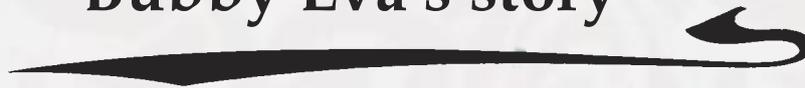




# Bubby Eva's story



(Eva Schartup)





I was born October 16, 1910 in Valga, Estonia, a small town not far from the Baltic ocean. The population wasn't more than 20,000 with approximately 25 Jewish families. We had one synagogue and one movie house.

We were seven children, 4 boys and 3 girls. I was the youngest of the girls and the second youngest in the family.

Our home was a very happy one, with much laughter abounding. My father's mother also lived with us. I vividly remember the days I would hold on to the bottom of her skirt and followed her wherever she went. I loved her dearly and must have been her favourite. She used to call me "Shvartzinka", which means "blacky" and that used to make me angry, so I recall asking her why she called me that. She lovingly explained, "Narrela", little fool, don't you know that the sweetest cherries are the black ones, and so I felt a special love from her. There were times when I would crawl into bed with her. One day I had an accident, wet the bed and cried because that upset me. I was her "mazunick"; she cradled me in her arms and calmed me down telling me everything was quite alright.

We had a large house: the living room and the dining room were all in the one area. I remember a sofa that was ornately carved and mama's dishes were very beautiful. She used to bake chulas and potatonik in the wood stove. Then we had another large wood stove which was used to heat the house. One was used for cooking on top and the other was for baking and heating. We lived in this house up until I was six years old. A stream was nearby and one day we had to move because the stream became a new boundary line dividing our town into two. One side was Estonia and the other was Latvia, something like east and West Germany. Valga was not much of a town but they divided it anyways.

Father wanted us to be Estonian and so moved our family to another location. It was after the World War 1 that Estonia and Latvia became independent countries.



Valga, Estonia





As I mentioned, our house was close to a stream, not a river, but in the spring it was fun. I would go with bare feet into the water and catch the tadpoles. I always thought they were baby fish but when I was older found out they were little frogs. After the frost the stream would flood over and have at least two feet of water in our courtyard. We would raise our skirts high because the water was nearly knee deep. That was always fun for the youngsters, giving us the opportunity to take out big basins, sit in them and float around, and around. Unfortunately my children and grandchildren will never know what fun we had growing up. In the summer we used to go to the woods to pick blueberries and mushrooms. Mother used to take us to the river to swim in the summer, but once I almost drowned and so never learned how to swim until I was grown up.



Eva young girl, 1917

Father owned a kosher butcher shop as well; he had a smoke room where geese, salami, lamb and also tongue were smoked. This was usually done during the winter months. Thinking of those days, when my father would take out salami from the smoke room to test if it was done, the warm fats trickled down my fingers; my saliva would start to run. These were days when many children went hungry, but we were very fortunate to have everything. Father's business was very successful, in addition to the store he would buy cattle and sell wholesale to other stores. Mother had help come in to clean house, iron and wash.

With 7 children she must have been kept quite busy cooking and sewing. Sarah my older sister, we called her Totsie, had epilepsy as a child and was slow in learning. She did not stay in school too long and so helped mother at home with the chores. My only job before Shabbat was to wipe the dust from the leaves of the plants. I loved my parents very much but could show my affection more to my mother than my father. I remember when mother was not well I used to sit by her bedside and stare at her. She was very beautiful, slim built with dark eyes and olive complexion. My father was tall and fair with blue eyes and light hair. He wore a goatee beard which was always neatly trimmed. My parents were a very happy couple; an abusing word was never spoken from either of them.





I never played with dolls as I grew, always outdoors a stick and a rod was my favourite game. When old enough to get on skates the first frozen puddle was mine. Our winters were cold with lots of snow, how I enjoyed it! I would lie down in the snow and roll around often trying to measure my indentation to see how tall I was or by fluttering my arms in remember having a cold.



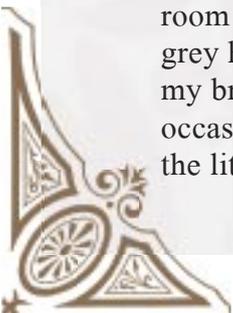
In school I was a good proficient in languages and a subject I liked because I even though it was needed, the maps were difficult was in grade 1 or 2 the blackboard to do a math something like that. When

teacher wanted to reward me with something. She took me to the back of the room, a very large room with classmates of 50 or 60, where her living quarters were. There she gave me a candy and told me how proud she was of me and how clever I was. As I looked around the room I saw this beautiful painting of the Czar. It was after the revolution and she was not supposed to have such a picture on display. These things remained in my memory.

student especially math, geography was not refused to wear glasses therefore the letters on for me to read. When I teacher called me to the question, adding  $2+2-1$ , I answered correctly the

As mentioned, father bought cattle, some were sold and some were slaughtered for his butcher shop. Father helped deliver a sheep when I was 4 or 5 years old. He brought the cleaned off lamb into the house to show us: it was the cutest thing I ever saw and shall never forget that moment. Afterwards when the lamb was taken back to its mother we made him promise that he would not slaughter it but we did give him permission to sell it. The joy to watch little chicks hatch and the birth of baby animals made a lasting impression on me. We also had a dog, a dachound which lived a long life. Father buried the dog in the woods when it died. We never had another one as our attachment to it was so great.

We did not live on a farm, but our courtyard was very spacious with a few families living there as well. In addition to our large house and the smoke room we also had a barn, where we had chickens and father's huge dapple grey horse. We called him "Shimmel". I was afraid of this big beast but my brothers rode him and would take him to the lake to have a swim. On occasion mother would decide to hatch some of our chickens and would bring the little fluff balls into the house to keep warm for a while.





During the winter months it would be a treat when father took out Shimmel and hitched him up to a sleigh. It was cold, but we had blankets around our legs and warm clothes. The horse had bells attached to the harness and we so loved the sound ringing in our ears as we rode through the town. The sleigh held 4 or 5 people, but this big horse had no trouble pulling us all. The horse was kept in the barn, but I was afraid to go near it.

One day, around Passover father went to the synagogue, my younger brother Labey and my sister Berta and I climbed up onto the loft in the barn and dug into the barrel of apples. It was a treat enjoying the sweet aroma and delicious taste of our winter apples.

Our big house had 3 bedrooms upstairs; however, it was used only in the spring and summer time as it was much too cold to sleep there in the winter. The wood stove kept the downstairs warm and this was where the family slept, partitions separating the sleeping quarters. Our house was lit by kerosene lamps but I remember distinctly when electricity came in. What an excitement when this event happened. This commodity was only used for the lighting and that felt like a great luxury. When I was very young I remember my brother Morris handing me a candle and asked me to hold it while he went to the bathroom. There I was standing with the candle while he was sitting on the throne. We didn't have a telephone or a car, maybe two families in our town had a vehicle. I remember father telling us he loaned a man some money for his business years before and the man became very wealthy. He was one of the two that owned a car. His name was Yossel Shaine the other was an uncle of a friend of mine, Hannah Shamas. Her uncle, who was a rag peddler, became very wealthy.

Valga, Estonia





There was a beautiful park where music was played several times a week and there were places for children to play hide-and-seek to the enjoyment of all. Our summers were short, not too hot and fall came early. I found the winters lots of fun. I could hardly wait after school to have my supper so I could go out skating. It turned dark early but was never afraid to come home alone. When I reached the large courtyard I would show my bravery by singing on top of my voice so I felt, if people heard me coming, no one would harm me. I sang until I reach my door. I enjoyed my childhood so much.



Eva (left), Cousins, Leibe, Cousin





We used to have company for Shabbat afternoon tea. There was a lady in particular who came with a black velvet cape that had multi-coloured beading sewn around the hem. At 4 or 5 years of age I was fascinated by these coloured beads and as I sat on the floor while she drank her tea, the focus of my life became those beads so I proceeded to pick them off one at a time. I doubt she noticed my mischief as she came back for many other Shabbat teas thereafter. I remember mother telling me that this lady was a kleptomaniac, she would steal fish at the market but one time the fish man at the market watched and caught her in the act of putting a fish in her bag. I could never remember her name but I would call her the "fish lady". It's amazing how I remember all these little details.



The Passover Seder was so beautiful with the new dishes and polished candelabra. I can still see father leaning against the pillows, reciting the Haggadah. The foods were festive in particular I remember goose "greibens", the fat rendered with a lot of onions, spread over matzo with salt.



Parents: Leah and Hershel Schartup





Everything came easy for me in school so I didn't have to study. We had a choice go to a Russian school but I made up my mind to go to a German school.

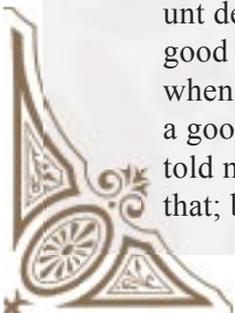
One day while coming home from school I overheard two boys who were following me talk about the "Yitzkas and the Judskas", all kinds of slang language about Jews. Without hesitation I turned around and with all my might, gave one of the boys a smack right across his face.

When I got home, I told my mother what I did. My mother was called to the school by the principal and told him why I smacked the boy.

I was never punished and was never scared to do anything. When my mind was made up to do something, I did it. I was brave and always knew what I wanted.

At a young age, 11 or 12, the youngsters got together to talk about Palestine. They talked and I listened as the older teenagers cultivated plans to make aliah. It sounded exciting so when I went home from one of these meetings I informed my father that I was going to Palestine. He looked at me and very seriously said, "First you finish school!"

Father one day asked me to collect money from our customers who bought meat on credit. There was an instance I remember vividly. A customer, who was in the dry goods business and fairly well off, refused to pay me when I went to collect, the lady of the house said she couldn't pay. I approached her very tactfully, telling her my dad was going out of town and that I needed the money to pay for school the next day, which was the truth. Still she would not pay. I said, "I must have the money as I won't be able to go to school". Again she said "I can't give you any money". Well that did it! I said in Yiddish, "ere haut shain alas off ge gessen, ze ous ge kucked unt der nisht betzallen", meaning "You have eaten everything and had a good bowel movement and still you won't pay". She barely let me finish when she told me "you freshnick; get out of here". I left her house and had a good laugh but I was angry. What was I going to do? When I got home I told my mother what was said. She told me I should not have spoken like that; but I kept on saying..."but momma, wasn't I right?"





Hannah was my good school chum; she was funny, and flirty. I had more fun beating up a boy than flirting with them. One day during the spring time, the two of us were upstairs studying. On the windowsill was a beautiful clock my brother Charley brought back from Moscow. My friend was leaning over the sill flirting with the boys next door.

Unfortunately the clock fell to the pavement and smashed to pieces. I ran downstairs; gathered up the pieces, put it in a paper and disposed of it. I asked my friend, "what was I going to do when they asked what happened to the clock?" She said, "If you tell them I did it, I will say you did it", so I decided to keep it a secret. I was only 12 years old but I couldn't go and tell my mother what actually happened. There were times when she questioned the disappearance of this clock and eventually decided it had been stolen. Hannah and I were the same age, but we were not alike in personality at all. She was very pretty, but flighty. I was much more a serious person, intellectually advanced and quite mature. Not long thereafter my friend and her brother Wolfka (in America they called him Willie) got sponsored by a well-to-do aunt in Philadelphia to go to America.

My brothers treated me like a little lady. Whenever there was dancing they always danced with me. Charley and Morris were always my escorts and we danced the evening away. At the end of one evening, I walked ahead of my brothers, as we came to the exit there were two tall boys and one of them brushed his hand over my breast. At 13 I was very developed and took great offense that they touched me, so I raised my hand and gave him a smack. My brothers who were behind couldn't make out what had happened and wanted to know why on earth I was fighting with those guys. When they reached me I explained what had happened and they had a good laugh.



Eva and a friend





I was taking French in school then had to drop French because we had a treaty with Great Briton and so English lessons came instead. In my earlier school days I learned Russian, German, French and English. We learned many languages also a smattering of our bordering countries. I had a private tutor who taught me English twice a week.

One day when I went for my lesson, the sister of my teacher met me at the door. She said "come upstairs." My teacher was a very beautiful woman with long braided hair wound around her head like a crown and there she was on the floor, dead. I was told by her sister that she was cleaning a gun and she accidentally shot herself. I put my hand under her head, it was still warm. This was the first time I was in contact with a dead person. It was very upsetting and when I got home I cried so much.

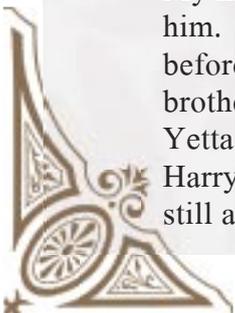


Brother Morris

By this time my brother Morris had also left for Brooklyn and naturally I was on pins and needles wanting to also leave home. I told my mother that when I go to America I shall bring them over and meet them with a drashka, a carriage, with 6 white horses with bells ringing. I was a big dreamer and to me, a drashka was meant for nobility to ride in. I didn't know anything about big city living, cars or New York for that matter.

Migration of people to other lands was not an unusual event. They left for various reasons. My father's father was in the Czar's army and I never knew him. He also had a brother who disappeared never to be heard from again. The family thought he might have gone to South America or Australia to avoid being conscripted. Papa also had a married sister, aunt Channah. After her husband died she moved to New York with her son.

My mother's father served 25 years in that army; I don't ever remember seeing him. My mother's mother was killed, run over by a horse and buggy long before I was born. Mother was one of four children having 2 sisters and one brother. Her oldest sister aunt Raizel lived in Valga. Her younger sister aunt Yetta went to New York when she was a young girl as well her brother uncle Harry Lipson with his wife Annie. Another younger brother died while I was still a very young child.

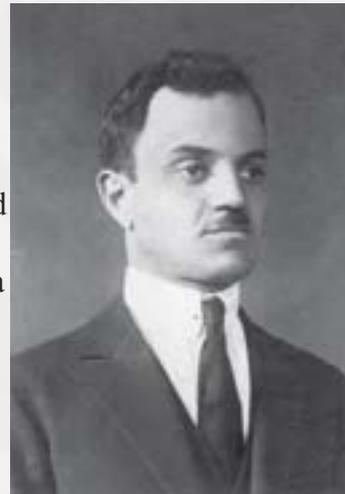




Sister and Brothers (l to r):  
Berta, Charley, Laibey  
Below: Tevy



My oldest brother Tevy was tall dark and handsome. He had the agility of an athlete and could skate beautifully. When he was an infant he was inflicted with a very high fever. Mother said he had too many teeth coming in at one time, however we know today that does not create a severely raised temperature and so suggest that he had some sort of virus that caused the fever. Unfortunately he lost all his hearing and as a young man went to special schools for the deaf to learn sign language. He could speak but it sounded strange and was difficult to understand. He went to another city as a teenager and so I did not see him very often. Tevy married a woman who was not Jewish who also was born with normal hearing but as Tevy, lost it from illness. They had a child with normal hearing. Mother was the only one who went to see them. I was told a very sad story about my brother and his family life. His wife had family in South America who were childless. They came to visit and his wife decided to give their child to her family. She wanted them to take their child back to South America and bring the child up with parents who could speak and hear properly. When my brother found out what she did, he was heartbroken and left her. Our family never heard about their grandchild after that.



My brother Charley travelled to many cities buying and selling perfumes and lingerie. There were times, when he was a young man father had to bail him out as some items he purchased were contraband in our country.

My brother Morris worked with father in the butcher shop until he left for America. My brother Labey was just a youngster as I mentioned the youngest of seven.





One day at the age of 14, I was sitting in the park with my sister Berta, telling her my dreams of going to a big city to become an actress. I always was a big dreamer and fantasized life. Berta, who was then 16, told me that in order to succeed in that business I would have to sell myself first: "you'd have to sell your body." At that time I didn't realize what she meant. I said, "What do you mean? I can do anything I want". She replied, "Oh yes, but if you want to succeed in this world you will have to do a lot of things that may not be good so you better think about it." She was very wise my sister. We were very close and could talk to her about everything.

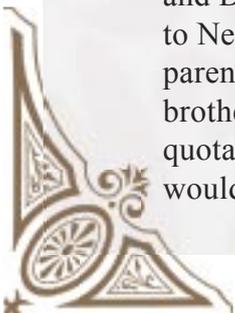


Eva and sister Berta

The day finally came when I remember telling my mother, "you know momma, I think that this place is too small for me. I feel I just want to spread my wings and fly. I don't want to spend the rest of my life in a small town." Mother was rather shocked that I spoke like this.

At that time my brother Morris had already gone to New York. Actually, my brother Charley was supposed to have gone instead of Morris but he had trachoma and would not be able to enter the United States with this eye disease.

When Morris arrived in Brooklyn, he stayed with our aunt Yetta who had married Sam Paritsky. Also living in New York was my mother's brother uncle Harry Lipson and his wife Annie. They had two children, my cousins Bessie and Dory. There were other people from our town who also had immigrated to New York, so I was persistent with my desire to go to America. I told my parents I wouldn't go to university. I had to go to a big city. We wrote to my brother Morris and my uncle who had to sponsor me, however there was a quota for Estonian immigrants coming into the United States and therefore I would have to wait until they allowed me an entry visa.





I was 15 when I told my parents I had enough school. I knew I would have to wait until my papers came. I felt the need to prove to my parents and myself that I had the ability to take care of myself, and so decided to press them into letting me go to Tallinn.

My cousin Berta lived there, the youngest of aunt Raizel's daughters. Berta was married and had two children at that time. I stayed for a while, then felt the need to leave, the over protection was not allowing me freedom. After 3 or 4 weeks I was running out of money and needed to find a job.

I walked almost to the end of town and luckily found a factory that made threads. Collecting my courage I walked in and asked if they had work for me. They inquired if I could watch that the threads did not get tangled up on the machine. When the spools were full I was to stop it and take the spools out.

This was the first job I ever had. The next thing I did was to move out from my cousin's home. She suggested a Jewish family who allowed me to stay with them and so I paid them very little and they gave me a foldout bed, which I remember had bugs in it as I woke up at night scratching. I did not get paid immediately and had run out of money. I bought black bread and put sugar on it, this was my daily food for days. Benny Steinert, who later became a cousin of mine, came to Tallinn and invited me out to dinner. It was the most food I had eaten in a long time. I was beginning to wonder how long I would last, fearing to tell my parents I had run out of money. It wasn't easy, but finally my wages started to come and I managed to live on my own.



Eva, in the middle, with Berta and friends

A letter finally arrived from my parents telling me the American counsel had my visa to enter the United States. It must have been 6 or 7 months after I left home that this news came. Believe me, I packed my few belongings and ran home! I never told my parents how I managed to live, they would have been shocked.





Soon after mother started to get my things ready and I remember it was a Shabbat afternoon, when this same lady that it used to pick beads off her cape, said to momma "what! You're going to let such a young girl go to America by herself? Pasha Leah, how can you do that?" I was in the other room but heard what was said. Rushing into the room it said, "**Momma, don't worry. I can be right here in this same town and if I want to be bad, I'll be bad and if I want to be good I could be in the midst of gypsies and I'll be good.**" My mother looked at me, understood and had the confidence that I would know how to live and how to behave.

Preparations continued. Mother sewed me a beautiful brown woollen dress with an inset vest made from embroidered Egyptian cotton. Black silk stockings and black paten shoes were bought for me. I had nice batiste cotton underwear. Mother always knew how to sew and therefore a beautiful wardrobe. My adventure abroad was on the way. All the preparations took a few months, by then I was 15 1/2. There was this big question of what Morris was going to do with me when I got there, because he would have to send me to school until the age of 16. Well, in a small town many things can be done....father took a bottle of wine and managed to get a birth certificate stating I was over 16 years.

My parents made me a farewell party that was like a wedding. There were many friends I went to see before leaving, in particular there was an admirer of mine who presented me with a box of chocolates. I had no interest in this person as I was only 15 1/2 and he was 26 or 27. I took the chocolates with me for the voyage, as the box was very beautiful. As things turned out, he was a brother to my sister-in-law Frieda, my brother Charley's wife. Charley also gave me a wallet with his monogram on it. Prior to leaving I remember my mother saying to me, "I wish I could peek through the key hole to see what a grand reception you're going to get from aunt Yetta, my sister." It was many years her sister had been in America and though she thought her sister would behave in the same manner as she would do, it never came about. I had never met aunt Yetta, she and her brother uncle Harry had left the old country before I was born.





The Schartup Family

The results of the search for historic documents about the family in Valga

It was told to her that there has been Sartup Pese-Leja (nee Leibson) born 14.03.1872 in Valga (Estonia). Her father was David Leibson born 27.04.1839 in Latvia town Tukum and mother Beile Leibson (nee Gotlieb born 23.06.1844 In Latvia , Tukum). Married 06.01.1896 in Valga with Hirs Sartup (born 09.04.1864 in Lithuania).

Pese-Leja's children

sons

- Tuvje
- Zale
- Hila-Michel
- Leib

daughters

- Sore-Rive
- Beila
- Have





## *The Voyage To America & Meeting Fred*

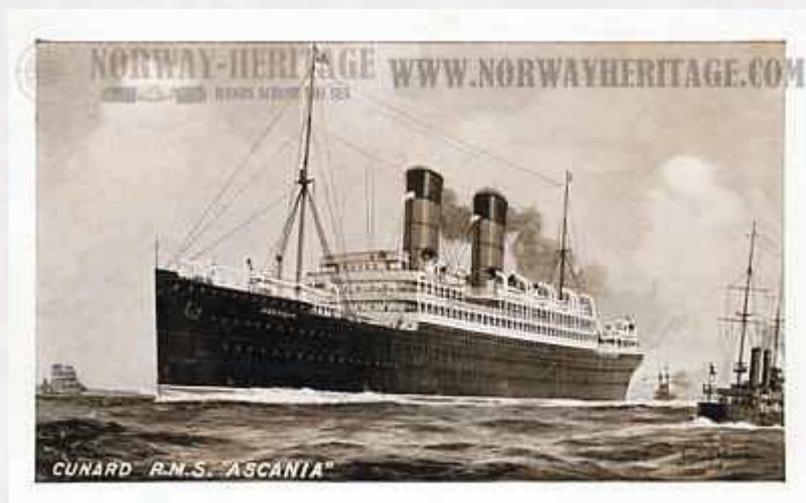
I was so brave; I wouldn't shed a tear... I couldn't allow my parents to see how sad I was feeling, having to leave them. The following day they took me to the train station. I kissed my mother goodbye, I kissed my father goodbye, but when it came to say farewell to my bubby, I broke down and started to cry. She took my face into both her hands, looked straight into my eyes and said, "don't cry child, this is your time, this is your life now."

The first stop was Rega, Latvia. I got off the train and walked past a store with sweets. Outside the store were barrels of goodies including halvah. I bought a pound of it and ate and ate until I felt sick, then threw the rest away. The next train took me to Lei bow in Lithuania which was a sea port...it must of all happened in one day, because I don't remember sleeping over.

In Liebow I boarded a liner, 15 or 20,000 tons called the Ascania, this was not considered a large ship, but to me with so many passengers coming aboard and the fact it was the first time I stepped foot on to such a ship, it felt humongous.



The "Ascania" boat





On board ship, I travelled middle class and met a lady whose cabin was next to mine. She had two young children, a boy and girl age 4 and 6. Unfortunately this woman, who was travelling to New York to meet her husband, was seasick from the time the ship set off. I offered to take her children for breakfast and after that on to the deck to play ball with them. It gave me something to do and allowed her to lie in bed. Poor thing, she couldn't lift her head off the pillow.

After a day or so the ship docked in Sherbrook to take on passengers from France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, from all over.

The following day I took the children as before to the deck to play ball. I ran to catch a fly-away ball and as I knelt down to grab the ball my eyes came in contact with a young man who was on his knees in an attempt to also catch the ball.

Frederick Rezek



We looked at each other and both began to laugh. He asked if I spoke German and so we started a conversation with a language we were both familiar with. He had blue eyes and fair complexion, and wavy brown hair. I thought he was so handsome but was sure he was not Jewish. I asked if he was Jewish and he said he was. I thought I was very wise to ask if he could speak Yiddish.

I must have been naive, because I said "how can you be Jewish if you can't speak the language?" he told me he spoke many languages, but at home they spoke Czesky (the language of Czechoslovakia) and his schooling was in German as was mine, but the family never spoke Yiddish. I said this was very strange. In German he answered me "ich biene ein reich blutika Judah". "I am a pure blooded Jew".

I had a good feeling and believed him. The ship docked in Southampton to pick up more passengers crossing the Atlantic. He told me his name was Fred Rezek and that he was from a small town not far from Prague. He tried to see me every day. He questioned why I left home so young as he was 23 and I 15 1/2. I said "I guess I had the wanderlust", it appeared we both had that drive to go places and see new things...wanderlust is not a good translation...but we both had the same feelings.





He was on his way to Halifax. The only way to get into Canada at that time was to commit to six or eight months of labour on a farm. I asked how come he was going as a farmer and he said he really wanted to go to the United States but couldn't get a visa so he decided to go to Canada.

He told me about his previous adventure with two other friends from Czechoslovakia. They came up with a plan to go to Mexico and there the three of them would swim the Rio Grande River, then cross the boarder into the U.S.

Before the three reached the river they had to trek across a desert. All were extremely thirsty, after days and days of walking. The first slimy puddle they saw, they threw themselves into the water and drank even though the water was not clear or clean.

Finally after much walking they came to the Rio Grande. One chap could not swim and so the other took all the belongings on his back and Fred, who was an excellent swimmer and athlete, had the other friend lie on his back. With the man on his back, Fred swam across the river (this is where the term "wetbacks" came from.)

Unfortunately, waiting on the other side were boarder police. The three were caught and shipped back to Prague. They had to shovel coal into the furnaces all the way back in lieu of payment for their passage to Czechoslovakia. He stayed home about two weeks, gathered some belongings and some money and then decided to go to Canada.

He also had the desire to see the world, like me. Perhaps my talking about my experience in Tallinn appealed to him, the travelling bit and my wish to be in America and see the world.



Fred in summer camp in Ck





Fred served in the Ck Army,  
(Cavallery Regiment #9,  
Vys. Niy'to)





On board the Ascania, Fred saw me every day. We conversed and one day I brought up the box of chocolates that was given to me before my departure. He took the box and on the back of it he wrote in English, "I love you". I could read English and must have blushed when I read it. He asked where I was staying in New York and I told him about my brother Morris and my aunt. I gave him my aunt Paritsky's address.

The day we docked in Halifax he gave me a letter. I couldn't imagine why he would give me a letter. I went to my cabin and read his letter. I read it over and over, and over again. He wrote he would one day come to New York. I should have patience because he would look me up to be his future wife.

My head really spun, I didn't know how to think or feel. The night before we docked he kissed me on my head. He knew I was very young and didn't want to overwhelm me by kissing me on my lips. I ran upstairs after reading his letter, people were leaving the ship. I looked and looked everywhere for him... finally he turned around, we spotted each other...he waved and threw me a kiss goodbye. I waved back, feeling light-headed and deliriously happy.

