

WASYL (SLASTUKIN) VERIGIN FAMILY

COOPERATIVE FAMILY LIFE

This article is a personal review of cooperative living as in the Verigin family.

My grandfather was born on January 02, 1878, into the Slastukin family in Georgia which was part of Russia at that time. As a two-year-old, his father died accidentally when kicked by a horse. His mother and two older siblings were left in dire straits so that his mother appealed to the community for assistance.

Fediya and Paraniya Verigin responded, with interest, as their children were growing up. So it came to pass that Vasily was legally adopted by the Verigin family while in Georgia. Wasyl (adult name) married a Malasha (maiden name not known) while in Georgia (not confirmed) and they had a son Peter. A daughter died at birth.



The entire family migrated to Canada with the main body of Doukhobors and arrived in Canada in 1899, to settle in Pakrovka (Prokuratova Village), some 3 ½ miles North of the present village of Veregin, Saskatchewan.



Wasyl's second marriage (date unknown) was to Auxuta, the third daughter (born 1876) to Nikolai Chursinov and Maria Remizov.

The family lived and worked the independent farms (there was an early disagreement with the Community of Doukhobours in and about 1903) together as one family unit with the grand parents Fediya and Paraniya and the children, Peter from the first marriage and all the following siblings:



Petro (unknown)



William 1905



Polly 1907



John 1909



Sam 1911



George 1913



Alec 1915



Annie 1917



My father (William) shared the story that there was a period when “bumper crops” became accepted as a “routine” and so the family decided to build a house that would better accommodate the family on the original family homestead, five (5) miles directly North of Veregin. On the left is the house which also included two large barns and outbuildings all serviced by electric lights and a well inside the house. It was quite an achievement!

I am not privy to a date of construction but from the stories that my father and mother related to me, I was able to identify the following family members occupying the home:

Petro married Nastiya Savinkoff and the family picture L to R is son Peter, Petro, daughter Mary, son Paul, daughter ?, Nastiya, another daughter was born in Russia. This family lived together with all the rest.



The Petro Verigin left the “family unit” and became part of the group of Doukhobors that returned to Russia during a time from 1923 to 1927 to the Melitopo district of the Ukrainain province of Zaporozhye. Although many of the migrants returned to Canada after the USSR began recruiting the young men and broke some other promises, the Petro family remained in Russia. A last letter was received in 1947 that Peter, eldest son was killed during World War II and father Petro was shot by the Soviet Army as he attempted to cross the frontier to the West. The letter also suggested that no one should write back as the rest of the family was closely watched. No further communication was attempted.



My mother (Annie Morozoff) married my father William on March 09, 1930 and moved into the “family unit”.

Brothers Lawrence and Russel were born there and became part of the “family unit”.

Polly married Mike Ratushny and joined the “family unit”. Their son Fred was also born there.



Sam married Malasha Wasilenkoff and joined the “family unit”.

Children, Mildred, Mike and Sam were all born there.

John married Vera Soukorokoff and they too became part of the “family unit”. Peter was born there.

Some of the stories that my mother passed on to me was all the seven (7) cousins being part of a “chorus” wanting attention and needed to be fed at the same time.



She remembers the babies all laying down together with a bottle of milk and nipple, contributing to the “family challenge.”

The families were able to live and prosper as a “family enterprise” for a time.

From the stories, I was told, the women had difficulty in being able to share all the duties in the very busy household and thus may have contributed to the eventual cooperative dissolution. There were twenty-two (22) mouths to feed for three (3) meals a day, which would be a heavy chore. There would be cows to milk, gardens to tend along with all the other household chores.

Annie was a spinster, for some time, until she married Pete Popoff. They farmed in Arran, Saskatchewan
George and Alex never married and continued to live on the homestead with their mother Auxuta.

This photo shows the brothers, John, William, George, and Sam operating the Steam Tractor that propelled a threshing machine. William had an official Steam Ticket third class even though he could not read nor write.



The original majestic home met with tragic end and was destroyed in a fire. A modest replacement was constructed on the original foundation and aged in place.

George and Alec remained on the original homestead after all the families separated the assets and moved to individual farms as follows:

1. William and Annie moved to a purchased farm three (3) miles West of Phoenix School, NE of Canora. Later moved to a rented farm 3 ½ miles NE of Veregin. The final move was in 1947 to a ½ section 3 ½ miles NE of Pelly.
2. John and Vera moved to a farm ½ mile West of Tolstoi School that was part of the Soukorkoff holdings.
3. Sam and Malasha moved to a purchased farm across from John and Vera.
4. Mike and Polly Ratushny moved to Vancouver, B.C.

The families continued to cooperate, especially during harvest with the “threshing gang.” The family “bonding” survived dissolution and all members remained “close” as a family unit.

This story was intended to record the brief history of the Wasyl Verigin family.

Written November 23, 2023, by EWV