

CAMP “20 TH QUARTAL”

(Dwadtzaty Quartal)

AS I REMEMBER IT.

By: Morton Knecht October 1999

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SENTENCED FOR LIFE TO LIVE IN CAMP “20th QUARTAL”.

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Bialystok – a city in Poland – occupied by the USSR in 1939.

Deportation: Approximately 1.00 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. of June 20, 1940.

Day of arrival at labour camp: July 12, 1940

Released from camp: September 17, 1941.

Address of camp:

СССР

Вологодская Область.

Ковжинский Район.

Аненский Мост.

Ужла, Двадцаты Квартал.

Sounding like as follows:

Wologodskaya Oblasetz

Kowzynsky Rayon

Anniensky Most

Uzhla. Dwardtzaty (20) Quartal.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE ARREST.

At the beginning of the Second World War, Soviet forces occupied Eastern Poland including the city of Bialystok. The city became a safe haven for countless refugees who fled the German occupied territories. Most of the refugees led a miserable life in Bialystok, trying to find lodging, food and work. The refugees thought and hoped that the war will be short. They also hoped that they would soon be reunited with the loved ones left behind in their hometowns. In the beginning of 1940 the Soviets gave the refugees a choice of accepting Soviet citizenship and emigrate to central Russia or staying where they were until they could return home. The overwhelming majority expressed the desire to stay and eventually return home. The Soviet authorities understood this decision as a rejection of their system of government and a rejection of their “generous” hospitality. After all their slogan of the day was “The one that is not with

us, is against us". The Russians response to this decision was not immediate. The refugees soon began leading a somewhat normal life. Children and teenagers attended school and the majority of refugees found accommodations and work. Very few refugees paid homage to the past registration and accepted the status quo. Some of those who had accepted Soviet citizenship and went to Central Russia started to filter back to Bialystok. They were very disappointed with life in the Soviet Union. They tore up their new passports and blended in with the rest of the refugees. All this changed very quickly when the Soviets acted without warning.

JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN.

During the night of June 20 1940, thousands of refugees all over the occupied territory, were rounded up by armed members of the Red Army and the Soviet Police. The refugees were taken in army trucks to a railroad loading area and divided into two groups, families and single individuals. All of us were quickly loaded into railroad cars. Sometime later we learned that the single adults were sent to infamous Russian Gulag prisons.

About 30 to 40 people shared one cattle car equipped with upper and lower sleeping shelves at either end of the car. A large metal container was placed against the wall for storing human waste. Our family was assigned the top shelf of car number 41 which we shared with three others. The shelf became our resting and sleeping place for the duration of the train journey. The guards locked the cars and on rare occasions allowed individual inmates outside to collect minimal rations to distribute to the car occupants. None of us knew how long the trip would last or its final destination.

Most of the time we traveled on single railroad tracks. Our train frequently stopped on side rails to allow the trains traveling in the opposite direction or for faster trains to pass us. On a few occasions, peasants who were themselves impoverished, approached the stationary trains and handed us pieces of bread and bits of other food through the small railroad window.

After traveling a few days, the train stopped in a large field located near the edge of a mighty river. The field was located near the city of Yaroslav; the spot where the Volga and Sheksna rivers merge. We were ordered to disembark. The Russian guards still did not tell us about our destination or give any reason for our predicament. We were allowed to roam freely in the endless fields. We were overjoyed and felt like animals released from a cage.

Under the watchful eyes of our guards the people spread out and started looking after their bodily needs. Some men and women stripped to the waist and washed themselves and their clothing. We were given a reasonable good meal, and relaxed in the warm sun. The prisoners of each wagon with their belongings formed separate groups. We were allowed to mingle but had to return to our individual groups whenever our overseers felt necessary to communicate with us. Throughout the journey we were referred to as occupants of the train-wagon that we previously occupied. (In our case as: occupants of car No 41).

Toward the evening about a half of the inmates were assembled and marched along the river. After a short walk we could see two freight barges tied up near the shore. Nobody had the slightest inkling that those barges would be our next means of transportation. We were quickly loaded; everybody and all of their worldly possessions were packed onto the barges. Eventually

a tugboat appeared, hooked up the two barges, one behind the other, and our journey up the Sheksna River began.

The conditions on the barges were not fit for human beings. 700 to 800 people cramped together, fighting for fresh air. Standing and sleeping space on the deck as well as below was scarce. The sanitary and medical conditions were appalling. The food was minimal. At all times you could hear children crying, adults constantly arguing and complaining. Rumors about our horrible future began to circulate and did not help with our morale. Some of the older people aboard told terrible stories about life in pre - revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union. By now we all knew first hand that life inside the great “Workers Paradise,” was far below that of the poorest pre war European country.

The majority of the young people (including myself) stayed mostly on deck. Some adults joined us and together we monopolized the front part of it. The countryside was rugged and unspoiled occasionally pierced by small villages that to our surprise still had churches. Periodically we could see large groups of people working with axes and handsaws cutting down trees, stripping the tree bark and erecting large wood structures. We came to the conclusion that majority of them were prisoners and were guarded by armed guards. To our inexperienced eyes it looked like a big unconnected mess of activity. The officials and guards on board seemed to be as puzzled, as we were and didn't know what the strange structures were meant for.

The barges seemed to be motionless except for the swells created by the tugboat and the seemingly slow moving shores. We sailed past the cities of Rybinsk and Cheropoviets but we did not stop there. As a matter of fact, before approaching the cities, we were ordered to go below deck and stay there. The same thing happened every time we passed under a bridge or through river locks, supposedly to prevent sabotage.

The days were becoming rapidly longer and everyone tried to stay on deck as long as possible. The atmosphere on deck was at times quite joyful. Chess sets, cards and other games appeared out of nowhere and kept us occupied. Young men flirted with young ladies. Occasionally somebody would start a familiar song and a chorus of voices would join in. Eventually we crossed the body of water known as the Beloye Ozero (White Lake). The name of the lake is very appropriate, the waters literally looked like milk and the surface was as smooth as polished marble. The lake must be quite shallow because we used a canal to circumnavigate it. Nature had one more surprise for us. For the first time, we unexpectedly experienced the beauty of a Russian White Night. It is hard to describe the feeling one gets, when you realize that at midnight you have sufficient light outside to read the fine print of a newspaper. We saw the rising of the sun and the start of a new day without darkness. A startling and difficult experience to accept. Most of us were sure that somehow we missed the night hours and made sure to wait for the next sunrise to verify the event.

The trip up the river continued as before except that now we were making frequent stops. At each stop orders were given for specific families, selected by wagon number and name, to disembark. Nobody knew if this was good or bad.

We wondered whether those who left were winners or losers. We were anxious to find out when and where will our turn come. This was the big question of the day. So far we had no idea of what was awaiting us, what would happen to the people who left or those who stayed aboard. During our trip north we were unable to find out any concrete information from the guards, about our future. Their only answer was:” Don’t worry you will find out soon enough”.

CAMP LIFE:

Our turn to disembark came early in the morning on July 12, 1940; we arrived on the outskirts of a settlement called Uzla some 15 kilometers north - west of Annensky Most. Members of the local militia greeted us in a rather friendly manner. After short formalities we were told to gather our possessions and were marched to the Cultural Hall of Uzla. We were told that a great meal was awaiting us. It was also hinted that it would be a very long time before we would again enjoy such hospitality.

Upon our arrival at the “reception” we were asked to sit down at long tables and we were again greeted with a few short speeches about “Soviet hospitality” The meal was served. For the first time in our lives we ate using primitive wooden spoons and glazed clay dishes. The “great” meal was primarily thick pasta soup laced with large pieces of cooked fish that was previously salted and dried. The majority of us have never before seen or eaten this kind of food. We were quite hungry but could not force ourselves to finish this dish. We consumed all the bread that we could lay our hands on and enjoyed every bite. The sweet tea, that was served, found the right spot too.

The local population gathered outside the Hall to ogle at the strange “Polak’s”, as we were referred to. They became very offended and couldn’t understand why so many of us refused to eat and enjoy the meal that they have worked so hard to prepare. They were also commenting that we were well dressed. (We felt very shabby) and that all of us must be capitalists and oppressors of the working class. They were obviously briefed beforehand by the “propaganda machine” about the dangerous criminals that were coming. They were indoctrinated to believe that they were leading the best life all of the world’s working class. Anybody that was better off than they must be an exploiter of the poor. We on the contrary felt dirty and shabby and very few among us would qualify as “capitalist”. We were a cross section of the Jewish population of Poland. The majority of us consisted of workers such as tailors, shoe- makers, merchants, book keepers and a few of the intelligence (Doctors, Engineers etc.). Only my father, and two others, had the experience, working in the lumber industry, prior to the war.

The events of the next few hours are deeply engraved in my memory and will most likely stay with me for the rest of my conscious life.

After the meal was over, we were told to load our possessions unto a number of very strange looking vehicles. These home made contraption looked somewhat as a sled, made with two “J” shaped saplings turned on their side. The lower part of the “J” was joined together by a cross log with a small platform that could hold our belongings. The natives tied our goods securely to the sled, with heavy ropes. A small horse was harnessed between the long “J” sides of each vehicle. The three or four local men who supervised the loading climbed on top of the harnessed horses and we were ordered to follow them on foot. The procession was a sight to

see and to remember. Our bedraggled, frightened and depressed convoy was led into the forest. Some of us were caring babies in our arms, and some were clenching the tiny hands of young children. Almost every one in this dejected group was still carrying a variety of parcels containing the “treasurers” that they wouldn’t entrust to anyone. Our destination was still unknown.

It became extremely hot and humid. The road was rough and very bumpy and littered with decayed logs and other tree remnants. We realized that this road was cut, some time ago, through virgin forest. Along the parts of the path which were soft and boggy a series of thin logs were laid down, crosswise to the direction traveled, to form a sturdy and narrow road. The road led in part through a marsh. It was clear that no other form of transportation would have been as appropriate and as reliable as these horse drawn sleighs.

As soon as we entered the forest we were attacked by millions of insects including mosquitoes and horse flies. We had no way of protecting ourselves since our clothing was inadequate, exposing our arms and legs. The bites of the horse flies were the hardest to ignore. Each bite drew blood and was very painful. Panic set in! Children began to cry, and adults began to complain. Mr. Fogler, an accountant from Warsaw became hysterical. He started to scream. This new, relatively minor discomfort added to all the previous inhumanities was more than he could endure. He blamed the whole world for his misfortune. It took a long time before we were able to calm him and assure him that life would get better. We continued to plod through the forest arriving 2 to 3 hours later at an elevated area, about six kilometers from our starting point.

The place was hardly occupied and the exteriors of the buildings were made entirely of logs. About a half a dozen men greeted us and led us into a large room. Outside the room was a hand painted sign that read “Krasny Ugolok” (Red Corner). We were officially greeted and introduced to our hosts. The man in charge was an N.K.V.D officer; the others were our future work trainers and supervisors. The commandant stated without ceremony: “Here you will live for the rest of your lives and here you will die. Forget about Poland, France and England. Do not sit on your suitcases”! He also told us that this settlement is called “Dwadzaty Quartal” (20th quarter sector). He outlined the work that we would be expected to do. He also outlined the living conditions, expected behavior and regulations of the camp. The speech ended with a famous Soviet slogan: “Remember, that the one that does not work, does not eat”. He continued: “Tomorrow you will be assigned various duties and begin your new jobs. Only women with small children and the very young will be excused from work in the forest but they still will be expected to perform many chores”.

Our family and some 15 more inmates were told to stay in the hall and make it our home and that when the new 7th Barrack (Log-house) would be completed there will be a re-assignment and most likely we would be housed in it. The others people were meanwhile housed in the six existing barracks.

In the next few days we learned that our new settlement consisted of:

Six houses (Barracks) with living areas.

One kitchen and a Mess Hall

One store

One administration building that included the living quarters for the Camp Commander.

A large stable with an attached room for the one-legged stable-keeper with his wife.

One additional stable, just outside the camp perimeter, housed a Russian couple with one small child.

One small building, with a large pot, used to boil drinking water (Kipiatok).

One outdoor toilet facility

One small workshop used for making ax-handles and sharpening saws.

One building that housed the Cultural Hall, in the center of it. One end of the building housed a one room medical - facility and also a one room teacher's quarters. The other end of the building had two rooms that were assigned to the Staroswiecki family.

Two barracks were under construction.

A deep well located at the highest elevation and almost in the center of the camp. The water in the well was unfit for human use because it was contaminated with insect larva and full of algae.

The camp, a circle of dry land about thousand feet (300 meters) in diameter, was surrounded by virgin coniferous forest. The camp was located at a crossing of two well-defined primitive paths. One path going east west direction and the other going north south. Only part o the north-south road, the one we came on, was wide enough for sleds to use. The other "roads" were essentially footpaths. As I learned much later these paths were concession lines, cut through the forest by removing brush and the lower branches of trees. These concession lines occurred every kilometer near the camp and every two kilometers as one went further away from the settlement. The paths going east to west and north to south divided the forest into squares known as Quartals (Sectors). A square area of two-kilometer per sides (4 square kilometers) made up a Quartal. At each intersection of the (2 km.) paths was placed a square wooden marker, which identified the number of the adjoining sectors. These markers were intended to serve as a directional guide in the endless forest. Time and neglect had destroyed most of the information on these markers. The paths as well as the markers went unnoticed by our untrained eye as they blended in with the numerous new paths made near the camp. Nobody took the trouble to make us aware of the forest markings. I have received a crude free-hand drawn map and explained the function of the paths and markings, as part of a later training in forestry. Although this was largely a spruce forest, it also had a small percentage of pine and birch trees. The low-lying and wet areas were overgrown with Linden, other leaf-bearing trees and shrubs.

Eventually our family was assigned a small room in the newly completed # 7 barrack. This barrack was made of logs, and was rectangular in shape. Small residential rooms were on either side of a central hall that ran the full length of the building. The room that housed the five members of my family was less than 8 feet by 10 feet. Ours was a preferred room because it had solid log walls separating it from the next residence and hallway; it also had a window with a view of the forest. Only the two rooms at either end of the barracks, (four rooms in all), had internal log walls that stretched from floor to ceiling. The inside rooms of the complex had flimsy partial partitions made from wooden board and open near the ceiling thus offering

limited privacy. A typical East European brick and clay wood burning “furnace-oven” was in the middle of the log wall that connected our room with that of our neighbor the Gutermans. The grate of the heater was located in their space and they therefore were responsible for keeping the oven going. My father, a practical and ingenious man, managed to gather some stones and bricks to build a “stove” which he attached to the flue of the “heating-oven”. We now had a “stove” with two burning positions for boiling water and cooking. The stove became very important to our survival once we started to adapt ourselves to the living conditions of the camp.

The camp was not guarded and there were no lookout towers or barbed wire fences but no one escaped. A few adventurers, unhappily “attempted” to visit the nearby village to trade with the residents, but they were picked up as soon as they got there and returned to the camp. The commandant gave these “heroes” a good tongue-lashing. He immediately issued a declaration that anyone who attempts to leave the camp without permission will receive severe punishment. To the best of my knowledge, no further attempts were made.

We were allowed to explore the forest, collect mushrooms and all kinds of berries that were in plentiful supply and grew everywhere during the summer. Since nobody showed us how to identify wild edible plants we picked only those that we knew were safe. Eventually we learned by trial and error and also by sharing our knowledge with other inmates to consume a greater variety of plants. It did not take long before all edible vegetation near the camp became in short supply, forcing us to look farther and deeper in the forest. During the week, the primary collectors of these delicacies were the women and children; everyone helped on the Sundays, our only day of rest. Some of the camp inhabitants were afraid to venture into the forest by themselves and only collected the edibles growing within sight of camp. These people unfortunately depended on others to take them to more bountiful and more distant locations, but places with good picking were well kept family secrets not often shared with others.

Every one doing physical labour in the forest, or duties within the camp, was required to work every day (except Sunday) no matter what the weather except when the temperature dropped below minus 30 degrees Celsius. (-22 degrees Fahrenheit). A hard to obtain, medical permission would also grant you a short exception.

People worked in small groups called brigades. Each brigade had a leader that also served as the spokesman for the group. Brigades could be made up entirely of family members or unrelated inmates doing the same job. The majority of people worked as lumberjacks. They cut down trees, stripped them of branches, and cut the logs into prescribed lengths. All this was done using only axes and handsaws. The length of the log depended on its future use: e.g. railroad ties, telephone posts, lumber supplies, mine supports, etc. The logs then were piled into small heaps with their thick ends touching. Waste such as branches and shrubs were piled together forming hill-like structures, about seven feet high (2.5 Meters) and burned during the winter and the rainy season to reduce the risk of an uncontrolled fire. This process is known as “clear cutting”. Nothing was left standing. Even the smallest tree was cut down or burned. We learned to protect ourselves from the flying sparks that burned small holes in our clothing but unfortunately not soon enough to safe-guard these most valuable possessions. Occasional small strips of mature forest were left standing with the idea that they would re-seed the barren land.

Other workers were responsible for bringing the cut timber to predetermined places, sorting, piling and arranging them in the required manner. This work was done with the help of a team of horses individually harnessed to the “J- sleigh”. Depending on the size one to six logs were manually loaded thick end first onto the sleighs’ cross section, and fastened with a chain. The horses then dragged the cut timber to special storage areas, where the logs were sorted according to length and type. The logs were stacked as high as possible to facilitate future loading and transportation. During the winter only, large tractors were employed to pull massive sled convoys, loaded to capacity with logs, to the river. The harvesting of the surrounding coniferous forest was going on throughout the year. For some unexplained reason mosquitoes and horse flies were less aggressive during the white nights of summer, than during the day. The horses were greatly bothered by these insects therefore they were used only during the night.

Working in the forest during a northern winter would have been impossible without suitable footwear. Some exemplary workers (Stachanowcy) received coupons for felt boots (Valanky). Locally made linden bark sandals (Laptzie) were issued to the other workers. These sandals had to be worn over carefully wrapped feet to prevent frostbite.

Adults, anyone over the age of 16, not working in harvesting of the forest, performed various chores within the camp. My mother and other women who had small children were assigned to make “churky”. They were supplied with logs that they had to cut into slices approximately 50 millimeter (2.0 inches) thick. They then chopped the slices into cubes (Churky). The dried churkies were used as fuel for specially modified automotive trucks. In order to utilize the adult female work force fully the soviets organized nursery facilities for infants and a two-room school for older children.

My father was one of the few inmates at the camp who had experience working with logs and lumber. He has spent a large part of his life working with wood in a plywood factory, lumberyards, sawmills and the forest. He formed a work group called the Nadolny Brigade, consisting of himself, Mr. Drupiewski, Mr. Nadolny and Mr. Szarf. The other members of the brigade had experience in handling horses. My father’s ingenuity in the use of levers and wood rollers to move or lift heavy logs combined with the brutal strength of the others proved to be a winning combination.

They were often assigned to load the thickest and heaviest logs, onto the rigs. The horses were brutally encouraged to drag the logs to the assembly points. Here too the Nadolny brigade, using all the tricks of the trade, piled the logs neatly and as high as humanly possible. In some places, using the nearby hill to their advantage, they managed to create neat piles of logs, almost as high as two stories. There was a substantial bonus in pay given for piles above a certain height. The Nadolny Brigade also came up with a neat idea too earn a few extra rubbles. To encourage higher production the management set production goals for each individual for a period of three months in advance. When one reached that goal he was paid almost double the regular rate. What they did was unique. They claimed that most of the brigade’s work was done by one member only. As soon as he reached his goal, and started earning extra money another member started claiming high productivity, and so on. This procedure was repeated every three months. The pay collected was put into one kitty and divided equally.

Soon everybody tried to imitate this method but it only worked with people that trusted each other and were able to produce above the set quotas. Mr. Nadolny eventually left the brigade but the rest stayed together and formed a strong bond between them that carried on for many years.

All work in the camp was done as piece-work. Supposedly the pay was the same as was paid to the local lumberjacks and horse-workers. The difference was that we had no experience or strength to produce as well as the local workers. Women and men worked side by side doing all the manual labour but a lot of us were physically unable to do this kind of strenuous work. On top of this 10% of our pay was taken away for the N.K.V.D. The take home pay of a good worker in camp barely covered the expenses for the miserable food available. Some inmates traded away their bread rations to be able to buy other things of necessity. Those that couldn't earn enough to purchase the necessities of life grew weaker and weaker and earned less and less. This condition prevailed and often led to complete breakdown and slow death.

CAMP FOOD

Russian workers had improved the road to Uzla, shortly after our arrival. It became possible to transport supplies into camp much more easily using either horse drawn sleighs or small tractors. Everything including drinking water had to be brought into camp and everything was rationed, including soggy bread made of a mixture of whole rye flour, rye bran and water. Even though inmates bought their food rations with their earnings, no one could buy more than one ration per worker, half a ration for non-working adults and a quarter ration for children.

For the first three months, at every meal, three times a day, we were given a small bowl of a paste like mush made of ground corn topped with a teaspoon of bitter oil. This "Concoction" was brought to the workers' stations at lunchtime. The daily full ration of bread was meager. The Soviets expected the bread to last the entire day but it never did! Twice daily everyone was given a ladle of hot (supposedly boiling) water. It was "just to bad" if you didn't have a large enough container to hold the allotment of water for your entire family. Officially you could not receive the rest of your hot water later on. Mrs. Ewa Stawicki the cook often disobeyed the rules and you could get the balance of the hot water sometime later. One could obtain a little extra of almost everything except food, for money or barter. Occasionally, we were allowed a few hundred grams of raw-sugar and on very rare occasions some other produce.

A few months after our arrival in camp the mealtime corn-mush meal was replaced with rolled oat-mush, and then with millet-mush and barley-mush. Only once on a national holiday were we given a few grams of overcooked meat placed on top of the regular evening meal.

Housewives somehow managed to scoop up the oil from the food rations and save it. The summer forest supplied all kind of mushrooms. They were eagerly picked and with the help of the saved oil and maybe a spoonful of flour turned into "delicious" meals. We used to sit down and eat the soup and fantasize that this tasted like something fantastic. Some mushrooms definitely tasted like liver other like meat, the broth somehow tasted like chicken soup and so on. There was also an adequate supply of blue berries, raspberries and a variety of other edible

vegetation. We consumed as many berries as we possible could. The mushrooms and berries season lasted only a short time. Without an adequate supply of sugar or salt and lack of knowledge, we could not preserve them. Attempts to boil them and keep them in unsuitable containers failed miserably.

The local (company) store sold items such as tobacco, tea, salt and other less important items at inflated prices. The store also kept supplies for the camp kitchen and was open to the inmates a few hours per week. The store also used to sell a limited supply of clothing. The clothing was inferior, lacking taste and unaffordable.

Food was in the shortest supply, during the winter months but there is always a positive side to everything. Snow and frozen water that dripped from the roof provided all the drinking water that one could wish for. The lack of fat and vitamins in the diet soon took hold of the population. Scurvy and night blindness became very common. Dr. Gleichgewicht by now the medic of the camp persuaded the management to provide him with some sugar. He created a horrible tasting brew by boiling last years spruce growth with the sugar and insisting that everybody come in once a week to have a glassful of this brew. I am not so sure that this actually helped. Very soon this experiment was put to rest. From the Russians we have learned that the frozen or fresh wild rose hips and frozen berries from mountain ash trees were far superior and tasted a lot better. Our family took this very serious and I became the provider of this "luxury". Our family managed, with some minor exceptions, to escape vitamin deficiency sicknesses.

When I look back at the times in camp the thing we missed the most, besides not knowing what was happening to our relatives in Poland, was the lack of hygiene. The only outdoor toilet was soon so dirty that one would not go near it. Fortunately the forest provided some privacy in the summer. The deep snow in the winter limited how far in one could get for a few minutes of privacy. The mess around the camp became unbelievable. Thanks to natures intervention the human waste disappeared in the spring. Occasionally one could buy a piece of brown laundry soap that was used for laundry as well as for personal grooming. There were no bathing facilities. Here too, simple ingenuity came in handy. Mr. Sokolower (about 50 years old) cut a log about three feet long. Using an ax only, he flattened the log on two opposite sides and created handles on each end. One of the flat sides became the bottom; in the center of the second side he made a deep depression. The whole thing looked somewhat like a small canoe. This utensil could be used as a basin for washing oneself and for doing laundry. There was a great demand for it initially and gave him some additional income. Soon many inmates copied the idea and put him out of business. Toothpaste was a thing of the past. A piece of rug and some wood ashes became the daily substitute.

MY CAMP EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS.

I arrived in camp on my fourteenth birthday. For about a week I wandered about like a lost soul. The NKVD administration considered me too old for school and too young for physical labour. I started to explore my surroundings. Some other inmates and I ventured cautiously into the forest a few hundred feet at a time. Shortly after our arrival some people and I found mushrooms and berries near camp. We threw most of them away because we didn't know if they were poisonous or edible.

Before long I was asked by some of the occupants of the “Krasny Ugolock”(Our temporary place of occupancy) to help them out in the forest. They were given the task of cutting down trees to clear a road to be used to transport timber during the winter. These trees had to be cut even with or below ground level. In some cases the roots of large trees had to be removed. One day, my mother suggested taking along a small container when I went with my neighbors to their job. She explained that she had overheard that one of them had found raspberries while working.

I helped our roommates for a while that day but soon got tired. The forest was far more interesting and I decided to explore it while staying within earshot of the working party. Nearby, I came upon a huge clearing overgrown with brush and small evergreens. One could easily see that the area had been harvested some years ago. The whole area abounded with berries, red currants and raspberries. It didn't take long to fill my small container.

After work the whole gang followed me to this clearing. They filled their caps and anything else that would hold this unexpected treasure. That evening we shared this delicious find with some friends. My discovery made me famous throughout the camp as “the kid who knows where to find berries”. Needless to say, everyone in camp visited the clearing and it was completely stripped and trampled after only a few days.

We were fully aware that other people had previously built and occupied the camp and cleared some of its surrounding land. The Soviets referred to these people as the “Karello-Finns” a name that did not mean anything to me at the time. We could not find out what happened to these people.

For the reader's information: I have learned since then that the Karello-Finnish people were resettled from the Soviet Socialist Republic of Karelia. This disputed area connects Russia and Finland and was occupied by both nations, at different times. Camp 20th Quartal was located approximately 150 kilometers (100miles) east of the extreme eastern borders of Karelia and therefor a logical place to house the deported.

Our friend Mr. I. Goldberg, who came from the same town in Poland as my family, was assigned work in the stables. Mr. Goldberg, a spoiled and lazy son of a wealthy family, depended on my parents for moral and social support. He had a natural fear of horses. I, on the other hand, had had some exposure to horses during my childhood and was comfortable around them. I adored and loved being near them; it made me feel all grown up.

Mr. Goldberg solved his work problem by asking me to help him in the stable. He arranged that I would get paid a minimal sum of money for my efforts. Little did he know that I would have gladly worked for nothing and that the promise of pay only sweetened the deal. My chores included cleaning the stables, feeding the animals and taking them to the nearby stream to drink. The very best part of the job was being allowed to ride bareback on the horses, which I did as often as possible. During this time I adopted a small and swift 3-year-old white filly named Strelka (Arrow) that was very delicate and not suitable for heavy work. I rode her whenever I could, often deep into the forest. Strelka would graze patiently while I scouted an area. I depended on her instinct to find her way home, from anywhere in the forest. She never failed me. I must admit that initially I did not trust her instincts and let her do this only when we were close to camp. She rushed home willingly and soon I used to encourage her to take me

to camp from anywhere. I am also convinced that she was able to recognize my footsteps even from some distance. The one legged Stable Overseer, comrade Bogdanov, admired my love for the animals and my willingness to help him with his chores. He often invited me to his one room quarters, he also suggested that I may use one of the horses any time as long as he knew about it. I liked the idea very much and took advantage of it.

Comrade Bogdanov was an unusual unassuming and good hearted man of small stature. If you ask him he would literally give you the shirt of his back. When he was a lot younger he lost one of his legs just above the knee. He wore an artificial, wooden homemade substitute that looked like a funnel. The large end of the artificial leg fitted the thigh; the thin end reached the ground and had a replaceable round leather "sole". This handicap did not prevent him from doing heavy chores or from riding a horse. He was soft spoken and seldom complained and never talked about his past. His living conditions were only slightly better than ours. He had very few possessions visible for a life of hard work.

My job provided another significant and most unexpected benefit the opportunity to trade with the locals! Mr. Goldberg and I were responsible for going to town (Uzla) to bring the supplies for the store also hay and oats for the horses. We harness the horses to the rigs, rode on top of them to Uzla, where we picked pick up supplies.

During these trips, I sometimes managed to sneak away and buy or to trade for some potatoes or any other food, while my mentor was getting the supplies and doing the required paperwork. On occasion I managed to get some potatoes or a few red beets. Occasionally I managed to steal a piece of sugar from the supplies. In order not to get caught smuggling, I hid the contraband in the forest prior to returning to the camp, and retrieved it later in the day. The potatoes I acquired on one such trip were a great treat for my family, our friends, and my father's co-workers.

Toward the end of the summer 1940 I tried to get a proper job. My parents were not at all pleased. At times they considered me a grown up but mostly they saw me as their little boy. I, never the less felt ready to work. I knew quite a lot about logging, from listening to my father's stories, from my bit of experience in the woods and from watching my father handle logs. I believed that his knowledge of all aspects of logging had somehow magically rubbed off on me. After all I was born in a house that was part of the local saw mill and had spent lots of time observing the operation while playing and sun bathing on the premises. I decided to follow in my father's footsteps and got myself a job as an assistant "manipulant"(from the word to manipulate).

My job training included learning how to measure and record the output of the lumberjacks, how to recognize the different flaws in wood hidden under the bark of trees and how to determine the best results and economy of the harvest. I learned all these tasks very quick and worked with very little supervision throughout that winter.

My friend Szulin Wajnrib who was doing the same work I did made friends with some Russian. He was a year older than I and lived in the same barrack. We used to spend hours and many evenings in the company of the two Russian female teachers (they were not much older then we

were) and this sure helped us master the Russian language. In time our Russian vocabulary became quite good and helped me a great deal in camp and in years to come.

The following spring brought new and different challenges. As soon as the ice melted on the river, I was sent to a lumber camp called “Miedwieshka (a place of Bear’s) where I worked and lived with Russian laborers. I was assigned the task of helping sort and track the timber that had to be transported on the waterways to its destination. These logs were lying on the riverbank of a small tributary of the river Sheksna and had to be quickly transported to the ultimate users or sawmill to beat the short summer and the approach of winter. (Unfortunately a sizable proportion of the lumber cut during the winter was left to rot in the forest). Since “Miedwieshka” was only about eight kilometers away from camp 20th Quartal I was able to be with my family on Sundays. Sometimes on these visits I would ride Strelka to nearby communities to raffle up additional provisions for them. Trading was strictly forbidden and would have resulted in serious punishment, if I had been caught. On one such excursion I exchanged my mother’s large hand knitted wool shawl for a large quantity of potatoes. I could not smuggle all of the potatoes into camp at one time, so I took only a small portion of them with me. My understanding was that I would be able to pick up the remaining potatoes at a later date from the tradesman. That evening, my family shared the treasured potatoes with some of our friends. My mother prepared a splendid thick soup made of spring mushrooms, potatoes, cereal, a spoonful of oil and a pinch of salt. The whole family enjoyed this meal “fit for a King” My stay in Miedwieshka was rather short since I did not endear myself with either the local Russian workers and/or their supervisors (some were suspected agents of the secret Police). I asked too many questions about their lives and the communist regime and I suppose that my somewhat exaggerated stories of our comfortable life in prewar Poland did not help much either. After a few weeks, I was dismissed and sent back to camp. Before I left I received another payment of potatoes but I never managed to collect all the potatoes the local tradesman owed me.

After my return, I was given a new job under the guidance of a Russian forestry expert known to me only as “Comrade Tarasov ”. I had to learn the skills of my new position in a hurry. Our task was to find and mark specialty lumber such as large Spruce trees with a fine grain for manufacturing Balalaikas, birch trees for production of bobbins for sewing machines, tall trees suitable for telephone poles and pine trees needed for the aviation industry. We also recorded the location of unique trees that might prove useful in future manufacturing. Supposedly teams of lumberjacks equipped with skis were going to harvest these trees in the coming winters.

This job forced me to learn a number of practical skills. I had to learn how to orient myself in the forest and how to tell the approximate time of day using the Quartal markings. I have learned the skills of starting and maintaining a fire without causing an uncontrolled flare up, how to create a lot of smoke to keep mosquitoes and other insects away and how to make sure my fire was completely extinguished before leaving a site. My job afforded my family enormous benefits. I was supplied with dry rations including sugar in far greater quantities than I could consume. I therefore left most of my allotment of food at home. Some camp members noticed my newfound “riches” and complained to the administration that I was receiving more food than I could eat. The primary complainer was the store manager. This rumor resulted in the camp staff reducing my rations a number of weeks in a row. I shared this job with Motel Winter, a young camp prisoner who was trained by a different forester to do the

same tasks. After we completed our short training Motel became my assistant. We were expected to stay in the forest up to a week at a time even though it was still very cold at night and the snow had barely melted. Sometimes we slept on the forest floor. Most of the time we used an abandoned shack in the 39th Quartal that had a working stove which we used for cooking and heating the hut during the cold nights.

Days were rapidly growing longer and warmer. Vegetation sprouted overnight. In sunny spots wild flowers magically materialized. My parents dug up a small area of land in front of the window of our room and planted pieces of potatoes supplied by the camp management. The plants thrived in the virgin soil and extra daylight. One could almost see the plants growing taller and fuller from day to day.

Everything changed dramatically on the 21st of June 1941. In the early part of the day we were told that the Germans had attacked the Soviet Union. Our status was now different but as yet we didn't know how! The Russian government began immediately recruiting and mobilizing local male workers. Some of the local recruits offered to contact and relay messages to our relatives and friends in Poland. The Russians were convinced they would reach Warsaw in a matter of days, be victorious and return home very quickly.

Daily camp life continued as before, but all of us were preoccupied with the war. I returned to my job in the forest but my fantasies of returning home kept me from doing a good week's work. When I returned to camp that Sunday, I could hardly recognize the place. An unconfirmed rumor of an early defeat of the Soviet Army was circulating throughout the camp. There was also some talk that German paratroopers had already landed near Ladoga Lake, quite near our camp. All the inmates were frightened by this report and the number of rumors kept increasing from hour to hour. After the Russians had been engaged in battle for a number of days the camp Commander called a general meeting of all residents. He claimed that he still did not know what was happening on the front lines but this was the first time the commander did not end the assembly with his favorite comment "don't sit on your luggage, from here you will go nowhere not to Poland, France or England. Here you will live and here you will die." Life in the camp changed completely during the first few days of July. We were told that on June 30, The Soviet Union had signed a pact with the Polish Government in Exile to free all Polish prisoners held in the USSR and to organize a Polish Army of all former Polish citizens of military age. There was no further information available about this agreement. Again we were left to wonder how this document would effect our future lives.

We were also told that the Soviet Government had ordered all horses in the camp be destroyed because they were infected with a virulent and contagious disease. This order was carried out without delay. I could not make myself to go and see the slaughter of all the hard working horses and my beloved Strelka.

We really did not think that the horses were sick or in any way unfit. We learned later that this was a panicky reaction of some high ranking official. Rumors circulated of a possible German parachute landing in/or near the strategically important Aniensky Most. An occupation of the locks would close down the important waterway and the lack of horses would hinder the Germans and deprive them of local transportation.

Another change, we were now allowed to display and sell our belongings on Sundays. Locals from the surrounding area came in great numbers and were interested in anything we were willing to sell and seldom argued about the price. We sold whatever we could spare since we knew that we would soon need money for travel. We were told that we were free to leave Camp 20th Quartal as soon as our travel documents arrive. That we were allowed to go almost anywhere in the Soviet Union except among other things to settlements located nearer than 200 kilometers from any border, cities with large populations, and places that had military installations were also excluded.

A group of us met and studied a small map of the Soviet Union. The unanimous decision was to pick a place that could be reached by waterways, since we assumed that the railroads would be crawling with soldiers and other refugees. We picked the City of Ufa but the Soviets considered it to be too large a center and Ufa was not approved. Next, we picked the city of Birsk located on the river Biala, some 100 kilometers down stream from Ufa. To our joy, this choice was approved and the place was east enough for us not to worry about a German invasion. On Sept 17, 1941 we received our travel documents, said our good-byes and left the camp. We had been in Camp 20thQuatal just over 14 months. We left the area using the same route that brought us there. This time we traveled on overcrowded river boats instead of barges, but the major difference was not the mode of transportation but that we were free no longer prisoners without any rights. We disembarked in Czerepovets and waited a few days to take a larger boat down river. During our stay in Czerepovets we met a lot of Russian refugees fleeing the German offensive and we found out that the Germans were approaching the nearby city of Smolensk. This was too close for comfort. We continued our journey to Rybinsk. The river widened to become a large lake referred to as the Rybinskoye More (The Rybinsk Sea). Our boat had to circumnavigate a number of wooden dams and locks. Why sailing the large body of water we could see submerged trees and at least one completely submerged village with the church steeple still visible above the calm waters. Eventually we sailed through the last set of locks and reached the river Volga. The strange wooden structures observed on the way to the camp obviously were part of the great dams and locks.

I realize that I am completely unable to describe the individual suffering of the people in camp, the mental anguish all the inmates experienced not knowing the fate of the relatives they left behind, the agony of being unable to provide the necessities of life for their children, the constant hunger, the unattainable yearnings for a decent meal or a good night's sleep, the constant suffering of many inmates from scurvy and night blindness, the relentless painful bites of endless swarms of black flies, mosquitoes, all sorts of nasty insects and various other parasites the puss filled sores and boils that were the inevitable results of scratching and infections. But without doubt the winter months were the hardest to endure, We lacked clothing for the extreme cold, frostbites were common and some cases resulted in a lost of toes or other extremities. None of us were able for even a moment to escape this bone chilling frost, even in our rooms. Most of us lacked any knowledge of living near or in the forest or of chopping endless trees and we suffered daily from frequent injuries, bleeding calluses, aching muscles and sore backs all these things contributed to the misery. Life was intolerable but hope and moral was ever present.

I am still intrigued by how this system managed to function- a system that made us work like slaves and live in substandard conditions. After all there were no guards, nobody actually stood

over us with a stick or gun. Only two people were sent to a jail for a few weeks each because they failed to report for work, without a special permission or a doctor's certificate allowing them to abstain from work. The things that were driving us to perform the assigned tasks were the will to survive. The minimum pay we received after the deductions for the "support of" the NKWD, the reduced food rations if you did not meet the minimum prescribed production quotas or the knowledge that we could not survive very long if we didn't try to adopt ourselves. The existing conditions could not break our spirit. I think perhaps there were many other reasons that keep us there: fear of the unknown environment, the possibility of severe punishment and the hope that some day and some how this too would pass. I am convinced that the greatest push to survive was the constant hope of being reunited with our loved ones and our conviction that some day soon we would be set free and return to our homes in Poland.

After all with the help of our Allies, the English and French armies fighting the Germans we believed we would be in short order victorious and free.

As it turned out it was a long wait. The majority of us, that survived the camp and future hardships, did not return to the destroyed anti-Semitic Poland till spring 1946 (some as late as 1956). Only a minority stayed behind due to various circumstances.

I often remember a particular incident, which stands apart from all the other experiences, and concerns that were part of living in camp. On Erev Yom Kippur 1940, (The Day of Atonement) two observant men who worked together in the woods failed to return from their jobs. The administration presumed they were lost. Some inmates suspected that these men wanted to avoid working on Yom Kippur but we all remained silent. The NKVD formed a search party. I joined the search team since it offered an excuse to ride a horse. Although it was getting dark, we proceeded to the area where the missing men were last seen. We called their names and made a lot of noise to attract their attention. One of the officers of the NKVD fired a few shots into the air but there was no response. The search was abandoned that evening with the understanding that we would meet the next morning to continue the search. A smaller party of men spent the next day looking for the lost men but again they were unsuccessful. The two were found a few days later, near the river by a party of Russian workers and brought back to camp. They looked horrible, their faces and their hands were swollen from insect bites and scratches. Their clothing was torn to shreds and they were desperately hungry. They really looked more dead than alive. Approximately a year later, when we were leaving the camp, the two delinquents admitted that they purposely stayed in the forest to avoid working on Yom Kippur. They originally intended to return the following evening and since they were fasting they did not take any food with them. When they heard the search party approaching their hiding place, they panicked and they started to run deeper into the wet low laying area of the forest. They were so convinced that the shots fired were fired at them so they stayed in hiding. When they were found some days later, they were completely lost, disorientated and shivering from exposure and could hardly talk. Even a year later they did not believe that the shots were intended to help them find the search party and that nobody had been actually shooting at them.

Eventually I learned that throughout the Soviet Union hundreds of similar camps existed. They were scattered mostly in the northern part of European Russia and Siberia. The camp inmates were primarily Jews rounded up in various centers of West Ukraine and West Bialorussia.

The Soviets claimed that all workers that performed the same task inmates, local worker, man, or woman received the same pay. Philosophically perhaps, since everyone's base pay per item of work (piecework) was the same but the real take home pay for specific groups was startlingly different. Inmates had a much harder time than the established local population:

- 1). We had 10% of our pay deducted immediately for the cost of Supervision by the N.K.V.D.
- 2). We produced less because we were generally in poor physical health and not strong enough to do the hard labour required.
- 3). Even those among us that were in good health had no experience or expertise doing this work and could not keep pace with the output of experienced local workers.
- 4.) We lacked the support of having extended families that could help each other and trade among themselves. We did not have gardens or cows, which supplied the local workers with vegetables and other commodities. During the summer their families could make preserves that could last from season to season.

CAMP STATISTICS:

Approximate number of inmates: 150

Approximate number of inmates who perished in camp during our stay: 30

CAMP ADMINISTRATION:

The head overseer: Officer Koviashin of the NKVD (and his wife)

Assistant overseer: Comrade Gofmanov.

Chief overseer and administrator of labor: Comrade Alushkin

Stable-hands: Two Russian couples' that supervised 2 stables, with approximately 45 horses in total.

Elementary school teachers: Two Russian females.

Medic (Feltcher): A Russian female.

THE INMATES:

The following is an incomplete list of prisoners prepared from memory and some help from the few survivors still alive. They represent only a very small group of people resettled for life by the authorities of the Soviet Union. Everyone in this group was arrested in the city of Bialystok and taken forcibly to "20 Quartal" a prison camp in the interior of Russia. All were Jewish refugees from the Polish territories then occupied by the Germans. The Soviets officially classified them as: "Spec. Pieresielency"(Specially resettled).

NAME	ORIGINALY FROM.	REMARKS
Binsztok Mr.	Pultusk	
Borensztajn Mr.		Father of Mrs. Wengorz
Brok Father		Passed away in camp
Brok's son.		In his twenties
Drupiewski Laybel	Pultusk	Worked with a horse named "Krasawczyk"
Drupiewski Surcia	Pultusk	
Drupiewski Dawid	Pultusk	
Drupiewski Frayda	Pultusk	
Engelman Mr.	Bialystok	
Engelman Irena	Bialystok	
Fajtek Stasiak	Warsaw	
Fajtek Stela	Warsaw	
Fogler Mundek	Warsaw	Camp Kitchen Manager.
Fogler Mrs.	Warsaw	
Fromer Mr.	Warsaw	
Fromer Mrs.	Warsaw	
Fromer son	Warsaw	
Gelasan Mr.	Krakow	Camp bookkeeper.
Gelasan Mrs.	Krakow	

	Gelassen 1 st Daughter	Krakow	
	Gelassen 2 nd . Daughter	Krakow	
	Dr. Gleichgewicht Mr.	Warsaw	Camp Doctor
	Dr. Gleichgewicht Mrs.	Warsaw	
	Goldberg Itzek.	Nowy-Dwor Maz.	Stable- Hand
	Guterman Mr.	Pultusk	
	Guterman Mrs.	Pultusk	
	Guterman daughter.	Pultusk	About 4 years old girl.
	Himelfarb Mrs.		
	Himelfarb Mr.		
	Horewicz Mr.(Eng.)		
	Horewicz Mrs.		
	Jagoda Mr.	Legionowo	
	Knecht Iser Leyzor.	Nowy-Dwor Maz.	Worked with horses
	Knecht Rayzel.	Nowy- Dwor Maz.	
	Knecht Motek (Morton).	Nowy- Dwor Maz.	
	Knecht Feiga.	Nowy-Dwor Maz.	Attended school
	Knecht Ita	Nowy –Dwor Maz.	Attended school
	Miendzylewski Idel	Pultusk	
	Miedzylewski Mala	Pultusk	
	Miedzylewski child	Pultusk	
	Miendzylewski Chaja	Pultusk	
	Miendzylewski Jankiel	Pultusk	
	Miendzylewski Mrs.	Pultusk	
	Miendzylewski child	Pultusk	
	Miler Hendelka	Legionowo	
	Nadolny Mrs.	Pultusk	worked with horses
	Nadolny Mrs.	Pultusk	
	Rubin Mendel	Pultusk	
	Rubin Gelcia	Pultusk	
	Skalka Idel		
	Skalka Mrs.		
	Skalka Margolka.		Approx. 4 years old girl.
	Sokolower Mr.	Suwalk	A tin smith - Died in
camp	Sokolower Mrs.	Suwalk	Died in camp
	Sokolower Tamara.	Suwalk	
	Sokolower Malka	Suwalk	
	Sokolower Miriam	Suwalk	
	Sokolower Dawid	Suwalk	
	Stawicki Aron	Lodz	Worked with horses
	Stawicki Ewa	Lodz	Prepared “boiling” water.
	Staroswiecki Chaja	Pultusk	Mother of Mrs. Drupiewski
	Staroswiecki Mr.	Pultusk	
	Staroswiecki Mrs.	Pultusk	
	Staroswiecki Zosia	Pultusk	
	Staroswiecki litle girl.	Bialystok	Died in camp

Staroswiecki Mariam	Pultusk	
Staroswiecki Ruchel	Pultusk	
Staroswiecki Chil	Pultusk	
Staroswiecki	Putusk	The oldest daughter
Husband of above	Pultusk	Worked with horses
Szarf Idel		
Szarf Keyla		
Szarf Daughter		About 6 year old
Szyfman Basia	Pultusk	
Szyfman Ruchel	Pultusk	
Wengorz Senior		
Wengorz Mrs.		
Wengorz Mr.		Kept track of the production.
Winter Mr.	Pultusk	
Winter Mrs.	Pultusk	
Winter older son	Pultusk	
Winter Motel		
Wengiel Mr.	Pultusk	Worked with horses
Wengiel Mrs.		
Wengiel Israel.	Pultusk.	About 7 years old
Wengiel a boy	Pultusk	About 5 years old
Wajnrib Szulem		
Wajnrib Mr.		
Wajnrib's sister		Made bricks and fired them in self made primitive kilns.
Husband of above		

Among some fifty other people whose names I can't recall are:

The man and women that organizers a children's theatrical performance.

The man and his family that sharpened axes used in the woods.

The man and his family, that made handles for axes and sharpened saws.

The young woman, that worked in the kitchen –a friend of Hendelka Miller.

The two men that were lost in the forest and their families (see page 16)

A handicapped couple and their two young daughters. The man died in the camp. The neglected and sick children were taken to an orphanage. I met the woman in 1943, in a "Kolchoz" (Collective farm village) in Bashkirskaya ASSR. She was the only Jewish person in the whole area, and kept on lamenting her strange circumstances and the lost children. I have tried, without success, to help her find the whereabouts of her daughters. Eventually I lost all contacts with her, without knowing why. She simply disappeared into the thin air.

After departing from the camp, we lived with some and stayed in contact with a number of former camp inmates that eventually scattered all over the world.

It is important to note that many others shared similar experience in different locations including my wife's family. Their camp was one of a cluster of three smaller camps located in Siberia. As far as I can make out the proper location (mail Address) was:

Nowosybirskaya Oblastz
Suzunski Rayon (Near the town of Suzun and the river Ob)
Posioloock #56 or #58

LIST OF FORMER CAMP INMATES, IN THE CITY OF BIRSK

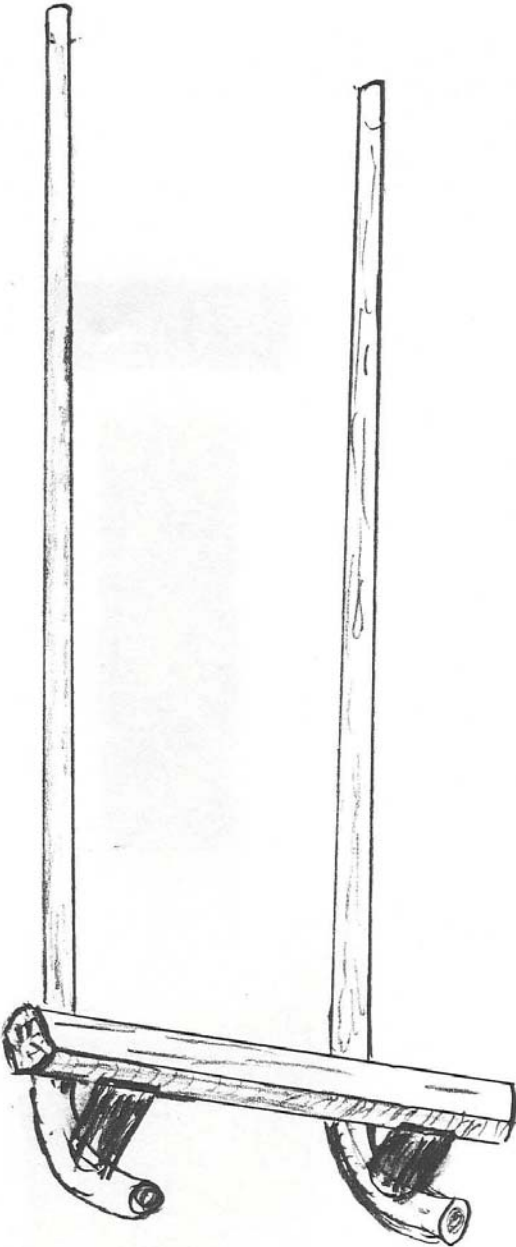
The following inmates, from camp 20th Quartal, settled in the city of Birsk at the beginning of October 1941. Most of them stayed there till March 1946 and experienced enormous hardships due to extremely cold winters, food shortages, cramped living conditions and political persecutions. Some of the men were mobilized to the Soviet or Polish armies. Very few managed to resettle in various other locations throughout the Soviet Union.

Drupiewski Leibel	Skalka Idel
Drupiewski Surcia	Skalka Mrs.
Drupiewski Dawid	Skalka Margelka
Drupiewski Frayda	Sokolower Tamara
Fajtek Stasiek	Sokolower Malka
Fajtek Stela	Sokolower Miriam
Fogler Mundek	Sokolower Dawid
Fogler Mrs. (Died in Birsk)	Staroswiecki Chaja (Drupiewski)
Horewicz Mr. (Died in Birsk)	Sraroswiecki Mr. (Senior)
Horewicz Mrs.	Staroswiecki Mrs. (Died in Birsk)
Knecht Iser Leyzor.	Staroswiecki Zosia
Knecht Rayzel	Staroswiecki Mariam (Died in Birsk)
Knecht Motek (Morton).	Staroswiecki Ruchel (Died in Birsk)
Knecht Feiga.	Staroswiecki Chil
Knecht Ita	Staroswiecki (Oldest Daughter)
Miler Hendelka	Husband and son of above
Her friend Mindzia	Szyfman Ruchel
Rubin Mendel	Szyfman Basia
Rubin Gelcia	Wengorz Senior
	Wengorz Mr.
	Wengorz Mrs.

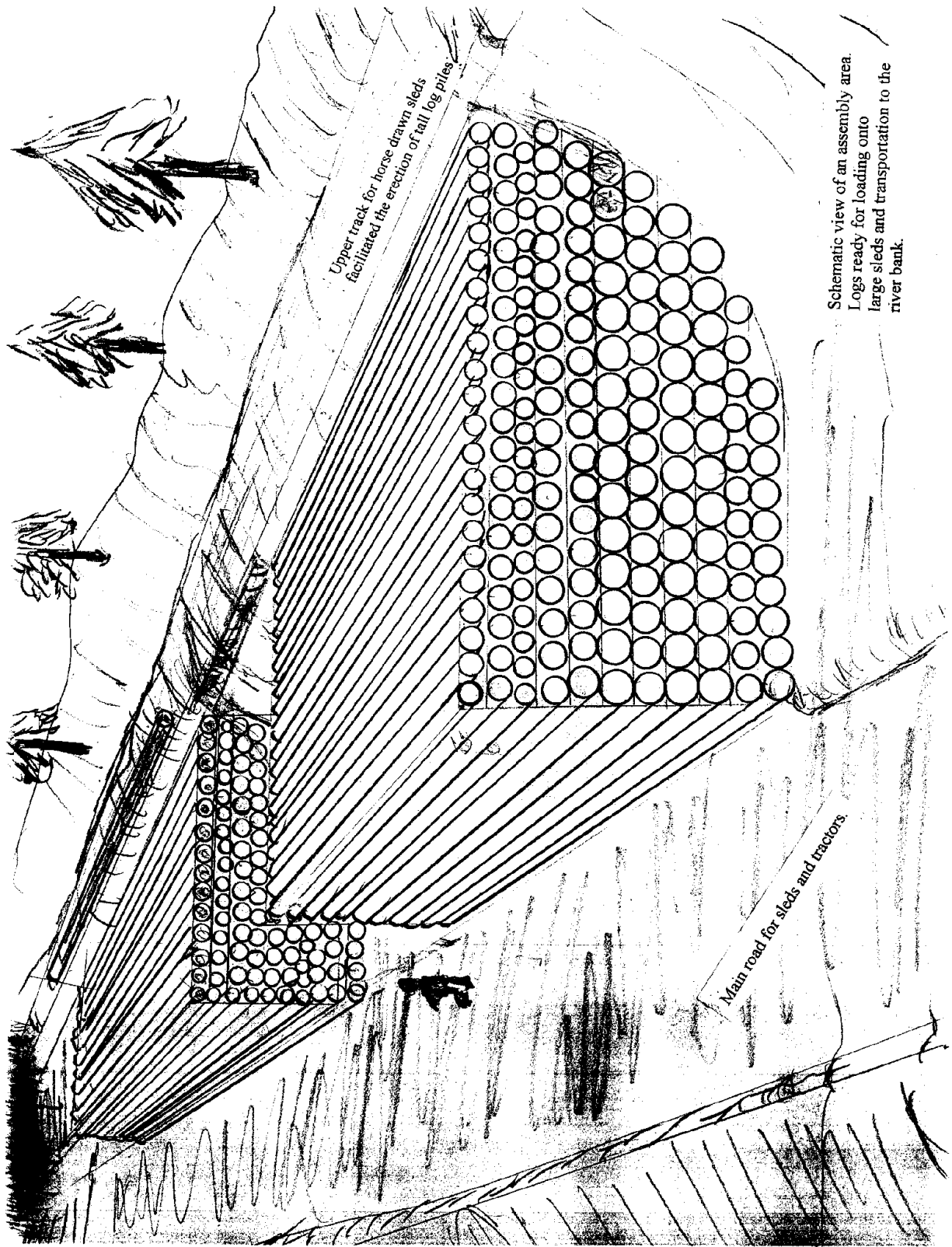
Our family eventually left the city of Birsk May 3rd, 1943. We have established residence in the newly developed Industrial Center known as Novo-Troitzk, located on the shores of the Ural river, some 20 miles (30 km.) from the city of Orsk. Here we lived, worked, studied and endured various hardships till March 1946.

We took the advantage of a General Amnesty for former Polish Citizens and returned to Western Poland (Former German territory) and staid for a short time in the City of Dzierzonow (formerly Reichenbach), before making our way to the U.S.A. Zone of Occupied Germany.

DRAWING BY MORTON KNECHT



Basic Horse Sled



Upper track for horse drawn sleds
facilitated the erection of tall log piles.

Main road for sleds and tractors.

Schematic view of an assembly area.
Logs ready for loading onto
large sleds and transportation to the
river bank.

the Wild Goose article TRAVELED 7115 Miles

the (s mi)
 "... of emotions,"
 Geographic, June 1994



