

## THE ROOTS OF THE GOESKY FAMILY TREE

Drafted by Mark Goresky, based on

- 1) Adelaide Banting's family history (Addie was a daughter of Basil Goresky's son Isidore)
- 2) Addie's conversations with both George Goruk (Basil Goresky's half-brother) and Ksenia (married to Kateryna Goruk's son) and
- 3) Clarifications by Dennis Goresky (son of Isidore).

Edited and corrected by Manoly Lupul (husband of Natalia Goresky) with unpublished additions from the biography of Isidore Goresky.

### In Canada

The roots of the Goresky family in Canada are in Western Ukraine, more specifically in the village of Barbivtsi (later Brusnytsia or Brusnytsa), in Bukovyna, a principality in the Austro-Hungarian Empire before World War I. Barbivtsi is where Basil Goruk met and married Victoria Eustafiewich in 1901, both of whom immigrated to Stony Mountain, Manitoba, in 1905 and 1906, respectively, constituting the roots of the Goresky family tree in Canada.

One can locate Brusnytsa on Google Maps, starting from Chernivtsi, (the main city), following the Prut River west, about 25 miles.

The name change from Goruk to Goresky was made by Basil shortly after his marriage to Victoria. The priest who married them was named Goretcki (also listed as the priest on the birth certificate of their first-born son Isidore in 1902). On the same certificate Basil's name is also given as Aftanasie Goruk, so we do not know exactly when he changed his name to Basil. As a blacksmith, Basil began to call himself Gorecki, intimating that he was distantly related to gentry (*shliakhta*), hoping thereby that it might ease his advancement to some higher position. The actual change in spelling to Goresky was made in Canada when the name was registered.

### In Ukraine

The known roots of the Goresky family in Ukraine go back to Ivan Goruk, a blacksmith, whose son Ivan (1846-1922, also a blacksmith) was the father of the above Basil Goruk. Ivan, Basil's grandfather, had married Anne (a Polish girl - last name unknown - the daughter of a *dvirnyk* (the lord's high servant on a manor) from the village of Zamok, Galicia, a larger, neighbouring principality in the same empire. Some said that Ivan and Anne eloped, or that Goruk just kidnapped Anne on horseback, escaping across the Dniester River to the village of Panka in the valley of the Seret. Among their eight children (three boys and five girls) was, of course, Ivan (Basil's father).

When Anne's husband Ivan died, Anne married Matthew Chirar, another blacksmith (from Bessarabia, now Moldavia) and like her former husband a well-placed overseer of his lord's estate. Her son Ivan Goruk resented the addition of Chirar to his name (Goruk-Chirar) and later changed it back to Goruk.

Ivan lived in Kostyntsi (later in Zhadova) before moving to Horishni (upper) Stanivtsi to be near his half-brother George and his family, where Ivan later died in his seventy-sixth year. We do not have a record of his first wife, but she and Ivan had three children, among them, of course, Basil (1875-1937), as well as Fruzina and Kateryna.

Ivan's second wife, Anna Tudan, was from the village of Voloka. She is said to have had a dark complexion and rumoured to be part gypsy and Romanian in background. She and Ivan had two children, including Basil's half-brother George (1898-1970). Basil himself travelled

considerably in Eastern Europe, and is said to have been literate in four languages, speaking at least six.

But of all the Goresky ancestors, the most amazing by far was undoubtedly Kateryna (Catherine) Eustafiewich.

#### Kateryna (Catherine) Eustafiewich the Great Benefactress

The Victoria Eustafiewich whom Basil Goruk married in Barbivtsi in 1901 was the daughter of Ivan (yet another Ivan!) Eustafiewich (b.?-1898) and Kateryna Oleksiyevich (1858-1937). Catherine is extremely important because it is she who made the decision to send her entire family and eventually herself to Canada. At the time of her husband Ivan's death in 1898, she and he had six children.

Isidore (age 2 - not to be confused with Isidore, the first-born son of Basil and Victoria)

Melety (age 4)

Agrapina ("Grapina" - age 6)

Victoria (age 14 - Basil's future wife)

Elias (age 16)

Elizaveta (Elizabeth - age 18)

Left a widow, Catherine married Basil Gora to help feed, clothe and send the children to school. The land left to Catherine by Ivan - two parcels for the three older children and one for the three youngest - was enough to feed the family but not enough to divide among the children when they grew up. Accordingly, to supplement their income, the enterprising Catherine made contact with the steamship agents in Chernivtsi who paid her a commission for the passengers she sent their way. This was no easy task, for she had to walk to the city with her clients, a distance of some twenty-five miles, following the Prut River, crossing it at Napolokivtsi. Of course, some people took the shorter route, but there were large hills on the way. She also possessed some land as a dowry from her father Todyr Oleksiyevich, and with these assets she gradually set in motion the emigration of her family to Canada.

In 1904 she first sent Isidore Sichkowsky, the husband of her eldest daughter Elizabeth. Sichkowsky, impressed with Canada, wrote back that work was readily available and that he intended to remain in Manitoba, enclosing literature about Canada, Brazil and Argentina. As a result, in 1905 Catherine sent Elizabeth and Basil Goruk (Victoria's husband), selling land piece by piece to help pay for their passages.

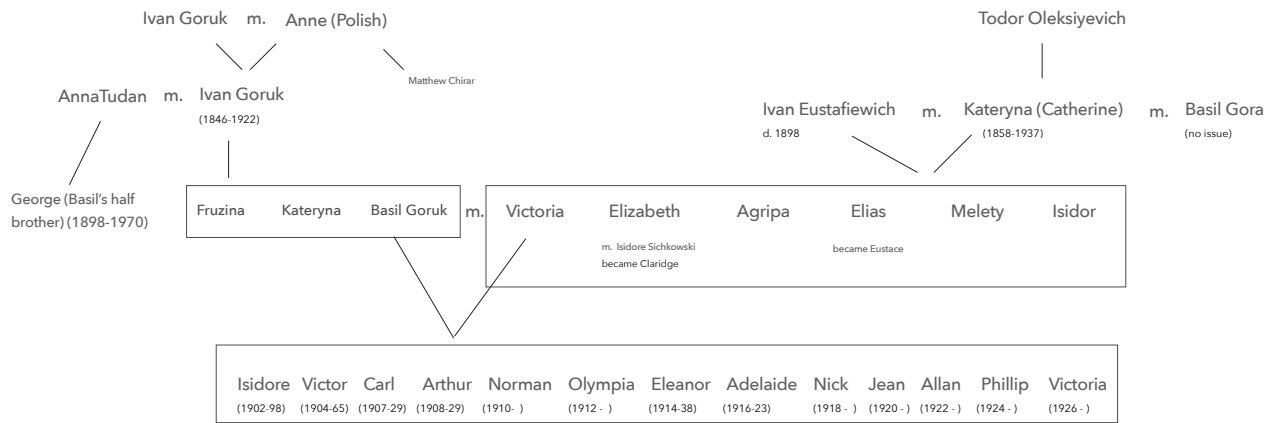
Reunited, the Sichkowskys now changed their last name and became Claridges.

In 1906 Catherine sent Victoria with her two children, Isidore (age 4) and Victor (age 2). [See their family photo on the opening page of the Goresky Reunion website].

Next to leave in 1908 was Elias, having completed his military training. In Winnipeg he enrolled in a special course in the Presbyterian Manitoba College to learn English. He became a priest in the Presbyterian-sponsored Independent Greek Orthodox Church, changed his last name to Eustace and at the church's dissolution in 1912 became a minister in the Presbyterian (later United) Church. He was posted to Andrew, Alberta, and later died in Winnipeg.

Because Catherine could not sell the land of the three youngest children until they came of age, she used a ruse to get Melety out of the country in 1913. This was especially important as World War I had begun and Melety was almost of military age. Before she and Melety left, she had deliberately spilled coffee on Isidore's (the younger son's) passport, so that it could not be easily recognized. She and Melety then joined Elias in Andrew and sent the passport back to Isidore. When he tried to use it, however, he got as far as Vienna where the passport was taken away. Fortunately, Isidore was eventually able to continue to Antwerp and Halifax because of the relatives he already had in Canada.

Grapina and her husband remained in Ukraine, living on the old Eustafiewich land, and many years later much ill feeling was aroused between Melety and Grapina over the ownership of that land.



As members of their family reached Stony Mountain, Basil and Victoria welcomed them and helped in their search for work. In the beginning, Basil and Victoria rented a shack below the hill west of Stony Mountain, along the track leading to the quarry; their next shack was across from an abandoned dairy establishment. Later, Basil bought two lots with separate shacks, just south of the McVittie home. The family lived in one of the shacks and the other was rented to labourers, who worked in the quarries. The living quarters of the former Sichkowskys, also in Stony Mountain, were purchased by the Danko family, with whom Basil's son Isidore remembers boarding when attending school after his family moved out to the farm. Most of the early group of Ukrainians gradually left Stony Mountain, some going to Winnipeg and others to the United States. The incoming Italians generally purchased the old, modest Ukrainian dwellings, taking over the quarries in Stony Mountain and Stonewall.

It is most unfortunate that we do not know the burial places of either Basil, Victoria or their great benefactress Catherine.

Walter Goresky, in a "toast to the groom" (his father Isidore) in 1972, had this to say about those pioneer years:

Basil was a blacksmith and a quarry stone cutter who worked in the local quarry whenever work was available. This amounted to only 3 months in a year and his rate of pay was only 15 cents per hour. This then, was all the money the family had at their disposal. They were therefore very dependent on the farm for their livelihood.

This was a period of serious poverty for many families, Isidore's family [meaning, Basil's family] included. It is difficult to describe the seriousness of this period. There were no welfare supports. Starvation did occur. People were dependent on one another in times of crises. Hunger, insecurity and the depression of poverty haunted everyone. I see this experience as a central theme in the subsequent life of people who have lived through this era.

Grandfather [Basil] is difficult to describe. He died early. He was a man who basically knew several languages. He was interested in current events; he was a good story teller to the children and grandchildren. He has been described as a strong willed man but I recall him as a kind person. I picture him in a lifelong struggle just to keep himself and his family alive. Grandmother [Victoria] was a very basic woman. Busy with children, farm animals, cooking. I recall her as a powerful woman but a friendly and determined person.