

Life In A Slave Labor Camp Melania Brings Gifts To Husband While He Is Detained By Russians

(Continued from Last Week)

Crime To Be A Pole

My right-hand sleeping partner was George, a fine lad, whose only crime had been that of being a good Pole. He told me that he intended to escape the next day. He had been picked as one of the prisoners to ride in the truck for provisions. George tried to persuade me to run away with him. I thought his proposition over, but I was still so certain that I would be released, that I decided against it. The following day, George did indeed leave by truck. He made one return trip, then left again and that was the last we saw of him. In the end, I regretted not having gone with him.

We Poles, soldiers of the Home Army, felt it was very degrading. The days passed. There was no news from home. In vain some of us strained our ears to hear our names called out. Desperately we wanted some of our families to come. My anxiety mounted; what had happened to Lania? Had the Russians by chance picked her up too? I dared not think what would happen to her if they had.

Headed With Germans

One thing in particular bothered us. Besides the problem of trying to satisfy our hunger and thirst and the problem of keeping relatively well, there were the Germans with whom we Poles were forced to associate. I do not mean to imply that we were snobs; it was just that we felt it was a slap in the face to receive from the Russians, our allies, the same treatment that was meted out to the Germans, the same Germans who had for so long persecuted the Polish nation. We finally put in a demand at the camp office to be kept separate from the Germans. We indicated that this was the wish not only of the Poles, but the Germans as well. The camp commander, a Soviet captain, gave his officer's word of honor that the present arrangement was merely a temporary one. Eventually, the groups would be separated.

There were soon more than 3,000 of us in the camp. We counted each group as they came in. We represented a veritable cross-section of Poland: intellectuals, doctors, lawyers, priests, workers, city dregs and criminals. Here at Rembertow, class lines and social status vanished and new divisions sprang up.

The attitude of the NKVD guards and soldiers toward us grew worse with each passing day. One example of their vindictiveness was shown in their treatment of the prisoners in front of the latrine every morning. For the 3,000 people in the camp there was only one latrine with six seats. One can well imagine the throng waiting every morning in front of it. Since most of the prisoners had digestive disorders, many of them could do nothing but crouch in the vicinity of the building and relieve themselves. This practice met with the disapproval of the Russian guards posted outside the barbed wire fence, who, to the great glee of the NKVD soldiers accompanying them, would fire several volleys into the crouched multitude. The shooting regularly ended with four or five corpses and a dozen or so wounded. On one such occasion "Gramps" received a light wound in the leg. During the month that I was at Rembertow, this shooting pastime occurred five times. How-

ever, despite these drastic methods of teaching us hygiene, the inmates continued to risk death; there was no other choice. The penalty for soiling other parts of the camp was no less severe.

Soon we were no longer permitted to go out into the corridor at night. Each nocturnal visit to the latrine was a risky business, for the guards liked to shoot if you walked a little faster at any time. We all slept in our clothing because the room temperature of our barracks was too low, and the soldier on duty in the corridor was in the habit of waylaying any night strollers and taking away from them anything they might have that was better than what he had himself.

Visit From Melania

At last the day I yearned for came. One of the soldiers ran into my room and called, "Lieutenant Heller to the sentry box!" He didn't have to tell me that twice. I dashed out of the barracks in the direction of the barbed wire. In the crowd of women standing a little distance away from the fence, I saw Melania dressed warmly in a sheepskin coat and a fur hat. I called to her and she waved to me. The guards did not let her come any closer than she was. A soldier even pushed her back with the butt-end of his gun. I heard her call that she had left a parcel for me with the guards and would be back in a few days with another parcel. She stood a while longer and with a tired step walked away. A weight fell from my shoulders; I knew she was alive and free.

My friends Kupla and Michael also received packages that day. We ceased to be hungry for a while, and we had cigarettes which we shared with those around us.

Three days later I was called out again. Melania had come. The officer on duty summoned me to the sentry-house and said I would be able to see her for a moment. I was surprised at his kindness. Through a small window in the sentry-house I watched Melania detach from a group of women when she heard her name called. In her haste she failed to notice a tree stump in her path. She stumbled over it and still clutching the sack she was carrying, she fell to the ground. She must have hurt herself badly. But she clambered to her feet quickly in order not to waste any of the moments she was allowed to spend with me. When she had crossed the threshold of the sentry-house, I saw now why the officer had been so lenient. Eagerly, he grabbed the flask of whiskey that Melania got out of her pocket and handed to him.

I greeted Melania affectionately. We had so much to say to each other. I knew our little drama was being enacted thousands of times by thousands of other couples, brutally split by war and conquest. But I did not care about the others, I was only interested in my own tragedy. About a minute later, the officer came and urged Melania to leave. She was very brave and would not let me see how she felt. But her eyes (they were enormous eyes) could not hide her sorrow. The Soviet officer became more impatient. Finally, he seized Melania by the hand, jerked her away, and pushed her out of the sentry-house. I had managed to steal one kiss from her. Little did I know that it

was to be my last for the next three-and-a-half years.

Among the items Melania brought was a good-sized medicine kit. It contained anti-infection pills (antistreptine), iodine, drops, bandages. Several days in a row we gave Marie, the liaison girl, some antistreptine. Together with "Gramps," who knew a little about first-aid, we cleaned her wound and took off the filthy rag which served as a bandage and put on clean gauze. She improved but her hand remained stiff.

On March 1 a new transport of prisoners arrived. They turned out to be Poles who had heretofore been held in another camp at Rembertow which was being liquidated. Among the new arrivals I noticed Kotarski who brought me up-to-date on his experiences after we left him at Wlochy.

They had left him alone in the cell for two days. Then they had locked him up in a dark cell for a few days and had given him nothing to eat. They then transferred him to a third cell where his cellmate was, according to his description, the last Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army, Okulicki. Only a few months earlier, in the notorious Moscow Trial, he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment by a special tribunal for the crime of being a loyal Pole. Kotarski told me much about him, about his strong, unshaken character, about the methods the NKVD used to question him at Wlochy, and how he was literally carried back bloodstained and unconscious after each session with the interrogating officer.

Slowly the full realization of the whole situation began to dawn upon us, too late; that if we had maintained ordinary precautions and if we had heeded warnings, we would surely not be in an NKVD camp now. Frequently I thought about Danuta, my liaison girl, who had traveled from the already Soviet-occupied region east of the Vistulato Warsaw in November 1944. Danuta had told me about the NKVD practice of releasing Poles after the first arrest only to re-arrest them a few days later (as in my case). She had told me about the NKVD's ruthless destruction of everything and everyone who did not work for Moscow. Knowing this, I still stupidly was optimistic about the Russians when they entered my territory. Carelessly, I had allowed myself to fall into the clutches of the NKVD.

We had all been so naive, so certain that the only organization we had to fear was the Gestapo. In spite of all we knew about the NKVD, and we knew plenty, we never thought that it could surpass the Gestapo in methods of torture. It never occurred to us that this Gestapo, the very mention of which sent shivers of horror, fear, and hatred in the heart of every Pole, might prove to be an amateur in comparison to the NKVD.

(Continued Next Week)

THE DALLAS POST

"More than a newspaper
a community institution"
ESTABLISHED 1889

Member Pennsylvania Newspaper
Publishers' Association

A non-partisan liberal
progressive newspaper pub-
lished every Friday morning
at the Dallas Post plant,
Lehman Avenue, Dallas,
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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Dallas, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year; \$2.00 six months. No subscriptions accepted for less than six months. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$3.50 a year; \$2.50 six months or less. Back issues, more than one week old, 10c.

Single copies, at a rate of 5c each, can be obtained every Friday morning at the following newsstands: Dallas-Berts Drug Store; Dixon's Restaurant; Evans Restaurant; Smith's Economy Store; Shavertown-Evans Drug Store; Hall's Drug Store; Trucksville-Grassey's Store; Idetown-Care's Store; Harveys Lake-Deeter's Store; Fernbrook-Recess Store; Sweet Valley-Britts Store; Lehman-Moore's Store.

When requesting a change of address subscribers are asked to give their old as well as new address.

Allow two weeks for changes of address or new subscription to be placed on mailing list.

We will not be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, photographs and editorial matter unless self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed, and in no case will this material be held for more than 30 days.

National display advertising rates 84c per column inch. Transient rates 75c. Local display advertising contract rate, 60c per column inch. Political advertising \$1.10 per inch.

Advertising copy received on Thursday will be checked at 7:30 p.m. Minimum charge 75c. All charged ads 10c additional.

Unless paid for at advertising rates, we can give no assurance that announcements of plays, parties, rummage sales or any affair for raising money will appear in a specific issue.

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ONLY YESTERDAY

Ten and Twenty Years Ago
In The Dallas Post

From the Issue of June 9, 1944
Keats Poed gets the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart posthumously. He lost his life in combat in the Pacific, attempting to assist refugees from Java.

Douglas Riddal receives the Air Medal and two oak leaf clusters for valor over and above the call of duty.

Boys and girls are wanted on farms this summer. Wilson Cease urges teen-agers to help raise food. John Hislop buys Richards Market.

Air Raid Wardens will collect data for soldier ballots in absentia.

In the Outpost: Evan H. Jenkins, Pacific Fleet; Edward Shilanski, Pacific Fleet; Howell Rees, Italy; Bob Lauderbaugh, Michigan; Bob Evans, Jacksonville; Warren Stanton, Point Look-Out; Bernard Jones, at sea; John Kunkle, New York APO; Millard Koehler, South Pacific; E. H. Evans, Alaska; Clarence Hubbell, Cal.

Died: Walter Besteder, 50, Centermoreland. Steward Paul Ehret, 20, Lehman. Shirley M. Jones, 19, Shavertown.

Married: Marayln Colvin, Chester, to Lt. E. G. Bull, Anacostia. Engaged: Louise Space, Dallas, to James Lurba, Washington. Shirley Martin, 13, Dallas Township, is struck by a car, spends three days at Nesbitt Hospital.

There will be plenty of sugar for canning. Use stamp 37.

From the Issue of June 8, 1934
Caterpillars invade Dallas in great numbers.

Light rain helpful to crops, but drought remains acute. Davenport Street will be put in better condition.

Anne Czulegar, Dallas, marries Joseph Collis, Wilkes-Barre. Berry baskets, \$6.75 per thousand. Car washing 75 cents. Sugar, 10 lbs. for 46c.

'Y' Da-Camp Opens
Monday, June 28

Back Mountain Branch Town and Country YMCA, through the Board Chairman, L. W. LeGrand, announces that the 1954 Da-Camp will be held June 28, at 9 a.m. at the 'Y' Building in Shavertown. It will continue for a 6-week period. The Da-Camp will be held on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during these 6 weeks.

Da-Camp is open for all children from the 2nd to 8th grades inclusive, giving them an opportunity to learn crafts, sports, leadership.

The 'Y' Da-Camper will visit scenic places and also tour many industrial plants in Wyoming Valley. For further information, write J. H. Williams, Executive Secretary, 40 W. Northampton Street, Wilkes-Barre, or call VA 3-2191.

Bob Tales

By BOB

You parents who are interested in seeing your children benefit from a good Back Mountain school system better get on the phone and tell your school directors before the big meeting on June 18. This meeting will bring matters to a head and just a couple of unimportant details may throw the whole thing into a stalemate unless most of the directors form a solid front for a big jointure. Your telephone call could balance the scales in the right direction.

Tommy Kingston doesn't fool around. Instead of turning his foot over sideways he turns it the hard way, rear end over front end. A week or so later his wife turned her Austin over on its side... some fun.

The fat old scamp of a dog named "Rogue" is a fixture at The Dallas Post. He's a professional beggar with big soulful brown eyes and he's worked it now so that the boys in the composing room are packing extra food in their lunch boxes for him. The Risleys feed him real well but he always has room for a snack.

Lots of folks maybe don't know it, but along with their other capabilities, "Duke" Isaacs and Jim Oliver are fine trap shooters. They're both on the Irem team and it's nothing for them to score 96 out of 100 birds.

There's still a big interest in living in the country. Last Sunday, after advertising a model home open for inspection, the Whitesell Brothers had over 1000 people at their Oak Hill development.

We had quite a disappointment this week. Floyd Harris's "Queenie" failed to produce her expected litter after all the neighbors were so sure she was going to. Oh well, we'll just have to wait 'til next time.

Don't forget to get your Auction Chicken Bar-B-Que tickets at the Dallas Hardware, or Evans Drug Store, while they last.

Played "kick-the-can" with my kids and some of the neighbors' kids last night. I'm not as fleetfooted as I used to be I guess, 'cause I was "it" most of the time.

Used to be that little boys always ran around bareheaded but here in the Back Mountain they won't be seen without their Little League caps. They would sleep in them if their parents would allow it.

LITTLE LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Tonight
Shavertown vs Fernbrook
Westmoreland vs Dallas

Monday
Dallas vs Fernbrook

Tuesday
Shavertown vs Trucksville

Wednesday
Westmoreland vs Jackson

Thursday
Trucksville vs Fernbrook

Pupils Of Louie Ayre To Give Piano Recitals

Louie W. Ayre will present her pupils in a piano recital, June 11 and 18 at 8:00 p.m. in the Sunday School Room of First Methodist Church, N. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre.

Appearing in the Recital June 11, will be:

Jane Banks, Lois Brown, Barry John, Joan Llewellyn, Rachel Kay, Moncey Miller, Linda Mosca, Sally Moyer, Vernalle Pritchard, Della Schulz, Jimmy Strausser, Timothy Walsh, Gwen Weaver, Peter Weaver, Betsy Welker.

On June 18, the following will be heard:

Sandra Ash, Jack Barnes, Mary Bennett, Ruth Bennett, Joyce Comito, Janet Cornell, Carol Dungey, Richard Eckerd, Gerald Gavigan, Cindy Gross, Judy Gross, Jean Hathaway, Nancy Hathaway, Carol Klings, David Larmouth, Bonnie Lewis, Dolores Lundy, Sara McKemes, Dorothy Mathers, Dorothy Novicki, Melvin Oliver, Miriam Oliver, Evelyn Orchard, Ruth Ellen Tremayne, Linda Wolfe, Barbara Yenchas.

'Y' Auxiliary Plans Card Party June 28

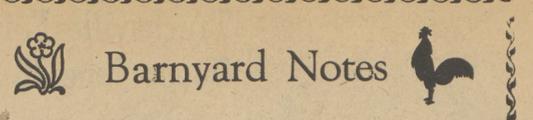
Back Mountain Branch YMCA Ladies Auxiliary will hold a Card Party on Friday, June 25, at 8 p.m. at the 'Y' Headquarters in Shavertown.

Mrs. James Eckerd, president, announces that the chairman of the party is Mrs. Floyd Pope.

Tickets may be secured from any member of the Auxiliary. Refreshments will be served and there will be prizes awarded at each table.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Laux Entertain for Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Laux, Midland Drive, entertained friends Tuesday evening at a buffet, marking their wedding anniversary. Guests included Rev. Francis Kane, Rev. Richard Frank, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Evans, Mr. and Mrs. William Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Simpson, Mr. and Mrs. James Devlin, Dr. and Mrs. Louis Vitale, Mr. and Mrs. Donachie, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Waldow, and Mr. and Mrs. George Ward.



Barnyard Notes

(Continued from last week.)

Susquehanna Trade

The first interest in steam navigation on the Susquehanna centered in Baltimore. It was part of the bitter competition between that port and the port of Philadelphia over the Susquehanna trade. Both of these growing cities were convinced the commerce that came down the river rightfully belonged to them; Baltimore because she was geographically situated at the bottom of the Susquehanna Valley, and Philadelphia because she controlled the valley politically. Because of the Conewago Riffles, much of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century down-river cargoes had been diverted overland from Middletown to Philadelphia via Lancaster or Reading. Everything the Baltimore interests could do to get those shipments to their port, was done, Turnpikes were built north from Maryland to tap the Susquehanna trade at Harrisburg. Canals were proposed, but by the third decade of the last century, no canal financed by the Baltimore capital had been dug up the Susquehanna north of the Mason-Dixon line. True, a canal financed by Pennsylvania had been constructed around the Conewago Riffles in 1795, but it was little used by the rivermen. Hence the idea of a steamboat appealed strongly to certain merchants and bankers in the Chesapeake port, who thought they saw in this means of transportation, the answer to their problem.

In 1825 a steamboat drawing twenty-two inches of water was launched in Baltimore and towed to Port Deposit, from which point it was to proceed under its own power, up the Susquehanna, to Columbia. The ship was named "Susquehanna," and aroused much interest in the towns along the river. Its progress was closely watched, but it failed to master the river for which it was named. The channel was too crooked or too shallow, and the current undoubtedly too swift. The ship never reached Columbia. She simply made no headway up the river, and even attempts made to pull her over the rapids with ropes failed. Crowds of people who had lined the banks to cheer her on her way, returned home disappointed. Thus ended the first attempt to navigate a steamboat on the Susquehanna.

The Famous Codorus

During the summer and fall of 1825 three steamboats were constructed for the Susquehanna trade. One of these was destined to become the most widely traveled craft that ever navigated the river, although she never fulfilled the hopes of her backers. She was built in the shops of Webb, Davis & Gardner of York, at a cost of \$3000, and had to be hauled by a specially constructed eight-wheeled wagon to Accomac on the Susquehanna, where she was launched in November. The ship was named "Codorus," from the nearby creek on whose banks she had been fabricated. This craft was the first steamship ever to have been constructed of iron. She had a 60 ft. keel, a 9 ft. beam, and weighed 4 tons. Without cargo the Codorus drew 5 inches in the water. She was designed to burn anthracite, but could also use wood for fuel.

She was commanded by her designer, John Elgar, who was later to become one of the country's leading engineers. Early in December he took the Codorus up the river to Harrisburg on a trial run, with over one hundred passengers on board, made up of Baltimore and York backers, legislators, and public officials.

The Harrisburg Oracle of December 3 reported that the Codorus was greeted by crowds of well-wishers. A great banquet was held at Buehler's Hotel to celebrate the event. Speeches were made, predicting all kinds of wonderful things, and when Captain Elgar took the boat back to York Haven (via the Conewago Canal) great expectations were felt by everybody. The future of steam navigation on the Susquehanna seemed assured. Several other runs were made to and from Harrisburg that winter, and all were successful.

The Codorus Sets Forth

However, the real test was yet to come. With the arrival of spring, and the seasonal high water, the Codorus set forth on a truly remarkable voyage. It proved to be quite an argosy, and has never been repeated; yet, for some reason it has become one of the forgotten and unsung achievements in the history of American navigation. At the time the voyage was made, the progress of the ship attracted wide attention. Perhaps, because it failed to inaugurate regular steamboat service on the Susquehanna, it was quickly forgotten. Had it shown the river

suitably for steam navigation and become the pioneering voyage of great fleets of steamships to follow in its wake, the name Codorus might have been as well known as that of the Clermont. Let us follow Captain Elgar and his ship up the Susquehanna, gleaming his itinerary as much as possible from the valley newspapers of his day.

The voyage started auspiciously. The Codorus steamed up the river through the water gaps in the Appalachian ridges. The Lycoming Gazette reported that on March 22 she passed M'Kee's Falls, heading towards Sunbury and Northumberland. At these towns she was greeted by crowds of enthusiastic citizens, who saw in this puffing iron boat, a vanguard of unlimited and undreamed of commercial possibilities for their communities. From Northumberland the Codorus proceeded with considerable difficulty up the West Branch. One account tells that, running low on fuel, Captain Elgar put in at Bayley's Island, and his crew tore up some rail fences, but the owner of the fences happened to be close by, which ended when a satisfactory financial settlement was reached.

When the Codorus reached Williamsport it met with a gala celebration. A small cannon was fired until it exploded, injuring several people. There was a special reason why the Codorus was welcome in Williamsport. Some of the ship's investors were citizens of that community. Largely through the efforts of Peter A. Karthaus and Tunison Coryell, a number of Williamsporters had subscribed several thousand dollars in the venture, which funds were added to those raised in Maryland and York County. Karthaus was an iron master with furnaces up the West Branch at the place which now bears his name. He was keenly interested in the steamboat as a possible means of shipping his products to market.

The Codorus pushed up the river, reaching Farrantsville beyond Lock Haven before she was forced to turn around and return to Northumberland. Prior to proceeding up the North Branch, it appears that the Codorus visited Selingsgrove on April 2 and 3, making several runs between there and Northumberland, with, as the Northumberland Gazette reported, "a number of our citizens" as passengers.

On April 7 she reached Bloomsburg, where her captain and crew were wined and dined in what by this time must have begun to be a somewhat monotonous, if not boring performance. The next day this scene was repeated in Berwick.

Reaches Wilkes-Barre
On the evening of the 14th, amid a thunderous welcome, the Codorus arrived at Wilkes-Barre, having successfully negotiated the dangerous Nescopeck Rapids. On the 15th a delegation of around seventy leading citizens were welcomed on board for a short cruise up the river to Forty Fort and back. The day was ended with a banquet following which, according to the Wilkes-Barre Democrat, appropriate toasts were drunk, and Captain Elgar announced his intention to take his ship as far up the river as possible.

He sailed a few days later, but the Bradford Settler informs us that somewhere near Tunkhannock the Codorus developed engine trouble and had to drift back to Wilkes-Barre for repairs. Many of the towns up the river were keenly disappointed when they learned this news. Committees from Newtown (now Elmira), Athens, and Towanda, had come down the river to meet the ship at Tunkhannock, and ride back on board. They were forced to return home without the Codorus, and carried rumors that Captain Elgar was going to give up the trip.

However, the captain was a determined man. Also he was urged to take his boat back to York Haven, nevertheless the first week in May saw the Codorus once again puffing up the Susquehanna towards the New York State line.

This part of the trip was accomplished with other difficulties. On May 11, at a banquet in Towanda, Captain Elgar complained that he was having trouble securing wood for fuel, and requested people along the river to leave wood cut to the proper size along the Susquehanna's banks, where his crew could pick it up. At Tioga Point he turned north-west and steamed up the Chemung River to Newtown.

On To Binghamton
Here, according to the Tioga Register, the Codorus was received early in June by "Hearty cheers of the assembled multitude who lined the banks and the bridge to witness this first assay at navigating the Chemung by steam."

(Continued Next Week)

Final Tax Warning

All personal taxes remaining unpaid after June 19th, will be turned over to a Delinquent Tax Collector for collection, which means additional costs to you.

ARTHUR DUNGEY,
Tax Collector,
Dallas Borough

THE SECOND NATIONAL BANK
DE WILKES-BARRE

Main Office
Market and Franklin

Kingston Office
Wyoming at Union

Vacations Don't Grow On Trees

Even though it's spring and everything is growing, anyone who is planning a vacation trip this summer knows it's going to take more than blossoms to make his plans come true.

Can you afford the summer trip you'd like to take? If you can, it's probably because you have saved toward it during the past year. Consistent saving toward it during the past year. Consistent saving with a purpose is the only way most of us can make our dreams come true... whether it's a vacation trip, or a new car or a better home.

We invite you to open a Savings Account at either of our offices.

Are You Using the FREE Parking Lot Alongside Our Kingston Office?

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION