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biographical notes

Quite recently, speaking to my good friends, I was asked if my grandchildren were interested in my past. On reflection I had to answer, no. In fact I never had a single question asked by either of them concerning my person. Hearing this my friends suggested that I should try to make some notes on my past so that one day, when I am gone, there would be some record of my life which , apparently, might be considered colourful and out of ordinary.

Having no previous experience with writing using English, which is my second language, I am faced with the difficulty of deciding how to approach the task of producing a coherent and readable document. My life could be generally divided into three basic periods: **1.** The span between the two World Wars. **2.** The Second World War. **3.** The post-war period. The latter could, perhaps, be subdivided farther into: ***(a)*** *English Experience* ***(b)*** *African Experience* ***(c)*** *Canadian Experience*. Within that framework I will simply endeavor to produce a narrative introducing facts relevant to my person and circumstances in which I was placed at the time.

1. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

I was born on the 18 the of October 1917 , in the part of Poland occupied for more than a century by Austro-Hungarian Empire, just over a year before the end of the 2 and World War and the resurrection of the independent Republic of Poland, accomplished at the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. Both of my parents were descended from noble families of landowners, in those days considered a privileged class, and at the time of my birth they lived in the Manor House in the village of Dzwiniacz on a farm, which my mother brought as a dowry on her marriage in 1907. At the time I had five siblings, the eldest brother Jan (1908) three sisters Teresa (1910), Anna (1912), Krystyna (1914), and brother Stanislaw (1915) ,who were all born in the Manor house in the Village of Horyhlady, the property of my father. After the 1st World War broke out, Horyhlady was in the front line of battles raging between Austrian and Russian armies and my father moved the family to Dzwiniacz which was less exposed to fighting and offered a better chance for survival than Horyhlady where, ultimately, the Manor House and all the farm buildings were razed to the ground during the hostilities. At the time it was customary for all births to take place at home with the assistance of a midwife and I had another brother, Andrzej, born in Dzwiniacz in May 1920. My father had a Ph.D in Law but he never practiced law and his main occupation was managing his land property in Horyhlady of approximately 600 hectares (he studied Agriculture at the German Universities of Leipzig and Breslau). In 1920 war broke out between Poland and Russia and my father, not having had any previous military experience, volunteered as a private for the Polish army where he served for several months until the victorious end of the war. In the early nineteen twenties he rebuilt the destroyed house and farm buildings in Horyhlady and 1923 we all moved there back from Dzwiniacz. At home we had a housekeeper generally known as „Dama" which was probably a childish corruption of „Madame" but, as it often happens, it stuck to her for ever. She was French, called Marie Louise MourÄ a widow, whose husband was killed in Indochina some years before and who then emigrated to Poland where she earned her living as a housekeeper. She could only speak a few words of Polish and, as a result, all the children learned French, more or less, as

their first language. The arable land in Horyhlady was stretching along the North bank of the river Dniestr, elevated about 100 feet above the low lying, and periodically flooded, meadows from the village of the same name in the East to the village of Ostra in the West. The woodland belonging to the estate was situated on an escarpment, as high in places as 350 feet and, following the South bank of the river. The nearest railway station and the Post Office were 12 kms away in Niznіów on the other side of the river which, during the Summer, could be crossed by a ferry capable of taking one horse carriage at a time. During the floods or when for some other reason the ferry could not operate, one had to cross by the nearest bridge which extended the distance to 25 km. During the Winter the river was frozen for 2 to 3 months and horse drawn sleighs were able to cross it then on ice. All the cultivation of the land was done by horse drawn implements and there must have been about 60 working horses, plus replacement, kept on the farm. Poland was a country devastated by the war and, in my memory, always in depression so the low prices of grain and other agricultural products did not justify the use of tractors, which were too expensive to operate. The same applied to travel and my parents never owned a car. We did all our traveling by horses and train. Although we belonged to a privileged and relatively well off class, my parents were always very careful to remain thrifty and live within their means without incurring debts which were, only too frequently, used by some landowners to raise their standard of living. The population of the village was about 2,000, all poor peasants with tiny strips of land, continually shrinking through inheritance subdividing by many generations and peasants owning 10 or 15 acres were considered rich. There was no industry, worth speaking of, to absorb the surplus of the growing population which was doomed to stay on the land which was not adequate for subsistence. This resulted in an almost feudal arrangement in which the population of the village was largely dependent on earning their living by work in the manor either in the form of wages, firewood or grazing privileges for cattle as well as some of the crops received for helping with the harvest, which was all done by hand. Most of peasants were Ukrainian although the dividing line there was not the nationality but the religious rite. The Ukrainians were of Greek Catholic rite while the Poles were Roman Catholic. There were two primary schools, one Polish and one Ukrainian. There was a Greek Catholic church with a married resident priest and a Roman Catholic chapel, built by my father, with the Parish priest coming 7 km to celebrate the mass every third Sunday.

I will always remember Horyhlady as the most wonderful place on earth. My younger brother and I stayed there the year round until 1928 being taught by a governess. These sometimes changed, we had two. At the end of the school year we had to take an examination at the school in our County capital, which guaranteed the necessary level of education for our respective grades, should we seek admittance to any of the standard schools in the Country. I have few distinct recollections from that period except memories of visits to the workshop of the carpenter, who made all the wagons, including wheels, and anything else that was needed for farm work. His duties also included keeping in good repair the harnesses for 40 odd horses used for work on the farm. The other was the smithy where the horses were shod and the wagons equipped with steel axles and tires. Andrzej and I often fought, but he was consistently fighting back and never wanted to submit to my obvious 3 year advantage in size. I remember our father deciding to teach us to dance the Viennese Waltz. He showed us the basic steps, put on a record, on the hand wound gramophone, and we were ordered you practice. It turned out more difficult than he thought but we continued for some time and I, the leader, decided that it was Andrzej is fault and he

should be disciplined. Since arguing in public was frowned upon I surreptitiously started to pinch him , which left him little room for retaliation. The final result was that we kept on dancing with tears streaming down his face, which was eventually noticed and we were both interrogated. Being brought up with the rule of not „telling" we both kept stone silence and, as a result, were both punished. Another flash in my memory - we somehow got hold of a bottle of red wine which we took to a secluded area where we hid in the bushes, opened the bottle and tried to drink from a small steel enameled mug taken for that purpose. The wine tasted bitter and horrible, however, so we returned home to fetch some sugar but, in spite of all our efforts to make wine more palatable, it still tasted horrible. It was a miracle that nobody smelled wine on our breaths and, somehow , we got away with it but, for many years I had an aversion for dry wine.

In 1928 my mother run ted an apartment in the town of Lwów, as it was time for Andrzej and I to go to school. Since then we lived there together with the two older brothers, Jan and Stanislaw until 1936, with my mother running the house with the help of a cook and a maid brought with us from Horyhlady. My father stayed at home to look after the estate and came to Lwów on business only occasionally. During the school holidays of Christmas and Easter each lasting about three weeks all children, including my three sisters, Tereska, Hania and Krystyna, who were being educated at boarding schools run by nuns of the order of „Immaculate Conception", and Jan and Stanislaw, who attended public schools in Lwow , came home. Christmas was celebrated in Polish traditional fashion with the Christmas Eve being a fasting day and the main meal, consisting of mainly fish dishes, being served about 6 p.m. at a table covered with white tablecloth underneath which there was a thin layer of hay to commemorate the manger. To start with my father used to pick a wafer, prepared for this purpose, and shared a piece of it with everyone exchanging kisses and wishes. After the dinner everybody moved to the living room with the Christmas tree and the presents (1 per person) underneath. First we sang a number of Carols after which the presents were handed out and one had, at last, access to home made candies which were part of other, also home made, decorations on the tree. At about 11 p.m we usually set off in horse drawn sleighs to midnight Mass in our parish church in Koropiec, about 7 km away.

Easter was celebrated with with strict fasting on Good Friday, which I greatly enjoyed being allowed, at breakfast, to drink black tea instead of my required daily milk. On Easter Sunday after the mass in a chapel built in our village by my father and, on that day attended by a visiting priest, a main meal of cold meats and cakes was served thus allowing the servants a break in their daily chores.

During the Summer holidays in July and August everybody came home often with some school friends invited by by one of us sometimes for the whole Summer. The centre of activity was invariably the river Dniestr, which was running across our property, the arable portion located on the left bank while the woods occupied the right , quite steep, escarpment. To reach the river from our house one had to cross a stretch of flat grassland usually used as pasture for the dairy herd of Simentaller cattle but which, in some years, was flooded making the river more than 1 km wide at that point. Under ordinary conditions the river was 100 m to 150 m wide with the current more swift in the narrower places. The bottom was lined with pebbles, which made walking barefoot difficult and this encouraged us to learn swimming at an early age. On the bank we had a flat bottomed rowing boat similar to those used by local fishermen and one or two plywood kayaks, each made to accommodate two persons. Meals were served by a maid or a butler, always at the same times: breakfast at 8 a.m., lunch at 12, tea at 4 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. Of course it was

unthinkable to be late for any of them. Other recreational activities could include horseback riding or a game of tennis on a concrete court.

In May 1935 I took and passed successfully the final school exam called „MATURA" which, in Poland, was truly a watershed in everybodyis life. It consisted of a written portion with identical questions set for the whole country and an oral portion, taken later in front of an appointed commission. If passed, it entitled the individual for admission for further education at the university. It also qualified men to be admitted to officersi schools as cadet officers for the duration of the compulsory military service. In general, it also opened many possibilities for other positions which, otherwise, would be inaccessible. In other words it was a sine qua non for success. Afterwards I thought that I would like to go to university to study agriculture but my father decided that I should first spend a year as student on different farm where I could gain some practical experience and get a real idea what the farming was all about. As a result I spent the next year on a property of about 500 acres called Grabownica Sozanska near Dobromil, known as a very well administered and efficient enterprise run by Edward Janecki , a man with degrees in agriculture from both, Poland and Hungary. During that year I soon found out that farming was more than fun and games and that it involved really hard work. My duties were mainly supervisory but I was also encouraged to try my hand at any task that I was supposed to watch. My day started at 4 a.m. with milking, all done by hand and performed 7 days a week then after breakfast at 6 a.m. I would join in any other tasks which, depending on the season, took place on the farm. In that way I learned to do all the jobs which farm labourers normally did, all by hand as there were no tractors or electricity on the farm.

In October 1936 I enrolled in the Department of Agriculture at the University of Poznan for a 4 year course leading to a title of Engineer. As it happened I never completed that course as on 1st September 1939 the war broke out and with it came the end of the world I knew hitherto.

2. THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

Rumours about the approaching war started early in the spring of 1939 but it was not until late summer, when a large number of men, who previously completed their national service, were called back to their units that it became a certainty. At the same time my father received orders to supply a large amount of grain for the army as well as a number of horses.

In the morning of the 1st of September we heard on the radio that the German planes have started bombarding Polish towns at 3 in the morning and the German armies have entered Poland all along the Western border. For the first few days very little news about the situation at the front was given and even those were quite confusing. On the radio one heard, most of the time, coded messages which were referring to German aerial attacks but on the whole the mood was sombre and one could guess that things were not going as well as expected.

Horyhlady was situated in the South East corner of the country and soon we started having a trickle of refugees from the West together with the news of of rapid German advance all along the front. We were told that apparently the plan for the Polish army was to retreat towards the Eastern border where an effective resistance could be mounted in the Prypec Marshes stretching along the Polish/Russian border. The refugees came to Horyhlady hoping to wait for the end of the war as far from the front as possible.

On the 17th of September the news came that the Soviet army had entered Poland all along the eastern border. To begin with it was not clear if they came as enemies or allies to

fight the Germans but soon it became obvious that they were in collusion with Hitler. In fact a truck full of Soviet soldiers arrived in the village the following day and their commander told the peasants that they should go to the manor and help themselves to any property they could find there. As a result the house and farm buildings were sacked and a few days later a NKVD commissar arrived with two soldiers to arrest my father, whom they took to the prison in the County town of Tlumacz where they gathered most of the local landowners. Some weeks later they were all deported to Russia and there was no more news of them until after the war my mother heard that one of them, Andrzej Jakubowicz, survived and according to him they were kept under appalling conditions in a prison in Nicolayev and one morning, early in 1940 two guards entered the cell and brutally took my father and another man A. Komornicki, outside and that was the last he heard of them. After the collapse of the Soviet Union a number of secret documents was opened to public scrutiny and, amongst others, a list of Poles executed by KGB was published in Poland. The name of my father was on it. After the arrest of my father I walked with my sister, Hania, to Niznіów a small town 12 km. away which was the site of our nearest railway station and where was also a monastery for nuns belonging to the order of the Immaculate Conception. In fact my motheris sister was one of the nuns there and we hoped that the rest of our family could perhaps find temporary shelter in the monastery. Our hopes soon evaporated. The nuns were terrified. Apparently the monastery had been already searched several times and they expected more to follow and there was no question of letting anybody in, particularly members of the capitalist class known as „enemies of the people" without risking serious consequences. Rather disappointed we walked to the railway station to find more about current train timetable just at the time when a train was pulling in. To our surprise one of the disembarking passengers was our brother Stas, a medical doctor serving with the army. He was wearing shabby civilian clothes and he told us that after his unit was overrun he managed to escape, get out of the uniform and make his way to Horyhlady to find out what happened to the rest of the family. As we were talking, two members of the newly formed communist security force approached and asked for identification documents and as we did not have any they placed us under arrest. We were taken to an office building and put in a small cellar where there were already several other prisoners mainly local peasants.There was no furniture and only two tiny windows right under the ceiling the air was stifling and the atmosphere gloomy. Shortly afterwards a uniformed NKVD officer came in and started interrogating the prisoners. His approach with each prisoner was very simple and invariably started with the exclamation „Confess" and when asked what to confess to he replied that you knew very well what he already knew and now you had to confess. I remember a terrified old peasant falling in front of him on his knees and begging to be let go upon which he was told that if he did not confess he would be sent to a place where white bears lived. Seeing the absurdity of this line of questioning, my sister Hania, always a giggler, could not control herself and was laughing openly even when the questions had, eventually, been addressed to her. The officer looked at her in disbelief and I think he must have concluded that she lost her mind. Anyhow, during the following two days he repeated his performance several times with all of us but never again with her. During the three days in the cellar each of us was taken separately to an office upstairs where a man in civilian clothes took down our personal particulars and our life histories but during all this time we were not given any food. Finally on the third day we were taken out and sent on a horse drawn cart, under the escort of two armed guards, to the County town of Tlumacz, the same town where our father had been imprisoned. Arriving there we were taken to an office where a NKVD officer started

questioning us, looking occasionally at the notes which were handed to him by our escort. After about an hour he got up and said „You have been arrested unlawfully. You can go now." Tlumacz was a small town with a largely Jewish population of about 20,000. I have been there once or twice before but none of us knew anyone whom we could ask for help. We had no money worth speaking of but we felt that we should try to establish some contact with our father and see if there was any hope hope for his release from prison. There was in town one small hotel belonging to a man called Schweffelgeist, whom none of us knew but we decided to go there for advice. When we introduced ourselves to the owner he could not have been nicer. It turned out that he knew our father very well and having heard our story immediately brought us some bread and hot milk and, while we wolfed it down, explained that although he would have liked to help us he had to be very careful because if it were reported to the NKVD that he was associating with „Capitalists" he would get into serious trouble. He gave us an address where we could rent a room, wished us good luck and that was the last time I saw him. We went to the address he gave us to get some accommodation. It was a small house belonging to widow who showed us the room that she was willing to rent. It was tiny, the only furniture in it was a bed and a small table but it had electric light, one naked bulb hanging above the door. Its main advantage was that we were allowed to use the kitchen and the rent was very reasonable so we took it but now we had to find some money to pay the rent buy food we would need. Our landlady suggested that one could earn some money chopping wood that every household needed for cooking and heating so Stas and I bought an axe and a saw and every morning we would walk along the streets with our newly acquired tools of trade in hand and indeed, as predicted, we were soon approached by some house owners who tried to get our services. The pay was poor but there was no other choice and so this became our main occupation for about three weeks. We found out that in the prison where father was held the food was very inadequate but if the families were permitted to bring some from outside. All we could obtain was flower and Hania was making noodles for all of us and every day she took a pot with them to the prison for our father. One day somebody told us that there was some work at the railway station unloading freight cars so Stas and I went there to investigate. It proved to be true and the man in charge hired us offering us quite a good pay. We worked there for two or three days when we heard from one of the fellow workers that the communist police have been making enquiries about us. That was enough for me and I told Hania and Stas that I was leaving. They decided to stay to be close to father but I took next day a train leaving for Stanislawów where I got another one which got me to Lwow. There I went to the apartment of the mother of my sister in law Wanda , Mrs. Walcer, the kindest person I ever met. She was a widow who lived on Zyblikiewicza Street in a very nice apartment but part of it had been requisitioned by a Soviet couple, a major and his wife Shura. It turned out that my mother and my sister Krystyna were also there having been kicked out of Horyhlady two weeks before. The mood in Lwow was very sombre. I did not wont to stay there and I thought that I would try to get to the part of Poland occupied by the Germans. It happened to be just the perfect time to do it as the Soviets allowed refugees from the West, who left their homes running eastwards away from the front , to go back. The demarcation line between the two occupation zones had been opened for just three days at a town called Przemysl and I was lucky enough to go through. Having crossed into the German occupied territory I got a funny feeling of having entered a different world. People looked different. They were talking with animation as ordinary people do often smiling or laughing and you knew that you could trust them because we all suffered the same misfortune , the same

defeat and they were your friends ready to help if you needed it. We all had the same common enemy, the Germans, and we were all united by a hatred of them. On the other side it was a different world. Grey and colourless with people silent, frightened and suspicious of one another reluctant to talk not knowing who might be a Communist sympathizer ready to denounce you. It seemed that the sun never shone there. It was a grey, sad world. Traveling at that time was very difficult. There were no regular passenger trains and only occasionally one could illegally board a freight train never being quite certain of its destination. The most important thing was to ascertain that they were heading West or North, away from the Soviets. I was planning to go to Wilków, an estate south-west from Warsaw (near Grójec) whose owner was my fatheris cousin, Ludwik Zakrzewski, whom my siblings and I, as was customary in Poland, called uncle and who was nicknamed by us „Arab" . He was a very colourful character, who was born in Aleppo in Syria and whose father, a Medical Doctor, emigrated there after after some romantic tragedy in Poland at the beginning of the 19th Century and eventually married there an Arab girl, quite sophisticated, actually educated at a convent school in France. The doctor Z. became quite famous and did extremely well as, apparently, he was not only successful in treating patients but also did not have much competition having been the first European doctor to settle in that part of the world. They had one son, Ludwik, who was educated in Paris and Vienna and spoke fluently not only French and German but also Arabic and Turkish. After completing his studies he started working in banking and at one moment become a director of the Ottoman Bank in Turkey. He became friends with Kemal Pasha Attatürk, whose photograph signed and dedicated to Ludwik I have seen in Wilków. In 1918 Poland regained its independence and in 1922 Ludwik decided to come home. At that time he could hardly speak Polish but he was wealthy and had a good knowledge of world business. At the time he was married to an Arab woman, Gita, but the marriage ended in divorce. He later married his Polish secretary, Mary. He never had any children from either marriage. He spent the first few years in Warsaw but eventually bought a large country estate, not far away, in the county of Grójec. I do not recall now how long it took me to reach my destination, but somewhere between two and three weeks. I did some of my traveling by train but most of it on foot or, when lucky, by horse drawn carts. I had no money so I depended entirely on peoplesi kindness which, in the atmosphere of generally suffered national tragedy, seem to have been abundant. I had no idea if Ludwik was at home or whether his property suffered any war damage. As it turned out I was lucky to find him there and the estate intact. He was already sheltering several persons, mainly wives of officers who were in the war and whose fate was not known at the time. There was also a bookkeeper, a Jew, who actually survived the war thanks to incredible risks taken by Ludwik to save him from the Gestapo. He ultimately reached U.S.A. and some years later was instrumental in arranging, from there, Ludwikis release from a Polish prison in Katowice where the Communists kept him for several months. This did not help him for long as he was rearrested and spent several more months in prison and when released again, died shortly afterwards,

I found shelter in Wilkow , where there already were three other refugees, two wives of officers who were taken as P.O.W., Mrs. Gasiorowska, wife of General G. and Mrs. Ziemianska wife of Captain Z. and Bolek Skraba, the brother of Arabis 2nd wife. In addition there was a butler, Lukasiewicz, head maid Justyna and another maid and a cook whose names I do not remember. In various houses also located on the farm there lived members of the staff running the farm. Farm manager called Schutz the manager of the Distillery Czachowski and a book keeper Finklestein who was a Jew and , of course, was using an

assumed name. Life in Wilkow was quite comfortable with plenty of food, supplied by the farm, and all the servants looking after us. Arab had relatively good relations with the Germans, whom he was corrupting with good food and small gifts and who did not considered him as a Pole in view of his physical appearance, (he had a slightly dark complexion) and his complete fluency in the so called „High" German which he acquired at the Vienna University. Sometime in August 1940 I had a visit from Leopold Seidler, a friend I knew only slightly but whom I considered very brilliant because he earned his Ph.D. in Law, before the war at 21 thus becoming the youngest student ever to have such an achievement in the Country. He was of Armenian origin and only 2 or 3 years my senior. He was an officer of reserve, in an artillery regiment and took part in the brief campaign of September 1939 but somehow avoided being caught by the Germans and/or the Russians. Currently he got a job in a large complex of farms run by the Germans under the name „Liegenschaftverwaltung" , situated about 40 km South West from Warsaw and only 20 km from Wilkow and which consisted mainly of farms whose owners did not return home after the end of hostilities, being either killed or taken to Prison Camps. He resided in Babsk, the headquarters of the complex, and worked as the secretary to the head of the organization or „Oberleiter", Sarley, a young Austrian from Lintz, who did not feel very sure of himself and who relied on his secretaryis knowledge of local conditions. The administration of of the complex was still in its formative stages and Seidler or „Poldek", as we called him, tried to recruit as many people he trusted, as he could, to fill the open positions and thus have more control of the whole enterprise. He suggested that I enter the organization by taking the job of the Storekeeper (Hoffverwalter) in Babsk which I readily agreed to. I worked in Babsk for a few months when the „Betriebsleiter" (Manager) of one of the farms, Golyn, was arrested and „Poldek" convinced Sarley to nominate me for the vacancy. Golyn was a relatively small farm of about 300 acres and was operated entirely by horse and hand labour. The soil was sandy and poor but Poldek managed to allocate to it considerable amounts of fertilizers brought in from Germany so the yields of crops, mainly potatoes and rye, were considerably improved. The trashing of the rye could only be done under the supervision of Tschernik, an Austrian peasant whom Sarley brought with him to Babsk and who was used by him as a trustee. Shortly after my arrival in Golyn I was sworn in as a member of Z.W.Z. or Zwiazek Walki Zbrojnej (Coalition of Armed Struggle), which was then the name of the first national underground organization (later changed to Armia Krajowa or A.K .(Home Army), under a name of „Bruno" by a monk called „Frater" who from then on, gave me from time to time orders to perform some tasks and who remained my only contact with the underground. Over the next year and a half I sent by horse carts several tons of potatoes and grain to the starving people in Warsaw. The grain had to be trashed in secret to escape Tschernikis supervision. I also accumulated and hid in the attic considerable amounts of bandages and other first aid supplies. Occasionally I gave shelter to couriers who had to stay overnight and once or twice I had to transport a suitcase from one address to another without knowing what it contained. I did that without incidents carrying it in my horse and buggy. On the 22nd of June 1942, at 2 a.m., I was woken up by somebody knocking at my bedroom window. It was the daughter of the distillery manager from Babsk, Lila Mikowa, who said that the Gestapo came to arrest people from the Head Office and she just managed to escape before they got to the distillery. She run the 4 km. to Golyn to get some help from me but, just before she reached the house, she saw the lights of a car coming along the main road and then turning into the lane leading to my house. That night I had two visitors sleeping in my room , my friend Zbyszek Maier , who came to stay with me for a few days

from a neighbourhood farm where he found temporary shelter for the duration of the war with his mother and two sisters. The other was a courier who stayed with me once before but whose name I did not know. The three of us dressed frantically and we all left through the back door and into the garden, the courier running first and Zbyszek and I following behind. At the end of the garden there was a row of trees dividing it from a field planted with not yet harvested rye. When the courier was just two steps from the trees there was suddenly a long burst of machine pistol fire and I saw stumble and fall forward. Realizing that we were cut off from the escape route Zbyszek and I returned to the house and waited in the bedroom for further developments. At least, we thought, we would not be caught while trying to escape. After a while the door to the adjoining study opened and a vice called „raise your hands and come out". We entered the study where we saw two uniformed men standing in opposite corners of the study each holding a „Schmeiser" (machine pistol used by the Germans) trained on the open door. We were both handcuffed and taken to a light truck, parked in front of the house with two other Germans, where we found. Lila was already handcuffed in the truck. Meantime, the other two Germans went to search the rest of the house. They came back with Wanda Gora, the girl who was in charge of running the vegetable garden and who lived on the upper floor. We were then driven, first to a local town, Rawa Mazowiecka, and then to Tomaszow Mazowiecki where the local Gestapo had their headquarters. We were put in two cells in the cellar, each approximately 10i X 10i with concrete floors and a small barred window just under the ceiling. There were 78 people all together, including 5 women, divided at 39 persons per room. They were all arrested at the same night in the sweep organized in the Rawa Mazowiecka area and which, I found out much later, was precipitated by an incident occurring two days before the arrests. Apparently the local German police noticed some light showing through a sloppily blacked out window in Rawa Mazowiecka, they went to check, and found there two men and a girl just finishing printing the current edition of an underground news leaflet. The three tried to escape jumping through the window, but both men were shot dead during the attempt and only the girl succeeded in escaping. When the Gestapo were called, all they could find was the evidence of underground activity but no one to interrogate. As the result, they decided to arrest several people whom they thought could be active members of the underground. The cells were so crowded that it was not possible, for all, to sit on the floor at the same time, especially, as there was a large, steel bucket in one corner, serving as a toilet. The first meal that was brought into the cell, was macaroni in a steel, enameled washbasin , put on the floor near the door, without a fork or spoon to eat with. Soon, they started calling out names of people, whom they took out for interrogation. When they were brought back they, usually, were in such a state that they could not stand up any more and we had to make room for them to lie down on the floor. One young man, Wacek, when he was brought back after after the 3rd session said he could not stand it any more and, at night, hung himself from the bars in the window. Being able to hear what was said in the cell next door, we learned that, Henryka, daughter of the distillery manager from Babsk, died in the cell after three sessions, her sister, Mikowa, survived and was sent to Auschwitz. My name was called out during the second week. I was taken upstairs into a room with a table, a chair and a contraption able to support a steel bar about 3 feet above the floor which, as I found out later, was placed under the bent knees and over the arms with wrists in handcuffs and then lifted onto the stand making the personis head and shoulders to hang down while the feet and the backside were exposed to the beatings. The questions they asked me convinced me, soon, that they did not know anything specific about me and only tried to force out some information about

underground activities in the region. It ended up as my only interrogation, which left me, with two broken teeth and very sore feet and behind. After 12 days we were all loaded on trucks and driven to the prison in Radom where we stayed the night and the next day we were loaded into cattle trucks on a train which took us to Auschwitz where we arrived on the 2nd of July 1942. We stood outside the gate which had, above it, a sign ARBEIT MACHTS FREI and waited, endlessly, until eventually we were led to one of the brick buildings where we remained for two days during which we were processed to become inmates of the camp. During this time the building was off bounds and no person was allowed in or out. After the evening roll call, however, some prisoners gathered under the windows to find out if any of their relatives came on this transport. At one time I was called by someone who was just looking out of the window and, when I looked out, I saw Wladek Plaskura (# 1000), whom I knew before because he was married to my distant cousin, who shouted „remember you are a plumber" . This was all that he was able to say because some camp official was, just then, approaching. I could not understand what he meant but I found out two days later. The first two days were spent being integrated into the camp as a prisoner. You were given an identification number, your hair on the head and all body was shorn or shaved, you were issued a vertically blue and white striped uniform and a similar overcoat, a shirt and underwear and a pair of boots. All these were made of thin, synthetic and very coarse fabric, obviously, worn before by many prisoners and had many repair patches bearing testimony of their age. Later your photograph, full face, profile and ¾ view, was taken. On the second day my group of 53 people, who were arrested with me in Rawa Mazowiecka, were led outside and confronted with a huge, gorilla like ss man, Unterscharfeuhrer Friese who had for assistant the prisoner #3 named Otto, who had a band on his upper arm with the inscription ARBEITSDIENST Otto started calling out various trades like Electricians, Mechanics, Plumbers etc. and asking if any of us belonged to them. It was then when I realized what Wladek Plaskura meant and, when Plumbers were called, I stepped out. Otto who conducted the interview asked me how long I worked in the trade. Not knowing well, what plumbers actually did, I was terrified that, if I exaggerated, I would soon get killed so I answered that I worked for one year only upon which Friese waved me away and, then, Otto asked me what I had been doing before. I said I was a student and Otto quickly suggested to Friese that I was a technician which made the latter to shrug his shoulders and nod his head in agreement. Our group came from a rural part of the country and there were only 3 of us who registered as tradesmen. By strange coincidence, we were the only survivors at the end of the war. I digressed now but, returning to my first days in the camp, the interview with Otto did not have an immediate effect on my allocation to a working group. Next morning we joined a group of about 800 men which was taken to work on a railway line. The individual prisoners were given either a wheelbarrow or a pick and shovel. Some, about 5%, were issued a stick, usually a pick handle, and their job was to make sure that all the others worked at top speed by, using their sticks if anyone slowed down. If they did not beat the others to the satisfaction of the leader, also a prisoner with an arm band inscribed either KAPO, or VORARBEITER , they were made to exchange tools with another prisoners and were, in turn, beaten instead of beating the others. I was given a wheelbarrow, horribly heavy, with a narrow steel wheel which cut into the ground. My job was to push it following a line of other barrows working between two lines of prisoners, one on each side, working with shovels and filling the barrows as they passed by. It took seconds to have the barrow filled and, therefore, there was not a moment allowed to rest while the line had to move at a running pace all the time. If somebody slowed down he was beaten by the stick wielders

which, usually, slowed him down even more and this, in turn, generated more beating , eventually, ending with death of the victim. When marching back to the camp, by the end of the day, the corpses of the dead had to carried by the group so that they could be counted at the gate and the number of those who left the camp agreed with the number of those who came back. During the second day of work my hands became badly blistered and, once or twice, I was urged by blows to work faster. I knew that I wouldnit last another day. On the third day, after the morning roll call, my number was called out and I was told to join the group of plumbers.

After the roll call, which was conducted every morning, the prisoners formed individual working groups called Komandos ,each of them, headed by a Kapo. The plumbers were divided into two groups one for new construction (Bauleitung) and one for maintenance work (Verwaltung). The Bauleitung group was headed by a Polish, mechanical engineer C. [3]Lachecki and I was supposed to join them. All the working groups were marching in rows of 5 abreast the Kapo being the first on the right side of the first row. The prisoners had to march with open palms pressing against their thighs to facilitate counting which was carried out by the SS-men at the gate. The main Street leading to the gate was called"Dali - Dali Strasse" and it had, on its left side in the corner by the camp kitchen, a small square on which the camp band, composed of prisoners, played marches every morning when Komandos were leaving for work and again in the evening when they were returning. When the Komando neared the gate, the Kapo gave the command „Muetzen ab" (caps off) and at the gate reported to the SS-man the name of the Komando and its strength. As the group walked by the SS-man had to count the number of the rows and the number of prisoners in the last one, if incomplete, and enter it into his master sheet. When returning, in the evening, the count had to agree with the one taken in the morning otherwise, it meant that somebody escaped and the line of SS-men manning the towers (Postenkette) around the working area, could not be taken off until the area was searched thoroughly by groups of SS-men with specially trained dogs. In the meantime, the prisoners were standing in front of their Blocks waiting for the evening roll call, sometimes, for hours. The longest wait happened before I arrived in the camp. It lasted until the next day and more than 100 prisoners died during it.

Our group went first to shack where the Kapo assigned the various jobs, currently in progress, to smaller groups led by a VORARBEITER. I was to join a group, led by Jan My½sok, Working on a new, water pipeline under construction. There was a long trench with 18" cast iron pipes lying along its side which we first had to lower to the bottom of the trench and then each prisoner was allocated to one of them in order to make a secure and waterproof joint with the the pipe lying in front. Each pipe had a wider collar at one end into which the straight end of another pipe was pushed in leaving a space of about 3⁄4" around it, which had to be packed tightly with three different materials. The tools I received for the task was a heavy hammer and chisel and three bundles of packing materials. Tar impregnated hemp had to be chiseled in first, followed by regular hemp and the very last layer consisted of lead wool. Each of these materials had to be compacted solidly so as to provide a waterproof joint. When you finished one joint you were given the next to work on. This was real heaven. I could sit down straddling the pipe and the work was not heavy, moreover, nobody shouted at you or beat you, absolute bliss. Towards the end of the day the newly completed section, had to be tested under pressure. It was filled with water and , with the help of a hand pump, the pressure was raised to the required level. Several joints were found leaking, all of them, those I worked on. I was terrified certain that now they would kill me. My½sok called me

and asked me „are you a plumber?" I said that I wasnit „so why in hell did you not tell me?" I said that I was scared and it appeared that that was the end of it. Later when we returned to the shack and My½sok reported the incident to Lachecki and the Kapo said that, next day, I would be transferred to the other Branch, the Verwaltung.

Next day,the routine of leaving the camp after the morning roll call was the same as the previous day except that we were led by a different KAPO whose name was Józek Plaskura (#1001) , the brother of Władek (#1000) who, originally,when I was still in the quarantine block, told me that I was a plumber. We arrived at a different shack where we were divided into pairs, each consisting of the plumber and his helper, and allocated a repair job scheduled for the day. Jobs varied from repairs in the houses of married SS men, the slaughter house, the bakery, the SS kitchen and any other building located outside the actual camp but still within the larger line of posts, (POSTENKETTE) set up every morning before the working groups, (KOMANDOS) left the camp and taken off in the evening after verifying that all prisoners returned to the camp. Sometimes repairs were required in other, nearby, camps like Rajsko, Harmenzy and Birkenau, which were located outside the POSTENKETTE and, in such case, we were escorted by armed SS men. Being always in company of a qualified plumber, I was relatively safe as far as performance was concerned, doing only what I was told. Some jobs were better than the others and here the important factor was the opportunity of scrounging some extra food at the site. Our camp rations were so inadequate that we constantly, thought, dreamt and talked about food. In houses occupied by SS couples one always had the excuse of going to the cellar in order to shut off the water and there, usually, one could find some roots like potatoes , carrots, turnips etc. which, of course, had to be eaten raw and on the spot. Once I went, with my mate, to the SS kitchen where the toilets required some repair. The kitchen was manned by prisoners and while we were working in one of the cubicles, suddenly, a prisoner walked in and placed, on the floor, a bucket half full of delicious, thick, pea soup. On another occasion we were sent to STABSGEBAUDE, a building in which the SS women were billeted. While in there, and working on one of the cubicles, we saw many SS women coming in and out of other cubicles. One of them was the infamous Irma Graese, a striking blonde, who saw us working and, after a while, she came back and gave each of us a delicious white roll with some jam. (Irma Graese was later transferred to Belsen where, after the war, she was sentenced to death and hung.) We were sent, once or twice, to the piggery where potatoes were steamed in huge cauldrons and this gave an opportunity for eating a few. On the whole, however, opportunities for getting extra food were rare and the main advantage of working with the plumbers was that we had educated and very decent KAPOS who, within limits, always helped us when we run into trouble. Being themselves prisoners, however, KAPOS had no special privileges and they had to share the fate of their subordinates when so ordered by any SS man. Once, after a prisoner escaped, our KOMANDO was called out and placed between the two rows of barbed wire near the main gate where we were kept waiting for several hours. It was clear that we had been selected for some reprisal in connection with the escape and the prospects were grim. Some time before, a prisoner escaped from the Komando of the the Surveyors and, as a reprisal, the whole Komando,including their Kapo, was publicly hung during a roll call. During these hours of waiting, near the gate, between the barbed wires, we died a thousand times knowing that there was nothing in this world that could save us. Eventually, late at night, we were ordered out and replaced by the Komando working on the sewers whose member was identified as the escapee. I will now refer to another incident which made me think that death was inevitable. It was customary that, after some morning roll

calls, a list of prisonersi numbers was read out and those on the list, instead of going to work, had to stay behind and report to the SCHREIBSTUBE (camp office) where their identities were checked and where they waited for the arrival of SS Unterscharfeuhrer Palitsch, the camp executioner who, with a 22 rifle slung over his shoulder led them to the block #11 for daily executions. There they were ordered, in turn, to stand facing a concrete wall between blocks #10 and #11 where Palitsch shot each of them in the back of the head. The corpses were then loaded onto a cart which was pushed by prisoners to a crematorium situated just outside and to the right of the main gate. The cart left on the road a ribbon of dripping blood which was a grim sign for the all, returning to camp after work, of the execution which took place. The numbers read out after the morning roll call started with the lowest and followed a consecutive order so once a number, higher than yours, was called you knew that for that day, at least, you escaped the selection. Nobody, actually, knew how and why the numbers were chosen and it was only after the war that I found out that they were hostages killed as reprisal for some event that happened in their district. The highest number of prisoners executed in one day was just over 280 and it happened on the 28th October 1942. One dreadful morning, which I shall never forget, I heard my number called. and that was the moment I started dying. It is not the instant of dying that is so awful but rather the awareness and inevitability of it coming. You know how it is going to happen and you relive this moment over and over again afraid beyond reason and yet wishing it was already over. There must have been less than 10 of us in the group and we were all led to the Schreibstube where our identities were checked by prisoners working there after which we waited until Palitsch appeared with his rifle and a piece of paper with numbers on it which he proceeded to read and my number was not on it. He took the group out while one of the prisoners handed me a letter from my mother (we were allowed to write and receive one letter per month) containing a photograph of a cousin many times removed, I was allowed to look at the picture for 30 seconds after which it was torn up. This, apparently, was the camp regulation and, although, I never heard of anyone receiving a photograph before, the only way to show it to an inmate was to have his number read out after the morning roll call.

Sometimes we were sent to outside camps for women like Rajsko where the prisoners worked cultivating vegetables and experimental plants. One of the main plants which the Germans grew there, and tried to improve, was Dandelion. They hoped that its milky latex juice could ultimately be used for production of rubber. The guards who escorted us to Rajsko, once in the camp, left us alone and tried to flirt with the SS women who supervised the inmates. While working on assigned repairs we had an opportunity to deliver little notes, in camp language called grypsy, to the wives, sisters or sweethearts which were given to us by friends in the main camp. The notes were usually written on tiny pieces of paper about 2”x2”, rolled tightly and hidden in a screwdriver handle which was previously prepared for that purpose. Talking to women prisoners was prohibited under death penalty but it was customary for the woman, who expected a gryps, to approach us having first posted a lookout for an early warning. The same was happening in other women camps like Harmenzy, where they tended poultry or the women camp in Birkenau, as well as Block #10, in our own camp, which housed women inmates used by German doctors for medical experiments. In the last one, which I visited only once, I had an opportunity to meet the SS Aufseherin Irma Grese for the second time. Irma was the only guard in that building and, throughout or stay, she stood looking at the street in the front door which gave me the impression that she, purposely, wanted to give us an opportunity to talk to or deliver a gryps to whoever we wanted. It was well known in our camp that prisoners working in

maintenance KOMANDOS like plumbers, electricians or locksmiths were sent for repairs to the women camps and, therefore, male prisoners who wanted to maintain contact with inmates of those camps knew where to seek help. Considerably later, when I was in Wantzleben, a sub camp of Buchenwald, a gryps was intercepted by the Camp Commandant who accused me of having written it. On that occasion, in spite of tremendous beating, I managed to convince my interrogator that my handwriting was totally different from the one on the note.

Somewhere around the end of 1943 a vacancy was created for the operator of the water pump supplying the SS Kitchen and Józek Plaskura decided to give me that job. The pump was located in the SW corner of the basement of a large building (known as T.W.L.) which served as storage of the dry food supplies for the SS Guards. The part of the basement which housed the pump and the pressure tank was about 20i X 20i had separate entrance at the back of the building. The shallow well was situated about 30 yards diagonally to the left and the Kitchen itself about 80 yards to the right. The well had 10i in diameter and was 25i deep and its sides were lined with bricks with an iron ladder attached to the wall giving access from the trap door in the well cover to the gravel bottom of the well. Since the well had a limited water supply, when the demand from the kitchen exceeded it, the system was drawing air instead of water and the pump had to be stopped and then primed again. This was the main job of the caretaker who, in addition, had to chlorinate the water through an apparatus of glass an rubber tubes into which chlorine solution was daily poured and maintained at required concentration. The large pressure tank with all the connecting pipes stood on a gravel floor surrounded by 36" concrete walks elevated 30 „ above the gravel bottom and since the water spilled, during frequent priming of the pump, had no other drainage except through gravel floor, the base of the tank always stood in not less than 24" of water. The room was very humid as the only ventilation was through five 3" X 3" holes at the top of the wall dividing it from the East part of the main building.There were two Polish prisoners working in the Main Building, Bali-ski was the name of one of them, the other I forgot, and there was one SS man in charge, Oberscharfuehrer Holzknecht, apparently a decent fellow. Every few days one of the two Poles would come to the pump room bringing me small quantities of granular sugar and oat flakes, the only supplies they had, that could be eaten without cooking. This was a real blessing and I gained quite a bit of weight in the following weeks. To the West of my pump and almost opposite the SS Kitchen was a large, concrete lined pit for the refuse from the kitchen and the other buildings. It was emptied and carted away by a prisoner from Slovak called Rudolf whom I got to know quite well because of his frequent visits. One day he brought to my pump room a fair sized jar, one of those one sees on the shelves in Pharmacies, with the inscription È"Cocainum Hydrochloricum", and asked me if I wanted it. I suspected that it must be cocaine and I decided to take it. I could not hide it in the pump room where it would be easy to find so I took it into the well where about 10i down i found a loose brick in the lining, took it out, made enough room behind to conceal the jar, and put the brick back again. For a few days I did not touch it but, eventually, I came to a decision. I heard before that cocaine was very addictive narcotic and once you started taking it you would have to continue. I also heard that it was a drug that did not dull your wits and gave you very positive high. What did I have to lose? I new that I could never get out of the camp alive so why not try? I heard that you were supposed to put a pinch of the snow like powder on the back of your hand and then inhale it through your nose. I pondered for a few days and then, one morning, I climbed down the well and took my first sniff. I continued to do it almost every day for almost six months but one day the jar was

empty and I had to stop. The withdrawal symptoms were quite mild, nothing compared to giving up smoking and, after a few weeks, they vanished altogether. During my stay in in the pump house I had two unpleasant incidents. Once a SS man walked in and started snooping around. He got interested in the the bottle of the chemical which was used to test the concentration of chlorine in the water. He suspected that it was vodka and tried to force me to drink it. I managed to resist in spite of severe beating but I was lucky that he eventually decided to give up and leave. The other was with Bali-ski and the other Pole who worked in the main building. Sometimes, they had to work in the basement just on the other side of the wall which separated the pump room from the rest of the building and had the ventilation holes under the ceiling. One day, they told me that they would be working there pouring rum from casks into bottles and since, Holzknecht was usually locking them in and they were there alone, they would pass a few bottles through the ventilation holes for me to hide and they would collect them later on. I was rather stupid to agree but they treated me so well before that it was hard for me to refuse. They passed on 4 bottles which I hid in the gravel having dug big enough space under the water and all the way under the concrete gangway , finally, covering it well with gravel. They told me later that they traded the rum in exchange for margarine with a prisoner who worked as upholsterer in one of the close by buildings and was supposed to pick it up the next day. When I entered the pump room the next morning I saw, to my horror, two rum bottle labels floating in the water. I searched frantically my perfect, underwater hiding place which, unfortunately was empty, all four bottles had gone. When I told Balinski and his mate what happened, they would not believe me and accused me of stealing. After that we never spoke again although I found out later that the upholsterer stayed, that evening, in his building for overtime and, clearly, knowing that the bottles were in the pump room, searched until he found them.

To reach the pump I had to walk a fair distance by myself and, on my way I was frequently meeting SSmen for whom I was obliged, as a prisoner, to take my cap off and walk at attention. Once I met Oberscharfuehrer Stibitz who, at the time, was acting in the camp as Raportenfuehrer and he stopped me for not taking my cap off quickly enough. He hit me in the face knocking me down but I jumped up quickly so as not to give him an opportunity to kick me with his heavy boots which could have caused a serious internal damage. He hit me again and I fell down and got up quickly as before and this was repeated several times until he decided to stop and leave. I knew from experience that SSmen were flattered when they saw a prisoner fall down after each of their blows but, at the same time, I knew that one had to avoid being kicked when on the ground and, therefore, getting up quickly was very important.

Life in the camp started improving early in 1943 and, I think, it must have been the result of military defeats on the Russian front. The camp Commandant, Hauptsturmfuehrer Rudolf Hoess had been replaced by Sturmbahnfuehrer Liebehenschel who, shortly after his arrival announced that, „...new winds are in the air...” and, from now on, beating of the inmates would be prohibited. In practical terms, this meant very little except that, if somebody was so severely beaten that he had to be carried to the hospital block, it resulted in some enquiry but, nevertheless, it appeared that the prisoners who, originally, were brought to the camp for extermination were now to be treated as workers whose effort had to contribute to the ultimate victory. On my arrival in Auschwitz our group was greeted at the gate by a short introductory speech by the Lagerfuehrer Fritsch who said „... the life here is hard but just and do not have any illusions that you will ever leave. The only way out is through there. „ he finished pointing to the crematorium chimney which was belching

smoke and flames. Now, under the new rules, prisoners were allowed to receive food parcels which made a huge difference because, although not everybody was a recipient, those who did not get any parcels still benefited from the extra camp food which had not been used by the others. At the time of my arrival, on the 2nd of July 1942, the consecutive numbers given to the prisoners were jumping by 10,000 per month yet the camp population remained constant at about 10,000 which translated into an average of 330 prisoners dying every day. A year later, this situation changed a bit and there had been a drop in the daily mortality but, otherwise, our circumstances remained the same. We waited, impatiently, for the end of the war but at the same time we knew the Germans well enough to realize that they would never, willingly, let us out alive. In October 1944, after the failed Warsaw uprising, the Russian front which stopped its progress for 2 months (the duration of the uprising), resumed its advance and came sufficiently close to Auschwitz to force the Germans to evacuate all the Poles from the camp.

On the 30th of October 1944 no prisoners were sent out to work but, instead, individual numbers of prisoners were called out starting with the lowest and, gradually, working its way up. I became then possible to to notice that in some groups of numbers like, for instance, 11,000 to 12,000 only 3 numbers were called out and in my group, comprising the numbers between 44,000 to 45,000, only 23 prisoners were still alive. As the numbers grew higher more prisoners were found present and I only vaguely remember that the numbers called out ended somewhere around 120,000. When the reading of numbers was completed we were marched to Birkenau where all 4 crematoria, each equipped with a gas chamber, were located and, at first, we thought that we were all going to be killed. Instead we were put in one of the empty enclosures with a railway branch line where rows of cattle trucks were assembled. Gradually we were divided in separate groups which were then loaded into the waiting trucks. We were packed tightly and then the door was closed and sealed. Our train traveled quite slowly for three days and nights frequently stopping and waiting and it was, sometimes, possible to see, through a small opening in the wall, the names of the stations which we passed. I remember one called Sagan and another Kotbus. During the second night we stopped somewhere near Berlin during an air raid. One could hear the sounds of explosions and the antiaircraft fire. It was great to hear that the Germans were getting what they deserved. The next day, on the 3rd of November 1944, we arrived at Oranienburg where we were unloaded and we spent the night in a huge hangar which was a part of the Heinkel Aircraft Factory. In the morning we were marched from there to the nearby Concentration Camp in Sachsenhousen. There I was given the number 113036 but I stayed there for only two weeks and on the 24th of November 1994 a group of us was loaded on a train and sent to Buchenwald where I was give the number 96452. The following day, a group of 500 prisoners was sent to a sub-camp in Wantzleben where we were destined to work in a potassium salt mine 1,000i deep where a factory producing undercarriages for Heinkel aircraft was established. We were housed on the surface in one room of a large factory building with several rows of 4 tier bunk beds. The prisoners were divided into two groups. One where prisoners were working as miners preparing new rooms where more machines would be placed in the future and the other where the prisoners were operating the already existing machines making the required parts. I had the luck of being given a job on the surface as Schreiber who was assisting the Stubeaelteste in keeping the room, where we lived, in order. The Commandant or Lagerfuehrer in Wantzleben was an SS Oberscharfuehrer whose name I forgot but who was called by the prisoners with a nickname „Skóra". There were also about 20 SS men serving as guards. Every morning the

prisoners were taken down into the mine by elevators situated just outside the building and they were brought up again, after work, late in the evening. Before leaving they made their bunk beds and were given .5 liter of, so called, coffee which had not much taste and was,to all purposes, just warm water. After returning back from work they were issued their ration of bread and, sometimes, a sliver of margarine or a slice of horse meat sausage together with 1 liter of thin soup. The job of the Stubeaelteste, whose name was Marian Bily, and of myself was to sweep the floor and distribute the food which was prepared, by prisoners, in another part of the building. There were a few Frenchmen in our group and, since I spoke French, I had to translate any official announcements which were, originally, made in German. Among the Frenchmen there was a young man called Roger FosseÄ who worked with the miners and whom I befriended because he was both nice and intelligent. One day he injured his leg at work and, not being able to work as hard as required, he was frequently beaten. I convinced Marian Bily that we could use him as a helper and we made a request for the transfer of Roger from the mine to the Stube where, as an outstanding calligrapher, he would prepare a card index of all the inmates which „Skóra" wanted to have. It took two or three days before our request was granted and Roger was already close to death when he, finally, settled at the table in our small office and started working on the required cards. His leg healed and he never went back to the mine. Later on, our paths diverged and I never knew if he managed to survive. Two years after the war, when at Cambridge, I wrote to an address in France which I memorized when he gave it to me and soon I had a reply. We became good friends and he was sending me food parcels at the time when all food was rationed in England while in France it was plentiful. Later he married Yvonne, the daughter of the Mayor of Auffey, the village where he lived, and they had two sons, Jean-Luc and Yanik. In 1949 I went to a christening party of his first son, Jean-Luc , where he introduced me as the man who saved his life. At the time, he was working as a real estate agent but, being very ambitious, he was elected as a member of the French parliament and, in time, became a deputy minister in the De Gauleis Government. We kept in touch through Christmas cards written by Yvonne and once, she and her two sons, came to Idle Acres from Washington where Roger was attending an important international conference. A year or two later we had the last card from Yvonne in which she told us that Roger left her and they were getting a divorce.This was the last I heard of him.

Towards the end of the winter it was obvious that the war was going badly for the Germans. There were continuous bombing alarms and raids on various cities. For two days and nights we could see the skies lit up by fires after the huge raid on Dresden which was 40 km away. On the 12th of April 1945 no prisoners were sent to work and, instead, we were assembled into a long marching column of 5 men abreast with 30 escorting SSmen spread along the sides. „Skóra" rode his bicycle at the end of the column. We marched towards Magdeburg and, soon, some weaker prisoners were not able to keep up and dropped out sitting down or lying on the side of the road. They were left behind and when „Skóra" caught up with them he killed them with a pistol shot in the head. Late in the afternoon the column stopped at an old quarry and we were told to rest at the bottom of it while the guards formed a circle around the upper perimeter. Much later I learned that that the Germans planned to finish us off there but they changed their mind feeling that there were not enough of them to do it without risk. They decided to join a group from another camp, which was heading in the same direction, when the ratio of guards to prisoners would make it more favorable for them to initiate the slaughter. After an hour we resumed the march and continued walking for the rest of the day and into the night. It must have been just before

midnight when Kazik Gradowski and I decided that it was time to try to escape. We marched next to each other on the extreme right side of the column and, when we felt that the gap between the guards walking on our side became large enough, we jumped across the ditch and started running as fast as we could away from the column. It took several seconds before we heard the first shots of machine pistols and the bullets whistling by but we continued to run until we dropped totally exhausted. We were in a ploughed up field and we could see from the lights flashing along the road that the column stopped but, after a while, it resumed its march. It was a strange feeling being temporarily free but in the middle of Germany where, if caught in our prison uniforms, we would be shot on the spot. We started walking in the westerly direction until dawn when we realized that the land was absolutely flat an devoid of any vegetation where one could could take cover during the daylight hours. It was getting quite light when we came across a fairly deep ditch where we thought we could hide when, suddenly, a German soldier with helmet and rifle appeared from nowhere. He challenged us and, my German being quite fluent, I proceeded to explain that our civilian labour camp had been bombed and we tried to get away from the bombs when, suddenly, the soldier said in Polish „Donit worry. I am also Polish forced to join the army because I lived in what they now call The Reich. I deserted two days ago and during the day nobody pays any attention to me because there are plenty of soldiers everywhere but at night I am becoming conspicuous and I have to hide in the fields." He told us that, not very far, there was a civilian camp of forced labourers with many nationalities and he knew there two Poles who might be able to help us. He said that he had to leave now but he advised us to stay in the ditch until he came back. It was an endless wait for us, cold and hungry, until he came back late in the afternoon but, this time, in civilian clothes and carrying a suitcase. He brought us some bread which we devoured instantly and civilian clothes into which we changed burying the hated striped uniforms in the silt at the bottom of the ditch. The clothes he brought included caps which were very important to cover our shaved heads which would make us very conspicuous. He thought that the front was very close judging by the sounds of exploding bombs and artillery shells and the movement of the German troops withdrawing in the north easterly direction. He recommended, however, that we stay another night in hiding while he would return to the town of KÜthen to stay with his friends in the civilian camp. The night was filled with front line noises, flashes and sounds of explosions, roars of heavy engines on the ground and in the air which was music to our ears bearing witness to the reality that the invincible German war machine was crumbling at last. At dawn the sounds of the battle shifted to the east, although, there was still some fighting going on in KÜthen. By late afternoon we moved to find the camp which, we knew, was situated in the east part of the town. It turned out to be full of people, men and women of many European nationalities and with no German authority in charge. Apparently the Germans left during the night and the Americans were now in the town and only a few of the remaining Volksturm troops, old men and young boys, continued fighting from some of the buildings and from the rooftops. The camp had a number of typical barracks filled with two tier wooden bunks, some not occupied, so we had no problem in finding space to sleep. The next morning there was no more shooting and all fighting in the town stopped.

We were, at last, free and, more important, still alive. It was only then that my friend Kazik told me that his real name was Janusz Jarosz and that he was a lieutenant in the Polish army in Scotland where he was trained with the Special Units and subsequently parachuted in Poland in 1943. He was caught in the streets of Warsaw in the early 1944 and, without any specific charges, sent to Auschwitz. He told me that, now, his objective was to get back to

his unit in Britain as soon as possible and that he would help me to get there with him. The most important task to begin with was to secure some food. We soon found out that all food in Germany was rationed and to get any one needed some coupons. Although KÜthen was now occupied by the Americans, their administrative units have not yet arrived and, in the meantime, the German administration carried on as usual. When we arrived at the town hall and declared that we were Polish political prisoners from Buchenwald the officials there became very cooperative and subservient and ,without further questions, gave us all the coupons we requested for our imaginary group of 10 and the money needed to buy the food. Our next move was going to the railway station where in the trucks parked there we found all that we needed. One truck contained 20 kg. bags of macaroni and there was a cistern of 95% pure alcohol. There also was one truck filled with German Africa Corps uniforms, sandy in colour and found those useful to change into because they added some authority to our appearance and the general population in Germany probably never saw them before. Looking around, we found a small hand cart and some 10 liter milk cans. We took two of the latter, filled them with alcohol, and loaded them together with one bag of macaroni before going back to the camp. Rapidly the camp was becoming quite empty, with previous inhabitants leaving in all directions, and we settled in a room from which we removed nearly all bunk beds which we used for fuel in an iron stove to heat the room and cook the food. We stayed there for about two weeks while we made plans for the best way of getting out and, somehow, reaching England. Walking around took a long time and we we thought that we should get some vehicle as means for more rapid transport. In one of the German houses we spotted a small, 200 cc motorcycle and when we told the owner that we needed it he handed the key without a word of protest. He was ,obviously, impressed by our uniforms which, he might have thought, belonged to one of the occupying forces. Janusz, at one time, served as a traffic officer and could drive any imaginable vehicle so we mounted the motorcycle and rode away. From then on our life became much easier. One day we went to the local airfield where Janusz introduced himself to the American officer in charge, captain Fisher, from whom we learned that he expected evacuation planes to land from time to time to pick up French prisoners of war from the nearby camp. There was no fixed schedule and to be picked up depended on the decision of the pilot who brought in the plane. During the following few days, on two occasions, we saw a plane circling for landing but, by the time we arrived at the airfield which was 3 km away, it was too late and the plane had already left. One day, however, as we were entertaining American soldiers who found out that we had vodka and loved to drop in often bringing us some presents of cigarettes or chocolate which were difficult to obtain. Janusz, who left the room sometime before, came in and pulled me outside. He said that he saw a plane coming in for landing and he rode out to investigate. The plane, a Dakota 3, just landed and he spoke to the British pilot explaining our situation. The pilot promised that, if we were there in 15 minutes, he would take us to Brussels. There was no time to lose and, without saying goodbye to our guests, we mounted the bike and raced to the airfield. When we arrived, the plane was still there but it was already loaded with the French P.O.W. The door was still open and the pilot, ignoring the protestations of the French C.O., ordered two Frenchmen to leave and minutes later we sat in the plane which was rolling down the field for the take off. We landed in Brussels three hours later where we were met by members of the Red Cross with gifts of chocolate and cigarettes. In short time Janusz managed to get in touch with the British Consul who arranged for us to be picked up by a military truck which took us out of town to a chateaux surrounded by woods. We were, obviously, expected there by the only inhabitants in evidence, a British major and

two female officers, one from the ATS and the other from the WAAF. The major took us to a room, which was used for stores with piles of Tommy guns and other weaponry, and gave each of us a battle dress, a pair of boots and a beret and showed us to our room with a bathroom en suite. He told us that dinner would be served in an hour and we should come back as soon as we were ready. We had a quick bath and change and when we came back he offered us a drink and, soon after, the two girls brought from the kitchen a simple but delicious meal. The general atmosphere was very friendly and pleasant and, after the dinner, the girls put on a gramophone record with dance music and we spent another two hours talking and dancing until the major told us to go to bed because we were scheduled to leave early in the morning. After breakfast a pick up truck, with two British sergeants in it, came to collect us and it drove us to the port in Ostend where we were transferred to a fishing cutter manned by naval captain and two British sergeants. We left immediately and it was a thrilling experience for me who never had been at sea before. It was very windy and the sea was extremely rough with huge waves tossing the small boat in all directions. Soon after departure Janusz became sea sick and went down to the cabin. I stayed on the deck the whole time and enjoyed the new experience until, after 7 hours, we arrived in Dover. It was the 3rd of May 1945 and, 3days later, Germany surrendered. There was a car, again with two sergeants, waiting for us in the port and it took us to the railway station where, this time escorted by only one of the sergeants, we boarded a train for London. In those days I spoke French and German quite fluently but I did not know a word of English and had to rely on Janusz for translations. He told me that we were warned by our escort not to attempt to communicate with the other passengers in our compartment. An hour and a half later the train arrived arrived at Victoria Station where our escort handed us over to two civilians who drove us in their car to a large building enclosed by a high brick wall with broken glass and barbed wire mounted on its top which we entered through a heavy, iron gate guarded by an armed sentry while other sentries patrolled the outside perimeter of the wall. The whole place looked very much like a prison which, in fact, it was its primary purpose being to house people, who entered England without documents, while their identities were being verified. Later we found out that the place was in Balham and was generally known as „The Patriotic School". While there, we were treated very well. The food was good and we were given a packet of Craven A cigarettes every day so there was nothing to complain about and we felt very happy. Janusz was allowed to telephone his military unit and was let out two days later but I had to stay for two weeks being interviewed every day for approximately six hours. The interrogating officer spoke Polish and wrote down every word that I said while I was relating my life history and asked many questions in connection with the time I spent in Auschwitz and the other camps. I had excellent memory and I was able to give him names of hundreds of SSmen whom I met during my life as prisoner and I was also able to draw a fairly accurate map of Auschwitz and and environment. After a few days, when I thought that I have given him all necessary details, my interrogator started asking similar questions all over again. It was, obviously, designed to catch any inaccuracy or contradiction in my stories which would then put in doubt their veracity. I must have passed my tests because after two weeks I was released in charge of an official of The Polish Government in Exile who took me to the „Soldiers House" in Islington where Polish soldiers were allowed to stay while visiting London. I stayed there for about two weeks exploring, among other things, the London Underground train system which I found fascinating and very easy to follow if one wanted to reach any part of London. I practiced changing lines at designated stations and became quite proficient at it and the advantage of my project was that it cost me only the

price of a 1.5 Penny ticket. The tickets had the name of the station where one bought them printed and they had to be shown only when leaving the station so that the collector could see that one paid enough for the trip. The cheapest tickets, which I used, allowed usually trips not further than 2 or 3 stations so I had to come back within those limits. On my first day of exploring the system I stayed on the trains quite late and when I arrived at Charring Cross where I was supposed to change lines to get back to my station in Islington called Angel, I found out that the station was already closed for the night and I missed my connecting train. So there I was , lost in London, in darkness, because of the still observed „Blackout", miles away from my destination and not being able to speak a word of English. I did not panic, however, and I decided to do the only thing I could - start walking. The sky was clear that night and thanks to the blackout I was able to find the North Star. I knew that Angel was vaguely in the north-easterly direction and I tried to maintain that course. Unfortunately the streets in London never go very far in a straight line and my task was far from being easy. Nevertheless 6 hours later I found Angel and came home.

I was originally allowed to „land" in England on condition that I would join the Polish forces and, shortly after the arrival, I appeared before the Recruiting Commission and went through the usual medical examination. I was assessed as unfit for military service and, instead, I was permitted to attend a university in order to complete my education.

3. THE POST-WAR PERIOD

(a) ***The English experience***

The Polish Army Command Center was located in the hotel „Rubens" not far from the Victoria station and, one day, running around it, trying to find an office where I had an appointment, I met in the corridor a childhood friend, Jasiek Romanowski, whom I did not see since the Summer of 1939. Jasiek was in the uniform of a captain in the Polish army and he told me that he was serving as the aide-de-camp to General Władysław Anders, the Commander of the Second Polish Corps which fought the war in Italy. Neither of us had the time to talk there and we arranged to meet for lunch when we could catch up on our news.

Jasiek went to war with his cavalry regiment on the first day of the the German invasion and his army group was retreating eastwards when the unexpected Soviet attack forced them to turn South and eventually cross the frontier of the, then, neutral Rumania. He eventually made it to France, where some Polish forces were re-forming, but he was ordered to go back to Poland with a mission to help in organizing the Underground Resistance movement. He went first to Hungary and, when trying to cross the frontier to Poland at night, he run into a Soviet border patrol. There was a lot of shooting during which he shot one of the Soviets but was himself wounded in the stomach. He somehow managed to reach the house of a Ukrainian peasant in the vicinity. When he left France he was given some gold coins to use in case of emergency and now he gave two of them to the peasant who assured him of his help and told him to lie down and rest. Two hours later the peasant brought a Soviet patrol who arrested him. He was first taken to Lwów where he was kept in hospital for two months and then transferred to Moscow. For several weeks he underwent there a 3rd degree interrogation after which he was tried and sentenced to death. He was then put in a death cell in Lubianka awaiting his execution. In the meantime, but unknown to him, Hitler

attacked Russia on the 22nd of June 1941 and Poland instead of being an enemy, suddenly, became an ally. One day the door of his cell opened but, instead of being led to his execution, he was set free. General Anders was also imprisoned in the Lubianka and Stalin commissioned him to organize an army from the 1.5 million Poles who have been deported to Russia in the years between 1939 and 1941. The organizing of that army run into enormous difficulties as Stalin, not trusting the Poles, provided only enough funds for 35,000 soldiers and made all kind of other obstructions. In the end, in some miraculous way, Stalin agreed for this Polish army. later to be known as the Second Polish Corps, to leave Russia for Persia while another Polish army under the command of a communist General Berling remained in the Soviet Union. From Persia the Polish army moved to Iraq and then Palestine and eventually it was shipped to Italy where it fought as part of the 6th Army under the command of General Alexander. One of the bigger achievements of the Second Polish Corps was the taking of Monte Casino where, for several weeks, the fortified German paratroopers halted the progress of the allied forces. After leaving Russia, Jasiek married Irena Graff, a widow who also was a member of the Second Corps. He was now staying for a few days in London to arrange things entrusted to him by General Anders. At lunch I met a great friend of his wife, Marysia Ostrowska, a volunteer worker for the Red Cross who, later, helped me a great deal during my stay in England.One of the first things she did was to find me a free room to stay with the family of an English solicitor, Mr. and Mrs. Cree in the London suburb of Upper Norwood where I lived for about six weeks. In mid June she sent me to recuperate with the family of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Tallis in Tredegar, South Wales.

Jasiek was demobilized in 1946 and they moved to London where Jasiek enrolled with with the University of London to complete his studies in Mechanical Engineering which were interrupted by the outbreak of war. They bought a house in Ealing and, later, after he earned his degree they emigrated to Canada and bought a house in Montreal at 5611 Wentworth Avenue. He got a job with Shell in a refinery where he worked for 25 years and later became a freelance consultant which involved frequent trips to the USA and to some other parts of the world. Their first son, Jacek, was born in England and the other, Andrzej, 10 years later in Montreal. Jasiek and Irena have always remained my best friends and we remained in close contact. Irena died of cancer in 1987 which affected Jasiek very deeply and ten years later in June 1997 Jasiek died suddenly of a heart attack.

While in London I attended a beginneris course in English at the Regent Street Polytechnic. Every day we had 5 hours of instruction by different teachers speaking no other language except English. It was pretty exhausting as I had no knowledge of the language at all and, moreover, I joined the class in the middle of the course. Also at 28 it was a little late to try learning a new language. At each class there were, usually, 20 students mainly men but there was one very attractive Polish girl, Magda Stryje-ska who came on a visa from Switzerland. Her mother, Zofia Stryje-ska was a well known Polish illustrator had a dual citizenship and spent the war in Switzerland where she died. Magda, not having any family there, decided to go to England to learn the English language. We became good friends and we spent quite a bit of our spare time together. She lived near Maida Vale or Warwick Avenue where she rented a room from a brother and sister couple, Maciek and Danka Mars. Maciek, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poland, earned his living as an illustrator and Danka, who also had a degree in Fine Arts worked for The Polish Interim Committee For Education. They were both more than 10 years my seniors and I found them very intelligent and interesting. Neither of them has ever married and they both had hearts of gold. They regarded Magda more as a member of the family than a lodger.

It took well over an hour by bus from Upper Norwood to the school but I never missed a class and always tried to do my best. The Crees, who provided me with a room, had two daughters. The older one was married to a clergyman, the Rev. Daniel Jenkins with whom she had a 3 year old daughter and they all lived with her parents. The younger sister served during the war with the WAAF and I met her when she came home on a 10 days leave. She was very attractive and had been engaged to get married in the near future. During her leave she tried to help me with my homework but we had such difficulty in communicating that her efforts did not meet with much success. Mr. Cree was tall and thin, with a clipped mustache and he , obviously, worked very hard leaving early in the morning and coming back late. Mrs. Cree had completely white hair which made her look older than she probably was. During my stay she was visited once or twice by her sister Mrs. Nixon, known in the family as Aunt Olive. She was a tiny, elderly woman whom I mention because, a little later, I read in the paper that her body had been found in the Hyde Park, probably, a victim of robbery and murder. Although all members of the Cree family were exceptionally nice and kind my lack of English made it quite impossible for me to know them better. After I left their home I maintained for a while contact with them and much later, when I was at Cambridge, Mr. Cree came there and asked me for help to find a cemetery on Huntigdon Road.

After I was released from the „Patriotic School", I reestablished contact with Janusz Jarosz who, in meantime, did very well. He received lieutenantis back pay due to him for the past two years, obtained a sick leave for an indefinite period and now lived in London with his brother, a captain in the Military Police in a rented flat, somewhere in the Chalk Farm area. When his money run out, he got a job of a manager an a farm in Norfolk (he had a degree in agriculture from Poland) and a year later moved to Ireland where he got a job on a farm breeding horses. The last I heard from him was when he was working as manager on a farm near Phoenix in Arizona. After that we lost touch but I heard that he returned to Poland and was lecturing at the University of Kraków.

Before I had enough time to learn much English at the Regent Polytechnic Mrs. Ostrowska told me that she was offered a place for me to stay and recuperate with a family in South Wales. I left in mid June for Tredegar where my hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Tallis lived. Roy was the manager of a coal mine and , during the war, headed the local militia with the rank of a major. Mrs. Tallis was the chairman of the Anglo Polish Friendship Society which was, probably, why I was invited to stay with them. They had two teenage sons, Nevil 16 and John 13. Their house, surrounded by a nice garden, was one of the largest in Tredegar and they, evidently, belonged to the upper crust in that town. They were all extremely kind an nice to me which turned my staying there into a wonderful holiday. The boys were taking me to the movies and parties with their friends but since nobody spoke any other language than English I found communication very difficult. I tried to explain to the Tallises that I had been a university student in Poland where I studied for a degree in Agriculture but my studies were interrupted by the war and I hoped to resume them in the U.K. and they assured me that they could arrange for me the admission to Usk in the neighbouring county of Monmouthshire where I could do just that. One day they drove me to Usk and introduced me to Mr. Purvis who showed us various classrooms, laboratories etc. and, at the end, said that I would be admitted and should report there at the beginning of the school year in September. The name of the school was „Monmouthshire Institute Of Agriculture" and, although, the place looked rather small to me I did not question it because, after all, what did I know about universities in this country? I wrote to the Polish Interim Committee for Education informing them of my admission to Usk and asking for a grant that would enable

me to to continue my education. I received a reply that they pay my tuition and give me a grant of ú20 per month as long as I could prove that I passed all the required examinations. If I failed any of the exams all payments would be stopped.

I arrived at the institute on the required date and I was given a room on the second floor of one of the cottages, occupied by a permanent farm hand, and sharing it with another student, John Bramwell. Gradually I learned more about the Institute. I found out that weekdays started with work on the farm from 6 to 8 a.m. followed by breakfast and then lectures from 9 till 12. There was a 2 hours break for lunch and then more practical work on the farm until 5 p.m. Dinner was served at 6 p.m. The school was coeducational and there were 50 students divided into two departments: Agriculture (28) and Horticulture (22). Students were admitted after finishing regular school and the average age was 18.

During the lectures students were supposed to take notes or, sometimes, they were given typewritten summaries. Unfortunately I was unable to take notes and I usually borrowed those taken by my roommate John Bramwell. I copied them in my spare time and tried to get their meaning with the help of English/Polish dictionary attempting, at the same time, to memorize each page as well as I could. I worked until 1 a.m. every day including Saturdays when there were no lectures we were required to work on the farm only up till noon and on Sundays which were free. I was extremely tired most of the time and, sometimes, I thought that my head would burst. I persisted, however, knowing that the first terms exams were held in December and it was a matter of life or death for me to pass them. When they eventually came all I could do was to read the question and and to guess to which page of my notes it referred to and then write down everything I could remember from that page. Some subjects were easier for me than the others but, on the whole, it was a very trying time. After 4 days we received back our marked papers and, to my immense relief, I passed in all subjects placing 18th in a class of 28.

Most of our teachers were quite young, some of them girls, straight out of college and, in many cases younger than me. During meal breaks they often asked me to their common room and they were fully aware of my language problems. They all expressed their amazement at the result of my exams and just could not believe that I did so well. Of course I paid more attention to the girls, some very attractive, but I never allowed myself to deviate from my daily routine and I only socialized visiting their common room during the meal breaks. The food at the Institute was simple but plentiful and , with all the exercise while working on the farm, I gained weight and became quite fit. Our practical work consisted of spending some weeks in various departments of the farm e.g. the dairy farm, the chicken farm, the sheep farm and the pig farm. Some time was also spent driving the tractor with various farm implements. The longest time was spent working as general farm labourers thinning, hoeing and harvesting root crops, making hay, harvesting and thrashing cereals, thatching stacks and laying hedges. We became, gradually, skilled in every aspect of farm work.

The second term exams were held in April and, by that time, I learned enough English to understand the questions and I felt more relaxed writing the answers. When the results were tabulated I was placed as 8th out of the total of 28 students. Some of the teachers helped me to write applications for admission to various Universities. I think that I wrote to 6 of them but I received only negative answers. In desperation I decided to apply to the Polish University College which was affiliated with the University of London but, since they did not have a faculty of Agriculture I applied for studying Chemistry as my main subject. The reply stated that I would be required to pass an entrance examination to be held in London in

July. The examination subjects would include Physics, Mathematics and English. This was really bad news. It had been more than 10 years since I left school and had anything to do with Maths or Physics and the only pass I could hope for was in English which, at present, became quite adequate. Nevertheless, since I had no other alternative, I decided to try and hope for the best. In the meantime I continued my working routine in preparation for the final examination at the Institute which was scheduled to take place early in August.

In July, a day before the date of my examination, I took a train from Newport to London and reported at the Polish University College. The questions in Physics and Mathematics were far too difficult for me to answer and the question in the English language absolutely stunned me. I was required to write an essay on „The English Wild Flowers"! I did not know many names of wild flowers in any language including Polish so I could I, possibly, write an essay on them in English? Needless to say I failed 100% in all subjects and, the next morning, I boarded a bus to go to Paddigton Station to catch a train back to Newport. My bus was passing on its way by the Palace Gate where the offices of the Polish Interim Committee were situated and, for a moment, I thought that, perhaps, I should inform the official in charge of my grant of my miserable failure but then I decided that it was not worth while. The bus stopped and and started again when on some inexplicable impulse I changed my mind and jumped out of the already moving bus. I did not understand what made me do it and, almost regretfully, I went through the motions of reaching the office of the official. I was walking along a corridor with office doors on each side when one of the doors opened and out came Danka Mars whom I did not see for more than a year. She greeted me warmly asking me how I was doing and I briefly explained my situation saying that the prospects of continuing my education were not very good. When Danka heard my news she invited me into her office and, immediately, started typing a letter which she then put in an envelope addressed to Mr. William Thatcher, the Censor of Fitzwilliam House (The censor is now known as Èmasteri). She told me that without further delay I should take a train to Cambridge and, personally, deliver the letter. She briefly explained that Mr. Thatcher believed that the Poles, during and after the war, had a very rough deal and, therefore, he reserved 20 places, in the College he was heading, exclusively for Polish students Danka being in charge of supplying names of the suitable applicants. I had been lucky because I would be filling the last available vacancy.

I arrived at the Fitzwilliam House before noon and handed the letter to the receptionist. After a short while I was ushered into Mr. Thatcheris office. He was a tall, slim man in his late fifties with a ruddy complexion and a bullet scar on his left cheek which was immobile and slightly distorted. He had thin gray hair and a pair of kind blue eyes. He asked me to relate my war time history and my present status, asked a few other questions and said that, in principle, he was prepared to admit me to Fitzwilliam house on condition that the School of Agriculture would accept me as a student and, therefore, I had to see the secretary of the school, Mr. Ede, for an interview. Mr. Edeis office was within an easy walking distance and half an hour later I was facing him seated behind a large desk. I told him about my previous studies in Poland but he became really interested when he heard that I was just about to complete my course at the Monmouthshire Institute of Agriculture. He said that the school would be glad to admit me but he recommended that that I should take, during the Summer, a six weeks course in Chemistry and Botany at the Tutorial College in London.

I just could not believe mu luck. Suddenly, all my immediate problems were solved and now I could not only get proper education but I was also allowed to do it at one of the two

most famous universities in England. On my way back to Usk I still thought that it was only a dream but, now, I had to face the reality and get back to work preparing for the final exams at the Institute. When they came, writing them was really quite easy. I had all the information imprinted in my mind and the only difficulty was to find enough time to put it all on paper. When it was all over and we all waited for the closing of the year speech and handing out of the Diplomas by Mr. Purvis which supposed to happen in the afternoon I allowed myself, for the first time, the luxury of going to the local pub in the village. I was driven there by two of teacher friends and we had a few toasts to our friendship and the end of the school year. Not being used to drinking I became slightly tipsy and when we came back and everybody was already gathered to hear the Principalis speech I did not pay much attention to what he was saying. At one point he said „...and our top student this year had been Ted Wisniouski..” which did not sink in until I realized that everybody was looking at me and that I was supposed to step forward to pick up my Diploma.

The year spent in Usk, where I was totally immersed in English speaking surroundings, was a marvelous way of learning the language and I do not think that anywhere else I could have been so successful in making such a good progress in a relatively short time. Had I gone straight to a university, where the standards of required performance would have been much higher, I would not have been able to cope and the whole operation might have ended in a disaster. The beginnings at Cambridge were very difficult. When working on an essay in the library I spent at least twice as much time reading and writing than my English born colleagues. Even my best Polish friends, Karol Godlewski, also reading Agriculture and Piotr Wandycz (Maciekis and Dankais half brother) reading History had an advantage over me by having arrived in Britain from France in the Summer of 1940. They both served in the Polish army in Britain but were never sent overseas and, being 4 or 5 years my juniors, assimilated the language much more readily. Also they both were 2nd year students and , already, had a full year of university experience. Karol became the captain of the Fitzwilliam House Rowing Club and he persuaded me to join in. At the time our club had 3 boats on the river Cam numbered in order of performance and, being a greenhorn, I was put in the 3rd better known as a rugger boat. Cam was a narrow river and the boats started at a fixed distance behind each other in an order which had been established in the previous year. The boats were all graded into 4 Divisions, the 1st Division starting in front of the 2nd and so on After the start each boat tried to „bump” the boat in front and, if successful, it was placed ahead of it at the start of the race the following day. The „bump” was declared when a boatis bow passed the rudder of the boat in front of it. My boat was the last one in the 4th Division so, at least, we had nobody behind to threaten us but, nevertheless, we had to row the full length of the course which was about 4 miles. Snow and frost were extremely rare in Cambridge but, in that year both were in evidence and the banks on both side of the river were covered in snow when, on the first day of the race, we began the long row to the end of the line which was our established position on the river. Soon after the start we managed to hit something under the water level which made a hole in the hull and the boat started to sink. All the crew got out in time without getting soaked but it was a very long and cold walk back to our boathouse where we left our bicycles. This was the end of my rowing career as I decided that I could not afford the time to attend all the practice sessions imposed by the club.

Fitzwilliam House had, at the time, a very small building which accommodated only the offices, dining hall and the kitchens and only very few residencies. Most of the students lived in allocated licensed digs acquired from owners of private houses who were willing to

sublet parts of their houses. I was allocated my digs in a hose at 60 Halifax Road which belonged to a widow Mrs. Ethel Symonds and consisted of a 2nd floor bedroom and the ground floor sitting room which I shared with another Pole, Karol Krótki. My bedroom was quite small with one very drafty double hang window and an electric fireplace equipped with a meter into which you had to place coins if you wanted to get some heat. The same arrangement applied in the bathroom which was accessible from the corridor outside my room and which also had a meter into which one fed coins if one wanted to have a bath. My rent for this accommodation was ú5 per month. The days of attendance at the university were counted by the number of nights spent in residence and all students were obliged to be in their residences, be it colleges or licensed digs, before midnight. After this hour the entrance doors were locked and those left outside faced the penalty of expulsion. Mrs. Symonds was very thorough in following these rules and always waited for either of us to come back before she locked the front door. All students in Fitzwilliam House were required to attend at least two „Halls" a week which meant eating dinner in the college for which there was a charge of 5 shillings. I ate all my other meals at the British Restaurant or the WAAF cantine which had the merit of being very cheap although the meals there were quite awful. Food rationing in England persisted for four years after the war and, since it included even potatoes, people often ended up being hungry.

In Cambridge one had to have bicycle, I acquired a used one for 10 Shillings which I eventually sold, 3 years later, for ú1 making a 100% profit. The other essential item was an undergraduateis gown. The gowns had to be worn at the „Halls", at the exams and after dark which meant after 8 p.m. After that hour the streets of Cambridge were patrolled by the Proctor wearing his long, graduateis gown walking in front of two porters, commonly known as „Bulldogs", dressed in black and wearing top hats. If the Proctor spotted in the street a young man without a gown he would point him to the „Bulldogs" who would than approach the young man and, tipping their hats, would ask politely if he were a member of the University. If the answer was yes they would ask him to speak to the Proctor if the answer was no they would apologize and withdraw trying, at the same time, to memorize his face. The fine for not wearing a gown after dark was 10 shillings. Sometimes a guilty student would try to run away but with little hope for success because the „Bulldogs" were renowned for speed and usually got their pray. A lot of these peculiar rules dated back to the middle ages and applied mainly to young teenage boys while, after the war, most of the students were ex-servicemen whose average age was 25 and who after having been, in many cases, high ranking officers found them rather funny and difficult to accept. One of my English fiends, Ted Stearn, a very gallant fellow who lost his right forearm in the war, stood one evening in front of his college on the pavement smoking a cigarette and talking to another student but not wearing a gown. He was spotted by the Proctor who pointed him to the „Bulldogs" who asked him politely if he was a member of the University and when he admitted that he was they said that the Proctor would like to speak to him. The Proctor asked for his name and the name of his College and then fined him ú1.00, !0 Shillings for not wearing the academic dress after dark and another 10 Shillings for smoking on the street while he was supposed to wear the gown (which was against the rules).

As a student I elected to have supervision in 3 subjects which involved one hour spent weekly on each subject with a supervisor who usually set you a question to prepare an answer in the form of an essay which you brought in the following week and which was brought back, corrected, a week later, when it was also discussed with the supervisor. I found preparation of the essays very time consuming because, as I mentioned before my work in

the library was hampered by my imperfect knowledge of the English language. The work with the supervisor, however, helped considerably in broadening the overall knowledge of the subject. During the first year I set myself a target of spending 8 hours per day on work which did not include the hours while attending the lectures or labs and as a result I did not have the time for any socializing or making new friends. This first year at Cambridge was very important. It created a lot of new challenges which I had to overcome. I knew that if I blew it I would have to dig ditches for the rest of my life. Working at home during the Winter was very unpleasant because of low temperatures and the high humidity. I could not afford to feed coins into the fireplace and, anyhow, it did not help very much with wind whistling through the closed windows. I tried to limit working at home to the minimum but I still had to spend some time there. Also going to bed was a horrible experience. The sheets were so damp and cold that it took ages for the heat of the body to warm them up sufficiently to allow me to fall asleep.

Being a student, I had to belong to the Union Society which provided some amenities like a dining room, squash courts etc. but, for me, its main attraction was the debates which, sometimes, aroused my interest. In its building, The Union Society had one large room fashioned in the manner of the House of Commons in which the students debated various topics. The debates took place in the evening and I do not, now, remember how often but their format consisted of a motion, presented to the House, on which there were two speakers defending it and two others speaking against it. The 1st speech, defending the motion, was followed by the 1st rebuff of it which gave a chance to the 2nd promoter to answer the criticism which, in turn, gave the 2nd opponent an opportunity to reply. The motions to be debated were posted in advance near the entrance door so it was easy to check if the debate had a potential to be interesting. At the end of each debate all those present left the room using doors marked „Ayes „ or „Noes" thus enabling the count of votes. The results of the vote was posted the following day and often mentioned in the press. When the motions had a political contents it was customary to invite guest speakers from the House of Commons to take part in the debate as 2nd speakers and, during my student years, I had an opportunity to hear many M.Ps and also some members of the contemporary Labour Government. It was a pleasure to listen to these guests whose debating ability was very superior to that exhibited by our local students who, after all, were just trying to learn the trade.

The period of Exams fell somewhere at the beginning of May and consisted, in my case, of 1.5 hours of writing to answer the questions typewritten on a sheet of paper with a heading „ Do not attempt more than (x) questions" the x being a number minus 1 of all the questions listed which gave one the chance of leaving out the question that was most difficult. I now remember only very vaguely how many subjects I had to cover but, since they also included laboratory procedures in the science subjects, the exams extended over several days and in this first year were a true ordeal. The last day was devoted to writing an essay on a specified subject e.g „Soil Erosion" and the marks obtained in the essay counted only if they raised the Class average otherwise they were ignored. The results of the exams were posted some time later in a display box on the outside wall of the Senate House and the names of successful students were graded into Classes: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Pass. The names of students who failed were not published. It is hard to describe how impatient I was awaiting the results to appear. For several days,the first thing I did every morning was to rush to the Senate House and look at the important wall and day after day there was nothing there until one morning, at last, they were there. I found the sheets relating to the 1st year

exams in Agriculture and, starting from the bottom, scanned frantically the names printed there. My name did not appear in the Pass section and my heart sunk but I continued my search in the 3rd Class and there it was. What a victory and what a relief! I now had more than 4 months of the summer during which I had to find jobs to supplement my highly inadequate grant from the Polish Interim Committee for Education. During the Christmas and Easter holidays I could not be gainfully employed because I had to concentrate on my studies and, since I had nowhere to go, I stayed in my digs. I heard, however, that the Common Cold Research Unit in Salisbury was looking for volunteers who were prepared to offer themselves as guinea pigs during Christmas holidays and students from Oxford and Cambridge were given preference. There was no remuneration for it but they paid for the return railway ticket, provided all the food Including beer and paid for the telephone calls to anywhere in England. I went there on two occasions and absolutely loved it. The volunteers were housed just outside Salisbury in Harvard Hospital which, after the war, was donated by the Americans and consisted several very comfortable Nissan huts each having 6 bedrooms, a dining and a sitting rooms plus two larger administration buildings. The volunteers lived in pairs each pair occupying one Nissan barrack and each pair allowed to go for walks in the outside fields but honour bound not to approach other people closer than 200 feet. After the arrival we gathered in one of the administration buildings where we were fed and briefed about the rules and the general procedure after which each pair was allocated their barrack. Next morning the door bell rung announcing the arrival of our food for the day which was delivered in large Thermos Flasks left outside on the front steps. We were told not to open the door for 2 minutes allowing the carriers time to go away. A little later a Doctor and a Nurse, both wearing masks, arrived and put some drops into our nostrils some of them infected with the cold virus but we did not know who was the recipient and and who served as control. This was kept secret and was only known by the Bacteriologist who, eventually, disclosed it at the final goodbye party at the end of two weeks. At he same time we were given a sheet each on which we were to record the times of the day when we sneezed and how we felt in general and other symptoms which I now forgot. The doctor and the nurse visited us every day to take our temperature and more drops into our noses but we never saw their faces and we only knew their voices. On my first arrival to the Harvard Hospital in December 1947 my room mate was Chris Zeeman from Downing College where he was reading for a degree in Mathematics. He was a very pleasant fellow whose main hobby was classical music and he told me that he and his room mate at the college, Cook, had a large collection of records and, during their spare time, they played a game which consisted of one of them placing the needle, at random, at any place on the record of his choice and then timed the other how long it would take him to identify the work being played. When, back at Cambridge, I visited them in their residence I was witnessing their playing this game and I was truly astonished with the speed , which rarely exceed 6 seconds, which either of them required to identify the piece. In our quarters at the Harvard Hospital we saw each other only during our daily meals and the daily walk usually taken in the afternoon. When walking we did not talk very much and once I asked Chris if he was working a lot and, to my surprise, his reply was „I am doing it right now" and he then elaborated that in his subject they rarely used any textbooks and worked mainly by applying and solving various formulas which they could do in their heads. During these walks we sometime encountered a pedestrian heading our way and we had to retreat to keep the required distance. Apparently the reason for giving preference to students was that they were more reliable in obeying this rule then the workers from the local Woodbine cigarette factory who, as volunteers, were known to go

shopping during their walks. thus making the total experiment invalid. During my stay I did a considerable amount of work as the conditions for it were absolutely perfect and I decided to come here again the following year. The goodbye party turned out to be quite an event. We all met for the first time in a large reception room in the Administration building where we had an excellent meal and the opportunity to tie together the various voices, known only from telephone conversations or heard behind the masks, with faces. During the meal the Bacteriologist disclosed his secret and I had a chance to find out that, this time, I served as control and never was meant to catch a cold. Apparently the common cold and any other virus cannot be grown in cultures like the bacteria but can be kept alive in a living medium a fertilized egg being used for our experiment . The research at the Harvard Hospital never reached itis objective and, I recently, heard that it had been abandoned a few years ago.

The following year I was inoculated with the virus but also failed to become infected. This time my roommate was John Painter, a divinity student from Oxford whom I found rather dull and very materialistic. I do not remember much about him except that he was an unbeliever and , at Oxford, he chose his subject as career with a goal of becoming a bishop as soon as possible. I tried to limit our conversations to minimum which resulted in having more time available for work.

During my Summer holidays I had no difficulty in finding employment. I do not remember today the chronological order in which they occurred but, rather, classed them by the amount of pleasure I derived from them. There was one at Chivers, a large producer of all kind of jams and marmalade. They advertised for 20 Cambridge students to work as supervisors at a displaced persons camp numbering about 700 European students and other persons of all possible nationalities who were living in a now abandoned wartime RAF airfield located in the middle of a strawberries growing district. During the strawberry season, Chiversi lorries were bringing endless loads of newly picked berries, for processing, before they were placed in large barrels and shipped to the factory. The strawberries arrived on wooden trays and, before they could be placed in the barrels, they had to be „plugged" or have all the green ends of the stalks removed. The European students did the actual plugging and were paid per tray they processed while the supervisors were keeping all the records, and had to put the fruit into barrels which they, then, loaded onto lorries departing for the factory. My job was that of the interpreter and announcer on the loudspeakers in those languages I knew which was English, French, German and, of course, Polish and, that combination allowed me to communicate with, practically, everybody. We were paid by the hour so the day started by clocking in and working through the day and clocking out by the end of it since we were responsible for cleaning up the place we usually worked for two extra hours after everybody else left. At night we usually sat around a bonfire and listened to songs of the students of other nationalities. After three weeks the strawberry season ended and most of the other supervisors left but I stayed for two more weeks after the blackberry season started. It was the most pleasant and the best paid best job I managed to get during that Summer. Another job I took was that of an Eel worm and Colorado Beetle inspector in the vast potato fields of Norfolk. I was doing this job with five other students and wee traveled from farm to farm on our bicycles and our wages were paid by the Ministry of Agriculture who were trying to control those pests. In another job I paired up with Chris Atchison a student I met on one of the other jobs and we decided to go apple picking. We rented a tent which we pitched on a farm near a large apple orchard and in order to economize we cooked all our meals, consisting of oat meal, on a Primus stove. The apples were being put for storage in large refrigerated sheds where the temperature was kept just

above freezing. It was quite hard work climbing up and down the ladders and then carrying the baskets for weighing since this was piece work and we were paid by weight. between us we picked several tons of apples and made good money but by the end of it we were so fed up with porridge, which with the apples and an occasional egg comprised our diet, that we were glad when the this job ended. Another job that I remember having on an apple farm was that of picking apples which have fallen on the ground and was quite tiresome because one had to walk carrying\ heavy baskets and frequently bending to pass under the low branches. I was paid the then prevailing agricultural wage and, working with me, there were two other farm labourers who did not exert themselves and often stopped to rest. The bulk of the labour, however, was provided by the German Prisoners of War whose camp was located nearby. They were all very young and hard working even though they were only paid 1 Shilling per day. I moved in with them and slept on a tiered bed in a little cubicle paying only my share of the wages of one of them who stayed behind to cook their meals. It had been a very interesting experience living and talking with them and seeing how little they knew about the realities of life in Hitleris Germany. I remember being asked by one of them if I had ever been in Germany and when I answered that I had been in Buchenwald he declared, quite innocently, that his father served there as a guard. On one farm, this time working with Chris, our job was to pick beans. The farmer had a contract to deliver the the beans in shallow wooden boxes for which he was paid a fixed price per box. Probably knowing that paying the minimum agricultural wage would cost him 17 Shillings per box he put us on piece work promising to pay 15 Shillings per box. For the next 3 days Chris and I worked very hard and we made, on the average, 30 Shillings each per day. This should not have made any difference to the farmer since we picked many more boxes than he would expect but he could not stand to see us make so much money and, suddenly, changed our payment from piece work to paying regular agricultural wage with the net result that from then on we followed the pace of other farm labourers and his cost of labour per box became considerably higher.

During the last Summer before our graduation Chris and I decided that we should try to get some real farm experience without concentrating only on making as much money as possible. Chris heard of a farmer called Edgar somewhere in Hampshire who had an outstanding dairy herd and, generally, an excellent reputation. We wrote to him applying for jobs and he accepted us for 8 weeks of the summer as general farm labourers paid the minimum Agricultural wage. On arrival, the farm manager arranged for us board and lodging in one of the farm cottages at a price which would not leave us in the end with much money saved but, since our objective was gaining some farm experience, we accepted it quite willingly. It was the biggest mistake we ever made. On the first day after our arrival we were put behind a potato digging machine which was one of the hardest and most exhausting work involving picking the potatoes into baskets and emptying them into sacks which, when full, had to be tied and, all the day, not being able to rest for a minute because, in the meantime, the digger was right behind and it was unthinkable to make it stop. We were hoping that one day it would all end and we would be given something else to do. All in vain. We stayed picking potatoes until the last day, we never saw the famous Edgar, and at the end of the Summer we were left with only ú8 saved for the whole time we stayed on that farm. So much for practical farm experience.

My second year at Cambridge was much less traumatic than the first. My English has improved considerably and so did the ability of studying which had to be adapted to the new environment. I also developed friendships with some of the students and we often gathered

together bringing up to date the information we acquired by asking each other questions and answering them in turn. I found that these sessions helped enormously in solidifying the knowledge acquired during the lectures and the subsequent work at home. Our group usually consisted of 3 to 4 students whose names I now forget except John Hill who later proved a brilliant student being the only one of all the students, in our year, writing the final 3rd year examination who was awarded The 1st Class. This was a very rarely occourig distinction and, if I recall it correctly, it was only Ted Stern, the armless hero of the W.W. 2. who also received it once. The result of the meetings of our small group was that by the end of the school year I felt so confident that for the last week before the exams I entirely stopped working and tried to relax by doing things that, because of my tight working schedule, I was unable to do during the year. In fact I found the Examinations in the last two years fairly easy and my only problem writing them was the time I had to allocate, evenly, in answering all the required questions. My only difficulty was the 3 hour essay which, being handicapped by the knowledge of the language, I could not write well enough to matter in my grades. I mentioned before that the essay did not really count unless it was good enough to improve oneis grades. My working timetables proved, obviously, successful because in each of the last two Examinations I was awarded The 2 nd Class which I considered more than adequate. The ceremony of awarding individual Degrees happened some time later in the Senate House for which I asked Jasiek Romanowski and Marysia Ostrowska who came from London and watched from the gallery high above the roomis floor. Jasiek made a mistake of trying to photograph the ceremony but was spotted by one of the „Bulldogs" who took his camera and removed the film from it. Apparently no picture taking was allowed in the Senate House which he did not realize.

When the elation of having received a Degree subsided I decided that it was time to apply for a job. I left Cambridge and moved to the apartment of my sister in law, Wanda who lived in Southgate. Wanda was the widow of my eldest brother Jaμ, killed in 1941 over Germany as a pilot of a bomber during a bombing raid on Bremen. He was a reserve officer in the Polish air force flying fighter planes and after the short Polish campaign he managed to get to France and, eventually, to England. At the time, there was a shortage of experienced pilots and he was transferred to a bombing squadron flying Welligtons.He was killed flying his 30th mission over Germany. He and Wanda had one son, Tomasz, born in December 1937 and Wanda, who was quite wealthy at the time, lost everything when the Russians occupied Lwów and, left alone with the baby, had a very difficult time for the rest of the war. She found herself under the German occupation when, in June 1941 the Germans occupied Lwów, and then then moved to the western part of Poland. For the rest of the war she was unaware of her husbandis death since she kept receiving food parcels from Portugal obviously prepaid in advance by Jaμ. It was only when I arrived in England and and found what has happened she found the sad truth. She then was smuggled into a Displaced persons camp from which she was allowed to enter England and receive a small pension of ú10 per month as a widow of an officer affiliated with the RAF. She rented a 2 bedroom flat in the north of London, sent Tom to a Catholic boarding school in Ipswich and took courses in sewing with the aim of earning her living as a seamstress. She had lodgers in one of the bedrooms which helped to pay the rent for the flat which was, actually, very poorly built. She lived on the top floor of a 4 storey apartment building and when it was cold in the winter the condensation from the not insulated concrete ceiling which served as the roof was so severe that it, literally, felt as if it were raining. Wanda let me use a couch in the sitting room and that was where I resided for the first year after obtaining my Degree. The first thing I did was

to obtain and fill in an application from the Colonial Office In which I specified Fiji answering the question on my preference for posting. I was told that my application would be considered and that I would be notified in due course. In the meantime I started answering advertisements in the Farmers Weekly and other papers for openings in Agriculture on my level of educations. Altogether I sent more than 200 application to all of which , invariably, I received negative replies. At this time I registered with the Labour extension. for for an unemployment benefit which was granted to me together with a Welfare supplement which in total amounted to ú5.5 To collect dole I had to report personally twice a week at the Labour Exchange where they tried to convince me that they could offer me a job as a porter in the underground. When I answered that I was a professional and I did not see any connection between that job and my qualifications they replied that it many benefits like free travel on the entire system and free socks (never understood why?). According to the rules, by being a Displaced Person, I had no right to take any employment without the consent of their office. They had to check first if there was an English person who wanted the job before I could get an approval. During this period I also applied for a Visa to emigrate to the to the USA but, under the existing quota for Poles, there was a 10 year waiting list. Canada simply refused me entry and Australia, which at the time, not only would give me an entrance visa but also would pay for my passage somehow, for reasons i do not now recall, did not stir up my imagination. After 9 months of not being able to find anything suitable I decided that it was time to try to change my career. I found through my Polish friends that there was a Pole who had a factory in the east London where he produced what was then called „Dunlopillo" foam rubber. The owner worked before the war as as a chemical engineer in a Dunlop factory in Poland and when the war broke out he took with him all the then secret production formulas and eventually when, after the war, he found himself in England he opened a small factory and, using his saved formulas, started production of foam cushions. He had two employees but needed another one an was willing to give me a labourers job. When I reported next time to the Labour Exchange and announced that I now had a job they called the factory owner and told him that if he had a vacancy he had to apply for replacement through them just in case there was an Englishmen available to fill the vacancy. When he answered that he needed a labourer, paid a minimum wage, and who had an advanced knowledge of chemistry they, reluctantly, granted me permission to take the job. The factory was located in the East End of London so it took me close to an hour to reach it by underground and 15 minutes of walking from the station. It was was a small operation with two other Poles already employed there. It contained mixers and moulds into which the final mixture was poured as well as several containers of different used to measure the chemicals in liquid or powder form and a large quantity of bags and steel drums containing the necessary chemicals. The work had to be very accurate as the proportions in which the chemicals were mixed and the length of time during which they were processed was critical. The owner and the other two Poles were friendly and working there was a real pleasure. The foam cushions had been at that time a relative novelty and were in great demand so every day we had to load them on lorries to fill in the arriving orders. My pay cheques were slightly higher than those that I was receiving from the Labour Exchange but the main advantage was being free from the dreadful bureaucrats and the stigma of living on the dole. I did not have the time to appreciate my new job properly because after three months there and, exactly, one year since I filled in the application for a job in the Colonies I received a reply from the Colonial Office offering me a post of an Agricultural Officer in the The Gold Coast Colony at an annual salary which made my head spin. Gold Coast was not the

best location I could think of and, had been universally known as „The White Manis Grave" but, the offer was so tempting that, without hesitation, I accepted it.

I was given a 1st Class ticket on the SS Accra sailing for Takoradi in the Gold Coast on the 27th of April 1950 which left me about 3 weeks to prepare for my departure. I do not remember who gave me the advice on what equipment I would need but I managed to get most of it at Moss Bros. who apart from renting evening clothes also catered to to people who who needed equipment for the Tropics. I bought two large, black steel trunks with my name painted in white, a folding camp bed, a folding canvas bath, two mosquito nets, mosquito boots which, at night, protected oneis ankles, a few pots and pans and some crockery, a Jeffrey .404 rifle a .22 rifle and a single barrel 12 gauge shotgun together with the necessary ammunition. I did not buy any clothes except one pair of dinner jacket trousers and a very light suit which I could have needed for some formal occasions. Apparently all the clothes required for work in the bush could be made quite cheaply, by the local tailors, after the arrival. On the 25th of April I took the boat train to Liverpool, spent the night in a hotel and in the the morning embarked on the Accra which was moored at the Elder Dempster Lines pier.

(b) ***The African Experience*****.**

The boat was very nice and my cabin was just below the main deck and I shared it with Major Mayhew whose bed was parallel to mine but separated with ample space between them. Each of us had a small bedside table as well as separate cupboards. I only brought a small suit case into the cabin leaving the bulk of my luggage in the hold. I have never been on a liner before and the luxury of it amazed me. The dining room and other reception rooms the swimming pool and deck chairs along parts of the main deck it all was supposed to make one as comfortable as possible. During the day the chief steward organized various games like bingo or horse racing, diving for coins in the swimming pool, or pillow fight on a greasy pole running horizontally above the pool which two men straddled facing each other while trying to knock the opponent with blows of the pillow down into the pool. Once during each trip they run an obstacle race which was great fun for the younger and stronger passengers. Every night one could buy for a few shillings a ticket for guessing the mileage covered by the boat during the day and the person whose guess was closest to the distance announced by the captain, collected the purse. Most of the passengers were civil servants either returning from their leave or, like me, going out for the first time. There were only two unattached women one called Eileen was a rather large nurse who was being posted to a hospital in Accra and the other, Hase Cameron, was going to rejoin her husband, Peter, to whom she had been married in England two months before. Hase was a nickname by which her Austrian, doctor father always called her. In German it meant hare and nobody ever called her by her real name, Helga. Hase was not only very attractive but she also had a brilliant mind and we developed a very close friendship which lasted until her death in 1998.

The boat stopped for the first time at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands where we spent 24 hours and could go ashore and do some shopping and sightseeing. The prices in Las Palmas were incredibly low and a lot passengers bought local brandies and wines which cost next to nothing. I took Hase to a night club where everybody was wearing evening clothes so, at first, we backed out but were reassured by the maitre dihotel that it was perfectly all right to come in street clothes. We had a very good dinner with wine and the total bill was just over 10 Shillings. The boat left in the morning and the next stop was in Freetown in

Sierra Leone. There was no proper port there and we anchored some distance from the land late in the evening and I will never forget the peculiar smell which the wind was bringing from the coast although it would be difficult to describe it. Later I read somewhere that this was known as the smell of Africa.

In the morning a few passengers left for the town on a motor boat and a few others were brought in while in the meantime a number of native boats loaded with young people surrounded the „Accra" and what apparently was the usual show started. Passengers standing on the deck were throwing single pennies which, in those days, were quite large copper coins and the boys from the boats dived and retrieved them before they disappeared into the deep. The water was very clear allowing the whole proceedings to be easily observed from the deck.

The next stop was in Takoradi which had a proper pier and which served as the main port for the Gold Coast. A number of passengers, including myself, disembarked there and after going through very perfunctory Customs and Immigration formalities we proceeded to find cars which arrived from Accra to pick us up. A clerk from the head office of the Department of Agriculture called Joe Davies, came to meet me in his car and, while we waited for my luggage to be brought up from the hold and loaded onto a departmental lorry, we had lunch in the portis restaurant served by native waiters in starched, white uniforms. My immediate impressions I had of the land to which I just arrived were first: the incredible, suffocating heat which I did not think I could ever bear and second: the extremely slow pace at which the natives moved. Joe drove me the odd 120 miles along a dirt road running along the coast, passing the historic town of Cape Coast, to the Head Office in Accra where I met the Director, the Deputy Director and some other brass working there. The Director told me that, for the moment, he did not decide where I would be posted and, in the meantime, I would be staying in the Airport Resthouse where I was driven by Joe. Resthouses were essentially buildings reserved for traveling Europeans and, depending on the location, they differed greatly in the facilities they provided. This one was fairly well equipped as it, obviously, served the air travelers. It had several rooms running along a long porch each having a separate entrance door and each equipped with two beds and linen as well as a shower and some cooking facility. One really could compare it to accommodation in a North American Motel. I stayed in the Resthouse for a few days until I was summoned to the Head Office and introduced there to Douglas Billes, whom everybody called „Bill" an Agricultural Officer in charge of the Experimental Agricultural Station, Pokoase, only 15 miles away. I was told that I was temporarily posted to Pokoase to work there with Bill who would acquaint me with the routine work done at the station and who was, now, going to drive me there.

After the arrival I was installed in the very comfortable and well equipped Resthouse which was quite close to the bungalow occupied by Bill who already found me a cook. Cookis name was Mensah and who for the time being, would also act as a steward until I reached my final destination. Mensah was 23 and he was previously employed by two or three Europeans where he gradually advanced from the position of a „Small Boy" to that of a „Steward" and ultimately that of a „Cook". I was going to pay him the usually accepted rate of ú5 per month and, in addition, provide him with made to measure, white uniforms. There were numerous tailors in Accra and at the same time that I ordered his uniforms I also ordered khaki shorts and shirts of light tropical cloth which I bought in the Union Trading Company, one of the two large stores in Accra. At the head of the country was the Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clark, who represented the King and later the Queen and, who resided in the Christianborg Castle.Years later, after he and I were long retired, we met in Aurora at a

dinner given by his cousin Peggy Garstang. Peggyis husband Bill was a teacher at the Saint Andrew's College and we were all close friends. At that time, there were approximately 3000 Europeans in the Colony , most of them civil servants and I soon found out that the expatriates were underdogs in the country where, by law, they were not allowed to own any land and, if they came in any other capacity than to join the Civil Service, they had to make a deposit of ú5,000, serving as a guarantee, which in those days was a huge amount of money. Most of the traders in the country were of European, Syrian or East Indian origin. The country was divided in three administrative parts which roughly corresponded to different climatic zones. Each part was subdivided into districts and administered by political staff. At the head of the administration was the Chief Commissioner in Accra and each of the three parts had the Assistant Chief Commissioner with offices in the capitals of the three parts. Each district, in turn, was administered by a District Commissioner. The Department of Agriculture had a similar hierarchy with the Director of Agriculture in Accra, The Assistant Directors in each of the three parts with offices in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale and Agricultural Officers on Experimental stations in each district. The narrow coastal belt „The Colony" had two rainy seasons and a fairly dense population making their living mainly from fishing which was reflected in larger frames of individuals due to their diet containing an adequate amount of protein. The other two parts had just one rainy season each usually starting when when the rays of the sun moving between the Tropic of Cancer and the equator reached the vertical position. In the Colony which was the closest to the equator there were two rainy seasons while in the other two which were closer to the Tropic of Cancer the two seasons merged into one each lasting for about 4 months somewhere between May and October. The amount of the rainfall varied with the location. It averaged 10 inches per season in the Northern Territories but reached more than 180 inches in some parts of the high forest.

The central, considerably wider belt, „ The Ashanti" with its capital in Kumasi, was covered by high forest and, in consequence, apart from the birds, was almost entirely devoided of animal life due to the endemic Trypanomiasis transmitted by the high population of TseTse flies. The population existed almost entirely on starchy diet and the inhabitants were considerably smaller than the rest of the population. Finally the largest, most northerly belt, „The Northern Territories" with the capital in Tamale, had the lowest rainfall in the country which averaged only about 10 inches per annum. It had park land or savanna vegetation and was covered mainly by grass, low bushes and an occasional high tree. The Tse-Tse flies were much less abundant and cattle was present on all local farms adding the much needed protein to the diet which, like in The Colony, was reflected in the general size of the people one saw around.

The most important line of work in Pokoase was breeding pigs which the Department tried to introduce into the country. The station was also growing a number of crops to feed the pigs but this was only secondary to the main objective. The pigs were housed in mosquito screened buildings which kept the Tse-Tse flies out but, in spite of this, their mortality rate was very high. There was a Danish veterinary surgeon who was supposed to keep en eye on the herd but he only came to the conclusion that the deaths were caused by nephritis or inflammation of the kidneys but was at loss to explain the reason for the latter. Bill gave me a target of doing some research on the subject which occupied me for the three month I stayed at the station. There were a few interesting facts which I established during that period which ended abruptly before I had the time to draw any correct conclusions. It has been generally accepted that, since no trypanosoma were found in the blood of the pigs, they were free from Trypanomiasis (sleeping sickness). I spent hours over a microscope

examining samples of blood until one day I drew the sample from behind the ear of a pig which did not yield blood but only plasma. I put it, nevertheless, under the microscope and found numerous Trypanosomas which indicated that the screening was not foolproof and some of the flies managed to get into the sties. This was interesting but did not answer the question of the nephritis which was not a symptom of the sleeping sickness. I suspected that there must be something in the grains which fed to the pigs that might have affected their kidneys. I do not remember today what were the components of the pigsi diet but, since they consisted four different pulses I isolated 4 pairs of just weaned piglets in 4 different sties and designed a diet which eliminated just one component, different for each sty. When after a few weeks one of the piglets died I did the post mortem of it and of the three other piglets which were paired in the other sties. After the second autopsy the results appeared quite obvious. Only piglets with Chick Peas in their diet had shriveled kidneys while those who missed it in their diet had normal, healthy kidneys. I never had a chance to complete my experiment when, suddenly, an order came from the Director instructing me to buy a car and be ready in a week to leave for Bawku in the Northern territories. I was supposed to stop on my way in two stations located in the rain forest zone to acquaint myself with different types of agriculture practiced in the high forest. The first was Asuansi, in the northern part of the Colony and, Kwadaso, in Ashanti. Having never driven before, and knowing nothing about cars, I had to rely entirely on Billis expertise who bought me and brought to the station a grey Commer pick up truck for which he ordered a top made of wood with a roof and expanded metal sides which had curtains one could roll down in the case of rain.. It had a manual gear shift for which one had to double declutch a procedure which I found very difficult to master. I spent the next four days driving over the fields practicing for the examination which was scheduled in five days in the Public Works Department. When the examiner, who sat on the seat next to me, heard me crashing the gears at least 3 times before we left the gate he became very nervous and when we barely entered the street he told me to turn round, asked me to come with him to the office and gave me my license. I bought some food supplies filled up the tank and drove back to the station where, the next morning, I picked up my heavy luggage and Mensah and set off for Asuansi.

In those days the roads in the Gold Coast were absolutely awful. They were all corrugated with little bumps which, unless one maintained a speed of 50 m.p.h., shook the car to bits and made driving very exhausting. When roads were dry there was also a cloud of fine dust following each car reducing visibility and making the overtaking quite impossible. Fortunately the traffic was light and the roads were wet so I made quite good progress. I was very proud of my truck and found driving it exhilarating. Asuansi was approximately 175 miles north west of Accra and I arrived there in the afternoon. The Agricultural Officer in charge of the Station was Derek Westwood who received me very well and helped me to install myself in a Resthouse some distance from his bungalow. After the open fields of Pokoase I felt quite oppressed by the forest encircling me and almost coming right up to my door. I had no specific duties at the station and spent most of my time examining plots of various experimental plants and reading the past reports. One incident which stuck to my mind was when Derek and his wife took me to a dinner with the head of one of the companies where Derek, who drove us there in his pickup truck, had a little too much to drink and overturned the truck which landed on its side. Luckily nobody was hurt but it was quite difficult getting out of the cab. Apparently we were not very far from the station so the Westwoods decided to walk back. We all wore dinner clothes, Derekis wife a long skirt which she lifted and tied around her waist. We walked in complete darkness using only a flashlight

taken from the truck. Being the only sober person I was quite worried because I had no idea where we were and the Westwoods couldnit care less. An hour later, however, we reached the station and, the next morning, I took a few labourers who lifted the truck and put it on itis wheels after which I started it an drove back to the station. I did not get very far when the engine stalled and it would not start again. What I did not realize was that, lying on its side, the engine lost all its oil and seized up. I felt really awful about it but Derek was very gracious about it. He had the truck repaired in few days and we became such good friends that during my first leave, which coincided with his, I spent a few days with them at his parents house in Pinner.

After a week at Asuansi I set off for Kwadaso which was just outside Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti. The Agricultural Officer in charge there was Mickey Blane whose bungalow was very near of that occupied by Isaac Sibson, the Assistant Director of Agriculture for Ashanti and the Resthouse allocated to me. Also there, were the bungalows of , the Assistant Director of Forestry Department and that of the Forestry Officer. The Forestry and Agriculture Departments always worked in close cooperation. What remained memorable for my first visit to Kumasi was that, on the third day of my visit, I was driving to meet the Assistant Chief Commissioner and, on the way there, I run into the side of a Chevrolet car, the priceless possession of the Assistant Commissioner, who was driving to the same meeting but on a different road the two meeting at a very acute angle. There were no signs posted on any of the two roads in question and I was convinced that the road I was using was the main one and, therefore, I had priority over the other joining it on my left while, in fact, it turned out to be the opposite. The resulting collision was not very serious but, in spite of my belated attempts to stop, I slid into the middle of the right side of the car. My front bumper did not suffer any damage but both doors of the car were dented. I felt really dreadful but it was one of the many lessons taken when I was learning how to drive. The next leg of the trip took me to Tamale, the capital of The Northern Territories which had only about 200 Europeans living there. My recollection of the first visit there are not very clear now and all I remember is that this was the nearest place to Bawku (400 miles) with a garage where I could obtain parts or have any repairs done to my Commer pick up truck. I also, had to pick up there my monthly food supplies including beer from Accra brewery and the one bottle of the, then rationed , whisky delivered by a Government lorry and ordered by mail a month in advance. It also had the only social club called Gymkhana Club whose membership was open to non Europeans. The other two clubs which I visited in Accra and Kumasi had memberships restricted to people of European origin. Sometime later I attended there, a fancy dress, New Yearis party for which one of the members a charming, black nurse came dressed up as a „Golly Wog" explaining that this way she looked quite genuine. She was one of the only two people whom I met during my stay in the Gold Coast who did not have a monumental chip on their shoulders and, curiously, both of them have been brought up by white families. I remember the name of the other which was Gardiner, who worked as Director of the Mass Education Department.

During my second tour in the country I met in Tamale a Pole who graduated from Cambridge at the same time that I did and whose story illustrates the difficulty met by foreigners in trying to find employment in England. His name was Piotrowski, whose parents emigrated to France after the W.W.I. and where he was born and educated. When the W.W.II. broke out and France was invaded he found himself with the Polish forces in England and, after the 6th of June 1944 fighting in Europe until Germany surrendered. After being demobilized in England he went to Cambridge where he studied languages, Spanish and

French (his mother tongue). After obtaining his Degree, which was difficult for him only because of his poor English, he applied for a job as a teacher and had interviews with several schools who all rejected him as unsuitable because, as some explained, the pupils would not understand his French accent. After a year, during which he had difficulty surviving as a private tutor he applied for a job with the Colonial Service and, after waiting another year, he was finally posted to the Gold Coast and ended up teaching at a school in Tamale. When I expressed my surprise that French was being taught at schools in the Gold Coast he replied „ but I am teaching English „ .

Another Pole whose fame as a scientist was well known in prewar Europe was Dr. Judenko. His subject was a fairly narrow field of Entomology pertaining to Aphids and the only job he could muster, for over three years, was sweeping the floors in The Entomology Building in Cambridge. He eventually also ended up in the Gold Coast where the Cacao trees, supplying the main country export crop, were dying from the attacks of the „Mealy Bug" for which there was no known remedy. Within very short time after his arrival Dr. Judenko found a treatment for the problem and thus secured the continuation of the stream of valuable foreign currency resulting from the export of the crop.

The road from Tamale to Bawku was intersected by the Volta River which had to be crossed by a ferry. Since there was only one road it was possible by having records of traffic and loads carried by lorries in each direction to estimate the quantities of food imported or exported from the district of Kusasi which was to be allocated to the care of the Agricultural Officer residing in the Experimental Station, Manga, just 4 miles outside of Bawku. In the Gold Coast the newly arrived officers, employed by the Colonial Office, were supposed to serve 18 months long tours which entitled them to one week leave for every month of stay in the colony. They also were allowed additional 12 days, each way, If they traveled by boat or 7 days each way if they traveled by air. After the age of 30 the tours were reduced to 15 months but the time allowed for traveling remained the same. As I was 33 when I commenced my service, my tours were lasting only 15 months right from the beginning. After three, 15 months tours which I was allowed to spend in Manga our figures showed that imports of food into Kusasi were gradually decreasing and, after 2 years, were replaced by steadily rising exports. It was a general rule that Agricultural Officers coming back from leave were posted to another Station and, in this respect, I was an exception by returning to Manga for 3 consecutive tours. This was, no doubt, the outcome of the results which I achieved by encouraging the farmers to follow the relatively simple methods for improvement accessible to all in the 1,200 square miles of Kusasi.

The bungalow in Manga was designed and built by one of my predecessors. It faced South and all the walls and the front door stoop were built from laterite stones, a reddish, easy to cut rock, common in the District, held together with cement mortar. The floors of the house and the front door stoop were on the same level elevated by 6 feet above the ground and consisted of a concrete slab supported by packed soil and accessible by stone stairs leading to the stoop. All the walls and the inside partitions were about 24 inches thick and whitewashed on the inside. There were essentially three rooms one serving for sitting one for dining, the latter with two small rooms at the back one serving as a food storage and the other to accommodate the water filter. The filter was a large ceramic, and glazed on the outside, affair composed of two parts, the upper one which had two replaceable, also ceramic but unglazed, candles screwed into its floor each candle having drip canals in the centre ending with percolating holes at the bottom it fitted snugly over the lower part which had a small tap on the outside and near the bottom. The routine was for the steward to boil

a bucket of water in the kitchen and then pour the water into the upper part of the filter. The clean drinking water was then poured into bottles using the tap in the lower part. The bedroom was also subdivided at the back into the bathroom and the loo. Above the bathroom was a large square tank into which water was pumped by a hand pump from a 40 gallon steel drum brought daily on a cart drawn by a pair of bullocks from the well located at the bottom of a valley about 1 mile to the south. The well was quite shallow but its walls were lined with concrete. The water was manually drawn by a bucket and a rope but, since the well had a limited capacity, sometimes, run dry during the dry season. Soon after arrival I ordered a steel windmill with a water pump which arrived in a large crate and I had a lot of fun assembling and placing it on a concrete foundation. At the same time I borrowed from the Public Works Department a set of steel forms to build a round, 7 foot high, concrete water tank with 10,000 gallons capacity. Once the job was completed I never run out of water and I used the tank to supply water for a demonstration vegetable garden which I built sometime later. Rosamond and I also used the tank for swimming which was not possible anywhere else because of the universal presence of water borne bacteria and parasites. All the windows were covered by open, hinged at the top, louvers which had no locks and could be partly open by propping them up with pieces of wood if a better air circulation was required. The front and back double entrance doors were also open louvers hinged on their sides. The house had a corrugated iron roof thatched on the outside which insulated it from the direct rays of the sun the the noise of the falling rain during the rainy season. There was no ceiling and the rafters were visible from inside and they were used by a large colony of bats resting there during the day and flying out at night. They attracted some predators and later, when I was already married, my wife Rosamond saw a snake which, having gobbled a bat, fell to the floor quite near the chair where she was sitting. Terrified, she remained seated and called one of the servants and, when he arrived, she pointed to the snake. He saw it and run out but, a few moments later, came back with reinforcements all three armed with sticks and within seconds the unfortunate snake was dead. They all claimed that it was a very bad snake but, having never seen it I was unable to confirm their claims. In the front of the house and on the right side of the stoop was a fair size Neem tree which as a species was popular with the natives who used their young twigs for chewing and cleaning their teeth. This universal, and seemingly natural, habit made sense because the tree contained a fair amount of quinine which helped to fight widespread attacks of malaria. The Europeans once used to take daily Quinine tablets as a prophylactic against malaria but, more recently, replaced it with tablets of Palludrine or Mepocrine while Quinine remained the last resort drug in solitary cases of „Black Water" a particularly vicious form of malaria. On the other side of the house and in front of the windows there were several ornamental flowering shrubs like Bougainvillea, Plumeria, Amaryllis, etc. To the East, and some distance from the house, was a very large Ficus tree known to the natives as a Jou-Jou tree which were scattered around the district.The local custom prohibited cutting such trees or groves and even any dead branches falling to the ground were not used as firewood but left alone. There was a great wisdom in this custom as this groves served as sources or reservoirs of seeds of species which might, otherwise, have disappeared for ever. Between the house and the tree there was a Resthouse for any visitors, to the main house, who might stay overnight. It was a simple round structure with a diameter of roughly 10 feet constructed the way the natives built their own houses. The walls were made of clay topped by a thatched roof and the only difference was that they were whitewashed in and out and had window and door openings covered by louvers. Behind or on the North side of the house there was a square, oblong

building constructed at the same time and, its shorter side, at right angle to the main building. That end was open and served as the kitchen while the, much longer, rear part had several rooms and was used as servants quarters. Still farther behind was a chicken wire enclosure to keep the chickens. Behind the house and the kitchen there was a ramp for servicing oneis vehicle. It was built of the same laterite stones as the house and it consisted of two 20i long 4i 6""„ high and 24 „ wide walls placed about 4i apart and accessible by the walls dropping at the beginning at a 45 degree angle. Driving up and later backing out was a very difficult operation because the width of the walls did allow any margin of error. I hated using it but I was lucky and never had a mishap. There was no electricity so the illumination was provided by Aladdin or Tilley\, pressured, kerosene lamps. Those were used to the minimum because they created additional heat in the already high temperatures. Throughout the year, the day light and darkness lasted exactly 12 hours with the sun setting very rapidly at 6 pm. and rising again at 6 am. It was customary to have a drink in easy chairs on the stoop having changed before into trouser worn over mosquito boots, long sleeved shirt with a tie thus keeping the skin areas exposed to mosquito bites to the minimum. A Tilley lamp was usually lit and hung above the the stoop with a large enameled and full of water wash basin placed on the floor underneath which was filled during the evening with swarms of flying ants (a stage in termiteis life) attracted by the light and some of them dropping into the water which made their wings wet and thus unable to fly. This was a delicacy relished by the servants who fried or roasted them for eating. In every room of the bungalow there was the basic furniture made by the local carpenter from, locally available, mahogany and it included the 4 reclining easy chairs with kapok filled cushions and 4 side tables for the sitting room, the dining room table with 10 straight back chairs and, finally, a large wardrobe with a hanging rod and numerous shelves as well as a double bed with a kapok filled mattress and a frame capable to support a mosquito net above and on all its sides. After making the bed, the steward attached the mosquito net to the supporting frame and, after making sure that there were no insects inside, tucked the bottom of it on all sides under the mattress. To get into the bed one had to untuck a small portion of the net, slide inside, and quickly tuck it under the mattress again. If, by some chance, a mosquito got trapped inside one could detect it by the high pitch note made by its wings when it was flying around. In such case one had to put on the light and kill it before it had an opportunity to sting and to gorge on oneis blood. I n the dining room, in addition to the furniture, stood, in one corner a small refrigerator which operated by keeping a small kerosene lamp lit permanently at its base. The refrigerator worked very well and even produced ice cubes. If it stopped working, the usual remedy was to stand it upside down which sometime cleared the obstruction present in the fine tubing. When I once showed the ice cubes to some visiting local chieftains who, of course, had no idea what ice was they all said that it burned their hands. One of them wanted to take a cube home to show it to his wife.

About half of a mile south of the bungalow was the stationis office with the overseer George Chilalla and Koffe the clerk working from there. Their houses as well as those of other permanent employees were built for them by the Department not far from the office and the other farm buildings. I usually arrived at the office at 6 am. then came back home for breakfast at 9 am. and, half an hour later, returned to the office where I stayed until an houris lunch break at noon then back to the office until the end of the working day at 2.30 pm.

My work at the station included management of the experimental plots designed by Peter Stevens, our departmental Chemist who was attached to the Head Office in Accra and

whose final objective was to obtain statistically significant responses of locally grown crops to the different fertilizer treatments. All the planting cultivation and the individual crop treatments, as well as recording the results, were carried out by the Station staff leaving the final statistical analysis to Stevens. Our biggest problem were the termite mounds sprouting occasionally inside the plots thus jeopardizing the statistical validity of the experiment. For the permanent removal of any nest, sometime as high as 6 feet and an even larger diameter at the base, it was necessary to break up the upper part of the nest and then find and destroy the queen who, otherwise, would continue to produce new generations of various forms of this fascinating insect. The operation was risky because one of the forms „the soldiers" were quite large and equipped with enormous cutting claws with which they used for attacking any intruder. The native workers who, usually, walked bare feet or, at best, only wore sandals were very vulnerable to these attacks and, to make them less ferocious we used Gammexane candles which, when ignited and inserted into the nest, produced a toxic gas affecting the „soldiers" and making them somewhat sluggish. The queen, with a small head and a large body which, really, was a sac thicker than the index finger and 4 - 5 inches long containing thousands of fertilized eggs capable of producing all the various forms of the termite family, lived in a separate, spherical, clay cell which could be found in the centre of the nest about 10 inches below the ground level. In spite of the use of gas the workers legs were covered in blood before the end of the operation but, if successful, they were rewarded by the body of the queen which was considered a great delicacy.

The other, very important, duty of the Agricultural Officer was the Extension Work covering the whole district and performed with the help of 23 Agricultural Assistants each of them attached to a specific part of the district. These were graduates of vocational, agricultural school which, in theory, made them literate and capable of writing reports but, in practice, the latter were usually difficult to decipher and, even more, to understand.

The District of Kuasi had 7 distinct tribes living in it and each of them speaking a different language. The most important were the Mamprusis who originally conquered the area and generally occupied the positions of the local chieftains in the individual villages. There were the Kusasis, Busangas, Bimobas and, I donit remember today, the names of the three others. The men of each tribe had their faces marked by specific scars which were obtained by making the required cuts on babies and then smearing them with cow dung which infected the wounds and made the scars more pronounced when they eventually healed. Apparently the reason for this kind of identification dated back to the days of continuous wars when tribes were raiding each other and slaughtering the male opponents while enslaving the females. It was only after the arrival of the Europeans that the peace was enforced and this, according to reports, happened as recently as 30 years ago. The men wore usually a loin cloth and sometime a short smock while women had a fresh bunch of leaves one in the front and one in the back hanging from a string encircling the waist. In the Fara-Fara tribe the women wore nothing in front and a little tail in the back. The land in each village belonged to the Chief who controlled its distribution between the farmers. Each of the individual farms had an area of about 9 acres which was about all a farmer could cultivate using, the universal tool, a steel hoe with a short wooden handle. After 7 or 8 years the soil became so depleted from its plant nutrients that the yields dropped to almost nothing and it was customary to to stop any hand cultivation and allow the land to return to the natural vegetation for, at least, 10 years after which the surface of the underlying bed rock had the time to weather and restore some of its nutrient value. When a farmer was ready to move he had to apply to the Chief who then allocated to him a piece of land which

already had the required rest. This, of course, involved a „Dash" or gift which it was customary to bring when visiting a Chief. The first thing the farmer had to do after getting his new plot was to build a compound which consisted of several round structures each to serve its specific purpose. The so called „rooms „ were round, thatched structures with the door or really a very low opening in the front to allow entry. The walls were made of clay mixed with cow dung which was universally used as the building material. The number of the rooms depended on the size of the family but they were built, some distance from each other, on the perimeter forming a circle with the door facing inward. They were all joined with each other by a high wall, thus, forming a compound with only one entrance gate through a space left open between two of the rooms. Inside the compound there were the additional structures for storage of the grain, the open kitchen etc. The open floor of the compound was constructed using the same mixture of clay and cow dung which was pounded down by short flat sticks to a smooth hard surface which could be easily swept clean by simple brooms and would last the whole of the dry season and had to be only renewed after, the annual four months, rainy season.

This was the way I constructed a tennis court on the south east side of the bungalow. To do this I asked the Chiefs of two neighbouring villages for help promising to hold a party. I then hired a drum band and ordered a few large calabashes of locally brewed sorghum, beer called „Pito" which had a fair contents of alcohol but was quite cheap and suited to the occasion. The Chiefs brought with them a large number of women of all ages who had the expertise of making floors and after a few hours of work accompanied by the drum beat they produced a perfect surface for the future tennis court. After this started the dancing. Each of the women, in turn, came alone onto the court and rhythmically performed their dance for about a minute after which she was replaced by a new one and so on they were offered some Pito and the party was on.

I always dreaded the moment when Pito was served because, to be polite, one could not refuse a drink when it was offered by a Chief. The standard protocol was for the attending woman to remove with her fingers the froth which has formed on the top of the beer in the large calabash and then, using a small calabash to scoop it full of the liquid pass it, on her knees, to the most senior Chief . The latter, after having a sip, passed it on to the next man sitting on his left who after a sip passed it on again and so it continued until it was empty and had to be refilled again. One always hoped that all the nasty bacteria and parasites, always present in any water, had been killed during boiling which preceded the process of fermentation but afterwards there were many other occasions when they could return before the Pito has been offered to one as a drink. During my last leave, after five years in the Gold Coast, I spent three months in the Hospital of Tropical Diseases in London where, amongst others, I was treated for amoebic dysentery with which I had been, probably, infected through drinking Pito.

I played some tennis with George Chilalla who loved it and was quite a good player even though he used a rather unorthodox style. Other partners who sometime came for a game were the District Commissioners and their wives and, off course my wife Rosamond after we have got married during my first leave in England. Rosamond was, by far, the best player and however hard I tried I could never beat her at the singles.

There was no Agricultural Officer at Manga at the time of my arrival and the district of Kusasi was temporarily looked after by Sandy Leslie the Agricultural Officer at Bolgatanga whose District, larger than mine, was the most densely populated in the country inhabited by the Fara-Fara tribe and, in the bad years, of late or inadequate rains which occurred about

every 3 years, there was a widespread famine. The land was considered fertile with granite as the bed rock but, due to the high density of population, there was not enough of it to allow for the customary rest period from the cultivation. I now from experience that if one had to administer two districts, as I did for a while when Sandy Leslie went on leave, one has barely the time to visit the other one may be once in two or three weeks chiefly to arrange the payroll and check the books. The Station at Manga was very fortunate to have George Chilalla as overseer because, in my opinion, he was bright and full of initiative and one could rely on his judgment. For some unknown reason he changed his name from Kodjo several years before I knew him but, in spite of this, all the locals used his old name and played dumb when you asked where he was, using the new one. He was married to a very good looking, statuesque black woman who was, obviously, ruling the household and with whom he had numerous children. He declared himself as being a Christian but I suspect, that he only did this because most of the Whites were Christian and, therefore, he believed it to be more civilized. He spoke most of the local languages and also Hausa which in most of West Africa was the language of the travelers and, knowing it, one could always find someone who could also speak and understand it. When I went on „trek" (called „safari" in other parts of Africa) he usually accompanied me and not only served as a translator but also was able to explain all the local customs which varied from village to village and from tribe to tribe. As I mentioned before he loved playing tennis and was often invited to make up a foursome but he was very tactful and always maintained the distance expected between the Blacks and Whites in those colonial days.

After 1956 , when the Gold Coast became independent and called itself Ghana, I corresponded with him for a while and he told me that he became an Agricultural Officer and was transferred to the south but, eventually, we lost touch and I do not know what happened to him.

My first and most important job after arrival in Manga was to start work at the Bumbugu Land Planning Area. There was very little information that I could obtain about it at any level of the Department of Agriculture and I only found its location from the official map of the country where it had been marked as an oblong, 2 miles wide and 10 miles long, running diagonally from the South West of Kusasi in the North Easterly direction. There were no specific instructions nor even any guide lines to the planning and how the plan was to be implemented. Soon after my arrival I visited the area and found that the corners of the gently undulating land, typical for that part, with farms and compounds scattered around, had been marked on the ground but there was no indication of any other work being carried out. After giving it some thoughts I decided that the first thing to do was to carry out a survey and to produce the detailed map of the area.

I have never worked on a map survey but I found at the station the necessary equipment, normally used in laying out the experimental plots, which consisted of a prismatic compass, 3 Gunter chains, several surveying poles an Abbey Level with a staff, a small drawing board and several sheets of graph paper. Chilalla gave me a gang of 5 labourers who walked bare feet but wore, ankle to knee putties, to protect them from thorny shrubs which covered most of the uncultivated land and, in addition, Abdulla Ali, the Agricultural Instructor responsible for the area who could speak both, Kusasi and English. I decided to work in narrow strips of 132 feet which involved setting a straight course with the prismatic compass and making 66 feet (the length of the Gunter chain) right angle offsets on each of its sides. In this way I was able to record in minute detail everything that was on the ground including elevations, farm land, waste land as well as individual crops and compounds. In

addition I recorded the number of inhabitants in each of the compounds as well as livestock like cattle, sheep, goats and poultry. I calculated that using this scale I would have to walk 90 miles and, as I found out later, 3 miles would be the maximum distance one could hope for covering in a day.

As I was given only three months to submit a comprehensive report I left the routine running of the station to Chilalla and set out to work on the survey almost immediately after my arrival. The progress during the first few days was rather slow because I was not familiar with this type of work and neither was my gang of labourers. Gradually we all become more skilled and our pace improved. Nevertheless it took me more than two months to complete the survey and another month to transfer all the data on a large 2i x 10i map on which I then coloured to denote various proposed land uses .

I assumed that he most important consideration for planning should be to minimize the soil erosion occurring during the violent storms of the rainy season and, therefore, all my proposals have been directed to achieve this end by using the land according to its elevation. All the ridges, which suffered most from the impact of torrential rains, should act like sponges absorbing as much water as possible and should, therefore, be taken out of cultivation and planted with trees. The land designated for cultivation should be protected from soil erosion by construction of trenches built, following the contour of the land, at every six feet of vertical interval, thus intercepting and slowing down the flow of water which would end up at the bottom of the valleys along which some dams should be built in strategic locations to slow the flow of the streams and to create reservoirs for additional water conservation.

When I finished the map and had my report ready I notified the Head Office and they fixed the date for the meeting at Manga of the Deputy Director of Agriculture from Accra, John Ward, The Assistant Director of Forestry from Tamale, Freddie Hughes and the Assistant Director of Agriculture from Tamale, Bill Billes, who had been promoted to this post after I left Pokoase. The meeting took place at Manga in my office where I hang the map, I produced, on the wall and explained my recommendations. The meeting had been a success and everybody present congratulated me on my work but it was then that I realized that I knew much more about land planning than my distinguished audience.

After the meeting I had more time to get acquainted with my district and I often went on trek visiting all parts of Kusasi. I often stayed overnight in the local Resthouses which were present in almost every village and exclusively reserved for the Europeans. They were simple, single room structures built in the same way as the local compounds with mud walls and thatched roofs one entrance and, at intervals, elongated openings around the building about 4 feet above the ground to serve as cross ventilation. I always brought with me a camp bed with a mosquito net and bedding, a folding table and chair, a round canvass bath and a pressure lamp. The cook, who always accompanied me, had a primus stove and a few pots, pans and plates as well as a bucket. He also carried several bottles of filtered water. After unloading the gear it was customary to meet the chief of the village with whom one exchanged gifts. I had small packages of tea to offer while the chiefs, invariably, offered eggs. The meeting took place with the chief sitting under a tree where the polite greetings and gift exchanges took place the Instructor responsible for the area acting as an interpreter. The eggs were useful for the next breakfast if one could find some that were still fresh but it was quite rare and I remember that in one village I received a large gift of 60 eggs but had to leave without a breakfast because they all proved to be rotten. The inspection of best part of the district gave me a good general idea of crops grown and cultivation methods used locally.

It seemed quite obvious that in order to increase the food production one had to concentrate on teaching the farmers to make a better use of the existing resources without introducing any revolutionary changes which were not practical and beyond the means of the local population.

The average size of a farm was about 9 acres which was all that the family could cultivate and plant at the beginning of the rainy season using the only implement they had, an iron hoe with a short wooden handle of about 24 to 28 inches. The field was first hoed and then the seed planted on the top of little round mounds, 6 to 8 inches high which were scraped from the most fertile, top layer of the soil. The most widely used crops were Sorghum and Millet and less commonly, Maize. The thin layer of the top soil, gradually, produced lower and lower yields and, when after about 9 years became almost totally depleted, it had to be put to rest and fallowed for the average of another 9 years. Although most farmers owned some cattle the manure was never used as a fertilizer and served only as a binding agent for clay during construction of walls and floors of a new compound or, when dried up, as fuel for cooking. The animals would never be slaughtered for meat and were only kept to represent the wealth of the owner who could use them as dowry when buying himself a new wife. The usual rate was 4 cows per wife but the future in laws were, as a rule, very choosy and insisted on getting only young and big animals in excellent condition if , however, the wife run away from her husband, which was usually happening when, after a few years, she did not have any children, the husbands main concern was to get back his dowry. At that time, however, the shoe was on a different foot and all he could hope to recover was 4 animals which fulfilled the only requirements of having 4 legs each. One of the wealthiest men I met was the Chief of the village in Teshi who had more than 200 wives and was still acquiring new ones on the eve of his death. I happened to arrive in Teshi a day after he died and I noticed that his huge compound had a hole punched out in each of the short walls which joined each of the 50 or more rooms encircling the whole compound and each used to accommodate 4 wives. When I asked Chilalla what was the purpose of the holes he explained that it was a common belief that when the husband died his ghost would wait at the main entrance and pounce on any wife who had been unfaithful during his lifetime and now tried to exit so the holes helped to get out without being confronted at the gate. When I remarked that every room in the compound had an exit hole made he answered „...well, he was a very old man..." and when asked again if it was acceptable for a married woman to have a lover he answered „... yes, but one has to be very, very careful..." .

Another interesting information I received from George was when I remarked that poor men could never marry because they had no cattle he answered that, in some cases, the not so beautiful wife could be bought with 4 donkeys and when I again asked what was the required standard of beauty his answer was „... well, if she did not have many lovers she couldnit be very beautiful... „

Just as I arrived at Manga we received several hundred of steel framed bullock carts and ridging ploughs for distribution to the farmers. I considered this as an excellent opportunity to promote the use of farm yard manure which had little hope of being, otherwise, accepted. I picked up two neighbouring farms which I designated as models which I would use to demonstrate the effects of cattle manure on the yields of the local grain crops. I promised the two the farmers, Musa and Awuni, That I would bring them the necessary manure from the close-by Quarantine Station where large herds of cattle, driven from the North and destined for Accra, had to spend a minimum of two weeks before they were allowed to cross the frontier. This was necessary in order to ascertain that they were

not infected with with Rinderpest, a highly contagious cattle disease. However, I made it conditional upon the farmers loading and unloading the Station lorry which would be used to cart the manure because I thought that they would appreciate it more if they had to make an effort instead of getting everything free. It appeared to me that it was a very attractive offer but they both sounded evasive. When I spoke to Musa he said that he was too old to do it alone and when I suggested that both neighbours should work together and this way help each other Chilalla, who acted as an interpreter explained to me that this was not possible because Musa was a Busanga while Awuni was a Kusasi and the two tribes could never do anything together. This was my first lesson on animosities between the different tribes which was later confirmed on many different occasions. It all ended with only Musa getting the manure and after the next harvest the results were so spectacular that the Department produced a film about him called „Musa the good farmer" which was later shown in villages around the district from a truck which was equipped with a generator and other paraphernalia necessary for showing films. It created a great sensation among the natives who never saw a film show in their lives and were particularly astonishing to those who knew Musa personally and now saw him appear on the screen.

The notion of handling cattle in any other but the traditional way was quite unthinkable in Kusasi and therefore it was important to demonstrate that using them as draft animals for pulling the ridging ploughs saved labour in cultivating the land and. therefore, allowed to increase the size of the farm without an extra effort. Once this became evident, however, the plough could become a dangerous implement unless used in a proper way. The traditional farm was gradually loosing its fertility partly through depletion of necessary elements by removing them with cultivated crops and partly through soil erosion accelerated by torrential rains during the growing season. The proper application of the ridging plough was, therefore, to use it only in the direction which followed the contour of the land. It was impractical to demarcate all the farms in Kusasi with a Transit level and therefore the Department imported a number of small spirit levels about 4 inches long and 3/4 inches in diameter with two little hooks at each end which allowed it to hang it in the middle of a 50 foot string supported, at each end, by a thin 3 feet high stick. These levels were given to each of the 23 Instructors in Kusasi and I personally gave a demonstration of how to use them. Four persons were necessary to operate this tool. The Instructor who watched the level, the two labourers who held vertically the two sticks at the ends of the string and one labourer who carried a bunch of stakes which he hammered in, with his hoe, at the point indicated by the Instructor who told the leading labourer holding, vertically, the end of one of the sticks to move up or down the slope until the air bubble was in the centre of the level. That point was then marked with the stake and the line moved for the next fifty feet. Once the Instructors understood and learned the routine the demarcation of the contour took very little time.

I managed to persuade most of the village chiefs to act as demonstrators and I gave each of them a cart and a ridging plough with a chain to pull but under condition that they would build round, open kraals enclosed with 4 feet high walls in which they would put at night all their cattle instead of of allowing them to roam freely around. In addition I requested that they all cut enough dry grass to build a stack near the kraal to be used as bedding for the animals. Simple yokes with a piece of wood and a hook in the middle were easy to make and the Instructors showed how to use them. This part took a little longer before it was accepted but the chiefs did the whole thing only to please me never believing that it it really could help them in any way.

It took about a year before the farmers noticed that using cows to pull a ridging plough would allow them to double their cultivated areas and the applications for carts and ploughs started pouring in. Each farmer, whose name was put on a waiting list was informed that they all would be required to pass a test proving that they have learnt to handle the cattle in the required, new way. There were 4 things they had to do: (a) To build a kraal; (b) To cut sufficient dry grass to build a stack which would last for a year; (c) To keep their cattle every night inside the kraal; (d) To apply fresh bedding every morning after the animals left for grazing. Once a month the Instructor would pay an unannounced visit to inspect the kraal and mark on, a specially prepared form, which conditions had been attended to on that day on that particular day entering a „+" or a „-" in the appropriate place. The only applicants who would be considered for the issue of plough and carts were those who had no „-" entries for one whole year. Their farms would be then marked for contours and they would be taught how to use their animals for ploughing.

In the first year of the operation the benefits of using cattle for draft and using their manure to fertilize the land were not understood and we only had under one hundred applicants of which only 11 qualified for ploughs. In in the second year, however, the ease of cultivation by ploughing become more apparent and, after the farmers realized that we were serious about our requirements, we were able to issue over one hundred ploughs to more than 300 applicants. The rigid adherence to the required conditions was paying off because, even those applicants who were not successful, still ended up with some manure which they had to apply to their land thus increasing the total yields. Our project had been so successful that after the, first three years, our records taken at the Volta ferry crossing showed a dramatic reversal of the prior import of the grain to the export to the South. At the time when, after 5 years, I was leaving Kusasi, for good, the ploughs used there numbered over 1,000 and the benefits of applying farm yard manure to the land, in order to increase the crop yields, had been generally recognized.

The Department of Agriculture had a separate branch dealing with soil conservation. There were two Soil Conservation Officers, Monte Moore from Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Jaz Clacy from South Africa. Both of them were born and reared in Africa and, therefore, felt much more at home than the expatriate officers. Jaz was married to Jeannie, also from South Africa, and they had a 2 year old daughter. Jaz and Monte worked on different projects but they saw each other quite often and were quite close friends. I saw more of Monty who became involved in the soil and water conservation work on the Bumbugu Planning Area in Kusasi. The Soil Conservation branch also employed, so called, Development Officers, who did not have to have a university education and were hired by The Colonial Office on temporary contracts and were used to help the Soil Conservation Officers. I only remember the names of two of them Dick Ashworth who came from Lancashire and had such a thick accent that I hardly understood him and Graham Bush, a real giant 6i 6" and heavily built, he was a very gentle man and Monte and Jaz kept on playing practical jokes on him. I remember that once we all sat on the stoop after dinner and they brought there a half full jute bag telling Graham that they had some apples for him. When Graham put his hand in he jumped up and screamed because instead of apples he found there a fair sized python. On another occasion the three of them were staying in the same resthouse and after Graham got all tucked in under the mosquito net in his camp bed, they untucked part of the net and inserted through this small opening a flying fox bat under the net extinguishing the pressure lamp at the same time. The flying foxes were huge fruit eating bats with no fur of any kind and a horrible snout resembling that of a fox, hence their name.

In complete darkness, Graham did not know what happened but he felt the bat trashing around and he went absolutely crazy, tearing his mosquito net and breaking his bed. Gentle as he was he would have killed them both there and then but, when he finally managed to free himself of the intruder, they already drove away and did not show up for the next two days.

The actual construction of the dams and terracing of the land on both sides of the valleys was done on contract by a commercial company which arrived from Tanganika in East Africa after the failed attempt of „The Groundnut Scheme" started by the post-war Government of Clement Attlee. At the head of the company was a very able businessman called Paton who, obviously, knew what he was doing. The company, which was working on cost plus basis which meant that all their expenses were paid and an agreed percentage was added to it, was using a large number of earth moving equipment like back hoes, scrapers, graders, tractors and lorries and employed a number of English operators who drove and maintained the machines.

All the dams were built from earth having a wide base and both sides sloping at 45 degrees and ending in a narrow , flat top. The site for the dam was chosen by The Soil Conservation Officer who also had to design the dam. All the earthen dams had to have an impermeable clay core running across the valley in the centre of the base to a depth required to reach the underlying bedrock. A trench, abut 3 feet wide was dug by a back hoe to the necessary depth and then gradually filled with paddled clay which was supposed to form a barrier preventing the water from the future reservoir leaking under the ground and escaping down the valley. The top of the dam had to be level except for the spillway which was placed at one end of the dam usually 2 feet below the rest of the top and up to 12 feet wide, to allow the surplus of water to flow out at a secured and controlled point thus preventing the damage to the whole dam. The sloping sides of the dam were protected from erosion by the grass transplanted there as soon as the dam had been finished. In the Bumbugu area we must have built at least 4 dams which spread them out at just over two miles along the whole of the planning area. The sides of the valleys were terraced at a 6 È vertical interval, each terrace dropping 2 „ at every 50 lineal feet. The terraces were built by the huge graders cutting the trench on the uphill part of the terrain and placing the resulting ridge on the downhill part, which forced the water to flow along the graduated contour into the bottom of the valley. The British drivers who operated and maintained the earth moving equipment were hired and lived in bungalows rented for them by their Company and their contracts stipulated that they come alone leaving their families, if any, behind in the UK. There must have been three or four of them but I only remember the first names of two of them. Rocky was the chief mechanic and Eddie was one of the drivers. At the time, I was already married and Rosamond invited them once for dinner. When we later had a drink on the stoop the conversation turned to elephants and Eddie said that he believed their tasks were made of „compressed air" which was rather puzzling until Rosamond realized that Eddie, a Cockney, did not pronounce the letter „h". I mentioned before that driving on the corrugated dusty roads was an agony unless you drove at 50 mph at which speed the vehicles, somehow, were flying over the bumps and did not shake your car to pieces. Unfortunately the African lorries were old, in poor repairs and usually overloaded, their speed rarely exceeding 30 mph. If you happened to drive behind one of these, you had to stay at some distance away because a long and dense plume of dust always followed a vehicle making it also quite impossible to overtake anyone. A few days after the dinner I just mentioned, Eddie found himself in his jeep behind one of those lorries. Being impatient, he

attempted to overtake it and was instantly killed colliding head on with a lorry driving in the opposite direction.

Once the dams had been completed and eventually filled during the following rainy season the water table in the bottom of the valleys stayed very close to the surface and it was enough to dig a well 3 or 4 feet deep to have a water supply lasting all the year round regardless of the season. To encourage using this water for irrigation of vegetable gardens I built a demonstration garden near the windmill and the reservoir at Manga which had a series of concrete lined canals distributing the water to a series of secondary lateral canals which actually irrigated individual beds. The level of all the canals was above the sunken beds and the distribution of water was controlled by sliding short boards in or out of the openings left in the concrete walls of all canals and thus allowing the flooding of individual vegetable beds. We grew the vegetables like tomatoes, coss lettuce, okra and cabbage which we found out were doing well under the local conditions and then we supplied the seedlings to the Instructors whose job included the promotion of gardening. During the rainy season the farmers were entirely absorbed by planting and cultivating their farms but during the remaining 8 months they had little they could do except attending funerals and going to the markets. Most of the farmers also did not realize that the vegetables existed and it was not easy to convince them that they could be grown during the dry season and also provide healthy food. All our seed were imported from England and planted in the garden at Manga and the seedlings issued free to any applicant. The gardens which the Instructors promoted were simple affairs of one or more sunken beds established near a previously dug well and the irrigation was done by hand using a suitably sized calabash. Gradually, more and more farmers followed our suggestions and the project ended as a great success. By the time I was going on my last leave you could find fresh vegetables like tomatoes, green onions and okra in practically any market in Kusasi.

I mentioned before Hase Cameron whom I met and befriended on the boat when sailing for the Gold Coast and during my first three months when I was at Pokoase I saw a fair amount of her and her husband Peter who at the time lived in Accra. They went on leave at about the same as I and, while in England, they invited me to spend a weekend in their house somewhere in Gloucestereshire called „Charity Farm". That was the time when I met Rosamond Gladstone whom I later married on the 18th of March 1952. Before going back to the Gold Coast, Rosamond bought a Citroen car which was loaded on the ship when we sailed to the port of arrival, Takoradi. From there we drove in the Citroen north stopping on our way in Kumasi where I left my pickup Commer with the Department of Public Works. From Kumasi we drove in a convoy I going first in the truck and Rosamond following at adequate distance to avoid the cloud of dust. It turned out a very traumatic trip. Very shortly after we started I had my first puncture so I stopped to change the wheel but we did not get very far before I had another puncture and no more spares. I tried to repair the inner tubes but after the next puncture puncture I run out of patches and when the next puncture occurred we had to drive together in the Citroen to the next village where we could find a blacksmith and have the tube vulcanized. It became obvious that when the pickup was stored by the Department of Public Works they left it standing on its wheels for four months instead of putting in on blocs, which was the usual practice, and the tubes deteriorated very seriously. In all, I had 11 punctures and the drive took considerably longer than anticipated. For Rosamond, it was a rough introduction test to the life in Africa but she passed it in flying colours as she did, afterwards, during her whole stay in the Gold Coast. When we, finally, reached Tamale I was able to replace all my tubes and tires at the local agency so we drove

the last 400 miles without further problems. We had another memorable drive in June 1953 when Rosamond became pregnant and we decided that she should have the baby in England. It was at the beginning of the rainy season and the road to the ferry on the Volta had been, at one spot, washed out and it was impossible to drive the Citroen across the break. I had our car followed from Manga by a station lorry loaded with labourers and wooden rails and, when we arrived at the break, the men lifted the car on the rails and carried it to the other side where we could continue our drive. At the ferry there was a huge lineup of local lorries and, since the river level was 30 feet above normal, it would have taken ages before our turn came. Reluctantly I had to resort to bribery and ú1 put us at the head of the queue. The rest of the trip was uneventful and we arrived at the Accra airport in time for Rosamond to board an „Argonaut" plane for the 22 hour flight to England. She reached London in time and, a week later, I received from her a telegram that our daughter, Diana, was born in the London Clinic on the 2nd of July 1953.

Shortly afterwards I was due for leave and, this time I took a plane to arrive in England as soon as possible. It was a long, dreary flight on a turbo prop „Argonaut" with two touch downs for refueling but I arrived in London as scheduled and found Rosamond and Diana installed in an apartment at Colherne Court which Rosamond rented for the duration of our stay in England. In due course, Diana was christened at the Brompton Oratory with my sister in law, Wanda, as godmother and the commander in chief of the Polish underground army general Bor-Komorowski as a godfather for whom his son Adam stood proxy.

Mensah, my first cook whom I mentioned before did all the shopping of food available in the local for myself like eggs which, always, had to be opened first to make sure that they were fresh and, therefore, could only be fried or eaten as omelettes, goat or meat, chicken and palm oil and for the servants yam and cassava or any other food they were used to eat. I did not take much interest in his cooking and I ate whatever he put on the table. The only beef available would be from cattle that died from some disease or the old age so I never used it. Sheep and goats, looked exactly the same and the only way to tell the difference was that the first had their tails hanging down while the latter had their tails sticking up but there was only slight difference in the taste of meat. One day, when I was taking a bottle of beer out of the refrigerator, I noticed a claw showing from under the paper wrapping. When I discovered that it was a rat, I asked Mensah what it was supposed to be and he said that he has bought it for my dinner. From then on, I made sure that I knew what was the menu for every meal. The eggs from the local hens were quite small and my standard breakfast which I had every day was six of them, usually, fried. On Sunday, when one had guests for dinner, it was the custom to serve a meal called „Palm Oil" which was a curry of a cut up chicken stewed in palm oil and made very hot with hot peppers or curry to which every person added some of the numerous, chopped up pickles and vegetables, onions, hot red peppers, okra, copra etc. from small plates which were passed on around the table.

When I got married I hired a local boy, Salifu, who had some previous experience working for a European as a „Small Boy" and I promoted him to a steward with a monthly pay of ú5 per month. He turned out to be an excellent choice and he stayed with me until the very end. Very soon they started to tell me that it would be a good idea if I employed a "small boyi" who would not cost very much but could, occasionally help them with their chores. I delayed it for a while but, eventually, asked Chilalla if he knew someone he could recommend and he sent me Mumuni, a 13 year old Kusasi boy whom I hired for ú1.5 and, although, I later found that I overpaid him, he turned out to be very nice and willing. When he started working, it became clear why the other two were so persistent in asking for a

“small boyi”. From then on, they hardly did anything delegating almost all of their tasks to Mumuni. I felt quite sorry for him but he never complained and, apparently, that was the usual way for all the servants to start their apprenticeship. The Europeans always paid more and it was generally known that the black officers, be it doctors or other professionals, would only pay half of what was, generally, paid by the expatriates. Many white people believed that the blacks were exploited by their colonial masters which, I do not think, was true at all because, if one took the output of each worker into account, it appeared that the wages of black workers were higher than those of the whites. It was later, when I emigrated to Canada and found myself working for a construction firm, I could compare the output of the white Canadian masons with that of his black counterpart, using as a standard the number of concrete 6” blocks laid, in each of the countries, per mason per day and it, then, became clear that it was the Gold Coast masons who were paid the higher wages.

In addition to the above mentioned servants I also employed a “garden boyi” Awuni, a Busanga whose job was to cat the grass and keep the compound tidy and also look after my horse, a chestnut whom we called „Winston” but whom I did not use very much and it was Salifu who frequently exercised him, riding bare back around the station to keep him in good form when he got too fat.

I had one rather unusual pet, a crowned crane whom we called Evelyn. I bought him as a small baby for 10 shillings from a native who was passing by carrying two of them in a sack and offering both of them them for sale. I only bought one and we put it in the enclosure with the chickens where, to start with, he was fed with the rest of the flock and ,probably, must have thought that he was a chicken always waiting patiently for the gate to be opened to let the flock out on the free range. This was happening even when he got so tall that he could almost just step over the chicken wire. When he grew up he became very beautiful with white plumage and black wings but it was his head that was exquisite. He had rosy-red cheeks, the colours becoming deeper when he was pleased, and a velvet like short plumage covering the top of the head with a 6” to 8” golden tuft rising in the middle. When he was out and we sat on the stoop, he would climb the stairs and start playing, pulling my ears and hair with his beak and occasionally drinking some beer from my tankard. The game he liked best was when, in order to teach him how to fly, I lifted him with both hands and threw him up as high as I could and he then flapped his wings landing somewhere on the lawn and, immediately climbing the stairs again demand another encore. When he was fully grown up and knew how to fly he would follow me going to the office where he perched on the roof before he descend into the valley to feed. He became completely independent but every evening he returned home for his little game and before it got quite dark he would fly off and perch on the roof where he would spend the night giving loud honks if anyone approached the house.

He followed me everywhere and sometimes he was a bit of a nuisance. One afternoon I decided to plant a long hedge at the edge of the front lawn and I had a long strip of ground prepared for it where I started pushing in 10 „ long cuttings of oleander. It was hard work doing it in the heat of the day and I was quite pleased when I finished the job but, when turned and looked back to admire the result, I saw that Evelyn has been following me pulling out every cutting that I pushed in just a moment before. On another occasion I was cleaning the carburetor in mu truck and having taken it apart I spread all the small parts neatly on a piece of a cardboard on the ground when, suddenly, Evelyn picked one of the jets up in his beak and and I was lucky to recover the part before it got lost when I was chasing him around. If I lost it I would have to get it from the nearest agency in Tamale, which was 200

miles away. When I was going on my last leave I told his story to John Gray, who was my replacement, and from whom I received afterwards a letter in England saying that, very shortly after my departure, Evelyn joined a flock of other crown cranes feeding in the valley and never again came back to perch on the roof.

After the arrival of Rosamond I started paying more attention to the food supply and we often went out in the Citroen with a 22 rifle and a shotgun looking for birds which we would bring back for lunch and dinner. The easiest to get were the guinea fowls who were usually found while perching on branches of some tall trees where I could shoot one with the 22 rifle before they all flew away to land on the ground or on some other tall tree. They were delicious to eat and they became our favorite game bird. Other game birds, which could be found sometime, were locally known as „Bush Fowls" and were similar to partridges. These were much more difficult to spot because they usually hid in the grass and finding them involved quite a lot of walking. In the wet valleys one could encounter the „Whistling Teals" which were the only ducks I have ever seen in that part of the world. They came to feed in the wet valleys and, while flying, emitted penetrating whistles. hence their name. They were also excellent to eat and we alternated them with the guinea fowl as our staple diet. This was definitely superior to the local chickens or goat meat available at the market. During this short trips we occasionally to the bank of a large pool or a river where one could see crocodiles. It was rare to find them on the banks and, when they were swimming, one only could see their eyes protruding slightly above the level of the water. At the beginning of my stay I tried to shoot them with my .404 rifle but never did it again after I found out that the locals believed that their bodies contained the spirits of their ancestors. Similar belief was also held about pythons and in this connection I had an interesting experience. One morning, when I drove to the office I noticed a big gathering of station labourers around the sheep pen. When asked they told me that inside there was a big snake which was eating the sheep. I went inside the pen which had only small windows and was very dark but when my eyes adjusted I could see a large python which already swallowed one of the sheep and was just in the process of swallowing another. Hen I came out, I asked the crowd if it was anybodyis ancestor or could I kill it, to which they answered that he was a Èthief mani and therefore could not possibly be anybodyis ancestor and it was all right to kill it. Hearing that I drove back to the bungalow and picked up my .22 rifle and 3 bullets and I returned to the scene. When I entered the pen I aimed at the snakeis head and fired but it was too dark to aim properly and I missed all the 3 shots. I did not feel like driving back to the bungalow for more ammunition so I came out and pick up a heavy wooden stick with which I was hoping to club and kill the snake. After the first blow which felt like hitting a rubber tire the snake became obviously agitated and it spat out the sheep which, already, was almost half inside it and then tried to attack me with its large fangs, mouth wide open. It obviously could not move very fast having that first sheep still inside its body and I kept pounding at the head with my stick when, suddenly, it brought up the first sheep and, in a panic, I delivered a lucky, deadly blow after which I grabbed it by the tail and pulled it out of the pen and into the open light. Once outside the snake started moving again so I picked up a cutlass and cut off its head. I then ordered the snake skinned when, suddenly, one of the labourers said that I killed his grandfather. I asked him why he did not tell me before that it was his grandfather to which he answered that he did not see him when he was in the pen. He then proceeded telling me that I will have a lot of trouble because the grandfather will avenge himself. Al this happened on Friday and, on Saturday, we decided to visit one of our friends in the French Togoland, Chaumail, who was the the French Commandant of the

district at place called Dapango. At the time I was driving my new car a Humber “Hawki and Rosamond sat with me in the front seat while Monte Moore sat in the back. The road was single lane winding through 7“ tall grass which considerably restricted the visibility. At one point I saw a lorry coming toward us and I tried, but could not get off the road because of the high camber in the middle so I just stopped while the lorry kept going. We collided head on with quite serious consequences. Rosamond got a deep cut in her head after hitting the dashboard, I broke a scaphoid bone in my right wrist and Monte tore off part of his lower lip after hitting the back of the front seat. The car was a total write off. The lorry took us back to the Bawku hospital where our friend, Dr. John Barlow patched us all up. Rosamond had several stitches put in to close the cut in her head, Monte had the same done to reattach his torn lip and I had plaster put on my wrist which I carried for the next 3 month. When we came back to Manga nobody was surprised. The grandfather avenged himself!