



Karausch family, 1910. Back row: Mary, Donia, John, Irene. Middle: Lydia, Elko, Sophie holding Annie. Left front: William, Joseph. Missing: Katie.

THE KRAUSCH FAMILY STORY

Elko Karausch, who lived on a farm near Odessa, in Kherson gubernaria, emigrated to America in 1903.

Instead of sailing from the Black Sea port of Odessa, Elko, Sophie and their five children traveled across Europe to Hamburg, a major Atlantic port. They were assigned to the emigrants' barracks, 20 people to a ward.

The Hamburg bureau of immigration inspected the quarters daily for cleanliness. All emigrants were required to take hot baths and have their clothing disinfected.

Before getting on the ship, they were given medical exams and their belongings were labeled "inspected" or "disinfected." The German police checked their criminal history to make sure they weren't white slavers or fugitives. They were vaccinated for smallpox after the ship was under way.

Their ship was the SS Adria, a 400-foot-long two-mast steamship of Hamburg-America's Hansa line, built in 1896. Her speed was 13 knots (about 15 mph). They departed Hamburg June 8, 1903, and arrived July 1 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Tickets cost \$15 each, but there may have been a family discount. (For comparison, the Breitmans, a Russian-Jewish family of six, paid \$40 for steerage passage in July 1904 from Hamburg to New York on the Hamburg-America line.)

Beneath the top deck of the Adria were 21 deluxe cabins. The galleys and the dining room were under the second deck. There were no cabins in steerage (the hold below water level). It was an open area with rows of iron bedsteads, three or four levels high. In the lower beds the women and children slept, and in the higher tiers the men and the boys, clutching their possessions. The Karasches were among 673 passengers. The ship provided simple meals of salted meat, soup, sauerkraut, potatoes and prunes. There was an average of one toilet for 100 passengers. The stench must have been unbearable.

The eldest child, Katie, who was 15, recalled that she climbed the iron ladder to the upper decks to breathe fresh air whenever she could get away with it.

When the Adria arrived at the Port of Halifax on July 1, the family boarded a Canadian-Pacific railroad train to Winnipeg.

Although they could have stayed in Winnipeg, where lots of Ukrainians lived, they continued to Lehr, N.D., where according to the border-crossing document, Elko had a brother-in-law, Feodor Mishchenko (I have been unable to locate a record of him).

They homesteaded 14 miles south of Lehr and 15 miles northwest of Fredonia. They built a sod house and planted flax. Elko was a farmer in Russia, and he continued as a farmer in his new homeland.

They raised nine children: Ekaterina (Katie), Eudocia (Donia), Marya (Mary), Ivan (John), Irina (Irene), all born in Russia; and Lydia, William, Joseph and Annie, born in America.

Bureau of Land Management records show Elia Karasch filed patent on 160 acres in 1910, seven years after arrival. The sod house was still intact more than 30 years later. His grandchildren played there to escape the heat of the North Dakota sun.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Until recently, all we knew about Elko and Sophie were their names and that they emigrated from Odessa. The travel documents, which I finally located in September 2013, show that we didn't even know their real names.

On the documents, Elko is listed as Ilia or Ilya, and Sophie is listed as Agafia (Russian for Agatha). No patronymics are listed for either.

Elko was born in Kherson around 1863, and Sophie was born in Kherson around 1866.

Elko's granddaughter recalls her father, John Krausch, telling her "We are not Russian." However, he never elaborated on that.

Because our name Krausch looks German, our family assumed for many years that we were descended from the Germans who came to Ukraine during the reign of Catherine II to farm the steppes. However, some things didn't add up. For one, Germans kept their mother tongue in Russia. Elko's family spoke Russian, not German, according to the U.S. census.

Recently I learned that Elko is a Yiddish nickname for Ilya. Until I found this detail and the DNA analysis (below), the possibility of Jewish ancestry was unknown to the family.

It's possible he lived in an agricultural colony. The first Jewish agricultural colonies were established in the Kherson Gubernaria in 1806. The Ukase of Dec. 9, 1804, allowed Jews for the first time in Russia to purchase land for farming settlements (Koloniya). Jews were provided exemption from military service, tax abatements, and reduced land prices as incentives.

The spelling Karasch is how it was recorded in Hamburg, and how it was spelled in America until sometime after World War I, when it was changed to Krausch. It's unknown if that's the actual name or a sound-alike, as Elko could not read or write (according to the ship's manifest and later U.S. census forms).

Elko's citizenship paper lists his name as Elco Karauce. He signed with an X. There are many errors on that paper, so I don't trust it.

John Krausch's daughter-in-law, Judy, recalled that he once wrote down the name for her as Khrushch and told her that's how it was originally spelled in Russia. I have not been able to verify this.

The name **Krausch** appears in old Jewish family names in Galacia. The name **Karaush** is on 1906 voter lists in Bessarabia. **Karasch** shows up in modern Odessa, Ukraine. The name **Khrushch** also shows up in modern Ukraine.

Sophie's maiden name is also a mystery. The LDS site, familysearch.org, lists it as Jernogko. So do the Lehr and Fredonia Golden Jubilee Books, which were put together after Sophie and Elko were dead.

Different family sources show the name as Chernick or Chernago. It might even have been Chorneyko. More research is needed in this area, but Jernogko can easily be eliminated, as that surname is a dead end.

The prefix "Chern" means black. "Chorney" is a Ukrainian and Jewish (Ashkenazic) nickname for someone with dark complexion or dark hair; from Ukrainian *чорний* (black).

GENETIC ANALYSIS: ELKO

Each of us carries DNA that is a combination of genes passed from both our mother and father, giving us traits that range from eye color and height to athleticism and disease susceptibility. One exception is the Y chromosome, passed directly from father to son, unchanged, from generation to generation.

A haplogroup is defined by a series of genetic markers shared by other men who carry the same random mutations. Through these genetic markers, scientists can track our ancestry back to Adam.

The DNA analysis was done by National Geographic Genographic Project.

Elko Karasch and all his male ancestors and descendants belong to haplogroup E1b1b1 (M35.1). This line of descent is most heavily represented in Mediterranean populations, in

particular the Berbers, Sicilians, Greeks and the Balkan counties. About 25 percent of Jewish men are in this haplogroup.

Elko had black hair, a fair complexion and green eyes. He stood 5-foot-6 and weighed 160 pounds.

GENETIC ANALYSIS: SOPHIE

Sophia's haplogroup is U5. Her genetic line is traced through mitochondrial DNA, carried from mother to daughter. A genetic sample was taken from the daughter of one of Sophia's daughters.

Around 50,000 years ago, Sophia's female ancestors crossed the rugged Caucasus Mountains in southern Russia and moved on the steppes toward the Black Sea. Women from haplogroup U populated the Baltic countries and western Eurasia. We share distant ancestry with these women, but Sophia's next genetic marker took her in a different direction. Warring tribes pushed subgroups of U north and west.

The U5 subgroup is restricted to Finland. Her direct ancestors were either Finnish or Saami. The reindeer hunters who follow the herds from Siberia to Scandinavia have the U5 lineage at a very high frequency of around 50 percent.

Sophie had black hair and dark, slightly almond-shaped eyes. She was very tiny.