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## "START YOUR ENGINES"

It's off to the races we go! As we gear up for the "Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix," we flag down Canadian IndyCar Driver James Hinchcliff to talk about his soaring career, his new team, overcoming injury and what lies around the next turn. — PAGE 18

# A Suitcase Filled With Hopes And Dreams

By Andrea Grimes

**W**orld War I. It was a war of many “firsts” bringing a destructive power the world had never before seen.

As a young nation, Canada played a respectable role on the world stage and in many ways would come of age. Over the top and into the wire, war made our men age too fast and die too young.

Our brave men fought with valour and courage fuelled by the fire that victory was theirs for the taking. Throughout every mission, it was inconceivable that our soldiers could even survive in such deplorable conditions facing such bestial horrors, let alone fight under a barrage of enemy gunfire – but fight they did!

The Great War resulted in the collapse of empires when old countries across Europe were abolished. One consequence of the massive redrawing of borders and the political changes were the large number of European refugees being displaced by war.

In the early 1900s, Canada became one of the first non-European countries to receive refugees from Europe who suffered the devastations of war – loss of family, loss of home, loss of nationality.

The thousands of faces deeply furrowed from fear and backs bent from oppression, told the tales of despair. Families faced imminent danger if they stayed; yet the decision to flee was still a difficult one.

With steamship passage tickets fastened to their fathers’ caps and pinned to the dresses of their mothers, families said goodbye to their beloved mother land bringing with them not much more than a suitcase, their work ethic, their deep-rooted faith, ... their hopes and dreams.

From all accounts, refugees shared the same values – to be proud of their heritage and to be self-sufficient. They crossed the

ocean bringing their deep-rooted faith, courage, and resolve to assimilate into the Canadian way of life as productive members of their communities.

For Russian families, life in Windsor was a constant struggle, but no matter how many times they ‘did without’ it was paramount for Russian families to build their churches.

At the turn of the century, the **Henry Ford Motor Company of Canada** provided employment for our returning Veterans, as well as for thousands of immigrants in its automobile factory on Drouillard Road.

Men of all nationalities worked side by side on the assembly lines toiling long hours under harsh working conditions to earn a living – to support their families.

In recognizing opportunities to provide factory workers and their families in east Windsor with the necessities of life, Russian merchants on Drouillard introduced their trade – **Windsor Cooperative Bakery, Morris Dry Goods, Ford City Provision, Dubinsky Hardware, Melnick Roofing, and Lazurek Photography.**

In 1916, a small group of Russian immigrants established **St. John the Divine Church** on Drouillard Road at Huron Street (Richmond). In 1934, political unrest and religious disagreements among the parishioners resulted in a rift within Windsor’s Russian community. As a result, a new parish was established with the purpose of maintaining traditional customs and delivering the Liturgy in the Slavonic language. Construction of a small wooden Church at 1410 Drouillard was completed in 1935 in the name of the **Holy Trinity Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.**

According to Church archives, “the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Russian Concert-Ball of May 27, 1938 was held at **Gordon McGregor School** for



The Korovitsch family from Ukraine (now Russia) sailed from Plymouth, England to Canada, November 18, 1951. Photo courtesy of Lydia Martin (nee Korovitsch).

the benefit of Russian World War Disabled Veterans Outside of Russia.” The program also noted that “Russia lost during the world war 6,000,000 men – dead, wounded and missing for the common cause with the allies.”

As the wooden church began to ‘show its years’ parishioners put shovels in the ground and built a new church and Parish Hall in 1944. Former parishioners and newly-immigrated Russian families celebrated the Church’s Dedication on November 21, 1948.

Since its inception, the fundamental role of the Holy Trinity Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has been to hold in high regard steadfast traditions, to value hardships and sacrifices; to honour those accomplishments, achievements and contributions made by Russian immigrants who persevered to give their children a better life.

‘Семья - малая церковь’ – The family – a little (or small) Church, according to Lydia Martin, Church historian.

May 8, 2015 is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-E Day - the end of WW II. (In Russia, V-E Day is recognized on May 9, 2015 due to the time zone.)



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