

The Story of the

**Kondoff Family
Immigration
To Canada**

Presented by: Peter Kondoff

Macedonian Origins



Map of Macedonia

At the turn of the 20th century...

In the Ottoman Empire, it was customary for the first born son in each family to serve in the military.



A Plan to Avert Military Service

People in the village of Dumbene saved enough money to send three boys to the United States.

In 1909, my father, Demitri "Jim" Kondoff, was among the three boys. They were taken to Solun where they boarded a ship for New York.



No Legal Entry into U.S.A.

My father and his companions were not allowed to enter the United States. Without money to return to Europe, the ship's captain had his own solution.



In 1928, my father Dimitri Kondoff married my mother, Veleka Tolkova from Gabresh.

I was born in 1925 in Detroit, Michigan. My brothers John and Bill followed.

Detroit, MI – 1920s



Meeting and Marrying Mary Vasilieff from Toronto



Wedding, 1949

A Life-Changing Visit From My Father-in-law

The year following our marriage, Mary's father asked her to come and meet her across the border in Windsor, ON.

Reasons for Coming to Canada

Mary was not able to re-enter the United States. It was then necessary to:

- Sell the house in Detroit
- Adjust to a new life in Canada
- Live in a new city with very few Macedonian immigrants compared to Detroit

Settling in Windsor, ON



I lived in Windsor from 1950 to 1955 while I worked and went to school in Detroit.

Moving to Toronto

- I accepted a job in Toronto, ON in 1955. We moved to the Kennedy Road and Lawrence Avenue area where we remained for a few years.



The Kondoff Family Grows



Our daughter Dove

Maintaining Macedonian Culture

Despite not having been born in Macedonia, culture was maintained by both Mary and I in several ways.

- Involvement with the Macedonian church
- Attendance at social gatherings such as picnics, weddings and name day celebration
- Sending our daughter Dove to Macedonian school

Macedonian Community Involvement in Canada

In 1960, I was implored to come to a meeting of the fledgling United Macedonians. I was nominated and awarded the position of executive secretary and was effectively the managing director for 10 years.

Other community involvements were numerous.



Kondoff brothers

More Contributions

- Board of Directors, Canadian Macedonian Place
- One of the founders of St. Clements of Ohrid church in Toronto
- One of the founders and is a past president of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society