

**Editor's Note:** *This is Part II of a special historical review; for Part I, see Journal of Sugar Beet Research 30(1&2):1-36 (1993).*

## THE SAVITSKY STORY

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### CHAPTER 3

#### A New Life in America

**I**n late September, 1947, Dr. G. H. Coons of the USDA learned the good news that all five Savitsky family members (Viacheslav and Helen, Helen's sister Xenia Harechko, and Viacheslav's parents Fabian and Xenia Savitsky) had been granted visas and were awaiting the arrival of travel funds (Appendix 9). At last, information was received in Washington that the Savitskys had been cleared for transit and would arrive in New York aboard the troop ship Ernie Pyle on November 28, 1947. At last, plans could be made for their arrival. The Committee for Aid to Geneticists Abroad arranged with Dr. T. H. Dobzhansky, a geneticist with Columbia University in New York, to meet the ship. The Committee had been able to raise \$700 in contributions from members and friends of the Genetics Society of America. This money was used to purchase sleeping car tickets and pay incidental expenses to Salt Lake City. Housing was in short supply in Salt Lake City, but Dr. Owen eventually was able to find temporary accommodations in a tourist motel.

No information had been received from the Savitskys regarding any seed stocks they might be bringing. We were hopeful that they might bring seeds of choice genetic stocks including monogerm seed. To avoid any difficulty with customs in New York, Dr. E. W. Brandes, Head Pathologist in Charge of the Sugar Plant Investigations Division, wrote a memorandum to Ernest Sasser, Bureau of Nematology and Plant Quarantine, requesting that the entrance of any plant material accompanying the Savitskys be expedited (Appendix 10).

The Savitskys arrived in New York the evening of November 28 and were permitted to go ashore the following afternoon. Dr. and Mrs. Dobzhansky met them after they had cleared customs and spent three days showing them many interesting sights around New York including the genetics laboratories at Columbia University. They then boarded a west-bound train and arrived in Salt Lake City the evening of December 3. Here they were met by Dr. Owen and William Musser. Mr. Musser could speak German and acted as an interpreter when necessary. Dr. Owen was surprised to learn that in addition to the baggage they carried with them, another shipment of 800 books was to arrive later.

The Savitsky family was taken to the American Tourist Lodge where rooms had been rented until such time as an apartment or house could be located. The following day they were taken to the sugarbeet laboratory and given a tour of the facilities. On December 8, they wrote a personal letter to Dr. Coons thanking him for all his help and describing their first impressions of America including the opportunities for scientific research (Appendix 11).

In this letter, they acknowledged the help Dr. Brandes had provided in expediting the custom clearance for seeds and plant materials that they might be bringing from the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, they had to advise Dr. Coons that all of their breeding stocks had been lost when they were evacuated from Poznan, Poland. At the time this letter was written, the Savitskys were euphoric and were most thankful for all the help the Americans had given them in escaping communism. Undoubtedly, they deeply regretted their inability to bring seeds of their valuable genetic stocks, especially the monogerm seed, which would be useful to their new American friends.

The next few months were spent adjusting to life and work in a completely new environment. Photographs taken shortly after they arrived are reproduced in Figure 1. Dr. Owen was able to provide office space, and a laboratory for Helen. Communication was a problem, especially with Viacheslav, but they had good discussions of proposed research projects. Dr. Owen told them of our great need for monogerm seed and asked for their suggestions in finding the



**Figure 1.** The Savitsky Family (February 12, 1948). Top: Dr. V.F. Savitsky, Dr. Helen Savitsky. Center: Xenia Haretschko (Helen's sister). Bottom: Fabian and Xenia Savitsky (Viacheslav's parents).

character. A decision was made that a search, led by Viacheslav, should be made in the Oregon seed fields during the coming summer.

In June 1948, the Savitskys travelled by train to Sacramento, California, where they were met by Dr. Eubanks Carsner, USDA plant pathologist from Riverside, and the writer, Dr. John McFarlane, USDA geneticist from Salinas. The group immediately began the trip to Oregon for an early inspection of the seed fields. This proved to be a most interesting experience for all of us. Helen had mastered English reasonably well but Viacheslav could speak only a few phrases. He was having some trouble with his stomach and was supposed to avoid red meat. At the first lunch stop, the two of them studied the menu for some time and then decided to order chicken fried steak. When the order was served, they couldn't understand why they didn't get chicken. Dr. Carsner and I had to explain some of the vagaries of the English language.

In Medford, we were joined by Dr. Ray Pendleton, USDA agronomist from Oregon State University at Corvallis. We spent a day inspecting the seed fields and stock seed increases in the Medford area. At one of the stops, we asked the farmer to show us another part of the field. His reply was, "Okie dokie." Helen immediately picked this up and asked for an explanation. For the remainder of the trip, her response was "okie dokie" whenever we announced our next stop.

We then drove on to Salem where we met Sam Campbell, Manager of the West Coast Beet Seed Company, who took us on a tour of several seed fields. In each field, Sam explained the origin and nature of the variety being increased. Viacheslav examined the flowering plants and took notes. Arrangements were made for him to return in July just as the seed was ripening.

As planned, Dr. Savitsky returned to Salem in July to make an intensive search for monogerm beets. He searched in several selected fields but was able to find monogerm plants only in the Michigan Hybrid 18 variety. This was a four-acre field containing approximately 300,000 plants from which he identified five plants with monogerm seed. All five of the selected plants were late in floral development with more than half of their fruits being immature when harvested. The five plants were taken to the laboratory in Salt Lake City for study.

Word spread rapidly that plants bearing monogerm seed had been discovered. The plants were placed on display in the Salt Lake City laboratory and several visitors from the sugarbeet industry stopped by to inspect them. A careful study revealed that only two of the five plants, SLC 101 and SLC 107, were true monogerm. The monogerm

character was found to be recessive. The two plants evidently had originated from lines that had been self-pollinated for several generations.

Studies with the monogerm character became the principal research activity for both Viacheslav and Helen. SLC 101 was selected for most intensive study and increase. This line was self-fertile and work was undertaken to produce self-sterile monogerm races of several self-sterile populations. Existing self-fertile inbreds were converted to monogerm. This required the delicate emasculation of the flowers on one of the parents. Helen's abilities with meticulous laboratory procedures made her especially adept at this task. Cytoplasmic male sterility had recently been discovered in sugarbeet, and the development of monogerm male-sterile lines was undertaken.

The Savitskys quickly realized the economic significance of the monogerm beet and, as might be expected from new converts to the capitalistic system, began to consider ways of profiting from their discovery. At one point, they proposed to set up a large breeding program and convert the existing sugarbeet varieties to monogerm. This proposal was, of course, unacceptable to the sugar companies. Following discussions with Dr. Owen and industry leaders, the Savitskys agreed to restrict their research to genetic studies and leave the breeding work to the plant breeders. Decisions were made to distribute seeds of SLC 101 and of subsequent monogerm developments to domestic sugarbeet breeders. These distributions were made through cooperative agreements with the Curly Top Resistance Breeding Committee and later with the Beet Sugar Development Foundation. Monogerm seed also was provided to European breeders by the USDA in cooperation with the CTRBC.

As their research progressed, the Savitskys needed to publish their results in scientific journals. Papers were prepared, much as they had done in the Soviet Union, with the objective of publishing in journals such as *Genetics* and the *American Journal of Botany*. Dr. Owen reviewed their manuscripts and concluded that they would be unacceptable without extensive revisions. The composition was similar to that of letters appearing in the appendix, the format did not conform to that required by the journals, and the presentation of their results was awkward.

Dr. Owen pointed out these problems and told them about the requirement for peer reviews. This was a new procedure for the Savitskys and they felt that it was entirely unnecessary. They were highly qualified scientists and each had been awarded the title of Professor. In the Soviet Union, scientists with their qualifications had the final say about the content of their papers. Eventually, they submitted a

paper to a prestigious scientific journal and it was rejected. This was a great disappointment but, with Dr. Owen's help, eventually they were able to prepare manuscripts suitable for publication. Their first two papers were published in the 1950 *Proceedings of the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists*. The title of Viacheslav's paper (pages 155-159) was "Monogerm Sugar Beets in the United States," and Helen's paper (pages 160-164) was entitled "Embryology of Mono- and Multigerm Fruits in the Genus *Beta* L."

Much of their future publishing was done in the *Proceedings* and later in the *Journal of the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists*. Editing of their manuscripts continued to be a problem and was one of the more unpleasant tasks that their various supervisors had to perform. The composition of their writing continued to be unacceptable and the manuscripts had to be almost completely rewritten. After a time, the Savitskys came to accept and even appreciate these revisions in composition but rigorously rejected any suggestions for changes in format or interpretation of their results. It was only when the journal reviewers or editor insisted, that such changes were incorporated.

When the Curly Top Resistance Breeding Committee agreed to employ the Savitskys, funds were provided for their salaries (full time for Viacheslav and half time for Helen) but no provision was made for support funding. As their research programs developed, the Savitskys required technical helpers, field and greenhouse space, and specialized laboratory equipment. Dr. Owen recognized the research abilities of the Savitskys and provided all assistance possible without jeopardizing his own program. Requests were made to the Curly Top Resistance Breeding Committee for additional funding. Helen was hired on a full-time basis and some support funds were provided.

Funding still was inadequate to carry on the research program the Savitskys desired and were capable of performing. They pressured Dr. Owen and industry leaders for more help. Dr. Owen recognized the need but was greatly disturbed by the persistent demands placed upon him. The Curly Top Resistance Breeding Committee was dissolved in June 1953 and the Savitskys became employees of the Beet Sugar Development Foundation. The Savitsky "problem" became a major item of discussion at each meeting of the Foundation directors.

In 1958, the Savitskys were invited by the Max Planck Institute at Rosenhof (near Heidelberg), Germany to spend six months assisting with a monogerm breeding program. The Foundation directors approved this leave and they spent a profitable six months in Europe. In addition to the Max Planck Institute, they visited several

other sugarbeet breeding stations. The Savitskys became convinced that polyploidy, with emphasis on triploid hybrids, was the preferred method of sugarbeet breeding. When they returned to Salt Lake City, polyploidy became Viacheslav's principal research activity.

In the late 1950s, Helen was assigned the difficult task of transferring nematode resistance from the *Patellares* section to sugarbeet. Many attempts had been made to make this transfer but without success. Able geneticists in both the United States and Europe had concluded that the transfer would be most difficult and perhaps impossible. Helen entered into the project with her usual enthusiasm and it became her principal research activity for the remainder of her career.

The entire family adjusted well to life in America and was especially thankful for the new freedom that they could now enjoy. In addition to learning English, Helen and Viacheslav studied our form of government and became U. S. citizens at their first opportunity. Helen's sister, Xenia, found employment as a laboratory technician. The entire family lived frugally, and they soon were able to start payments on a small house. They loved to entertain and frequently invited visiting scientists to their home for a meal.

Dining with the Savitskys was a delightful experience. Very often they invited the visitor for lunch, which was actually a large dinner. Upon entering the house, one was greeted by a couple of huge German Shepherd dogs and was assured by Viacheslav that they were friendly. They may have been friendly, but the visitor became thoroughly exhausted warding off their expressions of affection. The Russian meal was prepared by Viacheslav's mother, who was an excellent cook. In typical Russian fashion, Viacheslav always offered vodka and wine. Great tact was required to graciously restrict one's participation in their wonderful hospitality. After all, the visitor had a full program at the research laboratory that afternoon.

Like all Americans, the Savitskys looked forward to owning their own car. Eventually, they saved enough money to purchase a new Oldsmobile. Both Viacheslav and Helen took lessons and were able to get driving licenses. They loved to show off their new vehicle. Dr. Sydney Ellerton from England was visiting shortly after they acquired the new car, and Viacheslav insisted on taking him for a ride. He drove the car to the highway, got up to full speed, then turned to Sydney and said: "See, power brakes!" Sydney almost ended up in the windshield and immediately decided that this would be his last ride with the Savitskys.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Move to California

In the mid 1950s, Dr. Owen learned that the lease on the Salt Lake City property housing the sugarbeet laboratory would terminate in 1961 and the laboratory would have to move. Special funding was provided by Congress to permit the construction of a new USDA research facility on the campus of Utah State University at Logan. As 1961 approached, a decision was required as to who would go to Logan and who should transfer to some other location. The Savitskys presented a special situation; they were employees of the Beet Sugar Development Foundation, but worked in the Salt Lake City laboratory under the direction of Dr. Owen.

The directors of the Beet Sugar Development Foundation invited Dr. H. M. Tysdal, Chief, Tobacco and Sugar Crops Research Branch, Agriculture Research Service, USDA, to attend a meeting where the Savitsky situation could be discussed. At this meeting, a decision was made to transfer the Savitskys to the U. S. Agricultural Research Station at Salinas, California. The relationship between the Savitskys and Dr. Owen had become somewhat strained and this seemed an appropriate time to assign them to a new location. Also, adequate space and facilities were available at Salinas. Some additional Federal sugarbeet research funds had become available, and Dr. Tysdal indicated his willingness to investigate the possibility of securing civil service appointments for the Savitskys.

When the Savitskys were advised of this proposed move, they were most unhappy. Utah, and especially Salt Lake City, had become their home and they didn't want to move. They had visited Salinas and didn't care for the foggy climate nor the opportunities for research. They made it clear that they preferred Logan and indicated that they would not move to Salinas. Mr. James Fischer, Manager of the Beet Sugar Development Foundation, finally had to advise them that an administrative decision had been made for the Salinas transfer and they must either go there or lose their jobs.

Thus, in the fall of 1960, the Savitskys travelled to Salinas to make preliminary arrangements for their transfer. They were shown the research facilities and assured that adequate office, laboratory, and field space would be available. They also spent considerable time with a realtor inspecting available houses. Eventually, they found a house to their liking but they didn't care for the location. Before returning to Utah, they arranged with a contractor to construct a house with an identical plan on a lot in the beautiful San Benancio Canyon

between Salinas and Monterey. The house was to be completed when they were transferred to Salinas the following spring.

On February 20, 1961, a large moving van drove onto the grounds of the U. S. Agricultural Research Station at Salinas. The Savitskys and all their research materials had arrived. The van was fully loaded with potted plants, clay pots, laboratory equipment, genetic seed stocks, household furniture, and the personal effects of the Savitskys. The driver reported that his van was overweight and he had been required to pay a stiff fee at one of the highway weigh stations. The research materials were unloaded at the research station and the personal property was taken to the new house that had just been constructed in San Benancio. The contractor had fulfilled the terms of the contract and the Savitskys were well pleased with their new home.

The task of settling the Savitskys into a new research situation must now be undertaken. Dr. C. W. Bennett was station superintendent and I was responsible for the breeding program. We decided to share the responsibilities. Dr. Bennett was responsible for the general needs such as office space, assignment of laboratory and greenhouse space, and administrative requirements. I took care of the field program and other needs of the breeding work.

We were aware of some of the problems that had developed at Salt Lake City and took steps to avoid these difficulties. It was our desire to provide a pleasant research environment for the Savitskys and, at the same time, avoid serious conflicts with existing programs. Fortunately, we had plenty of space and were able to assign individual offices to Viacheslav and Helen. A three-bay greenhouse was made available for their exclusive use and Helen was assigned a laboratory for her cytogenetic studies.

Civil service appointments had been approved for both of the Savitskys so they were now covered by the same rules and privileges as other government employees. The Beet Sugar Development Foundation no longer paid their salaries, but provided additional support funds. Both Viacheslav and Helen were able to hire technicians plus part time help as needed. Several acres of land were assigned to Viacheslav for his individual use. We had inherited some farm equipment from the old guayule project, enabling us to provide him with a small tractor and cultivating equipment. Heavy farm work, such as land preparation and beet lifting, was done by the farm crew. Viacheslav was an able geneticist but proved to be a mediocre agronomist. His cultural practices left a good deal to be desired, adversely affecting some of his results.

In general, the plan for merging the Savitskys into the station research program worked out well. Funding was adequate to enable

them to carry on a modest but effective program without jeopardizing the work of other researchers. They developed good relations with the station staff and were well liked by their fellow workers. However, their aggressive traits persisted, and they frequently requested program increases. We explained that the station operated on a fixed budget and that we were unable to meet their desires without penalizing their fellow scientists. Following such encounters, Helen usually responded with "We must fight!" Each fall, they submitted budget requests to the directors of the Beet Sugar Development Foundation and gradually received modest increases.

Studies on polyploidy and triploid hybrids continued to be Viacheslav's principal research project. He produced a wide range of comparable diploid and triploid hybrids and obtained performance data indicating that the triploids were significantly superior to their diploid counterparts. His results didn't always agree with those of other researchers. He also performed genetic studies designed to explain the theoretical basis of triploid superiority.

Viacheslav maintained an interest in the monogerm work and made genetic comparisons of the American and Russian monogerm. He concluded that they differed in their mode of inheritance. His results agreed with those of other researchers in both the United States and Europe. In October 1977, during a discussion at the All Union Research Institute of Sugar Beet and Sugar at Ramon in the U.S.S.R., I was told that Russian geneticists also had found the genetic behavior of the two monogerm varieties to be different. They also said that the yields of their monogerm varieties were inferior to those of the multigerm varieties.

Viacheslav's career was cut short on April 6, 1965, by a massive heart attack. He had performed his normal duties at the research station, gone home, mowed his lawn and was stricken while resting from the day's activities. At the time of his death, Viacheslav was preparing a manuscript on his genetic studies with polyploidy. Unfortunately, he had not progressed sufficiently for Helen or others to complete the paper.

Dr. V. F. Savitsky's major contribution to the American sugarbeet industry was the discovery of monogerm seed. Several American sugarbeet breeders had searched for the character without success, and we were somewhat embarrassed to have a newly arrived immigrant make the discovery on his first try. His success can be attributed to his keen sense of observation. The discovery previously had been made in the Soviet Union, and he was aware of the plant characteristics associated with the character. Today, the monogerm gene has been incorporated into all of our varieties and has had a

major impact on the economy of beet production. The industry is most grateful for this most significant contribution.

After Viacheslav's death, Helen had to carry on alone. Viacheslav's mother lived with her and required some care but was able to help with the housework. His father, Fabian Savitsky, had died before they left Salt Lake City. Her sister, Xenia Harechko, had found employment as a laboratory technician at the University of California in Davis.

Helen returned to the laboratory and pursued her cytological studies on interspecific hybridization with her customary enthusiasm. Her principal objective continued to be the transfer of nematode resistance from the *Patellares* section to sugarbeet. Through the use of a grafting technique, she already had crossed sugarbeet with *Beta procumbens* and had made backcrosses to sugarbeet. The next step was the development of nematode-resistant trisomic plants. These plants possessed 18 chromosomes from sugarbeet plus an extra chromosome from *Beta procumbens* bearing the gene(s) for nematode resistance. From backcrosses to sugarbeet she was able to identify plants in which a chromosome section bearing the resistance gene(s) apparently was translocated to one of the sugarbeet chromosomes.

In 1971, Helen reached the mandatory retirement age and was required to retire from her position with USDA. She chose to continue her nematode-resistance research and the Beet Sugar Development Foundation agreed to provide financial support. Working with plants bearing an alien section of the *Beta procumbens* chromosome, she produced homozygous resistant lines. These homozygous lines tended to be sterile and the transmission of nematode resistance was irregular. The alien section of the *Beta procumbens* chromosome was apparently rather large and normal meiosis did not occur.

During the 1970s, scientific exchanges with the Soviet Union were in vogue. I participated in two exchanges and, in turn, two groups of Soviet scientists visited our Salinas station. Included in one of the groups were three scientists from the All Union Sugar Beet Institute at Kiev, the institute at which the Savitskys had worked. Helen didn't know any of the scientists, but the visit provided an opportunity to catch up on the activities in Kiev. During one of the discussions, Helen was asked whether she would like to return to the Soviet Union for a visit. Her emphatic reply was, "Nyet!"

On our return to the Monterey airport, a side trip was made up San Benancio Canyon. I pointed out Helen's home in the beautiful canyon setting. Not a word was spoken, but it was evident that the visitors were taking it all in. Here was a scientist who had been on Stalin's liquidation list, but had been fortunate enough to escape to

the West. Not only had she escaped, but she had found employment with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, purchased a beautiful home, and drove a large American car. The contrast with the life of the typical Soviet Union scientist was clear.

The Beet Sugar Development Foundation continued to provide financial support until Helen reached her 80th year in 1981. The directors decided that the time had come to shift their support to Dr. M. H. Yu, who had been employed by the USDA to take over the cytogenetic research. Dr. Yu was hired in 1975, but Helen had declined to work with him or to make available her more advanced research material. She did work closely with Arnold Steele, the station nematologist, who provided valuable assistance in the resistance testing work.

Helen's entire existence was centered around her research and she requested permission to carry on without any support funds. Her resistance testing program required some heavy manual work which she was unable to handle. The directors of the California Beet Growers Association had been following her work for several years and were impressed with her progress. Even though she was 80 years old, they admired her desire to continue and offered sufficient funds to permit the employment of a part-time greenhouse helper.

During the next few years, Helen concentrated on the development of resistant lines that were free of the sterility problem and capable of transmitting nematode resistance to their offspring in a predictable manner. Unfortunately, her eyesight was failing and she could no longer accurately classify the segregating populations. Selected plants often proved to be susceptible.

Problems also were developing in her personal life. Her mother-in-law required increased care and eventually died. Likewise, her sister, Xenia, and a second sister, who lived in eastern Canada, passed away. She eventually made contact with a brother who was a doctor and had been exiled to Siberia by the communists. Helen was able to correspond with him and provide financial assistance before he also died. The only remaining relative was a nephew in the Ukraine with whom she corresponded until he, too, died. Helen now felt very much alone.

She continued to live in San Benancio for a time after Viacheslav died, but didn't care for the long drive to the research station. She eventually arranged with a contractor to build her a similar house in a new Salinas subdivision and then sold the San Benancio property. As her eyesight began to deteriorate, driving became more difficult, resulting in an occasional accident and traffic citation. The Department of Motor Vehicles finally refused to renew her driving license. This was a great blow to Helen's ego and was most difficult

to accept. She concluded that the American and Russian officials were equally obnoxious.

The loss of her driving license caused a serious inconvenience. There was no bus service to her subdivision and she was without transportation to the research station. Helen didn't give up and arranged with a retired neighbor to provide transportation to and from the station. This arrangement continued until she became seriously ill and could no longer continue her research activities.

Dr. Helen Savitsky died May 20, 1986, following an illness of only a few weeks. Her death brought to a close a sixty-year career in cytogenetic research. More than 25 years had been devoted to interspecific hybridization with the objective of developing a nematode-resistant sugarbeet. This proved to be a most difficult task, but Helen never lost her enthusiasm and determination to complete the assignment. Remarkable progress had been made and the ultimate goal was in sight, but she did not live to see it completed.

Helen earned a world-wide reputation for her cytogenetic research. She received the Meritorious Service Award from the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists and the Award of Merit from the Sugar Industry of The Netherlands. The Sugar Beet Investigations Unit received a merit award from the U. S. Department of Agriculture for the development of monogerm seed. Both Viacheslav and Helen were major participants in this research. She was a member of the Genetics Society of America, the Genetics Society of Canada, the Genetics Society of Japan, the Botanical Society of America, and the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists.

Dr. Helen, as she was known by her many friends and associates, was a dedicated scientist with great personal courage. She was highly respected by all who knew her and was an inspiration to her colleagues. Her great spirit, strong determination, and fervent dedication to high research standards will long be remembered.

## APPENDIX (continued)

### Appendix 9. (Transcribed copy)

August 31st 1947

Dr. G. H. COONS  
6811 Oak Lane  
Chevy Chase 15,  
Maryland.

Dear Dr. G. H. Coons:

We live now in Munich in the transit Camp. We are just finishing our affairs in the Consulate. The American Consul has granted the visas for all five members of my family.

We are very happy that we shall be able to sail for America in the nearest future. Only when we came to the Consulate we have seen how many documents were sent to the American Consul concerning us and how much troubles we have done to the American scientists.

We thank you whole-heartedly for your cordial attitude towards us, for the affidavits, for your troubles and the efforts to help us at the Consul's.

We are waiting now for the funds for our transportation, which must be sent by Dr. COOK to Munich, according to his letter.

One telegram concerning the money was sent to Dr. COOK by Church World Service, another must be sent by the Consulate by the Consul's order. but we don't know whether Dr. COOK is in Washington and whether he has received these telegrams.

Only after arrival of these money we shall be able to receive the visas and be registered to a transport.

All members of my family are sending you their thanks and the best wishes.

With kindest regards  
Very truly yours  
(Signed) Sawicki, W.  
Sawicki, W.

Our address to write:

Prof. W. Sawicki bei Frau Hugo Rutz.  
Oberammergau, Schnitzergasse 9  
Bavaria, Germany, American Zone.

**Appendix 10.** (Transcribed copy)

November 24, 1947

To: Ernest R. Sasscer, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine

From: E. W. Brandes, Head Path. in Charge, Div. of Sugar Plant Inves.

Subject: Assistance to Dr. W. Savitsky Entering U.S.A.  
November 28

We are informed that Dr. W. Savitsky (also transliterated Sawicky), his wife Helene (Elena), and family are due to arrive in New York City on November 28 on board the S. S. Ernie Pyle.

Dr. Savitsky is a Ukranian Geneticist who as a result of the Lysenko-Vavilov controversy found himself subject to persecution in USSR and finally ended up as a displaced person in the American Zone of Germany. Through the activities of the American Genetics Society he and his family are being brought to United States to work on sugar beet breeding for the Curly-top Resistance Breeding Committee at Salt Lake City, Utah. This work is in cooperation with this Division.

Dr. Savitsky's entrance into the United States was assisted by letters of Secretary Anderson to the Secretary of State.

It may be that Dr. Savitsky is bringing plant material such as sugar beet seed with him. Of this we are not informed. If he has such material it will be very valuable to him and to us as breeding material.

It would be appreciated if the arrival of Dr. Savitsky could be brought to the attention of your staff at New York City with request that entrance of his plant material be expedited. He will, of course, be glad to have the material subjected to whatever inspection is desirable. We are anxious that nothing be done that would impair viability of this stock.

I repeat that we have no positive information that he is bringing plant material and I am acting only on the chance that he was able to salvage some of his choice sugar beet breeding stocks.

GHCoons:PET

**Appendix 11.** (Transcribed copy of handwritten letter)

December 8, 1947

Dr. G. H. Coons  
6811 Oak Lane  
Chevy Chase 15  
Maryland

Dear Dr. G. H. Coons:

We have received your very kind letter on the board of Ernie Pyle. We are very thankful to you for your greetings on our arrival in the U.S.A. and for the wish good look in our new life.

We all are very happy that thank to the help of american scientists we were able to come to America at last, and we shall try to become useful citizens of this country. We were coming to New-York on the 28th XI in the night. From the deck of the ship we admired the illumineted town. At two o'clock p.m. on the 29th we could come out on the shore. The representative of Traveler's aid met us on the pier and helped us to go through the custom-house.

We are very thankful to you and Dr. Brandes for your troubles about the seeds and plant material, that you expected we were bringing. But I am very sorry all our breeding stocks and the collection materials were perished in the time of evacuation of the town of Pozan (Poland).

We have received also the money and the tickets to Salt Lake City from the Traveler's aid on the pier. After we have finished all our affairs, Prof. Dobzhansky and Mrs. Dobzhansky met us on the pier. We spent in New-York and on the Farm of Tolstoy Foundation three days. We met every day Mr. and Mrs. Dobzhansky. They showed us the town, Columbia University, the laboratory of Prof. Dobzhansky (we have seen also the laboratory in which Prof. Morgan has done his famous discoveries); they acquainted us with the life in America and helped us very much to forward our travel. They are very fine people and we are very thanful to them.

**Appendix 11** (Continued)

We like New-York and America very much. It is especially pleasant that we have seen in America more than we have expected. It concerns not only the richness and abundance, but also the American people. In spite of the greater energy, the American are more quiet, and they differ from European by their kindness.

We arrived to Salt Lake City on the 3-th of December in the evening. Dr. Owen and Dr. Musser met us on the station and drove us to the lodging, which they have found for us. All the people of the sugar beet laboratory met us very cordial especially Dr. Owen and Dr. Musser.

They both do for us all possible and impossible to help us to organize our life and work. They showed us all the laboratories, the beet sowings, the books, the town. They help us by the money and taking interest in all our affairs. We felt that we are among the friends. We don't know in what way we shall be able to thank these fine people. The sugar laboratory is very good and we believe that we shall be able to work there very well.

We thank you very very much for your cordial attitude and for the help to all our family and we ask you to tell us how much money we have to return and to whom must we send it. With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Sawicki, H.  
Sawicki, W.

Salt Lake City, Utah  
2922 So. State str.  
American Tourist Lodge