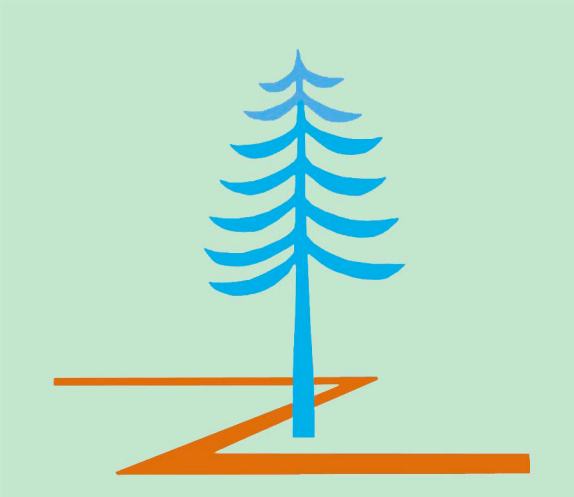




ON THE ROAD FROM THERE TO HERE

My Journey from the Old Country
to Princeton . . . and Back



BY STANISŁAW MALISZEWSKI



In Loving Memory of
My Mother and Father

JANINA TATUR
1919-2009

WŁADYSŁAW MALISZEWSKI
1914-1988



Engagement photo of my parents, Janina Tatur and Władysław Maliszewski.
Look closely and you'll see she's wearing a brooch with his photograph.

How does anyone get from there to here? There is a different answer for each of us. My family's journey to the United States followed a winding road without a map, GPS, or expectations. I certainly was not born to play football, to major in philosophy, or to attend Princeton and Harvard Business School. The road started in the Polesie region of Poland, in what is now Belarus. It is a region of large fields, marshes, and dark, deep forests once inhabited by fiercely patriotic Poles.

My parents, Władysław Maliszewski and Janina Tatur, were both from old Polish *szlachta* families. My mother's roots were especially deep. Her father, Władysław Tatur, and her mother, Stefania Kisielewska, could trace their lines back to 1450 and 1250, respectively. The Tatur family had lived on their land, called Zastaria, for centuries. After Poland's partition in the late 18th century, the country was wiped off the map, and Zastaria became part of Imperial Russia. Following World War I, when Poland re-emerged as a nation, Zastaria wound up in Belarus, a part of the Soviet Union, although close to the Polish border. Despite their nominal status as Belarusians,

On the Cover:



The logo Julia designed for Zastaria, our Maryland home. The tree represents the great forests of the original Zastaria. The orange line, in the shape of a Z, is the winding road my family traveled.



My father (Tata) in front of the cabin in Swislaczo, Belarus, where I was born.



Great Aunt Zofia Tatur holding me in late 1944, shortly before we fled west.

the Tatars (then and now) never thought of themselves as anything but Poles.

My family suffered terribly in the Bolshevik purges. My grandfather Władysław Tatur was arrested in 1931 and given a five-year sentence at hard labor, working in a gulag on the Murmansk Canal. Soon after his release he was rearrested, and this time executed — a victim of the Great Purge of 1937, when Stalin killed an estimated one million Poles living in the Soviet Union. All four of his brothers and all his male cousins were also executed. In total, 70 Tatars living in and around Zastaria perished at the hands of the Bolsheviks. My mother was 12 years old the first time they came at night to seize her father, and 18 when they took him away again. Five years later they killed her brother Roman, who was just 20. Roman Tatur was the uncle I never knew. My son is named for him.

The Tatars were accused of being “counter-revolutionaries” and “kulaks.” A kulak was a so-called rich farmer. He could own a pig and be denounced by a neighbor who had no pig. Both of these terms were used as an excuse to arrest

anyone — no particular proof was necessary. My mother was convinced that Stalin executed so many Poles because he knew they would fight against the Soviets in the war he saw coming.

It was not enough to execute the Tatur men. Stalin had all their houses, barns, shops, and other buildings razed, removing even the foundations. The surviving women and children were then forced to move into log cabins in Repische, a new collective farm village built on the property. Stalin had made certain there was nothing left for them to go home to. In 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, they scouted the area. They knew of Zasteria as a name on the map but couldn't locate it on the ground. When they approached the villagers in Repische and asked, “Where is Zastaria?” they were told, “It is no more.”

When German troops first entered the western Soviet Union they were greeted as liberators. It's not that the inhabitants of Belarus and Ukraine liked the Germans, but having endured Stalin's purges and the famines resulting from forced collectivisation, they *hated* the Bolsheviks. Later, they wondered about the Western powers' alliance with Stalin in the fight against Hitler. As they often said, “You don't bring in the wolf to get rid of the mad dog.”

Following their marriage in 1938, my parents moved to Swislaczo, a village a few miles west of Repische, at the junction of the Swislacz and Berezina rivers. (During his retreat from Moscow, Napoleon was defeated on the banks of the Berezina.) They built a house outside of town, close to the glass factory where my father worked. Their first child, my brother Leonard, was born there in 1939.

Five years later, when the area was occupied by Germans and she was pregnant with me, my mother was shot in the leg while fleeing Bolshevik partisans. The wound was serious but my mother recovered after some time in a hospital. When she was running her lower leg was horizontal, on a plane similar to the bullet's trajectory. The bullet entered just below the calf muscle, spiraled around the bones, and exited below the knee. The scars were much larger than the bullet because



My family in Germany, 1949. Mama made all our clothes. That's me on the left — already practicing my "Crush Yale" look.

of the angle of entry and exit. (As kids my brothers and I were fascinated by these wounds.)

Shortly after this incident, to be closer to family, my parents and brother moved into the cabin of my paternal grandparents in Swislaczo. I was born in that cabin, on the banks of the Swislacz River, in August 1944.

By now it was late in the war. The Germans continued to round up Poles for forced labor in Germany. My grandparents Jan and Stanisława Maliszewski had already left, and my parents and other members of the family soon followed. Staying put wasn't an option. The Red Army, notorious for raping and killing civilians in its path, was pressing from the east. And after what the Bolsheviki had done to her family, my mother saw "escape" to Germany as the lesser evil: Better the unknown dangers facing them there than the known terrors of Soviet rule.

I was just a few months old when we left. Traveling in a horse-drawn cart with all our possessions, we joined a long



ID photos, ca. 1949: Leonard, Staś, and Kazimierz. Mama knitted all our sweaters.

line of other Poles moving west. We got about 20 miles before a fighter plane, presumably Russian, strafed us. People jumped into ditches as bullets ripped through the column. Bodies lay scattered along the road. Our horse was killed, so my parents abandoned the cart and took only what they could carry. Carrying me, and with my brother in tow, they walked hundreds of miles to Płock, Poland, and boarded a train for Germany.

We ended up near Lubeck, where my mother worked at a hospital farm and my father as a laborer. Shortly before the war ended, the Poles and other forced laborers were ordered into a fenced detention camp. We'd been there a few days when one morning my parents awoke to find the guards had vanished. My mother and her sister got through the gates and went down the road looking for milk when they saw a tank approaching. They immediately recognized it as British. The war was over, and a new adventure was beginning.



Kids in D.P. camp practicing the Krakowiak, a traditional Polish dance. I'm on the right.



School photo taken ca. 1948 in the Neuves, Germany, D.P. camp. My brother Leonard is second from right. The teachers are in Polish military uniforms.

The many thousands of foreign workers stranded in Germany were designated Displaced Persons, or D.P.s. In the weeks following the war's end they were assigned to Displaced Persons camps throughout Germany. British, French, and Americans administered the camps, depending on the zone of occupation. (There were also D.P. camps in the Soviet zone, but these were temporary.) We were in the northwest quadrant of Germany, the British zone. The camps were usually organized by nationality, so they resembled villages of Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, etc. Over the years we were moved from camp to camp with names such as Varel, Bockhorn, Sande, and Papenburg.

Early on, for unknown reasons, we were transported to Holland. There we encountered a well-meaning Dutch couple who tried to convince my parents that my brother Leonard and I would have a better life if our parents left us with them. They pointed out



Leonard as an altar boy in the Varel, Germany, Displaced Persons camp.



The former troop ship U.S.A.T. *General S.D. Sturgis*, which in 1950 brought us to America.

that it would also ease the burden on our parents. They were persistent about this and never failed to mention it whenever we encountered them. Obviously to our benefit, our parents chose the harder path and kept us. Oh, those forks in the road of life.

The D.P. camps were former German military installations, and the housing was similar to college dorms, giving families a measure of privacy. The only exception was Bockhorn, next to a bombed-out airfield, which had wooden barracks like those in the TV show *Hogan's Heroes*. Growing up in the camps was an adventure. They were filled with children of all ages. We went to Polish school and had no trouble entertaining ourselves outside of class. One of our favorite activities was hunting for helmets, knives, live bullets, and other war souvenirs. As kids we had an opportunity to make money

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, INC. 214 East 21st Street New York 10, N.Y.				
TRAFFIC DEPT.		Spring 7-3500		
Name of Passenger	Maliszewski, Wladyslaw	Date Requested	Nov. 22, 1950	
No. of Adult Passes	2	Requested by	Miss Fricke	
No. of Half Passes	2	Displ. Pers. STURGIS, Nov 24		
No. of Infants	1			
From:	N.Y.	To:	Davenport, Iowa	
	DATE	HOUR	VIA	Space Reserved
Hoboken, N.J.	11/24	8:30 pm CST	DELAWARE, LACKAWANNA & WESTERN R.R.	
Chicago	11/25	3:40 pm CST	NICKEL PLATE # 7 "Westward"	
CHANGE TRAINS				
Chicago	11/25	5:00 pm CST	CHICAGO & ROCK ISLAND # 405 "Des Moines Rocket"	
Davenport, Iowa	11/25	7:59 pm CST		

Detail of the itinerary for our train trip from Hoboken to Davenport.



Mama and sons in Davenport, shortly after our arrival. The photo was published in the local paper. I'm the one on the floor.

collecting metal from bomb fragments and unexploded bombs. Even years after the war, there was still plenty of stuff to find. You could make enough money to buy ice cream.

The Yalta Agreement had provided for the return to the Soviet Union, by force if necessary, of anyone of Russian origin in any of the occupied zones. This policy led to the rounding up of Russians — by the Soviets, of course, but also by the Western allies. Camp personnel eavesdropped on D.P.s and seized anyone speaking Russian. They were then packed into boxcars for transport to the Soviet Union and certain death. In all, the Western allies deported some 3 million Russians. Bear in mind, it wasn't Nazis or even Bolsheviks doing this but British, French, and Americans.

One day my father and a friend, Piotr Swarc, were in the forest hunting mushrooms. They came upon a Russian man, his wife, and young son in hiding. Everyone knew what the deal was if they were caught. My father brought them into the Polish camp to live with us for quite some time. Once

among the Poles they were relatively safe, since no one was going to turn them in. In time, the roundup and forced repatriation of Russians stopped.

It turned out that this Russian family was Baptist, not Russian Orthodox. They were fortunate, because American Baptists were aggressive about relocating Baptist D.P.s to the United States, no matter which occupation zone they were in. Our Russian friends soon left for New York and a new life in America.

Meanwhile the years went by, and we moved from camp to camp. My parents had their third and final child, my brother Kazimierz, born in 1946 in Papenburg. Finally, in 1950, we received papers to go to Venezuela. Typically, D.P.s in the British zone were sent to countries where the British had influence, such as Australia, Canada, and — apparently — Venezuela. So we got ourselves ready to go.

Then, out of nowhere, new papers arrived: instead of Venezuela we were going to the United States! The Russian my father had befriended had taken our case to the Church World Service in New York, which in turn had arranged for us to be sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, Iowa. In order to emigrate we had to be in good health (my grandparents weren't, and stayed behind) and have a sponsor who arranged for housing and employment (which could not replace an American worker). In addition, we were expected to pay back our sponsor for any expenses bringing us over, an obligation my parents honored.

We were transported to the Bremerhaven Displaced Persons' camp to board the U.S.A.T. *General S.D. Sturgis*, a former troop carrier. The passengers, all D.P.s, were separated by sex, with the exception that younger boys stayed with their mothers. My brother Leonard joined our dad in the men's quarters while Kazimierz and I bunked with our mom. The spaces were tight. We slept in hammocks stacked four high.

This was one more adventure: 11 days on the North Atlantic in a ship that seemed large to a six-year-old but in actuality was not that big. We saw flying fish and lots of waves. My mother, Leonard, and I threw up every day at sea. My father

and Kazimierz were fine the entire time.

As the ship neared New York the excitement built. The day before our arrival we enjoyed a special meal, with all the ice cream we could eat. The crew distributed U.S. products, some of them totally unfamiliar to us. (I'm not sure my mom had ever used lipstick.) As the ship entered New York Harbor, passengers crowded the port and starboard railings. Those on the port side had a great view of the Statue of Liberty, but we were on the starboard side, our gazes fixed on the Manhattan skyline, and missed it. I didn't see the Statue of Liberty until I was a student at Princeton. On November 24, 1950, we docked at Ellis Island. My parents were given \$5 to begin their new lives in America.

Back in Germany, my parents had packed two very large trunks and four large suitcases made out of wood by my father and grandfather Jan. At Ellis Island we were dressed in our finest clothes, all made by my mother from blankets. While preparing for the journey we felt considerable anxiety about customs. After passing through immigration, the five of us stood nervously by our open trunks and suitcases, their contents awaiting inspection. The inspector walked by, but he didn't even glance at our stuff and signaled us to close everything up. We were relieved and dumbfounded.

We took a ferry over to Hoboken to board the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western R.R. to Chicago, where we changed to the Rock Island Line to Davenport. The train struggled through a severe blizzard all the way, at times coming to a complete stop. In Davenport, we were greeted at the platform by members of the First Presbyterian Church and taken to the nearby Hotel Dempsey.

The Dempsey had a number of firsts for us: elevators, a bathtub, and, for breakfast, chipped beef on toast. My parents never could figure out the chipped beef. My older brother was the only one who knew any English, and that wasn't much.

The church arranged a job for my father repairing electrical motors, while my mother cleaned house for some of its parishioners. My father made 40 cents an hour, my mother

even less. Church officials arranged for us to rent a bungalow on Jefferson Street, in a predominately Irish neighborhood. The Presbyterians couldn't have been nicer, picking us up on Sundays to go to their service and Sunday school.

Ending up in Davenport, in the American heartland, was a blessing. This small, prosperous city bustled with industries like John Deere and Alcoa, but you didn't have to go far to be in open, rolling country and surrounded by farms and woodlands. (I went rafting!) Everybody was incredibly friendly, and as a family we never had any sense of being poor — if my parents couldn't afford to buy shirts for me and my brothers, my mom could make them on the pedal-powered sewing machine a church member gave her.

By contrast, most of our fellow passengers aboard the *Sturgis* settled in cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, and Buffalo, with large Polish populations. There was a natural tendency for them to speak Polish all the time, sometimes even in school. We spoke Polish at home, but as soon as we left the house English was the only option. Because my parents wanted us to maintain a high-level fluency in our native language, our Polish (albeit with a Polesia accent) was probably better than the Polish spoken in big-city immigrant enclaves.

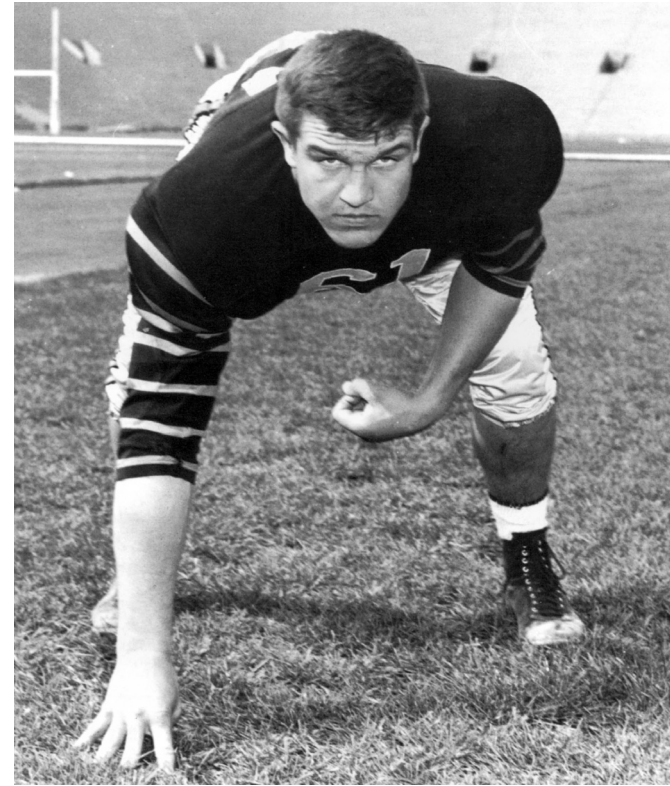
A lot of discussion in our house centered on what would happen when our Presbyterian hosts learned we were Catholic. This was a major problem for my parents, who worried we might be sent back to a Displaced Persons camp — or worse, Venezuela! Because my mother felt we couldn't ask a Presbyterian for directions to the nearest Catholic church, she walked in larger and larger circles around our house until she found it — St. Paul the Apostle — and rushed home to collect us all for a visit. My parents were so concerned about our Catholicism being discovered that they asked St. Paul's newly ordained assistant pastor, Father Maynard Brothersen, not to wear his priestly garb when calling on us. That wasn't a problem, since he always arrived at our house on his motorcycle. After much discussion (maybe in sign language), Father Brothersen convinced my parents it would be O.K. to tell the Presbyterians we were Catholic. They couldn't have been

more gracious, and in hindsight I doubt they were surprised.

I started in kindergarten at the Garfield Elementary School not knowing a word of English. (Later I was able to skip fourth grade and catch up with my age group.) There was no class in English as a second language. But thinking back on it, I don't remember ever *not* speaking English — immersion was the best teacher. My first day in school was memorable for me, of course, but even more so for the other kids. My mother dressed me up in style: lederhosen, suspenders, long socks, and appropriate shirt. They'd never seen anything like it. No one wore shorts in those days, let alone an entire outfit like mine. Decades later, they still talk about that day.

The parishioners of the First Presbyterian Church continued to be a part of our lives for many years. They were there to sponsor us in 1956, when we became naturalized citizens. Among the Presbyterians who employed my mother to clean house was the family of James and Lois Leach. They had two sons, Bob and Jim. Both boys were good students and athletes. When I needed a baseball glove, a football, a shirt, or even underwear, the Leaches had plenty of hand-me-downs. They gave us reserved tickets to the first football game I ever saw, with Bob Leach quarterbacking the Davenport High School team. In those days 15,000 came out for a high school game.

After one year in public school, my mother transferred my older brother and me to St. Paul's Catholic School, where I was introduced to athletics and Notre Dame. Like many parochial schools, St. Paul's modeled its fight song on Notre Dame's. After scraping and saving, my parents purchased a house on the west side of town. So in the middle of second grade I transferred to Holy Family School. After eighth grade I went to Assumption High School. At Assumption I was valedictorian, editor of the newspaper, and vice president of the monogram club; I also did community service and participated in football, wrestling, track, and baseball. Assumption was very familiar with Notre Dame, having sent many students there to study and compete in athletics. I had my heart set on following them.



A 1965 publicity photo distributed by Princeton's sports information office.

One of my teachers at Assumption, Father Arthur Perry, had played football at Notre Dame for Coach Frank Leahy (our Bill Leahy's uncle!). I had received All-Quad Cities and All-State honors in football, so Notre Dame, as well as some Big Ten schools and military academies, took an interest in me. In the fall of 1961, on a recruiting visit to South Bend, I watched Notre Dame play Syracuse with its great running back Ernie Davis.

During the visit I was interviewed by Head Coach Joe Kuharich, who had played at Notre Dame for Coach Elmer Layden, a Davenport native who in his own playing days had been one of the Knute Rockne's famed Four Horsemen. One of Assumption's rivals was Burlington High School, and I had sent Notre Dame film of the Burlington-Assumption

game to evaluate. Burlington had a running back, Tony Baker, who went on to star at Iowa State and play for the Los Angeles Rams and several other N.F.L. teams. Howard Cosell nicknamed him "Touchdown Tony." I sent that game film to Notre Dame because Tony was a nationally known high-school prospect, and playing linebacker I had eaten his lunch the entire game.

My interview with Coach Kuharich went great. He wanted me to be part of his team, so a dream I'd had since fifth grade became a reality — a football scholarship to Notre Dame.

While waiting for the interview, I was sitting outside Kuharich's office in the Rockne Memorial Building, right next to a bust of the legendary coach. Sitting next to me was a recruit from New Haven, Conn. We had a great time chatting and comparing notes. As it turned out, neither of us wound up at Notre Dame. The next year he went to Bordentown (N.J.) Military Academy, where Notre Dame sent players who weren't academically ready. The next time I saw Floyd Little he was playing for Syracuse. In the fall of 1964, along with other members of *Look* magazine's All-America team, we appeared together on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson.

During Christmas vacation of my senior year, I received a phone call from Jim Leach '64, then a sophomore at Princeton. He asked, "Have you ever thought about going to Princeton?" My reply: "Jim, I've never thought about going to Princeton but you're welcome to come over to chat." I think his mother put him up to it. (Lois Leach was an extraordinary person.) I had known Jim since we were kids — on summer days I'd often accompanied my mother when she worked at the Leaches' house, and we'd played together. He was two years older than me, but in grade school we were about the same size. Our high schools competed against each other.

When Jim came over to my house to talk up Princeton he brought along local alumni Jack Searles '39, Pete Priester '42, and Dudley Priester '45. We had a long chat about their undergraduate experiences and why Princeton would make sense for me. Our discussion was followed up a month or

so later by a visit from Princeton's head football coach, Dick Colman. He was there four days — we thought he would never leave — and spent much of his time talking with my mother and my high school coach, Ray Ambrose, and getting to know the community. During his stay he must have met everyone in Davenport. It worked, because in mid-February (fairly late in the process) I decided to apply to Princeton.

The big stumbling block was financial aid. Princeton presented us with the normal package of grant, loan, and job. My parents refused even to consider borrowing any money. They understood work — that was no problem — but not a loan. They had never borrowed any money for anything and weren't about to start now. Besides, at Notre Dame a scholarship covered everything, even toothpaste. After a week or so, Princeton came back with a package of all grant, no loan, which made it possible for me to pursue this great opportunity.

I was able to supplement my grant with summer work and a campus job. In the summers of 1962 and 1963, Dudley Priester got me a job at the Priester Construction Company in Davenport. In 1964, Armand Fell '34 hired me and Walt Kozumbo '67 to work for his roofing company in the Trenton area. In 1965, Blair Lee '67 and I worked for his grandfather E. Brooke Lee '16 on his farm in Damascus, Md.

When I arrived at Princeton, Coach Colman introduced me to Dennis Keller '63, a.k.a. The Pizza Czar. Dennis found a job for me at the Student Pizza Agency, which he'd founded. I was one of its early employees, making and delivering pizzas. The agency had a delicious sausage with a secret recipe; I was growing and always hungry, so I'm pretty certain that I must have eaten into Dennis's profits significantly. Working for Dennis led to a close, life-long friendship. We ended up as neighbors in Hinsdale, Ill.

During my recruitment phase, the Davenport alumni arranged for me to visit Princeton over Freshman Prom weekend. That was my first jet airplane ride. Coach Colman picked me up at Newark Airport. I'll never forget turning off U.S. 1 and driving up elm-lined Washington Road to the



At headstone of Roman Tatur when it was dedicated in 2009. Julia is next to the priest who blessed it. I'm with Janina Tatur, one of my mom's cousins.

football offices in the tower of Dillon Gym. Coach Colman gave me the regular tour, trying his best to sell me on the uniqueness of Princeton. He was a little bit worried about how it was going when I mentioned that I'd never heard of Princeton's Heisman Trophy winner, Dick Kazmaier '52, and didn't understand why they'd never finished the south end of Palmer Stadium. I also asked why the Osborn Field House, where the varsity still dressed for practices on adjacent University Field, was so small; in the Midwest a field house was a big building enclosing a field, while at Princeton it was a small building next to a field.

I stayed with Jim Leach in his suite of rooms over the arch in Hamilton Hall. The campus was beautiful and easy to fall in love with. I wanted a sweatshirt to take home, so I asked one of Jim's roommates, Bill Howard '64, where I could buy one. He said, "The U-Store." Wanting to double-check his answer, I approached another roommate, Chuck Powell '64,

who told me the same thing: "The U-Store." Finally I went to Jim and said, "I'd like to get a sweatshirt to take home. I know I'm going to be on financial aid, but I don't want a *used* one."

At the end of that trip I told the coaches I'd be coming. My decision wasn't based on Princeton's football record or even its academics (although sitting in on one of Hubert Alyea's chemistry lectures was great fun). It was the people associated with Princeton who impressed my parents and me. There was something special about them. That's how I felt then, and it's how I feel today.

The freshman football team dressed in Dillon Gym, just down from Brown Hall, where many of the freshman players lived. After a rainy day of practice, I was at my locker, in the row farthest from the entrance to the locker room. I could hear someone coming down the aisle, asking each row, "Where is Maliszewski?" (Can't remember if he pronounced it correctly!) Finally, he arrived at my row. I looked up from undoing my shoes to see a short, elderly man, leaning on a cane. He had white hair and a white moustache, and was wearing a beret. He was Robert Rinehart, president of the Class of 1904, which provided my financial aid. He had come to check out his class's investment. Football was an important legacy for members of '04. In their senior year they'd been national champions — going 11-0, with 10 shutouts, and had outscored their opponents 259-6.

How can you beat that!

Indeed, Princeton is a special place.

* * *

POSTSCRIPT

In Davenport my parents almost never talked about their former life, so growing up I knew next to nothing about it. Over time, my mom lost track of all her relatives. In 1977 and again in 1980, I took her on visits to Poland. On both occasions we met a few of my father's kin, but our itineraries didn't include the Soviet Union, where any of her surviving relations presumably lived. In her 60s she



Here I am with some villagers in Repische, the collective farm built on the old Tatur property. They were nice people. I'm not related to any of them.

began to open up about the past, and after my dad passed away in 1988, at age 74, she became more comfortable recalling the terrible events of her youth.

In the last 10 years my wife, Julia, and I have made six trips back to where my mother's family had lived and where I was born. I didn't know if any of her relatives were still alive. Happily, we discovered them in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. In spite of the horrors inflicted upon them, they had found ways to maintain their identity, even in a communist state. We hold a reunion whenever we visit Belarus. Many of the Tatur clan are university professors, no less. They have a website dedicated to the family and an impressive book that chronicles our history. We placed a headstone at the local cemetery for my mother's brother, Roman. As far as we know, it's the only headstone in Belarus written in Polish, English, and Russian. The locals take great pride that a member of the family came such a long way to erect this memorial.



The team that helped us explore Zastaria: Aliaksandr Makarevich, Racibor Biahun, (me,) Eugeniusz Netkaczew, Alexander Sokolov, Stanisława Gusakova.

We have contacted the Belarusian K.G.B. in an attempt to get the records for my grandfather Władysław Tatur's arrest, detention, and execution. (Yes, the K.G.B. is alive and well in Belarus — unlike their Russian counterparts, Belarusians didn't bother to change the name of their secret service.) Officials acknowledge they have the records but will not release them. We learned he's been officially "rehabilitated" and cleared of the fabricated charges against him, as have most other family members victimized by Stalin.

We have surveyed the Zastaria property with the help of five young professional archeologists and historians who are friends of Maryia Rusack '15, a Princeton graduate from Belarus. These are dedicated and courageous people. They have all demonstrated for democracy and been arrested and jailed multiple times. (Here in the U.S., some people think making a four-foot putt takes courage!) They helped me find the location of Zastaria homesteads and the paths my mother walked

to church, school, and the old Polish cemetery where the Tatars are buried. All this was done using old maps showing all the buildings, along with GPS and Internet technology. In the field we had an old, detailed map and Google Earth side by side to scale on a computer, with crosshairs on both; moving the crosshairs to a spot on the map correspondingly moved the crosshairs on Google Earth, and vice versa. GPS then guided us to the spot.

My family's Zastaria no longer exists. Part of the land is a collective farm and part is a wildlife refuge harboring moose, bear, wolves, etc. We were surprised and pleased to learn recently that the name of the refuge is Zastaria.

My mother died in 2009, at 90. She lived with Julia and me at our Maryland farm — "Zastaria" — for the last nine months of her life. There's no comparing what we did for her to the sacrifices and dangers she endured for me. Still, it was a privilege to care for her at the end, as she had cared for me at the beginning.

When she arrived we pointed out that she was born at Zastaria and would die at Zastaria. During her brief time with us we came to realize there wasn't a day in her life when she didn't think about her parents, brothers, sister, and Zastaria. She had deep love and regard for America and what it had done for us, but it was clear she felt a stronger bond to the family torn from her in such a tragic way.

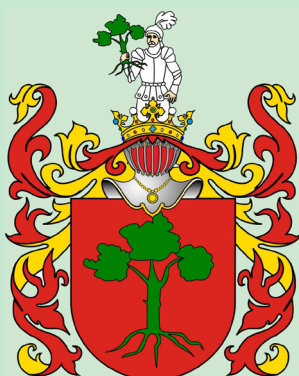
* *

After she died we took her back to Davenport. The now much older Father Brothersen was the celebrant at her funeral Mass and burial. We had a simple cedar casket with bier custom-made in the Polish *szlachta* design by Trappist monks at the New Melleray Abbey, near Dubuque. The wooden bier and casket were lovingly borne by her eight grandchildren, Paul, Steve, Aleksandra Tatur, Stanisława, Roman, Nicholas Jitkoff, Tatiana Jitkoff, and Rictavia, and by her great granddaughter and namesake, Janina Tatur. She was buried in Zastaria soil that Julia and I had gathered from the exact location of her childhood home, in the old country. ■



April 8, 2009: Mama and I celebrating her 90th birthday at Zastaria, our Maryland home.

Copyright © 2016 by
Stanisław Maliszewski.
This essay appeared in different form in the 50th
Reunion Book of the Princeton Class of 1966.
Layout by Jim Merritt.



Maliszewski coat of arms



Tatur coat of arms