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COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.

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# Gins Family History Research News

Our good fortune continues, as we have received additional Gins family history document sets from Stas Bookalo in Eastern Europe. We now have a team of translators working on 16 pages copied from archives in Vinnitsya. This material includes copies of letters written and signed by Morits-Emil Gins, on his letterhead as Chief of the Kiev Central Telegraph Office! I'm hoping to have the full translation in time for the next newsletter, and will certainly show a copy of the letters drafted by Morits-Emil. The new document set deals with the life and work history of Marija Gins, who was the third of four daughters born to Morits-Emil and Marija.

And in addition to the material about Marija, we also have copies of 26 documents from the St. Petersburg archives covering Vladimir Gins' entire work history. Some of those details are presented in this issue. I'm attempting to translate this material myself, and it's a slow but rewarding process.

Last but not least, we also have 6 pages that appear to be the birth records of Modest and Aleksandr Gins from Tulchyn, that show changes that were made to correct Morits-Emil's patronymic to indicate his original, preferred patronymic: Ludvigovich.



COURTESY/A. GLAZUNOV.

### Zinaida Andreevna Gergardt and Dmitrij Konstantinovich Gins

.This lovely photo from the front of a postcard is of two Gins cousins, Zinaida Gergardt and Dmitrij Gins, taken before the Gergardt family moved to Harbin, possibly in 1909. Zina, born in 1890, would have been 19 years old and Dmitrij, born in 1885, would have been 24. Dmitrij's military rank of Staff-Captain is apparent from his shoulder boards.



## Morits-Emil Ludvigovich Gins' Ranks, Orders and Medals

Translation by Boris Dralyuk, C.Phil.

In the February issue of the newsletter, we covered Morits-Emil Gins' extensive work history as described in documents from 1896 found in the Russian State Historical Archives. We followed Morits-Emil's start as a telegraphist for foreign correspondence for hire in the St. Petersburg Main Station in 1858, through the pinnacle of his achievements: confirmation as Chief of the

Morits-Emil Gins? COURTESY/WARDEN.

Kiev Telegraph Station in 1883, later to be reorganized as the Kiev Central Telegraph Office in 1889.

We now turn our attention to Morits-Emil's equally intriguing ascent up the Imperial Russian Civil Service ranks, and the official recognition he received in the form of special orders and awards. It took 10 years from the time he entered the telecommunications field, for Morits-Emil to achieve entry into the Civil Service system. He was officially promoted to rank 14, as a Collegiate Registrar, on Mar. 31, 1868 with seniority starting on Apr. 9, 1867. From that time forward, Morits-Emil rose steadily and after 23 years, in 1891, he was accorded the title of State Counselor [Rus. "Statskij Sovetnik"], at rank 5. This is as far as the 1896 St. Petersburg documents recorded, but we know from the 1906 Kievian Nobility Register that Boris unearthed, Morits-Emil was finally granted the title of Actual State Counselor, at rank 4, on Jul. 5, 1899. This ensured that he, along with his sons, and grandsons at the time were all recognized as hereditary nobility.



Order of St. Vladimir, 2nd Class, civil division. The medal in the photo is considered to be of museum quality and is valued at \$50,000. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Medal for Pacification of Polish Rebellion, 1863-1864. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Reverse, Medal for Pacification of Polish Rebellion. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Order of St. Anna, military division. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Order of St. Stanislaus, civil division. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.

Morits-Emil also received numerous orders and awards during his Civil Service career, including the orders of St. Anna of the 2nd and 3rd degree, and St. Stanislaus of the 2nd and 3rd degree (all from the civil division). But the most extraordinary awards were the Medal for Pacification of the Polish Rebellion of 1863-1864, and the order of St. Vladimir, 4th degree.

In translating the award documentation, Boris tells us that, "one of the more surprising (and perhaps telling) bits of their father's service: On Apr. 15, 1869, Morits-Emil received the Dark Bronze Medal 'for suppressing the Polish mutiny of the years 1863 and 1864.' This illuminates his relationship to the Poles and their national ambitions. For reasons we may only surmise, by 1863 Morits-Emil had emphatically cast his lot with the Russian Empire." Since we know from the new documents that Morits-Emil did not participate in any battles on behalf of the Empire, it is likely that he found that his position in the telecommunications field allowed him to pass along intelligence gathered.

The order of St. Vladimir, 4th degree, civil division, awarded to Morits-Emil on Aug. 30, 1891, "in recompense for his extraordinarily zealous/diligent service" was even more significant: it guaranteed him the right to hereditary nobility. The only other order to grant hereditary nobility for its recipients was the St. George.



Vladimir Gins. COURTESY/S. GUINS.

## Vladimir Moritsovich-Emilievich Gins' Civil Service Career, Orders and Awards

Translation by Boris Dralyuk, C.Phil. and Susan Morris

Following in his father's footsteps, Vladimir Gins, second son of Morits-Emil and Marija Gins, pursued a similar career path and devoted himself to the growing telecommunications industry. Vladimir completed formal post-secondary education that allowed him to become a Telegraph Mechanic (engineer). According to the new documents,

Vladimir graduated from the Kiev Real Institute and enrolled in the Engineering College of Post and Telegraph of Russia in St. Petersburg, where he finished a full course of study in 1889.

As Boris has pointed out, "It's no surprise that both Morits-Emil and Vladimir, pioneers in a burgeoning field with tremendous implications for national security, began their careers in the capital."

The new documents give us the following details: "By order of the St. Petersburg Post-Telegraph District, issued on June 5, 1889, he was declared a post-telegraph clerk, forth class, starting May 29, 1889. Later that year, he was attached to the Kishinev Post-Telegraph Office and named a Junior Mechanic."

Vladimir must have fallen in love with Varvara Vasilievna Mirovskij soon after he moved to Kishinev, for they married a year later, on June 4, 1890. Their union produced 7 children: Natalia (b. 1892), Mikhail (b. 1893), Vera (b. 1895), Olga (b. 1897), Leonid (b. 1899), Evgenija (b. 1900), and Lidija (b. 1903).

Less peripatetic than his father, Vladimir worked in Kishinev, Bessarabia, Russia (now Chisinau, Moldova) from 1889 until 1907, when he was transferred to Vilna (now Vilnius, Lithuania). The Gins family lived in Vilna near sister Anna (Gins) and her husband, Mikhail Gembitskij, until Vladimir transferred to work in Samara, Russia in 1912.

By 1916, Vladimir had achieved the rank of State Counselor and the title of Chief Engineer of the Samara Post-Telegraph District. Also by this time he had earned the St. Anna, 2nd and 3rd degrees, and the St. Stanislaus 2nd and 3rd degrees. In addition there are three medals he accrued that are illustrated on this page: the Silver Medal Commemorating the Reign of Aleksandr III, the Light Bronze Medal Commemorating 300 Years of the Reign of the House of Romanov, and the Bronze Medal for the Mobilization of World War I, 1914. This last medal was the only one struck for World War I, and is a poignant reminder of the fateful years that followed and the events that forever changed the Empire.



Medal commemorating the reign of Aleksandr III. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Reverse, Medal commemorating the reign of Aleksandr III. COLLECTRUSSIA.COM.



Medal for the Mobilization of World War I. GWPA.ORG/MEDALS.



Reverse of Medal for the Mobilization of World War I. GWPA.ORG/MEDALS.



Medal to Commemorate 300 Years of the House of Romanov. RUSSIAN-COINS.NET.



Reverse of Medal to Commemorate 300 Years of the House of Romanov. RUSSIAN-COINS.NET.



1st Class worn on a sash across the chest with the star; 2nd Class worn at the neck with the star; 3rd Class worn at the neck without the star; 4th Class worn as a badge on the chest. .GWPA.ORG/MEDALS



Vera Vladimirovna Gins wearing a badge or jetton, circa 1907. COURTESY/MORRIS.

## Medal for Participation in the Great Siberian Campaign of 1920 Awarded to Vera Bekkarevich (nee Gins)

Translation by Boris Dralyuk, C.Phil.

Men of the Gins families weren't the only ones to earn official awards for service to the Empire. One young woman, Vera Vladimirovna Gins, daughter of Vladimir and Varvara Gins, had the distinction of being granted a medal for her participation in the Great Siberian Ice Campaign of 1920. Although she was not a combatant,

Vera did come under fire while escaping the advancing Red Army. Traveling with her new husband, Captain Boris Nikolaevich Bekkarevich, Vera, along with the retreating White Russian army and many refugees, covered at least 1,700 miles by sled during the middle of the Siberian winter, as the group worked their way from Omsk, after the fall of the city to the Red forces in November 1919, to the city of Chita, east of Lake Baikal. There may have been close to 30,000 people on the trek, along with their possessions and what remained of the imperial gold reserves. Many did not complete the dangerous journey.

Vera wrote of their ordeal in an article that she submitted to *McCalls* magazine. I will include it in the next Gins newsletter.



The White army under Vladimir Kappel in Siberia, 1919. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Following is the text of the certificate for her award:

### Certificate

*Sign of Distinction Military Medal "For the great Siberian Campaign" of second degree (Silver thistle wreath with gold sword on Vladimir's ribbon without the bow) under the No. nine hundred ninety seven really granted to Vera Vladimirovna Bekkarevich, which is verified by the signatures and official stamps.*

*City Chita April Day\_\_\_ 1920 year, The head of the headquarters of the commander of the army of the Russian eastern district of the General Command, Major General...illegible signature*



Certificate No. 997 issued to Vera Vladimirovna Bekkarevich (nee Gins), awarding her the Sign of Distinction Military Medal for her participation in Great Siberian Campaign of 1920. COURTESY/S. MORRIS.



The Order for the Great Siberian Campaign, with a St. George ribbon. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

## Medal for Participation in the Great Siberian Campaign of 1920 Awarded to Vera Bekkarevich (*nee* Gins) continued

Here is a description of the award and it's history:

### Order "For the Great Siberian Campaign"

Instituted in 1920 by the Supreme Director, Admiral Kolchak, for all participants in the march from the Volga to the Transbaikial. It appears as a copy of the badge for the 1st Kuban Campaign, differing only in the metal of the sword. The crown of thorns is oxidized silver and 30 mm in diameter, crossed by a gold sword 50 mm long. Above the crown is a small ring for wearing it; the reverse side is smooth with a stamped serial number. The badge is in two classes: class I on a St. George ribbon (without the rosette in national colors) for all battlefield participants, and class II for those who completed the march but did not take part in any fighting, on a Vladimir ribbon (red with two black stripes) also without a rosette.

The first recipient of this award appears to be the Commander of the Eastern Front forces General Staff, Major-General [Sergei Wojciechowski](#). He is reported to have been involved in creating the award and said it represented: "... reward for the exceptional dangers and labors incurred by the troops of the Eastern Front in this unprecedented hike from the banks of the Irtysh River to Lake Baikal, ... a decoration of the Military Order of the Great Siberian expedition."



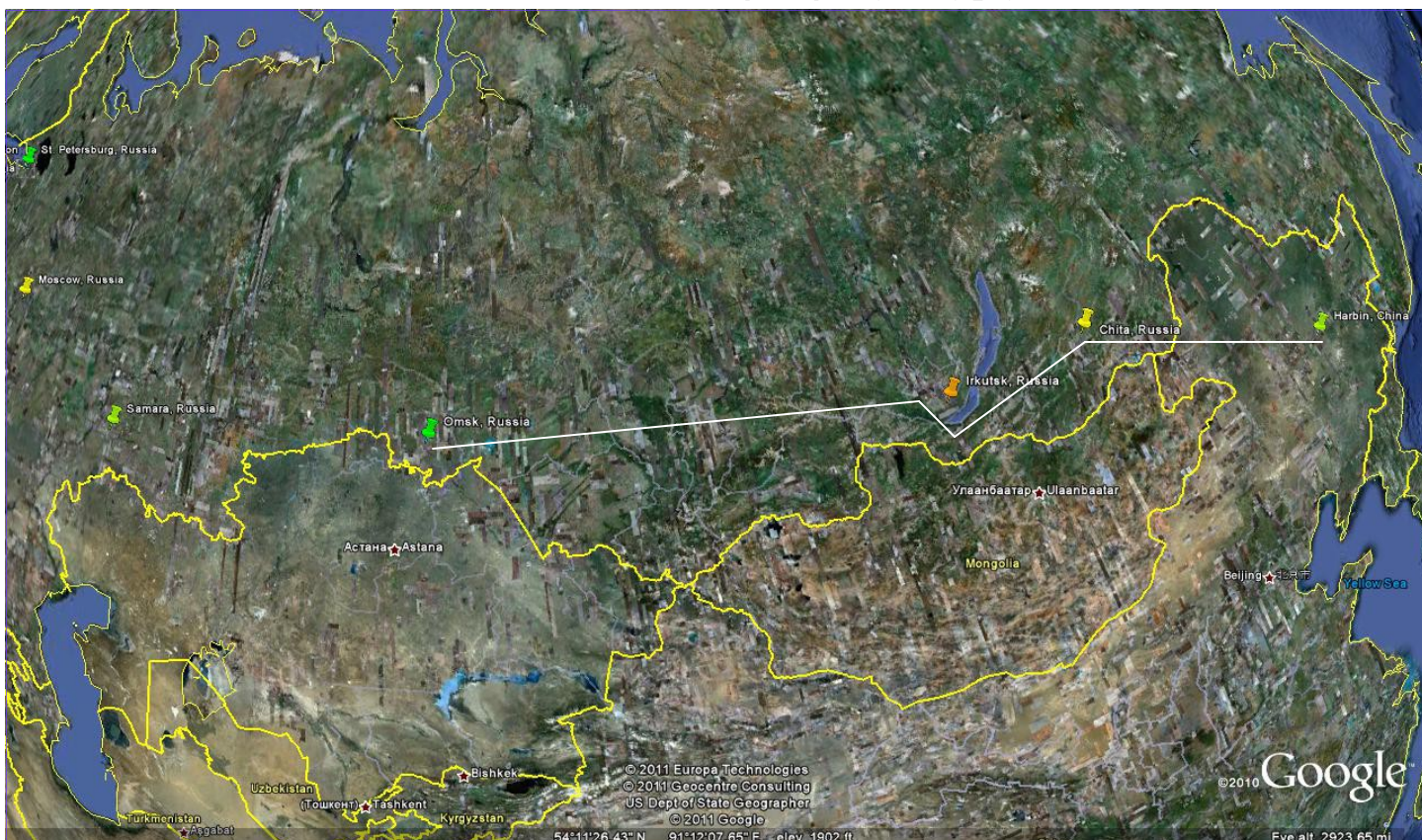
Vera Vladimirovna Bekkarevich photo stamped by the Commanding Staff of the Eastern Army, 1920. COURTESY/MORRIS.

We know there were nearly 1,000 of these medals presented, since Vera's own award was No. 997.

What is also significant is that Vera was pregnant at the time of the Great Siberian Ice Campaign. Although she took a spill from her sled and nearly had a miscarriage, Vera safely delivered the child, Igor Borisovich Bekkarevich, in Chita on June 15, 1920 (Julian calendar date). Listed on Igor's baptismal certificate, dated July 3, 1920, is a witness by the name of Colonel Ekaterina Platonovna Panchikhina. Boris found a reference to her and discovered that she received her own military medal for the Great Siberian Campaign, of the 2nd degree, dated May 27, 1920. So, according to the dates on the certificates, Vera must have arrived a month earlier than Ekaterina, because Vera's award was granted in April 1920.

And in looking at the miles the retreating White Army and refugees had to travel, it appears that if Vera and husband, Boris, headed east at the time of the fall of Omsk on Nov. 15, 1919 and arrived in Chita in late March/early April they must have been traveling on average, about 13 miles per day for more than 4 months through snow and ice to reach their destination.

Rudichenko, A., *Awards and Badges of the White Armies and Governments of the Russian Civil War, 1917-1922*. Moscow, 2008.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omsk>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Siberian\\_Ice\\_March](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Siberian_Ice_March)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order\\_of\\_the\\_Great\\_Siberian\\_Ice\\_March](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_Great_Siberian_Ice_March)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei\\_Wojciechowski](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Wojciechowski)



Google Earth map showing a straight-as-the-crow-flies route from Omsk to Irkutsk to Chita, covering nearly 1,660 miles (with a final line route to Harbin). This is how Vera and Boris Bekkarevich made their way eventually to Harbin. This is also the route that George, Emilija, Seva, Sergei, and Julija took, as well.

*Photography*

**The Empire That Was Russia:  
Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii**



Nikolaevskii Cathedral in Mozhaisk, 1911.



Gallery, Church of the Resurrection of Christ, Rostov Velikii, 1911.



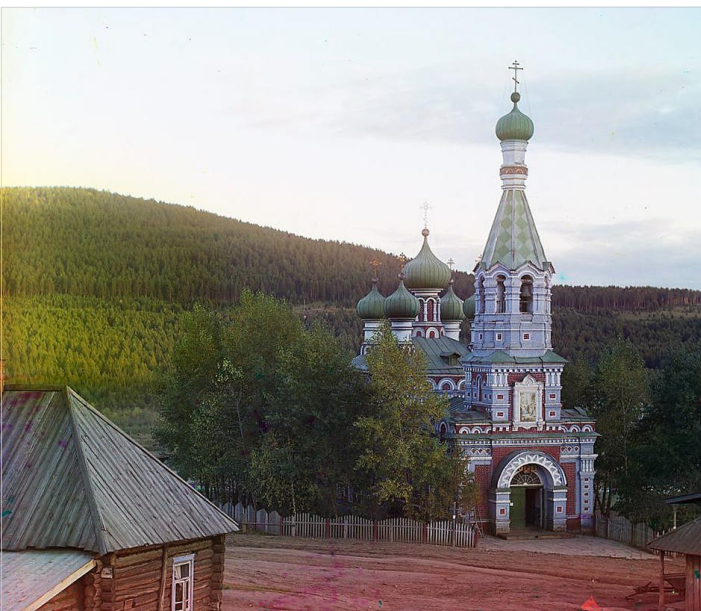
Chapel on Olga Hill, Russian Empire, 1909.



View from Svetlitsa Island, Saint Nil Stolbenskii Monastery, Lake Seliger; 1910 .



Old Church of Saint Nicolas the Wonderworker, Nyrob, 1910.



Church in Vetluga settlement, 1910.



Church of the Resurrection in the Grove, Kostroma, 1910.

## Correspondence Julija Gins Gains Permission to Travel to Chita

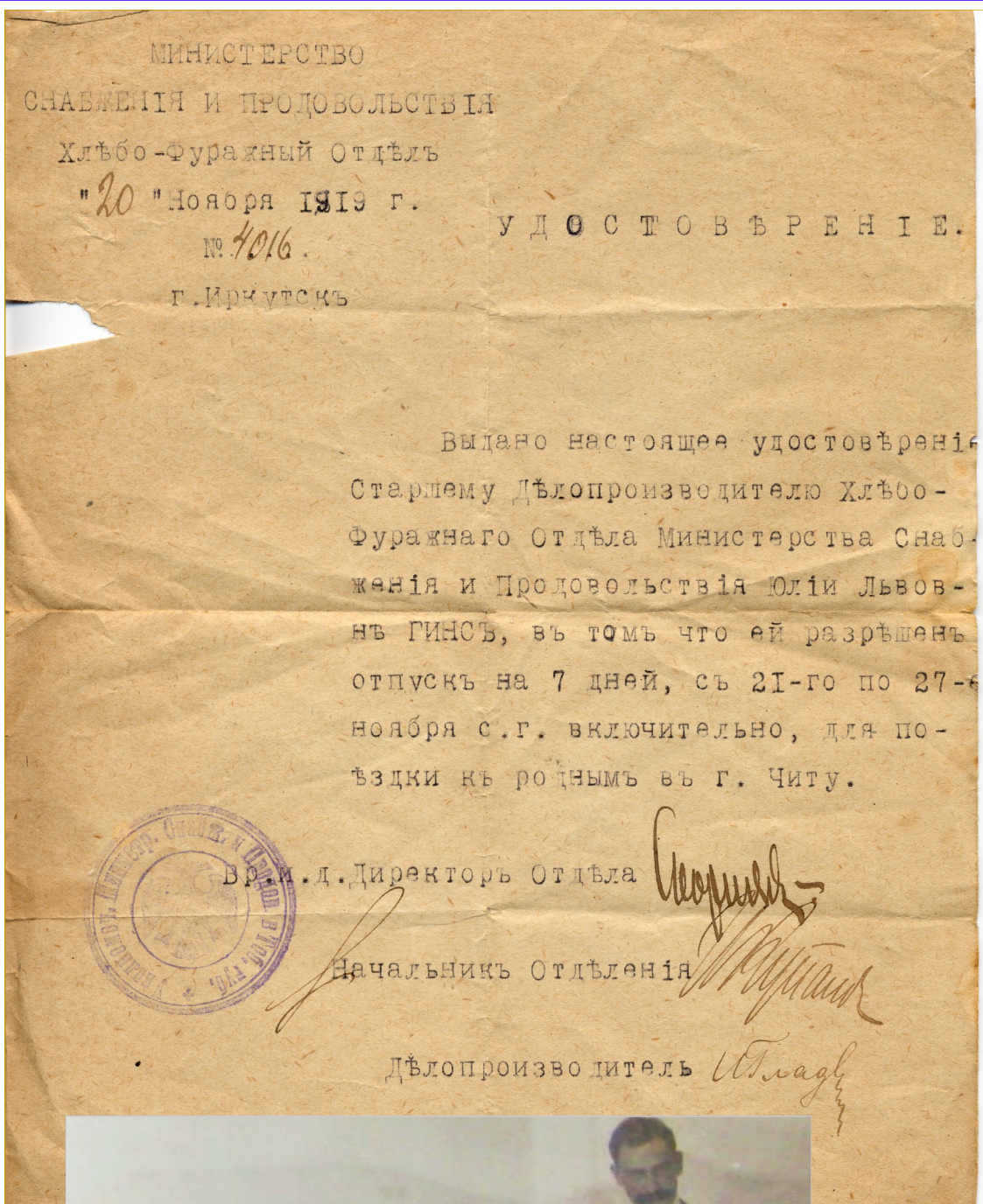
Translation by Vicky Mlyniec

Nikolaj Gins wasn't the only one who sought official sanction to travel during the Civil War. Even his young wife, Julija, had to ask permission and document her authorization to travel to Chita in 1919.

The certificate on this page comes to us from the collection of Vicky Mlyniec by way of her grandmother's cache of correspondence, and is dated 20 November 1919. Julija Lvovna Gins needed official approval to travel to Chita. Once there, she could plan her escape to Harbin. She was living in Irkutsk at the time with her sister, Emilija, brother-in-law, Georgij, and nephews, Seva and Sergei.

Julija had been working for the Ministry of Supplies and her supervisors drafted this certificate as permission for her to take a vacation. Because of her satisfactory work in the Ministry of Supplies, Julija Lvovna Gins was given 7 days, from the 21st through the 27th of November, for a trip to relatives in Chita.

They likely didn't know it at the time, but her supervisors had given Julija a precious gift: permission to travel, to begin the next phase of a new life.



Emilija, Julija,  
Seva, and Georgij.  
COURTESY/V.  
MLYNIEC.

*Mapping the Past*

[HTTP://HOME.KU.EDU.TR/~MBAKER/HIST304/BLANKRUSSMAP.GIF](http://home.ku.edu.tr/~mbaker/hist304/blankrussmap.gif)

### Gins Family Sites Were Within Empire Boundaries

It occurred to me that I needed to correct a number of map-oriented mistakes I have made in displaying the locations associated with Gins family history in Eastern Europe. In the last issue of the newsletter I included a map on page 2 that showed contemporary country boundaries and indicated the cities where Morits-Emil Gins worked, and the family, presumably, lived. These cities were shown in the current countries of Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine. My mistake was not using a map of the Russian Empire with the borders showing where these cities existed during the time that our family actually lived in Eastern Europe.

The above map gives the borders of the Empire that were in place in 1913. Note that both Warsaw and Kiev were within the Empire boundaries, as were the other cities that I mentioned in connection with Morits-Emil's birth and work history (but are not on the above map): Kalisz, Berdychev, Zhitomir, Odessa, Tulchyn and Rovenky.

And, to further clarify mistakes that have cropped up on the family tree charts and other references, I will attempt to edit all the birth information on family members who were born in Russia, so that the information reflects their affiliation as citizens of Russia, rather than Poland, Ukraine or Moldova. I fell into the trap of recording the contemporary countries associated with various cities, because of the map feature on Family-TreeMaker, the database program I use to store family history information and photos. The program automatically suggests the current country name when a city name is entered, so that the user can request a map and see the location of the city within present-day country boundaries.

I apologize for falling into the current country/contemporary map trap, and will generate an updated Gins family tree chart with birth and other locations that indicate the correct country name associated with the date.