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Discover History At Canadian River Valley Pioneer Museum!

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MUSEUM NOTES: APRIL 27, 2021

FROM THE AMARILLO GLOBE NEWS, JANUARY 14, 1957

Since mid-January, I have slowly worked through the Malouf "Oofie" Abraham collection donated by Kelley Cooper Cameron. I have really enjoyed learning about Oofie, his life, and his political career. One thing I found particularly interesting was as mayor of Canadian, he helped with the immigration of a Hungarian refugee family fleeing their communist ruled country.

Between 1944 and 1945, Stalin's Soviet Union forces captured approximately 600,000 Hungarians and deported them to labor camps in the Soviet Union, with almost 200,000 of those dying. Those who survived the labor camps were returned to Hungary between 1946 and 1955. In 1956, Hungary citizens revolted against the Soviet controlled communist government. In return, the Soviet Union sent a large military force to crush the armed resistance. Needless to say, it was a dangerous and terrible time to live there.

The Horvath family lived in the town of Chepreg, Hungary, near the Austrian border. Gyula Horvath was college educated and owned and operated a flour mill. Gyula was imprisoned by the Soviets for two years where he was beaten and tortured. After the Soviet response to the Hungarian Revolution, Gyula with his family (wife Juliana, 10 year old daughter Julia, and 8 year old son Julius) crossed the border into Austria along with 170,000 Hungarian refugees fleeing communist control Hungary. In December 1956, President Eisenhower established the Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief, which helped re-settle 30,000 Hungarian refugees to America.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1956, before the president's committee was formally established, Oofie contacted the International Rescue Committee to see what Canadian could do to help. Canadian citizens raised almost \$1,800 to help move the Horvaths here. Oofie provided them a rent-free home for one year at 804 Summitt. Mabel Teas gathered serviceable furniture from residents for the Horvaths and Theresia Hodges, a native German, translated for them.

In January 1957, the Horvaths traveled by train from New Jersey to Canadian and were greeted at the train depot by several town's people, journalists, and Boy Scouts Bill Ed Abraham, Eddie Snyder, and Tommy Bartlett who carried the US, Texas, and Hungarian flags.

The Horvaths quickly settled in their new home town. Gyula found a job at the Best Way grocery store and was able to purchase a home. The children quickly adapted to school and made friends. Juliana learned how to cook on a gas stove, as she had only cooked on a wood

burning stove in Hungary. She joined the PTA and made many friends with the women of Canadian.

In September 1958, the Horvaths decided to move to Wichita, Kansas. Gyula found employment at a grain mill, similar to the work he did in Chepreg. The Horvaths were sad to leave Canadian and its residents. They had every intention of making Canadian their home, but the opportunity in Wichita was too good to pass up. When they moved, Gyula and Juliana wrote a letter to the citizens of Canadian and it was published in the Canadian Record on September 11, 1958. Here is the last portion of their letter, "As so we wish to thank for all the noble-hearted residents of Canadian, who have come to our help with selfless friendliness even before our arrival there, and stayed our friends and guardians all the time after. May we pray them to keep us in their memories for ever. We will remember with everlasting gratitude and love Canadian and its angel-hearted citizens. May God bless Canadian and all the God-fearing, noble residents of this wonderful community."

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