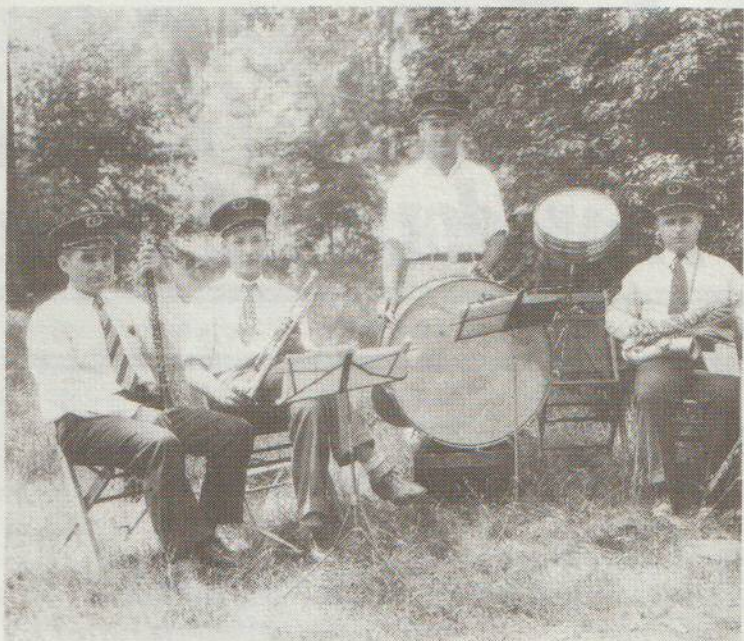


# Macedonian Tribune

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*Members of the first Macedonian band in the United States are, left to right, Elia Calcoff, clarinet; Kiril Rouseff, trumpet; George Toshcoff, drums; and George Kandillin, saxophone. The photograph was taken at an MPO picnic in Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

## My Papa, the Musician

*Elia E. Calcoff*

1891-1962

*by Marika Calcoff Burton*

Elia E. Calcoff was born on May 20, 1891, in the village of Vishini located in the Kostur region of Macedonia. He was a quiet man standing only five feet ten inches with brown hair and hazel eyes and having a most gentle manner.

From the time he was a small boy until the day he died music was uppermost in his heart.

In the mountains of Vishini he was a shepherd boy. At the tender age of eleven tending sheep was a very lonesome chore.

Young Elia made his first "*kaval*" with his own two hands and played at night to keep from being lonely and to entertain his sheep. The melodies he played were handed down generation to generation. They were learned by listening to fellow villagers when they gathered in groups to sing in the fields or when the small village band played at weddings.

At the age of seventeen he emigrated to Fort Wayne, Indiana, but because of ill health he stayed only a year. But when he returned to his native homeland he carried, very proudly, a new "store bought" clarinet. It was a small one, but nevertheless it was a clarinet.

Elia married his childhood sweetheart Anna Bacracheff, from the same village. He used to serenade her while up in the mountains. The melodies of the clarinet carried over the village and the love songs he played were quite beautiful.

When their first child Olga was six weeks old he emigrated to the States again and in 1913 settled in Fort Wayne. He went alone, leaving his wife and baby in Vishini until he could earn enough money for passage. It was ten years before he saw them again.

As a young man Elia took clarinet lessons (when he could afford them) from Mr. A. Cafaro, a well-known musician, and learned to read music. He soon played in several recitals conducted by Cafaro.

In 1923 he sent for his wife and daughter Olga (now ten years old). Another daughter Marika was born in 1924. Soon after that he founded the first Macedonian band in the States, which consisted of George Toshcoff on drums, George Kandillin on saxophone and Kiril Rouseff on the trumpet. Mr. Rouseff is the only survivor.

Most of the people from Vishini settled in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Soon every Sunday became a gathering of dancing with the band playing the *horos* from home. The little children were encouraged to join in the dancing, and made their parents very proud that they could participate in some of the more difficult dances along with the adults.

By this time Elia had purchased a new clarinet. From the late twenties to the late fifties the Fort Wayne band was much in demand traveling to other cities to play for weddings and also for MPO conventions.

This man had an indescribable talent. When he played people would actually cry. Some of the exotic appeal of his music is captured on the record that has his imitation of the "*gaida*." Much of his music was recorded in the fifties and his records were very popular.

In the late fifties his health began to fail and he gave up playing in public. No matter how bad he felt, Elia took the clarinet out of its case everyday and tried to play a few of his beloved *horos*.

This fantastic talent came out in his grandson Steve Jugloff, his oldest daughter Olga's son. Steve made two records and they are a

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## **My Papa** *Continued from page 2*

tribute and compliment to his Dedo. Instead of a clarinet, his choice is the piano organ, and the Macedonian folk songs he recorded are of an excellent quality.

Elia's youngest daughter Marika also plays piano organ and spent several years with her father's band but quit when she married. Today she plays for her own pleasure but not in public.

Elia Calcoff passed away in January 1962, and his wife Anna buried his clarinet with him.

The most recent generation of Macedonian youths, some hearing his records for the first time, are amazed as they finally realize what their parents are talking about when they describe the talent of this gifted musician. They too soon hear the melodies of Vishini . . . singing groups in the fields . . . walking at sunset in the village . . .

*Olga — passed away in 1973*

*Anna — passed away in 1979*

*In honor of her father Elia, mother Anna, and sister Olga, Marika donates \$25.00 to the **Macedonian Tribune**.*