

Therese & Bryce Hawkins
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24 April 2007

Dear Michael .

Have enclosed a copy of the last letter written by Michael (Max) Ravensby to his wife, together with a typed transcript, as the original was impossible to read until I did some enhancing on the PC.

We enjoyed seeing you all yesterday and look forward to doing it again sometime.

Kind regards

Bryce

Therese & Bryce

(Transcript of letter written by Michael (Max) Ravensby to his wife)

Rosemount Hospital
Brisbane

June 9th 1936

Dear Alice

I received two of your letters today. What was the reason to write a letter one after the other.

I am getting on a lot better since you have been here and I might be able to avoid operation. I will have a conversation with the doctor next Friday. I am able to take a little more food and I do not feel so much pain as before. Joan has been telling me that the Ruth and Beau and Joyce are coming this Saturday, if they have plenty of time let them come they are quite welcome, I like to see them all. Kind regards to Mr Appleby and Mr Flynn, tell them I am getting on good.

Halcyon has been telling me about the canaries. I wonder if she likes them, I have not much opinion about the birds in captivity, they do not enjoy their life in cages.

If Joyce is coming tell her to bring some music with her for we have a piano in the ward where I am. She might be able to give us a tune. Remember me to all our friends and the neighbours with best wishes and kind regards.

Best love to all at home from your affectionate husband Max.

Give my love to Ruth and Beau and Noel, wishing them good prosperity and good health.

Footnote: Joyce has written in the left hand margin "died November 1936 R.I.P." and on the reverse of this letter she has written "My Daddy's last letter to his family"

Rosemount Hospital

Brisbane

June 20th 1936

Dear Alice.

I received two of your letters to day, what were the reasons to write a letter one of to the other. I am getting on a lot better since I have been here and tonight be able to do some operation. I will have a conversation with the doctor next Friday. I am able to take a little more food and I do not feel so much pain as before. You have been telling me that the Ruth and Beau and Joyce are coming this Saturday, if they are coming I like to see them. They are quite welcome, I like to see them all. Kind regards to Mr. Apperly and Mr. Hyman Tell them I am getting on good. Yakson has been telling me about the Candice's I wonder if she likes them, I have not much opinion about the birds in captivity they do not enjoying their life in cages. If you is coming tell her to bring some music with her we have a Piano in this ward where I am she might be able to give us a tune. Remember me to all our friends and the neighbours with best wishes and kind regards. Best love to all at home from your affectioned husband Max. Give my love to Ruth and Beau and Noel wishing them good prosperity and good health.

dec

Dec. 9th 1936

11.2.17

There was no Poland when Michael Rovinsky was born - there was only Austria and Russia in the region where Poland used to be over a hundred years before. The Polish State was officially eliminated in the late 1700's when Russia and Austria annexed the country and divided it up between themselves. The official map of Europe showed a larger Russia with more land to their south, and a larger Austria with more land to their north. The State of Poland then ceased to exist for around 130 years until 1919, when WW1 ended and the Treaty of Versailles stripped 65,000 sq kilometres from Germany and Austria, much of which was delivered back to the newly created State of Poland. Prior to WW1, the map of Europe shows only three countries in this part of Europe - Russia, Germany and Austria.

Michael Rovinsky was therefore born in Austria, as is evidenced by:- (a) his own disclosure in his Statutory Declaration of 1913 and (b) his wife's Declaration in 1945, and (c) the fact that there was no State of Poland between 1790 and 1919..

Michael and his wife were married at St Paul's Manse, Leichhardt Street Brisbane on 23 December 1911. They were married in Michael's name "Rovinsky", which is how the Marriage Certificate was signed.

Michael was Naturalised in Toowoomba on 23 June 1913 as Michael Rovinsky, where he again declared his birthplace as Austria on the Certificate. He is said to have changed his name to Michael Ravensby, but I've never been able to find any documentation of that event. It seems that the name change was probably not done by Deed Poll, and even if it was, there would now be no records (see the following extract from the National Archives of Canberra - their words, not mine)

"1. What is a Deed Poll

A deed poll is a legal contract involving only one party. Changes of name by deed poll were (and are) made before a solicitor who issues the document to the person changing their name. The solicitor may keep a copy on file, **but it is unlikely to be a certified copy, and the file is unlikely to be kept for more than five years.**

2. Essential information

Contrary to popular belief, it has always been possible to change your name without having to register the change with any official body. It is still perfectly legal for anyone over the age of 16 to start using a new name at any time, as long as they are not doing so for a fraudulent or illegal reason.

The National Archives only holds records of changes of name which have been enrolled at the Supreme Court of Judicature. This is a very small percentage of all deed polls.

3. How can I find proof of a change of name?

People looking for proof of a change of name will often find that it simply does not exist. Historically, many people preferred not to draw attention to their change of name."

It was therefore quite in order for Michael to simply decide that he would now be known as Ravensby. Alice was always known as Alice Ravensby, which was quite acceptable in the general scheme of things, but we have proof that for the land purchase request (1945) in Nambour, she was required to use her **legally correct** surname of Rovinsky on all documentation papers.

This anomaly comes to light, and is proven, in documentation she signed in 1945 when she was applying to purchase land at Nambour. In her own hand-writing, she proclaimed herself to be Alice Jane Rovinsky, and that her husband was born in Austria. So she knew that legally, this was the case. For this purchase of land, Alice had to go through much bureaucratic paperwork to gain approval, because in the words of the Director of Investigations at Canberra, she had been married to "**a person of enemy origin**" - even though Michael had been dead for 9 years.

Though Michael had fought for Russia against Japan in 1904/05, he was still regarded by the Commonwealth of Australia as a "person of enemy origin" because of his birthplace being Austria - which was one of the principal countries who initiated World War 1. The total irony of this decision is that Michael arrived in Australia in 1910 - four years *before* World War 1 broke out. And during that War, he was part of the Australian Military Forces in the Middle East.

It must be remembered that Michael was a Naturalised Australian citizen long before WW1 broke out. He had been an Aussie for several years and his only previous war service had been with Russia 10 years prior to WW1. And Russia was, in fact, our **ally** along with Britain and France in that war. And many years later in World War 2, Russia was again allied with ourselves and Britain etc, and it was Russian troops that liberated Berlin resulting in the death of Hitler. So poor Michael got a raw deal, being bookmarked as "a person of enemy origin" simply because he was born in Austria, which - along with Germany - started WW1, and therefore was our enemy. But his birthplace of Austria was sufficient for the Government in Canberra to place him in that unfortunate category. ***And how about this for the greatest irony of all - If, in fact, there had been a State called Poland when he was born in 1876, then he would never have been declared "a person of enemy origin".***

Joyce and the family believed that Michael died at Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital, but this is not the case. Michael died at Rosemount Hospital (near the current RBWH). Greenslopes Hospital was not built until 1941 (Michael died in 1936).

Michael's Funeral Notice (Cannon & Cripps - *Courier Mail*, Tuesday 10 November 1936) advises that he was cremated at the Mt Thompson Crematorium, and his ashes were laid to rest at Toowong Cemetery in a Soldier's grave. It is interesting that you cannot find any record of his grave under his preferred name of Ravensby in Cemetery or Council records. It is only found under the name "Rovinsky", but Alice ensured that his Headstone would carry his own preferred name of Ravensby. The Council and Cemetery records show the words "this Grave has space for more burials" thus further confirming the limited space occupied by Michael's ashes.

From the day of his arrival at Pinkenba in 1910, Michael did indeed lead his life as an honourable Australian - a very good commendation for someone who 9 years after his death was still known in the Archives as "**person of enemy origin**".

Europe Before World War I, 1914



Europe after World War I, 1919



QUEENSLAND
STATUTORY DECLARATION.

Referred to in Paragraph 6 of annexed application.

1. Name in full.

I, Michael Rovinsky do
 solemnly and sincerely declare that—

1. My name is Michael Rovinsky

2. My age is 33 years, and I was born on the fifteenth day

2. Name of city,
town, or locality.

of September in the year 1874, at Lomum

3. County, state,
department,
province, or as the
case may be.

in the Austria in the country of Europe

3. My occupation is that of Labourer

4. Full address.

4. My place of residence is Englewood House at Toowoomba

in the State of Queensland

in the Commonwealth of Australia.

5. I have been resident in Australia for 3 1/2 years.

6. I intend to settle in the Commonwealth.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be
 true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act of 1867.

Made and declared before me

at

this

day of

19

J.P.

It is particularly requested that the writing, especially of the names of persons and places,
 be plain and legible.

" (COPY OF) CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

Insert Minister's or Registrar's Christian Name and Surname at length.

Insert Designation

a Church or place where celebrated.

I, Robert Moorhead Legate
Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia
 do hereby certify that I have this day at St. Pauls, Maunse
Leichhardt Street, Brisbane duly celebrated Marriage between

BRIDEGROOM

Insert Bridegroom's Name (in full) Michael Rovinsky
 " Rank or Occupation Labourer
 " Residence 110 Princes Street Kangaroo Point
 " Condition (Bachelor or Widower) Bachelor
 " Age (Last Birthday) Thirty five
 " Birthplace (Town or Place) Smyrna (Country or State) Austria
 " Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Phillip Rovinsky (dec)
 " Father's Rank or Profession Farmer
 " Mother's Name (Christian Name) Mary (Maiden Surname) Krietchien

AND

BRIDE

Insert Bride's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Alice Jane Byrnes
 " Rank or Occupation (if any) Domestic Duties
 " Residence 110 Princes St, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane
 " Condition (Spinster or Widow) Spinster
 " Age (Last Birthday) Twenty seven years
 " Birthplace (Town or Place) Woodburn (Country or State) Richmond River (Country) New South Wales
 " Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Arthur Byrnes
 " Father's Rank or Profession Farmer
 " Mother's Name (Christian Name) Martha Matilda (Maiden Surname) Boyce

WITNESSES (2 Witnesses Names in full)

Before Arthur Byrnes and Bessie Legate

after declaration duly made as by law required.

DATED this Twenty third day of December 1911

R. Moorhead Legate

(Signature of Minister or Registrar)

Michael Rovinsky

Alice Jane Byrnes

(Signature of Bridegroom)

Arthur Byrnes

AUSTRALIAN



MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 3190

Name RAKUBSKY Michael

Unit 252 LH Coy. 42nd Bn.

H^{on} Lt. H. J. Jones Joined on 1/1/1918

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. What is your Name? | 1. <u>Michael Rakubsky</u> |
| 2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? | 2. In the Parish of <u>Villamare of Lencuva Poland</u>
in the County of <u>Russia</u> |
| 3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) | 3. <u>Naturalized (Papers Lost)</u> |
| 4. What is your Age? | 4. <u>Thirty nine yrs</u> ^{3/12} <u>three mts</u> |
| 5. What is your Trade or Calling? | 5. <u>Labourer</u> |
| 6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? | 6. <u>No</u> |
| 7. Are you married? | 7. <u>Yes 2 children 16 yrs</u> |
| 8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) | 8. <u>Alice Rakubsky (Wife)</u>
<u>Hume Street,</u>
<u>Yorwanda</u> <i>Mumukshu</i> |
| 9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? | 9. <u>No</u> |
| 10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? | 10. <u>No</u> |
| 11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge | 11. <u>2 yrs Russian War</u>
<u>5 yrs Russian Cavalry</u> |
| 12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? | 12. <u>Yes</u> |
| 13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? | 13. <u>No</u> |
| 14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)—
Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? | 14. <u>Yes</u> |
| 15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? | 15. <u>Yes</u> |

3. Michael Rakubsky

do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife.* and children.

HAS HAD HOME LEAVE

in 1 10

No. L. 9931

WILL BE APPLICATION OF Alice Jane Rovinsky
 Husband Michael Rovinsky (deceased)
 Wife of
 who is a naturalized person of enemy origin
 for consent to the purchase
 of certain land at Nambour for investment purposes.
Queensland

	Husband	Wife
Place of Birth	<u>Austria</u>	<u>Australia</u>
Date of Birth	<u>1876</u>	<u>1882</u>
Arrived in Australia	<u>1910</u>	<u>—</u>
Whether absent since arrival	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Naturalized in	<u>Australia</u> <u>1913</u>	<u>1913</u>
Married in	<u>Australia</u> <u>1911</u>	<u>1911</u>
Country of Birth of Father	<u>—</u>	<u>Australia</u>
Country of Birth of Mother	<u>—</u>	<u>Australia</u>
Date of Father's Naturalization	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Consideration - amount of	<u>—</u>	<u>£50</u>
Consideration - cash	<u>—</u>	<u>£50</u>
how payable - mortgage	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Whether other property held (particulars at foot)	<u>—</u>	<u>* Upo</u>
Money in War Loans and when invested	<u>—</u>	<u>None</u>
Contributions to Patriotic Funds	<u>—</u>	<u>Small amounts</u>
If previous application - Decision	<u>—</u>	<u>Upo 18383 Granted</u>
Which reports (if any) unfavourable	<u>—</u>	<u>None</u>
Whether Public Opinion adverse	<u>—</u>	<u>No</u>
Number of	<u>Sons</u>	<u>Daughters</u>
Number born in Australia	<u>None</u>	<u>4</u>
Born between 3.9.1894 and 1923	<u>—</u>	<u>4</u>
With A.I.F. etc.	<u>—</u>	<u>4</u>
Volunteered and Rejected	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>

REMARKS: Applicant has contracted to buy an allotment of land with
 dwelling-house at Nambour (subject to A.G.'s consent 49930) - Subsid
 allotment is vacant land on which applicant intends to build a house
 when permitted to do so.

This purchase was entered into without consent and
 transfer executed - See S/D 6345.

Clear Applicant is an Australian born widow
 (29930 herewith for decision.)

Telephone No.
3 1381
Box 201-M, S.F.O.
BRISBANE

AIR MAIL
SECRET

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

26 JUL 1945

COMMONWEALTH INVESTIGATION BRANCH
COMMONWEALTH OFFICE, ADELAIDE STREET

JH : FT

BRISBANE

In Your Reply Please
Quote this Number
BB.3606

24th July, 1945.

The Director,
Commonwealth Investigation Branch,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

NATIONAL SECURITY (LAND TRANSFER) REGULATIONS
Alice Jane ROVINSKY

With reference to memorandum No. L.9931 of the 23rd February, 1945, from the Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, relative to an application by the abovenamed person, it is submitted that the Police Department report states:-

"As a result of inquiries made it has been ascertained that Alice Jane Rovinsky is known in Harbour as Alice Jane Ravensky. She was born at Woodburn, N.S.W. on the 10th December, 1882 and she was married to Michael Rovinsky a person of Austrian Nationality, at Brisbane, on the 21st December, 1911. She has resided in the Harbour District for the past 22 years. Her husband Michael Rovinsky or Ravensky died at Harbour 5 or 6 years ago.

Discreet inquiries have been made from all residents in the locality where this land is situated and I have been unable to obtain any evidence of the existence of a strong feeling against the acquisition of further land by naturalized persons of enemy origin, or by the subjects of a country in enemy occupation.

The applicant is well known to me, she bears a good character and is known to be a loyal British subject. There appears to be no general grounds why this application should not be granted."

The Deputy Director of Security for Queensland advises:-

"With reference to above it is advised that no adverse record of the applicant is held by Security Service."

No adverse record of the applicant is held at this Office.

RECEIVED
25 JUL 1945
COMMONWEALTH INVESTIGATION BRANCH

The Secretary,
Attorney-General's Dept.
A. J. C. M. C. M. C.
26 JUL 1945
Investigation Branch

(A. C. Nicoll)
Acting Inspector.