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Introduction -- Family History -- Dispossession and Father's Arrest -- My Mother's Travails -- My Life After the Arrests of My Parents -- The Holodomor -- My Parents, and Their Lives During and After the Holodomor -- I Rejoin My Parents -- Uncle Danylo -- Life with My Parents in Bilychi -- The German Army Enters Kyiv -- Return to Nova Bubnivka -- Conscription to Forced Labor in Germany -- Correspondence I Received as a Forced Laborer in Germany -- The War Ends; I Am Set Free -- Life in the Refugee Camp, Regensburg, Germany -- I Start My Own Family -- We Immigrate to the United States -- Life in Chicago -- Reconnecting with my Mother -- Family Life in Chicago -- Move to Palatine, Illinois -- Our Family in America -- Our Move to Florida. The Family Grows -- Last Thoughts -- Postscript

Sommario/riassunto

Wasył Andreievych Kushnir was born in Ukraine in 1923, and was witness to the tragedies and horrors of the early years of collectivization under the Soviet regime in his homeland. His father fought in the Ukrainian National Army against the Russian Bolshevik invasion and ultimate occupation of Ukraine, and his grandfather was murdered by Chekist Bolsheviks. Early in Wasył's life, his family's home and all personal possessions were confiscated by the communist authorities, and both parents were exiled, his father to Siberia, and mother to a prison in Mariopol. His uncle Danylo was also arrested and exiled to forced labor in Siberia, and then to Komi SSR. During this period, Ukraine experienced genocidal famine, and Wasył himself suffered hunger during the Ukrainian Holodomor, in which millions perished. Upon the escape of his parents from prison camps, the family reunited, only to be torn apart again during World War II when Wasył was taken by the Nazis as a slave laborer to Germany. At the war's conclusion, Wasył drove trucks for the American Army in Germany, and married his wife, Maria, also a forced labor survivor, who bore him two sons. The family ultimately emigrated to Mississippi, and then Chicago, Illinois where two other children were born. Wasył pursued the American dream, sought an education, and was ultimately successful in business, retiring in Florida where he spent his last years. The story of Wasył's life, which extended almost a century, is told by his son Andrei in his father's voice. Andrei combined his father's memories, written longhand in Ukrainian, with translated documents and additional narrative. This non-fiction work attests to the struggle for survival under the harsh Soviet regime in Ukraine, the courage and persistence of one remarkable man, the importance of family, and the strength and endurance of the human spirit.
