

= Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna of Russia =

Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna of Russia (Russian : ? ? ???? ???? ? ???? ; 13 June [O.S. 1 June] 1882 ? 24 November 1960) was the youngest child and younger daughter of Emperor Alexander III of Russia and younger sister of Tsar Nicholas II .

She was raised at the Gatchina Palace outside Saint Petersburg . Olga 's relationship with her mother , Empress Marie , the daughter of King Christian IX of Denmark , was strained and distant from childhood . In contrast , she and her father were close . He died when she was 12 , and her brother Nicholas became emperor .

In 1901 , she married Duke Peter Alexandrovich of Oldenburg , who was privately believed by family and friends to be homosexual . Their marriage of 15 years remained unconsummated , and Peter at first refused Olga 's request for a divorce . The couple led separate lives and their marriage was eventually annulled by the Emperor in October 1916 . The following month Olga married cavalry officer Nikolai Kulikovsky , with whom she had fallen in love several years before . During the First World War , the Grand Duchess served as an army nurse at the front and was awarded a medal for personal gallantry . At the downfall of the Romanovs in the Russian Revolution of 1917 , she fled to the Crimea with her husband and children , where they lived under the threat of assassination . Her brother and his family were shot by revolutionaries .

Olga escaped revolutionary Russia with her second husband and their two sons in February 1920 . They joined her mother , the Dowager Empress , in Denmark . In exile , Olga acted as companion and secretary to her mother , and was often sought out by Romanov impostors who claimed to be her dead relatives . She met Anna Anderson , the best @-@ known impostor , in Berlin in 1925 . After the Dowager Empress 's death in 1928 , Olga and her husband purchased a dairy farm in Ballerup , near Copenhagen . She led a simple life : raising her two sons , working on the farm and painting . During her lifetime , she painted over 2 @,@ 000 works of art , which provided extra income for both her family and the charitable causes she supported .

In 1948 , feeling threatened by Joseph Stalin 's regime , Olga emigrated with her immediate family to a farm in Ontario , Canada . With advancing age , Olga and her husband moved to a bungalow near Cooksville , Ontario . Colonel Kulikovsky died there in 1958 . Two years later , as her health deteriorated , Olga moved with devoted friends to a small apartment in East Toronto . She died aged 78 , seven months after her older sister , Xenia . At the end of her life and afterwards , Olga was widely labeled the last Grand Duchess of Imperial Russia .

= = Early life = =

Olga was the youngest daughter of Tsar Alexander III and his consort , Marie Feodorovna , formerly Princess Dagmar of Denmark . She was born in the purple , i.e. during her father 's reign , on 13 June 1882 in the Peterhof Palace , west of central Saint Petersburg . Her birth was announced by a traditional 101 @-@ gun salute from the ramparts of the Peter and Paul Fortress , and similar salutes throughout the Russian Empire . Her mother , advised by her sister , Alexandra , Princess of Wales , placed Olga in the care of an English nanny , Elizabeth Franklin .

The Russian imperial family was a frequent target for assassins , so for safety reasons the Grand Duchess was raised at the country palace of Gatchina , about 50 miles (80 km) west of Saint Petersburg . Olga and her siblings , however , were not accustomed to a lavish early lifestyle . Conditions in the nursery were modest , even Spartan . They slept on hard camp beds , rose at dawn , washed in cold water , and ate a simple porridge for breakfast .

Olga left Gatchina for the first time in the early fall of 1888 when the imperial family visited the Caucasus . On 29 October , their return train approached the small town of Borki at speed . Olga 's parents and their four older children were eating lunch in the dining @-@ car when the train lurched violently and came off the rails . The carriage was torn open ; the heavy iron roof caved in , and the wheels and floor of the car were sliced off . The Tsar crawled out from beneath the crushed roof , and held it up with " a Herculean effort " so that the others could escape . There were 21 fatalities . Empress Marie helped tend the wounded , and made makeshift bandages from her own clothes . An

official investigation found that the crash was an accident , but it was widely assumed that two bombs had been planted on the line .

The Grand Duchess and her siblings were taught at home by private tutors . Subjects included history , geography , Russian , English and French , as well as drawing and dancing . Physical activities such as equestrianism were taught at an early age , and they became expert riders . The family was deeply religious . Although Christmas and Easter were times of celebration and extravagance , Lent was strictly observed ? meat , dairy products and any form of entertainment were avoided . Family holidays were taken in the summer at Peterhof and with Olga 's grandparents in Denmark .

Empress Marie was reserved and formal with Olga as a child , and their relationship remained a difficult one . However , Olga , her father , and the youngest of her brothers , Michael , had a close relationship . Together , the three frequently went on hikes within the Gatchina forests , where the Tsar taught Olga and Michael woodsmanship . Olga said of her father :

My father was everything to me . Immersed in work as he was , he always spared that daily half @-@ hour once my father showed me a very old album full of most exciting pen and ink sketches of an imaginary city called Mopsopolis , inhabited by Mopses [pug dogs] . He showed it to me in secret , and I was thrilled to have him share his own childhood secrets with me .

During 1894 Olga 's father became increasingly ill , and the annual trip to Denmark was cancelled . On 13 November 1894 , he died at the age of 49 . The emotional impact on Olga , aged only 12 , was traumatic , and her eldest brother , the new Tsar Nicholas II , was propelled into a role for which in Olga 's later opinion he was ill @-@ prepared .

= = Court life = =

Olga was due to enter society in the summer of 1899 , but after the death of her brother George at the age of 27 , her first official public appearance was delayed by a year until 1900 . She hated the experience , and later told her official biographer Ian Vorres , " I felt as though I were an animal in a cage ? exhibited to the public for the first time . " From 1901 , Olga was appointed honorary Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the 12th Akhtyrsky Hussar Regiment of the Imperial Russian Army . The Akhtyrsky Hussars were famous for their victory over Napoleon Bonaparte at the Battle of Kulm in 1813 , and wore a distinctive brown dolman .

By 1900 Olga , age 18 , was being escorted to the theatre and opera by a distant cousin , Duke Peter Alexandrovich of Oldenburg , a member of the Russian branch of the House of Oldenburg . He was 14 years her senior and known for his passion for literature and gambling . Peter asked for Olga 's hand in marriage the following year , a proposal that took the Grand Duchess completely by surprise : " I was so taken aback that all I could say was ' thank you ' , " she later explained .

Their engagement , announced in May 1901 , was unexpected by family and friends , as Peter had shown no prior interest in women , and members of society assumed he was homosexual . At the age of 19 , on 9 August 1901 , Olga married 33 @-@ year @-@ old Peter . After the celebration the newlyweds left for the Oldenburg palace on the Field of Mars . Olga spent her wedding night alone in tears , while her husband left for a gambling club returning the next morning . Their marriage remained unconsummated , and Olga suspected that Peter was pushed into proposing by his ambitious mother . Biographer Patricia Phenix thought Olga may have accepted his proposal to gain independence from her own mother , the Dowager Empress , or avoid marriage into a foreign court . The couple initially lived with her in laws Alexander Petrovich and Eugénie Maximilianovna of Oldenburg . It was not an harmonious arrangement as Peter 's parents , both well known for their philanthropic work , berated their only son for his laziness . Eugénie , a close friend of the Dowager Empress , showered her daughter @-@ in @-@ law with gifts including a ruby tiara that had been a present to Joséphine de Beauharnais from Napoleon , but Olga took a dislike towards her mother @-@ in @-@ law . A few weeks after the wedding , Olga and her husband traveled to Biarritz , France , from where they sailed to Sorrento , Italy , on a yacht loaned to them by King Edward VII of Great Britain .

On their return to Russia , they settled into a 200 @-@ room palace (the former Baryatinsky

mansion) at 46 Sergievskaya Street (today Tchaikovsky Street) , Saint Petersburg . The palace , a gift from Tsar Nicholas II to his sister , now houses the Saint Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry . Olga and Peter had separate bedrooms at opposite ends of the building , and the Grand Duchess had her own art studio . Unhappy in her marriage , she fell into bouts of depression that caused her to lose her hair , forcing her to wear a wig . It took two years for her hair to regrow .

Near the Oldenburg 's estate , Ramon in Voronezh province , Olga had her own villa , called " Olgino " after the local town . She subsidized the village school out of her own pocket , and established a hospital . Her daughter @-@ in @-@ law later wrote , " She tried to help every needy person as far as her strengths and means would permit . " At the hospital , she learned basic medical treatment and proper care from the local doctor . She exemplified her strong Orthodox faith by creating religious icons , which she distributed to the charitable endeavours she supported . At Ramon Olga and Peter enjoyed walking through the nearby woods and hunted wolves together . He was kind and considerate towards her , but she longed for love , a normal marriage and children .

In April 1903 , she was introduced to a Blue Cuirassier Guards officer Nikolai Kulikovsky by her brother Michael during a royal military review at Pavlovsk Palace . Olga and Kulikovsky began to see each other , and exchanged letters regularly . The same year , at the age of 22 , she confronted her husband and asked for a divorce , which he refused with the qualification that he might reconsider after seven years . Nevertheless , Oldenburg appointed Kulikovsky as an aide @-@ de @-@ camp , and allowed him to live in the same residence as Oldenburg and the Grand Duchess on Sergievskaya Street . The relationship between Kulikovsky and the Grand Duchess was not public , but gossip about their romance spread through society .

From 1904 to 1906 , Duke Peter was appointed to a military post in Tsarskoye Selo , a complex of palaces just south of Saint Petersburg . In Tsarskoye Selo , the Grand Duchess grew close to her brother Nicholas and his family , who lived at the Alexander Palace near her own residence . Olga prized her connection to the Tsar 's four daughters . From 1906 to 1914 , Olga took her nieces to parties and engagements in Saint Petersburg , without their parents , every weekend throughout the winter . She especially took a liking to the youngest of Nicholas 's daughters , her god @-@ daughter Anastasia , whom she called Shvipsik (" little one ") . Through her brother and sister @-@ in @-@ law , Olga met Rasputin , a self @-@ styled holy man who purported to have healing powers . Although she made no public criticisms of Rasputin 's association with the imperial family , she was unconvinced of his supposed powers and privately disliked him . As Olga grew close to her brother 's family , her relationship with her other surviving brother , Michael , deteriorated . To her and Nicholas 's horror , Michael eloped with his mistress , a twice @-@ divorced commoner , and communication between Michael and the rest of the family was essentially cut off .

Public unrest over the Russo @-@ Japanese War and demands for political reform increased in the early years of the twentieth century . At Epiphany 1905 , a band of revolutionaries fired live rounds at the Winter Palace from the Peter and Paul Fortress . Olga and the Dowager Empress were showered with glass splinters from a smashed window , but were unharmed . Three weeks later , on " Bloody Sunday " , at least 92 people were killed by Cossack troops during a demonstration , and a month later Olga 's uncle , Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich of Russia , was assassinated . Uprisings occurred throughout the country , and parts of the navy mutinied . Olga supported the appointment of the liberal Pyotr Stolypin as prime minister , and he embarked on a programme of gradual reform , but in 1911 he was assassinated . The public unrest , Michael 's elopement , and Olga 's sham marriage placed her under strain , and in 1912 , while visiting England with her mother , she suffered a nervous breakdown . Tsarina Alexandra was also unwell with fatigue , concerned by the poor health of her hemophiliac son , Alexei . Olga stood in for the Tsarina at public events , and accompanied her brother on a tour of the interior , while the Tsarina remained at home .

= = War and revolution = =

On 1 August 1914 , just before the start of World War I , Olga 's regiment , the Akhtyrsky Hussars , appeared at an Imperial Review before her and the Tsar at Krasnoe Selo . Kulikovsky volunteered for service with the Hussars , who were stationed on the frontlines in Southwestern Russia . With the

Grand Duchess 's prior medical knowledge from the village of Olgino , she started work as a nurse at an under @-@ staffed Red Cross hospital in Rovno , near to where her own regiment was stationed . During the war , she came under heavy Austrian fire while attending the regiment at the front . Nurses rarely worked so close to the frontlines and consequently she was awarded the Order of St. George by General Mannerheim , who later became President of Finland . As the Russians lost ground to the Central Powers , Olga 's hospital was moved eastwards to Kiev , and Michael returned to Russia from exile abroad .

In 1916 , Tsar Nicholas II officially annulled the marriage between Duke Peter Alexandrovich and the Grand Duchess , allowing her to marry Colonel Kulikovsky . The service was performed on 16 November 1916 in the Kievo @-@ Vasilievskaya Church on Triokhsviatitelskaya (Three Saints Street) in Kiev . The only guests were the Dowager Empress , Olga 's brother @-@ in @-@ law Grand Duke Alexander , four officers of the Akhtyrsky Regiment , and two of Olga 's fellow nurses from the hospital in Kiev .

During the war , internal tensions and economic deprivation in Russia continued to mount and revolutionary sympathies grew . After Tsar Nicholas II abdicated in early 1917 , many members of the Romanov dynasty , including Nicholas and his immediate family , were detained under house arrest . In search of safety , the Dowager Empress , Grand Duke Alexander , and Grand Duchess Olga traveled to the Crimea by special train , where they were joined by Olga 's sister Grand Duchess Xenia . They lived at Alexander 's estate , Ay @-@ Todor , about 12 miles (19 km) from Yalta , where they were placed under house arrest by the local forces . On 12 August 1917 , her first child and son , Tikhon Nikolaevich was born during their virtual imprisonment . He was named after Tikhon of Zadonsk , the Saint venerated near the Grand Duchess 's estate at Olgino . Although Tikhon was the grandson of an emperor and the nephew of another , neither he nor his younger brother Guri received any title as his father was a commoner .

The Romanovs isolated in the Crimea knew little of the fate of the Tsar and his family . Nicholas , Alexandra , and their children , were originally held at their official residence , the Alexander Palace , but the Provisional government under Alexander Kerensky relocated them to Tobolsk , Siberia . In February 1918 , most of the imperial family at Ay @-@ Todor was moved to another estate at Djulber , where Grand Dukes Nicholas and Peter were already under house arrest . Olga and her husband were left at Ay @-@ Todor . The entire Romanov family in the Crimea was condemned to death by the Yalta revolutionary council , but the executions were delayed by political rivalry between the Yalta and Sevastopol Soviets . By March 1918 , the Central Power of Germany had advanced on the Crimea , and the revolutionary guards were replaced by German ones . In November 1918 , the German forces were informed that their nation had lost the war , and they evacuated homewards . Allied forces took over the Crimean ports , in support of the loyalist White Army , which temporarily allowed the surviving members of the Romanov family time to escape abroad . The Dowager Empress and , at her insistence , most of her family and friends were evacuated by the British warship HMS Marlborough . Nicholas II , however , had already been shot dead and the family assumed , correctly , that his wife and children had also been killed . Unknown to her , Olga 's childhood confidant and brother Michael , Nicholas II 's supposed successor , had been assassinated near Perm on 13 June 1918 .

Olga and her husband refused to leave Russia , and decided to move to the Caucasus , which the White Army had cleared of revolutionary Bolsheviks . An imperial bodyguard , Timofei Yatchik , guided them to his hometown , the large Cossack village of Novominskaya . In a rented five @-@ room farmhouse there , Olga gave birth to her second son , Guri Nikolaevich , on 23 April 1919 . He was named after a friend of hers , Guri Panayev , who was killed while serving in the Akhtyrsky Regiment during World War I. In November 1919 , the family set out on what would be their last journey through Russia . Just ahead of revolutionary troops , they escaped to Novorossiysk , and took refuge in the residence of the Danish consul , Thomas Schytte , who informed them of the Dowager Empress 's safe arrival in Denmark . After a brief stay with the consul , the family were shipped to a refugee camp on the island of Büyükdada in the Dardanelles Strait near Istanbul , Turkey , where Olga , her husband and children shared three rooms with eleven other adults . After two weeks , they were evacuated to Belgrade in the Kingdom of Serbs , Croats and Slovenes where

she was visited by Regent Alexander Karadjordjevic , later King Alexander I of Yugoslavia . Alexander offered the Grand Duchess and her family a permanent home , but Olga was summoned to Denmark by her mother . On Good Friday 1920 , Olga and her family arrived in Copenhagen . They lived with the Dowager Empress , at first at the Amalienborg Palace and then at the royal estate of Hvidøre , where Olga acted as her mother 's secretary and companion . It was a difficult arrangement at times . The Dowager Empress insisted on having Olga at her beck and call and found Olga 's young sons too boisterous . Having never reconciled with the idea of her daughter 's marriage to a commoner , she was cold towards Kulikovsky , rarely allowing him in her presence . At formal functions , Olga was expected to accompany her mother alone .

= = Anna Anderson = =

In 1925 , Olga and Colonel Kulikovsky traveled to Berlin to meet Anna Anderson , who claimed to be Olga 's niece , Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna of Russia . Anderson had attempted suicide in Berlin in 1920 , which Olga later called " probably the only indisputable fact in the whole story " . Anderson claimed that with the help of a man named Tchaikovsky she had escaped from revolutionary Russia via Bucharest , where she had given birth to his child . Olga thought the story " palpably false " , since Anderson made no attempt to approach Queen Marie of Romania , during her entire alleged time in Bucharest . Olga said :

If Mrs. Anderson had indeed been Anastasia , Queen Marie would have recognized her on the spot Marie would never have been shocked at anything , and a niece of mine would have known it There is not one tittle of genuine evidence in the story . The woman keeps away from the one relative who would have been the first to recognize her , understand her desperate plight , and sympathize with her .

Anderson stated she was in Berlin to inform Princess Irene of Prussia (sister of Tsarina Alexandra and cousin of Tsar Nicholas II) of her survival . Olga commented , " [Princess Irene] was one of the most straightlaced women in her generation . My niece would have known that her condition would have indeed have shocked [her] . "

Olga met Anderson , who was being treated for tuberculosis , at a nursing home . Of the visit Olga later said :

My beloved Anastasia was fifteen when I saw her for the last time in the summer of 1916 . She would have been twenty @-@ four in 1925 . I thought Mrs. Anderson looked much older than that . Of course , one had to make allowances for a very long illness ... All the same , my niece 's features could not possibly have altered out of all recognition . The nose , the mouth , the eyes were all different As soon as I sat down by that bed in the Mommsen Nursing Home , I knew I was looking at a stranger I had left Denmark with something of a hope in my heart . I left Berlin with all hope extinguished .

In addition , Olga said she was dismayed that Anderson spoke only German and showed no sign of knowing either English or Russian , while Anastasia spoke both those languages fluently and was ignorant of German . Nevertheless , Olga remained sympathetic towards Anderson , perhaps because she thought that she was ill rather than deliberately deceitful . Olga later explained :

... she did not strike me as an out @-@ and @-@ out impostor . Her brusqueness warred against it . A cunning impostor would have done all she could to ingratiate herself ... But Mrs. Anderson 's manner would have put anyone off . My own conviction is that it all started with some unscrupulous people who hoped they might lay their hands on at least a share of the fabulous and utterly non @-@ existent Romanov fortune ... I had a feeling she was ' briefed , ' as it were , but far from perfectly . The mistakes she made could not all be attributed to lapses of memory . For instance , she had a scar on one of her fingers and she kept telling everybody that it had been crushed because of a footman shutting the door of a landau too quickly . And at once I remembered the real incident . It was Marie , her elder sister , who got her hand hurt rather badly , and it did not happen in a carriage but on board the imperial train . Obviously someone , having heard something of the incident , had passed a garbled version of it to Mrs. Anderson .

Conceivably , Olga was initially either open to the possibility that Anderson was Anastasia or unable

to make up her mind . Anderson 's biographer and supporter Peter Kurth claimed that Olga wrote to the Danish ambassador , Herluf Zahle , at the end of October 1925 : " My feeling is that she is not the one she believes ? but one can 't say she is not as a fact " . However , within a month she had made up her mind . She wrote to a friend , " There is no resemblance , and she is undoubtedly not A. " Olga sent Anderson a scarf and five letters , which were used by Anderson 's supporters to claim that Olga recognized Anderson as Anastasia . Olga later said she sent the gift and letters " out of pity " , and called the claims " a complete fabrication " . When Olga refused to recognize Anderson as Anastasia publicly and published a statement denying any resemblance in a Danish newspaper , Anderson 's supporters , Harriet von Rathlef and Gleb Botkin , claimed that Olga was acting on instructions received from her sister Xenia by telegram , which Olga denied in private letters and sworn testimony . She told her official biographer , " I never received any such telegram . " The supposed telegram was never produced by Anderson 's supporters , and it has never been found among any of the papers relating to the case . Xenia said ,

[Anderson 's supporters] told the most terrible lies about my sister and me ... I was supposed to have sent Olga a telegram saying , ' On no account recognize Anastasia . ' That was a fantasy . I never sent any telegrams , or gave my sister any advice about her visit to Berlin . We were all apprehensive about the wisdom of her going , but only because we feared it would be used for propaganda purposes by the claimant 's supporters My sister Olga felt sorry for that poor woman . She was kind to her , and because of her kindness of heart , her opinions and motives have been misrepresented .

= = Danish residency and exodus = =

The Dowager Empress died on 13 October 1928 at Hvidøre . Her estate was sold and Olga purchased Knudsminde , a farm in Ballerup about 15 miles (24 km) from Copenhagen , with her portion of the proceeds . They kept horses , in which Colonel Kulikovsky was especially interested , along with Jersey cows , pigs , chickens , geese , dogs and cats . For transport they had a small car and a sledge . Tihon and Guri (age thirteen and eleven , respectively when they moved to Knudsminde) grew up on the farm . Olga ran the household with the help of her elderly , faithful lady 's maid Emilia Tenso (" Mimka ") , who had come along with her from Russia . The Grand Duchess lived with simplicity working in the fields , doing household chores and painting .

The farm became a center for the Russian monarchist community in Denmark and many Russian emigrants visited . Olga maintained a high level of correspondence with the Russian émigré community and former members of the imperial army . On 2 February 1935 in the Russian Orthodox Church in Copenhagen , she and her husband were godparents , with her cousin Prince Gustav of Denmark , to Aleksander Schalburg , son of Russian @-@ born Danish army officer Christian Frederik von Schalburg . In the 1930s , the family took annual holidays at Sofiero Castle , Sweden , with Crown Prince Gustaf of Sweden and his wife , Louise . Olga began to sell her own paintings , of Russian and Danish scenes , with exhibition auctions in Copenhagen , London , Paris , and Berlin . Some of the proceeds were donated to the charities she supported .

Neutral Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany on 9 April 1940 , and was occupied for the remainder of World War II . Food shortages , communication restrictions , and transportation closures followed . As Olga 's sons , Tikhon and Guri , served as officers in the Danish Army , they were interned as prisoners of war , but their imprisonment in a Copenhagen hotel lasted less than two months . Tikhon was imprisoned for a further month in 1943 after being arrested on charges of espionage . Other Russian émigrés , keen to fight against the Soviets , enlisted in the German forces . Despite her sons ' internment and her mother 's Danish origins , Olga was implicated in her compatriots ' collusion with German forces , as she continued to meet and extend help to Russian émigrés fighting against communism . On 4 May 1945 , German forces in Denmark surrendered to the British . When economic and social conditions for Russian exiles failed to improve , General Pyotr Krasnov wrote to the Grand Duchess , detailing the wretched conditions affecting Russian immigrants in Denmark . She in turn asked Prince Axel of Denmark to help them , but her request was refused .

With the end of World War II , Soviet troops occupied the easternmost part of Denmark , and the Soviet Union wrote to the Danish government accusing Olga and a Danish Catholic bishop of conspiracy against the Soviet government . The surviving Romanovs in Denmark grew fearful of an assassination or kidnap attempt , and Olga decided to move her family across the Atlantic to the relative safety of rural Canada .

= = Emigration to Canada = =

In May 1948 , the Kulikovskys traveled to London by Danish troopship . They were housed in a grace and favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace while arrangements were made for their journey to Canada as agricultural immigrants . On 2 June 1948 , Olga , Kulikovsky , Tikhon and his Danish @-@ born wife Agnete , Guli and his Danish @-@ born wife Ruth , Guli and Ruth 's two children , Xenia and Leonid , and Olga 's devoted companion and former maid Emilia Tenso (" Mimka ") departed Liverpool on board the Empress of Canada . After a rough crossing , the ship docked at Halifax , Nova Scotia . The family proceeded to Toronto , where they lived until they purchased a 200 @-@ acre (0 @.@ 81 km2) farm in Halton County , Ontario , near Campbellville .

By 1952 , the farm had become a burden to Olga and her husband . They were both elderly ; their sons had moved away ; labor was hard to come by ; the Colonel suffered increasing ill @-@ health , and some of Olga 's remaining jewelry was stolen . The farm was sold , and Olga , her husband and her former maid , Mimka , moved to a smaller five @-@ room house at 2130 Camilla Road , Cooksville , Ontario , a suburb of Toronto now amalgamated into the city of Mississauga . Mimka suffered a stroke that left her an invalid , and Olga nursed her until Mimka 's death on 24 January 1954 .

Neighbors and visitors to the region , including foreign and royal dignitaries , took interest in Olga , and visited her small home , which was also a magnet for Romanov impostors whom Olga and her family considered a menace . Welcome visitors included Princess Marina , Duchess of Kent , in 1954 , and Louis Mountbatten and his wife Edwina , in August 1959 . In June 1959 , Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited Toronto and invited the Grand Duchess for lunch on board the Royal Yacht , Britannia .

By 1958 , Olga 's husband was virtually paralyzed , and Olga sold some of her remaining jewelry in an attempt to raise funds . Following her husband 's death in 1958 , she became increasingly infirm until hospitalized in April 1960 at Toronto General Hospital . She was not informed or was not aware that her elder sister , Xenia , died in London that month . Unable to care for herself , Olga went to stay with Russian émigré friends , Konstantin and Sinaida Martemianoff , in an apartment above a beauty salon at 716 Gerrard Street East , Toronto . She slipped into a coma on 21 November 1960 , and died on 24 November at the age of 78 .

She was interred next to her husband in York Cemetery , Toronto , on 30 November 1960 , after a funeral service at Christ the Saviour Cathedral , Toronto . Officers of the Akhtyrsky Hussars and the Blue Cuirassiers stood guard in the small Russian church , which overflowed with mourners . Although she lived simply , bought cheap clothes , and did her own shopping and gardening , her estate was valued at more than 200 @,@ 000 Canadian dollars (about 1 @.@ 5 million Canadian dollars as of 2013) and was mostly held as stock and bonds . Her material possessions were appraised at 350 Canadian dollars in total , which biographer Patricia Phenix considered an underestimate .

= = Legacy = =

Olga began drawing and painting at a young age . She told her official biographer Ian Vorres :
Even during my geography and arithmetic lessons , I was allowed to sit with a pencil in my hand . I could listen much better when I was drawing corn or wild flowers .

She painted throughout her life , on paper , canvas and ceramic , and her output is estimated at over 2 @,@ 000 pieces . Her usual medium was scenery and landscape , but she also painted

portraits and still lifes . Vorres wrote ,

Her paintings , vivid and sensitive , are immersed in the subdued light of her beloved Russia . Besides her numerous landscapes and flower pictures that reveal her inherent love for nature , she often also dwells on scenes from simple daily life ... executed with a sensitive eye for composition , expression and detail . Her work exudes peace , serenity and a spirit of love that mirror her own character , in total contrast to the suffering she experienced through most of her life .

Her daughter @-@ in @-@ law wrote ,

Being a deeply religious person , the Grand Duchess perceived the beauty of nature as being divinely inspired creation . Prayer and attending church provided her with the strength not only to overcome the new difficulties befallen her , but also to continue with her drawing . These feelings of gratefulness to God pervaded not only the icons created by the Grand Duchess , but also her portraits and still life paintings .

Her paintings were a profitable source of income . According to her daughter @-@ in @-@ law , Olga preferred to exhibit in Denmark to avoid the commercialism of the North American market . The Russian Relief Programme , which was founded by Tikhon and his third wife Olga in honour of the Grand Duchess , exhibited a selection of her work at the residence of the Russian ambassador in Washington in 2001 , in Moscow in 2002 , in Ekaterinburg in 2004 , in Saint Petersburg and Moscow in 2005 , in Tyumen and Surgut in 2006 , at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and Saint Michael 's Castle in Saint Petersburg in 2007 , and at the Vladimir Arsenyev Museum in Vladivostok in 2013 . Pieces by Olga are included in the collections of Queen Elizabeth II , Prince Philip , Duke of Edinburgh , King Harald of Norway , and private collections in North America and Europe . Ballerup Museum in Pederstrup , Denmark , has around 100 of her works .

= = = Ancestry = = =