

Once royal Romanovs

BY MARION SOFTKY

When the Russian Revolution arrived at Ai-Todor, the Grand Duke Alexander's Crimean estate, it was almost a celebration.

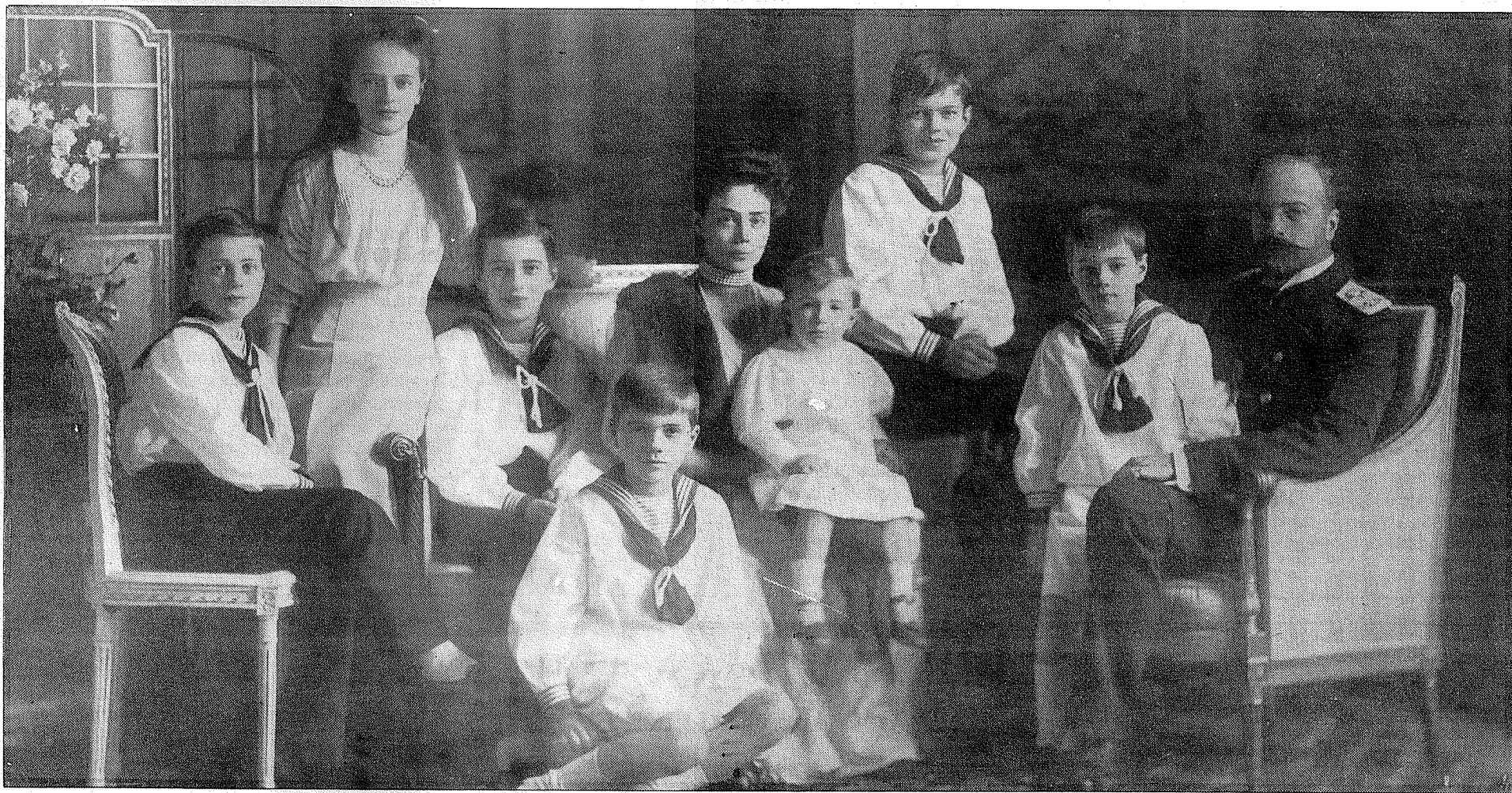
His son, Vasili Romanov of Woodside, nephew to

Tsar Nicholas II, remembers the excitement as a manservant wearing a big red bow came running up to the house, saying, "They're coming to congratulate you."

Then a crowd of villagers wearing more red ribbons gathered in front of the house singing the Marseillaise and yelling amiably. "They congratulated us on the Revolution, the new Emperor and liberty," Mr.

Romanov recalls.

Prince Vasili, three brothers, a little niece with her nurse, and his brothers' Swiss tutor gathered on the balcony to receive the "congratulations." Speaking for the little group of royal children, the Swiss tutor finished his speech by saying, "I hope everything will be as nice as it was before." His speech was greeted with more hurrahs



GRAND DUKE ALEXANDER AND GRAND DUCHESS XENIA of Russia posed with their family for this formal portrait in 1912. Prince Vasili,

the littlest one on his mother's knee, now lives in Woodside. Irene, the only girl among seven children, later married Prince Felix Yussoupov,

who gained fame by killing the demonic monk, Rasputin. At their wedding, Prince Vasili led the procession carrying the icon.