

Michel Fedorovitch Bartholomei – Russian Diplomat

by Richard Cafferata



Theodore Bartholomei,
Michel's father⁽⁵⁹⁾

When Redmond Barton Cafferata married Rose Tatiana de Bartholomey at the end of 1901, it seemed like a fine match between the successful, but slightly maverick, son of a wealthy family of Victorian industrialists and the beautiful daughter of a Russian nobleman. It might be guessed that there is an interesting background story, and the reality of Tatiana's parentage is just as intriguing as might be expected.

Tatiana's father was Michel Fedorovitch Bartholomei, a well connected member of the Russian ruling classes, who was born in 1836. He was the son of General Theodore Bartholomei who had been governor of the fortress of Brest-Litovsk (now in modern-day Belarus) and was part of a family which originated in Italy and came to Russia via Prussia. A career diplomat, Michel's first post was secretary to the Russian ambassador in Constantinople from 1856 to 1859. From Constantinople he moved to Tehran, first as secretary and then as Chargé d'affaires.

A domestic position followed, with Michel becoming First Secretary of the Asiatic Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1865. In 1868 he was seconded to the Governor of the Caucasus before being sent to London as advisor⁽¹⁾.

In the 1871 UK census, Michel was shown as living as a boarder at 5 Bolton Row, Westminster, a street just to the north of Green Park. At the Embassy, he held the position of "Councillor", in effect being second in command, deputising when the Ambassador was absent. The position of acting chargé d'affaires was first held by Michel at the beginning of June 1870 when the then Ambassador, Baron Brunnow, was summoned to the Czar's Imperial Court at Ems⁽²⁾.

Greeting important guests at Embassy functions was another of Michel's official responsibilities. Typical was a fête – a grand dinner followed by a ball – which was held in honour of the Czar's son, Grand Duke Vladimir, who was staying in London in June 1871. Michel had to welcome guests including the Prince of Wales, Duke of Edinburgh and various foreign diplomats and nobles. He must have been an imposing figure – he stood 6'10" tall and spoke 30 languages⁽³⁾.



Michel de Bartholomei⁽⁶⁰⁾

Later the same year Grand Duke Constantine paid a low-key visit to London and Michel was the only official sent to greet the Czar's brother on his arrival at Charing Cross Station⁽⁴⁾. This rising diplomatic star was acknowledged when Michel de Bartholomei was confirmed with

the official title of Councillor of State by the Russian Emperor in an Easter honours list in 1873⁽⁵⁾.

On 23rd January 1874 Prince Albert, Duke of Edinburgh and second son of Queen Victoria married Czar Alexander II's daughter, Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna. No doubt Michel would have been kept busy assisting with the arrangements, but his efforts were rewarded with an invitation to a state banquet given by Queen Victoria at St George's Hall in Windsor Castle for the Duke and Duchess⁽⁶⁾. A fortnight after the banquet, Michel was a



St George's Hall, Windsor Castle

guest of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace for a luncheon to celebrate the Czar's birthday. This hospitality was returned the same evening when the royal couple were entertained at the Russian Embassy⁽⁷⁾.

In May 1874 Alexander II paid a state visit to Britain and Michel was amongst the party that assembled at Gravesend to greet the Czar. Unfortunately though, the Emperor's yacht went aground off Flushing and as a consequence, diverted to Dover. A special train was laid on by the South Eastern Railway Company and the dignitaries hurriedly moved down the coast to the new arrival port. As part of the visit, Michel was present at a banquet at the Guildhall in London for 2500 guests⁽⁸⁾.

The diplomatic merry-go-round continued through 1874 and 1875 with Michel, amongst other duties, attending the Empress of Austria on her visit to London and being a guest at a garden party held by the Prince and Princess of Wales. He also attended a reception held by the wife of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mrs War-Hunt. Michel wasn't constantly on duty in London though – in May 1875 he went on a leave of absence to Ems and in 1876 he returned to St Petersburg for a short while.

As well as great affairs of state Michel also took part in the social functions of the various foreign embassies in Victorian London; He was a guest at the wedding service on the occasion of the marriage of the daughter of the Turkish Ambassador to the Second Secretary of the Italian Legation, and afterwards attended the wedding breakfast for 100 friends at the Turkish Embassy⁽⁹⁾.

The 1870s saw important changes to Michel's personal life. He met Frances Mary Broadwood and together they had two daughters who were both born in London. This

may have caused some raised eyebrows, because Michel and Frances didn't marry until the spring of 1879.

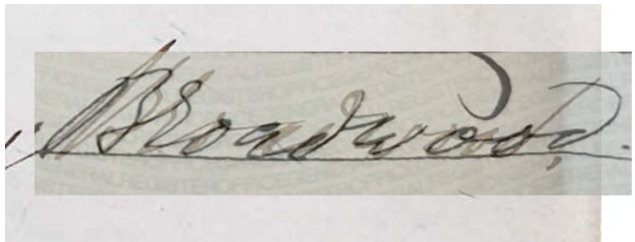
Frances is, by all accounts, a very intriguing character, who presents some problems in tracking through official records. Her death register entry would indicate that she was born around 1844 and gives her place of birth as "Lowther, England". In H el ene's birth certificate, she gives her name as "Mary Broadwood, formerly Hamilton", but by the time of Tatiana's birth two years later, she was "Frances Mary Broadwood formerly Lowther". These point towards the surname of Broadwood being a married name with the inference that she had a maiden name of either Hamilton or Lowther. Her father isn't named on her marriage certificate to Michel with only the word "George" being written in the column before being crossed out. Her condition is described as "widow", which confirms that she had been married before.

The marriage register entry at Kensington Register Office for her marriage to Michel gives her name as Frances Mary Lowther Broadwood⁽¹⁰⁾. and the cemetery where she is buried indicates that her birth name was Lowther, although this isn't sourced. It isn't unreasonable therefore to work on the assumption that her surname at birth was Lowther.

A search of possible Broadwood marriages points strongly towards the marriage of Charles Hamilton Broadwood and Mary Short who were married in February 1854.⁽¹¹⁾

Of course the big difficulty here is the name of the bride and there are also other problems with the assumption that the two Mary Broadwoods are the same – for example the lady who married Charles Hamilton Broadwood was apparently born in 1832 and was, therefore 12 years older than the age indicated in Frances' death registration.

However there is also strong evidence that the Frances Mary Broadwood who married Michel Bartholomei was the same person who used the name Mary Short to marry Charles Hamilton Broadwood. A comparison of the name Broadwood in signatures dating from the time she was married to Charles and the time of her marriage to Michel shows similarities. Also, as we shall see, the address where Michel's elder daughter was born was the same address where Charles Hamilton Broadwood's widow lived when she disputed his will.



A comparison of the signatures of Frances Mary Broadwood. The letter formation is very similar ⁽¹⁰⁾ ⁽¹²⁾

Other, more circumstantial evidence includes Frances' using "formerly Hamilton" on H el ene's birth certificate and perhaps even the use of "5 Steinway Terrace, Penge" as her address in Rose's birth certificate. This could be a nod to the piano making business of her former husband's family, especially as it appears to be a false address.

Under the name of **Mary Short**, she had married Charles in 1854. However, she also went by the alias of Louisa Beresford up to her marriage. The marriage met with the strong disapproval of Charles' family, with his father almost completely cutting him out of his will. Completely dominating her infatuated husband, a former officer of the Yeoman of the Guard, Mary kept her hand tightly on his purse strings, even persuading him to sign the lease on a property in London without showing him the address. She spent her time there whilst Charles was away from home and pursued several affairs, including one with the Duke of St Albans. Charles sued for divorce, citing her adultery with the Duke who, most unwillingly, was dragged into court. His lawyers painted him as a victim – a young man ensnared by an older, calculating female and both he and Mary counter-sued that Charles too was having an affair and, not only that, but actually living with a woman. Both the presiding judge and the Times newspaper which reported on the case were scathing about all parties – The Times said that Mary had carried on “the vocation of Courtesan” prior to her marriage, and that the Duke should have taken more care to avoid getting into this situation. The judge, Sir James Wilde, said that “it was an insult to the court...to bring such a case before it” and criticised Charles for alleging his wife's adultery whilst coming to court with his own mistress. Accordingly, he refused to grant a divorce⁽¹³⁾. The marriage had, of course, broken down and the couple separated.

Some years later, in January 1870, Mary returned to court in London to seek a protection order stopping Charles from taking any of her possessions. This was necessary because under English law at the time all of a woman's property passed to her husband upon marriage. Mary argued that Charles had abandoned her and *“that since this desertion I have maintained myself without any allowance from him, and have myself acquired certain property, consisting of wearing apparel, jewellery &c., which I am naturally anxious to protect, having no other property of any kind in my possession since my husband made the last seizure and sold all my personal effects, even to my clothes.”* Mr Tyrwhitt, the Magistrate granted her the order. This court case also revealed that Mary and Charles had a child together but it had died⁽¹⁴⁾.



Frances Mary Broadwood in a photo taken around 1860

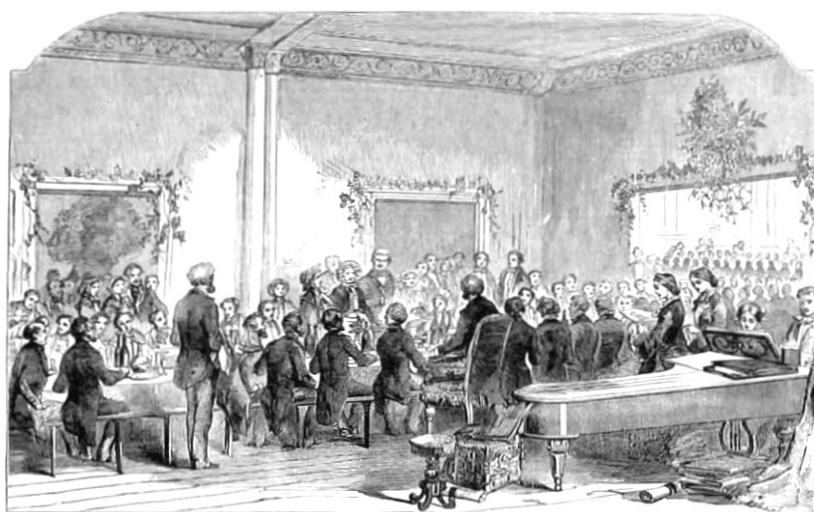
Charles himself died in Sussex some two years later, and even then the legal arguments didn't stop, with Mary bringing a suit in the Probate Court in 1874 against Charles' will. Ultimately the will was upheld and Mary was faced with paying the court costs⁽¹⁵⁾. It is this last event that provides the best clue that Mary Short was the same person who married Michel Bartholomei. The court costs incurred in unsuccessfully contesting Charles' will would have been a heavy burden and in August 1874 a bankruptcy notice appeared in the London Gazette

arranging a meeting for the creditors of Frances Mary Hamilton Broadwood.⁽¹⁶⁾ The notice is significant in that it said that her former address was 18 South Bank, Regent's Park.

Documents held by Westminster Archives indicate that Frances had a lease on 18 South Bank which was initially for a term of 21 years and was dated the 24th August 1872. However, on the 28th January 1874 the residual term of the lease was assigned to Captain Alexis Stolpakow, a Russian cavalry officer⁽¹⁷⁾. The date of the transfer of the lease, just a week before her court case disputing Charles' will suggests that Frances may have been protecting her assets in case she lost the case. It also demonstrates how close she was to the Russian Embassy. We don't know when or where she first met Michel but the transfer shows the depth of her relationship at this point. Not only that, but it would have been around this time that she became pregnant with the couple's first child.

Although it was shown as her former address, she clearly continued living at 18 South Bank as Frances and Michel's first child, Hélène Marguerite was born there on the 24th September 1874. An advert in The Morning Post described the house as "*A perfectly unique and fascinating little villa, of classic design, containing on the ground floor seven bed and reception rooms, and on the basement ample domestic accommodation. The villa stands detached on ground sloping to the Regent's Canal and enjoys a delightful prospect with complete seclusion.*"⁽¹⁸⁾

Inevitably, there is still some doubt as to whether Mary Short, Louisa Beresford, Mary Louisa Broadwood, Frances Mary Broadwood formerly Lowther, Mary Broadwood formerly Hamilton and Frances Mary Bartholomei are the same person, but if she was as calculating as she was presented in her divorce case, then it is quite possible that she reinvented herself frequently.



The Russian Embassy, Chesham Place

A second wedding would have been a lot easier for Frances Mary as a widow than it would have been had her divorce been granted, but the couple didn't immediately marry. We can surmise that Frances continued living at 18 South Bank through 1875 but had moved by the beginning of 1876 as, in January of that year, Captain Stolpakow transferred the lease to John Judson Werner.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is likely

that Frances moved to 28 Edgware Road, Marylebone because it is there that the family grew larger, with the birth of their second daughter, Rose Tatiana on the 2nd December 1876. It wasn't until Tatiana was two and a half years old that Michel and Frances finally married in the Register Office at Brompton on the 7th June 1879. By this time they were living together at 47

Beaufort Gardens⁽²⁰⁾ although the marriage certificate does show a second address for Michel, Keyser's Hotel, Blackfriars.

Regardless of the complications in Michel's private life, his professional career continued apace. Baron Brunnow retired as Russia's Ambassador in 1874 at which time Brunnow was 77 years old, having been in office for most of the period from 1840 onwards. It is interesting to speculate whether Michel wished to take over as Ambassador, and what his feelings would have been when the post was offered to Count Petr Schouvaloff can only be imagined.

Certainly, Michel was scathing in his opinion of Schouvaloff. In his memoirs he recounted a number of stories about the new ambassador including an incident that occurred as Schouvaloff travelled to London for the first time:

He arrived early in the morning by the Dover boat train. He told me that he needed 500 pounds sterling to give to a secretary of the German legation in Dresden, Count Radolinsky, with whom he had travelled from Paris. This Count Radolinsky had spoken to Schouvaloff in the carriage in which the two of them were travelling alone. He told him that he knew him by sight and by reputation and that he, Radolinsky, had come to England to seize warehouses of counterfeit German banknotes and to arrest the counterfeiters and that, in pursuit of this affair, he had found the places where the counterfeit Russian notes were deposited, the machines and various printing devices, and finally the very residences of the main culprits.

Radolinsky told Schouvaloff that he would be happy to do him the service of discovering and arresting the gang and seizing the counterfeit money: it would be a success mark for the Russian ambassador to make his debut in a similar way. To obtain this brilliant result, Radolinsky needed, he said, only 500 pounds sterling and he promised to have the whole thing seized the day after or even the day the 500 pounds were paid to him.

Schouvaloff told me that he wanted to try, that he was sure of it and asked me for the money. Despite the advice and indications I put to him, he insisted and I gave him a cheque from Barings. which, as a last precautionary measure, I dated it two days later, in order to have a day between the execution of the promise and the payment of the bankers. According to what had been agreed between Radolinsky and Schouvaloff, an old and trusted servant of the Embassy went to Charing Cross and in a waiting room found the individual and gave him the cheque against receipt. Schouvaloff spent the next day waiting in vain, receiving only one telegram signed Radolinsky from a station near the Crystal Palace. On the third day, the cheque was cashed at the Barings by



Count Petr Schouvaloff⁽⁶¹⁾

Radolinsky and Schouvaloff heard no more about the affair. He left it to the Minister of Finance, Reutern, to clear the 500 pounds he had given to a mere swindler.

All reasoning would seem too much faced with such facts. It would suffice to note that at this very moment Schouvaloff was leaving the Ministry of Police where he had been for 10 years. What a way of doing business, what a way of dealing with people, and what a sight!⁽²¹⁾

Michel continued to deputise for the Ambassador in the mid to late 1870s, a time of unrest in the Balkans and ultimately a war between Russia and Turkey. According to Michel, Count Schouvaloff had, at times, a diplomatic method that *“was very unorthodox, very unusual and I believe very little known to the Emperor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg.”*⁽²¹⁾

Michel also felt that Schouvaloff had felt forced out of Russia and came to London *“carrying with him an impression of bitterness towards all the other ministers and influential people he had left behind him in St. Petersburg and a feeling of disdain and hatred towards his sovereign. He also spoke with little restraint about the Emperor and everything to do with Russia, and he spoke as if he were a foreigner, even a hostile foreigner.”* An example of this, recorded by Michel and further showing his opinion of Schouvaloff, occurred *“During the flow of Russian volunteers to Serbia in 1875, and at the height of the struggle between that country and Turkey, Schouvaloff happened to be talking with a few Englishmen and several foreign diplomats, including the Austrians, who had been very ill-disposed towards the Serbs at the time. Schouvaloff expressed the opinion that the Russian government should not be blamed for what was happening in Serbia, as the Russian volunteers were nothing but a bunch of scoundrels.*

This sample of his language will show how little restraint, tact and, I would say, skill presided over Schouvaloff's words.”⁽²¹⁾

Another of Michel's criticisms of Schouvaloff was that he *had got into the habit of communicating to the English Government the encrypted telegraphic dispatches that he received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in plain text, without any of those alterations which are customary to cover and disguise the writing and transmission of the ciphers. Despite some objections from his secretaries, he continued to act in this way and it was possible to find the exact text of our encrypted dispatches in the English ‘blue books’.* Michel also expressed his surprised that this *“wilful impudence on the part of its ambassador in London”* had never been noticed by St. Petersburg.



Schouvaloff's relationship with Lady Derby, the wife of the British Foreign Secretary, was the subject of much rumour and speculation at the time of the Russian-Turkish War, with one of Lady Derby's friends commenting that she was *“slightly in love with Schouvaloff & he very much so with you.”*⁽²²⁾ Schouvaloff had become *“so assiduous near Lady Derby, that in view of his interests and diplomatic*

Mary Stanley, Countess of Derby⁽⁶²⁾

successes, the Queen herself intervened in the matter, reproaching her and remarking on this unseemly intimacy between the wife of the Foreign Minister and a foreign representative.” Unflatteringly, Michel described Lady Derby as “a woman on the comeback trail and, what is more of little wit” but he acknowledged that “this association was not without real advantages for Schouvaloff. Thus, during the first hostile measures adopted by England in order to intimidate Russia in the march of its armies towards Constantinople, Lady Derby said to Schouvaloff: “Beware of half-way houses”, which was very difficult for us at the embassy to understand, because Schouvaloff, who was somewhat deaf, very absent-minded, and moreover understood English very poorly, sometimes understood what Lady Derby was telling him in an incomplete manner.

We were unable to understand the real significance of this half-disclosure, which suggested that England was determined to seize some intermediate point on the route to India. I remember that I suggested the idea of an occupation in Egypt, albeit with diffidence, because this idea seemed too far in the future. What Lady Derby wanted Schouvaloff to understand, without however committing an act of treason that was too obvious, was the immediate occupation of the island of Cyprus, but, despite Lady Derby's half-disclosure, neither Schouvaloff nor any member of the Russian Embassy managed to discover this aspect of English policy, and the taking of possession of Cyprus came as a surprise to us all.”⁽²¹⁾

Nineteenth century diplomacy was a mixture of unofficial efforts, such as those between Schouvaloff and Lady Derby, and more official exchanges, which occurred regularly. During one of his periods in charge, Michel was summoned by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby on the 23rd May 1877 and asked to communicate the British Government's concerns about the progress of the war. Lord Derby asked him to provide assurances from St Petersburg that would “satisfy public feeling in England.”



Turkestan – an Anglo-Russian Flashpoint

Michel promised to forward the Foreign Secretary's concerns to St Petersburg. The situation in Turkey affected the Russian Government's policy in Central Asia, especially in Turkestan, which bordered Afghanistan and impacted on British India. Once again Michel was summoned to the Foreign Office and told that any Russian military moves towards the Turkestan city of Merv would be countered by the British. Michel answered by asserting that Russian actions in the area were necessary because of the situation in Turkey and because of Britain's attitude towards Russia.⁽²³⁾

Despite these diplomatic wrangles, Michel continued to move in exalted social circles, attending the Queen's Court at Buckingham Palace on 28th February 1878, a dinner at the Austrian Embassy on the 2nd May and another Queen's Court in May of 1879. He was also a guest at a dinner for the Empress of Germany, held at Lord Salisbury's mansion in Piccadilly in the same month.⁽²⁴⁾

Although he had been a popular figure in Russia, public opinion was turning against Ambassador Schouvaloff following the conclusion of the Turkish war and in November 1879 he was recalled to St Petersburg. Once again Michel would be called upon to act as chargé d'affaires until a successor could be appointed. Again, we can only wonder about his personal ambitions for the post.⁽²⁵⁾

Once again, though, it was not to be, as Aleksey Lobanov-Rostovsky was appointed in Schouvaloff's place. By now it was apparent that a major move was on the cards – the Morning Post speculated on New Year's Day 1880 that Michel was to be sent to the Embassy in Athens, and the rumours didn't subside during the spring. The Times reported from St Petersburg on May 1st *"It is stated here in well informed quarters that M. Davydov will succeed M. Bartholomei as Councillor to the Russian Embassy in London, M. Bartholomei having been appointed Russian Minister to Greece."* He was certainly in



The Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Anne

St Petersburg at the beginning of May as on the 1st he received the Grand Cross of St Anne.⁽²⁶⁾ It was presumably during this visit that he was given the news about his next appointment which, according to the Revue D'Histoire Diplomatique, dated from the 26th April 1880.⁽²⁷⁾ Michel returned to England and resumed his duties at the Russian Embassy, working through the summer and early autumn. The papers still speculated that he was going to Athens, but when the move finally came it was west, not east and Michel was sent to become the Russian Ambassador to the United States of America.

Travelling on the S.S. Gallia, Michel, his wife Frances and daughter Hélène left Liverpool and arrived in New York on October 5th 1880.⁽²⁸⁾ It is interesting to note that Tatiana isn't mentioned on the passenger lists – was she left behind, and if so for what reason? At the beginning of November, Michel de Bartholomei presented his credentials in Washington as "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Imperial Majesty" to the Secretary of State, William Evarts.⁽²⁹⁾ The New York Times reported that Michel was received in official audience by the President, Rutherford Hayes, on the 16th November 1880.⁽³⁰⁾



The S.S. Gallia on which Michel and his family travelled to America

Michel obviously made a positive impression when he was presented in Washington. The Chicago Tribune reported "*Barthomomei is a man of striking appearance, and will be called the handsome member of the Diplomatic Corps, - a body not noted for the physical attractions of its members. Bartholomei is tall and very well proportioned. He speaks English with fluency and accuracy. Mrs. Bartholomei is of English parentage. The new diplomatist comes here from the Court of St. James.*"⁽³¹⁾ The Courier Journal went further saying "*The*

new minister is a splendid specimen of manly beauty. He is over six feet in height, well proportioned, and graceful in his movements. He has dark hair and eyes, wears a beard, and looks intellectual. He speaks English fluently, and is a man of perfect breeding and easy, affable manners. His wife is an English blonde, with reddish auburn hair. She is very charming in conversation. She has been married twice. The first husband was a Frenchman, and their child is now in France being educated. She has been married to Mr. Bartholomei eight years, and has one child, a girl, six years old, who is with her parents."⁽³²⁾

Michel and his family appeared in the newspapers regularly whilst he was the Russian Ambassador. The articles give a large amount of detail in stories which ranged from flattering to outright insulting. They provide an insight into the press of the times, which very often sought to increase a paper's circulation through sensational stories which made no effort to be either accurate or balanced. Sometimes, accuracy is easy to check as is the case of the report in The Ogden Herald on the 6th October 1881 which stated that Michel "occupied the elegant residence of Capt. Downing, with wife, eleven children, and a huge retinue of servants."⁽³³⁾ At the time, Michel only had, as far as all the evidence shows, two children. Another series of reports also stated that he had come to the United States from South America⁽³⁴⁾, easily disproved by looking at ships' passenger lists. Other details, such as the statement in the Courier Journal that Frances had been married to a Frenchman are, as yet, unverified. Whilst I have included quotes from some of these stories, ANY details in them cannot be considered as reliable.

Although based in Washington, Michel spent a lot of his time and installed his family at a house in Malbone Road, Newport, Rhode Island, of which we shall hear more later.

Michel was to work in Washington for just over a year, much of which seems to have been routine, such as seeking clarification on points of American law and notifying the Americans of Russian regulations on fishing off the east coast of Siberia. It is worth noting that most of Michel's correspondence with the Americans was in French, the customary language of the Russian nobility, rather than English or Russian. A lot of the correspondence from the Russian side was also double dated due to the differing calendars used in each country. For

example, the 17th March 1881 in the US was only the 5th March according to the Russian date. Occasionally, the United States State Department also asked for correspondence that had been written in Russian to be translated, by the Russian mission, into French to assist their translators.

Part of Michel's life as a diplomat was attending receptions and soirées and he recorded his impressions of the social side of his career in his diaries. Michel thought that Secretary of State Evarts (in post until the assumption of power by President Garfield) served "good wines" but the food was "cold and mediocre" with the receptions being "very bad and sufficiently wearisome". His opinion of receptions at the White House was similar; the music was "poor and too fast" and the receptions were "terrible, marked by a wearisome, big crowd." Michel attended the inauguration of President Garfield where he was struck by his "dreaming regard" and the "exterior of a tired man".⁽³⁵⁾

There were, however, two significant events that occurred during Michel's time as Ambassador. The first of these was the assassination of Czar Alexander II in St Petersburg in March 1881, an event which was to have far reaching consequences for Russia as a country. On March 15th, the new Secretary of State, James Blaine, wrote to Michel informing him of the Senate's resolution condemning the assassination.⁽³⁶⁾

Michel replied to Blaine on the 17th that he had been commanded "*in the name of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander III, to transmit his most sincere thanks to the Federal Senate for its sympathy with Russia on account of the painful loss which has just been experienced by that nation.*" Michel also passed on his own "*warmest thanks for the expressions of earnest sympathy which I have received from you in this moment of anguish and terrible trial for my country.*"⁽³⁷⁾

A memorial service for the Czar was held at Michel's home, with the newspaper "The Inter Ocean" describing the event:

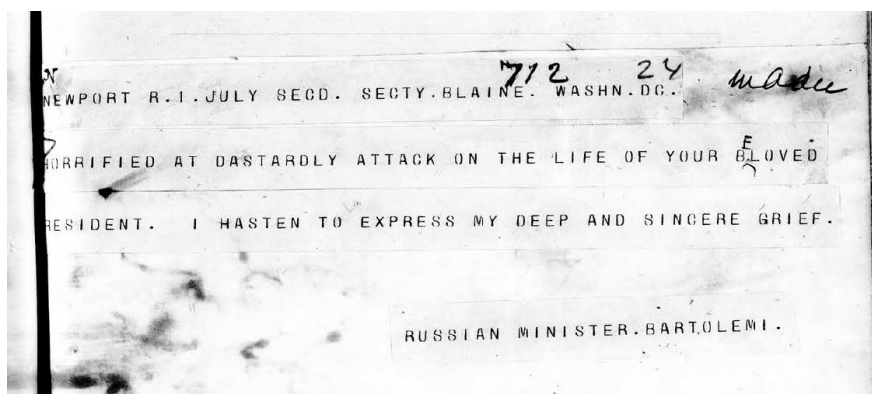
"The parlors of the Russian Minister, on the first floor of his residence, were devoted to the invited guests. The walls of the front parlor were hung with black bombazine, and the light of day was excluded. All the jets were lit from the great chandelier, which was festooned in black. In the low window of the front parlor, also hung in black, was an improvised altar, covered with black cloth, on which rested lit candles, a crucifix, and a Greek missal. Before the altar stood the Rev. Father Bjering, pastor of the Greek Church of the city of New York, and beside him his assistant, who swung a lighted censer filled with a strong incense with a peppery odor, which unpleasantly irritated the throats of those present. The priest and his clerk were in the full vestments of the Greek Catholic Church. There was no other piece of furniture in this chamber of mourning. Its entrance was heavily draped in black; so was the main entrance to the house. At 3:30, M. Bartholomei, the Russian Minister, and M. De Meissner, Second Secretary of the Legation, with M. Vlatsky, Consul General at New York, wearing their court costumes, their swords, decorations, chapeaus, and buttons being shrouded in crape, came down the stairs, shook hands with Father Bjering, and stood at the door to receive their guests. As they arrived, the gentlemen were led to the front and the ladies to the rear. When all had arrived, both parlors were filled.

At 4 o'clock, Father Bejering opened his missal. For half an hour, he and his assistant intoned, in Russian, the solemn service for the death of the Czar. The service was conducted entirely in Russian, with the exception of a few verses from the New Testament treating the immortality of the soul, which were read in broken English. At its conclusion, the Russians present, having partaken of the sacrament, the guests were dismissed with the Greek benediction. All the diplomats shook hands with Secretary Blaine and Father Bjerger before departing.

Many tributes of respect in flowers were sent to Mme. Bartholomei, who appeared in deep mourning.”⁽³⁸⁾

Less than two months later, a similar event rocked America when President Garfield was shot in Washington on July 2nd 1881. Michel was in Rhode Island at the time and sent a telegram of sympathy to Secretary Blaine as soon as he heard the news.⁽³⁹⁾ In a follow up letter on July 6th, Michel passed on the Russian Emperor's sympathy and indignation, but added his own wishes saying “Let me be permitted to add the expression of the heart-felt desire of my wife and myself for the preservation of General Garfield's valuable life.”⁽⁴⁰⁾

Seriously wounded, Garfield survived for some weeks before dying on September 19th. Once again, Michel was called upon to pass on the Emperor's grief and, once again, he included his own feelings: “I address you not only officially, as the head of the cabinet, but also as the sincere friend of the illustrious man whose tragic and premature end is lamented by his country at large and by all Europe.”⁽⁴¹⁾



Michel's telegram to Secretary Blaine about the shooting of President Garfield

Despite these momentous events, it was soon back to business as usual for Michel, as his next letter to Mr Blaine discussed a Russian scientific expedition to the Polar Regions. The normality of diplomatic life wasn't to last for Michel though as, at the end of the summer of 1881, he became embroiled in a dispute with a Rhode Island animal feed merchant, Mr Charles Murray, over a disputed bill for \$147.87 plus interest.

Michel put his side of the story in a letter to Secretary Blaine: “A bill having been presented to me which I considered exorbitant and unjustifiable, by C. J. Murray, for provender furnished for the use of my horses, I declined to pay it in full. Being unable to induce Mr Murray to make any concession, or to consent to arbitration, I allowed the matter to remain in abeyance so that he might have time to adopt conciliatory measures and deduct from his claim that which appeared to be in excess of what was just.”⁽⁴²⁾ Mr Murray was in no mood to compromise and engaged a Newport law firm, W.P. Sheffield, to pursue the debt. On September

30th, the local sheriff, Mr George F Crandall, served a summons on Michel at his home. The court date was set but the State Department confirmed Michel's diplomatic immunity and the case was non-suited. It seems that the matter didn't end there though as Michel's name appeared in the papers throughout the winter of 1881. The perspective varied widely according to which side of the dispute the papers took but ultimately the decision was taken for Michel to return to Russia.

Accordingly, Michel began to dismantle his house, selling by auction the contents. Again, the newspapers reported on the events, providing an insight into how the house was furnished:

"The beautiful rooms, with their fresh and exquisite furnishings, were too perfect to be dismantled and scattered abroad, and there was universal regret at the idea. The camphor and cedar chests, oak boxes and traveling trunks were standing around in confusion, and the magnificent minister was rushing up and down stairs harassed with the last hours of packing and stowing away his private belongings."⁽⁴³⁾

The San Francisco Chronicle even had prices for some of the articles:

The parlor mantel mirror, framed in crimson plush, very large, brought \$500; an Aubusson carpet, \$250; an ebony mantel-mirror in the library, \$225; another, a Florentine, \$150; bits of Dresden ware and bric-a-brac ran away up into the hundreds"⁽⁴⁴⁾

On Christmas Eve 1881 The Ottawa Free Trader (an Illinois newspaper) carried a short, but very one-sided piece that said *"One of the last as well as the best acts of Secretary Blaine was to ask the Russian Government to invite home its Minister in Washington, Mr Michel Bartholomei, who has not only outraged Washington society by attempting to force into its circles disreputable women, but who in all business matters has shown himself a worse dead beat than Guiteau, running lavishly into debt with everybody and paying nobody."*⁽⁴⁵⁾

Michel remained as Russian Minister in Washington until January 1882, when he wrote to the new Secretary of State, Frederick Frelinghuysen, on the 18th., informing the Americans of his intention to return to St Petersburg on leave. Evidently though, Mr Murray still wanted his bill paying, as Michel wrote about the matter to Secretary Frelinghuysen about it on January 16th from New York saying that Secretary Blaine *"had the kindness to give me the assurance that the United States Government would not permit a continuation of this affair... and that any appeal that C. F. Murray or his lawyers might wish to forward to St. Petersburg, through the Federal Government, would not be sent."*⁽⁴⁶⁾ This letter was prompted by yet another letter to Michel from the lawyers, W. P. Sheffield, stating they were going to take that course of action.

It doesn't appear that there was any further correspondence on the matter with the State Department, but Michel had now left America, not to return. In June of that year the Arizona Weekly Citizen carried a somewhat outdated report that stated *"The Russian minister, M. Michel Bartholomei has left Washington for Russia leaving many clamorous creditors of all classes of tradesmen. A demand will be made through the State Department upon the Russian government for the payment of the debts of its representative."*⁽⁴⁷⁾ Later the same year Michel

was appointed the Russian Minister to Japan but didn't stay in that position for long, resigning in December 1882 for personal reasons.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Michel and Mary changed addresses several times following his resignation. An intriguing advertisement appeared in The Times in October 1883 in which Michel offered 15,000 acres of Russian land for sale, asking £30,000 in cash.⁽⁴⁹⁾ It isn't known whether this land was his own Russian estate, or whether he was acting as agent for someone else. His address was given as 111 Rue du Ranelagh, Passy, Paris which was a very well-to-do address. Michel and Mary also kept a house at 102 Tverskoy Boulevard in Moscow.

Whether Michel's resignation as Ambassador to Japan was prompted by Frances' health is another matter for speculation, but by 1884 he was in Vienna. It was there that Frances succumbed to her final illness. On 18th June 1884 she died from "*degeneration of the abdominal organs*"⁽⁵⁰⁾ at 20 Mariannen Gasse, a private sanatorium. The newspaper Die Presse reported on the 23rd that "*the corpse of the deceased was taken by the 'Concordia' to the Westbahnhof and then transferred to Paris. There the corpse will be buried in the family crypt.*"⁽⁵¹⁾ The family tomb was located in the recently opened Cimetière des Gonards in Versailles,

statt. — Am 18. d. M. ist hier in einer Privat-
heilanstalt die Frau Marie Bartholomei, Gattin des
kaiserlich russischen Gesandten Herrn Bartholomei, gestorben.
Die Leiche der Verbliebenen wurde heute Früh von der „Con-
cordia“ nach dem Westbahnhof gebracht und sodann nach Paris
überführt. Dort wird die Leiche in der Familienruhestätte
beigesetzt werden. — Gestern Früh um halb 7 Uhr ist hier, Maria-

Notice in Die Presse announcing the death of Frances

just outside of Paris and it was there that Frances was laid to rest. Although she didn't write a will, Frances left personal property worth more than £5500.⁽⁵²⁾ In Frances' death register entry she was described as the wife of "The Imperial Russian Ambassador", indicating that Michel was still working in an official capacity.

Michel was well-connected to senior members of the Russian Government and in February 1885 met with the Foreign Minister, Nikolay de Giers several times. De Giers recounted stories of Russian government and court life, some of which Michel used in his memoirs. Amongst these were an account of when de Giers had worked with his predecessor as Foreign Minister, Prince Gortchakoff, to bring a conclusion to the Russo-Turkish war in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. Another story de Giers told related to the hasty remarriage of Czar Alexander II to Princess Yurievsky after the death of his first wife and her awkward meeting with the Czarevitch and Czarevna (heirs to the throne) after the wedding.⁽⁵³⁾

Michel eventually remarried, this time to a Russian lady, Maria Dmitrievna Martinoff. Following his remarriage, his two daughters were sent to stay in a convent, first in Paris and later on the Isle of Wight. The sisters spent some years there, and were both recorded on the 1891 UK census as students at the Benedictine Priory in Ventnor. Michel and Maria were, by that time, living in Paris, in the 8th Arrondissement. It was there that Michel's third daughter, Dora Marguerite Irène Benedicta Bartholomei was born on the 17th March 1891. In the record of Dora's birth, Michel is described as "Chamberlain to the Emperor of Russia" with

Maria being listed as “without profession”. Michel was in Paris at the time and registered the birth personally, accompanied by Serge Czetiakow, Russian State Counsellor in Paris.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Throughout the 1890s, Michel maintained properties in England, France and Russia, continuing to work as State Counsellor and Chamberlain to the Czar, Alexander III. In September 1894, shortly before Alexander’s death, Michel rewrote his own will whilst he was in France and had it witnessed by officials of the Russian Embassy in Paris. In this will Michel left all of his effects which included land in Alchal Jourtovskoy to his wife, and also made her responsible for the charge and care of his children.⁽⁵⁵⁾

The following year, whilst staying in Richmond in Surrey, Michel died on the 31st July 1895. Like Frances, his body was transported to France and laid to rest in Versailles. His will was proved by the Arrondissement Tribunal in St Petersburg in November of the same year with the estate valued at more than £12,000.

After leaving the school H el ene went to live in Paris whilst Tatiana remained in England. H el ene married Jean Gabriel Cha ales des Etangs, a French Infantry Captain, on the 26th February 1896 in Paris. Even though Michel had died, the Russian diplomatic service maintained an interest in the girls, sending representatives from both the London and Paris Embassies to H el ene’s wedding.⁽⁵⁶⁾ H el ene and her family eventually settled in the USA. It is probable that Tatiana met her future husband, Redmond Cafferata, at some point after Redmond’s return to Britain following his voyage around the world which ended in 1897. Five years later, they were married in London. Maria and Dora gave gifts of house linen, cutlery, china and glass to the newlyweds. Maria and Dora lived in France and Maria eventually became a naturalised French citizen, before dying in Cannes on the 5th August 1927. Her body was taken to Paris where it was cremated in P ere Lachaise cemetery on the 11th. Her ashes were then interred alongside Michel and Frances.⁽⁵⁷⁾⁽⁵⁸⁾



The Bartholomei family vault in Versailles⁽⁵⁸⁾

Notes

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- (7) The Times 30th April 1874
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- (32) The Courier Journal 27th November 1880 p6

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