

Anne Myers (Maryasz) nee Jurecko 1878-1964

Submitted by Jan Linnell, granddaughter

My grandma was a very quiet, unassuming woman who was there in the background of Mum's life, but like many kids, we took her for granted. How I wish I could go back and ask her these questions that I so long to hear her answer.

I do have some bare facts: I know she was married at eighteen, had two girls when she was twenty and twenty-two in Poland. It was a time of unrest and her husband, not wanting to be conscripted in to the Russian army, left for Canada and new opportunities that were being promised by the Canadian government at this time. He homesteaded in 1903 at Cedoux and then sent for her.

She came with two little girls, no English, and a long ocean passage to endure. She arrived at Ellis Island in New York fearing that the officials would find small pox or tuberculosis in either her or the girls and then subject them to quarantine or, worst case scenario, deportation. Thankfully the Catholic Church had volunteers there to translate and assist with finding the railway station so this little family could travel across the continent to Saskatchewan or rather the Northwest Territories as the province was just being recognized. I can only imagine what that trip was like. To our family's knowledge she did not have communication with her Polish family again!

How would it feel to leave all you knew and those who loved you and travel such distances knowing you could not go back? Was she scared? Was she lonely? Was she just looking forward to seeing her husband again? Was she excited? I wish I had asked her!

I do know that she and her husband Michael went on to build a good family in Canada having five sons between 1907 and 1916. She would have been a very busy woman being pregnant, breast feeding, doing all the housework, and looking after every physical need as well as being a good wife over those years. No hospital births for her, no mother to come and assist, just a neighbour, if they were able to take the time from their busy life. According to stories the boys were always up to mischief, egging each other on. But Grandma was up to the challenge and kept them in line even though she was barely five feet tall. She did her best to keep her boys healthy and safe.

She went on to have one more baby, a girl this time, when she was forty –my mum! I am so glad she persevered, otherwise I would not exist. Vernie was born in 1918 on the farm in Cedoux.

Grandma Anne witnessed much hardship; the following year (1919) their livestock died from poisoned water and they had to leave the farm. They did persevere, farming in

other communities until 1943, when they retired to Weyburn. Unfortunately Grandma was widowed at 67.

Her life was not one of luxuries but one of faith and family. She was a devout Catholic with the church being the center of her social life. She observed the rites and customs even though events tested her beliefs. In those days it was difficult to accept interfaith marriages but when my mum fell in love with the farmer's son and left the church, Grandma, ever pragmatic, said "Same Jesus"! It is too bad her ecumenical attitude is not more widely held!

Grandma witnessed many changes over her life, many having to do with daily living. My mum was trying out her new electric frying pan, a new toy in the 50's, and cooked Grandma a fried egg. Grandma thought it was the best egg she had ever tasted (and she hated eggs)! She was always amazed at what life had to offer.

She practised the art of making do and cooking from scratch with the fruits of her garden. She seemed to be permanently bent over as she weeded her garden patch with tender care. Her cooking was gourmet before we knew the meaning of the word with her wee rolls of sour cabbage stuffed with rice and basted with lemon. To this day those cabbage rolls remind me of her.

Grandma left us with an appreciation of perseverance, love of family, faith in tomorrow, and acceptance of life as it unfolds.