

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project
Transcription of Myn Hursin audio recording 2016.mp3
http://digiport.athabascau.ca/aasmp/people/m_hursin.htm

Narrator: Amelia (Myn) Hursin
Interviewer: Shirley Stashko
April 18, 2016

[Start of Interview]

Myn Hursin recording 2016.mp3

Shirley My name is Shirley Stashko, and I'm here today in the home of Amelia, otherwise known as Myn Hursin, at Baptiste Lake, April the 18th, 2016. Could you give us your complete name, Myn?

Myn My name is Amelia Vera Hursin, and I'm known as Myn. My maiden name was Holowchak. My father's name was Roman Holowchak. My mother's name was Julianna Yachimec, neé Yaremko. I was born on March 23, 1932 in Edmonton, Alberta. My husband's name was John Hursin.

Shirley Okay, very good. So, today you have decided to tell us the story of your mom.

Myn Yes, it's a story of my mother Julianna Yaremko Holowchak Yachimec. My mother Julia was born in Subotiv, Ukraine, in 1907. In 1926, she married Roman Holowchak in the Ukraine. Her husband traveled to Canada and was in Canada for two years and saved enough money to bring his wife Julia to Canada. She arrived in Canada on January 1st, 1931. She did not know the English language at all.

Myn In 1930, her husband Roman contracted tuberculosis and was in the TB sanatorium in Calgary. Julia lived in a small room at a friend's home in north Edmonton. It was during the depression. There were no jobs to be had, or nothing available for her, so she was on relief and she had an interpreter at the government relief station. And she was told that she was able to travel by train to Calgary to visit her husband. She is pregnant with child. In 1932, she gave birth to daughter Amelia all alone. While she was in labor, she took the streetcar from North Edmonton to the old Royal Alexandra Hospital on March 23rd, 1932.

Myn In April of 1933, her husband passed away in Calgary. Now widowed, but considered a non-person, and through the interpreter at the relief station, is advised that she will be deported back to the Ukraine and that her daughter will be placed in an orphanage in Edmonton. With the help of her friends, she leaves Edmonton and hides from the authorities until her uncle, who is a coal miner in Cardiff, helps to find her a bachelor so that she can marry and remain in Canada. In November of 1933, she married Andrew Yachimec, a coal miner working in the Beverly mines, and they are situated in a one room shack on 59 Street and 122 Avenue in north Edmonton. They rented an additional two lots from the city of Edmonton for one dollar a year to have a garden. They built a barn, had a cow, chickens and garden to live. In 1936,

she gave birth to her son Walter on January 12th. In 1939, she received her Canadian citizenship through her husband. She got a job at the Swift packing plant. Her daughter Amelia started school at six and a half years. She [Julia] knew no English, therefore had to bring her schoolbook home, and it was important that every day after supper, her mother learned to read English as well. Julia was determined to learn the language and was very proud to be a Canadian.

Myn The land of freedom, for women in particular: In 1944–45, she had an operation and in order to pay the hospital bill, she grew potatoes and cabbages on the rented land and her daughter and son would walk the approximate 40 city blocks, by pulling the veggies in a wagon, to the hospital to pay the bills.

Myn 1949: Abusive marriage. She discovered she could not get a divorce, only upon committing adultery, and would lose all rights and also the custody of her children. So, she remained in the abusive relationship until her son was 13 years of age. She then hired a detective and gave evidence that she committed adultery and was very surprised that the court offered her one half of the sale of the house and her belongings as well. Julia worked at Burns packing plant during the war years, six days a week, but always found time on Sunday to take her son and daughter to Borden Park to swim, and the zoo, and a picnic. She watched us from the stands as we swam and said that someday she would also buy a swimsuit and swim. In the 1950s, her son and daughter both married and she was, in her words, "blessed to have" eventually, eight grandchildren. She traveled, had many friends, was very active in bowling, dancing, camping, cooking, and swimming. Let me just say, she was very upbeat and generous with her family.

Myn In 1970, she traveled back to the Ukraine to see her brother, and upon returning remarked that "we were very, very lucky to be living in Canada and that she was very proud to be a Canadian."

Myn In 1972, she retired from work and received her Old Age Security. She continued to travel, cook specialty dishes for family, was devoted to and enjoyed her family and friends. She was very active and also very positive. Her grandchildren found Baba to be a lot of fun. She loved fishing at Baptiste Lake. She was also very pleased to welcome eight great-grandchildren into her life.

Myn In 1994, her health started to decline. She moved from Edmonton to her son's home in Leduc and then to her daughter's home at Baptiste Lake, and lastly to Extencicare in Athabasca, where she was known for her outspoken humor and a fun person. In 1997, Julia celebrated her 90th birthday on March the 7th and on March 23rd, when her daughter became 65, her mother's comment was quite loud in the dining area of Extencicare, "Oy! I have to go, because the government cannot afford to pay Old Age Security to both of us." It brought lots of laughter to all. Exactly one month to the day, on April 23rd, Julia passed away peacefully. Canada gave her freedom of choice and her Old Age Security was a Canadian blessing that gave her freedom to enjoy her elder years in her Canada.

Shirley Thank you, Myn.

[End of Interview}

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