

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF UKRAINIAN HERITAGE

"Eventually those in Ukraine would write back," Yereniuk said.

Soon Ukrainian Canadians began sending money, clothes and other supplies to family in the old country. The Soviets soon realized that and began operating parcel services where they would send propaganda to Canada and take parcels the other way.

"The Ukrainians learned quickly that if they sent three sets of pantyhose one paid the customs person, one paid the postmistress, and one the relative got to keep," Yereniuk said.

The Soviets began taxing the shipments based on purchase price so Ukrainian Canadians responded by sending used items with lower price tags.

Parcels to the Ukraine played an important role, Yereniuk said. Knowing that items such as pantyhose and kerchiefs were popular, Ukrainian Canadians sent several of each back home in each package to cover "taxes" and ensure a few of each made it to their final destination. The recipient might keep one of each for herself and sell the surplus for as much as one month's wages. Those funds raised were used to buy building supplies, Yereniuk said.

"My grandmother's house was paid for with money from clothing and the house still stands."

While they may not send as much pantyhose back home, today's younger Ukrainian Canadians often have success in tracing their family tree thanks to some old-fashioned sleuthing, Yere-

niuk said. Given an envelope with a postmark or the birthplace of a relative, researchers can track down relatives.

"The social mobility is not like ours here," Yereniuk explained. "There is always someone who stayed in the village. People on the ground in Ukraine are very helpful."

Yereniuk helped a woman from Saskatchewan locate the town where her ancestors resided. They visited the one church in town and the woman found the tombstones of 38 relatives. As Yereniuk and the woman stood in the cemetery they noticed a couple watching from a nearby house.

"The man ended up being her father's second cousin," Yereniuk recalled. "That was a little bit of a tear-jerker."

Ukrainian Canadians also feel sadness about the current state of the Ukraine, Yereniuk said.

"The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has made a very strong point about what has happened with Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk. It is inhumane. Imagine if the United States invaded southern British Columbia and claimed one third of it as theirs because 20,000 Americans live there."

Yereniuk applauded Canada for sending personnel to train Ukrainian soldiers, and the Ukrainian-Canadian community for helping with the war effort. Led by youth groups the community has raised more than \$6 million to outfit Ukrainian soldiers with basic medical kits. Yereniuk credits the



The Ewanchuk family farms near Gimli in 1907.

THE MICHAEL EWANCHUK PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, PC 96. U OF M ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

initiative with saving scores of lives.

Yereniuk hopes the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada accomplishes two goals.

"We want to use this occasion to strengthen our Ukrainian-Canadian cultural life in Canada... We also want to aid Ukraine."

For more information on plans surrounding the anniversary, go online at

[@HeraldWPG](http://www.uccmb.ca/Facebook.com/TheHeraldWPG_Twitter)

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A new generation forges its own ties

■ Natalie Tataryn is one of those young Ukrainian-Canadians who maintains strong ties to Ukraine.

"I feel like it's our duty to support them as Ukrainians in Canada with our relatives either still back there or because of those who have come over," Tataryn said. "It is still our home country."

Tataryn was born in Ukraine 25 years ago, a few months before the breakup of the Soviet Union. After hearing Tataryn's birth mother wanted to put her up for adoption, delivery room doctor Lesyk Baran was given one month to find the baby a home before she would be placed in an orphanage.

Baran's wife Yaraslava contacted Sister Veronica, a Canadian nun, for help. Sister Veronica knew Tataryn's mom and baba.

"She called and asked them if they knew anybody looking to adopt a baby," Tataryn recalled. "My mom said she would."

Tataryn said she felt fortunate to be given a new life in Canada, so when she heard of the Home of Hope she wanted to help.

Based in Lviv, Ukraine, the Home of Hope is a safe house for young women who are vulnerable to human trafficking. It is owned and operated by the Lubov SSMI Foundation—a part of the Sisters Servant of Mary Immaculate, an international congregation of sisters from the Ukrainian Catholic Church—whose Winnipeg office is at 1085 Main St.

Ukraine's dual struggles with Russia and with creating a functioning democracy have torn many families apart and left scores of young women orphaned. Once they transition out of Ukraine's orphanage system in their teens, many fall prey to human traffickers, Tataryn explained. Relying solely on donations, Home of Hope provides daily care, social services, and

education for Ukrainian girls and women between the ages of 16 and 23.

Tataryn began knitting hats and making perogies to raise money for Home of Hope but she still wanted to do more, so in June she travelled to Lviv to spend a few weeks at there.

"These are incredibly brave young women," Tataryn said.

Once in Lviv, Tataryn saw Home of Hope was true to its name. Every woman was enrolled in schooling ranging from music to education to cosmetology. They looked forward to the future. "I'm going to continue raising donations and spreading the word about this wonderful home, this wonderful foundation Lubov, and the people who put all of this hard work into it," Tataryn said.

In addition to visiting Home of Hope Tataryn met dozens of relatives. She soon saw Ukrainian hospitality is the

same whether it in East Kyiv or East Kildonan.

"You go to this small house and there's 30 people outside to greet you," Tataryn said. "You go in and there's this full table of food. We ate, they gave us gifts, and when we went to leave, they said 'You have to go to the next house.' We went to three houses like that."

Ukraine's geography was familiar too.

"I can see why Ukrainians felt the landscape of Canada was like home. They have prairies and mountains, like Canada but condensed into a small area."

The trip of a lifetime left Tataryn determined to keep helping her fellow Ukrainians.

"The trip gave me so much more than I could have ever expected. Being where your relatives walked made it really feel like home."

—Tony Zerucha

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