

DISPLACED PERSONS AND OSHAWA: A MEMORY BOOK PROJECT



— Home to our History —

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Cover Photographs: The Thomas Bouckley Collection: The Robert McLaughlin Gallery; Oshawa Museum

Photographs: Oshawa Museum; Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21





Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in our oral history Memory Book to further our research for the Oshawa Historical Society/Oshawa Museum oral history project on Displaced Persons and Oshawa. The information you gave in this Memory Book will be very helpful and will form an important part of the history of Displaced Persons and Oshawa for future generations.

Please fill in as much of the booklet as you are able to. There is no need to try and fill in each section if you nothing to share.

If you have had some additional recollections that are significant to this project, please feel free to send them to us, including photographs, objects and other mementos.

Thank you again for your time and your contribution.

Very best wishes,

Oshawa Museum

Displaced Persons and Oshawa

The 19th century saw more or less unrestricted movement into Canada. With the exception of a select group of people (criminals, those who were destitute or ill) entry into Canada was not restricted. This policy changed after Canada was faced with mass immigration during the early part of 1900 and the economic impact of the First World War.

The aftermath of World War II saw a world faced with mass movement of human beings on a scale never before seen. Initially the idea was to “repatriate” people back to the countries from where they had been displaced. It soon became clear that this was not going to be possible. When the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration concluded its work, there were still well over 1.1 million displaced persons who were determined to be “nonrepatriable”.¹

The job of finding homes for these people was handed over to the newly created International Refugee Organization (IRO). The IRO was tasked with finding homes for approximately 875 000 people. In 1947 the Canadian government agreed to open the borders for 5000 displaced persons to come to Canada and begin life anew.²

Oshawa became an enticing place for relocation for many Ukrainians escaping Europe after World War II. Due, in large part to the already large Ukrainian community in the City. Immigration to Oshawa by Ukrainians began around 1907 when a gentleman by the name of Julian Kalyanko moved here.³ His arrival was the start of a growing community of Ukrainian immigrants in the south end of Oshawa.

Approximately 2 to 3 million Ukrainians found themselves as Displaced Persons post World War II.⁴ In 1946, the Oshawa Branch of the Canadian Ukrainian Committee spoke to the community about several resolutions put forth by the Committee to bring Ukrainian displaced persons to Canada.⁵ Upon arriving in Oshawa, Ukrainians found themselves in an area that very much felt like home. There were several Ukrainian churches, community halls such as the Ukrainian National Hall and a small retail sector of businesses owned by Ukrainians. There were also readily available jobs in the manufacturing sector. Fittings Ltd., a company that manufactured pipe fittings, waterworks fittings and plumbing brass goods, had a workforce comprised a great deal of Ukrainian immigrants.

Another group of displaced persons that arrived in Oshawa after the war were the Poles. Similar to the Ukrainians, there was already an established Polish community in Oshawa prior to the Second World War. The Polish community settled around the Olive Street area and established business and organizations to serve members of their community.⁶ Polish workers could be found at any number of the numerous industries that operated in Oshawa. Perhaps the largest concentration of Polish workers could be found at Ontario Malleable Iron Works. The works was located close to the heavily Polish neighbourhood around Olive Avenue. Much like Fittings Ltd., Malleable Iron had a long history in Oshawa and manufactured pipe and stove fittings.

While Ukrainian and Polish immigrants made up the largest percentage of displaced persons to settle in Oshawa, immigrants also arrived in Canada from countries such as Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium.

Kulischer, Eugene M. “Displaced Persons in the Modern World”. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 262, Reappraising Our Immigration Policy (March 1949), pg 171.

“500 D.P.s May Enter, Is Ruling”. *Oshawa Times-Gazette*, June 9, 1947.

MacDonald, Helen Bajorek and Suchan, Laura. “Immigration, Industry and the Environment in Oshawa” Oshawa Museum Archives. Unpublished, 2009. Pg. 9.

Luckiuk, Lubomyr Y. “Unintended Consequences in Refugee Resettlement: Post-War Ukrainian Refugee Immigration to Canada”. *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Special Issue: Refugees: Issues and Directions (Summer, 1986), pg. 468.

“Ukrainians Ask Canada Take Displaced Persons”, *Oshawa Times-Gazette*, August 13, 1946.

“Canadian Roots Celebrated by the Ukrainian Community”, *Oshawa Times Extra*, May 15, 1991.

Biographical Sketch

Contact Information

Full Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Family History

Birth Date & Place of Birth: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Date & Place of Marriage: _____

Children's Names & Dates of Birth: _____

Biographical Sketch

Education, Career & Activities

Primary Education (school & Location): _____

Dates: _____

Secondary Education (school & location): _____

Dates: _____

Higher Education (school & Location): _____

Dates: _____

Professions & Jobs (locations & dates): _____

Military Service (Branch, Rank, dates): _____

Civic & Community Activities (organization/Activity, offices held): _____

Travelling to Canada

Where were you born? What happened to your home during the war?

Ukrainians Ask Canada Take Displaced Persons

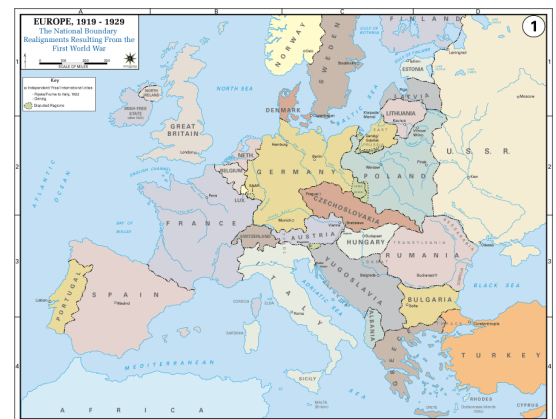
Capt Michael Kapusta Tell Oshawa Branch of Canadian Ukrainian Committee of Conditions In Camps In Western Eur.

Spent Six Years Under Soviet And Nazi Occupation

at our boys edom....the urged Cap in support of before a mass the Oshawa meeting Branch of the Canadian Ukrainian

Send Government Officials To Europe To Select Refugees

When did you arrive in Canada? How old were you?



Travelling to Canada

Why was Canada chosen for you and your family to resettle? Was there a choice?



Travelling to Canada

Can you talk about your trip across to Canada? What memories do you have of that time?



Passengers participating in a fire drill
aboard a ship.

Travelling to Canada

Did your family have a plan for what was going to happen once you arrived in Canada?



Travelling to Canada

Did you have any expectations about what Canada was going to be like? Did it match these expectations? Please explain further.



Arriving in Canada

Where and when did you first step foot on Canada soil?



What was the response of the Canadian authorities when you arrived?

Arriving in Canada

What was that first night like? What did you experience those first few days?



Arriving in Canada

Did you speak English when you came to Canada? If you did not speak English, were there language obstacles or barriers when communicating with others? How did you overcome these barriers?



Arriving in Oshawa

How and why did your family end up settling in Oshawa?



Polish Vets Due Soon

It is expected Oshawa's quota of the contingent of Polish veterans which came to Canada this week in the government's program of providing farmers with help, will arrive here this week-end or the first of next week. According to the National Employment Office here, the veterans destined for Oshawa are now in Toronto and the first of the group may arrive here Sunday afternoon.

Some 200 of the war veterans have arrived in Kingston and were housed in Vimy barracks pending their assignment to different farms. Eleven will be allotted to the farmers in the immediate Kingston district.

Were there services set up in the City to assist with new arrivals?
If there was help available, what sort of help was it?

Arriving in Oshawa

Where did your family live when you first arrived in Oshawa?



Why was that area chosen by your family?

Arriving in Oshawa

What was your first impression of Oshawa, the community and the people?



Oshawa residents in front of Hotel Genosha.



Oshawa General Hospital

Living in Oshawa

What jobs were available for recent arrivals to Oshawa?



Inside Pedlar People factory.



Fittings Ltd.

What made these jobs, besides the economic importance, attractive to recent arrivals?



Robson Leather Co.

Living in Oshawa

Where did you work in Oshawa?
Can you tell us about your job?



General Motors



Ontario Malleable Iron Co.

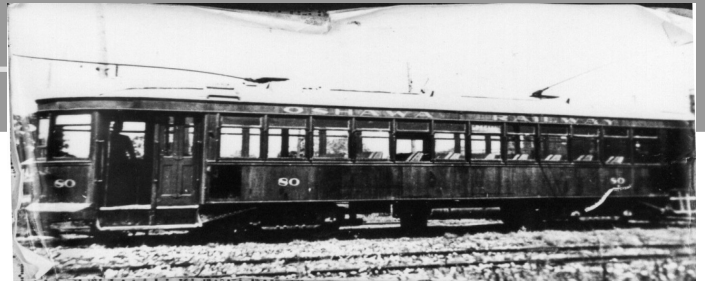
Living in Oshawa

How were you treated by Oshawa residents when you arrived?



Living in Oshawa

What are some of your fondest or lasting memories of your first years living in Oshawa?



Oshawa Railway car

Did you get involved in any organizations or clubs in Oshawa? If so what were they? Did you encounter any difficulties in joining these groups?



Living in Oshawa

What benefits did Oshawa contribute to displaced persons and their families?

Were there disadvantages for displaced persons and their families living in Oshawa? Please explain further.

Notes

Do you have any further memories or experiences about coming to Canada or living in Oshawa you would like to tell us about? Please feel free to mention any interesting stories, experiences, or people.

Release of Information Form

I _____(name of participant), hereby give this information recorded on _____(insert date) to the Oshawa Historical Society/Oshawa Museum as a donation. With this gift, I transfer to the Oshawa Community Museum and Archives legal title and all literary rights, including copyright.

I understand the Memory Book may be made available for research and such public programming as the Oshawa Museum may determine. This includes right and license to reproduce, copy, modify, display, distribute, perform, broadcast, transmit, and create derivatives from the Memory Book. This may include use of the Memory Book in print and in live or recorded programs for radio, television, or any electronic publishing medium.

I transfer all of the above right without limitation, to support the research of the Oshawa Museum to disseminate information about the Memory Book.

Please note, limitations such as anonymity may be considered on a case by case basis.

Signature of participant

Name (printed)

Date



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