



Ukrainian Genealogy Group

National Capital Region

The Ukrainian Genealogist

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913 Carling Avenue Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4E3

Website: uggncr.org

Contact: Myron Momryk (613) 731-1870

eMail: uggncr1@gmail.com

Editor: Mike Dowhan (613) 606-9176

September UGG-NCR Webinar

The DP Experience: One Family's Story by Zonia Keywan

In this presentation, Zonia Keywan told the story of her parent's experiences as refugees fleeing from the approaching German-Soviet front in western Ukraine during the Second World War and their experiences in a Displaced Persons Camp after the war.

Zonia began her presentation by describing her growing interest in this period of her parent's lives that was shared by many other Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Canada as Displaced Persons (DPs) and as part of the Third Wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada (1946-1953).



Zonia Keywan - our September speaker

The information for the presentation is based on two novels written by her mother, Maria Adriana Keywan, *Karvendel* (1971) and *Plyve Shumyt Rika* (1985). These are autobiographical novels with new names for the characters and place names but obviously were based on the experiences of Zonia's parents, Ivan and Maria Adriana Keywan. Her parents

lived through Soviet occupation of Western Ukraine from September-October 1939 to June, 1941 and then the German invasion until 1944.

During each period, the Ukrainian population was faced with uncertainty and doubts about their future, fears of arrests and deportations and suffering under foreign occupation and expressed in the form of novels. The characters in the two novels reflect the anxiety, attitudes, and personal concerns of these years and the need to make difficult decisions that could affect the rest of their lives. Zonia quotes from the novels to describe the decision made to leave their home, the trip by horse and wagon westward, then by rail to Germany and the Displaced Persons Camp.

Zonia read excerpts from the novels about the refugees and their living conditions, daily habits, geographical locations and also the hospital, schools, kitchens, nursery school in the Camp. Planning for Easter celebrations and making 'paskas' and 'pysanky' brought some relief from the conditions in the camp.

After a few years, plans were made to immigrate to other countries and many hoped to travel to Canada and the United States. Zonia describes the concerns of the DPs with quotes from the novels during the trip across the Atlantic Ocean to Halifax, the long train trip across Canada to Edmonton and finally, their settlement among the Ukrainian community. Her talk was illustrated by family documents, photographs, post cards, maps, and other visual material.

Zonia concluded her presentation with a list of [References](#) regarding sources for research and for further reading.

2024-25 UGG Board

We invite those interested in serving on our UGG Board for the 2024-25 season, or in helping out our organization in a volunteer capacity, to contact us at uggncr1@gmail.com. We aim to appoint our Board at our November meeting.

Please consult our [website](#) for more information about our Board and various volunteer opportunities.

New UGG-NCR Website

As previously announced, we have launched our new website this fall co-incident with the start of our 25th anniversary year. This total website rewrite comes with a simplified and easy to remember internet address (URL):

<https://uggncr.org/>



Our new website is easy to navigate—even for the novice computer user. Information on all our meetings and newsletters is now at your fingertips. Even better, our site is fully searchable.

Our “Resource” section is still a work-in-progress as we intend to add more information in the coming weeks and months.

We will look forward to all comments and suggestions. Please forward them to: uggncr1@gmail.com

Community Events

Saturday, November 2 @ 5:30 pm

Ukrainian Night

Dinner and Dance to support Ukraine Solidarity Fund for Humanitarian aid to Ukraine (please follow the [link](#) for information and tickets).

Where: St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine, 952 Green Valley Crescent, Ottawa

When: 5:30 p.m. – Vespers
6:00 p.m. – cocktails
7:00 p.m. – dinner
(dance to follow)

Saturday, November 23 @ 10:00am to 2:00pm

Ukrainian Christmas Market

Where: Ukrainian Banquet Hall, 1000 Byron Ave., Ottawa

For more information, click [here](#).

Saturday, December 7 @ 10:00am to 2:00pm

Ukrainian Christmas Bazaar

Where: St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine, 952 Green Valley Cres.

Sponsored by the UCWLC.