

Feigl & Mandzj Families

Aniela Steffani Feigl (nee Mandzj)

- Aniela was born on October 12th, 1935 in the city of Lwow, Poland (now Ukraine).
- Her parents were Piotr and Weronika Mandzj.
- Aniela has lasting memories of the Second World War. "The Germans forced my family to leave Poland after the war. They told us the Russians would kill us if we didn't leave. My mother cried and didn't want to go and when they heard this, soldiers pushed her to the wall and threatened to kill her. She saved herself because she spoke German to them."
- "So, we were shipped from camp to camp. They were called displaced persons camps. We first went to Salzburg, then Linz, and Wien (Vienna). The American soldiers used to give us care packages."
- "The Red Cross moved us out of Wien about 150 kilometres away to Enns in upper Austria because the Russians were circling Wien and there was danger. I still remember how loud and terrible the sirens screamed 20 minutes before a bombing. I felt like it would make me crazy."
- After having survived the Nazi onslaught by fleeing her home, Aniela found life in the displaced persons' camp to be an oasis of calm and learning: "We had to leave our home with nothing, then we had everything to eat and play with in the camp, and it was all free. There were teachers in the camp and we could learn anything."
- "I learned ballet and when I had studied enough, I gave lessons to others." Later, in Red Lake, she again took dance lessons.
- Aniela's older sister, Jozefa (Josie, born 1929) and her husband, Wladyslaw (Walter) Sukiennik were the first of the family to immigrate to Canada.
- Aniela came to Canada in 1954 with her parents, sister Zozsa (Sofia, born 1940), and brother Adolf Boleslaw (born 1944).
- "We landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and went by train to Winnipeg. My sister, Josie, worked there when she first came to Canada and before she went to live in Madsen. My family went to Madsen and my Dad got a job in the mill of the Madsen Mine. He had a false arm and hand and did fine. He worked there until he retired."
- "I was only in Madsen three months when I went back to Winnipeg with Josie and went to work in a clothing factory. The more you sewed, the more money you made. So, I sewed leather jackets like crazy! When Josie went back to Red Lake, I did too," Aniela remembered.
- Aniela returned to the work force when their youngest child, Richard, was in grade one.
- She was a chambermaid at the Balmer Motor Hotel in Balmertown.
- As well, Aniela worked part-time ironing men's shirts for three years for Victoria and John Gazankas in their Red Lake Laundry.
- In 1980, the year the area was evacuated due to danger from a massive forest fire, Aniela began her long employment at the Owen J. Matthews Manor in Cochenour. Initially she worked as a cleaner and then was promoted to the position of nurses' aide. Aniela devoted herself to the care of the Manor's elderly residents until, after 18 years of employment, she retired in 2000 at age 65.
- Aniela was a long-time member of the Red Lake branch of the Polish Alliance Friendly Society of Canada, and served for two years as president of its Red Lake ladies auxiliary.
- She contributed her delicious cooking for countless occasions over the years, as well as donated hundreds of hand-knitted items to charities and fundraisers.
- In the late 2000s, Aniela joined the Red Hat women's group.

Herwig Feigl

- Herwig Feigl was born on March 22nd, 1934 at St. Josef's Hospital in Vienna, the capital of Austria.
- He was the fourth of eight children.
- His parents were Auguste Wilhelm and Hermine Hosek.
- His father, Auguste, was a professional engineer and in Stalingrad, Russia during the siege of 1941. Two years later, Auguste got word to his wife and children that he was very ill, living in pitiful conditions and in great fear for his life. Herwig remembered, "The Russians were advancing, and my Dad wrote us just before Christmas 1943 that he knew he wouldn't survive. Then we got a

message that he was missing-in-action. We never saw him again." Herwig believed that his father either succumbed to illness or was executed by the Soviet Red Army.

- Herwig's Czechoslovakian mother, Hermine, was soon to deliver her eighth and youngest child at the time of Auguste's death. As a single mother, she nurtured her children and encouraged them to excel in their studies.
- Herwig's enduring memories of war-time were mostly of the fear he felt.
- As a boy, he climbed onto the roof and observed United States jet fighter aircraft bombing his beloved Vienna.
- The family lived at times in their father's birthplace of Waidhofen, on the outskirts of Vienna.
- When bombing was occurring nearby, Herwig's mother moved the family into a four-storey house in Vienna to escape danger. Ironically, a bomb also hit the second house in the family sought refuge. They hid in a corner in the basement and all survived the house falling around them. Herwig remembered that American soldiers pulled them out of the wreckage three hours later.
- He attended elementary school in Enns, Austria, and high school in Linz, Austria.
- By Grade 11, Herwig left school to work to help support his mother and younger siblings.
- When times were better, he learned the printing trade at college in Linz. After three years, he obtained his professional certification.
- Herwig Feigl worked as a professional painter and decorator in Enns, a medieval town on the banks of the Danube River. It was there in a displaced persons camp that he met his future wife Aniela.
- Herwig was a natural athlete, and greatly enjoyed playing on a junior soccer team in Enns. He had been offered a coveted spot on a professional soccer league, but willingly gave it up for love and for Canada.
- He was the first of his family to leave Europe.
- Northwestern Ontario could not have been more different from the Viennese world in which Herwig grew up. "I arrived in Madsen at night. When I woke up and saw only solid bush I said to Aniela (I called her *rotkopf* – red head) 'you sent me to the end of the earth!' With my first pay cheque, I was going to go home," Herwig remembered.
- Herwig adapted to many changes, learned English well, developed a deep appreciation for the north, and made the Red Lake District his permanent home.
- Herwig's career in gold mines in the area began shortly after his arrival. He was hired by Madsen Red Lake Gold Mines, Limited, to work underground.
- With a portion of his first Canadian pay cheque (from Madsen) of \$42, Herwig did not return to Europe as he had planned, but bought his first Canadian-made shirt.
- In 1955, Herwig was hired by Cochenour-Willans Gold Mines, Limited. When it closed in 1968, he became the chemist in the lab at Griffith Iron Ore Mine.
- After brief stints at Campbell Red Lake Gold Mines and in Pickle Lake, he worked as an assay chemist with John W. (Jack) Beck and Paul Okanski in Cochenour.
- Herwig's skills in assay work remained in demand. He was skilled in all steps of the assaying process, such as crushing, weighing pulps, pouring from the furnace, slagging, and washing beads.
- Maureen Reid (nee Beck) said, "Dad always respected Herwig for his diligence, dedicated work effort, and his attention to detail."
- Herwig retired at age 59 in 1993 from Paul's Custom Assaying (owned by Okanski, who succeeded Beck).
- Apart from his day job, Herwig also worked for decades as a house painter and decorator. His skill, efficiency, and perfectionism at the craft of painting kept the jobs coming for many years.
- Herwig suffered hearing loss as a result of many years of mining as an occupation, but he did not let that stop him from enjoying life.
- Herwig was chief of the Cochenour Fire Station in the 1970s.
- Although he rarely spoke about it (out of modesty), Herwig saved Aniela's sister, Zosza (Sofia), from drowning. Sofia's future husband, Boleslaw (Bolek/Bill) Dranski, said that he has been grateful to Herwig every day for over 50 years.
- Herwig's fondness for sports continued in Canada. From 1955 through the 1960s, he played on the Northwestern Ontario Soccer League, Red Lake All Stars Team and the Cochenour Bs. He was a frequent goal scorer, and contributed a "Soccer News" column for the Red Lake District News in the 1970s.

- Herwig was a long-time coach for the Cochenour Soccer Club. He trained and mentored many youth of the Red Lake District with his characteristic humour and patience. He instilled in them the health benefits of being active and of learning team-work.
- Herwig rarely missed a game in which his children or grandchildren were playing. He also had great fun cheering and jeering games on television in the Cochenour house.
- Because Herwig was fatherless at an early age he developed a deep empathy for the feelings of children. Just as he did with his own children, he was on hands-and-knees on the floor, playing and laughing with his grandchildren.
- When Herwig's cancer was discovered, he offered himself for an important study on new medication at the London Regional Cancer Clinic. He took an experimental drug which prolonged his life. Today, that medication is on the market and is saving lives.
- After an operation or treatment, Herwig always returned to his routine of walking from Cochenour to Balmertown to swim 50 laps in the Campbell pool. The staff kept nitro pills at the desk for Herwig as a precaution. He also enjoyed swimming in the waters of Red Lake.
- While he ultimately could not conquer the cancer that blighted his body for 14 years, Herwig's tremendous courage and inner strength guided him through many recurrences and remissions.
- He resiliently defied the odds—and medical opinion—many times, and even survived a heart attack.
- Surrounded by the love of his family, Herwig Feigl died at age 75 on August 26th, 2009 at the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital.
- His ashes rest in the Woodland Cemetery columbarium in Balmertown.

The Couple

- Herwig and Aniela met in a displaced persons camp in Enns, Austria over a game of ping pong.
- Aniela had observed him walking through the camp enroute to painting jobs. She was charmed by the sight of the handsome, black-haired young man in painter's clothing with the little step-ladder over his shoulder, and she wondered if she would ever meet him.
- Aniela was the ping pong champion in the camp when, one day, Herwig joined in a competition.
- Ping pong was followed by attending dances together, and falling in love.
- Aniela was already a skilled dancer, but Herwig was not. Eventually, out of frustration over other men asking Aniela to dance, Herwig insisted that she teach him.
- They dated for three years but initially could not speak each other's languages.
- Aniela left Europe at the beginning of 1954 for Canada. She and Herwig did not see one another until Aniela sponsored him to immigrate to Canada that October.
- Herwig and Aniela were wed on December 26th, 1954 at St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Red Lake. It was a very cold but sunny day. "It was a stupid time to get married," Aniela laughed, "oh, it was so cold! I was in high heels and my wedding dress and when I got out of the car and walked a little bit, I slid down the hill to the church. We were so young. I was 19 and Herwig was 20."
- Aniela's sister, Sofia Dranski, was the matron of honour, Anna Kaminsky the bridesmaid, and Boleslaw (Bolek/Bill) Dranski was best man. Her brother, Boleslaw (Bill) Mandzj, was the ring bearer.
- The Feigls became devoted parents of six—Monica (1958), Renate (1961), Garry (1962), Marianne (1964), James (1967), and Richard (1970), all of whom were born in the Cochenour Memorial Hospital. They were grateful to have six healthy children because they had grieved the deaths of two male babies (1957 and 1960).
- Herwig and Aniela not only welcomed their children's spouses, but also had profound affection for them. They also became the proud "Babcia" and "Opa" of 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
- Herwig and Aniela were excellent ballroom dancers. They spent many evenings waltzing in venues such as the clubhouse in Madsen, halls at Ear Falls and South Bay Mines, but mostly at the Polish Alliance Hall in Red Lake. It was mesmerizing to watch their seemingly effortless coordination as they glided across dance floors.
- Herwig and Aniela loved to travel and made three trips to Austria, and some to Germany and Italy. They also travelled extensively to enjoy visits with children and grandchildren.
- Both Herwig and Aniela, with their huge hearts, enthusiastically welcomed grandchildren and celebrated their baptisms, graduations, and various accomplishments.

- Herwig and Aniela worked hard to provide happy Christmases for their children and grandchildren.
- They took great pride in their home and yard, and won annual awards from the Municipality for their exterior house Christmas decorating.
- On their 50th wedding anniversary in 2004, Herwig and Aniela renewed their wedding vows in a moving ceremony in St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church.
- Their home base remained in Cochenour ever since they moved there in 1967.
- They spent decades volunteering for various organizations.
- Herwig and Aniela were married almost 55 years at the time of Herwig's death in 2009.

Weronika Mandzj (nee Engel)

- Weronika (nee Engel), was a twin, born in Mirzice, Poland, on April 24th, 1906.
- As a young woman prior to her marriage, Weronika worked as a domestic for wealthy Jewish families.
- Weronika was diagnosed with cancer and was ill for some time. She died at age 68 at the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital on November 4th, 1974.

Piotr Mandzj

- Piotr, son of Jakob Mandzj, was born in Lwow, Poland on July 10th, 1903.
- Piotr, a carpenter by trade, suffered the amputation of his right arm in a horrific saw machinery accident.
- When he arrived in Canada, Piotr got a job in the mill of the Madsen Mine. He had a false arm and hand and did fine. He worked there until he retired.
- Piotr lived to advanced age and spent long periods of time living with his daughters.
- While residing with Aniela in Cochenour, Piotr died, also from cancer, on May 9th, 1991, in his 88th year.
- He was buried beside Weronika in Woodland Cemetery in Balmertown.

The Couple

- Piotr and Weronika were married in Lwow in 1929.
- They were the parents of nine children. Irka (Irene) died at about nine months, and Michal died from mumps at age 18 in Austria, in 1947. Another son, Willusz Wilhelm, was seized at a displaced persons' camp in Sudetenland by the German army and his family never saw him again. When the Mandzjs came to Canada, they searched for him through the Red Cross Society, but never found any answer.
- The Mandzjs were living in Lwow when it was overtaken by Russia and then by Germany during the Second World War.
- Their daughter Jozefa (Josie, born 1929) and her husband, Wladyslaw (Walter) Sukiennik were the first of the family to immigrate to Canada.
- In January 1954, Weronika and Piotr and their children—Aniela, Zozsa (Sofia, born 1940) and Adolf Boleslaw (born 1944)—left Europe by ship from Bremerhaven, Germany enroute to Canada.
- They had initially hoped to immigrate to Australia, where another daughter, Kazimiera (Kasia) Gacek (born 1932), had moved. However, their application was rejected on account of Piotr being an amputee).
- The voyage took approximately 14 days over rough, windy seas. The storms were so severe that the ship docked in England until danger had passed.
- Once they landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the family went by train to Winnipeg. Then they moved to Madsen.
- Their daughter Sofia married Boleslaw (Bolek/Bill) Dranski, who was also born in Poland and came to Canada in 1953 with his parents, Janina and Stanislaw Dranski. The family settled in Starratt-Olsen, near Madsen, where the parents lived for 41 years.
- Bill and Sofia Dranski retired in Whitby, Ontario, where Sofia's older sister, Janina Witazek (born 1927), also lived.
- Both Weronika and Piotr are buried in Woodland Cemetery in Balmertown.