

Kostynuk Family

Angelina Kostynuk (nee Onufryczuk)

- Angelina Onufryczuk was born on November 16th, 1891 in Chernovitz, district of Bukovina, Ukraine.
- She attended school and was literate.
- Angelina came to Canada in 1913. The identification she carried was written by the mayor of Chernovitz. He described Angelina as having blond hair and grey eyes.
- "She liked it in Canada. There were a lot of Ukrainians in Chapleau and she made friends right away. A lot of them came to Canada around 1910," says Bill.
- Angelina was not the only member of her family to come to Canada. She also had a brother who lived near Gimli, Manitoba. Today, no one knows why, but Angelina and her brother never made contact with one another, and the family never heard what happened to him.
- While her husband worked at the mine, Angelina was always busy caring for her children, garden, and home. She made some of the family's clothing and knitted socks and mittens for them.
- She was a good pastry cook, and the aroma of her bread and doughnuts baking attracted many of her children's classmates. "Our place was popular with the kids. My mother cared about all of them. My friend Clinton Campbell came from a very poor family and practically lived at our house for a long time. My mother was a very good woman," says Bill.
- Angelina had many friends in Red Lake, such as Erie Bonnycastle (later Nayler). Neighbours felt comfortable dropping in for visits.
- Angelina learned a fair amount of English from hearing it spoken.
- By the late 1930s, Angelina was unwell. She had uterine or stomach cancer (or both) and she lived for several years.
- In her final months, her husband and children, especially Mary, cared for Angelina in their log home overlooking the school. Red Lake's hospital was located where the parking lot of the Red Lake Inn is today, but Angelina preferred to deal with her illness at home.
- Marjorie Walter, a nurse, came at various intervals to give Angelina an injection of morphine. Marjorie and her husband, Ted, operated a drug store across from the school.
- Angelina died at home on September 3rd, 1942. She was only two months shy of her 50th birthday.
- Her body was taken to the hospital and from there was transferred to an aircraft. Local pilot Lawrence (Larry) Roluf flew the body to Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba, where a funeral director was waiting to bring her to Winnipeg.
- Angelina's family flew out separately and honoured her wish to have a funeral in a Ukrainian church which her city friends could attend. She also wished to be buried in Winnipeg.
- Following the funeral, Angelina was buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Leon (Leo) Kostynuk

- Leon (Leo) Kostynuk (shortened to Kostynuk) was born in city of Chernovitz, district of Bukovina, Ukraine, on December 9th, 1889.
- His parents were farmers. They never came to Canada and Leo never saw them again.
- Leo came alone to Canada sometime between 1907 and 1910. He sailed from Germany and docked at Montreal.
- Leo's brother came to Canada (and Red Lake) in 1929 or 1930 for a time before returning to Ukraine.
- "Dad heard that Canada was a pretty good place so that is why he came," says his son William (Bill). "There was advertising calling people to come to farm in Canada. From Montreal he came to Winnipeg. The government gave Dad farm land to clear and settle on. He thought it would be near Winnipeg but it was far away, near Gimli. He went there and looked at the land and didn't like it. He gave that farm up and went back to Montreal."
- Leo then worked out of Montreal on the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- When he was transferred to Chapleau, Ontario (before 1913), Leo was promoted to section foreman.

- With the hope of finding work, Leo came to Red Lake in its earliest days and before any community was established. The Howey Gold Mines had been discovered in 1925 and by the time of Leo's arrival, construction of the mine was just beginning.
- Leo was accompanied on this first trip by Alex Ewdoshko. They were from the same town in Ukraine, came to Canada around the same time, and worked together on the railway in Canada. Like Leo, Alex lived the rest of his life in Red Lake.
- Leo worked in the sawmill, providing wood with which to construct the shaft and buildings on the property. He worked hard to save enough money to bring his wife and children to Red Lake.
- From the sawmill, Leo moved to the construction crew of the Howey Gold Mines' shaft because the wages were higher. He later worked underground but did not like it. He then worked in the assay office.
- His final job with the mine began in 1937 when he was made night watchman. Leo worked at Howey until its closure in 1941.
- Leo was also never short of friends, especially if they liked poker. He derived a lot of pleasure from playing poker with friends such as Emerson (Danny) Goodison and George (Red) Mason, as well as with miners who lived in the bunkhouses.
- Leo's wife Angelina died in 1942. After her death, he moved with his daughter Mary to Windsor, Ontario. He stayed in a boarding house, while Mary had an apartment. Bill and Steve also relocated to Windsor.
- In 1943, after about one year away, Leo returned to Red Lake with his son Bill.
- In 1953 the family built a larger frame house on the site of their former log home. The old house was too crowded for an older man and his five grown children. Leo slept on the main floor, while Alex, Mary, and Steve had their rooms on the second floor. Leo remained there, making homemade beer, and enjoying his bountiful garden and his grandchildren, until his death.
- On September 4th, 1965 at age 77, Leo died from heart failure at the Red Lake Red Cross Memorial Hospital. He had suffered with a heart condition and poor circulation in his legs for some time. His wish was to be buried in the same plot as his wife, Angelina, in Elmwood Cemetery in Winnipeg.

The Couple

- It is not known when Leo and Angelina met in their mutual birthplace, but they were dating at the time of his departure for Canada. They had also grown up four or five houses away from one another.
- When Leo was settled in Canada, they corresponded regularly.
- Leo worked hard so that he could save money for Angelina's passage to Canada.
- Their small wedding took place on August 5th, 1913 in Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, a short time after Angelina arrived in Chapleau, Ontario.
- They settled in Nicholson Siding, a hamlet along the Canadian Pacific Railway (near Chapleau) because it was close to Leo's place of employment.
- Angelina and Leo had 10 children, all of whom were born in Chapleau. One daughter and four sons were stillborn or died in infancy. Angelina and Leo did not talk about the grief they suffered in losing so many children.
- Leo came to Red Lake first then the rest of the family followed.
- There are differing dates of their arrival. Alex believed that they arrived in July or August 1927 because their names and that year are in the guest register of the Gold Pines Hotel (the register is in the Ear Falls Museum). However, as Bill remembers, there were two separate trips: "I was told I was three years old when my mother, my brothers Mike and Steve (about a year old) came to Red Lake in the spring of 1926 [he would have turned three that September]. Alex and Mary did not come with us then because they had to finish their grades. They stayed in Chapleau with a neighbour named Stefanko who worked on the railroad with my Dad. Alex and Mary then came to Red Lake in 1927 after the school year ended. I know we came with a boat and scow from Hudson. We stayed overnight in Gold Pines and we used to sleep on the boat, too. Then there were all the portages we had to cross."
- After moving to Red Lake, the Kostynuks' first residence was a log house on what later became Westerlund Street. "We went that far away from town because it was the only place where there was an available house," says Bill. "After my Dad bought it, he built on. Our house and yard and

big garden were right where Zygmunt Wesolowski's house is today. At first we had no neighbours. Later on, a couple of families moved in such as Dan and Polly Billyk (until they built their long-time home on Kenora Road)."

- A large forest fire in 1930 came perilously close to the Kostynuks' home in the Westerlund area. The staff of the Ontario Forestry Branch used water pumps which drew water from the creek that ran beside the Kostynuk home. "My mother put towels on our faces because it got very smoky. The forestry guys told us to go and helped my mother move us to the Howey Mine. My Dad was at work at the time so he couldn't help. We stayed at the Howey for about five or six hours, and my mother was very nervous. When we went back home, the fire was just about out. The firefighters were mostly native men, and they saved us. The fire stopped about 500-600 feet from our house. My Dad was working then at the Howey," Bill remembered.
- In 1932, the Kostynuks moved from the isolated Westerlund area to a log house on a hill above the Red Lake Public School. The new home was much larger (three bedrooms), and was heated by wood stove. Water was obtained from the well at the foot of the hill.
- Angelina and Leo often spoke Ukrainian at home.
- After Angelina's death, the rest of the family moved from Red Lake for a short time.
- When they had all returned to Red Lake, the family built a larger frame house on the site of their former log home in 1953.
- A street in the Kelson's Farm subdivision of Red Lake is named in honour of the Kostynuk family.

Children

- The Kostynuk siblings (Alex, Mary, Mike, Bill, and Steve) all had the distinction of being in the first school class in the first school in Red Lake, in the fall of 1929. There were only 11 students enrolled, and the Kostynuks made up almost half of the classes.
- The school was located in a log cabin where Green Airways was later built.
- A caretaker went to the school very early in the morning and started the woodstove. By the time the pupils arrived, the school was warm and cozy.
- The first teacher was Gerald Beverly R. Collier, who taught all grades. He was also an Anglican lay minister and would hold services in the school with his class. Collier was gentle and refused to give anyone the strap.
- After Collier left in 1932, he was replaced by Dalton (Duke) Jordan, who taught the older grades (and Alex and Mary), and James Cawley taught the younger grades. Cawley was unlike his predecessor, Collier, as Bill related, "I was always getting in trouble with Cawley. I used to get a strapping nearly every day. I rolled a pencil down a desk and I got the strap. He would also hit me over the knuckles with a pointer. Oh yeah, he was a very strict guy. Alex and Mary were the best students in our family."
- An eight-dog team conveyed the Kostynuk children to school every winter morning. It was actually quite a distance from the isolated Westerlund area to the school located past the business section of Red Lake.
- The Kostynuk siblings had never before experienced the death of someone close to them until Bernard Tymkin drowned in Red Lake in 1934. "He went to their dock to get water. He threw the pail in the lake but the rope was tangled around his leg somehow and pulled him in to the water. We all went from the school on scows and up to his burial at Post Narrows. It was the first time all of us kids went to a funeral. We all were sad because he was in our school," Bill recalled.
- During the hours indoors, the Kostynuks, especially Alex, drew and composed poems.
- The brothers were all skilled prospectors and miners. They discovered their mining property, The Kostynuk Brothers Mine, by accident. On a prospecting outing, the brothers encountered a rain storm and sought shelter under a spruce tree. They noticed a high quartz content there. Later, the mine shaft was sunk on that very spot. The mine operated for five years during the 1960s.
- Although they dated and Alex and Mary were engaged for periods of time, they and their brother, Steve, remained unmarried.
- The first few years of the new millennium saw the passing of three of the Kostynuk siblings: Alex, Mary, and Steve. Alex's and Steve's ashes were interred in their parents' plot in Elmwood Cemetery in Winnipeg. Their shared grave marker has gold prospector's hammers beside each of their names, and reads, "Prospecting Together."

Alex

- Born on April 11th, 1917.
- He was the oldest surviving child.
- Alex remembered his first voyage to Red Lake: "We stopped at Gold Pines and Snake Falls. Due to bad weather, it took five days to get to Red Lake by scow. It was sure rough going through Lac Seul and Pakwash Lake. It must have been tough for our mother, who worried about our safety."
- When the family lived in the Westerlund area of Red Lake, Alex had a pet hawk and an eight-dog team. He fed them rabbits, fish, and oatmeal, and they were with the family for a long time.
- One of Alex's early playmates was Frances Goodison, a daughter of the first resident physician. It took Alex some time to realize that he was playing with a girl. Frances had a boy's haircut and a tomboyish look.
- After he finished school, Alex went to work on the rock picking conveyor belt in the crusher at the Howey Gold Mines.
- He then worked as a solution operator in the ball mill.
- Alex was one of Red Lake's first body builders. He exercised and kept himself in peak form. Alex's friends nicknamed him "Atlas" after the legendary body builder, Charles Atlas. Boxing matches were held in the dance hall on Johnson's Point in the mid-1930s. Alex boxed in the adult category, while his brother Bill boxed in the youth division. George Aiken, Harry Ashford, and Criss Booi also boxed on Johnson's Point.
- After his mother's death, Alex went to work in the Levack Mines near Sudbury, Ontario. He and younger brother, Mike, were instrumental in forming the union in 1942 at Levack, Ontario, and spent much time advocating for the rights of miners.
- Alex had a long career in local mines. He also diamond drilled for the Boyle's Brothers Company, worked at Campbell Red Lake Mines, and retired from the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- He also served as a councilor on the first municipal council of Red Lake.
- After a siege with cancer, Alex died on August 12th, 2002 at age 85 at the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital.

Mary

- Mary, the only surviving daughter, was born on January 13th, 1919.
- After her mother died, Mary went to work with her father in Windsor, Ontario. He stayed in a boarding house, while Mary had an apartment. Mary remained in Windsor for three years.
- She was the only one of her siblings who drove a car.
- Mary worked serving the public for much of her life in Red Lake. She was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, Simpson Sears, and then as a clerk with the Red Lake Post Office for 32 years before her retirement in 1983.
- For many years, she was very active in sports in the area.
- Mary was a cancer survivor for many decades and worked with the Canadian Cancer Society to raise funds with which to fight the disease.
- Ultimately, cancer claimed Mary on June 9th, 2003, when she died in hospital in Red Lake at age 84.
- She was buried in Red Lake Cemetery, as was her wish.

Michael

- Born in 1920
- After completing his education in Red Lake, Michael went to work at Hasaga Gold Mines.
- He later went with his older brother Alex to work in the Levack Mines near Sudbury, Ontario and helped to form the union of 1942.
- When Mike returned to Red Lake, he returned to work at the Hasaga Gold Mines.
- With his pilot's license and his own plane, Mike aided his brothers in many of their prospecting ventures.
- Mike was the only other Kostynuk to marry.
- He married Elizabeth (Betty) Miller in 1966, when he was 46.

- Betty was born in England and had nursed in Malaysia, where she was a captain in the British Army. She also nursed at the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital.
- They had two children, Michael and Alexis.
- Mike worked at Campbell Red Lake Mines, Limited, until his retirement in 1985.
- Mike and his family eventually moved to Osoyoos, B.C.
- Betty died from heart failure in 2003 at age 65.

William (Bill)

- William (Bill) was born on September 29th, 1923.
- "Bill's father once said that all of their children were large babies," says Bill Kostynuk's wife, Jeannette. "The lightest one was nine pounds and he claimed that one of them was about 13 pounds. The family used to laugh at Bill because he would take Steve's milk bottle and go hide in the corner and suck it. Bill was three and Steve would have been one year or less. I say that all that milk is the reason Bill grew to be the tallest of his family."
- Bill boxed in the youth division when boxing matches were held in the dance hall on Johnson's Point in the mid-1930s.
- Bill quit school when he was 17 years old in 1940 and went to work at Hasaga Gold Mines.
- He went to Windsor along with Mary and Steve after the death of their mother.
- In 1943, after about one year away, Bill returned to Red Lake with his father.
- Bill returned to work at the Hasaga Gold Mines, working underground. The mine was within walking distance from their home.
- Bill was not at work long when he had a surprise visitor. "When I was in Windsor I got a letter asking me to meet with officials of the Canadian army. Instead of seeing them, I went back to Red Lake. The army never took workers from gold mines because they needed manpower to keep the mines running. Well, the army caught up with me. One day a Mountie came to see my boss, John Gustafson, who was the mine captain. They called me over and the Mountie said, 'You've got to go to the army.' I agreed and the next day we went to Winnipeg so I could enlist. The guys who processed my papers said that my case went through the fastest they had seen. I came there in the morning and by 7 p.m. I was already a soldier in uniform."
- While he was serving in the army in Brussels, Belgium, Bill was training as a motorcycle dispatch driver until he crashed into a monument. It was the end of any thought Bill had of driving, and the army transferred him to the engineers.
- Bill first met Jeannette Virginia Kozub when he was 20 and she was just four years old. In 1944, the Kozub family moved to Red Lake and the house in which they lived had no well, so they would go to the Kostynuks for water. Sixteen years later, they met again at Jeannette's family's Ukrainian Christmas Eve supper and this time felt an immediate connection. They were married on October 1st, 1960, just two days after Bill's 37th birthday.
- Bill and Jeannette had two children, Barbara and Carolyne.
- Bill and his family went to Ukraine in 2002 and visited Chernovitz, the city in which his parents were born. "It was nice to think of Mom and Dad growing up there so many years before," Bill said.
- 2010 marked the 84th year of residency in Red Lake of William (Bill) Kostynuk. No other Caucasian person has ever lived in Red Lake for that many years.

Stephen Joseph (Steve)

- Steve was born on July 14th, 1925.
- One of the children who did not survive was named Joseph. He was born between William and Stephen.
- Steve also went to Windsor after Angelina died.
- Steve died at the St. Boniface General Hospital in St. Boniface, Manitoba.
- He spent 79 of his 80 years in Red Lake.
- He served with the Merchant Marines during the Second World War.
- He worked at various mines in the area, most notably with Campbell Red Lake Mines.