

Franczak Family

Adam Franczak

- Adam was born in the village of Dubjecko (also spelled Dubiecko), Przemyśl County, in southeastern Poland, on April 18th, 1921.
- He was raised by his parents, Karolina (nee Karasch) and Woiczek Franczak – who were both Roman Catholics – in the village of Sielnica.
- When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, he and a younger sister were taken by the Nazis to work as slave labourers on farms.
- His sister was too young and was returned to Poland, but Adam, who was 18 at the time, was forced to remain.
- He escaped on two separate occasions in an attempt to return to his native Poland.
- When he was captured, the Nazis spared his life but he was interned in a concentration camp for the next 18 months where his life was constantly threatened. He was warned that if he tried to escape a third time, the soldiers would 'shoot to kill.'
- Adam was eventually brought from a concentration camp to work on the same farm as his future wife, Luise.
- Adam was always grateful that he and his parents survived the war, and that he met and married Luise.
- He and Luise and their five children immigrated to Canada in 1956. (**SEE BELOW 'THE VOYAGE TO CANADA'**)
- Adam's brother-in-law, Yanek, had immigrated to Canada alone in October 1948, while his sister and four-year-old son arrived in April 1949.
- After the family arrived in Red Lake in 1956, Adam worked from January to October as a butcher and sausage maker in a small grocery store owned by Adolf and Rosa Galinski, the Polish émigrés who had sponsored the immigration of the Franczak family. (Adolf Galinski immigrated to Canada in 1948, worked for three years at Madsen Red Lake Gold Mines, then built his store.)
- Adam was later employed on surface at Campbell Red Lake Mines, Limited for 28 years, from October 1956 until his retirement.
- After retirement, he was delighted to devote himself to tending their garden and nurturing his animals.
- In his last years as a widower, Adam was a resident of Northwood Lodge in Red Lake, where he died on March 11th, 2010, one month before his 89th birthday.

Luise Franczak (nee Jaumann)

- Luise Franczak (nee Jaumann) was born in the small city of Bopfingen, district of Aalen, in the state of Baden-Württemberg, Germany, on August 31st, 1926.
- Her parents, whom Luise remembered as being loving and supportive, were Maria Josefina (nee Steger) and Anton Jaumann.
- Luise, her brother, and four sisters, were raised Roman Catholic.
- Luise graduated from Grade 8 in 1939, a few months before the Second World War erupted in Europe.
- At this young age, Luise saw many traumatic situations occur during the war, none, however, as sad as the loss of her only brother, who died at only 23 as a soldier in the Battle of Stalingrad.
- While war raged, Luise worked on a farm as household help. This is where she met her future husband, Adam.
- She immigrated to Canada with Adam and their five children in January 1956. (**SEE BELOW 'THE VOYAGE TO CANADA'**)
- Once in Red Lake and settled into their new home (which was the former log home of Adam's sister, brother-in-law Yanek, and their three boys) Luise sewed curtains, and washed the entire cabin.

- Luise spent her first summer in Canada caring for her children and passing the days with them at the beach. "They had never seen anything like open sea, and the beach looked like that. They enjoyed the beach very much and I was happy with them," she remembered.
- She always claimed that the year 1957 was passed in happiness. "Now," she noted, "Red Lake felt like home."
- Luise was especially touched when "Canadians" were friendly toward her.
- While Adam worked in the mines, Luise raised their large family and, incredibly even worked outside the home by cleaning the houses of others and doing some child care in the district.
- The first to employ her was the Galinski family (who had sponsored the Franczaks to live in Canada), followed by Lesia and Dr. Stephen Dayneka.
- By the late 1960s, Luise became a custodian of St. John's Roman Catholic Separate School, where her children attended.
- Later, she worked for many years on the custodial staff of Red Lake District High School, until she retired at age 65.
- Luise was one of the first immigrants of the Red Lake District to take English as a Second Language lessons. She embarked on his educational journey with great enthusiasm and sustained that energy, even encouraging others to join her, for many years.
- She contributed to several booklets of memories of immigrants in Red Lake in the 1980s. To write her story in English was a great source of pride for Luise, and to help others do so was an even greater delight.
- "She had a love of learning, embraced life, and had a very busy social schedule, always busy with volunteering, and writing her memoirs," as was noted in her obituary.
- Luise especially encouraged her children in their various careers and educational goals. They made her proud on so many occasions.
- From 1999 through 2001, Luise diligently documented her memoirs in a large, spiral-bound notebook in a more extensive version (over 100 pages) so that her descendants would always know their history.
- Luise was the consummate mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, and great-grandmother.
- Despite having raised 10 children, Luise's energy never waned as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were born. She was their hugest fan and their greatest supporter.
- Luise died in Red Lake on October 20th, 2006, two months after her 80th birthday, after suffering from Alzheimer Disease.

The Couple

- Luise and Adam met while working on the same farm during the Second World War. Adam had been brought there from a concentration camp, and Luise was working as household help.
- Luise and Adam fell in love amidst the turmoil of war.
- They were married on January 4th, 1946 in Wasseralfingen, a suburb of Bopfingen, Germany.
- Their eventually large family began in Germany, where Carol, Irmgard, Albin, Peter, and Doris were born.
- Luise and Adam sought more opportunity for themselves and their children and made the life-changing decision to immigrate to Canada in 1956. (**SEE BELOW 'THE VOYAGE TO CANADA'**)
- The family arrived in Red Lake on January 24th, 1956, exactly two weeks and four days after leaving Germany.
- After staying for two weeks at the home of Adam's sister, brother-in-law, and their three boys, the Franczaks moved into that family's former log home.
- The Franczaks had to borrow dishes and other necessary items, as their trunks did not arrive until almost five weeks later.
- The Franczaks bought a large table and two chairs from a Lithuanian immigrant named Liudvik Balciunas, known as "Second Hand Louis".
- Wooden apple and orange crates temporarily sufficed as other seating. They also bought four large beds, a chest of drawers, and sheets.

- Luise remembered it was terribly cold at night. "Even the tea froze into the teapot. We used our new winter coats to cover our children at night. We just used our imagination and everything went fine," Luise noted.
- Just over one year later, Luise gave birth to David Adolf, their first Canadian-born child, on April 24th, 1957.
- In time, four more children were born to Luise and Adam in Red Lake: Alfred Alexander, Reinhard Ferdinand (Rene), Robert Allan, and Jennifer.
- As Luise and Adam made more friends who had also come from Europe, they began to feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- The following year was consumed by the hard work of building the first Franczak home in Red Lake. (**SEE BELOW 'BUILDING THEIR FIRST HOME'**)
- Both Luise and Adam remained in Red Lake until their passing. They are buried in Red Lake Cemetery.

The Voyage to Canada

On January 7th, 1956, three days after their 10th wedding anniversary, Luise and Adam Franczak and their five children (Carol, Irmgard, Albin, Peter, and Doris) began the long voyage to Canada. They had been sponsored by Adolf and Rosa Galinski, Polish émigrés living in Red Lake, Ontario. The two couples had met in 1945 in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation displaced persons camp in Wasseraufingen, Germany.

They travelled from afternoon until the next morning by train from Bopfingen to the Bremen Lesum railway station. Two days later, the family went by bus for over seven hours to reach Bremerhaven, the seaport city in the state of Bremen where they boarded the passenger ship, *M.S. Seven Seas*.

Luise recalled the journey across the ocean. "We boarded the passenger ship, *M.S. Seven Seas*. It was a big ship, like a city - unbelievable. Our family stayed in a big cabin because our children were too young to stay in a separate cabin. Their ages were: almost two, three, four, five, and nine years. As we left the harbor, [we] went up on the deck to wave goodbye for the last time as we left our homeland. Everybody waved and cried, and a live band played [German] songs."

The next stop was brief. For two hours, the Franczaks and other passengers waited in the harbour at London, England, while freight was loaded and unloaded. "After that, we sailed on high seas for 10 days without stopping," Luise recalled.

Adam spent much of the 10-day voyage in bed, as he became seasick shortly after leaving Bremerhaven and remained so until Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada was within sight. Luise had not only five children to care for, but also a bedridden husband.

This schedule, Luise reminisced, "kept me very busy. I went with my children three times daily to the dining room for breakfast, dinner, and supper. We also went to the play room or library. They had all kinds of books there in more than one language. Very interesting! There was also a big shopping centre like a big mall. People could buy anything they liked. When the weather was nice and the wind quieted, I took the children up on the deck for a short time. Every day, the captain of the ship kept the passengers up to date [on] how far we were and about the weather on the sea." Passengers were given lessons and practice runs in how to conduct themselves in case of emergency, such as the use of life jackets.

On January 19th, about 5 p.m., Luise spotted a city on the horizon. It was Halifax. "The passengers were already getting restless. I noticed their tension. About 9 p.m., the ship glided slowly toward the harbour. [By then] there wasn't much to see because it was already dark," Luise noted.

The Franczaks and other passengers were obliged to remain aboard until the next morning, at which point the captain joined everyone for breakfast. Luise remembered what he said: "Best wishes to all of you and good luck in your new homeland. God bless you all, now, and in the future."

They were taken by bus to a train station where, in the drizzling rain, the Franczaks left Halifax on January 20th. They passed Montreal, Quebec City, Sudbury, and, among others, Sault Ste. Marie.

"As we travelled more inland, it was getting colder," said Luise. "We saw a big passenger ship frozen in the St. Lawrence River in Quebec City. On the train we were very cold. We could barely look out of the train windows. Otherwise, we couldn't complain."

"Finally, we arrived in 'Red Lake Road, Ontario' about 4 a.m. This train station was in the middle of nowhere – just a little shack and nobody was there," Luise observed. Several fellow passengers from the ship had travelled on the same train. They were continuing on to Winnipeg so the Franczaks bid them farewell and good luck.

At Red Lake Road, Luise asked her brother-in-law, Yanek (the husband of Adam's sister), and his friend, who were there to greet them, how cold it was. "His answer was '40 below Celsius.' After a rough car ride on a gravel road for three hours, we arrived in Red Lake, Ontario, at 7:30 a.m. on January 24th, 1956, exactly two weeks and four days after we left Germany. That was our last stop and the start of our new life in this country."

Building Their First Home

In 1958, the Franczaks needed to expand their living space to accommodate for their growing family.

"We planned to put an addition onto the house because we now had six children and the house was a little too small," said Luise. "We wanted to borrow money, but we had to wait for the spring to make the last payment on our first loan."

Upon paying off the earlier loan, Luise approached the bank manager for another thousand dollar loan. She was surprised when he approved it but also then was careful and strategic in how she spent it. "Everything for the addition was measured over and over so we didn't waste one cent. I went to the dealer to bargain over the material. If I could save \$20, that would help me in another place to buy something else."

Adam was bewildered as to how to even start the addition, so they hired a neighbour – a carpenter by trade – to work for \$1.50 per hour.

The floor material arrived in a timely fashion, but the rafters for the roof, which had to be custom-made, took six weeks to arrive. "On Sunday morning, one week before the rafters came, my husband, a friend and the carpenter started on the floor," explained Luise. "Soon more people came to help. Around Sunday noon, there were twelve men outside helping. At sunset the floor and walls were standing," Luise remembered, still marveling at how helpful and generous their neighbours were. "I couldn't believe we were so lucky. Without having to ask them, people from the old country came after the church service to help. Other people drove by and also stopped to help."

Luise prepared a delicious supper and provided drinks to the volunteers as a means of showing their appreciation. When they left at night for their own homes, Luise remembered that she must have thanked each and every person until they were tired of hearing the word. The roof went up the following weekend and again Luise made a bountiful meal of thanks.

The work on their first house never seemed to end. "After this, we had another big job to do – a new chimney. My husband and I dug the foundation after we had supper. The next evening we poured cement in. By the weekend the chimney was up. Finally we could heat the house properly. For the previous three weeks, we had heated the house with an electric heater."

Luise and Adam were deeply touched at how Red Lake residents pitched in to help the newcomers. The bank loan was repaid within two years, certainly an accomplishment for such a large family beginning its

new life in a foreign country. Eventually, the Franczaks moved to a larger home on Gold Shore Road in Red Lake.

Children

Carol, Irmgard, Albin, Peter, and Doris were all born in Germany. When they immigrated to Canada with their parents in 1956, their ages were almost two, three, four, five, and nine years. Irmgard celebrated her fifth birthday on January 14th aboard the ship, complete with a birthday cake from the kitchen. On the very day they arrived in Red Lake, Albin turned four and Doris turned two years old. In fact, all five children had birthdays as the family was enroute from Europe to Canada. Just over one year later, Luise gave birth to **David Adolf**, their first Canadian-born child, on April 24th, 1957. Irmgard began elementary school that autumn. In time, four more children were born to Luise and Adam in Red Lake: **Alfred Alexander, Reinhard Ferdinand (Rene), Robert Allan, and Jennifer**. Alfred graduated as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer and in 2003 was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.