

## John Yaremko

Rose Kotyk writes the story of John Yaremko as told to her by her father, Mike Kotyk, John's half-nephew.

John Yaremko was born in Bridok, in the province of Bukovina, Ukraine in 1892. His father's first name is unknown. His mother, Oksana, was first married to Mihai Kotyk. From this first marriage was one son named Vasel Kotyk. What happened to Mihai Kotyk is unknown. His mother then married a man whose last name was Yaremko and from this marriage was one son named Ivan Yaremko. There were no other children. Vasel Kotyk and Ivan Yaremko were half-brothers.

In 1904, Vasel Kotyk immigrated to Canada where he worked in Winnipeg as a laborer laying the sewer lines in the city. He worked there for four years and when the project was completed in 1908, returned to the village of Bridok in Ukraine where he remained until he died in 1973. Sometime after Vasel returned to Bridok, he married Maria Mihaychuk. Their only son, Manoli Kotyk was born in 1909. In 1913, when Manoli was 4 years old, his mother Maria died from an upper respiratory infection. It was in late fall and just before she got sick, she had gone down to the Dniester river to retrieve hemp reeds (konopli) that were soaking in the water. It was very cold, she worked in the freezing water for some time, got chilled and became morbidly ill shortly after. In 1914, Vasel Kotyk married Anna Wakaluk. From this marriage, three children were born: Anastasia (Tsia), Ivan, and Vaselena, half-siblings to Manoli Kotyk.

Ivan Yaremko immigrated to Canada in 1908, at the tender age of 16, the same year his half-brother Vasel returned to Ukraine. Ivan Yaremko's first name then became known as John. The whereabouts of his naturalization papers is unknown. Why he immigrated to Canada is unknown although it is suspected that this decision was based on encouragement from his half-brother Vasel Kotyk.

Where John Yaremko lived and what he did when he first came to Canada between 1908 and 1912 is unknown.

In 1912, he owned and operated a chicken ranch in Calgary, AB. How long he did this is unknown. Mike Kotyk was told that John was a very generous man and helpful to fellow Ukrainians who had also immigrated to Canada. Because of his generosity, John lost the chicken ranch.

Sometime between 1912 and 1914, John sustained a serious knee injury, the cause of which is unknown, and traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota where he had knee surgery. He was left physically disabled and required the use of a cane for mobility after that.

According to John's personal papers, he was living on a homestead river lot, land location RL3-TWP79-R5-W6, in the farming district of Greenway, near the town of Rycroft, AB in the Peace River district in 1914. The river lot adjoined the Spirit River, a beautiful and scenic piece of land. Already settled in this area were numerous Ukrainian immigrant families and single men from the province of Bukovina, Ukraine, many of whom originated from the village of Bridok or other nearby villages in Ukraine. They settled in nearby groups in communities to make communication easier, to help each other and to support each other.

Homestead land cost \$10 per quarter section or river lot. Government regulations to maintain ownership of homestead land at that time required clearing at least 10 acres in the first year in order to be able to plant a grain crop to harvest and sell so that the farmer could sustain himself financially. If this requirement was not met, the land reverted back to the government and the \$10 investment was lost. Land was cleared manually using a broad axe, newly fallen trees and windfalls hauled away with horses. The tree stumps and some of the roots were pulled out of the ground using heavy horsepower. Loose roots that then worked themselves up to the

surface of the land over the following years were manually gathered and disposed of on an on-going basis. The tree growth of mainly poplars, willows and spruce was thick. Interspersed in the thick forest were small meadows and numerous sloughs. Hordes of mosquitoes were bothersome. Smoke smudges were often utilized to keep the irritating mosquitoes at bay.

Other fellow Ukrainian immigrant neighbor farmers helped John and he helped them with land clearing and later with planting and harvesting when they and he were able. Simple horse-drawn farm machinery and tools were shared at first, then bought, often in partnership with others in the same circumstances of low cashflow and low income.

John built himself a small two-room log house where he lived while he remained in the community. The two rooms were completely separated by a wood plank wall. John lived in one room that contained a wood heater/cook stove, a simple hand-hewn table and two chairs, a single bed with a mattress stuffed with oat straw. Oat straw was used because it was softer than other grain straw. A small storage dirt cellar was manually dug under this room. The floor was packed dirt. The other room was divided in half. In one half he kept a cow, and chickens in the other half. To help keep out the cold in the winter, the spaces between the logs were packed with a mixture of horse dung, straw, soil, and water. Firewood for heating his house and for cooking was in good supply from the trees that were cleared off the land. The trees were hauled, sawed into blocks, chopped into firewood and stacked in neat rows beside the shack within easy access.

John struggled with his farming operation finding the heavy physical demand difficult to manage with his disability. Land was cleared slowly, the price of grain was low and his cashflow very limited. Grain at first was seeded manually by walking the cleared land, broadcasting the seed, then it was harvested manually by cutting it with a scythe and tying it into small bunches of sheaves using a few strands of the grain straw. Later, simple horse-drawn farm machinery including a binder and a seed drill was purchased most often on time payments. A small number of farmers had threshing machines that made harvesting easier. The thresher had to be paid. Paying off the farmers who came with their horses and racks to pick up the bundles of grain to feed the threshing machine were repaid in equal work for equal time, e.g. those that came to help him, he in turn took his team of horses and hay rack and helped them get their harvest off. Harvested grain was hauled to the elevator in Rycroft by heavy horses hitched to a wagon box.

With grain farming being very dependent on the weather, crop failures were more frequent than average crop yields. Because the land was cleared manually, available land to plant grain came slowly. A crop failure under those circumstances was devastating. In the occasional years when average grain yields were experienced, the income from selling this grain went to pay accumulated debts from the years of poor grain yields. Oats was most often planted and part of it was cut and stored as greenfeed for winter animal feed while the rest was ripened, harvested and sold as seed.

One winter, John took a load of grain with a wagon box on a sleigh with horses to the elevator. His grain was seized to pay for accumulated debts. He left the sleigh and horses in the elevator, telling the elevator agent he might as well take these too. The horses, wagon box and sleigh were moved to the livery stable then sold one week later.

With the hopes of making his farming operation easier, John decided to enter into a verbal agreement partnership with a fellow single Ukrainian immigrant farmer who lived nearby, Mike Andrushka, sometime around 1920. When they formed the partnership, John supplied the horses and machinery. Mike Andrushka had neither. Each lived on their separate homesteads.

On his homestead, John built himself a barn to shelter his horses, and raised a few pigs. He constructed a "peechee", an outdoor oven that he used for cooking and baking bread. He

planted a big garden on a 1.5 acre flat beside the river of mainly potatoes, sugar beets, and cabbage that he used to feed himself and his animals.

Socially, John was an active participant in community activities and gatherings. He attended the Labor Temple hall in Greenway. Dances were held regularly in this hall as were box socials. There were local picnics and fishing expeditions to the Peace River at Dunvegan during the summers. He became a self-trained barber and would often cut his neighbor's and friends' hair.

John was a creative, artistic young man. He taught himself how to read and write the English language and developed beautiful, even penmanship that approached calligraphy. He became an avid reader. He loved music and knew how to play the violin. When he accumulated a few extra dollars, he ordered himself a violin from Vienna. He played this violin at local social functions and during quiet times sitting outside his small shack on his homestead. He played and sang the Ukrainian songs he remembered from his homeland, and learned other songs and tunes he heard from the children attending school in the community.

John was an honest man and had a strong sense of fair play. He had a melancholy personality demonstrated by a reserved and sensitive nature, was a deep thinker and often philosophized about the meaning of life. He was a non-conformist and was often disappointed by what he perceived as a lack of understanding and compassion from government politicians, agents and officials. This disappointment extended to some of his neighbors who treated others unfairly and took advantage of them. John's gentle nature and generosity were often taken advantage of by other, more aggressive farmers who often lacked integrity and honesty.

Municipal District #133 requisitioned land taxes from the farmers within their jurisdiction. John could not afford to pay these taxes.

After a few years in partnership with Mike Andrushka, the relationship soured more with each passing year. John found himself in a difficult situation, depending on his fellow Ukrainian immigrant neighbors and his partner for social and manpower support, yet often experiencing disappointment and disillusionment in their business dealings with him and ungratefulness for his generous nature. Mike Andrushka claimed as his own, machinery and horses that were owned by John.

It was at this time, in the summer of 1927, that his half-nephew, Manoli Kotyk emigrated from the village of Bridok, Ukraine arriving in Rycroft on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. From that point on, Manoli Kotyk was known as Mike Kotyk. Mike's father, Vasel Kotyk had written to his half-brother John earlier in the year and John agreed to sponsor Mike. The day Mike Kotyk arrived in Rycroft, John was clearing land at Mike Andrushka's. A neighbor drove Mike Kotyk out to Mike Andrushka's farm and his uncle John put him straight to work helping him clear the land. Mike Kotyk was working in a slough and within the next few days developed an angry-looking weeping rash all over his lower legs. A neighbor, John Onesko, treated this rash with ether and the rash cleared within a few days.

Mike Kotyk stayed with John and the partnership between John and Mike Andrushka dissolved that fall. Money was scarce and Mike Kotyk went to work for neighboring farmers to support himself, often visiting his uncle John and helping him whenever he could. That fall, Mike Kotyk went with his uncle John to Mike Andrushka's to pick up John's share of hay. Andrushka threatened John with a grub hoe. John called his bluff and Andrushka ran away, locking himself in his shack. When Mike Kotyk worked for both John and Andrushka, Andrushka agreed to pay half of Kotyk's wages. When it came time to pay his share of \$40, Andrushka told John he didn't hire him and refused to pay his share.

Mike Kotyk learned a lot about farming and how to live life in Canada from his uncle. Mike Kotyk describes many enjoyable times with John, singing with him while they worked or



visited in the evenings, oftentimes being entertained by John playing his beloved violin. His uncle taught him how to say some English words. John had a little black dog named "Deego"; horses named Mamen, Sooney, Dick, Local (named after a slow freight train), and Darcheka; chickens and a couple of pigs. John loved animals and always treated them well. Mike has always held a great deal of respect for his uncle John, and John's old homestead has always held a special spot in Mike's heart. They often enjoyed simple meals together consisting mainly of chicken and bread.

Mike Kotyk's experience of working for the local Ukrainian immigrant neighboring farmers proved to be a challenging experience. The farmer he first worked for, Mike Deley, promised to pay Mike Kotyk \$1.00 a day and feed for horses. Mike Deley was an established farmer in the district who often boasted about how well he was doing financially. However, every time Mike Kotyk would expect payment, Mike Deley would tell him he had no money to pay him. After two years, Mike Kotyk ended up working solely for room and board. Another farmer, Stefan Chalus deplored Mike Deley's actions and shared some of his own hay crop with Mike Kotyk.

Besides Mike Deley, other established farmers in the district behaved in a similar manner. These established neighboring farmers represented the first Ukrainian immigrant group. Mike Kotyk was part of the second wave of immigrants that came from Ukraine. In addition to experiencing the lack of integrity from these established farmers, the second wave of immigrants was called "manigrante" who were often the brunt of ridicule and laughter. Not knowing the English language put this second wave of immigrants in a vulnerable, untenable position. They depended on these established Ukrainian immigrant farmers for social support, yet received the opposite from many of them. There were, however, enough of the established farmers who were very supportive and it was with the assistance of these that made these difficult times bearable. The discriminatory farmers would often play tricks and practical jokes, setting up the newly immigrated young lads to ridicule. Mike Kotyk tells of one such incident in the spring of 1928. Mike Deley ordered him to go to one of the neighbors and pick up an April Fool and bring it back with him. Thinking it was a tool of some kind, Mike Kotyk did what he was told. After the neighbor stopped rolling on the ground from laughter, he told Mike Kotyk to go back to Mike Deley and tell him to come for it himself. He then told Mike Kotyk what April Fool meant.

It was from these experiences that Mike Kotyk began to understand and appreciate what his uncle John would tell him of his own experiences with these people.

In 1929, Mike Kotyk went to work on the railroad where he earned \$1.25 a day. He bought homestead land in the New World district that was approximately 15 miles southwest of John's homestead. When he wasn't working on the railroad, Mike Kotyk was busy with his own homestead that made opportunities to visit with his uncle John less frequent.

In the mid 1930's, John's health declined. One day, he was found in his shack to be very ill and was taken to the doctor in Spirit River. The nature of his illness is unknown other than he had blood in his urine. He required specialized care in Edmonton and M.D. #133 paid for his train ticket and transfer to the hospital in Edmonton. He had surgery during which one kidney was removed. After several weeks, John recovered somewhat and after his release from hospital, he stayed in the Empire Hotel in Edmonton.

John was never to step foot on his homestead near Rycroft again. John continued living in the Empire Hotel while he stayed in Edmonton, till the fall of 1939. He was physically unable to continue farming. Employment in Edmonton was almost non-existent and physically he did not have the strength or stamina to work as a laborer, the only kind of work he knew.

His medical and hospital bills, and his living accommodations of \$15.00 a month were accumulating along with land taxes that he had never been able to pay over the previous at least

ten-year period. Periodically, he received letters from the M.D. asking him to pay his debts or his land and his possessions would be seized and auctioned. While Mike Kotyk was working for the railroad, John had borrowed \$300 from Mike Kotyk. After he started to receive the letters from the M.D. requesting payment for his accumulated debts, John signed over his machinery and horses to Mike Kotyk to cover the \$300 he had borrowed and to protect these from being seized.

While in Edmonton, he ate one meal a day at the soup kitchen. He socialized with other Ukrainian immigrants living in Edmonton whom he knew as well as with others from the soup kitchen. He participated in local political discussions and petitions to the government for improvements in employment opportunities and financial assistance for the destitute.

John had little income during these years in the 1930's. After he went to Edmonton, Mike Kotyk farmed his uncle John's land as well as his own. Mike would put his crop in, then move the horses and machinery the 15+ miles to his uncle John's place and put the crop in there. There was \$2600 owing in back taxes on his uncle's land. Mike began paying the debt against his uncle John's land and continued with whatever annual payments he could make until the entire debt was paid off. However, before this was accomplished, the M.D. took possession of the land until the accumulated debt was paid off. Once that happened, Mike rented John's land from the M.D. One spring in the late 1930's, the sheriff came to seize John's horse-drawn John Deere seed drill. Mike showed the sheriff the bill of sale and the sheriff left. The next day, one of the unscrupulous neighbors, George Rosko, asked Mike if he could borrow this drill and after Mike agreed, George asked Mike to move the drill to the top of a hill where George would come and pick it up. Instead of George, the sheriff came and took the drill after engaging the aid of this unscrupulous neighbor. This same neighbor asked Mike if he could borrow John's rifle. After a few months went by, Mike went to George's place to retrieve the rifle. George refused to give it to him, telling him that he was keeping the rifle as payment for the meals John ate at his place. Ironically, the meals John ate there were payment for work done for George.

While he was destitute in Edmonton, John again tried to collect money owed to him from the neighbors over the years. He was not successful. Particularly disappointing to him was Mike Andrushka's refusal to pay him what was owed. John attempted to sue him for the money but was advised by the court that more than 10 years had passed since the verbal agreement and he did not have that option.

Some of his neighbors, especially the Mike Zahara family kept John informed of the local news and farming conditions in the Rycroft district through letter writing. Mike Kotyk wrote to him regularly as well.

Desperate to maintain his integrity and good name, and to plea for assistance for himself and others experiencing similar hardships throughout the province, in the fall of 1939, John sat in the public gallery during a sitting of the Alberta Legislature. He described his plight to the assembled MLA's. He described what happened next to his nephew, Mike Kotyk. John said no one would listen to him and summarily dismissed his pleas. To emphasize his plight, he raised his leg, grabbed his pant leg and ripped it to demonstrate to them that he was reduced to wearing almost worn out clothing. Immediately two policemen grabbed him, he was arrested on the spot, declared mentally incompetent and committed under police order to the psychiatric hospital in Ponoka, AB.

Shortly after, in 1939, Mike Kotyk attempted to get his uncle released in his care. He traveled to Ponoka and was told that he first needed permission from the police. He traveled back to Edmonton and with the aid of the manager from the Empire Hotel, Mr. Tyron, went to speak with the police. The police there told Mike that John was too much trouble, he was crazy, and would not give permission for release.

John Yaremko remained in the psychiatric hospital in Ponoka until he was transferred to Alberta Hospital in Oliver, AB, another psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Edmonton, in 1957. John remained at Alberta Hospital until the Mental Health Act changed in 1972. John was then transferred to the nursing home in Barrhead in 1972. He remained confined to a psychiatric hospital under police order for *33 years*.

It took Mike Kotyk until 1949 to pay off the accumulated debt against John's land. That same year the Public Trustee Act came into effect. John's land was then turned over to the Public Trustee for management.

After 7 years on his own homestead in the New World district, Mike Kotyk sold his homestead and moved all of his belongings and horses to live and work on his uncle John's river lot. Mike continued to clear more land on John's river lot and the last of the brush was cleared in 1952. This river lot would contain 108 cultivated acres. Approximately 14 acres remained partly as grassland where John's shack was located and partly as inaccessible riverbank.

In 1941, Mike Kotyk married Anne Deley and together they had two children. Bill Kotyk was born in 1942 and Rose Kotyk was born in 1947. Mike, Anne and Bill lived on John Yaremko's river lot until 1946. Mike had built another house that had two rooms. On this farm, they raised horses, cattle, a milk cow, pigs, and chickens. That year, Mike and Anne bought a half section of land two miles northwest. They moved the house Mike had built and in 1947 added a full basement and another two rooms.

Mike rented John's land from the Public Trustee on a one third share legal agreement from 1949 until 1972 when the Public Trustee listed John's land for sale on his behalf. Through negotiation with the Public Trustee, the Public Trustee accepted Mike's bid and Mike was thrilled to now own his uncle John's land. It had been paid for many times over the years taking into consideration the debts that had to be cleared over the years. This was of small consequence to Mike, however, whose foremost goal was to keep this land in the family. Mike had felt helplessly frustrated at not being able to get his uncle released from the psychiatric hospital. To this day, Mike adamantly insists that his uncle John was not mentally ill when he was committed under police order and declared mentally incompetent.

In 1972, Rose Kotyk was working as a Registered Nurse in Edmonton, AB. After John Yaremko was transferred to the nursing home in Barrhead, in May of 1972, Rose traveled to Barrhead to finally meet and spend the day with the uncle John she had heard so much about from her father, Mike.

I, Rose observed a tall, thin and frail uncle John who by now was 80 years old. His eyes reflected a "broken spirit". I introduced myself and he immediately made the connection with my father. He was obviously pleased to see me. His voice was somewhat raspy and barely above a whisper.

I spoke with him in Ukrainian and found it somewhat strange that he suddenly became cautious, answered me in English and advised we should only speak in English. I learned that he was given a small garden plot to care for at the nursing home, that he spoke of with pride. He described going for walks outside of the nursing home grounds, often going downtown to shop or just explore the walkways. He showed me a large collection of rocks of various sizes that he had accumulated from his excursions. He stored these rocks in his bedside table, under his mattress, and in his room locker for safekeeping. Each represented some sort of treasure for him and he pointed out the intricate features and geology of some of them.

I had brought some bananas and cottage cheese that I knew he liked and we went outside to sit on a bench. He walked slowly, with a limp and used a cane to steady his gait. We shared this food, and while out of earshot of any of the nursing home staff and residents, uncle John visibly relaxed and talked, with encouragement, about some of his experiences while confined to



the psychiatric hospitals for the last 33 years. He spoke of frequent senseless, unprovoked beatings by the orderlies and being severely punished for speaking Ukrainian especially while in the Ponoka facility. He cooked and prepared food for cooking, worked in the laundry, housekeeping and maintenance departments in both psychiatric facilities. He cried as he spoke of his confinement and the suffering endured during those years.

Uncle John took me to his small 6-foot square garden plot where he planted and was tending a few vegetable plants. Growing in this small space were sunflower seedlings that he was especially proud of.

Uncle John noticed my frosted, shaggy hairstyle that was popular in 1972. He decided that it needed to be straightened out and offered to take me back inside to his room where he had a set of hair clippers. I politely declined and although visibly disappointed, he accepted that I could keep my hair that way.

During that afternoon, Uncle John offered some sage advice to his grandniece. He cautioned me to never read a newspaper until it had been allowed to lie in the sun for at least 24 hours, otherwise I would contract syphilis from the newsprint. He demonstrated how the newspaper should be laid out in the sun.

He asked many questions about my father, his farm, my father's family, and farming conditions. He was also interested in the whereabouts of the other people he once knew in the community. Uncle John asked if my father could send him his beloved violin that he missed enormously.

Before I left, I spoke with the manager of the nursing home. She advised that all the staff there loved Uncle John, that he was always polite and respectful, and had a good sense of humor. The only concern they had was his rock collection. One bedside table was ruined from collapsing under the weight. He was very cooperative with them when they explained they had to, from that time on, inspect his bedside furniture and discard excessive rock collections in the future. I advised that Uncle John used to play the violin and had requested that it be sent to him. The manager greatly encouraged this and advised they would have him play in the dining room for the other residents and staff. Playing it anywhere, in fact, would be a welcome addition to the nursing home environment.

On my return to Edmonton, I reflected on our visit. From my observations and nursing background, I realized that the Uncle John I met that day was not mentally healthy but functioning adequately. He demonstrated obsessive-compulsive behaviors with his rock collections, paranoia-like ideation and obvious trust issues. His pride and dignity were intact and he was courteous, respectful and polite. His quiet, reserved demeanor commanded an indescribable respect and he responded positively to a quiet non-threatening approach. Remembering my father's adamant insistence that this man was not mentally ill when he was committed in 1939, I could not help but wonder if his severe treatment in the psychiatric facilities over the last 33 years helped him choose his mentally unhealthy behaviors in order to survive in that environment. Assertive, mentally healthy behaviors may well have provoked the beatings he received. Living with the realization of no hope of freedom, ripping away all that was important to him including his first language, imprisoning a fiercely proud and independent man with a melancholy personality for that length of time must surely have influenced the development of mentally unhealthy behaviors and thinking processes over time. The medications, psychiatric care and therapeutic treatments he received while in the psychiatric facilities are unknown. Whether or not he was administered electro-shock therapy is unknown.

John's violin had deteriorated over the years. The fine wood had warped and one of the seams had separated. Mike Kotyk took this violin to a local violinmaker named John Nedohin and had it repaired. The bow was restrung. Mike and Anne Kotyk delivered the violin and bow

with extra strings to John later that summer. John was overjoyed. For the first time in 33 years, he picked up the violin, placed it under his chin, took the bow in his right hand and proceeded to play with a broad smile lighting up his face. A long-gone twinkle returned to his eyes!

For the next 10 years, John played that violin for his own pleasure, for the nursing home residents and staff, for social functions, and just because. Advancing arthritis in his hands finally prevented him from playing it after he turned 90 but he always had it close by his side.

Mike and Anne Kotyk, sometimes Mike himself, visited John in Barrhead 3 or 4 times a year. Bill Kotyk and his wife Marie also visited periodically as did I. Picnics in the town park were enjoyed with him and he liked to go for rides in the car or pickup truck. He always enjoyed these visits as we enjoyed visits with him.

On February 5, 1987, John died peacefully in the nursing home in Barrhead. He was 95 years old. During previous visits with him in the nursing home, John told Mike that he wanted to be buried in the Greenway cemetery after he died. His wishes were carried out and on February 9, 1987, John was laid to rest in the Greenway cemetery following a small graveside service attended by Mike Kotyk and his family as well as by a few of John's former supportive friends and neighbors. Following the funeral, Anne Kotyk prepared a traditional Ukrainian supper for the guests who attended John's funeral.

The Office of the Public Trustee managed John's affairs and his estate from the time he was committed until approximately one year after he died. Funds from his estate were provided for his burial. Over the years, the Public Trustee Administrator assigned to John's file always consulted with Mike regarding the management of John's affairs. Money accumulated in John's estate was equally divided and shared amongst Mike Kotyk in Rycroft, Mike's half brother Ivan, and half sisters Tsia and Vaselena in Ukraine. These were John's next of kin. The Public Trustee turned over to Mike all the personal effects and documents John had in his possession when he died including his beloved violin.

John Yaremko never married and had no children. It is not known if John became a Canadian citizen.

Mike Kotyk always felt that the Public Trustee managed John's affairs professionally and always ensured that John's needs were met with utmost professionalism and respect. Involving the Public Trustee was perhaps one of the more positive things in John's life after he was committed under police order. He was very well taken care of in the Barrhead Nursing Home and for the last 15 years of his life, enjoyed a quiet peaceful life where he was unconditionally accepted and loved. It was finally okay for him to be who he was.

In 1994, Mike Kotyk transferred to Rose Kotyk the title to John Yaremko's original homestead as a gift from father to daughter. Bill Kotyk and his son Dwayne Kotyk rent and farm this land.

On September 28, 2003, John Yaremko's personal papers and documents were presented to Alexander Makar, the Executive Director of the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum in Edmonton where they will forever be safely and carefully stored in history.

Thus are the highlights of the life of one significant Ukrainian immigrant pioneer whose work and life contributed to the development of the farming community in the Peace River country of Alberta. As his family, we are proud to have been given the privilege and blessing to call this brave, courageous man of strength our beloved Uncle John. His life experiences inspire us. We hope we have inherited his strength and courage.