

#9

Internment Survivor writes Mulroney



Excerpt from a letter written by Mary (Manko) Haskett on March 29, 1993 to Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Before she died on July 14, 2007 at the age of 98, Mrs. Haskett was believed to be the sole survivor of Canada's World War I internment camps.

Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

29 March 1993

I was 6 when I was interned, along with my parents, Andrew and Katherine, my brother John, and my sisters Anne and Carolka. She was only two and a half years old when she died at the Spirit Lake internment camp in Quebec.

I may be the last survivor of Canada's first national internment operations. What happened to our family, to many of our friends from Montreal's Ukrainian-Canadian community, and to my sister Carolka, can never be undone. It was unwarranted. It was unjust.

But I believe that you, Mr. Prime Minister, have a unique and historic opportunity to show understanding and compassion for those who fell victim. Before you leave office I appeal to you to honour the Ukrainian Canadian community's request for acknowledgement and redress. I do this on behalf of my parents, for those many thousands of others who can no longer speak, for my sister Carolka. Our community, all of us, suffered a national humiliation. Few Canadians, even today, realize how traumatic and damaging those internment operations were. My own children did not believe me when I told them I had been interned in Canada. Spirit Lake is no longer shown in any atlas. Canadian history books do not mention how thousands of Ukrainians were interned, disenfranchised and otherwise mistreated in this country between 1914-1920. Until recently, I did not even know where Carolka was buried.

I believe you can appreciate how important it is for me to have this injustice dealt with in my lifetime. I hope you will take my appeal to heart and do what is right and just.

(Signed)

Mary (Manko) Haskett.

Mary Haskett (Manko), "Internment survivor writes Mulroney" in Lubomyr Luciuk (ed.), *Righting an Injustice* (Toronto, ON: The Justinian Press, 1994), p. 151.

