



# Polly Vishloff

(1923 - )

“The world can send a man to the moon and yet they haven’t learned to talk things out, to share their wealth and to live peacefully.” These powerful words are not just a testament to Polly Vishloff’s profound wisdom, but also to her devotion to her faith. Born into a Doukhobor family, Polly has been a resident of Mission for over 60 years after her family moved from a traditional village outside of Shouldice, Alberta to British Columbia. Though born in Brilliant, BC at the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, Polly grew up in the prairie community, learning the Russian language and reverently upholding the traditions of spoken prayer, vegetarianism, pacifism and abstinence from drinking and smoking. Throughout her youth in Alberta, she attended the community school and assisted her hard-working family by weaving, cooking, baking and tending to the communal garden.

When she was 18, her family, seeking a more independent way of life, decided to leave the Doukhobor village and move to Mission. No stranger to hard work and loving the thrill of an adventure, Polly eagerly awaited her arrival in the “land of opportunities.” For \$100, her father purchased the land where she and her husband, John, still reside.

Married in 1947, and a mother soon afterward, Polly felt it was essential that her children recognized and appreciated Doukhobor culture and language. While they faced some discrimination throughout the years, especially during the Cold War, Polly insisted that her family remain proud of their unique background. While raising her four children, she worked at the Pacific Co-op Plant, Aylmer Cannery, Berryland and at the Fraser Valley Record.

After retiring from her 20-year position at the paper, she has remained an active part of the Mission community, lending her proficient weaving skills to the creation of the Mission Tartan, as well as sharing her culture with Lifetime Learning and provincial museums.

Dedicated to preserving Doukhobor heritage, Polly has kept a comprehensive collection of photos, documents and artifacts that is a virtual treasure trove of knowledge. Reflecting upon her faith, Polly is confident that her chosen paths are indeed divinely intended, knowing that “...where there is love, there is God.”

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