A CARPATHO-RUSYN RENAISSANCE
BRINGING THE RUSYNS (BACK) TO LIFE
“No! We Won’t Die!”:

REDISCOVERING

EMIL KUBEK

By Nick Kupensky

As you travel east on Pennsylvania Route 54, it is impossible to ignore the sublime ruins of the abandoned St. Nicholas Coal Breaker, once the largest of its kind when it opened in 1931. Located just outside the town of Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, St. Nicholas had been the home to anthracite mines since the 1860s, and a large contingent of its miners were Slavic immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was also the home of the Carpato-Rusyn priest Emil Kubek, who arrived in Mahanoy City to serve as the pastor of St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church in the early 1900s. For nearly 40 years, Kubek would work tirelessly to represent the lives of his working-class parishioners in poetry and prose and arguably became the most significant Rusyn-American writer of his generation.

Despite his considerable literary output, the residents of Kubek’s adoptive hometown remember him primarily as the priest of St. Mary’s rather than as a writer, largely because the vast majority of his work, written in Carpato-Rusyn, has yet to be translated into English. In the summer of 2015, I spent three months in the Coal Region researching Kubek’s career in order to reconnect Mahanoy City with its most accomplished writer. With the help of Erin Frey, an undergraduate student at Bucknell University, and Paul Coombe and Peg Grigolonis from the Mahanoy Area Historical Society, I launched the Emil Kubek Project, which includes a digital archive of his work in my translation and a virtual tour of the areas of Mahanoy City that inspired his poetry and prose.

What makes Kubek’s story worth telling is that he was someone who made significant contributions to the Carpato-Rusyn literary canon and is a unique example of an American writer who represented the hopes and dreams of Slavic miners during the first half of the 20th century.

Emilii Anton Kubek was born on November 23, 1857 in the village of Štefurov, Kingdom of Hungary (now Slovakia), where his father, Anton, served as a Greek Catholic priest. The young Emil began reading the works of the great Carpato-Rusyn poet Aleksej Duškňovych at the age of five, and by the age of six he was able to recite the entire Greek Catholic liturgy by heart.

He was ordained a Greek Catholic priest in 1881. Before his ordination, he married Maria Shirilla, the daughter of a Greek Catholic priest from Ruszoló, Kingdom of Hungary (now Krušľova, Slovakia), and the young couple would go on to have four children: Maria, Antôn (Anthony), Anna, and Alpheta. After serving in a number of villages in the Presov Region, Kubek and his family ultimately settled in the village of Snávok, where he established himself as a Carpato-Rusyn Renaissance man. He developed the village infrastructure by leading the renovation of the old chapel, building a new parish building, opening a school, and prompting the construction of a new road into town.

He became an amateur agronomist, introduced fruit trees and beekeeping, and taught the impoverished villagers about new farming methods. Finally, he began to develop his talents as a writer and scholar and published an extensive comparative dictionary, Church Slavonic-Hungarian-Russian-German Dictionary for Holy Writing, which was published in 1906. His considerable talents caught the attention of the Greek Catholic Church, which gave him a new challenge and reassigned him to St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church in Mahanoy City in 1904.

After Kubek arrived in Mahanoy City, St. Mary’s grew rapidly under his leadership. Like in Snávok, he immediately opened a reading room and parish school, which taught first through eighth grades six days a week. The opening of the school drew praise from the newspaper Svéoda, which called for all Carpato-Rusyn priests “to follow the example of Father Kubek” in tending to the spiritual and cultural enlightenment of their parishioners. The arts also flourished during Kubek’s tenure at the church, as St. Mary’s produced numerous concerts, dances, and plays. Amidst all of his commitments as a priest, community leader, husband, and father, he nonetheless found time to establish himself as one of the most powerful literary voices in the Carpato-Rusyn diaspora.

What distinguishes Kubek’s literary production is its genetic, tonal, and thematic diversity. Kubek is at once a 19th-century epicope and a 20th-century modernist, and his work straddles the border between being traditional and experimental, nostalgic and forward-looking, dramatic and realistic, rural and urban, serious and satirical, highbrow and lowbrow, European and American. First of all, Kubek viewed himself as a Rusyn writer, one who was strongly influenced by the ideals of the 19th-century Carpato-Rusyn Renaissance. The Rusyn Kubek strove to make his fellow countrymen proud of their heritage, and we can feel his nationalist orientation most strongly in his lyrical poetry, such as his “On the Anniversary of the Death of Dukhnovych” (1915), a tribute to the great Rusyn awakener, or his nostalgic farewell poem to the Carpatsians “My Native Land” (1916). Kubek the nationalist also turned to large, ceremonial forms as well, such as his wide-ranging novel, Marko Selys (1915) about Rusyn village life at the end of the 19th century, his New Year’s

Left: Kubek served as the priest in Snávok, Slovakia, from 1881 to 1904, before emigrating to the United States.

Below: Oldest known photograph of St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, constructed in 1840.
ode “Last Year’s Night” (1916) about those suffering during the First World War, or his “March of the Sokols” (1930), the theme song of the Rusyn youth organization.

At the same time, as a Greek Catholic priest, Kubek did not shy away from addressing religious issues, and the Catholic Kubek revealed himself in different genres. While he did write religious poetry about the Eastern Rite (“Three-Bar Cross”, 1922) and miraculous power of prayer (“A Mother’s Love,” 1930), Kubek the moralist most frequently appeared in didactic non-fiction, such as children’s literature, editorials, and epistles. Perhaps the most interesting of his religious texts is a long eulogy of the Lords Prayer, Our Father (1917), which he wrote as a commentary to a painting produced by his son Anthony.

Finally, his immigration to Mahany City forced Kubek to grapple with the realities of life in a mining town. This third identity — the American Kubek — was primarily a realist and gravitated towards the short story. He parodied the discourse of local newspapers, incorporated Rusyn-American speech patterns, and drew upon the individuals and institutions of Mahany City to dramatize the difficulties of assimilating into American life.

Although Kubek invested a great deal of energy into his writing, he encountered a number of difficulties in bringing his literary output to a general public. A large portion of the Rusyn-American community was illiterate, and many of those who could read had difficulty with the Cyrillic alphabet, which forced him, much to his chagrin, to write in Latin script. Furthermore, the readership that did exist generally lacked an appreciation (and the time) for literature. Since money was hard to come by for the publication of his longer works, he often had to resort to publishing them for free as detachable sections within Rusyn-American newspapers, which were easily damaged and quickly decayed. As a result, Kubek speculated that one third of his works ended up in the fireplace, another third existed only in manuscript form, and the rest were published but almost immediately lost.

Nonetheless, those who knew his work immediately acknowledged its quality, and by the end of his life, his reputation as an author was well enough established that the sentiments expressed in his poetry and prose, he wryly joked, even “were endorsed by many who had never read my writings.”

The best known corpus of Kubek's writings appeared in his four-volume collected works, People's Tales and Verses (Narody povest i stich, 1922-1923). The first volume features a selection of his lyric poetry and short stories, and the final three volumes are dedicated to his most significant literary accomplishment, the first novel written in Carpatho-Rusyn, Marko Selys. Set in Subcarpathian Rus', Marko Selys tells the story of the trials and tribulations of Marko Furman against the backdrop of Central European history from the 1860s until World War I. Orphaned at a young age, Marko is forced to serve in the Austro-Hungarian army and make his own way in life as a farmer. Through hard work and perseverance, he manages to become a successful landowner and by the end of the novel comes to "believe firmly that this poor nation of mine will come to life, will be raised by their national spirit towards a happy future!"

While Marko Selys occupies a central place in the canon of Carpatho-Rusyn literature, its publication took a significant emotional and financial toll on Kubek. Although he had completed the novel in 1915, he had trouble finding a publishing house that was willing to incur the substantial cost of producing a lengthy saga for a Carpatho-Rusyn community that was not at all inclined to read — let alone purchase — belles lettres. The literary committee of the Greek Catholic Union, the largest Carpatho-Rusyn fraternal organization, accepted the novel in 1916, but only prepared 100 pages before they pulled out of the project. A few years later, Kubek gave the manuscript to Peter J. Macelik, the head of the GCU youth organization “Sokol” (The Falcon), who distributed parts of the novel to its members. The Rusyn-American youth responded so positively to Marko Selys that they pleaded with Kubek to publish it in its entirety, so he decided to finance its publication himself.

Kubek spent $4,000 of his own money to print 3,000 copies of the four-volume People’s Tales and Verses, which would turn out to be the only commercial print run of his work during his lifetime. The publication turned out to be a family affair, for all four volumes were illustrated by his son Anthony, who was a classically trained painter, and edited by his son-in-law, Nikola E. Petrlik. In the preface, Kubek proudly announces that Marko Selys is “the first long tale (novel) of a writer from Subcarpathia in the Rusyn language," but the fact that Kubek felt the need to explain that a “novel” was “a long tale” (povest delfa) reveals that the Carpatho-Rusyn readership was largely unprepared for this pioneering work. Indeed, People’s Tales and Verses did not sell nearly as well as Kubek had hoped, and the poor sales were exacerbated by his principled refusal to pay for advertising in Rusyn-American newspapers after he had worked as a contributor for free for nearly twenty years. To add injury to insult, Kubek soon developed respiratory problems, which left him broken in body as well as in spirit. In December 1925, his daughter Mary urged him to take some time off from his duties as a priest and writer and spend a few months with her in Florida. After some initial resistance, Kubek decided that he deserved a vacation his first after forty-five years in the priesthood.

Kubek’s trip to Florida was a transformative one, and he published an account of his adventures called “My Journey to Florida” (1926). Kubek’s travelogue is a fascinating look at America in the 1920s through the eyes of a man who feels liberated from the burden of his familial, literary, and pastoral duties, if but for a few weeks. He drinks wine on the side of the road in Pennsylvania during Prohibition, investigates Southern Baptist churches, talks with the homeless, smokes in line at the post office in Fort Meyers, is deeply moved by the terrible living conditions of Southern blacks, and reaches a level of profound joy and deep sadness at the thought that he could have bought a plot of fertile land in the south — if only he hadn’t just spent his life’s savings on the publication of Marko Selys! As a result, Kubek’s “My Journey to Florida” begins with a scathing critique of the Rusyn-American reading public, which he excoriates for wasting the money and time of Rusyn artists. “We have writers, poets, composers, actors, on the level of the most educated, magnificent peoples,” Kubek writes: “And their work is in vain — there’s nobody to write for, to compose for, to paint for, to write for” with great frustration and bitterness, he revealed that “My Journey to Florida” will be his “last appeal to the Rusyns” and announced his retirement from writing.

As the years went by, Kubek’s silence in the Carpatho-Rusyn press was noticed by a number of readers who missed seeing his articles, poems, and stories. The most effusive testimonial to Kubek’s career may be that of Michael Yuhaz, the president of the GCU, who in 1929 called Kubek “the lamp” of the Rusyn people. Yuhaz urged Rusyn-Americans to appreciate the unique gift of having an author of Kubek’s caliber and to acknowledge the regrettable consequences this has had on his fame and fortune. “If he wasn’t born a Rusyn, if he would have been the son of a different people, then he...
would have had great worldly glory; his name would have been written in golden letters in the book of hymns, our dear poet-writer would have had worldly riches,” Yuhasz writes: “But God gave him to us, the poor Subcarpathian-Rusyn people, and although we value him higher than anything else, although with sweet and bitter tears we read the work of this creative genius of ours, nevertheless we’re not in the position to honor or materially compensate Father Kubek for the work he has done for us.”

A year later in 1930, the Rusyn-American literary magazine, Vzglad (The Leader), also ran a tribute to Kubek. Josip Perović, who wrote the preface to the issue, paints a sweeping and heartfelt portrait of the writer. He calls Kubek “a joyful” man: “full of amusing jokes and stories,” a “highly educated” priest who “passionately loves his flock,” and a writer who is “a rigorous expert on the soul of his people, a sharp critic of all sorts of sins and vices that are prevalent among the populace, and abundantly reveals his noble qualities and thoughts for the sake of praising and cultivating virtue to raise up his poor, downtrodden people.” For these reasons, Perović calls on the Rusyn-American community to collect and publish all of Kubek’s works in time for his golden jubilee, which would be held the following year. While this particular appeal wasn’t answered, Kubek did celebrate his 50th year as a priest in style.

In 1931, Kubek launched a wide-reaching expansion of St. Mary’s, which included a complete reconstruction of both the exterior and interior of the church and the building of a new rectory. During the first liturgy and its dedicated priest. The day began with a street parade led by two local marching bands, and the procession led into the church for the first liturgy in the new building. The crowd proved to be so large that an amplification system had to be installed to broadcast the service to those left standing in the street.

After the liturgy, the party continued into the evening, where a dinner was held at the Mahanyo City Elks Club to celebrate Kubek’s 50th year as a priest and his 74th birthday. It was Kubek, naturally, who stole the show. The Mahanyo City Record American describes the culmination of the banquet:

“Two years later, on July 17, 1940, Emil Kubek died at the age of 82. In lieu of an obituary, The American Rusyn Messenger announced his death by republishing one of his poems, “No! We Won’t Die!” (1922), a lyric which reprises all of the qualities Kubek valued most: an unwavering belief in Christ, a robust dedication to the Carpatho-Rusyn people, and a call for preservation and development of their cultural heritage. In “No! We Won’t Die!” Kubek sees the triumph of life over death in the changing of the seasons, as winter’s “blizzards and storms” give way to “spring showers.” In Kubek’s lifetime, Carpatho-Rusyn culture came back from near death twice — during the first Rusyn Renaissance of the mid-19th century and again during the second interwar period in the First Czechoslovak Republic. Kubek was acutely aware that the fight for political freedom is a hard one and calls upon future generations of Carpatho-Rusyns “to ensure that this freedom survives.” What Kubek could not have predicted, however, was the resurrection of his own legacy fifty years after his death.

Today, courses are taught about Marko Šobyť in the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture at the University of Presov, the city where he was ordained a priest. The school he helped found in Snakov, Slovakia, was named in his honor in 2008. The Slovak government funded the production of a documentary film about his life, and dozens of books and articles about his work have been published in Europe and the United States. And November 22, 2015, the Kubek Project, in conjunction with a dozen partners from the United States and the local community, organized a day-long celebration of his life in the town where he made his name. Over 100 guests from throughout the country — including Kubek’s great-grandson — descended upon Mahanyo City to tour the places connected to Kubek’s life. Guests heard a musical performance of “My Native Land!” by Drew Skitko of Opera Philadelphia, took shots of moonshine while reading “The Good Dadi” in Mahanyo City’s oldest bar room, explored the sights that inspired Kubek’s short stories, and recited “No! We Won’t Die!” at his grave in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Indeed, while he was born during the first Rusyn Renaissance in the 19th century and flourished during the 20th, Kubek’s work, after being forgotten for decades, is now finding new life in the third renaissance of Rusyn culture taking place today.

Interested in reading more?
For the complete, unedited version of “No! We Won’t Die!”: bedroomemsilkubekinfo by Nick Kubek at Kubek Resources Inc. onto http://www.scribd.com/search

Notes
9. "That Celebration Was Held by Members of St. Mary’s Greek Catholic Community," American-Russian November (December 1971): 1. The original newspaper article says “Russian” and “Rusyn” — but Kubek would have obviously spoken in his parish’s native language.

The ruins of the St. Nicholas Coal Breaker. Henry Cake and Henry Geist began to mine coal on this site, known as the St. Nicholas Colliery, which was active from 1866 to 1928. In 1905, at the height of its production, it employed 869 men and produced 345,106 tons of coal. As the anthracite industry developed more efficiently and less hazardous methods for producing coal, the St. Nicholas Colliery was dismantled to make way for a coal breaker capable of processing large chunks of anthracite into smaller pieces better suited for home heating. The St. Nicholas Coal Breaker was built in 1930 on the site of the former colliery. When it became operational in 1932, it was the largest of its kind in the world and seemed to signal the promise of a better future for an industry that exacted extraordinary human costs. In 1972, the St. Nicholas breaker ceased operations and was left abandoned. The company that owned the site transformed a defunct mining operation into a successful shopping center (May 28, 2015).

The beautiful interior of St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church, which underwent a major reconstruction under Kubek in 1931.
The fall of communism in east-central Europe followed shortly upon the unexpected death of Andy Warhol in 1987 at age 58 after routine gallbladder surgery. Under communism, which viewed avant-garde Western art as decadent rubbish, Warhol was largely unknown. Given the limited access to information and restrictions on communication across borders, the existence of an international superstar who had connections to a small village in northeastern Slovakia easily went unnoticed. Therefore, it was only after Andy’s death that he was discovered by the Carpatho-Rusyns, who were then just embarking on their own quest for identity and self-determination.

The facts demonstrate that Warhol unquestionably had Rusyn roots. Born Andrew Warhola in Pittsburgh in 1928, Andy was the third son of Andrii Warhola (1888-1942) and Julia Zavacka Warhola (1892-1972), emigrants from the small village of Míková. Andrii lived in 1912 to escape being drafted into the army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of which he was then a citizen. Detained by World War I, Julia joined her husband in Pittsburgh nine years later, by which time Míková was part of the newly formed state of Czechoslovakia. In fact, however, Míková was first mentioned in historical records in 1390 and it has been the site of a Greek Catholic church since 1732. Its people, their language, and their culture have always been unmistakably and indisputably Rusyn.

A few years ago, I began to study the influence of Warhol’s Carpatho-Rusyn background on his art and persona in the jealously guarded archive at The Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, where the 610 boxes that Warhol called Time Capsules are stored. In these boxes, Andy deposited much of his mail, along with receipts, invitations, scribbled notes, and photographs of daily life. The correspondence, videos, and documents I found in the archives revealed that the window into the Rusyn side of Warhol is his mother. But even more important, I found that Julia Warhola is an object of study in her own right, as a representative of the many able and talented Slavic immigrant women who endured pain and hardship through a lifetime of sacrifice for their children. The American Andy Warhol owes much of his success to his Rusyn mother. Julia was born in 1892 to Andrii Zavacky and Justina Mrožko, the sixth of fourteen children, five of whom died in childhood. The Zavacky family belonged to the upper middle class of the village, working 12 to 14 acres of land and supplementing their income with seasonal work in lower Hungary. The elder villagers remember Julia for her musical and artistic talent. Friends recall her creative painting of household utensils and the walls of the family cottage. She had a lovely singing voice and knew the entire Greek Catholic liturgy. In the 1960s, Andy made records of his mother singing the Rusyn folk songs and religious hymns that he and his brothers grew up with.
In 1909, Julia met Andri Warhola, who returned to Milosvá after some time in America. For an article on the mothers of famous men in Esquire magazine, Julia told a reporter:

He was good-looking. Blonde. . . He came back to village and every girl want him. Fathers would give him lots of money, lots of land, to marry daughter. He no want. He want me. . . I was seventeen. I know nothing. . . I no think of no man. . . The priest — oh, a nice priest — come. "This Andy," he says, "a very nice boy. Marry him." . . . Andy visit again. He brings me candy, wonderful candy. And for this candy, I marry him.

They had a three-day wedding celebration with "eating, drinking, barrels of whiskey," "wonderful food," and "seven gypsy playing music." As Julia describes the details, one can feel the pleasure she felt indulging in happy memories: "I had hair like gold. Hair down shoulder, oh, beautiful hair." Unfortunately, the wedding photos were lost in the war.

On November 12, 1912, a daughter was born, and four days later Andri sailed from Bremen, arriving in New York on November 25. Julia says, "My husband leaves and then everything bad." The Warholas' first child, Maria, lived just 33 days. In tears, Julia told the interviewer, "She catch cold. . . We need doctor, but no doctor in town. Oh, I cry. Oh, I go crazy when baby died. I open windows and yell, 'My baby dies.' . . . My baby dead. My little girl." Julia never completely recovered from this loss, which she had to endure without her husband, who was by then back in America. It was left to Julia to take care of the elderly, as well as her younger sibling: "I work like horse. . . . I carried sack of potatoes on my back. . . . I was very strong lady." Two years later the Rusyn homeland was crisscrossed by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies, and battles raged throughout the region. Andy's older brother John remembered his mother's expressive description: "Dead bodies were scattered in the forest and on meadows. Skulls of soldiers shined like large white mushrooms long after the war was over." He attributes Andy's obsession with death, and specifically his Skull series, to Julia's stories of the war. Finally, in June 1921 Julia emigrated to America, with $25 and a ticket to Pittsburgh.

In the next seven years, three sons were born, and until he was six, Andy, the youngest, lived with his family in tenements with no indoor plumbing. In depression-era Pittsburgh, Julia cleaned houses and took in boarders, as did most Rusyn immigrant women. But unlike them, she also made flower sculptures out of paper and tin cans and sold them for a quarter. Her oldest son Paul remembers: "We'd walk a mile and a half into the better sections of town, and while she sold door to door, I'd hide behind the tree, embarrassed." This was four-year-old Andy's introduction to what he later called "business art." Andy was a sickly child, and Julia kept him entertained with comics, coloring books, and paper dolls. She taught him to decorate Easter eggs in the Rusyn style, using wax, applying color, and then removing the wax to create a negative image — a method similar to the silkscreen technique that became Andy's trademark. Asked in 1981 if his mother understood art, Andy answered, "More than that. She did a lot for me. She was a really good artist, in the primitive style." Andy's father's influence is less often noted, but Andy inherited his industrious work ethic from Andri Warhola, who did manual labor for a house-moving company. In 1942 at age 55, Andri died from a gastrointestinal bacterial infection contracted from drinking tainted water on a job. He left his wife a death benefit of $600 from an insurance policy he had purchased through the Russian Brotherhood, and most importantly, he left enough savings in postal bonds to pay for Andy's first two years in college. John Warhola recalls his father's words, "You're going to be real proud of him. He's going to be highly educated, he's going to college." But just two years after his father's death, sixteen-year-old Andy suffered another trauma when his mother was diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent a colostomy.

John remembers: "When she came home she had a hard time recuperating, but she came round. Andy did a lot of praying with my mother. . . . Everybody talks about how important his mother was to Andy but he was equally important to her. . . . Andy really kept her company. He spent most of the time with my mother. He was very close with her." With a degree in design from Carnegie Institute of Technology, Andy left Pittsburgh for New York in 1949. It's uncertain whether he invited her or whether she just showed up on his doorstep, but two years later, his mother came to live with him and stayed for twenty years. At first they shared a bedroom in a sparsely furnished apartment, which they clothed with dozens of cats. Later, Julia had her own garden apartment in Andy's Lexington Avenue brownstone. When Andy worked as a commercial artist, Julia became his collaborator, copying text and coloring pictures. Warhol issued limited-edition portfolios that paralleled some of his own commercial work on shoes and cookbooks. The lettering in these books was done by Julia in her ornate, old-world calligraphy. Andy would write out the words and Julia copied them.
letter for letter, without actually understanding much of what she was writing, which often resulted in creative misspellings. Her drawings of cats and angels bear a distinct similarity to Warhol's pre-pop work, and some of her angels resemble the distinctive primitive style of Rusyn icons. Warhol published her drawings under the title Holy Cats by Andy Warhol's Mother. And while the origin of the idea for Warhol's soup cans is still a matter of debate, recent evidence suggests that Julia may have been an influence. In 2012, the Warhol Museum exhibited a sketch of a Campbell's soup can drawn by Julia in 1952, ten years before Warhol's ground-breaking show of thirty-two Campbell's soup cans. The Warhola family worshipped regularly at St. John Chrysostom Byzantine Catholic Church, where the iconostasis was Andy's first exposure to art, and some scholars see the icon screen as the source of his characteristic serial imagery and icon-like prints of movie stars and Coke bottles. After his death it became known that Andy was exceedingly devout, regularly dropping in to St. Vincent Ferrar Roman Catholic Church for a quick prayer. Julia described Andy as "a good religious boy," and Andy's nephews confirm that before going out for a night on the town, Andy would say a prayer in Slavonic with his mother and receive her blessing.\[13\] Warhola's diaries contain abundant references to prayer and church attendance, as well as evidence of down-to-earth practicality and peasant superstition reminiscent of Rusyn folklore. Beyond his religious works, such as the 1977 Ten Supper series, numerous critics have found Warhol's spiritual sense expressed throughout his art — in the memento mori theme of his Death and Disaster paintings, the iconic features of his portraits, and his transfiguration of ordinary objects into transcendental relics. By elevating commonplace items to the level of artistic awareness, Warhol expressed his mother's view of the world that recognized the intrinsic value of even the humblest objects, as well as a democratic Rusyn view of art, created by and for the people and accessible to all. By 1971, Julia had suffered a series of strokes and was placed in a nursing home in Pittsburgh, where she returned in her mind to Mikova. According to relatives, Andy called her from New York and from his travels, but never visited. She died in 1972 at the age of eighty. Although Andy paid the expenses, he did not attend her funeral, telling his brothers that he wanted to remember her as she had been. While family accounts describe his extreme emotional distress, he hid it from friends and associates, deflecting questions about his mother, saying, "Oh, she's great. But she doesn't get out of bed much."\[12\] Julia's last words to her son Paul were reportedly: "Promise me you'll take care of Andy. I want you to look after him because sometimes I wonder if he doesn't have a childish mind."\[13\] Unreleased videos in the museum archives shed light on the mother-son relationship. Julia speaks to Andy as to a child, in Rusyn, with diminutives and endearing terminology. Her comments and persistent questions are faced generously with Andik, Andrikko, synok and synocho. Andy answers her mostly in English, sometimes impatiently as he coaxes her to take her medicine. But we also hear him address her tenderly, mixing Rusyn with English: "You want something to eat, mom? eat! ish? What isy you want? Two years after her death, Andy did a series of portraits of his mother, which are among his most intimate works. Wearing glasses, an elderly Julia smiles kindly at the viewer out of a background of reds and blues, her face surrounded by a halo of brush strokes and finger-painted flourishes that give the impression of lace. A little known co-produced "portrait" of Julia is in Time Capsule 27, where Andy preserved her prayer books, correspondence, and articles of her clothing. The tremendous influence Julia had on Andy, both personally and professionally, is undisputed. Sympathetic American commentators agree that Julia was a source of tenacity, gentleness, resilience, devout faith, and peasant whimsicality, and that she was the "greatest passion of Andy's life."\[14\] Rusyn commentators dissolve whatever doubts they may have about Warhol's sexuality and lifestyle in a celebration of his bond with Julia which they credit for his personal and artistic success: 'And so this American with European blood, whose Rusyn genes from Slovakia combined with the New York world of hope became the symbol of success, fame, wealth, and influence.'\[15\]

Notes
10. ibid, 44