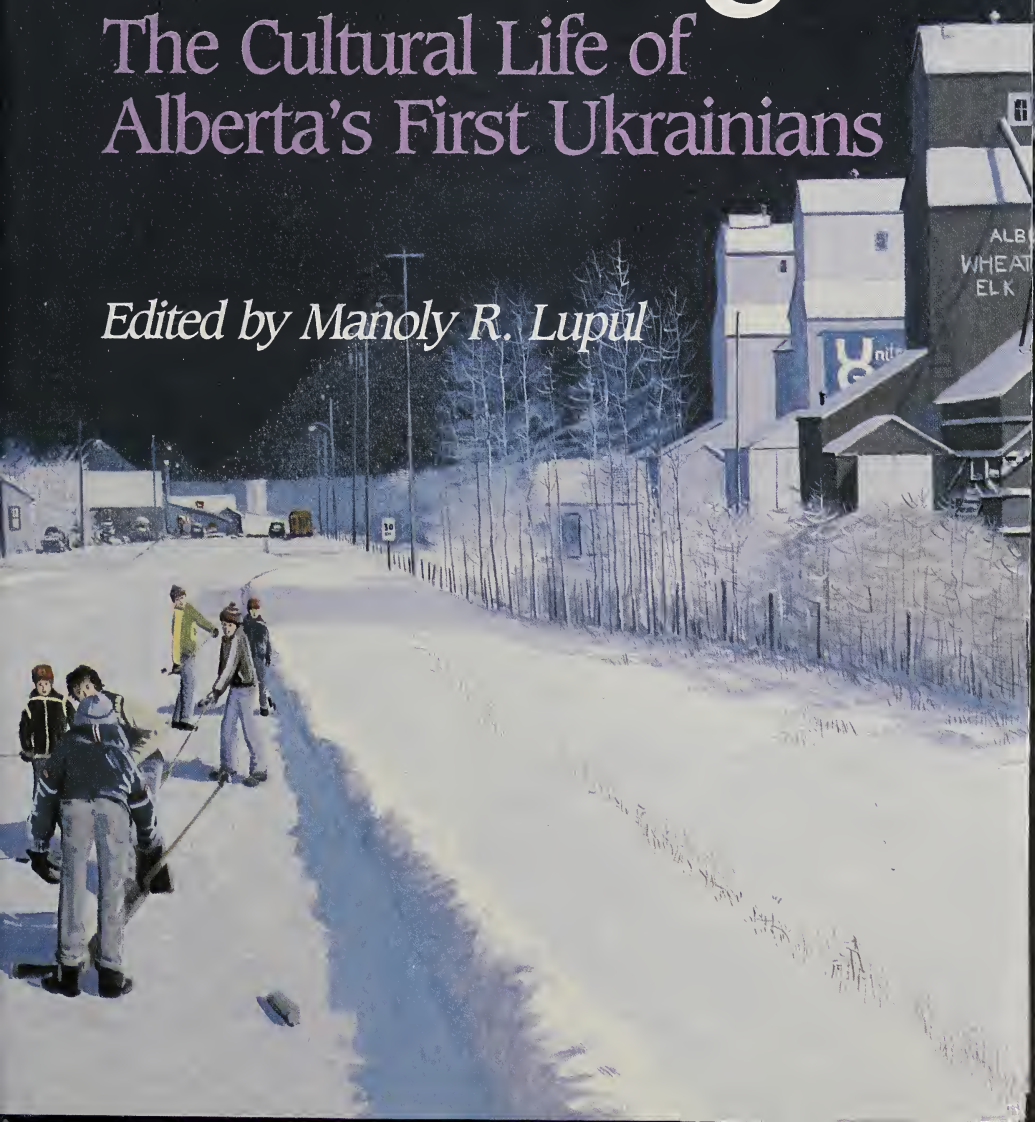


# Continuity and Change

The Cultural Life of  
Alberta's First Ukrainians

*Edited by Manoly R. Lupul*



A comprehensive, interdisciplinary examination of the life of the first Ukrainian immigrants. Nineteen essays examine conditions in Western Ukraine which led to migration, the nature of the rural bloc settlement, material culture, the fate of women, customs and beliefs, cultural institutions and organizations, as well as problems of cultural transmission, accommodation and ethnicity.



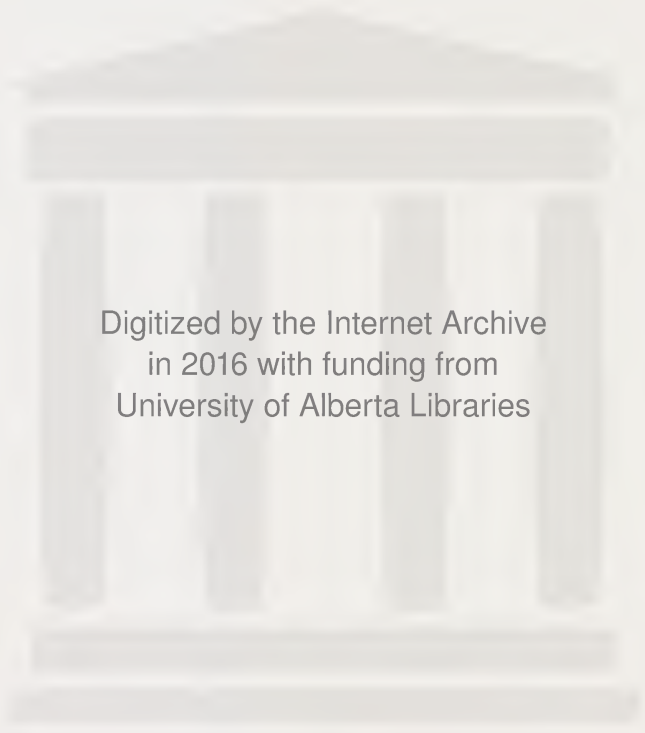
Manoly R. Lupul is professor in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta, and editor of *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*.

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Peter Shostak

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## **The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians**

**edited by  
Manoly R. Lupul**

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**Continuity and Change**  
**The Cultural Life of Alberta's First**  
**Ukrainians**



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Aerial view of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, 1985 (Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism)



## Introduction

This volume contains the proceedings of the conference on "Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians," held on 2-4 May 1985 at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village and sponsored jointly by the Historic Sites Service, Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, Province of Alberta, and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta.

In recent years the Historic Sites Service has commissioned numerous studies to assist in the development of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village as an "open-air" museum fifty kilometres east of Edmonton on Highway 16. The purpose of the conference was to bring together the academic and field research on the cultural, social and economic life of the first Ukrainian immigrant generation in Alberta, which the Village is concerned to portray. Through the conference the academy obtained a better idea of what Village research has uncovered and the Village was provided with a formal opportunity to explore possible directions for the future.

The volume consists of eight parts. It begins with a prologue by Roman Onufrijchuk which sets the stage for understanding the difficult process of cultural transmission and accommodation, made even more difficult for the first Ukrainian settlers who were from the peasant strata as well as pioneers. It ends with a more theoretical epilogue by Ian H. Angus that points up the unique significance of ethnocultural communities in rescuing Canadian identity from the universalizing grip of homogenizing cultures like that of the United States.

In between, the volume explores (in the second part) the historical conditions in Western Ukraine and western Canada at the turn of the century, the overall nature of the rural Ukrainian bloc settlement in east central Alberta (the largest in Canada) and the contrast between the cluster village in Ukraine and the railroad village in the West. In this part John-Paul Himka presents the hypothesis which is tested indirectly by subsequent presentations: "...Ukrainian immigrants in Canada were at first not only culturally more traditional/backward than most Canadians but also more traditional/backward than their contemporaries in Western Ukraine."

The next four parts on material culture, the life of women, customs and beliefs, and cultural institutions and organizations in the new world could be said to constitute the heart of the volume. The life of the first immigrants is analyzed in detail in terms of the problems of shelter, agricultural technology, the status and responsibilities of women, the endurance of customs and beliefs and the evolution of institutions and organizations that were similar to, yet distinct from, those in the Old Country. The analysis is as strong as the field work on which it depends, and there is no doubt a lesson here for all ethnocultural groups: research in the field should begin early while most of the immigrant generation is still alive.

The seventh part on the "open-air" museum may be seen as the applied part of the conference and is, of course, most directly relevant to the needs and concerns of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. As a type, the Village has numerous models in other countries and its problems like its accomplishments are in some respects unique. On the whole, the future appears promising.

In any joint effort, debts are incurred, and the editor (who was director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies when the conference was organized) would like to thank Dr. Frits Pannekoek, Director, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, for his understanding and co-operation and Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism for sharing equally the costs of the conference and this publication. As chairman of the programme committee, it is a pleasure also to express my personal thanks to the committee's three other members: Dr. Carl Betke, Chief of Research, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism; Dr. John Foster, Department of History, University of Alberta; and Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky, Department of Slavic and East European Studies at the same university. Finally, the scholars and researchers who participated in the conference gave generously of their time and effort and their contributions to this volume are gratefully acknowledged.

Manoly R. Lupul  
Edmonton 1988



# PROLOGUE

# Immigration and Organized Forgetting: Continuity and Change in Systems of Meaning

Roman Onufrijchuk

*An entire past comes to dwell in a new house.*

*Gaston Bachelard.<sup>1</sup>*

## *Introduction*

This paper deals with the encounter between an immigrant community, its “cultural baggage” and a set of forces and conditions which served to “integrate” these immigrants into the cultural mainstream of Canada. While the “Continuity and Change Conference” is oriented toward the experience of Canada’s first Ukrainians, the concern of this paper is focused more on the immigrants’ cultural contribution and its role in shaping (or its failure to help shape) the present cultural milieu of Canada. Put another way, the concern is with what the experience of the first Ukrainians has to say to the present. To be sure, the passing of this immigration has given us a worked land and this cultural museum, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village; we are on its site. Metaphorically we might even say that, while written by a contemporary hand, this place is their inscription on this rolling landscape.

This conference is being held in the partial restoration of the material remains of the encounter between the Ukrainian immigrants and the Canadian prairie. The buildings remind us of the immigrant’s dwelling here in the early years of their arrival. Here the wind, the sky, the grass, and in winter, the snow, recapitulate the experience of those “(wo)men in sheepskin coats” who came in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Here, and not far from here, they entered into the Modern Age. And, here and not far from here, many of them softened the dark earth with their sweat, the same dark earth into which their children and grandchildren now plant their bones.

In a sense, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village—an historic and research institution—is also a *pamiatnyk* to a people who passed this way

some four generations ago. A *pamiatnyk* is a monument. *Pamiat* is the word for *memory*. This place is a place for memory, and perhaps for "all of Baba's children" it may become a place of "pilgrimage."

This place, and indeed this time, are for remembrance. And yet, the coming of that first immigration was also an encounter with forgetting. Not only was this New World entirely new, but here they encountered techniques of an organized forgetting which extended from the efforts and attitudes of those who administered this place at that time.

The term "technics" refers not only to technology but to the knowledge required to make effective use of technology and the institutional capacity to realize both. Technics encompasses technology, techniques and infrastructure. The immigrants had entered a land that was part of the British empire. The Dominion of Canada already contained institutions and value structures inherited from the Imperial core—systems of meaning and organization. The "opening" of the West was impelled by an economic imagination and a profit motive. Wheat for export was the subject, East European immigrants were the object imported for its realization. Cultural integration meant a reorientation of the culture of these immigrants. Much of this cultural reorientation—the "evolution" or "change"—necessitated a technics of forgetting.

It would be unfair to suggest that the technics were always and by everyone deployed intentionally. However it would be equally unfair to say that the process of forgetting occurred always "naturally" or "innocently." Of the combination of factors that served to integrate the immigrant population into the cultural mainstream, three particularly stand out: the change in spatial arrangements and conditions encountered by the immigrants, the change in the ways and conditions of passing on language and knowledge, and the direct intervention into the cultural domain by immigrants through the bilingual schools which began to appear on the prairies a decade or so after the immigrants' arrival.

The present age has little time for remembering; memory can be a hindrance to creativity or progress. Yet, whether remembered or not, history does set the conditions for experiencing the present. For a community whose history can be characterized by its denial, often continuity is a matter of/for conscious effort. For such a community, history becomes, as Roland Barthes puts it, "love's protest."<sup>2</sup> For a community of this sort, "identity" is contained in, and develops out of, the tension created by a relationship between a social inheritance and the project of its reconstitution in the new world.

The two terms of the relationship—inheritance and project—exist by virtue of each other and delimit the cultural (and by extension the social, economic, political and historical) domains of a community's experience. For it is the culture, or the system of meanings of a community, that orients its responses to, and its communal actions in, its new world.

This is only to say that one is born into a language and a "house." And before all else, one is given a name. One can see in all three a possibility of a utopia or world, or one can experience in all three a constriction, a purgatory

or a hell of oppression. One can choose to deny all three. Or, perhaps even more easily, the denial of all three can be a function of a kind of "constructive dismissal."

The confluence of conditions or factors noted above that provided the cultural context for the immigration did much to ensure that not all the past, and in fact as little of the past as possible, came to live in the new house.

### *Community, Culture and Communication*

The immigrants did not come empty-handed. We are told that some brought tools, others brought seeds, some brought only their clothing and still others even brought millstones for fear that suitable stones would not be available in Canada. Nor did the immigrants come empty-headed. They came with a language and a system of meanings through which they reacted to as much of the new world as they could experience.

The system of meanings (the cultural baggage) which the immigrants brought was an intricate interweaving of ideologies, practices and poetics, which provided a coherent social organization of time, space and conceptions of self and other. This is not to suggest that this social world was not filled with contradictions; the framework, however, was the means by which they made sense of the human fatality within the dissonances of the contradictions. But even more, the interweaving also provided patterns for conviviality, a *cosmeisis*—in the sense of the "ordering of parts"—for living together and for the community's many arts.

The ideological elements of the interwoven configuration were ideas based on the concrete realities of the people's material existence and the distribution of social power that created the framework of that existence. Practices such as rituals, re-enactments, various kinds of social dramaturgy, and habitual processes of social interaction—ways of greeting and parting, for example—served to frame and reaffirm the community's social reality. And the poetics, that ineffable aspect of any culture, provide the predominant stylistic templates for both the expression of ideologies and practices and the articulation of personal and communal response to the human condition.

As is the case in any predominantly oral culture, the nuances and subtleties of the separate threads of this interpretive scheme as well as the interweaving were affected village by village, region by region, biography by biography. This rich *kylym* was the background across which social communication flowed, finalities and means for their realization were understood, persons and communities were reproduced.

On arrival the immigrants were to discover that this cultural baggage was a liability with respect to their capacity to penetrate the cultural and social institutions of the host society. To be sure, some had left the homeland in flight from the constrictions of the social milieu which formed their cultural baggage. Others found the new dominant norms oppressive and sought to establish a variety of cultural and social institutions which might nurture the

continuity of cultural identity.

While equal opportunity in the economic domain was always of major importance, a second theme—the cultivation of a cultural reality—also rose to a level of overall community concern. The first theme (or aspect of the immigrant's project) represented a difficult undertaking, but it was at least a *bona fide* objective of the fundamental ideology which grounded the development of "Canada." Hard work on a fertile, if demanding, land was the first step toward a better life for self and one's own. Concentrated in this ideology were ideas about "progress," "enlightenment," and "achievement" which were consonant with the ideology which drove the Dominion of Canada in its expansion into the West. The second theme—the continuing growth and development of a community somehow different from the host society—met with resistance, and with strategies for its subversion or eradication. In short, the immigrant's community which reproduced itself according to a cultural logic distinct from that of the host society was both a threat and an embarrassment. It became an object for "enlightenment" and induction into the dominant institutions and the Anglophone "reality" of the Canadian West.

The transition in culture that ensued proceeded along many lines. At this conference we are concerned to explore and document the details and specific contours of these processes for Canada's first Ukrainians. In what follows are three interrelated sets of changes that would have a powerful impact on the nature of the possibilities and conditions of cultural evolution for Baba's children. In a broad sense, the interrelated factors defined the stage for the cultural evolution of the first immigration. And given that this immigration provided the social and cultural infrastructure for subsequent immigrations, the context of the first immigration's cultural life and its determinants would have a long-range effect on subsequent cultural growth.

### *Community and Change*

On neither side was the process of immigration a *tabula rasa*. Just as passage to the new land meant rupture with an old, overcrowded, impoverished but familiar world, and the immigration experience itself involved shipping agents, immigration officers, railways, local governments and land agents, so the prairie was not just there for the taking. Imaginary lines traversed it into sections and quarter sections. Settlement would have to follow a new, much more socially isolating pattern, where relevant or familiar social institutions did not exist. There soon seemed to be as many actual and potential constraints as there were actual and potential freedoms. If, as Don Ihde suggests,<sup>3</sup> being part of a community involves hearing the unspoken in the spoken, then the dominant cultural milieu seemed glad to see both silenced.

*Isolation and distances.* Prior to immigration the peasants had lived in villages, where the practice of dividing the inheritance of land equally among

all the children posed significant husbandry problems. Besides shrinking with each generation, an individual's fields could be separated by some distance. But in the village itself social life was continuous, involving neighbours and extended families. The village provided sites for everyday community interaction, and living meant living with people. After immigration, living meant living in isolation.

In Canada the immigrants were settled according to a grid which separated families from families by what would have been great distances by preimmigration standards. To walk a mile across the prairie with the temperature forty degrees below zero and the wind speed forty kilometers per hour is still a challenging experience.

Isolation implied a cutting or rupture in the role played by the community in cultural transmission. Those aspects of the oral tradition which were given manifestation through various leisure practices in song, story-telling, or language games were immediately impoverished as they depended upon continuous vocalization and mimetic learning. Leisure, which in the village setting might be social, was now predominantly restricted to the immediate family.

*Education and culture formation.* Immigration meant a rupture in the generational continuum. Although more intimate, the break was similar to the isolation caused by the settlement pattern. Aspects of a person's cultural formation acquired through frequent interaction with elderly members of an extended family were likely to be less readily available. The demands of pioneer life left little time for games and dances (*ihry* and *pisni*<sup>4</sup>), nor were there always people who could explain or demonstrate them or occasions when they could be performed.

Within ten years of settlement the struggle for schooling usually began. When built, the schools were also isolated, both geographically and in terms of the young, inexperienced anglophone personnel that did not or chose not to understand their charges. Then, again, pioneer life and isolation frequently restricted school attendance as families conscripted their children's help at key times of the agricultural calendar.

Bilingual schools, a political and ultimately a cultural victory, were short-lived. The bilingual education which depended upon immigrants trained in the "Ruthenian" teacher training institutions in Brandon, Regina and Vegreville went up in the smoke of the First Great War's hysteria, made most visible in the burning of "foreign language" textbooks on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature in Winnipeg in a fitting climax to the resentment of local non-Ukrainian politicians at the community leadership provided by the teachers. The return of English-language schools met with resistance and was enforced by the state.

*Organized forgetting.*<sup>5</sup> An aspect of organized forgetting was demonstrated in the above struggle over bilingual education—a "heavy handed" aspect characterized by state intervention enforced by the courts and the police. Another form, while not backed by the immediate authority of the state, carried the power of a "moral force" and found expression in hundreds of



examples furnished by the press of the late 1890s and early 1900s. Still another form was the backlash against Sifton's immigration policy after 1900. Karl Peter has probably captured the essence of this more insidious form of cultural politics when he wrote of "institutional intimidation" as an effective device for keeping "ethnic groups at bay":

The notion of the huddled, ignorant masses of Europe, fleeing from tyranny and persecution, who were given the privilege to partake in free Canadian institutions bestowed upon the Dominion by the English, was designed to impress on the immigrant a feeling of awe, unworthiness and inferiority and elicited an attitude of generosity, superiority and condescension among the Anglo-Saxon groups.<sup>6</sup>

This "institutional intimidation" flowed through the press, was expressed in interactions with various officials, and appeared on the playgrounds and in the classrooms of the schools. Perhaps no more poignant and ironic image of it has been given than the one in the NFB film *Teach Me To Dance*. An immigrant girl who has taught her English friend a Ukrainian folk dance, which they planned to perform together, stands on a stage and recites "Children of the Empire" in the school concert just minutes after being told that her friend has been forbidden to perform the dance.

But the most potent aspect of "institutional intimidation" to effect organized forgetting in the immigrant community itself occurred after the First World War. It came over the air waves, through the flickering images of movies and by means of the generalized consumer culture, itself based on a continuous approbation of the new and a rejection of the old. This is worth noting, even as an aside, because of the far-reaching cultural implications it would have for all immigrant groups entering North America. A separate conference would not be out of place to explore the impact of technological society, mass consumption and communication on ethnocultural communities.

The above were some of the forces and conditions (some inevitable, others intentional and strategic) which came to shape the possibility and directions of cultural continuity and change among Alberta's first Ukrainians. Isolation and the rupture in generational continuum were augmented by a monolingual educational system, supported by the less obvious but nonetheless effective technics of "institutional intimidation," to ensure that entry into the promised cornucopia of the Dominion was assured only to individuals and not to communities which retained or sought to evolve distinctive "foreign" cultural forms.

### *Inscription and Speech: A Heritage and Project*

At the outset a metaphor was suggested to capture something of the cultural significance of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village: an inscription on the prairie landscape by a contemporary hand of a people's passing this same place four generations ago. Writing, we know, is a technics for remembering. What we tend not to notice is that writing is both for

remembering and forgetting. Once something is written down, we can forget about it until it is needed again. Often what is written down is not spoken; it is silent or remains silent. And in a culture such as ours, the present is overfilled with apparently memorable things, events, situations and experiences—each disappearing into the maw of consumer culture only to be replaced by the yet more memorable.

It seems that the role which the Village is to play is that of a monument to the historical experience of the first Ukrainian immigration to Alberta. This is being done through research, display and interpretation. Artifacts, buildings and stories are gathered to demonstrate the kind of people who came to work the land into productive forms. There can be no doubt that this is a good thing, for it contributes to the history of a place and of those who made it what it is.

However, there are other compelling questions left wake-like in this people's passing. That a people opened a land, ate biscuits from this kind of tin can and embroidered particular patterns on fabric is useful knowledge. But one hopes that more difficult questions will also be addressed—and given voice—at the Village, questions which are pressing even now in the context of *Canadian* subculture. *There are questions about the price the immigrants paid for this land, the price in terms of culture, language and community.* The losses have been tremendous and they touch more than material culture. The Village should strive to become the site for inquiry into the conditions which militated against cultural (as distinct from economic) contributions by the first immigrants to the overall fabric of Canadian culture—and this to the likely detriment of those descendants who once lived or who still live in the Ukrainian bloc settlement which the Village borders and which it seeks to portray. In face of the silence of forgetting, one hopes that the Village will join other institutions to recover the all-too-hastily silenced voices.

## Notes

1. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. M. Jobs (Boston 1965), 5.
2. R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. R. Howard (New York 1981), no. 38, 92–4.
3. D. Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens, OH 1976), 165–9.
4. Both terms are used here to designate also the ritual dramaturgy associated with the seasonal and “biographic” calendars—birth, marriage, mourning and death.
5. M. Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. M. H. Heim (Harmondsworth, England 1981), 229–37.
6. K. Peter, “The Myth of Multiculturalism and Other Political Fables,” in J. Dahlie and T. Fernando (eds.), *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada* (Toronto 1981), 61.

**OLD AND NEW WORLDS  
CONTRASTED**

# Cultural Life in the Awakening Village in Western Ukraine

John-Paul Himka

## *Introduction*

This paper describes the cultural life of West Ukrainian peasants during the period of mass emigration to North America. The geographical restriction is to the Austrian crownlands of Galicia and Bukovyna; the Ukrainian peasants of the Hungarian-ruled region of Transcarpathia are not considered, since few Transcarpathians emigrated to Canada. The period discussed is the last third of the nineteenth century (beginning in the late 1860s/early 1870s) and the early twentieth century (to 1914).

Galicia<sup>1</sup> and Bukovyna,<sup>2</sup> with their capital cities of Lviv and Chernivtsi, were the easternmost crownlands of the Austrian part of Austria-Hungary. To the north and east of them was the Russian empire, to the south and west Hungary. Galicia was the single largest crownland of Austria (78,497 sq km), but Bukovyna was relatively small (10,451 sq km). Galicia had been acquired by Austria in 1772 as its part of the first partition of Poland; Bukovyna had been part of the Ottoman vassal state of Moldavia until Austria occupied it in 1774 and annexed it in 1787. Both territories were ethnically mixed. Ukrainians lived in the eastern part of Galicia and northern part of Bukovyna. Poles inhabited western Galicia and also predominated in the landlord class, administration and urban population of eastern Galicia. Romanians inhabited southern Bukovyna and formed a significant part of the landlord class also in the north. There was a relatively inconsequential German minority in Galicia and a numerically and politically significant one in Bukovyna. Both crownlands contained Jewish minorities of over 10 per cent. In 1880 there were 2,551,594 Ukrainians in Galicia and 239,690 in Bukovyna; in 1910 there were 3,208,092 Ukrainians in Galicia (40 per cent of the total population) and 305,101 in Bukovyna (38 per cent).<sup>3</sup>

The most marked characteristics of cultural life among the peasantry in Western Ukraine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was

*change*, with the peasantry moving from a natural to a money economy and with a print culture beginning to supplement and then supplant the traditional oral culture in the village. These changes were epoch-making and heralded the extinction of cultural patterns and skills dating back centuries, perhaps millennia.

The preconditions for this major cultural metamorphosis were established between 1848 and the late 1860s. In 1848 the peasantry of both Galicia and Bukovyna were liberated from serfdom. The end of the feudal era loosened the restrictions on peasant mobility and education; the end of feudalism was also the end of an economic mode necessarily based primarily on a natural rather than a money economy.<sup>4</sup> In the 1860s the railway linked Galicia and Bukovyna with the industrial centres of Vienna, Bohemia and Western Europe. In 1861 Lviv, via Przemyśl, was linked with Vienna by rail; the line extended to Brody, on the Russian border, and Zolochiv by 1869.<sup>5</sup> The expansion of the railway into Bukovyna was only a little later in development. Chernivtsi was linked with Lviv in 1866 and the line was extended south to Suceava in 1869.<sup>6</sup> With the railways came cheap, factory-made goods, whose immediate effect was to undermine traditional artisanal production in the Galician cities.<sup>7</sup> The decade from the late 1850s to the late 1860s was also distinguished by a series of economic, educational and political reforms that were to affect the cultural life of the Galician and Bukovynian peasantry. Among the major economic reforms were the industrial law of 1859,<sup>8</sup> which dissolved the guilds and facilitated the importation of factory-produced commodities, and the abolition in 1868 of all restrictions on interest, the division and alienability of peasant land and Jewish economic activity. In the sphere of education, crownland school councils were created for Galicia in 1867<sup>9</sup> and for Bukovyna in 1869.<sup>10</sup> Compulsory education was introduced in Austria in 1869; while binding in Bukovyna from the first, its formal application to Galicia was delayed until 1873.<sup>11</sup> In connection with the constitutional restructuring of Austria in 1860–7 a series of political reforms affected the West Ukrainian village: the guarantee of basic civil liberties (freedom of the press, assembly and association); the (limited) enfranchisement of the peasantry to elect deputies to legislative assemblies; and the introduction of municipal self-government.<sup>12</sup> Finally, beginning in the late 1860s the Ukrainian national movement, hitherto confined to the secular intelligentsia in the cities and to the clergy in the countryside, began to penetrate among the peasantry. This process was initiated with the establishment of the popular educational societies *Prosvita* (Enlightenment) in Lviv in 1868<sup>13</sup> and *Ruska besida* (Ruthenian Club) in Chernivtsi in 1869.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Money Economy*

Memoirs on Galician rural life in the 1860s agree that the peasant economy at that time was primarily natural, i.e., that the peasants provided for their own needs without much recourse to money and therefore made

little use of goods produced outside the village or even off the homestead. The son of a Greek Catholic priest recalled the natural peasant economy of his youth (the 1860s):

Farming (*hospodarstvo*) was, especially in the older times I can remember, more natural than money-based. The farm produce was used at home. People wove cloth at home, even dipped [their own] candles. Hired hands were also usually paid not in money, but in nature. They received clothing, linen (*billia*), boots and also grain. Work at harvest time was paid in nature as well.<sup>15</sup>

On the same period, Jan Słomka, a Polish peasant from Dzików in western Galicia, wrote: "The turnover of money in the villages was still trifling in my early days."<sup>16</sup>

From the late 1860s, however, because of factors already indicated, the natural economy began to dissolve. Money came to play an increasing role in the peasant economy, and commodities more and more replaced the produce of the peasants' own labour. The penetration of a money economy, it should be noted, did not necessarily bring with it a rise in the living standard. In fact, the initial effect of the destruction of the natural economy seems to have been economic dislocation in the countryside. The economic transformation was simultaneously a cultural transformation, as peasants used the money economy to satisfy their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter thereby transforming the folk cuisine, costume and architecture of Western Ukraine.

"As for articles of food," wrote Jan Słomka of the 1860s, "only salt and beverages were bought in the shops. Village folk lived mostly on what they themselves sowed and planted on their own land."<sup>17</sup> But while the inventory of a village store in Kolodribka, Zalishchyky district, in 1884 included the traditionally bought salt, it also included an array of other food items that were already part of the peasant diet: honey, vinegar, fish, yeast and nuts. The presence of fish and nuts in the store reflects the fact that ponds and forests were largely expropriated by the landlords as private property in the two decades following the abolition of serfdom.<sup>18</sup> The sale of honey, vinegar and yeast indicates that these items were now less often produced domestically. Food items new to the peasant diet and offered for sale by the store included pepper and other spices, tea and its necessary complement, sugar, and buns made from white flour (*bulky*).<sup>19</sup> Writing in 1912 and comparing the foodstuffs available then with what was available in the 1860s, Jan Słomka stated: "Coffee, tea, sugar, rice, raisins, almonds, oranges, lemons—things sold today in every store with other articles of food—were virtually unknown in the village."<sup>20</sup> In 1885 a Ukrainian peasant from the Stanyslaviv region wrote of rice and white flour as superfluous innovations introduced to the villages by, among others, the wives of railway workers.<sup>21</sup> The extent of the change is perhaps best dramatized by the cabbage roll (*holubets*), popularly considered very traditional ethnic food. The cabbage roll as we know it is stuffed with rice, yet rice does not grow in Ukraine. Only by being imported and purchased could it have entered the West



Ukrainian diet in a significant way after the 1860s. It caught on to such an extent that today only students of the history of diet would think of a cabbage roll as being filled with the traditional millet, maize or buckwheat.

In costume the changes were even more far-reaching. The handmade national costumes could barely withstand the competition of the cheap, colourful textiles which came from the factories outside Western Ukraine. To quote again from Jan Słomka:

Our clothing was for each whatever could be made at home. . . . Until well after 1860 folk dressed in white both summer and winter, both on workdays and holidays; and all home-spun materials tended to stay that colour. More dressy women and girls, however, were already putting on bright coloured skirts and girdles of bought materials, as well as kerchiefs, shawls and stays from the stores. . . . With the years, clothing made of bought stuffs became the regular thing; and about 1870 the new fashion caught on.<sup>22</sup>

The village store in Kolodribka sold linen, ready-made kerchiefs, yarn, cotton material and thread.<sup>23</sup> The peasant from the Stanyslaviv region who complained about rice and white flour also felt that the umbrellas coming into the villages ("introduced by all kinds of railway workers, brakemen and watchmen") were expensive and useless novelties; but even he had reconciled himself to "the vests, which many peasants have now started to wear."<sup>24</sup> Peasants in the Kalush area in 1884 were buying what one peasant characterized as "stupid calico" to make shirts, aprons, skirts and kerchiefs, even though "this all is flimsy and tears quickly so one has to buy again." They preferred the calico to their own cloth, although their home-made hemp shirts lasted nine times as long.<sup>25</sup> Obviously, to buy a cheap, shortlived, factory-produced textile meant that one would not waste labour embroidering it. As an English traveller to Western Ukraine wrote at the beginning of the 1890s, the merchant "is doing his best to crush out all artistic sense in the peasants by supplanting their really good handiwork with the vilest machine-made trash that he can procure."<sup>26</sup>

The construction and furnishings of the peasant cottage were also modified under the impact of the all-pervading money economy. The thatched roof—the very symbol of rural Western Ukraine—began to give way to roofs covered with sheets of tin.<sup>27</sup> Other metal<sup>28</sup> and glass<sup>29</sup> (neither of which could be produced by a peasant household) found increasing application in the West Ukrainian peasant cottage.

Although none of the above changes constituted by themselves a revolution in lifestyle, their sum total did. In the late nineteenth century, West Ukrainian peasants entered the world of commodities and their specific material culture began to conform to the much more general and universalized material culture of industrial Europe.

### *The Print Culture*

In West European history the transition from feudalism to capitalism occurred together with the use of the printing press. The widespread exchange of commodities which characterized capitalism and its predecessor, the money economy, was ideally suited to the dissemination of printed material. The national networks of commodity exchange served also to distribute the printed word. The printed book was itself a commodity, in fact "the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity";<sup>30</sup> the same was not true for the oral creation or even the manuscript. Thus historically (and for more reasons than can be developed here) there has been a close link between an economy based on exchange and a culture based on print, and it is not unusual that a money economy and a print culture penetrated the West Ukrainian countryside at the same time.

The peasantry of Western Ukraine had preserved an almost exclusively oral culture into the late nineteenth century. Wisdom was passed from generation to generation and from village to village in the form of proverbs, songs and tales. With oral culture it is difficult to establish continuity and to accumulate knowledge, especially precise knowledge. By contrast, a culture based on literacy fixes the knowledge of previous generations and of diverse peoples, thus making the accumulation of knowledge more efficient. The benefits of a literate culture are accelerated by the use of print. It is print culture that, by diffusing knowledge quickly to many people, allows more rapid development and greater participation in the expansion of human understanding. The print culture made possible the scientific advances on which the industrial and subsequent technological revolutions have been based. In a wider sense, print culture includes not only the production and distribution of printed matter, but also the knowledge and theories shared by those participating in the print culture.

West Ukrainian peasants were introduced to the print culture through the school system established at the end of the 1860s. Under serfdom the peasants had been kept ignorant deliberately.<sup>31</sup> In 1842 only 15.2 per cent of school-age children in Galicia and Bukovyna attended school.<sup>32</sup> As Table 1 shows, about half of the children of Galicia and Bukovyna were attending school by the 1880s, and on the eve of the First World War elementary education was practically universal in Bukovyna and also quite widespread in Galicia.<sup>33</sup> Corresponding to the increase in school attendance was a slow, steady increase in the literacy rate (see Table 2). By 1914 the vast majority of young peasants in Western Ukraine could read.

In addition to the school system, the Ukrainian national movement also did much to promote literacy and reading among the peasantry, particularly by establishing reading clubs (*chytalni*) and publishing a popular press. Reading clubs were village organizations in which peasants gathered to read and to discuss what they had read. They were excellent supplements to the school system, because they fostered the retention of literacy. Without something like a reading club, which provided both reading material and an incentive to

**TABLE 1** Percentage of School-Age Children Attending School in Galicia and Bukovyna, 1871–1913

Year	Galicia	Bukovyna
1871	46.9	11.0
1880	49.1	18.8
1890	60.1	52.4
1900	71.0	75.2
1913	82.4	98.0

SOURCE: *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch* . . . 1882, 81 (for 1871 and Bukovyna 1880); *Rocznik Statystyki Galicyi* 3 (1889–91): 101 (for Galicia 1880); *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch* . . . 1891, 68 (for 1890), 1901, 109 (for 1900), 1914, 409 (for 1913).

**TABLE 2** Percentage of Literates in Galicia and Bukovyna, 1880–1910

Year	Galicia			Bukovyna		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
1880	14.23	8.52		11.75	6.58	
1890 <sup>a</sup>	27.39	18.14		23.07	15.52	
1900			30.2			28.7
1910 <sup>b</sup>	60.2	48.5	54.1	50.4	40.2	45.2

<sup>a</sup>Only includes the population over 6 years old.

<sup>b</sup>Only includes the population over 10 years old.

Note: Only those who claimed they could both read and write are here considered literate.

SOURCE: *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch* . . . 1882, 7 (for 1880), 1891, 9 (for 1890), 1901, 3 (for 1900), 1913, 21 (for 1910).

read, peasant youth might easily have forgotten what they had learned in school. The school teacher in Kolodribka described the situation well. He had been teaching in the village for twenty years, but in spite of all his efforts,

when the youth finished school and devoted itself to the hard work of farming, it gradually became unaccustomed to books and learning and in the end forgot everything it had learned. Now it's different. The school-age youth hurries to the reading club in days free from work, listens attentively to intelligent discussion and [public] reading and reads books and newspapers. Thus the youth develops a growing taste for reading and learning, and it is not so easy to forget what has been learned in school. This is a great boon to the school, a strong and lasting foundation for the enlightenment and education of the youth. And even adult peasants, encouraged by this, are quicker and more diligent in sending

their children to school for an education. In fact, there are even some older peasants in the village who have learned on their own initiative how to read and write a bit as well; in the main they have learned from their children, who are pupils in the school.<sup>34</sup>

Also in Svarychiv, Dolyna district, the members of the reading club included "some who remembered the alphabet and writing only after the opening of the reading club, but now they read fluently."<sup>35</sup> The reading clubs, furthermore, spread the message of the print culture to illiterates, since public readings were an important component of their activities. In fact, a quarter of the members of the reading clubs were illiterate (Galicia, 1897–1910),<sup>36</sup> and undoubtedly the clubs' influence extended beyond the dues-paying membership. By 1914 there were 2,944 reading clubs affiliated with the Galician *Prosvita* and 150 affiliated with the Bukovynian *Ruska besida*;<sup>37</sup> there were also reading clubs independent of these two major organizations. A reading club existed in almost every West Ukrainian village.

The development of the print culture in Western Ukraine is demonstrated by the establishment and proliferation of Ukrainian-language periodicals (see Table 3). The first Ukrainian periodical appeared in Galicia in 1848, but by

TABLE 3 Ukrainian-Language Periodicals in Galicia and Bukovyna, 1871–1910

Year	Number of Ukrainian-Language Periodicals		
	Galicia	Bukovyna	Both
1871			9
1880	18	2	20
1890	20	2	22
1900	29	4	33
1910	42	14	57

SOURCE: *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch* . . . 1882, 86 (for 1871); *Statistisches Jahrbuch* . . . 1881, Heft 5, p. 196 (for 1880); *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch* . . . 1891, 70 (for 1890), 1900, 97 (for 1900), 1910, 93 (for 1910).

1860 the Ukrainian periodical press had disappeared. Revived in 1861 with the appearance of the newspaper *Slovo*, the Ukrainian press in Galicia enjoyed uninterrupted growth thereafter. The first Ukrainian periodical in Bukovyna was published in 1870; the Ukrainian periodical press was consolidated there in 1885, when the national populists began to issue the newspaper *Bukovyna*, but the press did not flourish until the turn of the century. Of particular importance for the village was the popular press aimed at the peasantry. The national populist wing of the Ukrainian national movement published the newspapers *Batktivshchyna* (Lviv, 1879–96),

*Svoboda* (Lviv, 1896–1939), *Ruska rada* (Chernivtsi, 1898–1908) and *Chytalnia* (Chernivtsi, 1911–13). Other political tendencies (Russophile, radical, social democratic) published their own papers for the peasantry. In addition to the politically oriented popular press, there were also periodicals for the peasantry that specialized in giving advice on farming technique and the management of co-operatives. Related to the popular periodicals were popular booklets published by organizations like *Prosvita*. All of these publications were aimed at the reading clubs and the newly literate peasants.

One result of the introduction of a print culture into the village was a certain displacement of the traditional oral culture. This is strikingly, but unconsciously, revealed in a passage from Slomka's memoirs:

Parties would be arranged evenings in the winter from house to house. In the summer folk would gather in groups on Sundays or holidays on the lawns, or indeed anywhere in the open, to gossip about the lately abolished serfdom, or the campaigns the older ones had seen.... In general, stories were popular, or jokes, riddles and prophecies; as well as news from afar, or incidents of interest from the villages. *In other days these things counted for what the reading of books or papers does now* [1912].<sup>38</sup>

The introduction of the print culture effected changes in almost all aspects of peasant life and folk ways. It meant, for example, that theatre would be added to the peasants' entertainments,<sup>39</sup> that clock time would start to replace solar and stellar time,<sup>40</sup> that traditional religious and seasonal feasts would be supplemented by new print-culture holidays (e.g., the annual commemoration of national poet Taras Shevchenko in March),<sup>41</sup> that traditional folk medicine would be denounced as harmful superstition by reading peasants,<sup>42</sup> that the icons on the cottage walls of the peasant would more likely be printed than painted and that they would share space with secular portraits.<sup>43</sup> The print culture also drastically altered the peasant world-view: the reading peasant developed a modern national consciousness, political opinions and, in many cases, a more critical attitude to the church.

To illustrate the type of changes implicit in the diffusion of the print culture, one might focus briefly on the impact of print culture on folk music. The folk songs of Western Ukraine were recorded by representatives of the print culture, i.e., by professional and amateur folklorists, who subsequently published collections. At least among the more democratic folklorists, there was a desire to make these published collections available to the peasantry,<sup>44</sup> and some collections did indeed reach the reading clubs.<sup>45</sup> In such cases the oral creativity of the peasants was transformed into an object of the print culture and returned to them in this new form. The school system also influenced the musical culture of the village. Elementary schools were expected to teach singing,<sup>46</sup> and songbooks for West Ukrainian schools were prepared by the Bukovynian composer Sydir Vorobkevych (who studied at the conservatory in Vienna in 1868).<sup>47</sup> Thus peasant children were exposed to non-folk music and to folk music that had been arranged by a highly



educated, professional musician. Finally, the national movement encouraged the development of choirs in the villages, generally in association with the reading clubs. Already by 1884 national populist students had counted sixty-eight choirs in Galicia and Bukovyna, forty-eight of them attached to reading clubs.<sup>48</sup> The choirs often made a point of singing from notes (a great fad at least in the 1880s) and introducing polyphony.<sup>49</sup> All such intervention by the print culture began to alter the character of peasant music. In an oral culture the words to songs undergo continual modification; once they are printed, however, they are relatively fixed. The same applies to melodies. In short, the fluidity and spontaneity of folk culture does not easily survive imprisonment in print. With the dissemination of songbooks and choirs, moreover, the repertoire of peasants' songs expanded to include songs composed outside the villages. Some authentic folk music would thereby be displaced, especially since the folk songs would be competing with songs that had lyrics by talented poets (a number of Shevchenko's works, for instance, were put to music) and melodies by professional composers (such as Vorobkevych). Finally, the sound of the music itself would begin to change, and not simply because of the introduction of novel harmonic techniques in the choirs. The change was more complex. Once peasant music was captured by notation and choirs began to sing in accordance with the notation, some of the very important tones of West Ukrainian folk music would disappear. The musically illiterate, traditional singer deliberately sang some tones flatter or sharper than could be conveyed by standard notation. These shades of difference were lost in notation, and when notation superseded oral tradition the original sound was lost. Traditional peasant singing can be compared with a violin, an unfretted instrument on which any interval between tones can be played. The new, notation music was like a piano, with its limited set of predetermined tones. Also, standard musical notation does not encompass nuances that were very important in traditional singing: quavers, wails, shouts, timbre. Notation tended not only to abstract from such nuances, but to minimize their importance and eradicate them. Thus pre- and post-notation music (oral and literate-print music) sounded very different.

Such changes as have been described for music affected all aspects of peasant culture to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the extent to which the print culture had fastened on to a particular aspect of culture.

In the period from 1870 to 1914 the money economy and print culture were only beginning to effect a sea change in peasant cultural life. Some isolated West Ukrainian localities and regions would be but little or late affected,<sup>50</sup> while others would be experiencing rapid change. The extent of the changes among the peasantry was also determined by generational, sexual and economic differences. In this period, then, the West Ukrainian peasant still lived in two worlds, the traditional world of the natural economy and oral culture and the "modern" world of the money economy and print culture. Culturally, the peasant was amphibious.

*Implications for the Study of Ukrainian Canadians*

The suggestion that the West Ukrainian peasantry had made significant progress toward "modernization" on the eve of and during the period of mass emigration may surprise historians who have studied the early Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. Much evidence shows that these immigrants were, in fact, very traditional (primitive and backward, to use more loaded language). This seems to stand in contradiction to much that has been said in this paper about Western Ukraine's cultural evolution.

The contradiction is even more glaring when one considers that Canada represented the "modern" world. Here a money economy was much more developed than in Western Ukraine; in fact, by the late nineteenth century Canada's economy was clearly capitalist. Canada was also culturally far advanced over Western Ukraine, that is, it was well saturated with a print culture. It would seem, therefore, that Canada should have brought out and strengthened the "modern" aspect of the immigrants' amphibious culture. Were this the case, however, the early immigrants should have appeared less backward and less primitive than they did both to contemporary outside observers and to later historians.

The reason for this apparent contradiction is that while Canada as a whole was more "modern" than Western Ukraine, the immigrants' place in it was not. Although Canada was economically more developed than Galicia or Bukovyna, the homesteaders on the prairie were initially constrained to live primarily in a natural economy. The pioneering skills which served the Ukrainian immigrants so well were essentially the skills they retained from the traditional side of their amphibious culture, skills that enabled them to feed, clothe and house themselves with little or no money. It was only after the immigrant homesteaders had achieved a certain level of prosperity that they could participate in any significant way in the advanced all-Canadian economy. Thus the initial effect of emigration to Canada was to plunge the West Ukrainian peasants into an economic situation even more backward than what they had left. Much the same occurred with regard to the print culture. One characteristic of the print culture is that it is language-specific,<sup>51</sup> and the relatively advanced print culture of Canada was in English, a language unknown to the immigrants. Thus the immigrants were at first both physically removed from their native print culture and linguistically removed from the advanced print culture of the host country. Until a Ukrainian-language press developed in Canada and a sufficient degree of bilingualism had been acquired in Ukrainian Canadian society, the peasant immigrants found themselves in an even more exclusively oral culture than they had had in Western Ukraine. In sum, the immigrant situation brought out the most traditional aspects of West Ukrainian culture rather than its more modern aspects. One might venture the hypothesis that Ukrainian immigrants to Canada were at first not only culturally more traditional/backward than most Canadians but also more traditional/backward than their contemporaries in Western Ukraine.



## Notes

1. There is a burgeoning literature in English on Galicia. Among the most important works are P. R. Magocsi, *Galicia: A Historical Survey and Bibliographic Guide* (Toronto 1983), and A.S. Markovits and F.E. Sysyn (eds.), *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, MA 1982), especially the chapter by I. L. Rudnytsky, "The Ukrainians in Galicia under Austrian Rule," 23–67.
2. The historical literature in English on Bukovyna is less well developed than on Galicia. Brief surveys are R. A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918*, 2 vols. (reprint New York 1964), 1:318–32, and R. A. Kann and Z. David, *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526–1918*, A History of East Central Europe, 6 (Seattle and Washington 1984), 273–9, 287–91, 416–25, 438–46. Bukovyna is treated together with Galicia in J.-P. Himka, "The Background to Emigration: The Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovyna, 1848–1914," in M.R. Lupul (ed.), *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada* (Toronto 1982), 11–31, and J.-P. Himka, "A Researcher's Handbook on Western Ukraine (Galicia and Bukovina) in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," manuscript prepared for the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (Edmonton 1985). Standard works on Bukovyna in Ukrainian include *Narys z istorii Pivnichnoi Bukovyny* (Kiev 1980), and D. Kvitkovsky, T. Bryndzana and A. Zhukovsky (eds.), *Bukovyna. Ii mynule i suchasne* (Paris-Philadelphia-Detroit 1956); for a bibliography on Bukovyna, see E. Beck, *Bibliographie zur Landeskunde der Bukowina: Literatur bis zum 1965*, Veröffentlichungen des Südostdeutschen Kulturwerkes, Reihe B (Wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten), 19 (Munich 1966).
3. In the calculation, language is used as the determinant of national affiliation. *Rocznik Statystyki Galicyi* 3 (1889–91): 1–2; *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch für das Jahr 1911*, 13.
4. In Galicia in 1819–20 only 6 per cent of feudal rents were paid in money. F.I. Steblii, "Peredmovia," *Klasova borotba selianstva Skhidnoi Halychyny* (1772–1849). *Dokumenty i materialy* (Kiev 1974), 10.
5. *Rocznik Statystyki Galicyi* 3 (1889–91): 218–19. For a map of the development of the railway system in Galicia through 1914, see *Historia Polski: 1864–1900* (Warsaw 1967), 3, pt. 1.
6. *Die Bukowina. Eine allgemeine Heimatkunde verfasst anlässlich des 50 jährigen glorreichen Regierungsjubiläums Seiner kaiserlichen und königlichen Apostolischen Majestät, unseres Allergnädigsten Kaisers und Obersten Kriegsherrn durch die k.k. Gendarmerie des Landes-Gendarmerie-Commandos no. 13* (Chernivtsi 1899), 334. For a map of the railway system in both Galicia and Bukovyna in 1889, see *Artaria's Eisenbahn- u. Post-Communications-Karte v. Oesterreich-Ungarn 1889* (Vienna [1889]). By 1910 Galicia had 4,117 kilometres of railway, with 587 in Bukovyna. *Oesterreichisches statistisches Handbuch... 1911*, 213.
7. J.-P. Himka, *Socialism in Galicia: The Emergence of Polish Social Democracy and Ukrainian Radicalism (1860–1890)* (Cambridge, MA 1983), 14–15; J.-P. Himka, "Voluntary Artisan Associations and the Ukrainian National Movement

- in Galicia (the 1870s)," in Markovits and Sysyn, 180.
8. "Kaiserliches Patent vom 20. December 1859... Gewerbe-Ordnung," *Reichs-Gesetz-Blatt für das Kaisertum Oesterreich* (Vienna 1859), 619–44.
  9. K. Grzybowski, *Galicja 1848–1914. Historia ustroju politycznego na tle historii Austrii*, Polska Akademia Nauk, Komitet nauk prawnych, Studia nad Historią Państwa i Prawa, Seria II, 9 (Cracow 1959), 75.
  10. *Die Bukowina*, 329.
  11. Ibid.; A. Sirka, *The Nationality Question in Austrian Education: The Case of Ukrainians in Galicia 1867–1914*, European University Studies, Series III: History and Allied Studies, 124 (Frankfurt am Main-Bern-Cirencester 1980), 76; T. Mizia and J. Miąso, "Oświata i szkolnictwo," in Tadeusz Lepakowski (ed.), *Słownik Historii Polski* (6th ed.; Warsaw 1973), 836.
  12. On municipal self-government in Galicia, see Grzybowski, 260–71. For Bukovyna, see *Sammlung der Landes-Gesetze für das Herzogthum Bukowina*, 8 vols. (Chernivtsi 1870–89), 1:1–71; also Himka, "A Researcher's Handbook," 72–7.
  13. M. Lozynsky, *Sorok lit diialnosti "Prosvity" (v 40-litnii iuvilei tovarystva)* (Lviv 1908). *Storichchia materi "Prosvity". Narys istorii matirnoho tovarystva Prosvity i ohliad prosvitnykh tovarystv u Kanadi* (Winnipeg 1968).
  14. Unavailable to the writer was the history of the society by Illia Semaka [Ievhen Dmytriv], *Istoriia prosvitnoho tovarystva "Ruska besida" v Chernivtsiakh* (Chernivtsi 1909).
  15. E. Olesnytsky, *Storinky z moho zhyttia*, 2 vols. (Lviv 1935), 1:22.
  16. J. Słomka, *From Serfdom to Self-Government: Memoirs of a Polish Village Mayor 1842–1927*, trans. W. J. Rose (London 1941), 84.
  17. Ibid., 26.
  18. This was the so-called servitudes issue. See M.M. Kravets, *Selianstvo Skhidnoi Halychyny i Pivnichnoi Bukovyny u druhii polovyni XIX st.* (Lviv 1964).
  19. [Hryhorii Tymchuk], "Pysmo vid Zalizhchyk. II," *Batktivshchyna* 6, no. 25 (20 [8] June 1884): 148–9. Tea was a recent innovation in Bukovyna at the end of the 1890s. *Die Bukowina*, 168.
  20. Słomka, 29.
  21. Blyzhkii, "Pysmo z-pid Stanislavova," *Batktivshchyna* 7, no. 40 (2 October [20 September] 1885): 272–3.
  22. Słomka, 21, 23–4.
  23. Tymchuk, "Pysmo vid Zalizhchyk."
  24. Blyzhkii, "Pysmo z-pid Stanislavova."
  25. Selianyn, "Pysmo vid Kalusha," *Batktivshchyna* 6, no. 11 (14 [2] March 1884): 64–5.
  26. J. Pennel, *The Jew at Home: Impressions of a Summer and Autumn Spent with Him* (New York 1892), 56.
  27. Insurance companies, concerned about fires, were the major promoters of tin roofs. According to insurance-company statistics, the peasants of Volhynia gubernia, the region of Russian-ruled Ukraine bordering Galicia, spent over 120,000 rubles on 762,631 kilogrammes of tin in just nine months of 1913. "Prodazh bliakhy," *Rada* (Kiev) 9, no. 2 (3 [15] January 1914): 3.
  28. The store in Kolodribka sold nails. Tymchuk, "Pysmo vid Zalizhchyk." They would have been used primarily to attach shingles and to hang objects of domestic use.
  29. The home of a well-off peasant in Kamianka Lisna, Rava Ruska district, in 1884 was distinguished by its "large windows" and by the presence of a bookcase "with glass doors." Chlen chytalni v Vynnykakh, "Pysmo z Zhovkvy," *Batktivshchyna* 6,

- no. 19 (9 May [27 April] 1884): 112. "The board-covered window was very rare by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. It consisted of thinly whittled boards that covered the elongated window openings and the window itself which was filled either with cow-stomach lining or many pieces of glued-together glass of different colours, sizes and thicknesses." C. Chomiak, "Vernacular Architecture and Forms and Plans of Rural Settlement, Western Ukraine, c. 1900," manuscript prepared for the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (Edmonton 1985), 65.
30. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1983), 38.
  31. J.-P. Himka, "Serfdom in Galicia," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 15-17.
  32. *Tafeln zur Statistik der österreichischen Monarchie für das Jahr 1842* (Vienna 1846), unpaginated.
  33. The most intensive expansion of the Galician school system occurred in the decade before the First World War. By 1914 there were 6,000 elementary schools in Galicia; 2,080 of them were founded between 1868 and 1905, while 1,444 were founded from 1905 to 1914. W. Bartel, *Zur Geschichte der galizischen Landesschulrates 1867-1918*, Sonderabdruck aus dem Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 114, Jahrgang 1977, So. 17 (Vienna 1978), 351.
  34. Hryhorii Tymchuk, "Pysmo vid Zalizhchyk. III," *Batktivshchyna* 6, no. 26 (27 [15] June 1884): 156.
  35. Ibid. 6, no. 27 (4 July [22 June] 1884): 168.
  36. J.-P. Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Edmonton 1988), 88.
  37. V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *Entsyklopediia ukrainoznavstva* (Paris 1949- ), sv. "Prosvita" and "Ruska Besida."
  38. Emphasis added. Slomka, 102.
  39. Peasants in Lopatyn, Brody district, staged an amateur theatrical performance in 1885 to raise money for the reading club and its library. "Pysmo z Bridshchyny," *Batktivshchyna* 7, no. 23 (5 June [4 May] 1885): 168-9.
  40. The well-to-do peasant of Kamianka Lisna had "a beautiful clock" against one of the walls of his home. Chlen chytalni, "Pysmo z Zhovkvy," 112. On traditional methods of timekeeping and the introduction of the clock, see Slomka, 18-19.
  41. For a description of a Shevchenko commemoration in Zakomarie, Zolochiv district, see Hromadiane Zakomarski, "Pysmo vid Ozhydova," *Batktivshchyna* 6, no. 10 (7 March [24 February] 1884): 58-9.
  42. [Hryhorii] R[ymar], "Pysmo z-pid Drohobycha," *ibid.* 4, no. 18 (16 [4] September 1882): 144; K.V., "Pysmo vid Kalusha," *ibid.* 6, no. 16 (18 [6] April 1884): 99; [Kr.], "Pysma z Kolomyishchyny. VIII," *ibid.* 7, no. 13 (27 [15] March 1885): 101; --i --i, "Pysmo vid Kalusha," *ibid.* 7, no. 49 (4 December [27 (sic; should be 22) November] 1885): 338; Himka, *Socialism*, 132.
  43. The wealthy peasant of Kamianka Lisna decorated his walls with "images of the saints, of the baptism of Rus' and portraits of our Ruthenian personalities." Chlen chytalni, "Pysmo z Zhovkvy," 112.
  44. O.I. Dei, *Ukrainska revoliutsiino-demokratychna zhurnalistyka. Problema vynyknennia i stanovlennia* (Kiev 1959), 82.
  45. Vasyl Fedorovych, "Pysmo vid Horodka," *Batktivshchyna* 7, no. 3 (16 [4] January 1885): 21.
  46. Sirka, 77-8.

47. *Entsyklopediia ukrainoznavstva*, sv. "Vorobkevych Sydir"; *Narysy z istorii Pivnichnoi Bukovyny*, 237.
48. [Mykhailo], "Spravy ruskykh chytalen. III," *Batktivshchyna* 6, no. 49 (5 December [23 November] 1884).
49. Danylo Saikevych of Radvantsi, Sokal district, was agitating for "enlightenment" in his village, but was opposed by traditionalist peasants under the mayor's leadership. He then recruited twenty-eight boys and girls and "began to teach them notes, then divided them up into voices; this pleased them so much that even adult peasants joined the singing group." D. Saikevych, "Pysmo z Sokalshchyny," *ibid.* 6, no. 38 (19 [7] September 1884): 233–4.
50. The question arises whether those districts of Western Ukraine that provided the majority of immigrants to Canada were less affected by cultural changes than other districts. As far as Galicia is concerned, the districts providing immigrants to Canada seem to have been no more culturally backward than others. Stella Hryniuk examined in detail five districts of Galicia that were the major source of Ukrainian immigrants to Manitoba and independently came to conclusions very similar to those presented in this study. See S. Hryniuk, "A Peasant Society in Transition: Ukrainian Peasants in Five East Galician Counties, 1880–1900," Doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, 1985. Orest Martynowych has identified the West Ukrainian districts that provided the most immigrants to east central Alberta and has shown that the reading club movement affected these districts. O. T. Martynowych, *The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890–1930: A History*, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Occasional Paper No. 10 (Edmonton 1985), 11–12, 25, 33–4, 48 notes 15–17. The sixteen districts of Galicia identified by Martynowych as the source of immigrants to Alberta accounted for 32.7 per cent of the total Ukrainian (Greek Catholic) population of Galicia (1900); yet in these districts were located 39.4 per cent of all Ukrainian reading clubs (1889). *Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder. Bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1900*, Herausgegeben von der k.k. statistischen Zentralkommission, B. 12: *Galizien* (Vienna 1907). *Rocznik Statystyki Galicyi* 3 (1889–91): 129–30. Bukovyna as a whole lagged slightly behind Galicia in the cultural developments described in the text. For example, in 1914 there were 197,000 members of reading clubs associated with the Galician popular educational society *Prosvita*, and 13,000 with the Bukovynian society *Ruska besida*. Comparing these figures with the number of Ukrainian speakers in each crownland in 1900, we find that about one of every sixteen Ukrainians in Galicia, but one of every twenty-three in Bukovyna, belonged to a reading club. *Entsyklopediia ukrainoznavstva*, sv. "Prosvita" and "Ruska Besida." *Österreichisches statistisches Handbuch* 20 (1901): 5.
51. As Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 38, 46, has observed, "anyone with money can buy Czech cars; only Czech-readers will buy Czech-language books"; and "we still have no giant multinationals in the world of publishing."

# The Canadian Prairie Frontier

T.D. Regehr

This paper attempts to characterize briefly some of the main attitudes and policies of the host society on the prairies which greeted the Ukrainian immigrants after 1895. It is not based on primary research pertaining specifically to the Ukrainians, since the writer's research relates mainly to the Mennonites and to railway policies. However, many of the attitudes and policies of the host society apply to immigrants in general, and hence also to the Ukrainians.

A typical account of how many of the immigrants were first received when they arrived in Canada is provided by D. B. Hanna in *Trains of Recollection*:

I accompanied the first party which was destined for Dauphin. They camped outside the town—not a very fashionable looking crowd, it is true. The women with handkerchiefs over their heads, their footwear made entirely for enduring ease, and their waistlines uncontrolled, deceived some onlookers as to their suitability for rearing Canadian citizens.

Pretty soon a deputation of townsmen waited upon Superintendent Hanna, with strong, straight intimation that by this unsolicited invasion a grave error in judgement had been committed, and a menace to the peace, order and good government of the realm introduced among a people who deserved a better fate. This threatened tide must be rolled back. And so on and so forth.

Superintendent Hanna reasoned with the deputation as well as he could, pointing out that these people had been attached to the soil for centuries; that they were accustomed to work, and not afraid of it; that their poverty was the best incentive to them to make good in a land where they would be free from some of the afflictions of their former country....

The deputation went away as little satisfied with the prospects of this intrusion as they were when they came. The superintendent turned to more customary duties.

A couple of hours later the chiefs of the deputation returned to retract their objections to the Galicians. From shirts, and from stockings above the unfeminine looking footgear, there had been brought forth enough cash to buy two thousand dollars' worth of supplies from Dauphin merchants; and faith and charity had begun to work up to lively hope



among the stores that this was a mere shadow of things to come. The might of economics in social life never received a more vivid vindication than was furnished the superintendent on that day.<sup>1</sup>

These particular immigrants were welcomed because of the economic services they provided as customers, pioneers, homesteaders and settlers, even though there were serious doubts about their social, religious and cultural values. Very few immigrant groups had more experience, or developed to a greater degree of perfection, the strategy of bargaining and exchanging political and social concessions for economic services than did the Mennonites.<sup>2</sup> In the above account, the Ukrainians benefited from the same reactions and attitudes of the host society.

Late nineteenth-century Canada was a particularly good place for useful and necessary pioneers who might normally be considered socially, religiously or politically undesirable.<sup>3</sup> As long as immigrants provided the desired economic services, and otherwise stayed out of trouble, they were tolerated by Canadians and welcomed by immigration, land and business promoters. There was a rather ill-defined expectation that the immigrants would, sooner or later, become true Canadians in a social, cultural, religious and economic sense,<sup>4</sup> and in the earliest years there was relatively little overt assimilationist pressure. People who thought seriously about the matter simply assumed that the new immigrants would quickly recognize the superiority of British civilization and British governmental and cultural institutions and become assimilated into Canadian society.<sup>5</sup>

This early tolerance of immigrants who provided economic services was, nevertheless, shallow and fickle. It did not apply equally to all immigrant groups, and many Canadians remained hostile to immigrants of non-Anglo-Celtic background. Rev. Charles W. Gordon, better known by his pen name, Ralph Connor, expressed the ambivalence of such Canadians.

In the first place we [Canada] need them [the foreigners] for our work. They do work for us that Canadians will not do. They do work for us that the Americans will not do; and were it not for the Galicians and the Doukhobours and the foreign peoples in our country today we could not push our enterprises in railroad building and in lumbering and manufacturing to a finish. We must have them.<sup>6</sup>

In his novel, *The Foreigner*, Connor also indicated that "these people [the Galicians] here exist as an undigested foreign mass. They must be digested and absorbed into the body politic. They must be taught in our ways of thinking and living, or it will be a mighty bad thing for us in Western Canada."<sup>7</sup>

The attitudes expressed by successive ministers of the interior were similar. Clifford Sifton, in 1901, declared emphatically that "The cry against the Doukhobours and Galicians is the most absolutely ignorant and absurd thing that I have ever known in my life. There is simply no question in regard to the advantage of these people."<sup>8</sup> In the same year, however, Frank Oliver, who succeeded Sifton as minister in 1905, voiced a far more critical view, declaring that many of the immigrants "know nothing of free institutions,"

and were therefore "a drag on our civilization and progress."<sup>9</sup>

Most Canadians before the First World War probably believed that some immigrants were more desirable than others. Those that made obvious economic progress, such as the Germans, Scandinavians and Mennonites, enjoyed greater tolerance and acceptance that did more impoverished immigrants such as the Orientals, Ukrainians and Italians.<sup>10</sup>

But even those Canadians of a more tolerant, or perhaps merely more utilitarian, turn of mind rarely had any real understanding or appreciation of the culture, religion and social values of the non-Anglo-Celtic immigrant groups. Anglo-Celtic Canadians believed that Canadians were, or certainly should become, "British in their historical associations, political ideals, their preference for law and order, and their capacity for self-government." The predominant social philosophy of the time stressed Anglo-conformity in an imperial context. Foreigners, it was expected, "would be assimilated to the prevailing ideals."<sup>11</sup> Few recognized that the foreigners had a culture or civilization of their own. Ralph Connor's reaction to the work of John Murray Gibbon, who in the 1920s and 1930s wrote about the culture and fine arts of the foreigners, reflected the extent of the earlier ignorance:

This is a revelation to me. . . . I always looked on the Poles as husky, dirty labourers whose chief entertainment was drink, but these are delightful, cultivated people. I feel that I have done them an injustice in my book. . . .

I was both surprised and delighted with what I saw and heard. These people have a culture that excels ours in some regards and is entirely worthy of our consideration and preservation.<sup>12</sup>

The prevailing cultural milieu of the host society before the First World War, whether expressed in a spirit of appreciation for economic services rendered by the immigrants or in a spirit of religious, social and cultural hostility and imperialism, was generally based on ignorance of the culture and social values of the immigrants. It was expected that, sooner or later, the immigrants would abandon their "backward" ways and become assimilated into the superior Anglo Canadian way of life.

Hostile attitudes toward the non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants gradually hardened as more and more came and the economic need for more immigrants diminished, while at the same time assimilation, for many, proceeded at a disappointingly slow pace. Strong, broadly based, national reform sentiments swept Canada during and immediately after the First World War, focusing in part on the social, cultural and religious characteristics of the immigrants. Group or bloc settlements and other accommodating government policies which had undoubtedly facilitated the economic purposes of the Dominion, but which had also allowed and facilitated the establishment of alien communities and social institutions, came under sharp attack. The longstanding problems of these groups occupying relatively low positions in the ethnic pecking order were intensified, and assimilationist pressures were sharply increased for several groups, notably those who spoke German, which



had previously enjoyed considerable toleration and even acceptance.<sup>13</sup>

At the height of the war hysteria some extremists demanded that all the immigrants from Germany and Austro-Hungary, including almost all the Ukrainian immigrants, be forcibly repatriated to their former homelands.<sup>14</sup> Much more common was the demand for policies which would significantly hasten and force the pace of assimilation. The churches were expected to play a vital role in this, but the public schools came to be seen as the most important institutions which could hasten the assimilation of the immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

First-generation adult immigrants from southeastern Europe were generally considered unassimilable, but their children had to be properly taught in the schools. "Unless we gird ourselves to this task with energy and determination, imbued with a spirit of tolerance," one prominent educator wrote, "the future of our Canadian citizenship will fail to reach that high level of intelligence which has ever characterized Anglo-Saxon civilization throughout the world." Only a proper Canadian education would ensure that these immigrant children would become "a living link in the great earth-girdling imperial chain of the greatest empire on earth."<sup>16</sup>

Forcing the pace of assimilation through the schools generated considerable resistance among some groups. The most conservative Mennonite groups responded dramatically by selling their properties and moving to Mexico and Paraguay where their economic services as pioneers again gained them concessions which they once had had in Canada, thanks to the efforts of Canadian reformers and educators.<sup>17</sup> The Ukrainian response was less radical and often more passive, except in the cities where residential institutes were established to serve mainly students who could earn Canadian academic credentials and then enter the schools to achieve essentially Ukrainian objectives.<sup>18</sup> For Mennonites and Ukrainians generally, however, the assimilationist pressures during and after the First World War merely increased resistance and probably retarded assimilation, even though the same policies hastened the assimilation of other groups.<sup>19</sup>

Not all those concerned about the immigrants after 1911, however, were social, educational or religious reformers. Canadian workers, whether members of organized labour unions or not, often saw immigrant workers as serious competitors for jobs. As long as the immigrants took only the dirtiest jobs and other jobs were plentiful, the immigrants were tolerated. But in periods of recession and unemployment, hostilities rapidly increased.

Major employers, particularly the railways, found it in their interest to have on hand a large supply of cheap labour to perform undesirable menial tasks, and, if the need arose, to serve as replacements for Canadian workers demanding higher wages and other concessions which the employers were unwilling to grant. Such exploitative labour practices occasionally created their own insecurities and problems. When prices rose sharply during the war, creating desperate conditions for workers at prevailing wage rates, it was relatively easy for labour agitators to stir up the workers in the urban slums. The threat of violence and, indeed, of revolution increased dramatically as

poverty and frustration increased. With the example of violent revolution in Russia before them, the Canadian immigrant workers came to be seen by many employers and other Canadian leaders as dangerous aliens.<sup>20</sup> Ukrainian immigrants did not rise to occupy many leadership positions in the radical labour organizations in the immediate postwar period, but many were certainly susceptible to the arguments of the radicals, and hence were regarded as a dangerous and unstable element in bad economic times. That danger gradually decreased after 1923 when the economic conditions improved.

The period after 1923 saw the emergence of a new attitude in most parts of Canada toward immigrants of non-Anglo-Celtic background. The aggressive assimilationist policies of the war and immediate postwar years created a backlash which helped the Liberal party to regain office in 1921. The Liberals believed that Canada needed more immigrants if there was to be satisfactory economic growth, although there was always some concern that the right type of immigrants be admitted. The difficulty was always to define exactly what was the right type. The railways and industrialists wanted more freight-producing settlers and an adequate labour supply to ensure that even the least desirable work got done at relatively low cost. The railways were particularly active in promoting an aggressive immigration policy and of creating a more positive image of the immigrants which were brought into the country. Various urban social agencies working with the immigrants also had the same goal. As a result, the Young Women's Christian Association published a modest study in 1926 entitled *Our Canadian Mosaic*, becoming thereby the first to use today's widely used term in the title of an official publication.<sup>21</sup> In the 1920s, when laissez-faire economics seemed to be leading the country to the biggest economic boom in its history, an open and free immigration policy also seemed to make sense. The concept of the mosaic matched the current economic ideology, leading to a radical redefinition of Canadian culture and identity.

## Notes

1. D. B. Hanna, *Trains of Recollection, Drawn from Fifty Years of Railway Service in Scotland and Canada* (Toronto 1924), 38-9.
2. T. D. Regehr, "The Writing of Canadian Mennonite History," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 1 (1983): 11-32.
3. Clifford Sifton's oft-quoted remarks about "men in sheepskin coats" are the best-known expression of Canadian policy and opportunities. J. W. Dafoe, *Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times* (Toronto 1931), 142.
4. H. Palmer (ed.), *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto 1975), 16-17, 77-9, 112-15.
5. C. A. Dawson, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada* (Toronto 1936).
6. C. W. Gordon, "Our Duty to the English-speaking and European Settlers," An Address to Canada's Missionary Congress, Toronto, 31 March-4 April 1909,

- quoted in E. H. Wood, "Ralph Connor and the Canadian West," Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1975, 58.
7. R. Connor, *The Foreigner: A Tale of Saskatchewan* (Toronto 1909), 225.
  8. Quoted in Dafoe, 142.
  9. Quoted in H. Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto 1982), 45.
  10. For a more detailed discussion of the "Ethnic Pecking Order," see *ibid.*, 22–37.
  11. C. Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1919* (Toronto 1970), 152.
  12. Quoted in Wood, 78.
  13. J. H. Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West 1914–1918* (Toronto 1978); D. Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy 1896–1919, the Anglo-Canadian Perspective," Doctoral thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1973.
  14. W. Bridgman, *Breaking Prairie Sod* (Toronto 1920), 188–209.
  15. J. T. M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem* (London and Toronto 1918); E. H. Oliver, *The Country School in Non-English Communities in Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon n.d.).
  16. Anderson, 8, 240.
  17. H. L. Sawatsky, *They Sought a Country, Mennonite Colonization in Mexico* (Berkley and Los Angeles 1971).
  18. S. Curniowsky, "How to Teach a Ukrainian," in M. Kovacs (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education* (Regina 1978), 365–6.
  19. K. Tischler, "The German Canadians in Saskatchewan with Particular Reference to the Language Problem," Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1979, 142–8.
  20. D. Avery, *'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896–1932* (Toronto 1979).
  21. K. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto 1926).

# The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930<sup>1</sup>

Orest T. Martynowych

## *Introduction*

In May 1894 four immigrants from the village of Nebyliv in eastern Galicia applied for homesteads on the four quarter sections which comprised Section 22, Township 56, Range 19, west of the fourth meridian.<sup>2</sup> Little did they know that the four quarters, located some thirty-two miles northeast of Edmonton, would become the nucleus of the largest Ukrainian bloc settlement in Canada. Within a few months, most of the Ukrainians who had migrated to Alberta since 1892 and settled a few miles to the southwest of the four quarters relocated on adjoining homesteads. New arrivals in 1895 and 1896 gravitated toward the new settlement. As a result, by the fall of 1896, just as immigration to the Canadian prairies was about to assume mass proportions, 300 Ukrainians were homesteading on seventy-five quarter sections in seven adjoining townships.<sup>3</sup>

When the outbreak of the First World War halted immigration, the Ukrainian settlement encompassed seventy townships and extended over some 2,500 square miles, stretching over seventy miles from Edna-Star in the west to Slawa in the east, and over forty miles from Smoky Lake in the north to Mundare and the outskirts of Vegreville in the south. About 25,000 people, the majority Ukrainian peasant immigrants from eastern Galicia and northern Bukovyna, inhabited the region. In 1931, at the end of the period under review, Ukrainians comprised the largest ethnic group in nineteen adjoining municipalities of east central Alberta.<sup>4</sup> In the ten rural municipalities at the centre Ukrainians constituted an absolute majority—from 50 to 85 per cent in each of the rural municipalities and 67.25 per cent of the total population (including the inhabitants of railroad towns) (Figs. 1 and 2).<sup>5</sup> It was these ten municipalities—a 3,000 square mile area situated between the 1905 Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) and the 1917-20 CNoR/CNR (Canadian National Railway) lines and populated by

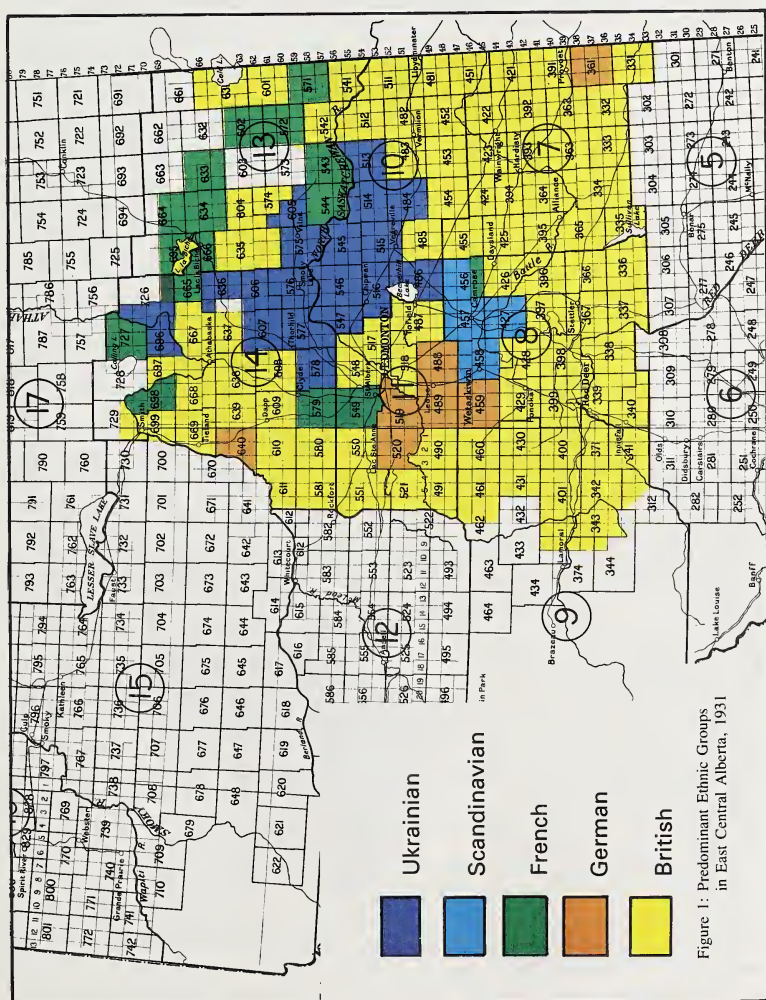
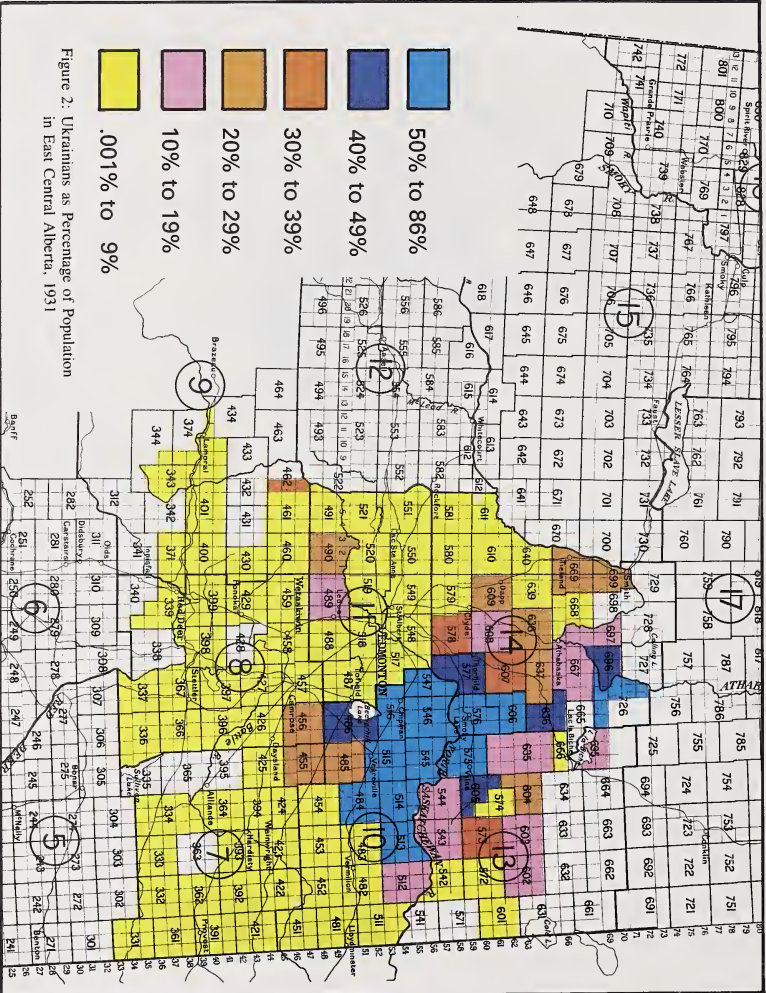


Figure 1: Predominant Ethnic Groups in East Central Alberta, 1931





almost 28,000 Ukrainians—that may be said to have constituted the Ukrainian bloc settlement in east central Alberta (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup>

This paper surveys three dimensions of life in the Ukrainian bloc settlement between 1890 and 1930: (1) the transition from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, (2) the evolution of rural communities and the institutions which gave them life and (3) the role played by railroad towns in the region. It focuses on general trends rather than on the experiences of individuals and communities, and is intended as an introduction to the Ukrainian experience in east central Alberta.<sup>7</sup>

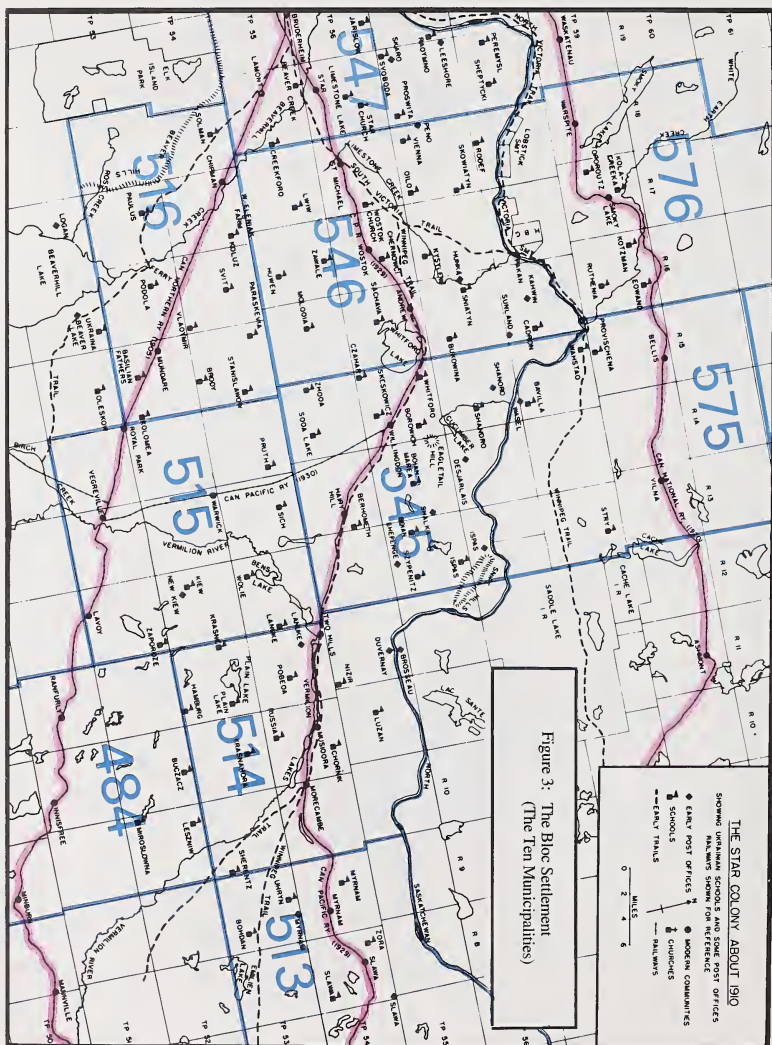
### *The Farm*

In most parts of the bloc settlement the typical Ukrainian farm passed through three phases between 1890 and 1930. During the first phase the immigrant family concentrated on accumulating the capital required to establish a farming operation. A temporary dug-out shelter called a *zemlianka* or *burdei* was constructed and only enough land was improved to satisfy the provisions of the Homestead Act.<sup>8</sup> Adult males spent most of the year working as railway navvies, miners, lumberjacks and harvest labourers. Women and children worked the field and garden crops, looked after the existing livestock and helped established neighbours in exchange for milk and garden products. Within a year, most homesteaders could purchase a cow, a few chickens and one or two hogs. Thereafter the family's food supply was assured. Depending on the family's wealth, the number and age of its males and the nature of the terrain, the first phase could vary "from five years in the country of light timber and good soil to an indefinite time in other districts."<sup>9</sup> In most parts of the bloc, the first phase came to an end by 1905–10.

The second phase was a transition period from subsistence to commercial farming. With sufficient capital accumulated to acquire a team of oxen or a pair of horses, a few cows, some hogs and poultry, a cart, a plough, a harrow, perhaps a binder and certainly a permanent dwelling—a two-room clay-plastered log house with a thatched roof—the men settled down to full-time farming. During the next five or ten years livestock holdings were expanded, more land improved and a variety of specialized outbuildings constructed. The entire family worked the farm, especially at spring seeding and during harvest.

Many Ukrainian farmers in the municipalities of Leslie #547, Wostok #546, Eagle #545 and The Pines #516—all sparsely wooded and settled since the turn of the century—were already producing for the market when the First World War broke out. By 1916 about fifty to seventy acres of land had been improved on the typical farm and about fifteen to twenty acres had been sown with wheat and another twenty to thirty acres with oats. The average farm had six horses, fourteen head of cattle (including milch cows) and twelve to sixteen hogs.<sup>10</sup> Hogs were the quickest, easiest and most profitable





way to raise cash since they could be fed coarse or frozen grain, skim milk, whey and slops. In a number of districts in the same four municipalities Ukrainian farmers also turned to commercial wheat farming. In the Shandro-Whitford district (Eagle #545, Wostok #546), where the soil was exceptionally rich, most Ukrainian farmers owned 320 acres by 1916 and a few as much as 800 acres. On many, over 100 acres had been improved and one of the local farmers had already earned \$3,000 from the sale of a single grain crop in 1913.<sup>11</sup> In a district north of Mundare (The Pines #516), twenty-two of thirty farmers owned at least 320 acres. About 44 per cent of the land had been improved and of this 42 per cent was sown with wheat. Farmers in the Star-St. Michael-Wostok district (Leslie #547, Wostok #546), settled by the first Ukrainian immigrants from Nebyliv, were turning to commercial wheat farming in earnest by 1916.<sup>12</sup>

The third phase saw a large number of Ukrainian farmers make the transition to commercial farming. The process was stimulated by the high price for agricultural products, especially wheat, during the war years, and by the good crop yields and generous prices of the late 1920s. Between 1916 and 1921 improved acreage in the bloc settlement increased by 52.2 per cent and the area sown with wheat increased by 84.3 per cent.<sup>13</sup> During the ensuing decade (1921-31) improved acreage increased by 115.8 per cent and wheat acreage by 214.8 per cent.<sup>14</sup> Commercial farming was stimulated by a new generation of Ukrainian farmers during the 1920s, as many of the original homesteaders retired or passed away. Old peasant habits were set aside; North American-style two-storey frame or brick houses were constructed; and profits were invested in new machinery and land. Steam engines, threshing machines (separators), and by the end of the decade, tractors, were added to the farm inventory. In the Shandro-Andrew district Ukrainian farmers bought up all the land. By 1929 the size of the average farm in the Andrew district was 416 acres, including 248 improved acres.<sup>15</sup> Most of the land around Vegreville (Norma #515) had also been purchased by Ukrainian farmers who proceeded to expand into the area south of Ranfurly and Lavoy (Birch Lake #484), displacing English- and French-speaking settlers.

During the 1920s several new trends were discernible in the operation of farms in the bloc settlement. Livestock farming experienced a setback. During the war years the expansion of wheat farming and the disappearance of vacant homestead and railroad lands, used earlier as free pastures, caused many farmers to neglect their cattle. Between 1916 and 1931 the number of cattle fell from 66,406 to 56,416 (or from 12.5 to 8.5 per farm). The trend would not be reversed until the 1930s when falling grain prices increased interest in livestock, fodder crops and scientific feeding and breeding methods. Hog farming, always popular with Ukrainian farmers, held its own during the 1920s. Between 1916 and 1931 the number of hogs in the bloc settlement increased from 61,859 to 97,698 (or from 11.6 to 14.7 per farm).<sup>16</sup> Provincially appointed district agriculturalists did the most to improve the quality of hogs by introducing new breeding and feeding methods during the late 1920s.

Another new trend was the leasing and renting of farms. Successful farmers with entrepreneurial interests leased out their farms when they established businesses in towns. Immigrants without resources to establish farms of their own, or with inferior homestead lands, rented land on the way to becoming independent farmers. In the environs of Vegreville, successful Ukrainian farmers frequently rented lands from their less successful English-speaking neighbours.<sup>17</sup> In general, however, there was less land leasing and rental in the bloc settlement than in the rest of the province. Almost 90 per cent of the farmers in the bloc owned the land which they farmed during the 1920s, compared to 70 per cent in the rest of the province. Within the bloc there were also fewer tenants in the underdeveloped municipalities (Smoky Lake #576, Vilna #575, Ukraina #513) than in the advanced municipalities (Norma #515, Birch Lake #484).

Larger operations and a growing appreciation of higher education for teenaged children also obliged some Ukrainian farmers to employ hired men and female domestic help. The arrival of 9,400 Ukrainian immigrants (primarily from Galicia and Volhynia, recently incorporated into Poland) between 1924 and 1930 provided a pool of cheap labour upon which to draw. Hired help was most widespread in municipalities such as Norma, where larger commercial farms predominated. In general, however, hired workers on the average farm in the bloc settlement were fewer than in Alberta as a whole.<sup>18</sup> The family, especially female members, continued to provide more labour power on the Ukrainian farm than elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> The progress and agricultural expansion within the bloc was primarily the result of larger working family units (5.06 members per rural household compared to 4.26 for rural Alberta as a whole),<sup>20</sup> the work done by women<sup>21</sup> and the very low expectations and simple lifestyle to which the peasant immigrant had been accustomed.

By 1929 the Ukrainian farmers of east central Alberta had become the envy of Ukrainians across Canada. In the districts around Andrew, Vegreville, Mundare and Lamont, Ukrainian farms were larger and revenues greater than in any other Ukrainian settlement on the prairies. The success, however, was more apparant than real. In 1931 the average Ukrainian farmer in the bloc owned 38 per cent less land—of which he had improved 24 per cent less and cropped 16 per cent less—than the average Alberta farmer.<sup>22</sup> He owned 1.3 fewer horses, 3.25 fewer head of cattle and slightly less poultry than the average Alberta farmer. Only in hog production did Ukrainian farmers surpass the rest of the province. In 1935 the average farm in the bloc was worth almost \$1,200 less than the average Alberta farm, and the two municipalities where farm values exceeded the provincial norm, Leslie #547 and Norma #515, had the lowest percentage of Ukrainian inhabitants—50.1 and 58.4 per cent respectively.<sup>23</sup>

Although agricultural development in the Ukrainian bloc lagged behind most of the province, the degree of development within the bloc varied from region to region. At least four regions may be identified, the first consisting of the municipalities of Leslie #547, Wostok #546, Eagle #545, and The

Pines #516 (see Fig. 4). In 1931 the average farm in this region was approximately 250 acres, with at least 150 acres improved and 70 acres sown in wheat. Barley (10 acres/farm) and hog (18 head/farm) production were also more important than elsewhere in the bloc. Revenues were derived almost equally from the sale of crops and livestock and production for domestic consumption. Between 1931 and 1936 wheat acreage fell to 50 acres per farm while barley acreage rose to 15 acres per farm. Hog and cattle production also grew in importance during the Depression.

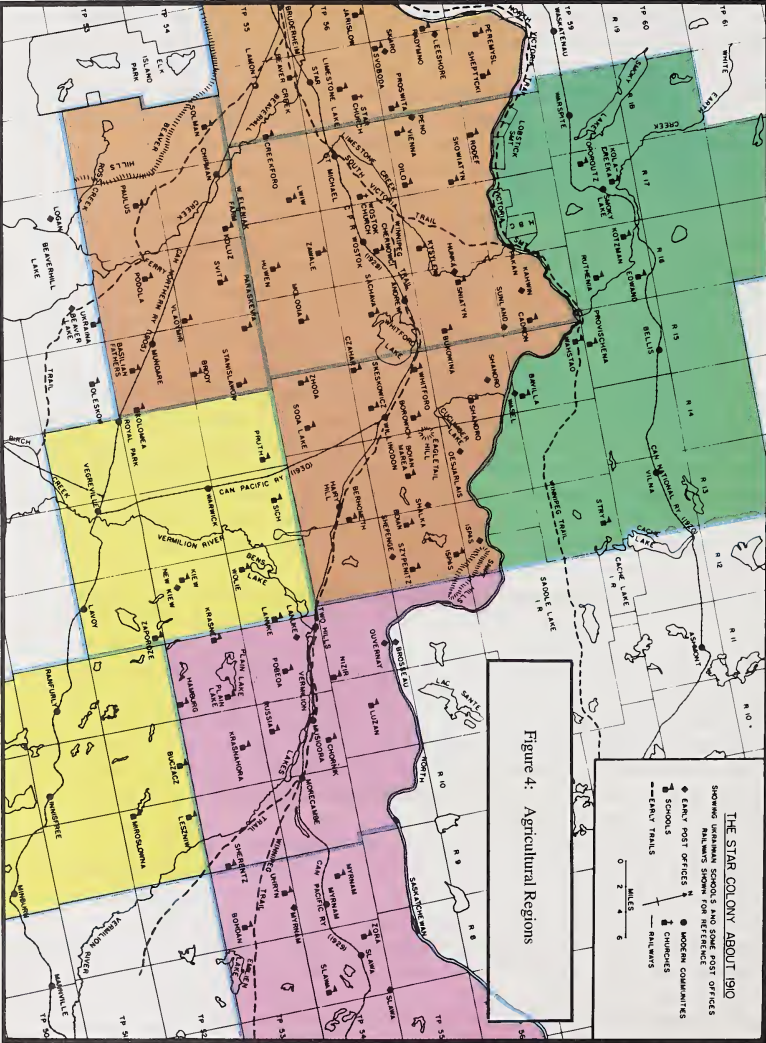
The second region consisted of the municipalities of Norma #515 and Birch Lake #484. In 1931 the average farm in this region was 320 acres, including almost 200 acres of improved land of which 100 acres were sown with wheat. Hog and cattle production were also quite important. Farm revenues, especially in Norma #515, were about 50 per cent greater than in the rest of the bloc, being derived primarily from the sale of crops, although the sale of livestock and production for domestic use were equal to or greater than in the rest of the bloc. In this region wheat production declined after 1931 as farmers turned to barley, cattle and hog production.

In the municipalities of Sobor #514 and Ukraina #513—the third region—the average farm consisted of 250 acres in 1931, with only 110 acres improved and 60 sown with wheat. Cattle (10 head/farm) and hog (11 head/farm) production were on a par with the rest of the bloc. Unlike other regions, wheat production continued to expand (primarily in Ukraina #513) after 1931, while hogs and cattle held their own. By 1936 crops were the major source of farm revenue, followed by production for domestic consumption and the sale of livestock.

The fourth region—the municipalities of Vilna #575 and Smoky Lake #576—was the poorest and least developed in the bloc. In 1931 the average farm size was about 210 acres, of which less than 90 acres had been improved and less than 40 sown with wheat. Cattle and hog production were marginally below the rest of the bloc. Farm revenues, considerably lower than in other regions, were derived primarily from production for domestic consumption, with revenues from the sale of livestock greater than the sale of field crops.<sup>24</sup> By most criteria this was still essentially a pioneer region. In this region the average farm was valued at just over \$3,500, which was \$3,200 below the provincial average.

How can the disparities in agricultural development within the bloc and in relation to the rest of the province be explained? Of the variables determining the rate of development within the bloc, the first was the length of time an area had been settled. The least developed municipalities (Vilna #575, Smoky Lake #576, Ukraina #513, Sobor #514) were the last to be settled. Although Smoky Lake and Vilna were formally opened to settlement in 1902, most settlers arrived after 1905. Similarly the influx of settlers into Ukraina and Sobor was slight prior to 1905. In the more highly developed municipalities (Leslie #547, Wostok #546, Eagle #545, The Pines #516), settlement dated from the late 1890s. The most highly developed municipalities (Norma #515, Birch Lake #484) had been settled by





non-Ukrainian homesteaders between 1901 and 1911, and significant concentrations continued to farm in 1931. A second variable was the quality of the land settled. Most of the soil in Smoky Lake #576 and Vilna #575 was poor, as was that in Sobor #514, especially the rough, stoney rolling terrain with small lakes which extended from Plain Lake north to the North Saskatchewan River.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the lands south and east of Wostok in the municipalities of Wostok #546, Eagle #545, Norma #515 and The Pines #516 were flat and fertile. A third factor was proximity to railroads, with farms larger and more improved where access was easiest. The grain marketing facilities in the railroad towns along the 1905 CNoR line (Lamont, Chipman, Mundare, Vegreville, Lavoy, Ranfurly) encouraged production for the market and land improvement in the municipalities of Leslie #547, Wostok #546, The Pines #516, Norma #515, Birch Lake #484 and Eagle #545. On the other hand, further north (Smoky Lake #576, Vilna #575) and east (Sobor #514, Ukraina #513), where grain had to be hauled more than thirty miles over poor roads before the 1920s, there was little incentive to abandon subsistence for commercial farming.

Why did agricultural development in the bloc lag behind the rest of the province? At a time when about \$975 were required to establish a farm,<sup>26</sup> most Ukrainian settlers arrived with little or no cash and had first to work elsewhere to acquire the capital to start farming.<sup>27</sup> As a result, Ukrainians began farming much later than settlers from Ontario, the United States or northern Europe. Nor could most Ukrainians pre-empt adjoining quarter sections or buy railroad lands when filing their homestead applications.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the Ukrainian peasant immigrant's desire for an ample supply of wood also slowed down the rate of agricultural development.<sup>29</sup> Ukrainian homesteaders spent more time and energy clearing the land than did settlers on the open prairie further south. Development was slowest in the two most heavily forested municipalities north of the North Saskatchewan River (Smoky Lake #576, Vilna #575).

Finally, agricultural progress was also checked by peasant conservatism—the unwillingness to break with time-tested methods—and the absence of programmes of information about new agricultural methods among Ukrainian farmers before the late 1920s. As a result, Ukrainians in livestock production remained suspicious of new breeds and new feeding methods and shunned minerals and proteins for their animals. Ignoring consumer demand for quality, they displayed little interest in high-grade Yorkshire bacon hogs as they did in purebred sires for their cattle or good strains of milch cows.<sup>30</sup> The fact that about 48 per cent of Ukrainian men over fourteen years were illiterate in 1916 and 86 per cent could not read English hampered efforts to disseminate information about new farming methods.<sup>31</sup> In 1931, 13.42 per cent of Ukrainian men in Alberta, twenty-one years of age and over, were illiterate, while 13.06 per cent of the men over ten years could not speak English.<sup>32</sup> Only with the appointment of Ukrainian-speaking professional agriculturalists by the federal and provincial governments during the 1920s were new methods of farming introduced.

### *The Rural Community*

The Ukrainians who settled in western Canada did not attempt to establish clustered villages such as those in the Old Country. Instead, they lived on quarter-section homesteads, sometimes as much as half a mile from their nearest neighbour. Nevertheless, the traditional Old Country settlement pattern was *partially* reconstituted through village-like rural communities in spatially extended form because of the homestead system.<sup>33</sup> Chain migration and gravitational settlement assisted the process, as kinsmen, fellow villagers and inhabitants of the same district settled near one another (Fig. 5).<sup>34</sup> Institutions to satisfy social, cultural and religious needs were established, causing sociologist C. H. Young to conclude that "old world communities [had been] taken up wholesale and set down on the soil of our Prairie Provinces."<sup>35</sup>

Rural communities varied in size and complexity. Some were no larger than a school district, with the local schoolhouse the only readily identifiable institution, in which church services, concerts, meetings, picnics and all other community functions were held. More complex rural communities had a store, a post office with a toll telephone, and frequently a blacksmith, an implement dealer and a miller. The focal points of most communities were a church, a school and a community hall (*narodnyi dim*), often at a crossroads.

As the essential services and institutions were rarely so tightly clustered as to be identified with one rural community, rural east central Alberta was really a "series of interdependent communities."<sup>36</sup> The tendency to overlap was reinforced by the voluntary nature of membership based on kinship and village ties, religious persuasion, political convictions, and ease of access. While the choice did not necessarily coincide with that of immediate neighbours, local residents nonetheless were aware of informal boundaries and each community had an identity, deriving its name from the local post office or school, frequently named after Old Country villages and districts, popular Ukrainian slogans, topographic features or prominent settlers such as the first local post master. The institutions defined the community and imbued its members with a sense of place.

Among the factors which determined the rate at which rural community institutions emerged, economic considerations were the most important. During the early years the number of males who left to seek work was so great "that any work of a community nature was impossible."<sup>37</sup> Even though some churches were built before homes had been erected, settlers were often reluctant to build and maintain schools and pay teachers' salaries. Less essential services and structures were even less prevalent. While almost 130 one-room schools were constructed between 1904 and 1914, stores began to appear in significant numbers only after 1910.<sup>38</sup> Although a few reading clubs (*chytalni*) had begun to meet in private homes shortly after 1900, most rural community halls were built during the 1920s and 1930s after high, war-generated agricultural prices had raised the standard of living among rural Ukrainians.



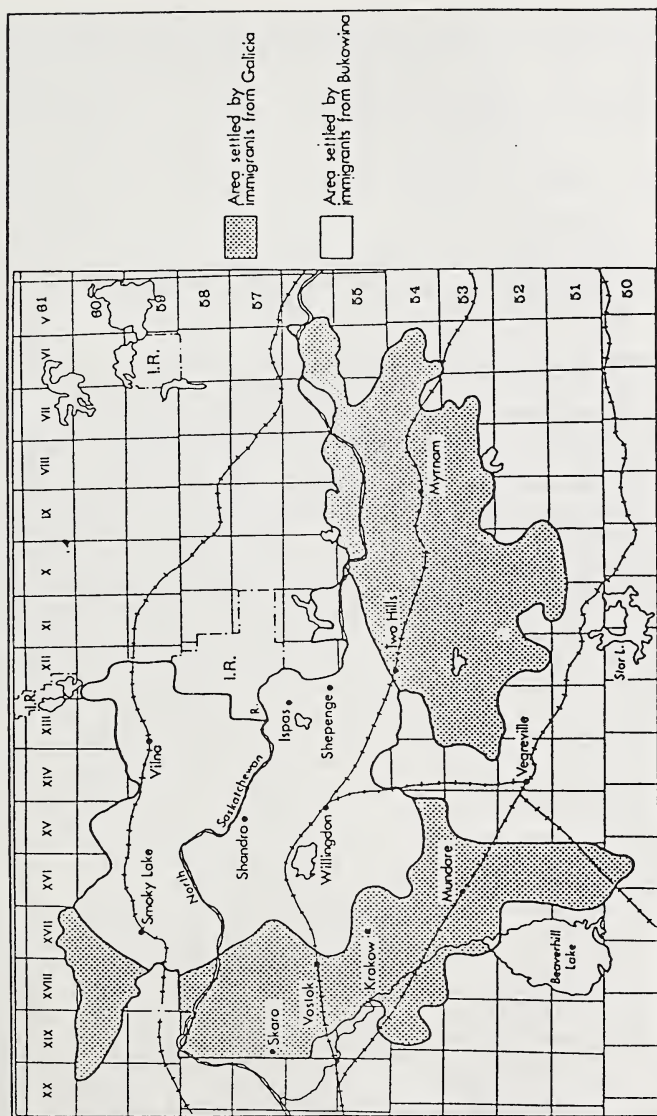


Figure 5. Area of Galician and Bukovynian Settlements in East Central Alberta, ca. 1914. (Source: J. C. Lehr, "The Process and Pattern of Ukrainian Rural Settlement in Western Canada, 1891-1914," Doctoral Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, 273)

The absence of traditional community leaders hampered the establishment of rural communities. In Galicia and Bukovyna leadership had been provided by the village priest and his family, with the most conscientious and dedicated organizing reading clubs, establishing co-operatives, conducting choirs, sponsoring amateur theatricals, inviting guest lecturers and introducing the peasants to new agricultural methods. Where clergymen failed to lead, services were frequently provided by the local Ukrainian school teacher or young doctor or lawyer. In east central Alberta, with resident clergymen few, the harried missionaries who held services in a different community each week were just barely able to meet the settlers' spiritual needs. With Ukrainian school teachers and professionals in east central Alberta also few before the 1930s, leadership devolved upon the few immigrants who had acquired some education and experience in local government in the Old Country.

*The church.* Churches were frequently the first institutions to appear. The overwhelming majority of Ukrainian immigrants from eastern Galicia belonged to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church; those from northern Bukovyna belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church. Because the two churches were unable to furnish sufficient priests, some immigrants turned to missionaries who represented other Christian denominations. Two churches that made significant inroads among Ukrainians in western Canada were the Russian Orthodox Church, represented in North America by the Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska, and the Independent Greek Church, established by immigrants with Radical<sup>39</sup> leanings who enjoyed the support of the Presbyterian Home Mission Board for a decade prior to the First World War. Members of the short-lived institution, together with the handful of Ukrainians converted to Methodism by missionaries in east central Alberta, constituted the majority of Ukrainian Protestants in the bloc. By 1930 most were members of the United Church of Canada. A third church, born out of the upheavals produced during the First World War, which began to win converts in the bloc during the 1920s and 1930s, was the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, established in 1918 by disaffected Greek Catholics and others who demanded greater scope for lay initiative in the religious and cultural life of their communities. Thus, by 1930 Ukrainians in east central Alberta belonged to one of four denominations: Greek Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Ukrainian Greek Orthodox and United Church.

The Greek Catholic Church, which has always held the allegiance of most Ukrainians within the bloc, lost adherents to its three competitors between 1890 and 1930. Not only did few Greek Catholic priests emigrate to western Canada, but Roman Catholic bishops in North America refused to tolerate married Greek Catholic priests in their dioceses. With the Vatican decree in 1894 forbidding married priests to serve in North America, 97 per cent of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests in the Old Country were disqualified from missionary work in the new world.<sup>40</sup> Conflicts with the Roman Catholic hierarchy in western Canada also alienated many immigrants. Roman Catholic bishops tried to incorporate land and property belonging to Greek

Catholic congregations; they dispatched Polish Roman Catholic missionaries into Ukrainian Greek Catholic communities; and they opposed the appointment of a Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishop for over a decade. To make matters worse, the intransigent behaviour of the first Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishop, Nykyta Budka, who asserted his authority over the entire Ukrainian Canadian community as he might have over a remote and isolated village in Galicia, finally precipitated a full-blown rebellion within the church.<sup>41</sup>

Before 1930 there were only three or four Greek Catholic priests in Alberta at any one time, most being members of the Basilian order of monks who had first arrived in 1902 and established a monastery in Beaver Lake, three miles southeast of Mundare. By 1918, forty Greek Catholic churches had been constructed in east central Alberta, most within the bloc settlement.<sup>42</sup> Between 1918 and 1930, however, only four new congregations were organized, while a number split or defected en masse to the newly established Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church. At its nadir across Canada during the 1920s, the Greek Catholic Church began the process of reconsolidation in east central Alberta through a Basilian novitiate and seminary staffed with teachers recruited in Galicia. The first Canadian-born and educated Basilian priest was ordained in 1932. During the 1930s, thirty new parishes and almost as many mission stations were organized, primarily in the Peace River district and along the periphery of the bloc settlement. By 1940 there were twenty-three Basilian and two secular Greek Catholic priests in Alberta.<sup>43</sup>

Within the bloc the Greek Catholic Church was dominant around Radway and Leeshore (Unity #577, Leslie #547), between Chipman and Mundare (The Pines #516) and in the region stretching east from Two Hills to Clandonald (Sobor #514, Ukraina #513).<sup>44</sup> In 1931, 60 per cent of the Ukrainians in Alberta were Greek Catholics.<sup>45</sup> Within the ten municipalities in the bloc, just over 50 per cent belonged to the Greek Catholic Church.<sup>46</sup>

The Russian Orthodox Church (known as the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church after 1924) stood second to the Greek Catholic Church in adherents. It obtained a foothold because it filled the vacuum created by the absence of Greek Orthodox priests among the numerous Orthodox immigrants from Bukovyna,<sup>47</sup> and because it capitalized on disputes between Roman Catholic bishops and Greek Catholic laymen by penetrating into those Galician Greek Catholic settlements where Russophile sentiment was marked.<sup>48</sup> Its expansion was facilitated by the many Russian Orthodox missionaries who spoke Ukrainian,<sup>49</sup> and by the similarity of the Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic liturgies. Most Ukrainian peasant immigrants from the Habsburg empire, especially the Bukovynians, also felt no national antagonism toward Russians prior to 1914, which facilitated the spread of Russian Orthodoxy. The latter was especially attractive because the Russian Orthodox missionaries, subsidized by the tsarist government, made few financial demands on the immigrants and did not require the incorporation of parish property with the hierarchy of their church.<sup>50</sup> By 1917 the Russian Orthodox Church in east central Alberta

numbered nine priests (including three monks), sixteen churches, one monastery and twelve mission stations.<sup>51</sup> Wostok, where the Holy Trinity Ascension of Christ Monastery was located, was the focal point with priests also stationed at Boian, Star, Mundare, Shandro, Smoky Lake and Rabbit Hill.

The fall of the tsarist regime in Russia in 1917 and the subsequent triumph of the Bolsheviks dealt the Russian Orthodox Church in North America a blow that was nearly fatal. The church lost its major source of revenue and the hierarchy fell victim to incessant power struggles which did much to undermine clerical prestige.<sup>52</sup> The new sense of Ukrainian national consciousness and the emergence of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church had the same effect.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the church retained a foothold in east central Alberta. In 1930 the Shandro district (Eagle #545) stood out as the foremost centre of Russian Orthodoxy within the bloc. Others included the Andrew, Willingdon and Kaleland districts (Eagle #545, Wostok #546) and the rural areas north of the North Saskatchewan River (Smoky Lake #576, Vilna #575), where farmers remained firmly attached because relatives were buried in Russian Orthodox cemeteries.<sup>54</sup> The Russian church was also prominent in the Wostok, Skaro, Penno and Rodef districts (Wostok #546, Leslie #547), where Galicians who converted to Russian Orthodoxy from Greek Catholicism lived. Congregations also survived in Chipman and a few miles north of Mundare (The Pines #516). In 1931 the majority of the 19,303 Ukrainian Albertans listed as "Greek Orthodox" belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>55</sup> In the ten municipalities that constituted the bloc, about 42 per cent of Ukrainians were listed as "Greek Orthodox,"<sup>56</sup> but a large majority belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Before 1930 the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church included a dynamic minority of the 19,303 "Greek Orthodox" Ukrainians in Alberta. The church had been established by teachers, businessmen and young professionals who resented clerical tutelage and saw the Ukrainian complexion of the Greek Catholic Church jeopardized. As a burgeoning middle class they favoured the democratic, synodal form of government prevalent in the Orthodox church, which allowed extensive participation by the laity. In the 1920s the church expanded as Greek Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Independent Greek Church/Presbyterian congregations joined the new institution.<sup>57</sup>

By 1928-9 over twenty congregations had been organized in Alberta, served by no more than four Ukrainian Greek Orthodox priests. Unlike Catholic and Russian priests, the Ukrainian Orthodox were expected to marry and to participate in the social and cultural life of their parish. Despite its converts in Alberta, the church did not expand as rapidly as it did in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.<sup>58</sup> Its strong appeal to Ukrainian national sentiment attracted the intelligentsia and the businessman in the cities and railroad towns and some of the more prosperous and enlightened farmers. T.C. Byrne, who studied the bloc in 1937, concluded that the church's stronghold was in two townships northwest of Vegreville, between Royal Park and Spring Creek (Norma #515).<sup>59</sup> The new church was also strong in the



railroad towns north of the North Saskatchewan River (Smoky Lake, Vilna, Bellis).

The nativist hostility of the First World War, combined with the growth of Ukrainian national feeling and the emergence of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, effectively destroyed Protestantism's slim chances among the Ukrainian settlers. By 1914 Methodist missionaries had won only fifty converts<sup>60</sup> in the bloc, while by 1917 there were only seven Ukrainian ministers affiliated with the Presbyterian church serving nine congregations (Musidora, Krakow, Zawale, Sniatyn, Andrew, Kahwin, Rimula and Slawa) with just over 600 members.<sup>61</sup> In the 1920s most Ukrainian ministers and their congregations joined the United Church, with Ukrainian congregations in Lamont, Radway, Smoky Lake, Bellis, Andrew/Huwen, Krakow, Zawale, Two Hills and Edmonton. In 1931, 810 Alberta Ukrainians belonged to the United Church, with 417 in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>62</sup>

*The school.* The school was the second major institution to appear in most rural communities, even though some settlers opposed the creation of school districts and the construction of schools. Between 1900 and 1915 over 130 schools were organized within the bloc, as even the most rabid opponents perceived the advantages of education for their children.

Prior to the 1920s the school system's efficiency, as in most parts of rural Alberta, left much to be desired. School trustees resisted spending more than the absolute minimum to operate schools. Some closed their schools for part of the year, discouraged children over fifteen from attending, refused to introduce high school instruction, objected to extracurricular activities which kept children away from the farm and refused to purchase much needed school equipment.<sup>63</sup> School attendance was always irregular, as the settlers struggled to make ends meet and kept children from attending school. In the spring and the summer's end the children were needed at home. In the winter some parents could not afford to buy shoes and warm clothing for children attending school. The poor roads did not encourage school attendance. But the major problem was the shortage of qualified teachers. In the bloc, teachers were scarce, as few qualified teachers were willing to endure loneliness, isolation (physical and cultural) and the absence of suitable living accommodation. The Department of Education stubbornly refused to establish a special training school where immigrants with some education in the Old Country could earn professional certificates to teach in Ukrainian districts.<sup>64</sup> As a result, many were left without a teacher for most of the year or were saddled with the dregs of the teaching profession.<sup>65</sup>

The problems were gradually resolved during the 1920s. As Ukrainian farmers became involved in commercial farming and their living standards rose, trustees became less reluctant to spend money on schools. Many could now afford to provide their children with a high school and/or normal school education. By the 1930s the supply of teachers also matched the demand for services in the bloc settlement. As a result, by 1930 most children attended school from six to the age of sixteen, and schools operated from September through June for 200 days annually. From about 1927 there had been a

growing demand for high school instruction, and in 1930 about 15 per cent of the young people in the bloc were enrolled in the high school grades (IX–XII).<sup>66</sup>

The first Ukrainian normal school graduate entered the teaching force in 1916. By 1930 the proportion of Ukrainian students in normal schools (7.8 per cent/75 students) matched the proportion of Ukrainians in Alberta (7.6 per cent/55,872 inhabitants).<sup>67</sup> At the time there were 287 teachers of Ukrainian origin, who constituted 5.03 per cent of the Alberta teaching force. A decade later there were 474 teachers of Ukrainian origin in Alberta, who constituted 7.6 per cent of the teaching force (Ukrainians were almost 9 per cent of the population). Eighty-six per cent of the teachers were in predominantly Ukrainian school districts; the rest taught in districts settled by Poles, Romanians and Russians.<sup>68</sup> The highest percentage of Ukrainian teachers was in the Two Hills school division (94.2), followed by Lamont (77.7), Smoky Lake (71.1) and Vegreville (40–50). Ukrainian teachers were under-represented in city and town schools (1.7 per cent), where teachers' salaries were relatively generous, and over-represented in the rural schools (88.4 per cent), where salaries were low.<sup>69</sup> The disproportion was the result of prejudice: "Even the suggestion of Ukrainian extraction in a name is enough generally to cause the refusal of an application."<sup>70</sup>

*The community hall (narodnyi dim).* The last major institution to appear in most rural communities was the *narodnyi dim* or community hall, most of which were built during the 1920s and 1930s. The *narodnyi dim* was the Canadian offspring of the *chytalnia* (reading club) which had mushroomed in Galicia and Bukovyna after 1890. Frequently the *narodnyi dim* was erected by members of a reading club, organized some years earlier in the home of one of the settlers.<sup>71</sup> The Canadian *narodni domy* were not, however, perfect replicas of the Old Country *chytalni*. Like the latter, most *narodni domy* were used for meetings, lectures, choir rehearsals, plays and concerts; few, however, served as centres of co-operative activity and many did not have a library or reading room. Although some held classes in the Ukrainian language and folk arts for children on Saturdays, none seem to have provided systematic adult education to eradicate illiteracy. The *narodni domy* were more oriented toward entertainment and recreation than the *chytalni* had been. Concerts, dances, picnics and athletic activities dominated the programme in most community halls, though visiting speakers from all parts of Canada and abroad did speak on all kinds of subjects.

The first *narodnyi dim* in east central Alberta was erected in Vegreville in 1914. By 1940, when their "golden age" had come to an end, at least 110 had been constructed in the province, all but eighteen in east central Alberta.<sup>72</sup> About 40 per cent were located in the cities and railroad towns, with the rest in rural communities. Most had been built by volunteers with funds generated by concerts and amateur theatricals. Almost all were named after some prominent figure in Ukrainian history, with the name frequently reflecting the ideological orientation of the members.<sup>73</sup>



There were three categories of *narodni domy*: independent, Catholic and pro-Communist. The earliest were usually independent, established on non-denominational principles, although some by the 1930s were tied to the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church's Union of Ukrainian Community Centres (SUND—*Soiuz Ukrainskykh Narodnykh Domiv*). Catholic halls were usually affiliated with a local parish.<sup>74</sup> Although two were erected in 1917 in Edmonton and Mundare, most in the bloc settlement were built after 1930. The pro-Communist Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association (TURF-dim—*Tovarystvo Ukrainskykh Robitnycho-Farmerskykh Domiv*) halls, which appeared in the mid-1920s, expanded rapidly in the 1930s by appealing to Ukrainian national pride, bringing new cadres up through the ranks and supplying films, lectures, performers and trained personnel to teach music and train drama groups.<sup>75</sup>

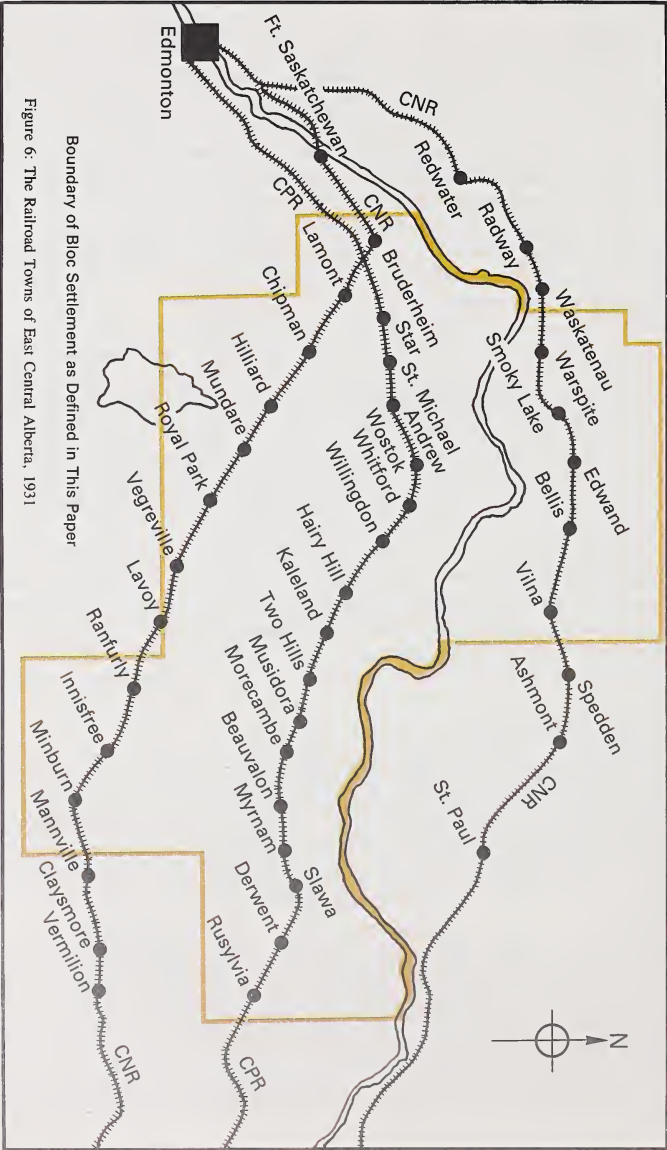
By 1940 there were seventeen Catholic and thirty ULFTA halls in Alberta. As far as can be determined, the rest were unaffiliated. Within the bloc, ULFTA halls were concentrated in the northwest, especially along the CNoR/CNR line between Warspite and Spedden (Smoky Lake #576, Vilna #575), and in the east, especially in the Two Hills-Myrnam district (Sobor #514, Ukraina #513). In these districts agriculture lagged well behind others in the bloc and in the province. There were no ULFTA halls in the southwest (Leslie #547, Wostok #546, The Pines #516, Norma #515), which was Catholic and Russian Orthodox with more prosperous farmers.

Activity in the community halls reached a peak in the mid-1930s, when the Depression forced many, including local animators, to scatter in search of employment. The Second World War drew others into the armed forces and the larger urban centres. Both developments caused the *narodni domy* and the rural communities in which they existed to decline.

### *The Railroad Towns*

Rural communities had developed spontaneously, intent on reproducing old world villages to meet social and cultural needs and to help preserve Old Country traditions. Railroad towns, on the other hand, were established on a preconceived formula devised by railway companies interested in maximizing profits. They imported the capitalist market economy, well established in eastern Canada, and in the process undermined the self-sufficient rural communities.

Between 1905 and 1930 three railroads were constructed through the Ukrainian bloc in east central Alberta (Fig. 6). In 1905 the main line of the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) was built from Winnipeg to Edmonton along the southern boundary of the settlement. Between 1917 and 1920 another railroad was constructed by the CNoR and its successor the Canadian National Railway (CNR) along the northern edge of the bloc settlement. In 1927 the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) built a line through the centre of the bloc.



Boundary of Bloc Settlement as Defined in This Paper  
Figure 6: The Railroad Towns of East Central Alberta, 1931

As the railway companies were unable to count on passenger traffic to generate profits, they encouraged commercial grain farming. Prairie grain bound for eastern Canadian and foreign markets and manufactured goods destined for prairie farmers would be transported by rail, guaranteeing steady traffic and profits for the railway companies. To collect and export grain, evenly spaced stopping points called sidings were built along the railroad lines at seven- or eight-mile intervals. Railway stations, grain elevators and general stores were usually the first structures on the townsites, followed invariably by livery stables, garages and service stations, small hotels, blacksmith shops, cafes and billiard halls. Only the few larger towns offered such commercial and professional services as banks, high schools, liquor stores, hospitals, legal and dental offices and the Alberta Provincial Police barracks. The railroad towns were grain collection centres and commodity distribution points, and even the smallest helped to entrench capitalism on the prairies.

Between 1905 and 1930, forty-six railroad sidings were built along the three railroads that passed through the Ukrainian bloc,<sup>76</sup> and townsites were surveyed at forty-two of them. In sharp contrast to the surrounding countryside, populated primarily by Ukrainian farmers, most railroad towns of east central Alberta were almost English-speaking islands.<sup>77</sup> In 1931 Ukrainians were a majority in only eight of twenty-one towns with over 100 inhabitants and Ukrainian businessmen owned a majority of the establishments in only fourteen of twenty-eight towns with at least ten establishments.

None of the largest and most profitable enterprises—grain elevators, banks, lumber yards, creameries—belonged to Ukrainians. Nor did they often belong to local settlers of British origin. They were usually the property of national or international corporations with headquarters in London, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton. Men who had never set eyes on east central Alberta usually reaped the profits. Between 1910 and 1930 the largest grain elevator companies in east central Alberta were owned by the Peavy family (British American Elevator Company, National Elevator Company, Northern Elevator Company) and the Searle family (Saskatchewan Elevator Company, Home Grain Company, Liberty Grain Company, Searle Grain Company), both of Minneapolis;<sup>78</sup> by W. Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook), Nicholas Bawlf and R. B. Bennett (Alberta Pacific Grain Company) of London, Winnipeg and Calgary respectively; and by H. E. Sellers (Federal Grain Company) of Winnipeg. Prior to 1923 creameries and cheese factories in the bloc were generally the property of the Edmonton City Dairy Limited, controlled by W. W. Prevey, an American who lived in Edmonton. In 1924 the ECD was sold to P. Burns and Company of Calgary, owned by Pat Burns, Alberta's most successful rancher and beef merchant, and Calgary's first millionaire. George E. Hayward (Hayward Lumber Company) of Edmonton and Samuel H. Bowman (Alberta Lumber Company, Globe Lumber Company, Builders' Hardware Stores) of Calgary controlled the bulk of the lumber yards in the bloc.

Even though the railroad towns subordinated the bloc to external capitalist interests, the same towns also played a positive role in the life of Ukrainian settlers. Through commercial grain farming, Ukrainian peasant agriculturalists could break out of the dull routine and poverty that accompanied subsistence farming. The medical, legal and educational facilities helped to break down the isolation and to extend the social and cultural horizons of the peasant immigrants. By 1930 there were at least six high schools, eight Alberta Provincial Police detachments and ten hospitals in towns in and around the bloc. As a result, literacy increased and health and hygienic standards improved in an area where the infant mortality rate (1925-31) was above the provincial average (103/1,000 compared to 77/1,000).<sup>79</sup> As fatalism and superstition diminished, respect for the law and authority (still often identified with oppression) grew.

The most populous towns with the greatest variety of services were found along the oldest railroad, the 1905 CNoR line. In 1931 Fort Saskatchewan, Vegreville and Vermilion, each with more than 1,000 inhabitants, boasted over forty businesses each.<sup>80</sup> Mundare and Lamont with over 500 inhabitants had almost as many businesses as their larger neighbours.<sup>81</sup> Fort Saskatchewan, Vegreville, Vermilion (and to a lesser extent Lamont and Mundare) had automobile dealers, carriage makers, jewellers, tailors, millinery shops, shoemakers, florists, printers and booksellers, druggists, undertakers and moving picture theatres. Educational, medical and religious facilities were also more extensive along this railroad. High schools were located in Fort Saskatchewan, Mundare, Vegreville and Vermilion by 1930. Hospitals operated in Lamont, Mundare, Vegreville, Mannville and Vermilion, where most of the doctors, dentists, veterinarians, chiropractors and lawyers were also found.

In the towns along the other two railways, services were fewer and less diversified. Along the 1917-20 CNoR/CNR line only Smoky Lake (366 inhabitants) and St. Paul de M tis (938 inhabitants), the latter drawing on an essentially French-speaking hinterland, offered more than the most conventional services prior to 1930. Hospitals were located in Radway Centre, Smoky Lake, Vilna and St. Paul de M tis.<sup>82</sup> By the time the CPR line was constructed through the centre of the bloc settlement in 1927 the region was dotted with many fairly complex rural communities, whose businesses and institutions now frequently moved to the new railroad townsites. Willingdon with 250 inhabitants was the largest centre, followed by Two Hills, Myrnam, Andrew and Derwent, all with 100 to 150 inhabitants. In 1930 the towns had no hospitals, high schools, dentists, lawyers and only one medical doctor. Only the most conventional commercial services were available with no "luxury trade" (tailors, jewellers, booksellers, etc.).

Ukrainians began to establish businesses in the railroad towns of east central Alberta during and after the First World War,<sup>83</sup> once the high price of agricultural products furnished the capital needed and the demand for store-bought goods increased. The new sense of Ukrainian national consciousness generated by the war and by the struggle for Ukrainian

national liberation overseas (1917–21) also made the slogan "*svii do svoho*" (patronize your own) more appealing. Once Ukrainians began to take up residence in railroad towns in greater numbers in the 1920s, local Ukrainian merchants acquired a larger and more dependable regular clientele.

As a result, by 1930 Ukrainians operated many businesses in the railroad towns. Along the 1905 CNoR line between Lamont and Vegreville Ukrainians owned 33 to 66 per cent of the businesses, and they were even more prominent in the smaller towns along the 1917–20 CNoR/CNR line. In Redwater, Radway Centre, Smoky Lake, Edward, Bellis, Vilna and Spedden 60 to 90 per cent of the businesses were Ukrainian-operated. Along the 1927 CPR line Ukrainians operated at least 50 per cent and some times over 75 per cent of the businesses in all towns except Beauvalon.

Although prominent in businesses in towns like Mundare, Smoky Lake and Myrnam, Ukrainians were generally concentrated in relatively unprestigious and unprofitable enterprises. Occupations requiring fluency in English, a certain level of formal education, a substantial amount of capital or business connections were almost always filled by individuals of British origin. As a result, almost all bank, grain elevator, lumber yard and creamery managers or agents were of English or Celtic origin. So too were most professionals—lawyers, medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians, editors, APP officers, high school teachers and principals. Many of the auto and implement dealers, insurance salesmen and hotel owners, especially in the bigger towns, were also of British origin. Individuals in the luxury trades—tailors, jewellers, milliners, men's clothiers, bakers, florists—were also usually of non-Ukrainian origin, frequently German, Jewish or Scandinavian merchants. Finally, restaurant and cafe owners were overwhelmingly of Chinese origin.

Ukrainians operated businesses which required little capital or formal education. Besides general stores, they operated livery stables, blacksmith, shoe and harness repair and butcher shops, feed mills, grocery, confectionary, hardware and secondhand stores, implement dealerships, garage and service stations and billiard halls/tobacco shops. Prior to 1930 Ukrainians operated billiard halls in no fewer than twenty-three railroad towns.

A handful of Ukrainian professionals worked in east central Alberta prior to 1930. The first Ukrainian doctors and lawyers in Alberta had opened offices in Edmonton in 1921 and 1922. By 1930 there were three Ukrainian doctors in east central Alberta: John Yakimischak (Vegreville), N. Strilchuk (Mundare) and Nicholas D. Holubitsky (Radway Centre). Nicetas Romaniuk was the lone Ukrainian lawyer in Smoky Lake. George Skwarok opened a law practice in Mundare shortly after 1930. Isidore Goresky (Smoky Lake) was the only Ukrainian high school principal in east central Alberta before 1930.

*Summary.* By 1930 Ukrainian settlers in most parts of east central Alberta had made the transition from subsistence agriculture to commercial farming, helped by the high price of agricultural products during the First World War, the construction of roads, railways and railroad towns, and the gradual



establishment of a market economy. In the short run these changes stimulated an unprecedented degree of social and cultural activity in the Ukrainian rural communities. With religious leaders and teachers acting as social and cultural animators, churches, schools and community halls became the focal points they had not been prior to 1919, and which they would cease to be after 1939. In the long run, however, the changes in transportation, communication and agriculture undermined the foundations of the rural communities. As Ukrainians became less isolated and more mobile, and in touch more with the emerging North American consumer culture, the rural communities disintegrated and their activities lost their appeal. By the 1940s, the Depression and the Second World War had deprived the bloc of many of its most active elements, leaving most rural communities vulnerable to disintegration.

### Notes

1. This paper summarizes portions of three chapters from the writer's *The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930: A History*, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Occasional Paper No. 10 (Edmonton 1985).
2. Although Ivan Pylypow (Pillipiw) and Wasyl Eleniak had visited western Canada in the fall of 1891, it was not until the summer of 1892 that the first permanent settlers—a contingent of seven families from Nebyliv led by Nykola Tychkowski and Anton Paish—filed homestead entries in T55-R21 & 22. The four men who chose homesteads on Sec22-T56-R19-W4 were Fedor Melnyk, Mykhailo Pullishy, Wasyl Feniak and Ivan Pylypow.
3. J. G. MacGregor, *Vilni Zemli (Free Lands): The Ukrainian Settlement of Alberta* (Toronto 1969), 72, 90-96, 151, provides a good popular account of the settlement of east central Alberta between 1890 and 1914. For a more scholarly analysis of the early years, see V. J. Kaye, *Early Ukrainian Settlements in Canada 1895-1900* (Toronto 1964).
4. In the nineteen municipalities (approx. 160 townships, 5,760 square miles) and the towns within their boundaries, 35,283 of 59,267 inhabitants (59.5 per cent of the population) was of Ukrainian origin. The remainder was British (14.5), Polish (7.5), German (4.4), French (3.6), Scandinavian (3.2), Romanian (2.6), Russian (1.7), Finnish (0.6), Austrian (0.5), Dutch (0.5), Czechoslovakian (0.4), Jewish (0.4), Oriental (0.15), Hungarian (0.07), Native Indian (0.06) and Italian (0.04). The Saddle Lake and Cache Lake Indian reservations (pop. 1,514) were located in the municipality of Champlain #544, which was surrounded from three sides by predominantly Ukrainian municipalities. For Ukrainians as a percentage of the population by municipalities in east central Alberta, see fig. 2.

The distribution of Ukrainians by municipalities, and in towns of over 100 inhabitants within the boundaries of these municipalities, was as follows:



	Municipality/ Town	Total Population	Ukrainian Population	Percentage Ukrainians
#514	Sobor	3326	2841	85.42
	Two Hills	149	84	56.38
#546	Wostok	4584	3793	82.74
	Andrew	115	89	77.39
#513	Ukraina	3245	2534	78.01
	Myrnam	131	82	62.60
	Derwent	107	54	50.47
#576	Smoky Lake	4268	3324	77.88
	Smoky Lake	366	291	79.51
#575	Vilna	3756	2880	76.68
	Bellis	117	79	67.52
	Vilna	151	54	35.76
#606	L.I.D.—D.A.L.	131	99	75.57
#545	Eagle	4100	2801	68.32
	Willingdon	250	165	66.00
#516	The Pines	3464	2322	67.03
	Chipman	284	114	40.14
	Mundare	832	595	71.51
#484	Birch Lake	2312	1374	59.43
	Ranfurly	122	39	31.97
	Innisfree	227	67	29.53
	Minburn	119	6	5.04
#515	Norma	3201	1868	58.36
	Vegreville	1659	544	32.79
	Lavoy	151	23	15.23
#547	Leslie	3725	1867	50.12
	Bruderheim	280	9	3.21
	Lamont	507	43	8.48
#577	Unity	4919	2402	48.83
#486	Beaver Lake	3028	1366	45.11
#605	Ashmont	1616	680	42.08
#636	L.I.D.—D.A.L.	217	89	41.01
#578	Opal	3286	1305	39.71
#607	L.I.D.—D.A.L.	887	349	39.35
#573	St. Vincent	2554	835	32.69
#603	L.I.D.—D.A.L.	615	179	29.11

Compiled and calculated from *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 2, table 33, 464–83.

5. Ukrainians constituted 71.16 per cent of the population in the ten rural municipalities and 42.0 per cent of the population in the sixteen towns of over 100 inhabitants found within the boundaries of these municipalities (#514, 546, 513, 576, 575, 545, 516, 484, 515, 547). Overall Ukrainians constituted 67.25 per cent of the population in these towns and municipalities (27,942 of 41,548 inhabitants). Other ethnic groups in these ten rural municipalities and their towns included: British (10.9 per cent), Polish (6.8), German (4.0), Romanian (3.7), Russian (2.0), Scandinavian (1.5), French (1.3), Austrian (0.6), Jewish (0.5), Dutch (0.4), Czechoslovakian (0.35), Chinese (0.13), Native Indian (0.06),

Finnish (0.05) and Hungarian (0.05).

There were large rural concentrations of some ethnic groups in this region: 1,094 Poles in Leslie #547 and The Pines #516; 1,175 Romanians in Eagle #545 and Wostok #546; and 1,375 settlers of British origin in Norma #515 and Birch Lake #484.

As fig. 1 indicates, German (#459, 488, 489, 519, 520), Scandinavian (#427, 456, 457, 458) and French-speaking settlers (#549, 579, 543, 544) also formed fairly compact "blocs" in east central Alberta. In none of these blocs did any of these predominant groups form the majority of the population. The Germans constituted 41.84 per cent of the population in their "bloc"; the Scandinavians constituted 38.94 per cent of the population in their "bloc"; and the French constituted 42.29 per cent of the population in their two "blocs."

6. A more accurate demarcation of the Ukrainian bloc settlement would include the northern portion of Beaver Lake #486 (the southern part was populated by Scandinavians and Germans) and the eastern portion of Unity #577 (the rest was Polish and British), and it would exclude the southwestern portion of Leslie #547 (German and Polish) and the southern portions of Norma #515 and Birch Lake #484 (British). The writer has somewhat arbitrarily defined the bloc settlement as the ten rural municipalities where over 50 per cent of the population was of Ukrainian origin in order to have a fixed unit for calculations based on census returns.
7. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village seeks to depict the same three dimensions of the Ukrainian experience in east central Alberta, dividing the site into farmstead, rural community and railroad town sections.
8. The Act required homesteaders to clear thirty acres before receiving title to the lands. In wooded areas it appears that only ten acres had to be cleared.
9. C. H. Young, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto 1931), 80.
10. *Census of the Prairie Provinces 1916*, table 25, 346-9.
11. Province of Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report 1915*, 84.
12. J. S. Woodsworth, "Ukrainian Rural Communities: Report of an Investigation by the Bureau of Social Research, Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Winnipeg 1917), 73-94.
13. Compare *Census of the Prairie Provinces 1916*, table 25, 346-9, and *Sixth Census of Canada 1921*, vol. 5, table 81, 274-7; see also A. Makuch, "Ukrainian Canadians and the Wartime Economy," in F. Swyripa and J. H. Thompson (eds.), *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton 1983), 71-3. For a breakdown by municipalities of farming statistics for 1916, 1921 and 1931, see the tables in Martynowych, *Ukrainian Bloc Settlement*, chap. 3.
14. Compare *Sixth Census of Canada 1921*, vol. 4, table 81, 274-7, and *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 8, table 37, 704-9.
15. Young, 98.
16. Compare *Census of the Prairie Provinces 1916*, table 25, 346-9, and *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 8, table 38, 716-21.
17. Among Ukrainian farmers crop-sharing usually accompanied land rental: the tenant paid the landlord one-third of his crop in exchange for the use of the landlord's farmland and buildings.
18. In 1935 the average farm in the bloc had 0.062 permanent hired workers and 0.711 temporary hired workers, compared to 0.092 permanent and 0.913 temporary in Alberta as a whole. Calculated from *Census of the Prairie*

*Provinces 1936*, vol. 1, table 120, 1180-1, 1186-9.

19. In 1935 the average farm in the bloc settlement relied on the labour of 1.486 male and 0.062 female family members, compared to 1.300 male and 0.037 female in Alberta as a whole. *Ibid.*
20. The figure for Alberta is from A. J. Pelletier et al., "The Canadian Family," in *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 12, 130. The figure for the bloc is an estimate calculated from *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 8, table 37, 704-9.
21. In Canada women worked in the fields more than in Galicia and Bukovyna, where the landholdings were smaller and the harvests correspondingly less bountiful. Woodsworth, 113. On the other hand, the task of making clothes soon disappeared since men and children, who spent much of their time away from the farm, were under much pressure to wear North American store-bought clothes. R. Bilash, "The Colonial Development of East Central Alberta and Its Effect on Ukrainian Immigrant Settlement to 1930," Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1983, 126-33. C. H. Young concluded that "the average Ukrainian woman often contributed more to the work of the farm than does the average hired man" (88). See also the description of women's work in H. Potrebenko, *No Streets of Gold: A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta* (Vancouver 1977), 46-50.
22. See *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 8, tables 37 and 38, 700-21. The data from these tables are summarized below. For a more detailed breakdown by municipalities, see Martynowych, *Ukrainian Bloc Settlement*, chap. 3.

	Alberta	Ukrainian Bloc
Total no. of farms	97,408	6,638
Total acres occupied	38,977,457	1,656,984
Acres per farm	400.15	249.62
Total acres improved	17,748,518	924,583
Acres improved per farm	182.21	139.29
Total acres field crops	12,037,394	689,321
Acres field crops/farm	123.58	103.84
Percentage field crops=wheat	65.33	63.98
Acres wheat per farm	80.73	66.44
Percentage field crops=oats	20.48	24.32
Acres oats per farm	25.31	25.26
Horses per farm	7.66	6.39
Cattle per farm	11.75	8.50
Hogs per farm	10.85	14.72
Poultry per farm	89.58	88.46

By comparison, in eight municipalities (70 per cent British) to the immediate southeast of the bloc (#452, 453, 454, 481, 482, 483, 511, 512) the average farm size was 345 acres, of which 170 acres were improved and 67 sown with wheat. There were 8 horses and 11.5 head of cattle per farm. Immediately south of the bloc in four predominantly Scandinavian municipalities (#427, 456, 457, 458) the average farm size was 305 acres of which 178 acres were improved and 76 sown with wheat. There were 6.7 horses and 12 head of cattle per farm. The farms in the German "bloc" southwest of Edmonton (#459, 488, 489, 519, 520) were less developed than those in the Ukrainian bloc. The average farm size was only 232 acres of which 119 acres were improved and 41 sown with wheat. There were 5.6 horses and 10.3 head of cattle per farm.

23. In 1935 the average farm in Alberta was valued at \$6,722.91; in the bloc the average farm was valued at \$5,529.34. By comparison, the value of the average farm in the Scandinavian "bloc" (#427, 456, 457, 458) was \$8,020.81, in the German "bloc" (#459, 488, 489, 519, 520) \$6,596.24 and in the British "bloc" (#452, 453, 454, 481, 482, 483, 511, 512) \$6,448.12. *Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936*, vol. 1, table 122, 1204-5, 1210-13.
24. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 8, table 37, 704-9 and *Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936*, vol. 1, table 123, 1222-5. For sources of revenues, see table 114, 1210-13.
25. MacGregor, 183-4.
26. R. E. Ankli and R. M. Litt, "The Growth of Prairie Agriculture: Economic Considerations," in D. H. Akenson (ed.), *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. 1 (Gananoque, Ontario 1978), 51-6.
27. Official estimates indicate that the average American immigrant to Canada arrived with \$800 to \$1,400, although it was not unusual to arrive with \$4,000, \$5,000 or even \$10,000 in cash and equipment. On the other hand, the 1917 Woodsworth survey of Ukrainian rural communities revealed that 50 per cent of Ukrainian immigrants arrived in western Canada with no capital and the range for 42 per cent was between \$1 and \$500. Of 433 families (400 of them Ukrainian) surveyed in the bloc settlement, 185 arrived without any money, 70 had \$1 to \$100, 46 had \$1 to \$500, 115 had over \$100 and 17 had over \$500. Ankli and Litt, 45; Woodsworth, 73-94.
28. Homesteaders were encouraged to pre-empt adjoining quarter sections, to be paid for within three years at \$4 per acre. Between 1902 and 1914 the price of CPR lands rose from \$3.25 to \$17.80 per acre; CNoR lands rose from \$3.44 in 1903 to \$9.75 in 1910 to \$18.75 per acre in 1918. J. H. Thompson, " 'Permanently Wasteful but Immediately Profitable': Prairie Agriculture and the Great War," *Canadian Historical Association Papers 1976*, 195; T. D. Regehr, *The Canadian Northern Railway* (Toronto 1976), 235.
29. J. C. Lehr, "The Rural Settlement Behaviour of Ukrainian Pioneers in Western Canada, 1891-1914," in B. Barr (ed.), *Western Canadian Research in Geography* (Vancouver 1975), 51-66.
30. F. Magera and W. Kostash, "They Came to Farm," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton 1975), 57; see also the reports of W. N. Pidruchney and A. J. Charnetski in Province of Alberta, Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report (1928-33)*, passim.
31. Woodsworth, 5.
32. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 1, table 55, 1001; table 67, 1104.
33. The point is developed in Bilash, chap. 4.
34. The result was that Galicians and Bukovynians settled in almost complete isolation (see fig. 5). J. C. Lehr, "The Process and Pattern of Ukrainian Rural Settlement in Western Canada, 1891-1914," Doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, 274-7.
35. Young, 75.
36. Bilash, 110.
37. Young, 79.
38. About 110 rural localities in the bloc settlement operated country stores between 1900 and 1930. In 35 localities the store was not in Ukrainian hands; in 75 localities ownership was exclusively Ukrainian, with most established after 1910. Most of the country stores were located in the central and northern sections of the bloc, probably because settlers in the southernmost townships were rarely

more than twelve miles north of the 1905 CNoR line and enjoyed relatively easy access to stores in the railroad towns. Most country stores had disappeared by 1930. The three railroads, over forty towns and an adequate road system had made most redundant.

39. For the anti-clerical, pro-Protestant stance of the Ukrainian Radical party, see O. T. Martynowych, "Village Radicals and Peasant Immigrants: The Social Roots of Factionalism Among Ukrainian Immigrants in Canada, 1896-1918," Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, chap. 1. Many of the immigrant leaders were sympathetic to Radical ideas.
40. P. Yuzyk, *The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1918-1951* (Ottawa 1981), 41.
41. For details, see Martynowych, "Village Radicals," chap. 3.
42. See the list of parishes in *Propamiatna knyha ukrainskoho narodu v Kanadi, 1891-1941* (Yorkton 1941), 251-318.
43. *Ibid.*, 327-9.
44. T. C. Byrne, "The Ukrainian Community in North Central Alberta," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1937, 56.
45. The census does not distinguish between Roman and Greek Catholics, but it is safe to assume that over 90 per cent of the Ukrainians listed as "Roman Catholics" in 1931 were Greek Catholics. In 1931, 33,512 of 55,872 Ukrainians in Alberta were listed as Catholics. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 4, table 45, 788-9.
46. Estimated by subtracting the number of Polish, Belgian, French and one-fifth the number of German settlers in the ten municipalities and seventeen towns from the total number of "Roman Catholics" in the same municipalities and towns. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, table 42, 680-5.
47. The Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Chernivtsi, Bukovyna, had refused to dispatch priests to North America "out of deference to the jurisdictional claims of the Russian Orthodox Church," which had appointed a North American bishop in 1840. Yuzyk, 34.
48. Russophiles maintained that the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) in the Habsburg empire and the Ukrainians in the Romanov empire were part of the (Great) Russian nation, and not a distinct national entity. They favoured the adoption of standard literary Russian and rejected literary Ukrainian. By 1900 they represented a small but influential minority of the intelligentsia in Galicia and Bukovyna.
49. Many missionaries had been born and educated in Ukraine; others were Galician Russophiles educated in theological seminaries in Russia or the United States.
50. Between 1890 and 1914 Russian missionary activity in Europe and North America was intense. It was but one "aspect of the foreign policy of tsarist Russia in the three decades prior to the outbreak of the First World War. The Russian government hoped to undermine the power of the Habsburg empire by converting Greek Catholic peasants within Austria-Hungary and its emigrants in the USA [and Canada] to Orthodoxy; conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church was thought to foster loyalty to the tsar and to all things Russian." P.R. Magocsi, "Carpatho-Rusyns," in S. Thernstorm et al. (eds.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, MA 1980), 204.
51. *Illustrovanyi kalendar Russkago narodu 1918* (Winnipeg), 181.
52. One of the few sources on the Russian Orthodox Church in Canada during this period is P. Bozhyk, *Tserkov ukrainsiv v Kanadi* (Winnipeg 1927).
53. Ukrainian Greek Orthodox priests were better educated and more dynamic than their lethargic Russian Orthodox colleagues. By the 1930s Russian Orthodox



settlers were also beginning to question slogans such as "Russia One and Indivisible, One Russian Orthodox Nation," which were commonplace with Russian Orthodox priests.

54. Byrne, 54-8.

55. The 1931 census did not distinguish between Russian and Greek Orthodox. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 4, table 45, 788-9.

56. The number of Orthodox Ukrainians in the bloc was estimated by subtracting the Russians and Romanians in the ten municipalities and seventeen towns from the number of "Greek Orthodox" in the municipalities and towns. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 2, table 42, 680-5.

57. At Boriwtsi (Borowick), Kahwin, Szypenitz, Cadron and Luzan/Pruth (near Willingdon), a faction or the entire Russian Orthodox congregation went over to the new church. By the late 1920s Russian Orthodox parishes at Ispas and Mamaestie were restless. In Sniatyn/Zawale, Sich-Kolomea/Vegreville and Hemaruka, congregations associated with the Independent Greek Church joined the new church. Disaffected Greek Catholics established Greek Orthodox congregations in Downing, Peno, Bruderheim, Spas Muskalyk, Radway/Eldorena and Jaroslaw. By 1930 congregations had also been established in Smoky Lake and Hamlin.

58. In Alberta the Russian Orthodox Church was strong among the conservative Bukovynian population, while the Greek Catholic Church under the Basilians was more resilient than in the other two provinces where Belgian Redemptorists were numerous well into the 1920s.

59. Byrne, 53-60.

60. V. Olender, "The Reaction of the Canadian Methodist Church Towards Ukrainian Immigrants: Rural Missions as Agencies of Assimilation," Master's thesis, University of St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 1976.

61. P. Crath, "Survey of Various Communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Made under the Direction of the Boards of Social Service, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches," unpublished manuscript, c. 1917.

62. *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, vol. 4, table 45, 788-9; also Byrne, 53; *Kyshenkoviï kaliendaryk na 1939 rik* (Winnipeg 1939).

63. V. Svystun, "Nashe shkilnytstvo v Kanadi," *Kaliendar ukrainskoho holosu 1915* (Winnipeg), 122-9; *ATA Magazine* 4, no. 4 (September 1923): 20; 5, no. 3 (August 1924): 18; 5, no. 7 (December 1924): 3.

64. For a discussion of this subject, see A. Makuch, "In the Populist Tradition: Organizing the Ukrainian Farmers in Alberta, 1905-1935," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1983, chap. 2.

65. Martynowych, *Ukrainian Bloc Settlement*, chap. 4, 201-24.

66. Young, 193-5. Only 12.7 per cent of the Alberta student population was enrolled in Grades IX-XII. Department of Education, *Annual Report 1930*, 111.

67. J. M. Deverell, "The Ukrainian Teacher as an Agent of Cultural Assimilation," Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1941.

68. In seventy-nine predominantly Ukrainian districts the teacher was still of non-Ukrainian origin.

69. Of Alberta teachers, 24.9 per cent taught in cities and towns and 60 per cent in rural school districts.

70. C. O. Denny, *ATA Magazine* 7, no. 8 (February 1927): 19.

71. Reading clubs had met in private homes in Edmonton, Myrnam, Mundare, Vegreville and Krakow between 1906 and 1915, while *narodni domy* were constructed between 1914 and 1928. D. Prokop and W. Kostash, "National



- Homes or Narodni Domy," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton 1975), 149–80.
72. A. Makuch, "The Kiew ULFTA Hall: A Structural History," Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project No. 24 (Edmonton 1983), 189–90, lists 101 community halls constructed before 1940. The writer has found references to nine others in the secondary literature.
  73. Among the most popular were Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Markiiian Shashkevych, Taras Shevchenko, Mykhailo Drahomanov, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Pavlyk, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Stepan Melnychuk and Petro Sheremeta. A lone Russophile hall in Peno was named after Mykhailo Kachkovsky, a nineteenth-century Galician Russophile.
  74. They were known as *parokhialni domy* (parish halls), *narodni domy* (national homes), *katolytski domy* (Catholic halls) or *katolytski narodni domy* (Catholic national homes). Makuch, "Kiew ULFTA Hall," 74–6.
  75. Ibid., 42 ff.
  76. Only thirty-one of the sidings were within the ten rural municipalities which constituted the bloc settlement (see fig. 6). The others were in Unity #577, Laurier #543, Champlain #544, Melberta #483 and Vermillion Valley #482, all along the periphery of the bloc.
  77. Ukrainians made up 42 per cent of the town population in the bloc and were 1.3 per cent in towns on the periphery (Fort Saskatchewan, St. Paul de Métis, Mannville, Vermilion). Settlers of British origin constituted 30.2 per cent of the town population within the bloc and 57.5 per cent in the towns on the periphery.
  78. The Searle family had moved to Winnipeg by the 1920s. On the grain trade, see D. A. MacGibbon, *The Canadian Grain Trade* (Toronto 1932) and C. F. Wilson, *A Century of Canadian Grain: Government Policy to 1951* (Saskatoon 1978).
  79. Calculated from data in P. Yuzyk et al. (eds.), *The Ukrainian Canadians: A Statistical Compendium* (Ottawa 1980), series 60.201–216, pp. 690 ff.
  80. The annual listings of Dun and Bradstreet provide information about the number and variety of businesses in railroad towns. For a town-by-town breakdown, see Martynowych, *Ukrainian Bloc Settlement*, chap. 5.
  81. These towns grew quickly because important prerailway communities had existed near the townsites, whose businesses and institutions moved to the new locations.
  82. The only dentist and veterinarian north of the 1905 CNoR line were located in St. Paul de Métis.
  83. For a discussion of Ukrainian reluctance to go into business, see V. Havrysh, *Moia Kanada i ia* (Edmonton 1974), 65 ff., and W. A. Czumer, *Recollections About the Life of the First Ukrainian Settlers in Canada* (Edmonton 1981), 89 ff.

# **Ukrainian Rural Communities in East Central Alberta Before 1930**

**Radomir Bilash**

## *Introduction*

In the Canadian context, the term "village" has rarely been understandable as a separate entity. Its unquantifiable ambiguity has begged the use of parallel and contrasting terms. Attempts to classify it among such other units as "hamlet," "town" and "city" have placed it somewhere near the lower end of the population scale, without too clear an impression as to functional distinction. In pre-emigration Ukraine, on the other hand, the village was the community core of the settlement pattern within the peasant agricultural economy, one which the immigrants would be unable to reproduce in western Canada. Even so, in the process of establishing themselves, the Ukrainian settlers imposed on the developing settlement landscape of east central Alberta an adaptation of the traditional village amenities which can be characterized as the "rural community."

## *The Western Canadian Context*

In Canada the grid system of survey and the federal Homestead Act required each individual agrarian landowner to establish his dwelling and outbuildings upon his own fields. The large 160-acre farm precluded traditional clustered rural communities. Rather, separate "townsites" would be developed and served primarily by railway companies, and populated by a merchant society interacting with the farmers in the immediate area. Their purpose was to constitute a marketing network throughout the West. As settlement increased, more railway lines would be constructed, extending the network of townsites and thereby increasing the prominence of Canada in world markets as a supplier of cash crops.

In attempting to provide criteria for the taxation and general administration of settlement clusters, prairie governments devised classifications suggesting an evolutionary form of community development following a natural course through three main stages: village, town and city. Official designation depended upon government approval of an application from a qualifying community. Even the smallest communities, however, were identified in terms of residential concentration. Five dwellings in close proximity were officially recognized after 1897 as constituting a "hamlet." The minimum requirement for recognition as a "village" was ten, fifteen or twenty-five dwellings until 1928 when the term "hamlet" was applied to ten-dwelling communities. Communities not qualifying for village status were governed through the local municipal districts.<sup>1</sup>

The rural community centres in the Ukrainian cultural landscape of east central Alberta, which combined the simplest commercial and postal functions with the nurturing services of church, school and community hall, received no official acknowledgement. By contrast, those communities that were recognized for administrative purposes exhibited a much more commercial character. Some fairly large centres did develop and persist prior to the arrival of railway lines in the various districts, but by the late 1920s even they had been displaced. Wostok and Andrew are two good examples, each having developed over a twenty-year period into settlement clusters of residences and businesses until being displaced by nearby railway townsites of the same names in 1927 and 1928. For the only two designated "towns" in the region, Vegreville and Vermilion, the distinction was clearly associated with their more complex roles as railway divisional points. Seventeen more of the thirty-eight railway townsites established in the Ukrainian settlement bloc to 1930 had by then been officially recognized as "villages." Thus any discussion of community organizations in the Ukrainian bloc settlement which limits itself only to officially recognized units concentrates on the Canadian framework to the neglect of significant processes of cultural transition from the old world to the new.

### *The East European Village Tradition*

It is questionable whether any amount of information could have prepared settlers for the particular settlement pattern they found on the prairies. Although pamphlets that described the prairies in detail were available to Ukrainians, the promise of individual landholdings equal to those of wealthy village landlords clouded the immigrant's perception of the lifestyle in the new country. Many emigrated from villages in which a total acreage serving 200 households would be distributed among only ten in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

Villages in Bukovyna and Galicia at the turn of the twentieth century varied in shape, size and function.<sup>3</sup> Known as a *selo*, each was administratively responsible to the next largest settlement form, the *mistechko* or town, which in turn responded to the *misto* or city. The *misto*

and *mistechko* were usually surveyed settlements, while the form of each *selo* reflected the terrain on which it was situated. Villages near the Carpathian Mountains were often chain villages formed along a single road running the length of a valley. Flatter areas supported more irregular village styles with single main roads branching off randomly into residential laneways. In both patterns, small contiguous yards contained the villagers' dwellings, outbuildings and gardens. Each household's fields, pastures and forests were found on the outskirts of the inhabited cluster.<sup>4</sup>

The community services available in a village varied with population, area and role in the administrative structure of the Austro-Hungarian state. The smallest settlement unit was the *prysilka*, *khutir* or *kut*, a farmstead or neighbourhood which contained only residential properties and looked to an adjacent village for services. An average village in Bukovyna or Galicia in 1900 contained places for worship and schooling, a tavern and/or small store, some form of postal service and village administration, and the services of such minor artisans or processors as carpenters, blacksmiths, millers and weavers. The far less intimate "villages" and towns of prairie Canada did not provide this same range of services, especially those of cultural import.

Ukrainian immigrants were not alone to experience this contrast. Some East Europeans, however, gained concessions that Ukrainian settlers were not granted. Especially in the early years of western Canadian development, the federal government was prepared to be flexible with regulations which hampered the establishment of European-style villages. A major concession to the prescribed pattern of farm settlement appeared in an amendment to the Dominion Lands Act in 1883:

If a number of homestead settlers, embracing at least twenty families, with a view to greater convenience in the establishment of schools and churches, and to the attainment of social advantages of like character, ask to be allowed to settle together in a hamlet or village, the Minister may, in his discretion, vary or dispense with the foregoing requirements as to residence, but not as to the cultivation of each separate quarter section entered as a homestead.<sup>5</sup>

Some groups were therefore allowed to settle on blocks of land especially reserved for them. This allayed fears of settling in a foreign land and pacified residents of Canada who were equally apprehensive of foreign settlers. The arrangements were usually made with the Canadian sponsors and/or the immigrant group leaders prior to their migration to Canada.

Among the earliest groups to take advantage of the Canadian government's concessions were the Mennonites from the tsarist Russian empire. During preliminary inquiries they sought the right to establish village clusters rather than individual farms. They were supported by the Mennonites in Ontario, who convinced the Canadian government to reserve blocks of land for their brethren in Manitoba.<sup>6</sup> The result was the creation of open-chain villages after 1873, clusters of twenty to thirty households with yards along a single roadway up to one mile in length.<sup>7</sup> In the five miles between villages,

the territory was designated by the village leaders for use as fields and pasture. The overall size of each colony was determined by the area of homestead land available to the number of legally eligible householders in the colony.

Other groups seemed content to waive European-style village settlements for other assurances. The prime concern of immigrants from Germany and Iceland, for example, was the ability to live and interact within their groups on special homestead reserves. But certain groups of early Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe combined reduced property (homesteads of 80 rather than 160 acres) with the chain pattern of village cluster and the architecture prevalent in their countries of origin. In a unique experiment during the 1890s, Count Paul D'Esterhazy attempted to emulate the system practised by the Mennonites for a colony including settlers of several nationalities. Its plan featured villages of twenty families, with each householder holding 160 acres within the colony.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1890s, the Mennonites extended their village-style settlement into Saskatchewan,<sup>9</sup> but their impact quickly decreased after the arrival of the Doukhobors from Russia. The Canadian government gave the Doukhobors numerous privileges as an incentive to settle the prairies. These included several land reserves, similar to those granted to the Mennonites. The Doukhobors created village clusters spaced two to four miles apart. The twelve to twenty dwellings along the single road of each village were surrounded by fields and pastures.<sup>10</sup>

Although sanctioned by the Canadian government, the European-style village clusters aroused public opinion. They were deemed impractical as they required farmers to travel long distances to reach properties on several scattered locations on the outskirts of each village.<sup>11</sup> The clusters also created large tracts of undeveloped land between villages, suggesting a speculative ploy on the part of the villagers to profit from the eventual sale of the lands at the expense of the government. More racist was the unsupported belief that the villages wasted good productive land and hindered western Canada's development into a world market producer.

Gradually federal and provincial authorities began to waver in their tolerance of settlement reserves. Insisting that they had never agreed to the continuation of reserves in perpetuity,<sup>12</sup> government authorities at the turn of the century granted Mennonite lands to anyone who qualified as a homesteader. Of course, fracturing the homogeneity of these village colonies threatened their very existence, for it was the exclusiveness of the reserves that enforced cultural retention, particularly among the religion-oriented Mennonites and Doukhobors.

### *Railway and Townsite Development*

Pressure to undermine the cultural exclusiveness of the reserves had appeared earlier, most particularly in the form of railway development. The railways and the homestead landowning system reinforced each other. The railways would transport the produce of each homestead to markets in other



parts of the country and the world. Central to the efficient operation of the market system was the townsite or "commercial village" or "town" where farm produce could be accumulated and prepared for further marketing. As it was later observed:

The commercial village growing up at the shipping point provides the chief institutional service which this more advanced type of agriculture makes possible and necessary. This local community finds its place in a network of interdependent communities, the largest of which is a central city. From the latter, by way of a series of smaller cities, towns, and villages comes knowledge of the affairs of the larger world. For at this stage of development the farm and the farmer's local community are interdependent parts of a far-reaching whole.<sup>13</sup>

It was not a system catering to a peasant economy or society. When railways entered a district, they did not augment the communities that already existed to suit the needs of the market system; rather the railway companies established their own townsites. The impact of the railway was such that earlier settlement centres were always dispersed in favour of the new townsites. In time, the railway townsites affected the Mennonite and Doukhobor villages in the same way, despite such extreme measures as the threat of excommunication<sup>14</sup> to discourage contact between villager and townsite.

Like the homesteads, the railway townsites too were surveyed on a grid pattern with little regard for the terrain. Their location at consistently short intervals along rail lines to collect crops took precedence over their impact on local settlement. The railway towns in east central Alberta were based on an American-style survey originally implemented in New England in 1820.<sup>15</sup> Two later variations attracted Canadian attention: town development on both sides of the railway line and development on one side only. The latter was implemented in almost every instance in east central Alberta.

Townsites were usually located about seven miles apart with the property initially surveyed (between three and twenty acres) divided into two sectors, each further subdivided into rectangular building lots.<sup>16</sup> The narrow lots in one sector usually bordered the town's main street and were intended for businesses. The other sector's lots usually consisted of wider lots intended for residences. The site itself centred on a T-shaped intersection, with the avenue of the intersection parallel to the railway tracks and the main street intersecting the avenue perpendicularly. The format served to highlight the station grounds and the grain elevators. The uncompromising rigidity of the plan was further repeated in the spatial organization of each lot. The main structure, a dwelling or business establishment, was always located at the front and bordered the street. Any outbuildings were at the opposite end, with small gardens in between. Such railway townsites were foreign not only to the Ukrainian settlers, but also to virtually all other immigrant groups on the prairies.

By 1930, east central Alberta was served by three railway lines, each running from east to west. The earliest, forming the southernmost boundary of

the Ukrainian settlement bloc, was constructed in 1905–6, a full decade after Ukrainians had begun to arrive. The next line was initiated in 1912 to run north of the North Saskatchewan River, near the northernmost limits of Ukrainian settlement, and built primarily between 1917 and 1923. Again, Ukrainians had settled much of the district by 1905. The last line ran through the centre of the settlement bloc, its construction delayed repeatedly until 1927–8 (see Fig. 1). In many cases the long-settled lands were farmed by a second generation of farmers, the original settlers having already imposed clear patterns of cultural significance on the landscape.

### *Ukrainian Adaptation in Alberta: The Rural Community*

Although east central Alberta was examined and superficially surveyed in the 1880s, some of the homestead boundaries were not in place until the early twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, until the railway connected Edmonton with Calgary and the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1891, east central Alberta was virtually inaccessible for major immigration. As soon as the railway provided access, newcomers from various sources settled in groups, though not too distant from Edmonton. For example, in 1892 German settlers from Galicia located in the Beaver Hills district and Scandinavians established a colony just east of them. Three more colonies of German settlers appeared in 1894 at Bruderheim, Beaver Lake and Victoria. A Canadian group from Parry Sound, Ontario, located in the Lamont district. In the same way, Ukrainian groups from Galicia and Bukovyna settled in the vicinity of Limestone Lake or Edna, imitating a pattern that would spread through east central Alberta.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the Mennonites and Doukhobors, the Ukrainians had made few demands on the host society prior to migration. The few negotiations on their behalf concerned the conditions of travel from Galicia and Bukovyna to the prairies, negotiations that were initiated from Ukraine without the support of any sponsoring group in Canada. Like the settlers from Germany and Scandinavia, Ukrainians were quite content to settle as a group on land reserves, where they worked their individual farms in relative isolation from one another.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Ukrainian form of village settlement was not transferred to western Canada, the villages of Galicia and Bukovyna did exert their influence. Settling as a separate group, a situation which reduced the pressures to change, most Ukrainians recreated their yards in the fashion common to their villages of origin in terms of architecture, spatial organization and fencing. There were two important differences. First, farmers did not replicate the yards they had owned in Ukraine but tried to emulate those of the wealthier village stratum whose comparable property holdings they now enjoyed in Canada.<sup>21</sup> Second, the yards were not contiguous with one another, being set in the midst of their respective fields and pastures.

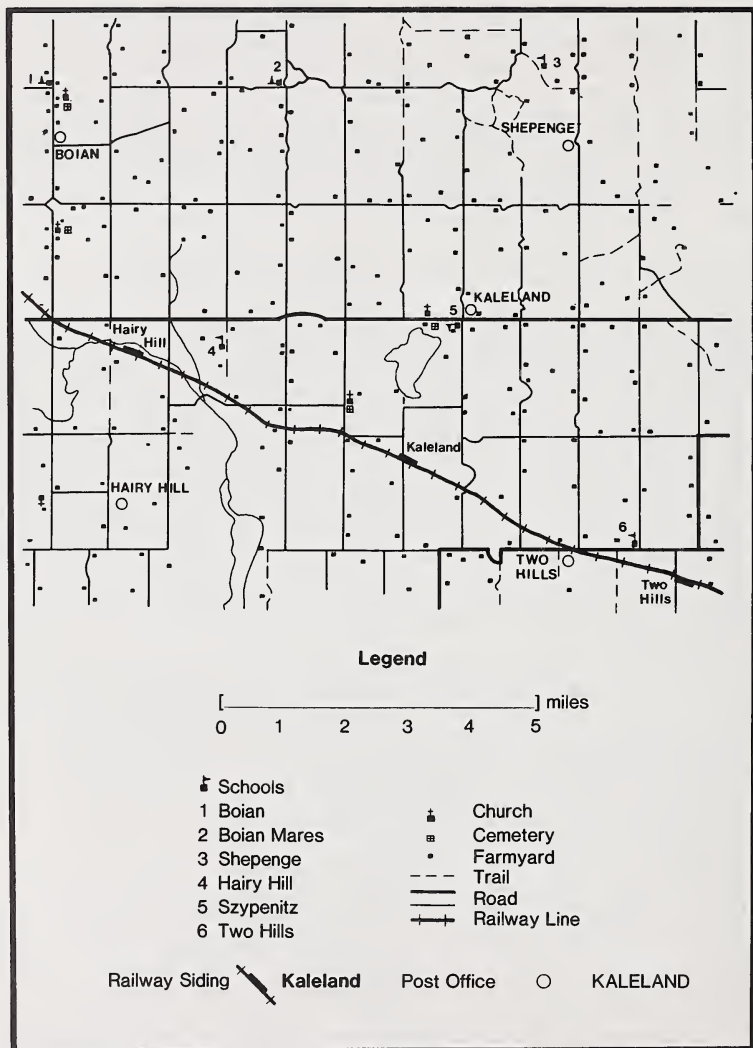


Figure 1. Displacement of Ukrainian Rural Communities. (The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through east central Alberta in 1927-28 led to the displacement and reconstitution of existing communities at sidings along the railway line. Note the duplicate place-names at different locations.)

A less obvious influence of the village pattern of Galicia and Bukovyna could be seen in the Ukrainian bloc's rural communities. (The phrase "rural communities" was first used in 1917 to describe a form of settlement associated with Ukrainian homesteaders on the prairies.<sup>22</sup>) Unlike most farming communities, which were served by only a few state-generated services such as post offices and schools, the Ukrainian settlers developed local communities where the farmers were the resident core population.<sup>23</sup> The communities not only contained such establishments as churches, halls and implement dealers but also supplied such services as weaving, spinning and building construction that often reflected traditional Ukrainian culture. The most complex of rural communities in number and type of services were those furthest away from the railway's sphere of influence.

The place-name of the rural community was frequently Ukrainian and corresponded to the name of either the post office or the local school district (if there was no post office). Because membership was voluntary, the boundaries of such communities fluctuated. Although the communities were not registered or acknowledged by the province, and their boundaries were not documented, the latter were nonetheless known to the local population and even used to delineate political and religious factions. Especially unique because they functioned without playing a role in the prevailing market economy, the rural communities can be considered a reconstitution of the traditional Ukrainian village within the larger spatial parameters of the Dominion Lands homestead system. A similar style of community developed among the Mennonites in Saskatchewan once their earlier cluster settlements began to disintegrate.<sup>24</sup>

In the Ukrainian bloc an interesting dichotomy of settlement developed. When the railway lines contacted the existing Ukrainian rural communities with their basic services, the railway companies chose not to augment them with railway stations and grain elevators, but rather to survey distinct townsites (see Fig. 2). Especially in the early period along the railway line constructed in 1905-6, almost no individuals of Ukrainian origin lived in the townsites.<sup>26</sup> The result was a large Ukrainian farming population in rural communities with an infrastructure reminiscent of services found in traditional Ukrainian villages, contrasted with an English-speaking merchant population in railway townsites with a service infrastructure supporting a cash crop market system.

### *Conclusion*

The unique dichotomy of the rural community and the railway townsite in Ukrainian bloc settlements in western Canada before 1930 developed in circumstances otherwise common to prairie experience. When homesteaders began to settle in western Canada, mechanisms were put in place which discouraged the voluntary establishment of settlement clusters not based on state-sanctioned grid pattern surveys. Even when European-style villages were allowed by government under special conditions, the spatial development of

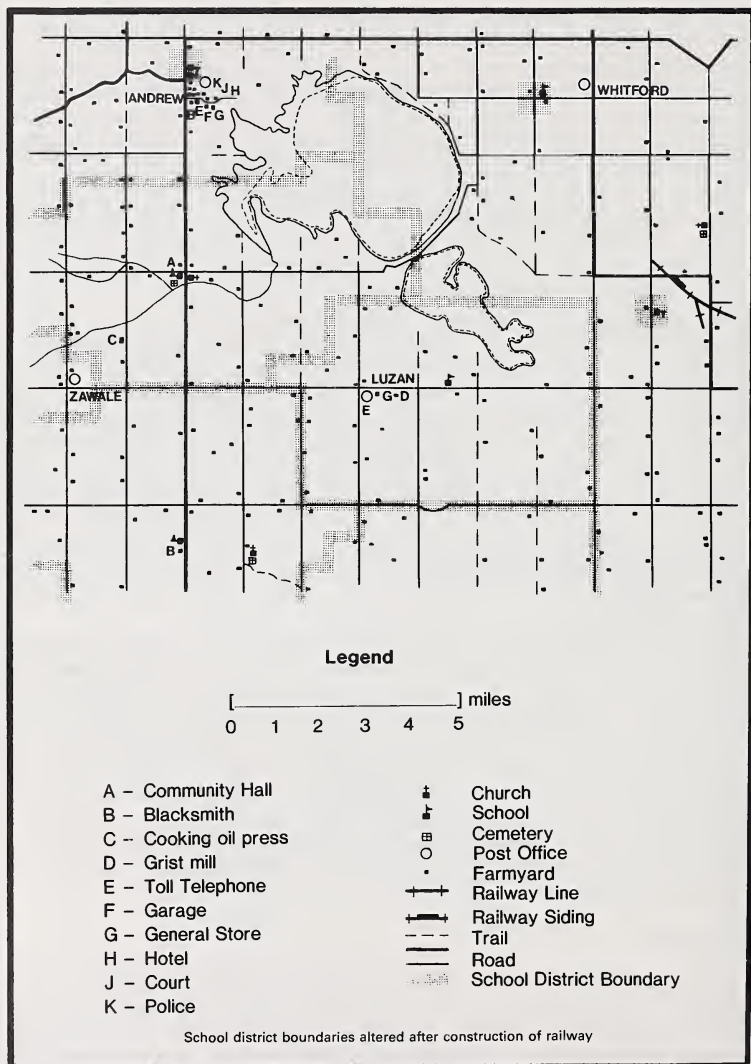


Figure 2. Interdependent Communities in East Central Alberta in 1927. (The "end of rail" was the siding at Willingdon and preparations were underway to extend the line through the existing communities at Whitford and Andrew.)



the villages followed the bounds of the grid-pattern government roads rather than an alignment determined by terrain. The officially preferred style of settlement, however, established the merchant population in grid-surveyed townsites, and the agrarian population in household units isolated physically from each other and the townsites. The Ukrainian immigrant settlers responded to this superstructure by voluntarily reconstituting in rural communities the familiar infrastructure of the villages of Bukovyna and Galicia and adapting it to the Canadian situation.

This phenomenon was largely ignored at the official level and is therefore not easy to study. Although the government did not discourage voluntary community development, it reserved the right to sanction and categorize any settlement according to a classification system based on an expected growth progression. Because there was no real need for it, no Ukrainian rural community petitioned for official recognition. According to the criteria set out by provincial legislation, the rural communities did not exist. As a settlement form, however, they continued to function and provide services to the Ukrainian rural population of east central Alberta at least until the outbreak of the Second World War.

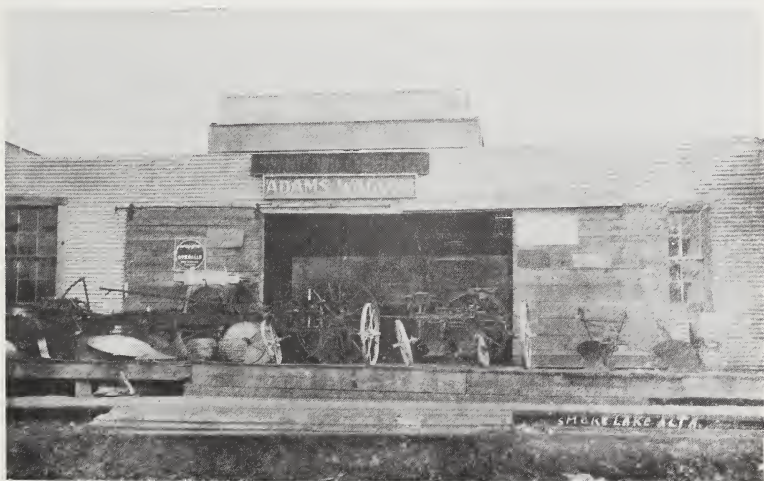
## Notes

1. Based on a survey of the ordinances of the North-West Territories (1888–1906), the statutes of the province of Alberta (1907–34) and the *Alberta Gazette* (1906–30).
2. For an indication of agricultural landholdings in Bukovyna and Galicia, see table 2 in J.-P. Himka, "The Background to Emigration: Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovyna, 1848–1914," in M.R. Lupul (ed.), *A Heritage in Transition* (Toronto 1982), 15. See also specific land use data in *Gemeindelexikon von Galizien* (Vienna 1907) and *Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrath Vertretenen Königreiche und Länder, XIII. Bukowina* (Vienna 1907).
3. The discussion of traditional villages is based on H.Iu. Stelmakh, *Istorychnyi rozvytok silskykh poselen na Ukraini* (Kiev 1964); R.A. Cybriwsky, "The Pre-Soviet Village in Ukraine," *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* (1972), 119–36; Iu.H. Hoshko, *Naseleennia ukrainskykh Karpat XV–XVIII st.* (Kiev 1980).
4. V.P. Samojlovych, *Narodna tvorchist v arkhitekturi silskoho zhytla* (Kiev 1961), 18.
5. *Revised Statutes of Canada*, 47 Vict., c. 54, s. 37 (1883).
6. N. Macdonald, *Canada: Immigration and Colonization 1841–1903* (Toronto 1966), 200.
7. C.A. Dawson, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada* (Toronto 1936), 110.
8. Macdonald, 220–30.
9. R.J. Friesen, "Saskatchewan Mennonite Settlements: The Modification of an Old World Settlement Pattern," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 2 (1977): 72–90.
10. Dawson, *Group Settlement*, 15.
11. *Ibid.*, 111.

12. Macdonald, 204.
13. C.A. Dawson, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces* (Toronto 1940), 24.
14. Dawson, *Group Settlement*, 117.
15. J.C. Hudson, "Towns of the Western Railroads," *Great Plains Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (1982): 41-54.
16. The discussion of townsites is based on R. Bilash, "The Colonial Development of East Central Alberta and Its Effect on Ukrainian Settlement to 1930," Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1983, chap. 2.
17. The map is based on the following sources: *ibid.*, 69; Department of the Interior, *Vermilion: Sectional Map Sheet No. 316, 1:190,080* (Ottawa 1928).
18. "Letter from Rev. C.H. Lawford, M.D.," *Missionary Bulletin* (1905): 204.
19. A.S. Morton, *History of Prairie Settlement* (Toronto 1938), 98; E. Carlsson and I. Stainton (eds.), *Lamont and District: Along the Victoria Trail* (Edmonton 1975); V.J. Kaye, *Early Ukrainian Settlements in Canada 1895-1900* (Toronto 1964), 356.
20. J.C. Lehr, "The Process and Pattern of Ukrainian Rural Settlement in Western Canada, 1891-1914," Doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978.
21. R. Bilash, "Bukovynska arkhitektura v Zakhidni Kanadi," paper presented to the All-Soviet Conference of the Institute of Ethnography, Soviet Academy of Arts and Sciences, Chernivtsi, 24 May 1984.
22. J.S. Woodsworth, "Ukrainian Rural Communities: Report of an Investigation by the Bureau of Social Research, Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Winnipeg 1917).
23. For the components, influence of population size and place-names of Ukrainian rural communities in the region, see Bilash, "Colonial Development," 109-20.
24. Friesen, 84.
25. The map is based on the following sources: Andrew Historical Society, *Dreams and Destinies* (Andrew 1980); C. Chorniawy, "Luzan Grocery, Land Use and Structural History Report," Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture (Edmonton 1985), 32; Dun and Bradstreet, *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book* (New York 1927); Department of the Interior, *Edmonton: Sectional Map Sheet No. 315, 1:190,080* (Ottawa 1928).
26. V.J. Kaye (Kysilevsky) and F. Swyripa, "Settlement and Colonization," in Lupul, 43.



Farm and roadside chapel, Pruth district, ca. 1930 (Devlin Collection, Public Archives Canada 113847)



Wm. Lazaruk's farm implement agency, Smoky Lake, 1922 (Ratsoy Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV500)



Overflow crowd and speaker before Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association *Narodnyi Dim*, Myrnam, ca. 1930 (Demchuk Collection, Public Archives Alberta 86.19/58)



Railway station and grain elevators, Mundare, 1920 (Bobersky Collection, Oseredok, Winnipeg, Ba250)





Ukrainian farmer 'in town' for business, 1920 (Bobersky Collection Ba74)



General store, Lamont, 1920 (Bobersky Collection Ba115)





Inside view, National [Ukrainian] Mercantile Company, Chipman, 1920  
(Bobersky Collection Ba87)



John Demchuk's blacksmith shop, his wife, apprentice in background, Myrnam, 1929 (Demchuk Collection UV724)



# **MATERIAL CULTURE**

# The First Imprint: The *Burdei* in the Wilderness'

Andriy Nahachewsky

The vast majority of Ukrainian immigrants to western Canada at the turn of the century found themselves in relatively unpopulated parkland homesteads soon after their arrival. Food and shelter became immediate and important concerns. The immigrants often built a temporary dug-out shelter—*burdei* or *buda*—to cover their heads until a better dwelling could be constructed. The first months and years of any immigrant's experience were often charged with a great deal of emotion, as the decision to resettle was evaluated and the potential for success in the new land was appraised. The basic relationship with the host society was also established at this time.

The rural immigrant experience has received little attention from historians in Canada, and such studies as do exist deal with it briefly.<sup>2</sup> Folk architecture and material culture have also seldom concentrated on the earliest structures.<sup>3</sup> Studies of early prairie dwellings deal with sod houses and log cabins, but rarely with less permanent shelters.<sup>4</sup> While Ukrainian vernacular architecture has been studied, the emphasis again has been upon more permanent structures.<sup>5</sup> This paper will outline the form and context of the *burdei* built by Ukrainian pioneers as they made their first imprints on Canadian soil.

Although a large number of Ukrainian immigrants did not build a *burdei*, others sheltered themselves in one from a few months to up to three, six and even ten years.<sup>6</sup> The time before a family built a permanent house depended upon the available manpower, capital and time of arrival. Although living in a *burdei* constituted an unsatisfactory condition, many perceived earning money and establishing a productive farm as more pressing priorities, and outside work and clearing land therefore often took precedence over building a permanent house.

The building of a *burdei* was most common in Alberta between 1895 and 1905. Dug-out dwellings were rarely built after the First World War, though at least one case is known of a single man living in one from 1930 to 1962, several miles north of Waskatenau, Alberta.<sup>7</sup>



The form of the temporary shelters varied greatly, depending on the time available for construction, the available manpower, tools and materials, the number of occupants, the intended period of occupancy and the skill of the builder. The crudest arrangement was simply hiding under a wagon or stretching a blanket over several poles. Very few immigrants could afford a tent. Some built primitive shelters by leaning broken branches around a tree trunk and huddling in the cone-shaped space below. Others scraped out or enlarged a natural depression in the earth and leaned branches on top. When padded with straw, such shelters provided a place to sleep and some protection from the wind, though little from mosquitoes or rain. Such crude accommodation could be assembled in minutes and often lasted for no more than a single night.

A slightly more substantial, primitive type of temporary shelter consisted of digging a hole deep enough for a person to stand upright. Logs, poles and branches might then be laid across the top to form a flat roof. More common was the dug-out with a slanted roof. Two rows of poles were leaned onto a framework to form an inverted "V" which covered a hole. The gable walls of such a structure were triangular in shape. The frame was then covered with straw, dirt and sod. A fourth type of dug-out dwelling was more substantial, with log walls rising vertically from the ground. In some cases these structures resembled log cabins, except for the excavated interior floor level. The roof of a log-walled *burdei* was sometimes similar to the *burdei* with angled poles leaning onto a central beam. Other log wall dug-out houses had a raftered roof construction and a separate ceiling. These four types of structures were parts of a diverse and complex variety of temporary dwellings. Forms varied from haphazard coverings of branches to structures almost indistinguishable from real and permanent homes. The slanted-roof type *burdei*, however, stands out as the most common and most typical form.

Slanted-roof dug-out dwellings were built either on flat land or into the side of a hill. The excavations varied from nearly two metres to no excavation at all. Most such dug-outs, however, were approximately .75 metres deep. Typical dimensions for a *burdei* were 3 by 4.2 metres, with an interior area 12.6 metres square. Other slanted-roof dug-outs ranged from one-third the size to over twice as large. The walls of such dug-outs were as tall as the depth of the excavation. In most cases, especially if the dug-out was built into clay, the walls were simply tamped or left in their raw-earthen state.

The weight of the roof in the above structures rested upon a horizontal beam suspended above the centre of excavation along the major axis. The most common support system consisted simply of one forked post implanted in the ground at each end. This type of structure was called "*dakh na sokhakh*" (roof on forked posts) in Ukrainian folk architecture.<sup>8</sup> Variants consisted of three or four support posts holding the beam. The structural frame in all cases was overlayed with a row of parallel poles on each side to fill the angled planes of the roof. The poles were sometimes plastered, though more often they were first covered with straw and grasses, then dirt and one or more layers of sod blocks. Eventually, grasses and other vegetation would

grow on the roof. The gable walls at the end of the slanted roofs were filled with vertical rails and/or sod. The door was built into one of the gable walls, facing south or southeast. It was made of a blanket, woven twigs, a frame of parallel rails or wide boards shaven from logs. The interior floor consisted of tamped earth. A clay stove for heating and cooking was topped with a metal sheet or lid. Smoke was vented through a metal chimney or one made of twigs and clay. The settlers slept on a bedframe made of poles, on benches or on straw spread on the ground.

Slanted-roof structures were not exclusive to Ukrainian settlers but were built also by Germans from eastern Europe, Romanians and Poles. While English-speaking settlers on the prairie frontier did sleep under the stars or in covered wagons or tents, women and children usually stayed in towns or with other homesteaders until a log cabin, sod house or framed building was erected.<sup>9</sup> Slanted-roof type structures were not commonplace among English-speaking settlers. In one isolated description the author calls such forms a "grotesque attempt" at building a home:

At Lawrence, Kansas, many odd structures were to be seen. There were dugouts, sod houses, log cabins, shake structures, and other odd dwelling places. In the summer of 1854 it was a village of tents, but by the following year most of the houses were made of sod. The sod house built at this time had not developed into the standard type which came into being on the plains in the next pioneer generation. Sod was used for the walls but not for the entire house as was done on the true sod-house frontier. A style which became fairly common and which was almost peculiar to Lawrence at this time was called "the hay tent." It was built by setting up two rows of poles and then bringing them together at the top and thatching the sides with prairie hay. The house was all roof and gable; the windows and doors were in the end. The gables were built with sod walls.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of first dwellings built by English-speaking settlers were comparable to the more substantial log-wall type of *burdei* built by Ukrainians, either above the ground or as a dug-out.

Although log-walled dug-out structures were common to English-speaking and eastern European settlers in Alberta, slanted-roof structures were built almost exclusively by the latter. The high incidence among Ukrainians suggests that the slanted-roof was part of a known structural design. The Trypillian culture that flourished north of the Black Sea in the fourth and third centuries B.C. was characterized by the use of dug-out dwellings with thatched roofs angling to the ground.<sup>11</sup> The standard dwelling of common people in Kiev during the tenth and eleventh centuries was also a dug-out.<sup>12</sup> The term "*burdiuh*" or "*burdei*" was of Tatar origin, and was first used by Slavs in the Cossack era to refer to crude, isolated dug-out shelters built on the steppes by lone Cossacks monitoring Mongol incursions or simply living a hermitic life.<sup>13</sup> Dug-out structures were also used by Cossacks in their main camp and other settlements.<sup>14</sup>

Dug-out dwellings (*zemlianky*) were used into the nineteenth century by hermits, the impoverished and the first settlers in an unpopulated area.<sup>15</sup> Herdsmen, fishermen and soldiers built them as shelters.<sup>16</sup> With the rapid growth of industry in the nineteenth century, *zemlianky* served as basic dwelling places for industrial workers who flocked to mines and factories to supplement their agricultural earnings:

*Zemlianky* were primitive in appearance, basically a hole in the ground. If a *zemlianka* was built into a hillside, it had a roof of one plane. If it was built in a level area, the roof was built in two planes of rushes (*ocheret*), straw, earth, etc. The roofs of the *zemlianky* reached down to the ground. Such *zemlianky* had no ceiling; the floor—earthen. A clay oven (*pich*) was placed to the right or the left, near the entrance. They often used a metal heating place (*plyta*) or a small oven (*chavunna pichka*) instead of a *pich*. These served both for heating the *zemlianka* and for food preparation.

Instead of benches (*lavy*), earthen platforms were often left intact along the walls. These were reinforced with wooden slabs. Until the 1880s, there were very few beds (*lizhka*) in the proletarian settlements....

Immediately beyond the upper entrance doors, earthen stairs descended to the interior door at the bottom. A sleeping area was often arranged on the bare earth at the side of the entranceway in the summer. This area was otherwise used for storage. The *zemlianky* barely rose above the earth, and only their entranceways extended higher, as if leading from a grave. These entrances were built either into a façade or into a gabled wall. The interior door led directly into the dwelling, which was long and narrow and sometimes nearly square in shape. It was always dark and damp inside the *zemlianky*. The workers bitterly joked that "the rain is still beyond the hill, but in our [*zemlianka*] it is already dripping." Families or groups of workers (*artyl'ii*) lived in these *zemlianky*, which they constructed themselves.<sup>17</sup>

Typical at the time were the *zemlianky* described above and half dug-outs (*napivzemlianky*) with short vertical walls, similar to the log-wall *burdei*.<sup>18</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, temporary structures were also built for night watchmen at schools, vegetable gardens and other large establishments.<sup>19</sup> Survivors of villages destroyed by war built such structures until they could rebuild their houses. Similar structures were also built and used as cold storage cellars.<sup>20</sup>

The *burdei* built by Ukrainian Canadian pioneers was, then, a continuation of the architectural tradition of eastern Europe. Strong architectural ties with Europe were seen also in their second and third dwellings.<sup>21</sup> Most of the peasants who emigrated from Galicia or Bukovyna had never lived in or built a *burdei*, and most had never built a log house either.

Strong connections with the Old Country were also evident in the *burdei* dweller's personal possessions. About 60 per cent of a typical family's furniture, utensils, tools and clothing were from the Old Country. Another 20 per cent were hand-made of wood and other raw materials available in

Canada and were based almost exclusively on Old Country models. The remainder of their belongings were usually bought in Canada.<sup>22</sup>

Typically, families brought with them one or more clay pots, clay bowls, metal pots, cups, wooden spoons and knives. In their trunk were pillows, blankets and several complete sets of hand-made clothing. Other common articles were vegetable seeds, sickles, blades for axes, spades, hoes and scythes, hammers, saws, chisels, planers, drills and rivetting hammers. Among miscellaneous items were icons, jewellery, lamps, guns, extra fabrics and legal documents. Items typically made out of raw materials at the *burdei* site included clay stoves, hand mills for grinding grain, beds, straw mats, benches, tables, dug-out tubs, washboards, rakes, flails, yokes, sledges for the oxen, scythe cradles and other wooden tools, furniture and equipment.

The majority of articles bought in Canada were related to food and farming equipment. Sacks of flour, corn meal, seed grain, salt, sugar and tea were usually purchased. Stove tops, metal pails, fish hooks, wires for snares, blocks of wax, wooden pails, barrels and other objects acquired to facilitate the collection, storage and preparation of food. Cows, chickens, oxen or horses, ploughs, plough connections, harrows, rope, grub hoes and empty sacks were also needed for farming. Other miscellaneous objects purchased were coveralls, gloves, boots, matches, ammunition and occasionally guns.<sup>23</sup>

TABLE 1 Material Possessions Owned by *Burdei* Dwellers (in per cent)

	Transported from the Old Country	Made in Canada	Bought in Canada
COOKING: stoves, chimneys, pots, bowls, cups, dishes, spoons, knives, dug-out tubs, handmills	56	28	16
FOODSTUFFS: salt, garden seeds, grain, flour <sup>24</sup>	54	0	46
SLEEPING: beds, mattresses, quilts, blankets, pillows	46	54	0
FURNITURE: benches, chairs, tables, trunks	47	53	0

CLOTHING: shirts, blouses, pants, skirts, overalls, belts, scarves, footwear, socks, coats, jackets, hats, gloves	88	2	8
WASHING: dug-out tubs, pails, washboards, soap	17	75	8
TOOLS: sickles, scythes, rakes, forks, flails, axes, saws, chisels, drills, hammers, spades, hoes, grub-hoes, rivetting hammers, anvils	77	10	13
LIVESTOCK & EQUIPMENT: ploughs, harrows, wagons, sleds, harnesses, yokes, livestock	0	6	94
MISC: icons, crosses, jewellery, lamps, wax, guns, instruments, fabric	86	0	14
AVERAGE	60	20	20

The lifestyle and values of immigrants living in a *burdei* were little removed from those in the Old Country. With only a few acres under cultivation, the farm itself was nearly the size of the one left behind in Ukraine. The land was ploughed one furrow at a time, with both the crop seeding and weed picking done by hand. Crops were harvested with scythes and sickles, bound into sheaves, dried in stooks, stored in stacks, threshed by flail and winnowed in the wind. The religious convictions, language, folk songs, traditional prose, superstitions, folk medicine and numerous minor customs also remained.<sup>25</sup>

The aspect of life that differed most from the village society left behind was the isolation in Canada. Distances between neighbours rendered many customs and celebrations impossible. With priests and churches scarce, elective life-cycle celebrations such as weddings were rare, and births, funerals and the many calendar celebrations were marked with rites that were much less elaborate than in the Old Country. The isolation and loneliness was one of the most difficult and depressing aspects of life in the *burdei* period,



with homesickness very prevalent especially on Sundays and holidays.<sup>26</sup>

Canada's physical environment also set the immigrant apart from his relatives in Europe. The Canadian climate was drier and cooler and spring arrived later. The long, cold winter, the insatiable mosquitoes, the wild animals and the lack of village amenities threatened survival on a day-to-day basis and was memorialized in poetry.

#### Ukrainian text

Oi tak nashe tu ruskyi narid  
Hirenko biduie,  
Lyshyt v budi zhinku, dity  
Sam pishky vandruie.

Oi vandruie po Kanadi  
Roboty shukaie,  
A tu zhinka z ditechkamy  
Z holodu zhybaie.

Iak zaroboyv kupyv khliba,  
Khtiv do nykh prybuty,  
Ne zastav zhe zhinku z ditmy  
Lysh hnylii trupy.

#### English translation

And so our Ruthenian  
Suffers bitterly here,  
He leaves his wife, children in a  
*buda*  
And wanders off on foot.

Oh, he wanders about this Canada  
Searching for work,  
But here his wife and little ones  
Are dying of starvation.

Earning some money, he buys  
some bread  
And wants to go and join them  
But he finds not wife and children  
Only rotting corpses.<sup>27</sup>

Although the experience of most settlers was less bitter, the arduous task of clearing land was accompanied by much that was not familiar: bears, moose, coyotes, skunks, snakes, buffalo skulls and certain berries and types of mushrooms. Although the untamed bush had to be tolerated, the wilderness also yielded an abundance of construction materials, fuel and wild game.

Specifically Canadian elements present in the lifestyle of *burdei* dwellers included the Canadian legal system and settlement policies reflected in the quarter-section homesteads and the processes involved in making a claim. The Canadian economy, as material possessions demonstrated, was at first more distant. The self-sufficiency of the *burdei* period ensured that women and children especially would rarely experience the external world. Contacts with mainstream society increased as men joined the work force, families sold their first crops and purchases were made.

Although it is clear that the first dwellings of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada were often less substantial than those of other immigrants, this was the result of several disadvantageous factors. First, the distance, both culturally and geographically, between Ukraine and western Canada was most marked. Second, the amount of available capital greatly affected success on the frontier. Often misled about financial requirements by steamship agents and exploited *en route*,<sup>28</sup> many arrived with little or no cash. As a result, the Ukrainian settlers' experiences in the dug-out dwellings were

remembered by all as the most difficult and trying periods. Hoping to find prosperity and happiness, the first settlers instead found themselves huddled in crude shelters that in the Old Country were associated only with the poorest and least fortunate people. Here they withstood hunger, cold, mosquitoes and loneliness, while the work to establish the homestead seemed never to end. Fortunately, the *burdei* period was temporary, and, for most, better times followed.

## Notes

1. This paper is based on a research project on Ukrainian dug-out dwellings in east central Alberta commissioned for the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village by Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture. Land-use and structural, materials and narrative reports were prepared to reconstruct and interpret a dug-out dwelling (*burdei*) in the museum. Because of the lack of other documentation, the primary source was the personal reminiscences of surviving *burdei* dwellers and other informants. Other contributors to the study, conducted between June 1983 and March 1985, were Sonia Maryn, Peter Martyniuk, Ivan Franko and Nestor Mykytyn.
2. R. Perin, "Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 4 (December 1983): 458. K. N. Conzen, "Historical Approaches to the Study of Rural Ethnic Communities," in F. C. Luecke (ed.), *Ethnicity on the Great Plains* (Lincoln, NE 1980), 1-2.
3. J. H. Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore* (New York 1968), 268-80; W. E. Roberts, "Folk Architecture," in R. M. Dorson (ed.), *Folklore and Folklife* (Chicago 1972), 281-93.
4. R. L. Welsch, *Sod Walls: The Story of the Nebraska Sod House* (Broken Bow, NE 1968); B. Oringderff, *True Sod: Sod Houses of Kansas* (North Newton, KS 1976).
5. J. Lehr, "Ukrainian Houses in Alberta," *Alberta Historical Review* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1973): 9-15, *Ukrainian Vernacular Architecture in Alberta*, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Occasional Paper No. 1 (Edmonton 1976), and "The Log Buildings of Ukrainian Settlers in Western Canada," *Prairie Forum* 5, no. 2 (1980): 183-96; P. Gilbert, "Ukrainian Cottages," *Architecture Canada* 18, no. 8 (August 1941): 132-3; P. Kravchuk, "Pershi zhytla ukrainsiv u Kanadi," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafii*, no. 3 (May-June 1968): 73-5.
6. For accounts of settlers occupying a *burdei* for six years or more, see interviews with John Archiniuk, Nick Cebuliak, Bill Slemko, Tom Trefanenko, Verna Topolnitsky and Verna Znak in Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Edmonton (hereafter HSS).
7. Alex Dmyterko, living on S25-T59-R19, W4.
8. T. V. Kosmina, *Siliske zhytlo Podillia. Kinets XIX-XX st.* (Kiev 1980), 37.
9. P. Talbot, "Pioneering on Strawberry Plain," *Alberta Historical Review* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1955): 14-20; F. G. Roe, "The Sod House," *ibid.* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1970): 2; Oringderff, 21.
10. E. Dick, *The Sod House Frontier*, quoted in Welsch, 23-4.
11. I. Shoukoplis, *Sonovy arkheolohii* (Kiev 1972), 78, 151; S. Bibikov (ed.), *Narysy starodavnoi istorii Ukrainskoi RSR* (Kiev 1957), 60-1.
12. P. S. Fedorenko, *Illustratyvni materialy z istorii Ukrainskoi RSR* (Kiev 1974), fig. 21.

13. P. I. Evarnitskii, *Istoriia zaporozhskikh kozakov* (St. Petersburg 1892), vol. 1, 301-2.
14. A. Kashchenko, *Opovidannia pro slavne viisko zaporozhske nyzove* (Katerynoslav 1971), 236.
15. M. L. Strunka, "Ukrainske narodne zhytlo Mykolaivshchyny," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafii*, no. 2 (March-April 1983): 64; Kosmina, 49; V. Shukhevych, "Hutsulshchyna," in *Materiialy do ukrainsko-ruskoj etnologii*, vol. 2 (Lviv 1899), 112.
16. K. Vovk, *Studii z ukrainskoj etnohrafii ta antropologii* (Prague [1927]), 83-5.
17. M. P. Prykhodko, "Do pyttannia pro rozvytok zhytla robitnykiv Donbasu," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafii*, no. 2, (March-April 1957): 52-3.
18. *Ibid.*, 53-4.
19. L. V. Markova, "Traditsii i innovatsii v ustroistve i ispolzovanii zhylyshcha Bolgar zapadnykh raionov Odesskoj oblasti UkrSSR," in Iu. V. Ivanov (ed.), *Kulturno-bytovy protsessy na iuge Ukrainy* (Moscow 1979), 129-32.
20. M. Sopolyha, *Narodna arkhitektura ukrainsiv skhidnoi Slovachchyny* (Svydnyk 1976), figs. 93-7; Kosmina, 102.
21. Lehr, *Ukrainian Vernacular Architecture*, 35-6.
22. Based on informant accounts. The accuracy of the percentages is limited by the data sample and by the arbitrary designation of individual objects.
23. Interviews with John Archiniuk, Mary Bushko, Nick Cebuliak, John and Anne Eleniak, Anna Harasewich, Hafia Janisewski, Annie Laskey, Annie Lastiwka, Zonia Shevolup, Mary Walaschuk, Anna Zailo. HSS.
24. Only more stable foods are included. Perishable and quickly consumed foods were more difficult to quantify. Perishable foods were either bought (potatoes, dried fruit) or acquired from the land or livestock (rabbits, eggs).
25. R. B. Klymasz, *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada: An Immigrant Complex in Transition* (New York 1980); also interviews with Katherine Godziuk, Anne Harasewich, Mary Walaschuk, Anne Zailo, Anna Zazula. HSS.
26. Interviews with Katherine Godziuk, Anne Goyan, Hafia Janisewski, Mary Walaschuk, Eudokia Woytkiw. HSS.
27. An excerpt from a folkloric poem in T. Fedyk, *Pisni pro Kanadu i Avstriiu* (5th ed.; Winnipeg 1914), 75.
28. J. Lehr, "Propaganda and Belief: Ukrainian Emigrant Views of the Canadian West," in J. Rozumnyj (ed.), *New Soil—Old Roots: The Ukrainian Experience in Canada* (Winnipeg 1983), 1-17.

# The Cultural Importance of Vernacular Architecture

John C. Lehr

If language is the geneology of a culture, as Dr. Samuel Johnson proclaimed, then architecture is the physical manifestation of that geneology, writ large in the landscape and absorbed into the consciousness of the people. In the monumental high-style architecture of the aristocracy and the urban elite are recorded society's flirtations with the stylistic movements and fashions of the day; movements which swept through our civilization from the Romanesque to the postmodern period.

High-style architecture, by reason of its prominence of position, permanence and prestige, has overshadowed, in both a literal and figurative sense, the more humble, less pretentious buildings of the common people. Denied even the status of "architecture" by some critical purists, these folk buildings often lack the longevity of their high-style counterparts, in part because of their origin, location and materials of construction. Paradoxically, the ephemeral nature of ordinary folk buildings is countered by the permanence and continuity of the long-enduring traditions which spawned them, and by their very ubiquity in the pretechnological age.

The significance of any folk building thus lies not in the individual architectural merit of the structure *per se*, although each may well be of intrinsic interest and value, but in the representation of a tradition, an eclectic gathering of attitudes, values and socio-economic exigency, expressed in the otherwise purely functional framework of a practical building. This observation, of course, holds true for all folk building which, as Alan Gowans has noted, is fundamentally similar in that it strives for solutions to common problems of shelter, heat, light and air, using local materials and non-specialized labour.<sup>1</sup> Thus, while this paper addresses the cultural significance of the vernacular building traditions introduced into the western Canadian landscape by Ukrainian pioneer immigrants at the turn of the century, it has a far wider application in a comparative sense, since it raises issues which relate to the vernacular architectural traditions of other

European groups which settled on the free homestead lands of the Canadian West.

### *The Context of Transference*

Early in 1892 a small group of peasant immigrants from Nebyliv, Kalush district, Galicia (Halychyna), filed on homesteads in the vicinity of Star, Alberta. These were the first of thousands of immigrants from Galicia and Bukovyna in Western Ukraine who sought free homesteads on the agricultural frontiers of western Canada until the outbreak of war in 1914 halted emigration from continental Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Most Ukrainian immigrants sought land which possessed certain characteristics found most often in western Canada in the aspen parkland vegetation zone. Their environmental preference and the administrative and political concerns of the government of the day channelled the Ukrainians into a fragmented series of solid blocs of settlement running in an arc from southeastern Manitoba to east central Alberta.<sup>3</sup> The Alberta settlement was the first to be established and it ultimately became the largest. By 1914, it encompassed over thirty townships of settled territory where, for a brief period while pioneer conditions endured, the Ukrainian tradition reigned supreme.

The settlement at Star was a primary destination for many immigrants, partly because Dr. Joseph Oleskiw had popularized it in his pamphlet on emigration,<sup>4</sup> and partly because of the chain-migration features of the Ukrainian movement to Canada. The initiation of emigration through the encouragement of kinfolk, friends or fellow villagers who had already settled in the new world meant that new immigrants would wish to settle beside their mentors to secure the advantages and the security of a familiar socio-cultural milieu. The result was a recreation of social relationships from the old world in the new land. Indeed, among many Ukrainian settlements in western Canada the social geography of Western Ukraine was created anew in microcosm. Often quite dramatic was the maintenance of a distinct split in settlement between immigrants from Bukovyna and those from Galicia. This split on the basis of religion and province of origin, and the perpetuation of old-world village groups among settlers, was quite marked in the Alberta bloc.<sup>5</sup>

This process and pattern of settlement has some major implications for both the survival of folk culture and approaches toward its study in the 1980s. First, the sheer size of the bloc of Ukrainian settlement in Alberta created an environment which buffered many settlers from the immediate onslaught of assimilative and acculturative forces. Second, the maintenance of Old Country groups created an environment whereby local and regional traditions could be transferred to a new locale without undue intermixing with other styles and traditions, either alien or fraternal. Third, the continuance of old-world groups meant that traditional forms would continue in the new setting, at least in the immediate postsettlement phase. Not only



would the same cultural norms be shared by settlers in a given area but the aesthetic expression of the norms would also be a shared tradition.

From the foregoing, it might be thought that the Ukrainian settlement in Alberta would be an ideal laboratory for the study of transference of material folk culture from the old world to the new. Unfortunately, such is not the case, for here, as elsewhere in the Canadian West, the full transposition of the material aspects of folk culture was prevented by the legal and administrative requirements imposed upon the process of acquisition of homestead land by successive federal governments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The greater part of western Canada, and virtually all of the agricultural lands opened to homestead settlement in the 1890s and in the first decade of this century, were subdivided under the system of sectional survey which divided the land into townships six miles square, each subdivided into thirty-six square-mile sections, further quartered into the standard 160-acre units—quarter sections—then deemed to be the optimum size of an agricultural operation in the West. The Dominion Lands Act, which governed the dispersal of all Crown lands under the homestead system, required that any settler claiming a quarter section of land as a homestead had to fulfill certain requirements.<sup>6</sup> Of these, the stipulation that a settler reside upon his homestead for three years before a full title could be granted had the greatest effect upon transference of culture. The requirement negated any chance of replicating Old Country patterns of nucleated village settlement in the Canadian West. It not only scattered the settlers across the country, but made the single isolated farmstead or the *einzelhof* the common unit of settlement across the land, largely destroying the social context within which material culture could be set and also diluting the effects of chain migration by discouraging the cohesion of local groups in settlement.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Homeland—The Point of Departure*

The material culture introduced into the new Ukrainian colony in east central Alberta was the material culture of the peasant farmer in Western Ukraine of the 1890s and early 1900s, filtered through the exigencies of the pioneer environment and distorted by the environmental and cultural changes wrought by the turmoil and disruption of emigration. The picture is further complicated by the fact that the material culture of Western Ukraine, like the society which spawned it, was possessed of a surprisingly rich diversity. Nor was it a static fossilized culture, one impervious to alien influences or resistant to innovation and change.

From our vantage point, it is easy to fall prey to the trap of the "Ruritanian" myth by picturing Western Ukraine in the closing decades of the nineteenth century as a bucolic paradise, rich in a folk culture unchanged for centuries, oblivious to alien tastes and fashion and immune to the technological and social changes that were sweeping throughout a Europe

that was being industrialized rapidly. In part fostered by fond immigrant reminiscences and the romanticism inherent in many societies aspiring to express a national identity, the acceptance of the myth of a pristine folk world has been encouraged by the nostalgic yearnings of western technological societies cut off from peasant origins. In recent years the distortions of this view of the Ukrainian past have been challenged by John-Paul Himka, who has demonstrated that the reality of Western Ukraine in the 1890s was far from such a timeless pastoral ideal.<sup>8</sup> Both Bukovyna and Galicia may have been social and economic backwaters of the Hapsburg empire but neither were pristine sanctuaries of folk tradition. Manufactured goods from Austria's nascent industrial centres were penetrating into all parts of the country, disrupting traditional craft industries, changing patterns of consumption and significantly altering the expression of peasant material culture.<sup>9</sup>

Other factors were also affecting the stability of society and culture. Education was slowly eroding the barrier that illiteracy placed in the way of communication of ideas, and the increasing prevalence of seasonal and annual migration in search of work had expanded the horizons of the peasant world far beyond the immediate limits of the village.<sup>10</sup>

Two examples will suffice to illustrate the way in which folk society and culture was continually evolving at the time of the immigration movement to Canada. Most obvious and dramatic was the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century shift in traditional church design, away from the steeply shaped multi-roofed wooden churches, toward an embrace of the domed configuration of the Byzantine-influenced *banya* variant which bore the imprint of the Russian-controlled Greater Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> While it may be argued that religious architecture, because of the influence of the clergy, always reflects an elitist tradition and is thus never truly of the folk genre, the same cannot be said of the evolution of the basic form of the Ukrainian folk house during the two centuries preceding emigration. From a basic one-room *khata* in the seventeenth century to the multi-room variants common in the nineteenth century, the *khata* of Western Ukraine had evolved into a well-defined form with distinctive regional expressions. At the close of the century the technology of building was in a state of flux. For example, the practice of building a chimney to vent smoke above the roofline was widely established, but in some of the more remote areas the *chorna khata* (black house), where the chimney led only to the ceiling, was still to be found. Smoke drifted out through the thatched roof or through eyebrow vents placed in the roof, usually on the forward or southward slope.<sup>12</sup>

Even regulation by village and provincial authorities was beginning to affect traditional building forms in Western Ukraine by the turn of the century. Thatch, much used as a roof covering in many areas, was in disfavour with authorities as a fire hazard. In at least some villages it was being replaced by other less aesthetically pleasing, but far safer, roofing agents, among them wood shingles and galvanized iron.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear therefore that any study of transference of material culture from Western Ukraine to the frontiers of North America cannot view the act of migration as the sole agent of change in the folk tradition. The process of transference may have initiated change, it may have accelerated it, or it may even have retarded it; it may even have acted as an agent of atavism, causing a society to backtrack and employ forms in the new land which were archaic in the old. What is certain is that the process cannot be viewed as a simple cause and effect with migration marking a bridge between an old world unchanging rural folk culture and a new world industrial and urban-based society.

### *Implanting the "Khata" in Alberta*

Rather surprisingly, the migration from Western Ukraine to western Canada did not involve a major shift of physical environment, only one of location. For the most part immigrants from Western Ukraine came from the wooded foothills and highlands of the Carpathians. In their movement to Canada and into the aspen parkland belt they encountered a physical landscape similar in many respects to that which they had left. In some instances immigrants chose to settle in certain areas primarily because of the visual similarity to their homeland environment. It was a raw undeveloped environment, of course, but it meant that the newly arrived settler was usually able to find close at hand the principal materials of peasant building: timber, fieldstone, clay and straw. The capacity to replicate the building technology of the Old Country was thus afforded to the Ukrainian settler in most parts of western Canada, and certainly in the part of east central Alberta occupied before 1914.

The exigencies of pioneer life—lack of capital, a desperate need for shelter and lack of time to construct a conventional dwelling—led many settlers to construct a temporary shelter—the *burdei* or *zemlianka*—a dug-out, and to postpone the erection of permanent dwellings until a more substantial house could be erected.

The form of the *burdei* may well have been patterned on the *staya* of the Hutsuls, with antecedents in the Trypillian culture.<sup>14</sup> At all events, its use was atavistic and signified a return to earlier forms of the cultural traditions of Western Ukraine and, of course, served to dramatize the flexibility of the peasant builder in drawing upon the range of his experience and cultural background.

In Alberta most Ukrainian immigrants soon built a substantial house and other farm buildings in the pattern of those left behind in the Old Country. Again, pioneer conditions militated against the full replication of the rich decor and ornamentation of the house as found in the homeland. Nevertheless, there is evidence that many settlers made quite determined efforts to recreate their previous dwellings in all respects. In 1895, after his visit to the Alberta colony, Dr. Oleskiw noted that the Ukrainians wasted too

much time and effort in the construction of their houses.<sup>15</sup> In his opinion they would have been better employed in building purely utilitarian dwellings and concentrating on bringing their land into production.

Despite a wide variation in appearance of the early houses built by Ukrainian settlers in the West, they did possess a unity of design and proportion and quite often a similarity of construction technique. This unity was most clearly seen in the integration of several elements of orientation and form: a southward orientation; a single storey; a rectangular two- or three-room plan; a central chimney; a gable, hipped gable or hipped roof; the maintenance of facade to side-wall ratios; and the use of distinctive colours in decorative trim.<sup>16</sup>

In Alberta virtually all of the pioneer dwellings were of log and virtually all used horizontal construction, an interesting contrast to some other areas settled by Ukrainians where slight variations in environmental conditions led to the use of post and fill (Red River frame) and stockade walling (vertically placed logs).<sup>17</sup> Since all three construction techniques were practised in Western Ukraine,<sup>18</sup> and since there is little correlation in the use of any of these building techniques and the regional origins of the builder, the argument has been made that horizontal log construction was preferred and used whenever good quality timber was available, whereas post and fill were employed only in areas where good solid building logs were in short supply. Stockade walling was apparently used only in areas devoid of mature timber.<sup>19</sup>

Change in the method of log construction did not appear to have wrought any significant change upon the form of the house. However, changes in the manner of roof covering did have an impact upon the overall appearance of the building profile, though this did not extend to affect the building form.

According to the Ukrainian ethnologist V.P. Samojlovych, at the turn of the century most house roofs in Western Ukraine were steeply pitched and thatched with rye straw, though in some regions hand-split wooden shingles were used.<sup>20</sup> There, regional preferences in roofing materials, as with type of log construction, simply reflected the cost of availability of timber.

In Canada most pioneer buildings used thatch, using slough grass as a rye-straw substitute. These thatched roofs ranged from the expertly done to the slapdash. Since thatch was a recognized fire hazard, it was often replaced after some years by wood shingles, at which time the roof pitch was quite frequently altered so as to lower the roof profile. At this point the silhouette of the house was changed, something of the picturesque element eliminated, but the basic form and spirit of the house remained intact.

It has been argued that the environmental shifts experienced in the move to western Canada were immediate but essentially inconsequential in their impact upon the basic structure of the house form.<sup>21</sup> The fundamental objectives, value system and aesthetic assumptions of the builders and their buildings remained unchanged. Frontier conditions did not impose any real constraints upon either the configuration or size of the house built by the Ukrainian pioneer immigrant.



Change in house form, if not wrought by environmental forces (which is seldom the case), must have resulted from major shifts in functional use of space or from major changes in the aesthetic norms under which buildings and their component forms were evaluated. That being so, the pioneer house may be viewed as a sensitive barometer to cultural trends within the immigrant community—a barometer, moreover, which is easily read and which leaves no doubt of the situation being recorded. The old adage that actions speak louder than words is undeniably true when applied to measurement of the strength and direction of cultural affinity, affiliation and aspiration. Any profession to a commitment of maintaining old cultural values unpolluted by alien influences made by any immigrant could be more clearly belied by incorporation of either elements of Canadian decor, changes in the organization of space within the house, or the adoption of new aesthetics of scale, proportion, alignment or the linear ratios incorporated in building design, than by the simple adoption of new methods of construction or the incorporation of a new building technology. The former reflects a change in attitude; the latter reflects only expediency, a trait not incompatible with the *weltanschauung* of the peasant immigrant.

Although cultural anthropologists, social historians and geographers have long accepted such assumptions, few, if any, have pursued the logical extension suggested by Churchill's remark that "We shape our buildings; afterwards our buildings shape us."<sup>22</sup> Yet it would seem logical that if traditional values found expression in building form, and if traditional building forms reinforced traditional values by ensuring the replication of patterns of spatial behaviour and activity within the house, then the alteration of building form, room shape, size or function would erode or destroy previously entrenched behavioural patterns. Patterns of family interaction, sex roles in the control and organization of social space, the juxtaposition of activities and even notions of privacy are all dependent upon the form of the buildings which house the family unit.

In this context the evolution of the Ukrainian pioneer form in the Canadian West offers a rare and fascinating opportunity to examine the process of cultural change as the immigrant community was subjected to the consistent pressures of Anglicization, acculturation and assimilation. Within the Alberta bloc settlement there was a clear geographical differentiation in the rate of incorporation of alien cultural elements into the domestic landscape. Initially, and usually through the first few years of settlement, a fairly high degree of cultural separation was achieved even in areas adjacent to English-speaking settlements. For many pioneers cross-cultural contact was confined to occasional forays into local market centres. In the larger settlements, especially in the more remote and poorer areas, the penetration of alien culture was limited, so acculturation was not manifest in house design for many decades. In the smaller settlements, and on the more prosperous fringes of the Alberta settlement, alien traits were incorporated into the houses of Ukrainian settlers within twenty years of settlement.



In the early decades of this century travellers passing through the Ukrainian settlement in Alberta were impressed with the foreign appearance of the countryside, which they mistakenly thought to be quintessentially Russian:

When less than five miles of our journey [from Lamont] were covered we entered a district as typically Russian as though we had dropped into Russia itself. Here and there beside the winding trail loomed up groups of buildings, low browed, and heavily thatched. These always faced south. The houses were all of rough logs, rough hewed and chinked with a mortar made of clay and straw. Some were plastered on the exterior, and almost all of them had been limewashed to a dazzling whiteness.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, on the fringe of the Alberta settlement at Star most of the recently built houses were described as being "entirely Anglo-Saxon in design, well built, and with sufficient windows."<sup>24</sup> Many traditional elements survived in these "entirely Anglo-Saxon" houses, many of which were actually architectural hybrids, unless they were based entirely upon a "pattern-book" design and hence devoid of any input by the builder.

In many of the second-generation Ukrainian houses there was a conscious effort to embrace Canadian styles and technologies (for example, the use of log as a building material was occasionally replaced by milled lumber), but more frequent was the elimination of the more flamboyant aspects of the traditional style. Heavy roof overhangs and ornamented eave brackets went by the board, so that the house became more austere and simple than its traditional counterpart. The house profile may have been changed by the addition of an additional storey but the basic floor plan generally remained unaltered; decor showed little change insofar as painted trim was concerned, and wall ratios, door and window placement were not changed significantly.<sup>25</sup> Typical was the second house built by Ivan Pylypow (Pillipiw), now preserved in the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, which displays elements of both the Ukrainian and North American tradition.

For the first few decades of settlement the floor plan of the Ukrainian house usually remained unchanged, in large measure because the arrangement of space within the house was determined by well-entrenched patterns of social behaviour and use of micro-space. The form of the Ukrainian pioneer house evolved from an early one-room dwelling to the two- and three-room dwellings common in Western Ukraine at the time of emigration. The two-room house was divided into the usually smaller eastern *mala khata* (little house) and the western *velyka khata* (big house). The *mala khata* was the remnant of the original house wherein all domestic activity took place: washing, cooking, eating, sleeping, grooming and socializing. Even with the addition of the *velyka khata* this association of activity with the *mala khata* did not experience major change. In most peasant households the *velyka khata* tended to be reserved for ceremonial functions, for the entertainment of guests or for use as the sleeping place of the adults. Stove placement in the *mala khata* undoubtedly accounted for the

retention of many activities in that room. The hearth is a natural focus of domestic activity. Its heat made the *mala khata* the more attractive living and sleeping quarters—indeed it was customary for the children to sleep atop the large clay stove (*peech*) where slowly radiated heat made for a warm bed on cold nights.

All other floor plans found in Ukrainian pioneer houses were simply variants of this basic plan and showed no real deviation in the use of pattern of space from the basic two-room variant described above. For any real alteration in this pattern of spatial organization, fundamental changes in the attitudes and expectations of the family decision-maker had to occur. This may have been manifested in a determination to slough off the trappings of all things Ukrainian, to be assimilated into Anglo-American society. If this were the case, the change was rapid and radical: complete adoption of the North American pattern-book house and relegation of the pioneer house to service as a granary or storage shed.<sup>26</sup>

More often the change was wrought slowly and reflected the gradual impingement of alien ideas upon the consciousness of the household members who effectively controlled the organization and use of space within the house. In most cases this was the woman, and generally it was the woman who was less exposed to foreign culture and who, for social reasons, was less disposed to be influenced by it.

It has been argued that the entire pioneer landscape clearly reflected the pathways by which alien cultural influences penetrated into the Ukrainian community. Ordinarily it was the male who served as the vehicle of acculturation since he was more exposed to North American ways.<sup>27</sup> The journey to local service centres, involvement with the market economy and working on harvesting crews, the railway section gangs or in the mines, gave some contact with English-speaking society. Prestige among peers was gained by the degree of acculturation as represented in the acquisition of technology, adoption of North American agricultural practices and the incorporation of English jargon into the immigrant vocabulary.

The woman seldom left the isolation of the homestead except to engage in community social activities which revolved around the family and the church. The latter was the guardian of culture in the new land, one institution where the Protestant-tainted English language would make little headway for many years, and an institution which fought for the maintenance of tradition rather than for its obliteration.<sup>28</sup> The woman was thus a bearer and guardian of culture. Those aspects of the domestic landscape under her influence were protected in some measure from the ravages of acculturation. The aesthetics of decor, the arrangement and use of space, the embellishment of the interior through ornamentation were all largely the domain of the woman and displayed the Ukrainian influence long after the spatially more extensive male-dominated landscape had ceased to reflect any significant European influence.

The effects of this were several. Patterns of spatial usage largely determined the arrangement and use of interior space. Since peasant buildings are

designed from the inside outwards, the formation of patterns of use of interior space determined the basic form of the pioneer house and its outward appearance. Decor was kept remarkably constant in the Ukrainian house from the pioneer era onward. The great majority of Ukrainians plastered and limewashed the exteriors of their log houses. Plastering and limewashing the exterior walls was traditionally done by the woman, the latter several times a year and always before the celebration of Easter. The precise colour of the limewash was determined by adding washing blue to the lime to obtain a dazzling white finish which became a characteristic of Ukrainian pioneer houses.

Geometric designs in blue were frequently executed upon the limewashed plaster, a simple operation since colour change was easily effected by adding a greater amount of washing blue to the limewash. Wooden trim around windows and doors was frequently painted in the same sky-blue colour. This perpetuation of colour preferences—at least of colour use—has been attributed to nationalistic sentiment, since blue and yellow constitute the national colours of the independent Ukrainian national state. That may well be a facile explanation, for in many peasant societies—indeed in all societies—colour carries meaning. Today that meaning is mainly emotive, but in the past the symbolic function was more pronounced. In parts of the Carpathians, blue was thought to possess certain powers to ward off evil, to bring protection and good luck to the house so decorated. That, put together with the relative ease with which the colour could be created and applied, may account for the popularity of its use among large sections of the Ukrainian immigrant community, especially those who had migrated from the province of Galicia.<sup>29</sup>

Even in urban areas, when the immigrant had little opportunity to express ethnic individuality in the urban landscape, perpetuation of colour usage was the one cultural element which served to create a distinctive visual landscape. Describing Winnipeg's North End in 1904, a newspaper columnist wrote:

Many of their homes are decked out in brightly coloured paints and in summer are adorned with flowers. Blue is apparently a favourite Galician colour and is predominant in the neighbourhoods where they live.<sup>30</sup>

Something of this trait may yet be observed in the various Ukrainian communities across western Canada, although time has blurred the uniformity of colour preference. Paradoxically, continuity of what is essentially an ephemeral superficial element of the domestic landscape is explainable in terms of its ephemeral nature. Colour preference is both subconscious and is independent of the built form. Long after other alien cultural forms have been adopted, colour preference and the aesthetics of decor survive, simply incorporated within, or adapted to, the new non-Ukrainian tradition.

Another element within the woman's domain was the placement of ornamentation within the house. Traditionally the eastern wall of the *velyka khata* was regarded as a holy wall upon which were displayed icons, religious calendars and other objects. This function changed with the decrease in the

role of religion in many households, but continuity was evident in the use of the holy wall for the display of such icons of an Anglicized generation as graduation photographs, family portraits and sports trophies. The symbolism has undergone a radical shift, but the use of space, in a conceptual fashion at least, has scarcely been altered.

Within the Ukrainian settlement of Alberta, as in other Ukrainian settlements in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, hundreds of apparently modern houses are, in fact, re-sided older homes, structurally sound and incorporating many elements of the pioneer tradition in terms of such things as floor plan, window placement, chimney situation and wall ratios. Within these modernized pioneer houses, room usage frequently replicates the traditional pattern. The *velyka khata* often has an expanded use, but it still remains less intensively used, as it is reserved for the more formal household activities. Even in those houses where there no longer exists a wall separating the two major rooms, the focus of daily activity still centres on the area of the house that was the old *mala khata*. Modern space heaters provide the freedom to exploit all parts of the house in equal comfort on a year-round basis; no longer is activity confined to the proximity of the stove in the *mala khata*, yet deeply ingrained patterns of spatial behaviour persist. Whether they will survive the inevitable passing of the old forms and be perpetuated within the confines of new architect-designed dwellings mass produced for the homogeneous North American market is, however, very much open to question.

## Conclusion

The vernacular architecture of the Ukrainian settlers of Alberta—and, of course, of Ukrainians who settled elsewhere in the West—constitutes a valuable and unique vehicle for the study and understanding of cultural transference, the process of adaptation and acculturation and of the effects of that process upon the micro-patterns of spatial behaviour. Unfortunately, until recently, this facet was neglected in the academic study of ethnic cultures of western Canada, interest in house form being regarded as an antiquarian rather than a legitimate form for historical research. Assimilation was measured by other indices. Much of the study of ethnic culture has focused upon what the popular mind clearly perceives as folk: art, music, dance and, of course, cuisine. The house has been seen as an element of culture without a future, save for fossilized preservation within the confines of a heritage museum. A cultural dinosaur, doomed to extinction, unable to span the gulf between the rural pioneer environment and the modern urban setting, it became, to many, a symbol of economic disadvantage, poverty and exclusion from the mainstream of Canadian life. Unlike dance or art it could not make the leap to high culture—more properly high folk art—and so was deemed to be an element of culture best left in the countryside when the second and third generations made the move into the burgeoning towns and



cities of the West. To suggestions that the ethnic tradition be carried into the city and be expressed in the built environment, one meets the riposte, "How can one build a thatched roof house as one's city home?"

The answer, of course, is that one cannot, but that does not preclude the incorporation of elements of Ukrainian vernacular architecture in modern architect-designed city houses. As the noted Ukrainian Canadian architect, Radoslav Zuk, has observed, "the essence of cultural uniqueness does not lie in a few superficial symbols, but in the characteristic abstract relationships inherent in any physical object" or set of spatial relationships.<sup>31</sup> From the cultural perspective it seems that the Ukrainian vernacular architecture may yet have two important contributions to make: to serve as a window into the past and to offer for the future the characteristic abstract set of relationships which a new generation of architects may use to express the Ukrainian presence in the townscapes of the West as firmly as it was experienced in the pioneer rural landscapes of the Prairie provinces.

## Notes

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13. Interviews by the writer with M. Krykalowich, H. Koncohrada and F. Krill, Beaverhill Pioneer Home, Lamont, Alberta, 5 June 1972.
  14. See, for example, V. Sichyn'skyj, "Etruskyi dim i hutsulskyi osedok," in V. Simovych, *Pratsi ukrainskoho vysokoho pedagogichoho instytutu im. Mykhaila Drahomanova u Prazi. Navkovyi zbirnyk* (Prague 1929), 370–81.
  15. Oleskiw, 62–3.
  16. The design of the Ukrainian folk house in Alberta has been described in more detail by the writer in *Ukrainian Vernacular Architecture in Alberta*, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Occasional Paper No. 1 (Edmonton 1976), *Alberta Historical Review* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1973): 9–15, and "Changing Ukrainian House Styles," *Alberta History* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 25–9; and by W. Wonders and M. Rasmussen, "Log Buildings of West Central Alberta," *Prairie Forum* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 197–218.
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# ***Mashyna: Ukrainians and Agricultural Technology in Alberta to 1930***

Peter Melnycky

Some of the most profound changes Ukrainians in Alberta experienced between the 1890s and the 1930s occurred in agricultural technology, as the typical farmstead passed from the pioneer to the commercial state. The extent of change can be gauged by comparing the pre-emigrational agricultural practices of Ukrainians with the adaptations they gradually made in Alberta while transforming the wilderness into expansive farms producing grain on a large scale.

In Galicia and Bukovyna at the end of the nineteenth century, 95 per cent of the Ukrainian population was peasant and suffered from a rapidly diminishing supply of land.<sup>1</sup> By 1900 rapid population growth and subdivision of family holdings in eastern Galicia had reduced 42.7 per cent of the holdings to less than two hectares of land each and 80 per cent to less than five. In Bukovyna the situation was even worse, with 56 per cent under two hectares and 85 per cent under five. Most peasant families owned less than the five hectares (approximately twelve acres) needed to support themselves at a subsistence level.<sup>2</sup> The effect of land scarcity was much aggravated by a low level of agricultural technology. Miniscule holdings of several narrow strips in separate locations rendered advanced technology impractical, even when it was affordable.<sup>3</sup>

Farm implements included mainly crude home-made, wooden devices. Land was ploughed and cultivated with wooden hoes, shovels and in some cases ox-drawn walking ploughs. Fields were sown by hand; crops were harvested with scythes or sickles, collected with rakes and forks and threshed with flails. In eastern Galicia 75 per cent of households with less than two hectares had no horses and 25 per cent had no cows; those on two to five hectares averaged a horse and cow per household. In Bukovyna at least 45 per cent of households had no horses and 11 per cent no cows. In all of Galicia 1,150,000 households with less than ten hectares owned a total of thirty-four sowers and fifty-eight harvesting machines.<sup>4</sup> A light plough and harrow and possibly a straw cutter or hand mill were the most advanced

implements used by Ukrainian peasants. Binders, seeders, mowers, rakes and other machinery were practically unknown. Only middle-sized farms might own threshers, with the large estates alone possessing a full range of seeders, mowers, binders and other machinery.<sup>5</sup> With 98.4 per cent of the seeders, all the hayrakes, 99.8 per cent of the binders, 79.5 per cent of the threshing machines and 81.7 per cent of the separators in Galicia, the estates were nevertheless poorly managed and peasant-labour intensive.<sup>6</sup> While peasant collectives owned some agricultural machinery, only on the estates of large landowners did peasants usually have contact with more than wooden ploughs and hand implements, and even there mechanization was limited by the availability of cheap labour.

The negligible material wealth and technical knowledge of peasants made adjustment to the specialized wheat economy in the Canadian West very difficult for Ukrainian immigrants. Neither the Canadian government nor promoters of emigration in Galicia were effective in preparing Ukrainians for settlement in frontier Canada.<sup>7</sup> In *Pro vilni zemli*, Dr. Joseph Oleskiw, a Galician agronomist, stressed that in 1895 each family would require approximately \$100 to purchase oxen, a plough and other farm implements before the first harvest.<sup>8</sup> In *O emigratsii*, published after a visit to western Canada that same year, Oleskiw recommended that sundry smaller equipment (axes, hoes) be purchased in Winnipeg to save costs, especially as the equipment was "entirely different in Canada from that used in our country."<sup>9</sup> Great adjustments would be needed to cope with standards on mechanized prairie farms of which the Ukrainians were "completely ignorant":

The ability to operate a sickle or a scythe is of no importance whatever in Canada, because these implements cannot be used in farming in that country. Ploughing is the only skill in which our peasants may claim to have a certain amount of experience, but even ploughing is different in Canada, because the local farmers commonly use prairie-breakers and thus plough the virgin prairie without difficulty. Canadian farmers look with amazement even at our most intelligent farmers and refuse to believe that they had anything to do with farming, because our farmers are completely unfamiliar with their methods of work.

In the essential area of draft animals as a source of power, Ukrainians also faced a significant challenge:

Skinny miserable nags would not be able to pull these machines, hence one needs good horses for it. Farmers in Canada have therefore horses differing markedly from those commonly owned by our peasants, differing even from the horses of our Germans, and it would take us a long time to find in our country horses of the kind owned by farmers in Canada. Harnesses made of cloth are not strong enough to operate these machines and must be made of leather. It requires experience to know how to deal with this kind of horse and harness and with the agricultural machines. . . . Our man can easily harness a horse if the harness is made of cloth, but it is profound philosophy to him to use a Canadian harness,

a philosophy he cannot master. He can drive the half-starved Galician nags with an equal ease, but cannot manage the heavy Canadian horses. Our farmer sits down on the driver's seat, hangs his head and, deep in thought, lets the reins dangle, while the strong Canadian horses, used to a willful farmer's hand, run around as they like.<sup>10</sup>

Experience in handling a better standard of draft animals and machinery on the landowners' estates was a definite advantage:

Our peasant looks at every new machine with wonder: he feels it and smells it, whereas what he should do is learn to operate it and learn it thoroughly. Workers and foremen from large estates would probably find it easier to get along in Canada, but ordinary farmers must work hard to deserve the name of farmer in that country. Those who know it in advance, those who learn while still at home to operate the agricultural machines, handle the big vigorous horses and leather harnesses owned by rich landowners in our country, will be far ahead of those who emigrate to Canada unprepared.

Oleskiw praised the earliest Ukrainian immigrants in Canada for renting their machinery by the day or acre from German neighbours rather than purchasing on credit. He also warned about being too cautious and missing the opportunities which mechanization offered:

Those owning machines develop their farms most effectively and achieve prosperity faster.... Should our people in Canada fold their hands and cease striving for the improvement of their conditions, and should they fail to acquire certain means of production, they will be left behind by everyone in the new country, just as they were lagging behind in the old country, in their fatherland.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the effectiveness with which Oleskiw and others popularized Canada, they had little effect on the early farming practices of Ukrainian settlers guided more by their precarious state of capitalization and their notion of a viable farm operation. Traditional perceptions applied to the initial requirements of survival led most to prefer wooded homesteads better suited to a subsistence peasant economy than to a capitalist market. The varied environment of a homestead in the wooded park belt would provide for their families until sufficient capital was generated to farm on a commercial scale. As a result of land selection in the transitional zone between aspen parkland and boreal forest, even homesteads with rich, fertile land were often heavily treed and required clearing before they could be cultivated.<sup>12</sup>

While Ukrainian immigrants could manage on less than the estimated \$1,000 needed to establish a farming operation, an initial cash base was essential. Yet 50 per cent of Ukrainian immigrants had no capital and 42 per cent arrived with less than \$500, according to the 1917 Woodsworth survey. Most were therefore in no position to acquire even the minimal prerequisites: a stove (\$40), breaking plough (\$27), hand implements, a team of oxen or horses (\$200), harness, wagon, seed and provisions. As a result, most relied on the simplest implements, often from Europe: axes, sickles, scythes, spades,

hoes, flails, saws, rakes, forks, augers, winnowing sieves and, occasionally, carpentry and blacksmith tools. Some brought ploughs and hand mills.<sup>13</sup>

The pioneering phase of farming—up to five years depending on funds, aid from family or community, and the landscape—was over for some by 1898 and for most between 1905 and 1910. Even though the homestead was labour intensive and dependent upon old-world techniques, the search for extra capital brought Ukrainians into contact with prevailing agricultural practices. Working for more established neighbours or as members of large migrant harvesting crews brought in badly needed cash and gave Ukrainian immigrants first-hand experience with a wide range of farm machinery, enabling them to enter a self-sufficient transitional phase of farming. As a farmer established his permanent dwelling and specialized outbuildings, increased his livestock holdings, and cleared and cultivated expanding acreage with an emphasis on grain, the quality of draft animals and farm implements simultaneously improved. Horses were acquired, either as the first draft animals or to replace oxen. Standard farm wagons and sleighs with grain boxes became common. Sulky and gang ploughs replaced simple walking ploughs. Harrows, seeders, mowers and binders became standard possessions, and threshing machines owned individually or co-operatively made their appearance.<sup>14</sup>

By 1900 many farmers in the Edna-Star settlement owned full complements of machinery, and a pair of families were probably the first Ukrainians in Alberta (and possibly in Canada) to own a steam-threshing outfit.<sup>15</sup> A Canadian immigration official reported that the settlers were proving to be “quite an acquisition to the commerce of Edmonton and vicinity as well as displaying a progressive interest in promoting the industries of the country. They have already become a potent factor in consuming the production of the East as well as being large producers where they live.”<sup>16</sup> The manager of the Massey-Harris Company in Edmonton confirmed that the Ukrainians were “good men and honest, meeting their notes before they mature.” Their purchase of machinery in 1899 amounted to \$15,000 and a \$3,000 steam thresher was paid for before payment was due.<sup>17</sup> Among other commercial beneficiaries, the three Edmonton dealers for McCormick, Deering and Frost & Wood recorded sales to the settlement of over \$40,000 in agricultural implements; Frost & Wood alone anticipated selling 100 binders in 1900. The trade potential induced several firms to hire Ukrainian interpreters.<sup>18</sup>

By 1903–5, several individual Ukrainian farmers owned “*kirat*”-powered<sup>19</sup> threshing machines where either two horses on a treadmill or five, seven or more horses harnessed to a large rotating crown sweep gear supplied power through a belt or drive shaft to a wooden thresher/separator. In his novel, *Sons of the Soil*, Illia Kiriak relates the first time Hrehory Workun had his crop (750 bags of grain) threshed by his neighbour's small “*kirat*”-powered thresher, purchased second hand from German settlers. Kiriak conveys the powerful and almost transcendental effect on the settlers of experiencing their first mechanized harvest:



The first threshing remained one of his happiest memories. It filled him with pride that he who in the Old Country never knew where his next meal was coming from could now boast of so much grain that he had to hire threshers to help finish the job for him.

His friend Wakar, pitching out straw from the separator, called out in mock deference over the din of the machine:

"Most powerful Sir, Landlord *kum* Hrehory, how is the grain shelling out?" This was his way of jesting to me for becoming so great a landlord that I could afford to do threshing with a thresher.

According to the narrator, "The epochal first threshing by machine was long remembered in the community."<sup>20</sup>

Even as they experimented with the "*kirat*" threshing machines, individual farmers at Edna-Star began to introduce steam power as early as 1899, and increasingly after 1904. With the experience gained on threshing crews or on industrial work sites, individual farmers obtained licences to operate the great steam engines. They could either hire themselves out to individual or co-operative threshing units or operate units of their own, while doing custom work for neighbours.<sup>21</sup> Although excellent sources of stationary and pulling power, the early machines were huge, enormously heavy and often unwieldy monsters that damaged roads, destroyed bridges on the way between fields, bogged down under their own weight, consumed prodigious amounts of fuel and water and often broke down or even self-destructed if not operated properly.<sup>22</sup>

In his memoirs Peter Svarich described the difficulties encountered with one of the first co-operatively owned steam-traction engines in east central Alberta. Having obtained his steam operator's licence in 1904, Svarich organized a six-member co-operative which purchased a used thresher/separator with a 48-inch cylinder and 64-inch straw blower powered by an 80HP steam engine. During the ten days it took to transport the machine from South Edmonton to Vegreville, several bridges were destroyed and the tractor became mired numerous times. Despite the machine's massive capacity, small orders of 200–300 bushels of custom threshing from individual farmers several miles apart made the entire venture uneconomical. The time spent in travelling equalled that in threshing, and the \$20–25 daily fee barely covered the cost of workers, maintenance and oil. Wet conditions immobilized the machine, while cast-iron parts broke in severe winter temperatures. When the engine's main three-inch shaft shattered in the cold, it took three days to extract the part, a week in Edmonton to reproduce it and another two days to replace it—all at a cost of \$60. After two days the shaft bent out of shape and again had to be removed, reworked and reinforced, with a further loss of three days. Breaking through the ice of a small lake necessitated an elaborate rescue operation lasting more than three weeks. The first year's clear profit on a \$2,000 investment was less than \$200. Before the co-op's second season, Svarich rebuilt the engine, which

performed flawlessly. Convinced that training to operate and maintain such machines was needed, he established a school for steam operators in Vegreville where students prepared themselves to become licenced operators through government-regulated exams. In the two years of the school's operation, over thirty licenced engineers graduated.<sup>23</sup>

Steam-threshing units of the kind owned by Svarich and associates became more prevalent as farmers in the bloc moved from mixed to commercial grain farming. Material progress was more apparent in some districts than in others. The initial under-capitalization of most farmers and the need to clear and improve often heavily forested homesteads were not conducive to rapid mechanization. The length of time an area had been settled, the quality of its soil and the proximity to railroad lines and their grain marketing and retail facilities were also important. In the face of several inhibiting factors, the Ukrainian peasant-settler's traditional penchant for mixed subsistence farming prevailed over the more specialized and highly mechanized, profit-oriented grain farming.<sup>24</sup>

The decisive impetus to commercial grain farming was provided by favourable market conditions during and immediately after the First World War. The transitional Ukrainian emphasis on family labour and mixed farming, the advantage of parkland zone moisture during the generally dry summers of 1917-19, and income derived from harvest labour on other farms improved farmers' incomes. Ukrainians expanded their landholdings and invested in all kinds of implements, including steamers and threshers. Internal-combustion gasoline tractors, which had appeared in east central Alberta as early as 1909, were widely used during the 1920s.<sup>25</sup> Although a postwar recession (1920-4) caused a record rate of bankruptcies among the Ukrainian farmers, with much recently purchased land and equipment reverting to their original owners, a new period of relative prosperity (1926-9), with increased grain prices and good crop yields, strengthened the growth and mechanization spurred by the war.<sup>26</sup>

Mechanized farming was further encouraged by the agent-operated implement dealerships in virtually all the townsites along the three railroads built through the Ukrainian bloc. Occasionally dealerships even preceded the railroad. Pakan on the North Saskatchewan River, for example, boasted three implement shops by 1900: International Harvester, Massey-Harris and John Deere.<sup>27</sup> Individual Ukrainians were quick to enter into the implement sales business. Theodore Nemirsky was a dealer for Frost & Wood/IHC Deering at Wostok in 1906 while the Shandro brothers acted on behalf of the McCormick Company, and in 1907 were reported to be doing "much business." Alex manned the agency at Shandro while Andrew worked out of Vegreville as salesman over a large territory. By the First World War at least a dozen Ukrainians were in the implement business, a figure which took off dramatically in the 1920s. Each railroad townsite had a cluster of dealers representing each of the country's main manufacturers. Competition was fuelled by a wide variety of credit arrangements as inducements to purchase equipment.<sup>28</sup> Although the Ukrainian press and periodical publications

devoted considerable attention to agricultural concerns, they were likely less significant to the improvement of farm technology than the new generation of Ukrainians graduating from agricultural colleges, who in the 1920s were appointed district agriculturalists by the Alberta Department of Agriculture or liaison officers by the federal Department of Agriculture.<sup>29</sup>

By the 1920s Ukrainians not only bought and sold farm machinery, but east central Alberta was the proving ground of the Boychuk stooker—an automatically operated grain stooking machine invented by Nicholas and John Boychuk of Shandro. The Boychuks constructed four “hand built” stokers between 1924–7 with ordinary machine shop tools and materials. The company holding the patent hoped to augment the estimated 400–800,000 binders in operation in Canada and over 3,000,000 in the United States. Promotional literature anticipated mass production by the harvest of 1929 and sales of 50,000 annually at \$200 each were projected over a sixty-year period in the United States alone. The project was supported with signed testimonials by a professor of agricultural engineering and the dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Alberta and by Alberta’s deputy minister of agriculture. Its appeal was tested by field demonstrations to farmers, businessmen, the provincial department of agriculture, the university and an International Harvester Company engineer from Chicago. Although sufficient capital could not be coaxed from investors, the stooker demonstrated technological ingenuity developed on Ukrainian Canadian farms.<sup>30</sup>

During the interwar period Ukrainian farm-implement inventories began to include gang ploughs, a variety of smoothing and disking harrows, seed drills, cultivators, mowers, rakes and binders. There were more individual and communal steam threshers as well as more internal-combustion gas tractors after the mid-1920s, although horses remained the principal mode of machinery power as they were for most prairie farmers.<sup>31</sup>

Gasoline tractor farming did not become general until after the Second World War. Even though steam tractors were too cumbersome and expensive for the average farmer, internal-combustion tractors were not sufficiently refined until the late 1920s. Not only could few farmers perform the maintenance and repair work, but most horse-drawn machinery was not readily adaptable to tractor operations and there were no reliable farm trucks to replace the standard horse-drawn grain wagons. Not until the late 1940s did as many as half of Alberta’s farmers own an internal-combustion tractor; in the meantime Ukrainians on their generally smaller farms bought or rented tractors only for belt work, using them as self-propelled static engines while horse teams performed the bulk of field operations.<sup>32</sup>

Two technological innovations of the 1920s would eventually prove decisive. A standard feature of gasoline tractors by 1924 was the power take-off, which transmitted power directly to the implement being pulled. This was of considerable benefit in operating the new swather and harvester combines which united the cutting and threshing of grain and eliminated the binding, stooking, hauling and threshing steps associated with the stationary

machinery. Such developments motivated the final push for mechanization shortly after the Second World War.<sup>33</sup>

Although initially hampered by a lack both of prior skills in mechanized farming and of financial resources, Ukrainian farmers entered into mechanization as an inevitable adjunct of their settlement in Canada once they understood the market economy and large-scale farming. The process of mechanization was uneven, conditioned by initial under-capitalization, the peculiarities of Ukrainian settlement patterns, and variations in topography, surface cover, soil types and natural calamities. However, Ukrainians came to Canada to escape the lack of access to markets and the means of agricultural production in the Old Country, and in the new land most settlers eagerly mastered those aspects of the market system which guaranteed the strength of their enterprise.

## Notes

1. J.-P. Himka, "The Background to Emigration: Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovyna, 1848-1914," in M. R. Lupul (ed.), *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada* (Toronto 1982), 12, 15-16.
2. O.T. Martynowych, *The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930: A History* (Edmonton 1985), 16, 19; Himka, 15.
3. Martynowych, 19; S. Koenig, "The Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia: A Study of Their Culture and Institutions," Doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1935, 123, 130-1.
4. Martynowych, 19-20.
5. S. Maryn, *The Chernochan Machine Shed: Ukrainian Farm Practices in East Central Alberta* (Edmonton 1985), 5; Himka, 14; J. S. Woodsworth, "Ukrainian Rural Communities: Report of an Investigation by the Bureau of Social Research, Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Winnipeg 1917), 111-14; V. Levynsky, *Selianstvo i sotsialdemokratiia. Agrarni prohramy sotsialistychnykh partii* (New York 1918), 18; P. V. Sviezhynsky, *Ahrarni vidnosyny na zakhidnii Ukraini v kintsi XIX-na pochatku XX st.* (Lviv 1966), 45-7, 60; Koenig, 130-1, 136-7.
6. Sviezhynsky, 45.
7. J. C. Lehr, "Propaganda and Belief: Ukrainian Emigrant Views of the Canadian West," in J. Rozumnyj (ed.), *New Soil—Old Roots: The Ukrainian Experience in Canada* (Winnipeg 1983), 2-7, 12-13.
8. J. Oleskiw, *Pro vilni zemli* (Lviv 1895), 32.
9. J. Oleskiw (English translation), *O emigratsii* (Lviv 1895), 20. Rev. Nestor Dmytriw's travelogue, *Kanadiiska Rus'* (Mt. Carmel PA 1897), 43, written after a visit in 1897, also urged immigrants to buy their supplies and equipment in Winnipeg at half the price they could pay in Edmonton.
10. Oleskiw, *O emigratsii*, 21. Peter Svarich also related the frustrations early settlers experienced when dealing with the Canadian harness for the first time:

Before long the German delivered the horses. We harnessed them to the new wagon immediately and took them in hand for a trial. Everything worked excellently except that we were terrified by the sight of the complicated and tangled harness which we could neither put on nor take off. There were too many of those buckles and belts, so that we did not know which to unfasten and which to leave in place. Eventually we learned how to handle the harness but more than one poor fellow had his problems. *Spomyny. 1877-1904* (Winnipeg 1976), 109. Translation by the writer.

11. Oleskiw, *O emigratsii*, 18, 21-2.



12. J. C. Lehr, "The Process and Pattern of Ukrainian Rural Settlement in Western Canada, 1891-1914," Doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, 145-6, 149-50, 152-3, 287; Martynowych, 16, 73, 75, 84, 90-91, 114.
13. Martynowych, 120, 123, 124, 134. The most extensive data on the initial stages of pioneer farming in east central Alberta can be found in the series of Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village reports dealing with Ukrainian dug-out (*burdei*) dwellings: A. Nahachewsky, *Ukrainian Dug-Out Dwellings in East Central Alberta* (Edmonton 1985); P. Martiniuk and A. Nahachewsky, "Ukrainian Dug-Out Dwellings in East Central Alberta: A Materials Report" (Edmonton 1984); A. Nahachewsky, "Ukrainian Dug-Out Dwellings in East Central Alberta: A Narrative History Report" (Edmonton 1985).
14. Martynowych, 113, 125-6, 128-42; W. Kostash and F. Magera, "They Came to Farm," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton 1975), 54; S. Maryn, "The Chernochan Machine Shed: Material History" (Edmonton 1984), 25. For a discussion of the tendency of early Ukrainian settlers to opt for oxen in draft work, see "Koni," *Ukrainskyi holos*, 24 August 1910. The article commended the practice and favoured a switch to horses only after material standards were stabilized, as horses were a major expense which few could afford. C. H. Young, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto 1931) noted that in some cases the transition from oxen to horses was too rapid. In the poorer districts farmers "could barely raise sufficient oats to feed the horses" (85).
15. For the Pylypow (Pillipiwi) and Melnyk steam-threshing outfit at Edna-Star, see W. A. Czumer, *Recollections About the Life of the First Ukrainian Settlers in Canada* (Edmonton 1981), 142. For a history of the Pylypow farmstead, see M. Lesoway, "The Pylypow House: A Narrative History" (Edmonton 1982).
16. Quoted in V. J. Kaye, *Early Ukrainian Settlements in Canada 1895-1900* (Toronto 1964), 353-4.
17. *Ibid.*, 354. On the relationship of implement agents, readily available credit and the spread of mechanization, see R. B. Shepard, "The Mechanized Agricultural Frontier on the Canadian Plains," *Material History Bulletin* 7 (Spring 1979): 13-14. A correspondent in Toronto's *The Globe* (3 July 1909) discussed the implement agents in Ukrainian settlements: "The Galicians working in the fields are fully equipped with implements. There is a weak spot which the agents for farm machinery soon discovered. They played on their desire to be as up-to-date as their neighbors, and many a money-poor Galician bought tools enough to cultivate 300 acres when his crop area was less than 25 acres." C. H. Young (85-7) also thought that the Ukrainian transition from hand implements to oxen, horses and tractor and power implements was "a little too rapid." Without sufficient regard to ability to pay, they were "an easier prey for the machine company salesman since the first few years after they came."

[Further] complications followed the introduction of farm machinery. With this they are now well equipped, some say too well, for many of their settlements are overrun with threshing outfits, and the threshing outfit is just the thin edge of the wedge making for more machinery and greater expenditures. In the old days the separator of the threshing machine was driven by the steam engine which was useful for little else than threshing and sawing wood. To-day, however, the separator is tractor-driven, and the tractor is but the first of an endless chain of expenditures which have gone far in many districts to handicap the economic progress of the Ukrainian farmers.



19. The original terminology used by Ukrainian settlers to describe various agricultural implements and paraphernalia is a constant challenge to the researcher. Although the term "*kirat*" appears often both in Ukrainian- and English-language transliteration, the writer was unable to uncover its origins. See, for example, "Weleschuk, Ewan" and "Weleschuk, Theodore," in S. Hrynew (ed.), *Pride in Progress: Chipman-St. Michael-Star and Districts* (Chipman 1982), 779–82. The Ukrainian dictionary published by the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR defines *kyrat* as "a mechanism for transferring the draft power of horses or oxen to the rotating parts of a threshing machine, strawcutter, etc.; a horse run drive gear," without offering any morphological insight into the term. See I. K. Bilodid et al., *Slovnyk ukrainskoi movy* III–IV (Kiev 1970–); *Z ukrainskoho zhyttia v Kanadi* tom II (Winnipeg 1973), 163–71; A. V. Matvienko et al., *Muzei narodnoi arkhitektury ta pobutu URSR. Fotoputivnyk* (Kiev 1981), 45–6; I. Khmil, *Ukrainske polissia. Avtobiohrafichno-ethnohrafichni narysy* (Chicago 1976), 90.
20. I. Kiriak, *Sons of the Soil*, trans. M. Luchkovich (Toronto 1959), 222, 224, 226. Ukrainian Canadian literature offers several illustrations of settlers adjusting to the spectre of mechanized farming. In all cases an anthropomorphic respect, if not outright fear of machinery by somewhat intimidated peasants, is depicted. See O. Ivakh, *Holos zemli* (Winnipeg 1937), 69–74; V. T. Sklepovych, "Ot dorobysvia!" in *Hory klychut. Opovidannia* (Winnipeg 1975), 154–67.
21. Martynowych, 135; Ernest B. Ingles, "The Custom Threshermen in Western Canada, 1890–1925," in D. C. Jones and I. Macpherson (eds.), *Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History on the Prairies* (Calgary 1985), 135–160. See also several local histories: Hrynew, *Pride and Progress*; M. Charuk (ed.), *The History of Willingdon: 1928–1978* (St. Paul 1978); L. Semeniuk (ed.), *Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District* (Andrew 1980); A. Hrynychuk and J. Klufas (eds.), *Memories: Redwater and District* (Calgary 1972); E. Carlsson and I. Stainton (eds.), *Lamont and District: Along the Victoria Trail* (Edmonton 1975); H. Coutu (ed.), *Our Crossing: Rivers to Roads, A History of the Brosseau, Duvernay and Surrounding Area* (Edmonton 1980); M. Bennett (ed.), *Reflections: A History of Elk Point and District*, 2 vols. (Elk Point 1977); *Vegreville in Review: History of Vegreville and Surrounding Area 1880–1980*, 2 vols. (Vegreville 1980); *Waskatenau, 1867–1967* (Smoky Lake 1967); N. Buk and S. Urchak (eds.), *The History of Two Hills Including the Lanuke District* (n.p., n.d.); *Our Legacy: History of Smoky Lake and Area* (Smoky Lake 1983); also *The Ukrainian Pioneers in Alberta Canada* (Edmonton 1970); *Ukrainians in Alberta*, 2 vols. (Edmonton 1975, 1981).
22. S. Gordon, *Agricultural Tractors in Alberta since 1925* (Wetaskiwin 1983), 7; Shepard, 7–9, 16–17.
23. Svarich, *Spomyny*, 224–7; also P. Svarich, "Uryvky zi spomyniv P. Zvarycha z Vegrevyl, Alta," in *Propamiatna knyha Ukrainskoho Narodnoho Domu v Vynnypegu* (Winnipeg 1949), 647. For the problems encountered by the first steam-powered threshing co-operative in the Lanuke district, see "The Early Threshing Machines," in Buk and Urchak, 30.
24. Martynowych, 136–42.
25. *Ibid.*, 143–4; A. Makuch, "Ukrainian Canadians and the Wartime Economy," in F. Swyripa and J. H. Thompson (eds.), *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton 1983), 72–3; see also the local histories cited in note 21 above.

26. Martynowych, 144–7; Makuch, 73; T. C. Byrne, “The Ukrainian Community in North Central Alberta,” Master’s thesis, University of Alberta, 1937, 36. For an examination of the effect on farm structures of widespread mechanization of agricultural production in east central Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s, see B. Balan, “The Myrnam Threshing Machine Shed: Land Use and Structural Report” (Edmonton 1984); and M. Lesoway and R. MacLeod, “The Lakusta Barn and Granary: Land Use and Structural History” (Edmonton 1984).
27. S. Maryn, *Ukrainian Farm Practices in East Central Alberta*, 49–50, and “The Chernochan Machine Shed: Materials History,” 35–7.
28. T. Nemirsky, “Diary,” Public Archives of Alberta, 73.560, 86–7; *Vegreville Observer*, 12 June 1907; W. G. Phillips, *The Agricultural Implement Industry in Canada* (Toronto 1956), 134–5, 146–9. For the dealings of a line implement agent in the Ukrainian bloc settlement, see D. Boettcher, *The Seventh Son: The Autobiography of Dan Boettcher* (Edmonton 1975), 79–80, 92–3, 136, 141. For an account of one Ukrainian’s experiences as an implement dealer, see Ivan Krysa’s recollections in *Ukrainskyi holos*, 31 January 1934.
29. Maryn, *Ukrainian Farm Practices*, 52–4; V. J. Kaye, “Early Ukrainian Graduates of Agricultural Colleges,” in *Slavs in Canada* (Ottawa 1968), 263–72.
30. “Boychuk Stooker” file, Glenbow-Alberta Archives; Charuk, 13, 14, 35; A. A. Boychuk, “Alexander P. (Sandy) Boychuk,” in *Our Legacy*, 319–20.
31. Maryn, “The Chernochan Machine Shed: Materials History,” 3–8, 49; Martynowych, 143, 148, 149; R. E. Ankli, H. D. Helsing and J. H. Thompson, “The Adoption of the Gasoline Tractor in Western Canada,” in D. H. Akenson (ed.), *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, vol. II (Gananoque 1980), 9–39.
32. Ankli et al., 10; Martynowych, 149–50; Maryn, *Ukrainian Farm Practices*, 8; Gordon, 1, 3, 7–8, 15, 23; Shepard, 19; and local histories cited in note 21 above. The earliest gasoline tractors inherited many of the unwieldy characteristics of their steam predecessors: for some time they were hard to start, prone to break down and subject to large repair bills when parts were available. Too hasty an entry into tractor farming could easily deal unwary farmers a costly setback. For a comic depiction of such a situation, see I. Maidanyk, “Shtif mekhanik-mashynist,” *Vuikova knyha* (Saskatoon 1974), 60–1.
33. Gordon, 27, 31–5, 44–7.



Mykola Sydor Shandro's first home, Shandro district (Bobersky Collection Ba49, photo 1920)



Mykola Sydor Shandro's newly built second home, 1920 (Bobersky Collection Ba48)



John Weleschuk's steam-powered 1908-model thresher, Wostok district, 1916 (Weleschuk Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV661)



Steam-powered threshing, Smoky Lake district, 1925 (Antoniuk Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV11)

# **THE POETICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE**



# Women in Three Households

Marie Lesoway

Three women. Three lives. Three tapestries woven from threads of many colours, spun from many shades of unique and individual existence. Pauline Hewko, Annie Pylypow (Pillipiw) and Vaselina Huculak were three women who pioneered on the Alberta prairie near the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup> They were women of different capabilities, character, family circumstances, economic resources, attitudes, values, motivation and ambition, but they shared a common Ukrainian culture—newly transplanted into a foreign and hostile environment and inexorably affected by it.

To understand these three women, and to glimpse the extent of their strength and warmth, it is perhaps necessary to address a few larger questions: What is woman? What makes her special? What criteria does she use to define who she is, what role does she play in the overall scheme of things and how does she play it? How does she view her world and her place within it? What does she give to her world—to her family or to her community—and what does she take from it?

All such questions are influenced by her culture. Anthropologists speak of culture as that collective body of “knowledge, belief, art, law, and custom” which women and men inherit from and share with other members of their community. It is culture which provides us with our sense of self and equips us with the tools—“act and artifact”<sup>2</sup>—which we need to understand, to relate to and to function within the context of our own time and place. Culture provides the raw materials which we can use to cope with change and to meet the problems of life. It supplies us with patterns for preparing our food, building our homes, clothing and adorning our bodies, managing our households, raising our children and worshipping our God.

Culture is part of the whole human experience, but women have a special role in deciding how it will be employed and what will be passed on. To a large degree, women are ‘carriers of culture,’ and ‘makers of the cosmos.’ In most households, it is the woman who bears prime responsibility for raising and caring for her family. It is she who upholds the values of the past and passes on to her children their ancestral faith and their mother tongue. She imparts to her children the rhythms and customs of traditional life that are

relevant to their survival in an era of change. She nurtures those aspects of her culture which remain applicable within the context of her own time and place, and decides which threads of her cultural heritage must be broken, which must be unravelled and reworked into new patterns and which will be woven intact into the tapestry of cultural experience which her children will inherit.

In the context of the Ukrainian immigrant experience, it was often the woman of the pioneer household who decided the pace at which her family would be assimilated into the mainstream of Canadian culture. The degree of her exposure to the world outside her home dictated how soon her children would wear Canadian-style clothes, how they would relate to the community at large, how they would marry, how they would advance at school and which of their traditional customs and beliefs they would abandon or modify. Women like Pauline Hewko, Vaselina Huculak and Annie Pylypow lived at a time when numerous cultural adjustments and choices had to be made and when old and new ways existed side by side in a state of precarious balance.

Pauline Hewko was born in Alberta in 1903—the eldest child of Galician parents. Her experience of immigration was indirect, but she had an intimate appreciation of its effects. Pauline saw the birth of Alberta as a province (among her prized possessions was a framed certificate which acknowledged her citizenship in Alberta in 1905), but was born a generation too soon to benefit much from its educational system, to learn English or to assimilate its lifestyle completely.

Pauline's parents strove to instill in her many of the values and customs of their own time, but the ways of the new land were also beginning to take hold. Pauline broke with tradition by choosing a suitor without her parents' approval, but persuaded her betrothed to concede to her mother's demand that he buy a farm before they wed. She married in a pearl-encrusted, Canadian-style white gown, but on the day following her wedding, she took part in ceremonies native to her parents' homeland. The women of her neighbourhood gathered to "test" her housekeeping skills, and they sang about the "little bird" who would no longer wear flowers in her hair, but whose lot was now the ceaseless toil of married womanhood. Pauline was a child of the new world, but some customs of the old were naturally part of the tapestry of her life.

Vaselina Huculak came to Alberta from Borivtsi, Bukovyna, in 1899, when she was twelve. She was filled with a child's sense of wonder and a child's resilience and adaptive ability. Her mother wept to leave the familiar sights of home, but for Vaselina, the voyage to Canada was a wonderful adventure. The writer first met Vaselina Huculak when she was ninety. Her face was weathered by many winters, many hardships and many tales of joy and sorrow. The lines were deep, but her eyes still twinkled with the sparkle of laughter and youthful excitement. When asked what she had felt on her voyage to Canada, she exclaimed, "Child! There was sea and sea and sea and sky! And in Canada, the land was blessed, and life was good."

Vaselina Huculak was young enough when she came to Alberta that she could easily transplant her roots, and she soon came to accept and enjoy many of the technological advances and luxuries that came with being the child of one prosperous homesteader and later the wife of another. When Vaselina's husband brought home a new gramophone, her mother-in-law fled the house, thinking it was the voice of the devil she was hearing. Vaselina took such innovations for granted, but her life, like Pauline Hewko's, was firmly bound to at least some elements of her traditional (Ukrainian) culture.

Annie Pylypow was born in Nebyliv in Carpathian Ukraine in 1905 and came to Alberta when she was eighteen. Because of her age, the transition to the new land was very difficult. Annie did not leave home in search of adventure; she left because emigration was the only way she could hope to survive. Her family had always been poor, but the ravages of the First World War had left them destitute. In desperation, her widowed mother wrote to her kinsman in Canada, begging that he take at least one of her children.

Annie came to Canada as her uncle Ivan Pylypow's hired girl. Unlike Vaselina Huculak, she was of an age when she keenly felt the loss of homeland, family and friends. Because of poverty, she was forced to exchange her mother's hearth for a life of servitude with a family of strangers who were not even sure they wanted her. She left with the certainty she would never return and would be always alone. Such was the lot of the hired girl. No matter how good her master, she had no place to call home, no solace and no sense of belonging.

The vignettes which follow are drawn from the experiences of the three women.<sup>3</sup> They are not intended to provide a complete understanding of Ukrainian pioneer women or even to supply an authoritative account of the nature and repercussions of cultural transplantation. In recounting moments of experience, they demonstrate how three women confronted the challenges of assimilation and coped with the forces of change which affected their culture.

### *Progress and Change*

Annie Pylypow, Vaselina Huculak and Pauline Hewko lived in an era of tremendous technological and material advances. They saw the development of Alberta from treed wilderness to productive farmland dotted with roads, railways and towns. They witnessed the shift from subsistence agriculture to efficient, large-scale farming. They saw the dawning of an industrial age, when machines gradually replaced traditional hand technologies.

Pauline Hewko and Vaselina Huculak remembered their fathers mowing hay crops with a scythe, harvesting with a sickle, threshing with a flail, winnowing in the wind and milling flour with hand-operated grindstones. Such hand technologies were what they had used on their small-acre holdings in Ukraine, and where practical in the early years of homesteading when each farmer had only a few seeded acres. As more and more land came under

cultivation, new methods had to be introduced. Machinery was acquired, but lack of capital ensured that the process would be slow.

Pauline Hewko recalled that by 1913, when she was ten, her father purchased a second plough and she was taught to use it. She was also taught to harrow, following behind her father to cover the grain as he sowed it by hand, there not being enough money to buy a seed drill. Pauline recalled watching her father mix bits of blessed, crumbled Easter bread (*paska*) into his sackful of seed. God had granted a bountiful crop, and what had been given must be returned to the land—strewn with every handful of grain sown—to ensure blessings for yet another harvest. Mechanization—the purchase of a horse-drawn seed drill—marked the end of this ritual observance, but Pauline Hewko maintained its “feeling” intact. Even in later years, on her own farm, she placed her trust in the land and in God. Her farm had a full complement of machinery, and she had far too many acres to include *paska* crumbs with all her seed grain, but her life—like her father’s—was still inextricably tuned to the changing cycle of the seasons. She was a farmer,<sup>4</sup> and she must sow when land and climate permitted and reap when her harvest was ripe. Although crop insurance now took the place of blind faith, her mastery over the land was still linked to natural forces beyond her control. Like her father, she had a deep, unshakeable faith—in God and in her own strength—and she believed that hard work preceded just rewards. “*Iak sia zaslužhe, to tak bude*” (One receives what one deserves/earns). This was the essential “meaning” she had distilled from her childhood observance of her father’s reverent sowing ritual, an “essence” important enough to pass on to her children and grandchildren.

Folk beliefs were discarded when they became irrelevant to day-to-day survival. Compare the different milking practices in Ukraine and in Alberta. In Annie Pylypow’s homeland in the Carpathians, the land was rocky and unproductive at the turn of the century and herding supported much of the population. Because cattle were so important to the Carpathian economy, herding and milking were entrusted to men, and rigidly observed rituals accompanied both activities. Milking always began with prayer. Singing or whistling were strictly forbidden so as not to attract wolves, and dark cows were milked first to avert bad luck.<sup>5</sup> By the time Annie arrived on her uncle’s farm in Alberta, Ukrainian homesteaders had dispensed with such superstitions. With large herds and vast pasture lands and with grain growing the main source of income, milking had passed to the female domain. Ukrainian women on Alberta homesteads often managed the milking chores completely, including the manufacture of butter and cheese. Both Pauline Hewko and Vaselina Huculak were experienced milkers. In Vaselina’s case, it was she and her daughters who milked the family cows, her sons being completely exempt from this task.



*Woman's Work*

Soon after arriving in Alberta, Annie Pylypow discovered that milking was one of many chores for a woman—although to her dismay it was not a skill which she had acquired in Nebyliv. As a result, on one occasion when her uncle's range cattle came home to water, she decided to impress her uncle by leading a cow with a particularly large udder to the barn for milking. Unaccustomed to handling, the terrified animal promptly leaped over the half-opened Dutch door of the barn, knocking over the milkmaid and tearing the door from its hinges. Annie soon mastered the art of milking and learned cooking, housekeeping and numerous other skills which Pauline Hewko and Vaselina Huculak took for granted. Both knew the rigours of life in the wilderness. They understood that manpower was at a premium in the early years on a homestead, and that the problems of survival did not allow for neat distinctions as to man's, woman's or even child's work. They learned early that a woman must be mother and helpmate, gardener and field hand, teacher, cook, housekeeper, milkmaid and seamstress. In short, a woman's work was never done!

On a homestead, girls were expected to learn nearly all the tasks needed to operate both household and farm. Pauline Hewko recalled how, at the age of nine, she was sent to her widowed grandfather's farm to cook for a threshing crew at harvest time. She was expected to prepare a full-course meal—soup, meat, potatoes, vegetables and cake or pie for dessert. At night she lay awake, filled with apprehension, but all went well. By the time Pauline was a teenager, she could cook and keep house as well as any adult. She could also milk a cow, harness a team, plough a field and stack stooks as well as any man. Vaselina Huculak learned all of these skills as well. Even in later years, when she and her husband were the prosperous owners of five quarter sections, Vaselina continued to be active both in the house and on the farm. She raised sheep, spun her own yarn and knit warm stockings and mittens for her family. She made her own pillows and quilts and recycled sugar and flour sacks into drawers and petticoats. She cooked and cleaned, milked and mended and lent a hand in the fields whenever necessary. She was a strong and active woman, and on the day her daughter Anne was born, she spent the morning stooking.

Because of her age and upbringing in Nebyliv, Annie Pylypow was overwhelmed by her new physical environment and the skills, behaviour and attitudes she had to assimilate. The cultural shock was intense. She had spent her childhood in the Old Country pasturing the family cow. Later she was expected to work outside the home—pasturing, tending gardens and finding paid employment away from the village at harvest or planting time. Girls her age learned cooking and housekeeping after marriage, although in Alberta as a hired girl, such skills would be central. To please an elderly mistress whose ill health left little patience with a hired girl's ignorance, quick adjustment was needed. The transition was harsh and abrupt, as the old rules no longer applied. Annie recalled that her uncle was uncomfortable when she kissed his



hand on first meeting. Such things were not done in Canada! But in Nebyliv, not to offer this mark of respect would have been unthinkable. In Nebyliv, also, Annie's family had been desperately poor. Hunger was a fact of everyday existence. In Alberta, Annie's uncle owned four farms, vast herds of cattle, granaries full of wheat and a fine, two-storey home. Annie was sure she had come to paradise! The storehouses brimmed with flour, vegetables, salt pork and sugar. Annie stuffed herself with fistfuls of the latter and otherwise ate voraciously.

Pauline Hewko and Vaselina Huculak took the new land's abundance more lightly. They were accustomed to planting huge gardens and storing the produce in root cellars for the winter. They pickled sauerkraut, dried peas, beans and wild mushrooms and preserved saskatoons, gooseberries and strawberries. They raised cattle and poultry to supply dairy products, eggs and meat. The land was rich and good; white flour was never in short supply.

How different was the situation in Annie Pylypow's Nebyliv, where an egg was as precious as gold! Her eyes misted as she recalled her mother bartering a few carefully wrapped eggs for lamp fuel or a bit of salt. She remembered the long weeks of Lent before Easter and the few eggs hoarded away by her mother for use in the Easter *paska*. In Alberta, when she sat working her aunt's large, barrel churn, she recalled the times when her family did not have a cow and had to make do without milk, butter or cheese. She recalled the flat, oaten cakes (*korzhi*) that had served her family in place of yeast-leavened bread. In Nebyliv wheat was not grown because the land was too poor, and Annie marvelled that in Canada wheat and white flour were available to all.

### *Ritual and Community Life*

Annie Pylypow eventually adapted to the Canadian way of life, but in the early years on her uncle's farm she was often lonely and homesick. In Nebyliv she had been part of a closely knit community. Villagers worked their fields and returned to homes in the village, the centre of social life, where Annie enjoyed the companionship of friends and neighbours. In Alberta the division of land into 160-acre homesteads prevented traditional village clusters, and the great distances between neighbours inhibited the social interaction so common in the Old Country.

In Nebyliv, also, Annie Pylypow and her friends often pastured cattle together or spent evenings at *vechirnytsi*—spinning, chatting, dreaming of the future and singing songs that reflected their understanding of the cycle of life and their own, personal experiences. Spontaneous compositions often portrayed actual events, and Annie learned about girlhood, courtship, love and the trials of married life. In Canada she often sang to pass the time or to entertain her mistress, but the art of "spontaneous" singing did not travel very well. While pioneer women like Vaselina Huculak and Pauline Hewko inherited a large part of the vast legacy of folk songs from their parents, their own children no longer knew many of the traditional songs. The loss was easily explained. Children on Alberta homesteads, isolated by the spaces which

separated farms, did not gather on a regular basis, and an important vehicle for the transmission of folk songs and folk wisdom was thus lost.

Folk songs, moreover, often reflected daily life and the way things were done. In Alberta, as new technologies replaced old ones, traditional folk songs became less relevant. In Nebyliv Annie Pylypow had known many songs about preparing flax or hemp fibres and weaving cloth. In Alberta, however, Vaselina Huculak's daughters acquired store-bought finery or sewed their clothes with factory-made materials. Without the need to learn the art of cloth-making, the body of folk songs associated with such an activity gradually disappeared.

Some folk songs and customs were lost because of the physical realities of Alberta's environment. Thus spring songs or *haivky*—traditionally accompanied by games and sung outdoors during the Easter season—required a milder climate than the cold and snow-bound conditions which frequently characterized Alberta at Easter time.

Vaselina Huculak remembered other customs that were lost for the same reason. As a girl in Borivtsi, she and her friends had gathered on St. Andrew's Eve (12 December on the Julian calendar) and played games that revealed their fortunes. Each girl placed a few dumplings (*pyrohy*) on a plate, a cat was called in, and if a particular girl's dumplings were eaten, this portended marriage in the coming year. For Vaselina Huculak's daughters, such merry-making was limited because girlfriends lived too far away to permit frequent visiting during Alberta's cold Decembers.

The one institution at which Ukrainian homesteaders did gather was the church, once one was erected after the basic necessities of life were assured. Even though Pauline Hewko's parents had come to Canada in 1899, community life in the Mundare area was still in its infancy at her birth in 1903. On 12 July she was among the first children to be baptised, immediately after the first mass in the first church—the Basilian chapel then under construction and not yet fitted with doors and windows, two miles east of the future site of Mundare.

The churches played very significant cultural roles in the lives of Ukrainian pioneers. They filled a spiritual need, reinforced a sense of community and strengthened links with the past by encouraging choirs, drama clubs, women's organizations, reading societies, dance troupes and Ukrainian language classes. Pauline Hewko recalled walking seven miles to attend church choir practices when she was a girl. In later years, she was active in the local ladies' league and other community organizations. Vaselina Huculak sent her children to dance classes, choir practices and Ukrainian-language classes organized in the Shandro parish by the local priest.

### *Education*

While Vaselina Huculak and Pauline Hewko did provide their children with some of the cultural and educational opportunities available in Alberta, they themselves were born too early to benefit much from them. They lived at a time when education was considered a luxury and it was not thought neces-

sary for women to go to school. Vaselina Huculak, the child of illiterate immigrants, did not attend school in the Old Country; in Alberta the first school in her neighbourhood was not constructed until after her marriage, and she never learned to read and write.

Pauline Hewko also obtained no more than a rudimentary education. At five, she was sent to a Basilian-run school near Mundare, where she learned catechism, reading, writing and the rudiments of arithmetic. The children slept on their own hay-filled mattresses, and payment for their classes consisted of eggs and meat. The programme lasted three months, and this was the entire extent of Pauline's formal education. When a school opened at Podola, 3 1/2 miles from her home, she was only seven or eight but, as the eldest of nine children, she was needed at home to help with the never-ending routine of housework and farm chores. She was, however, more fortunate than Vaselina Huculak, for both of her parents were literate. As a result, her brothers went to school and she and her sisters were taught to take pride in their own heritage and language, for without it they could not hope to gain the respect of others. Pauline recalled long winter evenings around the family table, where by the light of a coal oil lamp her father taught her to read and write Ukrainian. She remembered the strong, warm tones of his voice as he read aloud the latest Ukrainian newspapers. From him, she learned the value of education, and she saw to it that her children attended institutions of higher learning and that her grandchildren did not forget the Ukrainian language and culture.

Success in Alberta required mastery of English, but women were denied the same access to mainstream Alberta society as men. While men made frequent trips to town (to market grain or purchase supplies) and had contact with non-Ukrainian merchants and traders, the life of women centred in the home. Book-learning was not required for one to be a good milkmaid or to bake bread, and education for women was introduced very slowly. Vaselina Huculak's eldest daughter, of school age in 1916, was often kept at home to help her parents. Even when Annie Pylypow came to Canada in 1923, educated women were still viewed with suspicion. Annie herself was literate and often passed her leisure hours reading. Her mistress, however, frowned on the practice, maintaining that any woman who bothered to read must be a "*chornoknyzhnyk*," concerned only with the practice of black arts.

### *Continuity and Change*

Annie Pylypow, Vaselina Huculak and Pauline Hewko lived at a time when Ukrainians in Alberta were under enormous pressure to assimilate into mainstream Canadian society. Annie adopted the Canadian style of dress shortly after her arrival. She set aside the embroidered shirt, apron and shawl bought for her journey to Canada—even though these had cost her mother the family cow. Annie's new prize was a wide-brimmed, garland-trimmed, five-dollar pink hat which her uncle had bought her at Eaton's. She was the belle of the neighbourhood, but under her hat, her thick, fair hair was still plaited in the same style she had worn in Nebyliv! In Ukraine hair fashions had set girls apart from women. Married women wore characteristic styles

and were expected to keep their heads covered. Only girls could leave their hair exposed, and thick, glossy, long braids were a mark of beauty. Despite her other concessions to Canadian fashion, Annie would not relinquish this traditional aesthetic for more than a decade after emigrating to Alberta. Adjustments were gradual, as the old and familiar provided either special skills for survival in the new land or a source of comfort and cultural identity during the transition.

Vaselina Huculak was similarly attached to such traditional marks of beauty, and she kept her long hair even after all her children were born. She bowed to Canadian fashions by wearing it in a plaited bun and by keeping her head uncovered. By comparison, her own mother and mother-in-law maintained the hairstyles typical of their native villages all their lives. Vaselina's mother, Katrina (Balanko) Huculak, wore her hair plaited and coiled on top of her head, covered with a Turkish-style fez topped with a kerchief tied in the style of Borivtsi. Her mother-in-law, Minodora (Nykula) Hawreliak, plaited and bound her hair in two coils, covered with a kerchief arranged in the style of her home in Ruskyi Banyliv.

The process by which one's sense of beauty is modified is often gradual, and this can be seen by the retention of certain elements of Old Country architecture in the homes of early Ukrainian settlers in Canada. The noted Ukrainian ethnographer V. P. Samojlovych states that the architecture of a people evolves to meet the demands of daily life and to suit a particular set of customs and aesthetic preferences. With the passage of time, less "functional" aspects of architecture are discarded, while better-suited elements are imbedded in the architectural tradition that is passed from generation to generation.<sup>6</sup>

Both Vaselina Huculak and Pauline Hewko grew up in three-room, thatch-roofed, log-and-mud plastered houses of the classic type known as "*khata cherez siny*."<sup>7</sup> Their homes consisted of a central hallway (*siny* or *khoromy*) which was used for storage and two rooms on each side: a multi-purpose "living" room (*mala hata*) with a *pich* (clay oven) for cooking in which the family also ate and usually slept, and a "guest room" (*velyka khata*) for entertaining on special occasions. By 1919, Vaselina Huculak had a new house<sup>8</sup>—a ten-room mansion which marked the culmination of her success as a homesteader's wife. Her new home was built in an era when capital was accessible and store-bought materials readily available. It was a frame structure with hardwood floors and wainscoting, stained glass windows and factory-produced fittings. These refinements reflected the influence of Canadian building conventions, but many features were also derived from traditional Ukrainian building styles.<sup>9</sup> Despite its fine woodwork, its upper walls were finished with clay plaster and whitewash in the traditional manner. Its rectangular plan reflected the simplicity of form which was characteristic of Ukrainian folk architecture. Its colour scheme, verandas and the arrangement and function of rooms were also modelled after traditional prototypes. These elements of traditional architecture were still compatible with Vaselina's aesthetic sense, and could be used without sacrificing either "progress" or efficiency.



Women like Vaselina Huculak, Pauline Hewko and Annie Pylypow also maintained tradition through cooking. They prepared the same types of dishes as their mothers and used the same cooking techniques. The main difference between their style and their mothers' was in the richness of their dishes and in the variety of foods they were able to serve at one meal. Annie Pylypow learned the conventions of Alberta-style cooking soon after her arrival at her uncle's farm. Her aunt was away and, eager to please, Annie resolved to cook for her uncle. For several days in a row, she prepared rice *kasha* with milk for every meal. This would have been considered a feast in Nebyliv, but when her aunt returned, she was appalled to discover what Annie had done. In Alberta no self-respecting farm wife would ever serve soup as the only course!

Food served a social function as well as fulfilling a biological need, and played a major role in religious rituals, holidays and family events. It was a "form of social communion."<sup>10</sup> This can be seen in the lives of our three women in their preparation of the traditional Christmas wheat (termed *kutia* by Pauline Hewko, *pshenytsie* by Annie Pylypow and *pshynytsa* by Vaselina Huculak<sup>11</sup>). Pauline Hewko prepared the dish from boiled wheat and ground poppy seeds, sweetening it with diluted honey to give it a soup-like consistency; Annie Pylypow used whole poppy seeds and undiluted honey to flavour her wheat; Vaseline Huculak used sugar or honey, omitted the poppy seeds and boiled the wheat to a pudding-like texture. Each followed the regional variations inherited from their own mothers, but for each the wheat retained the same significance. It solidified their membership in the Ukrainian community and maintained their link with past generations. It also encouraged family unity and its preparation ensured that the traditions of the past would be passed on to future generations.

## Conclusion

A few brief glimpses into the lives of three prairie women cannot do justice to the forces of tradition and change which affected their lives. One thing, however, is certain. It was largely through their efforts that Ukrainian culture survived. Although our world is very different, we are the inheritors of their legacy. Much has been lost, forgotten, changed or altered, yet the thread of culture remains unbroken, and our responses continue to be shaped by the fabric of culture they handed down.

## Notes

1. The maiden names of these women are used because many of the experiences they described occurred in their childhood or girlhood. Pauline Hewko married Andrew Fill of Mundare in 1919, Annie Pylypow (niece of Ivan Pylypow (Pillipiw), one of the first Ukrainian settlers in Canada) married John Tatarchuk of Edmonton in 1935 and Vaselina Huculak married Mike Hawreliak of Shandro in 1907. The English versions of the women's Christian names and the spellings of their names are the forms they themselves preferred. The Ukrainian forms are *Pavlina* (née *Hevko*) *Fil*, *Anna* (née *Pylypiv*) *Tatarchuk*, and *Vasylyna* (née *Hutsuliak*) *Havreliak*.



2. R. Redfield, *The Folk Culture of Yucutan* (Chicago 1941), 132–3, cited in C. E. Richards, *Man in Perspective: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (New York 1972), xiv.
3. Biographical data for Annie (Pylypow) Tatarchuk and Vaselina (Huculak) Hawreliak was obtained from interviews conducted by the writer between 1980 and 1984. The interviews were part of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village research programme, and transcripts can be found at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Information about Pauline (Hewko) Fill was obtained from her personal reminiscences, recorded in 1979.
4. The reference to Pauline Hewko as a farmer is deliberate. Her husband was crippled with arthritis soon after her marriage, and she was left to manage their farm single-handedly.
5. M. D. Mandybura, *Polonynske hospodarstvo Hutsulshchyny druhoi polovyny XIX-30kh rokiv XX st.* (Kiev 1978), 18–19, 65.
6. V. P. Samojlovych, *Ukrainske narodne zhytlo* (Kiev 1972), 6.
7. V. P. Samojlovych, *Narodna tvorchist v arkhitekturi silskoho zhytla* (Kiev 1961), 22.
8. Vaselina and Mike Hawreliaks' 1919 house is now located at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village.
9. Samojlovych, *Narodna tvorchist v arkhitekturi*, 20, 49–101.
10. L. F. Artiukh, *Ukrainska narodna kulinariia* (Kiev 1977), 85.
11. *Pshenytsia* was the preferred term in Bukovyna, *zdobavka* in Hutsulshchyna and *kutia* in other parts of Western Ukraine. O. V. Kurochkin, *Novorichni sviata ukrainsiv* (Kiev 1978), 58.

# Nation-Building into the 1920s: Conflicting Claims on Ukrainian Immigrant Women

Frances Swyripa

## *Introduction*

The Ukrainians who settled in western Canada at the turn of the century were part of a peasant mass in the process of national awakening and modernization, both of which were interrupted by emigration and resumed under very different circumstances. Poverty, backwardness and ignorance, especially by Canadian standards, contributed to the immigrants' low socio-economic status and the negative popular image that helped to perpetuate it. Overall male supremacy in a patriarchal society had been moderated by the peasant economy, which made women indispensable not only in reproduction but also in the operation of the household and farmstead. Marriage, traditionally an economic agreement between families as well as a private contract between individuals, entailed the exchange of goods and property. Women were overwhelmingly illiterate, steeped in superstition and ritual and attuned to the companionship and rhythms of village life.<sup>1</sup>

Bloc settlements in the Canadian parkland, divorced from the surrounding culture, initially preserved women's status and roles, although solitary homesteads, the rigours of pioneering and extended male absences imposed a new social isolation and increased female responsibilities for basic subsistence. Modernization and Canadianization within an inferior and culturally alienated immigrant group had significant implications for Ukrainian women in Canada; so did membership in a minority whose homeland was engaged in a political-cultural renaissance and worried about its survival.

In both Anglo Canadian and Ukrainian circles, individuals concerned about the fabric of their society undertook to shape it according to their respective blueprints. Middle-class Anglo Canada, committed to a strong, healthy nation built on British and Protestant principles, watched with alarm as the ills of modern industrialism and rapid growth—urban slums, alcohol abuse, family breakdown, health crises, non-British immigration—threatened

to thwart its goals. The crusade to reform the "foreigner" to conform to attitudes and standards of conduct compatible with the society Anglo Canadians desired was one response to such ambitions and fears. Among Ukrainians, a small educated stratum loosely styled as an intelligentsia-elite spearheaded the crystallization of an amorphous immigrant group into a distinct community divided along religious-political lines.<sup>2</sup> The most successful in articulating and publicizing the group's formal identity were the so-called nationalists, aspirants to social acceptability and precursors of the Ukrainian Canadian middle class.<sup>3</sup> Combining a keen sensitivity to the position of Ukrainians in Canada, a legacy of activism among the peasants on behalf of national and socio-economic goals and a concern for Ukrainian fortunes abroad, they tried to influence Ukrainian Canadian development to answer both Anglo Canadian prejudices and Ukrainian national needs. Anglo Canadian and Ukrainian leaders alike emphasized society's right to mobilize the individual for the good of the community, as each perceived it, and to compel compliance with their objectives.

The two groups acknowledged the family as the basic unit of society, making the nature of national life incumbent upon the quality of the home. This led Anglo Canadian reformers to admit the public's right, with the state as ally, to interfere in the family where it was deemed responsible for conditions detrimental to the general welfare. It led the Ukrainian intelligentsia-elite to accord the family prominence in its plans for the Ukrainian Canadian community. With their traditional social roles and reproductive function, women figured as major forces to harness and groom. Historically, they enjoyed a close relationship to the customs and crafts which expressed a people's grass-roots common identity, and through their dominance in the domestic sphere, especially in childrearing, women were critically placed to determine the values their offspring inherited.

Arbitrary child marriages, submissive and subservient women, family violence and peasant home conditions were features of Ukrainian immigrant life which agitated Anglo Canadians, both as evils in themselves and as potentially destabilizing to Canadian society. Such conditions contrasted too sharply with the Anglo Canadian ideal of woman (endorsed regardless of its remoteness from the real-life options of many women) of a leisured fragile flower, pure and noble, devoted to the domestic and maternal tasks for which nature and temperament had equipped her.<sup>4</sup> The Ukrainian home and family had, therefore, to be penetrated and influenced if Anglo Canadian norms were to take root and Ukrainians were to acquire acceptable socio-cultural traits. Not only did the treatment of women need to change, but as housewives and mothers, women themselves, properly instructed, would be vehicles for acquainting Ukrainian homes with ways of thinking and acting synonymous with assimilation.

From the Ukrainian perspective, neither socio-economic progress nor a more positive image was conceivable if Ukrainians remained burdened in the primary social unit by ignorant women "hiding behind closed doors."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the calibre of a woman's relationship to the Ukrainian community

as well as her personal qualities and the atmosphere in which she raised her children were crucial to the Ukrainian consciousness of the rising generation. The unparalleled influence of women within the family, wrote *Kanadyiskyi farmer* (14 April 1916), bestowed on them a grave responsibility before all society as the mothers of the nation. The unenlightened or alienated woman, incapable of inculcating a commitment to community service or patriotism, could transmit only a passive knowledge of her language and culture.

Neither Anglo Canadians nor the Ukrainian intelligentsia-elite ignored the adult woman who arrived in Canada already socialized, but both focused on her daughters. To the Anglo Canadian community, it was the young Ukrainian girl, carefully indoctrinated, who would introduce her parents and subsequently her own household to Anglo Canadian modes of behaviour and thought. To the Ukrainian community, it was the same girl who would have to be retained by the group for its future survival, in the face of enticements from the larger society. The strain of contradictory pressures frequently caused her to disappoint them both.

### *Making Her Canadian*

An uneasy mixture of empathy, revulsion and indignation characterized Anglo Canadian descriptions of conditions among Ukrainian women, particularly those by young women whose only standards of comparison were sheltered homes in Ontario or the Maritimes. Censure or criticism from a height of assumed superiority frequently did not appreciate how the peasants' traditional social and economic organization had influenced the sex roles and relationships observed in the Ukrainian colonies. The position of women within the family and marriage was not interpreted in terms of peasant life in transition but measured against external norms and female models. In practice, such attitudes meant that campaigns to uplift and emancipate Ukrainian women were undertaken not to help them adapt to the changes attending immigration and modernization, but to make them into new beings, imitating the middle-class Anglo Canadian wife and mother in dress, manner and outlook.

Outrage at concepts of womanhood at variance with Anglo Canadian ideals focused on the Ukrainian wedding and husband-wife relationship. Accounts of marriage practices ranged from the conscientious recording of "quaint" customs to uncompromising condemnation of insensitive marriage bargains where love was absent and child brides bought and sold. The following captures the essence of the Anglo Canadian complaint:

Perhaps the most deplorable thing is their idea of marriage. In the first place the girls are married far too young and in the second place they are nearly always forced to marry against their own inclination. Nearly all Galician girls are married between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. After sixteen they are considered old maids.

The parents usually look around for some grand specimen of Galician manhood, regardless of age or character as long as he has two cows or four pigs to give in exchange for the girl. The bargain is made with the man and he comes to take a look at the good and bad points of his trade....

The main feature at a wedding is much weeping and wailing. The bride weeps and the bridesmaids weep and the Preacher weeps and all the people weep. Then, after the ceremony, everybody gets hilariously drunk.<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, a correspondent to the *Vegreville Observer* (14 March 1917) suggested that Ukrainian girls be offered a course in "filial disobedience and rights and privileges of this free country," and more than one teacher deplored the early mandatory marriage that spelled indifference to a girl's education.<sup>7</sup>

Equally condemned were the obedience and subservience demanded of a wife and the treatment of women as beasts of burden and domestic drudges—reflecting what Anglo Canadians saw as a callousness toward life and human relationships in general. Personal violence and irregularities in rural Ukrainian pioneer communities were regarded as endemic evils in the Ukrainian way of life. Their source in the traumas of immigration homesteading as opposed to "traditional" patterns of behaviour went unexplored.<sup>8</sup> Failure, for example, to secure medical aid for sick children or women in childbirth was blamed on ignorance nurtured by custom and lack of feeling between spouses or by parents for their children.<sup>9</sup> To Anglo Canadians, wife-beating perhaps epitomized the disrespect for women and want of affection in marriage. It also highlighted the chasm between accepted practices in their own milieu and in Ukrainian peasant society. When reporting the beating of a Pakan woman, the *Edmonton Bulletin* (30 October 1916) contended that such things "hardly appeal . . . to a 'white' man" but are "fairly common among the foreigners." The officer investigating the suicide of a young Mundare wife, following maltreatment by her husband, went so far as to imply that given Ukrainian standards of behaviour the woman had overreacted. "Wife beating," he wrote,

is so common among these people, that I dont [*sic*] believe that . . . [X] . . . was any more cruel to his wife than the average Galician is, especially considering his grounds for suspicions of her fidelity. I believe many of the Galician women in that district stand as much if not more beating than she, without any thoughts of suicide, or even much resentment.<sup>10</sup>

The Anglo Canadian assessment of Ukrainian male attitudes and women's inferiority was not without substance. Witnesses at one inquest into the death of a woman from injuries inflicted by her husband testified that the man had said he "cared about as much for his wife as he did for last year's snow" and beat her "for fun"; the husband himself denied ever abusing his wife, "excepting several times I hit her with a strap."<sup>11</sup>

When public disapproval alone failed to uproot offensive practices, less subtle measures were employed. On occasion the justice system viewed itself as a mechanism for forcing change, or, at least, providing an object lesson. The husband of a sixteen-year-old who died in unattended childbirth, for example, was bound over for trial for not providing the necessities of life, after



the crown prosecutor argued that "neglect...may...[have been] due to ignorance and custom with those people but a trial would probably have a good effect."<sup>12</sup> Appeals for direct state intervention came from citizens' groups concerned with the broader ramifications of undesirable Ukrainian practices or attitudes. In 1913 the Woman's Canadian Club of Calgary asked the province to establish residential schools where Canadian women would instruct Ukrainian girls in domestic science; a companion resolution, deploring the prevalence of child marriage and motherhood at age fifteen or sixteen among Ukrainians in Alberta, requested legislation to ban such marriages "for the sake of future Canadian citizenship."<sup>13</sup>

Tactics less comprehensive than mobilizing the state were also adopted. Teachers stationed in the rural blocs were direct and personal in their approach. They worked individually to upgrade Ukrainian domestic practices, willing to supersede the home and family in training future wives, mothers and homemakers. The contention that female teachers, in particular, had a special duty and opportunity to bring non-English-speaking girls into intimate contact with all that was admirable in Canadian womanhood was supported by the young women themselves. With a vision of "fathers carrying the load and walking hand in hand down the trail with the mothers," one teacher outlined her strategy:

My house on the school grounds was invaluable in helping me towards realizing the hopes I had for the district. Girls stayed with me and learned cleanliness in cooking and preparing simple wholesome dishes. I was extremely particular about the care of my own hair and person, the cleanliness of the teacherage and cooking utensils. It had the effect of making them realize there was something sadly lacking in their way of living, and the marked improvement in their homes exceeded all my expectations. They copied me as closely as it was possible for them to do in eating, table manners, housekeeping, cooking, dress and action. For that reason I tried to do my best. I polished my shack with greater care to receive a mother in sheepskin coat and red shawl than I would clean my home in preparation for afternoon tea.<sup>14</sup>

From the settlement period onward, the selfless teacher also recognized her responsibility toward her pupils' mothers, holding classes in English, sewing, cooking and hygiene. A genuine desire to help was inseparable from the realization that the physical and cultural-linguistic isolation of rural Ukrainian women hindered the assimilation of their offspring:

I think that one of the greatest influences working against making Canadians of these children [wrote a woman teaching in rural Saskatchewan] is the attitude of the women towards learning English, and trying to improve themselves and their homes. The mothers in this district know practically no English and seem to have no wish to learn. This prevents them from associating with English-speaking women and getting any new ideas in regard to homemaking and self-improvement. The children are living in homes that are no more like Canadian homes than were the homes of these people in the old country. The children must speak Ruthenian almost entirely at home in order to make the mother un-

derstand, and are expected to follow all the customs and believe all the weird tales and the superstitious beliefs which the parents have brought from their former home. The only glimpse of Canadian ideals that the children get is what they get at school.<sup>15</sup>

Individual teachers could only do so much and their precise influence on the Ukrainian girls or their mothers is difficult to determine. Frequently, transformation was only skin deep and community sanctions continued to weigh heavily. One teacher noted how the discarded headshawl reappeared at a funeral.<sup>16</sup> Contemporary Anglo Canadian reports advertised successes and tried to lure new workers with enthusiastic and optimistic propaganda.<sup>17</sup> There is evidence of a more realistic assessment of expectations by some teachers engaged in foreign work. A winning entry in the *Edmonton Journal* short story contest in 1914 expressed disenchantment and an awareness that workers could hope to budge entrenched ways and attitudes very little. In the tale, a teacher encourages her star pupil, a girl, to read books and to embrace her own views on the emancipation of women. She is angry when her protégé rejects business college to marry a local Ukrainian "hero," an ex-jailbird, declaring, "I am not like you—I am only a woman, you know." Only a woman, the teacher fumes, "and what have I been trying to do? Play the part of Providence? Well, I am certainly tired of my part."<sup>18</sup>

Independent work by Anglo Canadian teachers on behalf of Ukrainian women and girls was supplemented by the organized activity of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches under the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS). Both churches operated hospitals and residential schools as adjuncts to direct proselytization.<sup>19</sup> The school homes, in particular, were understood to have the broader mandate of supplanting the family. They were to raise Ukrainian youngsters in a Christian, Anglo Canadian environment, making the assimilated boy or girl an ambassador of British Canadian civilization and values.<sup>20</sup> "The Home-trained girl," felt a businessman who had employed several as servants,

has invariably the Canadian woman's viewpoint of the self-respect and independency of womanhood as distinguished from the Slav idea of subserviency. They would much rather earn their own living among Anglo Saxons than go home to be literally given away, by parents, as wives to some men for whom they have no love. This may be undermining discipline in the Slav home, as some see it, but it is unquestionably the Canadian ideal and has the approval of many enlightened Slav parents.<sup>21</sup>

Girls at the Kolokreeka Methodist school home, near Smoky Lake, were taught home economics and assisted in the domestic tasks of the institution, acquiring both practical knowledge and responsibility. They were being trained, one of the WMS workers maintained, "not to go to Edmonton, where they can secure good wages as maids in English homes, but rather to be good little homemakers in their mother's home, and later creditable wives for the rising generation of Austrian-Canadian young men."<sup>22</sup>

However, the movement of Ukrainian adolescent girls and young women to the city to earn money to assist the family budget was a reality the missionaries could not ignore. The most ambitious undertaking, the Ruthenian Girls' Home in Edmonton (1908), provided job-seeking farm girls, and increasingly those pursuing education beyond the rural school, with a place to stay, sheltered in Christian surroundings from the temptations of city life. Lessons in English and housekeeping as prerequisites for positions in suitable private homes (employment far superior, the WMS staff insisted, to being waitresses or chambermaids) accompanied lectures on hygiene and "morals" and attempts to enforce attendance at evangelical services. In Methodist propaganda the Ruthenian Girls' Home stood out as a sanctuary from unbearable conditions—cruel stepfathers and husbands, overwork and repressive spiritual environments.<sup>23</sup> The ultimate missionary triumph was Annie Korzak, the orphan adopted by the superintendent of the Presbyterian hospital at Teulon who became a nurse and head of the church's hospital in Vegreville; in the perfect ending, she subsequently "married a young Scotch Presbyterian farmer and...established a Christian Canadian home of her own."<sup>24</sup>

WMS workers in the bloc settlements also hoped to contact adult Ukrainian women through home visitations. Although linguistic and cultural liabilities and travel under pioneer conditions reduced their effectiveness, the isolation of homestead life made their calls a welcome break to lonely women, particularly those whose husbands were away working.<sup>25</sup> Women's gatherings combined sewing bees with worship, but their major benefit was undoubtedly social. "Well do I recall my first Woman's meeting," wrote a retired worker from Alberta:

Eight or ten women gathered at a farm house about 10 a.m. to patch a quilt, each for herself, the mission supplying the patches. For me it was a first attempt to give a Bible reading in Ukrainian. We sewed till between three and four, then work was put away and the tired women settled themselves patiently for the worship service. Singing and reading passed off very well then an interruption [*sic*] occurred. From a dark corner, made darker with a heavy gray blanket, a hen walked out. She was quite inoffensive but tired of close confinement. But she evidently had not been alone under the blanket, and the ray of light that she had let in deceived her male companions into thinking that the dawn had come.... Their raucous crowing filled all the air. Every Ukrainian word that I had memorized so carefully fled from me, and I broke into violent perspiration as I looked in vain to the women for some interest or inspiration. They looked as if they cared not a whit whether they heard me or the roosters and I had to hurriedly close the service in the deepest embarrassment.<sup>26</sup>

More secular, urban-based women's groups concerned about the welfare and assimilation of immigrant women (usually in conjunction with other social issues) may have stressed God less, but they too sponsored domestic science and English classes and home visitations for the greater national good. "Helping these women to learn our language, see things from our viewpoint and adopt our ideals," the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

declared, "would in no small way contribute to a better Canada."<sup>27</sup> It was the WCTU which took a sustained interest in rural Ukrainians, particularly in Alberta. While its primary objective was prohibition, its more general reform-mindedness led it to tackle the total Ukrainian lifestyle. In 1918 the provincial convention engaged school teacher Mary Howard as a worker in the Vegreville bloc to organize women and youth into Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, United Farm Women, Red Cross and other groups as links with mainstream society. This did not happen but the programme at the community centre she established at Sniatyn, near present-day Andrew, included adult English classes, temperance lectures and lessons in housewifely arts. The experiment floundered under Howard's successors and was abandoned in 1923, on the eve of the referendum on government-controlled liquor sales. A Ukrainian man was then hired as itinerant temperance lecturer, a quiet recognition of the inability of young Anglo Canadian women to sway Ukrainian men (as the primary abusers of alcohol) on behalf of prohibition.<sup>28</sup> The move also doomed the related WCTU programme of broader outreach and reform, especially to uplift women and girls. Apparently no Ukrainian woman could be found to fill Mary Howard's shoes.

The dearth of qualified Ukrainian females to bear the torch for Anglo Canadian social reform and evangelism was lamented. In 1917 Annie Korzak's benefactress proposed that the Presbyterians and Methodists train Ukrainian girls as deaconesses and nurses to go into the Ukrainian colonies, paired with "Canadian" workers. They could, she contended, "by coming in touch with the women in their homes, teach them habits of cleanliness and healthful cooking, how to care for the sick in their home, and above all, the love of our Saviour for suffering humanity."<sup>29</sup> Although neither church exploited the idea systematically, the government in interwar Alberta introduced something similar, without the religious mantle.<sup>30</sup>

The interests and prejudices of class and race that governed the activities of Anglo Canadian women among Ukrainians were nowhere more obvious than in the campaign for female suffrage. The Anglo Canadian women, who saw the vote for foreign men as a threat to the proper functioning of democracy, were equally unsure about extending it to foreign women. In 1913 the departing president of the Woman's Canadian Club of Calgary cautioned:

If you are convinced that the ballot will be a powerful weapon in the hands of women in bringing about much needed reforms, I hope you may be granted it but a general franchise in the West would more than double the foreign unintelligent vote which is largely purchased so your first great effort should be to secure legislation restricting the franchise for men, or better still, perhaps a restricted franchise for both men and women.<sup>31</sup>

Race, regardless of sex, was to close ranks. Prominent Albertans, leading campaigners for women's rights, subsequently hailed as their sex's great champions, echoed such sentiments. Nellie McClung, for example, swayed by wartime anti-alien hysteria and pragmatism, approached the federal government to enfranchise British and Canadian women to offset the foreign male vote.<sup>32</sup>



Given their wartime enemy-alien status as former Austrian subjects and their repressed condition, Ukrainian women were viewed as doubly dubious material for the vote. Once their enfranchisement became a fact, however, Canadian women's groups undertook to see that ballots were cast intelligently. The Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire in Manitoba, for example, addressed itself to raising the "status and intelligence of the foreign-born Manitoba woman voter," and mainstream Manitoba women were urged to use their own votes wisely, electing representatives committed to improving conditions for their Ukrainian sisters with "an animal's life or worse."<sup>33</sup> Emily Murphy spoke in a similar vein to Alberta club women, betraying the exclusivist undertone to the suffrage campaign: only by nationalizing the foreigner would Anglo Canadian women protect the rights secured by enfranchisement.<sup>34</sup>

If Ukrainian women were not (and in the foreseeable future would not be) the equals of Anglo Canadian women, to what end were the programmes for their emancipation and enlightenment? Permitting the latter only within the parameters of the position accorded the Ukrainian group in Canadian society seriously undermined liberating Ukrainian women from forced marriage at an early age to domineering husbands, teaching them to keep house like middle-class Anglo Canadian housewives and imbuing them with their ideals of womanhood and motherhood. Anglo Canadian women placed their Ukrainian sisters in limbo. They were no longer purely Ukrainian, but neither were they wholly Canadian.

### *Keeping Her Ukrainian*

As it assumed its self-imposed stewardship of Ukrainians in Canada, the pioneer intelligentsia-elite was both sincerely concerned for the immigrants' physical and spiritual welfare and shamed by the many unflattering stereotypes. The future, it realized, rested upon widespread motivation and transformation of individuals. Even more important than the individuals themselves, however, were the potential repercussions of their actions and attitudes on Ukrainians collectively and on the leadership's group goals. Interest in women united two issues. Existing conditions among women both aggravated the Ukrainians' inferior position in Canadian society and retarded national growth and activity.

Like Anglo Canadians, Ukrainian activists condemned harmful or uncomplimentary conditions in Ukrainian bloc settlements, along with the ignorance or harsh reality responsible for them. Women's labour in the fields, for example, was regretted by the Presbyterian *Ranok* (23 September 1914) because it left children unattended and a prey to accident and injury. But when ends and means clashed, the intelligentsia-elite was forced to make choices. It was true that rural economic progress initially required a workload for women (as part of the farming unit) that had detrimental effects on family life. It was equally true that Anglo Canadians found the workload repugnant, further proof that Ukrainian women were beasts of burden and Ukrainians generally uncivilized. In this dilemma, a priest touring the



colonies in 1898 aligned himself firmly with the homesteader; Ukrainians should look on women as valuable assets, he maintained, because they worked on the land, even though the practice might shock the English.<sup>35</sup> However, other controversial features of Ukrainian immigrant life could not be justified or temporarily tolerated on grounds of survival.

It particularly rankled the intelligentsia-elite how the sins of a few could taint the entire group. What Anglo Canadians said or thought did matter, and Ukrainian immigrants were constantly exhorted to observe all proprieties to avoid censure or derision. During his 1897 pastoral visit, Rev. Nestor Dmytriw castigated Ukrainian women for the filthiness of their section of the Strathcona (South Edmonton) Immigration Hall and for the foul habits of their unsupervised children; it was no wonder, he said, that Anglo Canadians considered Ukrainians "worse than Indians."<sup>36</sup> The Ukrainian press regularly exposed and mocked outrageous behaviour—bigamy by men with wives overseas, philandering by men masquerading as bachelors or widowers, adolescent waywardness—in the hopes of shaming Ukrainians into reforming their ways.<sup>37</sup> And coverage of violence, child neglect, drunkenness, marital discord and other irregularities in the bloc settlements often subordinated their victims to the reputation such incidents gave Ukrainians as a whole. One report of a man's abuse of his step-children and their mother's indifference, for example, stressed the negative publicity in the English newspapers; Anglo Canadians had discovered savages, it lectured its readers, and as long as Ukrainians clung to their darkness they would indeed live like wild beasts.<sup>38</sup>

The response of the elite to the twin issues of alcohol and prohibition illustrates the importance of image. Much of its propaganda on the evils of liquor—family violence and discord, poverty, physically and mentally handicapped offspring—paralleled Anglo Canadian arguments. As wives and mothers, Ukrainian women were admonished to participate in the 1916 Saskatchewan liquor referendum for such reasons.<sup>39</sup> But prohibition was not portrayed simply as a good thing in itself. A vote for prohibition, declared *Ukrainskyi holos* (6 December 1916), was also necessary to temper Anglo Canadian stereotypes, prejudiced by the image of the drunken 'Galician' making a spectacle of himself or ruining his family.

The peasant approach to marriage that combined with a surplus of males and female indispensability to the homestead to produce young brides, emphasis on material factors and hasty betrothal or remarriage also came under growing scrutiny. Ukrainian youth was warned of the harmful effects of too-frequent childbirth on the girl married before full physical maturity, and of the mental immaturity that made her incapable of coping with the responsibilities thrust upon her.<sup>40</sup> Increasingly, attacks on early marriage reflected the elite's obsession with the spiritual and intellectual content of Ukrainian immigrant life. A girl's marriage shortly after puberty condemned her forever to ignorance and the narrow world of her house. That Ukrainian women presumed nothing else exasperated the elite. Girls were satisfied to know how to cook, sew, clean and write letters; their mothers were content to have daughters who were comely, healthy and hardworking, for their future

was as farm wives, not doctors, lawyers or teachers.<sup>41</sup> By the 1920s such thinking had been severely rebuked within leading sectors of the Ukrainian community. It was fine to marry and become farm wives, wrote "Ukrainka" (Ukrainian Woman) in *Ukrainskyi holos* (8 September 1915), but it did not mean women had to stagnate mentally, trained in nothing but household and farmyard chores, absorbed by their petty cares and routines and too unsocialized to mingle with people; some knowledge of childrearing and social intercourse as well as the civilized world was necessary. Ignorant farm women had become a distinct embarrassment. An anonymous letter in the same newspaper (3 July 1918) described them clustered at the railway station to watch the train pass: agog and cackling foolishly, with mud-caked feet, parading their lack of dignity and empty-headedness. More than an embarrassment, however, ignorant farm women were increasingly perceived as an obstacle to socio-economic and national progress.<sup>42</sup>

While the farm girl plucked from school at fourteen or fifteen to marry and doomed thereafter to hard physical toil in isolated unenlightening conditions was one side of the coin, her urban sister, particularly the farm girl sent in adolescence to work in domestic service or in the hotel and restaurant trade, constituted the other. Acquiring a smattering of English and a bit of money, she became an "English lady," preoccupied with frivolous amusements and fashions and chasing non-Ukrainian men. She rejected parental values, refused her family financial assistance and became ashamed of her language and people. Such girls married Ukrainians only after being abandoned by the vulgar non-Ukrainian lovers they attracted; they were useless as farm wives, too spoiled to work and sulky when their husbands could not gratify their whims. Here, painted vividly in the Ukrainian press was "Katie," female companion to "Jack," the corrupted and maladjusted young man whose education began on the extra gang and was completed in the tavern and poolroom.<sup>43</sup>

While both Jack and Katie were criticized and ridiculed for making themselves and Ukrainians generally a laughingstock, Katie was the more serious problem in the eyes of the intelligentsia-elite. Hats, face powder and chewing gum were visible symbols of a deeper disorder. Nothing in the moral deterioration of Ukrainian girls exposed to the attractions of the new world and to the independence it represented was so ominous for the future as their alienation from the Ukrainian community. Alienation triumphed when as a wife and mother Katie refused to speak Ukrainian to her husband and children and avoided Ukrainian contacts. To the elite, this was the crux of Katie's downfall and explains why her fate overshadowed Jack's. Having repudiated her language and people, Katie, as homemaker, led the way in the assimilation of the next generation. Ukrainians vilify the Muscovites and Poles for centuries of Russification and Polonization, said a pointed address to Ukrainian women in 1917, only to see mothers in Canada deliberately make their children into enemies of their people.<sup>44</sup>

Katie was probably no better or worse than contemporary young women of other immigrant backgrounds who defied custom and ended up suspended between two worlds. Circumstances, however, ensured that the issues of

alienated youth, particularly girls, and a backward womanhood would have special urgency for Ukrainians. First, by magnifying the questions of image, status and progress, an ambivalent reception and socio-economic handicaps in Canada required that individual behaviour be monitored in the interests of the group. Second, emigration at a critical moment in Ukraine's national evolution, together with the failure of Ukrainians in Europe to establish an independent state in 1917-21, magnified the questions of national consciousness and obligation to the homeland. Once Ukrainian territories were again divided among more powerful neighbours and the precariousness of national life in the homeland became clear, the intelligentsia-elite denied Ukrainian Canadians a choice. Their language and culture had to be preserved and nourished, and moral and material aid extended to the nation abroad. This could be done only if Ukrainians in Canada were mobilized as a whole and acquired the necessary material, spiritual and intellectual resources.<sup>45</sup>

With the vitality and future course of Ukrainian Canadian life dependent on the values imparted to the young, women as the first socializers of children had a high profile, reinforced by educational developments in Canada. The abolition of state-funded bilingual schools in 1916, closing public avenues for the transmission of Ukrainian culture, stimulated not only *ridni shkoly* (Ukrainian schools) and *bursy* (residences for older students) but an emphasis on the home as a source of knowledge and appreciation of things Ukrainian.<sup>46</sup> With women expected to participate perceptively in moulding the young to be Ukrainian patriots as well as good Canadian citizens, the degree and quality of their Ukrainian consciousness and general enlightenment became crucial. Katie in her rebellion and her rural sister in her ignorance were not the ideal propagandists for community objectives. The bloc settlements might preserve the Ukrainian language and customs longer than urban life appeared to permit, but in themselves they did not guarantee greater Ukrainian consciousness or commitment.

"You support three corners of the home and your husband one," an early Alberta immigrant had reminded women (*Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 1 March 1906), complaining that although children now ate white bread, their behaviour proved Ukrainian mothers had failed to provide spiritual nourishment. "Pay attention to your children," he had admonished:

Send the small ones to school, teach them at home, give them a good example of Christian life, explain to them the foundations of the sacred faith and our Rus' history...[so that]...they will be a gratitude and help in your old age and contribute to the expansion of our Ruthenian honour and glory.

By the late 1910s the belief prevailed that Ukrainian womanhood in Canada, backward and without mentors, was defaulting in its mission. The mother uninterested in bettering herself and the home environment, or unaware of the need or possibility of improvement, penalized her family through ignorant complacency and passivity.<sup>47</sup> A worse evil was the slovenly and improvident woman, prone to gossip, neglecting her household and hostile to learning and cultural activity, for she hobbled her family wilfully and by her bad

example.<sup>48</sup> Many commentators argued that unprogressive parents of whatever ilk, incapable of arousing intellectual ambition or communicating principles, perpetuated their own poverty, exploitation and degradation in their children. They were directly to blame, for instance, for Katie's attitudes. Sent out to work far too young, without ingrained values and self-respect or pride in her own origins, she naturally gravitated to the dregs of Anglo Canadian society, by whose coarse standards she became "civilized."<sup>49</sup> The female nature, it was explained, less rational and more tractable than the male, made a girl's upbringing delicate with unusually grim consequences when apathetic or depraved parents bungled it.<sup>50</sup>

When parents themselves needed teaching, it befell the enlightened members of the Ukrainian community to break the vicious cycle by leading them to education. While all agreed on responsibility, some voices intimated that the intelligentsia-elite was not doing enough. One critic drew an unfavourable comparison with prewar Galicia, where the intelligentsia had gone into peasant and worker houses and transformed the countryside; its Canadian counterpart, by contrast, exerted itself only halfheartedly, whether to influence parents in raising their young or to elevate the parents themselves.<sup>51</sup> Once women were enlightened and consciously Ukrainian, it was believed, they would buy books and newspapers instead of trinkets; they would understand that their people's condition resulted from centuries of foreign subjugation and cease to be ashamed; and they would transmit their own patriotism to their children.<sup>52</sup> As their letters and articles in the press demonstrate, such women existed and concurred with community expectations, simultaneously urging other women to do likewise.

In addition to quickening emphasis on women's maternal and domestic functions in the wake of political developments in Canada, by the 1920s events in Europe had produced demands for a larger public role in national work as well. Women were criticized for their apathy toward the independence struggles overseas, particularly the Polish-Ukrainian conflict over Galicia which erupted in 1918, and shown the example of service and sacrifice by Ukrainian women there.<sup>53</sup> National life fermented around them, charged a woman in mid-1919, but Ukrainian women in Canada cowered "like mice in their holes"; they needed to cultivate public interests, perceiving their sphere to extend beyond their kin to the nation as a communion of families.<sup>54</sup> A worker's wife spoke harshly in *Ukrainskyi holos* (19 November 1919) of the inertia of those women whose education and privilege equipped and obliged them to lead their sex; these women—the wives of doctors, lawyers, priests, politicians, businessmen and teachers, and the teachers themselves—ought to be in the vanguard of organizing women for national purposes.

It was as organized women, under their own leaders, that Ukrainian women would discharge their public obligations, participating in national life alongside men as enlightened members of the community. Instead of being concerned with "politics," however, their organizations were to exploit female nurturing talents and focus on special female needs. Ukrainian Red Cross work was identified as a perfect outlet for women in aid of war-ravaged



Ukraine.<sup>55</sup> Women's organizations would also frame healthy views on life for Ukrainian women and define their family and national responsibilities; moreover, every member would act as a personal model of female consciousness and patriotism to her less enlightened sisters.<sup>56</sup>

Those, like the worker's wife above, who criticized the invisibility of the female intelligentsia, were somewhat unfair. While the male intelligentsia itself was small, the pool of women from which to draw similar leaders was even smaller. Priests' wives, for instance, in a position to be an influential presence among village peasant women in Galicia, never existed in Canada where the celibate Greek Catholic clergy enjoyed a monopoly. By 1921 only a handful of Ukrainian women (4 nurses, 58 teachers, 20 nuns) had professional occupations; 38 per cent of all Ukrainian women were illiterate, and the percentage was even higher among the foreign-born.<sup>57</sup> The Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, in Canada since November 1902, had been dedicated social workers and were to operate hospitals, orphanages and *ridni shkoly*, but they did not aspire to leadership in the secular community.<sup>58</sup> And within the secular community itself evidence suggests that not all men could comfortably contemplate the idea of publicly active women. Both Anna Bychinska and Olha Swystun told the third Ukrainian National Convention in 1918 that it was time men valued women's contributions to Ukrainian life, realized that they were good for something besides "cooking and nursing babies" and took their education seriously. "You, men, may call yourselves patriots," Bychinska stated, "may have noble ideas and may speak of education and politics, but your patriotism is of little value if you do not place the matter of elevation of our women in the first place."<sup>59</sup> As it was, besides solitary literate women in the colonies, two nuclei of female activists had emerged in western Canada by the early 1920s.

The one group included bilingual teachers and women in the *bursa* movement, particularly the Mohylianky at the Mohyla Institute in Saskatoon.<sup>60</sup> As a buffer against Anglicization, the *bursy* provided youth with a controlled and, at times, aggressive Ukrainian environment as they pursued their studies in larger prairie centres, turning out a generation of community workers of both sexes. Although girls formed a decided minority of pioneer *bursa* students, promoters stressed the importance of enlightened nationally conscious young women as future mothers and emphasized the role of the *bursy* in training them.<sup>61</sup> In addition to regular classes in Ukrainian language, history, literature and music, the Mohyla Institute offered special instruction for girls in cooking, sewing, embroidery, interior decoration, health and hygiene and social graces. Anglo Canadian reformers would have easily recognized the programme.

The Ukrainian Women's Enlightenment Society, formed in Winnipeg in late 1916 around the Ukrainian National Home, constituted the second nucleus. Dominated by wives of major figures in the male intelligentsia, it emerged from male initiative. Manitoba MLA Taras Ferley told an initial gathering of women of the necessity of "a women's organization to be concerned not only with childrearing and homemaking but also the need for women to become interested in national and political affairs in order to



become the equals of other citizens in this country.”<sup>62</sup> The charter members saw themselves as an organizational model to rural women, and their activities embodied the “female-oriented service” that earmarked their successors; they also campaigned among Ukrainian women in Winnipeg on behalf of Canadian national wartime registration.<sup>63</sup> The group’s first president later reaffirmed their dual orientation:

This society was a fine patriotic example to Ukrainian women who followed in our footsteps. It was a great pleasure to work together, for among us there was love, co-operation and tolerance, and thus the success of our work, as women acted for the good of this country and the good of the Ukrainian people.<sup>64</sup>

Contemporary accounts were not so quick to proclaim such harmony. The association’s own assessment in *Ukrainskyi holos* (25 January 1918) of its first year’s work alluded to internal discord that hurt its performance and was openly antagonistic toward local women who had thwarted its “educational and cultural enlightenment” of Ukrainian women in Winnipeg by their “hostility or indifference.” Indifference, without prior large-scale propagandizing, is understandable. That the source of hostility may have lain in the attitudes of the Ukrainian Women’s Enlightenment Society itself is suggested by its reaction to the collapse of fancywork classes for girls when parents objected to buying the materials. In its emphasis on the thankless sacrifice of the volunteer teachers and its dismissal of the pupils’ parents for selfishness, the possibility of a financial imposition on working families went unnoticed and the idea of Ukrainian fellowship was lost.

This semi-articulated sense of alienation and superiority on the part of the intelligentsia-elite indicated its tendency to approach the masses from the perspective of group needs and goals of its choosing, at the expense of the immigrants’ real or immediate concerns and experiences. Even a moving and informative description of the lot of Ukrainian women homesteaders, like Anna Bychinska’s 1920 account, was insensible to the actual problems to be tackled or the personal role enlightened Ukrainians might play in their solution.<sup>65</sup> At times the distance between reality and what the elite wished or chose to believe lent an air of irrelevance to its activities, casting doubt on its practical usefulness to a peasant immigrant society in transition. When “Ukrainka,” for example, lamented the disappearance of traditional dishes and a preference for prepared foods among farm wives, she ignored the sheer convenience of canned goods to busy rural women, regardless of nutrition or variety as to diet.<sup>66</sup> While the budding nationalist elite assumed the right to impose its blueprint on the Ukrainian immigrant community, others objected to such presumptuousness and neglect of social issues. Correspondence to the socialist press (*Robochyi narod*, 18 July 1917) criticized the way “our businessmen-patriots” ignored the question of improving conditions for Ukrainian working girls and concentrated instead on their ability to sing Ukrainian songs and their willingness to part with hard-earned money for the nationalists’ cause.

Nowhere, however, in the intelligentsia-elite's regard for the status of women were community-perceived needs so obviously the crucial factor as in its attitude toward female education and emancipation. Educated women were certainly necessary for national and socio-economic development. But as this consensus coalesced during the escalating wartime concern for woman's role as Ukrainian mother, homemaker and sometimes public activist, her personal growth and female emancipation in general received little attention.<sup>67</sup> This contrasted with an earlier series of letters and articles in *Ukrainskyi holos*, significantly by women, which stressed their personal emancipation and equality with men as prerequisites for progress of any type; true progress could be realized only when life was regulated by "reason not a cudgel," with both sexes equally enlightened and mutually supportive, whether in the family or community.<sup>68</sup> The most outspoken piece was a critique in *Holos* (22 June 1918) of the social structures and prescribed sex roles in Ukrainian society that forced continued ignorance and submissiveness on women. Identical basic needs, the author maintained, gave women the right to equality with men. Instead, they were male possessions, "bought and sold goods," their sole purpose marriage, their sole responsibility obedience. Slaves had to be kept ignorant or they would challenge their masters; learning was antithetical to obedience. Only independent earning power and the knowledge to profit from it wisely, by releasing women from obligatory marriage, would provide them with the freedom and means to decide their own destinies and happiness. In her rejection of parental and community controls, refusal to surrender her wages and sometimes pathetic attempts at self-expression, Katie epitomized the straining for independence which this writer claimed was woman's due. The article foreshadowed well the dilemma that confronted the intelligentsia by the early 1920s.

Although the pursuit of material gain led Ukrainians to regard their older children as capital, it exacted its price. The girl who worked in the city brought home money; but she also tasted something besides the often circumscribed and unrewarding life of the homestead. If occasionally she balked at returning to a traditionally subservient and physically demanding role and chose the marketplace (however lowly the occupation) over rural married life, it was an unequivocal comment on her evaluation of the relative merits of the two lifestyles.<sup>69</sup> Resisting Ukrainian community directives and expectations in the name of the larger good was a further statement of independence. Once education increased a girl's awareness of alternative lifestyles to those traditionally available to Ukrainian women and provided her with the tools to take advantage of them, she was even freer to choose her own course.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, enlightenment through a consciously Anglo Canadian school system constituted a powerful force for assimilation. Education and the work force both immersed girls in the Canadian world and opened options other than marriage and homemaking, at a time when the intelligentsia emphasized the important role of women, especially in the home, in preserving a Ukrainian identity. The problem facing Ukrainian leaders was to strike a balance between promoting progress and reform and securing or maintaining influence. Ukrainian women and girls had to be educated and enlightened, enabling them to take their place among the "civilized peoples"

of the world and to serve their own people usefully, but not to the point where new ideas and independence lost them to the community.

### *Conclusion*

In the interests of group self-preservation, Anglo Canadian and Ukrainian immigrant communities adopted similar arguments and priorities regarding an appropriate role and outlook for Ukrainian women. They differed in the ultimate "national" ends to be served. The Ukrainian problem was the more complex for it had to satisfy the often conflicting demands of life in the new world and a sense of duty to the old. An elite within both groups saw the necessity of changing existing conditions among Ukrainian women if its objectives were to be realized. But while the Protestant social gospel spurred Anglo Canadians to translate their concerns into concrete programmes, Ukrainians appeared reluctant to interfere as directly in the family unit.<sup>71</sup> Approaching reform more from above, largely through the press, the pioneer intelligentsia-elite neither devised centrally co-ordinated strategies for lifestyle reform nor implemented widespread local educational programmes to undermine the mentality that sustained dubious or outdated practices and to introduce new ways and values in their stead. The structural immaturity as well as the settlement patterns and composition of the Ukrainian immigrant community were partially responsible. But to say Ukrainians lacked the necessary financial and human resources to mount grass-roots reform campaigns would be untrue, for the elite put the required energy into national projects like the *bursy* and aid to Galicia, wringing thousands of dollars from the immigrants by the early 1920s. Not infrequently, the emphases of Anglo Canadian reformers and Ukrainian leaders alike had limited direct relevance to the people they addressed; an inaccurate reflection of the immigrants' immediate needs or condition, they did little to assist an immigrant peasant society in transition.<sup>72</sup>

There was a certain ambiguity in the intelligentsia-elite's attitude toward Anglo Canadians. At the same time as women's adoption of many Anglo Canadian traits (food, dress, language) was criticized, English women and the English attitude toward women were held up as models to and for Ukrainian women: the English educated their daughters, English housewives were an example to Ukrainian immigrants, English women had demonstrated the possibility and value of women's organizations, English women had contributed to the advancement of their societies and the English honoured and did not repudiate their own. Ukrainian community leaders clearly recognized the dangers inherent in education and progress, which necessitated exposure to the Anglo Canadian world with its interest in capturing Ukrainian women and girls for its own purposes. While Anglo Canadians, for example, considered live-in domestic service ideal employment for Ukrainian girls because of the supervised immersion in Anglo Canadian home life, Ukrainian leaders (*Ukrainskyi holos*, 31 May 1916), for the same reasons, considered even the best service corrupting. But in spite of the dangers, the intelligentsia-elite also knew Ukrainians had to use the mechanisms of

Canadian society to advantage if they were to experience socio-economic progress, enriched spiritual and intellectual life and conscious commitment to the Ukrainian nation.

By encouraging general enlightenment and modernization among Ukrainian Canadian women, the intelligentsia-elite promoted their integration into Canadian society (as far as the status accorded Ukrainians as a whole would permit). But it simultaneously imposed on them a socio-cultural role with political undertones, as Ukrainian homemakers and patriots, that operated outside mainstream parameters. The resulting tensions and dilemmas, together with pressures from Canadian society itself, had been felt and acknowledged by the early 1920s. Over the next few decades they would grow in importance.

## Notes

1. Enlightenment and the improvement of socio-economic conditions among Ukrainian peasant women—issues addressed in late nineteenth-century Galicia—continued to be important to the interwar Galician women's organization, *Soiuz Ukrainok*. M. Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Feminism in Ukrainian History," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 16–30; "Natalia Kobryns'ka: Formulator of Feminism," in A. S. Markovits and F. E. Sysyn (eds.), *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, MA 1982), 196–219.
2. The term "intelligentsia-elite" is awkward and not altogether satisfactory. It is used in the absence of research into the precise nature of Ukrainian immigrant leadership to refer to the few members of the Galician and Bukovynian village intelligentsia who emigrated, the Greek Catholic clergy, and the handful of Canadian-educated bilingual teachers, university graduates and businessmen who collectively represented Ukrainians publicly.
3. The mouthpiece of the nationalists was the pioneer press, particularly *Ukrainskyi holos* and *Kanadyiskyi farmer*. The Greek Catholic *Kanadyiskyi rusyn* and Presbyterian *Ranok* reflected many of the same concerns.
4. See E. Silverman, "Women and the Victorian Work Ethic on the Alberta Frontier: Prescription and Description," in H. Palmer and D. Smith (eds.), *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905–1980* (Vancouver 1980), 91–9, and *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880–1930* (Montreal 1984), for a discussion of the views of Alberta pioneer women on the relevance of the popular womanly ideal to their lives and the tensions between myth and reality. The contemporary woman's movement promoted woman's nurturing function and unique attributes to argue that women could make a valuable contribution outside the home; it justified participation in such "female" professions as teaching, nursing and social work, as well as the right to the franchise and a role in reform on the grounds that feminine input would purge society of its growing ills.
5. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 8 September 1915.
6. "Some Teacher Experiences" (unsigned, n.d.), William Martin Papers, 19165–6, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon. The murder of a Pakan-area woman by her husband, who had "practically purchased" her for a plough and wagon, became a *cause célèbre* in the Alberta press (see *Vegreville Observer* and



- Edmonton Bulletin*, March 1912), proof of the immorality of Ukrainian marriage practices. Two contemporary descriptions of Ukrainian weddings in Alberta illustrate both condemnatory and picturesque approaches: see respectively B. C. d'Easum, "A Galician Wedding," *Canadian Magazine* 13 (May-October 1899): 83-4, and M. Elston, "A Russian Wedding in Alberta," *East and West* (18 March 1916): 93.
7. N. McClung, *The Stream Runs Fast* (Toronto 1945), 163-4, discusses teacher reactions to attitudes toward the education of girls in the Ukrainian bloc east of Edmonton during the First World War.
  8. It is necessary to determine not only the relative contributions of "tradition" and immigrant adaptation to the 'endemic evils,' but also their prevalence among Ukrainians and the extent of deviance of the Ukrainian pattern from that of other nationalities. There is no doubt, however, that contemporary Anglo Canadians felt the problem to be particularly acute among, and characteristic of, Ukrainians.
  9. Inquest files 824, 907 and 1745, Department of the Attorney General Records, 67.172, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton (hereafter PAA); *Vegreville Observer*, 17 August 1910, article "Brutal Father"; M. Elston, "Our Little Russian Brother," *Christian Guardian*, 1916, "Meeting Needs on the Frontier: My Acquaintance with Lamont Hospital," *Onward*, and "Ruthenians in Western Canada: When Sickness Visits a Russian Home," *Onward*, 1919, copies in PAA, 65.55.
  10. Constable J. Nash, Alberta Provincial Police, Vermilion, 31 August 1917, Inquest file 1012, Department of the Attorney General Records, 67.172, PAA. Local authorities in Ukrainian districts in east central Alberta handled numerous common assault cases involving Ukrainian parties, including charges by wives against their husbands. For examples, see Justice of the Peace files, Department of the Attorney General Records, 69.210, PAA.
  11. Inquest file 599, Department of the Attorney General Records, 67.172, PAA.
  12. Inquest file 1350, Department of the Attorney General Records, 67.172, PAA. The man was convicted; overlooked in both inquest and trial decisions was his obvious reluctance to leave his wife's bedside to get help personally and the fact that a doctor was summoned. Notwithstanding the difficulties of supplying most rural pioneer areas with medical services, one coroner's jury in the Vegreville colony recommended that the government "adopt some method to induce people of foreign nationalities" to provide women with proper care during childbirth. Inquest file 907, Department of the Attorney General Records, 67.172, PAA.
  13. Minutes, 15 September 1913, Woman's Canadian Club of Calgary, M1703, Box 1, Book II, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary; see also D. MacGregor (ed.), *The Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book* (Calgary 1917), 7. The Alberta Woman's Christian Temperance Union also opposed child marriage and discussed the distribution of foreign-language leaflets exposing its harmful effects: see minutes (annual convention), 29 September 1913, Woman's Christian Temperance Union, BD.3. W.872B, file 2, Glenbow-Alberta Institute.
  14. R. England, *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (Toronto 1929), 146. See J. T. M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem* (London and Toronto 1918), 143-50, for a lengthy description of the "best type of Canadian womanhood" in action in a Ukrainian district. In the early 1930s many Anglo Canadian teachers in rural Alberta still taught foreign girls home economics after school hours, convinced as were their predecessors that "the only way to influence the older people in these communities is through the children." Local Council of Women, *Year Book* (Calgary 1932), 53.



15. E. Bishop, "Some Teacher Reminiscences" (n.d.), William Martin Papers, 19425, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
16. England, 90.
17. One of the best examples is a short story, "A Message," published anonymously in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union collection, *Canadian National Prize Medal Contest Book* (n.p., n.d.), 39–42 (copy in the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, BD.3 W.872A). In the heart of the Ukrainian bloc in Alberta, Lena is made happy by the new Anglo Canadian teacher who lectures on "cleanliness and the evils of alcohol and nicotine" and teaches the girls to make "Canadian" dresses. Lena's despair when the teacher leaves to nurse her invalid mother and the students' cry for another teacher "to teach us to be Eengleesh and make Canadian tings" is a none-too-subtle challenge to readers to become involved in foreign education. In a later period, J. Deverell, "The Ukrainian Teacher as an Agent of Cultural Assimilation," Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1941, 93–5, suggests Ukrainian girls were less likely to imitate Anglo Canadian teachers than Ukrainian ones.
18. M. J. Sproule, "On a Russian Trail," *Edmonton Journal*, 22 December 1914; see *Vegreville Observer*, 13 January 1915, for commentary. It is interesting that two of the winning stories featured Ukrainian women; first prize went to Miriam Elston for "Baba Petruchevich."
19. See, for example, R. Warden, "Report of the Home Mission Committee, Western Section, 1902–3," *Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (1905), 5; and H. M. Kipp, "Hospital Work as an Entrance," *Missionary Messenger* (March 1919): 79.
20. The ideal transformation which a mission girl could wrought in her native surroundings and fellow Ukrainians is depicted in the novel *The Foreigner* (Toronto 1909), 157–68, by the Presbyterian minister Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor).
21. Comments attributed by J. H. Hall, "Sifton School Home," *Missionary Messenger* (April 1919): 112.
22. P. Code, "Everyday Life at Kolokreeka, Alta.," *Missionary Outlook* (January 1914): 16.
23. See, for example, McClung, 167–9; W. H. Pike, *Ruthenian Home, Edmonton, Alta.* (Toronto n.d.), 5 pp. (copy in the United Church Archives, UC 172/106, PAA).
24. F. Yeigh, "New Canadians Making Good," *Canadian Magazine* 59 (July 1922): 231–2.
25. See M. Laycock, *Bridges of Friendship* (n.p., n.d.), 32, and E. Chace, untitled typescript (n.d.), 3, United Church Archives, UC 172/42, PAA. Both women were missionaries to the Ukrainians in east central Alberta.
26. Ethelwyn Chace to Edith Weeks, "Wahstao Memories" (typescript, n.d.), 15, United Church Archives, UC 172/40, PAA.
27. S. F. Daum, "Work Among Foreigners," *Report of Fourth Annual Convention of the Alberta Provincial Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (1916), 58.
28. Over the years the WCTU tempered its assurances of improvements in Ukrainian lifestyle and family life under the influence of its workers. Its records note the resistance encountered. In 1918, for example, anti-alien wartime measures caused Ukrainians to view Howard's initiatives with suspicion, while Jacob Krett and Nick Lopushinsky, who carried the interwar WCTU banner, had trouble renting public buildings from local Ukrainian leaders for their temperance/Bible lectures. The fortunes of WCTU work in the Ukrainian bloc can be followed in the reports of its annual conventions from the mid-1910s to the mid-1930s.

29. A. Bell, "An Ideal Worthy of Attainment," *Missionary Messenger* (June 1917): 178.
30. In 1928 Hanna Romanchych was retained by the Alberta Women's Bureau in the Department of Agriculture for extension work in home economics among Ukrainian women in the Vegreville area. N. Bannerman (comp.), *What's Past is Prologue: A History of Home Economics in Alberta* (Calgary 1981), 26, 115. Romanchych solved the problem of a sympathetic Ukrainian speaker to communicate with Ukrainian women, but without the value-laden trappings accompanying the practical guidance of her Anglo Canadian predecessors; her own gravitation was to the Ukrainian community. V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *Entsyklopediia ukraïnoznavstva*, vol. 2, pt. 7 (Paris and New York 1973), 2568.
31. Woman's Canadian Club of Calgary, *Year Book* (1913), 9.
32. In H. Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto 1982), 44; see *Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book*, 8, for a similar petition to Ottawa by the Calgary Local Council of Women.
33. Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, *Souvenir* (1916), 45, and *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 February 1916.
34. In *Club Women's Records* (Edmonton 1916), 16; see also L. McKinney, "President's Address," *Report of Third Annual Convention of the Alberta Provincial Woman's Christian Temperance Union* (1915), 33.
35. Rev. Pavlo Tymkevych in *Svoboda*, 3 November 1898; see *Manitoba Free Press*, 19 September 1916, for an Anglo Canadian cataloguing of the costs of female fieldwork. A sociologist later argued that it was precisely the mobilization of the entire family that had enabled the Ukrainian farmer to expand his operation, often at the expense of his Anglo Canadian neighbour whose surplus cash went to hired help. C. H. Young, *Ukrainian Canadians: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto 1931), 63.
36. *Svoboda*, 22 April, 20 May 1897. For similar sentiments by a Ukrainian immigrant in Winnipeg, see *ibid.*, 26 May 1898. Dmytriw and Department of Interior interpreter, Cyril Genik, insisted that Ukrainians exchange their "dirty sheepskins" for "clothes of the world" at the outset of their journey to escape ridicule on arrival in Canada. *Ibid.*, 28 January, 10 June 1897, 10 March 1898.
37. Very early examples can be found in letters from Canada in *Svoboda*, 26 April, 31 October 1900, 17 April, 5 June, 17 July, 28 November 1901, 24 April, 14 August 1902, 28 May 1903, 1 March, 25 August 1904. Other approaches were also utilized. Playwright Dmytro Hunkevych wrote *Zhertvy temnoty* (Lviv and Winnipeg 1923) as a warning to male sojourners tempted to abandon their families and to girls who married hastily only to lament their unhappy fates (see author's postscript, 44). Humorist Jacob Maydanyk resorted to satire, particularly through cartoon characters Vuiko Shtif (Uncle Steve) and Nasha Meri (Our Mary).
38. *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 8 February 1906; see also *Ukrainskyi holos*, 14 June 1911, where a Vegreville-area correspondent complained of the negative impression an attempted domestic poisoning made on outsiders.
39. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 6 December 1916. Ukrainian teachers were urged to use their positions to agitate on behalf of prohibition. From the literature on the evils of alcohol, see *Ukrainskyi holos*, 3 November 1915; *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 25 February 1916; and the five-part article by Rev. M. Kinash, "Pyty chy ne pyty?" in *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, January and February 1914.
40. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 29 January 1913; A. Arabska, "Obrazovanie divchat," *Kameniar* 2, no. 4 (1 March 1919): 134-5.

41. See, for example, *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 20 August 1915, 1 February 1918; *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 10 October 1917; *Ukrainskyi holos*, 11 August, 8 September 1915, 28 June 1916; Arabska, "Obrazovanie divchat," 134–5.
42. If the "bride-wanted" columns of *Ukrainskyi holos* and *Kanadyiskyi farmer* through 1920 are any indication, Ukrainian men began to attach greater weight to factors in marriage not immediately identifiable as economic or materialistic that could affect their progress and reflect on their status. As emphasis on a dowry declined, other attributes in a wife—housekeeping skills, unblemished character, literacy (some prospective grooms even specified English)—took precedence. Perhaps significantly these qualities were most frequently mentioned by non-farmers.
43. One of several corrupted Anglicized names used by half-Canadianized girls, "Keidi" ("Katie"), was particularly popular in *Ukrainskyi holos* to disparage the entire phenomenon. Here her composite is based on *Svoboda*, 31 October 1900, 31 January 1901, 24 April 1902, 16 April and 30 July 1903, 1 September 1904; and *Ukrainskyi holos*, 5 June 1912, 8 September 1913, 25 November 1914, 8 September 1915, 31 May, 28 June, 26 July and 16 August 1916, 9 December 1917.
44. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 19 December 1917; see also *ibid.*, 8 September 1913, 25 November 1914, 28 June 1916, 19 November 1919. Within their respective emphases on the faith and the workers' struggle, the Greek Catholic and socialist presses shared the nationalists' concern for parental responsibility in the assimilation of children. See, for example, *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 4 January 1913, 28 October 1914, 23 May 1917, *Robitnytsia*, 1 October 1924. Opinion on the destructiveness of the urbanized working girl was not unanimous. In 1897 Dmytriw noted how employment in Edmonton made girls ashamed of the squalor of their parents; he believed it would be Ukrainian girls, not men (too corrupted by their Galician upbringing), who would absorb and disseminate the best of North American civilization so central to Ukrainian progress. *Svoboda*, 29 April, 3 June 1897.
45. See, for example, *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 2 May 1917; *Ukrainskyi holos*, 4 September 1918.
46. As the bilingual schools had been limited to Manitoba, their abolition affected only Manitoba Ukrainians directly; during the 1910s Alberta and Saskatchewan also grew increasingly intolerant of the use of public educational facilities to teach languages other than English. During the bilingual schools controversy, Ukrainian women consciously endorsed their role in teaching their language and culture to the young. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 22 December 1915, 16 February 1916. See also Arabska, "Dim," *Kameniar* 2, no. 6 (1 April 1919): 204–5, outlining the ideal role of home and mother in family life; and *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 10 October 1917.
47. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 11 August, 8 September 1915, 19 December 1917; *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 10 October 1917; *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 20 August 1915, 1 February 1918; Arabska, "Obrazovanie divchat," 134–5.
48. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 6 July 1910, 11 August 1915, 26 July 1916, 16 July 1919; *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 20 August 1915, 14 April 1916, 1 February 1918.
49. *Kanadyiskyi farmer*, 1 March 1906; *Ukrainskyi holos*, 6 July 1910, 8 September 1913, 25 November 1914, 3, 23 November 1915, 31 May, 26 July 1916, 19 December 1917, 4 September 1918. For a plea by three women to their sisters not only to heed their own self-improvement but also to encourage enlightenment and abstinence in their men, see *Ukrainskyi holos*, 15 July 1914.
50. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 31 May, 26 July 1916, 19 December 1917.

51. Ibid., 4 September 1918; see also *ibid.*, 19 November 1919. One individual, appalled by Katie, appealed to the entire community to prepare Ukrainian girls for adult life. Ibid., 25 November 1914.
52. Ibid., 5 June 1912, 28 June 1916, 8 September 1913; *Svoboda*, 30 May 1901.
53. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 16 July, 19 November 1919.
54. Ibid., 16 July 1919; see also *ibid.*, 19 November 1919. Other peoples, it was charged, had women who contributed usefully to the community and furthered its progress, but Ukrainians in Canada did not. American Ukrainian women, who had formed their own organization and founded their own periodical, were an example to their sisters across the border.
55. Ibid., 19 December 1917, 19 November 1919, 25 February 1920. *Kanadyiskyi rusyn*, 2 May, 10 October 1917, also stressed a public "social work" role for Ukrainian women, which would utilize their special maternal and sacrificing gifts, in addition to primacy in homemaking; in the wake of the abolition of bilingual schools, Ukrainian Catholic farm women in Manitoba were exhorted to greater community involvement in yet another traditionally female realm, donating cheese, butter, potatoes and eggs to the Sheptytsky *bursa* in St. Boniface.
56. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 19 December 1917. The cry for female models was not new. In 1910 a woman had argued for parallel male and female intelligentsia as well as a women's organization, the latter two specifically to channel the leisure time of Ukrainian working girls to useful purposes. Ibid., 22 June 1910.
57. The occupations of two women were not specified; 220 Ukrainian men had professional and technical occupations in 1921, while another 174 individuals classified as owners or managers were also undoubtedly almost entirely male and included the business elite. W. Darcovich and P. Yuzyk (eds.), *Statistical Compendium on the Ukrainians in Canada, 1891-1976* (Ottawa 1980), Series 40.161-172, 407-9, and Series 40.31-42, 392. Illiteracy stood at 8.8 per cent among Canadian-born Ukrainian females and at 50.3 per cent among the foreign-born; only 4.3 per cent of all Canadian women were illiterate, although the percentage was somewhat higher on the prairies. Ibid., Series 32.1-12, 277-80.
58. See *Propamiatna knyha z nahody zolotoho iuvileiu poselennia ukrainskoho narodu v Kanadi* (Yorkton 1941), 73-6, for an outline of the work of the Sisters Servants in western Canada prior to the Second World War. From their pioneer base at Beaver Lake (Monaster/Mundare), they were particularly active in east central Alberta.
59. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 5 February 1919. Bychinska regretted the small female attendance at the convention.
60. The Ruthenian Teachers' Association accepted its first woman member in 1908; in 1926 the Mohylianky provided the impetus for the Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada, aligned with the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, established by prewar nationalist activists.
61. See, for example, *Ukrainskyi holos*, 28 June 1916; Arabska, "Obrazovanie divchat," 134-5; and S. Stechishin, "Tovarystvo Mohylianok—uholnyi kamin Soiuzu Ukrainok Kanady," in *Iuvileina knyha. 25-littia Instytutu im. Petra Mohyla v Saskatuni* (Winnipeg 1945), 297-9. When the Mohyla Institute opened in 1916, three of its thirty-five students were girls; by 1942 females constituted approximately one-third of past residents. Ibid., 55, 327-37.
62. Quoted in S. Kovbel and D. Doroshenko (eds.), *Propamiatna knyha Ukrainskoho narodnoho domu u Vynnypegu* (Winnipeg 1949), 227. Jaroslav Arsenych told the same gathering that the primary objective of the proposed organization should be to educate women in national and political affairs. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 25 January 1918.



63. Ibid. Their "traditional" activities included money-raising bazaars, *ridni shkoly*, cultural promotions, the Ukrainian Red Cross, and community cooking. The women were proud of their efforts toward national wartime registration and felt the Ukrainian community owed them great gratitude for this work on its behalf.
64. Quoted in Kovbel and Doroshenko, *Propamiatna knyha*, 229.
65. *Lamont Gazette*, 25 September 1920. The article originally appeared in the *Grain Growers' Guide* and was intended for a mainstream Canadian audience. It was a foretaste of the popular romanticization of the Ukrainian homesteading experience and larger-than-life *Baba* (grandmother) figure that was to characterize a later period.
66. *Ukrainskyi holos*, 24 March 1915. Contemporary Anglo Canadian investigators noted that rural Ukrainian families ate more varied food in winter because women had more time to prepare it. J. S. Woodsworth, "Ukrainian Rural Communities: Report of an Investigation by the Bureau of Social Research, Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Winnipeg 1917), 102.
67. Female suffrage, for example, was not a major issue in the Ukrainian press at a time when the vote for women was being debated in the Prairie provinces and federal parliament. *Ukrainskyi holos* did, however, react to Anglo Canadian opposition to enfranchising foreign women (8 November 1916), and it drew a parallel between the enslavement of weak nations by the strong, keeping them in subjugation and darkness for easier exploitation, and men's refusal to share their rights with women (9 February 1916).
68. See, for example, *Ukrainskyi holos*, 18 May, 27 July, 14 December 1910, 18 January, 8, 22 February, 8 March 1911 for discussions of women's rights.
69. As early as 1902 an Alberta immigrant had complained that Ukrainian girls, seduced by Canadian city life, preferred to be the servants of Anglo Canadian men to being their own farm mistresses, forcing bachelors to seek "willing farm wives" from among recent immigrants. *Svoboda*, 10 July 1902. His unspoken point was that recent immigrants made "willing farm wives" precisely because they had not been exposed to more appealing ideas, liberties, commodities or careers.
70. Rural economic progress itself had a dual impact. By easing and readjusting female workloads outside as well as inside the house, it increased women's leisure time for educational, recreational and cultural pursuits and for community service; but it also freed girls to stay in school longer, often postponed marriage and permitted them to consider their lives between school and the altar as their own, whether to work or seek specialist training.
71. Charity was different. Independently organized campaigns in the press appealed to readers to support financially the families of men killed or injured on the job; various self-help organizations also extended assistance to their members.
72. An excellent example of elite distance from reality in both groups and their tendency to sensationalize in the interests of reform is the pronounced suggestion that most Ukrainian girls were married by sixteen. Vital statistics records for Alberta show that while the heavily Ukrainian district of Whitford, for example, had a much higher percentage of brides in the 15-16 age category than did Alberta as a whole, it by no means represented a majority of brides in any year. See the reports of the Vital Statistics Branch in the *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture* (1916-17) and the *Annual Report of the Department of Public Health* (1918-21).





The second generation, daughter and three sons, Pyshka family, Lesniw district, 1920 (Bobersky Collection Ba74)



Pobeda Public School, Lanuke (Laniuk) district (Bobersky Collection Ba3)



Dress apparel of two generations, Shandro district, 1920 (Bobersky Collection, Oseredok, Winnipeg, Ba56)



*Ridna shkola, Smoky Lake, 1924 (Ratsoy Collection UV502)*



# **CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS**



# Ukrainian Rites of Passage

Zenon Pohorecky

A birth or death in a family always stuns its own members and friends, even when expected, so ethnologists have called them "crisis events."<sup>1</sup> Their ripples have been smoothed ritually by "rites of passage."<sup>2</sup> In Ukraine such rites were conducted in peasant village settings whose homes, churches and halls accommodated fabulous weddings but passed by puberty as if growing up Ukrainian were of small consequence. Nor did such rites of passage mark so-called calendrical events. In Ukraine seasonal celebrations like *kupalo* before harvest or *obzhynky* after it reflected the rhythm of nature itself. On the other hand, the rites of passage noted only the ritual rebirth of mortals as they entered into, exited from and progressed within a finite life cycle.

## *Puberty Rites*

Most rites of passage stress being born again and touch only lightly on the demise of a prior state of being. Yet some puberty rites in the South Seas have had young male initiates tortured to make memorable the transition from childhood to adulthood. Such exotica have fascinated ethnologists. Yet Ukrainians have not had puberty rites, not even anything like the mild Bar Mitzva held for the Jewish boy who may get a ballpoint pen for reading a holy scroll. Instead, Ukrainians have preferred to have their youth prepared for eventual wedlock by having them organize their own peer groups, separated by gender into brotherhoods (*pobratymstva*) and sisterhoods (*sestrynstva*).<sup>3</sup>

Boys and young bachelors, led by an elected *otaman* (a Cossack-style leader), played their own sports and even danced their own energetic dances, when not carolling, taking part in week-long wedding rituals or cutting a cross of ice from some nearby river for the blessing of water (*vodokhryshchi*).<sup>4</sup> Unwed girls, having chosen an *otamansha*, organized frequent socials which were held outdoors in summer and indoors in winter. Such socials, which let the girls dance their graceful dances, have long been scheduled so that, after a busy workday, their evening parties (*vechernytsi*)

could begin only after Intercession (*pokrova*) and did not violate pre-Christmas fast (*pylypivka*).

Even in western Canada at the turn of this century, such young Ukrainian peer groups of unwed boys and girls continued to dance together, each in the style of their gender (as if to stress the difference), while sharing special meals at almost feast-like socials (*skladky*) catered usually by the girls' mothers. Consistent with this quite traditional pattern, the many church and secular organizations that emerged in Canada between the two world wars usually had a youth auxiliary that was supported mainly by a women's auxiliary, while the men went about their "manly" work.

Yet the drawn-out puberty process, culminating in marriage, was itself never marked by any special rite of passage, and Ukrainian youth growing up in Canada still have to look to their birthday parties at McDonald's and graduation exercises in the school gym to structure their progress through adolescence around some annual calendrical events. Both events are still devoid of any crisply defined crisis event like puberty, now spread over many years by a training machine geared to prepare one for a job rather than marriage, though a high school graduation does mark one's entry into the market place or some postsecondary educational institution. Such annual rites are also devoid of Ukrainian content, unless one is in a Ukrainian bilingual school programme or, as in Ukraine, one's birthday is celebrated by gift-giving kin and godparents and not just one's parents and peers.

Such godparents in the Old Country might have provided some moral support for their teenaged charges during emotional crises, which were handled mainly by the youth groups, for godparenthood was a vital institution in Ukraine. It was taken seriously by those who agreed to serve just hours after an infant's birth. The gifts they gave at the child's birthdays reminded them of the far more substantial wedding gifts they would give later. Thus godparenthood was a major economic obligation, recalled annually from the cradle to the nuptial bed of the godchild.

The closest Ukrainians come to noting a puberty crisis event may occur today in Ukraine to young men almost twenty years old, well past puberty but not yet wed.<sup>5</sup> The youth's departure for military service is noted by rites resembling those of tsarist times, when unwed draftees for army duty experienced such wedding customs as the solemn bestowal of parental blessings and the ban on quarreling during the evening meal, followed by festive dancing and singing until dawn.

### *Wedding Rites*

The epic Ukrainian wedding still awes outsiders with its flamboyance and complexity. Traditionally held in summer for several days in a parental village (*selo*), it allowed guests in the Old Country to spill out of a crowded house onto a music-filled yard bedecked with tables loaded with food. Open without invitation to almost anybody, it provided many with a welcome window into a wondrous world of sensual delights, even in Canada. Thus the most celebrated rite of passage became a popular vehicle on the prairies for

conveying attractive ethnic symbols through distinctive music, songs, dances, costumes and foods, while featuring universally understood young love in a setting of generosity and goodwill.

Such elements remain, notwithstanding the rented tuxedos, plastic flowers on a U-Drive limo and studio stop between church and catered reception. The bride is no longer captured ritually nor defended by her kinfolk, and members of her and her groom's households may now have more to do with the actual church ceremony than was traditional. Yet the Ukrainian wedding drama continues to reflect the old alliance not only between two families, but between two unrelated kin groups or even two ethnic groups. Despite modifications, the Ukrainian wedding continues to flourish in Ukraine and Canada, where it helps to counter the disruptive effects of interethnic marriage by virtually absorbing others into the rich Ukrainian heritage.

The duration of the Ukrainian wedding has been slashed both in Canada, where the work week frees many only for Saturday nights, and in Ukraine, where collective farm life prohibits prolonged ceremonial events. Its shortened form, however, has allowed its performance on virtually any weekend, even in winter, and not just between seeding and the harvest. While the church ceremony remains optional in Ukraine, the folk wedding must be held if the marriage, legalized in the state Registry Office, is to be fully valid. Wedding rites are therefore most adaptable to changes in environment and one's personal circumstances.

Current wedding rites in Ukraine and Canada still have best men (*druzhby*) and bridesmaids (*druzhky*). The elaborate matchmaking rituals, which may still begin a month before the church ceremony in Ukraine, have disappeared in Canada, and with them the matchmakers (*starosty*) and their attendants (*boiary*) with embroidered sashes. Although the rural setting did tend to insulate early Ukrainian immigrants in their bloc settlements from cultural shock, allowing even dialect enclaves to survive,<sup>6</sup> the pattern of dispersed family households in western Canada could only weaken the immigrants' resistance to drastic changes in wedding rites, whose forms required a traditional village context, comparable to the compact colonies of the Mennonites and Doukhobors in Canada.

It is possible to read very detailed accounts of song-filled wedding rites practised a century ago in Galicia and Bukovyna.<sup>7</sup> The following brief resumé of weddings in both suggest the models the first Ukrainian settlers in Canada would have tried to emulate.

### *The Wedding in Galicia (Halychyna)*

At the outset, the prospective groom asked two neighbours to accompany him as matchmakers to the bride's home, where the liquor he brought was drunk standing up by all present. The girl's father then invited the guests to drink at his table, and after negotiations (*svalbyny* or *svatannia*) the wedding date was announced.

Wreath-making (*vinkopletynia*) began on a Saturday night when musicians, playing at the girl's window, were invited inside by the girl's

father. All then went with the couple's entourage to gather periwinkle (*barvinok*), drinks and bread being sent with the best man to the woman whose orchard had the periwinkle. Upon returning, drinks were served at the girl's threshold first to the best man toting the periwinkle in a towel-draped pail, then to everybody else. After the periwinkle was poured on the table, the pail was stuffed with a loaf of bread stuck with a knife and topped with a lock (*kolodka*).

The groom's entourage then left the bride's entourage to braid the head-wreaths amid singing and snacking. The bridesmaid and another girl, each holding a white towel (*khustka*), stood behind the table, opposite two brothers of the bride, each holding a towel and wearing head-wreaths on their hats. All four waved their towels and moved ballet-like three times in the third figure of a quadrille. Each time the towels literally leaped out (*vyskakuiut khustky*) as the boys seized the girls opposite them for a dance.

Only after the wreaths were braided did the groom's entourage return to the bride's house. Outside her door, the boy's matchmaker (*svakh*) claimed they were traders looking for a place to stay. After the girl's *svakh* objected they could be bandits, the boy's *svakh* might flash a tobacco wrapper to show he was a merchant. Vowing not to join in the festivities, they would be led in and once seated, asked if a bride they had lost was in the house.

An old woman was led in with a pipe in her teeth, wearing a wreath of straw and clutching a rolling-pin. Amid laughter, the girl's *svakh* would ask if she were the one. A bridesmaid followed and finally the bride entered with a wreath on a towel. The groom bowed low as she placed the wreath on his hat, kissed him and, before sitting at his left side, turned the towel under his belt three times and tied a knot.

His *svakh* joked about the lack of drinks. After much banter, a big empty jug (*drantak*) was put on the table and tipped to fall and shatter, sparking a pretended quarrel between the *svakhy*. The girl's *svakh* then served the drinks, first to the parents (*batky*), then the couple and finally to both *svakhy*, who ended their make-believe quarrel by feigning drunkenness. Quarreling was banned at the meal that followed, after which all danced.

On Sunday morning, the girl's *svakh* took gifts (*dary*) to the priest, who was asked about the cost of the church service (*orudiuy za shlub*). He then returned to the bride's home where, after a ritual snack, the bridesmaids had begun to comb the bride's hair, unbraided by her brother. As her mother put a wreath on her head, the groom came with his entourage and gift-laden guests, invited and uninvited, began to gather. Everybody stood while the mother wailed a sad song of farewell.

The girl's *svakh* then invited both clans to sit with bread set on their towel-covered laps, requesting them to forgive the couple for any trespasses. Amid singing, the couple knelt before their parents, kissed their hands and feet and then each three times. The groom then hit the door with a cane, whose bells and branches signified humility. Laying the cane (*kolokiltse*) under the threshold, he and his bride stepped over it. This purifying ritual was done at every other door that led to the yard.



The cane was shaken as the wedding procession walked to the church, singing happy songs to let the priest know they were coming. They continued to sing while waiting for him before the church. After the service, the *svakhy* came out singing, and everybody sang on the way to the bride's home, before which the *svakhy* sang for her mother.

The mother came out wearing a short sleeveless jacket (*bunda*) and a towel on her head. As the *svakhy* sang, she gave the couple honey on a knife, first into the bride's lips, then the groom's, smearing honey on each forehead, chin and both cheeks. After everybody else had tasted the honey, all entered the house where the girl's mother gave the couple a milk cereal she had prepared. Her "children" (*dity*) had to eat it with a single spoon while the *svakhy* sang.

Led by the bride's parents, the young began dancing, while the girl's brother tried to keep the boy's helpers (*boiary*) from sitting behind the table. The best man would shove him off the bench, permitting the *boiary* to climb onto it and to begin circling the tables three times, while the bride sat "hidden" with her head bent over the table. The best man meanwhile "sowed" seeds (*vives*) and cast three kerchiefs among the girls before pouring a pail of seeds onto the floor from behind the table.

The girls also moved from behind the table, which the bride alone continued to clutch. On the third try the groom would tear her away, kiss her and sit beside her, while the best man tied them with a white kerchief (*rantukh*). After a song-filled meal, the bride bid farewell to her close kin, kissing their hands and feet. As more songs were sung, the groom kissed his new in-laws on their hands and cheeks.

Farewell songs were sung as a wagon was readied to carry the bride's belongings. Many items were playfully filched to make the trip more eventful, but the *boiary* recovered and returned everything. Then, generously bestowed with drinks, they took the bride to the loaded wagon, singing enroute with the *svakhy* and others. In the groom's yard, the groom skipped along the harness between the horses before jumping down.

The groom's mother came out to greet and lead her daughter-in-law into the house, where she gave the bride a rag from the oven and a raw beet, which she threw on the floor. She then invited the bride to sit behind the table, placing a boy on her lap so the first-born might be a boy.

Taking some cheese in a kerchief, the best man would stand on the bed and pretend to enlist the women to do various chores for the bride in her new household. In return, each "volunteer" was paid with a bit of cheese and had her name put on a wall, perhaps as a nanny for children yet unborn. Then the couple went to bed.

On Monday morning, the third day, the young danced as the others ate and revelled at the groom's house. At noon the couple visited the bride's parents, asking them to hold a reception (*propii*). Her brother then invited married couples to come at twilight, when her mother, with a loaf (*kolach*) under her arm, sang to her. With the daughter also holding a loaf, they exchanged bread at the threshold and went inside, while the guests outside sang. The bride stepped out with the best man, who carried a pail of grain which she sowed three times among the guests who entered singing.



While songs before the wedding had been sorrowful and dignified, they were now joyous and playful, soon passing the bounds of modesty. The guests made indiscreet jibes about the big straw man, called a German, which the best man had brought in to indicate that all gifts (*potomstvo*) had to be of the male gender. Some women then led the bride to the storeroom (*komora*) where the groom sat waiting on a trunk. She sat on his lap. After three trials, she allowed a nightcap to stay on her head, which her sister then wrapped in a white kerchief (*rantykh*) and capped with a wreath.

Rising from the groom's lap, the bride was led into the house where she sat for an evening meal with her singing guests (*propiitsi*), before each of whom her mother had placed a piece of bread. The groom and his parents did not sit or eat, or even touch a spoon, so that the young couple's children might not be gluttons. The bride then placed her wreath on the best man's hat, which she put on her head. Pouring drinks into a glass set inside her bowl, the best man then served everybody, as each threw money into the bowl. The party ended late at night.

On Tuesday, the fourth day, the best man and *boiary* dressed comically and went to the groom's house, led by a musician and a cook who let everybody make merry for the whole day. On Wednesday, the fifth day, at a sharing ceremony at the home of the bride's parents, the *svakhy* sang a series of beautiful songs, some of which pictured the difficult position of the bride (*nevistka*) in her husband's clan (*simia*).

### *The Wedding in Bukovyna*

The wedding in Bukovyna also began on a Friday night, when the bride dressed for church and, accompanied by her bridesmaid, invited her closest kin, including her parents, and most distinguished guests to some preliminaries (*zachanainytsi*). The groom did not attend but sent his best man to invite his guests. When all had gathered, they sat around a table and sang as the bride's mother sewed a head wreath of periwinkle (*barvinok*).

After sewing a few leaves, she passed the needle first to the girl's priest, who returned it, and then to her eldest child, and so on in sequence until the wreath was ready, trimmed on four sides with coins and garlic. Two loaves of braided bread (*kolachi*) and salt (*topka*) were then placed on a white pillow that had been set on the table. Amid singing, the wreath was placed on the salt.

Before the evening meal, amid more singing, flowers (*hvozdyky*) and red berries (*kalyna*) were attached with periwinkle to a little pine tree (*derevtse*) that would stand on the table until Tuesday, the fifth day, when all the guests would watch her father throw it over the house. If it did not break, the groom would not break his vows to his bride.

On Saturday morning the bride wearing her head-wreath and her bridesmaid went to each house and on the threshold invited all "baptised Christians" to her wedding. The girls, kissing the invited, were rewarded with gifts and good wishes. Meanwhile, the groom had sent his best man and helpers with canes to do likewise. By evening, all gathered to frolic before

leading the groom and bride to their respective homes for meals accompanied by song.

The groom's best man then went to the bride's home, where he picked up the beautifully embroidered shirt the bride had sewn for the groom, accompanied by the bride's sisters and *svakhy* who sang as they neared the groom's home. They could see from the threshold the yellow boots that the groom had made for the bride. Singing to and fro, the visitors finally entered, put the embroidered shirt on the table, bowed and asked that it be accepted. The groom handed the yellow boots to the bride's eldest *svakha*, who sang as she lofted them upwards. Everybody then sat behind the table to eat, drink and sing.

On Sunday morning, the third day, the couple prepared for the church service (*slub*), joined by their parents and guests. In each parental home, a bench (*oslin*) was set for the priest and mother, who held bread and salt as her child knelt on a pillow set over a sheaf of rye. All present repeated, "May God forgive and bless" (*proshchi*).

All then went singing to church. After the service, the groom went to his home and the bride to hers, where songs called each mother to greet her child with bread and salt. At the groom's home, his brother entered and, unfurling a ribbon, made a sign of the cross on each door with a ribboned cane. At the bride's home, her brother did likewise. As the guests entered in pairs, they held the ribbon. After dinner the groom made ready to go for his bride.

A wagon was harnessed for him, his parents and the priest. His singing entourage walked. At the bride's home, the best man had first to catch and then lead her behind the table, where she sat, with bowed head before the bread. The groom then gave knives to the males and kerchiefs or coats to the females. As his entourage sang, he also gave a ring to the bridesmaid who made room for him by his bride.

His *starosta* set down two green branches over which he put a sheet-cover, which the best man was prevented by the bridesmaid from lowering on the bride's head until his third attempt. Thus covered, she rose and gave gifts to the groom's family. His mother then tied an embroidered towel across the back of each *starosta*, with ribbons attached to their belts.

Amid singing, the groom's parents sat beside the young couple for the evening meal, after which the guests rose and bowed to the host and hostess, thanking them for their hospitality. Everybody sang as the parents blessed the couple. The best man then took the trunk with the bride's belongings and set it on the wagon. The couple rode with the bride's parents, as the singing entourage walked. At the groom's home, his mother greeted them with bread and salt and led them inside.

On Monday, before noon, the bride's parents and kin went to give gifts to the young couple at their new household, singing for the bride. The groom's sisters responded in song as the bride set a large bowl of drinks on the table. First each man, then every woman, drank from it. While the groom's retinue sang, each man threw a silver coin for the bride into the bowl, while each woman wrapped towels or cloth around her neck. Rising from the table, the women sang as they tied a towel around her head, leading her to the gateway

(*vyvod*), where the groom joined her, followed by everyone else. After some merry-making in the yard, everybody joined hands and sang.

On Tuesday morning, the fifth day, the young couple sent eight loaves to the groom's father, inviting him and his wife to visit. Representatives and musicians, singing, also went and were greeted by her father. Around noon, others came from the bride's parents and invited everybody to a party (*smiiny*), where they drank and danced until nightfall, when the wedding ended.

### *Diverse Wedding Customs*

Even casual comparisons of the two weddings reported a century ago in Halychyna and Bukovyna reveal many regional variations, despite the geographic contiguity of the two provinces. The extent of such differences can be quantified if each custom is counted as a unit more or less equal to others. Such units occur in activities called categories, which can include any number of traits.<sup>8</sup> Of the seventy-one wedding traits which can be counted in Halychyna and the sixty-six in Bukovyna, the two provinces share only twenty-four. If one assumes that the latter were likely to be represented most frequently in Ukrainian weddings in western Canada at the turn of the century, the typical wedding on the prairies would have included the following: the blessing and singing during the *vinkopletynia*; the *rozpletynia* at the bride's home, the presence of kinsmen and of a ritual family during the preparations at the bride's home; the singing and the couple on foot during the wedding procession; the repast during the groom's wedding train; the placing of bread and salt on the table where the bride had rested her head; the entry of the groom and his entourage into the bride's home; the "sale" of the bride by her brother with the groom seated on the *pokuttia* during the "sale"; the placing of a kerchief on the bride's head, her reluctance to wear it and the singing when the bride is incorporated into the society of married women; the repast before the couple's departure; the singing and loading of wagons while preparing for departure; the mother greeting her son's clan with a fur coat on their arrival at the groom's home; and on the day after the wedding, the coming of the bride's people to the groom's home, their entering the dwelling, the offering of drinks by the couple who then receive gifts amidst singing.<sup>9</sup>

### *Birth Rites*<sup>10</sup>

The forms of birth rites in Halychyna and Bukovyna were all discouraged in western Canada by the medical professionals who would not play the ritual role of *baba*, the traditional midwife. In Ukraine, however, persons were classified by their birth into a clan (*rod*) and seen as part of an indivisible family (*rodyna*) and nation (*narod*), which included not only the living and the dead, but those still unborn or ritually reborn.

Thus ancestors were seen to be reborn through a clansman's wife who was said to conceive miraculously by eating some food from the ancestor's abode.

The expectant mother was expected to hide her condition under bulky clothing, but when labour began, she was undressed and everything bound was unbound, every lock was unlocked and every door was opened. Only at the last moment was an older woman (*baba*) brought to deliver.

The *baba* welcomed the newborn with a prayer before cutting the umbilical cord with an axe (*topir*), if a boy, or a distaff, if a girl. Then the *baba* introduced the infant to the family, touching a boy's feet to the crossbeam and a girl's head to the mouth of the oven (*pich*). The child was then wrapped in a sheepskin coat, along with a chunk of coal or clay from the oven that housed a friendly goblin (*domovyk*) who guarded the household, thus uniting the man's ancestor cult and the woman's hearth cult.

Yet the world brimmed with demons (*bisy*) who had an unclean power (*nechysta syla*) shared by both a host of spirits linked to the unclean dead and witches (*vidymy-charivnytsi*) helped by devils.<sup>11</sup> To prevent a bewitching of the newborn, its afterbirth was buried under the floor, where bread, money and rye were also sprinkled. *Baba* then poured perfume on the mother who lay behind a curtain, while her child lay in the corner of honour (*pokutia*).

The charm-laden child was then placed by a candle-lit icon beside the mother to ensure that it was not substituted for a changeling by the devil. After *baba* bathed the child, its acceptance as a clan member began with a family ceremony that soon mushroomed into a community reception. Baptism had to follow quickly, because the mother could not nurse her child until it was baptised.<sup>12</sup>

It was the father who alerted the chosen godparents (*kumy*), who wore embroidered sashes as they brought bread, a baptismal cloth (*kryzhma*) and the swaddled child to its baptism, where they drank a toast. Becoming a godparent (*kumuvaty*) was a great honour, so nobody declined. The child was expected to inherit the godmother's good qualities, while the godfather would give birthday gifts every year, capped by a generous dowry. This fictive relationship is still popular even in Canada, but where it once cemented long-term economic obligations between a child's father and its godfathers, it is today primarily social. Recent baptisms in Ukraine have been known to have five pairs of *kumy*.<sup>13</sup>

It was traditionally *baba*, not the priest, who again washed the child during baptism, this time in "untouched" or holy water, gathered at a certain time from a certain place. She then wrapped a boy in his father's shirt and a girl in her mother's. Finally, she handed the child to a godfather over some threshold, if a boy, or over a comb, if a girl. As in the marriage service, the parents took no part, their place being taken by godparents who formed important alliance networks through the child. After the baptism, the godfather clipped the child's hair at a ceremony called *postryzhyny* or *obstryzhyny*, while the father threw coins onto a sheepskin coat that *baba* had spread fur-up for the child. As already indicated, godparents and kinsmen were expected to give birthday gifts as annual reminders of their pledges to enhance the child's dowry later, after which time the godparents' role became less important.



Within nine days of baptism, *baba* and mother underwent purification (*zlyvy* or *zlyvshchyna*). "Untouched" water was again used, now to wash *baba's* and mother's hands in a basin decorated with sprigs of *kalyna* set crosswise. Then *baba* received ritual gifts like bread and cloth for an apron (*zapaska*). Godparents and neighbours, in a final gesture, broke bread and shared it in a fertility ceremony that recalled the rebirth of ancestors.

### Death Rites

Funerals in Ukraine and western Canada were once conducted at home, where neighbours were expected to bury the dead without charge. In Ukraine it was believed that the dead person would be reincarnated in a plant or animal and continue to help in household work, making the crops grow and ripen. Every commemorative feast therefore began with a rite to evoke and invite ancestors, meet and greet them, and finally eat with them in a ritual meal in which all clan members—living, dead and unborn—participated.

In western Canada ancestors were and, in some cases, still are represented by sheaves of wheat (*didukhy*) brought into the house at *rizdvo* (Christmas). Kernals of wheat brought from Ukraine also represented such ancestors to the pioneers. To enable ancestors to visit, windows in Ukraine were left open all night, with cloth spread from each window to the yard. Flour strewn on window sills was examined at dawn for telltale tracks. A protective ritual supplied visiting ancestors with food for their return journey, to guard against their taking someone or something like a cow with them.

The eyes of the Hutsul dead were always closed immediately (to prevent their taking anybody else with them) and the face was covered with a towel on which a decorative tree of life was embroidered.<sup>14</sup> Girls loosened their hair, women put on white kerchiefs and men left their heads uncovered, but nobody wept because the dead could still help a household and be recalled anytime. Hutsuls invited women for their skill in wailing, and all-night vigils were designed to prevent evil spirits from entering the body.<sup>15</sup>

In western Canada at the turn of the century, as in Ukraine, a death would have stopped all work in the house, leaving floors unswept and trash untouched. Embroidered towels would cover mirrors and furniture arrangements would be reversed. The house, marked outside by birch branches, would have its windows shaded by embroidered towels, and a fire would be lit by its gate, as a death knell (*podzvin*) tolled for the soul's repose (*spokii*).

As if the life cycle were somehow incomplete without youth's most vital rite of passage, an unwed girl who died was dressed as for her wedding. A wreath was placed on her head, a ring on her finger and a braided wedding loaf on her coffin. Her funeral procession resembled a wedding party with its bridal attendants and matchmakers wearing embroidered sashes. All received small green candles called guiding lights (*provodnychky*). After the funeral, the wedding bread was shared by relatives.



A married woman was clad in a skirt and jacket (*svyta*) girded by a belt; a headcloth (*peremitka*) completed her ensemble. A married man was dressed in linen slippers (*kalyhy*), trousers, an embroidered shirt, a shroud (*smertna*) and a fur cap. A dish was set by the body so its soul could have drink, and three small rolls of bread were placed on the bosom. Even the poor were ceremonious, sloping the open coffin on the bench under the windows with the head by the icons and feet by the door. Only infants were laid on the table.

In western Canada, as in Ukraine, on the day after the death, the coffin (*truna*, *domovyna*, *derevyshche*) was made *gratis* by neighbours. Maple and pine were used to stop vampires and evil spirits. Coffin shavings or grass and herbs, not feathers, filled the cushion. After a prayer, the corpse was slid into the coffin and everybody bid farewell, kissing the corpse as a sign that all was forgiven.

If the deceased had been vicious in life, the body was bound, pinned to the coffin wall with an aspen stake and hemmed in by a stone wall around the grave. The same was done with unclean dead who had died by suicide, hanging or drowning, and who as vampires (*opyrii*) roamed at night, terrifying, choking and sucking blood from sleeping people. Girls or women who had died prematurely or violently were said to become water-nymphs (*rusalky*) who tickled their captives to death. The body of an unbaptised girl (*mavka*) was transparent from behind, revealing the internal organs. An unbaptised boy (*mavko*) turned into a bat or magpie.

Such beliefs in the living dead encouraged people to nail coffins tightly with aspen pegs before lifting them onto the shoulders of mourners. Strewn with rye to assure bread for the living, coffins were carried feet first, knocking three times at each threshold, to let the deceased bid farewell and not return unless invited or reborn. To prevent unwelcome returns, an axe would be laid where the coffin had stood or on the doorstep, while relatives slammed all the doors. A new pot might also be smashed on the floor.

The cattle were also brought to bid farewell, while the gates were bound with a red belt to prevent their leaving the corral, already strewn with oats. The Hutsul funeral procession was accompanied by mourning horns (*trembity*). In some places, a coin was cast into the grave so the deceased could buy a place from the earth-devil (*zemlianyi didko*) linked to a death cult. Sometimes, wheat or barley cooked with honey (*kolyvo*) was left on the grave.

All returned from the burial without looking back. Purification followed by washing the hands and touching the stove. As today, the funeral dinner began with the same *kolyvo* dish eaten during *sviat vechir* (Holy Supper) celebrating the birth of Christ. Thus, with symbols and rituals was the mystic cycle of death and rebirth commemorated even in Canada, though less completely.

## Notes

1. B. Malinowski, "The Role of Magic and Religion," in W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt (eds.), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* (4th ed.; New York 1978), 37–46, stressed the role of religion in comforting individuals at a time of crisis: "Primitive religion is largely concerned with the sacralization of the crisis of human life. Conception, birth, puberty, marriage—as well as the supreme sacrifice, death—all gave rise to sacramental acts." On the other hand, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (New York 1975), noted that among those who feared breaking any taboos associated with sacramental rites, the rite itself may have created more anxiety than did the crisis event, thus emphasizing the maintenance of a stable, orderly society rather than just comforting its members.
2. In *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago 1960), A. L. Van Gennep, a Belgian anthropologist, examined various societies at the turn of the twentieth century and generalized that all rites of passage had three phases: separation or the individual's initial detachment from a group and place (ritual death); a marginal period or condition, positioned between states; and aggregation or the individual's re-entry into society (ritual rebirth). Some societies have stressed a few passage rites and virtually overlooked others that might apply to any change in place, condition, status or age.
3. Despite the military titles of the leaders, these pan-clan sodalities, unlike those of some Plains Indians, were not organized into age sets of increasing rank, each with its own distinctive dance, songs, paraphernalia and privileges. Nor did they have any role of economic or political significance. A major role of such pan-clan sodalities, divided only by gender, was to prepare for courtship and marriage and to engage in ritual events.
4. The teenage groups were actively involved in many rituals whose ancient heathen origins were never concealed completely by the use of Christian terminology and symbolism.
5. B. Krawciw, "Return to National Customs and Rituals," in V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto 1963), 424–5.
6. Z. Pohorecky and A. Royick, "Anglicization of Ukrainian in Canada between 1895 and 1970: A Case Study of Linguistic Crystallization," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 2 (1969): 141–219.
7. For accounts of weddings in Galicia and Bukovyna, see M. M. Shubravska and O. A. Pravdiuk, *Vesillia*, 2 vols. (Kiev 1970), 2: 73–124, 315–32. The section on Galicia was compiled by O. Roshkevych and edited by Ivan Franko in 1886. It describes a wedding in the village of Lolyn, Stryiskyi district. The section on Bukovyna was written in 1891 by Evhenia Iaroshynska and describes a wedding in the district adjoining the Dniester River.
8. The traits and categories used here are based on L. Marushchak, "The Ukrainian Wedding," Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1985.
9. For the regional variations in Ukrainian weddings, see L. F. Artiukh, "Vesilne pechivo ukrainstiv ta rosijan," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnografia* 5 (1979): 80–4; I. P. Berezovskij and O. A. Pravdiuk (eds.), *Vesilni pisni*, 2 vols. (Kiev 1982); V. K. Borysenko, "Formy pobutuvannia vesilnoho korovaiu," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnografia* 5 (1981): 37–44; I. Bugera, *Ukrainske vesillia na Lemkivshchyni* (Howeria, NY 1977); P. P. Chubinskij, *Trudy etnograficheskio-statisticheskoi ekspeditsii v Zapadno-Russkii krai*. Ed. N. I. Kostomarov, 7 vols. (St. Petersburg 1872–8), vol. 4; O. M. Kravets, *Simeinyi pobut i zvychai ukrainskoho*

- narodu* (Kiev 1966); V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto 1963); V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto 1984), vol. 1; M. Onomyr, *Ukrainske vesillia* (Howeria, NY 1971); H. Y. Pashkova, *Etnokulturni zviazky Ukrainstiv ta Bilorusiv Polissia* (Kiev 1978); V. Petrov, *Ukrainskyi folklor* (Munich n.d.); O. A. Pradiuk, "Zahalnoslovianska osnova ukrainskoho vesillia," in H. D. Verves (ed.), *Slovianske literaturoznavstvo i folklorystyka* (4th ed.; Kiev 1968), 97–110; M. M. Shubravska (ed.), *Vesillia*, 2 vols. (Kiev 1970); W. Stscherbakiwskyj, "The Early Ukrainian Social Order as Reflected in Ukrainian Wedding Customs," *Slavonic and East European Review* 31 (1952–3): 325–51; K. Vovk, *Studii z ukrainskoi etnografii ta antropologii* (Howeria, NY 1976; original in 1928); N.I. Zdorohava, *Narysy vesilnoi obriadovosti na Ukraini* (Kiev 1974).
10. The sections on birth (and death) rites, consistent with the wedding rite described in the writer's essay in this volume on kinship and courtship patterns, present historical versions which may approximate an original peasant prototype in western Ukraine. The main sources used are two early works by V. Shukhevych, *Hutsulshchyna*, 2 vols. (Lviv 1899, 1902) and his article "Smert i pokhorony," in *Materyialy* 5 (1902): 241–55. Funerary customs and rituals ("Pokhoronni zvychai i obriady") are also discussed by V. Hnatiuk in *Etnografichnyi zbirnyk*, 40 vols. (Lviv 1895–1929), 31 and 32: 131–424.
  11. F. Kolessa, "Demonological Figures in Ukrainian Folklore," in Kubijovyč, *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (1963), 346–8.
  12. Z. Kuzela, "Folk Customs and Rites Related to Family Life (Birth)" and V. Petrov, "(The Conception of Birth and Marriage)," in *ibid.*, 333–5, 345–6.
  13. B. Krawciw, "Revival of Wedding Rites," in *ibid.*, 425–6.
  14. The tree of life was linked to a ladder at the top of the central branch, which joined the earth with the sun in heaven. On each side of the trunk were three branches with flowers, which represented stars. Older towels had a woman with raised arms, representing the goddess-mother *Berehynia* (protectress), along with peacocks. Other designs, which symbolized amulets worn as a protection against evil spirits, included triangles, rhombi, stylized plants, birds, and animal and human figures. J. Wynnycka and M. Zelena (eds.), *Ukrainian Embroidery* (Toronto 1982); N. D. Manucharova and S. I. Sydorovych (eds.), *Ukrainske narodne mystetstvo. Tkanyny i muzychno literaturny URSU* (n.p. 1960).
  15. Z. Kuzela, "Folk Customs and Rites Related to Family Life (Burial Rites)" and V. Petrov, "The People's View of Death," in Kubijovyč, *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (1963), 338–40, 345.

# The Role of Folk Music

Robert B. Klymasz

## *Folk Music in Alberta's Ukrainian Bloc Settlement*

Folk music, like speech, is a vehicle for communication and, as such, the two share several features. Both are non-tangible, elusive and constitute fleeting moments of sound production; both can be encoded (recorded/decoded) with the help of print, mechanical devices and/or human memory. However, folk music, unlike speech, is *always intentionally* emotive in nature; again unlike speech (and most other aspects of folkloric behaviour) folk music is, above all, a superb and often a more effective outlet for the expression of feelings, emotions and sentiments that if/when expressed in other forms, could/would seem embarrassing, impertinent, boring or somehow improper.

An important aspect of traditional music-making is folk song and folk singing. What distinguishes this particular medium is its unique combination of music plus poetic language and articulated imagery. As a result, every folk song has the potential of producing a striking, irresistible and aesthetically rich message. The following is a striking example of this feature from Vegreville, Alberta, and shows how the Ukrainian folk song makes uncommon what is common and highlights and enhances crucial moments in human experience:

### Ukrainian text

Oi upala zvizda z neba,  
Tai rozspyalasy,  
Molodenka pozbyrala  
Tai obtykalasy.

Hai koby ia taka krasna  
Iak ta zvizda iasna,  
Svityla by na vse pole,  
Nikoly ne zhasla;

### English translation

A star fell down from the sky  
And shattered into bits,  
A young girl gathered them up  
And bedecked herself with them.

"If only I were as beautiful  
As that bright star,  
I would shine o'er all the fields,  
And never die out.

Svityla bym na vse pole  
 Azh na Shybynytske,  
 Takyi ia sy my spodobav  
 Khlopets molodetskyi.

"I would shine o'er all the fields,  
 Right up to Shybynytske  
 (village)—  
 I've gotten to like a certain  
 Young fellow from there."<sup>2</sup>

But how does one measure the significance of music and song to the people whose lives and accomplishments the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village celebrates? Given the high rate of illiteracy among Canada's early Ukrainian pioneer settlers, folk music and, indeed, all non-print, verbal lore functioned as an important, ever-ready and, in some cases, sole reservoir of guidance, education and instruction, as well as relief from everyday cares in the form of amusement and entertainment. In certain instances, the folk song was even a medium for intercontinental communication between loved ones in the Old Country and Ukrainian settlers in Alberta or elsewhere on the Canadian prairies.<sup>3</sup> An essential characteristic of the information offered by the Ukrainian folk-song tradition was/is its utter disregard for the workaday world of cold, hard data—of practical how-to or factual knowledge that relates to the material, tangible side of human existence. No Ukrainian ever relied on his/her folk-music heritage for data on how to grow or harvest crops, embroider, make *pyrohy*, construct farm buildings or decorate eggs for Easter. In the Ukrainian folk-song tradition, seeding and harvesting are transformed into matters of the heart; and as exemplified below by the provocative song-text recorded in Alberta, it is not seed but songs that have the better chance of being sown in the imaginative realm of folk music:

#### Ukrainian text

Spivanochky moi liubi  
 De ia vas podiiu?  
 Iak budu sie viddavaty  
 Po horakh rozsiu:

To iak bude dobra dolia—  
 Ia vas pozbyraiui,  
 A iak bude lykha dolia—  
 To vas zanykhaiui.

Bodai zhy to tii svekrukhy  
 Tak lehko vmyraty,  
 Ta iak meni spivanochkiv  
 Z hory pozbyraty.

#### English translation

O my beloved songs,  
 Where shall I put you?  
 When I marry  
 I'll sow you o'er the mountains:

So if my fate is kind—  
 I'll gather you up,  
 But if my fate is troubled—  
 I'll neglect you.

I hope my mother-in-law  
 Finds it as easy to die  
 As I do to gather up  
 My songs from o'er the  
 mountains.<sup>4</sup>

As the above samples illustrate, the Ukrainian folk-music tradition focuses on the non-material aspects of the human condition—on the full range of human conduct and behaviour and on the important universals and



perplexities of human life. Accordingly, the psychodynamics of Ukrainian folk music have always centred on the tradition's ability to express praise and bewilderment, enchantment and rage, amazement, surprise and frustration. Alberta's first Ukrainian settlers did use the folk-music tradition in this manner and, along with their compatriots elsewhere, did not hesitate to inject into it folk-song creations that captured the soul of their new experiences in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

But the Ukrainian folk song is neither a historical document nor is it intended to serve merely as an outlet for assorted socio-economic statements. As implied earlier, the folk song represents a live art-form (musical, verbal and eminently portable) that for the newly arrived villager from Ukraine could lift and transform a mundane situation of despair into a poetic experience; for a moment at least one could rise above one's plight and, through song, affirm the existence of art in life and in the human condition.

### *Shifts in the Folk-Music Tradition*

The transfer of the Old Country folk-music complex to the new world placed an unparalleled stress on the tradition and its carriers. There is no evidence of another breach which jeopardized so crucially the continuity of Ukrainian folk music. The trauma of dislocation hit hardest at those traditional music-making practices that were associated in the Old Country with village customs and family rituals.<sup>6</sup> The old village get-togethers and evening entertainments never took root in the new Canadian environment; indeed, the very words *selo* (village) and *vechernytsi* (evening parties) represent experiences that were never duplicated in Canada.<sup>7</sup> Away from its native context in the Old Country, the early Ukrainian folk-music tradition in Canada was unattuned to the comparatively harsh climatic conditions on the prairies, the non-traditional settlement patterns, the isolation and the absence (initially at least) of churches, cemeteries and village priests. Accordingly, the situation signalled the breakdown (though not total collapse or eclipse) of such segments of the *ritual* folk-song tradition as the wedding cycle and house-to-house carolling and mumming customs; the traditional Easter singing-games (*haivky*) that required predictable spring weather, a church site and a healthy mix of young, unmarried girls and boys; the rich tradition of funeral lamentation that required experienced and professional village wailers; and the harvest festivals that could not function on Canadian prairies buffeted by weather patterns that made autumn an anxious (even frantic) season for the grain farmer.<sup>8</sup>

The casual, *non-ritual* segment of the folk-music and folk-song tradition was in a better position to foster the maintenance of Ukrainian tradition on Canadian soil. An effective device was the introduction of reinterpreted and compensatory features. Thus many traditional songs of departure, farewell and hardship took on new meaning in Canada. Songs that featured the word *chuzhyna* (a strange or foreign place) were easily integrated into the emergent Canadian cycle of Ukrainian folk-song items; Old Country village

songs that bemoaned the departure of recruits into the Austrian military mirrored well the departure of young men for Canada; and songs that bewailed the plight of young brides fated to leave the comforts of parental hearth for the uncertainties of different and sometimes hostile households took on an ambiguity that became especially poignant and meaningful in the new Canadian environment:

## Ukrainian text

## English Translation

Tykho sumno po dolyni,  
Tiazhko zhyty na chuzhyni  
Na chuzhyni tiazhko zhyty,  
Mov toi kamin pidoimty.

'Tis still and quiet in the valley—  
'Tis hard to live in a strange  
place;  
Living in a strange place is as  
hard  
As lifting boulders.

Oi chuzhyno ty chuzhyno,  
Choho v teby tak studeno?  
Tut ni snihiv ni moroziv,  
Lyshen povno moikh sloziv.

O strange place, you strange  
place,  
Why are you so cold?  
No snows here, no frosts—  
Only my copious tears.

Khto chuzhyny shche ne znaie,  
Nai sy mene zapytaie.  
Na chuzhyni tiazhko zhyty,  
Mov toi kamin pidoimty.

Those who don't know yet a  
strange place  
Can ask me all about it:  
Living in a strange place is as  
hard  
As lifting boulders.

Kamin zdoiumu tai spochynu,  
Na chuzhyni marno zhynu.

At least one can rest after lifting  
boulders,  
But in a foreign place I can only  
perish.

Dalas mene, moia maty,  
Na chuzhyni zahybaty,  
Bo chuzhyna ne rodyna,  
Plache sertse iak chuzhyna.

O my mother, you gave me up  
To perish in a strange place;  
For a strange place is not like  
one's own kin,  
The heart weeps with strangers.

Plache vono, znaie choho,  
Nema pravdy ne vid koho,  
Nema pravdy vse i ne bude,  
Pishla pravda mezhy liudy.

I know why it weeps—  
There's no word of truth from  
anyone,  
There's ne'er any truth, and  
there'll not be any,  
Truth has gone away and  
disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

*From Village Group to Solitary Immigrant Singing*

The absence of the Old Country village community profoundly affected the Ukrainian folk-music tradition in Canada. Alberta informants (recorded in 1965), all of whom had emigrated to Canada before the First World War, indicated that learning and singing songs had been essentially a group activity in the Old Country. One informant related how in her village it was not unusual for two hundred workers, girls and boys, to sing together as they hoed the land for the local village gentry.<sup>10</sup> Other occasions in the Old Country conducive to group-singing were work-bees (*toloka/klaka*), evening parties (*vechernytsi*), military marches and, of course, weddings. In Alberta the only other situation that reportedly matched the preceding occasions as being conducive to productive music-making and folk singing was railway construction.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the Ukrainian folk-song tradition increasingly came to be composed and practised in solitude; it became simply a way to help pass the time.<sup>12</sup>

Thus leaving the home village, the Old Country folk-music complex was almost immediately reduced from a social to a private phenomenon. Singing became a solitary activity and song and instrumental music an individual statement rather than a public, collective form of expression. The process of privatization mirrored the parallel creation of a new identity: "the private individual";<sup>13</sup> and in the process, certain song-types and/or genres became more productive than others. On the whole, lyrical and narrative song-items (e.g., lullabies) relating to expressions of love and death survived in good form until after the First World War when the proliferation of halls and organized community activities marked a return to group music-making. The revival, however, was in formal ensembles, and the new communal musical event had a shiny, urban veneer that differed radically from the music-making in the old village. The new singing collectives were choral groups that met regularly to rehearse with conductors who preselected arrangements for public musical performances before passive audiences that assembled on prearranged dates and at prearranged times in community halls, church basements or elsewhere. The formalities of preselection, rehearsing, staging and performing were well established in east central Alberta by the 1930s and mark the beginnings of the Ukrainian Canadian community's growing appreciation of its musical heritage as a national art.<sup>14</sup> By 1940, the collective aspects of the musical tradition were surviving in choir lofts as religious and liturgical music, in halls as instrumental music (e.g., wedding music, mandolin orchestras), on the stage as theatrical re-enactments of customs and traditions of yesteryear and on commercially produced sound recordings emanating, for the most part, from New York in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

## Notes

1. Research for this paper is based on folk songs and related materials recorded by the writer during the summer of 1965 in and around Vegreville, Alberta. The fieldwork included interviews with about thirty-five folk singers whose repertoires were recorded on tape. These materials are now in the Klymasz document collection of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, Ottawa. Brief reports on the fieldwork were published in the *Bulletin of the International Folk Music Council* 28 (1968): 49, and in *Ethnomusicology* 10 (1966): 342-5.
2. English translation by the writer. The song-item was recorded in Vegreville, Alberta, on 5 July 1965, from Alex Hlady, then eighty years old. Museum of Man catalogue number KLY-B-66.13.
3. R. B. Klymasz, "The Letter in Canadian Ukrainian Folklore," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 6 (1969): 39-49.
4. English translation by the writer. The song-item was recorded from Vera Luciak, Vegreville, Alberta, 6 August 1965. Museum of Man catalogue number KLY-B-8.47.
5. For examples, see R. B. Klymasz, *An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folksong Cycle* (Ottawa 1970); for songs recorded in Alberta, see items B.6, B.7 and B.8.
6. The crucial loss of rituals was noted very early: "The first to disappear are the complex rituals that are so rooted in our village population. Inconceivable here [in Canada] are those long wedding rituals, those christenings, those harvest festivals, those feast days, in general the whole network of rituals that envelops the whole life of our poor peasant. Another important reason for the loss of rituals is the fact that our man in Canada cannot procure 'horilka' [whisky] so easily." "Canadian Ruthenians," *Kievskaiia starina* 66 (1899): 109.
7. *Selo* was never used in Canada to refer to a Ukrainian settlement or community until well after the Second World War when concerted efforts were made to reconstruct, imitate, stage and revitalize old-world village experiences in the form of outdoor museums, summer workshops and camp activities.
8. The shock of first exposure to winter in Alberta and the unreliability of Old Country feast days as seasonal markers are described by Illia Kiriak in his novel, *Sons of the Soil*, trans. M. Luchkovich (Toronto 1959), 120-1.
9. English translation by the writer. The song-item was recorded from Vera Luciak, Vegreville, Alberta, 5 August 1965. Museum of Man catalogue number KLY-B-80.9.
10. Recorded from Anna Zacharuk, seventy-six years old, Vegreville, Alberta, 20 July 1965. Museum of Man catalogue number KLY-B-72.10.
11. See Museum of Man catalogue numbers KLY-B-78.8 and KLY-B-81.18. See also the comments of Alex Hlady, KLY-B-66.3.
12. Mrs. John Sokoloski, eighty-one years old, Vegreville, Alberta, 16 July 1965. Museum of Man catalogue number KLY-B-72.4.
13. Anthropologist Edmund Carpenter described the privatization resulting from the impact of new media on isolated, tribal people: "The effect was instant isolation. Their wits and sensibilities, released from tribal restraints, created a new identity: the private individual. For the first time, each man saw himself and his environment clearly and saw them as separable." *Oh, What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me!* (New York 1972), 130-1. Among Alberta's first Ukrainian settlers, the process of privatization could also influence the physical layout of new homes,

as in the six-bedroom(!) "Hawreliak House" on the site of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village.

14. For a brief formulation of "national art" vis-à-vis "pioneer folk" and "ethnic pop," see R. B. Klymasz, *Continuity and Change: The Ukrainian Folk Heritage in Canada* (Ottawa 1972), 5-14.
15. For some insights into the impact of early Ukrainian sound recordings in North America, see *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage* (Washington 1982).



# Three Types of Ukrainian Folk Tales in Canada

Bohdan Medwidsky

A search for Ukrainian folk tales in a recent annotated bibliography of *Canadian Folklore in English*<sup>1</sup> revealed five items: one by Odarka Chandon, *Kyrylo the Tanner* (Toronto 1977), which was judged to contain "significant amounts of authentic folklore," "usually rewritten or adopted," and designed for a "popular audience," being "especially suitable for young people";<sup>2</sup> another by Robert B. Klymasz, *Folk Narrative among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada* (Ottawa 1973), considered as "most important...dealing with authentic folklore";<sup>3</sup> two items by Jaroslav B. Rudnycky, *Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore Texts in English Translation* (Winnipeg 1960), deemed "good" yet "of somewhat less importance," as well as *Readings in Canadian Slavic Folklore* (Winnipeg 1961), described as containing "items dealing with authentic folklore" and some "of somewhat less importance"; and one item compiled by the Women's Council of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, *The Flying Ship and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales* (Toronto 1975), judged to be "of minor importance" and "specially suitable for young people."<sup>4</sup>

Of the five items, only the Klymasz and Rudnycky publications can be considered authentic folklore or texts collected directly from the folk and published without significant changes. Another reference, Klymasz's *Bibliography of Ukrainian Folklore in Canada, 1902-1964* (Ottawa 1969), indicates that little scholarly collecting of folklore had been done before the Second World War. Without its Marius Barbeau or W. Roy Mackenzie, Ukrainian folklore collecting in Canada had to wait for Plaviuk in the late forties, Rudnycky in the fifties and Klymasz in the sixties to develop systematically. However, only Rudnycky and Klymasz published narratives and only the latter compiled a collection specifically devoted to prose genres, although in his 1973 publication, Klymasz did include a number of riddles in a chapter entitled, "Mushrooms on the Freeway: The Immigrant as Dupe."

In a comparison of the Klymasz and Rudnycky collections, it is clear that: 1) Rudnycky lists almost twice as many narratives as does Klymasz; 2) more

than half of Rudnyckyj's texts consist of personal-interest stories, while Klymasz provides more traditional folk-tale texts listed according to the type of index provided by Aarne and Thompson,<sup>5</sup> with other genres used only as illustrations; and 3) unlike Rudnyckyj who provides the minimal required annotations and a short, general introduction, Klymasz provides a great deal of introductory and contextual material as well as type and motif indices.

The Rudnyckyj collections contain ninety-seven narratives, seventy-four of which were translated into English and published in his two works. Klymasz lists forty-six narrative texts in his work, to which another five can be added from his "Mushrooms..." chapter.

Slightly more than a third of the Rudnyckyj texts are folk tales in the traditional sense. The remainder are personal-interest stories presented in 1960 simply as Ukrainian folklore adapted or created in Canada and reclassified in 1961 as: 1) pioneer stories, 2) namelore and 3) adapted "Old Country" folklore. This contrasts with Klymasz's collection of traditional narrative texts. The divergence is likely because Rudnyckyj listened to the stories of the early Ukrainian settlers with the amazement of a recent immigrant arrival, while Klymasz took the Ukrainian fact in Canada for granted and went for the "real" tales, using memorates and oral history only as explanatory material.

Notwithstanding the two different approaches to collecting and classifying Ukrainian folk narratives, three categories emerge, two being quite productive—the personal-interest stories and humorous anecdotes—and the third representing a small number of texts from the non-productive traditional 'Old Country' complex.<sup>6</sup>

Some examples of the texts in each of the three categories are presented below. The category of personal-interest stories is represented by a text in Klymasz's collection which provides a prehistory to the Ukrainian emigration:

[The village of] Bereziv had some kind of special distinction, even as far back as King Cas's time—because at one time, long ago, a group of Ukrainians—Lord knows who they were—helped the Polish Princes and they won the war, and therefore, that king granted freedom to those who had joined. And he said, "Go and find yourselves land wherever you wish and take as much as you want; and you shall not have to enlist in the army nor shall you pay taxes, and no matter what you will wish to build, all the same you shall not pay taxes for this."

And it remained thus for many years. I don't know for how many centuries this continued.... But then, when they began to draft men into the army because of that Hungary, they lost their rights and from then on they had to serve in the army and to pay taxes.

And because of this—my father who was there [in the army] for twelve years—he was given leave for only two weeks in eight years because his mother died, and then he returned and continued to serve in the army. Father knew how tough the routine was in the army there and he took pity on me, and because of me he decided to go to Canada.<sup>7</sup>

Having arrived in Canada and survived the early years, Ukrainian settlers developed their new communities by naming school districts, electing trustees,

building schools and hiring teachers. These social processes were retold in a personal-interest story to J.B. Rudnycky:

### **Origin of the School Name "Radymno" in Alberta**

At the time, Mr. Fletcher, an Englishman, was the school organizer in Alberta. He arranged a meeting in our district at which three school trustees were elected. Thereupon we named our school district "Radymno", which was the name of a neighbouring town in the district of Yaroslav, in West Ukraine, where we came from. Our school district was organized in 1912, in 1913 we built our school house, and in 1914 the school was open. Our first teacher was Mr. M. Luchkovich who later on became the first Federal MP of Ukrainian origin in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

Another personal-interest story relates a humorous encounter between a hospitalized patient and some proselytizing busybodies:

### **The Way He Felt**

Once, many years ago, a man got ill. Some people said that he was ill with "a chicken rash", others said it was "a beet rash", and still others said it was a case of "pig's T.B." The man was taken to a hospital, where he had all kinds of visitors. Among them were some priests, ministers, and preachers, all with words of consolation. One Sunday night two young preachers of some new-fangled church paid him a visit and kept on deriding the Church to which he belonged.

They spoke at length against incense-burning and against the veneration of Christ's Mother, until they got hoarse. Then they stood up, one on each side of the patient's bed and asked the patient: "Well, how do you feel now?" The patient glanced at both of them and said: "Christ might have felt the same way on the cross, between the two robbers."

The preachers were nonplussed by such an answer. In the meantime the patient added: "Try to keep your own sheep within your sheep-fold, without trying to bring in somebody else's sheep."<sup>9</sup>

The above personal-interest story fits in well with the category of humorous anecdotes, one of the most productive types of folk narratives in North America. Ukrainian Canadians were aware of the humour which arose from linguistic misunderstandings and macaronic expressions. The following text depicts humour resulting from misunderstood words:

### **A Mare in Place of Nails**

As we knew no English, some of our first experiences here were very painful. One autumn, after we were through with the harvest work, I was employed at the same time by two brothers, one by the name of Jack Angus and the other Adam. It was very hard on me to work at the same time for two farmers. Once, when it was raining and we couldn't do any

threshing, the two farmers started to build a granary. I assisted them in the work as much as I could. The day before, my boss, Jack Angus, bought some nails for the purpose when he paid a visit to the town of Russell. But, as ill-luck would have it, Jack forgot about the nails when we left in his buggy next day for Adam's place to build a granary there.

When we arrived at the place Jack noticed that he had forgotten to bring the nails along. So he went back to get the nails, as his place was just a little over a half-mile off. I heard only two words in what he said to me that were familiar to me—the buggy, and something like “Nellie”. Well, he had a horse by the name of “Nellie”. So when I came home I went to the stable and found out that Nellie was let out to graze on the farm. So I went out, and took hold of Nellie, brought her home, harnessed her, hitched her to the buggy, got up on the buggy, and set out. When the brothers saw me coming back in a buggy they were surprised. They burst out laughing. Then I realized that I made some mistake. They asked me where I was going in a buggy. I didn't know what to say. Then my boss, Jack Angus, came over and, pointing at the package of nails, said: “nails”. It was only then that I realized my mistake in fetching the horse by the name of Nellie in place of nails. . . .<sup>10</sup>

Gypsies are often stereotyped as being alert and cunning. The gypsy trickster's humorous confession is still a popular folk tale:

### Stealing the Watch

A man went to a priest to confession. And the priest placed his *xvykapushij* [?] on his head and asks—it was a gypsy. He says, “My gypsy,” he says, “did you steal?”

And that gypsy says, “I steal.”

He says, “No . . . I'm asking whether you stole!”

And that one says, “No, I steal.”

“Perhaps you don't understand what I'm asking?”

He says, “What are you asking?”

“Did you steal anything or not?”

He says, “Yes, I stole something.”

“What did you steal?”

He says, “I stole a watch.” And he had stolen it from the priest, you know—while the priest was asking he stole it from the priest from here [informant shows how pocket watch was stolen].

He says, “What did you steal?”

“I stole a watch.”

He says, “My God! That's a sin! Give it back to him!”

And he says, “Here you are!”

“Don't give it to me,” he says, “give it to the one you stole it from!”

He says, “I gave it to him but he doesn't want to take it.”

“If he didn't want it, keep it!—for you do not have a sin, because he doesn't want it.”

Then the gypsy went and the priest waits and waits: perhaps other people will come. He comes out, there aren't any people, and he—he realizes that he had a watch but it's gone! “Well,” he says, “may he be

struck down on the road! He said to me, 'I steal,' and then he stole it! He even gave it to me—and I didn't take it! *Na!*" The gypsy was gone, so he had lost his watch.<sup>11</sup>

The last category of texts are remnants from a large body of Old Country Ukrainian folk tales. Away from their traditional roots and former surroundings, they "became more and more alien, old fashioned and irrelevant... with each generation."<sup>12</sup> The traditional tales are illustrated below by an animal-tale text, a tale of magic and a fragment of a saga. The animal tale is about a bear, pursued by boars, who climbs up a haystack where a man is hidden. Stabbed by the man, the bear is torn apart by the boars.

### My Narrow Escape

This happened a long time ago, in a certain district in Canada, at the time when we were building a church on a high hill in the woods, as there was not much cleared land yet.

When we were building up the cupola, we could see far away above the woods, fields, and houses. So once I decided to take a short-cut from the church to the house of the farmer where I lodged, as it took me twice as far to walk down the road. But I had no success. I came by and by into an open field. Then I knew that I had become lost. I found there a stack of sheaves and a pitch-fork. By means of the pitch-fork I climbed up to the top of the stack, and pushed some sheaves to the side, thus making a bed for myself. So there I fell asleep, still holding the pitch-fork in my hands. It was daybreak when I woke up. I could hear a terrible commotion nearby. When I looked down I saw wild boars chasing a bear. The bear was running towards the stack. Soon he was right by the stack, near me. Then he began to hurl sheaves at the boars. He was looking down at them as they were tearing the sheaves to shreds. I was afraid that the bear might throw me down too, if he saw me. So when he was just about to throw down another sheaf I ran the pitch-fork into his body. The bear fell down among the boars. It was a feast for them.

I sat there quietly for a long time, being afraid that the boars might take me for another bear, sitting in hiding.<sup>13</sup>

The longer tale of magic presented below is another example of the traditional Ukrainian folk tale that is now seldom transmitted orally. It is classified as an Animal-Languages story in the Aarne-Thompson index.

### The Husband Who Understood the Speech of Animals

This here *bajka* [story] is long and interesting for young people, who should take interest in the fact that this is the way things are in the world. It's a *bajka* but it's also the truth.

There were once two old people and they didn't have any children. And so the husband of that woman went to gather mushrooms, you know the kind of mushrooms there are, the white kind. He went into the hills to get mushrooms. And he's gathering them and hears something squealing, something like a child. And he became curious and he went to look. He



goes, and this was in the hills and the ground had shifted. And there was a slab standing, and a snake was crawling long that, and that slab fell over and caught that snake. And that snake began to cry out there, and he comes to look. And somehow it was sad for him to see this, for there was the slab lying on that animal. And he went and lifted up that slab. And that snake crawled out from under there and turned to him, saying, "In return for saving my life, I grant to you that you shall know all tongues, that which the birds say, what people say, what every animal says—you shall know that speech."

And the two of them had a pair of horses. There was a horse and a mare. And the mare was so to say pregnant. And the woman was expecting in her old age. And he comes home, and that snake had forbid him to tell his wife that he knows all tongues. And he asked why. And she says, "For when you tell your wife you'll die on the spot." And of this reason, you see, he didn't want to tell his wife for they lived well together.

And she says, "You know what, my husband, in Trembovlja there's a nice fair!" It means that they sell everything there. She says, "What do you say that we go!"

And he says, "We could go, but I don't want to, because the mare is pregnant, and there's a river that we'd have to cross. If we could go on horse, then," he says, "the horse could cross over better than if it were to pull a cart." And so the two of them agreed accordingly and she got on the mare and he got on the horse.

And they go to that fair. And they came near the river and that horse flopped into the river and crossed over, but that mare began to circle about—she doesn't want to go in there. But the horse says to the mare, saying, "Just take a little jump, and jump over that and you won't get stranded."

And the mare says to him, "It's fine for you to talk since you and your master are in such a condition. But as for the two of us," she says, "we're in such a condition that this is not possible." And she began to beat the mare, and her husband began to laugh there on that other side. And that mare slowly crawled down that bank, crossed over and emerged, and now they're going to that fair the two of them together.

And she says, "Why were you laughing so?" For she didn't understand what the horse had said to the mare.

And he says to her, "That wife is something," he says, "that I can't tell you, for if I tell then I'll die." Well now, she doesn't take interest in the fair but only in why he was laughing. And she keeps asking him. And he says, "Listen, wife, we're going home now," he says, "I'll tell you when we get home and I'll tell you. But as long as you know that I'll die."

"There's no such thing," she says, "in the world, like you say!" And she keeps saying that he should go home now.

And now they had gotten on the horses, they're going home and they arrived home. He doesn't want to tell, for he'll die—that snake had said that he'll die. Then he says, "You know what, wife, if you want me to tell everything to you, you had better," he says, "get a bier ready, and," he says, "prepare some water to wash me nicely and," he says, "place me on the bier." And he says, "Then I'll tell you but not sooner."

And then she got busy right away. She heated up some water, took some kind of washrag and quickly went and washed him nicely, dressed

him up, lay him down and covered him up with a kind of cloth that they use to cover the deceased. And she stopped and said, "Well, my husband, tell me!"

And he thought and thought. But a dog came running in, for the doors were open and it was summertime. And the dog came running and it was howling loudly, howling like anything! And she says to the dog, "Get out of here! Get out! What the devil's mother are you howling here for me! Don't you see!" And she kicked that dog with her feet.

But a rooster came running up, and he hears all this because he understands that language. The rooster ran up and says to the dog, "What the devil are you bawling about?"

"Alas," he says, "my master," he says, "is going to die!" he says. "As soon as he tells his wife, he'll die!"

"If your master is that stupid," he says, "if he wants to tell that to his wife, let him go to the devil and die! Just you think," the rooster says to the dog, "I've got fifty wives! If find a seed," he says, "I can call them all together and eat the seed myself and they go on. And here he's got one," he says, "and he doesn't realize this but goes to meet death, because she wants him to tell him!"

And then he jumped up, saying, "May the devil take you! Mark well that I have unattached myself from you forever!" And now he spends his time baking bagels [*obaranky*]*—cookies*, and she went off somewhere with some Indians.<sup>14</sup>

The final text in the group of Old Country remnants is a fragment of what might have been a saga of the Ukrainian folk hero Karmeliuk (Karmelyuk). Apparently elicited by jogging the informant's memory, the text is little more than a very general reminiscence:

### The Memory of Karmelyuk Was Still Alive

You ask me if I ever heard of Karmelyuk, the famous highwayman. Yes, I have heard many stories about Karmelyuk. In my boyhood days there were still many old people in our village who remembered well those times when Karmelyuk and his band used to attack and rob the houses of the rich squires and landlords and sometimes shared their booty with the very poor people of the village. He lived not very far from our district, further to the east of our river Zbruch, somewhere near the city of Kamyanets of Podolya. He came with his band sometimes as far as our district. When I was born (in 1858) it was hardly thirty years since Karmelyuk's death. He was lured into an ambush and shot there to death, just like Dowbush, his famous forerunner.<sup>15</sup>

The above in a sense brings full circle the Ukrainian folk tales collected and published in Canada, as both the Karmeliuk fragment and the account from Berezhiv deal with the past. Further research will likely show that, with time, recent occurrences will take the place of pioneer stories, jokes and anecdotes. Some traditional types may survive, but should this occur, it will likely be through such modern means of communication as books, radio and television.

*Notes*

1. E. Fowke and C. Carpenter, *A Bibliography of Canadian Folklore in English* (Toronto 1981).
2. Ibid., 59.
3. Ibid., 60.
4. Ibid., 61.
5. A. Aarne and S. Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki 1961).
6. When one examines the many folk narratives in the *Etnohrafičnyi zbirnyk* series, the majority of which were collected in the two decades at the turn of the century, it is clear that not only was the most fruitful period for folklore collecting in Western Ukraine before the Second World War, but that the 'Old Country' folklore complex has shrunk much in the first sixty to seventy years in Canada.
7. R.B. Klymasz, *Folk Narrative among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada* (Ottawa 1973), 11.
8. J.B. Rudnyckyj, *Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore Texts in English Translation* (Winnipeg 1960), 182.
9. Ibid., 166.
10. J.B. Rudnyckyj, *Texts in English Translation* (Winnipeg 1961), 56.
11. Klymasz, 57-8.
12. Ibid., 19.
13. Rudnyckyj, *Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore Texts*, 194-5.
14. Klymasz, 96-8.
15. Rudnyckyj, *Ukrainian-Canadian Folklore Texts*, 162.

# Humour

Robert B. Klymasz

In discussing humour and Alberta's first Ukrainians, there is at least initially the impression that one is dealing with something incongruous, a contradiction in terms. What humour could there possibly be in an experience that was hardly humorous or amusing? Yet even in the deadly serious and heroic game of survival, some measure of respite was needed, and gravity always has its humorous side.<sup>1</sup>

To show that the early Ukrainians in east central Alberta were not totally without humour, three varieties of humour are examined. The first variety relates to adjustment to the new environment and is basically confined to in-group circulation; it reflects the humour of embarrassment rooted in ignorance, of being fresh or new at the game. William Kurelek, in his autobiography, *Someone with Me*, recalls how the hired man on his father's farm near Willingdon, Alberta, saw "that beautiful black-and-white striped tail go waving by as he was working on the land. With nobody to give him lessons on Canadian fauna, he had to find out the hard way that a skunk is not a pretty pussy to be stroked."<sup>2</sup> The humorous side of ineptness is also well reflected in the comical misadventures of such apocryphal immigrant folk heroes as "Vuiko Stif Tabachniuk" (literally Uncle Steve Tobacco-son), "Tymko Spylka" (Tim Needlehead) and "Klym Telebukh" whose hilarious experiences in the new world dotted the early popular Ukrainian press in Canada. Laughing at their awkwardness, the Ukrainian community related easily to their experiences, which they knew were not entirely fictitious. The measure of truth appealed to the Ukrainian rural immigrant community as it began its (at times) chaotic climb up the economic ladder to 'private enterprise,' 'free institutions,' 'the spirit of competition' and 'individual rights.'<sup>3</sup> On 1 August 1965, 65-year-old Antin Sokoluk, an old-timer from Vegreville, Alberta, still recalled the time that "Steve" brought home an ice cream cone for his wife, Iavdokha:

Here we are eating ice cream and I recall that ice cream [cone] of Steve Tabachniuk. They used to publish an almanac, a funny one all about Steve Tabachniuk, and I recall such an excerpt from there.

Steve's riding home from work, but in Winnipeg he had bought an ice cream [cone] for his *lavdosia*. And, naturally, he tasted it and knew that it was good and sweet, so he stowed the cone away under his shirt and kept riding on. But he felt something leaking, takes a look and he discovered that the end of the cone was wet. So he cut off the end and he had to eat the cone because the ice cream had leaked out. And he comes home and says, "*Iavdokho, Iavdokho!* Quick, lick my belly! Maybe you can still have a taste! For I was bringing you an ice cream [cone] but I was unable to bring it [home in time]!"<sup>4</sup>

The humour of derision by outsiders is a second variety of humour which, to some extent, is a precursor of the Ukrainian joke in our own time.<sup>5</sup> Even in the Old Country, a reputable but elitist journal like *Kievskaia starina* could not mask its sarcasm when, in 1899, it attributed the loss of traditional customs among Canadian "Ruthenians" to "the fact that our man in Canada can't procure *horilka* [whisky] so easily. Sometimes it happens that he is forced to lose several days before he comes back with it from town."<sup>6</sup> Derision was also reflected in the newspaper reports of a certain "H.D." from Beaver Lake, Alberta, who for about a decade (1909-1917?) supplied the *Vegreville Observer* with biting accounts of his visits to the pilgrimage town of Mundare, Alberta, which the Basilian Ukrainian Catholic priests had established as a religious centre. The following excerpt (28 February 1917) is typical:

They were having "Big Holiday" on the day I went, and the street was black and buzzing with humanity; they encumbered the sidewalks, thronged the stores, and mobbed the post office, and it was a little excruciating because there is a peculiar, sand baggy force of inertia in a Ruthenian crowd which makes it difficult to elbow through. Not that this was any novelty for it occurs once or twice a week. It should really be stopped. I generally make it a point to respect other people's religious opinions, but it must be confessed that, in this country and this time, for an entire population to wallow in idleness fifty or a hundred times a year because some frowsy old saint or another is supposed to have been born on that day a thousand years ago, is an anomaly, an absurdity and an anachronism. How to stop it? Nothing more easy. Put the Saints' Days under the Inspector of Licenses; tax them the same as we do automobiles and things, assuming that the country has the right to profit by the labor of its inhabitants; strike a compensating charge for every day wasted in idleness and hold the priests responsible for the amount. In a short time you would see all the old Saints hopping out of the calendar and everybody at work in the fields. This is so simple and sensible that it never will be done.

The third and most productive source of humour during the early settlement period was the traditional folklore complex of Old Country songs, stories and customs which the pioneers brought with them. It consisted of two categories: casual humour and ritual humour or serious fun.<sup>7</sup> Casual humour embraces scatological lore, drinking songs and that part of children's lore calculated to amuse (finger games were especially popular); also included are



stories and songs that poke fun at clergy, women and marital situations. Besides encouraging relaxation and escape from the humdrum of everyday concerns, such humour focused on situations that were to be avoided. It often included a message, as in comical songs that narrated the pitfalls of marriage with lazy, old or useless spouses.

Especially important was the category of humour associated with ritual. All Ukrainian folk ritual includes humour, where it operates as a foil and balancing mechanism to *relieve* and thereby *heighten* the gravity of the ritual acts. Thus traditional Ukrainian wedding songs recorded in Alberta include many humorous items that seek to tease but actually function to test the seriousness of the bride, groom and/or other members of the wedding entourage. In the following, all is ready for the marriage ceremony except for the priest whose out-of-town absence suggests the possibility of postponement:

Ukrainian text	English translation
Oi my v tserkvi buly, Hai tai shozh my tai vydily?— Dva vinochky na prystoli, Molodenkym na holovakh. Hoi nema popa vdoma! Pishov pip do Lvova....	O we were in church, and Guess what we saw there?— Two wedding wreaths on the altar For the heads of the young couple. Alas the priest is not home! He's left town for Lviv.... <sup>8</sup>

Humour in funeral laments was described by a branch manager of Park Memorial Limited, a funeral home in Vegreville, Alberta: "And it used to be quite comical, because one woman would be wailing and bending and practically falling into the casket, next moment she would be turning around to somebody else and laughing her head off—big joke!"<sup>9</sup> William Kurelek's account of life in east central Alberta noted a funeral "social" or "wake" which he witnessed as a young boy:

People have gathered in the home of a deceased neighbor or relative to pay their last respects. But in the very next room through an open doorway is a full sized party table laid out where people can eat, drink and even sing. It used to puzzle me for many years after that how people could rightly be enjoying themselves at a death.<sup>10</sup>

Besides ritual humour associated with the human life cycle (weddings and funerals), humour is also strongly evident in the two main seasonal ritual cycles (winter and Easter). In the latter, however, humour is allotted a well-defined and predictable slot that terminates (but does not necessarily climax) a four-part flow of temporal rhythm composed of four kinds of ritualistic behaviour. The basic parts form a pattern of activity:

- 1— prohibition imposed (fasting/*pist*)
- 2— sacred formality (church liturgy)
- 3— prohibition lifted (fasting ends with special ritual feast)
- 4— release and merry-making; serious fun time; ritualized humour (carolling, Malanka, Easter singing-games/*haivky*, egg contests/*tsokannia*).

The well-defined, terminal positioning of humour in part four above differs from the positioning of ceremonial humour in weddings or funerals. In the latter, humour is introduced into the ritual complex in a more sporadic manner—at seemingly random moments. The result is more intimate and highly intricate balanced interpenetration of humorous elements that differs from the humour of large and comparatively more massive proportions.

It is quite appropriate for humour to reinforce the distinctive features that separate seasonal from non-seasonal rituals. However, by the Second World War the distinction was blurred in Alberta's Ukrainian bloc settlement. Ritual humour associated with the human life cycle was either liquidated (laughter at funerals, for example, was no longer tolerated) or channelled into a single terminal slot (wedding dances and banquets) in imitation of the four-part tabulation for seasonal cycles of ritual activity outlined above.

### Notes

1. See Aristotle's comments in J. Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations* (14th ed.; Boston 1968), 483, note 2; also H. Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (Cambridge, MA (1969), and M. Bakhtin's introduction in his study, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, MA 1968).
2. W. Kurelek, *Someone with Me* (Ithaca, NY 1973), 22-3.
3. The folkloristic implications of these socio-economic processes are discussed in R. B. Klymasz, *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada* (New York 1980), 35-6.
4. R. B. Klymasz, *Folk Narrative among Ukrainian-Canadians in Western Canada* (Ottawa 1973), 29.
5. R. B. Klymasz, "The Ethnic Joke in Canada Today," *Keystone Folklore Quarterly* 15 (1970): 167-73.
6. *Kievskaja starina* 66 (1899): 109.
7. "Serious fun" is fun with a purpose rather than fun for its own sake. For the function and powers attributed to serious fun, see V. Propp, "Ritualnyi smekh v folklore," *Uchenye zapiski Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* (1939), No. 46; P. G. Bogatyrev, *Voprosy teorii narodnogo iskusstva* (Moscow 1971), subject index under *Iumor* (Humour) and *Smekh* (Laughter). For an anthropological study of humour, see M. L. Apte, *Humour and Laughter* (Ithaca 1985).
8. English translation by the writer. The song-item was recorded from eighty-year-old Alex Hlady, 5 July 1965, Vegreville, Alberta. Museum of Man catalogue KLY-B-66.11.
9. Recorded 9 August 1965. Museum of Man catalogue KLY-B-83.14.
10. Kurelek, 24.

# Kinship and Courtship Patterns

Zenon Pohorecky

The key kinship units for Ukrainians are their families (*rodyny*) and their clans (*rody*). A family household, created by marriage, is symbolized by the hearth near which the children are raised by *mama* (mother) and *baba* (her mother-in-law). Tracing such children's descent through *tato* (father) and *dido* (his father) perpetuates the clan, symbolized by ancestors and those yet unborn.<sup>1</sup>

Recalling an epoch when the betrothed had to be from a different clan, the wedding rituals and the language itself signify a bride's passage from her own clan to her husband's, whose surname she adopts. The bride literally "leaves with and for her man" (*vykhodet zamuzh*), while the groom "takes his woman" (*zhenytsia*).

The bride's in-law parents, with whom she lives, call her literally the "dear uninformed girl" (*nevistka*), or one who knows nothing, presumably about how her husband's extended family operates.<sup>2</sup> They could also call her "belonging to my son" (*synova*), and the children could call her "belonging to my brother" (*bratova*).

All Ukrainian kinship terms, despite their bias in favour of the man's clan, have a remarkably symmetrical structure, where every man has a woman, at least in name. Thus courtship patterns are revealed in the performance of the wedding rituals themselves, which indicate how boys and girls have been prepared for wedlock.

Traditionally, Ukrainian youth were expected to form their own brotherhoods (*pobratymstva*) and sisterhoods (*sestryNSTva*), whose socials (*skladky*) and evening parties (*vechernytsi*) facilitated courtship, and whose role in matchmaking and the wedding rituals was vital.<sup>3</sup> The traditional upbringing anticipated an equally traditional division of labour by age and gender. Thus the boy worked with his father's ancestral helpers in the fields and woods, learning manly pursuits, while the girl learned womanly pursuits near her parental hearth, which housed her mother's guardian goblin (*domovyk*).

### Kinship Terminology

All kinship terms are paired to indicate spouses, not necessarily of equal status.<sup>4</sup> Though the word for wife (*druzhyna*), derived from another for woman (*zhinka*), has a prefix that suggests partnership (*druzhba*), as do other words for wedlock (*podruzhha*, *podruha*), a husband (*muzh*), whose name means man, is the only one who could partner (*odruchytsia*), while the wife could only follow her man (*vykhodyty zamuzh*).

A son (*syn*) is a male born into the clan, or simply a male descendant. His wife (*nevistka* or *synova*) must live with his parents, whom she calls *svekor* (father-in-law) and *svekruha* (mother-in-law), while her husband, who does not have to live with any in-laws, calls her parents *test* (father-in-law) and *teshcha* (mother-in-law). The different terms reflect different residence requirements for each spouse.

The word for daughter (*dochka*) has a suffix of endearment, indicating parental love, though she must leave them after her wedding. Her husband is called by a term (*zhat*), derived from "taking" (*vziaty*), to signify any male "taken into" an alliance through marriage. Thus the term crosses generations to refer to almost any male-in-law, here a son-in-law, but in a sister's husband's case, a brother-in-law.

The same term may also be used by a wife to refer to her brothers-in-law outside her husband's household, like the husband of her husband's sister. The term (*zhat*) may be used by her to refer to her husband's younger brothers, though, among Hutsuls, never her husband's older brothers. The subtle distinction is significant and is also found between her own brothers.

The word for brother (*brat*), a clansman, signifies provider and protector meriting respect. His new sister-in-law, whom residence rules put in daily contact, calls him *diver*, a term reserved before marriage for her older brother, her protector, as if to discourage incest then, and now adultery. She called a younger brother who has not reached puberty *shurak*.

A sister (*sestra*) is a woman belonging to her brother's clan. She calls her brother's bride *bratova*, meaning her brother's woman. The Hutsul bride responds with *zovytsia*, as if to deny her sister-in-law's relationship with her brother or even its possibility through marriage.

A brother's brother-in-law (*bratanych*), like his sister-in-law (*bratanytsia*), have names based on the word for brother. Similarly, a sister's in-laws, both male (*sestrynets*) and female (*sestrynytsia*), have names based on the word for sister.

As economic independence between siblings increases and the need for distinctions lessens, persons related through one's brothers or sisters are lumped into a pair of categories, based on gender: kinsman (*pleminnyk*) and kinswoman (*pleminnytsia*). A whole series of other lumpings into second, third, fourth and fifth families are based on kinship traced through uncles or aunts and great uncles or great aunts. Thus one refers to all male first-cousins as "second family brothers" (*dvoiyridni braty*), and to all female first-cousins as "second family sisters" (*dvoiyridni sestry*). Where once six discrete categories of the sons and sons-in-law of all uncles and aunts existed, the general term now lumps the following together: a paternal aunt's son

(*tetychnyi brat*) and son-in-law (*titychnyk*); a paternal uncle's son (*stryichnyi brat*) and son-in-law (*stryichych*); a maternal aunt's or uncle's son (*vuichnyi brat*); and a maternal aunt's or uncle's son-in-law (*vuichych*). On the female side, the six categories of female first-cousins remain: a paternal aunt's daughter (*tetychna sestra*) and daughter-in-law (*titchynka*); a paternal uncle's daughter (*stryichychka sestra*) and daughter-in-law (*stryichychka*); a maternal aunt's or uncle's daughter (*vuichna sestra*); and a maternal aunt's or uncle's daughter-in-law (*vuichynka*). The pattern of lumping is repeated consistently: second-cousins as third-family brothers and sisters (*troridni braty i sestry*); third-cousins as fourth-family brothers and sisters (*chotyroridni braty i sestry*); and fourth-cousins as fifth-family brothers and sisters (*piatoridni braty i sestry*).

The pattern, then, is to call all cousins "brothers" and "sisters," related through one's uncles and aunts or great uncles and great aunts. The terminological lumping indicates that all cousins must be treated as siblings, though still marriageable if they belong to another clan with another surname. This suggests that clan membership is more important in courtship and marriage than being parallel cousins or cross-cousins. The pattern, however, does not lump all brothers and sisters of one's parents, in the first ascending generation, as if they were also one's parents. This suggests that one's uncles and aunts are not expected to play any parental role through kinship relationships. Other alliances through godparenthood or marriage are presumably needed at this generational level.

Suffixes of endearment are usually added to the terms for a father's brother (*stryi* to *stryiko*) and an unwed father's sister (*teta* to *titka*), who live in one's household. A similar affectionate suffix is attached to a mother's older brother (*vui* to *vuiko*) who lives in another clan household, but who, as his sister's protector in her parental home, may be expected to have a special protective attachment to her children. Common usage has extended the meaning of *vuiko* to almost any male friend of the family. In Canada, for example, Vuiko Shtif, a satirical cartoon character popular until well after the First World War, Anglicized his Christian name from Stefan to Shtif, but his status as a good-natured man made him everyone's *vuiko* (uncle).

No such suffixes of endearment are given to *vuina*, who may be a mother's sister or the wife of a mother's brother. More social distance may be expected to develop with such female kin, who must live within another clan household, focusing their main social obligations almost exclusively on their own children. Nor is a suffix normally given to the wife of a father's brother (*stryina*), who may have to live in one's own clan household, to help avert familiarity, if not seduction.

An intimate term for kinsman (*svoiak*) is based on a possessive form (*svii*), meaning his or mine, and, in this sense, is like another that means ours (*nash*), but which may be translated to mean one of us. Diminutives, of course, are used freely with all kinship terms. They come naturally when referring to grandson (*vnuk*) or granddaughter (*vnuka*), and are reciprocated by such references to the elderly (*startsi*) as *babisia* or *babunia* for grandmother and *didus* or *diduno* for grandfather, since both were expected



to play a vital role in raising grandchildren. On the other hand, there were no diminutives for great grandparents (*pradid* or *prababa*). Set four generations apart from their great grandchildren (*pravnuuk* or *pravnuka*), the surviving elders would merit too much respect for diminution to be appropriate.

The terms *svat* for male and *svakha* for female are commonly used to refer to three possible relationships: to any person who represents a relative of the groom (or bride) at any stage of the wedding rite; to couple's parents who may use the terms to refer to each other during the matchmaking as if they were already in-laws; and rather loosely to all of one's in-laws.

Although kinship terms based in marriage did refer to persons who acted out the roles of actual relatives, the kinship terms were not considered fictive, because numerous social duties were imposed. Nor was it important to be specific about the exact geneology of a distant in-law who, if a man, would likely belong to another clan, and, if a woman, would just have married into one's own clan. In most cases, such in-laws would be less important than a child's godparents, whose social relationships were based in baptism rather than on birth or marriage into a clan. The importance of godparents, who, in Canada, still call each other *kumy*, is based on the economic obligations shared for the child's welfare. On the day of the child's birth, godparents vowed to present substantial gifts on the child's wedding day, a vow recalled annually with appropriate birthday gifts.

Kinship terms reflect the socio-economic expectations which form the fabric of any society. Yet a social structure may be revealed even more clearly perhaps by examining some implications of a central organizing principle like clan exogamy, which would still be respected among Ukrainians in Canada.

### *Clan Exogamy*

Having to marry outside one's clan integrated the two clans through an economic alliance between their members. Since Ukrainian social structure was based on the clan, traced patrilineally and identified by the surname of its members, such clan exogamy had other implications.

First, clan exogamy made the village irrelevant in the origins of a bride or groom, ruling out both village exogamy and village endogamy. Clan exogamy also made irrelevant marriage between cross-cousins, ruling out matrilineal cross-cousin marriage as a pattern. Nor did the proximity of the blood-relationship between a bride and groom matter. Clan exogamy allowed a young man to wed his older sister's daughter, if their ages were close enough, despite the generation difference, because she had been born into another clan. A niece also could marry her young uncle, even though her mother had been born into the groom's first family and the bride was only three degrees removed from him.

Although marriage might verge on incest, it did not disrupt the clan system. It was certainly consistent with the principle of clan exogamy and was also acceptable because it considered more important the relative ages of the bride and groom being the same than their belonging to the same generation.

Yet it is most unlikely that there were many such marriages because the young man had so many other choices. Even among his female relatives, he could find not only eligible cousins, but also aunts and nieces who belonged to other clans, and the number literally doubled every time he moved outward from his second families, on both his mother's and father's sides, to his third, fourth and fifth families. Numerical odds favoured marriage to someone who was remotely related if not completely unrelated.

The point is significant, for it suggests that the intervention of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada since 1920 to impose its degrees of kinship<sup>5</sup> on a clan-based society was needless, as clan exogamy already fostered social harmony. Fortunately, the intervention was innocuous, as the degrees of church kinship appeared to reflect the actual effects of clan exogamy. In the end, the Orthodox church's takeover of the regulation of marriage could not undermine the importance of the clan system's symbols in the wedding rite, as transplanted by the pioneers at the turn of the century.

In western Canada, as in Western Ukraine, every marriage was seen as the mechanism by which women ritually died, when they left their parental clan and were ritually reborn in their husband's clan. The woman's loss of her maiden name, bestowed by her parental clan, may have represented the pivotal sacrifice that enabled orderly social life to develop for generations. The orderliness, reflected in many patterns of courtship, consistent with regional and personal circumstances, was always rooted firmly in the principle of clan exogamy. For a girl, marriage meant loss of membership in her parental clan. For the rest of her life, unless she remarried, her surname identified her husband's clan. Her daughter through marriage lost even her mother's adopted surname. Thus the clan system meant discontinuity for girls. The clan was run by men born into it. Marriage and godfatherhood allied them with others for socio-economic reasons. In the Old Country they had united in the past to defend their land from invaders. Repression and poverty did not turn them against their clansmen but against their wives, who were born outside the clan.

In western Canada, where the lot of Ukrainian men was bitter and the new pattern of settlement did not support the traditional extended family with its matriarchy of wife, her mother-in-law and her sisters-in-law, the clan system quickly broke down. Many Ukrainian girls married outside the system, often to non-Ukrainians, while clinging to their heritage and passing it on to their children. Such interethnic extension of clan exogamy, by strengthening the woman's nuclear family at the expense of the man's widely scattered clan, may even have helped to entrench the Ukrainian heritage in Canada. Even though her surname was no longer Ukrainian, she could still raise her children in the cultural traditions she loved.

This, however, was not necessarily the way Ukrainian organizations in western Canada, whether reading hall- or church-based, came to see the situation. Concerned to stave off threats to the survival of Ukrainian culture, especially the language (seen as the immigrants' indispensable carrier of untranslatable poetic values<sup>6</sup>), the organizations put the emphasis on endogamy and resisted exogamy. Education, courtship and marriage within

one's group—especially one's Catholic or Orthodox group—came to be stressed. To this end, children of the same Greek rite attended Ukrainian language schools, folk dance classes and frequent socials in church basements under the watchful eye of clergy who frowned on any marriage outside their ethnoreligious group. To some, marrying within one's group came to be seen as a sacred patriotic duty, with exogamy considered a form of disloyalty. Had the narrow endogamic guidelines been enforced, the Ukrainian community in Canada would have emerged as a closed society. Clearly, this has not happened mainly because such guidelines in Western Ukraine were not traditional. The villages and towns formed an open society which allowed one to marry almost anybody except a member of one's own clan.

### *Matchmaking*

This section is based on the pattern of courtship and marriage reported in the Hutsul part of Western Ukraine, from where many settlers in western Canada came at the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup> Hutsuls are noted for preserving more archaic linguistic elements and cultural practices than most others in Western Ukraine, so this account may approximate an original peasant prototype.

Traditionally, a wife-seeking Hutsul tried to learn about the available girls at the socials. Once he had chosen, he sent someone to her house for a report, followed by a personal visit. If satisfied, he told his parents, who then had someone approach the girl's parents about the size of dowry. If pleased, they allowed their son to send a friend to the same parents, who, if the girl agreed, bade the young man to send matchmakers.

The wooing ceremony began when the young man formed a wooing party, led by a head-matchmaker, called elder (*starosta*), who conducted most of the wedding rituals. At the girl's door late at night, they were met by the mother, whose consent the daughter needed for the betrothal. As if protecting the daughter, she gave elusive answers to their demand to be asked why they came. Once the mother presented her daughter to the young man and his party, the matchmakers asked how the girl's home had been without them, and the parents replied that it was better with them, requesting them to be seated.

The matchmakers then asked about the so-called "women's legacy," the inheritance from her mother, as they revealed what the prospective groom could offer. The parental hand clasp in agreement was broken by the *starosta* passing bread over it and initiating eight toasts. The girl's father was toasted by the *starosta*, her mother by her father and the girl by her mother. The girl then toasted the boy (who immediately returned it), the boy's father and then his mother, the only parent not to offer a toast. The boy's father ended with a toast to the *starosta*.

After the inebriating libations, the "kinning ceremony" (*svatannia*) began when the girl tied an embroidered sash across the chest of the *starosta*. Occasionally, she even stuffed an embroidered kerchief into the prospective groom's belt. Her mother gave similar sashes to the other matchmakers, who

were already called "in-laws" (*svaty*). The sashes were a form of magic. Their tying protected the marriage alliance and the embroidered tree of life contained solar, celestial and earthly representations. Other designs symbolized amulets worn as a protection against evil spirits.<sup>8</sup> The boy and girl then clasped hands, which the *starosta* unclasped by passing bread over them, bread symbolizing fertility in the ceremony. Amid merrymaking, the parents discussed payments and other wedding arrangements, using "in-laws" language, the men calling themselves *svaty* and the women *svakhy*.

## Marriage

As the parents could not attend the wedding, the girl picked a married man to be her Wedding Father (*batko*), and the boy a married woman to be his Wedding Mother (*matka*). The fictive parents conducted separate ceremonies in both homes where fertility symbols were made and bestowed and the boy and girl sought their respective parents' blessings. The priest also received gifts from both homes for his blessings. For more blessings, the boy's fictive mother took him to his kin, and the girl's fictive father took her to hers. Next morning, the boy was asked to enter a yard where his kin awaited him. He came, holding hands with a brother or sister. When he returned home, he was no longer considered a bachelor.

A day before the wedding, the groom sent two men to give his bride boots and a red kerchief, the headgear of a wedded woman. She, in turn, gave her groom a shirt and tied embroidered sashes to the men. On the wedding day, the bride, with the hairdo of a wedded woman, and the groom, wearing her gifts of the day before, bade farewell to their respective parents, who blessed each. Only the bride and groom rode horses in the procession, which was led by the Wedding Parents, with the *starosta* bearing a fertility symbol and musicians providing fanfare to alert those in church of their arrival.

After the vows (*vinchannia*), the procession was led by the bride's group and followed by the groom's to her home, where her father met them at the door, blessed them and invited them to dine, while others outside celebrated at their party (*vesillia*). After the bridal couple and their entourages had eaten, the guests entered to dine.

Having gathered his kin at the gate, the groom returned for his bride. Her mother feigned ignorance of her whereabouts, as did all her household, though she sat among them. Her kin let her go only after the groom's kin had paid a "ransom." Such abduction rituals in Ukraine showed that the bride had not left her family willingly, nor that her clan had handed her over voluntarily, since passage to another clan was considered a crime against her own. (So much so, that even a Hutsul could now burst into her room and remove her hair-fasteners.) Dressed in the headgear of a wedded woman, the bride re-entered the room, danced with the *starosta* and resumed festivities.

The groom, on leaving again, was now given the bride and her dowry, amidst wailing by her mother who saw the departure as the death of the unwed girl. A fire was lit at the gate of the groom's home as a funerary rite to purify the new house of the deceased and the new member of the clan, who



had just died in her own clan. On the eve of her arrival, the hearth in her new home had been scoured and polished by women who then feasted, sang, put wood in the stove and left water on it overnight to feed the hearth's good goblin (*domovyk*), who was the guardian spirit of the women living in the house. The groom's parents, who had left the bride's home early to prepare a welcome, met the procession with bread and salt and blessed the couple.

The bride entered her new home silently and near the hearth released the black hen she had brought. She was received by her mother-in-law, who removed her head-covering with a stick (*pryhoshchuvaty molodu*). The bride was then seated in the place of honour (*pokuttia*), as would a newborn child, and a piece of clay (*pechyna*) from the hearth in her new home was placed in her hand. She cast it under the table, ending the ritual that accepted her rebirth in her new household.

The loss of her virginity, literally "breaking the guelder-rose" (*lamannia kalyny*), occurred in the storeroom (*komora*). The married couple was taken ceremonially to the nuptial bed, made of straw and a sheepskin coat, with a sheaf of rye and holy icon placed at its head. The bride's shirt, with the bloody signs of her virginity, was then carried around by merrymakers, whose wild entertainment (*perezva*) lasted for days.

The last purifying act, however, occurred on the morning after the wedding, when the wedding procession went to a river or stream, accompanied by music. There, in a special ceremony (*vyvid*), the couple was sprinkled with water, followed by the groom strolling with his bride along the riverbank. On their return, she brought a pail of water for her new hearth, ending the last episode in a long ceremony where the groom's clan ancestors finally accepted her as one of their own.

## Notes

1. V. Petrov, "The Clan in the People's View of Life," in V. Kubijovyč (ed.), *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto 1963), 344.
2. An alternate interpretation has the *nevistka* knowing nothing about sex, since she is a virgin. In this sense, the term may be considered a compliment, even after the marriage is consummated, because it refers with pride to her original virgin condition.
3. Z. Kuzela, "Folk Customs and Rites Related to Community Life," in *ibid.*, 340.
4. N. A. Buriachok, *Nazvy sporidnenosti i svoiatstva v ukrainski movi* (Kiev 1961).
5. "Concise and Accurate Instructions Concerning Marriages," gathered from various authorities, but especially out of *Juris Graeco-Romanum* (a compendium of Greek-Roman law) (pp. 977-1000). The "Instructions" recognize five varieties of kinship resulting from a) birth into a lineage, b) marriage into another lineage, c) unions involving three lineages, d) baptism and e) adoption. In laying down nine axioms to apply to kinship, the church banned any marriage that confused or confounded the surnames of the lineages. Thus an uncle might not marry his niece, even if they were of the sixth degree because the kindreds would be confused: "The uncles become nephews, by the wives, and the nephews become uncles, by the husbands. Likewise the wives become aunts and the nieces to each other, and this is not proper" (p. 989).



6. Z. S. Pohorecky and A. Royick, "Anglicization of Ukrainian in Canada between 1895 and 1970: A Case Study of Linguistic Crystallization," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 2 (1969): 141-219.
7. V. Shukhevych, *Hutsulshchyna*, 2 vols. (Lviv 1899, 1902).
8. J. Wynnycka and M. Zelena (eds.), *Ukrainian Embroidery* (Toronto 1982).



**Haivky** performed by women following Easter service, Mundare, ca. 1918 (Elston Collection, Public Archives Alberta 65-55/23)



**Haivky** performed by men following Easter service, Eldorena district, 1919 (Pysmenny Collection, Public Archives Alberta UC357)



Bride (centre) and wedding party, Smoky Lake district, 1915 (Ratsoy Collection UV495)



Bukovynian brides, Smoky Lake district, 1920s (United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto)



Bukovynian wedding march, Smoky Lake district, 1920s (United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto)



Outdoor dancing, Bukovynian wedding, Smoky Lake district, 1920s (United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto)





Wedding, Hairy Hill district, 1920s (Galganetz Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV117)



Repka wedding orchestra, Shandro district, 1928 (Repka-Hawreliak Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV535)





Ukrainian bride's dowry, Smoky Lake district, 1926 (Ratsoy Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV504)



Funeral cortege prepares to depart Ukrainian Catholic church, Edmonton, ca. 1915 (Shapka Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV555)



# **CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

# *Narodni Domy* in East Central Alberta

Andrij Makuch

## *Introduction*

After the First World War, virtually every township and town in east central Alberta with a sizable Ukrainian population had at least one *narodnyi dim* (national home or community centre). The buildings were modest, wood-frame structures which usually served a host of cultural, educational, social and recreational purposes. They were a major characteristic of Ukrainian life in Alberta until the Second World War.

The *narodni domy* were remarkably similar in their physical structure, operations and activities. They were usually affiliated, formally or informally, with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Catholic Church or the pro-Communist Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association. The political or religious differentiation manifested itself in portraits on walls, the plays (or songs) performed, the newspapers acquired and the causes supported. The general pattern of organizational activity, however, was strikingly similar.

The *narodni domy* were clearly a phenomenon of the interwar era. Each arose from the earlier formation of cultural and literary clubs and the growth of social and recreational life in given locations. Construction of a building followed and usually marked the period of greatest organizational activity. Ironically, once finished and paid off, a third phase of slow decline generally set in. By the late 1930s, most *narodni domy* were on the decline and the war years simply accelerated the process. By the mid-1950s, many had closed completely.

The *narodni domy* had a clear counterpart in the numerous *chytalni* (reading halls) found throughout Western Ukraine at the turn of the century. But despite striking similarities, the *narodni domy* placed greater emphasis on social and recreational functions and played down the educational and political activities of their Old Country counterparts.

## *The Nature of Narodni Domy*

Between 110 and 120 *narodni domy* were built in Alberta before the Second World War, most during the 1920s and 1930s, the vast majority (85 per cent) located in the bloc settlement in east central Alberta.<sup>1</sup> As indicated, they were similar to the reading halls or *chytalni* (from the verb *chytaty* "to read") in Western Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Individual *chytalni* were often affiliated with larger co-ordinating bodies, the most common in Ukraine being the Prosvita Society.<sup>3</sup> Usually they were little more than small one-room, house-like structures, although in larger centres they would likely have a proper auditorium with stage. Engaged in popular education and community development, by the First World War over 2,000 *chytalni* had developed a strong national movement in Western Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> Although the word *chytalnia* was used in a generic sense in Canada, it was largely replaced by the term *narodnyi dim* (literally "people's home," more commonly translated as national hall). In Western Ukraine *narodnyi dim* referred to the larger, club-like *chytalnia* found in cities and larger towns. By the time halls were built in Canada, it had become a common term for even the modest *chytalnia*.

The *narodnyi dim* was generally a late addition—long after churches and schools were built—to the landscape of community institutions in Ukrainian settlement areas. The earliest *narodni domy* in Alberta were built in Vegreville (1914), Lanuke (near Two Hills, 1915), Mundare and Edmonton (1917).<sup>5</sup> The *narodni domy* were not elaborate structures. They were usually wood-frame buildings, 1,200 to 1,600 square feet in size, able to seat between 75 and 125 individuals. In fringe and economically marginal areas, a small number were built out of logs and mud plaster.<sup>6</sup>

Certain common features characterized almost all *narodni domy*.<sup>7</sup> Virtually all had a stage for plays and concerts, which was usually elevated, with a roller curtain at the front and an Old Country scene (*kraiovydy*) as backdrop. A small number had simple platform stages. Approximately 20 per cent had half-sized dug-out basements under the stage which served as kitchens. A greater number (50 per cent) had a special room in the rear which functioned as a concession stand or "buffet." Twenty to 25 per cent of the halls had a second room near the entrance which served as an office or coat check. Another 20 to 25 per cent had a mezzanine or "balcony," and regulation projection booths were located in five. In the majority (at least 85 per cent), seating was provided by hand-made wooden benches and heating almost universally by wood stoves. Rural halls used gas lamps for lighting, while approximately 50 per cent of town halls had electrical power.

## *Organization and Activity*

All *narodni domy* in Alberta were either independent or affiliated with Catholic or pro-Communist organizations. The independents were the most numerous (45 per cent), followed by the pro-Communist (35 per cent) and Catholic halls (20 per cent).<sup>8</sup> Because of intense rivalry, approximately half of Alberta's "Ukrainian" towns or townships had two or more Ukrainian



halls.<sup>9</sup> The differences notwithstanding, the degree of similarity as to appearance, activities and overall operation was remarkable.

Independent halls were generally operated by the liberally minded secular intelligentsia,<sup>10</sup> with school teachers usually the key personalities. Although owned locally, the halls tended to lean toward the Orthodox church and the pro-Orthodox Union of Ukrainian Community Centres (*Soiuz Ukrainskykh Narodnykh Domiv* or SUND), formed in 1927.<sup>11</sup> Notable exceptions existed either where the local independent *narodnyi dim* fostered genuine co-operation between Catholic and Orthodox Ukrainians (e.g., Myrnam);<sup>12</sup> or where a hall was built by nationalist interwar immigrants ("Sich" halls, as in Derwent);<sup>13</sup> or where the local *narodnyi dim* was built as a "community hall" in a geographic, not ethnic, sense (e.g., the Andrew Community Hall, built largely in a Russophile locale).<sup>14</sup> Independent halls, the first to be built, were usually named after such Ukrainian national heroes as Hrushevsky, Shevchenko and Franko. After the Second World War, many independent halls were taken over by Ukrainian Orthodox parishes.

The second most numerous group of *narodni domy* were incorporated under the umbrella of the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA).<sup>15</sup> Openly pro-Soviet and informally affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada, ULFTA halls were centres of controversy and ULFTA members were frequently disliked by mainstream Ukrainians. Nevertheless, ULFTA was capably led and through strong networking and aggressiveness enjoyed considerable organizational success.<sup>16</sup> ULFTA halls in the Alberta bloc were more numerous than in the other Prairie provinces, a result largely of the influence of former miners, radicalized while working in such ULFTA strongholds as Drumheller, Lethbridge and the Crow's Nest Pass area.<sup>17</sup>

ULFTA began to build its base in the 1920s by incorporating independent *narodni domy* under its federal charter. In some cases, this involved no more than transferring the properties of a *narodnyi dim* built by a group with strong socialist sympathies, such as the Melnychuk National Home in Hillock-Ranfurlly or the Pavlyk National Home in Lanuke.<sup>18</sup> In other cases, incorporation of the local *narodnyi dim* with ULFTA was strongly resisted and hostilities broke out.<sup>19</sup> ULFTA was successful in several contests, and most halls were, in fact, acquired through the transfer of properties rather than being built as ULFTA halls.

With the exception of Edmonton and Mundare, Catholic halls were not built until the 1930s.<sup>20</sup> These *narodni domy* were usually incorporated under the episcopal charter<sup>21</sup> and the programmes were closely affiliated with a sponsoring parish, unlike the loose Orthodox affiliation of independent halls. As a result, the nomenclature of the halls emphasized their Catholic nature (*Katolytski narodni domy*) as parish halls (*parokhiialni domy*), named after figures acceptable to Catholic sensibilities, particularly Shevchenko and Shashkevych. Even though criticized by their independent counterparts, they were openly antagonistic to the activities of the ULFTA halls.

All *narodni domy* were run as voluntary societies with an elected executive (*zariad*).<sup>22</sup> Men assumed the leading roles, with women and children relegated to auxiliary roles in affiliates, youth sections, choirs, orchestras,

drama groups and kitchen and janitorial assistants.<sup>23</sup> Each *narodnyi dim* would have its core group of supporters and a wider circle of sympathizers who attended plays, concerts and social functions.<sup>24</sup> Besides the executive, other volunteers included a chief janitor, choir and/or drama director, teacher, librarian and newspaper correspondent.<sup>25</sup> The activities sponsored by *narodni domy* were cultural-educational and social-recreational. The first made the buildings specifically Ukrainian; the second, perhaps the more popular for many, raised funds for the first activities and established a social milieu.

Cultural activities centred around plays and concerts, the first set characteristically in the Old Country and consisting of dramas, comedies and historical pieces.<sup>26</sup> The plays in independent and Catholic halls stressed patriotism, while ULFTA's carried a clear socialist message. In performance numbers, recitations, hymns and speeches, the concerts were similar. All relied on choirs, orchestras, soloists, dancers and guest speakers.<sup>27</sup> However amateurish, the cultural activities not only entertained but provided an outlet for the mundane life of immigrant settlers. A means to socialize people into a Ukrainian milieu, they emphasized the need to involve as many people as possible rather than the best possible productions.<sup>28</sup>

Educational work usually took the form of public readings or lectures, debates, English language classes, and lending libraries (most useful since public libraries in east central Alberta were rare). To a degree, the plays (often quite didactic) were also "educational." Because a *narodnyi dim*'s educational programme was determined by local resources, the strength of a hall's educational work was a good indicator of the vibrancy of Ukrainian community life in a given area.

The social and recreational functions of *narodni domy* were usually the most popular.<sup>29</sup> Major undertakings included dances, wedding receptions, bazaars, picnics and baseball games in the summer, as well as plays and concerts. While some community activists might berate *narodni domy* as functioning at the level of "dance halls,"<sup>30</sup> most Ukrainians viewed them primarily in social and recreational terms.

As community centres, the *narodni domy* were also the focal points for local political activity. Meetings featured addresses about Ukrainian community concerns and Canadian political questions. A *narodnyi dim*'s political orientation vis-à-vis the Old Country frequently provided the motivation for strong commitment and, as with the pro-Soviet ULFTA, generated strong divisions within the Ukrainian communities, especially in the 1930s.<sup>31</sup> The *narodni domy* also served as polling stations during elections, facilities for funerals and the first movie theatres in Ukrainian areas.

### *Development and Decline*

Most *narodni domy* developed according to a clear pattern with three distinct phases: 1) the growth of social and cultural-educational activity in a given community; 2) the construction and financing of the *narodnyi dim*, usually coupled with the most intense period of organizational activity; and 3) a gradual decline in organizational activity.

*Social and cultural development.* As Alberta's Ukrainians emerged from pioneering conditions or established themselves in towns, they established school districts, built schools, created cultural societies and engaged in social and recreational activities, which included amateur drama groups, choirs and reading societies (*chytalni tovarystva*). The groups met in makeshift facilities in private homes, rented premises (in towns and cities) or in the local school.<sup>32</sup> As dances became more popular, they too were staged in makeshift facilities, usually an empty granary or the local school.<sup>33</sup>

As the population grew, the need for some kind of community structure in Ukrainian districts became more pressing—particularly in rural areas. With at least four or five children in each family, the large pool of young people needed a special milieu of its own comparable to the churches their parents had established earlier.<sup>34</sup> However, it was not until the First World War that funds were generally available to build the facilities needed.<sup>35</sup>

*Construction and major period of activity.* The construction of a *narodni dim* usually involved raising a bare-bones structure, which was then "finished off" (*vykinchene*) over a number of years as funds became available through a host of events at the *narodnyi dim*.

Once the idea of building a *narodnyi dim* was accepted, a collection was held to buy the materials needed. A foreman (*maister*) was usually hired to co-ordinate construction, with labour provided voluntarily. Land was generally donated by a sympathetic supporter, especially in rural areas, and the building raised in one or two years.<sup>36</sup>

In most cases, construction required a loan. Efforts followed to pay off the debt as quickly as possible and to raise money for improvements such as the hardwood floor and for finishing the walls. The most popular fundraising activities were plays, concerts, dances, bazaars and picnics, which served also as major forms of entertainment.<sup>37</sup> Once the capital costs were covered, additional fundraising was undertaken to build a dug-out basement or buffet room.<sup>38</sup> Most *narodni domy* were generally most active during the fundraising period.<sup>39</sup>

*Decline of activity.* By the late 1930s, the pace of activity in most *narodni domy* had begun to decline. Apart from the usual organizational problem of replacing people worn out by routine, the *narodni domy* simply faced too much competition from such other attractions as dance halls, radio, anglophone service clubs and baseball.<sup>40</sup> Some sponsored their own baseball teams or showed more films, but among the youth the lower level of linguistic fluency increasingly affected participation.<sup>41</sup>

The *Narodni domy* were also affected in the 1930s by the development of church lay bodies such as the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood and the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League. As membership tended to overlap, the people found it difficult to maintain dual loyalties indefinitely.<sup>42</sup> Finally, many Ukrainians during the Depression left the bloc districts to seek work in eastern Canada or in the cities.<sup>43</sup>

The Second World War was a critical turning point in the life of many *narodnyi domy*. Earlier trends—particularly the drop in youth participation and decrease in cultural activity—were accentuated, and by the late 1940s

the concerts and plays, the mainstay of the *narodni domy* in earlier days, were seldom seen. Thousands who left the bloc at this time never returned. The rural depopulation closed post offices and encouraged school districts to consolidate. Between 1955 and 1965 large numbers of *narodni domy* were either sold or closed.<sup>44</sup> Where new halls appeared, they were usually regarded as parish halls, not *narodni domy*.<sup>45</sup> By the 1980s, only a handful of the original *narodni domy* still operated.

### *Narodni Domy and the Problem of Continuity and Change*

As already indicated, although clearly built in the tradition of western Ukrainian models, the *narodni domy* in Canada functioned in a different social milieu with substantially different orientations. The *chytalni* of Western Ukraine were established first and foremost as cultural, educational and political institutions.<sup>46</sup> While they did perform a social function, the social and recreational needs of Ukrainians in a village setting were met informally through daily interaction and more formally through traditional social events.<sup>47</sup>

In the Old Country the *chytalni* were in a good position to advance the cultural and political interests of Ukrainians. First, they were part of a fairly extensive network of activities promoted by the Prosvita Society. Thus centralized, Ukrainian activists had a solid base. Second, the activities undertaken by *chytalni* were not just cultural and linguistic, but were tied also to such bread-and-butter issues as practical adult education, the amelioration of the political position of Ukrainians within the Austro-Hungarian empire and the establishment of such self-aid organizations as co-operatives.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the Ukrainian community leaders—individuals like Ivan Franko, Kost Levytsky, Kyrilo Trylovsky, Mykhailo Hrushevsky—not only had the common touch, but were well-attuned to the needs and sensibilities of the Ukrainian peasantry they wished to organize.

In Canada the cultural-educational and social-recreational functions of *narodni domy* were generally stressed in equal measure for two main reasons. First, with the village gone, the social needs of Ukrainian Canadians could not be met in the same informal manner on isolated quarter sections or in railroad towns. More structured social activities became the norm and the *narodni domy* became their focal points. In Canada economic self-improvement was the result of personal effort; the ethos of group action for common improvement was not as marked. Moreover, occupational farm interests were not represented by "ethnic" associations but by organizations like the "Canadian" oriented United Farmers of Alberta and Alberta Wheat Pool. Despite efforts to establish economic operations such as the *Narodna Torhovia* and the Ruthenian Elevator Company before 1930, the same economic base for community organization as in Ukraine never existed in Canada.

The differences between *chytalni* and *narodni domy* can also be seen in their general organizational structures. Unlike the highly centralized *chytalni*,



the *narodni domy* were highly localized. Even ULFTA, whose efforts at networking were perhaps the most successful, lacked the funds to cover its large territory. The nominal affiliation of some independent *narodni domy* with the Union of Ukrainian National Homes (SUND) was usually limited to the press and the occasional speaking tour. For practical purposes, most *narodni domy* ran their own programmes and limited their interaction to others in the immediate area.

The relative weakness of *narodni domy* in Canada was the result also of their small number which, in turn, was the result of the smaller population base when compared to Western Ukraine. The sectarian and ideological differences which divided the halls among three rival factions also did not help. Finally, when compared to the leadership in the Old Country, the community leaders who emerged in Canada were generally young and inexperienced, without practical organizational experience in Western Ukraine and with very limited means in Canada.

## Notes

1. The estimate is based on Alberta Department of Labour figures classified in A. Makuch, "Profile Study of Ukrainian Halls in Alberta," Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project No. 24 (Edmonton 1983), table 21, and O.T. Martynowych, *The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930: A History*, Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture, Occasional Paper No. 10 (Edmonton 1985), 247.
2. For the role of *chytalni* in Western Ukraine, see J.P. Himka, "The Background to Emigration: Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovyna, 1848-1914," in M.R. Lupul (ed.), *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada* (Toronto 1982), 21-3; for an overview of their development, see M. Pavlyk, "Pro rusko-ukrainski chytalni," in *Mykhailo Pavlyk. Tvory* (Kiev 1959), 416-549.
3. *Narys istorii matirnoho tovarystva Prosvity* (Winnipeg 1968), published to commemorate the centennial of the founding of the Prosvita Society, provides a good overview.
4. Himka, 29.
5. A. Makuch, "The Kiew ULFTA Hall: A Structural History," Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project No. 24 (Edmonton 1983), 189-90.
6. Makuch, "Profile Study," tables 6, 27, 31.
7. *Ibid.*, tables 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41.
8. *Ibid.*, table 16.
9. *Ibid.*, table 26.
10. O.T. Martynowych, "Village Radicals and Peasant Immigrants: The Social Roots of Factionalism Among Ukrainian Immigrants in Canada, 1896-1918," Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978, 262-78, discusses the origins and ideology of the liberal intelligentsia among Ukrainians in Canada. *Almanakh ukrainskoho holosu* (Winnipeg 1960), printed on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the newspaper *Ukrainskyi holos*, provides a basic "organizational" history of this community faction.
11. For an overview, see V. Batytskyi, "Soiuz Ukrainskykh Narodnykh Domiv," in *Propamiatna knyha ukrainskoho narodnoho domy v Vinnipeg* (Winnipeg 1949), 284-7.



12. D. Prokop and W. Kostash, "National Homes or Narodni Domy," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton 1975), 164.
13. For the record of ownership, see Public Archives of Alberta (hereafter PAA), Department of Labour, "Amusement Tax Applications," 76,518, Box 74, "Derwent."
14. Ibid., "Andrew."
15. A full organizational history of ULFTA has still to be written. An extensive, although uncritical, account can be found in P. Kravchuk, *Na novii zemli* (Toronto 1958). For organizational developments preceding the formation of ULFTA in 1924, see O.T. Martynowych, "The Ukrainian Socialist Movement in Canada, 1900–1918," *Journal of Ukrainian Graduate Studies* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1976): 27–44, and 2, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 22–31; N. Makuch, "The Influence of the Ukrainian Revolution on Ukrainians in Canada, 1917–1922," *ibid.* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 42–61. For works that discuss ULFTA in Alberta, see M. Kostash, *All of Baba's Children* (Edmonton 1977); A. Makuch, "In the Populist Tradition: Organizing the Ukrainian Farmer in Alberta, 1909–1935," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1983; H. Potrebenko, *No Streets of Gold* (Vancouver 1977). *Almanakh TURFDim, 1918–1929* (Winnipeg 1929) contains short histories of several ULFTA locals in Alberta.
16. C. H. Young, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto 1931), 146–7.
17. For a distribution of ULFTA locals, see *Almanakh TURFDim, 1918–1929*; also interview by the writer with Peter Krawchuk, 2 March 1982.
18. Makuch, "Kiev ULFTA Hall," 62–4.
19. *Nash postup*, 24 February, 20 May 1926; *Ukrainskyi holos*, 24 June 1925, 15 December 1926, 26 January, 20 July 1927; Prokop and Kostash, 168, 172.
20. Makuch, "Profile Study," table 18.
21. See *Propamiatna knyha z nahody zolotoho iuvileiu poselennia ukrainskoho narodu v Kanadi* (Yorkton 1941), 250–318.
22. For an overview of organizational operations, see S. Maryn, "The Kiew Hall: Narrative History," Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project No. 24 (Edmonton 1984), 43–51.
23. Ibid., 140–1.
24. Ibid., 132–6.
25. Ibid., 79–80.
26. For an overview, see I. Wynnyckyj, "Ukrainian Canadian Drama from the Beginnings of Immigration to 1942," Master's thesis, University of Waterloo, 1976.
27. Maryn, 72–9.
28. Interview by the writer with Anne (Cylurik) Samoil, 17 November 1982.
29. Prokop and Kostash, 149.
30. See, for example, P. Zvarych, "Zovnishna prykrasa narodnykh domiv i iikh ploshch," *Soiuz ukrainskykh narodnykh domiv. Vidchyt*, no. 1 (n.p. 1934).
31. Makuch, "In the Populist Tradition," 130–61.
32. For the use of rented facilities before the halls were built, see the local histories in *Almanakh TURFDim 1918–1929*; Prokop and Kostash, 165, 170–1.
33. The staging of social dances outdoors or in makeshift facilities prior to the building of halls is well described in A. Nahachewsky, "First Existence Folk Dance Forms Among Ukrainians in Smoky Lake, Alberta and Swan Plain, Saskatchewan," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1985, 58–64.
34. See Makuch, "Kiew ULFTA Hall," 11, for the case of Kiew, Alberta, whose population rose from 218 in 1906 to 478 in 1921.

35. For an overview of economic trends during this period, see A. Makuch, "Ukrainian Canadians and the Wartime Economy," in F. Swyrypa and J. H. Thompson (eds.), *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton 1983), 69–77.
36. Makuch, "Kiew ULFTA Hall," 14–15, notes that the Kiew Hall was built basically in one winter.
37. H. Lazarenko, "Podola," A. W. Tymchuk, "Moscow Hall," in *Memories of Mundare* (Edmonton 1980), 139, 144; Prokop and Kostash, 152, 154, 166.
38. Makuch, "Kiew ULFTA Hall," 56–7; *Propamiatna knyha poselennia*, 77, 259, 260, 293, 295, 305, 307.
39. See the comments of Prokop and Kostash, 167, concerning the "initial enthusiasm" of the "first half-dozen years" of the hall at Pruth.
40. Ibid., 158, 170, 174.
41. Ibid., 156, 167–8; R. Yakoweshen, "The Ukrainian Educational Society of Wostok," in L. Semeniuk (ed.), *Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District* (Edmonton 1980), 256. The decline in linguistic ability is also evident in the minute books of the Kiew ULFTA hall in the archives of the Alberta Council of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, Edmonton.
42. Prokop and Kostash, 168–9, 172–3, 178.
43. Ibid., 149, 158, 169, 170, 174–5.
44. Makuch, "Profile Study," table 49.
45. PAA, "Amusement Tax Applications."
46. Pavlyk, "Pro rusko-ukrainski chytalni," notes this point well.
47. For the nature of social interaction at the village level in Western Ukraine, see S. Koenig, "The Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia: A Study of Their Culture and Institutions," Doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1935, 539–70.
48. See I. Vytanovych, *Istoria ukrainskoho kooperatyvnoho rukhu* (New York 1964), for an overview of the Ukrainian co-operative movement.

# Ukrainian Performing Arts in Alberta

Andriy Nahachewsky

If there is one sphere in which the Ukrainians excel, it is in their genius for self expression in all forms of art. Institutions for the expression of this gift are to be found everywhere Ukrainians are settled in any number, in both rural and urban areas.<sup>1</sup>

The above, written in 1931 by sociologist Charles H. Young, still echoes in statistics collected by the Cultural Heritage Division in Alberta. In 1983, 40 per cent of all Ukrainian organizations listed in the province were designated as performing arts groups.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this paper is to survey the research on Ukrainian performing arts (drama, song, dance and music) in Alberta and to examine several processes relating to their growth and decline.

## Research

There are few serious studies of Ukrainian performing groups in Canada. Noteworthy are *Nasha tsena. Khudozhnia samodiialnist ukrainskykh poselentsiv u Kanadi* (Toronto 1981), edited by Petro Kravchuk, and "Ukrainian Cultural Traditions in Canada: Theatre, Choral Music and Dance, 1891-1967," a Master's study at the University of Ottawa in 1978 by Alexandra Pritz.

*Nasha tsena* documents the history and activities of Ukrainian drama, choral, instrumental and dance groups in the pro-Soviet segment of the Ukrainian community in Canada. Even though the groups currently represent a relatively small part of overall activity, they are examined in great detail and the book represents the single most extensive discussion of Ukrainian arts in Canada. Much of the documentation is published for the first time. The histories of specific groups, performances, performers and artists are accompanied by numerous photographs and a sixty-three-page list of theatrical presentations advertised in the "progressive" press or are part of the records of Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association halls and Association of United Ukrainian Canadian centres from 1907 to 1973.

Unfortunately, the book is not footnoted and contains no bibliography.

Pritz's thesis deals more generally with theatre, choral music and dance in essentially all segments of the Ukrainian Canadian community. It does not cover instrumental ensembles. The main focus is on major groups in urban centres, by-passing less prominent activity, especially in rural areas. Like Kravchuk's, Pritz's work is comprehensive; both analyze major trends and special issues, but Pritz's work is much shorter and is not illustrated. It is, however, extensively footnoted with several appendices and an extensive bibliography.

A shorter, more recent study on "The Fine Arts" was written by Robert B. Klymasz.<sup>3</sup> In his account of Ukrainian Canadian music, theatre, dance and other arts, Klymasz avoids a rote recitation of events but strives to focus on the main trends in each field. He includes important historical aspects, recent developments and goals which he would have the arts community attain. Another survey by Bohdan and Dania Stachiw-Zajcew, emphasizing present and potential trends, appeared in 1984.<sup>4</sup>

In the same year the publication *Visible Symbols* contained several articles on Ukrainian Canadian music<sup>5</sup> and dance.<sup>6</sup> Several studies have dealt with aspects of theatre,<sup>7</sup> music<sup>8</sup> and dance.<sup>9</sup> General histories of Ukrainians in Canada often contain sections on the performing arts, where a few activities are listed along with numerous sweeping statements about their character.<sup>10</sup> Few of the above studies are devoted specifically to Alberta,<sup>11</sup> although the general Canadian works are partially relevant.

## Sources

Until recently practically all performing arts groups were organized within the structure of other Ukrainian organizations. As a result, much information is available in the jubilee and special publications produced by some major organizations<sup>12</sup> and institutions<sup>13</sup> within the Ukrainian community. Some personal memoirs refer to performing arts activities, especially where the writer was a participant.<sup>14</sup> Provincial<sup>15</sup> and local<sup>16</sup> histories in Alberta also contain special articles about performing groups, short biographies of participants in the arts and sponsoring organizations. The local history books are particularly valuable because they include the oft-neglected rural areas.

Some of the major directors and artists in the Ukrainian performing arts have published materials on their respective arts,<sup>17</sup> and their biographies also contain much information.<sup>18</sup> Incidental references to performing arts groups and the arts are found in a wide variety of other works.<sup>19</sup>

Potential sources for primary research are even more diverse and numerous. Articles, advertisements and reviews in newspapers provide important information. Record books and financial logs of performing groups and their parent organizations can also be important. These are most often in the hands of private individuals, organization offices or libraries and occasionally in repositories like the Ukrainian Canadian Museum and

Archives in Edmonton, Provincial Archives of Alberta and the Public Archives of Canada. Some collections include programme booklets and photographs. Performers may also be an excellent source through recorded oral histories. Other sources are advertising brochures and promotion packages printed with the establishment of performing arts groups. The growth in sound- and video-recording technology has preserved many details of staged performances, and government support agencies like the Cultural Heritage Division of Alberta Culture can provide information about performing groups who have requested aid.

### *Processes and Trends*

Ukrainian Canadian culture has commonly been understood as activity transplanted from the Old Country and preserved until it is eroded by assimilation. In these terms, increases could be expected from not-yet-assimilated immigrants fresh from Ukraine. Decreases on the other hand, could be attributed to increased contact with Anglo Canadian life and the "melting pot" process.

Figure 1 illustrates this process where the vertical axis represents time and the horizontal axis the amount of Ukrainian activity. Point A represents the beginning of immigration and the increase of activity as immigration proceeds. With assimilation, activity would decrease until the immigrant/ethnic activity ceased and the process was completed (point D). The pattern would be affected by the two world wars and the immigration that followed each. If the performing arts were affected only by immigration and assimilation, their graphs would be similar to Figure 1, where the greatest activity would take place soon after immigration. When quantified in each arts field, the general patterns below emerge.<sup>20</sup>

*Theatre.* Regular theatrical (drama) activity (Fig. 2) began in Edmonton with the formation of the "Boian" Association in 1911 (A).<sup>21</sup> Theatrical activity increased even during the First World War, when the "Samoobrazovannia" organization began to contribute to theatrical life.<sup>22</sup> Dramatic activity blossomed in the period after the war with the influx of new immigrants, and the period was likely the most active in Alberta's history. During the Depression theatre groups continued, but activity began to decline. Activity, curtailed during the Second World War, was renewed in urban areas as professionally trained and enthusiastic leaders emigrated to Canada (E).<sup>23</sup> In more recent years, activity has decreased because of rural depopulation, language loss among the young and the availability of other means of entertainment (F).

*Choral music.* Organized choral activity (Fig. 3) was preceded by a very strong tradition of folk singing, with which the immigrants accompanied their work and leisure time. Communal prayer was first sung in the form of unofficial prayer services and later as liturgical celebrations (A). Secular choirs, originally closely connected with drama circles, grew in size and number into the 1920s (B). A major milestone occurred in 1923 with the arrival of Alexander Koshetz and the Ukrainian National Choir. Its excellence set



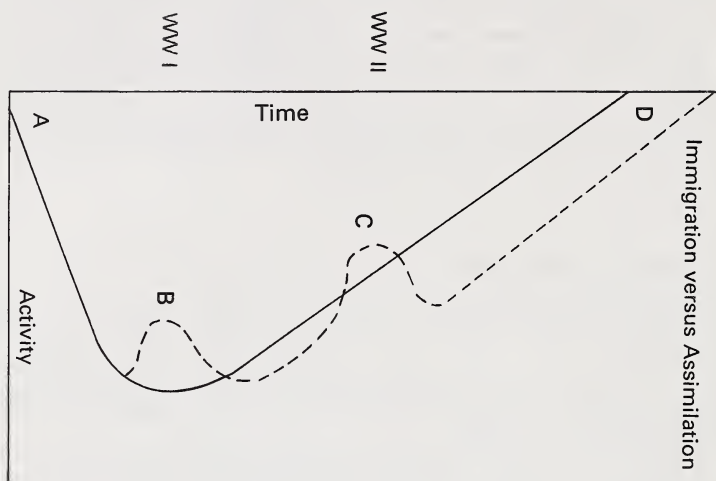


Figure 1. Simple Model of Ethnic Activity

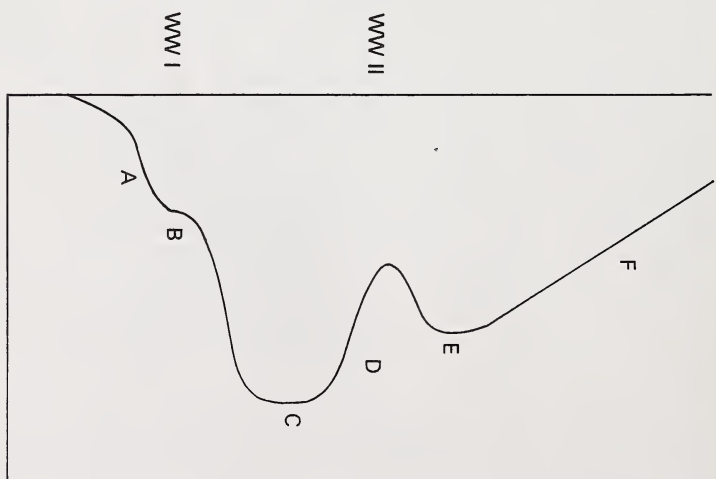


Figure 2. Drama Group Activity

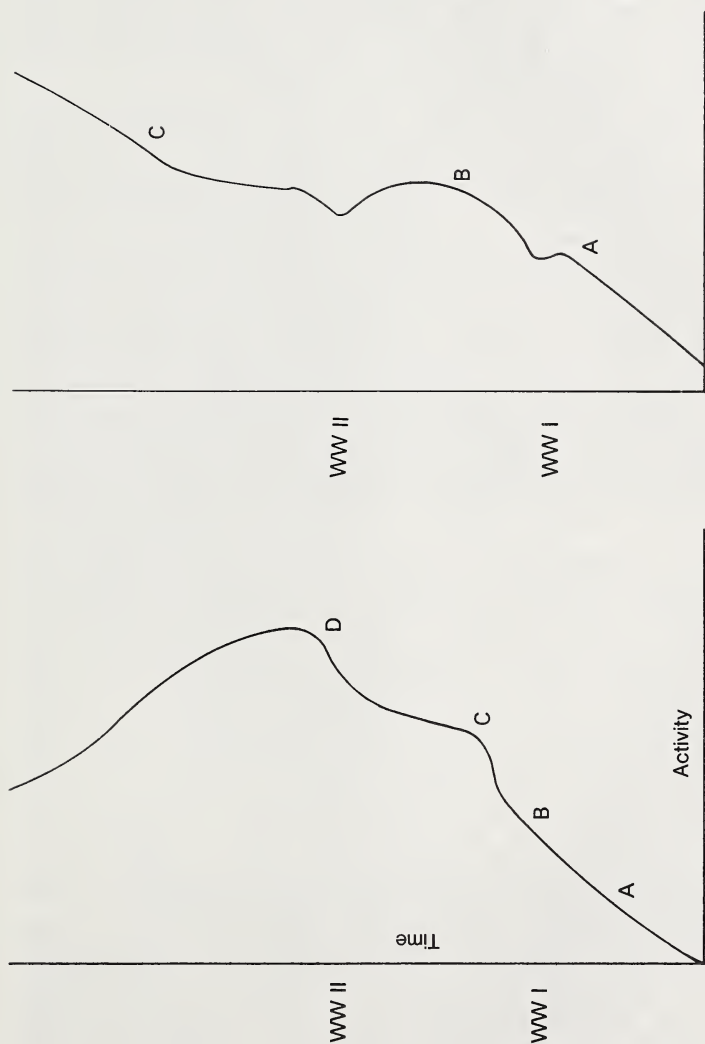


Figure 3. Choral Activity

Figure 4. Instrumental Music Activity

new standards and inspired local conductors and singers everywhere (C). Beginning in 1940, young conductors and choir directors attended annual summer courses in Winnipeg, where Koshetz himself headed the music programme from 1941 to 1944. Students from Alberta returned better equipped to lead the local choirs (D). Choral activity in major Alberta centres was supported by the arrival of new conductors after the Second World War,<sup>24</sup> although activity in rural areas declined.

*Instrumental music.* Instrumental music was a folk tradition from the earliest period of Ukrainian settlement in Alberta (Fig. 4). Some pioneers brought a fiddle from the Old Country; others built a set of *tsymbaly* (dulcimer) when they could spare the time. Community socializing increased before the First World War, as communities became better established and elaborate weddings became more common (A). During the rise in community halls and dances in the interwar period, dance bands and orchestras became more popular. Concert-oriented mandolin ensembles were organized in many communities, particularly after the 1926 western Canadian tour of the Girl's Mandolin Orchestra, sponsored by the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association in Winnipeg (B).<sup>25</sup> During the Depression and after the Second World War, dance bands continued to incorporate new instruments and orchestrations and many adopted features of the country-and-western style. New musicians replaced those who retired. Weddings, anniversaries and other community dances remained very popular. Very notable was the popularization (C) of the long-play recording and the creation of "*estrada*" bands playing Ukrainian melodies in pop-rock and other contemporary styles.<sup>26</sup>

*Dance.* As a popular form of recreation, Ukrainian dance in Alberta (Fig. 5) was brought with the song and music of the immigrants. As a performing art, however, it was featured only incidentally in dramatic productions until the arrival of Vasyl Avramenko in 1925. In June/July 1927 Avramenko staged six dance concerts in Alberta and in November his touring troupe visited fifteen Ukrainian communities in the same province.<sup>27</sup> As Avramenko's students moved into urban and rural communities, dancing became popular among youth organizations and schools (A). Teachers in Ukrainian areas were often expected to have their students dance regularly at Christmas, year-end and other concerts. Students trained in the summer courses in Winnipeg led dance activities in subsequent decades.<sup>28</sup> The arrival of great performing ensembles from the Soviet Union coincided roughly with the establishment of independent dance ensembles in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Since then, Ukrainian dance gained great momentum (C), with approximately eighty dance groups in rural and urban Alberta.<sup>29</sup>

The variety of shapes in the above graphs indicate that immigration and assimilation were not the only processes which affected the history of Ukrainian performing arts in Alberta. Non-verbal art, in particular, demonstrated significant increases in periods when immigration was not directly relevant. The growth in participation of second-, third- and fourth-generation Canadians is particularly significant.



Figure 5. Dance Activity

The appearance of skilled and energetic leaders such as Alexander Koshetz and Vasyl Avramenko had a positive impact on arts activity. So did the students of the Winnipeg summer courses, many of whom were younger and Canadian-born. Conversely, the departure of good leaders often precipitated a sudden decline, as in Edmonton's theatrical community in 1936 when Pylyp Ostapchuk and L. Nakhvostach moved away.<sup>30</sup> Other phenomena affecting growth were the successful tours of individual ensembles such as the Winnipeg mandolin orchestra in 1926, Avramenko's travelling dance group in 1927 and the several Soviet dance companies who performed in Canada after 1958.

## Conclusion

More than most other Ukrainian activities in Canada, the performing arts have retained their prominence from the earliest years. There is as yet no scholarly, comprehensive account of the phenomenon, and the frame of reference used by most is limited and inadequate. In addition to data about the number and location of groups, the number of participants and performances and the types of events, it is also important to study the content of performances, the style, the repertoire, the subjective characteristics and the meaning of the arts. Important too are the motivations which inspire individual and community efforts. Such projects will enable scholars to assess the significance of Ukrainian performing arts in the general cultural life of Canada.

## Notes

1. C.H. Young, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto 1931), 167.
2. Alberta Culture, Cultural Heritage Division, List of Ukrainian Organizations, 1983.
3. R. B. Klymasz, "The Fine Arts," in M.R. Lupul (ed.), *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada* (Toronto 1982), 281-95.
4. Prepared for a conference on "21st Century Ukrainians in Alberta: Their Needs, Goals and Directions," sponsored by the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, Alberta Provincial Council, Edmonton, October 1984.
5. R.B. Klymasz, "Folk Music," B. Zajcew, "Ukrainian Popular Music in Canada," Z. Lawryshyn, "Ukrainian Classical Music in Canada," W. Klymkiw, "The Ukrainian Choral Tradition in Canada," in M.R. Lupul (ed.), *Visible Symbols: Cultural Expression Among Canada's Ukrainians* (Edmonton 1984), 49-56, 57-61, 62-6, 75-8.
6. A. Pritz, "The Evolution of Ukrainian Dance in Canada," I. Balan, "Dance Interpretation and Performance," L. Pavlychenko, "Some Personal Impressions," D. Hohol, "The Contemporary Dance Scene," in *ibid.*, 87-101, 102-4, 105-7, 108-10.
7. I. Wynnyckyj, "Ukrainian Canadian Drama from the Beginnings of Immigration to 1942," Master's thesis, University of Waterloo, 1976; B. Hiritsch, "The Development of Ukrainian Theatre and Its Role in Canada," Master's thesis, University of Montreal, 1961.
8. R. Klymasz, *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada: An Immigrant Complex in Transition* (New York 1980); M. Bandera, "The Western Canadian Championship: *Tsybaly* Competitions at the Red Barn," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 11 (1983): 28-33; M. Bandera, "The *Tsybaly* Maker and His Craft: A Dynamic Musical Tradition in East Central Alberta," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1984.
9. R. Klymasz (ed.), *Ukrainian Folk Dance: A Symposium* (Toronto 1961). Of the eight essays on Ukrainian dance, seven deal with the North American context. See also A. Pritz, "Ukrainian Dance in Canada: The First Fifty Years, 1924-1974," in J. Rozumnyj (ed.), *New Soil—Old Roots: The Ukrainian Experience in Canada* (Winnipeg 1983), 124-54; K. Nahachewsky, "Alberta Ukrainian Dance: A Look at the Need to Develop Province-Wide Resources," Alberta Ukrainian Dance Association (Edmonton 1983).



10. W. Wytwycky, "Music," and V. Revutsky, "Theatre, Dance, Cinema," in V. Kubijovych (ed.), *Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopedia* (Toronto 1971), 1183–5; M.H. Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (2nd ed.; Winnipeg 1982), 167–73, 449–61, 675–9 and photographs; O. Woycenko, *The Ukrainians in Canada* (Ottawa 1968), 32–4, 169–85; Young, 167–77; P. Yuzyk, *Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto 1953), 160–9; M. Kostash, *All of Baba's Children* (Edmonton 1977), 169–95.
11. The studies by Bandera, K. Nahachewsky and the Zajcews deal specifically with Alberta.
12. *Pamiatkova knyha iuvilleina. XVI kraiova konferentsiia Ukrainskoho natsionalnoho obiednannia Kanady* (Winnipeg 1952); N. Kohuska, *Chvert stolittia na hromadski nyvi* (Winnipeg 1952); *Liga vyzvolennia Ukrainy. Kalgari, Alberta* (Calgary 1964); *Dlia Boha, tserkvy, i narody. Liga ukrainskykh katolytskykh zhynok edmontonskoi ieparkhii v 1944–1964 rr.* (Edmonton 1967).
13. *Iuveileina knyha. 25 littia instytuta im. Mykhaila Hrushevskoho v Edmontoni* (Edmonton 1943); W. Kostash, "The Mychailo Hrushevsky Institute: A Narrative History," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton 1975), 85–97; D. Prokop, "The Taras Shevchenko Institute," in *ibid.*, 97–100; *Propamiatna knyha ukrainskoho narodnoho domu v Vynypegu* (Winnipeg 1949); *Propamiatna knyha ukrainskoho narodnoho domu 1906–1966* (Edmonton 1966).
14. W. Czumer, *Recollections About the Life of the First Ukrainian Settlers in Canada* (Edmonton 1981); W. Paluk, *Canadian Cossacks: Essays, Articles and Stories on Ukrainian-Canadian Life* (Winnipeg 1943); D. Prokop, *Ukraintsi v zakhidnii Kanadi. Do istorii ikhnoho poselennia ta postupa* (Edmonton 1983).
15. J. M. Lazarenko (ed.), *The Ukrainian Pioneers in Alberta, Canada* (Edmonton 1970); *Ukrainians in Alberta*, 2 vols. (Edmonton 1975, 1981); P. Kravchuk, *Zhinochi doli* (Toronto 1973).
16. A. Hrynchuk and J. Klufas (eds.), *Memories: Redwater and District* (Calgary 1972); M. Bennett (ed.), *Reflections: A History of Elk Point and District*, 2 vols. (Elk Point 1977); E. Carlsson and I. Stainton (eds.), *Lamont and District: Along Victoria Trail* (Edmonton 1975); M. Charuk (ed.), *The History of Willingdon, 1928–1978* (St. Paul 1978); L. Semeniuk (ed.), *Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District* (Andrew 1980); H. Coutu (ed.), *Our Crossing: Rivers to Roads. A History of the Brosseau, Duvernay and Surrounding Area* (Edmonton 1980); *Memories of Mundare: A History of Mundare and Districts* (Mundare 1980); *Vegreville in Review: History of Vegreville and Surrounding Area 1880–1980*, 2 vols. (Vegreville 1980); *Our Legacy: History of Smoky Lake and Area* (Smoky Lake 1983).
17. V. Avramenko, *Ukrainski natsionalni tantsi* (Winnipeg 1928), and *Ukrainski natsionalni tanky, muzyka i strii* (Winnipeg 1947); M. Irchan, *Stsena. Pidruchnyk dlia robitnycho-farmerskykh dramatychnykh hurtikiv* (Winnipeg 1928); *Vidhuky mynuloho. O. Koshetz v lystakh do P. Matsenka* (Winnipeg 1954); I. Kowaliw, "Liturgical Music: Living with Religious Symbols," in *Lupul, Visible Symbols*, 67–74.
18. L. Levytska and I. Bodrevich, *Lev Turkevych. Zhyttia i tvorchist* (Toronto 1965); I. Knysh, *Zhyva dusha narodu* (Winnipeg 1966); I. Pihuliak, *Vasyl Avramenko a vidrodzhennia ukrainskoho tanku* (Syracuse 1979); S. Paush, "Peter A. Paush," in *Ukrainians in Alberta* (1975), 104.
19. J. Canuck, "Communing with the Ruthenians," *Canadian Magazine* 40, no. 5 (March 1913): 403–10; P. M., "Diialnist khoru v novomu Kievi," *Kaliendar ukrainskoi rodyni* (1941), 166; J. Skwarok, "The Ukrainian Settlers and Their Schools," Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1958; S. Maryn, "The Kiew

- ULFTA Hall: Narrative History," Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project No. 24 (Edmonton 1984).
20. The graphs are intended only as conceptual images; they are not quantified as to number of groups, performances, participants, hours of volunteer time per week or any other concrete measure.
21. Pritz, "Cultural Traditions," 36.
22. Kravchuk, 33.
23. Pritz, "Cultural Traditions," 71-9.
24. Ibid., 138-42.
25. Kravchuk, 69-73.
26. Zajcew, "Popular Music," in Lupul, *Visible Symbols*, 58-9.
27. Pritz, "Cultural Traditions," 217-19; "V. Avramenko i Ukrainski tanky," in *Propamiatna knyha ukrainskoho narodnoho domu v Vinnipeg*, 722.
28. Pritz, "Cultural Traditions," 178-81, 199.
29. K. Nahachewsky, 1-4.
30. Pritz, "Cultural Traditions," 61.

# **The Cultural Implications of Protestant Missions**

Vivian Olender

At the time of the first Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the mainline Protestant churches supported a providential view of history, believing that God not only directs the lives of individuals but intervenes in the fate of nations. The aim of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist churches was to establish the Kingdom of God in Canada and to make the Dominion of Canada "His Dominion" from sea to sea.<sup>1</sup> With the opening of the prairies to settlement, it was vital to the Protestants that a society conforming to their vision of righteousness be established on the prairies.<sup>2</sup> Since they equated the Protestant tradition with *the* Church of Christ and British culture with Christian culture, they maintained that the new society of the West must be a homogeneous Anglo Canadian society.

Most Anglo Canadians at the time were ethnocentric in their attitude toward all non-British immigrants. The so-called Anglo-Saxon race was believed to be superior and British traditions and institutions were given the highest ranking in the hierarchy of cultures. The greater the distance, actual or assumed, between the British Protestant norm and the culture of the immigrant, the lower the rank of that culture and its people. Rather than setting an example of tolerance and brotherhood, the Protestant clergy accepted and even sanctioned the popular racial prejudices and ethnic stereotypes.<sup>3</sup> They advocated a policy of assimilation for all continental European immigrants, as well as French Canadians, and they believed their churches should be foremost among the assimilating forces on the prairies.<sup>4</sup>

While the Protestants did train a small number of Ukrainian converts as pastors, they mainly recruited their own people as missionaries, with male ministers as pastors and doctors under the jurisdiction of the Board of Home Missions and female missionaries as teachers, school home matrons and nurses under the Women's Missionary Society (WMS). The result was a network of hospitals, nursing stations, school homes and social centres in Ukrainian bloc settlements, all used as agencies of proselytization and assimilation. Most missionaries were middle-class Anglo Canadians from

Ontario, usually unfamiliar with primitive pioneer life on the prairies. While the plight of the Ukrainian immigrants was undoubtedly much alleviated by the medical and educational institutions, the Protestants were not motivated solely by humanitarianism or brotherly love. They were keenly aware that gratitude could open the door to the message of their churches.<sup>5</sup>

The values and ideals which the Protestant home missionaries tried to promote were capitalism, temperance, sabbatarianism, clean amusements and middle-class standards of etiquette and sanitation. The chief areas of conflict were temperance, healthy recreation and sabbatarianism, with Ukrainians often breaking all three at once by drinking alcohol at dances on Sundays! Until the late 1920s many Protestants opposed dancing, believing it encouraged excess, overexertion and late hours, leading eventually to physical breakdown. Moreover, modern dances such as the tango and turkey trot promoted free love, unhindered divorce and demoralization.<sup>6</sup> A person who broke such moral taboos as drinking or dancing was capable of breaking them all.

With the same aims and goals, plans were carefully laid to avoid overlapping. The Congregationalists and Baptists were primarily responsible for missions to Scandinavian and German settlers. The Methodists were allotted the bulk of the work in the Ukrainian bloc in east central Alberta, and by 1925 they had established three hospitals in Pakan, Lamont and Smoky Lake, two school homes in Wahstao and Kolokreeka and a social centre in Smoky Lake. The Presbyterians chose Vegreville as their centre, where they established a school home and a hospital. In 1925 the Congregationalist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches formed the United Church of Canada, and the Ukrainian missions of the Presbyterians and Methodists were consolidated. By the 1940s the United Church had social centres only at Smoky Lake, Radway and Vilna and a hospital in Smoky Lake. There were also a small number of Ukrainian-language congregations.

The ultimate aim of the new United Church was to unite all Protestant denominations into a truly Canadian church that would include most Canadians. The small Ukrainian congregations in Andrew, Chipman and Lamont were tolerated primarily to entice the first generation. The second and third Canadian-born generations, speaking English, would blend easily into the Anglo congregations.<sup>7</sup> United Church leaders could not understand why immigrants wanted their traditional churches when the United Church, a true Canadian church, offered to help them participate in Anglo Canadian society.<sup>8</sup>

The first Protestant missionaries among the Ukrainian settlers were medical missionaries, traditionally the first agency in pagan lands.<sup>9</sup> As hospitals were built, patients could be subjected to extended proselytization and visiting family and friends to evangelism.<sup>10</sup> Worship services were held and appropriate religious literature distributed.

Besides hospitals, the Methodist WMS also established mission houses usually staffed by two or more unmarried females. Both had an important cultural influence on Ukrainian women, who, unlike the men, had little

contact with the host society. Protestant female missionaries helped to introduce new clothing styles both visually and by distributing used clothing collected in Ontario and eastern Canada. They also taught sewing and quilting.<sup>11</sup>

The hospitals and mission homes were also training grounds for maids.<sup>12</sup> Apprenticed in the laundry and kitchen, where they learned to prepare Anglo Canadian food, wait on table and clean house, Ukrainian girls were often secured positions in non-Ukrainian homes in Vegreville or Edmonton.<sup>13</sup> This was a leap up the social scale, for the more usual route was from dishwasher in a Chinese restaurant (as early as age twelve), waitress in the same restaurant, waitress in a Ukrainian restaurant or maid in a Ukrainian hotel, salesgirl in a Jewish store or maid in a Jewish home and then maid in an Anglo Canadian middle- or upper-class home. Nightclasses for young adult males were also held, with emphasis on English and arithmetic, important for business.<sup>14</sup> Classes included a heavy dose of religious instruction and hymn singing, with the Bible usually a textbook for learning English and the memorizing of passages from Scripture.

After the first decade, both Presbyterians and Methodists became discouraged by the indifference of the older generation. While Ukrainians were critical of their own churches, particularly clericalism and Latinization, they were not eager to embrace Protestantism. To solve the "Ukrainian problem," the Protestants turned to school homes for the young, aimed at Ukrainian parents who, in the absence of district schools, did not want their children boarded in larger centres. Again education was not the motivating force behind the school homes. Recognizing the leadership potential of a new generation of educated Ukrainian Canadians, the Protestants saw the homes as the means to introduce Anglo Canadian ideals to the entire Ukrainian community.<sup>15</sup>

Boarding schools offered unparalleled opportunities for the assimilation of totally isolated, impressionable children. Presbyterians in the Vegreville home gave orphans and children from the poorest homes the highest priority,<sup>16</sup> since children from indigent homes associated their poverty with Ukrainian ethnicity and were more willing to assimilate.<sup>17</sup>

In the school homes most of the housework was done by the children to teach them "proper" methods and to introduce them to Anglo Canadian cuisine. Middle-class standards of dress, etiquette and recreation were stressed. Christmas and Easter were celebrated according to Anglo-Celtic traditions and Thanksgiving and birthday parties were introduced. In the Methodist homes the children were encouraged to sign the triple pledge against alcohol, profanity and tobacco. To isolate children further from their families and ethnocultural background, the Vegreville home in 1916 prohibited residents from going home on weekends to attend weddings.<sup>18</sup> The extensive religious activity in all homes included church on Sunday morning, Sunday School in the afternoon and a second worship service in the evening. There were also other religious meetings at least twice a week as well as prayers and a Bible reading before and after each meal. The director of the



Vegreville home boasted that in a Bible contest his residents would easily defeat any Anglo Canadian children.<sup>19</sup>

By the 1930s the school homes had small enrollments and had outlived their usefulness. The Vegreville home closed in 1938; reduced to six students, the last United Church home in Radway closed at the end of 1944.<sup>20</sup> As roads improved and more district schools opened, younger Ukrainian children attended schools nearer home, while older students could live in the Michael (Mykhailo) Hrushevsky Institute in Edmonton, if necessary. As a result, the United Church concentrated its mission work on social centres in Smoky Lake and Vilna. Staffed by a married couple or two female missionaries, each multipurpose building was used for young people's clubs, lectures, games, movies and the usual religious services and Sunday School.

The small number of Ukrainian Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church congregations were not self-supporting; nor did they ever involve a significant percentage of the Ukrainian population. In some instances Ukrainians attended Protestant services because others were not available. In Andrew, until a Ukrainian Orthodox church was built, Ukrainians attended the local Presbyterian, and later, United Church served by Rev. Theodor Bay.<sup>21</sup> Protestants generally had limited success in attracting young Ukrainians to their Sunday Schools, C.G.I.T. clubs and young people's groups in the social centres. Some came out of curiosity or because activity by the local *narodnyi dim* (national home/community centre) did not provide such alternative activities as Ukrainian choirs or dance groups. The children rarely came for religious reasons, nor did they usually convert.

For converts to join a Protestant church, especially in the early years, was to deny one's ethnicity. A Methodist missionary in Chipman observed in 1913:

There is a marked national spirit abroad in the air, and many feel that to leave their church is to drop their nationality. "He is not Russian," as a woman once said, "he is a Baptist."<sup>22</sup>

Converts were often ostracized by the rest of the community and Ukrainian pastors were looked upon as "hirelings" who had sold themselves to the "English."<sup>23</sup> The conflicting values often affected family relations:

After her conversion she took a firm stand on many moral questions, much to the disapproval of her family, who, while they did not actually break relationship with her, showed in many ways their antipathy to her new life and her earnest desire for their salvation.<sup>24</sup>

Young men who attended Protestant services against the will of their parents were sometimes forced to leave home because of their beliefs.<sup>25</sup> Paul Crath (Pavlo Krat), a prominent United Church minister, reported in the 1930s that converts did not become leaders in the Ukrainian community as the missionaries had hoped, but were virtually outcasts without influence.<sup>26</sup>

Among cultural changes, conversion affected clothing styles and recreational activities. Converts were encouraged to abandon traditional dress

and other visible signs of Ukrainian ethnicity; recreational customs, especially such as involved dancing and alcohol, were proscribed. Dancing was especially tempting, as a Methodist missionary in Pakan noted in 1909:

The Easter festivities were a source of testing to these young men. The older of them was noted as the best dancer of the community, and his friends could not understand his self-denial for conscience sake. Their fidelity to God is very inspiring.<sup>27</sup>

In Wahstao the two female missionaries, believing they had the right to regulate the standards of the community, actually tried to stop a dance in 1910.<sup>28</sup> With appropriate passages marked in their Bibles, they asked the host to permit them to read to the guests. When the men refused and only the women listened, the missionaries left in defeat. When a dance was called the following Sunday, the missionaries, to save their small flock from sin, prolonged their evening service and made certain that all went straight home. Converts also either abandoned or modified traditional customs associated with Christmas, Easter and weddings. At a wedding ceremony of a young Ukrainian couple in the 1930s, a mother who bemoaned the lack of lighted candles was reprimanded by United Church members who pointed out that candles were not needed as Jesus was the Light of the World.<sup>29</sup>

As an example to other Ukrainians, the Methodist WMS published a pamphlet about the life of a model convert, *Tsea A Mission School Girl at Wahstao*, a young Ukrainian girl who left the mission home and married a Ukrainian man. Settled in her new home, an "English house" similar to the mission house, she refused to attend the local Ukrainian church because it "did not give her the soulfood she needed." Mortally ill, she insisted that her Bible, not a cross, be placed in the coffin with her body when she died.<sup>30</sup>

The Protestant mission's greatest influence was over the school home alumni, usually second-generation Ukrainian Canadians, who can be divided into three groups. The first, a small minority, converted to Protestantism, often changed their names and with their Canadian education were more readily accepted into Anglo Canadian society.

A second group accepted the ethnic stereotype imposed by the missionaries and developed a highly negative self-definition, accompanied by an inferiority complex. Also included in this group were students influenced by prejudiced Anglo Canadian teachers in public schools.<sup>31</sup> Members of the group remained in the Ukrainian community and even retained nominal membership in the traditional churches, frequently for professional reasons; at the same time, many shortened or Anglicized their names.

A third group—the vast majority of school home residents—reacted to the assimilatory pressures by developing a strong attachment to their ethnic identity. Many became leaders in the Ukrainian nationalist movement and in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. If at university, they rejected assimilation in favour of Ukrainian cultural activity and later occupied executive positions in various educational, religious, professional and community organizations.<sup>32</sup>

In the end, the Protestant home mission programme had a much greater cultural than religious impact on the Ukrainian Canadian community. The missionaries introduced the Ukrainian immigrants to new foods, types of recreation and styles of clothing and provided medical services and educational opportunities. For most, however, the mission programme's emphasis on assimilation, strengthened their identification between Ukrainian ethnicity and the traditional Ukrainian churches.

## Notes

1. W. T. Gunn, *His Dominion* (Canada 1917).
2. N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Studies in Religious Sciences Religieuses* 2 (1972-3): 315-25, and "The Religion of WASPs," *Christian Outlook* 19, no. 2 (April 1964): 3-7.
3. For Baptist views on immigrants and their cultures, see C. J. Cameron, *Foreigners or Canadians?* (Toronto 1913), and C. H. Shutt and C. J. Cameron, *The Call of Our Own Land* (Toronto 1922); for Presbyterian views, see R. G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto 1912); for Methodist views, see W. F. Osbourne, "Neo-Latins Versus Teutons," *Christian Guardian* (6 May 1903): 8.
4. *Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church*, 1905-6, xiii; W. D. Reid, "Mission Work in Alberta," *Home Mission Pioneer* (January 1911): 156.
5. R. A. Falconer, "The Opportunity of the Present," *Home Mission Pioneer* (June 1912): 49.
6. "The Modern Dance," *Presbyterian Record* (April 1914): 180.
7. " 'Language' churches exist primarily for those who cannot understand English and for those who have just come out as immigrants. The constituency has therefore a changing and transient character. Another part of the 'language' churches' function is to help non-Anglo-Saxon people become merged or assimilated into the community and the church life of the district in which they live. The second and third generations speaking English readily are encouraged to join and share in the life of the regular churches in their own areas." C. MacDonald, *From Lakes to Northern Lights* (Toronto 1951), 53-4.
8. Gunn, 224-31.
9. "The True Place of Medical Missions in the Church's Work," *Missionary Messenger* (March 1915): 74.
10. F. O. Gilbert, "A Missionary Doctor in the Foreign Colonies in Canada," *ibid.*, 76.
11. E. A. McLean, "Kolokreeka Mission Pakan Alta.," *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada*, 1909-10, ciii.
12. "The work of the WHMS, As presented by Mrs. J. A. MacDonald to the General Assembly," *Home Mission Pioneer* (November 1912): 118.
13. The Ruthenian Girls' Home, a Methodist WMS mission, opened in 1908 in Edmonton to serve Ukrainian girls from rural areas who worked or attended school in the city. Besides offering residence and nightclasses, the home functioned as an employment agency. The missionaries discouraged jobs in restaurants, hotels and factories in favour of private Anglo Canadian homes. Some employers allowed their maids to attend night school in the Ruthenian Girls' Home. J. K. Munro, *The Ruthenian Home* (Edmonton n.d.).

14. A. A. Sanford, "Wahstao, Alberta," *WMS Annual Report*, 1911–12, cxii.
15. "Let us educate young Ruthenians who in their turn will educate their own people. Let us help those who are trying to introduce amongst them the elements of a pure and free and democratic religion." A. J. Hunter, "The Future of the Foreign Immigrant," *Home Mission Pioneer* (February 1910): 159.
16. H. Johnson, "Children of Vegreville Homes: Ruthenian and Slav," *Presbyterian Record* (June 1916): 267.
17. "I have noticed that children who come from the poorer and under [*sic*] types of Ukrainian homes are anxious to forget their origin and desire to become absorbed among the English-speaking people." A. J. Hunter, "Report of the Educational Work of Teulon," n.d., 5. Typescript in Cormie Papers, United Church Archives, Conference of Manitoba and North-West Ontario, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
18. R. Johnson, "Ruthenian Pupils Note Degrading Customs," *Missionary Messenger* (May 1916): 150.
19. D. Strachan, "God's Word at Work in Our School Homes in Canada," *Presbyterian Record* (March 1918): 82.
20. *The United Church of Canada: Year Book*, 1945, 188.
21. L. Semeniuk (ed.), *Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District* (Andrew 1980), 125.
22. E. G. Chace, "Chipman Alberta," *WMS Annual Report*, 1912–1913, cxxxiv.
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24. W. H. Pike, *Wahstao "The Light on a Hill": The Story of the Work at Wahstao* (Toronto 1917), unpaginated.
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26. P. G. Crath, "A Statement of the Ukrainian Mission Work of the United Church of Canada," n.d., 1. Typescript in Cormie Papers, United Church Archives, Conference of Manitoba and North-West Ontario, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
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29. J. I. MacKay, *The World in Canada* (Toronto 1938), 105.
30. E. G. Chace, *Tsea A Mission School Girl at Wahstao* (Toronto, n.d.), unpaginated.
31. D. R. Hughes and E. Kallen, *An Anthology of Racism: Canadian Dimensions* (Montreal 1974), 96.
32. J. M. Lazarenko (ed.), *The Ukrainian Pioneers in Alberta, Canada* (Edmonton 1970), 356–8.





Farmers attend Ukrainian Catholic mass, Leeshore district, 1920 (Bobersky Collection Ba140)



Ukrainian Catholic congregation, Mundare, ca. 1930 (Devlin Collection 500735)





Children in care of Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, Mundare, 1920  
(Bobersky Collection, Oseredok, Winnipeg, Ba284)



Ukrainian Presbyterian congregation, Edmonton, 1915 (Dragan Collection, Public  
Archives Canada 88470)



*Narodnyi dim*, built in Smoky Lake in 1921 (Ratsoy Collection photo 1935, UV499)



Ukrainian Labor-Farmer Temple Association *Narodnyi Dim*, Vegreville, 1928 (United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto)



Cast of Ukrainian drama "The Enslaved," Cardiff, 1918 (Woywitka Collection, Glenbow Museum, Calgary NA-2513-7)



Choral group and string orchestra, Shevchenko *Narodnyi Dim*, Vegreville, ca. 1924 (Bellegay Collection, Public Archives Alberta UV40)





# THE “OPEN-AIR” MUSEUM



# The Outdoor Architectural Museum

James M. Fitch

## *Introduction*

Museums began as repositories for all sorts of homeless artifacts which could no longer survive in their original habitat. At first mere collections reflecting the tastes and idiosyncrasies of their owners, modern museums have been transformed into cultural institutions of prime importance. Their task, however, is fundamentally the same: to provide optimal environmental conditions for the study and enjoyment of rare and/or valuable artifacts, small enough to be moved easily.

For the preservation of larger objects, such as complete buildings, the curatorial problems until recently were handled on an *ad hoc*, pragmatic basis. A range of museological institutions was invented: the historical village (Williamsburg); the historic district (Vieux Carre); the historic house museum (Mount Vernon); the outdoor architectural museum (Skansen).

## *Historical Background*

As standard art museums in Europe extended their collections to include archaeological fragments (Elgin Marbles, British Museum; Altar of Pergamon, Berlin) and decorative arts such as furniture, furnishings and interior architecture (*Kunstgewerbe*, Vienna; Victoria and Albert, London), museums of fine arts in the United States created the "historic room." It was a museological response to preserve decorative arts materials, to display them in authentic or, at least, appropriate contexts and occasionally to save an isolated room of an historic building in the course of the demolition. Perhaps the largest and most varied collection of historic rooms is that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which ranges from a first-century Pompeian bedchamber to Venetian, French and English interiors and the American wing.

The outdoor architectural museum (*plein air* in French, *Greiluftmuseum* in German) is a more recent institutional invention than the standard art or historical museum. It is ordinarily dated from 1891, the year in which a famous Swedish folklorist, Arthur Hazelius, established Skansen on what was then the outskirts of Stockholm. Dissatisfied with anthropological and ethnographic museums which not only collected small artifacts (costumes, tools, household fabrics) that could easily be housed in conventional museums, but also exhibited them in isolation from the physical contexts and lifestyles that had produced them, Hazelius set out to create a national museum of folk architecture and handicrafts, as comprehensive as the great art museums dedicated to the presentation of high-style, urbane art. In the century since Skansen first opened, it has become the prototype for museums of folk life in many countries around the world. In some smaller ones like Romania, Denmark, Norway and Finland, the outdoor museums are viewed as authentically national collections, representing regional variations of village and vernacular buildings of every sort, from beehives to churches.

Initially, as at Skansen, the outdoor museum was usually an *ad hoc* collection of artifacts with different origins, casually dispersed in the landscape. The installation was visually disconcerting and didactically difficult, since it presented in one field of vision artifacts which in real life would never be experienced together. Consequently, in such newer museums as *Frilandsmuseet* outside Copenhagen and Old World Wisconsin, large tracts of empty farmland are the setting for collections of farm and village structures from all principal districts of Denmark and Wisconsin respectively. Each group of buildings is laid out and landscaped as a visual unit, with the houses, barns and surrounding fields separated and screened from adjacent displays by heavy plantings of trees. The effort at maximum verisimilitude extends to importing the indigenous flora of each district or region. The Copenhagen museum has other interesting features. Although the entire plant is immaculate, traditional housekeeping means are used. There are no mown lawns and all grass is cropped by domestic animals (cattle, sheep, goats), usually neutered males to guarantee docility and to eliminate the problems of caring for the young.

To achieve maximum verisimilitude, outdoor museums are paying increased attention to active, ongoing demonstrations of the crafts which supported the original settlements. Thus there are vegetable gardens, cultivated fields, herds of sheep and cattle, wood carving, broom making, blacksmithing and pottery making. In the houses, besides baking and butter-and cheese-making, flax is spun, wool carded and quilts made. The enormous popularity of such activities is a measure of the hunger of modern industrialized people to see first hand how things are made. Such activities are, of course, "artificial," but no more so than any museum function where, by definition, artifacts and processes must be removed from their real-life context to be exhibited at all. In fact, by this narrow definition all formal academic training is "artificial."

In very large and diverse countries such as China, the Soviet Union, Canada and the United States, the concept of a single comprehensive national

museum of architecture is probably unworkable. Among the notable regional museums which have emerged in the United States are Old Sturbridge Village, Shelburne, Cooperstown, Old Bethpage Village and Old World Wisconsin.

The preservation of vernacular architecture and folkloristic artifacts preceded the emergence of folk-life studies as an academic subdivision of ethnography. In fact, many of the most important American institutions began as the private hobbies of rich collectors. The Winterthur du Pont Museum in Delaware, today one of the world's greatest collections of American decorative arts and a centre of graduate studies in the field, began as the private home of Henry Francis du Pont. The same is true for Shelburne, near Burlington, Vermont, the museum of Americana established by the J. Watson Webbs; Greenfield Village, the museum of Americana established by Henry Ford as part of his museum at Dearborn, Michigan; and Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, the creation of the two Wells brothers.

The Winterthur collection is housed entirely in the great mansion of the du Pont family. All the others, however, are typical outdoor museums, with the old buildings in which the artifacts are displayed themselves constituting part of the collection. The collections are highly idiosyncratic, reflecting the prejudices and preferences of strong-willed and immensely wealthy amateurs. Thus the Webb museum boasts enormous collections of decoys, quilts and wooden Indians, alongside the family railroad train, the last of the Lake Champlain steamships and a lighthouse—the latter two on dry land! The Ford Museum has the country's largest collection of heating and cooking stoves, while one of the du Pont's specialities was Chinese export ware. Finally, the collections are largely undocumented and uncatalogued as to provenance. As they become institutionalized, documentation is one of the great tasks facing curatorial staffs.

Some architectural museums have been created in response to the pressure of urbanization in their regions. Thus Upper Canada Village, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River above Montreal, was established as a "home" for some of the hundreds of old buildings doomed by the dams and locks of the international waterway. The displaced buildings were organized into a farm and village complex which simulates a mid-nineteenth-century riverine settlement. The same formula of moving buildings doomed by urbanization was followed by Old Bethpage Village on Long Island, structured to resemble a typical Long Island farming village at about the time of the Civil War. Major tourist attractions, the newest and most comprehensive museum of this type is Old World Wisconsin, located near the centre of the state.

Outdoor architectural museums in the Skansen tradition attempt to replicate (or at least to simulate) actual landscapes or scenographic situations. On an island in Lake Onega, north of Leningrad, however, the Soviets have created a specialized museum of far northern wooden architecture by moving in log-built houses, churches and monasteries from a wide radius around the lake. The museum does not pretend to recreate any single village and has living accommodation only for the staff and a small number of overnight visitors. At Grabovno, Bulgaria, along a little river with a very

rapid fall, a specialized museum has installed a range of old water-powered mills and workshops to demonstrate all the early presteam-engine industrial operations necessary to support a provincial town around 1800. The processes demonstrated include sawing, milling, forging, papermaking, leather-tanning and felt-making; production of wooden and ceramic utensils, etc. Each workshop is staffed by a master craftsman and apprentices; and the artifacts produced, all of traditional design, are sold in the museum stores. In the United States the closest approximation is Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, a specialized collection of buildings associated with maritime activities in New England before the advent of steam. While the museum village at Cooperstown is scenographically a typical New York State settlement, its buildings and artifacts are actually a highly specialized collection. All are of local origin (none from more than thirty miles away), and all date from the period between 1783, when the territory was first opened to settlement, and 1845, when factory-made metal tools and equipment began to replace local artifacts, mostly of wood.

Many outdoor architectural museums are actual villages and towns, philogenetically quite different from such artificial constructions as Skansen or Sturbridge in that, through some accident of history, they have survived with little disturbance to their physical fabric. Williamsburg is, of course, the most famous and the least typical American example because of all the work it has sustained. Other examples of original buildings on their original sites are Harrisburg, Vermont; Deerfield, Massachusetts; two Shaker villages at Hancock, Massachusetts, and at Lexington, Kentucky; Marshall, Michigan; Madison, Indiana; and Columbia, California. Some (Marshall and Madison) are living American towns which happily have neither grown nor withered. Others (Deerfield and the Shaker settlements) have little or no permanent population and function as museums. For all of them, tourism is a substantial and growing economic factor.

All the outdoor architectural museums described above are, in effect, collections of "authenticated antiques"—that is, artifacts (buildings, furnishings, artworks and tools) whose provenance has been firmly established by scholars. Such institutions (and especially historic houses) are frequently criticized for being "dead," "inert," "lifeless" for celebrating upper-class, urbane life. There is some substance to such charges since focusing on artifacts which are valuable antiques often does single out the wealthy connoisseur or collector. As a result, there is a growing tendency in architectural museums to interpret the artifact "actively," together with documentary materials to teach history in a more dynamic way. Emphasis is more upon the processes supported by the artifacts than upon the artifacts themselves.

The result is more demonstration activities to show the spectator how a given historical process actually worked: how hams were smoked, lard rendered or bread baked. The active recreation is very popular with a public divorced from first-hand knowledge of how anything is made. When structured to permit participation, it becomes even more attractive, especially to young people. Such participatory programmes, however, have negative

aspects. The process may be hazardous for the unskilled (e.g., splitting wood shingles or cooking on an open fire), and the antiques used may be too rare or fragile for use by any but experts.

In this context, two unusual institutions—Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts and the Historical Archaeological Institute in Lejre, Denmark—merit special attention. Both see active teaching as the paramount function of the outdoor architectural museum. Both are based upon human settlements which no longer exist. The actual Plimoth Plantation of 1621 is buried under the modern town of Plymouth, Massachusetts; prehistoric Lejre vanished millenia ago in the Danish bogs. Without authentic artifacts (buildings, tools, furnishings), both museums use only replicas and facsimiles whose accuracy is based upon research. Such a situation permits the free use of artifacts without extravagant concern about breakage, damage or theft. In terms of archival and documentary resources, however, Plimoth Plantation not only dates from a historical period, but was also richly documented by a population which was both literate and litigious. It left a written record of sermons, law suits, land titles, wills, deeds and inventories so voluminous that it is possible to create biographies of practically all the early generations of Pilgrim settlers. At Lejre, on the other hand, there is no written record at all. The only resource is artifactual: organic remains of people, animals, tools and houses which the acid peat bogs conserved astonishingly well. Even so, there are enormous gaps and the recreation of the Lejre lifestyle requires construction of facsimiles of everything, followed by testing to confirm actual performance of assumed tasks.





Townsite, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV Collection JBI)







Kitchen in Pylypow (Pillipiw) House, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV Collection JB2)





Costumed interpreter shredding cabbage, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV Collection R005-10)









School children tour Buczacz Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV Collection 2.1-17)

# **The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village: Interpreting Ukrainian Canadian History**

Sandra Thomson

## *The Nature of The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village*

The idea of creating a historic village to commemorate the settlement of east central Alberta by Ukrainian pioneers was first envisioned by a small group of descendants who formed the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Society in the fall of 1971. Their principal aim was to develop a "heritage village" through displays and demonstrations of authentic structures, furnishings and handicrafts used in the past. Over the next four years the society received federal grants and donations from private industry and the community to develop a small historic village, which portrayed settlement once typical in parkland Alberta. Located fifty kilometres east of Edmonton on Highway 16, the core of the historic village consisted of several relocated historic structures and modern replicas.

In 1975, when the society found itself unable to continue with the project, the provincial government purchased the site to protect the initial investment and to ensure the preservation of the historic structures already in place. Administered by the Department of Culture in Alberta, the site since 1981 has been part of the Historic Sites Service Branch—one of the largest of twelve historic sites operated by the branch.

Covering some 320 acres immediately south of the highway, along the eastern boundary of Elk Island National Park, the site is divided into two distinct areas by the natural barrier formed by Goose Lake and its wetlands: a historic presentation with some thirty-three historic buildings west of the lake and supporting visitor services and administrative facilities on its east side. The village project is a joint development that has involved the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the Archeological Survey of Alberta and the Department of Public Works, Supplies and Services. It is scheduled for completion in 1989.

As an outdoor historical museum, the Ukrainian Village is situated in the southwest corner of the region of historic Ukrainian settlement in east central Alberta, the earliest and largest Ukrainian bloc in Canada. Until recently many physical remnants of the past could still be found. Improvements in the economy of Alberta, however, have left their mark on the bloc, and the major changes have affected the landscape and the lifestyle of its population. The creation of the Village has made it possible to recreate and illustrate a unique part of Alberta's past for future generations.

### *Village Goals and Objectives*

Since the Department of Culture restores and furnishes historic buildings to interpret them, the main goal of the Village is "to create in the visitor an awareness and a broad understanding of early Ukrainian settlement in east central Alberta, in terms of physical representation, historical context, and its significance both for Ukrainian Canadians and to Canada."

The nine objectives of the Village are found in the site's Interpretation Programme:

1. The programme content, based on the story of early Ukrainian settlement in east central Alberta, shall demonstrate the settlement's two major characteristics: how the historic experience and traditions of Ukrainians influenced Canadian development and how the attitudes and traditions of Ukrainian settlers were modified by their Canadian experience.
2. The programme shall communicate social, cultural and technological information in a historical environment where the visitor experiences both the lifestyles and traditions of the early Ukrainian settlers and the transitions that resulted.
3. The programme shall strive for a total visitor experience through a co-ordinated presentation of interpretive displays in the Visitor Reception Centre and on site. Parallels shall be drawn between the visitor's physical movement through the site and the interpretive storyline based on Ukraine's history and the nature of immigration, settlement and community development in Canada. Visitors may be guided to sites of related historic interest to complement their experience at the Village.
4. The programme shall present a "living history" through animation, visitor participation and surroundings that reflect a sense of the early period.
5. The programme shall present desired information at two or three levels of detail to allow for differing lengths of time on the site and differing levels of interest and knowledge.
6. The programme shall update presentations to accommodate new research information and allow for flexibility in presentation in response to visitor effect and off-site extension programmes.



7. The programme shall encourage community involvement through use of the Village and the extension of services into locations other than the Village.
8. The programme shall encourage a continuing interest in Ukrainian settlement.
9. The programme shall foster positive attitudes toward the preservation and conservation of historical resources.

### *Meeting Village Goals and Objectives*

The main emphasis of the Village is on the fourth programme objective, whose "living history" is presented through animation, visitor participation and sights, and sounds and smells that reflect a sense of the early period. As long as the project is under development, it is not possible for the Village to present a total living-history approach, for it is not wise to encourage visitors to walk back into time amid modern earth-moving equipment, construction crews in hard hats and half-finished landscaping. However, the young women who invite visitors into the Pylypow House, excusing themselves as they mind the cooking on the wood-burning stove, are attempting living history.

Living history as "a means of bringing humanity, reality, and depth to the interpretive function"<sup>1</sup> is one of the more recent developments in historical interpretation. Among the approaches are first-person interpretations where the language, dress, mannerisms, tools, techniques, attitudes and mores of a particular time are designed to involve the visitor; dramatic presentations; craft and skill demonstrations; and cultural festivals. To the Village, living history is both the best means of presenting the past and a creative method of expression. Living history requires much time, research and many props (furnishings, machinery, textiles, the buildings themselves). And staff must be carefully selected and trained to ensure natural and believable role-playing.

What historical significance may living history have? In a recent book, *Time Machines: The World of Living History*, the author noted that people enjoyed vicarious time travel to escape the tyranny of abstract time; as a nostalgic preference for a particular epoch in the past; and out of curiosity about everyday life in a specific historical period.<sup>2</sup> There are three characteristics that ensure the historical significance of living history. First, living history challenges us to think and feel; all the senses are involved, forcing participants to experience the past as fully as possible. Because one can never be sure that any sense of the recreated past is authentic, the Village conducts extensive research and resists the temptation to claim too much. Thus four research reports are required for each building: one for past physical structure, another for changes in the building, a third for the building's furnishings and textiles and still another for the lifestyle of the people who lived in the building (daily routine, folk traditions, rituals).

Second, living history is all-encompassing. It lies outside the boundary of academic history, thrives on independence and determines its own way to approach historical truth. Living historians can be more critical of themselves than outsiders. The hostility generated in the Village's Project Planning Team when a programme chief finds a colleague wanting in dedication to accuracy can be enlightening. Third, living history rejects a linear view of the past. It shows that academicians have often failed to interpret the everyday reality of ordinary people. In attempting to remedy the neglect, the Village emphasizes primary sources, oral histories and research into material culture. It tries to steep itself in the historical context of a particular time and place so as to help its visitors to understand and feel the life of the first Ukrainian pioneers.

### *The Several Purposes of the Ukrainian Village*

*As a historic restoration.* The Village, as a collection of thirty-three historic buildings which illustrate the life of Alberta's first Ukrainians, is the largest restoration project under development in Canada. Its purpose is to preserve and reconstruct homesteads and pioneer towns; collect artifacts and farm implements for the buildings and farms; demonstrate building and farming techniques and the business, cultural and spiritual life of such communities; and provide public and school programmes that allow students to understand and enjoy the past.

*As a "rememberer" of the past.* Besides saving buildings, furniture and tools from the past, the Village is an agent, alongside historians, writers and artists, for remembering the everyday reality of the ordinary Ukrainians who pioneered Alberta. Since what is not remembered disappears from common memory, a memory that disappears or is allowed to disappear takes a historical experience into oblivion. Thus to remember is to argue that what happened was—and still is—important; conversely, to argue that the past is important is to demand that we remember it. The Ukrainian Village has thus a major role to pass on the memory of pioneer joy, pain, hardships and successes to a future generation of assimilated, urbanized and cosseted descendants.

*As an official recognition of the Ukrainian contribution to Alberta's past.* Through its commitment to the Village as a multi-million dollar tourist attraction, with a major physical plant, a major employer and a large research commitment, the provincial government officially recognizes the Ukrainian settlement experience as an important part of Alberta's past. The Village recognizes Ukrainians as builders and contributors to the province's development and as part of mainstream Alberta history, not just some colourful offshoot.

*As an important member of the community.* In the 1984 summer season 46,000 people visited the Village, an increase of 59 per cent over the previous year. (The present goal is at least 120,000 visitors annually.) There were also other signs that the Village was beginning to take its place in the community.

In 1984 volunteer possibilities were identified at the Village and recruitment began. To date, 3,000 volunteer hours have been contributed to perform traditional music, skills and crafts and to assist with research, curatorial and office work.

At the same time, the Village was approached by a group of individuals who wished to assist with programme delivery. On the advice of the Village's Advisory Board, the Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society was formed as an autonomous, legally incorporated, non-profit body to serve as a liaison between the Village and the general public; to respond to requests for assistance from the Village manager; to promote the Village and encourage use of its facilities; to help provide a core of volunteers to perform functions not being provided by the staff; to help manage food kiosks, the craft and souvenir shops and other ancillary activities not directly related to the Village's mandate; and to receive donations and undertake fundraising projects.

*As a generator in the local economy.* The Village is a local consumer of goods and services. It is also a local employer, with some forty permanent and non-permanent staff, twelve interns and sixty seasonal workers. As a tourist attraction, it marries historical preservation and education with local economic benefit. Tourist-associated industries increase provincial taxation revenues, and recent statistics have shown that approximately 30 per cent of every tourist dollar is spent during a visit to a historic or cultural resource.

## Conclusion

The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village has a strong commitment to research and publication. Its staff is a professional team of researchers, curators, conservators, display artists, restoration designers and builders, interpretive planners, public programmers and front-line interpreters. It provides an opportunity to step back into history and escape the tyranny of the present. It demonstrates a strong belief in the importance of Alberta's Ukrainian past. It furnishes an opportunity for individual and group community involvement. And finally it is committed to a return on the invested capital dollar by encouraging the local tourist industry. The Village, still under development, has had a long adolescence and all eagerly await its maturity.

## Notes

1. I. L. Garrison, "Living Interpretation," in G. W. Sharpe (ed.), *Interpreting the Environment* (2nd ed.; New York 1982), 215-35.
2. J. Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville 1984), 179-93.

## Living History: A Panel on the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village

Kathleen Conzen, James Fitch, Matti Kaups, Sandra Thomson

*Carl Betke* (moderator): It is now time to consider how the Ukrainian historical experience in east central Alberta can best be presented through the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. To help us, we have four distinguished panelists: Dr. Kathleen Conzen, specialist in ethnic immigrant history; Dr. James Marston Fitch, who has directed a graduate programme in historical structural preservation; Dr. Matti Kaups, specialist in ethnic immigrant historical geography and material culture; and Dr. Sandra Thomson, responsible for site management at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. The first three have frequently been called upon as consultants in the development of various open-air museums, and their reflections are designed to complement the particular experiences of the Village as related by Dr. Thomson.

*Kathleen Conzen*: My observations will concentrate on the content of the Village and the way it is presented. The issue of content flows from what one wants to present. History for most North Americans is, I think, the past. The frequent complaint, certainly heard often about the present [Reagan] administration in the United States, is that Americans have no sense of history. They do have a sense of history, but it is a history that is very separate from them, that exists some place in the past. It can be visited perhaps for enjoyment but it has no connection with the present.

To me, the great danger of a site such as this Village is that it can encourage the same kind of ahistorical sense. The great opportunity, on the other hand, is that it can assist people to appreciate or follow emotionally (and intellectually) some of the links between the past and the present. How does one do that? One way is the way it is being done here through buildings from different eras to demonstrate the

progression. Another way is to preserve some of the historical layering in individual buildings. We all live in homes that change over time; it is not realistic to place the emphasis on one particular date. A third way to link past and present is to go beyond the structures themselves. When I went through the exhibit here, it sort of stayed on the surface of life, with the houses, the agricultural techniques and the embroidery on clothes. It did not try to get at the values underneath. We know that what is presented has vanished. But we also know that history is a dialectic, that out of the past emerges a present and out of the present a future. And so to present the underlying values is a good way to get at the living past, at the history that has made us what we are today.

An example is the exhibit "Six Generations Here" at Old World Wisconsin. To complement the one lovely old Pomeranian farmhouse, a family of Pomeranian origin occupying the same land for six generations was identified (not the people associated with the house but from nearby). They were inveterate collectors and for four generations they had also been hobby photographers and had boxes full of family pictures. Although now scattered all over the United States, the family had a strong historical sense and was willing to bare the connections that began with three people in one primitive little log cabin in Wisconsin and led to modern America.

Another minor idea as to content is to encourage movement out from the site into the community. The Village is an artificial recreation, and one longs to see the heritage in the community itself. And so guides, maps and information about where to go are needed.

In terms of presentation, I have two points. The first grows out of the Wisconsin experience and focuses on the perennial problem: does one present the really great building or the typical one? The Pomeranian farm house in Old World Wisconsin is a marvelous half-timbered building—totally atypical. But very few early Wisconsin Germans ever lived in such houses, and when you interpret it you therefore have a great problem.

My second point refers to living history. As an intelligent adult, I find myself enormously embarrassed by first-person presentations which seem to require me to play a role—and I am not an actress. Such presentations are great with children but they tend to stifle intelligent questions from adults, because it is much harder to interrupt individuals pretending to be Aunt Sophie cooking. What happens—and I say this not only because of my personality but because of my sense of history—is that I am prevented from trying to make sense of things. An interpretation is forced on me which reinforces the view of the past as something back there. It is, after all, only one particular version. And quite ironically, rather than being drawn into the presentation, I am encouraged to distance myself from it, because it is something I am very familiar with—it is television. It is increasingly almost like an interactive computer game: if you say this, you will get that response from



the interpreter. One is not encouraged to see the connections between the past and present. In actual practice, where there are living-history interpreters, I tend to go in the off-season when I can pull people out of their roles and deal with them as one intelligent adult to another.

*Carl Betke:* Do you have in mind living-history role-playing that you simply look at or that in which you are actually invited to engage?

*Kathleen Conzen:* The first tends to move into the second, and the attempt is made to draw people in. If it is really well done, it is fine. At Plimoth Plantation it works much better. Maybe it is because I know many people there and the training they have had as well as the research on which their roles are based.

*Sandra Thomson:* This exactly has been our experience at the Village. We examined whether we were going to do first-person or third-person history. We chose first-person narration, mostly with children because they are willing to suspend disbelief. To them the role player is really Annie or Sophie or whoever. With adults, various complications arose when the issue was examined. For one thing, first-person narration requires much intensive training, yet to date we have had only seasonal staff with, at best, three weeks training, which is not enough to turn someone into a 1920s Ukrainian pioneer. Staff must also be willing to undertake role-playing, which is a matter of attitude. There is also the matter of respect, for the portrayal is of real persons, who in some cases are still alive. One day a guide in the Pylypow House looked up and saw an older lady who said, "I used to wear that dress, yah, that is like the dress I wore." The woman was Annie Pylypow (Pillipiwi), whom the guide was portraying. In a site dealing with history that is only sixty years old one can run into that.

Our guides generally do a fair amount of third-person narration while in the costume and engaged in all the activities of the period. If they are stopped, they speak normally and answer questions. They would not say, "I am Annie (or Marusia or Bohdan) and I am sorry I do not know anything past 1925 because I am a 1925-person!"

*Kathleen Conzen:* I think that the more role-playing there is, the more it distances the viewer from the past. It makes the past entertainment. It makes it more difficult to draw fundamental links and help the individual to see how the past relates to the present. Still, it does sound like the Village is working its way toward a good, happy medium.

*Sandra Thomson:* We have two kinds of interpreters. Some we call building attendants, people in costume who are assigned to a building or an area with specific duties to be performed; others are guides who can lead people through the site without role-playing. Visitors demand various

kinds of services, and where one person may be absolutely fascinated by first-person narration, another will be less impressed.

*James M. Fitch:* There is no unique solution to this problem. However, an active exhibit that crosses over from demonstration to participation encourages involvement that is more vivid. In the course of developing programmes for children on Statten Island, outside New York, we considered traditional cooking in an 1839 house that had just been restored. Through research we had the family grocery bills for seven early years and knew the foods they ate. The date was handy because it was post-fireplace or stove cooking, which is safer. After a competent person demonstrated the cooking of traditional recipes, the children did something similar in another section without using antique equipment or cooking on coal ranges. In churning, for example, they could use a little Sears Roebuck churn, because the principle did not depend upon having a crockery with a huge plunger. So there the impact is broadened or deepened where one can be a participant as well as a spectator.

*Sandra Thomson:* Among such programmes, we have considered overnights, where children or adults spend twenty-four hours and through activities (including chores) experience a whole-day, pioneer cycle. With the site under development, we are still hesitant to do such things while our big concern is to complete the restoration and the furnishings, but it is an idea that keeps coming up. The secret basement with its modern facilities in the Hawreliak House makes the building fit for overnights. What fascinated me about Jay Anderson's *Time Machines: The World of Living History* was the reference to military-history buffs in the United States who actually lived through a historic weekend, learning all about their costumes (down to the buttons), their firearms and how to march. I do not know whether such fascination with history exists in Canada, but we do not have such weekend history buffs in the local area near the Village.

*Carl Betke:* It sounds as though a basic principle will have to be flexibility of response to meet the needs of various people.

*Sandra Thomson:* The Ukrainian Village ought to publicize the possibilities to test their popularity. Part of the reason public demand is unpredictable is that the public does not know what could be made available. It is a kind of give and take all the time.

In the matter of going out from the Village into the community, driving tours of east central Alberta have been discussed. If people are to come from all parts of Canada and the world, they deserve more than just a half day's experience. In the Interpretation Programme, too, an introduction to the history of the area would enable people to tour the neighbouring little towns and look at the historical resources *in situ*.

Finally, the reference to "Six Generations" reminds me of an anecdote. A couple of years ago, two Village guides in the Pylypow House realized that one was the granddaughter of Ivan Pylypow (Pillipiw) and the other was the grandson of a man who once worked for Pylypow. The next day the young man brought his grandfather who sat beside the wood stove and, chatting away, put his foot up exactly, he said, as he used to do in the Pylypow kitchen. It was as if history were continuing. The two young people were amazed that they could have such a historical connection.

*Matti Kaups:* I wish first to comment on the role of folk museums in education and then to make an outlandish proposal. When primary- and secondary-school students in Sweden, Finland and Norway study history, they are assigned papers about lifestyles in the past. The students visit museums and use the books, monographs and pamphlets which museums publish. This function of outdoor museums in Scandinavia is even more important in North America. I am familiar with the history texts used in Minnesota. Usually they begin with Minnesota as the land of 10,000 lakes, go on to the Indians and the arrival of the first white settlers and then the farmers, the lumber frontier and the iron ranges. The state simply develops with little mention of the ethnic groups who came to Minnesota. In Alberta, on the other hand, the Village can be very helpful in getting school children to experience Ukrainian history as part of Alberta history.

I would also insist that commercialism and historic preservation are compatible. My own town of Dundin in Estonia, established in 1154 and invaded by Danes, Germans, Swedes and Russians, must have been quite a place. Even so, nothing was happening to its magnificent downtown, despite buildings that went back to the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When I visited it in 1974, I was amazed at its decay. When I returned in 1976, I talked to the City Planning Commission and the City Historic Preservation Commission and indicated that such a city in the United States would make millions. In a pamphlet published by Intourist in the Soviet Union I learned that Dundin has more medieval buildings than any other city in northern Europe. Finally, as visits by tourists with hard currency increased, the Soviet government, grasping reality, set aside funds for the city's historic renovation and preservation. Today a Polish company with a budget to the year 2000 is restoring it. There is nothing wrong with commercialism.

As for the outlandish proposal, what we need in folk museums in North America is buildings from Europe. When I walk into Old World Wisconsin, I see German, Finnish and Swiss farms in America. But why not recreate in museums such as this Village farmsteads from Bukovyna and Galicia? It would likely not be feasible to transport buildings from western Ukraine, but one could certainly recreate and furnish them with

artifacts here. Visitors need more than the Ukrainian experience in Canada; they need the experience of Ukraine in the 1890s. And as a footnote, bear in mind that, with the space available and the marvelous plan, the Ukrainian experience in Canada should not end with 1925. Why not have buildings from 1970 or the year 2000? The museum will be here for one and two hundred years, so some space should be left for them.

*Robert B. Kymasz:* The Village is very lucky to have a research and collections component, for some museums do not emphasize research and others do not see collections as the main reason for their existence. Thus there can be tensions between research and collections, on the one hand, and interpretation, education, programming services and activities, on the other. At the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre in Winnipeg, for example, the old Ukrainian printing press in the basement was thrown out to create eighty-three workshop rooms! Space was needed to make Easter eggs because educational services were the priority.

Although delighted, I cannot believe that no one has yet mentioned Disneyland. I have seen directors of public museums send staff members to study Disneyland and perhaps borrow ideas. At the Village authenticity is important and contrived things and artificiality are resisted. It is good to know this.

The Ukrainian museum movement in Canada, however, is strange. None of the folk museums have taken an *in situ* farmstead and put a fence around it. Near Dauphin there is a beautiful farmstead, complete with ice house. One does not need the next fifty years to put the whole thing together. It is all there, but they are doing something else in Dauphin.

It would be good for this Village to develop a strategy to relate to other Ukrainian museums. It has the base from which to influence them as a model.

Finally, a word about museums as a business. At the National Museum, we face such questions all the time. Is the museum paying for itself? Will anyone pay to see us? One is always up against the numbers game to justify one's existence. Because Disneyland is bringing in millions, we have to do the same or we will not get the needed funds. This is what plagues public institutions.

*Sandra Thomson:* There have been contacts between the Village and the Dauphin Museum and the Ukrainian Museum in Saskatoon. The idea of networking in general is not new but it has never taken root. It came up at a recent meeting of colleagues in Edmonton who thought that meetings through the Canadian and Alberta museum associations were sufficient for Ukrainian museologists. In my view, however, we have special kinds of problems and we need to get together, at least to put

faces to names. The Ukrainian Village has gone forward to such museums as the Catholic Women's Association and the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum, but the relationship seems overwhelming because we are perceived as people with government money and full-time professional staff, whereas they see themselves as talented amateurs on a shoe-string budget. All we want, however, is a loose connection to meet mutual needs. As a government institution we feel an obligation to assist others. We have occasionally filled requests from Fort Edmonton Park, and it seems appropriate for people in the Ukrainian museum "business" to work together.

*James M. Fitch:* On the Disneyland phenomenon, if there is one principle the museum must defend categorically, it is the unique cultural value of the prototype and no facsimile can possibly equal it. In no reputable fine arts museum that exhibits five Rembrandts is one likely to see five facsimiles, regardless of how competent they are. Disneyland is the most dangerous cultural phenomenon we have invented. Its technical virtuosity makes it even more dangerous.

*Carl Betke:* In your presentation, however, did you not say something quite favourable about the facsimiles in the Plimoth Plantation?

*James M. Fitch:* No, I was not favourable. I said that, when confronted with this problem, the people at Plimoth Plantation took a particular approach. Since there was nothing about the village that was original, they decided they could make it into a culturally and socially valid activity by exploiting this very fact.

*Participant:* Living architectural museums are sanitized from a physical and social point of view. You can never really recreate an eighteenth-, nineteenth- or early twentieth-century community without distortion. And for legal reasons alone, you cannot recreate the behaviour of people at the turn of the century or two or three centuries back. The effort distorts history into nostalgia and draws a curtain across our past. At the Ukrainian Village there is fanatical dedication to the accuracy of buildings, but it is impossible to do the same thing with animation, and I would suggest that animation stop completely. Guides should take people through and allow the imagination to work from verbal descriptions of the buildings rather than attempt half-way simulation and thereby distort historical behaviour.

*James M. Fitch:* The point raised is very serious, and in certain areas ultimately not soluble. For example, in the American South, the restoration or preservation of any historical artifact—a town or a group of houses like Williamsburg—raises the whole question of black slavery. Its many sordid aspects make it practically impossible to recreate the



phenomenon of slavery in four-dimensional reality. Perhaps the most plausible solution is to do a first-rate documentary film that interprets the sordid facts with maximum veracity. However, beyond a certain point it is obvious that you cannot recreate.

*Participant:* In Europe a number of places have "Sound-and-Light" film spectacles which recreate the past. Has the Village thought of doing anything similar?

*Sandra Thomson:* We use the National Film Board movie *Teach Me to Dance*, some of which was filmed at the Village. It is a very good teaching device, especially with children, who identify with it easily. Through it, we have come to appreciate the effect of movies in delivering themes and messages.

*John Lehr:* While it is possible to run tours from the Village into the surrounding countryside, there are limitations because the materials in the pioneer homes are vulnerable to decay. Moreover, once the best examples of Ukrainian houses are identified they become targets for vandalism. I also have some difficulty with the idea of an *in situ* farmstead. It has to have a function, otherwise it is just a derelict, its condition a prelude to decay. These days you cannot have people live in old farmhouses. The people who should live there are the old folks to whom such farmsteads were a way of life. However, when they die, the site dies with them, and the matter is most difficult.

The suggestion that we recreate in the Village a typical farmstead from Bukovyna or Galicia is not at all outlandish. Frankly, any museum like this Village is ahistorical, for we group buildings and farmsteads that would never have been that close to one another. So why not create a meaningful learning experience by reconstructing one or two typical farmsteads from eastern Europe and put them in the Village to demonstrate the impact on buildings of transferring a culture thousands of miles.

*Kathleen Conzen:* When touring, it would not bother me if all the buildings were gone and if guides did not single out individual houses. One must assume that the eye is educated at the Village. We all need to learn more about reading a landscape, to see it as a heritage of what the people created. The tour therefore would focus on the system of settlement and on seeing what is out there as part of the heritage of the past. I would even take the tour into Edmonton, where there must be some neighbourhoods where Ukrainians live. And I would go even if they looked like any other neighbourhoods. That would make very clear the end of the line from the original settlement. The tour therefore is not just a guide to surviving old houses—perhaps especially not a guided tour of surviving old houses—but one to the whole landscape that was

created and its evolution over time.

*Participant:* I like the idea of recreating typical farmsteads from the Old Country. Children should see the typical appearance of buildings—if not of a whole village, then at least a household or two with everything in its proper place. But is the idea feasible?

*James M. Fitch:* Technically it is quite possible. If we can get men on the moon and monkeys into space, we could certainly get a farmhouse from Bukovyna. The long-range cultural viability of such facsimiles, however, is doubtful. Conceptually, the use of facsimiles is very perilous, for sooner or later they show up as authenticated artifacts when in fact they are fakes. There must be many ways of teaching or illustrating what life in Bukovyna was like without moving a full-scale three- or four-dimensional model of a farmhouse to this Village. However, technically it is certainly possible and Disneyland proves it. As a matter of fact, the dreadful Busch Gardens just below Williamsburg did just that. Its houses are labelled French, Bohemian and so forth, but they represent the ultimate in corrupting the genre.

*Participant:* But has the idea as an educational device even been discussed at the Village?

*Sandra Thomson:* In presenting the story of the Ukrainian pioneers we accepted the obligation of beginning in the homeland. The display in the Interpretation Centre does precisely that. The dark wood in the narrow corridor at the entrance is supposed to illustrate the Old Country's cramped spaces, and when it opens up into the large and lightly coloured room that leads into Canada, the material on the floor is supposed to remind you of stubble. The effect is likely a little too subtle, for not many visitors have noted it. A number of ways have been discussed to present the homeland—through print, photographs, film and slides. Right now we have only an interim display. In our thinking, however, we keep returning mainly to film.

We also have videocassettes for classroom use, as a result of teacher requests for information. We have given much thought to the preparation of students before they take in the site. Should they be prepared in the classroom or in our Interpretation Centre? What do we tell them? We are working to meet our responsibility to the children who visit not only from Alberta but from Saskatchewan as well.

*Radomir Bilash:* It is unfortunate that conference participants were unable to take in yesterday afternoon's training seminar for guides. This year first-person interpreters will be inhabitants in buildings and third-person interpreters will act as tour guides who bridge the gap between our time and 1925 or 1930. Although in costume, the tour guides move between

1925 and 1985 when, for example, they control the flow of crowds in the buildings. Walking into a building, a tour guide might say, "Hello Annie, I brought some people to see your building, do you mind?" Between themselves the conversation could be in Ukrainian even though the general tour is in English. It was interesting to see how guide trainees had to think ahead, anticipating problems and posing potential relationships with one another.

*Participant:* It appears that this Village lacks bilingual guides, or they function as some French guides do in eastern Canada, whose first attempt in French is to say, "I don't understand French, my French is limited," before moving into English.

*Sandra Thomson:* We face the problem of bilingual guides every year when recruiting summer staff. Out of some eighty applicants, we select forty, not all of whom are necessarily bilingual. Our goal is sufficient bilingual guides to accommodate the bilingual school children, the groups of older people who prefer Ukrainian and guests from Ukraine or Ukrainians from other countries. The ability to speak Ukrainian is an important qualification, but there are others. We need people who can deal with the public, are interested in the project and are willing to work wholeheartedly for it. To find such individuals is not easy. We advertise widely and we select carefully, but we do not always get what we are looking for. The situation is very complex, for the majority of our visitors are English-speaking, yet in recreating historic interiors their occupants would not have spoken English or would have spoken it poorly or with a heavy accent. The whole issue of language is a serious one and there are no simple solutions.



# EPILOGUE



# Oral Tradition as Resistance\*

Ian H. Angus

The purpose of this paper is to present a philosophical defence of the place of preindustrial oral traditions in the context of mass industrial culture which universalizes and homogenizes cultural expression. It will be argued that the connection of fact and validity in oral enactments is the generating foundation for cultural expression. Identity is formed through participation in a social assembly to which the individual belongs. The preindustrial fundament of culture is of particular significance for regenerating resistance to the contemporary anonymous reprocessing of culture as information. First the contemporary threat to culture will be sketched, then the significance of oral tradition for rediscovering its fundament will be outlined.

## I

The term "culture" refers, in the first place, to the opinions and beliefs which characterize groups and make their members recognizable to one another. In the second place, explicit expressions of beliefs in historical events and the creative arts bring members in cultural groups to self-consciousness, allowing a deeper perception of motives and implications of beliefs and providing a more solid foundation for their persistence in time and space. In this sense, culture is fundamentally about "identity"—the self-knowledge of groups recognizable by shared beliefs that is established in self-conscious expressions. Culture is based on the communication of experience within a group, such that the experiences of others clarify and shape those of the individual. Thus the medium (or manner) of communication that prevails at any time influences the opinions and beliefs which solidify cultural identities, and especially constitutes the *mode* of attachment to such beliefs. For this

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reason, in asking about Canadian culture, the question must be situated within the communicational context of the contemporary world.

The first thing to notice about contemporary culture is that it is an *industrial culture*. As such, there are two main forces acting externally on cultural change and expression—economy and state. The capitalist exchange economy begins by breaking down local hierarchies and traditions and substituting a production/consumption system with an inherent mechanism of accumulation. The apogee of such an expansionist economy is a universal world-system which regulates and replaces all local and particular sources of cultural identity. The modern state, and the nationalism that created it, was primarily a response to the centralizing features of the exchange economy. But in some cases, it may be said to have established the *conditions* for such an economy (more or less consciously) by substituting generalized for local authority and the conception of law as an abstract system of rules for local authority and over personal, inherited power. In Canada the role of the federal government in developing the infrastructure of economic expansion (e.g., the railways) may be thought of in this sense. At times, also, the state intervenes to *limit* and manage the effects of the economy. The leader (or “centre”) of the world-system is usually in favour of free trade since the universalizing and centralizing effect of exchange economy favours free trade. Both Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in this century have appreciated this fact. However, the peripheries of the world-system—former colonies and new nations—often need to protect themselves by setting up trade barriers to counter the advantage of size in an exchange economy—to redress the fact that there are no local advantages in a universal world-system. Canada, together with many other countries, have such trade barriers. One can view the federal government’s transfer payments which attempt to redress the inequalities between regions within Canada in this sense.

As a result of the two external factors of economy and state the internal development of industrial culture has passed through three stages. While these stages tend to overlap, they nevertheless clarify the development of culture in an industrial setting where, due to the forces of state and economy, there is continual transformation of culture and therefore of group identity.

The first stage of industrial culture is *class culture* which reflects the class character of industrial production. The unequal relationships generated by the sale of labour power in industry extend throughout the whole of society. Thus the working class and the capitalist class have different opinions and beliefs, different historical and artistic expressions, and inhabit, in effect, two different cultural worlds. The image of the nineteenth-century factory crystallizes well the first stage of industrial culture.

*Mass culture* is a feature of the twentieth century, emerging most clearly perhaps in the 1920s as the second stage of industrial culture. As the long-projected and sometimes attempted transformation of capitalist

industrial production failed to materialize, the great variety of commodities produced by new production methods began to pervade the entire culture. With the stabilization and rationalization of the system of production, the era of mass consumption appeared, beginning with consumer goods and gradually permeating the whole of culture. Mass culture replaced the "two worlds" of class culture with a single self-enclosed world of industrially produced cultural goods. The latter's mechanical reproduction established cultural uniformity and challenged the older cultural forms based on regional, ethnic and linguistic differences. In the new mass society inequalities were expressed not as different worlds of goods, but as *relative degrees of access* to uniform goods, and cultural uniqueness came to be seen as a sum of consumer choices from goods available in principle to all. Perhaps the best-known image of mass culture is the film, the apotheosis of the entertainment industry.

Today a third stage of industrial culture is emerging. It has been characterized as the "postmodern condition," the "information society," the "postindustrial society" or the "society of the image." The field is new and contested, with every characterization implying a position, a diagnosis and an evaluation. How precisely the new stage differs from the stage of mass culture is still an open question, but from its image—the computer, or more specifically, the computer-simulated video screen—the direction of the difference is clear. Jean-François Lyotard, in his report to the Quebec government on the current state of knowledge, has indicated the new relationship of economy and state which is at stake in the cultural transformation:

The mercantilization of knowledge is bound to affect the privilege the nation-states have enjoyed, and still enjoy, with respect to the production and distribution of learning. The notion that learning falls within the purview of the State, as the brain or mind of society, will become more and more outdated with the increasing strength of the opposing principle, according to which society exists and progresses only if the messages circulating within it are rich in information and easy to decode. The ideology of communicational "transparency," which goes hand in hand with the commercialization of knowledge, will begin to perceive the State as a factor of opacity and "noise." It is from this point of view that the problem of the relationship between economic and State powers threatens to arise with a new urgency.<sup>1</sup>

Within the information society the external forces operating on industrial culture come to *coincide* with the content of culture itself. The economy and state regulation pervade culture, and "information" becomes the content of culture. The main tendency of contemporary industrial culture is a convergence of economic and cultural realms in "information." In the new and contested field of the information society, the self-knowledge on which cultural identity rests is mediated through information-processing. Each cultural expression is an input into society modelled on the video screen; it is a "knowledge-commodity" insofar as the processing of culture as information colonizes and offers up for exchange the opinions, beliefs and expressions

which define the self-knowledge of cultural identities. As Marshall McLuhan has observed of the age we are now entering,

In this electric age we see ourselves being translated more and more into the form of information, moving toward the technological extension of consciousness. That is what is meant when we say that we daily know more and more about man. We mean that we can translate more and more of ourselves into other forms of expression that exceed ourselves.

By putting our physical bodies inside our extended nervous systems, by means of electric media, we set up a dynamic by which all previous technologies that are mere extensions of hands and feet and teeth and bodies, including cities—will be translated into information systems. Electromagnetic technology requires utter human docility and quiescence of meditation such as befits an organism that now wears its brain outside its skull and its nerves outside its hide. Man must serve his electric technology with the same servo-mechanistic fidelity with which he served his oracle, his canoe, his typography, and all other extensions of his physical organs. But there is this difference, that previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electric is total and inclusive. An external consensus or conscience is now as necessary as private consciousness. With the new media, however, it is also possible to store and to translate everything; and, as for speed, that is no problem. No further acceleration is possible this side of the light barrier.<sup>2</sup>

Information, like the majority of economic goods, is subject to ownership and control by multinational corporations. The reduction of culture to information not only extends throughout the contemporary world, but also reprocesses the past, for the reduction of culture to information extends to the self-knowledge of all cultural identities in time and space, history and geography. Information is not merely a new technological development, but one of universal significance for all culture. The culture of information processes all experience situated in and bounded by history and geography through a universal matrix abstracted from the concrete experience of individuals and groups—the experience of ethnocultural groups, of course, included.

Within the Canadian situation those who accept this development and its (often unstated) assumptions that only such a universal world-system can overcome the arbitrariness, hierarchy and mystification inherent in localized and particular cultures have regarded themselves as “internationalists.” More recently, they have been appropriately renamed “continentalists” under the influence of the nationalist critique which has demonstrated that the current world-system is based in the United States and involves the submergence of Canada as an independent nation within a multinational-dominated American industrial culture. Nationalists have argued that, since the world-system undermines national sovereignty and extends the unequal distribution of power and resources, state intervention is required to limit these consequences and impose the direction of national goals decided upon in the arena of parliamentary politics. Continentalism is based on the considerable power of the capitalist market economy in determining the development of industrial culture and cannot be expected to disappear as the predominant tendency



without a substantial reorientation of the population at large as well as its representatives. Its fundamental notion is that the free play of economic forces yields the most just and uncoerced choices of cultural goods. The part of politics is primarily to adjust to the mechanisms of market rationality. All local resistance to the world-system is stigmatized as irrational, parochial and romantic.

The nationalist case is based on the substantial power of the state to intervene and "steer" economic forces. Despite the undermining of national sovereignty by the multinational world-system, state power is not yet entirely extinct and can be utilized to impose political goals on the system. It is due to the nationalists that cultural politics and policy has been brought into public debate. Continentalism in Canada has prevailed throughout the twentieth century in the guise of the Liberal party. Except for the Diefenbaker interlude, the force of continental integration has rarely been seriously questioned by a large section of the Canadian public. Interestingly, in both the 1960s and the 1980s the issue of nuclear weapons—the Bomarc and Cruise controversies—has been foremost in bringing continentalism into question. The Mulroney government's actions indicate that present-day conservatives are no longer inclined to such nationalist excesses. Canadian intellectuals can also be aligned on this spectrum. The figures of John Kenneth Galbraith and Marshall McLuhan represent the tendency to forego national attachments and merge with the multinational mega-machine. There is also a significant tradition of "dissident conservatives," especially Harold Innis and George Grant, who have accepted the challenge of justifying local loyalties.

The continentalist and nationalist positions rest on the institutional force of the economy and state respectively. In this sense, they may be termed "institutionalist" positions. Public debate tends to oscillate between these two positions and thereby to remain within a discussion of the relative merits of a multinational economy, on the one hand, and parliamentary politics, on the other. Of course, in actual discussion the differing (and often opposed) institutional bases of the two positions are not too apparent. And there is, of course, no necessity that public debate will demand theoretical clarity.

In examining the two institutionalist positions on Canadian culture, several observations can be made about their assumptions which may encourage receptivity to a third position. By continentalists, the economy is usually taken to embody "free and equal" exchanges and thereby to promote the liberal values of freedom and equality throughout society—freedom because no one is compelled to exchange and equality because commodities of equal value (or prices) are exchanged for each other. But the concentration of economic power in multinational corporations severely circumscribes the possibility of exchange between uncoerced individuals. Resources and goods must be sold to someone who has the industrial organization to use them, but when most such corporations involve huge concentrations of power (often with a monopolized sector of the market), the transactions can hardly be called "equal." Such an economy has nothing to do with "free enterprise" in the



sense of individual initiative. Moreover, the "freedom" inherent in market exchange has, for the majority of the population, been narrowed down to consumer choices between commodities offered on the market. This is a freedom only to choose from what is made available, not to determine or change the conditions of one's life. Similarly, with respect to the state, in which the "national identity" is determined by citizens and their representatives (rather than by partial groups), the claims of freedom and equality do not apply across the board. First, there are internal centres and peripheries, an underdeveloped economy dominated by the industrial interests of Central Canada which have a large stake in definition and press national definitions of their own. Second, there are a plurality of regional and ethnic identities which simply cannot be ignored. All of which leads us to a third position on Canadian culture. Rooted in a critique of institutions—especially economy and state—the position centres on the *inherently local* source of culture in oral encounters, and seeks to articulate the silences that have fallen on "localities" in the shadow of large, dominant institutions.

## II

The 1980 report to the federal Department of Communications, *The Information Revolution and Its Implications for Canada*, describes the "information revolution":

The extraordinary evolution and diffusion of information technology since the Second World War is the second major manifestation of the information revolution. Such technology is the product of a melding between computer and communications technologies—a convergence which has created powerful systems with vast capabilities for computation analysis and access to enormous amounts of information.<sup>3</sup>

It then suggests the numerous issues raised by the impending transformation:

Canada must...address the sweeping socio-political issues raised by the information revolution. These include retention of national sovereignty and identity, lessening of vulnerability, and protection of privacy, civil liberties and freedom of information. The broader economic consequences of the diffusion of new information-based technological devices also cannot be ignored.<sup>4</sup>

The 1982 Science Council of Canada report, *Planning Now For an Information Society*, also refers to national sovereignty, privacy and freedom being affected by ownership of information.<sup>5</sup> It also notes the potential effect of new information technologies increasing the already widespread sense of alienation and powerlessness.<sup>6</sup> Both reports suggest that the dangers posed by the information revolution can be managed to provide virtually unmitigated benefits<sup>7</sup> and assure us that the present transition is, in any case, inevitable.<sup>8</sup> They vacillate, however, between the relative merits of unimpeded market

forces and state intervention through public policy. It is assumed that the two institutional forces can be harmonized to produce beneficial effects. Both simply presuppose that the institutions of state and economy set the parameters within which discussion of "benefits and dangers" must take place. The ideological limitation is the result of an impressionistic and unclarified notion of "information" at the base of public policy discussions.

In both reports "information" is described simply as the convergence of computer and communications technologies.<sup>9</sup> To go beyond the two institutionalist positions on Canadian culture, "information" has to be understood not only as a convergence of technology and communication, but as the specific configuration of cultural life corresponding to the contemporary world-system—a configuration which reduces all present *and* past culture to information and thereby uniquely endangers all cultural identities. Thus, the notion of "information" itself must be clarified and criticized.

The basic building bloc of the massive computerized information-processing systems is a binary option—a yes/no or on/off choice. All culture that can be coded in this form multiplies such minute choices resulting in complex arrangements or patterns which *represent* the encoded cultural content. The content can then be trotted out as deemed appropriate by those in control of the information systems. Such binary coding is the microsmic analogue of consumer choice, a choice between goods arrayed in front of an individual subject. There are two main aspects to such choice: First, the choice between *finished* goods excludes the consumer from the process of making goods as well as from deciding what goods will be made. Second, the consumer-subject is not required to *justify* choice; it is arbitrary precisely because its presuppositions or influence on the context of other consumer choices—whether by the same or another subject—are not necessarily discussed. Thus the cumulative effect of choices on the individual and on society is outside consideration, as is the production itself. To situate such choices within a historically and geographically specific identity-formation would require an overarching sense of cultural identity. Such an overarching sense of culture, however, is excluded by the reduction of culture to information, leaving unassimilated the cumulative effect of the production process and consumer choices. Culture as information excludes the *designing* of alternatives by *self-forming* individuals and groups. Information is both the contemporary state of culture and the reduction of culture, since culture in the genuine sense requires not only isolated choices but the *formation* of individuals and groups through *expressions* which communicate specific experiences and their interpretations. In the contemporary situation the "reduction" of culture is the result of information-processing which does not *generate* culture but *presupposes* its historical and geographical formation and expression. Such processing of cultural heritages is a parasitical recording of their content within a form which blocks their assimilation. All culture can be coded, but codes do not exhaust culture.

While previous expressions of cultural experience can be reprocessed as information, the character of information-culture is most apparent when it

codes today's world directly. Since the origin of industrial culture in the photograph, its tendency has been to process the world without the intervention of *interpretations* which earlier cultural expression required. To be sure, someone holds the camera and presses the switch. But such activities do not require mediation by process of assimilation and interpretation as in a novel, a poem, or even—though in reduced form—contemporary journalism. This unmediated character of iconic or directly representational images accounts for their force, as well as their tendency to repel reflection.

An iconic image is an ensemble of binary bits of information through which worldly events are duplicated as culture. The binary translation and mechanical reproduction of a direct imprint from the world produces an image that resembles the chosen segment of the world. In such images, society confirms itself, in the process confirming itself ad infinitum. Images reduce the critical transcendent element in traditional cultural expressions, which include interpretations which demand to be reinterpreted.

The image is bounded and abstracted in space and time. While it derives from worldly experience, image-making cuts off the continuousness of the world in both space and time. An event in the world is *preceded and followed* by other events in a continuous flow which provides the experiential basis and motivation for understanding the event. Similarly, an event occurs in a *particular place* surrounded by others which puts it "on the map" of a wider experience of the world. This two-fold continuity is shattered by the image due to the technological process which imprints and reproduces it. The image is a coincidence of technology and communication in an abstracting and duplicating procedure. The image is the direct coding of the world as information.

In information culture the fundamental question posed is not one identity versus another—posed as consumer choice or as an enlargement of the range of commodities available to consumer choice. The fundamental question is one of "identity" as "loss of identity," of a culture of anonymity, the production of *silences*. It is not basically an issue of "access to" information, or even "production of" information, but of information as the loss of the historical and geographical *fundament* of cultural experience. The continuity of worldly experience in space and time requires cultural expression that incorporates interpretations, which then call forth further interpretations and generate a contextually-specific dialogue that reflexively constitutes cultural identities. Thus the issue of Canadian culture is intertwined with the general issue of how to save culture from its reduction to information. To the extent that Canada's cultural experiences and expressions in their historical and geographical extension contribute to clarifying the present danger, they justify preserving and extending our own particularity as a critique of information-culture. They indicate further that the contribution of Canadian culture may have a significance beyond Canada itself—the undoing of a universality that denies particularity and creates dispossession and silences.

## III

Cultural nationalism gains its credibility by attempting to preserve and extend national identity through state intervention which seeks to limit the excesses of domination by multinational corporations over the information society. In the process, it cannot recognize the existence of forms of domination within Canada over regional, ethnic, gender and labour particularities. Nor can it take seriously the Canadian tradition of thought which criticizes empire and defends particular traditions. A perspective which is concerned only to *limit* the effects of multinational domination presupposes the *existence* and, within bounds, the *validity* of such an economy. Nationalism can thus only question the *content* of contemporary industrial culture and not the form of information itself. Despite the validity of state intervention as a holding action, it is necessary to ask whether there is an intervention which is not tied to the presupposed validity of the institution of the state. In doing so, the question of "independence" can be posed not only *externally* (from the United States) but *internally* as well, as a question which pervades industrial culture through the reduction of particular cultures and traditions to a universal information-processing system.

The concern with Canadian identity has encompassed at least half a century without evident result. It is our fate that in order to understand ourselves, we must understand the United States. The contemporary world-system is centred there and its information culture is the apogee of social and cultural developments which go back to the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions. Thus in questioning Canadian identity, we are forced to question the *telos* of European culture (now centred in the United States), thereby passing beyond a mere "national" conception of identity. If Canada is merely a device—a political unit formed by people who did not want to be Americans—it may still be a useful device, and that for the same reasons that it was invented. To that end, Canadians need now to question the universal, homogenizing impulse stemming from the Enlightenment.

This *negative* definition of ourselves (in the logical, not ethical, sense) does not, and cannot, fill the space of a unifying national myth. Rather it justifies creating free space for designing alternatives to contemporary industrial culture. Beginning with the particularities and diversities of the Canadian mosaic, it is possible to give voice to those whose attachment to culture has been left out in the rush to information. Empire, not only outside but within Canada, silences particularities, reads them out of the story in progress. Whether it be Gaelic that is destroyed by the educational system in Cape Breton or Ukrainian in the prairies, or whether it be the potlatch outlawed in British Columbia, the diversity of our country is systematically reduced. In restoring and extending the Canadian tradition of protest against the imposition of uniformity, we must begin from a recognition and justification of diversity as the starting point for a new common discourse.



There is indeed a paradox in a tradition whose unifying principle is a defence of diversity. This is not conceptual error, but the paradox of our time whose calls for integration, information and communication serve to enforce uniformity within an electronic empire. Only by discovering what is suppressed by information-culture will a renewal of culture begin. The Canadian defence of oral tradition and particularity at the very apogee of modern universality and uniformity presupposes that conditions for such a dialogue of past and present exist—that in the postmodern age, culture is again a site of invention and discovery. In the face of the computer chip, culture must emphasize that which is lost in reprocessing.

In questioning the existence of, and justification for, Canadian culture we must also reflect on the concepts we use. The main tendency of contemporary industrial culture is to break down local attachments and to reduce culture to information. If there is a Canadian culture, it will require terms other than those derived from this main tendency to identify and characterize it. It is not a question of "more" information, "access to" information, or even its production, but of the reduction of culture to information itself. The search for concepts to identify and justify Canadian culture must therefore begin from reflection on the situation in which this search originates. We may not yet be sure how to think of Canadian culture, how to argue its validity. But when the question is asked, it is because of an unease, a suspicion that something valuable that is our own is being lost. From this motive, in the course of self-clarification, we can derive a critical account of the information society and formulate other concepts to characterize it—concepts which derive from the Canadian tradition. We can read the tradition with our present situation in mind for help in posing and, perhaps, answering our question. And the motive is itself part of the tradition.

In the Canadian tradition, it is striking that the term "empire" emerges independently in a number of thinkers. This is a political and economic concept that is absent from political philosophy (because of its core of liberal assumptions) at least since the time of Hobbes at the origin of the modern age. In Canada there is a tradition of "dissident conservatism" which rejects the liberal assumptions that have led to the reduction of culture to information. A stress on history and community in the formation of cultural identities contrasts significantly with the predominantly liberal emphasis on individuals in the present. In the work of Harold Innis and George Grant, "empire" is used to characterize both the economic and political aspects of contemporary society and culture. In each case, another concept is advanced to illuminate the suppressed possibilities inherent in Canadian historical experience that have been written out by the drive to empire. Thus, though a defence of nationalism is present, it overflows an institutional framework and serves as a base for developing a third perspective on Canadian culture that is grounded in a critique of institutions.

Innis used the term "oral tradition" to conceptualize an inherently local, face-to-face medium of communication that involves the whole person in interaction with others.<sup>10</sup> Cultural identity is formed through the history of



participation by individuals in dialogue. George Grant uses the terms "particularity" and "one's own" to point to the specific difference between cultural identities that is erased in the rush to universal modes of thought and organization.<sup>11</sup> Those who question the apex of "progress" in the reduction of culture to information need the voices of those who have been shunted aside by the liberal emphasis on progress stemming from the Enlightenment. If the main tendency of modern civilization is toward a universal, multinational empire, then the survival of Canada requires that we view ourselves as trying to do something different. Without our own particular culture, we cannot move into a dialogue with other cultures. We are *dispossessed*, cut off at the root.

From this perspective, we may thus characterize the information revolution as the imposition of *silences* on the diverse source of culture. *As a successive colony of the French, British and American empires, denial of the particularity generated by oral encounters at the periphery is endemic to our history.* Nevertheless, alongside is also a conservative tradition that, by pointing a finger at empire, listens for the diverse voices that have grown silent with the triumphant march of "progress."

The concept of particular oral traditions incorporates a lament for a way of life that has passed. We tend to idealize it in the same moment that it is characterized *from outside*—in the very terms that have replaced living oral tradition with mass culture. In our time, this lament perhaps can become the source of protest, but we are then faced with an opposite thought process which characterizes the future in terms of the present. In neither case, however, is it literal past or future, but a characterization based on the perceived degeneration of culture in the present. If oral tradition contains the germ of another possibility, it can be discerned in this tension between lament and utopia in the present—oral tradition as *resistance*.

Information culture reprocesses images that enforce silences on particular traditions. On the basis of the reduction of culture in the present, we are moved to discover the generation of articulations from which culture emerges. This meaning-fundament from which culture emerges is the *event*—the enactment of oral encounters in embodied presence. Beginning with the event, we avoid the intractable opposite of rule-obeying *or* original actions, individual *or* social creations. We focus on the embodied encounters in the here and now that are the source of cultural expression. Rooting culture in oral encounters in the present implies that cultures are essentially diverse and internally articulated in spatial and temporal dimensions. The pluralities of food, language and music are necessary to the *source* of human culture; recovery of these pluralities in the present resists the undoing of culture by industrially produced uniformity.

Thus oral encounters articulate a localized display in which the co-ordinated senses of all present are embodied in an event. Such an event is an *inscription* of meaning in the here and now. Its only mode of transmission to other encounters (there/then) is through the participants who witness the event. The transmitted expression *evokes* meaning in the participants in

another context. Oral tradition is the mode of communication that connects inscription and evocation of meaning *solely* through the continuity of participants in a succession of encounters. The continuity of cultural expression that sustains a localized identity is inseparable from the social assembly that witnesses events.

The social assembly can be divided into two groups, but it would be inaccurate to term them "performers" and "audience." In oral encounters all are performers or enactors to some degree, even if only minimally through nods of assent at the end of verses or exclamations during jazz solos. The minimum degree of co-enactment depends on the structure and meaning of the traditional material being known apart from the present event. The co-enactors are not *initiated* into the material by a particular performance as are most modern audiences; rather, their *belonging* to the social assembly is *confirmed* by their presence at the particular event. The degree of participation by co-enactors is usually considerably more than the minimum. Consider the singing along on choruses in traditional folk songs, for example. Similarly, the song does not belong to the performer, it is only borrowed from the social assembly for the duration of an event. He or she is the "one who is singing" not a "singer"—not a specialist in the current division of labour, but a voice of the social assembly. A single enactment gathers together a relationship between past and present, between repertoire and performance, that establishes the continuing perdurance of the social assembly from the past into the present. Songs and stories of home, clearances and emigration establish the continuity of the assembly in space to match that in time.

Enactment establishes not only the *fact* of continuous cultural experiences but also its *validity* in the present. The compactness of fact and justification in oral encounters enacts the identity of the social assembly as a *display* of uniqueness which confirms the *value* of the uniqueness.

Such an essentially diverse fundament of culture is the ground for a recovery and renewal of self-expression and cultural identity. The source of culture is to be found in the articulation of the particularities of Canadian historical and geographical experience—neither in a "unifying national myth," nor in a "lowest common denominator," but in a wager that particular encounters can give rise to *unique value*. Such a wager rescues and defends precisely what is marginalized and silenced in the information culture—the geographical and historical extensions required for the formation of cultural identity. It is a protest against the dispossession required to impose uniformity.

The present state of culture requires the preservation and justification of the preindustrial *fundament* of cultural experience in oral expressions rooted in the interplay of the human senses in bodily presence. Bodily enactment is an engagement of the whole person in a social assembly. The event is the common source of belonging and justification. This common source is bifurcated in the reprocessing of culture as information—knowing is separated from doing, interpretation from belonging. Only by rediscovering and extending the oral and particular *source* of culture can we find strength and

hope in the present for *resistance* to the universality and uniformity of such modern electronic empires as the United States. And it is in the resistance (however small) which the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village can offer to the levelling effect of cultural empires that its significance ultimately lies.

### Notes

1. J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis 1984), 5.
2. M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York 1964), 64–5.
3. S. Serafini and M. Andrieu, *The Information Revolution and Its Implications for Canada* (Ottawa 1980), 21–2.
4. *Ibid.*, 102.
5. *Planning Now For an Information Society* (Ottawa 1982), especially 47–8, 49, 61–2.
6. *Ibid.*, 49–50.
7. *Ibid.*; *The Information Revolution*, 104–5.
8. *Planning Now*, 56; *Information Revolution*, 96.
9. *Information Revolution*, 21–2; *Planning Now*, 12, 15, 30, 52.
10. H. Innis, *Empire and Communication* (Toronto 1972), especially 53–84.
11. G. Grant, *Technology and Empire* (Toronto 1969), 24, 37, 73, 76.

































