

UKRAINIAN RITUAL ON THE PRAIRIES

Growing a Ukrainian Canadian Identity

NATALIE KONONENKO



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PREFACE

NATIONALISM IN THE TIME OF WAR

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The supposed justification for this “special operation” was that Ukraine does not possess a culture distinct from the Russian one and should, therefore, not be a separate nation. Had Putin and the architects of the Russian invasion read the book that follows, they might have realized that Ukrainian culture is not simply distinct; it is powerful. It is a culture so vital that, when it encounters new surroundings, even dramatically new life circumstances such as transplantation to Canada, it does not die. Rather, it grows and develops new forms as it encounters new lived circumstances.

Questions of Ukrainian nationalism have been important to me all of my life and were central to the work I did as part of the Sanctuary Project, my major source for the data used to write this book. Whatever form Ukrainian nationalism takes, be it the articulated form of organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress or the vernacular form of Ukrainian Prairie Canadians, it is powerful and is indisputable proof that Ukrainians are a distinct people with their own Ukrainian culture. This book confirms that fact.

The circumstances of war and the Russian denial of Ukrainian distinctiveness make it imperative to use a vocabulary that may strike some readers as odd. Certain standard English-language words designating Ukrainian places, objects, and people do not come directly from Ukrainian. In this book I have made every effort to go back to the Ukrainian original and to transliterate directly from that. I have not used standard English vocabulary, especially since some of it has entered English through Russian. Thus:

- Kozak rather than Cossack.
- Borshch rather than bortsch.
- Halychyna rather than Galicia.
- Chornobyl rather than Chernobyl.

My biggest problem was with that ubiquitous and emblematic food item: perogies. The Ukrainian word for this food is *pirih*, singular, and *pirohy*, plural. Ukrainians on the Prairies know the Ukrainian words and sing them when performing folk songs. But when it comes to the actual food, they themselves use the terms *perogy*, singular, and *perogies*, plural. In the text here, I have opted to use those two words.

I have also maintained Ukrainian concepts, even though some of these may strike English readers as strange. Thus, icons and *pysanky* (Easter eggs) are written; they are neither painted nor drawn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book, like all major projects, could not have been possible without the help of many people. First and foremost, I must acknowledge my Sanctuary Project partners: John-Paul Himka, Frances Swyripa, and John-Paul's daughter Eva Himka. Thank you. I love fieldwork and I enjoy conducting interviews. Upon my arrival in Canada in 2004 I started looking for fieldwork opportunities. You provided the best fieldwork opportunity I could have imagined. I thoroughly enjoyed being out on the prairies and talking to the people who came out to open churches for us. Because we worked as a team with each person performing a particular type of job, we were able to accomplish many times more than what four people could possibly have done had each worked alone. In addition, you were not only research partners, you provided companionship and support. This work would not have been possible without you. Working on this project was one of the best experiences of my life.

Many graduate students and community volunteers joined us in our work. Thank you for your help and for your companionship and cheerfulness. I hope that working on the Sanctuary Project was an enjoyable experience for you and that your knowledge of both the people of the prairies and of documentation techniques increased over the course of your work. Special thanks go to our academic volunteers Keith Bell from the University of Saskatchewan and Linda and Lazlo Ivanits from Pennsylvania State University. We benefited greatly from your professional expertise as well as your help.

I conducted around 250 interviews as part of the Sanctuary Project, and these, in addition to the interviews I conducted on my own, produced

180 hours of sound. That is a massive volume of data. Working with this amount of material is a challenge. Fortunately, I was able to use digital technologies to index my data and build a sound file database. Indexing involves listening to the sound recordings and noting the time point where a topic, such as the food served at weddings, begins to be discussed. A database is then built using these time points. Having a sound file database allowed me to identify the recordings in which a particular topic was discussed and then to go directly to the point in the sound file where that topic appeared. I could never have been able to manage my data without it. Here I must thank the graduate students who did the indexing for me, particularly Lina Ye Shaw and Daria Polianska. I wish to also thank my programmers, Omar Rodrigues of the Arts Resource Centre and Sean Luyk and Mariana Paredes-Olea of the University of Alberta Libraries. I could never have worked through all of this data without your help.

The Sanctuary Project was conducted over a span of ten years. Travelling for a month at a time and covering the distance that fieldwork on the prairies requires is expensive. We were supported by a number of organizations and granting agencies, including the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies, the Killam Fund, the University of Alberta Fund for Support of the Advancement of Scholarship, provincial heritage foundations in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, and donations from individuals. For me personally, the most important sources of funding came from the Kule Chair Endowment and the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies. The Kule Chair Endowment was my primary source of support. It helped cover on-the-road expenses and allowed me to purchase excellent recording and photography equipment, vastly improving the quality of my work.

Gratitude for funds from agencies established by Peter and Doris Kule must be accompanied by sincere thanks to the couple themselves. Doris was born on the prairies and worked as a teacher before moving to Edmonton. We were fortunate to have her show us her family home. Peter came to Canada as a young man. After receiving an education, he spent a number of years driving around the prairies as an accountant, offering his guidance and advice to many clients. The Kules' love of the prairies kindled similar feelings in me. Besides serving as an inspiration, the Kules offered friendship and support to me and my family. They

were particularly kind to my husband, whom I would leave alone for a month at a time year after year.

The gathering and processing of data has enabled me to write this book. The writing process itself, just like the collection of data, was supported and facilitated by many people. Robert Bohdan Klymasz, a man who himself did a great deal of fieldwork on the prairies, has been kind enough to undertake the massive effort of reading both the first draft of this book and its subsequent rewrites. His comments have been invaluable. This book is dedicated to him. In addition to providing academic guidance, Klymasz has kept me entertained with newspaper clippings, Ukrainian place mats, Xeroxes of stories about prairie life, and more Ukrainian paraphernalia than I knew existed.

Editing help has come from Rosemary Levy Zumwalt. She read the near-final version of the entire manuscript and offered valuable comments. She has been a source of encouragement as I work on getting my book to completion. A number of other people read small sections of my manuscript and offered comments. I have done my best to incorporate their suggestions.

In connection with this manuscript, as with all other things in my life, my husband Peter Holloway has been a source of support and guidance. Peter read all the versions of this book. At each stage he offered comments and corrections. He undertook very tedious work that would have consumed an enormous amount of my time. Specifically, he checked the names of the people I interviewed as I cited them in the book against my interview agreement forms, correcting my spelling. When things were not clear, he looked people up online to make sure we cited them correctly. Peter also put together the table of respondents cited and the table of places visited. When we were working on a Sanctuary Project webpage aimed at providing a popular, as opposed to a scholarly, account of our work, it was Peter who generated maps and provided technical support. I am blessed to have a live-in assistant with this level of technical experience and the amount of patience required to do all the checking and correcting that a project of this size requires.

Most of all I want to thank the many people who were kind enough to sit with me for interviews. You were willing to meet a perfect stranger – me – and to share with me your recollections of life on the prairies. This book is about you. It is my feeble attempt to do justice to who you

are and what you do. I have learned so much from you. I have discovered a vibrant culture that has been overlooked yet is a source of pleasure to all who participate. I hope I have done justice to who you are and what you have accomplished.

To acknowledge all of the people I interviewed, on the tables at the back of the book I am providing a list of all respondents. The first list is arranged by name. People who want to look themselves up can refer to that list. The second list is arranged by place. People who want to know about their home town or the town of their ancestors can use the place list. In the colour plate section are two maps that show the areas the Sanctuary team visited and where I did collecting work: one for Alberta and one for Saskatchewan.

To Bob

*He preceded me across the prairies, talking to people
and writing about what they said. I was going to say
that he paved the way. As it turns out, the rural roads
of Alberta and Saskatchewan, beautiful as they may
be, remain unpaved, but welcoming to those who, like
me, would follow in Bob's footsteps.*

—

INTRODUCTION

This book is about Ukrainian Canadians living on the Prairies. It is a book about people. It is about Chris Zorniak, who entertained me with stories of tricks played on the bride and groom during Ukrainian Prairie weddings. It is about Sonja and Joe Galichowski, who put together a hand-printed Ukrainian songbook in honour of their son, killed in an accident. It is about Nellie Holowachuk, born in a Saskatchewan Prairie town that no longer exists, who went on to be a successful hairdresser and an astute stock market investor, amassing enough money to donate a set of sixteen life-size granite statues to the cemetery outside her home church. It is about Roy Kolot, who, along with a group of volunteers, some not members of his congregation, made and sold enough perogies (pirohy) to pay for the reroofing of the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Sturgis. It is about Mary and Steve Rudy, who founded, and still actively participant in, the Nipawin Malanka, a midwinter festival that attracts four hundred celebrants annually, despite Saskatchewan winter road conditions. The festival is written up regularly in both print and digital news media. This book is about Linda Klapak, who married a Ukrainian and learned to sing in Ukrainian, despite not knowing how to speak the language. She performs at various events, including church services, singing in Ukrainian and accompanying herself on the guitar. It is about Gerardine and Mike Woitas, who championed a new attitude toward unbaptized infants and succeeded in getting their church to recognize and sanctify their graves. They are part of a movement affecting other congregations. It is about Norman Harris, a joke-teller and an entertainer who is also an amateur scholar. He collected information about his community and its early settlers and published it in local history books.

It is about Shirley Korpatniski, an avid writer of *pysanky*, Ukrainian Easter eggs, who showed me her work and her sophisticated egg-writing tools. She has preserved the hand-made tools used by her grandmother alongside her modern equipment. These are all people about whom little or no information would be available were it not for this book. It is also about the many other people who took the time to sit with me and to talk about their lives as Ukrainian Canadians. They are no less deserving of attention, but too many to mention in this introduction. A full list of them is provided in the this book's Table of Respondents.

In this book I look at the people I talked to through the lens of ritual culture. Rituals express community solidarity as they mark the turning points in human lives and celebrate the high points of the calendar year. They are accepted by the entire community as events of significance that are specifically Ukrainian Canadian. The reasons for looking at Ukrainians on the Prairies through their ritual culture include not only the importance of rituals to the community but also practical considerations. Most of the information gathered for this book was obtained through my participation in the Sanctuary Project, a ten-year effort carried out between 2008 and 2018 with my colleagues John-Paul Himka and Frances Swyripa and Himka's daughter Eva. This project took our team out onto the Prairies for one month every summer as part of an effort to document the rapidly disappearing Ukrainian Prairie churches. I will describe our project in a chapter devoted specifically to our work. Here I will note that participating in this project allowed me to gather a wealth of information, a depth and breadth of material that I could not have obtained had I worked on my own. In addition to information that I gathered through the Sanctuary Project, in this book I use my own experiences as a hyphenated Ukrainian, a person of Ukrainian descent living outside Ukraine and participating in Ukrainian Canadian community life.

This book is also about vernacular nationalism. Through the Sanctuary Project I discovered that there are many ways of being Ukrainian. I encountered conceptions of proper Ukrainian behaviour that are distinct from those found in urban settings in Canada and elsewhere in North America. Those conceptions also differ from ideas about Ukrainian identity being debated in Ukraine itself, where establishing what it means to be Ukrainian is especially important as the country

seeks to determine what it, as a nation, should be. Those ideas are especially germane today, when the country is attempting to turn back an invasion by Russia. Working with the sacral culture of Ukrainians on the Prairies led me to derive the term “vernacular nationalism” from the concept of vernacular religion proposed by Leonard Primiano and now widely accepted as designating the religious behaviour that people actually practise as opposed to the official religious credo prescribed by their church.¹ As vernacular religion refers to those faith-based practices that are suited to the lives of individuals and small, unofficial groups, so vernacular nationalism applies to expressions of Ukrainian identity that are organic and suited to the lived circumstances of ordinary people. Looking at nationalism as a vernacular phenomenon helped me see the flexibility and innovative nature of the practices I recorded among Prairie Ukrainians. This book is not about preserving the past. It is about creating something new.

POSITIONALITY: SITUATING MYSELF IN THE DISCUSSION

Since vernacular nationalism was the key that helped me understand the Prairie approach to being Ukrainian, I will use my own struggles with the concept of nationalism and Ukrainian identity to help elucidate my position in this book.

Throughout my life I have asked: what is nationalism? As the granddaughter of a famous Ukrainian nationalist, I was very confused about the meaning of this word. My grandfather, Konstantyn Kononenko, was an agricultural economist and a professor at the university in Kharkiv. He argued against Soviet agricultural policies and was arrested several times. I recently found his dictated confession as I was going through family papers. My family feared that my grandfather could not possibly survive another term in prison, so they used the turmoil of the Second World War to flee to the West, living in Poland for a time and then literally walking westward across Europe. They made it to Germany, and my father made certain that they ended up in the American Zone when the war ended. I was born in a DP (displaced persons) camp in Germany. I remember very little of the camp – just concrete walls and a tiny window so high up that even the adults could not look out. I have clearer memories of the one-room apartment that my parents

and I shared with my grandparents. I remember the German children, who were less than friendly toward me as a foreign child. At that point in my life, it seemed that nationalism was a very bad thing. It threatened my grandfather, and it made my early years rough indeed.

When I was five years old, we made the journey to the United States. I clearly remember the train ride to the port where we boarded a Second World War ship, the *Admiral Rickover*. The trip across the ocean made an even stronger impression because many people, my mother included, were seasick and the celebratory meal that was offered to us on 4 July, Independence Day, went mostly uneaten and was tossed overboard, attracting schools of dolphins. Watching the dolphins gobble up the food was the highlight of my transatlantic passage. When we arrived in New York, we learned that our ship was carrying the 250,000th immigrant to arrive from Eastern Europe. Because this was a milestone number, the *New York Daily News* ran a story about our arrival and took a picture of my very distinguished-looking nationalist grandfather and little curly-haired me to mark the occasion. Years later, when we moved from Edmonton, Alberta, to Waterloo, Ontario, a few years ago, I found the clipping.

After a few months in New York City, my father found a job at a chemical plant in New Jersey, and we moved to Boonton. As we settled down and got comfortable, my grandfather's nationalist friends and admirers began to visit. It was they, I learned, who had facilitated our move to the United States and helped finance it. The respect that these men (and they were all men) paid my grandfather and the fact that they had invested in bringing our whole family to America made nationalism seem very good. After all, it was because my grandfather was a prominent nationalist that he, and we by extension, received all this attention.

At the same time, I dreaded those occasions when my grandfather's nationalist supporters visited our home. They scolded me for not speaking Ukrainian and made my life miserable. They criticized what I wore and how I behaved. Their visits were so unpleasant that I would run away and hide in a park down the hill from our house. My one moment of joy was when my dog urinated on the leg of one of these staunch enforcers of proper manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism. These men made me hate nationalism, and all the more so because what they were asking of me was impossible. They wanted me to speak Ukrainian – but how was I



FIG. 0.1 The author as a child with grandfather Konstantyn Kononenko

supposed to learn this language? My grandfather, the famous nationalist, the man written up in the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, spoke Russian at home – and so did the rest of the family. I had nothing against learning languages. After we arrived, I learned English quickly. In high school I learned German and won a gold medal. While I was in university, I worked in Germany one summer as a translator and interpreter. I can still read German, and I understand it easily. I took French in high school, and my French is adequate to the point of being able to serve on bilingual grant review committees in Canada. But Ukrainian ... how in the world was I supposed to learn that when it was not spoken at home and not taught in school? And constantly being criticized for not doing the impossible gave me no reason to think that nationalism was something positive, something desirable.

Ukrainian was not offered at Cornell, where I started my university education. I took Russian, not realizing that this would further aggravate nationalistic Ukrainians whose paths I might cross because it was Russia, and later the Soviet Union, that had crushed Ukrainian aspirations to

nationhood. And cross the paths of Ukrainian nationalists I did, precisely because my grandfather and the family name were well-known. And nationalists who interacted with me would criticize me just as my grandfather's colleagues had done.

It was only when I got to Harvard and met a group of young Ukrainian fellow students who took me in despite my linguistic shortcomings that I stopped dreading being attacked for my improper manifestation of my Ukrainian identity. At Harvard I did learn Ukrainian, and I became fluent. My dissertation was on Turkish folklore, but I worked closely with the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and was involved in many projects, including the institute journal and the preparation of a book of translations of Ukrainian epic songs called *dumy*.

Harvard sealed my fate, and I spent my academic career writing about Ukrainian topics, even as, in my job at the University of Virginia, I taught Slavic folklore and Russian language. I travelled to Ukraine and worked in archives. I wrote an award-winning book about the Ukrainian blind minstrels who roamed the countryside in the nineteenth century.² As Ukraine opened up more and more, and as it gained independence from the Soviet Union, I started doing fieldwork, travelling outside urban centres and talking to people in villages. This yielded a number of articles.³ I learned a Ukrainian that is spoken in Ukraine itself, which differs from the Ukrainian spoken in North America. I worked closely with the Folklore Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Eventually I was recruited to join the faculty of the University of Alberta as the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography. Yet despite my success as a scholar, my problems with nationalism continued. The situation, and especially the criticisms I was now receiving, reminded me a great deal of my childhood years and the attacks I had endured from my grandfather's nationalist colleagues. There was always something wrong. I was always inadequate in some way. If it was not my language knowledge, then it was my interest in Ukrainian folklore. Those who criticized me reminded me that Ukraine was the home of renowned composers and famous authors and successful painters. My emphasis on folklore, they said, made Ukraine seem like a backward, unsophisticated country, and that was a bad thing for me to do.

There was an asceticism to it all. One had to suffer for Ukraine. I remember attending lectures that, as often as not, ran over the scheduled

time as the speaker went on and on, thus delaying and delaying the lunch or dinner scheduled to follow. Whenever I said I was hungry, I was told that I had to suffer for the sake of Ukraine. There seemed to be a code, something akin to religious dogma, to which I was not privy, but which others wielded to control wayward souls like me. Needless to say, the people who claimed to be Ukrainian nationalists and sought to impose this code did not make nationalism attractive.

There is a temptation to call these demands for a virtually unachievable purity the Avramenko syndrome. *Vasyl Avramenko* was a dancer and a dance instructor, a producer of films, an actor, and an entrepreneur. Most Ukrainians living in Canada and the United States know him best as the man who organized dance troupes in communities across the country and taught their children not only Ukrainian dance but also what he claimed were Ukrainian values. As *Orest Martynowych* writes in his biography of Avramenko, he demanded that his dancers abstain from even the smallest pleasures. They were forbidden to smoke and drink alcohol; they were not even allowed to chew gum.⁴ Father Michael Zaleschuk, whom I interviewed in Regina, Saskatchewan, recounted that Avramenko, when he was on one of his cross-Canada tours, stayed at his parents' home. According to Zaleschuk, Avramenko demanded that his hostess prepare a special, spartan meal for him; he would not eat what was prepared for the family because the food was too rich. This might have served to prove his asceticism, but it was inconsiderate of his hosts, and Zaleschuk's mother made it clear that she was not eager to have this man visit again. Avramenko was, of course, not the only one to demand extreme purity to prove proper love for things Ukrainian; one of my students at the University of Alberta told me that she left a Ukrainian campus organization because its members made her feel that she was "not Ukrainian enough." The "philosophy" behind these demands, if one can call it that, was to set an unattainable goal toward which one would always have to strive. Of course, as in my own case and that of my student, this tactic repelled as many people as it attracted.

Nationalism in Ukraine is different from nationalism among Ukrainians in the Diaspora. Nationalism is often defined as the desire to create a state, a political entity, on the land where a group that perceives itself to be a nation lives. Such a state would then allow free cultural and linguistic expression. Having a direct physical connection to the place

that wants to be a nation-state is different from living far from that place. In the former case, there is a tangibility and a palpability that does not exist when one does not live on the territory that is meant to constitute the nation-state. Yet Ukraine was not a nation. The name designated a region and a language spoken there, but as a political unit, Ukraine did not exist; instead, the region was controlled by the Russian Empire and the Hapsburg Empire and later by Poland.⁵ I have always been charmed by the fact that nineteenth-century Ukrainian nationalist intellectuals worked around prohibitions on the use of the Ukrainian language by collecting and publishing folklore. By writing down epics and other songs and publishing them as they were performed, they helped preserve the Ukrainian language. By composing the introductions and analyses of that folklore in Russian, they adhered to the prohibitions against the use of Ukrainian in official documents such as scholarly works.

During the Soviet period, Ukraine was legally a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, but it was by no means sovereign. Ukraine achieved true nationhood only with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the declaration of Ukrainian independence. In the thirty years since independence, many intellectuals and activists have worked hard to consolidate the Ukrainian language. They have done their best to promote Ukrainian culture, both its traditional aspects and new developments that are seen as an organic evolution of Ukrainian identity.⁶ Yet even now, there are threats to Ukraine's independence. On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The quick victory that Vladimir Putin had envisioned has not transpired, and battles continue to rage. Russian strategy has shifted from annexing the entirety of Ukraine to capturing those parts of the country that are contiguous with Russia and Crimea, a peninsula in the south of Ukraine annexed by Russia in 2014. Ukraine's fierce determination to maintain its independence, bolstered by Western material and logistical support, has allowed the country to hold off the Russian invasion and has even created the hope that Ukraine will regain the territories annexed by Russia in 2014, specifically Crimea and eastern Donetsk and Luhansk. Ukrainian nationhood was and remains precarious indeed, and this fragility has led Ukrainians, both in Ukraine itself and abroad, to feel a compelling need to hold and express nationalist sentiments.

I argue in this book that there are many types of nationalism. There is the nationalism of Ukrainians living in the country itself who are

seeking to define and promote Ukrainian identity. It is different from the nationalism of Ukrainians living abroad. The latter group, especially during the Soviet period, saw it as their mission to preserve Ukrainian culture and to defend it against Soviet attempts at assimilation; they sought to safeguard what they viewed as a pure Ukrainian culture for export back into Ukraine once that country was free. They were focused on the country of Ukraine and on the past, on trying to identify those features that had escaped domination by non-Ukrainian powers. It is noteworthy that, as Ukrainian independence made access to Ukraine possible for Ukrainians living abroad, it was North American Ukrainian nationalists who, when they visited that country, insisted on linguistic and cultural purity. Ukrainians living in Ukraine were more realistic and flexible. Because I was not among the purity enforcers, my Ukrainian friends would complain to me about those of my colleagues who were trying to impose a diaspora definition of Ukrainian language and culture instead of letting Ukrainians develop their own.⁷ It is also noteworthy that much of the writing about nationalism in Ukraine has been produced by Ukrainians living abroad.⁸ Talking to the people who are the subject of this book made me realize that there is a third type of nationalism, one that is focused on Canada rather than Ukraine and one that looks to life in the present rather than trying to preserve or resurrect the culture of the past. This is what I term vernacular nationalism. It is nationalism without dogma. It allows free expression of identity; there is no concerted effort to define what being Ukrainian means and to impose that definition. This nationalism looks neither to the past nor to the country of Ukraine, although many of the Prairie Ukrainians I talked to were interested in things Ukrainian outside their own experience and some had made the trip to the land from which their ancestors had come. This kind of nationalism has adapted to life in Canada and created new and meaningful ways of being Ukrainian. The innovations in ritual and other aspects of sacral and community life that I discovered on the Prairies are a central topic here.

The rural/urban contrast must be addressed in connection with nationalism, and this is true for Ukraine as much as for Canada. In fact, the different approaches to national identity that typify Ukraine were influential in setting the pattern found in Canada. Ukrainian nationalists, beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing into the present,

tend to be intellectuals and city-dwellers. Nationalist ideologies are seldom the concern of people living in villages. This phenomenon has helped shape urban/rural ideas about nationalism in Canada. Ukrainians came to Canada in waves. The first wave began in the final years of the nineteenth century and lasted until the First World War. The second wave came in the interwar years. These two waves were of economic immigrants from Halychyna and Bukovyna in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were farmers, and it was they who settled the Prairies. They came by choice, and they came to stay. The Prairie Ukrainian Canadians whom I interviewed for the Sanctuary Project are their progeny. The third wave came after the Second World War. They left for political, not economic, reasons, and they settled mainly in the cities of Canada, the United States, and Latin America. Subsequent immigrants, those from late Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine, while emigrating primarily for better jobs, also have tended to choose urban centres rather than farming areas. Whether Ukrainian immigrants came from cities or villages affected their choice of places to settle: those from rural areas became farmers, and those from urban environments preferred cities. Ukrainian rural versus urban origin also influenced immigrants' views on national identity and nationalism. As will be discussed in the chapter on the role of the church in Canadian Prairie life, farmers from Bukovyna and Halychyna developed a Ukrainian identity *after* their arrival in Canada. Immigrants from cities identified as Ukrainian *before* their arrival on this side of the Atlantic.

Salman Akhtar distinguishes between immigrants and exiles in a way that is most useful here. Immigrants, he says, move to their new location willingly. They choose to leave their country of origin, and they do so with the intent of making the new land their home. Exiles feel that they have been forced to leave, usually because of conflict and the resulting political pressure in the country where they were born. They are very much focused on the country from which they came.⁹ This is precisely the contrast between the first two waves of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and the third, postwar wave. The first two waves came willing, to build a new life on the Prairies. The third wave, of whom my nationalist grandfather was a perfect example, did not want to leave Ukraine, and only extreme circumstances forced them to choose exodus. And thereafter they were always focused on their home country. My nationalist

grandfather and his wife requested that they be buried in steel coffins so that their remains could be shipped back to Ukraine once it broke free of the Soviet yoke. In sum, both the contrasting reasons for immigration and rural versus urban origin influenced the formation of the two types of Ukrainian nationalism I see here in Canada.

My position, then, has been to acknowledge a multiplicity of nationalist ideas and to let the people I talked to define what being Ukrainian means to them. The dogmatic nationalism enforced by people like my grandfather's friends is not productive. A vernacular nationalism that eschews dogma and allows flexibility is what I found on the Canadian Prairies. Its creative approaches to Ukrainian ritual practice will be described here.

AN OUTLINE OF THIS BOOK

This book has three sections. The first describes the Sanctuary Project, which took me onto the Prairies and away from the urban nationalists whose approach to Ukrainian identity I had found problematic since I was a child. The Sanctuary Project allowed me to talk to some 250 people I would not otherwise have met and been able to interview. This project allowed me to amass more data than other collecting work has been able to preserve. I describe the Sanctuary Project in a methodology chapter and compare my work to that of my hero and mentor, Robert Bohdan Klymasz. His work, which preceded mine by some thirty to forty years, allows us to create a picture of change over time.

The chapter on the role of the church explains why, in Canada, churches came to be integral to Ukrainian identity. The early settlers who chose the Prairies as their home were very much tied to their churches, and these were the earliest communal structures they built. The churches offered not only religious services but also activities that allowed Ukrainians to be Ukrainian, to express their linguistic and cultural identity. Ukrainian immigrants, like many other immigrant groups, became aware of their collective identity as a result of government policies toward them. These policies grouped Ukrainians together whether they came from the Halych or the Bukovyna part of Austria-Hungary. The attitude toward immigrants from the Ukrainian parts of Austria-Hungary was that they needed to be taught English and assimilated into

Anglo-Canadian norms. Ukrainians responded to assimilation pressures by clinging to their church, which met their needs by providing secular Ukrainian activities such as language classes, readings in Ukrainian, and Ukrainian plays, in addition to religious services.

Finally, this section offers a chapter on vernacular religion. If we are to understand vernacular nationalism, then an excursion into vernacular religion, as it functions on the Canadian Prairies, is a must. The nature of Prairie life forced a great deal of flexibility onto canonical religious observances. Between lack of clergy, Prairie settlement patterns, and the road conditions in rural areas, flexibility was not an option – it was a necessity. Looking at expressions of vernacular faith helps us better understand the ritual practices that are the main subject matter of this book.

The second section describes the Ukrainian Prairie versions of rites of passage, the life cycle rituals of marriages and weddings, births and baptisms, and death and funerals. Marriage is the most public of these rituals. It is the one where Ukrainians not only celebrate their own ethnic heritage but also display it to their neighbours, non-Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians. The people I interviewed married somewhere between the 1950s and the early 1970s, and talking to them revealed that they had adapted their wedding rites to include Anglo-Canadian features such as the white wedding dress and the wedding cake made out of fruitcake and decorated with white icing. Their children, especially those who had attended Ukrainian bilingual schools and participated in dance programs, often sought to celebrate a more Ukrainian wedding, what they believed to be a revival of old practices. Their revivals, however, were unlike the practices of their Canadian ancestors as well as different from the revivals of old rituals that had started in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As it happened, they developed a specifically Canadian version of the Ukrainian wedding, with clothing that looked like dance costumes and a *korovai*, or wedding bread, that was kept as a memento rather than eaten.

Baptisms and funerals are more private celebrations and involve primarily Ukrainians and their churches. They are based on the physiological events of birth and death. Both giving birth and dying were quickly professionalized on the Canadian Prairies, and they began to take place in the hospital rather than at home. Furthermore, the preparation of

the body for burial became the responsibility of the funeral home. Still, a number of the people I talked to remembered or even experienced home births and recalled their deceased grandparents lying in state in the house. The ritual aspects of birth and death, namely baptism and the funeral, are important to Prairie Ukrainians, not only from the religious point of view but also because they help strengthen family solidarity. Many innovations have entered these rituals as well; Ukrainians now use baptismal gowns like their neighbours and simplify funerals to accommodate Prairie life.

Baptisms and funerals have introduced some tension between parishioners and their clergy. There was a time that when the church forbade the burial of babies who died before baptism or adult parishioners who had committed suicide in sanctified cemeteries. These regulations are now being contested by parishioners, and in the case of unbaptized babies, many congregations have succeeded in having them recognized as persons and accepted by the church. At least in some locations, babies' graves are now part of cemeteries, and those babies who could not be identified are memorialized on cenotaphs. The matter of suicide is in the process of church/congregation negotiation. Cemeteries are often the sites where such negotiations take place. Church acceptance of suicides has not reached the level of its acceptance of unbaptized infants, and we are at a stage where parishioners often act out what they consider to be proper treatment of people who took their own lives. This may lead to the acceptance of suicides by the church in the future, in the same way that similar actions in the past with regard to unbaptized infants led to their current recognition as persons. Cemeteries are also used by individuals to make a statement; thus, Nellie Holowachuk, a woman who did not adhere to the norms of Ukrainian Prairie life, used the cemetery of her rural family church to make a statement about her own life as an unconventional woman. She donated a set of statues of the Stations of the Cross to serve as petrified progeny. Most people's graves have become pilgrimage sites for their descendants. For Holowachuk, who had no children, the fact that her statues were pointed out to visitors as a tourist attraction perhaps served as a way to get strangers to visit her grave in lieu of offspring.

The third section deals with rituals that follow the calendar year. Christmas and Easter are religious holidays, and important aspects of

them are celebrated in the home. While Christmas church services are not always possible, the Christmas Eve meal is held in almost every family, with traditional dishes and practices that recall the honouring of ancestors and the wish for a good harvest in the coming year. Easter entails an important church service, and where possible, it is preceded by the blessing of pussy willows on the Sunday a week prior to Easter. For families, the blessing of the Easter basket takes centre stage, as does the consumption of its contents in the home following the service.

Many lesser holidays, such as New Year's/Malanka and Spas/Obzhynky/Thanksgiving, have become occasions for reaching out to the community and offering others a taste of Ukrainian culture in the form of a Ukrainian meal, along with a condensed and choreographed display of Ukrainian ritual. These, along with church suppers, are fundraising events and show a shift from using the church as a retreat from anglicizing forces to making it a centre for outreach to all community members, non-Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians.

The conclusion states that Ukrainians have become central to life on the Canadian Prairies. The giant statues they have contributed to the region, which dominate the Prairie landscape, express their importance to Canada in visual form. The Ukrainian Prairie giants are all enormous statues of objects associated with Ukrainian identity. They include a giant sausage in Mundare, Alberta, commissioned by Stawnichy's Meat Processing, a highly successful business that produces a food beloved by Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. They also include a giant statue of a woman in a Ukrainian costume, who welcomes visitors to the town of Canora. Perhaps the best known is the *pysanka* (Ukrainian Easter egg) in Vegreville, erected to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Mounties. The fact that a *pysanka* is used to celebrate the Mounties, a consummate Canadian institution, shows that Ukrainians are now an integral part of Canadian life. 🌿

CHAPTER 1

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THE SANCTUARY PROJECT

I became acquainted with the lives of Prairie Ukrainian Canadians by participating in the Sanctuary Project. That project, of unprecedented size and scope, set out to document Ukrainian sacral culture on the Prairies. For ten years I spent one month every summer driving around the Prairies with John-Paul Himka, Frances Swyripa, Eva Himka, community volunteers, and as many students as we could afford to take along. Our work, which took us across Alberta and Saskatchewan, was called the Sacral Heritage Documentation Project (the Sanctuary Project, for short). Its purpose was to document churches where Ukrainians worshipped. The impetus for it was a keen awareness of the importance of sacral culture in the lives of Ukrainian Canadians, combined with the fear that the churches would soon be gone. The onion domes of Ukrainian churches are an iconic feature of the Prairie landscape, and one cannot drive across the Prairies without seeing these marvelous edifices, some simple and some ornate. Sometimes they are tiny, sometimes medium-sized, and sometimes they are huge edifices raised seemingly in the middle of nowhere. They are a marvel to behold, and it is hard to imagine the Prairie landscape without them. Yet those Prairie churches are disappearing at an alarming rate. Some are simply left to decay, and others have been burned and buried. Some have been sold to other denominations or repurposed for non-religious use. Whatever may happen to them, these churches are being irretrievably lost, and it was the realization that they needed to be documented before they disappeared that prompted us to begin our work.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

There are many reasons why Ukrainian Prairie churches are disappearing. Rural areas on the Prairies, indeed throughout Canada, are experiencing population decline as the descendants of farmers move from the countryside to urban areas. The number of people required to run a farm is decreasing sharply, for mechanization allows individuals to farm progressively larger tracts of land. Chris Zorniak of Innisfree, Alberta, explained how he could program his equipment to do much of the work of ploughing and reaping, allowing him to till more land. In Samburg, Saskatchewan, Ron Adamko, seventy-eight years old at the time of the interview, said that with the equipment he had acquired, he was able to run a multi-hectare farm single-handedly, with his son coming in only on weekends. Farmers like Zorniak and Adamko have taken advantage of their ability to till progressively larger tracts of land by buying out their neighbors. The children of the farmers who end up selling their land typically move to cities and towns, where they take on non-farming jobs. As the children leave, the population of rural areas decreases.

Road transportation has had a tremendous impact on rural life. In the past, small towns were found at regular intervals across the Prairies, serving as centres of commercial activity. Almost every one of these towns still has a street named Railway Avenue, which parallels or abuts the railway line that runs through the town. On that avenue would always stand the local grain elevator, a feature of the Canadian Prairies that at one time was as ubiquitous as the Ukrainian church. The elevator held the wheat, canola, and other grains grown on the surrounding farms. When a train came through the area, the elevator would load these goods onto railway cars. Farmers would haul their crops into town and sell them to the company that ran the elevator, which meant that they visited these towns on a regular basis. While some old, wooden grain elevators still stand, they are no longer in use. Grain operations – both storage and shipment, and even the production of crop derivatives – have shifted to urban centres like Yorkton, which is crossed by two railway tracks. At the edge of this city stand enormous shiny metal elevators, and next to them is a facility that extracts the oil from canola. The shift from delivering grain to the elevator in the nearby town to taking it to a facility



FIG. 1.1 The Sanctuary team. Back row: John-Paul Himka, Eva Himka, Frances Swyripa; front row: Natalie Kononenko.



FIG. 1.2 Ron Adamko, second from right, with the Sanctuary team

in a city is largely the result of improved transportation. Concentrating operations in one large centre is much more economically viable for companies that ship grain. Once farmers could purchase trucks and use them to transport what they produced to central operations in cities, the larger centres flourished at the expense of smaller ones.

When small towns were still thriving, they had shops where farmers could buy needed equipment and parts. Doris Kule recounted to me that when she was growing up on the Prairies, the stores in town sold sugar and other foodstuffs that could not be produced on a Prairie farm. Most towns also had a restaurant where visitors could have a meal while they waited for their equipment to be repaired. As cars and trucks became more easily available, towns and the services they provided began to lose their relevance. Grain could just as easily be transported to the nearest urban hub, where needed supplies could be found at shopping malls and farming equipment could be purchased from the large dealers in the vicinity. The main streets of many small towns are now lined with boarded-up shops. Wroxton, Saskatchewan, is a striking example of this. It had once been the location of a large John Deere dealership. The family that owned it was Ukrainian, and wealthy, and they put their money into the construction of the St Elias Orthodox Church, an especially large and striking edifice. However, increased ease of travel meant there was little sense in having a John Deere dealership in little Wroxton, so the family moved their business to Yorkton, a short drive west on the highway. St Elias closed, and by the time the Sanctuary Project came to the area in 2015, it was up for sale, and its structure was visibly deteriorating.

Membership in rural churches peaked in the 1950s; around twenty years later, it was declining rapidly. Today, many rural congregations have fewer than ten people, and the parishioners find insurance, heating, and maintenance costs, not to mention eparchy fees, to be more than they can manage: they simply cannot maintain their church. Demographic shifts have been accompanied by growing secularism. Inter-marriage with non-Ukrainians has brought some new members into Ukrainian churches, but it has also prompted people to join non-Ukrainian congregations. Loss of language is a big factor especially when priests who are recent émigrés from Ukraine and have limited English are assigned to Prairie churches where only the elderly retain enough language knowledge to

follow a service in Ukrainian. Young people, failing to find the services meaningful, migrate to English-language churches where they can understand what is being said. In several of the locations where I was able to attend a church service, members of the congregation would approach me afterwards and complain about not being able to follow a service that was largely in Ukrainian.

An important development that has not received as much attention as rural-to-urban migration but is crucial to understanding the situation on the Prairies is the fact that over the past twenty years, large tracts of rural land have been purchased as investments by major corporations. Desmarais and colleagues write that large agricultural conglomerates and even pension funds are buying up prime Saskatchewan farmland. Some lease it back to farmers, but they themselves do not visit their properties. They fence in their land and lock the gates, violating earlier customs of neighbourliness. They hire temporary workers who have no connection to the land and who never interact with the local residents. As one of the people interviewed for the article stated, “all you see is the sudden appearance of a row of combines.” While some large landholdings are indeed the result of expansion by local farmers who have long owned and worked property in the area, most of the new land acquisition is not. Corporate purchases drive up land prices, making it nearly impossible for young people who want to be farmers to start in the business unless they inherit land or are willing to work it as tenants. This has further depleted the population of the Prairies and made it still harder to sustain rural churches. Desmarais and colleagues conclude that when non-resident owners acquire large tracts of land, community cohesion is lost and depopulation becomes so marked that services and institutions cannot be sustained.¹ Hopefully this will not be the final blow to Ukrainian churches on the Prairies, but fear that it could be added great urgency to the Sanctuary Project.

Population shifts on the Prairies are not unidirectional. New people are making rural Alberta and Saskatchewan their home, and most of these are recent émigrés, mainly from South and Southeast Asia. As the members of the Sanctuary team and I travelled the Prairies, we could not help but notice that many gas stations, roadside eateries, and motels are run by new or relatively new arrivals, mainly from South Asia and the Philippines. Besides running small businesses, these new arrivals

work in long-term care homes such as the one I visited in Preeceville. In Wynyard, where I stopped at a local restaurant for supper, I was told that the local chicken-processing plant employs people from South and Southeast Asia. The new immigrants are a welcome addition to the Prairies and provide much needed services. They are not likely to join Ukrainian churches, however, and they will not save these edifices from decline.

THE START OF THE PROJECT

Himka and Swyripa, both of the Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta, now the Department of History, Classics, and Religion, deserve the credit for conceptualizing the Sanctuary Project. That project began with a conference in late 2008 in which all possible interested parties were invited to participate. Fieldwork began in the summer of 2009. During the first year, my husband Peter Holloway and I tagged along because of our interest in Ukrainian Canadian culture. It soon became clear to me that the project needed an interviewer. Himka and Swyripa only took photographs. The stories of the people who worshipped in these churches were not being captured except in an incidental way. In 2010 I began bringing along recording gear, in addition to photographic equipment, in order to interview the people who opened the churches for us. I asked them to talk about their religious life, focusing specifically on rites of passage, namely weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and calendar rites, primarily Christmas, Easter, and the celebration of the holiday from which their church derived its name. We continued in this manner until the project wrapped up in 2018. We covered the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and debated working in Manitoba. That idea was hugely attractive, but in the end we decided against it, partly because we were all exhausted from the work we had already done and partly because similar work was then being carried out by faculty from the University of Manitoba.

John-Paul Himka, his daughter Eva, and Frances Swyripa and I worked both together and separately. The photo-documentation conceived by Himka and Swyripa was the project's primary goal, and everyone except me was engaged in taking photos. The students who accompanied us and the community and faculty volunteers who joined us worked under

the direction of the Himkas and Swyripa. I had one graduate student, Svitlana Kukharenko, join me in interviewing one summer before she received her degree and moved away. At one point a faculty member from a different university wanted to work with us as an interviewer. It soon became clear that this person was not compatible with the rest of the team, and we parted ways. Thus, during the ten years of the Sanctuary Project, I did essentially all of the interviewing by myself.

PROJECT RESULTS

Our project documented more sites than had any other group or individual working on Prairie churches. Because Ukrainian and other churches on the Prairies are so striking, they are a favourite subject for photographers, and many people have photographed them over the years. Painters, notably Parasia Iwanec, whom I interviewed at her retirement home in St Catherine's, Ontario, in 2010, have made Prairie churches their subject matter. On Facebook there are several groups that feature photographs of Prairie churches, and quite a number of individuals contribute to them. The difference between these photographers and the work of the Sanctuary team was that Himka, Swyripa, and their photography team were systematic and thorough. They photographed all structures at each location, meaning not only the church itself, but also belfries, church halls, if any, and even outhouses. They photographed not only the beautiful exteriors of churches but also their contents: icons, banners, vestments, lecterns, bibles, crosses, tetrapods, the crowns used for the celebration of weddings, in short, all available items. Besides documenting each item, they were careful to record its relative size. One member of the team, often a student, would hold a meter stick next to the item being photographed so that its dimensions were clear. The Sanctuary Project was also unique because, while photography was the primary mission of the originators of this effort, they allowed me to work with them and conduct interviews. As a result, this is the only photography project to be accompanied by sound recordings. No other church photo documentation project on the Canadian Prairies had an interview component. The original goal of the project was to document all existing places of worship that might have served Ukrainians living on the Prairies. Most ambitious goals cannot be realized, and our team



FIG. 1.3 Himka and Swyripa photographing

was unable to gain access to every church that we were able to identify; some were left undocumented. Nonetheless, we did amass a set of data unequalled by any other documentation project. Himka, Swyripa, and the photography team collected more than 300,000 photographs. I recorded almost two hundred hours of interviews, speaking to approximately 250 respondents.

THE MECHANICS OF THE PROJECT

In any given year, our group would spend the month of June on the road. The planning for all of this work required much effort and great care. It was a rare and fortunate coincidence that the principal investigators on the project, Himka, Swyripa, and I, got along well and brought to it complementary interests and abilities. Swyripa loves archival research. In fact, upon retirement, she did pro bono archival work for St Peter's Benedictine Monastery in Muenster, Saskatchewan. When we planned our work for the upcoming summer, we would rely on Swyripa to check

archival and other records. She would identify a set of churches in a relatively contiguous area that we might document. Swyripa is also a proud native of Saskatchewan, and when she retired she was willing to drive to many of the locations where we would later work, essentially scouting the area.

Locating churches is not the same as gaining access. Here we relied on Eva Himka. She became enamoured of the project and joined us as the fourth principal member of our team. Her job was to call up people at each of the places where we hoped to go, trying to arrange a time to meet a person who had the key to the church we wanted to visit. Finding the name of the contact person at any particular church is often not an easy matter, and as we worked and travelled, she and Swyripa would do their best to ask people at one church for contacts at the nearby churches we hoped to document.

Once we had arrived at a location and met the people we had contacted, we would tell them about our project and show them published materials such as newspapers and magazines that explained our work. I would then present interview agreement forms to the people with whom we would be working and ask them to read and sign the forms. Eva Himka would get their names, addresses, and other contact information. Later, for each location, we followed up our work by sending our contacts a DVD with all photographs taken and all interviews recorded at a particular site. We essentially provided them with a record of what we had done and gave them a chance to react to our work with any requests they might have for the storage, treatment, and publication of our data. In certain unfortunate circumstances, our records proved most helpful to our respondents. In those instances where there was a theft or a fire, the parishioners had the photographs and sound recordings we had produced to present to the insurance company and substantiate their claims.

When introductions were over, we would set about our work. The two Himkas and Swyripa and any students and volunteers who had joined us would take photographs in the extremely comprehensive and detailed manner described earlier. They would begin with general photographs of church exteriors and outbuildings, then do panoramic shots of the interiors. After these establishing shots, they would proceed to photograph all of the individual items one by one.

THE ORAL INTERVIEW

While the photography was going on, I would sit with the person who had let us into the church and possibly other parishioners who were interested in being interviewed and talk to them about church culture and ritual practice. Our contact person was always notified in advance that an interviewer was part of the team. Thus, they could prepare for my work and bring with them any other persons who might want to talk about the church and about ritual. For the interview, I would use a topic guide. This was written, not in the form of a questionnaire, but as a list of topics I wanted to discuss. The list changed over time. I quickly learned that asking about church history and religion was not wise. In both instances many respondents thought that I, being a professor, wanted precise answers. In some cases, I got the sense that people thought I was testing their religious propriety or that I wanted to validate their commitment to Ukrainian culture. I quickly dropped these topics. Information about church history was best obtained from the parish books that many congregations have produced. These have specific names and dates. For my purposes, it was best to ask what was meaningful to the person or persons with whom I was talking. Did they remember when the church was built? If so, did anything interesting happen? Questions like these produced accounts of parishioner volunteer work such as using teams of horses to excavate the church basement. There were stories about specialists with peculiar habits, such the one about an icon painter who needed an alcoholic drink to get up the courage to ascend scaffolding and work on the dome of the church. One painter would always leave the building and then gaze through the door to see if he had gotten the marbling effect he wanted on the lower part of the church walls. Such narratives were easy and comfortable talk. Similarly, instead of asking about religion, I encouraged my respondents to walk with me around the church and point out things that were especially meaningful to them, things unique to their church, things they found especially striking. This way I learned about urns made out of popsicle sticks and a frame with fish bones gilded and arranged to represent Christian virtues. The work of particularly adept craftspeople, such as gifted embroiderers, was pointed out, as were hand-marbled tetrapods and lecterns constructed so that they could rotate. Other, more controversial information about

the church, such as the relationship between the parishioners and their bishop, or tensions among the members of a particular congregation concerning finances, did come up in our conversations. However, contentious topics were often raised outside, before we entered the building and began the formal interview. When someone misspoke and revealed potentially compromising information after the recorder had been turned on, I asked whether my respondent wanted that section silenced on the audio recording. If the person said yes, I made a note and such statements were indeed silenced; they cannot be heard on the recordings that have been made public.

After the general introduction about the church, we spoke about ritual. I would take time to find a good place to start. For example, if a funeral had occurred recently, it would certainly be a topic that people would remember well and could speak about at length. Yet a recent funeral might prove to be a painful topic and so best avoided. I tended to start with happy topics: weddings or Praznyk or Khram, the church annual celebrations held on the holiday after which the church is named. Once we got going, it was easy to transition from one topic to the next. As it turned out, not all of the topics that people wanted to talk about were happy ones. Sometimes my respondents wanted to speak about a young person who had been killed in a farm accident and how he or she was honoured within the church. I welcomed the sharing of such information. As I worked, my list of topics grew in length. I learned to be open to discussion of the many accidents that can occur while farming, and I learned to ask about events and practices that were specific to the Prairies. These included Styrofoam wedding cakes and the types of tricks played on the bride and groom after the wedding. This information appears throughout this book. Moreover, I came to realize that practices that I thought had died out were still part of Prairie life, or at least existed within the memory of my respondents. Thus, I learned that there were traces of the wedding of the dead, a tradition that incorporates elements of the marriage ceremony into the funeral when a young person who is not married passes away.

I must stress that interviewing is neither easy nor automatic. I began conducting interviews when I was a graduate student and was sent to Turkey to collect oral epic songs. Over the years I worked in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Canada. From my almost fifty years of experience, I

know that an interview is a special form of interaction. Normal conversation between people does not take the form of an interview. Conducting an interview is a process of negotiating a relationship with people one has never met and, in so doing, trying to achieve a collaborative and mutually beneficial information-gathering session. All sorts of things can go wrong. To give some examples from my Canadian work: there were instances when the person I was supposed to interview claimed to “remember everything,” but when I began to pose questions, this proved not to be the case. I should point out that the questions were not esoteric. I would ask: “Do you remember your wedding?” If the person said that he did, I would continue with a question such as “What did your bride wear?” or “What was the wedding cake like?” I sometimes got responses such as, “That was fifty-two years ago. I don’t remember.” Sticking to one topic can be problematic, and following a systematic list of discussion points can be difficult. Something that comes up in connection with one ritual, such as Easter and the use of an embroidered cloth from the Easter basket to ward off storms, could well lead to a discussion of holy water and its use in storm prevention. When something like this happened, I did not interrupt the speaker. I let him or her finish and would then gently nudge them back to the topic of Easter celebrations. Sometimes I would forget to go back to the original topic, so that a discussion of the first topic remained incomplete. I did my best to cover material as systematically as I could while allowing my respondents the freedom to talk as they wished and to bring up what was most important to them.

Those who want to use my sound recordings can access them at Sound Sanctuary Project.² The data I collected are indexed according to the American Folklore Society International Ethnographic Thesaurus. The reason for following the thesaurus is to make the data available to researchers with a specific interest in Ukrainian traditions, and to encourage their use by scholars in other fields. The categories of the thesaurus sometimes did not fit my data because Ukrainian subject matter has not been widely used by non-Ukrainian researchers. To make my sound files accessible both to Ukrainian specialists and to scholars with no Ukrainian background, some categories are double-coded. Malanka, for example, the celebration that comes around the time of the New Year, is double-coded by its Ukrainian term and also by the thesaurus category Carnival.

I have also put together a website built with non-specialists and the interviewees in mind. It has numerous photographs and short explanations of Sanctuary Project work. It also has a link to the sound file database, should a user wish to listen to it.³ Readers of this book and users of my databases are welcome and encouraged to send comments and suggestions regarding the sound file database and the Sanctuary database to me by email.⁴

I should also point out that on many occasions I was recording interviews under less than ideal circumstances. Often, my colleagues were doing their photo documentation around me and my respondent(s). This could be distracting to the people with whom I was speaking. There were often unwanted noises, anything from my colleagues speaking too loudly among themselves to their dropping meter sticks with a clattering sound. The sound quality of many of my sound files is not ideal. Sometimes I was able to withdraw to a quieter, more secluded space such as the church basement. Often this was not possible. Thus, what I produced are not studio recordings. It was what I could do under the circumstances. And I was more than willing to accept the circumstances to do the work that I did. After all, what I was able to get was unique and of unprecedented scope and thoroughness. Because we worked as a team, I was able to gain access to many more places and people than I could ever have contacted on my own. The amount of information I was able to gather was worth the many problems encountered.

Working as a team also meant that I had to coordinate what I did with my teammates. Sometimes I would be engaged in a fascinating interview with a loquacious person and my colleagues would be finished with their work and ready to leave. If I had my own vehicle, I could stay and keep on talking. If we had travelled in a single vehicle, I had to apologize, end the interview, and leave, something that was hard to do. The opposite would also happen. Namely, my respondent would turn out to be a reticent person with little to say and my interview would end fairly quickly. Under such circumstances, to make the situation as comfortable as possible for everyone involved, I would talk even when the person I was with had little to say in response. I would share information from other places that the Sanctuary team had visited; I would talk about my trips to Ukraine or my own life. This would keep my respondent engaged until the photographers on our team had finished their work.

Even when I was not talking to fill in awkward pauses, in order to make the situation as natural as possible, more like a conversation, I would interject my reactions to what I was being told and give examples of what I had heard elsewhere or experienced myself. Any information that I provided about myself was not something that I wanted included in my data: it was my way of making people feel that our interaction was a natural conversation, an exchange of information that might happen between any two people who had just met.

The data I collected were influenced by serendipity. I realize that, had a person other than the one who showed up for my interview been my respondent, I might have gotten different information. When I was talking with a group of people, one of them might have witnessed a grandparent laid out in the home prior to the funeral while the other members of the group had not. Had I been talking to those other parishioners only, had the first person not been present, I would not have known that the custom of keeping a body in the home overnight was practised in that particular area. Thus, when I say that an item or custom was attested in a certain set of towns or parishes, it does not mean that the item or the custom does not or did not exist elsewhere. It was just my luck that the people I talked to did not remember it or that I had to leave before we could get to that subject.

I am also aware that the chemistry between the interviewer and the respondent affects the data. Having talked to people in many places, having worked with a number of field partners, and having interviewed individuals who had previously talked to another person, I know that what is told to one person may well differ from what is told to another. I remember a graduate student of Ukrainian descent assuring me that her family did not believe in the return of the dead, not even on holidays that celebrated ancestors. When I was attending the party held in honour of this student's completion of her degree, her elderly relative sat down next to me and told me how her deceased husband had visited her on a number of occasions. Thus, what I, as an interviewer, elicit is likely different from what another person would elicit.

With all of the caveats listed above, my work was the most thorough documentation of Prairie ritual life since the work of my predecessor, mentor, and role model, Robert Bohdan Klymasz. His fieldwork was done at an earlier date and under different circumstances. He was able



FIG. 1.4 The author interviewing Mary Ann Holowach, Skaro, AB

to avoid many of my constraints, but he also had to adjust to constraints of his own. As an employee of the Canadian Museum of Man (later the Museum of Civilization and now the Museum of History), Klymasz had far greater flexibility in terms of the amount of time he could spend in the field. He did not have to return to campus to teach (like I did). He did not have to leave a place or an interview when teammates needed to be on their way; he could spend as much time in any given location as he liked. His *Sviato: Celebrating Ukrainian-Canadian Ritual in East Central Alberta through the Generations* is based on interviews done in the mid-1980s and is the study that covers material most similar to the rituals documented here.⁵ His method was appropriate to the times and the circumstances in which he worked. From what he has told me, when in the field, he would have freewheeling conversations with informants, presumably similar to my interviews with my respondents. But for publication in *Sviato*, he would extract from his conversations information that fit a list of topics he had already developed. This was in keeping with the scholarly interests of his time, which emphasized

discrete items of folklore over lore in context. Klymasz's ballad book serves as an excellent example of this approach.⁶ The approach to the study of folklore current in Klymasz's time also emphasized looking for items with the greatest antiquity, and for the *Sviato* book, Klymasz, working in the 1980s, was able to interview people who had come to Canada from Ukraine, along with Canadian-born Ukrainians. Klymasz looked for Ukrainian material brought from Ukraine, but even at the time of his work, he found that the lore and practices of people on the Prairies deviated from practices in Ukraine. This led him to posit that what he was observing was a shift from immigrant to ethnic lore.⁷ Klymasz also faced technical constraints different from the ones I faced. At that time, there was no possibility of producing a digital sound file database, so he had to rely on publishing a limited data set, such as the one in his *Sviato* book. Working alone, he had to locate his own interview subjects, whereas I could depend on my Sanctuary Project colleagues to arrange interviews for me. In sum, Klymasz and I did what was required of our respective times and circumstances. We both, in our private chats, recognize that we did what we could. Interviewing is dealing with people. It is surrendering a great deal of control to the person or persons with whom we work. Data obtained through interviewing bears no resemblance to information gathered under controlled circumstances. Yet interviewing is enormously rewarding, and both of us love what we do. Together, our interviews, done some thirty to forty years apart, produce a picture of Ukrainian Prairie ritual and its evolution over time that is of great, perhaps unequalled, scope.

Working, talking, and sharing the way that I did with the people on the Prairies creates a certain intimacy, and I became friends with a number of the people I interviewed. I would go back to visit them whenever I could. One of the great drawbacks of large-scale interviewing and working over a region as vast as the Canadian Prairies is that the relationships one develops cannot be maintained. Now that I am retired, living in Ontario, and ill, going back is not possible. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic precludes travel. I miss the Prairies, and I long for the many special people I had the privilege of meeting. I hope this book captures their grandeur, that it conveys who these people are and what they have accomplished.

DATA THAT COME FROM UKRAINIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITY LIFE

Interview data, as noted earlier, has an inescapable people factor. Another type of interaction with people that yielded data for this book has to do with my life as a “hyphenated” Ukrainian, a person of Ukrainian descent who lives abroad and takes part in the life of the community in his or her new place of residence. In the introduction I talked about my problems with ideas of Ukrainian nationalism generated by Ukrainian Americans and Ukrainian Canadians who sought to make me conform to “proper” behaviour as they defined it. But there is much more to community life than being told what to do and who to be. Looking at my life just in Canada, my participation in the Ukrainian Canadian community has meant attending weddings and baptisms and funerals and all of the rites of passage that were also described by the Prairie Ukrainian Canadians whom I interviewed. Living in the Ukrainian Canadian community has meant honouring Ukrainian tradition when celebrating Christmas, Easter, and other holidays. It has meant attending a Ukrainian church, first in Edmonton and now in Waterloo. It has meant participating in festivals and working in the Ukrainian tent at the Heritage Days celebration in Edmonton, where, for a while, I was the master of ceremonies for the traditional and modern Ukrainian costume fashion shows while my husband sat in the Ukrainian tent showing and explaining the various Ukrainian-themed websites we had created. My husband and I also participated in the Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, although not as regularly as we took part in Heritage Days. We ran traditional arts and crafts workshops for children and for adults. Most of these were in Edmonton, although some were in rural areas. We helped community groups do documentary work such as the filming of an Ivan Kupalo (the midsummer celebration of St John the Baptist) at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. We participated in the documentation of the baking of ritual breads and in doll-making and other craft workshops. I interviewed local craftspeople and collectors interested in folk art.⁸ I served as a consultant to museums and other community organizations. All of this work must and does inform my understanding of Ukrainian Canadian culture, and I have drawn upon it in writing this book.

FIELDWORK DATA COLLECTED IN UKRAINE

In this book I occasionally refer to Ukrainian material. When I do so, I am not trying to find Canadian remnants of ancient Ukrainian practices. Quite the contrary: the book emphasizes the creative nature of Ukrainian Canadian ritual. But certain practices do persist, in original or modified form. These practices are not fossilized relics of the past. Rather, when old practices continue to exist they do so because they are meaningful and play a role in contemporary society. Thus, I cite Ukrainian material to help make sense of Ukrainian Canadian phenomena. For example, had I not learned about the wedding of the dead when I did fieldwork in Ukraine, I would not have understood why people on the Prairies dress unmarried girls in white dresses or put rings on the fingers of teenagers who die unexpectedly. Saying a few words about phenomena such as the wedding of the dead in Ukraine will hopefully help the reader.

What I am using for Ukrainian data is my own fieldwork in Ukraine. I started collecting material about life cycle rituals in 1998 and continued doing so until 2013, travelling to Ukraine every summer and sometimes also during the academic year. After 2013 I continued to do some collecting in Ukraine, but I no longer did it as systematically or as thoroughly because I had become too involved in the Sanctuary Project to do justice to both collecting efforts. I use my own fieldwork for the Ukrainian comparisons for much the same reason I use my own sound files here. This is material I know because I am the collector. The intimacy of my being the collector in both situations makes the two sets of data more comparable than using field data for a description of Canada and published materials for data about Ukraine. The nineteenth-century classics that are most often used for information about Ukrainian folklore are distant from the Canadian material discussed here, and Soviet folklore studies suffer from having had to comply with Soviet standards of scholarship.

There are other parallels between the Sanctuary sound file set and my Ukrainian sound files beyond the immediacy of my personal experience and their containing current material. In both locations, I was working during times of great change. In Ukraine, the Soviet Union had just collapsed and Ukraine had become independent. People were

striving to bring back the old traditions they treasured and to work out a compromise between these and those Soviet-produced rites that had become a meaningful part of their lives. This is like the situation on the Prairies, where population depletion and the intrusion of big corporations are causing a major upheaval in a way of life. On the Prairies the members of the Sanctuary team were witness to Ukrainian Canadians trying to keep their churches going under challenging circumstances by seeking to work out a balance between church-centred Ukrainian culture and more secular assertions of Ukrainian Canadian identity that would appeal to younger generations and be understood and appreciated by non-Ukrainian neighbours.

My recordings from Ukraine are a useful source of data also because the collection method was similar to the one used for the Canadian sound files. In fact, I worked out some of my methodology in Ukraine, although things like asking respondents to sign release forms was not an option in a post-Soviet country. For one thing, release forms were not standard when I started my work. For another, even if release forms had been the norm, getting someone to sign an official document at a time as tense and nervous as the one that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine would not have been realistic. All Ukrainian respondents were informed that I was a scholar gathering data to be used in a book. On all trips to Ukrainian villages, I was accompanied by a scholar from the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, who would explain to our respondents who we were and what we were doing. That person could also guide me toward proper behaviour in the circumstances we encountered.

All of the Ukrainian material is also available in digital format and can be found online.⁹ These sound files are, of course, in Ukrainian. The index used for the files is home-made. At the time this work was done, the American Folklore Society International Ethnographic Thesaurus did not exist, so, working with graduate student Svitlana Kukharenko and the University of Alberta Text Analysis Portal for Research (TAPOR), we came up with a set of categories and sub-categories that fit our data. Programming was done by Eric Zhang of TAPOR. He was assisted by my husband, Peter Holloway, who worked through the difficult process of uploading files written in Cyrillic. To allow better access to Ukrainian

immigrants who might understand spoken Ukrainian but were unable to read the language, all of the category headings in this database were translated into English. On any page, both Ukrainian language and English language categories appear, and both are clickable. Readers of this book who understand spoken Ukrainian are welcome to access the site and offer comments to this author. ❁



Holy Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church, New Kiew, AB [ABOVE]

Dormition of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sich-Kolomea, AB
[BELOW]



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Myrnam, AB. Note the miniature replica of the church. [ABOVE]

Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Whitesand, SK [BELOW]



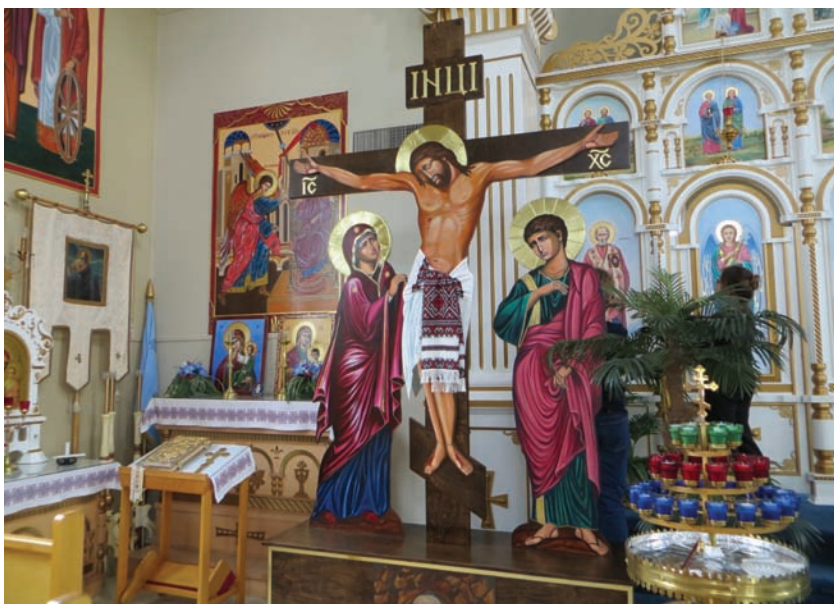
Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Insinger, SK [ABOVE]

Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Jedburgh, SK [BELOW]



Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Shipman, SK.
Although many Ukrainian churches in Saskatchewan are grand
with a great degree of variety in colour, quite a few others do
indeed look like houses with a cross on top. [ABOVE]

Iconostas in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Ascension,
Kobzar, SK [BELOW]



Iconostas in the All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church,
Kamsack, SK [ABOVE]

Christ on the Cross, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church,
Prince Albert, SK [BELOW]



Cemetery of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Brinsley, AB



St Basil's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Gorlitz, sk



[ABOVE AND FACING]

Massive granite statuary donated by Nellie Holowachuk to the Chechow Ukrainian Catholic church near Preeceville, sk. The photographs show Holowachuk's own tombstone, statues of Christ the Saviour and Mary Mother of God, and one of the Stations of the Cross.





Singing after a church service using Joe Galichowski's song book in the St Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Luzan-Toporiwtsi, AB.



Grave blessing, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Insinger, SK



Khram, Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church, North Bank, AB



Khram, Ss Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Dickie Bush, AB



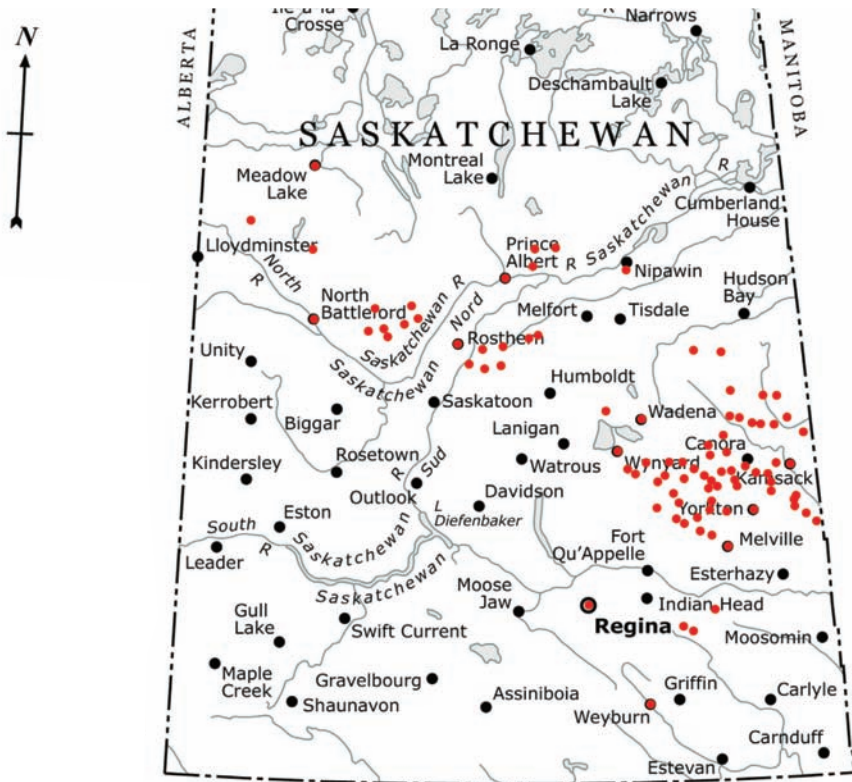
Desanctification of the St Jaroslav Ukrainian Catholic Church,
Bruderheim, AB



Places where the Sanctuary team worked in Alberta

Source: <http://atlas.gc.ca> © 2002

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada,
Natural Resources Canada.



Places where the Sanctuary team
worked in Saskatchewan
Source: <http://atlas.gc.ca> © 2002
Her Majesty the Queen in Right of
Canada, Natural Resources Canada.

CHAPTER 2

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THE CHURCH AND UKRAINIAN IDENTITY

On the Prairies the church was the hub of things Ukrainian. The Ukrainians who began arriving in Canada starting in 1896 were a deeply religious people who treasured their centres of worship. Religiosity and faith, however, were not the only things that made the church central to Ukrainian Prairie life. The Ukrainian church was an established and recognized institution that played a pivotal role in helping people retain their Ukrainian identity while also helping them integrate into Canadian life.¹ Urban areas had their Ukrainian churches, but they also had other centres of cultural activity. The Ukrainian National Federation promoted Ukrainian nationalism and provided cultural activities to help further its political agenda.² The Ukrainian Labor Temple played a major role, especially in its defence of Ukrainian workers, supporting them in their opposition to the horrific labour conditions imposed on immigrants. The Labor Temple upheld culture as well, and, as Kassandra Luciuk points out, it staged Ukrainian-language plays that were highly effective in winning over public support by promoting Ukrainian culture.³ On the Prairies, on the farms and in the towns where the earlier arrivals from Ukraine settled, however, the church was the main hub of Ukrainian activities, cultural as well as religious. It was a solid and stable point around which the more fluid activities of adjustment to a new homeland could occur. On the Canadian Prairies, the church was one of the few institutions that Ukrainians could call their own, and this heightened its importance to first- and second-wave immigrants.

The Ukrainian church in Canada is many churches. The major denominations are Orthodox Christianity and Eastern Rite Catholicism,

a faith that recognizes the authority of Rome but also observes a rite similar to the Orthodox one and allows a married priesthood. In addition to Catholicism and Orthodoxy there are many smaller denominations that served and continue to serve Ukrainian Canadians. One of these is the Russian Orthodox Church, which, on the Prairies, conducts services in a mixture of English and Ukrainian, as happens at the St Onuphrius Church south of Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. Furthermore, Ukrainians sometimes worship with other nationalities. In MacNutt, Saskatchewan, and Boian, Alberta, for example, they join the Romanians. It is not my purpose to present a survey of Ukrainian spirituality or to trace its history in Canada. This has been done with great thoroughness by scholars such as Orest Martynowych. The focus here is on the church as an institution, regardless of denomination, and the role organized religion played in helping Ukrainian immigrants adjust to Canadian life, thus helping form their understanding of themselves as Ukrainian Canadians.

EARLY SETTLERS AND EFFORTS AT ASSIMILATION

The Canadian government wanted Ukrainians to come to Canada and settle the Prairies, so it cooperated with recruiters like Josef Oleskew to encourage migration. However, the authorities were not quite pleased with what they got. John Lehr points out that politics played a role in immigration and that the Conservative Party was especially opposed to the immigration policies that brought in immigrants from Eastern Europe.⁴ As a result, the government introduced policies that segregated Ukrainians, and this led to the block settlements found in the Western provinces.

The early settlers were not grouped together in order to allow them to maintain their culture and language. Quite the contrary – the clustering of Ukrainians had political and financial motives, and the goal was assimilation, not the maintenance of Ukrainian identity. Canadian immigration policy in the early period favoured colonization of land deemed to be vacant, notwithstanding the presence of Indigenous peoples. According to Lehr, the government did its best to meet the perceived needs of Ukrainians even while catering to public prejudice against them. Ukrainians were settled on the peripheries of the best agricultural lands, in proximity to one another. The decision to settle them in bush country in part reflected the government's fear that Ukrainians did not have the financial resources

to survive on farming alone and would become a burden on the state. Placing them near wooded areas would allow them access to hunting and foraging (for mushrooms and berries), as well as a chance to make money by cutting and selling cordwood. The government also surmised that clustering Ukrainians together would help them adjust to their new home while segregating them from other settlers.⁵ Add to this that at the time, many Canadians did not view Ukrainians positively, viewing them as animal-like brutes with questionable hygiene, good for tilling the soil and little else. Apparently, there was some basis to this perception. Between the horrific trials that many had to endure in the course of their passage from Europe to Canada and the overwhelming demands of trying to farm prairie land, many did sink to levels of suffering and self-neglect that left even Oleskew shocked.⁶ The appellation “men in sheepskin coats,” a phrase that became the title of Vera Lysenko’s book, captures the bestial quality that others attributed to the early arrivals.⁷ Additional and painful discrimination came during the First World War, when Ukrainians, because they were from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were interned as enemy aliens and subjected to forced labour.

Ukrainians liked the early settlement policies that bundled them together with their co-ethnics, and Lehr shows that they preferred to live near people to whom they were related, either by birth or by marriage.⁸ Ukrainians’ desire to live near people like themselves meant that they were also segregated according to religion. The settlers who came in the first two waves were from Halychyna and Bukovyna, and while both these regions were Ukrainian-speaking parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they differed on the basis of religious practice: the Halychany were Eastern Rite Catholics, and the Bukovyntsi were Orthodox. Because there was antipathy between the Halychany and the Bukovyntsi, the Canadian government soon caught on that putting these two groups together was not productive, and so it began settling people with their co-religionists, thus emphasizing the importance of religion.⁹ The pattern of Catholic/Orthodox segregation did not persist, however, and today many towns and cities have both Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox churches, often just a few blocks apart – as in Innisfree, Alberta – or kitty corner from each other – as in Bruderheim in the same province. Early settlement policy, however, did underscore religious differences.

What is striking about early settlement practices and in need of further study is the apparent disregard for the Indigenous peoples of the Prairies. As Lindy Ledohowski writes, Ukrainians had been co-opted into the project of colonizing the Prairies.¹⁰ The early immigrants, with their very limited knowledge of Canadian life, had no idea that there were peoples already living on the lands to which they were assigned. Calling the early settlers pioneers, a policy that came with the push toward multiculturalism, helped reinforce the image that Ukrainians were settling on virgin, unoccupied soil. Only now are Ukrainians coming to terms with the types of relationships their forebears had with Canada's First Peoples. Programs focused on Ukrainian/Indigenous relations are now offered by the University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan University, and other institutions. Graduate students are researching this topic, and Ukrainian organizations such as the Shevchenko Scientific Society offer grants to support this work.

Once settled in Canada, Ukrainians were subjected to aggressive efforts to assimilate them into the Canadian mainstream. These efforts were many and varied and were carried out within the memory of people whom I interviewed. What came up most often in my interviews was the attempts by schools to Anglicize their young pupils. Ukrainians never had to face residential schools of the sort used to assimilate First Nations children. Nonetheless, schools were often brutal. Respondents remembered being beaten for speaking Ukrainian. They told me that their names were forcibly changed. Elsie Kawulich described how her primary school teacher forced her to adopt the first name she now bears. Lesia, the name given by her parents, the teacher said, was not a real name and needed to be changed. While Elsie did retain the name forced on her by her teacher, she also developed a sense of having been mistreated by the system, and this was compounded by her discovery that the police were using her friendship with the daughter of one of their officers to spy on Ukrainian settlers. As she recounted in our interview, when the police went to a Ukrainian home to investigate an alleged crime, they would take Elsie along so that she could listen to what people were saying in Ukrainian. They would then interrogate her without telling her the reason for their questions. Her sense that she had been exploited by the police and wronged by the school system merely because she was Ukrainian led to Kawulich's life of activism and the Order of Canada award she received in 2012.



FIG. 2.1 Elsie Kawulich showing her Order of Canada medal

Lesia/Elsie's name was not the only one that was changed. Nazarii Haras of Endeavour, Saskatchewan, became Norman Harris, and not by choice. Dmytro Radesh of Boian, Alberta, became Metro. In fact, on the Prairies, the name Dmytro was regularly anglicized to Metro. Some people Anglicized their names willingly for the sake of better job prospects. That is why Frank Cedar's father changed his name from Woitovych to Cedar and why the donor who endowed the professorship I held at the University of Alberta went from Petro Kuleba to Peter Kule. Kawulich's case is not the only one of police misuse of authority. Mark Minenko, a retired lawyer, is currently examining police archives to find other examples of such misuse. At a conference at the University of Alberta in May 2018, he reported that his search had been most successful.¹¹

THE CHURCH AS THE LOCUS OF ALL THINGS UKRAINIAN

With Canadian institutions such as the school system and the police lined up against them, Ukrainians needed an institution of their own, and that institution was the church. The church was not just a religious centre – it supported all aspects of Ukrainian culture. In church halls, members of the congregation could attend Ukrainian-language plays. Churches also offered instruction in the Ukrainian language. When I was given a tour of the All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Camrose, Alberta, my guides pointed out an old blackboard with the Ukrainian alphabet written on it. From the appearance of the writing, it must have been done long ago; it was not erased because it was a memento of the services the church offered. Churches provided suppers with Ukrainian food, as well as after-service lunches where parishioners could sing Ukrainian songs. These were such favourites that Joe Galichowski compiled a hand-written book of songs in memory of a son killed in a traffic accident and would pass out Xeroxed copies of it to those in attendance at post-service meals. The church's deep commitment to being a Ukrainian institution can be seen in icons in which Christ the Saviour, Mary Mother of God, and other religious figures wear Ukrainian embroidery. Such icons can be found in Bellis and at the Holy Ascension church in New Kiew, both in Alberta. In the Orthodox church in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Jesus wears an embroidered *rushnyk*, or ritual towel, as a loincloth.

Writing about Ukrainian identity formation back in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, John-Paul Himka contends that the church was important for helping the Ukrainians feel distinct from government authorities and their Germanic neighbours.¹² John Lehr makes an even stronger connection between the church and identity, a connection that dates back to Austro-Hungarian times. He notes that back in Eastern Europe, both Halychany and Bukovinsti felt that the church was the one thing that was their own. So when these groups came to Canada, they viewed their homes as mere structures, the primary purpose of which was to provide shelter. This encouraged them to adapt their houses to Western models relatively quickly. Ukrainian churches, by contrast, had the emotional weight of edifices of identity and thus retained their distinctive features.¹³ In Canada, especially on

the vast Canadian Prairies, the church was indeed the institution that Ukrainians regarded as specifically their own.

Women's leagues affiliated with churches formed. Besides meeting their religious duties, these groups were responsible for many activities that were primarily cultural. They ran Ukrainian cultural programs, provided language instruction, and offered the young instruction in traditional arts and crafts. The Catholic women's league has recently published a large book cataloguing its activities. It details the founding of branches in cities, followed by its expansion to more and more small communities. The book lists the activities of the various branches and provides tables enumerating classes in *pysanka*-writing, embroidery, pottery, and dance.¹⁴ Women's leagues ran and continue to run museums. In Edmonton there is a Catholic museum at St Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Church and an Orthodox museum at St John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Both museums display traditional embroidered clothing, *pysanky*, ritual breads (*korovai*), and other cultural objects. The women's leagues have been so diligent in collecting folk material culture that when I toured the museum at the central Catholic eparchy in Winnipeg, Natalia Radawetz, its curator, informed me she had stopped accepting folk materials for reasons of space. The museum has been forced to limit its collection to religious objects only.

Where communities were too small to organize a women's league to provide cultural services and instruction in traditional crafts along with religious teaching, the gap was filled by the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate. Every summer the Sister Servants headed out to remote communities. They would spend two weeks in each location, staying at the home of one of the parishioners. Andrew Chupik of Danbury, Saskatchewan, remembers his family hosting the Sister Servants any number of times. During their stay, the Sister Servants would teach the catechism and also show children how to write *pysanky*, embroider, and cook. The sisters played baseball with the children and taught Ukrainian dance wearing their full-length habits. Many times, when I asked a talented *pysanka* artist or embroiderer how she or he learned the craft, the answer was: the Sister Servants.

It is likely that the women's church leagues, along with the Sister Servants, filled a gap created by the demographics of early Ukrainian immigration. During the first two waves of immigration, families typically

arrived without grandparents: it was too expensive to bring the elderly, and they were often too feeble to make the journey. As a result, there was no *baba*, or grandmother, to mind the children and to teach them traditional arts and crafts. Furthermore, even if the mother of the family was skilled in traditional activities, she had no time to pass these on to her children. Early Prairie life was extremely harsh.¹⁵ The demands of clearing land and feeding a family were overwhelming. To help the family survive, men often had to leave the farm and work on the railway or take other paid employment such as clearing bush. Family members who stayed behind were stretched to the limits of their abilities. Michael Mucz, writing about folk medicine, goes so far as to claim that mothers administered narcotics derived from poppies or hemp to their babies to make them sleep because that was the only way they could handle all the chores they needed to perform to enable their families to survive.¹⁶ Teaching arts and crafts was out of the question. This gap in instruction was filled by the church. Be it the women's leagues and their classes, or the Sister Servants and their entertainments to supplement religious instruction, it was the church and its affiliates that kept alive and passed on to future generations the material and ritual culture that is so often associated with being Ukrainian. Essentially, the church took over the transmission of folklore, which made it all the more important to the Ukrainian pioneers.

BURYING ANCESTORS AND PLANTING ROOTS IN CANADIAN SOIL

One of the most important services provided by the church was the burial of the dead. Treating human remains in a respectful manner dates back to prehistoric times and has been, and continues to be, of paramount emotional importance to the living. For Ukrainians the loss of family members was a serious matter. Between the stress of the voyage to Canada and the enormous demands of establishing a homestead, people died. Thus, proper church burial quickly became a profoundly essential service. Churches did not exist in the very earliest stages of immigration, but they were important enough for Ukrainians to start building them just as soon as they could. St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for example, was built near Gardenton, Manitoba, in 1899. Cemeteries

soon followed. Some cemeteries actually predate the churches that later came to serve them. This is true of the North Bank Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in Lobstick, Alberta, located near the Victoria Trail, where people who died on the journey westward were buried in the First People's cemetery located at that spot.

For immigrants, burial of the deceased and the construction of cemeteries served a vital function in addition to allowing proper and respectful interment of human remains: burying the dead in Canada was a way of sinking roots into Canadian soil. As Dennis Klass states, for immigrant cultures "the cemetery becomes a piece of the old country, a new ethnic homeland." He describes cemeteries with sections where all of the graves belong to people of a particular ethnicity or people who come from a single country. He notes that people perceive these sections as "their land," something that re-creates the country they left behind. Klass adds that "burying the dead as part of claiming a place in the [new] homeland has a long history" dating back to the ancient Hebrews.¹⁷ For Ukrainians in Canada, cemeteries were a way to stake a claim to new land, to establish rootedness in the Canadian soil. David Burzminski, interviewed in the cemetery of the Church of St Jaroslaw in Bruderheim, Alberta, made a statement that comes very close to Klass's view. In my interview with him, he explained that burying one's ancestors in Canadian soil was like planting seeds in the new Canadian homeland, an image that resonated with the farmers in his area. When I asked about the crushed glass decorations on cement grave coverings, he responded by switching the topic and asking me if I knew why the graves needed to be topped with slabs of cement. When I said I did not, he explained that the heavy cement grave covers kept the dead from trying to return to Ukraine. The slabs were too hard to lift, he said, and prevented the dead from rising up and leaving their graves. This, in turn, prevented them from becoming unquiet dead, wandering and lost souls, who, because they could not find their way across the ocean, were doomed to remain in a purgatory-like limbo. The soil in the Bruderheim area is sandy, and my supposition is that, until people started putting slabs of concrete on top of graves, they might have been dug up by animals such as wolves and coyotes. The disinterred graves were then interpreted in accordance with traditional belief as attempts by the deceased to return to where they had been born. Preventing the deceased from "returning"



FIG. 2.2 David Burzminski (centre), Svitlana Kukharenko, and the author

also helped their descendants, who, again quoting Burzminski, “needed them here, in Canada.” The belief that burial offers a powerful way to claim connection to one’s Canadian homeland is affirmed by people’s efforts to be buried in their ancestral plots, next to their kin, a topic that will be covered in the chapter on cemeteries.

Cemeteries, then, established a connection to Canadian soil. They also provided, and continue to provide, a place to mourn, not just for deceased relatives but for all losses. Mourning is an essential aspect of the immigrant experience, and Henry, Stiles, and Biran point out that mourning is necessary for successful immigrant integration and the formation of a new cross-cultural identity.¹⁸ Ukrainians who settled in Canada had a great need to mourn. They needed to express the pain of their misery under the harsh conditions of settlement. They also suffered sorrow that exceeded that of other newcomers. For them, the imposition of Soviet rule meant they had only limited contact with family and friends in Ukraine. Eastern Ukraine was one of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union, and Western Ukraine came under partial Soviet domination

in 1939, with the rest joining the Soviet state in 1945. Letters did go back and forth between Canada and the Ukrainian homeland, but they had to be written in Aesopic language that provided little emotional satisfaction.¹⁹ If anything, those letters instilled sorrow and fear. Visiting cemeteries, whether to bury relatives or to commemorate the deceased, allowed an expression of loss that went beyond the loss of ancestors. Traditional laments, whether performed in Ukraine or in Canada, expressed sorrow not only for the loss of loved ones but also for various other misfortunes, such as the harshness of life. Lamentation died out in Canada somewhere in the 1970s, but, as Klymasz points out, some of the functions of mourners and mourning were taken over by the church, with priests of all denominations reading eulogies with lament-like features.²⁰ Thus, going to cemeteries for a funeral where a priest delivered a lament-like eulogy could well prompt necessary general mourning.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

The church provided for the needs of the early settlers. It also served as a counterweight to government efforts at assimilation. Frances Swyripa, writing about how Ukrainians are portrayed in English-language works, points out that such works repeatedly contrast the relationship of early settlers to schools, which sought to assimilate them, to their relationship to their churches, which did the opposite.²¹ It is not clear, however, that the churches fostered a specifically Ukrainian identity in the Prairie newcomers. For one thing, most came from Halychyna and Bukovyna, which were regions of Austria-Hungary and not part of a country called Ukraine. For another, as John Lie writes, “nation” is a relatively new construct, and people who came from villages – like the early immigrants did – probably identified with their village rather than their country. Perhaps they identified with the region where they lived, but the concept of nation was alien to them.²² It was Canadian government policies, noted earlier, which settled Ukrainians with their own kind, that gave them a sense of unity. It was political – and often public – opposition to Ukrainian immigration on the Prairies that lumped together the newcomers, be they from Halychyna or Bukovyna, and called them Ukrainian, thus giving them the idea that they were a single people. Of course, as people I interviewed often reminded me, some of the names

they were called were not neutral, but no one I talked to questioned the fact that all Ukrainians were lumped together. Again, following Lie, it is when people become immigrants that they acquire an identity corresponding to their country of origin or, in this case, their ethnicity. During the First World War, the Canadian government perceived Ukrainians as Austro-Hungarians and interned many of them as enemy aliens, but it soon became clear that they were not German or Germanic but an ethnic unit unto themselves. The contrast between Ukrainians and the political state from which they had come helped Ukrainians cultivate a sense of having a separate identity.

Frances Swyripa, again in her discussion of the portrayal of Ukrainians in English-language works, does not speak about immigration creating a sense of nation, instead arguing that Ukrainians did have a strong sense of identity even before they came to Canada. She too notes the assimilation pressures exerted by public schools and discusses the efforts by non-Ukrainian churches to encourage the new arrivals to join – which did not meet with success. In fact, one Protestant missionary, she found, went and learned Ukrainian instead.²³ Swyripa does not state whether the tenacious adherence of the early settlers to their culture was the result of something like national awareness or simply a retention of practices developed in Austria-Hungary, where Ukrainians held on to their language and culture. That question was not raised in English-language works.

Purely nationalist ideas came with the third wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, with the people who arrived after the Second World War. These émigrés felt themselves to be exiles and focused on the country they had left and on righting the wrongs they felt were being perpetrated in their homeland. They were educated professionals rather than farmers. They settled in cities such as Edmonton, and, according to Per A. Rudling, they were militantly opposed to being assimilated. Many had fought to establish an independent Ukraine and, when they failed, had headed west, where they maintained their Ukrainian language and culture and set out to raise a cadre of descendants who would continue the fight for Ukrainian independence.²⁴ While they did not settle in the rural areas where the earlier Ukrainian immigrants had made a home for themselves, these third-wave immigrants did have an impact on Prairie settlers, making them more aware of themselves, not just as a

group but as a nationality. The greatest impact of the third-wavers on rural areas came not on their first arrival but in the 1970s, when they were instrumental in creating Canada's multiculturalism policy. That policy allowed them to secure funding for bilingual schools and for cultural activities such as Ukrainian cultural festivals, run not just in urban centres but in rural areas as well. These programs then stimulated nationalist sentiments among rural Ukrainian Canadians.

Writing about Canada's multiculturalism policy and the role of Ukrainians in creating that policy, Julia Lalande finds an interesting mix between the nationalism of the postwar arrivals and the more neutral attitude of the Prairie farmers. The drive for multiculturalism policy was led by postwar immigrants, but their arguments for the policy and for the recognition of Ukrainians as "a people like no other" were based in large part on the traits of the early immigrants who had settled the Prairies. It was the presence of these first settlers that allowed the development of the pioneer myth – the claim that the Ukrainians, like the English and the French, were one of Canada's founding peoples. Furthermore, the fact that Ukrainians lived in block settlements supported the argument for their geographical and cultural unity, akin to French dominance in the province of Quebec. Last but not least, it was the existence of Prairie Ukrainian Canadians, people who had long inhabited the land and had planted their roots in Canada by burying their dead in Canadian soil, people who, with their successful clearing and tilling of farmland, had turned the Prairie provinces into desirable property, that supported the argument that Ukrainians were integral to Canada. In other words, they were true Canadians, not "New Canadians" or immigrants.²⁵ By drawing Prairie Ukrainians into their argument for a multiculturalism policy and by sending monies received from multiculturalism grants to Prairie bilingual programs and cultural organizations, the nationalists of the third immigration wave pulled the early settlers and their descendants into the Ukrainian nationalist sphere. They helped them identify as Ukrainians and encouraged younger generations to revive Ukrainian culture or construct what they thought it should be. As a result, many of the descendants of the early Prairie settlers, those who went to school in the 1970s and later, benefited from official in-school bilingual programs, grant-supported dance programs, and church-run but grant-sponsored summer camps. Some, in turn, became nationally conscious.

CONSTRUCTING AN IMAGINED UKRAINE

As Lalande notes, one part of the “people like no other” argument was that Ukrainians, unlike other immigrants to Canada, could not return to their homeland. Soviet rule of their homeland meant they could not return there even if they wanted to – even brief visits were out of the question. Letters that went back and forth were uninformative because they were written in a way that would not get people in Soviet Ukraine into trouble. With time and loss of language, the letters became even more inaccessible so that Ukrainians were further distanced from their country of origin. Ukrainians were left to construct a Ukraine based on memory, on books, and on imaginations fuelled by nostalgia. This was mixed with the image of Ukraine propagated by the nationalists, who in the Ukrainian press painted a picture of an oppressed and suffering land. The nationalist approach and the nostalgic memories of Prairie Ukrainians together created an imagined, bucolic Ukraine, one of neat thatched cottages surrounded by flowers. This imagined Ukraine was a beautifully verdant land that would blossom even more once it was freed from the Soviet yoke with its linguistic and cultural Russification and the imposed industrialization of Dnipropetrovsk, the Donbas, and Chernobyl. Beautiful people in embroidered shirts populated this wondrous imagined landscape. They were carefree amid Ukrainian bounty, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments. Harvests were abundant, and without the forced requisition of farm produce that had characterized the Holodomor, the Ukrainian Famine, people were handsome, well-fed, and cheerful. As Lynette Russell writes, an imagined homeland can have tremendous power over a person, often greater power than a place that is real, and that is why some people refuse to visit the actual place they idealize.²⁶

The lovely, bucolic Ukraine that would blossom again once freed from Soviet domination was the ideal, one that would be realized someday. Meanwhile, the reality as imagined in Canada was a Ukraine in chains. It was an oppressed Ukraine in need of political and divine intervention. This image is beautifully captured by a painting in the church hall of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God in Model Farm, Saskatchewan. It shows a female figure in a garment that calls to mind both Grecian robes and a long-skirted,



FIG. 2.3 Volia Ukraini (Freedom for Ukraine painting), Model Farm, SK

fancy version of an embroidered Ukrainian dress, holding a sash that reads “Freedom for Ukraine” written in Ukrainian (Volia Ukraini). Above her is Archangel Michael, the warrior, holding a sword and a wreath of victory that he appears ready to drop on the woman’s head. To her left is a smaller but similarly dressed female figure with a book, holding a palm frond over the central figure. Chains, with some of the links broken, drape the woman with the “Freedom for Ukraine” banner. She stands on an island surrounded by water. On the mainland is a seated *kobzar*, a traditional Ukrainian minstrel associated with freedom and nationhood. An important genre in the *kobzar* repertory is the *duma*, a type of song that describes Kozaks, valiant and picturesque warriors who do battle with those who oppress their fellow Ukrainians. One cannot help but read the image, taken as a whole, as a Canadian way of picturing Ukraine: classic and statuesque, blessed by a warrior angel, but passive, as Ukraine continues to be under Soviet rule. The water separating the central figure from the rest of the composition is like the water that separates Ukrainian Canadians from their homeland. Songs recorded from minstrels, some published in Canada, are the only link

to this imagined Ukraine. The smaller figure with the book suggests that reading is a way to better oneself and become politically informed and thus better able to support Ukraine through action on this side of the Atlantic. Literacy was a goal not only for the Canadian authorities, who wanted Ukrainians to learn English, but also for the nationalists, who wanted their co-ethnics on the Prairies to learn written as well as spoken Ukrainian. Literacy, they believed, would make Prairie farmers properly informed and better able to support the postwar émigré activists in their political efforts on behalf of the homeland. What was the actual intent of the artist who created this painting? It is impossible to determine. The painting is neither signed nor dated. I asked about the artist and the meaning of the painting when, in 2016, the Sanctuary Team attended the Praznyk at the Patronage of the Mother of God Church and the celebratory meal that followed. I was unable to get an answer.

Stage backdrops found in the halls associated with Ukrainian churches are also a good illustration of how Ukrainians in Canada imagined the physical appearance of the countryside in their former homeland. In Musidora, Alberta, there is a beautiful and complicated stage backdrop signed by Petro Romaniuk and dated 1948. The central panel pictures a village scene with houses that would be typical of eastern Ukraine, not the western Ukraine from which most of the residents of Musidora came. The houses were probably based on descriptions in Ukrainian literature rather than on the homeland memories of the people who settled the Prairies. In her discussion of imaginary landscapes, Russell discusses tours of Australian and New Zealand places associated with *The Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, and other literary and filmic works of fiction. While she does not say this, her work indicates that media, be it print or filmic, can create a powerful reality, perhaps more potent and attractive than actual personal experience. Genre and the concept of frame should also be mentioned. If backdrops used in theatres in Ukraine pictured landscapes typical of eastern Ukraine, then such pictorial references could have been carried over into Canada with memories of plays.²⁷ The stage backdrop in Musidora is based more on literary works (and recollections of theatre performances) than on actual memory of Ukraine. One unusual feature of the Musidora work is that it mixes its idealized Ukraine with features found in Canada. The streets in this imagined village are straight, even though they are of dirt. The township roads and range roads that cross



FIG. 2.4 Stage backdrop, St Mary's Church of the Dormition hall,
Musidora, AB

the Prairies are typically straight; this is not the case in Ukrainian villages, where paths meander to follow the land's contours. Especially striking is the mountain towering over the painted village, which looks much like something out of the Canadian Rockies. Perhaps this was supposed to represent the Carpathian Mountains of western Ukraine, so as to add a western Ukrainian touch to the backdrop. If this was the intent, it was not successful: the mountain here looks more like something near Lake Louise, Alberta, than anything found in the Carpathians. Unfortunately, we cannot ask Romaniuk or his descendants what he was trying to represent in his work. Similar stage backdrops can be found in a number of other Ukrainian church and municipal halls. They do not include the Rocky Mountains, but they do consistently picture idealized eastern Ukrainian villages with blooming flowers and neat houses with thatched roofs. One of these idealized village paintings is found in the church hall in Model Farm, the same place as the *Freedom for Ukraine* painting. It is noteworthy that the painting of the village is in good condition whereas the one of *Ukraine in chains* is water-stained and faded. Does this indicate that an

idealized Ukrainian village life was closer to the hearts of the Patronage of the Mother of God congregation than thoughts of taking action to liberate Ukraine? Perhaps. Action aimed at the country of Ukraine itself seems to have been the goal of third-wave immigrants; the rural-dwelling Ukrainians who came in the first two waves were more involved with life in Canada and content to imagine a bucolic ideal.

The plays staged in the 1950s in church and municipal halls run by Ukrainian organizations reveal the ways that Ukrainians in Canada imagined their home country. Norman Harris, the Ukrainian activist mentioned earlier, gave me a bundle of play scenarios to use in my work. I had met Harris in 2013 when the Sanctuary team documented his home church in Endeavour, Saskatchewan. When I attended Khram in Sturgis in 2015, Harris made of point of being there, having been informed that I was coming by Roy Kolot, my contact at the Holy Trinity church in that town. He brought the bundle of plays to pass on to me.

The plays are printed on cheap paper. Some of them were printed in western Ukraine, which did not come under Soviet domination until 1945, but most of them were produced on this side of the Atlantic. The play scenarios are geared to a Western audience and present the hopes and fears of Ukrainian Canadians.²⁸ In the bundle provided by Harris, many booklets have the names of local actors written in pencil next to the roles they played, an indication that these plays were indeed staged. The plays themselves portray village life in Ukraine and paint a picture of poverty and struggle.

Judging from the condition of the various play booklets, the most popular drama was a tragic one: *Svekrukha Evdokha* (Evdokha, the Mother-in-Law). Here we see a village matriarch who tries to deal with poverty by abusing her daughter-in-law. The young woman's husband, Evdokha's son Ivan, has gone to earn money in North America; which country is not specified (at the time this play was staged, travel across the Canada-US border was easy and people could move from one country to the other for work). With Ksenia, the daughter-in-law, left unprotected, Evdokha tortures her in every possible way. Because the family is poor, she tries to force Ksenia to find a paying job. When Ksenia fails to do so, Evdokha withholds food. Ksenia suffers and then dies, leaving behind Maryna, her little daughter. Ivan returns soon after Ksenia's death, too late to save his wife, so the earnings he brings back with him are of no

avail. Ivan abandons his mother but eventually forgives her, and the two are reconciled just before Evdokha dies. While the family is reunited, this is not a happy ending.

Vuiko z Ameryky (The Uncle from America) is a comedic take on the desperate economic state of Ukraine. Zenon, an impoverished young man, makes his money by writing to his uncle in America and telling him about his non-existent family. Each time Zenon adds another family member, the uncle sends another gift of cash. Eventually the uncle decides to visit Zenon's wonderful family. Of course, the family does not exist, and Zenon has to go through all sorts of comic contortions to pretend that it does. All works out well in the end, but the point here is not the happy resolution – it is the picture of Ukraine as an impoverished land, reliant on support from the West.

Both these plays deal with the personal issues of the sort that would have been on the minds of immigrants to Canada. *Svekrukha Evdokha* expresses the guilt that immigrants perhaps felt as they sought better economic prospects in the West. *Vuiko z Ameryky* shows successful support of family left behind. Issues that affect the nation of Ukraine as a whole are not addressed in these dramas. The play that comes closest to addressing politics in Ukraine is *Hapka Bushovnychka* (Hapka the Revolutionary). It tells about a servant who takes advantage of the imposition of Soviet rule to make the lives of her former employers miserable. The doctor for whom Hapka worked prior to the arrival of the Soviets manages to trick her by using the laws of the very Soviet system that Hapka supports. At this point Hapka decides that her life was better before Soviet rule, and things return to normal. This play, when it was staged in the 1950s, expressed both the shortcomings and the illogic of the Soviet system and gave Ukrainians in Canada hope that people in Ukraine who supported communism might come to see that system's faults, drive the Soviets from power, and return things back to the way they were before.

The plays are no longer performed. Even so, they offer an important clue to the way Ukraine was seen at precisely the time when that country and Canada were separated from each other by the Iron Curtain, leaving Ukrainians on this side of the Atlantic fearful for their relatives suffering from the oppression characteristic of communist Ukraine and simultaneously hopeful that Soviet power would collapse.²⁹

UKRAINIAN ACTIVISM IN URBAN CENTRES

The image of Ukraine as a country in chains, one enslaved by communism and waiting to break free so that she can go back to being the bucolic paradise that Ukrainian Canadians on the Prairies imagined her to be, was reinforced by activists in urban centres. When Ukraine became independent and travel there became possible, Canadians and Americans were often shocked to find a rather ordinary Eastern European state instead of a bucolic paradise. Their typical response was to blame the disparity between what they expected and what they found on the Sovietization and Russification of the populace. A person from Edmonton told me that when she travelled to Ukraine, she discovered that villagers were not wearing embroidered shirts: *vyshyvanky*. She attributed this problem to Soviet era suppression of anything associated with Ukrainian nationalism, the *vyshyvanka* being one such item. Considerations such as the fact that one might not choose to wear something that takes as much effort to make as an embroidered shirt when one goes to milk the cows or hoe the garden did not occur to this person. The *vyshyvanka* has indeed become a symbol of national pride in post-Soviet times, and in 2006 Ukrainians around the world started celebrating Vyshyvanka Day on the third Thursday in May by wearing their embroidered shirts in public. Of course, they bought these shirts instead of embroidering and sewing them themselves, so their only consideration was national pride; the fact that in Ukraine this shirt was strictly a festive garment and definitely not worn on a daily basis did not occur to them.

When Andrea Odeyzynska filmed *The Whisperer*, she made sure that the village she and her team featured in their work, one posited to be a repository of traditional Ukrainian knowledge, conformed to Western ideas of what a good village should be. Early in the film, she and her travelling companions arrive in a village in western Ukraine, a part of the country considered to have retained its Ukrainian culture better than the rest of the country because it escaped Soviet domination longer than eastern Ukraine. In the film, the villagers are all dressed in *vyshyvanky*, and one little boy is shown wearing a *keptar*, a traditional leather vest. The “proper” image created by having everyone in traditional clothing is reinforced by a man who plays the *sopilka*, a flute associated with the charm of village life. Surely this must have been

staged for the camera. It is hard to imagine that villagers, even if they were expecting nationalistically oriented visitors, would dress in their finery and have their musical instruments at the ready. In the film, Odezynska and the documentary crew come to collect folk songs but end up filming a healer, the whisperer of the title. She practises not only healing but also a combination of psychology, prayer, and knowledge of traditional incantations to serve her fellow villagers, and in the course of the film, she also treats Odezynska and her companions. Like the image of people all dressed in *vyshyvanky*, the romantic idea that the village is a repository of ancient, traditional healing knowledge, lost to people living in the modern, Western world, fits well with North American constructs of Ukraine.³⁰

Perhaps the most striking example of creating the Ukraine that the residents of Canada want to see was a film project in which I participated in 2010. Suziria, a performance group based at the Ukrainian National Federation in Edmonton, asked my students and me to help film their staging of Ivan Kupalo, the midsummer festival celebrating John the Baptist. Their plan was to put on this event at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, a historical park east of Edmonton with examples of housing from all stages of Ukrainian life in Canada, from the dugout or *burdei* that the earliest settlers used for shelter, to thatched homes, to lovely two-storey buildings that Ukrainians constructed once they had prospered. Each type of dwelling comes complete with gardens and farm animals appropriate to the period and settlement type. The Suziria team planned to use the village-style thatched homes for their enactment of Ivan Kupalo and to film this festival, creating a video that would encourage children to feel proud of, and learn about, their Ukrainian roots. The plot was supposed to be that the group of young Canadians fall asleep in the Ukrainian National Federation Hall in the city and wake up in a village in Ukraine where a traditional celebration of the Festival of Ivan Kupalo is being held. But the celebration we filmed was hardly traditional or realistic. Rather, it was staged to conform to Ukrainian Canadian expectations. To give just one example, in one scene a girl goes out to feed chickens dressed in her fine embroidered clothes. Suddenly, music starts to play and the girl bursts into a dance like the ones staged at Canadian dance competitions and festivals. Needless to say, wearing one's finery is not what one does in a real village

when going out to feed the chickens; nor does someone start executing the complicated steps of a stage performance, with or without music, when doing farm chores. While the Ivan Kupalo event staged at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village bore no resemblance to life in a real Ukrainian village, it most certainly captured what Canadian Ukrainians imagined that life to be and was a great success with the more than one thousand visitors in attendance. Why are Ukrainian Canadian constructs of life in Ukraine so different from that country's reality? Separated by the Iron Curtain, Ukrainian Canada and the Old Country grew apart so that what Canadians imagine Ukraine to be is not what it actually is.

Misconceptions about Ukrainians on the other side of the Atlantic go in both directions, and recent émigrés often expect Ukrainians in Canada to be something quite different from what they really are. Edmonton, where I lived, stages a huge heritage festival every August with more than eighty pavilions representing an equal number of countries. Most pavilions have displays, ethnic food, and a stage show. In 2014, on the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Taras Shevchenko, a poet whom many feel captures the heart and soul of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Pavilion had a Shevchenko display, and one of my students, a recent émigré, got up on stage to read Shevchenko poems in Ukrainian. Her performance did not meet with audience approval, and she was shocked. When she had recited Shevchenko poems back in Ukraine she was met with applause, and she had expected a similar reception on this side of the Atlantic. Instead, attendees at the Heritage Festival, likely anticipating that they would be treated to a display of Ukrainian dance rather than to poetry in Ukrainian, a language they could not understand, got up and left.

BACK TO THE PRAIRIES

Recent arrivals from Ukraine, with an exception that will be discussed as part of the calendar cycle, have not chosen to become farmers and settle on the Prairies. The contacts that Prairie Ukrainians have with people from Ukraine are through their clergy. Priests trained in Ukraine are indeed assigned to rural parishes. The language problems created by such clergy have already been mentioned. Language is not the only issue. In informal conversations, those held in church basements while *kolachi*

were being prepared or those conducted outdoors before formal, recorded interviews took place, parishioners complained that these newly arrived priests not only used too much Ukrainian but also altered practices with which they were familiar. The people speaking to me wanted what had been developed over the years in Canada, customs they had come to identify as Ukrainian and their own. Practices that had recently been brought over from Ukraine might seem more genuinely Ukrainian, but they still made Prairie Ukrainian Canadians uncomfortable.

Prairie Ukrainian Canadians focus on the Prairies and on the culture they have developed over the years. Interest in the country of Ukraine is an urban rather than a rural phenomenon. It is noteworthy that the painting of Ukraine in chains, located in the church hall in Model Farm, is in bad condition: it is faded and water-stained. The painting of a bucolic scene, found in the same hall, is pristine. This may indicate that Ukraine as a nation is not foremost in the minds of Prairie dwellers. What attracts them is the land of their imagination.

CONCLUSION

Adjusting to a new culture and a new land so as to form a new, dual, Ukrainian Canadian identity requires flexibility and mutability. It is creative work. Such work cannot be accomplished without a fixed and steady reference point from which exploration can occur. For Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, the cultural reference point was their church, which provided not only religious but also social and cultural services. The church assumed its prominence because it was a Ukrainian institution. Its institutional, defined, codified nature enabled it to help counterbalance the Canadian school system and other formal bodies bent on anglicizing Ukrainian immigrants. The importance of religion led to the construction of gorgeous churches across the Prairies and helped Prairie Ukrainians develop their own ideas of what Ukrainian identity should be. Partly shaped by the church, partly influenced by the postwar third wave of immigrants and their nationalism, and greatly influenced by the need to respond to the reality of life in Canada, Ukrainian Canadians have created their own culture. It is a construction of identity that they hold dear and work to bring to life in the many festivals, rituals, monuments, and other cultural activities and objects found on the Prairies. 🌿

CHAPTER 3

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VERNACULAR RELIGION

The various churches in which Ukrainians worshipped helped them resist assimilation and maintain their identity as Ukrainians. These churches also set a pattern for adaptation: they were themselves flexible and showed their parishioners how to be flexible as well. Marion Bowman, who writes extensively about vernacular religion, distinguishes three types of religious practice. The first is what is conducted by the official church. This is church canon, and it remains fixed. What is considered proper by the official church can change over time, but that change is slow and requires action by the church hierarchy. The second category of religious behaviour is what is done by the lay members of a religious faith. It is group belief and practice. While there is general consensus within the group as to what constitutes proper expressions of piety, this category is more amorphous and nebulous. The third type of religion is personal expressions of faith. The second and third categories, according to Bowman, constitute vernacular religion.¹ In a standard description like Bowman's, it is the second and third categories that are flexible, whereas the first, or official, type of religious expression is codified and stable.

On the Prairies all three types of religion were, and had to be, flexible. Prairie life, and Prairie reality, significantly affected and continues to affect what the official church can do. In other words, what priests based on the Prairies actually did and do differs from what is prescribed by the official church and what is done in urban churches. Because of Prairie conditions, actual rural practice deviates from what would otherwise be considered proper, and that adaptation is accepted by official bodies. Because one priest typically serves a circuit of some twelve small churches, it is impossible to have a service every Sunday in each location.



FIG. 3.1 Father Taras Udod at the Descent of
the Holy Spirit Khram, Hafford, SK

Parishioners who are able to drive can follow the priest on his circuit and participate in a more regular schedule of religious observances. Others, especially those who are older and frail, are limited to the few church events that are held at their local church. Thus, Prairie services and other religious observances have their own special features because of the characteristics of Prairie settlement. Problems of lack of clergy are compounded by Prairie climate and the nature of Prairie roads. The weather can be harsh, and many roads remain unpaved. Getting to a church in inclement weather can be a challenge.

Prairie life also influences the religious observances themselves. Circumnavigating the church at Easter, or blessing Easter baskets outdoors, is often impossible because of the weather. Cutting a hole in

the ice for a water blessing at Yordan, the celebration of the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, which takes place in January, is equally out of the question. This is partly due to the temperatures in winter, but it is also affected by the types of bodies of water found on the Prairies. Rivers are too powerful to allow a congregation to venture out onto them even in winter, and sloughs – bodies of water characteristic of Alberta and Saskatchewan that form in Prairie hollows – are often too shallow. Modifications were, and are, an absolute necessity, and these modifications are accepted as part of necessary practice by both parishioners and church officials. Flexibility on the part of the church hierarchy encouraged Prairie Ukrainian Canadians to accept flexibility in other spheres of their lives. It allowed them to develop a concept of Ukrainian identity that is not rigid and does not follow the dictates of any official body. Their concept of Ukrainian identity, their nationalism, is vernacular.

THE CLOSING OF PRAIRIE CHURCHES AND FLEXIBILITY ON THE PART OF INDIVIDUAL PRIESTS

A form of flexibility and negotiation between priests, the representatives of the official church, and their parishioners can be observed today as churches are forced to close. Even though everyone understands that the closing of churches is unavoidable, it is nonetheless quite traumatic for many, included non-parishioners. I remember walking into a store in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, in 2013 and receiving a long lecture from a non-Ukrainian store clerk about how a church that had recently been deliberately burned down should not have been destroyed. In Meath Park, Saskatchewan, a very large and beautiful former Ukrainian Catholic church was sold to another congregation but never used. Because it was across the street from the regional school, civil authorities feared an accident might happen should schoolchildren end up on the premises. Bulldozers were called in. A former parishioner, to protest the destruction of her church, chained herself to the door and said she would move only if taken away by the RCMP. This did indeed happen, and the church was torn down. I learned about the protesting woman as the incident unfolded because local residents kept emailing me and texting me as the standoff continued. I then read about it in the newspaper the following day. The people whom I had met in Meath Park were upset



FIG. 3.2 Former Ukrainian Catholic church, Meath Park, SK

enough about the event to contact me, and I presume others, to tell us what was happening to their former church.

What actually happens when a church is closed can vary a great deal. Ideally, the building is desanctified. This involves holding a church service, often with the bishop present. Initial sanctification turned the church from just a building into a sacred space; desanctification reverses the process and makes the building ordinary again. At this point, the building can be repurposed or destroyed. The St Jaroslaw Church in Bruderheim, Alberta, was desanctified in the presence of Bishop David Motiuk and the Knights of Columbus on 23 August 2008. My husband and I attended the proceedings. After the building ceased being a church, it was moved to a Catholic summer camp to serve as an additional work space. Other desanctified churches have been sold. The churches in Meath Park and Endeavour, Saskatchewan, were bought by other congregations. Others have been bought by people who use the structure for their own purposes. One church building has been converted into an exercise facility. Some people buy churches out of personal interest. Keith Bell,

one of the Sanctuary Project volunteers and a retired professor of Art and Art History at the University of Saskatchewan, became enamoured of Ukrainian churches and bought one in order to restore it. But many church buildings have not survived. A typical way of disposing of a once-sacred object is to burn it – and this is indeed often done, with the ashes then collected and buried in the cemetery. Perhaps the saddest churches are the ones left to simply decay into the Prairie landscape, such as the church in Plainview, Saskatchewan. A church that has been abandoned is often invaded by pigeons and other animals, which befoul it and its contents. Sometimes, especially if the abandoned building is near an inhabited area, civil authorities must demolish it to prevent curious people from entering and falling through rotting floorboards. The task of destroying a building usually falls to the RCMP, and their approach is, again, to burn the building if no other buildings are nearby. When the church that needs to be taken down is within a town, then bulldozers are summoned.

The emotions aroused by the destruction of a church building are often intensified by the destruction of objects within a church to which a particular person or group of people hold an especially strong attachment. To give but one example: Farming is dangerous work. A number of farm equipment malfunctions are possible, as are accidents with horses and other farm animals. I have met people with missing fingers and large scars. Some farming accidents are fatal. This is an extremely upsetting situation, especially when the person who dies is young. Many Prairie Ukrainian Canadians respond to these tragic deaths by donating an item to the church in memory of the family member whom they have lost. Probably the most common donation is an embroidered icon. Special favourites are an icon of an angel, a representation of the loved one who has died, or an icon of the Last Supper, a remembrance of the last time the family was together. The practice of embroidering icons may well serve the therapeutic function of creating the calm of slow, meticulous, and repetitive work that helps release the pain of the loss. It also allows the comfort of doing something for the person who has died. The embroidered icons may reflect the evolution of a practice I encountered in Ukraine, where a special type of *rushnyk*, or ritual towel, one with a cross and a poem about memory, is embroidered for a young person who has died before his or her time, such as a soldier killed in



FIG. 3.3 Deconsecration, St Jaroslav Ukrainian Catholic Church,
Bruderheim, AB [ABOVE]

FIG. 3.4 Church cupola over buried ashes, Birmingham, SK [BELOW]



FIGS. 3.5 and 3.6
Plainview Descent of
the Holy Spirit Church,
exterior and interior

battle.² Whatever the source of the practice or the reasoning behind it, embroidered icons were pointed out to me in a number of places as mementos of young people killed in accidents. These embroidered icons are typically donated to the local church, blessed, and hung on its walls, becoming objects of veneration, honoured not just by the family that has suffered a loss but by the whole congregation.

But what happens to these items when the church is scheduled to close? Legally, once donated and blessed, the icon is church property. It is a sacred object, like the building in which it is housed, and must suffer the fate of that building, meaning that, if the church is to be burned, then the icon must be burned with it and, if the church is to be repurposed, then the eparchy decides what happens to its icons, including those embroidered and donated by parishioners. Many people found this hard to bear. In the course of interviews and sometimes outside the church, I was told that people wanted the icon embroidered to commemorate a brother killed in an accident returned to the family. Some priests, when faced with such a situation, followed the letter of the law and did not let a family reclaim the object they had donated, insisting that it remain with the church, often to be destroyed along with it. To protect the individuals involved, I cannot name the priests who disallowed the reclamation of objects, nor can I list the places where this occurred. This information is silenced in the Sanctuary sound recordings posted online.

Other clergy, praised by their parishioners, were more flexible. Such a priest might say, “You want the icon your mother made when your brother was killed? Then take it, my son, and pray for the repose of your brother’s soul.” Some priests did not simply surrender donated objects of deep personal significance to the parishioners who wanted them. They would find a middle ground between eparchial directives and people’s desires and arrange for a situation in which members of the congregation might have a chance to communally claim donated objects before a church was closed and destroyed. Either way, in the congregations of more flexible priests, the people got what they wanted, along with a reminder of the religious significance of the objects they had claimed. This approach achieved a middle ground between church policy and human need. Again, I cannot give the names of specific people or list the church locations.

The adaptations forced on parishioners and clergy by the closing of churches added another stratum to the complex, even nebulous, middle ground where people and their institutions negotiate change. These manifestations of flexibility are but the most recent examples of the kind of adaptation to lived circumstances that affected, and continue to affect, the lives of Prairie Ukrainian Canadians.

VERNACULAR RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

As Bowman noted, the religious practices of individuals and groups are less constrained than the actions of the official church. On the Prairies, the lack of clergy often requires individuals to take on some functions, such as house blessings, that would normally be performed by priests. Group and private use of holy water is a good example of the interaction between individual and group expression and the demands of Prairie life. Groups and individuals are not always self-aware, and, as Benjamin Gatling asserts, examining actions is more salient than trying to extract a conscious system of belief. Observing what people *do* provides clearer insight into the nature of faith and religiosity than attempts to tease out a coordinated belief structure.³ As Gatling notes, folklorists and other academics tend to see patterns in the actions and words of the people in the community they are studying. These patterns do indeed exist, and the fact that they are there encourages members of the community to practise the actions the patterns delineate. In the past, academics attached the label “belief” to the patterns that they saw in a particular culture’s or community’s behaviour. Gatling, however, argues that what academics extract and call belief may not actually exist for the people themselves: what is real to them are patterns and actions. They are unlikely to be able to articulate a coordinated belief system; they are simply acting in the ways they consider proper.

An observation from the Prairies can serve as an example. In most churches and homes, an icon of the Last Supper is prominently displayed. I was struck by the ubiquity of this icon. As a scholar, I can interpret it as encapsulating the Ukrainian immigrant experience. It depicts a scene where people have gathered to say goodbye to one of their company, just like families in Ukraine might have assembled to say goodbye to those of their members about to depart for a new home

in Canada. As sad as saying farewell may be, the Last Supper portends Easter and the new life and new hope that come with the resurrection of Christ. Christ's glorious resurrection might be emblematic of the hope for a new life in Canada. This interpretation sounds good and makes perfect sense in the context of my experiences with Prairie Ukrainian Canadians. But is this what people actually believe? When I asked my respondents why the icon of the Last Supper is such a favourite, the answer they gave was different from my interpretation. The immigrant experience with its farewells and hopes for a new life was not mentioned even once. People told me that it is the proper icon to have. They did not quite say that everyone else has one and so we have one too, but some of that sense did come across. Who is right? Is it the folklorist who sees the Last Supper icon as representative of the immigrant experience, or is it the actual owners of the icon, who see it as the proper item to have in the home? Folklorists' interpretations, I believe, have some value and, when I have taken mine back to the community, people have appreciated my thoughts. By the same token, I should not, and will not, impose my interpretation. People's actual views must be honoured and presented, and I will do my best to produce an accurate presentation here. Elaine Lawless has argued for reciprocal ethnography, the practice of taking the interpretations of the academic professional back to the community and co-creating meaning.⁴ Time and the distances between the locations where I did interviews did not permit systematic reciprocal ethnography, and I did not discuss my interpretations with consistency. As noted in the Sanctuary chapter, our team practised a modification of consulting with respondents: we sent them a DVD with my recordings and encouraged them to provide feedback.

CUSTOMARY USE OF BLESSED OBJECTS: HOLY WATER

Individual and group religious behaviour and belief are well-expressed in the use of items blessed in church and then taken home by parishioners, such as holy water. Water is blessed on two occasions. One is Yordan (from the River Jordan; Yordan is the Ukrainian pronunciation of Jordan). This is a holiday that commemorates the baptism of Christ in the Jordan and is also known as Epiphany, or Theophany. The other occasion for water blessing is the church Khram or Praznyk, with Khram

being the term used by the Orthodox and Praznyk being the Catholic term. These are celebrations of the church itself and are held on the day of the saint or the holiday after which the church is named. Yordan is the main water blessing event. Unfortunately, it comes at a most inconvenient time for getting out to an isolated rural church: according to the Julian, or Old-Style, calendar used by some Orthodox churches, it falls on 19 January; according to the Gregorian, or New Style, calendar, it takes place on 6 January. Roads are seldom in good condition: between the snow and the Prairie winds, driving is treacherous. Heating a church for the service is also a challenge, because of the outdoor temperature and the fact that the building is left unheated for long periods of time. Nonetheless, Yordan is considered so important that great efforts are made to mark it. The simplest solution is to hold a full Yordan service, complete with water blessing, in one of the larger churches located in a town. In such situations, the faithful from nearby smaller churches, if they wish to attend the service, are expected to travel into town to take part. Yet Yordan and, by extension, holy water, is so essential to religious life that priests try to hold at least an abbreviated water blessing in a number of the more active smaller churches. An interesting modification is to hold a Yordan evening meal in the home of one of the parishioners, as is done in Codette, Saskatchewan. This is attended by the priest and those parishioners who can make the trip to the designated home. Some places, like the Orthodox church in Prince Albert and the one in Cudworth, both in Saskatchewan, combine Yordan with Sviata Vecheria, the Christmas Eve meal. This violates the church calendar, but it does provide a practical solution, in that the largest possible number of parishioners can experience both the all-important Christmas Eve meal and Yordan.

The Yordan service celebrates the baptism of Christ by blessing water. This is done by dipping a three-pronged candelabra into the water brought into church. In Ukraine and at tourist locations such as the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village outside of Edmonton, Alberta, the water blessing is conducted outdoors. A hole is cut in the ice of a river or a lake, and the blocks of ice removed to make that hole are erected in the shape of a cross. The priest blesses the water in the river or lake, and parishioners take what they will use at home directly from the natural body of water. Today, all rural parishes bring water indoors, into the

church, and bless the water there. After the service, each parishioner takes a sip of holy water and almost everyone takes some home. People bring their own jars or bottles for this purpose, and most churches provide extra containers for the forgetful members of their flock and for visitors who are unfamiliar with Ukrainian traditions.

The water blessed on Yordan is the quintessential holy water and the substance with the greatest range of uses. In those areas where priests do house blessings, going to parishioners' houses to sanctify the home, they use Yordan water. Because clergy in rural areas are few and priests are responsible for multiple churches, many cannot perform all the house blessings their congregation desires. One of the priests in Prince Albert, for example, a young and vigorous man, said he could handle only three blessings per day. Some priests are too old and frail to travel to homes at all. When a priest cannot do a house blessing, people bless their own homes using Yordan water. In Preeceville, Saskatchewan, Nellie Holowachuk said her mother used the holy water to make a cross on every door of the house, much as a priest might do. In Redwater, Alberta, parishioners used Yordan water to bless their houses themselves. In Candiac, Saskatchewan, Darlene Romanov said her family used this water to bless the tractor and the combine. In Speers, Saskatchewan, Peter Bomok used Yordan water from the previous year to bless his livestock and farm buildings. New Yordan water, he said, could be used in springtime to bless seeds before sowing. In Welychko, same province, Ann Betskal said that holy water could be used to bless the house and the garden. Using holy water for blessing both the house and other parts of the farmstead, sometimes by the priest and sometimes by the owner of the property, was attested in Kelliher, Goodeve, Candiac, and Ituna, Saskatchewan, and in Star Peno, Alberta. Some farmers use the water to bless their fields and their seeds before spring planting, as noted earlier. This is also done in New Kiew, Alberta, and Candiac and Goodeve, Saskatchewan.

While Yordan or Epiphany/Theophany is specifically dedicated to creating holy water, there are other occasions when water is blessed. The most prominent is Praznyk or Khram. This event commemorates the saint or the holiday after whom or after which a particular church is named. On this day a service is held, followed by the blessing of water. The water blessing is usually done outside the church at a cross or monument by the church entrance. All present have a sip of this water and then the priest



FIG. 3.7 Marcella Shewchuk showing Eva Himka a handmade candelabra

uses it to bless the church, walking around it, stopping on each side to recite a prayer. He circumnavigates the church three times, followed by the congregation. This, however, is the full version, and it is often not performed in rural churches. In the Yorkton area, one of the priests is in ill health and cannot do the outdoor blessing, much less walk around the church. In some cases, the parishioners are too elderly and frail to attend anything except a service within the church. A few churches are named after events that fall at a time of year when the weather can be questionable. Thus, churches named for the Protection of the Mother of God, such as the one in Borowich, Alberta, an event that comes in October, often need to cancel outdoor activities because of inclement weather and move their Khram and the water blessing indoors.

Because the Khram or Praznyk holiday focuses on the edifice of the church and the sanctified water is used to bless that church, some people do not consider it as powerful as the water from Yordan. Parishioners in some churches, specifically Laniwci and Mazeppa, Saskatchewan, consider the two waters to be complimentary, with Yordan water used for

blessing houses, farms, and seeds and Khram or Praznyk water reserved for personal use, such as illness. For many other people, the two waters are equivalent, and both are used for illness, insomnia, storms, or to drink before a meal on holidays and birthdays. For others, Khram and Praznyk water is not special; people drink it in church after the service, but they do not bother taking some home.

One thing that may have discouraged personal use of water blessed on Khram and Praznyk is the fact that, on the Prairies, this celebration is often combined with grave blessings. In such cases, the water blessed on that day is used to bless the graves rather than the edifice of the church. If a full church calendar were being observed, grave blessings would occur on Provody, a commemoration of the dead that follows Easter Sunday. Provody are still important and are celebrated in many parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan, as will be discussed in the section on calendar rites. In those places where Provody still exist as a separate event, the water used to bless the graves is not drunk or taken home; it is used for grave blessings only. This may be the practice in most locations; however, Marlene Lozinski of Donwell, Saskatchewan, said that Provody water could be used for illness or fever, just like any other blessed water.

Provody can no longer be celebrated as a separate event in many locations: the congregation simply cannot afford to pay for a priest to do both a spring grave blessing and a blessing of the church itself. In such cases, Khram or Praznyk is deemed the more important event and the grave blessings become part of that celebration. In such cases, the service and the blessing of the water are followed by a meal held at the church or in a nearby hall. After that, the priest calls the congregation and all go out to the cemetery, where they proceed around the graves, reading out the names of the deceased and blessing each grave with holy water. In some cases, such as at the church in Melville, Saskatchewan, the congregation needs to visit several cemeteries to honour all deceased relatives of the members of the church. In Sturgis, after the meal, the priest and the congregation head for Preeceville, which no longer has its own church but does have a cemetery where many Orthodox faithful are buried. After blessing the graves in Preeceville, the priest and the parishioners return to Sturgis and bless the graves in the cemetery there. I attended the church service and the two sets of grave blessings in Sturgis/Preeceville in 2016.



FIG. 3.8 Peter Bomok with his son

Whether blessed on Yordan or on Praznyk/Khram, holy water is used for well-being and to overcome health problems. This is the use most often mentioned in my interviews. People drink blessed water when they feel unwell, with Olga Owerko of Kelliher, Saskatchewan, testifying that she stopped her husband's uncontrollable smoker's cough with holy water and started him on the path to giving up his cigarette habit. Holy water can be used topically: Marlene Lozinski of Donwell, Saskatchewan, said she put it on a washcloth and wiped her children's faces when they had a fever. In Rama, same province, Marcella Shewchuk would apply a cloth soaked in holy water to ease her children's eye problems. Holy water is given to colicky children, children plagued by nightmares, and people suffering from insomnia. Some people share a sip with all family members on birthdays and before the main meal on holidays such as Christmas. In Camrose, Alberta, my respondents mentioned blessing important gifts for children with holy water, and in Speers, Saskatchewan, people sprinkled it ahead of themselves when going on a trip. A few respondents use holy water on a virtually daily basis, adding a drop of it to each bath

or to any cooking liquid. They and the respondents who blessed all of their farm buildings believe that holy water is so potent that one drop can make even a large quantity of water blessed. A special use of holy water was mentioned in a limited number of interviews. That use was to deliver a form of extreme unction in those instances when someone was in an accident, was in danger of dying, and no priest was available to say last rites. Peter Bomok of Speers, Saskatchewan, who listed the greatest number of holy water uses, said he kept an emergency kit of sorts with blessed oil and holy water just in case he needed to tend to a dying person. This use of holy water was also mentioned in Porcupine Plain and Tuffnell, same province. In Rama, Saskatchewan, Marcella Shewchuk said that a newborn who was in danger of dying should be sprinkled with holy water.

The other use of holy water that was mentioned in my interviews was to control bad weather. One of the most memorable stories was recorded from Nellie (Angela) Kotylak in Montmartre, Saskatchewan, in 2017. As Kotylak told our team, it happened one summer afternoon. When she went outside, she was horrified to see a tornado on the horizon, rapidly heading her way. Kotylak did not hesitate; she knew what to do. She grabbed her holy water and ran around the house three times. She and her husband watched the tornado approach, sometimes touching down and other times not. It came right up to the fence of their farmstead ... and then it turned around and went the other way. Many neighbours suffered damage, and when Kotylak and Andrew, her husband, drove around the next day, they could see the terrible devastation caused by the storm. In fact, the tornado had been strong enough to lift a tractor and suspend it on some electrical wires. But the Kotylak farm was safe, thanks to Nellie's quick thinking and her running around with holy water.

Kotylak was not the only person to mention using holy water to control the weather. Jeannette Worotniak of Hafford, Saskatchewan, said that sanctified water could be tossed outside, into the storm, and that it would help with bad weather; in Porcupine Plain, same province, I heard virtually the same thing. In Rama, Saskatchewan, people suggested dipping one's fingers in holy water and making the sign of the cross. In Redwater, Alberta, Joe Prodaniuk said his mother would use holy water when hail storms came, but that this was a practice people no longer remembered, much less performed.

THE GROUP AND THE INDIVIDUAL

There is a qualitative difference between using holy water to stop bad weather and using holy water for ill health, to bless one's road before travel, or to bless gifts for children. The latter uses are akin to prayer and something that people found acceptable. In other words, they fit with group religious belief and practice. Blessing the house when no priest is available and blessing animals, seeds, farm buildings, and farm equipment are all actions performed in the absence of a priest and similarly condoned by Ukrainian Canadians. They were widely attested in my interviews. Using holy water to control weather is different; it has an element of magic and makes people ill at ease, whether for religious reasons or because it smacks of irrational, outdated thinking. Those who were present with me when Kotylak recounted her miracle were somewhat uncomfortable during the course of her narration. Other mentions of using holy water for storms contain an element of distancing: it was done in the past, by the parents of the respondent, not by the person I was talking to. Another distancing technique was to say that using water just might help, implying that any real effect was up to God and not under the control of the user; it was like prayer, not magic.

Using holy water in a manner akin to prayer is a group custom and accepted by many. Using holy water in a way that has some of the flavour of magic is individual behaviour and not widely practised or accepted. Another way to express this contrast is to say that ascribing agency to God when using holy water is proper whereas assuming one's own agency is not. The contrast between these two types of behaviour can be exemplified by two narratives about divine intervention. These are excellent examples of group versus individual approaches to the sacred. I heard both of these in the company of others, and their reactions to the stories indicate to me that the first story was considered acceptable, if not praiseworthy, whereas the second one was questionable, perhaps describing an out-and-out improper act.

AGENCY

I heard an interesting etiological narrative from David Burzminski of Bruderheim, Alberta, in 2006. He gave the following account of the founding of the shrine at Skaro dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This account was not part of our interview; rather, it was told to me when we were having tea in his mother's home. As Burzminski pointed out, when Ukrainian settlers first came and claimed their quarter sections, one of the requirements for retaining title to the property was continuous occupancy and working the land for three years. This was not always possible since the land was virgin soil, not previously farmed, and to produce anything that might come close to sustaining a family, it needed clearing and intensive labour. The task of doing all of this shortly after settlement was overwhelming. Many people took jobs working off the farm to bring in cash and help ends meet. Even today, many farmers' sons work on road repair crews or do railway maintenance to help out with farm finances. I met these men when the Sanctuary team stayed in budget motels and other cheap accommodations. It was they who told me they worked to supplement farm income, putting in two weeks on the repair crew and getting ten days off to help back on the farm.

Returning to Burzminski's story: in the early days of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, my narrator said, a certain man owned a quarter section in the Bruderheim/Skaro area. He needed to earn money to support his farm and decided take a job on a railway construction crew. This meant he had to leave the land he owned. To maintain ownership of the farm he was trying to support, he asked his neighbour to work his land so that he could retain title to it. The neighbour agreed. The owner of the property went away to work on the railway. He returned several years later and asked the neighbour to give him his land back. The neighbour refused, saying that his working the farm for several years gave him ownership. The original owner felt there was nothing he could do to make things right other than pray to God – and so he did.

The man who claimed the land he had promised to give back had a son. Not long after he appropriated the quarter section of his neighbour, a horse kicked his son in the head, severely injuring the boy. As Burzminski told the story, at this point the cheating neighbour realized that he was being punished for what he had done, and to atone for his sins, he went and built the grotto to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Skaro. In some versions of this account, Burzminski said, the guilty man is credited with initiating the building of the Grotto, with others then contributing their labour; in other versions, he is credited with making a large financial contribution to the shrine.

On the Blessed Virgin Mary shrine's website, this story does not appear. Rather, Father Anthony Sylla, an Oblate priest assigned to Skaro, is credited with the idea for the shrine. He is said to have enlisted the aid of Father Philip Ruh, a priest familiar with the Our Lady of Lourdes grotto in France. According to the official site, the actual building was done by the faithful, who volunteered time, labour, and countless loads of stones to enable the grotto to take its present shape. The site is currently a popular pilgrimage destination, which may well explain the existence of both official and popular narratives describing its creation.⁵

The official version of the creation of the Skaro grotto fits the agenda of the church, crediting clerics with the idea for this popular pilgrimage site. By contrast, Burzminski's narrative is a folk version that addresses the concerns of the community. It upholds moral lessons: one should keep one's word; one should cooperate with one's neighbour and not take advantage of his or her struggles. It is also especially meaningful because it places these basic lessons in the context of situations that truly mattered to the men and women who established the first Ukrainian communities on the Prairies. The version told by David Burzminski uses imagery and circumstances that were part of early Prairie life and speaks to the people of his circle. It describes a situation familiar to Burzminski and to other people I interviewed about struggles to establish homesteads as told to them by their parents and grandparents. The folk story about the Grotto of the Blessed Virgin Mary assures people that misdeeds will be punished and that God will set things right. Prayer plays a central role, but any action is left up to God.⁶

A different story, one with an oral version only, was told by a man in Smuts, Saskatchewan, who had a local reputation as a storyteller.⁷ It had to do with another common problem, namely the conflict between religious denominations. While memorable, this narrative did not inspire the group approval enjoyed by Burzminski's story about Ukrainian pioneers. In the Smuts narrative, a Ukrainian Catholic church burned down on Easter Sunday Eve. The fire was presumed to have been set by a rival group, for three men were seen fleeing the scene. The deacon of the church that had been destroyed supposedly took action to punish the evildoers. He did not simply pray to God for justice; he took action. He gathered ashes from the burnt church, sprinkled them on a Psalter, and said that the three perpetrators should die unusual deaths. Sure

enough, one of the suspects dropped the reins to his cart as he was going up a hill. When he got off to retrieve the reins, he was run over by a cart wheel and killed. The second man made the mistake of leaving a diamond harrow in his barn. His horse got a hoof caught in the harrow, started to kick, and pierced his owner with a sharp harrow piece. The third man was supposedly cursed to have his feet cut off for what he had done. Apparently, he contracted type 2 diabetes and did indeed have his feet amputated.

The second story, like the first, is set in the past: not the time of the early pioneers, but a more recent past when churches had already been built and conflict between confessions did arise. Like the first, it addresses real issues, namely tensions between religious denominations and real fears of sabotage, especially the burning of wooden churches. Nonetheless, it is problematic. As several people present at the storytelling pointed out, a deacon should never use a sacred text such as the Psalter to cast a curse. In fact, doing so was not something that clergy should or would do. The deacon's actions verged on magic, and that made his actions bad: they violated taboo. Furthermore, what the deacon did was destructive magic, making it doubly unacceptable in terms of group belief. In both Burzminski's story and the one told in Smuts, justice was served. But in the former, vengeance was left up to God, whereas in the latter, the deacon exercised agency by invoking curses.

The Smuts respondent was very much of a storyteller. He talked about a man who committed suicide by drinking gopher poison because he was heavily in debt. He told about a man who killed his wife so that he could be with his lover, but then was unable to die until he confessed his sins. His stories might be considered sensational. But it was not this man's tendency to talk and tell stories that met with disapproval; it was his reference to an act of magic by a member of the clergy. The narratives told by the respondent in Smuts did not carry the power of Burzminski's story, and the people present questioned what he said. The hero of Burzminski's story trusted in God. The main actor in the story told by Smuts had taken things into his own hands, and that was not acceptable in Prairie group or folk religion.

We can also contrast the narrator in Smuts with Norman Harris of Endeavour, Saskatchewan, a much-loved teller of jokes and stories. Harris, too, likes tales of the supernatural such as accounts of unexplained lights

appearing over swamps. The difference is that, in his stories, humans take no action: they observe and they do not practise magic. Harris's passion for stories led him to collect the set of play scenarios described earlier. Like Burzminski, he is interested in the early settlers, and he has collected information about Ukrainian history in eastern Saskatchewan. He contributed to a book about the Endeavour parish, writing about both his own family and the families of other settlers.⁸ These accounts of the past meet with group approval. His work documenting the history of early Ukrainian settlers is so highly respected that he received the Community Recognition Award from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in 2007.⁹

MORE ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL BAD WEATHER

Nellie Kotylak's story about controlling tornadoes perhaps comes across as naive, if not improper. Still, storms, hail, tornadoes, high winds, and other extreme weather phenomena are such a concern on the Prairies, especially for farmers, that a number of people did mention attempts to control the weather. In some parts of the Prairies the item used to avert bad weather is a beeswax candle that has been blessed at Candlemas or *Stritennia*, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. The use of the Candlemas candle is rare, and I encountered it only a few times. The reason is that Candlemas is seldom celebrated because of Prairie realities: that holiday falls on 15 February by the Julian calendar (2 February by the New or Gregorian calendar). Either way, that is not a convenient time for a church service because of the challenges posed by Prairie winters. Furthermore, the Yordan water blessing happens not long before Candlemas, and most parishes cannot afford to bring in a priest for both occasions. Candlemas tends to be held only in those rural churches where a prominent parishioner is a beekeeper (like Peter Bomok in Speers, Saskatchewan) or candle-maker (like Karen Kitt Colford in Myrnam, Alberta). Candlemas is celebrated in larger churches such as the ones in Wadena and Canora, Saskatchewan. These are typically the home base of the priest serving a particular circuit and often have more services in winter than in summer, when the priest drives out to serve rural congregations.

Lighting candles when storms come seems to meet with greater approval than Kotylak's running around with holy water. The reason

may be that lighting a candle is a more passive act, one associated with prayer. People do regularly light candles brought home from church when they pray; Jeannette Worotniak of Hafford, Saskatchewan, said that she lit such a candle when praying for her children to pass their exams at school. Because Candlemas or *Stritennia* candles are rare in rural areas, people use candles blessed on other occasions, especially Easter. In Plain Lake and Andrew, Alberta, my respondents said that to ward off storms, they used the candle that had been in their Easter baskets when it was blessed. They placed it in the window facing the direction from which the storm was coming. In Redwater, Alberta, and in Candiak, Welychko, and Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, any church candle could be used for this purpose. Perhaps by analogy to using the Easter basket candle as a storm blocker, a woman in Ituna, Saskatchewan, used the embroidered towel that had been in her Easter basket and hung it in the window facing the path of the approaching storm.

Another item mentioned as protection against weather damage was a pussy willow twig blessed in church on Palm Sunday, more frequently referred to as Pussy Willow Sunday by Ukrainians. The pussy willow became the plant associated with the Sunday before Easter in the East Slavic world because the palms used in other churches were simply not available. In Canada, the pussy willow is associated specifically with Ukrainian Christianity. Whether the pussy willow was selected because it is among the first plants to show signs of life in the spring cannot be determined. It is tempting to see the pussy willow as a symbol of new life and thus linkable to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but such references exist only in popular media; they did not arise in any of my interviews.

The way that pussy willows are blessed in church on Palm or Willow Sunday has much in common with the way water is blessed. A senior member of the congregation is usually tasked with bringing a number of pussy willow branches to church. Parishioners can bring their own, but they need to mark them in some way so that they are not taken during the general distribution of the blessed plants. As with the water blessing, a regular service is followed by the service that sanctifies the pussy willows. At its conclusion, all walk by the place where the branches are being held and help themselves either to the branches they had brought, now blessed, or to a twig or two from the general pile. In a great many locations, interview respondents said they either tapped other

members of the congregation with a twig and recited at brief verse or remembered this being done in their youth. The little verse translates as follows: "It is not I who hit you; it is the willow that hits you. In a week it will be Easter." The tapping was not an actual blow, and people tried to "willow tap" as many congregants as possible. Again, it is tempting to see tapping people with the pussy willow as an attempt to transfer the willow's vital force, its ability to come alive so early in the spring, to the recipient of the tap. Thoughts along those lines were not mentioned in interviews and probably did not occur to the people I talked to. Still, in Innisfree, Alberta, Betty Saik made a point of telling me that her father would always tap all of his children with willow branches on Willow Sunday. The action of tapping the children, along with the little saying about willows and Easter, was important enough for him to always do it and for Betty Saik to remember it. Although Saik did not say that her father thought he was doing something that would benefit his children, his insistence on this action does imply that this was his motive. The pussy willows blessed in church are taken home and kept in a vase near an icon, often that of the Last Supper, a popular icon associated with Easter because the Last Supper is an Easter precursor. If there is a cross in the home, the pussy willows can be placed in front of it or behind it.

When pussy willows are used to control a storm, they can simply be placed outdoors, as was done in Sheho, Saskatchewan, or they can be burned to make the storm go away. This was mentioned in Andrew and Redwater, Alberta, and Kelliher and Theodore, Saskatchewan. It seems that averting bad weather with pussy willows is viewed in the same way as Kotylak's using holy water to make tornadoes change course: people attribute it to the older generation – it is a behaviour characteristic of the past, not a current practice. Doug Bonar of Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, said that he had tried to get his father to buy insurance for the family farm, and whenever he did so, his father would hold up his blessed pussy willow and say, "This is my insurance." The implication was that the father's behaviour, as charming as it might be, was old-fashioned. A few other ways of combating bad weather were mentioned, and most were unique to one household. In Szypenitz, Alberta, two farm implements such as a rake and a hoe could be placed outside in the shape of a cross. In Candiak, Saskatchewan, Darlene Romanov said that one day her grandmother, when confronted with a really powerful storm, made



FIG. 3.9 Betty Saik

her son, Romanov's father, go outside and draw a cross in the mud. The storm was so severe that the Romanovs' father remembered the incident well into adulthood.

DISPOSING OF BLESSED SUBSTANCES AND OBJECTS

Because holy water and pussy willows blessed in churches are sanctified, they cannot simply be thrown away; they must be disposed of in a manner that respects their sacred nature. Blessed pussy willows are generally destroyed on the following Willow or Palm Sunday. They are often burned and their ashes scattered. In New Kiew, Alberta, pussy willows have to be burned in the stove when the *pasky*, or Easter breads, are being baked. The ashes are then scattered in a place where no one will

walk so that these blessed items will not be desecrated. Pussy willows can also be planted in the garden or buried there. Karen Kitt Colford of Myrnam, Alberta, said that she did not bury them just anywhere, but in the graves of deceased pets.

Holy water, whether blessed on Yordan or on Khram or Praznyk, must also be disposed of in a way that honours its sacred nature: it cannot be poured down the sink. It is used to water house plants, though putting it on outdoor plants is also acceptable. Marlene Lozinski in Donwell, Saskatchewan, specified that it is best to put it on a plant used in healing. In her case, she put it on an aloe. Peter Bomok in Speers, Saskatchewan, pours his, not on a healing plant, but on a ritual one – his myrtle, which he uses to make wedding wreaths.

GROUP SOLIDARITY AND RITUAL FOOD

Grave blessings, whether they occur on Provody or are performed as part of Praznyk/Khram, are extremely important. They are typically the best-attended of services, with the descendants of parishioners and members of rural parishes who had moved away returning to the church of their ancestors to pay respects at family graves. They are a major source of funding for many rural churches. During a grave blessing, the first thing that happens is a regular service. This can be the Khram or Praznyk service, if grave blessings and this holiday are combined. If the grave blessings come at Provody, then they are the focus of the event. People bring booklets with the names of their deceased, and these are read out loud either inside the church or at the cross outside. From there, the priest, followed by altar boys carrying banners and/or a cross, walks between the graves, sprinkling them with holy water and blessing them and the deceased who rest beneath. I have attended grave blessings in a number of locations in both provinces. When these are part of Praznyk or Khram, the usual practice is to have a service and grave blessings only. The blessing of the church building is omitted for the sake of the priest's time and the time and stamina of the parishioners.

Food is part of grave blessings, and this food is special and assigned ritual potency. The most elaborate version of special food is a *kolach*, or funeral bread, prepared for each deceased relative who is commemorated. When we filmed Anna Mayko in Edmonton on 9 May 2007, she made



FIG. 3.10 A family with their *pomana*

nine such ritual breads. The *kolach*, as well as fruit, is brought to the graveside of the deceased relative and placed on the grave; if possible, it is placed on an embroidered towel or *rushnyk*. This food is called *pomana* and is considered a remembrance offering presented for the repose of the deceased. The food on the grave is not blessed directly, but when the grave is blessed, the *kolach* and fruit are blessed along with it. People then share the bread and fruit with those present. As blessed food, the *kolach* and fruit cannot be refused when offered and must be fully consumed by the recipient; throwing unwanted food away is not an option, and consuming it in memory of the deceased for whom it is given is an obligation. An example of a grave blessing where families brought their *kolachi* and fruit and then distributed it to those in attendance was the event in Hafford, Saskatchewan, in 2013.

Of course, preparing *kolachi*, especially in large amounts, is difficult for some people, either because of age or because of the demands of their work. A common solution is to have one member of the congregation bring one large *kolach*, or a stack of three *kolachi*, on behalf of

all church members. This bread is placed on a table next to the cross where the water is blessed. Fruit typically accompanies the bread. The food offering is blessed with holy water immediately after the water blessing, and at the end of the grave blessings, all return to this table and partake of the communal *pomana*. This is what was done at the Khram at the St Onuphrius church south of Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, in 2016. Sometimes, as in Buchanan, Saskatchewan, there are three *kolachi* of progressively smaller size. The largest *kolach* is given as a gift to the priest, and the rest is consumed by the congregation. Fruit is offered along with the bread in this case as well, and all seek to have at least something from the main table in order to share in the blessing.

Consuming the food offered in conjunction with grave blessings is an absolute necessity and has ritual power. No one said that the more people who accepted some of the *kolach* and fruit *pomana*, the better off the ancestors being remembered would be. Yet at every event where families were passing out food, it was clear that they tried to approach as many of those present as possible. Similarly, no one was specifically instructed to consume all of the items they were offered, yet no food was thrown away at any event I attended. The *pomana*, the food items distributed in memory of the deceased, partake of the power of the sacred and must be treated with respect. This is common practice, and all adhere to it to the best of their ability.

The wedding cake has some of the same traits as the *pomana*. It is not blessed, even indirectly, the way *pomana* is when placed on top of the graves of relatives and sprinkled with holy water. But both the *pomana* and the wedding cake are foods used to wish the best to persons entering a new stage of life – or afterlife. Certainly couples make every effort to ensure that each guest receives a piece of their wedding cake, in much the way relatives pass out *pomana* to as many people as possible. When the cake is a multi-tiered fruit cake, the lower tiers are cut during the banquet and distributed to all present. A recent innovation has made giving each person in attendance a piece of cake even more apparent. Styrofoam cakes have become fashionable. These are most often rented cakes, prepared by a professional, and displayed at the wedding banquet as a decorative item. They can also be slabs of Styrofoam decorated with icing by a family member and made to look like a cake. When the Styrofoam cake is the centrepiece at a wedding, it is obviously not eaten.

Instead, each guest is given an individually wrapped piece of fruitcake to take home. The attention given to preparing a wrapped piece of fruitcake for each person attending the banquet parallels the effort to offer all in attendance at a grave blessing some of the *pomana*. Styrofoam cakes were used in Beaverville, Candiak, and Churchill, Saskatchewan, among other locations, and it is here that people spoke of the need to distribute real cake to each person present.

A recent addition to Ukrainian Canadian weddings is the *korovai*. This, like the Styrofoam cake, is not eaten but instead is used as a decorative item. In Ukraine, the *korovai* is a semi-sweet and highly decorated wedding confection that is eaten and must be fully consumed. It seems not to have been part of weddings celebrated by Ukrainians who arrived in the early waves of immigration. Perhaps the number of people needed for the traditional preparation of the *korovai* could not be gathered together because early homesteads were so distant from one another, so the early arrivals substituted the fruitcake characteristic of English weddings. Perhaps the fruitcake was chosen as a way to fit into the Canadian mainstream, much as the white wedding dress became the garment of choice for those who could afford one. In any case, the decorative wedding *korovai* is a recent phenomenon, characteristic of the children of the people I interviewed, not my respondents themselves. Those younger couples who wanted to emphasize their Ukrainian identity often chose to do so with the *korovai*. The *korovai* will be discussed further in the chapter on weddings.

SMALL GROUP SOLIDARITY: RITUAL DRESS

Clothing worn by participants in church rituals, specifically weddings and baptisms, is attributed some of the power assigned to blessed objects and substances by a few of the people I interviewed. Wedding dresses, baptismal gowns, and ritual clothes are used to bring families together, sometimes across generations and sometimes within one generation, solidifying bonds between siblings. Because weddings are extremely important events, almost every woman whom I asked about her wedding dress said she had kept it as a memento. What happened to the dresses varied. Most women, such as Elaine Nychyk in North Battleford and Sylvia Doroshenko in Buchanan, Saskatchewan, simply preserved



FIG. 3.11 Katy Bonar showing her wedding dress

theirs, with Nychyk holding on to her mother's dress as well as her own. In a few places in southeastern Saskatchewan, the dress is brought out for important occasions, such as the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, and modelled either by its original owner or by a daughter or niece. Whether kept from one generation to the next or worn by successive generations, the dresses are treated as family heirlooms. This was done in Donwell, Edmore, Holar Farms, Rama, and Goodeve, Saskatchewan, among other locations. A few women did not see their dresses as objects connecting the members of their families and instead donated them for

use in mock weddings and other plays, often church fundraisers. Their preference for church functions nonetheless conveys some of the sense that the dresses are related to religion.

Items associated with baptism are similarly used to cement family unity, sometimes among siblings and sometimes across generations. In Ukraine, an important part of the ritual is the *kryzhma*. Normally a white cloth, although print fabrics have also been used in recent times, this item is provided by the godmother of the infant and used to hold the infant during the church service. After the baptism, the cloth becomes the property of the infant. This means that it can be used to make something, such as clothing, for the infant and for the infant only; it can be used for no other purpose. Many people in Canada use a special cloth when they baptize their own children, although most do not know the word *kryzhma* and typically call the object simply a “white cloth.” What they do with it varies, and while some do use the cloth to make items for the newly baptized child, most see it as an object with special properties that affects the life of the child. Thus, they use the same cloth for all of their children so that they will be close to one another, or they pass it on from one generation to the next to cement linkages within the family line. Under the influence of their non-Ukrainian neighbours, Ukrainian Canadians began using baptismal gowns not many generations after immigration. These gowns are treasured and kept as talismans. They are used in almost the same way as the “white cloth”; either all siblings are baptized in the same gown or the gown is passed from one generation to the next. In both cases, the stated purpose is family unity, creating a special bond between family members. Details about the various uses of the white cloth/*kryzhma* and the baptismal gown are given in the chapter on birth and baptism.

CONCLUSION

The church was very important to the Ukrainians who arrived in Canada, including the first immigrants who started coming at the turn of the twentieth century. It was they who started building Prairie churches as soon as they could. Edifices are one thing and ritual is another, and here Ukrainians could not overcome all the challenges of life on the Prairies. This held true not only for the first arrivals but also for their descendants

and subsequent settlers in rural areas. It holds true today. Life on the Prairies required, and continues to require, modifications to religious practices at the level of the official church as well as in group and individual expressions of faith. Church hierarchy, for example, accepted the fact that many churches would not have weekly services and that many acts that are supposed to be done outdoors would need to be brought inside. The hierarchy condoned modifications to the religious calendar so that the most important acts, such as the blessing of graves, could continue, even if they did not come at the official time.

The parishioners, as a community or folk group, performed many customary group actions such as tapping fellow congregation members with pussy willows on Willow or Palm Sunday and consuming the food offered as *pomana* at grave blessings. They also accepted that they needed to take on some of the actions that would otherwise have been performed by clergy, had priests been available, such as the blessing of the home and the farmstead.

At the level of individual religious behaviour, two categories existed. One was behaviour performed by many people and seen as akin to prayer. Examples were using holy water for illness or to bless one's journey. Certain other individual behaviours made respondents uncomfortable. These included using holy water or pussy willows blessed in church to prevent weather damage. Such actions seemed more magical than prayerful and assumed agency on the part of the individual who performed them; they did not leave action up to God. When such actions were mentioned in my interviews, the speakers often saw them as outdated and characteristic of older generations. Even when telling stories about the past, Prairie Ukrainians considered agency to be important. When a person prayed for help from God, his action was deemed praiseworthy. When a person took it upon himself to perform acts that would punish evildoers, such actions were condemned.

Foods associated with ritual events like grave blessings and weddings, while not blessed directly, do have some of the traits of blessed substances. They are used to cement group solidarity and to benefit the family members at whom the ritual is directed, be it the couple getting married or family ancestors. These foods are not the subject of debate; their distribution and consumption are automatic and unconscious acts. None of the controversy associated with using holy water and blessed

pussy willows to prevent weather damage arises in connection with food.

Finally, there are certain church-related behaviours that are practised in small groups, by families and in local communities. These relate to wedding dresses, baptismal gowns, and the baptismal white cloth that links generations or cements ties between siblings. These practices were developed in Canada, rather than brought over from Ukraine. The special importance of family ties for Ukrainians living in Canada may well have helped give rise to these new traditions, which emphasize the family. At all levels of church and religion-related behaviour, Ukrainians on the Prairies have practised an adaptability and flexibility that has allowed them to thrive in their new homeland. ❁❁

CHAPTER 4

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UKRAINIAN WEDDINGS ON THE PRAIRIES

BACKGROUND

Weddings are extremely important rituals. They take a man and a woman and create a new family. They are public rituals, reaching out beyond the couple and their families and affecting the whole community. The very public nature of the wedding is apparent in the number of guests that Prairie Ukrainian Canadians invite to their ceremonies. My respondents reported hosting hundreds of people: four hundred in Beckenham, Saskatchewan, for example, five hundred in Kamsack, and eight hundred in Hyas, both also in Saskatchewan. Weddings are when the couple and their families declare to their friends and neighbours who they are and what future they want. Marriage was, and sometimes still is, equivalent to achieving full adult status, and weddings articulate the role the couple sees for itself in the Ukrainian community and in the Canadian homeland. Weddings are solemn and create a union very important to the couple, to the two families involved, and to society as a whole. They are also a festive occasion when people indulge not only in food and drink but also in frivolity and carnivalesque merry-making, including playing tricks on the bride and groom.

The Ukrainians I interviewed out on the Prairies were mostly elderly, the sort of people who did not have to work and had the time to open up churches for the Sanctuary team and to sit with me for an interview. They got married sometime between the late 1950s and the early 1970s. That was a time when the Ukrainian churches on the Prairies were flourishing and before the depopulation of rural areas began. It was

also a very active period when the interplay between things that were considered Ukrainian and actions and items that spoke of integration into Canadian society were found together at most weddings. It was a time when people could afford to think about their culture and try to do something traditional, or what they constructed traditional to be.

By this point, a basic pattern of what should be done during the wedding had evolved. It was not a direct import from Ukraine, and one reason why was that the earliest of the immigrants, because of the overwhelming demands of setting up a household, could not really afford to celebrate elaborate weddings, either in terms of money or in terms of time. We cannot interview the earliest settlers to eastern Alberta and Saskatchewan to get some sense of what early life was like because the first arrivals have all passed away. An interview with Johanna Woloshyn, conducted in an eldercare facility in Falher, Alberta, however, gives some idea about what life was like on the Prairies when Ukrainian settlers first arrived. The Peace River country of northern Alberta, where Falher is located, was settled much later than the Kalyna country of eastern Alberta and Saskatchewan, the first places the earliest settlers came. Thus, the circumstances faced by people like Woloshyn may well mirror what happened in the early days of Prairie settlement. Put simply, conditions were rough. The interview with Woloshyn, conducted in Ukrainian because she had come to Canada as an adult and was more comfortable in that language, detailed harsh conditions, struggle, and putting survival above all else. As Woloshyn said and her son-in-law underscored in response to my questions about the ornamental features of a traditional wedding, there was simply no time or resources for anything beyond the barest necessities.

The weddings of the first settlers may have been perfunctory, but this ritual was so important that, as soon as they could, Ukrainians started having more elaborate events with many people in attendance. Like so many aspects of the lives of the early Ukrainian settlers, these events were looked at askance by their Anglo-Canadian neighbours. Ukrainian weddings around that time were open to anyone who chose to come and were, therefore, events that attracted not only Ukrainian family, friends, and neighbours but also many non-Ukrainians looking for tasty food, free drinks, and a general good time. Ukrainian weddings were considered a great place to have fun – and also as potentially dangerous because

fight at weddings were a common occurrence. In his description of the period 1915–29, Gregory Robinson writes that Ukrainians were assumed to be rougher and more uncouth than other nationalities that had settled in Canada. This assumption was based on many factors, including Ukrainians' propensity for fighting with farm implements rather than bare hands – which Anglo-Canadians considered ungentlemanly – and the likelihood that Ukrainian weddings would descend into brawls. The situation was aggravated by the presence of young, rootless, immigrant men called “Jacks” who were unmarried, had no permanent domicile, and tended to be underemployed or unemployed; they did indeed tend toward violence. They would show up at weddings looking not only for food and drink but also for a chance to release their pent-up frustrations. Thus, Ukrainian weddings drew the special condemnation of Anglo-Canadians, who saw them as events where there was almost always excessive alcohol and fisticuffs, leading to physical injuries and sometimes even death.¹ The pugilistic aspects of weddings diminished over time, especially as people settled down and young men found jobs. By the time the Sanctuary Project interviewees got married, weddings were great public events, showcasing prosperity and Ukrainian culture. They also established the couple and their families as citizens who were both Ukrainian and Canadian.

By the late 1950s, Ukrainians were well-settled and prosperous. Their colourful weddings were viewed as a great source of entertainment and good food. Tricks might be played on the bride and groom, but there were no injuries, and the worst that was likely to happen was that cornflakes were put under the sheets of the couple's nuptial bed or that the car they were planning to drive to the place where they would spend their honeymoon night was stuffed with Styrofoam peanuts. The weddings were a source of Ukrainian pride.

THE STRUCTURE OF MY RESPONDENTS' WEDDINGS

I have abstracted the basic pattern of what was considered to be a Ukrainian wedding from my interviews. What I give below is the fullest possible version. No single wedding had all of the features listed here, and over time, there was simplification and adaptation to circumstances. People did not have to do everything themselves: they could call on

professional help, and some Prairie Ukrainians became semi-professionals, taking on some of the cooking chores that weddings required. Over time, more and more Anglo-Canadian features and modern innovations were added, such as bachelor and bachelorette parties. From the very beginning, however, the stages of the wedding that characterized the period when my respondents got married were complex. Their most striking characteristic was that traditions brought from Ukraine were mixed with garments, foods, and practices adopted from Anglo-Canadians. More important, my respondents seemed unaware of this mixture. What they described to me were, to them, proper Ukrainian weddings.

The stages of the wedding were as follows. The young man was expected to go and ask the father of his intended for her hand in marriage. In Ukraine, the request for the bride was and, among traditionalists and in many villages, still is, an ornate ritual.² In Canada, the formal request for permission to marry faded away quite quickly; it was seldom mentioned in my interviews. Once the marriage was agreed upon, wedding preparations began. Again, the Canadian version was far less formal than what is done in Ukraine, where the two families meet and negotiate who will contribute what to the wedding. While no one I interviewed talked about how families decided who would do what, it is obvious that both sides did agree on which of the various goods and services they would provide. Both families contributed to the cost of the meal at the reception, and both saved as much money as they could by providing food raised on the farm. Fried chicken was and is so popular a dish that some people still refer to it as Ukrainian chicken. Ground beef and pork used for *holubtsi*, or cabbage rolls, were produced on the farm, along with the cabbage. Prepared meats such as sausage were also made at home. As for potatoes and cheese for *pirohy* or *varenyky*, all of this was home-grown, along with beets for *beetniks* (beet leaf wraps in dill cream sauce). Only flour needed to be purchased: farmers could grow the wheat, but they needed a mill to grind the flour. Mushrooms for side dishes were collected in the fields and forests; beans and the cornmeal for *nachynka* or *mamalyha* were homegrown. The dishes produced were what people identified as Ukrainian and what they still cook for formal, celebratory events, be they rituals such as weddings or events such as church dinners. These were what Levi-Strauss called “exo” foods, meaning special occasion foods associated with ethnic

identity and placed on public display before being consumed. This is in contrast to “endo” foods, or the sorts of things eaten on a daily basis in the home.³ Whether Ukrainian weddings set the pattern for what came to be considered special, “exo” food cannot be determined, but this may indeed have been the case. From the 1950s to the early 1970s, much of the alcohol consumed was home-brewed. The cake, a three-tiered fruitcake with white icing, was homemade as well.

While families did most of their own cooking, a trend toward professional food preparation was slowly emerging. Marlene Lozinski of Donwell, Saskatchewan, said that her mother would earn money by working as a cook at weddings, leaving for the location of the reception on early Saturday and not returning until late the next day. Marlene and her cousin started taking similar jobs as they grew older and said that the work was extremely hard because each guest had to be served individually and people would come and go as they pleased; there was no set time for the meal and no possibility of just setting food out so that guests could help themselves. These days Danny Rudey runs Dan’s Bakery and Catering in Sheho, Saskatchewan. For those people who do not want to cook for their own wedding receptions, but want to serve Ukrainian dishes to their guests, Danny provides a variety of attractive options. The business does well and currently employs five staff.

In addition to deciding who would provide which food and drink for the festivities, families decided where the after-wedding party or parties would be held. It could be in a church or a civic hall, although many such buildings were often not large enough to hold all of the guests. Parties were usually held on the farms of the families of the couple, much like in Ukraine. One option was to have two events, one at the home of the groom’s family and the other at the home of the bride’s, the way it is done in Ukraine. This was especially popular if the two families lived far apart. It became progressively more common to have a celebration at one home only, and that was typically the home of the groom. The guests could not possibly be accommodated in the house itself, so families built stages or platforms for the dancing or cleaned out Quonset huts for the festivities. Presumably both families participated in this part of the preparations as well.

Before the wedding – typically the night before the church ceremony – there was a party called the *vinkopletennia*. It was usually held at the

home of the bride. Sometimes this event was for women only, but more often, both women and men could attend. When older women were present, they might sing songs appropriate to the event. Traditionally on the Prairies, as well as in Ukraine, where *vinkopletennia* is still practised in many areas, the songs describe the steps of the ritual process and the actions that various participants are supposed to take. These songs help remind participants what they are supposed to do. The other function of the songs is to release strong emotions. The songs voice a farewell to maidenhood and the home and family in which the bride grew up. As such, they are typically sad songs that allow the bride to have a good cry before her departure from her family for life in a new home. The element of melancholy was disappearing at the time when most of my respondents got married, although several people did remember hearing sad songs. Sylvia Doroshenko of Buchanan, Saskatchewan, did not have anyone sing songs at her event, but she recalled that the songs she heard at other such events were very sad. According to Maria Havryliuk of Wynyard, Saskatchewan, her older sister had a *vinkopletennia* at which old women sang songs. The songs were so mournful and the sister cried so hard that, when it was Havryliuk's turn to marry, she refused to have a *vinkopletennia*. Why did Ukrainians on the Prairies reject sad songs? This is probably an instance when Western ideas about weddings influenced Ukrainian practice. The Ukrainian Canadian bride was probably no less sad about leaving the home where she had grown up than her counterpart in Ukraine. But in the West, a wedding is conventionally viewed as a joyous time. It is likely that public expressions of sorrow came to be seen as inappropriate.

One item produced at the *vinkopletennia* was a myrtle wreath for the bride. In Buchanan, Donwell, and Kyziv, Saskatchewan, dimes with holes drilled through them were attached to the wreath to ensure the wealth of the couple. Sometimes a *boutonnière* for the groom, worn on his lapel or pinned to his hat, was made as well. Myrtle does not grow in Canada, but it is considered traditional, so a number of people grew it indoors specifically for weddings. When the Sanctuary team visited the home of Peter Bomok in Speers, Saskatchewan, he showed us his potted myrtle and said it was a prophetic plant. Apparently, it would start to grow rapidly when any of Bomok's daughters had a serious boyfriend, indicating that the plant was ready to produce needed



FIG. 4.1 Mike and Sylvia Sas

decorations for the upcoming wedding. Periwinkle, which does grow locally, is an alternative to myrtle. It is considered suitable because it is an evergreen and is thus associated with fertility and longevity. By the time the people I interviewed got married, *vinkopletennia* was optional, though still fairly common, and a number of my respondents mentioned it in their interviews. It was attested in Blaine Lake, Codette, Grenfell, Hyas, Ituna, MacNutt, Meath Park, North Battleford, Porcupine Plain, Samburg, Stenen, Swan Plain, Welychko, Wishart, Yellow Creek, and Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and in Szypenitz, Alberta. In many of the places that continued to have this event, it was no longer a sad farewell to maidenhood and the bride's family of birth; it was a party, primarily for young people, held on the night before the marriage ceremony. Mike and Sylvia Sas of Kamsack, Saskatchewan, for example, mentioned men bringing musical instruments to entertain the participants.

On the morning of the wedding, the groom came to the bride's home. In some areas, when the groom arrived, he was "delayed" in various ways.

Sometimes the groom had to buy the bride from her siblings, and the payment was usually made in small coins. Sometimes the groom had to pay for the bride's trunk – her *kufer* or *skrynia* – or bribe the children sitting on it. After the groom “acquired” his intended, the couple was blessed either with ordinary bread or with *kolachi*, woven loaves made especially for the occasion. Most often the blessing took place at the home of the bride and was done by her parents, as happened in Jedburgh, Kelliher, and Shipman, Saskatchewan. Blessing by the groom's parents was also possible, as attested in Laniwci.

After the groom picked up his bride, the older practice was for the couple to go to church together, where they would be met by the priest, who would talk to them about marriage and its responsibilities and then walk them down the aisle, as was done in Innisfree, Alberta, and in Meath Park, Porcupine Plain, Wakaw, and Wishart, Saskatchewan. There was, however, quite a bit of variation regarding how the couple went to church. In many locations the bride and the groom would go separately; respondents mentioned sayings that whoever arrived at the church first would dominate in the marriage. The Western tradition of having the bride's father walk her down the aisle had become quite widely accepted by the time my respondents got married, so that even when the couple came together, the groom walked down first and waited at the front for the bride's father to lead her down to the tetrapod and give her away. The bride's father walked her down the aisle to the waiting groom in most of the wedding descriptions I recorded, including those in Beaverdale, Blaine Lake, Candiac, Goodeve, Holar Farms, Jedburgh, Krasne, Laniwci, Lepine, Maybridge, Model Farm, Rama, Shipman, Swan Plain, and Theodore, Saskatchewan, and Myrnam, Skaro, and Waskatenau, Alberta.

During the ceremony, crowns, the property of the church, were held over the heads of the couple by their best man and maid of honour. They needed to be held above the head, not touching the couple. In most churches the crowns, being potent sacred objects, could not be held with a bare hand and needed to be held with a handkerchief. The usual practice was to have the best man hold the crown over the head of the groom and the maid of honour hold the crown over the bride. The crowns could be heavy, and Maudest Yurkiw said that two men held the crowns at his daughter's wedding. Crowns are extremely



FIG. 4.2 Maude Yurkiw with Eva Himka [ABOVE]

FIG. 4.3 Handmade wedding crowns [BELOW]

important. Using crowns to mark the couple and separate them from the people not going through this critical rite of passage is often seen as a core and quintessentially Ukrainian part of the ceremony. Almost all churches have their own set of crowns, many of them handmade by the parishioners. In some cases, crowns were and are brought in from the larger urban church that is the home parish of the priest serving a particular circuit. A wedding without crowns is not a Ukrainian wedding. The crowns used in the ceremony conducted in church are a distinctly Ukrainian feature of the wedding, and since crowns were seldom, if ever, brought from the Old Country, parishioners in Canada went to great lengths to produce home-made but stunning ritual objects. My favourite is a set of crowns made out of intricately carved tin cans covered with velvet and decorated with buttons and sparkles. The crowns are a way to perpetuate an important aspect of Ukrainian church ritual on Canadian soil. Cloth items, especially embroidered ones, are part of Ukrainian tradition, and the couple was supposed to stand or kneel on a ritual cloth, or *rushnyk*, to say their vows. Once their vows were pronounced, many of my respondents had their hands tied with another, smaller ritual cloth. Because embroidery was not a skill widely practised on the Prairies, couples used *rushnyky* handed down from parents or grandparents. Over time, these were replaced by strips of white fabric or abandoned altogether.

At the wedding itself, the bride wore a white gown, usually store-bought, although sometimes made by the bride herself or by a relative. Jeanette Worotniak of Hafford, Saskatchewan, had her sister make hers. Elsie Kawulich of Vegreville, Alberta, was very practical and modified her short white graduation dress into a long white gown suitable for a wedding. The wedding dress was a special garment in many senses. It was more than a ritual garment worn for a most important occasion; it was also a token of a major rite of passage. A woman kept and keeps her wedding dresses, and often the dress belonging to her mother, as a memento of her special day. In some areas, the dress is brought out again for special anniversaries like the twenty-fifth. This happens in Beaverdale, Melville, and Wakaw, Saskatchewan.

After the church service, the wedding party went to the reception. Receptions were and are a chance to host large groups, including non-Ukrainian friends and neighbours, and can be held in rented venues

that can accommodate literally hundreds of people. Sometimes the local church hall or municipal hall in town is big enough for this event. At the time when my respondents got married, receptions were usually held at the home of the groom's parents, with parties held at the home of both the groom and the bride in some cases. Having separate parties at both the groom's home and the bride's is what is done in Ukraine, and this practice encourages the sharing of expenses between the two families. Dual receptions at the homes of the families of both members of the couple were mentioned in Buchanan, Candiac, Donwell, Insinger, Ituna, Montmartre, and Swan Plain, Saskatchewan. In Rosthern and St Walburg, Saskatchewan, the reception was at the farmstead of one of the families. When held on a farm, accommodations for receptions included cleaning out farm buildings and constructing special spaces to accommodate guests.

Some sort of entertainment is a must at receptions. The more traditional version was the *darovannia*, also called *perepii*, a formal gift-giving, where the couple stood behind a table and accepted gifts from their guests, in many cases offering them a shot of alcohol in return. Gifts at the *darovannia* were typically unwrapped; the practice of leaving wrapped gifts on the table during the reception to have them unwrapped the following day or even several days later was a newer development. In my interviews, gift-opening parties were more common than the *darovannia* or *perepii*, and Elaine and Roman Nychyk complained that the *perepii* that was part of their wedding celebration was a burden, forcing the couple "to stand with frozen smiles for three hours."

Carnavalesque foolishness often accompanied the reception. The bride could be "kidnapped" and taken to a bar, forcing the groom to buy everyone a round of drinks to get her back. She could be simply taken outside until the groom produced "two bottles," as happened in Buchanan, Saskatchewan. According to Marlene Lozinski, when her groom was informed that she had been stolen and he had to buy her back, he answered: "You stole her; you keep her." Of course, the young man did eventually "buy" his bride and they lived happily ever after. The bride's shoe could be "stolen," obliging the groom to pay for its return, usually with home brew. In Innisfree, Alberta, the groom did not have to actually buy his bride, but he did have to treat his wedding guests to alcohol. Chris Zorniak, knowing the custom he would be expected to



FIG. 4.4 Marlene Lozinski with the author [ABOVE]

FIG. 4.5 Chris Zorniak [BELOW]

fulfil, started saving bottles of rye whiskey long before his wedding day. He would open them very carefully so that the seal did not look as if it had been broken. When the time for the wedding came, he filled all of the bottles with tea, which was about the same color as rye whiskey, and sealed them carefully so that they looked as if they had just come from the store. At the reception, guests, receiving what looked like full bottles of rye, thought they were getting really special treats – until they opened them and tasted the contents. Of course, as Zorniak explained, he gave bottles of real rye to relatives and to those who had helped most with the wedding preparations.

The centrepiece of the reception was the wedding cake. Originally it was a grandiose three-tiered affair, a fruitcake with white icing. The fruitcake, like the white bridal gown, was a borrowing from the Anglo custom, but by the time my respondents got married, it was viewed as a traditional Ukrainian confection to the point that young women who wanted to have a different kind of cake at their wedding were told they could not because it would violate Ukrainian custom. A few did manage to have a white or even chocolate cake, especially if it was bakery-bought rather than produced by friends and relatives. Because the cake was intended for show, ways to make more spectacular ones were sought, and one solution became the fake cake made out of Styrofoam and decorated with white icing. Still, the fruitcake was and still is considered a part of Ukrainian tradition and closely associated with the Ukrainian Canadian wedding. Thus, when Styrofoam cakes were used, individually wrapped pieces of fruitcake were prepared for, and distributed to, all wedding guests. An interesting combination of food item and display item was the practice of making the bottom tier, or even the bottom two tiers, out of fruitcake, with the top tiers made out of Styrofoam. This approach to the wedding cake was described in Donwell, Insinger, and Rama, Saskatchewan and in New Kiew, Alberta. Couples tended to keep the very top tier of their wedding cake. This was easy when the top was a plastic decoration such as a church or a set of bride and groom figurines and much harder when the top tier was itself a small cake. Nick and Eva Dmytryshyn and Teresa Kekish all had real cake as the top tier of their wedding confection and did manage to dry it out and keep it as a memento, as did Leonard Romanson. But fruitcakes are moist, and Jeannette Worotniak, Valentina Hritzuk, and

Nellie Kotylak did not succeed in drying out and preserving their cake tops. Neither did Adalice and Edward Pidperyhora.

In some areas, a mock wedding is and was staged at the reception or on the following day. A mock wedding is a comedic reversal of the real thing, with gender-switching and a layperson doing a humorous imitation of a clergyman. It is a bit of levity that balances out the solemnity of the marriage ceremony. Mock weddings were part of the celebration for a number of the people I interviewed, but, as Ron Lozinsky, who had played the role of the bride at such events, pointed out, they were becoming less common, and the last one he remembered took place some fifteen or twenty years ago. Mock weddings were also described in interviews conducted in Codette, Holar Farms, Insinger, Laniwci, Rosthern, Swan Plain, Tuffnell, Westbrook, Yellow Creek, and Sheho, Saskatchewan, in both Catholic and Orthodox churches. In Jedburgh, Saskatchewan, Jeanette Karapita said they were a practice of the past.

For most of my respondents, when the marriage festivities were over, the couple went to live with the groom's parents or another relative and stayed there until they could either afford a place of their own or it came time for them take over the farm, allowing the groom's parents to move into town, closer to medical and other services.

SAMPLE WEDDING DESCRIPTIONS

Olga Kozun, whom I interviewed in Churchill, Saskatchewan, remembered that her fiancé did go to her father and formally request her hand in marriage. Prior to her wedding, she had a *vinkopletennia* where those present made her a wreath out of myrtle, grown indoors expressly for use in making wedding wreaths. Older women sang songs at this event. Kozun remembered a few lines and was able to sing them for me.

Vesillia sia zachynie, vesillia, vesillia.
A ia sobi [spochyvaiu?] zakutaiu v zillia.
A to nyny subota, a zavtra nedilia,
A ia sobi sia zbyrai, idu na vesillia.
Na vesillii daiut' iisty, horilky pyty,
A divchata pryspivaiut', radusia zhenyty.

A wedding is beginning, a wedding, a wedding
And me I am [unclear], wrapping in greenery
Now it is Saturday, tomorrow is Sunday,
And I am getting ready to go to a wedding.
At the wedding they give you (food) to eat and *horilka* to drink
And the girls are singing, they are glad for the marriage.

This is clearly not one of the sad songs the people I interviewed objected to; it is neutral and descriptive, and this may explain why it was remembered.

Kozun and her groom went to the church together after being blessed with breads by her parents. The groom's parents were deceased, and his aunt stood in for them at the wedding. The groom did something that is routine practice in Ukraine but was attested only once in the course of my interviews, namely he went to the graves of his parents and issued them an invitation. After the wedding, Olga and her husband took over the family farm.

Melvin Klus, Lavona Sedlovitch, Anne Elash, and Morris Yanush of Goodeve, Saskatchewan, remembered their parents blessing them on their heads with a bread before they headed for church. There they were met by the priest in the vestibule and taken down the aisle. Jeannette Worotniak of Hafford, same province, remembers the wreath made of myrtle. She recalls being blessed with a bread by her parents and going to church together with her soon-to-be husband. She added the detail that, in church, the couple stood on an embroidered cloth, a *rushnyk*, that she had made. Worotniak said that her daughter also made a *rushnyk* for her wedding, but that embroidering a *rushnyk* for the marriage ceremony rarely happens anymore. In fact, Elsie Kawulich might be an example of transition in the sense that she had a *rushnyk*, but it was not fully hand-embroidered. Rather, she took an ordinary towel and added bits of coloured thread at the edges. Returning to Worotniak's wedding, her white wedding dress was handmade, but the work of her sister, not something she made herself. Worotniak described standing behind a table and receiving gifts, offering each of the guests a shot glass with alcohol in return. Katy Bonar, interviewed in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, said she remembered older women singing during the gift-giving that took place at the reception.



FIG. 4.6 Olga Kozun

In Edwand, Alberta, Joan Bozniak, Emily Lastiwka, and Mike Rogoza said that the groom had to buy a place next to the bride when he came to pick her up, paying her siblings for this privilege. They also remembered that transporting the bride's wedding chest, her *kufer*, was accompanied by songs. Older women sang these songs, they said, but the younger participants did not know them, and when the older generation passed away, their songs died with them. In the case of the respondents in Edwand, the blessing of the couple with bread happened at the door of the community centre, not the bride's home. They added that the couple went to the church separately and that there was a belief that whichever member of the pair arrived at the church first would dominate in the marriage. There was no mention of *vinkopletennia* and no myrtle wreath, but one of the women remembered a different ritual gesture that she considered important, namely her mother placing her veil on her head. The couple had their hands tied together with a white cloth in church, and their best man and maid of honour held crowns over their heads during the service, using a cloth to do so: bare hands touching the crowns was not allowed.

In Kamsack, Saskatchewan, Mike and Sylvia Sas recalled that a fake bride, meaning a man dressed as a woman, was presented to the groom when he first arrived at the bride's house. The groom had to bribe this person with alcohol so that he would leave and allow the groom to get to his real intended. Something almost identical was attested in a Stenen, Saskatchewan, interview, one conducted with Florence Bazansky. According to Bazansky, her uncle dressed up as a bride and her groom had to produce a bottle of liquor to get the man to step aside. In the case of Mike and Sylvia's wedding, the fake bride was not the only impediment. When it came to purchasing of the *skrynia*, the bride's younger siblings sat on it and made the groom give them coins so that they would release the chest. Like many couples, Mike and Sylvia went to live with his parents until they took over the farm, an arrangement that was also mentioned by Sonia Pryslak of Maybridge, Saskatchewan.

Leona and Harry Ewanchuk of Brinsley, Alberta, described the wedding they had forty-six years prior to the interview. The couple was apparently quite prosperous because Leona wore a white wedding gown with white satin shoes to match. The gown was important to her, and she kept it, along with the white gown that had belonged to her mother. The couple did not go to church together; rather, they met at the church and, during the service, stood on a white rug they had ordered from the Eaton's catalogue. The fruitcake served at their reception was made by Leona's aunt and decorated by her cousin. There was no *vinkopletennia* prior to the wedding, and Leona did not wear a wreath, though Harry mentioned memories of *vinkopletennia* events from his childhood and Leona remembered making flower decorations out of Kleenex tissues. When it came to activities such as kidnapping the bride and holding a mock wedding, both respondents said that they remembered such events. Leona was even able to name the couple whose wedding at the nearby church was followed by a mock ceremony. They themselves, the Ewanchuks added, did not have anything like that when they got married. Their wedding culminated in a big party in the Ewanchuk family basement.

Peter and Jean Woroschuk of Calder, Saskatchewan, said they had to marry in a church that was not their own because the priest who served their circuit was officiating at that location on the weekend they had chosen for their wedding. Jean was an orphan, so the Woroschuk

family took on double ritual functions, arranging a *vinkopletennia* for her and then having Peter's sister make the wedding cake. For the marriage service, Jean's uncle stood in for her father and gave her away to Peter. The ritual of picking up the bride and going to church together was not observed in this case. By the time Connie Senkiw of the Orthodox church in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, got married, the practice of the groom coming to fetch the bride was no more. Senkiw's betrothed met Connie at the church. Senkiw refused to have her father "give her away," however. Inspired by feminist sentiments, she walked down to her groom on her own, justifying what she did by saying that the father giving the bride away was a Western tradition and she was going back to her Ukrainian roots. Merv Krywulak, who married his wife in Beckenham, Saskatchewan, in 1976, had a simple wedding. There was no *vinkopletennia*, and his bride did not wear a wreath. He remembers no attempt to kidnap his wife and no mock wedding after the serious ceremony, but he had heard about all of these things being done in towns not far away.

In another Stenen, Saskatchewan, interview, Thomas Smud, Ron Steranko, and John and Pearl Gurski talked about practices in transition. They remembered having a *vinkopletennia* for the bride while the groom had a more Western bachelor's party. Pearl Gurski said she was the first in her area to have a wedding shower. While the shower was an innovative element, Pearl did have the traditional *rushnyk* as part of her service in church. Olga Wasylyniuk of Swan Plain, while describing a number of older elements such as the groom buying her from her brother, having a myrtle wreath, and standing on a *rushnyk* during the ceremony, also stated that she did not come to the church together with her groom. In her case, the family used the more Western practice of having her father walk her down the aisle to the front of the church where the groom was already waiting. The after-service party, in Wasylyniuk's case, was somewhat like what is done in Ukraine. There were two receptions, first at her parents' house and then at the home where the groom's parents lived. A gift-giving ceremony was held at both locations. Two wedding receptions, one at the home of the bride and the other at the home of the groom, were also attested in Candiatic, Donwell, Ituna, Montmartre, and Rhein, Saskatchewan. As for two receptions in Swan Plain, these were held in succession, not simultaneously, as in Ukraine. In most cases,



FIG. 4.7 Peter and Doris Kule's wedding photo

everyone did not attend both celebrations: the friends and family of the bride attended the reception at her house, while the groom's family and friends attended the one at his. In some cases, this was a matter of the distance between the two homes and the difficulty of travelling to both locations.

At St Michael's and at the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, both in Wishart, Saskatchewan, the wedding was more modern. At the St Michael's Church the only older practice mentioned was bride purchase. Modern elements held prior to the wedding and found at both churches were a bridal shower and a bachelor party, what the speakers called a stag party. After the wedding, at the reception, there was an opening of gifts rather than a presentation of gifts at a table by individual guests. Another new element was having pictures taken by a professional photographer, as was done in Bodnari, Saskatchewan. Gloria and Harold Hadewich drove to Melville, Saskatchewan, from Goodeve Farm for their pictures. The Kawulyches, the Nychyks, the Sases, and the Kules, among others, all had formal photographs of their weddings that they kept and displayed in their home.

The introduction of some new elements was less welcome than the introduction of others. Mary Ann Sebulski and Violet Medvid of Insinger, Saskatchewan, for example, complained about all of the "silly stuff" that characterizes modern marriage and objected to pregnant women serving as bridesmaids. Leona Ewanchuk of Brinsely, Alberta, criticized the practice of using cupcakes arranged on a multi-tiered stand instead of a wedding cake. This might be convenient, she said, but it was definitely not traditional.

WOMEN OF VALUE

In the weddings of this time period, there was a strong focus on the value that the bride brought to her new household and new family. Precisely because the couple went to live with the groom's parents, to eventually take over their landholdings, it was important to convince the family accepting the new member that she was indeed the right person for the task. The exchange of money for the bride, or of an object associated with her such as her shoe or her *kufer/skrynia*, took many forms and was part of nearly every wedding. When the groom was impeded from picking up his bride for the wedding, the fact that he had to pay her younger siblings for her was a way of saying she was valuable to her birth family and that they would not surrender her easily. In some cases, an older male – the uncle in Stenen, Saskatchewan, and a male of unspecified relationship to the family in Kamsack – presented himself as

the “bride.” Like the children, he had to be bought off before the groom could claim his real bride.⁴

Where there was no bride purchase and no pay-off of a substitute bride, there was typically some form of bride theft. Often the groom’s male friends or the bride’s male siblings abducted the bride from the reception and forced the groom to buy her back, usually with alcohol. This was so widespread a custom that even Lozinski’s groom, who claimed he was willing to give up his bride to the men who had stolen her, knew he would be paying for his wife-to-be, and he did so as soon as he had had his bit of fun.

In Innisfree, Alberta, gifts to the members of the bride’s family were the norm. As described earlier, Chris Zorniak managed to circumvent this practice, to the entertainment of the wedding guests, by “paying off” the bride’s relatives with bottles of what looked to be rye whiskey but were in fact bottles refilled with tea. Another approach was to steal the bride’s shoe, compelling the groom to buy it back. This too was widely accepted practice; Maudest Yurkiw made use of this custom, passing the bride’s other shoe around so that the guests could put money in it and help him buy her back. In all cases of theft, be it of the shoe or of the bride herself, the actions of the male members of the wedding party signalled to the groom that the woman he was taking as his wife was someone desirable to all young men.

In sum, these purchases were more symbolic than an actual exchange of funds, and no significant amount of money was ever paid. The real cost of the wedding was borne by the two sets of parents, or rather the two families. Thus, the various forms of paying for the bride were more of a way to send an important message than a real surrender of cash. This was most obvious in Tony Bilokury’s interview. He said he had to pay the bride’s brother a substantial amount of money but eventually got all of it back. Various forms of symbolic bride purchase and bride theft also added levity, of course, to a solemn occasion that was perhaps frightening to the groom, the bride, and the two families whose children were entering this new union.

Bride purchase or bride theft, followed by a “payment,” was so widely practised among Ukrainians in the early days that it shocked Anglo-Canadians. As Swyrypa writes, teachers and Anglican ministers assumed

that Ukrainians were immoral because they “happily sold their young daughters to any man regardless of character.” They did not realize that such exchanges served an important symbolic function. Anglo-Canadians were also shocked by the giving of gifts of chickens, pigs, and cattle at the *darovannia* or *perepii*, something that even some of my respondents remember. Presentations of farm animals, they assumed, were again an indication that women were being bartered; they did not understand that the animals were a means of helping the young couple set up their new farmstead. Certainly, the idea that the symbolic “purchases” were a way of underscoring the bride’s value rather than a debasement of the woman escaped Anglo-Canadians.

The bride’s parents had to signal their acceptance of the departure of their daughter, who would be leaving their household to live with and work for another family. This they did with the bread or *kolach* blessing, which was done either at the home of the bride or at the door of the community hall. Similarly, the formal request for a young woman’s hand in marriage was a way of acknowledging to the bride’s birth family that their surrender of their daughter was a sacrifice. Formal requests disappeared much earlier than the blessing with breads or *kolachi*, perhaps because approaching the bride’s father was a private affair whereas the blessing with *kolachi* or bread was a public one, done in front of others – at very least, the bridal party of best man, maid of honour, and attendants, if not all of the wedding guests. By this action, the parents of the bride were letting others know that they accepted and blessed the union. In some cases the parents of the groom also blessed the couple with *kolachi* or breads. While less common, this was another important way for the older generation from the groom’s family, the one that would be accepting a stranger into their household, to signal their approval of the marriage.

In many districts, a mock wedding was held one day after the real one. During the mock wedding, a large, hairy man played the bride while a petite woman or a small man played the groom. Sometimes the actors wore rubber masks to look like an elderly couple – *baba* and *dido* – as was done in Sheho, Saskatchewan. The message of the mock wedding was similar to that of the man dressed as a bride on the wedding day: it contrasted the silly wedding done for entertainment with the real

marriage that had taken place; it showed that the marriage that preceded the levity was the right and proper match. It was more than just an occasion for frivolity and foolishness. Nonetheless, the entertainment aspect of the mock wedding was important, which may be why this practice, while remaining an enduring trait in many Ukrainian communities in Saskatchewan, was in some districts separated from the marriage ceremony altogether to become purely a source of entertainment. As a funny play, the mock wedding was sometimes confused with Malanka, a New Year's celebration that will be discussed in the chapter on calendar rites and outreach activities. Sometimes, as in Olesha, Saskatchewan, the mock wedding became totally independent of all other rituals and was used as a fundraiser, usually for the church. For example, Eleanor Hadubiak of that town donated her wedding gown to a drama club so that it could be used for this purpose.

BLENDING IDENTITIES: BEING BOTH UKRAINIAN AND CANADIAN

Among the most striking features of Ukrainian weddings between the late 1950s and the early 1970s were the fruitcake wedding cake and the bride's white wedding dress. Both these items had come to be seen as traditional components of a Ukrainian Canadian wedding, yet they were actually borrowings from British practice. They were a way of declaring the "marriage" of the couple not just to each other but to their Canadian identity as well. Ukrainian immigrants did treasure their Ukrainian identity, but they were also Canadian, and at the wedding they were performing a ritual that would ground them in Canadian life. This statement of integration into the Canadian mainstream was intended especially for the people at the reception. It was there that non-Ukrainian neighbours and friends joined the gathering. Most Prairie churches are small and cannot possibly accommodate several hundred people. In all likelihood, only family and fellow congregation members attended the church ceremony. The reception was another matter. Held in a hall or on a farm with extra space for guests provided by an outdoor platform, an extra-large basement, or a cleaned-out shed or other farm building, the reception could indeed offer space for hundreds of attendees, non-Ukrainians as well as relatives and fellow Ukrainians.

The fruitcake as the wedding confection of choice is a British tradition and was brought to Canada by English settlers. Originally called the bride's cake (as opposed to the groom's cake), it eventually became the only cake served at the reception.⁵ The choice of fruitcake (rather than the *korovai*, a ritual bread the preparation of which is typically a step in the wedding ritual) was not explained in my interviews: it was simply what was done, and no further discussion was necessary. On the few occasions when a reason was given for serving fruitcake, respondents stated that this type of cake kept well and could be made in advance, allowing more time for other wedding preparations. The display aspect of the cake was also important. The most obvious support for this supposition is the introduction of the Styrofoam cake in parts of southeastern Saskatchewan. This cake could easily be constructed in multiple tiers, and because Styrofoam is lightweight, the cake could have fancy columns supporting the upper layers. This cake could be made at home; Martha Kruda of Beaverdale, Saskatchewan, had a home-made Styrofoam cake and kept it as a memento. Many Styrofoam cakes, however, were rented from a bakery for the wedding reception and used at the reception only. Whether homemade or rented, Styrofoam cakes were obviously not eaten; their sole use was as an eye-catching display. When the *korovai* was reintroduced by the children of the people I interviewed, it was meant to be a declaration of Ukrainian identity. The *korovai*, too, was not eaten but kept as a wedding memento or used in multiple weddings. If the *korovai* was a statement of being Ukrainian, then the white three-tiered fruitcake might be considered a symbol of the acceptance of a new Canadian lifestyle. Just as, over the course of the wedding, the bride accepted multiple changes – from maiden to wife, from being a member of her family of birth to being integral to her husband's family – so the fruitcake likely signalled to the people at a reception that the couple was part of Canadian society.

There are many reasons why British traditions became integrated into Ukrainian ritual practice and then seen as a traditional part of it. The power and prestige enjoyed by Anglo-Canadians encouraged Ukrainians to emulate them. But there were other reasons besides this. Frances Swyripa points out that many Ukrainians embraced the myth that the British royal family had Ukrainian blood as the result of the marriage of the daughter of the Saxon King Harold to Volodymyr



FIGS. 4.8 and 4.9
Ingrid Chalus
showing one of
her mother-in-
law's dresses and
wedding trunk

Monomakh of Kyivan Rus'. So they did not view British traditions as alien, and this made it easier for Ukrainians to accept the external trappings of the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture.⁶ I have experienced first-hand the tendency to incorporate all cultures and traditions into the Ukrainian fold. Peter Kule, a Ukrainian who donated a large sum of money to the University of Alberta, including the funds that established the Kule Chair in Ukrainian Ethnography, which I held from 2004 to 2019, would always insist on finding some Ukrainian ancestry, some connection to Ukraine, in the background of every powerful person to whom he was introduced.

The bride's white wedding dress was another way of communicating Ukrainians' integration into Canadian life. In Ukraine, the bride's wedding outfit is colourful and complex; she often wears a special headdress, jewellery signalling her wealth, and a *rushnyk* tied over her abdomen to protect her and her reproductive organs from the evil eye. All of this seems to have disappeared early in Canada in favour of the white wedding dress. The most striking example of rejecting Ukrainian wedding outfits and substituting Western ones that I encountered was on a farm near Rycroft, Alberta. Ingrid Chalus had a trunk that had belonged to her mother-in-law. According to Chalus, the trunk's owner was planning on marrying as soon as she got to Canada, so she had packed the trunk with both everyday married woman's wear and a special wedding outfit. Chalus remembers her mother-in-law wearing some of the everyday items, but never the wedding outfit. In fact, the gold leaf that was supposed to decorate her wreath of myrtle was still intact when Chalus showed me the trunk's contents. Chalus, of course, does not know what her mother-in-law actually wore at her wedding, but she is quite certain it was not the Ukrainian wedding outfit she had so carefully packed – and one can assume that the chosen garment was, indeed, a white wedding gown.

All of the women I interviewed for the Sanctuary Project had worn white wedding gowns, some home-made, but most store-bought. Either way, they were the norm at the time my respondents married. Some women, like Elaine Nychyk and Leona Ewanchuk, had kept their mother's gowns, and these were long white dresses as well. This indicates that white gowns were the garment of choice for Ukrainian Canadian brides as early as the 1930s if not before. Why would Ukrainians give

up the traditional dress worn in their country of origin in favour of the white gown that was characteristic of weddings of other, primarily Anglophone, groups in Canada? Again, the likely answer is that they were showing their integration into a Canadian social world dominated by settlers of British heritage. Ukrainian clothing was much maligned by Anglo-Canadians, who saw it as another marker of the uncivilized, even brutish, nature of Ukrainian immigrants. So it was quickly discarded, as Swyripa and others point out.⁷ Because the wedding was so closely tied to the beginning of adult life in Canada, articulating hopes for success by means of the wedding ceremony involved signalling that the couple was part of the mainstream, and the bride's white wedding dress helped do just that.

The anglicization of the Ukrainian Prairie wedding indicated by the white wedding dress was balanced by an item that was seen in the church only and that was perceived as purely Ukrainian, namely the wedding crowns used during the marriage ceremony. Almost every church has its own wedding crowns, which were held over the heads of the couple during the marriage ceremony and, in the very few cases where a church did not own crowns, these were brought by the priest from the larger church that was the centre of his circuit. The crowns kept in the various Prairie churches are a special feature of Ukrainian Canadian marriage. Almost invariably hand-made, they range from rings of braided beeswax decorated with artificial flowers to elaborate constructions of metal decorated with velvet, braid, ribbons, and buttons. The amount of time and effort expended on cleaning and cutting the tin cans used to make the crowns and then richly covering them with cloth and ornaments was surely great, indicating that these are an extremely important part of the wedding ceremony. The crowns are the centrepiece of the church ceremony the way the white dress and three-tiered cake are the focus of attention at the reception. Just as the dress and cake signal integration into life in Canada, so the crowns show the families and congregation members that this is a Ukrainian marriage, one that includes all the proper ritual features, even if these items are constructed out of the materials at hand.

Frances Swyripa discusses six Catholic churches in Edmonton and the ways they display statements of belonging to Canadian society while

also articulating the congregation's membership in the national group of their country of origin. She begins with the Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church and its centrepiece: the Our Lady of Canada icon executed by Andre Prevost. In this icon, the Mother of God wears a mantle covered in maple leaves. This icon is a modification of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In the Perpetual Help icon, the angels in the two upper corners hold the instruments of Christ's torture: one holds the cross; the other holds a spear, the weapon with which Christ's side was pierced, as well as a stick with a sponge soaked in vinegar. What the two angels hold in the Our Lady of Canada icon is different: instead of instruments of torture, they hold a maple leaf and a map of Canada. These, Swyripa points out, are not meant to be equivalent to instruments of torture. Rather, they signal that "although this is a Ukrainian parish, its members are also good Canadians." For each of the respective congregations she describes, Swyripa discusses the role of gender in the presentation of belonging to Canada. Since a female figure is used by the Ukrainian parish to signal belonging to Canada, and since the garment worn by the Mother of God is, visually, the dominant way of sending this message, it is probably not much of a stretch to see Ukrainian brides in white wedding dresses as symbols of integration into the Canadian mainstream. As Swyripa notes in her discussion of gender, men were often more Westernized: they adapted Western garments and Western roles earlier than women.⁸ Males in Western garments characterize weddings as well. The appropriate outfit for a man, even in much of Ukraine, was and still is a suit, with the addition of a special decoration on his lapel or his hat to mark him as the groom. While men have been wearing folk costumes in recent revival weddings, especially those that are staged for show, when it comes to the marriage ceremonies of ordinary Ukrainians, the typical male attire is a suit. Given that men wore Western-style suits in the home country and brought this practice over to Canada, it did not take much to dress women in more Western clothing as well. Also, as noted earlier, the wedding cake and the bride's gown are probably the showiest aspects of the wedding ritual. The fruitcake decorated with white icing and the bride dressed in a white gown were and are the most logical ways to mark the marriage as Canadian.

THE WEDDINGS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION
OF PRAIRIE UKRAINIAN CANADIANS:
ADOPTING THE ANGLO-CANADIAN NORM

Over time, weddings changed. According to my Sanctuary Project respondents, the weddings of their children, often held in the same church as their own, were quite different. Change went in two directions. One was to make weddings of Ukrainian Canadians more like those of Anglo-Canadians. Sanctuary Project respondents did not describe these weddings. The nature and structure of Anglo-Canadian weddings were assumed to be common knowledge and not of interest to me. Furthermore, the respondents themselves, because of their dedication to their specifically Ukrainian churches, were less interested in weddings in which Ukrainian elements were missing. They did say that intermarriage was important in the drift away from Ukrainian practice. A child, especially a son, who married an Anglo-Canadian in all likelihood would have a Western-style wedding. Ukrainian Catholics often married Roman Catholics, and when they did, the ceremony tended to be in English and to follow Anglo-Canadian tradition. Orthodox Ukrainians often married members of the Anglican church with the same result.

Language was an important issue in a number of contexts. While older Prairie Ukrainian Canadians knew at least some Ukrainian, their children did not. People talking about dwindling congregations often blamed language, saying that priests newly arrived from Ukraine who conducted services primarily in Ukrainian were driving the young away. Linda Klapak in Cadiac, Saskatchewan, praised her priest, Father Trombley, for his efforts to translate Ukrainian texts into English, thus making the service more accessible to more members of the congregation. Most young people do not know Ukrainian, and when they fail to understand the services, they leave.

The loss of songs is a big factor in the shift toward Anglo-Canadian weddings. My research, conducted in another context, shows that songs are excellent mnemonic devices. Songs are where language is retained the longest. Experimental crowd-sourcing work revealed that even people with a weak knowledge of Ukrainian will remember songs in that language.⁹ Songs, I hypothesize, help bridge the gap between a situation like the one described by Johanna Woloshyn when early settlers had

no time to think about the niceties of proper ritual and the situation described by my respondents in which economic prosperity provided both the opportunity and the desire for the big, formal weddings of the late 1950s to early 1970s. Songs keep memories alive and remind people what should be done. When songs disappear, so do memories. By the time my respondents got married, wedding songs were rare, sung only by older women. As the older women died, their songs died with them. In a discussion of Christmas carolling in Goodeve, Saskatchewan, Carol Domalsky said that they absolutely had to have a specific elderly parishioner with them. She was the only one who knew the songs, and without her, Ukrainian carolling would have been impossible. There were surely many other elderly women who were the sole bearers of traditional singing. Wedding songs are, in many senses, descriptive, reciting the actions that need to be performed as part of the ritual. As knowledge of the Ukrainian language was lost, and as the few elderly people who knew the wedding songs passed away, those songs disappeared and could no longer serve their function of guiding ritual participants through the wedding stages.

The climate and the settlement patterns in the new land discouraged the retention of tradition. As already noted, the myrtle used for wedding wreaths does not grow in Canada. Some people did make an effort to grow it indoors as a potted plant, but, precisely because extra effort was required, many did not. Some used periwinkle as a substitute, and many others simply abandoned *vinkopletennia*, replacing it with a bachelor party for the groom. More recently a bachelorette party for the bride has been added. Because Prairie farms are located on quarter sections, walking from one wedding party to the other was a trial, which meant that the many processions that characterize rituals in Ukraine could not be performed, so they disappeared. And without the songs that help preserve memory of the stages of the wedding ritual like *vinkopletennia*, the old practices were forgotten.

The switch to non-Ukrainian churches was compounded by the tendency of the young to leave rural areas for urban environments that offered more and better jobs. While there are Ukrainian churches in many Prairie cities, both large and small (in Edmonton alone there are thirteen Ukrainian churches), working and living in a predominantly non-Ukrainian environment may encourage joining a non-Ukrainian

church. According to Statistics Canada, intermarriage is especially prevalent in urban environments, and when Ukrainians marry non-Ukrainians, they may well choose to follow the rituals of their spouse's religion.

Even on the Prairies, respondents who have adopted Western wedding norms were often unaware that these were not Ukrainian practices. Many couples, even those who married between the late 1950s and early 1970s, did not walk down the centre aisle of the church together. Instead, the groom waited at the front of the church and the father of the bride led her down the aisle to "give her away" to her future spouse. People started to believe that even in a Ukrainian wedding, the groom was not allowed to see the bride until he met her at the church; they also came to believe that the bride needed "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue," a belief mentioned explicitly by Martha Kruda in Beaverdale. All of these are Western practices that, by the time of my interviews, had been internalized as the Ukrainian Canadian norm.

THE WEDDINGS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF PRAIRIE UKRAINIAN CANADIANS: CREATING AN IMAGINED UKRAINE

My respondents happily described in detail the weddings of those of their children who sought to bring back Ukrainian customs. These were the weddings they remembered and wanted to share. Sometimes it was a clergy person who prompted this revival. Thus, when Martha Kruda's daughter married, Bishop Brian brought an embroidered *rushnyk* for the couple to kneel on and tied their hands together with another ritual cloth. In many cases, it was the couple themselves, or one member of that couple, who opted for a Ukrainian ceremony. Having learned about Ukrainian traditions through programs at a Ukrainian bilingual school, or by attending Ukrainian dance classes and summer camp, children thought to re-create what they imagined a Ukrainian wedding should be. Ron Bodnar of Bodnari, Saskatchewan, described the wedding of one of his daughters that took place in 1994. Although she lived in Saskatoon, she came back to her parents' little country church to get married. To make the situation especially romantic and, in her view, more traditional, she opted for an evening service by candlelight, something that is not the

norm in Ukraine, where weddings typically take place in the morning. In terms of the ritual itself, she did everything she could to make it Ukrainian. She and the groom stood on a *rushnyk*. She wore a wreath, and the reception was graced with a *korovai*. The children of a number of respondents had a *korovai* at their wedding, even as their parents had used a fruitcake with white icing. Leona and Harry Ewanchuk's children in Brinsley, Alberta, each had a *korovai*, and all kept them as wedding mementos; they did not serve them to their guests. Leona did claim that she had heard of one recent occasion when an extra-large *korovai* was made and actually served to reception guests, but she could remember no details about this event. One of the Ewanchuks' daughters-in-law became particularly enthusiastic about Ukrainian culture and had a *rushnyk* as part of her wedding, something her Ukrainian in-laws did not have.

A particularly interesting case of revival can be found at the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Candiak, Saskatchewan. One of my respondents was Linda Klapak. She is of German descent, but married a Ukrainian. Klapak is an excellent example of the enthusiasm of the convert. While she never learned to speak Ukrainian, she did learn to sing in Ukrainian, helped and encouraged by the parish priest. Furthermore, she learned to make the *korovai* and baked one for each of her children. She became a supplier of these breads to the neighbourhood. The *korovai* was not the only item associated with Ukrainian tradition that Klapak tried to "revive." With Ukraine open for commercial transactions post-independence, she was able to buy a *rushnyk* for her son and his bride to kneel on as they said their vows.

Some revivals were the result of actions by ethnic Ukrainians, not converts like Linda Klapak. Steve and Mary Rudy of Codette, Saskatchewan, are very much into preserving Ukrainian traditions. By doing some book research, Steve managed to "revive" a Malanka event that became a very successful fundraiser for the Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church (see the chapter on holidays and outreach activities). Steve also plays in a band and entertains at weddings. In this capacity he has done a great deal to bring back both customs and songs. For example, he mentioned that he and his band performed during the gift-giving, or *darovannia*, at weddings and that he sang traditional songs. Obviously, this was not quite traditional since Steve is a man rather than an older woman, but Steve was eager to revive what he could. Unfortunately,

while I was conducting the interview, I did not think to ask him about his sources of song texts and music. It would have been revealing to know whether he learned the songs from women in the area or if used print sources, as he did for his very popular Malanka.

MODERN CITY WEDDINGS

Weddings in urban settings that I have attended over the past several years both differ from and share elements with Ukrainian weddings on the Prairies. The church ceremony remains distinctly Ukrainian. As on the Prairies, only a small and intimate group of friends attend the church service. That service does follow standard practice to a large extent: crowns are held over the heads of the couple by the best man and the maid of honour, each person using a handkerchief. The *rushnyk*, however, is seldom used, and the couple's hands are not tied together. One couple held icons of Mary Mother of God and Christ the Saviour that had been written expressly for them by the bride's brother. The church service, just as in Prairie celebrations, is the distinctly Ukrainian part of the wedding. The rest can vary a great deal.

One bridal pair who married in Edmonton was very interested in Ukrainian culture and tried to include Ukrainian elements in their event. The bride wore a long, pale-green princess-cut gown with embroidery. Because embroidery is closely associated with Ukrainian identity, its presence on the gown was a nod to Ukrainian heritage. The couple held their reception in a church hall and offered their guests Ukrainian traditional food, but had no *korovai*. The other couple whose Edmonton wedding I attended included nothing Ukrainian in their event beyond the church service itself. The bride wore a short white lace dress. The reception was in a non-Ukrainian restaurant, and the games played bore no resemblance to anything described by my interviewees, nor were they like the entertainment I observed at weddings in Ukraine. The games fell into the "silly" category criticized by some Sanctuary Project respondents. At both receptions there was no bride theft and no mock wedding. Everything else about the marriage process in urban centres was thoroughly modern, with bridal registries and requests for gifts of money to help pay for the honeymoon – features not mentioned in any Prairie interviews. Urban brides have bachelorette parties to parallel the

bachelor parties of their grooms. Some of the games at bachelorette parties are sexually suggestive and might well have met with criticism from my interview respondents, had they been present at them. Essentially, then, it is the church service and objects associated with religion, such as icons, that mark urban weddings as Ukrainian. The rest differs little from any Anglo-Canadian celebration.

UKRAINIANIZATION ON THE PRAIRIES: CREATING AN IMAGINED UKRAINE

Young people on the Prairies who want to underscore their Ukrainian roots by celebrating what they believe to be an ethnic ritual perform a wedding that constructs what they imagine a traditional Ukrainian wedding should be. If the couple chooses to emphasize their ethnicity through dress, their clothing resembles Ukrainian dance outfits. The bride wears an embroidered shirt, a fitted vest, often with appliqué, and a woven plaid skirt. The groom wears a suit with an embroidered shirt. The rest of the men's dance outfit, namely the wide satin pants typically worn for dance, are not usually part of wedding attire. The *korovai* is the centrepiece of the banquet table at the reception and may have been influenced by Ukrainian dance, where the opening, or welcome, number typically has the female dancers parade in holding a *korovai* on a *rushnyk*. What Prairie Ukrainians choose is that with which they are familiar. What they consider ethnic outfits are not like the wedding outfits found in Ukraine either in the past or in the present. They are not like the outfits brought from Ukraine by early immigrants such as Ingrid Chalus's mother-in-law. They are not like the clothing currently being revived in Ukraine by traditionalists like Liudmila Sokolova, a woman in Iavorivka who made a point of dressing like her ancestors and brought out and modelled her outfit for this author. They are not like the outfits posted on YouTube by Ukrainian revivalists who seek to bring back non-Sovietized Ukrainian ritual. Essentially, couples on the Prairies wear what they know from their life in Canada, not what is worn in Ukraine. The ritual steps they follow are evolutions of what is done in Canada, not imitations of what is done in Ukraine. Young people on the Prairies who want a Ukrainian wedding today choose the Ukrainian Canadian option.

The treatment of the *korovai* is a good example of adaptation to life in Canada. It is now a common feature of those Prairie weddings where the couple wants to showcase their Ukrainian identity. The preparation of this ritual bread and its use differ significantly from Ukrainian practice. In Ukraine, the bread is made by relatives, neighbours, and friends, and its preparation is an important and ritualized step in the wedding process. It typically takes place on the Thursday before the weekend marriage ceremony and involves seven happily married women. The Ukrainian Canadian *korovai* is not baked by family and friends, but ordered from a person who specializes in making such breads. At the Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, professional bakers display their *korovaii* (pl. of *korovai*) in the hopes of soliciting business. A more striking difference is that in Canada, the *korovai* is seldom if ever eaten. Like the Styrofoam cake, it is meant for display; it is not a food. This is a shock for recent immigrants from Ukraine, who firmly believe that the *korovai* must be consumed completely so that the marriage being celebrated will not be cursed with bad luck. One graduate student who came from Ukraine was horrified when she saw dried and shellacked *korovai* breads being kept as mementos in china cabinets.

The weddings of young Ukrainians on the Prairies who want to promote their Ukrainian identity are not based on attempts to learn from what is done in Ukraine. When Ukraine became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian Canadians did not go there to learn what Ukrainian weddings are like. They are also not revivals of the rituals of their great-grandparents. The Ukrainian culture they seek to display is one developed in Canada. Influential in the formation of that culture was the wave of immigrants who came after the Second World War. They were the ones who were nationalistically oriented and heavily involved in promoting Canada's multiculturalism policy. As Wanner notes in her discussion of recent religious refugees and their failure to join communities of Ukrainians already living in the West, the postwar refugees did not interact with earlier Ukrainian immigrants.¹⁰ Their influence was through arranging funding for language instruction in bilingual schools and for cultural programs such as dance groups, summer camps, and cultural festivals. They were also influential in the sense that it was those of their children who agreed with the need to promote Ukrainian language and culture who became teachers in



FIG. 4.10 *Korovaii* (plural of *korovai*), shellacked and preserved as mementos

Ukrainian-language programs on the Prairies. These descendants of the postwar immigrants were the ones who took jobs as counsellors in church-run and other Ukrainian-themed summer camps. They drove out to Prairie town after Prairie town to offer instruction in Ukrainian dance. It was these camp counsellors and dance instructors and bilingual program teachers who told the children of my respondents about the *korovai* and the *rushnyk*. It was they who helped create and reinforce ideas about proper Ukrainian dress.

Dance was, and is, a particularly important factor. Many communities, even small ones, have Ukrainian dance programs, with young instructors from major cities such as Edmonton and Saskatoon driving out to give lessons. Dance competitions between groups from towns across the Prairies are the main attraction at the Vegreville Pysanka Festival. Once Vasyl Avramenko started founding dance groups in cities and towns across Canada and the United States, dance became emblematic of Ukrainian culture. Dance may have been especially

influential because Avramenko devoted a great deal of his energy to promoting what he considered the proper image of a good Ukrainian.¹¹ Dance, then, provided ideas about how Ukrainian costumes should look, a visual construct suited more to the stage than to real life. Dance also frequently featured an introductory “welcome” number with a *korovai*, thus further cementing the link between this ritual bread and Ukrainian identity. Expressions of nationalism found in the weddings of younger Prairie Ukrainians reflect vernacular nationalism. It is their own construct, distinct from nationalism both in Ukraine and in the nationalistically oriented Canadian urban environment. ❁❁

CHAPTER 5

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BIRTH CUSTOMS AND BAPTISMAL RITUALS

INTRODUCTION

Birth and death are physiological events, and baptisms and funerals, the rituals associated with these events, are essentially private rites that involve the family, the church, and close friends. In that sense, they are different from weddings, which draw many people and speak to the entire community, not just Ukrainian Canadians. The non-ritual parts of birth and death were quickly professionalized on the Prairies. Hospitals took over childbirth, and those respondents who ended up giving birth at home typically did so only because getting to a medical facility was impossible. For them, home birth was a necessity, not a choice. Similarly, hospitals and funeral homes took over deaths and funerals. Taking birth and death into professional settings contributed to making their associated rituals more private. Funerals can, and often do, draw large numbers of participants, non-Ukrainians included, but participation in them tends to be limited to the meal after interment that celebrates the life of the deceased. Non-Ukrainians seldom participate in church funerary rites.

The church has always played an important role in baptisms and funerals. Baptism is the church's way of legitimizing the personhood of the newborn. Because the church views baptism as an essential sacrament, when babies were stillborn or died before they could be baptized, as did happen under the difficult conditions of Prairie life, especially in the past, they were, in a sense, regarded as not fully human. They could not be buried in the sacred ground of the church cemetery, and, as I learned during my interviews, some families did not mention those

babies who had not been baptized, treating them almost as if they had never existed. Unbaptized infants can be denied cemetery burial and are often interred on the edge of the church burial ground, away from other graves. Attitudes toward the need for an infant to be baptized before being considered a person are changing. They were in flux during the years we conducted our Sanctuary work and I did my interviews. The right to a cemetery burial has played a prominent role in changing people's feelings about baptism. It is in cemeteries that congregation members are currently negotiating with their church hierarchs and working to reshape views about what is necessary for a child to be considered a person. These negotiations encompass everything from moving cemetery fences to reburying remains. The changes I observed will be the subject of the chapter on cemeteries. This chapter describes baptisms as they are conducted when there are no controversies.

From the point of view of the people rather than the church, baptisms are a way to mark and cement family unity. For immigrants who have been torn away from the people and places they know, solidarity with one's kin is especially important. Lehr underscores how strongly early Ukrainian arrivals preferred to settle near kin, whether blood relatives or kin by marriage. That preference was so intense that settlers were willing to forgo good farmland in order to live near relatives.¹ My interviews took place years after the early settlements described by Lehr were founded. Still, rituals like baptism continue to feature many elements that link families together, whether across generations or between siblings.

THE MEDICALIZATION OF BIRTH

Before looking at ritual, we need to briefly examine the actual physiological event of the birth of infants. Perhaps because the church, an official institution, played a major role in welcoming the newborn, Ukrainian Canadians easily accepted the role of another institution, the hospital, in the birth of their young. Among Ukrainians on the Prairies, birth was Westernized fairly quickly, and home birth was soon replaced by medically assisted delivery. When people did not turn to medical professionals, it had more to do with physical impediments, such as bad roads, than with religious belief. According to the respondents, while some beliefs and customs lingered, the numerous complicated actions connected



FIG. 5.1
Mary Holinaty
with her daughter
Elizabeth

to pregnancy and childbirth in Ukraine had been abandoned.² Almost without exception, the women I interviewed gave birth in hospital. Only the very oldest respondents, such as Mary Holinaty, interviewed in an eldercare facility in Cudworth, Saskatchewan, had given birth to their children on their own. Holinaty told me that she delivered her first child at home, but not because she wanted to. She had hoped to go to the doctor in Wakaw, but her family did not have a car, the roads were bad, and travel seemed so precarious that she and her husband decided they could not risk the trip.

By the time I did my interviews, birth on the Prairies had been medicalized and the many pregnancy precautions and taboos considered vitally important in Ukraine had been abandoned. This surprised me, because in Ukraine, such taboos were and still are numerous and widely shared. Pregnancy and childbirth affect the health and well-being of both mother and child and are of great concern to the entire family. In

Ukraine, the precarious nature of pregnancy has given rise to a widely known and frequently repeated set of precautions that the mother-to-be must take. Because the taboos are so prevalent in Ukraine, I made a point of asking about pregnancy prohibitions and beliefs when I was conducting interviews. It turned out that in Canada, taboos are essentially non-existent and have been replaced by regular medical monitoring. I asked whether older family members – such as the respondent's mother-in-law in cases where the young couple lived with the groom's parents – told the person I was interviewing any pregnancy dos and don'ts. The answer was no, they did not. Only two of the many taboos I recorded during my fieldwork in Ukraine seem to be extant in Canada. One was that the pregnant woman should not become frightened. The belief in Ukraine is that a woman who is inadvertently frightened should not touch her body because the infant will be disfigured with a birthmark located on the spot corresponding to the part of her body she touched in response to the fright. In Canada, the only location where similar beliefs were mentioned was Szypenitz, Alberta. In most places the feeling was that the mother-to-be should keep herself in good health and good spirits; fear was not a good thing for the baby she was carrying. But the notion that a frightened woman could disfigure her baby did not exist except in Szypenitz.

The other pregnancy taboo that exists in Ukraine and was also mentioned on the Prairies is that there should be no gift-giving prior to the actual birth. Anticipating a positive outcome is tempting fate and thus risking divine wrath. This belief is widely held in Ukraine, where bridal showers and baby showers are avoided. Oksana Kryvorit of Velykyi Khutir, Drabiv province, recounted with sadness how she had made a mistake and purchased a baby blanket for a family of fellow villagers before their child was born. When she later met the father of the infant, he told her that the blanket was "of no use," meaning that the baby had died. She, of course, regretted her folly.³ During my Sanctuary Project interviews, similar beliefs were mentioned only in Foam Lake, where they were voiced by both Connie Senkiw of the Ss Peter and Paul Orthodox Church and Katy Bonar of the St Onuphrius Russian Orthodox Church south of the city. As stated in the previous chapter, in Canada, things like bridal showers did begin to become standard practice with the generation I interviewed. Once bridal showers became accepted

and even routine, baby showers probably followed. Unfortunately, I neglected to ask specifically about baby showers when I was conducting my interviews.

BIRTHS IN THE 1930S AND 1940S – HOW THE SANCTUARY PROJECT RESPONDENTS WERE BORN

Although the people I interviewed had access to medical help in practically all instances, their parents, when they bore my respondents and their siblings, sometimes delivered their children at home. When the people I interviewed talked about the home deliveries that brought them and their siblings into the world, they expressed admiration for the strength their mothers had displayed, mixed with regret and sorrow over the conditions that early immigrants had endured. There was also pride in Ukrainian stoicism and physical endurance. Ron Lozinsky of Laniwci, Saskatchewan, said his mother was out stooking (i.e., tying up bundles of hay so that they could be piled up to dry) when he came into this world. His brother, Lozinsky added, was born the same way, only by the well rather than out in the field. Pat Sydoruk, originally from Devale, Alberta, was born on her family's farm, as was her brother. Her grandmother assisted with both births. Tony Bilokury of Wakaw, Saskatchewan, was delivered by his aunt, and Alexandria Diakiw of Cudworth had to deliver at home because no doctor was available. Why babies were born at home with the help of relatives rather than in hospitals or at least with the assistance of a doctor was not stated in many instances, but, going by those cases where a cause was given, we can assume that bad roads were the problem, as was the lack of doctors. If we go by Lozinsky's account, the demands of farm labour were another factor. Women needed to work until the last possible minute to help sustain their families, and unassisted birth was the result.

Lozinsky spoke extensively about delivery without medical assistance, stressing not only the accomplishments of Ukrainian pioneer women and their families but also the hardships they endured. Many burdens were psychological. As Lozinsky emphasized, Anglo-Canadians objected to Ukrainians giving birth at home and considered it backward, thus stigmatizing people who were already struggling. They did not understand that home birth was typically not a choice. As Lozinsky further



FIG. 5.2 Ron Lozinsky with Frances Swyripa

explained, so often there was no other option: when a man was alone on a farm with a wife who had gone into labour, he could either leave her to struggle all alone while he went looking for a doctor, or he could stay with her and do his best to offer assistance. Most men chose the latter option. Unfortunately, in cases where the woman died in labour, the poor father typically faced another hardship, namely arrest and jail time for a situation that he could not control.

The settlement patterns of early immigrants, combined with the types of people who immigrated to Canada, made childbirth especially difficult. On the Prairies there were no neighbours to call for help and almost no midwives to summon. In Ukraine, houses are clustered together in a village and the farmlands fan out from the densely populated centre. Neighbours are a shouting distance away. When a woman goes

into labour, her husband can easily summon someone from one of the nearby houses to look after his wife while he attends to matters such as finding medical help. In Canada, the official settlement system placed people on quarter sections, separated from their neighbours. As my respondents repeatedly noted during interviews, houses were far apart and the only people readily accessible in times of need were members of the immediate family. If the parents or the aunts and uncles of a couple about to have a baby were living with them, then there was someone who could offer help. Otherwise, the husband and wife were on their own.

On the Prairies, midwives were as unavailable as doctors. In Ukrainian villages, midwives provide physical support, massaging the young mother's abdomen, helping her into positions that aid delivery, and coaching her through her contractions and the delivery itself. They help psychologically, performing a set of ritual actions intended to secure the health of both infant and mother, rituals that put everyone at ease. As people who regularly assist at births and have extensive experience with deliveries, including problematic ones, midwives are especially helpful for women in labour. But midwives were not available on the Canadian Prairies. Here, again, early immigration patterns and isolation played a role. As Boriak notes, midwives are typically highly experienced women, which means they are elderly.⁴ In the early days of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the elderly seldom made the journey overseas because of the hardship and expense of the journey. There were some midwives on the Prairies, and Sanctuary Project respondents had, in a few cases, heard about midwives or women with folk-healing skills. Most people had not, however, because midwives were rare. What is more, even if midwives had been available, getting one to come and assist the woman in labour would have been no easier than summoning a doctor. The condition of the roads and the distances between farms were no more conducive to calling a midwife than they were to securing medical assistance. People who currently practise folk healing, not as midwives but as wax pourers, such as the ones described by Rena Jean Hanchuk, do exist on the Prairies and do offer ritualized, tradition-based help.⁵ In most cases, however, they do not travel to meet their clients. Rather, they expect the people who seek their help to drive out to see them. Needless to say, in the 1930s and 1940s, access to practitioners of traditional healing techniques was even more difficult.

STILLBIRTHS, INFANT DEATHS, AND UNBAPTIZED BABIES

Hospital births and medically assisted deliveries were becoming the norm when the Sanctuary Project respondents were born. But as noted earlier, professional help was not always available, and even some hospital births were not successful, as is still the case today. Many babies born at the same time as the Sanctuary Project respondents, whether at home or in the hospital, did not make it, a situation that was likely worse the further back in time one goes. Gerardine Woitas, interviewed in Model Farm, Saskatchewan, and discussed in the next chapter, became curious about her name. When she inquired about it, she learned that the baby brother born prior to her had not lived and that she had been given the feminine version of his name. Investigating further, she learned that two other children had been born into her family who had not been baptized and were, therefore, treated as if they had not existed. Considering that the Popiks, Gerardine Woitas's family of birth, had three children who were stillborn or who did not survive long into infancy, deaths of newborns must have been common. Other members of the Patronage of the Mother of God Church in Model Farm where the Woitases worshipped, when they heard about the Woitases' search of civic records, also found records of stillborn babies or those who had not survived until baptism and were simply ignored. This happened at other locations as well. Rudolf Kresak in Rama, Saskatchewan, recounted how surprised he was when he discovered records of babies born in the past who had not been baptized and were treated as nonentities. Efforts to reclaim the many children who were buried outside cemeteries with no recognition at all or whose graves were located on cemetery borders and marked only with small wooden crosses will be described in the cemeteries chapter. Here it will suffice to say that stillbirths were not rare and that many children were lost in early infancy. Deaths of small children in general were far more common than they are now. Mary Holinaty lost a ten-month-old boy to food poisoning, while Darlene Kindrachuk and Mary Wojcichowsky of Yellow Creek, Saskatchewan, told of baby boys in their families who died. Near Plain Lake, Alberta, according to Hilda Horon, there is a "whole field" of babies, delivered in the 1930s, who died before they were baptized and were buried in

this separate place. The delicate negotiations between the church and the parishioners concerning these unbaptized infants are the subject of the chapter on cemeteries. Here it will suffice to say that many babies died unbaptized.

THE SANCTUARY PROJECT RESPONDENTS AS PARENTS

When the people I interviewed for the Sanctuary Project started having children themselves, they delivered their babies in hospitals. It is noteworthy that the movement toward home births that was growing in North America around this time did not reach Ukrainian Canada. The home birth movement advocated avoiding the medicalization and depersonalization of birth that characterized hospital deliveries and sought to give greater control to the expectant mother and her partner.⁶ None of the people I interviewed mentioned the home birth movement or its goals, and no one I talked to expressed the idea that home delivery was better for the mother or the child.

With most deliveries happening in hospitals, stillbirths and infant deaths became rarer. Perhaps because most babies survived and perhaps because hospitals kept records of all births, stillbirths included, along with the names that were given, or would have been given, to those children who did not live, the generation I interviewed had a hard time accepting that a baby who was not baptized did not deserve cemetery burial. It is they who worked for the recognition of those infants, born in the past, who had not been interred with proper religious rites. Although they fully believed that all children, baptized or not, deserved cemetery burial and that an infant did not need to be baptized to be considered human, they did not neglect the rite of baptism when it came to their own children; they made sure their own children received this sacrament. All of the people I interviewed baptized their children, but not all baptismal rites were conducted in church. In some cases, baptism was in the home, and if the weather was especially cold, if the roads were snowed over, or if there was a threat to the child's health from either immersion in cold water or from pouring water over him or her in a cold church, then the priest came to the house of the new parents and conducted the baptism there. Sometimes the priest came to the home because travelling to the location of the church in winter would

be hazardous to the well-being of the infant and the mother. Baptism in the home was mentioned in Holar Farms, MacNutt, Whitesand, Foam Lake, Insinger, and Goodeve, Saskatchewan, and in Edwand, Alberta. In a number of cases, home baptism happened as necessary – that is, the family opted for a church ritual when possible but accepted home baptism when weather or other factors made travelling to the church difficult. Betty Saik of Innisfree, Alberta, said that baptism was sometimes conducted in the priest's home if conditions precluded a ritual in church. In Calmar Farms, Alberta, Laudy Lickacz described a case of unusual, emergency baptism. She recounted that she and her twin sister were baptized in the hospital where they were born by the nuns working there because the two girls were so small and weak that the nuns were afraid they might die. Leonard Sebulski said he had to be baptized in the hospital as well because he was born prematurely.

BAPTISM IN CHURCH

The basic structure of the church sacrament is as follows. Around forty days after the birth of a baby, the parents bring him or her to church. While forty days is the ideal, this was not always possible in Prairie conditions, and some children are baptized when they are older. Bev and Maurice Kostichuk of Insinger, Saskatchewan, said that their first-born, a boy, was old enough to talk by the time he got baptized, and when the priest said the child's shoes should be removed, he protested and kept repeating "No shoes off" throughout the ritual. Their subsequent children, the Kostichuks said, were baptized young enough not to offer any objections.

Once in church, the parents hand the infant over to the godparents. The godparents, sometimes two and sometimes four in number, are usually relatives. The godparents present the child for baptism, and the priest conducts the ritual, either immersing the child in water or pouring water over him or her. Once the infant has been baptized, the priest carries him or her around the church, going behind the iconostasis if the child is a boy. According to Eustine Kereliuk and Richard Eliuk of Szypenitz, Alberta, boys need to be carried behind the iconostas because they might become priests when they grow up and so must to be introduced to this area of the sacred at baptism. The baptismal service is followed by a meal, typically a small family event.

THE CHURCHING OF THE MOTHER

In some places, baptism is accompanied by the churching of the mother. This is a cleansing ritual that purifies the mother from the blood pollution that comes with giving birth. Only after undergoing this ritual is a woman allowed to participate in church services and receive the Sacrament. In Orthodoxy and Eastern Rite Catholicism, a woman is considered unclean because of the blood that accompanies the delivery, and she cannot enter the church until she has been cleansed of that blood. Menstruating women are similarly unclean and should withdraw from receiving the sacrament. The reason for this is that the only blood acceptable within the church proper is the blood of Christ; other blood is taboo. Few people know these taboos. Furthermore, because bringing a new addition into the family is so desirable, it is hard to imagine that a woman would become unclean by giving birth. The apparent illogic of labelling a woman unclean after she has done something good, combined with growing feminism and assertion of women's rights, means that churching is becoming less and less common among Ukrainian Canadians. Lydia Bringerud, working among Orthodox women in the United States, did find a few instances where women were in favour of churching because it made them feel special. They reinterpreted it as recognition of their contribution to the family, or they saw the discipline leading up to churching as a way to solidify their faith.⁷ Among the people I interviewed, churching could be something that was done automatically, without much thought about its meaning. Many people did not practise churching at all. They were unfamiliar with the ritual and needed to be guided through it or nudged into it by their priest. Some people, men as well as women, openly objected to the rite. No one expressed fondness for it.

Churching does continue in a number of Prairie churches. It was attested in the Holy Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church in New Kiew, Alberta, and the Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Beavertdale, Saskatchewan. The Ukrainian Catholic church in Sheho, Saskatchewan, had churching, but the Orthodox church did not. Star Peno and Stry, Alberta, and Krydor, Montmartre, Rama, Wadena, Westbrook, Weyburn, Foam Lake, Codette, and Cudworth, Saskatchewan, had churching ceremonies, as did the Orthodox and

Catholic churches in Candiak and North Battleford, Saskatchewan. The nature of oral interviews means that this is not an exhaustive list, but it does show the practice to be relatively widespread. Probably because churching is controversial, it varies a great deal. Sometimes it precedes the baptism so that the mother can take part in this important ceremony. This was attested in Star Peno, Alberta, and Beaverdale, Candiak, Rama, Montmartre, and Sheho, Saskatchewan. Sometimes, as in Westbrook, Foam Lake, North Battleford, Wadena, and Weyburn, Saskatchewan, churching occurs immediately after baptism so that the mother can receive her newly baptized child at the end of the ceremony. In some areas, the churching follows baptism by two or more weeks. This used to be the practice in Codette and Cudworth, Saskatchewan, but has now been shifted to occur at the same time as the baptismal rite. In Stry, Saskatchewan, the churching was sometimes performed prior to the baptism of the infant and sometimes after. In many areas, churching is a thing of the past. If my respondents had any familiarity with it at all, it was as something that they had heard about but not actually seen.

A number of people objected to churching. A respondent in Szypenitz said her daughter-in-law was so against churching that she did not want to have her child baptized because she feared that going through the baptismal rite would force her into undergoing the churching ritual. A woman in Insinger said she felt degraded because she had to stand in the entryway to the church, could not enter the church proper, and was unable to participate in the baptism of her own infant. One man whose wife had gone through the rite of churching for all of the couple's children asked that I turn off the recorder and then spoke emphatically and at length about his many objections to churching and the implied degradation of women. While in most cases churching seems to be losing currency, it has sometimes been revived. Carol and Dan Dumalski of Goodeve, Saskatchewan, were unaware that churching could be part of baptism, but the priest talked to Carol and convinced her of its importance. In the St Onuphrius Russian Orthodox Church south of Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, the mother came with her child to the baptism, not expecting a churching, but the priest sent her out and called her in for churching only several weeks later.

Churching is not an issue that is being negotiated with the church. Unlike the problem of securing recognition for unbaptized babies,

churching is either accepted or ignored. There is no movement to alter or modify this practice. In most locations, churching either just stops or it continues with no great enthusiasm for it among parishioners. Where churching ceases to exist, the lack of clergy probably plays a part in its demise. It adds time to the baptismal service, time that a Prairie priest responsible for a large number of churches may not have. In those cases where it is a ritual that should occur at a time other than the date of baptism, the congregation can seldom afford to bring in a priest for an additional service. In these cases, churching either is performed along with baptism or ceases to exist. The only person I encountered who was willing to talk about churching, not only with me but also with church officials, was the man who asked me to turn off the recorder when he spoke about this practice. But, as a lone voice, he was powerless against the church hierarchy. Where churching disappears, it is by attrition, not in response to parishioner action.

BAPTISM AND FAMILY SOLIDARITY: THE WHITE CLOTH OR KRYZHMA AND THE BAPTISMAL GOWN

Baptizing their babies continues to be important to the Sanctuary Project respondents. Outside of the ritual itself, what matters most are various ritual-associated objects. These are almost invariably kept, and their purpose is to bring the family closer together. Sometimes objects like the baptismal gown are used for all of a couple's children, linking siblings; sometimes they are used from one generation to the next. The clearest articulation of the goal of family solidarity was offered by Barbara and Peter Hutzul of Westbrook, Saskatchewan. Barbara told me she had heard "an old wives' tale" that if siblings are all baptized in the same gown, they will be close. Guided by this belief, the Hutzuls did use the same gown for all of their babies. When I asked if the belief became fact, Barbara assured me that it did.

Two types of objects were repeatedly mentioned in the interviews. One was the baptismal gown and the other was the *kryzhma*. In Ukraine, the *kryzhma* is a baptismal cloth. Originally it was a plain white length of fabric that was used to dry the baby after the baptism. It was supplied by the godmother, and she or the godfather received the infant from the priest onto this cloth once he had immersed the

baby in the baptismal font or sprinkled her or him with holy water. In Canada, a great many people did and do use a *kryzhma* in their baptism, though few use the Ukrainian term and many refer to the fabric as a white cloth. When I mentioned the word “*kryzhma*,” some respondents said they remembered hearing that word in the past. That word came up in interviews conducted in Myrnam, Andrew, and Two Hills, Alberta, and in Stenen, Yorkton, Wakaw, Jedburgh, Hafford, MacNutt, Goodeve, Codette, Churchill, Ituna, and St Walburg, Saskatchewan. Mary Prokopchuk of Rhein, Saskatchewan, had heard the word, although she did not use it herself or remember other people using it. The term “white cloth,” referring to the same ritual object as the *kryzhma*, has replaced the Ukrainian word and is used in a great many places, including Star Peno, Eldorena, Redwater, Camrose, Wostok, and Innisfree, in Alberta and Cudworth, Endeavour, Meadow Lake, Kamsack and Westbrook, Saskatchewan.⁸

The use of the baptismal cloth, under whichever name, is widespread, but what happens to it after the baptism varies. In Ukraine, the *kryzhma* is supposed to become the exclusive possession of the infant who has been received on that cloth during the baptismal rite, and only items designated specifically for that child can be made from it. On the Prairies, the white cloth can be used in this manner. Angel Strelezki said that her mother made a white shirt for her son out of this cloth, and Elsie Choban said her mother used the baptism cloth to make clothes for the children. Valentina Hritzuk said that the baptismal cloth was made into clothes for the child, as did Bill and Anne Shewchuk, Carole Myshaniuk, and Lillian Tkachuk. Eustine Kereliuk used it to make a dress for her daughter to wear on the first day of school. Ernie Kuchmak also noted that the white baptismal cloth became clothes, as did Mary and Steve Rudy. Connie Senkiw and Elaine Nychyk used baptismal cloths to make pillows for their babies, and Marlene Lozinski cut hers up to make diapers. Jacob and Sylvia Doroshenko said that the children themselves, when they grew up, made things out of their baptismal cloths. Nestor Kyba and Patricia Ciona both said that their families simply passed on the white cloths to the children to do with as they wished.

Some people keep the cloth as a memento of baptism. Alexandria Diakiw's family did this, as did Allan Borys, Bev and Maurice Kostichuk, and Eva and Nick Dmytryshyn. Sonia Matichuk, Iris Hewko, Helen and



FIG. 5.3 Roman and Gail Chez with the author

Robert Andreychuk, Thomas Smud, John and Pearl Gurski, and Ron Steranko saved their children's baptismal cloths. Jean Tycholiz did so as well, though she no longer remembers where the cloth is kept.

The goal of cementing the family together is most obvious in those instances where the same cloth is used for all of the children or passed on to the next generation. Bertha Koszman and Cristine Herlick said they saved the cloth from the baptism of their oldest child to use for their subsequent children. Larry Ukrainetz said he used the same cloth for all of his children and then passed it on to be used for the grandchildren. Maria Havryliuk passed the baptism cloth she had used for her children on to her daughter so that she could continue the family tradition. Marlene Manastyrski also used the same cloth for the baptism of all of her children, as did Martha Kruda, Wayne Malowany, and Joe Prodaniuk.

When not connecting family members, the cloth can be used to link the stages in a person's life, and some respondents use the baptismal cloth in other life cycle rituals. Roman and Gail Chez, formerly of Arran, Saskatchewan, now living in Vernon, British Columbia, saved theirs and

stood on it when they said their marriage vows. They still have both cloths and plan to have them placed in their coffins when they pass away. They allowed me to photograph one of these items. Roman and Daria Stephaniuk used the white cloth during their children's confirmations. Mary Ann Holowach said that the priest used it when her children got married, to tie the couple's hands. Phyllis Horne, Marie Wenarchuk, and Zenovia Lazariuk, all from All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Camrose, Alberta, did different things with their white cloths. One gave it to her mother, who made a blouse out of it, and another gave it to her child to kneel on during the wedding. She expected that the cloth would later go into that person's coffin. Ron Feledichuk, Roy Bryks, and Nikolai Nikolaev said that the baptismal cloth should be used to kneel on during the wedding. A rather different approach was reported by Teresa Kekish. She said that the baptismal cloth belonged to the church and that is where it was kept.

In a few cases, the word *kryzhma* is reinterpreted to mean a gift presented by the godparents to the child. Katie Rudey used the word in this sense. In Insinger, Saskatchewan, godparents are supposed to give the gift of an outfit to the infant if it is a baby boy and a dress if it is a girl. An intermediate step of sorts was attested by Jeanette Karapita, who said that a loonie, a Canadian one-dollar coin, should be attached to the *kryzhma* as a gift for the child. Chris Zorniak of Innisfree, Alberta, a very articulate narrator, said that the godfather of his second child, instead of giving a gift to the baby, raised money. After the baptism ceremony, he carried the infant around the congregation complaining that the child "has no shoes." And members of the congregation did give donations to be used for the child.

The *kryzhma* or white cloth serves to tie people together. Whether the cloth is saved as a family heirloom or used for all of a couple's children, whether it is passed from one generation to the next or used in rituals marking the important stages in a person's life, the cloth creates connections between people. Linking godparents, who are often relatives, to the immediate family of the newborn is also important.⁹ Creating connections was important to Ukrainians in their precarious situation as newcomers who needed to establish ties to others. Creating connections continued to be important as Ukrainian Canadians became prominent members of their communities.

My respondents in Innisfree, Star Peno, Two Hills, Redwater, Wostok-Bukowina, Borowich, Stry, and Redwater, Alberta, and in Holar Farms, Foam Lake, Goodeve, Olesha, Wadena, Buchanan, St Julien, Endeavour, Welychko, Edmore, Meadow Lake, Westbrook, Wynyard, Donwell, Goodeve, Melnychuk, Tuffnell, Candiack, Insinger, Wishart, Churchill, Beaverdale, North Battleford, Theodore, Meath Park, Rhein, Sheho, Jedburgh, Swan Plain, Rama, Melville, and Ituna, Saskatchewan, considered the baptism gown to be as important and powerful as the *kryzhma*. Some use both a *kryzhma* and a gown, but most have switched entirely to the gown as their ritual object. The widespread use of gowns seems to have begun around the time that Sanctuary Project respondents were baptizing their own children, although a number of my respondents said that they themselves were baptized in gowns, meaning that gowns can date back to at least the 1930s and 1940s. The preference for the baptismal gown could well have paralleled the introduction and eventual dominance of the white wedding dress; in other words, it was an incorporation of an Anglo-Canadian custom, a way to declare that the infant would grow up to be Canadian as well as Ukrainian. A gown is much more expensive than a white baptismal cloth, however, and, as Katy Rudey pointed out, many people could not afford one. If they wanted one regardless, they made their own. Even so, the baptismal gown was widely attested in the interviews I conducted, and in most places it was used multiple times, either for all siblings or as an item passed from one generation to the next, or both.

It is possible that the reuse of the gown started as a way to save money. Cherise Husulak said that she used the same gown for all of her children because she could not afford to buy a new one every time. And besides, she pointed out, the gown is worn for only two hours on any one occasion; there is no practical reason to purchase a new garment every time. Eleanor Hadubiak used the same gown for all three of her children, and saving money was also her motive. But for most people, reuse was motivated by sentiment rather than financial need. As already mentioned, Barbara and Peter Hutzul stated explicitly that they used the same gown for all of their children not to save money but to cement the bond between their offspring. While others did not specifically mention family togetherness, their use of a single gown for all children and the care they took to pass it on to the next generation does imply

a desire for linkages among family members, albeit not necessarily a conscious one. Allan Borys said his family used one gown for all of the children and passed it on to be used for the children's children. Shirley Korpatniski and Teresa Kekish did the same. Ken Karmaznuik said he and his wife used the same gown for all of their children, as did Larry Ukrainetz, Maria Havryliuk, Marlene Lozinski, Phyllis Marianchuk, and Marlene Rohatynchuk. Melvin Klus, Lavona Sedlovitch, Anne Elash, and Morris Yanush. All said they used the same gown for all of their babies, explaining that this is the proper way to do things.

Several people used the gown in which they themselves had been baptized for their own children, sometimes passing it on to be used by the next generation as well. Carol Ripplinger said she did this, as did her sister. Chris Zorniak reported that both of his sons wore the gown in which his wife had been baptized and that the sons then took it to baptize their own children. Martha Kruda used her husband's baptismal gown for her son's ceremony and then passed it on to be used for her grandson. Elsie Choban used the gown in which she herself was baptized for her daughter and then the daughter did the same, passing the gown on one more time. Wayne Malowany still has the gown in which he was baptized, which he then used for his own children. Yvonne Medvescek said she was baptized in a gown her mother made and then used it for her children, later passing it on to the grandchildren. Several couples made the connection to earlier generations by using gowns either made or purchased by their parents. Connie Senkiw's mother-in-law made the gown she used when she started having children. After using it for her own babies, she passed it on to be used for her grandchildren. Joe Prodaniuk had a gown made by his mother that he used in a similar manner. Elaine Nychyk's mother bought her a baptismal gown when her first child was born, and she went on to use it for all her children. Daria Stephaniuk used the same gown for all of her children, and they used it for their own children, but when one of them bore a set of twins, Stephaniuk made new and matching gowns for the babies.

Many people saved the gown as a memento, much like they saved the *kryzhma* or white cloth. Jacob and Sylvia Doroshenko used the same gown for all of their children and then kept it, as did Marlene and Charles Manastyrski and Olga Kozun. Judy and Ron Rudkowsky also saved the baptismal gown they used. Carol and Dan Dumalski

purchased new gowns for each of their children and kept every single garment, giving it to each child when she or he left home. In short, the gown, like the *kryzhma*, was an important ritual object associated with family and togetherness and kept by many people as a token of their bonds to their kin.

Deliberately not using the same gown for all of a couple's children was rare. The only instance of this I encountered had to do with gender identity. Some people feel uncomfortable putting a "dress," which is what the baptismal gown looks like, on a boy. This was especially true when baptism was delayed and the child was a bit older. Thus, Bev and Maurice Kostichuk used the same gown for both their daughters but baptized their son in a little suit. Jeanette Karapita did the same.

CONCLUSION

For the church, baptism is a way to incorporate the newborn into the community of the faithful, a recognition of his or her membership in the church to which the parents belong. For the parents themselves, baptism, or at least the objects associated with it, are symbols of connection and belonging, not just to the church but to their community and their family as well. Given the importance of family for Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, the objects associated with baptism, namely the *kryzhma* or white cloth and the baptismal gown, are a concrete and tangible way to express family solidarity. The baptismal gown may also be a way to signal membership in the wider Canadian community, showing that the child is a member of his or her church community and also a citizen of Canada, a future Ukrainian Canadian. ❁

CHAPTER 6

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DEATH AND THE FUNERAL

Baptisms are a ritual way to welcome a new member of the family and the community. Funerals are the opposite: they are about letting a person go. The church plays an important role at the end of life, just as it does at the beginning. As baptisms legitimize the personhood of the newborn, so church funerals bless the life that has been lived and mark it as proper. They signal that this was a life that followed church dictates, ending in a death that was equally in keeping with church canon. When a life ends “improperly,” the church can refuse the sacrament of the funeral; thus, church services can be denied to a person who has committed suicide. Suicide is seen as an act that takes the decision determining when life should end out of God’s hands and is, therefore, anathema. A church service is routinely denied a person who has died by suicide, although in the Orthodox church a family can petition the bishop to allow a funeral service for a person who has died by his or her own hand. Many priests did, and some still do, refuse to perform a funeral over a person whose body has been cremated. Suicides and cremated individuals, like unbaptized infants, can be denied cemetery burial and are often interred at the edge of the church burial ground, away from other graves. While attitudes toward suicides and cremated individuals, like attitudes toward unbaptized infants, are changing, there appears to be greater resistance to modifying those burial practices that concern adults. Infants are innocent, and when they are not blessed with baptismal rites, it is easy to see them as blameless. Adults do have a choice, although one could

argue – as some of my respondents have done – that people who commit suicide have no choice because they are sick, just like someone with a physical ailment. Nonetheless, volition is involved in both the act of taking one's own life and in the decision to cremate the body. Therefore, changes in attitudes toward church funerals for such individuals will probably take longer, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Cemetery burial of relatives is especially important to Canadians because interment is a way to underscore the connection between people and places. Thus, among Ukrainian Canadians, as among other immigrants, especially in the past when Ukrainians were first settling the Prairies, funerals were not just about saying goodbye to a person and sending her or him on to a life in the spirit. Funerals were also about establishing a new and different connection: a link between people and the new land in which they buried their deceased. As discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion, by interring one's ancestors one was staking a claim to the new homeland that would house and nurture future generations. It was a way to plant "seeds" from which new identities and new possibilities might grow. Perhaps because of the need to establish a tie to the land through burial, funerals continue to emphasize place and connection to place. They incorporate many ritual acts that acknowledge the connection between the deceased and his or her Canadian places. Some of these have been lost over time. Others have been revived, and the clergy who come to Canada from Ukraine have reintroduced some of the practices that pay special attention to territory and location because territorial passage and ritual acts connected to it are an important part of the funeral in Ukraine.

People are connected not only to place but also to family and community. When a person dies, those ties to people must be acknowledged and honoured. In the past, it was the custom to ring church bells to alert everyone in the community that someone had passed away, and Henry Dozorec of Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan, remembers this being done. Once notified that someone had died, members of the community would come to pay their respects to the deceased. The elderly died at home, and people would assemble in that home and keep an all-night vigil, one that sometimes lasted three nights. The vigil was followed by a church service and interment. With the introduction of other forms of communication, first the telephone and later cell phones and other digital means,

the custom of ringing church bells disappeared. Depopulation has also had an effect, in that there is often no one to go and ring church bells. Also, dying at home has become a rare occurrence. Only a few of my respondents remembered such instances, and most people who passed away during the lifetime of the people I interviewed did so in hospitals.

VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

The vigil in the home is like a similar practice in Ukraine. The deceased is laid out in an open casket with his or her head toward the icon corner. Family and friends sit with the body, talking about the deceased and reading from the Psalter. In Ukraine, the body of the deceased is washed and prepared for burial by post-menopausal women, usually friends of the family rather than the family members themselves.¹ Jeannette Worotniak of Hafford, Saskatchewan, described something almost identical happening to her grandmother after she died. According to Jeannette, her grandmother died at home and her body was dressed by old women rather than by an undertaker. One of the women, Worotniak remembers, placed a cross made of wax in the deceased's hands. The body was then kept in the house for three days. In Calder, Saskatchewan, Peter Woroschuk remembered that when his aunt passed away, her body was prepared at home. In Canada, the reading of the Psalter was not mentioned, but a number of other practices extant in Ukraine were. In Cudworth, Saskatchewan, Alexandria Diakiw remembered that when her mother died, someone stayed beside the body the entire night, and also that all the clocks in the house were stopped. Bill Strelezki of Endeavour, Saskatchewan, remembers that his uncle was laid out in the living room of his home and that people watched over the body. Grandparents dying at home was part of Betty Saik's memories in Innisfree, Alberta, and in Insinger, Saskatchewan, Mary Ann Sebulski and Violet Medvid remembered people using a special coiled candle that would burn all night while people sat and kept watch over the deceased. In Kamsack, Saskatchewan, Mike and Sylvia Sas told me that people sang during the course of the overnight vigil. Henry Dozorec of Wroxton Farms said that the vigil in the home could last as long as three days. In Meath Park, Saskatchewan, Jean and Mike Tycholiz and Sharon Feschuk made a point of telling me that the body of the deceased was brought from

the funeral home to the house so that she or he could spend one night there before being buried. Shirley Korpatniski of Sheho, same province, said the deceased was brought home from the hospital for the same purpose. This was also attested in Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta. Keeping the body of the deceased in the home overnight was also described in Model Farm and Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Respondents at the Catholic and Orthodox churches in Swan Plain also mentioned this practice. In Swan Plain, the Holodiuk and Nokinsky families stated that bringing the deceased relative home to spend one night there was becoming less common, though some people still did this.

Among the people I interviewed, no one currently keeps the body of their deceased relative in the home overnight. A step that marked a transition away from keeping the body in the home was doing the same thing in the church. Where possible, a service was conducted in the church on the eve of burial. Leaving the body there after this service provided a nod to the tradition of keeping the body in the home, besides accomplishing a practical purpose: the body was already in the church for the funeral the next day. This was done in Beckenham and Sheho, Saskatchewan. In Holar Farms, Saskatchewan, leaving the body in church used to be the practice, but it no longer is, and Edward Pidperychora's mother did not remain in church after the service over her body. The same happened in Jedburgh, where the body was taken all the way back to Yorkton after the service in the rural family church. An evening church service followed by the return of the body to the funeral home was attested in Wadena, Saskatchewan. Daria Stephaniuk said that prayers could be said directly in the funeral home without the need to bring the body to church. The funeral home was the site of all activities in Welychko as well. Something similar was done in Waskatenau, Alberta, where Karl Korosec said that everything was done in the church hall because the church itself was too small.

PREPARING FOR DEATH

In Ukraine there is debate concerning whether people should prepare for their own burial. There is some consensus that clothing can be selected prior to death; however, a coffin cannot be made in advance. When I did my fieldwork in Ukraine, a number of people showed me the outfits

they had set aside to be used when they died. In Canada, coffins have generally been purchased, so the question of making them in advance does not arise. Only Peter and Jean Woroschuk, of the Zhuchka Church in Calder, Saskatchewan, a very elderly couple, mentioned making a coffin in preparation for death. According to Peter, measurements taken of the person before death sometimes proved inaccurate, and it sometimes happened that the coffin turned out to be too small to accommodate the body. This may be a remnant of Ukrainian legends about curses that are actualized when a coffin is made ahead of time. Burial clothing was not a frequent topic of discussion, but in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, Mike Parchoma did point out that his mother was buried in “nice clothes” that she herself had selected, and in Marcelin, same province, Jerry and Rosemary Banda said that his grandmother picked out her burial outfit in advance. Valentina Hritzuk of St Walburg, Saskatchewan, said almost the same thing, namely that her mother laid aside clothing prior to her death and instructed Valentina on the way in which she should be dressed for burial. Ann Betskal of Welychko, Saskatchewan, also mentioned that her mother selected her death outfit ahead of time.

It seems that during weddings, older people, including my main Sanctuary Project respondents, used clothing to express their integration into the Canadian mainstream; thus, they wore Western-style white gowns. It was only some of their children who wanted to showcase their Ukrainian identity by getting married in embroidered shirts and blouses. Yet when it came to funerals, choosing Ukrainian clothing was more common. The very first immigrants and some of their children were buried in Ukrainian dress. For them, it was likely a matter of custom rather than a conscious choice. Some of the people who were the same age as my respondents chose Ukrainian clothing as well, typically selecting a single item – such as an embroidered shirt – that spoke to their heritage. In Samburg, Saskatchewan, Ron Adamko said that the treasurer of his church was dressed in Ukrainian clothes when she was buried. Whether this was a modern costume, like the ones used for dance performances and weddings, or an outfit brought from Ukraine is not clear. In Insinger, Violet Medvid said her mother chose to be buried in a Ukrainian blouse and a black skirt. Again, whether the blouse was brought from Ukraine or made in Canada was not stated in the interview.



FIG. 6.1 Outfit given to the author by Roy Kolot

I ran into a sad situation outside of Sturgis, Saskatchewan. Roy Kolot, our contact at the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in that town, insisted on giving me a complete Ukrainian costume, one I did not want to take because I feared I would not be able to find it a good home. On further inquiry, I learned that this outfit had been given to Kolot by workers at an eldercare facility. Kolot had trained as a psychiatric nurse and worked in that job until he retired to take care of his widowed and ailing mother. He also volunteered at an eldercare facility, paying particular attention to Ukrainians, especially those with limited knowledge of English. The woman whose outfit was given to Kolot was one of the residents he had frequently visited. While I cannot be certain, I think this was an outfit the woman had prepared for her own burial. It was a complete outfit: shirt, vest, skirt, apron, and these garments, judging from how they had

been made, seemed to have been made in Ukraine. Of course, no one, especially not the non-Ukrainian workers at the eldercare facility, had heard of dressing people in a Ukrainian costume for interment; they associated such outfits with dance performances only. This meant that the woman was buried in the best Western clothes that the workers at the eldercare facility could find. The Ukrainian outfit went to Kolot because he was a known Ukrainophile, and then, through him, to me.

It is tempting to think that choosing traditional Ukrainian outfits, especially garments made in Ukraine, is an attempt to link back to the Old Country, a way to “go back” to the original Ukrainian home in spirit, if not in fact. I cannot help but think that this is an expression of the desire to return that Burzminski and his fellow members of the St Jaroslaw Church had in mind when they put concrete slabs over their deceased to keep them from trying to go back to the land from which they had come. This idea must remain a supposition only. I did not pose this question during my interviews, and even if I had, my consultants would probably not have been able to give an answer.

PLACING MEMENTOS IN THE COFFIN: ESTABLISHING LINKS

Preparing for one's own death might be viewed as a touch morbid, and this may be a reason why such actions were not often mentioned by my interviewees. Having the living place objects in the coffins of their relatives, on the other hand, is an approved and common practice. People would place money in the coffin or in the grave itself for the deceased to use in the other world. This is something done in Ukraine, and on the Prairies it was mentioned in Szypenitz and Edwand, Alberta. A more frequently attested practice is placing objects in the coffin that were meaningful to the deceased when she or he was alive. People put playing cards, alcohol, and tobacco in with the body, if those were particular favourites of the person who had passed away. This was mentioned in Edwand, Alberta, and Norquay and Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. As Ken Siedlecki pointed out, however, it came to be considered a somewhat questionable practice because drinking, smoking, and playing cards are less than laudable pastimes. The practice was discontinued unless a person specifically asked to have such items buried along with him or her. Perhaps the strangest

item a family wanted to bury with their loved one was a hunting rifle complete with ammunition. Their desire to do so was motivated by the fact that the deceased was an avid hunter. The parish priest disallowed this particular coffin addition, saying that the family could cause a horrific accident should they ever decide to move the body.

Most items buried with the deceased are benign and associated with accomplishments or pleasant memories. Wilmar Kusey of Wishart, Saskatchewan, said it is the custom to place ears of wheat in the coffin of anyone who had been a farmer. In Holar Farms, Saskatchewan, Adalice and Edward Pidperyhora said they knew of a family who placed chewing gum in the coffin of their deceased patriarch because he liked to give gum away to children. In Insinger, same province, Violet Medvid said that her mother's wedding gown and veil were tied up in a bag and placed in her coffin. Rosaries are frequent coffin additions for Ukrainian Catholics, and in a few of the Orthodox churches, such as the one in Kamsack, a printed prayer is placed in the hands of the deceased. In St Walburg it is a little icon. In the Ukrainian Catholic churches of Jedburgh and Sheho, Saskatchewan, children were asked to put pictures of themselves or notes and pictures in their grandmother's coffin. In Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta, Diane Feledichuk said that her grandmother's embroidery kit went into the coffin, along with a lock of hair she had kept from a daughter who died as a four-year-old. For people who had an especially strong longing for Ukraine, soil from that country could be placed in the coffin. Some more recent immigrants, when they came to Canada, brought little bags of soil with them for this purpose. In Stenen, Saskatchewan, soil brought from Ukraine is thrown into the grave. The custom of placing soil from Ukraine into the coffin or the grave is another expression of the tie to Ukraine that many immigrants feel. Here the longing for Ukraine is obviated by bringing Ukrainian soil to Canada and burying it with the deceased, symbolically negating the need to seek return to Ukraine itself. The importance of soil and the land seems to have evolved into a purely Canadian form in some locations. Thus, in Wadena, Saskatchewan, Daria Stephaniuk said that the soil from all of the places where her parents had lived was placed in their coffins. Placing meaningful items in the coffin for the deceased to take on the final journey is a way to ensure their peace in the other world. Another way to help the dead rest peacefully is to avoid excessive

crying and mourning. Too many tears, it is believed, will force the dead relative to lie in water. This is a widely held belief in Ukraine, and Ann Betskal in Welychko, Saskatchewan, said the family should not cry too much because it is hard on the deceased.

THE JOURNEY TO THE PLACE OF BURIAL

Ties to a place are likely to be especially important to people who have moved during their lifetime. Immigrants feel an especially strong need for connectedness, a need that may be felt not only by the people who actually immigrated, but also by their descendants. For Ukrainians, this desire was especially compelling because connections to Ukraine had been cut almost completely when Soviet dominance made it impossible to travel to that country, even to visit. Thus, their yearning for a link to a physical locale was particularly great. The need for a tie to a place, both the old, overseas homeland and the new place to which people moved, may well explain the frequently attested practice of driving the body of the deceased by all of the places where that person had lived or worked. This is usually done on the way to interment, either when the body is picked up at the funeral home to be delivered to the cemetery, or on the way to church in those cases where the cemetery and the church are adjacent. This practice was attested in Burgis, Glaslyn, Insinger, Kobzar, Speers, Swan Plain, Wadena, and Wishart, Saskatchewan, and Eldorena, Innisfree, Myrnam, Redwater, and Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta.

Another Ukrainian practice is to have the funeral procession, typically one where the coffin is carried by hand, stop at all crossroads. There must be at least three such stops. If three roads are not crossed, the procession makes an additional random stop or stops to complete the three-stop total. The tradition of stopping along the journey from the church to the cemetery has almost disappeared in Canada, perhaps because the coffin is driven to the gravesite rather than carried. It does continue in a few locations, and Peter and Jean Woroschuk described this practice in Calder, Saskatchewan. In Insinger, same province, Mary Ann Sebulski and Violet Medvid said that one of their undertakers would stop at all crossroads when taking the body to the cemetery. A variation on stopping along the way was recounted by Ron Feledichuk, Roy Bryks, and Nikolai Nikolaev in Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta. The drive from the funeral home to the

church was roughly ten miles, and they remembered the priest stopping every few miles to pray. The multiple stops practised by the undertaker and the priest may be an effort to bring back some Ukrainian, or old Canadian, practices. Stops of a different sort were attested in Wostok-Bukowina. When the coffin is carried out of the home, the pallbearers are supposed to stop and say prayers at the door of the house, the gate to the farmstead, and the edge of the property belonging to the deceased. This, too, is similar to what is done in Ukraine.

Honour and respect need to be accorded to the deceased person, and some people insisted that once in the cemetery, the body had to be carried by pallbearers for the last part of its journey; driving it all the way to the gravesite was disrespectful. In Model Farm, Saskatchewan, the distance the coffin needed to be carried was specified. In other locations, the custom is simply that the coffin should be borne by pallbearers for the last part of its journey to the grave. In Innisfree, Alberta, the hearse stops outside the cemetery and the coffin is carried to the gravesite. Sometimes, when the deceased is female, women carry the coffin, as Joan Bozniak, Emily Lastiwka, and Mike Rogoza of Edwand, Alberta, explained. The family often acts as pallbearers, as is the custom in Eldorena, Alberta, and Jedburgh, Saskatchewan. In Wostok-Bukowina, Szypenitz, and Edwand, Alberta, people have to carry the coffin – it cannot be driven all the way to the grave. In those two locations, the pallbearers each get a *rushnyk*, or ritual towel, for their service, a custom still practised in many parts of Ukraine today. One uniquely Canadian aspect of burial has been strongly influenced by the Prairie weather: the thawing of the ground so that it will be soft enough to dig a grave. Bill Strelezki of Endeavour, Saskatchewan, said that when his uncle died in January the ground was so frozen that fires had to be burned for several days on the spot chosen for the burial. He added that he and his brother were tasked with digging a number of graves, so they knew how to handle the demands of Canadian soil and Canadian winter.

SEALING THE GRAVE

The part of the burial service conducted by the priest is quite consistent from one location to the next. The ritual part performed by the priest includes not only the words he says over the coffin but also a special

action called the sealing of the grave. Sealing can be done by making cuts, forming a cross, into the four sides of the hole made for the coffin, as happens in Beckenham, Saskatchewan. Once the coffin is lowered, the priest can throw dirt, sand, or ashes on top of it in the shape of a cross. This, too, is called sealing the grave, and it is a practice attested in Bodnari, Dnieper, Endeavour, Foam Lake, Holar Farms, Laniwci, Rosthern, Porcupine Plain, Speers, St Walburg, Swan Plain, and Welychko, Saskatchewan, and Innisfree and Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta. In Melville, Saskatchewan, my respondents said they had witnessed both ways of sealing a grave. As they noted, some priests would throw dirt on top of the coffin in the shape of a cross and others would make four cross-wise cuts in the hole dug for the grave. Mary and Steve Rudy of Codette, Saskatchewan, said that the grave needed to be sealed, but they did not specify how.

THE MEAL AFTER THE FUNERAL

The funeral is almost always followed by a meal, during which those who attended the ritual can honour the deceased. Often held in a church hall or a larger venue to accommodate all the guests, the meal is important. What is served varies. In Ukraine, an obligatory part of the meal is a dish called *kanun* or *kolivo*, consisting of boiled wheat berries sweetened with honey or sugar. There are variations to this dish, but it is always sweet and contains wheat in some form. This sort of dish was attested in a few places where I conducted interviews. In Codette, Saskatchewan, it is called *kolivo* and consists of sweetened whole wheat berries. According to Steve and Mary Rudy, their priest typically explains what this dish is, what symbolic meaning it has, and how it is to be eaten. This explanation is for the benefit of non-Ukrainian guests and those Ukrainians whose church has stopped serving *kolivo*. In the other places the special funeral dish comes with no explanation and is usually called *kutia* because of its resemblance to a food served at Christmas. Quite often the boiled wheat dish is served alongside foods associated with the remembrance of the dead, namely *kolach* (braided bread) and fruit. As discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion, *kolach* and fruit are typically served at annual grave blessings. In the interviews focused on funerals, they were mentioned as part of memorial services conducted on the fortieth day

after burial, and it is likely that what was served at a commemorative meal blended with what was served at funerals, especially since *kolach* and fruit are more palatable to non-Ukrainian guests than boiled wheat berries. In Burgis, Saskatchewan, the family serves fruit and one large *kolach*, which is divided among those present. *Kolachi* are offered to the guests in Cudworth, Saskatchewan; *kolachi* and fruit, along with *kutia*, are served in Edwaud, Alberta. In Endeavour, Saskatchewan, the special funeral dish is referred to as boiled wheat, its Ukrainian name forgotten; in Hafford, same province, little cups with wheat are distributed to all of the guests. Something similar is done in Melville, Saskatchewan, where little cups of *kutia* are served to all present along with instructions that this food needs to be eaten first, before partaking of any other dish. *Kolachi* are also served, but do not need to be eaten before any other food. Boiled wheat as a special funeral dish was mentioned in Wimmer, Saskatchewan. Ann Betskal of Welychko, same province, said that in the past, it was obligatory to eat some *kutia* before any other food, but this is no longer the case. Insinger, Saskatchewan, has *kutia*, *kolachi*, and sliced apples, while Ituna, same province, has *kutia* and fruit, with *kolachi* added by some families. *Kutia* and *kolachi* are served in Wadena, Wakaw, and Kamsack, Saskatchewan; in the last of these locations, Mike and Sylvia Sas said that everyone attending a funeral has to eat at least a bit of the boiled wheat and a piece of the *kolach*.

Fruit is important, and in Kamsack, apples are distributed in plastic bags for everyone to take home. In Myrnam, Alberta, each of the guests is given an individual little *kolach* to take home. In Laniwci, Saskatchewan, the requisite food given to each guest is an orange, a rare commodity on the Prairies until recent times and probably a way to mark the special nature of the occasion. Trays with *kolachi* slices and fruit are passed around at funerals in Stenen and Swan Plain, Saskatchewan, and also in Szypenitz, Alberta, where this food is referred to as *pomana*, the term used for the food distributed at graveside commemorative events. *Kutia*, probably because it is strongly associated with Christmas, is served less and less often. This was confirmed by Valentina Hritzuk of St Walburg, Saskatchewan, who stated that *kutia* was served at her grandmother's funeral but not at more recent events.

Serving food after the funeral seems to be a vernacular way of symbolizing death and resurrection. This is very clear in Ukraine, where

rye is thrown in the wake of the procession that carries the coffin. The Ukrainian word for rye is *zhyto*, which sounds like *zhyttia*, the word meaning “life.” In Ukraine there are also beliefs in the sanctity of bread and the body; the idea is that the two are linked in a circle of life where the body, after burial, becomes one with the soil, nurturing crops and thus future generations.² Some of this symbolism seems to persist in Ukrainian Canada, where whole grain, perhaps symbolizing seed (*kutia*), or a grain product (*kolach*), is an obligatory part of the funerary meal and is accompanied by fruit, which grows from seed. Conscious awareness of this symbolism need not exist for there to be a feeling that what is being done is right and proper.

SANITIZING DEATH, PROFESSIONALIZING FUNERALS

In a few places, once the deceased has been lowered into the grave, the family says goodbye to their loved one by throwing dirt on top of the coffin, essentially acquiescing to the burial by being the ones to begin the process. This was mentioned in Holar Farms, Jedburgh, Samburg, Swan Plain, Wishart, and Welychko, Saskatchewan, and in Lloydminster, Alberta. Because bidding farewell to the deceased by actually helping to bury him or her can be emotionally difficult for the family, throwing dirt into the grave is seldom practised now. Funerals, in general, seem to be more and more sanitized so as to make it less emotionally difficult for those left behind. Most of the Sanctuary Project respondents said that the casket was open during the service in the church, and the Ukrainian Canadian funerals I attended in urban settings also had open caskets. Some respondents, such as Ken Siedlecki of Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, mentioned that some priests objected to this practice, claiming that it was too distracting to those present.

Current funerals seem to favour making death easier for the living to accept and the funeral less emotionally taxing on those present. This trend does not meet with universal approval. Father Roman Kocur of Wakaw, Saskatchewan, complained that death is being sanitized to an excessive extent and that people are denied the opportunity to understand its gravity. People want closed caskets, he said. They do not bring their children. At most funerals he is the only one to throw dirt on the coffin, he complained; the family does not participate. In general, he

concluded, people just want to give the funeral home their credit card and take no responsibility for the interment of their loved one.

It is probably true that professionalizing the funeral, turning all of the arrangements over to a funeral parlour, distances people from death. As professionals take over ritual processes, be they funerals or the births of babies, traditions and beliefs associated with them atrophy. Changes to the funeral do not seem to concern Sanctuary Project respondents; they see what is happening as inevitable. For them, the real issues associated with birth and death are stillborn infants and other unbaptized babies and, at the other end of life, suicides and cremated individuals. It is here that changing beliefs are impacting accepted church practice. In the past, suicides were refused burial in the sanctified ground of the church cemetery and individuals whose remains had been cremated were often similarly denied cemetery interment. Today, vernacular belief is changing and most people do not hold these individuals unworthy of full funeral rites. Certainly, that was the feeling of most of the people I interviewed. Changes in belief are currently having an impact on church practice, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

WEDDING OF THE DEAD

In Ukraine, as in some other countries of Eastern Europe, a life is considered incomplete if a person does not go through all of the proper rituals. Thus, a person must marry in his or her lifetime in order to rest in peace after death. When someone dies young, either from disease or an accident, and is not married, she or he is buried in a special ceremony that combines elements of the wedding with those of the funeral, thus enabling the person to go through all proper rituals and have a complete life.³ There is some doubt about the propriety of this tradition in contemporary Ukraine, but it is still practised, even in urban settings, where an obituary for a woman killed in a traffic accident in the city of Kharkiv noted that her funeral was celebrated as a death wedding.⁴

I first learned that the practice of combining the wedding with the funeral existed in Canada when I gave a lecture in Ottawa about life cycle rituals and a man showed me an old photograph he had previously not been able to explain. It was a picture of a young woman, a relative of the man who approached me, lying in a coffin dressed as a bride. The

photo indicated that death weddings were practised in Canada; seeing it, I assumed that they were a phenomenon of a past as distant as the photograph was old. I learned that this was not the case when I was conducting an interview in Weekes, Saskatchewan. Elsie Grywacheski, when telling me about her church, how the land for it was purchased, and how it was built, recounted an incident that accompanied the church's founding. After the cemetery next to the church was consecrated, the first person to die and be buried there was a man who had never married. One of the older women in the congregation said that a single man should not have been the first to be interred in the cemetery because now a woman would have to die: a cemetery could not be established on the grave of an unmarried person. Sure enough, a young woman about to get married suffered a burst appendix and died in the hospital. She was buried in her wedding dress. The young woman's mother, Grywacheski added, suffered a breakdown. While what happened in Weekes did not have all of the attributes of a death wedding, the belief that single people must be given a mate, especially if they are the first to be buried in a newly established cemetery, is clearly articulated in this narrative. After my experience in Weekes, I started asking about death weddings and did find various traces of this practice. Something similar to what happened in Weekes seems to have occurred in Norquay, Saskatchewan: a woman who died before her marriage was buried in her wedding dress. In Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, Ken Siedlecki said that his brother-in-law's sister died from cancer at age eighteen. She too was buried in wedding attire. In Ituna, Saskatchewan, Redemptorist Father Boris Kyba said that he had seen a death wedding in Winnipeg some fifteen or twenty years prior to the interview. This was the funeral of a severely retarded woman who had never been married. Judy and Orest Zastrizny, Valerie Oshynko, and Beverly Bachinsky of Sheho remembered an eight-year-old girl dressed in white for her funeral, and my respondents in Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta, said that young girls would be dressed in white gowns for burial.

Another of my lectures led to yet another discovery of a death wedding. I was speaking at the University of Alberta, and Lennien Pawluk, a staff person at that institution, when she heard me talk about this phenomenon in Saskatchewan, told me she remembered an accident in the Edmonton area. A school bus carrying high school students was



FIG. 6.2 Elsie Grywacheski with the author

involved in a terrible, fatal accident. The bodies of the dead, Pawluk said, were dressed in wedding clothes. The event, including the wedding attire, was so striking that Pawluk still remembered it more than fifty years later. A search of the *Edmonton Journal* produced an article dated Monday, 5 December 1960, that described the funeral that Pawluk remembered. According to that article, the students were from a high school in Chipman and their bus was hit by a train, killing sixteen girls and two boys. In preparation for the funeral, the bodies were laid out for viewing in the school gymnasium. According to the *Edmonton Journal*, “the girls wore formal white gowns and white veils. The boys wore jackets. Bibles and rosaries were held in the hands clasped to the children’s breasts.” While the newspaper article does not call this wedding attire, likely because its non-Ukrainian author was unfamiliar with the death wedding, Pawluk perceived the clothing on the deceased as reminiscent of wedding outfits, and probably so did the rest of the local congregation.⁵

Most references to death weddings, or at least to dressing the deceased in wedding attire if she or he was a young unmarried person,

date back to events from the 1970s or earlier. Yet some remnants of the death wedding persist to this day. Marlene Lozinski of Donwell, Saskatchewan, said that her sixteen-year-old nephew suffered a seizure while playing basketball and died. When he was buried, a ring was placed on his finger. I questioned Lozinski further to see if this was supposed to be a wedding band. "No, it was just a band," was the answer, but it is hard not to see some remnant of the death wedding, faint though it may be, in this action.

Why did traces of the wedding of the dead persist even as other traditions gave way to more Westernized versions of funeral practices? Perhaps it is the nature of the Ukrainian Canadian wedding. As noted in the wedding chapter, for the generation that served as my primary respondents, the wedding was more than a way of joining a man and a woman and creating a new couple, the nucleus for a new family; it was also a way of joining Ukrainian identity to the Anglo-Canadian culture that dominated Prairie life. If it is true that establishing a powerful link to the new homeland is particularly important for immigrants, and if it is also true that a wedding makes the couple not simply Ukrainian, but Ukrainian Canadian, then the wedding of the dead may well have served as a way to join unmarried young adults to the Canadian soil in which they were about to rest. It may also have been another of those actions that kept the deceased in Canada and prevented them from attempts to return to Ukraine.

The other reason for preserving the wedding of the dead may be the prevalence of farm accidents in which young, unmarried people are killed. Out on the Prairies, one cannot help but notice the number of people with serious injuries. Ron Adamko of Samburg, Saskatchewan, lost part of his hand in a sawblade accident. This was particularly tragic for him because he loved to play the violin. Fortunately, he was able to relearn his instrument using his remaining fingers. In the Kobzar Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church our guide was Randy Krochak, a relatively young man. He was available during the day because he was disabled by a work injury and could no longer work. On a number of occasions, as I conducted interviews, I noticed large scars on the bodies of my informants. As stated in an earlier chapter, people showing me important items inside of their church would point out icons embroidered and donated to the church in memory of young men who died in

accidents such as tractor rollovers. Such icons were typically angels, as I saw in Edmore, Saskatchewan, and represented the family's view of their lost loved one, or they were icons of the Last Supper, a popular Prairie icon, in this case probably referring to the last time the young person was with his family. Embroidering a memento for a young person who dies before marriage is a Ukrainian custom: a sister or other close relative is expected to embroider a *rushnyk*, or ritual towel, with images of a cross, a grave, and a *kalyna* or viburnum tree. Such a *rushnyk* is a substitute for the wedding of the dead ritual in those cases where the body of the deceased is not available for burial, as often happens when a soldier is killed in battle. This *rushnyk* is placed in the *skrynja*, or family linen chest, and never displayed. In a sense, it has been "buried" instead of the body, albeit in a chest rather than the ground. It should be noted that the viburnum tree is associated with marriage and that the juice of its berries is linked to the blood shed when a woman loses her virginity.

An interesting variation on the tree motif, although not a viburnum, was attested at the Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Insinger, Saskatchewan. Cherise Husulak said that the family of a girl who drowned at age eighteen and was not married donated two artificial trees to their church in her memory. These trees too may be related to the Ukrainian *rushnyky*, for a tree is an obligatory and central motif on such embroidered items. When trees are used as memory objects for a person who died young and unmarried, or when actions such as embroidering an icon to donate to the church are performed, the people who do these things are not necessarily aware of connections to practices that exist in Ukraine. In all likelihood they do not think they are performing a variation of an old Ukrainian tradition. They are just doing what feels right. Educated people, especially those who are no longer part of tradition or who learn about traditional practices from books rather than lived experience, typically want to know what the symbols or actions mean. That is why there are so many books catering to the desire for symbol glossaries.⁶ Because I was familiar with the practice of glossing, I would often ask for meanings in the course of my fieldwork to see whether what was true among those who had learned tradition from published sources was also true among Prairie residents. My respondents, people who had grown up with tradition instead of learning it from books, would answer that this was simply the way things were done. They did

not give reasons for their actions beyond stating that what they did was proper behaviour. Labelling something as proper behaviour is a good way to describe the actions on the Prairies that resemble death wedding rituals. Donating trees, or embroidering something, or putting a ring on a boy's finger, just seemed right. People cannot tell you why it seemed right – it just did.

I am postulating that certain actions seem right because they are linked to traditions brought over from Ukraine and retained on a subconscious level. These actions cannot be explained. On some level, however, their symbolism rings true. The persistence of actions analogous to Ukrainian death wedding rites indicates that Ukrainian Canadians needed, and still need, to mark the tragedy of losing a young person. Because this need is so great, making a special icon that remains in the church in memory of the young person who has been lost or celebrating a funeral as a death wedding and, in more recent times, just including wedding-like items like a ring or a white dress, are customs that continue into the present. ❁❁

CHAPTER 7

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CEMETERIES AND RITUAL CHANGE

CEMETERY AS HETEROTOPIA

Heterotopias, according to Foucault, are places that are “outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.” Foucault’s first extended example of a heterotopia is the cemetery.¹ Indeed, in Canada, cemeteries, especially the rural ones we visited over the course of the Sanctuary Project, are special places that are physically clearly located and yet socially and conceptually ambiguous and hard to pin down. They are both earthly and spiritual domains. They are concrete in their physicality yet full of emotion, memory, all the intangibles of contemplating life and death. Cemeteries are places for the repose of the dead, as well as places alive with memories. Cemeteries are also where the Ukrainian Canadians living on the Prairies express their dissatisfaction with official religion, specifically the definition of who is a proper person, worthy of burial in the sanctified cemetery ground. Cemeteries are where they take action and, in some cases, are able to change church policy.

For Ukrainian Canadians, both the ones who have continued to live on the farms and in the small towns of the Prairies and those of their descendants who have moved to take jobs in urban centres, cemeteries hold a special emotional power. As stated several times earlier, for all Ukrainians, cemeteries are where they sink their roots into Canadian soil by burying their ancestors. It is where they establish a visceral connection to the land. For descendants of earlier settlers who have moved away, cemeteries and the events connected to them, specifically



FIG. 7.1 Volyn Church

grave blessings, are what draw them back to the places where their ancestors first established their homes. Grave blessings are the biggest celebrations held by rural churches. They fill the church and bring in much-needed revenue – indeed, in some parishes they are the major source of income. For the people who make their pilgrimage back to their ancestral home to take part in grave blessings, this is their chance to honour their ancestors and to re-establish their connection to their extended family and to their Ukrainian heritage.

Because of their importance to all Ukrainian Canadians, cemeteries are beautifully maintained even as churches are closed and fall into disrepair. Some of the churches that have been closed are abandoned and woefully neglected. They are decaying and infested by pigeons and other animals. They are a most sorry sight. Yet the cemeteries associated with these churches are immaculate, with flowers, neatly mowed grass, and carefully tended tombstones. This is true in Plainview, Saskatchewan, home of what must have once been a large and thriving church, judging by the size of the building itself and the church hall adjacent to it. The church

and hall sit on one side of the main road and are so run-down that the road leading to them has been taken over by a slough, a shallow body of water characteristic of Alberta and Saskatchewan that moves around and can change the landscape. The only way I could walk over to the church was by stepping on the reeds growing out of the slough. I crushed them down to create a soggy bridge. On the other side of the main road is a well-maintained driveway leading into the beautifully tended cemetery. In places where the church has been demolished, such as Birmingham, Saskatchewan, the cupola of the former church sits in the middle of a neatly manicured graveyard. In Birmingham, there are Orthodox graves to one side and Catholic ones to the other; a plaque on the cupola explains the history of the church and its switch from Orthodoxy to Catholicism. Outside Rycroft, Alberta, a tiny wooden log building called the Volyn Church has long ceased to be a place of worship and is now a historical monument. The cemetery of this church, however, is fully operational and carefully tended. When the Sanctuary team was working in the area in 2010, we met a woman who had come to visit the grave of her recently deceased mother. This recent burial shows that the cemetery is active and thriving, even though associated with a no-longer functional church. Perhaps the ultimate irony is that cemeteries continue to live even as the churches with which they were affiliated die.

As heterotopias, locations where “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted,” cemeteries are places where people can negotiate not only the difficult transition between life and death, between existence in the body and existence in memory, but also relationships between parishioners and their church.² As attitudes toward what constitutes personhood change, it is cemeteries where these attitudes are expressed and where definitions are contested. Cemeteries are both church property and public property. When churches close, ownership of cemeteries can be disputed, although the typical pattern is for the eparchy to claim the church and the land on which it stands, often burning or demolishing the building and selling the land. The cemetery, however, becomes the property of the congregation. Even though this is the typical pattern, who gets to dispose of which part of the church-plus-cemetery complex can be a contentious topic, and discussion of this question often comes up precisely in cemeteries. When the Sanctuary team arrives at a site

and meets the people who will act as our hosts, we typically walk around the grounds, cemetery included, before settling down to the work of photographing objects and recording interviews. It is outside, often in the cemetery, and before recording equipment is turned on, that our hosts voice their grievances against church hierarchs concerning property ownership and control. It is here that they tell us about their clergy and the tensions that arise between priests and parishioners, especially when churches are about to close.

Even when the congregation is granted ownership of the cemetery, it does not gain full control of cemetery operations. Because the cemetery is consecrated land, the church retains the right to determine who may, and who may not, be buried within its confines. Unbaptized infants are traditionally denied cemetery burial and are typically interred somewhere on the cemetery edge, just outside consecrated ground. In the case of adults, the two categories of individuals denied cemetery interment are suicides and people whose remains were cremated. Official religion maintains that the exclusion of certain categories of persons from cemetery burial is correct; however, public opinion is changing, and over the course of our Sanctuary work, we were witness to this. I heard stories that articulated, often in an indirect way, parishioners' dissatisfaction with burial practices. In some cases, church members took action. In the past, these were individual acts of defiance. In more recent times, entire congregations have acted and have sometimes been able to reverse church policy.

Cemetery burial is a confirmation of the personhood of an individual. And it is precisely in cemeteries that parishioners are contesting church definitions and practices. As more and more people consider babies to be persons regardless of the rite of baptism, as more and more of them deem individuals who committed suicide to be sick persons rather than sinners, they are becoming dissatisfied with church policies of exclusion. Because cemeteries are heterotopias, they are places where Ukrainian Canadians can express and act out beliefs and desires, using performance to make statements to one another, to church hierarchs, and to the Canadian community as a whole. Cemeteries are places where changes in belief can most readily lead to changes in practice and where the evolution of popular attitudes toward personhood can lead to the transformation of eparchy policies.



FIG. 7.2 Allan Borys shows the author around the cemetery, Star Peno, AB

RECOVERING UNBAPTIZED BABIES

Cemeteries were where I heard narratives that differed from the material presented in interviews. Walking outdoors in cemeteries, typically prior to my turning on my recording equipment and starting a formal interview, respondents aired their grievances. This is where they talked about financial matters and tensions between eparchy demands for support and the inability of ever-shrinking congregations to pay the fees requested. It was here that people awaiting the imminent closure of their church proudly announced that they had managed to retain possession of their cemetery even as the church itself was to be demolished and the church grounds sold. In short, cemeteries were places where parishioners declared their emotional needs – as opposed to their official views – that they wanted put into the record I was making as part of my Sanctuary work.

Most actual interviews were conducted while my colleagues were doing their photography, either inside the church itself or in the church

basement or church hall. The formal interview was often not the end of our interaction, however. After the interview, we would often end up in the cemetery again. Sometimes I would request a cemetery tour because I wanted to check the burial practices of the church we were documenting. As often as not, however, it was my respondent who took me outside to show me something that she or he thought I should see. It was during these post-interview cemetery tours that I heard some of the most interesting and moving stories. It was in the cemetery in Weekes that I first heard that weddings of the dead took place in Canada as late as the 1970s. Cemetery stories were powerful accounts of restless souls and parishioner discontent. These were not complaints about financial matters and tensions between the officials and the parishioners of a particular church. These were ghost stories that focused on the restlessness of the dead rather than on any congregation/eparchy conflict over money. They were expressions of parishioners' unhappiness with how certain types of deceased people were treated. They were narrative expressions of the need to redefine personhood.

Stories of dead babies looking to find peace were the ones I heard most often. Women, whose cemetery maintenance task tends to be cleaning up around the cemetery periphery while men run the large mowing equipment, would tell me about infants crying in the bush because they were stillborn or died before they could be baptized and thus could not be buried in the cemetery proper. They were suffering souls, my consultants said, consigned to burial at the edge, outside of hallowed ground, and crying for recognition and for justice, trying to catch the ear of anyone who came near their place of burial. As noted earlier, the graves of unbaptized infants are typically just outside the cemetery proper. Sometimes, as in Rama, Saskatchewan, they are quite visible because they are marked by little wooden crosses placed right on the border between the cemetery and a farmer's field. In many cases, the graves of unbaptized babies are harder to spot because they are located where the cemetery ends and the bush that grows around the cemetery begins. The bush is a Prairie phenomenon. It refers to stands of small trees, usually poplar, that cannot grow tall because of the harsh Canadian winters. The trees are small, with narrow trunks, and grow close together, creating an almost impenetrable thicket. Bush covered large stretches of the Prairies, and when settlers came, it was cleared for

farming and for the erection of churches and the creation of the cemeteries that went with them. When not continuously cut back, the bush tends to encroach on the land that has been cleared, and this often happens at cemeteries, especially those not affiliated with an active church. As the bush spreads, infant graves disappear. People who took me around cemeteries saw this as an additional affront to the dead infants who had been interred at the cemetery edge. They would tell me that when they were cleaning up the cemetery for events such as the annual church Praznyk or Khram, they could hear the cries of the dead babies every time they came near the bush. They took these as cries for help, cries for recognition that had been denied.

Baby graves next to the bush are doubly problematic. Even at active churches such as the St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in Insinger, Saskatchewan, the ever-growing bush at the cemetery boundary tends to be used as a dumping ground. When the Insinger cemetery was renovated and the old gravestones were replaced with new monuments, the discarded materials were thrown into the bush that bordered on the graveyard. The disposal of waste at the cemetery edge gives the unpleasant impression that unbaptized infants, because they are also at the cemetery boundary, are a form of human waste, discarded and useless remains.

The saddest case I encountered during my Sanctuary project work involved a grave next to an outhouse at a cemetery outside Tuffnell, Saskatchewan. It had once been affiliated with the now abandoned Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, a decaying building across the road from the graves. Around a week after visiting the cemetery, I was able to interview Larry Ukrainetz, the caretaker of the present-day Holy Trinity Church, located in Tuffnell proper and itself a victim of population attrition: it is currently down to one service per year. Ukrainetz explained that the unusual grave next to the outhouse was that of a little girl, probably five or six years of age when she died, but still not baptized. Because she was bigger than an infant, the child was interred in a proper grave, complete with large cement cross, but outside sanctified ground nonetheless. Most infant graves are not marked as noticeably as the grave of the little girl buried outside Tuffnell. They are tiny graves with equally tiny wooden crosses or no markings at all. They are often hidden and subject to neglect. There is the threat that they will be forgotten with time.



FIG. 7.3 Grave of an unbaptized girl buried near an outhouse, Tuffnell, SK

The most successful effort at reclaiming baby graves and thus recognizing the personhood of infants was the one spearheaded by Gerardine and Mike Woitas and mentioned in the chapter on birth and baptism. Their story goes as follows: In 2016 the members of the Sanctuary team were attending the Sunday service at the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God in Model Farm, Saskatchewan. Our plan was to meet and get to know the parishioners so that we could arrange a later visit to the church, when we would do our documentary work. As we walked around the church grounds, Gerardine and Mike Woitas, our hosts, made a point of telling us that the fence enclosing the cemetery adjacent to the church had been moved so that infant graves, which had previously been outside its confines, were now within the cemetery proper. Father Methodius Kushko of the Yorkton Redemptorist Fathers, they said, had come to bless the graves that had formerly been excluded from church recognition. What happened? Why was the fence moved? There was no provincial or other municipal ordinance requiring the parishioners of the Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God



FIG. 7.4 Gerardine and Mike Woitas (far right) with members of the Sanctuary team

to change the location of their fence. There were no sloughs nearby threatening the cemetery. Why was it important to tell our research team about the change in the location of the fence? Had nothing been said, we would not have been aware that the fence was not where it had been earlier. As Mike and Gerardine Woitas explained, the reason for relocating the fence was a change in belief. And it was their initiative that led to the recognition of formerly ostracized deceased infants who had died unbaptized.

According to the couple, it all started with Gerardine being curious about her peculiar name. What she learned was that prior to her birth, a baby brother had been born, but died in infancy. His name was Gerard and that would indicate that he was, in fact, baptized. My respondent was the next child born after the boy who did not live, so she was given the feminized version of what would have been her brother's name. Carrying his name gave Gerardine the feeling of having a special bond with the brother who died. She dreamed of him often. She talked about him with her husband. The profound effect of discovering the identity

of Gerard led the couple to look into other babies who had not survived infancy. Unbaptized babies did not appear in church ledgers, but they were registered in civic records, and from these, Gerardine learned that there had been two other babies in her family who were either stillborn or had died as infants and whose names had not been recorded by the church. While she was aware of the existence of Gerard, the other two infants were a complete surprise because, as Gerardine told me in a follow-up interview, her parents never talked about them; it was as if these children had never existed. While I did not think to ask, all indications are that Gerard was indeed baptized, and that is why, after he died, the family considered it acceptable to pass his name on to the next child in line: the baby girl who grew up to be Gerardine. The unbaptized infants, I assume, had no names to pass on to subsequent children.

The examination of the records of the Popik family, Gerardine's family of birth, inspired other members of the Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God to check their family histories. The names of many babies appeared, as well as records of babies who died with no name. It was this discovery that led to the moving of the cemetery fence to include all of the infant graves. It also led to the erection of a cenotaph with the recovered names of dead infants and also a statement recognizing those infants who never received a name. As it states on the cenotaph, the monument is "in loving memory of the children buried in this cemetery without personal markers." I had an almost supernatural experience when I went to photograph the cenotaph and that part of the cemetery where the graves of the unbaptized infants are located. My camera suddenly started acting up and would not let me take any pictures. And I could not fix my camera and remedy the situation because my colleagues were in a hurry to leave for our next destination and would not wait while I fiddled with my equipment. That part of the cemetery at the Patronage of the Mother of God Church remains unphotographed, at least by me.

What happened at Model Farm was parishioner action that culminated in official church recognition of the personhood of unbaptized children. In a number of other districts, parishioners took it upon themselves to erect cenotaphs or plaques in honour of formerly ostracized infants. A cenotaph similar to the one on the grounds of the Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God stands at the Kyziv St Demetrius Church south of Rama, Saskatchewan. At the Dormition of the Blessed



FIG. 7.5 Cenotaph in Kyziv

Virgin Orthodox Church in MacNutt, there is a metal plaque with a message almost identical to the one on the Model Farm cenotaph: “To the memory of all infant children who are asleep in the Lord and have no markers: Memory Eternal.” At the cemetery in Birmingham, Saskatchewan, little plaques or memorial stones have been placed at the foot of the adult graves for all of the families that lost children before they could be baptized. As it turns out, almost every husband-and-wife pair of graves has a little lost baby marker below it. I do not know whether any of these community efforts led to official church recognition of the unbaptized. I did not ask at the time. Unfortunately, one often sees patterns of behaviour not when one is in the field but later, when working through and contemplating one’s data. This happened to me, and there was no opportunity to return with follow-up questions.³

Alexander Panchenko, in his description of the creation of saints’ shrines in Russia, notes that there is a three-step process by which parishioner action becomes official doctrine. In the Russian material he surveyed, the construction of personal shrines, or individual acts

of piety, can be followed by communal recognition and reverence by a group or groups of believers. This can lead to official recognition of a sacred site.⁴ The Model Farm case is an instance of official recognition. Rama, Kyziv, MacNutt, and Birmingham offer evidence of communal action. Whether the cenotaphs and plaques in these locations led to church sanctification of the infant graves, I do not know.

The cenotaphs and plaques in Model Farm, Kyziv, and MacNutt indicate a change in attitude toward unbaptized infants and a reclassification of them as people who deserve burial in sanctified soil. This change in group or communal attitudes in rural Saskatchewan did not occur in a vacuum. It was facilitated by a general shift in approaches toward the stillborn and those infants who die soon after birth. According to Gerardine, the changes in belief that led to the change in practice at the Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God happened within the past ten years. In Brinsley, Alberta, Leona and Harry Ewanchuk gave a similar date: they said that the practice of burying unbaptized infants outside the cemetery ended about ten years prior to our interview. At about this time, specifically on 27 May 2007, the *Globe and Mail* newspaper carried an article about a funeral for a miscarriage. This generated a lengthy discussion about hospitals and failed pregnancies and about parents contesting with medical professionals the point at which a fetus becomes a person and can no longer be treated as medical waste. According to the article, medical technology, such as ultrasound, which can show the child moving in utero, makes the baby real to the couple at an earlier stage in gestation and makes them want to treat it as a person and to demand full burial rites. Medical imaging may have affected the perceptions of the parishioners of the Church of the Patronage of the Mother of God because of the coincidence in dates.⁵

While the shift in attitude toward the unborn may have begun earlier, it is clear that a change in birthing practices, specifically from home to hospital delivery, likely served as the catalyst for interring unbaptized infants on sanctified cemetery grounds. When children were born at home, no name was granted to a child until he or she was baptized. Once children started to be delivered in hospitals, names were assigned to infants whether or not they survived, and this was crucial to the way that babies who did not live were conceptualized. Names are of vital importance. The oldest known stories of ways to bring peace to

a stillborn child state that naming him or her is precisely what is necessary.⁶ It was her peculiar name that started Gerardine on the search that led to the discovery of a sibling who did not live beyond infancy. Names matter. A name makes a baby real in an almost Lacanian sort of way. But babies were not named prior to baptism, especially by religious people, as long as only the family and the church were involved in the incorporation of a new being into this world. In cemeteries on the Prairies, early infant graves, if they are marked, bear no name at all or just the family name, but not the given name of the child, precisely because a name had not yet been given. A few infant graves have small cement or stone markers, again with the name of the family, but not that of the infant. Sometimes they give the date on which the child was delivered. If the child survived a few days, then both dates may be given. Giving the name of an unbaptized child on a cross or gravestone is a recent phenomenon, dating approximately to the 1970s, and is by no means obligatory. Making babies real by naming them led, I believe, to a three-stage process similar to the three stages of creating saints' shrines described by Panchenko.

Dissatisfaction with burying unbaptized infants outside the cemetery arose much earlier than the erection of cenotaphs or the moving of the fence at Model Farm. During this early period of dissatisfaction, however, there was not enough communal support for protests against such burials to take the form of anything except individual expression. In other words, this was the first stage of Panchenko's three-step process. Some of the instances of early individual expression can still be observed on the Prairie landscape. In Shipman, Saskatchewan, where we worked in 2013, I was given my usual graveyard tour, which included being shown the site where the ashes of the former church were buried, marked by the church's cupola. As we walked around, I noticed, outside the cemetery proper, the usual cluster of tiny baby graves with wooden crosses. Next to them was something quite unusual: a large adult grave complete with the Maple Leaf used to mark the graves of veterans. The grave bore the name of Anthony Thomas Huculak, born in 1923 and deceased in 1979. When asked about this strange grouping, Rose Huculak, my respondent on this tour, explained that the man in the large grave was indeed a veteran. Furthermore, he died a natural death; he did not commit suicide. The reason he was buried on the periphery,



FIG. 7.6 Grave of Anthony Huculak. The white tombstone marks the grave of his son. All other infants are marked with wooden crosses.

along with the dead infants, was that he had had a baby boy who died unbaptized and was thus doomed to peripheral burial. This upset the father so much that he insisted on being buried alongside his son when he himself died, a request that was granted. Not far from the adult grave is a lovely stone marker bearing the inscription “Baby Huculak, Son of A. and S. Huculak, July 16, 1946.” All the other baby grave markers are wooden and bear only the name of the family who lost their child; there is no indication of the gender of the infant. Apparently, the congregation back in 1946 and again in 1979 when the elder Huculak was buried followed church dictates. Group belief in the personhood of unbaptized infants had not yet developed, and the communal support that led to the changes found in Model Farm, Kyziv, and elsewhere did not yet exist. At the time Anthony Huculak protested the extra-cemetery burial of his son, belief in the necessity of baptism for personhood was still strong. Only recently, with the acceptance of even stillborn infants as people, have some Ukrainian congregations switched to including unbaptized infant graves within the cemetery proper.

IMPROPER ADULTS: SUICIDES AND CREMATED INDIVIDUALS

Men who told me cemetery stories typically raised the matter of suicides being buried apart from the other graves. When cemetery maintenance takes place, men get the job of using heavy equipment such as ride-on mowers, and it is up to them to clean up the main part of the graveyard. Like the women, who were uncomfortable with the extra-cemetery burial of infants, men often objected to the fact that people who had committed suicide needed to be buried away from everyone else. Many men acted on their objections and mowed paths to these graves. In doing so, they made the suicides visible: their graves were no longer hidden by tall Prairie grass. The path they mowed between the suicide graves and the rest of the cemetery linked the two together, as the cemetery keepers apparently felt they should be. Women talking about infants buried outside the cemetery talked about them as a group, a generic category. Men telling me about the graves of suicides often had stories about specific individuals.

Rudolf Kresak of St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Rama, Saskatchewan, told me about a woman whose husband had committed suicide and was buried outside the cemetery proper. Like Anthony Huculak, she felt this treatment of her husband to be so unjust that she asked to be buried beside him, even though she herself did not need to be excluded from sanctified ground. In Sheho, Saskatchewan, I was told an almost identical story about a woman who was unhappy that her husband had been buried outside the cemetery because he had committed suicide. According to Leonard Sebulski, the woman insisted that her husband was not a sinner; he took his life because he was sick, she said. If other people who were sick, if people who had physical rather than mental illnesses, could receive proper burial, why was this denied her husband? In protest, she acted in much the same way as Huculak and the woman in Rama – she insisted on being buried outside the cemetery herself so that she could be next to her spouse. Leonard's brother, who was taking care of the Sheho cemetery, pointed out the path that had been mowed to the grave of the man who had killed himself and the grave of his wife who had chosen to lie by his side. These situations are not unique. Neatly mowed paths to graves located outside the cemetery can be seen

in Jedburgh, Saskatchewan, and New Kiew, Alberta. Unfortunately, I was not privileged to hear stories to go with them.

What is happening with the graves of suicides is somewhere between individual contestation of accepted burial practices and community acquiescence to new attitudes toward taking one's own life. Suicide, more and more often, is being redefined as a manifestation of illness rather than a sin. Although attitudes toward suicide are changing, we encountered no instances where there was community pressure to include the graves of people who had died by their own hand in the cemetery proper. The paths mowed to the graves of suicides indicate the extent to which these burials are recognized. As mentioned in the chapter on funerals, accepting unbaptized infants as sinless and deserving of cemetery burial is far easier than seeing suicides as people without sin because newborns are innocent whereas adults do have some capacity for choice. Strictures against suicide are becoming less severe, albeit slowly. I heard no objections from the parishioners in those congregations where cemetery caretakers make the graves of suicides apparent. The paths mowed to where graves outside the cemetery proper are located elicit no negative comments. Even so, church recognition of suicides as deserving cemetery burial has yet to come.

Resurrection is believed to occur in the body, and this means that the body must be intact when it is buried. No one questions the fact that human remains decay, but the condition of the body when it is interred allows for proper resurrection on Judgment Day. Thus, cremation is avoided, and, when I was in Ukraine, many people expressed fear of fires precisely because they did not want their bodies to be destroyed. Orthodox clergy frequently refuse to conduct a service over cremated remains, although some allow cremation once the funeral service is complete. Most frown upon the interment of ashes in cemeteries.

Canada presents a situation where belief in the need to bury the body intact comes into conflict with economic pressures. Many people express an overwhelming desire to be buried in the cemetery of the church they attended as children, a desire likely linked to the meaning of burial to immigrants. These "home" cemeteries have special meaning, and many Ukrainian Canadians do their very best to be laid to rest there. Unfortunately, being buried "at home" can be financially impossible, however much one yearns for it. Shipping a body across

Canada is prohibitively expensive. When I was working on Ukrainian collections for the Royal Alberta Museum, I interviewed the relatives of Peter Orshinsky, who had amassed a huge collection of artifacts, which his family then donated to the museum. According to Orshinsky's niece, Peter had been planning a trip to Ukraine when he learned that he was terminally ill. He decided to forgo his trip abroad and focused on arranging for his own burial in Alberta. Although being laid to rest on the Prairies was of paramount importance to him, the cost proved so prohibitive that he eventually accepted burial in Fenwick, Ontario, where he resided at the time of his death.⁷

Shipping ashes is much, much cheaper than shipping a body. At the St Onuphrius Orthodox Church south of Foam Lake, my cemetery tour included a long discussion about burying cremated individuals. According to my guide Doug Bonar, one member of the congregation had moved to Ottawa and worked there until his death. Ottawa was his residence, but the St Onuphrius Church was his home, and he wanted to be buried alongside his relatives. Because of the prohibitive cost of shipping his body intact, this could not be done, so he was cremated, and his ashes were delivered to his family in Foam Lake. When the priest refused to celebrate a funeral over these remains because they were ashes and not a body and then denied cemetery burial of the cremated remains, the relatives went to the graveyard at night and buried the ashes themselves. They did not keep their action secret. They made their protest known by burying the ashes alongside the grave of one of the members of their family and erecting an engraved metal plate over the spot. Was this an individual act, or was the burial of cremated remains something with which the parishioners sympathized because they understood both the desire to be buried at home and the impossibility of paying for the shipment of an intact body? I cannot provide the answer. Doug Bonar, my cemetery guide, was sympathetic to the family's plight. What other parishioners thought, I do not know. I attended a service and a celebration at the St Onuphrius Church, but this was not an occasion where discussing cremation would have been appropriate.

An unusual account of a suicide combined with a cremation comes from Ispas, Alberta. When my consultant took me around the cemetery, he pointed out a grave at the edge that held the remains of a man who had committed suicide. According to my guide, the deceased man's

mother objected to his burial on the periphery, and when she died, she had her body cremated and her ashes scattered on her son's grave. By this action, she went against two church dictates while also indicating her unity with a son who had been ostracized. What this mother did was not a public statement, unlike the burial of ashes south of Foam Lake. From what I heard, the woman's choosing cremation, even though this was not condoned by the church, was something that was generally known. Having her ashes scattered on her son's grave as an act of protest was a clandestine act, very different from marking cremated remains with a plaque, as had been done at Foam Lake. It was only when the man who mowed the cemetery grounds found the metal tag from the crematorium that what the mother had done became apparent. Again, I cannot say whether there was community support for what the woman had done. The man who told me about the scattered ashes was somewhat nervous and uncomfortable with the situation. What his fellow parishioners thought, I cannot say.

Will individual actions in regard to suicides and cremated individuals lead to a change in communal belief and perhaps to a change in church policy? Will such people be recognized and accepted by the church the way that unbaptized infants have been, at least in some locations? As stated earlier, it is easy to accept newborns as innocent; with adults, it is harder. Changes in attitudes toward adults whose lives did not end in the traditional way will take longer. Certainly, looking for changes is something that would be useful in future Canadian Prairie work.

INDIVIDUAL ASSERTION AND CONTESTING GENDER ROLES

When Ukrainian Canadians on the Prairies erect cenotaphs to unbaptized babies, and when they mow paths to the graves of suicides, they are using cemeteries to express changing attitudes that are held by many, if not most, of the members of their parish. In Preeceville, Saskatchewan, I met a woman who used the cemetery of her home church, a cemetery in which she herself planned to rest, to make an individual and unique statement about gender roles.

Nellie Holowachuk defied expectations of what a Ukrainian woman born on the Prairies should be and do. She was an independent and



FIG. 7.7 Nellie Holowachuk

financially very successful person who never married. She used her money to erect statuary in the cemetery of her home church that, so I surmise, was meant to legitimize her unconventional life. She commissioned life-sized granite statues of Christ the Saviour and Mary, Mother of God, as well as almost life-sized monuments of the Stations of the Cross. The striking assemblage she erected in the cemetery of the Chechow church, her family church and the one she attended as a child, was her way of proclaiming to the world that she had succeeded at the life she had chosen, one that was worthy of admiration and respect.

I first learned of Nellie Holowachuk on a hot afternoon in Preeceville. When the Sanctuary team does its work, we typically stay in a location from which we can travel to several churches. After we have documented all the churches in the surrounding area, we move on to another more or less central location to work on another set of sites. In 2015 we were

staying in Preeceville, and one afternoon when we had no churches on our schedule, I went for a walk around the town. My usual approach to touring Prairie towns was to look around and get a sense of place and to talk to as many people as would talk to me. This was quite easy, because unfamiliar faces like ours were rare and people were curious about why we were there. During my Preeceville walk, I stopped in a cafe to escape the heat and get some refreshment. Of course, my presence aroused curiosity, and as soon as I explained who I was and what our team was doing, people immediately told me that I had to drive down a dirt road heading south and west and visit the Chechow (pronounced Chekhov) church to see a remarkable set of cemetery monuments. Coincidentally, that evening Maudest Yurkiw, a man whom I had interviewed earlier, stopped by our motel to tell me that I had to interview Nellie Holowachuk, the woman who had donated the monuments described to me in the cafe.

Frances Swyripa and I drove out to the Chechow church and were overwhelmed. In the fading light we saw the life-sized statues of Christ the Saviour and Mary, Mother of God. Around the perimeter of the cemetery were slightly less than life-sized, but nonetheless huge, statues of the Stations of the Cross. Not far from the Christ and Mary statues was an enormous monument executed in pink granite and waiting to receive the remains of the donor of all of this statuary: Nellie Holowachuk. The scene was magical. The setting sun and the gorgeous Prairie landscape inspired awe. A double rainbow graced the sky as if to signal that we had been led to a special discovery. And there it was – that special discovery: huge statues in the middle of nowhere. The statues were something special: a monumental statement that deeply affected my colleague and me. The following day I had my chance to conduct an interview with Nellie Holowachuk at the personal care home where she then lived.

Nellie, I learned, was born in Ketchen. This is an even smaller town than Preeceville, to the west of where we were staying. As Nellie explained, she may have been born in a small town, but she did not want to be a small-town girl, and she did not want to become a farmer's wife as was customary for young women in her area. She was exceptionally good-looking and did some modelling. It was perhaps because of her modelling that Nellie moved to Toronto, though I could not establish this for a fact. What is certain, and what Nellie talked about at length, was that in Toronto, she worked as an assistant in a hair salon while

she trained to get her certificate as a hairdresser. Earning the certificate allowed her to open a salon on her own. Nellie turned out to be not only a good hairdresser but also a shrewd businesswoman, and soon she had two salons, a staff, and a large number of happy clients. One of the clients was a stockbroker, who advised Nellie on investing in the stock market. Nellie did invest, quite cannily, and became wealthy. This allowed her to travel, and she did just that. Most of her adventures were pleasant, although one trip to the Middle East ended in a kidnapping and injury. There were implications that she was raped, although I could not quite make out what had happened. At the time of our interview, Nellie was in her late seventies and quite frail: she was not clear on all aspects of her story. What is clear is that Nellie did make it back to Canada. It is also clear that she never married. After she sold her business and retired, she moved to Preeceville to be near her family and in a position to be buried in the cemetery of the Chechow church. This was her home church, and the plaque listing founding members outside it bears the names of a number of Holowachuks.

Nellie developed colon cancer. This required surgery and long hospital stays. During one of her rehabilitation sessions, she went to the washroom, looked up at the mirror, and saw the face of Jesus glowing over her shoulder. The vision was momentary, but the memory of it was indelible. It was a numinous experience. After her vision, Nellie told no one, but she could not help but wonder why Christ had appeared. Of course, she felt blessed that her cancer was in remission. Still, she felt that the vision was not simply a confirmation of healing; there was some other meaning to what she had seen. As she told me, she kept wondering what Jesus wanted. Eventually she realized that it was a statue, so she commissioned a granite statue of Jesus and had it erected in the cemetery outside the Chechow church. Still, something was wrong. Nellie felt that Jesus wanted more. Jesus was lonely standing out there all alone in the cemetery, Nellie explained, as beautiful and as scenic as the locale might be. So she commissioned a statue of Mary, Mother of God, and that statue now shares a stone pedestal with Jesus. Yet she was still not satisfied, besides which, she was practical: she did not want the government to take her money after her death, so she ordered stone sculptures of all fourteen Stations of the Cross. These were erected along the perimeter of the Chechow cemetery. The statues of Jesus and Mary,

Mother of God are at the back, facing the road. Fanning out to either side of them are the Stations of the Cross. At the back and a bit off to the side is the memorial obelisk that Nellie ordered for her own grave.

Holowachuk was frail at the time of our interview, especially after her prolonged battle with cancer, and many people were afraid I would have a terrible time interviewing her. But when speaking about her illness, her recovery, and most especially her vision, Holowachuk was coherent and articulate. Holowachuk was a religious person, and she felt that she had been blessed with the numinous vision, something that few people are privileged to experience. She was grateful to be in remission, even though she was quite weak. But most of all she was proud of what she had accomplished in the Chechow cemetery. Not only was the site beautiful and made more so by the statuary she had commissioned: it was striking, even startling. To see an assemblage of monumental statues in the middle of nowhere takes one's breath away. Holowachuk was eager to have her accomplishments recognized, and indeed, she achieved the recognition she wanted. After all, a stranger, a university professor from another province, having heard about Holowachuk from a number of locals, was there recording an interview, something that promised further recognition through database collections and publications.⁸

CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALIZATION

Nellie Holowachuk's statues function on many levels. She wanted to make sure that her accomplishments were recognized and validated by her home community, and she had chosen the cemetery of her family church to accomplish her goals. In other words, she had chosen to memorialize herself. Julie Rugg points out that cemeteries, unlike graveyards, "offer the possibility of, and the context for, memorializing a particular individual." A cemetery "enshrines the identity of the deceased."⁹ Nellie did indeed want to be recognized as an individual – and for her individuality – and she wanted, perhaps needed, to use her donations to memorialize herself. Her own gravestone is the largest single object on the site, dwarfing all of the other tombstones and crosses. It is plain, with the Lord's Prayer in English on the front and in Ukrainian on the back. The Twenty-Third Psalm, in English, is written on the slab intended for covering the grave. The monolith with the Lord's Prayer rests on a base. The words "She had

a vision" appear on that base in large capital letters. This is a grave marker of what James A. Hijiya calls the monumental variety. Monumentality, according to Hijiya, shows defiance of death. Discussing grave markers and using them as a way to trace a history of attitudes toward death in America, Hijiya points out that early views of death accepted it as a routine event. Attitudes toward death, and the gravestones through which these views were articulated, shifted over time. North American grave markers associated with the Puritans reminded people to prepare for death through good behaviour, offering heaven as a reward. These were followed by stones promising a life after death, not just in heaven but also on earth. If those left behind mourned the deceased, Hijiya argues, if they engaged in commemorative acts, then the person would live on in memory. This is reflected in grave markers depicting weeping willows and mourners rather than skulls or angels. The monumental grave marker, the next one to appear in historical sequence, took one step further the idea of living on through things here on earth rather than in heaven. Monumental grave markers are forceful reminders of the deceased. They celebrate what the deceased has accomplished in this world and remind the living of those accomplishments so that they will retain their awareness of the person who has passed away.¹⁰ This is particularly relevant in Holowachuk's case. As a childless woman who had spent most of her life away from her ancestral home and the graveyard in which she was to be buried, she could not rely on memory alone. She needed to showcase her accomplishments by erecting a set of statues that no one else in a small town like Preeceville could possibly afford.

Hijiya associates monumental grave markers with defiance of death, an attitude diametrically opposed to the acceptance of dying evident in the earliest North American grave markers. The concept of defiance fit Holowachuk's life in many ways. Perhaps defiance of life's conventions was more important to her than defiance of death; perhaps, too, a bid for recognition and acceptance of her unusual life choices was her primary motivation for donating the statuary at Chechow. As already noted in the brief biography provided earlier, Nellie Holowachuk defied Ukrainian Canadian convention. By not marrying, by living alone and travelling extensively, especially in countries that Ukrainians did not normally visit, by being financially self-sufficient and even wealthy, Holowachuk showed herself to be exceptional. Her defiance was not just against the

taxman but against societal norms as well. She used her statuary to visibly articulate her status as her own woman. She could have avoided the taxman by donating to a religious or other charity. She chose not to do so because the charity would then have had the power to decide how the funds would be used; Holowachuk wanted to make her own decisions and her own statements.

Writing about the politics of memory and monuments to historical events rather than people, Katharyne Mitchell notes that monuments of exceptional size are generally erected in urban areas because of the tremendous cost involved and thus the need to access the resources of a group rather than an individual. Holowachuk's monuments are of monumental size and are especially striking because they were paid for entirely by one person. Mitchell talks further about power and the gendering of monuments and male dominance in the social and commemorative sphere.¹¹ What we see south of Preeceville is a woman defying male dominance; her actions can be compared to what Mitchell calls counter-practices, which seek to constitute "minority" memory. Holowachuk was not part of any social movement such as the one that Mitchell discusses, but she did act in a way that both ensured her own memory and spoke to a non-traditional definition of what a woman should and could be.

NELLIE'S STATUES AND EASTERN RITE CATHOLIC TRADITION

Holowachuk did not simply rebel against the church or against male hegemony; religion was important to her, and in her actions, she combined her rebellion with conformity and negotiated her own take on proper religious behaviour. Her vision was central to her actions, and she stressed that in the vision, it was Christ who appeared. It was Christ who decided that the statues should be placed at Chechow, not she herself. By attributing the decision to Christ and downplaying her own agency, I believe, she was evoking the authority of the church and its ultimate male figure, thus legitimizing her own unusual actions. But Holowachuk did claim agency regardless. She did not talk about receiving a command from Christ. Rather, she described a rather enigmatic vision, one that left her wondering about its meaning and what Christ wanted

her to do. It was she who needed to decipher the vision and to realize that she was meant to spend her money on statues for the cemetery at Chechow. She further underscored her personal role in the Chechow statuary by having her name and the date of the donation inscribed on the pedestal on which the figures of Christ the Saviour and Mary, Mother of God stand.

The placement of the statuary in the cemetery follows tradition, and this also serves to legitimize Holowachuk's unusual act. The statues outside the Chechow church are arranged as the Stations of the Cross and the figures of Christ and Mary would be arranged in a church interior. The figures of Christ the Saviour and Mary Mother of God are farthest away from the entrance to the cemetery, just as figurines of Christ and Mary would be placed near the altar or *iconostas* and farthest away from the church door. The Stations of the Cross statues follow the perimeter of the cemetery just as small icons or plaques with images of the Stations of the Cross are traditionally mounted on walls in Eastern Rite Prairie Catholic churches. Essentially, Holowachuk took what can be seen inside churches and put it outside, in the cemetery. She further transformed it by replacing figurines and icons with large statues, making the assemblage her own and making it monumental. And to make sure that everyone recognized her agency, she not only inscribed her name but also placed her own tombstone in a prominent position.

UKRAINIAN CANADIANS AND TRADITIONS OF PILGRIMAGE: STATIONS OF THE CROSS AND CHILDREN

Holowachuk's actions evoke not only church symbolism but also symbols important to Ukrainian Canadians. The statues at Chechow are not simply acts of defiance and assertions of the right to individual expression. They also show Holowachuk's acceptance of the Ukrainian Canadian symbolic world and seek to incorporate her person into it. As Rugg points out, another aspect of cemeteries is that they are sacred spaces because they act "as a focus for the pilgrimage of friends and family."¹² The Chechow statues, I believe, were Holowachuk's bid to turn her grave into a site of pilgrimage. Having one's grave visited is extremely important to all Ukrainians, and the pilgrimage to the gravesite of one's ancestors holds special meaning and tremendous weight in Canada. As

much of an individual as Holowachuk might have been, her view of life and afterlife required that her grave be a place where people would want to go. But Holowachuk had no children, and her friends were probably far away, in Toronto. How could she attract visitors to her grave except by creating a striking site that would demand attention?

As already noted, cemeteries are especially important to Ukrainian Canadians, just as they are to all immigrants, because they are a way to establish the presence of their ethnic group in the new homeland. Visiting the dead is a Ukrainian tradition, and in Canada, this tradition, like the cemetery itself, acquires additional merit as a way to honour ancestors, the original immigrants who established Ukrainian communities in the new Canadian world. It is possible that Nellie saw herself as a pilgrim returning to the place of her ancestors, much like the many visitors from afar whom the Sanctuary team encountered at grave blessings across the Prairies. The idea of return “home” is underscored on her tombstone, where Toronto, Ontario, is written after her name. While perhaps not presenting herself as the prodigal daughter, Holowachuk did use her tombstone to say that she had been away and had returned. Her return was not just the annual pilgrimage for a grave blessing event; it was the final return for eternity. It is further noteworthy that Holowachuk had the Lord’s prayer written in English on the front of her gravestone and in Ukrainian on the back. It is almost as if she was asserting that she was now part of the anglophone Canadian world, but still recognized her Ukrainian background: Ukrainian would always be there behind the anglophone façade.

Holowachuk’s roots, her background, are clearly part of the Chechow church. The names of the Holowachuk ancestors are listed on plaques honouring the founders of this church, and Nellie’s grave is situated near those of her family: she has thus returned to her roots as a good descendant should. But Holowachuk did not want to simply return. If that was her goal, she might have behaved liked those other Ukrainian Canadians who had their remains shipped back to their ancestral cemetery. Holowachuk’s problem, I believe, was that she did not have descendants; there were no children to continue the cycle of pilgrimage and return to ancestral graves that Holowachuk herself performed. Holowachuk had no descendants to come to her grave the way that was customary and the way she had herself come back to the family

church. I believe this is why she created “children of stone” – statuary commissioned, if not created, by her, figures that would keep vigil over the Holowachuk family cemetery the way that living descendants do for those who have been fortunate enough to produce offspring. Furthermore, these were statues meant to attract visitors, to encourage the pilgrimage of non-relatives, and indeed, the Chechow cemetery had become a site pointed out to visitors even in Holowachuk’s lifetime. Certainly, I was urged to visit and take my Sanctuary Project colleagues along.

The association of Holowachuk’s statuary with children is reinforced in another way. Similar assemblages of Stations of the Cross on the Canadian Prairies are associated with pregnancy and fertility. At least in vernacular religion, they are believed to help true and ardent believers who are struggling to conceive children. Just south of Preeceville is a town called Rama, the home of the monastery of Our Lady of Lourdes. This is a Roman Catholic site, but one frequented by people of many ethnicities and religions, Ukrainian Catholics included. Outside the monastery is a garden with a set of stone Stations of the Cross very similar to the ones that Holowachuk commissioned for Chechow. These Stations of the Cross are located along the perimeter of the garden; a grotto with the statue of Mary, Mother of God, is in the centre. The garden has been designed as a place for reflection and contemplation by the monks and visitors. Over time it has acquired another meaning and purpose: in vernacular belief it has become associated with miracles and the power to bring fertility to couples unable to have children. Our Sanctuary team visited Rama in 2016 and again in 2017. During the latter visit, my colleague busied himself taking photographs of the statuary while I stood near the gate. I was looking at the scenery when I was approached by a couple with a small child who were leaving the garden. We began a conversation, and the family told me they visited the site often, having credited it with the conception of their daughter. As we talked, other people came out to join in the conversation, and I was treated to a vernacular history of this site. The garden was built during the Second World War on the initiative of Father Anton Sylla, whose statue stands near the entrance. It then fell into disrepair but was restored in 2012 by Cas and Marie Broda, who credited it with their business success and also with their ability to have a child, something they too had been unable to do for a long time.

Another outdoor Stations of the Cross is in Cudworth, and it too is associated with children. Our Sanctuary team visited there in 2011. The decision to set up the statuary in that location is attributed to a vision of Mary Mother of God that two children had on the hilltop where the statuary is currently found. The site became a focal point for pilgrimages, and a chapel with an auditorium and stage was erected nearby to serve the many visitors. The chapel and auditorium have since been closed, but the statuary remain.

Did Holowachuk associate her statuary with children? Unfortunately, we will never know. In 2016 I went to the personal care home in Preeceville to visit Nellie again. Knowing that she liked attention, I wanted to ask whether she had seen a popular piece I had written about her for *Nasha Doroha* (*Our Path*), a Catholic news journal.¹³ I also wanted to follow up on our earlier interview and ask about some of the interpretations presented here. Unfortunately, Nellie was gone. She had seen the *Nasha Doroha* article, I was told, and she had proudly shown it to the other residents of the home. But speaking with Nellie herself was not possible. All I could do was make a pilgrimage to her grave at the Chechow cemetery.

HOLOWACHUK'S UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT USING THE CEMETERY AS SETTING

Li and others emphasize that grave markers are typically erected by the family of the deceased, not by the dead person him or herself, although family usually try to follow the wishes of the person being commemorated.¹⁴ This is not always the case. Some people, especially those who want to be recognized and memorialized in a distinctive way, erect their own grave markers. Yet even by comparison to these grandiose monuments, what Nellie Holowachuk did was exceptional: she did not simply erect a monument to herself, she populated the entire small cemetery belonging to the Chechow church with distinctive statuary, transforming it into a site of pilgrimage, a tourist site, not just a place of burial. Other Stations of the Cross do indeed attract pilgrims and tourists. The garden at Rama is listed as a tourist site, complete with advice on the best times to visit depending on the type of experience one seeks. The statuary Holowachuk gave to the Chechow church has the same potential.

What Holowachuk did, I believe, was use the heterotopic quality of the cemetery to perform an act that met her needs for memorialization and that helped create a progeny in stone when real, biological children were not possible. She met her longing for immortality not through children but through works. She also made a statement to her community, justifying herself and her life in terms of the beliefs and symbols that were important to, and well understood by, the Ukrainian Canadian community. Her choice of the cemetery as the location for her donation was probably motivated by the heterotopic quality of this space: she could do here what she could not do in the eparchy-controlled confines of the church. This choice also gave her work a permanence that could not have been achieved had her gift gone inside the church itself. As noted earlier, cemeteries remain even as churches disappear. Furthermore, when churches close, their contents are contested in sometimes acrimonious ways. Some donated items end up in the museum run by the Basilian Fathers in Mundare, Alberta. Many, however, are destroyed, and this might well have been the fate of Nellie's donation, had it not been one of stone cemetery statues. The heterotopic quality of the cemetery and the special meanings that cemeteries hold for Ukrainian Canadians allowed Nellie Holowachuk to contest gender roles assigned to Ukrainian Canadian women. It also allowed her to return home, as many Ukrainian Canadians long to do. And it allowed her to memorialize herself, to secure that which Ukrainians traditionally wish for their deceased: memory eternal.

CONCLUSION

Cemeteries are special places. When people die, cemeteries are where they find eternal repose. For Ukrainian Canadians, as for other immigrants, cemeteries are where the interment of their ancestors creates a permanent link to a new country, a new homeland. As the demographic shifts that are occurring in western Canada force the closing of Prairie churches, cemeteries are the institutions that live on: they are carefully maintained even as the churches with which they were affiliated cease to exist. Yet cemeteries are by no means static. They are where Ukrainian Canadians can express changing ideas about what constitutes personhood. They are where they can contest church officials' definitions of who

can and who cannot be buried in sanctified cemetery soil. Cemeteries allow for group or communal action, such as redefining the status of unbaptized infants. Cemeteries even allow for individual expression. Sometimes this takes the form of persons contesting burial practices by choosing to be interred in unconventional places; thus, adults who have the right to cemetery burial can choose to rest with family members to whom cemetery burial has been denied. Sometimes this can entail the creation of a striking memorial site to an unusual individual by that exceptional person herself. 🌿

CHAPTER 8

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THE CALENDAR YEAR

Christmas and Easter are the two most important Christian holidays. For Prairie Ukrainians the celebrations that happen in the home are of special prominence. The church services that go with Christmas and Easter are important as well, but it is families' commemorations of these events that dominated the minds of most of the people I interviewed. Christmas church services, when they are celebrated, are often abbreviated. This is attributable at least in part to Prairie weather and road conditions. The other reason is that Yordan, the water blessing linked to the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, is a virtually obligatory church service and comes close in time to Christmas. Most congregations cannot afford to have the priest celebrate both Christmas and Yordan. When a choice needs to be made, the church service is held on Yordan. Christmas, whether or not there is a Yordan service, is celebrated in the home.

Easter is another matter. This is a most important church service, not only because it celebrates the resurrection of Christ from the dead but also because, like Yordan, it produces a blessed substance. In the case of Easter, the substance is food, which is essential to the breaking of the fast after Great Lent. The special Pascal service that blesses the food shared in the home is so important that the priests will try to do at least something in even the smallest churches. This has led to great time flexibility, so that while ideally celebrated at sunrise on Easter morning, the Pascal service on the Prairies can occur anywhere between sometime on Saturday and sometime on Sunday. Palm Sunday, which

falls one week before Easter, is also very important, and most places try to have a service on this day as well as for Easter. The specifically Ukrainian version of this holiday is called Pussy Willow Sunday because pussy willows rather than palms are blessed on this day. Both Yordan and Pussy Willow Sunday produce blessed substances that are used by Ukrainians, including those living on the Prairies. These are discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas celebrations on the Prairies are an interesting combination of expressions of religious faith mixed with actions that were once meant to ensure future harvests and are now seen primarily as markers of Ukrainian identity, although there is some feeling that the traditions once said to affect crops and the fertility of farm animals are indeed efficacious. This might be compared to those actions taken to avert bad weather and discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion: people look down on those who openly express belief in the power of these behaviours yet quietly perform the actions themselves. There is a “what if” element to the various crop-oriented practices: *what if* these actions, because they have the weight of years of Ukrainian tradition and because they are done at a time central to the Christian faith, can actually produce positive results or predict farming success in the coming year? A number of my respondents named the results that were supposedly achievable by Christmastime actions related to crops and animals. I did not ask whether they actually believed that the actions they described led to the desired outcome; in today’s society, such a question would have been somewhere between uncomfortable and inappropriate.

Because family is so important to Ukrainian Canadians, the Christmas celebration ideally brings all relatives together for the Christmas Eve meal. Frances Elkow in Musidora, and Elsie Choban in Two Hills, both in Alberta, and Bill Soloway of Porcupine Plain, Gerald Yaholnitsky of Wroxton, and Peter and Jean Woroschuk of Calder, all in Saskatchewan, mentioned large gatherings of twenty to thirty people. But while large gatherings are the ideal, most Christmas Eve events are limited to immediate family. Because of the weather and Prairie road conditions, children and more distant relatives who have moved away cannot always

travel to join those who have stayed on the farm and who still attend the ancestral church. Those Ukrainian Canadians who do remain on the Prairies tend to gather at one house for their celebration. It is especially important that no one be left on his or her own, and widows, widowers, and unmarried kin join the Christmas Eve event at the home of a relative who has a family.

The Christmas Eve meal was, and is, universally celebrated among Ukrainian Canadians across the Prairies. It is important in the rural areas that were at the core of Sanctuary Project fieldwork, and it is a central holiday event in urban settings, where newspapers and other media in cities with large Ukrainian populations such as Edmonton always feature an interview with a Ukrainian household and a picture of their Christmas Eve table. This meal consists of twelve meatless dishes and is supposed to start when the first star, symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem, appears in the sky, a practice that has given way to modern time pressures. The custom of looking for the star to know when the meal can begin was mentioned in only a handful of interviews, for example, in Edwanda and Innisfree, Alberta, and in Wadena, Weekes, and Jedburgh, Saskatchewan. In Plain Lake, Alberta, Hilda Horon said it was her mother who looked for the first star before beginning the evening meal; the custom ended with her mother, however, and no one of her own generation has continued this practice. In Shipman, Saskatchewan, it was my respondent, Rose Huculak, who looked for it as a child, but she did so, not of her own volition, but at her mother's behest, and she did not continue to look for the star when she became an adult.

When the family begins their meal, the first item served is *kutia*, a dish made with whole-wheat berries, hulled but not ground into flour. The wheat berries are cooked in water until soft and then mixed with honey and poppy seeds. The poppy seeds can be ground into a paste or used whole. When this dish is brought to the table, the household head is supposed to take a spoonful of it and throw it at the ceiling. The amount of *kutia* that sticks there foretells the coming harvest: a large number of wheat berries stuck to the ceiling indicates that the coming harvest will be an abundant one; when only a small amount sticks, that is a bad sign. After the prediction ceremony, the bowl with *kutia* is passed around; each person present is supposed to take some of the dish and eat at least one spoonful.

Kutia is prepared across Ukrainian Canada in both rural and urban settings, although the custom of tossing it at the ceiling is being performed less and less often and the dish itself is often enhanced with nuts and/or raisins to make it more attractive to the Westernized palate. In Calder, Saskatchewan, Peter and Jean Woroschuk said that their family made the dish more appealing to children by adding soft candy such as gummy bears. *Kutia* as a requisite dish was mentioned in Brinsley, Innisfree, Myrnam, Plain Lake, Rycroft, and Waskatenau, Alberta, and in Buchanan, Churchill, Donwell, Goodeve, Hafford, Hyas, Krydor, Kyziv, North Battleford, and Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan, along with a great many other locations.¹ In Calmar Farms, Alberta, *kutia* was made by Laudy Lickacz's mother, but it is not part of his current Christmas Eve celebration. In other words, in just about all of the places where I had the opportunity to ask about the Christmas Eve meal, the respondents mentioned *kutia*; only in a few places is *kutia* a thing of the past, not currently served on Christmas Eve. Essentially this is a requisite part of the Christmas Eve meal. It is true that *kutia* was not mentioned in some of the other interviews I did, but that does not mean it was not made and consumed in that location. Lack of attestation could be the result of my failing to ask specifically about *kutia* or the respondents and me running out of time and being unable to discuss Christmas food. It is only when a person being interviewed stated specifically that *kutia* was not part of the Christmas Eve meal, as Laudy Lickacz did, that we can be certain of its absence.

While *kutia* is indeed very widespread, throwing it at the ceiling is a thing of the past in most locations, and some respondents blamed the introduction of hard-to-clean stippled ceilings for the curtailment of this practice. Throwing *kutia* at the ceiling to foretell the coming harvest was referred to as a tradition of the past by Sanctuary Project respondents in Holar Farms and Jedburgh, Saskatchewan, and in Innisfree, Alberta; Chris Zorniak of the Catholic church in the same town said that his own family never did throw *kutia*. In Brinsley, Alberta, Elena Trischuk specifically blamed stippled ceilings for ending the practice of throwing *kutia*, and in Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, Eva and Nick Dmytryshyn said the same thing. In Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, Mike Parchoma said that throwing *kutia* at the ceiling was never part of his family's Christmas Eve celebration. In Hafford, Saskatchewan, Jeanette Worotniak's family still



FIG. 8.1 Henry Dozorec

throws *kutia* at the ceiling, and in her case, the harvest prediction is very specific: the number of whole wheat berries stuck to the ceiling foretells the number of bushels of wheat the farm will produce in the coming year. In Krydor, Saskatchewan, Patricia Ciona said that her family not only threw *kutia* at the ceiling but left it there all year to ensure their prosperity; it was cleaned up just before the next Christmas Eve meal, but not earlier. The Cionas run a gas station with an eatery, so the *kutia* ensures general economic prosperity, not just an abundant crop. Peter Bomok, a beekeeper in Speers, Saskatchewan, said he threw *kutia* at the ceiling, not to predict his grain harvest but to ensure that his bees would thrive. He sells honey, and his bees are an important source of income for him. Throwing *kutia*, according to him, helps the bees and thus affects the amount of honey they produce. In Sheho, Saskatchewan, Katie Rudey said that her dad used to throw *kutia*; he told her that the number of grains stuck to the ceiling predicted the number of hives of honey his family would have in the coming year. The Ukrainian-speaking members of the MacNutt Romanian Orthodox church still throw *kutia*

at the ceiling, as do the members of the Ukrainian Catholic church in Porcupine Plain. In Melville, Montmartre, Welychko, Whitesand, and Preeceville, Saskatchewan, and in Vilna, Alberta, respondents remembered the practice from their childhoods, but said it was something they no longer did. Even without stippled ceilings, throwing *kutia* at the ceiling is rather messy. As Henry Dozorec of Wroxton Farms said, “Baba would have killed them (the men in the family) if they threw *kutia*. She was tiny, but she was fierce.”

Christmas is preceded by the Nativity Fast, also called the Advent Fast. This means the Christmas Eve meal must consist of meatless dishes. The people I interviewed had fond memories of their Christmas Eve meals, both as a time of family gatherings and for the delicious dishes served. Besides the standard meatless *borshch* and meatless perogies (*pirohy*) with a potato and cheese filling or with sauteed sauerkraut or mushrooms, they remembered meatless *holubtsi*, or cabbage rolls, as well as beetniks: beet leaves wrapped around dough, baked, and then cooked in a cream sauce with dill. The sauce can be made using corn starch instead of cream if the family is adhering to a strict fast, meaning one that excludes dairy as well as meat. People had especially fond memories of a baked cornmeal dish called *nachynka* or *mamalyha*. Mushrooms were mentioned in several interviews, such as the one in Dnieper, Saskatchewan. In Weekes, Saskatchewan, Elsie Grywacheski remembered picking mushrooms on the family farm, and in Sheho, Saskatchewan, and Szypenitz, Alberta, respondents talked fondly about looking for wild mushrooms, which would then be stored for the Christmas Eve meal. Mushroom picking was especially important to Katie Rudey, who explained how her mother taught her which wild mushrooms were edible and how they should be preserved for the winter months.

Quite a few families had a *kolach* for Christmas, either in addition to the *kutia* or in place of it. A *kolach* is a special braided bread, formed and baked in the shape of a ring. This bread was attested as a Christmas Eve food in Camrose, Two Hills, Vilna, and Hines Creek, Alberta, and in Cudworth, Drobot, Edmore, Speers, Sturgis, and Tuffnell, Saskatchewan. The *kolach* is not just a Christmas Eve treat; it is also a funeral bread, widely used on the Prairies both for the meal after burial and for grave blessings, be they part of Provody or part of Khram or Praznyk (religious events discussed earlier). *Kutia*, like the *kolach*, is also a funeral food,



FIG. 8.2 Katie Rudey

though seldom served as part of funerary rituals on the Prairies today. As discussed in the chapter on funerals, when it is served at a wake, it is treated very much as it is on Christmas Eve, namely it is the first dish offered and all present must eat at least one spoonful. In some places, the funerary wheat berry dish that is almost identical to *kutia* is called *kolivo* or *kanun* to distinguish it from the Christmas Eve *kutia*. *Kolach* and *kutia* served at Christmas are just two indicators that this season is associated with ancestors, those family members who have passed away. Many if not most of the people I interviewed did not think of Christmas as a time when living family members could be joined by those of their relatives who had died, but this element of Christmas is made clear by the choice of foods and a number of other practices that are retained in some areas.

There is one practice that does make explicit the return of the dead at Christmas. In a number of interviews, my respondents remembered

adding an extra place setting to the Christmas Eve table so that, once the family had gone to bed, their ancestors could come to the table and enjoy the feast. In Brinsley, Alberta, Harry Ewanchuk said he remembered his grandmother putting some food on that extra plate and leaving it overnight. Joan Bozniak of Edwand, Alberta, reported that she still sets out an extra plate on Christmas Eve. Extra plates were set out in Insinger, Saskatchewan, Myrnam, Alberta, and Two Hills, same province. In Two Hills, Elsie Choban leaves a *kolach* and a candle on a plate for the departed family members, who are believed to return. A few people mentioned putting hay under the tablecloth, perhaps as another reminder of ancestors. Hay was placed under the tablecloth in Andrew, Brinsley, Edwand, and Innisfree, Alberta, and in Edmore, Shipman, St Walburg, Welychko, and Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan. In Insinger and St Walburg, Saskatchewan, respondents linked the hay to the manger in which the Christ child was laid. For them, religious symbolism took precedence over any connection to crops or to deceased family members. A variation on the hay under the tablecloth was reported in Churchill, Saskatchewan, where Olga Kozun said her family placed garlic cloves under the tablecloth at each corner of the table. This was the only mention of garlic cloves in the Sanctuary Project interviews, although this practice is attested in Ukraine. In Ukraine, it is supposed to ward off evil spirits, who have the ability to travel between worlds because Christmas falls close to the winter solstice when the barriers between realms are down. Kozun did not give a rationale for the use of garlic cloves.

The table set for the Christmas Eve meal is special in many ways. The table itself is covered with a special tablecloth, embroidered if possible or with an embroidered runner or *rushnyk* in the middle. It is set with the twelve meatless dishes. Under the table is something that one might not associate with a festive meal, namely a pile of hay. The hay was, at least in the past, connected to wishes for nature's bounty in the coming year; it was a way to acknowledge the presence of what was left of the previous year's grain harvest in the hope that the coming year's yield would be abundant. The hay under the table is also a special treat for children. Children like this practice not only because they are allowed to play in the hay, but also because candy, nuts, and sometimes even coins are hidden in the straw and anything they find is theirs to keep. Hay is placed under the table in Eldorena, Alberta, and Jedburgh,



FIG. 8.3 Jacob and Sylvia Doroshenko

Melville, Shipman, Wadena, Welychko, and Churchill, Saskatchewan, and candy is hidden in the hay for the children to find. In Mazeppa, Saskatchewan, the treat is nuts. In Edwaud, Alberta, adults hide both candy and peanuts; in Innisfree, Alberta, it is candy and small coins. Respondents in Goodeve Farm and Goodeve town, and in Grenfell, Lysenko, Montmartre, Regina, Sheho, Insinger, Weekes, and Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan, and in Redwater and Vilna, Alberta, said that hay was placed under the table but made no mention of treats. The fact that treats were not mentioned does not mean that they did not exist. It is possible that such things were forgotten once the people I interviewed became adults. In Beaverdale, Saskatchewan, Martha Kruda found small coins in the hay when she was a child.

Cleaning out hay strewn on the floor can be messy, and people who want to honour tradition while still keeping the house relatively tidy put a sheaf of wheat rather than loose hay under the table, making it easier to remove when the time comes. This is done in Beckenham and Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, and in Brinsley, Alberta. In Hafford, Saskatchewan,

Jeannette Worotniak's family puts the hay that goes under the table in a box, thus going one step further in the direction of ensuring neatness and easy clean-up.

A particularly poignant story was told by Jacob Doroshenko of Buchanan, Saskatchewan. One Christmas season when the weather was especially bad, his elderly father insisted on going into town with him even as he tried to talk him out of braving the cold and snow. Doroshenko later discovered that his dad was insistent on the trip because he wanted to buy treats for the grandchildren. What he ended up getting was peanuts because he could not afford candy. And that year was the one time that the family had hay under the table; it was there so that the grandfather could give his grandchildren a bit of joy – along with a dose of tradition.

The room where the family eats their Christmas Eve meal is decorated. Christmas trees are used by virtually all families now, but the decorated pine or fir tree is not part of Ukrainian tradition; it is a relatively new addition to this holiday season. In Canada, the Christmas tree was added under the influence of anglophone and other Canadian neighbours who came from Western Europe. The original Ukrainian decorative item is a sheaf of wheat set in the corner of the room, preferably under the icons. The sheaf was mentioned as a necessary part of Christmas in a number of interviews. While it was not described, my understanding is that this is most often a sheaf of wheat tied as it would be during the course of harvest. In recent times, under the influence of practices extant in Ukraine, fancier versions are being produced by braiding some of the wheat stalks. In Andrew, Alberta, Helen and her son Robert Andreychuk said they regularly have a sheaf. In Cudworth, Saskatchewan, dad bringing a sheaf into the home was just a memory for Mary Holinaty; this practice had stopped long ago. Ernie Kuchmak of Eldorena, Alberta, had a similar memory. Mike Tycholiz of Meath Park and Bunny (Bohdan) Halyk of Melville both said it is specifically the father, the household head, who sets a sheaf in the corner of the house on Christmas Eve, while in St Walburg this is the job of the oldest brother. A Christmas sheaf was mentioned in Redwater, Alberta, and in Endeavour, Goodeve Farm, Insinger, Meadow Lake, Norquay, Rama, Hafford, Wadena, Weekes, Welychko, Wimmer, Whitesand, Wishart, Yorkton, and Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan. In Glaslyn, Saskatchewan,

a sheaf was set up in church as well as in the home. A practical variation described by Chris Zorniak of Innisfree, Alberta, is using the same sheaf year after year, saving the trouble of making one annually.

Some of the respondents had a Ukrainian name for the sheaf, calling it the *dido* or the *didukh*, a term that has the root *did*, meaning grandfather or, more generally, male elder. This is a term that connects this holiday object to elders and generations past. The names given to the sheaf are almost certainly part of the complex of summoning ancestors to join their living relatives for the Christmas Eve meal. This is my interpretation. The connection to dead relatives was mentioned in connection with the food and the empty plates set out during the Christmas Eve meal or immediately after it. When it came to the sheaf of wheat, the connection between its name and elders did not come up in our conversations.

There were two ways of disposing of the hay that had been under the table and the wheat sheaf set in the corner. Where respondents remembered what happened, some said that the hay was fed to the cattle. This was done in Brinsley, Alberta, and Insinger and Sheho, Saskatchewan. In Edwand, Alberta, Joan Bozniak said her grandfather made a point of feeding the hay that was under the table on Christmas Eve to the farm animals. Other people said that the hay from under the table is to be burned. In Goodeve, Saskatchewan, the hay is taken outside, laid out in the shape of a cross, and then burned, whereas in Lysenko, Saskatchewan, it is simply burned; it did not need to be in a particular shape. In Eldorena, Alberta, it was the sheaf that stood in the corner that was taken outside and set on fire, acting as a sacrificial object of sorts. In Brinsley, Alberta, the hay from the sheaf serves a purpose similar to items discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion, namely the water blessed on Yordan and the pussy willows blessed at Easter. Like the pussy willows and holy water, it can be used to avert storms. Alec Werstiuk said that his mother would take bits of the sheaf and burn them whenever a severe storm was approaching. Both methods of disposal indicate that the hay has a sacred quality, since burning or making sure that a substance is completely consumed is what is done with pussy willows blessed in church.

Feeding holiday hay, the substance associated specifically with Christmas, to animals and the increased attention paid to livestock at



FIG. 8.4 Terry Danyliuk with Eva Himka

this time of year is also an indication of concern for the well-being of the farm. In Drobot, Saskatchewan, the children, while digging for treats in the hay under the Christmas Eve table, are supposed to make sounds like animals. In Ukraine, this is believed to help the animals reproduce in the spring. Nothing of this sort was mentioned by Sanctuary Project respondents; they retained the activity without an explanation for it. Special food is given to the animals on Christmas Eve. In addition to the hay already mentioned, some households give the farm animals extra treats, and in Shipman, Saskatchewan, they are offered some of the family's *kutia*. A similar practice was also attested in Wadena, Saskatchewan, although the *kutia* is given to the animals on Christmas morning. In Ukraine there is a belief that on Christmas Eve, animals can talk with human voices, but a human should not try to overhear them because doing so will have disastrous consequences. This belief is articulated in legends that tell of a foolish person whose curiosity gets the better of him and who goes to see if animals really can talk on Christmas Eve. He discovers that animals do indeed talk, and as he listens, he hears his

cattle predict his death. Sure enough, he dies the next day. Remnants of these beliefs were shared by a few Sanctuary Project respondents, with Jeannette Worotniak of Hafford, Saskatchewan, telling this legend almost verbatim. When I asked if anything special was done for the animals on Christmas Eve, she said that her father would not go to the barn on that night for fear of overhearing the animals talking. Other Sanctuary Project respondents also mentioned animals talking on Christmas Eve and told of prohibitions against overhearing this event. Terry Danyiuk of Drobot, Saskatchewan, said that his parents warned him not to go to the barn on Christmas Eve because the animals could speak in human voices on that night. In Shipman, Saskatchewan, Rose Huculak said that going to the barn on Christmas Eve was allowed, but one had to leave by midnight because that was the time that animals acquired human speech. A variation with a prohibition reversal was described in Whitesand, Saskatchewan, where John Popowich said that his dad made a point of going out to the barn and talking to the animals on Christmas Eve. Whether he did this before midnight is not stated in the interview. Did people really believe in talking animals? The Prairie Ukrainians I interviewed tended to ascribe such beliefs to older generations. What is certain is that all aspects of farm life were important to farmers and that this importance came to the fore at Christmas, a special and enchanted time of year.

“GRAIN SOWING” AFTER CHRISTMAS

A Christmas season activity that is obviously crop-oriented is called *siiaty*, to sow. It is performed by children, and their playful imitation of sowing grain at the transitional season of Yuletide is supposed to help real crops grow when it comes time to plant in the spring. Originally *siiaty* was supposed to be done on the morning of New Year's Day, but, as with many things on the Prairies, the time when this actually happened or happens is flexible, as long as it is after Christmas Day. The practice, as it occurs in Ukraine, is restricted to boys, whereas most respondents on the Prairies remembered children of both sexes going *siiaty*. To perform this ritual, children take grain, such a whole wheat berries, although which grain is used was mentioned only once in the interviews I did. The children walk to the house of relatives, typically

grandparents, or they go to their neighbours, and recite a little rhyme, which some of the people I interviewed still remembered. It goes:

Siisia, rodysia zhyto, pshenytsia.
Na schastia, na zdorov'ia, na novyi rik.

Rye and wheat – be sown and sprout.
For good fortune, for good health, for the new year.

The version attested in Ukraine is much longer, with more wishes for the prosperity of various aspects and persons of the household. The two-liner is more typical on the Prairies, although a few people knew an additional line or two. After reciting the little rhyme, the children throw their grain into the house they are visiting and receive a small coin in return. This custom was attested in Innisfree, Alberta, and Hafford, Saskatchewan, where both the Sanctuary Project respondent and his or her children went to “sow grain.” In Two Hills, Alberta, Elsie Choban said that the practice continues to this day and now it is her grandchildren who go out to do it. She explained that she wanted her progeny to participate in this ritual because it was emblematic of the family’s Ukrainian heritage. For most people, *siiaty* was something they did as children but not something their own offspring practice. Orest Makowski of Mazeppa, Saskatchewan, went to sow grain as a child and even remembered the little rhyme that was said, but saw it as a practice of the past. This was also true of Nellie Kotylak of Montmartre, Saskatchewan. Nick Huska of Norquay, same province, remembered the little rhyme he used to say and pointed out that the grain you were supposed to throw was hemp seed, only the police forbade this practice because of the confusion between hemp and marijuana. Children “sowing” grain was also attested in Olesha, Sheho, Stenen, Wadena, Whitesand, and Wroxton Farms, Saskatchewan.

Siiaty became a thing of the past in most families because, like putting hay under the table or throwing *kutia* at the ceiling, it was quite messy. One respondent, Harold Hadewich of Goodeve Farm, told me he got more money than his companions when he went *siiaty* because he put his grain kernels on the table instead of throwing them all over the floor. Specifically, he would get twenty-five cents while the other



FIG. 8.5 Elsie Choban with Eva Himka

children got a nickel or a dime, and he assumed that it was because the homeowners were happy not to have to sweep the grains off the floor and from under the furniture. *Siiaty* became less attractive to children as well as to the adults who had to do the sweeping. When Sanctuary Project respondents were little, earning a quarter or even a dime or a nickel was quite desirable. This allowed children to buy treats that were normally not within their reach. With time and the increased prosperity of Prairie Ukrainians, children looked forward to nice presents at Christmas, not just a few pennies to spend. *Siiaty* stayed as a custom in those households that were keen to keep up Ukrainian tradition. Elsie Choban of Two Hills, Alberta, for example, is quite an activist when it comes to things Ukrainian. It is not surprising that she has encouraged her children and her grandchildren to keep up this practice. Unfortunately, I did not ask Choban how much her grandchildren earned.

Carolling was an adult pastime somewhat analogous to going *siiaty*. It was a fun activity that, like *siiaty*, involved going to people's houses, bringing them the joy of Christmas, and wishing them health and

prosperity in the coming year. While there was no age limit on carolling and children with a paper star representing the Star of Bethlehem are often pictured on Christmas cards, carolling, because it is a nighttime activity, tends to be limited to adults. In the past, young adults would go from house to house, sing a few songs, and get invited indoors for more singing plus food and drink. As noted by Klymasz, in the 1950s and 1960s carolling was not just about celebrating Christmas; it had a mate-finding function as well, with young women and men travelling together in festive camaraderie.² Carollers went out on both Christmas and New Year's, with Christmas being more of a religious occasion. At some point carolling became a fundraising activity that produced money for the church. With population attrition, carolling has become more and more rare. The Sanctuary Team found and photographed a papier-mâché star that carollers carried to light their way in the St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox church in Hyas, Saskatchewan, but this object was unique; we found no similar stars in other churches. Today, in most places, if people go out to carol at all, it is only once at some point during the Christmas season, not at both Christmas and the New Year. Carolling is still a popular way to raise money in urban churches and a few of the larger rural ones. In most places, however, there are simply not enough people to engage in this activity. Also, as noted in the chapter on churches, language is a big issue, and there are fewer and fewer people who can sing carols in Ukrainian. In several places, carollers sang English carols after performing their limited Ukrainian repertory. This was done in Beaverdale and Hyas, Saskatchewan, but adding English material does not seem to have saved the practice; there are simply not enough people to go out and sing, and carolling, like going *siiaty*, is now rare.

YORDAN

The Christmas season ends with Yordan, also called Epiphany or Theophany. This holiday commemorates the baptism of Christ in the Jordan and is celebrated on 6 January according to the new (Gregorian) calendar, and on 19 January according to the Old Style (Julian) calendar. While a church service at Christmas may or may not be held and some respondents complained that they paid for a service only to have the



FIG. 8.6 John-Paul Himka with the
carolling star in Hyas, SK

priest not show up, a church celebration on Yordan is obligatory and clergy make every effort to have at least some kind of service in even the smallest and most remote churches. Yordan is a water blessing service; it produces holy water used by the priest to bless the houses of parishioners. Holy water from the Yordan service is perhaps the only Christmas season substance assigned efficacy both by the church and by the parishioners. Many if not most congregants take some home and drink it when they are not feeling well. As noted in the chapter on vernacular religion, it is also used to bless farm buildings, as well as seeds before sowing. Holy water blessed at Yordan is treated very differently from *kutia* and the grain thrown when children go *siiaty*. The water blessed at Yordan is holy and cannot simply be poured down the drain. It must be treated with respect, and if it needs to be disposed of, it must be poured on plants or down the side of a building or a fence so that no one can tread on this sacred substance. *Kutia* and *siiaty* grain, by contrast, can be discarded. The *kutia* scraped off the ceiling is simply thrown away, as is the grain

swept up after *siiaty*. Similarly, Yordan is almost universally celebrated, whereas the grain-throwing rituals of *kutia* and *siiaty* can end when they conflict with other desired outcomes such as maintaining a clean house. Water blessing on Yordan remains an important tradition and a virtually obligatory church service in all places where I asked respondents about this holiday. Because of their special power and meaning, Yordan and holy water are treated in the chapter on vernacular religion.

THE EFFICACY AND ATTRACTION OF RITUAL

Did the Ukrainian Canadians who set a plate out for ancestors and threw *kutia* at the ceiling and sent their children and grandchildren out to “sow” grain believe that the spirits of the dead would join them and that the *kutia* stuck to the ceiling would predict the harvest while ensuring prosperity, or that having children throw grain would bring abundant crops? Did they think that good wishes passed on through carols would indeed bring health and happiness? The answer is yes and no. As I argue in the chapter on vernacular religion, action is not necessarily indicative of belief. Many things are done just because that is the way it is supposed to be. The ritual actions listed are routine behaviour, perhaps interpreted as traditional and done for the sake of tradition. My respondents did not mention that these were attempts to communicate with the dead or ensure a bountiful harvest. Certainly, those people who associate a particular behaviour with being Ukrainian and who want to emphasize their Ukrainian heritage have this additional incentive to continue the practices of the past. But if these practices conflict too much with other desired behaviours, such as keeping the house tidy, they can be discarded and become a mere memory. The holy water blessed at Yordan is different from Christmas-related activities and substances. It is taken more seriously because of the actions of the church and of the clerics who produce it. The Christmas practices described here are more fun activities than acts with a power that extends beyond the human realm. Still, there is a certain “what if” component to traditional behaviours. *What if* throwing *kutia* does bring prosperity? *What if* dead relatives do return during the night when all the living sleep deeply, having eaten their fill of the Christmas Eve meal? When rituals are performed, no matter with what degree of seriousness, there is at least some degree

of belief in their efficacy. Besides, rituals are enjoyable and provide a welcome break from everyday routine. There is no need to seriously believe that they will summon the spirits of the dead and ensure good harvests to enjoy participating in ritual activities.

BETWEEN YORDAN AND EASTER

According to the church calendar, there are many important celebrations between the baptism of Christ with its blessing of water and the special holiday of Easter. Urban churches that have a full-time priest and services every Sunday can afford to celebrate these events; rural churches dealing with clergy assigned to an entire circuit of churches cannot have more than a few services per year, and some have only one. Thus, as noted throughout this book, rural churches have celebrations on major holidays only. If they have services on a church holiday like Candlemas, also called Stritennia and Presentation of Christ in the Temple, it is because of the special interest or special efforts of a congregation member. Thus, as noted in the chapter on vernacular religion, if an active church member is a beekeeper or a candle-maker, as happens to be the case in Myrnam, Alberta, and in Speers and Sheho, Saskatchewan, then the priest will make a special effort to celebrate Candlemas to thank the beekeeper or the candle-maker for the wax and other services she or he provides.

SHROVE/CARNIVAL OR MASLIANA/MASLENITSA

Easter, like Christmas, is a most important holiday. In fact, it is considered the more important holiday of the two in many Ukrainian churches. The Easter service, described below, is the one service that is celebrated everywhere, including in the smallest churches. As an important event, Easter is preceded by a number of preparatory stages. Great Lent, the forty-day period of fasting and contemplation that ushers in the Easter celebratory season, is important to many people. Many of today's Christians, especially those doing heavy farm labour, may not avoid meat and dairy during Lent as the church prescribes; even so, they try to give up at least something as they reflect on the sacrifice and the resurrection of Christ. Traditionally, the strict fast that was Lent was preceded by Meat Fare week, a time when the consumption of meat

was still allowed. This has not been a period for ritual activity either in Ukraine or in Canada. The following week is called Cheese Fare week. During this week meat is prohibited but dairy, fish, and eggs are still consumed, and this has indeed been a festive period, called Carnival in some areas. In Ukraine, this week is called Masliana, from *maslo*, meaning butter. It was once a carnivalesque period prior to the solemn weeks of Lent. People lit bonfires and held contests such as rope-pulling or tug-of-war; they staged snowball fights behind forts built out of snow. Such activities were banned in Ukraine itself during the Soviet period, and there were no communal outdoor events, except perhaps for shows staged and orchestrated by the government. People, if they celebrated, did so quietly, in the home, with pancakes (*mlyntsi*), drawn butter, and fish products, even caviar. The outdoor carnivals have returned with the independence of Ukraine and the removal of the Soviet yoke with its demands for sobriety and austerity. People began to engage in carnivalesque play, and public carnivals were staged in parks around Kyiv and elsewhere. What will happen this year very much depends on the current invasion of Ukraine by Russia. If the war is over, the likelihood is that celebrations will indeed return. If the war continues into the pre-Easter season, there will be little incentive or opportunity to celebrate.

For the people I interviewed over the course of Sanctuary Project fieldwork, Masliana was not a major event. Certainly, there were no outdoor celebrations in the frigid weather. Most people referred to this period as Shrove, and while they knew about it, they did not consider it an important calendar ritual. In Skaro, Alberta, Mary Ann Holowach said her family had pancakes at home, but there was no community event. The women interviewed in Camrose, Alberta, also talked about making pancakes. In Stenen, Saskatchewan, and Star Peno, Alberta, people mentioned having a big meal before Lent started, but they did not consider pancakes to be an obligatory part of it. In Redwater, Alberta, there was a pancake supper put on by the town, but nothing at the church or in the home, while in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, one of the clergy explained that people did not celebrate prior to Lent because they did not fast.

The one exception to all this was in North Battleford, where the Orthodox Church held a pancake event targeted at recent immigrants with children. This area has attracted many new arrivals, who take jobs

as pipefitters. My understanding is that in the past, Masliana was not part of the North Battleford church calendar; it was introduced later on precisely to cater to the new arrivals and to make them feel at home. Because this holiday had retained its importance in Ukraine and is part of the ritual calendar familiar to people who have recently left that country, it was added to the events observed by this particular Canadian church. It will be worthwhile to see whether this event continues to remain a part of the holiday cycle at this church, for it was unique in my Sanctuary Project experience.

A few Prairie churches do use pancake suppers as fundraisers, but these are held in the fall, not at Shrove, and pancake suppers, at whatever time of year, are not the norm. As will be discussed in the chapter on outreach and fundraising, when it comes to food, most people – parishioners, other Ukrainians, and the non-Ukrainians – who buy food at church suppers prefer what has come to be considered a typical Ukrainian meal to the much more common and simple pancake supper. People would rather have perogies (*pirohy*), cabbage rolls (*holubtsi*), sausage (*kovbasa*), a ham or a turkey, and possibly other Ukrainian dishes such as baked *nachynka* (cornmeal), beetniks (stuffed beet leaves in cream sauce), and poppyseed cake – Ukrainian *exo* food.

PALM OR PUSSY WILLOW SUNDAY

Lent is, by definition, not a festive time. For those who observe it, it is a period of quiet and solitary reflection. Communal activities begin toward the end of Lent with Palm Sunday, which takes place a week before Easter. Palm Sunday is also called Pussy Willow Sunday because palms are very hard to find in Ukraine, so pussy willows, abundant in the area, are used as a substitute. As noted in the chapter on vernacular religion, the catkins on pussy willows are among the first signs of new life in springtime, so willows are a fitting plant to connect to the Resurrection and new life in Jesus Christ. On the Prairies, the term Pussy Willow Sunday has come to designate the specifically Ukrainian version of the Sunday before Easter as opposed to the kind of celebration held in non-Ukrainian churches, where the term Palm Sunday is used.

Pussy willows can be brought to church for blessing by the parishioners themselves. Most churches provide pussy willows for those who

are unable to bring their own. Gathering them is usually the job of the *starshyi brat*, a member of the congregation who serves as a church elder. Other members of the community can, of course, help out. The pussy willows are blessed by the priest at the end of the Sunday service, and each parish family takes a few home. As an item that has been blessed in church, pussy willows are imbued with sacred power. People keep them in the home, usually near a religious item such as an icon or a cross. As discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion, a number of people use blessed pussy willows to protect their homes from storms. As items that have been blessed in church, pussy willows cannot simply be thrown away: they need to be burned, planted, or otherwise disposed of in a dignified manner. There is some indication that pussy willows blessed in church are associated with good health, and many people mentioned tapping one another with them, children in particular. No one mentioned a belief that pussy willows conferred health and vigour, but, as noted throughout this book, action is more indicative than articulated belief, and the pattern of use of these blessed objects indicates that the association is there on some level. Pussy Willow Sunday and the blessed willows themselves are discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion.

HOLY WEEK: MAKING FOOD, PREPARING THE EASTER BASKET, AND THE QUESTION OF WRITING PYSANKY

Pussy Willow Sunday is followed by Holy Week. This is an exceptionally busy time. The house must be cleaned, and in the past, the cleaning was supposed to be completed no later than Thursday, referred to as *Chystyi Chetver*, meaning Clean Thursday. This allows Good Friday and the days following to be devoted to religious matters. Two respondents, one in Innisfree, Alberta, and one in Myrnam, same province, mentioned that cleaning needed to be completed by Thursday, adding that they did not always manage to follow prescribed practice. Most people were unaware of the association between Thursday and the completion of cleaning and talked about this week as one of food preparation.

Food is a central element of the Easter holiday, just as the Christmas Eve meal is the focus of that celebration. For Easter, people prepare a requisite set of foods, place them in a special basket, have them blessed in church, and eat them on Easter morning to break the Lenten fast.

Everyone I asked said that preparing an Easter basket was very important, if not mandatory. Large baskets are prepared for the family, and where there are children, small individual baskets can be made for them. Two decorative items were frequently mentioned in the interviews I conducted. According to the Sanctuary Project respondents, baskets should be covered with an embroidered cloth or a cloth that looks like it is embroidered. Although such a cloth is important, few if any of the people I talked to made their own. Adalice and Edward Pidperyhora, Maudest Yurkiw, and Rose Huculak mentioned using family heirlooms, cloths made by their mothers or grandmothers. Karen Kitt Colford used the cloth she herself had embroidered as a child. Others ordered Easter cloths from Ukraine or purchased them at stores that carried Ukrainian merchandise. Some used towels or napkins with prints that looked like embroidery, and these were often bought in regular shops like Walmart. The other decorative item that people thought should be included in the Easter basket was *pysanky* – at least one per basket. *Pysanky* are the fancy, intricately decorated eggs often associated with Ukrainian culture. They are made by the wax resist method. The artist melts beeswax in a stylus called a *pysachok* and uses the wax to write and seal a pattern on the egg, thus protecting it from dye. The egg is then dipped in a light-coloured dye and dried. The process of sealing a design and then dipping the egg in a dye of the next darker color continues until the artist has applied all of the colours he or she wishes to use. Once the egg is done, the wax is gently melted off to reveal the design underneath.

The embroidered cloth and the *pysanka* are both considered mandatory, yet people I talked to seldom made their own, at least not as part of Easter festivities. Embroidery is no longer a popular pastime. *Pysanka* writing is still widely practised, and many Prairie Ukrainian Canadians produce strikingly beautiful art objects. But making *pysanky* has lost its link to the Easter holiday. People no longer look forward to writing *pysanky* as part of their preparations for Easter, and decorating eggs is not a regular pre-Easter children's activity. *Pysanky* have undergone a metamorphosis, from tokens of Easter to art objects, often still associated with Ukrainian culture but not necessarily a part of Easter.

The Easter basket and the food it contains are what people talked about when I asked them to describe Easter. Just about everyone thought that having a *paska* for Easter was obligatory. A *paska* is a

semi-sweet bread, sometimes braided, but just as often a loaf decorated with a braid of dough on top or marked with a cross, also shaped out of dough. Frequently both decorations appear. *Pasky* (plural of *paska*) were mentioned in so many interviews that it is pointless to list them here. Of the people I interviewed, many still made their own *pasky*, although quite a few now buy them. In those places where there are still active *paska* bakers and they are willing to bake more than what their own family needs, the products of their labours are frequently sold to make money for the church. This happens in Buchanan and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The women's league at the Catholic church in Redwater, Alberta, used to make and sell *pasky*, but it no longer does so because of population depletion and the increasing age of the bakers who still live and work in that area. Some people sell *pasky* to make money for themselves rather than for the church. Eva and Nick Dmytryshyn of Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, sell their *pasky* in Saskatoon, a larger and more lucrative market. *Pasky* are readily available, not only through churches but also through secular venues. Harold Hadewich of Goodeve Farms said his family bought theirs at the Superstore in Yorkton. Respondents in Melville, Samburg, Waskatenau, and Olesha, Saskatchewan, also said they now buy *pasky* instead of baking their own. In Sheho, Saskatchewan, the Ukrainian bakery run by Danny Rudey has created a disincentive to make one's own *pasky*; most locals now buy from Rudey and his establishment.

Yet the making of *pasky* continues to have its own ritual significance and provide its own pleasure. Perhaps because writing *pysanky* is no longer an Easter activity for many people, and because some form of hands-on creativity is needed to make this holiday special, many people do continue to bake. Betty Saik of Innisfree, Alberta, said she kept making her own *pasky* even after she hurt her shoulder. Baking through pain implies that this activity is more important to her than any sort of disincentive. Marcella Shewchuk of Rama, Saskatchewan, holds *paska*-making classes to spread joy and artistic satisfaction to anyone who is interested and will pay her nominal training fee. She told me she gets as many as twenty students per session, including non-Ukrainians. In Redwater, Alberta, Leda Kapicki, a member of the Orthodox church in that town, runs *paska*-making classes at the local school. Because she is dealing with children, she shortens the baking process. She makes

the dough herself and brings it to the school. The students then get to do the most visually appealing steps of the process: shaping the dough, adding the braid that goes around the edge, and making the cross design in the middle.

On the Prairies, a number of families also make *babky*. A *babka* (singular of *babky* and also called a *baba*) is made with a sweeter, richer dough using more eggs. Raisins are often added. It is baked in a tall tin – such as a large juice or soup can – and produces a tall, striking-looking bread with a rounded head. The decoration on *babky* is made out of icing rather than dough and can have candy imbedded in it, sometimes to spell out XB (KhV) – for Khrystos Voskres – “Christ Is Risen” in Ukrainian. Respondents in both Alberta and Saskatchewan almost all said that *babky* were part of their Easter celebration. In Blaine Lake and in Meath Park, Saskatchewan, the family makes a *babka* only; they do not make a *paska*. In Olesha, Saskatchewan, the family makes its own *babky*, including the children in *babka* preparation, but buys its *pasky* in Prince Albert. The widespread presence of the *babka* indicates that it is an important part of the Prairie Easter celebration. One interesting aspect that I had not heard elsewhere was that the *babka* dough has to be yellow, presumably because yellow is associated with the sun, which starts to brighten in the spring, something that can easily be connected to the rising of Christ and His shining glory. To ensure that the *paska* dough does indeed have a yellow color, several people added turmeric. This was done in Eldorena, Alberta, and in Rhein, Saskatchewan.

Other items placed in the Easter basket always include cooked and undecorated eggs meant to be eaten by the family. There is also some kind of meat such as ham or sausage (*kovbasa*), because this is the first time that meat products are allowed after forty days of fasting. A number of people put in horseradish, often mixed with beets and pinkish in color. In Tuffnell, Saskatchewan, Larry Ukrainetz explained this condiment as “mixing the good with the bad” or the bitter with the sweet, a combination that is a good symbolic fit for the suffering and resurrection of Christ. People like to have a butter lamb in the basket to reference Christ as the lamb of God. Butter lambs are hard to make, and some people use a mould for this purpose. Those who do not have a mould, like the Nychyks in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Rose Huculak in Shipman, same province, and Carole Myshaniuk and Lillian Tkachuk in Myrnam,

Alberta, take pride in making their butter lambs freehand. Huculak even explained how to make the eyes and the tongue on the lamb using cloves and candy. Others complained about the difficulty of executing this dish, did not bother making it, and just put a stick of butter in their Easter basket. Some added cottage cheese or hard cheese to their basket, and a few mentioned adding a bottle of wine; others included a vegetable like celery or cucumbers. In Vilna and Szypenitz, both in Alberta, and Weyburn, Saskatchewan, an obligatory Easter basket item was a bunch of green onions. In Vilna, Alec Barabash explained that blessing green onions at Easter helps crops grow in the upcoming season.

BLESSING THE BASKET AND BREAKING THE FAST ON EASTER MORNING

Getting the basket with its special Easter food blessed is a complicated matter. The limited number of priests available to serve distant rural churches means that basket blessings may take place anytime on Easter weekend and that services often have to be abbreviated so that the priest can make it to all the parishes he needs to serve. Other physical circumstances characteristic of the Prairies dictate that the prohibition on having meat products in the church proper is not always obeyed; people like outdoor basket blessings, but more often than not, harsh weather forces basket blessings inside, and this usually means into the church. If there are pews, baskets are lined up at the end of the pews and the priest walks up and down to bless them. Some priests object to doing the blessings inside the church. In Lysenko, Peter Moroz remembered that when he was a youngster, the congregation built a huge bonfire for the priest so that he could do outdoor blessings. Although the problem with baskets in church is that they contain meat products, some clergy produce slightly modified explanations. Nick Kaweski of Wadena, Saskatchewan, said that his priest – and priests in general – do not like baskets in the church because they contain pork in the form of ham and sausage.

Once blessed, the food in the basket – and, in the opinion of some, even the *rushnyk* and the candle inserted in the *paska* or *babka* during the service – acquire sacred power and become potent substances. People try their best to make sure that consuming sanctified food extends to

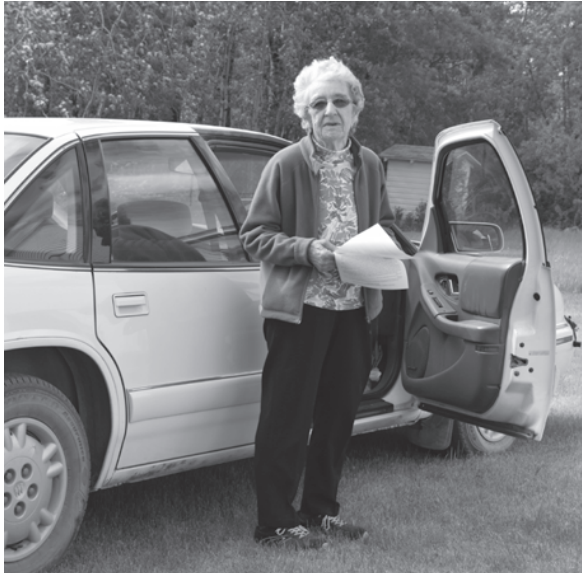


FIG. 8.7 Florence Bazansky

all family members, a theme that arose repeatedly in my interviews. In Maybridge, Saskatchewan, the household head took one of the blessed eggs and cut it into five pieces, one piece for each family member. The Ciona family in Krydor, Saskatchewan, did something almost identical. One of the eggs in the Easter basket was cut into as many pieces as there were people at the table and all ate their piece at the same time. Pat Ciona's husband led this ceremony. The cutting of the egg must have been quite tricky in some years, for at one point there were sixteen people present at Easter Sunday breakfast. In Star Peno, Allan Borys's family placed three eggs in their basket and ate one of the eggs on Sunday, one on Monday, and one on Tuesday, thus keeping the blessings of Easter going over three days.

When the family did not share a single egg, they tried to create unity in other ways. Quite a few respondents mentioned making something for each child to ensure that the child felt included and understood the importance of Easter. In Grenfell, Saskatchewan, and in Redwater, Alberta, the family made a little basket for each child, while in Hafford,

same province, Jeanette Worotniak made sure there was a mini-*paska* for each of the children. In Olesha, Saskatchewan, the *baba* rather than the *paska* was the traditional Easter bread, and Eleanor Hadubiak made a *baba* for each child. Making a *baba* for each of the grandchildren can be quite demanding, and Teresa Kekish of Wishart, Saskatchewan, said she had to make as many as nineteen *babas* so that each of her grandchildren would have one. In Stenen, Saskatchewan, Florence Bazansky also made little *babas* for each of her grandchildren. She was moved to tears when her five-year-old granddaughter said, "Oh, look! My little *baba* made me a little *baba*!" Apparently, the child distinguished her grandmothers by their size and called Bazansky her little *baba* because of her short stature.

Sharing blessed food was a wonderful and uplifting event. In a few locations the power of the items in the Easter basket was extended to nature. As mentioned in the chapter on vernacular religion, the candle inserted in the *paska* or *babka* could be used as protection from storms. The members of the Orthodox church in Ituna used the embroidered cloth that covered the basket in a similar manner.

Blessed objects do come with restrictions and demands: they cannot simply be thrown away; they must be disposed of in a respectful manner. This was apparently not a problem with food because it was all consumed and there was no possibility of someone tossing sanctified fare into the garbage bin. Only Elsie Choban in Two Hills, Alberta, mentioned that leftover *paska* needed to be fed to animals and could not be simply thrown away. Eggshells were another matter. They could not be consumed, but, having been blessed, they could not be tossed in the trash either. Some people avoided the problem by peeling their eggs before putting them in the Easter basket. That way there were no sanctified shells that needed special care. This was done in Wadena and Wishart, Saskatchewan. Most people who left the shells on their eggs when they took them to be blessed said they buried the shells in the garden. This was reported in Myrnam, Alberta, and in Foam Lake and Speers, Saskatchewan, among other locations. Some people burned their eggshells. This was mentioned in Holar Farms and Wishart, Saskatchewan. As discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion, pussy willows blessed in church also need to be disposed of in special ways such as by planting them in the garden or burning them. In New Kiew, Alberta,

Ed and Irene Cymbaliuk combined the special act of baking *pasky* with the ritual disposing of blessed pussy willows, burning the willows from the preceding year in the oven in which they baked *pasky*.

PROVODY

According to the Eastern Rite religious calendar, Easter should be followed by Provody, a grave-blessing ritual held in the week following Easter that brings the good news of Christ's resurrection to deceased relatives. Provody is still celebrated in parts of the Canadian Prairies, although the depopulation of this region is making this event progressively more rare. Provody is still observed in Andrew, Borowich, Brinsley, Calmar Farms, Camrose, Innisfree, Musidora, Myrnam, Star Peno, Stry, Szypenitz, Wostok-Bukowina, and Ispas, Alberta, and in Cudworth, Donwell, Krydor, Lepine, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Prince Albert, and Wakaw, Saskatchewan. A grave blessing service after Easter was held in Redwater, Alberta, but not called Provody. In most places, lack of clergy means that a separate Provody service is not feasible, so grave blessings are combined with the event that celebrates the church itself, namely Praznyk for the Ukrainian Catholics and Khram for the Orthodox.

Where Provody is still celebrated, the service takes a variety of forms. Some kind of ritual bread to commemorate the deceased was mentioned in all Provody descriptions, but in some areas the bread is a *kolach*, the bread braided in the shape of a ring and typically used in funerals; in others it is a *paska*, much like the one made for Easter, namely a round loaf that can be decorated on top with a braid or a cross. *Kolachi* were attested in Andrew, Borowich, Brinsley, Innisfree, Ispas, Myrnam, and Stry, Alberta, and in Cudworth, Krydor, and Lepine, Saskatchewan. *Pasky* were traditional in Calmar Farms, Camrose, Redwater, Szypenitz, and Star Peno, Alberta, and in Donwell, North Battleford, and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The two breads chosen reference very different holidays, but both focus on deceased relatives and thus make sense in the context of Provody. The *paska*, as an Easter bread, brings the glad tidings of Easter and the resurrection of Christ to ancestors. The *kolach* is a funerary bread, as well as one used at Christmas, when ancestors are remembered and asked to join in the celebration of Christ's birth.

Both are holiday breads and, as such, are associated with celebratory occasions. It is almost impossible to tell at this point how and why they were conflated, but conflation did occur. Perhaps it can be explained by the fact that both these dough products are associated with holidays.

Even though Provody still exists in quite a few of the places where the Sanctuary team did its work, a number of respondents observed that the tradition was dying out. In places that have both a Catholic and an Orthodox Ukrainian church, it is possible that one church will have Provody and the other will not. The reasons why this event is celebrated less and less often are many, and most have to do with lack of resources. During Provody, the names of all of the deceased who are being commemorated should be read out. This is indeed done in most of the locations where this celebration takes place, but such a service tends to be quite long, and a number of my respondents noted that children object to its duration. As a result, many churches have cut the length of the service. In Innisfree, Alberta, for example, the priest reads out the names of only those deceased whose family members are present at the service, not the complete list of all those interred in the cemetery.

Parishioners make their own cuts to the ritual process. The Ciona family in Krydor, Saskatchewan, used to make a *kolach* for each of their family graves, but now they make only one *kolach*, which they use to honour all of their deceased. Pat Ciona remembered a time some twenty-five years ago when everyone brought *kolachi*, adding that this is no longer the case and that few church members bother to bring a ritual bread. In Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, Provody is no longer a church service, and what would have been Provody has become a time to clean up the cemetery. Thus, the congregation still pays special attention to their deceased but does not bring in a priest for a service. According to Carol and Dan Dumalski of Goodeve, Saskatchewan, their church used to have a Provody service but no longer does, the last one having been conducted two years earlier. In Lloydminster, Alberta, a city rather than a town, the priest did read out the names of the deceased, but this was not a major service because parishioners did not bring food and attendance was poor. Poor attendance was a problem in Maybridge and Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, as well. In Redwater, Alberta, only one family brought a *paska* because Provody was losing its importance. Star Peno, Alberta, perhaps thanks to its proximity to Edmonton, does

better; about 170 or 180 people attend, most of them driving in from the city. Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta, is another rural church not far from Edmonton. It too reported high attendance at Provody, but only when the weather was good. With good weather being more likely in the summer months, many if not most grave blessings have now been combined with Praznyk or Khram. Grave blessings, whether they are performed at Provody or as part of Praznyk or Khram, are more extensively discussed in the chapter on vernacular religion. There I look at *pomana*, the collective term for the food that goes with this event and the role it plays in bringing people, the living and the dead, together and confirming family unity.

THE STREAMLINING OF RITUAL TO CREATE A UKRAINIAN CANADIAN IDENTITY

Ritual on the Prairies has been streamlined. This is true not only when it comes to grave blessings and their absorption into other rituals, but also in terms of the general reduction in the number of church services and other celebratory events. With the decline in rural population and the lack of clergy, many holidays have disappeared. Others, like grave blessings, because of their importance, have been merged with major celebrations such as Khram or Praznyk. What has emerged is a calendar with a limited number of events. This calendar is widely recognized and associated with Ukrainian identity. It allows Ukrainians to participate in non-Ukrainian holidays and still have a set that they recognize and value as their own.

The process of condensation or streamlining that has affected holidays is similar to the development of a certain limited set of dishes that non-Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians associate with Ukrainian tradition and expect to encounter during events such as Ukrainian holidays or other events billed as Ukrainian. The dishes that are generally recognized as Ukrainian are perogies (*pirohy*), *kovbasa* or sausage, and *holubtsi* or cabbage rolls, all slightly modified to suit available ingredients and Canadian tastes. All sell very well. As will be discussed in the next chapter, selling Ukrainian foods, be it at an event such as a sit-down fall supper or in bags of five dozen frozen perogies (*pirohy*), is a major source of revenue for Prairie organizations, churches among them. As

it turns out, Ukrainian ritual also sells. Rituals like those associated with the Yuletide season are tremendously popular, and when they are further condensed into an evening of mini-enactments combined with Ukrainian food, they are some of the most popular events on the Prairies, drawing hundreds of attendees. As Steve Rudy, the organizer of one such event, told me, “Ukrainian culture sells.” Rudy’s event and other quasi-ritual occasions emblematic of Ukrainian identity are the subject of the next chapter. ❧

CHAPTER 9

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OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Ukrainian Culture on Display

Christmas and Easter are holidays that involve the family and the church. They are essentially Ukrainian events. When non-Ukrainians join these celebrations, they do so because they are invited by a Ukrainian family. A different sort of event also occurs on the Prairies: Ukrainians hold outreach activities specifically aimed at the community at large that welcome Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. They are typically fundraisers, held at Prairie churches or at larger venues, but with the church as the intended recipient of the funds. They are celebrations of Ukrainian food and culture, sometimes with a didactic element that educates those in attendance about Ukrainian traditions and their meanings.

In three of the places where I conducted interviews, the members of the church community stage a celebration that combines a sumptuous Ukrainian feast with a re-enactment/re-creation of Ukrainian ritual practices connected to the calendar year. Similar events may be staged elsewhere, but these are the ones I was able to document. In communities where these events are held, members of the congregation put on a show in which guests watch, and sometimes participate in, rituals connected to a particular calendar season, typically fall or mid-winter. In a sense, the evening condenses all of the rituals of the chosen season into several hours. These events are extremely popular, both with Canadians of Ukrainian heritage and with their non-Ukrainian neighbours. They routinely sell out and are successful fundraisers for the church that sponsors them.

MALANKA

Outreach and fundraising activities are often associated with the church calendar without strictly speaking being religious holidays. These can be celebrations of a minor saint, as is the case with Malanka. They can also be festivals that coordinate Ukrainian celebrations with Western ones such as Thanksgiving and the New Year. These events are held in church halls or in other facilities connected to the church or rented by the church. They are, however, not religious occasions, and they are open to all: parishioners, non-churchgoing members of the Ukrainian community, and non-Ukrainians. They routinely draw crowds numbering in the hundreds, despite Prairie weather and road conditions.

Malanka is one such event. A modern and modified version of it has flourished in Codette, Saskatchewan. It is a predominantly secular celebration, even though it is associated with New Year's and the saints' days of Saint Melania (31 December) and Saint Basil (1 January). As described by Robert Klymasz, Malanka, in the early days of Ukrainian Prairie life, had little religious meaning and served as a courtship venue: a way for young men to get to know eligible young women. The men would dress in costumes representing animals, an old man and an old woman, the devil, and various ethnic characters. They would go from house to house, making a special effort to visit homes where young women lived, and put on a skit, sometimes one with suggestive elements aimed specifically at the opposite sex. At the time that Klymasz did his fieldwork, this sort of Malanka was becoming rare and carolling was replacing it as a way for the young people to become better acquainted.¹ When I did our Sanctuary Project interviews, a handful of people remembered a Malanka similar to the one described by Klymasz, and even for them, it was something that had taken place in the distant past. Morris Ewanchuk, Peter and Jean Woroschuk, and Bill Shewchuk all remembered Malankas where they would go from house to house in animal costumes or dressed as an old man and an old woman. All added that such events were held long ago.

In most Prairie towns, the term Malanka now refers to a dinner-dance run as a fundraiser for the church or an evening that showcases Ukrainian dance performances by local children's groups. In recent times, the latter form of Malanka has come to dominate. As the members of

church women's groups have grown too elderly to cook a supper for a large number of attendees, the dance groups themselves have taken over the job of putting on Malanka, and the money they raise typically goes to them. According to my respondents, this type of Malanka is held in Hafford, Norquay, North Battleford, Beaverdale, and Wishart, Saskatchewan, and in Lloydminster, Alberta.

With the depopulation of the Prairies, Malankas have become further simplified. In a few places, Malanka is still a church fundraiser, but it is a dinner/dance only; there is no performance as part of the evening. Couples buy tickets and are treated to a meal followed by music to which they can dance. Terry Danyliuk, my respondent, said that he and his band liked to play at such events. While the church is Malanka's beneficiary in most towns, in Sheho this event is held to support the local school. Furthermore, Malankas are mutating and losing their connection to the New Year. The Malanka held in Cudworth has lost its association with the winter season and is held in April. It is still a fundraiser and an opportunity for children's groups to perform, but it is not a winter event. By contrast, in Calmar Farms, Alberta, there is indeed a New Year's party, but it is not called Malanka.

An intermediate stage between costumed Malanka players who travelled from house to house and the dinner-dance or Ukrainian dance display that characterizes current practice is a parade of young people dressed as animals, gypsies, *baba* and *dido* (grandma and grandpa) with a baby, and other funny characters. They often do a small skit to entertain the audience. Even without the skit, the parade of costumed young people is entertaining, I was told, because part of the fun is trying to guess the identity of the people in costume, figuring out who is wearing what disguise. This, too, is a matchmaking event of sorts because the people in costume are typically young women and men who try to trick each other into revealing their true identities. Because the number of people living on farms is decreasing, the skits and parades now take place in larger towns only. They were mentioned in Redwater, Wostok-Bukowina, and Andrew, Alberta. Some of the people I interviewed in Drobot, Saskatchewan, told me that a wedding skit, like the mock wedding that used to follow real marriage celebrations, is performed at New Year's time and also called Malanka. Since mock weddings started out as a bit of levity after the real wedding, performing them as a Malanka skit

is an interesting conflation of carnivalesque performances from totally different rituals, a blend probably aided by the fact that, in a number of locations, mock weddings have separated from the wedding itself and become burlesques staged for fundraising purposes. The other reason for mixing mock weddings with Malanka might be the similarity between the old man and old woman with a baby found in Malankas and the cross-dressed couple, often with a fake pregnancy, who appear in mock weddings.

For many people, dressing in costume has become associated with wearing Ukrainian traditional dress. When Carol Ripplinger and Donna Colby of St Michael's Church in Candiak, Saskatchewan, showed the Sanctuary Team their old Malanka outfits, these turned out to be rather crudely made Ukrainian clothes like the ones used for some performances of Ukrainian dance. In Candiak, they were stored in boxes in the church hall. Perhaps the association between costuming and Ukrainian traditional outfits explains why Ukrainian dance has become part of events that, in many areas, are currently called Malanka. In Maybridge, Saskatchewan, dressing up for Malanka has come to mean that attendees need to put on their best clothes for the dinner-dance. Disguising oneself as a funny character or donning Ukrainian dress is absent in this area.

In urban areas like Edmonton, Malanka is a staged event performed in a church or community hall during which young people of both genders either parade around the room in their costumes or perform a humorous skit, or both. In a number of urban locations, Malanka has come to include a play. The Ukrainian National Federation Hall in Edmonton, Alberta, stages a play written by one of its members on an annual basis. The actors belong to a drama club called Suziria and showcase topics that affect young people, especially recent immigrants living in urban areas. The Malanka performance is very important to the members of Suziria, and they produce a fresh play every year. One that I attended dealt with a matchmaking service used by people in search of a potential mate, sometimes to find love but just as often to secure a Canadian visa. The humour behind the skit was a combination of word play, slapstick, and exaggeration of the traits and preoccupations of young people new to Canada. The name of the matchmaking service in the play was Ostannii Shans (Last Chance). Much of the humour of the



FIG. 9.1 Carol Ripplinger showing Malanka clothes, Candiak, SK

play revolved around people confusing this matchmaking bureau with a funeral parlour, based on its name. And, of course, the play showcased the quirks and fallibilities of young Ukrainians new to Canada. Plays like the one I attended are annual events and part of a gala evening that features song performances, a bar, a multi-course Ukrainian feast, and an opportunity for attendees to dance once the meal and all of the performances are over.²

Rural areas where I conducted interviews do not have elaborate plays like the ones staged in cities. Two very successful Malankas that were described to me by the people who organized them did, however, have striking dramatic elements. In Codette and in Wynyard, Saskatchewan, the Malankas offer a highly choreographed version of the showiest ritual elements of the Christmas season. They give Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike the thrill of experiencing a wealth of Ukrainian ritual, all within a single evening of food, drink, dance, and theatre.

One such Malanka was described by Steve Rudy of Codette, Saskatchewan. Rudy is an activist who, during our interview, repeatedly

expressed pride in his Ukrainian heritage. He has backed up his pride with action and has been willing to work extremely hard on behalf of his church. Steve Rudy, his wife Mary, and several other couples run a very large and enormously successful event that attracts hundreds of people, selling out every year. As Rudy described the history of the Codette Malanka in our interview, the celebration started in 1989. It has grown exponentially over the years, first taking place in the Ukrainian Hall in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, then moving to the Legion Hall, which could seat 200 people, and now held in the Evergreen Hall, which seats 350. The event owes much of its success to Rudy's hard work, his willingness to seek out information, his keen sense of showmanship, and his understanding of what makes an effective ritual. He and the original team of church members first turned to the parishioners in Canora for advice. Rudy then did library research and also applied his knowledge of his community. The current Malanka has a pre-dinner *vorozhka*, a fortune-teller with a crystal ball available to foretell the future of anyone willing to pay for her services. She reads fortunes during the six p.m. cocktail hour. Supper begins at 7 p.m., with the guests seated at forty tables. A *hospodar* and *hospodynia* (master and mistress of ceremonies), dressed in Ukrainian costume, explain the dishes served and lead blessings of family members and past generations. There is also a *didukh*, a sheaf of wheat symbolizing the bounty of the past year. Unlike the one in the home, which is made out of full-length stalks of wheat and described in the chapter on Christmas and Easter, the *didukh* at the Codette/Nipawin event is small enough to be placed on a foil plate and set on fire. The burning of the *didukh* sheaf is said to ensure bountiful crops in the year to come. This interpretation of the *didukh* and its destruction by fire is explained by the *hospodar* and *hospodynia*.

At 10 p.m. there is a costumed parade with outfits based on Rudy's research. Young people walk around the hall dressed as animals, devils, and gypsies, wearing outfits similar to the ones documented in early Malankas and described by Klymasz. A young woman plays Malanka, a representation of Saint Melania, and a young man is Vasylo, based on Saint Basil. While all of this is happening, the *hospodar* and *hospodynia* walk around handing out candy and nuts, presumably based on, or in allusion to, the candy and nuts placed in the hay under the Christmas



FIG. 9.2 Steve and Mary Rudy

Eve table. As they circulate among the guests, the *hospodar* and *hospodynia* wish everyone health and prosperity in the coming year. After the costumed parade, the band that is hired for the evening begins to play and guests can dance.

Two fortune-telling chickens are the highlight of the evening. The birds are not fed all day and are then brought out at 11:45 p.m. A bowl of wheat and a bowl of water are placed before them. If the chickens head for the water, it means there will be a drought in the coming year. If they choose the wheat, there will be a bountiful harvest. One year, according to Rudy, the chickens chose neither bowl. Finally, one of them defecated and the *hospodar* pronounced that what was coming would be a “shitty year.” Rudy explained that people took the chicken prediction semi-seriously and, when he met anyone in town the following day, people who had not been able to attend the Malanka wanted to know what the chickens had done.

The Ss Peter and Paul church in Codette, thanks to the energy of Steve and Mary Rudy, holds a number of other events to raise money, including a fall supper with three sittings and an average attendance of four hundred people. Khram draws people from a wide geographical area as other congregations join in. Those in attendance contribute to the cost of the meal served after the church service. There is an event for high school graduates that also draws a crowd. The Rudys host a supper at their home on the eve of Yordan, the water blessing that comes in mid-January. After the meal, young people go carolling to raise money for the church. The highlight of all of these activities, however, is the Malanka event described above. What makes it especially attractive, according to Steve Rudy, is precisely that it is Ukrainian and that it presents Ukrainian traditions and their meanings to both the Ukrainian community and the general public. Rudy is proud of his Ukrainian heritage and is also strongly opposed to holding bingo nights or running raffles to make money for the church; he considers such activities to be akin to gambling. As he told me during our interview, Ukrainian cultures sells – and selling culture is precisely the approach to take.

What makes the Malanka choreographed by Steve Rudy attractive is not only its reference to Ukrainian culture, but also its artistic qualities and Rudy's instincts as a showman: the *hospodar* and *hospodynia* are dressed in colourful Ukrainian attire. The Malanka players wear animal costumes and other striking outfits. The tables are beautiful and so is the food. There is something to engage the attendees during the entire course of the evening, from the fortune-teller prior to the meal, to the burning of the mini-*didukh*, to the meal itself, the dance after, and, of course, the harvest-predicting chickens close to midnight. Rudy is an innovative person. He is also very successful at farming, and when I visited his farm, he not only talked about culture but also showed me some of the farming equipment he had designed. He also has a strong artistic bent and is a master of stagecraft and entertainment. As noted in the chapter on weddings, he sings and plays with a band and tries to include traditional singing in his band's performances. The Rudys' Malanka proves that things that have the feel of the traditional, even if they do not fully conform to tradition, and have a depth and resonance that gives them a powerful, perhaps inexplicable, emotional appeal. Steve Rudy has added elements that are not really part of Ukrainian

culture, such as the “gypsy” fortune-teller. He has modified elements that are traditional to achieve greatest effect. He has the *didukh* burned indoors during the celebration, not outdoors at the end of the season, as custom demands.

Even his chicken prediction is his own invention. I never ran into accounts of it in Ukraine, and Elena Boudovskaia, who did fieldwork in western Ukraine, the part of Ukraine from which most early immigrants to Canada had come, had not encountered it either. But genuine tradition or not, what Rudy has put together has the feel of authentic tradition. He makes the chickens seem traditional because they are a variation on the prediction aspect of tossing *kutia* at the ceiling. Because of the genuine practice of predicting harvest at Yuletide, albeit in a different way, Rudy’s chicken prediction has acquired the aura of depth of practice, of engaging in something that reaches far back in time. Traditionality, real or constructed, has powerful appeal.

The other elaborate Malanka that I was able to document was described by Roy Kolot of Sturgis. This event was staged not at his own church but in the larger town of Wynyard, Saskatchewan. Asked to help fundraise but never having seen a Malanka, Kolot used his recollection of what his mother had told him about this event. Like Steve Rudy, he took the Christmas season as a whole, selecting elements from several rituals that are conducted during this period. Being a showman like Rudy, Kolot arranged an evening that would have maximum sensual impact. He brought in Ukrainian dancers and costumed young people to take part in the event. He had little children walk in carrying lit candles while performing a choreographed version of the *siiaty* ritual and tossing grain left and right as they walked. Because Kolot comes from a family that ran a restaurant, there was an extravagant Ukrainian meal at the bargain price of twenty-five dollars, although, according to Kolot, the tickets sold out so quickly that people were buying tickets from one another and paying double the amount just to get in. And this was to a hall that could seat four hundred. Kolot himself dressed as Grandfather Frost, complete with a floor-length robe and a fake white beard. This event ran successfully from 1990 to 1994.

Kolot’s Malanka, like Rudy’s, took selected elements from real rituals performed during the Christmas season and modified them to make them more striking and thus more suitable for a large audience. Instead

of having individual children perform a *siaty* ritual, he arranged for a colourful procession. Like Rudy with his chicken divination, Kolot added elements that were not traditional. Grandfather Frost, the character he himself chose to play, is a figure taken from folk tales. In those tales, Grandfather Frost tests young women; he has nothing to do with Christmas or New Year. He became the widely popular personification of Christmas during the Soviet era as a non-religious, but well-known, embodiment of winter. Rudy said he did research to find some of the elements he included in his Malanka. Where Kolot got the idea for Grandfather Frost I do not know. He may have heard of the popularity of this figure from friends returning from Ukraine; he may have learned about Grandfather Frost from tales; he may have based his character on the old man figure who appears in those versions of Malanka in which people parade dressed as various animals and personages. Whatever his sources, he successfully combined the food people expected at a Ukrainian event with modified and stage-appropriate versions of real Ukrainian tradition, plus made-up elements that seemed traditional, like the figure of Grandfather Frost.

Why the Wynyard Malanka stopped running, I failed to ask. It is the nature of oral interviewing that what one sees clearly several years later when writing up interviews is not so clear when talking to respondents. Certainly, Kolot did not want the event to end. Using words almost identical to Rudy's, he said that working on the Wynyard Malanka made him proud to be Ukrainian because it allowed him to showcase Ukrainian culture to a large and appreciative audience. My speculation is that people with the energy and the talent of Roy Kolot and Steve and Mary Rudy are rare, and when it comes to putting on major events, the activists cannot shoulder the responsibility single-handedly year after year. When there is a group that supports their efforts over time, as is the case with the Rudys in Codette, the event thrives. When a special person like Kolot is not backed by a dedicated cohort, the celebration eventually withers and dies. It is special people like Roy Kolot, Steve and Mary Rudy, and Elaine and Roman Nychyk (see below) who have inspired this book. They are small-town heroes who would be forgotten if a folklorist did not write about them. It is people like them who keep tradition alive, modifying it to keep it meaningful and enable it to thrive on the Canadian prairies.



FIG. 9.3 Roy Kolot

THANKSGIVING/SPAS/OBZHYNKY

The other holiday that has become a successful blend of Ukrainian culture and outreach to the community, Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian alike, is the Thanksgiving dinner/fall supper. Thanksgiving is not a Ukrainian holiday. It is a celebration of the harvest that began in the United States as an expression of gratitude for the land's bounty and is said to have started as a joint meal held by the Pilgrims and their Indigenous neighbours. Canadian Thanksgiving is partly based on British harvest festivals, many with a liturgical component, and partly influenced by American Thanksgiving. It falls on the first Monday in October and is thus distinct from the American celebration. The Ukrainian festival that celebrates the harvest is called Spas, the Feast of the Transfiguration, and is actually a series of three events, one expressing gratitude for the harvest of honey, one for the apple or fruit harvest, and one for poppy seed and nuts. It comes much earlier in the year than Thanksgiving, but

at least in one church, Spas and Thanksgiving have been successfully combined to produce a harvest season re-enactment attractive to the general public.

The most Ukrainian-like and most dramatic celebration of harvest is held at the Orthodox church in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and combines elements of Spas and Thanksgiving, producing a major event similar to the Malankas organized by the Rudys and by Kolot. Again, an energetic couple, active in the church, has been key to the event's success. Roman and Elaine Nychyk dress as the *hospodar* and *hospodynia* and serve as master and mistress of ceremonies. Fruit, honey, and herbs are displayed on the main table in an apparent allusion to Spas, although the Nychyks did not use this term and called their celebration Obzhynky (see below). The *hospodar* and *hospodynia* stand at the door and greet everyone who comes in with the traditional welcome of bread and salt and a shot of *horilka* (vodka), which can be replaced with iced tea by those who choose to avoid alcohol. There is a big meal of turkey combined with Ukrainian specialties, dancing to a band, and an auction. The items sold include not only prizes donated by local businesses but also *rushnyky*, embroidered in Canada, and *pysanky*. These *pysanky* are different, however. They are not eggs decorated for Easter, but special ones made to commemorate the Holodomor, the famine that killed millions of Ukrainians in the early 1930s. The *pysanky* struck me as an act of extreme juxtaposition, contrasting the bounty of Canada the attendees at the event were enjoying that evening with the suffering that had occurred in Ukraine in the past. I was taken aback that Holodomor eggs were being sold at an event celebrating nature's abundant gifts. Perhaps this contrast was meant to stimulate generosity. In any case, the attendees accepted the selling of Holodomor *pysanky* as appropriate, and photos of the Obzhynky in the North Battleford Orthodox church show a colourful and well-attended event.

A number of other churches hold what parishioners call a Thanksgiving celebration, though none as elaborate as the one in North Battleford. While the term "Thanksgiving" is widely used by the people I interviewed, in most churches it refers to a harvest festival that thanks God for His bounty and that, because of lack of clergy, seldom falls on Thanksgiving Day. For this reason, the term "harvest festival" is preferred. Most churches combine their service with a meal, and few

of these Ukrainian Canadian celebrations contain allusions to Spas. At the Thanksgiving service in Redwater, Alberta, a table with fruits and vegetables is blessed prior to the after-service luncheon, a possible Spas reference. Ukrainian harvest elements were less apparent elsewhere; people made a general association between Thanksgiving and harvest, nothing more. Several people, like Robert Andreychuk in Andrew, Alberta, mentioned there being a Thanksgiving Day service that is a blessing of the harvest, followed by a meal. As his wife Helen explained, while people call it a Thanksgiving service, it can be held at any point in the fall, depending on the availability of a priest. In Burgis, Saskatchewan, what is referred to as the Thanksgiving service comes after the harvest but need not coincide with the Canadian holiday. Larger churches like the one in Two Hills, Alberta, are able to hold their Thanksgiving service on Thanksgiving itself and offer a post-service turkey dinner in the church basement. Churches that used to hold fall services in the past, such as the ones in Melnychuk, Saskatchewan, and Star Peno, Alberta, tend to refer to them as Thanksgiving celebrations, although they, too, seldom coincide with the civic holiday. Others, such as the Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church in Waskatenau and the Immaculate Conception Church in Calmar Farms, both in Alberta, hold potluck events for their parishioners. These are held on Thanksgiving weekend and give people, especially those with no family nearby, a chance to have a celebratory meal.

Perhaps because there is no harvest celebration that is widely practised in Ukrainian communities and their churches in Canada, the Pivovarchuks, a family recently emigrated from Ukraine, tried to introduce one. This family wanted to get to know their Ukrainian Canadian neighbours and thought that a festival called Obzhynky would be the perfect way to accomplish this goal. Obzhynky is part of the calendar cycle of celebrations in Ukraine, and since it is a secular festival, presumably of pre-Christian origin, it became popular in the Soviet era. Currently Obzhynky is part of the lives of people in Ukraine, especially those engaged in agriculture, and to the Pivovarchuks, this seemed like the sort of event that would appeal to Ukrainian Canadian farmers.

Natalia Shostak offers an interesting account of the Pivovarchuk family, nationalistic Ukrainian immigrants who moved to Mundare, a town east of Edmonton, and their efforts to fit in with the established

Ukrainian Canadian community. The new immigrants assumed that they would have a lot in common with the local population because they were all farmers of Ukrainian origin. Acting on this assumption, they founded an organization called *Zustreech*, translated as “meeting” or “get-together.” Their hope was that, through *Zustreech*, they could sponsor events that would appeal to the locals and that these events would create a strong bond between themselves as new arrivals and the established Ukrainian community.³

While *Obzhynky*, the festival the *Pivovarchuks* chose as their first outreach event, seemed most appropriate to the people living in the area, it was not a success. Having grown up under Soviet rule, the *Pivovarchuks* arranged for poetry recitations and all the trappings of celebrations they knew from back home. The fact that the poetry was in Ukrainian and most Ukrainian Canadians do not know the language was not the only problem. The sorts of things that for recent émigrés were emblematic of Ukraine did not align with what Ukrainian Canadians perceived the land of their ancestors to be – or what they thought it would have been, had it not been for seventy years of Soviet domination. Most important, these *Obzhynky*, as opposed to the ones in North Battleford created by the *Nychyks*, did not fit Ukrainian Canadian culture. Prairie Ukrainians had developed their own cycle of calendar rites, and the successful ones have dramatic elements and condensed re-enactments of actual ritual. The *Pivovarchuks*’ *Obzhynky* did not offer traditional ritual in condensed form; it was based on Soviet practice. Furthermore, it had none of the drama that Ukrainian Canadians had come to expect. With its static poetry readings, it was unlike both the North Battleford *Obzhynky* and the *Malankas* in *Codette* and *Weyburn*. It was just not acceptable to Ukrainians already living on the Prairies.

SELLING UKRAINIAN FOOD: THE FALL SUPPER AND CATERING SERVICES

The fall supper is a major fundraiser at a number of churches on the Canadian Prairies. It is not related to Thanksgiving, and it is debatable whether it can be considered a ritual. While this is impossible to determine with certainty, it probably began in imitation of the fall fundraising suppers held by non-Ukrainian churches. I did not ask because my

respondents probably would not have been able to tell me. Fall suppers are not connected to holidays, either Ukrainian or Western ones, and their primary purpose is to generate money for the many expenses associated with church upkeep.

There is practically no celebratory aspect to the fall supper, and no church service is connected to this event. No dramatic re-enactments of ritual are offered to those in attendance. Sometimes, but not always, there is a band and an opportunity to dance. Essentially fall suppers sell that extremely popular item: Ukrainian food. Suppers typically take one of two forms. They can be a sit-down meal, serving as many as several hundred people. Tickets to such events are sold in advance and the meal starts at a set time. Or they can be rotating events, with a number of sittings over a designated time span. People come, eat, and leave, and then another group comes in to purchase and consume a meal. In such cases, tickets are usually sold at the door. Ukrainian food is extremely popular, not only with Ukrainians but also with non-Ukrainian Canadians, which makes various types of food events important church fundraisers. In most cases women's leagues bear the responsibility for running the fall suppers and for providing the food that is sold at these events.

In some places, such as at the Saint Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Candiatic, the big fundraising meal is not an indoor fall supper but a summer outdoor barbecue. Here, the food served is not typical Ukrainian fare but standard Western barbecue. The women's league sells tickets, and the prices vary according to the item purchased, with steaks costing more than hamburgers. My understanding is that the foods served to accompany the grilled meats are indeed Ukrainian non-meat dishes. The outdoor event in Candiatic attracts a variety of people out to enjoy themselves and helps the parishioners keep their church and the church hall in very good repair. Summer events, like the Candiatic barbecue, are an attempt to engage with and adapt to a more Canadian calendar, much like the Thanksgiving celebrations. Summer is barbecue season, and the Candiatic church uses that association to draw people toward their church for a big, mainly Western-style outdoor meal. There is no attempt to link the Candiatic barbecue to a Ukrainian summer holiday such as the Feast of Ivan Kupalo, St John the Baptist. One unusual and very popular fundraiser is held in Stry, Alberta. It is called Midnight Madness because it begins with a dinner, followed by a dance that goes

on until four in the morning. This event, like the Candiak barbecue, does not coincide with a holiday or with fundraising activities held at other churches in the vicinity; nor is it an adaptation of Canadian food events like Thanksgiving or New Year celebrations.

One step removed from sit-down suppers are sales of frozen food items such as perogies (*pirohy*) and cabbage rolls, or *holubtsi*. These can be held at any time and are not tied to festivals. Roy Kolot and the women volunteers of the Holy Trinity Church in Sturgis sell perogies year-round and have sold enough to hire a contractor to reroof their church. While I was there in 2015 filming one of their perogy-making sessions, the roofers were present and hard at work. Several workmen bought bags of five dozen frozen perogies and one customer was buying perogies to ship to Montreal. As I observed the group in Sturgis making perogies, it became clear that there was a ritual-like aspect to their activities in the sense that the participants laughed and socialized and ate a communal meal together. Women's leagues hold bake sales of Ukrainian specialties such as poppyseed cake and typical Canadian foods such as pies. The preparation of these items may embrace some of the ritual aspects that I saw in Sturgis. Some items produced by women's groups are sold only to parishioners. These foods do tend to be linked to rituals. They include Easter breads, the braided *paska*, and the tall and sweet *baba* or *babka*. Also sold "internally" so to speak are *kolachi*, the breads used for funeral and memorial services and for distribution at grave blessings.

With the decline in the number of parishioners in rural Prairie churches, women's leagues are shrinking and their members are growing too old and frail to produce the food needed for fall suppers and perogy and bake sales. As a result, these are becoming rare. In Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, the parishioners solved the problem by ordering food from a business in Saskatoon called Babas and selling it at their events. They were able to make a profit and raise money for their church. Needless to say, reselling food made by others reduces its connection to ritual.

A number of Ukrainian churches offer catering services: the parishioners donate their labour, produce food for the organization or event that hires them, and then contribute a portion of the money earned to their church. The events being catered are much like the ones for which Ukrainian foods are sold. Most are life cycle rituals, specifically weddings



FIG. 9.4 *Pirohy* making, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church,
Sturgis, SK [ABOVE]

FIG. 9.5 *Kolachi* for sale, Prince Albert Ukrainian Orthodox Church [BELOW]

and funerals. Catering can be viewed as a transitional situation between the past, when many if not most churches held fall suppers and bake sales, and the current situation, in which fall suppers are rare and food is seldom produced for sale except for those few successful fundraising operations such as the one in Sturgis. Catering by church women was done in quite a few locations, including Stry, Alberta, and Buchanan, Porcupine Plain, Rhein, Rosthern, and Stenen, Saskatchewan. In some cases, such as in Szypenitz, Alberta, the catering was for parishioner weddings and funerals only; it was not offered to outsiders. Most often, though, catering was offered to anyone who would pay, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. Where resources are limited and not many people are available to do the work, congregations can specialize. In Skaro, Alberta, for example, the catering is for funerals of the relatives of church members only. The beautiful church in Plain Lake rents out both the church itself and the church hall to people of all faiths who want to hold a wedding in picturesque country surroundings.

WESTERN-STYLE FUNDRAISING: BINGO NIGHTS, RAFFLES, AND SNOWMOBILE POKER

The popularity of Ukrainian food and its dominance as a funding source for churches indicate that Ukrainians have established themselves as an important and even emblematic presence on the Prairies. They are no longer immigrants, but Canadians, and the foods and practices they brought with them and then modified in this country have shaped Canada as much as they themselves have been shaped by this country. In their daily lives, Ukrainians blend their traditional foods and practices with those of their neighbours. Just as Ukrainians have added Western pies to their bake sales, so they have added Western fundraising practices to their own. Many churches earn money from bingo nights and raffles. The latter often coincide with a church service such as Khram or Praznyk and help bring in extra cash. The Sanctuary team was present at a raffle after the Praznyk celebration at the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, on 13 June 2017. The church service, like most Praznyk celebrations, was followed by a meal. After the service, people went downstairs into the church hall, but before the meal started, the church league sold sheets of tickets to raise money. At the conclusion



FIG. 9.6 Raffle, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, Weyburn, SK

of the meal, two members of the congregation got up at the front of the hall, drew tickets, and read out numbers. The person holding the ticket with the matching number won a prize. The prizes were not Ukrainian objects; they were mostly household items and sporting goods donated by local businesses. The occasion was full of fun and frivolity and added some additional entertainment to the Praznyk, besides providing money for the church coffers.

Among the places I visited, there were two where people spoke of selling or raffling off specifically Ukrainian items. One was Sturgis, which raffled off *rushnyky*, embroidered ritual towels, and paintings of Ukrainian scenes. The other was North Battleford, which also raffled off *rushnyky* and the Holodomor *pysanky* mentioned earlier. The Holy Trinity Church in Sturgis and the St John the Baptist Church in North Battleford both diligently emphasize Ukrainian heritage. Their use of raffles to raise money, and the Ukrainian cultural items they raffle off, serve as a marker of how Ukrainian and Canadian traditions can blend successfully.

Perhaps the most unusual fundraising event described to me was the Snowmobile Poker Derby, a winter event held at the Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Beaverdale, Saskatchewan. It combines entertainment and gaming and, of course, offers food. The derby is held every January. Participants who buy tickets show up with their snowmobiles. They are then treated to a pancake and sausage breakfast. Whether this can be considered a Ukrainian treat is debatable. Perhaps the sausages served are *kovbasa* and the pancakes are based on *mlyntsi*, Ukrainian pancakes served at Shrove. After the breakfast, contestants ride their snowmobiles to predetermined stations. At each, they collect a playing card. Whoever ends up with the best hand wins the derby prize. The prize is not a Ukrainian item.

THE SPECIAL ROLE OF THE PYSANKA

Ukrainian celebrations on the Prairies have proven to be remarkably flexible. With the exception of Christmas and Easter, the celebrations that follow the calendar year have adapted easily and in a variety of ways. Some events, like the Codette and Wynyard Malankas and the North Battleford Obzhynky, offer a condensed version of a Ukrainian ritual season for the entertainment of Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. Some are adaptations of things like fall suppers, Ukrainianized for the benefit of the local population and intended to bring money into the community church. Some, like snowmobile poker, are new events added to the calendar year for the entertainment of both Ukrainians and their neighbours, again, to raise money for the church.

The *pysanka*, or Ukrainian batik Easter egg, presents a special case. It needs to be treated separately because it was once a ritual item produced for the calendar festival of Easter. It has lost much of its connection to Easter and become an art object, one that remains a specifically Ukrainian item in the minds of many people, Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian alike. The association of *pysanky* with Easter seems to be strongest among non-Ukrainians, and many buy *pysanky* made by Ukrainians at Easter time. Ukrainians, it seems, associate *pysanky* more with Ukrainian heritage than with the holiday that first inspired these eggs. This phenomenon may have developed as *pysanky* became more and more elaborate and ceased being food. Early Prairie

pysanky had simple designs and were executed on hard-boiled eggs meant to be eaten on Easter morning. They were done with vegetable dyes, derived from food and food-based products such as boiled onion skins, beet root, red cabbage, and turmeric. A number of people I interviewed had fond recollections of old-style *pysanky* made with food-based dyes. This was a time when the *pysachok* used for writing on the egg were also home-made, often by rolling the tin tab used to hang calendars into a funnel. The hand-made writing tools and the vegetable dyes have since disappeared and are now but a memory, replaced by commercially sourced dyes and tools that come in a variety of forms, from electric writing implements to lathes that allow drawing perfectly straight lines. These may not have the same charm as items that took special care to make, but they are easier to use and allow the creation of intricate designs. While not poisonous, commercial dyes are not meant to be eaten and are used on eggs whose main purpose is decoration. An intermediate step between the simple *pysanky* blessed in church and eaten on Easter morning and the intricate *pysanky* of today may have been the practice of extracting colour from crepe paper, thus producing a dye that seems unappetizing on an item that has the potential of being eaten. During my work for the Sanctuary project, many of the people I talked to expressed nostalgia for the old tools and dyes, but no one seemed eager to bring back the techniques of the past. Shirley Korpatniski of Sheho, Saskatchewan, an enthusiastic and highly skilled *pysanka* writer, kept and treasured her grandmother's hundred-year-old handmade implements. She herself used all of the modern equipment she could get, including a special egg lathe and an electric *pysachok* or stylus.

Contemporary *pysanky* are exquisite art objects that, for many, have little or no connection to Easter. Among my Sanctuary Project respondents, a number of people made and/or collected *pysanky*, but without seeing it as a must-do Easter activity. For them, *pysanka*-writing was a Ukrainian tradition, one that children were taught as a cultural, not a seasonal activity, and they did not perceive it as a necessary part of Easter. Teaching *pysanka*-writing in the schools as a way to promote Ukrainian culture was mentioned in Musidora and Redwater, Alberta. In Swan Plain and Tuffnell, Saskatchewan, children learn *pysanka*-writing in school rather than at home.



FIG. 9.7 Shirley Korpatniski with her *pysanky*

Pysanky are a very attractive commercial item. Perhaps because non-Ukrainians link *pysanky* to Easter more closely than Ukrainians do, many Prairie Ukrainians make quite a bit of money selling eggs to non-Ukrainians. Phyllis Marianchuk of Theodore, Saskatchewan, used to sell *pysanky* at Easter time primarily to non-Ukrainian customers. Her eggs were indeed exquisite, and she stopped decorating them only because, at age eighty-six, her eyesight had started to fail. Shirley Korpatniski, cited earlier, said that her daughters paid their way through the University of Saskatchewan by writing and selling *pysanky*, although she did not mention whether they sold the eggs specifically for Easter or year-round. Other people talked about making clocks out of *pysanky*, which, in Insinger, were sold at church fundraisers. In Myrnam, Alberta, Karen Kitt Colford talked about a woman she knew who decorated ostrich eggs with *pysanka* designs, sawed them in half, attached hinges, and sold them as decorative containers. This woman also made and sold pendants made out of *pysanka* shells. In Gorlitz,

Saskatchewan, Henry Wasylyshen said his brother broke *pysanky* apart and used the shell pieces to compose *pysanka* mosaics. These sold very well, including to large urban churches. One could argue that *pysanky* have become a Canadian item, not a specifically Ukrainian one, and are emblematic of Canada and the Prairies. In Edmonton, *pysanky* and items made out of them such as clocks and wall hangings are sold as souvenirs of Alberta at the Provincial Legislature. *Pysanky* and *pysanka* clocks and wall hangings are prizes at the bingo games and raffles held to raise money in urban churches.

A number of people on Facebook post their *pysanka* creations year-round, including snowflake *pysanky* (white designs on a solid-colour background), which serve as Christmas ornaments. In the past year there have been Halloween *pysanky* and, since the Russians invaded Ukraine, blue-and-yellow *pysanky* (the colours of the Ukrainian flag) have become popular fundraising items sold to support Ukrainian troops. The Facebook group “Incredible Eggs: Pysanky and Batik” posts images throughout the year. The designs shown are of astonishing intricacy and delicacy, often with no reference to Ukrainian traditional design or Ukrainian subject matter. Just recently a member of this site posted a set of crèche figures executed on *pysanky*. As noted earlier, the Orthodox Church in North Battleford during its Thanksgiving event auctioned Holodomor eggs to raise funds for itself.

The *pysanka*, no matter what the design, has become an emblem of Ukrainian culture. A giant metal *pysanka* is the focal point of a large Ukrainian event held on Canada Day weekend (see the conclusion). The Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, Alberta, is held on a summer holiday weekend so that parents can have the free time to drive their children to the dance contests held as part of this event. *Pysanky* are sold at this festival, and so are *korovai*, the wedding breads discussed in an earlier chapter. *Vyshyvanky*, or embroidered shirts, are also sold at this festival, as are Ukrainian folk dolls called *motanky*. There are even stalls with kitchen items, such as knives, favoured by Ukrainian Canadian cooks. This festival has nothing to do with Easter, just as *pysanky* are now Ukrainian art objects with only a peripheral connection to the Easter ritual.

It is noteworthy that Prairie churches do not sell *pysanky* to raise money, even though there is a high demand for these items and prices are good. It seems that, at least for churchgoers, there is some retention of

concept that the *pysanka* is a ritual object closely linked to an important religious holiday. Churches sell transformed versions of *pysanky* only. For example, *pysanka* clocks are sold at the St Nikolas Church in Insinger, Saskatchewan. To make such a clock, *pysanky* are cut in half, filled with plaster of Paris, and mounted on a base. *Pysanka* mosaics can be sold for display in churches. Intact *pysanky*, however, are not sold at church fundraisers. St John the Baptist Orthodox Church in North Battleford does sell actual eggs, but these are removed from Easter in multiple ways. The eggs commemorate the Holodomor, a tragic event that is almost diametrically opposed to the joy of the Resurrection and the coming of spring. And the eggs are sold in the fall, at a Thanksgiving/Obzhynky event, not Easter. If *pysanky* do indeed retain some connection to an important religious holiday, at least in the minds of churchgoers, then it is understandable why they must be altered and distanced from Easter in some manner before they can be sold to raise funds for a religious institution.

CONCLUSION

The rituals of the calendar year, even more than family and life cycle rituals such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals, have been adapted to Canadian ways. The rituals that have retained the greatest number of Ukrainian traits are the ones most closely associated with the church and the home, namely Christmas and Easter. Other calendar events have been extensively modified to make them more suitable to Prairie life, and in some locations completely Western celebrations have been added. Also, when it comes to calendar events, there has been no attempt at revival, as occurs during the weddings of some of the more nationally conscious younger Ukrainians. The Malankas in Codette and Wynyard and the Obzhynky in North Battleford, all in Saskatchewan, are not revivals, but modifications of a cycle of rituals that make them suitable for the entertainment of those living on the Prairies. Perhaps the most unusual development has been the reinterpretation of the *pysanka*. Once an item closely tied to Easter, a very important church and family event, the *pysanka* seems to have broken free of ritual to become an art object, still associated with Ukrainian culture but only marginally connected to Easter. ❁

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CONCLUSION

From the Sacred to the Secular, from Monumental Ukrainian Churches to Prairie Giant Monuments

For early Ukrainian arrivals to Canada, churches were their bastions. They provided the newcomers with an opportunity to worship in a manner they knew from their homeland and thus with the spiritual and emotional support they needed under the very stressful conditions of settling in a new land. Churches were also the places where Ukrainians were free to be Ukrainian. There was a great deal of assimilation pressure on early arrivals. Children were punished for speaking Ukrainian in school. Ukrainian practices were disparaged in the media. Scholarly articles about this early period describe Anglo-Canadians viewing Ukrainians as pugilistic, unsanitary, and generally backward. In their churches, Ukrainians were none of these things. In churches their culture was not simply validated: it was celebrated. Churches provided non-religious services in addition to serving religious needs. They offered Ukrainian-language classes as well as plays and other performances staged in Ukrainian. There were festivals and dance classes and opportunities to sing in Ukrainian. Churches allowed Ukrainians to sustain all facets of their culture. Today it is clear that Ukrainians have not been assimilated. Rather, they have developed their own distinctive Ukrainian Canadian culture suited to the social, geophysical, and climatic features of Canadian life.

As Ukrainians established themselves, churches became the vehicle through which they reached out to others. The most basic outreach

activity was selling Ukrainian food. Food was offered by itself, in the form of frozen perogies, bake sales, and the like. It was also presented to the community through church suppers, often held in community halls rather than in the churches themselves. In larger communities, the food was accompanied by a display of Ukrainian culture, and children's and other dance groups would perform in conjunction with church events. In at least a few places, guests at Ukrainian suppers were treated to a dramatic re-enactment of a Ukrainian ritual season such as Yuletide, complete with Ukrainian costumes and explanations of the rituals and their significance.

Food is of primary importance in all of these activities. It is important to Ukrainians as a marker of their identity. Establishing a community is vital to people who have been uprooted from their homeland, have left their traditions behind, and are trying to settle in a new and dramatically different country. Diasporas need community, and on the Canadian Prairies, Ukrainians have marked and encapsulated their community identity through food. Food holds a special place in community creation: it is literally visceral; it is culture experienced through the body as well as the mind.¹ Diaspora food is typically a blend of the old and the new. It is a strong part of tradition but has been modified to fit the new climate and the availability (or not) of ingredients. Diaspora food retains traits that link it to the food culture in the country of origin while incorporating the tastes of the new homeland. It has also been altered to suit the preferences of non-Ukrainian neighbours and children who have been raised on Canadian food.

Ukrainians are hardly the only group that links culture to food in this way. Writing about Chinese restaurants in Newfoundland, Li emphasizes that the food they serve under the rubric of Chinese cuisine is not Chinese food as it is prepared in any part of China. Rather, it has been adapted to the Western palate. It is acceptable to non-Chinese consumers yet different enough from their normal fare to provide them with a sense of indulging in the exotic. This type of food offers a bit of culinary tourism close to home. Chinese food in Canada may not be traditional from the perspective of China itself, but it has developed its own culture and its own devotees, so when Canadian expats go to work in China itself, they miss the Chinese/Canadian blend they used to call Chinese food back home. Apparently, the longing for Canadian Chinese

cooking was strong enough to prompt the opening of a restaurant in Shanghai called Fortune Cookie. This establishment focuses on hybrid Chinese/Canadian food and does very well, attracting North Americans living in China and offering them a taste of home.²

Ukrainian Canadian food is analogous to the Chinese/Newfoundland food described by Li. The creators of the hybrid cuisine of Newfoundland were trying to run restaurants that would attract a mixed Chinese and non-Chinese clientele. By contrast, Ukrainians on the Prairies were not at first trying to sell what they cooked; rather, they adapted themselves to what was available and to the more Western tastes of their offspring and neighbours. Nonetheless, certain Ukrainian dishes have become extremely popular and a highly successful way of raising money, be it for the church or for other causes. Ukrainian food is so much a part of Canadian life, especially on the Prairies, that radio hosts make analogies to activities such as pinching perogies when trying to explain something to the audience. Perogies are such a staple that they are blended with other favourite dishes, so perogy pizza is readily available in many Prairie locations and is a regular menu item at restaurant chains like Boston Pizza. And, of course, commercial concerns do very well selling frozen perogies. Cheemos, a perogy manufacturer that sells in major grocery stores across Canada, advertises its Canadian roots and Canadian-grown ingredients.

Two other items that evoke Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian community are *pysanky* and dance. As noted in the preceding chapter, *pysanky* are no longer solely an Easter item. They are art objects in their own right, made year-round by Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. They are Ukrainian culture that has become Canadian culture, sold year-round in a variety of forms, from the eggs themselves to clocks, plaques, and jewellery made out of the eggs (or parts of them). These items are available at the souvenir shop outside the Provincial Legislature in Edmonton and are presented as emblematic of Alberta. Dance is another activity that draws in members of the community, solidifies their cultural awareness, and serves as an excellent showcase for Ukrainian culture. Dance can be enjoyed by any spectator, regardless of heritage, and can attract dancers who are not ethnically Ukrainian, as well as Ukrainian participants.

The wide acceptance of Ukrainian food, *pysanky*, and dance testifies to the complete integration of Ukrainians into Prairie life. This is not

assimilation, but a blending of traditions to produce a distinctive culture. Ukrainians overcame the pressure to assimilate that was exerted on them when they first arrived at the turn of the twentieth century. If anything, that pressure made them aware of their distinctiveness, and they have since retained that distinctiveness. One can say that they have blended Canada's Prairie culture with their own.

Ukrainians celebrate – and assert – their culture not only through activities sponsored by their churches but also through the Prairie giants. These are monumental statues, most of which depict food, that dominate the landscape through their sheer size. Their very dominance underscores that Ukrainians now play a central role on the Prairies. Monuments are a powerful means of self-assertion. Katharyne Mitchell writes that minority groups use monuments to achieve recognition, and Nuala Johnson notes that “public monuments have been the foci of collective participation in the politics and public life of villages, towns and cities.”³ On the Prairies, many small towns strive for recognition by erecting huge statues that represent their local economy and traditions. In Falher, a French town in northern Alberta that proclaims itself to be Canada's honey capital, an enormous bee graces the centre of town. For Ukrainians in Canada, asserting themselves in the public sphere has been especially important because of their need to emphasize that they are a distinct group, albeit one that is very much at the core of Canadian life. Thus, they have joined in the construction of enormous monuments proclaiming Ukrainian heritage and identity. The Prairie giants they have helped construct dominate today's landscape as much as their own Prairie churches, which proclaim Ukrainian participation in Prairie life.

The most famous monument to Ukrainians in Canada is the Vegreville *pysanka*, a giant metal egg balanced on a fulcrum in such a way that, even though it weighs 3,000 pounds, it moves in response to Prairie winds. Dedicated in 1974 as a memorial to the hundredth anniversary of the RCMP, the *pysanka* was conceived a year earlier when the town of Vegreville responded to a call for commemorative monuments by the Province of Alberta, one that came with an offer of funding. The town saw the province's call as an opportunity to showcase Ukrainian identity in an area that is indeed heavily Ukrainian and referred to as Kalyna Country, a term derived from the high bush cranberry, a plant associated with Ukrainian ritual and song. The *pysanka* has become a

tourist attraction. It is the focal point of an annual Pysanka Festival that celebrates all things Ukrainian and serves as a showcase for amateur dance groups from across the Prairies.

According to Vegreville's municipal website, the *pysanka* symbolizes "the peace and security the Mounties offered the area's pioneers and their descendants."⁴ That a Ukrainian *pysanka* could be accepted as a symbol for something as quintessentially Canadian as the Mounties, and that it could be seen to represent all Prairie settlers, is already a testament to the importance of Ukrainians in the Prairie provinces.

The Vegreville *pysanka* is much more than a tribute to the RCMP. It is also a technical marvel that asserts Ukrainian know-how. Constructing the monument required the design services of graphic artist Paul Sembaliuk, a donation of anodized aluminum from Permaloy Corporation, the volunteer services of engineering professor John Ruptash, and the programming of Ron Resch of the University of Utah. Digital software allowed the two-dimensional tiles created by Sembaliuk to be fitted into an egg shape; thus, the Vegreville *pysanka* became the first monument to be entirely computer-designed. The egg itself is enormous, standing over three stories high, and was the largest *pysanka* in the world until a larger one was constructed in Kolomyia, Ukraine. Between its imposing size, the fact that it moves, and the firsts that went into its production, the *pysanka* is a testament to Ukrainian accomplishments. It is proof that Ukrainians are not the backward peasants that Anglo-Canadians once imagined them to be. The egg is monumental and, if monumentality is a way to establish power relations, as Per A. Rudling suggests, then the Vegreville *pysanka* asserts Ukrainian power in Canada.⁵

Another monumental testament to Ukrainian accomplishments stands in Mundare, fifteen miles northwest of Vegreville. It honours a very successful business known as Stawnichy's Ukrainian Sausage. Opened in 1959, the sausage factory has been in the hands of the Stawnichy family ever since, growing steadily and making its owners quite wealthy. To commemorate their success, the family decided to raise a monument. They set up a not-for-profit foundation and, in 2001, unveiled a 12,000-pound, 42-foot-tall statue of a sausage. The sausage rests on a pedestal; a heart at the bottom offers a tribute to Mundare from the Stawnichy family. The statue looks like a sausage link from the side, but if one looks at it from the front, where the heart is located, or



FIG. 10.1 Vegreville *pysanka* (author beneath the monument to show size)

from the back, the impression created is entirely different. The statue is made of fibreglass and painted red and, from this angle, looks very much like an enormous erect phallus. It is probably not too much of a stretch to see this statue as an assertion of Ukrainian masculine prowess, a symbol of financial and culinary success as well as Ukrainian power.⁶

Another food-related monument is the giant, twenty-seven-foot-tall perogy (pirih) in Glendon, Alberta. It is pierced by a silver fork. According to Johnny Demienko, the man who came up with the idea for the monument, the fork was a later addition. Without the fork, people could not identify the object with what it was meant to represent. With the fork inserted, the meaning was clear: this was a food item, one emblematic of Ukrainian cuisine.⁷ There is a perogy restaurant in Glendon, founded by Ukrainians. The restaurant is currently run by a Chinese family, proving that all ethnic groups can now participate in the production and



FIG. 10.2 Stawnichy sausage monument in Mundare

consumption of Ukrainian food. One more food item is a statue of three giant mushrooms in Vilna, Alberta,. According to the statue's website, the mushrooms are of the genus *Tricholoma uspale* (possibly a misspelling of *Tricholoma ustale*).⁸ They grow wild in the area and, as the website states, in fresh or dried form they "are a traditional ingredient in the ethnic dishes of the region." A bit further down on the website it becomes clear that the ethnics in question are from Ukraine: the text reads that "mushroom hunting in this area has been a tradition since the early Ukrainian settlers arrived in the early 1900s." Again, the mushrooms are enormous (18,000 pounds in weight and twenty feet high) and a tribute to technical prowess because, as another website states, they could not be blown over by a hurricane (admittedly, there are no hurricanes in Alberta). The mushrooms, like other Prairie giants, attract tourists. According to another website, they average at least one tourist visit every half hour in peak season.⁹

One last monument to mention here is Lesia, the “Welcome to Canora” statue just outside Canora, Saskatchewan. This figure was constructed by Nicholas Levchuk and his son Orest in 1979 to draw attention to Ukrainian culture. The statue, twenty-five feet tall, is listed as “the world’s tallest Ukrainian lady.” It opened in 1980. The monument presents a very colourful young woman in folk costume offering bread and salt on a *rushnyk*.¹⁰ Greeting visitors with bread and salt is a Ukrainian traditional gesture of welcome. Lesia, the Canora Ukrainian monument, shows that this is the home of an important Ukrainian community that has maintained its traditions even while welcoming other ethnicities. While Lesia has a name, she is a generic Ukrainian woman. Nuala Johnson points out that when it comes to monuments, those raised to men typically represent individuals, while those of women, especially women’s bodies, represent a concept rather than a particular person.¹¹ Lesia is precisely a concept rather than a specific individual. Built by a father and son, she is a generic female and her name is common enough to represent all Ukrainians. It is interesting that the costume worn by this statue is typical of eastern Ukraine, though most of the residents of Canora and the surrounding area are from western Ukraine. This underscores that “Lesia” is a generic, idealized Ukrainian woman rather than someone from the personal experience of the area residents. Like the other monuments described earlier, her enormous scale is an assertion of power and of the importance of the Ukrainian presence on the Prairies.

Lesia holds a traditional Ukrainian bread, a *korovai*, but this is not a food monument. She references Ukrainian dance, that other tradition that has grown into a Prairie staple, and thus serves as an emblem of Ukrainian culture, especially in those forms that reach out to and communicate with all Prairie residents. Lesia’s costume and her offering of bread on a *rushnyk* are found in a widely performed Ukrainian number, the dance of greeting or welcome with which many public dance performances begin. By referencing dance, Lesia showcases the Ukrainian community in a way that all Canadians find relatable.

Ukrainian food, *pysanky*, and dance, as they are displayed along Prairie roads, are not the food, *pysanky*, and dance found in Ukraine. Rather, they are special Ukrainian Canadian forms of each of these items, and they speak to people in Canada, Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. Food has assumed primary importance in this regard and is a



FIG. 10.3 Lesia, the Welcome to Canora Statue (author
beneath the monument to show size)

visceral way of communicating culture. Food is not only re-created in Prairie roadside monuments but also sold at everything from church fundraisers, to Rudey's Catering Service, to supermarkets that carry Ukrainian products made by companies like Cheemo's and Stawnichy's. The food that communicates Ukrainian-ness has been pared down to a few easily recognized items, perogies (pirohy) and sausage primary among them, just as the monuments attest. Cabbage rolls are also ubiquitous, but it is the perogy (pirih) and the sausage, perhaps because

of their commercialization and mass production, that have achieved symbolic dominance. At Heritage Days in Edmonton and at Folklorama in Winnipeg, the items offered in the food tent are perogies and sausage, and the lines waiting for these treats are huge.

At any festival, the two mentioned above included, *pysanky* are for sale, regardless of season, and tents at the Heritage Days and Folklorama festivals, both of which are summertime events, often offer *pysanka*-writing lessons as well as the beautifully finished objects done by masters for sale. The entertainment at Heritage Days, at Folklorama, at the Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, and at the Veselka Festival in Foam Lake is Ukrainian dance. The forms in which the foods, *pysanky*, and dances are presented are not those found in Ukraine, but those developed on the Prairies and now emblematic of Ukrainian Canadian culture.

Ukrainians on the Prairies have not been assimilated despite early efforts to do just that. Nor have Ukrainians imposed the culture they brought from Ukraine on their non-Ukrainian neighbours. Rather, Prairie Ukrainians have developed their own special traditions that suit life in Canada and appeal across cultural groups. The dominance of food in this culture may have to do with the hospitality traditional to Ukraine. It may have to do with the visceral nature of food. And it may have to do with the fact that Prairie Canadians are farmers, or at least started out as farmers, producing food and feeding not only themselves but the nation. Churches were the means of preserving Ukrainian identity in the early days of immigration to Canada. Ukrainians today happily display their identity through their churches and through secular monuments like the Prairie giants. ❁

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EPILOGUE

After finishing one of the earlier drafts of this book, my husband Peter Holloway and I started checking the spelling of people's names. Having used the hours and hours of information that the people I interviewed across the Prairies shared with me, I wanted to make sure they were properly credited for their tremendous contribution to our knowledge of Prairie life. I wanted their names to appear correctly so that they, their offspring, and their friends and neighbours could appreciate the magnitude of what they had done. To check the proper spelling of names, we used my interview agreement forms, the notes I had taken in the field, and the names listed in the sound file database. My husband came up with the idea of double-checking the spelling in my materials against sources found online, namely local newspaper articles, parish announcements, and funeral parlour death notices. There were quite a few obituaries for the people who had sat and talked with me. I was surprised and upset to see how many people had died between the time of interview and the writing of this book. The loss of so many good and knowledgeable people makes it all the more imperative that they be properly credited and remembered.

The people who talked to me were of a generation that came of age in the 1950s and 1960s. That is when the churches on the Prairies were flourishing, when congregations numbered more than one hundred parishioners. The generation I interviewed witnessed tremendous change and could talk about what they had seen over the years. Even with the decline of their churches due to population depletion, they maintained their dedication to their places of worship and did their best to keep

them going as long as they could. They also took great care to tell me about the many things they had seen over the years. I hope that what I have written here does justice to who they are, or were, and what they accomplished.

As I work on this version of my Ukrainian Canadian ritual book, I am overwhelmed by the events that are occurring in Ukraine. The unprovoked Russian invasion orchestrated by Vladimir Putin not only threatens peace and the world order but also has led to a mass migration of Ukrainians. While many civilians are staying and taking up the fight to keep their country free, many are fleeing the bombing of their cities and heading west. Canada is one of the many countries offering them asylum. Once the war is over, especially if Ukraine is victorious and succeeds in maintaining its independence, a substantial portion of the refugees will return. But some are likely to stay, especially if they have relatives in Canada or find temporary jobs that can be turned into permanent ones. If a substantial number of Ukrainians do stay, they will change the character of Ukrainian Canadian life, including life on the Prairies. Thus, this work may well document a situation that will soon cease to exist.

Demographics are not the only thing that makes this book unique. Besides capturing a special generation of Prairie Ukrainians, this book is based on a data-gathering method that may well not be possible for the foreseeable future. When I was doing my work, interviewing people to gather information was already becoming less and less popular. I know from personal experience that interviewing is difficult. It demands travel under taxing circumstances that include cheap motels and microwave cooking; it also requires the ability and the willingness to interact with people, getting them to talk and to share. I myself thoroughly enjoyed fieldwork, in-person contact, and the interview method, but I realize it is difficult and something that many people are unwilling, or perhaps unable, to do. Yet interviewing provides a wealth of information and the immediacy of human contact that simply cannot be gotten from work in archives or from print sources. Even if other scholars *are* willing to do interview work, it will not be possible again for a number of years. With COVID infections limiting all direct human contact, it is no longer possible to sit down in close proximity to another person for a chat about ritual culture and church practices. The no-contact hiatus may

in fact change the field of folklore studies and make in-person, one-on-one interviews even more rare, if not entirely a thing of the past. That being the case, I am extra-thankful for the opportunity I had to do the fieldwork that I did and for the people who were willing to sit down with me for interviews. I repeat my hope that this book has done justice to their contributions to our knowledge of Ukrainian Prairie life.

I wish to add that this book covers only a portion of the information I collected during my interview sessions. People told me marvellous anecdotes about the artists and other professionals who designed, decorated, and painted their churches. There were stories about the painters of icons and about community projects to excavate church basements and to do the other work that was outside the sphere of professional builders and painters. I interviewed Ann Huziak, the spouse of Jim Huziak, who painted church interiors. I spoke with Roman Chez, the son of Ilya Chyz, a man who charted the very complicated domes or *baniyas* that are a distinctive feature of Eastern Rite churches. He also did the fancy filigree work on a number of iconostases. It would be lovely if someone were to use my sound files to write about all of these interesting people. In this particular book I, unfortunately, could not. There are many, many more topics that offer great potential and I hope that potential will be realized over time. For now, I thank again all of the people who shared their information with me. I apologize to those whose information I was unable to incorporate into this particular book. As I hope I have done justice to the materials presented here, so I hope others will draw on my data for future work. 🌸

APPENDIX

TABLE A.1 LIST OF RESPONDENTS BY PERSON INTERVIEWED

Adamko, Ron, Samburg, SK	17 June 2013
Andreychuk, Helen and Robert, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Andrew, AB	24 June 2012
Bachinsky, Beverly, Dormition of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	22 June 2016
Banda, Rosemarie and Jerry, St John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church, Marcelin, SK	10 June 2013
Barabash, Alec, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church, Vilna, AB	7 June 2018
Bazansky, Florence, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church of America Church, Stenen, SK	5 June 2015
Betskal, Ann, Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Welychko, SK	10 June 2013
Bilokury, Anton (Tony), Assumption of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wakaw, SK	6 June 2011
Bodnar, Ron, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Church, Bodnari, SK	8 June 2011
Bomok, Peter, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Speers, SK	8 June 2013
Bonar, Katy, Foam Lake, SK	15 June 2016
Bonar, Marian and Doug, St Onuphrius Russian Orthodox Church, Foam Lake, SK	15 June 2016

Borys, Allan, Assumption of the Mother of God Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Star Penon, AB	13 June 2012
Bozniak, Joan, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edwamton, AB	20 June 2012
Bryks, Roy, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church, Wostok-Bukowina, AB	16 June 2012
Burzuminski, David, St Jaroslav Ukrainian Catholic Church, Bruderheim, AB	2 September 2006
Chaba, Zoney, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Redwater, AB	13 June 2014
Chalus, Ingrid, Rycroft, AB	23 July 2010
Charuk, Roy, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sich Kolomiya, AB	24 June 2014
Chaykoski, Joe, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmore, SK	9 June 2016
Cherneski, Audrey and Bill, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Cudworth, SK	3 June 2011
Cherneski, Blair, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Fenwood, SK	16 June 2016
Cherviakoff, Alexander, Mother of Protection Russian Orthodox Church, Hines Creek, AB	26 July 2010
Chez, Gail and Roman, Vernon, BC	23 May 2013
Choban, Elsie, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Two Hills, AB	19 June 2014
Chorneyko, Ace, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wynyard, SK	8 June 2017
Chupik, Andrew, Danbury, SK	21 June 2013
Ciona, Patricia, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Krydor, SK	8 June 2013
Clark, Myrna, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmore, SK	9 June 2016
Colby, Donna, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Candiac, SK	12 June 2017
Colford, Karen Kitt, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Myrnam, AB	23 June 2014
Cymbaliuk, Irene and Ed, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church, New Kiew, AB	6 June 2018

Danyliuk, Terry, St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Drobot, SK	21 June 2016
Diakiw, Alexandria, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Cudworth, SK	3 June 2011
Dmytryshyn, Eva and Nick, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Glaslyn, SK	5 June 2013
Doroshenko, Sylvia and Jacob, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Buchanan, SK	9 June 2017
Doroshenko, Sylvia, St Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church, Kyziv, SK	24 June 2016
Dozorec, Henry, Volodymyr and Olha Ukrainian Catholic Church, Wroxton Farms, SK	15 June 2015
Drobot, Orville, St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Drobot, SK	21 June 2016
Dumalski, Carol and Dan, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Goodeve, SK	8 June 2017
Dvernichuk, Walter, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmore, SK	9 June 2016
Elash, Anne, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Goodeve, SK	22 June 2016
Eliuk, Richard, St Mary Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, Szypenitz, AB	17 June 2014
Elkow, Frances, St Mary's Church of the Dormition Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, Musidora, AB	18 June 2018
Ewanchuk, Leona and Harry, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Brinsley, AB	21 June 2014
Ewanchuk, Morris, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Ispas, AB	14 June 2014
Feledichuk, Diana and Ron, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church, Wostok-Bukowina, AB	16 June 2012
Fedoruk, Verna, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Prince Albert, SK	15 June 2013
Feschuk, Sharon, Meath Park, SK	17 June 2013
Flunder, Rodney, Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church, MacNutt, SK	16 June 2015
Franko, Peter, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wimmer, SK	26 June 2013
Galichowski, Sonja and Joseph, Luzan Toporiwtzi, AB	21 June 2014

Galye, Raymond, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Stornoway, SK	16 June 2015
Gogol, Jocelyn, nee Serdachny, Hyas Baptist Church, Hyas, SK	11 June 2015
Grywacheski, Elsie, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Weekes, SK	24 June 2013
Gurski, Pearl and John, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Stenen, SK	5 June 2015
Hadewich, Gloria and Harold, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, Goodeve Farm, SK	13 June 2016
Hadubiak, Eleanor, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church, Olesha, SK	5 June 2017
Halyk, Bunny (Bohdan), St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Melville, SK	11 June 2016
Harris, Norman, St John Greek Orthodox Church, Endeavour/ Usherville, SK	25 June 2013
Havryliuk, Maria, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wynyard, SK	8 June 2017
Herlick, Cristine, Weyburn, SK	13 June 2017
Hewko, Iris, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Andrew, AB	24 June 2012
Hnatyshyn, Donald, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Burgis, SK	18 June 2015
Holinyaty, Elizabeth, Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Cudworth, SK	8 June 2011
Holinyaty, Mary, Cudworth, SK	9 June 2011
Holodniuk, Florence and Stanley, Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church, Swan Plain, SK	22 June 2013
Holowach, Mary Ann, Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church, Skaro, AB	13 June 2012
Holowachuk, Nellie, Personal Care Home, Preeceville, SK	8 June 2015
Horne, Phyllis, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Camrose, AB	7 June 2012
Horon, Hilda, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, Plain Lake, AB	26 June 2014
Hrab, Olive, All Saints Ukrainian Catholic Church, Hines Creek, AB	26 July 2010
Hritzuk, Valentina, St Walburg, SK	6 June 2013

Huculak, Rose, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Shipman, SK	19 June 2013
Hupka, James, Holy Sunday Greek Orthodox Church, Wysla, SK	18 June 2015
Huska, Nick, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church, Norquay, SK	11 June 2015
Husulak, Cherise, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Insinger, SK	23 June 2016
Hutzul, Barbara and Peter, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Westbrook, SK	15 June 2016
Huziak, Ann, Yorkton, SK	14 June 2015
Juzwishin, Vicki, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Devale, AB	24 July 2010
Kapicki, Leda, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Redwater, AB	13 June 2014
Karapita, Jeanette, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Jedburgh, SK	20 June 2016
Kardash, Joel, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Grenfell, SK	15 June 2017
Karmaznuik, Ken, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Melnychuk, SK	21 June 2016
Kawcuniak, Millie (Emily), Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Rosthern, SK	21 June 2013
Kaweski, Nick, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wadena, SK	26 June 2013
Kawulich, Elsie, Vegreville, AB	20 March 2014
Kekish, Teresa, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Wishart, SK	7 June 2016
Kereliuk, Eustine, St Mary Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, Szypenitz, AB	17 June 2014
Kindrachuk, Darlene, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Yellow Creek, SK	6 June 2011
Klapak, Linda, Descent of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, Candiak, SK	13 June 2017
Klus, Melvin, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Goodeve, SK	22 June 2016
Kocur, Father Roman, Wakaw, SK	4 June 2011

Kolot, Roy, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sturgis, SK	8 June 2015
Korosec, Karl, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church, Waskatenau, AB	13 June 2014
Korpatniski, Shirley, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	22 June 2016
Kostichuk, Bev and Maurice, Ss Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church, Insinger, SK	10 June 2017
Kostiuk, Nestor, St Michael's Russian Orthodox Church, Star Peno, AB	13 June 2012
Koszman, Bertha, Weyburn, SK	13 June 2017
Kotylak, Nellie (Angela), Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Montmartre, SK	14 June 2017
Kozakevich, Mike, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Melville, SK	11 June 2016
Kozun, Olga, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Churchill, SK	5 June 2017
Krasicki, Anne and Bill, All Saints Orthodox Church of America Church, Meadow Lake, SK	6 June 2013
Kreklewetz, Ted, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Norquay, SK	9 June 2015
Kresak, Rudolph, St Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Rama, SK	24 June 2016
Kreway, Nettie, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church, Ituna, SK	20 June 2016
Krochak, Randy, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kobzar, SK	6 June 2015
Kruda, Martha, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Beavertdale, SK	16 June 2016
Krywulak, Merv, Church of the Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic Church, Beckenham, SK	8 June 2016
Kuchmak, Ernie, Protection of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Eldorena, AB	14 June 2014
Kulasa, Myron, Our Lady of Protection Ukrainian Catholic Church, Willowbrook, SK	17 June 2015
Kule, Doris and Peter, Edmonton, AB	21 August 2007
Kunesky, Mary and Danny, Rycroft, AB	25 July 2010
Kusey, Wilmar, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Ukrainian Catholic Church, Wishart, SK	7 June 2016

Kushko, Father Methodius, St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church and monastery, Yorkton, SK	15 June 2015
Kyba, Nestor, Church of the Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic Church, Dnieper, SK	12 June 2015
Kyba, Redemptorist Father Boris, Sacred Heart or Christ, Lover of Mankind Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ituna, SK	14 June 2016
Laschowski, Kevin, Ss Volodymyr and Olga Ukrainian Catholic Church, Two Hills, AB	7 June 2018
Lastiwka, Emily, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edwand, AB	20 June 2012
Lazariuk, Zenovia, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Camrose, AB	7 June 2012
Lemko, Ed, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church, Lloydminster, AB	2 June 2011
Lewchuk, George, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Devale, AB	24 July 2010
Lickacz, Laudy, Immaculate Conception of St Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Calmar Farms, AB	16 July 2012
Lomaskiewicz, Father Michael, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Prince Albert, SK	15 June 2013
Lozinski, Marlene, Holy Transfiguration Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Donwell, SK	3 June 2017
Lozinsky, Ron, Ascension of Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Laniwci, SK	7 June 2011
Machushek, Orest, Boychuk Church aka Holy Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Rhein, SK	7 June 2017
Makowski, Orest, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Mazeppa, SK	21 June 2015
Malowany, Wayne, Ss Borys and Hlib Ukrainian Catholic Church, Redwater, AB	19 June 2014
Manastyrski, Marlene and Charles, St George Ukrainian Catholic Church, Melville, SK	20 June 2016
Marianchuk, Phyllis, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Theodore, SK	18 June 2016
Maticchuk, Sonia, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Andrew, AB	24 June 2012
Mavridis, Louis, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Lloydminster, AB	2 June 2011

Mayko, Anna, Edmonton, AB	9 May 2007
Medvescek, Yvonne, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church, Ituna, SK	20 June 2016
Medvid, Violet, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Insinger, SK	22 June 2015
Moroz, Peter, Dormition of the Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Lysenko, SK	18 June 2016
Moroz, Ray, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Porcupine Plain, SK	20 June 2013
Myshaniuk, Carole, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Myrnam, AB	17 June 2014
Nahachewsky, Father Yvan, St George Ukrainian Catholic Church, Prince Albert, SK	14 June 2013
Nikiforuk, Audrey and Willie, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Devale, AB	24 July 2010
Nikolaev, Nikolai, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church, Wostok-Bukowina, AB	16 June 2012
Nokinsky, Jeannette and Bernard, Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church, Swan Plain, SK	22 June 2013
Nychyk, Elaine and Roman, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church, North Battleford, SK	7 June 2013
Oleksyn, Alec, St Michael Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, Lepine, SK	6 June 2011
Oshynko, Valerie, Dormition of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	22 June 2016
Ostapovych, Julian, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmore, SK	9 June 2016
Owerko, Olga and Eugene, St Vladimir Ukrainian Catholic Church, Kelliher, SK	13 June 2016
Pankiw, Mike, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Melville, SK	11 June 2016
Parchoma, Mike, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church, Blaine Lake, SK	12 June 2013
Parfeniuk, Emma, Exaltation of the Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church, Hubbard, SK	14 June 2016
Pidperychora, Adalice and Edward, St Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church, Holar Farms, SK	8 June 2016

Popowich, John, Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Whitesand, SK	13 June 2015
Prodaniuk, Joe, Ss Borys and Hlib Ukrainian Catholic Church, Redwater, AB	19 June 2014
Prokopchuk, Mary and Ted, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Rhein, SK	20 June 2015
Proznick, Emily and Paul, St John the Evangelist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Krasne, SK	7 June 2016
Pryslak, Sonia, Church of the Dormition Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Maybridge, SK	9 June 2015
Ripplinger, Carol, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Candiak, SK	12 June 2017
Rogoza, Mike, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edwand, AB	20 June 2012
Rohatynchuk, Marlene, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Stry, AB	12 June 2018
Romanow, Darlene, Descent of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church, Candiak, SK	13 June 2017
Romanson, Leonard, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Kelliher, SK	13 June 2016
Rudey, Katie, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	6 June 2017
Rudkowsky, Judy and Ron, St Pokrova Greek Orthodox Church, Borowich, AB	11 June 2018
Rudy, Mary and Steve, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Codette, SK	5 June 2011
Saik, Betty, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Innisfree, AB	24 June 2014
Sas, Sylvia and Mike, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kamsack, SK	8 June 2015
Sebulski, Leonard, Christ the King Ukrainian Catholic Church, Sheho, SK	21 June 2016
Sebulski, Mary Ann, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, Insinger, SK	22 June 2015
Sedlovitch, Lavona, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Goodeve, SK	22 June 2016
Senkiw, Connie, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Foam Lake, SK	6 June 2016

Sernowski, Connie, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church, Norquay, SK	11 June 2015
Shein, Danny, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Alticane, SK	11 June 2013
Shepherd, Audrey, Dormition of the Theotokos Russian Orthodox Church, MacNutt, SK	19 June 2015
Shewchuk, Anne and Bill, Dormition of the Theotokos Russian Orthodox Church, MacNutt, SK	19 June 2015
Shewchuk, Marcella, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Rama, SK	24 June 2016
Sideroff, Alexander, Sergei, and German, Mother of Protection Russian Orthodox Church, Hines Creek, AB	26 July 2010
Siedlecki, Ken, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Foam Lake, SK	6 June 2016
Simunovic, Father Vladimir, All Saints Ukrainian Catholic Church, North Battleford, SK	7 June 2013
Skihar, Walter, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	11 June 2016
Sloboda, Stella, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Prince Albert, SK	15 June 2013
Smud, Thomas, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Stenen, SK	5 June 2015
Smysniuk, Pauline, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church, Ituna, SK	20 June 2016
Solohub, Eleanor, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wynyard, SK	8 June 2017
Soloway, Bill, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, Porcupine Plain, SK	20 June 2013
Soprovich, Willis, St Mary Romanian Orthodox Church, Boian, AB	11 June 2018
Starchuck, Marg, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Melville, SK	11 June 2016
Stenhouse, Dorothy, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Veregín, SK	18 June 2015
Stephaniuk, Daria, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church, Wadena, SK	27 June 2013
Steranko, Ron, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Stenen, SK	5 June 2015

Strelezki, Angel and Bill, St John Greek Orthodox Church, Endeavour/Usherville, SK	25 June 2013
Sydoruk, Patricia, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church, Devale, AB	24 July 2010
Tkachuk, Lillian, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Myrnam, AB	17 June 2014
Topolnisky, Eugene, St John's Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral, Edmonton, AB	23 June 2013
Tokarski, Mike, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wimmer, SK	26 June 2013
Trischuk, Eleanor, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Brinsley, AB	21 June 2014
Tycholiz, Jean and Mike, Meath Park, SK	17 June 2013
Ukrainetz, Larry, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, Tuffnell, SK	11 June 2016
Wasylyniuk, Olga, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Swan Plain, SK	22 June 2013
Wasylyshen, Henry, St Basil's, formerly Ukrainian Orthodox and now Orthodox Church of America Church, Gorlitz, SK	13 June 2015
Wenarchuk, Marie, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Camrose, AB	7 June 2012
Werstiuk, Alex, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Brinsley, AB	21 June 2014
Woitak, Gerardine and Mike, Patronage of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, Model Farm, SK	9 June 2016
Wojcichowsky, Mary, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Yellow Creek, SK	6 June 2011
Wolfinger, Aimee, St Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmonton, AB	13 June 2018
Woloshyn, Johanna, Long term care home, Falher, AB	27 July 2010
Woroschuk, Jean and Peter, Zhuchka Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Calder, SK	19 June 2015
Worotniak, Jeannette, Hafford, SK	13 June 2013
Yaholnitsky, Gerald, St Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Wroxton, SK	20 June 2015
Yakimchuk, James, St Mary of the Protection Ukrainian Orthodox Church, St Julien, SK	4 June 2011

Yamniuk, Father Patrick, St Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Edmonton, AB	13 June 2018
Yanush, Morris, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Goodeve, SK	22 June 2016
Yurkiw, Maudest, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Hyas, SK	5 June 2015
Zaleschuk, Father Michael, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Regina, SK	12 June 2017
Zastrizny, Judy and Orest, Dormition of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Sheho, SK	22 June 2016
Zorniak, Chris, St Josaphat's Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Innisfree, AB	28 June 2014

TABLE A.2 LIST OF LOCATIONS WHERE INTERVIEWS TOOK PLACE

Alticane, SK	Shein, Danny, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church	11 June 2013
Andrew, AB	Andreychuk, Helen and Robert, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2012
Andrew, AB	Hewko, Iris, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2012
Andrew, AB	Matichuk, Sonia, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2012
Beaverdale, SK	Kruda, Martha, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church	16 June 2016
Beckenham, SK	Krywulak, Merv, Church of the Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic Church	8 June 2016
Blaine Lake, SK	Parchoma, Mike, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Catholic Church	12 June 2013
Bodnari, SK	Bodnar, Ron, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Church	8 June 2011
Boian, AB	Soprovich, Willis, St Mary Romanian Orthodox Church	11 June 2018
Borowich, AB	Rudkowsky, Judy and Ron, St Pokrova Greek Orthodox Church	11 June 2018
Brinsley, AB	Ewanchuk, Leona and Harry, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2014

Brinsley, AB	Trischuk, Eleanor, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2014
Brinsley, AB	Werstiuk, Alex, Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2014
Bruderheim, AB	Burzminski, David, St Jaroslaw Ukrainian Catholic Church	2 September 2006
Buchanan, SK	Doroshenko, Sylvia and Jacob, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2017
Burgis, SK	Hnatyshyn, Donald, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church	18 June 2015
Calder, SK	Woroschuk, Jean and Peter, Zhuchka Ukrainian Orthodox Church	19 June 2015
Calmar Farms, AB	Lickacz, Laudy, Immaculate Conception of St Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church	16 July 2012
Camrose, AB	Horne, Phyllis, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	7 June 2012
Camrose, AB	Lazariuk, Zenovia, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	7 June 2012
Camrose, AB	Wenarchuk, Marie, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	7 June 2012
Candiac, SK	Colby, Donna, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	13 June 2017
Candiac, SK	Klapak, Linda, Descent of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2017
Candiac, SK	Ripplinger, Carol, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	12 June 2017
Candiac, SK	Romanow, Darlene, Descent of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2017
Churchill, SK	Kozun, Olga, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church	5 June 2017
Codette, SK	Rudy, Mary and Steve, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2011
Cudworth, SK	Cherneski, Audrey and Bill, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church	3 June 2011
Cudworth, SK	Diakiw, Alexandria, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	3 June 2011
Cudworth, SK	Holinyat, Elizabeth, Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	8 June 2011

Cudworth, SK	Holinaty, Mary	9 June 2011
Danbury, SK	Chupik, Andrew	21 June 2013
Devale, AB	Juzwishin, Vicki, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church	24 July 2010
Devale, AB	Lewchuk, George, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church	24 July 2010
Devale, AB	Nikiforuk, Audrey and Willie, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church	24 July 2010
Devale, AB	Sydooruk, Patricia, Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church	24 July 2010
Dnieper, SK	Kyba, Nestor, Church of the Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic Church	12 June 2015
Donwell, SK	Lozinski, Marlene, Holy Transfiguration Ukrainian Orthodox Church	3 June 2017
Drobot, SK	Danyiuk, Terry, St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2016
Drobot, SK	Drobot, Orville, St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2016
Edmonton, AB	Kule, Doris and Peter	21 August 2007
Edmonton, AB	Mayko, Anna	9 May 2007
Edmonton, AB	Topolnisky, Eugene, St John's Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral	23 July 2013
Edmonton, AB	Wolfinger, Aimee, St Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	13 June 2018
Edmonton, AB	Yamniuk, Father Patrick, St Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	13 June 2018
Edmore, SK	Chaykoski, Joe, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2016
Edmore, SK	Clark, Myrna, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2016
Edmore, SK	Dvernichuk, Walter, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2016
Edmore, SK	Ostapovych, Julian, Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2016

Edwand, AB	Bozniak, Joan, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church	20 June 2012
Edwand, AB	Lastiwka, Emily, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church	20 June 2012
Edwand, AB	Rogoza, Mike, St Pokrova Ukrainian Orthodox Church	20 June 2012
Eldorena, AB	Kuchmak, Ernie, Protection of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church	14 June 2014
Endeavour/ Usherville, SK	Harris, Norman, St John Greek Orthodox Church	25 June 2013
Endeavour/ Usherville, SK	Strelezki, Angel and Bill, St John Greek Orthodox Church	25 June 2013
Falher, AB	Woloshyn, Johanna, Long term care home	27 July 2010
Fenwood, SK	Cherneski, Blair, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	16 June 2016
Foam Lake, SK	Bonar, Katy	15 June 2016
Foam Lake, SK	Bonar, Marian and Doug, St Onuphrius Russian Orthodox Church	15 June 2016
Foam Lake, SK	Senkiw, Connie, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2016
Foam Lake, SK	Siedlecki, Ken, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church (also Christ the King Roman Catholic Church)	6 June 2016
Glaslyn, SK	Dmytryshyn, Eva and Nick, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2013
Goodeve Farm, SK	Hadewich, Gloria and Harold, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2016
Goodeve, SK	Dumalski, Carol and Dan, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2017
Goodeve, SK	Elash, Anne, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2016
Goodeve, SK	Klus, Melvin, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2016
Goodeve, SK	Sedlovitch, Lavona, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2016
Goodeve, SK	Yanush, Morris, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2016

Gorlitz, SK	Wasylyshen, Henry, St Basil's, formerly Ukrainian Orthodox and now Orthodox Church of America Church	13 June 2015
Grenfell, SK	Kardash, Joel, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	15 June 2017
Hafford, SK	Worotniak, Jeannette	13 June 2013
Hines Creek, AB	Cherviakov, Alexander, Mother of Protection Russian Orthodox Church	26 July 2010
Hines Creek, AB	Hrab, Olive, All Saints Ukrainian Catholic Church	26 July 2010
Hines Creek, AB	Sideroff, Alexander, Sergei, and German, Mother of Protection Russian Orthodox Church	26 July 2010
Holar Farms, SK	Pidperychora, Adalice and Edward, St Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church	8 June 2016
Hubbard, SK	Parfeniuk, Emma, Exaltation of the Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church	14 June 2016
Hyas, SK	Gogol, Jocelyn, nee Serdachny, Hyas Baptist Church	11 June 2015
Hyas, SK	Yurkiw, Maude, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2015
Innisfree, AB	Saik, Betty, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2014
Innisfree, AB	Zorniak, Chris, St Josaphat's Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	28 June 2014
Insinger, SK	Husulak, Cherise, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	23 June 2016
Insinger, SK	Kostichuk, Bev and Maurice, Ss Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church	10 June 2017
Insinger, SK	Medvid, Violet, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2015
Insinger, SK	Sebulski, Mary Ann, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2015
Ispas, AB	Ewanchuk, Morris, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church	14 June 2014
Ituna, SK	Krewy, Nettie, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church	20 June 2016

Ituna, SK	Kyba, Redemptorist Father Boris, Sacred Heart or Christ, Lover of Mankind Ukrainian Catholic Church	14 June 2016
Ituna, SK	Medvescek, Yvonne, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church	20 June 2016
Ituna, SK	Smysniuk, Pauline, Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox (formerly Holy Trinity) Church	20 June 2016
Jedburgh, SK	Karapita, Jeanette, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	20 June 2016
Kamsack, SK	Sas, Sylvia and Mike, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2015
Kelliher, SK	Owerko, Olga and Eugene, St Vladimir Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2016
Kelliher, SK	Romanson, Leonard, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2016
Kobzar, SK	Krochak, Randy, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2015
Krasne, SK	Proznick, Emily and Paul, St John the Evangelist Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2016
Krydor, SK	Ciona, Patricia, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2013
Kyziv, SK	Doroshenko, Sylvia, St Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church	24 June 2016
Laniwci, SK	Lozinsky, Ron, Ascension of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2011
Lepine, SK	Oleksyn, Alec, St Michael Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church	6 June 2011
Lloydminster, AB	Lemko, Ed, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church	2 June 2011
Lloydminster, AB	Mavridis, Louis, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	2 June 2011
Luzan Toporiwtzi, AB	Galichowski, Sonja and Joseph, St Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2014
Lysenko, SK	Moroz, Peter, Dormition of the Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church	18 June 2016
MacNutt, SK	Flunder, Rodney, Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church	16 June 2015

MacNutt, SK	Shepherd, Audrey, Dormition of the Theotokos Russian Orthodox Church	19 June 2015
MacNutt, SK	Shewchuk, Anne and Bill, Dormition of the Theotokos Russian Orthodox Church	19 June 2015
Marcelin, SK	Banda, Rosemarie and Jerry, St John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church	10 June 2013
Maybridge, SK	Pryslak, Sonia, Church of the Dormition Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2015
Mazeppa, SK	Makowski, Orest, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2015
Meadow Lake, SK	Krasicki, Anne and Bill, All Saints Orthodox Church of America Church	6 June 2013
Meath Park, SK	Feschuk, Sharon	17 June 2013
Meath Park, SK	Tycholiz, Jean and Mike	17 June 2013
Melnychuk, SK	Karmaznuik, Ken, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	21 June 2016
Melville, SK	Halyk, Bunny (Bohdan), St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church	11 June 2016
Melville, SK	Kozakevich, Mike, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church	11 June 2016
Melville, SK	Manastyrski, Marlene and Charles, St George Ukrainian Catholic Church	20 June 2016
Melville, SK	Pankiw, Mike, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church	11 June 2016
Melville, SK	Starchuck, Marg, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church	11 June 2016
Model Farm, SK	Woitak, Gerardine and Mike, Patronage of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church	9 June 2016
Montmartre, SK	Kotylak, Nellie (Angela), Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	14 June 2017
Musidora, AB	Elkow, Frances, St Mary's Church of the Dormition Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church	18 June 2018
Myrnam, AB	Colford, Karen Kitt, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church	23 June 2014

Myrnam, AB	Myshaniuk, Carole, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	17 June 2014
Myrnam, AB	Tkachuk, Lillian, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	17 June 2014
New Kiew, AB	Cymbaliuk, Irene and Ed, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church	6 June 2018
Norquay, SK	Huska, Nick, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church	11 June 2015
Norquay, SK	Kreklewetz, Ted, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	9 June 2015
Norquay, SK	Sernowski, Connie, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church	11 June 2015
North Battleford, SK	Nychyk, Elaine and Roman, St John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church	7 June 2013
North Battleford, SK	Simunovic, Father Vladimir, All Saints Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2013
Olesha, SK	Hadubiak, Eleanor, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church	5 June 2017
Plain Lake, AB	Horon, Hilda, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church	26 June 2014
Porcupine Plain, SK	Moroz, Ray, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	20 June 2013
Porcupine Plain, SK	Soloway, Bill, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	20 June 2013
Preeceville, SK	Holowachuk, Nellie, Personal Care Home	8 June 2015
Prince Albert, SK	Fedoruk, Verna, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	15 June 2013
Prince Albert, SK	Lomazkiewicz, Father Michael, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	15 June 2013
Prince Albert, SK	Nahachewsky, Father Yvan, St George Ukrainian Catholic Church	14 June 2013
Prince Albert, SK	Sloboda, Stella, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	15 June 2013
Rama, SK	Kresak, Rudolph, St Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2016
Rama, SK	Shewchuk, Marcella, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	24 June 2016

Redwater, AB	Chaba, Zoney, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	13 June 2014
Redwater, AB	Kapicki, Leda, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	13 June 2014
Redwater, AB	Malowany, Wayne, Ss Borys and Hlib Ukrainian Catholic Church	19 June 2014
Redwater, AB	Prodaniuk, Joe, Ss Borys and Hlib Ukrainian Catholic Church	19 June 2014
Regina, SK	Zaleschuk, Father Michael, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Orthodox Church	12 June 2017
Rhein, SK	Machushek, Orest, Boychuk Church aka Holy Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church	7 June 2017
Rhein, SK	Prokopchuk, Mary and Ted, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	20 June 2015
Rosthern, SK	Kawcuniak, Millie (Emily), Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	18 June 2013
Rycroft, AB	Chalus, Ingrid	23 July 2010
Rycroft, AB	Kunesky, Mary and Danny	23 July 2010
Samburg, SK	Adamko, Ron	17 June 2013
Sheho, SK	Bachinsky, Beverly, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	22 June 2016
Sheho, SK	Korpatniski, Shirley, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	22 June 2016
Sheho, SK	Oshynko, Valerie, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	22 June 2016
Sheho, SK	Rudey, Katie, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2017
Sheho, SK	Sebulski, Leonard, Christ the King Ukrainian Catholic Church	21 June 2016
Sheho, SK	Skihar, Walter, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	11 June 2016
Sheho, SK	Zastrizny, Judy and Orest, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	22 June 2016
Shipman, SK	Huculak, Rose, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	19 June 2013
Sich Kolomiya, AB	Charuk, Roy, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	24 June 2014

Skaro, AB	Holowach, Mary Ann, Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2012
Speers, SK	Bomok, Peter, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church	8 June 2013
St Julien, SK	Yakimchuk, James, St Mary of the Protection Ukrainian Orthodox Church	4 June 2011
St Walburg, SK	Hritzuk, Valentina	6 June 2013
Star Peno, AB	Borys, Allan, Assumption of the Mother of God Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	13 June 2012
Star Peno, AB	Kostiuk, Nestor, St Michael's Russian Orthodox Church	13 June 2012
Stenen, SK	Bazansky, Florence, Holy Assumption Orthodox Church of America Church	5 June 2015
Stenen, SK	Gurski, Pearl and John, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2015
Stenen, SK	Smud, Thomas, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2015
Stenen, SK	Steranko, Ron, St Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church	5 June 2015
Stornoway, SK	Galye, Raymond, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	16 June 2015
Stry, AB	Rohatynchuk, Marlene, Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church	12 June 2018
Sturgis, SK	Kolot, Roy, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2015
Swan Plain, SK	Holodniuk, Florence and Stanley, Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2013
Swan Plain, SK	Nokinsky, Jeannette and Bernard, Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church	22 June 2013
Swan Plain, SK	Wasylyniuk, Olga, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	22 June 2013
Szypenitz, AB	Eliuk, Richard, St Mary Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church	17 June 2014
Szypenitz, AB	Kereliuk, Eustine, St Mary Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church	17 June 2014
Theodore, SK	Marianchuk, Phyllis, St Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church	18 June 2016

Tuffnell, SK	Ukrainetz, Larry, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church	11 June 2016
Two Hills, AB	Choban, Elsie, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church	19 June 2014
Two Hills, AB	Laschowski, Kevin, Ss Volodymyr and Olga Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2018
Vegreville, AB	Kawulich, Elsie	20 March 2014
Veregin, SK	Stenhouse, Dorothy, St Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	18 June 2015
Vernon, BC	Chez, Gail and Roman	23 May 2013
Vilna, AB	Barabash, Alec, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2018
Wadena, SK	Kaweski, Nick, All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church	26 June 2013
Wadena, SK	Stephaniuk, Daria, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church	27 June 2013
Wakaw, SK	Bilokury, Anton (Tony), Assumption of St Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2011
Wakaw, SK	Kocur, Father Roman	4 June 2011
Waskatenau, AB	Korosec, Karl, Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2014
Weekes, SK	Grywacheski, Elsie, St Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church	24 June 2013
Welychko, SK	Betskal, Ann, Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Church	10 June 2013
Westbrook, SK	Hutzul, Barbara and Peter, Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church,	15 June 2016
Weyburn, SK	Herlick, Cristine	13 June 2017
Weyburn, SK	Koszman, Bertha	13 June 2017
Whitesand, SK	Popowich, John, Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church	13 June 2015
Willowbrook, SK	Kulasa, Myron, Our Lady of Protection Ukrainian Catholic Church	17 June 2015
Wimmer, SK	Franko, Peter, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church	26 June 2013

Wimmer, SK	Tokarski, Mike, Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church	26 June 2013
Wishart, SK	Kekish, Teresa, St Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2016
Wishart, SK	Kusey, Wilmar, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Ukrainian Catholic Church	7 June 2016
Wostok-Bukowina, AB	Bryks, Roy, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church	16 June 2012
Wostok-Bukowina, AB	Feledichuk, Diana and Ron, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church	16 June 2012
Wostok-Bukowina, AB	Nikolaev, Nikolai, St Nicholas Russo Greek Orthodox Church	16 June 2012
Wroxton, SK	Yaholnitsky, Gerald, St Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church	20 June 2015
Wroxton Farms, SK	Dozorec, Henry, Volodymyr and Olha Ukrainian Catholic Church	15 June 2015
Wynyard, SK	Chorneyko, Ace, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2017
Wynyard, SK	Havryliuk, Maria, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2017
Wynyard, SK	Solohub, Eleanor, St Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church	8 June 2017
Wysla, SK	Hupka, James, Holy Sunday Greek Orthodox Church	18 June 2015
Yellow Creek, SK	Kindrachuk, Darlene, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2011
Yellow Creek, SK	Wojcichowsky, Mary, Ss Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church	6 June 2011
Yorkton, SK	Huziak, Ann	14 June 2015
Yorkton, SK	Kushko, Father Methodius, St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church and monastery	15 June 2015

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Primiano, “Vernacular Religion.”
- 2 Kononenko, *Ukrainian Minstrels*.
- 3 Kononenko, “How God Paired Men and Women”; “Tak Boh liudei paruvav,” 384–92; “Narodne parvoslav’ia,” 14–21; “Ukrainian Ballads about the Loss of Virginity,” 61–80.
- 4 Martynowych, *The Showman and the Ukrainian Cause*.
- 5 Helbig, Buranbaeva, and Mladineo, *Culture and Customs of Ukraine*.
- 6 Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*.
- 7 Kononenko, *Ukrainian Epic and Historical Song*, 37–9.
- 8 Helbig, Buranbaeva, and Mladineo, *Culture and Customs of Ukraine*; Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*; Sonevytsky, *Wild Music*.
- 9 Akhtar, “The Immigrant, the Exile.”

CHAPTER ONE

- 1 Desmarais et al., “Land Grabbing and Land Concentration.”
- 2 “Sound Sanctuary Project,” University of Alberta, revised 10 February 2021, <https://ualberta.aviaryplatform.com/collections/1784>.
- 3 “The Sanctuary Project,” University of Alberta, revised 22 December 2021, <https://livingcultures.ualberta.ca/sanctuary>.
- 4 Natalie Kononenko, nataliek@ualberta.ca.
- 5 Klymasz, *Sviato*.
- 6 Klymasz, *The Ukrainian Folk Ballad in Canada*.
- 7 Klymasz, “From Immigrant to Ethnic Folklore.”
- 8 Kononenko, “Collecting Ukrainian Heritage.”
- 9 “Ukrainian Folklore Sound Recordings,” University of Alberta, 19 May 2009, <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio>.

CHAPTER TWO

- 1 Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years*, 155–237.
- 2 Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Interwar Years*, 510–13.
- 3 Luciuk, “More Dangerous Than Many a Pamphlet.”
- 4 Lehr, “Government Perception.”
- 5 Ibid., 5–6.
- 6 Ibid., 4.
- 7 Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats*.
- 8 Lehr, “Kinship and Society.” See also Lehr, *Community and Frontier: A Ukrainian Settlement in the Canadian Parkland*, in which he argues that Ukrainians were willing to accept the poor road and soil conditions of southern Manitoba precisely so that they could live near kin.
- 9 Lehr, “Government Perception,” 6–8.
- 10 Ledohowski, “White Settler Guilt.”
- 11 Minenko, “Searching Unusual Places.”
- 12 Himka, “The Basic Historical Identity Formations.”
- 13 Lehr, “The Ukrainian Sacred Landscape.”
- 14 UCWLC: *Builders of Home, Faith, and Community*, 159–60.
- 15 Fodchuk, *Zhorna*, 15–62; Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Interwar Years*, 78–100.
- 16 Mucz, *Baba’s Kitchen Medicines*, 102–6.
- 17 Klass, “Continuing Conversation about Continuing Bonds.”
- 18 Henry, Stiles, and Biran, “Loss and Mourning in Immigration.”
- 19 Khanenko-Friesen, *Ukrainian Otherlands*, 99–125.
- 20 Klymasz, “Speaking at/about/with the Dead.”
- 21 Swyripa, *Ukrainian Canadians*.
- 22 Lie, “Diasporic Nationalism.”
- 23 Swyripa, *Ukrainian Canadians*, 3–4.
- 24 Rudling, “Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization.”
- 25 Lalande, “The Roots of Multiculturalism.”
- 26 Russell, “Remembering Places Never Visited.”
- 27 Ibid.; Baron, “Sins of Objectification?”; Mason and Turner, “Cultural Sustainability.”
- 28 These plays have little or no publication information. They are popular publications, printed on cheap paper and meant for a folk audience. They were in bad condition by the time I received them, despite Harris’s efforts to keep them intact.
- 29 Kononenko, “Hromads’ke zhyttia tserkov.”
- 30 Odezynska, *The Whisperer*.

CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Bowman, "Phenomenology, Fieldwork, and Folk Religion."
- 2 For this and other references to Ukrainian materials see the appropriate section in <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio>.
- 3 Gatling, "There Isn't Belief, Just Believing."
- 4 Lawless, *Holy Women, Wholly Women; Reciprocal Ethnography*.
- 5 Andrew Ehrkamp, "After 100 years, Alberta's Skaro Shrine still draws thousands of pilgrims and visitors," *Grandin Media*, <https://grandinmedia.ca/100-years-albertas-skaro-shrine-still-draws-thousands-pilgrims-visitors>.
- 6 Bowman, "Restoring/Restorying Arthur and Bridget," gives a set of English shrine stories.
- 7 The name of this storyteller is intentionally omitted.
- 8 Endeavour History Book Committee. *Past Endeavours: History of Bear, Beaver Bank, Cheremosz, Endeavour, Lilian, Lilian Rural, Midland, Peerless, Rochford, Stoney Acre, Usherville Veterans*. Altona: Friesen, 1989. <http://www.ucc.sk.ca/oldsite/programs/nbuilders/2007/index.html>.
- 9 "The Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Saskatchewan Provincial Council (UCC-SPC) Nation Builders and Community Recognition Awards," <http://www.ucc.sk.ca/oldsite/programs/nbuilders/2007/index.html>.

CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 Robinson, "Rougher Than Any Other Nationality."
- 2 For descriptions of Ukrainian wedding rituals see the appropriate topic in <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio>.
- 3 Forero and Smith, "The Reproduction of 'Cultural Taste.'"
- 4 In at least one case they lived with two members of the groom's family who needed extra care: a brother who died young, presumably because he was ill or handicapped, and an unmarried uncle.
- 5 Charsley, *Wedding Cakes and Cultural History*, 17–18.
- 6 Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause*, 3.
- 7 Ibid., 71.
- 8 Swyripa, "The Mother of God Wears a Maple Leaf."
- 9 Kononenko, "Groupsourcing Folklore Sound Files."
- 10 Wanner, "Religion and Refugee Resettlement."
- 11 Martynowych, *The Showman and the Ukrainian Cause*.

CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 Lehr, "Kinship and Society."
- 2 For descriptions of Ukrainian rituals see the appropriate topic at <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio>.
- 3 Interview conducted in 2000.
- 4 Boriak, "The Anthropology of Birth in Russia and Ukraine"; *Baba-Povitukha v Kul'turno-istorychnii tradytsii Ukrainitsiv*.
- 5 Hanchuk, *Word and Wax*.
- 6 O'Connor, "The Home Birth Movement in the United States."
- 7 Bringerud, *Whose Tradition?*, 246–51.
- 8 Other locations where respondents mentioned the white cloth include Szyphenitz, Calmar Farms, Andrew, and Skaro, Alberta, and Lepine, Weyburn, Goodeve, Foam Lake, Weekes, Glaslyn, Buchanan, Meath Park, Swan Plain, Kelliher, Melville, Wynyard, Tuffnell, Donwell, Beaverdale, Insinger, Blaine Lake, Preeceville, North Battleford, Samburg, Laniwci, Edmore, Shipman, Kobzar, Dnieper, Churchill, Theodore, Sheho, and Krydor, Saskatchewan.
- 9 Ebaugh and Curry, "Fictive Kin."

CHAPTER SIX

- 1 For this and other references to Ukrainian practices, please see the funeral entries in <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/UkraineAudio>.
- 2 Kononenko, "Folk Orthodoxy."
- 3 Kligman, *Wedding of the Dead*.
- 4 Kononenko, "Vernacular Religion on the Prairies."
- 5 Mason, "Thousands in Chipman for Mass Prayer Service"
- 6 Selivachov, *Folk Designs of Ukraine*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 Foucault, and Miskowicz, "Of Other Spaces."
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Kononenko, "Vernacular Religion on the Prairies."
- 4 Panchenko, "How to Make a Shrine with Your Own Hands."
- 5 Legalline.ca, Legal Answers, Employment Law, Types of Leave, Pregnancy and Parental Leave," accessed 9 May 2022, <https://www.legalline.ca/legal-answers/pregnancy-and-parental-leave>.
- 6 Markevich, *Obychaii, pover'ia, kukhnia, i napitki malorossian*, 82.
- 7 Kononenko, "Collecting Ukrainian Heritage."
- 8 Kononenko, "Children of Stone."

- 9 Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial."
- 10 Hijiya, "American Gravestones."
- 11 Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory."
- 12 Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial."
- 13 Kononenko, "Religious Visions on the Prairies."
- 14 Li, "Emergent Chinese Diasporic Identity."

CHAPTER EIGHT

- 1 The list of the locations where *kutia* was mentioned in Sanctuary Project interviews includes Andrew, Calmar Farms, Devale, Edwand, Eldorena, Hines Creek, Redwater, Szypenitz, Vilna, and Wostok-Bukowina, Alberta, and Beckenham, Blaine Lake, Cudworth, Glaslyn, Holar Farms, Jedburgh, MacNutt, Meadow Lake, Meath Park, Melville, Montmartre, Norquay, Olesha, Porcupine Plain, Preeceville, Rhein, Samburg, Sheho, Shipman, Speers, Stenen, Swan Plain, Wadena, Weekes, Welychko, Whitesand, Willowbrook, Wishart, and Yorkton, Saskatchewan.
- 2 Klymasz, "Malanka," 32–6.

CHAPTER NINE

- 1 Klymasz, "Malanka."
- 2 Kononenko, "Hromads'ke zhyttia tserkov."
- 3 Shostak, "Zustreech."

CONCLUSION

- 1 Forero and Smith, "The Reproduction of 'Cultural Taste.'"
- 2 Li, "Performative Chineseness," 268.
- 3 Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory"; Johnson, "Cast in Stone."
- 4 Town of Vegreville, "World's Largest Pysanka (Easter Egg)," accessed 7 May 2022, <https://www.vegreville.com/p/worlds-largest-pysanka>.
- 5 Rudling, "Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization," 743.
- 6 *Atlas Obscura*, "The World's Largest Sausage, Mundare, AB," accessed 7 May 2022, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-world-s-largest-sausage-mundare-alberta>.
- 7 *Atlas Obscura*, "Giant Perogy, Glendon, AB," accessed 7 May 2022, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/giant-perogy>.
- 8 Tourisme Alberta, "World's Largest Mushrooms, Vilna, AB,"

- accessed 7 May 2022, <https://tourismealberta.ca/attrait/plus-grands-champignons-au-monde/?lang=en>.
- 9 Mark Newlon, "Vilna, Alberta, Canada: World's Largest Mushrooms," *Roadsideamerica.com*, accessed 24 August 2002, <https://www.roadsideamerica.com/tip/6741>.
 - 10 Town of Canora. "Attractions," accessed 7 May 2022, <https://canora.com/whats-new/visitors/attractions>.
 - 11 Johnson, "Cast in stone," 57.

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