

FOLK FAIR MAY 1966

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UKRAINE



## HISTORY

Ukraine is one of the oldest of the Slavonic nations, its history of statehood starting in the sixth century.

There are three main periods in Ukraine's history in which, as a flourishing nation, it contributed to Europe's progress.

A thousand years ago Ukraine was the seat of a mighty kingdom. Kiev, the capital, situated at the crossroads of East and West, developed a rich culture.

Gradually during the 15th and 16th centuries the Ukrainian Kozak State emerged and became known for its democratic principles. It developed into a buffer state for Europe against Asian invaders.

In the 20th century Ukraine's struggle for freedom led to national revolution in March 1917. On January 22, 1918, the decree of independence was proclaimed for the Ukrainian National Republic. However, the Russian Bolshevik's attacked the young republic and thus Ukraine became the first victim of Bolshevik aggression.

After World War II the Ukrainian Soviet Republic became a member of the United Nations. She regained unification of her territory but lost her former democratic freedom and independence. Therefore, the struggle of the Ukrainian people will last until their aims and ideals are attained.



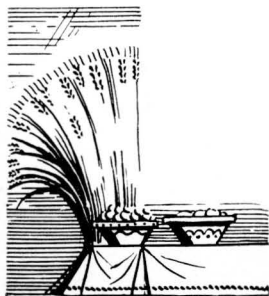
St. Yuri's Cathedral in Lviv.

## UKRAINIAN TALE

### The Blooming Fern—The Flower of Happiness

Ukraine is a very old nation and has its cultural roots stemming from the time long before Christianity. Many of the rites or observances from these times have been carried over into the present and have grown into tales and legends. One of these observances from the olden times falls at the end of June, when nature is at her fullest and most beautiful. It is called the Feast of Kupala (Coo-pa-laa). Out of this feast grew a wonderful tale. Kupala was believed to be a good spirit who helped people. On this day everyone was happy and gay for this was a day where one could find true happiness. On the magic eve of Kupala boys would start a fire and jump over it to cleanse themselves of evil or bad spirits in anticipation of the coming of the good spirit Kupala the next day. Girls would sing and dance, and each one would make two wreaths out of field flowers and throw them on the water; if they came together she would marry her betrothed that year. Boys would go into the forest in search of a fern which was believed by the Ukrainian people to bloom only once a year on the eve of Kupala, and if one was to find a blooming fern then he would have found true luck and happiness for the rest of his life. Boys and girls believed that the good spirit Kupala was a match-maker, that is why they did their best to get into his good graces.

It is no wonder that Ukraine is called the **Bread Basket of Europe**, for its fields have always abounded with golden wheat and this is where our ancestors believed that Kupala lived. At the end of the harvest the last stalks of wheat were saved and used for making a figure at Christmas which was to bring on an abundant harvest.





## UKRAINIAN EASTER EGG

The most renowned traditional object of art in Ukraine is the Easter egg — the “pysanka.” “Pysanka” stems from the verb “pysaty” (to write). This is a multi-colored egg on which the designs are first written with wax.

The egg was believed to be the origin of all things and has been associated from earliest pagan times with mythical and religious ceremonies. The Easter egg tradition is simply a continuation of that concept, retaining many of its magical qualities. In Ukraine a bowl full of Easter eggs is invariably kept in every home. It is a part of the Easter ritual to have these Easter eggs on every table.

It is also a sign of friendship. On Easter Sunday members of the family and friends exchange them. The blushing maiden, dressed in her best costume, presents her sweetheart with a “pysanka,” especially made for him.

The Easter eggs are decorated by Ukrainian women. Before beginning her design, the proper prayer and blessing has to be given — then the artist is ready. She usually works alone or with relatives only. Though most of the symbols on an Easter egg are of ancient origin, each artist applies her ingenuity in creating of new designs and harmony in colors. Thus rarely do we find two eggs decorated identically.





## ETHNOGRAPHIC TERRITORY OF UKRAINE



Ukraine is situated in southeastern Europe. Its territory — now in the boundaries of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic — covers 360,000 square miles. Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe. The population of Ukraine is over 42,000,000, including 81% Ukrainians and 19% others (mostly Russians and Jews). The largest cities of Ukraine are Kiev (capital, about 1,000,000 population), Kharkiv (also nearly 1,000,000), Odessa (800,000), Dnipropetrovsk (600,000) and Lviv (400,000). Ukraine has the richest agricultural land in Europe and is the largest producer of sugar, wheat and rye. Her industrial power equals that of France and Italy combined.