North Dakota History

JOURNAL OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS

Volume 53, No. 4 Fall 1986 $3.00

In This Issue:

North Dakota's Ukrainian Heritage

Historic Buildings of North Dakota

—*State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection*

First Baptist Church—Kief

by L. Martin Perry

The First Baptist Church at Kief is an unheralded historic signpost of European migration to this country. Despite being the first worship house erected in North America by Russian immigrants of fundamentalist protestant sects, its importance has been eclipsed by constructions of two other Russian groups, Black Sea Germans and Ukrainians of Orthodox and Catholic faiths. Kief, along with several other Soo Line stops west of Anamoose, became home to many evangelical Christians from Russia in search of religious freedom. Descendants of these settlers populate towns and farms around Butte, Ruso, Benedict, Max, and intermittently in rural spaces as far west as Plaza and Makoti.

Alvin Kapusta in this issue of *North Dakota History* traces the migration of Russian evangelical protestants, also known as Stundists. He notes that Stundists colonized two American locations, Louisville, Kentucky and Yale, Virginia, before entering North Dakota. Those urban colonists, however, missed the opportunity to imprint their culture on the unformed spaces encountered by Stundist homesteaders in North Dakota.

The local church stands as one noteworthy feature of the North Dakota Stundist cultural landscape. The architectural design of their churches expresses the elemental nature of their religious beliefs. For instance, the church in Kief, like those in nearby Stundist settlements, is conspicuously plain. The simple wood frame structures are unadorned beyond an occasional steeple and gothic arched windows. Elaborations of the wood structure, a common feature on nearby religious buildings, is a rarity on historic Stundist churches. Translucent colored glazing is as close as they came to using stained glass. Their edifices outwardly manifest a desire to eliminate inessentials from religious practice.

The results of Stundist emphasis on religious purity leads to several interesting comparisons with 17th Century New England Puritans. Both groups rejected perceived dogmatic and ritual excesses of the dominant culture in favor of simplified liturgical practices. Resultant persecution for such beliefs led to emigration. Both sets of pilgrims came to America to erect a society which fully incorporated their ideals. And, importantly, each group's meetinghouse signifies their efforts.

But here the similarity ends. Puritans society continued to expand and mature; in contrast, the fledgling Stundist culture seems to have been extinguished by assimilation into existing American social patterns. Within a generation services were conducted in English and the churches became affiliated with mainstream Protestant organizations.

It appears that the Stundists emigrated from Russia too soon—before a viable and integrated system of traditions had fully replaced the culture they rejected along with the Russian orthodoxy. Today little more than surviving Ukrainian surnames distinguish Stundist descendants from many American protestant sects. Conversely, the Germans from Russia and Orthodox or Catholic Ukrainian immigrants in North Dakota remain distinct cultural groups. The historic church buildings of the Stundists, such as the one in Kief, are among the best physical witnesses to heroic attempts to construct "a city on a hill."

North Dakota History JOURNAL OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS

Volume 53, No. 4 Fall 1986 $3.00

Superintendent.................. James E. Sperry Managing Editor.................. Larry Remele
Circulation........... Roxanne Kunnanz-Petersen

Contents

Ukrainians in North Dakota

Historic Buildings of North Dakota:
First Baptist Church—Kief.......... Inside front cover
by L. Martin Perry

Introduction.. 2

Western Ukraine in the 19th Century:
A Perspective.. 3
by Jaroslaw Sztendera

Puritans on the Prairies:
Ukrainian Stundists in North Dakota.............. 10
by Alvin Kupusta

Ukrainians on the Prairies: Old World Cultural Values
and the Demands of a New Land.................. 17
by Theodore B. Pedeliski

The Role of the Church in North Dakota's
Ukrainian Communities: A Personal Memoir........ 26
by Reverend Michael Bobersky

"Who Are We?" A North Dakota
Ukrainian Oral History............................ 33
by Agnes Palanuk

Northern Plains Reviews............................ 41

Letters and Comments............................ 43

Author's Gallery.................... Inside back cover

Editor's Choice:
Sepchenko Family Handmade Furniture... Back Cover

On the Cover:

People of Ukrainian descent are an important, if little-known, part of North Dakota's ethnic heritage. Their proud traditions, demonstrated on the cover by Eva Boozenny of Butte, North Dakota, were featured at a 1985 symposium at Dickinson; the papers read at those sessions about the Ukrainian heritage are the focus of this issue of ***North Dakota History.***

—Photograph by Clay Jenkinson. Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson

North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, under the authority of the North Dakota State Historical Board. Annual subscriptions cost $10.00 for residents of the United States, or $15.00 for residents of other nations (payable in American funds only). Back issues, with some exceptions, are available; prices vary, and those interested should inquire prior to ordering. Manuscripts concerning the history and culture of North Dakota and the northern Great Plains are solicited. Direct all correspondence to the Managing Editor. Articles are abstracted and indexed in **America: History and Life** and **Historical Abstracts**. Published articles represent the views of the author and not necessarily those of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Copyright, 1986, State Historical Society of North Dakota. All Rights Reserved

ISSN 0029-2710

Introduction

The Ukrainians who came to North Dakota after 1896 emigrated from a divided Ukraine. Western Ukraine (Galicia) was part of the Austrian Empire. Some Ukrainians thus identify themselves as Austrians. Austria's name for western Ukraine was Ruthenia and the inhabitants were known as Ruthenians. Eastern Ukraine was a dominion within the Russian Empire from the 17th Century; Originally, this part of the Ukraine was called *Kievan Rus*, and the people were called *Rus*. Russia subjegated the Ukrainian people and Russified them. Ukrainians were forced to speak the Russian language in public, but maintained the Ukrainian language withing the privacy of their own homes.

North Dakota's Ukrainians came to this country in search of political, economic, and religious freedom. However, their national origin was often misrepresented. It was the goal of a special symposium held in Dickinson, North Dakota, on May 3-4, 1985, to bring an understanding of the origins and unique culture of these people to a broader public.

The Symposium was preceded by a North Dakota Ukrainian Oral History Project sponsored by the Ukrainian Cultural Institute and the North Dakota Humanities Council. During the project thirty-three Ukrainians who had immigrated to the United States were interviewed; the interviews were transcribed and published. In addition, scholars were invited to prepare papers to amplify the popular memory with an academic historical perspective. This work was all accomplished in 1984 and 1985.

Funding for the Ukrainian Oral History Project was provided by the North Dakota Humanities Council and the Ukrainian Cultural Institute Foundation. Dr. Michael Soper of Dickinson State College and Agnes Palanuk of the Ukrainian Cultural Institute served as project directors. Their work is represented by the five articles in this issue of *North Dakota History*. We are pleased to present the results of the project and the special history of an important North Dakota ethnic group to the broad audience served by this publication.

—Agnes Palanuk and Larry Remele

Western Ukraine in the 19th Century: A Perspective

by Jaroslaw Sztendera

Galicia or Western Ukraine had a colorful history and was known by many names: a principality, a kingdom, and a republic. At the turn of the 10th Century it was a principality of Kiev ruled by Volodymyr the Great (980-1015). Even at that time Poland and Hungary, taking advantage of the squabbles among the Ukrainian princes, made frequent attempts to incorporate Galicia into their own kingdoms. With the fall of Kiev (1240), the national life of the country shifted from eastern to western Ukraine. At that time the western Ukrainian state was comprised of two provinces, Galicia and Volyn, which had been united by Prince Roman in 1200, and the city of Halych was the new capital. In 1254, under the rule of Danylo, this territory received the status of a kingdom.

Eventually the dynastic line came to an end, internal strife ensued, and Poland was able to conquer all of Galicia and part of Volyn. With the formation of Polish-Lithuanian Union (1370) and with the emergence of Poland as the dominant power, large areas of eastern Ukraine were also incorporated into Polish dominion.

There was a time in Ukrainian history when it appeared that statehood could be restored within the historical borders. That opportunity occurred in 1648, when the Cossacks, supported by the entire Ukrainian population from the Dnieper to Sian Rivers, rose in rebellion against Poland. Led by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnyckyj, the Ukrainians crushed the Polish armies at Zhovti Vody, Korsun, Pyliava, and Zboriv, leaving Poland, in the words of a Polish writer, "In blood and dust at the feet of the Cossacks."[1]

However, Khmelnyckyj failed to recover the lost territories. Instead, he gave Poland a chance to recover militarily. Eventually, that mistake led to the gradual weakening of the Cossack state. In 1667, Moscow signed the Treaty of Andrusiv with Poland, which partitioned Ukraine. The right bank Ukraine, west of the Dnieper, was given to Poland, which quickly liquidated the existing form of government, its Cossack organizations, and Ukrainian laws, and imposed serfdom. The left bank Ukraine remained under Muscovite control, although nominally ruled by Hetmans.

In 1672, Hetman Petro Doroshenko tried to free the right bank, but due to the military intervention of Moscow his efforts were unsuccessful. On the left bank, this task fell to Hetman Ivan Mazeppa. In an attempt to shake off the repressive and odious Moscovite protectorate, Mazeppa allied himself with Charles XII, the king of Sweden. But at the Battle of Poltava (1709), the allies were defeated. Thus, eastern Ukraine for all practical purposes fell under the complete control of Moscow. To suppress any thought of independence, both parts of the Ukraine were subjected to vigorous process of Russification and Polonization. Often, the two states, Poland and Russia, would cooperate in an effort to crush the national aspirations of the Ukrainians.

For example, in 1768, when an insurrection led by Maksymn Zalizniak and Ivan Gonta almost dislodged the Poles from a large part of right bank Ukraine, it was Russian military intervention that allowed them to crush the rebels.

But with the growth of Prussia in the west and Russia in the east, Poland became the buffer between two ambitious states and eventually a victim of their expansionism. In 1792, 1793, and 1795, Poland was partitioned between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. In practical terms, Russia took control of eastern Ukraine and Volyn while Austria took possession of Galicia. As a result of the Russo-Turkish War, in 1774, Austria occupied Bukovina, which at first was annexed to Galicia and in 1861 became a separate crown land. With minor modifications, the control of Ukrainian territories remained unchanged until World War I.[2]

The revival in western Ukraine was largely due to the fact that the Austrian Empire was ruled by enlightened monarchs. Express Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and her son Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790) deserve credit for improving the cultural and economic status of their Ukrainian subjects. Being devout Catholics, both strived to improve the educational level of the clergy. In 1774, the Austrian government established in Vienna a theological seminary for the Ukrainian Catholics of the Eastern Rite *(Barbareum)*.[3] In 1787, Ukrainian studies *(Studium Ruthenium)* were added to the curriculum of Lviv University, which included a philosophical and theological faculty. In 1781-1782, the plight of the serfs was eased by the curtailment of the unrestricted powers of landlords over the peasantry.

[1] *Prapamjatna Knyha* (Jersey City: 1936), p. 465.

[2] In the third partition of Poland (1795) Austria gained Kholm and parts of Brest and Pidliasha districts. In 1809, having lost the war with France, Austria was forced to cede all territories acquired in 1795, as well as the districts of Zomostia and a part of Belz province to the Kingdom of Poland, which was united by a personal union with Russia.

[3] In 1784, Joseph II established the St. Barbara Church, which is being used by the Ukrainians today.

As a result of Polonization in Galicia in the past as well as Magyarization in Carpatho-Ukraine, the population of western Ukraine was left without an influential class. Nobility in other countries traditionally headed the political and cultural revivals. Ukrainians also lacked an established middle class which could have filled the vacuum left by the nobility. Thus, the leadership of the Ukrainian people fell into the hands of the clergy. It should be noted that the bishops of the Ukrainian church always took an active interest in secular affairs. Even during their negotiations in the matter of union with Rome, the bishops sought to be seated in the senate.[4] The Metropolitan of Lviv, by arrangement with the state, was a member of the House of Lords in Vienna and Vice-President of the Galician Parliament.

As a consolidated and disciplined class, the clergy led their flock in a predictable direction, which can be characterized as ultra-conservative in outlook and loyal to the Crown. It defended the ecclesiastical traditions, the use of church Slavonic language, and opposed literary works written in the vernacular, the language of the people.

But the leadership of the clergy did not go unchallenged. The challenge was an indirect result of the Napoleonic Wars, which kept Europe in turmoil for the first fifteen years of the 19th Century. For some nationalities, the wars gave hope if not for total independence then at least for some liberal reforms.[5] If the autocrats of Europe hoped for a return to the status quo once they had Napoleon confined on the Isle of Elba, the events of the following decades proved a great disappointment. The tranquility dreamed of by those autocrats was shattered by a number of bloody uprisings, most if not all inspired by nationalism and the desire to shake off foreign domination. While the Serbs, Greeks, and Poles were making their bids to gain independence, the French, Germans, and Austrians attempted to liberalize their governments.

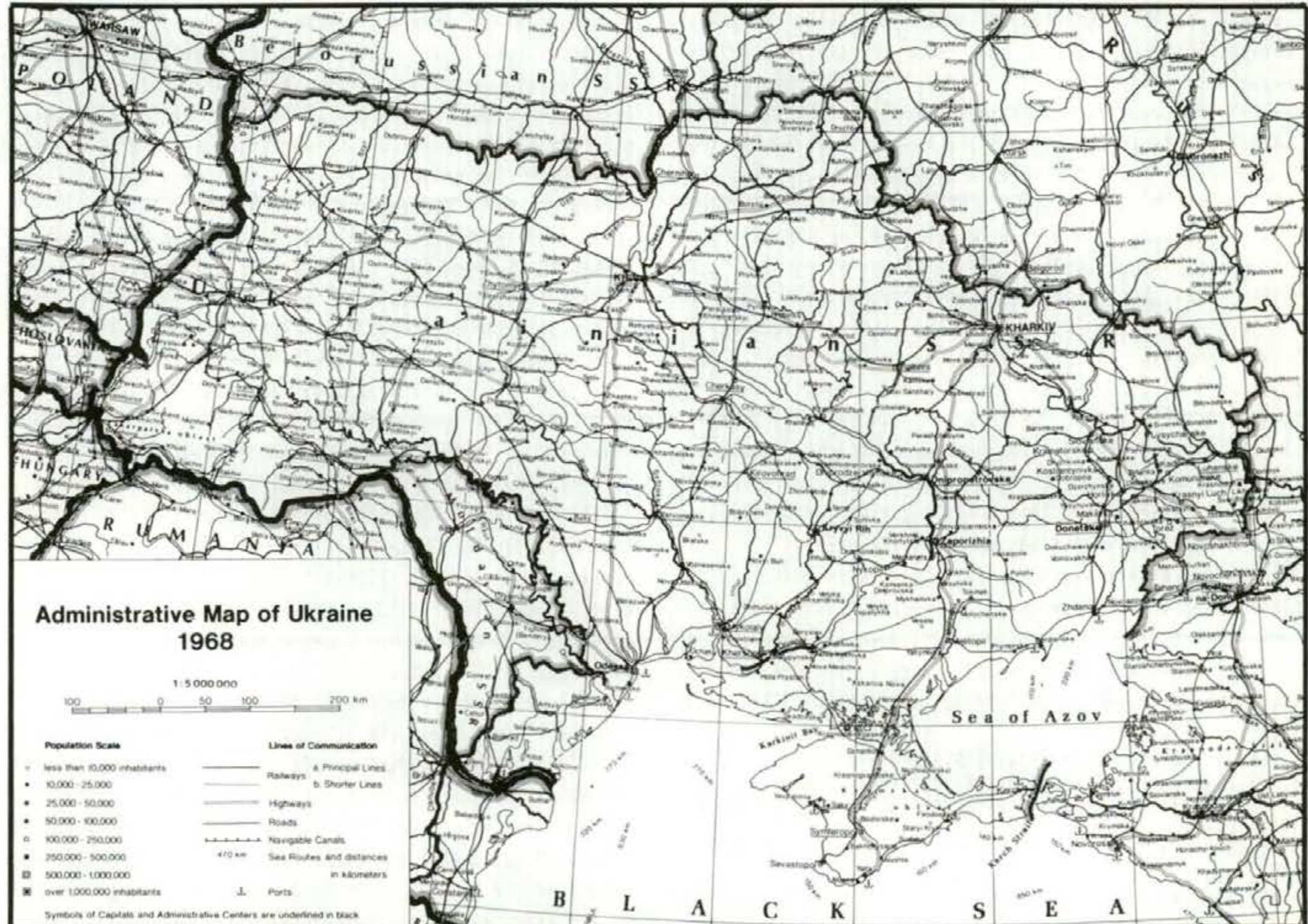
Eventually, the conservative forces crushed the revolutionary movements. But the ideas which spawned these movements had taken root, and the reactionary policies of the monarchs only delayed the national consciousness among the oppressed.

For the Ukrainians in Galicia, the events which rocked Europe during the "spring of nations," the violent birth of nationalistic aspirations, served to solidify their national consciousness, which now would seek a definite means of expression. To a large extent, the growth of nationalism and cultural progress in Galicia was facilitated by the constitutional reforms enacted in the Habsburg Empire. But the

[4] Taras Hunczak, "The Politics of Religion: The Union of Brest 1596," *Ukrainskyj Istoryk*, 3-4 (1972), p. 101.

[5] The pro-Napoleon sentiment was especially widespread in Eastern Ukraine. In many areas of Poltava province, leading gentry drank toasts to French victory. When the French forces occupied Mohyliv (1813), the archbishop Varlaam Shyshatskyj recognized the French authority, praised Napoleon in his sermons, and wished him victory. Some landowners went as far as to establish republics on their estates.

—Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson, ND



Ukrainians in that region were considered a nonhistoric nationality, that is, one without its own recent state; as a result, their struggle would be hard and bitter.

Leadership of the Ukrainian people was in the hands of the clergy. Another hindrance to their struggle was the fact that the Ukrainian population of western Ukraine was divided into two and after 1861, when Bukovina was made a separate crown land, into three separate administrative units. This artificial, but effective, division of the Ukrainian population made it impossible to present a united front before the central government in Vienna. In essence, this division was to the advantage to all opponents of any national and cultural revival of the Ukrainians.

When the process of revival was well on the way in Galicia and later in Bukovina, it did not penetrate Carpatho-Ukraine. In that region the large landowners, in close alliance or in collaboration with the parish priests, managed to keep the Ukrainian peasantry in virtual serfdom, illiterate, ignorant, and financially dependent upon the existing system until the last days of the Austrio-Hungarian monarchy.[6]

But the most serious obstacle on the road to national, cultural, and economic recovery were the Poles, who with the help of Austria held a dominant position in Galicia. In exchange for their support of the central government in Vienna, the Poles were granted a large measure of cultural autonomy and practically a full measure of local self-government. For them, Galicia became an intellectual political school for the future Polish republic.

This was the setting in which the Ukrainians, stripped of influential leaders, divided among unsympathetic neighbors, and without any sort of economic base, decided that they would join the family of nations and gain a voice in their native land.

But to do so, they had to overcome many obstacles. According to law governing elections to the Austrian parliament, the Poles formed a majority in the Galician representation to that body. When the Austrian parliament was broken up into national and political groups, the Poles, who in the matter of Galicia maintained a united front, formed a substantial block of votes which was courted by the central government in its efforts to control other national minorities. The price which Vienna was willing to pay for Polish support most often was at the expense of the Ukrain-ians.

The Poles had one or two ministers in the central government who protected their national interests within the government and before the Crown. After 1871, the Cabinet of Ministers also included a Pole, a minister without portfolio, who *de facto* was a minister for Galicia with extensive powers, including the power to veto any and all matters pertained to that region. As a matter of practice, a Pole was also appointed a viceroy, that is, the administrative head of Galicia.

Things were not different in Galicia itself. According to the law dealing with elections, the Poles were assured an overwhelming majority in the Galician parliament *(sejm)* and thus had complete control over the legislation and administration. As a result of special laws and decrees, Polish language dominated in federal and provincial institutions.

In regard to the Ukrainians, the Poles followed the same policy as in days of Polish statehood, although they did have to observe the Austrian constitution. This constitution in theory made all nationalities equal; in practice, it was up to each nationality to realize its cultural and linguistic equality as prescribed by the constitution.

At first, the Poles held the view that there was no such entity as a Ukrainian nation, but rather there was a Ukrainian "tribe." Any cultural development of this tribe could be realized only through a process of Polozination. After a certain period an acceptable individual would emerge--*gente ruthenus natione polonus*--Ukrainian tribesman of the Polish nation.[7]

When it became apparent that this tribesman not only refused to join the Polish fold but showed an inclination to follow his own path and even spoke of his own culture and his own nation, the Poles decided to revise their strategy. Now it was decided to place every possible obstacle at every step of Ukrainian cultural development, knowing quite well that at some point this struggle would become a fight for political power in that region.

Actually, this fight began on May 2, 1848, when the Ukrainians established the Supreme Ukrainian Council. At first it was headed by Bishop Hryhorij Yakhymovych and later by a member of the Consistory, Mykhajjo Kuzenskyj. In its manifesto, the council reminded the interested parties that the Ukrainians were part of a once independent state having its own history and culture. It urged the population of Galicia to realize its destiny within the constitutional framework. The council brought up one important political demand which would remain the minimum political program of the Ukrainians till the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: the council demanded that Galicia be partitioned into eastern and western parts, thus forming Ukrainian and Polish provinces.

Had the "spring of nations" lasted longer, the position of the Ukrainians may have been strengthened. For instance, the Land Statute of 1850 (a provisional constitution) specified that the deputies to the Galician parliament were to be elected by direct vote. The Austrian government also passed a decree on April 24, 1854, concerning the division of Galicia into Polish and Ukrainian regions.[8] Unfortunately, by that time the political climate had changed considerably and these proposals were never put into effect.

That change began at the time when the aspirations of oppressed nations were at their peak. For instance, in June 1848, the Pan-Slavic Congress met in Prague, where the Ukrainian delegates demanded linguistic equality and educational reforms for their population. These demands were blocked by the Poles; the congress itself was dispersed by the Austrian troops; the liberal government of Bohemia

[6] Peter F. Sugar, "The Nature of the Non-Germanic Societies Under Habsburg Rule," *Slavic Review*, (1963), pp. 16-17.

[7] Dr. Mykhajlo Lozynskyj, *Halychyna v rr. 1918-1920* (New York: 1979), p. 7.

[8] However, Galicia was divided into two circuits of the Higher Land Courts, one in Lviv and the other in Cracow. This division allowed the use of the Ukrainian language in the circuit courts of the Higher Land Court, located in Lviv.

was overthrown, liberal reforms were revoked, and the region was placed under martial law.[9]

This turn of events was a serious setback for the Ukrainians in Galicia.

Even before the return of absolutism on December 21, 1851, the Poles managed to convince the Austrian emperor to remove the impartial Count Stadion from his post as the Governor of Galicia and to replace him with a Polish aristocrat, Count Waclaw Zalewski, who immediately sought to further Polish interests in Galicia. Zalewski obtained on September 29, 1848, from the minister of education a decree which made Polish the official language in secondary schools and in institutions of higher learning. The Lviv University, previously designated as an institution for Ukrainians, was handed over to the Poles.

The return to a limited constitution on October 20, 1860, brought about by the Austrian defeat in Italy, did not bring any relief for the Ukrainians. The old system favoring the Poles was retained. In fact, due to the unchecked growth of Polish influence in the central government in Vienna during the previous decade of absolutism, the Polish hold on Galicia was strengthened.

According to the 1860 constitution, Galicia was to be governed by a regional parliament empowered to pass legislation of regional character. This parliament elected a regional executive board responsible for the administration of the region. The central government was represented by the viceroy and his local representatives, *starostas*, who made sure that federal law did not conflict with regional legislation and assured that the local administration followed the proper political line.

Even within this constitutional and administrative framework it would have been possible for the Ukrainians to enjoy relatively good life and continue their cultural and political development. But the central government, at the urging of the Poles, made sure that such a development would not be realized. This was accompanied at the ballot box.

The electorate of Galicia was divided into separate groups, each of them assigned a specific number of mandates. The first group was made up of large landowners, who were given 31.7% of mandates. The second group consisted of merchants, city population, and various trades. This group was allotted 25.2% of mandates. The third group, with 42.8% of mandates, was the bulk of the population, the peasantry. The fourth group which was seated in the provincial parliament consisted of all the bishops of the two churches, the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic rites, rectors of Lviv and Cracow universities, the rector of the Lviv Politechnical Institute, and the president of the Academy of Sciences in Cracow.[10]

Even at the first glance it is obvious that the peasantry, though the majority of the Ukrainian population in the region, would not have a majority in the parliament. In practical terms 3235 families of large landowners had the right to elect almost a third of the deputies, but over 1,240,000 peasant households were allotted fewer than half.

But the central government in Vienna added insult to injury by allowing the first two groups to elect their representatives by direct vote, but requiring the peasants to elect their representatives indirectly by voting for electors who in turn voted for a delegate. Needless to say, this indirect method of election came to be riddled with abuses, ranging from falsification of votes cast to outright physical violence and intimidation of the Ukrainian electors. Quite often the starosta, the representative of the Crown, instructed the police to arrest the Ukrainian electors or relied on other means to prevent them from casting their ballot for Ukrainian candidates. During the first election to the Galician parliament, even with the minimal interference on the part of the Polish administration, the Ukrainians elected only 49 of 144 deputies.

The next crucial period in the political development of Galicia began in 1863, the year of the unsuccessful Polish insurrection against Russia. Failure of the insurrection forced the Polish leadership to reevaluate its strategy. Unable to form an independent state in the territory held by Russia, the Poles decided to make Galicia their pseudo-state. With this in mind, they concluded an 1866 agreement with the Austrian central government; as a result, they had a free hand in Galicia in exchange for their support in the federal parliament against other minorities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Henceforth, in the words of the Austrian Minister of State Baron F. Beust, "The answer to the question whether the Ukrainians in Galicia can exist and to what extent they can exist is in the hands of the Galician Parliament."

Having received such power, the Poles ignored any and all efforts by the Ukrainians to reach some understanding regarding their legitimate demands. Aware of the position taken by the Austrian government, which supposedly ensured that some sort of legality was maintained in the region, the Polish deputy Leshek Borkowski, speaking in the name of the Polish majority in the parliament, declared without reservation that "There is no Ukraine. There is only Poland and Russia."

The Austro-Polish agreement had a number of unfortunate results for the Ukrainians. First and the most obvious, the Ukrainian population was exposed to every sort of legalized abuse and exploitation. Second, the Ukrainian members of parliament had to make extraordinary efforts to ease somehow the various burdens placed upon the Ukrainian population. Third, and just as significant, was the split among the Ukrainian leadership. One group, even in the face of this adversity, decided to continue to struggle for the good of the population. The other, having lost confidence in themselves and their ability to continue the fight, began to look to the Russian empire as a potential ally in the struggle with the Poles. They rationalized their new orientation by saying "If we, as a nation are to die, we prefer to drown in the large Russian sea rather than to suffocate in the Polish mud puddle."[11]

This split had immediate and unfortunate consequences for the Ukrainians. Not only did they lose a segment of their

[9] Carlton J.H. Hayes, *et al.*, *History of Europe* (New York: 1949), p. 765.

[10] Dr. M. Stachiw, *Zakhidna Ukraina Ta Politya Polshchi, Rosiji i Zakhodu (1772-1918)*, V. I (Scranton: 1961), p. 72.

[11] Stachiw, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

leaders in the ongoing struggle with the Poles, the division complicated the work of those who chose to continue the fight. Now the Poles, with some justification, could point to a pro-Russian and therefore anti-Austrian sentiment among the Ukrainians in Galicia. It also gave the Poles an opportunity to weaken the Ukrainian representation in parliament; every time there were two Ukrainian candidates, one of whom was a Russophile, it was to Polish advantage to make sure that the latter would win.

But the most damaging effect was felt by the population. The split confused those who looked for guidance from clergy and intelligentsia who had shifted to the Russophile camp. Russia also took advantage of the split by financially supporting the Russophile faction and thus perpetuating this rift. Russian benevolence was not based on altruistic motive, but rather on the desire to destroy what was considered a dangerous tendency, namely, the growth and spread of Ukrainian nationalism.[12]

At the time when the Ukrainian statesmen were facing one crisis after another, a generation was growing up which not only was willing to help the seniors, but sometimes it would challenge their leadership.

Basically, this generation gap was due to the methods proposed by the two groups to achieve the same goal, that is, to promote the cultural and political development of the people. Both factions agreed on one point: To be effective in this effort, one had to be well-educated. This was especially apparent to the most educated segment of the Ukrainian society, the clergy; for that reason, the clergy made every effort to provide the best education available. It was an unpleasant experience for those parents to learn that their progeny, rather than burning the midnight oil over the works of church fathers, were getting involved in secret societies, often resulting in dismissal from school when discovered by the school authorities.

In Ukraine, the participation of youth in the social life of the country was not a new development. As early as 1134 the *Chronicles* mention brotherhoods, usually associated with the local churches. At times such brotherhoods would deviate from social and cultural matters and acquire a political coloration. A good example of such deviation was the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, formed in eastern Ukraine. Among its best representatives were Taras Shevchenko, Pantelejmon Kulish, and Mykola Kostomarov. The first group to formulate a political program, it called for the formation of a federation of all Slavic nations, destruction of absolutism, democratic equality of all nationalities, freedom, and religious tolerance.

The spirit of brotherhoods, or *Hromada*, was also firmly rooted in western Ukraine. It should be remembered that the union between the Ukrainian church and Rome to a large extent was the result of a struggle between the church leaders and the brotherhoods. Later (1616), when the Basilian Order received permission from Rome to establish schools in western Ukraine, various societies were formed to help those schools.

A more determined effort to further Ukrainian revival was made by Rev. Ivan Mohylynchyj (1777-1831) in the city of Peremyshl. He openly defended the use of Ukrainian language in seminaries and at Lviv University and used Ukrainian in his own sermons. Together with other priests, he formed a publishing company, which printed books in Ukrainian, including *Bukvar*, the A-B-C book.[13] Around 1816 under his initiative and leadership, a group of young people became active in an effort to introduce the Ukrainian language in public schools.

This work was continued by the Bishop of Peremyshl, Ivan Snihurskyj, who also bought a printing press to publish Ukrainian books, established a library, and introduced the use of Ukrainian language at home and in his office. Bishop Snihurskyj's influence was responsible for the establishment and the development of the so-called Peremyshl school of music, which included such composers as Rev. Mykhajlo Verbyckyj, Ivan Lavrivskyj (1822-1873), and Rev. Victor Matiuk (1852-1912). Verbyckyj, whose compositions are noted for their religious atmosphere and patriotic spirit, is credited with providing the stimulus for the development of music in Galicia, as well as the high standards to be followed.[14] He also wrote the music for *Shche ne Vmerla Ukraina*, the Ukrainian national anthem.[15]

But not all young people sought to express themselves within organizations connected with the church or school. Some were active in Polish revolutionary organizations and participated in the anti-Austrian and anti-Russian uprisings. This participation in underground activity tended to bring out their own ethnicity and to stimulate the formation of their own Ukrainian organizations.

In the 1830's, a secret group was discovered at the Greek-Catholic seminary in Lviv, and thirty seminarians were dismissed. Efforts to establish legal organizations, such as the Society of Students-Seminarians were unsuccessful. In 1833, Markian Shashkevych, who earlier may have been a member of a secret Polish organization, formed his own group, which included Jakiv Holovatskyj, Ivan Vahylevych, and Mykola Ustianovych. This group also resolved to use the Ukrainian language in their daily life, to use the Cyrillic rather than Latin alphabet, to write in the spoken language, to fight for the purity in the Ukrainian church rite, and to preach their sermons in Ukrainian.

The Shashkevych group had to struggle not only against the hostile officialdom but also against the Russophiles. Despite the difficulties, the group continued to grow in size and in the scope of its activity. Due to their influence and literary works, Shashkevych, Vahylevych, and Holovatskyj were soon known in the region as the Ukrainian Trio. One Sunday, Shashkevych, Ustianovych, and Velychkovskyj decided to deliver their sermons in the Ukrainian language at the various churches in Lviv; that marked the first decisive breakthrough to eliminate Polish language from the Ukrainian churches.

Encouraged by the success of their first literary anthology, entitled *Son of Ukraine*, the Shashkevych group compiled

[12] The split and the confusion it caused later would immigrate to other countries, especially to the first Ukrainian settlements in the United States.

[13] Ivan Bodnarchuk, "Zakhidnoukrainski Komposytory tserkovnykh pisen," *Ameryka*, March 1, 1985.

[14] Volodymyr Lenyk, "Ukrainska Orhanizovana Molod," *Vyzvolnyj Shlakh*, # 10 (1983), p. 1177.

[15] The words were written by poet Pavlo Chubynskyj.

another, called *The Star*. But the censor banned the work and only parts of it were published two years later in Budapest under the name *Rusalka Dnistrovaja (The Dniester Mermaid)*.

The 1860's belonged to the younger generation. While the statesmen like Julian Lavrivskyj sought to reach some sort of accommodation with the Poles, the younger generation gathered supporters as well as influence. It became apparent to them that they had to establish a broad base of support among the population. Since most of the population was rural and had little education, the activists had to go to the villages to make sure that their message would take root. Thus was born the *Narodovci*, or the Populist movement.

To make sure that the enlightenment process would continue in an organized and systematic manner, on December 8, 1868, the populists formed an organization called *Prosvita* (enlightenment) which strove to "Promote public education in a moral, material and political direction." That meant that the initial thrust of *Prosvita's* work was to improve educational standards in public schools and to provide the general public with reading material which would raise the level of national consciousness.

In 1873, within *Prosvita*, the literary publishing society of Taras Shevchenko was established. Its main goal was to publish Ukrainian textbooks for grades 5 to 8. In 1893 the publishing society was reorganized into the Schevchenko Scientific Society, thus initiating a new era in the intellectual life of western Ukraine.

From a practical standpoint, these developments had a far-reaching effect on the cultural life not only in Galicia but also in other areas of the Ukraine. The educational work of *Prosvita*, through its chapters, began to expand from its center in Lviv to other cities, towns, and villages. Establishing libraries, reading rooms, and various clubs, it was able to move into more specialized areas. To help the farmer utilize his land more efficiently, specialists were sent to familiarize him with the latest techniques in agronomy; to help market his produce more profitably, efforts were made to establish cooperatives and credit unions in order to provide a financial base. Thus, from the center of Lviv to isolated hamlets came books, newspapers, speakers, and organizers. To maintain the impetus of this work, Ukrainian newspapers and journals published special sections of interest to a farmer, housewife, or village teacher.

The success or failure of *Prosvita* in the village depended on the local situation. If the local leadership, that is, the priest, the teacher, or the well-to-do farmer, was sympathetic to the work, then a library or a reading room was established, newspapers, magazines, and books were subscribed, choral, dramatic, and literary groups were formed, and the village joined the stream of national, cultural and political development. But if the leadership favored the Russophiles or was seeking favor with the Poles, then the local activists, as well as the visitors, were subjected to various pressures and intimidation.

The Schevchenko Scientific Society, although just as important in the development of cultural life as *Prosvita*, became a more intellectually-oriented institution. It was also unique because almost all segments of Ukrainian society from all parts of Ukraine participated in its formation.

Eastern Ukrainians, deprived by the Tsarist government of any national or cultural life of their own, saw western Ukraine as the only area where literary and scholarly work could be continued and developed. With the financial and moral support from leading writers and scholars in eastern Ukraine, the Shevchenko Scientific Society was able to provide the Ukrainian population on both sides of the border with a diversified literature. It is true that only a very small portion of these works found their way to eastern Ukraine because they had to be brought in illegally.

Thus, the Shevchenko Scientific Society became a depository and a distribution center for both established and developing writers, scholars, and scientists. With such an extensive gathering of contributors, the Society attempted to familiarize the general public with all aspects of Ukrainian culture. The populations of the Society in turn stimulated interest in those aspects on the local level and quite often stimulated submission of articles about local history or folklore, thus expanding the material for future publications.

To evaluate the success of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, one needs only to mention that it was recognized nationally and abroad for its scholarship and its publications became valuable source material for foreign scholars. In essence, it became an unofficial Ukrainian academy of sciences. It should not surprise modern students to learn that Ukrainians who emigrated to foreign countries made an effort to establish *Prosvita* and the Shevchenko Scientific Society.[16]

While all of these efforts produced the desired effect in reviving Ukrainian culture, they could not solve the most basic problem of the population, poverty. The process of impoverishment of the Ukrainian peasantry began, of course, with the introduction of serfdom. When Ukrainian territory fell under Polish control, Ukrainian laws and institutions were gradually replaced. In practical terms, only a noble could own land and the peasant on that land became property of that landowner. For the privilege of using a small plot of land to feed his family, the peasant was obliged to work so many days on the land of his master. The number of days, which chained the peasant to his master's land, gradually increased as the power of the nobility became more rooted. For example, in the second half of the 15th Century, the nobility approved a minimum of fifty-four days of work and various other obligations by the peasant toward the master's estate. By the end of the 16th Century, the obligation of the peasant increased to 220 days. By that time the peasant had lost the judicial protection of the state and become subject totally to the despotic and arbitrary rule of his master.[17]

By the time Galicia became an Austrian dependency, the economic situation in the region had reached a critical

[16] It is rather ironic to note that at this time, when the process of assimilation in well on the way in many areas, the *Prosvita* has been forgotten and the work of its branch, the Shevchenko Scientific Society, has been limited as a result of the lack of readers. It is ironic because one cannot function effectively without the other.

[17] Stachiw, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

point. On one hand, the Polish landowners, bound to the traditional methods of exploitation of their holdings, had no interest or foresight in developing new ways to utilize the available resources and the fertile land. On the other hand, to pay for their accustomed lifestyle, the landlords had no choice but to exert more pressure on the serfs to increase their productivity, thereby driving the peasantry into deeper poverty.[18]

In an effort to revitalize the stagnant economic conditions in Galicia, Emperor Joseph II tried to ease the burden of the peasants by making them less dependent on their masters; they were allowed to marry without the master's consent, to sell whatever property they had acquired, and to pay a fixed sum of money rather than labor for the use of their land.

But neither these reforms nor the abolishment of serfdom on April 18, 1848, could improve the economy or well-being of the population in that region. Without industry to absorb the large surplus of workers, the small holdings of the peasants continued to be split into even smaller plots. Holdings of two to five hectares made up 38% of the total farms, and 48% of farms consisted of fewer than two hectares.[19]

Poverty among the peasants was in the interest of their former master. It provided an inexhaustible source of cheap labor. For his work from sunrise to sunset, and for providing his own food, the peasant was paid 25 hellers (5¢ U.S.).[20] Most of the peasantry had to accept the miserly wages as a matter of necessity and with hope for a better tomorrow. But some, in desperation and as a matter of survival, found enough courage to seek better life in foreign lands.

Historically speaking, immigration was not a stranger to the Ukrainians. For instance, after the Battle of Poltava, Hetman Mazeppa and some of his followers found refuge in present-day Moldavia. And in 1775 when the Russian army forced the Zaporozhan Cossacks to leave their settlement, the Sich, a large number settled at the mouth of the Danube River. That episode, by the way, was an inspiration for the opera, *Zaporozhetz za Dunajem*.

In the 17th Century, Captain John Smith, who escaped through Ukraine from a Turkish imprisonment, mentioned in his diary a doctor named Lavrentij Bohun, who accompanied him to Jamestown in Virginia. Among the participants in the war of American independence, we came across such Ukrainian names as Samijlo Hrabovskyj, Jakiv Nemerych, and James Sadowskyj. In the American Civil War (1861-1865), men as Vyhovskyj, Zarevych, and Colonel Ivan Turchyn, who later became a general and a personal friend of President Abraham Lincoln,[21] are noted as participants.

These Ukrainians very likely came to America across the Atlantic Ocean. But there were some who came from the west. That group arrived in California via Alaska when the Russian government decided to build a fort near San Francisco (1809). According to Ahapius Honcharenko, the Orthodox priest and a political activist who published the *Alaskan Herold*, among the military personnel and settlers there were many Ukrainian Cossacks, former exiles to Siberia. There were many Ukrainian settlers among the Russians in Alaska, as well.

Another political emigre, Mykola Sudzilovskyj, a doctor and a revolutionary leader from Kiev, in 1880's came to California and later moved to the Hawaian Islands. There he took part in the political life and was elected the President of the Hawaian Senate. Through his efforts, new settlers were offered virgin forest land and that offer was accepted by about forty families from Galicia.

But the first massive emigration from Galicia began in the middle of the 18th Century when the Austrian government began a systematic program of settlement of Bachka and Banat areas in present-day Yugoslavia, where the Ukrainians live till this day.[22]

The massive Ukrainian immigration to North America began in the second half of the 1870's, mainly from Galicia, Lemkivshchyna, and Carpatho-Ukraine. By some estimates, the United States alone received between 200,000 and 250,000 immigrants. It is impossible to establish a more definite figure because until 1899 the Bureau of Immigration recorded only the country of origin. After 1899, it listed the mother tongue of each immigrant.[23]

The difficulties these immigrants encountered in their new homeland are a tribute to their courage, preseverance, and instinct for survival. Without a knowledge of the language, without a profession, and without an assurance of a job, they had no choice but to accept the hardest, the dirtiest, and the lowest paying positions. The new arrivals scattered throughout the farmlands of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, among the coal mines and the steel mills, followed the highways and the railroads, and broke their backs in the slaughterhouses and textile sweatshops. They lived in slums where the expenses were low and often they were prey of the unscrupulous or even criminal element.

But in time, due to hard work, advice of good people, and the Homestead Act of 1862, the farmhand became a farmer, a worker in a slaughterhouse opened his own butcher shop, and a textile worker who learned his trade well opened his own tailor shop.

If there are any conclusions to be drawn from the experiences of the first Ukrainian immigrants, the first is that they established a reputation for hard work, honesty, and dependability. Second, the first immigrants, having been exposed to the process of cultural and political revival in Galicia, brought this experience to whatever country they came to call their home. They brought their churches and reading rooms; they established schools, mutual aid societies, and the press. Finally, even in far distant lands, they continued to maintain a bond with their native soil. This bond took the form of financial aid to the Galicians in their struggle for independence and in form of a humanitarian aid at the time when Ukraine was devastated by war. A few decades later, the children of those first immigrants were strengthening this bond with moral and practical support given to a new wave of emigrants from the land of their fathers.

[18] Mykhajlo P. Herasymenko, *Ahrarni Vidnosyny v Halychyni v Period Kryzy Panshchynnoho Hospodarstva* (Kiev: 1959), p. 17.

[19] Stachiw, *op. cit.*, p. 90 Hectare = 2.471 acres.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Orest Horodynskyj, "Heneral Ivan Vasylovych Turchyn," *Almanakh, Ukrainskyj Narodnyj Sojuz* (Jersey City: 1971), p. 98.

[22] Julian Kolosar, "Do Istoriji Juhoslavjanskykh Ukrainciv," *Almanakh Ukrainskoho Narodnoho Sojuzu* (Jersey City: 1970), p. 146.

[23] Paul R. Magocsi, editor, *The Ukrainian Experience in the United States: A Symposium* (Cambridge: 1979), p. 6.

Puritans on the Prairies: Ukrainian Stundists in North Dakota

by Alvin Kapusta*

The story of the Protestant sect of evangelical Christians of Ukrainian descent called Stundists[1] who settled in central North Dakota is a colorful, but sadly neglected, chapter of Ukrainian history and American emigration history. It is also an interesting study in religious formation of a community and of religious and national identity. These questions of identity, both religious and national, would puzzle both outside observers and members of the community itself.

These questions were even raised by young people. The author recalls his boyhood in the Max community; when the young people inquired about their origins, their parents said, "We're Russian." And yet, in conversations among themselves, the older people would say "We're Ukrainian." In that one couldn't be both, it was all very perplexing.

The central North Dakota communities had some fleeting acquaintance with other Ukrainian communities, such as those at Wilton and Belfield. But if those people were Ukrainians, they were a very different variety. They drank, danced, and practiced festive rituals, and many of them offered allegiance to the Pope. The Ukrainians at Kief, Butte, or Max found the drinking and dancing sinful and the relation to the papacy disturbing.[2]

There was similar confusion in religious identity. When schoolchildren developed an acquaintance with peers who were Lutheran, Catholic, or Congregational, they asked their parents what religion they followed. The parents replied: "We are Russian Baptists." Yet, among themselves, they called each other *evangel'skiye khristiane* (evangelical Christians) or *dukhovniye kristiane* (spiritual Christians). Or they would privately say, "*My Stundisty* (We are Stundists)." Although the latter was pejorative, one could identify with it because it was also an identification with the sufferings and persecutions that the group had endured for Christ under that name.

The central North Dakota communities of Stundists started with a nucleus of seven Eastern Ukrainian Protestant families who emigrated from the village of Boyarka, Kievskaya Gubernya, in 1889. They left a homeland which they loved dearly. They did not wish to leave, but were forced to as a result of religious persecution and their strong desire to worship in peace.

Old World Origins and Background to Emigration

The origins of the sect can be traced to 1858, when Ivan Onishchenko, a tailor from Osnova in Khersonskaya Gubernya became converted to Christ as a result of his contacts with nearby German Evangelical and Mennonite settlers. These Germans were the descendants of the German colonies which Catherine the Great had planted in the 18th Century to populate newly acquired lands in southern Ukraine and along the Volga River. Special concessions were given to these German settlers, including the right to German schools and their own churches; these rights were honored by her successors throughout the 19th Century.

Many of these German settlers were of Lutheran or evangelical persuasion, and in the mid-1850's a widespread evangelical and pietist revival swept through the German colonies. The new religious ideas were brought from Germany by pastors like Kard and Johann Bonnekemper, Johann G. Oncken, and Martin Kalweit who crisscrossed

* The author acknowledges the editorial assistance of Theodore Pedeliski in the preparation of this article for publication.

[1] Probably the most comprehensive account of the early Stundist origins, activities, and relations with Russian Orthodox Church and the Tsarist government is A. Borozdin in Vol. 39 of Brockhaus-Efron's *Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar* published in St. Petersburg in 1903. In the section under *Stundism*, Borozdin traces the influence of earlier religious movements, such as the Dukhobors and the Molokans, on Stundist beliefs. Especially interesting is his description of the work of the Third All-Russian Conference in Kazan in 1899 which divided Stundism into two categories: Kosyakovskiy Confession—which required rebaptism and was thus designated *starostundism* or *stundobaptism;* and the Chaplinka Confession—which did not require rebaptism and was designated *mladostundism*.

[2] The social differences which these Ukrainians noted had their roots in historical antecedents of many centuries. Western and Eastern Ukrainians had experienced the genesis and early development of an independent country during the Kievan-Galician era (circa 950 to 1240). But the Mongol invasion in 1240 and the Polish-Lithuanian takeover in 1370 together rent asunder the greater Ukrainian state. Caught between the intrigues or wars of Polish nobles, Lithuanian Lords, Catholic bishops, Tartar vassals, and Muscovite metropolitans and grand princes, Ukrainians were split apart as a people. The Western and Eastern Ukrainians were differentiated in terms of their national, religious, and social character.

Ukraine and Russia preaching and converting among the German settlers. Ukrainians living in the vicinity of these German settlements began to attend some of these reform services and became impressed with the genuineness of the revivalists' Christianity, and with their piety, honesty, and charity. For the Ukrainians, these qualities were in great contrast to the Christianity with which they were familiar—that of an extremely formal liturgy spoken in the archaic language of Church Slavonic with little relation to daily life. They were also alienated from their traditional church. There no longer existed a Ukrainian Orthodox Church. A Russian Orthodoxy had been imposed on them. The priests were Great Russians, unfamiliar with the Ukrainian language, badly educated, and limited in pastoral or homeletic abilities. As a result, their contact with the Ukrainian people was limited to certain rites of passage. The priest was the man standing at the stile to baptize the common folk when they came into the world, to marry them, to baptize their children, and to bury them. In contrast to this formalistic religion, Ukrainians like Onishchenko saw German Protestants apply the teachings of Christ directly from the Bible to their own simple daily lives and do this in their own language.

Upon his conversion in 1858, Onishchenko, who was already 43 years old, with typical Ukrainian persistence applied himself to the task of learning to read so that he could study the Scriptures himself. The German colonists provided him with a Russian-language Bible (no Ukrainian translations of the Bible were available, nor would they have been allowed by the Tsarist government). However, the Germans did not permit Onishchenko to join their church. The German colonists were free to pursue their own religion, but they were not allowed to proselytize. Onishchenko had to start his own church. Having mastered the Russian language, he began the task of preaching his new faith to his fellow Ukrainians. His first convert was his own tailor-apprentice, Mikhail Ratushniy. After the liberation of the serfs in 1861, Ratushniy, who too had been a serf, was able to travel around the Ukraine in guise of a peddler, spreading the new beliefs to other villages and to other *gubernyas.*[3]

By 1864, eight years after Onishchenko's conversion, the new sect began to make substantial inroads on the established Russian Orthodox Church. At first, the new converts did not openly advertise their differences with the Church, but after the 1861 Emancipation many of them came out into the open and publicized their new convictions by removing icons from their homes and publicly burning them; icons were idols, according to their beliefs after reading the Bible. Furthermore, immediately upon conversion, they would foreswear their old life of smoking, drinking, and public carousing. This "odd" behavior was quickly reported to the village priest, who would call the culprits in and attempt to talk them out of their errors and bring them back to the mother church. But the rational-minded Ukrainian who always enjoyed a lively theological argument, not only refused to do so, but had the temerity to ask Scriptural questions of the priest. Having pored over their Bibles with the zeal of new converts, they often proved more than a match in arguments with the often semi-literate Russian Orthodox priests, who were more versed in Church Slavonic liturgy than in Biblical dogma.

By the late 1860's, the growing wave of conversions to the new sect seriously alarmed Orthodox authorities, and they turned to the police for assistance. At first, the village *starosta* attempted to convince the converts to return to the Orthodox fold and threatened dire consequences if they did not. When such arguments brought no response from the new believers, sterner measures were adopted. The converts were rounded up and put in the *kholodilnik* (cooler) where the culprit had time to think and repent his sins. But when these measures also proved ineffective, the local police recruited bullies,[4] tanked them up with vodka, and sent them off to surveil members of the sect and beat them up upon their return from evening worship services. The Stundists then began meeting in secret in various homes, but frequently these bullies would find the place, break up the meeting, destroy the home, and harass those attending the service. An Englishman, Herbert Thompson, writing in 1896, describes these early persecutions:

> . . . In 1877-78, the new sect began to feel the real weight of persecution. They were raided and deprived of their New Testaments and hymn-books; they were prevented from meeting for worship in their cottages, and their presbyters and deacons were forbidden to leave their localities for the purpose of confirming the more remote and weaker churches.[5]

At this time the Tsarist church and civil authorities pinned the label "Stundist" on the evangelical Christians. Although based on a German sect which did call itself Stundist, the term was adopted by the authorities as a pejorative term of foreign origin in order to frighten the uneducated superstitious Orthodox parishioners more easily. The word *Stunde* in German means "hour" and was used by the German pietist groups to designate their hour of Bible study

[3] J.C. Pollock, in chapter 2 of *The Faith of the Russian Evangelicals* describes the milieu in which both Onishchenko and Ratushniy worked in southern Ukraine. He also describes their early missionary work and their contacts with Russian Baptists who trace their origins to Nikolay Voronin's baptism in Tbilisi in 1867, and with the "salon sectarians" (as they were pejoratively called) of St. Petersburg, the Col. Pashkovs, Princes Lievens, and Baron Korffs, who had been influenced by the English Baptist Lord Radstock.

[4] Among the "bullies" was the author's maternal great-grandfather, Simeon Shevchenko. Simeon's grandson, Victor Remarenko, spent much time with his grandparents while a child in the Ukraine. He recalls his grandfather describing how the police encouraged devout Orthodox church members to surveil and harass the Stundists. Simeon would take a long logging hook with him on these expeditions; when he would discover a Stundist meeting place, he would demolish the thatch from the house with his hook. On one such occasion, after destroying the roof, Simeon found the Stundist family outside the home praying on their knees for his salvation. This act of Christian forgiveness impressed him so much that he began to visit the Stundist services and became converted. He, in turn, was persecuted by the authorities and exiled twice, once to the swamps of what is now Byelorussia, and once to Baku in what is now Azerbaijan.

[5] Chapter VII, "Religions and Religious Persecution," in Herbert Thompson's 1896 book *Russian Politics* provides a good picture of how the different sects, including the Stundists, developed in Russia and Ukraine and the measures taken by both the state and church authorities to cope with this challenge to their civil and ecclesiastic authority.

and meditation, a practice subsequently adopted by the early Ukrainian converts. To the average Ukrainian peasant, a Stundist was a person who was an evil incarnate, a frightful black-clad demon with horns and tail. In his memoirs, an early Stundist convert, Stephan Nesdoly, who later emigrated to Canada, described reactions of curiousity mixed with fear when he first heard the word mentioned by a priest who made every effort to blacken the reputation of the new sect.[6]

In spite of the combined efforts of church and state, the new sect refused to go away, much to the alarm of the Orthodox Church authorities. In fact, the sect spread like wildfire throughout the Ukraine, primarily through the efforts of itinerant lay pastors such as Ratushniy, Ivan Ryaboshapka, Mikhail Tsimbal, and Trifon Khlistun from Khersonskaya Gubernya; and Gerasim Balaban, Pavlo Tsibulskiy, Yosif Tishkevich, and Syzont' Kapustinskiy[7] from Chaplinka or other villages in Kievskaya Gubernya.

Basically, the tenets of the Stundists were a mixture of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Baptist beliefs. They believed that sin caused the fall of man, and with the Calvinists they believed in the predestination to salvation. The five means of salvation, according to their dogma, included the word of God, baptism, the breaking of bread, the communion of saints, and repentance with prayer which did not necessitate the mediation of a priest. The ecclesiastical organization was very simple, with no priests or bishops. The faithful, however, chose presbyters to govern and administer their church affairs and teachers to preach. These latter two orders could baptize and serve the Eucharist with the assistance of deacons or servers. They had no fixed rites, but the services usually began with reading and interpretation of the Bible.[8] Lay people with no formal education or seminary training led the worship services and expounded on the Biblical imperatives. Speaking seriously, honestly, and with great emotion, they were the equal of any modern media evangelist.

Although both the leaders and the Stundist congregation were made up of ethnic Ukrainians, they utilized the Russian language in their Bible reading, sermons, and hymn singing. This evolved from the fact that in the 19th Century the Ukrainian language was expressly forbidden by Tsarist *ukase* in the press, schools, theatres, and public lectures, and no books could be printed in that language. The translation of the Bible into Ukrainian had not yet been completed (even in Western Ukraine), and should such have been available it would have been illegal. In addition, the Stundists, coming from a highly formalized Orthodox background, felt that the Ukrainian language was too "common" to use in holy services (much as many Catholics felt about the vernacular when the Church abolished the use of Latin in church ritual in recent times).

By 1882, with a new reactionary Tsar and with Pobedonostsev as Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Stundist movement began to experience increasing levels of oppression. New measures were instituted which levied arbitrary fines on former Orthodox believers attending Stundist meetings. If they refused to recant, they were evicted from their homes, imprisoned, and their property sold for default of exorbitant fines. In spite of these stringent measures, more adherents appeared, and the authorities began to subject leaders of the Stundists to even more severe penalties, such as imprisonment for long periods with common criminals, or banishment with their families to distant provinces. This often meant death for many of them or their children because these long journeys were made on foot; the exiles were often chained to each other and did not have adequate food or care. The areas of exile were often inhospitable swamps where survival was difficult, or semi-tropical regions where unaccustomed diseases took a heavy toll.[9]

By the mid-1880's, an aroused Russian Orthodox church began to train and send large numbers of missionaries to the areas infected by Stundists to coerce the converts through threats of corporal punishment and everlasting damnation. But all these sufferings seemed to stiffen the spirits of the Stundists to endure ever greater persecution; they believed the Bible foretold that true believers would be tested by persecution. By 1888, the authorities had adopted even more severe measures, such as wholesale banishment or imprisonment, not only of leaders, but also of the ordinary members and their families. A favorite place of exile was the notorious town or Gergusi in southern Trans-Caucasus where many of the Stundists succumbed to tropical diseases. Among the victims of Gergusi in the 1880's was the Bible colporter Syzont' Kapustinskiy, who traveled throughout Russia distributing Bibles and establishing congregations, including one in the city of Orel'.[10] Another Stundist

[6] Stephan Nesdoly, an early emigrant to Canada, describes his introduction to Stundism in the journal *Seyatel Istini* (Feb.-Dec. 1931). Born in 1855 in Borodyanka in Kievskaya Gubernya, Nesdoly was a young man when the Stundist movement began. He describes his experience, while driving a priest and his organist to their church, of overhearing conversation about this new sect. At the service, the priest began to warn his parishioners about the terrible "Stundists" who were heretics rejecting priests, churches, and attendance at church services.

[7] Both Domashovets' and Hrushev'skiy give detailed accounts of these and other early Ukrainian Stundist leaders.

[8] An excellent English language summary of the Stundist tenets and dogma is given in Fredrick C. Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters* (NY: Russell and Russell, 1962). Much additional material about Stundist beliefs is included in Trokym Zinkiv'skiy, *Shtunda, ukrainsko-ratstionalisticheskaya sekta*. Much of his material is taken from the unpublished dissertation of Father Arseniy Rozhdesfvenskiy, an Orthodox priest who studied the Stundist phenomena first-hand in the 1880's.

[9] Both Nesdoly and Herbert Thompson give graphic descriptions of the persecutions of the Stundists during the period from 1880 to 1905, when many of the more stringent measures were abolished by Tsar Nicholas after the 1905 revolution.

[10] Syzont' Kapustinsky, a paternal grand-uncle of the author, was mentioned in a 1968 issue of the Soviet Baptist journal, *Bratskiy Vestnik*, as having "established the first seeds of Christian worship in Orel' by converting Vasiliy Frolovich Kurasov who became the first presbyter of the Orel' church." Kapustinsky, a native of the Chaplinka branch of the Stundists, became a colporter for the Russian Bible Society and was later exiled with his family to Gergusi in the Trans-Caucasus where he met Stepan Nesdoly who reports the death of both Syzont' and his wife in his memoirs.

preacher, Ivan Ryaboshapka, was exiled for twelve years to Yerevan, Armenia, from which he managed to escape to Turkey and from there found his way to Sofia, Bulgaria, where he made contact with the Western Ukrainian nationalist leader, Mikhail Drahomaniv, and where he died in 1900.[11]

New Beginnings in the New World

When the persecutions of the Stundists became almost intolerable in the late 1880's, leaders of the sect appealed to the Tsarist authorities for permission to emigrate *en masse* to some part of the Tsarist empire where they could worship in peace. When the authorities refused, they began to search for other places to emigrate. From Jews who had emigrated to the United States and then returned to visit their families, the Stundists learned that full religious freedom was available in the United States for all religious sects. They could live where they wanted, do what they wanted, and worship as they pleased. It seemed too good to be true.

The first eastern Ukrainian Stundist emigrants to the United States were Khariton Sabarovich[12] and his family from Kaniv region of Kievskaya Gubernya. From Jewish emigrants to the United States who had returned to the Ukraine for visits to their families, Sabarovich learned about the religious freedom which existed in the United States. Arriving in New York in 1889, Sabarovich, again with the help of Jewish contacts, settled in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was able to establish that the religious freedom that Jewish friends had talked about was in fact a reality. He then wrote to his Stundist friends in Ukraine and urged them to join him. Given the fact that the Pobedonostev persecution was at its height, a small group set out for America and eventually found its way to Louisville. In Kentucky, the Stundist emigrants, who were mostly farmers, found it difficult to adapt to factory work which only paid some 80 or 85 cents for a twelve-hour day of hard labor. But living costs were also very inexpensive, and in spite of the early hardships the Stundists found them bearable in view of the religious freedom that they found there.

Yet their experiences with American Protestant groups left them bewildered. As newly arrived "Baptists," the Stundists were invited to a local Baptist Church. They accepted the invitation. They didn't understand English, but felt they would be in God's house, could worship and pray to Him, and hear Him glorified with song. After the service the preacher, seeking to offer a welcome to these immigrant colonists, offered the men cigars. This astounded the Ukrainians and they fled the scene. The minister, they thought, must be the devil in man's clothing.

As more of the Ukrainian Stundists began leaving for America, the landowners in the Ukraine appealed to the Tsarist government to curtail such emigration, fearing they would lose all the cheap labor needed for their large estates. The Russian government did not stop the emigration, but limited it to small groups of twenty to twenty-five persons. As a result, a small colony was soon established in Louisville, and the older emigrants began to explore the possibility of locating farm land. Learning of the availability of farm land at Yale, Virginia (west of Norfolk), a small group left Louisville and settled there where they began to raise corn and peanuts. Among these Virginia settlers was Antin Pilipiv, who left Ukraine in 1893 and continued farming in Yale until his death in 1945.

Once the colony at Yale became established, they wrote to their friends and relatives in Ukraine and urged them to come to the United States. In response, a group of seven Stundist families from Boyarka in Kievskaya Gubernya left their homes and set out for America to join their Virginia compatriots. The leaders of this small band of religious pioneers, Anton Bokovoy, enlisted in this venture the families of O. Dedenko, Harry Kooreny, Nestor Korunetz, E. Lushenko, Peter Michalenko, and Elias Sitch. With parents, wives, and children, the group consisted of over forty persons. While boarding ship in Hamburg, Germany, the Bokovoy group met Peter Saylor,[13] a farmer from the German colonies in Ukraine who had earlier emigrated to South Dakota and who was returning to his farm after having visited his relatives in Ukraine. Since he spoke Ukrainian as well as German, Saylor became a friend of the Bokovoy group and helped them with various emigration formalities. When he found out that the group were all farmers, he suggested that rather than going to Virginia where they would have to work in factories before they could get money to buy land they should go to South Dakota where the American government was giving away free land to willing settlers under the Homestead Act.

Although suspicious at first of such a wild claim as "free land," the land-hungry Ukrainian group decided, after landing in Baltimore in the fall of 1898, to continue on to South Dakota where they arrived at Saylor's hometown of Tripp on November 16, 1898. Here, to their disappointment, they learned that all the free "homestead" land had already been parceled out, but were told that similar "free land" was still available further north in the new state of North Dakota.

Since it was already too late in the season to make an overland trip to this new area, the kindly Russian-Germans of the area took in the seven families and provided them with shelter and food until the next spring. In late April, the Ukrainian settlers, after buying teams and covered wagons, proceeded to the north. They arrived in Harvey,

[11] In the case of Ivan Ryaboshapka, the present Evangelical Christian-Baptist Union in the Soviet Union considers him one of their forefathers, and in 1981 mentioned the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of his birth in *Bratskiy Vestnik*. There, however, seems to be some discrepancy on his birthdate; most Western sources give it as being 1817. The same *Bratskiy Vestnik* (No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1981) also states that a history of the Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists was scheduled to be published in 1984.

[12] Rev. G. Domashovets' in his 1967 book *Naris istorii ukrainskoy Evangel'sko-Baptists'koy tserkvi* gives an account of the early Stundist settlers in the United States and Canada.

[13] In *Na batkivshchini i na chuzhini* (Toronto, 1957), Andrey Duboviy, one of the early Stundist settlers in North Dakota, gives a detailed account of the Bokovoy group. Doboviy was an interesting exception to the majority of settlers; he was well educated and had brought a considerable library of philosophical and religious topics, including books about the Dukhobors and the Stundists in Ukraine. Duboviy's book has been translated into English by Maria Halun Bloch and published as *Pilgrims on the Prairie: Ukrainian Pioneers on the Prairies* (Dickinson: Ukrainian Cultural Institute, 1983).

North Dakota, after seventeen days and many miles of bonebreaking travel across rocky and roadless plains.[14]

At Harvey, where the land office was located, they managed to obtain information about the still available free land and were directed to an area south of Martin, North Dakota, where they staked out their claims, Not having plows or other farm implements, the new settlers spent the summer in building sod houses, planting gardens, and working for neighbors to earn money for food and farm implements. They called their new area "Svoboda" (liberty) in honor of the freedom which they had found in their new homeland.

In 1900 the new farmers broke virgin sod and planted flax, only to have drought destroy their crops and bring them to the brink of starvation. A neighboring Slavic settler from Rumania, Alex H. Nikolaus,[15] who had been converted to the Baptist faith in Canada before settling in North Dakota, learned about the desparate plight of these new Ukrainian settlers and appealed to the American Baptist representative in North Dakota. This representative, T.M. Shanafelt, arranged for the purchase of flour, coal, and clothing in Minneapolis; it was shipped to North Dakota without charge by the Soo Line Railroad, thus helping the starving Ukrainians to survive the winter of 1900-1901.

On April 4, 1901, Shanafelt, Dr. O.A. Williams, and Alex H. Nikolaus organized a new church for the Ukrainian emigrants, which the settlers called the First Russian Baptist Church of Liberty. In 1902, the congregation, which prior to this time had met in private homes, constructed a church building in a new village which they decided to call Kiev after the capitol of their former homeland. Kiev was transliterated into "Kief" by postal officials. This church was the first Russo-Ukrainian Baptist church in North America, and Alex Nikolaus was enjoined to become the first pastor.

It is ironic that new "Russian Baptist Church" was in fact neither Russian nor Baptist. The members of the congregation were all ethnic Ukrainians who belonged to the "Evangelical Christian" branch of Protestants and were not an organized Baptist group. In the Ukraine, they had had ties with the Russian Baptists of Nikolay Voronin and with Col. Pashkov and Baron Korff of the St. Petersburg Salon Baptists. But few of the Ukrainian Evangelical Christians in fact called themselves Baptists — this was to come later. In fact, the union of the Baptists and Evangelical Christians in Russia and in the Soviet Union, as many times as it was attempted between 1880 and 1940, did not come to full fruition until Stalin forcibly united the two groups in the "All Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists" in 1944. Given that, why did the North Dakota Ukrainians call their new church the "Russian Baptist Church of Liberty"?

First, the Tsarist government had for many years taken measures to Russianize the Ukrainian population and discourage the use of the Ukrainian language. Few of the North Dakota Ukrainians would have called themselves Ukrainian in the political sense; this concept had only recently been developed by such intellectuals as Taras Shevchenko, and by the Cyril and Methodius societies, but they were quickly repressed in eastern Ukraine. Politically, no Ukraine existed. Thus, many Ukrainians did not have a strongly defined Ukrainian nationalist feeling, and others had already been won over by the government and in fact considered themselves Russian. This basic denationalization, coupled with the prohibition of the use of the Ukrainian language at the time of the sect's formation, led to the adoption of Russian as the church language and further reinforced their identification with the Russians. The authors of the section on Ukrainian Stundists in the volume *Ukraine, A Concise Encyclopedia* rightly observed that "this movement was far removed from any major social concerns and was under Russian influence . . . this worked against the cultural-national interests of the Ukrainian people and some alienation is still noticeable among many [Ukrainian] Baptists."[16]

Second, in the pietist Evangelical Christian theology with its strong primitive Christian overtones, the convert was judged not on the basis of his ethnic origin or language, but on the basis of his conversion to Christ. The evangelical Ukrainians went back to a primitive Christianity and the statements of Paul that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female for you all are one in Jesus Christ" [Galatians 3:28. See also Romans 10:12]. To the convert it made no difference whether the person was a Ukrainian, or Pole, or Russian, or Georgian. What was important was his conversion to Christ. What was most important was the fellowship of Christians rather than the feeling "We're Ukrainian, we're Poles, or we're Lithuanian."

Finally, the North Dakota Baptist representatives who provided material help to the starving North Dakota Ukrainians had an interest in enlisting this new group of settlers into their ranks. Because the Ukrainians felt considerable gratitude for their help and since the Baptist tenets were close enough to their own Evangelical Christian beliefs, they did not see any great conflict in calling themselves Baptists.

From 1900 to 1917, a continuous stream of Ukrainian emigrants followed in the footsteps of the pioneering Bokovoy group and settled the prairies west of Kiev, North Dakota, along the Soo line towards Plaza in the west. Congregations sprang up at Max (1908), Butte (1920), Greatstone, and Makoti. A small contingent even moved to the southwest portion of the state, where they established a

[14] In addition to Duboviy, American Baptist historian Coe Hayne visited North Dakota in the 1920's and published articles entitled "Pilgrims of the Dakotas" (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1925, and Jan. 1926, issues of *Missions* magazine). He describes the Bokovoy trek to North Dakota, the difficult early years, and the establishment of the First Russian Baptist Church in North America in the area of Kiev, North Dakota, in 1901.

[15] Alex Nikolaus (also listed in various sources as Nicholaus, Nicholaus and Mikolaiv) remained in North Dakota until 1919 and then transferred to San Francisco to serve as pastor of the Russian Baptist Church there.

[16] See Borovsky, V. and Korowytsky, I. in their article on Ukrainian Protestanism in *Ukraine, A Concise Encyclopedia,* Vol. II (Toronto, 1971), which gives a short history of the Stundist-Baptists in the U.S. and Canada.

congregation on the fringes of the North Dakota Badlands at Killdeer in 1916. At its peak the Ukrainian community in North Dakota consisted of some two to three thousand[17] emigrants, mostly of the Evangelical Christian-Baptist persuasion, although later settlers included Mennonites, Pentacostalists, Seventh Day Adventists, Orthodox believers (many of whom converted to Stundism in North Dakota), and of course non-believers who came primarily for economic reasons.

In 1917, sixteen years after Bokovoy brought his band of Ukrainian Stundists to North Dakota, the six North Dakota Stundist congregations joined together to form the Russian Baptist Conference, a loose association which met approximately once a year for an all-congregational spiritual conference. Originally held in large tents near one of the churches, the conference meeting consisted of day-long services with guest speakers from other Russian Baptist churches in the United States and Canada and was primarily devoted to the serious business of conversion of new believers. However, taking place as it usually did in June between the hectic pace of spring work and fall harvest, the conference was a high point in the social life of the isolated Stundist farmers and provided a welcome opportunity to meet with friends and relatives, to partake of the tasty Ukrainian cuisine, and for the younger set to do a bit of courting. Converts from such annual conferences and from the weekly church services would then be baptized at services held at nearby Strawberry or Nelson-Carlson lakes.

By the 1920's, the Max Russian Baptist Church, the largest of the six congregations, had some 200 members and was large enough to have both a church choir and a church orchestra under the direction of a talented Ukrainian musician, Ivan Dubach. Because none of the congregations could afford a separate pastor, the six congregations together supported one pastor-missionary who was expected to make the circuit to each of the churches, sometimes preaching as often as three or four times each Sunday. This pastor was located in Max and was also supported in part by the American Baptist Home Mission Society as part of their mission outreach to Slavic emigrants to the United States. Such Russian speaking pastors as Alex Nikolaus (1900-1919), Nestor Nesdoly (1919-1923), John Bucknell (1925-1933), G.P. Schroeder (1936-1942), and Alex Koval (1942) filled this demanding pastoral and missionary position. Interestingly enough, Rev. G.P. Schroeder came from Ukraine from one of the German Mennonite colonies which had served as one of the sources of the early Stundist ideas in Ukraine. Schroeder, who died in 1981 at the age of 91, came from Choritza, which during the Ukrainian Civil War served as the headquarters for the anarchist Makhno. He personally knew Makhno and served as interpreter for the German colonies with Makhno, helping to alleviate some of the atrocities that Makhno's undiciplined band was wont to inflict on both the Germans and Ukrainians.[18] Well-trained and speaking German, Ukrainian, and Russian, Schroeder energetically devoted his talents and time to building the North Dakota churches which had been without a pastor for some years at the time of his arrival. He established Women's Mission Circles in the churches, organized and taught Russian language classes to the young people, initiated the first Russian language Baptist broadcasts over radio station KLPM in Minot, and traveled thousands of miles over rutted, muddy, or snow covered roads to bring the message to his spread-out congregations. Since 1943, the North Dakota churches have had pastors without a knowledge of the Russian or Ukrainian language, with the exception of Rev. Sandie Palnick who served as pastor in Max from 1952 to 1955. During periods when there was no pastor, or when the pastor only knew English, Efraim Sitch, John Kovalenko, Nick Semchenko, Arsene Sambor, Andrey Meronuck, or John Barnick[19] filled in.

The "Russian Baptist" churches in North Dakota have since undergone affiliation with American Baptist associations. Only family names of members betray the original Ukrainian origins. Third and fourth generation descendants have lost their Ukrainian language and have become fully assimilated into their American communities.[20]

But assimilation can not detract from the legacy that these Stundist churches left their communities. The fervor and sincerity of the religious congregations during the era when these churches were culturally autonomous provided a certain yeast of Stundist faith and steadfastness that followed children and grandchildren wherever their pursuits took them. An ethical upbringing and a certain perseverance served them well. The church also reinforced the values of self-sufficiency and democracy. These Stundist churches were primary social institutions for these people. Nobody went to the authorities to solve the social problems of the community—the church regulated all the quarrels and arguments. Church records from the Max congregations dating from the 1920's include debates about what to do with church members who drank too much. The church offered the opportunity for local self-government at the most

[17] Exact statistics about the extent of the Stundist emigration to North Dakota are difficult to obtain. Domashovets' estimates that some five to ten thousand settlers came to North Dakota, but this figure appears to be exaggerated. Only detailed examination of land and emigration records can provide an accurate count.

[18] Rev. Gerhard P. Schroeder describes his experiences in Ukraine up to his departure in 1923 in *Miracles of Grace and Judgement* (Lodi, California, 1974). The Schroeder family emigrated to Canada as a result of the efforts of the Canadian Mennonites to aid their fellow co-religionists in Ukraine. Schroeder pastored several Stundist churches in Canada before coming to the United States in 1936 to serve in Max, North Dakota. He had written a second volume dealing with his experiences in Canada and North Dakota, but this remained in manuscript at his death in 1981.

[19] John Barnick, born in 1892, was one of the oldest survivors of the original settlers. He was an honored guest at the 75th anniversary of the Max Russian Baptist Church on June 27, 1983. Barnick, who came with his Russian Orthodox family as a young boy to North Dakota in 1901, was converted to the Stundist faith only after the family had settled in Max, where they came after having spent some time in Chester, Pennsylvania, and Kief, North Dakota.

[20] This contrasts with the cultural status of congregations of Stundist origin in other parts of the United States. Since 1952 these churches have been affiliated with the Russian-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in America, an organization that is a direct lineal descendant of the 1919 Philadelphia Conference, the first union of such churches. The union maintains a publishing house for both Russian and Ukrainian religious materials, publishes a bi-monthly journal *Seyatel ' Istini (Sower of Truth)* in both Russian and Ukrainian, sponsors missionary work among Soviet emigres, and maintains senior citizen centers and summer camps. Affiliated churches are located in New Jersey, Michigan, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, California, and Canada.

basic level. As at the New England town meetings, the members got together and voted about everything—that gave the community its basic introduction to democracy. Most of those people had never heard of democracy in the classic sense of the word, but they knew this was the right thing to do—to let the majority decide. That was a tremendous heritage.

The Stundist congregations experienced a denationalization of origins. In fact, denationalization was in process even before the immigrants came to the United States. Less than a rejection of Ukrainian national origins, it represented a temporary substitution of Russian language to accommodate the demands of their evangelical religion and a concentration on assimilation into the American milieu.

But denationalization was a two-edged sword. In one respect, the community broke clearly with many Ukrainian traditions. The communities did not participate in all the activities undertaken by their Catholic and Orthodox brethren. They did not experience the richness of the Christmas and Easter services, the rituals of weddings and christenings, the music, or the dancing. Under Protestant tenets this was sinful. They also forsook many of the traditional arts and crafts, the making of *pysanky*, the fashioning of musical instruments, even the fine embroidery. This rich heritage they lost. These cultural corollaries were mutually exclusive to their articles of faith.

In another respect, however, denationalization was advantageous to those people of Ukrainian descent who left the community and plunged into American life. It provided for quicker assimilation and more upward mobility, especially for the second and third generations.

The emphasis in the faith on Biblical literacy also inculcated a high regard for education in these communities. In fact, these people saw education as precious as gold. From the one room school the children of these immigrants were directed to institutions of higher learning throughout this country—from Minot State College, which scores attended, to Baptist seminaries, to Northwestern Medical School, or the University of California at Berkeley. The seeds of learning were sown with these congregations.

One of the towns to which Stundists came during the early 20th Century was Kief, located in southern McHenry County. This 1911 photograph depicts the "residence section" and one building in the business community as it then existed. At this time the village was about five years old; its name reflected the Ukrainian origins of its founders and first settlers. —*State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection*

Ukrainians on the Prairies: Old World Cultural Values and the Demands of a New Land

by Theodore B. Pedeliski

The settlement of the Ukrainians in western North Dakota and the creation of Ukrainian settlements in Billings, Dunn, and Stark counties is a story of struggle and adversity in establishing themselves within the state. Yet, each ethnic group exhibited its own pattern of adaptation, assimilation, and success--a pattern often closely related to the character and the professed values of their group. The Ukrainians in their story of settling the prairies demonstrated those values which place them where they are today. These values include: a deep religious faith, a tenacity in meeting adversity, a strong sense of individualism, modesty in aspirations, and a strong emotional tie to the folkways of Ukrainian origin.

The experiences and adjustments of the Ukrainians in North Dakota must be related to the conditions in the old country which prompted immigration. The background to immigration from the Ukrainian settlers who came from the Austrian-Hungarian province of Galicia and also those who came for the Cherkassy and Korsun areas of the Russian Ukraine testifies to a growing condition of poverty and economic subservience. Historians, particularly Canadians, who have studied the conditions of life for Ukrainians in both Austria-Hungary and Russia for the period of immigration (1890-1914) testify to conditions of poverty, economic subservience, and political exploitation.[1] The Ukrainian immigrants who settled in North Dakota were among the poorest immigrants who settled these plains.

Our awareness of these conditions comes from the accounts of the first Ukrainian settlers who came to North Dakota. Their accounts tell of a shrinking land base for families. Most families who came here sold their holdings of three to six hectares (6-12 acres). On these small plots they had to raise enough food to feed their families, raise their livestock, and raise enough flax for their linen clothes. To augment their earnings they engaged in a system of sharecropping with their Polish overlords, or "pomischiky" or "pany" as they were called. George Klym described the system: for corn which required a great deal of hoeing, a one-quarter laborer's share; for wheat and barley which did not require as much labor, a one-eighth share; and for fields of wheat in which yields were high, a meager one-twelfth share.[2]

There were other fields from which the landlord took all yields and for these he hired the labor of teen-age boys and girls. For a day's work from sunrise to sunset on a task that demanded heavy labor, such as sheaving or cutting wheat with a sickle, the person would earn about twenty-five *heller* (25 cents) a day. Or they might be paid in grain, especially in long term indenture, earning about 2400 pounds of grain for four years' work.[3]

The poverty and low wages were one symptom of the real impetus to immigration--the treatment of Ukrainians by their overlords. Interviews reveal a deep and intense bitterness toward the "pany." The immigrants recall Polish overseers who would ride around to inspect fieldwork and chastise and discipline Ukrainian workers with buggy whips. More than one Ukrainian peasant lived to have an arm grow crooked because it was broken by a taskmaster. The peasants saw the lord ride around in a red-fringed surrey with four perfectly matched horses. They compared their own primitive dwellings with the large whitewashed manors of the "pany," houses furnished with chandeliers and Persian rugs and surrounded by formal gardens. Ukrainians had a proverb that Polish children treated their pet monkeys better than their Ukrainian child acquaintances, the Polish dame treated her imported peacocks ten times better than her Ukrainian help, and the Polish master treated his hunting dogs 100 times better than his Ukrainian laborers.[4] This was surely hyperbole, but it fostered a growing perception of discrimination and economic enslavement.

John Paul Himka sums it up brilliantly: "When the Ukrainian peasant looked up, he could see above him, riding on his back, the Polish noble, the Romanian Boyar, the Jewish inn-keeper lender, and a few of his own people as well; but when he looked down, all he could see was earth and precious little of that."[5]

The conditions in Galicia at the end of the 19th Century indicated a growing sense of alienation in terms of the loss of what the peasants held most dear--their lands. The first

[1] For a short assessment of the background to immigration, see Wasyl Halich, *Ukrainians in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), Chs. 1, 2; Paul Yazuk, *The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1953), Ch. 2. A detailed assessment appears in Ivan L. Rudnytsky, "The Ukrainians in Galicia under Austrian Rule," *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, ed. by Andrei Markovits and Frank L. Sysyn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 23-67; John Paul Himka, "The Background to Emigration: Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovina, 1848-1914," in *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*, ed. by Manoly R. Lupul (Toronto: McCleland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 11-31; Orest T. Martynowych, "Village Radicals and Peasant Immigrants in Canada, 1895-1915" (Unpublished MS thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978), Ch. 1.

[2] Interview with George Klym, Belfield, ND, July 1955.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Himka, p. 14.

settlers who came to America strongly voiced the view that lands properly belonging to them had been taken: "*Poliaky ukraly nashu zemliu* (The Poles stole our lands)." In fact, following the emancipation of 1848, the Austrian-Hungarian authorities had allowed the Polish nobles to expropriate forest and common lands as a compensation for the loss of their serfs. In addition, taxes were then levied on the peasants who had been emancipated. Finally, the Ukrainians found themselves in a vicious circle of borrowing and high interest rates usually ending in the loss of the ancestral plot. A poem by Ivan Franko sardonically voices the feelings of the peasant:

Khliborob (The Farmer)

Hey! Who in the world has a better lot
Than he who plows the sacred earth?
Than he who falls in debt,
  As deep as the bottomless sea,
Than he who struggles on
  till driven to auction his land
Than he who reaps for someone else.
Hey! Who in the world has a better lot.[6]

The most important attraction of the new world to these peasants was land--and free land at that, *zemlya za durno* (land for nothing). The promise was more land than even the "pany" owned. For Ukrainians, land exhibited the ultimate value (after God or faith). Land was provision and sustenance. It responded to one's honest labor and bore fruit. It was better than money, vastly more important than title and position. Land was the ultimate legacy to leave to one's children. And upon one's own land one could be a sovereign lord.

The promise of free land, *zemlya za durno*, carried with it an additional promise--that of freedom, not political freedom or the freedom to participate in public governance, but a more basic freedom which Ukrainians called *Svoboda povna* or full freedom. This was the freedom of individual fulfillment, and land assisted in the attainment of that freedom. To have one's own land gave one the freedom of one's days, the freedom to raise what one chose and plant what one intended. It gave one a permanent home. It was the freedom to build a legacy for one's children and the freedom to control one's destiny. This drive for individualism is a character trait that has its roots in the Ukrainian historical experience--an experience formed by living in an area of fertile soil, abundant space, and strongly developed concepts of both personal and real property as recognized in the old Ukrainian code of laws *(Ruska Pravda)*. Both historians Ivan Mirchuk and Nicholas L. Fr.

[6] The poem by Ivan Franko is reprinted in *Ibid.*

Ukrainian families, the pioneers of northern Billings County, gather in front of their church, St. Josaphat, at Gorham. The 1915 photograph captures the first church occupied by this congregation; note the bell in the churchyard and the somber clothing worn by the parish members.

—*Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Institute, Dickinson, ND*

At the center of Ukrainian life in North Dakota was the church. The parishes, whether Catholic or Orthodox, often devoted much effort to the symbolic decoration of the altars. This interior is the Ss. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Belfield as it looked in 1985.
—Photo by L. Martin Perry. State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection

Chirovsky stress these qualities of individualism as an important part of the Ukrainian *dusha* or soul (psyche).[7]

The move to America reflected a fulfillment of this search for freedom. In the old country, the Ukrainian tribes (before foreign hegemony) had obtained their property by way of free physical occupation and here the homestead laws provided a similar opportunity. County land records reveal that many Ukrainian settlers shopped around, relinquishing their first claims, taking up other relinquishments, moving into what ownership vacuums might exist till they obtained the parcels of land they found most suitable. In Billings County, the homestead records reveal that the Ukrainians represented a second wave who acquired the lands relinquished or abandoned by an earlier wave of homesteaders, the Anglo-Saxon and German "boomers."[8] The lands that they found in western North Dakota also included open range and open school sections which were utilized as common lands.

This land became a ticket to American citizenship. There was a tacit contract between arrivals and this nation. The government gave out free land--Ukrainian immigrants took out citizenship papers almost on arrival. This was in contrast to other Ukrainians who found their niche in the laboring force (as on railroad extra gangs) and whose census records reveal delays of many years before petitioning for citizenship.

While rejoicing in their fortune of obtaining land, the Ukrainians settling here could only register shock at the change of environment. These immigrants did not come from the open and eastern steppes of the Ukraine. They came from the Dniestr Valley, a garden area with a grand river, deep soil, and interlocking areas of fertile fields, deciduous forest, and orchards. Roads were lined with tree rows. It was an area of mild climate and adequate rainfall, mild enough to raise apples, plums, cherries, pears, and nuts.

The land they encountered in western North Dakota was forbidding at best. It was open, treeless, uninhabited. There were no fences and no roads, only trails. Wild cattle roamed the hills. The oral histories of pioneer Ukrainians record three things as universally creating an impression: the lack of trees, the lack of running streams, and the wind--the persistent dry, hot (or bitter cold), and dust-laden wind. There was also a forbidding isolation. The women of the Klym family on the homestead could on still days see the smoke from the steam locomotives on the Northern Pacific line fifteen miles away. They would hear the whistles and break out into tears with a sense that they were being abandoned on the open land. Late arrivals (after 1908) also found that the available land was marginal or even submarginal. As one proceeds from the east to west in Billings County, the acquifiers are deeper, the gumbo heavier, the alkalai flats more common, the cactus patches more prevalent. This was *solonetz* country.[9] After comparing their lot in the old country to their situation in North Dakota, some said the move was from "bad to worse," particularly when bad years, drought, grasshoppers, and hail denied any crops. The struggle to raise a homestead on the prairie with one's bare hands was a challenge of character appropriate for these Ukrainians.

What then accounts for their successful settlement and their tenacity? Rather than moving on or going back, these Ukrainian settlers sent for their families and brought over their aging parents. A number of reasons supply the answer.

One certain factor was their individualism. In their deter-

[7] Nicholas L. Fr. Chirovsky, *An Introduction to Ukrainian History. Volume I: Ancient and Kievan Galician Ukraine-Rus* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1981), pp. 22-24; Ivan Mirchuk, "Basic Traits of the Ukrainian People," *Ukraine and Its People: A Handbook* (Munich: Ukrainian Free University Press, 1949), pp. 35-42.

[8] See "Homestead Tract Book: Ledgers, 1875-1930" (Unpublished tract books maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, Billings, MT).

[9] The term *solonetz* has been incorporated into basic soils terminology to refer to the grass hummocks that struggle for survival on alkalai hard pan. See M.J. Edwards and J.K. Albeiter, *Soil Survey: Billings County* (Washington, D.C.: 1944).

mination to obtain land, they sought all sorts of ways to obtain the resources necessary to stake the homestead. They worked on sheep and cattle ranches; they hired out to Czech and German-Russian farmers; they worked on the railroad extra gangs; and in the off-seasons they went to Montana and Oregon to work in the lumber camps, or to St. Paul to work in the meatpacking plants. Despite these experiences, they never gravitated toward the cities or to blue collar occupations. They never lost sight of coming back to the homestead to fulfill their hopes on the land.

Another reason for the Ukrainians' persistence was their familiarity with primitive techniques of agriculture, which made them aptly suited to settle an untamed and open prairie. Even today in the villages of origin (which are now in the Soviet Union), the Ukrainian farmers use walking plows and broadcast small acreages by hand; they still plant and harvest potatoes by hand and thin row crops with hoes. Families still tend cattle along roadsides and in unfenced areas. Lacking motor transportation, people walk from one destination to another.[10] The Ukrainian settling in North Dakota was accustomed to reliance on his hands to till the soil. He crafted many of his farm implements and he made his own harness. He broke sod with a walking plow and broadcast his first crops by hand-dragging the surface with bullberry bushes. He built his house and outbuildings with the mud-wattle construction techniques of the old country. In fact, this old-country adobe construction was aptly suited for this severe climate. The necessity of applying these hand skills required no extraordinary transition for the Ukrainian settler.

The tenacity of the Ukrainian settler was also assisted by the courage of the women. They, too, came from the same impoverished circumstances. In addition, they bore the traditional burdens of the role of an eastern European peasant woman, a role which required acceptance of their husband's demands and a full share of the labors of home and field. The wife was expected to fulfill wide-ranging responsibilities: to beget and rear the children, to take care of the home, to fashion the clothes, to tend the garden, to process the food, and to take part in considerable field work. Women took part in the shocking of grain, the hauling and stacking of hay, even the mining of coal. They stoically accepted the desolation of the prairie, the primitive dirt-floor *derianka* or sod house, the lack of the simplest amenities. They also suffered isolation and abandonment on the homestead when their husbands were forced to seek distant employment: they experienced premature aging, accidents and injuries without medical care, frequent infant mortality, and even death.

In spite of this hard and grim existence these women persevered, assisted by a strong religious faith. And it was the women who provided a strong outward expression of that faith. Their prayer habits were particularly fervent. It was the women who demonstrated their sacrifice during Lent by subsisting on milk and *mamalyga* or corn meal mush. They were also demonstrably enthusiastic in preparing the bounty of the *Sviata Vechera* or Holy Supper of Twelve Dishes on Christmas Eve, or in preparing lavish *paska* or Easter baskets, or in spending hours or even weeks in preparing the elaborately decorated *pysanky* or Easter eggs. These were labors of love--religious acts of thanksgiving for the continued blessings of life and for deliverance and survival on these prairies.

And as foreboding as the land was in comparison to their previous environment, it allowed survival. Wood was not available except in the wooded draws of the badlands but the settlers found that their land had coal, often just under the surface. And it was only a short distance to the badlands where firewood, coal, and cedar posts were available for the taking. Even the prairies could be gleaned for life's necessities. The prairies and the badlands provided rabbits and deer, mushrooms, *shchavnyk* or wild sorrell, and berries of various types. And except for times of absolute drought, the 160-acre quarter fulfilled the promise of self-sufficiency. It provided milch cows, swine, poultry, potatoes, and garden produce to feed even the larger families. For the hearty Ukrainian diet of bread and sour cream, *pyrohy* (boiled dumplings), *borscht, kapusta* (cabbage or sauerkraut), eggs, and chicken meat, the homestead provided. Almost all the old-timers interviewed for the North Dakota Ukrainian Oral History Project noted that times were tough, "but we were never hungry." Even in North Dakota, the land gave its blessings.

Finally there is the most important factor explaining the tenacity of the Ukrainian pioneers in putting down roots. There was their religious faith which involved a linkage of land and life and God—almost in a mystic triad. The land was the source of God's fruits; it was the well of God-given life. And one's labor on the land entailed stewardship and obligations to God.

The Ukrainians who belong to the Uniate (Greek Catholic) or Ukrainian Orthodox churches reflected their eastern Christian traditions which expressed an immersion in the beauties of ritual and a mystical approach to worship not common to the western churches of Christendom.[11] This was true of these simple farmers as well as the clergy and the cloistered religious:

> Nothing has penetrated nor filled the spiritual life of the Ukrainian peasant-immigrant so thoroughly as did the church and the church rite. Back in his village the church and the rite had become part of him. They became his ethical roadsigns, the guidelines of a pious life here on earth which as he was taught, led to salvation and rewards after death . . . There [in the church] his life found spiritual food. There he found and expressed his own aesthetic feelings amidst all the light, paintings and glistening clothes of God's servants with their serious unusual movement of hands and bodies and their incense, bells, and singing. . . . In such a state he came to America. And as soon as he found what he came there for—work and money—the first thing he started to look for and began to think about was the church in the way he knew it in his native village.[12]

[10] These observations were made by the author during a trip to the western Ukraine in June 1984.

[11] The eastern Christian approach to worship is described in Casmir Kucharek, *The Sacramental Mysteries: A Byzantine Approach* (Allendale, NJ: Alleluia Press, 1976), esp. Ch. 19-23.

> the church in the way he knew it in his native village.[12]

Religious expression was integrated into every aspect of daily life. The common greeting between Ukrainians was *Slava Isusu Khrystu* (Glory be to Jesus Christ) and the response was *Slava na viky* (Glory forever). It was a sign of peace as well as a greeting. Similar greetings heralding Christ's birth or resurrection were regarded by Ukrainians as "our happy words." The use of these greetings was taken very seriously. When young people substituted more secularly based American greetings, they were chastised by their parents for demonstrating a lack of respect, as well as for falling away from their Ukrainian customs.

Religious rites were a prominent part of Ukrainian daily life. Churchgoing and sacraments were important, but in keeping with eastern Christian theology sacramental practices more closely in touch with daily living were widely followed.[13] These included fasts, memorial services, and innumerable blessings: blessings of bride and groom, Easter foods, wheat, wine, flowers, waters, and homes. From the mystical to the prosaic, this host of rites and practices were to the believer vehicles of Divine presence and action.

Ukrainian religious rites among both the Uniate and Orthodox in many forms contained symbols referring to the fruits of the land, especially to wheat and bread. The basic sanctity of bread was reflected not only in its eucharistic uses but also in the distribution of the *prosfora*, a blessed bread given out as a sacramental during holy days. The *kolach*, the basic braided bread, was used in countless ceremonies from weddings to the services of the dead. It was even placed upon graves as a memorial. It was ritually offered to honored guests. It was used as a sign of intention in courtship. In the *Sviata Vechera* (holy supper of Christmas eve), the *didukh* or sheaf of wheat was placed prominently on the table. Boiled wheat kernels were the first and most essential dish. At New Years, blessings were invoked by casting wheat into the four directions of the compass in the house. At the blessing of the Easter foods, every household, even those headed by bachelors or non-churchgoers, brought a *paska* or Easter bread to bless. A Belfield couple spoke not of raising wheat, but of raising "bread;" it was time to "plant the bread," or to "harvest the bread." When a freshly baked loaf of bread was taken from the oven, it was reverently kissed. If a crust fell to the floor, the housewife would pick it up and reverently kiss it. Children were told that failure to consume all the bread before them was a sin. Woe to the farmer who allowed his wheat to spoil. All these symbols cast a particular honor on tilling the soil and raising the staff of life.[14]

As farmers they integrated their faith into their work. Before a farmer would start slowing a field he would cross himself. Even during planting, farmers would unhitch their horses and take time out to go to *moleben* (May services). There were special liturgies that centered on prayer for rain. Farmers were scrupulous in observing Sundays and holidays. Even threshing crews would cease work on the feast of *Uspennia Prechystoi Divy* (Dormition of Our Lady). Even a minor feast like that of St. Elias (August 3rd) involved an expectation of resting from one's labors.

An incident, somewhat apocryphal in nature, related to the author demonstrates this point. The family of a neighbor made preparation to proceed with the harvest while the mother beseeched them to observe St. Elias' day. The men went to cut and shock a field of ripening oats. After they had shocked about ten acres, a small cloud appeared on the horizon and drifted over the field. It darkened, and as it passed over the field a lightening bolt struck down, starting a fire that burned precisely the area of the field which had been worked.

The story illustrates another aspect of the belief system--a belief in divine intervention. The Lord intervened and he intervened in the rhythms of the seasons and through the forces of nature. This tied in with the Ukrainian settler's basic fatalism. Bad years and disaster through hail, drought, or grasshoppers were stoically accepted like penances. There were no landlords, no oppressive government, and no domineering ethnic elite to blame here. Their lives were now in God's hands. All this is not to indicate that these Ukrainian farmers were religious fanatics--but it is to demonstrate that they saw a religious dimension in their calling of farming and husbandry. Farming was more than livelihood, business, and accumulation of land and possessions. It was blessed labor which was divinely protected and guided.

The church was also important as a center of community life. Their first collective energies were directed to building churches and obtaining priests of their rite. To a Ukrainian, a church was more than a religious gathering place:

> God's presence is perceived in the act of going into a church which is seen as a depiction of heaven on earth, in the mysterious quality of the Divine as seen in icons.[15]

The importance was heightened in terms of the personal dedication and contributions of church members. There is an old Ukrainian proverb, *Yak vira, taka ofira* (Like one's faith, so is one's giving). Constantine Kordonowy donated one-fourth of his homestead to provide a site for St. Demetrius Church. The farmers of Gorham, poorer than most, constructed a most impressive church on the prairies; when it burned down in 1917, they immediately replaced

[12] Iuliian Bachn'ski, *Ukrins'ka immigratsia v ziednenykh Derzhavkh Ameryky* (Lvov, Austria: 1914); this document was translated and reprinted in Vasyl Markus, "A Century of Ukrainian Religious Experience in the United States," in *The Ukrainian Experience in the United States*, ed. by Paul Magocsi (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1979), p. 107. For a similar assessment of the religious orientation of the eastern European immigrant, see Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), p. 121.

[13] While western or Roman Catholics see a sharp categorical distinction between the seven valid sacraments and other pious practices, the eastern rite Catholic is more likely to view sacraments and sacramentals on a continuum in which all rites are important vehicles of "gracious spirit." See Kucharek, pp. 333-334, 338-341.

[14] The sacred character of grain, especially wheat, dates from pre-Christian times for the Ukrainian. The Ukrainian word of grain, *zhyto*, means "source of life" and is very similar to the word, *zhitia*, which means "life."

[15] Kucharek, p. 338.

it, working in early winter to pour the foundations and heating the water for the concrete in steam engines.[16] They built St. Josaphats, a jewel on the prairies complete with stained glass windows, a hand-crafted *iconostas* (altar screen), a chandelier, and carpeting. The parishioners who split off to form Ss. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church built a magnificent domed edifice for a congregation of some fifty families. This at a time when most settlers were still living in their adobe and wattle-wall construction homes.

While religious faith was very little in question among these Ukrainian settlers, "churches" were the occasion for persistent conflict in those early decades. These ecclesiastical conflicts substituted for politics among these rural people. There were conflicts between parishes, conflicts over services of pastors, and conflicts over finances; there was even a major schism in the Greek Catholic jurisdiction, resulting in formation of Ukrainian Orthodox parishes at both Ukraina and Wilton, North Dakota. An analysis of these conflicts and divisions reveals that the issue of authority was most often the underlying cause, although personalities were also involved. Interestingly, these divisions were also rooted in the discovery of "freedoms" unknown in the Old World ecclesiastical system. These churches built with the hands of the settlers were now the property of the congregation. Trusteeism as an American institution took root among the Ukrainian parishes. This meant conflict with pastors, and even conflicts with bishops (over property questions). Actually, the conflicts that took place in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Orthodox congregations in North Dakota mirrored conflicts that were taking place at that time in the entire American Ukrainian community.[17]

The priests of these Ukrainian churches played an important role in the community. They were primary leaders, irrespective of their problems with their flocks. Early priests like the Rev. John Senchuk (Orthodox) and the Deacon Soltas provided lessons in the native language. They provided musical instruction and established choirs. The churches established congregational libraries with holdings in the native language. Books were obtained through the *Prosvita* (Enlightenment Society).[18] Priests encouraged higher education and the sending of the community's promising young people to academies in the east. In the 1930's the Rev. Anthony Borsa of Ukraina enlisted the talents of teachers in his parish to inform parishioners a little more about the outside world, its geography, science, and astronomy. Few attended and the program died, but this again demonstrated the role of the church as an informative

[16] Interview with George Struchynski (Ukrainian Oral History Project Collection, Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson, ND).

[17] The basic conflicts that marked the Ukrainian churches and their congregations in America, 1895-1920, are discussed in Markus (see note #12 above). Also see: Walter Paska, *Sources of Particular Law for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States: Canon Law Studies 485* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1975), for a thorough history of the beginning of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in America.

[18] The *Prosvita* or Enlightenment was a literary and cultural society established in the western Ukraine in 1868. Its objective was to raise standards of literacy and national consciousness; to do so, it published books for libraries established in the Ukraine and America.

The ceremonies and rituals of the church remained essential to Ukrainian communities into the second and third generations. The Greeting and Procession at the St. John's Ukrainian Catholic Church at Belfield, photographed in the early 1960's, combined both traditional vestments and order with contemporary dress and styles.

—*Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson, ND*

institution. In the Wilton community, the Rev. A.M. Haluchynsky attempted to set up a citizens' club and get his Orthodox flock involved in public issues.[19]

It is natural that the center of community life was the church. It was the gathering of the whole of the community on Sundays, feastdays, weddings, and funerals. It was the focus for socialization. Not only did the men gather after church to discuss crops and community issues, there was even a custom in which they absented themselves from the service from the end of the sermon to the point in the liturgy known as the "Great Entrance" to go outside and socialize.

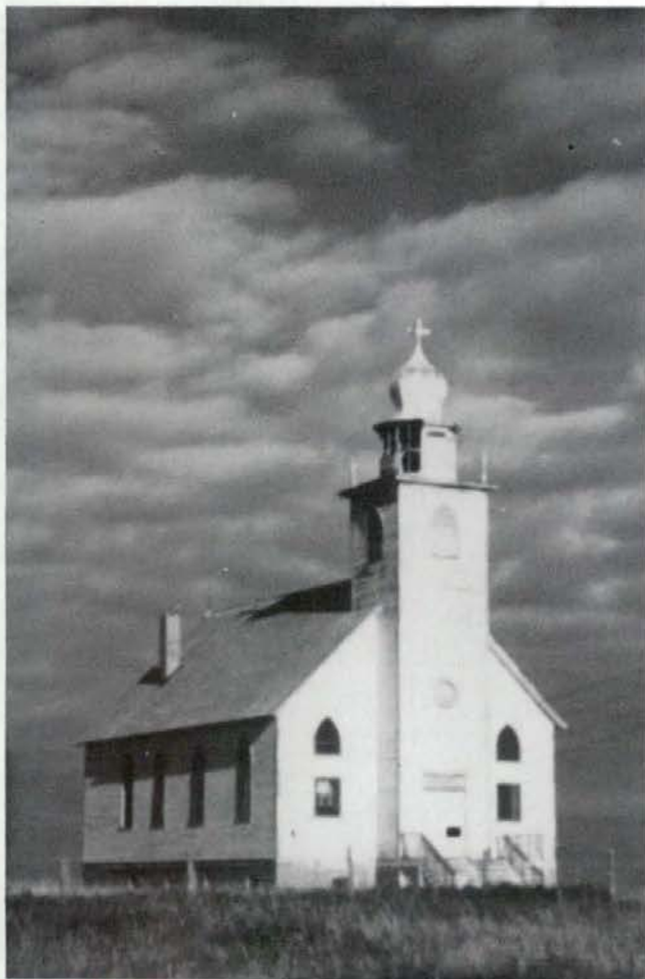
It was in the rural hamlet where the church served as a central institution that the ethnic community preserved its identity. It was not in Dickinson or Belfield or Medora, where commercial, political, and legal activities flourished, that the Ukrainians centered their community life and lived out their social roles, but in Ukraina and Gorham and Fairfield, little hamlets off the main roads. In addition to the churches and their cemeteries which provided important community ties even to those who moved away, these hamlets might include a tavern or pool hall (again important in community socialization) and possibly a general store which provided emergency provisions (such as the Ruthenian Co-operative Store of Gorham, North Dakota). The village setting appears to have been important in preserving traditions.[20] The community was protected from competition by the dominant Anglo-American or German business and political groups, and it had the isolation to indulge in its folk ways and customs without outside scrutiny and outsider curiosity.

The survival of the distinct Ukrainian community was promoted by Ukrainian folk ways. These customs were a vehicle for the celebration of life and death in a community setting. Weddings, christenings, anniversaries, funerals, memorial services, and *kolaidy* (caroling) nights all presented an opportunity for the community to reinforce its ethnic solidarity and identity. Wedding celebrations might last as long as three days. No matter how bad the times, how inconvenient the time of year, or how poor the families, these community celebrations took place. Often the most lavish displays of hospitality were given by the poorer families. At one wedding, a "marginal" farmer celebrated the marriage of his last daughter with a two-day celebration that included two groups of musicians and provision to the guests of a slaughtered hog and steer, a washtub of home made sausages, forty chickens, ninety-six gallons of beer, and cases of vodka and *horilka* (whiskey). While these celebrations were later modified, abbreviated, and scaled down in size, they always kept the Ukrainian core--the Ukrainian music played on Ukrainian instruments, the folk liturgy of parental blessings, and the Ukrainian humor. All were powerful symbols of life in the old Ukraine. The music and rituals at these weddings and christenings served as strong reinforcements of traditional Old World culture. In fact, these performances made no references to the immigration experience nor to life in America (e.g., homesteading). As Anisa Sawykyj indicates, "They were faithful replicas of songs and stories that might have been heard in a Western Ukrainian village at family celebrations and community get to-gethers."[21]

Each community has its cultural keepers, those persons responsible for maintaining the traditions. In the Ukrainian communities, they included the priests and lay deacons who kept alive the sacred musical traditions. It also included the musicians and the *starosta* or elders who kept alive the secular musical traditions. They were very important to the survival of the ethnic community. In fact, when many of the Ukrainian fiddlers and their accompanying *tsymbalisty* (accompanists on dulcimer) died off in the 1950's and 1960's, some said that the Ukrainian community was gone. These western North Dakota Ukrainian communities made minimal efforts to preserve literacy in the native language and to transfer a high level of literacy from generation to

A darkening sky heralds an impending storm on the prairies surrounding the St. Josephat's Catholic Church near Gorham. The church, constructed in 1917, symbolizes the commitment of its people to their faith. The photo was taken in 1958.

—Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson, ND



[19] Letter, A.M. Halychynsky to Governor William Langer, October 14, 1933 (William Langer Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks).

[20] The differences between social and community life in villages and towns (emergent cities) are discussed in Carl F. Kraenzel, *The Great Plains in Transition* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), Ch. 15.

[21] Anisa Sawykyj, musicologist's notes, *Ukrainian-American Fiddle and Dance Music: The First Recordings, 1926-1936* (El Cerrito, CA: Folk-Lyric Records, 1979).

generation.[22] So the demise of the musical carriers left a hole in the fabric of the community.

There were other carriers of the culture. Quite a number of the first generation did not fit in. They continued to farm with horses after machinery had been introduced. They still went to town by horse and wagon or buggy, even into the 1940's. Their homes reflected the modest simplicity of old-world dwellings. They were thirty years out-of-date, at best. But they provided a vital bridge between the traditional community and the new American-Ukrainian community. They persisted in the old-world custom of visiting or *ity v hosti.* They would make the rounds of the community, walking or coming on horses to drop in on neighbors unannounced, stay all day, reminisce, and tell *baiky* (tales of the old country). They may have appeared eccentric at the time, but they kept alive the traditions and memories of the old country.

Ethnic communities commonly rally around ethnic organizations and associations which maintain lodges and provide such selective incentives as insurance, charitable aid, and press offerings. Ukrainian-Americans in the urban areas of the United States engaged in a great deal of organizational activity, but no lodges were established in the western North Dakota communities. There were attempts to maintain an active chapter of the Ukrainian Congress Committee[23] in the state, but few joined. A number of reasons possibly explain this non-involvement. One may have been simple isolation from the national Ukrainian community. Another maybe that many of these associations had a secular, often anti-clerical bias and were not sympathetically supported by the local clergy. A historical-cultural factor may also have been operative.

In the old country, especially in the western Ukraine, Ukrainians tended to be individualistic, relying upon God, themselves, and nature. The basic self-sufficient unit was the self-sufficient household; if Ukrainians formed a local community, it was a community that accepted limited authority and represented a loose and voluntary association of individuals—what they termed the *hromada* or brotherhood. First clans and then emergent villages tended to limit themselves to some fifty or sixty households.[24] The Ukrainians here also tended to function as *hromada*, particularly in co-operative farming endeavors: threshing crews, round-up and butchering gatherings, coal-mining teams, road crews. The Ruthenian Co-operative Store at Gorham represents that type of practical co-operation. The small parishes of less than a hundred families also provided a comfortable boundary of social relationships, but this localistic organization also inhibited these farmer-ranchers from joining larger national organizations.

Even in the greater western North Dakota Ukrainian community, there was a separation into sub-communities. The parishes of Ukraina, Gorham, and later Belfield maintained their separate and often aloof existence although they were all located within fifteen miles of one another. There was a spirit of independence in these communities that could be traced to cultural norms in the old country.

There was also limited social contact between the Ukrainians in eastern Billings County and those in Dunn and McKenzie counties (the Grassy Butte/Fayette community). The Grassy Butte/Fayette community was settled by Ukrainians from the eastern Ukraine--from the Cherkassy and Korsun area south of Kiev. Originally, this group was affiliated with the Russian Orthodox church in the old country, and they did establish a church in North Dakota which held sporadic and rare services when Orthodox clergy could be persuaded to make a visitation. This group had a jaded, if not anti-clerical, attitude based on their experiences with the Russian Orthodox clergy; it was natural that they called upon clergy only for funerals or the main feasts of the church. This was also a community in which members expressed a fiercely independent spirit. Fights, brawls, and neighborhood feuds were a fixture of community life. But these settlers came from an area of Cossack traditions, from villages with the reputation of having the strongest fighters in the Ukraine. They were transplanted into an area that was still experiencing some of the violent episodes connected with the western frontier ranch culture. Here we had the influence of a particular (Cossack?) brand of individualism that asserted, "I won't be pushed around; I won't be taken advantage of; I won't be insulted; I won't give in."

The Grassy Butte/Fayette community also experienced an immigration of another wave of Ukrainian-Americans. From 1910-1920 there was a considerable infusion of Ukrainian settlers who were evangelical Christians (Baptist or Adventist) who had settled originally in the Kief and Max areas of North Dakota or who found that land was not available in the proximity of their evangelical communities.[25] They established both a Baptist and a Seventh Day Adventist congregation in the area. These congregations experienced a "denationalization" of their Ukrainian culture as they affiliated with American denominations and were staffed with English pastors.[26] These evangelical Christian communities had also broken from the ritual-oriented and sacramentalized religion of their forefathers. While expressing a love of God and a love of land that was as deeply felt as those of their fellow Ukrainians in the Greek Catholic and Orthodox folds, their religious expression was more in keeping with American Protestant traditions. It should be noted, however, that in the early years (pre-1920) they had an order and style of worship that was influenced by their eastern Christian background. As Robert Dupuy notes, they showed "an intemperate love of public worship." A service would begin

[22] This contrasts with the central North Dakota community of Ukrainian Seventh Day Adventists (inheritors of an original Ukrainian "Stundist" movement) who established a "Russian Department" with intensive Russian language offerings at the Sheyenne River Academy in order to preserve the "Biblical" language of their forebearers.

[23] Records of the Ukrainian Congress Committee, North Dakota Branch (Ukrainian Cultural Institute, Dickinson, ND).

[24] Chirovsky, pp. 72-74.

[25] See Andrew Dubovy, *Pilgrims on the Prairies: Ukrainian Pioneers in North Dakota* (Dickinson, ND: Ukrainian Cultural Institute, 1983). Also see, Melissa Bokovoy, "The Move to America: An Analysis of Detroit Croatians and the North Dakota Ukrainians" (Unpublished Honor's thesis, Pomona College, Claremont, CA, 1982).

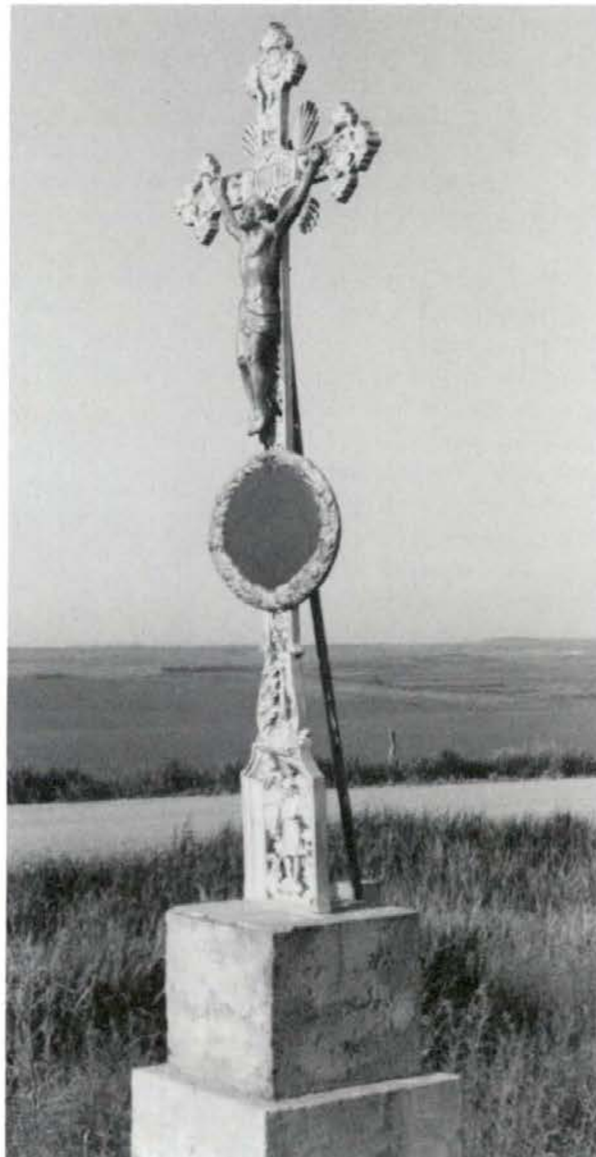
[26] The phenomenon of "denationalization" which involves a neglect of rejection of ethnic origins and cultural attributes is discussed by Alvin Kapusta in this issue of *North Dakota History*.

with the Ordinances of Humility (footwashing), then there would be a Lord's supper, and finally a prayer meeting and a hymn song (with hymns in Russian and Ukrainian preserving the eastern church musical modes) that might last as long as eight hours.[27] Such was the commitment of the early Ukrainian Seventh Day Adventists.

The basis of Ukrainian community life was a commitment to God, family, and the land. The interdependence of these elements in provided in the following illustration. Maxim Logosz in 1910 arranged for shipment to North Dakota from the old country of a large cast-iron cross of Byzantine design. He erected the cross as a shrine among his fields. There in early summer the family would gather together on Sundays and feastdays to pray and hold a picnic, often with the first fruits of the land. The grandparents who were in their 90's and who had spent most of their life in the Ukraine would be present. In that place, in that situation among the blooming fields of grain, the family's action expressed what life was all about on this prairie land.

At present the original homestead has been abandoned for some three decades. The area has become largely depopulated and the cross stands alone and almost unnoticed. Yet, it has also taken on a new meaning. It stands as a symbol of the original struggle of those Ukrainian settlers who came to southwestern North Dakota. It stands for the struggle of that first generation, a struggle of perseverance, a struggle to maintain faith, and a struggle to obtain that *svoboda povna* or full freedom that they sought. It was not only a personal struggle, but a struggle for community which in itself was the struggle for the survival of the best qualities of being Ukrainian in this new land. In this striving for community, these rural people with their hallowed ties to the land and soil made a commitment to remember--to remember always their parents and grandparents, their roots, their birthplace as a people, their culture, and their values.

[27] Robert Dupuy, "The Russian Seventh Day Adventist Church in North Dakota" (Unpublished manuscript, no date); while Ukrainian in origins and speech, members of this group self-identified as "Russians."



—Photo by Theodore B. Pedeliski

The Role of the Church in North Dakota's Ukrainian Communities: A Personal Memoir

by Reverend Michael Bobersky

I thank the Divine Providence who permitted me to celebrate fifty years in the holy priesthood in 1985. I don't think my story of success or failure in the performance of my duty as pastor could be realized without the motivating force or principle that steered or set my course through life.

I acknowledge that I was never much more than simply a small country parish priest, not a man of great learning, nor a person of great piety. I'm sure that many of my people whom I served, whether here or elsewhere, possessed greater piety than I, and I learned from them the practical lessons of relating to God in daily living. Perhaps some eminent learned men would be able to solve what still remains a mystery to me: the difference between the speculative and the practical knowledge of knowing God.

Permit me to go back to my high school years. I loved to read about the whys and the wherefores of all things. Philosophy, religion, evolution, medicine, sorcery, hypnotism, Freudianism all fascinated me. The philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were interesting to my inquisitive mind. Practically, I was a Catholic; speculatively, I was an agnostic. I argued, not realizing then the limits of my obtuse mind, with much older and learned men and sometimes college students, the problems of the existence of God, the hypocrisy of religion, the mystery of moral evil and the sinfulness of man. In retrospect, I had a very inquisitive, proud, stubborn mind, and I wanted to know the answers to these and many other problems of life. My parents, of blessed memory, suggested the idea to me of studying for the priesthood. I deliberated upon their suggestion, thinking that if I wanted to know about medicine, where would I go to find out all about it...naturally, to a medical school. If I wanted to learn mechanics, I would attend a trade school. If I wanted to have my questions answered about God, I would attend a theological school. Fr. Michael Lukasky, once pastor of St. Demetrius parish in North Dakota in the years 1917-1918, was then our pastor in Berwick, PA. He was a Roman student. He arranged the paperwork for the Bishop and I was sent to Rome. I had only one and one-half years of Latin in high school and was in no way qualified to be a student in Rome, but we had no other seminary, except in Galicia, Ukraine. All our subjects in philosophy and theology were in Latin. Our lectures were strictly in Latin with the exception of astronomy, which was in Italian. It took me two years alone of studying Latin and Italian grammar and words before I understood what the professors at the "Angelicum," a Dominican University, were talking about. In the meantime our spiritual daily exercises and meditations slowly but surely opened the eyes of my mind to the beauties of God's creation and plan for the salvation of mankind. It took some years for my total conversion. The study of Ukrainian, Latin, Italian, plus the school subjects, diverted my agnostic, unbelieving mind in such a way that I was unaware, at first, of the budding of a new life within my soul—God's love. Imperceptibly, Christ's love had won me over to Himself.

The reading of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, the lives of the early Fathers of the Church, especially St. Augustine, and the simplicity of St. Thomas' "Summa Theologica" strengthened my faith in the church built upon the rock of St. Peter. And the foundation of the rock was Christ's love for mankind. I vowed that the guiding light of my ministry in the church will be *LOVE.* If my Savior died on the cross loving His enemies, am I to do less? If God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, am I to give less? The climax of all that I have learned in the Seminary was to do everything in my ministry for the love of the Savior, and not only to do, but to teach others to do everything for Christ. And the bottom line to action was and is *LOVE.* I would supersede hatred of my opponent with the expression of love.

I encountered fierce opposition a few years after I arrived in North Dakota to care for four parishes and one mission in Montana. The congregation as a whole were a likable, hospitable, good people. They loved their church, they loved their pastor, and they kept the traditions of their forefathers.

It would be most difficult to trace the source of belligerency attributed to a few non-conformists. Man is an

aggregate being. Man was not created to live alone, but in society, in the society of his family, and with his family within a group of families. As man exerted his dominance in his own family and thereby became its leader, so, too, in the society of families there was need of a leader. When our people emigrated to this country their first objective was to build a church and get a priest who would be their leader, would offer prayers in their behalf, preach the word of God, baptize the children, perform marriages, hear confessions, console the sick, annoint the dying, and bury the dead. In the administration of the parish finances and affairs, a committee was elected by the people, and only with the pastor's consent various projects would be put into effect, whether to plan to build a school, hold a mission, or even have a parish picnic. This was the ideal type of a parish the people desired. As in all societies on earth, there are those who are dissatisfied with any arrangements. Some of our early immigrants lived and experienced the transitional period from the feudal system that existed in our old country, long after it was abolished in the more progressive countries in western Europe, to a more liberal type of government. Immigrating to America, the land of the free, was like letting the bird out of the cage. Could it be that a little of the spirit of the French Revolution bestirred within their souls? If the radical element could, by intrigue or otherwise, influence the congregation that their way was better, then they would become the ruling element in the congregation. The priest would then play a secondary role, subject to the whims of the ruling class. In America, this was possible because one has freedom to do as one wishes within the bounds of law. In Europe, the church and the priest were protected by the government and any uprising would soon be quelled.

Another reason for the existence of the radical element in a parish could be the lack of understanding of the role of a priest in the community. Yes, the ministers of Christ are servants of the people. Could some understand this to mean that the priest must do what they say, who he may baptize, who he may not baptize, marry, or bury? Since, they reasoned, he is paid a salary, he is obligated to do their bidding.

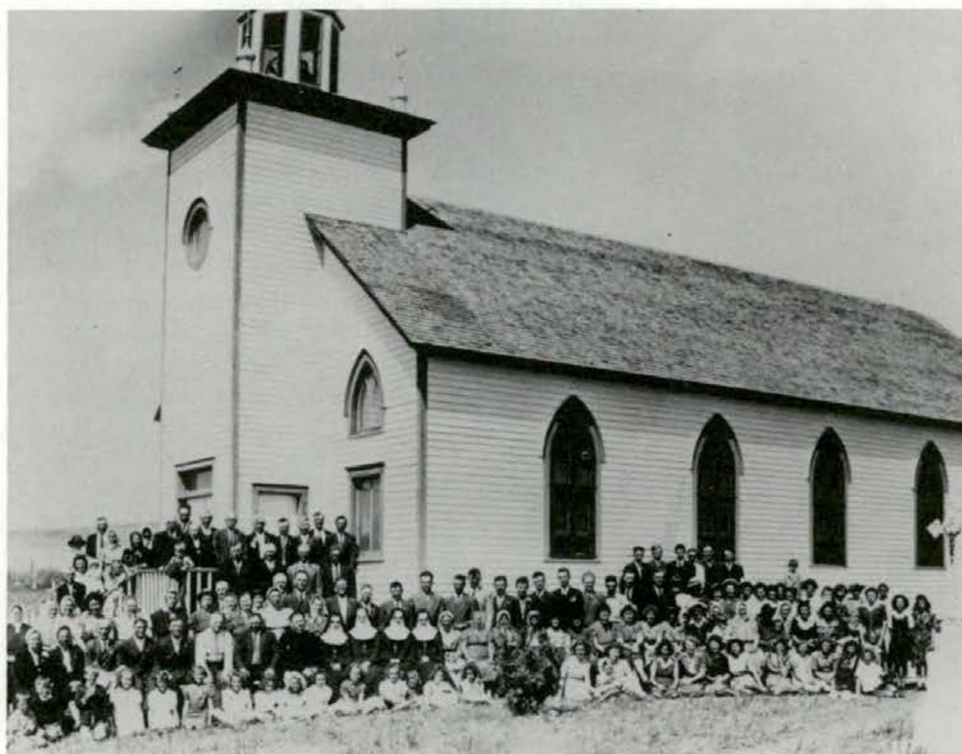
Still another reason: the misconduct of a cleric could have a bad influence on people of little faith. Those who have the grace of faith understand the weaknesses of human nature. However, if the scandal is prominent, they seek the proper channels to remove it. Others, however, take this occasion to satisfy the proclivity of their unbridled nature and seek dominance through vengeance.

We must also take into consideration that at the time of establishment of our churches in North Dakota, as well as in the East, we had no bishop until the year 1913. Bishop Ortynsky lasted until 1916, dying prematurely. There then was no Bishop until 1924. A diocese without a Bishop is like a flock of sheep without the shepherd. However the priests that came to North Dakota before there was a Bishop were of a missionary caliber. They stayed a year or two and continued on to other missions. Our people, in general, always respected their priests and in spite of the priest's human weaknesses the people attended all the services. And we had

Early in his North Dakota ministry, Reverend Michael Bobersky gathered the youth of his parish with their teachers for a Feast Day photograph. The priest's role as spiritual leader, teacher, and perpetuator of tradition put him at the center of the North Dakota Ukrainian community that he served.

—Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Institute, Dickinson, ND

The church that Reverend Bobersky served has passed through several incarnations. The original St. Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church was constructed at Ukraina in 1906 and burned in 1928.



The second St. Demetrius building was moved from Ukraina in 1949. It had been constructed in 1930; the photograph shows the church in 1944.

The third, and present, location of the St. Demetrius parish was obtained in 1949 at a site fourteen miles north of Belfield along U.S. 85. Also shown in this photograph, taken shortly after the relocation was completed, is the rectory.
—Photographs courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Institute, Dickinson, ND

plenty of services in a year. Besides Sundays, there were eighteen to twenty holy days of obligation and all the other services: matins, vespers, molebens, supplications, marriages, and funerals. The parishes of St. Demetrius and St. Josaphat were humming with activity. But how did these parishes originate?

In the early 1900's there was quite a large settlement on both sides of what is now U.S. 85 in Billings County. There was a plan to build a church which would be centrally located, somewhere near the place where stands the present church of St. Demetrius. What the main reason for abandoning the plan was, I don't know. Those on the east side of the road decided to build the church near the center of the heavily populated community that became known as Ukraina. It was quite a distance for those living in the Gorham area to attend services at Ukraina; so the people of Gorham in the early 1910's built their own church not far from the general store and named the church after the great saint and martyr for the Ukrainian church unity, St. Josaphat. One priest lived in Gorham and from there served St. Demetrius parish. Another, later on, lived somewhere between Gorham and Ukraina and from there served both parishes. Eventually a rectory was built at Ukraina. There was also a mission at Wilton whenever Wilton was without a pastor; those services were usually held monthly. The last pastor who lived in Wilton did so in the early 1920's. There was also a mission at Sand Creek, near Vida, Montana. But the services there were held usually during the major holy days, two to three times a year.

The saddest part of the history of our community was the schism at Ukraina. The schism occured not only at Ukraina in the 1917-1918 period, but also at Wilton, in the vast number of parishes in Canada, and in many of the parishes back East. An article in the *Redeemer's Voice*, a publication of the Redemptorist Fathers of Canada, alluded to this schism as the work of the Russian government. Either agents of the government or avid anti-Catholic Ukrainians fomented this deplorable revolution among our people. Families were divided, friends became enemies, churches were robbed of their sacred vessels and books and burned to the ground, the priests stoned and beaten. In many communities, the rift continues to this day. Recent developments raise a possibility for Ukrainian ecumenism and the restoration of the Church unity between the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. May God grant that all may be one.

At Ukraina, many who left the Mother Church during the schism eventually found their way back. It wasn't until the late 1920's, in 1928, that the original structure of St. Demetrius church was destroyed by fire of unknown origin. Previously, the church at Gorham was also destroyed by fire. The present structure of St. Demetrius was built in 1930 during the pastorate of Fr. Martyniuk. In about three years he was transferred and Fr. Tytar took his place. Shortly after, about a year, he also left and the parishes were left without a shepherd. However, Roman Catholic priests Fr. Aberle and Fr. Roessler, both of whom spoke Ukrainian, served the parishes. Occasionally, a priest from Minneapolis would come to help. This continued until Fr. Borsa, newly arrived from Europe, was assigned in 1936. He was a very energetic and dedicated man of the cloth who accomplished in little more than four years more than any previous pastor to unite the people of his parishes. He was a talented musician, a good catechist, sociable, and quite active in any undertaking. But he, too, became a target of the discontented clique.

During the pastorate of Fr. Kocaba, the parish was on the verge of a grievous, unpleasant turmoil. He received a directive from the chancery to consolidate all the church money from the various treasurers under one title of St. Demetrius Church. A committee was in charge of all finances. During and previous to Fr. Kocaba's time there were five distinct individual treasurers. Each one collected money from the people and placed it in the bank under his or her own name; if the priest needed candles for the church he went to the person who collected money for the candles and asked for a certain amount to buy them. There was absolutely no way he could have consolidated these monies in a friendly, negotiable fashion. But he, in his own way accomplished the feat, all except one. The church dues money remained with one individual. Fr. Kocaba's unorthodox method caused a furor. It was at that time that I arrived at Ukraina. In fact, there wasn't Ukraina anymore; as I was on the road to Ukraina, leaving U.S. 85 and going east, I met the movers pulling the general store with the post office to Belfield.

After Fr. Kocaba left, a number of parishioners came to visit me, and I noticed in some of them, especially as I watched their eyes, an indescribable hatred for the previous pastor. What I heard from others, what I witnessed during the frequent meetings that were held in the church hall led me to vow that I would speak in my sermons on the two commandments of LOVE until I would exhaust the subject and myself. The whole crux of the matter was that this certain belligerent group wanted the control of all the books and finances. They asked me to return all the books. I agreed to do so only if the Bishop permitted. I told them to write and ask the Bishop. As far as I know they received no reply and I did not receive any instruction to do otherwise. I had, in the meantime, established the parish of St. John the Baptist in Belfield, and most of these friendly enemies belonged to St. John's. Others in this group were members of the Gorham church. In St. Demetrius parish I had no opposition; in fact, they all defended my position.

However, this group in Belfield continued to harass me and some of my committee members. They devised a plan to have me removed by ordering a meeting to prove to the Bishop that the whole congregation of St. John's wanted a different pastor. I was notified to attend the meeting at the Memorial Hall in Belfield. I asked Steve Baranko to attend this meeting with me. The majority of the votes, by show of hands, were for my removal. Even the man who served by the altar and had expressed previously how much he ap-

Reverend Bobersky (center) and Reverend Thomas Glynn celebrate mass at the St. Demetrius church in 1976.

—Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson, ND

preciated my serving the parish voted against me. At a later date, I asked him why; he replied that some members of that belligerent group came to his home and threatened to burn his home if he voted for me. But during the meeting one person asked to speak. This was granted. He got up, and pointing his finger at me began his long tirade. I can't remember all he said, but I do remember one accusation which sounded so ridiculous that I wondered at the mentality of that man: He said, "You came here to fill your pockets." I let him talk until he finished. Then I got up and said: "Sir, [I spoke in Ukrainian] I don't know you and I don't think I ever saw you before. But I know something about you. I see by the gray hairs on your head that you are an old man. You have one foot in the grave. It won't be long before you will stand before your judge in heaven and you will have to give an account for all things you said against me before this assembly. How will you ever be able to justify yourself for all these lies?" I spoke for a few more minutes and then I turned to Steve and said, "Let's go home."

It was about two or three years later, during the pastorate of Fr. Zabawa, that I received a phone call from Belfield (we were then at our new location along U.S. 85). It was this man's wife begging me to come and confess her husband. I said, "I'm sorry, I can't. Call your own pastor." She replied that her husband would only confess before me. I hesitated, not knowing what to say. I feared that if I did not go to confess this soul and he died without confession it would be on my conscience. I went. In the course of time all those of that defiant group who conspired against me begged forgiveness before they died, all except one. I hope that in his heart, he did, too.

In the years that I spent at Ukraina (on the prairies, I call it) we held two successful missions, Church dinners, and picnics. In 1948 we had the Julian calendar changed to the Gregorian with 100% FOR in St. Demetrius and St. Josaphat parishes and 95% for in Belfield at St. John's.

In the years of 1947-48 quite a number of the older generation of Ukrainians began to move into Belfield. In the radius of a few miles there were but a few families left near the St. Demetrius on the prairie. With the help of members of my committee, Peter Yourk and Steve Baranko of Gorham, a plan was discussed to move the St. Demetrius Church to a centrally located area, accessible to all, and to consider the possibility of building a Catholic grade school and a general store on the property and to arrange sections of land for those who wished to retire and be near the church. We bought forty acres of land from Sam Logosz along highway 85 for $1,400. We arranged to have the contractor from Bismarck move the three buildings, the church, rectory, and Sister's house, to this new location. This was accomplished in the fall of 1949. Our first service at this new location was the feast day of St. Demetrius, October 26.

The reason for this relocation was that during the winter months and on Sundays after a heavy rain the people could not come to church due to impassible gumbo or snow-blocked roads. These days of no attendance would sometimes equal three to four months in a year that the people were without services. Like previous pastors, I was a prisoner of the blizzards and the snow-blocked roads. Food and heating became a problem, especially during the winter. There was no inside plumbing; water was drawn by pail from a well about eighty feet from the rectory. For lighting, we had two kerosene lamps; there was no basement and no refrigeration; the house was not insulated and was heated only by a potbelly stove that burned lignite coal that had to be broken up with an axe. Later, briquettes were introduced to this area; this was a luxury. These inconveniences lasted until the relocation of the church.

I remember one winter, 1948-1949. After the Epiphany services on January 6, the people left for home and that evening we experienced the beginning of a four-day blizzard. According to the Weather Bureau, a real blizzard is one in which the wind velocity is thirty to forty miles per hour, the temperature is at least 25 below zero, and this continues for at least three days. Toward the end of that month, we ran out of food. So, being young and strong, I dressed myself with winter clothes suitable more for the eastern winters, and with a knapsack over my back I manag-

ed to walk to the highway in 10 below zero cold through snow that was waist deep if you broke through the snow-crust. Steve Klym, who lived along the highway, drove me to town to buy groceries and then drove me partly back on the road, about a mile or so; I walked the rest of the way back to the rectory. For an elderly priest to have to undergo such an experience or something similar was a predisposition to get away from such an environment. I can hardly blame some of them for wanting to leave North Dakota. I believe that this is the only parish in the whole state, if not in other states, where the priest lived many miles away from the nearest town with no neighbors for at least one mile. God does not seek martyrs of those not disposed to martyrdom. This was one of the major reasons for moving into a better location accessible to the people and less hazardous for the priest.

Our church activity increased by leaps and bounds at our new location. Missions were conducted in English, Sunday sermons were said in English, and catechism classes were held after the services on Sunday. Later we started a catechetical school with textbooks. We formed a social committee of young people which took care of all the social activities--dinners, bazaars, picnics, and so forth. Although we had a choir and sang Christmas carols over the radio station KDIX, I preferred congregational singing in church. One of the highlights of our social gatherings was the Easter dinner. The good ladies of the parish prepared a meal that was almost heavenly, and after the blessings of the food it became a heavenly meal fit for the king and Pope. The two-day bazaar held in the Fall on or near the Feast of St. Demetrius was an event in which almost all the young people participated. It made us all feel that we were a family. As for the church liturgy on Sunday, attendance was 98% to 100%, with a sprinkling of Ukrainians from Gorham and St. John's, plus some of our Latin Rite brothers and sisters. In fact there came a moment when we considered enlarging the church. We did some remodeling with the intention to do more later.

In 1951 over 7000 trees and shrubs were planted, mostly by the young people of the parish. The soil conservation group would not plant trees farther than eight feet apart. I wanted them fifteen feet apart. My reason was that I noticed that the plantings of eight feet apart did not give the trees enough growing space. They grew up and not out. Also, during the dry months, the trees would compete for moisture, many would die, and dead trees detract from the beauty of any landscape. Since the Soil Conservation agency did not offer too many varieties of trees, I decided to do some experimenting. I was curious whether other trees, foreign to this climate, would grow here. I set aside one row for experimentation. I ordered and planted several types of apple, nut, plum, pear, birch, locust, hybrid elm, willow, and above all, my favorite, Pin-oak, a tree found in the swamps in Louisiana. Some grew, others did not. Teresa Glazier, wife of a Presbyterian minister of Calgary, Alberta, and a teacher in a college in Illinois, wrote a beautiful article in *North Dakota Horizons*, naming our grove of trees "an oasis in the prairie." We did receive two awards from the national soil conservation department.

Another achievement that we are proud of is the building of a new rectory and a large garage in 1960's. In the early 1970's the Bishop blessed the iron cross, commemorating the early Ukrainian pioneers that settled this region of Billings County. It is now a landmark along Highway 85. A beautiful inscription written by Agnes Palanuk describes this commemoration. Also of note is the incorporation of St. Mary's Cemetery, which was established at the turn of the century, into the St. Demetrius Parish. In 1966 a mimeographed monthly journal titled *The Prairie Steeple* began and continued for three years. It contained parish news, information concerning various subjects, and a child's corner.

The years of tree plantings that eventually made St. Demetrius an "oasis" began during the 1950's. Reverend Bobersky's careful husbandry was photographed from the air in 1958 by the North Dakota Soil Conservation Service.

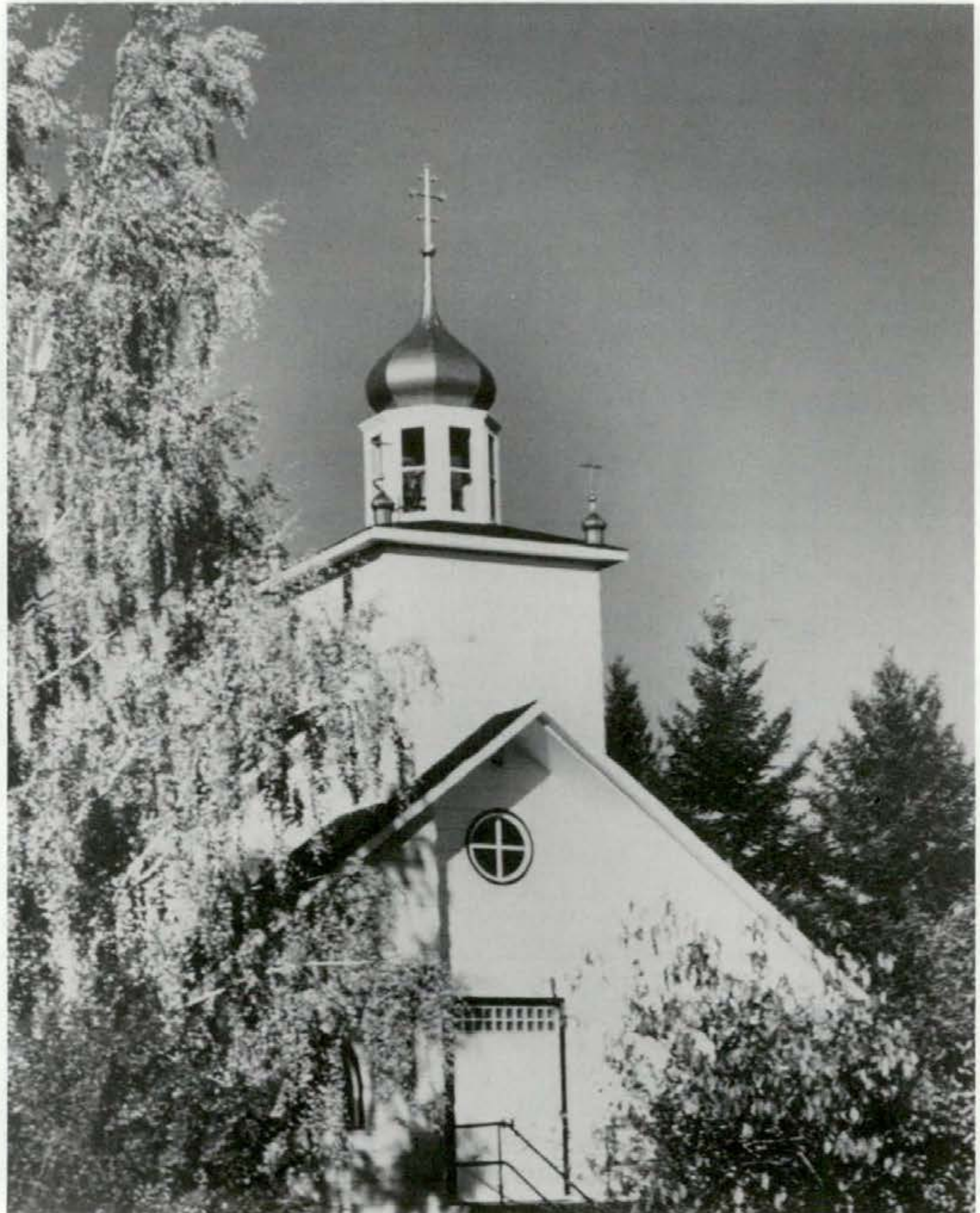
—Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Institute, Dickinson, ND

Being the first American born priest of these parishes, I believe I had enormous influence upon the younger generation. I understood them and they understood me. I worked with them without ignoring the elderly.

I have been asked if I aimed to do what I did. I must reply as any minister should: I did what I did for the greater glory of God and to the lost reputation and dignity of our Ukrainian people in this area.

If in my thirty-one years serving the parishes of North Dakota and Montana I was instrumental in leading some souls nearer to God, my dedication in His service has not been in vain.*

*See Fr. Michael Bobersky, "Adventure and Dedication in North Dakota," *Beacon: Ukrainian Rite Monthly*, 17-3 (May-June 1983), pp. 39-40.



Surrounded by trees that have grown and prospered through dry and wet years, St. Demetrius church remains an important landmark along Highway 85 and a significant center of the Ukrainian community in that part of North Dakota. The lifetime commitment of Reverend Bobersky indicates clearly the dedication that the parish priest brought to his calling among North Dakota's Ukrainians.

—State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection

"Who Are We?"

A North Dakota Ukrainian Oral History

by Agnes Palanuk

Beginning in June 1984, Pam Evoniuk and I interviewed thirty persons in the established Ukrainian communities of North Dakota. The communities were: Bismarck, Wilton (8); Kief, Butte, Max (8); Belfield, Fairfield (9); Dickinson (4); and Killdeer (3). From the interviews, we learned that these people had lived a history of the western Ukraine under Austro-Hungary, during World War I, during the Russian Revolution and brief independence, under Poland, in the Soviet Union, and under the Germans during World War II. Our interviewees in eastern Ukraine lived under the Czars, the revolution of 1917-1923, the Germans, World War II, and in the Soviet Union.

We recorded experiences of the first immigrants from the time they arrived in North Dakota to the present day. In addition, twenty-one first generation Ukrainian-American North Dakotans related their interaction with the immigrants and their own experiences.

For the purpose of understanding the history of Ukraine and the experiences of the immigrants in North Dakota, we categorized our interviewees into four time periods: the First Emigration, 1897-1914 (9); the Second Emigration, 1921 (1); the Third Emigration, 1947-1950 (5); and First Generation Ukrainian Americans in North Dakota (20).

Jaroslaw Sztendera has provided a comprehensive overview of Western Ukraine in the 19th Century. Into his setting of Western Ukraine under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the first emigration beginning in 1896, we shall impose the experiences of the immigrants. To help maintain clarity, the names and ages (at the time they left) of those who were part of the First Emigration are provided. They are: Eva Haluzak Boozenny, age 1; George Tymchuk, age 2; Polly Kopichuk Cerkoney, age 2; Pearl Evoniuk Basaraba, age 9; and Peter Basaraba, age 7. Emigrating from Ukraine under Czarist Russia and their ages are Mrs. John Kabanuck, age 3; John Kabanuck, age 5; Pauline Hurinenko Kulish, age 7; and Mike Kulish, age 14.

Due to the ages only four of these people have their own images of Ukraine because they would have been of age to attend school there. Our 14-year-old from eastern Ukraine said he attended school for three years taught in Ukrainian. He used many words I didn't understand. Our 9-year-old said she did not spend a single day in school. She said her brother attended the village school, but she did not. Other immigrants said they attended school in North Dakota. Their statements about their schooling were: I spent one winter in three different schools; I learned the abc's and to count to 100; I went to school three leaves in the third grade; I learned Ukrainian myself; and I wish I had school. Mr. and Mrs. Kabanuck from eastern Ukraine attended school in the United States up to sixth grade.

Almost all read Ukrainian, reading Ukrainian short stories, newspapers, histories, and prayer and song books. They learned the Ukrainian language by themselves or with the help of their parents. At the time they were school age, there was no established Ukrainian church and religious community.

The four persons who described Ukraine vividly said the following:

Peter Basaraba: "The villages were along the Dniester River. I got a Canadian Farmer Newspaper and it said the Dniester was the best creek in the whole world. The water was clean all the time. Zbruch was small. It flowed into the Dniester. There was Russia on the other side. But that was Ukraine. Russia took it. And this side was Austria."

Pearl Basaraba: "My gosh! We lived near a creek and grapes, peaches, apricots, pears, walnuts, and apples grew there. Everyone had an orchard and trees. In spring the trees blossomed, the cuckoo bird cooed. When the cuckoo (zozulia) cooed and the bees buzzed, it was like heaven on earth. The river and fields were delightful. I remember. Ukraine is the land of milk and honey. That is the kind of soil it is. There is bread in Ukraine."

This leads to the question of why they left Ukraine:

Pearl Basaraba: "I don't know what the conditions would have been had it not been for America. As an example, look at us. Eight in our family and four more were born here. Think of the acreage we left. I don't know where they would have worked. I think about the events that occurred. We left in 1906 and the terrible war erupted in 1914. It could have caught us there."

Eva Boozenny: "It was real good, everybody was happy. They had all kinds of fruit. But they were afraid of war. The war won't pass—it is going to be."

Peter Basaraba: "There was ten of us in the family and we had 24 *morga* (4½ acres). Then Father thought to himself when the kids take part of it, the kids won't have anything and I won't have anything. He sell out. And we came from bad to worse."

If we study the ages of our immigrants, the 1939 census records compiled by Fr. Anthony Borsa show that Urko Basaraba, father of Peter Basaraba, was born in 1857. Keep in mind that until 1848, in Ukraine under Austria, the political structure for the Ukrainians was serfdom. That means that our great-grandfathers were serfs. On the cross marker on the grave of Apolonia Rodakowski, the date of birth is 1842. She was born a serf. That is, she was midway between that of a freeman and a slave. A serf was bound to the soil and required to provide certain payments and services to the lord or the *pany*. Taras Schevchenko was born a serf, but he was bought out of serfdom by artists who realized his potential.

Paul Kordon, speaking about the pany: "The rich pany had houses of lumber. Their other buildings were constructed of stone. One always recognized the pany by their frisky horses, both horses were the same color. On the harnesses were bells. The pany had a lot of land. Their raised crops for market. Their farms were about 600 acres. Workers on these farms were paid 25 cents per day."

The people we interviewed emigrated from Ukraine

Philip Spichke, Kief

Theodore and Sandie Kritsky, Butte

Photographs for the North Dakota Ukrainian Oral History Project were taken by Clay Jenkinson in 1984 and 1985.

Matt and Katie Logosz
Fairfield

Mrs. Peter Kassian, Sr.
Wilton

Julia Tymchuk, Belfield

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Karpenko, Kief

Polly Cerkoney
Dickinson

George Tymchuk
Belfield

Olga Struchynski
Bismarck

John Struchynski
Bismarck

Catherine Omafray
Wilton

Rose Skurupey, Belfield

—Photos by Clay Jenkinson. Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson

Mrs. Philip Spichke
Kief

John Kabanuck, Max

Pauline Kulish, Killdeer

Mike Kulish, Killdeer

Mrs. John Kabanuck
Max

under Austro-Hungary and from Ukraine under Russia. To the question of whether they considered themselves Ukrainian or Russian, they replied:

Mrs. Kabanuck, from Ukraine under Russia: "I really didn't have many Ukrainians to explain it to us. That's all I know is Russian, Russian, Russian."

Pearl Basaraba: "I respect America and I thank God for her. But I feel Ukrainian and everything Ukrainian is precious."

Sometimes they referred to Ukraine as *Staryj Kraj:* "I never traveled much in Staryj Kraj." "I was born in Ukraine. We came from Kiev," said Mike Kulish.

We asked if there were language problems. Because the immigrants could not speak English and in many instances did not read or write Ukrainian, were they taken advantage of? In response, Matt Logosz, a first-generation Ukrainian-American, said of his father, Maxim Logosz: "He attended night school along with John Chruszch and Mike Klym. There was about 15 of them. Dad learned the English language well. Nobody could sell him."

Pete Basaraba said he borrowed money from the bank in Belfield to purchase land. According to Pete, "We had to pay 7% interest and that God dam Melesten put down 9%. And I didn't know nothing. I never was in that kind of a deal."

Pearl Basaraba noted: "Angliky got along well with the Ukrainians. Who could not speak English, someone went with him. The bankers helped all they could. Those were poor times. They took mortgages."

George Tymchuk remembered a big picture of "Uncle Sam" saying, "I want you in the Army" and joined the army in 1919. He volunteered for the band and wasn't allowed to do manual labor in order to protect his fingers. He did read the manual and knew the general orders.

How did the Ukrainian immigrants get along with the non-Ukrainian neighbors?

Matt Logosz said: "I was herding sheep and horses for the Norwegians. They were real nice to me. Even brought me a little cake or something during the afternoon."

Pearl Basaraba remembered, "In Gorham there were Norwegians. We got along well. But then the submarginal [land classification] was established. [words omitted] . . . did not interact well with the people"

About the Germans the Ukrainians said:

Catherine Omafray: "We lived by the Germans. We threshed with them. The Ruski-Germans came first. . . The Germans were good neighbors. They were richer. They spoke Ukrainian."

Matt Logosz: "I was herding cows. We herd with the Kessel boys. And, by God, Kessel boys and we grew up together just like brothers. But the only thing we were scared of were those Bohemians. We were herding cows and they were coming with saddle horses across. And what they did, they used to chase us with saddle horses. We'd run for our life. They wouldn't hurt us but we were scared."

Rose Skurupey: "Czechs ridiculed Ukrainians. Soltus was here. We were threshing at Polensky's. Several Czechs came there. They began to laugh at Soltus saying he doesn't know how to pitch bundles. He only knows to sing in church."

Julia Tymchuk: "We had a couple friends that were Czechs, but they didn't attend our parties. Ukrainians couldn't be with Czechs and the Czechs couldn't be with the Ukrainians. It isn't like it is now. They'd fight just because they were who they were."

Peter Basaraba: "My sister went to work for the Bohemians. They used to have them rock houses and granaries. Our girls had to go over there and smear over that."

Polly Cerkoney: "Grandma mud-plastered the chicken coop for the Bohemians. She received some chickens for that."

Last, let's listen to the Ukrainian immigrants who are now their late 80's and early 90's:

Peter Basaraba: "I was sitting here now and I was thinking how many times I would be killed. I figure 25 times I was suppose to be killed. Then I went to sleep. In the morning I got up and I figure, by gosh, I'm lying to myself. It was more than 30 times."

George Tymchuk: "I have suffered. I had surgery on the eye. Now I can't see on it. My feet and hands are good."

Pearl Basaraba: "How can the people be awakened from their sleep? I tell you nothing will awaken the old and you will not convince them. The youth. . . I don't say from the very little children, but like this girl Cheryl. Needed are those kinds of boys so they would understand Ukrainian undertakings and assist and see their value. About the old. . . forget them."

World War I ended the first emigration. It also prevented Mary Skoropat and her mother and sister from joining their father and husband who left Ukraine in 1914 for the United States. Mary's father emigrated with the intent of returning to Ukraine. His idea was to come here, earn money, return to Ukraine, and buy a farm, says Mary. When he observed that there was space and land available, he sent for the family. The money never reached the village; with emigration closed, Mary was to experience World War I. We who never experienced war on our land can obtain a minute glimpse of its terror from ten year old Mary:

Fourteen soldiers were sleeping in our house. They stole a pig from our neighbor. They butchered and singed it in the house. They ate it right there.

One mother hid her son in the hay upstairs. The boy lived there and she carried food for him there. Someone reported this. They found him, took him in the corner of the school yard, and shot him. We all saw. We cried for him. We cried and just about the whole village cried for him.

When the war was on, they first told us to get out. Then they told us not to because they were planning to shoot from hill to hill. They said all should go down into the root cellar. If anyone runs, they'll shoot. One man was helping mother cut wood. We told him to stay. He said no, no, he can't because he's got his wife and children and he had to go home. He said he'd go by the wooden fence. He got halfway and he got shot. He didn't see his wife and children.

Mary's entrance to the United States included examination on Ellis Island in New York harbor:

When we got off the ship we went to a station and there we were all shut into cages like animals. They asked us to identify the people meeting us. During the war we cut our hair like boys. This was so that nits would not get into our hair. Men would pat our heads and say, "Hello Boys!" When we arrived in New York, Mamma told Dad what had happened. He knew us and we knew him.

A lady had a big chalk X placed on her in front and back. She cried to my mother calling, "Nastu, Nastu, help me." We don't know what became of her.

Mary gave us some insight into the village in Ukraine:

> There was a small store in the village. It was managed by Jews. Available there was naphta and salt.
>
> The tavern was near the church. From the church they went to the tavern. The church was beautiful. It was Ukrainian Catholic. It couldn't have been Orthodox for I never heard of Orthodox until I came here.

In the United States Mary went to school for five years. It appears the process of assimilation was more rapid in the 1920's. With the children in school, Mary's Dad asked why they kept the old calendar: "We are living in America. The Julian calendar was for Ukraine."

Dances especially appealed to Mary. At the age of 10 she says her mind was not on school work, but on the boys and the dances. Mary is 78 years old now. She thinks herself very lucky for she lives close to the church.

The third emigration to North Dakota came in the late 1940's and the 1950's. We interviewed five families who were part of this wave. These new immigrants did not come to the United States directly from Ukraine, but were displaced by World War II. Two of the five were deported to Germany to work on the farms. One, who was in school in Poland, said he was fortunate not to have been in the Soviet zone when Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland in 1939. Two of the interviewees left Ukraine during the German occupation. All of the new immigrants expressed great fear of the Soviets and did not want to live under their occupation. At their request we will not reveal their names.

This third immigration in North Dakota can be divided into two categories: professionals from the cities, and people from the villages and towns. Their reasons for coming to the United States were not economic or to search for land, as during the first emigration. As one emigree stated, "We didn't come to look for riches or an easy life. We came to save our lives. We didn't want to be killed for nothing by Stalin or henchman because we don't believe in their ideology." These Ukrainians would have preferred to remain or to return to Ukraine had it not been for the totalitarian system of the Soviets:

> I never thought that I would be in America. I thought when the war would end, I would return home. In the meantime it happened that the Russians were there. It was not good. We knew there was no reason to return.

How bad were the Russians? One immigrant said:

> My sister had one daughter-in-law. She had one child. There was a famine. She went into the field to gather *kolosky*. A soldier came and grabbed her sack which was half filled and beat her. She died.

Others reported these events:

> The Russians occupied our village for two years that I was there. They transported many, very many people to Siberia. . .
>
> Only God knows why. During the night while people slept, you heard the sound of a motor, a truck arrives and you don't know for whom or for what or who they took. There were times when no one knew of the disappearances. . .
>
> I recall one time an old woman, so old I can't understand why they'd take her. She was in her 70's. Later we learned she died on the road. In winter, like cattle, they perished. It was very difficult. . .
>
> It was hard to get through the night. Someone was angry with you. There was no hearing. They'd come and take you. Sometimes they told the truth and sometimes lies. But each had tried to protect himself. . .
>
> Criticism was not allowed and the smallest criticism of the leaders was punished. Punishments were shootings and concentration camps of hard labor. Families were forced from the village or town to central Asia where there were large poorly developed plains. They died quickly from lack of food and the cold.

The people who fled from Ukraine during the German occupation wanted to be in the area which they believed the Americans would occupy. One interviewee described the first sight of the American army and the final days of World War II:

> One day the Americans were putting a lot of pressure on the Germans. We were near the Rhine River. Across the Rhine there was a large bridge, a huge bridge. The Germans themselves mined it. They did not want the Americans to cross over to the other side.
>
> When the Germans were retreating over the bridge, half way over, they set it afire. I thought heaven was tumbling and the earth quaking. Such were the fears of the explosions.
>
> This was at night. Toward morning we hid in dungeons. The Germans had placed grates and bricks over the windows and I could see through one. I looked. There's some kind of an army approaching. This army passed. It was the first patrol. An American. . . the first to enter this village.
>
> The bombing of the bridge did not help the Germans. That was foolishness. The Americans placed inflated rafts across the river. By the time the Germans were off the bridge, the Americans were over there
>
> When I saw the army through this crack in the window, I said I see some kind of an army and it is not German. When I said this, the Germans cried hysterically.

Earlier we said that many Ukrainians fled Ukraine before the return of the Red Army. Among those fleeing were Ukrainian professionals. The need for medical doctors was acute in the war zones and the Ukrainian doctors cared for the wounded in various countries in Europe.

Germany had imported a million persons to work in her war industries and farms, and at the war's end many returned to their homelands. Those who chose not to return, and these were largely from the Soviet-overrun countries, were placed into military barracks. They were separated into ethnic groups and here Ukrainians met Ukrainians, sometimes from their own village:

> One person said the following about life in the camp: When the Americans came, they saved us. We were very hungry in Germany. The American Army gave us lodging, food and medical supplies. But then the Russian agents came and they praised Russia. They said in Russia it is so good. There is nothing to fear. But we knew the truth.

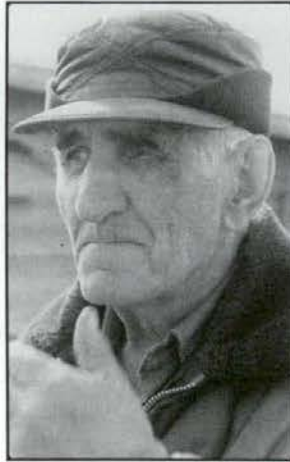
"Slowly our people began to lift themselves," said another, "They gained strength and admitted to being Ukrainian."

> At first there was no Ukrainian life. Later, a Professor came. Many of our people were not literate. The youth didn't have an education because of the war. Before that the older people didn't have an education as the Polish didn't allow it.

With the discrimination and the war, how was it possible for the Ukrainians to become professors, doctors, researchers, and other professionals? The reply was:

> They had a quota. There were 60 places in the

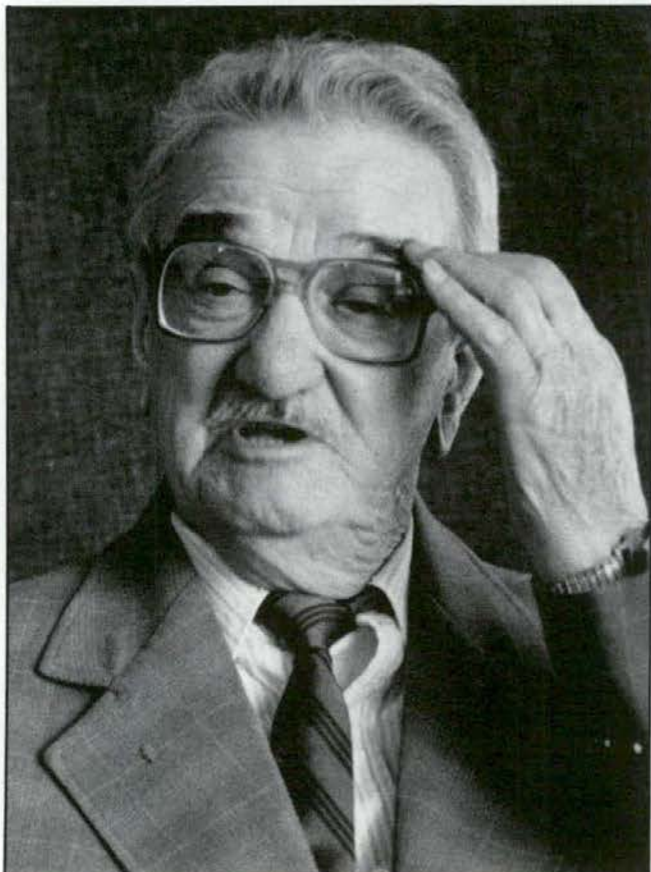
Mary Stuss, Belfield



Pete Kassian, Sr., Wilton

Mary Palanuk, Dickinson

Peter Basaraba, Belfield



Anna Logosz, Belfield

—Photos by Clay Jenkinson, Courtesy Ukrainian Cultural Center, Dickinson

medical school and 2500 applications. We had a written examination in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Out of 2500, 800 were accepted. Out of the 800 they were selecting the best ones from these and they admitted according to the quota — 40 Polish, 10 Ukrainians, 3 Germans, 3 Jewish, 3 Lithuanians. That's how it happened.

From the displaced persons' camps, the Ukrainians dispersed to Australia, South America, North America, and western European countries. Many were sponsored by private citizens from the accepting countries. Others were assisted by the World Church Services and Ukrainian Refugee organizations. One family we interviewed was sponsored by a young couple living on a dairy farm 100 miles from Philadelphia. The new arrivals said:

> They took us to the chicken coop to live, My God, a stove with holes and a water stand. The stove was hot, but it was cold inside. I was in boots. I wondered what is this.
>
> They liked us. I took care of the baby. The baby was born premature and tiny. I didn't know that. . . I thought the children in America are so tiny.

Was the language a problem for the Third Emigration as it had been for the previous emigration? The answers varied:

> Where I lived there were no Ukrainians. I had no occasion to speak English. I entered a hospital and they asked me questions. I don't know if I answered well or not. Two nurses began to ridicule me. The superintendent of the hospital said to them. Why are you laughing? Just think about it. Why are you laughing? That what she knows, you'll never learn, but what you know, she will learn quick.

[Another stated]

> I went to school because I had to take a medical examination. It took me two months to learn the English language. In Ukraine I studied several languages. I knew how to get into the spirit of learning the language.

The fourth group of people we interviewed were the children of the first immigrants. They were born into large families: 10 to Karpenkos, 10 to Logoszes, 15 to Evoniuks, 15 to Anheluks.

With this first generation Ukrainian Americans, we noted a change in emphasis, a spirit of growth, and Americanization. When they speak about Ukraine, it is not with the vigor and determination characteristic of their parents.

Eighth grade education was a necessity, but high school was available only to those willing to pressure the parents for permission and earning their way through school. Matt Logosz wanted to attend high school but he said, "Dad wouldn't let me go. Because you got to work if you want to farm, he said." If the children went to high school, they'd stay in town and work for room and board. Mary Stuss said, "My youngest sister, Ann, graduated from high school. She worked for Determans and Kleemans. Sister Pearl worked for Frank Dick and for Pearson. She saved enough money to go to school. She graduated from beauty school in 1935."

In Wilton, where more Ukrainians resided in town because the main employer was a large local mine, high school education for the boys began in the 1920's. According to Anna Sologuk and Catherine Omafray, the old people's attitude about girls' education was, "What is she going to be, a professor, or will she work in a bank?"

Education received more emphais in the Butte-Max-Kief area. It was common for the children of the immigrants to attend high school and college. Philip Spichke of rural Kief was born in 1904. He and his brothers attended business college in Bismarck and in Minneapolis. Anna Spichke, wife of Philip, was a teacher in the grade school in the 1920's. Sam Karpenko's brothers, born in 1910 and 1912, attended the universities in Fargo and Grand Forks and became civil engineers. The Sheyenne River Academy, a private Seventh Day Adventist boarding school, was established in 1913.

The immigrant and his family, some children European-born and some American-born, expanded the dream. They acquired more land, land defaulted by homesteaders or sold by other nationalities. The land didn't always produce, and according to Philip Spichke they lost the land. Some were not even farmers in the beginning. He said they didn't even dress like a farmer: "No farmer overalls. They had nice hats and nice leather gloves. They either sold their land or abandoned it."

"I'll tell you why our Ukrainians survived," said Philip. "The women who came from Russia, they know how to raise a garden, they know how to be ambitious, and they raised their own vegetables and everything. The Norwegian women didn't know how to do any of this. They had to buy. They couldn't survive. Germans were pretty good, too."

By 1928, Maxim Logosz was farming 300 acres. They were "plowing with horses, Nick, Sam, and I, three gang plows, that is six bottoms at a time. We were going strong."

John Struchynski went with a threshing crew in 1924 and pitched bundles for a machine owned by Anton and Sam Evoniuk. At that time, trucks began hauling wheat to town and tractors began to be a status symbol.

Not all Ukrainian immigrants became farmers. Their towns also played an important role. At one point, Kief had 300 people. Ukraina was an official post office. Many Ukrainian men became small businessmen. For example, one operated a service station in 1923 in Max; another opened a grocery store in Kief in 1929; and Ukrainian implement dealers were in Butte and Max. We asked about the business ethics of Ukrainian businessmen:

"As a businessman, Dad never beat nobody for a red cent," said Sam Karpenko.

> Dad and me, it must have been in 1912, there was a big sack of peanuts open in the warehouse. And we went with our groceries and I looked at them peanuts and they were tempting. I never ate peanuts in my life. But I knew what peanuts was, cause boys use to bring them home. But my conscience wouldn't let me to take a few peanuts, absolutely not.

Not all was honesty. John Struchynski related one experience where his neighbors took advantage of his inexperience after his father's death. They used his header to cut their crop and also helped John header his crop. "They built small stacks," he said,

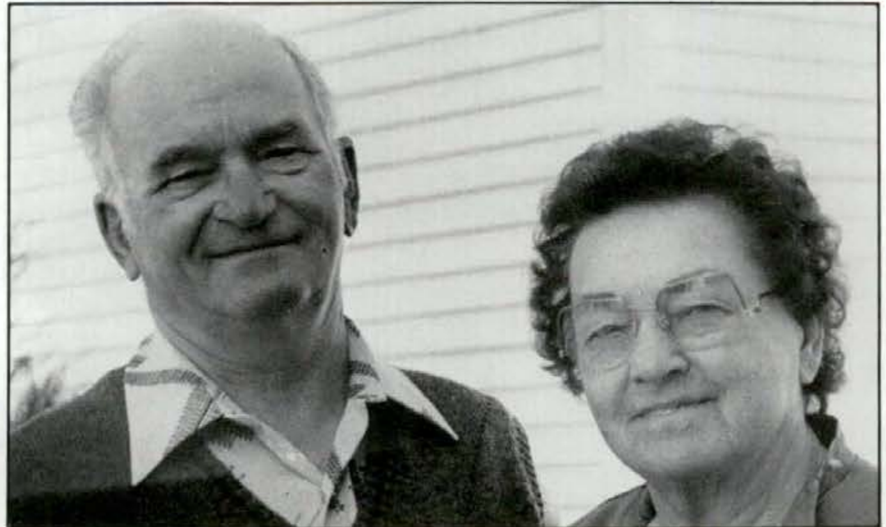
> and I said to them, "My father built big ones, higher and wider." He said, "If a big stack gets wet, it's going to rot and this little one gets wet and it's a little one. The wind will blow through and it will dry faster.
>
> That fall it started to rain for two weeks. We spread the piles so they would dry. Daytime would be sunshine and in the nighttime, rain. Everything ruined. We threshed it and I had eleven double boxes.
>
> I brought a box of it to Belfield. Here I am still sitting on the seat. I just barely stopped and he already got this stuff. And he's asking where did I get that? [ex-

> pletive deleted] I said, "That's what I got this year." "Get the hell out, I don't want that stuff," he said. "So I drove out. What to do? I almost cried. I went to another elevator. I'm half crying, got to pay thresh bill, taxes, and we need clothing and flour. The price of wheat was around $1.45 and he gave me 65 cents. One price. No less, no more. So I tell you, I almost kissed him.

About the header, John said, "I had to go to the neighbors to bring home my header. The canvases were all torn, lots of things bent. I had to do some fixing. Next year in 1926 I was driving the header myself."

Beginning in 1896 the Ukrainian immigrants settled on farms in Billings, Stark, Dunn, McLean, and Sheridan counties. Today we find many of the homesteads in the original family's third generation. Those who retired or left the farms frequently migrated into the larger towns in their area. Now there are sizable Ukrainian populations in Bismarck, Minot, and Dickinson, as well as the smaller towns of Wilton, Belfield, Butte, Max, and Killdeer.

We encountered the strongest Ukrainian heritage present in the kitchens; *paska, baba, khrin* at Easter time, *varenyky, pyrisky, holubtsi.* Almost all of the thirty-five people we interviewed spoke Ukrainian. In the settlements from eastern Ukraine, they identified their language at times as Russian. Wedding traditions and Ukrainian folk arts are kept strongly in the Ukrainian communities from Halychyna, Western Ukraine.



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Strilcov, Max

The sod houses have returned to the soil; only an occasional remnant remains of the four-sided roofs that dotted the quarters in yesteryear. The churches have found new sites, moving from the country to the town or a new location. One brick church was built in the 1960's. The cross Maxim Logosz shipped from the Old Country and placed on the corner of his farm remains of interest to the historians.

In conclusion, we share the thoughts on the minds of the Ukrainians today. In the Max-Butte-Kief area, they said.

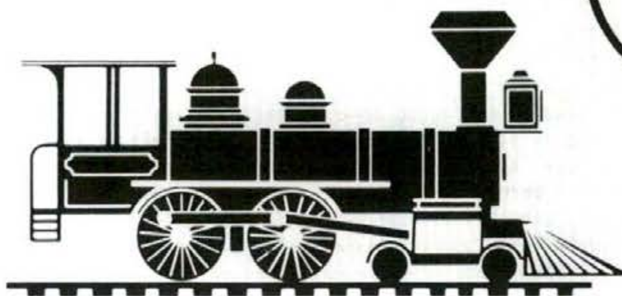
> We wanted our children to have a good education and we wanted them to fear the Lord.
>
> *Mr. and Mrs. Strilcov:* Our daughter-in-law, she's Norwegian and German. She is after us and after us to make a tape of our singing. And she doesn't understand our language. But we never did it. We could cry now that we didn't—not that we sing so good but just to pass on the heritage.
>
> *Sam Karpenko:* We leave for Washington right after election—the next day after election because I am a precinct committeeman and being a precinct committeeman is an honor and something that costs you money. You have to donate so much for the governor and the president. President Reagan writes me a letter.
>
> *Mrs. John N. Kabanuck:* John fixes the meals. I can't walk. I'd like to help him. Sometimes I go out in the kitchen a little bit so I can get on his toes. We try to get along as much as we can. People are really nice to us. They bring lots of things.
>
> *Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kulish:* Now it's harder to plant, to be on the knees planting. Our daughter helped us plant. But I planted the tomatoes and cabbage on my knees.
>
> *Mary Hruby:* I made it so far. No matter what happens, I'm ready. I'm so thankful for all I've seen.
>
> *Peter Basaraba:* I wish to Christ I had school. The way I'm thinking, if I have a school, I wouldn't live until now. I can't stand it the way they're doing.
>
> *Mrs. Sologuk, Mrs. Omafray:* Very few come to church often. Some married Latin Catholic girls. Do they go? No. Once in a great while. They have children. They don't go.
>
> *Katie Logosz:* In our family, our church is the most important thing—you know—religion.

Another said, "It was difficult for me especially when the Bishop came and the Liturgy was in English. I understood but it didn't have the same feeling. It was very sad." She continued:

> Perhaps our population in Ukraine is dwindling. The older generation is dying out. The youth of today is absorbing the spirit, the Russian is forced upon them. I believe Ukrainianization will not disappear. If it should happen that it is permitted [for one] to return to Ukraine, I believe people from here would return there.
>
> I expect that the Ukrainian nation will heal from the wounds of World War II. It will have a rebirth fulfilling the words of our great poet genius, Taras Shevchenko, who is his prophetic spirit prophesized: "Ukraine will rise; The fog of slavery will disperse; The children in bondage will pray in freedom."

Perhaps the words of Mrs. Mike Basaraba best summarize the spirit and heritage of the Ukrainians who came to North Dakota to settle and stay: "Our father said to the boys: 'Work together—one branch is easily broken, but all branches together one cannot break.' " Neither, we might add, will the heritage of the Ukraine be easily stripped from people so proud of their collective past.

Northern Plains Reviews



Lawrence H. Larsen. *The Rise of the Urban South*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. ix + 220 pp., including contents, list of tables, preface, notes, essay on sources, index. Tables. $22.00 (cloth). Available from the publisher at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky. 45206.

"Invest in the glorious sunbelt South. Bring your money and factories from the North to this land of cheap labor and low taxes. The racial problems of the '60s have been settled and we are now a more racially happy society than the rest of America. The South is the future."

So might go an advertisement of the late 1970's or 1980's. But so also was that cry uttered a century before, and the voices then came not from a Jimmy Carter or Reuben Askew, but rather from New South spokesmen such as Louisville's Henry Watterson, Atlanta's Henry Grady, or Baltimore's Richard Edmonds. In fact, one can almost envision author Larsen saying, quietly, as he writes, "Plus ca change. . . ."

That theme of continuity is only one of the various strands woven into this concise tapestry of the urban South. Professor Larsen, the author of *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* (1978) and other works, here looks at another region and finds a rather similar story. While the Civil War represented a real breaking point between eras to the people of the time, for the urban South it provided no such fissure. Before the Brothers' War, southerners had done a reasonably good job in building cities; after it "an essential continuity remained. New structures rose upon the ashes of the old" (p. 18). The same commercial interests operated, the familiar traditional lines of development continued, the usual weaknesses remained.

To Larsen, the urban South of the late nineteenth century, despite all the rhetoric, never freed itself of two weights that slowed its pace: poverty and racism. As in earlier decades, the region still looked to the Northwest and Midwest. It believed that produce from those regions should naturally go down the Mississippi or southward by rail for distribution. But geography, a rail system that had a different gauge than northern ones until 1886, and few other direct transportation connections made that mostly a dream of dreamers. Instead the South's future lay within itself. But to achieve the greatness envisioned by the prophets of wealth required outside capital, northern money. The section that had warred with the North now had spokesmen who called for an essentially colonial status of economic subordination. And while some of that colonialism did occur, so too did it across America. The South's weak agrarian economy and racial separation did not present an image that attracted great capital.

Instead, the mythmakers of the New South essentially failed in their time. Their region did not thrive as much as did most of the rest of the country. Their cities did not become Chicagos or New Yorks. Their land did not prosper. But in failure, in a sense they did succeed, according to Larsen; for by the 1890's the urban South stopped trying to be like the North and turned inward. That had oppressive consequences in some ways, especially for blacks who felt the tightening hand of segregation about them. But, in another way, it meant that leaders now decided that their region had a unique history, one of continuity and distinctiveness, and that history required its own answers, not some other region's. When area attitudes and economics did change in later years, then the urban South envisioned by men now long dead finally became reality. Only then was it truly a New South.

In presenting this thesis in 164 pages of text, with a chronology that is not always clear and a subject that covers Kentucky, Maryland, and all the Confederate states but Texas, Larsen traverses much ground. Little of it is left barren; abstract charts, statistics, and tables fill many of his pages. But, to his credit, so too do the stories of individuals, and of the way people lived. When we read of a time when, in 1853, ten thousand people die of yellow fever in New Orleans, and five thousand more in Memphis a quarter of a century later; when we learn that in eight hours, "a thousand horses deposited about five hundred gallons of urine and ten tons of dung upon the street surface. Most cities had one horse for every four persons" (p. 118); when we discover that many large cities used municipal hog herds (or, in Charleston, turkey buzzards) to eat the garbage thrown in the streets; and when we find that most cities simply dumped their sewage and street sweepings into nearby rivers, then the society is transformed from an abstract one to a real, albeit unpleasant, one.

In such ways, the themes presented herein have an importance to all regions of the country. Not all will agree with those arguments offered, and each reader may find a particular point to criticize (it is *Marion*, not *Marvin*, Lucas on pages 171 and 203, for example), but in the end those who peruse these pages should leave them having learned much. And that is the historian's goal.

Frankfort, Kentucky — James C. Klotter

James C. Klotter, the state historian and general editor of the Kentucky Historical Society, has written about Kentucky and the Appalachian South in the late nineteenth Century.

Raymond J. DeMallie, editor. *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. xxix + 452 pp., including contents, list of illus. and maps, foreword, preface, acknowledgements, appendices, bibliography, index. Illustrated. $19.95 (cloth). Available from the publisher at 901 N. 17th St., Lincoln, NE 68588.

John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), one of the most important books narrating the Sioux world view, is widely read and regarded a "classic." Nevertheless, there has been a lingering suspicion casting doubt on its reliability: did *Black Elk Speaks* truly present the words and mood of Black Elk, or reflect Neihardt's poetic creativity? *The Sixth Grandfather* responds to this concern and provides additional information obtained by Neihardt from Black Elk, but not included in Neihardt's publications.

Raymond DeMallie introduces *The Sixth Grandfather* with a brief, valuable biography of Black Elk and an examination of his relationship to

Neihardt. Black Elk, born in 1863, was raised in traditional Lakota culture and as a youth had a powerful vision in which he saw himself as the "'sixth grandfather', the spiritual representative of the earth and of mankind" (xix). His vision established him as "a holy man—as thinker, healer, teacher," with powers to assist his people (xix). Too young to fight in the conflicts against whites in the 1860's and 1870's, he nonetheless felt the Lakota's agony in defeat, and his presence at the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890 made a lasting impression. It caused him to reject the ways of the whites which he had assimilated as a member of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows from 1886-1889, but soon Black Elk abandoned his role as a traditional spiritual leader and in 1904 was baptized into the Catholic faith. He became a catechist and missionary and symbolized the union of the old ways and the new. By chance, in 1930 on the Pine Ridge Reservation he met John G. Neihardt, they spontaneously developed a personal intimacy, and in 1931 Black Elk related his vision and autobiography to Neihardt in a series of interviews. Now 67, Black Elk seemed burdened by his unfulfilled vision and "with the story completed, Black Elk had finally transferred his spiritual burden to Neihardt; it would never trouble him again" (46-47).

Volumes of notes resulted from the interviews with Black Elk and several other old Oglalas. They were carefully written in shorthand by Neihardt's daughter and then transcribed; though not verbatim, the transcripts are immediate and thorough and provide more extensive information than Neihardt could utilize in his summative and creative books. The transcripts of the interview sessions, the first detailed account telling exactly what Black Elk told Neihardt, provide the major portion of the text of *The Sixth Grandfather*. Included in this interview transcript of Neihardt's second visit in 1944 when he listened to Black Elk and Eagle Elk and meshed their stories together in *When The Tree Flowered* (1951).

DeMallie has carefully edited the transcripts of the interviews and supplied extensive notes and documentation which provide useful information about Lakota life and culture; identify the people, places, and events; and "provide comparisons between the interviews and the published books" (xxiii). The editor also had included a concordance relating the interview material to pages in *Black Elk Speaks* and *When The Trees Flowered*.

DeMallie indicates that *Black Elk Speaks* authentically reflects Black Elk's world view as revealed in the interview. In an excellent discussion of Neihardt's creative effort, DeMallie concludes that Neihardt was committed to "make the books speak for Black Elk faithfully, to represent what Black Elk would have said if he had understood the concept of literature and if he had been able to express himself in English" (xxi-xxii). However, Neihardt did interpret; for example, in an attempt to retain Black Elk's symbolic role as traditional leader, Neihardt omitted references to any conversion to white ways. The serious student of Lakota culture necessarily will examine *The Sixth Grandfather* as well as Neihardt's books. Not only does *The Sixth Grandfather* enhance appreciation of Neihardt's literary skills, the transcripts deserve reading for the additional information and perspective they provide. *The Sixth Grandfather* merits inclusion among the significant contributions to studies of Lakota culture.

Mitchell, South Dakota — James McLaird

James McLaird is Professor of History at Dakota Wesleyan University and a student of literature concerning Dakota Territory and frontier peoples.

Lawrence Svobida. *Farming the Dust Bowl: A First-Hand Account from Kansas*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986. 255 pp., including contents, foreword, intro. Illustrated. $7.95 (paper). Available from the publisher at 329 Carruth, Lawrence, KS 66045.

Lawrence Svobida was twenty-one years old and fired with enthusiasm to become a wheat farmer when he arrived in Meade County in southwestern Kansas in 1929, prepared to work land owned by his father. Life as a farm youth in eastern Nebraska and the work involved in farming did not deter him from his one and only ambition: to become a farmer. It was not the most auspicious time to put his dream to the test, however. Of the six crops he planted during his first four years of operation, only one was worth harvesting; then things really got bad.

This is Lawrence Svobida's own story, written shortly after he finally gave up and joined the exodus from the Dust Bowl in 1939. The first-hand account was first published in 1940. The University Press of Kansas does history a service by re-issuing it along with forty-eight illustrations and a useful foreword by historian R. Douglas Hurt, who puts the story into historical context for the reader. Svobida himself displays many of the characteristics of the historian; he seeks to understand the causes of the situation he faced and to explain the historical antecedents of the Dust Bowl, the dilemmas it posed for people, and the reactions of himself and others to those challenges.

The book is arranged chronologically, detailing year by year the decisions Svobida had to make about what crops to plant, how to try to save them, and whether, indeed, to stick it out for the long haul. The descriptions he gives of dust storms and the changing weather, of the impact of the ecological and economic disaster on farmers in the area, and of the types of responses people exhibited—optimism, resignation, bewilderment, greed, generosity, insanity, suicide—are vivid and informative. At times he sounds more like a journalist or sociologist, full of facts and statistics that demonstrate considerable research beyond what could have been learned from a perusal of newspaper stories.

The most valuable contribution of this book is the insight it gives us into the day-to-day operations of a single farmer in a single place faced by the specific choices Svobida had to make. We learn a great deal about different types of plowing, the kinds of mechanical repairs constantly required by machinery, and the kinds of work habits farming on the Plains requires if one wants to be successful, as Svobida obviously did. We don't learn much about social affairs—Svobida was a bachelor and does not talk about his methods of relaxation and entertainment—or politics or religion. We don't know what kind of food he ate or what radio programs he listened to or whether he had a dog. The focus is always on the main issue: the dust storms and their impact on his life as a farmer.

Reticent as he is about personal matters, Svobida does an excellent job of describing his emotions and feelings in response to climatic disasters and fluctuating farm prices. For him, as for others, battling the elements during the Dirty Thirties was a "seesaw of hope and anxiety," the former coming out on top time after time despite the heavy accumulation of the latter. Finally, however, Svobida succumbs to pessimism, concluding that "with the exception of a few favored localities, the whole Great Plains region is already a desert that cannot be reclaimed through the plans and labors of man." Ironically, as he was writing those words, moisture was returning, crops were improving, and farmers were beginning to recoup their losses. Yet, Svobida's careful narrative and eloquent warning serve as a caution to us today.

Brookings, South Dakota — John E. Miller

John E. Miller is Professor of History at South Dakota State University; his recent publications include a biography of Philip LaFollette and an article-length study of the South Dakota Farmers Holiday Association.

Hiram M. Drache. *Plowshares to Printouts: Farm Management as Viewed Through 75 Years of the Northwest Farm Managers Association*. Danville, IL: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1985. xiii + 261 pp., including dedication, "about the book," foreword, preface, acknowledgements, contents, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. Illustrated. $14.95 (cloth). Available from the publisher at 19-27 Jackson St., Danville, IL 61832-0594.

Concordia College historian Hiram M. Drache's latest book, *Plowshares to Printouts*, serves several purposes at once. It first is a detailed Diamond Jubilee history of the Northwest Farm Managers Association, arguably the least-known and most influential agricultural organization in the Upper Midwest. The book is also a platform from which its author declaims his

well-known opinions about agriculture, management of farm enterprises, and agricultural technology; Drache belongs to the "bigger, better, faster, growth forever" school of thought, and he freely emphasizes that philosophy in his outline of the association's history. Finally, Drache sketches the relationship between North Dakota's land-grant college, business enterprises connected with farming and agricultural production, and the "innovator" class of farmers in the region. These purposes combine to make *Plowshares to Printouts* at once a history, a tract, and a platform; necessarily, it bears some of these burdens better than others.

Plowshares to Printouts shines as a "house history." The detailed presentation of the NWFMA and its decade-by-decade development emphasizes its overriding concern with management. Drache traces the NWFMA's roots to a "farmer's institute" featuring railroad baron James J. Hill held at Fargo in 1899; that three-day meeting led to formation of the Tri-State Grain and Stock Growers Association. Annual conferences at Fargo attracted thousands, among them managers of larger farming operations who in 1907 decided to convene for informal discussions. In 1912, a separate organization emerged to deal specifically with farm management concerns; from the beginning professional agricultural educators played a major role, and the longterm commitment of Cap E. Miller, the chairman of the North Dakota Agricultural College Department of Farm Management, became integral to the NWFMA's existence. Miller joined in 1925 and remained the "moving and shaking force" until 1951. Subsequent leaders followed his footsteps and the NWFMA continues to be closely allied with North Dakota State University and the state Agricultural Experiment Station.

In telling the NWFMA's story, Drache draws mostly on organizational records and publications, interviews with longtime members, and his own reminiscences. He is a NWFMA member, served as its president in 1971, and has frequently addressed the various meetings. This familiarity is amply reflected in *Plowshares to Printouts*. The author's penchant for identifying individuals by their first names, his detailed descriptions of banquet menus and meeting facilities, and his year-by-year synopses of programs and tours emphasize how personal a history this volume is. Even so, a good editor could have greatly improved both prose and presentation.

Drache interprets the NWFMA as an organization dedicated to improving farm management through technological innovations. As a result, *Plowshares to Printouts* emphasizes the efforts of NWFMA leadership to identify and bring to the members these "new ideas" in machinery, seed, fertilizer and farm chemicals, computerized systems, and other technical developments. The effort involved a triad of interests: working farmers who joined and supported the organization, agricultural educators who wanted to disseminate specific ideas and philosophies, and commercial producers of farm technologies. All three groups were united by a common belief that profit was the ultimate measure of success in farm management.

As it pursued this goal, the NWFMA became an organization that mostly discussed "how to" rather than "why." Neither the ebb nor the flow of federal farm policy altered its commitment to the "fewer farmers, larger farms" concept of agriculture. Drache does not explain how this monolithic viewpoint came to supersede all others within the organization; it seems clear, however, that the NWFMA has always served as a constituent group to the state agricultural educational establishment, shares its projections concerning the future of agriculture, and as such has not been open to differing points-of-view. Within *Plowshares to Printouts* is little evidence of the discussion and dissent that should be expected from an organization fostered with public money and essentially headquartered at a public institution. Even more striking is the glaring absence of connections between the NWFMA and farm organizations such as the North Dakota Farmers Union and the highly visible presence of individuals in leadership positions who were (and are) closely associated with the American Farm Bureau. Drache's failure to analyze the development of a narrowly-defined focus for the NWFMA and the way that viewpoint has been used to influence public policy is the major shortcoming of the book.

Drache is best when he discusses technology and innovation. Interesting chronologies at the beginning of each chapter list major developments in agriculture during the respective decades. This cavalcade of change melds with informative tables and a fine (though too much reduced) selection of photographs to give plenty of information about the subject at hand. An appendix lists the association's officers, sponsors, and other useful data, and the book has a good bibliography.

Plowshares to Printouts is a worthwhile "house history." An organization, such as the NWFMA, whose members become governors, legislators, and local leaders deserves to be better known. However, to subsequent studies remains the task of evaluating the longterm impact of the Northwest Farm Managers Association and placing the organization in historical context. This book provides the details and the organizational point-of-view—the analysis is left to the future.

—editor

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

To the editor:

The cover picture on the Spring 1986 issue of *North Dakota History* really brought a flood of memories for me and members of my family.

Our family visited the Sullys Hill Park during the summer of 1924 and the Model T pictured on your cover could very well have been the mate to the 1917 Model T Touring car our family traveled in that summer.

. . . The only question your article did not entirely clear up for me was why if it had been designated a National park in 1904 it carried the entrance sign, "Sully's Hill National Game Preserve" in 1924, I know we all remember it as "Sullys Hill National Park" and it is so identified in our family photograph album. . . .

Robert N. Huey
Sioux Falls, SD

The sign, to the best of our knowledge, simply affirms the article's contention about the status of the Sullys Hill National Park. As author David Harmon notes, the park never received significant funding; rather, the associated Game Preserve operated by the U.S. Biological Survey was the entity that obtained the few dollars that were available. Hence, the one entity could afford a sign and the other could not. That probably accounts for the fact that the "Park" entrance carried the "Game Preserve" sign.

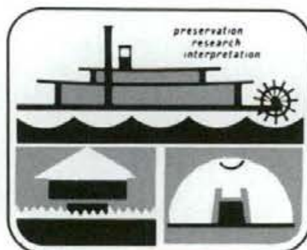
—editor

To the editor:

I have either a point of information or a grumble. I enjoyed [the] "Editor's Choice" about Richard V. Grace [*NDH*, Summer 1986], and appreciated knowing his papers are at the Heritage Center, as I don't remember seeing his name on a listing anywhere. . . . It would have been helpful to readers of *North Dakota History* had your notes included mention of his books about his career. They are interesting reading.

So, if you didn't know about the books—you mention only "personal manuscripts"—this is a point of information which should have been mentioned. . . .

Kathie Anderson
Grand Forks, North Dakota



STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH DAKOTA

NORTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL BOARD

President . . . . Lowell Johnson
Vice-President . . . . Lawrence L. Loendorf
Secretary . . . . Agnes Palanuk

Appointed Members

Terms Expiring July 1, 1987

Lowell Johnson, Wahpeton
Lawrence L. Loendorf, Grand Forks
Karl Limvere, Ypsilanti

Terms Expiring July 1, 1988

David Bliss, McKenzie
Robert Carlson, Glenburn
Larry Tinjum, Powers Lake

Terms Expiring July 1, 1989

Sharon Wermedahl, Fargo
Agnes Palanuk, Dickinson
Pemina Yellow Bird, Sanish

Ex-Officio Members

Vernon Fahy, State Engineer
Walter Hjelle, Highway Commissioner
Ben Meier, Secretary of State
Dale Henegar, State Game and Fish Commissioner
State Forester
Margaret Stefanak, State Librarian
Robert Hanson, State Treasurer

STAFF

Superintendent . . . . James E. Sperry
Deputy Superintendent . . . . Robert J. Schlobohm
Director/Archeology and Historic Preservation . . . . Louis N. Hafermehl
Director/Education and Interpretation . . . . Larry Remele
Director/Historic Sites . . . . Melvin V. Barnett
Director/Museum . . . . Brian Alexander
Director/State Archives and Historical Research Library . . . . Gerald G. Newborg

Authors' Gallery

Jaroslaw Sztendera is an author and scholar whose writings include *Western Ukraine: A History*. A resident of Washington, D.C., he holds an M.A. in Eastern European history from the University of Texas and has attended post-graduate school at St. Andrew's College (Winnipeg) and the University of Illinois. Presently he is employed by the Ukrainian Branch of the Voice of America.

Alvin Kapusta, a native of Max, North Dakota, graduated from Minot State College and obtained graduate training in Slavic Languages and Literature from the University of California (Berkeley). Since 1956 he has served with the United States Foreign Service and recently retired from the United States State Department, where he was Special Assistant for Soviet Nationalities. An author, lecturer, and scholar expert in Eastern Europe, he lives in the Washington, D.C., area.

Theodore B. Pedeliski is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of North Dakota. A native of the western North Dakota Ukrainian settlements he received his undergraduate training at Dickinson State College, his MA from the University of North Dakota, and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Though his list of publications includes studies of law, education, and politics, he regularly provides expertise to projects in ethnic studies. His chapter, "Slavic Settlement in North Dakota," appears in *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History* (1986).

Reverend Michael Bobersky obtained his education at St. Basil College (Stamford, Connecticut) and the St. Josaphat Pontifical College at Rome, Italy. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1935 and thereafter served parishes in Massachusetts for ten years before coming to western North Dakota in 1945. As leader of the St. Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church parish, he served a far-flung flock until his retirement in 1976, but also gained reknown for the experiments with horticulture and shelter belts; the latter won his church awards for Soil Conservation activity.

Agnes Palanuk, founder of the Ukrainian Cultural Institute, is a native of Belfield, North Dakota, who received her undergraduate training at Dickinson State College. She taught rural elementary schools while raising a family with her husband on their Billings County ranch. Active in local historical work, she co-edited the award-winning *Echoing Trails: Billings County History* (1979) and served as president of the Billings County Historical Society. She was named to the North Dakota State Historical Board in 1985 and remains active with the Ukrainian Cultural Institute.

Editor's Choice

—State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection

Sepchenko Family Handmade Furniture

Within the Museum collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota are about one dozen examples of magnificent hand-carved furnishings and other decorative items made by John and Peter Sepchenko, sons of "Russian" homesteaders who farmed near Kief. The intricate, painstaking carvings represent a beautiful, classic folk art seldom duplicated in North Dakota museum collections.

The Sepchenko family came to the Kief area about 1900 from Russia. Like many of their neighbors, they called themselves Russians, but really came from the Ukraine. After establishing their farm, the family remained until 1917, when they moved east to Pennsylvania to work in the munitions industry during World War I. The farm and original house stood vacant until 1930; then Aneray Sepchenko (son of the original homesteader) and his son John returned to the land and began constructing a new stone house that was completed in 1934.

The family's woodcarving actually began in Pennsylvania. A second of Aneray Sepchenko's sons, Peter, started making furniture for the home they planned to build when they came back to North Dakota. However, he died in 1928; Peter's father and brother brought the items he had created with them two years later. Once the new stone home was finished, John Sepchenko also began to carve; it is now for the most part unknown which of the brothers designed and decorated the furniture and other pieces which survive.

Among the items held by the State Historical Society of North Dakota are a portal, stair railings, newel posts, a high-backed upholstered chair, a desk, two cabinets, and a bench. These pieces were donated by the family in 1967 and have been displayed several times in the North Dakota Heritage Center as examples of the finest in North Dakota folk art.