

THE
UKRAINIANS

THE INTRODUCTION

There is a land in south eastern Europe described by ancient historians as "a land of milk and honey" and by a recent historian as "the granary of Europe". It is the Ukraine.

The Ukraine is the largest non-Russian nation not only in the Soviet Union but also behind the Iron Curtain. Its population of over 45 million ranks with that of England, France, and Italy. In geographic area it extends from the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe to the foothills of Caucasus, bordering on the Middle East. The territory of Ukraine exceeds that of France and embraces such historical cities as Lviv, Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa.

Ukraine accepted Christianity in the year 988 A.D. and developed a high cultural standard, notably in literature.

The indomitable Ukrainian will for freedom and independence crystallized in the old Ukrainian State from the 9th to the 14th century, in the Ukrainian Kozak State from the middle of the 16th century to approximately, the end of the 18th century, in the National Republic from 1917 to 1921, and again by the proclamation of independence of the Ukrainian State on June 30, 1941, in the city of Lviv.

In World War II, millions of Ukrainian patriots seized the short-lived opportunity of German invasion to attempt once again to realize the hope of Ukraine's independence, only to be frustrated by the Nazi scourge. This unbending will continues to be strong and powerful in the epic struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgence Army (UPA) against the evil forces of Muscovite tyranny and the well demonstrated resistance of Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian Insurgence Army (UPA) became a glorious symbol of Ukrainian national resistance, which carries on its banners the sign of God and the Ukraine.

One of the first victims of Russian Communist aggression the Ukraine has proved to be the Achilles Heel of the Soviet Union. The destruction of its national churches, the horrible man-made famine of 1932-33, which took the life of eight million Ukrainians, the mass murder of Vinnitsa in 1937-39 and vast purges and deportations decreed by Moscow have failed to exterminate the spiritual and moral resources for national freedom in the Ukraine.

The historic capital of Kiev, with centuries of rich traditions and culture, still symbolizes the indestructible hope of a nation determined to be sovereign, free and independent.

Many Ukrainians were forced to leave the country to seek freedom and a more favourable environment elsewhere. Canada is one of those friendly lands which attracted them.

The first Ukrainian immigrants in Canada started their harsh pioneering life on the prairie provinces in the early spring of 1891. Their dedication and effort helped make the Canadian West the granary of the Dominion.

The descendents of those pioneers, after long years of adjustment, have taken their place in Canadian public life, and are well represented among teachers, priests, writers, musicians, scientists, doctors, businessmen, economists, and members of the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa.

In the First World War there were 10 thousand Ukrainians in the Canadian services and in the second World War 40 thousand, or about 10% of the Ukrainian population in Canada. Many of our Brantford boys were among these. One paid the supreme sacrifice. Private John Joseph Bialas, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. John Bialas, 84 Terrace Hill St., was killed in action in Italy, on September 24, 1944, and is now buried in San Vito, on the Uso River, Italy. He was 23 years of age. Enlisting in May, 1942, Pte. Bialas trained in Brantford, Ottawa and Prince George, where he joined the Cameron Highlanders. He was posted overseas in 1943 and was transferred to the Westminster Regiment with which he saw his last action. Born in Brantford, John attended St. Basil's Separate School and was a member of the congregation of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church. He was one of the best known of Brantford's young hockey players. He was on the Brantford Lions Club Hockey Team in 1940-41, and the next year played for the Akron Clippers in Ohio. He was a skilful skater and a good team man. Prior to his enlistment he worked at the Universal Cooler Company of Canada, Ltd.

SETTLEMENT IN BRANTFORD

Brantford's growth as an industrial centre limited the opportunities for farmer settlers. So Ukrainian farmers, coming to this area settled in Waterford, Simcoe, Delhi and vicinity, and have proven their talents in the art of agriculture. Others who chose Brantford as their home make their living here as industrial help, businessmen and tradesmen.

The first Ukrainian settlers in Brantford arrived in 1902, and there are still a few of them here. The language barrier, long hours of work in the factories and the strange environment, hampered

their organization as a national or religious community. The strange anonymity of those first Ukrainians in Brantford continued almost three long years until their adjustment. Early in the spring of 1905 the situation changed rapidly when the Pratt Letchworth Co. hired a new labour force for its foundry. Most of the new workers were Ukrainians from Buffalo, N.Y. They came in a group of about fifty families. All were of the Catholic faith. Very close ties to the country of their origin kept them together.

In the early days there was no Ukrainian church in Brantford. Religious services for the newcomers were held in St. Basil's Church. As it became stronger numerically, the Ukrainian community began to think of a church of its own and a community centre.

During the Ukrainian Christmas of 1907 a special committee consisting of Mike Madarasz, Dmytro Walkowycz, Wasyl Romanczak, Iwan Kastranec and many others, started to collect money for the building fund while carolling. Three years later this committee had enough money to buy a lot on High Street with the intention of building a church on it. In June 1911, the Ukrainian Brotherhood of St. John the Baptist was organized with Michael Pontus as president, Stefan Kowalyk as vice-president, Stefan Serdynskij as secretary and Michael Madarasz as treasurer. This first benevolent association became the nucleus of the first Ukrainian parish in Brantford.

In 1917, the official building committee bought a building at 100 Terrace Hill Street. After long and tedious work, the structure was converted to a church and St. John the Baptist was chosen as its patron. The present Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. the Baptist on Terrace Hill Street was rebuilt after a fire destroyed the old structure in 1928. Many other improvements and changes have been made since. From then until 1947, the parish was served by 23 priests. His Excellency Bishop Isidore Borecky functioned as one of them. The second and third generation has continued to preserve the national and religious identity of the Ukrainian community in Brantford.

After World War II, total occupation of all Ukrainian territories by Communist forces compelled thousands of Ukrainians to leave their homeland to escape death or concentration camps in Siberia. Most of them were people with higher education and an established career. A small part of this third wave of immigrants arrived in Brantford in 1947-48. The local Ukrainian community received the newcomers warmly and helped them to adjust to their new life.

In 1949, Father Joseph Telizhyn started to serve the parish and in the 18 years he has been in Brantford, a new rectory has resulted from his efforts and the generosity of all members of this parish.

During this period, this parish hall was enlarged and the inside of the church was improved and renovated becoming more suitable for the members of the church. At present, the parish of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist includes 130 families. There is a very well organized and active Ukrainian school attended by 45 children. The League of Catholic Women lends help to all the needs of the church and this year the ladies have undertaken the task of buying new pews, carpeting and tile.

The 1947 immigrants brought a very clear picture of the situation in which the Ukrainian people live under Communist rule. This caused a revival of anti-Communist feelings in Canada which was seen in the creation of a new political organization, the Canadian League of Ukraine Liberation (LWU).

The Brantford Branch of the League was organized in 1953. Its first president was H. Noha and Wm. Borodacz was secretary. The Branch is an active element of the Ukrainian community. Another active group is the Ukrainian Youth Association founded in 1951. Its first president was the late Michael Mandziuk. Its main purpose is the cultivation of Ukrainian national traditions, development of language abilities among the young people and the encouragement of recreational and educational activities.

The Ukrainian community in Brantford is a responsible part of the city's national minorities group. It has found here general and personal satisfaction, and feels deeply the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

The second oldest Ukrainian organization in Brantford is the educational, cultural and non-political "Ukrainian National Home" initiated at the home of William Manulak. A mixed choir was formed under the direction of M. Kruchak. Choir rehearsals and one concert were held at the home of Leo Swider. For about two years the members collected funds by giving concerts, plays and bazaars, and eventually were able to buy a lot at 16 Dundas St. E. on which they started to build a hall. The most active person in the young organization was George Doff. Other strong supporters were William Manulak, Petro Olenuk and Stach Cirka, who guaranteed the mortgage on the building. The new home was officially opened in July, 1937. Among the many distinguished guests attending the opening was the Mayor of Brantford, the late Mr. McBride, present Senator Ross Macdonald and Mr. George Gordon, present M.P.P. With the choir from Toronto and Boys Band of Brantford, the procession under the leadership of Wolodymyr Sikevich (General of the Ukrainian Army in Europe) came to the war Memorial where the wreath was laid. With the concert and banquet, the ceremonies were ended.



ST. JOHN'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



ST. MICHAEL'S UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



ST. MICHAEL'S UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



UKRAINIAN DANCING GROUP

The first Ukrainian immigrants of Orthodox Faith came to Brantford about 1910. An Orthodox church was just a dream to them since most came from a poverty-stricken homeland. So some of the new settlers went to churches of other denominations.

The first Ukrainian Orthodox congregation in Brantford became a fact when Father Shumsky organized St. Mary's Parish in 1935. Father Shumsky was priest of the congregation from its birth until he was replaced by Father Lazaar in 1940. A year later the parish ceased to exist. For this there were several reasons. There was a lack of effort to hold the parishioners together in the formative years. In the second World War several members were lost through displacement in employment or on military services. Also, the church had no official ties with the centralizing administrative organ, the Consistory in Winnipeg. Until a new congregation was formed, local people attended churches in nearest towns and cities.

During the latter years of World War 2, many arrivals were people of Ukrainian origin who for many years had lived in the Prairie Provinces. Many were already members of both the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of Canada. The church provided for the spiritual needs of its adherents and the League provided cultural and educational facilities through its paper the Ukrainian Voice and its institutes for students in Saskatoon, Edmonton, and other Ukrainian homes throughout Canada. Branches active in Brantford are: Ukrainian Self-Reliance Men's Association; Canadian Ukrainian Youth Association; also Ukrainian Women's Association.

The local Ukrainian Self-Reliance Men's Association was organized in 1948 when Mr. N. Evanetz was elected president. The Canadian Ukrainian Youth Association was organized locally on October 24, 1948, Mr. W. Chaplinsky, president. This is an organization of boys and girls of school age. They assist the Elders and prepare themselves to take over the responsibilities of the Church in the future.

The most active of the three is the Ukrainian Women's Association which started in Brantford on May 29, 1949 with Mrs. B. Cybulski as president. As an organization the Women's Association is a member of Canadian Council of Women; The Canadian Consumer's Association, and of various women's organizations and committees on the local, provincial and federal levels. It assists in drives for funds for worthwhile causes.

The desire of the people to worship as they wished led to organizing a new Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Congregation in Brantford on

May 15, 1947. The first service was held on June 17, 1947 at St. James' Anglican Church, Brantford. Very Rev. T. Kisiliuk was the first priest. In the formative years services were held monthly at St. James' Church, and later were accommodated at St. Luke's Church, Brantford. In 1950 the congregation acquired a property, consisting of 4½ acres of land and a big home on West Street. The home was later rebuilt into a church, officially opened for services in 1952. The congregation adopted St. Michael as its Patron. Archbishop Michael heads the Eastern Diocese, and under his jurisdiction falls St. Michael's Parish in Brantford whose priest is the Very Rev. J. Triska. The parish has well over a hundred families adherent to the church.

A Brantford branch of the Ukrainian Fraternal Association was formed in 1947. In reality it is an insurance body with head office in Winnipeg, and provides some financial security and benefits through insurance. The branch in Brantford comprises of approximately 100 members covered by almost \$300,000 insurance.

The Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror "Suzero" has a Brantford branch formed on Nov. 2, 1957 at the Ukrainian National Home. "Suzero" is formed mostly by new Canadians who during the Second World War escaped from Kremlin tyranny after years under the Soviet Regime, some in Ukraine, others in Siberia and some in the far north. These people witnessed the torture and hunger of many of their loved ones.

The main functions of this organization are: To supply information to people in Canada about the regime in Ukraine and other countries occupied by Russia, and to continue in Canada the fight against communism. The organization has published many books and pamphlets in Ukrainian as well as in English.

In closing, we Ukrainians wish to join with all our fellow citizens in expressing pride in being Canadians and celebrating Canada's 100th Birthday. God Bless Canada.