

# THE UKRAINIANS IN RHODE ISLAND

*Faith and Determination*

Edited by

RT. REV. JOHN J. MOWATT



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Rhode Island Ethnic Heritage Pamphlet Series

Published Jointly  
by  
The Rhode Island Heritage Commission  
and  
The Rhode Island Publications Society  
Providence, 1988

Published jointly by  
The Rhode Island Heritage Commission  
Robert B. Lynch, *Chairman*  
and  
The Rhode Island Publications Society  
Dr. Patrick T. Conley, *Chairman*

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Printed in the U.S.A.  
ISBN: 0-917012-90-9

*Published with a grant from the  
Rhode Island Heritage Commission*

Rhode Island Ethnic Heritage Pamphlet Series  
Dr. Patrick T. Conley, *General Editor*

Cover drawing: Ukrainian Trident with Cross

This pamphlet is dedicated to the millennium  
of Christianity in Ukraine  
988-1988

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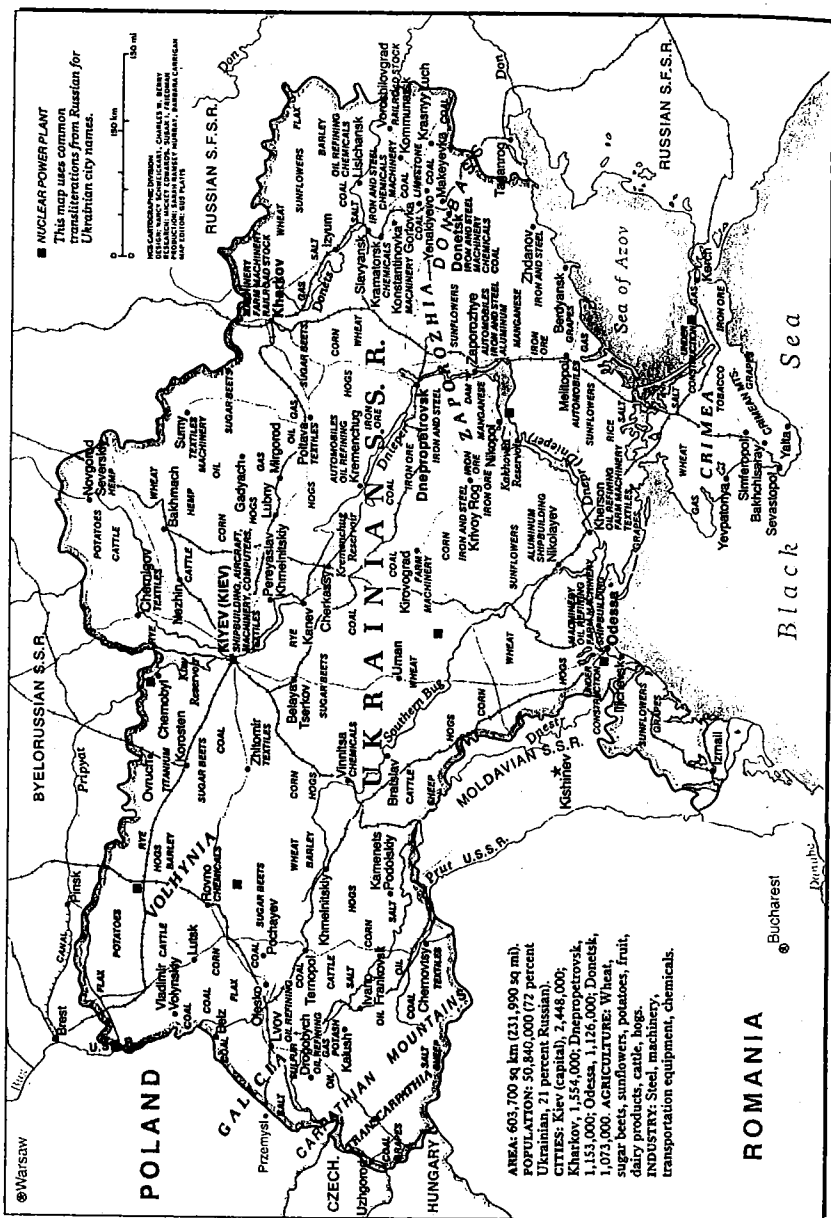
## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

In 1975 and 1976, on the eve of the bicentennial observance, in my capacity as chairman of Rhode Island's celebration (ri76), I established eighteen ethnic heritage committees, consisting of recognized leaders of this state's major ethnocultural groups. One purpose of this move was to involve in bicentennial activities those ethnic communities whose contact with this country did not extend as far back as the Revolutionary era. I urged such groups to observe and commemorate the contributions they had made to the American and Rhode Island experience from the time of their arrival down to the bicentennial year. A much more important reason for establishing the ethnic heritage program, however, was to allow each group to present its unique contributions, customs, and folkways to its neighbors from other cultural backgrounds. Formulated under the premise that knowledge promotes understanding and understanding begets brotherhood, the program was designed to break down the ethnocentric barriers and antagonisms that hindered us from achieving that lofty motto and goal—*E pluribus unum*, one out of many.

The one task assigned to each group upon its formation was to write a brief interpretive account of its Rhode Island experience—its motives for migration, areas of settlement, cultural survivals, and economic, political, and social activities—together with an assessment of its contribution to the development of our state. Though some efforts are more sociological, subjective, anecdotal, or selective than the neat, precise historical narrative that I envisioned, each of these pamphlets in its own way makes a valuable statement to all Rhode Islanders and provides a useful self-evaluation for the group that is the subject of analysis.

After the bicentennial's expiration, the concept of an ethnic heritage pamphlet series was kept alive by the Rhode Island Heritage Commission and its tireless chairman, Robert J. McKenna. Albert T. Klyberg of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Dr. Hilliard Beller of the Rhode Island Publications Society, and, especially, the authors of the various essays have also labored to bring this project to fruition as their contribution to the 350th anniversary of the founding of the state. No historical enterprise could be more appropriate for this 1986 celebration than a recounting of the toil and the triumph of our diverse peoples: From American Indians to Southeast Asians, we are Rhode Islanders all!

Patrick T. Conley



Map courtesy of the National Geographic Society

## Ukraine, Ukrainians, and the New World

As a national ethnic group, the Ukrainians are perhaps the least understood in the Western world. Although they have made a sizable contribution to world history, they were not always treated justly by historical events. There was, in fact, no Ukrainian political nation on the eve of the first mass migration of Ukrainians to America; if the Ukrainians had any political identity at all in Europe, where they formed an ethnocultural community, it was one associated with Russia, Austria, or Hungary. The geographic region called Ukraine was dominated by Tzarist Russia, and western Ukraine was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The ancient name for Ukraine was *Rus'*, and perhaps for this reason alone many Europeans and Americans conveniently but erroneously consider Ukrainians to be Russians. This misconception is due to the fact that the Tzarist Russian government always claimed that the Ukrainians were, in fact, Russians (Little Russians) and that their language was nothing more than a dialect of the Great Russian language. In their own way, the Soviets perpetuate this theory today.

Ukraine is situated in southeastern Europe. Its territory (now in the boundaries of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic) covers 360,000 square miles. Starting from the Black Sea in the south, Ukraine borders Romania and Hungary in the southwest, Czechoslovakia and Poland in the west, Byelorussia in the north, and Russia in the east.

With a population of fifty million people, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe. Its topography consists of vast plains and plateaus. Mountains are located on the outskirts. The Carpathian Mountains run through southwestern Ukraine; the Crimean range rises along the Crimean peninsula; and a portion of the Caucasus traverses the southwest.

Ukraine has the richest agricultural land in Europe, and its black soil is especially suited to the cultivation of grains such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, maize, millet, and buckwheat. For this reason, Ukraine has often been called the Breadbasket of Europe. Among its commercial crops are sugar, beets, tobacco, hemp, flax, sunflowers and hops, and a variety of fruit and vegetables. Animal husbandry is also practiced.

Ukraine is well endowed with natural resources. These include minerals such as coal, natural gas, peat, and petroleum, and metals like iron, manganese, titanium, mercury, magnesium, and nickel. Among plentiful nonmetals are silica, lime, dolomites, and graphite.

Economically, its mineral-rich soil has placed Ukraine among Europe's richest and most industrially developed countries. The manufacture of machinery, equipment, and fabricated products, chemicals, construction materials, automobiles, glass, china, pottery, food, and consumer products has spread to all parts of Ukraine.

Culturally and linguistically, the Ukrainians are a Slavic people. By present-day reckoning, Slavs are divided into three main groups: the eastern group (Byelorussians, Russians, and Ukrainians); the western group (Czechs, Poles, and Slovaks); and the southern group (Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, Macedonians, Bosnians, other Yugoslavians, and Bulgarians). Each of these particular groups cherishes a highly developed sense of national identity, but at the same time all have a unique feeling of belonging to one Slavic family.

With the unification of the various Slavic tribes living in what is present-day Ukraine into the Kievan Kingdom, a nation came into being. In 879 Kiev was attacked and captured by the Vikings, and all the inhabitants of ancient Rus' came under the rule of the Scandinavian royal family of the House of Rurik. The new rulers adopted the customs, traditions, and language of the conquered people and set about the construction of a vast and powerful state, which came to be known as Kievan Rus'. This Ukrainian state reached its height of power in the tenth century under the rule of its popular prince Vladimir the Great. In 988 Vladimir requested and received baptism from the Greek Church and made Christianity the state religion of his nation.

Years later, after the death of Prince Vladimir, quarrels broke out in the royal family, and the House of Rurik was divided into four separate branches. The first three continued to rule in Ukraine proper, while the fourth branch established itself in the northeast region, near the Volga River, where in time the cities of Suzdal, Vladimir, and Moscow were founded.

In 1240 the Mongols advanced from the east and sacked Kiev. These invaders kept Kiev's inhabitants in servitude for some 250 years. It was during this period that the center of Ukrainian national life shifted to the southwest, to the provinces of Galicia and Volynia. By the end of the twelfth century Galicia and Volynia had united to form a single principality retaining the name Rus'. For some one hundred years this new Ukrainian state prospered, but in the fourteenth century Galicia was conquered by Poland, and Volynia, together with the princely city of Kiev, was annexed by Lithuania. In 1569 Lithuania joined Poland to form a commonwealth, and Poland became the dominant power in this newly formed political union.

The years under Polish rule, both before and after the formation of the commonwealth, were very difficult for Ukrainians. The Polish kings desired a religious, cultural, and political unity in their realm, and to achieve this uniformity they attempted to eliminate Ukrainian institutions.

Matters were especially difficult for the Ukrainian Church, then the most powerful element of Ukrainian national identity. This institution was an Eastern church, and consequently not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, to which all Poles adhered. To understand the religious situation, one must go back in time. In 1054 the Christian Church had been dealt a heavy blow when a schism took place between the Patriarchal Sees of Rome and Constantinople. This unfortunate event caused a separation, which exists to this day, between Eastern and Western Christians. Having accepted Christianity in 988 from the Patriarchal See of Constantinople, when East and West were in ecclesiastical communion, the Ukrainians, after the schism, found themselves separated from the Patriarchal See of Rome. The Poles, strongly attached to Rome, consequently looked upon Eastern Christians as undesirables within their kingdom. Heavy taxes were levied on Ukrainian churches, and if these taxes were not paid, the churches were closed or confiscated.

In 1596 the Ukrainian hierarchy, together with the Byelorussian bishops, signed an act of union with the Roman See. The Ukrainian and Byelorussian churches were allowed to retain their Eastern Christian rites, traditions, and ecclesiastical discipline intact and at the same time were considered to be an integral part of the Catholic Church whose chief bishop was the pope of Rome. The Ukrainians hoped that the Polish king, who was also a Catholic, would now cease to interfere in their religious and cultural life, but such was not to be.

A number of the Ukrainian nobility refused to accept the Act of Union, so a new Orthodox hierarchy was consecrated for them by the

Eastern Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. From that time forward, the majority of Ukrainians have belonged to one of two churches—either the Orthodox or the Catholic.

In spite of the Ukraine's subjugation, Ukrainian national identity continued to be preserved by various Cossack groups. In 1648 the Cossack *hetman* Bohdan Khmelnytsky defeated the Polish armies and erected an independent Ukrainian state. Unfortunately, to ease tension in the area, he signed a treaty with the Russians from the State of Muscovy. These aggressive Russians looked upon this accord as an invitation to come in and rule. Gradually these Muscovites began to station Russian troops throughout Ukraine, and despite several attempts by the Cossacks to secure a permanent Ukrainian state, Russia, under Peter I, took over the entire country by 1709 and brought eastern Ukraine and a part of western Ukraine under Russian rule. Meanwhile, Austria had gained control over three provinces of western Ukraine—Galicia, Bukovina, and Carpatho-Ukraine—all of which were once part of the proud eleventh-century Kievan Rus'.

During World War I, with the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires in disarray, the Ukrainians again attempted to establish a free and independent state. A parliament, called the Rada, was duly elected, and on January 22, 1918, it declared the Ukrainian National Republic to be the free sovereign and independent state of the Ukrainian people. But in April of that year the advancing Germans overturned this new entity and placed a group of conservative landowners in charge. This landed gentry, in turn, established a monarchy headed by Pavlo Skoropadsky, who was proclaimed *hetman*, an ancient title used by the old Cossack leadership.

In November 1918 Germany and Austria acknowledged defeat, and all the national groups of the old empire—Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and Ukrainians—organized to prepare for self-determination and independence in accordance with such postwar aims as those articulated by President Woodrow Wilson in his famous Fourteen Points. On November 1, 1918, the Ukrainians of the former Hapsburg (i.e., Austrian) Empire proclaimed the existence of the independent Republic of Western Ukraine and indicated that they wished to unite with those Ukrainians under Russian rule. On January 22, 1919, the two Ukrainian republics were formally and officially united.

But the newly formed republic was no match for the surrounding armies who were intent on invasion. The Red Russian army, determined to have a Bolshevik regime in Ukraine, reinvaded

from northeast. The Imperial (White) Russian army, anxious to include Ukraine in a new noncommunist Russian state, invaded from the southeast. A Polish army, set on including Galicia and Volynia in the newly revived Polish nation, invaded from the west. The Bolshevik troops defeated the White Russian army and then concluded a truce with the Poles that recognized the latter's claim to Galicia and Volynia. The Ukrainian national army was finally defeated in 1920, bringing to a swift end the Ukrainian National Republic and dashing the hopes of millions who had longed for a free and independent nation.

World War II again brought suffering and heartache to the Ukrainian people. With the collapse of Nazi Germany, the long arm of Bolshevik communism reached out to grasp and control other freedom-loving people. The western Ukrainian provinces of Galicia and Volynia, together with Carpatho-Ukraine, were absorbed into the Soviet empire.

After World War I the Orthodox Ukrainian Church had been absorbed into the Russian Orthodox Church. Now the same fate awaited the Catholic Ukrainian Church. The 350-year-old Act of Union with Rome was declared null and void. In 1946 the Ukrainian Catholic Church was declared illegal in its native territories and officially "united" to the Orthodox Church of Moscow.

The bondage which Ukraine and the Ukrainians suffer today is no doubt the worst in the long and turbulent history of this nation and its people. In the years 1932 and 1933, during the depths of a worldwide economic depression, an estimated seven million Ukrainians died of starvation in a terrible famine that ravaged Soviet-occupied Ukraine. But unlike other famines, caused by such natural factors as drought or pestilence, this one was the desired by-product of a deliberate political policy. In an effort to finance rapid industrialization, to enforce collectivization, and to break the will of a nationally conscious Ukrainian peasantry, the Soviet regime under Stalin ordered the expropriation of all foodstuffs and grain from the hands of the rural population. The result was a famine of almost unbelievable dimensions—a mass murder by decree.

The story of the Ukraine's Great Famine does much to illustrate the essential inhumanity and cynicism that has characterized Soviet rule for the last three generations, and marks it to this day. But the deep faith, abiding hope, and strong determination of a people who yearn for freedom will continue until Ukraine is independent and its people free. The stirring words of the national anthem of the short-lived free Ukraine speak of a nation that is not dead; they proclaim a

readiness to sacrifice body and soul for freedom, because Ukrainians are all "brothers of the Cossack race."

\* \* \* \* \*

This very brief and simplified history of the travail of the Ukraine and her people explains why so many Ukrainians were determined to find freedom, even if they had to seek it in a new and foreign land. It was this determination that brought Ukrainians to the faraway shores of America.

Although American historical records indicate that there were people of Ukrainian origin on the North American continent as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was in the years from 1870 to 1914 that the first large-scale immigration of Ukrainians to the United States took place. The majority of the immigrants came from the western provinces—Galicia and the Carpathian regions of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most were Catholics of the Byzantine Rite (called Uniates by American churchmen). For the most part, they were peasant farmers who were not able to make a decent living on their small farms and could not afford to purchase more land at home. The new arrivals often wrote home to encourage others to follow, and Ukrainian immigrants usually settled in those areas where their relatives or friends were already living. A heavy influx came to work the coal mines of Pennsylvania. That state and New York received the largest percentages of early Ukrainian immigration, but sizable Ukrainian communities developed also in New Jersey, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Recently, California has acquired a significant Ukrainian population as well.

During the 1870s Ukrainian immigration was sporadic, but from the 1880s to World War I the influx was continuous. In 1899 estimates of the number of Ukrainians in the United States ranged from 200,000 to 500,000, with the lower figure being more plausible. Since 1899 immigration authorities have developed greater precision in recording the races and the nationalities of foreign arrivals. According to the annual immigration reports for the years from 1899 to 1930, a total of 268,311 Ukrainian immigrants entered the ports of this country. These annual reports listed the immigrants under the obsolete and less than generic terms "Ruthenians," "Rusins," or "Russniaks."

Rhode Island received 2,041 of this total, and undoubtedly others came prior to 1899, when nationality rather than ethnic background was the means of designation and many Ukrainians were listed as Russians or Austrians. The state's peak year was 1913, when

337 migrants from the Ukraine entered Rhode Island. The principal source of this influx was Galicia.

The causes for Ukrainian migration to the United States in the pre-World War I era were many. The leading student of American Ukrainians, Wasyl Halich, contends that Russian political and cultural oppression was the primary factor, but even those Ukrainians from East Galicia and Ruthenia who were under Austrian rule prior to 1918 were quite discontented with their lack of national identity. Other motives for migration were economic—the promise of high wages and steady employment, the prospect of free homestead land, and poor conditions at home, including small farms, high taxes, and limited industry. Social and cultural discrimination by Russians or by Polish and Hungarian officials within the Hapsburg Empire was also a source of discontent.

It appears that a good number of those immigrants labeled Austrian- or Russian-born in the Rhode Island state censuses were from the Ukraine. This observation is especially true for the city of Woonsocket, where the 1920 census classified 6.1 percent of the population as of Austrian stock. A Ukrainian Catholic Church was founded in Woonsocket, and it continues to function today.

Between 1920 and 1939 no more than 40,000 Ukrainians immigrated to America. Most of these migrants came from those parts of Ukraine ruled by Poland, since very few Ukrainians were permitted to immigrate from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1920.

The next large influx of Ukrainian immigrants took place in the post-World War II period. This immigration was composed mostly of families and individuals who had left Ukraine during the war (many were in forced-work camps in Germany or in other occupied territories) and who refused to return to their homeland under Communist dictatorship. In the beginning of 1948 there were approximately 250,000 Ukrainian displaced persons in Western Europe. Under the Displaced Persons Act passed by Congress in that year, some 85,000 of these Ukrainians entered the United States. In 1952 another 33,000 were admitted, and 8,000 more arrived in 1955. Today almost every state, be it large or small, has a Ukrainian population.

The post-World War II immigration brought new and young families into Rhode Island. This influx did much to strengthen and renew the existing Ukrainian-American communities. Through their religious and cultural organizations, these communities continue to maintain the Ukrainian heritage, with all its rich customs and

traditions. As a people who have known tyranny, sorrow, and oppression in their beloved homeland, Ukrainian-Americans deeply appreciate the liberty which America has offered to them. Here in Rhode Island, Ukrainians are most appreciative of patronage and support given to all ethnic groups by the state through its Heritage Commission, and they endorse the sentiments expressed by the poet Taras Shevchenko: "ABSORB ALL CULTURES BUT FORGET NOT YOUR OWN."

## Ukrainians and Religion

Religion was always an important part of the life of the inhabitants in all the towns and villages of Ukraine. Ukrainian immigrants to the New World attempted to recreate this religious milieu, so one of their first concerns was to construct churches for their local communities. Since religion is such a vital and integral part of Ukrainian life and culture, the history of Rhode Island Ukrainians cannot be understood without examining the development of these churches.

### St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church

When the Ukrainians began arriving in Rhode Island in the late nineteenth century, they formed church communities, church-related organizations, and benevolent societies while earning their living in mills at such localities as Woonsocket, Manville, Central Falls, Providence, Pawtucket, and Crompton. The early years were extremely difficult, often unbearable, but most of the immigrants settled and adapted to their new home.

The first arrivals consisted mostly of men. They were young, eager, venturesome, and ready for new horizons. The mills employed them in the least desirable jobs and at the lowest pay, and they climbed the job ladder very slowly. These pioneer immigrants to Rhode Island were from western Ukraine's small towns and villages: Bibrka, Skalat, Brody, Zbarazh, Berezhany, Radehiv, Rusiatyn, Ternopil, Rohatyn, and Yavoriv.

By 1903 the immigrants realized the need for the formation of a church which would suit the needs and customs of the Ukrainian people. Just before Easter of that year the first Ukrainian Catholic



liturgy was celebrated in Woonsocket's Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church by Rev. Teofan Obushkevych. Shortly thereafter St. Michael's parish was established and a hall (now St. Joan of Arc Church) was rented in Cumberland Hill for religious activities. Fathers Wolkaz, Ulycki, Winarski, Zaklynsky, and Lewinski came from out of state at regular intervals to minister to this embryonic parish.

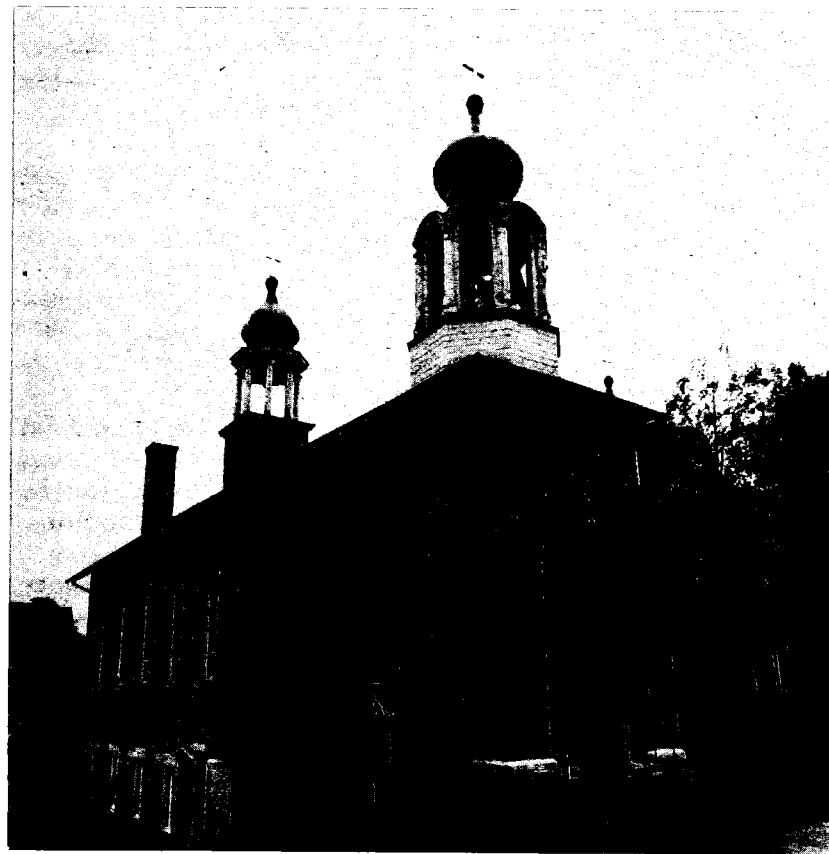
By the fall of 1907 the congregation had divided into two groups. One group established a Russian Orthodox parish in the village of Manville, in Lincoln, while the church in Cumberland Hill remained Ukrainian Catholic and received a permanent pastor, Rev. Michael Struminsky, in December 1908. Father Struminsky organized the parish and conducted services in Lyceum Hall. The new parish was incorporated and received its state charter on January 5, 1909. In June of that eventful year the parishoners purchased a building at 164 West School Street, Woonsocket, which they remodeled into a church. They also constructed a rectory in the rear of the church. These undertakings left the new parish burdened with a mortgage of \$5,500.

In 1910 a new pastor, Rev. Vladimir Dowhovych, arrived and organized Branch No. 206 of the Ukrainian National Association. The branch was named Zaporozska Sicz after the famous Cossack fortress. A third pastor, Rev. Basil Turula, came in 1911. Three years later a cemetery was purchased for \$1,500 and the church debt was paid in full. At this time the parish was growing rapidly with the arrival of many new immigrants. Families were reunited and births boomed. The number of Ukrainian children baptized in 1914 is recorded as 1,290; the number of families totaled 600. A parish choir was organized that year under the direction of the composer Michaylo Hayworonski. Such growth prompted Father Turula to acquire property on Blackstone Street in Woonsocket for a larger church. This new acquisition, which cost \$7,750, included a building that could be converted to use as a rectory.

In 1917 another parish, St. Stephen's (Ukrainian Catholic) Church, was organized in Manville. Father Turula ministered to both the Woonsocket and Manville parishes. Between 1920 and 1922 the Woonsocket congregation was served by the Reverends Michael Kuzmak, Volodymyr Kozoriz, Antin Lotovych, Volodymyr Obushkevych, Myron Zalitch, Yuri Krupa and Roman Volyneec.

Construction of the new church in Woonsocket began in 1923, at a building cost of \$62,000, and the old church was sold in 1924 for \$8,200. At that juncture Rev. Onufri Kovalsky came to serve the

congregation. The new church on Blackstone Street was blessed by the Most Reverend Constantine Bohachevskyj on September 24, 1924. In 1925 Rev. Hlib Verchowsky arrived as pastor.



*St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 394 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket. Photo by K. Struminsky.*

The 1920s were a period of turmoil in many Ukrainian-American church communities. Dissatisfaction with the clergy and many other religious and cultural issues divided church members. In 1926 the Woonsocket Catholic congregation divided into two groups; the larger one became independent and later joined the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, while the other remained Ukrainian Catholic and maintained union with Rome. A court trial involving rights to the church building lasted twelve years, costing both sides a total of over \$15,000. Father Verchowsky held Catholic services for

approximately forty families at Trinity Hall during the dispute because the Orthodox group had gained control of the church property.

In 1929 the pastor of the Ukrainian Catholic parish in Fall River, Massachusetts, conducted services in Woonsocket. In January 1932 Bishop Bohachevskij conducted a three-day mission, and in February he sent a newly ordained priest, Rev. Vasyl Tremba, to serve the troubled parish. Father Tremba reinstated the charter of the old St. Michael's corporation. Court proceedings continued and an appeal followed. On January 25, 1938, the Rhode Island Supreme Court unanimously voted to return the church to the Catholic group. On February 6, 1938, six years after Father Tremba's arrival in Woonsocket, the Blackstone Street church was reconsecrated as a Catholic church, with George Malanczyn, Michael Rybak, and Andrew Basan the new trustees. Soon thereafter the interior of the church was redecorated and renovated.

St. Michael's celebrated a native son's first liturgy in 1940. Father Nestor Romanovych, the parish's first ordained priest, attended school in Pawtucket and later in Stamford, Connecticut. He continued his studies at St. Josaphat's Pontifical Seminary in Rome, where he was ordained on May 13, 1940.

In 1941 Father Tremba purchased picnic grounds in Blackstone, Massachusetts, for \$1,650. Three years later he acquired a house on Blackstone Street for \$10,000 to allow for expansion of the church's facilities. After serving the parish for seventeen years, Father Tremba left in 1949, replaced by Rev. Joseph Galysh.

The postwar years brought a new wave of Ukrainian immigrants from Europe and new activity to the parish. By 1953 the parishioners had paid the mortgage, and a church renovation fund was started. In 1958 the church underwent major interior renovation. The traditional iconostasis (or icon screen) was erected, the walls were painted, and stained-glass windows and a new tabernacle were installed. The work was executed by two well-known artists, iconographer Sviatoslav Hordynsky and sculptor Serhiy Lytwynenko. A golden jubilee celebration took place on November 23, 1958, with Bishop Ambrose Senyshyn, OSBM, DD, of the Ukrainian Catholic Exarchy of Stamford, and the Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, bishop of Providence, presiding. The parish published a book and held a banquet at the Dario Plaza Hotel to commemorate the occasion.

In 1967 Father Galysh died suddenly of a heart attack, and Rev. Ivan Mak became pastor. During his stay the sixtieth anniversary of

the parish was commemorated with a visit by Bishop Joseph Shmondiuk of Stamford and another jubilee banquet. A new pastor, Rev. Paul Szufat, arrived in 1969. Between 1973 and 1978 three priests served the parish: the Reverends John Mucharsky, Petro Lisowsky, and Yuri Spolitakevych. The Right Reverend Mitrat John Mowatt, the current pastor, arrived in 1979.

In commemoration of the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine, the parish held a three-phase celebration over a three-year period. The first part of the celebration took place on June 28, 1986, with the blessing of the parish shrine to Saint Michael the Archangel by the patriarch of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, His Beatitude Maximos V. The second observance was held on December 6, 1987, with His Grace, the Most Reverend Basil H. Losten, the Ukrainian Catholic bishop of Stamford, placing two crowns on the Holy Icon of Our Lady of Pochayiv. The crowns were previously blessed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Patriarch Demetrios I. The third commemoration took place on June 19, 1988, when Bishop Losten blessed and dedicated the Millennium Monument of the parish. This monument consists of a fourteen-foot Byzantine crucifix, an altar, and two icon stands, all made of polished Barre granite. The millennium celebrations culminated with the blessing by the Right Reverend Mitrat John Mowatt of a four-foot bronze plaque depicting St. Vladimir and the baptism of his people in Kiev, Ukraine, in 988.

The pastor and parishioners of St. Michael's continue to worship in the tradition of Eastern spirituality proper to the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Special care is taken to beautify the church interior with icons and religious furnishings in keeping with the Ukrainian-Byzantine liturgical tradition.

Throughout its history St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church has provided religious instruction and various activities for its youth and adults through a number of church groups, some of which are described below:

*The Sisterhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.* The Sisterhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded on February 6, 1908. Its first meeting was held at the Lyceum Hall on Main Street in Woonsocket. Its members prepared church dinners and functions, including the Feast of St. Michael, a major patronal feast. They supported a drama club which staged frequent performances of such plays as *American Girl*, *Pan Mayster Kopytko*, and *The Orphan*, as well as a yearly tribute to the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko. The women also participated in the frequent concerts of the parish choir and in other programs of entertainment throughout the year.

*The Heritage School.* Since most Ukrainian immigrants before 1914 were illiterate, it was necessary to organize adult education classes in which the Ukrainian immigrant could learn to read and write both English and Ukrainian. Most of the classes were conducted by the local church in libraries and in reading rooms containing newspapers, books, and pamphlets on topics of general interest.

Religious and cultural instruction for Ukrainian youth has also been stressed by the Woonsocket community. The Heritage School of St. Michael's plays a vital role in preserving the Ukrainian culture and language. This school evolved from First Communion preparation and religious instruction according to the Eastern Rite. It gradually added language, reading, writing, music, choral instruction, and Ukrainian history and geography to its agenda.



*St. Michael's Heritage School and the First Communion class, with Father Basil Turula, 1919. Photo by Tenczar Studio.*

*The Providence Association.* The Providence Association was founded in New York City in 1912 by Bishop Soter S. Ortynsky, who realized the need for such an organization for Ukrainian Catholics in the United States. The four primary objects of the organization are (1) moral: to sustain and propagate a religious spirit among

Ukrainians in the United States; (2) material: to assist its members in cases of sickness and need, as well as to support worthy religious and civic causes; (3) religious: to further the Ukrainian Catholic cause and to strengthen religious spirit among its members through the publication of Ukrainian Catholic newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and books; and (4) civic: to instruct Ukrainians in the history, Constitution, and government of the United States.

St. Josaphat's Assembly, Branch 177, of St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Woonsocket, was formed on May 1, 1929, by George Malanczyn. At the present time (1988) Dr. Taras Hanushevsky is president and Elizabeth Galonski secretary-treasurer. There are currently sixty-two members. The association makes annual donations to the Bishop's Fund and to the Synodal Patriarchal Office in Rome.

*The Holy Name Society.* The Holy Name Society was established by Rev. Joseph Galysh in the early 1950s. Its purpose is to assist in parish work and to promote better understanding of church services and the Byzantine traditions of St. Michael's.

*The Dance Group.* The Dance Group of St. Michael's was formed in 1967 under the direction of Mrs. Taissa Decyk. From its beginning to the present, the group has performed the colorful folk dances of Ukraine at numerous parish and community functions. Among such occasions were the bicentennial celebration at Warwick



*Governor J. Joseph Garraby and Robert J. McKenna, chairman of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, with St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church folk dancers at the Heritage Festival, 1977.*

Mall (1976), the governor's inauguration at the Providence Civic Center (1977), Cumberland's International Fair and the Rhode Island College Anthropological Convention (1978), and Brown University's annual International Fairs. The Dance Group has also participated at the State House Heritage Festival since 1977. Alex Chudolij was frequently the accordion accompanist for the group, while Mrs. Ivanna Hanushevsky served as the Dance Group's director.

*The Guild.* The Guild was organized on March 3, 1974. The main purpose for its formation was to help with the maintenance of the church and the rectory and to run social functions for the parish. With funds received from various functions, the Guild has purchased many items needed by the church and rectory.

In 1978 the parish hall was renovated with the labor of participating members. Later they helped with the extensive renovation of the rectory. In 1987 the Guild assisted in the remodeling of the rectory's kitchen and the complete renovation of the church hall.

### St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The present parochial community of St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church was formed in 1926 when its founders separated from St. Michael's Catholic parish. For twelve years following the schism, the new group of Orthodox worshipers maintained control over St. Michael's church property. The Reverend Maxim Maruschak became the first Orthodox pastor of the newly established parish on July 22, 1926, but his stay was short-lived, for the following year Rev. Joseph Yaletchko came to serve the congregation.

In 1928 the Very Reverend V. A. Kaskiw was appointed as pastor. During his tenure the parish flourished. Father Kaskiw organized the Ukrainian School and the church choir and, of course, performed the religious services. At this time there were two hundred children enrolled in the Ukrainian School. The youth were well organized and participated in numerous cultural performances and religious services. "St. Mike's" Boys Club had a basketball team which won many championships in the YMCA League, and the club was very involved in other athletic and social activities as well.

In August 1938, after the Orthodox parishioners were ordered to relinquish control over the Blackstone Street church by Supreme Court decree, Rev. Demetro Leschishin was appointed to replace the Very Reverend V. Kaskiw. Orthodox church services were then held at different locations throughout Woonsocket. Within two years, however, Father Leschishin, together with the spirited parishioners,

negotiated to purchase the present parish property, a house known as the Cavedon Homestead, located at 74 Harris Avenue, Woonsocket. In October 1942, after many people gave of their time, labor, and money, St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, built at a cost of over \$70,000, was blessed. Parish organizations such as the Zaporozska Sicz, the Ukrainian Women's Society of St. Mary, and the various youth clubs helped to finance its construction through their donations and their loans. The Manville Orthodox parish of St. Stephen donated the bell for the new Woonsocket structure.



*St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 74 Harris Avenue, Woonsocket.  
Photo by K. Struminsky.*

In 1944 the Very Reverend Peter Bilon was appointed pastor. He was followed by Rev. Anthony Beryk, Rev. Demetrius Sawka, and Rev. Stephen Holutiak. During Father Holutiak's pastorate the interior of the church was decorated with the painting of icons, and

continues its work of extending Ukrainian culture and traditions and promoting the spirit and value of Ukrainian folk dance in Rhode Island.

*The Bandura Male Chorus.* On May 1, 1948, a male chorus was organized under the direction of Joseph Marciniuk. Shortly thereafter the group chose its name: the Bandura Male Chorus. Its current director, Peter Teper, presides over a membership that numbers thirty-six voices.

The purpose of the chorus is to perpetuate the singing of Ukrainian songs. The group helps the parish to commemorate two important national events: the birth of Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine's immortal bard, on March 9, 1814, and the proclamation of the Western Ukrainian National Republic on November 1, 1918. In addition, the chorus entertains children at Halloween (a tradition begun in 1948), sponsors dances, picnics, plays, and installation banquets, and commemorates the sacrifices of Ukrainian-American war dead on Memorial Day.



*Bandura Male Chorus, with Father Vitaly Kowalenko, 1973.*

The Bandura Male Chorus has contributed liberally to the church from its treasury, and ever since its inception it has

performed on the radio, presented Christmas programs of Ukrainian carols, and taken part in city and state civic affairs. Costumed in native embroidered shirts and Cossack pants, the group makes a marvelously colorful presentation when it performs.

*The Ladies' Sodality.* The Ladies' Sodality, founded in June 1950, has furnished a variety of services to the parish. One of its initial projects was the raising of funds for the care of the parish house and the purchase of vestments for the priest and altar boys.

The sodality has always made a special effort to help the youngsters of the parish, and financial support has always been made available to them for any worthwhile ethnic endeavor. Within the church community itself, the group has held Communion breakfasts for the young and purchased educational material needed by the various church school classes.

While maintaining its original goal, the Ladies' Sodality has contributed much to the Woonsocket community during the past thirty-eight years. The group's annual harvest dance consistently attracts a large turnout. The preparation and sale of Ukrainian ethnic foods has also been a major project over the years, affording the community the chance to become acquainted with Ukrainian delicacies. The sodality's bazaars are always open to the general public and are well attended. The sodality has contributed to community charitable drives almost every year since its inception.

To promote understanding of Ukrainian culture, in recent years the group has begun presenting exhibits to the public. One of these, a display of cultural objects, was offered at the new Woonsocket Harris Library in conjunction with a concert by the Bandura Male Chorus in 1975. Another cultural display was presented at the Warwick Mall during a Ukrainian festival in November 1976. The Ladies' Sodality also offers Ukrainian ceramics, art, and other articles at its boutique, which is always open to the public. For the past several years a Ukrainian food concession has been managed by the sodality at the Autumnfest in Woonsocket.

The Ladies' Sodality now numbers seventy-five members, including women from Woonsocket, Cumberland, Providence, Pawtucket, and Warwick.

*The Ukrainian Boys Club.* St. Michael's Ukrainian Boys Club was organized by a number of athletic-minded young men in 1928. Its basketball teams were among the most powerful in the area. Over the years St. Mike's—or the Ukes, as the boys were popularly called—collected trophies representing twelve championships in city league contests, state tournaments, invitational exhibitions, and

games with other Ukrainian teams from Boston, New Britain, Ansonia, Bridgeport, and New York City. The Boys Club continued in existence until 1946.

*The Young Women's Club.* The Young Women's Club was organized on April 15, 1945, with the aid of Father Peter Bilon. The object of the organization was to promote mutual aid as well as the culture of Ukraine. On August 7, 1949, a ceremony was held to bless and dedicate a monument which the club erected to honor the World War II veterans who belonged to St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, including those who died in action: John Barby, Stephen Komar, Vincent Hreczuk, John Komonicki, John Kawa, Peter Koperniuk, Nicholas Kiczak, Dmytro Mode, John Kociuk, Bernard Szewczuk, and Paul Kolisnyk. The organization disbanded in 1949.

*The Ukrainian Youth League of Woonsocket.* The Ukrainian Youth League of Woonsocket, formed in February 1946 by several returning war veterans, was a reorganization of several parish youth clubs. The object of the league was to promote intellectual, social, and athletic activities among Ukrainian-American youth. The league was dissolved in 1951.

### St. Stephen's Ukrainian Orthodox Church

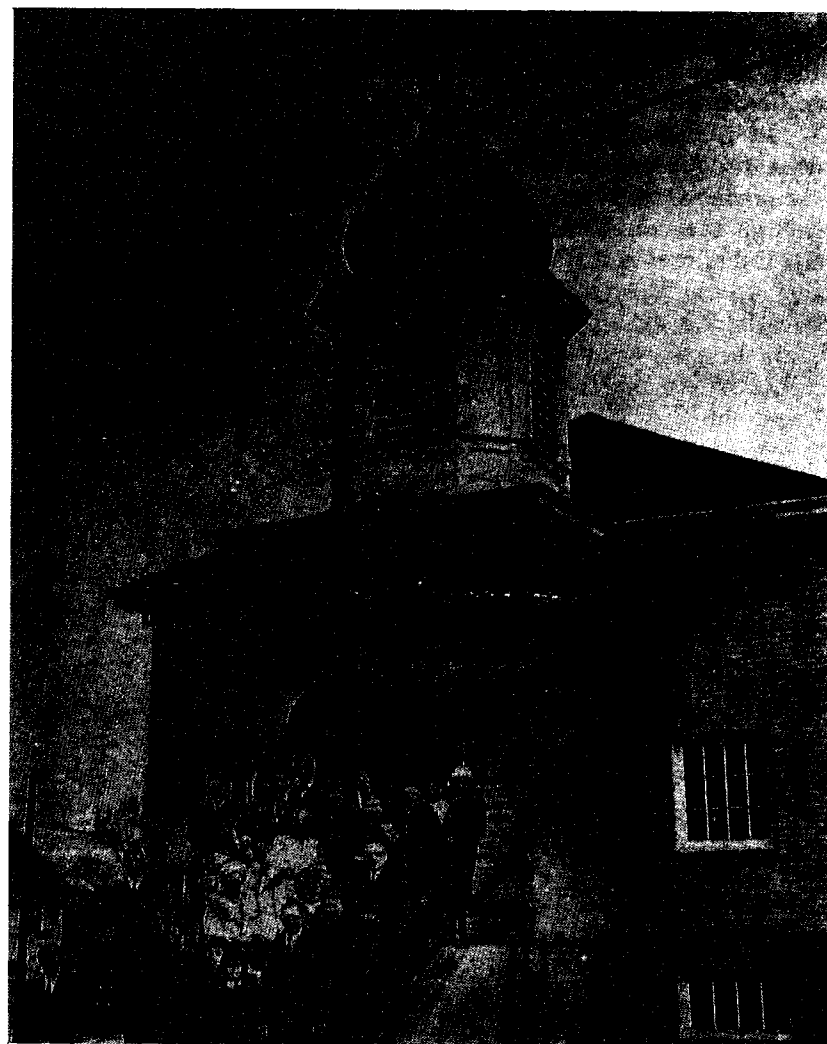
By 1903 Ukrainians had already settled in Woonsocket, Manville, Cumberland Hill, and the surrounding districts. During the early years the Ukrainian people had no priest except on special occasions such as Easter, Christmas, christenings, weddings, and funerals, when priests from parishes in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut came to officiate. Eventually church services were held every Sunday in St. Joan of Arc Church in Cumberland Hill.

In 1907 Ukrainian Bishop Stephen Ortynsky arrived in this country and assigned Rev. John Zaklynsky to the local community as its first priest. The bishop also began plans for establishing a beneficial society. This organization, Ukrainian Beneficial Society of Mychaylo Dranomoniv, was founded that same year.

St. Stephen's Ukrainian Catholic parish was organized in 1917 with Father Basil Turula as the first pastor. The Beneficial Society purchased the old opera house in Manville in 1917 to be used as a church. Among those recorded as organizers were Ivan Chvetz, Catherine Hanzar, George Yasinczuk, Elia Toporovsky, Dimytro Sopkiv, Paul Kazan, Paul Hrychuk, Sylvester Stoyko, Paul Lubinsky, Nicholas Sawka, Maxime Izowsky, and Peter Lanowy.

The church changed its ecclesiastical affiliation in 1927 and became known as St. Stephen's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of

Manville. The new organizers were Joseph Chodorowski, George Yasinczuk, Stephen Hamatiuk, Stephen Snewchuk, Stephen Prokopczuk, Nicholas Sawka, Ivan Chvetz, John Tkacz, Paul Kazan, and Peter Cherkas. The priest from St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Providence served both parishes. The new parish purchased approximately two acres of land on Old River Road in Manville for a parish cemetery.



*St. Stephen's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Manville, with some of its parishioners in 1969.*

In 1930 the old opera house, the parish's church, was destroyed by fire. The parishioners then attended other neighboring churches but remained organized as a parish. In late 1932 the parish decided to build a new church, which was completed in 1933. The first priest to officiate in the structure was Father Eugene Karolyshyn, who spent much time with the children and young adults of the parish, teaching them to read and write the Ukrainian language. He organized a fine choir to sing in the church, taught Ukrainian dancing, and conducted some Ukrainian plays. His beneficial ministry continued for eight years, during which the parish had a membership of some fifty families from Manville, Cumberland Hill, and the surrounding areas.

In 1935 the female members of the church organized a parish sisterhood. This group—St. Ann's Sisterhood of St. Stephen's Ukrainian Orthodox Church—contributed much to the church through the crafts, skills, and diligent work of its members.

Over the years the parish was served by Fathers Peczar, Kaskiw, and Mostensky. The Reverend Joseph Zelechewsky came to the Manville church in 1944 and served St. Stephen's until 1977, when he retired after fifty-eight years of active service as an Orthodox priest. His well-earned retirement celebration was both memorable and climactic for the Manville parish, whose active membership had dwindled. With Father Zelechewsky departed, the parishioners made a decision to dispose of the church property and to retain only the parish cemetery, which they incorporated as the St. Stephen's Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery Corporation of Manville, Rhode Island. The church building and land were sold on August 1, 1978. Most of the parishioners then joined the neighboring St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Woonsocket, a church with which they had a cordial and long-standing relationship.

### St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church

St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Providence was founded in 1921 by Ukrainian immigrants who had settled in the industrial area of South Providence, seeking a livelihood for themselves and their families. This early group consisted of the families of Harry Luchka, Emil Rekrut, Stephen Saska, John Onyske, Luka Humlak, Paul Nakopinsky, Elia Kruk, and Andrew Lech.

In the beginning no funds were available to buy a church, and so services were held in a local Episcopal church. Later the congregation purchased a small parcel of land at 45 Pilgrim Street, near Rhode Island Hospital, and laid plans to build their own church.

The first priest to hold services for the Providence congregation was Father Zembra. This zealous cleric also gave music lessons to the young children of his parish, teaching them to play the violin, the flute, and the clarinet. To support and maintain the church, he staged concerts, plays, folk dances, and other activities.

From the late 1920s until 1944, parish growth was slow because of the effects of the Depression and World War II. Among the many clergymen who came to the church during these years were Fathers Pashkevich, Karolynshyn, Leschishin, Cherniavsky and Mostensky.

On July 1, 1944, the Very Reverend Joseph Zelechewsky arrived at St. John's and immediately sought another location for a new parish church. Supported by the parishioners and their friends, he held many affairs to raise money and establish a building fund for a new church and parish house. When the city of Providence took over the Pilgrim Street property for redevelopment purposes in the early 1950s, the parish purchased land at 628 Public Street in the Elmwood



*St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Public Street, Providence.*

section, and a church was erected there under Father Zelechewsky's direction. On August 21, 1955, the new St. John's was dedicated by the Most Reverend John Theodorovich, metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States.

On Sunday, May 21, 1967, St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church celebrated its mortgage burning with a divine liturgy and banquet. The Very Reverend Michael Mostensky, who had served as pastor in Providence on two occasions between 1937 and 1943, returned in 1965 to again serve the parish, where he remained until his death in 1967.

During the 1950s and 1960s the organizations at St. John's consisted of St. Ann's Sisterhood, St. John's Brotherhood, a mixed choir under the direction of Melvin Zelechivsky (who also organized a state choir), and a church choir under the leadership of Mrs. Irene Kanazawich and Mrs. Anna Prawer. Sunday School classes were held whenever there were church services.

The last pastor to serve the parish was the Right Reverend Vitaly Kowalenko. It was during his tenure that St. John's—its membership depleted by a massive outmigration of people from Providence's South Side to the suburbs—closed its doors. The relatively new structure was sold to a Spanish Pentecostal group known as the Upper Room Church in 1982.

## Ukrainian Organizations

### Ukrainian-American Veterans Association

The Ukrainian-American Veterans Association was organized in 1946. The association was formed as a result of the welcome-home banquet held for 193 war veterans in this area by different Ukrainian organizations. Walter Wecal, a survivor of the Bataan Death March, was honored at the banquet, which was held at the Industrial Textile Union building on Federal Street in Woonsocket. The idea for the organization was promoted by the banquet's guest speaker, Major Damophray of Philadelphia, a veteran of World War I and national commander of the association. Veterans in this area were enthusiastic about having their own veterans' post, and the organization was quickly formed. Membership was restricted to American war veterans of Ukrainian descent, of either sex.

The aims of the association are fraternal, patriotic, historical, and educational: to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of deceased members and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and its laws; and to maintain and extend the institution of American freedom among the Ukrainian people of the United States and defend them from all enemies.

In 1952 the veterans began conducting memorial services at the Veterans' Monument on the grounds of St. Michael's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This observance continues as an annual event every Memorial Day.



## Ukrainian National Association

One of the oldest fraternal insurance organizations in the United States is the Ukrainian National Association, which was founded in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, in 1894. The main purpose of this organization was to aid Ukrainian immigrants working in the coal mines. It expanded throughout the nation and presently has its headquarters in Jersey City, New Jersey. Its members number 80,000.

The association publishes a Ukrainian daily newspaper, *Svoboda* ("Freedom"); an English-language newspaper, *The Ukrainian Weekly*; and a children's magazine, *Veselka* ("The Rainbow"). It offers life insurance protection, provides scholarships for students, and owns the beautiful vacation resort "Soyuzivka" in the Catskills, which also serves as a cultural center.

There are five branches of UNA in Rhode Island and another close by in Taunton, Massachusetts. The Rhode Island units are as follows:

*Branch No. 73, Taras Shevchenko, Providence.* This branch was founded in 1903 and was named in honor of the Ukrainian poet. The members participate in regular meetings of the branch and also send delegates to national conventions.

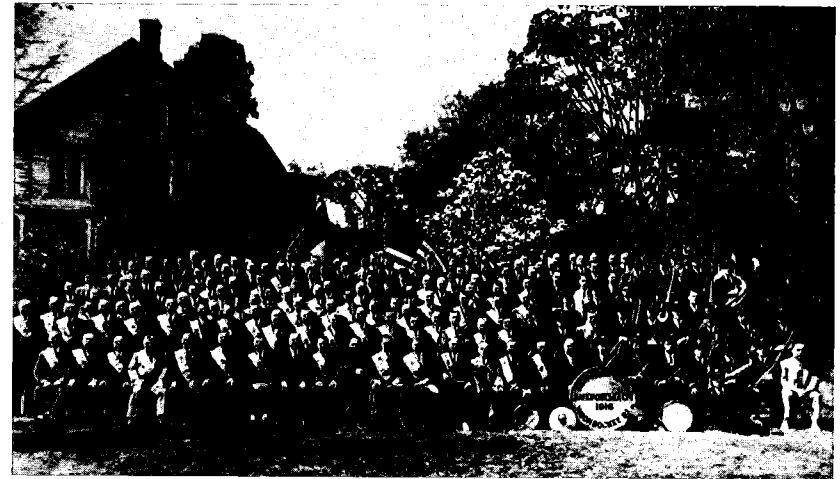
*Branch No. 93, Ivan Franko, Central Falls.* This branch was founded on November 27, 1916, at the home of Petro Tityk on High Street. On March 9, 1930, Branch No. 93 organized a Ukrainian school, which functioned for several years. The late John Danyluk was a longtime secretary of the branch.

*Branch No. 177, Love, Providence.* This group received its charter in July 1919. Monthly meetings were held at the homes of different members. Branch No. 177 is a member of the Ukrainian Congress Committee. It has helped people to attain citizenship and donated to many charitable causes.

*Branch No. 206, Zaporozska Sicz, Woonsocket.* Zaporozska Sicz was founded by a group of Ukrainian immigrants in May 1910 and incorporated under the laws of the state of Rhode Island in 1911. The organization's purpose is twofold: to perpetuate Ukrainian culture in the United States and to share with other Americans the traditions and values of the Ukrainian people.

In 1912 this UNA branch established both a library, which included the works of several great Ukrainian authors and poets, and a school to teach children the Ukrainian language. In 1913 the organization was awarded the first prize for its presentation at Woonsocket's celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary as a city. The branch's Ukrainian band, organized in 1916, gave concerts,

marched in city parades, and took part in other community and church affairs. In 1920 a Citizens Club was begun to encourage and educate members of Zaporozska Sicz to become citizens of the United States.



*Ukrainian band of Zaporozska Sicz, 1916. Photo by W. Kindeforski.*

Among the organization's more prominent members was the late John Kokolski, a noted local activist and the branch's longtime financial secretary and president, who became the supreme advisor and later the supreme treasurer of the Ukrainian National Association of New Jersey.

*Branch No. 241, Ivan Franko, Woonsocket.* The Ukrainian Beneficial Society of Ivan Franko was organized on January 4, 1923. This group, which makes insurance available to its membership, aims to unite all Ukrainians and their descendants, to educate them in the Ukrainian and English languages, and to awaken in them a spirit of solidarity, loyalty, and devotion to the principles upon which this nation is established.

Over the years the society and its members have taken part in many affairs of the state and the local community. During the years of the Second World War it helped to organize a drive to sell war bonds, the society itself buying bonds in the amount of \$1,830. The organization continues to serve its members the local community on all levels.

### **Ukrainian Beneficial Society of Mychaylo Drahomaniv**

The history of the Beneficial Society dates back to 1896, when Ukrainian immigrants began settling in Manville, Woonsocket, Cumberland Hill, and the surrounding districts. In 1907 the first Ukrainian bishop, Stephen Ortynsky, arrived in this county, and a short time later he visited here and started plans to organize St. Michael's parish and the Ukrainian Beneficial Society of Mychaylo Drahomaniv. The society was chartered by the state of Rhode Island that same year.

The purposes of the society are to work for unity, to promote principles of benevolence and to administer a fund for the relief of disabled and sick members, to cultivate love for Ukraine and its people, and to encourage good American citizenship. The society has promoted many U.S. bond drives and contributed to numerous local, state, and national charitable organizations. It has been a member of the Ukrainian Congress Committee and the Ukrainian Relief Committee. It has promoted and taken part in many cultural programs, and it has distributed forty-eight volumes of Ukrainian history to public libraries throughout the United States.

In 1954 the society was influential in naming the Theodore Suptelny Memorial Bridge. This bridge, which crosses the Blackstone River between Manville and Cumberland, was dedicated to the memory of a Ukrainian-American, born in Manville, who was killed in action on June 19, 1944, while serving in the United States Marine Corps. The society was one of the local Ukrainian organizations that placed a bronze plaque on the bridge in 1956.

### **Ukrainian-American Citizens Club**

The Ukrainian-American Citizens Club of Pawtucket was organized and chartered on June 25, 1934. In addition to its involvement in running a Ukrainian school, the club took part in organizing a Ukrainian orchestra and collected funds to aid the homeland, which suffered a devastatingly severe famine in 1932-1934. In the late 1940s, when a new wave of Ukrainian immigrants began arriving in this country, the club was instrumental in finding them shelter and employment. These new arrivals, for their part, brought with them abilities which had been lacking in the community, for many were skilled workers, teachers, and doctors.

More recently the club has undertaken political action on behalf of the state's Ukrainian minority, as well as such ethnic projects as the education of children in the Ukrainian language. Presently the

club is seeking to rejuvenate itself by increasing its membership and its activities.

### **Ukrainian National Women's League of America Rhode Island Branch 25 The Holy Princess Olha, Patroness**

In 1925 five Ukrainian women's groups in New York formed an independent national women's organization, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America. The principal purpose of this organization was—and is—to preserve the Ukrainian cultural heritage and to help Ukrainians here and abroad. This is an organization that unites Ukrainian women of different religious and political convictions. The women in Ukraine today do not have the opportunity to express themselves in free, organized activities or work for the benefit of their homeland. This responsibility has been assumed by Ukrainian women throughout the free world.

Since 1944 UNWLA has published a monthly magazine called *Our Life*. The initiative and generosity of the UNWLA membership has made possible the existence of the Ukrainian Museum in New York. Currently UNWLA has 115 branches in the United States, including one in Rhode Island.

The first Rhode Island branch—Branch 29, Olha Kobylanska, the Patron—was organized on November 5, 1932. This group was active for more than a decade, but then it declined. In 1961, however, after a new influx of Ukrainian immigrants to the state, another branch—Branch 25, Princess Olha, Patroness—was established. Its activities have included participation in the annual ethnic heritage festivals at the State House.

### **Ukrainian Subcommittee of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission**

During the observance of the bicentennial of American independence in 1976, state bicentennial chairman Patrick T. Conley created eighteen ethnic heritage subcommittees to involve the state's major ethnic groups in the celebration of two hundred years of American nationhood. He charged these committees—one of which was the Ukrainian—with presenting appropriate events and activities relating to their contributions to the development of Rhode Island and the nation.

The Bicentennial Commission (ri 76) and the formation of its ethnic heritage subcommittees by Dr. Conley gave different

Ukrainian groups an opportunity for unified action. Governor Philip Noel proclaimed November 13, 1976, as Ukrainian Heritage Day, and a Ukrainian Festival was held at Warwick Mall. This festive affair featured exhibits of Ukrainian books, art, paintings, egg decorating, embroidery, photography, ceramics, carved and inlaid wood, folk costumes, and church vestments. The performances of a male choir, dancers, singers, a bandura player, and a mime took place at intervals throughout the day. Thousands of people who came to the mall that Saturday viewed these exhibits and performances.



*Ukrainian Subcommittee on Ukrainian Heritage Day at Warwick Mall, with Dr. Patrick Conley and Congressman Fernand St Germain (fifth and sixth from left), 1976. Photo by Y. Trenkler.*

The Governor's Inaugural Ball on January 4, 1977, provided another chance for recognition. A news story of the event featured a picture with the caption, "High Kickers: the Ukrainian dancers were only a part of the multi-ethnic parade." Elaborating on the fascinating ethnic performers, the story reported that "the Ukrainian dancers, including a young man who kicked vigorously while standing on his head, were cited by many as favorites." The Bandura Male Chorus presented a selection of Ukrainian songs at this event.

After the bicentennial year, Governor J. Joseph Garrahy implemented Dr. Conley's plan to establish a Rhode Island Heritage Commission as a permanent agency of the state government. This



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, PROVIDENCE

Philip W. Noel  
Governor

PROCLAMATION

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE DAY

BY PHILIP W. NOEL  
GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, This year marks the Bicentennial of the United States and the Centennial of settlement of Ukrainian in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Ukrainian American Heritage Subcommittee of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission was created to commemorate both these anniversaries by demonstrating the role of the Ukrainian community in the development of our State; and

WHEREAS, The Ukrainians came to America to enjoy the dual blessings of religious liberty and political freedom which did not exist in their native land; and

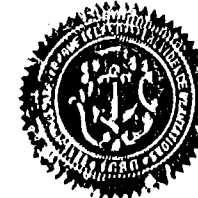
WHEREAS, The Ukrainian Americans who have settled in Rhode Island have shown a deep concern for the preservation of their culture and, at the same time, they have worked to achieve the economic and social benefits available in our society; and

WHEREAS, The Ukrainian American Heritage Subcommittee of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission has chosen Saturday, November 13, 1976, as Ukrainian Heritage Day, whereon the Committee has invited Rhode Islanders to share with them their rich culture and their history,

NOW, THEREFORE, DO I, PHILIP W. NOEL, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, PROCLAIM

NOVEMBER 13, 1976, AS  
UKRAINIAN HERITAGE DAY

and urge the citizens of Rhode Island to participate in this festive event.



By the Governor

*John S. Germain*  
Secretary of State

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State to be affixed this ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and seventy-six, and of Independence, the two hundred and first.

*Philip W. Noel*  
GOVERNOR

*Governor Philip Noel's proclamation of Ukrainian Heritage Day.*



*Ukrainian Subcommittee delegation with Governor Garraby on Ukrainian Independence Day at the State House, with Ukrainian Catholic Church pastor Rt. Rev. John J. Mowatt and Ukrainian Orthodox Church pastor Father Myron Oryhon, 1983.*

wise decision not only aided the various ethnic communities but also dramatically increased the number of national subcommittees.

The Ukrainian Subcommittee meets monthly in Woonsocket and participates in festivities in Woonsocket, Providence, Newport, and other localities. It also conducts socials regularly to raise funds. Annually the subcommittee takes part in Rhode Island Heritage Day at the State House, where it creates a little "Ukrainian village" which thousands of people visit to taste Ukrainian foods, to admire the numerous artifacts on display, and to enjoy Ukrainian dancing and musical entertainment.

In 1988 the Ukrainian Subcommittee received from the secretary of state a certified copy of a resolution proposed by Representative Rene M. Lafayette and passed by the General Assembly's House of Representatives on May 27, 1988, commemorating the millenium of Christianity in Ukraine.



*Ukrainian Subcommittee of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission, 1987. Front row: Yuri Trenkler, state commissioner; Helen Trenkler, secretary; Rt. Rev. John J. Mowatt, president; Dimitry Wolansky, vice president; Eleanor Kogut, treasurer. Middle row: Mary Kokolsky, Maria and Andrew Kun, Alice Kogut, Irene and Dimitry Sarachmon, Ivanna Hanushevsky. Back row: Helen Bilyj, Paul and Rose Masnyk, John and Julia Manlick, Dimitry Yasinczuk. Photo by Y. Trenkler.*

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1988

88-H 9926

House Resolution

IN RECOGNITION OF THE MILLENNIUM OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE UKRAINE

WHEREAS, According to the authoritative eleventh century chronicle of the Kievan Monk Nestor, Tale of Bygone Years, the origin of the Christian conversion of the Ukraine began in the year 987, when Prince St. Vladimir initiated a search for a state religion to unify his people and strengthen his kingdom. The Prince's delegation returned from their quest joyously singing the praises of the Byzantine Rite of the Christian religion as celebrated by the Greeks. Legend holds that Vladimir's faith was strengthened when, after falling ill, he was cured on the day of his baptism. It was in August of 988, therefore, that St. Vladimir urged his subjects to be baptized in the Dnieper River, and proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of Kievan-Rus; and

WHEREAS, With the conversion of the Ukrainian people, a powerful and lasting bond was quickly forged with their new faith. The rich legacy of Christianity in the Ukraine is evident in the culture and faith that has endured despite centuries of persecution, most recently by the Soviet government; and

WHEREAS, The Ukraine is home to nearly 50 million people and is universally acknowledged as "the breadbasket of Europe" for its natural fertility and wheat production. Bordered by the Black Sea to the south; Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania on the west and southwest; and by Byelorussia and Russia on the north and northeast, Ukrainians are a complex and highly cultured people who have enjoyed a long and friendly relationship with the United States; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1870, a major influx of Ukrainians immigrated to the United States, many settling in Rhode Island. Of those Ukrainians who have come to America to escape from religious and cultural persecution, as well as to earn more prosperous lives for themselves in this democracy dedicated to the individual liberty of each citizen, most of these courageous, independent souls have been devoted Catholics of the Byzantine Rite, and Ukrainian Orthodox Christians; and

WHEREAS, As a people who have known tyranny, sorrow and oppression in their beloved Ukraine, Ukrainian-Americans deeply appreciate the liberty which America, and especially Rhode Island with its long and historic tradition of religious tolerance, offers to them, and we, in Rhode Island, are appreciative of the innumerable contributions that Ukrainian-Americans have made to the Ocean State's rich and diverse heritage; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this house of representatives of the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations joins with Ukrainians everywhere in celebrating the millennium of Christianity in the Ukraine. The spirit and faith ignited one thousand years ago continues to burn strongly and brightly today, serving as a magnificent symbol of the virtues of courage and perseverance to us all; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state be and she hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Ukrainian Subcommittee of the Rhode Island Heritage Commission.

## Conclusion

In examining the contributions of Ukrainian ethnic groups to the welfare of Rhode Island, one finds that early Ukrainian immigrants produced a much-needed work force for the development of the textile industry in the Blackstone Valley and Providence. More recent immigrants established themselves in the southern part of the state and in the Tiverton area as agricultural workers and independent craftsmen. Their children moved up the socioeconomic ladder in industry, commerce, and the professions. Ukrainian cultural and economic influence is strongly present today in Manville, Cumberland, and Woonsocket.

The shift of the cotton textile industry to the South, a movement which began in the 1920s, was slowed as a result of the demand created by World War II, but the southward exodus resumed in the 1950s. This move was a severe blow to the Ukrainians of the state. Many left Rhode Island for work elsewhere. But this was also a time when a new wave of Ukrainian immigrants began to arrive, immigrants who had fled Europe after World War II in the quest for freedom and independence. Of diverse ages and professions, the new arrivals were generally better educated than the earlier immigrants had been, and they needed less time to adapt to their new homeland. Their coming revived the cultural life of the Ukrainian community and brought fresh blood into its organizations.

The old and the new immigrants, together with their children, can now be found in almost every position and profession throughout Rhode Island. There are Ukrainian professors at Brown University and the University of Rhode Island, Ukrainian engineers in industry, Ukrainian physicians and technicians in the hospitals,

Ukrainian teachers at different levels of education. The Ukrainian presence is seen in all areas of government and the military.

Among Rhode Island leaders of Ukrainian descent are United States congressman Fernand J. St Germain, the state's longest-tenured congressman and chairman of the House banking Committee; District Court Judge Orist Chaharyn; state representative Peter Wasylyk; and the former head of the Department of Elderly Affairs, Anna (Moskalyk) Tucker.

The generosity of Ukrainians in Rhode Island is evident in all phases of life and has even spread across state lines to nearby Cambridge, Massachusetts, where three chairs of Ukrainian studies are maintained at Harvard University. These chairs—in history, literature, and linguistics—are endowed through the Ukrainian Studies Funds, Inc., established in 1957, an organization to which the Rhode Island Ukrainian community contributes liberally. Many of the state's Ukrainians also participate in the summer courses that Ukrainian Studies Funds sponsors at Harvard. The organization is now in the process of completing another endowment for Harvard's Ukrainian Research Institute, a center of Numerous books about Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Presently the institute is publishing works relating to the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine.

Ukrainians have adjusted well to American culture and to their new way of life as members of American society. At the same time, they have preserved their distinctive national traditions and customs. As Americans of Ukrainian birth or descent, they have not only adapted themselves to the new social structure but also become contributors to it; Ukrainians introduced the Byzantine style of architecture to the American scene, and they continue to share their cultural background in art, music, and folkloric customs with all Americans. Many Ukrainians today speak several languages. Though not numerous in Rhode Island, Ukrainian-Americans are a diverse and dynamic people, marching into the future, in step with other Rhode Islanders of all the state's varied ethnic backgrounds.

## Appendices

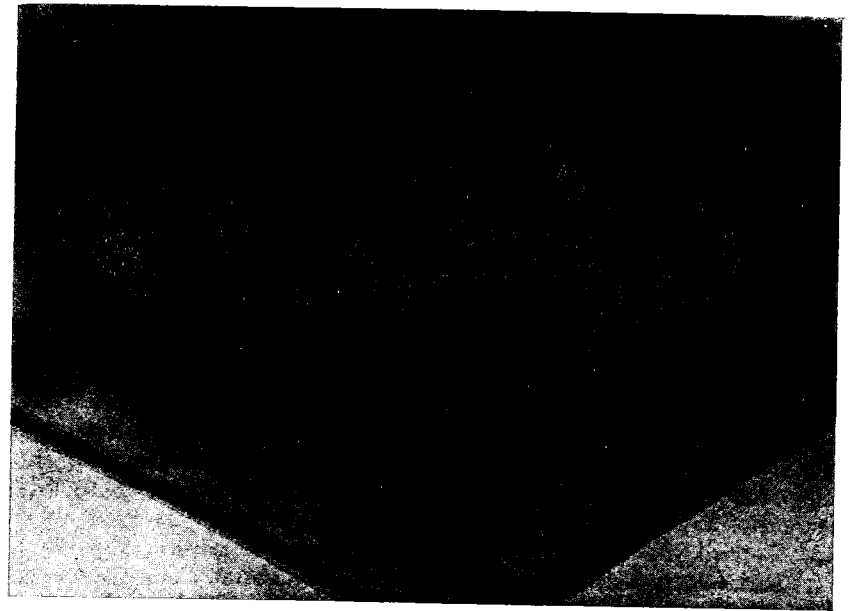
### I

**THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL FLAG.** The national banner of Free Ukraine consists of two horizontal bars, the top bar light blue and the bottom bar bright yellow. The blue symbolizes the vastness and the freedom of the skies, while the yellow is symbolic of the wide, rich fields of golden wheat so familiar in Ukraine.

**THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL EMBLEM.** The national emblem is the *tryzub*, or trident. This emblem has been in use since the days of Vladimir the Great in the tenth century. The use of the trident (a three-pronged spear) as an emblem by the ancient Royal House of Rurik may have come from Scandinavia, since it was also the symbol of Neptune, who was honored by the pagan Vikings as god of the seas. As a Ukrainian national emblem, the trident may be seen today as a symbol of the Trinity, much like the shamrock of Ireland.

**THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE.** The Ukrainian language is a Slavic tongue. In the past century it has undergone a number of spelling and grammatical changes. Ukrainian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, named after St. Cyril, a Greek monastic missionary who brought Christianity to the Slavs. Although modern Ukrainian is being used more and more in church services, the ancient Slavic tongue, called Old Church Slavonic, is still retained and can be heard in many Ukrainian parishes. This ancient tongue, which is the basic Slavic language, is very similar to present-day Bulgarian and Macedonian.

**UKRAINIAN ART.** Religious art closely follows the designs and rules of the Byzantine icon. The Ukrainians also have a very rich folk art, seen in paintings, wood carvings, and fine intricate embroidery. Egg painting—actually the application of hot beeswax and dye—is a very popular art, and Ukrainian Easter eggs, *pysanky*, are world-renowned.



*Ukrainian Easter eggs (pysanky) by Natalie Michaluk and Barbara Michaluk Robrdanz, 1985. Photo courtesy of the Woonsocket Call.*

**UKRAINIAN MUSIC.** Ukrainians have a very large and rich repertoire of religious and folk songs. Especially famous are Ukrainian Christmas carols. One of these, the harmonious "Carol of the Bells" by Nicholas Leontovych, has become an American Christmas classic.

**UKRAINIAN DANCES.** Ukrainian folk dances are today a highly stylized art form. Some are ritual dances that are pre-Christian in origin; some are dances performed by mixed groups, while others are done as solos (one popular dance, the *hopak*, is performed by men only); some are regional dances peculiar to particular provinces of Ukraine. Most of these dances are lively and of fast tempo. Many of the dances have a theme, depicting work, national heroism, folklore, local customs, nature, birds, or animals. The dances of Ukrainians, like their songs, display great love for family, home, nation, and liberty.

II

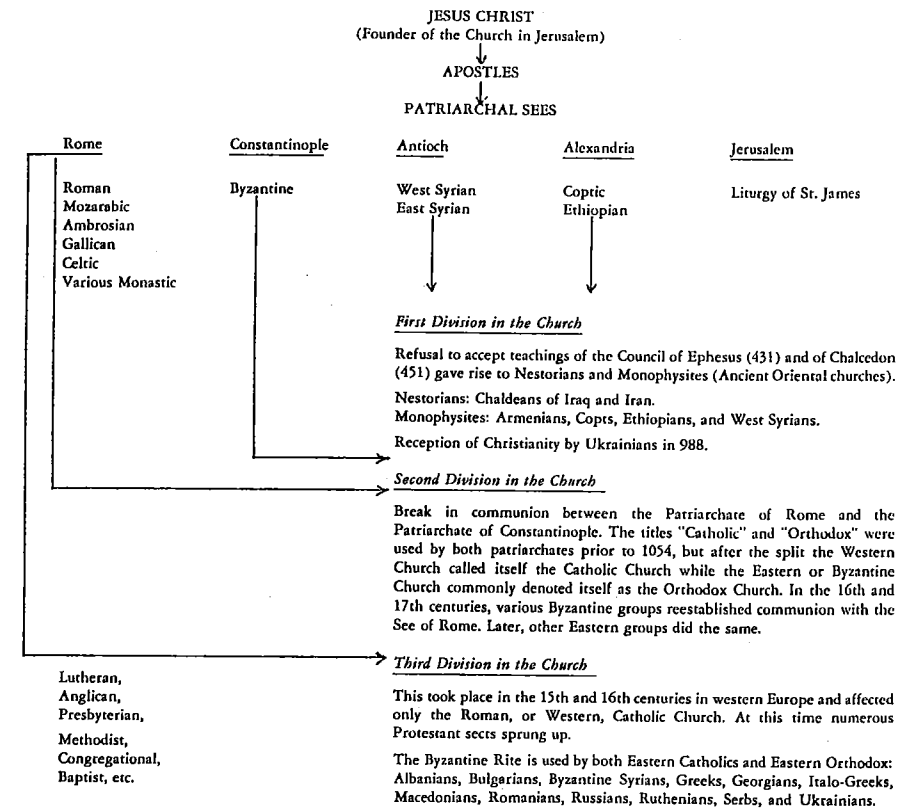
PASTORS OF ST. MICHAEL'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:

Rev. Mychaylo Struminsky (1908-1910), Rev. Volodymyr Dowhovych (1910-1911), Rev. Vasyl Turula (1911-1920), Rev. Mychaylo Kuzmak (1920), Rev. Volodymyr Kozoriz (1920), Rev. Antin Lotovych (1920), Rev. Volodymyr Obushkevych (1920), Rev. Myron Zalizach (1920-1922), Rev. Yuri Krupa (1922-1923), Rev. Roman Volynech (1923-1924), Rev. Onufri Kovalsky (1924-1925), Rev. Hlib Verchowsky (1925-1929), Rev. Jaroslaw Skrocki (1929-1932), Rev. Vasyl Tremba (1932-1949), Rev. Josyf Galysh, (1949-1966), Rev. Mychaylo Kurylo (1966-1967), Rev. Ivan Mak (1967-1969), Rev. Pavlo Szufiat (1969-1973), Rev. Ivan Mucharsky (1973-1977), Rev. Petro Lisowsky (1977-1978), Rev. Yuri Spolitakevych (1978-1979), Rt. Rev. Mitrat John J. Mowatt (1979- ).

PASTORS OF ST. MICHAEL'S UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: Rev. Maxim Maruschak (1926-1927), Rev. Joseph Yalerchko (1927-1928), Rev. V. A. Kaskiw (1928-1938), Rev. D. D. Leschishin (1938-1944), Rev. Peter Bilon (1944-1948), Rev. Anthony Beryk (1948-1950), Rev. Demetrius Sawka (1950-1951), Rev. Stephen Holutiak (1951-1956), Very Rev. Stephen Bilak (1956-1958), Very Rev. Michael Mostensky (1958-1965), Very Rev. George Krasevich (1965-1967), Rt. Rev. Mitrat Vitaly Kowalenko (1967-1979), Rev. Myron Oryhon (1979-1988), Rev. Mykola Krywonos (1988- ).

III

The Place of the Ukrainians in the Development of Christianity





## Suggested Reading

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