"VICHNAYA PAMYAT":

COMMEMORATION, CELEBRATION AND EXECUTION: THE 'OTHER SIDE' OF CANADA'S UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE

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AIM OF "WINNIPEG PAPERS"

This is the sixth annual compilation of "Winnipeg Papers", a project funded by the University of Manitoba’s Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies in Winnipeg and designed to permit the rapid dissemination of research pertaining to the Centre’s focus on Ukrainian culture in Canada.

In general, these are “working” papers with minimal editing. In the interests of making information available quickly, normal production procedures have been abbreviated. As a result, errors may occur. Should that be the case, your indulgence is requested, bearing in mind the aim of the “papers”.

"Winnipeg Papers" is not a publication in the usual sense of this word. The initial "run" for each compilation is limited to a very small number of copies. Only contributors and selected research centres are automatic recipients. However, copies of back issues are available upon request from Mr James Kominowski at the University of Manitoba’s Dafoe Library (tel: [204] 474-9681).

The first issue ("Winnipeg Papers on Ukrainian Music" [2008]) featured contributions by Bohdana Bashuk, Alexis Kochan (via Liz Hover), James Kominowski, Melita Mudri-Zubacz, Danny Schur, Myron Shatulsky, and Greg Udod.

The second issue ("Winnipeg Papers on Ukrainian Book Culture" [2009]) included contributions by Denis Hlynka, Robert Klymasz, Jean Kowbel, Ihor Kutash, Nell Nakoneczny, Jaroslav Rozumnyj, Myroslav Shkandrij, Christina Turkevych, and Orest Rudzik.

The third issue ("Winnipeg Papers on Ukrainian Arts Culture in Canada") included contributions by Roman Bozyk, Daria Darewych, Orysia Ehrmantraut, George Fedak, Murray Gibson, Mary Jo Hughes, Janice Kulyk Keefer, Serhij Koroliuk, Mary Mach, Marcia Ostashewski, Thomas Prymak, Gloria Romaniuk, and Orysia Paszczak Tracz.

The fourth issue ("Searching for ‘Kanadiis’ka Rus’") featured a selected annotated bibliography, an index to Nestor Dmytryv’s "Kanadiis’ka Rus’" and a memoir piece by Nicholas A. Hryhowczuk.

The fifth issue ("Cossacks and Indians? Encounters, Abductions, Guilt, Ballads and Empathy on the Prairie and Beyond") included three essays (by Maryna Hrymych, Robert B. Klymasz, Myron Shatulsky) English translations (from the Ukrainian of Ivan Kulyk, Myroslav Irvan and Pavlo Popovych) along with reports, reviews, images, a list of recommended readings and "snippets from here and there".

Thus far, all the issues of "Winnipeg Papers" have been prepared and introduced by Robert B. Klymasz.
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TEN SELECTED OBITUARIES (packed in separate envelope at end)

Introductory note to the envelope of selected obituaries

The Winnipeg Free Press is the City’s leading daily newspaper with several special features. One of these is the section devoted to obituaries, “in memoriam” and commemorative pieces (Saturday’s “weekend issue” is especially rich in this regard). These are normally published in English and occasionally in French or other languages. Ukrainian-in-Cyrillic never appears.

In this package of ten obituaries this particular genre of expression is shown as an opportunity for original comment that goes beyond the usual template (see Linda Degh’s article cited elsewhere in the Bibliography): originality and striking elements are the main characteristics here.
INTRODUCTION

If Ukrainianness represents a cultural trait expressed by individual human beings, how does that trait surface when its carriers encounter their inevitable demise? What’s normal and what isn’t? After more than a century of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, many burial grounds have become parks of history (after all, thanks to the resultant demographic fallout, it’s likely that today Canada’s dead Ukrainians outnumber live Ukrainians). So how do we approach or even dare to enter into that metaphysical ‘other world’? This compilation of Winnipeg Papers explores these issues with the help of essays, reportage and first-person material such as newspaper obituaries; together they provide a threshold into a universe both feared and revered. Hopefully, these instruments of information, along with their assorted viewpoints and perspectives, will serve to enrich our understanding of the Ukrainian experience in Canada.

Our focus on ‘raw’ data as presented by anonymous obituaries and cemetery markers – these condensations of lives lived -- underlines the inescapable biographical, person-focused dimension of human death and dying. But as argued by S.Holyck Hunchuck in her intriguing interpretation of Ukrainian food colossi on the prairies, there are other sides to this story that need to be to considered as well, -- as exemplified by the arresting image on our cover - a reproduction of a painting (Lest We Repent 1966) by William Kurelek (1927 – 1977).

Throughout this report the eclipse of Ukrainian as a viable language in contemporary Canada is well documented although certain words refuse to disappear. The obituaries show a retention of traditional kinship terms of endearment and their cognates (such as baba and dido > “gido”), names of beloved foods (such as pyrohy >
"perogies" / varenyky and borshch) as well as the standard expression of farewell (vichnaia pamiat' = eternal memory). (By the way, the English obituary, as a traditional genre of ‘creative’ writing, has no equivalent in the Ukrainian popular tradition.) Besides language, there are other variables as well: these are related to such basics as the gender of the deceased and his/her place of birth and birth/death dates.

Acknowledgments. I wish to thank our three prominent “essayists” whose writings help to identify and characterize an area of interest that warrants further research. In common with all the preceding issues of Winnipeg Papers, the one that you now hold was prepared and produced with the support of a Zuravetsky Fellowship awarded for the academic year 2012-2013 by the University of Manitoba’s Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies. Victoria Kaschor -- the Centre’s office manager and technical guru – gave generously of her know-how and editorial skills to enhance the final product.

To obtain copies of this work, please contact Mr. James Kominowski of the University of Manitoba’s Elizabeth Dafoe library (Archives of the Ukrainian Canadian Experience). His telephone number in Winnipeg is 204 / 474-9681.
Note: The following essay is taken from Svitlana P. Kukharens’ doctoral dissertation, “Abnormal Death Memorials in Ukraine: the Folkloristic Perspective” (University of Alberta, 2010).

UKRAINIAN FOLK BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ABOUT DEATH, FUNERALS, AND AFTERLIFE BEFORE THE 20TH CENTURY1

Death and Its Personifications

Death was not a taboo topic in Ukrainian culture; on the contrary, it was viewed as a natural and integral part of human life. A riddle, Од Бога мені більше, а од царя старше [(Whose authority is) lower than God's but higher than Tsar's?], implied “death” as an answer (Manzhura 1890: 174) and pointed to the “democratic” nature of death in the people's eyes: it did not differentiate between the poor and rich, the noble and peasants. Numerous proverbs and sayings about death presented it as a natural event one could not escape, but had to prepare oneself for: “Смерть — неминуча дорога [Death is an unescapable path]; Сей світ позичений [This world is a borrowed one]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 158); “Крути-че верти, а не втеччи від смерті [Either this way or that, you cannot escape death];” “Коли не вмирать — треба день теряти [Whenever you die, you lose a day]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236); “Думки за горами, а смерть за плечами [One's thoughts are over the mountains, and [one's] death is behind the shoulders];” “Я в під замуруйся, а смерть найде [Even if you wall yourself in a stove, death will (still) find (you)]” (Hnatiuk 1912a: xxxviii). That it was shameful to be scared of things related to death and funerals was reflected in a

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1 The beginning of systematic study of various Ukrainian folk beliefs and practices goes back to the 19th century when Ukrainian intellectuals influenced by European Romanticism developed an interest in ethnography. In fact, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries was a period of the most intense fieldwork for collecting materials on the Russian Empire, of which Ukraine was a part. In the foreword to his monograph, which was one of the biggest collections of traditional folk prose, Volodymyr Hnatiuk (1904) underlined the importance of collecting folk beliefs about death, soul, afterlife, and various spirits by saying: “[T]his sort of data are of special importance for us, not only because they are scarce but also because they contain lots of elements that are specific for our folk and, unlike, for example, tales they are not borrowed from any common human source of folklore” (p. i). Yet folklorists did not begin studying funerary rituals at the beginning of the 19th century. Those became a research subject only in the 1850s (Kuzelia 1912: 134). Several scholars - Bin'kovskii, Chubyns'kyi, Danilov, Hnatiuk, Ivanyts'kyi, Malynka, and Sreznev's'kyi, to name just few - collected folk beliefs about life, death, and afterlife in different regions of Ukraine. Their publications remain important references on this topic. However, most ethnographic data are about Ukrainian village. There is no sufficient information about urban attitudes toward death and the funeral.

2 In Nomys's collection, a section “Death” contains over 100 proverbs and sayings. See pp. 158-160.
saying “Боятися, цуратися мерця – гріх [To be scared of or avoid a dead person (in a funeral) is a sin]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 247).

Nevertheless, there were numerous euphemisms to avoid mention of death and funerals: “Не захоміте більше хліба істі [(The person) did not want to eat bread any longer (i.e., the person died)]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238); “Пішов у далеку путь [(The person) has set on a long journey (i.e., the person died)]” (Braliovskii 1885: 81; Kotliarevskii 1891: 219); “Там би він і коржі поїв [There was where he would eat wafers (i.e., he has died)]” (Manzhura 1890: 171); “Посадити каніну [(To plant a viburnum tree (for someone) (i.e., to bury that person)] (Kotliarevskii 1891: 250); “Чоловік часу [The man is getting closer to his time (i.e., he is dying)]” (Miloradovich 1897: 18); “Дуба дав [He has given an oak tree (i.e., he is dead)]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 159); “З’їхав з села [He has moved out of village]” (ibid.: 265). When they invited neighbors to make a coffin, villagers would say, “Прийдіть, будь ласка, до нас та положіть пострий моєму батькові (чи там матері) нову хату. не сховім у старий жить [Please, come and help me to build a new house for my father (or mother). He (she) does not want to live in the old one]” (Moshkov 1902: 16); “Відійшов [(He) has departed]” (Nechui-viter 1862: 45).

The same tendency was true for some curses by which people would covertly wish death while avoiding the words “death,” “funeral,” or “grave”: “Бодай ти з душою розділися [May your body separate from your soul]” (Manzhura 1890: 171); “Щоб ти туди не дійшов і назад не вернувся [May you neither reach your destination nor return]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 72); “Щоб тебе положили на лаву! [May (they) lay you on a bench (a place where a family traditionally would place a deceased member)]” (ibid.: 74); “Нехай тебе на мари положать [May (they) put you on the mery (a wooden stretcher on which a coffin was carried to the cemetery)]” (Lencevskii 1899: 76); “Щоб тобі дубовий хрест [May you get a wooden cross, i.e., may you die and get a wooden cross on your grave]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 74); “Бодай тебе очеретом зміряю [May your height be measured by a stem of reed]” (Lencevskii 1899: 75);3 “Нехай до нього нін із кадитом прийде [May a priest with a censing pan come to him]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 233);4 “Щоб на тебе ворони кркали [May ravens caw at you]” (ibid.: 217; Surntsov 1896: 196);5 “Щоб тобі віку як у козі хвіст [May your life be as long as a goat's tail, i.e., may your life be very short; may you die soon]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 267); “Щоб над тобою конче праведне не сходило [May the righteous sun never shine upon you, i.e., may you be buried]” (ibid.: 73).

Generally, curses by which someone was wished death were considered very powerful and, therefore, extremely dangerous. For some people, they specified the way they would like another person to die: “Щоб його перша куля не мінила [May he not escape the first bullet]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 73), “Бодай

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3 Until the beginning of the 20th century, Ukrainian villagers used a stem of reed to measure a coffin size, and then put that stem into the coffin.
4 A priest with a censing pan would come only to a funeral.
5 Ravens were believed either to predict a sinner's death by cawing or to caw loudly while devouring dead flesh of unburied sinners.
ti повисися на сухий осци [May you hang yourself on a dried aspen tree]" (Bin’kovskii 1898: 7), and many others.

According to traditional Ukrainian folk beliefs, life did not end at death, but continued, with death just another form of existence. Death was often perceived as a long sleep, so people compared one to the other. “[The person] sleeps like the dead” meant that a person slept so deeply, nothing could awake her/him. “[The person] has fallen an eternal sleep” meant a person had died. This perception of death as a form of rest was also widely reflected in the writing on gravestones, such as “Тут спочиває… [Here rests...].” Generally, images of death, soul, and afterlife were partly connected to church teachings and reflected in the iconography. Some of that imagery was indirectly presented in lore as proverbs, saying, omens, personal narratives, legends, curses, and even children’s games in which death was a central element or character and in which folk understanding of a soul and its destiny was expressed. Furthermore, Ukrainians believed in a parallel existence of another world and always wished good life in that world to their dead. For example, at a big feast, people would remember their dead by toasting them: “Дай нам, Боже, здоров’я, а померлим царство небесне [Grant us, Lord, health and a Heavenly Kingdom to our dead]” (Bin’kovskii 1896: 260). During Christmas caroling, singers of kolядky (sacred songs) would sing to every member of household, including the dead, wishing a Heavenly Kingdom to the deceased. Kolядky also expressed a belief in close communication between the living and dead and their mutual obligation to care for each other spiritually. One ends with these words:

Dead souls beg the Lord,

[They] beg the Lord, [and] ask the Lord

For these [survivors] who do not forget about them,

[Who] request church masses [to commemorate the dead]. (Hnatiuk 1914: 278)⁶

It appears from ethnographic descriptions of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that an animistic concept of death prevailed in Ukrainian beliefs, probably because “in the folk view, animism predominates in the realm of enigmatic” (Ivanov 1909: 245). People imagined death to be an anthropomorphic being. They often described it as an ugly, crooked old woman in white or black baggy clothes (Manzhura 1890: 63; Hnatiuk 1904: 114-115) or a human skeleton with a scythe visiting a house where a death was about to occur (Afanas’ev 1868: 336, 361; Generozov 1883: 17; Batiushkov 1891b: 328; Egorov 1903: 168), standing by the deathbed and visible only to the person about to die (Bulgakovskii 1890: 190; Liatiskii 1892: 40). Death as an animated being was not believed to take people's lives randomly, by her own choice; instead, she was to go first to God for

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⁶ “Померші душі Господя молі
Господя молі, Бога благают
За цих, що за них ні забувать,
Служби до церкви вони посилають” (syntax as in the text).
instructions (ibid.: 41). Death was thought to be able to speak, so it was possible to negotiate with her. Although it was possible to dupe her and spare the living at least several additional years, as in the legend about Death and the Soldier (Manzhura 1890: 61-63), Death could not be bribed if a human’s appointed time to die had come.

Death, however, was also associated with *dolia*, or a person's destiny. Some legends portrayed Death not as a taker of life, but as a helper in life. In one, Death appeared as a poor, young girl asking for Easter bread to break her Lenten fast. When a poor man shared his Easter bread with her while refusing Judah and Apostle Peter, Death became his sworn sister and assisted him in daily living (Ivanov 1894: 154). In another, a young man shared his meal with Death, who became so grateful that she helped him become wealthy (Hrinchenko 1897: 89-91).

Death was frequently seen as an unclean spirit, sometimes equated with the devil. People would say, “Прийде чорн по його душу [A devil will come to take his soul]” (Liatskii 1892: 41). This saying is based on the belief from Christian teaching that angels took righteous souls while little demons took sinners’ souls (Bessarabia 1904: 42). Death was imagined as living in the underworld, more certainly in hell and her presence near a dying person was felt as grave cold (Afanas’ev 1868: 336; Brailovskii 1885: 76). As an agent of the underworld, Death was thought to manifest herself through certain birds—usually black or nocturnal ones with unpleasant calls, such as a raven (Sumtsov 1890a: 75). The house of a dying or newly dead sinner was believed to attract many kinds of birds associated with evil and “bad death.” Ravens, crows, owls, and magpies would circle overhead, shriek, and perch on the roof or nearby (Afanas’ev 1868: 355; Bessarabia 1904: 42).

Ukrainian culture surrounded human death with a complex of beliefs and omens – special warnings foretelling upcoming death, both one’s own and someone else’s. It was important to alert a person in time to let him prepare for death and was customary to prepare for one’s own death, not only in a spiritual sense but also a physical one. Villagers would make coffins for themselves well in advance (Chubinskii 1877: 707; Markevich 1883: 394; Miloradovich 1897: 168). For many, death was a comforting, long-awaited event, since they expected to reunite with late relatives immediately after death. Therefore, knowing the right time was important. People would pay special attention to the warning signs, such as a knock on the window at night or birdcalls (Hnatiuk 1904: 115-16), a dog howling with its face down (Afanas’ev 1868: 356; Lenchevskii 1899: 72; Iakovlev 1905: 155), a chicken crowing in a rooster’s voice (Chubinskii 1877: 698; Demidovich 1896: 137; Iakovlev 1905: 155), an icon falling off the wall (Miloradovich 1897: 7) or a mirror breaking (Iakovlev 1905: 155). Other omens were a house spirit (*domovyk*) snoring, knocking loudly, or screaming at night— or simply shutting up and moving away (Ivanov 1893: 53). Even the birth of twins or triplets, because of their relative rarity, was thought to foretell the death of one of the parents, depending on the sex of the newborns (Manzhura 1890: 154).

Certain dreams were believed to predict death, requiring specialists to interpret their meaning. Dreams were considered omens if they involved taking
something from dead relatives' (Liatskii 1892: 39), walking in a cemetery, or seeing a church procession (Miloradovich 1897: 7). So, too, were dreams of bees, a monk, a loaf of bread, smoke, teeth falling out, blood (Manzhura 1896: 161), drowning in muddy water, a falling ceiling in one's home, an oven falling apart (Bin'kovskii 1896: 230), and so forth.

**Beliefs about Different Types of Death**

The death of a fellow villager was an event of significance upon which the welfare of the entire community depended. Therefore, it was paramount to interpret properly not only the death omens, but also the death itself, and, accordingly, follow the rules of burial that would protect the rest of the villagers from possible danger. That was especially important because people distinguished between two types of death: a good one and a bad, sudden, or unnatural one. Good death was an ideal to strive for: “Only that death can be called 'human’-/ 'Christian-like when a man peacefully died in his bed, while beforehand having prepared himself through confession and communion, and having said goodbye to all his relatives” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236). In addition, “the death must be 'one's own” (i.e., natural, easy, not violent); it must happen at 'one’s own’ time (i.e., at an appropriate age), in 'one’s own’ place and among 'one’s’ relatives, and then all the customs accepted in 'one’s own’ society should be observed during the burial” (Vinogradova 1999: 46). Such natural death was viewed as the most precious. People would normally say about the lucky person, “Бог гарну смерть послае” [God has sent a good death]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 236).

“Bad death” meant the opposite and could be subdivided into liuta (furious) and nahla (sudden). Liuta meant either violent or prolonged, agonizing death (Batishkov 1891: 174). Examples would be death by execution, wild animals, or fire (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238). Prolonged and agonizing death was a sign that the person was associated with evil powers and, therefore, a grave sinner and certainly a witch, wizard, or vampire. Witches and wizards were believed to die only at a very old age, but not naturally and peacefully – especially learned ones. Their death had to be prolonged and agonizing, and would come only after transferring their witchcraft knowledge to somebody else. People also believed that making a hole in the ceiling above the deathbed of such people would hasten their passing. The hole would not be blessed with the sign of the cross as were all other openings like doors, windows, and chimneys to protect against evil entering. This custom was to encourage the escape of the sinner's soul, or rather the sinner's evil spirit, which was reluctant to depart because it saw formidable demonic creatures crowded around waiting to grab and torment it (Ivanov 1909: 249).

Nahla, or sudden unnatural death, included a wide range of events, such as death from a lightning strike, drowning, falling from a tree, suicide (Fischer 1921: 354), difficult childbirth (ibid.: 364), contagious disease, (Ian-s'ki 1898), freezing along a road, and drunkenness (Bin'kovskii 1902: 158; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 39-40; Bily 1926: 82). Babies who were stillborn, murdered by their mothers, or unbaptized at death also belonged in the “bad death” category, as were people of any age who had been doomed to hell by parental (Kravchenko 1889: 774; Miloradovich 1897: 171) or ecclesiastical (Olel'kovych 1861) curse. Their passing
was believed the result of punishment by God and interference from evil spirits. Folk beliefs, however, were inconsistent and controversial. For example, lightning and thunder were believed caused by Saints Elijah and Gabriel as they hunted demons. If someone was struck by lightning or affected by thunder, two explanations were typically offered: (1) The person was associated with unclean forces and doomed to the hell (Hnatiuk 1904: 3), or (2) the individual was an accidental victim, for a demon tried to hide inside him. Therefore, he died like a martyr and his soul would ascend to the Heaven (Kotliarevskii 1891: 248-49; Miloradovich 1897: 171).

Good dead were buried after a regular church service and assumed to hold a neutral or positive attitude toward the living. They ultimately became “ancestors” whose souls left for some distant place, supposedly the land of ancestors or Heaven. They never disturbed the living; on the contrary, they guarded and helped their living relatives. Good death did not preclude contact with the living. It happened in dreams or by invitation from the living, but only during special occasions. Such visits were welcomed and viewed as prophetic.

Contrary to the good dead, those who died an unnatural death were assumed to be angry or envious. Such dead became unquiet or unclean revenants who lived close to the living and could harm them. One of their characteristics was the inability of their souls to proceed to the next world because death occurred before the appointed term allotted to every human by God (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 40). Unable to join the rest of their ancestors, the unquiet dead had to rattle about the earth without rest until their worldly time was up. Even then, however, their lot was miserable, since people believed that “God does not summon such dead; there is no place for them neither in heaven nor in hell” (Bilyi 1926: 83). To die “a bad death” meant to have neither forgiveness for one’s soul nor rest for one’s remains in the other world. To wish somebody such death was the worst curse, usually meaning that the curser (Wex’s term 2005) reached the point of hatred beyond which neither the laws of human tolerance nor Christian compassion worked any longer: “Щоб твоя кість непрощена була [May your bones be not forgiven]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 286); “Щоб ти нагло згиб і змітив непохований, як падло [May you die suddenly and rot unburied like a perished animal]” (ibid.: 288); “Щоб його земля не прийняла! [May earth not accept his body]” (ibid.: 74); “Щоб тебе поховали на ростаннях [May you be buried at the crossroads (like the one who hanged himself)]” (ibid.: 74); “Щоб тебе нім не ховав [May a priest not bury you]” (ibid.: 72); “Щоб ти на Страшний суд не встав [May you not arise on Judgment Day]” (ibid.: 73); and so on.

Pious people feared “bad death” saying, “Нехай Бог боронить і сохранить від такої смерті всього [May God save and prevent everyone from such death]” (Bin'kovskii 1896: 238) or “Дай, Боже, з який час лежати, а не нагло померати [Grant, Lord, to lie (while dying) for some time instead of dying abruptly]” (Nomys 1985[1864]: 159). They prayed for themselves and close relatives to avoid “bad death” and did whatever they could to ensure a good one. For example, people believed that fasting on the twelve special Fridays of the year would help ensure they escape both nahlia and liuta deaths (Ivanov 1907: 16-17). Blind minstrels performed a religious song called “Twelve Fridays” in which they
described in detail the benefits of fasting and praying on each of those days (Borzhkovskii 1889: 696-698).

**Funeral Practices for Regular and Special Death**

Upon someone's good death, the person's family would call relatives and neighbors to help. Generally, a funeral was an all-village event for which neighbors or friends never refused to assist. Otherwise, people believed, the dead would not share anything with them in the next world when their time came. Moreover, it was considered indecent and sinful to charge for such services as coffin making (Apollosov 1861: 220; Chubinskii 1877: 706; Miloradovich 1897: 168; Malinka 1898: 101; Lenchevskii 1899: 75; Moshkov 1902: 16).

An even number of necessarily old women washed the corpse and dressed it in clean clothing, usually as fine as people could afford (Bulgakovskii 1890: 185; Moshkov 1902: 16, 20). Red clothes were avoided for fear that all the relatives would die young. Indeed, nothing red was allowed in the coffin except for a flower for unmarried youth (Manzhura 1890: 159; Miloradovich 1897: 167; Lenchevskii 1899: 74). Generally, red was associated with Kozak funerals, widely mentioned in songs about Kozaks's death, but not commonly used by civilians (Danilov 1909).

A dressed body was put on a bench, with head toward the icons and legs toward the exit. The legs, hands, and often jaw of the deceased were fastened with puty, ropes to prevent involuntary movements during rigor mortis. People put a wax cross in a cadaver's left hand since, according to the folk belief, his right hand would be busy making a sign of the cross when he appeared before God (Apollosov 1861: 219; Chubinskii 1877: 698). People would also give coins to a corpse to pay for the transfer over the river of the dead or to “buy off” a place at the cemetery (Lepkyi 1883: 14; V.K. 1890: 323; Bin'kovskii 1896: 254; Miloradovich 1897: 166). A body was to spend several nights at home guarded by the same old women who prepared it. Ethnographic materials show that there once were забави при мерці [games in the vicinity of the deceased] in the 19th century in western parts of Ukraine (at that time a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire) (Hnatuk 1912: 310-311), where they persisted into the early 20th century, mostly in remote places (Fischer 1921: 210).

On the day of the funeral, the body would be placed in a coffin filled with dried grass (Bin'kovskii 1896: 245; Miloradovich 1897: 168) and some favorites of the deceased like tobacco, alcohol (Lepkyi 1883: 14; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Bin'kovskii 1896: 255), doughnuts (бабанки), and apples (Abramov 1907: 29). To the coffin of a midwife, or повитуха, people would put poppy seeds so that she would have gifts for all the children she helped to deliver when met them in the next world (Ivanov 1909: 249). A priest would come to the house of the deceased and read Psalter and a special prayer of permission (резрвительная). The text of the prayer was put into the corpse's hands. In essence, it was a “parchment certificate of good conduct attesting that the Church was in peace with a deceased” that signaled to the survivors they were free to pray for the dead person's soul (Dolotskii 1845: 397).

After that, close relatives bid the deceased farewell and he was taken outside. At the threshold, pallbearers would lower the coffin and knock on it three
times, allowing the deceased to say good-bye to his house (Morachevich 1853: 306; Chubinskii 1877: 708; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Lenchevskii 1899: 76; Kaminskii 1912: 133-134).

At the cemetery, family members would remove the puty from the deceased, fearing that failure to do so would impair his quality of life in the other world; he would not be able to stand up and walk to it when the horn summoned him on Judgment Day (Ivanov 1909: 250).

After the coffin was lowered into the grave, a priest would “seal” the grave, i.e., make a sign of a cross over the four sides the grave with a shovel (Moshkov 1902: 22). Folk beliefs held that death stopped all of a dead person’s earthly activities only if the grave was sealed; otherwise, he was able to exit and wander around (Ivanov 1909: 248). Church and secular authorities initially opposed this practice, but eventually incorporated it into the ritual since many considered sealing the essence of a funeral (Moshkov 1902: 22). After that, each person tossed three handfuls of dirt into the grave, the grave was closed, a cross was put on it, and people returned from the cemetery for a special commemorative dinner in the house of the deceased. The master of the house would say to those present: “Поминайте [Commemorate (the deceased)] and people would reply, “Нехай Господь помяне душу покийника [May God commemorate the soul of the deceased]” (Morachevich 1853: 307).

Funerals of those who died in a “bad” way differed dramatically from those of the good dead: their bodies were treated differently, the ritual had unusual steps or was absent altogether, the burial had a special form, and the burial place was marked in a distinctive way. Most of these funerals of were of small, especially unbaptized, children; unmarried youth; people who committed suicide; witches; and those who died on a road. Because of the nature of their death, “bad” dead had no time, opportunity, or desire to receive the ministration of the Church while still alive. Therefore, they could not be buried in the usual way at a usual place. Both church and cemetery were considered clean or blessed places, and neither tolerated a body of such dead, who were considered unclean (нечисти).

Absence of a proper funeral was bad, as only a proper funeral insured salvation of the soul. When a body was missing, a proper funeral could not be performed, since:

If a person dies in such a way that his body cannot be buried in the ground — for example, wolves devour [him], he perishes in fire [or] drowns and no body is found — it means that person was a sinner, and such death itself is viewed as God’s punishment for terrible sins (Bir'kovskii 1896: 238).

Ukrainians, however, sometimes tried to find a compromise in such cases. For example, in 1784, a Church Court accused a priest and a deacon of trying to have a funeral service for two local villagers who died far away from a contagious disease. Both clergy representatives held a mass over an empty marya and people kissed a fabric placed on it that supposedly represented the absent bodies. (Lanskii 1898: 2). Generally, depriving someone of the right to a funeral was the worst penalty; his soul was believed to agonize eternally and never find peace. The paramount importance of adequate funerals and commemoration for salvation
of one’s soul in the other world, God’s protection, and dissociation from the evil powers was reflected in the belief in a special candle that magically helped thieves avoid arrest. The candle could be made only of fat of a “sinless child who was not mourned by human tears and whose body was not buried into the blessed soil after all proper funeral rites” (Lytvyniv 1900: 142-144).

Corpses of suicides were the most hated and denied proper interment, for if they were buried, God’s punishment was believed to strike the community (Zabylin 1880: 564). Once God gave a person his/her fate, one had to endure it no matter how hard it was. As people would say, “нести свой крест [to carry one’s own Golgotha cross; to endure one’s fate]” (Manzhura 1894: 161). Those who committed suicide went against God as a result of the devil’s seduction and therefore were sinners who could not be buried as Christians in a cemetery, for their presence would desecrate the soil and anger other, “clean” dead who were ancestors (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 92). Priests refused to bury such deceased and did not say a prayer of permission upon them. In the 13th century, they were not buried at all, but left to rot on the surface (Bilyi 1926: 83) “without either a prayer or cross, like perished animals” (Levitskii 1891: 358). Later, they were usually buried along roads or at crossroads, (Chubinskii 1877: 712; Kotliarevskii 1891: 33-34; Bin’kovskii 1896: 258), right at the spot of their deaths (Manzhura 1894: 167; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 89), or in swamps (Bin’kovskii 1896: 258). Tradition prescribed tossing “a bit of straw, a tree branch, or a handful of earth” while passing by the graves of those who died badly and were buried outside of a cemetery (Rudchenko 1874: 71; Chubinskii 1877: 712; Demidovich 1896: 136). This was believed to bring luck to travellers, or as Chumak said, “Дорога будет удачи [The road will be fortunate]” (Rudchenko 1874: 71; cf Fischer 1921: 357). With time, the accumulated debris was burnt at an “unclean” grave and the fire seen as a “pacifying old sacrifice to [the suicides’] orphaned and homeless souls” (Kotliarevskii 1891: 34). Moving their bodies to another place was a taboo because that would be additional desecration of the ground. If absolutely necessary, their bodies could be transferred only over a crossroad, but even then the suicides were believed to return to the old spot of their death over the next seven years (Manzhura 1894: 167). People believed that the sites of death and burial of unclean, unquiet dead were places where evil forces concentrated and that those dead were the means of devilish power. Ukrainians viewed the spirits of suicides as dangerous, since they turned into vampires and the tragic end of their earthly lives caused their souls to hate the living (Sumtsov 1889: 271; Levitskii 1891: 359; Fischer 1921: 361). Those who hanged themselves were buried on the borders of fields with a metal nail from a harrow in their mouths and an aspen branch driven through their chests (Levitskii 1891: 359). The funerals of such suicides took place late in the evening and they were placed in coffins with their faces down (Lepkyi 1883: 14). Those who drowned—whether purposefully or accidentally—were interred on the banks of the rivers (Demidovich 1896: 137). It was believed that the unclean forces guarded their drowning sites and their spirits might appear to ask travellers to move boats from them (Manzhura 1890: 132).

Marriage and procreation were so important for Ukrainians that those who died too early to be married were expected to do so in the other world. People
used to say that “there is no place in the other world for a man who died unmarried” (Svidnyts'kyi 1861: 52) and “One did not live if one did not have a wedding” (Nechui-viter 1862: 42). Generally, Ukrainians believed that in the other world, as in this world, people would live in couples. Those who died young and unmarried were buried after a special ritual called вестийний похорон [the wedding of the dead] (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 6, 45). Those two words do not seem oxymoronic if we remember that both events – funerals and weddings – are connected to death and rebirth (Petrov 1989: 89). In Ukrainian epic songs, or dumy, funerals and weddings were equated when a dying hero asked that his family be told he had married a foreign girl instead of saying he died (cf Kononenko 1998: 172). Weddings songs and funeral laments had common features. The former presented a woman as making a journey; she moved to another house and left her kin to join another family. Similarly, the latter, avoiding the word “death,” presented the deceased as leaving his kin to join the ancestral realm; he was on a journey to another house, a coffin. This mediation between two kinship groups became the “point of contact between funeral and wedding laments” (Petrov 1989: 89).

A young girl’s or boy’s funeral typically resembled a marriage ceremony, although wedding songs were not sung (Lenchevskii 1899: 75; Moshkov 1902: 23). If a girl died, her friends were called to performed a role similar to bridesmaids. They unbraided her hair, split it in half, and encircled her head with a wreath. The girl attendants wore kerchiefs or ribbons on their right arms as they carried their dead friend to the cemetery in a coffin (Apollosov 1861: 223). The mother gave the girlfriends the dowry the daughter had prepared for her wedding. For both a girl and a boy who died young, relatives baked wedding bread, korovai, and shared it at the cemetery. People put a wedding band on the ring finger of a dead child, who would leave behind a symbolic spouse considered a widow/widower and an in-law to the family of the deceased (Svidnytskii 1861: 52-53; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Kotliarevskii 1891: 237; Ivanov 1909: 254).

Kozaky warriors who died young and violently once had special markers on their graves in addition to a cross: a white flag above their graves so that “a cemetery would turn white from the banners, which testified to an untimely death of a young Kozak” (Tereshchenko 1999[1848]: 301). In addition, a viburnum tree was planted at a grave of a Kozak who died far away from his lard (ibid.).

Unbaptized or stillborn babies were most often buried under the house threshold so that people entering and leaving would make a sort of cross sign by stepping over their graves to help free the infants' souls (Vasil'ev 1890: 319; Kotliarevskii 1891: 33; Ivanov 1909: 247). Sometimes these children were buried in family gardens (Vasil'ev 1890: 319) under a fruit or willow tree (Miloradovich 1897: 171). Occasionally they were buried at a crossroads (Chubinskii 1877: 713). In contrast, baptized toddlers were usually buried in a cemetery. No matter where the burial, a small child's funeral generally was a much less elaborate ritual than an adult's (Lepkyi 1883: 13). A deceased child would be dressed in a long white linen shirt with an obligatory fabric belt around its waist, a periwinkle wreath on its forehead, and a cross on its chest (ibid.: 13). Parents put candy and gingerbread (прашки) in the coffin (Abramov 1907: 29). Mother and other relatives were not
to cry or lament the death, especially if the baby died unbaptized. If it was the
first-born, mothers did not even go to the cemetery to bury it for fear that her
subsequent children might also die (Apollosov 1861: 223; Lepkyi 1883: 13;
Bulgakovskii 1890: 188; Hrinchenko 1897: 23).

The “bad” dead had two major reasons for becoming revenants: they lacked
proper/complete burials/funerals and did not live their allotted lifespan. In his
1988 monograph, Paul Barber listed various apotropaics, or methods various
cultures used against revenants to turn evil away. Those included “mutilation
of the corpse, physical restraints, various funerary rites, and even deception intended
to trick the spirit world” (p. 46). Ukrainians used numerous apotropaics, with
mutilation of the corpse being the most common. The aspen is probably the only
tree not glorified in Ukrainian folk songs for it was considered a cursed species on
which Judah hanged himself (Bessaraba 1904: 44). Since people connected aspen
with devilish creatures like witches and the unquiet dead in general, it was used as
a talisman to protect against them (Bin'kovskii 1898: 7). People would drive an
aspen stake through hearts or heads of such dead to prevent them from coming
back. In some regions, people would cut off the head of a suspected witch/wizard
and put it in the coffin between the cadaver's legs (Hnatiuk 1904: 165; Zelenin
1995[1916]: 89). To prevent unquiet dead from returning and harming the living,
people would sow poppy seeds in a circle around their graves or along the way
from the house to the graves; for some mysterious reason, these dead were
thought to count tiny poppy seeds compulsively to keep them busy all night
(Chubinskii 1877: 712; Lepkyi 1883: 14; Kolesa 1902: 248; Kaminskii 1906: 10;
Zelenin 1995[1916]: 53). Ethnographic descriptions show that although burying
suicides and other “bad” dead in regular cemeteries became more widespread by
the late 19th-early 20th centuries, their graves could be sealed only after seven
years (Manzhura 1894: 162). At times of cataclysms like droughts or epidemics,
people would still open them and treat the remains cruelly (Levitskii 1891: 359;
Bin'kovskii 1898: 8).

Numerous taboos and fears surrounded even the proper funerals of the good
dead, as they did weddings and other major rites of passage. When a body fell into
the category of unclean, contaminated, and thus dangerous, many taboos involved
the corpse and objects in contact with it. For example, people disposed of “dead
water” (water in which a dead body was washed in preparation for the funeral) at
a place where no one walked. Crossing the path of the funeral procession was a
taboo, for people believed that it would cause inflammation and wounds over the
body (Manzhura 1894: 168). When the coffin was in the street, survivors shut the
yard gates, believing that it prevented the deceased from returning to his house
from the cemetery (Apollosov 1861: 221). To defend the survivors and ensure
their long life, Ukrainians sprinkled rye inside the house after the deceased was
taken outside (ibid.: 221; Vasil'ev 1889: 636; Bin'kovskii 1896: 255;
Miloradovich 1897: 169; Malinka 1898: 102). The root of the Ukrainian word
жито [rye] is the same as the root of the word життя [life]. People believed in
the purifying function of this grain and its ability to revitalize anything
contaminated by death (Kotliarevskii 1891: 221). People believed that the dead
had magical power and that physical contact with the body, or coffin, or the mere
presence at the place of death, would kill developing life, like a fetus or vegetation. Therefore, pregnant women were not to attend funerals, while all seeds and plants were removed from the house where a body lay (Chubinskii 1877: 706). At the same time, however, a corpse was believed to have healing power over so-called “dead bones” – hygromas, bone outgrowths, etc. (Vasilev 1889: 636; Fischer 1921: 220). Therefore, materials in contact with a dead body were able to “deaden” pain, feelings, relations, and life itself, according to the law of imitative magic. For example, washing the mouth with “dead water” supposedly killed a toothache, just as transferring puty from a deceased to the limbs of a sick person would mitigate a toothache or rheumatic pain (Ivanov 1909: 250). Similarly, it was believed that a kerchief which had closed the jaws of the deceased could stop fights or physical altercations if secretly squeezed inside a pocket of someone who obtained one from a funeral (Bin’kovskii 1896: 244). A rope on which a person committed suicide or a criminal was hanged was highly valued as a means to luck or profit and was considered worth stealing and trading (Sumtsov 1889: 256-257). Lamp oil or a candle made from the fat of a murdered person was a treasure among criminals because it magically made them invisible (ibid.: 258-259; Lytvyniv 1900: 142; Fischer 1921: 218).

A corpse was believed to be a reliable instrument of prediction: if it was soft when transferred to a coffin, there would be another death in the family soon (Apollosov 1861: 221; Grichenko 1897: 24; Iakovlev 1905: 155). People covered a dead person’s eyes with coins to prevent him from looking at the living; his stare would cause another death in the family (Chubinskii 1877: 699; Demidovich 1896: 137; Lenchevskii 1899: 76; Moshkov 1902: 15).

Mourning and Commemoration: Their Forms and Functions

Much of the post-funerary activities were directed towards avoiding things that would make a soul unhappy and doing things that would make it happy. Just as funeral rituals differed depending on the type of death, there were different ways of memorializing and commemorating. Souls of those who died a good death were prayed for as often as possible. There were twelve special Saturdays throughout the year called alternatively поминальные, батюшиковские, or задушевные суботы [commemorative, parental, or Saturdays designated for praying for the souls of the dead], and prayers for dead relatives were believed especially effective on those days. Prayers of blind minstrels were considered even more beneficial for the souls of the deceased; they were especially powerful if pronounced for those who died a “bad death,” since the minstrels were seen as good mediators between the world of the living and dead (Kononenko 1998: 189-190). Prayers for such dead often listed various ways of dying badly:

“Dear Lord! We are praying to you for [the sake of] the souls of all the dead...[who were] ministrated without Christ, who were killed in wars, drowned in waters, burnt in fires, [whose] heads were cut off by swords, devoured by wild animals, [whose] blood was sucked by serpents, [who were] killed by [falling] trees, tossing dirt, struck by thunders, killed by bullets, [those who] died in hospitals, or because of freezing, [who] died suddenly, without confession or the sacrament. Lord! Accept and
commemorate all [of them]....” (Hnatiuk 1896: 74); “Commemorate, Lord...
Small unbaptized children!/ And those knowing and not knowing/ Who
drowned in waters,/ Who burn in fires,/ Whom [wild] animals devour,/ Who
are killed by thunder,/ Who is covered by blessed soil,/ Who dies a sudden
death.” (L.M. 1903: 6-7)

Ukrainians mourned during the funeral with laments, free improvisations
used by professional wailers, but most often by the closest relatives to express
their grief and pain of loss (Danilov 1905: 30). Iarlon Sventsits’kyi (1912) felt
that laments were once the central element of the funeral until “the circumstances
of life singled them out from the funeral into a merely tolerated remnant” (p. 7).
Laments articulated whatever was performed during funeral rituals. They
were dialogues with the dead when survivors asked questions and often provided
answers on behalf of the dead (ibid.). Lamenters addressed a deceased person as if
she/he were alive. The deceased were asked to open their eyes, look at the people
present, and get up from the coffin. The coffin was compared to a house, though
dark with no windows – yet another indication of a belief that death was a passing
to a new life (Brailovskyi 1885: 80). Lamenters never mentioned the faults of the
deceased during funerals. On the contrary, they invariably elaborated on only the
good deeds and best qualities. The aim of laments was to elevate the esteem of the
deceased through praise (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 18). In this sense, laments were
suggestive of epic songs, for those, too, provided a positive portrait of the

In the lament texts, the soul was depicted in a material way, just like in folk
beliefs. Laments often described a journey of a soul to the other world. Villagers
believed that laments could facilitate the transfer of a soul to that world. In them,
the living expressed their puzzlement over why someone decided to leave this
world where she/he had a good life. They showed concern that the deceased –
especially children – may suffer from the lack of something. The deceased were
asked to visit, asked when they would return, and so on. Thus, laments testify to
the folk belief that the dead return for visitations:

7 “Господи Боже! Молим ся Тобі за всіх душ померших... без Христа субирації, котрі
в воинах погибли, на водах потопали, на огнях поторгали, мечами голови стинали, кулі
побивали, лота звір пожирала, гад кров просисала, древо превертало, земли присипляла,
громи забивали, кулі побивали, по шпиталях поумирали, по морозах погибали, наглою
смертью пумирили і без сповіді і без сакраменту пумирили. Господи! Приймі і помини
всіх” (Hnatiuk 1896: 74); “Помим, Господи... Діочки маленьких близьких!/ За знанних, і за
незнаних, і брат в огнях потопань, і брат в водах потопань, і брат в звірі памірає, і брат
в шпиталях пумирає.” (L.M. 1903: 6-7).
8 Starting with Metlinsky (1854), 19th century ethnographers like Kaminskii, Brailovskyi,
Sreznevskii, Sventsits’kyi and many others turned their attention to laments and collected them.
The earliest recorded Ukrainian laments date from the 16th century and are found in Latin in Polish
sources: 1) A letter dated 1551 by a Polish priest, Ioann Menetius, contained “De Sacrificiis et
ydolatria ueterum Borussorum, Livonum aliarumque vicinorum gentium” (Kaminskii 1912: 109-
110; Kotliarevskii 1891: 149-150); 2) A poem “Roxolania” by Polish poet Klirovich (Klinovych-
Acernus, Sebastian-Fabian) published in Cracow in 1582 (Danilov 1904: 148-151; Kotliarevskii
1891: 154-156).
“Where will I look out for you, from which road [should I] meet you?” (Chubinskii 1877: 702). “Tell me now when you will come to visit me? When should I serve tables and when should I wait for you? When will you, my husband, arrive for a visit? Whether on Christmas or on Easter, or on the green week [before Pentecost]?” (Braïlovskii 1884: 183). “I will go to the road and will look out and listen carefully [to see] if my dear mother is coming to visit me” (ibid.: 184). “Do not forget me in difficult times — come and help [me]” (Kaminskii 1906: 9). “Which way should I look out for you from? From which side? Come to visit us on Easter, to break the Lenten fast together.” (Kaminskii 1912: 117)\(^9\)

The living asked the deceased to take them to their land, apologized for not having pleased them and wished them happy life in the other world (Kaminskii 1912: 123-124). As noted previously, laments make clear a belief that death was not accepted as the ultimate end of life, but as the beginning of a different reality analogous to earthly life. They also testify to the belief about uninterrupted contacts between the living and the dead, and the cult of the dead as the protectors of the living. Laments were one of several ways Ukrainians communicated with their dead, all grounded in magic (cf Petrov 1989: 88). A deceased person was perceived as a mediator between the worlds of the living and the dead.

Lamenting was a moral obligation of the deceased's relatives. Loudly doing so was also a sign of a “good funeral” (Apollosov 1861: 219; Bin'kovskii 1896: 251). People believed that a well lamented soul was happier (Lenchevskii 1899: 77). If a family failed to lament as expected, it could be accused by the community of lack of proper respect and empathy towards the deceased (Sventsits'kyi 1912: 24, 29). “[V]illagers totally disapproved of those who could not lament” (Lenchevskii 1899: 77). Although both genders performed the practice (Hnatiuk 1912: 357; Kaminskii 1912: 112-113), it was women who were blamed if it was insufficient or absent (Kaminskii 1912: 112). While laments provided the opportunity for voluble grief, the community and the closest relatives of the deceased banned extreme expressions of bereavement, since funerary rituals sought the most comfortable surrounding for the deceased's soul. It was believed that such displays would be very unpleasant for that soul, since it would not be able to rest, possibly bringing unwanted reactions from it (Bin'kovskii 1902: 108). Extreme grief also created discomfort for the body of a deceased; people believed that too much crying over it would cause her/him to lie in water (Grinchenko 1897: 92; Sventsits'kyi 1912: 27).

If conventional display of mourning for the good dead included loud cries and laments, “bad death” was surrounded with silence because it was considered shameful. Nobody wanted to talk about the “bad” dead, so neither psalms nor

\(^9\) “Де ж та тебе буде виглядати, з якої дороги зустрічати?” (Chubinskii 1877: 702);
“Скажи ж мені теперь, коли ж ти до мене в гости прийдеш? Коли ж мені столи застелити, да коли ж мені тебе жпати? Коли ж ти, моя вірна дружина, в гостинній прибудеш? Чи на Різдво, чи на Великдень, а чи на зелену неділю?” (Braïlovskii 1884: 183); “Да я вийду на шлях, да все буду визирати да прислухатись, чи не іде мої матінко до мене в гості”(ibid.: 184); “Не забувай же мене в лиху годину; приходь помози” (Kaminskii 1906: 9); “Звідки вас я буду виглядати? З якого боку? Прийди до нас у гостенейку на Великдень, щоб разом розговітися” (Kaminskii 1912: 117).
laments were performed during the funeral. The death and funeral of a small child was also devoid of cries and laments, although the passing was neither terrible nor shameful (Apollosov 1861: 223). A child's death was, in fact, a reason to rejoice: the younger was relieved from this world's sufferings and parents happily expected to join their children in the other world (No author 1825: 74). People believed that small babies and toddlers became angels upon their deaths. It was considered a sin to cry or lament their passing; they were believed to be taken straight to Heaven by their Heavenly Father (Sventsits'kyy 1912: 27). That, of course, was considered a good death.

As a sign of mourning, women and girls did not wear earrings, sing songs, or participate in merriment for at least forty days after death (Apollosov 1861: 223). Daughters also mourned their dead mothers by avoiding the color red; they did not wear red ribbons or belts, and the wedding wreath of an orphan girl had to be blue or green (Miloradovich 1897: 171). The closest relatives wore black or dark clothes for one year, with the boys and men not donning hats, even in winter (No author 1898: 72; Moshkov 1902: 23; Hnatiuk 1912: 218).

Church officials commemorated a deceased person after the passage of specific amounts of time, providing sacrifice for the person's sins. This occurred on the third, ninth, and fortieth days and one year after death. On the third day, the appearance of the corpse was believed to change; on the ninth, his body disintegrated and only the heart remained; on the fortieth, the heart finally disintegrated; after a year, the church prayed for the sake of commemoration (Dolotskii 1845: 411). A sacrificial meal on the commemoration days was seen as necessary for a soul. If the deceased kept returning at night, he was to asked what his soul needed. He might complain that his soul was hungry. That was expected if relatives did not bring commemorative bread to the church for the sake of the soul or if some living being owed the deceased something (Kolessa 1902: 250).

After the first year of commemoration, the deceased person attained the status of ancestor. Ancestors were de-individualized spirits commemorated collectively in a cult of the dead. This was akin to the Christian cult of the saints who were worshipped and whose protection was sought. Addressing them as "діду [grandparents]" and "батьки [parents]," Ukrainians brought them food, made sacrifices for the sake of their souls (mostly in the form of alms to the poor), asked about help or advice, and called them out of their graves with prayers and laments (Kotliarevskii 1891: 254). Generally, commemorating and doing good things for the sake of all the dead, not just one's own, was beneficial for the living. Thus, whoever set a cross aright on any grave on Easter, for example, would have his gravest sin pardoned (Ivanov 1907: 99).

In Greece, commemoration of the "regular" dead and those who died from either violent or unnatural deaths took place on three special Fridays: the Friday before Lent, Good Friday, and the Friday before the Pentecost (Summers 1968: 242). Ukrainian Christianity adopted the Greek custom, but with differences. The souls of unbaptized children, stillborn babies, and those who drowned or died accidentally another way were commemorated only once a year on Pentecost (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 234). There were three Saturdays, Дмитрова, Кузьмина, Михайлова, throughout October and November designated for remembering the
dead (Manzhura 1894: 171). The Sunday after Easter, проводи (hence the etymology – проводжати [to see somebody off]), or St. Thomas's Sunday (Kalinskii 1877: 465; Cherniav'ska 1893: 95), was the biggest memorial event, but only for those who died a good death (Ivanov 1907:107-108). In some regions of Ukraine, the Thursday before Easter was called мавський/навський Великдень [Easter for the deceased] (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 204, 235). People commemorated female amphibians, or rusalky [unquiet spirits of drowned females, those who died during Rusalii, the week preceding Pentecost], by leaving bread for them in rye fields. They also hung wreaths and long pieces of white fabric on trees so that rusalky could use them as clothes.

After the Easter church service, close relatives visited their dead at the cemetery, offered holiday greetings, and buried краванки, or dyed eggs. The next day, they came to check the eggs: if all were intact, it meant the soul of the deceased pleased God; if dogs took any, the soul displeased God and nobody knew how to help it (Ivanov 1907: 96). People believed that the dead were resurrected on Easter and came invisibly to the church service at midnight and to the homes of their relatives (Hnatiuk 1904: 124). They were thought to remain in this world until they were commemorated on the Sunday after Easter.

People also believed that souls of those who committed suicide and witches were lost forever, with no way to be saved. After the 6th Ecumenical Council in 691 A.D., a new canonical rule condemned suicide and opposed prayer for it (Levitskii 1891: 352). Again, silence greeted those who killed themselves; even inserting their names in a prayer for the deceased was a sin (Ivanov 1907: 107-108; Zelenin 1995[1916]: 41). The Church forbade relatives to commemorate the suicides for seven years (Fischer 1921: 358), which coincided with the period banning the sealing of the grave (Manzhura 1894: 162). If commemoration was a way to remember a person and pass those memories on, those who died in a “bad” way were denied the privilege; their memories had to fade as soon as possible. Family ties and pity, however, were often stronger than strict ecclesiastical prohibitions and families of the suicides would prepare a “secret Easter” (Miloradovich 1897: 171) to recall their unfortunate relatives.

The Afterlife: Perils and the Power of the Soul

Fustel-de-Kulanzh (1895) suggested that in the view of ancient people, not burying a body made a soul unhappy. Therefore, “funeral customs were mainly executed not to express grief but to pacify a deceased and make him happy” (quoted in Kaminskii 1912: 106). This seems true for the Ukrainian culture, too. The concerns and fears Ukrainians had while dealing with a death were directed toward what would happen to the soul of the deceased and how to please that soul so it would not take revenge on the living, because failure to follow the required funeral formalities could lead to negative consequences for both the living and the dead. Furthermore, folk beliefs about soul comprised a whole worldview that influenced many other beliefs and often regulated people’s daily behavior. Ukrainian funerary rituals served to protect the lives of the survivors and souls of persons passed away.
Folk views of the soul were contradictory, probably because it was perceived both as an intangible and as a material entity. Ukrainians imagined soul as something invisible and light like air and wind. People believed that at the moment of death, the soul left body with the final exhalation through the mouth and flew away (Generozov 1883: 6). At that moment, the soul of a righteous person would take the form of pale smoke (Grichenko 1897: 66). Someone’s unnatural death, in contrast, was believed to cause such atmospheric disturbances as a strong wind or storm, since the soul of a person who died suddenly or violently had to rush to the other world (Generozov 1883: 6; Fischer 1921: 355).

The soul was also imagined as zoomorphic – in the shape of a butterfly, fly, or bee (Generozov 1883: 10; Moshkov 1902: 15). It was believed that God gave a soul to every baby when it first moved in the womb and an angel delivered that soul, which looked like the winged creatures, but lost its wings upon entering the fetus’ body (Ivanov 1909: 245-246). Naturally, then, people believed that upon death, the soul reacquired its original form and flew into the house as a fly, bee, or butterfly. This vision of the soul was probably the basis for the custom of leaving something sweet like syta, or kanun (honey dissolved in water) for the soul/fly to drink to fortify itself for the long journey to the other world. On the night after the funerals, old women guarded the soul of the deceased. If it appeared as a fly or butterfly and drank kanun, it meant that a soul was pleased by the funerals and had nothing against the living. A fly in the house on Christmas Eve was believed to represent a soul of a deceased relative who came invited for the holy supper, and Ukrainians usually left kutia (a ritual sweet dish) and a spoon on the table for such expected visitors (Kolessa 1902: 250).

All Slavs imagined that the soul was also able to transform into plants and other animals (Generozov 1883: 14) – usually a bird, most often a dove, eagle, or cuckoo (ibid.: 11; Lepkyi 1883: 13). Laments often refer to the deceased as “жисний сокіл,” “голуб/голубонька,” or “либідь.” “Fly to me my dear brother as a smoky dove or as a bright eagle, or as a white swan” (Generozov 1883: 11); “Mother, my... dear swallow, my meadow cuckoo bird” (Danilov 1907: 230).10

At the same time, people viewed the soul as an anthropomorphic, supernatural entity – a spiritual duplicate of a once living person that was able to live its own benevolent or malevolent life. Thus, the soul was believed to survive in the other world with its old earthly habits, needs, mood (attitudes), and human appearance (Generozov 1883: 12). It needed food and drink, felt cold and heat, suffered, and indulged in pleasures; i.e., it lived in a close relation to the human’s body. For that reason, people put various personal belongings and food into a coffin, believing that a soul will use them in the other world (Lepkyi 1883: 14).

At the moment of death, body and soul separated, finding its expression in phrases like відійшла душа [the soul has departed]; розлучилася душа з тілом [the soul separated from (its) body], or віддав душу [gave (his) soul away]. It was thought that a physical body died, but a soul continued its existence. People believed not as much in the eternity of a soul, but that the soul outlived the body.

10 “Прилеті ж ти до мене, братіку, хоч сизим голубом, хоч ясним соколом, хоч білим лебедем” (Generozov 1883: 11); “Мамочко, моя... ластівочко, ... Зозулячко моя луговиця” (Danilov 1907: 230).
After soul and body parted, the former was believed to roam around the latter, as if looking for it (Batiushkov 1891: 163; Batiushkov 1891a: 340). No matter how bitter that separation, it was important to liberate a soul for good. This was the aim of a series of actions with the unquiet dead — exhumation, driving an aspen stick or sharp metal object through the body, or burning it. Bandits, witches, and other terrible sinners supposedly no longer possessed a soul, but only a spirit — more precisely, the evil spirit (Ivanov 1909: 247). Their souls were considered lost forever, while the presence of an evil spirit in them (as the opposite of a soul) enabled them to leave their graves and wander (Ivanov 1891: 217). Rich people were also equated with evil, for they had signed a pact with the devil during their lifetime (Grinenko 1897: 65). Whether they acquired their demonic power accidentally or through conscious collaboration with evil forces, the unquiet dead were believed to have the desire and ability to harm the living. They were thought to cause disease, poor harvests, bad weather, and many other misfortunes.

The soul stayed in a house until the body was buried, and the moral obligation of the inhabitants was to put out a glass of water for drinking and/or bathing and bread for feeding a soul for that length of time (Kaminskii 1912: 101). Then, during the forty days of mytarstva (aerial toll houses, or spiritual trials), a soul was believed to visit home daily, where it ate honey to lessen the bitterness of its suffering and rested on a special embroidered towel, rushnyk (Ivanov 1909: 252). The spiritual trials were to determine if the soul was sinful or righteous:

“At the first spiritual trial the soul is asked about homicides, at the second — about debauchery, at the third — about sins against father and mother [of the deceased]; at the forth — about stealing, and so on [till the end] about all other kinds of sins.” (Novitskii 1912: 169, 170 cited by Chabanenko 1990: 21)11

The living were to protect, help, and please a soul of a dying person. Tolling the church bells was believed both helpful and pleasing to it (Chubinskii 1877: 699). People supposed that a soul could be stolen by evil forces right before funerals (Fischer 1921: 210). To prevent this, relatives or neighbors guarded the body during the nights before burial and prayed. They watched so that a cat or dog would not jump over the dead body, for in that case, the soul would enter the animal’s body and not leave the house, making the deceased person an unquiet dead (Bin’kovskii 1896: 246). People believed those animals associated with the devil. In Ukrainian folklore, there are many legends about witches turning into either cats or dogs (Hnatiuk 1912a: 109; 131; Ivanov 1891: 218, 220)12

While the deceased was still in the house before burial (and forty days after the funeral), the living were to make sure not to upset the soul. Household tasks like cleaning, washing, whitewashing the walls, or sweeping the floor were taboos, for one could accidentally run into the soul and smear it or cover with dust. That would be offensive, make the soul feel unwelcome and cause it to leave

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11 “На одній митарстві питают про душогубство, на другім — про блуд, на третім — за гріхи проти батька-пеніці, на четвертім — про злодійство, а далі — про всякі інші гріхи.”

12 This Ukrainian folk belief was used by Mykola Hohol (Nikolai Gogol) in his novels "Маїська ніч, або утоплена" and "Вечір проти Івана Купала" both of which were first published in 1830.
the house in anger (Bin'kovskii 1896: 246; Miloradovich 1897: 166; Ivanov 1909: 252).

A human soul after death was usually more magically powerful than a living person could ever be, even if the death was bad. It overcame time and space restrictions, could move about, was able to do various things, acquired different appearances, or took revenge on behalf of a body that was no longer able to stand for itself. Even those who disregarded Christian amendments were scared of the supernatural powers of the soul or its associates. A court record from the 1880s showed that murderers who killed and skinned a child for the sake of black magic did not touch the boy’s right shoulder and arm because they feared that the child's guardian angel (one is believed to live on each person’s right shoulder) would wreak vengeance on them (Lytvyniv 1900: 142).

Souls of those who died in a “bad” way were also believed to assist humans with evil intentions. When a sorcerer wanted to cast a mighty curse, he would go to an aspen tree in the forest and “ask 'those killed, who had fallen from trees, gone astray, died unbaptized, without names' to get up and harm a person” while facing west (Mansikka 1909: 9).

Beliefs about the place a soul inhabited were also contradictory. On the one hand, people thought that it stayed in the coffin in the grave. On the other hand, they also believed it flew away to the other world (Generozov 1883: 20). Contradictory interpretations of a soul's fate conveyed an archaic view about the multiplicity of souls: one returned to where it originated; another went to the grave with the body; and yet another stayed on earth to protect the living (Ivanov 1909: 248). Dolotskii (1845) emphasized that the unknown fate of the soul was the reason pre-Christian people mourned the deaths of their own, but the Church's optimism about the future of the soul brought hope and made funerals almost uplifting events (pp. 418-419).

Christian teachings certainly emphasized the idea of a sinful soul, God’s punishment for sins, and rewards for righteousness. The folk understanding of a sinful soul is reflected in various legends, sayings, and proverbs. For example, “Взявся я чорт за гришну душу [To take after (some task) like a devil after a sinful soul]” (Manzhura 1890: 170); “Гріх душу загубити, а есмемуси — не гріх [It's a sin to kill a soul but to create (a new one) is not (speaking about illegitimate children)]” (ibid.: 166). It was believed that a dead body could still betray carefully hidden proof the deceased was a terrible sinner. For example, the corpse would involuntarily move if a domovyk laughed nearby (Ivanov 1893: 53) or when a Psalter was read over it (Bin'kovskii 1896: 243). Overall, determining if a soul was righteous or sinful was profoundly important in people’s minds in order to decide on what type of funerals to administer.

Ancestor worship was a major religious component of Ukrainians, so they were curious about the nature of the afterlife. Ukrainian laments, burying customs, and commemorating practices are the best testament to folk views on life in the hereafter. The ideas about the next world were directly related to the nature of death, and people’s expressed beliefs about this relationship through their rituals. Images of the afterlife are fragmentary, inconsistent, and often illogical, which can be explained by a mixture of Christian and folk beliefs (Generozov 1883: 47).
These images derive from a mixture of sermons and depictions in church icons and wall frescos. Many apocryphal songs contained detailed descriptions of heaven and hell, ideas of which were so popular and stable that they found their way into children’s folklore. Although mothers forbade their children from imitating funerals or the deceased (Vasil’ev 1890: 321), games called “Heaven” and “Hell” were very popular. In them, the players split into two camps – angels and demons. Players competed by dragging members of the other group into their own (Ivanov 1889: 61-63).

Overall, images of the afterlife were expressed in material or concrete terms. People believed that a dead person needed everything there that she had required or failed to achieve in her earthly life – a family, favorite foods, clothes, and so on. People placed treats into coffins even though the clergy fought this custom as a pre-Christian remnant (Abramov 1907: 29). Survivors also put the cut nails of a deceased into the coffin so he could climb a mountain of *mytarstva* in the other world, pull off worms, or get out of the hellish abyss (Kalinskii 1877: 469; Dal’ 1994[1880]: 96; Manzhura 1894: 170; Ivanov 1909: 249). Ideas about the other world and afterlife motivated the attitude of the living towards the dead, since Ukrainians replicated real life relations with the souls. People imagined heaven as a place with a table set with everything the soul had earned in this world, donated to other humans, or sacrificed to God (Manzhura 1890: 155). Therefore, very grateful, people could say: “Хай взоно вам там перед душечкою стае [May this [your good deed] stand before [your] soul there [in another world]” (ibid.: 163).

Two destinies awaited dead children. In Ukrainian folk beliefs, *rusalky* (female amphibians) and *mavky/navky* were considered unquiet spirits of females who ended up dying unnaturally, and thus dangerous for the living, but their origin and functions were viewed differently (Kalinskii 1877: 470; Ivanov 1909: 246). Females who drowned or died during the week preceding Pentecost were believed to become *rusalky*, while unbaptized gils became *mavky* regardless of the nature of their death (i.e., were killed by their mothers, were stillborn, or died soon after birth) (Zelenin 1995[1916]: 147). The latter were believed to live in forests or mountains, and the former in bodies of water. Unlike *rusalky*, *mavky* could live without water for a long time. Like *rusalky*, they were believed to sing and dance in forests or fields, but their dancing did not cause grass to flourish like the dancing of *rusalky* did. *Rusalky*, therefore, were helping people in some sense. Both *rusalki* and *mavky*, however, were dangerous for the living: *rusalky* dragged humans into water and drowned them, while *mavky* tricked them into the deep forests with their very human appearance and tickled them to death.

At the same time, there was a belief that unbaptized babies nonetheless ascended to the heaven, although they dwelled separately from the baptized children. People also believed that souls of children had distinctive appearances: souls of children who were illegitimate, born out of wedlock, or killed upon birth were dirty, while souls of “good” children were white and even had rosy cheeks if

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13 According to the canons of Medieval Christian (Catholic) Afterlife, purgatory was imagined as a mountain that must be climbed (cf Weir 2002: 87). Therefore, it appears that the Catholic idea of purgatory parallels the Orthodox idea about the *mytarstva*, or spiritual trials.
the babies had been delivered with the assistance of a “baba” (midwife) (Ivanov 1909: 246).

A different destiny awaited women who died during pregnancy or labor. A pregnant woman who died was to suffer until the Judgment Day, while a woman who died in labor or within six weeks after was “considered a martyr and went [directly] to the heaven” (Vasilev 1890: 320; Miloradovich 1897: 171).

Women who delivered stillborn babies or whose children died did not eat apples till the Jesus’ Transfiguration Holiday (August 6/19). They believed that on that day, God gave heavenly apples to children's souls in the other world, but only to those whose mothers did not eat them. Otherwise such children were told, “А ваши свини з'ели [And yours (apples) have been eaten by pigs]” (Ivanov 1907: 173).

People believed that on Easter and during the preceding week, the gates of the heaven were open for all and mytarstva were eliminated so that souls could ascend directly to heaven (Bin'kovskii 1896: 259). People believed that those who died during the first three days of Easter were pure souls, and God granted them his blessing (Ivanov 1907: 93). This belief was probably inspired by the church songs that declared an overall forgiveness on Easter and partly by the church ritual of opening the iconostasis gate seven days before Easter Sunday. According to John the Evangelist, the open iconostasis symbolized the open heaven (Kalinskii 1877: 459-460). People fasted on Mondays, believing that Monday was the sacred day on which the world was created and that not eating on such a day would grant one a good, easy death: “Whoever fasts this day, will have a nice (good) life in this world and will not be scared to die. If someone dies without previously venerating St. Monday, it is bad for him to go to another world” ([Ivanov] 1894: 143-44).14 In the folk views, sacred Monday, or St. Monday, was associated with the Apostle Peter who guarded the doors of the heaven and hell and accompanied the souls of those who had near-death visions (завмерли) on their journey to both (ibid.).

Sinners in hell were thought to sit in craters of boiling tar. To escape, one could grab whatever he had given to the poor during his life. In one legend, a man had given only three green onions, so when his son tried to save him with those onions, he failed. The onions were torn and father fell down back to hell (Ostapchuk 1902: 464). Apart from sinners, there were several categories of people who could not enter heaven due to the “shameful” facts of their lives: bold men (Manzhura 1890: 105), men battered by their wives, and persons attacked by pigs (ibid.: 154).

People believed that the worse the deceased sinner, the sooner his body would rot. The opposite of this was a belief in incorruptible relics of the saints (Moshkov 1902: 25). Bodies of vampires did not rot, but were believed to leave their graves at nights and walk to homes sucking blood from the sleeping. Unclean dead were generally believed to move around. Those who died due to an accident, suicide, or murder were bound to the place of their demise: those who

14 “Хто в цей день поститься, то тому буде гарно (хорошо) жити на землі, і так же йому не страшно і умирати. Як хто умре не погачаний святого Понеділка, то йому скверно йти на той світ.”
hanged themselves forever returned to the place where they swung, especially during the full moon; those who drowned appeared near that body of water; and those who were murdered went back to the scene of their bloodshed (Zelenin 1995: 1916: 48) and gazed at it (Potushniak 1938: 34).

The worlds of the living and dead were believed closely interrelated. The living had to care about the dead and do their best to arrange for their welfare in the other world. If a deceased person appeared in some form to his relatives less than forty days after death, his soul suffered and asked for prayers on his behalf (Liatskii 1892: 39). The dead also cared about the living. Dead mothers came back to feed their children and wash their clothes (Hnatyuk 1904: 125). The closest kin, whether alive or dead, were always present during major life events. An orphan bride would go to the cemetery to invite her deceased parent(s) to her wedding and ask their blessing for the rite.

The dead were believed to have close communication not only with the living, but also among themselves. Their relations, however, were not always amicable. Thus, when people bought something for funerals, they never bargained over the price because they believed that if they did, the dead would not live in peace, but would haggle in the other world (Malinka 1898: 100-101). If grave-diggers accidentally struck an existing grave, they were to put money into it to buy the place for the newly-deceased from a previous “owner.” Otherwise the dead pair would fight until the Judgement Day (Ivanov 1909: 250). If two corpses were to be placed into one grave, as happened during epidemics, people provided a stick to the weaker one to help it protect itself from the stronger (ibid.).

Ukrainian minstrels, or traveling blind singers popularized view on death, soul, the afterlife, and Judgement Day among peasants and ordinary city dwellers through religious songs or psalms. They were “agents for dispensing religious information” (Kononenko 1998: 147). A minstrel would describe the Judgement Day similar to church teachings, yet in more accessible terms:

When the Judgement Day will come,
He who does good deeds will go to the [Heavenly] Kingdom.
Sinner, repent – you still can get to the sky.
But if you can’t repent
Then you will die for ever and be cursed (Borzhkovskii 1889: 694-695)\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\) “Когда час приходит, страшный суд наступил -
А кто добре вчинить, до царства доступить.
А кайся, грішнику, дайся до покути,
Перестань тріпляти, - можешь в небі бути.
Як же ти не зможеш покути прийняти,
Ізгинеш на віки ще й будеш проклятий.” Read the whole psalm on pp. 694-695.
Crime, Punishment and Executions (Ukrainian Canadians during the Interwar Years)

Orest T. Martynowych

During the interwar years Canadian public opinion associated Ukrainian Canadians with a high rate of criminality. Studies of the Canadian prison population revealed that a very substantial proportion of foreign-born male penitentiary inmates were natives of Austria, Poland, Romania and Russia, the countries from which Ukrainians immigrated to Canada. Data obtained in 1928 from the warden of the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol in east central Alberta, the province’s largest prison, indicated that about 10 percent of the inmates were Ukrainians, at a time when they constituted less than 7.6 percent of the provincial population. At the new Haddingly Jail outside Winnipeg, an inquisitive Ukrainian academic from central Europe who toured Canada in 1937 was informed that Ukrainians constituted the largest ethnic cohort among prisoners in the facility. And in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Ukrainian priests who visited incarcerated parishioners, including those on death row, informed their colleagues and superiors that provincial prisons and federal penitentiaries, were literally teeming with Ukrainians. All reports indicated that by the 1930s, the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian convicts were no longer the foreign-born, but the Canadian-born sons of immigrant parents.

Of course, few Canadians scrutinized crime statistics and the scholarly reports commissioned by government departments that indirectly implicated Ukrainians. Those who did realized that statistics concerning arrests, convictions and the prison population were not very trustworthy because they were directly related to changing law enforcement priorities, the efficiency of local police forces, and fluctuating and varying levels of social tolerance in Canadian society in general and among Ukrainian immigrants in particular. In fact, the furor about Ukrainian crime, as recent research has suggested, probably had more to do with the peculiar characteristics of Ukrainian offenses than with their frequency. Ukrainians committed the same crimes about as often as other Canadians, but because the techniques, settings, circumstances and motivations involved struck many Canadians as unusual, Ukrainian criminals attracted an inordinate amount of public attention and elicited more than their share of opprobrium.

Take theft for example. While a number of Ukrainians including Jack (“The Kid”) Krafchenko, Wasyl (“Bill the Barber”) Makenczuk, Metro Melnychuk, and the members of the Sliding Hills municipal council gained notoriety as bank robbers, burglars, home invaders and forgers during and immediately after the First World War, few Ukrainian Canadians were thieves. Ukrainian rural settlers were routinely praised for being honest in their dealings with businessmen and bank managers in the affluent Vegreville district considered Ukrainians a better risk than Anglo-Saxons. Most Ukrainians charged with theft were poor farmers who purloined grain, poultry, implement and machine parts, tools, barbed wire and ordinary everyday objects from other equally poor Ukrainian farmers. Theft of horses and livestock was rare among Ukrainian Canadians because of the heavy punishments involved. So too was theft from homes because money and valuables were scarce and ingeniously concealed by settlers lucky enough to possess
them. Nevertheless, the widespread theft of trivial everyday items astonished the police and the Canadian public, and it led to speculation that pilfering was a genetic trait, or at the very least, endemic among Ukrainians. Grain theft, frequently perpetrated to spite a bothersome neighbour, struck at least one judge as the most “despicable” crime that one farmer could commit against another. Ukrainian grain thieves who appeared before him in Pelly, Saskatchewan, were labeled “dirty cowards” and “skunks” because, in his estimation, they lacked all sense of human decency and displayed utter disregard for the insecurity and suffering of fellow farmers.

In general, public opinion did not associate Ukrainians with sex crimes such as indecent assault, rape, incest, and seduction under promise of marriage. A contemporary observer, who expressed concern about the high proportion of Ukrainians in provincial prisons, believed that sex crimes were relatively infrequent among Ukrainian settlers and attributed this to the fact that “Ukrainians came with a relatively rigid control in this respect, based on public opinion in their communities and on strong familial organization.” Current research, on the other hand, has challenged these assumptions. Countless instances of seduction, carnal knowledge, incest, indecent assault, rape and violence against women never came up before the Canadian courts and were never mentioned in the popular press because “isolation, ignorance, fear and physical force” prevented many Ukrainian female victims from taking legal action. Even more significantly, Ukrainian settlers regarded sex crimes as civil offenses that should be resolved by means of “a ‘settlement’ or monetary compensation” negotiated by representatives of the perpetrator and the victim. They appealed to the Canadian judicial system to resolve sex and gender disputes only when traditional community-mediated efforts failed.

More than any other crimes, violent offences against the person – assault, aggravated assault, manslaughter and murder – created the impression that Ukrainian Canadians were a criminal element. Assault was very common among Ukrainians and rarely required a great deal of provocation. Unlike Anglo-Canadians, who confined fistfights to the bar and billiard room, Ukrainians displayed a proclivity for violence at dances, weddings, christenings and wakes, not to mention religious feast days like Easter and Christmas. Equally alarming in the eyes of the Anglo-Canadian majority was the fact that instead of settling disputes in a manly fashion with their fists, Ukrainians resorted to the use of weapons – everything from sticks, iron bars, axe handles, spades and hammers that were close at hand, to cudgels, brass knuckles, knives and revolvers with which reprobates looking for a fight armed themselves. Because such behaviour violated commonly accepted standards of British fair play and occurred in settings that offended the Anglo-Saxon Protestants’ sense of moral propriety, it provoked a great deal of censure and fed the stereotype of the criminally inclined Ukrainian.

Assault was often the prelude to manslaughter or murder. Although there are no studies of homicide rates among Ukrainian Canadians during these years, there is enough evidence to at least consider the possibility that Ukrainians committed the crime more frequently than other Canadians. Even the most casual perusal of Ukrainian-Canadian weeklies reveals references to an almost endless succession of murder and manslaughter
investigations and trials involving members of the ethnic group. One December 1925 issue of Kanadyiskyi farmer carried brief notes on five recently concluded trials at which nine Ukrainian residents of Manitoba stood accused of murder or manslaughter in the death of five individuals. All of the accused were found guilty, two received the death penalty and were executed, and five were given prison sentences of two to eighteen years. One of the condemned men had dismembered the body of his Ukrainian victim after killing and robbing him and then buried his remains in a pig sty on his farm near Minnedosa; the other had killed a Winnipeg taxi driver while attempting to rob him.\textsuperscript{13} In the fall of 1929 Ukrainskyi holos mentioned at least six homicide investigations involving Ukrainian Canadians, most of them charged with manslaughter in the aftermath of street fights and brawls at wedding receptions. Several months later the same weekly reported the homicidal rampage of a fifty-year-old Ukrainian whose attempt to settle scores with the family of a young girl he had been living with ended in a shoot-out that left two dead and three seriously wounded. The weekly also indicated that two other Ukrainians would be facing murder charges at the next session of the Yorkton assizes.\textsuperscript{14} Editorials lamented “the torrent of crime among [Ukrainian] settlers in Canada which the Anglo-Saxon press mentions incessantly” and commiserated with respectable Ukrainian Canadians who always scanned articles on murder investigations with great trepidation fearing that once again a Ukrainian would be implicated in the crime.\textsuperscript{15}

Some fragmentary statistics on homicide among Ukrainian Canadians are available. In 1931 Young reported that five Ukrainians had been convicted for murder and one for attempted murder in the Dauphin judicial district, between 1917 and 1928. He also indicated that in the Stuartburn district of Manitoba, which had a total population of less than 5,000, no fewer than nine people had been murdered between 1899 and 1929.\textsuperscript{16} Alberta Provincial Police (APP) records provide a more complete set of data. Between 1920 and 1931 the APP laid 105 murder and 76 manslaughter charges in the entire province. During the same period the provincial force investigated at least 21 murder and manslaughter cases involving Ukrainians living in east central Alberta and its immediate environs. Based on these figures, which ignore homicides committed by Ukrainians in the Peace River Country and in the mining communities around Lethbridge and Drumheller, it would appear that Ukrainians were involved in at least 11.5 percent of murder and manslaughter cases at a time when they constituted about 7 percent of the provincial population. This is a significant disparity that deserves serious investigation. In most instances, homicide was the unpremeditated result of a vicious assault, although one or two cases were planned and carried out with blood chilling ferocity. A majority of the killings occurred within a domestic setting. Eight were related to marriage breakdown or lovers’ quarrels and in twelve instances the killer’s victims were relatives. Homicide for financial gain or because of property disputes was rare occurring twice in both instances. At least two instances of manslaughter were the unforeseen results of a drunken assault and two others the desperate acts of unemployed men driven to violence by the prospect of being turned out of their homes by friends or relatives. Five of the suspects committed suicide before they were apprehended and one fled to Poland.\textsuperscript{17}

The most striking examples of what many Anglo-Canadians regarded as the Ukrainian immigrants’ unique propensity for homicide were several chilling mass murders in each
of the three Prairie Provinces. Featuring axe-wielding perpetrators, decapitated and mutilated victims, and fires that could be seen for miles around, they received a great deal of publicity and did more for the criminal reputation of Ukrainians than countless other more prosaic instances of homicide. The first occurred in Manitoba at the dawn of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. Wasyl Gusyczak and Semen Czabej gained notoriety as the province’s first mass murderers when they hacked to death a countryman and his four small children near Stuartburn in 1898 and promptly became the first Ukrainians to be executed in Canada.18 Their tally was surpassed in 1932 by Tom Hrechkozy, a hired man who also used an axe to kill seven members of an Elma farm family that employed him and then set their home on fire, with all the bodies still inside. Hrechkozy managed to evade the hangman’s noose by insisting that “the Devil” told him to commit the massacre and by referring to frequent conversations with a friendly housefly that accompanied him while he was on the run.19 Further west, near Wakaw, Saskatchewan, five members of a farm family had been shot and killed in 1916 and their property burned to the ground, although police were not sure whether Ivan Mychaluk, a discontented farm labourer who subsequently committed suicide, or Mike Syroshka, a resentful son-in-law who may have murdered and framed Mychaluk after settling scores with his wife and her family, was the guilty party.20 Alberta had to wait until 1930 for its first Ukrainian mass-murder, which was committed by George Dverrenchuk, a farmer who suspected his in-laws of concealing the whereabouts of his run-away bride and accordingly shot and killed four members of the family as well as an unfortunate neighbour who stumbled upon the murder scene near Smoky Lake.21 A native of Bukovyna, Dverrenchuk identified himself as a “Romanian” when he went to the scaffold, but no one was deceived.

Data on men and women executed in Canada for murder provides a final index for estimating Ukrainian Canadian involvement in violent crime.22 Of the 211 Canadians executed between 1891 and 1920, about 20, or 9.5 percent, appear to have been Ukrainians, at a time when the group represented well under 2 percent of the Canadian population. In all likelihood, most, if not all, were foreign-born immigrants, and as almost all of the murders in question were committed after 1908, Ukrainian migrant labourers, who flooded into the country between 1906 and 1914, were conspicuous among those who mounted the scaffold prior to 1920.23 Between 1921 and 1941, 225 Canadians were executed for murder and of these, at least 28, and perhaps as many as 39, were Ukrainians. In other words, Ukrainians, who made up 2.1 to 2.7 percent of the Canadian population during this period, probably constituted between 12.4 and 17.3 percent of all Canadians executed. Not unexpectedly, virtually all were residents of Ontario and the three Prairie Provinces, but there were significant regional disparities. While only 3 or 4 Ukrainians could be found among the 19 persons executed in Alberta, and 4 to 6 among the 19 executed in Saskatchewan, 8 to 13 of the 60 men executed in Ontario were Ukrainian, as were a remarkable 11 to 14 of the 22 executed in Manitoba.24 As Ontario and Manitoba, with their diversified economies, and large urban Ukrainian communities, especially in Winnipeg, had always served as a magnet for the young, homeless and rootless migrant labourers who have always figured prominently among lawbreakers, such regional variations should come as no surprise. The fact that most Ukrainians in Alberta and Saskatchewan were more affluent than those in Manitoba and Ontario may have also been a factor. Since many of the Ukrainians executed during the
1930s were no longer immigrants but their Canadian-born sons, robbery and extortion became a more common motive for murder, especially in Manitoba. Three Ukrainians hanged in Winnipeg in 1939 had killed an elderly farm woman during an attempted robbery, while a year later, Mike ("The Horse") Attamanchuk, a career criminal who committed suicide before he was apprehended, had shot and killed a city policeman during a bungled burglary.\textsuperscript{25} More traditional motives like jealousy, feelings of insult, and retribution for hurts and injustices also remained the root cause of many homicides.

The execution figures, which call for the kind of detailed study and analysis that cannot possibly be attempted here, are so startling that they must be treated with caution. The apparently high percentage of Ukrainians among those sentenced to death and executed may reflect differential law enforcement by police forces, which perceived "foreigners" as a special threat to law and order, as well as pervasive and deeply rooted prejudice among the judiciary, which was loath to commute death sentences imposed on Ukrainians, Slavs and other East Europeans because they were presumed to be incorrigible criminals beyond all hope of redemption. On the other hand, the fact that a number of Ukrainian men, and at least three women, had their death sentences commuted when public opinion or the Ukrainian Catholic Church took up their cause, indicates that at the very least, this interpretation must be qualified. In any event, serious research and analysis is required to clarify the issue.\textsuperscript{26}

A number of factors contributed to the frequency of crime, especially violent offenses, among Ukrainian Canadians. Excessive alcohol consumption (piatyka) at weddings and other celebrations was cited most frequently as an explanation. Ukrainian community activists lamented that their countrymen spent millions of dollars annually on alcohol in Canada and had nothing to show for it except broken bones and a tarnished reputation.\textsuperscript{27} Drinking, they maintained, stimulated arguments, aroused violent passions and led to fights that culminated in aggravated assault, manslaughter or murder. Another factor frequently cited by contemporary sociologists, was the surplus of males, especially young male migrants, in most Ukrainian-Canadian communities. Males between their late teens and early thirties have always committed a majority of crimes — especially violent offences — in Western societies, and in 1931 they made up 68 percent of the prisoners in Canadian penitentiaries.\textsuperscript{28} At that time, 17 percent of all Canadians but 19.5 percent of Ukrainians in Canada consisted of males aged 15-34. Also noteworthy was the fact that in urban areas, among Ukrainians in the 25-49 age group, men outnumbered women by a ratio of 1.8 to 1 whereas for all Canadians the ratio was 1.03 to 1.\textsuperscript{29} Such a large surplus male population indicated that there were very many itinerant Ukrainian males in urban areas, who experienced the hardships and dislocations of immigrant life without the emotional stability provided by marriage, a relationship or membership in a local community. They too, were more susceptible to anti-social and criminal behaviour.

Violent behaviour culminating in manslaughter and murder was also a legacy of the Ukrainian peasant immigrants' historical experience, particularly the brutality they had known in the old country. Prior to the abolition of serfdom in the Austrian Empire, violence had been an everyday occurrence as the landed gentry and its agents routinely used whips and cudgels to administer corporal punishment in an attempt to control
Galician and Bukovynian peasants. After emancipation in 1848 and until the outbreak of the First World War, estate owners continued to inflict pain on hired peasant field hands as punishment for poor work and encouragement to greater effort. Corporal punishment, as historians have pointed out, had a devastating impact on the psychology of the Ukrainian peasantry. It conditioned many Ukrainian peasants and agrarian labourers to accept violence as a normal part of human behaviour. They came to regard violence meted out by estate authorities as natural, displayed a casual attitude toward violent behaviour among fellow villagers, and allowed it to pervade relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and siblings. “Victims of abuse,” as Gregory Robinson has pointed out, “many Ukrainian villagers became abusers themselves.” Trapped in a “subculture of violence,” where physical assault served “as a routine means of conflict resolution,” many Ukrainian peasants developed an “either him or me” “gunshooter mentality” that encouraged a quick and lethal first blow, preferably with a weapon, in response to any public challenges or expressions of anger.

A substantial number of Ukrainian peasant immigrants brought “the psychological scars of their violent past” to Canada. Well into the 1920s, the “subculture of violence” was most readily apparent in the behaviour of young migrant frontier labourers (the so-called ‘Jacks’ or Dzheky) who had no family, no property, no home and no permanent job. Employed as section men, railway navvies, miners, lumberjacks, harvest labourers and hired men, the Jacks traversed the country drifting from camp to camp and in and out of cities, towns and rural districts in search of work and shelter. Prizing their freedom and virility, they scorned formal education and the authority of church and community organizations, spent their free time carousing and gambling, and took pride in their brute strength and fighting ability. While the latter skills were a vial and often much-appreciated asset during brawls and inter-ethnic clashes in frontier camps and one-industry towns, the efforts of landless and penniless Jacks to win recognition and prove themselves in Ukrainian rural colonies and urban ghettos by provoking fights to demonstrate just how tough and fearless they were, outraged both their countrymen and local authorities, especially when they culminated in broken noses, bloodshed and, on occasion, a corpse or two.

Violence was also a central feature of the sub-culture that had emerged by the 1920s among young, single, poorly educated rural ruffians (the so-called ‘Bulls’ or Buhai), most of them Canadian-born, who had grown up amidst pioneer penury, their childhood characterized by endless chores, no recreation, and little if any mental or cultural stimulation. Caught between the dreary world of their Ukrainian peasant parents and a nascent Anglo-Canadian consumer culture, they were socially marginalized, confused about values and standards, and unhappy with their lot in life. Frustrated by their inability to attain a prosperous North American lifestyle and with little more than the prospect of endless and unrewarding toil before them, they devoted their free time to the satisfaction of base appetites. They emulated the Jacks; drank to excess; organized themselves into bands or gangs that confronted equally boisterous groups from neighbouring farm districts; brandished bars, cudgels, brass knuckles, jackknives and occasionally revolvers; engaged in vandalism and petty crime; and displayed their machismo by brawling at dances and weddings. Many had no fear of the police, the
judiciary or the prison system because conditions in Canadian jails were superior to those they found at home. They struck the Canadian public as far more menacing than their foreign-born parents, found themselves behind bars more frequently, and contributed to the interwar stereotype of Ukrainian lawlessness and immorality.33


2 Young, 263-4. See also Gregory Robinson, “Rougher Than Any Other Nationality? Ukrainian Canadians and Crime in Alberta, 1915-29,” Journal of Ukrainian Studies XVI (1-2) (Summer-Winter 1991), 149-50, who correctly indicates that “Fort Saskatchewan was not Alberta’s only provincial prison in the 1920s, as Lethbridge handled offenders from areas south of Red Deer” and then argues that Ukrainians “made up more than 15 per cent of the population which sent prisoners to Fort Saskatchewan Gaol” and suggests that Ukrainians “would have been considerably more law-abiding than other peoples of northern Alberta.” Unfortunately, Robinson neglects to consider several crucial points: the Lethbridge facility had a much smaller holding capacity than Fort Saskatchewan; all prisoners sentenced to more than two years were held at Fort Saskatchewan; Ukrainian peasant immigrants regarded many criminal acts as civil offences.

3 Kanadyiskyi farmer 22 June 1938 (editorial) “Zlochnyst mezhь ukraïnsьkoï moloddi v Kanadi.”

4 Stefan Semchuk to Basil Ladyka, 4 March 1931, SS28, Semchuk file, Archives of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg, Winnipeg; Semen Sychuk to Nykola Moroz, 5 March 1939, Nykola K. Moroz file, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Archives, Winnipeg.

5 This point is made by Robinson in his excellent article.


7 Young, 269-70.

8 Robinson, 152-4.

9 Steward and Hudson, 48-9.

10 Young, 270.


12 Robinson, 154-9; Young, 267-8.

13 Kanadyiskyi farmer 2 December 1925. Ivan Kuten’ (sometimes identified as John Kooten or John Kooting) and Stefan (Steve) Nazar were sentenced to death and executed; Wasyl Podoba, Nykola Rusynka, and a group composed of Oleksa Shupeniuk, Sevastian Kytichuk, Petro Tsepar and Ivan Medvid’ received prison sentences ranging from two to eighteen years.

14 Ukrainyiski holos 11 September (Gilchuk case), 9 October (Plansky case), 30 October (Ostopovych case), 13 November (Galsky and Stanus case; Donaczet case), 20 November 1929 (Eleniuk case); 5 (Danyliuk
case) and 19 March (Ortynsky case), 9 (Reshetarsky case) and 16 April (Biliarsky case), 7 May 1930 (Yorkton assizes).

15 Kanadyiskyi farmer 22 April 1938 (editorial) “Zlochynnist mezhul ukrainskoiu moloddii v Kanadi.”

16 Young, 266, 268-9.


22 For complete listings see: Executions in Canada from Confederation to abolition:
http://www.geocities.com/richard.clark32?@btinternet.com/canada.html and especially the more detailed Canada Death Penalty Index: http://members.shaw.ca/canada_legal_history/ which is arranged by province and provides some detail on the crimes.

23 Most of the following men, executed between 1899 and 1920, were Ukrainians: Wasyl Guszcza (1899, Manitoba), Simeon Czubel (1899, Manitoba), Stefan Sworyda (1909, Ontario), Mike Pidhorney (1909, Manitoba), Hrycza Zbyhley (1909, Alberta), Wasyl Chobotar (1911, Alberta), Sam Wilinsky (1912, Alberta), John Baran (1913, Manitoba), John (Jack) Krafchenko (1914, Manitoba), Serhey Konuch (1914, Alberta), Tymko Nakonyshyn (1916, Manitoba), Wasyl Dejduck (1916, Ontario), Wasyl Semoneuk (1916, Manitoba), Peter Nimalovitch (1916, Saskatchewan), George Stanko (1918, Saskatchewan), Ivan Weyerynuck (1919, Ontario), John Wowk (1919, Saskatchewan), Paul Kowalski (1919, Ontario), Tom Kornchech [Kornichuk] (1920, Ontario), Mike Bahri [Bahrri] (1920, Ontario), Nick Debeka (1920, Quebec), John Yuzik (1920, Saskatchewan).

24 Most of the following men, executed between 1921 and 1941, were Ukrainians: Mike Prosko (1922, Quebec), Metro Wiksych (1923, Ontario), Steve (Stefan) Nazar (1926, Manitoba), John Kooten/Kooting [Ivan Kutsen] (1926, Manitoba), Daniel Prockiw [Prociev] (1926, Manitoba), John Burowski (1928, Ontario), John Ivanuch (1929, Ontario), Peter Myhal (1929, Ontario), Sam Kuhut (1930, Saskatchewan), Alexander Wysochan (1930, Saskatchewan), George Dvernichuk (1931, Alberta), Mike Radko (1931, Alberta), Michael Sowery [Mykhailo Savvit] (1931, British Columbia), Nick Kozub (1931, Ontario), Joseph Verhoski [Verkovsky] (1932, Manitoba), Mike Skakoon [Skakun] (1932, Ontario), Bill Kurulak [Kuruliak] (1932, Saskatchewan), Mike Tkach (1933, Ontario), William Antonowicz (1933, Ontario), Fred Stawyczyn (1933, Manitoba), Peter Pienk (1933, Manitoba), Peter Beyak (1933, Ontario), William Bahrey [Bahrii] (1934, Saskatchewan), Steve Bohun (1934, Saskatchewan), Julian Komarnicki (1934, Manitoba), Andrew Orichowski (1934, Manitoba), John Skrut (1935, Alberta), William Hawryluk (1935, Alberta), John Pawluk (1936, Manitoba), John Gulka (1936, Ontario), Tom Ponomarenko (1938, Ontario), Peter Kidala (1938, Manitoba), William Kanuka (1939, Manitoba), Peter Korzenowski (1939, Manitoba), Dan Prytula (1939, Manitoba), Bill Petrekowich (1939, Ontario), Joseph Dlugosch (1940, Ontario), Nick Zhiha [Zhyha] (1941, Manitoba).

26 For a complete list of capital cases during these years, including those where the death penalty was commuted or not imposed, see Lorraine Gadoury and Antonio Lechasseur, Persons sentenced to death in Canada, 1867-1976: An inventory of case files in the Fonds of the Department of Justice (Ottawa: Government Archives Division, National Archives of Canada, 1994.). Profiles of several Ukrainian-Canadian women who avoided the gallows may be found in Frank W. Anderson, A Dance with Death: Canadian Women on the Gallows, 1754-1962 (Saskatoon and Calgary: Fifth House, 1996).


29 Calculated on the basis of “Series 22. 17-56, Population by Ethnic Origin, Age Group and Sex, Canada and the Provinces, 1926 to 1971” in Darcovich and Yuzyk, 133-62.


31 Robinson, 156-9, 167-73.

32 Ibid., 159-62.

33 Ibid., 162-7.
Lost Folk Art in Ukrainian-Canadian Cemeteries

By S. Demchinsky

(All photos are by S. Demchinsky unless otherwise noted.)

Abstract: People of Ukrainian ethnicity have brought many cultural traditions with them since they first started coming to Canada in the late 19th century. While folk arts such as embroidery and hand-decorated Easter eggs endure, the art of the homemade cemetery marker has been lost. This essay examines that lost craft with a special emphasis on examples resulting from the author’s extensive photography in Ukrainian cemeteries.

The need to bury the dead was almost immediate for many of the first Ukrainian pioneers settling in the Prairie Provinces. The first significant wave of Ukrainian emigration to Canada commenced in 1896. The following year, Fr. Nestor Dmytryw (an itinerant priest from the United States) consecrated Ukrainian cemeteries in places like Mink River and Valley River in Manitoba as well as Star-Edna in Alberta. These and many other new cemeteries soon became the sites of the first Ukrainian churches in Canada. It is fitting for the church and the cemetery to be on the same plot of land because those who have “fallen asleep in the Lord” perpetually remain members of the Universal Church.

Perhaps, the saddest case of an immediate need to bury the dead happened near Paterson Lake, Manitoba, in 1899. A group of Bukovynian settlers disembarked from a train at the end of the rail line in order to travel to their new homesteads in the Shoal Lake area. An outbreak of scarlet fever struck the group and they were quarantined in tents for two weeks, in what was actually a wilderness. Forty children plus two adults succumbed to the disease. There was no choice but to bury the dead in a mass grave and the survivors carried on as soon as the quarantine was lifted. Here 42 Ukrainian immigrants were consigned to the Prairie soil before they even had a chance to see their new homesteads.

Given the harsh conditions of climate and utter isolation under which the first Ukrainian homesteaders lived, the question is not so much, “Why did so many die?” Rather, the question is, “How was it possible that so many of them actually survived?” But they did survive and this tenacity and endurance is part of the legacy of Canada’s Ukrainian heritage.

For Ukrainians, cemeteries are not merely a place to deposit the dead and cemeteries certainly are not desolate land like the Biblical potter’s field. Rather, the cemetery is a sanctified place where the deceased rest until the second coming of Christ. Ukrainian cemeteries are as much for the living as for the dead. The Ukrainian cemetery is a prayerful meeting place and a sort of bridge between the living and the dead. It is what Professor John Lehr termed “fields of remembrance for the living.” Ukrainians bring food to the graves of their loved ones, and the blessing of graves is generally an annual event in most parishes. After the graves are blessed, parishioners take the food to the local hall for a common meal or, in some parishes, food is consumed right in the cemetery as at a picnic. In a sense, it can represent the sharing of a meal with our deceased loved ones. In Ukrainian spirituality the cemetery is never a spooky place to be avoided. Rather, it is a part of the landscape, as much a part of life as it is a part of death.
Pioneer cemeteries forged an emotional link to Canada for those who came from the Ukrainian homelands because their loved ones were now part of that new soil. The cemeteries were a gathering place, through which the pioneers found a new sense of community. This sense of community, in an odd way, also manifested itself because ethnically and religiously exclusive cemeteries demonstrated distinctness of the Ukrainian settlers from other prairie peoples. The grave markers in those cemeteries formed part of that distinctness.

Given the need to build some rudimentary shelter, clear the land, and plant crops in a harsh climate, it is not surprising that the first graves in Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries were marked primarily with wooden crosses. It seems unlikely that they were intended to be anything more than a temporary measure. Wooden crosses deteriorated with the harsh weather conditions or even burned with grass fires.

In her book *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies*, Frances Swyrripa displays an archival photo of a Ukrainian cemetery from 1908 in which every grave marker appears to be a wooden cross.

It is difficult to say how the earliest cemetery crosses looked because so little evidence of them survives today. In St. Demetrius Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery near Gardenton, MB, one can find a few wooden crosses on which were placed rounded pieces of wood at the three upper extremities that approximate the look of a trefoil cross (image # 01). The inscriptions are worn and illegible so there is no way to verify the date of the crosses and no way to verify the extent to which such embellishments may have been common in early cemeteries. Given the results of my interviews, I doubt that these examples would be much older than the first half of the 20th century.

I interviewed Peter Warchow about Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox Cemetery in Ottawa, ON. Warchow was the manager of the cemetery for many years, retiring from the job in 2011. When he first started working in the cemetery in the early 1970s, he found the remnants of some wooden crosses that had collapsed. Since the cemetery opened in 1930, the oldest the crosses could have been at that time would be approximately 40 years old. In most instances, the lettering was illegible on these crosses. However, Warchow stated that there were a few examples where the lettering had been “burned into the wood – maybe with a soldering iron” and it was still possible to read the lettering. To date, there have been about 470 burials in Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox Cemetery, among which there are 6 “unknown” burials. There are many more sites where the burial was recorded but no monument exists and most, if not all, of these would have once had wooden crosses.
The Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox Cemetery bylaws now prohibit wooden grave markers. However, there is one old wooden cross in Holy Trinity cemetery that predates that prohibition (see image 02). While there is no inscription painted directly on the cross, there is a metal plate telling us the deceased, Oleksa Melnychuk, died in 1940. The metal plate is oddly situated on the middle crossbar to the left of centre. Possibly there was an inscription originally painted directly onto the cross and the metal plate may have been added after the cross was repainted, covering the original inscription. This photo was taken 72 years after the date of death, so the cross must have been repainted several times if it genuinely dates from 1940. The cross in image 02 looks short and the bottom crossbar nearly touches the ground. On close inspection one can see that the bottom of the cross is bolted to metal brackets and the brackets are attached to a concrete base. It is possible that this cross was originally placed directly into the ground where the lowest part rotted. The family may have cut off the rotten part and placed the cross on a more functional base and this would account for its short appearance.

I have photographed wooden crosses in other cemeteries that were plain Latin crosses. It is rare to find wooden crosses that are not faded beyond being able to interpret them. These crosses give us a glimpse of how some early Ukrainian-Canadian grave markers may have looked. However, the evidence is too scant to make more than speculations regarding the actual appearance of Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries at the beginning of the 20th century.

In time, a family of the deceased might replace a wooden cross on a grave with a more permanent marker but there are many Ukrainian cemeteries across Canada in which there are unmarked graves. For example, in the parish cemetery of Holy Ascension Ukrainian Catholic Church in Hadashville, MB, parishioners had the forethought to erect a monument that has over 40 names of the dead buried in the cemetery for whom no grave marker exists (see image 03). Sometimes, only a slight hollow in the earth is all that is left to indicate a burial site. I interviewed Donna Shandrowski, president of the parish council, and she stated that owing to diligence there are no unknown burials in this cemetery of approximately 200 gravesites. While this is something of an indication of the possible volume of unmarked graves in Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries, this sort of memorializing of unmarked graves is very rare and no accurate statistics of unmarked graves exist in most early cemeteries.

According to Professor John C. Lehr, Ukrainians started replacing the wooden crosses with crosses made of concrete by around the 1920s or 1930s. In many communities it may have even been earlier. When I interviewed Violet Shymko of Calder, SK, she said that her grandmother died in 1918 and that she was certain the concrete monument was erected shortly after her death. Her grandmother's monument did not have to be replaced until 2012, nearly a hundred years later.
The re-transcription from a wooden cross to the concrete one would be as faithful as memories permitted. In some instances, there may have been even more room on the concrete monument for details. Most communities only had a few craftsmen who made cemetery markers. They poured the cement into a cross-shaped mould, reinforced with iron bars. They made the inscription by hand while the cement was still wet. Usually, they would paint the “stone” white and retrace the lettering in black paint. Certain decorative motifs in black paint were also fairly standard. However, there are also some very old examples where multi-coloured paints were used to decorate the white grave markers.

In his essay, “Crosses of East Slavic Christianity among Ukrainians in Western Canada”, A.M. Kosteki makes a case that there were two types of religious art for in the Ukrainian homelands. There was “ecclesiastical art”, well regulated by the Church, (for example, the icon studios of the monasteries) and there were the “minor arts” of the folk artists such as Easter egg making and embroidery. The “minor arts” were unregulated: “folk artists based their work on patterns developed over many generations, individual creativity, foreign models, and pre-Christian beliefs.” Cemetery crosses fall into the latter category and display characteristics that are distinct to the Ukrainian homelands. Ukrainian Greek Catholic cemetery markers were even distinct from the nearby Polish Roman Catholic cemeteries in Halychyna.

During the earliest period of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, the Church was scarcely present in the homesteader setting. As well, people who could make a good living as folk artists had no incentive to migrate to the New World. Thus, in Canada, there was a something of a disruption in cultural continuity and the two types of Ukrainian religious art became more blended and less distinguished than they were in the Ukrainian homelands. Kosteki writes: “A popular aesthetic taste based on the memories of only a few generations took the place of a genuine folk tradition. The community’s religious needs eclipsed the individual creativity of folk artists. In the new environment of western Canada, the significance of the cross as a symbol of group identity was greatly enhanced.”

While it may have taken a while for Ukrainian-Canadians to change from wooden crosses to concrete ones, it seems reasonably clear that the designs for grave markers in Canada were based on the memories of cemeteries found in the Ukrainian homelands. Compare the photograph of a Bukovynian cemetery at the village of Klivodyn, Chernivtsi oblast, Ukraine (image 04), with the cemetery in east-central Saskatchewan (image 05) and one immediately sees a consistency in style of the grave markers.

**Image 04:** An Orthodox country cemetery near Chernivtsi, Ukraine – photo courtesy of K. Warchow

**Image 05:** Dormition of St. Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery – five miles east of Calder, SK
The style of cemetery markers may change from one parish to another. However, there are many Ukrainian cemeteries where the trefoil cross is obviously the most widespread style. Images 04 and 05 demonstrate the trefoil cross is common in Orthodox cemeteries but also it is often the most common style in Greek Catholic cemeteries as well. Image 06 displays a large Greek Catholic cemetery near Bruno, SK, in which the trefoil cross is clearly the most usual style.

![Image 06: Trefoil style crosses in Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, located 4 miles east of Bruno, SK](image)

Certain styles of Ukrainian cemetery crosses can be found right across Canada. A concrete cross in a Ukrainian cemetery in Ontario may look almost indistinguishable from the type found in cemeteries of the western provinces. The immigrants settled in a wide variety of locations in Canada but, throughout this country, there was usually some consistency in the revival folk arts rooted in the Ukrainian homelands.

![Image 07: The most recent homemade cross documented by the S. Demchinsky Photo Collection - St. Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Sirko, MB](image)

As difficult as it is to determine when homemade concrete cemetery markers started appearing in Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries, it is almost as difficult to determine when the last ones would have been made. Each prairie province has hundreds of Ukrainian cemeteries and it is not feasible to inspect all of them.

During the rising prosperity of the postwar period, homemade cemetery markers became increasingly rare and until they had all but died out by 1960. The most recent example of a homemade cemetery cross (image 07) that I have documented, to date, is for a woman who died in 1966 and is buried in St. Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery at Sirko, MB. While it is likely that this cross was made about the year of her death, it is not impossible that it could have been made during her lifetime. It was not unusual for a person to buy two cemetery plots when his/her spouse died and to have both cemetery markers prepared for the time when the couple would rest together side by side.
Regarding the actual process of making concrete markers, I interviewed Dr. Reginald Martsinkiw on November 3, 2012, regarding his father, the late Joseph Martsinkiw, who was a multitalented craftsman in the rural community of Donwell, SK. Among his many talents, Joseph Martsinkiw was frequently asked to make cemetery markers and coffins. Donwell is located approximately 45 km northeast of Yorkton, SK, and the community was one of the first areas of Saskatchewan to be settled by ethnically Ukrainian people from Halychyna and Bukovina at the end of the 19th century. Joseph was born into this pioneer rural community in 1900 at a time when it was still the Northwest Territories.

I asked Dr. Martsinkiw if he was ever present when his father made cemetery crosses. “Yes,” he replied, “I assisted him in this task many times.” Dr. Martsinkiw then described the process to me.

Joseph Martsinkiw had crafted a mould that could be used many times to make concrete cemetery crosses. While the mould was primarily made of wood, Martsinkiw used bent tin to shape some of the finer rounded details of the cross.

To make the cement mixture, he sifted sand several times until it was very fine. Lots of lime was mixed into the cement, since this made for a lighter colour of concrete – almost white. White was traditionally the only proper colour for a cemetery cross.

He poured the cement into the mould, reinforcing it with iron bars. Martsinkiw tapped the sides of the mould with a hammer to make the cement properly settle into it. During this process a hole needed to be made in the under part of the cemetery cross. The cement mixture was left in the mould for several days to ensure that the concrete was properly cured before removing it from the mould.

After the cement mixture had set for a while, but was not yet fully dry, Martsinkiw could make the inscription on the cemetery cross. He owned a set of lead letters to make these inscriptions and they were gently pounded into the semidry concrete with a wooden mallet to make indented lettering. He also had a lead cross that he pounded into the cement to add a decorative element to the cemetery marker.

Martsinkiw removed the cross from the mould when the concrete was fully set. He used sandpaper to make the cemetery marker as smooth as possible and then painted it white. He painted the indented letters on the concrete with a contrasting colour of paint.

Martsinkiw made a separate concrete base for the cross that he sank into the ground. An iron bar stuck up out of the base and he connected that bar to the hole made in the under part of the cemetery cross. Joseph Martsinkiw made some of these crosses seventy or more years ago and they still stand in many cemeteries around Donwell, Hamton, and Mikado, SK.

I asked Dr. Martsinkiw if many people in his community made cemetery markers and he confirmed that not many people in the community could do this. It was something his father had a knack for doing and he was often called upon to provide this service. Even if there had been funeral homes in the larger towns, most farmers could not have afforded their services.
There are a few points about Martinkiw’s process of making cemetery crosses that warrant further examination. The proper preparation of the base of the cross was very important. If the base was not properly installed, the cross might tilt or might even fall over. In my interview with Peter Warchow, we discussed how the bylaws of Holy Trinity Bukowinan Orthodox Cemetery previously stipulated that the base of all cemetery markers be at least four feet beneath the surface but that the church council was considering changing the stipulation to five feet. Image 08 taken in a cemetery in Zbruck, MB\textsuperscript{22}, illustrates how the lack of a deep base can lead to a cross tilting forward. Warchow explained the reason for this:

\begin{quote}
We need to put the base down five feet because we put the casket down to the minimum required five feet. Naturally, the soil is disturbed on the gravesite and it is looser than normal before the ground fully settles. When they go to put the monument on the gravesite, there is about a foot to 18 inches between the casket and the base. The back of the base is up against fully settled soil while the front of the base is up against the looser soil. There’s nothing to curb that foundation from tilting forward toward the burial site. In time, the casket deteriorates and the soil over the burial shifts some more. This also causes the monument to tilt forward if the base is not sufficiently deep.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

Another thing to note about Martinkiw’s description of cross making is the importance of carefully preparing the cement mixture. In her monograph, Made in Saskatchewan – Peter Rupchan, Ukrainian Pioneer and Potter, Judith Silverthorne describes how one Ukrainian pioneer called Metro Safruk, near Usherville, SK,\textsuperscript{24} ordered a book from a Montreal cement company to assist him in making concrete cemetery markers. Safruk found that the trick to making a cemetery cross that would not crack was in the careful mixing of the right quantity of “clean dirtless sand”. He also found that it was important to slowly cure the concrete: “He kept the concrete wet for approximately two weeks to help the crosses stay strong.” Safruk’s nephew predicted that his crosses should “last forever” and, indeed, they still stand in many cemeteries in his community with only an occasional need to be repainted.\textsuperscript{25}
In my interview with Jennie Dutchak, she said that her father wanted the best possible cross for her grandmother. Dutchak quotes her father as saying, “Safruk knows the key to making crosses.” In 1947, Mr. Dutchak travelled from Mamornitz to Usherville (a distance of about 95 km) to obtain a grave marker based on Safruk’s reputation.²⁶

There were a great many folk artists who could make crosses but did not have the proper technique to make them last a great length of time. In image 09 we see a concrete cross that is falling apart. In this instance, the maker only used heavy wire to enforce the concrete, rather than iron bars, and this may have been a factor in its deterioration. There does not appear to be a correlation between the age of a cemetery and the number of broken grave markers. Some of the oldest Ukrainian cemeteries in Canada have no broken concrete crosses whatsoever. Rather, it appears that some communities simply had better craftsmen than others.

Over half of Ukrainian immigrants prior to 1914 were illiterate.²⁷ This is indicated by frequent misspellings on grave markers. In some instances the inscriptions appear to be a combination of Ukrainian and Old Slavonic (image 10). Inscriptions show dialect differences between Halychyna and Bukovyna compared to modern vernacular Ukrainian. Some inscriptions may even contain both Cyrillic and Latin letters. In other cases, a Latin letter may be used for a Cyrillic letter when the two letters look similar but represent totally different sounds. For example, the Latin “N” may be used in place of the Cyrillic “И”. In time, English on grave markers became increasingly common (image 07).²⁸

As earlier described, Joseph Martsinkiw could make neat transcriptions on his cemetery markers by carefully pounding prefabricated letters into the semi-wet cement and then painting the indented letters. However, a great many concrete cemetery crosses across the prairies appear to have been transcribed
using a nail or a stick – creating a particularly naïve look (image 11). In some instances, the inscription was merely painted on the concrete marker with no indented letters and these would fade with time.

Often, the crosses were so narrow that some words in the transcriptions required abbreviation. In many instances, some words were broken onto more than one line. For example, on the cross in image 12, we see “Тут Споя” on two lines and this is short for “Тут Спочиває” (meaning “here rests”). Next we see “РБ” which is short for “Работа Божия” meaning “servant of God” (specifically feminine). This is followed by the deceased’s first and last names, which are split over four lines: “До мяча Чоботар”, meaning her name was “Domka Chobotar”. We next see “Упок”, which is short for “Упокоилась” (meaning “reposed”). Next we see “13”, presumably meaning she was 13 years old. Finally we see, spread over three lines, “То март 1927 р”, which together mean “on March 1927”. The final “р” is short for “ропы” (meaning “year”). Thus we can roughly interpret the full inscription to mean “Here lies servant of God, Domka Chobotar, reposed at 13 years old in March of the year 1927”. For the uninitiated, early Ukrainian grave markers may be difficult to read, if not downright cryptic.29

In addition to birth and death dates, early grave markers frequently have information identifying the old-country village from which the deceased emigrated, thus maintaining a connection between the old world and the new.30

Wrought-iron grave markers in early Ukrainian cemeteries are less common than the concrete variety but they are by no means unheard of. Given that blacksmith shops were fairly common in the 1920s and 1930s, one may wonder why we do not see more wrought iron. In the end, it may just be a matter of tradition that the concrete grave markers predominate.

Image 13 demonstrates a wrought-iron grave marker in St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Keld, MB. On the whole, it is artistically crafted and possibly the same craftsman built the little iron fence around the grave. Note the “rays of glory” radiating from the centre where generally Christ’s head is positioned. It also includes a crescent moon near the bottom (explanation further below). A long narrow concrete base supports this iron cross on which is inscribed the details of the deceased’s birth, death, etc. In other instances a metal plate is sometimes attached to a wrought iron cross that has the details regarding the deceased.

Image 13: Wrought-Iron cross in St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Keld, MB
As the photos of the cemeteries in images 04, 05, 06, 08, and 13 demonstrate, the overwhelming majority of grave markers placed in Ukrainian cemeteries were at one time cross-shaped. This distinguishes Orthodox and Catholic cemeteries from Protestant ones during the same period. There is a greater proportion of grave markers shaped in the tombstone style, horizontal rectangle, or even obelisk-shaped grave markers in Protestant cemeteries.

Regardless of their lack of education, the immigrants seemed to know instinctively that the cross is a clear manifestation of the Christian mystery of triumph rising from defeat, of glory following degradation, and of everlasting life achieved by Christ’s death and resurrection. It is the representation of the all-powerful God, who willed to become human and to die in order to save all humankind. The cross is the very image of our salvation through Christ’s grace. Saint Paul wrote, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1: 18)

Indeed, the concrete crosses of early Ukrainian cemeteries were frequently decorated with more crosses – sometimes in multitude (image 14).

A very common feature of these cemetery crosses is the traditional trefoil-shaped ends. The trefoil is certainly not exclusive to Eastern Rite usage and many ethnic groups employ it. Figure 1 illustrates typical shapes of two- and three-bar crosses and Figure 2 illustrates possible shapes of crosses with just one bar.

There are generally two types of the single-bar cross: the Latin cross and the Greek cross. These are convenient names but it should not be interpreted that Latin crosses are strictly for use in the Latin Rite and Greek crosses are strictly for use in the Greek Rite. Both Rites use both styles of cross. Technically, the ratio of a Latin cross ought to be eight squares high by five squares wide. For a Greek cross the ratio ought to be seven squares by seven squares.

The local craftsmen who built cemetery markers were not likely educated in such intricacies, so sometimes it is difficult to discern if one is looking at a Latin cross with a short base arm or a Greek
cross with a lengthened base arm. Three-bar crosses are sometimes found in Ukrainian Catholic cemeteries and single-bar crosses are common in Ukrainian Orthodox cemeteries.

The three-bar cross is sometimes mislabelled the “Orthodox cross”. In fact, it is only rarely seen in art and architecture beyond that of the Slavs and it is usually foreign to Romanians, Greeks, Lebanese, and other Orthodox peoples. Since the tradition of the three-bar cross predates the Union of Brest, which created the Greek Catholic Church, it is also a tradition of Ukrainian Greek Catholics. In the Norms of the Ruthenian-Catholic Church, written in 1915 under the supervision of Bishop Nykyta Budka, it is prescribed: “The largest cross on a church is to be single-barred, and where the people insist on a three-barred cross, the priest may permit it under the circumstances, in as much as this insistence is not motivated by hidden schismatic efforts.”

The reference to “schismatic efforts” gives us a clue to the disappearance of the three-bar cross in Ukrainian Catholic churches and cemeteries in Canada. During the intense rivalry between the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the 1920s and 1930s, the three-bar cross lost its appeal to Catholics because it was viewed as being “too Orthodox”.

The additional two bars on a three-bar cross are not merely decorative. The very top bar (generally the shortest one) represents the slat of wood above Christ’s head on which was written, “Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews” in three languages. The central bar represents the crossbeam on which Christ’s hands were nailed. The lowest bar represents the slat of wood to which Christ’s feet were nailed. The bottom bar is generally set at an angle to the other two bars because there is a tradition that the piece of wood twisted when Christ was struggling on the cross.

While there were always a few people who had moulds for concrete crosses, the number in any particular community was likely small enough that the selection of styles was small. Some styles of cemetery crosses may be unique to a particular community. For example, in Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, just southeast of Rosthern, SK, somebody had a style of concrete cross mould with a skull and crossbones that is entirely unique to that area (see image 15). While skulls are frequently found on the base of processional crosses and in iconography, they are rarely found on grave markers. The skull represents Golgotha, meaning “the place of the skull” in Aramaic, the hill where Christ was crucified. There is a tradition that the skull of Adam was buried at Golgotha and that it was exposed at the time of Christ’s crucifixion.
Images 15: This unique grave marker with skull and crossbones is one of several like it found only in the Rosthern, SK, rural community.

Images 16: A detail of the skull and crossbones from the cross in image 15.

While this cross from the Rosthern rural community is unique, it also has some typical symbolism frequently found in Ukrainian cemeteries. The “IC” on the left arm of the cross and the “XC” on the right arm of the cross together make the “IC XC”, which is the common monogram for Jesus Christ (Исус Христу). A scroll is at the top of cross with the Cyrillic letters “ІНІР”. These letters represent the sign posted above Christ’s head reading, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (“Иисус Назарянинъ, Царь Іудейский”). This is directly equivalent to the “INRI” (Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum) often seen at the top of Latin Rite crosses. In the centre, in image 15, is a cross within the cross. On the left of it are poppies representing the great sleep that we undergo before the great final day of judgement. On the right, we see wheat that grows in spring and symbolizes resurrection.

The most charming attribute of early Ukrainian cemeteries is the plethora of mystical symbolism on the grave markers. Figure 3 demonstrates some of the interesting motifs typically found on Ukrainian-Canadian cemetery crosses up to as late as the 1950s.

The first two images of the first row in Figure 3 look like a type of asterisk contained in a circle and this symbol is one of the most common found in early Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries. It represents the sun in the spring and it is symbolic of rebirth, thus having a resurrection theme. In June, 2012, I photographed eight variations of this symbol in just three Ukrainian cemeteries in the Arbakka/Gardenton area of Manitoba. The images below demonstrate just three of those variations.
Image 17: The top point of a cross in St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Gardenton, MB

Image 18: The right point of a cross in St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Gardenton, MB

Image 19: The top point of a cross in Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Arbakka, MB

Image 20: A cross with palms at St. John Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Stead, MB.

Image 17 demonstrates one of the many varieties of the sun-in-the-spring symbol, along with two poppies. Image 18 demonstrates a more typical version of the sun-in-the-spring symbol, in which the trefoil has a trinity of identical suns. Image 19 shows the sun-in-the-spring symbol in raised relief (the discolouration is due to lichens growing on the concrete).

The palm is one of the most enduring Christian symbols. Leonid Ouspensky writes: “A palm branch is a symbol of joy and feasting. The Jews used them to welcome people of high rank; as a symbol of valour it was also given to reward conquerors. So the crowd gathered at the city gates with palm branches in their hands to welcome the Lord riding a donkey as the Conqueror of death.” We see more of this concept in Revelations 7: 9. “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” Therefore, the symbol of palm leaves on a cemetery cross speaks of that victory over death by Christ’s conquering of death and the joy that victory brings.

In image 20, the palm leaves at this gravesite express the expectation of resurrection of the deceased for whom the cross was made.
The fourth image from the left of the second row on the diagram in Figure 3 looks like a type of plant. This symbol actually is a representation of the tree of life. Image 21 demonstrates a cross with such symbolism in St. Mary’s Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery near Sheho, SK (Kruprowski Church).

Image 21 also demonstrates an example where the cemetery cross has a rectangular niche built into the structure. This type of recess may have been used to house a picture of the deceased or possibly an icon print. In other instances artificial flowers may have been placed in the niche and it undoubtedly would have had a sheet of glass covering it.

A crescent moon at the base of a cross is not uncommon in early Ukrainian cemeteries. While there is no definitive agreement regarding the origin of this symbol, there seems to be a general consensus that the crescent moon at the base of a cross represents the victory of Christianity over Islam after the Tatars were expelled from Eastern Europe. The inclusion of the crescent moon is also fairly common on the crosses gracing the roofs or domes of both Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox churches. Image 22 in St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Keld, MB demonstrates just one example of how this may look.

In some instances a cross over a grave may contain elements that are not strictly within Eastern Rite traditions. For example the three-dimensional figure of Christ on the cross (the corpus) has been added to some concrete cemetery crosses even though this is more typical of Roman Catholic crosses. In his essay, “Ukrainian Grave Markers in East-Central Alberta”, Bohdan Medwidzky notes that the corpus can be seen in both Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic cemeteries but it tends to be more common in the Catholic ones. From my numerous visitations to Ukrainian cemeteries across Canada, I concur with Medwidzky and add that this appears to be generally accurate for other provinces as well.

Image 23 shows a cross with a corpus in St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Caliento, MB. There can be no doubt that this was the result of a mould because there are three other crosses in the same cemetery with the identical naïve looking body of Christ. Image 24 demonstrates an example of a concrete cross with a corpus found in a Greek Catholic churchyard in southeast Poland. It is only slightly more sophisticated.
Image 23: An example of a cemetery cross with a corpus – St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Caliento, MB

Image 24: An example of a corpus on a cross, found in a Greek Catholic churchyard in Komaiczky, southeast Poland.

Other westernizations might be the addition to the cemetery marker of a lamb or an angel (see image 25). One might surmise that such western elements are more common in the Ukrainian Catholic community in Canada because it has a larger proportion of families that came from Halychna rather than from Bukovyna. In 1910, 40% of the population of Halychna was ethnically Ukrainian and religiously Orthodox, while 47% were Polish Roman Catholic. At about that time, 38.4% of Bukovyna was ethnically Ukrainian, while 34.4% of Bukovyna was comprised of Romanian Orthodox people. Thus, the potential for influence from the Roman Catholic Church was much greater in Halychna.

Сльоза і камінь (Tear and Stone) is a book featuring photography from in cemeteries located in some of the oblasts of western Ukrainian, all of which were once part of Halychna. From this “photo album” (Фотоальбом), photographed and written by Andriy Kis, it is clear that the addition of a corpus, an angel or other three-dimensional figures to a cemetery cross is not uncommon in Greek Catholic cemeteries in at least some parts of the Ukrainian homelands. (One can also see a number of wrought iron crosses in the cemeteries depicted in this book; however, like the Ukrainian-Canadian counterparts they are a minority.) Thus, this type of westernization of cemetery markers predates Ukrainian immigration to Canada.

In some Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries, there are examples where it appears that the corpus was removed from a crucifix and attached to the cemetery cross before the cement dried.
The emotional link between pioneers and the new world forged by cemeteries may have been strongest for parents who had to bury their children. Early prairie cemeteries always seem to have more than their fair share of children’s graves. For example, in her book Mamornitz Revisited, Jennie Dutchak-Zayachkowski writes that the Dormition of the Mother of God cemetery in Mamornitz, SK, contains over 200 interments since 1910. She goes on to write: “There was also a high rate of infant mortality in the community during the first two decades of settlement, as a result of such infectious diseases as scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough and smallpox. Between 1916 and 1945, there are over forty recorded child deaths.”

Image 26 shows a diminutive grave marker in Nativity of St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Weidon, MB. The cross on the grave (in the foreground) is made of chunks of green glass that were pressed into the cement before it dried. The presence of plastic flowers at the base suggests the infant is still mourned over 60 years after his death.

It is very common to see isolated graves, usually at the back, in early Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries. Often there was a strict enforcement of the rule that unbaptized children and persons dying of suicide would be placed in a part of the churchyard that was not consecrated. In his historical and canonical study of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada, Eastern Christians in the New World, Bishop David Motiuk writes: “Yet, in the past, certain groups of people were denied ecclesiastical burial. According to the particular law of the Ukrainian Church in Canada, these included: non-baptised children; heretics, schismatics, apostates, and the excommunicated; those who deliberately commit suicide; notorious sinners who died without repentance; and members of forbidden societies.” Motiuk explains that these rules have been modified and are less restrictive now.

The style, language, and calligraphy of Ukrainian-Canadian cemetery markers clearly has not been static for any great length of time in the 20th century. Even at a time when wooden crosses must have been still relatively common, new innovations were appearing in the concrete crosses. As the luxury of photography became more affordable, pictures of the deceased on crosses (preserved under glass) became increasingly common (see image 27).

Not only did the language of the inscriptions change over time, but also what was typically meant in the inscriptions began to change. For example, the common expression “Вічна Пам'ять” (eternal memory) was not much used on cemetery crosses before the 1940s even though it was part of the lexicon of Ukrainian-Canadians. The initials “R.I.P” or the words “Rest in Peace” did not become commonly inscribed on cemetery markers until the 1950s when people began to buy stone markers from funeral homes. No doubt this is because origin of the inscription is
actually from the Latin Rite ("R.I.P." is found in many western European cemeteries because it actually stands for the Latin expression "requiescat in pace" from the Requiem Mass.)

Grave markers are not the only concrete crosses that we see in Ukrainian churchyards. Often the very best examples of this folk art are found in the parish memorial crosses. Image 28 shows how the annual feast day celebrations at Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church (OCA) at Star-Edna, AB, include the traditional blessing of fruit. They do this at the concrete memorial cross if weather is permitting.

In many instances, the parish will construct a service table at the base of the cross. This table may be used for an outdoor *panakhýda* (панихіда) service when the weather is permitting. The *panakyhda* is a service in memory of the departed. For Ukrainians, the different prayers for the dead have specific intention: to pray for the eternal rest of the dead; to console the existing relatives and friends; and to remind us of our own impermanence and the briefness of this mortal life.

The *panakyhda* may be said for an individual, for several departed of a particular family, or may be said for the parish in general at the time of the annual blessing of graves. Additionally, there are specified days on the church calendar dedicated to prayers for the dead, such as the "Soul Saturdays" during Lent.

The memorial cross in image 29 is a good example. On it we see a cross within the cross, stars, the crescent moon at the bottom, the "IC XC" (Jesus Christ), and the alpha and omega. Revelations 1:8 states: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and they may be found in upper case (Α Ω) or lower case (α ω). This example is a bit odd in that the alpha is in upper case, while the omega is in lower case. This beautiful memorial cross and service table are located close to the entrance of St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Szypenitz, AB.

The mould for the memorial cross in image 29 also must have been used for grave markers because there is a grave cross identical to it in the nearby cemetery of Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Kaleland, AB.
In addition to homemade crosses, early Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries frequently have examples of grave covers but this is not very consistent from one community to another. Many cemeteries have none at all, while grave covers may be over the majority of graves in other cemeteries. The cover is symbolic of the grave being sealed until the second coming of Christ. The grave cover also clearly delineated the burial space from the space where one could walk, since it was considered improper to walk over a grave.57

Image 30 shows metal covers (possibly purchased from a retail firm) on a concrete base in Dormition of St. Mary Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery, Meacham, SK. In this cemetery a significant proportion of the graves had covers and they varied greatly from one grave to another, with the majority of covers appearing to be made by local craftspeople (note the photo background).58 In St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, near Krydor, SK (image 31), the majority of the graves are covered with a concrete cover and these covers all have either pebbles or crushed coloured glass that appear to have been pressed into the cement before it dried. The colours of the bits of glass usually are green, reddish-brown, or clear – colours that could be easily be obtained from crushing soft drink or beer bottles.59

Other ways that a gravesite might be clearly delineated would be to build a fence around it or to place a concrete border around the grave. In image 32, the grave on the extreme left of the photo has such a border. There are two graves seen in the centre and right side of the photo that are fenced in and also have concrete grave covers. The little gate at the front of these two fenced-in graves adds additional functionality since it allows the family access to clean the graves, place flowers on them, etc. Fences around gravesites form a significant minority of cases in Ukrainian-Canadian cemeteries. There also is much less of a tradition regarding their appearance. If you compare the fence in image 32 with the fences in image 30 (background) and
image 13, they are all very different.

The prairie landscape is changing. Many rail lines have been abandoned. Many little villages and hamlets have lost their general stores, post offices, and grain elevators. Sometimes even the churches no longer exist to indicate that people once worshiped God there. For many prairie communities, all that is left is a cemetery to indicate that the location was once a place where people lived, had an identity, and bonded with their neighbours.  

By the early 1960s homemade grave markers became rare. As Ukrainian-Canadians purchased professionally made grave markers of quarried stone, designs have been less likely to be cross-shaped or white. Much of the mystical symbolism of past centuries has been lost, while some more generic images have gained popularity. As Enrico Carlson-Cumbo comments in his essay *Contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian Grave Markers in Urban Southern Ontario*: “Renditions of DaVinci’s ‘Last Supper’, Michelangelo’s ‘Pieta’, the Good Shepherd, and the praying Christ in Gethsemane have become common place.” However, while much of the ancient symbolism is no longer seen on Ukrainian grave markers, many contemporary grave markers have other symbols that are distinctly Ukrainian. Symbolism such as the Trident of Volodymyr and Ukrainian embroidery motifs sometimes are laser-etched on today’s Ukrainian grave markers. Thus one may view this not so much as traditions dying but, rather, traditions changing.

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SDPC (S. Demchinsky Photo Collection): This is a body of primary research containing a collection of over 20,000 images, along with field notes, detailing over 550 Ukrainian-Canadian churches. Images detail exteriors and interiors, as well as churchyards. Hard copies of the photos are held by Library & Archives Canada, the Archives of the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, and the Archives of the Metropolitan, Ukrainian Catholic Church (Winnipeg Archeparchy). Digitalized copies are available from the author/photographer (905 – 530 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa, ON, K1R 7T1). Photos are cited by a film number, in which the first 4 digits represent the year, followed by an underscore and 2 or 3 digits representing the chronological film number. Thus “2011_75” represents the 75th roll of film taken in 2011.

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October 24, 2012

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End Notes


2 Dutchak-Zayachkowski, p: 141.

3 Balan, p: 67 and Swyripa, pp: 204-205. The two authors disagree slightly with the exact number of dead. I used Swyripa’s lesser numbers to be conservative. Additionally, Baran, p: 5, states there were “40 children and some adults”.

4 Carlson-Cumbo, p: 76.

5 Lehr, p: 8.

6 Swyripa, p: 70.

7 My use of the term “Ukrainian homelands” is a deliberate attempt to deal with the fact that ethnic Ukrainians came from a land of ever changing boarders. Indeed, during the first wave of Ukrainian immigration, prior to 1914, there was no entity called “Ukraine” on any map of Europe.


9 There seems to be a fair degree of agreement on this point: Lehr p: 9; Kostecki, p: 57; Medwidsky pp: 72 and 75; Swyripa, pp: 68-69.

10 Swyripa, p: 69.

11 I interviewed Peter Warchow on December 4, 2012. Additionally, I have assisted with management of Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox Cemetery since 2002 and I have a photocopy of the cemetery burials. They have been transcribed by hand in an ancient-looking ledger book and this remains the only record of the parish burials. The former Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox Cathedral Parish in Ottawa amalgamated with Christ the Saviour Orthodox Parish in 2003. Today, the church is called Christ the Saviour Orthodox Sobor while the cemetery retains its original name. The church and cemetery are together part of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church Diocese of the USA. This is a Slavic-tradition diocese under the Patriarch of Constantinople. While “Bukovynian” is a more acceptable spelling, I have retained “Bukowinian” because this was the spelling used when the parish was incorporated and it is the spelling on the land title deed for the cemetery.


13 Lehr, p: 9; Shymko interview – January 3, 2013. Calder is a village located about 56 km east of Yorkton, SK. This area was homesteaded very early and it would make sense that the earliest places to be settled would be the first to switch from wooden crosses to concrete ones. Shymko and virtually all the people that I interviewed confirmed Lehr’s assertion that there were only a few people in any community that made these monuments.

14 SDPC, 2012_01. Also, Kostecki, p: 57, maintains that the multi-coloured designs are typical of Bukovynian grave markers; however, the examples in SDPC, 2012_01, are from a very old Greek Catholic cemetery. In St. Elias Orthodox Cemetery (located 5 miles east and 3 miles north of Rhein, SK) there are beautiful old cemetery crosses that have blue crosses painted in the centre of the white concrete cross with yellow and black sun-in-the-spring symbols at the three upper extremities of each monument. This appears to have been the standard practice in this parish cemetery. The cemetery has not been used for many decades. See SDPC, 2000_15.


16 Kostecki, pp: 55-56. Regarding folk artists in the Ukrainian homelands, Tear and Stone by Kis clearly demonstrates that many of the Greek Catholic grave markers of Halychyna were much more sophisticated than what can be found in Canada. Many are made of concrete but some are carved from stone. While all have some elements of naivety and some look downright amateur, it is clear from the level of embellishment that this was the work of people who specialized in the art of making cemetery markers in Halychyna.
17 Medwidisky, p: 72, also states this in his study. Other examples are Stuartburn and Arbakka, MB, cemeteries, SDPC: 2012_01; Gardenton, MB, SDPC: 2012_02; Donwell, SK, SDPC: 2009_04; Rosthern, SK, SDPC: 2010_01; Dickiebush, AB, SDPC: 1999_04, etc.

18 SDPC: 2013_01. The earliest concrete grave markers in Holy Trinity Bukowinian Orthodox cemetery have a striking resemblance to those commonly found in the Prairie Provinces. However, the vast majority of Ukrainians in Ottawa during the 1930s and 1940s had never been west of Ontario.

19 Baran, pp: 458-460, documents that there were almost 160 Ukrainian Catholic parishes in Manitoba in 1991. Most of these parishes had their own cemeteries. This does not include Orthodox cemeteries and it also does not include a great many abandoned Ukrainian cemeteries that stand in the prairies with out being attached to any parish. It seems reasonable to guess that there might be about 1,000 Ukrainian cemeteries in just the Prairie Provinces.

20 In the interest of full disclosure, Reginald Martinskii is my uncle and Joseph Martinskii was my maternal grandfather. Hampton and Mikado, SK, were the two closest neighbouring communities to Donwell. That Joseph Martinskii was contacted to do work in neighbouring communities is further testament to the fact that there were few people doing this type of work.


22 Zbruch, MB, no longer appears on a road map (if it ever did). It is located about 85 km directly north of Winnipeg in the Interlake District of Manitoba.


24 Usherville is about 130 km north of Yorkton, SK.


27 Martynowych, p: 11; also see note 81, p: 106; Balan, pp: 6-7.

28 Lehr, pp: 9-10; Medwidsky, pp: 73-74; Swyripa, p: 68.

29 I give thanks to Dr. Jennie Dutchak, who provided me with interpretations of several grave markers.

30 Swyripa, p: 68.

31 A good example of this is on Merivale Road in Ottawa, where two Orthodox cemeteries and a Protestant cemetery are virtually situated side-by-side. The majority of the grave markers from 1950 or prior are cross-shaped in the two Orthodox cemeteries. Only a small minority of grave markers in the Protestant cemetery, from the same period, are cross-shaped.

32 All quotations from scripture are from the “New International Version”.

33 Kostecki, p: 57.

34 Kostecki, p: 57.

35 Prokurat p: 331-332. The Eastern Slavs were almost entirely Greek Orthodox prior to the Union Brest (1596). Under this arrangement, Orthodox bishops in the Ukrainian homelands broke away from Constantinople and went under the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. Much of the populace wanted no part of this union. It was particularly opposed by the Cossack brotherhoods that revived the Orthodox Church. This was the beginning of the centuries-long rivalry between the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox churches.

36 Motiuk, p: 301.
37 Medwidzky, p: 75.
38 Lehr, p: 9.
39 SDPC: 2010_01.
40 Ouspensky, p: 181.
41 Dutchak-Zayachkowski, p: 143.
43 Ouspensky: p: 176.
44 Medwidzky, p: 72.
45 SDPC: 2010_29; At Dormition of St. Mary Ukrainian Orthodox cemetery I photographed a cross with such a niche. There was an icon and artificial flowers in the niche and the pane of glass was intact. When my grandfather’s son died at age 13, he built a cemetery cross with such a niche in it and placed a photograph of the child there. Unfortunately, this was not an ideal situation for the preservation of a photo and it completely deteriorated over time.
46 Kostecki, p: 58; Medwidzky, p: 72.
47 Medwidzky, p: 72.
48 SDPC: 2012_06.
49 Martynowych, p: 4.
50 My one criticism of Сльоза і камінь is that it provides very little information beyond the location of each subject of the photos. It seems likely that Kis photographed the best examples of cemetery markers, artistically speaking, but this gives us little idea as to what is the “norm” would be.
51 Dutchak-Zayachkowski, p: 141.
52 Medwidzky, p: 74; Dutchak-Zayachkowski, p: 141.
53 Motiuk, pp: 190-191.
54 Swyripa, p: 68.
55 Dutchak interview, January 31, 2013. While we do not have specific statistics in this regard Dr. Dutchak and I agreed that we both observed this in our many visits to prairie cemeteries.
56 SDPC: 2004_02
57 Dutchak interview, January 31, 2013.
58 SDPC: 2010_07
59 SDPC: 2010_40
60 SwyrIPA, pp: 73-74.
The following is from *THE MISSIONARY OUTLOOK* (September 1908)

**A Russian Funeral**

**BY MISS M’LEAN, B.A.**

Not far from the Wahstao Mission is a little Russian home that was gladdened by the arrival of a baby boy. There were already two girls in the home, so the boy was very welcome. Soon word came that he was sick, and in a few days, in spite of everything that a loving mother’s heart could do, he died. The father in the meantime had gone to be away some days, so the mother felt alone in her grief.

When we went over to the funeral, a number of women had come and were seated on the bed swinging their bare feet, chatting together of the old days in Austria and of how different a funeral would be if they were only back in “the Old Country.” On a pile of cushions in one corner of the room lay the little body, dressed in white. A black cap, adorned with bright coloured flowers and tinsel, was on the head, and strewn around and over the body were green leaves and prairie flowers. Now and then a little child would run in with a bunch of flowers, or it might be weeds, and they were lovingly placed with the others. As the neighbours kept coming they would stop at the door, devoutly cross themselves, pray, then walk to where the child lay, kiss it, and after more prayer, greet the other people in the room by shaking or kissing their hands.

We had understood that one of the Russian men was to read their service as the priest was not sent for, but presently a man came in and asked “If Miss Cartwright would read a sermon.” It is the first time they have ever asked for anything like this. Miss Cartwright hurried over to the house for her books, and when she came back the people were ready for whatever form of service she chose. She read to them in Russian from the 14th chapter of John, spoke a few words telling them that although the baby was not baptized he had gone to be with Jesus. When the woman who was interpreting had explained this, the women nodded their heads and seemed satisfied. Then Miss Cartwright sang to them in their own tongue, “What a Friend we have in Jesus,” and offered prayer.

The mean brought in a tiny wooden box and some women lined it with leaves, placing a little pillow for the head, and the mother with tears running down her cheeks, laid the little boy in his soft bed. The cover was nailed on, a Greek cross roughly drawn on the top and each end, holy water was sprinkled over and a lighted candle placed on it. The women lit candles and passed one to each of us, and we held them as the box was being prepared.

The procession was then formed, and truly it was a picturesque sight. The mean and boys went ahead carrying bright coloured banners and a large gilt cross mounted on a pole. Behind them came four boys carrying the coffin on an improvised bier. Then the women, barefooted, with white “foostkas” (A Russian head-dress) and bright-coloured dresses, came behind with the little children, and all the dogs in the neighbourhood. They climbed the hill and followed the trail to the burying ground, already marked by three wooden crosses. At the grave, Miss Cartwright read our burial service, the men listening reverently with uncovered heads, though they understood but little of it, while the women in vain tried to keep their candles from going out. Service over, the mother untied a little bundle and gave each child a cake, and invited each person to come to her home for the meal which is always served afterwards. We were given the seats of honour at the head of the table, the men were called in next and sat at one side with the women at the other. The people stood and prayed both before and after the meals, crossing themselves frequently.

Three courses were served, the first, meat cooked in cornmeal; the second, a soup course of many flavours. A large dish was placed in the centre and each dipped in with a spoon till satisfied. Perhaps a
newcomer might be pardoned for becoming satisfied a little sooner than some of the others. The last dish was of some kind of meal, cooked and rolled in cabbage leaves. On going away each was given a little loaf of bread to take home, so it means no small amount of labour and material to prepare for a Russian funeral feast. The idea seems to be that in so doing the departed soul may have no want. The idea may have been outgrown in some cases, but the custom continues and doubtless many believe it still.

The whole scene would impress an onlooker as being a series of incongruities – the burning candles, the holy water, the crosses on the box, and the strange procession, then along with it, the simple Gospel talk, the fervent prayer, the singing of the old familiar hymn, and our impressive burial service at the grave. As we sat holding the candles they gave us we wondered whether, when they come to know more fully Jesus, the light, these, to us unnecessary practices, may not drop off of themselves and be left behind as a cast off garment. If they can only be led to look thought the form to the things unseen, which are the real after all, then the form will no longer bind them. The fact that they of themselves asked for our services, shows that old bonds are loosening. Truly the mission was rightly named Wahstao – light – for its influence is telling on these people.
A Sermon at the Funeral of a Wife and Mother

"All is wasted on the wasteful"

by

Reverend Maksym Kinash (1870-1949)

[Translator’s note: An effort has been made in the English to retain the sermon’s rather melodramatic moments, and “improvements” have been avoided.]

Today as we send off to a place of eternal rest a faithful wife, dear mother, and exemplary housewife, -- the deceased Marija, -- then on this occasion I wish to remind all of us present here how great are the responsibilities, troubles and worries that weigh upon every woman and mother.

It often happens that men do not realize that the toil, obligations and troubles of women and mothers are far heavier than the work of a man, and not realizing this they do not value enough the labour of women. Every woman and mother is worse off than the lowest servant-girl, because her hours of work aren’t fixed, because she’s busy day and night. And since they are by nature more delicate, more weak and soft-hearted, women consequently respond to all domestic troubles in a way that is worse than men, and therefore women lose their strength quicker, age sooner, and leave this world quicker. Meanwhile, all that toil and trouble goes undervalued by husbands and children, and only then do the men value the woman’s work and the children the mother’s care – when she’s no longer around.

When a husband comes home from work in the evening, and the house is drafty, he shivers with sadness because there’s not that sun that brought warmth and light, because there’s no housewife; when the children run home, one by one they look at one another, grimace and groan through tears; our mother’s no more -- only then does the husband understand what a woman means, what a housewife means, what a mother means.

Our Marija was one of those exemplary women, downtrodden housewives; it is this kind of good woman and exemplary parishioner that we are sending off today for an eternal rest.

The deceased Marija lived with her husband Stefan for 32 years; this was an exemplary marriage because they lived together in love and harmony. But now this bond of matrimony is torn apart. That downtrodden housewife is no more; the true, loving wife is gone. The husband will come home from work, but the house is empty, the air is cold, and poor Stefan feels like he’s an orphan in this world.

The health of the deceased has long been weak, with each passing day her strength declined, but the deceased patiently suffered her heavy pains and didn’t blame God for this, because she was devout and an exemplary parishioner. Here husband tried his best to save her and cared for her sincerely, but in spite of all these attempts and efforts he could not save her, and unsympathetic death severed her thread of life. Having had Holy Confession, on Sunday she ended her life on earth.
And now the deceased is on her eternal journal and wishes to bid farewell with her family, fellow countrymen, friends, neighbours and with everyone present here.

Firstly, she bids farewell with her husband Stefan:

“My true husband, my sincere friend, my longtime guardian” – with my lips the deceased addresses her husband – “forgive me for the sorrow I’ve brought you, for poisoning your heart with grief, but this isn’t my fault, such is the will of God. I thank you for your help during my sickness, for those sleepless nights; do not remember those frequent difficulties you needed suffer because of me. I thank you for your sincere love for me, and I ask that you remember me in your prayers.

“Farewell, my true husband!...
“Farewell, my brother Andrij!...”

The deceased bids farewell with her kinswoman Ksenja!...

She bids farewell with all who have come to offer her their final respects and she asks for their prayers.

And I too bid you farewell, my good parishioner, and I hope that your godliness and long years of suffering have cleansed your soul and that the heavenly Judge will grant you eternal happiness. Amen.

Translated by R.B.Klymasz from the original Ukrainian text in Reverend Maksym Kinash, *Pokhoromi propovidi z prashchannami* [= Funeral sermons with farwells], Philadelphia, 1949, pp.4-45.
The commemorative lament that follows is taken from "An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folksong Cycle" by Robert B. Klymasz (Ottawa, 1970)

*Sung by Mrs. N. Mychajlik,
Dauphin, Manitoba, 1963.*

1 Чоловіче мій миленький,
   Чоловіче мій дорогенький,
Щож ти мене лишив саму в Канаді,
Що я буду робила в чужині,

5 Що я фамілії не маю.
   А ти ніпова вже такі літа великі,
   Тай до мене не звідаеш,
   Ані листа не припишишь,
   Ані самий не прийдеш,

10 А що я буду робила сама,
   Мене сь то ся діти відцурали
   Від коли тебе нема.
Що я буду робила,
Де я ся подію?
15 Ти прийди хоч на годинку,
І скажі мені, як я жити маю,
Що до мене діти не приходять,
Тай не хоче ся звідати до мене.
Коли ж ти до мене в гості прийдеш,
20 Коли ж ти до мене лист напишеш?
Щож я робити буду сама?
Вже штири роки як тебе нема,
Мені ж ток бої не висихають,
Рано її вечір плаку тай ся Богу колю,
Коли ж ти прийедеш за мною,
Коли ж ти прийедешь,
Коли ж ти відїдаеш,
Чоє ти ся нагнівав на мене?
Я ж ток п'ятдесят літ з тобов жила,
30 Тай ти ся ніколи не гнівав,
Тай ти ніколи не був злюсний на мене.
Коли ж ти до мене в гості прийдеш,
Чи на Івана з вишеньками,
Чи на Спаса з яблучками,
Чи на Великден з писанками?
Який же тобі подарунок дати,
Чи пасочки м'ягенькі,
Чи писанки чорненькі?
Коли ж ти прийдеш,
40 Коли ж ти до мене листа пришлеш?
Щож я робити буду сама?
Отож м'я лишни в Давфнин лишина....

Translation:

1 O my sweet husband,
   O my dear husband,
   Why have you left me alone in Canada?
   What am I to do in this foreign land
5 Without any family?
   You have been gone for such long years
   And you haven't even let me hear from you;
   You haven't written any letters
   Nor have you come in person.
10 And what am I to do all alone?
   The children have ignored me
   Since you've been gone.
   What am I to do?
   What am I to do with myself?
15 Come to me at least for an hour.
   And tell me how I am to live,
Since my children don't come to visit me
And don't even care to look me up.
When will you come to visit me?

20 When will you write a letter to me?
What am I to do all alone?
It's four years now since you went away;
My eyes never have a chance to become dry.
For day and night I weep and pray to God.

25 When will you come for me?
When will you come?
When will you come to visit?
Why are you angry at me?
For fifty years I lived with you.

30 And during that time you were never angry at me,
Nor were you put off with me.
When will you come to visit me?—
Will it be on the Feast of St. John when the cherries come out,
Or on the Feast of the Transfiguration when the apples come out,

35 Or on Easter Day when they give Easter eggs?
What sort of gift shall I give you?—
Fresh Easter-bread loaves,
Or dark Easter eggs?
When will you come?

40 When will you send me a letter?
What am I to do all alone?
Now that you've left me here in Dauphin . . . .

DATA: This is a somewhat rare example of traditional Ukrainian lament style with its stichic formation and its lines of uneven length (See Ukrainian text). The informant sang this lament shortly after she had come home from a special mass in her husband's memory.
PEOPLE BURIED
IN THE CEMETERY

The following is taken from *Our Grandparents, Our Heritage*, Dmytro Gutiw [Saskatoon] 1988, p.179.

**Burial of the Dead**

In these communities and parishes, there were sad occasions, too, when a beloved member of a family of relative or friend had died and arrangements had to be made for the burial. Usually a coffin was made by a carpenter or handyman and lined inside with white material. The body was washed and cleaned, dressed and laid into this homemade coffin. People came and paid their last respects and offered prayers. A good reader read the Psalter, which took a good three hours. The Psalter is a reading of 150 Psalms, which express passion, trust in God’s providence, thanksgiving and reflection of life. Some people sat the whole night with the deceased body, told stories and prayed by the candlelight. The next day was the funeral.

The burial had to be done within a day or two, as the body was not embalmed. In small, rural communities, there were no funeral homes to do the job of embalming. The first embalming and funeral home came into the area in the early Forties. They supplied ready-made coffins and embalmed bodies in the homes of the bereaved. Shortly after, funeral parlors were built, which provided this necessary service.

The following is taken from “The Korban Funeral Chapel” in *A History of Funeral Service in Manitoba*, Harald Gunderson, [Winnipeg], c2000, p.45

**Korban Funeral Chapel**

Although the Korban family serves any and all faiths and ethnic communities, it is obvious from the moment one walks into the premise, one notices the family is extremely proud of their Ukrainian Catholic faith and Ukrainian roots. The walls of the main foyer, the hallways, the two arrangement offices, the clergy room and the business offices are adorned with religious works and artwork of prominent Ukrainian artists. Religious icons, paintings and wood carvings are intermingled with works by such celebrated artists are Ben Wasylyshyn, Larissa Sembaliuk-Cheladyn, Ludmilla and Leo Mol.

The Chapels original design was created by architect Ihor Pona and has gone through three major expansions over the years. The original design included an arrangement office, a business office, casket showroom and a 200 seat chapel. The first expansion in 1985 created an extra office, boiler room and storage room, and relocated washrooms to allow for the expansion of the showroom. As well, a garage which housed the lead car, limousine and hearse was built with a fully decorated two bedroom suite built above the garage.
PLANNING A FUNERAL AT HOLY FAMILY UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church
1001 Grant Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1Y3

ph. (204) 453-4653 fax: (204) 475-0928
e-mail: holyfamilyucc@mts.net
Points to Remember when Planning a Funeral

- If the funeral is to take place in church, the body is to be present. If you are planning a cremation, the cremation is to take place after the funeral, not before. The remains are to be buried as soon as possible, preferably in a Catholic cemetery.

- The casket is to remain open during the funeral services unless the body is in poor condition. This allows the priest to bless the body, and the family and friends to make their final farewell. As well, an open casket serves as an antidote to the denial of death which is so prevalent in our culture today.

- A eulogy by family and friends is not part of our Ukrainian Catholic funeral. However, if it is desired that a family member or a friend give a eulogy, it can be done at the following places and times:
  - at the funeral home after the prayers of the priest.
  - at the grave after the prayers of the priest.
  - at the funeral luncheon.

Eulogies by family or friends are not to be done in the church proper.

- The funeral services and musical tones are to follow the Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic liturgical texts and Typicon. Melodies and tones which are appropriate for one liturgical season may not be appropriate for another liturgical season. For example, melodies and tones appropriate for the Christmas season may not be appropriate during Great Lent or the Easter season. In the case of an exception to the above rule, whereby the use of musical instruments and songs of other church traditions are requested, it can be done at the following places and time:

- at the funeral luncheon
- at the funeral home after the prayers of the priest.
- at the grave after the prayers of the priest.

Songs and music not following our Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic liturgical texts and Typicon are not to be played in the church proper.

Children and a Funeral

We encourage the attendance of children at a loved one's funeral. It is an important time of formation regarding our understanding of life and death. Children should be encouraged to grieve and to have a chance to say goodbye to those who have played an important part in their lives. As a church we are always reminded to have hope in the Resurrection and to look forward to the day we will be reunited. Death is not feared, but conquered. Christ is risen, and He has promised we will as well.

After the Funeral

- It is our tradition to hold services for the deceased 40 days and 1 year after the funeral. This commemorates the Ascension of our Lord and the remembrance of our loved one. It is customary to bring bread and fruit to bless at each of these services. These services are typically arranged with the pastor and are celebrated on a mutually agreed upon time. Usually a meal follows for family and friends. A remembrance service is never celebrated on a Sunday as this is always reserved for the Lord's Resurrection Day.

- The recommended fee is $50 for these services, payable to the pastor.

If you have any questions, please consult your parish priest.

Effective December 1, 2009

*For Private Use Only*
For your convenience, it is strongly suggested that all payments be arranged directly through the funeral home.

For services celebrated in the church, donations are collected by the parish office or other authorized person. Divine Liturgies and other donations will be recorded by the parish office and acknowledged to the family.

If the family seeks counsel as to a particular charity, we encourage donations, in memory of a loved one, to be given to the various projects of Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church.

**Hall Rental and Luncheon**

- Active parishioners are entitled to the use of the parish hall for the funeral luncheon, unless the hall is previously booked. A donation towards the hall use is appropriate.
- Others may rent the hall for $185 plus a church donation. Cheques are to be made payable to Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church.
- If the interment is a long distance from the city, we recommend the luncheon take place after the Funeral Rites, followed by the interment.
- The funeral luncheon coordinators of the parish may be contacted to help with planning. We do not offer catering service. Typically families purchase our recommended menu items or hire their own caterer and our funeral coordinators make sure everything is set up, served and cleaned up. The coordinator can be reached through the parish office. Arrangements may vary.
PLANNING A FUNERAL AT
HOLY FAMILY UKRAINIAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Arrangements

◊ We encourage the family to make the necessary arrangements through the funeral home of their choice.
◊ The funeral director contacts the parish office immediately to confirm arrangements, they are subject to the approval of the parish priest.
◊ Desired dates and times are subject to the schedule of the priest.
◊ The family is free to request a particular priest. The parish priest must give his approval if a different celebrant is to serve in his parish.
◊ It is our custom to list the “officiating” priest in the obituary, etc.

Funeral Rites

◊ The Funeral Rites are subject to the liturgical prescriptions and customs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.
◊ Accordingly, fag music is not permitted in church.
◊ The family is free to choose the following:
  - the number of services (Pankhyda, Parastos, Funeral Divine Liturgy, or both)
  - the location of the Parastos (in church or at the funeral home)
  - the language(s) of the service(s) (Ukrainian, English or both)
  - the Epistle reading (from the Epistles for the deceased or another Epistle reading)
◊ The family is free to request someone to sing or read the Epistle. In such case, the cantor must be informed beforehand.
◊ The family is free to request their own cantor, providing that this person is a qualified cantor of the Ukrainian Church. Otherwise, the church will select their own cantor.
◊ The family is encouraged to promptly provide the officiating priest with biographical information for his sermon.
◊ Eulogies are typically read by the laity, but not in the church proper. We encourage the family to share their memories during the dinner (or after the Pana'hida, only if celebrated at the funeral chapel).
◊ Casket spray is permitted at all times during the funeral services. Flowers are permitted in church.
◊ Cremated remains are not to be present in the church. Funerals in the church may be celebrated without such remains or with the remains in the funeral chapel.

Fees and Donations

◊ "Stole Fees" are set by the Metropolitan-Archbishop. Cheques should be made out to the celebrating priest. The recommended fee is $200.00 plus travel where applicable, regardless of the number of services. A donation should be considered if other clergy are invited to attend as well.
◊ A cantoring fee is separate. The recommended fee is $75.00 plus travel where applicable, regardless of the number of services. It is payable to Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church.
◊ Non-active parishioners pay an additional $100 fee for the upkeep of the church. This donation should be made payable to Holy Family Ukrainian Catholic Church.
SNIPPETS FROM SELECTED OBITUARIES

An introductory note. The following 53 “snippets” are divided into two large categories: item nos. 1 to 17 inclusive cover selected individuals who were born abroad (Ukraine, “old Country”); excerpt numbers 18 to 53 are all Canadian natives (i.e. born in Canada). Within these two general categories, females and males are listed separately. Females born in Canada are numerically dominant (see nos. 36 to 53).

PART ONE: BORN ABROAD (UKRAINE, “OLD COUNTRY”)

FEMALES

1. [From the obituary for Helen “Hashka” Chackowsky (nee Kowalewich), 1928-2013, born in the “old country”]. “She will be dearly missed by... everyone she met and touched with her quiet charm (and cookies)... Always a generous hostess, we’ll remember many gatherings... and her wonderful recipes... and did we mention cookies?... In her memory you may wish to decorate your home with some brightly coloured ‘kweetkas’ (flowers) – one of her favourite things.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

2. [From the obituary for Marion Dutka (nee Schmigel), 1924-2013, born “in the Ukraine”]. “The Angels will be well fed with Marion’s pickles, pickles, perogies and borscht. No one ever left her table hungry.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

3. [From the obituary for Mary Malenchuk, 1910-2010, born in “Bukovina”, immigrated to Canada in 1929.] “She hosted family get-togethers in Ukrainian tradition for Christmas Eve and Easter dinners. She loved taking care of her garden and flowers and made the best apple pies ever.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

4. [From the obituary for Anne Kupchak / Wilczynska, 1917-2011, born “in a small village near the Western Ukrainian town of Rudki.”] “She could dance up a storm and she was always the belle of the ball. She was so beautiful, she made heads turn, even at 83. Her perogies and holopchi were the best in town. She was never without a cat and made it her mission to dutifully feed the birds and feral cats in the neighbourhood every day.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

5. [From the obituary for Helen Wakula (nee Letkeman), 1924-2013] “born in the village of New Osterwick (now Dolinskoya) in the Chortitza settlement in the Zaporozhane region of Ukraine... descended from the original Vistula Delta Mennonites who came to the region form West Prussia during the reign of Catherine
the Great and settled among the Zaporozhan Cossacks." Immigrated to Canada in 1949. "Except for wintering in Phoenix, Arizona, many trips to Eastern and Western Europe, and numerous vacations in Cuba, Helen has lived in Winnipeg ever since. A born storyteller. Helen had a gift for the gab... Helen loved playing cards and board games, especially when she was winning." (Winnipeg Free Press)

6. [From the obituary for Mary Pushkar, 1914-2010 “born in the village of Slobitka, near Ternopil, Ukraine.] "She came to Canada at the age of four months, as a pioneer child. At an early age, she and her family cleared and settled land in Skylake, Manitoba...she had a phenomenal memory, even co-editing a book entitled UKRAINIAN SONG RECOLLECTIONS..." (Winnipeg Free Press)

7. [From the obituary for Maria (Mary) Droniuk, 1925-2010, born in Kursk, Russia.] “She was a survivor of The Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933... They came to Canada with nothing, worked hard and did well.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

8. [From the obituary for Irene Babiyhuk (nee Andrushko), 1909-2009, born in Ukauskowce, in the district of Czortkow, Ukraine.] “She immigrated... when she was 13 travelling via train to Warsaw, on to Danzig and then by ship to Montreal.”] "Irene didn’t get the benefit of an education... and found work in the hospitality industry... losing her job when she decided to get married. The owners only wanted single girls to work in the restaurant because most of their business came from the single men working at the CN shops... Irene met her future husband when a young man born in the same village as her parents visited in 1925. They knew each other for about two weeks when their parents met and gave permission for them to get married. Everything moved very quickly and they were married three days later... Their first home was a garage converted to a house...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

9. [Demographic fallout as per obituary for Clementine (Klema) Happychuk (nee Chikoski), 1911-2010.] “... born in Niewra, Borszczow, Galicia, (Austria-Hungary), Poland. She arrived in Halifax at the age of two on November 11, 1913 aboard the vessel ‘Ryndam’... leaves to cherish her memory daughter... son... daughters [?], 15 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and ten great-great-grandchildren...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

10. [From the obituary for Anastasia Horbatiuk, 1920-2009, born in Ukaine.] “Baba had a great sense of humour and made sure no one was ever hungry and if they were off to K.F.C. we went.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

11. [From the obituary for Mary Muzychka (Seniuk), 1908-2009. “Mom came to Canada in 1931... She was a beautiful seamstress and in her early years made shirts out of bleached flour bags.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

12. [From an “In Memoriam” for Elizabeth Shirley (Farion) Din of Calgary, AB, 1946-2010.] “...The choir and cantors sang hymns and responses in English and Ukrainian... Many members... dressed in embroidered blouses, lined the aisle with candles to form an honor guard for Shirley... sweets and coffee after the memorial service... a delicious roast beef meal for the funeral luncheon... raised on a farm
near Vegreville... her cherished collection of pysanky... Shirley’s passion for living led her to explore Ukraine, her ancestral homeland, and to hike in other exotic locations to experience the music, theatre, culture and architecture... her service to church, church family and its ethno-cultural uniqueness was fundamental... Easter Teas, Bake sales, pysanka displays, workshops, Ukrainian fashion shows... all benefited from Shirley’s direction, encouragement and support over her 40 years in Calgary... She supervised the installation of the iconstasis, the woodworking and carving by... and all the icons written by... a quartet sang Ave Maria and Amazing Grace” (by Marusia Koszarycz, Ukrainian Voice [Winnipeg], Feb. 15, 2010).

13. [From the obituary-article (entitled “Provinces oldest citizen lived tough and sweet” by Kevin Rollason) about Katherine Wowchuk (1901-2011)]. Born 1901 in Austria, arrived in Canada 1914, married in 1917, died in Fisher Branch, MB, 2013. ...“was still using an outhouse, an outdoor hand pump well for water and a wood stove for cooking at her house until she turned 98... After landing in Eastern Canada, the family took a train to Winnipeg before travelling on an ox cart to live near Arboga... ‘On her wedding night, she was told she had to sleep with him, but she got upset and ran to her mother and said she wanted to sleep with her. When she was told you have to sleep with, she told her mother, ‘You picked him; why don’t you sleep with him?’... lived on the farm for many years, where everything was organic... never smoked... never drank alcohol... but she ate salt by the ton. She needed three teaspoons of sugar for her tea and everything she ate had fat or lard or cream... she had good genes.” (Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 12, 2013, p. A11)

14. [Obituary for Sophie Bochonk born 1909 in Orzechowce, Przemsyl, died Winnipeg 2010]. “With a horse-drawn cart, her family evacuated their village home during the chaos of the First World War... In October, 1927, she married... Two months later Sophie departed on her own for Canada and arrived in St. Johns, New Brunswick, on Christmas Eve... Her intention was to join three of her sisters who had immigrated to the eastern United States... In the spring of 1928, she entered the United States at Detroit by crossing the Detroit River from Windsor in a small boat. She was dropped off on the shore, climbed a steep bank and walked into town... from whence she reached her family in New York... Sophie eventually thought that Winnipeg was the best place in the world to live and was a true booster... buying, fixing and selling houses... the family lived in 15 different homes in the next 15 years... worked for Eaton’s in the bakery department, The Bay; and Canada Packers in the freezer deboning meat... discovered that she could make money sewing... regularly sent care parcels back to family in their village... In keeping with Sophie’s strong interest in education, her body has been contributed to the University of Manitoba for the advancement of medicine through anatomical study.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

15. [From the obituary for Roma Sophia Martynowych (nee Dobrzanska), 1926 – 2012.] Born in Khodoriv, Ukraine to a Ukrainian mother and a Polish father. “The Second World W and the Holocaust, which took the lives of some of her closest Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian friends, left Roma with vivid and poignant memories and a lasting antipathy for ideologies and movements that fuelled prejudice, intolerance and bloodshed. (Winnipeg Free Press)
16. [From the obituary for Olga Kuzenko, 1927-2013. Born in Sukha Volya, Ukraine (now Poland).] ...”arrived in Halifax, NS on December 28, 1947 and continued westward making Winnipeg her home...worked for 32 years as a baker. She was the best! ... took great pride and joy in preparing her fantastic “20” course meals for family and special friends... loved her Caribbean cruises...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

**MALES BORN ABROAD**

17. [From the obituary for Ihor Klos (1944-2013), “master musician violinist”, born in Austria] “A celebration of Yogi’s life will be held... at the Ukrainian Canadian Veterans Legion... Immediately following the service and luncheon, there will be an ‘Open mic and jam session’ ... Musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments and partake in the celebration.” (Winnipeg Free Press, June 3, 2013.)

**PART TWO: BORN IN CANADA**

**MALES (“COUNTRY LADS”)**

18. [From the obituary for (Mickey) Michael J. Stokotelny, 1932-2011. Born in the R.M. of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba.] ...“He received his education in Lemberg, Halley School...and the University of Manitoba... coached gymnastics and swimming. After retiring he became a World Triathlon Athlete...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

19. [From the obituary for Walter Demchuk, 1918-2010. Born in Arran Saskatchewan.] ...”retiring in 1982 after a fulfilling 38 years in the grain industry... He loved a house full of visitors and lived by the motto ‘eat, drink and be merry’... Throughout his life, Walter had many interests including restoring old vehicles, refinishing furniture, picking mushrooms and berries, tending his vegetable garden and taking long drives in the country to check local crops.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

20. [From the obituary for Steve Shachtay, 1927-2010.] “Grew up on a farm in Morweena and farmed most of his life... always enjoyed his life exactly the way it had been. He enjoyed friends... visitors... cribbage... hunting...dancing with his wife and looked forward to polkaing to what he called a good Ukrainian beat... gardening...berry and mushroom picking and had greater love for the pies his wife baked.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

21. [From the obituary for Peter Harbowy, d.2013 at 97 years of age.]”...a deeply spiritual man who lived in Kaminak [Manitoba] his whole life... moved from the original homestead to town...where Peter built his own house, including the windows...the large vegetable garden (some of which provided the deer with a daily salad...his nephews and nieces would follow him around ‘helping’ with the cows and other chores such as picking mushrooms and high-bush cranberries...never
failing to impress us with his mathematical skills, all done without electronics or even paper and pen...we used to enjoy accompanying him to the local Chicken Chef." (Winnipeg Free Press)

22. [From the obituary for Roy Shymanski, 1941-2010. Born on the farm, rural St.James, MB.] "In 1970 he launched his trucking business, and worked round the clock to... He encouraged their ‘farming gene’ by supporting a bantam chicken ranch, a pet pony and lots of dogs and cats. Roy loved starting projects, and over the years the yard filled with his many ‘works in progress’... enjoyed boating in wacraft seaworthy or not. His exploits earned him the nickname, ‘Gigi with the boat’...[later] gardening proved a safer passion..." (Winnipeg Free Press)

23. [From the obituary for Alfred (Fred) Favel, 1940-2013.] “In the presence of his beloved sacred music...death set Fred free... leaves behind his wife Laurel Lemchuk-Favel... Fred’s love of classical and liturgical music was nurtured in a Ukrainian Catholic foster home in Portage la Prairie [Manitoba]... He became...” (Ottawa Citizen, June, 2013)

24. [From the obituary for Michael James Juryn, 1914-2010.] “Dad’s roots began in Junkins, Alberta... He retired in 1977 from Winnipeg [Hydro] enjoyed road trips to the foot hills of Alberta to research family history, which was his greatest passion. He was proud of his Ukrainian heritage and left a legacy behind by providing his family with a multitude of writings.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

25. [From the obituary for John Hunchak, 1912-2011.] “… could fix almost anything. After retiring... worked at an equestrian centre which reconnected him with horses and his farming roots. ... There was nothing more nimble than when he played the fiddle... loved music and always wanted to share what he called the ‘universal language’... He livened up all our family gatherings with many old time waltzes and polkas. At the age of 92, John formed ‘The John Hunchak’ band who along with Elaine on piano, nephew Ed Hunchak on violin and family friend Craig Mackie on drums recorded a CD. John was very proud of this recording and he had his 15 minutes of fame when the story of its production was covered by the CBC National News". (Winnipeg Free Press)

26. [From the obituary for Walter John Stefaniuk, 1947-2011.] “… was the son of Ukrainian immigrants and spent his early years on the farm in Glenella, MB... After moving to Winnipeg in 1955, the family quickly integrated into the North End community and Walter was immersed in the Ukrainian cultural traditions of song and dance... always comfortable in the spotlight. His jokes were legendary and his stage performances critically acclaimed... he honoured his Ukrainian heritage whenever he got the chance, and sang with the Ukrainian Festival Choir in recent years.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

27. [From the obituary for Alec Kohuch, 1922-2009.] “... born in Mears, Manitoba in the R.M. of Rossburn. The fourth of 13 children... retired from the military with the rank of Captain... As a young man, Alec was an expert at cutting hay with a scythe
and stooking grain by hand, putting these skills to use for the many farmers in the area. This hard work prepared him well for his life in the military... officially recognized and honoured for having made over 8,000 visitations to patients.”

(\textit{Winnipeg Free Press})

28. [From the obituary for Philip Rehaluk, 1906-2004]. “Born in Preeceville, SK, Dad moved with family to Manitoba. At the tender age of 13 Dad had to pick up the 'reins' and sow the family crop. He was a zealous and proud farmer... enjoyed pioneering all the new technology... fond of horses... While at the nursing home, Dad would be enthused by dreams in which he broke new land, and bought new machinery (He told us that was why he slept often)... sponsored two families to Canada, one from the Ukraine and one from Germany... Sports figured prominently in Dad's life... built a hockey rink in the yard where neighbours gathered to play hockey, and have lunch... loved hunting and trapping. Venison was provided at many tables during the thirties... loved music, dancing and singing. A car radio was not necessary. We sang the entire trip... Travel suited Dad's character, a short skip over the border, or his visit to Russia, Poland, and the Ukraine – all received enthusiastic reviews... Mom and Dad were thrilled to have sung masses in the Ukraine. Dad was very involved in the building of two new Churches. When weather was inclement, and harvest ripe, a Church holiday was observed, regardless. Religion for Dad was foremost.” (\textit{Winnipeg Free Press})

29. [From the obituary for William (Bill) Popowich, 1917-2011. Born in Rembrandt, MB.] “… the oldest of ten children. Music was an important part of his life, having played the violin at numerous barn dances, weddings and other social events throughout the Interlake. His children remember fondly his impromptu concerts at the kitchen table… skills as a carpenter… In retirement, Bill became creative in his culinary skills and mastered the art of perogy-making. Several of his grandchildren were lucky to have learned these perogy-making techniques directly from the master… to the mall for coffee with the gang. It was here that they solved the world’s problems.” (\textit{Winnipeg Free Press})

30. [From the obituary for Joseph Norosky, 1923-2012. Born in the District of Ozerna, MB.] An active church member, “peeling potatoes for the perogy sale was an ongoing event… was a self-taught violinst and had a passion for listening to Ukrainian music. Summer meant going out to Sandy Lake and staying at the trailer on the old homestead… we remember his flirty ways and social interaction… His grandchildren and great-grandchildren were the apple of Gido’s eye.” (\textit{Winnipeg Free Press})

31. [From the obituary for Wm. Henry Basiuk. 1924-2012. Born in West Bend Saskatchewan.] “An active member of the church in Gonor [MB]. His Ukrainian roots, and especially music, were a source of pride and meaning in his life. A jack of all trades… An accomplished and self-trained violin player, he played a variety of musical instruments, some of which he constructed himself. Beginning as a youth playing at Ukrainian weddings, socials and parties with family members, he continued to entertain for many years and enjoyed music and the fellowship of musicians. At home in nature… fishing on quiet lake or on the ice, camping,
hunting deer or ducks, and mushroom or berry picking. ... looked forward to meeting with friends for golf or ‘Music appreciation’...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

32. [From the obituary for Paul Lucko Sr., 1927-2010. Born in Sclater, Manitoba.] “... his ventures as a young man... making ice and managing the Fort Rouge Curling Club... enjoyed trips with the Koshetz Choir, as well as hopping across the line to do a little gambling...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

33. [From the obituary for Joe Chyzzy, 1928-2011], “Born in Rembrandt, MB, the 13th in a family of 19 children... Joe’s life centered around his family, friends and farming. The coffee pot was always on, along with other refreshments...He loved Ukrainian and country music which he listened to while spending long hours on the tractor and on sightseeing tours of the local area...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

34. [From the obituary for Wilfred Peter Dowhy, 1946-2008. Born in Vita, Manitoba.] “…served the Winnipeg Police Service for 27 years...a creative cook who learned everything from his mother and spiced up many traditional Ukrainian dishes as well as his own concoctions. At work it was often a topic of conversation as to what sort of ‘gourmet’ lunch Dowhy had... He often shared his love of Ukrainian jokes that when translated into English just weren’t funny anymore.” (Winnipeg Sun, Oct.16, 2008)

35. [From the obituary for Stefan J.Sefanson died, 2008, born in Gimli, MB], “…mixed farming. His love of machinery is evident in that he still owned five tractors at the age of 92... fiercely proud of his Icelandic heritage... traveled to Iceland more than 35 times... his belief in his community. With this came a special pride and great delight in speaking Ukrainian.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

FEMALES

36. [From the obituary for Lyna Yakimischak, birth / death date not given.] “...was the middle child of a very large family in the Grifton district, northeast of Grandview, Manitoba... she was inspired to travel and discover having seen for the very first time at the age of nine, the town of Grandview and its electrically lit store-front windows. Back at the homestead where there was no car, nor in-door plumbing, nor telephone, nor electricity, one can only muse and smile over what must have been a vision of sheer delight and wonderment for an impressionable child... She was laid to rest – something she rarely did and probably should have been buried upright – on November 29, 2009...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

37. [From the obituary for Pauline Pearl Nimchuk (baba), 1931-2012.] Born “on the Fochak homestead in Julius, Manitoba near the CPR rail line... She loved the prairies, dancing, and the silliness that came with occasional drink... She was a Ukrainian woman through and through, spending her Saturday nights listening to Ukrainian fiddle music on the AM radio, and loved watching her granddaughter Ukrainian dance.” (Winnipeg Free Press)
38. [From the obituary for Minnie Slobodzian, 1928-2011, born in the R.M. of Mossey River, MB.] “…very proud of her garden… When her crop was very abundant. She would place a cardboard sign at the gate offering vegetables for sale... pickles, jams and jellies... homemade ketchup... mushroom picking... Going to pick blueberries meant the first cucumbers off the garden had to be made into a jar of dills so they could be packed for the picnic lunch at the berry patch. ….recently she acquired a food processor… now she could process five times as much with less work... baking bread was done at least once a week... the party-line telephone when all the ladies would pickup the phone at a certain time and have a “conference call”... loved to knit and made sure everyone’s feet were warm with her cupchi (slippers)...”

(Winnipeg Free Press)

39. [From the obituary for Rose Poirier (nee Rewniak), 1923-2012], born “in the little village of Ukraina, Manitoba] “…came from a family of 12, raised on a farm... participated in plays, acting, singing and dressing up in Ukrainian costumes and went carolling at Christmas... helped out with the chores and milked cows, gathered eggs from the hen house, separated the cream from the milk, and helped her mom make perogies and holubci... many adventures... got lost in the bush when berry picking... rescued. Two days before she died... told stories about her life in Ukraina... fire in the pantry... got locked in school... a flood, a twister... those stories will be cherished forever... enjoyed camping, berry picking [especially blueberries], picnics, fishing, mushroom picking, planting vegetable and flower gardens, going out to lunch, reading the newspaper, doing the puzzles. She enjoyed watching the Bombers, Jets and golf on TV, and also the Price is Right and Wheel of Fortune... rides in the country, music, animals, pet dogs and a cat, two budgies... liked to travel and went to Hawaii, New Orleans, Atlanta. Montreal, Vancouver, Los Angeles and many other places. Rose was proud of her Ukrainian heritage, and would often attend different churches, Ukrainian festivals and concerts. She loved to cook Ukrainian food and often invited friends to her house for a meal... car accident... cancer... hip operation...”

(Winnipeg Free Press)

40. [From the obituary for Marie Finch (nee Dolynchuk), 1913-3009], “born and raised On the family homestead in the Caliento area of south eastern Manitoba] “…times were very hard... an era of absolute poverty... love at first sight... To supplement their income Mom would join Dad in the logging camps to work as the camp cook... amazing meals... a member of the Anglican Church... also devoted to the dearly departed... cleanup and maintenance of the cemetery... tended to the family plot with the planting of flowers and cutting grass... Traditional Ukrainian fare (perogies, cabbage rolls...) was a mainstay, but Mom never forgot Dad’s roots as roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding was also on the menu... Mom loved all people... all creatures large and small... dogs and cats, deer, fox and house trained jackrabbit [which would sleep in her bed] to [believe it or not] skunks... she would lie down with little piglets and let hem nibble at her ears... loved to be in the forest... the smell... picking mushrooms. She knew the mushroom varieties and which ones to stay away from. Once in a while, though... bears... loved to garden... amazing rose petal jelly and wine... picking,
canning, freezing, and pickling all summer. Then she would give to her hearts
content... an absolute passion for fishing... enjoyed traveling... loved to have
fun... to dance... to play…” (Winnipeg Free Press)

41. [From the obituary for Marian Pieluck [Gulansky], 1954-2010] “… moved to
Winnipeg from her hometown of Tway, SK. Her interest in multiculturalism and in
her own heritage led Marian to become involved in the Ukraine’s transition to
democracy and she played an important role in ensuring that the Ukrainian elections
were held to international democratic standards. In 2004 she took part in the historic
‘Orange Revolution’ as one of approximately 500 people chosen from Canada to
monitor the re-run of the second round of Presidential Elections and later returned in
2006 to observe the country’s Parliamentary Elections. She was very proud to
represent Canada abroad and her experience in the Ukraine left an indelible mark on
her... spent much of her time sewing... many a happy hour had been spent in front
of the Singer sewing machine... Donations in Marian’s honour can be made to her
sponsor child in the Ukraine, Anastasia…” (Winnipeg Free Press)

42. [From the obituary for Rose Fedorchuk [nee Kozak], 1936-2012] “… born on the
Kozak homestead south of Tolstoi [MB]... a permit teacher at Prawda School in
Stuartburn... married Bill... settled on the Fedorchuk century farm west of Tolstoi
where they raised their family... her own ceramic business... her love of
gardening... won the provincial award for the Best Farm Home Ground
Competition... well known for her variety of crafts such as decorating Ukrainian
Easter Eggs, paper tole and decorative painting of cans and rocks. Every family
member has a prized scenic stone painting or Ukrainian Easter Egg to remind them of
Rose... Her love of BINGO... gatherings... scrabble or cards. (Winnipeg Free Press)

43. [From the obituary for Helen Turman [nee Taczynski], 1916-2011, “born and raised
on the family farm in the Byng area.”] “… head cook at CFS Gypsumville, her love
of cooking shone through in her food, as there were always extra guests around the
table for a good Ukrainian meal... Nobody could make a perogy as Baba could... very
proud of her Ukrainian culture and looked forward to Dauphin’s Ukrainian Festival
every year... also enjoyed a good polka at Malanka, and teaching her grandchildren
how to decorate Pysanka (Easter Eggs). Saturday nights you would find her listening
to polka party... a strong NDP member... honoured to have gone with her brother
Mike to have lunch with the Queen on the visit to Winnipeg, also to see the Pope on
his visit to Birds Hill Park.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

44. [From the obituary for Mary Prystak, 1937-2011] “… grew up on the family farm in
Tadmore, Saskatchewan... happiest when surrounded by family... Ukrainian
Christmas dinners were the happiest times when the guitars would break out and they
would sing and play and laughter would result... made perogies for many” (Winnipeg
Free Press)

45. [From the obituary for Elizabeth (Elsie) Mastaler (nee Batenchuk)], 1923-2010, born
in Tyndall, Manitoba) “… loved cooking and baking, her LP music records,
sunshine and feeding birds... also known for her beautiful singing that would turn
heads in the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church. The consummate Ukrainian woman, she was always feeding people. Her comfy kitchen was known as ‘Elsie’s Restaurant’... artistic flair... preparing the traditional Ukrainian Easter Basket for blessing. Road trips... tasty sandwiches and road snacks from a cooler in the back seat... winter vacations in Florida...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

46. [From the obituary for Evelyn Tkachuk, 1913-2010, born in Vita, MB] “... into her 80s was employed as a part time cook... never learned to drive a car... perogies, cabbage rolls and apple pies. And OH!!, those donuts... known as “Bossy Baba”. She made perogies in her dreams...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

47. [From the obituary for Frances Markiw (nee Shewchuk), 1927-2010] “We were always in awe that she was born in a house on a farm in Meleb, Manitoba... A classic north-end love story began at Keleksi’s restaurant in 1946 where mom and dad first met... marathon Rumoli games at the cottage...trips to Las Vegas... family life and dinner table was the focal pint. Mom’s kitchen was her place... help was politely turned down...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

48. [From the obituary for Mary Hnatiuk, 1914-2009] “A truer pioneering woman you could not find...spent her early life on the a homestead in the middle of the marshland in the Interlake near Riverton... the destitution of the depression... shared her husband’s political ideals... active members of the CCF and later the NDP... never forgot her socialist values. While Dad was the breadwinner, Mary ‘held down the fort’ hosting meetings and... To add to the family income she kept boarders and everyone put on weight because of Mary’s superior cooking abilities...always wanted children but... in her last years, she remained physically remarkably spry. ‘You can’t kill me with an axe!’ she would often say in a typical display of Tomchuk cheekiness.” (Winnipeg Free Press)

49. [From the obituary for Mary Sobiak (nee Kalupar), 1925-2010] “Peacefully at... survived by... predeceased by... born in Pine Ridge, MB... the oldest of 18 children... life on the farm was very hard... lots of fun times also... volunteered... member of... Bingo, board games and playing cards... thanks to... We are all going to miss mom’s baking and Ukrainian cooking... sadly missed by all her friends... and cat...” (Winnipeg Free Press)

50. [From the obituary for Joan Kazuk, 1925-2010] [place of birth not given] “Joan embraced nature which was evident through her meticulous care of her country home and gardens. You wouldn’t be hard pressed to find her hauling pails of mud, compost or rainwater from one end of the yard to another to tend to a special plant in need. Some may think of these activities as work but to Joan they were what made her hum and dance in the kitchen in the evening... passion for food... entertaining... If you couldn’t find Baba in the kitchen she was surely in the garden selecting the ingredients for her next culinary invention. Whether it was a plant, a person or a batch of dough, Joan treated everyone she knew and everything she did with love...” (Winnipeg Free Press)
51. [From the obituary for Jane [Jean] Olynyk, 1934-2012, born in Sundown, MB] “...loved to tell stories about growing up in a large family. We loved Jean's cooking, especially her signature ‘tiny’ perogies and holubtsi, her tasty gravy, and Christmas butter tatrt.. very proud of her Ukrainian heritage and enjoyed being part of the Ukrainian choir. She loved to sing and dance whenever possible....” (Winnipeg Free Press)

52. [From the obituary for Anne Dola, 1929-2010, born “at home” in the Melnice [MB] area.] “...she took pride serving others while catering meals. Anne expressed her love through food.... could make a banquet meal while laughing and playing canasta, then send them home with baba pickles, perogies or tomato juice... enjoyed gardening, caring for her hummingbirds, and everything of Ukrainian tradition especially when the grandchildren were involved (Int'lake Spectator)

53. [From the obituary for Anne Chastko, 1913-2011, born at Erickson, Manitoba] “...began farming in Ozerna, Manitoba... Anne was a character and when asked what she liked best about farming she would say ‘the hard work’. But when asked what she liked least about farming she would reply just as convincingly ‘the hard work’... enjoyed entertaining friends... and a good game of cards... Anne was the goddess of her kitchen ... She taught many of us her tricks of the trade... particularly Ukrainian holiday dishes which she prepared throughout the year... ñd quilting with...” (Winnipeg Free Press)
Nuggets from Here and There

1. Ronnie: Everything went smoothly today.
Walter: It was a nice funeral.
Ronnie: Baba looked very nice.
Netty: She did look nice.
Ronnie: And the dinner those women prepared. I can’t remember when I ate so much.

From Ted Galay’s stage play, "After Baba’s Funeral", p.10.

2. Professor Marusya Bociurkiw (Ryerson University) delivers a talk entitled “Two Funerals and a Nation: the Politics of Contagious Affect”. Presented by the Dept. of English, Film and Theatre & the Affect Research Cluster on February 16, 2012 at the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg).

In her talk Bociurkiw focused on moments of embodied feeling (lumps in throats, watering eyes) and the ways in which sadness and grief become contagious. She applies this to questions of national identity and nationalism.

3. “If a member of the family has died during the year, a place is set for him in the belief that the spirit of the deceased unites with the family on that magic Holy Night [Christmas Eve]...the customary ritual opening is done by the master of the household who brings a sheaf of wheat called “did” or “didukh” (grandfather), a symbol of the gathering of the clan... originally it [the dish of kutya] symbolized a spiritual clan unity of all living and deceased members.”


4. [Ukrainian ethnic joke in form of riddle:]
[Question:] “What’s the difference between a Ukrainian wedding and a Ukrainian funeral?”
[Answer:] “One less drunk at the Ukrainian funeral.”
(Overheard in lineup at local credit union in Gimli, Manitoba, July 31, 2012)

5. “In the cemetery, a few steps southwest of the church, is the resting place of the pioneers who built the church, kept it up, and went there to pray, to ask God for strength to carry on the struggle of pioneer life. Let us pay tribute to the souls (who may be forgotten) and remind ourselves and others that they worked very hard and suffered in many ways to make our lives easier. May they rest in peace.”

From *Emeralds: Past in Prose in Poetry and Pictures* (Wishart, Sask.: Wishart Bankend Historial Society, 1980), p.738, followed by “People Buried in the Cemetery” (p.739), as follows:

6. The following “nugget” points to the continuing viability of the special church service for the dead (known in Ukrainian as the *panakhida*). After the initial *amin*, the service continues with “svyatyi bozhe, svyatyi kripky, svyatyi bezsmertnyj...”.
(Fans of the classical composer Peter I. Tchaikowsky [1840-1893] should be able to detect the above in the opening bars of Tchaikowsky’s final symphonic work, his extraordinary 6th symphony [known as the symphony “Pathetique”]. The
connection is uncanny but unmistakable – not surprising in view of Tchaikowsky’s many links to Ukraine and its musical culture. Take a listen and decide for yourself.

O. Koshetz Choir – Annual Remembrance Panakhida

The O. Koshetz Choir invites you to join us for our annual remembrance of members and friends on Thursday July 25, 2013. The Panakhida will start at 7:30 p.m. and is held at the gravesite of Walter Klymkiw, just North of the entrance to Glen Eden Cemetery, near the gate to All Saints. After the Panakhida, a light lunch is shared. It is a great opportunity for Alumni and members to share and get updates on each other. Please join us.

PS - Miroslava Paches (Mira) will be conducting the Panakhida being sung by the mixed chorus for the first time. Of course all of the men who have sung for years are invited. I’ve attached the music on email: armstrong.scott@shaw.ca — so please feel free to print and bring to sing along. We will also have some copies on site for our friends.

July 15, 2013 issue of Ukrainian Voice
JULIA OMENIUK

Peacefully, Julia passed away at the Maples Personal Care Home at the age of 99 years.

Her memory will be cherished by her children, Joyce Sokoloski, Doreene (Florence), Betty (Don) Crane, Harold (Donna), Kenneth (Ellen), Janice Sutton, Dolores Turkalik and Robert (Elizabeth). She was Babi to 23 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren and extended family.

Julia was predeceased by her husband Michael, daughter Violet Hnatiuk, parents Anna and Stephen Boyko, brother Joe Boyko, sister Peggy Carson and son-in-law Joe Sokoloski, Joe Hnatiuk, Joe Sutton and Paul Turkalik.

Mom was born May 20, 1913 in Bird’s Hill. She spent her childhood and went to school in Springfield, MB. Mom met her dad Michael at a country dance and they were married on May 12, 1935. They farmed side by side for an entire 50 years in East St Paul. In later years they enjoyed travelling south for the winter. Mom was a homemaker and loved to prepare traditional food and celebrate Ukrainian holidays. She enjoyed the East St Paul and Narol Senior Club. Her greatest joy was a visit from her grandchildren.

Many thanks to the Maples Home and staff for Mom’s excellent care during her stay.

Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Thursday, August 16 at 10:00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, 6297 Hendersen Hwy. (Goner, MB) with Fr. Peter W. Chornayy. Interment to follow in the church cemetery.

Fellowsporto will be Alan and Jack Hnatiuk, Dale Omeniuk, Theo and Terry Turkalik and Nathaniel Omeniuk.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Julia’s memory may be made to the Holy Trinity Church.

We love you Mom and Baba.
You will be greatly missed.

Vichnaya Pamyat

Croco FUNERAL HOME
204-386-8014

ALEXANDER ALEXIUK

1942-2013

Alexander passed away at the Bethesda Hospital Steinbach, Manitoba on April 15, 2013 at the age of 78 years after complications with Diabetes and emphysema which he had to deal with for many years.

He was born to George and Stella Alexiuk on June 15, 1942 at Sundown.

Alexander was predeceased by his parents, sister Rose, brother Frank, and brother-in-law George Shept.

He is survived by his sister Lillian Shept, brother Fred, and sister-in-law Olga Alexiuk. Nephews Eugene, Dennis, Gerald, Edward, and Kevin. nieces Beverly, Elaine, Nancy and Crystal and many grand nieces and nephews.

Alexander worked construction, forestry and various other jobs as well as helping out neighbours.

He enjoyed the outdoors, cutting firewood, picking mushrooms, blueberries, and cranberries. He had secret mushroom and berry picking spots. Alexander was also an expert hunter. Dennis and his friend Olga would accompany him, and Olga is very proud to be his adopted niece.

Alexander also loved to play tricks on everyone from stuffing garlic skins and bacon ends to twigs and pebbles in your shoes.

Funeral Service will be held on Monday, April 22, 2013 11:00 a.m. at Vita Funeral Home 250 Railway Avenue, Vita, Manitoba with burial at St. Jozef Cemetery South of Sundown, Manitoba.

Should friends so desire donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

"Vichnaya Pamyat"

Arrangements Entrusted with Vita Funeral Home (204) 425 3114

JOHN ROBERECKI

April 7, 1928 - March 26, 2013

Peacefully with his family at his side after a sudden severe stroke. He was independent and quick witted to the end. In his words his life was "close to perfect" (very good). Longer obituary to follow.

Celebrating life through ceremony
larisasabalas.com 204-389-4729
KLIMCHUK, Annie - It is with great sorrow that the family announces the passing of our dear Mother, Baba and Great Baba on October 19, 2011 at the Percy E. Moore Hospital at the age of 77 years. Mom's memory will forever be cherished by her children Barb (Ken Malenichak), Cathy (Doug McPherson), and Nicholas (Andrea Facchini). Baba will be greatly missed by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Krista (Amadeo) with their children Brooklyn, Braedon and newborn Tanner, Terence (Lindsay) with their children Alyssa and Cody, Kendel (Dan Cheromzie) Tyson (Kristen Rudyk), Carmen and Kimberly, also survived by sisters Vicki Kimchuk and Joyce Nathan along with numerous nieces and nephews who remembered Mom with Christmas cards.卡洛琳na(安德里亚),
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND DISCOGRAPHY


This collection of 65 items is intended for priests. The table of contents identifies each sermon with a note on the context/occasion and "theme" (moral).


The "supplement" is devoted to services and commercial enterprises that specialize in funerals, etc.


This collection of selected obituaries "of ordinary Canadians" features three categories ("Leaving Too Soon", "The Lives of Women" and "Men's Lives") a bibliography and a worthwhile introduction.


A stunning introduction to one of the world's great cemeteries located in London, England.

See especially the sub-section on “The Special Place Accorded the Dead in Ukrainian Life” (pp.146-147) and her conclusion on page 150 (“Ukrainian food colossi are...an updated version of peasant foods left out to feed the dead.”


The Winnipeg Free Press newspaper publishes “in memoriams” that serve as vehicles for the expression of loss. This booklet, available on request, constitutes a collection of suggested verse material organized under headings: child – father / brother – husband / son – mother / sister – wife daughter – friend / companion / miscellaneous. Each verse has its own number to help streamline the process of ordering / placing a memoriam–ed in the paper’s classified section.


The Reverend Kinash (and his family) entered Canada from Ukraine in 1912 in order to serve several parishes in and around Ethelbert, Manitoba, and then at the Lakehead, in Ontario. In 1914 he moved to the U.S.A. This collection of 26 “sermons” was funded by the daughter of Reverend Kinash who likely retrieved them from her father’s papers in her possession.

Klymasz, Robert B. “Speaking at / about / with the Dead”: Funerary Rhetoric among Ukrainians in Western Canada,” Canadian Ethnic Studies 7(1975):2, 50-56.

_________. “Surfing obituaries “, a sub-section in his “Forays into Ukrainian Canadian Folklore Today”, Folklorica 2010, v.15, 162-163.

Kowaliw, Ivan (b.1916). ...“the ‘Panakhyda’, the office for the dead, the third most important ritual in Ukrainian religious life...represents, and will remain for long as a kind of national religious Universal. It symbolizes the Dooms-day, the frustration or even the possibility of the total spiritual destruction of the nation. From the symbolic, as well as from the spiritual point of view. the Ukrainian soul wavers between these two great rituals – between the two poles of ‘Panakhyda’ and ‘Woskresna Utrenia’. ”


Written by a prominent figure in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, this piece offers an authoritative survey of the theology behind many practices associated with church funerals today.

“Legacy Project” at www.legacyproject.org, Susan V. Bosak, founding chair. See especially the project’s “life statements.” The discussion includes sub-sections.

"Luchak's Easter". A 16 mm colour film directed by Robert B. Klymasz released in 1975 and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada for the then National Museum of Man. See also his accompanying guide to the film (“syopsis, notes and transcriptions”), 11 typescript pages. The film documents Easter graveside ceremonies at Willingdon, Alberta, May 1973.

Martin, Sandra. “Confessions of an obituarist” >> Roger Dangerfield of the newsroom. Dedication”, The Globe and Mail (Toronto), December 27, 2008, p.F4. “Modern technology is having a radical impact on her profession, but Globe and Mail obituary writer Sandra Martin wants all ‘grim reapers’ to embrace the changing times. If not, she says, society may lose the skill, passion and objectivity they exercise when bringing the dead to life”.


Mydryi, Sofron, bishop. “Konets’ zhlytia chy pochatok?” [= The end of life or the beginning?]. In his Dukhovni besidy [= Spiritual talks]. Ivano-Frankivs’k (Ukraine), 2002, pp, 70-78.

The discussion features sections on death, the last judgment, hell, and eternal life.


This is a report on the “7th Great Obituary Writers’ Conference” held in Bath, England.


Features musical notation along with accented Ukrainian text. Sub-sections include “Parastas”, “Panakhida”, “Verses of St. John Damascene”, “Verses of Final Farewell”, and “Requiem Liturgy”.

SHIRLEY NELL SMELSKI

Surronded by her four daughters and her husband, Shirley Smeliski of Gilbert Plains passed away on Wednesday, August 15, 2012. Shirley was a devoted mother, whose work ethic and love for her family was second to none. She leaves to mourn her husband of 45 years, Arvin Smeliski, and daughters, Sheryl Smeliski and dawn, and sons, Mark (Michelle) and David (Jane), grandchildren, Christopher, Tyson and Tyler, and great-grandchildren, Isaiah and Miranda. In accordance with her wishes, she was buried with her daughter and grandchildren.

She is also survived by sisters, Doreen and Gracey of Grandview, daughters-in-law, Lorrie and Michelle, and sons-in-law, Merlin and Wayne, and grandchildren, John, Tyler and Alex and Joey Smeliski, and grandchildren, Sean, Tyler and Andrew Smeliski, and grandchildren, Morgan, Laren and Ben. She is also survived by brother, Orin and Lucille of Calgary, sister, Joyce and Dennis Kuroczynski, and grandchildren, Brandt and Tanis of Winnipeg, and Tori and Kevin and four grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

She was born on November 9, 1926, in Dauphin and grew up along with her three siblings on the family farm. Shirley was an all-season athlete, excelling in soccer, volleyball, and basketball. She was on the ball field when she met Arvin. Shirley married Arvin Smeliski on May 3, 1946, and raised four daughters on a farm near Kildonan. Everything she did for her family she did with love and care. She cooked wonderful meals for everyone, tended and harvested two giant gardens, maintained a beautiful yard, kept a house clean and tidy, and gardened for the community. She was a dedicated volunteer with the United Way and the Kildonan Square community nursery.

2 p.m. when the show another world was on. Shirley would pause her day to watch, and depending on the season, she could be found with her eyes on the TV, but her hands would be shacking giant pails of peas, stringing pringles or folding laundry. Her other love was hockey. She enjoyed watching hockey, but from childhood, Shirley was passionate about the sport, and especially the St. Louis Blues. She was a member of the Oilers, and followed their games, cheering them on, through thick and thin. She was deeply dedicated to the sport, and her love for the Blues extended to her family and friends. She was said to have been a member of TOPS, and her passion for the sport was evident in her dedication to the team.

After the show, Shirley would return home, and her family would gather around her, as she shared her thoughts and experiences from the match. Her love for the Blues was evident in her dedication to the team, and her family and friends enjoyed following along with her passion. She was deeply saddened by the early death of her wife, but her love for the Blues extended to her family and friends. She was said to have been a member of TOPS, and her passion for the sport was evident in her dedication to the team. She went home to a small, quiet Christmas and New Year's celebration with her family, but her love for the Blues extended to her family and friends. She was said to have been a member of TOPS, and her passion for the sport was evident in her dedication to the team.
MICHAEL KUCHER

On Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 79 years of age, with his loving family at his side, Michael lost his valiant battle against cancer. His friends and family will miss him deeply.

Michael was profoundly missed by his loving wife of 65 years, Mildred. He was also survived by his sister, Olyya, his children, Mark, Melinda, Michelle, and his grandchildren, Katrina, Mike, Mark, Stanislaw, Chris, Donald, Laura, and Alexander and his great-grandchildren, Ty, Nathan, Kyra, and Ethan. Michael was predeceased by his daughter Ashley in September 2009, his mother Polly, Arthur Alexander, and brother William.

Michael's life epitomized Winnipeg's North West spirit and energy. Born in the Father's Ukrainian Catholic family, his strong work ethic and quick wit served him well. His union with the Merchant Navy and his career in both the Atlantic and Pacific fisheries for four years. Upon his return from the war in 1948, he established a successful fur-trading business in Canada's North. By 1948 he created his fishing company and spent the next 20 years establishing Kucher Bros., as one of the largest fish importers and packers in Western Canada. In doing so, Michael became one of the pioneers in setting the North West Fisheries. At the same time, Kucher Bros. established R.B. Randall and introduced the traditional Ukrainian cuisine to Simcoe, Canada. In doing so, Michael was an entrepreneur and genuine businessman whose work was never done.

Following his business career, Michael concentrated on his efforts on his family and community. The ultimate joy of Michael's life were his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His warm smile and open arms were a source of comfort and encouragement to all that enjoyed his company. His love and support for his family and community is a testament to his spirit.

Michael's life experience and profound knowledge of the Ukrainian culture contributed to his success in the fur trade and fishing industries. His legacy will continue to inspire and influence future generations.

May his memory be a blessing. The family would like to thank everyone for their support and condolences during this difficult time.

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FATHER grew up in a grand family. His father had served as a Colonel in the Tsarist Cavalry. The family was prominent in the community. The military tradition and the family’s social status provided a sense of security and stability for the family. The family’s wealth and influence were evident in their luxurious lifestyle and the grandeur of their home. The family’s social status was also reflected in their extensive network of connections and the opportunities it provided for the future generations.

During World War I, the family fled to newsprint paper production in order to continue their lifestyle. The paper production was a successful venture and provided a steady income for the family. The family’s wealth and influence continued to increase, and they were able to maintain their social status and lifestyle. The family’s name became synonymous with wealth and power in the community.

However, the family’s fortune was not immune to the economic downturn that followed the end of World War II. The family’s investments in newsprint paper production were not able to sustain the family’s lifestyle, and they were forced to sell some of their assets. The family’s wealth and influence declined, and they were no longer able to maintain their social status.

The following years were marked by a period of struggle and hardship. The family’s wealth and influence were a thing of the past, and they were forced to adapt to their new circumstances. The family’s members had to work hard to make ends meet, and they had to rely on each other for support.

Despite the challenges, the family remained united and committed to each other. They continued to provide for each other and to support each other’s endeavors. The family’s resilience and determination were evident in the way they faced the challenges of the post-war years.

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Margaretta Romain (née Schellenberg), 89-2011

Margaretta Romain (née Schellenberg), born to her children, passed away peacefully at Beethoven on November 30, 2011. She survived all of her siblings and now, her wish to be reunited with family members who predeceased her, including her grandson, Sam, and his wife, Kathy. She is survived by her husband, Peter Németh. Romain, children: Berta (May), Rita (Eric), Richard (Heidi), grandchildren: Jacob, Jonathan (Stephanie), Rebecca (Christopher), and great-grandchildren: John, Matthew, and Alexander.

Shortly after her birth on September 5, 1922 in Terezin, Czechoslovakia, her family moved to a railway station in the village of Smriškov, in the Moravian area of Southern Ukraine, now Ternopil District in the western region of Ukraine. In 1938, her family was deported to the Terezín Ghetto in Prague, Czechoslovakia under the provisions of the Nuremberg Laws. Here she met and married her first husband, Paul Frenkel, a Jewish orphan. They took up a medical practice in Terezín, and became the mother of their four children: Magda, Sari, and Alexander. Her outbreak of the Second World War saw both of them conscripted into the medical core. In 1944, she gave birth to twins only to escape from her husband's home and she moved to the little villa in the West, with her children, and began her life anew with a new husband, Gerhard Harry Schellenberg. A few years later, she was left a widow after her husband's assassination by the Gestapo. Gerhard became her reason to carry on, and the story of the small window of opportunity to escape from Terezín, Vancouver and New Delhi. She searched for a better life somewhere in the West. She eventually travelled to the US and the UK, and subsequently to Canada, where she lived until the end.

Family members: Németh, was born and raised in a middle-class Jewish family, attended high school in Prague, and after graduation, she moved to the United States, where she found employment as a medical assistant. She later earned a degree in nursing and worked at a hospital in New York City. After her graduation, she moved to Canada and eventually settled in Vancouver, where she worked as a nurse in a community health center.

Throughout her life, Margaretta was an active volunteer, helping her community. She was a member of the Jewish Women's Organization and the Canadian Jewish Congress. She also volunteered at a local elementary school, where she taught English as a second language to children from diverse backgrounds.

In 1996, Margaretta and her husband, Peter Németh, moved to Vancouver to be closer to their family. She continued to volunteer at the hospital and also took up gardening as a hobby. She enjoyed spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren. Margaretta was a warm and loving person who touched many lives during her lifetime. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Ronald John Seredikos

Ronald John Seredikos

Ronald John Seredikos was born in Princeton, New Jersey, on February 19, 1946. He is survived by his parents, Doreen and Richard Seredikos. He attended Rider College and later served in the United States Army. He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Mary Seredikos, his children, and grandchildren.

Family members: Seredikos was born and raised in a Jewish family, where he was exposed to Jewish traditions and values from an early age. He attended Rider College in New Jersey, where he met his wife, Mary. After graduation, he served in the United States Army and later worked in the financial industry.

In 1994, Ronald and Mary moved to New York City, where they raised their family. He continued to work in the financial industry, specializing in investments. He was a dedicated family man, who enjoyed spending time with his family and friends.

In 2011, Ronald suffered a heart attack and passed away. He is survived by his wife, Mary, his children, and grandchildren.

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A few days before she passed away, Vera dreamt of walking through a sea of blue hydrangeas. She adored these pavement beauties, first discovered in Japan and often associated with calm, peace and tranquility.

Vera was one of three daughters of Petro Jacyk and Yvonne Kupchyn. "Displaced persons" from Ukraine who had settled in Toronto after the Second World War. Vera and Nadia were twins, and Sonia their elder sister.

After growing up in a traditional immigrant family, Vera sought a new identity separate from her ancestral past and her new Anglo-Canadian context.

"My struggle has been to find a meeting place between the past and the present," she wrote in the catalogue of one of her art shows, "I am a hybrid."

During a school trip to Asia, Vera's love for all things Japanese crystallized. That culture's passion for aesthetic beauty based on minimalism, symbolism and meticulous attention to detail influenced her life and her work.

One day, Vera came home after a class about the Renaissance and announced to her family, "Artists were always supported by nobility."

This did not go over well with her father, who had seen from penitentiary immigrant to successful entrepreneur, and leader of his community. He did not believe one could make a living from art. Vera stood her ground.

She completed her foundation training at the Ontario College of Art and Central Technical School, then earned a master of fine arts from Norwich University's Vermont College.

Her solo shows show Chytozyto Chytozyto and A Wearable Prison were exhibited throughout North America and in Europe.

"Jaczy's work is an environment of misplaced memory," wrote Oleksandr Wlasenko, curator for Chytozyto Chytozyto.

Describing her own artistic purpose in that show, Vera wrote: "I know it lies in the area of trauma. In fragments and Fools in a sea of silence, in the unnatural quiet of the home I grew up in. My parents grew up and wartime experience in Glinsboro. Being stuck between Stalin and Hitler, Ukrainian soil savaged by both."

Her parents, she said, was to survive. "My task is different. What they closed the door on haunts me, haunts me."

"I track the silence that has been deep and pervasive in my life and collect scattered fragments of a story that were not to be remembered or retold."

In A Wearable Prison, Vera presented various female forms and body parts twisted out of barbed wire, representing women's suffering and bondage.

During her last days, Vera showed incredible grace and compassion. Her only remaining wish was that she had more time for her creative work.

Beloved Vera died on Easter Saturday, a time of resurrection, enveloped finally by the love she had so longed for. Days later, hundreds of blue hydrangeas showed up on the doorstep of her home.

Halya Kachanuk is Vera's friend.

To submit a Lives Lived:
lives@globeandmail.com

See the guidelines to share the life story of someone you've recently lost.
tgam.ca/livesguide