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Genealogists Greg Gressa & Megan Smolenyak

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Our long term goal is to develop this site into an electronic knowledge base
for the benefit of Carpatho-Rusyns world wide,
as well as persons wishing to learn more about our culture.

We Are Pleased to Welcome:
The Carpatho-Rusyn Society
The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center
Greek Catholic Union Magazine
Carpatho-Rusyn American Magazine
The Rusin Association

Rusyn Cultural & Scholarly Organizations World Wide

Reference Areas:
Genealogical Reference and Help:
Reader Involvement / Contributions:
Meetings and Other Happenings:
......And Much More
I am currently writing up a grant proposal to conduct preliminary field research in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. My focus is on Rusyn ethnic identity in the post-socialist context. There are two crucial questions I am attempting to answer prior to leaving for Presov this summer: (1) Does the minority Rusyn population still seek an independent/autonomous region in Slovakia or Ukraine? (2) Is this issue politically contentious enough to lead to violence? or is the quest for Rusyn autonomy fading? I would greatly appreciate any help in researching these questions.

David Karjanen
Johns Hopkins University
February 1996

In 1973-75, I worked at the Department of Ukrainian Studies at Šafárik University in Prešov where I researched the syntax of Rusyn dialects in Eastern Slovakia (at that time we had to call them “Ukrainian” dialects). I wrote my doctoral dissertation and several articles on this subject. I am now an associate professor (docent) in the Department of Slovak Language, and am presently at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London as a Teacher/Fellow in Slovak Language on a grant from the British Council. I would like to ask you to send me a copy of the study Norms of Rusyn Orthography by Jurij Pan’ko.

Dr. Juraj Van’ko
London, England
December 1995

I am interested in investigating the national revival among the Rusyns in the Prešov Region of Slovakia. I will, in fact, be going to Slovakia this coming fall on a Fulbright Scholarship to study the present-day situation of the Rusyn minority and the possibilities for a full-scale national movement. I will be studying under L’udovít Haraksim at the Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. I have read the relevant material in the Carpatho-Rusyn American. Are there recent articles in U.S. and European scholarly journals that you can recommend?

Andrew Yurkovsky
Milford, Connecticut
June 1995

As a PhD student I am doing a four-year research project on the relationship between the Roman Catholic Polish and Greek Catholic and Orthodox Rusyn communities in southeastern Poland. The working title of the project is “Stress-Reducing Mechanisms in Strained Interethnic Relations: The Case of the Rusyns and the Poles, 1848-Present.” The aim of the research is to find out which factors and mechanisms have contributed, and still contribute, to periods of relative peace and stability between these two ethnic groups. I would appreciate if I could meet with you and some of the other staff members to discuss certain aspects of the Polish-Rusyn relationship in general and of my research project in particular.

Rosa Lehmann
Amsterdam, Netherlands
January 1996
Dr. Ivan Párkányi (Parkanij), a former Czechoslovak minister and governor of interwar Subcarpathian Rus', has recently celebrated his one-hundredth birthday. Párkányi was born on January 1, 1896 in the village where his father served as an elementary school teacher—Teresova in Maramaros county of the former Hungarian Kingdom, today renamed Tarasivka in Ukraine's province of Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus'). After graduation from gymnasium (high school), he studied law first at the academy in Sighet and then at Pázmány University in Budapest, where he obtained a doctoral degree in 1918.

Soon after completing his studies, enormous political changes took place in Europe that were to alter the direction of Párkányi's career. World War I ended in November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed, and Rusyns living south of the Carpathians joined the new independent state of Czechoslovakia. Thus, soon after Párkányi returned to his homeland he was in a new country. The Czechoslovak authorities engaged him in their administration in Subcarpathian Rus', and between 1918 and 1921, he worked at the county level in Chust, Mukaëevo, and Dovhe.

Recognizing his administrative abilities, in 1921 the government brought Párkányi to Prague, where he first worked in the office of the prime minister. Then, in 1924, he was transferred to the office of the founding president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš G. Masaryk, to serve as special presidential advisor for Subcarpathian Rus'. He was to hold this post until the end of the first Czechoslovak republic in the fall of 1938.

During the interwar years, Párkányi was the only Rusyn of political influence in the Czechoslovak capital who could provide assistance to his fellow countrymen and students when they needed help. Many Rusyns came to Prague in search of work, and it was Párkányi who often found jobs for them. As well he was responsible for the establishment of a dormitory for Rusyn university students in Prague.

Another of his goals was the establishment of a Greek Catholic parish in the country's capital, so that Rusyns living there temporarily or permanently would have a place worship of their own. He wrote the charter for the establishment of a Greek Catholic parish and served as its first president. By 1926, the first Greek Catholic liturgies were being held at various Roman Catholic churches; then in 1931, the Archbishop of Prague donated St. Clement's church (one of the prime baroque churches in the center of the city near the Charles Bridge) to the Greek Catholics. The Pope officially confirmed the parish in 1935, and Párkányi served as its curator for many years. He also deserves credit for the return of St. Clement's to the Greek Catholics during the Prague Spring of 1968, after the church had been given to the Orthodox Church in 1952, following the communist regime's ban of Greek Catholicism. For his efforts to establish a Greek Catholic parish in Prague and his tireless work for the well-being of his people, in 1938 Pope Pius XI awarded Párkányi the highest lay honor, naming him a Knight-Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester.

By 1938, Czechoslovakia was under constant threat from Nazi Germany. At the end of September, Hitler forced on the country the Munich Pact, which amputated certain territories and transformed the rest of Czechoslovakia into a federal state. During the short transitional period before Subcarpathian Rus' got its own autonomous government, Párkányi became, on October 9, the last Prague-appointed governor of Czechoslovakia's far eastern province. He resigned, however, within two days when Subcarpathia was placed under its new autonomous government.

For Párkányi, the Munich Pact was the beginning of a great national and personal tragedy that culminated on March 15, 1939. On that day, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by Nazi Germany. Slovakia became a pro-German "independent" state, and his homeland of Subcarpathian Rus' was once more incorporated into Hungary. Under Nazi rule, he and his family survived with great difficulty the rest of World War II. When the war ended in 1945 and Czechoslovakia was restored as an independent country (although without Subcarpathian Rus'), Párkányi returned to government service as an official in the Foundation for National Renewal (Fond Národní Obnovy) and then again back in the president's office, as head of Finance and Budget and as the officer for Economic Development. Párkányi's postwar career in government was short-lived, however, because the new communist regime, which took over the country in February 1948, forced him to retire within four years.

During his quarter century of service in the office of Czechoslovakia's first two presidents, Tomáš G. Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, Dr. Ivan Párkányi experienced many successes but also many difficult times, especially during the Munich crisis, World War II, and the period of communist rule after 1948. Throughout his career, he was inspired by a love of Subcarpathian Rus', his Rusyn people, and his family. He has always been proud to be a Rusyn and, as a deeply religious person, has remained a devout Greek Catholic. At present, he lives quietly in Prague. After the untimely death of his wife Olga in a tragic automobile accident in 1987, his two loving daughters care for him. His life is full of remembrances of all the loved ones who are no longer alive and of his Subcarpathian homeland in Czechoslovakia which he has never betrayed, and which has always remained in his heart.

Cyril Párkányi
Boca Raton, Florida
THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS (part 4)

This is the fourth part of a general introductory article on all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn life which we began in the Summer 1995 issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American (Vol. XVIII, No. 2). Considering the enormous changes that have taken place in the European homeland during the past few years, we feel it appropriate to provide our readers with new and updated information. —Editor

History (continued)

The sixteenth century began a period of transformation in the socioeconomic and religious life of Carpatho-Rusyns. North of the mountains, Polish landlords expanded their estates into the Lemko Region where the local Rusyn peasant population became enserfed. This meant that landlords steadily acquired control over all aspects of a peasant’s life, including the amount of work a peasant family had to perform on the landlord’s estate, the amount of taxes a peasant household had to pay, even when and to whom peasants could marry. In order to ensure that these duties were fulfilled, Rusyn peasants were forbidden to leave their property, even temporarily, without the permission of the landlord. In effect, the serf became legally tied to the land.

South of the mountains the Hungarian government also passed laws (1514) that established serfdom in the country-side. Those laws were for some time not enforceable, however. This is because Hungary was invaded by the Ottoman Turks, who annihilated the Hungarian army in 1526, and who within a few decades came to control nearly three-quarters of the country. For nearly the next two centuries all that remained of Hungary was a small strip of territory under Habsburg Austria (primarily what is today Slovakia and part of Croatia) and the semi-independent principality of Transylvania (present-day central Romania) in the east. The Catholic Habsburgs spent as much time fighting their rivals for control of Hungary—the Protestant princes of Transylvania—as they did the Ottoman Turks.

Tucked in between Transylvania and Habsburg-controlled Hungary was Carpathian Rus’, which for most of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was ravaged by the conflicts between the military forces of Catholic Austria and Protestant Transylvania. Villages were frequently destroyed by marauding troops and the size of the Rusyn population declined because of flight or death by disease brought in the wake of foreign soldiers. Frustrated with their fate, many Rusyns joined Hungary’s independent Transylvanian princes in their struggle against the Habsburgs. For instance, during the last great anti-Habsburg rebellion, the armies of the Transylvanian Hungarian Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi (who was raised in the family castle of Mukačevo) was made up largely of Rusyn peasants. Even though Rákóczi was finally defeated in 1711, a Hungarian legend arose about Rusyns and how they proved to be a people most faithful (gens fidelissima) to “their” prince and country. Another result of the defeat of Rákóczi was the full implementation of Austrian Habsburg rule throughout all of Hungary. For Carpathian Rus’ this meant the influx of new Austro-Germanic landlords, like the Schönborn family, which during the eighteenth century came to control large tracts of land and numerous Rusyn villages.

The Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox church in Hungary was also caught up in the political rivalry between Catholic Austria and Protestant Transylvania. At the same time, Poland’s Catholic rulers were becoming increasingly alarmed at the rapid spread of Protestantism within their realm. Faced with such political and religious rivalries, several Orthodox priests and a few bishops, first in Poland and then in Hungary, decided to join the Catholic church and to recognize the authority of the Pope. This was confirmed by agreements reached at the Union of Brest (1595) and the Union of Uzhhorod (1646), after which the Uniate church came into being. In the course of the next century, the Orthodox church was banned and all Carpatho-Rusyns became officially Uniate or, as they came to be known after the 1770s, Greek Catholic.

Unlike the Orthodox, the Uniate/Greek Catholics were recognized as a Habsburg state church, and in 1771 received their own independent Greek Catholic eparchy (diocese) of Mukačevo. Financially supported by the Austrian Habsburg authorities, the Greek Catholic church by the late eighteenth century operated elementary schools and academies for seminarians in which the Rusyn and Church Slavonic languages were taught. From these institutions came Greek Catholic clerics (Ioanniky Bazylovyc. Mychaj Lučkaj), who during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries wrote the first histories of the Carpatho-Rusyns.

The rise of nationalism throughout Europe during the nineteenth century also reached the Carpatho-Rusyns. They became particularly active as a group following the revolution of 1848 and what turned out to be Hungary’s failed war.
Adol'f Dobrians'kyj, Carpatho-Rusyn political and cultural activist during the second half of the nineteenth century.

of independence against Habsburg Austria. The short revolutionary period of 1848-1849 did, however, produce three important results: the abolition of serfdom; the arrival on the throne of a new Habsburg emperor, Franz Joseph (who was to rule until 1916); and the beginnings of a Rusyn national revival.

The Rusyn national revival was largely the work of two individuals. One was the Greek Catholic priest Aleksander Duchnovyc (1803-1865), who in the 1850s founded the first Rusyn cultural society (in Prešov), published the first literary almanacs and elementary schoolbooks, and wrote the lines to what became the Rusyn national credo: Ja Rusyn byl, jsem i budu (I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn) and the Rusyn national anthem: Podkarpatški rusyny, ostavte hlubokýj son (Subcarpathian Rusyns, Arise from Your Deep Slumber). The other, Adol'f Dobrians'kyj (1817-1902), was a member of the Hungarian parliament and Austrian government official who between 1849 and 1865 attempted to create a distinct Rusyn territorial entity within the Habsburg Empire.

Following political changes in the Habsburg Empire during the 1860s, the last decades of the nineteenth century turned out to be a difficult time for Carpatho-Rusyns. The empire was transformed into the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, which in practice meant that the Hungarian authorities could rule their “half” of the state without any intervention by the imperial government in Vienna. By the 1870s, the Hungarian government set out on a course to enhance the status of the Magyars and their language and culture. As a result, the Carpatho-Rusyn national revival was stopped by the rise of Hungarian chauvinism. At the same time, widespread poverty caused in part by an increase in population and land shortages forced thousands of young men and entire families to emigrate. A few thousand Carpatho-Rusyns moved to the Bačka region (Vojvodina) in the southern part of the Hungarian Kingdom, where the first Rusyn colonists had arrived as early as 1745. A much larger number, estimated between 175,000 and 200,000, left between the 1880s and 1914 for the industrial regions of the northeast United States.

The mid-nineteenth century cultural revival led by Duchnovyc and Dobrians'kyj was able to preserve a sense of Carpatho-Rusyn national identity. It was not successful, however, in the effort to obtain autonomy or a political status specifically for Carpatho-Rusyns. All that was to change with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. For the next four years, thousands of Carpatho-Rusyns served loyally in the imperial Austro-Hungarian army where many died or were wounded on the eastern front against Russia or in the killing fields of northeastern Italy. The war years also brought another kind of tragedy, especially for Rusyns in the Lemko Region. In 1914-1915, when tsarist Russia occupied most of Galicia, Austrian officials suspected Lemko Rusyns of treason and deported nearly 6,000 to concentration camps, especially at Talerhof near the city of Graz in Austria.

When the war ended in late 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist. Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants in the United States had already begun to meet in the summer of 1918, and under their leader Gregory Žatkovyc (1886-1967) they eventually supported the idea of a fully autonomous “Rusyn state” within the new country of Czechoslovakia. The idea of Carpatho-Rusyn autonomy or statehood was also accepted in the European homeland. The postwar republic of Hungary responded by creating an autonomous Rusyn Land (Rus'ka Krajina) in December 1918, at the same time while Carpatho-Rusyn leaders were meeting between November 1918 and January 1919 in various national councils that called for union with either Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, or Czechoslovakia. Finally, in May 1919, Carpatho-Rusyns living south of the mountains met in Užhorod, where they decided that their homeland, Carpathian Rus’, should be united as a “third state” with the new republic of Czechoslovakia.

The Lemko Rusyns north of the mountains expected to be part of Carpathian Rus’ as well, but were rejected by Czechoslovakia. Instead, they created an independent Lemko Rusyn Republic based in the town of Gorlice. The Lemko Republic lasted for nearly sixteen months until March 1920, when its government headed by Jaroslav Kačmarčík (1885-1947) was arrested and its territory incorporated into Poland. Finally, the 10,000 or so Rusyns living in the Vojvodina (Bačka) region of southern Hungary joined a Serbian-dominated national congress and voted in November 1918 to be part of the new kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia).

To be continued

Paul Robert Magocsi
Toronto, Ontario
**Interview with Ján Botík**

Dr. Ján Botík, a curator at the Slovak National Museum in Bratislava, Slovakia, is in charge of the Division for Slovaks in Slovakia and Abroad and National Minorities in Slovakia. He was one of two chief editors overseeing the compilation of the new Encyklopédia l'udovej kultúry Slovenska (Encyclopedia of Folk Culture of Slovakia), published in 1995, which includes articles about Rusyns. Dr. Botík is presently in Olympia, Washington, where his wife, Dr. Marta Botíková, is a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at The Evergreen State College. —Editor

**What was the goal of the Ethnology Section of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in compiling the Encyclopedia of Folk Culture of Slovakia?**

In spite of the fact that the science of ethnography (ethnology) is a relatively young discipline in Slovakia, we have at our disposal a vast amount of information dispersed throughout numerous journals, collections of articles, and books in several languages. We decided that the time had come for this information to be made available to the professional and wider public in the form of a well-organized and high-quality encyclopedic compilation. Our encyclopedia provides information collected by several generations of ethnographers, folklorists, museologists, and other specialists on various aspects of folk culture. We also cover the most significant concepts, categories, methods, and directions of ethnographic research, as well as the most important individuals, institutions, and periodicals connected with ethnography in Slovakia. We based our study and inclusion of materials on the ethnic-territorial principle.

**How did you define “ethnic-territorial principle”?**

In the choice and processing of ethnographic materials for the encyclopedia, the determining criterion was their subjects’ connection with the territory of the Slovak Republic and with the Slovaks as an ethnic group. Thus we included materials about Slovaks living outside the borders of Slovakia, as well as materials about non-Slovak ethnic groups who reside within the borders of Slovakia.

**How was this principle applied in the inclusion of information about Rusyns in Slovakia?**

Naturally, the encyclopedia concentrates on ethnic Slovak society, but we wanted to show the ethnic diversity within Slovakia, which includes Hungarians, Rusyns, Jews, Croatians, Gypsies, Czechs, and others. Thus, we included information about all these groups in individual articles, and among them is an article entitled “Rusyns in Slovakia.” The article discusses their ethnogenesis, historical and ethnocultural development, and elements of their traditional folk culture. In this main article, reference is also made to other entries in the encyclopedia where there is additional information on specific topics related to Rusyn history and society as it developed in Slovakia, such as the “Valachian colonization,” “Lemkos,” “Bojkos,” “Pujdaks,” and “Ukrainians in Slovakia.” Information about fundamental elements of traditional Rusyn culture is also covered in other entries, such as “Icons,” “Icon Screen,” “Pascha,” and so on. In addition, entries on individuals also provide biographical information about outstanding scholars of Rusyn and Ukrainian background, such as Mykola Mušynka, Orest Zilyns’kyj, and Volodymyr Hnatjuk, as well as information about significant establishments involved in research on Rusyns, such as the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník.

Within Slovakia, Rusyns and Slovaks have lived as close neighbors for several centuries. What do folklorists see as some of the similarities and differences between Rusyn and Slovak folklore?

Rusyns and Slovaks have lived for centuries in northeast Slovakia, either in neighboring regions, in regions of adjacent Slovak and Rusyn villages, or in villages populated by both Rusyns and Slovaks. Coping with the same geographical and economic conditions led them to develop and employ certain common elements in their economic activities connected with agriculture, cattle breeding, and sheep herding, and in other areas of material culture. For instance, Rusyns and Slovaks traditionally built the same kinds of houses, wooden with thatched or shingle roofs. Furniture, cooking utensils, and other kinds of everyday equipment were the same in traditional Rusyn and Slovak village homes. In spite of the preponderance of shared elements, there did appear features of material culture which distinguished Rusyns from Slovaks. Rusyns, for instance, tended to use the anteroom to their homes for the hand-threshing of grain. They also built their indoor stoves without hearths, and used the inside of the stove not only for heating and baking, but also for cooking. Also specifically Rusyn in style are buildings for the storage of hay. These buildings (oborohy) are constructed with four-sided roofs attached at the corners to four posts stuck into the ground which allow the roofs to move vertically up and down, depending on the amount of hay under them.

In the area of spiritual culture, Rusyns and Slovaks are more distinct from each other than in material culture. Slovaks are largely Roman Catholic and Lutheran, while Rusyns are mostly Greek Catholic or Orthodox. Rusyns are particularly known for their Eastern-rite wooden churches, characterized by particular kinds of construction, architecture, and functional and artistic features. Other items also distinguish Rusyn culture, such as the velija (Christmas Eve supper), Pascha (Eastern Christian Easter), Rusyn weddings, the chorovod or round dance, and polyphonic singing. Shared and distinguishing features in the folk culture of Rusyns and Slovaks were studied in great detail on the basis of the folk ballad by the scholar Orest Zilyns’kyj.

By giving Rusyns a separate article in the encyclopedia, you clearly signify that Slovak ethnographers see Rusyns as a distinct ethnic group in Slovakia. Is this so?

There is no question that Rusyns are a distinct ethnic group with all the substantial components and attributes of an ethnic group. They have their own ethnonym and ethnic terminology, their own language with its literary norm, their own traditional and professional culture with explicit elements of ethnic and national specificity, as well as their own Rusyn ethnic consciousness.
What is the difference between Rusyns and Ukrainians in eastern Slovakia in terms of ethnicity, politics, and culture?

There is only one ethnic group with ties to East Slavic ethnicity living in eastern Slovakia. These people are Rusyns and call themselves Rusyns, and the Slovaks living there also call them Rusyns. There is no other indigenous East Slavic ethnic group in eastern Slovakia which has age-old roots in Slovak territory. There is, however, a political movement which attempts to identify Rusyns with Dnieper Ukrainians.

How do Slovak scholars see the Rusyn revival in terms of culture and society within Slovakia?

The Rusyn revival is a living and evolving process which has not yet crystallized. One still finds more than one ethnic term employed for Rusyns (Rusini, Karpatorusi, Ukrajinci [Rusyns, Carpatho-Russians, Ukrainians]), the use of different languages (jazyce, ukrajincina, rusincina [mixed jargon, Ukrainian, Rusyn]), and to some extent varying ethnic consciousnesses usually connected with the use of one or another of the ethnonyms. The greatest handicap in a nationality-building process toward any independent political nation of Rusyns is their dispersion on the territories of several countries—Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Yugoslavia. Nothing, however, stands in the way of the Rusyns' existence in Slovakia as a well-rounded, consolidated, and vigorous national minority, and I believe that as long as there exists larger national and political support for the existence of Rusyn ethnicity and a distinct Rusyn culture, the revival will bear fruit.

IN MEMORIAM: PETER BAYCURA

On March 12, 1996, the American Carpatho-Rusyn community experienced a great loss in the death of Peter Baycura. He was a man of generous spirit and a steward of cultural continuity. A son of Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants, Peter was a communicator and culture builder. He stood apart from many of his generation in his vibrant awareness and celebration of his Rusyn heritage. Likewise, he was able to rise above the religious factional problems of his time. A devout Byzantine Catholic, he was also on the faculty at the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Seminary in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where he taught public relations. In the late 1980s, he wrote a series of articles on the demise of communism in Eastern Europe for the Byzantine Catholic World newspaper, and at the same time designed and illustrated a beautiful prayer book entitled Come to Me which was published by the Orthodox Johnstown Eparchy. Peter's broad vision ought to be an example to us all.

We at the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Pittsburgh appreciated his sense of humor, good will, honesty, and laughter. It was Peter, in fact, who inspired us four years ago to contemplate the creation of the society and who helped organize its founding and planning committee. In 1992, he took his family and grandchildren on a personal family heritage tour to the Rusyn town of Čabiny in Slovakia, showing them where he was born and introducing them to their European Rusyn relatives. He subsequently wrote a touching account of that journey for the Carpatho-Rusyn American (Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1994). Striving to strengthen ties between our American and European communities, Peter travelled to Krynica, Poland in 1993 to participate in the Second World Congress of Rusyns where he showed himself to be a helpful advisor and a true compatriot and friend.

From 1989 to 1991, Peter served as the first communications officer on the board of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. He also worked closely with the C-RRC in the design of its popular brochure on Carpatho-Rusyns which has been translated into several languages and serves as an accurate and up-to-date description of the history and current status of Carpatho-Rusyns worldwide. At every turn in the road, Peter helped expand our understanding of how the C-RRC could be instrumental in aiding and supporting Rusyns in the homeland. His energy and enthusiasm inspired us all.

Peter used his expertise in publications also for the church. He was the editor of the anniversary album for St. John The Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Lyndora, Pennsylvania, a publication so masterfully designed that it has become a model for other parishes engaged in producing historical albums. In this and all of his activities, Peter had a special talent for getting people involved. At the same time he succeeded in awakening many people to the goodness of their Rusyn cultural heritage.

Peter is sorely missed—as a husband, father, grandfather, Rusyn-American activist, and friend. We thank him for making his life a gift to all of us. Blaženýj pokoj, vičnaja jemu pamjat'.

Jerry J. Jumba
McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania

Peter Baycura (left) in a typically animated conversation with John Righetti at a meeting of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in Pittsburgh, April 1990.
RUSYNS IN CYBERSPACE

In May 1995, the Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base was launched on the Internet's World Wide Web. This event represents an exciting new development for Rusyns throughout the world. As a co-founder of this site, I would like to familiarize readers of the Carpatho-Rusyn American with our activities and to invite you all to visit us.

The Internet is a vast network of computer networks all around the world. No one government, university, or other entity owns the network. Originally it was comprised of only university and government computer networks. Today it has grown to the extent that anyone with a computer and a modem is able to connect. It is estimated that over 20 million people are currently connected, and the number grows daily. The World Wide Web is the graphical, multimedia part of the Internet and is commonly referred to as "the Web." It is a point and click environment that enables users to find information quickly and easily via "hyperlinks" contained within documents. Click a highlighted word and you are transported to that computer containing the document. It is possible to access information immediately in any country on the globe.

The idea for creating a home for Rusyns on the World Wide Web (www) began with a notice by Rich Custer in the New Rusyn Times, the newsletter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society in Pittsburgh. He inquired if any member could create and maintain a page on the internet for the Society. This caught my interest. I am a computer programmer by profession and have a great interest in the Internet, as well as in my Lemko-Rusyn background. I began working on the concept in March 1995 and sent a functional demo to genealogist Megan Smolenyak for evaluation. This demo was then passed along to the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. Their page was unveiled in May and has grown steadily. It continues to evolve, almost on a weekly basis.

What originally began as just a page for the Carpatho-Rusyn Society has grown into what I affectionately refer to as "our country in cyberspace." The Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base is a place where people from around the world can visit and "talk" with us via e-mail or just drop in and learn about our history, culture, customs, folklore, religions, literature, as well as current events dealing with Rusyns both here and in Europe. Links or addresses are provided for every Rusyn organization in the world. Another focus of the site is helping people get started with the sometimes frustrating and difficult process of Rusyn genealogy as they seek to rediscover their heritage.

In connection with genealogy, a recent major addition to the site is "The Carpatho-Rusyn Surname Project." This works as follows. People searching for information on villages and/or surnames have the ability now to submit their information to me. I then place it on the web along with their e-mail address so that others can contact and share information with them. This is very exciting for people researching their Rusyn roots. Submissions have been coming in at a fair pace and the list is growing.

Along with a collection of Rusyn art available to our visitors, we now have map images of the Rusyn East Central European homeland contributed by Mark Mihalasky from New Jersey. These images are created with digital terrain data and look almost like satellite photos. Mark has superimposed Rusyn settlement areas on the images, including cities and towns. One image is a color-coded terrain map showing each elevation in a different color. Other images on the site have been contributed by readers and include photographs of villages and churches. Rich Custer has contributed some graphics as well. The site must be viewed with Netscape software in order to be fully appreciated.

All of this would not be possible without the generosity and hard work of many people, most notably Dr. Paul R. Magocs who allows us to place items authored by him on the site. Rich Custer for providing much information as well as valuable insights and material, and Megan Smolenyak for fielding e-mail, providing ideas and inspiration regarding content, and contacting people in an effort to gain new material. Among others who have contributed material or have granted permission to use items authored by them are genealogist Tom Peters. Andrew Fabula, George Worholic, Susyn Mihalasky, the Greek Catholic Union Magazine, Helene Cincebeaux, John Hudick, the Rusin Association of Minnesota, The Smolenak Family Newsletter, and many Carpatho-Rusyn Society members.

I myself am a third-generation Lemko Rusyn born in the United States. My grandfather, Ivan Gressa, arrived here in 1912 from the village of Rzepedz (Rusyn: Repid'), now in Poland, with his two brothers and worked in the mines in the anthracite region of eastern Pennsylvania. Relatives left behind in the homeland eventually were displaced during the 1947 Vistula Operation. The driving force behind my creation and dedication to the Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base comes from a deep respect and appreciation of our brave ancestors who left their homes to make a better life.

We ought to share information about Rusyns and their history and culture with the rest of the world. Our culture must be preserved, maintained, and presented to others so that it does not vanish. We may never have had a country to call our own, but now we have an "electronic country" of sorts in cyberspace. Despite the impression of cold, impersonal technology that computers convey to most people, our "Ruthenica Electronica" is a warm, friendly place. The entire site is funded by me personally, and was recently rated by Lycos/Point Survey as among the Top 5% of all sites on the World Wide Web based on content, presentation, and a few other criteria. I am grateful for what all of us have been able to accomplish together in building this site in the past year.

As of this writing, we have already experienced our first contacts with Rusyns in the European homeland. We look forward to hearing from the homeland more in the future, but understand that their shortage of computers limits their internet capability at the present time.

We warmly invite you to visit our site at:

http://www.carpatho-rusyn.org.carpatho

(designed for, and best viewed with Netscape software).

Gregory Gressa
Davidsburg, Michigan
THE CARPATHO-RUSYN MICROFILM PROJECT

Bogdan Horbal, a young scholar residing in New York City, has been studying materials in the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project for the last few years. In this article he introduces himself and discusses his work on the project. — Editor

I was born in Poland. My parents are Lemkos, that is, Carpatho-Rusyns living in the historic province of Galicia north of the Carpathian Mountains. I studied history at the University of Wroclaw in Poland. The title of my master’s thesis was “Political Activity Among the Lemkos from 1918 to 1921.” The thesis covers only three years, yet it was the only period in the history of the Lemkos when they not only talked about the future, but actually tried to shape our own people’s destiny. At numerous meetings, Lemko activists (mostly Greek Catholic priests, teachers, lawyers, and educated peasants) raised the case of the Carpatho-Rusyns in Galicia and put pressure on the Paris Peace Conference to grant Lemkos the right of self-determination.

At that time, the most prevalent national orientation among Carpatho-Rusyns on the northern slopes of the Carpathians was the Russian or Russophile orientation. Large numbers of Lemkos believed that they were a subgroup of the Russian nationality. Hence, they wanted to be unified with “Mother Russia.” Only a few Lemkos espoused a Rusyn or a Ukrainian identity and supported those orientations. Today the situation is much different. The only politically viable national orientations are the Rusyn and the Ukrainian. The Russian orientation belongs to the past and no longer has any political influence.

I began my research already in Poland. In the beginning it was very difficult. Nobody had written on Lemko politics of 1918–1921 in any detail. In addition, I had much difficulty finding even primary sources. Archives in Cracow and Przemysl contained some interesting materials, and Polish newspapers of that time also paid some attention to events in the Lemko Region. Although I found little, I was nevertheless satisfied because our knowledge of the Lemko Republic was so small that whatever I found was important. I wrote a small article for a Lemko newspaper in Poland in which I offered new information. After I managed to prepare the first chapter of my thesis, I decided to continue my search for historical materials in the United States.

While still in Poland, I learned about the New York Public Library and discovered that its Slavic section was vast and excellent, but I did not know anything about the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project collection. I cannot describe adequately my surprise when I discovered this collection. For starters, I had not known about the collection’s printed Guide to Newspapers and Periodicals. The first time I accessed the collection I was given an entire catalogue drawer. I began taking notes and suddenly realized that it contained a whole lifetime’s supply of information not for a single researcher, but for an entire group of researchers. I knew that the only way of working with this collection was to read systematically one item after another. I was so ecstatic that I wanted to request all of the newspapers at once.

What should I read first? What a great and wonderful decision to have to make! I was like a kid in a candy store, and not very organized at first. I ordered one reel of the American newspapers and periodicals. The collection I discovered changed my view of the thesis. In Poland I had learned a little about activities of Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States. Of course, I hoped to find more information about the immigrant community here, but I never expected to come across such a significant number of American Carpatho-Rusyn newspapers or to gain such insights into Carpatho-Rusyn political, cultural, and even military life throughout the world.

What were some of the specific pieces of information that emerged from my search? I learned, for instance, about the League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia, which was formed in New York City in 1917. Two years later, the league sent a four-person delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in order to represent Carpatho-Rusyns. Three congresses organized by this group took place between 1917 and 1920. The last one was attended by 300 delegates and guests. The Carpatho-Rusyn delegates in Europe did not stay only in Paris. They went to London, Geneva, and Rome to talk about the “old country’s” fate.

I also discovered the existence of the Carpatho-Rusyn Committee and small military units which were formed by Carpatho-Rusyn prisoners-of-war in Italy. Similar activity took place in the Russian city of Rostov-on-the-Don. A military unit created there joined the anti-Bolshevik White forces of Russian General Kornilov and fought by his side in the Kuban region of Ukraine. The Rus’ National Council of Carpathian Rus’ (Russka Narodna Rada Prikarpatskoy Rus’), then based in Rostov-on-the-Don, was forced by the Bolsheviks to leave the city and to move thousands of miles eastward through Siberia to Vladivostok on the Pacific coast. From there six Carpatho-Rusyn leaders went to Japan and then to San Francisco. Those members of the organization who did not go east sailed across the Black Sea to Bulgaria or Turkey, eventually making their way to Czechoslovakia through the Balkans.

In the meantime, another group of Carpatho-Rusyns, led by a Lemko, Dr. Adrian Kopystjanskij, formed in Russia another Carpatho-Rusyn organization—the Carpatho-Russian Council (Karpatorusskij Sovit). Its first congress took place in the Siberian city of Cheljabinsk. While the second one was in Omsk. Two Carpatho-Rusyn military units were also formed there and fought against the Bolsheviks in Siberia.

Information from all over the world came to New York City to the office of the League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia, whose name was later changed to the Carpatho-Russian National Organization in America. The organization published the newspaper Prikarpatskaja Rus’ (Light), published by the Russian Brotherhood Organization, and Sviti (Light), published by the Russian Orthodox Catholic Mutual Aid Society of the U. S. A.
There is no calculating the time or money it would take to accomplish my research were I forced to travel to London, Paris, or Rome for such material. Instead, I am able to do my work in one place thanks to the efforts of the Carpatho-Rusyn Microfilm Project which collected and compiled so much material. Is there any chance that after the terrible years of revolution and civil war in Russia between 1917 and 1921, and after so many years of destructive communist rule, there might still be Carpatho-Rusyn-related materials somewhere in Rostov-on-the-Don, Chelyabinsk, or Omsk? I doubt it very much. But how convenient for now that I can sit in the New York Public Library and read about Carpatho-Rusyn activists visiting the American ambassador in Tokyo, Japan in the middle of 1919! My heartfelt thanks goes out to all those who have donated money to enlarge the Carpatho-Rusyn microfilm collection. Their gift benefits scholars everywhere.

Bogdan Horbal
New York, New York

Postscript: The Carpatho-Rusyn American Monthly was created in 1975 at the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, with a matching grant in the amount of $12,500 each from the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Province (at the time headed by Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko) and the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D.C. Upon completion in 1979, copies of the complete collection were deposited in the Slavic and Baltic Division of the New York Public Library, the University of Pittsburgh Library, and the John Carroll University Library in Cleveland, Ohio. Professor Frank Renkiewicz prepared the Carpatho-Rusyn American Monthly Project: A Guide to Newspapers and Periodicals (Minneapolis, 1979).

THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

The Carpatho-Rusyn American (ISSN 0749-9213) is a quarterly publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center Inc., a nonprofit cultural organization whose purpose is to promote knowledge about all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture through the publication and distribution of scholarly and educational material about the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage in Europe and America. General inquiries concerning the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, and all communications concerning this publication, should be directed to:

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THE INTERNATIONAL WORK OF THE CARPATHO-RUSYN RESEARCH CENTER

Ever since its establishment in 1978, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has followed a policy of sending gratis its publications to students and scholars in east-central Europe who request our materials. Before 1989-1991, when Communist regimes were still in power, those researchers who received our materials were privately grateful but unable to mention in their own writings that some of their sources were from the "capitalist West." Moreover, many aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn history simply could not be discussed in the Soviet Union or in neighboring countries in the Soviet sphere.

Since the Revolution of 1989, however, things have changed. The C-RRC continues to send its materials gratis, knowing that researchers in east-central Europe do not have the economic means to purchase our books. In contrast to the "old days," all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture can be discussed today, and the work of the C-RRC is publicly acknowledged. We are particularly pleased to be able to assist a younger generation of students in east-central Europe. The following letter from a university student in the Czech town of Hradec Kralove, addressed to Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, president of the C-RRC, is indicative of the kind of contacts that have become possible in the new post-1989 world.

Dear Professor:

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for all the publications sent last summer which for me are invaluable.

Last week [November 1995] in Ostrava there was a student scholarly competition called History 95, in which I participated and presented the results of my work on the topic, "The Autumn of 1938 in Subcarpathian Rus." I must admit that I did not expect that this subject would provoke such a great response in general as well as among the panel of expert judges. One of the members of the panel was Professor Jaroslav Meznik of Masaryk University in Brno. I learned for the first time that he is the son of the late Dr. Meznik, who was for a time [during the interwar years] the Czech vice-governor of Subcarpathian Rus'. Professor Meznik recommended that I research the papers of his father which are held in the Moravian Regional Archive in Brno.

In the end, of the 17 presentations submitted at the scholarly competition, mine was awarded first place, for which I must thank you, since the publications you sent were an indispensable source of information in the course of my work.

Jan Morávek
Advanced School of Education
Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic

OUR FRONT COVER

Graphic image of the World Wide Web site for the Carpatho-Rusyn Knowledge Base.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH
ABOUT CARPATHO-RUSYNS, 1988

Items available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center are indicated as such. Others can be obtained on request through Interlibrary Loan at many local libraries or directly from research libraries of major universities (California at Berkeley, Harvard, Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Indiana, Toronto, Yale) or from the Cleveland Public Library, Library of Congress, and New York Public Library.
—Editor


SINCE THE REVOLUTION

Užhorod, Ukraine. On December 2, 1995, a group that calls itself the Council of Rusyn Intelligentsia met to discuss the present economic and political situation in Subcarpathian Rus’/Transcarpathia. University professors Mychajl Ruščak, Ivan Kryvs’kyj, and Mykola Erdevdy were among the speakers.

The group submitted a petition to Ukraine’s President Leonid Kucma and to the head of the Transcarpathian parliament (Narodna Rada) Serhij Ustyc, demanding that Transcarpathia be transformed into an autonomous republic within Ukraine. The group also accepted as a goal an economic program for agricultural development formulated by Mychajl Sarga.

—Volodymyr Tarachonyé

Budapest, Hungary. In December 1995 (and again in January 1996), Hungarian State Television (Program 2) broadcast an hour-long documentary entitled, “The European Traveler in Užhorod.” The emphasis was on present-day life in Užhorod, the administrative center of Ukraine’s Transcarpathian oblast (Subcarpathian Rus’). Particular attention was given to all the ethnocultural groups who live in the region, and specifically to the mentality and national characteristics of the Carpatho-Rusyns. Among Rusyn activists interviewed were the head of Užhorod’s Duchnový society, Vasylo Rusyn, and the writer Volodymyr Fedynýšyn. The film was produced by the popular Hungarian magazine, Európa útas, which will publish material from the program in its first issue for 1996.

—Volodymyr Tarachonyé