

CARPATHO~RUSYN AMERICAN

A Newsletter on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage



THE STORY OF ANNA

Patricia Krafcik

One day in 1914, sixteen-year-old Anna Bujdoš embraced her mother warmly and kissed her tear-stained cheeks and lips. Then, clutching a small bundle of belongings and food, she took her place on the back of an open horse-drawn cart and let her legs swing down over the side in rhythm with the cart's rocking movement. Tears stung her eyes as the cart pulled away from her village. Ruská Vol'a. She gave a last long look at the humble wood and white-washed house, the rolling mountains in the distance, and at her mother waving and calling out "Come back soon!" Come back soon—but in her mother's strong face, Anna read a different message: If my life has been hard, God grant that you make yours better. Live now not for me, live for yourself, your children, and your grandchildren.

At this moment of departure, however, Anna needed the comfort of knowing that she would return. After a long journey across an ocean, she would meet her own people in New York and New Jersey (these were still only strange place-names to her), find work, and then take her income back home to help her family. All this at sixteen years of age? To me now, her granddaughter, this seems inconceivable, but it seemed perfectly possible to Anna and to thousands of young men and women like her. To them this was an adventure, pursued, of course, not without some apprehension. But the whole world lay out there! News of the opportunity of a new life kept streaming into the small Rusyn villages tucked among the foothills of the Carpathians. Success stories—jobs, land, freedom—spread rapidly from village to village. Meanwhile, rumors of war and mandatory conscription into the Austro-Hungarian Imperial Army only added to the already electric atmosphere. The time to test the American promise was now.

Like the majority of young people, Anna never did return to her village. The years passed, and her mother's silent words—Make a better life for yourself and your children—became her inspiration. In the new land, she met and married a young man from a neighboring village in the old country, Mychajlo Čerkala, who still dreamed of the green

hills and the wild mountains brimming with legends of wonderful bandit heroes who protected the Rusyn people from the demands of unscrupulous rulers not of their own blood... But Mychajlo also shared Anna's dream of a better life. And the new dream was stronger than the old.

Mychajlo worked in the Pennsylvania mines for a time—long enough to suffer for it later with lung disease. Life, folk wisdom tells us, is never without its contradictions. Good and bad come together like two sides of the same coin. The young couple settled in Cleveland, Ohio, in a neighborhood of their own people clustered, as always, around a parish church. Here, continuing to cope with a foreign language and foreign customs, they reared a daughter and two sons on generous amounts of pirohy, holupky, and love. With their children they spoke one of the Rusyn dialects which they referred to lovingly as *po-našomu* ("in our manner"). The Depression came, the war came. Daughter Anne worked in a war plant while keeping the home together. Jon, an Army officer, witnessed the strategic Battle of the Bulge. Michael, a Naval officer, saw action on the Pacific front, and served (using his knowledge of language) as a liaison between the American and Soviet Russian Navies. And thus did the new Carpatho-Rusyn Americans contribute to the war effort of their adopted land.

After the war, daughter Anne married a Marine officer whose parents had emigrated from Košice in Slovakia, not so far away from her parents' native villages. Anne and John spoke American English, but enjoyed communicating with each other in what had been their first languages—she in a Rusyn dialect, he in Slovak. And from this marriage—from thousands of such marriages—has emerged the third generation on American soil. And now, secure in our being Americans, we dream again of the mountains, the secret streams, the bandit-heroes of the native land of our Annas and Mychajlos.

But our interest in ethnicity is not limited to dreaming. Now we can explore Rusyn ethnicity in academic surroundings, by observing and recording those traditions to which our people still cling in this country and in the old country, and by studying the language of our parents and grandparents. The Rusyn cultural heritage is rich and varied. It is a precious possession which we can preserve by sharing it with each other. Let us, the young people, together with our parents and our grandparents dedicate this newsletter to that endeavor.

Alexander Duchnovyč (1803-1865)

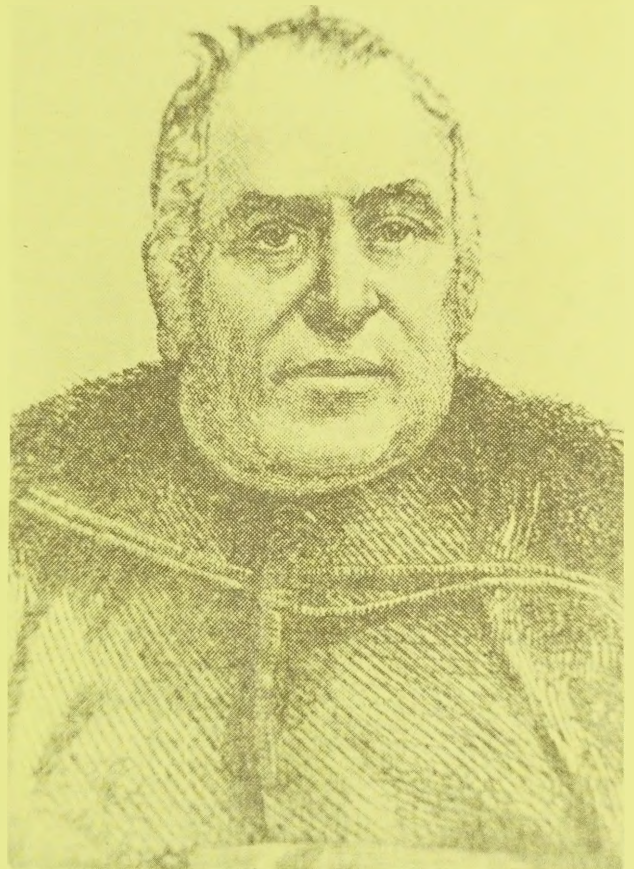
Every nationality has some great leader that is considered the father of his people. Among Carpatho-Rusyns that person is Alexander Duchnovyč. Because of his dominant role in the nineteenth-century Subcarpathian national renaissance, Duchnovyč has been remembered as the "national awakener of the Carpatho-Rusyns."

Duchnovyč was born in 1803 in the village of Topol'a (Zemplyn county) within the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region of present-day eastern Slovakia. He attended the Greek Catholic seminary in Užhorod and was soon after ordained into the priesthood. Like other students at the time, Duchnovyč was educated in the Magyar and Latin languages and was expected to be a Hungarian patriot. The young clergyman realized, however, that his Rusyn people were linguistically and culturally related to other eastern Slavs and that they were in dire need of enlightenment. He frequently stated that "a people without an education cannot call itself a people." To help change this situation, he published a *Reader for Beginners* (1847), the first school textbook published in the local Rusyn vernacular (i.e., spoken speech).

The revolutionary years of 1848-1849 really allowed for the development of Duchnovyč's national activity. He set up the first cultural organization for Carpatho-Rusyns (the Prešov Literary Society, 1850), published the first annual literary almanacs (*Greetings for the Rusyns*, 1850-1856), and wrote a popular poem ("Subcarpathian Rusyns, Arise from your Deep Slumber") which was to become the national anthem. He also composed a grammar, a book on pedagogy, a history of the Prešov Diocese, and a history of the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

Duchnovyč wrote these influential works in different languages, depending on for whom they were intended. In his poetry, plays, and school textbooks meant for the people, he used the Rusyn vernacular of his native region. For his histories, critical essays, and sermons, he used either Latin or a language called Slaveno-Rusyn, which was Church-Slavonic mixed with some Carpatho-Rusyn vernacular and sometimes Great Russian words.

The Carpatho-Rusyn people have not forgotten the father of their nation. After 1919, when Subcarpathian Rus' became a semiautonomous province of Czechoslovakia, statues to Duchnovyč were erected in Sevljuš (1925), Užhorod (1929), Chust (1931), and the largest in Prešov (1933), which still stands on the main square of that city. Even Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants erected a statue to Duchnovyč in the nationalities park in Cleveland, Ohio. Finally, at the one-hundredth anniversary of his death (1965), a three-day schol-



arly conference was held in Prešov, and one of his plays was revived for the repertoire of the local professional Carpatho-Rusyn theater. Duchnovyč would have been pleased by such developments. And he would have felt his life-long work was really worth the effort if his people and their descendents both in Europe and America could always recall the opening lines to his most famous poem, "Vručanie" (Dedication, 1851):

I was, am, and will be a Rusyn
I will not forget my honorable lineage,
And will remain its son.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Paul R. Magocsi, *Let's Speak Rusyn—Bisidujme po-rus'ky* (Englewood, New Jersey: Transworld Publishers. 1976), xxii and 106 pages, \$6.95.

Carpatho-Rusyn spoken dialects are often divided by linguists into three groups. The westernmost, the Lemkian, is spoken in the Prešov Region of Eastern Slovakia which consists of parts of the former Hungarian counties of Spiš (Hungarian: Szepes), Šariš (Sáros), and Zemplín (Zemplén). The Transcarpathian or South Bojkian group, is spoken in the central and western section of the Transcarpathian Oblast' of the Soviet Ukraine, former Už (Ung) and Bereg (Bereg) counties. The easternmost dialect, the Hucul, is spoken in the eastern portion of former Marmarós (Máramarós) county. These dialects belong to the East Slavic language group, but have been influenced greatly by the peoples who lived near the Rusyns—Magyars, Poles, Romanians, and Slovaks.

Since most Rusyn immigrants to America came from Eastern Slovakia, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi of Harvard University has chosen the Lemkian dialect for this elementary phrase book. He recorded the speech of older residents of the village of Vyšná Jablonka, since the speech of young people is heavily Slovakized. Vyšná Jablonka is located in Eastern Slovakia, a few kilometers from the Polish border in the former Zemplín county. The result is a presentation of actual Carpatho-Rusyn speech and not an artificial language.

This last point should be stressed. Previous works on the Carpatho-Rusyn dialects were attempts to make Carpatho-Rusyn conform to a literary language, usually Great Russian. Father Joseph Hanulya's grammar and Dr. Peter I. Maczkov's primers, for instance, utilized Russian grammar and vocabulary. To this day, the Slavic-language sections of such American Carpatho-Rusyn newspapers as the *Church Messenger* and *Greek Catholic Union Messenger*

are frequently in the Russian version of the spoken tongue. Magocsi has avoided this situation in his book. The result is a presentation of authentic Carpatho-Rusyn speech.

Let's Speak Rusyn is divided into twenty-six chapters, each including a series of phrases dealing with a given subject. Examples are: Greetings, Introductions, Church, Meals, and Civil Affairs. There is even a chapter of incorrect usages found in America, typically an English loan word with a Slavic ending, for instance, *kara* (car) and *štor* (store). Rusyns are not alone in possessing these hybrid speech patterns. They are found, as H. L. Mencken noted some years ago, among all immigrants. Thus, Italian immigrants say *fixare* (to fix) and Slovak immigrants will say that they work *vo majne* (in the mine).

Extremely valuable are the grammatical notes containing declensions of adjectives, nouns, and pronouns; verb conjugations; and lists of frequently used adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. Resourceful students will be able both to learn to speak the dialect and to compare Rusyn grammar to that of other Slavic languages. Incidentally, the Rusyn phrases are presented in both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets.

Carpatho-Rusyn Americans will want to obtain this phrase-book, find another student or an immigrant to practice with, master the language, and gain an empathy for the culture of their ancestors. Slavic linguists will find the work valuable, for it is a clear, systematic rendering of actual Carpatho-Rusyn speech. One might on a few occasions fault Magocsi's English translations which sometimes deviate from the literal, but this is a minor shortcoming, for the book is very carefully researched and prepared. This reviewer awaits the forthcoming Transcarpathian version.

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LANGUAGE

Carpatho-Rusyn has no standard literary form as do languages such as English, French, and German, but is composed of several dialects which differ somewhat from one another while remaining mutually understandable. The dialect used in the following phrases is spoken in the village of Vyšná Jablonka, located in northeastern Czechoslovakia. The pronunciation guide represents a close approximation of the authentic sound. Using the guide, practice these phrases of greeting until you know them by memory.

Hello.	Sláva Isúsu Chrýstu. (Sláh-vah Ee-sù-su Khri-stu.)
(response)	Sláva na viky. (Sláh-vah nah vée-kuh.)
(This most traditional greeting and response in the Rusyn dialects means literally: Praise be to Jesus Christ. Praise forever.)	
Good day.	Dòbrŷj dyn'. (Dòh-bree din.)
Good morning.	Dòbre ráno. (Dòh-bre ráh-noh.)
Good evening.	Dòbrŷj věčur. (Dòh-bree vé-chur.)
Welcome.	Vitájte. (Vee-táhy-te.)

NOTES ON THE GEOGRAPHY OF SUBCARPATHIAN RUS'

Despite its exotic-sounding name, Subcarpathian Rus', or Carpatho-Ruthenia, is located in the heart of Europe. In fact, if we look at the map of the European Continent as it stretches from the Irish and Portuguese coasts in the west to the Ural Mountains in the east, and from the Cape of Norway in the north to the island of Crete in the south, we see that Subcarpathian Rus' falls in the very middle of that land mass. At the present time, the territory is just within the westernmost borders of the Soviet Union and is officially known as the Transcarpathian Oblast' of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Rusyns also inhabit the north-eastern corner of Slovakia, in an area popularly known as the Prešov Region.

A glance at any atlas will reveal how Eastern Europe is divided into three geographic zones. The first is the Polish plain beginning in the west from the Netherlands across northern Germany and stretching eastward through Poland,

Belorussia, and Russia as far as the Ural Mountains. The second zone is that of the Danubian Basin, which is delineated roughly by the Carpathian mountain chain and includes Slovakia, Subcarpathian Rus', Hungary, northeastern Yugoslavia, and Transylvania in Romania. The third zone is the mountainous region known as the Balkans, which includes the rest of Yugoslavia, southern and eastern Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece.

It is in the second zone, that is, in the Danubian Basin, where we find subcarpathian Rus'. For almost 800 years, the region was an integral part of the Hungarian Kingdom, which itself was divided into 50 counties (known as *megye* in Magyar). The Rusyn word for county is *župa*. Spread throughout these various counties were many peoples—Magyars, Slovaks, Romanians, Germans, Croats, Serbs, and Carpatho-Rusyns. The Carpatho-Rusyns lived primarily in the northern counties of Spiš, Šaryš, Zemplín, Už, Bereg, Ugoča, and Marmaroš.

In the 1920s, the historical counties were abolished as administrative units, and replaced by a system of smaller-sized counties. At present, these are known as *okresy* in Slovakia. Carpatho-Rusyns live in parts of the Poprad, Prešov, Bardejov, and Humenné *okresy*. In the Transcarpathian Oblast' of the Soviet Ukraine, the counties are known as *rajony* and there are thirteen of them: Velykyj Bereznjy, Perečyn, Užhorod, Volovec', Svaljava, Mukačevo,



Berehovo, Mižhir'ja, Iršava, Vynohradiv, Chust, Tjačiv, and Rachiv.

With regard to terrain, the lands where Rusyns live are the foothills and mountainous regions of the Carpathian Mountains. Their villages are located along several river valleys. From west to east the major rivers are the Poprad, Torysa, Topl'a, Ondava, Laborec, Už, Latorycja, Boržava, Rika, Terebija, Teresva, Bila Tysa, and Čorna Tysa. These rivers generally run in a north-south direction, and all eventually flow into the Tysa (in Magyar: Tisza) River. Along the northern edge of Rusyn-inhabited territory, there are nine passes through the mountains that lead into Galicia, and although some of these were historically used as communication routes, Rusyn villagers for the most part gravitated southward down the rivers toward the lowland plain whenever they sought work or commerce in the markets and towns.

The Carpatho-Rusyns have historically been a rural people engaged in agriculture, sheep-herding, and forestry. In 1910, 89.6 percent of the populace were engaged in these pursuits, and by 1956, the percentage was still as high as 70. Moreover, until well into the twentieth century, 93 percent of

Rusyns lived in settlements of less than 3000 inhabitants. Urban centers such as Užhorod, Mukachevo, Berehovo, Humenné, or Prešov, were in the main settled by Jews, Slovaks, and Magyars, and even today, with the exception perhaps of Užhorod and Mukachevo, only a small percentage of Carpatho-Rusyns live in cities.

According to the most recent statistics, there are about one million people living in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland. Of these about 860,000 live in the Transcarpathian Oblast¹ of the Soviet Ukraine and about 140,000 in the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia. Several other nationalities have in the past lived within or adjacent to Carpatho-Rusyn ethnographic territory. Until their dispersion in 1944, many thousand Jews inhabited villages and nearby cities, and during the years between the two world wars several thousand Czechs worked as administrators in the region. Today, there still remain Gypsies living in the outskirts of many villages and Germans who continue to inhabit a few compact settlements. Finally, there are many Russian administrative and military personnel as well as Magyars in the Transcarpathian Oblast¹ and Slovaks in the administrative centers of the Prešov Region.

FOLK LIFE AND LORE

It is generally believed that "Pascha," a rich, golden bread, famous in Carpatho-Rusyn and other Slavic cultures, is meant to be baked and eaten exclusively at Easter. Its name corresponds to the Eastern Christian (Orthodox and Byzantine Rite) word for Easter which is Pascha, derived from the Hebrew Pesach, meaning Passover. The bread, however, can be prepared for other major religious observances, for instance, baptisms and weddings. It is a symbol, after all, of the celebration of new life. The following recipe makes three one-pound loaves or two one-and-a-half-pound loaves if a larger loaf is desired.

1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup warm water
1/2 tablespoon sugar
1 stick butter or margarine
1 1/2 cups warm milk
1/4 cup sugar (slightly more if sweeter bread is desired)
3 eggs
1/2 teaspoon iodized salt
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
5-7 cups flour (Sapphire or Robin Hood)
half a lemon peel, grated
1/2 cup golden raisins
1 egg combined with 1 tablespoon water

Soften yeast in warm water with sugar.
Melt butter; combine with warm milk and the 1/4 cup sugar; stir until dissolved.
Beat eggs with mixer in a large mixing bowl until frothy. To the milk mixture, add salt, vanilla, and yeast.
Add alternately 2-3 cups of flour and the milk mixture to the egg mixture, mixing on lowest speed until bubbly. Lemon peel may be beaten in at this time.
Begin working in the rest of the flour by hand until dough leaves the hands. Raisins may now be kneaded in.
Cover and let rise in a warm place about 1-1 1/2 hours.
Punch dough down and let rise again until doubled, about 30-40 minutes.
Grease 3 one-pound bread pans, or casseroles or soufflé dishes for a round loaf (or 2 equivalent containers for larger loaves).
Divide dough into 2 or 3 pieces; knead each to form a smooth ball. Fit each into a baking container smooth side up. Cover and let rise in warm place until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.
Bake in preheated 350-degree oven on next to lowest rack, about 1 hour.
Bread should sound hollow when tapped if it is done. Immediately brush tops of loaves all over with egg mixture. Let cool for about 20 minutes, then ease out of containers.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

For many years people believed that the United States was a kind of melting pot in which people from all ethnic and racial backgrounds would merge together into some single common group called "American". This seemed to require that we forget the native language of our parents and grandparents if it was not English, discard their cultural traditions, slacken ties with their native land, and perhaps even reject their religious identity. The illusion of this "pure" American toward which we were supposed to strive has, at last, lived out its time. We have gradually begun to realize that to be an American does not demand from us a denial of our ethnic heritage. What makes us Americans is not conformity to some ambiguous standard or model, but precisely our variety and the precious opportunity to share with each other freely the wealth of our individual cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

New York City is the prime example of a place in which people of all backgrounds living side by side witness openly and proudly to their ethnic cultures. The Carpatho-Rusyns are one of these peoples. Situated neatly on the corner of East Tenth Street and Avenue A in the East Village of Manhattan—a traditionally Slavic area of New York—is St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church. It is an outstanding center of ethnic culture in the city. The parish was founded in 1925 by Carpatho-Rusyn emigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The majority of parishioners have come from the villages of Jarabina and Litmanová, from the cities of Užhorod and Mukačevo, and generally from hamlets scattered throughout the Beskid and High Tatra Ranges of the Carpathian Mountains.

St. Nicholas parish, part of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox diocese centered in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, serves first and foremost the spiritual needs of its community. But it strongly encourages its people to cherish their ethnic identity, to continue speaking the rich Rusyn native dialects, to experience the culture in song, dance, cuisine, costume, art and crafts. Archimandrite Nicholas Smiško, rector of the parish and an enthusiastic supporter of this cultural preservation, notes that the frequent parish pilgrimages (*domašnye otpuski*) organized as tours to the native areas of the old country, as well as the influx of new emigrants from Czechoslovakia (particularly during the political thaw

of the Dubček era in the late 1960's) have been invaluable to the parish's efforts to maintain its ethnic flavor. New emigrants are attracted especially to this parish because it, in fact, has become reknown as an extremely active Rusyn cultural center.

In its worship services, the Carpatho-Rusyn version of Old Church Slavonic is used. The choir sings hymns and responses in the colorful native chant replete with folk melodies and referred to as *prostopinje* (plain chant). Congregational singing, characteristic of the Carpathian churches, can be heard twice a month. Weddings, baptisms, and other sacramental observances are conducted in the native manner. Weddings, for instance, are frequently performed and celebrated at the Lemko Farm picnic area in upstate New York where a pilgrimage to and from the chapel accompanied by a band is followed by an abundant reception of native Rusyn foods and the traditional bridal dance signifying the bride's passage from girlhood to womanhood.

Outside of the strictly religious observances, a remarkable event in which the whole parish participates, is the annual "Krajovyj den". This is a genuine celebration of Rusyn folk culture. Native costumes are worn, folksinging and dancing continue the entire day, and plays are performed in a Rusyn dialect portraying life in the native villages. Poetry is declaimed and even created spontaneously—an art form which has roots in ancient times and requires rare creative abilities. Native musical instruments are played, and the characteristic crafts of wood-carving and egg-decorating (*pysanky*) are displayed.

A group contributing a superb vitality to this event and to parish life in general is the St. Nicholas chapter of the A.C.R.Y. (American Carpatho-Russian Youth). The young people, after all, are the ones who inherit the culture and pass it on. And it is in this group that folksinging, folkdancing, and native crafts are studied. At the present time, Father Nicholas is organizing a group of college age youth which will help new Rusyn emigrants adjust to American life and culture and to the English language without feeling compelled to deny their Rusyn cultural and ethnic identity.

Father Nicholas strongly maintains that devotion to one's ethnic identity ought not take precedence over one's religious convictions, and within his parish it is evident that the expressions of native culture do not detract from religious observance but actually contribute to the celebration of the community's spiritual life. Father Nicholas extends an invitation to anyone planning to be in New York City to visit the parish, attend a worship service, meet the parishioners, and experience a moment of genuine Rusyn warmth.

IN COMING ISSUES:

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