FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

It was September of 1985 when I received a phone call that taught me a valuable lesson. I find it valuable enough to share.

The call came from a gentleman by the name of John Haluska of Cambridge, Minnesota. Mr. Haluska had called to ask if I would be willing to conduct a seminar on Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture for the Rusin Association of Minnesota. This truly caught me by surprise because I tend to keep abreast of the events happening and the organizations active in the preservation or study of Carpatho-Rusyn culture in the United States. And yet I knew nothing of this organization, its history, or its purpose.

I accepted Mr. Haluska's offer to conduct the all-day seminar and did so in November 1985 before a full audience in a Minneapolis Holiday Inn. The Rusin Association had rented the room, published and distributed brochures to gain registration for the event, and worked on publicizing it in the Minneapolis area. I was truly impressed at the level of organization and commitment and assumed that this was a massive organization sponsoring the seminar. I was puzzled that I had heard nothing of this group.

Therefore, when meeting the members of the Rusin Association of Minnesota, I took the opportunity to find out about the organization — and it is here that the lesson begins.

The Rusin Association of Minnesota was created in 1984, initiated and spearheaded by the meeting of three men — John Gera, Lawrence Goga, and John Haluska. Much to my surprise, I discovered that the Carpatho-Rusyn American played a small but vital role in the creation of this group. Mr. Gera contacted Mr. Goga about his interest in Carpatho-Rusyn culture when he read a letter to the editor Mr. Goga had penned to the Carpatho-Rusyn American. Mr. Goga, in turn, knew of Mr. Haluska's interest since they had tried earlier to organize such a group at their church unsuccessfully. Now the three met and the Rusin Association of Minnesota was born.

In developing the by-laws for this new organization, the purpose of which was to promote Rusyn culture, these men did something that had almost never occurred in the history of the development of Carpatho-Rusyn organizations in the United States. They developed a Carpatho-Rusyn organization to which anyone interested could belong, regardless of religious affiliation. Here would be an experiment at the community level. Had this one Carpatho-Rusyn community evolved to such an extent so that each person was secure enough in his or her identity to create an organization where religious differences could be put aside in order to join and promote the common heritage of their people? Knowing the history of the Minneapolis Rusyn community, it would be a bold experiment. For it was here, 100 years ago, that the Reverend Alexis Toth had led the first Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholic parish in America into the Orthodox Church, beginning a movement which eventually brought hundreds of thousands of Rusyn Greek Catholics in this country into Orthodoxy. It was in Minneapolis, therefore, that religious division among Rusyn-Americans began. How ironic that if too, would be the site of this cultural experiment.

In short, the experiment worked. Twenty people attended an organizational meeting at a local library and eight joined the association. At each monthly meeting, a few more would join.

Today the Rusin Association of Minnesota has a membership of 35 as well as a long list of outstanding achievements in its very short history. In less than three years, it has represented the Carpatho-Rusyns in the Minnesota Festival of Nations in St. Paul, constructing and staffing different displays on aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture. It has sponsored the all-day seminar previously discussed. It has held its first annual Duchnovyc Dinner in honor of the Carpatho-Rusyns' national awakener, the Reverend Aleksander Duchnovyc, and it alone attracted over 65 people.

In May of this year, the association sponsored an all-day conference at the University of Minnesota, addressing the different national perspectives of Carpatho-Rusyn ethnicity. The conference featured scholars from universities and institutions in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Chicago, and Toronto and was funded through a grant the Rusin Association received from the Minnesota State Humanities Commission.

That is not all. The association members are currently planning an all-day conference on Carpatho-Rusyn crafts, featuring artists from around the country. And they have just applied for and been awarded another grant, this time from the Minnesota State Historical Society, to construct a display on the Carpatho-Rusyns of Minnesota that will be housed at the historical society's building and then travel around the state for viewing.

The Rusin Association of Minnesota has achieved some great things and continues to work so that Rusyns and others may know the accomplishments of our people. And in doing so, I think they teach all of us two valuable lessons.

The first is that it does not take a great number of people to organize a viable Rusyn cultural group. Therefore, those Rusyns, particularly outside of traditional Rusyn settlements, can still contribute to an understanding of our people in America. This is an important lesson, because it means that people in "new" Rusyn settlements like Virginia, Florida, Arizona, and the West Coast can create similar organizations.

The other lesson is that much can be achieved when a Rusyn community puts aside its religious differences and celebrates its common culture. I don't mean to suggest that individuals should not have allegiance to their faith. The Rusin Association is not an example of that. But, just as Carpatho-Rusyns deal with people of various faiths in their work situations and other activities, they too can do this in promoting Rusyn culture. I think the Rusin Association of Minnesota has shown that the Rusyn-American community may have come of age enough to do just that.

I encourage others to follow their example.
Whenever one thinks of immigration, it is usually America that comes to mind. Yet before emigrants sought out the New World, some had built successful new lives in lands other than in North America. This was particularly true among a small but distinguished group of Carpatho-Rusyns who at the very outset of the nineteenth century went east to the Russian Empire instead of west. Why would young Carpatho-Rusyns go east and why would the Russian Empire want to accept them? The answers can in large part be found in the life and career of Ivan S. Orlaj.

Orlaj was born in 1771 in or near the Carpatho-Rusyn town of Chust in Marmaros county of the old Hungarian Kingdom. His father, Semen Orlaj, a Greek Catholic priest and former teacher at the Theological School in Užhorod, had instilled in the young Ivan a love and inquisitiveness for learning which was to remain with him throughout his lifetime. Educated first in his Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, at Mukachevo and Užhorod, Orlaj subsequently attended several secondary schools and universities throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Oradea, L'viv, Eger, Budapest).

Orlaj was a true man of his times, dominated as they were throughout Europe by the Enlightenment with its emphasis on universal and encyclopedic knowledge. Not surprisingly, Orlaj's interests were as varied as the many schools he attended: languages, history, numismatics, theology, mathematics, science, and medicine.

Already in 1790, at the age of 19, Orlaj began his career as a gymnasia (advanced high school) teacher in Austria-Hungary, but this was not to last very long. Farther east, in the Russian Empire, tsarist officials were in the process of reforming their own educational system and were seeking talent abroad, especially among the Orthodox Serbs and Eastern rite (Greek Catholic) Carpatho-Rusyns of Austria-Hungary. The precocious Orlaj was discovered and invited to St. Petersburg, where, because of his fluency in Latin, he was nominated two years later in 1792 to enter the medical school. Before the end of the decade, he had become so well-known a figure in tsarist Russia's medical profession that in 1800 he was named surgeon to the tsarist court.

Favored as he was by the tsarist authorities, Orlaj was encouraged to expand his knowledge by travelling abroad. As a result of such contacts, he was appointed a member of numerous scientific societies in Austria and Germany, and in Jena he even befriended the renowned writer Goethe, with whom he later maintained a correspondence.

Despite his extremely successful professional career, Orlaj did not forget his Carpatho-Rusyn homeland. Knowing the Russian Empire's continual need for knowledgeable people, Orlaj set in motion a program that in 1803-1804 brought three of his countrymen eastward, each of whom was to play a leading role in Russia's first university in St. Petersburg: Mychail Baludjans'kyj (see his biography in the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. I, No. 4, 1978) as its first rector; Petro Lodij as dean of the faculty of law; and Vasyl Kukolnyk as professor of law. Besides enhancing the careers of these and other fellow Carpatho-Rusyns who followed, Orlaj also publicized his homeland in tsarist Russian circles with a History of Carpatho-Rusyns (Istorija o Karpato-rossach, 1804), which in particular emphasized the Carpatho-Rusyn cultural relationship to the greater world of the eastern Slavs.

In 1821, Orlaj voluntarily left the medical profession and moved to the Ukraine, becoming director of the Nizyn gymnasia and then the Richelieu gymnasia in Odessa. At both places he refashioned the program to provide students with a universal approach to all aspects of contemporary as well as classical knowledge. It was at Nizyn that he was a familial neighbor and teacher of the greatest Russian-language writer of the period, Nikolaj Gogol, in whom he also provoked an interest in the Carpathians.

Although from an entirely different time and cultural setting, the life of Ivan Orlaj reminds us how it is possible to make a successful professional career without forgetting one's own Carpatho-Rusyn family, friends, and historical past.

Philip Michaels
FOLK CUSTOMS OF CARPATHO-RUSYNS
THE FUNERAL

One of the first things to be noticed by man in the earliest stages of historical development was the regularity and inevitability of two things in life: birth and death. Having found that all living beings have their beginning and end, man naturally accepted his own death as an unalterable law of nature. At the same time, however, death, like all other natural phenomena, appeared to primitive man as something supernatural and mysterious. In order to “humanize” the abstract notion of death, early man tried to form in his mind a concrete image of death.

In the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, death was most frequently personified in a powerful old woman armed with a scythe (Smertka — the “She-Death”). It was also represented by an old man, a skeleton reaper, and even by animals (a horse, a dog, or a cat). At the time of mass epidemics, once frequent in Subcarpathian Rus’, minds feverish with the illness and easily moved by mass hysteria were liable to believe that death was a concrete being with which one could communicate. At first the people tried to placate death with prayers and offerings, such as parts of the clothing from each inhabitant of the village that were put into the graves of those stricken by the plague. When this conciliatory approach failed to produce the desired results, methods believed more effective were used: an experienced exorcist was summoned to wield his magic power and drive death into a grave and seal her there. Even today we can hear in many Rusyn villages legends about people’s meetings with death, or with the living form of a dead man.

One of the most widespread superstitions in the past was the belief that a dead man or woman could either help or harm the survivors. This harm was feared especially in cases when the deceased did not receive due honors following his or her demise. This is where the traditional burial rites came in. In the past, when aged Rusyns felt that their “last hour” was approaching, they summoned to their death-bed all their relatives, divided their possessions among them, and said their last good-bye. Sometimes, especially in the recent past, the village magistrate or a notary was summoned in order to put together the dying person’s last will. On this occasion each of the relatives kissed the dying family member and said a few parting words. Crying on the part of the relatives in such situations was not usual, for it was desired that the dying person should spend the last hours of his or her life in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

A customary guest of the expired person was also the priest who listened to the confession and administered the sacrament of holy unction. Sometimes the dying person expressed wishes as to how he or she should be dressed for the burial and what particular form the burial should take. When all these demands were met, the dying person would usually calmly expire, as if death were scheduled. This obviously had as much to do with the general mentality of village life as with auto-suggestion.

Dying was, of course, not always so serene. When it appeared “too protracted,” and when the dying person was believed to suffer more and especially longer than was his or her due, the intervention of “unclean spirits” was suspected. In such cases, the dying person was sprinkled with holy water and “magic” plants were used for incense. A liturgical candle was put into the dying person’s hands, and among other things, holes were bored into a wall so that the soul could “fly away.” As many religious icons show, the soul was imagined in the form of light or dark vapor. Sometimes, to “speed up” the process of dying, the person in question was moved to the middle of the room.

When the man or woman died, his or her eyes and mouth were closed. Sometimes to prevent their re-opening, the eyelids were weighted down with coins, and the lower jaw-bone fixed with a kerchief. This, at last, was the time when the pent-up grief could be openly released. The room was filled with the wailing (holosynja) of the women and with the recitals of fixed formulae which highlighted the good deeds of the dead and the dead’s good relationships with his or her family. When a mother died in childbirth (a frequent occurrence in the past), a new-born child was also left with the mother to die because without a mother it had no chance to survive.

In the house, all the doors, cupboards, and vessels were opened. The head of the household or another member of the family went bareheaded to break the sad news to the coroner, the priest, and the bell-ringer. The tolling of his smallest bell (the funeral bell) announced to all the villagers that one from their midst had departed. In some villages the smallest bell only announced the death of a child. When an adult man died, his passing was announced with the tolling of the largest bell, while the death of a woman was announced by a medium-sized bell. The tolling, however, took place only when the person in question died in the course of the day. When he or she died after sunset, their demise was announced by the bell-ringer the following morning.

In the meantime, at home, the dead person was washed and dressed in his best clothes (these had to include the man’s wedding shirt), was laid out on a bench, and was covered with white linen. A dead young man or girl was dressed in wedding costume, while a child was not laid out on a bench but on a table, the legs pointing toward the door. The water, soap, comb, pot, and other objects that come into contact with the dead person were carried off to an inaccessible place in order to prevent their presumed negative influence on the cattle and the crops.

As a sign of grief, any mirrors in the house were covered with a piece of cloth. Candles brought to the house from the church were lit at the side of the dead person (their number ranging from 2 to 8, depending on the wealth of the deceased), and the joiner constructed a casket. As recently as the first half of the nineteenth century, the Carpatho-Rusyns buried their dead without a coffin, using instead a simple wooden plank. Later, an unadorned retangular coffin (hladka truna) closed with a lid began to be used. Only in the twentieth century did they start to use the sexagonal casket (horbata truna), consisting of two identical parts. The coffin was usually made in the courtyard, in the anteroom, or even in the very room where the deceased person was laid out. When the coffin was finished, its bottom was bedded with wood-shavings, and a fresh piece of turf was put at the place where the dead person’s head was to be laid. The body was then placed in the casket, which remained open until the burial. The joiners were rewarded likewise.

The room with the dead was visited by relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. Each of them knelt at the side of the deceased to say a prayer, and then briefly offer his or her...
condolences. The women from among the close relatives expressed their grief by ritual wailing.

Towards evening the local church cantor (djak) came to read from the psalter. The intervals between psalms were filled with narratives from the life of the deceased and with legends or fairy tales. These tales often acquired a cheerful, even jocular tone. This was due to the belief that the deceased perceived everything that was going on around him or her for as long as the grave was not “sealed.” Therefore, the dead person’s relatives and friends tried to re-create the atmosphere to which he or she was accustomed during his or her lifetime. In no case was the deceased allowed to stay in the room alone. The number of people who kept vigil over the deceased was an index of the honor bestowed on him or her. The belief in the continued life of the soul of the deceased found its reflection also in the custom of leaving a vessel with water and a towel on the windowsill so that the soul could “wash itself clean of sins” (umyty z hrichiv) and as well as leaving a bottle of brandy for the “refreshment” of the dead person’s soul.

An interesting phenomenon was the type of folk games with which young people of both sexes passed the time of their vigil. These games, widespread throughout the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, most especially among the Lemkos and the Bojkos, numbered into the hundreds. The most widespread of them were “The Wooden Spades,” “The Pear,” “The Rooster,” “The Goose,” “The Mill,” “God and the Devil,” “The Goat,” and “The Magpie.” Some of them were played also on other occasions, but most were connected with night vigils at the side of the dead person. The contents of these games had little to do with the sad atmosphere of the funeral. On the contrary, they were marked by youthful mirth, high spirits, and eroticism. Sometimes the young people involved the deceased person in the games. For instance, the boys used various tricks to move the deceased’s limbs, creating fear and panic among the girls, or they tickled the dead under his or her nose with a straw. The relatives and other senior people present not only did not object to such merrymaking, but even encouraged it by offering brandy to the revellers, believing that this would have a beneficial influence on the crops and on the life of the family of the deceased. The funeral games were sharply condemned as pagan by the church as early as the Middle Ages, but apparently with little effect. The games remained a part of the funeral customs virtually until the middle of the twentieth century. This author has witnessed the playing of such games near the town of Snina in the Prešov Region as recently as the beginning of the 1960s.

The customs observed on the first night of the vigil were basically the same as on the second night. The burial took place on the third day after the death. Almost all the villagers took part in the ceremony. After the priest’s arrival at the house, along with the djak and their party carrying the cross and the church banners, the excitement reached its culmination with the nailing of the lid onto the casket. Prior to this, the closest relatives parted with the deceased for the last time by kissing the face, hands, and knees. Each of them threw into the casket several coins so that the deceased could pay his or her “toll” to the other world. The relatives also put into the casket the favorite things of the dead: a pipe, tobacco, prayer book, sometimes even a bottle of...
brandy. The casket was always taken out of the house with the legs of the dead first (“so that the dead would never return”), and it was made to touch the threshold of the house three times.

In the courtyard, the casket was laid on the bier and the burial proceeded. The church ceremony was punctuated by the wailing of women. Another popular Rusyn folk custom was the singing of “funeral parting songs.” Their theme was mostly the futility of earthly existence and the relationship of the dead to his or her survivors. These songs, most of which were recorded in hand-written songbooks from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, were sung by the djak. He received a special reward for his singing, the amount of which depended on the emotional impression left on those present.

The bier was carried to the cemetery by four to six neighbors, or was transported (even in summer) on a sleigh drawn by oxen. This ancient form of burial procession, known at least from the time of Kievan Rus’, was preserved the longest among the Carpatho-Rusyns. A live rooster and a loaf of bread bound in yarn were carried at the head of the procession. Both were donated after the funeral to the priest or to the sexton. The burial procession for a young man or girl was an almost exact copy of the wedding procession. It was headed by the starosta (one of the chief organizers of the wedding) holding the wedding banner. He was accompanied by the best man and bridesmaids carrying the casket decorated with the wedding wreath. The casket of a young boy or girl was always carried by young people of the opposite sex.

After the coffin was lowered into the grave, each of the participants in the burial ceremony threw a handful of soil onto the casket. After the grave was filled, a wooden cross was erected at its head. It often bore no name; however, a coin of the latest year of issue was often affixed to it. This helped to identify the grave and the buried person. Normally the Rusyns did not take any special care of the graves of their relatives, and so it sometimes happened that even the children did not know where their parents were buried. Monuments on the graves have come to be generally widespread only since the mid-twentieth century. After the burial ended, it was customary to invite the participants to a funeral feast (pomana, kar). The usual meal was bread and bryndza (a kind of sheep cheese). Meat was served only as an exception. In far eastern Subcarpathian Rus’, the guests of the funeral feast were served a special dish called kolivko (a mixture of honey and boiled wheat).

The closest kin (parents, children, and siblings) mourned for the dead relative for a year. The mourning could be, but did not have to be, expressed by wearing black clothes. However, the social norm required that in the course of the year the closest relatives of the deceased should not take part in any sort of public entertainment, including weddings. Custom also forbade them to whitewash the walls of the room in which the person died (“in case the soul of the deceased is resting in a crack in the plaster”). The belief in the possible return of the dead was so widespread in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland that tales on this theme have been retained in all the villages. According to the stories, the late relative most often returned to pick up his or her favorite things, such as a pipe, tobacco, or a musical instrument. These things were usually laid upon the grave in order to prevent any further return of the dead.

A frequent theme of folk stories was also the postmortal life and “deeds” of evil male (vampir, dvodušnyk) or female (bosorkanja — a witch) magic beings. These were believed to go on, causing harm to people even after their death. They could cause, for instance, hail, drought, or the death of cattle. In order to prevent any further misdeeds of the evil spirits, the most superstitious among the villagers would dig out the dead bodies believed to be the holders of the evil spirits from their graves, cut off their heads, putting them between their legs, or pierce the hearts of the dead. Court archives from the past contain many documents testifying to such cases of vandalism motivated by superstition.

At present, the original burial customs are largely extinct. New burial customs include the mailing of funeral invitations, the bringing of store-bought funeral wreaths to the graves, and expressing condolences at the cemetery by a kiss and a handshake. The present-day funeral feasts have also changed considerably. They are invariably very opulent, and they usually take place in the village “house of culture” or restaurant. The participants at the funeral feast (sometimes as many as 200 people) include all the relatives, neighbors, and almost everybody who in some way was helpful at the burial. The guests are served substantial lunches and alcohol. As in the past, the funeral feast usually ends with the church memorial song “Vičnaja pamjat’” (Eternal Memory).

Recent times have witnessed a growing number of secular burials, that is, burials without any church ceremonies. These are organized by the local village councils (soviete) in Soviet Transcarpathia or by their equivalent in Czechoslovakia, the “national committees.” However, even the secular funerals retain some of the elements of the traditional folk funeral.

Mykola Mušynka
Prešov, Czechoslovakia

This is the last in a series of nine articles covering the full cycle of Carpatho-Rusyn customs: Christmas and New Year; Easter; Pentecost/Rusajia; Pastoral Festivals/St. George’s Day; Summer Festivals/St. John’s Day; Harvest Festival and St. Andrew’s Day; Birth and Baptism; the Wedding; the Funeral. For those who may not have the full set of this fascinating series, you may obtain it by ordering all issues for the years 1983 through 1986 ($7.00 per year), available from the Carpatho-Rusyn American, 7556 Middle Ridge Road, Madison, Ohio 44057.
Several readers have inquired whether the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland ever had its own national emblem and flag, and if so, what did they look like and what were their origins? In actuality, there was an emblem and a flag, particularly for the historic region known as Subcarpathian Rus'. Both the emblem and flag were created only in the twentieth century and both were used for official purposes for no more than two decades.

The oldest emblems in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland are those that began to come into use during the fifteenth century for each of the many counties (župy, comitati) within the historic Hungarian Kingdom. Carpatho-Rusyns inhabited the northern parts of eight counties, from west to east: Szepes (Spis), Abauj-Torna, Sáros (Šaryš), Zemplén (Zemplín), Ung (Už), Bereg, Ugocsa (Ugoča), and Máramaros (Marmaros). However, the emblems of those counties represented the heraldic needs of the Hungarian administration and had no particular Carpatho-Rusyn component, even though the image of the bear appeared on two of them (Bereg and Ugocsa) and the blue and gold colors were used on almost all (except Máramaros) — a fact, nevertheless, which did not really distinguish the emblems of the partially-inhabited Rusyn counties from the vast majority of the other Hungarian county emblems.

The need for a specific Carpatho-Rusyn emblem and flag was directly related to the establishment in late 1918 of the new republic of Czechoslovakia. By the spring of 1919, Rusyns living south of the Carpathians had joined Czechoslovakia: those in the Prešov Region came under a Slovak administration, while the majority in Subcarpathian Rus' obtained their own autonomous province. In fact, Subcarpathian Rus' (in Czech: Podkarpatská Rus) was the only part of the new Czechoslovak republic whose particular status — with "the fullest degree of autonomy compatible with the unity of the Czechoslovak state" — was guaranteed by an international treaty (September 1919) and reiterated in the Czechoslovak constitution (February 1920).

Part of the trappings of Subcarpathian autonomy included an official symbol, and a Czechoslovak law (No. 252) of March 1920 proclaimed the existence of an emblem for the new nation's eastern province. The emblem consisted of a shield divided vertically into two halves: on the left was a series of seven wide horizontal azure blue (4) and yellow (3) alternating stripes; on the right, a red bear standing upright on a plain white background and facing left toward the horizontal stripes. The bear had become the symbol of the mountainous Carpathian region, especially in the eyes of the Czech public, while some writers have suggested that the blue and yellow horizontal stripes symbolized the seven major rivers of Subcarpathian Rus' (Tisa, Už, Latorycja, Boržava, Rika, Tereblja, Teresva).

The official national emblem for Subcarpathian Rus' also appeared in the top right hand corner of both the "great" and "intermediate" emblems of the Czechoslovak republic. However, while the Subcarpathian emblem was described in Czechoslovak publications and in textbooks in Subcarpathian schools, its appearance in public life was not particularly widespread. For instance, as many historic photographs from the 1920s and 1930s reveal, most public buildings in Subcarpathian Rus' had the "small" Czechoslovak emblem on them, which included only the symbols of Bohemia-Moravia and Slovakia.

While Subcarpathian Rus' had its own national emblem, the only flag in official use was that of the Czechoslovak republic, which had no particular Carpatho-Rusyn elements in its design. However, there were Carpatho-Rusyn flags and they were invariably blue and yellow in color.

Some writers have suggested that the use of blue and yellow on flags and other symbols in the Carpathian homeland goes back to the medieval times. Later, blue and yellow did become the official colors of the Greek Catholic eparchies of Mukacevo (since 1772) and Prešov (1818). Finally, Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants in the United States — who in any case were so instrumental in having their homeland join Czechoslovakia — brought back blue and yellow flags (one horizontal bar for each color) which were used at public manifestations. For instance, blue-and-yellow Carpatho-Rusyn flags flew alongside Czechoslovak flags at both the May 1919 national congress in Užhorod and the meeting in Prague that witnessed the Rusyn declaration of unity with Czechoslovakia. The Carpatho-Rusyn flag was subsequently used at public manifestations in the province during the 1920s and 1930s.

The official Subcarpathian emblem with the bear and the unofficial blue and yellow flag remained in use until the very end of Czechoslovak rule, including the period of full-fledged
THE CARPATHO RUSYN EMBLEM AND FLAG
continued from page 7

autonomy for the region (renamed Carpatho-Ukraine) that lasted from October 1938 to March 1939. Only on the very last day of this period (March 15, 1939), when the Carpatho-Ukraine declared its independence, were some changes introduced. In its constitution (paragraph 6), the Carpatho-Ukrainian “republic for a day” declared that on the Subcarpathian provincial emblem the bear would become gold on a red background and that the trident (the medieval symbol of Kievan Rus’ which had become synonymous with Ukrainian nationalism in the twentieth century) would be added in the center of the top blue bar on the left half of the emblem. The same constitution (paragraph 5) also declared that the old blue and yellow flag become the official flag of the Carpatho-Ukrainian state.

With the occupation of all of Subcarpathian Rus’ in March 1939 by the Hungarians and the subsequent incorporation of the area into the Soviet Union in June 1945, the region lost any particular autonomous status. Therefore, both the Carpatho-Rusyn national emblem and flag, so intimately tied to Czechoslovak rule, ceased to exist. Only in the United States, among Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants and their descendants, do the historic national emblem and flag appear in some publications and cultural gatherings. In some cases, the standing red bear appears on a silver instead of white background in the national emblem, which in turn is superimposed in the middle of the blue and yellow flag.

Under the direction of Ivan Macyns’kyj (the responsible editor for this and other recent volumes), the Naukovyi zbirnyk has reached a new level of scholarly importance for Carpatho-Rusyn studies. Not only is this volume the largest produced so far in the annual series, it is also the first to place the greatest emphasis on publishing archival materials.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS 1982

Of particular value is the collection of poetry by the early nineteenth-century Carpatho-Rusyn poet and philosopher Vasyl’ Dovhovyc. His 252-page manuscript, dated 1832 and written in Latin, Hungarian, and Rusyn, is reproduced in its entirety as a photofacsimile, and it is followed by a translation into Ukrainian (pp. 113-232). The compiler, Ivan Macyns’kyj, has also provided an extensive scholarly biography of Dovhovyc, who besides his priestly duties was a specialist on the German philosopher Kant (pp. 23-110).

Two other rare works appear in volume X of the Naukovyi zbirnyk. Bishop Ivan Bradać’s Bukvar’ (Primer) — all but a few copies of which were destroyed soon after publication in 1770 — is reproduced in photofacsimile with a brief introduction by Stepan Hostynjak (pp. 233-273). Jakiv Holovac’kyj’s uncompleted dictionary of the “Little Russian speech collected in Galicia and northeastern Hungary” (from A to Z — the ninth letter of the Cyrillic alphabet), which was compiled during the mid-nineteenth century, is published for the first time with a solid introductory analysis by the contemporary Carpatho-Rusyn linguists, Josyf Dzendzelivs’kyj and Zuzana Hanudel’ (pp. 311-612).

Other studies in this invaluable volume include a description from the Prešov Region of popular Carpatho-Rusyn beliefs about demonic women by Nadija Varchol (pp. 275-309); a history of the strike movement among Carpatho-Rusyns in Subcarpathian Rus’ and the Prešov Region during the early 1930s by Ivan Hránčak (pp. 7-21); and a report on recent archeological research in 1976 at the remains of the monastery in Krásny Brod by Ladislav Oleksa (pp. 611-640). The volume also includes numerous illustrations; résumés of each article in Slovak, German, and Russian; and comprehensive indices.


This small anthology contains a selection of literary works (prose and some poetry) of Ukrainian-language writers in the Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia. Of the eleven authors represented — Nadija Varchol, Pavlo Vasyl’, Rudolf Dem’jan, Pavlo Maskaiyk, Olena Hyc’ Mycovčyna, Josyf Mulyk, Jeva Olear, Marija Paraska, Stepan Suchýj, Lesja Jarmak, Ivan Jackanyc — only two were born before World War II. The editor has also provided brief biographical sketches on each of these relatively unknown authors.

Nova dumka (New Thought), Vol. XI, Nos. 31-34 (Vukovar, 1982), 92, 96, 64, and 64 p.

This volume of Nova dumka continues to provide information on all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn life in Yugoslavia —

Paul R. Magocsi
both in the Vojvodina (Bačka) and Srem regions — and to serve as the only forum for recent writings on Carpatho-Rusyns by authors in the homeland and in the West. Among the latter are brief surveys of Carpatho-Rusyn settlements in northeastern Hungary during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Attila Paladi-Kovač (No. 31) and Rusyn immigration from Galicia and Subcarpathian Rus' to Yugoslavia by Krunoslav Tkalc (No. 31). Longer studies include a Vojvodinian Rusyn translation under the title “Ja rusyn bil, jesm‘i ‘budu’” of Paul R. Magocsi’s response to Vasyl Markus on Carpatho-Rusyn national identity (Nos. 32 and 33) and the first part of a monograph on the history of Rusk‘ Krstur, the largest Carpatho-Rusyn settlement in the Vojvodina, by Janko Řeje (No. 34).


The Basilian Monastery at Máriaposc, located in northeastern Hungary, has since its establishment in 1749 been an important cultural and religious center for Rusyn and magyarized Rusyn Greek Catholics living on the Hungarian plain. The monastery became famous among local Greek Catholics as well as those Rusyns living farther north in the Carpathian Mountains who participated in annual religious processions (otpustý) to pray before the church’s icon of the Weeping Mother of God. Máriaposc was also an important cultural center with its own school and rich library.

This volume reflects the riches of the Máriaposc library, which at its height had over 2000 volumes. Hardly any volumes from the old library are left in Máriaposc itself, but since 1950 they are found in various state and private depositories, especially the University of Debrecen Library. Despite being in a Hungarian-speaking environment, the liturgical language of the Greek Catholic faithful was Old Slavonic, and therefore the original library’s holdings, as reconstructed by the compiler of this catalog, are primarily in Cyrillic. Of the 145 old books described here, most were printed beyond the Carpathians, especially in Lviv, Počajiv, Kiev, and Moscow, attesting to the long tradition of cultural and religious contacts with the east. The oldest imprint is a copy of the famous Ostrih Bible from 1581. The library also held several works prepared by Carpatho-Rusyn authors (Aleksander Duchnovycz, Ivan Kutka, Mychail Lučkaj, Anatolij Krályč‘kyj, Andrej Popovycz) from the nineteenth century, as well as copy of the oldest book for Carpatho-Rusyns, Bishop de Camillis’ 1692 Cathecism, and Arsenij Kocak’s late eighteenth century Rusyn grammar.

This catalog includes a brief history of the Máriaposc library, a list of all old Cyrillic books and some manuscripts, various indices and 44 poorly reproduced illustrations. The introduction and notes are in Hungarian, book titles in the original Slavonic, and résumés in Russian.


This is the eighth edition of Olbracht’s collection of reportages on life among the Carpatho-Rusyns in Subcarpathian Rus’ (Transcarpathia), which was first published in 1935. The Czech author visited the province on numerous occasions between 1931 and 1936, and besides numerous perceptive essays on contemporary life there (several of which appear in this collection), he also published the popular novel, The Bandit Mykola Šuhaj (1933).

The newest edition of Hory a staleti includes the 10 original chapters from the first edition as well as two other essays on Rusyn life published elsewhere in Czech journals in the early 1930s. An afterword by Ludmila Lantová (pp. 240-261) places the book and Olbracht in the broader context of Czech-Rusyn cultural relations during the interwar period; editorial comments by Emanuel Macek (pp. 262-293) trace the rather complicated publication history of the book from 1932 (when a few essays already appeared) to 1982.


During the summer of 1933, some of the leading figures of the Czech artistic world descended on the little Carpatho-Rusyn village of Koločava, high in the mountains of central Subcarpathian Rus’ (Transcarpathian oblast). Drawn there by Olbracht — who was already famous for his novel about the contemporary Carpatho-Rusyn folk hero, Mykola Šuhaj — the Czech artists undertook to make a feature-length film about life in Subcarpathian Rus’. In an effort to achieve extreme realism, they decided not to use professional actors, but rather local inhabitants. Thus, the film which premiered in 1934 in Prague has a complete dialogue in local Rusyn dialects.

Olbracht and Nový wrote the script, which is about the rage of a husband who returns home to find that his wife has had an affair with a neighbor. Vancura, himself an accomplished author, served as the director, while the best-known Czech modern composer, Bohuslav Martinu, was engaged to write the score. This volume includes the complete text in Czech used as the basis for the film, and it is accompanied by as many as 173 photographic scenes. There is also an introduction on how the film was produced by Pavel Taussig (pp. 7-34); recollections by the film’s creators; contemporary criticism; and several photographs of the production, including the leading “actress,” Anna Škelebej, who lives today in Bardejov, eastern Slovakia.


This well-written book in Ukrainian traces the history of the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church after World War II in those lands that had come under direct Soviet rule or influence — eastern Galicia and Subcarpathian Rus’ (Transcarpathia) in the Soviet Ukraine and the Prešov Region in Czechoslovakia. Of particular interest are the extensive sections on Carpatho-Rusyn lands (pp. 175-306) where the Greek Catholic Church was legally banned, first in Transcarpathia (1949) and then in the Prešov Region (1950).

The Reverend Pekar tells the story in an engaging manner, with special emphasis on the biographies of those clergy who were imprisoned and who died for their faith, including the last Greek Catholic bishop of Mukačev, Teodor Romža (1911-1947), and the bishops of Prešov, Pavel continued on next page
Gojdč (1888-1960) and Vasyl' Hopko (1904-1976). Particularly valuable are extensive quotes from memoirs and other reports written by eyewitnesses to the events.


Thirty years of research in over 400 villages including interviews with 600 individuals has resulted in this scholarly monograph. For the most part, the areas analyzed are Rusyn villages in the Prešov Region mountainous areas of northern Spiš, Saryš, and Zemplín. In each of the book's nine chapters, the author provides Rusyn dialectal terminology and he shows the differences between Rusyn and Slovak sheepraising techniques.

Particularly interesting are the chapters dealing with the organized basis of sheepraising; the shepherds' work habits and living quarters (*koliba*); popular cures for sheep; and techniques for preparing milk products and wool. The volume contains numerous photographs taken primarily by the author during his research expeditions. The Slovak text is followed by extensive résumés in Russian and German.


This monumental encyclopedia of the Transcarpathian oblast (*Subcarpathian Rus*) is a revised and updated Russian-language version of a work that first appeared in Ukrainian in 1969 as part of the 26-volume series titled the History of Cities and Villages in the Ukrainian SSR. This edition follows the same format as the first edition. It begins with extensive historical surveys of the oblast as a whole (pages 9-87) and its administrative center Užhorod (pages 88-120). Then follow chapters on each of thirteen counties (*rajony*) in the Transcarpathian oblast. Within each of the county chapters, there are histories of the major cities or towns followed by briefer descriptions of the larger villages.

The result is a collection of histories varying in length of 295 cities, towns, and villages in Soviet Transcarpathia, which represents almost half the total number of settlements in the region. The volume also includes 24 maps, 26 pages of color plates, illustrations accompanying almost every page of text, a dictionary of historical and region terms, and comprehensive personal and geographic name indices. Although a large portion of the historical data in each of the sections stresses the last three decades of Soviet rule, this volume is still an invaluable resource for earlier as well as more recent developments in the region, and it provides in many cases the only available historical surveys of specific towns and villages inhabited by Carpatho-Rusyns and minorities living in Transcarpathia.

**RUSYN FORUM**

*Minneapolis, Minn.* On March 3, the Rusin Association of Minneapolis held its first annual Duchnovyc Dinner in honor of the national awakener of the Carpatho-Rusyn people, the Reverend Aleksander Duchnovyc. Over sixty people attended the event, which featured a menu of traditional Carpatho-Rusyn foods and the performance of Carpatho-Rusyn folksongs.

*Aliquippa, Pa.* On March 9, Ron Markvan of Ambridge, Pennsylvania demonstrated the art of *pysanka* to members of Greek Catholic Union Lodge 10 at St. George Byzantine Catholic Church.

*Toronto, Ont.* On April 4, members of the Orthodox Carpatho-Rusyn community of Toronto participated in a memorial service (*panachida*) to honor the memory of the Abbess Paraskeva Prokop, founder of the All-Holy Theokokos Convent in Lipsa, a village near Chust in Subcarpathian Rus', and from the 1950s until her death in 1967 the abbess (*ihumena*) of the famous St. Nicholas Monastery at Černeča Hora near Mukčačevo. The service was held at the Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church (Synod Abroad) as part of the Russian Orthodox of Canada Millennium Project.

*Philadelphia, Pa.* Over 75 people attended the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center's seminar titled "Carpatho-Rusyn Studies: New Research and New Sources, A Decade of Work, 1975-1985." Held April 17, 1986, at the University of Pennsylvania and co-sponsored by its Center for Soviet and East European Studies, the seminar featured the presentation of a number of scholarly papers dealing with the Carpatho-Rusyn experience in Europe and America, including aspects of culture, folklore, music, religion, and history. All those presenting papers had completed extensive research in Carpatho-Rusyn studies in American universities as well as abroad.

*St. Paul, Minn.* The Rusin Association of Minnesota represented the Carpatho-Rusyns for the second year at the Minnesota Festival of Nations April 25 through 27. The theme for the festival was the Statue of Liberty. The Rusin Association displayed articles portraying the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrant experience at a booth adorned with drawings of folk life in the Carpathians created by member Peter Hnath. Anna Novak exhibited embroidery done in the Carpathian Region and Nick Hnath described his experience of youth in Matyišova, the former Spiš county in present-day Czechoslovakia; his immigration to America; and his settlement in Minnesota.

*Minneapolis, Minn.* On May 3, 1986, the Rusin Association of Minnesota sponsored a symposium titled "Rusins, Who Are They? Perspectives on Rusin Ethnicity" at the University of Minnesota. The all-day symposium examined Rusyn ethnicity from Carpatho-Rusyn, Russian, Slovak, and Ukrainian perspectives. Those presenting the various points of
Montclair, N.J. A special Bible meeting was held May 17 at the Kimberly Academy by the descendants of the unique Carpatho-Rusyn Bible-studying community originating from Proctor, Vermont and described in the Rutland Historical Society Quarterly Volume XV, No. 2 (1983) in an article titled “Prorocheskoe Svietlo.” Reprints of the article are available for $2.50 from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, New Jersey 07022.

Kenosha, Wisc. St. Irene Byzantine Catholic Church of Bristol, Wisconsin, held a Slavic Folk Festival at St. Joseph High School Auditorium here on May 18. Nine Slavic folk ensembles performed the songs and dances of various Slavic groups. Carpatho-Rusyn folk songs and dances were performed by the folk ensemble of St. Michael Orthodox Church of Niles, Illinois.

Pittsburgh, Pa. On May 24-26, 1986, the Carpatho-Rusyns were represented at the 27th annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival held at the David Lawrence Convention Center. The Slavjane folk ensemble of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, once again performed Carpatho-Rusyn songs and dances while its parents’ organization served Carpatho-Rusyn delicacies. A display booth dedicated to Carpatho-Rusyn dancing and culture exhibited photos of Carpatho-Rusyn folk ensembles in the United States and Europe as well as embroidery, woodwork, leath­erwork, pysanky (Easter eggs), ceramics, and Rusyn folk costumes. The items were on loan from the private collections of Jerry Jumba of McKees Rocks, John Righetti of Avalon, Pennsylvania and Msgr. Basil Sherehy of McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Carpatho-Rusyn items, including pysanky, religious items, and Easter basket covers, were also sold at a booth.

Pittsburgh, Pa. On June 26, 1986, the 62nd Carpatho-Russian Day was held at Kennywood Park. The event, sponsored by the Pittsburgh Deanery of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese, has served for many years as an event at which Carpatho-Rusyns from throughout the tri-state area can gather. Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn foods were served by the Pittsburgh District of the American Carpatho-Russian Youth (ACRY). Carpatho-Rusyn folk dances were performed by the Vesely Krajane folk ensemble of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. Rusyn folk songs and religious hymns were sung by the choir of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church of East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Cracow, Poland. On July 17, 1986, Professor Paul R. Magocsi of the University of Toronto delivered a lecture at a conference sponsored by the Polish-American Historical Association and the Research Institute (Instytut Badan Polonijnyc) at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, one of the oldest and most distinguished scholarly centers in eastern Europe. Professor Magocsi spoke on the topic, “Carpatho-Rusyn Studies: A Decade of Accomplishment and an Agenda for the Future,” in which he described the worldwide renaissance in Rusyn studies that has occurred during the past decade.

While in Poland, Professor Magocsi also participated in the Fourth Annual Lemko Festival “Vatra,” held this year in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Bartne. Local Lemko cultural leaders were particularly pleased with several publications of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center given to them by Professor Magocsi.

Pittsburgh, Pa. On July 31, 1986, Byzantine Catholic Day (formerly Rus’kyj Den’) was held at Kennywood Park. Sponsored by the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archdiocese of Pittsburgh, the event serves as a time for Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics to gather from throughout the tri-state area.

Washington, D.C. Sister Joan L. Roccasalvo, CSJ, Coordinator of the Eastern Christian Studies Program at the University of Scranton, presented a scholarly paper at the 17th International Byzantine Congress held at Dumbarton Oaks and Georgetown University during the first week of August. The paper discussed the nature and structure of Carpatho-Rusyn plainchant (prostopinije) as a unique expression of Rusyn culture and religion in both Europe and America.

Freeland, Pa. On August 17, 1986, St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church here culminated the celebration of the centennial of its founding with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop Michael Dudick, bishop of the Diocese of Passaic, as main celebrant. All the Byzantine Catholic bishops in the United States also attended the liturgy, along with Metropolitan Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko, Metropolitan of the Byzantine Catholic Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. A centennial banquet was held later at the Hershey Pocono Resort in White Haven, Pennsylvania.

St. Mary’s Church is the oldest Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholic parish within the Byzantine Catholic Archdiocese.

McKeesport, Pa. On August 19-21, 1986, McKeesport held its 26th annual International Village celebration at Renziehausen Park. The Rusyny folk ensemble of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in McKeesport performed traditional Carpatho-Rusyn songs and dances. The festival is western Pennsylvania’s second largest ethnic festival.

Uniontown, Pa. From August 29 to September 1, 1986, thousands of Byzantine Catholics of Carpatho-Rusyn descent converged on Mount St. Macrina for the 52nd annual pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, sponsored by the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. This annual pilgrimage has played a significant role in the lives of Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics in the United States and continues the tradition of the religious procession (otpuszt) brought from Europe by the first Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants.
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