

ACUA VITAE

ALBERTA'S UKRAINIAN ARTS AND CULTURE MAGAZINE

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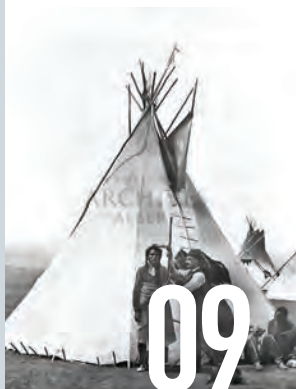


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ACUAVITAE



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ON THE COVER: PAINT THE RAILS MURAL, CORONA STATION

Carla Rae Taylor and AJA Loudon were tasked with creating a public art installation in Edmonton's Corona Station LRT. This part of the mural includes a men's choir, Ukrainian dancer, the Ukrainian bookstore, a Ukrainian cookbook, and the iconic Vegreville pysanka. AJA Loudon, the artist, also included the word *додому*, in this portion of the mural meaning homeward to represent the journey of a new immigrant in a new land and the hardships of making the new land their home, while longing for news and information of their old home.

PHOTO BY: ROBIN MCHUGH



PAINTING THE RAILS AROUND EDMONTON



By Robin McHugh

This spring the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights made contact with ACUA. They were looking for partners to work with them and Edmonton Transit Service on an exciting new project – *Paint the Rails*.

The legacy project was intended to bring communities together through community engagement and to celebrate Edmonton's history through public art. They partnered with organizations like ACUA, to help them hear stories from locals and learn about different cultures and the influences these cultures had on shaping our community.


The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights identified Ukrainians as a cultural group which has made significant impacts on Edmonton. They dedicated one of their murals to Ukrainians, Francophones, and Metis communities at the Corona Station LRT downtown.

Maigan van der Giessen, *Paint the Rails* project manager, worked with ACUA's *Paint the Rails* committee and together they identified a number of individuals within the community who came out to a community engagement session and told the stories of Ukrainian settlement in Edmonton and across Alberta. These

stories inspired local artists, Carla Rae Taylor and AJA Loudon, to create the Corona Station mural. Carla Rae and AJA also had the opportunity to consult with Larisa Sembaliuk-Cheladyn and Theodora Harasymiw, to develop the Corona Station mural.

The community engagement session was hosted at the Cultural Centre at St John's Cathedral. It was an interesting evening that was enjoyed by participants. The stories that were told that evening were so interesting, that ACUA decided to dedicate this issue of ACUA Vitae to the *Paint the Rails* project. There were so many stories told that evening; we couldn't publish them all but we did publish the stories that influenced Carla Rae and AJA to develop the mural in the way that they did.

The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights unveiled the Corona Station mural in July of this year. They hosted a number of guests who were entertained by members of the Zabava u Koli band, as well as, performing artists from the Francophone and Metis communities.

If you are interested in seeing the mural, it is located in the main LRT entrance of the Corona Station south of Jasper Avenue on 107 Street. The murals are located in the entrance, as you walk down the stairs. 

PHOTOS BY: ROBIN MCHUGH



PHOTO PROVIDED

AN ACUA INTERVIEW WITH

Carla Rae Taylor

Tell us about yourself.

I am a local artist that was born in St. Albert and raised in Yellowknife NT. I am of both Dene and Irish/French heritage. I completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) at the University of Victoria and received a certificate of Graphic Design from the Pacific Design Academy in Victoria BC. After University I moved to Edmonton where I spent five years working for iHumanYouth Society as their Art Coordinator, guiding inner city youth through their self discovery and healing through art. Time spent with inner city youth has influenced my art in many ways. Elements of urban techniques play into the imagery and materials that I use. My paintings are often colourful dreamscapes that are my personal interpretation of dreams, visions, spiritual experiences and stories.

What is *Paint the Rails*?

Paint the Rails is a collaboration between the Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) and the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. Throughout the past two years my Co-Lead Artist AJA Loudon and I have spearheaded the creation of murals in Edmonton's transit stations and have mentored two local Indigenous youth artists Dana Belcourt and Matthew Cardinal through the process. The John Humphrey Centre team has been working tirelessly, applying for grants to keep the project running, documenting the process, liaising with the various cultural communities and organizing the details of all the engagement sessions and unveiling events. The

project will culminate in the creation of a legacy book that will include many more of the stories and facts from each community engagement session. The John Humphrey Centre, the ETS and all our community partners have been incredible to work with.

Why did you decide to get involved with this project?

Because of my work with iHuman and my commitment to the development of both the arts in Edmonton, and my own practice, I was approached by the John Humphrey Centre to be a part of the team. I was excited to explore the rich cultural history that weaves our city together.

What inspired you to create the Murals?

Together with the John Humphrey team we have attended a large variety of engagement sessions with Edmonton's diverse cultural communities. We have had the honour of breaking bread with each community and have heard many incredible stories from each. The Artworks are inspired by these stories. We received input for the murals from Elders, Artists, Knowledge Keepers and Historians. The pieces are a celebration of Edmonton's rich diverse cultural communities and their stories. We received, by far, the largest turnout of community members from the Ukrainian Community. We were welcomed warmly and could have listened for many more hours to all the stories that were being shared. It was a wonderful experience and although we couldn't incorporate all the stories into

the mural, many more of them will be shared in the legacy book that is set to be created after the completion of the fifth *Paint the Rails* Mural.

How has working with *Paint the Rails* impacted you and will it inspire you in your next piece in the future?

Paint the Rails has deepened my experience of being in our city. To have been given the privilege of hearing the authentic stories of how people came to be in this place and make it their home has given me profound insight into our local history and has had an impact on my art practice and my experience as a community member. The knowledge I have received from this project and all its various facets will absolutely inform my future works of Art.

How long have you been painting and interested in art?

I have been creating art my entire life and will hopefully be able to continue for many years to come. It is truly a way of life, it is my way of understanding and interpreting all the richness of our world.

Do you have a favourite project that you have worked on?

The whole *Paint the Rails* project has been an incredible journey and the creation of each mural a complete joy. I have been truly honoured to be able to receive these stories, dive deep into our local history, develop designs alongside AJA Loudon and to transform public spaces into colourful artworks ripe with meaning and history. 

AN ACUA INTERVIEW WITH

AJA LOUDEN

PHOTO BY: BRENDAN RYDER

Tell us about yourself.

My name is AJA Loudén (AJA sounds like 'Ajay', short for Adrian Joseph Alexander), I'm an artist living and working out of Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Treaty 6, Edmonton, Alberta). I'm passionate about street art and graffiti, and I'm interested in murals and how they transform spaces into landmarks. The goal of my studio is to make places more engaging, inspiring, informed and thoughtful through strategic and compassionate use of art and design.

What is the *Paint the Rails* project? Why did you decide to get involved with this project?

As per the JHC: "*Paint the Rails* was chosen by the City of Edmonton - Canada 150 Legacies Committee as a legacy project for Canada's 150th anniversary. *Paint the Rails* seeks to bring to life the often untold stories from diverse cultural communities in the city to tell a larger story of settlement and reconciliation in Edmonton. A team of local established and emerging artists worked in collaboration and mentorship throughout the creative process.

The artworks themselves are inspired by community - elders, knowledge keepers, artists, historians, members of Edmonton's diverse cultural communities, and other stakeholders - who came together to help guide the stories and artistic vision that inspired the content of each piece. These murals tell our shared stories in public places with the goal of sparking conversation and celebration."

I decided to get involved in this project because I believe telling these often-untold stories through murals can be a powerful way to look at ourselves as a society, and I was honoured to be

asked to help. The consultation and mentorship components of the project were also important to me being able to learn directly from so many communities I otherwise may not be in touch with was a blessing.

What inspired you to create the mural?

From our artist statement for the mural 'Strong as a Forest': "This mural, 'Strong as a Forest' is the fourth in a family of murals that attempt to unearth and honour some of the lesser known stories in our local history. For 'Strong as a Forest', we worked with partners from the Métis Nation of Alberta, Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts and Francophone historians and educators.

We heard about the importance of language protection when it comes to community legacy and community identity. We witnessed the important role of song, dance and celebration as markers of resistance and resilience. We learned about the humour, collaboration and perseverance that has defined each community as they've fought for recognition and belonging on the prairies. We are so proud to bring these beautiful stories forward with 'Strong As A Forest', which was inspired by an understanding that was so clear in each of our community learning circles that together, we are stronger."

Our main source of inspiration was the stories we heard from each community. Carla, my co-lead artist, had a vision for trees that spanned across the background of the mural. We heard a lot about the tall trees that were a part of the art. We then created paintings on panels that captured the stories we'd heard from the community.

How has working with *Paint the Rails* impacted you and will it inspire you in your next piece in the future?

Through all of the murals we've painted for this project, I learned a lot about the history of this place and the many




PHOTO BY: LEAH LOUDEN

communities who have made it home. It's reminded me the importance of storytelling as a way of preserving our cultural heritage. I'm inspired to continue a strong component of community engagement within my practice as an artist.

How long have you been painting and interested in art?

I've been drawing on the walls since I was a kid. I've been painting with spraypaint for about 13 years.

Do you have a favorite project that you have worked on? What is it?

My favourite projects change all the time, but a few recent favourites are 'Unlocking Big Carp Energy', 'Dream Friends Journey', and an ongoing series of portraits of my son, Piney P. 

I believe telling these often-untold stories through murals can be a powerful way to look at ourselves as a society.



By Elyse Dzenick | Historical Accounts from Steven P. Eleniak

In 1991, Steven P. Eleniak published a book about immigration and his family history.


In particular, he wrote about his great-uncle Vasyl Eleniak (sometimes spelled Wasyl). Vasyl was born in Nebyliw, Galicia, Western Ukraine and was one of the first of many immigrants to leave the “bread basket of Europe” in search of a better quality of life. In Ukraine, most people were labourers who worked on land owned by someone else. The “pany” (landowners) belonged to the middle class. In the late 1800s, word reached Ukraine that land in Canada was being sold for cheap prices; 160 acres of land for \$10. It was land that anyone could own. Vasyl explained that land was the main motivating factor to leave Ukraine and come to Canada.

He set sail in 1891 from the port in Hamburg to reach Canada. When Vasyl’s brothers, John and Peter emigrated in 1895, they decided to settle four miles east of Chipman, Alberta. Though some Ukrainian immigrants continued south, almost all immigrants, including Vasyl and his brothers, stayed in East-Central Alberta. This was largely due to easy access to bush and other materials for tools and shelter.

Though the weather was cold and there was no community early on, the land became the main reason many more Ukrainian immigrants followed Vasyl and his brothers. The work was not easy; clearing and farming the land and building the railroad was strenuous work, but it paid off. The land that the people worked on was theirs! As more Ukrainians began to settle the area, education became a central focus in the community.

In Ukraine, it was rare for a child to get an education past the third grade. In Canada, education past this age was no longer an idea – it became a reality for many. Many of the small-town schools were even named after the hometowns in Ukraine.

Vasyl as well as many other Ukrainian immigrants formed communities based on three priorities; family, church, and land. For many years, Vasyl and thousands of other immigrants persevered through the harsh Canadian seasons and because of this these communities are still alive and thriving today.

In 1947, Vasyl Eleniak received the fourth Immigration Certificate of Canada. He was photographed by the world-famous photographer Yousuf Karsh when he accepted the certificate on behalf of all immigrants. 



BEYOND CULTURAL BARRIERS




PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA

By Elyse Dzenick | Personal Accounts by Edith Zawadiuk

Ukrainians faced many challenges when coming to a new, foreign land. A new climate meant adjusting not only to the weather, but also to the new plants and animals that were native to the Alberta plains.

Luckily, the Ukrainian immigrants had some help adjusting to their new surroundings. Edith Zawadiuk worked closely with Indigenous communities during her time with Alberta Agriculture and more specifically during her time with the Rural Development Program. From 1963 to 1973, Edith worked with several Indigenous communities including Saddle Lake, Kehewin, Whitefish (Goodfish), Frog Lake, and Cold Lake. She was also instrumental in the Nutrition At School program in Fort MacKay. After communicating with many people in these communities, Edith was told not only about the Indigenous communities, but about the early Ukrainian immigrants as well. When the first Ukrainian immigrants settled around the Vilna area in Alberta, they were faced with unfamiliar vegetation. The new immigrants were unfamiliar with what was safe to eat and what was poisonous. Local Indigenous communities offered help to the newcomers. They

taught the Ukrainian immigrants about Saskatoon berries, chokecherries, and other fruits and berries that were safe to eat. Men from the Indigenous communities helped Ukrainians clear the newly-settled land. Ukrainians were also taught how to hunt animals for food. In return, the Ukrainian immigrants showed Indigenous people which mushrooms were safe to eat. European immigrants, including Ukrainians, also introduced the Indigenous people to flour and wheat.

Nearby Indigenous communities were kind and generous enough to offer their help to the newcomers of Alberta. Without the help they received, Ukrainians would have had a much harder time trying to adjust to the new land with their own ways. 

Defying Expectations

By Elyse Dzenick | Personal Accounts by Elsie Kawulich

Vegreville is a town that is now known for its strong Ukrainian community, but the Vegreville Elsie Kawulich grew up in was very different than it is today. In the years Elsie grew up, the Ukrainian community in Vegreville was growing and as a result Ukrainians faced a lot of discrimination from the non-Ukrainian community of Vegreville. Non-Ukrainians saw Ukrainians as untrustworthy and as taking over their jobs and the economy. Elsie's parents emigrated to Canada in 1924 and 1925. They met in Vegreville, where Elsie was born and lived much of her life. Elsie grew up next to the local police barracks, where her mother would volunteer to feed Ukrainian prisoners. As a child, the policemen would occasionally take her on outings, and since she spoke both Ukrainian and English, they would ask her to spy on her Ukrainians to see what sorts of things these people were up to in the country. She remembers simply wishing she could go out to play with the other children instead of listening to the adults talk.

Discrimination toward Ukrainians was apparent in other areas of life as well. Elsie recalls that if you went to the movie theatre, Ukrainians would sit on one half, and non-Ukrainians on the other. "If you were walking down the street and you saw Protestants on the same side, you would cross immediately

so you wouldn't get beaten up," Elsie explains. Separation of Ukrainians also occurred in school. If you were Catholic, you would go to the Catholic school. However, if one wanted to go to university, one had to graduate from the public school, as the Catholic school didn't have the proper resources to provide a complete high school education. Elsie attended Catholic school until her grade 11 year, when she switched to a public school in hopes of attending university. Other than the final year of school, both the Catholic and Public school offered basically the same courses and level of study. When Elsie transferred to the Public school, she was met with discrimination at the administrative level. During the first two weeks of her grade 12 trigonometry class, she recalls how her teacher treated her as though she were in first grade. Every class, she was to write simple math equations like one plus one. Like many other Ukrainians, Elsie was viewed as untrustworthy and was humiliated because of her heritage.

When it came time for Elsie to apply for university, she was met with a principal who was angry that she was trying to further her education. He told her, "You have three strikes against you; one because you are a woman and women are stupid. Two because you are Ukrainian, and Ukrainian women are only good for working on the farm and raising





kids. Three, you are Catholic and those are the worst people on earth.” Despite the discrimination, Elsie completed her university degree and worked as a district home economist in the St. Paul area for many years. Elsie was recognized for her success in a local newspaper. Elsie was awarded the Alberta Order of Excellence for her work in 2005. In 2006 she represented Alberta at the Smithsonian and in 2012, she received the Order of Canada award. She has volunteered on various boards in and around the Vegreville area, giving back to and continuing to strengthen the community there. Elsie has shown the world that Ukrainians have a hard-working nature. It’s hard to imagine that a town known for its Ukrainian community once had discrimination against that same group of people, but it’s because of people like Elsie who made it acceptable to be Ukrainian. 



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MEET YOU AT THE BOOK STORE

By Elena Scharabun

The Ukrainian Book Store was opened in 1910 by Michael Ferbey and was the first independent book store in Edmonton. The early store not only sold books, but Ukrainian newspapers, candy, tobacco and stationery supplies. Books from Michael's personal library, as well as used books purchased from others, were the start of the book selection. In 1912, Michael turned over the store to brother Dmytro who also had a love of books. He would read them and relay their contents to his customers and encourage them to buy and read

books themselves. In these early years, the Bookstore became a focal point of ukrainian life in Edmonton and also Alberta. Ukrainians traveling to Edmonton came to the Bookstore not only to buy Ukrainian books, but also to get information about many things going on culturally. As they didn't know the English language, they also needed help to find Ukrainian doctors, dentists, lawyers, veterinarians and translators. The Ukrainian Book Store became an information bureau, cultural center, a place people could discuss politics,

problems regarding their farms and homesteads and much more.

During the First World War, the supply of books from Europe slowed, books printed in Halychyna (western Ukraine) had to be hidden, as it was part of Austria in those years. Post war, Dmytro travelled to Ukraine and other parts of Europe to expand connections and buy many books. These purchases averted a shortage of Ukrainian books during World War II. At this time, the Bookstore had to look at other goods and merchandise to sell, new

goods like records, ceramics, embroidery fabric and thread. Even though the store stocked these new items, books were still the main focus. The Ukrainian Book Store became noted for its selection of books, called the largest and best selection outside of Ukraine.

After Dmytro Ferbey's passing in 1961, the store was taken over by his daughter and son-in-law Natalka and Bohdan Melnychuk. They continued to expand the store and its variety of stock. Many bands and musicians' albums were sold at the store, gift items, greeting cards, art and dance costuming all entered the mix. Books were being promoted and sold to libraries, universities and customers all around the world. Over the next 50 years, the store was passed down through two more generations. It continued to expand in size and selection, became techno savvy with the advent of computers to produce

catalogues and had a strong online business in its later years. The Ukrainian Book Store served its purpose of promoting books and Ukrainian culture until its closing in 2012.

During all these years, the Ukrainian Book Store continued to be a gathering spot for the Ukrainian community in Edmonton. Discussions among patrons still involved politics, both Canadian and Ukrainian, farming and homestead problems made way for musings about the new Ukrainian bands, which dance group was touring or which new Ukrainian books to buy for the children and grandchildren and which concerts were coming up. Friends met, strangers discussed, and the Ukrainian community embraced each other. 



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History in Harmony

By Elyse Dzenick

Historical Account by Orest Soltykevych

Orest Soltykevych is well-known in the Ukrainian community for his involvement with various choral groups over the years. He grew up singing in Dnipro choir and in the Edmonton CYMK (pronounced soomk) choir and went on to conduct several well-known groups in and around Edmonton.

Orest has conducted the Verkhovyna choir since 2013 and recently travelled to Ukraine and Georgia with the group. His father, Roman Soltykewych, came to Canada in 1951. In Ukraine, Roman had received a more formal education. He had studied various aspects of music, including choral singing. He took his education and love for music to Canada with him. In 1951, the Ukrainian community in Alberta was already very active in the arts because of people like Roman who had come over earlier. Ukrainian schools and churches grew very quickly. Most members were either immigrants or first generation Ukrainian-Canadians and so they were very familiar with Ukrainian traditions, literature, and singing. In 1953, Roman organized a men's choir, Dnipro, along with several other men. By the early 1960s, the choir had grown to have around 40 members. In 1959, the first all-female choral group Verkhovyna formed. They were the first Ukrainian choir to occasionally be accompanied by bandurists.

By the mid-60s, many choirs had been formed; several church choirs, two men's choirs, and a woman's choir. In 1965, the board of St. John's Orthodox Cathedral approached Roman and asked him to

form a youth choir, and also to take over conducting the cathedral choir. He formed the Edmonton CYMK (Canadian Ukrainian Youth Association) choir as a way to get the Ukrainian youth of Edmonton involved in choral singing. There were originally two choirs; a junior and a senior. At this time, Ukrainian choral singing was very popular among both the youth and the older generations in the Ukrainian community in Alberta. The senior CYMK choir was so successful that in 1967, they became the first youth group to sing the liturgy in Toronto and were invited to sing at the World Expo in Montreal. By 1968, the junior and senior CYMK choirs merged to simply become CYMK choir. Around the same time, Dnipro Men's choir mixed with women to become the Dnipro choir that still exists today. Verkhovyna became a mixed choir in 1974. Roman Soltykewych conducted CYMK choir and Dnipro choir until his death in 1976, when Willi Zwozdesky and Maria Dytniak took over each respective choir. Orest himself conducted CYMK choir from 1986 until 1991.

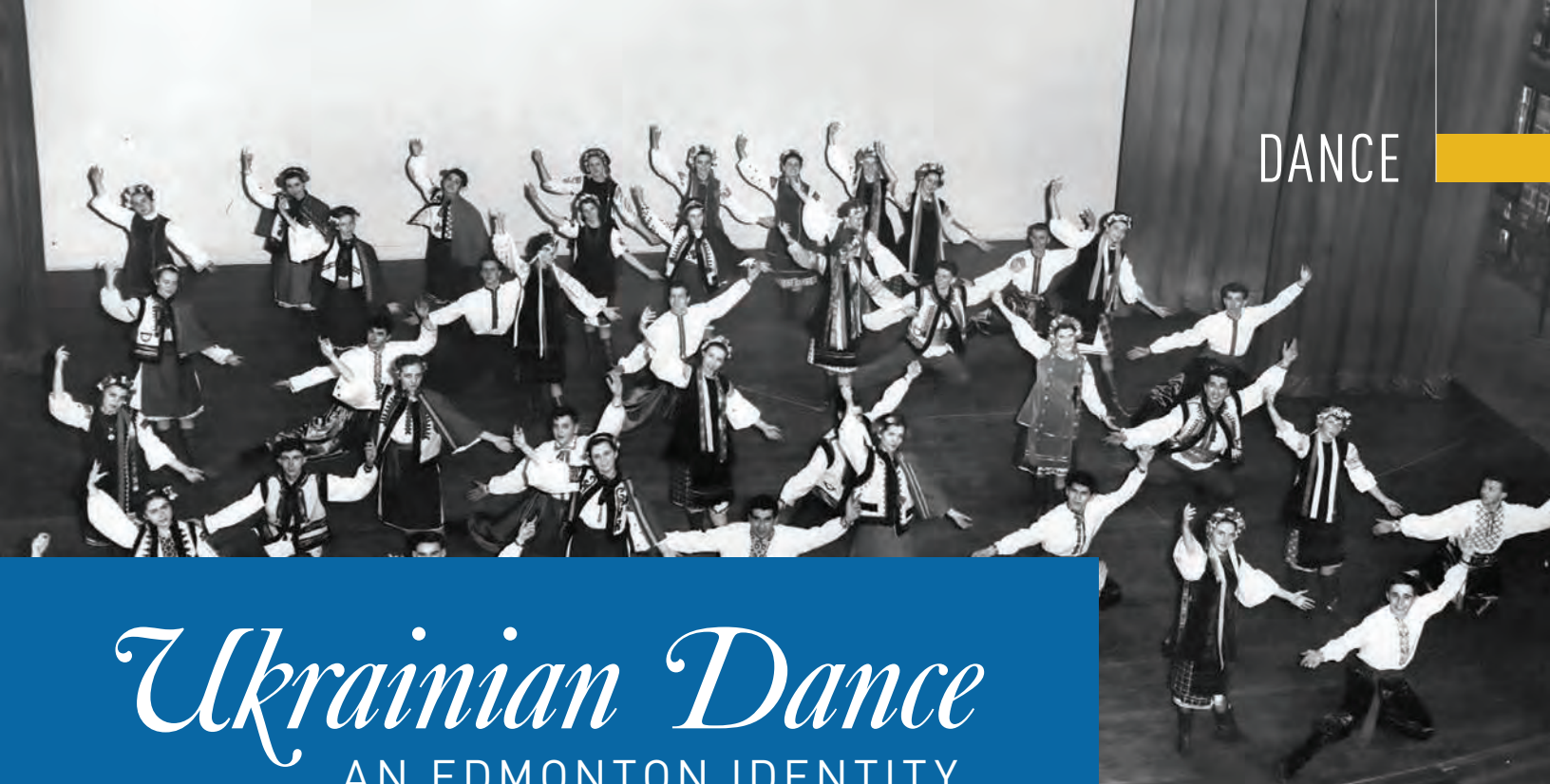
In 1984, Orest was approached by a few other men to reform a male-only chorus. Since both Ukrainian men's choirs had become a mixed choir, there were no longer any male-only choirs. The Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton began with only 12 members. Orest conducted the choir for 20 years when he took a break for five years. He returned to conduct the Men's choir and officially retired in June of 2019. Orest still conducts the Verkhovyna choir.

Choral groups have evolved with the times. Though it no longer exists today, CYMK choir gave many Ukrainian-Canadian youth a path into choral singing

and singing in another language. In fact, many CYMK choir alumni are still singing today. In 2008, Lesia Pohoreski formed the Viter Ukrainian Folk choir which is unique from past choirs because it has more traditional Ukrainian instruments for accompaniment. The history of each choir has been a unique insight into the past of the Ukrainian culture. Choirs have given Ukrainian-Canadians a way to learn about their heritage and language. They are a place of gathering where people not only promote art but create it themselves. Choirs have given people the opportunity to connect not only with history, but also with each other for many years, and they will continue to do so in the future. 



PHOTOS PROVIDED



Ukrainian Dance

AN EDMONTON IDENTITY

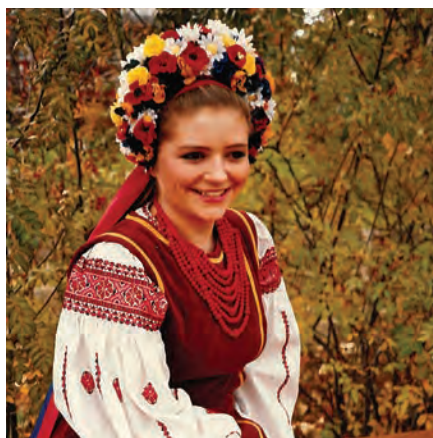
PHOTO PROVIDED

By Darka Tarnawsky

The Ukrainian Shumka Dancers was created in 1959 in a church basement in the heart of Edmonton. There, a group of young dancers decided to put in the energy, passion and hard work to preserve, promote and develop their Ukrainian culture through dance. “Shumka” – meaning whirlwind – has since become Canada’s only professional Ukrainian dance company and one of the most established and recognized dance groups in the country.


What did Edmonton have that sparked and encouraged these ambitious and talented dancers? I have always felt this city has a unique blend of art-makers and cultural-enthusiasts who are committed, hard-working, and innovative. Quietly confident. Not afraid to take risks. They have taken folk art and successfully brought it into the mainstream character of the city. A “Shumka dance” is as common as a Grey Cup championship, an arts festival, and a green onion cake in Edmonton. It is part of our current culture. One of those art forms that has “stuck” as part of the city’s big-hearted and down-to-earth identity.

Over the past 60 years, hundreds of Edmontonians have made Ukrainian dance a major part of their lives. In fact, over 5000 young Albertans partake in regular Ukrainian dance training annually. That’s a lot of bobby pins and ballet slippers.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

I often wonder if the settlers who arrived on this land over 125 years ago ever would have imagined an Edmonton that recognized a red boot for what it was. That cheered and clapped to a Hopak in the city-centre, at festivals, and on major theatre stages. A place inhabited by government leaders, teachers, architects, doctors, nurses, dentists, construction workers, engineers and students who proudly say, “I was a Shumka dancer back in the day.” And where the immediate reaction isn’t one of confusion or even awe, but one of inquisition. “My neighbour’s cousin was a Shumka dancer. Did you know her?”

I am very proud of this reality. And I believe our ancestors are, too. They walked the first difficult steps to establish themselves and our Ukrainian identity in Canada. And the generations that followed were inspired to continue that hard-working nature, a strong character that builds civic identity... and whirlwinds. 



SPACA MOSKALYK UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH | PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW

RELIGION IN THE COMMUNITY

By Elyse Dzenick | Accounts by Father Cornell Zubritsky



EAST CENTRAL ALBERTA | PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW

The Church has always been an important part of the lives of Ukrainians. It was — and still is— something that unites people and forms a community. When Ukrainians first settled in Canada, churches were a place that allowed a community to be reconnected. They acted as a place where Ukrainians could interact in their native language and share their cultural connections.

Both the Ukrainian language and culture are still alive and thriving because of the Church. During the times Ukrainians faced discrimination—in both Canada and Ukraine—church was a safe place to express cultural identities without discrimination. The Church provided a place for people to congregate and for a community to develop. It was the church communities that helped develop strong Ukrainian communities that we know today.

People of the congregation are still very much involved in the church in various ways, like fundraising, cooking for the church, and caretaking. Pyrohy suppers are still a very popular (and a delicious) way of fundraising.

Many congregation-led organizations, such as youth groups and ladies' organizations, have kept the communities within the church strong on local, provincial, and national levels. When these communities began to grow, they influenced parts of society beyond the church. Institutions and organizations outside the church, like the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, were set up to secure Ukrainian diasporas.

The Church has officially been around almost as long as Alberta itself, and has been an integral part to the strength of the province's Ukrainian identity. The Ukrainian-Albertan diaspora continues to be very strong. For newcomers today, the Church is often a place that acts as a point of first contact; it's a place that they can acquaint themselves with a Ukrainian community outside Ukraine. The church has been, and always will be an integral part of the Ukrainian communities throughout Canada. 



EAST CENTRAL ALBERTA | PHOTO BY LARYSA LUCIW



Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Alberta Provincial Council

Вітаємо Вас!

Congratulations ACUA on promoting Ukrainian artists, culture, music, and folkart throughout the year.


For the Love of Cookbooks

By Elyse Dzenick & Joyce Sirski-Howell

Food is an important part of any cultural community and Ukrainian culture is no different. Recipes have been passed from generation to generation. The first women's organization, the Ukrainian Women's Association was formed in 1926 by the Ukrainian Orthodox women. Once women's organizations such as this one were formed, the women began to publish cookbooks.

Joyce Sirski-Howell has been a part of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in various roles. She has shared her love for Ukrainian art through *pysanka* writing, learning and teaching embroidery, cooking and baking, and teaching adult classes. More recently, she has been involved with the Ukrainian community through ACUA and was part of the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers wardrobe team for nearly 20 years. She belongs to several embroidery groups in the US and Canada. Lately, Joyce has researched cookbooks and their relevance to the Ukrainian culture. The Ukrainian Women's Association first published a series of cookbooks in 1939. The four cookbooks, which were between 16 and 18 pages, offered expertise on different areas of cuisine; food preservation (jams and pickling), spring preservation (meat, fish, mushrooms), and hot dishes (*pyrohy*, *holubtsi*). They were the first cookbooks to be published as instructional booklets for Ukrainians settling in Canada by a Ukrainian women's organization. Circa 1942 in Edmonton, the ladies of St. Josephat's Goodwill Club submitted recipes and published a cookbook which they subsequently used as a fundraiser. Part of the money raised was put towards the construction of St. Josaphat's Catholic Cathedral in Edmonton.

Cookbooks are more than just recipes that have been passed from generation to generation. The advertisements in earlier cookbooks (1960s and '70s) provide a picture of businesses that supported the publication of the cookbooks. Cookbooks gave way for Ukrainian immigrants and first generation Ukrainian-Canadians to pass on traditions through food. These cookbooks were put together and sold by the women of Ukrainian organizations, such as the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic ladies' organizations mainly in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. The success of the sales proved that women could do more than just cook and raise children. These women used their knowledge to their advantage and helped (and still help) maintain churches and halls, which brings the community together.

Ukrainian culture has shaped Canadian culture in many ways. Since the late 1940s, Ukrainian recipes have appeared in cookbooks from non-Ukrainian organizations. Efforts of the Ukrainian pioneer women are even part of the reason why Ukrainian food, such as *pyrohy* (*perogies*) and cabbage rolls, are available in grocery stores today. Ukrainian culture has been spread around the world. An incredible example is "The Pioneer Cook Book" published by the ladies of a church in Bruno, Saskatchewan which can be found in the special collections of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Ukrainian traditions are as strong today as they were back then, and it's largely due to the work of the ladies of the Ukrainian community. Their skills and culinary knowledge have been passed down through generations, shaping Canadian culture and allowing Ukrainian culture to continue to thrive. 



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