

# USPENSKA

## A HISTORICAL LANDMARK OF SASKATCHEWAN

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*Dormition of  
the Holy Mother of God,  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church  
(Uspenska)*



### Early history (1897-1923)

#### Introduction

Rural pioneer churches scattered across the prairies have been called "historical landmarks of the plains." Certainly, there is no more familiar sight in the country side of Saskatchewan than the rural pioneer church. The church is as much a part of the prairie landscape as were the grain elevators and agriculture.

The story of Uspenska is the story of the beginning of the development, in 1897, of one of the largest Ukrainian bloc settlements in the province. It is the building of the first Greek Orthodox church in the provincial district of Assiniboia, NWT by two immigrant groups (Roumanians and Ukrainians) from Bukovyna, Austro-Hungarian Empire, who shared the church until 1916. This sharing was not new to them. Prior to their arrival, they were all under the same Roumanian Orthodox Archdiocese of Chernivtsi. Woven into this rich history of Uspenska are the efforts of Dr. Thomas Alfred Patrick, a young Irish medical doctor from London, Ontario, who came to Yorkton, the farthest end of the Manitoba and North Western Railway in May 1889, to practice medicine and politics, and homestead a quarter section of land in 1890. The name of this "horse and buggy doctor" and his integrity live on.

A century ago, Uspenska was an ideal in the mind of the determined group of Bukovynian settlers. They wanted to build a new Orthodox Bukovynian community in the rich farming lands of the prairies- a church, cemetery and school, which would form the nucleus of their prairie settlement. The founders faced many obstacles, but they soon turned their ideal into reality. Canada offered them not only economic opportunities, but a chance to preserve their cultural distinctiveness. Their new community soon became as rich and thriving as the farmlands around them. The true history of Uspenska is little known. I am offering my enthusiastic contribution.



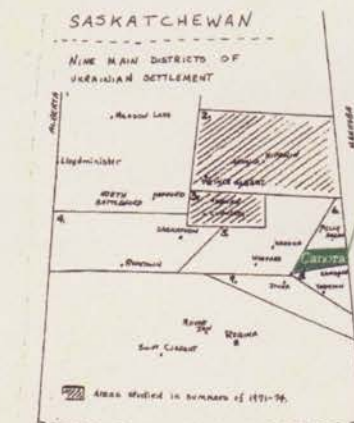
## 1897

### Beginning of a bloc settlement

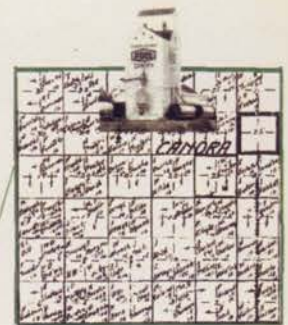
1897 was an important year in Canadian immigration history. Archival records of the Department of the Interior, show that at the beginning of April 1897, immigrants, lured by promises of "free land," were pouring into Canada, particularly Winnipeg, the center of colonization. On May 6, 1897, W. F. McCreary, Commissioner of Immigration in Winnipeg, reported to L.W. Fortier, Superintendent of Immigration in Ottawa, that 1100 souls had arrived in Winnipeg within six hours of each other and it was no easy task to manage them. "A more ignorant and unmanageable class we could not imagine." 473 were taken by special train to Dauphin, whereas the balance, 56 families or some 200-300 souls, most of them Bukovynians, who were of a "poorer class than the Galicians, more destitute, with filthy habits, obstinate and obnoxious," were still housed in sheds in Winnipeg. The immigration hall could not accommodate them all. Neither the land agents nor the immigration officials knew where to put them, and the immigrants had no idea of their destination. These immigrants were at the expense of the government and liable to become a permanent charge upon it. The authorities tried to persuade them to work as labourers, but they had one answer. They demanded the "free land" they had been promised. On May 29, McCreary made special arrangements with W.R. Baker, president of the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway Company, to take the balance of immigrants and all those forthcoming to Yorkton, Eastern Assiniboia, NWT, to take up land at once. This little hamlet of perhaps two hundred people was a point of considerable importance. It was the northwest terminus of the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway. Since 1892, there had been a number of businesses there, as well as a Dominion Land Office, where immigrants could register their homestead claims. And the land in Ranges 4-7 had been surveyed as early as 1889. McCreary placed C.W. Speers, colonization agent for Yorkton, with two interpreters, in charge of the immigrants. Upon their arrival in Yorkton, the immigrants were examined on the railway premises by a Dr.R.W. Mason, who found them all in a fair state of health. Their arrival in this quiet and secluded hamlet, however, caused a stir among the ranchers, who were soon to be ousted off their cattle ranges, wood lots and hay meadows, land, which they did not own and on which they paid no taxes.

"They brought a whole train load of those "Galatians," to Yorkton," one incensed rancher told Dr. Patrick He went on to describe them. "They were clothed in linen. The men wore their shirts outside their trousers and wore long narrow belts that they wound round and round their waists. The old women had their hair tied over the tops of their heads so tight that they were bald at the temples. The young girls- the virgins have their hair braided down their backs and in small braids on the side of their heads." The ranchers were clearly resentful of this sudden invasion. And they had every reason to be. "Over the next couple of years, all the homestead land was occupied," writes Dr. Patrick in his unpublished manuscript, and all they could see was smoke from the "izba" [sod shanty] pouring upward from many thousands of Slavic homes."

At the station, each family was given 25 pounds of flour and 25 pounds of potatoes and taken to their respective homesteads located north and northwest of Yorkton, namely the Crooked Lakes, Sliding Hills, Beaver Hills, White Sand and the Devil's Lake colonies, in Townships 28 -30, Ranges 4-7, thus setting the historical stage for all subsequent immigration. Families joined families, fellow countrymen joined fellow countrymen and soon the Canora-Sheho-Yorkton area became one of the most heavily concentrated Ukrainian speaking bloc settlements in Saskatchewan. "Some called them Ruthenians," says Dr. Patrick, "because of their religion; others called them Little Russians or Ukrainians."



Project CHIRP - Museum of Civilization



Museum of Civilization, 1971  
Cummins map, 1918  
T30-R4-W2ndM  
[CHIRP collection]

## 1900

### Formation of a community

The 1901 Federal census of the Crooked Lakes sub-division, District 203 of Eastern Assiniboia shows there were 180 families occupying a very desirable tract of land. The 1906 Prairie Census shows there were in 1901, 239 people in Township 30, Range 4, alone, a number approximately equal to the number of graves (285) now in the Uspenska cemetery. Devil's Lake subdivision (No.84) had 230 families. There was no town of Canora then, only a treeless site and the homestead of Ivan Gullason, occupied in 1899, and no railway until 1904. The nearest post office was at Tetlock, established on June 13, 1891 on S14-T29-R4-W2ndM under the postmanship of James T. Tetlock. There was no Saskatchewan, either. Some sixty Bukovynian families formed the nucleus of the Uspenska congregation of what later, when the railway was built,



Pioneers Mykhailo and  
Anna Goretskyi, arrived  
in Canada in 1900  
[CHIRP collection]



became part of the Canora "koloniya" [colony].

The settlers chose a peaceful site for their church, high on a hill overlooking the calm rich prairie farmland. Standing like a beacon of faith, it became known reverently as the "church on the hill." The earliest tombstone in the cemetery is that of Anna Melnychuk, (b. 1863, d. 1900).

The need for a church and cemetery was crucial for the mortality rate was high. "Measles broke out everywhere among them," said Dr. Patrick, "and measles contracted in damp dugout huts often meant broncho-pneumonia and death. With a light rig and team I pounded over the old trails and bumped over trailless bush land as I went about from place to place treating the sick. When I grew weary of travel and loss of sleep, I always felt it a little easier to sleep, when I thought of the misery I had seen among those immigrants from Eastern Europe."



*Oldest gravesite  
of Anna Melnychuk,  
d. December 5, 1900  
[CHIRP collection]*

## 1901

### Acquiring the land

Archival records show that on January 17, 1901, Dimitro Yastremskyi of the Tetlock post office, Assiniboia, NWT wrote to the agent of the Dominion Lands Office in Yorkton, [file no. 6116337] on behalf of twenty-four Bukovynian settlers of the Suczawa Congregation of the Orthodox Russo-Greek Oriental [Byzantine] Church, asking for twenty acres of the East 1/2 of Legal Subdivision 2 [hereafter L.S.] of S23-T30-R4-W2ndM, for church, cemetery and school purposes. The settlers were Iftodii Samoil, Georgii (Diordii) Safruk, Ivan Gulutsan (Gullason), Metro Cheredaryk, Mykhailo Antonovich, Nykolai Horechka, Pavlo Kudeba, Constantin Gorenko, Grigorii Watrich, Vasyl Vitsko, Ivan Gorcha, Petro Kushneriuk, Sandul Marandiuk, Todor Lodva, Ivan Muravan, Vasyl Gulutsan, Eliya Cheropita, Petro Danchilla, Georgii Danchilla, Georgii Vitsko, Petro

Samoil and Dimitro, Ivan and Tahnas Jastremskyi. The application was forwarded to the Department of the Interior in Ottawa. On February 1, 1901, the Department informed Yastremskyi that the requested land was within the Manitoba and North Western Railway Company reserve and, therefore, not at their disposal. The settlers then turned for assistance to their very active and effective local MLA for Yorkton, Dr. Thomas Patrick, who soon learned from Mr. William Whyte of the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway Company that the land requested, while "set apart for the railway, had not yet been selected and was still available crown land." He immediately wrote to the Department of the Interior requesting ten not twenty acres of the SE1/4 of S23-T30-R4-W2ndM. Since the congregation wanted to begin the construction of a place of worship as soon as possible, the settlers offered to pay for the land.



*Uspenska pioneers, three generations.  
From left, pioneer Oleksandr Gorcha,  
daughter Mariya Gorcha-Watrich  
and her two children Anna and Georgi  
[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]*



## 1902

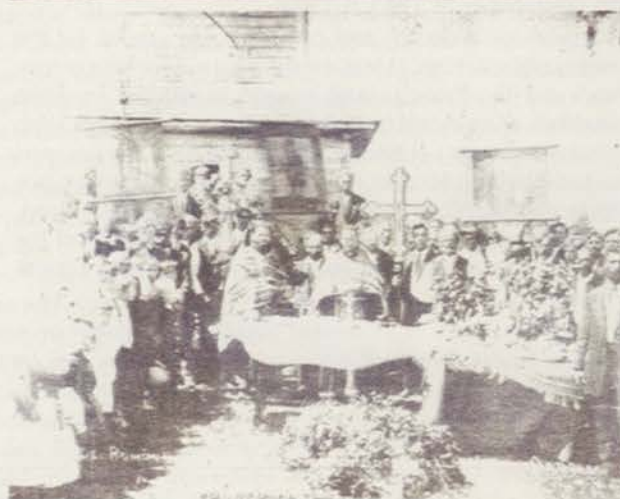
### Was it the first church?

A whole year passed before the Department of the Interior contacted William Whyte of Winnipeg for permission to dispose of the crown land for the purposes named. In April 1902, the railway company agreed to sell to the Suczawa congregation ten acres of the railway grant, at \$3.00 per acre with 5% annual interest. The price was rather exorbitant, considering that in 1891, ten years earlier, the same railway company sold 80,000 acres at one dollar per acre to a Dutchman, named Seaman, who had established his headquarters near what is now the village of Theodore.

The church was built in the summer of 1902. It was fashioned from poplar and aspen logs, and clay plastered on the outside. It was dedicated to the Dormition of the Holy Mother of God, whose feast day falls on August 28. In July 1902, an application was made by Dr. Patrick to the Dominion Parliament for the incorporation of this religious denomination under the name of the Suczawa Congregation of the Orthodox Russo-Greek Oriental Church of North America. (Suczawa was a name of a river and town in Bukovyna, which was adopted by the immigrants). This incorporation would have enabled the trustees to hold land in trust for the congregation for church purposes. No such federal act was passed in this connection, however, and the church had to be incorporated under the NWT legislation. The congregation, accordingly, deferred payment for the land until the fall of 1902. On behalf of the Suczawa congregation, Dr. Patrick assumed full personal responsibility for payment of the principal sum of \$30.00, plus accrued interest of 50 cents.

PAGE ELEVEN

THE CANORA COURIER



**WAS IT THE FIRST?** According to research done by Iva Samuels, the librarian at Canora, the original Orthodox church, built on a site four miles south and one mile west of Canora, was built in 1901, the same year that the St. George's Orthodox Church at Regina was built. Which was built first is not definite. There is a chance that it could have been the first Orthodox church in the province.

This photo by the late John Antikoff, one of the first photographers in Canora, was taken about 1910 at the site of the belfry which was built in 1905.

Printed in  
The Canora Courier  
October 29, 1980



## 1903

### Incorporation of the church

On September 29, 1903, the Suczawa congregation was incorporated under Chapter 42 of the Ordinances of the NWT of 1903, as "The Bishop of the Russo-Greek Catholic Orthodox Church of North America and the Aleutian Islands," and a patent issued. The settlers protested! They were not

Catholic! Dr. Patrick's response was immediate. "The patent should have been issued to the trustees of the Suczawa Congregation, namely Dimitro Yastremskyi, Constantin Gorenko and Petro Kushneriuk, who had complied with the Provisions of Chapter 39 of the Consolidated Ordinances of NWT of 1898," claimed Dr. Patrick. The Department of the Interior cancelled the patent and agreed to issue another one to the said trustees.

## 1904

### Patent issued to the wrong church and the wrong patentees

On January 16, 1904, the Department of the Interior received a petition with five signatures this time from the Suczawa Congregation of the Independent Greek Church of Canada. The trustees were John Yastremskyi, Constantin Gorenko, Petro Kushneriuk, Iftodii Samoil and Dimitro Yastremskyi. A patent was issued to them on December 19, 1904. "A patent had been issued as a result of clerical error to the wrong patentees and the wrong church," protested Dr. Patrick, again. The patent was cancelled immediately. The Department of the Interior then asked Dr. Patrick for clarification. "The Independent Greek Church was quite distinct from the Orthodox Russo-Greek Oriental Church. Which church is the patent to go to and who are the real trustees?" Dr. Patrick explained that two of the trustees (Kushneriuk and Gorenko)

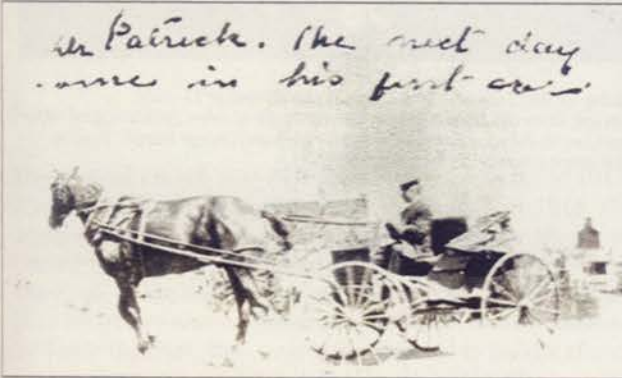
had come to him claiming they were induced by the other three trustees to sign a document they did not understand. They were influenced by Dimitro Yastremskyi, who had fallen under the influence of a certain Seraphim priest, who claimed to be a bishop of the Independent Greek Church, and who ordained Yastremskyi as a priest. The trustees repudiated the Independent Greek Church and the priesthood of Yastremskyi. They also protested to Jason E. Peakes, Dominion Land agent in Yorkton, against a patent being issued to the Independent Greek Church of Canada. On March 12, the Department of the Interior received yet a third application from Dimitro Yastremskyi, Pavlo Kudeba, Evan Muravan and Dmytro Cheredaryk, trustees of the parish of the Greek Independent Church of Canada, requesting the purchase of SE1/4 of LS.2 of S23. Since this land had been patented in October 1902 in the name of the Winnipeg Western Land Corporation Limited, the Department could not dispose of the land.



## 1905

### Correct patent issued

On April 5, 1905, a Dominion Land Grant was finally issued to the trustees of the Succawa Congregation for ten acres of the SW 1/4 of legal subdivision 2 of S23-T30-R4-W2ndM, followed by a Certificate of Title on September 25, 1906. Trustees Constantin Gorenko, Petro Kushneriuk and Dmitro Yastremskyi were now the sole owners of the said land. After five long years, Dr. Patrick had achieved his goal. The community now had a church of its own.



*Dr. Thomas Patrick  
(1864-1943)  
[Saskatchewan  
Archives Board]*

*Dr. Thomas Patrick in his  
light rig, pounding over old  
Indian trails to treat the sick  
[Saskatchewan Archives Board]*

## 1904-1915

### Operations and activities of the church (1904-1918)

From the beginning, the church was served by travelling Russian mission priests. T. Komarnytskyi (1904), Vasylii Mykhailovich (1906-1907), Vasylii Kolesnikov (1908-1911), Ioan Zlobyn (1910-1913), Kerls Belych (1916-1918), who was paid an annual salary of \$200, Ivan Manchuk (1916) and Chornushen (1918), are just a few of the names mentioned in the parish minute book. These Russian priests often carried with them their own official stamp with the words "Russo-Greek Catholic Orthodox Church," which created further confusion among the settlers. It is not surprising then that in 1913, the parish paid a lawyer \$10.00, plus an additional \$3.00 to cover the trustees' trip to Yorkton, to establish the church's legal rights against one of these priests. The parish minute book also shows that in 1905, Ralph Samuels, a master craftsman, built the belfry. In 1907, the parish allocated \$80.00 for the construction of a parish house.



*Eliya Terletskyi's funeral, 1928. Mourners hold lighted candles. It was common for emigrants to have a final picture taken outside the family home before a burial.  
[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]*

In 1908, the parish built a fence around the church and cemetery at a cost of \$13.50. Danylo Khalus paid \$3.00 for a cemetery plot. Miscellaneous expenses include 50 cents to buy flour for "prosfora" [communion bread] and \$2.55 for a gallon of communion wine. Petro and Elena Kushneriuk, immigrants from the village of Mamornytsya, donated \$5.00 for the purchase of an icon. They later moved to the Mamornytsya area and became faithful members of that church. On February 12, 1904, two years after the church was built, there was singing and rejoicing in the church when Agafiya Vitsko married her fellow countryman Dmytro Gulutsan on the Feast Day of the Three Saints [Tr'okh svyatykh]. Agafiya came to Canada in 1899 with her parents Vasyl and Kateryna from the village of Tsuren. Dmytro came to Canada in 1902 with his mother Safta and brother Mandary from the neighboring village of Mamornytsya. They were blessed with 67 years of married life. While they homesteaded and raised their family in the Mamornytsya area, they returned to the Uspenska area to die. On November 8, 1906, on the Feast Day of St. Demetrius, Safta Safruk, daughter of pioneer settlers, Diordii and Kateryna, married Petro (Peter) Rupchan, the famous Saskatchewan potter, who learned the trade in his native village of Molodiya, just outside Chernivtsi. There were many such marriages in the church, since Uspenska was the only Orthodox church in the district until 1910.

There was sadness in the church when Dmytro Dutchak died tragically on August 10, 1910, four years after coming to Canada. He was on a shopping trip to Canora with a team of oxen, to buy flour and other provisions for his starving family. He never returned. The accident was investigated by the NWMP. Upon hearing of the death of her husband, his pregnant wife, Dominika, [my grandmother] walked the twenty miles from Mamornytsya, along the country road which led to the "old" hospital, alone and at night.



6 "By morning I was at my brother's [Mykhailo Goretskyi] place," I remember her telling us. "Were you not afraid, Baba, of the bears and wolves," I asked her. "Of course, but I just crossed myself and kept on going," she replied. She had no time to be afraid. She had a husband to bury. She buried him in Uspenska beside his one-year old son, Ivan, who died in 1907 of broncho-pneumonia.

Missing from the minute book, but witnessed by pioneer Nykolai Vitsko was the mass reburial, which took place on the church grounds one autumn day. "Nine bodies which had earlier been buried privately on the homestead farms, before the church was built, were dug up and reburied in the Uspenska cemetery," remembered Vitsko, as he related this story to the CHIRP members in 1971. "One memorial cross was placed for all of them." Vitsko was five years old when he came to Canada with his parents, Vasyl and Kateryna, in 1899 from the village of Tsuren. Private burials on the farms were not uncommon then. Often, in the case of an epidemic, the bodies would be buried in great fear and haste and without a priest.



Wedding of Alex Danylichuk and Mary Gorcha, November 12, 1929.  
From left: Dominika Gorcha, (nee Bodnarash), wife of John Gorcha,  
Rosie Gorcha-Belous, Mary Gorcha (bride), Vera and George Reznik, cousins.  
[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]

## 1915

### Annual meeting

On December 15, 1915, twenty-three members attended an annual meeting held at the home of Earnest (Arsenii) Galatiuk. They were John and Dimitro Yastremskyi Mykhailo Goretskyi, Ivan Nicolaichuk, Ivan Muravan, John Gorcha, Petro Danchilla, George Galatiuk, Onufrij Melnychuk, Nykolai Horechka, Nykolai Horechka (Sr.), John Bodnarash, Metro

Perdie, Mykhailo Hnatyshyn, Vasyl Gullusan, Nykolai Vitsko, Todor Dutchak, Metro Vengreniuk, Todor Lodva and Pavlo Kudeba. Nominated as trustees were Ernest Galatiuk (3 years), Todor Dutchak (2), Todor Lodva (1). Church membership was \$10.00, non-members \$25.00, a cemetery plot cost \$6.00. Each member of the Board of Trustees would forfeit \$2000. for failing to keep in safe keeping all the documents of the church and deliver them safely to the chairman at the annual meeting.

## 1916

### Separation and division of property

In February 1916, an agreement was reached between the two religious parties [Roumanians and Ukrainians] of the same Greek Orthodox Church to separate because of their language differences and to organize two separate churches. They agreed to divide the property and to pay outstanding bills, such as the priest's hotel expenses (\$7.50), and his salary of \$62.50. On June 26, Earnest Galatiuk resigned as chairman. John Gorcha was elected to replace him. Membership before the separation was 45.

On August 24, 1916, twenty Ukrainian-speaking members of the church agreed to leave to the Roumanian party, upon separation: 1) five acres of the church grounds (western part); the Ukrainians took the remaining part of the said subdivision, formally held under the Certificate of Title and occupied jointly by the two orthodox bodies; 2) one dollar for the church building and belfry; 3) priest's upper vestments valued at \$75.00; 4) incense dish (kadylnytsya), valued at \$10.00; 5) church books valued at \$50.00; 6) cash \$89.00.

The following members gave their consent. Rev. Kerls Bilych, Dmytro Cheredaryk, Tanasko Dorosh, Todor Dutchak George Dutchak, Vasyl Gabora, Mykhailo Goretskyi, Dmytro Goretskyi, Ivan, Gorcha, Vasyl Gulutsan, Alex Gulutsan, Mykhailo Hnatyshyn, Nykolai Horechka, Pavlo Kudeba, Todor Lodva, Nykolai Lysan, Sandul Marendiuk, Onufrij Melnychuk, Eliya and Stepan Terletskyi and Vasyl Vitsko.

In a sworn affidavit dated January 9, 1923 before Barrister Michael Stechyshyn of Yorkton, Todor Dutchak, one of the founders of the church and a secretary since its inception, stated that "the Roumanians and Ukrainians separated mutually and peacefully."



Todor Dutchak, secretary of Uspenska from the beginning to 1923,  
and his wife Mariya, nee Melnychuk.  
[Photograph courtesy of the family]



## 1917

### Transfer of five acres to the Roumanian church

On April 23, 1917, trustees Todor Dutchak, Todor Lodva and Nikolai Horechka signed the official transfer of property to the Greek Oriental Roumanian Church, under the terms of the Land Titles Act, before Barrister Robert W. Cumming of Yorkton. The transfer was accompanied by a sworn affidavit

from Rev. Kerls Bilych, parish priest. Trustees Ernest Galatiuk, John Yastremskyi and Vasyl Vitsko were now the sole owners of all that portion [five acres] of Legal Subdivision 2 of S23-T30-R4-W2ndM. This land was later transferred to Vasyl Vitsko and a new title issued to him on January 27, 1966.

## 1918

### New beginning

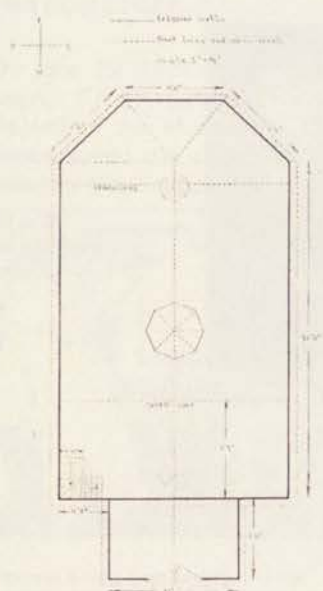
The original church was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1917. This led to the construction of a new church in 1918. On September 22, 1917, the first meeting of the new Ukrainian church committee was held at the home of Rev. Ivan Manchuk, in the town of Canora. Nominated as trustees were Eliya Terletsyky, Metro Cheredaryk and Vasyl Gabora. Chaired by Todor Dutchak, the congregation agreed to build a church on the same site and following in the same plans as the original, with arched windows to provide warmth and light and to impart an inspirational atmosphere during liturgy. Not all were in agreement. Some wanted to build in the town of Canora. Eliya Terletsyky even offered to donate two lots for the church. Nominated as trustees of the new church were Todor Dutchak (three years), Vasyl Gabora (two years) and Ivan Nykolaichuk (one year). Onufrij Kushneriuk was chosen as master builder at a fee of \$500.00. He was to hire his own workers. Everyone else agreed to help, either manually or financially. Tanasko Dorosh donated \$100.00, Onufrij Melnychuk \$50.00, Vasyl Gabora \$50.00, Todor Dutchak \$50.00, Todor Lodva \$50.00, Mykhailo Goretskyi \$50.00, Metro Cheredaryk \$55.00, Vasyl Hakman (son) \$25.00. These donations were rather generous, considering that grain prices were low and wheat was selling at six cents a bushel.



*Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Uspenska)  
[CHIRP collection]*

But this was the end of WWI and the hopes and spirits of the people were high

Parishioners also donated money to buy a new incense dish (kadylnytsya), a lantern (likhtar), chalice (chasha), and a priest's upper vestment, since these items had gone to their Roumanian counterparts during the transfer. The parish also received a permit to build a 24x12 "shanda" [church shed] for the priest at a cost of \$259.45. They also received fire insurance money. Thirty-four members paid their church dues for the year 1917-1918.



*Sketch of the Uspenska church, 1971  
[CHIRP collection]*



*Uspenska congregation January 8, 1928.  
[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]*



## 1922

### Transfer of property

At a special meeting of the congregation held on December 30, 1922 at the home of Nykolai Horechka of S22-T30-R4-W2nd, the congregation resolved to transfer the property from the

congregation of the Suczawa Orthodox Russo-Greek Oriental Church to the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Uspennya Presvyatoyi Bohorodytsi. The resolution was ratified by the congregation on January 9, 1923. Twenty-three members signed their names to the consent.

## 1923

### Renaming and new ownership

On February 17, 1923, a Certificate of Title was issued to the trustees of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Uspennya Presvyatoyi Bohorodytsi at Canora. Todor Dutchak, Mykhailo Goretskyi, Nykolai Horechka and Nykolai Lysan were now the sole owners of the SW1/4 of legal subdivision 2 of S23-T30-R4-W2ndM. The official transfer of property and change of name was executed by Barrister Michael Stechyshyn of Yorkton. In a sworn statement dated March 2, 1923, Rev. Stepan Hrebeniuk stated that he had been the parish priest of the congregation for the past three years (since 1920) and that the church has been known as the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox church of Uspenska. The name Uspenska (Uspenskyi prykhod) [parish of the Dormition], was used in the parish minute book as early as 1906.

The new Uspenska Ukrainian Orthodox church was now being served by visiting Ukrainian priests from the newly-established (1918) Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada in Winnipeg. Stefan Savchuk (April 12, 1920), Petro Samets (1923), Petro Melnychuk (1923), Dmytro Stratiychuk (1923), son of pioneer settlers Fedir and Fedosiya Stratiychuk,

and Stepan Hrebeniuk (1920-1923) were some of the names recorded in the parish minute book. They were paid anywhere between \$20.00 and \$40.00, depending on how much money was on the collection plate on that particular Sunday. In 1922, there was a collection of \$13.00 for Archbishop John Teodorovich of Philadelphia, who visited the Canora area in 1924, while attending the Fourth Sobor of the Ukrainian Orthodox church in Yorkton on July 17. Other sources of income came from the "kolyada" [Christmas caroling], which brought in \$39.25. Other resident priests to serve the church were Franko Kernitskyi (1940s), Petro Tokaruk (1940s), Mykhailo Bodnarchuk (1950s), Volodymyr Slyuzar (1960s), Mykola Stetsenko (1960s), Vasyl Boychuk (1970s), Mykola Derewianka (1980s), Hrehorij Udod (1980s) and presently Petro Vasylenko.

As the town of Canora grew and expanded, a new Ukrainian Orthodox Church named The Holy Trinity was built there in 1919. Some parishioners drifted over to the new church. Others remained faithful to their mother church on the hill.

There were no more written records after this period.

### ПЕРШІ СВЯЩЕНИКИ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ГРЕКО-ПРАВОСЛАВНОЇ ЦЕРКВИ В КАНАДІ



о. Архипресвітер  
Д-р С. В. Савчук



о. Митрат Д. Стратійчук



о. Митрат П. Самець



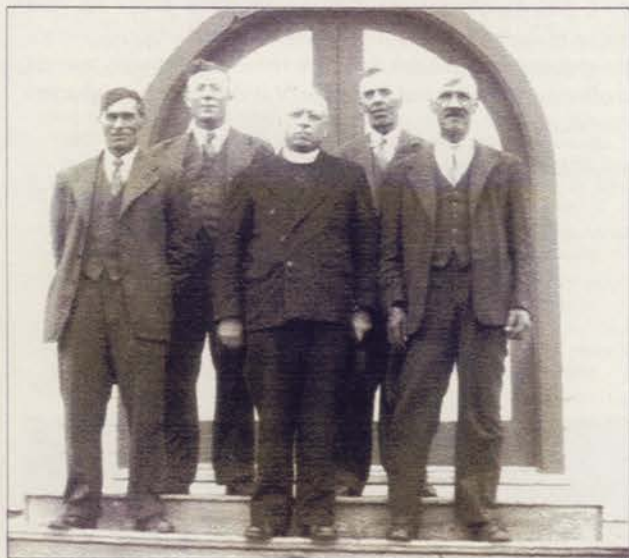
о. Митрат С. Гребенюк

First priests of the  
Ukrainian Greek Orthodox church  
to serve Uspenska  
from left: V. Savchuk, D. Stratiychuk, P. Samets  
and S. Hrebeniuk  
[newspaper Ukrainian Voice]



## 1940

### Faces of the community



Church executive of the 1940s.

From left: N Demchuk, Metro Goretskyi (chairman), [possibly Rev. Hrytsyna], N. Horechka and Fred Kushneruk



After the death of Petro Rupchan, his partner, Metro Safruk, son of pioneer settlers, Diordii and Kateryna, began making traditionally-shaped Bukovynian Orthodox tombstones on his own. "His sturdy cement crosses never crack," said my father, who placed one on his mother's grave in 1948. His crosses with trefoils (clover-leaf) on the ends of the arms, can be found on many Orthodox cemeteries in the district, including Uspenska.



Metro Safruk, local craftsman, (d. 1982).

[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]

Teacher Constantin (Gordon) Gorcha, son of Ivan and Dominika, with his wife Dolly, nee Vovchuk.

[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]

## 1971

### Visit from CHIRP

On June 25, 1971, Uspenska was visited by members of project CHIRP [Church Historical Information Retrieval Project] of the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. They photographed the church and the church grounds, made drawings of the church and belfry, interviewed Nikolai



Uspenska is not a large congregation now, but their young priest, Petro Vasylenko, and his handful of parishioners welcome all who come to worship with them.

[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]

Vitsko, a witness of history and keeper of the church keys, and wrote a short historical sketch. This source later served as a valuable pointer for further research in the Saskatchewan provincial archives. In this brief overview, I have shared with you some of the documentation to be found there.



Nikolai Vitsko holding a hand-made lantern used in church processions. [CHIRP collection]



## 1978

### History in pictures



(a)



(b)



(c)

Annual traditional feast day celebration on August 28, 1978, with a procession around the church three times (a), the blessing of water, fruit and flowers (b), and a memorial service at the gravesite (c). All the dead are remembered with prayers and offerings of bread and fruit. Rev. Vasyl Boychuk conducted the service.

*[Photographs courtesy of Metro Gorcha]*



*Ladies auxiliary of the church, 1978*

*From left:*

*Katie Stratiychuk,  
Dora Humeniuk, Lena Makowskyi,  
Victoria Goretskyi, Annie Gorcha,  
Mary Danylchuk, Katie Kalenchuk  
and Pauline Kunetskyi*

*[Photograph courtesy of Metro Gorcha]*

## 1996

### Cemetery list

On September 11, 1996, a cemetery list was compiled by Bill and Joyce Anaka of Canora. There were a total of 285 graves of which 202 were named, 5 undecipherable, 6 marked but unnamed and 72 unmarked burial mounds, the so-called "shadows of our forgotten ancestors."



*Church on the hill, a peaceful site overlooking the rich prairie farmland  
[CHIRP collection]*



## USPENSKA PIONEERS

(based on the 1901 federal census and Hamburg passenger lists)

### 1897

BILY, Paul (b. 1863), wife Paraskeviya (b. 1865), children Vasyi (b. 1893), Todor (b. 1895), Mariya (b. 1900)

ANTONIUK, Nick and John

GERMAN, George (b. 1857), wife (b. 1864), children Mike (b. 1883), Todor (b. 1889), Vasyi (b. 1884), Peter (b. 1898), John (b. 1899).

HORECHKA, Korol (b. 1865), wife Kateryna (b. 1872), children Vasyi, Anna, Andrew, Mike and Mariya  
HORECHKA, Metro (b. 1880)

MAKOWSKYI, Ivan (b. 1862), wife Mariya (b. 1862), children Annie (b. 1889), Kaska [unclear] (b. 1892)

MONISH, Simeon (b. 1834), wife Anna (b. 1852), son Elash (b. 1878), daughter Mary (b. 1883)

PROKOPETS (PROKOPETZ), Ivan (John) (b. 1851), wife Mariya (b. 1864), children, Todor (age 15), Maranda (b. 1893), Domka (b. 1899), Nykolai (b. 1900), a native of Chomyi Potik

PROKOPETZ, Vasyi (b. 1856), wife Anna (b. 1857), children George (b. 1881), John (b. 1897), Nicolai (b. 1900)

VIHMAN, Ivan (b. 1870), wife Paraska (b. 1872), Vasyi, Mariya (b. 1894), Anetsa (b. 1897), Vasylika (b. 1901).

### 1898

ADAM, Todor (b. 1869), wife Evdokiya (b. 1875), children Mariya (b. 1898), Dominika (b. 1900)

ADAM, Georgii (b. 1864), wife Anna (b. 1876), children John (b. 1884), Eliya (b. 1899)

DENIS, Pavlo (b. 1869), wife Nastasiya, daughter Anna (b. 1900)

GALANDRIY, Petro

KLUTZ, John (b. 1811), wife Annie (b. 1849), son Jacob (b. 1875)

LYSAN, Nykolai (b. 1865), wife Anna (b. 1869), children George (b. 1893), Onufriy (b. 1895), Kateryna (b. 1897), Mariya (b. 1900)

LYSAN, Ivan (b. 1855), wife Mariya (b. 1866), children Kateryna, Elena (b. 1890), Metro (b. 1892), Aliza (b. 1894), Nataliya (b. 1897), Todor (b. 1898)

SYDOR, Dmytro (b. 1840), wife Helena (b. 1848), children Tanasii (b. 1886), Hrehoryi (b. 1890)

SYDOR, Stefan

TERLETSKYI, Mykhail, (age 31), native of Tsuren.

### 1899

CHEROPITA, Prokopij (b. 1851), wife Dominika (b. 1865), children Georgii (b. 1890), Axenia (b. 1895), Gulafira (b. 1898), Elizabeth (b. 1901), native of Tsuren

CHEREDARYK, Vasyi, wife Safta, native of Mamomytsya

CHEREDARYK, Metro, wife Falaria, child Sawka, native of Mamomytsya

DANCHILLA, Petro (b. 1871), wife Dominika (b. 1875), children Merenda (b. 1899) and Alexander (b. 1900)

DANYLCHUK, Jakiv (Jacob) (b. 1866), wife Mariya, sons Alexei (b. 1898), Ivan (b. 1900), Iryna widowed mother (age 50) and sister Mariya (age 20)

DANYLCHUK, Ivan (age 25), wife Paraska, daughter Anna

DOROSH, Tanasko (b. 1848), wife Irena (b. 1853), children Anna, Vasyi (b. 1895)

FURSTEY (FUSHTEI), George (b. 1863), wife Evdokiya (b. 1865), children Paraska (b. 1889), Eliya (b. 1897), Metro (b. 1900), Paraska (mother) (b. 1841)

FUSHTEI, Mykhailo

GABORA, Vasyi (b. 1871), wife Khrystyna (b. 1877), children Vaseika (b. 1895), Mariya (b. 1899), Anna (b. 1900), Helen (b. 1904), Nellie (1906), Mykhailo (b. 1907) and George, Olga and Elizabeth, native of Doroshivtsi  
GABORA, Mykhailo (age 20)

GULUTSAN, Ivan (b. 183), age 63, wife Palagia (b. 1859), children Dominika (b. 1885), Mariya (b. 1882), son (b. 1888), Elena (b. 1892), Evdokiya (b. 1897), Petro (b. 1896), Alexander (b. 1899), native of Tsuren.

GORENKO, Konstantyn (b. 1872), wife Varvara (b. 1871), children Vasyi and Aleksandra.

HORECHKA, Nykolai (b. 1856), wife Kateryna (b. 1863), daughter Mariya (b. 1897).

KITCHEN, Todor (b. 1859), wife Anna (b. 1864), children Ivan (b. 1885), Petro (b. 1893), Nastya (b. 1895), Georgii (b. 1899)

LADVA (LADBA), Todor (b. 1865), wife Oniza, (age 29), daughters Dominika, Margareta (b. 1894) and Frusyna (b. 1899)

KALENCHUK, Onufrei (age 41), wife Anna, children Fedko (age 13) and Dmitro (age 10)

KALENCHUK, Mykhailo

KURULIAK, Vasyi (b. 1879), wife Anna (b. 1880)

KURULIAK, Ivan, wife Evfrozina (b. 1864), children Kyrylo (b. 1890), Dmytro (b. 1894), Tatyana (b. 1892), Anastasiya (b. 1893) and Mariya (b. 1899)

MARENDIUK, Sandul (b. 1859).

MATIJCHUK, Jakow, wife Todosia and children Simeon, Vasyi, Todor, Tanasii

MATIJCHUK, Danylo, wife Mariya and children Dokiya, Sofia, Vasyi, Nykolai, Ivan (b. 1900)

MARTYNIUK, Georgii (age 20)

MURAVAN (MORAVAN), Ivan (b. 1856), wife Mariya (b. 1855), children, Aleksandra, Angelina, Isak (b. 1885), Magdalena (b. 7), Sakray (b. 1893), Dodi (b. 1895)

OLIJNYK, Vasylii (b. 1859), wife Mariya, children Kataryna (b. 1885), Paraska (b. 1888), Oksana (b. 1891), Dmytro (b. 1892), Kyrylo (b. 1896), Anna (b. 1899), Jakov (b. 1901)

REPAY (REPEI), Todor (b. 1862), wife Paraska (b. 1868), children Ivan (1891), Annie (b. 1895) and Nykolai (b. 1900)

SAFRUK, Georgii (Diordii) (b. 1858), wife Kateryna and children Safta (b. 1881) and Metro (business co-partner of Petro Rupchan)

STRATIJCHUK, Michael (age 18), single

STRATIJCHUK, Hnat (age 40)

VITSKO, Vasyi (Alexei), (b. 1846) and Kateryna, nee Gorenko, (b. 1857) and five children. George (Hryhorij) (b. 1882), Agafiya (b. 1885), Petro (b. 1888), Dominika (b. 1891), Nykolai (b. 1894), Alexandra (b. 1899), native of Tsuren

YASTREMSKYI, Dimitro (age 33), wife Dominika (age 25), sons Stepan and (name not clear, b. 1900), native of Tsuren

YASTREMSKYI, Konstantin, wife Mariya, son Manoil

### 1900

ANTONOVICH, Mykhailo, wife Dominika, children Eliya, Elizabeth, Magdalena

DANCHILLA, Georgij, wife Galafira (b. 1863), children Dominika (b. 1884), Mariya (b. 1887), Iliya (b. 1890) Elena (b. 1893), Anna (b. 1897), Veronia (b. 1899), native of Tsuren

DUTCHAK, Vasyi (b. 1845), wife Anna (b. 1851), son Todor (b. 1882). After Vasyi's death in January 1904, the homestead NW1/4 of S32-T30-R4-W2nd went to his son, Todor.

DUTCHAK, Todor, wife Anna, nee Repei,

DUTCHAK, Georgii (Yurko), wife Dora, nee Terletskyi

GALATIUK, Trofim (age 18), native of Tsuren.

GORCHA, Ivan (b. 1871), wife Dominika, nee Bodnarash, (b. 1880), daughter Evfrosina (1897), George (b. 1900), Alex (b. 1904), Mary (1908), Constantine (b. 1910), Steve (b. 1917), Metro (b. 1915), Fred (b. 1920), a native of Tsuren

GORETSKYI, Mykhailo (b. 1869), wife Anna, nee Melnychuk, children Kateryna (b. 1896), Mariya (b. 1898), Yordakiy (1899), Helen (b. 1904), Metro (b. 1908), John (b. 1913), Sophie and George, a native of Mamomytsya.

GULUTSAN, Vasyi (b. 1862), wife Dominika (b. 1863), children Ivan (b. 1888), Alexander, Todor (b. 1891), Dmytro (b. 1895) and Dokiya (b. 1899)

HACKMAN (HAKMAN), Todor (b. 1859), wife Iryna (b. 1859), children Nastasiya, Vasyi, Vasylika, Nykolai

HARAS, George, wife Domka, children Kateryna, Mariya, and baby 11 mos.

HEIDEY, Ivan, wife Anusya, children Nykolai (age 4), and Vasyi (age 3), native of Doroshivtsi

HOMENIUK, T. (b. 1844), wife Mariya (b. 1851), sons Stefan and Metro (b. 1891)

HNATYSHYN, Mykhailo, (age 27), wife Evdokiya (b. 1875), daughter Mariya (b. 1899) Ivan (b. 1901), a native of Vasyliki

KUDEBA, Paul (b. 1857), wife Mariya, children Elena (b. 1884), Dmytro, Ivan and Evdokiya, native of Tsuren

KURULIAK, Alexander (b. 1867), wife Mariya (b. 1875), daughter Mariya (b. 1899)

KUSHNERIUK, Petro (b. 1851) wife Elena (b. 1856), children Oleksa (Alexei), (b. 1889), Kateryna (b. 1882) and Mariya (b. 1886), native of Mamomytsya

KUSHNERIUK, Onufrij and Mariya

KUSHNERIUK, Vasyi

MARANIUK, Sava (b. 1859), wife Tatyana (b. 1882), Ivan (b. 1895)

MERONIUK, Ivan (b. 1854), wife Kateryna, children Vasyi (b. 1891), Todor (b. 1894)

MELNYCHUK, Onufrij (b. 1852), wife Nastya, (b. 1855), Ivan (b. 1887) and Mykhailo (b. 1887), native of Mamomytsya

REZNYK, Georgii (father) (b. 1862), son Ivan (b. 1882)

STRATIJCHUK, Fedor (Fedir) (b. 1858), wife Fedosiya (b. 1852), children Vasyi (1892), Ivan (1885), Jacob (1884), Dmytro (1892), Annie (b. 1894) and Hrytsko (b. 1899), native of Pelypche, District of Borshchiv

WATRICH, Hrehoryi (b. 1862), wife Mariya, (nee Gorchal), (b. 1866), children Dominika (b. 1890) and Kateryna (b. 1895), Anna and Georgii

1901

TERLETSKYI, Ivan, age 30, wife Vasylika (age 24), children Dosiya (age 4), Mariya (age 2), native of Tsuren

TERLETSKYI, Eliya (b. 1867), wife Mariya, nee Karpiuk, children Stepan (b. 1887), Ivan (John) (b. 1889), Nick, Dora, Harry and Polly

STRATIJCHUK, Kateryna (b. 1887), Irena (b. 1883), Mykhailo (b. 1885), Anna (b. 1892), Nastya (b. 1893), family of Hnat, who arrived in 1899

### 1902

DWERNYCHUK, Semon (Semion) and wife Vasylika

DANYLIUK, Vasyi, wife Anna and son, Dmytro,

GAVRELETZ, Tanasyi, wife Domka, children Vasylika, Nykolai, Vasyi and Mariya

GAVRELETZ, Vasyi, wife Mariya and daughters Gafitsa and Yelena.

GORETSKYI, Dmytro, wife and two children, native of Mamomytsya

GULUTSAN, Safta, and sons Dmytro and Mandaryi, native of Mamomytsya

HEIDEY, Vasyi, wife Anna

HUPKA, Lazar, wife Zenoviya, children Andrii, Georgii (b. 1913), John, Polly, Rose and Mary

### 1906

DUTCHAK, Dmytro, (b. 1854), wife Dominika (b. 1866), children Mykhailo (b. 1896), Agafiya (b. 1902), Ivan (b. 1905), native of Mamomytsya



Descendants of Dmytro Dutchak (b. May 15, 1854, d. August 10, 1910). Three generations: son Alexei, granddaughter Jennie (author), great granddaughter Brenlee Dutchak

HNATYSHYN, Mykhailo, native of the village of Vashki.

VENGRENIUK, Georgii (age 24), native of Tsuren

### 1907

HNATYSHYN, Anna (wife of Mykhailo), and son Ivan (two months)

HNATYSHYN, Prokopij, wife Odokiya, nee Kostuk (parents of Anna Hnatyshyn)

### 1909

GORCHA, Oleksandr, wife Dominika, nee Firley, and three children, native of Tsuren. In 1917, Oleksandr erected a memorial cross on the Mamomytsya church grounds, in memory of his wife Dominika, who died in 1915, and is buried there.

Others

BILANCHUK, Vasyi and Safta

BILANCHUK, Ivan and Alex

BODNARASH, Dmitro

BODNARASH, Ivan and Mariya

GALATIUK, Ernest and Metro

GORETSKYI, Metro (son of Mykhailo) and Victoria, nee Andrusiak

GORETSKYI, Bob (grandson of Mykhailo) and Doris, nee Chobotar

Gulutsan, Charlie, (son of Mandaryi and Mariya), wife Victoria, nee Vitsko

Gulutsan, Danny and Olga, nee Kamnitskyi

KORNEICHUK, Vasyi

KHALUS (CHALUS), Vasyi

MAKOWSKYI, Maurice

MELNYK, Kost

NYKOLAICHUK, Ivan and Vasyi

PERDIE, Metro

VINGRENIUK, Metro and Akseniya



# USPENSKA

## A HISTORICAL LANDMARK OF SASKATCHEWAN

by Jennie Dutchak  
author of *Mamornitz Revisited*



### Conclusion

Uspenska is a treasure of the Canora community. Its rich history, when compared with other pioneer rural churches in the area, is unique and must be preserved. Standing alone on a farmer's field like a solitary candle, Uspenska embodies the shining spirit of staunch Bukovynian pioneers, who, upon their arrival in Winnipeg in 1897, knew what they wanted and who they were. This is where their journey to Canada ended and a new journey of building a community began. Uspenska is a first in terms of when and how the immigrants acquired the land from the railway company, incorporated the church under the NWT legislation with the help of Dr. Thomas Patrick, their local MLA, shared the church with the Roumanians until 1916, later separated peacefully and divided the property. They survived the burning of the church in 1917, and built a new church in 1918, which was served by the first Ukrainian Orthodox priests in Canada. The close proximity of another Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the town of Canora, only two miles away, attracted many of its followers, leaving the parish with a handful of parishioners, who, despite all odds, managed to keep the mother church open and functioning until its 100th anniversary, a milestone in the life of a rural pioneer church. We need this history! Canada needs it! Our future generations need to know their past.

As the bells ring out joyously on August 28, 2002, in celebration of 100+ years, may we, their descendants, honor the memory of these pioneers and follow in their footsteps!

### Sources:

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