

DAY 6—TUESDAY, JUNE 12

On to Ivano-Frankivsk

I was up at 6:00 am and beat the wake-up call. I packed my bags for our next leg of the tour, to Ivano-Frankivsk. Ivano-Frankivsk is about 135 kilometers south-east of Lviv. On the way we would stop in the town of Rohatyn to see the statue dedicated to Roksolana, Rohatyn's greatest pride.

We had our final breakfast at the Opera Hotel, and lugged our bags to the lobby. Our bus pulled up at 9:05 am and we met our driver, Myroslav. He spoke very little English, so Romana acted as our interpreter. This would be our first introduction to the quality of the roads. We had heard horror stories about the many pot-holes festooning Ukraine's highways. The road leaving Lviv is in good shape and it wasn't until we started to go through some of the towns that we encountered rough driving.

We were on the look-out for storks and their large nests, often found on top of light standards. Storks are supposed to bring good luck, so their nests are left alone. We reached Rohatyn at 11:15 and pulled over adjacent the main town square where a monument to Roksolana stands.



Roksolana

Our driver left the bus to locate someone who would explain who Roksolana was, and her importance. He came back with a young woman who proceeded to deliver an interesting account of Roksolana's history. She explained that Rohatyn was the birth-place of Nastya (Anastasia) Lisovska, who later became known as Roksolana. In the early spring of 1520, Crimean Tatars took a 15 year old girl prisoner. That same year Nastya was brought to a harem and soon the slave-sultana became a favourite wife of one of the most powerful Sultans of the Ottoman Empire, Suleiman Pyshnyj. Another story was that she was taken capture during her wedding in the Church of St. Spirit. This church is also known as Roksolana Church; since it was the church Roksolana attended and had a house nearby.

The Turkish Ottoman Empire, at that time extended from Egypt on the south to the Black Sea on the north and was one of the greatest powers at that time. The Turkish Emperor Sulieman liked Roksolana so much that she became his wife, whom he loved with all his heart. He did not refuse her and anything she asked for. She was the only woman honoured by Suleiman who built a huge mausoleum just for her.

Over time there were 36 Sultans and endless number of sultan's wives, but none of the wives during the Empire's thousand years had been buried with so much splendour as this 53 year old Ukrainian woman. Through him, she virtually "ruled" the empire and greatly influenced Turkish politics towards Ukraine; which spared Rohatyn and Ukraine from many Turkish invasions.



Sulieman's Mosque in Istanbul was built by Sulieman for Roksolana. Her son became the emperor as heir after his father. Today, she is revered and famous in Turkey. Nastya Lisovska was given a name Gurrem, meaning "Merry," because of her sweet smile. This official name with the added title Sultan becoming Gurrem Gasseki.

In Western Ukraine, the name, Roksolana, is quite common as a female first name because of her. Many local products, streets and so on are named after her. Even the mineral water from Rohatyn bears the name Roksolana. Her name and history is known all over Ukraine, especially in Western part, i.e. Galicia. After, her 20 minute talk, our guide led us on a 5 minute walk to the wooden Church of St. Spirit.

Roksolana's father had been a priest in the Church of St. Spirit. The current wooden church was built in 1595, many years after her father was priest to an earlier structure of the church, which is believed to have been built around 1184.

The church is surrounded by an old cemetery where Catholics, Orthodox and Greek-Catholics are buried. There is also the type of stone crosses that one would find on Cossack graves.

After leaving Rohatyn we encountered a cattle crossing. The women directed the crossing while chatting on modern cell phones. On the sides of the highways we saw countless clusters of ducks, geese and chickens and surprisingly, no road-kill. They knew how to avoid the cars and trucks.

Hotel Nadia and Ivano-Frankivsk



Our destination was the Hotel Nadia located in the center of Ivano-Frankivsk. This is the largest hotel in the city. Every room has all the conveniences, including telephone, TV-set, refrigerator, shower or bath room. Attached to the hotel is a large delicatessen with an outdoor patio. Here the locals buy their food and drinks from the delicatessen and have their meals on the patio. It is quick and cheap. In front of the hotel is a very large and impressive

monument to Ivan Franko.

Ivano-Frankivsk, was named in honour of the poet-writer and political activist Ivan Franco. It is the capital city of the Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast which lies to the west in Ukraine. It is a relatively small city with a population of roughly 246,000 people. The smallness of the city only adds to its charm.

The city was founded by Polish magnate Andrzej Potocki, in 1662 where three villages had stood. It was called Stanislawow, in honour of his son. Stanislawow started life as a fortress which was built to protect the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth from repeated Tatar invasions. This is did quite well and it wasn't long before the city-fortress began to grow under the safety provided by this fortification. The city went on to survive not only Tatar attacks but also those thrust upon it but invading Turkish and Russian forces.

The 17th century saw the initiation of partisan movement against the Polish nobility which was brutally suppressed by the Polish gentry. Many rebels hid high up in the steep cliffs of the Carpathian's with impenetrable forests. The partisan leader, Oleksa Dovbush, was captured by the Poles, taken to jail and later quartered publicly on a scaffold in front of the Town hall. Parts of Oleksa's body were hung in parts of the region to scare local peasants and quash any future national uprising.

Little of the fortress remains today. In 1802 the Austrian government bought Stanislawow and ordered the destruction of military ramparts. Today some remnants can still be seen on Nowchorodska Street. In the 1870s Stanislawow was proclaimed a “Free City” and both gates to the city, even as late as 1939, had large signs testifying to this fact.

During WW I residents of Stanislawow experienced hard times, since Austrians arrested them for collaboration with Russians. The Russians did the same for collaboration with Austrians. Many Stanislawow residents were sent to the concentration camp in Austria, while others were exiled to Siberia. Few people returned safely home from the Russian and Austrian camps.

The Austro-Hungarian monarchy fell in 1918. The short lived Western Ukrainian People’s Republic (ZUNR) was proclaimed with the capital Stanislawow from December 1918 till May 1919. Poorly equipped Ukrainian troops were forced to retreat from the much better equipped invading Polish armed forces who occupied the region.

In 1939 World War II broke out. During the War, 127,000 Ukrainians, Poles and Jews were executed by the Nazi troops and another 176,000 were transported to labour camps in Germany.

In 1962, to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the city, Stanislawow was renamed Ivano-Frankivsk in honour of the Ukrainian writer, poet, journalist Ivan Franko.

The Walking Tour

After unpacking and a quick lunch, we were taken on a walking tour of the



central part of the city. Ivano-Frankivsk has a very large ***Ploshcha Rynok*** (market Square), probably the largest in Western Ukraine. In the middle of the Square is a Ratusha (Town Hall). We briefly visited the Church of St. Volodymyr and Olga, a Greek Catholic Cathedral, dating back to the 17th century. I was getting “churched-out,” with all the churches we had

visited so far. Next to the Cathedral is the Andrey Sheptytski Majdan (Square). This square was probably an earlier Rynok Square, as old city maps show it as “Staryi Rynok”(old Rynok).

During the time of Ukrainian independence, a fountain with the figure of the Virgin Mary was erected in the Andrey Sheptytski Majdan. Semi-detached to the Cathedral are housed the premises of the Stanislawow Medical Academy, it is a former school of Polish Jesuits. Across the square is a large building. Today it is the Art Gallery which served as a Roman Catholic Church. There is an old and abandoned belfry nearby. Stanislawow was home to a large Armenian population and there is an impressive Armenian church with two blue bell towers which was built in 1742.

Our final stop in the tour was to a small park with a monument to a famous Polish poet Adam Mitskevych. A pigeon had made a home on his head, leaving his mark.



The city boasts many squares loaded with outdoor cafes and restaurants—a great place to people-watch. The Ukrainian “deuchinas,” wear stiletto shoes and very revealing skirts. In Toronto, they probably would have been followed by the vice-squad along with many young and old men. There is one 24- hour channel on TV, solely devoted to fashions. This is having an obvious effect on the attractive, young girls of Ukraine. To think that an old Babka figure is screaming to evolve out of their lithe young figures—or that the old Babka’s, at one time looked like these gorgeous girls. It’s hard to fathom.

After the tour we enjoyed a rest at the Hotel’s delicatessen patio. A half-liter bottle of beer sets us back 3 HUAs (75 cents). Since I could afford it I sprung for a round. We agreed to meet at 7:00 pm to go for supper.

Carol had consulted her guide book and found an interesting restaurant in the Ploshcha Rynok. We headed over to the square and wandered around trying to locate the restaurant. No one seemed to know where it was. Finally I ask some young Ukrainians, enjoying a beer, “De ye dobry restaurant?”

("Where is a good restaurant"?) They directed us to a side street, where there was a restaurant with an outdoor, covered patio. The menu looks good so we decide to try this restaurant. The patio was too crowded for us to sit together, so the waiter showed us inside to an upstairs, private room. The décor and menu was French/Ukrainian Fusion. The food was excellent. Unfortunately the staff had to struggle up the narrow stairs to deliver our food and drinks. They got a good tip for their efforts.

With all the walking from the tour, some of us ended up limping back to the Hotel for a nightcap on the delicatessen patio before retiring to bed.

DAY 7—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

Ivano-Frankivsk—The Archives and Kolomya

I was up before the wake-up call and got ready for the archives visit by checking my notes on what spravy I had ordered and what people I would be searching. Four of us would be hitting the archives; myself, Romana and the Hrynkiw's. The Vizniowski's would be sight-seeing; planning to go to Kolomya.

Breakfast was a new adventure with a new variety of items on the buffet table. So far I had enjoyed the breakfast layouts. They were tasty, plentiful and there had been a lot to choose from. However, there were no varynyky or studenetz (kholodets) on the menu. From the guide books I had read, they mentioned that these items were common breakfast fare and I was looking forward to some varynyky get me started in the morning.

After breakfast, the Vizniowski's headed out for their adventure and the "Archive Four" hopped a cab and made our way to our destination. The State Archives of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast is located at 42a Sahaidachnoho Street, which is a fair distance from the hotel. We travelled through an industrial area of Ivano-Frankivsk, down a gravel road to a fenced in complex with two



square, Soviet-inspired buildings. One looked like it is a small warehouse, of sorts, the other was the archive building. There was a small sign on the fence, indicating the archive address. You would never have known that this building housed the archives without the sign being present. However, the taxi-driver seemed to know the building and drove to the correct building, without hesitation.

The door to the archive building was propped open. We posed for pictures outside the entranceway and proceeded inside. We were met by a guard who showed us to the director's office. Compared to the Bernardine Archives, the interior of this building was bright and cheerful.

The Director Kateryna Petrivna Mytsan, was very warm in welcoming us. She said she was looking forward to meeting us and had set out the spravy



(metrical books) that we had earlier ordered. After chatting with us to find out more about our interests, the Director showed us to the Reading Room. It was far more spacious than at the "Bernardine Archives." The large, open windows let in plenty of light and fresh air. There were many thriving plants adding to the cheerful atmosphere. One table was piled high

with spravy we had ordered.

The Director proved very helpful and stayed with us until we were comfortably situated at our individual desks, where we could work. She offered to help us interpret what was in the books. We told her that we were familiar with these publications, having seen them on microfilm. The Director then suggested some other files to search that were of genealogical interest. She showed us the "*Emigration Sprava*" of those who emigrated from the region. These files included the letters and forms that were used in order to obtain a passport to immigrate to North America and elsewhere. Some even contained a copy of the resultant passport. We asked if the other archives would likewise had such Spravy. She said they would. Romana asked if they had any "schematisms" (annual directories of government, education and church officials and staff). The Director acknowledged that they had some and proceeded to show Romana the volumes they had.

The staff was so helpful that they even phoned ahead to order a lunch for us at a nearby café. The café was a five-minute walk down the road from the archive and adjacent a building parts warehouse. One of the staff would accompany us to the café, which had an outdoor patio. She took our order and relayed the information to the cook inside the café building. She then returned to the archive. The nearby warehouse sparked Harry's interest, who wanted to see what types of building materials were being sold.

We had our usual borscht a veal cutlet and kasha, chased down with a cool beer. The total for the four of us was 20 HUA (\$5.00). One can live very cheaply in Ukraine, if you knew where to eat. Harry made a quick visit to the warehouse, while we chatted. He would later relate to us just how inexpensive building parts were, compared to back home in Canada.



After returning to the archives, I was told that there was someone for me downstairs. I went downstairs and a young woman was standing there, holding my camera, which was attached to its monopod. I had taken it to the café and forgotten to carry it back. The café staff could have easily kept it and I would probably have lost my camera, had it not been for the honesty of the staff at the café. I thanked her and offered her 20 HUA for her trouble. She at first refused until I told her I wanted to buy a round of beers for the café staff. This she accepted.

Harry and Margaret were successful locating the birth records for Harry's grandfather. I was searching for my Godfather, Peter Turchyn's ancestors. Unfortunately the records stopped short by one year for what I needed. Romana was having success searching the "schematisms."



Before leaving the archives, we posed for pictures with the Director and staff and thanked them for their generous assistance. We ordered a taxi and returned to the hotel, where we went for a beer at the outdoor Delicatessen Café. We discussed our plans for tomorrow's side trip visits to the ancestral

villages. Harry, Margaret and I would visit Tlumach, Palahicze and Ostrynia, which are very close to each other. Romana would be visit Bolochiv.

After freshening up I met Harry, Margaret and Romana in the lobby. The Vizniowski's were not there. We figured that their trip to Kolomya was running late. We decided to have supper at the Delicatessen Café, where we would be able to see any returning buses. After a while the Vizniowski's appeared and we had our supper and exchanged our day's experiences.

I placed a wake-up call for 6:00 am for tomorrow, returned to my room and watched the BBC until I fell asleep.

A Bit About Kolomya and Pysanka

Located two hours by car from Ivano-Frankivsk, Kolomiya is a storied town, with written references dating back to 1241, making it one of the oldest settlements in Ukraine's Galicia region. Kolomiya was an important cultural and artistic center up until the 19th century and was home to a myriad of poets, writers and artists.



Historically, the city survived on trade. Kolomiya was located on the main trade route connecting Poland and Germany to Walachia and the Danube via Galicia, as well as linking the roads between Kyiv and Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia.

It has a population of around 60,000 which is comparable to Luzerne, Switzerland. Kolomiya records a long artistic history, and was home to a myriad of poets, writers and artists until the 19th century. Once a vibrant center for potters, by the 19th century Kolomiya's artisans were exporting up to 8,000 individual pieces of pottery daily: plates, bowls and other items used largely to serve food across Europe.

There are two museums in Kolomyya. The first one, *The Museum of Folk Art of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttya* is named after Mykhailo Kotsyubynskyi. This Museum was opened in the year of 1926. Nowadays it possesses the biggest collection of the articles of everyday use, metal and ceramic articles, national clothes and embroidery of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttya.

Traditional Hutsul culture is often represented by the colorful and intricate craftsmanship of their clothing, sculpture, architecture, woodworking, metalworking (especially in brass), rug weaving, pottery, and egg decorating, along with other Hutsul traditions, as well as their songs and dances, this culture is often celebrated and highlighted by the different countries that Hutsuls inhabit. Hutsul culture bears a noted resemblance to the traditional culture of Romania, with that of western Ukraine, and with that of other mountainous people which may have similar origins.

Hutsul society was traditionally based on forestry and logging, as well as cattle and sheep breeding; the Hutsuls are credited with having created the breed of horse known as the Hucul pony. They use unique musical instruments, including the "trembita" (*trâmbița*), a type of alpenhorn of Dacian origin, as well multiple varieties of the fife, or *sopilka*, that are used to create unique folk melodies and rhythms. Also frequently used are the bagpipe (*duda*), the jew's harp (*drymba*), and the hammered dulcimer - cymbalom.

The Hutsuls served as an inspiration for many writers, such as Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi, Vasyl Stefanik and Mihail Sadoveanu. Sergei Parajanov's film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (*Тіні забутих предків*), which is based on the book by Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'ky, portrays scenes of traditional Hutsul life.

A monument to Ukraine's most celebrated art form internationally; *The Museum of Pysanka* (Easter Egg) displays a host of handcrafted eggshells with delicately drawn designs and patterns unique to every region of the country. Its collection is made up of more than 10,000 pysankas from all the regions of Ukraine and from foreign countries. The Museum is located in the very heart of the town. It has the original architectural form of an egg and has an extremely rich collection of pysankas. Here you will have a chance to admire the beauty of Easter eggs and try out the technique of wax decorations. This extraordinary work of art, which is also being called the

eighth world wonder, is a glass pysanka. The museum is constructed in the form of an egg, fourteen meters high with a diameter of ten meters. It is made completely out of coloured glass with a surface of more than 600 square meters.



Shortly before the Feast of Christ's Resurrection, all across the Orthodox Christian lands eggs begin to be decorated in a great many ways — they are painted, pasted over with little pieces of all kinds of materials, wound around with multi-coloured threads, and gilded; Easter eggs are made of stone, metal and decorated with enamel, beads and precious stones. The most popular way to decorate Easter eggs in Ukraine is to paint them. The patterns used in decoration are not arbitrary — they have their own symbolism that goes back into the misty past.

There are many legends and stories about the origin of pysanka. One of the legends has it that on the day when The Virgin Mary gave birth to a son, a hen laid an egg all in red dots. It was looked upon as an auspicious sign and the egg was presented to The Virgin. Thus originated the tradition of decorating eggs on Easter and giving them as presents. Another legend tells a story of The Virgin painting eggs in different colours to give them to the Infant Jesus to play with. Still another legend has Mary Magdalene presenting a painted egg to the Roman Emperor Tiberius and saying, "Christ is Risen!" and then telling the emperor the story of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

In the past thousand years, pysanka in Ukraine has been associated with Christianity, but the tradition of painting eggs goes back thousands of years; the evidence of it was discovered in archaeological excavations at the sites of what came to be known as "Chernyakhiv Culture" and "Ternopil Culture"; the painted-egg tradition can be traced to the times immemorial in the lands of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttya.

Many rituals are associated with pysanka. The first Easter meal begins with an Easter egg — the head of the family chooses the best decorated pysanka, breaks the shell and removes it, and then the egg is cut into as many pieces as there are members of the family; then the head of the family walks around

the table at which the family are sitting, beginning from the eldest and down to the youngest, kisses each one three times, and gives every one a piece of the Easter egg saying “Christ is risen!” The shell is thrown either to the henhouse — it will cause the hens to lay more eggs, or into the field — it will ensure a good harvest, or it can be saved and kept hidden until the time a new house is to be built — then it will be put into the foundation and will bring happiness to the inhabitants of the house.

In the times of old, in the land of Hutsulshchyna, women used to lie down on the tilled field and throw pieces of the Easter egg shells up into the air — the higher the pieces flew, the taller the wheat would grow. The women used pysanka in fortunetelling: they let pysankas roll downhill, watching the way they rolled — if the egg broke, the person who launched it would not find anyone to marry in the next twelve months.

The patterns with which pysankas were decorated contained codified wishes of rich harvest, health and wealth. Pysankas were kept close to the stove so that all the evil that the eggs protected the inhabitants from would leave the house with the smoke from the chimney. Pysankas were suspended near the icon in the house; pysankas were used by girls as love messages to young men. Pysankas were also used to put a spell on people, to cause illness or even death.

In the centuries that have passed since Ukraine was converted to Christianity, the patterns and principles of decoration have gone through many changes, and today’s pysanka may carry patterns and decorations which do not contain ancient symbolism and are purely decorative. But in the country-side, the tradition of painting Easter eggs in patterns of highly symbolic nature lives on, and today’s peasant decorating pysankas is thus linked to the peasant of old who turned to the pre-Christian gods with a prayer to send warmth, sunshine and good yield, with the pysanka being a prayer vehicle. Those who decorate Easter eggs before Velykden are the followers of the ancient traditions of prayer and fortunetelling.

DAY 8—THURSDAY, JUNE 14

Ivano-Frankivsk—Trip to the Carpathians

The front desk staff of the hotel forgot to ring me for the 6:00 am wake-up call that I had requested. Fortunately, I woke up to a barking dog—perhaps *that* was the hotel’s wake-up call. It was warm and it felt like it is going to be a scorcher today. Our trip to the Carpathians, hopefully would provide a cooler environment for the day. In any event I stocked up on bottled water.

After breakfast we met our guide, Helena and driver Andrei at 8:30 am. I noticed that everyone was carrying extra water. Helena informed us that we would first visit Manyava and the Manyavsky Skyt Monastery. Next we would visit Yaremche. Our driver put on some music and Romana objected, saying that that it was Russian music. “Do you not have Ukrainian music?” she asked. The driver would stop, at a few places, looking for Ukrainian tapes to no avail.

On the way to Manyava, we saw many farmers cutting hay, using the old-fashioned scythes. The haystacks were tall and narrow and appear to be elevated above the ground. After a while we saw some incomplete stacks and noted that there is a criss-crossed pole structure, on which the farmers stack their straw. The way the poles are constructed allowed for the straw to be stacked above the ground, thereby avoiding dampness to collect under the straw. What a simple but ingenious idea.



We also, every so often, saw stork nests and storks sitting on top of haystacks. Off in the distance we began to see low-level mountains looming on the horizon. Everyone had their cameras out and was taking pictures of the countryside. We passed the remnants of huge collective farms and saw the odd long strip under cultivation.

After driving about sixty kilometers, we reached the village of Manyava in the Borodchansky region.

Our bus pulled up to a parking area, adjacent a small, wooden bridge leading to a pathway up into the hills.

There is a plaque describing the history of the area. Our guide added to the information on the plaque telling of the resistance put up by local population during WW II. Crossing over the bridge provided some slight relief from



the heat as the water below was cooling the air above. I stopped on the bridge for some momentary relief. The path leading to the Manyavsky Skyt Monastery climbs high through dense woods. Managing the pathway was rough going due to the small, loose rocks that we had to scramble over. Eventually we reached the Monastery. It is surrounded by defensive stone walls above which rise the pear-shaped domes of a church. There are towers built into the walls.

We proceeded through an entrance at the base of a white tower into a courtyard and quietly made our way amongst the buildings. They include the Cloister Treasury Tower, Saint Boris and Glib Church, Archangel Myhail Underground Church and the Christ Cathedral.

Manyava Scithian Monastery



The Manyavsky Skyt, (the word “skyt” actually means “a small and secluded monastery”) is located in a picturesque, isolated valley, called Horhanska, in Manyava village. There, in which sits a monastery. The site was chosen purposefully to make the monastery as inconspicuous as possible. The old monastery sits

on a cliff overlooking the Manyavka River.

The monastery was founded in 1606 by Yov (Job) Knyahynetsky, a Ukrainian from the small town of Tysmenytsya in the land of Prykarpattya (“sub-Carpathian”). Knyahynetsky had spent twenty years at the end of the 16th century in the monastic community of Mount Athos, Greece, where he

had taken monastic vows before he returned to Ukraine with a mission of introducing the monastic rules of Mount Athos into the monasteries of Western Ukraine.

There is some evidence though, both archeological and historical, the latter derived from the chronicles that suggests that there was a skyt in the Horhanska valley dating to as early as the 13th century. It is believed to have been founded by two monks who traveled all the way from the Pechersk

Lavra monastery in Kyiv after this city had been captured and ruined by the Mongols in a massive invasion of the Ukrainian lands. The local tradition has it that shortly after these two monks had settled down in the valley close by the tiny river of Baters, the Virgin Mary revealed herself to them and standing on a rock, which since then was called



The Blessed Rock, encouraged the monks to go ahead with founding a monastery. When Yov Knyahynetsky came to that place almost four hundred years later, he found no monastery there but the Virgin Mary appeared again and urged him to found a skyt.

It is hard to imagine that, this hard to get to place, in the middle of a deep forest, used to be an influential religious and cultural center for the whole region. Formerly, the skyt had 200 monks and dozens of subordinate cloisters in Halychyna, Bukovyna and Moldavia.

Ahead of us were some youngsters also touring the facility. In one of the buildings we heard the drone of chanting monks coming from inside. We passed through the courtyard and followed a path up into the mountains. This path would lead to a cave and I asked our guide, Helena was it very far. She said maybe 20 minutes. It was all uphill and my injured calf has become too painful to continue the climb, so I begged off, telling the group to go on and that I would meet them back at the bus.

I enjoyed the respite and found a small bench to sit on, overlooking the river. It was very peaceful with the sound of the river and birds chirping. I tried to

imagine that monks sat here in their reverie communing with nature. What an idyllic spot!



I slowly hobbled down the pathway to the bus. Andrei, the driver, had the doors and windows wide open to allow for some air circulation and he was enjoying his Russian music tape. He asked me if it offended me and I replied “nyet,” instead of “ni,” with a smile on my face. He offered me some water and we chatted, while waiting for the crew to return.

Other buses pulled into the parking area, discharging Ukrainian tourists. From what I had seen, I could understand why this is a popular place to visit. It offers forests, mountains, fresh air, serenity a rich history and plenty of exercise.

After about 30 minutes, the group made its way back to the bus. I noticed that a few were starting to duplicate my walk—so I did choose correctly. The Vizniowski’s describe the cave they saw and its religious connotation. If you touch the cave roof, your wishes would come true. If I was there, I would have wished for some winning lottery numbers. It started to drizzle, as we made our way to our next stop, Yaremche, where we would also have a traditional Hutsul lunch.

Yaremche

After a short drive, we arrived in the town of Yaremche. The first thing we saw were clusters of homes, and many small chalet hotels and restaurants nestled into the hills, adjacent the highway. Yaremche is a town of about 8,800 and lies at the entrance of the Carpathian National Park. The Prut River flows through the area and falls through a scenic gorge. The town is noted for its recreational and health resorts. A third of its inhabitants are employed in the tourism industry.

We were hungry and our driver was headed towards a traditional Ukrainian Hutsel restaurant. Our bus took a side road off the main highway, which

winds its way to a small cluster of buildings. He pulled up in front of The *Hutsulschyna Restaurant*, which is a log chalet-like, building with a large barbecue pit in a courtyard. We appeared to be the only patrons and the waiter showed us inside to our tables. The interior had log facsimile walls with various tools and plates on the walls, as decoration. The menu included: port and lamb shashlyki (shish kebab), river trout, borsch, Russian soup, mushroom soup, varynyky, port ribs, salads and potato pancakes (deruny). The deruny were delicious—just like my mother used to make. The waiter proceeded to take our orders, without writing anything down. We reminded him of this fact, but he assures us that he would remember. After we placed our orders, the waiter informed us that it would take about 30 minutes to prepare and that there is a nearby souvenir market on the other side of the river. The drizzle had subsided, so we decided to see what the market had to offer.

We followed a pathway, behind the restaurant to some precarious steps leading down to a small bridge crossing the Prut River. There were a number of tourists on the bridge admiring the view and taking pictures. The Prut is fast flowing, with a small waterfall (Yaremchansky waterfall) and some rapids. Some people had found a way to sit near the waterfall, where they pose for pictures. I noticed a wreath of flowers placed on the rocks on one side of the bridge. I would later find out that it was in remembrance of a drowning, which occurred a few years earlier. A young boy had fallen off the rocks, next to the bridge.



He had hit his head on the way down and was swept down the river. The fellow, who jumped in to save the boy, turned out to be our waiter at the restaurant.

On the other side of the river lies a small collection of kiosks, where local Hutsuls sell a variety of crafts, souvenirs and artwork in an open air market. Here, they vie for the occasional tourist passing

through. If you happened to look in the direction of a vender, she or he would try to engage you in conversation. After a few kiosks, one learned not to look in the direction of a vender, unless you wanted to purchase an item or two.

Typical offerings are traditional crafts and clothing that include ceramic pottery, carved boxes, plates, wooden forks and spoons, pysanky and a range of leather, cloth and fur goods such as fur caps and sheep vests. The regional Hutsul folk costume is a favourite, with the hand embroidered traditional shirt being topped with a leather vest known as a “kiptar” or a heavy felt jacket called a “serdak.” Other items include; carved wooden chess sets for 20 USD, wooden jewelry, cooking utensils, deep red stained flute/recorders and for 20 USD traditional Ukrainian shirts. Thick, leather belts, with holders for bullets, also seemed popular in many kiosks—was this to cater to any “red neck” tourists out there?

After 20 minutes, our stomachs get the better of us, as some of us stumbled our way back to the restaurant. I noticed a young couple of Hutsuls, passionately making out behind a small building. They seemed totally unaware that there was a group of Canadian tourists, noting their fine performance. It again started to drizzle as we enter the restaurant. The young couple was almost certainly now raising some steam as the rain hit them. I’d imagine that, in all probability, they were also oblivious to the rain.

After returning to our seats, the waiter brought us our lunch and he hadn’t forgotted what we each had ordered—what a memory! I had ordered the Russian soup (delicious), pork shashlyki (lots of meat and delicious) and the deruny/potato pancakes (now I was feeling stuffed).

The group liked what they saw at the kiosks and decided that there were items that they must purchase, as the prices seemed right. The guide also had mentioned that some of the items were only available at this market and nowhere else. My calf was still throbbing and I decided to forgo the trip to the market. I was certain that climbing down and up the steps to the bridge for a second time would do serious damage. I again join Andrei, the driver, in the bus for some chit chat. After a while it started to pour and it cooled the air. The group came back all soaked, but happy with their purchases.

The guide, Helena, asked us if we wanted to visit another nearby town. We decided that given the lateness of the day to forego the trip and we headed

back to our hotel. I noticed that my cameras were running low on battery strength and that I would have to recharge them. The trouble was that my electrical adaptor didn't fit into the hotel plug receptors.

Back at the hotel, I showed the front desk people my adaptor and asked if they knew where I could get a special piece for it, to allow it to plug into the wall receptacle. I was told that there was a small hardware store across the street that carried the piece I needed. The store was very small and carried mostly paint products. When I showed the clerk my adaptor, he brought me the piece I needed and told me the price. I couldn't believe that I had heard him correctly so I said, "Napasheet, bood laska." (Write it down, please.) It turned out to be 4 HUA (80 cents), which was what I thought he had said—what a bargain!

Most of the gang was enjoying a beer at the delicatessen patio and I showed them my adaptor bargain. I told Harry that he might want to take a look at the hardware store and pointed out where it was. We had passed the building a number of times and not known that it housed a hardware store. We agreed to meet in the lobby at 7:00 pm

I charged my camera batteries, labelled my video films and watched the latest news on the BBC. At 7:00 pm we met in the lobby. Those of us who were bushed decide to have supper at the delicatessen patio, where we discussed the day's outing and our plans for tomorrow. Romana, would be making a side trip to Bolechiw. Harry, Margaret and I would visit the nearby towns of Tlumach, Palahicze and Ostrynia. The Vizniowskis would be doing some sight seeing. I placed a wake-up call at the front desk and turned in early.

DAY 9—FRIDAY, JUNE 15

Ivano-Frankivsk—Village Side Trips

After breakfast, Harry Hryniw, Margaret and I met Roman Yurtseniak in the parking lot at 8:00 am. His English was very good. He had lived in Toronto (Thorncliffe neighbourhood) for a number of years. I got his name from his cousin, Alex Dolnycky, who had attended TUGG meetings and had also delivered a lecture there.

First we drove to Tlumach (24 kilometers) to visit the RAHS Office, which houses civil records (birth, marriage and death). RAHS is short for “Registration Acts of Civil State (formerly ZAHS).” We arrived in Tlumach at 8:30 and located the RAHS Office. The sign on the door indicated that the office opened at 8:00 am. The RAHS Director arrived at 8:40 am and let us in. She wasn’t very receptive even though we explained that we had come all the way from Canada. Harry showed her a document, his father’s birth certificate and asked if he could obtain additional information from the parish records for Ostrynia, his father’s birth village. She replied curtly that he already had the information and that she wasn’t allowed by law to show us the books. She indicated that we have to provide specific information, such as a birth date, before she would look up a record.

I would try next and see if I could obtain information on my Godfather, Peter Turchyn from Palahicze. I showed her my Family Tree diagram and his birth date. She responded with a firm “Nyet.” There has to be a blood link, for her to search, she replied. We thanked her for her trouble and left, empty-handed.

A Bit About RAHS

The RAHS Office has the most recent civil records (birth, marriage and death), and also has the Parish Registry Books, not yet in the archives, which date prior to 1940. The reason they have the pre-1940 parish records relates to the events of WW II. When World-War II started the Parish Registry Books for births, marriages and deaths were taken from the local parishes and Bishop’s offices and placed in a local ZAHS (now RAHS) Office. An individual parish registry covers many years of records. The law requires that before a parish registry book would be turned over to the archives, it would remain in the RAHS office until the last entry included in the book

was more than 75 years old. The RAHS authorities would simply look at the most recent record in the parish book and then wait until it is 75 years old before turning in *the whole book*. They would not turn over those sections in the book that were older than 75 years—they would not break the book apart for that reason. For example, if a Birth Registry was started by the priest in 1860 and the last entry was in 1940, it would be kept in the RAHS Office until about 2015 and only then would the whole parish registry book be turned over to the archives. Consequently there are many thousands of parish books languishing in the RAHS offices, which haven't yet made it to the archives in Ukraine.

For example, if a person finds that the archives have birth records only up to 1860, for the parish you were searching, it is highly likely that the RAHS Office will have the Birth Registry book dating from 1861 to 1940. So it is crucial to include a visit to the RAHS office if one is missing more recent information not found in the archives.

The RAHS process requires that an individual must have some proof of his or her relationship to the person being requested. It is possible to get some results—if they have the records. If it is a surname that is not the person's own (e.g. a mother's) then the RAHS will require some documentation of the connection, such as a marriage certificate. It might also make it easier, that if the documents were in Latin script, that they be transcribed into Ukrainian and better yet if that transcription were signed and sealed by a Notary Public. They love officialdom in those offices.

The RAHS is a part of the Ministry of Justice, not under the branch of government for Archival Administration. Their whole purpose of existing is different than archives and they have no interest in history or other matters other than legal ones. RAHS is not a research office like an archive. For confidential reasons, they will not let you look at books, and don't even have to give you the full info from a record. It depends on how busy they are, what their personality is like, and how irritated they are by your presence. They are government workers, not archivists.

After leaving the RAHS Office we drove 5 kilometers, to nearby Palahycze, the birthplace of my uncle, Peter Turchyn. It's a small village and we stayed on the main road until we could find someone who could tell us the location

for the mayor's office. An old woman by the side of the road directed us to a derelict of a building. It resembled a small school building. There were bits of rubble on the ground which was overgrown with weeds. The windows were dirty with soot and the building looked abandoned. The old lady approached us and told us that this was the back of the building and that the office is on the other side. We went around and found a parking lot in front of the building. This side of the building definitely appeared to be occupied, with clean windows and an official-looking flag, hanging over the entrance.

A woman left the building as we approached and we ask her where we can find the mayor. She told us to go up the stairs to where his office is located. There were seven or eight people already in the office. It appeared some villagers were conducting business and talking to a woman, who was dressed in a suit. Another woman asked us how she could help us. We told her that we were from Canada and wished to see the Mayor. She introduced us to the mayor, who appeared to be in his forties with a deep farmers tan. He was dressed casually with a short-sleeved checked shirt. He ordered up some chairs for us to sit in. We explained that we were here to visit our ancestral villages. I explained that I was related, through marriage, to the Turchyn family and was hoping to find any relatives of my uncle. The mayor knew the Turchyns and told us that he would take us to their farm.

The mayor took a few minutes to wind up some business and then joined us in the parking lot. He indicated that he would drive with us to the farm. We drove down a dirt lane with many ruts and holes. A large black dog was sleeping in a rut and had to get up to allow the car to pass. After we passed, the dog resumed his claim on the rut. Eventually we arrived at a large gate. An old woman opened the gate and welcomed us in. She turned out to be Peter Turchyn's Cousin Maria. I was introduced as Peter's nephew and she hugged and kissed me like I was a long-lost son.

The farm turned out to be the farm of Peter's early years. Maria was 77 and her husband Dmytro was 87 and in terrific shape. It was another sweltering day and Dmytro was shirtless and well tanned. Dmytro and Maria invited us into their home and into their dining room where we were all comfortably seated. There were chairs around a good-sized table, a sofa and other upholstered chairs were in the corners. Also in the house were their daughter and two great- grandchildren. Their granddaughter was away working.

Maria brought us a large pitcher of cold water. She explained that it was cold because of their deep well. Dmytro had recently dug a 22 meter-deep well outside the house. He explained that he had to chisel through rocky shale as part of the process of digging the well. We were amazed to think that someone in his eighties would be able to dig such a deep hole.

Next, the daughter and Maria brought in bowls of honey, bread, pop and a bottle of home-made horilka (vodka). Dmytro poured shots into various-shaped small glasses and proposed a toast. He explained that we could not leave without at least three toasts being offered. The horilka was very strong tasting like it was 200 proof. In the process of the conversations we were informed that Peter's father had been jailed for making home-brew—there's a skeleton in every closet.

After the house visit we were shown the property. It consists of a court-yard enclosed by a wooden fence. Inside the court-yard was a recently built house, a small barn with a cow and a calf inside, a garage structure and the well. The well had a cylindrical concrete wall about four feet high. We each took a turn looking down the well to see if we could see the bottom. Clothes were hanging out to dry.

Outside the court-yard was a large garden, fruit trees and a field on a gradually sloping hill. There was a large composting area with lots of flies buzzing around.

I asked to see the Turchyn cemetery. Before we left, Maria presented me with a bottle of honey to take back to Canada. We hugged and kissed and said our good-byes. The cemetery was a short drive away and situated on a slight hill. Maria made a bee-line to a section of the cemetery where some Turchyns were buried. Us younger folk had trouble keeping up with her. Most of the cemetery was overgrown with weeds, thistles and vines (which) every so often tripped you up. The Turchyn graves were kept in relative order compared to the others near-by, indicating that someone had recently tended to that area.

After the cemetery visit we drove Maria back to her home. We next visited the local church. It was high on a steep hill. There was a long stairway leading up to the main church. There is a smaller chapel off to one side. Looking at how many steps there were, we decided to forego the experience of the climb. I would let my zoom lens do the work.

We next drove to a small bridge crossing a narrow river. Here we stopped for some pictures. I imagined what it was like to swim in this river and wondered, had Peter swam in this part of the river as a young boy? The trees and shrubs hanging over the river shut out the sun and created a tunnel-like image.

After driving the mayor back to his office, we got directions to Ostrynnia. On the way there we notice a small town, nestled in some hills off in the distance. Once we were in Ostrynnia, Roman asked a local for directions to the mayor's office. We were directed to go to the town library, which was down the road.

The library had two staff, plenty of books and a large children's section nicely displayed. The staff brought in extra chairs for us to sit in.

A young attractive librarian gave a brief history of Ostrynnia and answered our questions. They brought us tea and some chocolates. The other librarian was busy on the phone trying to locate any relatives of Harry.

Later, an old woman arrived. She answered Harry's questions about his relatives and where they had lived and if any were still around.

Next, a young man arrived. He had a high hair-do which Elvis Presley would have envied. He turned out to be the mayor. He welcomed us and gave a brief speech about the town. He asked the old lady some questions. She indicated that there was a person who knew the Hrynkiw's who was living in a nearby town. The mayor said that he would show us to this person's home.

We thanked the librarians for their hospitality and left. The mayor told us that across the road from the library there used to be a Hrynkiw farm. We strolled about 20 yards to a fenced-in enclosure with an ornate gate. The mayor told us that this was where the Hrynkiw's lived. Unfortunately, the farm house was gone and it was just a field. Harry made his way in and took pictures.

As we drove away from Ostrynnia we saw a great view of the town alongside of the highway. We pulled over and Harry took a number of shots. We then drove to a nearby town and after a few tries located the house of the woman who knew the Hrynkiw's. The house was across from a small

hospital. It was surrounded by a fence, as were most of the houses. There was a vicious-looking and very pregnant dog sitting at the entrance gate. The dog wagged its tail and turned out to be friendly, allowing the mayor and Roman to pass through to the house. The mayor and Roman disappeared into the house and emerged a few minutes later with a woman, who told us that the woman who knew the Hrynkiw's had passed away. We thanked her and left.

We drove mayor back to his village and thanked him for all his kind help. Next we drove back to Ivano-Frankivsk. I suspected that Harry was disappointed, not having met any relatives. Harry indicated that he wasn't expecting too much and was happy that he got to walk in the village of his father and see his father's old farm.

We headed to the hotel delicatessen patio, where we had a few beers and discussed the outing. We paid Roman and thanked him for all his help and he wished us well. The trip had tired us so we decided to have our supper at the deli. Later we would meet the rest of the group, at the deli patio and exchange experiences.

Tomorrow we're off to Ternopil. Before retiring I placed wake-up call for 6:00 am.