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Cover illustrations by Karen Blanchette, based on the picture below:



PRAIRIE PIONEERS — THE ROMANIANS

Selected Readings

I must acknowledge and thank the authors, their families, or the publishers who graciously granted me permission, to use selections from their books.

The Canadian Romanian Society of Alberta / Romanians in Alberta

1898 — 1998.

Ann Toma and the family of Michael G. Toma / Never Far from Eagle Tail Hill

Pearl Murray and Borealis Press / A Baker's Dozen - The Way it Was

John Goodes / Where Money Grew on Trees

Dr. Eleanor Bujea / Romanians In Canada

Sandy Lutic / A Pair of Skates

Eileen Lapastin / Lapastean Family from Bucovina

Mary Louise Baranic / Memories — My Family — Life and Times

John J.Toma and family/ History of Ioan Toma and Family- And the People That Touched Their Lives

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PART 1: IMMIGRATION

BUCOVINA AND THE BUCOVINIANS



Bucovina, Romania was a beautiful land. The evergreen valleys boasted forests of beech, oak, ash, spruce, birch and fir. The area produced grain, sugar beets, cattle and sheep and the farm crops included potatoes, walnuts, chestnuts, corn, rye, oats, barley, flax, wheat, apples, pears, plums, peaches, cherries, grapes, and other berries. Lumber and wood, minerals, salt and petroleum were also products of Bucovina, the most densely settled province of Romania. In 1913 there were 200 people per square mile and 800,000 people in the whole of Bucovina.

From the majestic mountains, rich valleys and picturesque villages of Bucovina came stout-hearted men and women. They were hospitable, bright people with a keen sense of humour. They were the slender, healthy women; the very polite, tall, well-built youth. The typical Romanian is of medium height with dark hair and eyes. In Northern Moldavia, they are taller, with fair colouring. Bucovinians are fiercely independent, quick tempered, feared by the other Romanians, the biggest drinkers, the most incorrigible gamblers, the least willing to compromise with other Romanians; but the most devoutly religious of the Romanian North Americans. Romanians from Bucovina in Canada and the United States are among the most active members of the Romanian communities.

Throughout the eighteenth century, agriculture (mostly grain), mining, handicrafts and manufacturing developed. But the condition steadily worsened for the Romanian serfs. The serfs had social and political grievances: they demanded abolition of aristocratic titles and privileges, division of the big estates, equal rights and duties for all the population – a complete upsetting of the feudal order. But instead there were heavy obligations for the peasants in favour of the big landlords. The exclusively land-based economy and a rapidly growing population had produced an impoverished, landless society of peasants. Bucovina, before 1914, had been feudal. Generally, the peasantry remained poor, oppressed and exploited. Land rents and timber prices were unduly high and even gathering kindling was illegal. Because of constant subdivision, farm plots were small (12 to 25 acres). High taxation and interest rates, and overpopulation made for a precarious future. This produced large-scale migration of rural Romanians to North America with the hope of escaping from the depressed economic and social life in the rural villages.

Steamship-company agents publicized instructions on how young men could evade military service in the Austro-Hungarian army by emigrating. Austrian authorities were disturbed and uneasy over the impact – a mass exodus of peasants from the country would mean a loss of cheap labour and fewer soldiers for the Emperor.

Other causes of emigration included: agricultural disasters and resultant poverty; shipping declines in the 1890's caused prices of some products to be badly depressed; phylloxera, a plant pest, destroyed vineyards; anthrax killed large numbers of sheep; treaties admitted another country's products at a lower rate; mandatory service in the army during which time they were forbidden to marry; many refused military service in an army of a country which was not their nationality and many resented the political situation which made them oppressed; adventure seekers; join others who had left; some were lured by representatives of companies and labour agencies seeking labourers for railroad gangs and industrial centers. The oppression of the Romanians in Bucovina, Transylvania and Banta caused a trend of emigration of poor peasants to Canada and the United States, where significant colonies of Romanians grew.

In World War I Bucovina withstood four years of Russian and Austrian sweeps over her territory. After 250 years of Turkish rule, 145 years under Austrian rule, and 50 years under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bucovina unanimously voted to unite with the Kingdom of Romania on 28th November 1918. Greater Romania obtained Bucovina from Austria under the St. Germain Treaty in September 1919. Romania gained control of the whole province of Bucovina on 4th June 1920 through the signing of the Treaty of Trianon near Paris, France. After years of foreign rule this tiny province, Bucovina, which means "Beechland" by virtue of its beech forest, was 1% Russian, 10% German and Jewish, 30% Ruthenian and Ukrainian and 59% Romanian.









l. to rt. Sanfira, Zaharie holding Joanna on knees, Domnica holding Dochita on her knees, Maria in front and Sanda on extreme right, circa 1904.



(L to R) Bill, Nick, Ioan, Mike, Floyd, Veronica,
Sanda & Ioana





ROMANIAN CANADIANS – WHERE THEY SETTLED

The first settlers in Canada went to Winnipeg and Regina. In passing through Montreal and Toronto, some of them remained but most of them continued westward. The reasons were obvious. The West needed to be opened up; land was available and needed to be broken; the population needed to be expanded; the Canadian economy needed to grow. The East needed workers for industry. Eastern Europe, already over-populated, were lands from which immigrants needed to flee. Publications were sent to Romania with promises of fortunes to be had in “America” with the expending of a little energy. Many Romanians, Ukrainians, Russians, and other Eastern European people were willing to pull up their roots to seek their fortunes. People who settled in different areas of Canada had their own stories to tell. Their experiences differed. Their purposes in this new land differed, but they generally maintained their faith which did not differ and their ties to their countries of origin. They missed their family members who had not immigrated with them. Information about their experiences came by “word of mouth”, from family histories, from locally written histories, from parish publications and from local newspapers.

Thirty Romanian families were known to live in the Regina area in 1891. In 1885 there was a colony of German Romanians in New Toulcha (probably the name was taken from Tulcea in Romania). In an open letter in 1888 it was reported that this colony was successful. After the 1901 to 1914 wave of immigration, the process was curtailed after the outbreak of World War I. In 1921, there were 13,470 Romanians in Canada, 5,645 of who were living in Saskatchewan. After 1929 when the world economic crisis started, Romanian immigrations to Saskatchewan almost ceased. In 1931, there were 9,530 Romanians in Saskatchewan and 40,322 in Canada. The next wave of immigrants after World War II came to Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, and the industrial zones of Canada. In 1961, there were 43,805 Romanians in Canada, of whom 15,787 lived in the province of Ontario and only 7,128 in Saskatchewan, followed by 6,000 in Windsor, Ontario.

In western Canada, few societies were formed. There was one in Regina where people met, conversed, held social programs and banquets and watched their children perform Romanian dances. Their social functions were held in their homes and in their churches. Many social activities were held outdoors because their homes were too small to accommodate large groups. They worked hard, played hard and usually bore large families. They involved their children in farm work and thus were able to survive during the times that were bad due to droughts, invasion of “army worms”, hail outs and other natural catastrophes.

Some of the towns and cities in Saskatchewan where the early immigrants settled were: Assiniboia, Avonlea, Battleford, Blaine Lake, Humboldt, Kindersley, Last Mountain, MacKenzie, Maple Creek, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Dysart, Lipton, Qu’Appelle, Regina, Saltcoats, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Weyburn, Kayville, Dahinda, Flintoft, Wood Mountain, MacNutt, Lennard, Shell Valley and Canora, as well as many more. The information on where the Romanians settled is reported in areas of settlement. In some areas, much information was found, in other areas, the information was meagre.

ASSINIBOIA AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Assiniboia was called “Farmer Town” and was formed about 1900. Romanians, Ukrainians, Russians, Germans and other ethnic groups settled there. Many had brought with them from the “old country”, ploughs, hoes, sickles and harrow teeth. The land had to be broken with primitive farm implements. The farmers survived and made a good living during the years of World War I. The towns grew. Assiniboia was the largest town in southern Saskatchewan with a large Romanian population. Most of the Romanians in the area homesteaded on farms neighboring Assiniboia, many raised cattle. It was not until the drought period in the thirties and the mechanization of the farm equipment after World War II that Romanians began to migrate to Assiniboia in larger numbers. The church, therefore, was not built in Assiniboia until 1958. In 1958, a young people’s group was formed with its president Isaia Cristo. In 1959, the president of the youth group, C.O.Y.C. was Vichie Cristo. In 1962, the president was George Stefan. Assiniboia had its own priest, off and on, since that time. When the priest’s office was vacant, the people were served by a priest from Regina. Most of the second-generation Romanians were of a retirement age with few new Romanians moving into the area.

BOIAN (WILLINGDON) AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

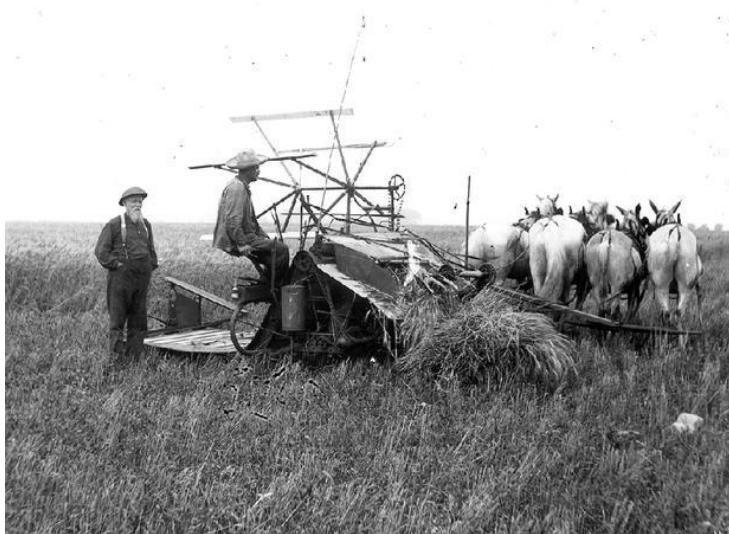
The first settlers in this area came from Boian, Bucovina from 1898 to 1910 so the town was named Boian, Alberta. It was four miles east of Willingdon. Hairy Hill was five miles south of Boian. The first immigrants wrote glowing reports of the area which had green grass, trees and the swift-flowing South Saskatchewan River. In March 1899, eleven families arrived, followed in May of the same year by twenty families. Most of the immigrants traveled by train from Bucovina to Hamburg; by ship to Halifax; by train to Edmonton. For food they gathered berries and duck eggs, hunted and traded with the Indians. Of note (Patterson, 72) was the Romanian-Ukrainian alliances in this area. These could also be noted in the Shell Valley, and Lennard, Manitoba area.

The closest town was eighty miles away. A priest from Rouleau, Saskatchewan traveled to Whitford, which was near the towns of Vegreville and Boian. The people spoke no English, had large families and became mainly self-sufficient. In 1901 they built the first cemetery on forty acres of land donated by Vasile Romanko for the building of a church. The cemetery was blessed by Rev. Fr. Ion Korchinsky (some spelled it Corcishi), a Russian Orthodox priest from Edmonton. In 1903, the Romanians started to build the Saint Mary Church in Boian on the donated land.

Little was written about the Romanians who settled in the Boian (Willingdon) district of Alberta, a short distance from the capital city of Alberta: Edmonton. To fill this void, Michael J. Toma published a book he authored, *“Never Far from Eagle Tail Hill”*. He referred to his as “*a brief history of the Romanian pioneers who settled in east-central Alberta at the turn of the twentieth century.*” It was printed by the Co-op Press of Edmonton. Some of the researched facts are included here. It was reported that the first Romanian settlers in east-central Alberta were Ichim Yurko, his wife Iftinca and their four-year-old daughter Ioana, plus Elie Ravliuk who arrived in 1898. They spent the first winter in a covered dug-out called a “bordei” in Romanian. Unlike other Romanian settlers in North America, the Romanians of the Boian District constructed Bucovinian peasant homes and farm buildings in homeland architectural styles (Patterson). They also used long poles with buckets attached to get water from their wells and used outdoor ovens

similar to the ones in Europe. The New Year's custom of dancing wearing animal masks permeated the district until recently.

The next group of immigrants to this area brought with them blankets, tapestries, bolts of cloth, vegetable and flower seeds, dried potato eyes for planting, sickles, scythes, axes and tools. One brought a small wooden plough. They had little money, so to remedy the situation, they traveled south and worked in mines and on the railway tracks. The railway line ended in Strathcona, south of Edmonton at that time, and that is where many disembarked. Some worked in the mines in Southern Alberta to get money before taking homesteads. Some worked in eastern Canada before venturing further west. At first, they worked with oxen; later they used horses.



The pioneers valued education and were concerned that their children be properly educated. A school in the district was founded in 1908. On the first school board were George T. Toma, Vasile Romanko and Nazar Yurko. The school site they chose was Vasile Toma's quarter section. It was reported that the use of Romanian was forbidden on the school grounds but the children continued to use it. The few Ukrainian children in the area, by necessity, were forced to learn Romanian in order to communicate with the rest of the children. In 1917, the school was overcrowded and another room was added. In 1927, a third room was added in Vasile Toma's vacant house. It was the only three-room school in the area and was called "*Boian Marea*" (Greater Boian). First the school used the gramophone for entertainment; then the radio became available; still later the television was invented. By the time the railway was finished, new schools were built in the neighbouring towns.

Once the pioneers found they could look after their basic needs, they thought about building a church. Vasile Romanko had donated forty acres of land for the church. In 1903, plans were finalized for the building of the church. John T. Toma, Metro Moscaluk, George T. Toma and George Porozni were selected to co-ordinate the work. Logs and rocks were hauled in; lumber was brought in from Edmonton; the carpenter was Elie Ravliuk. Each parishioner was required to donate \$20.00 to cover the costs of the church building. It was a joyous occasion when the church was finished in 1905.

Although the town has all but disappeared, people have occasional services in the church and are filled with nostalgia about the days that used to be. Churches filled with people and children, choirs singing,

children singing “Colinde” at Christmas, traveling from house to house with the “steaua” or star. Baseball diamonds where men played baseball and women played softball and the school bell rang and children played in the school yard. All gone, but not forgotten.

Several more Romanian Orthodox churches were built in the area because Russian immigrants wanted the Divine Liturgy to be celebrated in Russian and the Romanians wanted it celebrated in the Romanian language. The Russians were then in a majority and, in a court case, the courts ruled in their favour, giving them the Orthodox Church. Because of the circumstances and the politics of the time, the Romanians built their own church in Hairy Hill only a short distance from the Boian church. This “pulling in two directions” occurred in many areas, both in Canada and in the United States of America.

The Romanian ladies rallied around their churches and organized ladies’ auxiliaries. In 1945, the ladies’ auxiliary had a membership of thirty-six women.

The ethnic culture, traditions, foods of the area was lost as older people died. The Church, however remained strong with a priest from Edmonton visiting, on rotation, to serve the several Romanian Orthodox communities in the area.

CALGARY AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The story of the Romanian Canadians in the Calgary, Alberta, area was one of people working together to have a place to pray according to their Orthodox faith. At first, the people prayed in private homes, then in rented facilities. Later they purchased a house which they converted into a church. The Saint Mary parish was established in 1969. Once the Romanians had a priest for the parish on a more permanent basis, the parish membership grew. The story continued from a modest beginning to a larger church building being purchased and with many more faithful coming together weekly to pray and to hold Romanian cultural events. The early Romanian immigrants adapted to a city life. Calgary continued to have an influx of newly-arrived Romanian immigrants. The use of the English or Romanian language or both in the church continued to be a problem for some of the people. Calgary, because of its size and temperate climate, continued to have an influx of Romanian immigrants so its growth was ensured.

CANORA AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Canora is about 150 miles north and east of Regina. This part of Saskatchewan was heavily populated by Ukrainians who homesteaded in the area side-by-side with the Romanians. Together, in 1903 they built their first church, which burned a few years later. They built another one which burned down again. In 1929, they built their third church which is still standing today. Ukrainians and Romanians in this area have coexisted in Canada since the early immigrants landed. They have also intermarried. In 1920 a small church was built just one and a half miles south and east of Canora. The church had a small bell tower and a cemetery and was named Saints Peter and Paul. Many of the families of the original members moved to larger areas nearby, namely Yorkton and Kamsack, but they continued to have religious services, even though infrequently, on special feast days and on their Patron Saint Day. The largest church in the area was Saint Elias in Lennard, Manitoba and the priest there provided church services to the Canora parishioners on an infrequent basis.

CUPAR AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The Szecklers from Bucovina migrated to the Cupar and Punnichy area about 1906. They spoke Romanian and Hungarian and were Roman Catholic; some were members of the Protestant Reformed Church. They were itinerant traders in Romania and they soon migrated to other areas including Regina. Most had material things they brought from home. A number of Romanian families lived in and around Cupar. They were mostly farmers and were related to others living in Dysart, Lipton, Markinch and Southey. There was no Orthodox church in Cupar. The people travelled about eight miles east to Dysart for religious services. Sports activities, like curling, kept the community spirit alive in this area. The Romanians and the Jews from Romania co-existed very well in the area.

DYSART AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Dysart is located about 60 miles, north and east of Regina, Saskatchewan. The first Romanian Orthodox families moved to Dysart in the early 1890's making it the oldest settlement of Romanian Orthodox immigrants in the province. However, Regina was the first community to build a church in North America in 1902. The immigrants were mainly from Bucovina and Dobrogea. In 1902, Dysart was in the District of Assiniboia, in the Northwest Territories, before Saskatchewan was named a province. The Dysart landscape is slightly rolling with numerous small lakes and bluffs. The soil is "Oxbow loam" which is a thin and black soil. The land was surveyed in 1904 and was situated in the Lipton subdivision of the Assiniboia Northwest Territories. The railway line originated in Brandon, Manitoba and went north to Bulyea. It reached Dysart in 1906. Dysart was the name of the chief engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway who originated in Dysart, Scotland.

The first baptism in the church was that of Stana Nistor in 1910. In the same year George Christie and Elena Topal were the first couple to be married in the church. Also, the first funeral in that year was for George Corches.

The earliest homesteaders arrived about 1883. Some of them lived in a hole they dug in the side of a hill until they could build a dwelling. In 1906, Dysart had a blacksmith and a bank. The Board of Trade records before 1929 could not be found but, according to the available information, it was in existence before that time. Before 1900 there was a restaurant/caf . The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Elevator was built in 1912. There was a newspaper, the Dysart Clincher, in 1913.

The Fox Hills Post Office was situated in the home of Ioan Serbu who was appointed the first postmaster of this area and served until 1927. Letitia Jonescu took over from him. She served until 1930 and was followed by Minerva Petrascu who served until 1960 when the post office was closed. Every Saturday mail carriers brought the mail from Dysart. One of the mail carriers was Aurel Magda. At that time, the rural post offices were a very important link in communications.

The following is a story told by Steve Stan: In the old country (Romania), each village had its own church, or else the people attended churches in neighbouring villages. People did not own their land. Instead, they had a 99-year lease. They could not sell the land, but they were able to hand it down to the younger members of the family. The young men were subject to three years of military service in the Austro-Hungarian army. Because many young men did not want to do this service, they left, believing Canada was the land of opportunity. The Canadian Railway Company put on a campaign advertising acres of land to

each new settler for the sum of ten dollars. On hearing of homesteads available in the Dysart-Cupar area, they applied for and received homesteads in this area. They soon decided that a church would have to be built. The pioneers had no money, only great faith and determination. About 40 members each signed a note for \$30.00 and pledged volunteer labour to begin construction of the church in 1906. It was finished in 1907. It was completed at a cost of \$2,700. The two lots upon which the church was situated cost \$65. Locke Jonescu was the contractor. He built the church in Dysart with the help of Dimitrie Petrascu and immigrants in the area.

On June 17, 1907, the church was blessed by Archimandrite Evghenie Ungureanu, the first Romanian priest sent to Canada, who traveled from Regina to perform the Divine Liturgy. The trustees of the parish were: George Magda, Nick Corches, Constantine Dumba, and Josif Milos. Dan Smadu and Eva Poparnin were married in Saint George Romanian Orthodox Church in Dysart by Rev. Fr. Dionisie on January 26, 1919.

In March of 1907, one acre of land was purchased for use as a cemetery. This cost \$40. In 1911, the parish house was purchased for \$1,100 from Steve Albuletz, who used it as a store equipped with living quarters upstairs. The first parish priest was Archimandrite Evghenie Ungureanu who came to Regina from Romania in 1902. He traveled to Dysart by horse and buggy. He served the parish on August 4, 1908, June 9, 1910 and occasionally until 1911. (Other information revealed that he may have left Canada in 1909) The priests serving after him were:

June 24, 1911 - Rev. Fr. Gheorghiu Hentia
1911 to 1915, Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorgiu
1915 to 1918, Rev. Fr. Sylvester Jonescu
1919 to 1920, Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica
1911 to 1915, 1920 - Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu
1922 to 1968 - Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim
1968 to 1979 - Rev. Fr. Pantaleimon Stanciu

From 1979 to the present time, the parish was served by four priests who came from Regina on a rotating basis.

The church was renovated twice. In 1945, an extension of 16 feet was made and two circular towers were added. Fold-down individual benches (strana) appeared on the perimeter of the inside of the church. In 1968, the interior of the church was renovated. Pews were installed. They were not put in the church before then because the custom in Romania was for people to stand throughout the service. The absence of them up to this time was due to tradition. In 1968 the interior of the church was again renovated. The parish hall was built in 1947. It has since been enlarged and renovated.

Church records go back to 1910. Before that time, the records were kept in Regina, and were presumably destroyed by fire. Through the years, the parish and its activities were under the supervision of a church committee

The Romanian Ladies' Club catered to many functions in the community. It was formed January 15, 1937, with a membership of 28 ladies. The first president was Maria Oltean, and the secretary was Elena Stan.

Those who served in World War I include:

Vasile Catchuk
*Chorchis
*Zvanchuk

The Romanian men and women from the Dysart parish who served in World War II included:

George Bachiu	H. Scrobe
J. Bachiu	D. Scrobe
C. Belof	B.G. Stan
George Dumba	W.H. Stan
Betty Frank	George H. Stan
*Sam George from Southey	John G. Stan
Bill Gherasim	John J. Stan
*John Isfan	Nick Stan
John Jijian	Sam Stan
Emil Jonescu	George Staruiala
P. Milos	D. Tudor
J. Milos	George Tudor
J. Petrar	William Tudor
G. Richea	

*killed in action

Those who served in the Korean War include:

J. Paun

The Dysart and District Romanian-Canadians took part in every activity in the community: they participated in sports; they were involved in the building of the open-air rink, the closed-in curling and hockey rink, the ladies club, and other community activities. Names of pioneer Romanians included:

Adamache	Konecsni	Scrobe
Avram	Lupastian	Simeon
Bachiu	Magda	Sirbu
Belan	Maxim	Smadu
Comanici	Nistor	Stan
Corchis	Oltean	Stancuilescu
Costea	Onofrei	Staruiala
Costescu	Paun	Sulea
Duduman	Petrar	Tarcia
Dumba	Petrascu	Tudor
Frank	Postelnic	Vasil
Gherasim	Richea	Vilcu
Ionescu	Roman	

These Romanians were involved in various occupations, including banking, blacksmithing, farming, teaching, operating small grocery stores and meat markets, selling farm equipment, working at the Post Office and the Wheat Pool; essentially, they were involved in every aspect of rural Saskatchewan life. More information is available from a book entitled "*Dysart & District Yesterday & Today: Radant, Sambor, Kronsberg, Canterbury, Westlea, Gardiner, Parkland, McDonald Hills.*" It was published locally by the Dysart and District Historical Society in October, 1982.

Romanian immigrants participated in every type of business activity in Dysart.

Romanians serving the Village Council:

1931 to 1947 Bert Sulea
1948 to 1949 M. Oltean
1960 to 1962 Steve Stan
1961 Paul Hornung
1963 to 1965 J. P. Shlovelo
1965 and 1971 Elie Richea
1965 to 1976 John Petrar

Blacksmith was Bert Sulea from 1927 to 1958. In 1958 he gradually phased out his blacksmithing and went into machine repair work with his son Steve and they got the Oliver Agency. Then in 1963 they took over the Cockshutt Agency. In 1966 they closed up the old shop and moved to Main Street to the building that belonged to George Stewart. They had the Cockshutt Agency until the early seventies. Bert is now retired and Steve now does automobile and tractor repairs. Marin Roman did a great deal of building over the years. Steve Shlovelo was also a member of that repair crew and continued to make many repairs around town.

The first Board of Directors of the Dysart Credit Union were: Con Stan, Walter Pasieka, John Petrar, John Shlovelo, John Domm, Frank Waldegger, Milton Wood, Charles Wook, John Schick, with manager, S. H. Condy. Later Board of Directors included Con Stan, Peter Dumba, Frank Waldegger, John Domm, John Smadu, William Schonhoffer, Alex Benesh, George Spanier, Lionel Hoffarth, with manager, John A. Grohs.

In the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, more recent members included chairmen and secretaries W. Isfan, C. Stan, P. Dumba, Steve Gherasim.

Dysart volunteer firefighters in 1982 included Bill Gherasim, Steve Sulea, Ken Richea, Peter Dumba.

Operators of garages and body shops in the 1920's were John Serbu; in the 1930's Bill Gherasim; Lockie Gherasim; in the 1950's Bert Sulea and Son; John Shlovelo; in the 1960's Steve Sulea.

First Board of Directors of the Dysart Co-Op Association: Henry Stan as president, board member Alex Gherasim. In 1941, Steve Stan took over as manager. In the spring of 1943 George Staruiala became the manager. Other managers were Max Oltean, Alex Isfan and John Petrar.

Margaret Gherasim opened a hairdresser's shop in the old telephone office and operated about 6 months.

In the insurance and real estate industry was John Petrar.

Constables were W. N. Albu, J. Oltean, S. Shalovel, John Frank, H. Ursalescu, John Jijian.

The Dysart Dray and Livery Business was operated by Aurel Magda who delivered mail to Fox Hills and McDonald Hills in 1939. Max Oltean had a livery barn on the east side of town and George Oltean had one on the west side of town.

Dan Smadu delivered water to the town residents.

Steve Abuletz operated a store on the lot now occupied by the Romanian Parish Hall.

In 1980 Saskatchewan Telephone put buried cable for all subscribers. The members of the Board of Directors were: George Petrar, President; Philip Frank, Vice-President; Stephen Gherasim, Director & Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Lawreck and Steve Bartok.

Saint George had a very good choir conducted by Bartolomei Sulea and Andrei Comanici. The parish hall was built in 1948. In the 1950's a rift between two segments of the church, one supporting the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, of which the parish was a member; the other advocating joining the Patriarchate in Romania. The priest was physically harassed by the group advocating the joining of the parish to the Romanian patriarchate. The courts upheld the priest and those who adhered to the constitution of the Canadian church. More than half of the parishioners left the Orthodox Church, joining the Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes in the neighbourhood. Much of the history of the parish in the early days was lost because, according to common belief, the records were kept in Regina and were burned in a Saint George church fire in Regina. Much grief has come to the town: its rink burned down, but was rebuilt; it lost its post office, its bank and its school due to economic slowdown; one of its elevators burned, the others were torn down; the young people moved to the larger centres. The elements of this story are true to some extent in many small towns.

EDENWOLD AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Edenwold is only twenty-eight miles from Regina, close to Balgonie and about seventeen miles from Fort Qu'Appelle. When the early settlers arrived in 1882, they terminated their voyage by train at Fort Qu'Appelle. These were Volga German settlers who were a minority group living in Romania. They spoke Romanian but adhered to their German heritage. The same is true of those who settled in the Lipton area, about twenty miles from Edenwold. Others also settled in Dysart, a mainly Romanian community. They were homesteaders who walked from Fort Qu'Appelle to the Edenwold area where they were given land, wagons, ploughs and oxen by the Federal Government. It was reported by Patterson (.17) that these were the first Romanians to settle in Saskatchewan.

The immigrants used their skills to make homes in the side of a small hill. They used poplar branches to strengthen their adobe dwelling. Hay and straw cut from the marshes and sloughs were used to make clay which helped prevent the rain from spilling into their dwellings. Some dripping did occur. In the summer they built ovens outside, using the clay of the soil and baked in the sun. The baked mud was also used for making bricks.

Most of these settlers were Baptist. The Romanian settlers were Orthodox. When times were poor, they worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. When times improved, they moved to more urban areas. Some moved to North Dakota.

EDMONTON AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

In the March 25, 1897 edition of the Leader Post, the following was reported: *“Galicians settled near Edmonton are starving. It is reported that a number of Galician settlers sent to Edmonton from Winnipeg are starving. They have no food and no money and are absolutely dependent on the charity of their neighbours in the north...Galicians are members of the Greek Church.”* According to Canadian parlance of the time, all east Europeans fell under the title of ‘Galatians’. Thus, Romanians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and others were called by the same appellation. The Romanian church usually had, in its name, the word “Greek”, for example, *“The Romanian Greek Orthodox Church”* until the mid-fifties and later when the word “Greek” was dropped. The word “Greek”, referred to the Mother Church originating in the Orthodox Church in Constantinople.

The first Romanian immigrants to Alberta settled in the Edmonton and Vegreville areas. Although the immigrants who settled around Edmonton were in proximity with the Boian immigrants, they generally included the more recent arrivals to Canada from Romania. A letter to Romania in 1908 reported a visit to a Romanian community in Whitford, Alberta by a priest, Rev. Fr. Benedict Iliescu, to perform needed religious services.

Researchers in all Canadian provinces have studied the history of the European immigrants. There was a meeting of the Central and East European Studies Association of Canada in Saskatoon on May 22, 1979 at which Dr. Gulutsan presided and Dr. Eleanor Bujea of the Faculty of Education, University of Regina served as program chairman for the Romanian workshop and meeting. University professors from many provinces in Canada met to focus interest on European studies. In the fall of 1979, a course on Romania and Romanians was to be offered through the Division of East European Studies, University of Alberta in Edmonton. The segment of the course dealing with Romanians in Canada was to be presented by Dr. Metro Gulutsan who died in a tragic accident. Romanian courses had no visibility up to now even though the Romanians came to the prairies in and around 1880. In Alberta, about 5,000 residents identified themselves as Romanian for census purposes.

ELM SPRING AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

There never was a town at Elm Spring but there was a church there that served a half dozen or more Romanian Orthodox families. The church was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America and Canada. It was called the Church of the Ascension of Our Lord. It was said to have been built in 1926, on a hill, about fifteen miles east of Wood Mountain. The church was built by Dimitru Cuciuranu, who also built the two churches in the Kayville area (Patterson, 15). A cemetery was located on the church property. It is still well maintained and has occasional religious services.

FLINTOFT AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Although it was known that Romanians came to Canada in the late 1800's, they first began to settle in the Flintoft area around 1905. In 1906, a group of Romanian immigrants to Canada traveled to an area in southern Saskatchewan known as “Lynthorpe”, later to be called Flintoft. When they arrived, they lived on their land in dugouts, tents or adobe huts made of the clay. Flintoft and Elm Spring were situated very close

to each other, only twenty-two miles apart, with people from the area working together to keep their Orthodox churches alive and well. The Flintoft church was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America; Wood Mountain, nearby, belonged to the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. The parishioners have “gone their own way” over the years regarding adherence to one or to the other of the two religious jurisdictions.

It was reported in an article in the September, 1996, “*Luceafarul*” that the first families to settle in the area were Iamandi Adamache, Constantin Mihaiu, Musteata Ionita, Ion Stefan, Serban Radu, Andrei Chiru and Teodor Stefan. The bachelors were George Niculescu, Ion Costache, Tudor Radu and Sandu Oancea. Most of the settlers were from the Constanta area which borders the Black Sea.

At the time the Romanians came to Canada, the Government of Canada decreed that homesteads of 160 acres could be purchased for ten dollars by those who intended to remain in Canada and farm. The area around Flintoft was predominantly flat and was called “*prairie country*”. There were a few small hills in the area, more like a rolling plain. The Romanian farmers cultivated their land with oxen-drawn plows and the seeding was done by hand. There were no roads, and the pioneers felt isolated on their farms. Wherever they went, they did so by horse and buggy. The closest big town was 160 kilometres distant, the town of Moose Jaw. The capital City of Regina, Saskatchewan was another 75 kilometres away.

Only after the settlers, many were from Bucovina, were satisfied that they could provide for themselves and for their families, did they talk about building a church. The site of the church was to be ten acres of land donated by the Bumbac family. The only drawback was they did not have money to buy the necessary materials. Their answer to this came by way of a “*Roman bun*”, (a good Romanian) who settled near Regina, Nicolae Zora (Gioara). This man had arrived in Canada in 1890 at the age of 12 and had helped the Saint Nicholas parish by donating lumber for the church building in 1902; he also provided lumber to build the Saint George parish in Dysart in 1907; and now in 1910, he lent a helping hand to the parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Flintoft by providing them with lumber which had a retail value of \$6,000 at that time. The church building committee included Constantin Mihaiu, Ion Moldovianu Sr., Iamandi Adamache, Neagu Adamache, Ion Stoian, Constantin Stoian, Petru Tatoiu and Nicolai Surdia. Nicolai Iamandi donated ten acres of land on which was built the parish house. The construction supervisor was Gavrila Bancescu (others said the name of the builder was Mihai Gavrila); the iconostasis was brought from Jerusalem, ordered and paid for by Nicolae Zora. The icon of Saints Peter and Paul came from Mount Athos (Patterson). All this was registered with the Land’s Registration Branch in Ottawa in 1911.

In the 1985 Calendarul Ortodox Candela Strabuna, the arrival and settlement of Ecaterina Vlad and Radu Vasile were recorded. The story was written by their grandchildren (pp. 120-125). The two were married in Romania in 1887. By 1911, two of their daughters were already married, homesteading and living in Saskatchewan. A third daughter was working for a German family in Regina. The fourth daughter was a seamstress and arrived in 1912 with her grandfather. She married a Romanian and homesteaded near Flintoft. Her husband did not like farming and moved to Detroit where she ran a boarding house. The grandfather sent for the rest of the family and they went by train to Hamburg where they were in a three-week quarantine. The compound where they were held had a high fence around it and they were given two meals a day. Since it was 1914 and the world was at war, their agent had difficulty getting passage for them so they were sent to Rotterdam and then boarded a cattle boat and traveled twelve days to Halifax. They were all seasick. They boarded a train and arrived in Saskatchewan in the middle of winter. It was very cold and they spent the winter in a livery barn until they were able to get to the Jonescu home where they

spent the rest of the winter in a sod house that dripped mud as the snow on the roof thawed. In the spring, the grandfather built a sod house using wooden boxes to form the windows which were then replaced with glass. The roof was made of wooden poles packed with sod which hardened. The house was then white-washed with lime. An explosion in a nearby building took the lives of an aunt and uncle. Because of the bitter cold, school was closed in the winter. One of the daughters worked in the Burns Meat Packing plant in Regina which hired many immigrants. She then moved to Detroit to help her sister run the boarding house. The hardships were varied. The children married and settled in the area. They went to the Romanian Orthodox Church in Flintoft and their dead were buried in the Saints Peter and Paul church cemetery in Flintoft. This story reflected many similarities to other immigrant stories in the area. Many of their offsprings' families are still living in the area. The reason for writing this history was to highlight the 80th birthday of one of the children, Katie Rusceak.

In 1936, when Bishop, Polycarp Momsca, finally arrived in North America, the church was consecrated by him along with three Canadian priests, Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu, Rev. Fr. Teofil Maxim and his brother Archimandrite Daniel Maxim assisting.

Many priests served the parish, some were visiting priests. Those who served on a more permanent basis were Rev. Frs.: Dionise Nichifor, Glicherie Moraru, Teofil Maxim, Teodor Skalescki, Ion Oncescu, John Shunda, Gratian Radu, Petru Avram, Daniel Nenson, Marin Postelnic, Sorin Lanescu, Peter SanFillipo and Nicolea Marioncu. At present the parish is vacant and is served by visiting priests.

A story was told about Dionisie Nichifor, one of the early priests in the area. He was born in 1856. He was sent by the Metropolitanate of Moldavia in 1910 to serve the communities around Flintoft and Limerick, Saskatchewan. In 1910, he arrived in the Flintoft area from Romania at the age of 54. Between 1911 and 1928 he served Flintoft. He also served other parishes, including Saint Nicholas parish in Regina, Saskatchewan. On February 24, 1911, he obtained a homestead and, with the help of local pioneers, built a 24' by 30' rock house valued at \$1,000. Because he found no parish house or church, he built himself this house of stones. In August of 1925 he was seriously hurt in an automobile accident, did not regain his health, and sold his land and returned to Romania. Today the old stone house is in ruins but the foundation still stands and it is still called "*Nichifor's Place*".

Because the people were unable to financially support their own priest, they joined the Assiniboia parish and had one service a month in their church. The church was declared a heritage building and people made special trips to see the beautifully painted antique iconostasis. The town of Flintoft no longer exists.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BOIAN DISTRICT, ALBERTA



Demetre Tona, an early Bukovinian Romanian immigrant, settled in Boian, Alberta in 1900, returned to Boian, Romania, in 1920. Photo taken c.1921, Boian, Romania.

FORT QU'APPELLE AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Fort Qu'Appelle, because it was on the railway line, was the destination of many Romanian and Romanian Jewish immigrants in the early 1900's. From here, some stayed, some moved on to Lipton, Dysart, Cupar and Southey. Most of them farmed in the area. Many of the Romanian Jewish immigrants became small entrepreneurs starting grocery stores and selling other merchandise and services needed by the immigrants. Many of them remained in the area a long time before moving on to Regina.

The Orthodox Christian Centre was built in the Fort Qu'Appelle area by Romanian people from the Regina area in the early 1970's. A camp area was created where religious and social activities were provided for the children. Later, a church was moved from Norquay, Saskatchewan to the site and was of great interest to the residents of the area. This is a reporting about an occurrence that took place in the year 2000 as published in the Regina Leader-Post on November 3, 2001:

CHURCH FINDS A HAVEN

There's a new addition to the lakeside scenery on the south side of the Qu'Appelle Valley near Fort Qu'Appelle. The onion-shaped dome of a Byzantine-style church rises above the trees along Echo Lake, about three kilometres west of the town. It's the latest addition to a summer camp and retreat facility of the Romanian Orthodox Church. But the church is not new and the story of how it came to be there is a snapshot of Saskatchewan history. The church arrived in the valley in early August, after a challenging journey of more than 250 kilometres by truck. It came there from a rural location about six kilometres southwest of the Norquay, a town near the Manitoba border about 100 kilometres north east of Yorkton.

It had been the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity, but had not been used for more than 30 years. The Romanian Orthodox Centre had only to pay for the cost of moving it to Fort Qu'Appelle.... The first Ukrainian Catholic Church in Norquay was a small log building built in 1906. Six years later a larger church, 30 by 18 feet was built, and it served the parish for 23 years. The third parish church, the one moved to Fort Qu'Appelle, was built in 1935....improvements in transportation and communication caused a relentless movement of people from rural areas to the towns and cities....By 1961, Holy Trinity's flock had diminished by more than half and in 1968, the church was closed and the remaining parishioners joined the church in town....the church in Norquay could be had for the costs of removal.....\$55,000 (was paid) to the movers and about \$20,000 to Sask Power to clear all the power lines on the route.....the church is 64 feet long and 42 feet wide, built on a cruciform, or cross-shaped, floor plan. The top of the central dome is about 70 feet above the ground.

When it (the church) arrived at its new location, the first job was to look after stowaways. "A family of raccoons had been living in the ceiling" said Father Nenson. "Mother apparently left when the movers started work, but two babies made the trip from Norquay with the church. When they were discovered, they were weak and dehydrated, so the Conservation Officers from Echo Valley Park put out some water, then a snack of sardines in a trap door cage. They were relocated in a new home."

The church is now settled on a new foundation and ready for the work to begin that will bring it back to its original splendour.

The church was blessed by Archbishop Nathaniel Popp, the ruling hierarch of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Detroit and all of Canada assisted by the following clergy: Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson, Dean

of Canada, Very Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu, and Rev. Fr. Ioan Andrisoia of Vancouver, Ionel Cudritescu of Scarborough, and Constantin Turcoane of Regina, on May 20, 2002 with about thirty people from Norquay in attendance, about thirty people from the Fort Qu'Appelle area and an equal number of Romanian Orthodox from the surrounding area including Dysart and Regina. The consecration of the church was on September 29, 2002.

HAMILTON AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Romanians began settling in the eastern part of Canada in the early 1900's. In many cases, the hall was built before a church building was constructed. The Hamilton parish had a hall called "*Casa Romana*" which meant "Romanian Home". In 1940, the priest was Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan and the parish council president was Hie Vacarciuc. In 1945, the parish was vacant. Hamilton had an area called "*Campul Romanescu*". Annually large conferences were held with as many as a thousand Romanians in attendance. Numerous activities took place here over a period of several days. This was a social as well as an intellectual event. It was also a family event.

KAYVILLE AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The Kayville area included Truax, Avonlea, Rouleau, Dahinda, Crystal Hills, Spring Valley, and other neighbouring towns where Romanian families settled.

The Romanian pioneers of the village of Kayville arrived in Canada between 1905 and 1908. They left the provinces of Bucovina, Ardeal, Banat and Dobrogea. They were peasants. Many borrowed money for their fare to Canada. Once here they faced many hardships in the new foreign world. Some of them worked on the railway, some in the City of Regina and some homesteaded in Kayville. In 1906, the Kayville area had the largest concentration of Romanians, larger than Elm Spring or Flintoft; the largest south of Regina. Kayville was sometimes erroneously spelled "*Caville*". Names of people in the area, as shown in the "*Golden Memories of Truax and Districts*" were: Ardelian, Avram, Banda, Bulai, Buzila, Choban, Cicanski, Cocar, Cojocar, Corkis, Criton, Cucurean, Donison, Dragomir, Flutur, Mertick, Nencescu, Paicu, Pararuic, Petrisor, Popp, Purcell, Radu, Rusu, Scrimbit, Sotroca, Staruiala, Stefan, Toderesa, Ursu and Yorga. Most of the immigrants were from Radauti in Bucovina. In 1906, Saints Peter and Paul church was built on farmland about five miles north and east of Kayville. There were fifty members. Between 1908 and 1911, more Romanians, originating in Radauti, migrated from North Dakota. In 1915, a split occurred within the church and a group built their own church six miles north and west of Kayville, calling it Saint Mary. Since 1924, when the Mother Church in Romania adopted the Gregorian calendar, the members of Saint Mary followed it. The members of Saints Peter and Paul, however, decided to stay with the Julian calendar. Since 1940, both churches follow the revised Julian calendar (the Gregorian calendar). To build the church, donations were received from the Romanians and the Russians in the area as reported by John Bistretzan. The church was built by Dimitru Cuciurianu. Saint Peter and Paul church was moved into Kayville in the forties. Now this church is known as "*the town church*" and Saint Mary is "*the church on the farm*". Both churches are well maintained today by the Kayville area Canadian-born Romanians. These two churches are under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Dan Boghean recalled that he came to Regina from Romania in 1910. Romanians came from the United States to Dahinda. They went to a little church on Hazen Argue's property. At first there were seven families living in a 12 by 12 shack. Quite a few Romanians settled around Crystal Hill. They burned cow dung for heat. The priest's name was Benedict. He was from Banat. Dan doubted that he was an ordained priest because of his behaviour. The priest decided to convert from the Orthodox faith to Seventh Day Adventist. The church at Crystal Hill was Saint Mary. The men wore white shirts and pants.

KITCHENER AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The Romanians in this Ontario area founded their parish in 1941, later than most of the parishes in Canada. Most of the immigrants arrived shortly before World War II, leaving an unsafe situation at home and seeking a better place to raise their families. These immigrants had strong cultural and political ties with Romania. They gathered frequently for social and cultural events. Their cultural group was called "*Banatul*". They held spring festivals celebrating May 10. They chose a "*Miss Banatul*" and presented programs that attracted hundreds of people. Their young people formed folkloric dance groups and the young boys formed football teams. The boys and girls together formed a young people's group belonging to A.R.O.Y., the American Romanian Orthodox Youth organization. The women had a well-organized ladies auxiliary in their parish. Typically, in this area, the social hall was built before the church was built. Then, through the hard work of the women, who prepared banquets as fund-raisers and the men who helped in whatever way they could, they built and paid for their new church building. In the meantime, Divine Liturgy services were held in an area of the social hall.

LENNARD AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The Lennard Area of Manitoba included Shell Valley, Manitoba and could also reach out to include MacNutt, and Canora, Saskatchewan. The Romanians in this area came mainly from Bucovina and there were Russian, Ukrainian and Austrian names among the immigrants. There was no evidence that immigration was due to persecution. Most of the immigrants came to Canada, looking for free land and a better place to raise their families. Most of the early immigrants came with large families. Shortly after this, they were mostly young Romanians, married, and just starting their families. Upon arrival, they spent much time cutting trees to clear an area on which to settle their families. Their first dwellings were in holes 4 feet deep and large enough for each family to find shelter. The roofs of their dwellings were made of logs with sod over them to keep out the rain and the snow. The small sections of land cleared were used to farm and plant gardens. They had an abundance of logs and later built log homes with sod and thatched roofs in the Bucovinian style.

An interesting story was related by Nistor Onufreiciuc of Inglis in the 1977 "*Credinta*". He wrote that in 1900 (possibly 1899), Ioan and Gheorghe Paulencu and Nicolae Penteliciuc were thinking about making a place where the people could gather to worship. They lived in a forested area and decided to cut down a big tree and, with it, make a Holy Cross. This they did and gathered to pray. At that time there were no stakes showing the dividing lines of the farms. It was decided that, when they found out where the bordering lines were, the person would donate two acres of land on which the cross stood so this would be their place of prayer. In 1902, a committee with its president, Ilie Burla, (he was assigned this position

because he was the oldest), decided to build a log church with six small windows in it. The logs used were the ones they cut down from the forest in which they built their homes. They used adobe between the logs to keep out the elements. They would climb a tree to look out to see if there was smoke coming out of their neighbours' houses because they could not see them from ground level. They found the direction of the neighbours' house when they could see from where the smoke was coming. Later, before the roadways were built, they would knick the trees to keep them from getting lost and also kept them going in the right direction.

When they built their first church, it was much the same style as their houses. The first church was built by the people in 1903 (and in 1904) and was named after the prophet Elijah and in honour of Eli Burla on whose land the church was built. The women sewed the church cloths, the men built the altar table, the cantor stands and the pews which were, at that time, built against the interior walls of the church and were to be used by the old and feeble and possibly by the pregnant women nearing their time of delivery. The Romanians were concerned that the children were not being educated so they were determined that a school should be built. The school was built about the same time as the church. Once the school was built, the concern was for finding a qualified teacher. One of the literate immigrants was the first to fill in as a teacher until a qualified teacher could be found.

It was not uncommon for immigrants arriving in Saltcoats, to walk miles to other areas in search of land. Mrs. Donmica Paulencui arrived in Canada from Bucovina (Austria), with three children. They migrated from Saltcoats to Broxton. She brought with her from Romania herbs and medicines and was the "doctor" for the area. For lack of adequate water, they went to Russell, Manitoba and from there to Lennard. They built houses from logs taken from the wooded area, used blankets for doors, bunk beds were made from logs, floors were made from larger trees, mattresses were made from straw. With the seeds they brought they grew hemp. The cotton made from hemp was woven and bleached and was water-proof. The hemp was sowed among the vegetables and kept the insects away. Grain was crushed for flour and meals by using a mill stone. One of the first things they did was to erect a cross in a field where they would gather to conduct their service of worship. They obtained wool from sheep-raising farmers to weave into blankets; home-made stoves bore steel plates with holes for pots. The stoves were made of stones plastered with mud. Ovens were made of stones. The first houses were made like teepees with a hole in the top through which the smoke escaped. (Banner County, 173)

The names of the early immigrants were: Burla, Iftody, Pentilchiuk, Paulencu, Onufreiciuc, Holunga, Toderian, Mintencu, Pochtar, Gherman, Ostaficiuc, Bliziuk, Flundra, Nevestiuk, Guraliuk, Holopina, Cosma, Motoshoski, Ungurean, Chewka, Holovaci, Deletoi, Bulbuk, Cioropita, Tokar, Seminiuk, Chescu, Chiper, Gorda, Sawchiuk, Ciomei, Trebis, Cobliuk, Ilas, Sadovey, Bostan and Zitaruk, and, of course, many others. The names are Romanian, Ukrainian, Austrian and Hungarian, countries bordering Bucovina.

One of the histories of the area, "Banner County - History of Russell and District 1879-1967", p.169, records a short history of Eli Burla, who arrived in Canada in the spring of 1900 from Bucovina. Other families arriving at the same time were those of Vasile Onchulenko, Stefan Ursulenc, George Holunga, John Onofreiohuk and Peter Romaniuk. They had traveled by train to Hamburg and from there took a ship to Halifax and the train to Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. They did farm work for others before getting their own homesteads. They sought wooded areas because there were few trees in Romania. Immediately they cut down part of the woods and built their houses. However, they *"found it more of a curse than a blessing. The whole family sweated and laboured the whole summer to*

clear up a patch of land." When they were able to buy a team of horses, the team was then hitched to a plough alongside and an ox was led by the eldest daughter...they turned over the first sod. The area they settled in was called Lennard.

A phenomenon in the Shell Valley-Lennard Area was the collaboration of the Romanians and Ukrainians in building the church and hall. Once the church was built, they wrote to the "old country" to send a priest. They appealed to both the Romanian and the Russian hierarchy to send them priests. Some of the priests who served the area were Rev. Frs.: Petrea Hakman, Ion Mihalovich, Vasilovich, Theodose Nica, Ieremia Delea, Dumitru Istremski, A. Berek, Mihil Baleka, Taschuk, Ghenadie Gheorghiu, Dumitru Feica, Dumitru Irina (Erina), Dosofteil Constantinescu, Marin Postelnic, Martin Ionescu and Glichere Popa. The correct order of the priests serving this and the area parishes is not known.

In 1911, George Norquay opened a grocery store and post office and named the location "Lennard" after Mr. William Barrett Lennard, a pioneer homesteader of Boulton Municipality. In 1912, the school was built. The teacher was Onofrei Zelinsky who immigrated to the area in 1899. His monthly salary was \$60. He spoke Romanian, Russian and German. It was believed that English should be one of the languages taught but who would be the teacher? During the years of growth Lennard had expanded into a thriving community. As many as 250 families settled in the area, some on a temporary basis. The village consisted of a church, two general stores, two grocery stores, a post office, a blacksmith shop, two dance halls, two schools and a teacherage. The school enrolment reached as high as 106 pupils. In 1940, both Nick Burla and J. K. Paulencu owned stores for grocery and dry goods or gas. G. Mereniuk was a Shoe and Harness Maker, and made collars and rubber and belting repairs. Procopie Paulencu was the Postmaster and also sold groceries, dry goods and other things.

In this area, the first Romanian Orthodox religious education children's camp was built. A farmer granted use of his land where the camp was to be situated and the people of the area as well as people from Regina worked to develop and maintain the camp. In the late 1990's a Moldavian style house, built in the early 1900's was moved onto the church property, restored and maintained as a heritage property. The children of the pioneers had mixed marriages but many remained in the area. In the late 1990's the priest serving the Romanian Orthodox parishes in the area was a Scot by birth who had married Martha Holovach, a Romanian girl.

The thriving community of Lennard followed the pattern of many small communities and, in the late 1990's consisted of only a few houses with the church still located about a mile to the west. In 1993 the Paulencu House Project was begun. This house was built by John Paulencu in 1906 on his homestead adjacent to the Saint Elijah parish property. It was of log construction plastered with clay using local material. In the attic it had a meat smoke-house. It reflected the Bucovinian style of the village of Voloca. It had a deep overhanging roof on all four sides, exposed beams and square windows. The house had an inner support beam on which was carved a cross and the date 1906. The shingle roof had rounded ends. The building had two major rooms on the first floor and a bedroom on the second along with a large storage room. The house was relocated near the church when the original homestead was sold. In 2002 it was the winner of the 2002 Prix Manitoba Award —Heritage. The people in the area also restored the old church, turning it into a museum.

LETHBRIDGE AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

There was a short article about the Lethbridge Area Romanian Canadians in the November 23, 1956 edition of the *Regina Leader-Post*. It is quoted:

The Romanian community of Lethbridge has also started to build a church. Most members of this community were miners, for whom all went well as long as there were jobs. But the mines worked when there were enough boxcars to take away the coal. Often the mines would close and the miners would be unemployed. Many of them began to drift away, some going to Edmonton, others to Regina. Those who stayed saw with regret that they were not going to be able to complete the church. They decided to turn over the unfinished building to the Ukrainian and send the bell to Saint Nicholas church in Regina. The decision was carried out, and the bell, cast in 1897 by the Meneely Foundry Company at West Troy, New York, was unloaded from a CPR train, which arrived in Regina on a summer day of 1904.

MACNUTT AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

MacNutt is in Saskatchewan, about one hundred and sixty miles north east of Regina. It is very close to the Manitoba border. It is situated in the area where Ukrainians also settled. Immigrants first arrived around 1900. As reported in their 100th Anniversary booklet, there were valleys in the area and some immigrants, George Sarafincean and his family, lived in a cave for two years or more. His daughter Anne related the following story of her early years for John Andrew Sawkey's book (pp. 245 to 250).

I came to Canada with my parents in 1900...At the time I was two...I was actually four, but my father decided to make me two years younger in order to secure a reduced rate (on the train). When we arrived...there was nothing but trees and hoards of mosquitoes. My father dug a home in the mound of a hill which can still be seen today. Rails were used to make the roof which was first covered by straw and then with sod. Beds were also constructed with rails and filled with hay. A stove was built into one wall of the hut which accommodated a chimney. A coal oil lantern supplied the den with light. Living in a dugout presents many problems. The house was usually damp and cold. Whenever it rained, the floor became a mixture of mud which made life almost intolerable. We lived in this home for two years until father was able to construct a log hut. Living underground amongst trees made it difficult to locate our home...Trees were marked or notched so we would be able to find our way...Meals during the first two years consisted chiefly of brown bread and tea. There was no garden because there were no tools with which to cultivate the soil. Mother often gathered left over wheat from the fields of other settlers, filling a sack tied to her waist. The wheat was recovered by beating it with a flail and was later taken to Calder Station where Schulman ground it into flour with a stone grinding device. There was no poultry and we were unable to hunt wild life because we had no guns. Little was known of wild berries so our diet was limited. After two years of this, father purchased two oxen and a small plough which were used to break land. Vegetable seeds, grain and poultry were purchased from German settlers and farming began. Father used oxen for a number of years. As it was impossible to steer the oxen and guide the plough at the same time, I was required to lead the oxen while father followed behind the plough. I was five years old at the time. Oxen were temperamental creatures and frequently decided to stop working when the weather was too hot or the mosquitoes became unbearable. They often headed for the nearest slough and all the coaxing in the world would not get them back to work...father eventually acquired a few horses...I have heard that other settlers who used oxen to go to

church often never got there...Prairie fires were often a hazard. Fires sometimes swept through the thick trees and grass so rapidly that little preparations could be made to save the crops or the buildings.

Mrs. Toderian had three children of her own, Harry, George and Jim. After her husband's death she married Metro Kaminski and when he died, she adopted his three children. She was known in the community as "a woman with courage."

These pioneers built their houses in the same style as in Bucovina. Gregory Gaber arrived in the area in 1903. He arrived with his wife and five children via Hamburg, Halifax and Saltcoats. His planned destination was Edmonton. However, in Saltcoats, they were put in quarantine camp where they stayed for three weeks. Not liking it there, where they lived in tents while the guards gave three loaves of bread to them over the fence, three of the men escaped and walked to Calder where they heard there was a Romanian settlement (Banner County, 171). There they worked for a farmer until the police found them, fined them and took them back to the camp. After their release, they settled in the Lennard area.

In MacNutt, the first church was built in 1912: It was built according to the Moldavian style, of birch logs and a handmade shingled roof with one end curved. It was later moved to another location on the church property and replaced by a new church in 1957 because the Romanian population grew. Once the church was built, they wrote to the "old country" to send them a priest. The Romanians appealed to both the Romanian and the Russian hierarchy to send them a priest. Some of the priests who served the area were Rev. Frs.: Petrea Hakman, Ion Mihalovich, Vasilovich, Theodosia Nica, Ieremia Delea, Dumitru Istremski, A. Berek, Mihil Baleka, Taschuk, Ghenadie Gheorghiu, Dumitru Feica, Dumitru Irina, Dosoftei Constantinescu, Marin Postelnic, Martin Ionescu and Glichere Popa. The correct order of the priests serving this and the area parishes was not known. The parish had been served by priests from Regina, Saskatchewan and from Lennard, Manitoba. The parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

PIERCELAND AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Pierceland was about 400 miles north-west of Regina, the province capital and about two hundred and forty miles north and west of the second largest city in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. In 1915, Descent of the Holy Ghost church was built by half a dozen families. It was located on farmland about five miles west of Pierceland and about five miles east of the Alberta border. It was a small building with a cemetery in its yard. In 1935 Pierceland had a Romanian dance group. There was also a Balada Dance Group in 1976. The parish was served by a priest from Edmonton, Alberta about one or two times a year. Edmonton is almost two hundred miles away. The church was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

PRAIRIE AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The "Prairie" area was the first place the immigrants came to in Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are considered to be the "Prairie Provinces". Journalist Amy Nelson-Mile reported in an issue of the "Community Living" newspaper that "*although Winnipeg had been established earlier, it wasn't until 1881*

that the Regina district became advertised to the world. Fur traders and explorers had been through it but settlers were not familiar with the area."

When East Europeans were recruited for the settlement of Canada, little was known about this distant and foreign land. The Government of Canada, along with enterprising individuals, flooded Europe with invitations of welcome and promises of lucrative employment. Free land was also a promise. The land of the prairies was particularly attractive with its lack of "bush" and much greenery and small ponds dotted across the countryside. Canada became known to Europe as the "land of milk and honey". It is no wonder that thousands of Europeans sought ways to immigrate to this faraway land.

The Romanian descendants of the Dacians, when immigrating to Canada, came prepared to conquer any obstacles they might find. They took with them across the ocean their ploughs, hoes, sickles and harrow teeth. The Canadian government welcomed the technology brought in from Romania. The specialized factories took advantage of the prototypes brought by the Europeans and developed new and better multipurpose implements. Many immigrants were accompanied by their families but many were also single. Young men came in search of adventure and, in the process, found young girls of their own ethnic group and faith to marry. Others intermarried between ethnic groups (in the beginning usually with Ukrainian girls) and frequently drifted not only from their own faith but from any faith. Other immigrants were married and brought their wives and children of all ages. All were looking for the "promised land". The immigrants were prepared for hard work but unprepared for the natural calamities— the weather, the fires, the lack of medical care, the locusts, the army worms, the drought.

Each immigrant came with his own reasons for immigrating. All that was needed was the promise of something good and something free. Each one had his own background, expertise, physical skills and motives. Some sincerely believed that they would return to their homeland, having obtained unlimited riches as well as enriching experiences while in Canada.

Early settlers in Western Canada, unfamiliar with the language and customs of the country of their destination, sought a location where previous immigrants from their native land settled. The story of the Romanian immigrant did not vary too much from the norm. In the rural areas as well as in the towns, doctors were scarce. Mid-wives were called to deliver babies. Considering their lack of formal education, they saved many lives; however, many women and babies died in childbirth.

The earliest of pioneers, once comfortably settled, sought to make their new homeland as much like the old as possible. They gathered together in larger homes, built social halls, and built churches, requesting priests to be sent to them from the land from which they emigrated. When they could not find what they were seeking, they drifted into the larger cities and went to work for private entrepreneurs in small business or in large factories. Once established, they sought ways and means of starting their own business.

Riddell (17-93) stated that settlers, arriving, in Saskatchewan, tended to locate as close as possible to the railway, which provided convenient access to transportation. This was responsible for the land boom of Regina's early years and contributed greatly to the expansion of the town. Through the early 1880's, the population of the parkland and prairies (with the exception of the Indians and the Métis) was mainly British. It was not until about 1885 that immigrants from Europe began to arrive. These settlers came mainly from the United States, with Hungarians and Scandinavians moving north to the Esterhazy region and New Stockholm. Regina was a good choice for a capital city because it "was as good a point as any and more central and that it was surrounded by a very large area of the best wheat land in the Territories." (20)

The first train arrived at nine o'clock on the morning of August 23, 1882, which was also the occasion for christening the new capital...Her Royal Highness, Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria...suggested the name "Regina", signifying queen. (21) Very quickly settlers began streaming into the area to take advantage of the opportunities to homestead land, and the town bustled with land offices, general stores, a lumber yard, and tradesmen offering services as blacksmiths, plasterers, tinsmiths, and even a watchmaker. (27) Regina faced the usual problems of providing the citizens with water, fire protection, electric light, paved streets, and other facilities. To get the necessary power to provide these essentials, but mainly as a matter of local pride in its increasing size and importance, Regina applied for a charter as a city and became a city on June 19, 1903. (28) Immigration increased. In 1905, 971 immigrants arrived from Britain, 967 from Germany, 495 Americans, and 365 Canadians from Eastern Canada. There were 79 Austrians, 68 Galicians, 51 Romanians, 18 Swedes, 14 Icelanders, and 12 Swiss; one-third of them stayed in Regina; the others moved to more rural areas to take up farming. (34) Although Regina established its own police force in 1892, the North West Mounted Police played an important role in the life of Regina. In 1882, its headquarters were moved to Regina to beat a central point and near the railroad that was bringing a steady stream of new settlers and businessmen to the area. (60) The more than 100 churches in Regina represented all denominations. There were several Orthodox churches in Regina, built to meet the spiritual needs of the people from East Europe. Romanians came to Canada in numbers from 1900 to 1913, and again between 1920 and 1929. They brought with them their Orthodox Christian faith, building the first Romanian Orthodox Church in North America in 1902 in Regina.

In the 1900 period, the immigrants were mostly farmers while in the 1920 group they were chiefly craftsmen who settled in towns and villages. After 1929, immigration to Saskatchewan almost ceased. After 1945, the immigrants settled mainly in the industrial areas of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Most of these people immigrated for mainly political reasons. They were industrialists, office workers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, priests and professionals of all kinds. The census taken in 1979 recorded 87,000 Romanians in North America; 45,000 in Canada. The community with the most Romanians was Regina, Saskatchewan with 7,000 followed by Windsor, Ontario with 6,000. The largest ethnic community in Saskatchewan is the German.

The book, "The Ties that Bind" Estlin, Gray, Riceton, Bechard Volume 2, written by Harford Lewis, which had 703 pages, described the conditions the early immigrants faced. He stated that the area around Regina and Saskatchewan was opened for settlement under the Dominion Homesteads Act in the early 1880's. With the exception of the lands deeded to the Canadian Pacific Railway under a railroad compensation agreement, some school and Hudson Bay land as well as some half-breed or Métis scriptland, the balance of the lands were available for homesteads. While settlement proceeded slowly but steadily in the area from what is now North Battleford through Saskatoon, Yorkton and on into the area from Indian Head and Carlyle to the eastern boundary of Saskatchewan and on into Manitoba; very little settlement took place on the Regina plains. Many of the first settlers in this area only stayed a short time and the list of abandoned and cancelled homesteads was quite long. The reason behind all this poor development was the dire shortage of water and no firewood within miles. While it is true that buffalo manure, generally referred to as buffalo chips when it dried, could be used in place of firewood, it was a tedious job to gather it and there were some characteristic odours when using it in a stove inside a building. The reality is that the Regina plains area was very productive during seasons of normal rainfall. Many of the early farmers became wealthy from their land.

The early settlers usually arrived at their homesteads in the early spring when there was water in the sloughs. Every homestead had its water barrel on a stone boat in front of the shack. A stone boat was a flat wooden structure built on wooden skis that glided over the land without the use of wheels, but pulled by horses or oxen. They were used by farmers to help them clear the smaller rocks from their land in preparation of seeding. The wet years provided slough water for most of the season even though it did become foul in taste and in odour as the summer progressed. Water bugs, tadpoles and flies did nothing to improve the sight of the water in the drinking dipper either. However, it was wet and better than nothing. The bugs were strained out by pouring the water through a cloth. Some even set up a keg with about a foot of sand in the bottom through which the water could be filtered. By boring a small hole near the bottom, in the side of the keg and whittling a peg to fit the hole, water could be drained out but it still carried the tastes and odours of the slough.

In some areas good water could be obtained by hand digging a well down some 10 or 20 feet deep to an underground water table but that didn't work in the Regina area because there were no pockets of relatively shallow underground water. Another method of getting water in the wintertime was through melting snow. The water barrel in the corner of the kitchen would melt some snow to water each day but it required frequent refills of snow. The hot water reservoir on the kitchen range was also used the same way. When needed for a wash, a boiler or tub would be filled with snow and set on top of the cooking stove. For livestock watering, a snow melter was built out of a steel trough from six to eight feet long and two to three feet wide and it would be set over a homemade firebox made of brick or clay with a feed door at one end and a smoke stack at the other. Flax straw was the best firing fuel but wheat straw was also effective. The trough was usually fitted with a hinged wooden cover to keep the water from freezing and could be opened for stock watering. Snow was shovelled into the top tank and melted by the fire underneath. It was a slow method of producing water, especially if more than a few head were being watered. Horses that were let out to run at large for the winter fed on the straw stacks and ate snow for their water needs.

The idea of using a cistern to store water for later use was developed quite early. Most of the early cisterns were a square hole dug by hand from six to ten feet on each side and eight to twelve feet deep. They were usually lined with vertical plain lumber nailed to the outside of 2 X 6 frames or forms that were placed at two to three-foot intervals for the depth of the cistern. The bottom of the cistern was usually just a plain earth floor and the top was covered with a framed lumber flat top having a manhole with a cover. While cistern pumps may have been available, they were not in general use. Bailing water from the cistern as needed with a bucket and a rope attached to the handle was common practice. Sometime around the turn of the century it was discovered that a good water supply could be obtained by digging dugouts or water ponds as they were called at that time. The run-offs from the land would gather them in the spring and could be used to water livestock.

The storing of produce to sustain the settlers over the winter months was a challenge. No refrigeration was available. Settlers had to devise their own "cold room". Where small hills were found on the property, holes were built into the side of the hill where vegetables were stored for winter use. These were called "root cellars." Some settlers dug holes five to six feet deep and covered them with poles and sod after they were filled with food supplies. The wives of the settlers made their own soap. The settlers became very self-sufficient.

REGINA AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Regina was the capital city of the province of Saskatchewan. The first settlement in Regina took place in 1882. By 1901 there were fifty-eight Romanian-born residents in the North West Territories where Regina was located. At that time the district was known as "Pile O' Bones" because of the huge pile of buffalo bones the Indians had accumulated over the years in the belief that the buffalo would return to the home of their forefathers. The majority of the early settlers in the 1880's were the British and the aborigines, both Indians and Métis. The area south of Regina was excellent farming land and was called the "Regina Plains". It was a very fertile plain, although, in the 1880's it was called the "Dry Belt" because of the lack of rain. According to some, Regina's first settlers arrived in 1881. At this time there were thirty Romanian families in Regina. Settlers tended to locate as close to the railway line as possible and was one of the reasons for the big land boom in the Regina area. To maximize profits, the early owners of large parcels of land divided the city lots into very small lots only, 25 feet in width. Because most of the immigrants lived close to the centre of town, it contributed to the ghetto appearance of the eastern end of the city. However, the dwellings were well kept and the yards were full of flowers and vegetables.

Regina was selected as the capital city of the area because it was surrounded by very large areas of the best wheat land in the Territories. Dr. W. A. Riddell described the conditions early pioneers found when arriving in Regina. (Regina from Pile O'Bones to Queen City of the Plains - an illustrated history by W. A. Riddell). On page 9 he wrote:

"Long before the white man came to what is now the Regina plains, Indian bands recognized the area as a favourite grazing ground for the buffalo. The vast plains, rich in grass with a number of creeks and small rivers, attracted the animals. The town was originally known as "Pile of Bones". There was a low-lying area, now known as "Wascana Lake" which had little or no water in it. It was the ideal place for Indians to dump the bones of the buffalo they slaughtered to feed their families. When Her Royal Highness, Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, came to the area, she suggested that the name of the capital be "Regina", Latin for "Queen" in honour of her mother."

On page 17 he wrote about the Canadian government's advertisements through Eastern Europe to attract immigrants to settle the prairie provinces of Canada. The first Dominion Land Act of 1872, also called the Free Land Homestead Act, provided for free homesteads of 160 acres for incoming settlers. To prove the title the settler had to reside on the land for three years and pay a nominal fee of \$10 for filing a claim. In addition, provision was made for pre-emptions, which enabled the homesteader to take up 160 acres of land adjoining his homestead. Sections 11 and 29 were reserved as school lands to provide funds for establishing schools in the settlements developed. A road allowance bordered every section surveyed.

Most of the early immigrants from Romania took advantage of this offer. Upon arriving in Regina, they were taken to an immigration house on the 1600 block Saint John Street where an interpreter acted for them as settling arrangements were made. Regina had the largest Romanian community in Saskatchewan of any other province at this time. Sometimes the immigrants moved from one area to another, but for the most part, they remained in Saskatchewan and learned to survive the hardships the severe winters brought, the depressions resulting from drought conditions and they learned how to cope with the distances between their neighbours and their nearest schools, hospitals and towns. They became a very hardy group.

Even in the 1920's when immigration was restricted, Romanians still flocked to the west because there was provision in the legislation for bona fide agriculturalists. Most stayed on the land until economic conditions forced them to move into urban areas to find work.

The first Romanian Orthodox Church on the North American continent was built in Regina in 1902. Some of the founders were Nicolae Zora, Ilie Bancescu, Nicolae Surdea, Alexandru Ursaki and Nicuta Donison.

Because the railway line came through Regina, immigrants swarmed to it. An unfortunate incident was recorded in an issue of the Regina Leader-Post: Tudor Surdia, a Romanian, was killed by a C.P.R. freight train in the yards a few feet east of the immigrant hall. How the accident happened was not quite clear but it was surmised that the unfortunate man was under a car gathering coal when the train started. He was a resident of the city, living in the east end.

The population of Regina on June 30, 1911 grew to 30,210. Regina was definitely the centre for Romanians in Canada at this time. In the late 1900's, most of the Romanian immigrants settled in the industrial provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Very few have ever settled in the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland which were mainly settled by the French and the British.

VANCOUVER AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

The Canadian Citizenship Records of 1901 reported that there were five Romanian-born residents in British Columbia. They were few in number because of the distances the immigrants had to travel and the general lack of transportation at that time.

After World War II, the immigrants were mainly displaced persons who received their professional education in Romania as doctors, lawyers, clergymen, scientists, teachers and other professions. They were active socially amongst themselves. They brought professional Romanian entertainers to Vancouver for their own enjoyment. There was a proliferation of Romanian churches, most springing up for short periods of time. In 2004, the largest and most permanent group bought a church, Holy Trinity, in New Westminster and is progressing rapidly toward removing the mortgage from their church. Romanians were drawn to Vancouver because of the climate which was similar to that of Romania as well as the abundance of natural water resources.

WINNIPEG AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

Romanians began to settle in the Winnipeg, Manitoba area around 1900. In Manitoba, before the land could be cultivated or "broken", many trees and shrubs had to be cleared. This was also true in the Roblin, Lennard and Shell Valley areas. The shrubs were very thick and required much work. There were many rabbits and wild ducks to provide fresh meat as well as deer which were at home in this wooded area with much naturally flowing water and lakes. Many Romanians from the Lennard area moved to Winnipeg and some were credited with building a parish in Winnipeg which grew through their dedication.

Later, as in Saskatchewan, some children moved from the farm areas to the city of Winnipeg. Those in the Roblin area moved to Regina or Saskatoon as well as the Winnipeg area. Whenever there was a spiritual or cultural event, people would travel back to Winnipeg and to the Lennard area.

WOOD MOUNTAIN AREA ROMANIAN CANADIANS

In 1869 there were 70 fur traders in Wood Mountain trading with the Indians. In 1871, the Hudson Bay Company abandoned their post at Wood Mountain. As early as 1909, correspondence was found relating to priests who traveled in the Wood Mountain area and performed religious services for the Romanians in the area. Priests traveled from Rouleau to Flintoft to Wood Mountain and a town in Alberta called Whitford. In the correspondence the name of this town was incorrectly spelled "Viltford". Correspondence was sent requesting the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava to send a priest to perform religious services in the Wood Mountain area. It also stated that there was sufficient budget to pay the priest. David Cojocar opened the first general store in Wood Mountain in 1908.

About Wood Mountain, Patterson, (14) reported that it is still on the map. It is situated thirty-seven miles south and west of Assiniboia. It is the most south-westerly of the Romanian settlements in Saskatchewan and is near the badlands which extend into Montana. It is still settled mainly by the descendants of the original Romanian immigrants.

The Romanian church in the community, the Holy Transfiguration Romanian Orthodox church, was built by an immigrant by the name of Petrescu in 1929 and it still serves the families in the area. It belongs to the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America and Canada and is served infrequently by priests from Kayville and other areas. Homesteaders originally came to the region from Bucovina and Dobrogea.



160 Akre-130 juter
polja volno

200 million acre polja kod *
Zapadnoj **KANADI**,
za svakoga
poselenca.

160 акрів-130 Моргів австр.

* ВІЛЬНОЇ

землі *

200 мільйонів акрів під управу

в Західній **КАНАДІ** для
кожного
оселенця

160 akrů-130 jiter

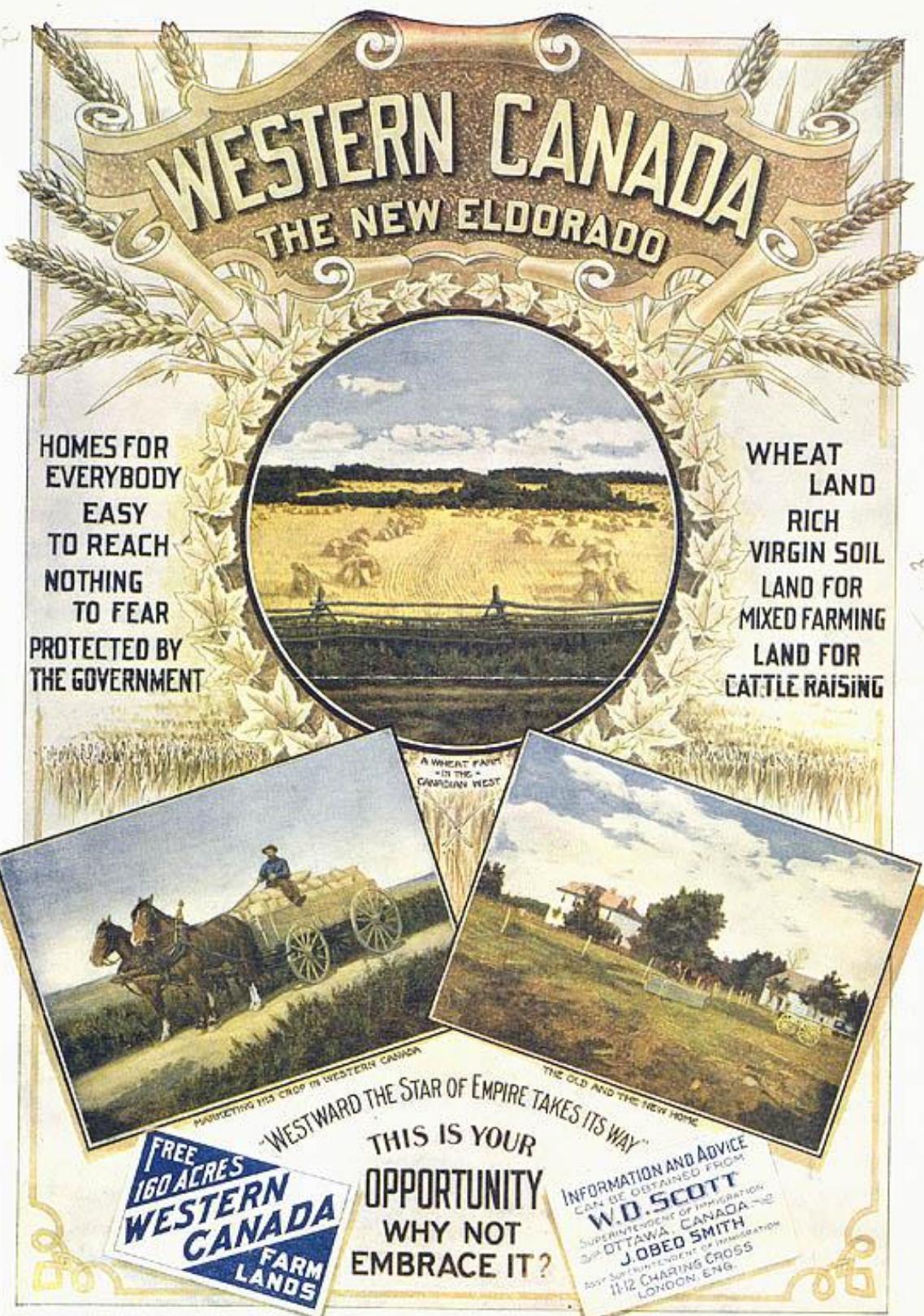
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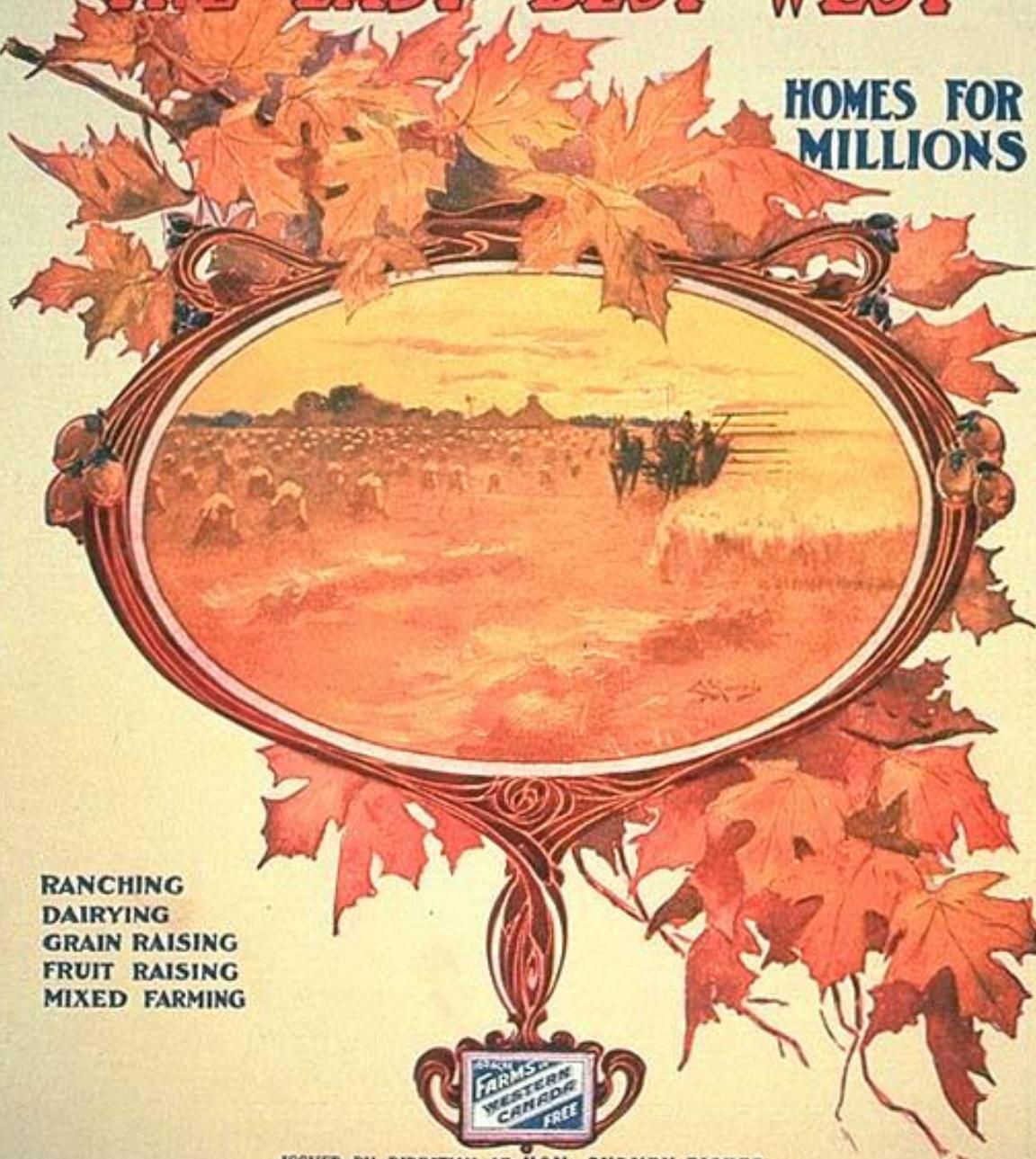
KANADÉ pro
každého
osadníka.



Canada West

THE LAST BEST WEST

HOMES FOR
MILLIONS



Swedish without accent

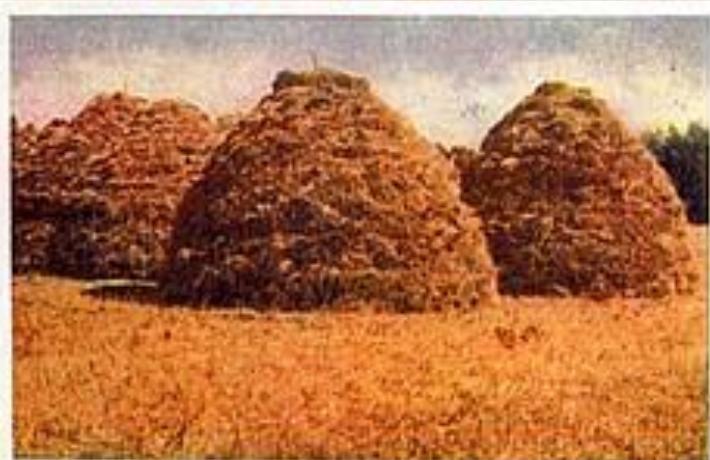
CANADA



**160 Acres
fritt land
till hvarje Nybyggare**

Canada

Das Land der
Gelegenheit

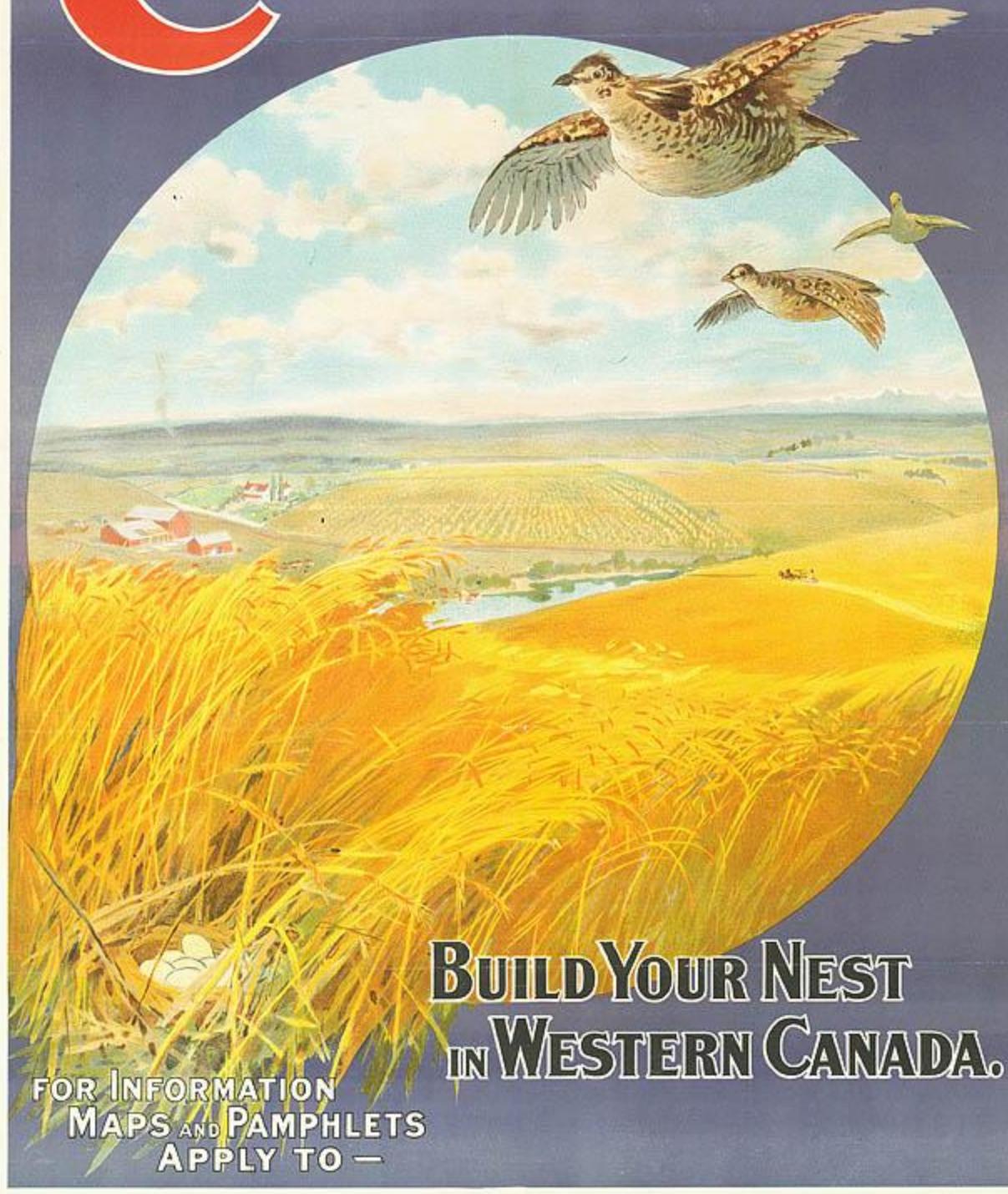


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PART 2: ROMANIAN LIFE

FAMILY AND WORK: ROMANIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN ALBERTA –

DAILY WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF A PIONEER WOMAN

Ron Perozny

"Behind every successful man stands a woman."

Pioneer men's names appear on many places in history, but what about women's roles? Some activities such as housekeeping and child care were obvious, but other work may have been more physically demanding or might require special skills. The following is a picture or snapshot of some of the activities of very busy pioneer woman during the early 1900's.

Cooking at first in a cuptor, then later with an iron stove. A wood fire was difficult to regulate in temperature. The correct temperature was often determined by throwing a handful of cornmeal or flour onto the fire; if it turned brown the temperature was probably correct for cooking or baking.

Working in the fields. When the prairie was first ploughed, some wives followed their husbands behind the first furrow cut into the virgin earth. The grass and tree roots were sometimes so strong that the furrow would fallback into place. It was their job to ensure that the sod was properly turned over. They also helped by picking the tree roots and moving stumps after the initial clearing, which was very hard work.

Whitewash for painting walls was made by adding powdered lime to a tub of boiling water. This mixture required constant stirring until the correct consistency was reached. Bluing was added to intensify the white colour.

Bread was often baked in an outdoor clay oven (cuptor). This way, large quantities could be baked at one time. Before yeast was available a sour dough starter had to be kept on hand. Up to 48 loaves could be baked on a busy day.

Jam was often made from wild strawberries, saskatoons, blueberries or gooseberries. If there was not enough (or any) sugar available women resorted to boiling the berries for many hours until it was thick enough and the natural sugar and pectin were extracted.

Home spun clothing. Wool was gathered from sheep raised on their farms. Women washed this wool, carded and combed it, then spun it around a spindle. At this point, through constant rolling and handling, a thread was formed that could be woven into simple cloth. Sometimes this wool was dyed with specific colours.

Ducks and geese, after slaughter, could add a by-product - feathers. This labour-intensive operation involved separating the feather or "down" from the quills. It could then be stuffed into pillows or sewn into panels for quilts.

Cheese making (cas). This was a real staple, especially during the winter months. Milk was soured, heated to separate the curds from the whey. The curds were placed in a cloth bag to drain (often hung under the kitchen table) then processed for storage or eating.

Gardening was essential for supplying a variety of vegetables and some fruit (usually berries) for the table year-round. Although a variety of vegetables were raised, some warrant special mention. Potatoes and cabbage could be used in a variety of ways and had very good keeping qualities. Beans provided valuable protein and, along with peas and corn, could be stored for the winter. All this produce required soil preparation, planting, hoeing, and weeding, even watering, then eventually harvesting. This work could stretch over many months.

During a very busy day, women completed many chores and errands around the farms. Sometimes they had to improvise along the way. In the late fall when the weather turned cold, a clucking hen, along with eggs or brood, might be brought into the house so that the chicks would survive. Even in later years I recall that grandmother stopped by the henhouse and picked eggs which she carried back in her apron.

Dedicated to my Grandmothers: Domnica Porozni, Rosie Iftody, with contributions from: Sandra Porozni, Metro (Mike) Porozni, Jean Porozni

MEMORIES OF OUR MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS

Darline (Iftody) Shelemy, Second Generation

Alberta Romanian, 1998

Lifelong friends met together over lunch and tea to share some of their special memories of their pioneer families when they were growing up in Boian: Sarah (Siminiuc) Toma and her daughter, Delima (Toma) Iftody, Lena (Esak) Ostapiuk, Pearl (Toma) Demchuk and Sandra (Hauca) Swekla.

Sandra remembers her mother, Domnica Falka, lived in a bordei when she came to Canada, which was like a dugout, in the ground about six feet deep and a roof of branches and sod. She said there were lots of snakes around, she had to watch out for snakes. She came from Boian, Bucovina in 1899 to join her husband, Nicolai Hauca, who came first, the previous year, and then he brought his family.

Domnica came with two kids; Metro (2) and George (1). She had three children born in the Old Country, but her firstborn died on the boat as she was coming over to Canada. The child choked. They were sleeping altogether in the boat, not in rooms like they have now; it was just a big ship. She was coming with three boys and one died, buried at sea. They got off the boat in Halifax and took the train west. They never came to Vegreville; the train didn't go there yet. She was 26 years old when she came here. Father was 28 when he left Boian. Then they built a house and farmed. Mother used to tell me those stories as I was growing up. I was the youngest so I don't know what hardships they went through, really. She never complained that they had hardships. They figured they had everything; no complaints. My grandparents also came, in 1900.

Lena said her Dad, Peter Esak Jr., came in 1899 with his parents when he was 11 years old. The train tracks running through Edmonton were just being built and he worked on the railroad. The nuns there wanted him to leave this hard job and they looked after him and put him through school. But Bunica, Dad's Mother, Domnica, was ill, and he was the oldest in the family, needed at home to help, so he didn't finish his education.

"My Mother came to Boian with her family when she was 16 years old. In 1911 when he was 22, Dad married Ana Yurok and bought a homestead at Desjarlais because his parents had a quarter section there, about 70 miles northeast of Edmonton. Moshu Esak bought his land for \$10 in 1899."

"One thing that bothers me," Lena says, "Our name, Esak, is totally wrong. When they settled in Desjarlais, or when they came to Canada, somehow, they had to be registered. Around Shandro, Star and Wostok, only some Ukrainians were settled there and they wrote 'Esak' the way they pronounced it. Our name in the Romanian language, which has no 'e' or 'k', should be spelled "Isaac" but that's how the Postmaster, or somebody around there, registered us. Not one of us had the same spelling. I was going to Europe and I had an awful time getting my passport because there was no trace of my birth registration. So, I asked for the school register and watched as she was flipping the pages of the long books. Fortunately, I caught my father's signature but my name was spelled totally different. It depends how the people who registered it pronounced it. And if they were Ukrainian, they wrote it in the Ukrainian alphabet. I know that our name is 'Isaac' not 'Esak'."

About my Mother, Ana was 16 when she married. She brought up 11 children, 4 died. She worked very hard, she was a good cook, she cared. She was a very caring woman, all-around. We had a wonderful mother, I always say. She was 6 when she came to Canada in 1901 and married 10 years later. Mary (Budnitsky) is the oldest living child. One child died right after birth, another lived two weeks. I remember Mother telling me about this one because she had sad memories of him. At two weeks old she put him in the hospital, by that time Vegreville had one. They took him to hospital because he was very ill. When they went to see him, he was very neglected in every way; his diaper wasn't changed, and she took him home. She said if he was going to die anyway, she might as well take him, and he did die. I know this one boy was only a few weeks old. A lot of hardships, I'm sure, for Mother. But as we grew up the oldest helped the next and we had a big, beautiful garden about the size of four city lots. We grew everything we ever ate, except sugar, flour – my Father took grain to the mill in Mundare and ground his own flour. Mother never bought any vegetables. She dried beans, peas – everything was dried. She let it ripen on the vine until they're dry, then pull them out and thresh them on a canvass of some kind, pickup the straw and branches - seeds were left on the canvass. I often think about that now, to reminisce. All they bought was coal oil for the lamps, sugar and salt - that's about all. There were no bought goodies. We picked every berry, picked raspberries in the bush, strawberries, blueberries, everything. I do remember when we started buying dried fruit; prunes and dried apples (tuderati).

Pearl said her Mother, Alexandra (Sanda) Vicsush, was 10 years old when she came to Canada in 1912 with Bunica Domnica; her husband had died. There was a Mr. Mihalcheon, his wife had died, I never met the family. So, in the meantime Mr. Mihalcheon had everything arranged for his family to come out and here was Bunica, a widow, so they quickly got married and her family of six children and his family came together to Canada. They landed and came across Canada, to Bunica's sister, Alexandra, who was Vasile Svekla's wife. They all came to Svekla's place at Boian because they were already established and that was her sister's house. It was quite a small home, two rooms, for ten Svekla children, Bunica's family and Mr.

Mihalcheon's family, all in a two-room house. They spent a winter there. Come spring, Bunica and Mr. Mihalcheon each went their own way, because this was just an arranged marriage to come over to Canada. Bunica found a place to live, but this is how they lived for the first winter. "Mom was only 10 years old. Of course, she had only one suit of clothes, hardly any shoes of any kind and the boat they came on wasn't like The Love Boat you see now on TV, more like a freight boat. They brought their seeds, hoes, cattle; whatever they were able to bring at that time from the Old Country. Talk about sleeping on the boat - you slept where you could. If you got seasick, well, lookout! A real disaster. Anyway, I know Mother worked for the Esak family when there were many babies; she was about 11 years old. She said you worked for a year and what you earn is a complete change of clothes. Those days she lived at Esak's at that time, away from her family. She had to go to work; Bunica had nothing to feed those kids so you had to work for a living."

Lena said there was always food at their place. Pearl's Mother helped milk the cows, helped with the children and worked in the garden, like all children did at that age. They just had to pitch right in and help. Alexandra was 86 when she passed away in 1988. She married Dad in 1919 at age 15. She married a widower, Gregory Toma, with 3 children, who was almost 20 years older than her. Her stepson Mike was 8 years old and Mom was 15, trying to be a mother to an 8-year-old and Lena was 4. There was a little baby who was sickly and Bunica looked after the baby, but it passed away not too long after that. "Mom and Dad had four children before any of us (four more) were born and unfortunately they got diphtheria in 1926 or so, and they all passed away in three weeks. Two days after the last one was buried, my brother, George, was born."

Sarah (Siminiuc) Toma immigrated to Canada in 1912 from Boian, Bucovina when she was two years old. She came with her widowed mother, Domnica (Cucheran) Siminiuc (39) and three brothers and a sister: Mary (14), Andrei (12), Louis (7), and Mihai (5). One brother, Peter, had already left for Canada at age 16, when his father, Nicolai, was still living. The eldest, George, drowned as a young boy swimming in the Pruitt River. Nicolai died in 1910 in his fifties after a brief illness, likely pneumonia.

Domnica's mother, Ioana, was widowed twice before leaving Romania in 1899 to immigrate to Canada. She had Peter and Domnica with Mr. Cucheran, then two girls with Mr. Basaraba. Ioana brought the two daughters with her when she came to Canada, to Boian, where she married Nicolai Falka. Her son Pete (Domnica's brother) had arrived in Boian before her.

Domnica's family settled by the North Saskatchewan River with George Nickoriuc, who immigrated with them. They had four children, but two daughters died when they were babies. Sarah helped raise Dan and Vera, who were born when she was 7-10 years old. Sarah helped her Mother with everything, she was a good worker.

Lena remembers her Mother was forever embroidering. She made her own clothes, they were Romanian costumes. Ana made everything - skirts, blouses, shirts. For everyday she had plain things, but she always had nice embroidered clothes. If she had any spare moment she was always embroidering. She used to weave a lot, too. She made blankets, even blankets for horses, and she sewed. I don't know where she would get the thread and the cloth. I imagine she would buy cloth. I do remember if she needed black thread, she always made it herself out of a piece of cotton. She'd pull the threads out and make us kids pull threads out, too. Mom would say, "Be very careful, don't break them." Sarah remembered too, and explained, "there was no other thread, you bought that cloth by the yard and then pulled black threads out."

Sandra said her Mother weaved and sewed and made Romanian shirts, was forever doing that, by candlelight, there was no electricity. I remember my first brassiere was made from flour sacks, made by hand. We used everything; never wasted anything.

Lena added that her Mother did heavy embroidery too, that would stand out on the clothes. And she dyed things. At Easter time, she made dozens and dozens of Easter eggs and she made all her own colours. For red, she used crepe paper, which was very inexpensive. For yellow, she boiled onion skin. Purple was made from the indelible pencils; she'd crack the wood and take out the lead and soak that for the colour.

Another memory that sticks with me was when my Father was building the big home. The houses were built in stages. He built half first, and then he built the other, a big room, for company and parties. I was small, still crawling, but I remember they had a red hanky on a stick, and a glass, at the peak of the house. Sarah explained to Lena that meant the house was finished, and that was a blessing there. Sarah said she danced many times in that home.

On Sundays the families went to Church. Lena said they walked about one-and-a-half miles from their place, and on the way her Mother always broke off branches of 'busioc', having long leaves with a spearmint smell. She brought flowers too, but she always had to carry that mint, it smelled so nice. By the time she got to Church, it was already softened up and the fragrance would be the strongest. Delima said that was the custom, "everybody brought garden flowers and different herbs, to put around the Icons." Pearl has a branch of her Bunica's spearmint in her garden. "We call it Romanian perfume," she said.

"Mother never cut her hair," recalled Lena. She always had her hair up in a bun. I don't think she cut it at all until later in life, when she was older. Women always had their hair covered in Church, and when we were little kids, of course she wouldn't put a scarf on our head, but she put a ribbon. She put something, maybe a bow, but something on our head because women were not supposed to go bareheaded. Most wore their hair in a bun (kirpa)

Sarah said when she was growing up, about 8 years old, her Mother was very, very sick with the flu in 1917. The family needed bread, so to make bread we had a wooden log, scooped out (cuvata), and that's where we made the dough. I remember how small my hands were and my stepfather, Mosho Nickoriuk, put flour in there, he knew to put yeast and water and he put the cuvata on the wooden bed. Then I got on my knees and with my little hands I was kneading the dough and enjoying that, it was like playing.

Lena didn't recall her Mother buying yeast. Instead, she always saved dough and she put it in the flour to preserve it there. When she needed to bake bread again, then she'd bring out that piece of dough and put it in warm water, let it soften, then add more water and make it into a loose batter and add flour to that. That's how she baked bread. Delima remembered too, "then she saved dough from that bread dough for the nettime."

Bread was baked in outside clay ovens, say 12 loaves of bread at a time. The pans were large, for 3 long loaves. Women knew they had to fill that big oven, to have enough bread to last. Sometimes there were hired men to feed, in addition to large families. Sometimes they needed to bake bread twice a week. So many people. Where did everyone sleep?

"I slept on the clay floor, mud and straw mixed together," remembers Sarah "We had big weaved blankets from the Old Country, and we put coats down on the floor, too. That's how I slept when I was little, growing up."

Sarah didn't go to school until she was 12. I was a working girl, I was needed at home. Our neighbour's kids were going to Desjarlais school, over the hill, 4 miles away. It was a granary, they made a one-room school out of it. Our neighbour was a School Trustee, and he would visit us. So, he knew I should go to school. He told my Mother, "You better send this girl to school." She said, "How can I? I need her, she's my right hand." When he returned to visit another time, he asked my mother if Sarah was going to school. No. Well, if you don't send her, you're going to pay a fine. Mother got so scared, because she didn't have any money to pay a fine. And thanks to that man, God Bless his soul, and my Mother too, because it was hard for her, I went to school for a couple of years, and I learned to read and write. I walked barefoot on the wagon tracks, a dirt trail. In those days, school was only in the summer, not in the winter. We took lunch to school in lard cans. Usually lunch was two slices of bread and a boiled egg, or bread and butter, bread and jam sandwich; very seldom, an apple. For breakfast we ate porridge, cornmeal or just bread. However, in only five- or ten-year spans, there was an entirely different level of lifestyle, as families prospered.

All day, the women worked; cooking, cleaning, baking bread, washing clothes, gardening. In the fall they had threshing crews to feed, three times a day. For washing, they had to pull water with a rope from a well, get wood to heat the wood stoves, melt snow in the wintertime. If you lived by the river, women took their laundry to the river to wash, on the rocks, in the water up to their thighs. In the wintertime, they had to cut ice from the river. Sarah used a little sleigh with an apple box on it, filled that with chunks to melt for water to drink, to cook, bathe and wash clothes.

Lena's mother had sheep, which she sheared. Then she washed the wool, and would spin it into yarn. "We always made our own socks and mitts," Lena said. Sarah said they didn't have any sheep, but my Mother would trade fresh fish for wool. "After I was 14 years old I stayed home from school and weaved wool rugs and made quilts and pillows which my Mother sold. Working with my grandmother, I weaved, bent over the loom all day, working by daylight and coal oil lamp."

Lena remembered Sarah's Mother coming with the horse and buggy to sell or trade fish. The fish was still alive, in a pail of water. Moshu Nickoriuk caught the fish and he'd keep them overnight in the river, caught in a basket he made of willows, then in the morning Domnica would take the fish and go around to trade for anything she needed. These sentimental and proud memories of a few daughters and granddaughters can be considered typical of most hardship and happiness of Romanian pioneer women in the early history of Boian. We honour their memory and spirit in these recollections. We appreciate that we are descendants of very, very remarkable women.

DUBITZ, Tom and Alexandra

Mary N. Romanko

In 1912, a young lad of the tender age of seventeen left the land of his birth in Toporutz in the Ukraine. He left behind his parents and two brothers and a sister. His brother Steve had migrated the year before in 1911 and was living in Eastern Canada. The adventure to go to the land of milk and honey in this new world called Canada that he heard so much about. Tom Dubitz was his name.

He set sail on the ship Carpathian with his high hopes and dreams. On the 12th day of April in 1912 a tragedy occurred; a distress call from the Titanic which was behind them, so his ship turned back to help them and managed to save 378 survivors. The rest of the journey was rather fearful as they were very crowded and the waters were very rough and also running short of food. They finally reached their port safely.

He got a job with the C.P.R. and worked around Lethbridge where many immigrants were promised jobs. There were many nationalities beside the Romanians and Ukrainians.

Several years later he went to Boian Marae where he had a cousin George Dubitz. Since the call of the land was very strong, he decided he wanted to stay so his cousin hired him to help clear and break the land for him. In payment he gave my father 12 acres of his homestead to call his own. He was so proud of himself to be a landowner now.

He married Alexandra Matie who was a sister to his cousin George's wife Sarah. Tom and Alexandra had a hard time communicating as Tom was Ukrainian and she was of Romanian descent but love conquers all and they eventually learned each other's language and spoke fluently in both languages.

They built their sod hut on a hillside on this land. The roof was the sod of the hill reinforced with boughs and eventually tallgrass and flowers grew over. The cows would graze on the roof and the coyotes serenaded them at nights. It was cozy within. They burned a lot of candles which they made out of bees' wax. Also, for light and a little heat they put a wick in tallow or oil to burn in a can or stone. Their stove was a stone and mud model made into a wall inside, wood, dried roots, branches and dried grass was used for fuel. The two older sons, Metro and Steve, were born in the sod hut. After spending two long winters in the sod hut, Tom and Alexandra decided to build a house.

BUILDING A THATCHED LOG HOUSE

In the two years they had cut and peeled enough logs for the home to be. After peeling the bark off the logs, they were seasoned and then hewn flat on two sides and notched at each end so as to fit the grooves into each other. In between, the logs were filled with a clay plaster which was made of straw and water as a first coat.

The finishing coat was also clay but was a finer plaster using manure instead of straw. We children were put to work here too as we went into this huge pile in our bare feet to trample the mud into a smooth plaster; this we enjoyed, watching and feeling the cool mud squishing between our toes. When larger quantities were needed the faithful horse was enlisted and led around in circles.

The roof raising was a celebration in itself, as more help came from neighbours and relatives. Before the raising, a bag was tied on the front rafter with some coins, a wooden cross, some wheat and a crock of Holy Water which they always saved and kept on hand. The water was to ward off evil spirits. The wheat was for fertility and abundance of food. The coins were for success and riches of those therein. It was a cornerstone of sorts.

The volunteers then proceeded to work on the roof. There was an abundance of wild hay, so when the grasses were as high as a pony's eye it was scythed and made into bundles like a sheaf, firmly tied in the middle with plaits made out of reeds or bulrushes like a rope. The sheaves were laid side by side in rows overlapping half way over each one. These made a weatherproof cover and provided insulation from the

summer's heat and rains and the winter's cold and snow. The first house had two large rooms and a lean-to shed on the whole north side.

Some were built with a removable top part of the wall against the shed which they opened up in the winter to get the heat from the animals and vice versa.

After the house was plastered inside and out with a finer finish as a second coat the walls were whitewashed with the lime coating. The outside bottom half was done with a grayish blue mixture of fine silt and sand and coloured with bluing. The lime was also tinted with bluing to bring out a very distinctive white and bright colour.

Then they made a 10-inch raised border around the whole house and painted it with black soot from the stove pipes mixed with water. The top of the walls outside were decorated with a border of crosses made of cardboard and dyed in dark red, greens and blues.

Alexandra Matie came to Canada with her parents, Maria and Metro Matie at the age of six in 1898. Maria was the daughter of Sandy Moscaluk in Romania. Her sister Sarah and brother Mike sailed with them. Katie and Stephan were born in Canada. They also lived in a bordei for a few years. There were no schools until 1910; Katie who was 14 went to grade four and Stephan finished school then went on to Camrose Normal School and became a teacher in 1928. He taught at Boian Mara school for many years. He was instrumental in organizing sports and had many winning teams as they competed with other local teams on sports or picnic days.

Alexandra worked alongside her husband Tom in clearing the land, picking rocks and roots. The first years they cut the grain by hand scythe and made sheaves by tying them with straw twisted into a rope. They flailed the grain, beans and peas with a flail made with two poles hinged with leather straps. They flung over the shoulder in a semicircle and beat the chaff off. It was done over a canvas, then fanned in the wind and then bagged.

They lived off the land as coins of the realm were hard to come by. The cellar was filled with potatoes, turnips, carrots and pumpkins. Barrels of sauerkraut, pickles, rennet cheese, fried pork packed in lard in stone crocks, were all stored in a root cellar. The dried beans, broad beans, peas and berries supplemented the winter's menu. Corn which they first got from the Indians -multicoloured cobs, looked so nice. The women would trade bean seeds of every colour after church services on Sundays. They did a lot of trading with the Indians in those days. Our milk, cream, cheese, butter and also bread were exchanged for moccasins, fur caps and coats, leather mitts and jackets and blankets.

What mother liked and cherished most were the seed and glass beads which she used in her richly decorated and intricately embroidered costumes of the rich Romanian culture which she learned as a child from her mother.

They also raised a lot of sheep. The six steps from the shearing of the sheep to the finished products out of their wool were washing, carding, spinning and dying, knitting of mitts, socks and sweaters, and weaving of beautiful intricately designed tapestries. The colour red signified bravery, blue was for loyalty, white was purity and the yellow (gold)was for prosperity; wheat was the staff of life. These were predominant colours in all designs, also crosses and half moons of the sun.

Religion of the Orthodox faith was very predominant as all holidays, both feast and fasting were faithfully observed especially by mother. She would line all five or six of us children in a row, on bended knee facing the east wall which was fully covered with icons for evening prayers. One or two brothers would balk and they bribed me with pennies or a nickel to say the prayers louder so mother wouldn't miss them. She was in the other room spinning and listened in on us.

There were eleven children in the family. Metro, Steve, Mike, Con, William, Sandy, Velma and our son Jack Romanko are laid to rest beside their parents.

Surviving members of the family are Mary Romanko, Kay Hutzkal, Lily Aulin and Andrew Dubitz.

PEROZNI, Mike

Mike Perozni

School was a luxury. I was needed on the farm so I quit in 1935 to help my dad.

In 1941 I married Jean Lukiwski. We farmed for four years and then our son Lenard was born in 1945. Because of my severe problems with hay fever we quit farming and went into business.

My first venture was a theatre and coffeeshop in Drumheller, which we sold to buy the Wabamun Hotel and Garage in 1947 when I was only 30 years old. This venture was followed by some time spent in oilfield drilling (Royal Drilling Co. Ltd had 2 drilling rigs for seismic work for a few years). However, when our bid on 4 acres in Banff was luckily accepted, we built a motel in Banff in 1954 which we managed until 1960 when we moved to Calgary. In Calgary we first built a 14-suite apartment block which we sold in 1962. This venture was followed by building the Ambassador Motor Inn which we operated until 1968 when we hired a manager to run it and we moved to Edmonton.

Then in 1972 we built the Ambassador Inn in Edmonton and that same year Lenard married Bernice Bubenko and they managed the hotel until we sold it in 1976. Lenard and Bernice had a son, Tyler, born in 1974.

In 1981 we bought more land and built our retirement home on the original homestead near Willingdon where we live now. Lenard and Bernice are the owners of the Ambassador Inn in Calgary and Tyler is taking his second year of law at the University of Alberta. We are enjoying our retirement and have been to Romania many times, enjoying the beautiful country and friends.

POROZNI, George and Domnica

(Biography) submitted by Robert (Bob) Porozni

Early Life in Bucovina

George and Domnica Porozni were born in the village of Boian, near the town of Chernowitz, in the province of Bucovina, which formed part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. They were of Romanian descent and brought up in the Romanian Orthodox faith.

Like most people of their district, they lived under severe hardships. Children were deprived of education and very few attended the village elementary school.

Some 70% of the land in their area was owned by landlords, consequently there was not enough land for the poor people to make a living. Earlier generations had divided the land among their descendants but eventually there came a time when there was no more land to share.

The peasants lived off the land. Large gardens were cultivated and the fortunate ones who owned a cow could enjoy fresh milk and cheese. To obtain wheat flour, the peasants were forced to work for the landlords who paid them 20¢ a day. In their homes they only had cornmeal with which they prepared "mamaliga" (cornmeal mush).

Being illiterate and unschooled, they knew little about the rest of the world and events that were occurring elsewhere. Most waited eagerly to attend church on Sunday, to hear the priest read the Gospel and interpret it for the congregation.

The land was worked by use of primitive implements. Some peasants were fortunate enough to own a plough and a horse to harness. Many varieties of vegetables, nuts and fruits were grown and preserved, if possible, to last until the next crop.

The women had a big job on their hands. Besides keeping house, cooking and working in the gardens and fields, they had to make garments for wearing. Flax was raised for this purpose.

When the flax was harvested, the seeds were crushed and the extracted oil was used for cooking. To make cloth, the flax stems were soaked in the river for several weeks. Next, they were dried and beaten to create the long threads for weaving. Imagine what effort was required to weave a piece of cloth!

Emigration to Canada

When the Central and Eastern Europeans heard about so much land available in Canada and that it only cost \$10 for 160 acres, many decided to emigrate. They left their relatives and friends, their churches too, and embarked for Canada. Some of these immigrants came with small children, others with large families. Many men folk arrived alone, to get established first before sending for their wives and families. But come they did, by the thousands, to the wide open and forested lands in the West!

They immigrated to Canada in 1899, along with a baby girl two years old named Pachita (Katie). From their home in Bucovina they travelled overland to Hamburg in Germany and boarded a ship for the ocean voyage that would take six weeks. The name of the ocean liner that brought them to Halifax is unknown.

The Train Trip to Western Canada

From Halifax they journeyed overland by train, first to Winnipeg, and then on to Calgary, then north to Strathcona, a settlement on the south banks of what is now the city of Edmonton. There the railroad ended. They had arrived to an area of Canada then known as the North West Territories. The Province of Alberta was established five years later, in 1905.

From Strathcona, they crossed the North Saskatchewan River by ferry. They, like so many other immigrants, were housed in the immigration hall, on the north side of the river until they were able to arrange transportation to their new home on the prairie.

They were successful in hiring a teamster to drive his family and possessions to Whitford, some 75 miles north-east of present-day Edmonton. They decided to homestead in this area because George's sister, Elena and her husband Mihai Cucheran, filed a homestead in the same section, namely SE 18-56-14W4

Early Life in Canada

In Canada, the pioneers found conditions very trying. The severely cold and long winters, the underdeveloped and sparsely populated land was indeed very unlike Bucovina which had a much milder climate, shorter winters and a dense population. Many of these pioneers would have returned but they lacked the funds to pay for the return voyage. Also, they appreciated that there was no future to look forward to in the old Country. So, they stayed and persevered.

Yes, the land was cheap and plentiful but there were certain conditions that had to be met before the homesteader could claim the parcel of land as his own. In order to qualify, the farmer had to live six months of the year on the land, for the first three years.

During this period, ten acres of land had to be broken, a house built and a well dug. If these conditions were not fulfilled, another person could come and file on the same homestead and develop it.

George lived with sister Eleana and Mihai Cucheran in their "bordei", a tent-like sod house that was really a rectangular hole in the ground and covered with poles, grass and sod. The following year George built a bordei for his family. He built this home in the far end of the farm because he didn't know where the road allowance was to be established. Years later, when he built the log house, he positioned it near the road allowance.

Pioneer life in Canada was no picnic! They had left the old country because there was a shortage of land. The landlords owned most of the land and the peasants were forced to work long hours and for meagre wages. But in early pioneer life in Canada the situation was very difficult too: homes had to be built, land had to be cleared, schools and churches had to be erected and money had to be earned to buy oxen or horses, farm implements, clothes and some food items. The garden and the cow provided the basic food essentials.

Working on the Railroad

In order to survive, the men left their families on the homestead and went to get jobs, usually on the railroads in southern Alberta. These workers would walk to Edmonton, get aboard a box car and ride to Calgary. They would work 10-hour days and receive \$1.10 for their labours.

George worked on the railway (extra gangs) at Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Calgary and Edmonton.

George Buys his First Horses

At the end of one summer's work on the railroad, George earned enough money to purchase a team of horses from a rancher at Cochrane, west of Calgary. After paying for the team he had only \$2.00 left with which to come home. But before he could begin his journey home, he first had to halter-break these horses.

The cowboy helped George put halters on these horses. He then tied the ropes together and began his long trek home. On the way, George would seek shelter with a farmer where he could obtain a loaf of bread and probably a place where he could rest his weary body. It took him 16 or 17 days to reach home. By the end of the trip the horses were partly trained.

Life for Domnica and Pachita was difficult and lonely during George's absence. They existed on wild game like prairie chickens and rabbits. The garden provided them with beets, potatoes and cabbage for sauerkraut. There was no correspondence by letter since people, in most instances, were illiterate.

Pioneer life in early Western Canada was a hardship. First gardens were dug up by spade and planted with seed brought from Europe. Settlers would pool horses to break the land. The grain was cut with a scythe and threshed with a flail.

Children were born at home, usually with only a midwife in attendance. The father was usually away from home, working in the bush or on the railroad. Children wore home-made clothes, usually made of cotton or denim. In summer, the people went bare-footed. Often rags were wound around one's legs, and were used instead of stockings. The fur coats, with fur on the inside, were brought from the Old Country and lasted for many years.

Since George had brought a walking plough from the Old Country, he was able to do custom work for other homesteaders' the following spring. George earned enough money to buy a wagon with which he could travel to Edmonton to purchase flour and other necessities.

The trip to Edmonton took a week or ten days to complete. This practice continued until 1906 when the town of Vegreville (25 miles south of the homestead) was established.

Building a Log House

Some years after arriving in Canada, they built a log house by the road. This thatched house consisted of two large rooms and a porch. One room was used as a combined kitchen and sleeping area while the other was kept for visitors and relatives.

The west room contained an oven and stove built of clay and stones. The stove had a fire box and a metal top where Domnica did the cooking. The oven was used for baking bread and it also served as the children's bed. It was indeed cozy on cold wintry days and nights since the clay oven retained its heat for several hours.

The east room of the house was always kept clean and cool. It served as a storage room but was also used for entertaining friends and relatives. The house was built of logs, then mud plastered with a clay and straw mixture and finally whitewashed.

The roof of this house was thatched – but not for long. In the fall and winter of 1919-20 the thatch from the roof was used as feed for livestock because our district, especially the area east of Willingdon, experienced a severe drought.

This building lasted until 1920 when it was dismantled and replaced by another log building that consisted of two stories. The walls were again plastered, but since there was more money available at this time, the exterior walls of the house were covered with siding.

Farming the Land

Coming back to the land, at first when a farmer had a few acres ploughed, he would seed it by hand. The procedure used was as follows: He would tie a bag filled with wheat around his neck and walk up and down the field, scattering the grain by hand. Once completed, he would harrow the land in order to cover the seed.

When the grain was ripe, it was cut with a scythe and bundled into sheaves. These sheaves would be stooked and left to dry. When the kernels and straw were dry, the sheaf would be undone and spread on a smooth surface. Then the farmer used a flail to thresh it - to separate the grain from the straw.

When the wheat was cleaned, it was ground into flour by a hand mill called a quern ("Zorna" in Ukrainian and "reshmitza" in Romanian). This tool consisted of two doughnut-shaped flat stones placed one on top of the other. The grain was poured into the hole of the top stone. With the bottom stone stationary, the top stone was turned and this action would crush the grain between the two stones.

Hard Work has its Reward

As the years went by, our family prospered. More land was acquired, more and better machinery was purchased. In time they owned 4 quarters of land which were eventually willed to their sons.

Our parents' family consisted of 3 boys and 2 girls, namely: Pachita (who was 2 when they arrived in Canada); John born in 1903; Velma (Vasilca) 1905; George Jr., 1908; and Mike (Metro), 1917.

George Porozni farmed until 1948. He passed away in 1949 at the age of 75 years. Domnica Porozni passed away at the age of 83 in 1962.

Family Tree: First to Third Generation

Gheorgie married Domnica Toma in 1895, Pachita married Tom Russ in 1916 and they had six children: Anne, Helen, Dorothy, Mary, Sally and George. John married Anne Svekla, 1926 and they had five children: Nicholas, Willis, George, Bob and Betty Ann. Velma married Fred Feduik in 1925 and they had four children: Ann, Harry, Lucy and Mike. George married Sandra Iftody in 1936 and they had three children: Georgina, Ron and Barry. Metro (Mike) married Jean Zukiwskyin 1941 and they have one child: Lenard.

POROZNI, George and Sandra

Ron Perozny

Married in 1936, they farmed from 1936 to 1978. Although their schooling was limited by today's standards, (George passed into grade 8, Sandra into 10) both supplemented their education with courses offered by local district or school and through extensive reading. Living in a multicultural community helped both Sandra and George to become trilingual; English, Romanian and Ukrainian.

They started with a quarter section of land, bought another and eventually rented several more. With this second-generation farming operations became more complex, requiring different skills. George, like most

farmers of that era, was required to be at any given time a mechanic, carpenter, livestock expert, crop specialist or a financial planner. Sandra at different times had to be a cook/baker (reputation known for chiffon cake), seamstress, gardening expert, livestock assistant or a machine operator. In particular, George was at equal ease with a carpenter's square or doing major repairs on a combine harvester. Sandra was an accomplished seamstress.

Farming during the depression years resulted in little return on effort. At times the price of transporting grain or hogs to market exceeded the price paid to the producer. The 1930's left them wiser, more resourceful; they learned to improvise and sometimes learned to do without. After WWII when the economy began to improve, their operation expanded; more land, bigger crops, more livestock. For a few years they raised a very large number of chickens or turkeys which required long hours of care. This second generation of farmers utilized mechanical equipment and machinery. Operating expenses went up, more financial planning had to be done and now taxes had to be paid. Incomes had to be forecast. As the pace of work accelerated physical stress became mental stress.

There was a time for relaxation on Sundays (harvest and busy times excepted). There were picnics, sports days, ball tournaments (both played on softball teams), church socials and large family gatherings. There was a very strong sense of community spirit at that time that is no longer evident there now or in most other parts of the province.

Children: Georgina Dorothy - 1937, Ronald Michael -1943, Barry Ian - 1956

POROZNI, John G.
(Autobiography of John G. Porozni)
Bob Porozni

My Early Years

I was born in 1903 in a "bordei," some two- and one-half miles east of Willingdon. I remember clearly the hardships which the family endured in those early days. We had very little clothing. As a child, I wore a garment that was a sort of shift (a loose-fitting dress) made of denim cloth. Boys and girls wore the same kind of garment until about the age of six or seven. Then the boys began wearing trousers and the girls wore dresses. The boy became a "he" and the girl, a "she".

I had no shoes until about the age of seven at which time my father made me a pair of moccasins out of rough cowhide. These were laced with twine. I did not have any socks to wear, so I would wrap pieces of rags around my feet. Up to this time I had to remain inside the house as soon as the cold weather set in. I would spend my spare time looking through a hole in the melted ice on the frozen window pane to see the outside world.

Our food consisted mostly of vegetables and bread. Later, when we owned a cow, my mother would make cheese and preserve it for the winter months. There were no eggs or milk in the winter as there were no warm buildings in which to house the cow and poultry. When we had pigs, a hog would be butchered in the late fall and the meat would be stored in a cold building.

My Educational Experience

There was no school available in our community until I was nine years old. I did not attend regularly as we lived 2 ½ miles from school and there were no roads. My mother was my teacher at home where she taught me how to read and write in the Romanian language. She had completed grade 7 back in Bucovina. My father had no formal education.

When I started school at 10 years of age, classes were held only during the summer months. Most of the children went barefooted to school. Since I was the oldest boy in the family, I had to help with the farm operations – clearing brush, taking out roots, etc. I attended school only three summers but the fact that my mother had already taught me to read, was a great help to me. I was happy to note that the English language uses the same alphabet as the Romanian language. Even with this help, I found the study of language to be my most difficult subject.

My formal education came to an end. At 12 years of age, I was at home, walking barefooted behind 4 harrows drawn by 3 sturdy horses.

The Positive Influence of G.M. Mihalcheon on my Early Life



Fortunately for me, in 1918, a local boy, G.M. Mihalcheon came to teach in Boian. Since the new teacher was fluent in both Romanian and English, he could translate easily and the classes learned quickly.

With his help, I was able to improve my English quickly; unfortunately, because I was needed to help with farm work at home (I was the oldest boy in the family), I was forced to quit school. By 1917 I graduated to a walking plough, pulled by 4 horses, which was used to break the prairie sod).

When my parents went to church during the week on holy days, I would go with them but would insist to be dropped off at the school. I would sit quietly at the back of the room and listen to whatever the teacher was instructing the students at that time.

I remember specifically one day when I was sitting quietly in the back row, the teacher was conducting a geography class. He pulled down the map of Canada. Mr. Mihalcheon then identified our new province of Alberta and pointed out that the province of Saskatchewan was to the east and British Columbia to the west of our province. I was so happy that I had learned something new in geography that day.

G.M. Mihalcheon was not a teacher who taught only the 3 R's. He prepared the students to perform on the stage and present concerts, plays and recitations for the enjoyment of members of the community. The major concerts were performed during the Christmas period and were presented in both English and Romanian.

Mr. Mihalcheon was more than just the local teacher in our school. He helped many people in the Boian district in a variety of ways. He encouraged the parents to send their children to school and would report to the authorities, those parents who were negligent.

Often these parents would get a summons to appear in court in Vegreville. Ironically, they would come to Mr. Mihalcheon and ask to be driven to the court hearing as he was the only person who owned a car at this time. The offending parents would be sentenced to pay ten to twelve dollars. If they did not have the money, they would borrow the money from Mr. Mihalcheon in order to pay the fine. Many children would not have attended school if Mr. Mihalcheon had not insisted on school attendance.

My Non-Formal Education Continues

I never stopped reading and learning after leaving school. One Christmas I went carolling and earned some money. I decided to purchase a copy of the Holy Bible. I had earned \$1.75, the Bible cost \$1.60 so I had 15¢ left over. I read parts of the Bible but, I have to admit, could not find what I wanted to know.

At this time newspapers and radios were not yet available. Our people in the Boian community were very isolated and localized. Much of this isolation was of their own doing as they tried to live like their forefathers did in the Old Country. I began to get restless as I came to the conclusion that there must be more in life than just what went on in the Boian district.

Still there was some enjoyment, especially during the Christmas season. The young men in the district would "go with the horse" (Cal) from house to house. Another group would act out the King Herod play (Irod). Members of these troupes would travel throughout the night performing in different homes. People would remain awake all night eagerly awaiting the arrival of the carolers, the "horse" and the King Herod play.

During the summer the young people played baseball and attended local picnics. There were organized baseball tournaments when visiting teams from neighbouring communities would compete for monetary prizes or cups.

To sell our grain we had to haul it by sleigh or wagon to Vegreville, a forty-eight-mile round trip. At this time, we were completely unaware of the importance of such factors as price fluctuations and weather forecasts. Each year, just before spring break-up, we would haul firewood, logs, lumber, and fence posts from the Bellis area (north of Willingdon and across the North Saskatchewan River).

In order to travel the approximately 15 miles to the tree location, cut the trees, load them on the sleigh and drive home, it was necessary to be on the road for up to 15 straight hours.

Working in Saskatchewan

I had a great desire to see how people lived in other parts of Canada, outside of Boian. To satisfy this yearning, I left home in 1923 and worked for 5 months on a farm in Davidson, Saskatchewan. This was a real learning experience for me. Farming practices were much more advanced than I had known at home. This learning experience gained while working on this farm had a profound impact on me and changed my views about the farming procedures as I had known up to that time.

Working in British Columbia

During the summer of 1924 I went to work on Vancouver Island, at a pulp and paper mill which employed 300 Japanese workers. I was one of 5 workers who were Caucasian (white). During this period, I realized how homesick I was for the wide-open prairies, the gently waving wheat fields and everything else connected with farming. I therefore decided to return home to Alberta and devote my life to farming with my father.

Marriage

In 1926 I married Anne Svekla from the Shalka (Hairy Hill) area and we continued our farming venture together. We both remember that, in 1927, when we built our first home, I had to cut down a patch of standing grain, an area just large enough to make room for our sixteen by twelve-foot log house.

We later built a barn which had separate stalls for two cows, a few horses and some chickens. Although the first year was a cold winter, the barn was warm enough since the chickens continued to lay eggs. Since there was no such thing as rural electrical power, coal oil lamps and lanterns were standard items for our farm.

1925 George D. Toma
John Porosni
at cushion farm









Technology Arrives and Farming Begins to Change

In 1915 the first grain threshing machines arrived in the district. The first portable gasoline engines did not drive under their own power and had to be pulled to a threshing site by horses. The feeder was fed by hand and since there was no blower, a conveyor took the straw away from the separator.

Then came the steam engine, powering its own movement and with more modern threshing machine or separator. Thus, the flail and cleaning the chaff and straw from the grain by hand was replaced by a tractor and separator. Then came the combines. I witnessed and participated in all these changes. Similarly, I witnessed changes in the cultivation of the soil and the changes in the homes, stoves, beds, clothing, food, etc.

The Depression Years

In 1930 we expanded farming operations and bought another quarter-section of land and more machinery was purchased on the credit plan. We timed this right – we got into debt just as the depression began! From 1932 to the present time we have kept a record of our farm income and expense transactions. During the 1930s, the economic depression was at its lowest ebb. Below are some of the prices we received for our produce during the depression period:

78 bushels of wheat for \$14.14 which is approximately 18¢ a bushel.

2000 bushels of #2CW oats for \$140.00. The freight and handling charges were 11 3/8¢ a bushel and our share was 7¢ a bushel

hogs were sold for \$38.50

one calf was sold for \$6.00 (which was 3¢ a pound)

gallons of cream paid us \$1.65

dozen eggs were sold for 91¢ (less than the price of one dozen eggs today)

Arrival of Rural Electrification

In 1946 rural electrical power was introduced in our farming area. Not only did this help our farming techniques, but it also improved our standard of living. Instead of walking around the farm yard and buildings on a cold winter night with a lantern that kept blowing out whenever it got too windy, all we had to do now was simply to flick a switch and the lights were on.

Our farming enterprise was registered under the name: **Willingdon Stock and Seed Farm**. Without the unselfish help received from my wife and children, our achievements would not have been attained. We raised purebred Yorkshire hogs and entered them in the Edmonton Fall Show, beginning in 1938.

In 1946, we commenced raising and selling purebred Hereford cattle. Over the years our registered bulls and cows were entered at numerous competitive shows held in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Lacombe,

Lloydminster and St. Paul. We have also sold breeding stock to Russian buyers for five years and one-year-old stock to German, Polish and Czechoslovakian buyers.

Our son Willis, who is carrying on the family tradition as a farmer, has sold purebred Hereford bulls to buyers in the state of Oregon, U.S.A. for the last eight consecutive years.

Master Farm Family Award

In 1951 our family received an award that made us all very proud. The Province of Alberta presented us with The Master Farm Family Award for the North-east region of the province.

Service to the Community

My wife Anne and I served on many boards and committees over the years.

Scholarship Established at Lakeland College, Vermilion

As our contribution to the continuation of the improvement of agriculture in Alberta, we have made a donation to Lakeland College, Vermilion, where a scholarship was established, called **The Porozni Master Farm Family Scholarship**.

This scholarship is awarded yearly to a graduating student of Lakeland College who has earned high marks in his/her studies and who is returning to the farm or to developing agriculture in the community.

Retirement

We retired in 1977 to live in new home in Vegreville. Although Willingdon has been our home town since 1927, the year of its incorporation, we have always had close contacts and attachments with Vegreville, because of its importance before 1927 and also its size.

Our Family

We are the proud parents of four sons and one daughter.

Nicholas is the manager of C.N.C.P. Telecommunications in Edmonton;

Willis is a farmer in the Willingdon area;

George is a professor at The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg;

Robert is a pharmacist and owns his drug store in St. Paul, Alberta;

Betty Anne lives in British Columbia and is employed as a Laboratory Technician at the Victoria Hospital.

We have, at present, thirteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Our Travels to Other Countries

We have travelled extensively in Canada, U.S.A., in Europe: (England, Germany, Finland, U.S.S.R., Austria, Switzerland, Greece, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Holland and Romania where we visited relatives.

We also travelled to the country of Kenya in East Africa to visit with our son George, when he was a professor at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University.

Grandson Greg is farming our own farm and is carrying on the 4th generation in agriculture.

John passed away in October, 1993 a few months before his 91st birthday.

RAVLIUK, ELIAS

Gordon Rawlake

In researching my grandfather's life story, I came upon at least seven different spellings of his surname. He took the name "Rawlak" when he became a "naturalized" Canadian in 1904. By 1920, the name had become "Rawlake". Some who have seen that unusual name have asked whether we were aboriginal Canadians!

Elias was born in Bucovina in 1864. While his occupation is listed as a "farmer" on the passenger list of the "Italia" (June, 1898), records indicate that he also made a living during his early years as a builder, a carpenter, and a soldier. He married Domnica (Dora) Hauca around 1885. She gave birth to four children; Nikolai (Nick), Maria, Anita, and Ioana between 1888 and 1898.

In *Never Far from Eagle Tail Hill*, Michael G. Toma wrote that Elias Ravliuk arrived in Canada with the Ichim Yurko family in June, 1898, and that they spent their first winter in a covered dugout near Andrew, Alberta. A year later, Dora and the children came to Canada with hundreds more Romanian settlers aboard the S.S. Bulgaria.

In 1901, Elias had a homestead near Boian, Alberta and was busy breaking land and putting up buildings. Records indicate that Dora died in February that year and that Elias was remarried soon after to Maria Badychel.

In the next 25 years, Elias made at least part of his income working as a carpenter in the Boian district. He was hired (for \$200) as the designer and chief carpenter for St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church – which was constructed between 1903 and 1905. Around 1912, Elias helped Ion Hutschal build a log house on his homestead. In 1923, Elias and another carpenter were hired by Ion Toma to build a two-room log house on his property across from the Boian school. During this time too, Elias and son Nikolai spent some time working in coal mines in Drumheller and Lethbridge.

In June, 1921 Nikolai married Alexandra Hantiuk. Nine children were born to them between 1921 and 1941. These children have produced 71 children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren – most of who live in or near Pierceland, Saskatchewan.

In November, 1929, Elias and Nikolai travelled to Lloydminster to buy homesteads which were located 5 miles south of Pierceland. In 1930, Elias, Nikolai, Alexandra and 4 children (Doris, Delmar, Ted and Art) along with other Romanians from the Boian area settled on homesteads around Pierceland.

Elias worked hard at helping Nikolai and his family become established on the homesteads. He did much of the work in building two log houses, a barn and a chicken coop. With Nikolai, he attended meetings for planning the formation of a new school district.

It was a devastating tragedy for the family when Nikolai died suddenly in November, 1940 at age 52. Alexandra, left with 8 children (ages 8 months to 17 years), soon found it too difficult to care for Elias as well. (He was then 76.)

Elias was taken to a "Home for the Infirm" in Wolseley, Saskatchewan. He died there at age 79 on April 21, 1943, and was buried in a cemetery adjacent to the Home.

We who are descended from the Romanian pioneers of Boian should feel very proud of their achievements. They bravely endured the hardships and tragedies of homestead life and worked so incredibly hard to create a good life for their children and grandchildren in Canada.

PART 3: THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Introduction







There is a story in the fourth Gospel in which St. John the Evangelist describes the dialogue between Christ and the Samaritan woman, whom he met at Jacob's well, not too far from the city of Sychar. The woman had come to draw water from the well but she ended up finding the living water, Messiah, who revealed Himself to her and said: "I who speak with you am He." (John, 4:26)

In many ways, St. Mary's is similar to the journey of the Samaritan woman to Jacob's well. The difference is that the well we've come to, was given to us by the Romanian pioneers, its name is St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church and the place is not Sychar but Boian.

For the Romanians and the descendants of the Romanian pioneers living in Alberta or scattered across North America, St. Mary's of Boian is the well we have to come to, from time to time, to fill up our spiritual water pots with the sense of moral values, the fear of God and the pure Orthodox faith, brought to his Land of Promise by our ancestors before the turn of the century.

It is here that we find our roots, our identity, our authenticity, and only by coming back again and again will we be able to maintain our dialogue with our parents and grandparents whose vision transcends time. In their wisdom and piety, they chose the Holy Virgin Mary to be the protector, the Patron Saint of this church and of the whole community, because the Virgin Mary is the universal Mother of all Christians who believe in the redeeming message of Her Risen Son. Of course, we can worship God "in spirit and in truth" anywhere, but this Church has a personal and special significance to us who are interested in knowing not only what we are, but also who we are and where we come from.

And we find these answers when kneeling before the same icons our ancestors knelt before and participating in the same Divine Liturgy, we feel their invisible presence and hear their voices when both the visible and the invisible Churches praise together the Giver of Life and say: "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory."

This is what we in the Orthodox Church call the Communion of Saints. But the communion and the dialogue have to be established first of all among the members of the militant and dynamic Church, which is imperative for our communion with the Saints and Christ Himself, in whom we are all united and who is the guarantee of our spiritual ascension, as He said: ".... for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5)

This is what the Romanian pioneers understood very well from the beginning. They never had their priorities mixed up. As soon as they improvised a roof over their heads, the next important thing was to build a house for God, an Altar which stands to this day as a testimony of their faith and devotion to the Creator of the Universe.

Fr. George Bazgan

CHURCHES

St. Mary's (Sfanta Maria) Romanian Orthodox Church, Boian

Nick G. Hauca

As one motors directly eastward four miles from Willingdon one will see a prominent and majestic edifice on the hill, the St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church in Boian. The history of the Church is long, interesting, and mingled at times with a rather turbulent story. As early as 1900 when the first emigrants arrived and settled here, the more aggressive individuals had visions of building a house of prayer. Two persons had already passed away and no cemetery and church were in place to bury the deceased. The need for the edifice was pressing -- to baptize the newborn, to marry the youth, and from which to lay to rest their dead. The initial meeting was held in the home of Mitru Moscaluk in 1901 for the sole purpose of choosing a location for a cemetery and a church.

From an earlier research done by George N. Kelba, a former school teacher, we learn that in 1901 a 40-acre parcel of land legally described as subdivision thirteen – NW 1/4 sec. 10, 56, 14 W. 4th was purchased as homestead land, paid for and registered in the names of three elected trustees: John (Ion) T. Toma, Mihai T. Yurko, and Konstantin Kachuk. Considerable correspondence took place between this group and Ottawa. Since Alberta was not yet a province, letters took a long time to reach their destination. Nevertheless, progress was made towards the realization and the fulfillment of their hopes and goals.

Once the site was selected, a Russian Orthodox missionary priest from Edmonton was invited to bless the cemetery. Subsequently, the elected committee prepared and planned for the construction of a church. The committee comprised of Ion T. Toma, George T. Toma, and Dumitru Moscaluk.

In the fall of 1903 Ion, George and Dumitru hauled huge stones from Ion Semeniuk's and Nicolai Yurko's farms to serve as a foundation for the new church. Neighbors and parishioners helped cut down tamarack logs and hauled them to the banks of the North Saskatchewan River at Desjarlais where some French sawyers operated a sawmill, to square the logs. The logs were then hauled back to Boian approximately six miles south. Ion, Dumitru, George and George Porozni Sr. were instrumental in hauling the prepared logs. It was decided at a meeting that each man donate twenty dollars cash and volunteer twenty days of free labour.

The chief carpenter, Eli Ravliuk, was to be paid 200 dollars for the major project. Without any blueprints, Mr. Ravliuk started the building, basing his design on recollection about the church in Boian in Bucovina. A typical Orthodox Church would have a belfry (detached from the church), a cupola, crosses on top, fanlight windows, the altar and sacristy. Eli Ravliuk later sent Ion to buy two strong rods of iron to tie in the outside walls, preventing them from caving in or bulging outside. He could not find such rods in Edmonton or Calgary, after making two fruitless trips by wagon. Ion went the third time and found a blacksmith in Edmonton who had iron rods brought in from Winnipeg, and fit the rods to hold the church walls in place. These rods are in place today and serve their required original purpose.

The building was completed in the summer of 1905 and a Russian Orthodox priest from Wostok was invited to come and consecrate the church. On August 2, 1905 in all probability, Reverend Father Mihailo Skibinski did the honours. What a joyous occasion for all the members! They came from far and near, following the trails that led to the church on the hill. A feeling of pride and satisfaction prevailed long after the festivities were over.

In 1918 the building was covered with siding. In 1948 stucco replaced the siding and the entrance was somewhat modified. The roof has been repaired and the belfry rebuilt. The stone foundation was covered with concrete. Much credit is due to all the active members of the community throughout the ensuing years for the excellent care of the building. It is as solid today as it was the day it was completed.

The original designation of the church was not St. Mary's. Not only has its name changed but its owners as well. Research in the files of the Land Titles Office in Edmonton shows that in 1906 this property was registered as the Parish of St. Demetrios and the owner was the Bishop of the Russo—Greek Catholic Orthodox Church. In 1909, it became the Parish of Rouminish Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake. The owner was "His Majesty the King in the Right of the Province of Alberta". In 1945 the Certificate of Title states that "The St. Mary's Roumanian Orthodox Parish of Boian, Alberta" is the owner. To further include this part of the history of the Church we must add that in 1979 the local church board drew up a realistic

constitution and they replaced the word "parish" by "congregation". Today the Certificate of Title to the property is as follows: "St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Congregation of Boian" is now the owner...

This house of worship has been in continuous use since its inception to this day. The church has been the scene of hundreds of Church services, numerous christenings, weddings, and funerals of the Romanian and Ukrainian people of the Orthodox faith. Many Ukrainian names like Gawrylo Lakusta, Sandyk Chebree, Mike Goroniuk, Vasile Chrapko, and others appear inscribed on the headstones. Because the Church was one of the first to be built in the area, some Ukrainian families became founding members as well.

The Romanian Community of Boian and the neighbouring districts were far from other similar ethnic settlements. This, and the fact that it was a rural community, made it difficult to retain the services of a local priest for any length of time. From 1905 until now, at least 26 priests served in the local church. Most priests were bilingual, speaking Ukrainian and Romanian. Some spoke English as well. Three of the more outstanding ones were Doctor Lazar Gherman, Vasil Cohan and Grigore Costea. Our present Reverend Father Mircea Panciuk has served our congregation the longest, a period of 29 consecutive years.

In 1948, when the foundation of rocks was enclosed by concrete, though it looked neat, inevitably this had detrimental effects on the base logs. No air circulation on the foundation base started the deterioration of the base logs. The weight of the church's log walls caused the west, north and east walls to sink and caused the inside floor to take curvatures in those directions. A few major projects were needed to rectify the problem.

In September, 1974 the church was declared an historic site and in 1977 declared a classical historic site. Since then any changes or renovations need the sanctioning of the Department of Culture. Also, since 1984 the Department would not approve any changes inside the church. For example, the altering of the stairway to the balcony was not permitted until the church was underpinned, levelled, and stabilized. Lack of funds and insufficient grants stalled any immediate planned changes. For the project, two bids, one of \$104,000 and one of \$54,380 were submitted. Two grants were projected for the work – one for \$22,000 (Foundation Calgary) and one for \$15,000 (Dept. of "Culture, Edmonton) were the last offers. Furthermore, the project had to be completed that year (1987), according to Rino Basso, the Department official. The project was begun in early October by W. & R. Foundation Specialists Ltd. for \$54,380. Our share to this point was \$13,464 and 470 hours of menial labour. It became necessary in early 1988 to apply for grants to replace the stucco with cedar siding. The enclosure to the foundation was completed with field stone in 1988.

The board and members of the church would like to acknowledge and show appreciation to individual members for donations of \$6,200 and to the Boian Ladies Club for \$6,000. A thank you goes to all members who have contributed indeed, in thought, and in kind over the years and in responding to the call.

Anniversaries are those vital moments that link the living present to those two great entities, the Past and the Future. For 93 years, what a history for a gregarious group of ripe Romanians – a history that is noble, unique, enduring, interesting, and intriguing. Today's majestic edifice stands overlooking the aspens and the beautiful valley below, and better known today as St. Mary's – "The Church on the Hill".

Acknowledgment: Mike G. Toma 's history book, "Never Far from Eagle Tail Hill".

Application for land for the Boian Church was filed on December 31, 1902 with the Department of the Interior, Ottawa by the first trustee, Ioan T. Toma on behalf of the Congregation. Under the provisions of

Homestead Mission Land Grant of Consolidated Ordinances of the North-West Territories, forty acres of land was granted on November 14, 1903. The Church was consecrated on August 2, 1905.

Founding Members

Ioan Andrie, Florea Axanie, Petru Bandur, Costache Bizovie, Nicolae Chelbe, Stefan Chelbea, Teodor Chelbea, Sandic Chibree, Alex Creison, Teodor Cruceak, G. Elie, T. Cucheran, Ioan Cucheran, Ioan D. Cucheran, Mihail T. Cuciurean, Vasile I. Cuciurian, Daniel Cutunghevici, Ioan Dérda, Ioan Deneliuk, Vasile Dimmitraschuk, Georgi Dubitzi, Onofrei Gordei, Mihail Guriniuk, Vasile T. Harasim, Petru Hauca, Nicolae S. Hauca, Dumitru Ihnatiuk, Ioan Hnetca, Simeon Hrapco, Vasile Hrapco, Nicolae Hutzcal, Petru Hutzcal, Nicolae B. Hutzuleak, Constantin Iftodi, Ioan Iftodi, Nicolae Iftodi, Petrealsak, Costache V. Kachuk, Elie V. Kachuk, Vasile Kachuk Ioan, Kokotailo Gvriel Lacusta, Dumitru Matie, Dumitru S. Mihalchean, Gheorghe A. Mihalchean, Ioan M. Mihalchean, Ioni Mihalchean, Zaharie A. Mihalchean, Ilie Morgoci, George Moroz, Vasile Moroz, Dumitru Moscaliuk, Lazar Nichiforeak, Ioan T. Toma, Teodor Nichiforeak, Gheorghe Porozni, Ioan Revega, Vasile Romancu, Vasile Rusul, Elie Ravliuk, Lazar Sanduleac, Simeon Sanduleak, Condrea Schirc, Dumitru Schirc, Ioan Schirc, Stefan Scétmitél, Georgi Scrénbi, Toader Scrénbitér, Maria S. Serbu, Nicolae Serbu, Ioan Siminiuk, Stefan Siminovici, Elisaveta Steforeak, Vasile Sveclé, Constantin Suprovici, Costake Tkachuk, Simeon Tkachuk, Dumitru I. Toma, Georghe T. Toma, Grigorie M. Toma, Ioan, T. Toma, Ioan V. Toma, Mihai Toma, Teodar A. Toma, Vasile D. Toma, Vasile T. Toma, Gheorghe T. Racéu, Nazarie Yurko, Nicolae Yurko, Vasile N. Yurko, Constantin Zaharichuk

A total of \$1,548.25 was donated by the above founding members. Aug. 17, A.D. 1980

PRESIDENTS FROM 1937

Constantin Iftody, Rev. Costea, Mike Skirka, Nick Nickifor, George W. Toma, Mike Serbu, Andrei Lutic, John Porozni, Bill Mascaluk, George Porozni, Floyd Toma, John Hutzcal, Martin Romanko, Ted Prescott, Willis Soprovich

The priests who have served St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church

1905	Father Ion Stobinschi
1907	Father Anton Alexandru
1909	Father Benedict Iliescu
1910	Father Erimie Delia
1911	Father Dumitru Crisca
1911-15	Father Filip Pantische
1915	Father Vasile Bolfan
1916-18	Father Grigorie Soroca
1918-19	Father Nicolai Prisecorian
1919	Father Dumitru Iastremschi
1920-21	Father Lazar Gherman
1921	Father Alexandru Piza
1922	Father Flerent Georgen
1923	Father Arhip Sarbu
1924	Father Dumitru Fieca

1924-29	Father Vasile Cohan
1929-32	Father Mihai Baleca
1932-37	Father Vasile Cohan
1937-40	Father Grigori Costea
1941	Father Toader Scaletschi
1942-47	Father Mihai Baleca
1947-48	Father Ion Daniliuk
1949	Father Onofrei Iwaniak
1950-54	Father Vasile Melnychuk
1954-55	Father Stefan Fieca
1956-57	Father Samoila Iuga
1959-63	Father Dumitru Diaconescu
1963-65	Father Eugen Barshowski
1965-68	Father Doremidont Tovtiuk
1969-	Father Mircea Panciuk

The Holy Ghost Romanian Orthodox Church of Hamlin

Nick Hauca

West and South of Hamlin Store you will find yourself on a winding sandy road lined with towering poplars, a little church nestled on a hilltop bordered by aspens, the Holy Ghost Romanian Orthodox Church of Hamlin. The steep hill to the church challenged many car drivers especially in inclement weather, so many a church-goer trudged up the steep incline, leaving their vehicles at the bottom, near the cemetery. The church is 36 feet long by 20 feet Wide and 12 feet high. The inside of the church resembles those in Romania or in Canada decades ago – no chairs or benches.

A picture of a bearded priest in vestments is found on the inside cover of a register with the inscription: “To Whom It May Concern” by Notary Public Peter Svarich, Vegreville, Alberta. On the 15th Day of December 1913, the bearer, Teodosie Nica, appeared before me. His picture appears above and the signature below it verifies to me the identification of his name, character and profession. He is a duly ordained monk of Vaslui Romania. He came to Alberta in January, 1912 and settled on homestead NE 1/4-22-57-14-4, where he built a church for the use of the Romanian Orthodox people. His intention was to build a monastery therein and for this cause solicited funds from the church members and the general public.

The monk Teodosie Nica in 1912 built a log cabin with a second story used as a chapel for services until 1916. On January 22, 1915, the first meeting was held to build the “Biserica Altfotiate Romana Ortodoxa cu hramul Pogoriria Duhului Sfant,” as it is officially named.

The members who took part and were elected in this historical meeting were:

Vasile Basaraba — 1st President
Ilie Basaraba
Dimitri Onciul - 2nd President
Nicolae Malin
Vasile Pitmniak - Secretary
Teodosie Nica
George Mihalcian - 1st Controller
John Cojocari
Nicolae Toma - 2nd Controller
Mihai Cuciurean
Andrei Lutic - 3rd Controller
Petrachi Esak
Ion Blesniuk
John Harasium
George Mohan
Nicolai Sarbue
Tanasie David
Andrii Euciuk
Ilie Aldea
Elie Kiper

An interesting footnote to the first meeting minutes is that: "si Bisiaricaavesaramae Supt. Guvernul Canadei Nu sava danicisupr Omesie Provintiea in Alberta Dara Prieutavorbitintaeasedinta la Poporul Romaniei." (and the church should remain under the Government of Canada --- but the priests who will serve are requested to be Romanian Greek Orthodox and to serve in the language spoken from the beginning by the Romanian people.) Even in 1915 the Romanians wanted their parishes to be served by Romanian priests.

The following year 1916 the "main church" for the monastery was built. The 10 acres on which the Church was built and the cemetery located on was originally given by the Dominion Government.

Father Teodosie Nica served the Parish needs till 1918. A local pioneer, Elie Aldea, was ordained priest and served the parish for a time. By June 25, 1924 the outside of the church was completed. On February 3, 1924 the parish received the following books: Sfanta Evanghelie, Octoihulcelmie, Sfanta Scriptura, Cantorul si Apostolul Creslin, Cazania, Pentecostarul."

Following the death of Father Elie Aldea, the parish relied on priests from Boian for their services. Boian is 15 miles south of Hamlin store across the North Saskatchewan River. Some priests who served at Hamlin were Vasile Cohan, Father Teodosie Scaletschi, Father Vasile Toma, Father Dumitru Diaconescu, Father Mircea Panciuk, Father Fiiko (Boian), Father Horbay (Hamlin), and Father Oleniak.

Today, 80 years after the arrival of Father Teodosie Nica, church services are held once a year on the Monday following the Sunday of the Descent of the Holy Ghost; that is the day of the Holy Trinity. On May 22, 1972 the church was visited for the first time by a Bishop, Archbishop Victorin, with Archimondrite Felix Dubneac, Father Jerome Newville, and Father Panciuk. They held prayers for the deceased parishioners, buried in the cemetery. When there is a priest to serve the parish, graveside services are held in memory

of the deceased. Since the first burial, January 28, 1916, there have been 35 burials in the cemetery. To date, the last burial was that of Nickolae Aldie on November 12, 1986.

The remaining few parishioners resisted the efforts by some to move the church to a Heritage Museum. The Church still stands as proud as it did in 1916 and is a living monument to those early hearty pioneers of Romanian Orthodox faith who came to Alberta and helped open Canada's greatest frontier more than 80 years ago.

The following is a list of Church Presidents from 1915 to the present:

1915	Vasile Basaraba
1916-18	George Mihalcian
1919	Elie Aldea
1920-24	Andrii Lutik
1927-35	Elie Basaraba
1936-37	Mike Gigiluk
1938-52	George Bobocel
1953-58	Elie Basaraba
1959-74	Roman Bobocel
1975-89	William Basaraba

Acknowledgment: From "Credmta by Rev M. Panciuk

PART 4: CHURCHES

THE HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN ROMANIAN ORTHODOX PARISHES

The parishes in Canada were founded and built with no help from their counterparts in Romania. The immigrant people rallied around each other and each lent his expertise in the developing and building of the churches and parishes. One locality had very little to do with another because the distances were great and transportation was limited. However, as individuals, the Romanians immigrants supported other Romanian Orthodox church-building activities in which they were invited to participate. They gave whatever assistance they could provide in the way of money or by providing labour or materials.

As the people neared the completion of their churches, they enlisted the help of the Church in Romania, and primarily the Metropolitan of Jassy, Moldavia, in sending priests to their parishes in the new land. Because they were newly arrived, they were bold about asking the Romanian Orthodox Church in Romania to send the priests to Canada and to pay for their passageway. The policy of the Romanian Church was to pay the salary of immigrated priests for at least six months after their departure from Romania. The Canadian Romanians felt obligated to put the title of their churches in the name of the metropolitan of the area of Romania who supplied them with priests. This situation did not appear to be a problem until it became a concern of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in Canada in the early thirties. When the parishioners in Flintoft could not pay their bank loan in April 1934, they requested assistance from the church headquarters in North America. The bank found that the name on the title was the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava, not the name of the parish or church organization. An investigation was made on all the titles of the Romanian Orthodox churches in North America and each parish took action to put the title under the name of their Canadian or American parish.

When it became known throughout the communities in Canada and Romania that there was a need for priests, many Romanian priests came to North America on their own. Many of the priests came and went on what appeared to be an itinerant basis. Usually parishes in a geographical area were served by one priest and it was difficult to ascertain if the priest did indeed have a home parish and, if he did, which parish was indeed his home parish.

This history, therefore, may appear repetitious at times, but only because the same priest served many parishes in one year, and even in one month. The parishes served could be in the same city or in a different province thousands of miles away. In the early part of the twentieth century, clergy members were entitled to free transportation. In those days, it was comparatively easy to identify members of the clergy. Today, it is not easy to identify members of the clergy and the railway discontinued the practice of providing free transportation to the clergy.

Where the Churches Were Built

In the late 1800's Eastern European immigrants streamed to Saskatchewan. Peasants were invited by the "Government of Canada to come to settle and develop "The West" with promises of free land and a quick way to make a fortune. They came individually; they came in groups; they came west. Only a few settled in the eastern provinces, namely Quebec and Ontario. The three Maritime Provinces did not attract them.

The largest population of Romanian immigrants in Canada at that time was in the Regina area. In the early part of the twenty-first century, seven of the twenty-one Canadian parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America were situated in Saskatchewan and four more in the two neighbouring provinces, Alberta and Manitoba.

It is not surprising that the first Romanian Orthodox parish was built in Regina. Regina was a rapidly growing town in the southern part of Saskatchewan and, because it was a well-known fact that the railroad was being built through it, Regina soon became a city. It was located in what is known as excellent wheat-growing land which was called "the bread basket of the world". The area was being settled by Romanian peasants, attracted to the area by advertisements issued and distributed by, the Canadian government. Shortly after the first immigrants settled, they looked to their spiritual needs. Soon after the first Romanian Orthodox church on the continent was built, Saint Nicholas church in 1902, more church buildings were quickly built in Saskatchewan and in the neighbouring two Prairie Provinces, Alberta and Manitoba. Wherever there was a small group of Romanian settlers, a church was built. This was followed by the building of churches in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Because of the perilous traveling conditions across the Rocky Mountains, churches developed in British Columbia much later and after the rail line was completed connecting the east to west.

A new trend in naming churches was the exclusion of names like "Romanian" and other Eastern European country names because Canadian-born Orthodox parishioners felt little attachment to the church in Romania or Europe. This movement is also indicative of the number of non-Romanian, non-Serbian, non-east European converts who recently embraced the Orthodox faith in "ethnic" parishes. At about the same time, there was a movement to unify the Orthodox Church in North America, those churches built in North America by immigrants from Greece, Russia, Serbia, Armenia, and so on. A movement was started to unify the Canadian Orthodox parishes under a church hierarchy to be developed in Canada and the United States of America, still respecting their roots in Romania, Greece, Russia, etc. but now needing to have its own Patriarch and hierarchy on North American soil. This movement was only in its nascent stages.

Turbulent and Troubled Beginnings of the Canadian Romanian Orthodox Church

The Romanian immigrants had a persistent, almost stubborn nature. They kept in touch with conditions in Romania and wanted to maintain their ties to their homeland. They also wanted to maintain their Orthodox faith in their adopted country. Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava in Romania, after receiving letters and pleadings for a priest from the Canadian Romanian immigrants, sent Archimandrite Evanghie Ungureanu to Regina in Canada to bless the first Canadian church which was built in 1902. In reading a letter from the metropolitan it could be concluded that the new priest was also carrying the authority to see that everything to do with the Romanian Orthodox Church in Canada was conducted in an orderly manner. This new priest was the first priest sent from Romania and was well-received by the parishioners

in Regina. Because there were many immigrants in several locations in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba, Father Evanghie went back to Romania and returned with a missionary priest to help serve the area. The second priest was Father Benedict Iliescu. As a priest, he served the Descent of the Holy Ghost church in Rouleau, Saskatchewan, but went frequently to Velva or Sawyer, North Dakota to serve a parish there. He also went to Alberta where there was a parish in Whitford which was probably known later as Hairy Hill or Boian. By 1908, a power struggle had developed between these two priests. Father Benedict told Father Evanghie that he had no authority over him. He declared that his authority was in Romania, not in Canada. It appeared that no one on Canadian soil was "in charge". There was no discipline between the two priests. Letters were exchanged between the two priests and the metropolitan. The priests were separated from their authority in Romania by many thousands of miles which translated to weeks and months by letter or travel. Telegrams would have been quicker but were seldom used. Most of the letter-writing was in 1908. Father Benedict Iliescu was celibate. A short time after his arrival, Father Benedict got married, performing the marriage ceremony himself. The Orthodox faith is such that marriage of a priest is not permitted after his ordination to the Holy Priesthood. Father Benedict did not adhere very well to the laws of the Church and broke his vows as a monastic when he married a Saskatchewan girl. Some parishioners chose to ignore this but Father Evanghie did not. He reported the marriage to the metropolitan. The Metropolitan in Romania felt the behaviour of both priests was shameful. By 1910, both priests were recalled to Romania. Father Evanghie listened to the call and returned to Romania. Father Benedict did not. Realizing that Father Benedict did not plan to return, at least not immediately, the metropolitan cut off his salary and stripped him of his priesthood.

It was the custom in Romania for the Church (Metropolitanate) to pay the priest a monthly salary. When the priests were sent to Canada, they still received their salary from Romania. From the information researched, this salary continued for at least six months after the priest arrived in Canada. It was understood, but not written, that after six months, the people should be in a position to pay their priests. This policy was not conveyed to the people and one hundred years later many of the priests still live in a state of financial need.

The Romanian people were also having a problem with the Russian priests in the Edmonton and Rouleau areas. They reported that the Russians were attempting to take over their churches. Correspondence was also found from a Russian priest stating that a Romanian priest was coming into his area, wanting to take his area into a Romanian jurisdiction. Both the Russians and the Romanians were claiming immigrants from Bucovina as theirs. The priests from both countries appeared to be undisciplined and unprepared for the new venture of serving the Orthodox Church in North America.

There were also jurisdictional problems. The first priest was sent to Canada by the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava as were some subsequent priests. Some parishes requested priests from the Metropolitan of Sibiu. A few had requests for priests written to two metropolitanates in the same time period. The people were becoming impatient in their quest for a priest. For years they had to baptize their children, bury their dead and marry in foreign churches. They did what they could to resolve their spiritual needs.

The Dysart parish was built with the approval of the Metropolitan of Ungro Valachia in 1906. The Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava had to do something to solve the problems the church outside of Romania appeared to have. A photocopy was uncovered of Article 57, of a regal decree No. 869 dated February 25 and promulgated in the official monitor No. 262 of February 26, 1906, which established that all Romanian churches in foreign lands, now and in the future, be placed under the Metropolitan of Ungro

Valachia, His Eminence Archbishop D. D. Iosif (Metropolitul Primat al Romania). At this time the churches affected included Baden-Baden, Germany, Regina, Saskatchewan, Velva, North Dakota and Suceava, Bucovina.

Shortly after the return of Father Evghanie to Romania (probably in the late 1910's or early 1920's) there was still a shortage of priests and many farmers became interested in entering the priesthood. Several of them traveled to eastern Canada or to New York to be ordained by Russian Bishops. This created another problem. The metropolitan in Romania refused to recognize the newly ordained priests as members of the clergy because they were "fara carte", in other words, they were not properly prepared either academically or spiritually for the role of a priest. In many cases, these newly-ordained priests considered themselves to be priests and held religious services in any parish which would accept them.

The letters received from Romania also related to another problem. In 1923, the Orthodox Church revised its "Julian Calendar", its first calendar, and adopted the "Gregorian Calendar which was accepted by the Romanian Orthodox Church. Many people in Canada did not understand the reason for the change. Some accepted it; others did not. In many cases, those who did not accept it split from the parish and built their own church, sometimes fewer than a dozen miles from the old church. This maximized the need for priests. Although the priests usually accepted the new calendar, they were willing to serve parishes which did not accept it. This resulted in a split in the parishioners, leaving fewer people in the church to look after the expenses of operating the church. Parishes were left without priests and priests had to travel to serve more than one parish. It was not unknown for a priest to serve one church under the old calendar and another under the new calendar.

In 1935, Bishop Policarp Morusca was sent to "unify" the North American Church. He was also mandated to develop the "North American Romanian Orthodox Church". Bishop Policarp took on the tremendous task of visiting all the Romanian Orthodox churches on the continent, both in Canada and in the United States in 1935 and 1936. He was generally accepted by all the parishes. Unification seemed to be starting. Unfortunately, on his second return to Romania, World War II broke out and he was put under house arrest by the Communist Government.

The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, accepting Policarp's mandate of developing an American Romanian Orthodox Church, had the authority to elect their own Bishop, which they did, Bishop Valerian Trifa. Father Andrei Moldovian, wanting to be the Bishop of North America, traveled to Romania to be ordained and returned, attempting to take over the properties of the Episcopate. He was "elected" by a "congress" of eight people, not by the "Romanian Orthodox Episcopate Congress". The United States Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Episcopate and refused to let Moldovian have the property or the name of the Episcopate's monthly journal and yearly calendar, the SOLIA. The group under Moldovian, who were under the Romanian patriarchate, continued in their work to split the Church in North America and this attempt continued into the present century, making unity in the Romanian Orthodox Church in North America difficult, if not impossible. Hopefully some common ground will be found over which unity may be possible in the near future.

In reading the biographies of the priests in this publication, the reader will begin to understand how turbulent the lives of the priests were and to admire how the people, holding on to their faith, were able to keep the church alive and growing. People, as well as priests, moved from one parish to another depending on what animosity or controversy arose. This took its toll in weakening the Church and the faith of the people, however, faith still reigns supreme and problems were gradually lessened.

The development of the Romanian Orthodox Canadian churches was not without problems. It was one problem to bring a priest to serve their spiritual needs. It was another to have a meeting of minds of the parishioners so that their church could progress and do its work with everyone in agreement as to what that might be. The Canadian parishes of Romanian origin are listed below in the order of their founding. It is interesting to note that all of them are Orthodox. Although people of Romanian ancestry did belong to churches of other denominations like Baptists, Lutherans and Roman Catholic, these were not Romanian churches and, for the purpose of this history, are not included in this publication. Some parishes kept a very careful record of their histories. Other parishes lost some of their important historical document through one reason or another. A history of the parishes developed by Romanian immigrants, according to historical documents preserved and located, follows. Where more than one reporting was found, the information often conflicted and the best documented information was reported.

CANADIAN ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF BUILDING DATE

Saint Nicholas, Regina, Saskatchewan (1902)

Saint Nicholas parish was the first Romanian Orthodox church built on North American soil. In reading the information about the development of this parish, insight may be gathered on the impact of the church on the life of the parishioners and the devotion of the parishioners to the Orthodox faith.

The first immigrants from Romania were headed west to Canada, arriving in the 1880's. Most of them stopped in Regina and in other nearby locations in southern Saskatchewan, wherever there was a train station. Thirty families homesteaded in the Regina district in 1891. Although most of them had been farmers and shepherds in the old country, they were ready and willing to do almost any other kind of work to help them establish themselves in Canada. Most of the early immigrants were heading for Saskatchewan and because land was available at a very low cost, they became farmers. Others who were not satisfied with the work required to be a farmer became entrepreneurs of small business or labourers, working on the Regina water systems, on the Provincial Legislative building which was built in the early 1900's and on the railway, which was winding its way across Canada. Although there were a few sites of coal deposits in southern Saskatchewan, there were no large mines, factories or industries in the west as there were in the eastern provinces; mostly there was just land to cultivate. These early immigrants to Regina were helped with settlement arrangements by three English-speaking Romanians who worked out of a house on the 1600 block Saint John Street.

One of the first things the Romanian immigrants did, after settling into their new environment was to look to their faith. It was around 1890 when the Regina immigrants decided they needed their very own Romanian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox faith was the faith they brought with them from Romania. A few parishes were established and small churches were built in the early 1900's. The first one to be built in Canada, and in North America, was Saint Nicholas church in Regina in 1902 but it had been founded by a group of pioneers in 1901 or earlier. A small group of Orthodox faithful collected their resources and purchased a piece of land which was five city blocks in one parcel of land on the 1700 block of Saint John Street. The founding members included Nicolae Zora who spearheaded the development by providing the lumber required to build a church. Other founders included Ilie Bancescu, Nicolae Surdea, Alexandru Ursacke, and Nicuta Donison. The 1967 SOLIA reported the original cost of the church building as \$9,000.00.

When the church was completed it was a wooden structure, held together with horseshoe nails, with a dirt floor and a simple cross on the roof designating it as a religious structure. It was built with its altar facing east. The entrance was to be on the Saint John Street frontage. When the city planners completed the city street design of Regina, the faithful found that the entrance to the church was to the back lane. Although this was not as they planned it, it was of little concern to them as long as the altar was facing east.

There was a short article about the Lethbridge Area Romanian Canadians in the November 23, 1956 edition of the Regina Leader-Post which reported on how Saint Nicholas Church in Regina got its first church bell when it was unable to pay for a bell.

The Romanian community of Lethbridge has also started to build a church. Most members of this community were miners, for whom all went well as long as there were jobs. But the mines worked when there were enough boxcars to take away the coal. Often the mines would close and the miners would be unemployed. Many of them began to drift away, some going to Edmonton, others to Regina. Those who stayed saw with regret that they were not going to be able to complete the church. They decided to turn over the unfinished building to the Ukrainians and send the bell to Saint Nicholas church in Regina. The decision was carried out, and the bell, cast in 1897 by the Meneely Foundry Company at West Troy, New York, was unloaded from a CPR train, which arrived in Regina on a summer day of 1904.

Some of the pioneers referred to this bell as the CPR bell and had their own version of the first bell. They believed that the Canadian Pacific Railway bell which was rung to announce noon hour to the whole city was the one donated to Saint Nicholas church. Quoted from the same article:

"Two bells: Meanwhile, the city of Regina had installed a siren on the roof of the powerhouse, to sound the fire alarm. This put out of commission the old city fire bell, which was donated to Saint Nicholas church. And thus, Saint Nicholas church became the church in town to have not only one bell but two bells, one in its belfry and one hanging from a scaffold outside the building."

This was the only church in Regina which had two bells ringing to announce the church services. There was also a barn on the property large enough to stable eight horses. In March, 1903, the people themselves constructed a small parish house for a parish priest when he arrived.

The next step they took was to write to Romanian hierarchs in the "old country" asking them to send them a priest of their own. Following a request from the parishioners to Romania for a priest, Archimandritul Evghenie Ungureanu of Neamti Monastery, Romania, was sent to Regina. He arrived in 1903. He was the first priest sent out of Romania to serve the immigrants of Canada (North America) who were the Saskatchewan people. He was sent to Saint Nicholas parish in Regina in 1902 by Metropolitan Partenie of Jassy, to serve as a missionary priest. He blessed the church on May 20, 1903, the first service in the church. He helped the people establish the Saint Nicholas parish. The church accommodated 200 people standing, but after the chairs, and then pews, were in place, the church only accommodated about 100 people.

In 1905 Rev. Fr. Evghenie Ungureanu returned to Romania and convinced protosinghel Benedict Iliescu to accompany him to Canada for mission work.

On January 2, 1907, Archimandrite Evgheni Ungureanu wrote to Metropolitan Iosif of Romania for money to pay the taxes on the parish house. There were no taxes assessed on church buildings. He had also written a letter requesting two sets of vestments, one for the church in Regina and one for the church in Dysart.

The ones he brought with him were old and deteriorated so badly that they could no longer be worn. No information was found that money was actually received from Romania.

On January 2 of 1907 he wrote requesting permission to serve the people in Saint George, Dysart at Christmas and at Saint John the Baptist Feast Day because there were 65 people in Dysart, many more than at Saint Nicholas in Regina.

By 1907 and 1908, controversy developed between Father Evghenie and Father Benedict. A letter was found, written by Father Evghenie asking the Metropolitan to recall him to Romania. In 1910 they were both recalled to the Monastery in Romania. Archimandrite Evghenie served the Saint Nicholas parish in Regina, Saskatchewan and the Saint George parish in Dysart, Saskatchewan until 1911. Upon his return to Romania he was assigned the Spiritual Father of Varatec Monastery and lived there until his death in 1933. There is no record showing the return of Father Benedict to Romania. In an interview it was reported that Father Benedict left the Orthodox faith and became a Seventh Day Adventist.

In the minutes of a joint committee of Saint Nicholas parish and Saint George parish in the 1920's, it was reported that a decision was made to sell Saint Nicholas church and send half the proceeds to a monastery in Romania and to keep the other half of the proceeds of the sale. This did not come to fruition.

Following Archimandrite Ungureanu's departure and around 1925, in an undated letter from Metropolitan Pimen to Very Rev. Daniel Maxim, the Saint Nicholas parish in Regina was affiliated to the Dysart parish because it had a permanent priest and was larger than the Saint Nicholas parish. At that time the membership of Saint Nicholas parish numbered around thirty. The priest in Dysart was mandated to serve the Saint Nicholas parish once a month. At that time, he also declared the Saint Nicholas church to be a heritage building and ordered that nothing should be removed from this church which was the first church built in North America and served the first immigrants from Romania. On April 1, 1987 the church was again designated by the city of Regina as a heritage property. The church has a distinctive Byzantine domed steeple.

Rev. Fr. Dionisie Nichifor arrived in the Flintoft area in 1910. He arrived at the age of 54. Although between 1911 and 1928 he served Flintoft, he only occasionally served Saint Nicholas parish. On August of 1925 Rev. Fr. Dionisie was seriously hurt in an automobile accident, did not regain his health, sold his land and returned to Romania.

In 1910, Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu, who was a monk, was sent by Metropolitan Pimen to serve Saint Nicholas parish in Regina. While being parish priest in Regina, he also served other parishes in southern Saskatchewan occasionally. In 1912 he was relieved of his parish duties at Saint Nicholas by the Metropolitan to serve the Dysart parish. On November 15, 1939 he died in Regina. The cause of death was stated as diabetes and alcoholism. He was buried in the Dysart church cemetery.

Archimandrite Protosinghel Silvestru Ionescu was sent to replace Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu. The following is an English translation of the letter sent by Metropolitan Pimen.

Pimen

By the Mercy of God Archbishop and Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava

To the Most Worthy Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu Priest designate

of the church in Regina, Sask., Canada, North America

The office of parish priest of the church of the Romanian Orthodox community in the city of Regina, Sask., Canada, North America, having become vacant through the vacancy of the previous holdee, Protosenglor Ghenadie Gheorghiu;

We, having in mind the letter registered as number 1727, this year of the worthy Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu who was the Major Ecclesiarch of the Metropolitan Cathedral to whom we assigned this office;

Considering his dignity at all times during which he held this position, that he is an excellent church servicer and has a very fine, dignified figure and has all our trust;

Considering that the priests named to the Romanian Orthodox colonies in America ought to have a superior to inspect the parishes, cemeteries and all institutions and guiding them into a moral and better life, and for love of country and work, which makes people happy;

Noting the acceptance given by the Minister of Cults, A. C. B. through his letter 3250] of 06 September, 1913, following our letter number 3771, 05 September, 1913;

We have assigned The Very Reverend Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu who was the Major Ecclesiarch of the Metropolitan Cathedral is named beginning 01 October, to the office of parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox church in Regina, Sask., North America, in place of the former priest, Ghenadie Gheorghiu, who having left as Well being the superior of the Romanian Orthodox colonies in Canada, North America the right which I issued through this Archeepiscopal letter by which is made known that he has our blessing to serve priestly services to the Romanian church in that place according to the canons, laws and church regulations; given at our metropolinate today 28 September, 1913.

Pimen, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Director Theodore Number 4157 1913 September 28

He served Saint Nicholas parish between 1912 and 1918. In 1914, Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu performed a wedding and signed the "Certificat De Cununie" of Enache Dragomir and Nastasia Maidoniuk. Sponsors were Parnfil and Maria Bujea.

In 1914 an argument developed between a few Romanian parishioners regarding church affairs. A split in the Regina community resulted in the organization of the Saint George parish on Edgar Street. Fortunately, the Romanian population in Regina was large enough to maintain the two churches. (Christensen p. 8). During his stay in Regina, Saint George church in Regina was built. At that time, most of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in Saskatchewan were within a two-hundred-mile radius of Regina. Rev. Fr. Silvestru was the first priest credited with setting up a Canadian Deanery under the Metropolitan of Moldavia in 1913.

Rev. Fr. Silvestru died in 1918 and was buried in the Saint George Cemetery in Dysart “prin subscriptie publica.” This meant that the parishioners paid the expenses of his funeral.

Between 1910 and 1911, Rev. Fr. Gheorghiu Hentea served Saint Nicholas parish. He moved to the United States of America and served Gary, Indiana in 1912. Rev. Fr. Iordache Ion Oncescu, between 1910 and 1913, served as Cantor at Saint Nicholas, Regina. Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica served Regina, probably around 1918. Not much was written about Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu but it is believed he served Saint Nicholas parish after 1914 but before 1920. About the same period of time and in 1916, Rev. Fr. Dumitru Alexandru Iastremski (Istrenski) served Saint Nicholas parish in Regina and Shell Valley parish in Manitoba.

Nicolae Zora (Gioara), a Trustee (Epitrop) of Saint Nicholas parish, wrote a letter to the Metropolitanate of Molavia on March 7, 1920, proposing moving the small church of Saint Nicholas outside of the city, selling the land and sending one-half the proceeds to Romania to help build a church in Marasesti honouring the heroes who died defending Romania. The remaining half was to be used to transport the church. Nothing came of this proposal.

From 1921 to 1923 Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa served Saint Nicholas parish. It was reported that he decided to have a service once a month in Romanian. Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu served Lennard and Shell Valley between 1923 and 1924 and in 1930. It was noted that he served Saint Nicholas parish sometime between 1923 and 1924.

On June 21, 1925, Saint Nicholas parish had their Constitution and By-Laws printed, the “Statutele Bisericei Greko-Orthodoxe Romane, Sfintul Ierarh Nicolae din Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada”. They were printed and signed by Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu. The Epitropi (trustees) were Alex Ursaki, Elie Bancescu and Trifon Maxim. A new constitution was printed in February, 1927. On the last page were printed “Comitetul”: Luca Franciuc, Presedinte; Zaharie Donmita, Vice Presedinte; Ianachi Bogolan, Secretar Financiar; Constantin Sandu, Secretar Protocolar; Titus Balmos, Casier; Grigori Nicutaii and Ioan Toronciuc, Controlorii. Membri de Incredere were T. Vasilasi, Vasile Lazar, Tanasa Suceavan, Ioan Lazor, Vasile Lazor and Pamfil Bujea.

In 1926, Patriarch Miron Cristea of Romania declared Saint Nicholas Church a national monument. In 1929, the Romanian Orthodox community made efforts to establish an Episcopate for North America. The location was to be in Detroit, Michigan. At this point in time this international group was called a missionary group.

In 1928, the City of Regina planned to put the Saint Nicholas Church property up for sale to pay for tax arrears. Miss Mary Bujea alerted Mr. Luca Francis and her father Pamfil about this advertisement in the Regina Leader Post. The two men hurried to the City Hall and paid one-year arrears, putting the church in good standing. At this time in history, Saskatchewan was facing a time of economic depression and many people were “on relief”, obtaining assistance from the government to pay for the necessities of life. Sunday collections were meagre and it was difficult to pay expenses incurred by the church. Members of the parish who were not “on relief” dug deeper into their pockets to provide candles and incense for the church.

In the 1920's, the old original barn on the church property was dismantled and the lumber was used to build a separate bell tower for the church. This tower was in use until 1944.

Rev. Fr. Teodosie Scaletschi, after serving Kayville, Saskatchewan from 1934 to 1935 and Hamilton, Ontario in 1937, made a request to leave the priesthood. However, we noted that in 1938 he served Flintoft; in

1940 he served Saint Nicholas parish in Regina. In 1924, he divorced his first wife who was in Romania and in 1940, he married a Regina girl. At some time after leaving Regina for the United States, he changed his name to Scala and served parishes in Nebraska, District of Columbia and Pennsylvania.

In 1934, the SOLIA Calendar showed Protopop Daniel Maxim as the administrator of the parish. In 1936 the parish council president was Luca Franciuc, the secretary was shown to be D. Maxim who, no doubt was Father Maxim. The parish had a parish house on Saint John Street, just north of the church. On June 21, 1936, Bishop Policarp visited the Regina parishes. Saint Nicholas was consecrated on that date by Bishop Policarp. Between 1932 and 1937 the Episcopate Congress Reports showed Rev. Fr. Teofil Maxim serving Saint Nicholas from time to time. It was reported in the 1937 SOLIA that the parish membership was 15 representing 50 "souls". In 1944 the parish was vacant and the 1952 SOLIA Calendar reported that in 1944, the church was renovated and a basement was added. The president was Mr. Cuciurean with trustees Gheorghe Popovici and Neculai Udrea. The 1939 SOLIA Calendar reported that Archimandrite Daniel Maxim was the administrator. The parish held a joint banquet with "Clubul Sotial Roman Gloria" as a fund raiser and split the proceeds.

A loosely structured young people's club, with 31 founding members, was known to have existed as early as 1940. The minutes of this group, on June 12, 1940 showed that they requested permission from the parish to play croquet on the church property. Rev. Fr. Scaletski was the priest at this time. One of the reasons the young peoples' group was formed was to work toward bringing a permanent priest to serve the parish. The group also had fund raisers to provide money to buy the necessary articles for the church. The parish house was constructed in 1947 under the guidance of Archimandrite Daniel Maxim.

In 1944 the parish priest was Rev. Fr. Petru Tatoiu. He served the parish until 1961 when he retired. After his retirement, he was taken to court for refusing to move out of the parish house which he claimed was his. The court ruled on his eviction. Father Tatoiu died in 1968.

In 1944, the parish council president was Dumitru Cuciurean, a contractor by trade. This is the year the parish decided to renovate the church. The church was raised, a basement was put under it, heating and plumbing were installed, the church was plastered, a bell tower was added. Pews were installed and two new "wings" for exits were added. The church was now in the form of a cross. The parish secretary was George Popovici; president of the ladies' auxiliary was Domnica Higginbottom; and the secretary of the ladies' auxiliary was Ecaterina Boghean. In 1958 the SOLIA Calendar showed George Staruiala as parish council president and John Roscoe as secretary of the parish. The ladies' auxiliary president was Varvara Lipan, secretary Sarah McHale; choir director George Lazar and Helen Bujea and cantor Pamfil Bujea; Sunday school teacher was Eleanor Bujea. By 1958 the young people's group, Re-ROY, Regina Romanian Orthodox Youth, was formed with Daniel Nenson as the first president. In 1958, the group formed itself as a chapter of A.R.O.Y., the American Romanian Orthodox Youth group in North America. The parish council president was Dumitru Cuciurean and the president of the ladies' auxiliary was Aneta Cioropita.

In 1963, Rev. Fr. John Shunda served Saint Nicholas for three months. He went to the United States to serve. He was suspended from the rank of clergy for remarrying after he divorced his first wife.

When Valerian D. Trifa became bishop, all ties with Romania were severed. In 1958, on May 14, Bishop Valerian Trifa visited the parish. Rev. Fr. Virgil Parvanescu occasionally served Saint Nicholas, Regina from 1960 to 1962. From 1962 to 1963 the parish was vacant. In 1963, Rev. Fr. Richard Grabowski made a temporary visit to Regina and served in Saint Nicholas parish.

Rev. Fr. Constantin Tofan, graduated from Saint Vladimir Seminary in New York in 1961 and requested ordination. He was ordained in New York on May 20, 1963 a deacon and then a priest. In 1963 he held his first service since ordination in his first parish, Saint Nicholas in Regina. On March 15, 1964, Bishop Valerian again visited the parish to install Rev. Fr. Tofan as parish priest. From 1963 to 1966, Rev. Fr. Tofan served Saint Nicholas and, because nearby parishes were vacant, he also provided Assiniboia and Flintoft parishes with services. After the arrival of Rev. Fr. Constantine Tofan, a junior Re-ROY group was formed for youth from 12 to 18 years. Re-ROY was Canada's junior chapter; it was formed and was active in Saint Nicholas church with 31 founding members, following their own agenda and doing their own activities.

In 1965, under the stewardship of Rev. Fr. Tofan, the young people's group, Re-ROY, hosted the first Canadian conference of International A.R.O.Y. Members active at that time were Nick Soparlo, John and Vicky Roscoe, Helen, Eleanor and John Bujea, Steve and Eva Delnea, John and Marie George, John and Phyllis Guraliuk, Dan and Alice Nenson, Gloria Kostiuk, Sharon Most and many, many others. The membership in Re-ROY grew to over 100 members. They made vital contributions to the then newly established religious education camp at Shell Valley, purchased an organ for the church, bought new tables and chairs for the church hall and furniture for the church school. Under the direction of Helen Bujea, a children's choir was started. Re-ROY sponsored a fund-raiser for the local football team, the Regina Roughriders, they sponsored a member of Re-ROY for the "Wheat Queen" contest. This is one of the ways Re-ROY earned money for its many religious projects, one of which was the funding of Saint Nicholas Camp in Shell-Valley, Manitoba.

From 1966 to 1967, Rev. Archimandrite Gratian Radu, served Saint Nicholas and the parishes of Assiniboia and Flintoft. He then decided to only serve Saint Nicholas parish. He was a tailor, sewing his own vestments and other church cloths. In 1967 he left Saint Nicholas parish for the United States of America.

Because the parish was again vacant, it was served by priests from the Romanian Western Canada Missionary Centre, which was a loosely knit group at the time. It held its meetings in one of the two Regina churches. Rev. Fr. Panaleimon Stanciu served Saint Nicholas from 1970 to 1971. He also served: Assiniboia and Flintoft in 1970; in 1974 Saint George, Dysart, Saskatchewan and the Shell Valley –Lennard, MB area.

Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane served the parish next. From 1970 to 1971, he served Saint Elias in Lennard, Manitoba and the surrounding area. He also served Assiniboia and Flintoft. In 1973 he was appointed administrator of Saint Nicholas parish in Regina. He resigned on May 15, 1983 and took leave of absence. He then returned to Saint Nicholas and continued to serve the parish until 2005 when he retired.

At the 75th anniversary of the parish, the head table guests were: government officials Mr. and Mrs. Smishek, John and Marie George, president of A.R.F.O.R.A. Mrs. Melanie Vlad, Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane, John Bujea, Bishop Valerian Trifa, Archimandrite Dr. Martinian Ivanovici, Dr. Eleanor Bujea and Preoteasa Turcoane. In 2002, the parish celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Saint Nicholas remained a small "country" church in the middle of the Capital City of Regina. It was a small but active parish. The parishioners kept the church in excellent repair.

Saint Nicholas was one of the many churches which received support of the women members of the parish. It is impossible to determine when the women officially organized themselves as an auxiliary since the early records were believed to be destroyed in a fire. Records showed that an auxiliary was formed in the Saint Nicholas parish and was named Saint Nicholas Ladies' Auxiliary, Regina Maria, in honour of the beloved

Romanian Queen Maria. It seemed appropriate also that the auxiliary should be born in Regina which means Queen.

The ladies' auxiliary of Saint Nicholas Church in Regina had its beginnings, even before the building of the church in 1902, as a group of women supporting the work of the Church, they worked side by side with their husbands to help pay for the church building and expenses.

In the early twenties, Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim served all the churches in Saskatchewan and it was believed that he carried all the church records with him when he traveled, especially those of Saint George in Dysart which was his home parish and those of Saint Nicholas in Regina which was frequently without its own priest. He may have left them in Saint George church in Regina at the time the church burned. Although the inference is there that the work of the ladies' auxiliary was started in or before 1902, in 1931 the activities of the Saint Nicholas Church Ladies' Auxiliary were formally noted in the minutes.

Saint Nicholas always had a hard-working Ladies' Auxiliary. Memories of the pioneers reflect church dinners being held to support the completion of the church. Where these dinners were held was not recorded. The first auxiliary financial report for the ladies' auxiliary that was found was dated 1935. Similar donations were made in 1936. The active leaders in the women's auxiliary at that time were Velica Dragu, Verona Franciuc, Paraschiva McRadu, Elena Cismasu, Verona Capraru, Maria Mihail, Maria Bujea and Ana Ciorpeta. The first formal auxiliary minutes of "Regina Maria Reuniune Femeilor" were dated November, 1949. The membership fee for the 52 paid members was 25 cents each. There was evidence in the existing records, since 1928, that the Ladies' Auxiliary, Regina Maria, of Saint Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church, had been organized formally and actively supported the work of the Church and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America as well as working with the young people in Religious Education. It is impossible to verify its existence prior to this date although members remember their mothers talking about the work of the ladies for the church since its beginning in 1902.

In 1939, a joint meeting was held to choose a committee of ladies to work for the banquet. The ladies' selected were: Mrs. S. Cismasu, Mrs. Cojocari, Mrs. Gusba, Mrs. Sandu, Mrs. Cucu, Mrs. Dragu, Mrs. Udrea and Mrs. Lazar. The rewards for the work were to be free admission and a bottle of beer. On July 3, 1939, the parish council chose Velica Dragu to be "engrijatoare peste femeile ce lucra inbucatorie" in other words "the supervisor of the ladies' in charge of the kitchen", or the ladies' auxiliary president. The parish council was responsible for the church and the activities of the ladies' auxiliary. At that time, the women had no vote at meetings of the parish, either general or annual.

In 1945, the "Doamnele" made a collection of \$288.05 for the Church. In 1946, records of the parish council showed that proceeds of many tea parties went to the benefit of the Church. In addition, there was a donation of \$50. This was repeated in 1947 with a donation of \$233.35.

The first formal Registru de Procese-Verbale Reuniunea Femeilor, Regina Maria din Parochia Romanian Orthodox Saint Nicholae Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada found in the records was dated November, 1949. These records showed arrangements for teas, church dinners, flowers and curtains. Membership fee was 25 cents. Income from membership indicated that there were 52 paid-up members. In 1952, the Auxiliary paid \$200 for paint for the Church. In the 1951 SOLIA Calendar, the name of the Saint Nicholas Ladies' Auxiliary was shown as "Albine" (bees). During the period when the young people's groups were active within the Church, the records of the young people showed many of the ladies were also active members of this group.

When Romanian ladies immigrated to Canada and joined the parish, the ladies of the auxiliary took Romanian cooking lessons from them, both to learn new recipes and to update themselves on recipes their mothers gave them. This was formally recorded in the winter minutes of 1965. In this year, the auxiliary sent their first delegate to an A.R.F.O.R.A. Conference. Ann Soparlo was the delegate this year and Virginia Scott was the delegate in 1966.

In 1967, "Prayers for Christian Unity" were held in Saint Nicholas Church and the ladies' auxiliary served coffee and donuts. The ladies' auxiliary also hosted many receptions following the "Sunday of Orthodoxy Vesper Services". Donations were also made to the Y.W.C.A. and to A.R.F.O.R.A.

The ladies' auxiliary was continuing supporters of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. In 1970, the ladies' auxiliary had a "bake-less" bake sale in support of Junior Re-ROY. In 1971, after a presentation to the parish council regarding plans to build a parish complex, the ladies' indicated their support of this project.

In 1974, the ladies' auxiliary loaned and later donated \$1,100.00 to assist the parish. In 1975, Preoteasa Milanka Turcoane was named honorary president of the ladies' auxiliary. In 1976, the ladies' auxiliary participated in the "Biggest Garage Sale" in order to make more funds for their projects. A formal motion was made to make a semi-annual donation to the church. These donations in the past had been made at least semi-annually but the ladies' wanted their intent recorded in the minutes. Rummage sales, catering, participation in multi-cultural events and religious events, doing voluntary work for charity, were all activities in which the ladies' auxiliary participated.

In 1977, the ladies' auxiliary prepared a dinner for the Orthodox Brotherhood Annual Conference. In this year a donation of \$1,000 was made to the Church. A donation was also made to A.R.F.O.R.A. to assist with the expenses of their "Sick and Visiting Pamphlet". The ladies' auxiliary also participated in the World's Day of Prayer for several years.

The ladies' auxiliary indicated their appreciation of the support it received from the parish council and the young people's groups over the years.

Saint Elias the Prophet, Lennard, Manitoba (1903)



Lack of land and opportunities in Romania were the prime motivating factors which caused the people of the Lennard, Manitoba area to immigrate to Canada. The first Romanian pioneers in this area settled in Calder, Saskatchewan in 1899. Included in this group were the families of George Paulenko, John Paulenko and Nick Pentlichuk. More immigrants arrived in the year 1900, to unite with their friends in Calder, Saskatchewan, a neighbouring community including Elie Burla and his family. In 1901, Elie Burla found a section of land available for homesteading in Manitoba. He convinced George Paulenko, John Paulenko and Nick Pentlichuk to join with him in purchasing the four quarters of land, and they took on the task of setting up their homesteads in what is now, Manitoba. Other families were soon to follow to begin the first Romanian settlement in Manitoba.

There were conflicting data as to the founding of the parish. Original records were difficult to locate, possibly because they were lost. In 1901 these settlers, who were of the Eastern Orthodox faith, having no church in which to worship, erected a cross in an open field and there they conducted their services of worship. On Easter Sunday in 1902, Romanian and Ukrainian pioneers in the Inglis and Lennard, Manitoba area, held services in the open air. They then set out to build a sod church which continued to serve them. The first wooden church was built in 1903 on two acres of land donated by Elie Burla. It served the people until 1908. This church was replaced in 1908 to accommodate a larger congregation of Romanians. Alexia Slusarchuk, a local pioneer of Ukrainian origin, had designed the church which is now the museum. In 1910, the church voting membership was thirty-one. Some years later John Paulenko donated an additional two acres to be used by the church. In the 1944 SOLIA it was reported that this parish was founded in 1905. The people in the area claim it was founded in 1901. Their information is probably the more accurate. The first church was actually built in 1903 and this is the year they celebrate their Hram.

Once the church was built, the people wrote to the "old country" to send them a priest. They appealed both to the Romanian and the Russian hierarchy to send them priests because there were also many Ukrainians in the area. Some of the priests who served the area were Rev. Frs.: Petrea Hakman (Hacman) who served around 1903 and may not have been a priest, Dosoftei Constantinescu who was possibly the second priest and served the parish for 5 years, and Ion Mihalovich who served in 1907, Vasilovich who was believed to be the fourth priest date unknown, Durnitru Feica who served about 1926 and was also believed to be the fourth priest, John Teodosienica who was believed to be the fifth priest and who served around 1924 to 1926, Teodosie Nica who served sometime after 1916 and before 1919, Ieremia Delea who probably served before 1920, Dimitrie lastremski who served around 1919, A. Berek, Mihial Baleka (Baleca) served around 1920 to 1924, Ghenadie Gheorghiu who served between 1933 and 1935 Durnitru Erina who served around 1956, Marin Postelnic who served around 1925. (Rev. Fr. Teodosienica and Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica may be one and the same man.) The correct order of the priests serving this and the area parishes is not known. It would appear that most of these priests served prior to 1923. As is recognizable from the names, the priests were Romanian, Ukrainian or Russian. There were many Ukrainian immigrants in the area and there were frequent intermarriages so Ukrainian names appeared in parish documents.

The church was named Saint Elie to honour their patron saint and to recognize the donor of land, Elie Burla. Around 2000, the parishioners restored the church which was built in 1908 and turned it into the "Saint Elijah Romanian Orthodox Church Museum". The church was constructed from hewn logs, plastered with mud, and locally milled timber and siding. It had a sod roof. It still has its embossed metal interior walls. It contained icons, crosses, banners, crucifixes and processional lamps brought over from Romania by the pioneer settlers. This restored church was in service until 1952.

A church history, written on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the church, listed the priests who served the parish from the beginning. The dates of services, in some cases, were unknown as were the first names of some of the priests.

Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu served Lennard and Shell Valley between 1923 and 1924 or in 1930. He also served parishes in the Regina area.

Hieromonk Glicherie Popa was the priest of the parish. From 1924 – 1926 and 1934 – 1958, he served Lennard and the surrounding area. Between 1926 and 1934 he traveled to the United States of America. After serving Saint George and Saint Nicholas parishes of Regina and Saint George parish of Dysart he served the parish in Windsor, Ontario.

In 1936, the parish council president was George Burla; the secretary was Peter Gaber. The ladies' auxiliary was called Sf. Elie Ladies' Auxiliary. Some resources indicated that the ladies' auxiliary was organized in 1934. In 1936 the ladies' auxiliary president was Achilina Ungurean; the secretary was Elisiveta Ungurean. The young people's group was called "Regele Carol II". In 1936, the president of the youth club was Peter Gaber; the secretary was Varvara Pardencu. In 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca visited the parish on June 7 at which a Hierarchical Liturgy was held and the church was blessed and consecrated. In the 1943 SOLIA it reported that the Lennard parish had 125 members and 129 families with 844 "souls". At that time, the ladies' auxiliary had 30 members. The church choir was called "G. Muzicescu" and had 65 members. It was reported that affiliated parishes were Calder (MacNutt), Canora "Holy Apostles" with 25 members and 25 families and 200 souls; and MacNutt "Sfanta Treime" with 7 members and 7 families. At that time, affiliated meant that the parishes shared a priest. Generally, the affiliated parishes were very small in size. This church building served the people until 1952, when once again they decided to build a larger church which currently serves the community. It was built by a contractor from Saint Lazar, P. Dupont, who supervised the work and the parishioners helped with the labour. The construction work was supervised by Peter Gaber. In 1939, the parishioners and Rev. Fr. Popa put their funds together and, on the three-acre site, built a comfortable country-style parish house a few yards from the church. Improvements and additions were continuously made. The old church was moved to a corner of the property. The new church accommodated up to 250 people with a hall beneath it which accommodated 150 people. It provided a place for worship, a source of fellowship, and in this case, a bastion of two cultures. The new building was blessed in 1954 by Archimandrite Rev. Fr. Maxim, Rev. Frs. Glicherie Popa and Petru Tatoiu. Rev. Fr. Popa died in Lennard on February 28, 1958 and was buried in the church cemetery.

When the present church was erected in 1952 at a cost of \$15,000.00, the original church was pulled away and left to deteriorate. Some even suggested burning it but this was not done. Later it was renovated and converted to a museum. In 1958, the parish council president was William Burla. The president of the ladies' auxiliary was Lina J. Gaber. The church choir was conducted by Peter J. Gaber. Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici was Sunday School Director with teachers William Galant, Mrs. Helen Galant and Mrs. Vera Burla. On May 10, 1958, Bishop Valerian Trifa of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America visited the parish.

Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici was the next administrator of the parish serving the parishes of Lennard and surrounding areas from 1955 to 1967. When Very Rev. Fr. Martinian took over the parish, the members numbered fewer than 20; by 1961, under his leadership, the membership grew to fifty-two. Between 1960 and 1967, Rev. Fr. Virgil Parvanescu served this parish occasionally. During 1964 and 1965 Rev. Fr. Constantin Tofan performed Holy Liturgy services occasionally. He was the parish priest of Saint Nicholas church in Regina. In 1967 Very Rev. Fr. Martinian was commended for serving other parishes while serving

the Lennard parish and was appointed as Vicar of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. In 1982 he resigned and served to Saint George parish in Regina.

Rev. Fr. Dan Nenson served Lennard and area from 1971 to 1973 on a temporary basis through the Western Canada Missionary Centre. Rev. Fr. Pantaleimon Stanciu was one of the priests of the Western Canada Missionary Centre also serving the Lennard-Shell Valley area in the early 1970's.

Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane was also a member of the Western Canada Missionary Centre to serve Lennard and surrounding area from 1970 to 1971. Rev. Fr. John Fleser served Lennard and surrounding area from June 1, 1972 to 1976. He was canonically released to another Diocese. From June, 1976 to December 15, 1978, Rev. Fr. Mirone P. Klysh served the parish occasionally.

In 1979, Mary Gaber, a granddaughter to Elie Burla, returned to reside in the area. She recognized the historic value of the old church and believed the original pioneers' faith, determination and hardships deserved a memorial. With the permission of the parish council she began her fund-raising projects for the restoration of the first church. A committee was organized with Peter Gaber as Chairman, Andrew Onofrechuk as Vice-Chairman and Mary Gaber as Secretary Treasurer. The restoration was started with anew foundation and new floor joists. The original floorboards were placed on the new underfloor. The square hewn logs from which the building was constructed were sound and left intact. The original frame siding and shingles were replaced with new custom-made materials. The windows are the original. The embossed metal interior walls were straightened, cleaned and painted. This church was turned into a museum. The museum houses the original banners, crosses, icons, candelabra, processional lamps and other artifacts used during the life of the church. The tiny choir loft held as many as thirty choir members. Many of the original artifacts were recovered, but some, such as the Royal Doors and brass Chandelier, were not returned. They may have been installed in the church in Blue Wing.

Agrapina Gaber, the oldest living original pioneer of Lennard was aged 89 years and had a remarkable memory. She provided much of the history of the parish. The more recent church events were properly recorded in the parish records.

On December 15, 1978, Rev. Fr. Nicolea Marioncu was released from Saint John the Baptist, Woonsocket, Rhode Island and appointed to the office of parish priest of the Lennard and surrounding area. On December 6, 1989 he was appointed administrative dean of Western Canada. In 1990 he was released from Lennard and surrounding parishes at his own request and was appointed Pro Tempore Vicar of Canada. On December 1, 1990 he served the parishes of the Descent of the Holy Ghost and Saints Peter and Paul, Assiniboia and Flintoft, Saskatchewan.

On April 30, 1990, Rev. Fr. Peter SanFilippo was released from the joint parishes of Assiniboia and Flintoft at his own request and on July 1, 1990 began to serve Lennard and surrounding parishes. A short time later, in 1992 he was released from Lennard, Shell Valley, MacNutt and Canora and transferred out of the R.O.E.A. to the Archdiocese of Canada of the Orthodox Church of America.

Rev. Fr. Joseph MacLellan was the next priest to serve the parish and surrounding parishes. He served from 1992 to October 2004. Father Joseph had formerly lived in the area and had married a local girl, Martha. He had moved his family to Winnipeg and traveled to the Lennard area on weekends to tend to the spiritual needs of the people. He had retired from his full-time business position.

The parish priest in 2004 was Rev. Fr. Octavian Mahler who came from Romania. He lived in Quebec before coming to Manitoba to serve the Lennard area parishes. He then moved his family to Winnipeg and commutes to the Lennard area for services. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

Saints Peter and Paul, Canora, Saskatchewan (1903)

Canora is 147 miles northeast of Regina. In 1903, Romanians and Ukrainians of Orthodox faith founded this small parish and built a church 147 miles, north east of Regina. A few years later the church was completely destroyed by fire. In 1918, the Romanian group organized its own parish and built another church on a five-acre site. In 1929, the church again burned completely to the ground. On the same location, they built another church in 1930. It was built under the technical leadership of a member, Florea Samurla, and the parishioners helped with the labour. The material cost was \$1,200.00. It seated sixty. The parish hall was built on the church site, near the church. Most of the labour was done by the members and the materials cost \$1,000.00. Between 1960 and 1965, the church building was renovated. Most of the parishioners lived in the nearby city of Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

The Canora Romanian community was always small. Because of its proximity to Shell Valley, Lennard and MacNutt, it drew on the priests serving these communities to reach out and serve Canora on special feast days. Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu traveled to Canora from Regina to serve the parish occasionally between 1933 and 1935. While in Canora, Rev. Fr. Gheorghiu blessed the church. He died in Regina on November 19, 1939. On June 12, 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca, Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church in North America, visited Canora as reported in the 1936 SOLIA. During his visit he consecrated the church. The 1939 SOLIA Calendarul reported that there were 25 members, 25 families and 200 "souls" in the parish in Canora.

Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa, the parish priest of Lennard, Manitoba, served the parish occasionally in 1924 and 1926 and from 1934 to 1958. He died in Lennard, Manitoba in 1958. The church building was renovated in 1958. During 1958, a church and social hall was built in the same yard as the church. The administrator of the parish was Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici. The parish council president was John Danchilla; the secretary was John Sadovei; the ladies' auxiliary president was Mrs. Viorica Sadovei. On May 12, 1958, Bishop Valerian visited the parish. Between 1960 and 1965, the entire church building was renovated.

From 1971 to 1973, Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson and Rev. Fr. Pantaleimon Stanciu occasionally served Canora when assigned by the Western Canada Deanery. Rev. Fr. John Fleser served Canora and surrounding parishes between 1972 and 1976, traveling from the church in Lennard. From December 15, 1978 to 1990 Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu served Canora occasionally. While serving Lennard, Rev. Fr. Peter SanFilippo occasionally served Lennard's surrounding parishes including Canora.

Rev. Fr. Joseph MacLellan served the parish occasionally from 1992 to October, 2004. His home was in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Because Canora was such a small parish, the parishioners had services only six to ten times a year. The priest serving them was usually the priest serving the Lennard area parishes as they did not have a priest of their own. In the winter of 1980, Bishop Nathaniel Popp of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America visited Canora making this his first visit to Canada.

Holy Trinity, MacNutt, Saskatchewan (1903)

MacNutt is about 150 miles northeast of Regina near the Manitoba border. This parish was in 1903 by Romanian and Ukrainian Orthodox people from Bucovina. Together they hauled birch logs by oxen team and built a small log church six miles west of MacNutt. In the late 1920's, Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu traveled from Canora to serve the parish. During the depression of the 1930's, the people could not afford the train fare to bring in a Romanian priest. Since the Ukrainian community started to found their own parishes, the Romanian group re-organized and built their new church under the guidance of a carpenter, Mike Huziak, from Kamsack, Saskatchewan using birch logs from 1957 to 1958. There was also a shelter for horses. Most of the labour was donated by parishioners. The cost of the new church was about \$13,000.00. It was situated on two acres of land donated by Vasile Calamcea. The iconostasis was executed by the Providence Church Goods Company of Winnipeg, Manitoba at a cost of \$1,500.00. The church had a capacity of 200 and the social hall could seat 100 and was located across the road from the church. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa served MacNutt occasionally in 1924 and 1926 and permanently from 1934 to 1958. He traveled there by train. He died in Lennard, Manitoba in 1958.

On June 11, 1936, Bishop Polycarp Morusca visited and served in MacNutt as reported in the 1936 SOLIA. In the 1939 SOLIA Calendar it was reported that the MacNutt "Sfanta Treime" parish in Calder, the nearby town, had 7 members and 7 families. The church was built between Calder and MacNutt and, at first had a Calder address but later the address was changed to MacNutt. The ladies' auxiliary was organized in 1944.

In 1958 a new church was under construction by the parishioners who were inspired by Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici. He was the administrator and blessed the new church on June 8, 1958. Also present were Very Rev. Archimandrite Daniel Maxim with Rev. Fr. Petru Tatoiu assisting. Very Rev. Fr. Martinian was commended by the Episcopate for his work in the building of the church. The parish council president was Dumitru Sarafincean, the secretary was Grigore Toderean; the ladies' auxiliary president was Mrs. Glicherie Toderean; the choir director was Grigore Toderean, the Sunday school teacher was Miss M. Sauchiuk. From 1970 to 1971, Rev. Fr. Panteleimon Stanciu, Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson and Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane served Canora when assigned by the Western Canada Deanery. Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu served MacNutt occasionally while he was the parish priest in Lennard between 1978 and 1990. While serving Lennard, Rev. Fr. Peter SanFilippo occasionally served the MacNutt parish. Because the MacNutt parish was very small, they could afford the services of a priest only about once a month and so it was served by the priests who served the Lennard parish as well as other parishes in that area.

Rev. Fr. Joseph MacLellan served the parish and surrounding parishes from 1992 to 2004. In 2003, the parish had only 15 members.

St. Mary, Boian (Willingdon), Alberta (1905)



Many of the old documents researched for the history of this parish had conflicting information. It was reported in the 1974 Credinta Calendar on page 102 that, by 1901, Vasile Romanko had donated forty acres of land to build a church and that, in 1901, a parcel of it was blessed for a cemetery. Other research claimed that the forty-acre parcel of land, which was bought in 1901, was homesteaded by three men: Ion T. Toma, Mihai T. Yurko and Konstantin Kachuk. These three men were reported to be elected trustees at a meeting in 1901 with the express purpose to choose a site for a cemetery and a church. Two people had already died and there was no cemetery in which to bury them. A Russian Orthodox missionary priest, Rev. Fr. Jacob Korchinski, from Edmonton blessed the site of the cemetery. Huge stones were hauled from neighbouring farms to form the foundation for the church. Lumber was cut from trees on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River. Lumber was also hauled from Edmonton. All the lumber had to be hauled to the site. Each man in the parish community was to donate twenty dollars in cash and volunteer twenty days of free labour to build the church. The chief carpenter was Elie Ravliuk who was paid two hundred dollars. The church was built according to the design of a church in Boian, Romania. It included a belfry as a separate structure. There was a cupola on the church with crosses on top. The church was completed in the summer of 1905 and consecrated by Rev. Fr. Mihailo Ion Skibinski (John Strembisk) from Wostok, a Bucovinian Ukrainian priest, on August 2 (1974 Credinta). It was a joyous occasion.

Pioneer names included Cuciurean, Harrison, Hauca, Hutschal, Iftody, Mihalchean, Perozni, Russ, Shirka, Svekla, Toma and Yurko.

On May 29, 1908, Archimandrite Benedict Hiescu wrote to the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava, Dr. Partiniu Clinceni, that he visited the Romanian community of Whitford, Alberta (possibly Boian) and found a church which had been mainly served by Russian priests. The people were in need of a Romanian priest so they would not lose their language. They also needed religious books and bibles written in Romanian.

The church name and ownership were changed a number of times. The Land Titles Office indicated the following name changes took place:

1901 to 1906	Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Orthodox Church, land only.
February 18, 1906	Parish of Roumanian Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake.
December 18, 1909	The 40 acres of land was transferred to the parish of Soda Lake.
1915, 1911	Bishop of the Russo-Greek Orthodox Church, Saint Demitrius of Soda Lake.
1912	Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Catholic-Orthodox Parish of Saint Demitrius of Boian.

The municipality of Eagle took the property for arrears of taxes. February 26, 1924. Rev. Fr. Piza of Shandro Church paid the taxes and re-registered the property. On February 3, 1945 it was called Saint Mary's Romanian Orthodox Parish of Boian, Alberta.

A rift amongst the Russian and Romanian people occurred in 1916 and a second church was built in Hairy Hill with Saint Mary as the Patron Saint.

By 1985, the Certificate of Title of the property read: Saint Mary's Romanian Orthodox of Boian, registered owner. Because many of the parishioners were Ukrainian, most of the serving the parish spoke Romanian and Ukrainian. Some also spoke English.

From 1933 to 1937 Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan provided services in Boian, Alberta. In 1938 the office of the parish priest was listed as "vacant" with George T. Toma as Cantor. In the 1939 SOLIA Calendarul it was reported the parish had 60 members with 137 families in the area and 663 "souls". From 1939 to 1940, Rev. Fr.

Grigore Coste (also spelled Grigoriu Costea) was the parish priest. The ladies' auxiliary was named "Saint Dumitru" and had 30 members. The name of the church choir was "Dulce Bucovina" and the youth group was called "Fm Romaniei". On July 5, 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca visited Saint Dumitru parish.

In 1942, Boian was served by Rev. Fr. Teodosie Scaletschi, who later changed his name to Scala. From there he moved to Hamilton, Ontario. The 1943 SOLIA reported there were 60 members, 137 families and 663 "souls" in the area. The parish had a choir and a youth group. Fifty-eight young people were reported to be in the army. The parish also had a religious education program for children, a parish house and a meeting hall. They had organized a ladies' auxiliary in the parish with a membership of thirty-six women. The church was listed under "Protopiatul Regina" under protosinghel Daniel Maxim. Between 1944 and 1962, the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma. In 1943, Rev. Fr. Elie Balica served Boian. In 1947 and in 1949 the office of parish priest was vacant.

On April 15, 1949, Rev. Fr. Onofreiu Iwaniuk was shown as serving Boian as parish priest. On November 28, 1949, he moved to Hamilton, Ontario. In 1950, the parish council president was Mihail Sirbu. The 1951 SOLIA showed that the office of parish priest was vacant. The parish cantor was George T. Toma.

Rev. Fr. Vasile (Victor) Melniciuc served in 1954. Between 1952 and 1956, Rev. Fr. Stephen Feica served Saint Mary's (Saint Dumitru's) in Boian. For a period of time, the Boian parish was referred to by the two names. In 1956, Rev. Fr. Feica left for the United States of America. Between 1953 and 1963, Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba served the Boian parish. In 1959, Nicolai Nickifor was the parish council president. Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu served the Boian parish from 1959 to 1963 and again in 1972. In 1966, the parish was represented at the Church Congress by Condrea Bizovi and Boris Puscasu.



Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk served the parish in 1972 as a visiting priest and he was the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Edmonton from 1972 to 1990. In 1972, the parish priest position was shown as "vacant". In August, 1985, on the occasion of its 80th Anniversary, the parish was visited by Archbishop Victorin. The parish hall had been renovated just three months earlier. The youth group from the Saints Constantin and Helen parish of Edmonton, Alberta, provided the entertainment. On July 23, 1978, the Church was declared a Historical Monument by the Province of Alberta. In the 1990 Credinta, Rev. Fr. Panciuk was shown as the priest serving this parish. It was served occasionally by priests who traveled from Edmonton, Alberta.





REV.FR. MIRCEA PANCIU
1967 – 1969



The parish in Boian was the oldest parish in the province of Alberta. There were several parishes which sprang up in the Boian area which seldom had their own parish priest. These parishes were very small and had very few church services per year. They were affiliated to the Boian parish. These parishes are the ones in Hairy Hill, Hamlin, Malin, Manning-Peace River and Pierceland. All these parishes were under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Saint George, Dysart, Saskatchewan (1906)

Dysart is located about sixty miles north east of Regina, the capital of the province. In 1906 there were 800 Romanian Orthodox Christian living in and around Dysart. Shortly after Romanian immigrants settled in the Dysart area, Saint George Church was founded. The year was 1905. The first board members and founders of the parish were Iosif Corchis, Nicolae Corchis, Constantin Dumba, Gheorg Magda and Iosif Milas. The church was erected of wood in 1906 and was very well maintained since then. The people did everything according to their religious beliefs and understanding brought with them from Romania. On March 20, 1906, Father Evgheni Ungureanu was invited to visit them and blessed the two lots of land on which the church was to be built. He asked the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava for permission for the immigrants to build the church. Metropolitan Parteni approved the building of the church. A letter was sent from Archimandrite Evgheni Ungureanu to Metropolitan Pimen which stated that the church was built with the approval of the Metropolitan of Ungro Vlahiei on April 19, 1906. He pleaded with the metropolitan not to send neither a Uniate priest nor a Hungarian priest since neither would fulfil the wishes of needs of the Romanian Orthodox community in Dysart.

Although some of the earliest immigrants were from Bucovina, between 1903 and 1908, forty-six Romanians from Dobrogea arrived in Dysart by way of Regina and were registered homesteaders in the area. Forty pioneers each pledged \$30.00 and volunteer labour to obtain a loan to build the church. The church was built and in February 1907 it was affiliated with Saint Nicholas parish in Regina. The affiliation procedure was followed so that a smaller, newer church would get some support and leadership from an older, more established parish as well as get the services of their priest when required. The Dysart church was completed and blessed on June 10 of 1907. The architect of the church was Locke Jonescu. He originated in Vechul Regat (the old kingdom). The icons for the church were imported from Romania. The parish hall located vis-a-vis the church seated 125. The church cost \$2,700.00 to complete. It had a seating capacity, including the choir loft, of 125. In 1910, a parish house was purchased in the vicinity. Two lots were purchased at the eastern edge of town and were used as a Romanian Orthodox Cemetery. From June 10 to June 22, 1907, the church was blessed by Archimandrite Evghenie Ungureanu. On August 5, 1906, he blessed the bells of the church. Around 1927, in an undated letter from Metropolitan Pimen, the Saint Nicholas parish in Regina was affiliated to the Dysart parish because it had a permanent priest and was larger than the Saint Nicholas parish. At that time, he declared the Saint Nicholas church to be a heritage building. On April 1, 1987 the church was designated as a heritage property by the local government. The parish house in Dysart was built in 1910 for \$4,000.00 and was situated across the street from the church. It had four rooms and was convenient to the church.

The first Romanian Orthodox priest in North America was Archimandrite Eugenie Ungureanu who came to Saint Nicholas in Regina in 1902 and remained until 1911. In addition to serving the Regina church, he served Dysart on January 11 and 24, - August 4, 1908 and June 9, 1910. In a letter to the Metropolitan of Moldavia in Jassy, Romania dated May 24, 1910 and received in Romania on June 9, 1910, Archimandrite Evghenie wrote requesting a priest for the Saint George Church in Dysart. He told the metropolitan that,

contrary to the information received in Romania that these people came from Transylvania, they actually originated in Dobrogea. They fervently requested that a priest be sent, with transportation prepaid, to serve them.

Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Hentea arrived from Romania and served Dysart from November 12, 1910 to November 24, 1911. He was followed on November 24, 1911 by Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu. He served Dysart April 10, 1912, May 11, 1913, October 11, 1914 and October 3, 1915. He left for Montreal on December 5, 1915. The parish paid him \$300.00 a year and he was satisfied with it. On August 23, 1920 he returned for two years at a salary of \$1,000.00 a year. After April 10, 1921, he no longer served Dysart at the request of the parishioners. Rev. Fr. Silvestru Ionescu, the parish priest of Saint Nicholas parish in Regina, served Dysart between December 6, 1915 and April 28, 1918. He died in 1918 and was buried in the Dysart cemetery. Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica served the Dysart parish from April 28, 1918 to May 22, 1920. From May 22, 1920 to August 2, 1920 the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu. The parish was again served by Protosinghel Ghenadie Gheorghiu from August 2, 1920 to December 10, 1921. On January 21, 1922, a delegation was sent by Dysart to Regina to request the services of Rev. Fr. Hieromonk Glicherie Popa. He served the Dysart parish from December 10, 1921 to November 21, 1922. He decided to have a service in the Romanian language only once a month.

On November 21, 1922, Very Rev. Archimandrite Protosinghel Daniel Maxim was parish priest for Saint George, Dysart, Saskatchewan. Statistics provided by Father Maxim to the Metropolitan in Romania about the history of the parish were as follows:

Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Hentea	performed 25 baptisms, 5 weddings and 10 funerals.
Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu	performed 173 baptisms, 25 weddings and 23 funerals.
Rev. Fr. Silvestru Ionescu	performed 54 baptisms, 3 weddings and no funerals.
Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica	performed 20 baptisms, 2 weddings and 14 funerals.
Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu	performed 5 baptisms, 1 wedding and no funerals.
Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa	performed 12 baptisms, 7 weddings and 2 funerals.
Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim	performed 143 baptisms, 25 weddings and 50 funerals.

On December 4, 1922 Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim's salary was fixed at \$500.00 a year. In 1925, the America publication reported the parish had 100 members. On December 8, 1926, Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim wrote Metropolitan Pimen asking him to send acknowledgments to donors of crosses and other altar vessels. This letter was received in Romania on January 8, 1927. In the 1936 SOLIA it was reported that the parish had a two-story parish house and the parish council president was Vasile Dumba with Secretary Andron Stan. On June 14, 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca visited the parish and consecrated the church. In 1936, at the Vatra Romaneasca in Michigan, Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim was named Dean of Western Canada Deanery. He remained in the area for approximately ten days. In the 1938 SOLIA Calendar, it was reported that there were 60 members and 630 "souls" in the Dysart area. This last number was a large one for such a small town but the figure must have included people in the surrounding area. It was also reported in this publication by Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim that affiliated parishes were: Maleval, Lakenheath, Wheatstone, Crystal Hill, Avonlea, Spring Valley and Southey. Geographically some of these towns were 200 miles distant from Dysart. The churches were not located in any of these towns but were in nearby towns. In 1944 the parish council president was Vasile Dumba. The treasurer was Andron Stan, and other members on the

parish council were: Vasile Richea, Nicolai Petrar, Samoil Gennan, Dumitru Vilcu, Alexe Gherasim, Bartolomei Sulea, Ioan Stan, Aurel Magda and Iosif Constantin Dumba.

The ladies' auxiliary was officially started in 1937 although the women worked for the church at a much earlier date. The president was Eva Magda and the auxiliary had \$200.00 in the bank. When the war broke out, the young people who joined the army numbered thirty-eight. The church was renovated in 1945 by Architect Lockie Jonescu. The church had eighty members. In 1948, a meeting hall was built, attached to the parish hall on the west side of it. This building had originally been the parish house. On July 15, 1944 and July 18, 1950, Rev. Fr. Petru Tatoiu served the parish. In 1951 the parish council president was Vasile Dumba. In 1949, a young people's club was organized with Peter Duman (this name may be Duduman) as president and Stefan Gherasim as secretary.

Very Rev. Archimandrite Daniel Maxim was named by Bishop Policarp as administrator of the Regina District and was an itinerant priest from 1941 to 1945 for Flintoft, Regina, and Inglis, Manitoba and in 1946 for Calgary, Alberta, a distance of approximately nine-hours by car.

In the early fifties, Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim was attacked by a group of Andrei Moldovian supporters and thrown out of the church while attempting to serve the Holy Liturgy service. At this time there was great controversy within the Romanian Orthodox Church in America. One North American group wanted to elect their own Bishop; the other group, also North American, wanted to accept a Bishop from Communist Romania. The Church in Romania at that time was under the Communist regime. For the most part, the recent immigrants and the not-so-recent immigrants, who were personally knowledgeable of the political situation in Romania, were the ones who supported and elected Valerian D. Trifa as their Bishop. In Saskatchewan all kinds of inflammatory information were circulated against Bishop Valerian by the Andrei group. On July 8, 1952, after reviewing all the documentation, the American courts moved against Andrei Moldovian and his group who attempted to take over the Vatra. It was the Romanian immigrants in locations far away from the Vatra, like Dysart, who were misinformed by ill-intentioned supporters of Andrei. In 1953, the courts punished Archimandrite Daniel Maxim's assailants. Special merit was awarded to him by the Episcopate Council and the Vatra Congress in 1958. As a direct result of this political situation, many parishioners left the church and joined the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in Dysart.

About this time Marie Nistor was president of the ladies' auxiliary. The last entry on the Dysart records from Rev. Fr. Daniel Maxim was on November 3, 1963. At the July, 1967 Church Congress, Rev. Fr. Daniel was granted Honourary Life Membership in the Episcopate Council. He retired on December 31, 1968 after serving Saint George parish for 46 years. He died on May 25, 1978 at age 87 in a nursing home in Cupar. Funeral services were officiated by Archbishop Valerian with assistance from priests of the Western Canada Deanery at Saint George Cathedral in Regina. Following the service, his remains were driven to Dysart where a short religious service was officiated. Then the body was returned to Regina where it was buried in the old Regina cemetery. He was survived by a sister Expraxia, a nun in Varatic Monastery in Romania and his brother, Rev. Fr. Teofil, of Regina.

Rev. Fr. Peter Avram occasionally served the Dysart parish between 1952 and 1967. In 1953, the parish council president was Stefan Stan; parish secretary and choir director was Andrei Comanici; cantors were Andron Stan, Vasile Riche and Samuel German; ladies' auxiliary honourary president was Mrs. Eva Magda; president was Marie A. Nistor; secretary was Eliseveta Petraru; Sunday school teachers were Elisebeta Petraru, Elena Stan, Cecilia Sulea and Evelyn Costescu.

In 1958, the president of the parish council was Stefan Stan; the choir director was Andrie Comanici; the church school director was Elisabeta Petram and Elisabeta Galatiuk was a teacher. Bishop Valerian visited the parish May 13 and 14, 1958.

Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici served the parish in September and November, 1969. In 1974, Rev. Fr. Panteleimon Stanciu was the parish priest. Prior to this, in 1968, he served Dysart as a missionary priest sent by the Western Canada Missionary Centre. Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson and Rev. Fr. Brendan O'Keefe (November 2, 1968, April 20, 1969 and other dates) served under the same program. Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu also served the parish occasionally. From 1987 to the present, the parish priest was Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson. In November, 1998 he became Dean of Canada and earned the designation of Very Rev. Fr.

This parish was a small one with aging parishioners. Their services, for the most part were sporadic and, when they did, on occasion, have a permanent priest, they still opted for irregular services. On religious feast days and anniversaries, people who were born in Dysart or lived in the Dysart area, returned for the celebrations in great numbers. Celebrations usually last two or three days and always included church services with people participating as though they still lived in the area. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.



Saint Demetrios, Preeceville, Saskatchewan (1907)

This church was located in the Preeceville Rural Municipality, north and west of Lady Lake. There was a church, a belfry and a cemetery. Church services were generally performed by itinerant priests. The church was designated a heritage property on February 5, 1990. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada and is no longer listed in the Credinta Calendar.

The Romanian Orthodox Church in Rouleau, Saskatchewan (1907)

References were found in many documents about a parish in Rouleau, Saskatchewan. The exact location of the church was not recorded in any documents. This may have been a parish shared with the Russian community in the area which was still standing. There were still a few people with Romanian names living in this rural area.

A letter, dated July 20, 1908 from “a colony of Romanians in Canada” (sixteen signatures) who came to Canada from North Dakota was written to the Church in Romania and stipulated how these immigrants planned to pay their priest, Protosinghel Benedict Iliescu. The people who signed the letter were: Petre Avram, Petre Petrescul, Petre Vulturaru, Dumnitru Oglan, Ion Purcel, Nicolaiu Avram, Todor Purcel, Ion Stefan, Nicolaiu Vesel, Miron Donisan, Constantin Blazinki, Nicolaiu Lupu, Nicolaiu Mateiu, Ion Gavra, Todor Zobra and Avram Ciuta. All signatures appeared to be written by the same hand. To support the church, they planned to pay two acres of harvest per year. For a wedding they would pay three towels and three dollars plus two dollars which totals five dollars; for a burial of an adult they would pay five dollars; for the burial of a small child two dollars; for the baptism of a child one dollar; for a house blessing one dollar; to a woman for cleaning services twenty-five cents; and for insuring they would pay, the sixteen parishioners stated they would sign their names. Otherwise, this letter was not signed by the writer of the letter.

A letter was written to Metropolitan Partheni on October 3, 1908 asking that three trustees be named for “the church in Rouleau.” The three were Petre Avram, Petre Petrescul and Nicolai Avram. It was signed by Protosinghel Benedict Iliescu.

Another letter was written on the same date stating that the parishioners from Sawyer, North Dakota had all purchased land in Rouleau and wanted permission to take the Sawyer church apart, put it on a train and move it to Rouleau, Saskatchewan. This letter was also signed by Protosinghel Benedict Iliescu. The parish was about twenty miles south of Regina. The parishioners had received 10 acres of land for the church. Some remembered hearing that the church was taken down, board by board, and loaded on a train and taken to Kayville to build the church. Nothing was found to confirm that the church was dismantled, moved or rebuilt in another location.

Letters were written to Romania by people in Saskatchewan complaining about the conduct of Hieromonk Benedict Iliescu. On November 19, 1910, a letter was sent to the Minister in charge of parishes in Romania, signed by twenty-six members of the parish in support of Rev. Fr. Benedict. On December 14, 1910, the Minister confirmed that the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava had stripped Hieromonk Benedict of his priesthood because of his conduct, including marriage after priesthood. He was known to leave the Orthodox faith and become a Seven Day Adventist. Letters had been written to Romania both in praise and in criticism of his priestly behavior.

No actual record was found of a church in Rouleau although Protosinghel Benedict was known to have served in the area, including Kayville. Relatives of a few of the men listed were asked about this parish in Rouleau and none of them confirmed knowledge that such a parish ever existed there. However, some church services must have been held in the area; possibly in a Russian church. There were references to Romanians in Moose Jaw who wanted to start a parish. Moose Jaw is a very short distance from Rouleau as is Kayville. A parish in Moose Jaw was started many years later but no church was built.

Saints Peter and Paul, Kayville, Saskatchewan (1908)

Kayville is located southeast of Regina near Dahinda and Rouleau. It was in the centre of good farming country and near the Regina Plains. In 1907, this area of Saskatchewan became populated by immigrants from Ardeal and Bucovina because the area was good for growing grain. Some Romanian immigrants moved north from North Dakota in the United States because the cost of land was so reasonable. From the Dahinda-Rouleau area, some of these immigrants moved to Wood Mountain and others to Willow Bunch forming three Romanian groups in the area. Protosingel Benedict Iliescu came to the area from North Dakota bringing many Romanians with him. From the start, he created problems amongst the clergy and the Romanian immigrants. The metropolitan defrocked Hieromonk Benedict for many reasons. He left his parish in North Dakota without the permission of the metropolitan in Romania. He was a monk who married after ordination. He caused problems among the people, and his behaviour did not befit that of a monk. He was defrocked and declared unworthy of the priesthood. Although he was recalled to Romania, he did not return. Instead he created more controversy amongst the Romanian immigrants resulting in two opposing groups. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu was sent by the Metropolitan in Jassy on July 20, 1911 to replace Fr. Benedict. More controversy occurred. When Fr. Benedict was restricted legally from doing religious services, he could no longer achieve his purposes and left the Orthodox Church, joining the Seven Day Adventists. The two groups of Romanians, still in controversy, requested another priest from Romania. Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu, growing tired of the controversy, gave up his parish to the new priest, Rev. Fr. Aurel Reu, and moved to Lethbridge, Alberta.

The parishioners of the Saints Peter and Paul Romanian Orthodox Church in Kayville, Saskatchewan published a small history booklet on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. In 1907, the first parish council was formed during the time when Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu served the parish. In 1908, a group of 50 people, new immigrants to Canada, founded a church near Dahinda and Rouleau. The church building was too small and the structure was not very solid. It could not withstand high winds. In 1918, the people dismantled the church as well as they could and reconstructed it, making it more spacious with a solid structure. On July 20, 1919, the reconstructed church was blessed by Archimandrite Dionisie Nichifor. His third letter requesting approval from the Metropolitan in Romania for the construction of the church was dated 1919. At that date no reply was forthcoming. In 1924, the revised Julian or Gregorian Calendar was adopted by the Mother Church of Romania. A conflict arose amongst the members of Saints Peter and Paul parish as to which church calendar to follow, the Julian or the Gregorian. The people favoring the old calendar were planning to attend the Russian Church or build their own church which would use the Julian calendar. About 50 members of the parish who wanted to remain on the Julian Calendar left Saints Peter and Paul parish to start a new parish, Saint Mary's, also in Kayville.



Rev. Fr. Teofil Maxim came to Canada from Romania and served Saint Mary's on the Gregorian calendar. According to a letter written to Metropolitan Pimen in June, 1929, the use of the new Gregorian calendar resulted in a split between the parishioners. Rev. Fr. Simion Ivanoff served the people for 18 years and kept on the old Julian calendar. In 1928, the church was enlarged. In addition, priests who served Saints Peter and Paul on a temporary basis were: Rev. Dr. Lazar Gherman, Rev. Fr. Aurel Reu, Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica, Hieromonk Benedict Iliescu, Rev. Fr. Dumitru Erina, Rev. Fr. John Diachina, Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Gheorghiu and Rev. Fr. Pavel Vulcu. In 1936, the priest was Rev. Fr. Teodosie Scaletschi. In 1937, Fr. John Pescari served the parish. In 1941 Rev. Fr. Peter Avram served the Kayville parish. He joined Bishop Moldovian's jurisdiction on the death of Bishop Ioasoff. Later he served Saint Nicholas Church in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1950. Then from 1952 to 1968 he served Saint George parish in Regina, Saskatchewan. The church was removed from the farm near Dahinda to Kayville in 1947. In 1964, the church interior was lined with veneer pews, a Sunday School was started, the first children's vacation Bible Camp was started, chandeliers were added and a choir was started which sang liturgical responses in both Romanian and English.

According to Very Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu's short history of the parish, he was the first permanent priest of the parish, starting his service in 1962. Around 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba served the parish. In 1966 the parish was represented at the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America Church Congress by Constantin Giofu and Alexandru Suciu. On January 1, 1967 Rev. Fr. Avram resigned and continued to help with the administration of the unified parishes of Assiniboia and Flintoft, Saskatchewan. He died December 9, 1971. In 1972, the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu. Rev. Fr. George Sandulescu served the parish from 1985 to 1987. Archbishop Victorin officiated at the Hram of the church, assisted by Archimandrite Jerome Newville of Wisconsin and the pensioned priest Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu.

In 1984, Rev. Fr. Danut Cornel Suciu served the parish before leaving for Calgary. Rev. Fr. Diaconescu died. The parish is now occasionally served by priests who travel to the area. Although the parish did not have a full-time permanent priest, the church was well maintained and had occasional services. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the R.O.A.A.C. It was affiliated with the parish in Marcellin.

Saints Peter and Paul, Flintoft, Saskatchewan (1911)

This parish is under the jurisdiction of the R.O.E.A. It was situated in the Stonehenge Rural Municipality, south west of Lakenheath in an area known at that time as "Lynthorpe". In some histories the church was referred to as being the "Lakenheath Church" and in other histories it was reported as the "Limerick Church". It was designated a heritage property on January 14, 1991. There was a cemetery in the church yard.

Romanians began settling in this area around 1905. Archimandrite Dionisie Nichifor was an early priest. In 1910 he arrived in the Flintoft area from Romania at the age of 54. He served the parish between 1911 and 1928. On February 24, 1911, he obtained a homestead and, with the help of local pioneers, built a 24' by 30' rock house valued at \$1,000.00. The rock foundation of the house still stands south of the church. The church was founded and built in 1911 and one year later, the parish house was built. Nicholas Zora, a Romanian pioneer from the Zehner area, was credited with the donation of all the lumber to build the church and the bell tower. The iconostasis was said to originate in Mount Athos. Others said it came from Jerusalem. The church records made no mention of where it originated but it had the most beautiful and oldest painted iconostas in Canada. There were silver altar vessels. A parish house was built in 1912 and the parish hall was built in 1917 at a cost of \$7,000.00. In August of 1925 Rev. Fr. Nichifor was seriously hurt in an automobile accident, did not regain his health, sold his land and returned to Romania.

After Rev. Fr. Nichifor left for Romania, the records showed that Father Glicherie Morariu served the parish from 1929 to 1932.

As was the procedure, the priests sent reports to Romania on their duties and work in the "colony" of Canada. In Father Glicherie's letter of June 8, 1929, he listed his activities:

As soon as he arrived, he organized the parish.

He organized a Romanian school and named it "Metropolitan Pimen."

Recognizing the need to implant deep national ideals in the hearts of the parishioners, he organized a society for culture and education and called it "Metropolitan Pimen."

He organized a 3-voice church choir with thirty-eight members.

He took the initiative to have a "cafes" built for the choir, that is, a balcony, at the cost of \$231.00. It was built by Nick Moldoveanul.

He gave birth to an organization named "Wheatstone" which helped people who were sick and dying.

He bought a building in Flintoft at a cost of \$2,199.00 to be used as a place to perform stage productions, dances, et cetera for the young people and called it the Metropolitan Pimen Society for Young People.

Every month he had a "serbare" or festival with the children at which was collected \$403.00 for the purchase of furniture for the church school.

He received three sets of new vestments from the parishioners.

He received altar vessels from parishioners' donations.

A parishioner repaired the church himself and donated all the materials.

He convinced the parish to build a parish house at the cost of \$4,000.00. When it was finished, the title was to be transferred to the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava.

He started a ladies' auxiliary and called it "The Association of Ladies' of Saints Peter and Paul." There were seventy-five members and they had a fund of \$409.00. It was organized in 1929.

He convinced the people to buy a "biblioteca" (a library). In his letter, Father Glicherie wrote that he hoped that eventually the people would build a brick church.

In a letter to Romania in 1929, members of the parish complained about Rev. Fr. Morariu's behaviour in the community. They asked the metropolitan to do something about him.

In October, 1929, the parish house was built. Eight members of the parish guaranteed a bank loan of \$1,300 to pay for the house. By April, 1934, they could no longer pay down the loan because the farmers had suffered financial losses due to the depression. The bank wrote letters to the Episcopate in the United States to guarantee the loan and discovered that the property was owned by the Metropolitanate of Romania. This information concerned the Episcopate that the titles of all church properties in Canada could show ownership by the Metropolitan of Romania but should show ownership by the parishioners in each community. As a result of this, action was taken to rectify the situation for all churches in Canada as well as in the United States of America.

Father Glicherie sent a letter dated July 7, 1929, to the metropolitan, requesting a salary of at least \$50.00 a month and some payment for the church school he started because of the lack of financial support from the farmers who were experiencing hard times in getting a crop during the depression. He wrote that Father Nichifor did not need money because he had his own land which he farmed and could supplement his income as a priest. Because of the drought, Father Glicherie could not find work as a farm hand. At this time a parish house was built in Flintoft. In December, 1929, the parish councilmembers signed a letter addressed to Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava, thanking him for sending them a good priest and looking after them so well. Some of the signatures were: Stefan Radu, Cristache Adamache, C. Jonescu, Nick Moldoveanu, Tamandei Adamache, Ion Ardelean, Ion Meldade, Alecse Haisuc, Gheorghe Niculescu, Ioan Donison, Petria Monteanu, Ioan Niculescu. Three other names were unreadable. The spelling of other names differed from the spelling of names previously listed. From 1925 to 1931, Rev. Fr. Marin R. Postelnic, while serving Saint George, Regina Saskatchewan, served Flintoft occasionally. He served Hamilton, Ontario between 1931 and 1933. Between 1933 and 1948 he served Windsor, Ontario. He died December 16, 1989 at the age of 93.

In 1929, the church was painted on the outside and a parish house was built. Hieromonk Teofil Maxim served Flintoft from 1932 to 1937 or 1939.

Father Ghenadie Gheorghiu served Saint George, Regina, Canora, Kayville and Flintoft between 1933 and 1935. He died suddenly in 1939. This period was known as "the dirty thirties" when, because of the drought, crops failed and there was danger of losing the parish house because of failure to meet bank payments.

Rev. Fr. Teodose Scaletschi served Kayville from 1934 to 1936 and Flintoft in 1938. It was during this time that arrangements were made to pay the mortgage of the parish house. A memorable event for the church

was when His Grace Bishop Policarp Morusca visited the parish on June 29, 1936 and, along with assisting priests, consecrated the church.

In the 1938 and the 1943, SOLIA Calendar it was reported that there were 79 members, 60 families and 250 "souls". The affiliated church was "Inaltarea Domnului" in Elm Spring. The parish had a parish house but there was no parish priest.

In 1944, the church required painting on the inside. The administrator of the parish was Archimandrite Daniel Maxim. He also served the parish between 1941 and 1945 and on other occasions. The parish council president was Cristache Adamache; the secretary of the parish was Gavril Oancea; members of the counsel were Nicolai Moldovian, George Gradinar, Sava Boghean, Radu Adamache, Pavel Clementi and Sarbu Strugaru. The ladies' auxiliary began in 1928 and in 1944 had twenty-six members with president Maria Dobrescu and \$150 in the bank account. The Romanians invested \$550 in War Bonds and they had seventy young people in the army. In 1945, the ladies' auxiliary had forty members. The Romanians had invested \$20,000.00 in War Bonds. There were 100 members in the parish.

Between 1944 and 1949, Rev. Fr. Iordache Ion Oncescu was permitted to serve Saints Peter and Paul, Flintoft, Saskatchewan, on condition that he serve only this parish. He attempted to take over Elm Spring and Wood Mountain from Rev. Fr. D. Eiskep and succeeded in doing this in the spring of 1950. He died November 21, 1988.

From 1956 to 1958, Rev. Fr. John Dinu served the parish. He became a Canadian citizen in 1953. He married Evelina Muntean in 1953. He was ordained a deacon and became a priest on September 16, 1956. He was assigned as parish priest for Flintoft. During this time, the parishioners built a church in Assiniboia. The 1958 SOLIA Calendar listed an A.R.O.Y. chapter with its president Isaia Cristo. On May 10, 1958, Bishop Valerian visited the parish. In 1958 Rev. Fr. Dinu left the Flintoft parish for Saint Mary parish in Chicago. He became the administrative dean of the Chicago Deanery. From 1960 to 1961 the Flintoft parish was vacant. The 1961 SOLIA Calendar reported that, after the unification of the Flintoft and Assiniboia parishes, the parish house was moved to Assiniboia as a residence for the priest. Adjacent to the Flintoft church there was a parish hall which accommodated about 150 people.

Rev. Fr. Virgil Parvanescu served Flintoft and then Assiniboia from 1960 to 1967. On April 7, 1964, Rev. Fr. John Toconita, secretary-treasurer of the Vatra, served at the union of the Assiniboia/Flintoft parishes.

In 1931, Rev. Fr. John Pescari served Saint George in Windsor, Ontario; 1934 Timmins Ontario; 1937 Kayville, Saskatchewan; 1941 Descent, of the Holy Spirit in Windsor, Ontario; 1945 in Hamilton, Ontario; 1938, 1939 and 1950 to 1956 in Flintoft, Saskatchewan and in 1956 he retired. In 1968 he died in Windsor, Ontario and was buried at the Vatra. In 1953 the parish council president was George Bumbac, the secretary was Vasile Deminchuk, the choir director was Chris Adamachi.

Rev. Fr. Shunda served Assiniboia/Flintoft for three months in 1963 then he was suspended on May 16, 1963 because he divorced his wife and married again after he entered priesthood. Fr. Peter Avram helped with the administration of the parish in January, 1967.

Rev. Fr. Constantin Tofan, while serving Saint Nicholas Church in Regina, provided services for the combined parishes of Assiniboia and Flintoft in 1964.

After the departure of Rev. Fr. Tofan, Rev. Fr. Gratian Radu, served the parish from 1966 to 1967 when he resigned from the Assiniboia/Flintoft parishes to serve Saint Nicholas, Regina, Saskatchewan. He died on December 1, 1979 at the Vatra where he lived his last days.

In 1968, the Western Canada Deanery was formed. Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson served Flintoft and Assiniboia from 1971 to 1973. Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane served in 1973 as a missionary priest for the Western Canada Missionary Centre serving this parish occasionally.

Rev. Fr. Pantaleimon Stanciu served Flintoft occasionally as a missionary priest in 1970 through the Western Canada Missionary Centre.

Bishop Valerian D. Trifa visited the parish and, seeing the church's deteriorated condition, encouraged the parishioners to do something to preserve its natural beauty and its valuable iconostasis. In the fall of 1977, six members of the parish volunteered to collect pledges for the restoration. This committee included John Jonescu, Trian Lascu, Dan Stoian, Nick Stoian, Nick Topola and Steve Kostie. On August 9, 1979, the stone altar table was demolished because it could not be lifted or moved. The furnace and the brick chimney also had to be dismantled and the cement steps had to be moved. The heavy marble slab and the antimens had to be preserved. The church was then lifted and moved beside the cemetery. All this was accomplished with the blessings of Bishop Valerian. In November, 1979, the church was moved back on a new cement slab foundation, built on the original site of the church. The interior of the church was cleaned and restored including the frames of the iconostasis which were painted with gold leaf. The bell tower, approximately fifty feet from the church, was also lifted and moved on to a new foundation. The exterior and interior were also restored; it was kept as close to the original as possible. New sidewalks and outdoor washrooms were built. The original bell was mounted outside the church. Power was installed. On June 28, 1981, the church was re-consecrated by His Grace Bishop Nathaniel Popp.

Rev. Fr. George Treff also served the combined Assiniboia/Flintoft parishes occasionally between 1979 and 1982 during the time he was serving the Saint George parish in Regina.

The first parish priest to serve the combined parishes of Assiniboia and Flintoft permanently after the departure of Rev. Fr. John Dinu was Rev. Fr. Sorin Eugen Lanescu. Rev. Fr. Lanescu was educated in Bucharest, received a scholarship from the Vatican to study in Ireland, and immigrated to Canada in 1983. He worked in the office of the Romanian Patriarchate before leaving for Ireland. While working out of the Romanian Orthodox Christian Missionary Centre at Fort Qu'Appelle he was assigned for service to the Assiniboia and Flintoft parishes. He served the parish as their permanent priest from 1985 to 1989. He resigned to further his studies in Toronto on an approved leave of absence. Father Sorin legally changed his name to Stuart Larsen.

He was followed into the parish by Rev. Fr. Peter SanFilippo who was accepted by the R.O.E.A. in 1989. He served Flintoft from 1988 to 1990. On April 30, 1990 he was released from Assiniboia/Flintoft at his own request. He was followed in 1990 by Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu. In 1998, he was released by his own request to serve a different jurisdiction. Since that time the parishes were without a permanent parish priest and were under the administration of Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson, the Dean of Canada. The parish was vacant and was served by visiting priests.

Flintoft, at one time, was a town with a general store, a hotel, a filling station, a grain elevator and residences. The church was located about two and a half miles north of town. The town no longer exists. The church was declared a heritage site and is well-maintained by the parishioners.

Saint Mary, Hairy Hill, Alberta (1911)



In an article, written by Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciu and published in the 1974 *Credinta* (pp. 105-197), the details resulting in the building of a new church in Hairy Hill, only three miles away from Boian, were related. In the years between 1905 and 1908, there was a dire scarcity of Romanian priests in Canada as well as in the Boian area. The Russian priests were plentiful, resulting in a Russian priest celebrating the Divine Liturgy in Saint Mary's Church in the Russian language. In 1908, a priest who was sent from Romania to serve the parishes in Saskatchewan was invited to Alberta to serve the Boian parish. In a letter dated in 1908, Rev. Fr. Benedict Iliescu wrote to the metropolitan that he was invited by a group of Romanians to visit them in Whitford, Alberta. Whitford is no longer on the map. He served the parish in the Romanian language performing as many sacraments as were requested, including baptisms, marriages, hearing confessions and offering communion.

The Russians in this area wanted the services to be performed in Russian. Because of strong language differences between members from the two ethnic groups, the Russian members and the Romanian members, there was a split which was taken before the Court. The Boian church was legally given to the Russian majority, even though it was built by the Romanians. Because the church in Boian was registered under the jurisdiction of a Russian bishop, they wanted a truly Romanian church. The Romanians hoped

that the court decision would be reversed. It was not. Three years, after sending a letter to Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu who lived in Regina, relating the loss of their church to the Russians, on February 13, 1911 he wrote to them, recommending they build their own church. The Romanians in the area decided to build a new church in Hairy Hill five miles away.

In 1911, a small group of fifteen people met in the home of Vasile Moroz and elected him as president of the new parish, Saint Mary's. Also elected were: Vasile D. Toma, vice-president; Teodor Chelba and Petru Bandur as controllers; Lazar Nichiforiac as secretary. The church was built on a small parcel of land which the president donated. It was 36 feet long and 24 feet wide. It was consecrated in a true Romanian Orthodox manner by Rev. Fr. Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu on August 11, 1914. The church was served, in 1913, by Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica who also served Hamlin, Alberta. In 1914, they were served by Rev. Fr. Silvestru Ionescu. Services were held occasionally when a priest was available and at least once a year, usually around the Paschal church celebrations.

In 1919 the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Dimitrie lastremski. In 1921, the Russian Revolution had just taken place and the Ukrainians were organizing themselves nationally. Rev. Fr. Dr. Lazar Gherman, who had his education in Theology in the University of Cemauti in Bucovina, served them until 1923. Dr. Gherman guided and advised Dumitru Feica to enter the priesthood. Rev. Fr. Dumitru Feica was ordained in Saint Mary's Church in Hairy Hill by a Syrian Bishop.

In 1924, after petitioning the Russian Bishop in Winnipeg about the situation in Boian and in Hairy Hill, he sent Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan to serve them. Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan was ordained in 1924 for a parish in Boian, Alberta where he served from 1924 to 1929. The Russians had to accept him because he was sent to them by their own Bishop. The Romanians now saw themselves as in charge of their own two churches. He also served Hairy Hill and surrounding parishes from 1932 to 1937 and then went to serve parishes in Hamilton, Ontario and the United States of America.



In 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca served the parish on July 6. In 1936 it was also reported that Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan served four parishes: Sf. Dumitru in Boian, Nasterea Maicii Domnului in Hairy Hill, Inaltarea Sf. Cruce in Shepence and Pogorirea Duhului Sfant, in Hamlin, all in Alberta. It was reported that the Russians from Edmonton took over the Boian and Hairy Hill parishes. When a priest was available, the priest served the two parishes equally. Father Cohan died in 1972 and was buried in Detroit. In 1930, Rev. Fr. Vasile Baleca served the parishes. As reported in the 1939 SOLIA Calendar there were 10 members, 20 families and 113 "souls".

From 1939 to 1940, Rev. Fr. Grigore Coste (Grigoriu Costea) was the parish priest, also serving the neighboring parishes. The 1944 SOLLA Calendar reported that the parish had 60 members, 137 families and 663 "souls". The ladies' auxiliary was called Sf. Maria; the name of the choir was "Dulce Bucovina" and the youth group was named "Fm Romaniei". The parish also had a church hall.

In 1944 Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma served Hairy Hill and the neighboring parishes and intermittently until 1967. Rev. Fr. Eugen Banciu served the parish from 1954 to 1956. Rev. Fr. Onofreiu Iwaniuk served Boian in 1949. In 1951, the parish administrator was Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma. The Cantor was John Cuciurean.

Rev. Fr. Stephen Feica served Saint Mary's and neighboring parishes between 1952 and 1956 and then went to the United States of America. He died in Alberta on April 11, 1996. The Credinta Calendar of 1974 showed Rev. Fr. Samolia Iuga served the parish between 1954 and 1957. He died in Brazilia on June 17, 1989.

Patterson (p.72) noted that the parish was rebuilt in 1954, two miles to the south. He also noted that parishes were founded at Malin (Ispas) and Hamlin.

Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba came to Canada in 1953. Between 1953 and 1963, Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba served the parish. It was also reported that between 1958 and 1972 the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu. Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciu served the parish in 1969. In 1990, when he retired, the parish was served by Rev. Fr. George Bazgan who was the priest serving the Edmonton parish.

Among the old-timers who were on the membership list and who were later ordained and served the parish were Vasile Toma and Dumitru Feica.

The parishes of Saint Mary, Boian and Saint Mary, Hairy Hill are now one. Saint Mary, Hairy Hill has services on its Patron Saint day and on the Blessing of the Graves. On July 21, 1973, Archbishop Victorin and the clergy and delegates to the 42nd Annual Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada visited and a prayer service was said for the pioneers interred in the cemetery in the churchyard. This was a very small parish and only had occasional church services.

Holy Cross, Shepence Alberta (1912)

A number of Romanian families living east of the Boian church decided to build a small church in their own district. "Two acres of land were donated by Nicolae Cuciurean. All labour was voluntary. The church was registered in April, 1914. The first president was Toder Nickiforeak. From 1933 to 1937, Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan served the parish. On July 7, 1936, Bishop Policarp Morusca served in Shepence as reported in the 1936 SOLIA. The 1939 SOLIA reported that Rev. Fr. Grigore Coste was the parish priest with 4 members, 6 families and 40 "souls". In 1945 it was reported there were 8 members, 8 families and 50 "souls". Between

1953 and 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba may have served the parish. Rev. Fr. Vasile -Toma served the parish occasionally between 1950 and 1970. In 1972 the parish priest office was vacant. In 1984, a few volunteers upgraded the building and the church was rededicated in June of that year. This parish is no longer listed in the Credinta Calendar.

Holy Trinity, Montreal, Quebec (1912 to 1913)

This was reportedly the first Romanian Orthodox parish in Montreal. It was located in the western part of Montreal. No church history was located.

Annunciation (Buna Vestire), Montreal, Quebec (1912 built in 1918)

Romanians settled in the Montreal area in the late 1800's. One of the first parishes in Eastern Canada was in Montreal in the province of Quebec. The "Buna Vestire" parish existed in 1912 and the parishioners built their church in 1918. Most of the founders were from Bucovina, an area in Romania where the Orthodox faith was strong. They named their church "Buna Vestire" which is "Good News" or "Annunciation". Priests coming to Canada from Romania usually stopped in Montreal and performed a few religious services before moving to Western Canada where the Romanian settlers settled in large numbers. Most of the parishes were established by the pious faithful who understood that there could be no service without a priest and no priest without a bishop. Thus, most Romanian Orthodox parishes in Canada were, through the presence of their priests, under the Metropolitan of Jassy, although the Buna Vestire parish was under the Metropolitan of Cernauti. There had been an agreement by the Metropolitans of Cernauti, Jassy and Sibiu, that the new bishop, Policarp Morusca, born in 1883 and consecrated Bishop in 1935, would be proclaimed as Bishop in North America. As the canonical hierarch for all Romanian Orthodox in North and South America, all parishes were under his care or jurisdiction (omoforion). The Romanian Orthodox parishes formed into a deanery and in time the Episcopate with its first bishop, Policarp Morusca, who recognized the role of the laity and their involvement in the administration of parishes. From August 8 to 14, 1935, Bishop Policarp Morusca visited Buna Vestire as part of his earliest pastoral journey across North America to pray with his flock. In the 1936 edition of the Calendarul SOLIA, Bishop Policarp included the name of all the parishes existing as under his pastoral care. Among those listed was the name of "Buna Vestire," Montreal.

During his short pastorate in North America, Bishop Policarp was under constant fire from various groups. The commemoration of the Metropolitan of Cernauti, Nectarie Cotlarciuc re-emerged in the Buna Vestire parish and in time the name of his successor, Metropolitan Visarion Puiu was raised. Soon after the communist takeover in Romania, Metropolitan Puiu founded the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Western Europe with its seat in Paris, France, and the Buna Vestire parish remained faithful to him. This new diocese was canonically affiliated, from its very beginnings, with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (Synod Abroad), which itself was instituted soon after the 1917 communist takeover in Russia. The Buna Vestire parish remained officially aside from the dispute between the two Romanian dioceses in North America, although it shared the goals and aspirations of the Vatra Romaneasca parishes and communities. The hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia let the Romanian parishes use their own language and allowed the use of the Gregorian Calendar instead of the Julian. This affiliation lasted until

1998 when, with the support of the parish councils and by mutual consent, the Buna Vestire parish, along with the European parishes of the Puiu Diocese found itself no longer under the coverage of the Russian Synodal Church. Led by the Very Rev. Dr. Petre Popescu, the European and Montreal parishes began a search for appropriate canonical coverage, which led to the clergy of Buna Vestire seeking canonical acceptance by the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. This was granted in May, 2000.

A history of the parish reports that its first parish council president was Stefan Cabba and the first parish priest was Rev. Fr. Gherasim Luca which was also reported in the 1925 America. In 1925, the parish priest was Rev. Fr. Ermogen Ionescu. Other members on the parish council included: Vasilie Rotary, A. Florea, Stefan Sutu, V. Costeniuc, V. Pesacari, G. Popp, A. Boicu, N. Plopian, I. Smantaica, V. Taboaica, Gheorghe Cuciurean, G. Seiniuc, M. Burac, N. Voronca, N. Tadasca and others. The president of the ladies' auxiliary was Eugenia Stanut. In the 1936 SOLLA Calendar there was a picture of the choir and the ladies' auxiliary. Rev. Fr. Luca served the parish, followed by Rev. Fr. Ilarion Vaje. In 1935, Rev. Fr. Irimie Delea was the third parish priest. Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu, the fourth parish priest, served in Montreal between December 5, 1915 and 1922. He was a protosinghel. He was followed by Rev. Fr. Dorofteiu (Dosoftei) Constantinescu in 1924 who was the fifth parish priest. The church building was rebuilt in 1918 and consecrated in July of 1919 under the presidency of Vasile Rotari and the priest Dorofteiu Constantinescu. The church was built at a cost of \$35,000.00. Rev. Fr. Valeriu Moglan and Rev. Fr. Epaminoda Chryssolor also served as priests for the parish. It was reported that the largest membership was 250 but in 1925 membership had shrunk to 125.

Rev. Fr. Glicherie Moraru served in Montreal between 1930 and 1933 and again from 1935 to 1938. He was a missionary priest for vacant parishes. The president of the parish council was Dumitru Stanut and the secretary was Nicolae Voronca.

Rev. Fr. Ioan Spariosu served the Annunciation parish, Montreal in 1933. He also served Saint Mary's Russian Church in Montreal and the following year in the Resurrection Church in Hamilton, Ontario.

In 1944 the parish had 150 members, 157 families and 698 souls. The youth club was called "A.T.R.C. Cultul Patriei" They had a social club called "Caritatea" and a parochial school called "Patriarh Miron". They also had a parish hall. Rev. Fr. Ilie Jida served the Montreal parish for a time as the sixth parish priest. He was ordained in New York. He died on April 11, 1927.

The 1939 SOLIA Calendar reported that the parish priest was Rev. Fr. Constantin Juga who was born on May 11, 1913 and ordained in 1938 for the Montreal parish. He was in Montreal from 1938 to 1940 and again between 1945 and 1949. Rev. Fr. John Oncescu was also a parish priest around this time. In the 1943 SOLIA it was reported that the president of the parish council was Ananie Boicu; secretary, Teofil Bucu; cantors Victor Romascan and Costan Doroftei and choir conductor Aurel Catarau. The parish was vacant in 1951. Most of the Romanians living in Montreal arrived after the World War II.

Ilarie Moloci may have served in Montreal. No other information about him is available.

Rev. Fr. Petre Popescu was born on May 17, 1917, ordained on June 10, 1951 and since 1951 served in Annunciation Church in Montreal. In 1950, the president of the parish council was Alexandru Gramada. The president of the ladies' auxiliary was L. Gafencu. The choir director was A. Catarau. After the arrival of Rev. Fr. Petre Popescu, the parishioners were assured of continuing services of a priest for their parish. After a few years they formed a group under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Romania. The old group remained

and they built a new church in the Orthodox style “with splendid decorated interior”. This remained under the jurisdiction of the Russian Bishop Teofil Jonescu and presided over by Archbishop Filaret. Rev. Fr. Constantin Ciubotariu was the assistant priest.

At the beginning of the 1960's, the structure of the church building was not deemed “resistant” enough and the church itself was too small for the growing Romanian community. Repairs to the old church were too expensive so a new church was built on Christophe Columbus Avenue. The building of the new Romanian Hall and parish house ended in 1981. His Grace, Bishop Nathaniel Popp of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America visited the parish in 1977 along with two of his Canadian priests, Rev. Fr. Nicolai Zelea and Rev. Fr. Nicolae Tanase. Archbishop Nathaniel visited the parish again on May 25, 1999. On June 29, 2001, in the presence of Very Rev. Fr. Constantin Tofan and by the vote of the parishioners, the parish was placed under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The parish priest at that time was Very Rev. Dr. Petre Popescu, the parish president was Victor Rosco and the vice-president was Constantin Sandalovschi. In 2002, the assistant priest was Rev. Fr. Ion Codrut. On March 1, 2003, Rev. Fr. Dr. Nicolae Stoleru became the parish priest.

Holy Transfiguration, Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan (1913 to 1920)

Wood Mountain is approximately thirty-five miles south-west of Assiniboia and about fifteen miles from Flintoft. One source indicated that the Holy Transfiguration church building was erected in 1929 by a Romanian immigrant carpenter named Petrescu. The Romanian immigrants were mainly from Bucovina and Dobrodgea. Correspondence dated October 15, 1909 was sent to the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava which referred to the need for a priest for Wood Mountain. It stated that the people had sufficient budget to pay a priest. The next information found was that, in 1913, Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu served the Dysart and Wood Mountain parishes. Some research also showed Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu served around this time. Information from an undated letter to Metropolitan Pimen informed him of an accident suffered by Archimandrite Dionise Nichofor in the month of August 1925 which disabled him from performing religious services. It also included the information that Marin Postelnic was ordained as a priest by a Russian bishop and requested that he not be accepted as a priest because he was “fara carte”, that is, he had no theological training. From 1928 to 1930, Rev. Fr. Glicherie Moraru served the parish. According to a letter written to the Church in Romania, there was some dissatisfaction among some of the parishioners with the services provided by him. Rev. Fr. Dumitru Erina (Irina) became a priest in 1932. He was reported to have served the parish in Wood Mountain in 1942. In 1951 the office of parish priest was vacant.

In 1960, the Wood Mountain ladies' auxiliary was organized with seven members representing forty people. Its president was E. Marcenko. They had a choir with eight members.

In 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba served the parish occasionally. Around 1960, the parish was represented at the Church Congress by Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu, Andrei Bizovi and John Aldea. From 1963 to 1972, Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu served the parish. From 1985 to 1987, the priest serving the parish was Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Sandulescu with the second priest listed as the Very Rev. Fr. Iordache Oncescu. The parish council president was George Ciocia and the cantor was Donald Punga.

This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Saint George, Regina, Saskatchewan (1914)

When the parish of Saint Nicholas became too small to accommodate all the Romanians in the city, and some members were of differing opinions of how things should be done in the parish, a second parish was established. During Rev. Fr. Silvester Ionescu's stay in Regina, Saint George Church was built. Saint George church was founded and built in 1914 under the leadership of Mr. Ganciu (Gancheff) on property donated by John Tarcea. In the beginning, one committee was elected to administer both of the Regina parishes.

Because there was a scarcity of priests, the priest who served a Regina parish, served all the Orthodox churches in the area. The following priests served Saint George parish: Archimandrite Silvestru Ionesecu, Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu who served after 1914 and before 1920. Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica probably served around 1919.

From 1921 to 1923, Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa served the Saint George parish in Regina, Saint Nicholas parish in Regina and Saint George parish in Dysart. It was reported that he decided to have a service once a month in Romanian (at that time the Holy Liturgy services were almost always in Romanian.) From 1923 to 1924 he served in Windsor, Ontario, and then returned to the Lennard, Manitoba and surrounding area where a ladies' auxiliary was organized and called "Buna Vestire" as reported in SOLIA 1944. Rev. Fr. Glicherie served Lennard and Shell Valley until 1958. He died in Lennard, Manitoba in 1958 on February 28.

The original wooden George church which was built on the present site was remodelled in 1928, after a fire destroyed part of the building. The church was remodelled with painted tin squares which was the fashion at that time. It was reopened on June 11, 1928. During the period 1925 to 1931 Rev. Fr. Marin Postelnic was the parish priest. From 1925 to 1931, Rev. Fr. Postelnic served Saint George parish in Regina, and Saints Peter and Paul in Flintoft occasionally. He then moved to Hamilton, Ontario and Windsor, Ontario and lived there until retirement. He died on December 16, 1989 at age of 93.

From 1923 to 1924, Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu served the parish, from 1930 to 1933 by Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan, in 1933 to 1935 by Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu, in 1952 by Rev. Fr. Simeon Ivanoff. The 1939 SOLIA Calendar reported that there were 140 members and 86 families with 600 "souls" and that the parish was vacant. In 1944 the parish was vacant. The decision was made in 1952 to raise money to build a larger church which would meet the needs of the parishioners. The number of members was steadily increasing. The church owned a parish house and a cultural place. There were twenty-four young Romanian men in Regina who entered the armed services. Three were known to be killed in action. Saint George Church Ladies' Auxiliary was formed in 1951. Rev. Fr. Petru Avram served Saint George's from 1952 to 1968. Rev. Fr. Avram resigned on January 1, 1967. The new and larger church was rebuilt in 1968. At different times the parish was independent; for a short time, it was under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church of America; then under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. On August 26, 1956, the parish was visited by Bishop Andrei Moldovian; present also were Rev. Frs. Iordache Oncescu, Petru Avram and Simion Ivanoff and Rev. Fr. Pavel Vulcu of Kayville, Saskatchewan. From May 17 to 18, 1958, Bishop Valerian D. Trifa of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America visited the parish. The necessary fund-raising for the new church was started April 27, 1959, with an "Every Member Canvass" plan, and construction of the new church began in July, 1959. It continued as a "winter works project". The reason for using this project was that it was designed to reduce the cost of construction over the winter months. Many still remember the early stages of construction, when services were held in the basement, cold and wet, and how crowded it was for the Christmas worship service in December, 1959. The church was completed in 1960 at a cost of \$189,420.43. The architect of the church was D. H. Stock of Regina. The

seating capacity was 400. The iconostasis was painted by Bartashuk of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The parish hall was located in the basement of the church and seated 220. The new parish house was built in 1971 at a cost of \$20,000. Two-thirds of the cost was collected from members and a loan of \$75,000 was taken from the bank. After the fund-raising project was completed, a greater effort was made to raise money to pay the balance owing, and with the dedication and co-operation of the parishioners and friends, and the special events, such as a \$50.00 per plate dinner on May 10, 1963, it was possible to "burn the mortgage" within three years, in August, 1963.

As Canadians of Romanian origin, most "of the people of the parish were born in Canada or had immigrated to Canada before the two world wars; they were unable, naturally, to understand the entire situation of the Romanian Patriarchate after the war, now in a Communist Block country. After a period of time, it became clear to the members of the church that they had to belong to a jurisdiction which was not under the rule of a Patriarch controlled by an atheist government. Thus, after the death of Bishop Andrei Moldovian, it was decided at a Special General Meeting of the parishioners on July 19, 1964, to apply for acceptance under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The acceptance was, without a doubt, one of the happiest times in the life of the parish, and was celebrated on August 9, 1964, with a special service celebrated by Bishop Valerian Trifa, the parish priest Rev. Fr. Peter Avrarn, and Vicar, Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici, as well as other local and visiting priests. A festive banquet and program followed in the Romanian Club Ballroom. It was a joyous event of Christian unity and brotherly love.

Over the years different organizations within the church were established. The Ladies' Auxiliary of Saint George was founded September 16, 1951. In the following years the Ladies' Auxiliary played a very important role in the life and growth of the parish. The auxiliary initiated the Food Booth at the Annual Regina Exhibition in 1955, which was operated by the parish members. The proceeds benefitted the auxiliary and the parish. Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici served the parish from 1967 to 1982.

The Orthodox Christian Education Association was organized in 1970 by members of Saint George Parish. Its founders were Rev. Fr. Brendan O'Keefe, Virginia Scott and Larry Lascue. The purpose of the organization was to propagate Orthodox Christian education and fellowship. It financially assisted the Sunday church school and religious summer camps. It laid the groundwork for the founding of the Orthodox Brotherhood of Canada in 1975.

Rev. Fr. Deacon Daniel Nenson served as deacon at Saint George church from 1970 to 1971. The Saint George Ladies' Auxiliary joined A.R.F.O.R.A. (the Association of Romanian Orthodox Ladies' Auxiliaries of North America) in 1968, and was the first and only Canadian ladies' auxiliary to host an A.R.F.O.R.A. Congress. This event was held in June 1970. They hosted the second Canadian Congress in 1989.

One of the special projects of the auxiliary was their cookbook, "Romanian Way of Cooking". This sold well and was a good money-maker. The auxiliary contributed greatly over the years in support of their church and other activities. A substantial contribution was given to the original construction of the parish house and its furnishings, as well as its renovations and refurbishing from 1987 to 1988. The ladies' contributed on an on-going basis for the maintenance and beautification of the church. They supported local and other charities, as well as the activities of the Episcopate.

Other organizations, unfortunately short-lived, were the Teen-Age Club of girls which was organized in the late "50's" and, under the guidance and instruction of the ladies' auxiliary. The girls were taught useful home arts. CEROY, a group of teen girls and boys was organized in 1969. These young people were involved

in various activities in the parish and did very well in two major fund-raising events. Their participation in the 1969 Saskatchewan Wheat Contest resulted in their candidate coming in second, as Lady-in-Waiting to the "Wheat Queen". Unfortunately, this organization only lasted a short time. Soon after the building of the new church, with more room available, a church school was started and in spite of the lack of teaching material, became quite successful. The use of more English during the Divine Liturgy was crucial in preserving young families in the church school and in the church.

From 1979 to 1982, Rev. Fr. George Treff was the assistant priest for the Saint George parish in Regina. He was assigned parish priest March 1 1982 to 1987; he also served the combined Assiniboia/Flintoft parish occasionally.

A revival and strengthening of the church school, through careful planning, took place through the efforts of Rev. Fr. George Treff and Preoteasa Paula Treff, during the late seventies and the early eighties. More young families were brought into the church and more children into the church school. More dedicated people were found to teach and to help in any way needed. The religious education of the children became a major priority of the parish council and the entire parish.

Another group within the parish was the church choir. Although one form or another of group singing existed all the time, a well-established form of the choir started in 1964. At that time there were approximately forty choir members. The main highlight for the choir was the trip to the Vatra Romaneasca in Jackson, Michigan, in 1967, when the choir gave the responses at the Divine Liturgy and also presented a program there. The choir was invited to participate in the 1970 Manitoba Centennial Celebration and went to Winnipeg in the fall of 1970 to celebrate the special occasion of the consecration of the new church with the Patron of Saint George.

Throughout the years many people contributed with their sacrifices to the founding and growth of this parish. Often, during the Divine Liturgy, prayers were said for the founders, the members, supporters, and benefactors of this holy place.

Rev. Fr. Danut Cornel Suci served the Kayville parishes of Saint Mary and Sts. Peter and Paul before moving to Calgary. He served Saint Mary parish in Calgary between 1985 and 1988 and served Saint George, Regina from 1988 to 1993 when he was released from Saint George, Regina and from the Orthodox Church of America.

The following article was written on June 11, 1989, on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of Saint George parish by Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici.

It is indeed a time of great joy and celebration—75 years of Religious and Historical existence on the North American Continent—75 years of spiritual work and dedication to the word of God.

I can't help but compare you (who are the true body and soul of Saint George Cathedral) with a mustard seed planted in a man's garden. 'It grew, became a tree, and the birds of the air perched on its branches.' Truly, this 'mustard seed' was planted with a lot of sacrifice and perseverance by the Romanian pioneers who felt in their hearts the need for a spiritual ground where they could pray and give thanks to God. Our majestic Saint George Cathedral is the result of this vision.

...To yesterday's generation, I know God has given you peace and the most precious gift of all, Eternal Life. To the young and old of today, try to match their 'Footprints' on this world so that you too may someday

shine like stars in the spiritual Universe as you hold out the word of life. Remember, the church has no grave. Kept by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, it is indestructible. No power, whether human or demonic, is able to prevail against it. Yes, the Church is alive and well and will always be I like to conclude with this anonymous poem:

O where are the Kings and Empires now of old that went and came?

But Lord, thy church is praying yet. A Thousand years the same.

May God bless you with His rich gifts.

Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici served as Dean of Western Canada from 1979 to 1989. He died January 20, 1994.

Rev. Fr. John Mancantelli served Saint George parish from 1994 to December, 2003. Then, for more than a year, V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Nenson served the parish on a temporary basis. Rev. Fr. Cosmin Sicoe arrived from Romania in April, 2005, to serve the parish.

This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America from July 19, 1964.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit, Desyarleis, Alberta (1914)

Not much is known about this parish. It was mainly served by itinerant priests. Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma was ordained in 1944 and served the parish occasionally from 1944 to 1970 and later. In 1945 there were eight members, eight families and fifty-nine “souls”. The parish council president was Nicolae Cojocar. The parish was vacant. Between 1953 and 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba may have served the parish. This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

The Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary, Kayville, Saskatchewan, (1915)

This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. This church may also have been known as “The Assumption”. Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu and John Ursu solicited contributions from neighboring settlements of Wood Mountain, Willow Bunch and Kayville for the building of a new church in Kayville. On January 6, 1915, the first meeting was held and plans were made to build the church, Biserica Altocal Roman Ortodoxa au hramul Adormirei Sfintă Maria (source spellings are incorrect.) This translated into the Autonomous Church of The Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary. The elected members were Dumitru Flutur, George Donison, Necolia Donison, Constantine Donison and Sebastian Donison. The lumber for the church was hauled by horses from Avonlea.

The church was built on two and one-half acres of land donated from John Ursu’s farm. Volunteer work was done under the direction of Dan Cucurean, Vasile Paraniuk and George Sotroca. Rev. Fr. Aurel Reu served the parish from 1913 to 1916. The church was blessed on August 15, 1915 by Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu, Archimandrite Sylvester Ionescu (Regina) and Archimandrite Dionisie Nichifor (Wood Mountain). Paul Vulcu and Mary Bocico were the first couple to be married in this new church. In letters from and to Romania, the pioneers wrote about the events in the Descent of the Holy Ghost parish in Rouleau. Although many pioneers mentioned going to a church in Rouleau and having church services

there, there must have been an Orthodox church in Rouleau that had more Russian parishioners than Romanian. Rouleau was the location where the train stopped. It was the largest town in the area where the early immigrants traveled to buy groceries and general supplies. However, in a letter dated September 24, 1920 to the "Ministeru Cultelor si al Artelor" a request was made to transfer the blessing of the priest from the Rouleau church, "postul a preotul din Rouleau...fie desfrintat si trecut la biserica din Dysart.", and moved him to the Dysart church. The priest in question was Rev. Fr. Ghlicherie Popa. The history also reported a church in Dahinda. This church was called Saints Peter and Paul. Dahinda was close in proximity to Kayville and the Saint Mary's listed in the histories were located between Kayville and Dahinda. Later, the church from Dahinda was moved to Kayville.

Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu was the first parish priest and served from 1915 to 1917. Between 1918 and 1924, parish priests were Rev. Fr. Teodosie Nica served from 1918 to 1922, Rev. Fr. Dr. Lazar Gherman served from 1918 to 1924, Rev. Fr. Simon Ivanoff and Archimandrite Daniel Maxim who served the parish occasionally. Rev. Fr. Teofil Maxim came as an immigrant to serve "Adormirea Maici Domnului", Kayville in 1925. He served the parish from 1925 to 1935. He was the brother of Archimandrite Daniel Maxim. Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu, served Saint George, Regina, Canora, Kayville, Dysart and Flinloft between 1933 and 1935. He died in 1939.

Teodosie Scaletschi (Scalesky, Scala), from 1934 to 1936, served in Kayville, Saskatchewan; in 1937 he served in Hamilton, Ontario after which he made a request to leave priesthood. In 1936, the congregation was visited by the first Romanian Orthodox Bishop of America and Canada, Bishop Policarp Morusca. In 1938 Rev. Fr. Scaletschi served Flinloft and in 1940 was at Saint Nicholas, Regina, Saskatchewan. In 1940 he was again in Kayville, Saskatchewan and in 1942 at Boian, Alberta. From 1943 to 1944 he served Hamilton, Ontario. It was recorded that he was divorced in 1925 and remarried in 1940 to a Regina girl, Mary Tudor.

In 1936, the president of the parish council was Pavel Bufila, the secretary was Ioan F. Popescu, the ladies' auxiliary president Oana I. Popescu, its secretary was Afina V. Adamachi. In the 1937 SOLIA Calendar, the parish was reported to have a choir and a ladies' auxiliary.

John Pescari (Pascariu) served Saint George parish in Windsor, Ontario in 1931; in 1934 he served in Timmins, Ontario; in 1937 he served in Kayville, Saskatchewan; in 1941 he served in the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Windsor, Ontario; in 1945 he served in Hamilton, Ontario; in 1950, he served Flinloft, Saskatchewan and in 1956 he retired. In 1968, he died in Windsor, Ontario and was buried at the Vatra Romaneasca. In 1956, the parish was visited by Bishop Andrei Moldovian. In the 1939 SOLIA it was reported that there were 50 members and 308 "souls". The ladies' auxiliary was called "Sf. Maria" and had twenty-eight members. There was a parish house. Thirty-nine young people had joined the army and served in World War II.

Pavel (Paul) Vulcu came to Canada in 1907. He was married in Dahinda, Saskatchewan in 1915 and had 8 children. He served Kayville, Saskatchewan from 1944 to 1963. He lived in Crystal Hill, Saskatchewan. He died on February 27, 1963 and was buried at the Saints Peter & Paul in Kayville, Saskatchewan.

In 1941 Rev. Fr. Peter Avram served Kayville occasionally from 1952 to 1967. In 1948, the church was raised and a full basement was put underneath it. The church was painted white with black trim and stood majestically on a little hill overlooking the cemetery.

In 1963 and later, Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba served the parish. In 1963 the parish was also served by Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu. When he left, the parish was served by visiting clergy. It was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. Between 1974 and 1975, the church was painted and the chairs were replaced with pews. Electricity was also brought into the church. Rev. Fr. Danut Cornel Suciu followed Rev. Fr. Diaconescu in 1984 and served four parishes in the area. In 1966, the parish was represented at the Church Congress by Dionisie P. Dobrea and Traian Cojocaru.

On August 17, 1975, Saint Mary's celebrated its 60th Anniversary. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Very Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu and Rev. Fr. Vasile Ignatescu of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Following the service, His Eminence Archbishop Victorin blessed the church and performed a memorial service for the departed. A banquet was prepared by the ladies' auxiliary and approximately 800 people attended including visitors from Detroit, Philadelphia, Ottawa, Windsor, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and surrounding districts.

Deacon Gheorghe Sandulescu was ordained by Archbishop Victorin in the Descent of the Holy Ghost Church in Windsor. The parish was served by Rev. Fr. George Sandulescu and visiting clergy. The cantors were Gordon Popescul, John Bistrizan and Peter Jurvale. The choir director was Marie Ritsca. Cantors who served over the years were: George Costea, Stefan Banilevici, Paul Vulcu, John Danilavick, Ionel Ispas, Ionel Sager (probably Sagin), Pete Zuravel, Peter Avram, Joe Purcell, George Stefan, Constantine Avram, Nick Neamtu, Bill Zaremba, Gordon Popescul, John Bistrizan and others.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit, Hamlin, Alberta (1915)



In an article in the 1974 Credinta, crediting no author, directions are given as to how to reach the church:

"As you turn west off the gravel road near the Hamlin store, you find yourself on a sandy lane lined by towering poplars. You wonder if this is the right way to the Holy Ghost Romanian Orthodox Church in Hamlin. The road leads deeper and deeper into what seems wilderness until on top of a hill one can see a small

church. The car cannot make it up the hill because of the steep grade. We walk up and see the belfry, we ring the bell and hear the clear crisp sound as it flows through the forest surrounding the church. As we walk up to the church, we notice that it is only about 36 feet long by 20 feet wide and 12 feet high. The inside is like the churches in Romania or in Canada of yesteryear; there are no chairs or benches."

The monk Teodosie Nica came to Alberta in 1912 and built a log cabin with a second story to it. The second story was the chapel used for services until 1916. About 1912, on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River, several Romanian families began settling in the area. On January 22, 1915, the first meeting, of a group of about 15 people, was held for the building of a church with the "Hram" on the feast day of the Descent of the Holy Ghost. The group elected as President Vasile Basaraba and decided to build a church. Other members elected were: Dimitri Onciul, second president; Vasile Pitruniak, secretary; and George Mihalcian, Nicolae Toma and Andrei Luctik as first, second and third controllers. Other members on the church committee were: Ion Blesciuk, George Mohan, Tanasi David, Elie Aldea, Ilie Basarabas, Nicolae Malin and the priest, Teodosie Nica. The church was built. The outside of the church was finished on June 25, 1924. Reverend Father Nica served the parish for two years, until 1918.

An interesting quote from the minutes of the first meeting, written in Romanian but translated into English, follows: "...and the church should remain under the Government of Canada...but the priests who will serve are requested to be Romanian Greek Orthodox and to serve in the language spoken from the beginning by the Romanian people."

The acres on which the church was built and the cemetery was the site given originally by the Dominion Government. The next priest was Elie Alda, a local farmer, who was ordained a priest and served as the second priest of the parish. After he died, the church was served occasionally by priests from Boian which was fifteen miles to the south.

The 1936 SOLIA reported that Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan served the parish from 1924 to 1930. The parish council president was P. O. Haig-Hill. The 1938 SOLIA reported the parish had 5 members, 6 families and 60 "souls". Other priests serving the parish were Rev. Fr. Teodosie Scaletschi who served in 1942, Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma who was ordained in 1944, Rev. Fr. Dumitru Diaconescu served from 1959 to 1972 and Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk. Between 1953 and 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba may have served the parish as well as others in the area. On May 22, 1972, the church was visited for the first time by any hierarch, Archbishop Victorin, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Jerome Newville of the United States of America and Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk. The remaining parishioners resisted the efforts of others to turn the church into a Heritage Museum. They declared it should be a living monument of the pioneers who came to Alberta and built it.

Holy Cross, Malin (Ispas), Alberta (1916)

The church of the Holy Cross at Malin (Ispas), six miles east of Boian, was founded in 1916 to serve three to five families, most of them are still in the area. (Patterson, p. 72.) The administrator from 1944 to 1962 was Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma. The parish council president was George V. Sfecla in 1951. Between 1953 and 1963 Rev. Fr. Alex Zaba may have served the parish. Priests visiting in the area served occasionally. Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk served occasionally in 1972.

Holy Resurrection, Hamilton, Ontario (1916)

The 1939 SOLIA Calendar reported that the parish was founded on May 21, 1916 but was not built until 1917. It was, located at 19 Murray Saint West. The parish priest was Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan. The parish had 70 members, 86 families and 330 "souls". The ladies' auxiliary and the church choir were called "Inviera" and the youth club was called "Clubul Tineretului." The affiliated church was in Saint Catherine's, Ontario, an Orthodox church with a membership of Ukrainian people born in Romania. Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu served the Holy Resurrection parish in Hamilton between 1931 and 1932 after serving Lennard and Shell Valley between 1923 and 1924. Nistor Anghel served as a Cantor in Montreal and was a Cantor for 17 years at Saint George, Windsor beginning in 1931. His father and brother were priests in Romania. He decided to become a priest and was ordained by Bishop Andrew Moldovian for Holy Trinity, Detroit, Michigan. Bishop Policarp had refused to ordain him in 1936 because he was married in 1910 and left his wife and children in Romania. On May 3, 1936 Bishop Policarp Morusca visited the parish. Rev. Fr. Anghel died on October 16, 1953 and was buried from Saint George, Windsor, Ontario. In the 1943 SOLLA Calendarit was reported that there were 75 members, 146 families, and 470 "souls". The church had a choir.

Marin R. Postelnic was ordained a monk in 1925. From 1925 to 1931 he served the Saint George parish in Regina, Saskatchewan; from there he served the Flintoft parish occasionally. From 1931 to 1933 he served Hamilton, Ontario; from 1933 to 1948 he served Windsor, Ontario. In 1967 he lived in retirement in Royal Oak, Michigan. He died on December 16, 1989 at the age of 93.

From 1932 to 1933 Rev. Fr. Ioan Spariosu served the Saint Mary's Russian parish in Montreal. From 1933 to 1934 he served the Annunciation parish in Montreal. In 1934 he served the Holy Resurrection Church, Hamilton, Ontario.

Rev. Fr. John Pescari served Saint George, Windsor, Ontario, in 1931; in 1934 he served Timmins, Ontario; in 1937 he served Kayville, Saskatchewan; in 1941 he served the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Windsor, Ontario; in 1945 he served Hamilton, Ontario. It was reported in the 1945 SOLIA that the parish was vacant in 1945. In 1950 he served Flintoft Saskatchewan 1956. He retired, in 1968 and died in Windsor, Ontario and was buried at the Vatra Romaneasca.

From 1934 to 1935, Rev. Fr. Teodosie Scaletschi served Kayville Saskatchewan; in 1937 he served Hamilton, Ontario; also, in 1937 he requested to leave the priesthood. In 1938 he served Flintoft; in 1940 he served Saint Nicholas parish in Regina Saskatchewan. In 1940 he served Kayville Saskatchewan; in 1942 he served Boian, Alberta; from 1943 to 1944 he served Hamilton, Ontario. He changed his name to Scala.

Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan served Hamilton, Ontario from 1937 to 1942. He had previously served in Boian, Alberta and Saint George, Regina. In the 1940 "SOLIA" of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada, a short-lived publication, he was reported as the conductor of a Romanian theatrical-choir group. The 1945 SOLIA reported that the Church was "restored" and was re-sanctified on August 20, 1944. The 1945 SOLIA Calendar reported that there were 75 parish members, 146 families and 470 "souls" in the Hamilton area. The parish had a hall called "Casa Romana." Their ladies' auxiliary was called "Inviera"; there was a church choir. Rev. Fr. Onofreiu Iwaniuk served Hamilton in 1949. In 1950 the parish was vacant.

Rev. Fr. George Preda received the designation of Very Rev. Fr. From 1951 to 1954 he served Hamilton, Ontario. In 1951, the president of the parish council was John Dumitru and the secretary was Nicolae Pora. In 1961, the parish priest was Rev. Fr. John Jifcu who later was raised to the rank of Archpriest. The president

of the ladies' auxiliary was Victoria Todorel and the church choir directors were Traian Barbu and Dr. Petre Popescu. There was a newly built auditorium and meeting hall. Members of the parish traveled from as far as Saint Catharine's and Toronto to attend church services. In 1956, Dumitru Deaconescu served as a sub deacon. In 1959 he was ordained a deacon and a priest to serve the church in Boian, Alberta.

From November 2, 1959, Rev. Fr. Nicolae Ciurea served the parish. On May 22, 1960, the church was consecrated by Archbishop Victorin. In 1971, a new parish house was built. On March 1, 1970, Rev. Fr. Paulin Popescu served as Administrator and then was transferred to Detroit. In 1985, Archbishop Victorin made a pastoral visit to the parish, a dinner was offered and the proceeds were given to the Archdiocese. On April 4, 1993, Archbishop Victorin officiated Holy Liturgy assisted by Very Reverend Nicolae Ciurea and on June 13, he ordained Cantor Gheorghe Gembluk as a deacon.

This parish was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Saint George Cathedral, Windsor Ontario (1918)

The first Romanians who came to Windsor in 1907 numbered nine families who, because of the small numbers, were not able to form a parish. Together with the arrival of more Romanians in 1912, Rev. Fr. R. Dignan allowed them to use the Roman Catholic Church auditorium on Wyandotte and Marionette. In the year 1915, the Russians began to build a church on Drouillard Road. It was the first Orthodox Church in Windsor. The Romanians then attended the Russian Orthodox Church. Between 1915 and 1917, some of the Romanians were elected to the parish council. The Epistle and some responses were said in Romanian from time to time. In 1917 there was a misunderstanding between the Romanians and the Russians. George Atanasiu, George Jureschi and Ioan Sauciuc proposed that the Romanians build their own church. The members pledged \$4,000.00 at this meeting to start a building fund. Members donating at least \$25 were considered to be founding members. The location was chosen and the church was founded in the fall of 1917. It was located on Pierre Avenue in Windsor, built of wood and blessed on April 23, 1918. Rev. Fr. Cornel Foltutiu from Saint George parish in Detroit, assisted by Rev. Fr. Ioan Oancea, the first priest (1918 to 1921) of this new parish. A Greek Orthodox Bishop offered the antemins for the church. The patron saint chosen was Saint George, a name which had been given to many Romanians in the area. The parish constitution and by-laws were written in 1918. The following priests served on a temporary basis: Rev. Fr. Irimia Delea, 1920; Rev. Fr. Ioan Petrovici, 1920 to 1921; Rev. Fr. Doroftei Loanga; Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa 1923 to 1924 and Rev. Fr. Alexandru Nan from 1921 to 1923; Rev. Fr. Filaret Gheorghiu from 1922 to 1923. Rev. Fr. Ilie Jida served from 1925 to 1927 and, when he died, was buried in the Windsor Grove cemetery on April 11, 1927. Serving on a temporary basis in 1927 were: Rev. Frs. Pavel Craciun Sr., Ioan Petrovici and Ilie Sicoe. Between 1928 and 1930, the parish was served by Rev. Fr. Dumitru Iamstremski "who then retired because of old age. From 1930 to 1931 protosinghel Filaret Gheorghiu returned to serve the parish. Between 1931 and 1932, the parish was served on a temporary basis by Rev. Fr. Ion Pescariu and Rev. Fr. Ion Baleca. The parish house was built in 1927 and the parish hall was built in 1933. The total value was \$25,000.

Between 1933 and 1934, there was a disagreement as to which calendar to follow, the Gregorian or the Julian. The majority of the members decided to follow the Gregorian Calendar. Between 1934 and 1938, those who wanted to follow the Julian Calendar left the parish and built their own church, the Descent of

the Holy Spirit. The priest of this parish was V. Rev. Fr. George Nan. Bishop Policarp visited the Saint George parish in 1935.

In 1933, the women organized a ladies' auxiliary, using the Patron Saint's name of Saint George, which had 60 members in 1933. In 1944, the youth group was organized. From 1933 to 1948 the priest was Rev. Fr. Marin Postelnic. He was the priest of the parish when it entered the jurisdiction of the Romanian Missionary Episcopate of America. Rev. Fr. Postelnic's beginning salary was \$30.00 a month and his ending salary was \$40.00 a month. At this time, the cantor was paid between \$20.00 and \$25.00 a month. In 1936, the parish council president was Ioan Zvares, the secretary was N. Puiul and the ladies' auxiliary president was Margareta Irimescu. The parish had a church school.

In 1938 there were 90 members, 250 families and 2,000 "souls". In 1940 the parish council president was Gheorghe Nan. The ladies' auxiliary had Ana Videan as president with 60 members. In 1943 it was reported in SOLIA that the parish had 160 members, 200 families and 1000 "souls". The president of the parish council was George Nan, secretary Ioan Tarcea, cantors George Nan, George Magda, and Nistor Anghel. There were 70 members in the ladies' auxiliary with president Maria Vidican and secretary Safta Cojocar. In 1945, there were 150 members, and 500 "souls". The parish priest was Rev. Fr. Marin Postelnic; the president of the parish council was Gheorghe Dragomir; the vice-president was Dan Vidican; the cantor was Anghel Nistor; the craznic was Teodor Prodan; the secretary was Daniel Rosu; the Congress delegates were the president and the secretary, Gheorghe Stanciu; Auditors were Gheorghe Popovici and Toader Fartais; Epitrop were Toader Taran and Gheorghe Nan; members of the council were Dan Oprica, Gheorghe Ardelean, Gheorghe Magda, Nistor Anghel, Teodor Prodan, Gus Radu, Ioan Donisan and Ilie Cusmanici. The hall caretaker was Ana Vidican. The ladies' auxiliary "Sf. Gheorghe" had 70 members and its president was Ana Vidican. There were 75 young men in the army. Vasile Postelnic died in active service. The Romanians in the area put \$100,000.00 into war bonds. Rev. Fr. Gheorghe Lupu served the parish in 1948 while the parish awaited the entry of Rev. Fr. Nestorian Cicala to Canada. In 1949 "Scoala Dumincala", the church school, was organized. The church choir was organized in 1950.

In 1950 it was decided to establish a building fund for a bigger church. Property was purchased on Tecumseh Road East and Kildare. Rev. Fr. Nestorian Cicala served the parish from January 1948 to July 1967. In 1951, Anghel Nistor served as a cantor in Montreal and as a cantor for 17 years at Saint George in Windsor, Ontario. He was later ordained. He died in 1953 and was buried from Saint George in Windsor, Ontario in Grove Cemetery.

The 1951 SOLIA reported that the parish council president was Peter Corchis. The president of the Saint George's ladies' aid society was Peggy G. Popovich. The choir directors were Constantin Corchis and John Donisan. There was an active young people's group named the Saint George's Young Orthodox People's Club (Clubul Tineretului), in 1944. This group was affiliated with the church and held sport and social functions. At Christmas time they sang Christmas carols for the members of the parish. The Sunday School (1949) provided religious education for the school-age children. There was a weekly church bulletin, "The Church and School". There was a parish house. The meeting hall was in the church basement. In January, 1955, the church on Pierre Street was sold for \$21,000.00. In March, 1955, a church house was bought on Durham Place near the location of the new church. On April 23, 1955, they marked the location where the new church was to be constructed.

The new church was built on 1960 Tecumseh Road East. During this time, the following priests who served this parish were: Archimandrite Bartolemeu V. Anania who was recalled to Romania in 1974, Rev. Fr. Mircea

Panciuk and Archimandrite Paulin Popescu who served in 1969. On November 16, 1955, the Church was raised to the rank of Cathedral by Bishop Teofil Ionescu. In 1958 a musical mechanism was installed for the ringing of the bells at a cost of \$4,000.00 and was paid for by the ladies' auxiliary. The interior and the icons were finished in 1959. In 1962 the ladies' auxiliary purchased a bronze chandelier beautified with the icons of the twelve apostles at a cost of \$4,800.00. Sixteen pews were paid for by contributions of the faithful. Many of the faithful individually donated other necessary items for the altar. A bingo held every second Tuesday and a 50/50 raffle helped bring in financial help for the church expenses. The ladies' auxiliary also had banquets and held annual bazaars. Archbishop Victorin was consecrated in this Cathedral on August 6, 1966. In 1966, the parish was represented at the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada Church Congress by Rev. Fr. Nestorian Cicala, Gus Radu and John Dragomer. Additional construction was done to increase the size of the auditorium and to beautify the exterior of the church as well as to place a bell tower on the church. The cupola was modeled after the monastery in Sinai, Romania, and is dominated by a cross with seven arms, characteristic of the time of Matei Basarab. The cross is similar to the one at the monastery of Plumbuita. The cathedral seats 300; the choir loft seats 150; the auditorium has a capacity of 400 to 500 people.

On December 1, 1967, Rev. Fr. Bartolomeu Anania was named deacon of the cathedral and Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk was the parish administrator. At this time, the construction of the new iconostasis was begun in Romania, sculpted by Grigore Dumitrescu of Bucharest, Romania where it was built and shipped to Canada. The icons were written by Archimandrite Felix Dubneac.

On March 1, 1969, Rev. Fr. Mircea Panciuk was transferred to Edmonton and Rev. Fr. Paulin Popescu was named parish priest. He served as administrator and then was transferred to Detroit. In 1971 this parish was also served by Rev. Fr. George Nan. On March 10, 1985, the parish was visited by Archbishop Victorin on the occasion of the Inter-Orthodox Vesper Service in Great Lent. The young people presented a program which was under the direction of Iconom Stavrofor Sirmion Caplat and Archimandrite Felix Dubneac, the Director of the Cathedral Choir. The priest serving the parish around 1988 was Rev. Fr. George Sandalescu. Saint George Cathedral in Windsor was under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Archbishop Victorin officiated the Hram service on October 17, 1993 when the parish celebrated its 75th anniversary.

St. John, the Baptist, Shell Valley, Manitoba (1919)

"In the beginning there were only ten members" is how the article in the July 1994 SOLIA began. The people in the area were both of Ukrainian and Romanian descent. These were Bucovinian Romanians who attended services at Saint Elijah Church in Lennard, Saskatchewan. They usually walked the eight miles to Lennard through mud, snow and sleet. The mosquitos were prevalent. Sometimes they would ask priests traveling in their area to celebrate Holy Liturgy service in their homes.

Between 1919 and 1922, they built their own church on five acres of land, in a wooded area, donated by one of the first settlers, Atanasie Ceuca. In the Canadian way of those times, the church was built by volunteers from the parish, both Romanians and Ukrainians under the direction of Miron Susarchuk. The architect was Mr. Todaschuk and the iconostasis was designed by Metro Sopka. Seating capacity of the church was 108. The church was named "Nastere Sf. Ioan Botezatorul". The church was blessed in 1920 by Rev. Fr. Lazarus Gherman. Because the parish was small and very close to Lennard, the priest serving the

Lennard parish also served Shell Valley. Once the church was built in 1919, the parishioners wrote to the "old country" to send them a priest. They appealed to the Romanian and the Russian hierarchy to send them a priest. The priests who served the area were either Romanian or Ukrainian. The listing of their names may not necessarily be in chronological order. Some of the priests who served the area were:

Romanian priests:

Rev. Fr. Ion Mihalovich served for 8 months in 1907.

Rev. Fr. Teodore Nica served from 1916 to 1919.

Rev. Fr. Ieremia Delea served probably in the 1920's.

Rev. Fr. Vasilovich served probably as the fourth priest

Rev. Fr. Dosoftei Constantinescu served from 1910 to 1915

Rev. Fr. Dimitrie Iastremski (Istrenski) served in 1916.

Rev. Fr. John Teodosie Taschuk served from 1924 to 1926.

Rev. Fr. Mihai Baleca served from 1920 to 1924.

Rev. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorghiu served 1911 to 1915 and for four months in 1920.

Rev. Fr. Dumitru Feica served in 1926.

Rev. Fr. Dumitru Irina served for eight months in 1956. "

Rev. Fr. Constantin Postelnic served from 1925 to 1931.

Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu served from 1926 to 1930.

Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa served from 1934 to 1955.

Rev. Fr. Dumitru Erina served for eight months in 1956.

Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici served from 1955 to 1967.

Rev. Fr. Vasile Cohan served in 1968.

Rev. Fr. Peter Avram served occasionally from 1952 to 1967.

Rev. Fr. Constantin Turcoane served from 1970 to 1971.

Rev. Fr. Virgil Parvanescu served from 1960 to 1967.

V Rev. Fr. Pantelimon Stanciu served from 1971 to 1972. _

Rev. Fr. John Fleser -served from 1972 to 1976.

Rev. Fr. Myrone Klysh served from 1976 to 1979.

Rev. Fr. Nicolae Marioncu served from 1978 to 1990.

Rev. Fr. Peter San Filippo served from 1990 to 1992.

Rev. Fr. Joseph MacLellan served from 1992 to 2004.

Rev. Fr. Octavian Mahler served in 2004.

Ukrainian priests:

Rev. Fr. A. Berek served, dates unknown.

Rev. Fr. T. Horbay served from 1938 to 1951.

Rev. Fr. Kolynych served from 1951 to 1952.

Rev. Fr. Thurshansky served from 1951 to 1953.

Rev. Fr. Gorgitsa served from 1953 to 1955.

Rev. Fr. Mayba served from 1955 to 1957.

Rev. Fr. Aponiuk served from 1957 to 1959.

Rev. Fr. Shvets served from 1959 to 1964.

Rev. Fr. Zabritsky served from 1964 to 1966.

Rev. Fr. Rauliuk served from 1968 to 1973.

Rev. Fr. Trufyn served from 1973 to 1980.

Rev. Fr. Hnatiw served from 1980 to 1981.

Rev. Fr. Demczuk served from 1981 to 1990.

Rev. Fr. Berezniak served in 1990.

By 1920 there were twenty church members. It was now necessary to have a residence for the priest so a small-two room log house was built east of the church. Because horses were the popular mode of transportation, a large enough barn was built to house twelve teams. Later a bell tower was added. Spruce trees were added on the south side of the church, probably to provide shade from the hot summer sun. Rev. Fr. Martin Ionescu, served Lennard and Shell Valley between 1923 and 1924. The 1958 SULLA calendar showed the founding date of the parish as 1920. The leader of the church-building workgroup was Rev. Fr. Mihai Baleca who worked with skilled parishioners, I. Todaschuk, who designed the church, and Metro Sopka, who planned the altar and iconostasis which was done locally. Almost all the material used in the building of the church was donated. The church building was designed for 100-175 persons which was the size of the community in the 1930's. Before 1928, Rev. Fr. Dimitrie Alexandru lastremski served Saint Nicholas parish in Regina and the Saint John Shell Valley parish in Manitoba. Rev. Fr. Dumitru Erina served Shell Valley probably around 1956. Rev. Fr. Teodosie Taschuk, who may have been Ukrainian, served Shell Valley around 1924 to 1926.

Rev. Fr. Glicherie Popa administered the parish from 1934 to 1958 and died in Lennard, Manitoba in 1958. The church was consecrated by Bishop Polycarp Morusca. The Saint John Church Ladies' auxiliary was organized in 1939.

The 1939 SOLIA Calendar reported there were 80 members, 80 families and 500 "souls". The ladies' auxiliary took the name of "Sf. Ioan" and had 25 members. The youth club was called "Professor I.G. Tanasescu" and had 30 members. Affiliated churches were in Winnipeg and Flin Flon, both in the province of Manitoba.

In 1944 the parish priest was Rev. Fr. Vasile Toma from Alberta. After World War II, when the soldiers returned, Saint John parish found its membership nearly doubled. As the parish became the focus for religious life of the area, some expansion was needed. In the early 1950's, a porch was added to the church to accommodate changes in the heating system. The 24 foot by 50-foot church was renovated and had a new iconostasis through the generosity of Romanian Canadian miners at Snow Lake, Manitoba who paid for the cost of the work. The church now accommodated 200 persons. Electric lights were installed, a new candelabra, religious books and vestments were purchased. In 1955, the church was renovated and took on a new appearance. The parish council president was James Martin, the secretary was George Motoshoski. The president of the ladies' auxiliary was Lena Marenik. The church choir director was Alex Holovach and the church school director was Martha Holovach and the teacher was Ileana N. Holunga.

In 1958 the Shell Valley Community Hall was erected and held 250 persons on each of its two floors. In it were held religious classes, choir practices and other parish events. The cost was minimal due to the outpouring of voluntary labour by parish members who were under the direction of George Salmanovich from Inglis. The debt was paid gradually with revenue from weddings, dances, dinners and other events hosted by the Saint John ladies' auxiliary. A "Shell Valley Community Club" was formed. In 1958, Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici became the administrator of Saint John parish in Shell Valley and had moved to Lennard, Manitoba from Windsor, Ontario. On May 11, 1958, Bishop Valerian visited Shell Valley. The parish council president was Nicolae Dohie and Gheorghe Motosovschi as secretary, the president of the ladies' auxiliary was Mrs. Lina A. Merenik with secretary Mrs. Maria Martin. The church choir director was Gheorghe Motosovschi. The Sunday School teachers were Miss Martha Holovach and Miss H. Germain. During the 1960's, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America made a greater effort to expand its work in Canada and began to nurture its parishes. Rev. Fr. Archimandrite Martinian was elevated to the office of Vicar to the Bishop. This had a great deal to do with the revitalization of the parishes in the Manitoba area.

The Shell Valley Religious Camp was organized in the same area as the church. Saint John parish rose to the challenge and in two years constructed a summer dormitory which could house seventy students, complete with electricity, beds and other needed facilities. The physical work was done by the Shell Valley parishioners and those in the surrounding area. The Saint Nicholas and other Saskatchewan parishes helped by providing beds, kitchen needs and volunteers for teaching purposes. Now Canadian Orthodox students could enjoy the physical and spiritual benefits of a summer camp without having to travel a thousand miles to Michigan. Bishop Valerian was in attendance at the first camp in 1962, bringing with him three young women from the United States to teach the children: Helen Toconita, Sandra Nan and Sylvia Baia. Martha Holovach, now Preoteasa MacLellan, was also a teacher at the first camp. The second camp had teachers and helpers Helen Bujea, Mary Harold and Adrien Popovich, all from Saint Nicholas parish in Regina. One teacher from the area was also in the group. In 1963, Princess Ileana, who later was Mother Alexandra, the Abbess of the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Pennsylvania, was in attendance. Without the workers in the Shell Valley area, nothing could have been accomplished; especially the ladies' who looked after nourishing the children, washing and cleaning the area before and after camp and making sure their children were in attendance. Over the years many volunteers came from Shell Valley area and as well as others who were mainly from Saint Nicholas parish in Regina.

Rev. Fr. Virgil Parvanescu occasionally served Saint John, Shell Valley, around 1962. Rev. Fr. Panteleimon Stanciu was sent to serve the parish by the Western Canada Missionary Centre. In 1965, the young people's group joined A.R.O.Y. In 1971, the camp ceased to operate and was moved to Fort Qu'Appelle.

FROM THE WEBSITE OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY IN REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN.

Our little church, the very first Romanian Orthodox Church in North America (1902), was built by our ancestors: immigrants, mostly from Bukovina and other parts of Romania (see HISTORY). These were people who had left everything: homes, jobs, farms, families, culture and security. In Canada they faced enormous challenges. The land was raw and unbroken. Winters were severe, unforgiving. And, perhaps hardest of all was the fact that most soon realized that they were unwelcome, undervalued, underpaid and disrespected in a British-dominated, English-speaking culture. It was "just not cool" to be a Romanian in Canada at the turn of the 20th Century.

In an attempt to preserve some sense of security and cultural identity, they built a place to congregate; to preserve and enshrine their social, cultural and religious practices; to create a kind of substitute for the land, homes and families they had left behind. In the year 1902, they built St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church in Regina, Saskatchewan.

In this humble downtown church, they gathered: they greeted, valued, respected and cared for each other. Here they relaxed and spoke effortlessly in their mother tongue without worry or difficulty, without embarrassment. Here they feasted, fasted and prayed; they established new friendships, new systems of support. From contacts made at St. Nicholas many found jobs, places to live, and even met their future husbands or wives. Through St. Nicholas, new Canadian families emerged, children were baptized, and loved ones laid to rest. This was a place of solemnity and reverence, a centre of celebration and rejoicing. For many, St. Nicholas became their new home: full of new "brothers and sisters and mothers".

At St. Nicholas, you could always hear familiar voices speaking in warm and friendly tones, sometimes telling jokes and stories recalled from childhood. Here, you could still breathe in the same wonderful aromas, and taste the same delicious flavors you associated with your grandmother's kitchen.

Countless lives of future generations of Canadians can trace their beginnings back to St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church, Regina. Although times have changed, and more than 100 years have rolled by since those first days, St. Nicholas is still pretty much the same. It is still a place where you can be greeted, valued, respected and cared for; where you can hear the Romanian language spoken in warm and relaxed tones; where you can meet new friends - perhaps even a future husband or wife.

At St. Nicholas, you can still breathe in the same wonderful aromas, and taste the same delicious flavors you remember from your grandmother's kitchen. And, most importantly, at St. Nicholas you can renew and strengthen your never-ending relationship with your Creator and God.

But you have to come. God sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be amongst us - to be seen, heard and touched. And you can still find Him here, at St. Nicholas.

So, please come and join us. Whether you are a new immigrant to Canada, or a descendent from a generation long past, you are always welcome. Whether you speak only English or Romanian, you will always have a home at St. Nicholas. But you have to come!









