Ukrainian Immigration from the Russian Empire to Canada: A Reappraisal

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Early twentieth-century Ukrainian immigration from the Russian Empire has largely remained outside the “grand narrative” of Ukrainian-Canadian history. Among dozens of works on Ukrainian immigrants in pre-1914 and interwar Canada, there is only one devoted specifically to Eastern (Russian-ruled) Ukrainians, and a few others mention them in passing.¹ Many historians have taken it for granted that the restrictive policies of the tsarist state and the pull of Siberian lands kept Ukrainians in tsarist Russia from emigrating and that the few who left were either political exiles or religious dissenters such as Baptists.²


While the numbers of Ukrainians from the Russian Empire in early twentieth-century Canada never matched those of Galician and Bukovynian immigrants, they were not as small as has been commonly believed. Nor did Ukrainians and other subjects of the tsar emigrate only for political or religious reasons. Although overseas migration in Dnieper Ukraine began later than in Galicia and Bukovyna and, with few exceptions, was confined to the Right-Bank territories, it reached considerable proportions in the few years before the First World War and was driven, as elsewhere in east central Europe, mostly by economic motives. There were, however, important differences in the character of the emigration movement from the two parts of Ukraine. While the majority of Galician and Bukovynian immigrants headed for the Prairies, where they formed close-knit farming communities, immigrants from Russian-ruled Ukraine arrived in Canada primarily as temporary migrant workers who gravitated to the resource frontier and large industrial cities of central Canada. Like their Belarusian neighbours, who also migrated to Canada as wageworkers, most Eastern Ukrainians considered themselves Russians and appeared as such in the Canadian census and other government records. Different from the majority of Canada’s Ukrainians in their religious and political loyalties and, at least until the 1920s, in national identity, they rarely joined Ukrainian (Ruthenian) organizations, which were dominated by the Greek Catholic clergy and Galician émigré intelligentsia. Nor did they form lasting community associations of their own. Thus they left few traces of their presence in early twentieth-century Canada for historians, who, following the paradigm established by the early writers of Ukrainian-Canadian history, have limited the social boundaries of the early Ukrainian community in Canada primarily to

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3. Standard works on the history of Ukrainian immigration usually underestimate both the presence of Eastern Ukrainians in early twentieth-century Canada and the general scale of emigration from Dnieper Ukraine. Thus, Michael Marunchak believed that they constituted only about three percent of all of Canada’s Ukrainians at the time (The Ukrainian Canadians, 22). Oleh Gerus and J. E. Rea write that only “several thousand [Ukrainians] emigrated from the western regions of Russian Ukraine” (The Ukrainians in Canada, 6).

4. After 1904 Canadian immigration statistics listed Ukrainians from the Russian Empire under the heading “Russians Not Elsewhere Specified”—a generic category, which included all immigrants from tsarist Russia other than Finns, Doukhobors, Russian Jews, and Russian Poles, who were classified separately.
“Ruthenian” immigrants from Galicia and Bukovyna plus a handful of natives of tsarist Russia who consciously adopted Ukrainian identity.

This article takes a fresh look at early twentieth-century Ukrainian immigration from the Russian Empire to Canada and investigates its patterns and structure on the basis of new documentary evidence obtained from various Russian and Canadian sources, primarily from the records of the Russian imperial consulates in Canada. These papers, available on microfilm at the Library and Archives Canada and known as the Likacheff-Ragosine-Mathers (Li-Ra-Ma) Collection, were created by three Russian consular missions that functioned in Montreal, Vancouver, and Halifax between 1899 and 1922. Most of the statistical data used in this study are taken from the so-called Passport-Identity Series of the collection. This series, commonly used by genealogists but so far unexplored by immigration historians, comprises approximately 11,400 personal files created by the consulates for Russian-subject residents of Canada who contacted them to obtain various documents, primarily between 1917 and 1921. Approximately one-third of these files belong to persons of Ukrainian origin. They hold a wealth of untapped statistical material, including two especially valuable types of documents—the consular questionnaires (oprosnye listy), which were filled out by individuals who applied for a travel pass (prokhoodnoe svidetelstvo) in order to return to Russia, and “sworn affidavits,” submitted by persons who sought official consular certification of their Russian citizenship to avoid troubles with Canadian authorities.

A few remarks about the origin and contents of these files are in order. The questionnaires were formally introduced by the new Russian passport regulations of 25 October 1916 for reasons of wartime security, but they were put into effect only in July 1917, after the fall of the Romanov monarchy. With minor modifications, the forms continued to be used until April 1919. Most of the questionnaires in the collection

5. I wish to thank Myron Momryk, Project Archivist, Social and Cultural Archives division of Library and Archives Canada, for his assistance and unfailing interest in this project.

were completed between summer 1917 and spring 1918. The total number of files containing questionnaires and affidavits is approximately equal (only a small portion of the files have both documents). The questionnaire included twenty-one questions, related mostly to the applicant’s origins and social and legal standing in the home country: (1) given names; (2) family name; (3) social rank (zvanie); (4) occupation; (5) social estate (soslovie) and place of registration (pripiska); (6) date and place of birth; (7) marital status, number and names of children; 8) military status; (9) year of summons to military service; (10) current place of residence (number of years); (11) names of parents and their places of residence; (12) places of residence in last five years; (13) religion; (14) nationality; (15) citizenship; (16) citizenship of parents; (17) changes of citizenship; (18) return destination in Russia; (19) purpose of return, with a list of documents proving identity; (20) relatives in Russia and their places of residence; and (21) trips outside Russia in last three years, their purpose, and dates of departure and return.

Any individual submitting a Russian citizenship affidavit—the second main category of personal documents appearing in the Li-Ra-Ma files—was required to supply the following information: (1) name and religion; (2) native gubernia, county, parish, and town/village; (3) marital status; names and address of wife and children; (4) names and addresses of closest relatives in Russia; (5) military status; (6) criminal convictions in Russia and the offence; (7) identity documents in possession; (8) time, place, and mode of crossing the Russian border; (9) direct or indirect (via the United States) entry to Canada and port of entry; (10) criminal convictions in Canada and the offence; (11) occupation in Canada; and (12) real estate ownership in Canada.

Using the Li-Ra-Ma files as a historical source, we must remember that they were compiled neither by a systematic count nor by scientific sampling of a population group, but emerged as a result of voluntary contact between the immigrants and Russian officials in Canada. Except for a few cases, the files have little to say about Russian-born immigrants who became naturalized in Canada, purposely severed all connections with the old country, or simply lived in Canada too long to feel any affinity with the Russian state or need for its protection. Because some religious or social groups were more likely to fall into one of the above categories, they are represented in the files less fully than others. Thus, there are few cases of religious dissenters (including those of Ukrainian origin) such as Baptists or Old Believers. Farmers are another immigrant
category that is largely missing in the collection: to obtain land title one had to be naturalized, and this usually (although not always) meant permanent settlement in Canada and the cutting of one’s ties with the homeland. It is primarily the temporary labour migrant, the “sojourner,” that appears in the Li-Ra-Ma Collection. As we know from other Russian and Canadian sources, this was precisely the immigrant class that predominated among Eastern Ukrainians who came to Canada before 1914.

The reliability of personal information contained in the files is another important question. Can we be sure that some immigrants did not conceal or misreport some facts of their biography or tell the consuls what they thought the officials wanted to hear? While such a possibility cannot be fully excluded, the reasons that compelled the immigrants to seek out consular officials were far too important and the cost of being turned down too high to justify the risk of lying. Applicants for travel passes were aware that their completed questionnaires were sent (or at least were supposed to be sent) to Russia for verification, and this would likely reveal any falsifications or withheld biographical facts. In addition, virtually all the files were created after the revolution of February 1917, which eliminated the watchdog function performed by the Russian consulates under the tsarist regime and removed most reasons the immigrants might have had for withholding the truth from consular officials. On the whole, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of personal information found in the Li-Ra-Ma files any more than the reliability of data in censuses and other serial records commonly used by immigration historians.

Because of the large size of the Passport-Identity Series, I have had to limit the amount of data used in this study. I have done so by creating a fifty-percent random sample of the entire Passport-Identity series, which I further reduced by eliminating cases representing persons from outside Ukraine,\(^7\) individuals with recognizably non-Slavic names (Jews,

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7. For the purposes of this study, Ukraine includes nine gubernias of the Russian Empire—Podilia, Volyn, Kiev, Kharkiv, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kherson, Katerynoslav, and Taurida—and the northernmost Khotyn County of Bessarabia, populated primarily by Ukrainians and sometimes referred to as Russian Bukovyna. Ukrainian geographical and personal names, which in the original are spelled in Russian, are given here in the Ukrainian form, except for Kiev, Bessarabia, and Taurida and cases when Ukrainian names appear in Russian citations. Terms and categories that appear in official Russian documents or are part of the imperial administrative lexicon are transliterated into English from their Russian original (for example, uezd instead of povit).
Germans, and others) and duplicate cases. In the process of working with the files, I decided to keep the files belonging not only to Ukrainians but to all persons of Slavic origin from Ukrainian territory, for in some cases it proved difficult to distinguish between Ukrainian, Polish, and Belarusian names (particularly in the Russian spelling, as is the case with the Li-Ra-Ma Collection). The resulting data set, which I hereafter refer to as the “Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian Sample,” consists of 2,052 files, most of which contain either a questionnaire or an affidavit, and a few contain both. I examined each of these files for all quantifiable information, which I entered into a computerized database. This main sample is supplemented by a separate and smaller “Passport File,” which contains data on the migrants’ occupation, literacy, and points of border crossing extracted from Russian passports attached to 391 of the Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian files.8

Data obtained from the Li-Ra-Ma Collection allow us not only to explore the “anatomy” of migration from Eastern Ukraine to Canada, but also to analyze the mechanism of emigrant selection by comparing the individual characteristics of the migrating peasants with those of the gubernias and counties (uezdy) that served as the main donors of overseas migrants. To make these comparison I use two major Russian statistical sources of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the 1905 imperial land survey9 and the 1897 imperial census,10 containing, respectively, detailed landholding and population statistics for all European gubernias of the Russian Empire.

As with any study that uses random sampling, this analysis cannot claim complete accuracy in reconstructing the picture of peasant emigration from Eastern Ukraine: obviously, no sample is a mirror image of the larger population group it is intended to represent. However, I hope to establish some basic trends that characterized the migration process and

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8. Besides foreign passports, which were used to travel abroad, there were two types of internal (volostyne) travel documents issued to peasants in early twentieth-century Russia: one-year passes, issued on single-sheet blanks, and long-term passports, which had the familiar form of small booklets. All three types of travel documents are represented in the Passport File.

9. Tsentralny statisticheskii komitet, Statistika zemlevladeniia v Rossii 1905 goda (St. Petersburg, 1905—1907), vols. 3 (Bessarabia), 8 (Volyn), 16 (Kiev), and 32 (Podillia). Hereafter Statistika zemlevladeniia.

10. Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 goda (St. Petersburg, 1897—1905), vols. 3 (Bessarabia), 8 (Volyn), 16 (Kiev), and 32 (Podillia). Hereafter 1897 census.
to present new information that will lead historians to re-evaluate the true scale and character of early twentieth-century Ukrainian immigration to Canada from the Russian Empire.

Statistics and Migration Patterns

Until the early 1900s emigration from Dnieper Ukraine was largely confined to the Jewish population, driven out of the country by economic misery and religious intolerance that reigned in the Pale of Settlement. With the exception of several isolated localities, Ukrainians in the Russian Empire remained little affected by the emigration movement. According to a contemporary estimate, between 1885 and 1902 the total emigration of Ukrainians from Kiev, Volyn, and Podillia did not exceed 26,000, but even this figure may be too high. A large proportion of the early leavers consisted of religious dissenters (more on them below) and political radicals, whose emigration especially increased in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution. Military deserters, persons with broken careers, criminals, adventurers, and other non-conformist types completed the picture of the migration movement in its incipient phase.

The masses of Eastern Ukrainian peasantry began to join these pioneers only towards the late 1900s. According to one perhaps somewhat exaggerated estimate, by 1908 there were already about 10,000 “Russian” Ukrainians in Canada. The opening of regular steamship communication between Halifax and Russia’s Baltic port of Libava (Liepaja) in the spring of 1912 and intensified labour-recruitment activities of Canadian railway companies resulted in a further increase in Ukrainian immigration from Russia. It reached its zenith in 1913, the year of arrival of ap-

12. Savva Fedorenko, a social revolutionary militant who fled to Canada after being charged with murder of a policeman in Kiev gubernia and whose extradition was sought by the Russian government, was one of the most prominent figures in this category. For more on Fedorenko and his story, see my “Protectors and Watchdogs,” 224–5. Rebellious sailors from the famous Potemkin battleship who came to Canada through Romania also belonged in this group. I have been able to identify four Li-Ra-Mail files that represent Potemkin sailors, including a Ukrainian Karpo Babchenko, born in 1879 in Sumy county of Kharkiv gubernia (file 11921). Another Ukrainian, Terenty Zaiarniuk from Stara Ushtysia (file 11380), served on the Alexander II battleship and also escaped to Canada after being exiled for revolutionary activities at Kronstadt in 1906.
13. Korolov, 60 n.
14. Ustinov to the Second Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20 February 1913, Li-Ra-Mail Collection, vol. 3, file 94. The regular steamship service between Libava
proximately forty-three percent of the Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainians, then dropped somewhat in the first half of 1914, and ceased completely with the outbreak of the war.

Unfortunately, precise statistics of immigration from Eastern Ukraine prior to 1914 are lacking. Early twentieth-century Canadian annual immigration reports and census statistics, which usually put Ukrainians from Russia among persons of Russian "racial origin," are of little help for historians. We can only make a rough estimate of the number of Eastern Ukrainians who lived in Canada in the early 1920s by using the cross-tabulated 1921 census data on the mother tongue and "racial origin" of the Canadian population ten years of age and over (the 1921 census was the first to include such data). Using this method of calculation, I make two assumptions: (1) that most Eastern Ukrainians at the time would define their "race" (ethnicity) as Russian and their mother tongue as a dialect of the Russian language, and (2) that the proportion of native Russian speakers in the general population was the same as it was among Canadians ten years of age or older. According to the census returns, in 1921 Canada had 67,120 persons ten years of age and over that reported their "racial origin" as Russian. Of these, however, only 33,856 (50.4 percent) said they spoke Russian as their mother tongue (the majority of the rest were Russian German immigrants). Applying this proportion to the entire Canadian population (i.e., including children under ten years of age), we arrive at the total of 50,432 individuals of Russian origin who also presumably spoke Russian as their mother tongue. This figure should be further reduced by 12,674—the number of Canadian Doukhobors, who, as ethnic Russians, would also have reported themselves as native Russian speakers. The resulting number of 37,758 still included nationalities other than Ukrainians—primarily Belarusians, who also identified themselves as Russians at the time, and perhaps a thousand or two of Russians proper. It would be fair to assume that about 25,000–26,000 were of Ukrainian origin. This estimate is based on the data from the Li-Ra-Ma Collection, which shows that Russian-born Ukrainians outnumbered Belarusians in Canada by a ratio of three to one.

and Halifax (continuing to New York) was run by the Russian America Line, a subsidiary of the Russian East-Asiatic Steamship Company.

15. See Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, vol. 2, table 81, "Mother tongue of the population 10 years of age and over, exclusive of aborigines, by specific origins, for provinces, 1921," 582–3.
It is important to emphasize that these calculations are of an approximate character (as are, indeed, all statistical estimates pertaining to early twentieth-century Canadian Ukrainians). There is a possibility that not only Eastern Ukrainians, but also some “Russophile” Galicians and Bukovynians may have reported themselves as persons of Russian origin speaking a dialect of Russian, thus inflating the size of the group. We also do not know how many Ukrainians from Russia were listed under their proper—Ukrainian—heading (although from what we know about the ethnic self-identity of the immigrants this figure was likely to be small).

### Table 1: Geographic Origins of Ukrainian Immigration from the Russian Empire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gubernia of Origin</th>
<th>Percentage of the Li-Ra-Ma Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podillia</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volyn</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessarabia</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chernihiv</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.2*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian sample

* Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

As table 1 demonstrates, peasant emigration in Eastern Ukraine developed primarily in regions west of the Dnieper River. The three Right-Bank gubernias (Podillia, Volyn, and Kiev), along with Khotyn county of Bessarabia, gave 96.5 percent of all persons that appear in the sample, with Podillia standing out as by far the largest donor area. In many villages and towns of Podillia emigration after 1910–11 quickly became a phenomenon common enough to be routinely reported in emigrant family correspondence, which has been preserved in many Li-Ra-Ma files. The sister of Avraam Savchuk, a peasant from Hryniivtsi in the northwestern corner of the gubernia, wrote to him in 1911 that emigration from the village had reached such proportions that “if someone leaves, [it is] always to America.” In another letter, sent in

16. Letter to Avraam Savchuk from parents and sister, 11 November 1911, Li-Ra-Ma Collection, file 12347.
1913, she reported that “[many] lads have gone to America, and Uncle Filipp’s [son?] Tereshko has been away [in America] already for a year and a half and has already sent money twice, and Uncle has already bought a pair of horses.”

In Left-Bank and Southern Ukraine peasant emigration never reached levels comparable to those exhibited by the Right-Bank gubernias. The northernmost part of Chernihiv gubernia (the counties of Novozybkov and Surazh), which contained large pockets of Belarusian population mixed with Ukrainians, was the only area in the Left Bank that developed intensive chain migration to North America. Among the few donor territories outside the Right Bank were also Sumy county of Kharkiv gubernia and Ananiv county of Kherson gubernia. All these localities together accounted for only a minuscule proportion of the migrants in the Li-Ra-Ma sample.

Considerable variations in migration rates by county were common throughout Ukraine. The topography of Eastern Ukrainian emigration was characterized by a patchy distribution of donor areas, with counties of heavy emigration surrounded by ones with very little or no emigration. Thus, in Podillia emigration developed primarily in the counties of Kamianets, Nova Ushytsia, Liatychiv, and Proskuriv, all adjacent to the Austrian border. Kamianets produced by far the largest migrant stream: with a population of less than nine percent of the gubernia’s total (as of 1897), it gave a whopping 69.7 percent of its emigrants and over thirty percent of all emigrants who reported their county of origin. Khotyn county in Bessarabia ranks a distant second with 12.4 percent. Two other large pockets of high emigration emerged in the southwestern part of Kiev gubernia (at the junction of Uman, Lypovets, and Tarashcha counties) and in Kovel county in northern Volyn. A survey conducted by the Volyn gubernial zemstvo revealed that emigration from Kovel in 1910 alone almost equalled the total number of county residents who had migrated to Siberia during the years 1906–11. Five counties represented in the sample by more than a hundred migrants each—Kamianets, Khotyn, Uman, Tarashcha, and Lypovets—constitute only 8.8 percent of the total number of counties but collectively account for almost two-thirds

17. Letter to Avraam Savchuk from sister, 24 November 1913, Li-Ra-Ma Collection, file 12348.
of all the emigrants. In most cases villages and parishes of heavy emigration formed compact clusters. Thus, in northern Bessarabia, over two-thirds of the major emigration villages were concentrated in the western part of Khotyn county within a radius of ten to fifteen miles. The same pattern existed in the south central part of Kiev gubernia. As in other parts of eastern Europe, labour emigration in Dnieper Ukraine tended to develop almost exclusively in counties and localities far away from the pull of large cities. With the marked exception of Kamianets-Podilskyi, the smallest and least developed among Ukraine’s gubernial capitals, nowhere did the capital county of a gubernia produce a significant number of emigrants.

It is important to mention here that areas of heaviest overall emigration were not necessarily the earliest donors or vice versa. The wave of peasant migration from Dnieper Ukraine to Canada, according to the Li-Ra-Ma records, does not seem to have spread progressively from its western periphery to the heartland. In fact, many of the earliest emigrants hailed not from Kamianets, Khotyn, or other territories on the empire’s western edge, but from areas farther east, including some localities east of the Dnieper River. Some of these early donors, such as Kiev county, failed to produce particularly large streams of emigrants in later years. While in some areas emigration skyrocketed after 1910–11, in others it remained at low or moderate levels throughout the whole pre-1914 period.

The somewhat erratic temporal and spatial configuration of emigration movement from Eastern Ukraine should not come as a surprise. First of all, one should remember both the relatively late beginning of large-scale peasant emigration movement from these regions and their large territory, which prevented quick diffusion of information about overseas migration opportunities. When the outbreak of war in 1914 brought transatlantic population movements to a halt, emigration in Eastern Ukraine had just begun to develop and was still limited to a relatively small number of pioneer areas. Furthermore, nowhere in east central Europe was labour emigration merely a mechanical process that, once put in motion, continued to operate and expand by itself. Rather, it was subject to substantial changes in both its temporal and spatial modalities under the impact of changing circumstances. The dynamics of emigration in specific localities were contingent on a host of local factors, with economic conditions playing a significant role. Landlessness combined with an excess of agricultural labour and the resulting meagre peasant
income were the root causes of emigration in Dnieper Ukraine, as they were in most other parts of the continent. As can be seen from table 2, in the south central part of Right-Bank Ukraine, characterized by relatively homogenous topography, climate, and soils, emigration was generally higher in areas with smaller peasant landholdings, a greater percentage of dwarf holdings, and higher population density.

The push of poverty alone, however, was not enough to produce an exodus of rural population from a specific area. In Podillia, for instance, large-scale emigration developed primarily in the gubernia’s northwestern counties, characterized by a medium level of economic development and a relatively intensive agriculture, rather than in the most economically advanced northeastern counties (Vinnitsia and Bratslav) or the more backward southern counties (Balta, Olhopil). Moreover, in contrast to the general correlation shown in table 2, in counties with the lowest average size of peasant landholdings, such as Mohyliv and Haisyn, it remained virtually unknown. Analyzing the complex relationship between the economy and migration, one should keep in mind that economic conditions in rural eastern Europe, although generally poor, were seldom so intolerable as to make emigration a matter of physical survival. It usually took other factors (some of which we shall probably never know) to trigger emigration from a specific village or volost—a word dropped by a peddler, a tavern-keeper, or a market vendor, an accidental meeting with a returning emigrant from another area or with a clandestinely operating steamship agent—provided, of course, that there was a group of enterprising souls ready to explore the unknown.

Among the mechanisms that facilitated the extension of emigration networks into new areas and new groups of population a key role belonged to internal work migrations. Thus, mass overseas emigration from the counties of Novozybkov and Surazh in Chernihiv gubernia—the earliest documented case of such emigration from Eastern Ukraine—began around 1895, when Fedor Korotky, a peddler from the village of


20. For a good discussion of the interplay between objective and subjective factors of emigration, see Ewa Morawska, For Bread and Butter: Life-Worlds of East Central Europeans in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, 1890–1940 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 70–1.
Table 2: Early Twentieth-Century Peasant Land Ownership, Population Density, and Emigration in Right-Bank Ukraine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of emigrants in the Li-Ra-Ma sample</th>
<th>Average land-holdings (desiatins), 1905*</th>
<th>Percentage of households with less than 5 desiatins of land</th>
<th>Density of population (persons per sq. km.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamianets</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>126.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khotyn</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>105.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tarashcha</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>100.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lypovets</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uman</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>102.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushytsia</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>106.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proskuriv</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>114.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liatchyiv</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaslav</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubno</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>67.3</td>
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<td>Ostrih</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
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<td>Starokostiantyniv</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>103.6</td>
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<td>Kremianets</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>86.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaniv</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>112.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novohrad-Volynskyi</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skvyra</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation with emigration (Spearman’s rank-order)

| Correlation with emigration | -.658** | .617*** | .528*** |


The table does not include counties represented by less than ten individuals and the northern counties of Volyn, where the agricultural economy was different from the rest of Right-Bank Ukraine due to the colder climate and poorer soils.

* The acreage includes both hereditary allotments and land acquired through individual or collective purchase. 1 desiatin = 2.7 acres.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

** 10.4

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Novi Bobovychi, wandered into Poland, where he heard stories of America from recent returnees and himself decided to embark on an
overseas trip. After spending three years working at a steel factory in Pittsburgh, he returned home and recruited about a dozen of his co-villagers to join him on his next trip. From Novozybkov, the “emigration fever” soon spread to the neighbouring Surazh county.\(^\text{21}\) While the United States remained the main destination of Chernihiv emigrants, some, as the Li-Ra-Ma records show, strayed off the beaten track and headed to Canada.

In some villages of Podillia, peasants learned about overseas migration alternatives during their annual labour-seeking forays to southern Bessarabia, Kherson, and further to the Black Sea. According to Podolianin, a Russian-language daily published in Podillia gubernia, mass peasant emigration from the village of Ivankivtsi near Proskuriv was set off in 1908–9 after one of the villagers, Hnat Pychko, learned about Canada from an unidentified “American entrepreneur,” whom he had chanced to meet in Odesa, Russia’s arguably most cosmopolitan city and a major destination of seasonal migration for Ivankivtsi peasants. Soon Hnat was on his way to Canada, where he reportedly acquired some land “in the city of Saskaton [sic],” “started a business,” and before long began sending “good money” to his family of five, which eventually joined him in Canada.\(^\text{22}\) In a matter of several years, about half of the total population of Ivankivtsi emigrated to Canada, leaving behind mostly children, elders, and women. Apparently, village hearsay did not particularly exaggerate Pychko’s Canadian achievements, as was often the case with emigrant success stories. In the records of the Russian consulate in Vancouver he figures as the owner of a “Pitchko Trading Company” in Dana, Saskatchewan, selling “dry goods, grocery, boots and shoes, crockery, etc.”\(^\text{23}\)

A comparison of statistics published by the Russian Immigrant Home in New York\(^\text{24}\) with data obtained from the Li-Ra-Ma Collection and

\(^{21}\) Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, fond 95, list 6, file 1241, fols. 162–5; and G. Skoropadsky, “Novozybkovskie krestiane v Amerike,” Zemskii sbornik Chernigovskoi gubernii, vol. 11 (1904), 67. Peddling was a common occupation among the peasants of Novozybkov, who had to engage in non-agricultural pursuits because of the poor quality of soil in the area.

\(^{22}\) Podolianin, 29 August 1914.

\(^{23}\) Li-Ra-Ma Collection, file 11061.

\(^{24}\) These statistics, published in Russkii emigrant (New York), 18/31 July 1913, included the geographical origins of 6,677 Russian (primarily Slavic Orthodox) immigrants who received assistance from the Russian Immigrant Home. According to these
other sources suggests that Canada was a far more popular destination for natives of Podillia and northern Bessarabia than it was for peasants from Kiev and especially Volyn, where a larger proportion of emigrants went to the United States. This configuration of migration routes in the southwestern part of Dnieper Ukraine obviously had much to do with the close contacts that existed between it and the Austrian provinces of Galicia and Bukovyna, the birthplace of most of Canada’s early twentieth-century Ukrainians. The boundary line that separated the two increasingly hostile multinational empires bore little significance for the daily lives of the local peasants, who spoke the same language and shared a common cultural space. Podillian and Bessarabian peasants crossed it on a regular basis with so-called “legitimating passes” (legitimsationnye bilety) in order to visit the nearest city market (which often happened to be in the other country), conduct a business transaction, track their lost or stolen cattle, or even (according to one legitimating pass attached to a Li-Ra-Ma file) to see a doctor.\footnote{Legitimating passes, obtainable from volost authorities in counties adjacent to the border, allowed their holders to cross the border legally and stay in Austria-Hungary up to four weeks. See “Ustav o pasportakh,” sec. 2 (“O pasportakh zagranichnykh, propuske cherez granitsu i pogranichnykh soobschentiaakh”), Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, vol. 14 (St. Petersburg, 1903), 55-6.} Many Galicians, in turn, worked as seasonal farm labourers on the other side of the border.\footnote{M. N. Leshchenko, Ukrainske selo v revoliutsii 1905–1907 rr. (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1977), 59.} The result of this intermingling was the emergence of trans-border communication networks, which facilitated the exchange of information about migration opportunities. Local marketplaces, which drew together large numbers of peasants, merchants, peddlers, and brokers from both countries, were among the most important venues for such exchange.\footnote{The key role of marketplaces in disseminating emigration information has been noted, for instance, by historians of Italian labour migration. See Donna Gabaccia, Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 14.} “It has long been observed here that residents of Austrian villages adjacent to the border come on market days to the market square of Novyi Plan [in Kamianets-Podilskyi] and recruit peasants to cross the border without government
passports,” complained Podolianin. Occasionally Novyi Plan witnessed spontaneous gatherings of people attracted by tellers of “American stories.” In early August 1913, police had to be called in to disperse a particularly large crowd that gathered to listen to Ivan Pytak, a peasant from the town of Novoselytsia and a recent returnee from America.

The intermingling of various ethnic and religious groups in Ukraine played a similar role in the formation of migration networks. The relationship between ethnic diversity and emigration, observed in other regions of eastern Europe, was no less true for the western frontier of the Russian Empire. As Josef Barton pointed out in his study of Slovak, Italian, and Romanian immigrants in Cleveland, the “great mixture of peoples—even within a single village—exposed different segments of the population to different economic and social pressures and also provided some individuals with special resources.” Groups that led the way in overseas migration—usually persecuted minorities—often served as transmitters of information to the rest of the local population. As a result, areas characterized by the presence of one or more of such groups were more likely to become early donors than those with a more homogeneous population.

As elsewhere in eastern Europe, word about “America” often spread to the Ukrainian peasantry through local Jewish merchants, peddlers, moneylenders, and steamship agents. While in the early 1900s the Eastern Ukrainian peasantry was still barely touched by emigration, Jews in Ukraine already had a highly developed migration culture and well-functioning information networks. In some localities, it was German colonists or religious dissenters that acted as trailblazers. Thus, Savva Prokopenko from Sumy county in Kharkiv gubernia was forced to leave Russia in 1899 because of his conversion to Lev Tolstoy’s teachings. “I would have remained a [Russian] Orthodox,” he explained to the Russian consul in 1918, “if I had not realized that the so-called Orthodox faith was just one of many sects, only a dominant one.” Having arrived in Canada with his wife and four children, he became a British subject in 1905 (“out of sad necessity,” as he put it) in order to secure title to a homestead near Kamsack, Saskatchewan, next to a large Doukhobor

28. Podolianin, 23 March 1913.
29. Podolianin, 9 August 1913.
colony.\textsuperscript{31} After Prokopenko, other peasants from Sumy began to emigrate to Canada, making that county one of the few donor areas east of the Dnieper. The largest group of Ukrainian religious exiles, however, were the Baptists, scattered in small enclaves across much of Dnieper Ukraine and increasingly persecuted by church and secular authorities. In 1894 one of the first large parties of Ukrainian Baptists left their native Tarashcha county in Kiev gubernia, crossed the Atlantic and formed compact settlements in North Dakota, soon to be followed by new groups of co-religionists. According to the 1920 U.S. census, the Slavic Baptist population of the Dakotas exceeded 11,000.\textsuperscript{32} Smaller colonies of Ukrainian Baptists also sprang up in Kentucky, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

The first reported Baptist emigrants from Dnieper Ukraine came to Canada around 1899.\textsuperscript{33} Until 1914 small groups of Baptists continued to trickle into Canada from Kiev and other gubernias of Ukraine and southern Russia. Thus, in April 1907, \textit{Rada}, Russia’s largest Ukrainian-language newspaper, mentioned the departure of three Baptist families from the city of Kiev and six from the nearby town of Borodianka (about thirty people in total), who went to Canada by way of Libava.\textsuperscript{34} Three years later, twelve Baptist families from Kherson and Stavropol came to Alberta and were granted homesteads near Monitor.\textsuperscript{35} Similar to Doukhobors and other religious exiles, Ukrainian and Russian Baptists usually arrived in family units and settled on the land in one of the Prairie provinces instead of drifting towards the industrial centres as did the majority of immigrant workers. That the Baptist exodus probably served as a catalyst to mass peasant migration from some Ukrainian localities can be seen from the fact that Tarashcha and Kiev, both counties with a relatively large Baptist presence, also figure among the earliest donor areas in the entire Ukraine. The Li-Ra-Ma sample data

\textsuperscript{31} Prokopenko’s questionnaire and letter to the consul, 14 August 1917, Li-Ra-Ma Collection, file 2955.


\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Rada}, 11 April 1907.

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Russkoe slovo} (New York), 9 July 1918.
show that 9.4 percent of all emigrants from Tarashcha came to Canada prior to 1911, while the corresponding figure for Ukraine as a whole is 6.5 percent. Contemporary press reports also demonstrate that peasants in Tarashcha caught the “emigration fever” earlier than peasants in many other areas of Eastern Ukraine. A survey conducted by a peasant court official (mirovoi posrednik) in one of Tarashcha parishes in summer 1907 found that over 400 of its residents were overseas as wage workers, and some had already sent for their wives and children.36 The town of Tetiiv (western Tarashcha county) became one of the earliest senders of emigrants to Canada. By 1913 so many of its residents had been to “America” that, according to the correspondent of Rada, it was “not surprising to see a man with a scythe in his hands, wearing American fashion shoes, a bowler hat and a gentleman’s suit.”37 By contrast, Kiev county, after sending out a few early fortune seekers, seems to never have risen to the rank of a major emigration area. In the Li-Ra-Ma sample it is represented only by eight individuals, all of whom hailed from Borodianka or its environs.38

Demography

The composite demographic profile of Eastern Ukrainian immigrants in Canada that emerges from the Li-Ra-Ma sample can be considered typical of the early phase of labour migration in eastern and southern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The overwhelming majority of the cash-seekers were young or middle-aged men who left their villages with the intention to return after a working stint in “America.”39 As table 3 demonstrates, men between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine had the highest propensity to migrate. The migrant population, however, included men of various ages, from sixteen-year-old lads, who often went to Canada with their older brothers or other

36. Rada, 13 September 1907.
37. Rada, 1 August 1913.
38. Li-Ra-Ma Collection, files 1270, 2853, 6062, 6069, 6179, 6907, 7824, 7847.
39. Unfortunately, the nature of the Li-Ra-Ma records, in which women are greatly underrepresented, does not allow me to establish the ratio of females in the migrant stream or the demography of female migration from Eastern Ukraine. According to other information available to me (including the records of Russian Orthodox parishes in Montreal, Winnipeg and Windsor), the number of single women among Eastern Ukrainian migrants was negligible.
relatives, to persons who would be considered seniors by the standards of the early twentieth-century peasant society.

Despite their young age, most immigrants were married. In the Li-Ra-Ma sample 64.8 percent of the persons were married, 33.7 percent single, and the remainder widowed or divorced. A comparison of 1897 Russian census statistics on the marital status of rural males between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine with the Li-Ra-Ma data for the same age group reveals that in most of the gubernias the proportion of married persons among male emigrants was higher—sometimes by a fair margin—than it was in the male rural population in general. As in other countries of eastern and central Europe, many young men went to “America” shortly after contracting a marriage, sometimes before the birth of the first child, in hopes of creating a nest-egg and giving their families a head start. 76.9 percent of the emigrants had fulfilled their military service before leaving the country—a figure that does not square with the popular stereotype that escaping military service was a common motive for emigration from tsarist Russia.

While the majority of the immigrants were married, relatively few brought their families to Canada—a clear indication of the lack of intention to take root in the country. In 1917-18, when the majority of the files in the Li-Ra-Ma sample were created, only 7.3 percent of the migrants lived in Canada with wives and children. The proportion of individuals with families was significantly higher among earlier arrivals, although we seldom know whether the wives came to Canada with their husbands, joined them later, or married in Canada. In any case, among

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40. The 1897 census breaks down data on the age and marital status of the population within each gubernia by county. Within each county, figures for cities (goroda) and the rest of the county territory are given separately. It is the latter data that are used in the table. Unfortunately, the census does not tabulate age and marital status by mother tongue or by social estate (soslovie). This, however, should not seriously affect the validity of these data for the purposes of our analysis, because (a) the only numerically significant minority group in most of Ukraine’s rural areas were the Jews, who generally married at about the same age as Slavic peasants and (b) the proportion of social estates other than peasants (krestiane) and townsmen (meshchane) in the non-urban population was very small.

41. This figure was computed solely on the basis of cases which contain “sworn affidavits.” Although questionnaires occasionally also have information on the place of residence of the person’s family, it was not specifically solicited and therefore was provided only sporadically and at one’s own choice.

42. Some Li-Ra-Ma files hold a special short affidavit (different from the one described above) that does contain information on the place of marriage, but the number of such
Table 3: Age of the Immigrants at the Time of Arrival in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Percentage of the total number of immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 1,284 100.4*

Source: Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian sample.
* Percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 4: Marital Status of Li-Ra-Ma Migrants Compared with Marital Status of General Population in Gubernias of Origin (Men between 20 and 29 Years of Age Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gubernia</th>
<th>Li-Ra-Ma Migrants, %</th>
<th>General Population outside Cities, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bessarabia (Khotyn)</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podillia</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volyn</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources for column 1: Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian sample; for column 2: 1897 census, table V, “Distribution of Population by Marital Status and Age Group;” 3: 31; 8: 28; 16: 28; 32: 32.

those who arrived between 1900 and 1910, persons with resident families constituted thirty-one percent compared to only 6.7 percent among migrants who came in 1911–1914. The proportion of family migration exhibited some variation by gubernia. It was highest (11.3 percent)
among immigrants from Bessarabia and lowest (4.5 percent) among the natives of Kiev. To use the title of Robert Harney’s important article, Eastern Ukrainian labourers in Canada were, like their Italian co-workers, “men without women,” migrant sojourners separated from their female kin—temporarily, as most of them hoped.\textsuperscript{43} Emotional and business ties with those left behind were maintained through letters, photographs, and money orders, which did not cease to flow across the Atlantic even in the worst months of the First World War.

**Literacy**

The level of literacy among eastern and southern Europeans who arrived in Canada in the early twentieth century has been an intriguing but difficult subject for historians to study, as little statistical data on it has survived (or was collected) on either side of the ocean. Literacy was not a formal requirement for admission to Canada and was not checked or recorded by immigration inspectors at the port of arrival until after the First World War. The Li-Ra-Ma Collection and the 1897 census are the only sources of data that allow us not only to gauge the level of literacy among the Ukrainian labour emigrants but also to compare it with the literacy of the general peasant population in the main gubernias of origin.

The literacy of the emigrants at the moment of their departure from Ukraine can be assessed from Russian travel documents constituting the Passport File. On receipt of their foreign or internal passport, literate persons were required to sign it. An individual who could not sign his or her name was deemed illiterate, and a note to this effect was made in the passport. Thus, literacy was understood by the passport-issuing authorities as the ability to both read and write, at the very least, to write one’s own name. From the figures in the left column of table 5, based on the Passport File data, we can see that emigrating men displayed a significantly higher level of literacy than the general male population of a similar age in the main donor gubernias.\textsuperscript{44} It is hardly surprising that the


\textsuperscript{44} In the 1897 census, as opposed to the emigration passports, literacy meant the ability to read but not write. If writing ability had been taken as the criterion of literacy, the census literacy figures would have certainly been even lower, as reading is normally learned prior to writing. Conversely, if the emigrants’ literacy had been assessed on the basis of their reading ability, we would likely have had a higher percentage of literates. In either case, there would have been an even larger gap between the emigrants and the
emigration movement recruited the more educated and astute among the peasantry. Literate men had access to more sources of information about the world beyond the pale of the village and were more inclined to explore new economic strategies. The ability to read and write (if only in the language of their home country) also gave them an advantage over their illiterate comrades by increasing the range of their opportunities and making them less vulnerable to swindling and abuse. Literacy was even more important when emigration from a country was still in its early stages (as it was in our case), with few community support networks available to the pioneers in the destination country.

The level of immigrant literacy often increased after several years spent in Canada. The need to function in a foreign environment, to perform previously unfamiliar tasks such as signing a job contract or a payroll, depositing money in a bank, sending money orders, and last but not least, corresponding with the family at home created a pressure for at least an elementary level of literacy that had not been as urgent in the old country. Living for months in a company bunkhouse next to more educated compatriots provided a good opportunity to master at least the basics of reading and writing. Some may also have attended Sunday courses organized by Frontier College or by various religious missions that proselytized among foreign workers, although the itinerant lifestyle of the majority of the migrants was hardly conducive to that kind of learning. The correspondence between Ukrainian immigrants and the Russian consuls contains evidence that some of the former illiterates indeed learned to write during their Canadian sojourn. Thus, writing a letter to the Russian consul general on behalf of his illiterate comrades, Adam Shpyruk from Rakiv Lis, Volyn, apologized for his poor grammar, “because [it is only] here [that] I have learned to write a little.”

general population. (That said, one wonders how many individuals there were among the Li-Ra-Ma migrants whose writing skills did not go beyond the ability to scribble their name.) At the same time, however, it would be fair to assume that in the decade between the 1897 census and the beginning of mass peasant emigration the general level of literacy in the two youngest age groups of the peasant population had increased thanks to Russia’s improving educational system and more positive peasant attitudes towards education. Although it almost certainly would not have grown significantly enough to approach the level of literacy among the emigrants, the difference between the two in the early 1910s may have been smaller than the difference that emerges from the 1897 data.

45. Adam Shpiruk to the consul, 18 August 1918, Li-Ra-Ma Collection, file 8449 (Potap Panasiuk file).
data in the second column of table 5 represent the percentage of individuals who were able to sign their questionnaires or affidavits with their full name (the illiterates either put a cross mark or were identified as such by the person who filled out the form on their behalf).

Table 5: Comparative Literacy of Li-Ra-Ma Emigrants and Male Peasant Population in Major Gubernias of Origin (% of literates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gubernia of Origin</th>
<th>Passport File</th>
<th>Li-Ra-Ma Sample</th>
<th>1897 census (ages 10-29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podillia</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volyn</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources for column 1: Passport File; for column 2: Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian sample; for column 3: 1897 census, table IX, “Distribution of Population by Literacy, Education, Social Estate and Age Groups;” 8: 54; 16: 54; 32: 60.
* Other gubernias of origin are represented in the Passport File and/or Li-Ra-Ma sample by too few cases to provide a reasonable level of statistical significance.

Ethnicity and Religion

The religious and ethnic composition of the emigration movement reflected in its main features that of the donor territories. The analysis of personal names (in conjunction with other objective ethnic indicators) shows that ethnic Ukrainians constituted an overwhelming majority of the Li-Ra-Ma migrants, with Poles being the only numerically significant minority group. Compared to the Ukrainian immigrants, the Poles had (as they did in the general population) a larger proportion of town residents and skilled tradesmen. 90.7 percent of the migrants were of Russian Orthodox faith, 5.4 percent were Roman Catholics (almost exclusively Poles), and 3.9 percent belonged to various minor denominations (mostly Protestant). A few individuals called themselves simply Christian.46

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46. There are a few persons recorded as being of greko-katolicheskaia (Greek Catholic) faith, but since the real Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church had been abolished in Dnieper Ukraine in 1839, these most probably were misnomers caused by the confusing terminology used by the Russian Orthodox Church, whose official name was “the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church” (katholikos, of course, means ‘universal’ in Greek).
The ethnic self-identification of most of the emigrants was, however, notably different from the picture obtained by using the so-called objective criteria of ethnicity. Asked to indicate their nationality (in the ethnic meaning of the term), 75 percent, including even several individuals with distinctly Polish names, identified themselves—or were recorded by clerks—as Russians. Among the rest, 16.1 percent were recorded as Little Russians (malorossy), 2.7 percent as Poles, and eight individuals (1.2 percent) as Ukrainians. About five percent apparently did not understand the question, which bore little relevance to the life-world of an early twentieth-century peasant, and either interpreted “nationality” in religious terms, reporting themselves as Christian, Orthodox, or Catholic, or replied that they were peasants.

While in some cases identifying oneself as a Little Russian (as opposed to simply Russian) might indicate a somewhat higher degree of ethnic self-awareness, more often it was probably an illustration of multiple identity. As Paul Magocsi has pointed out, Dnieper Ukrainians usually considered themselves to be both Russians and Little Russians, or Russians from Little Russia (russkie iz Malorossii). These identities were not arranged in a rigid order of preference and their use depended on the situation. There is no reason to believe that this self-perception changed significantly after a few years spent in Canada, particularly given the lack of Eastern Ukrainians’ involvement in organized Ukrainian life in Canada. Even after the demise of the tsarist monarchy in 1917 and the rise of national movements on the fringes of the former Russian Empire the majority of migrants apparently continued to subscribe to the old concept of Russian nation comprising Little Russians, White Russians, and Russians proper.

Social and Occupational Structure

The vast majority of Ukrainian immigrants from tsarist Russia came from the peasant class and belonged to the peasant estate (krestianskoe soslovie). Even those who reported themselves as townsmen—a category that included lower-class town and city dwellers—often reported farming

47. It is also probable that some confused the two etymologically related Russian words khristianskaia (Christian) and krestianskaia (peasant), which are pronounced in a similar way.

as their occupation. This is not surprising given the rural character of most Ukrainian towns. There were virtually no emigrants who were born in cities or belonged to the class of industrial workers (seasonal work aside). An examination of police registration stamps in the internal passports attached to some Li-Ra-Ma files shows that only a very small number of the emigrating peasants had experience as seasonal workers in railroad construction in either European Russia, the Far East, or in the factories of Katerynoslav, Odesa, and Donetsk. But these seasonal peasant-workers, embedded in the rural mode of life, were far from urban proletarians.

Just what segments of the rural population were the principal sources of the emigration movement is difficult to determine with precision on the basis of the available evidence. Unfortunately, we have no systematic data on the economic status of individual emigrants’ families (the amount of real estate or livestock they owned). From the evidence scattered through the voluminous correspondence between the emigrants and the Russian consuls and the family letters to the emigrants it appears that, as elsewhere on the continent, most of the emigrants were drawn from the middle or lower-middle strata of the peasantry; that is, families that owned a house with a back garden, several desiatins of land, and one or two horses or oxen, but still operated basically within a subsistence rather than a profit economy. According to one report in Rada, in Chernihiv gubernia emigration often was the alternative chosen by peasants who had failed, because of poverty and harassment by hostile neighbours, to establish themselves as individual farmers on a khutir. An examination of one-year travel passes and long-term internal passports, which carry information on the holder’s “type of occupation” (rod zaniatii) in Ukraine, showed that 44.6 percent of the migrants were engaged in farming (khlebopashestvo or zemledelie), 45.7 percent were general labourers (chernorabochie), 6.8 percent were artisans, and 1.1 percent were employed in “service.” There were also a teacher and a musician. The migrant stream also included a tiny number of impoverished gentry (dvoriane), primarily of Polish origin.

49. Rada, 1 June 1913.
50. In Russian chernorabochii, literally ‘black worker,’ refers to any kind of unskilled labour (agricultural or industrial) that does not require special skill or training.
51. Iakov Iatsimirsky from Stara Ushysia (Li-Ra-Ma file 4550) and Lukian Rakhalsky from Bershad (file 4008) were of noble background and came to Montreal in 1913 as migrant workers.
One should, however, be cautious in interpreting this data, particularly as far as the difference between farmers and labourers is concerned. With wage work being a normal part of life in the early twentieth-century Ukrainian villages, the line between these two categories of peasants was generally less than clear-cut. It is not improbable that in many cases those designated as labourers were poorer peasants with a dwarf land allotment who earned their living primarily by working as farmhands (and/or in seasonal industrial jobs). It is also possible that, depending on the judgment of the parish clerk or on the self-identification of the passport applicant, peasants of roughly the same economic standing were in some cases classified as labourers and in other cases as farmers. Thus there is good reason to believe that some farmers were also labourers engaged in seasonal hired work (in or outside the village). Conversely, many labourers could be called farmers, for they still cultivated a small piece of land.

One of the most salient features of Eastern Ukrainian emigration to Canada, which would have important implications for the shaping of the immigrant communities, was the all but complete absence of a middle-class or educated stratum (ethnic intelligentsia) in the migrant stream. In this regard, “Russian” Ukraine was notably different from Galicia, where emigration included a thin, but visible stream of schoolteachers, priests, and other intelligentsia, who along with the rising class of ethnic entrepreneurs soon became leaders in their immigrant communities and the chief promoters of Ukrainian national consciousness. The explanation of this difference lies in the peculiarities of the ethno-social structure of the Russian Empire, in which Ukrainians as well as Belarusians were “submerged” nationalities: both were considered branches of the triune “Russian nation” and deprived of even such limited political, cultural, and religious self-expression as the Poles, Finns, Germans, and even Jews were allowed to enjoy. This led not only to a low sense of national consciousness among the Ukrainian masses but also to a lack of an ethnic elite (commercial, intellectual, and religious) capable of providing leadership in the process of national consolidation either at home or abroad. Refugee revolutionaries and socialists were something of an


53. On national identity in early twentieth-century Eastern Ukraine, see Bohdan Krawchenko, Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine
exception; yet even among them there were relatively few ethnic Ukrainians or persons who identified themselves with Ukraine rather than Russia.

**Migration Routes**

The process of migration necessarily involved decisions of a logistical nature: where to go, when to leave, how and where to cross the border, and what steamship line to use. The experiences of earlier travellers and information received from steamship agents provided the necessary guidelines for planning one’s itinerary and weighing different available options. For some migrants the security of the legal status that came with the possession of a government passport was worth the substantial expense of time and money involved in procuring it, while for others an illegal passage was quicker and more efficient. Similarly, some preferred the convenient but relatively expensive non-stop trip to Halifax in the familiar cultural environment of the Russian America Line, the only direct steamship line that connected Russia to North America, while others chose the cheapest means of transportation.

It is important to point out that although leaving the country for an indefinite period of time or in an unauthorized way was a legal offence according to Russia’s 1903 Code of Punishments, in practice emigration in early twentieth-century Russia acquired a sort of quasi-legitimacy and was allowed to develop without much impediment or control on the part of the authorities. Most emigrants slipped through the loosely patrolled border illegally without bothering to apply for government passports. Only 22.4 percent of the Li-Ra-Ma migrants left with passports in their pockets. Of the remaining three quarters, 3.3 percent (all of them residents of Podillia and Bessarabia) left in a quasi-legal way, using legitimating passes to cross into Austria. Many “illegals,” however, hedged their risks by making sure they carried at least some kind of papers in order to prove their identity if need arose. Usually it was internal passports (17.1 percent), in some cases parish birth records or certificates of military status (voennye bilety).

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The proportion of emigrants who reported possessing a government passport varied greatly from gubernia to gubernia. Kiev appears to have had the largest number of legal travellers (50.2 percent), while Bessarabia had the lowest, a meagre 1.5 percent. The explanation for the variation in legal emigrants from different donor gubernias should be sought primarily in the local configuration of migrant networks, which was shaped by geography as well as the business connections of local emigration and steamship agents.\(^5\) As I have mentioned, in counties adjacent to the border peasants had greater access to resources that enabled them to slip across the border with relative ease and minimal risk. Smuggling emigrants across the border was a flourishing and well-organized business in the empire’s southwest corner. \(\textit{Podolianin}\) reported in the summer of 1913 that smuggling goods from Austria, which used to be the favourite trade for many local inhabitants, had been replaced by the more lucrative business of transporting emigrants across the Zbruch River (which formed the natural boundary between Russia and Austria) for a fee of six to ten rubles per person. \(^6\) While crossing on one’s own was not uncommon, most crossings were arranged through steamship agents, who, in turn, hired trusted locals as guides. There were many ways of crossing the border, from wading across the shallow waters of the Zbruch with bundles of personal belongings on one’s shoulders to hiding under heaps of hay, sacks of flour, or other cargo in carts and wagons. Bribing border guards appears to have been a common practice as well. On the other side of the border the travellers were usually met by another agent who arranged their transportation through Austria and/or Germany to the port of departure. Dozens of agent networks, organized in a chain-like pattern, functioned along the Austro-Russian border. \(^7\)

An examination of data on the ports of exit found in a portion of Li-Ra-Ma files shows that the proportion of legal emigrants (i.e. those possessing a passport) in each gubernia was directly related to one’s itinerary. Thus, Podillia and Bessarabia, which had the largest ratios of illegal emigration, also had the highest proportion of travellers sailing

\(^5\) A good illustration of this is emigration from Podillia, which went primarily through Hamburg, Bremen, and Rotterdam, although Libava was located either closer to or at an equal distance from most of the high emigration areas in that gubernia.

\(^6\) \textit{Podolianin}, 23 March 1913.

from Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and other western European ports, where no passport regulations were in force. By contrast, Volyn, Kiev, and Chernihiv, which had a larger share of emigrants departing through Libava, also had a higher percentage of emigrants carrying passports. Not all legal migrants, however, left through Libava. Many crossed the border by land and headed to western European ports. Ukrainian emigration through Russia’s Pacific ports was insignificant and limited mostly to natives of the Left Bank.

**Canadian Destinations**

Statistics of the territorial distribution of the Ukrainian immigrants in Canada obtained from the Li-Ra-Ma sample should not be taken at face value, for it is possible that persons who lived near to one of the two consulates (in Quebec, Ontario, or British Columbia) are overrepresented in the consular files. It is also obvious that the very term “territorial distribution,” relatively unproblematic in the case of agricultural settlers, loses its definiteness when applied to transient migrant sojourners, who frequently changed their place of residence. Still, the sample provides a better general picture of the immigrants’ main destinations and places of settlement in Canada than do federal census statistics, which lump Eastern Ukrainians with other ethnic groups in the portmanteau category of Russians. Even more importantly, it allows us to link the migrants’ places of origin in Ukraine with their Canadian destinations and thus identify transoceanic migration chains.

As table 6 demonstrates, after their arrival in Canada, most Eastern Ukrainians streamed into Ontario and Quebec, whose burgeoning manufacturing and resource industries provided ample employment opportunities. Western Canada, which attracted about fourteen percent of the Li-Ra-Ma migrants, held much less appeal for Ukrainians from the tsarist empire than for Galicians and Bukovynians. Thus, Winnipeg, admittedly the most Ukrainian-populated of all Canadian cities at the time, was reported as the place of residence by only 3.5 percent of the Ukrainians in the Li-Ra-Ma sample (although it is likely that Manitoba residents, because of their geographic location, are the least represented in the Li-Ra-Ma records).
Table 6: Patterns of Canadian Settlement of Ukrainian-Born Persons from the Li-Ra-Ma Sample (percentage of the total number of emigrants from a gubernia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canadian Province of Residence</th>
<th>Gubernia of Origin in Ukraine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bessarabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Li-Ra-Ma Ukrainian sample.

Two other popular destinations for Ukrainians from Galicia and Bukovyna—the coastal part of British Columbia and Ontario’s Lakehead district—also had few natives of Eastern Ukraine.

The most popular urban destination for “Russian” Ukrainians in early twentieth-century Canada was Montreal, reported as place of residence by about forty percent of the Li-Ra-Ma migrants. Large numbers of immigrant labourers from Eastern Ukraine, mixed with Galicians and Bukovynians, Belarusians, Poles, and other eastern Europeans, lived in Point St. Charles, the Hochelaga-Frontenac area, along the St. Lawrence Boulevard, and in the city’s largest industrial suburb of Lachine. Ukrainian immigrants from Volyn and Kiev were instrumental in organizing the Holy Trinity Orthodox Brotherhood and the Russian Orthodox parish of SS Peter and Paul, founded in 1906 and located until 1914 in a small rented house in Point St. Charles. The second largest urban concentration of Eastern Ukrainians, who, like the immigrants from Western Ukraine, settled primarily in the city’s St. John

58. Archives of the SS Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Montreal, “Metricheskaia zapis chlenov P[ravoslavnogo] Br[atst]va i Ob[shchest]va Vzaimopomoshchi v g. Montreal, Canada, organizovannogo[go] 13 mar. 1906 g.” The Russian consul in Canada N. Struve was elected honorary president of the brotherhood. I would like to thank Rev. Alexander Janowski for giving me access to this document.
Ward and, increasingly, in the Junction area. In 1916 a handful of Toronto’s Orthodox Ukrainians and Belarusians organized the parish of the Resurrection of Christ, which soon fell victim to the anti-clerical impulse of the Russian revolution but was revived in 1921 under the name of Christ the Saviour.\textsuperscript{59} Hamilton and Windsor were two other important destinations for immigrants from Dnieper Ukraine. The influx of immigrant labourers to Windsor increased dramatically when the Ford Motor Company built a plant there in 1904. According to one source, in 1915 Ford City (the part of today’s Windsor where the Ford Motor works was located) had about one thousand “Russians” (that is, eastern Slav immigrants from Russia).\textsuperscript{60} In 1917 the city’s Slavic immigrants established a Russian Orthodox parish named after St. John the Divine.\textsuperscript{61} Small communities of migrant labourers from Eastern Ukraine could also be found in many smaller industrial centres of the Great Lakes region, such as Welland, St. Catharines, and Sarnia, and in the mining and logging areas of northern Ontario.

A statistical comparison of the migrants’ places of origin with their Canadian destinations reveals different settlement preferences displayed by immigrants from specific regions of Eastern Ukraine. Thus, Ukrainians from Bessarabia were heavily concentrated in Montreal and Ford City. In the latter place they accounted for about three-fourths of all Ukrainian immigrants from Russia. They were also more likely than natives of other provinces to go to Nova Scotia.\textsuperscript{62} At the same time, only 5.6 percent of the 246 Bessarabians represented in the Li-Ra-Ma sample lived in Toronto and very few were found in the Prairie provinces or British Columbia. Ukrainians from Kiev and Volyn were more evenly distributed across the Canadian provinces. Volynians displayed the greatest preference for Prairie destinations of all Dnieper Ukrainians. While a few may have settled on the land, most worked as loggers, navvies, or farmhands in Le Pas, Manitoba, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and other Prairie


\textsuperscript{60} Novyi mir (New York), 18 October 1915.

\textsuperscript{61} Archives of the Archdiocese of Canada, Orthodox Church in America, baptismal records and collection book of the Russian Orthodox Church of St. John the Divine, Windsor, 1917–21.

\textsuperscript{62} See also John Huk, Strangers in the Land: The Ukrainian Presence in Cape Breton. (n.p., n.d.), 12.
towns and counties, or tried their hand as miners in the collieries of the Crow’s Nest Pass. The North Battleford district in west central Saskatchewan was the most popular Prairie destination for Russian-born immigrants of various nationalities and religions, including not only Orthodox Ukrainians, but also Doukhobors, Baptists, and Germans.

* * *

As a borderland territory, located at the intersection of the Atlantic (westward-oriented) and Russo-Siberian (eastward-oriented) migration systems, early twentieth-century Dnieper Ukraine experienced the double pull of Siberia and the “American El Dorado.”⁶³ While Left-Bank and Southern Ukraine produced relatively few emigrants, the Right-Bank gubernias, with their closer economic and cultural connections with Europe and a lower degree of integration with the Russian Empire, developed stronger ties to the Atlantic economy and came to play a greater role as suppliers of unskilled labour to the developing Canadian industries.

The majority of Eastern Ukrainians in early twentieth-century Canada were male sojourners who intended to return to their families after achieving the desired amount of savings. The theme of return resonates through the correspondence between the immigrants and the Russian consuls and in letters from the immigrants’ kinfolk in Ukraine. The war, followed by revolution and civil unrest in the homeland, largely foiled these intentions. Despite this, some Russian-subject Ukrainians, who did not fall in the category of “enemy aliens” and were not restricted in their movements, managed to return home after August 1914. Although precise statistics of remigration from Canada to Ukraine will likely never be known, probably as many as several thousand Eastern Ukrainians returned to the homeland between August 1914 and the early 1920s, including members of agricultural and industrial communes that went to Soviet Russia to help build the new socialist economy. The rest eventually crossed the line between sojourning and settling and made Canada their home. The history of this first generation of Eastern Ukrainians in Canada is yet to be written.

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