

The trip that made Lamont County the Cradle of the Ukrainian community in Canada



by Radomir Bilash, courtesy of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Alberta Provincial Council

On September 7, 1891, two fellow villagers from Galicia, Vasyl Ilyniak (later spelled Eleniak) and Iwan Pylypow disembarked from the SS Oregon at Quebec City. They had come to investigate the "Free Lands" that they had heard about in Canada.

The two travelled together as far as Winnipeg, where they came into contact with others from Galicia, but of German origin. From them, they were directed to some of the Galician German settlements in the outlying areas, where they could learn for themselves what "homesteading" was all about. In a short time, they had gotten jobs working for the German homesteaders.

At the end of September, Pylypow and Ilyniak went westward to investigate other regions of Western Canada, to see where it would be best to take up land of their own. They made it as far as Calgary. The land they were shown had no trees, so they returned to Manitoba and continued working for the German farmers at Gretna.

By the end of November, Pylypow



Provisioning for the journey.

had decided to return to Nebyliv to retrieve his family and return to Canada to live. He left Gretna at the beginning of December, and was back in Nebyliv by January 12th, 1892. People came from afar to hear his stories about the land called Canada and its free lands. Eventually 12 families decided to go with him, and plans were made to leave in May. However, Pylypow was arrested in May, purportedly for improprieties in

arranging passage for the other twelve families/householders. The case carried on for several months.

In the meantime, seven householders of the group - Mykhailo Romaniuk, Anton Paish, Dmytro Viznowych, Mykhailo Ilyniak, Vasyl Yatchew, Nykola Tychkowsky, and Iosyp Paish - left for Canada with their families. They arrived in Quebec City in June and made their way to Winnipeg, where they decided

to remain for a while. The main reason for the stop was to allow the men to earn some money, but Mrs. Yatchew was to give birth soon as well and could travel no further. In a short time, though, five of the men left their families behind and made their way to the area north of Edmonton and registered homesteads near a police post about 2 miles east of present-day Fort Saskatchewan.

Then, three of them, Mykhailo Romaniuk, Mykhailo Ilyniak and Dmytro Viznowych, returned to their families in Winnipeg, since they felt they did not have enough resources to stay and develop their homesteads. The other two, Anton Paish and Nykola Tychkowsky, spent the winter at Scotford near the German colony at Bruderheim, nine miles to the east. Paish built a sod house, and

Tichkowsky lived with him until more Nebyliv settlers arrived in the spring. The men who went back to Winnipeg soon reconsidered their choice of land east of Fort Saskatchewan, cancelled their entries, found temporary employment in Winnipeg, and then settled on homesteads in Manitoba.

In the meantime, Iwan Pylypow had spent the fall and winter of 1892 earning money to return with his family to Canada. In the spring of 1893, they and the Stefan Chichak family arrived in Beaver Creek and settled with their fellow villagers from Nebyliv - Paish and Tychkowsky. By the end of the year, Vasyl Ilyniak returned to Nebyliv to retrieve his family and bring them to Canada. When they did so, they chose to join their friends who were homesteading in Southern Manitoba. After several faltering steps, the determination of the two trailblazers Ivan Pylypow and Vasyl Ilyniak and those who followed them was about to take root.

The news was now circulating throughout Nebyliv and beyond: "Go to Canada! Some of our people are already there, near a place called Edmonton, at Edna post office."



A snap-shot of fellow travellers.



A young couple from Nebyliv, from around the time Pylypow and Ilyniak were preparing to come to Canada.

200,000,000 acres of free land

160 акрів - 130 моргів австр.
 * ВІЛЬНОЇ ЗЕМЛІ *
 200 мільонів акрів під управу в західній КАНАДІ
 ДЛЯ КОЖДОГО ОСЕЛЕНЦЯ

An advertisement, announcing that 160 acres of *free land* could be acquired by each settler. Two hundred million acres were available in Western Canada.



Waiting for the train to find "free lands" in Western Canada



At a rest stop on the way to Western Canada. Looking at what had never been seen or heard before in Canada.