

Canada is a young — a very young country — compared to other countries of the world. Less than a thousand years have passed since a Norseman lost in a fog sighted some unidentified part of the Canadian coast.

Later his fellow countryman Leif Ericson crossed the Atlantic to spend a winter at a place he called Vinland. (Recent expeditions have found the remains of Viking settlements on the northern tip of Newfoundland and in Labrador south of Hamilton Inlet.)

Jacques Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence in 1535 and embarked at the Indian villages of Stadacona and Hochelaga. He gave Canada its name when he mistook the Indian word "kannata," meaning collection of huts, for the name of the country.

It is even said that there were Dalmatian sailors aboard the ships of Columbus when he sailed to the new world in 1492.

Sailors and adventurers first started to settle in the new world during the first half of the 19th century along the California coast which reminded them of their homeland.

Serbs first began to settle in the United States and one of these: Capt. Mihailovich was in the ranks of Lincoln's army. It was not until 1850 that Serbs began to arrive in Canada.

Niko Music of Sacramento, California writes in a letter printed in the "Glas Kanade" April 21, 1938: "Ivan Vucetic led a Serbian organization as president when the Serbian flag was raised at the World Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This was the first time that a Serbian flag was raised at an exhibition across the ocean. Present at this occasion was Nikola Tesla. Even though I was a young boy I was also present. I rode a horse in the parade and carried the Serbian coat of arms which was handmade on silk by Mrs. Dimitrijevic from Zajecar, Serbia. Today (1938) almost all who were present at this celebration are dead. Except Tesla and Vucetic I believe that today (1938) only Ivan Palandecich is still alive. I know that Ivan was in Chicago but I do not remember if he took part in the parade. It was long ago and I do not remember."

Parents of Mrs. Djuro Sjubert moved from Montreal to Chicago in 1890 — they are from Dalmatia. Mrs. Sjubert told me that she grew up in Montreal and that in the days of her childhood there lived in Montreal a large number of our people, mostly from Dalmatia.

"A long time has passed since our people started to settle in Canada. In 1897 I came in touch with men who told me that the first pioneers settled in Victoria, B.C. in 1859. Spiru Obradovic from Boka Kotorska came to Kootenay River, B.C. for the first time in 1854. I saw in the Klondike a first of our men who settled along the Fraser River in British Columbia from 1860-1865.

"Our people were permanently settled in Vancouver even before 1869."

Most of the early pioneers were from the territories under the control of Austro-Hungary and from South Serbia which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. The Serbs emigrated in large numbers when political and economic conditions in their homeland became more and more oppressive due to enforced Germanization and Magyarization imposed on them by their foreign rulers. This second period of Serbian migration to North America occurred from 1900 to 1914. The first period of migration is considered to be from 1850 to 1900. The immigrants of the second era and their descendants for the major part are American and Canadian Serbs.

The name "Serbian" as the Serbs were first known to Canadians appeared for the first time in the Canadian census of 1901. It is impossible to say exactly how many Serbs first entered Canada as in the census many were listed as Austrians, Hungarians or Turks, according to the political status of their place of origin.

"BEOGRAD'S" REVERIE

The "Beograd Restaurant" at 431 King St. E. in the east-central section of Toronto was first owned by a Serb — Todor Pejicich — in 1912. This restaurant was the only meeting place of the Serbs in these early days. It is hard to imagine that anyone coming or passing through Toronto in those days did not drop in for a game of cards, black coffee or a chat with his countrymen.

During the First World War it was not only a meeting place of the Serbs but also the cornerstone of their organizations which were all founded there and in that same restaurant their meetings were held.

During the war, over Sunday, a group of Jews and a group of Ukrainians would come to the restaurant while the men would play cards and the women would talk.

The "Beograd Restaurant" was in Toronto. The patron of the restaurant in Toronto were Major Deacon, president of the Canadian Club, Lieutenant Colonel Noel G. L. Maraball of

to tell us not only the history of the Serbian colonies in Canada but also stories about the lives of pioneer immigrants — their hardships, joys, dreams and adventures.

Cheda Mijatovich in North America

One such story from World War I days would be the visit of Cheda Mijatovich (former Serbian minister of finance and foreign affairs during the Obrenovich reign and later minister in Constantinople and at the English Court of St. James) to the North American continent.

The purpose of Mijatovich's visit was to deliver lectures on Serbia and the Serbs in order to help the Serbian Relief Committees by telling the Americans who the Serbs are, their struggle for liberty, their contribution to Europe's Christian civilization and their political and social aspirations.

Prime Minister Pasitch had given his permission and 5,000 francs to cover the 74-year-old Mijatovich's travel expenses from London. Mijatovich was accompanied by Mrs. Pankhurst, who admired the Serbs' heroism and had great compassion for the war-suffering women and children. Mrs. Pankhurst believed that British women ought to do their utmost for the Serbs since, in her opinion, the British government had not done its utmost.

Thus at the end of 1916 Mijatovich began his three-month tour of the United States. First he delivered six lectures in New York City and from there continued to Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Boston, Philadelphia, Providence, Hartford, Washington, Boston and Chicago. In each lecture Mijatovich repudiated the Austro-Hungarian-German claim that Serbia was responsible for the war. He appealed for money, provisions, doctors and nurses to be sent to Serbia. In Pittsburgh he addressed a gathering of the Serbs and spoke of the union of all Serbs in one country.

Mijatovich dined with ex-President Taft and tells in his memoirs of his meeting with ex-President Theodore Roosevelt. (Mijatovich: Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist, Cassell Company, Ltd., London, 1917.) During their conversation Roosevelt told Mijatovich of his great admiration for the ideals of the Serbian people and the bravery of the Serbian army. Roosevelt told Mijatovich how he was so much interested in the Serbs that he knew a great deal of Serbian history and national songs. Roosevelt knew all about Czar Dusan, Lazar, Kossovo, the resurrection under Karageorge and Miloš. He even quoted from memory passages of Serbian epic songs.

He encouraged Mijatovich to also give lectures at the American universities and colleges. Mijatovich took Roosevelt's advice and addressed the student body at Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Harvard, Yale, Chicago and Columbia. Miss Helen Leila Lozanich who was travelling across the United States from town to town addressing meetings on Serbia and the Serbs, suggested to Mijatovich that he should also visit Canada. Thus Mijatovich was in Canada from February 27 to March 21, 1916.

His first stop was in Montreal, where he lectured in the city's largest theatre which was filled to capacity. In his memoirs Mijatovich describes the occasion: "... the stage was decorated with British, Canadian and Serbian flags. Whenever Serbia or the brave Serbian army was mentioned someone would call out 'three cheers for our brave Ally!' And then the people would give not three but nine cheers for Serbia. It was one of the most enthusiastic meetings we ever had."

In Ottawa Mijatovich was the dinner guest several times in Government House of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught who were the patrons of Mijatovich's meeting. The Duke noted with pleasure that many Serbs and Montenegrins had joined the Canadian army. The Duchess "told how much she admired the brave Serbian army and how sorry she was for the Serbian women and children who had suffered so cruelly in their flight through Albania." Both the Duke and Duchess expressed interest in the Serbian Relief Committees of Canada and assured Mijatovich that Canadians were in sincere sympathy with the Serbs.

Mijatovich's lecture in Ottawa's Russell Theatre was attended by the elite of the capital in evening dress. The meeting's chairman was C.A. Magrath, member of the International Joint Commission. A young Canadian opened the proceeding by singing "Boze Pravde".

Mijatovich's second meeting in Ottawa was held in the Forum Theatre. In his speech he mentioned how the Jews were well treated in Serbia and that they were repaying "their liberality by fighting and dying for Serbian ideals like true patriots." In there and in that same restaurant his memoirs he tells that at the end of his address a group of Jews and Ukrainians would come to the restaurant while the men would play cards and the women would talk.

The "Beograd Restaurant" was in Toronto. The patron of the restaurant in Toronto were Major Deacon, president of the Canadian Club, Lieutenant Colonel Noel G. L. Maraball of

PIONEER SKETCHES

CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF FIRST SERBIAN SETTLERS IN CANADA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A recent graduate of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, Ont., and an assistant editor at Southern Business Publication in Toronto is our Toronto correspondent Olga B. Markovich.

Miss Markovich in the past year has offered our readers a wide selection of feature stories of a historical value, as well as news reports. Her comprehensive reports included stories of Draza Mihailovich and King Alexander. One of her news reports was of the Serbian Singing Federation held in Toronto.



Olga B. Markovich

Olga was a journalism major in college, preparing herself a career in that field. However, prior to her working days she won a prize in an essay contest for her article in Serbian on "The Settlement of Serbs in Canada and Their Activities."

Today, she is working for a firm that publishes approximately 55 business and professional magazines.

Miss Markovich enjoys collecting Serbian records, and books in English about the Serbs — evidence of the later are reviews of some of the books that appeared on these pages.

Our Toronto correspondent is a member of St. Sava Choir, the Serbian National Shield Society, the Serb National Federation and the Kolo Srpskih Sestara. Also, she was secretary three years of Ryerson's YPC Association.

At the close of my address the Bulgar's

(note: the late Dr. Dimitrije Malin) shook hands with me and expressed regret that their country was fighting Serbia. Some Russians, Poles and Czechs were also present."

In Hamilton the chairman of Mijatovich's meeting was Mayor Brampton while his hosts were Dr. and Mrs. Albert Sharpe. Dr. Sharpe later accompanied Admiral Troubridge with the British naval guns to Belgrade.

Next Mijatovich went to North Bay, Ontario and from there to Winnipeg, Manitoba where the Governor of Manitoba Sir Douglas Cameron and military commander Count de Beury came to hear his speech. Member of Parliament Dixon was the meeting's chairman.

In his memoirs Mijatovich describes a pleasant incident in his Winnipeg visit: "It was in Winnipeg that I for the first time in my life (I was then in my 74th year) felt sorry that I was not a rich man. In that town I found only a single Serbian family, amongst great numbers of Russians and Poles. And this sole Serbian family had only one child, a little girl just reaching her 10th year. But this pretty child was already a marvellous pianist. There was something almost uncanny in her technical skill. She was playing for me in the drawing room of the Royal Alexandra Hotel, when the Governor Sir Douglas Cameron and Count de Beury called to return my visit. They listened while she played a Tarantella and shared my admiration for the child, who, no doubt, if God grants her life, will one day be a famous artist, doing honour to her native country and to Canada. I wished that I could adopt that child, and let her in London and Paris develop her unusual musical gift. I parted from Lulu Putnik and her parents with sincere regret that I was not a rich man."

In Winnipeg Mijatovich's North American tour came to an end and he returned to England leaving behind fond memories of his visit to Serbians, Americans and Canadians who had the pleasure to hear him.

World War I Volunteers

Another visit which "Beograd Restaurant" would surely describe is the visit in 1917 to Toronto and the rest of Canada of Colonel Milan Pribicevich, head of the Serbian Army Mission in America.

The Toronto Branch of the Srpska Narodna Odbrana called a special meeting of our men in "Beograd Restaurant". Standing on a table Pribicevich spoke for 21 hours about the purpose of his visit to Canada and the United States. — To sign up volunteers for the Serbian army. First to sign up after the speech was 17-year-old Stevan Trunich who was later

killed in action in Southern Serbia. During Pribicevich's visit many hundreds of volunteers from the United States and Canada signed up and passed through Toronto on their way to their training camp in Levis Quebec from where they were shipped overseas.

Even before Pribicevich's visit Serbs across Canada were fighting to free their native land from Austro-Hungarian tyranny. When war broke out it was not immediately possible to join the Serbian army hence many Serbs across Canada enlisted in the Canadian army in whose ranks they were fighting the common enemy of both their new homeland and their native land.

Many Serbs from Alberta were among the first to join the Canadian army. Many of these volunteers fought in France with the 51st Canadian battalion, others with the 101st and still others fought at Ypres.

Of these many men Lican Ilija Plecaš had an interesting adventure to relate on his return: while fighting on the French front he, single-handedly, grabbed a German by his beard and brought him into headquarters. There it was established that the German was a high-ranking officer and Plecaš received a promotion.

Major Budimir Protich who left Regina at the head of a battalion for the Western Front in France held the highest rank of all the Serbs in the Canadian army.

An Unusual Arrival

In the winter of 1916 Serbian and Canadian newspapers wrote about a young Serb boy who had arrived in New York wearing boots which were way over his knees and a bullet-ridden "sajkaea". The article continued that 14-year-old Kostja Protich of Sabac had taken part in the tragic retreat through Albania to the sea. Along the route he met up with a Canadian nurse serving the Serbian Army. This lady had now brought him with her to Toronto.

The Serbs brought him to "Beograd Restaurant" one Sunday where the men eagerly gathered around the youngster and asked him numerous questions about the war. When he got tired of relating his adventures with the army he would begin to sing the popular songs of that era: "Krece se ladja Francuska" and "Tamo Dajleka".

Trials and tribulations of the Immigrants

At the beginning of the war all foreigners in Canada had to register and prove that they were from an allied country. All of those who were not from an allied country such as Turks, Germans, Bulgarians and Austrians had to renew their registration every 40 days.

Because many stated that they were from an allied country even if they weren't a new order was issued in May 1918 which stated that any foreigner, who does not have a passport of the country of his origin, should obtain documents within 14 days from his country's official representative proving that he comes from an allied country. If he does not do so, he is subject to a fine of \$50, or jail until he has obtained the necessary documents.

Our men didn't pay much attention to the order either because of poor knowledge of the English language or taking for granted that because they were from an allied country they would not need the proof and so they did not even attempt to get the necessary papers.

On June 4, 1918 military police entered restaurants that were the haunts of foreigners and demanded passports. Those that had them were left alone; those that didn't were taken to jail. Among those arrested were fifty Serbs, most of them members of the Srpska Narodna Odbrana. Their plight was bad as there was no Serbian consul in Canada at that time. The SNO branch sent telegrams explaining the problem to the Serbian Legation in Washington and Prof. Michael Pupin — the honorary consul for the United States and Canada in New York.

Next day the Toronto authorities received an order from the Canadian government in Ottawa to release all the men who had SNO membership cards. As most of the cards were at home the free members had a busy day running around Toronto and getting their friends' cards. When the cards were presented the men were released and only two men who were not SNO members had to pay a fine of \$50.

The declaration of World War I found many foreigners who came from the countries of the enemy in Canada. Therefore Canadians looked at all foreigners with scorn and regarded them as enemies. It was only necessary to point out any innocent person and to say he was against the allies and he would be imprisoned. Many of these were detained in Kapuskasing, Ontario until the end of the war.

The peace treaty was signed but the men were still in the American detention camps. It was only at the end of the war that the SNO branch on their behalf had failed until the beginning of 1919 when our consul intervened on behalf of the SNO to the govern-

ment and army in Ottawa who consented to release them.

On January 2, 1919 B. M. Markovich received a telegram from our honorary consul Ante V. Seferovich instructing him to go to Kapuskasing and as the consul's representative to interrogate the men who were Serbs from Serbia, Montenegro, and Austria-Hungary and to recommend them for liberty. He would be responsible for each one released and should be on the alert that no enemy who could speak Serbian should get through.

When he arrived in Kapuskasing in northern Ontario Markovich found 17 barracks in which the prisoners lived surrounded by a high wall and locked with an iron gate guarded by soldiers with bayonet guns. The barracks each contained a dining room, kitchen, barber shop and dormitories.

All the Serbs were brought to him for questioning — they entered one by one led by armed soldiers. The worried bearded men stated their name, age, birthplace, when they came to Canada, when they were imprisoned and why. After noting their wishes each were taken back by guards.

Many cried as small children when relating their three-four year "ropstvo" for no cause at all. Here are just a few examples:

Peter Stimac, 30 years of age from Gospic, Lika was against Austrian rule at home and was always persecuted by the authorities. He, therefore, left for Canada where he was working as a railway foreman. A man who wanted his job, pointed him out as an Austrian and he was imprisoned for four years.

A 50 year old mute entered the room, crying and handed Markovich a slip of paper on which was written: "I am good! Gajo Vasiljevich (note: supreme president of the SNO), knows me and that should be a guarantee that you can set me free... I beg of you as my brother take me out of here, do not leave me here!"

After two days of interviewing Markovich asked that 164 men be released. He also spoke to a Czech delegation who asked that our consul help them also.

The next day the men were released. Each got a train ticket to whatever city they wanted as long as it was the same distance as the one from which they were imprisoned. The Serbs were the first group to be released from Canadian camps.

Great Friend of the Serbs

Mrs. Hamilton, a well-known Toronto socialite, had greatly helped the Serbian cause with her work for the Serbian cause. During the days of the First World War she led an active campaign on behalf of the Serbs among the Canadians. In Toronto she organized the "Serbian Relief Fund" which collected money which was sent as badly needed aid to the Serbian Red Cross and Serbian war orphans.

At the end of the war the executive board of the SNO gave Mrs. Hamilton a gold-filled fountain pen as a token of their appreciation and their indebtedness to her. The following dated August 14, 1918 is her reply:

"I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the great kindness of the Srpska Narodna Odbrana in making me the present of such a beautiful pen. Each time I write with it — and I write a great deal — I shall do so with pride and I hope that what I write may have in it some of the wonderful spirit of the Serbian people."

"Please give the members of the Odbrana my very heartfelt thanks, and tell them that my heartiest I can never repay what Serbia has done for me — my efforts have not been half enough and I hope yet to do more."

"I know that but for Serbia's heroic defence, Britain and her ideals might have gone down, and as for myself, over and over again when I am at work I am encouraged to go on, not only because of deep sympathy with the Serbs, but also because I am inspired by the wonderful courage and determination they have shown."

"When I was in Washington in December I met General Rashitch and one of the many fine things he says always remains in my memory: 'In this war, never look back, always forward.' I do indeed look forward to the time when your beloved and beautiful country will be restored to you and when perhaps I may have the happiness of coming to visit it."

"Again with heartiest thanks and good wishes to your Odbrana, believe me, Yours very sincerely,

Constance E. Hamilton

Also the Serbian government conferred upon Mrs Hamilton the St. Sava medal of the first rank for her great work for the Serbs. The decoration was ceremoniously presented to her in Toronto's City Hall by consul Seferovich in the presence of the Mayor of Toronto and other civic officials. At the same time other ex-members of the "Serbian Relief Fund" were similarly honored.

Although far away from the land of their birth, Serbian immigrants have always been very patriotic and have always been very active in the form of churches and halls.

Olga B. Markovich

ХРИСТОС СЕ РОДИ!

И

СРЕЊНУ НОВУ ГОДИНУ!

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ЦРКВЕНОШКОЛСКЕ ОПШТИНЕ

"СВ. САВА" У ТОРОНТУ