

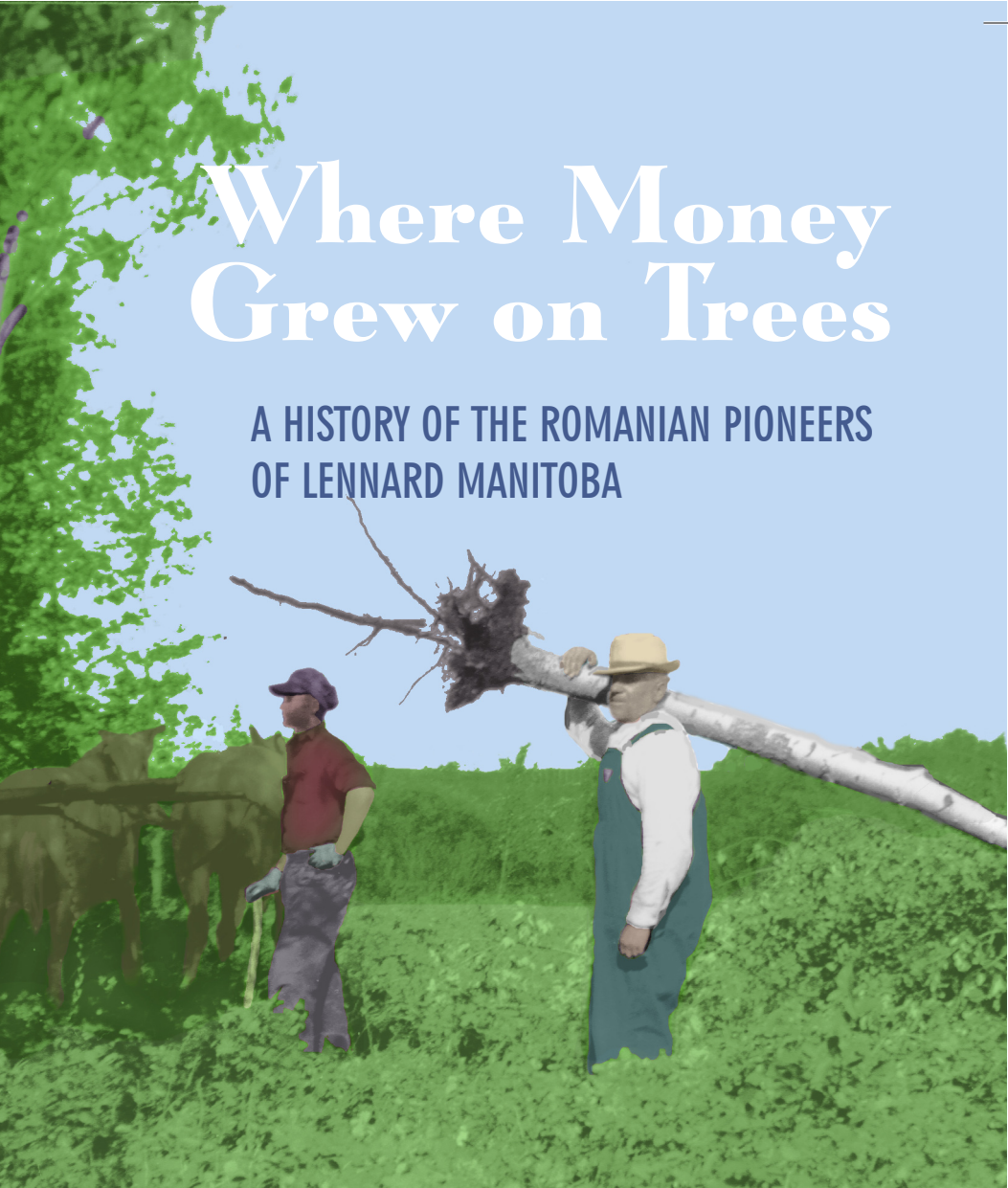
John Goodes



Where Money Grew on Trees

A HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PIONEERS
OF LENNARD MANITOBA

Where Money Grew on Trees



by JOHN GOODES



WHERE MONEY GREW ON TREES

A History of the Romanian Pioneers
of Lennard, Manitoba

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*To the descendants of the pioneers and all those who
have maintained these stories and shared them.*

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The Exodus Begins



A Carpathian village

THE NEWS OF free land in Canada spread quickly through the Carpathian region. For many in these regions, news of free land in Canada was seen as the only hope of escaping a life-sentence of toil and hopelessness. Across the ocean was the Promised Land. There, 160 acres of fertile soil, which could be had for the asking, was waiting for them. Sifton's aggressive promotion of Western Canada reached Bucovina around 1897. Pamphlets and agents of the shipping companies ignited the imagination of the peasants in the region, and the quest for the "men in

sheepskin coats” was on.

The individual immigrants from Bucovina did not leave much detailed information regarding how they arrived at their decision to emigrate. However, it is known that someone had to bring the news and information to the villages, and in all likelihood, this was the result of Canada’s promotional efforts. The first contact between the prospective immigrants and the Canadian government was usually made by an agent who, in most cases, was a prominent citizen of a regional centre, such as Chernautz* or Suceava. These agents were paid a certain fee for each immigrant obtained by them for Canada. Sifton predicted that once one or more families from a village or community made the move, they would act as magnets in the new country and other immigrants would follow them. The task was to get the first emigrant from the village to leave.

In the part of Bucovina from where most of the Manitoba settlers came, the process appears to have begun in a number of small villages in the vicinity of Cernautz. These were the Romanian Communities of Voloca, Corovia, Chahor, Aspacia and Mologia. Most of the Ruthenians (Ukrainian-speaking immigrants), came from Hlinitza, Stirchea and Zuchca, and other villages which were in the same general area. This was a predominantly Romanian-speaking region, which had withstood the Austrian influence for several generations. Romanian was still taught in the schools (to those who could attend), and the Romanian Orthodox Church remained strong. Any Austrian influence was passive and subtle. It was particularly evident in infrastructure, improved postal service, personal discipline, pride of home ownership

**Because certain characters used in the Romanian language are not found in the English alphabet, adaptations will be made throughout this work. For example, in Romanian, a tse sound is produced by placing a diacritical mark beneath the t. In this text, the same sound will be shown as ts or tz.*

and domestic architecture, (particularly their ornately decorated gates and fences). Some people, especially those who attended school or served in the Austrian army, spoke some German.

The whole story of how the news of the “Promised Land” arrived and was received in Voloca and the other villages was never fully recorded. However, bits and pieces of how the drama unfolded were gleaned from the memories of those who experienced it, or those who heard it from their parents, grandparents, and others. These stories can be pieced together into a portrayal of what may have happened in a particular family or group.

The Lennard story begins in 1898, in a whitewashed cottage in the village of Voloca. News of the free land in Canada had already spread throughout the community. A meeting was held, in a house owned by a local resident, involving a group of relatives and friends. They had come to discuss the information that the agent from Chernautz had brought regarding free land in Canada. The owner of the house was a widow, Dominica Paulencu.* Attending the gathering were her two sons, Ion and Gheorghe; her son-in-law Nicolai Pentelicuic, Elie Burla, Ilie Elia, his sister Natalia Holunga, Ion Axinte and Mihai Bordian.

They talked about meeting an agent from Cernautz who had gone through the village earlier, announcing the availability of free land in Canada. He had explained that much of the land had already been taken, but that there was still a considerable area of the country to be settled and good land could still be found. However, he warned that they would have to hurry if they wanted to take advantage of this offer, as the better land was being taken up quickly. The agent had distributed pamphlets

**Throughout this work, all names will be spelled as records and memory show that they were at the time of the event being described.*

and shown pictures of settlers who had already obtained homesteads, standing in the fields of grain. Other photos featured their homes, farmyards and animals.

Meetings of this type would take place in various homes in the villages over the next several months and years. While many of them had never heard of Canada in their isolated communities, the glowing reports coming from there were exciting, and fired their imaginations. Later, when letters began to arrive from some early emigrants from nearby villages, describing the freedom and abundance in the new country, the stories became increasingly exaggerated. Claims that in Canada money grew on trees, half made in jest, soon sounded plausible.

By October 1898, seven of the 10 people who had met in Dominica Paulencu's home reached a decision. Dominica and her sons Ion and Gheorghe; Nicolai Pentelicuic, his wife Marina and three children, Anghelina, age six, Calina, age 3, and Ilie, age 2; Elie Burla, his wife Zanfira and children, Eugenia, age 9, Grapina, age 6, and Nicolai, age 4, would be the first to set out for Canada. Ion Axinte and Mihai Bordian and Ilie Elia decided that they would follow at a later date, as eventually did Elie Burla. The agent in Cernautz was apprised of the decision, and he, in turn, advised the shipping company of their interest. A representative of the shipping company, acting on behalf of the Canadian government and the CPR, took it from there. The representative explained to them what the move would entail and where it would lead.

The people were advised that they would be responsible for the cost of train transportation from Chernautz to Hamburg, Germany, plus the ocean voyage and the travel by train from Montreal to their final destination. While

on board the ship, they would be supplied with meals, but during their train travel they would pay for their own food. The agent asked them where they would like to live in Canada and they replied, “anywhere that has water and many trees.”

The prospective immigrants were told that they could take a 20-cubic-foot trunk, plus separate bags for each person. As soon as they had acquired their passports, a certificate of sanity, and a health certificate saying that they were free from communicable diseases, their travel arrangements would be made. The required credentials would be issued by the county office (*primare*). By February 1, 1899, all their documents were in order and they set about selling their small land holding, houses, and the belongings that they would not be able to take with them. Because of the shortage of land in the community, there were many eager buyers for the properties. These were young men who wanted to get married and needed a place in which to live and start their families, but few of them had enough money to pay for the properties. Eventually, however, with the help of their expanded families and loans, several young men came forward with the money. Another obstacle had been overcome and one of the strongest links to the old life was about to be severed.

The agent advised them that, because of the weather at their destination, their travel would begin around April 1. Finally, March 31, 1899 was set as the day on which the first group of people from Voloca would depart for Canada. The shipping company representative told them that this would allow them sufficient time to construct some shelter for the next winter and also break up some virgin soil for a garden. News of the group’s pending departure spread through the village, and a church service

was held to pray for a safe voyage, and for health and prosperity in their new home. Streams of people passed through the homes of their departing relatives, friends and neighbours, and many tears were shed.

By the middle of the month, the final preparations for departure had begun. The emigrants set about using the space in their 20-cubic foot trunk to pack what they thought they would need in their new homes. This included their “Sunday best” clothing, bedding, pots, garden seeds including beans, garlic, onions, horseradish, “*lobida*” (a yellow or red-leafed plant used in soups and for making rice rolls), poppy seed, hemp seed, beeswax candles, bottle of holy water and a prayer book. Seeds of the absinthe (wormwood) plant (*pelin*) were discretely wrapped in a piece of cloth and stowed among the belongings. This plant would help to keep their beds free of bedbugs and fleas when they settled into their new homes, but would infest their pastures and roadsides many years later. If there was room left, tools, such as a sickle, scythe, flail, hoe, draw knife, saw, auger and bits, chisels and wood planer were fitted into the trunk. Icons were packed between the pillows and, sometimes, even a picture of Austrian Emperor Franz Iosef. “He is a good man,” they would say. “There have been many who were worse.” He had, indeed, let them worship in the church of their choice in their own language, and also use the Romanian language in their schools.

Then the fateful day arrived. Relatives and the close friends and neighbours gathered to see the departing villagers for the last time. There were smiles at first, but a melancholy mood set in as the enormous gravity of the event sank in. Most of them knew in their hearts that they would never see their relatives, friends and neighbours

again, even though they promised to come and visit as soon as they made their fortune in Canada. Meanwhile, they would write. Soon, some began to cry; the women first and then the children. The men stoically wiped their eyes with the sleeves of their shirts. They sang a song, *God grant you many years, (Multsi ani triasca)*, then someone called for silence. Prayers were recited by the priest and deacon. The prayers asked for God's blessing and His protection for them on the voyage, and finally, for health and prosperity in the new land.

The departure of these villagers from their homes had to be an enormous, heart-rending experience. Most of them had lived all their lives in their close-knit families and communities, and never ventured more than several kilometres from their villages. Now they were abandoning the lifestyles and traditions of many generations. But perhaps, the most distressing trauma was leaving behind family members whom they would never see again. In his book, *The Promised Land*, Pierre Berton writes about how one immigrant woman explained it later: "Inexpressible grief seized my young heart...The parting and the mournful keening (wailing) were heartbreaking. Old and young wept as they bade us farewell, perhaps forever." Many of the emigrants were still in the prime of their lives, and their parents were still living, and for some, also the grandparents. These were all, in many cases, left behind.

On the day of departure, a neighbour with horses and wagon arrived to take them to the railway station. The trunk and bags were loaded onto the wagon. There were more handshakes, hugs and kisses, and more crying and prayers, then they settled into the wagon and rode away, most of them never to return. Before they left, some had

stopped and picked up a handful of soil from their yard and wrapped it in a handkerchief, made the sign of the cross and tenderly touched the door panel of the house. As they rode toward Chernautz, they lifted the wrapped soil to their mouths and kissed it; a final and lasting tribute to their beloved land.

Putting Down Roots



Horses were a critical necessity in early days.

WITH ONLY ABOUT three months left before winter set in, the four homesteaders rushed to erect shelters for themselves and their families at their new location. Elie Burla borrowed a team of horses and wagon from his boss, Tom McLennan, for the two-day trip to their primitive dwellings in Assiniboia. There they loaded up their families and belongings and drove cross-country back to Manitoba. Soon most of the other immigrants from Voloca would follow, but others would remain. One of these was Natalia Holunga, who was the first immigrant

from Voloca to be buried in the MacNutt cemetery. Other families from Bucovina arrived in Saltcoats later and took up homesteads in the Calder-Wroxton-MacNutt district, but many of them would make their way to the new enclave of Romanians in Manitoba.

The availability of trees suitable for logs allowed the settlers in Manitoba to construct more substantial dwellings. They were aware, however, that the buildings that they were erecting would not be permanent, because the logs, which they cut, were still green, as there was not enough time for them to dry properly. Nevertheless, the small log shelters were constructed and plastered with clay mud, which was reinforced with dry grass. Rough lumber for door and window frames was available at the now accessible Asessippi or Mountain House sawmills. The floors were covered with packed clay. Before the end of the summer, the Paulencu brothers had purchased two oxen between them and could now haul lumber and other supplies as needed. After the temporary shelters were built and plastered, sod roofs were installed and they were ready for another winter in Canada. The joy of moving into a new fresh smelling, whitewashed cabin was overwhelming, especially for the women and children.

These first pioneers had to work closely with each other to meet the demands on their daily lives. Alone they may not have survived. After they had built their temporary dwellings (called *bordei* in Romanian) on their homesteads, they were sometimes separated by a half-mile or more of thick brush and trees. Initially, there were no trails, and stories were told of the methods, which the settlers used to determine the direction in which to go to reach their neighbours, without getting lost in the bush. They did this by climbing up a tree and seeing where the

smoke was rising from the neighbour's chimney. Later, they marked the trails by notching trees with their axes and then following the notches until they reached their destinations. After a while, footpaths were established through the bush and then wagon trails.

Compared with the winter of 1899-1900, the first winter in Manitoba was an easier one. Now they had better dwellings and more firewood. They were only five miles from the store and post-office in Asessippi. With easier access to work in the Russell area, the pioneers were able to earn enough in the summer and fall to buy a yoke of oxen or a horse. Small log stables, covered with sod, were quickly constructed. One of the settlers would buy a one-furrow breaker plow and share it with the others. Another would buy a wagon, tillage implement or haying equipment. Now they were ready to tackle the job of breaking new land and planting their crops. Initially, the grain was harvested by cutting it with a scythe and beating it with a flail. The wheat and rye were then taken in bags to the flourmill in Asessippi and ground into flour for their winter supply. As their acreages grew, more mechanized forms of agriculture were gradually adopted, using horses or oxen, and more money was needed for meeting this need.

The homesteaders, most of who arrived with little or no money, continued to work for the established farmers in the Russell area or in nearby sawmills. Horses and oxen continued to be their top priorities. Money had to be earned for purchasing these beasts, before they could break the mandatory 25 acres on their homesteads. Since their homesteads were not yet producing sufficient product for sale, they had to depend on wages to earn the cash they needed. Horses and vehicles also enabled them to

access the market for firewood in Russell, thereby giving them an alternative source of cash.

By the end of 1902, there were more than 10 families establishing themselves in the community. Temporary shelters (*bordei*) were being constructed, as well as stables for the few animals that were now being acquired by the homesteaders. Small cultivated fields dotted the landscape, tucked in among aspen and poplar bluffs. Wagon trails and footpaths began to appear, connecting the homesteads with each other and with Asessippi village. Slowly, the land on all sides of the original settlement was being taken up; south to the Bear Creek valley, west to the Shell River and east to the Riding Mountain forest. In the north and east there was a large tract of marginal land still available, which would receive immigrant settlers for several more years.

The attraction which these marginal lands held for Eastern European immigrants continued to puzzle Canadian immigration officials. However, no effort was made to discourage them from taking these homesteads. In a report to his supervisor, one of them expressed his bewilderment as follows:

“The Galatians (the term applied to all Eastern Europeans) are a peculiar people; they will not accept as a gift 160 acres of what we should consider the best land in Manitoba, that is first class wheat growing prairie land; what they want is wood, and they care little whether the land is heavy or light gravel, but each man must have some wood on his place.”

This preoccupation with wood was to a large extent an obsession that they carried with them from their villages

in Bucovina where wood was a precious commodity. In their homesteading experience, trees became both a blessing and a hindrance. Harvesting the trees was already a source of building materials and fuel for the homesteaders. It was also providing some of them with a cash crop and would continue to do so for many years to come, but especially during the period while they were getting established. But harvesting trees was a physically demanding activity in an age before mechanization. Muscle power was needed all the way from felling the tree until its final consumption as building material or fuel, or sold. These same trees were also a major obstacle to land clearing endeavours and were cursed for their stubborn resistance to the relentless efforts of the homesteaders to remove them from the land. The precious acres of cultivated virgin soil were only won with a massive investment of sweat, calluses and determination.

As early as 1901, the pioneers began to miss the dedicated religious life, which they left behind in Voloca and elsewhere. There was no priest in the area and the idea of building a church was still out of the question. Elie Burla's 10-year-old daughter, Eugenia, had died that summer and had to be buried in the Rochedale cemetery, because there was not yet a proper burial place in the new community. The four original homesteaders decided to construct a wooden cross made from a large aspen tree and raise it in a clearing on their section of land. Since they still had not found the surveyor's marker between the four properties, they initially did not know on whose property the cross was erected. For now, the wooden cross would serve as a place in which to meet and pray during the warmer months of the year.

Two of the Paulencu siblings, Gheorghe and Marina, had some schooling and were able to lead the outdoor prayers and singing. The four families had, unfortunately, not brought any Bibles or church liturgy books with them, and they would need to wait for other new arrivals to provide these. Later that year, Marcu Zelinskie, who had originally gone to Saltcoats, also decided to follow the Paulencus and the others to the Asessippi district. He had brought some religious books with him from Voloca and, being literate, was able to lead the prayers and services around the wooden cross.

By 1903, the community was developing at a rapid pace. There was a steady inflow of Romanian and Ruthenian immigrants into the district. The church committee, made up of the original four settlers, plus Nicolai Nevestuic and Pentelei Gorda, decided that there were sufficient numbers of people in the area to organize a parish, and a decision was reached to establish the St. Elijah Romanian Orthodox Parish. They decided to call it St. Elijah after the Old Testament prophet and also to honour Elie Burla on whose land the church was located. In that year, a Ruthenian immigrant arrived from Aspacia who would play a big part in the early life of St. Elijah Parish. He was Petru Hackman, a former Justice of the Peace (J.P.) in the old country, who spoke Ukrainian, Romanian, Russian and German. Being literate, he was able to conduct the services, but because he was not ordained, he did not perform the liturgy. Hackman received no salary, but graciously accepted whatever the parishioners could give to help him support his family.

A year later, while breaking new land on his homestead in the valley, a tragedy occurred that had a great impact on Petru Hackman's life. His son Plasiu, who was about 15

years old at the time, was leading a yoke of oxen, while his father held the plow. Suddenly, a bear crashed out of the bushes and frightened the oxen. Plasiu was unable to control the oxen, and they ran over the boy trapping him under their feet. The plow ran over the youth and the pointed share cut into his abdomen. He died instantly, and was reportedly the first to be buried in the St. Elijah Cemetery.

Petru Hackman never recovered from that tragedy. He was left alone when his wife and family moved to Alberta, and he spent much time in prayer, fasting and meditation. He continued to lead a pious life and also remained active in the church until his death in 1931. Fr. Ghenadie Gheorgheu, the priest who officiated at the funeral, remarked on how the body showed no evidence of decomposition, even after lying for three days in hot weather, without embalming. He said that this was the true sign of a saint. Petru was buried in St. Elijah Cemetery beside his son.

In another tragedy, Grigori Gabor was killed in a freak accident while building a new house for his family. As was a common practice in those days, neighbours always gathered at a bee to help in major construction projects. On this particular day, several men had joined Gabor in laying the logs to form the walls of the house. The logs were carried from a pile to the construction site on the backs of several helpers. Grigori Gabor, being left-handed, placed the log on the opposite side of the other right-handed men. When they arrived at the construction site, the men dropped the log off their shoulders, pinning Gabor under it. He died several hours later from internal injuries and was buried in the St. Elijah Cemetery in April 1905.

The parishioners continued to seek a way of having the holy liturgy service conducted in their new church. In 1905, Ilie Elia commenced a letter-writing campaign to the Metropolia of Moldova-Suceava in Bucovina, asking for help in attracting a priest to St. Elijah Parish. Two years later, his efforts bore fruit and an ordained priest arrived in the community. He was Fr. Ion Mihalovici from Basarabia, Romania, who spoke both Romanian and Ukrainian. The parishioners had built a rustic log dwelling on two acres of land next to the churchyard, donated by Ion Paulencu. This primitive manse would house Fr. Mihalovici and his family. The priest received \$30.00 a month from Romania, plus whatever donations the struggling pioneers could contribute. Tragically, one of his children died during his short stay in the community. There was much grief in the family and among the parishioners. It is not known where the child was buried, but the elders believed it was in a currently unmarked grave in the St. Elijah Cemetery. Fr. Mihalovici also served the Romanian Orthodox churches in MacNutt and Canora.

Rail connections had not yet been established between Russell and MacNutt, Calder and Canora, and these communities were only accessible by horse and buggy. Fr. Mihalovici utilized a one-horse cart, which could easily negotiate muddy roads, trails and shallow river crossings. A story circulated in the community about how, on one of these difficult 60-mile trips Fr. Mihalovici's horse became exhausted and could go no further. Undeterred, the priest unhitched the horse and pulled the buggy the rest of the way home, with the tired horse following. The well-loved Fr. Mihalovici returned to Romania after only 18 months at St. Elijah.

To the later generations, the lives of these early pioneers may have seemed like an endless period of toil and hardships. But in later years, when one spoke to the elders who had experienced it, they described the joy that they experienced upon seeing a small field broken and waiting to be seeded, a *bordei* constructed and made ready for keeping the family warm and cozy during the long winter days and nights, the acquisition of the first horse or cow, and the satisfaction of seeing a stack of hay, a cellar full of potatoes, or a few bags of wheat or rye ready for milling. The fruits of their labour brought meaning and happiness into their lives, and helped them to survive and create a community.

Festivals



Three kings in Christmas pageant.

SOME OF THE fondest memories that people have of the old days in the community involve the celebration of holy days and festivals. While Easter was the most important holiday of the year in the life of the church, Christmas was the holiday, which was most, anticipated, especially by the children. Probably, the next most celebrated festival,

after these two, was the feast of the patron saint of the parish - St. Elijah in Lennard and St. John the Baptist in Shell Valley.

In the early days of the community, Christmas was celebrated on January 7, according to the Julian calendar. Preparation for the holiday began with a six-week Lenten period, during which meat, dairy products and eggs were not consumed by those observing the lent. For the school children, the preparations began earlier, with practice for the school Christmas concert, starting in late November or early December. The Christmas concert was held just before the school break for the holidays. Most teachers attempted to give each child a part in the performance. Carol singing practice began several weeks before the concert, as did the rehearsals for plays and recitations. On the night of the concert, all the proud parents gathered to observe their children in the performances. Two sheets which hung on a cord stretched across the width of the school room were opened and closed between acts. The school was lavishly decorated with red and green crepe paper streamers and paper bells.

During the time leading up to the Christmas concert, the youngsters also made arrangements for the caroling tour, which would take place on Christmas Eve. Partners for the occasion were carefully chosen and were usually the neighbours' children and other close friends and relatives. A caroling group usually consisted of three or four singers, and rarely more than six. While practice time was minimal, plans involving the route to be taken and the mode of transportation, which was usually on foot, were carefully made. Some of the older boys carried a "Star," which was a large circular star-shaped lantern with five points, about 24 to 30 inches in diameter and an

icon on each side. A candle inside the “Star” illuminated the icons and the transparent star points. The lantern was held at shoulder height by a wooden handle at the bottom of the “Star” while the carol was sung.

For the carolers, the excitement and anticipation were overwhelming. The time finally arrived and, after sundown on January 6, the carolers set out, visiting the closest neighbours first. Their arrival was anxiously awaited and they were welcomed by the people in the household. The carolers approached the largest and most accessible window and asked if the occupants would accept the carol (called *Koliada* or *Kolinda* in Romanian) this was a traditional formality, as it was not likely that anyone would say “No.” Usually, the carolers without a “Star” would sing outside at the window, while the carolers with the “Star” would be invited inside where their prop would be more visible.

Early in the life of the community, the carol which was almost universally sung was *Three Kings From the East*, (*Trei Crai de la Rasarit*), but later a new carol was introduced, *O What Great News Bethlehem Reveals*, (*O Ce Veste Minunata Vifliemul ne Arata*). When the carol was finished, the carolers offered wishes for good luck and good health, and were invited into the living room of the hosts. Here there was already evidence of the preparations that had been taking place for several days. The house was scrubbed clean and kitchen smelled of Lenten foods cooking on the stove. In the “Great Room” the table was set ready for the late evening meal. Some families spread hay under the table in honour of the Christ child’s place of birth, the manger. The man of the house thanked the carolers and presented each of them with a coin, ranging from a penny to a dime, depending upon

the prosperity level of the family and the abundance of the harvest. The mother would offer them an apple or an orange and a fruit-flavoured drink. The carolers moved along quickly, as they had many more houses to visit and carols to sing.

In the homes, the younger children's excitement grew as they waited for the special Christmas Eve meal and listened to stories about the mysterious things that occur on that night. One of these was that the cattle in the barn spoke for the only time in the year. The children schemed among themselves on how to sneak into the barn and hear this, but the parents warned them that the cattle would not speak if anyone was around. The wide-eyed children listened to other stories of falling stars and the heavens opening up. They also heard about the rare appearance at the door of a ragged old man asking for food and warmth. Since this was usually an angel in disguise, it was a good idea not to turn him away.

The Christmas Eve Lenten meal usually consisted of fish, potatoes cooked in oil, beans, a root vegetable and boiled dried fruit for dessert. Honey-sweetened, boiled wheat was served to insure that a good crop would be harvested in the coming year. The young, sleepy-eyed children usually went to bed after the late meal, but the older people remained awake until near morning, as carolers from the other ends of the community were still likely to arrive.

While the man of the house and the older boys were doing the chores on Christmas morning, the women were busy preparing the first non-Lenten meal. If the family went to church, the meal would be served after the service. If there was no service, or the family did not attend, the meal

was served in the late morning. It usually consisted of boiled or roast pork, cabbage rolls, perogies, head cheese, cooked meat and sauerkraut, braided bread (*kolach*), and boiled prunes and dried apples for dessert. The exhausted carolers from the family arrived home after midnight or early morning and, after eating, went straight to bed. At church, the regular liturgy was served, unlike Easter when a special service took place.

Another Christmas custom which the settlers brought with them from the old country was a pageant called *Irod* (Herod). This consisted of a travelling act which went from house to house on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, performed by local actors, and which depicted an encounter between King Herod and the three Oriental kings, a shepherd, a priest, and an angel. In the drama, the three kings condemn Herod for the atrocities, which he had committed with regard to the Christ child, and the anger that this had aroused throughout the world. The king reacted belligerently, and swords were drawn, but before the scene turned violent, they all agreed to settle the argument with a song. Usually the carol, current at the time, was sung by all. The actors were treated to a drink and some food and left for the next house. Costumes depicting the time in history, and the part played, were worn by the actors, such as cloaks, crowns, swords and other distinguishing props. The pageant made its last appearance in the community in the late 1940s.

Another travelling show was one, which visited the homes on New Year's Eve (January 13, by the Julian calendar). This was an unstructured performance called *Malanka* by some countrymen from Bucovina and *Capra* by others. It consisted of a loosely organized group of local young men dressed in scary costumes depicting

grotesque human characters, animals and the customary goat. Upon being invited into the house they performed a few shenanigans, sang a song accompanied by a violinist, had a few drinks and some food, and then left for the next house. The children watched the display in horror from the steps leading upstairs or from behind their mother's skirt. The tradition came from a practice, common in the Carpathian region, of wearing weird masks and clothes to scare away the evil spirits for the whole year. The goat was symbol of innocence and stability that kept the confrontation between the two sides - the good and evil - from turning violent

The local youngsters were also involved in the New Year's activities. As on Christmas Eve, groups, who were usually the same as those who went caroling, called again at the homes in the community. Once again they asked if the family would accept the performance, this time called *Haicat*. It consisted of a long, light-hearted recitation given by one or more of the group at the window, concerning a good man and the problems he experiences in his fields during the growing season, and an encounter with the local miller. The recitation was assisted by a chorus of "*hai hai*," after each verse, accompanied by the ringing of a bell. It ended with wishes for a good crop and prosperity during the year. The performers were invited in and each given a coin and some food. On New Year's morning, the children put some wheat in their pockets and, after throwing some toward their parents and across the room, they went and repeated the act at the closest neighbour or relative. This throwing of the wheat was accompanied by good wishes for a good crop, prosperity and health in the New Year.

At the end of these two holidays, the young people who participated in the caroling and New Year's recitation were feeling prosperous. The coins, which they received, would usually add up to several dollars, depending upon how many homes they visited and the generosity of their hosts. For most of them, this was the most money that they would have all year. During hard financial times, this money came in handy for buying items of clothing or things like ammunition for their hunting rifles. The Eaton's catalogue received considerable wear as the decisions on how to spend this annual bounty were made.

Easter Day was celebrated; following the Julian calendar, utilizing a complex system based on the phases of the moon. Sometimes the day coincided with the Gregorian calendar Easter, but more often there was a difference ranging from one week to as much as a month. From the church's perspective, Easter was the most important religious holiday of the year and was preceded by a 56-day period of Lent. This significance was reflected in the Easter church service, which followed a special liturgical order and was often performed after midnight or around sunrise on Easter morning.

The service began with a procession of the priest and members of the congregation walking around the church three times, led by cross and banner bearers, and each person carrying a lighted candle. A special hymn for the occasion was sung as the congregation circled the church. Meanwhile, the inside of the church remained dark. While the priest and congregation processed around the church, the sexton, cantor or reader remained inside. At the third passage of the door, the priest knocked on the church door and declared; "Open the door for the king of glory." The person inside then asked: "Who is the king of glory?"

The priest responded: “Jesus Christ who is risen from the dead.” After three of these exchanges, the door was opened and the priest and candle-carrying congregation entered the dark church and joined in singing *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, restoring life again*. The lights were then turned on and this chorale repeated many times during the service and the liturgy.

During the three-hour long services, which were common during the early years, the young men of the community observed a custom that had been brought over from Bucovina. Since most of the Easter services were conducted sometime after midnight, darkness prevailed during most of their duration. The young men carried branches and wood from the nearby bush and lit a large fire that was kept burning during the whole service. In earlier days, some of the young men jumped over the fire three times, a practice, which was purported to result in good health and luck throughout the coming year. A similar ritual was carried out at some homes on the eve of Great Thursday, the day proceeding Good Friday. The children, and the whole family, participated in gathering branches into a large pile after which the father set fire to it. They stood around the fire enjoying its flame and observing a tradition, which may have been handed down from Pagan days.

At the end of the Easter service the priest blessed the baskets of food, which were brought by each family and arranged in neat order. The baskets contained a large “*paska*,” which was a round braided loaf of bread with a mixture of cottage cheese and egg in its centre. Coloured eggs and other items of food, such as sausage, cheese, sweets, garlic and salt were also arranged in the basket.

Upon returning to their homes, the parishioners had a big dinner, preceded by a slice of the blessed *paska* and a coloured Easter egg.

The meal usually consisted of soup, meat dishes, macaroni loaf, head cheese, cooked sauerkraut and pork, fruit preserves and cake or cookies. The adults toasted each other with spirits, which were usually home-made, and then participated in an egg cracking contest. Each person chose a coloured egg and held onto it until someone with a stronger egg cracked it. The tradition was that the person whose egg remained unbroken was entitled to all the others, but usually each person ate his own egg. In the early days, the Easter celebration lasted as long as three days, but as the years went by it was gradually reduced to one day - Easter Sunday.

Another church holiday which was observed in the early days, and continues to this day, was Epiphany. It was celebrated on January 19, following the Julian calendar. It commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River and also the revelation of the Trinity, when the dove flew over Jesus and a voice said, "This is my beloved son." In some villages in the Carpathian region of Romania, this holiday is still celebrated on the ice of a nearby creek or river, where water is drawn and blessed by the priest. The blessed water is then taken back to the church in a procession led by crosses and banners, with the priest and members of the congregation following. In Lennard, the holiday involved blessing the water inside the church. Later in the week the priest and deacon or sexton would visit each home in the community and bless it by sprinkling with holy water.

Another unique church custom took place on Ascension Day (*Ispas*), 40 days after Easter Sunday. After the church service, the priest blessed the graves by walking past each one and sprinkling water, which had previously been blessed. Following the blessing of the graves, some families served a lunch or meal on, or beside, the graves of their deceased family members. Since this holiday always took place in late May or early June, it was a pleasant time for people to get together and enjoy the warm outdoor weather, and also visit and partake of food in a picnic setting.

The feast of St. Elijah was known as *Hram*. It was celebrated on August 2, following the Julian calendar. This was happy occasion, which observed the anniversary of the parish and also honoured the patron saint, Elijah. Following the church service, part of which was held outdoors for the blessing of the water, the congregation members returned to their homes. During the rest of the day, they celebrated with friends and relatives from their own and other parishes who went from house to house, feasting and visiting. A dance was held at the local hall in the evening. The celebration was repeated by the visitors who reciprocated on the feast day in their own parish, such as St. John's Parish in the Shell Valley, on July 7.

Names

ELSEWHERE IN THIS work, reference is made to the importance of names of people and places when researching and recording history. Some geographic locations, for one reason or another, have been settled by people from many different countries and cultures. Canada and the United States of America are good examples of this. Here one finds a variety of names of many national origins.

In some locations where there has been little or no migration movement historically, names of persons and places are closely related to the locality where they have evolved over many generations and are, therefore, good identifiers. This is especially true of many European countries, but also in older societies elsewhere. Bucovina more closely resembles North America than Europe in this respect. The reason for this is because of its location at the edge of Eastern Europe. For several millennia, there have been great migrations of people from the surrounding geographic areas moving through the region. Wars, persecution, and economic necessity were the usual causes. Many of these transients, including enemy soldiers, stayed and were assimilated into the local society, but their original names remained with them. This mosaic of names followed the people from Bucovina to Lennard and once again contributed to the diverse character of the community.

The roots of names usually indicate their origin. For example, Romanian names generally end in *cu*, *ian*, *a* or *ar*, such as Paulencu, Mintencu, Chescu, Ungurian, Titian, Bordian, Bezenar, Poclitar, Popa, Holunga. Ukrainian and Canadian influence sometimes changed the *cu* to *ko*, e.g. Mintenko.

Ukrainian names often end in *chuk* (*czuk* in Ukraine), e.g. Slusarchuk, Sawchuk, Stolarchuk, and Federchuk. Onofericuic and Pentelicuic are probably forms of Onofreichuk and Pentilichuk that became Romanized over the generations. It is interesting to note that Onofrei and Penteli were common first names in Bucovina.

Some names in the Lennard district ended in *uik* or *iuk*, e.g. Galatiuk, Wachnuik, Guraluik, Daneluik, Merinuik, and Savluik. There is some interesting speculation about the origin of these names. Some people in Romania maintain that they are a carryover from the days of the Turkish occupation of Romania and Bucovina. They explain that names ending in *uc* (pronounced *uik*) are common Turkish names. In fact, some geographic and heritage locations in Romania still carry names with this ending. One of these is a famous 500-year-old attraction in Bucharest called Hanul alui Manuc (pronounced Manuik), which means Manuc's inn. Manuc was a wealthy Turk living in Bucharest during the occupation.

Names that end in *ici* or *aci* usually have their origin in Serbia, e.g. Mihailovici, Ivanovici and Holovaci. Names ending in *ski*, such as Motososki and Melishinski are of Polish origin.

There is evidence of other national origins in the names of the people that came to the Lennard and surrounding

area from Bucovina, as follows:

German: Hoffman, Gherman, Strutz, Gudz, and Hackman.
Jewish: Cohen and Hertzog. And even English? Deacon,
Keeper, Boston and Lucas.

Names tell other interesting stories. For example, nevestuica means otter in Romanian. Burlac means bachelor, and Ungurian means “from Hungary.” Burla is the name of a village in Bucovina, and Gorda means ‘fat’ in Spanish. Stratulat means “a broad vegetable bed” in Romanian.

Names became Romanized, Russified, Anglicized and altered in many ways through the generations, due to changes in geographic location and geopolitical influences. In addition, other factors contributed to this situation in Canada. When the immigrants arrived in Canada, some of them could not spell their names for the immigration and other officials, and their European documents were not always legible. Consequently, the names were then spelled phonetically and continue that way to this day. Also, for many years, it was not beneficial to have a foreign-sounding name in Canada, and many names were Anglicized to escape this rejection. But in spite of all these changes, in most cases, the basic root and sound of names remained unchanged.

Through the efforts of some current and former residents of the Lennard district, many of the original names of Lennard and Shell Valley pioneers have been preserved. Much of this is due to the recollections of one of the last surviving pioneers, Agrapina Gabor, whose daughter Maria recorded them for posterity. Following is a list of Romanian and Ukrainian families, and single individuals,

who arrived in the district from Bucovina between 1900 and 1914. The list does not include all those who arrived as young children. (All first names are the ones that the immigrants brought with them. To the extent possible, surnames are also spelled in their original style. Last names appear first).

From Voloca (original)

Paulencu, Ion
 Paulencu, Gheorghe
 Paulencu, Dominica
 Paulencu, Marina
 Burla, Elie
 Burla, Zanfira
 Pentelicuic, Nicolai
 Gabor, Grigore
 Gabor, Alexie
 Gabor, Agrapina
 Gabor, Marina
 Eli, Elie
 Eli, Stefan
 Strutz, Grigori
 Axinte, Ion
 Zelinskie, Marcu
 Zelinskie, Onofrei

Burla, Nicolai
 Axinte, Ion
 Axinte, Pricopi
 Mintencu, Nicolai
 Mintencu, Grapina
 Mintencu, Petrea
 Mintencu, Aleonte
 Mintencu, Gheorghe
 Mintencu, Constantin
 Gherman, Precopi
 Romanovici, Maria
 Gherman, Artimon
 Gherman, Katrina
 Titian, Ion
 Bezanar, Aleonte
 Mintencu, Iona
 Cheuca, Tanase
 Ceuca, Precopi
 Chescu, Nicolai
 Chiperi, Precopi

Second Wave (Voloca)

Onofericuic, Nistru
 Onofericuic, Isidor
 Onofericuic, Saveta
 Bordian, Mihail
 Mintencu, Zanfira
 Burla, Gheorghe

Chiperi, Nicolai
 Dohei, Elie
 Cohen, Elisaveta
 Cohen, Artimon
 Dubinski, Ion
 Unchalenko, Dominica
 Gorda, Tanase
 Gorda, Elie

A GROUP OF PEASANTS were gathered in a small whitewashed cottage in the northern Romanian village of Voloca to make a decision that would change the course of many generations' lives. Starting in 1899, they would board ships leaving behind their homeland forever, to set out for a life of promise and change in the Canadian prairies.

Where Money Grew on Trees is an intimate portrait of 100 years of Romanian ancestry in and around the small rural village of Lennard, Manitoba. From the pioneers' gruelling passage and homesteading years, to the building and lurking dissolution of a community, this is the story of transitions and traditions, economic changes and shifting identities, survival and adaptation.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION and analysis puts historical events in context, but it's the details that bring the story to life: the names of the people, the odours of the food, the fickle weather, the lost art of subsistence living, faith, farming and festivals, life and death.

For the descendants of these Romanian pioneers, *Where Money Grew on Trees* is the first comprehensive history ever written on their forebears. But it is also a true people's history, a vivid record of how peasant immigrants adapted, survived and contributed to shaping the Canadian rural landscape.

WRITTEN FROM oral accounts and archival research, the book also includes a brief history of Romania and the Voloca region.