

The History of Our Parish

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Introduction

As we celebrate and commemorate the first one hundred years of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church of McKees Rocks, it is important to look back at the major events and people that brought us to this important milestone. The Holy Orthodox faith in this country was established only gradually and with much effort. Only through God's love and mercy and the dedicated service and prayers of many clergy and parishioners has our parish arrived at its Centennial Celebration.

Very often in our modern, fast-paced, and mobile society, the history of a place or of a group is unknown. It is important to compile a parish history not only to chronicle the past but to introduce to new members the efforts and sacrifices of our founders. The historic events documented by clergy, secretaries and national administrators, newspaper articles, photos, and commemorations tell a wonderful story of God's blessings. Knowledge of these events gives us an appreciation for the work that God has done in our parish and provides a foundation for the future life of our parish.

The history of St Nicholas Orthodox Church closely mirrors the history of Orthodoxy in America in the 20th Century. In particular, our parish is the result of the development of the Russian Orthodox mission in America, the immigration of Slavic peoples to western Pennsylvania, the return of Byzantine Catholics to the Orthodox Church, the Bolshevik revolution, the gradual adaptation of the immigrant church to the American culture, and the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in 1970.



Background

The establishment of our parish must always be seen as a consequence of the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Alaska in 1794. For 73 years, Russian missionaries led the native peoples to Orthodoxy, cultivated their faith, and developed native leadership by 1867. By 1872, the bishop had relocated to San Francisco, bringing Russian Orthodoxy to the continental United States. This missionary activity created the foundation of faith for all Orthodox Christians in the United States.¹

In the early part of the 20th century, one of the largest waves of Slavic immigration occurred. During the years 1899-1910, just before the formation of our parish, the total immigration into the United States was around 10 million; of these, the Slavic peoples numbered about 2.2 million.²

They left Eastern and Southern Europe for a variety of reasons, both social and economic. In the United States, they were free to speak their own language, improve the family's situation, to move about the country unencumbered, and to avoid compulsory military service. They were promised that hard work would enable them to buy land, educate their children, and build homes, schools, and churches.

Rather than relinquish their identity upon immigration to the United States, first-generation immigrants tended to retain the religion, language, and culture of their home countries. They generally settled in specific areas of the United States, often following friends or family members from their home village. Thus they created ethnically distinct immigrant communities.

Today, many descendants of Slavic peoples are not able to accurately identify their own specific ethnicity. Many people say that their family came from Czechoslovakia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or Galicia, without realizing that these extant countries each encompassed several ethnicities. In our earliest baptismal records, the parents' village of origin was in Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Belarus, Russia, Poland, or even Romania. People from these regions were generally Orthodox or Eastern Rite Catholic, although their exact ecclesiastical affiliation may actually have been unknown to them.

Compounding the complexities of identifying the specific homeland are the rapidly changing borders of countries in Europe during WW1. Thus a family's country of origin may not represent their ethnicity. Many of our early parishioners considered themselves to be Carpatho-Russian (aka Rusyn, Ruthenian, Uhorsky-Rusin, or Lemko). This geographical region today is located in Western Ukraine, Southeast Poland, and Eastern Slovakia.



Parish Development

The future Orthodox Church in America, of which our parish is a member, was originally founded as a mission of the Russian Orthodox Church. In time, as millions of Orthodox Christians emigrated from Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, and the Middle East, the mission enlarged and became known as the North American missionary diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. It brought together Orthodox Christians of various national backgrounds and traditions.³ Thus most, if not all, Orthodox churches built at this time, were under the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Our parish began in the early 1910s, when Slavic immigration was at its height. Immigrants from eastern and southern Europe settled in McKees Rocks specifically due to the availability of factory work and recently constructed local housing. The Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad had opened in McKees Rocks in the 1880s and created many jobs. One of the largest employers was the Pressed Steel Car Company, manufacturer of railroad cars.

At that time in Western Pennsylvania, the Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic churches were in a state of flux. The traditions were so similar that many immigrants did not distinguish Orthodoxy from Eastern Rite Catholicism. There were villages in the old country that did not even know that their bishop had sworn allegiance to the Pope and that they were therefore technically Eastern Rite Catholic.⁴

Due to the work of St Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre, there were a great number of conversions of Eastern Rite Catholics to Orthodoxy – some reports as high as 20,000 people in the first decade of the 20th century.⁵ Sometimes an entire parish would convert to Orthodoxy, including the priest.

It is certain that some of our early parishioners were Eastern Rite Catholic in the old country, especially those coming from Eastern Slovakia. Our first priest, Fr Arseny Gavula, was himself from Čabiny in the Zemplinský region of eastern Slovakia.⁶ He was originally an Eastern Rite Catholic priest, but he and his entire parish of St. John's in Black Lick, PA, were received into the Orthodox Church in 1910.⁷

Fr Gavula was already living and working among the Orthodox people in McKees Rocks by 1912 when he was designated as our first rector. He appears in a photo of the St. Nicholas Ladies' Lodge in 1912, which was one of many fraternal organizations that existed in Western PA at that time.

However, other early parishioners were from traditionally Orthodox communities in their emigrant countries, especially those emigrating from Russia. At the turn of the 20th century there was no Orthodox church in McKees Rocks. The nearest Orthodox churches up to the year 1914 were in the former Allegheny City (now known as the North Side of Pittsburgh), across the Ohio River from McKees Rocks. St Alexander Nevsky Church was on Ketchum Street, and St. Michael's Church was at Reed and Vine Streets; both were listed as "Greek Russian Orthodox" Churches.⁸ The term "Greek" at that time was used to denote the Byzantine tradition, whether Orthodox or Catholic.

Our 50th Anniversary book reports of the regular Sunday routine for the future founders of our parish:

"These early years were replete with incidents, sometimes thrilling and daring, but always trying, especially in the winter months, when crossing the Ohio River was hazardous and very dangerous. Yet, they were delightful years, for everyone looked forward to each weekend, when they would trek down to the river in a body, singing and laughing and exchanging their trials and tribulations of the week. Crossing the river was made by small boats or skiffs, sometimes propelled by gasoline engines that

would sputter and stop several times before it made the crossing, and at other times by rowboat with but one man rowing.”⁹

It was reported that about 10 families initially made the crossing of the Ohio River each week to St Alexander Nevsky Church, where they were active members. That parish soon established a Russian School in McKees Rocks. This school not only provided the service of learning Russian, but also attracted and unified Russian-speaking people in the area. It laid the groundwork for the development of our current parish. By 1913, about 50 families were affiliated with the Russian School in McKees Rocks, and with this number they formulated plans to establish a parish of their own.

In July of 1914, a charter was drawn up and filed in the Allegheny County Court for “St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Catholic Church of McKees Rocks”. The signatories for the charter were Michael Sharak (president), Fr Arseny Gavula (vice-president), Mike Pravlochak (treasurer), Peter Lychkoff (secretary), Ilko Chomiak, George Yalch, Mike Hawchik, Mike Wolcike, and Mike Tatich. The corporation was formed “*for the purpose of the support of public worship according to the forms, principles, doctrine, and usages of that body of Christian worshippers known as the Russian Orthodox.*”

The purpose of the charter was to be able to purchase property and to apply for permits to build a church structure. Later, the corporation served another purpose: to protect property from being seized by the communist government in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution.

It is interesting to note the great need that our parish filled at that time. There were no other Orthodox churches in McKees Rocks. People lacked reasonable transportation to attend other Orthodox parishes, there was as yet no bridge to cross the river, and the Orthodox community was growing rapidly. The 75th Anniversary book indicates that by the time of the signing of the charter in July of 1914, there were about 120 families, or about 400 people, in the congregation. The parish metrical books record 133 baptisms in the first three years from 1914 through 1916.

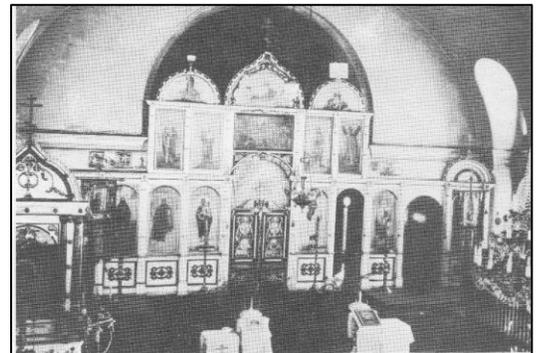
The Early Days of the Parish

The initial church meetings were held in the Pravlochak home on Ella Street nearby. Later, the parishioners rented Serbian Hall at Munson Avenue and Helen Street for church services. These accommodations were temporary, since shortly after the signing of the charter, land was purchased and construction began for the church building in our present location on Munson Avenue. Church records indicate that after Fr Arseny left, Fr Demitry Hotovitsky was assigned and was performing services for the church by June of 1914, before the charter was even signed. Fr. Demitry was instrumental in initiating the construction of the church.

The church building was financed through bank and parishioner loans. Both were to be paid back monthly from money collected by the parish council from individual donations and what was termed “dues.” In principle, the rather unfortunate idea was that only those who paid money to the church would be permitted to receive the sacraments. This principle was not always kept due to the poverty of some unemployed church members, especially during the Great Depression. There were many times when the parish could not afford to repay the parishioner loans.

Due to lack of funds, construction was halted after the basement was completed. Services were conducted in the basement for the next 2 years. During WW1, work was more plentiful from the increased factory output for the war effort. Parishioners had a bit more money to spare, donations increased, and construction of the church was completed in 1917 under the leadership of Fr Peter Tkach. Fr Peter was well known for his administrative talents, and he later became a Pittsburgh city official in various functions. The church was dedicated by Bishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) in December of 1917.

We know from photographs that our church originally had finished wood floors except for a carpet in front of the royal doors and part of the iconostasis. The iconostasis itself had western-style iconographic paintings: eight on the bottom row, four on the second row, and three half circular icons on the third row. Some of



the original icons were made out of paper. The kliros, the area for singers and readers on each side of the iconostasis, was a larger area than currently exists. As in most Orthodox churches, there were no pews. Women stood on the left during services, while men stood on the right. There were no paintings on the side walls of the church.

The year 1917 was a turbulent time in the American diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church due to the Bolshevik Revolution in October of that year. Money that had been coming from Russia to support the church was suddenly cut off. There was a desire among the clergy and parishioners to distance themselves from the socialist revolutionaries, but at the same time there was pressure from American socialists to align with them and distance oneself from the Orthodox Church entirely.¹⁰ There was also an attempt by the communists in Russia to seize property in the American diocese, including church buildings, that they believed belonged to them. These court cases lasted for years. The revolution and the following court cases were mitigating factors for many parishes to transfer ownership of their parish property from the bishop to the ownership of a loosely independent parish corporation. These factors complicated the lives of the Russian Orthodox Christians in America and around the world.

At this time, the hierarchy of the Russian missionary diocese was breaking down from the loss of ties with Russia. Thus the early days of our parish were turbulent, and other than in the war years, were marked by a consistent lack of funds, especially among new immigrants.

One of the practical implications this on had parishes of that era was that they could not afford to pay the priest a reasonable salary. Our parish records show priests were paid a small fee per service and were not offered housing until the parish house was built in 1919. There were in fact 16 different priests between 1913 and 1930, some staying for a few months and others for as long as 2 ½ years.

As WW1 ended and gave in to the Great Depression of 1929-1939, the entire country struggled financially, and the parish was naturally affected as well. Priests were still underpaid, social activities were curtailed, and many were not able to give any money to the parish at all. Parishioners moved away as they sought work in other areas of town and in other cities, leaving the support of the church to those who remained.

World War 2

The Great Depression ended with the start of WW2 in Europe. The job market was again booming due to the need of many factory workers to support the war effort. It was at this time that our parish experienced major change and growth. Fr Alexander Varlashkin, who had briefly been our priest in 1920-1921, returned to our parish in 1931. The 75th Anniversary book records that under his leadership, the parish grew to 680 members by the early 1940s.

With the depression now over, parishioners were able to find work and improve their financial situation.



In 1941, the parish decided to paint and decorate the church. Constantine Kosak, one of our members at that time and an artist by profession, painted the majority of the icons for the iconostasis. Other icons were purchased from an artist in New York City. Wassil Naidenoff of Carrick, who was a Bulgarian artist specializing in church decorations was hired to decorate the interior of the church during the summer of 1941. Eight icons were added to complete the second row of twelve apostles on the iconostasis. The main icons of the Theotokos and Christ were replaced as well as the icons on the deacon's doors. The icon of the Theotokos on the kiot in the nave was also replaced. On September 14, 1941, the Church was rededicated by Metropolitan Theophilus (Pashkovsky). Later, Yaroslav Tkach, son of our 5th priest Fr Peter Tkach and longtime member of our parish, made our main crystal chandelier. It was blessed in September 1963.

At the same time that the parishioners voted to have the church painted, they also began to talk about pews. Most likely, parishioners were influenced in their desire for pews by neighboring non-Orthodox

congregations and some other American Orthodox congregations who were adding pews at this time. It was decided that those who wanted pews would need to pay for it.

In 1944, Fr. Varlashkin requested donations for the purpose of paying off the mortgage. At that meeting, ten families donated \$100 each (valued at around \$1,300 today). Within four years, the mortgage was completely paid off, and the church celebrated with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy officiated by Bishop Nikon (de Greve) and Bishop Dionysius (Diachenko) and a banquet at the Ukrainian Hall.

When WW2 ended, our parish and Orthodoxy in Western Pennsylvania continued to thrive. At that time, the lives of the parishioners revolved completely around their church community. Their schools, social activities, and worship were all within the same tight-knit community. There were many different local and national Orthodox organizations that provided social activities for our parishioners such as the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (F.R.O.C.) – from which came the local chapter of the “R” Club – the Holy Virgin Nativity Lodge, the Men’s Mutual Aid Lodge, the Ladies’ Altar Guild, and the Men’s American Russian Orthodox (A.R.O.) Club. The children were educated at the church school and the Russian school, the boys served at the altar, and many socialized in the Young Ladies’ Social Club.

Cultural Changes

In the next few decades, the first generation of immigrant parishioners was passing away, and the culture of the parish began to slowly change. The descendants of the founders considered themselves Americans, assimilating themselves into the American “melting pot.” In contrast to the unified faith and culture of the church up until that time, the American parishioners were adopting the American lifestyle. They spoke English, wore American clothing, went to public schools, ate American food, and were influenced by the American culture.

They adopted American attitudes that deemphasized ethnicity and religion. Our parishioners began to marry non-Slavs and Christians of other denominations. It was no longer a cultural or religious value to marry within the Russian Orthodox community. There began to be a marked decline in parish membership. For example, when an Orthodox Christian married a Roman Catholic, most often the entire family became Roman Catholic. This was due to the requirement of those married in the Catholic Church to agree to raise their

children as Roman Catholics. Thus with one Catholic spouse and Catholic children, that family and their descendants were lost to the Orthodox Church.

There are no numbers that can point to how significant this trend impacted the membership in the Orthodox Church. One recent Greek Orthodox study claims that up to 75% of first generation Americans in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese were intermarrying.¹¹ In our own parish, we can point to many descendants of our parishioners who are now Roman Catholics.

Another influence on declining membership was the slow adaptation of Orthodox churches to American language and culture. When compared to a mostly Slavic ethnic community with services in Church Slavonic, some families opted to leave for the sake of the non-Orthodox spouse.

In an effort to reverse these trends, some cultural adaptations took place at this time: the addition of pews, the gradual introduction of English in the services, the rejection of head coverings for women, and the loss of the women’s and men’s “sides” of the church during services. These changes occurred



(left to right, back to front) John Shaytar, Nancy Pravlochak, John Pravlochak, Joe Homyak, Stella Homyak, Claudia Pennock; Carol Boretsky, Cynthia Panik, Doris Wasilko, Eleanor Kovacs, Christine Timko, Marilyn Skobil; Christine Strilka, Nancy Karavlan (Mell), Jan Pravlochak, Helen Bobin, Chuck Wasilko Sr, Ann Hruch, Marsha Wasilko, Joann March

specifically because the American culture taught its citizens that to become American means to assimilate into the culture and to become like everyone else.

The original language of the services in our parish was Church Slavonic. Cantors were generally used, and there was no fixed choir or choir director. Michael Branchin is the only person who could be identified as a choir director, but his tenure in this position was a short one. In 1922, a young Charles Wasilko began to sing in church, and over time he became Cantor and then Choir Director, a position he retained until 1984. He devoted 63 years to singing in our church, not only as choir director but also by singing at countless baptisms, weddings and funerals, and by accompanying the priest on Epiphany for house blessings. He was also instrumental in the growing use of English in the services of the church. His dedication is representative of the parishioners at that time, for whom their entire lives were focused on the Church.

As early as 1943, our parish council felt that they needed to stimulate interest in the church and to increase attendance at services among the young people. It was therefore decided that Fr. Varlashkin, the current parish priest, should conduct part of the church services in the English language. For the first time in 30 years, the church services would not exclusively be conducted in Church Slavonic.

The first Divine Liturgy music book in English was published by Fr Andrew Glagolev in 1948. The impact of using English in the churches is best summarized by the foreword:

“During the last few years, it is becoming more and more evident, ... that parochial responsibilities involving chorus participation, church reading and chanting, participation in administration, etc., are gradually coming into the hands of our American youth. Our youth, having been educated in American schools, naturally know their secondary language, the Russian tongue, imperfectly. Thus many of them do not truly comprehend our church services, although the liturgical melodies are next to their hearts. ...we are now experiencing the inevitable trying time in our church life, when our American environment has necessitated the translation of parts of our church services into the English language... We beseech you to remember those of our parents who still cherish dearly our Russian speech and Russian melodies. It will be as difficult for them to sacrifice our Russian lyrics as it is for you, the younger generation, to fully maintain them. Having sacrificed language—let us retain our traditional melodies.”¹²

By 1955, the parish had made a decisive effort to significantly increase the amount of English used in the services. There was naturally some resistance to this change, so it was only gradually accepted over many years.

Decline of McKees Rocks

The 1950s saw the beginning of decline in McKees Rocks¹³. The major industry and employer in the borough was the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Yard. It was used mainly to maintain steam locomotives, but as the railroad industry transitioned to diesel, the rail yard became obsolete.¹⁴ The population of McKees Rocks began to decline as many people moved away to find work, including many parishioners. Eventually, the parish was left in the midst of a deteriorating neighborhood. By 1961, the official number of adult parishioners had fallen to 299¹⁵, a significant decrease over the 680 members in the 1940s. This is likely due to the closure of factories.

Despite the decline, parishioners continued to attend our parish, now commuting from areas outside of McKees Rocks. This was another great cultural change for the parish. Instead of living next door to other parishioners, maintaining the small Orthodox community, and being involved in the neighborhood where the church resided, the parish community was scattered throughout the region. Now parishioners' neighbors were of different ethnicities and religions, further assimilating members into the American culture and lifestyle.

Following the retirement of Father Varlashkin in 1976 and his subsequent death in 1979 of a car accident, our parish struggled through another difficult period. The neighborhood continued to deteriorate, parishioners moved away, and several priests came and went for various reasons. After all of this turmoil, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church retained 83¹⁶ dedicated members, most of whom were descendants of the original founders and parishioners.

On April 11th, 1970 the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Moscow Patriarch Alexei I (Simansky), granted independence to its daughter church in America, who subsequently dropped its ethnic affiliation and became known as the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). One issue that impacted our parish was the adoption of the new calendar on September 1, 1982. Our parish transitioned from the old calendar, where fixed feast days such as Christmas were celebrated 13 days earlier. For example, Christmas was no longer celebrated on January 7th but on December 25th. This caused some turmoil in our community, and some parishioners chose to leave the parish and seek parishes that retained the old calendar.



In the early 1980s, the parish was grappling with the idea of leaving the deteriorating area of the McKees Rocks “Bottoms” and relocating. This issue caused turmoil within the parish community. During the tenure of Fr Michael Matsko, the parish purchased property in Kennedy Township. However, the parish never brought the issue to resolution, and the property was sold in May of 2000.

Renewal and Revitalization

In the 1980s, our parish was blessed with an influx of new immigrants from the Soviet Union who fled their country to escape the limitations and dangers of communism. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, many people left to seek new economic opportunities in the United States. Those who came from the former Soviet Union sought refuge in our parish and were welcomed by Fr Vladimir Soroka, who was assigned to the parish in 1988.

His assignment was unusual in that he had already retired in 1987 after twenty-eight years of active clerical ministry. However, then Bishop Kyrill (Yonchev) felt that he could stabilize our struggling parish. His skills both as a pastor and as a Russian speaker allowed the new immigrants to feel integrated into the community. It is often related that when they came to the church, he would say, “Welcome to your new home!” Thus our parish became a center for new Russian immigrants. Several of our parishioners were even motivated to adopt orphans from the former Soviet Union. These events, led by Fr Vladimir’s pastoral style and healing leadership, injected new vitality into the parish.

In the year 2000, Fr Thomas Soroka was assigned to our parish when his father, Fr. Vladimir Soroka, retired for the second time. Fr Thomas is the third generation of priests in the Soroka family to serve our parish. For the last 14 years, Fr Thomas has worked to build on the work of his father, growing the parish by leading converts into the Holy Orthodox faith and attracting many new members and young families. He is known for his outreach on the internet through social media and Ancient Faith Radio, built up the educational programs for both adults and youth, and directed renovations to the church building and properties.

Another positive development was the increase of clerical and monastic vocations. Joseph Mell (Fr Deacon Joseph Mell), a lifelong member of the parish, was ordained to the diaconate in 2004. James Mancini, Jr (Fr Niphon) a convert from Roman Catholicism, became a monk and was ordained as a deacon at Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos in Greece. Helene Krenitsky (Sister Helene) became a novice at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Elwood City, PA. Our parish has developed close ties to the monastery because of its proximity to our parish and Sister Helene’s continued presence.

Some organizations in our parish have existed from the very beginning our parish. For example, the Sisterhood includes all of the women of the parish and has always played an important role. In the early years, they assisted the parish by paying for various building repairs from money they had earned. Today, they organize or fund many of our annual celebrations and support the purchase and repair of the church covers and vestments which beautify our temple. Additionally, singing is of primary importance in our church. Many people have served as either cantors, singers, or readers. Today, Doris Wasilko continues the impressive tradition of her father, Charles, in preparing and directing the singers for all major church services.

Our parish is currently made up of long-time parishioners, including descendants of our founders, new Russian immigrants, new American converts, and other Orthodox Christians who have made St Nicholas their new home. New social and educational groups include the Orthodox Mothers’ Group, the book discussion group, the bible study, the church school, the vacation church school, and the Young Adult Group. They

enhance the already existing organizations such as the St Nicholas Sisterhood, the R club, the choir, and the Hoagie Heroes, and various lodges.

Building renovations since 2000 include the repair of the domes, renovation of the basement and kitchen, addition of the cry room, refinishing the floors, and painting of the church interior. In addition, two icons were replaced on the kiots, the Theotokos and St. Nicholas, having been painted by Fr. Theodore Jurewicz of Erie, PA. All of the icons on the iconostasis are being replaced, with two additions: St. John Maximovitch with St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, and Sts. Vladimir and Olga. All icons on the iconostasis are being painted by Cheryl Pituch of Johnstown, PA.

Conclusion

This church was built on the foundation of Christ and the Tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church. We are grateful for the success of our parish and for our arrival at the Centennial celebration. From our humble beginnings, we successfully transitioned from a Slavic immigrant community to an American Orthodox Church. Today our parish is a very tight-knit community, composed of Orthodox Christians from every ethnic and religious background. Our parish is truly an extension of our family, and we are all dedicated to seeing it into the next generation. We conclude with the closing words of the history as published in the 50th Anniversary Book:

“It took a lot of effort over the years to build, develop and maintain our parish as you see it and find it today and each of us should, in his or her own way, give thanks to the Lord for this heritage that we have been blessed with. The least that we can do to show our appreciation is to remain militant participants of the Orthodox Faith and thereby help to perpetuate its fine way of life.”¹⁷

(With grateful acknowledgement to Michael Pravy and John Pravlochak, our previous historians.

¹Kishkovsky, Very Rev. Leonid and Stokoe, Mark; “The Meaning of the Alaskan Mission”, Orthodox Christians in North America (1794 - 1994), Chapter 1, <http://oca.org/history-archives/orthodox-christians-na/chapter-1>

² “The Slavs in America”, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14051a.htm>

³ Matusiak, Rev. John, “A History and Introduction of the Orthodox Church in America”, <http://oca.org/history-archives/oca-history-intro>

⁴ “History of Orthodoxy in Osadné”, Pravoslávna cirkevná obec Osadné, http://www.pcoosadne.orthodox.sk/publicen_html/historia/parishosadne.htm

⁵ Orthodox Wiki, Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, “Reunion”, http://orthodoxwiki.org/Alexis_of_Wilkes-Barre

⁶ Pennsylvania Draft Board 2, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, Roll 1926736, Gavula, Arseny; U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005.

⁷ St John the Baptist OCA Parish, Black Lick, PA, “History”, <http://oca.org/parishes/oca-wp-bllsjb>

⁸ “Churches”, Pittsburgh directory, 1914, R. L. Polk & Co., Historic Pittsburgh City Directories, p.108, <http://digital.library.pitt.edu>

⁹ Pravy, Michael C.; 50th Golden Anniversary 1914-1964, St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church; “History of the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church of McKees Rocks, Pa.”

¹⁰ Kishkovsky, Very Rev. Leonid and Stokoe, Mark; Orthodox Christians in North America (1794 - 1994), Chapter 5: The Collapse of the Immigrant Church; <http://oca.org/history-archives/orthodox-christians-na/chapter-5>

¹¹ Kehayes, Peter S., “An Important Challenge for Greek Orthodox Christianity”

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/marriage/interfaith/guest-writers/challengeforGOC>

¹² Glagolev, Rev Andrew P, Songs of the Russian Orthodox Divine Liturgy with All Original Melodies of the Russ. Orth. Church, Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs of America, 1948.

¹³ Western Pennsylvania Brownfieldscenter, 2008, McKees Rocks (P & L E Railroad),

<http://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/brownfields/Case%20Studies/pdf/McKees%20Rocks%20-%20PLE%20UPDATE.pdf>

¹⁴ Schmitz, Jon, “CSX to build truck-transfer hub in McKees Rocks and Stowe”, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, October 16, 2013,

<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/region/2013/10/17/CSX-to-build-truck-transfer-hub-in-McKees-Rocks-and-Stowe/stories/201310170271>

¹⁵ St. Nicholas Orthodox Church of McKees Rocks, Parish Meeting Minutes 1930-1961, p.147.

¹⁶ Pravlochak, John; “Parish History”, 75th Anniversary Book; St. Nicholas Orthodox Church of McKees Rocks, 1989.

¹⁷ Pravy, Michael C.; 50th Golden Anniversary 1914-1964, St Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church; “History of the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church of McKees Rocks, Pa.”