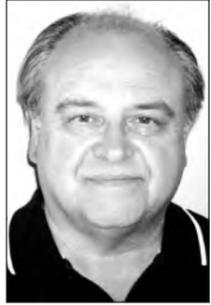


LOCAL NEWS

# Winnipeg Celebrates 100 years of Ukrainian Enlightenment



Peter Manastyrsky

■ In 1868, a 148 years ago in the western region of Ukraine a group of people came together to form a society that would have long lasting effects not only on Ukraine but later throughout the world. The objective of this new organization was to reawaken the Ukrainian spirit by encouraging language development as well as maintaining customs and traditions that was continuously oppressed. The society's name became "Prosvita" meaning to enlightenment or to reawaken.

Twenty five years after the first Ukrainians settled in Canada, the need arose again to reaffirm the Ukrainian spirit. The spirit was reawakened with the formation of cultural branches throughout the western provinces calling themselves "Prosvita" which took roots on Canadian soil to provide immigrants with a meeting place to share their anxieties and hope for the future.

Thus in 1916 at the Sts. Vladimir and Olha Cathedral in Winnipeg, a choral and dramatic society named "Bandurist" was established. This gave impetus to the whole movement of "Prosvita". By holding concerts and theatrical productions, the bandurist society soon expanded its membership to the point where the church hall space became inadequate. The concept of erecting their own Prosvita building was born.

On the initiative of Rev. Mykhailo Olenchuk, a founding committee was formed and land for the planned building was purchased at the corners of Pritchard Avenue and Arlington Street. Due to financial difficulties, the project took longer than originally

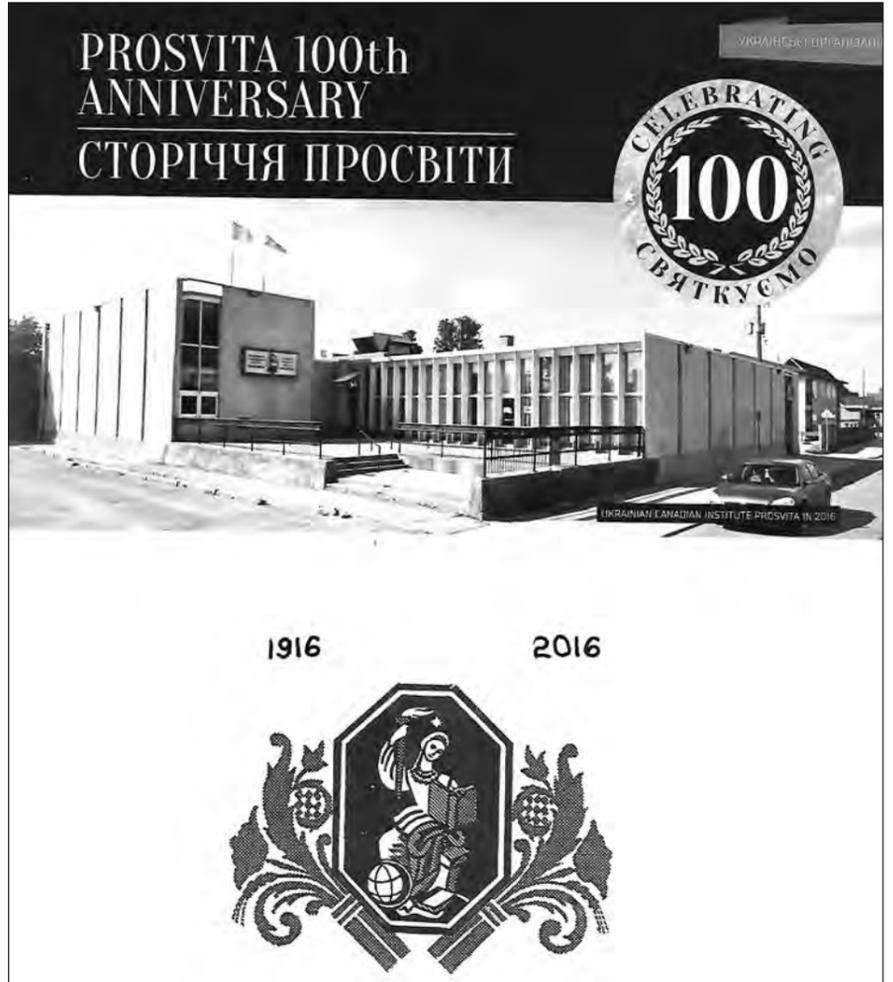
anticipated and the building was not completed until 1920. The building was blessed by his Beatitude Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyckyj. A great deal of credit for its fundraising efforts and generosity through the years belonged to the Knyahinia Olha League, who was very instrumental and active up and into the early 1990s.

With the additional space, activities at Canadian Ukrainian Institute Prosvita thrived and into the next number of decades the community witnessed numerous cultural productions and the birth of impressive choirs, amateur drama groups, orchestras, a school of dance, sport clubs and many other interesting concerts and events.

After the Second World War, with the arrival of a new wave of immigrants, not only did the membership of Institute Prosvita grow, but a number of new organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Youth Association (S.U.M) the League for Ukraine and its women's branch were welcomed as affiliates for the "Institute".

Due to the dynamic involvement and expansion of the building in 1954 and 1966 a fundraising campaign began in both years in order to remodel the building to facilitate the demand. Thanks to the generosity of the membership and the affiliated organizations, as well as the Ukrainian community as a whole, the present building was erected. Today it esthetically enhances the north end of Winnipeg and stands as a tangible measure of the Ukrainian community's successes and identifies the contribution to our city, the province and to the betterment of Canada.

Throughout the months of 2016, Ukrainians in Canada have been celebrating the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the first Ukrainians to Canada, and in particular to Manitoba. With the arrival of the first Ukrainian settlers to Canada and Ukrainian institutions like "Prosvita" that took root on Canadian soil a 100 years ago, these historical events provided a meeting place in which people shared their feel-



ings as well as hope for the future by enlightening and promoting Canada's cultural mosaic. The spirit of Prosvita is recognized as the light that guided the Ukrainian community and brought together four waves of Ukrainian immigrants, made a profound impact on the Winnipeg and Canada as whole. Hopefully as Canadians we continue the model of accepting and accommodating diverse cultures into

our society for the next 100 years.

—Peter J. Manastyrsky  
an active member of the  
Winnipeg's Ukrainian community.

**Editor's Comment:** The Ukrainian Voice newspaper was the cornerstone of and began the "Ukrainian Awakening" yet in 1909. The Ukrainian Voice was founded by the Ukrainian Teachers of Manitoba.

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**Христос Рождається!  
— Славимо Його!**

Christmas greetings and best wishes  
for a joyful and bountiful New Year!

From the director and staff at the  
Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies

Найщиріші Різдвяні вітання та  
Новорічні побажання!

Від директора та співробітників  
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