



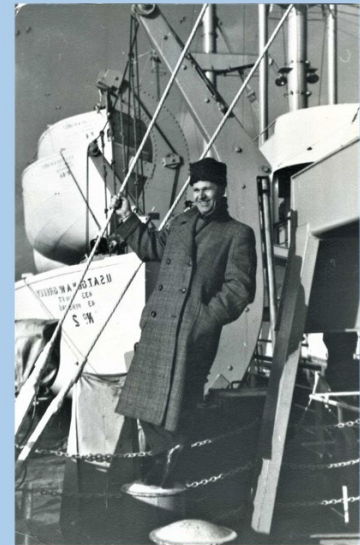
*We have many amateur-photographers, who lived in exile and in camps all around the world. They either took their own photographs or bought them as tokens without realizing that this photograph has great value as documentation of Ukrainian childhood in exile. Therefore, everyone who has these photographs of great historical significance should donate them to the museum so that future researchers will have access to materials, which can bring invaluable benefit to the future Ukrainian nation.*

*Petro Oleksijenko*

**Petro Oleksijenko**, a photo-journalist as well as a military and socio-political leader, was born on July 11, 1898 in the town of Rzhyschiv in the Kyiv Region. He participated in the Battle of Kruty in the student company of the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR). A recipient of the Cross of Symon Petliura, the military cross of the UPR, the Steel Cross of the UNR, the Cross of the Ukrainian Kozaks, and many others. The author of memoirs, *Rzhyschiv on the Dnipro* (1970) and *50 Years in Emigration in the Service of the Motherland* (1971).

After the defeat of the Ukrainian revolution, he lived in exile on the territory of Poland. When the Second World War ended, he found himself in a displaced persons camp in Augsburg, Germany. He was the owner of the photo studio Photo-World. In the early 1950s, he immigrated to the United States where he lived in Chicago, Illinois. Here, he became a co-founder of the Chicago branch of the Ukrainian veteran organization, Association of Former Ukrainian Soldiers in America (AFUSA). In 1955, he chaired the Fourth Congress of AFUSA in Chicago.

Toward the end of the 1950s, he moved to Denver, Colorado. He became one of the co-founders of the Ukrainian Archive Museum and Library in Denver. He died on March 9, 1988 in Denver, where he was buried in the Orthodox side of the Ukrainian cemetery, Crown Hill, in Denver.



**Photo-exhibition: Chicago Ukrainians in the 1950's through the lens of Petro Oleksijenko**

**Фото-виставка: Українське життя в Чикаго у 1950-х рр. через фото-об'єктив Петра Олексієнка**



*Thousands of photographs...were gifted by photojournalist Petro Oleksijenko to the Ukrainian National Museum of Chicago. Petro Oleksijenko's quote tells us that he was not just a professional photographer but a recorder of history. His photo-lens conveys life itself - ordinary people who survived the DP camps, gray-haired generals and officers of the army of the Ukrainian People's National Republic, Plast, Ukrainian scout camps in Europe, and then in Chicago, where he lived in the 1950s, cultural events, demonstrations and parades. He indelibly marked significant dates from his own life in the photos - there are family photos, documents, participation in theatrical performances and a scene of him taking his first step onto the ship that took him overseas to America. Petro Oleksijenko understood the significance of each of his photographs for the history of Ukraine and the history of the Ukrainian immigration to the United States.*



## **Loyalty Day Parade May 1, 1951**

Ukrainian immigrants after the Second World War actively merged with community life in the city of Chicago. Ukrainians understood and highly valued the democratic principles of their new homeland. They took advantage of every opportunity to thank America for accepting them. Participation in the Loyalty Day Parade in Chicago's downtown with other nations, whose governments were controlled by repressive communist regimes, became a demonstration of thankfulness for the American government for giving them the opportunity of living in a democratic and free country.



### **“I AM AN AMERICAN DAY” PARADE**

The tradition of celebrating “I AM AN AMERICAN DAY” started in 1939. In the city of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, a ceremony was organized for 350 young people who turned 21 and were finally able to vote. This tradition quickly spread to all American cities. On May 1940, the American Congress and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wrote a resolution, proclaiming the third Sunday of May as “I Am An American” day. It became a national holiday, which then transformed into Citizenship Day in 1952. Traditionally, “I Am An American” Day was celebrated through a festive parade, attended by all nations who wanted to demonstrate thankfulness to their new country. Ukrainians, especially those, who came to the United States at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, actively participated in the celebration of this American holiday. The photograph depicts Ukrainians participating in the parade, which takes place in the Ukrainian community. With the help of these historical photographs, we can see how the Ukrainian Village looked like during those times. We can also distinguish the Chicago and Oakley intersection. The main ceremony and welcome took place on the territory of Frederic Chopin Elementary School, which functioned as the main gathering place for Ukrainian assemblies during the 1950s.



## **Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Famine-Genocide against Ukrainians.**

After the Second World War, new immigrants, who were refugees of the communist regime, became the first who began to talk about the horrific Genocide - Holodomor against Ukrainians in Ukraine and outlying territories in 1932-1933. The pain of the tragedy and the memories of deceased family members compelled the Ukrainian immigrants to unite and stage mass demonstrations in memory of the victims of the Genocide - Holodomor. The United States, guaranteeing freedoms of life, speech, and religion in its Constitution, became a haven of democracy and place of liberty for Ukrainian political refugees.

A massive demonstration on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide - Holodomor took place in Chicago in 1958. It was a chance to inform the American society not only about the Genocide - Holodomor, but also about the large numbers of victims of Stalinist repression, the destruction of churches and clergy, the ban of any democratic freedoms, and the persecution of those not loyal to the Soviet system.

A substantial gathering took place in Smith Park, running its course through the streets of the Ukrainian neighborhood in Chicago. The Ukrainian anthem was sung, and speeches were made by community activists near Saint Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral. All active Ukrainian socio-political, educational, youth, and religious organizations participated in this event. On the photo, one can see parishioners of Ukrainian churches, students, and representatives of the following organizations: the Ukrainian Hetman Organization, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America, the Providence Association of Ukrainian Catholics, the American Ukrainian Youth Association, Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization, the Ukrainian Democratic Youth Organization, and the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN).



## Round Lake

At the end of the 1940s, a new wave of immigrants replenished Chicago's Ukrainian community. These new immigrants were mostly young Ukrainian families, who had small children, inspiring the idea of setting up recreational campgrounds for them outside of the city. The property on Round Lake was purchased. That same summer, about 70 children vacationed at Round Lake. Soon, it became the center of diverse entertainment, concerts, festivals, vacation and camping. The location, with a comfortable and safe lake for swimming, became a favorite vacation spot for Ukrainian Chicagoans.

