

PAGAN FOUNDER OF TOWN MADE SAINT

Pereyaslav's Originator, Once Cruel, Turned to Deeds of Charity and Piety

"Pereyaslav, a city of 18,000 inhabitants in the district known as Little Russia, whence came recently the disquieting news of a revolt led by the able organizer, Krustaleff-Nosar, is one of the most historic spots in Russia," says a war geography bulletin issued from the Washington headquarters of the National Geographic Society.

"Situated 25 miles southeast of Kiev, at the confluence of the Trubez and the Alta Rivers, five miles above the left bank of the Dneiper, Pereyaslav's story begins during the last decade of the tenth century, when it was founded by St. Vladimir on the spot where he, as grand duke of Kiev and of all Russia, defeated the savage Turkish tribe of Petchenegs. The founder of the city, incidentally, began his reign as a notorious pagan, immolating Christian martyrs on the altars of his heathen gods, and as a convert of the Catholic faith terminated it with splendid works of charity and piety which helped to civilize and Christianize his country, and which won for him a place of signal honor in Russia's calendar of saints.

"Almost no traces remain of the original city, although the Church of the Assumption, a seventeenth century structure, rests on the foundation of a sacred edifice built in 1010. The place suffered sack at the hands of Mongol hordes in 1239, at a time when it had risen to the eminence of chief town of a separate principality.

"Pereyaslav was one of the centers of the Cossack movement which, under the leadership of the signally able but ruthlessly cruel Bogdan Chmielnicki, threatened at one time to result in the establishment of a separate kingdom. It was at Pereyaslav that the Polish peace commissioners met to treat with Chmielnicki, after he had inaugurated the terrible 'serfs' fury,' during which all the Polish gentry of the Ukraine were subjected to the most frightful outrages, being burned and flayed alive or sawn asunder. It was also here, six years later, in 1654, after he had been defeated by a final desperate effort of John Casimir's Polish army of 60,000 men, that Chmielnicke signed a pact giving his allegiance to Czar Alexis I, thus throwing the Cossack power to Russia instead of to the kingdom of Poland, which was so soon to be ravaged both by the armies of the czar and those of Charles X of Sweden.

"The modern town has a considerable trade in grain, salt, cattle and horses, and has limited manufactures of tallow, wax, candles and shoes. Its river port on the Dneiper is the village of Andrushki.

"Pereyaslav of the Little Russia district is not to be confused with another town of the same name in the government, or province, of Vladimir, 45 miles northeast of Moscow. The latter was formerly noted for the number of its religious edifices, and now has extensive cotton mills."