

400 Years of Ukrainian-American History

12 facts you probably didn't know



#1

A young English adventurer named John Smith escapes slavery in Crimea. He flees north. Cossack frontiersmen shelter him and set him free. He goes home, crosses an ocean, and founds Jamestown—the first permanent English colony in America.

1603



#2

Revolution draws fighters deeply familiar with Ukrainian lands. Tadeusz Kościuszko —born in Belarus to Ruthenian parents— fights for American independence. He becomes a trusted aide to Gen. Washington. After defeating the British, he returns to Europe to challenge Russia.



1776



#3

That same Revolution draws Casimir Pulaski, who won his estate near Ternopil after surviving a Russian siege in 1762. By 1776, he trades his Polish noble title for the title "Father of American Cavalry." He dies a hero's death leading the siege against the British near Savannah.



#4

A Virginian diplomat named Lewis Littlepage—a personal friend of George Washington and Patrick Henry—stands on the banks of the Dnipro at Kaniv. Among the first Americans of the new republic to set foot on Ukrainian soil.

1787



#5

Lord Byron's epic carries the story of Hetman Ivan Mazepa—the Cossack who defied empire—across the ocean. From New York to San Francisco, his legend becomes one of the great spectacles of the American stage. Lincoln, an avid theatergoer, likely watched the DC production.

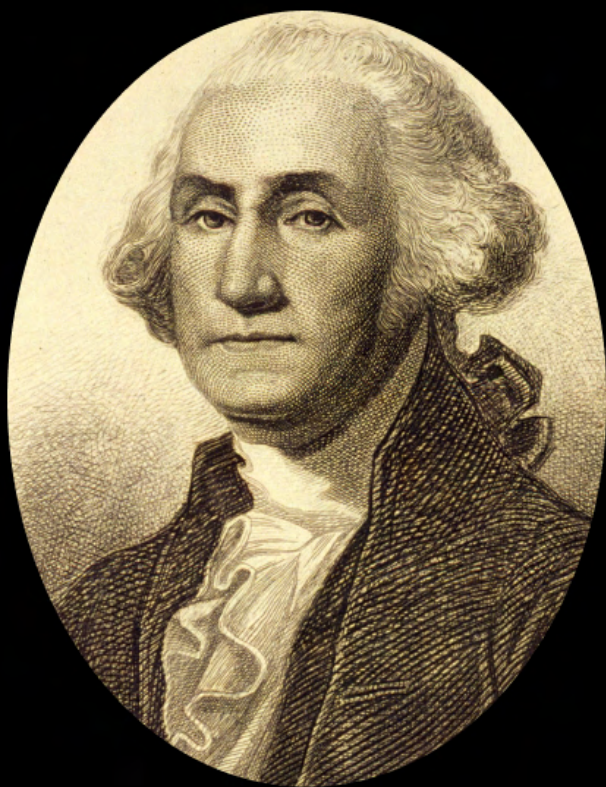


1800s



#6

Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko —born a serf—dreams aloud of the day his nation will greet "our own George Washington with a new and righteous law." He never lived to see emancipation, but his spirit of liberty inspires to this day.



1857



#7

The Tsar's serfs are freed. American slaves are liberated. Inspired by both emancipations, a Cossack-born officer who grew up riding the Ukrainian steppes dons the Union blue, and rises to the rank of general. He fights in America for the freedom he hoped to see at home.

GEN. JOHN B. TURCHIN DIES.
General John Basil Turchin, author, statesman and soldier, died of senile dementia at the hospital for the insane at Anna, Ill. He had been an inmate of the institution for about two months. He was the founder of Radom, a Polish settlement in Clinton County, and was a well-known magazine writer.
Colonel Turchin was in Illinois when the clarion of Lincoln's call roused



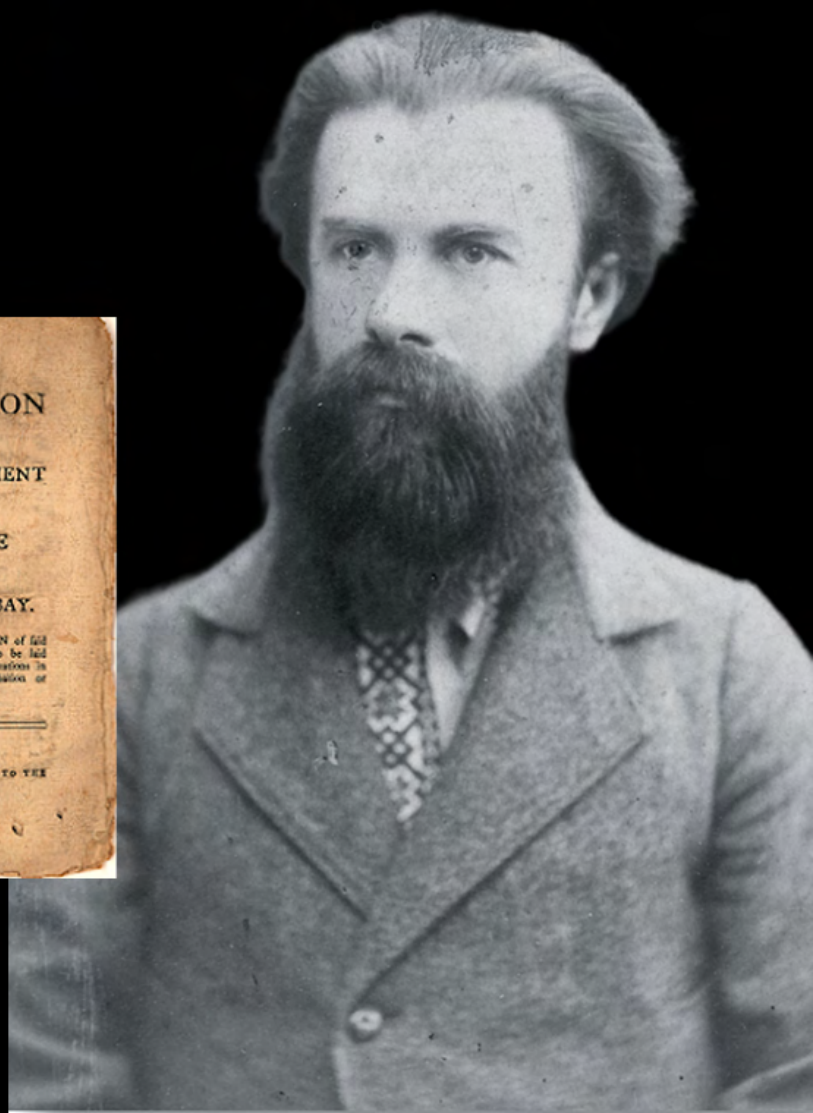
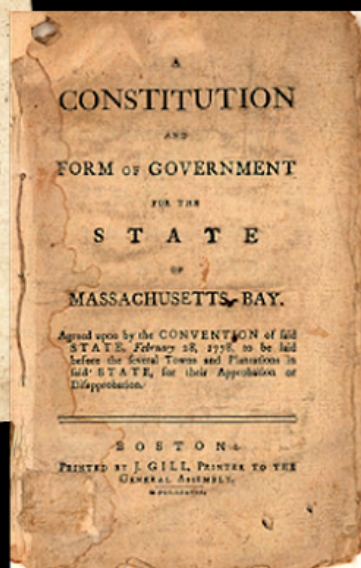
1861/65

GEN. JOHN B. TURCHIN.
The Russian soldier offered his sword to his adopted country and was appointed colonel of the Nineteenth Illinois Volunteers. His Russian methods, crossed with American patriotism, soon made that regiment a shining light of discipline and efficiency. He was called to the aid of General Buell, gave that commander most valuable strategical advice at Corinth, organized a battery in Chicago, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general, and in other ways distinguished himself highly in the service.

#8

Ukraine's greatest political thinker, Mykhailo Drahomanov, sits in exile reading American state constitutions — Maryland, Massachusetts, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina — line by line. He declares the United States among "the free lands which should be followed by all."

1870s-1890s



#9

U.S. Consul Douglas Jenkins arrives in Kyiv on special diplomatic detail. He witnesses the Rada declare independence and negotiate with world powers on their own terms. Jenkins reports directly to Washington — an American diplomat is prepared to recognize a free Ukraine.



1918



#10

Ukrainian-Americans don't just remember this history — they act on it. As Wilson negotiates the peace after WWI, they petition, they march, they lobby for recognition of independence. Ukrainian-Americans believe America will stand with them.

1920s



#11

FDR recognizes the Soviet Union despite reports of the Holodomor. Ukrainian-Americans march in protest but are attacked by Stalinist mobs. For the next several decades, advocates meet with the State Department and write to the White House to seek justice and recognition.



#12

President Eisenhower unveils the monument to Taras Shevchenko in Washington, D.C. In his speech, he called Shevchenko a Ukrainian hero and said the statue represented "millions of oppressed" and "gives them constant encouragement to struggle forever against Communist tyranny, until, one day final victory is achieved, as it most surely will be."



1964

TARAS
SHEVCHENKO
1814-1861
BARD OF UKRAINE



From before 1776 to 1991 and beyond: Ukrainians didn't wait until now to turn to America. For centuries, we have been bound by a shared conviction: that freedom belongs to everyone. This July 4th, we honor that deep friendship.

Happy Independence Day, USA!
Here's to 250 more!