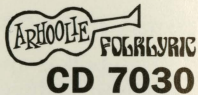


# UKRAINIAN VILLAGE MUSIC

Historic recordings 1928-1933



## UKRAINSKA SELSKA ORCHESTRA:

1. Dowbush Kozak
2. Newelnik (Prisoner) (waltz)

## ORCHESTRA BRATIA "HOLUTIAKY-KUZIANY":

3. Tramla z Pod Pagorka
4. Chytry Tanecne Cardasy (Artful Csardas Dance)

## EWGEN ZUKOWSKY:

5. Kolomyjka Powitowa (County Kolomyjka) - Part 1
6. Kolomyjka Powitowa (County Kolomyjka) - Part 2

## SAMUIL PILIP'S LEMKIWSKA ORCHESTRA:

7. Daliwskyj Tanec
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## JOSEF PIZIO:

12. Pidkamecka Kolomyjka
13. Ruzia Kaczky Zahaniala (Ruzia Drove the Ducks to the Pen) (kozaczok)
14. Polka "Czariwnyj Kaminetz" (Dazzling Jewel Polka)

## THEODORE J. SWYSTUN:

15. Kozaczka Szumka

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## TREMBITA ORCHESTRA:

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## MICHALA THOMASA & UKRAINSKA ORCHESTRA:

19. Tanec "Husar" (Hussar dance)
20. Pidhirska (Foothills)(kolomyjka)

## PETRA ROSADY & UKRAINSKA ORCHESTRA:

21. Zydiwoczka Na Seli (Jewish Girl in the Village)

## UKRAINSKA SELSKA ORCHESTRA:

22. Shnel Polka (Fast Polka)
23. Marusia (Little Mary) (polka)
24. Kolomyjka Lubka (Sweetheart Kolomyjka)

Total Time: 76:56

Reissue produced by Chris Strachwitz

Edited by Dick Spottswood

Cover photo: Josef Pizio (1939)

Cover by Wayne Pope

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# Ukrainian Village Music



Historic  
Recordings  
1928-1933

ARHOOLE  
7030  
POBRYRIC



# Ukrainian Village Music

(An introduction by Anisa H. Sawyckyj-1977)

"Bring together two Ukrainians, and you have the beginnings of another choir," an old Ukrainian saying goes. True enough, there is indeed music in the Ukrainian soul. That music ties together the Ukrainian people scattered all over the world with each other, and with Ukraine, their native land in Eastern Europe.

Ukrainian folk music can be melancholy or jolly. When it is melancholy it is very, very melancholy. But when it is jolly, it is infectiously so, setting hands a-clapping, feet a-tapping, and all folks a-hopping. The country dance tunes you hear on this disc belong to that latter category.

This Ukrainian fiddle music reflects the musical interest and traditions of the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants to America, who numbered more than half a mil-

lion by the 1920s. Emigrating largely from the western regions of Ukraine, now a nation of 50 million people, they began to arrive in the U.S. in the 1880s and settled primarily on the East Coast in such states as Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York where they found jobs in coal mines, steel mills, factories and in the service trades. Eventually Ukrainian communities arose in other New England and Central states. Today, the million or more Americans of Ukrainian descent are concentrated in such cities as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

Most of the vocal selections on this disc deal with the themes of love, courtship, marriage—usually in a light and humorous (and sometimes spicy) fashion. The songs chosen here are very traditional in

form and content, with no references to the immigration experience nor to life in America. Rather, they are faithful replicas of songs that might have been heard back in a western Ukrainian village at family celebrations, community get-togethers, village festivals and gatherings of friends.

These tunes, like their performers, came from the provinces of Carpatho-Ukraine and Galicia in western Ukraine, an area which until World War I was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The language and spirit of the tunes on this disc is distinctly Ukrainian. However, Eastern Europe is a region with a relatively large number of nationalities living in close proximity to each other, and a certain amount of mutual influence of musical genres has occurred. Thus, in southern Poland there undoubtedly are influences of Lemko (Western Ukrainian) songs and dances, while on Ukrainian territory one finds mazurkas, polkas,

and Hungarian elements. On the other hand, Bela Bartok has written about the influence of the *kolomyjka* on Hungarian folk music.

Some Ukrainian melodies have travelled into both Eastern and Western Europe and even made their way into the classical compositions of Haydn, Beethoven and Wagner. The American music field has also felt the Ukrainian musical touch. "The Carol of the Bells," adopted as a Christmas favorite by American audiences, is actually a Ukrainian New Year's carol called "Schedryk." Written by M. Leontovych and performed first in Kiev in 1916, it was popularized after a 1922 tour of Europe and America by the Ukrainian National Chorus. Since that time, over 50 recordings have been made, and it has been performed by countless choruses, chamber and pop ensembles, and symphony orchestras.

Dinah Shore's 1940 hit "Yes, My

Darling Daughter," which sold more than a million discs, is based on a Ukrainian folk tune "Oy, ne khody, Hrytsyu" (Don't go, Hryts). George Gershwin wrote "Cossack Love Song" based on elements from a Ukrainian folk song.

With the passing of decades, Ukrainian-American musical tastes changed. As peasants became middle-class Americans, appreciation of 'down-home' fiddle music decreased. Children of the immigrants were learning classical music, taking piano lessons, and moving out of the original settlements where traditional music was performed. Furthermore, after World War II, 80,000 additional Ukrainian immigrants arrived—this time political refugees from Soviet occupation of their land. Largely educated city folks, their musical tastes ran to Ukrainian art songs, opera and classical composers. Recently, however there has developed a new interest in traditional folk music and in-

struments, especially the *bandura*—the Ukrainian national instrument.

But Ukrainian fiddle music lives on. The Hutsul people from the Carpathian Mountains, living in communities in the U.S., have preserved intact the original tunes and dances of their native mountain regions and are now recording them for posterity. And Ukrainian country music is popular in central and western Canada, among the descendants of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada.

The old tunes remain, living on in the cultural consciousness of Ukrainians everywhere, not only among the million or more Ukrainian-Americans, but also among Ukrainians in Canada, Brazil, Australia and many other countries of the world where they have settled. The tunes you hear on this disc are rooted in the Ukrainian tradition: Their language is Ukrainian but their message is universal.

(Anisa H. Sawyckyj  
NYC March 1977)

## Editor's Notes

by Richard K. Spottswood

Back in the early seventies, when I first became curious about the wealth of traditional ethnic music captured on early 78 rpm discs, I quickly learned that there was a particularly fine body of music recorded during the 1920s and 1930s by emigres from the rural areas of eastern Europe.

When I signed on at the Library of Congress in 1974 to prepare an ambitious anthology of folk music for the 1976 Bicentennial observances, I was fortunate to make friends with Stefan Maksymjuk, who has assembled a definitive collection of recorded Ukrainian music over the years and has since taught me a good deal of what I know about it. He in turn introduced me to Myron Surmach, whose music retailing activities in the Ukrainian community on New York City's lower east side began in the teens

and continued until his death in 1991, at the age of 99. Many dealers who catered to ethnic minority markets also served as talent scouts for record companies, who relied heavily on their guidance. Surmach, who lived and worked in the city, was ideally situated close to major record company studios and offices, where his recommendations carried considerable weight. His tastes were broad and well informed, and he was personally responsible for remarkable sessions across a broad spectrum which included veteran opera celebrity Salomeja Kruczelniczka to hardcore rural fiddlers like Michal Thomas and Josef Pizio.

Their performances, folk and art alike, were marketed to Ukrainian-American consumers who, in turn, treasured the records which preserved the songs, music, language and memories of a homeland they

had left with mixed feelings. Unlike the emerging mass-market radio culture of the 1920s, large record companies could target specific minority audiences with music tailored for their tastes. They did so for years, for Ukrainians and dozens of other ethnic and language groups.

Myron Surmach introduced fiddler Pawlo Humeniuk to a record company official in 1925 [see *Arhoolie/Folklyric* CD 7025]. Before then, Ukrainian catalogs had concentrated on the relatively formal music of trained singers, studio orchestras and choruses, whose appeal to those raised in the villages and countryside of the old world was limited. Though Humeniuk had classical training, he was comfortable with rural folk tunes and played them with authenticity. The impact of his records was immediate and lasting, preparing the way for a variety of authentic Ukrainian folk singers and musicians who appeared in the studios on a regular basis from then until the mid-'30s.

Much of the music in this collection comes from the venerable Ukrainian *troyisty muzyky* (trio music) tradition of old world dance ensembles, which normally included violin, percussion and *cymbaly*, or hammered dulcimer. As regional and idiosyncratic styles evolved, they included additional violins, bowed bass and an occasional brass or reed instrument. Two indigenous dance forms predominate:

The *kolomyjka* originated in the Hutsul region of the Carpathians, in the southwestern part of the country. Either in vocal or instrumental form, its metric structure loosely corresponds with:

Yankee Doodle went to town  
Riding on a pony

The *kozak* (or *kozachok*) is a dance from the Kozak State of Ukraine, where it developed in the 16th to 18th centuries. Its meter resembles:

Fire on the mountain, run boys, run boys  
Fire on the mountain, run boys, run

## The Recordings:

### 1. Dowbush (*kozak*)

by *Ukrainska Selska Orchestra* (Ukrainian Village Orchestra). M. Slobodian-violin, with second violin and string bass. Camden, NJ, 10 February 1930.

"Hey, fellows, how about playing something our famous *Dovbush* danced. Play!"

This catchy tune also appears on early Lithuanian, Swedish and other Ukrainian recordings. It's best known to southern fiddlers in this country as "Flop-eared Mule." The *Dowbush* (or *Dovbush*) of the title was an eighteenth century peasant hero of the Carpathians, a sort of Ukrainian Robin Hood or Jesse James, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor.

"*Ukrainska Selska Orchestra*" was a name adopted by several recording groups in the 1929-33 period, of which Mr. Slobodian's was the first. His ensemble was made up of Hutsul musicians living in the greater Philadelphia area.

### 2. Newelnik (Prisoner) (*waltz*)

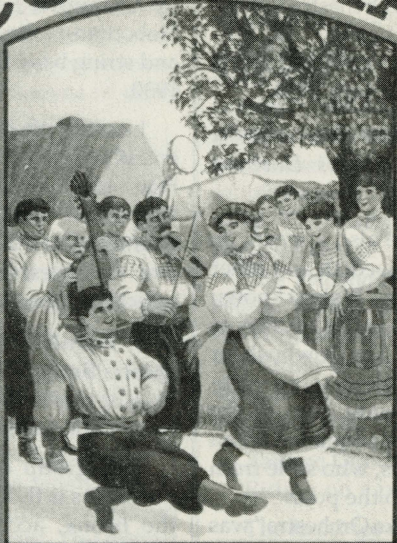
by *Ukrainska Selska Orchestra*. M. Slobodian-violin, with second violin and string bass. Camden, NJ, 27 May 1930.

Leaving the traditional *troyisty muzyky* style of the previous selection, this waltz is in the classic Carpathian string quartet style, encountered in the dance music of several countries, especially in groups which featured waltzes and polkas.

3. *Tramla Z Pod Pagorka* by *Orchestra Bratia "Holutiaky-Kuziany"*. Two or three violins and string bass. New York, June 1929.

This group of Lemko-Ukrainian musicians is thought to have lived in the Bronx, according to longtime music retailer Myron Surmach, and to have included professional undertakers! With the exception of recordings from their June 1929 session, the *Holutiaky-Kuziany* dance tune records featured a lead clarinet. This

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UKRAINIAN COLUMBIA



NEW PROCESS RECORDS

## КОМІЧНІ ПІСНІ.

(Comic Selections)

ЕВГЕН ЖУКОВСЬКИЙ, БАРИТОН.

(Ewgen Żukowsky, Baritone)

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- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 27065 F | { Борщик з Грибами.<br>(Borszczuk z Hrybamy)<br>Забрали—Забрали.<br>(Zabraly-Zabraly)                               |
| 27037 F | { Галичанка. Коломийки.<br>(Haluczanka. Kolomujki)<br>Чоловік в спідниці.<br>(Czolowik w spidnicy)                  |
| 27039 F | { Маруся. (Mariusia)<br>Ой, ішов я раз в ночі.<br>(Oj, iszow ja raz w noczi)  |
| 27095 F | { Журавель. (Zurawel)<br>Школярі. (Szkoliari)   |
| 27041 F | { Жінку не цілуй. (Żinkoo ne citalj)<br>Ой, ти, чи не ти, запаску згубила.<br>(Oj, ty, czy ne ty, zapaskoo zhubyta) |
| 27083 F | { Зрадниця. (Zradnycia)<br>Що Грубе То Добре. (Szczo Hrube To Dobre)  |
| 27042 F | { Катерина моя. (Katerina moja)<br>Премудрий Соломон. (Premudryj Solomon)   |
| 27082 F | { Лист з Краю. (Lyst z Kraju)<br>Волокитка. (Wolokytka)   |
| 27096 F | { Ой, зацьвила червона калина (Oj, Zacwila Czerwona Kalyna)<br>Що найшов то твоє. (Szczo Najszow To Twoye)          |
| 27099 F | { Диктом—Дактом. (Diktom—Daktom)<br>Майкові Троблі. (Maikowi Trobli)  |
| 27101 F | { Розвід. (Rozwid)<br>Забудьковатий. (Zabudkowatyj)   |
| 27105 F | { Ізда на Европлянні. (Izda Na Aeroplani)<br>Пісня Невольника. (Pisnia Newolnyka)                                   |



Ewgen Żukowsky

Жадайте нашого додаткового спису послідних рекордів.

is one of a number of pieces made specifically for the Polish market, for whom the group was labeled Wiejska Czworka "Bracia Kuziany."

**4. Chytry Tanecne Cardasy** (Artful Csardas Dance) by Orchestra Bratia "Holutiaky-Kuziany." Two or three violins and string bass. New York, June 1929.

This artful csardas was artfully concealed on a pseudonymously labeled Slovak release, complete with fictitious artist credit. The Lemko (or Lemko-Rusin) population of western Ukraine shared a turn-of-the-century fondness with the rest of the Austro-Hungarian empire for *csardases* and waltzes, even at the rural village level. In this country, this group also referred to themselves as "Lemko-Russian," which meant that records of Lemko music appeared on both the Russian and Ukrainian series.

**5. & 6. Kolomyjka Powitowa** (County kolomyjka) Part 1 & 2 by Ewgen Zukowsky. Vocal with two

violins, flute, clarinet and string bass. New York, October 1930.

This musical travelogue takes us through fifty-six cities, towns and villages in the Galician region of western Ukraine. Others, like Bob Wills, Henry Thomas (Ragtime Texas), Ray Noble, Jimmie Davis, and Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band (see **From Galway to Dublin**, Rounder CD 1087), have recorded humorous travel routines, but Zukowsky is the only one to have elevated the device to song.

One town is celebrated as the county seat, another is famous for its mayor's flying cow. Still others are notable for concentrations of dignified citizens, military strength, pretty girls, cheap liquor, musicians or churches. Zukowsky apologizes at the conclusion for omitting some locales, "because here in America I've forgotten everything!"

**7. Daliwskyj Tanec** by Samuil Pilip and his Lemkiwska Orchestra. Two lead violins, one or two second vio-

lins and string bass. New York, March 1929.

**8. Skrypka Hraje, Bas Hude** (The Fiddle Plays, the Bass Hums) Samuil Pilip and his Lemkiwska Orchestra. (Details same as last.)

**9. De Ty Buw, Janiczku?** (Where were you, Janiczku?) (*polka*) by Samuil Pilip and his Lemkiwska Orchestra. Two lead violins, one or two second violins and string bass. New York, May 1929.

Little is known about this remarkably tough-sounding Lemko orchestra, whose two lead fiddles are a distinctive feature. One of them is played by John Karliak, who recorded a few polkas with a similar-sounding group several years later. Pilip's recordings include no *kozaks* or *kolomyjkas* of western Ukraine; of these, the first two begin with 3/4 dances similar to the Polish *oberek* and conclude with 2/4 tunes which may be polkas, though they are performed at unusually challenging tempos. "De ty buw,

Janiczku?" is labeled a polka; it seems to be an informal medley, with an initial theme the band revisits from time to time.

**10. Kozak Dla Molodych** (Young Folks Kozak) by Ukrainiska Selska Orchestra. M. Slobodian-violin, with cymbaly and drum, Theodore J. Swystun-vocal. Camden, NJ, 9 December 1929.

*"Let's have a kozak dance, one the Zaporozhian cossacks once made merry with. But play it well—it will make the old cossacks jealous in heaven."*

**11. Zalaniwska Hreczka** by Ukrainiska Selska Orchestra. Two or three violins and trombone. New York, ca. July 1933

M. Slobodian's group was first to call itself the Ukrainiska Selska Orchestra on records, which were successful enough to inspire a couple of other groups to appropriate both the name and something of the Slobodian

style. One such (#11) recorded a few tunes in 1933 with a misplaced trombonist who may well be Sam Spielman, who appeared in early klezmer sessions and with other groups who recorded dance music in various East European styles. Slobodian's own group (#10) features singer Theodore Swystun, whose *kolomyjkas* were popular with Ukrainian-Americans for generations. This one is sung in first person by a young girl who prefers parties and fine clothes to field labor, and begs her mother to give her away. Later she complains that she has aged and the boys don't want to kiss her any more.

#### 12. Pidkamecka Kolomyjka

by Josef Pizio. Violin solo with two second violins and string bass. New York, September 1931.

#### 13. Ruzia Kaczky Zahaniala (Ruzia Drove the Ducks to the Pen) (kozaczok)

by Josef Pizio. Violin solo with two second violins and string bass. New

York, September 1931.

#### 14. Polka "Czariwnyj Kaminetz" (Dazzling Jewel Polka)

by Josef Pizio. Violin solo with two second violins and string bass. New York, ca. April 1933

Along with Pawlo Humeniuk, Joe Pizio was one of the best—and best remembered—village-style fiddlers, though he never worked professionally. Apparently, he arrived in New York before World War I and died there before 1945. Myron Surmach remembered him as "a real folk musician. A tall fellow, drank a lot. I never saw him without a fiddle. He couldn't read music; he'd just close his eyes and start fiddling away. By the time I'd get an orchestra together to record it, he'd forget that tune and couldn't repeat it. Had to record a different one!"

Pizio's two sessions were made following a suggestion by Surmach to a record company. It was a good suggestion too. Pizio's compelling fiddle sound is one of the most dynamic on

record. His tunes were steady sellers too; "Pidkamecka kolomyjka" was successful enough to stay in print for two decades.

#### 15. Kozaczka Szumka

by Theodore J. Swystun. Vocal with Pawlo Humeniuk-violin, clarinet, piano and string bass. New York, ca. April 1930.

Theodore Swystun lived in the Philadelphia area, where he practiced law following graduation from Temple University. He also reputedly hosted a popular local radio program for a number of years. Compared to Ewgen Zukowsky, he was a more polished singer, and his *kolomyjka* records enjoyed somewhat greater favor amongst Ukrainian-American upper classes.

*"Kozaczka szumka" celebrates young cossacks and pretty girls. There are forty of the latter at the market, one of whom says,*

*"You, cossack, have fun but don't touch me!"*

*"How can I have fun if I don't?"*

*"You may marry me, but don't kiss me in the street!"*

#### 16. Kozak

by Joseph Davidenko. Mandolin solo with Eugenio Cibelli-guitar. New York, 19 September 1932.

Joe Davidenko made several important recordings in the 1920s as a member of the Ukrainskyj Nacionalnyj Kwartet, which in turn was comprised of ex-members of the Ukrainian National Chorus, which had successfully toured the United States and Canada from 1922-24. As an actor, he had some minor roles on Broadway. "Kozak" was one of several dance tunes Davidenko recorded as a mandolinist between 1929 and 1932; though his technique was no more than elementary, the tunes were catchy, and several of his records were popular for years with folk dance instructors.

#### 17. Ebba (Evelyn) (polka)

by Trembita Orchestra. Wasyl Gula (Bill Gale)-violin, with second violin,

guitar and string bass. New York, 5 May 1930.

**18. Nina** (*polka*)  
by Trembita Orchestra. (Details same as last.)

These may be the first recordings by a violinist who was in heavy demand for radio and records after the mid-30s, as leader of Bill Gale's Globe Trotters, the Bee Gee Tavern Band, the International Rhythm Boys and other popular polka groups.

**19. Tanec "Husar"** (Hussar dance)  
by Michala Thomasa & Ukrainska Orchestra. Michal Thomas-violin, with two second violins, string bass and drums. New York, February 1930.

**20. Pidhirska** (Foothills) (*kolomyjka*)  
by Michala Thomasa & Ukrainska Orchestra. Michal Thomas-violin, with two second violins and string bass. New York, October 1929.

Nothing significant is known about this rough-and-ready fiddler, who led a group on several recording sessions between 1929 and 1933.

**21. Zydiwoczka Na Seli** (Jewish Girl in the Village)  
by Petra Rosady & Ukrainska Orchestra. Violin, flute, trombone, piano and string bass. New York, June 1928.

This medley of *kolomyjkas* may include some Jewish themes. Sam Spielman (or someone who sounds like him) is the trombonist.

**22. Shnel Polka** (Fast polka)  
by Ukrainska Selska Orchestra. M. Slobodian-violin, with cymbaly and drum, Theodore J. Swystun - remarks. Camden, NJ, 9 December 1929.

*"Hey, musicians—play a fast polka! Girls, get ready! Hey, mom!"*

**23. Marusia** (Little Mary) (*polka*)  
by Ukrainska Selska Orchestra. M. Slobodian-violin, with two second violins and string bass. Camden, NJ, 27 May 1930.

**24. Kolomyjka Lubka** (Sweetheart Kolomyjka)  
by Ukrainska Selska Orchestra. M. Slobodian-violin, with cymbaly and

drum. Camden, NJ, 10 February 1930.

Two polkas and a *kolomyjka*, one each from all three of Slobodian's recording dates. "Marusia," from the final session, substitutes string bass and second fiddle for the more distinctively Hutsul sound of the *cymbaly* and drum. It was also published as a Polish release.

(Dick Spottswood)

*This record is dedicated to the memory of Myron Surmach (1892-1991).*

*Special thanks to Steve Maksymjuk for providing song text summaries and for overseeing this project.*

*More thanks to Jack Towers, whose superb sound restoration techniques distinguish every project he encounters. Additional de-clicking and digital "cleaning" by George Morrow using the No Noise System.*

*For a full CD by Pawlo Humeniuk, "King of the Ukrainian Fiddlers," recorded in New York between 1925 and 1927, note Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7025 (23 selections).*

**Discography:**

**1:** (BVE 57686) V 21034; **2:** (BVE 62637) V 21062, FL 9014 (33); **3:** (W 110871) C 18366-F; **4:** (W110868-3) C 24117-F; **5:** (W 112412) C 27258-F; **6:** (W 112413) C 27258-F; **7:** (W 110517) C 27179-F; **8:** (W110464) C 27179-F; **9:** (W 110715) C 27189-F; **10:** (BVE 57660) V 21035; **11:** (W 113713-2) C 27339-F; **12:** (W 113151) C 27297-F; **13:** (W 113152) C 27294-F; **14:** (W113677) C 27337-F; **15:** (W 112025) C 27233-F, FL 9015 (33); **16:** (W 112024) C 27235-F, FL 9014 (33); **17:** (BVE 73535) V 21076; **18:** (BVE 62134) V 21058, FL 9014 (33); **19:** (BVE 62135) V 21078; **20:** (W 111668) C 27220-F; **21:** (W 111207) C 27205-F, FL 9014 (33); **22:** (W 109457) C 27148-F; **23:** (BVE 57661) V 21025; **24:** (BVE 62638) V 21062; (BVE) 57685) V 21035.

*From Ethnic Music on Records— Vol. 2 by Dick Spottswood (Univ. of Ill. Press)*

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ARHOOLE FOLK MUSIC  
CD 7030

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Cover photo: Josef Pizio (1939)

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