

UKRAINE, history to the 20th century

Like most borderlands, Ukraine has a complicated story. This outline oversimplifies.

Kievan Rus', 8th century to 1246

“From the Varangians to the Greeks” – Viking trade and settlements

Christianity. The written language of the Church. Saint Volodymyr/Vladimir

Campaigns in the steppe: *bogatyry* and *byliny*

Kiev, Novgorod, and other thriving cities

Aleksandr Nevsky fights off Germans as the Mongols invade

Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom, 15th – 17th centuries

The Mongols and the origins of Muscovy

“Gathering of the Russian lands” and the “Third Rome”

Ivan IV (*grozny*, the awesome) becomes a *Tsar*

Polish expansion. The Poles burn Moscow. Catholic vs Orthodox, 16th-17th centuries

Cossacks. Steppe communes between Russians, Poles, and Turks

The Cossack realm. Bohdan Hmelnytsky joins with Moscow to fight the Poles, 1654.

The great schism in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Tsar wins. The Orthodox Church in Polish territory makes a deal with the Pope.

The coming of Empire

Peter I: cannon, ships, serfs, taxes, a modern army, state bureaucracy.

The Great Northern War vs Sweden. Hetman Ivan Mazepa defects to Sweden.

Poltava, 1709 – Russia wins. Russia takes eastern Ukraine¹ and the Baltics. Cossack autonomy is crushed.

Catherine II: campaigns vs Turkey 1770s and 1780s. Potemkin as the conqueror of Crimea. Novorossiia established. Crimean Tatars flee to Turkey.

¹ This is actually incorrect usage. The name “Ukraine” wasn’t commonly used until the late 19th century.

Catherine expands serfdom and introduces it in Novorossiia and throughout Ukraine. Landlords are encouraged to move there with their serfs.

Partitions of Poland, 1770s and 1790s. Western (right bank) Ukraine comes under Russian rule. Polish landlords continue to rule their Ukrainian-speaking serfs.

19th century

Settlers continue to move to the steppe.

Russification and repression under Tsar Nicholas I (ruled 1825-55).

Romantic movement and first stirrings of modern Ukrainian nationalism: poet Taras Shevchenko. Nikolai Gogol begins with Ukrainian village tales then adopts and satirizes Russia.

Polish rebellions, 1830 and 1863.

Crimean war 1854-56. Russia loses but keeps Crimea. Real issue is control of Constantinople and the straits.

Serfdom abolished in the Empire, 1861. Development after of large capitalist farms exporting grain. Black earth of Ukraine and southern Russia becomes the “Breadbasket of Europe”.

Intensive Russification under Alexander III (ruled 1881-94). Growing anti-imperial nationalism in response (nationalism was the flavor of the times). Ukrainian speakers considered Maloross, “Little Russians”.

The *Pale*. Area of permitted Jewish settlement. Flourishing Jewish culture throughout Ukraine, particularly Odesa and Lviv (Lemberg, then in the Austrian Empire), also Minsk and Vilnius. Pogroms. Emigration of Jews, the largest number to the US – they brought gangs, the world’s best violinists, Hollywood and tin pan alley. Leon Trotsky was living in the Bronx when the Russian revolution began.

Donbas coal-iron industrial complex, from 1860s, essential to the economy of the empire. Yuzovka, 1869. Russians and Ukrainians came to work in the mines and mills – a polyglot proletariat.

Crimea became a summer resort for the Tsar and the Russian elite. Black Sea fleet at Sebastopol. The radical sailors mutinied in 1905: see the 1925 E

isenstein film, *Battleship Potemkin*.

By the turn of the century, Ukrainian nationalist ideas percolate at Kiev University and among intelligentsia groups. The term “Ukraine” comes into common use.