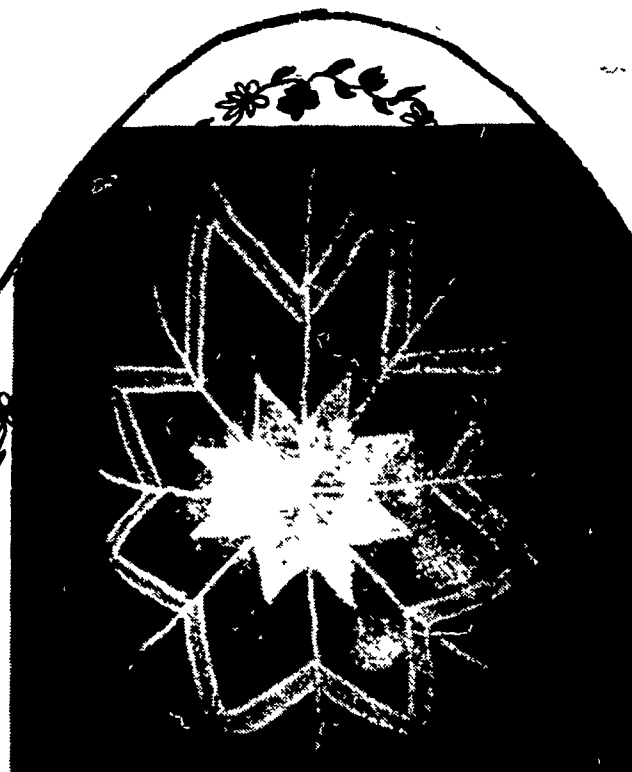


**Happy
Easter!**

**Homestead
Notes**



Ukranian method of dying eggs known as pysanky

By SALLY BAIR
Feature Writer

Easter is a time of tradition, and the tradition which is most common is that of dyeing eggs. One unique and beautiful way of decorating eggs is called "Pysanky," a Ukranian folk art over 10 centuries old.

According to Mrs. Donald Seith, 1648 Colonial Manor Drive, Lancaster, authentic pysanky are made with raw eggs, and must never be eaten.

Mrs. Seith said she became interested in pysanky through a friend in Ohio who taught her how to dye eggs in the Ukranian fashion. Since she first learned, she has been attracted to articles about the art, and has learned more of its history.

Lois said pysanky dates from an era before Christianity and the eggs are associated with pagan rituals and superstitions. It was the Ukranian custom to give eggs to friends at Easter as special gifts. "Happy was the home that had a lot of pysanky given to it. They were assured a prosperous year and good health," she said. Pysanky were highly prized gifts and helped to ward off evil spirits.

Decorating the eggs also symbolized the rebirth of the earth after Winter, and bringing new hope, since Christianity, Mrs. Seith explains that the art has been incorporated into religious beliefs, and the decorated eggs now symbolize the rebirth of man.

Decorating the eggs was itself a ritual in a Ukranian household, and in any home it means assembling the proper tools and finding time. Mrs. Seith says one egg can take from four to five hours to complete.

Necessary materials for this folk art include a kistka, which is a metal cone attached to a wooden or plastic handle about five inches long. Beeswax flows through a tiny pin-sized hole in the pointed end of the metal cone. These holes can be different sizes depending upon the fineness of the line you wish to draw. A candle and dye are the other necessary tools.

Mrs. Seith said beeswax is used to draw on the design because it has a low melting point, and is easily used in a kistka.

Mrs. Seith explained that the designs are drawn on the egg after it has been sectioned off into geometrical divisions. Lines are drawn horizontally and vertically, in sections of equal size. Motifs, she said, can be in three basic forms - geometric, animal, and plant.

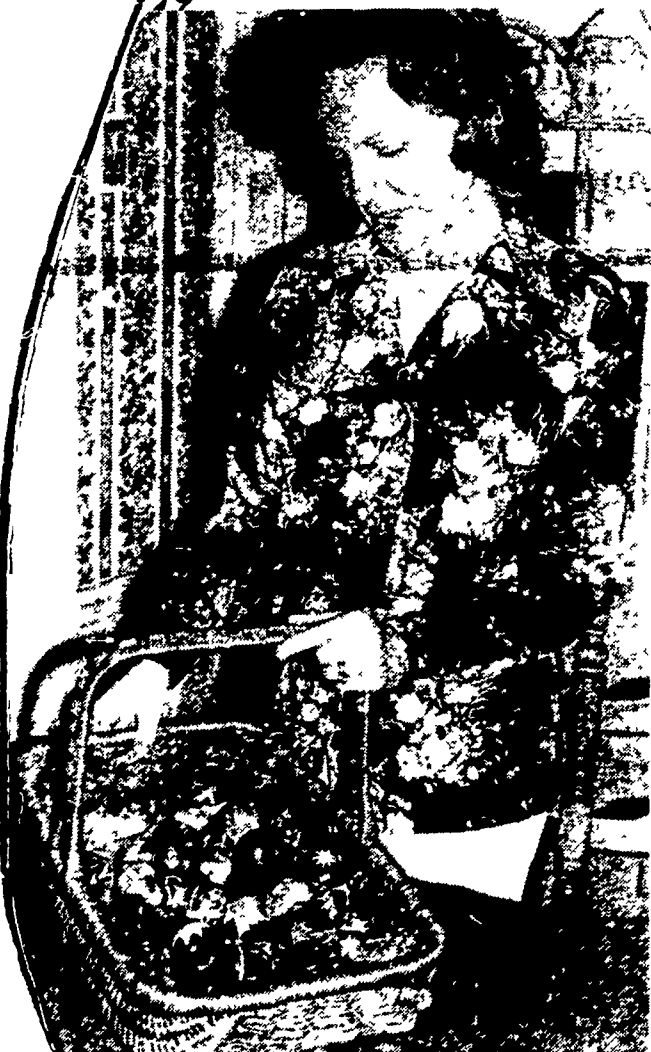
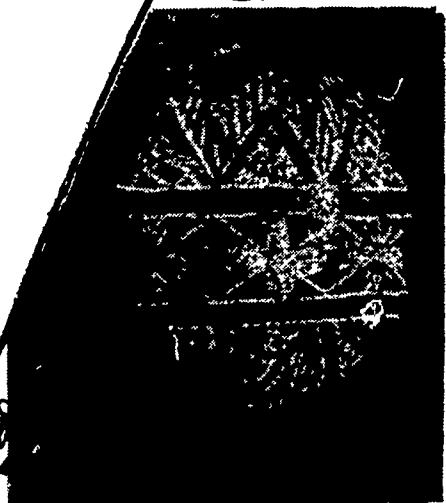
Geometric designs are similar to much primitive art. Often a belt encircling the egg is used to symbolize eternity. Plants are stylized, and have many meanings: pine trees symbolize youth and health, and the flower shows love and charity. Animal designs which do not appear often are also usually geometric in design. Reindeer and horses symbolize prosperity, and hens show fertility.

Today you can purchase suggested designs either in pysanky kits or separately, but in the Ukraine, forms and patterns were passed along from mother to daughter and became a prized heritage from one generation to another.

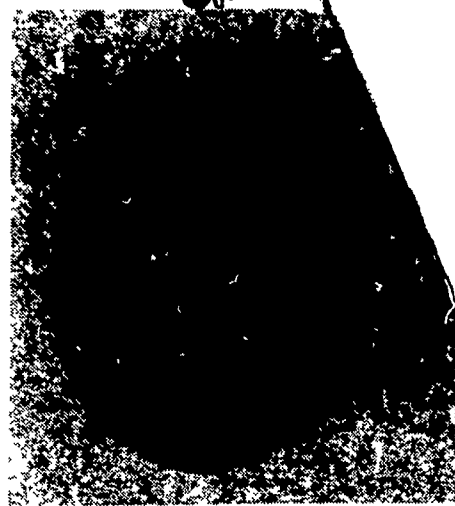
Ukranian women used natural dyes for the brilliant colors of pysanky, and because sources and "recipes" were hard to develop, the exact ingredients for specific dyes were often a secret. Today dyes can be purchased, and they really duplicate the vibrant colors of original pysanky.

Mrs. Seith demonstrated the necessary steps to decorating pysanky. She said none of the steps are difficult, but the total job is time consuming. The eggs are dyed a series of colors, beginning with light and

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Mrs. Seith shows some of the large number of pysanky which she and her daughter have created over the years.



Mrs. Seith holds the finished egg next to the burning candle to melt the wax, so it can be wiped off. At this point, the completed pattern emerges.