

Early Eastern Slavs

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In 500 AD Eastern Slavs begin to move toward the Volga River. They were hunters and farmers whose ancestors were Ukrainians, Belarussians, and Russians.

Villages

Villages were made up of 25 related families.
A stockade surrounded the village.

Houses

Houses built partly underground to provide warmth.
House had low walls and a dirt covered roof.
Later the East Slavs built izbas.
The whole family lived, worked, ate, and slept in the single-room cabin.
Had a fireplace but no chimney.
Smoke went out the windows.

Government

Oldest male governed the village.
He assigned jobs, judged quarrels, and was the military leader.
600 AD Slavs controlled all the land to the Volga River.
860 AD People from Novgorod asked Viking leader Rurik to rule over them.

Farming

Planted crops: barley, rye, flax.
Forests provided all the lumber they needed.
East Slavs soon became skilled builders with wood.
They made musical instruments, boats, and izbass.

Religion

The villagers worshipped many gods: nature, spirits, and ancestors.
Most ancient gods of the Russian Slavs seem to have been Svarog, the heaven, and "our mother, the dank earth."
Great Mother was the goddess of the land and harvest.

Voloss protected cattle and sheep.

Perun was the god of thunder and lightning.

The people built wooden images of their gods on the highest ground around their towns.

Do not seem to have had either temples or priests

Burials

Tombs of dead Slavs contain arms, instruments, jewels, animals, bones, and grains of wheat.

Russian Slavs expected the future life to be an exact continuation of the present one.

They surrounded the dead with all the objects that here contributed to his happiness.

Servants and female slaves were sacrificed over the corpse.

Trade

Rivers were roads, and later became trade routes.

Trade route ran from the Baltic Sea to the Caspian Sea.

Coins from China dated 699 have been found.

800 AD East Slavs built trading towns along the river.

In winter merchants gathered furs, honey, and forest products.

In the Spring, they traded in Byzantium, for cloth, wine, weapons, and jewelry.

Varangians, Viking warriors, protected the trade route.

It was called "Varangian Route."

The Varangians became part of the larger Slav population.

Vessels of pottery, iron, bronze, gold and silver objects, glass, false pearls, rattles have been found.

Proves that they had a certain amount of trade.

Weapons

Their armor was defective, they had no breast--plates.

They fought on foot and were naked to the waist.

They had for weapons, pikes, large shields, wooden bows, poisoned arrows, and lassoes to catch their victims.

Literature

1100 AD Slavic traditions written in the *Primary Chronicle*, a record of legends and facts.

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Kievan Rus

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Varangians in Rus

In 862 AD, a Varangian, Rurik, became prince of Novgorod. In 882 AD, a Viking warrior named Oleg built the first Kievan Rus state, a group of small territories. Whoever controlled Kiev controlled trade with Byzantium. The main ruler was the Prince of Kiev. He was helped by local princes, rich merchants, and landowning nobles. The Prince collected tribute from the local princes and they collected it from the people in their territory. Oleg's words about Kiev became proverbial "Here will be the mother of Rus cities."



Oleg nails his shield to the wall at Constantinople

Footnote

A magician had predicted to Oleg that his favorite horse would cause his death. It was kept apart from him, and when, five years after, the animal died, he insisted on being taken to see its body, as a triumph over the ignorance and imposture of the sorcerers. But from the skull of the horse issued a serpent which inflicted a mortal sting on the foot of the hero.



Vladimir I

Vladimir was an important prince.

He was a good soldier and a strong ruler.

His armies expanded the country into Poland and the Baltic coast.

Religion

988 AD, Vladimir sends people to observe different religions.

Not impressed with Islamic, Jewish, or Roman Catholic religions.

They saw beauty in the Eastern Orthodox worship.

Vladimir accepts Eastern Orthodox as the official religion.

This religion brought Byzantine culture to the Kievan Rus.

Priests taught religious rituals and the art of painting icons.

Stone churches with domes and arches rose among wooden buildings.
Monasteries appeared.

Education

They learned to write their language using the Cyrillic alphabet.
Sons of boyars and priests were sent to newly built schools.
The Kievan Rus believed they belonged to the civilized world.
It did separate them from western Europe.



Yaroslav the Wise

1019 AD, Yaroslav, the son of Valdimir I, became Grand Prince of Kiev.
His sister married the King of Poland.
His daughters married the kings of France, Hungary, and Norway.

Golden Age of Kiev

He invited scholars to live in Kiev.
He encouraged artisans.
Artisans built magnificent churches.
They decorated the palace with murals of music and hunting.
Kiev was larger than Paris or London.

Laws

Yaroslav organized Kievan Rus laws.
Crimes against property were more serious than crimes against people.
There was no death penalty.

Criminals paid fines, there was usually no physical punishments.

Decline of Kievan Rus

After Yaroslav's death princes began to fight over the throne.

Yaroslav's tomb is in cathedral of Saint Sophia in Kiev.

People from the steppe attacked Kiev.

They destroyed every building except cathedral of Saint Sophia.

This upset the flow of trade.

Kiev lost their source of wealth.

1169 AD, Kiev was plundered by Andrei Bogoliubsky.

The area never recovered.

Kievan Rus changed from a trading land to a farming land of peasants.

People fled and settled in the forests of the upper Volga.



Alexander of Nevsky

Novgorod was not in Mongol wave of destruction.

They had to contend with Sweeden invading from the west.

Prince Alexander of Nevsky defeated the enemy on the banks of the Neva.

The victory won for Alexander the title of Nevski.

The leader of Novgorod, Prince Alexander, was an outstanding military leader.

He is a hero of Rus history.

The Alexander of Nevski monastery in St. Petersburg is where his bones are reputed to be.

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The Mongol Conquest of Kiev

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1240 AD, the Mongols from central Asia, takes control of Rus states. They destroyed villages and towns, and killed many people. They made the Rus people pay tribute to the Khan. Rus citizens had to serve in the Mongol army. Many people fled to the northern forests.

The Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church remained strong during the Mongol Invasions. Monks began to found monasteries deep in the northern forests.

Rus farmers followed looking for new lands.

Towns and villages grew around the monasteries.

The Rus churches were isolated.

They developed their own local rituals and practices.

Daily Life

Food

Wealthy ate deer and wild pig.

Peasants ate bread, cabbage, salted fish, and mushrooms.

Entertainment

A peasant pleasure was visiting.

They told stories about the brave deeds of their warriors and heroes.

The stories were passed on and became part of Rus history.

Clothes

Peasants wore white tunics, linen trousers, and tree bark shoes.

They used rags wrapped around their feet for socks.

Rich Merchants and Boyars wore tall fur hats.
They wore long robes tied at the waist with a sash.
Rus women of all classes wore blouses or smocks, skirts, and long shawls.
On holidays they added a headdress.
The headdress indicated the region she was from and if she was married.

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The Rise of Moscow

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Moscow was a small trading post on the trade route from Kiev to the northern forests. Many Rus people moved north to escape the Mongols. Many artisans settled near the fortress at Moscow. The princes of Moscow cooperated with the Mongols. Soldiers from Moscow were in the Mongol army. The princes had power to collect tax money. When Rus territories could not provide soldiers or tax money Moscow would take it over. Moscow began to expand. In 1380, Dmitry, the prince of Moscow, attacked and defeated the Mongols.



Ivan the Great

1462 AD, Ivan III becomes prince of Moscow.
1480 AD, Ivan ends Mongol control of Moscow.
Ivan takes the title of czar.
He begins living in the style of Byzantine emperors.
1505 Ivan III dies.



Ivan the Terrible

Ivan IV was the grandson of Ivan III.
He led a terrible childhood.
He was like "a beggar in the palace."
He hurt animals to take out his frustrations.



1547, Ivan crowned czar at age 16.
He ordered peasants not to leave the land.

Defeat of the Mongols

1552 AD, leads armies against the Mongols and defeats them.
Ivan IV's armies had gunpowder.
The Mongols had bows-and-arrows.

Expansion

Settlers from Moscow move east.
Cossacks, begin to farm along the Volga.

Attack on Livonia

1558 AD, Moscow attack Livonia, a land on the Baltic Sea.
1562 AD, Livonia and neighbors defeat Moscow.
They take Baltic territory land from Moscow.

Attack on Boyars

Ivan blames boyars for defeat.

He threatens to abdicate unless he is given complete power.
Ivan takes boyars land and gives it to his supporters.
The Oprichnina, secret police, kills thousands of "traitors."
They carried a broom to "sweep treason from the land."
Troyat describes how the mighty Volga River became choked with bodies and turned red for several days.

Accomplishments

He encouraged art and learning.
He brought artists, scholars, and engineers to teach new skills.
Established links with England and Holland

Erratic Behavior

He went into rages.
He hacked Prince Dimitry Obolensky to death on the wine cellar.
1581, Beat daughter-in-law for the way she dressed.
Killed his son when he complained.

Death of Ivan

1584 AD, Ivan the Terrible died.
Mercury poisoning is the suspected cause.

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