

attacked the eastern  
1300s, the Byzantine  
Constantinople and part

still lived in the capital;  
was gone. In A.D. 1453  
Constantinople. For six  
lasted away at the city's  
fiercely until their last

the Byzantine Empire  
lands to its north. With  
central Europe lay open  
despite the empire's fall,  
in the civilization

## ROMS

of the Byzantine  
kingdoms went  
prosperity and decline.  
and south of the  
between the Black  
the kingdoms of  
Northwest of  
Europe's Balkan  
other realms—

between Europe  
against for-  
in the 700s  
0 years had  
pire. When  
and Persia in  
Armenia  
Tigran  
C., built  
stretch-  
Mediterranean  
defeated  
became part

Armenians,  
uh•DAH  
This deci-  
officially  
Christianity  
identity.  
olar-monk,  
the early  
successfully

defended their Christian state against the Persians  
in the Battle of Avarair (ah•vah•RAHR).

Arab armies invaded Armenia in the A.D. 600s,  
but they failed to conquer the entire country. An  
independent Armenian kingdom eventually arose  
in the northern region. In the A.D. 1000s the Seljuk  
Turks swept into Armenia, followed by the  
Ottoman Turks in the A.D. 1400s. Within 300 years,  
Armenia had become a battlefield among the  
Ottomans, Persians, and Russians. During the A.D.  
1800s, it was divided between the Russian and  
Ottoman empires.

## Georgia

Like Armenia, Georgia continually faced waves  
of foreign invasions. Ancient Georgia consisted of  
two kingdoms known as Colchis and Iberia. Both  
realms came under Roman rule in 65 B.C. The  
Roman conquerors built new roads and introduced  
their laws and customs to the region. The Silk Road,  
which passed through the Caucasus Mountains,  
allowed the Georgians to prosper from trade  
between Europe and Asia. Caravans of silk cloth,  
spices, and other goods reached ports on Georgia's  
Black Sea coast and continued on to the Middle  
East and Europe.

Georgia accepted Christianity in the A.D. 300s.  
Georgian tradition states that a Christian woman  
named Nino was responsible for converting the  
Georgians. Meanwhile, newly Christianized  
Georgia was attacked by rival Persian and  
Byzantine armies.

During the A.D. 1100s and early A.D. 1200s,  
Georgia enjoyed a golden age of freedom and cul-  
ture under Queen **Tamara** (tah•MAH•rah).  
However, from the late A.D. 1200s to the A.D. 1700s,  
the Georgians again faced a series of conquerors,  
including the Mongols, the Persians, and the  
Ottomans. Turning northward to the Russians for  
military aid, Georgia by the early A.D. 1800s had  
become part of the Russian Empire.

## Bulgaria

The Balkan Peninsula also underwent up-  
heavals. Conquered by Roman armies, the region  
that is present-day Bulgaria became part of the  
Roman Empire in the A.D. 40s. When Rome fell  
about 400 years later, Slavs from east central Europe  
and Bulgars from central Asia settled Bulgaria,  
where they eventually intermarried to become the  
Bulgarians.

Influenced by Byzantine culture and religion,  
the first Bulgarian state arose in the A.D. 600s. It  
reached its peak 300 years later under King Simeon  
I, and finally fell prey to Byzantine conquest in A.D.  
1018. Byzantine decline, however, enabled the  
Bulgarians to regain their freedom. This second  
Bulgarian kingdom survived from the late A.D.  
1100s to the late A.D. 1300s, when Ottoman  
invaders from central Asia conquered the territory.  
Ottoman rule of Bulgaria lasted more than 500  
years.

## Serbia

Northwest of Bulgaria was the Slavic kingdom  
of Serbia. During the A.D. 500s and 600s, groups of  
Slavs settled in the Balkan Peninsula. By the 1100s,  
the Serbs, one of the most powerful of these groups,  
had accepted Eastern Orthodox Christianity and  
the Cyrillic alphabet. They also formed a state. The  
Serbian kingdom enjoyed its greatest period of  
prosperity in the A.D. 1300s under Stefan Dusan  
(STEH•fahn•doo•SHAHN), who assumed the title  
of emperor of the Serbs. Dusan's armies success-  
fully fought the Byzantines, expanding Serbian rule  
throughout much of the Balkans.

After Dusan's death in 1355, his heirs lacked  
the skills to keep the Serbian kingdom united. The  
Serbs valiantly fought the Ottomans but were even-  
tually defeated in 1389 in the Battle of Kosovo.  
Almost 500 years of Ottoman rule followed, but the  
desire to reverse the shame of Kosovo helped keep  
alive Serbian national pride.

## SECTION 2 REVIEW

### Recall

- 1. Define** theology, regent, mosaic, illuminated manuscript, monastery, missionary.
- 2. Identify** Cyril, Methodius, the Seljuk Turks, Manzikert, the Ottoman Turks, Tiridates III, Tamara.

- 3. Explain** why the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles are strategic waterways.

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Information**  
Examine how the doctrinal and cultural split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church

contributed to the Byzantine Empire's decline.

### Understanding Themes

- 5. Innovation** How did Christianity affect culture in the Byzantine Empire and in neighboring kingdoms? What was the role of art and religion in these lands?

A.D. 900

A.D. 1100

A.D. 1300

A.D. 1500

**A.D. 980** Vladimir becomes Grand Prince of Kiev.

**A.D. 1240** Alexander Nevsky defeats the Swedes.

**A.D. 1380** Moscow defeats Mongols at the Battle of Kulikovo.

**A.D. 1472** Ivan III of Moscow takes title of czar.

## Section 3

# The Eastern Slavs

### Setting the Scene

- ▶ **Terms to Define**  
steppe, principality, boyar, czar
- ▶ **People to Meet**  
the Slavs, Rurik, Olga, Vladimir, Yaroslav, the Mongols, Alexander Nevsky, Ivan III
- ▶ **Places to Locate**  
Dnieper River, Kiev, Novgorod, Moscow

### Find Out

How did the Eastern Slavs develop separate cultures from those of western Europe?

### The Storyteller



Eastern Orthodox church

*As a pagan prince, Vladimir behaved kindly; once he became a Christian, his generosity became unlimited. Beggars assembled in his courtyard every day for food, drink, clothing, and money. For the sick and weak, supply wagons were loaded up and driven around the city of Kiev. Once, when his friends showed disgust at having to eat with plain wooden spoons, Vladimir laughed and had silver ones cast for them. He was also the first Kiev prince to mint gold and silver coins. The first of these, made by inexperienced Russian crafts workers, were slightly lumpy and uneven, but bore Vladimir's picture and the inscription, "Here is Vladimir on his throne. And this is his gold."*

—from *Vladimir the Russian Viking*, Vladimir Volkoff, 1985

After the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453, the leadership of the Eastern Orthodox world passed from the Byzantines to the Slavs. The Slavs were among the largest groups living in eastern Europe. Because of their location, the Slavs had been in close contact with the Byzantines since the A.D. 900s.

This relationship made a lasting mark on the development of Slavic history. The Slavs, especially those living in the areas that are today the Balkan Peninsula, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, borrowed much from the Byzantines. On the basis of Byzantine religion, law, and culture, the Slavs built a new civilization. They also borrowed heavily from western European and Asian cultures. As a result of these different influences, Russia—the farthest north and east of the Slavic lands—never became a completely European or completely Asian country.

### The Setting

One of the Byzantine trade routes ran north across the Black Sea and up the **Dnieper River**, then overland to the Baltic Sea. From trading posts along the river grew the roots of early Slavic civilization.

### The Steppe

North of the Black Sea are vast plains, thick forests, and mighty rivers. Much of the land is an immense plain called the steppe. Ukrainian author Nikolay Gogol vividly captures its spirit in his *Cossack Tales*:

“The farther the steppe went the grander it became ... one green uninhabited waste. No plow ever furrowed its immense wavy plains of wild plants; the wild horses, which herded there, alone trampled them down. The whole extent of the steppe was nothing but a green-gold ocean, whose surface seemed besprinkled with millions of different colored flowers.”

A.D. 1500

A.D. 1472

Ivan III of Moscow takes title of czar.

Constantinople in A.D. ... of the Eastern ... passed from the ... were among the ... Europe. Because of ... in close contact ... 900s.

... mark on the ... Slavs, especially ... today the Balkan ... Russia, borrowed ... On the basis of ... the Slavs built ... heavily from ... As a result of ... the farthest ... never became a ... Asian country.

... ran north ... River, then ... posts along ... civilization.

... thick forests, ... an immense ... author Nikolay ... Cossack Tales:

... grander it ... waste. ... wavy ... horses, ... them ... steppe was ... whose ... millions

Although the steppe has rich black soil, the harsh climate makes farming difficult and crop failures common. Too far inland to be reached by moist ocean breezes, the steppe often has scanty rainfall. In addition, most of the land lies in the same latitudes as Canada and has the same short growing season. During the long, hard winter, blasts of Arctic air roar across the land and bury it deep in snow.

### Forests and Rivers

North of the steppe stretch seemingly endless forests of evergreens, birch, oak, and other hardwoods. North-south flowing rivers such as the Dnieper, Dniester, and Volga cross the steppe and penetrate the forests, providing the easiest means of transportation. Yet travel is difficult for much of the year. In winter, deep drifts of snow cover the ground, and in the spring thaw the land turns to knee-deep mud.

## The People

Historians know little about the origin of the first Slavic peoples. Some believe the Slavs came from present-day eastern Poland. Others think they may have been farmers in the Black Sea region. It is known that by about A.D. 500 the Slavs had formed into three distinct groups and had settled in different parts of eastern Europe.

### Slavic Groups

One group, known as the West Slavs, lived in the marshlands, plains, and mountains of east-central Europe. They successfully fought the Germans to the west and the Scandinavians to the north for control of territory. Today the descendants of the West Slavs are the peoples of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Their religious ties came to be with the Roman Catholic Church, and their cultural ties were with western Europe.

Another group, known as the South Slavs, settled in the Balkan Peninsula, and had frequent contacts with the Byzantines. Today, their descendants are the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, whose languages and cultures were shaped by both the Roman Catholic West and the Orthodox East. One group of South Slavs—the Bosnians—were influenced by the religion of Islam from the Middle East.

The third and largest Slavic group, the Eastern Slavs, includes those now known as Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarussians. They lived north of the Black Sea between the Dnieper and Dniester Rivers and traded with the Byzantine Empire and northern Europe. From A.D. 500 to A.D. 800, some Eastern Slavs moved eastward toward the Volga River.

**East Slavic Lands A.D. 1100s**

The map shows the East Slavic lands in eastern Europe, including parts of Sweden, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, and the Byzantine Empire. Key cities like Novgorod, Suzdal, Moscow, Vladimir, Kiev, and Constantinople are marked. Major rivers such as the Neva, Dnieper, Dniester, Danube, and Volga are shown. Trade routes are indicated by dashed lines. A legend identifies 'East Slavic lands' and 'Trade routes'. A scale bar shows 0, 150, and 300 miles and kilometers. A globe icon is in the top right corner.

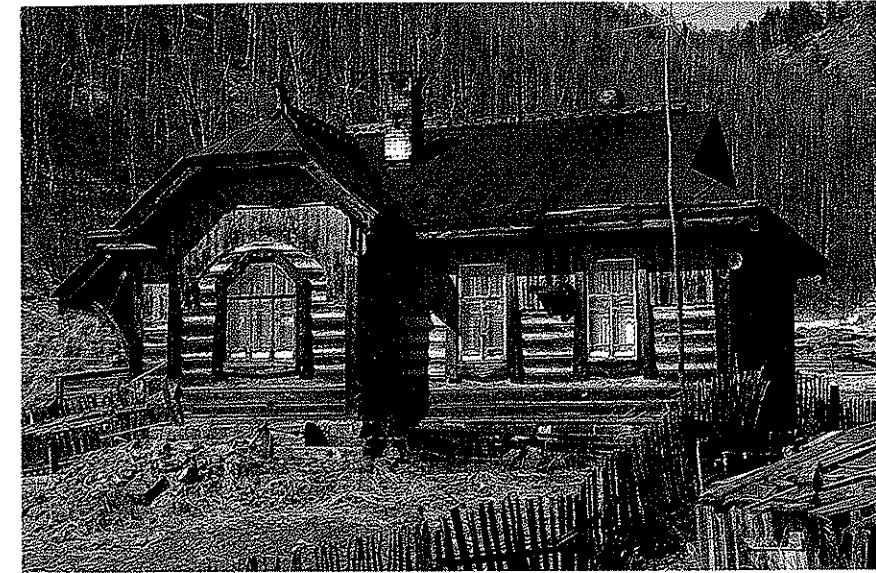
**Map Study** Trade with the Byzantine Empire helped build Kiev into a major city. Movement In what direction would traders have traveled from Kiev to Sweden?

### Early Ways of Life

The early Eastern Slavs lived in villages made up of related families. They were farmers who hunted wild game and birds to supplement the wheat, rye, and oats they grew. In the forests they cleared land by cutting and burning trees and scattering the ash to enrich the soil. On the steppes they ignited a "sea of flame" to burn off the grass for planting.

Most farm homes were sturdy log houses. With knife, chisel, and ax the peasants skillfully shaped the logs, notching them so that they would fit together without nails. Many log houses had wooden gables and window frames decorated with painted carvings of flowers and animals. Skilled artisans also used wood to make furniture, cooking utensils, musical instruments, boats, and images of favorite deities.

The Eastern Slavs used the many rivers in their region for transportation and trade. They set up trading towns along the riverbanks. By the A.D. 800s, a trade route ran from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south.



**Visualizing History** This log house in Russian Siberia's Lake Baikal region evidences the decorative style of Eastern Slav houses. How did these people build without nails?

## Kievan Rus

The early Eastern Slavs were not warlike. During the late A.D. 800s, they relied on Vikings, a group of warriors and traders from Scandinavia, to protect their trade routes. The Vikings not only provided military aid, they also helped to lay the foundations of Slavic government.

The arrival of the Vikings is recorded in the *Primary Chronicle*, a collection of Eastern Slavic history, tales, and legends written around A.D. 1100. According to the *Chronicle*, in about A.D. 860 the Slavic people from the northern forest village of Novgorod asked Vikings from Scandinavia for aid: "Our land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us." The Viking leader **Rurik** accepted the invitation. The Slavs called the Vikings and the area they controlled *Rus*; the word *Russia* is probably derived from this name.

### Rise of Kiev

In about A.D. 880, Rurik's successor, Prince Oleg, conquered the fortress-village of **Kiev** (Kyiv in Ukrainian) to the south. Built high on a bluff where the forest meets the steppe, Kiev prospered because it lay on the Dnieper River trade route. Some still call it the mother of Eastern Slavic cities.

Control of Kiev enabled Oleg to dominate the water trade route. Towns along the route were brought together under his leadership. Kiev soon became the major city of a region of Slavic territories known as Kievan Rus. The rulers of Kiev, known as Grand Princes, conducted raids against Constantinople. They were attracted by the wealth and

civilization of the Byzantine capital. In A.D. 911 a treaty ended these raids and established trade between the Byzantines and the Eastern Slavs. During the summer months, Slavic merchants carried furs, honey, and other forest products by boat to Constantinople. There they traded their goods for cloth, wine, weapons, and jewelry.

### Kievan Government

By A.D. 900, Kievan Rus had organized into a collection of city-states and principalities, or territories ruled by princes. Each region enjoyed local self-government; however, they all paid special respect to the Grand Prince of Kiev. The Grand Prince collected tribute from the local princes to support his court and army. The major duties of these princes were to administer justice and to defend the frontiers. The princes were assisted by councils of wealthy merchants and landed nobles, who were known as **boyars**. Assemblies represented all free adult male citizens. They handled daily affairs and had the power to accept or remove princes.

These three institutions—the princely office, the council, and the assembly—varied in power from region to region. In the northeastern territories, the prince wielded a great deal of political power. In the southeastern areas, the boyars had the greatest political influence. In Novgorod and a few northern trading towns and cities, the assemblies overshadowed both princes and boyars. In these areas, the assemblies came close to establishing a tradition of representative government in the Eastern Slavic lands. However, later princes limited the powers of the assemblies.



This log house in Siberia's Lake Baikal preserves the decorative Eastern Slav style. Did these people have trails?

In A.D. 911 a established trade Eastern Slavs. merchants carried goods by boat to their goods for

organized into a tribes, or territories, or territories. They enjoyed local paid special The Grand princes to or duties of justice and to were assisted and landed Assemblies. They handed to accept or

office, the power from territories, the power. In the greatest northern overshadowed areas, the tradition Eastern Slavic powers



Jim Brandenburg

## Rurik the Rus

This 19th-century statue of Kievan Rus's ruler Rurik stands in the center of the Russian city of Novgorod. The bronze Rurik, a mighty Prince, holds symbols of military might and political power: a shield and sword. His fur cape sweeps proudly over his shoulders. Founder of nations, the Viking warrior proclaims a glorious past.

Rurik and his Viking warriors came from Scandinavia to what is now Russia and Ukraine in the A.D. 800s, perhaps invited there by native Slavic

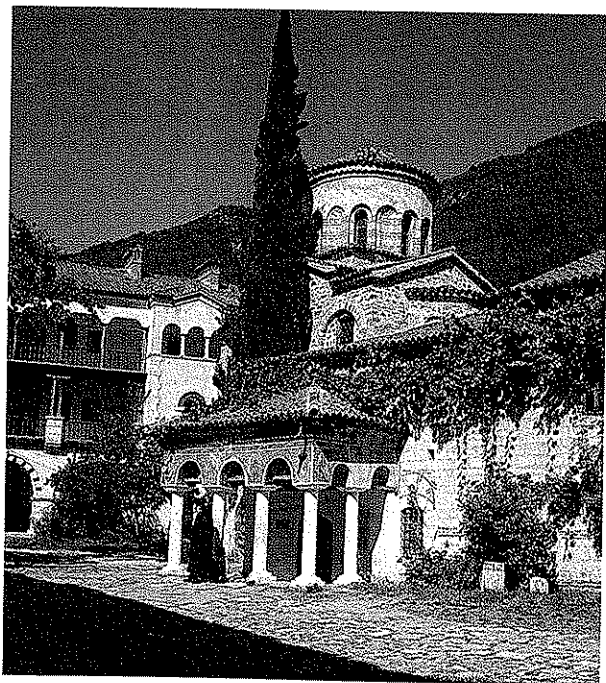
tribes constantly warring with each other. The Eastern Slavs during the A.D. 800s had little political stability, which made farming and commerce difficult. The Vikings changed that. Trading with the strong, plundering the weak, they moved south from Novgorod to Kiev, where they founded a political state, and from there they moved on to Odessa on the shores of the Black Sea. It took them two centuries to complete their expansion. By then the Vikings had lost their Scandinavian ways and had become assimilated into the local cultures. ●

## Arrival of Christianity

Before the late A.D. 900s, the Eastern Slavs honored nature spirits and ancestors, and worshiped many deities. The most popular gods were Perun, god of thunder and lightning, and the Great Mother, goddess of the land and harvest. Images of the deities were built on the highest ground outside the villages.

### Vladimir's Conversion

Because of contact with the Byzantine Empire, many Eastern Slavs were influenced by Eastern Orthodoxy. **Olga**, a princess of Kiev, became the first member of the Kievan nobility to accept the faith. Her grandson, Prince **Vladimir** of Kiev, decided to abandon the old beliefs and to adopt a new religion that he thought would help the Eastern Slavs become a more powerful civilization. An old Slavic legend states that Vladimir sent observers abroad to examine Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam. Only the beautiful ceremony in the splendid Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia impressed the observers. In A.D. 988, after his own conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy, Vladimir ordered a mass baptism in the Dnieper River for his people.



#### Visualizing History

This ancient monastery stands as a symbol of the influence of Byzantine Christianity. How was Eastern Orthodoxy introduced in Kievan Rus?

### Effects of Conversion

The conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy brought Byzantine culture to Kievan Rus. Byzantine priests and bishops introduced the Eastern Slavs to colorful rituals and taught them the art of painting icons. The Eastern Slavs also learned to write their language in the Cyrillic alphabet. Schools were established in the towns for the sons of boyars, priests, and merchants. Byzantine architects arrived in Kiev to build stone churches with magnificent domes. Monasteries also were founded in the towns and countryside, and attracted many new converts.

Acceptance of Eastern Orthodoxy, however, tended to isolate the Eastern Slavs from the outside world. Following the split between the Eastern and Western Churches, Kievan Rus was separated from western Europe. Its people lost contact with developments that took place in that area after A.D. 1200. At the same time, the Byzantine practice of translating the Bible and Orthodox church services into local languages had an important impact. Because Kievan scholars had translations of some classical and Christian writings in their own language, they did not learn Greek or Latin. As a result, they did not deepen their knowledge of the heritage of western European civilization. Instead, they turned for inspiration to the traditions of their own local culture.

## Kiev's Golden Age

Vladimir, who ruled from A.D. 980 to A.D. 1015, was one of the most important grand princes of Kiev. Known for his skills as a warrior, he successfully defended Kievan Rus's eastern frontiers against nomadic invaders. He also expanded its western borders by capturing lands in Poland and near the Baltic Sea.

### Yaroslav's Reign

After a time of dynastic conflict, Vladimir's son **Yaroslav** became Grand Prince in A.D. 1019. Under Yaroslav's rule, Kievan culture reached its height. Yaroslav encouraged the spread of learning by establishing the first library in Kiev. Yaroslav also organized the Kievan legal system, drawing from Justinian's Code. Written primarily for the princes and merchants, the code treated crimes against property as well as against persons.

A skilled diplomat, Yaroslav arranged for his daughters and sisters to marry kings in Norway, Hungary, France, and Poland. To the Europeans, who were just arising from the isolation and disorder of the early Middle Ages, Kiev was a

odoxy brought  
zantine priests  
Slavs to color-  
painting icons.  
rite their lan-  
ols were estab-  
oyars, priests,  
rived in Kiev  
fficient domes.  
he towns and  
converts.  
oxy, however,  
m the outside  
the Eastern and  
eparated from  
ct with devel-  
fter A.D. 1200.  
tice of trans-  
services into  
pact. Because  
ome classical  
anguage, they  
ult, they did  
heritage of  
instead, they  
of their own

to A.D. 1015,  
princes of  
he success-  
m frontiers  
xpanded its  
Poland and

dimir's son  
019. Under  
its height.  
arning by  
roslav also  
wing from  
the princes  
es against

ged for his  
n Norway,  
Europeans,  
ation and  
ev was a

glittering capital whose culture outshone that of any in western Europe.

### Kiev's Decline

After Yaroslav's death, Kiev declined in power and wealth for several reasons. First, Yaroslav began the practice of dividing up his lands among all his sons instead of willing them to one heir. Since no law established a clear line of succession, the heirs battled one another over control of Kiev. Second, the Latin Christian state created in Constantinople disrupted trade with the Byzantines and weakened Kiev's economy. Finally, in A.D. 1240 Mongol invaders from central Asia captured Kiev and completely destroyed it.

### Mongol Rule

The Mongols, or Tatars, as the Slavs called them, defeated the armies of the Eastern Slavic princes and conquered most of the country except for Novgorod. They sacked towns and villages and killed thousands. Mongols sought to tax the peoples they conquered, rather than impose their culture. The Slavs were allowed to practice their Christian faith, but the Mongols required allegiance to the Mongol ruler and service in the Mongol army.

For two centuries, Mongol rule isolated most of the Eastern Slavs from European civilization. Although the occupation helped unify the Eastern Slavs, it also further distanced them from ideas and trends of the Western world.



### Rise of Moscow

As city life in the south declined after the fall of Kiev, many Eastern Slavs—led by monks, farmers, and artisans—moved into the remote northern forests to escape Mongol rule. By the late A.D. 1200s, Vladimir-Suzdal and Novgorod were the strongest Eastern Slavic principalities.

### Alexander Nevsky

The Mongols had never advanced as far north as Novgorod because the spring thaw turned the land into a swamp they could not cross. Instead, the city faced attacks in the Baltic Sea area from Swedes and Germans who wanted to convert the Eastern Slavs to Roman Catholicism. In a ferocious battle on the Neva River in A.D. 1240, Alexander,



**Visualizing History** Alexander Nevsky, ruler of Novgorod, fought the German Teutonic Knights in A.D. 1242. Why did the Germans and Swedes attack the Eastern Slavs?

prince of Novgorod, defeated the invading Swedes. This victory earned him the nickname **Alexander Nevsky**, Alexander "of the Neva," and his victory established Novgorod as a strong, independent principality.

### Moscow's Beginnings

Daniel, the youngest son of Alexander Nevsky, became ruler of **Moscow**, a small but prosperous town located near vital land and water routes. Using war and diplomatic marriages, the princes of Moscow gradually expanded their state's territory. Moscow's importance grew in A.D. 1325 when the metropolitan, or leader of the Orthodox Church in the Eastern Slavic lands, was transferred there. By about A.D. 1350, Moscow had become the most powerful city. Cooperation with Mongol policies had kept it free from outside interference. Daniel's son, Prince Ivan I, became known as Money Bag because the Mongols even trusted him to collect taxes for them.

Muscovite forces defeated the Mongols at the Battle of Kulikovo in A.D. 1380. The tide had turned in favor of Moscow. Over the next hundred years, the Eastern Slavs steadily drove out the Mongols. In A.D. 1480 during the rule of **Ivan III**, Moscow