

Field Notes

IN MEMORIAM

We learned recently of the death in December of Gennady (Gennadii Petrovich) Kuropiatnik (1924–2019) one of the Russian Academy's pre-eminent scholars in American history and the history of Russian-American relations of the 19th century. He was a close friend and supporter of his younger colleague, Nikolai Bolkhovitinov (1930–2008) in leading the Center of North American Studies of the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences through *glasnost* and *perestroika* of the Gorbachev years. Both had Ukrainian connections, Bolkhovitinov's with Simferopol in Crimea, and Kuropiatnik was born and raised in the Poltava region. And both became distinguished scholars of American history and Russian-American relations in Moscow, despite obstacles. Unfortunately, Gennady suffered from diabetes in later life, lost both legs to the ailment, and had become understandably something of a recluse in recent years. Still, he managed to publish in 2009 a major book on the American Civil War.

He and his wife Vera (from St. Petersburg) had a very nice commodious apartment overlooking Sokolniki Park in Moscow: nothing but silver birches to be seen from it, and an invitation to dinner would usually be preceded by a "stroll in the park." This was followed by a multi-course meal. I know others who would echo the sentiment that "I have never eaten better in Russia than at the Kuropiatniks." Gennady and Vera were superb hosts and cooks.

A student of the English language, Kuropiatnik received a bump start as an Americanist by an assignment to the Soviet delegation to the United Nations, in the immediate post-World War II years, where he perfected his spoken English. More than most Soviet specialists, he was comfortable in speaking before university audiences on the American Civil War as the "Second American Revolution," the topic of an early book (1961). Actually his first book was the somewhat Cold Warish *The Seizure of the Hawaiian Islands by the USA* (1958), but it was still interesting reading. One of his most important efforts, however, was in weaving together American foreign and domestic policies for the Reconstruction years, 1867–81 (1981); this was later expanded to 1918 to cover the war and revolution (1997). He was also the contributor of many articles to *Amerikanskii Ezhegodnik* and other periodicals. At least one of them was published in English translation: "Russians in the United States: Social, Cultural, and Scientific Contacts in the 1870s" in *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776–1814* (University of Missouri Press, 1997).

Norman Saul

Americans in Revolutionary Russia

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