

CONTENTS

HISTORY

- 1 Kharko the Cossack
- 2 Ivan Sirko
- 3 Hnat Khotkevych
- 4 Vasyl Karazin
- 5 Mykola Kostomarov
- 6 Anton Denikin
- 7 Anton Makarenko
- 8 Oleksiy Beketov
- 9 Yuriy Knorozov

CULTURE

- 10 Hryhoriy Skovoroda
- 11 Ilya Repin
- 12 Serhiy Vasylykivskiyi
- 13 Les Kurbas
- 14 Mykola Khvylovyi
- 15 Maik Yohansen
- 16 Kharkiv Fine Arts Museum
- 17 Vasyl Yermilov
- 18 Barbara Karinska
- 19 Kharkiv School of Photography
- 20 Oleh Mitasov

- 21 TNMK
- 22 Yermilov Centre
- 23 Mykola Ridnyi
- 24 Serhiy Zhadan
- 25 H.L. Oldie
- 26 Prekrasnye Tsvety

FOOD

- 27 Vedmedyk Shop
- 28 Nasha Dacha
- 29 16/54
- 30 Borshch
- 31 Halushky

PLACES

- 32 Annunciation Cathedral
- 33 Karazin Kharkiv
National University
- 34 Kharkiv State Academic
Opera and Ballet Theatre
- 35 Derzhprom
- 36 Svobody Square

- 37 Metro
- 38 KhTZ
- 39 Barabashovo Market
- 40 Kharkiv Cable Car
- 41 Afanasiev Kharkiv State Academic Doll Theatre
- 42 DK Art Area
- 43 Kultura Zvuka
- 44 Zhyvot Club

NATURE

- 45 Siverskyi Donets
- 46 Sarzhyn Yar
- 47 Kharkiv And Lopan
- 48 Gorky Park
- 49 Feldman Ecopark
- 50 Marmot Tymko

SPORTS

- 51 Yuriy Poyarkov
- 52 Kharkiv-6 Racing Car
- 53 Yana Klochkova
- 54 FC Metalist
- 55 Bohdan Bondarenko
- 56 Elina Svitolina

TECHNOLOGY

- 57 Ilya Mechnikov
- 58 Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology
- 59 Lev Landau
- 60 Mykola Barabashov
- 61 T-34 Tank
- 62 Ukraina bicycle
- 63 The Kharkiv Institute of Monocrystals
- 64 Malyshev Factory
- 65 PJSC HARTRON
- 66 T-150K Tractor
- 67 Plarium

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- 1 Kharko the Cossack
- 2 Ivan Sirko
- 3 Hnat Khotkevych
- 4 Vasyl Karazin
- 5 Mykola Kostomarov
- 6 Anton Denikin
- 7 Anton Makarenko
- 8 Oleksiy Beketov
- 9 Yuriy Knorozov

Ilya Repin, Reply of the Zaporizhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire (fragment), 1880-1901, State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg

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Kharko the Cossack

Mythical founder of the city

Kharko is a half-historical, half-mythical figure of Ukrainian folk tales and legend. According to one legend, Kharko was one of a group of Polish settlers who founded the city. According to another, he was a well-off young Russian whose name was Khariton (shortened to Kharko), giving Kharkiv its name. A third says that Khariko was, in fact, a beekeeper. Still a fourth says that Kharko

did not exist at all, and that the city was named after the nearby Kharkiv river, and not the other way round. Kharko met his end by drowning in a river near Zmiev, according to another legend, passed down to a villager from nearby Kharkiv (allegedly from the great-great grandfather of a blind 104-year old, also from the same village).

What is unequivocally agreed upon is that the name

According to another legend, the founder of the city was *Khariton the beekeeper*

In any case, historians tend to agree that the city was founded in the mid-17th century by a Cossack regiment

Cossack, from the Turkic word *kozak* ('free man'), is a term used for the members of an independent martial society which was established around the 15th-16th centuries in what is now Ukraine



Taccuino Sanitatis, *Alimenti Miele*, XIV century, Casanatense Museum

Left: Illustration of **Cossack Kharko** from the book *Where does your name comes from?* by Pugachev V, XIX century, Saratov

Kharkiv appeared long before the first mention of the Cossacks; nonetheless in 2004 a monument to the Cossack founders of Kharkiv, including Kharko, was erected by sculptor Zurab Tsereteli on Nauky Avenue.

Kharko has also been a popular character in Ukrainian literature: for example, the poet Serhiy Shelkovyi alludes to Kharko the Cossack in his poem *The Kharkiv Fortress*.

In 2012, **archaeologists** confirmed that there was no evidence of the existence of Kharko

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Ivan Sirko

Mighty Cossack and hero of legend

Ivan Sirko is an important figure in Ukrainian history, a Hetman of the Zaporozhian Sich, and hero of many tales and legends.

Sirko's biography has long been intertwined with speculation, and even historians sometimes find it difficult to separate truth from fiction. It is known that he was born in 1610, in the city of Marefa, in the present Kharkiv region.

Sirko was Bohdan Khmelnytskyi's right-hand man. In 1663, Sirko was elected Hetman of the Zaporozhian Sich, becoming head of the Cossack army for 12 years. His exploits were spoken of all over the world, and he was greatly feared by his opponents.

Sirko died in August 1680 and was buried outside the village of Kopilovka, in Dnipropetrovsk region. In 1968,

Throughout his period of service to the Hetman of the Zaporozhian brotherhood, he fought in 244 battles



Hnat Khotkevych

Writer, historian, bandura player, composer, art critic, ethnographer, educator, theatre and socio-political figure

Khotkevych was born in Kharkiv in 1877 to parents who worked as a cook and a servant. During the summer they would go with their son to the village of Derhachi, where, at a young age, Khotkevych met a blind bandura-player who taught him how to play the bandura (a traditional Ukrainian instrument).

Because of his pro-Ukrainian ideas, Khotkevych was expelled from Kharkiv's Realschule Gymnasium and was exiled for two years, which took him to Kyiv. He went to study with the composer Mykola Lysenko, who, upon hearing him play, immediately offered him a part as a bandura-soloist, offering him a salary of 60 chervonets,

The authorities exonerated Khotkevych 18 years after his execution. After this his works were published for the first time in two volumes