

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Serbian Heritage Museum gratefully acknowledges the assistance in the preparation of this exhibit to the following individuals and organizations that with donations loans or otherwise contributed to its success.

Gracanica Choir,
Dr. Miodrag Ristic,
Mr. Velimir Toskovic,
Mrs. Aleksandra Budisavljevic,
Mrs. Slobodanka Jovanovic,
Mrs. Stanislava Markovich.

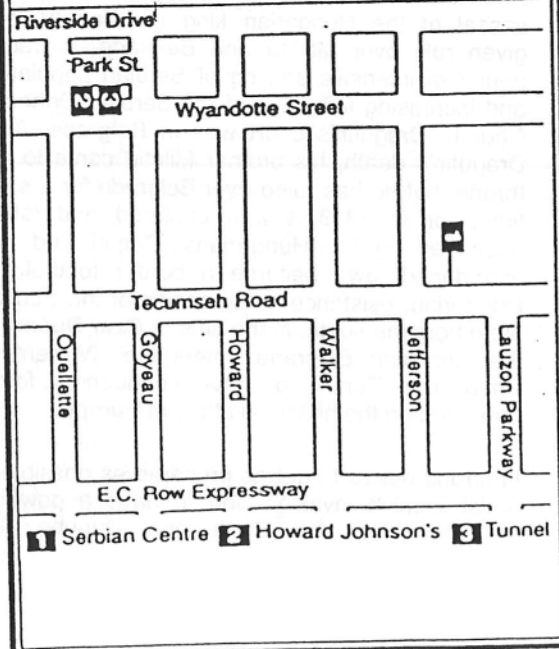
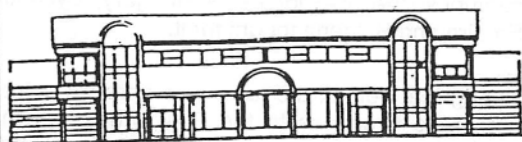
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Photographs and information for this exhibit has been obtained from the following books:

Stari Beograd by Mladenovic M. Luka; Beograd izmedju pesme I sunca by Gradimir Stojkovic and Viktor Secerovski; Beograd koji volim by Svetislav Mandic, Ivo Eterovic and Pedja Milosavljevic; Belgrade in the World published by Kulturni Centar Beograd.

SERBIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE
6770 Tecumseh Road East
Windsor, Ontario

From Highway # 401: Exit Essex Road
#19 to Tecumseh Road and left on
Tecumseh Road to # 6770



SERBIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF WINDSOR



Belgrade Coat of Arms

EXHIBIT:

**"BELGRADE – THE WHITE
CITY"**

November 28, 2004 – February 4,
2005

Belgrade (Beograd) is today the capital of **Serbia and Montenegro**, having about **1, 6 million** inhabitants. It is located in the south-east of Europe, in the Balkan Peninsula, at the confluence of the **Sava** and **Danube** rivers. It is one of the oldest cities in Europe and since ancient times it has been an important traffic focal point, an intersection of the roads of Eastern and Western Europe.

Belgrade is the capital of Serbian culture, education, science and economy. As a result of its tumultuous history, many nations live in Belgrade for centuries, and the majority of the population make Serbs (86%) of Orthodox persuasion. The official language is Serbian, while foreigners are recommended to use English in communication.

The founding of Singidunum is attributed to the Celtic tribe, the Scordiscs. As a fortified settlement, **Singidunum** was mentioned for the first time in **279 B.C.** The first part of the word - Singi - means "round" and dunum means "fortress" or "town".

The Romans conquered Belgrade in the beginning of the **1 century A.D.** and it has been under their rule for full four centuries.

The disintegration of the Roman Empire was followed by invasion of barbarian peoples: Eastern Goths, Gepidaes, Sarmatians, Avars, Slavs and others.

However, already in **488**, it became a Byzantine town

Around 630 the Serbian settlers come to this area

The Avars and Slavs did not care about this town, because it had lost its status of a border stronghold.

The town was mentioned again not until the IX century; under the Slavic name **BEOGRAD** (White Town - probably because of the walls made of white limestone). It was in a letter of **April 16, 878** which **Pope John VIII** wrote to the Bulgarian prince Boris-Mihailo

Several centuries after the first mentioning of Belgrade as a Slavic town, various armies and conquerors control it by turns. The Franks were the first to reach Belgrade and destroy the Avars under the command of Charles the Great. On the ruins of Taurunum they founded a Frank settlement Malevila, which was after Slavicization changed to Zemln (Zemun).

The rule of the Franks was replaced by Bulgarians, and they gave place to Hungarians. By the end of the X century, in the time of the great Samuel's state, Belgrade has already changed masters for a countless number of times. Already in **1018**, it once again became a border stronghold of the Byzantine Empire. During the XI and XII centuries, the rival forces of Hungary, Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria fought for it.

During that period, the town was a transit point of numerous Crusades to the East, which left their destructive mark on it. 190,000 people pass through Belgrade in **1189**, led by Frederick Barbarossa. This leader of crusaders saw Belgrade in ruins

The Serbian rule over Belgrade began in 1284, when the **Serbian king Dragutin**, son-in-law and vassal of the Hungarian king Ladislav IV was given rule over Mačva and Belgrade. It was a period of intensive settling of Serbian population and increasing influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Dragutin's court was in Belgrade. After Dragutin's death, his brother Milutin came to the throne, but he has ruled over Belgrade for a short time, for in **1319** it was captured and totally destroyed by the Hungarians. Demolished and abandoned town became a border foothold of Hungarian resistance to expansion of the Serbian state from the south, in the time of **Czar Dušan**. In that condition Belgrade enters the XV century, when the Turks, a new conquering force, appeared on the historical stage of Europe.

In strong desire to get as prepared as possible to resist Turkish invasion and to have a powerful stronghold on the Sava and Danube, the

Hungarians allowed construction of Belgrade during the rule of **Despot Stefan Lazarević**. He ruled over Belgrade from **1403** until **1427** and that was the time of a real prosperity of this town.

Belgrade was not only the **capital of the Serbian state**, but also the most important economic, cultural and religious center. The following buildings were erected: the Metropolitan Church, a new fortress (citadel), the Despot's Palace, a hospital and a library. Merchants were granted privileges, and wealthy and capable men came to the town and contributed to its prosperity. Belgrade was supposed to have about 40-50,000 people in that period.

The Despot's successor **Đurađ Branković** was forced to give in the town to the Hungarians. Following the example of the Belgrade fortress, he built the Smederevo fortress. During the hundred years of Hungarian rule the whole population structure was changed as well as shape of the very town.

Awakening of national consciousness and events related to the slaughter of the knezes led to organization of the **First Serbian Uprising** in 1804. The uprising led by **Karađorđe** from the very beginning was also aimed at liberation of Belgrade. After two years of fight, the town was liberated on **January 8, 1806**.

The dynamic development of Belgrade was interrupted by Turkish conquest in **1813**, and the repressions which followed led to the **uprising in 1815**. **The leader of the uprising, Knez Miloš Obrenović**, managed to introduce more of diplomacy into relations with the Turks.

After 346 years of rule, the **Turks left Belgrade for good on April 18, 1867**, and **Knez Mihailo Obrenović** moved the capital from Kragujevac to Belgrade. From that time Belgrade has been Serbian capital city.