

The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

PYSANKY – Ukrainian Easter Eggs - Part I by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

The collections of our Museum and Library are periodically enriched with rare and unique artifacts, books, periodicals, photographs, recordings, and archival materials. These items are donated by individuals who collected, accu-

numbering over 700 from Tanya Osadca. She is a *pysanka* artist, a lifelong researcher, and a collector of this traditional and singular folk work of art. Her *pysanka* collection is one of the largest and finest in the Diaspora, displaying authentic traditional designs which she unearthed during her many years of research and replication.

The artist and researcher Tanya Osadca became fascinated by the art of the *pysanka* while still a young girl in her native town of Kopychyntsi (Ternopil region, western Ukraine). She watched her grandmother and mother do the *pysanky* and learned from them. In addition, she received from her uncle the

fundamental knowledge about folklore and instructions on how to study and collect folklore material. In the course of time, her interest and enthusiasm in Ukrainian folklore and the art of the *pysanka* never diminished. However, it was not until after World War II and her immigration and settlement in the

United States that she was able to devote most of her spare time to the research and study of the *pysanka*. As she herself said “I experienced, as a young mother, the atavistic need to make *pysanky* for Easter.” This need to do a *pysanka*, to learn about the various regional designs, to decipher the meaning of the designs, and “the symbolic language that captures and transmits

the intimate spirit and wisdom of the people” of the *pysanka* led her to completely immerse herself in the study and research of this art.

The numerous *pysanka* exhibitions she organized, publications of articles on the subject, lectures, classes, and demos of the craft helped to propagate and popularize the art among Americans. Although Tanya could not do her research in Ukraine during the Soviet days, nevertheless she managed to accumulate a wealth of source materials available in libraries of the United States. She devoted much of her work to the study of the regional variants of the *pysanka* designs, replicating them, familiariz-



seums of Ukraine about which she had only read previously.

The *pysanka* collection which our Museum received from Tanya Osadca consists of 20 self-contained frames with 20 individual *pysanky* in each. Every frame contains *pysanky* from a particular region, and each *pysanka* is identified as to its provenance and the source from which the artist copied it.

The traditional use and the art of the *pysanka* was preserved and popularized among Americans and Ukrainians in

the Diaspora by such devotees to this art as Tanya and others. Her serious and in depth research of this folk art creation is an extremely important accomplishment, of which we should be very proud and for which we should be very grateful.

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The Tanya Osadca pysanka collection will be on permanent exhibit in our Museum.

mulated, or created them during their lifetime; and ultimately donated them to a museum or library for preservation for posterity, as well as to make them available for the benefit and appreciation by the general public.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of our Museum and Library we received an outstanding collection of *pysanky*

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