

The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

MORE ON COLLECTING COLLECTIBLES by *Lubow Wolynetz, Curator*

Recently, our Museum and Library received bags and boxes containing commonplace, even mundane items; but for collectors, libraries, and museums nothing is mundane or commonplace. Specialists in chosen fields or enthusiasts and collectors devoted to a particular topic find value and importance in items which to the average person might not be a big deal. But, as the old adage says “What for one man is rubbish, for another is treasure”. And so we again return to the subject at hand namely

lectors. In addition to the initial standard collection holdings, especially by libraries and museums, a wide range of other items have been added, for example: medals, badges, coins, stamps, photographs, recordings, postcards, posters, films, and now DVD's, CD's, various types of memorabilia, ephemera, and much more. The list can be limitless. What and how much has been collected and preserved has depended on the objectives, scope and perimeters of a given institution. Accumulation of objects and materials has also become a very popular hobby among individual

collectors. Such individuals may collect on a broad scale or just focus on one specific area of subject matter. This type of hobby has frequently become a lifelong pursuit, almost an addiction. We

they are valuable illustrative materials which enhance, enrich, and make the events even more memorable.

As examples of such badges and pins we have the following:

1) Those dedicated to the Millennium of Christianity in Ukraine. Almost every Ukrainian community has produced its own version.

2) Pins dedicated to the memory of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky and Patriarch Josyf Slippyj.

3) The annual solemn observance of the tragic historical events in Ukraine. Holodomor and Chernobyl produced many badges with images created by prominent Ukrainian artists;

4) Badges and pins worn and distributed during every protest march and rally in support of Ukrainian dissidents, demanding freedom for Ukrainian political prisoners who had been exiled to the Gulag;

5) Pins underscoring the lives of prominent Ukrainian writers like Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Lesia Ukrainka; historical personages like Hetmans Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Ivan Mazepa; historic events like the independence of 1917, November activities in 1918 in Lviv; and others.

There are even pins which now bring back memories – LOYALTY DAY PARADE pins. How many still remember those long marches down Fifth Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s? We marched together with representatives of other Captive Nations to make known to Americans and to the world the plight and enslavement of our countries and people by the Soviet communist regime.

And then there are pins produced by individual organizations which have been used for the benefit of their dedicated work and noble ideals. One example of such an organization is the “Brody-Lev Brotherhood”, organized in 1952 for the preservation of war graves and memorials of former Ukrainian soldiers, especially those who had served in the Division “Haly-



chyna” during World War II. Every year this brotherhood has produced these pins, mailed them to members of the Ukrainian community, thus soliciting funds with which to continue their work. With the advent of Ukrainian independence in 1991, members of this Brotherhood went to Ukraine to locate the graves of their fallen brothers. They built a chapel at a specially organized gravesite, placed monuments on each grave, and even reburied some of those who had died in Western Europe or America but who had wished to be reburied in Ukraine.



the importance of the preservation for posterity of not only the obviously significant materials, but also of the seemingly less noteworthy. These would be the trivial, miscellaneous materials which reflect some additional aspects of activities, events, undertakings, and even accomplishments of a given society, organization, club, or individual.

Collecting of art, artifacts, and written and printed materials like books and archives has gone through a continuous development for ages. The first collectors were actually monasteries, universities, churches, kings, and wealthy private individuals – patrons of art and scholarship. In time, human knowledge, creativity, and invention and anything that documented human endeavors increased to such an extent that more sophisticated institutions for collecting and preservation were founded, libraries and museums, as well as dedicated private col-

lectors. The collection of items about which we now write were originally intended to be of a transitory nature “here today, and gone tomorrow”. To these belong a variety of badges, buttons, and pins used to commemorate or celebrate an event, express an opinion, indicate membership, rally or call to action and support, announce or inform about an important occurrence, awaken memories, pay homage to prominent personalities, etc. Pins of this nature were made by lithographing an image directly onto a metal disk with a fastening device on the back. Most of the badges and pins in our collection exemplify civic, political, religious, organizational, and cultural activities of the Ukrainian Diaspora in America. Although compared to written material about events and activities, pins and badges of this nature might be considered by some to be of minor importance, but in reality

have been fortunate that there had been and still are Ukrainians in the Diaspora who pursue this type of hobby, and our Museum and Library has been the recipient of such collections, recently and in the past.



Pins and badges have been created to serve a purpose. They are an important element which has helped in the re-creation and illustration and documentation of the work and activities of a community or of a particular group of people.

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