

The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

WE SHALL SOON CELEBRATE AN 80th ANNIVERSARY!

Part Three by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

The artifacts which our Museum and Library collected during its organizational years, beginning in 1933 until the official opening in 1937, came from various donors and sources as gifts, along with some purchases. This we mentioned in the first two parts of our previous two articles. However,



there is one group of items in our collection which was specially commissioned by Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky in 1936 from a noted artist and sculptor in Lviv, namely Serhii Lytvynenko, 1899 -1964. Bishop Constantine believed that our Museum should have some artifacts which would illustrate and reflect the historical aspect of our culture. All this was intended for the benefit of the second and third gen-



erations of Ukrainians in America, who had never seen Ukraine and had only heard about it from their parents and pastors. With this information they would now be able to learn and become familiar with the important historical monuments and cultural contributions of their ancestors. So for this reason, Bishop Bohachevsky commissioned Serhii Lytvynenko to do stone models (replicas) of the following: the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kyiv; the Golden Gate of Kyiv; the sarcophagus of Prince Yaroslav the Wise; and the Tower on Bright Hill in the village of Pidlyssia

dedicated to the memory of Reverend Markian Shashkevych, 1811-1843. The first three models would reflect the cultural grandeur and power of the Kyievan-Rus-Ukraine State. The fourth model would be like a beacon reminding all of us about the dedicated work of Reverend Markian Shashkevych who brought about the literary and national revival in Halychyna.

The sculptor Serhii Lytvynenko was born in the Poltava region and attended school in the city of Lubny. During the Ukrainian Independence revolutionary years he joined the ranks of the Ukrainian Army, and later with other soldiers was interned in POW camps. Once freed, he went to study at the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts (1924-1929) and at Paris (1930). After his studies he returned to Western Ukraine and settled in Lviv. Here he opened his art atelier and also a ceramic factory. During World War II he escaped from the Soviet occupation of Ukraine, lived in DP camps in Germany, and in 1949 emigrated to the United States and settled in New York. Wherever he lived, he ardently participated in the art and literary circles of the community. He opened his art studio, was the founder and president of the Ukrainian Art Association (1952-1957), the founder of the Ukrainian Literary and Art Club in New York, the organizer of many art exhibits, etc. His artistic output consisted of numerous memorial monuments dedicated to historical events, heroic feats, sculptural portraits of noted Ukrainian individuals, including Metropolitan Sheptytsky. This monument was later destroyed by the Soviets. He is best known for his 1933 monument of Ivan Franko's grave in the Lychakiv cemetery.

The four models completed by Serhii Lytvynenko are as follows:

1) The Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Kyiv was built (circa 1037-1044) during the reign of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, 978-1054. It is considered to be one of the most outstanding architectural monuments in Ukraine. The Cathedral was destroyed a number of times by invading foreign armies. For years it lay in ruins until Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, 1597-1647, began efforts at its restoration in about 1638. Later Hetman Ivan Mazepa,

in the years 1690-1697 continued the restoration which he fully financed. The model which Lytvynenko made for our Museum depicts the view of St. Sophia as it was restored by Hetman Ivan Mazepa.

2) The Golden Gate of the fortification walls of the upper city of Kyiv was also built during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise. It was the most important gate of the fortification, and for centuries was used as the triumphant entrance to the city. Above the gate stood the church of the



Annunciation with gilded domes. One theory claims that because of the gilded domes, the Gate was named the Golden Gate. This edifice was also destroyed during various invasions and for centuries lay in ruins. It was rebuilt in 1982 to supposedly its original architectural plan. Lytvynenko's model depicts the Golden Gate as it looked in a state of ruins.

3) Royalty and nobility was by tradition entombed in specially designed sarcophagi. The body of Prince Yaroslav the Wise was entombed in a white marble sarcophagus placed in the Cathedral of St. Sophia. It is of a rectangular shape with a sloping roof-like lid. The sides and lid are decorated with various symbolic depictions e.g., grape vines with clusters, palm leaves, cypress trees, fish, crosses, and doves. For our Museum Lytvynenko did an exact miniature copy of the original.

4) Reverend Markian Shashkevych brought about the Ukrainian national and literary revival in Halychyna. He resurrected Ukrainian national consciousness, national identity, the use of vernacular Ukrainian in literature and sermons. He devoted his entire life to this cause and subsequently inspired others to do the same. In 1911 the inhabitants in the village of Pidlyssia, where Markian Shashkevych was born, wanted to commemorate his memory and so on the highest hill in the area known as Bright Hill they erected a tower with a metal cross. This monument was intended to be like a beacon guiding and reminding all Ukrainians to uphold and to follow the noble ideals of Rev. Markian Shashkevych. This monument was and still

should be especially meaningful for Ukrainian immigrants, since most of them, primarily the first and second wave, had come from Halychyna.



Lytvynenko did a miniature replica of this monument for our Museum.

These four artifacts were transported from Lviv to the port city of Gdynia in Poland, and were loaded into the ship SS "MINNEQUA". This ship then sailed to the port of New York arriv-



ing in August of 1937. Based on the correspondence which we have in our archives, the items which the freight contractors listed as "four cases of concrete goods" were then transported to Stamford by Drinkwater & Sons (Common Carrier) and deposited at our Museum. They arrived just in time for the official Museum and Library opening in September of 1937.



Explore and Experience Our Past



Come and Worship With Us During Your Vacation At The Jersey Shore!!

For all who are vacationing during the Summer months in Wildwood Crest, NJ, the Ukrainian Catholic Summer Mission in Wildwood Crest invites you to come and worship with us! We celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in Ukrainian (homily in English and Ukrainian) every Sunday evening at 6:30 pm from Sunday, July 2nd, through Sunday, September 3rd, 2017, located at:

Crest Community Church
5901 Pacific Avenue
Wildwood Crest, NJ 08260

Crest Community Church is located on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Crocus Road. For more information, please contact Father Paul Makar at 856-482-0938 (after August 1st, please contact Father Roman Sverdan at the same number listed above) or Marusha Cyhan at 609-522-2811. We look forward to having you and your family spiritually refresh yourselves with us during your vacation at the Jersey Shore in Wildwood Crest!