

EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

Woven and Embroidered Household Textiles - Part II

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



Decorative Pillowcase,
Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

After World War I, Eastern and Western Ukraine, having been subjugated by foreign powers, found itself in a difficult political situation. Notwithstanding this, there eventually emerged a generation of young educated Ukrainians. Despite the difficult circumstances of being without a political entity, as well as the domination and expansion of foreign culture, this generation began to assert its national distinctiveness. These young educated Ukrainians raised awareness among the people of their national identity, imparted to them pride in their heritage, and organized educational centers to uplift the cultural and economic level of the populace. They recognized the creative achievements of

the people, and broadened knowledge about this. They taught the people to cherish, value, preserve, and popularize national cultural heritage.

In Western Ukraine, there developed numerous ways to bring about, even if only partially, some of the above concepts. As a result, there arose educational, artistic, women's organizations, which as part of their activities meant involvement in specific programs and with whose help they would be able to realize their plans. One of these institutions was the Ukrainian Folk Art Cooperative (*Cooperatyva Ukrainske Narodne Mystetstvo*), which was founded in Lviv in 1922. The main goal of this

Cooperative was to create a center which would do the following: preserve samples of ancient and abandoned folk art; promote the development of folk art and household craft; spread the conviction of the value and significance of folk art artifacts; emphasize the necessity to include these works in their everyday lives by developing modern innovations based on traditional samples; and thus to create a *Ukrainian style* in household *décor* and personal dress. One of many results of this main purpose was the transformation of the large folk pillows and pillowcases into small, decorative embroidered or woven cushions for the sofa or chair in a modern home. This custom became widespread and has survived to the present day, both in Ukraine and



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An ad inside *Nova Khata* magazine for the Cooperative products for sale,
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in the Diaspora. In order to have a market for these items, the Cooperative organized 13 workshops, and had 500 workers who supplied items for sale. Furthermore, to disseminate information about folk art, its application, and to discuss the activities of its work, the Cooperative published a magazine entitled *New Home (Nova Khata)*.

In general, the embroidery motifs used for the decorative cushions came from women's shirt sleeves. The wealth and variety of folk designs actually gave the workers of the Cooperative workshop a wide range of possible innovations, as well as the means of creating attractive and interesting combinations to

apply to the cushions. These innovative products could satisfy many tastes and styles, both traditional and modern *décor*, and could even satisfy the peculiar whims of certain clients.

To decorate one's home with embroidered items – whether it be the ritual cloth, tablecloth, or cushions – is almost an unwritten law for Ukrainians. When a woman is conscious of her national identity, she will always be proud of her national heritage.

The underlying message of the Ukrainian Folk Art Cooperative was to convince the people of the artistic merit which their heritage possessed, to be proud of it, and to make it a part of their lives, as an emblem of their distinctive national identity. □

“All Roads Lead to ...” – the Ukrainian Museum and Library

On Friday, August 10, His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk visited the Ukrainian Museum and Library, where he met with His Excellency David Martin, Mayor of Stamford. The high profile guests were welcomed to the Museum by Curator Lubow Wolynetz. Following the meeting, both dignitaries toured the Museum and signed the visitor's book.



Mayor David Martin (left) greets His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk (right), accompanied by Bishop Paul Chomnycky (center) at the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.



His Beatitude accompanied by Curator Lubow Wolynetz views an exhibition dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of Ukraine's struggle for independence, entitled "For Independence, For Unification, For Statehood".

For more information about The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, please, visit www.ukrainianmuseumlibrary.org, call 203-324-0499 or 203-323-8866. The Museum is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at: 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.