

## The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

### THE POCKET CALENDAR – A VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

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We are indeed fortunate to live in an age when the acquisition or retrieval of a general type of information has been made more straightforward and not as difficult or time consuming as in the past. Before the advent of the technological innovations in the compiling of data bases and their instant availability, seeking information was a complicated procedure, as compared to the ease with which we find it today. Notwithstanding this, for centuries, efforts were made to compile basic and urgently needed information; and then to make it available in printed form for the benefit of the general public or for specific groups of society.

One of the earliest ready reference publications of this nature was the Almanac or calendar. Some researchers of this subject state that these calendars were in some way the precursors of today's iPhones. Almanac-calendars were so popular among the early settlers in America that they were read and preserved as family heirlooms, second only to the Bible. These digests, in addition to giving the months, days, and holiday dates for the coming year, included an array of additional useful and practical information which was often in demand by the general public. The content of these digests also depended on the purpose which the publisher or author sought to achieve; to what information they deemed necessary to relate; to share and to educate; and to give moral and wise guidance to the reader.

Individual organizations, societies, and clubs were motivated by these publications to produce smaller, pocket version digests for the explicit use and

benefit of their members. The topics of such pocket calendars in addition to the basic data would include specific material reflecting the goals of the organization and thus would provide its members with needed data. Most of them would also include blank pages to be used for making notes or for keeping diary entries.

Our Museum and Library has a fairly good collection of Ukrainian pocket calendars dating from the 1920s to the 1970s. Most of them were issued by various organizations, civic committees, publishers, and even private individuals.

One example of such a publication which we have in our collection is from 1923 and is entitled Pocket Calendar (*Kyshenkovi Kalendar*). It was printed in Germany but was intended for Ukrainian immigrants in the United States. It gives the usual months, days, holidays, and statistics on rivers, languages, countries, charts, and graphs. It also explains

why we celebrate our holidays according to the Julian Calendar. Likewise included is a brief history of Ukraine in an essay and timeline form, a bibliography of important books on Ukraine, a list of famous Ukrainian writers, and even a list of notable Ukrainians who died in the previous year. Included also is a list of new countries that were created as a result of the post World War I peace

negotiations. But, it even gives practical instructions for Ukrainian immigrants in America on the following aspects: how to transliterate Ukrainian surnames into the Latin alphabet "so that Americans can pronounce our names correctly"; the equivalents of Ukrainian first names into English; how to become an American citizen; etc. Of special interest is: *A Short Guide to the Old Country* – which contains a list of names and addresses of banks, libraries and museums, important publishers, aid societies, bookstores, newspapers, trade and commerce companies, etc. Also inserted is some humor and wise sayings of famous individuals. For a tiny pocket calendar of 80 pages printed on very thin paper, this publication contained a priceless wealth of

information for the readers then, and in some ways it still has value for us now.

We have a 1937 calendar published in Lviv by the Ukrainian Temperance Society of Western Ukraine. In addition the standard calendar information, it is filled with drawings, portraying the perils and evils of tobacco and alcohol abuse and issuing warnings of tragic consequences to those who are addicted.

In 1949 the *Scout's Pocket Calendar for 1948/49* (*Plastunskyi kalendarets na rik 1948/49*) was published by Ukrainian Scout's Library. It has a month by month Ukrainian cultural and historical data, timeline history of world scouting, and the Ukrainian Plast. It gives the fundamentals of Plast statutes, rules and regulations, oaths, and ideals. Best of all it includes a Morse code sign chart and gives a helpful guide in Ukrainian for easier memorization of the dots and dashes by using words with a definite number of syllables. If the syllable had an "O", that meant the code required a dash. All other syllables were dots. Those of us who were required to be proficient in Morse Code in order to advance to a higher degree in Plast, appreciated this helpful guide immensely.

In 1954 the *Calendar of a Young Ukrainian* (*Kalendarets molodoho ukrainsia*) was published by the SUM Ukrainian Youth Association in Munich. A very useful addition to the basic calendar data is a 3,500 word dictionary of foreign words used in Ukrainian publications. Not only does this dictionary give definitions, but it also points out how these words should be or can be used and even supplies Ukrainian alternatives.

There are many other calendars which we have, for example: *Calendar of Zemlia i Volia*, 1924 published by Ukrainian socialists in Lviv; *Providence Association Calendar* from 1934; *Calendar of a Young Ukrainian*, 1937 published in Lviv by the printing house "Inexpensive Book", commemorating the *Ukrainian Revolution for Independence* of 1917; *Calendar of the Ukrainian Insurgent*, 1947; *Pocket Calendar of the Ukrainian Political Prisoner*, 1948; *Calendar of a Ukrainian Revolutionary*, 1951; *Calendar of a Ukrainian Soldier*, 1952; *40th Anniversary Jubilee Calendar of Ukrainian Sharp Shooters*

(*Sichovi Striltsi*), 1954; *Ukrainian Calendar*, 1957 (first calendar published after World War II by Ukrainians living in Poland); *Christian Calendar* (*Khrystianskyi kalendar*), 1962 published on the occasion of the Second Vatican II Council, as well as many more.

Research libraries like ours, collect besides books and journals, printed materials of all kinds, which for the average person might seem to be of little interest or value. For researchers, on the other hand, such seemingly ephemeral and ambivalent publications, like these pocket calendars, might present

a treasure; give a needed insight; point to something which was neglected; reveal new facts; illustrate the lives of people within a specific period; and show their needs, concerns, and goals. Pocket calendars in their heyday truly served a useful purpose. By collecting and preserving them on the shelves of our Library, they will continue to serve this useful purpose for readers and researchers. Help us to preserve the treasures we have in our Museum and Library.



Explore and Experience Our Past