

The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

WE SHALL SOON CELEBRATE AN 80th ANNIVERSARY!

by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

In the fall of this year 2017, our Ukrainian Museum and Library will observe its 80th anniversary. As the oldest Ukrainian cultural institution in North America, it is only fitting at this time to recall some of the basic facts about how we came to be a prominent establishment in this community. Above all, we want to highlight the initial and subsequent artifacts donated or purchased for our unique collections.

Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky, the second Bishop for Ukrainian Catholics in America, realized that in order to secure the adherence of Ukrainian immigrants to their church, to help them preserve their national identity, and to have them learn about their religious and cultural heritage, the found

needed for the numerous Ukrainian Catholic parishes throughout the USA. Also, Bishop Bohachevsky announced plans for the founding of a Ukrainian Museum and Library (on the aforementioned property) for the benefit of Ukrainian immigrants in America and for the preservation of their heritage.

News about the proposed founding of a Ukrainian Museum and Library spread far and wide not only among Ukrainians in America, but also among Ukrainians in western Ukraine (Halychyna). As a result, work toward its implementation began in earnest from 1934 until the official opening in 1937.

Both Bishop Bohachevsky and the first curator of the Ukrainian Museum and Library, Father Leo Chapelsky, were in constant contact with directors and professional personnel of museums and cultural institutions in Lviv, e.g. Ilarion Svietsitsky, 1876-1956, director of the National Museum in Lviv; Yaroslav Pasternak, 1892-1969, director of Shevchenko Scientific Society's Cultural and Historical Museum in Lviv; Ievhen Iulii Peleny, 1908-1956, scholar; and others. Our two organizers were seeking from them advice as to the organizational aspect and the direction and scope of the collections toward which institutions should aim. All three willingly and enthusiastically gave professional suggestions and also helped the Museum and Library to acquire artifacts for its collections.

Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky was informed by Father Leo Chapelsky about the founding of the Ukrainian Museum and Library and promptly responded by sending a gift, which was the first artifact that our Museum had received. This item was a sketch (one of a

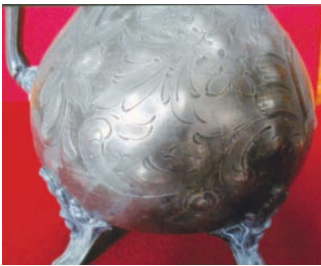
few sketches) for a larger painting of Our Lady and Child by the artist Oleksa Novakivsky. It was commissioned from the artist by Metropolitan Sheptytsky for the St. George Cathedral in Lviv. This donation was received in 1935. (I briefly wrote about it in the January 24, 2010 issue of *the Sower*.)

Over 20 noteworthy gifts were donated by the Basilian Sisters from the village of Pidmykhailivtsi which is in the Rohatyn district of western Ukraine. But what was the basis for such a generous gift from the Basilian Sisters? The answer is as follows: The Ukrainian Catholic Church in America from the beginning up to World War II has been seeking directives, guidance, and assistance from the hierarchy and clergy of our Church in western Ukraine, and thus was continuously in contact and had mutual cooperation. The first Basilian Sisters

actually came to the United States in 1911 at the request of Bishop Soter Ortynsky to be in charge of an orphanage in Philadelphia. Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky continued to bring additional Basilian Sisters to America especially for the operation of parish day schools which he began to establish for Ukrainians in America. Reciprocally, Bishop Bohachevsky continuously helped the Sisters in Ukraine, mostly financially, when specific needs would arise. In 1930, the Basilian Sister's monastery in the town of Zhuravno (Zhydachiv region) had an opportunity to purchase in the village of Pidmykhailivtsi an estate of 95 acres of land, a park and some buildings where they wanted to continue operating an orphanage as they had done in Zhuravno. The price of the property was \$22,000 which they did not have. So, they appealed to Bishop Bohachevsky, and he in turn asked his

faithful in America to raise the amount needed. The necessary sum was collected and sent to the Sisters. In gratitude, a few years later, October 4th, 1936, the Sisters sent Bishop Bohachevsky over 20 artifacts for our Museum and Library which at that time was in its organizational stages.

The first artifact in this group was a 17th century copper bowl and jug used for Christening. It came from an old church in the village of Pidtylychi. In the center of the bowl is a bas-relief depiction of the Annunciation. It shows the Blessed Virgin Mary kneeling in prayer and the Archangel Gabriel suspended in the air with a lily in hand. Between the two figures is a large



vase of flowers, and hovering above all is a dove with rays symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The jug is decorated with floral motifs using engraving and chasing methods. Metalwork was a highly developed art in Ukraine during the 16th through 19th centuries. It was produced by folk craftsmen principally for their own use and by guild artisans who produced works for the higher social classes. The bowl and jug was probably the work of guild artisans since it is in the Museum's collection of religious articles

In the following issues of the *Sower* I shall continue to write about other noteworthy artifacts in the collections of our Museum and Library.

ing of educational and cultural institutions was of paramount importance. Then, after searching for months Bishop Bohachevsky was finally able to purchase in 1933 a suitable property (on which were usable buildings) in Stamford, CT. Thus was established the Ukrainian Catholic Seminary for the education of priests

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