

## EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

## Struggle for Freedom as Depicted in Song, Poetry, Art, Memoirs

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

During World War I and the years of the fight for freedom, 1914-1922, Ukrainian armed forces, *the Sichovi Striltisi* and the Ukrainian Galician Army fought valiantly against enemy invasions. Although their attempts to oust and defeat the enemy were not successful, the remembrance of the heroic deeds, and sacrifices made for a just cause, political and cultural attempts to resolve the tragic and critical situations were deeply embedded into the consciousness of the Ukrainian people. This, in turn gave them a steadfast desire to continue the struggle until their freedom and independence was achieved.

It is especially in the month of November when we reflect upon and ponder those crucially significant years of the struggle for freedom. We try to refresh our knowledge about it,

*Za ridnyj kraj (For Motherland)*. Fragment. Lyrics and music. Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.



*Surma* – a collection of war songs. Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

demonstrate the literary and musical creativity of the participants in these events. One such item is a song book of *the Sichovi Striltisi (Spivanyk Sichovykh Striltisiv (1918))* and *Surma – a collection of war songs (1922)*. Music, for centuries, has been an important and an intrinsic part of warfare. The songs during wartime have had a psychological effect for both the performers and listeners. It strengthened their patriotic fervor, intensified their courage, deepened the understanding of their experiences and feelings, eulogized the lost, praised the heroic, described the ordinary, and laughed at the comical. *The Sichovi Striltisi* created scores of songs during the wartime years, which to this day we cherish and sing during relevant moments. The power of the words of these songs and the energy of the musical composition was such that the Soviet Regime banned their singing and threatened severe punishment to those who

disobeyed. The song “*Oh in the meadow the guelder rose branches have bent...*” is considered to be a second national anthem. And the song “*The Cranes (Vydysb brate mii...)*” is a mournful, sorrowful lament for the fallen soldiers or notable persons devoted to work for the social good. In the song book “*Surma*”, each song has detailed information about the lyricist, composer as well as the date and occasion when the song was written. Our library also has a book entitled “*Chervona Kalyna – literary anthology*” published in 1918. It contains historical data, poetry, memoirs, photographs, drawings, caricatures, etc. In the 1920s and 1930s, other works were published like “*Kalendar Chervonoj Kalyny*” and “*Chronicles of Chervona Kalyna*”, issues of both we have in our library.

Preserving and safeguarding these rare items is an exceptionally important task. Help us preserve these items. Be generous! ❖

*The Cranes (Vydysb brate mii...)*. Fragment. Lyrics and music. Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

*Chronicles of Chervona Kalyna*. Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.