



## LOCAL UKRAINIAN HERITAGE DOCUMENTS FIND NEW 'HOME'

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**N**ORTH AMERICAN AND European academic communities recognize the University of Toronto Libraries as a significant repository of Ukrainian émigré collections, holding distinctive collections across multiple historical periods. One of our greatest strengths is the collection of pre-1950 Ukrainian Canadian publications housed at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

The introduction of Ukrainian courses in 1955, the establishment of the Chair in Ukrainian Studies in 1980, and the launch of the Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine in 2001 have all spurred donations of private gift collections to the University of Toronto. It is worth bearing in mind the words of then University President Sidney Smith (1897–1959) on the launch of the first Ukrainian literature course in 1955: 'This is perhaps an indication that Slavic Studies, roundly considered, will develop and promote understanding of areas which are now so important, and in a sense so remote from us.' While Ukraine may have seemed remote to the University community, all one had to do to know something about its people and land was to walk around Toronto's downtown.

The Ukrainian community in Toronto is and has been large and active since the early twentieth century. Institutions past and present bear witness to the community's social and cultural undertakings, and

anyone who strolls along the western edge of the University campus may have noticed St. Volodymyr Institute at 620 Spadina Avenue. Founded in 1961, this Institute houses students, hosts performances and events, and has an extraordinary Ukrainian library collection.

What people might not know is that blocks away from the Fisher Library and 620 Spadina Avenue, there once stood at the intersection of Ulster and Lippincott Streets the Ukrainian People's (National) Home, which had an equally rich Ukrainian print collection. Located at the site of the former Salvation Army Hall at 191 Lippincott Street, the Home opened its doors in 1928 and flourished during the next three decades. During its peak period of activity from the 1920s to the 1950s the Home held weekly concerts, dance performances, and plays by local and visiting artists. The local choir was particularly in demand, performing for a variety of audiences at churches, clubs, and on the radio, and appearing regularly at the Canadian National Exhibition. Educational events run by the Ukrainian People's Home included English classes, courses on Ukrainian literature, and talks given by visitors from Ukraine and western Europe.

The old Hall, or Home, fell into decline before closing in the early 1980s, and was eventually torn down to make way for townhouses. Before demolition, the owners of the building emptied out the contents

**OPENING PAGE:** Nataalka Husar moving out her studio on Lippincott St. in 1988. Pictured with her are Chris Chown and Andriy Berezowskyj. Courtesy of Nataalka Husar **RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Ukrainian baseball team The Nationals. Photograph by A. A. Gray & Co., 561 Queen St., Toronto, ca. 1930s. National demonstration held on 14 June 1953 at Queen's Park to honour the victims of Moscow's genocide-mass famine in Ukraine in 1933.

of the library, theatre, and classrooms and placed them curbside. When I arrived in Toronto in 2006, I heard rumours that there was a chaotic situation. Local members of Toronto's Ukrainian Canadian community had helped themselves to whatever they wanted, and no one could tell me for certain what had happened to the valuable library collection. Thankfully, we know the fate of multiple documents and photographs thanks to the intercession and generosity of Nataalka Husar, an American-born Canadian painter, who once rented studio space on the second floor of the old Home.

Husar received her eviction notice around 1988. She recalls elderly Ukrainian men coming around nightly, putting hefty garbage bags out to the curb, and every night as she headed home from her studio at Lippincott Street she would open these bags. Inside, she discovered treasures which she would bring back upstairs for safekeeping.

When Husar moved out of her studio, along with her came these bags of salvaged Ukrainian artefacts. The material offered her creative ideas and inspiration for her paintings and other creative work. Her artwork can be seen in galleries and museums across Canada, including the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Gardiner Museum, and Fisher holds half a dozen of Husar's exhibition catalogues.

Eventually, the time came for Husar to part with the items and for them to find a new 'home' at the Fisher Library. On 24 August, the Independence Day of Ukraine, Nataalka Husar donated historical photographs, posters, and assorted documents associated with the Ukrainian People's (National) Home to the Fisher Library. The photographs, dating mostly from the 1920s and 1930s, include group portraits of the society's choir, women's section, and directorate, as well as members of the Ukrainian baseball team the 'National'. The posters promote lectures and theatrical and musical events from the Hall's period of peak activity.

The donated material includes documents revealing ties of Toronto's Ukrainian community with the *Prosvita* (Enlightenment) Society in Lviv, Ukraine. Others relate to events such as a 'Miss Popularity' Contest held in 1947, a public hall licence granted to the Home by the city, and a notice that once hung on the hall's door indicating that 'Саля заповнена. Більше не впускаєця' (The hall is full. No more entries). This sign of a once vibrant community institution is now preserved and available for study and research, along with the rest of the collection.



**УКРАЇНСЬКА ГРОМАДО!**

Українці в цілому вільному світі вшановують цього року пам'ять всіх тих наших братів і сестер, що впади жертвою жадливого і безприкладного в історії російського злочину

**народовбивства**

що його довершила Москва, організуючи в Україні масовий голод в 1933 році.

УКРАЇНЦІ ТОРОНТА, УСІ МІСЦЕВІ УКРАЇНСЬКІ НАЦІОНАЛЬНІ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ, ЩО ВХОДЯТЬ В СКЛАД КОМІТЕТУ УКРАЇНЦІВ КАНАДИ І ТІ, ЩО ПОЗА НИМ, ЩОБ ВІДЗНАЧИТИ ЦЮ ТРАГІЧНУ ПОДІЮ, ПІДГОТОВЛЯЮТЬ НА НЕДІЛЮ

**14 червня 1953**

**ВСЕНАРОДНЮ**

**МАНІФЕСТАЦІЮ**

у

**QUEEN'S PARK**

яку попередить похід вулицями Торонта (траєкція походу: від української католицької церкви Київ-Белудас, збоку Київ до Беттерст, збоку Беттерст поперек української католицької і протестантської, церкви до Каледон, поперек УНО збоку Каледон до Квіберста, збоку Квіберста до Нейксбороу).

**ПОХІД ПОЧИНАЄ ФОРМУВАТИСЯ ОБ 11 ГОД. ДНЯ ПІД ЦЕРКВОЮ БЕЛЛУДС—КВІН.**

Ключово українську громаду Торонта квати масову участь в цій маніфестації і вшанувати пам'ять жертв російського терору та загоротувати перед цим культурним світом проки злочину імперіалістичної Москви — МАСОВОГО НАРОДОВБИВСТВА В УКРАЇНІ

**ДІЛЛОВИЙ КОМІТЕТ**