



OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY

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PRESS RELEASE

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Ukraine Native's Invincible Spirit Displayed in Artifacts at Ocean County Library Jackson Branch

JACKSON TOWNSHIP – Pysanky eggs, nesting dolls, ceramic bunnies, and lacy, woven keepsakes tell the powerful story of Alla Long, the retired Jackson teacher whose objets d'art are on display through the end of May at the Ocean County Library Jackson Branch.

The delicate, intricate, handcrafted artifacts of wood, ceramic, and fabric trace Alla's life, from childhood in Ukraine to her more than 50 years in Jackson. They also symbolize the indomitable human resilience against oppression.

Her maternal grandparents were stripped of their possessions and banished to Siberia in 1928, but her family endured. "We left Ukraine in 1943," she recalled, "crossing the Carpathian Mountains in winter with their belongings, two horses and a buggy," sandwiched between opposing Russian and German forces.

"We crossed Hungary, Romania, and Poland. Then, we were placed on cattle trains that took us to pre-concentration camps. My mother and father were paid for by two separate families. I wasn't allowed to stay with them. In 1945, we found an American displaced persons camp. We moved every year, city to city, camp to camp."

The reunited family soon embarked to the United States, where Alla devoted her life to teaching, as her parents had done in their native land.

Many items are Alla's own handiwork. "I learned knitting and cross-stitching from my mother," she explained. The ceramic bunnies represent a bond between the two. "Every Mother's Day, I bought one and gave it to my mother," she said. Other items are mementos of visits to Ukraine, England, Spain, Belgium, France, and Italy.

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Strife that wracks her homeland prompted Alla to exhibit the finely-detailed pieces. They represent the uncertain futures of art forms that date back centuries, and also the hope that they will survive for new generations.

“I would die for America,” Alla said. “It has given me my life. But part of my heart is always there. When I stood on land that once belonged to my family, it took my breath away.”

The exhibit is free and open to the public, and can be viewed during normal Branch operating hours. For more information, visit www.theoceancountylibrary.org/events, drop by the Branch, 2 Jackson Drive, or call (732) 928-4400.

Keep up with Library programs and events at www.theoceancountylibrary.org, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), and [Pinterest](#).



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