



Exhibit of the Month

POSTCARD ON BIRCH BARK

Museologist Simona Gustaitytė

- Materials: birch bark, ink;
- Techniques: pressing, cutting, drawing, writing;
- Width: 6.8 cm (13 cm when open), height: 4 cm;
- Author - deportee Stasys Zavistanavičius;
- Krasnoyarsk Krai, the USSR;
- 1949.

Postcards on birch bark are unique pieces created by exiles and political prisoners scattered in Siberia in the 1940s and 1960s. These works were created in extremely poor living conditions, when the repressed people lacked the most basic household items and often had to be inventive in using the available materials. In this case, birch bark was an alternative to paper and was suitable for writing letters, greetings and drawings.

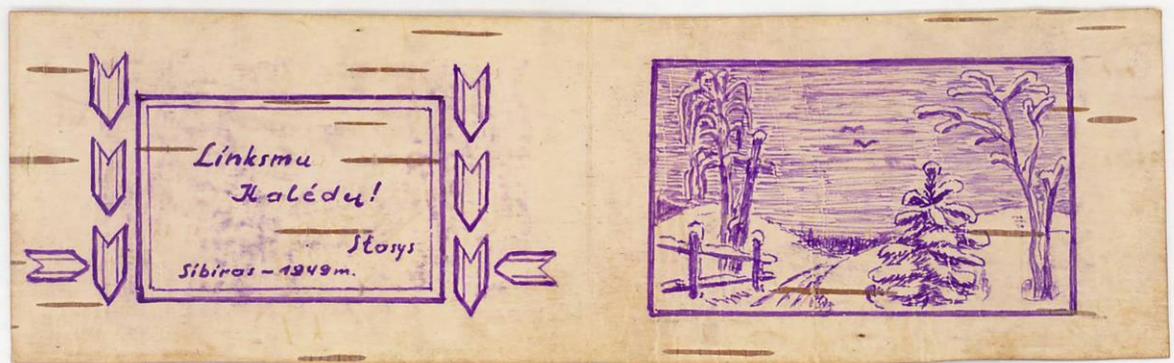
The exhibit in the collections of Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum is a tiny, just a few centimetres long postcard on birch bark, carefully decorated with ornaments and illustrated with images of a flaming candle and winter. The exhibit was donated to the museum by Laura Mačiokaitė-Janušauskienė. Her family suffered during the Nazi Germany and the second Soviet occupation. Mykolas Mačiokas, the father of

Laura Mačiokaitė-Janušauskienė, was an officer, a member of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) and a participant of the anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance. In 1943, he was brought to Stutthof concentration camp with a group of 45 Lithuanian intellectuals. After the Red Army reoccupied Lithuania in 1944, Mačiokas took part in the anti-Soviet resistance, and his wife Juzė and daughter Laura were deported to Krasnoyarsk Krai during the great deportation of Lithuanians called "Vesna" ("Spring") in May, 1948. Stasys Zavistanavičius, a student at the Institute of Physical Culture and a fellow student of Mačiokas' daughter Severina, was deported with them to the remote region of Siberia. He was sent to exile straight from prison, without the essential things for surviving in Siberia. At the kind suggestion of Juzė Mačiokienė, he travelled to exile as her family member. It seems that a sincere friendship was born under the circumstances of a common tragedy: in exile, the young man became an important supporter when J. Mačiokienė fell ill, and he took care of her twelve-year-old daughter. On the occasion of the major holidays of the year, Zavistanavičius gave her cards made from birch bark.





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