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Epifanius Stephan Bilak Papers, 1974-1991

Epifanius Stephan Bilak

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**Epifanius Stephan Bilak
Recordings, (1974-1991)**

Center for Restoration Studies
Manuscripts #302

Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives
Brown Library
Abilene Christian University
Abilene, TX 79699-9208

12 October 2022

About this collection

Title: Epifanius Stephan Bilak Recordings

Creator: Epifanius Stephan Bilak, (1926-2004)

Identifier/Call Number: Center for Restoration Studies Manuscripts #302

Physical Description: 3 linear foot (2 boxes)

Dates (Inclusive): 1974-1991

Dates (Bulk): 1990

Location: Center for Restoration Studies

Language of Materials: Ukranian

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of magnetic tape reels and small cassette tapes of Bilak's radio program "Messenger of Truth." The programs contain teaching of biblical texts in multiple languages, as noted in the inventory below. All of the recordings are under the name of Stephan Bilak. The tapes range from 1974 to 1991. The 116 tapes in this collection do not represent a complete run of the program.

Biographical Note: The following biographical note is excerpted from Find A Grave website and was read at Bilak's Switzerland funeral:

"Epi Stephan Bilak, 78, died on October 27, 2004, after a long battle with cancer. An evangelist, his radio program, "The Messenger of Truth," was heard throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for more than 30 years. Within three months of the fall of the Iron Curtain [Dec. 1989], Stephan and his wife, Reba, returned to Ukraine to investigate possibilities of planting a congregation in his beloved homeland. It wasn't long before a group of believers began meeting for worship. This group is now the Old Park Church of Christ in Ternopil, Ukraine, and is actively involved in evangelistic and benevolent outreach in western Ukraine. A number of individuals and congregations have helped support Brother Bilak and this mission work. Since 1974, this ministry has been under the oversight of the Elders of the Minter Lane Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. Stephan was born May 13, 1926, in Kosmeryn, Ukraine, and was the first child of Dimitri and Anna Derkach Bilak. At the age of 15, he was taken by the Nazis to forced labor camps in Germany. Following World War II, he studied at the Bible Institute in Nogent, near Paris, France. While there, he corresponded with and later met Martha Reba Denny. Stephan and Reba were married on March 26, 1954, in Nashville, Tennessee. They graduated from David Lipscomb University (then College) in 1957, did mission work in Canada and Plattsburg, New York; and in 1959, they began teaching at Michigan Christian College (now Rochester College). They were the parents of four children: Rebecca, Stephanie, Paul and James.

In 1969 the Bilak family moved from Rochester, Michigan, to Lausanne, Switzerland. A neutral country during the Cold War, Switzerland allowed for easier access to correspondence with radio listeners. In addition to his mission work with the Slavic nations, Stephan served as the preacher for the L'Eglise du Christ in Lausanne from 1972 to 1985. His wife, Reba, died February 13, 1999. On May 24, 2001, Stephan married Carolyn Halbert Pletz in San Antonio, Texas. Carolyn also traveled to Ukraine with Stephan, and encouraged the Christians in Ternopil.”¹

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Jack Boyd

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Accessioned by: Darren Hagood

Processor and Date of Processing: Mac Ice, 1 December 2014

Finding Aid Creator and Date: Mac Ice, Darren Hagood, 9 February 2015

Finding Aid Update: Mac Ice, Amanda Dietz, Ashlen Planes, 17 October 2022

¹ Epifanius “Epi” Stephan Bilak page, Find a Grave website,
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/55062862/epifanius-stephan-bilak>

Using this collection

Processing Status: Processed

Conditions Governing Access: Materials are housed in the Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas and are non-circulating. Access is available during normal business hours; prior appointments are preferred.

Conditions Governing Use: Materials are housed in the Abilene Christian University Special Collections and Archives, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas and are non-circulating. Access is available during normal business hours; prior appointments are preferred.

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Arrangement of Materials: Tapes are numbered. This collection does not contain, though, a complete run as there are missing items.

Separated Materials: None.

Subjects and Keywords

Ukraine

Inventory

Box 1

[First Folder] Finding Aid

Ukrainian Program “Messenger of Truth”

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Box 2

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1811, 1812 (Duplicated)
1813, 1814 (Duplicated)

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1817, 1818 (Duplicated)

1819, 1820 (Duplicated)

1821, 1822 (Duplicated)

1823, 1824 (Duplicated)

1825, 1826 (Duplicated)

1827, 1828 (Duplicated)

8 Unlabeled Cassette Tapes

37 Unlabeled 6-inch Magnetic Tape Reels