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PETER SAVARYN AND THE WESTERN CANADIAN BRANCH OF THE SHEVCHENKO SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

The purpose of the article is to research an important page of Peter Savaryn's (1926–2017) biography, which reveals his work within the Western Canadian branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. Despite the difficult circumstances of the Ukrainian scientific emigration life in Western Canada, he made extraordinary efforts to establish the fruitful work of the Shevchenko Scientific Society and publishing its issue the *Zakhidn'okanads'kyi zbirnyk*. **Scientific novelty.** A multifaceted biographical portrait of Peter Savaryn has been created in the context of Western Canadian branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society. The extraordinary person and one of the most influential figures of the post-war Ukrainian emigration in Canada is represented through the personal perception of the author of the article, who was a close friend of Peter Savaryn. The Shevchenko Scientific Society is a key concept, which reflects the main features of Peter Savaryn's character, first, his inexhaustible energy, human decency, devotion to the idea of preserving Ukrainians in the world, and boundless love for Ukraine. Accented relations of Peter Savaryn with representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora, members of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, contributors to the *Zakhidn'okanads'kyi zbirnyk* identify his position as a respectful and wise person with rich life experience and high moral ideals. **The research methodology** is based on the biographical criticism, focused on the historical-documentary analysis of the memoirs of Peter Savaryn and his epistolary legacy, which is stored in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (Edmonton, Canada). **Conclusion.** Based on the representative array of archival documents, numerous facts reflected in the correspondence and reflections

noted in memoirs, as well as the author's own observations during long work at the Western Canadian Branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, the significant and intense work of Peter Savaryn aimed at the development of Ukrainian science in the world and his profound influence on the activities of this organization in Western Canada is substantiated.

Key words: biography, Peter Savaryn, Western Canadian Branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, *Zakhidn'okanads'kyi zbirnyk*.

Peter Savaryn (1926-2017) was an extraordinary community leader, active in the city of Edmonton, the province of Alberta, Canada, and the world [1]. He made a major contribution to the victory of the Progressive Conservative party in the Alberta election of 1971 and was therefore able to place a number of Ukrainian-Canadians in cabinet positions. In the years immediately following he was one of the architects of Canadian multiculturalism. He played a major role in the founding of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta (1976). He served as chancellor of that university from 1982 to 1986. He also served as president of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians in 1983-88 [4, p. 513-516]. He was active in a multitude of organizations, including Plast, the Ukrainian Professional and Business Association, Friends of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, the Ukrainian National Home, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the newspaper *Ukrains'ki visti*, Gateway publishers, and the Brotherhood of Former Soldiers of the First Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army [3]. At the same time he maintained a law practice. He was a man of inexhaustible energy. The present article is limited to presenting his work within the Western Canadian Branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society [2].

The Branch was founded on 3 December 1955 ¹. It would be some years before Savaryn formally joined the organization, but, as he notes

¹ This is the date provided by Ю. Кисла, «Наука у вигнанні: з історії Західньоканадського осередку Наукового Товариства ім. Шевченка» [2, p. 24], based on a chronicle prepared by Michael Chomiak. This is also the date specified in: П. Саварин, «З собою взяли Україну: Від Тернопілля до Альберти» [4, p. 345]. Another source dated the founding to 5 December 1955: Звіт з діяльності НТШ західньої Канади за роки 1996-2000, Provincial Archives of Alberta (hereafter PAA), acc. 2005.0083/54. But this later source seems wrong also on the grounds that 3 December was a Saturday, a more likely date for a founding meeting, than 5 December, a Monday.

in his memoirs, he “was an ‘informal’ member from the beginning and knew almost all the members personally” [4, p. 348]. Indeed, this was the case. For example, he was close friends with Michael Chomiak, who served terms as secretary and president of the Branch in its first decades. In fact, the Chomiak family hosted Peter and Olga Savaryn each Julian-calendar Christmas (7 January), and Peter and Michael made a pact to take care of each other’s family in the event something happened to either one of them. Peter also had a close relationship with another of the stalwarts of the Branch’s first decades, the poet and professor Yar Slavutych. Savaryn met Slavutych as soon as the latter arrived in Edmonton in 1960. Both taught in the Ukrainian courses (*kursy ukrainoznavstva*), instructing children in the Ukrainian language and the history of Ukraine. Savaryn also worked closely with Slavutych for about fifty years to produce Ukrainian language texts for schools and university. After Savaryn formally joined the Society, he and Slavutych collaborated to produce volumes of the *Zakhidn’okanads’kyi zbirnyk* (hereafter *ZKZ*)², with Savaryn obtaining funding and rounding up authors and Slavutych editing [5]. Such connections between Savaryn and other members of the Society could be adduced as well, but these two examples probably suffice.

Before he officially became a member, Savaryn occasionally attended public lectures and events organized by the Society³. As he wrote to the board in early 1971, he attended whenever he had the time to⁴. Records show that the Society had been trying to coopt Savaryn since the early 1960s⁵. The Society listed him as a “supporter” in 1967 and 1968⁶. What finally induced him to accept membership was a written invitation from Chomiak and Wasyl Kunda dated 17 January 1970 [4, p. 348]. Savaryn filled out the membership form but kept in his pocket for some time. He wanted to deliver it personally because he wasn’t sure

² «Західньоканадський збірник», далі ЗКЗ.

³ “4.1. Lists of Meetings Attendees”, Ukrainian Folklife Archive, University of Alberta, Shevchenko Scientific Society, Box 1. In this partial list, it is recorded that Savaryn attended sessions on 27 September 1959, 15 November 1959, and 21 February 1962.

⁴ Letter of 17 February 1971, PAA, acc. 2000.1309/664.

⁵ PAA, acc. 1985. 191/272.

⁶ PAA, acc. 2000. 1309/664.

if he had filled out the form correctly. But then, on 17 February 1971, he posted a letter with his membership application enclosed ⁷. Already in 1972 he was elected to the board of the Branch, and as long as the Branch functioned he remained on the board, resigning only in 2014 at the age of eight-eight ⁸. He served as vice-president of the Branch from 1978 to 1982 and as acting president while the president, Bohdan Medwidsky, was away from 1 July 1980 until May 1981. During the time of his vice- and acting presidency, Savaryn held meetings of the Branch at his law office. In 1982 he went back to serving as a member at large of the Branch board ⁹. Savaryn also served as president from the mid-1990s until 2014.

Soon after joining the society and the board, Savaryn began working with Slavutych on the project of producing the irregular periodical *ZKZ*. Savaryn served as coordinator of the first seven volumes, which were published from 1973 to 2014. Volume 8, which appeared in 2020, a year after his passing, was dedicated to his memory. Savaryn contributed articles, mostly recording events in which he himself had been actively involved, to the first seven volumes (a list of his articles appears in the Appendix). Seven hundred and fifty copies were printed of volumes 3 and 4 ¹⁰, and probably the other volumes that Savaryn coordinated appeared with similar print runs.

The activities of the Branch sputtered out about 1985, no longer exhibiting signs of life. Savaryn ascribed this hiatus in the Branch's existence to several factors. One was that the postwar migrants who had founded it were declining in health and number. In 1997 he estimated that only fifteen of the original members were still alive, including members who lived outside of Edmonton. He also blamed the "inactivity" of the younger generation that had taken over the board of the Branch in the early 1980s; the president at that time was a professor in the Slavic department at the University of Alberta, Peter Rolland. A third, and perhaps the most important, factor was that the talks and seminars that had been held by the Branch were now supplanted by the

⁷ Letter of 17 February 1971. PAA, acc. 2000. 1309/664.

⁸ PAA, acc. 1985. 191/276.

⁹ PAA, acc. 1985. 191/275-76, 281. PAA, acc. 2000. 1309/658.

¹⁰ Letter of Peter Savaryn to Omeljan Pritsak, 28 December 2001. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/54.

talks and seminars organized by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), founded in 1976 ¹¹ [4, p. 348].

The Branch began to revive in the mid-1990s ¹². The head of the Shevchenko Scientific Society of Canada, Wolodymyr Mackiw, several times had asked Savaryn to regenerate what had once been a very active Branch of the all-Canadian organization ¹³. Savaryn was lured back to the Society because he hoped to record more of the history of his generation's accomplishments in Canada in further volumes of *ZKZ*.

On 30 May 1997 Savaryn sent out a circular letter to “members and potential members” of the Society in Alberta. He said that he didn't know if he would be able to revive the Branch, but that it was worth trying. He was particularly interested in producing volume 3 of *ZKZ*:

In Edmonton certain things were accomplished which are worthy, so to say, to REGISTER for history, for example, how CIUS was organized, the Canadian Foundation for Ukrainian Studies, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, bilingual schooling, Verkhovyna [St. Josaphat's Senior Citizens Residence], St. Michael's Long Term Care Center, the Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography, the Nova Program, the Ukrainian Resource and Development Center at Grant MacEwan, and so forth. Dr. Mackiw, of course, would like us to renew the Branch, and especially to draw in younger members (and we have a lot of candidates who have an education! and qualifications!), but again, what I would like is to publish a third *ZKZ* and leave people a free choice as to membership in the Shevchenko Scientific Society. As they wish, they can sign up or not. The main thing is whether they will WRITE about what they know for the *ZKZ*.

And so, since the start of this year, meeting with various individuals, I have been asking them: could you write something, e.g., about how the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village was created, or the Huculak Chair, etc. And, miraculously, so far, I have recruited fifteen individuals who are “ready”. They would have to finish writing by the end of the year,

¹¹ Peter Savaryn, circular letter to “members and potential members” of the Edmonton Branch, 30 May 1997, PAA, acc. 2005.0083/14.

¹² Savaryn paid his membership dues to the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Canada already in 1995. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/17.

¹³ Звіт з діяльності НТШ західньої Канади за роки 1996–2000. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/54.

Prof. Slavutych has agreed to edit the volume without payment, the Ukrainian Commemorative Society ¹⁴ and the Shevchenko Foundation might perhaps provide some funding, and the *Zbirnyk* would come out. Because there is no such thing as “unwritten history,” and the people, We, are getting old, and who in that case will be writing? Of course, I still have in mind other individuals to whom I hope to turn, but you, ladies and gentlemen to whom I address this letter, certainly know others, and also – ask around. If fifteen authors write twenty pages, we’ll have three hundred...

But all I want for the present is that you have talked to me and more or less agreed to “write something,” and have already BEGUN to collect materials and also BEGUN TO WRITE. Because time is passing like crazy, and if a person does not plan, for example, to write two or three pages a week, then nothing will come out of mere good will. A “project” has first to be “carried in the head” for a while, my friend Dr. [Ivan] Yarema once told me, so that something would “come out”, and then “get to work”. Therefore my request to you: start getting to work... And please look for others who have something to write... ¹⁵

The progress of the following volumes, and the work involved, is recorded in detail in other correspondence. Writing to Omeljan Pritsak, the director of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, at the end of December 2001, he complained about the difficulty of finding authors: “It would not be difficult to find money to publish [a fifth volume], but it’s too much trouble to find authors. Today people have become accustomed to work only, I might say, ‘for money,’ and not gratis as our generation worked”¹⁶. In a letter to the philologist Wolodymyr Zyla, from June 2001, he wrote at length about the situation with ZKZ:

...The postwar immigrants who lived *essentially* for Ukraine are almost gone. Their descendants, their children and grandchildren, behave now quite differently and live for other things... And the “old immigrants” do not read Ukrainian, so there’s no reason to turn to them.

¹⁴ In Ukrainian: Товариство збереження української культури.

¹⁵ Savaryn, circular letter.

¹⁶ Letter of Peter Savaryn to Omeljan Pritsak, 28 December 2001. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/54.

You mention the launch of the volume, saying there must have been “many attendees,” you believe that we “were able to sell a significant number of copies”. Yes, the launch was nice, but you guessed wrong on everything else. There were about fifty-five people in attendance, sixteen of whom were authors. So really not a lot of people. And we sent out over a hundred invitations just by post and about the same number were distributed in person. But who nowadays is interested in a *Ukrainian* book? Where can we find such people? We sold altogether twenty copies. The contributors received authors’ copies, and few of them even bought an additional copy. It’s another matter that since then Olga and I have personally sold fifty copies. And we will keep on slowly selling them, when there’s an “opportunity,” to those who are interested in such matters.

But we knew what to expect, because two years ago we published volume 3: how many would come to the launch, how many copies we’d sell, how many we would give out for free, and in particular – how many we would send to Ukraine, to various libraries, museums, universities, and the like. We gave away something like four hundred copies, mostly to Ukraine, and we got the funds to send them by selling about two hundred copies, and we still have about one hundred in our garage ¹⁷. Slavutych didn’t even try to sell any, with the excuse that “he knows nobody,” or “I don’t know how,” so that only Olga and I were selling the volumes. And this is not easy, nor pleasant. You would not believe how people invented excuses so as not to give \$15.00 or \$20.00! But we only laugh heartily, because we don’t need the money at all. We paid in full for the third volume (\$12,000) and for the fourth (almost \$16,000). My desire was simply to “record in writing,” for “history,” what our postwar immigration in Alberta did for the Ukrainian cause. And that is all. And that’s the only reason I organized 90 % of the authors as well as all the funding ¹⁸.

In a letter to Alexander Malycky two years earlier, as he was still planning volume 4, Savaryn wrote: “It was not hard to get the money,

¹⁷ The Savaryns also stored copies of another publication of the Branch, Michael Chomiak’s monograph on the artist Julian Bucmaniuk (1982). PAA, acc. 2000. 1309/658.

¹⁸ Letter to Wolodymyr Zyla, 28 June 2001. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/54.

nor authors, but it was hard to get the materials on time”¹⁹. It should be noted that “not hard to get the money” referred to his ability to use his connections in the government and Ukrainian community to obtain publication grants; however, his papers preserved at the Provincial Archives of Alberta show that he put a great deal of effort into filling in grant applications and figuring out budgets. In addition to all the tasks around ZKZ mentioned in the letters above, Savaryn also personally organized the printing of the volumes.

As long as the single focus of the revised Western Canadian Branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society was ZKZ, the board of the Branch was only a skeleton crew. Savaryn figured as president and secretary. Medwidsky served as vice-president and treasurer, replacing Demitrius Todosijczuk whose eyesight was failing²⁰. It was not until 2005 that the Branch again began to hold formal meetings.

I was elected treasurer in 2005, replacing Medwidsky [1, p. 171]. A few years later, in 2008, I suggested reviving the talks and seminars that the Branch had held during its first phase of existence. Savaryn was all in favor. We revived the talks, and also film screenings, because there was at that time no venue for scholarly discourse in the Ukrainian language, and our events would be in that language. In 2008 there were three groups who could benefit from the renewed program: surviving members of the postwar migration whose native language was Ukrainian, “professional Ukrainians” like myself who had developed a good knowledge of the language, and a new crop of university graduate students who had come to the University of Alberta from Ukraine since independence. Generally, these events, which were usually held in the *Plast domivka* in Edmonton, later at the university, and eventually online, attracted several dozen attendees.

But a problem arose. In 2010 President Yushchenko posthumously made Stepan Bandera a Hero of Ukraine and the Canadian Ukrainian Congress asked the Canadian government to provide veterans’ benefits to veterans of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). I was quite vocal in censuring these initiatives, pointing to the role of OUN-UPA in the Holocaust, which

¹⁹ Letter to Alexander Malucky. 21 July 1999. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/18.

²⁰ Звіт з діяльності НТШ західньої Канади за роки 1996-2000. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/54. PAA, acc. 2005. 0083/14.

I had been researching for some years. I also criticized Yushchenko's politics around the famine of 1932-33. The outcry against me in the Ukrainian community was vociferous and led to a campaign to have me removed from CIUS (successful) and fired from the University of Alberta (unsuccessful, since I formally retired in 2014). However, I was a very visible personage in the Edmonton Branch of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, which soon began to feel the heat.

Savaryn was a loyal friend (loyalty was one of his many sterling attributes). He wrote to the art historian Daria Darewych, the president of the Shevchenko Scientific Society of Canada, on 31 March 2010: "The discussion on the theme of the Ukrainian Holodomor-genocide, Bandera and Shukhevych as heroes, and the participation of OUN (Bandera) in pogroms against Jews and Poles continues among scholars, but our members have decided not to get involved in it. This is a matter chiefly for historians"²¹.

However, as the campaign against me intensified, Savaryn began to worry about damage to the reputation of our Branch, even though I had studiously avoided organizing talks on matters of controversy.

On 3 September 2013 I informed Savaryn of my plans for the fall semester of talks and films. I was going to have Oksana Kis from Lviv speak on the experience of women during the Holodomor and show the film "Vavilon XX", which had an account of the experience of Ukrainian villages during collectivization. I had a master's student who could introduce the film, but he would have to do so in English. I asked Savaryn if we could make an exception to our Ukrainian-language-only rule on this occasion. Here is what he wrote back on that same day:

I think we can, because there are no rules without exceptions, but make sure that the films and talks are, so to say, national-"Ukrainian," from the Canadian point of view, and not "controversial" or, God forbid! propagandistic or "pro-Russian". You know that some of "your" (they say) students ²² ruin your reputation and that of our community, and I don't want the Society to get in trouble for it.

²¹ PAA, acc. 2014. 0451/92.

²² The reference is to Grzegorz Rossoliński Liebe, who studied with me in Alberta for one year, and Per Anders Rudling, who wrote a dissertation on Belarusian nationalism under the supervision of David Marples.

I replied as follows, on 4 September:

I was sorry to read your letter. I do not want to work for a putative scholarly institution that does not allow for full academic freedom and instead has some kind of ideological censorship. Also, I don't want to work in an atmosphere of suspicion, because all the slanders against me have gotten and continue to get on my nerves.

Already last fall, when we had the annual general meeting of our Edmonton Society, I proposed to you that you find a new treasurer from among the younger cadres. At the next general meeting it is obligatory to find someone to take my place.

I have organized talks and also films with introductory presentations until the middle of January 2014. I am waiting for a few responses and have not continued correspondence in this matter after reading your letter. I am prepared to continue to conduct the organization and advertisement of the talks until the middle of January, or you can take over this task now, check what I have done, add and remove presenters, pass on the task to someone else, as you wish.

He wrote back that same evening:

Dear Ivas, Friend, Professor. All kinds of “nationalists” (in the bad sense of the word, since I am also a nationalist but a nationalist of a different order), even professors, have been after me, Why are you friends with Himka, why doesn't the Shevchenko Scientific Society throw him out, etc., but I tell them “honorable men may honorably disagree,” because I do not see anything dishonorable about you; and like you, I believe in academic freedom. I had difficulties with these sorts back when I was president of the World Congress of Free Ukrainians. So calm down, I trust you, but please do what is within your power to not give them pretexts to fight against us. As they say, “Comb the devil rarely”²³, “Don't move the [shit and it won't stink]”, because this annoys me was much as it does you, and that's why I wrote to you that letter, in that sense. Forgive me. This is my last term as head of the Branch, and I want to finish it together with you, just as we began, as friends! Moreover, if you left, they would

²³ In the original: «Чеши дідька зрідка».

be ready to think that they were right and that I think like they do, and that I “pushed you out,” and this is not the case. Therefore, let’s organize the talks, as if nothing had happened between us, okay? ²⁴

I agreed to stay on, and we never referred to this brief falling out again.

As Savaryn noted in his letter of 4 September 2013, he was ready to retire as president of our Branch. He was replaced by the linguist Alla Nedashkivska. The transition was very smooth. Professor Nedashkivska recently recalled: “Peter approached me, invited me to his house, showed me all of his archives related to Oseredok [the Branch]. He pretty much told me the history of Oseredok etc. I was very nervous about this opportunity and felt a great amount of responsibility that he is entrusting in me. He promised to mentor and be on my side; support me – and this is what he did; his guidance was unforgettable. I kept learning from his leadership while I had a chance!”²⁵

Peter and Olga Savaryn continued to attend the talks organized by the Branch until Olga’s health drastically declined and Peter himself passed away.

The best encapsulation of Savaryn’s activities was written by himself in 1998: “I have no doubt that the preservation of Ukrainianness in the world depends on Ukrainians alone, on their ‘will to life’, and our Branch, I think, proved this will to life by its successes...” [4, p. 350].

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²⁴ Email correspondence between John-Paul Himka and Peter Savaryn, 3-4 September 2013.

²⁵ Email letter from Alla Nedashkivska to John-Paul Himka, 21 July 2023.

5. Саварин П. Славутич — слава Едмонтону і української діаспори // Західноканадський збірник. Едмонтон ; Острог, 2012. Т. XLV. Вип. 6. С. 15–21.

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APPENDIX

Peter Savaryn's Contributions to «Західноканадський збірник»

(All issues of ZKZ (ЗКЗ) are available online at: <https://era.library.ualberta.ca/communities/f4f394ae-51c2-4321-8de5-89f3b00b72fc/collections/6bf8ec7d-3e7c-4157-a471-6820dd9f8526>)

ЗКЗ-1 (1973)

1. Українська мова в провінційних школах Альберти. С. 71–128.
2. Бібліографія важливіших статей. С. 205–206.

ЗКЗ-2 (1975)

3. Двомовні садочки та українсько-англійські школи в Едмонтоні. С. 280–286.
4. Клуб українських професіоналістів і підприємців в Едмонтоні 1960–1975. С. 287–311.

ЗКЗ-3 (1999)

5. Діяльність Осередку НТШ у Західній Канаді (1955–1985). С. 311–316.
6. Спогади учасника: Політика, багатокультурність, Канадський інститут українознавства, абеткова Енциклопедія України-2. С. 317–382.

ЗКЗ-4 (2000)

7. 20-річчя Альбертського товариства збереження української культури. С. 180–194.
8. Едмонтонські пластуни в проводі різних організацій і акцій. С. 289–296.
9. Українці в Альбертському університеті. С. 407–445.

ЗКЗ-5 (2008)

10. Канадська фундація українських студій (Нотатки до історії). С. 47–149.
11. Катедральна аудиторія і «Верховина» — дім св. Йосафата для старших громадян (Нотатки до історії). С. 150–163.
12. Слово на порозі нового 25-річчя Пласту в діяспорі У.Н.О., 15.11.1970, 3:00 год. С. 164–169.
13. Чи можливе зближення між українцями католиками і православними? (Кілька думок дискусійних). С. 223–238.

ЗКЗ-6 (2012)

14. Славутич — слава Едмонтону і української діяспори. С. 15–21.

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Петро Саварин і Західноканадське відділення Наукового товариства імені Шевченка.

Метою статті стало дослідження важливої сторінки біографії Петра Саварина (1926–2017), яка розкриває його участь у роботі Західноканадського відділення Наукового товариства імені Шевченка. Відтворено багатогранний біографічний портрет Петра Саварина, який, попри складні обставини наукового еміграційного життя українства в західній Канаді, докладав надзвичайних зусиль для налагодження плідної роботи НТШ та публікації його друкованого органу — «Західноканадського збірника». **Наукова новизна.** Непересічна постать одного з найвпливовіших діячів післявоєнної української еміграції в Канаді репрезентована крізь призму особистого сприйняття автора статті, який був близьким другом Петра Саварина. НТШ у дослідженні — ключовий концепт, який

віддзеркалює основні риси характеру Петра Саварина, перш за все його невичерпну енергію, людську порядність, відданість ідеї збереження українства у світі та безмежну любов до України. Стосунки Петра Саварина з представниками української діаспори, членами НТШ, дописувачами «Західноканадського збірника» ідентифікують його позицію авторитетної та мудрої людини з багатим життєвим досвідом та високими моральними рисами. **Методологія** дослідження базується на засадах біографічної критики, орієнтованої на історико-документальну аналітику спогадів Петра Саварина та його епістолярної спадщини, яка зберігається у фондах Провінційного Архіву Альберти (Едмонтон, Канада) (Provincial Archives of Alberta). **Висновки.** На підставі багатого масиву архівних документів, численних фактів, відображених у листуванні та занотованих у спогадах, а також власних спостережень автора статті у процесі тривалої роботи в НТШ обґрунтовано значущий вплив Петра Саварина на діяльність цієї організації в Західній Канаді, його складну й напружену роботу, спрямовану на розвиток української науки у світі.

Ключові слова: біографія, Петро Саварин, Західноканадське відділення Наукового товариства імені Шевченка, українська діаспора в Канаді, «Західноканадський збірник».