

COLLECTING THINGS IN THE TAMBOV REGION (a Cultural and Ethnographic Aspect)

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Abstract: In the article the collections of Tambov philanthropists are assessed from the point of view of the social and cultural approach, conclusions are made concerning the fact that collections of monuments of the old times attract users as artefacts, giving them some valuable information about the past.

Collecting things is widespread in Russia. A collection is a systematized collecting of homogenous objects or single monuments of history, culture, art, which can be of no value at all if they are separated but if combined they have all the features of a historical and cultural object, which is of a scientific, artistic, literary or other interest. There were famous state and public figures, industrialists, scientists, writers (A.A. Bahrushin, N.P. Rumyantsev, P.M. and S.M. Tretyakov and others) among collectors as well as thousands of bibliophiles, ethnographers, representatives of the native country culture [8]. Thus a prominent place in the history of the native country collecting of things belongs to Pavel Petrovich Svinin (1787–1839) – a journalist, a writer, an editor, a historian and a geographer, a traveler and an artist, a collector and a philanthropist. His idea of having a private collection was gradually materialized in “The Russian museum of Pavel Svinin”. Pursuing educational and charitable aims Svinin made his collection and a private museum accessible for the public, they became sights of Saint Petersburg [3].

It is known that a man needs artefacts and nothing can replace an original thing yet, that is why collections of monuments of the old time as important elements of the ethnographic information resource attract users who get reliable information about events, processes of the past studying them. Collections of the objects of the past reflect general cultural and professional interests, business contacts, reveal the creative laboratory of a collector. Many largest private specialized collections have become the basis of libraries, archives, museum expositions.

A big role in the history of the native country collecting of things is played by Tambov ethnographers, educators and public figures, who often gave their collections to public institutions, local repositories of artistic valuable things. These facts were mentioned in reference year books “Memorable books of the Tambov province”, the public learned the surnames of patrons of the arts from the press. Thanks to the activity

of collectors-philanthropists our contemporaries called Tambov “one of the outstanding towns” [5, p. 17]. The educated part of the society respected the noblemen Chicherins, Narishkins, Lanskys, Boratinskys, the merchants Tolmachyovs, Nosovs, Anosovs, Ashurkovs, who contributed large sums to charity and the purchase of objects from collections.

The information about some collectors and their collections is often given in the Soviet ethnographic literature, however detailed information about them was not published – famous collectors-philanthropists belonged to the rich and consequently their role in collecting cultural valuable things and often libraries and museums was diminished. The aim of this article is to consider those collections which were made in the Tambov region not only from the historical point of view but also from a cultural and ethnographic one.

Collecting things in Russia is closely connected with the notion “A cultural nest”, meaning a cultural centre of a particular territory, a place, where outstanding people lived. In the Tambov region along with Chicherin’s Karaul, Rahmaninov’s Ivanovka, “a cultural nest” was the village Lyubichi of the Kirsanov province, the prosperity of which is connected with Nickolay Ivanovich Krivtsov (1791–1843) – a state and public figure, a collector. He settled down here, in his wife’s estate, making it one of the centres of the cultural life of the Tambov, Penza and Saratov provinces [2].

N.I. Krivtsov was born in the Orlov province. He got a primary education at home, in September 1804 S.N. Turgenev, a writer I.S. Turgenev’s father, who was the Krivtsov’s relative, took Nickolay to Petersburg and made him an official cadet of the Guards of the chasseur regiment... Lieutenant colonel Krovtsov took part in the Patriotic War of 1812, was wounded near Borodino, was in captivity. The Frenchmen cured him together with their officers in the Moscow hospital. When Napoleon, having left the wounded, escaped from the city, Krivtsov saved the Frenchmen from a desperate crowd of Muscovites, what was a reason of being honoured by the king of France. Krivtsov had many awards for the courage in battles. In 1813 in one of the battles Krivtsov lost his leg. Nickolay Ivanovich lived in Europe for several years: he was cured, he educated himself, attended lectures in universities of France and Germany, and travelled. He got acquainted with famous writers, scientists and thinkers, who had a high opinion about a clever, handsome, athletically built Russian nobleman.

At the beginning of 1817 Krivtsov returned to the Motherland. A subtle artistic taste, original thoughts gave him an access to literary salons of Moscow and Petersburg. He was on friendly terms with Karamzin, Vyazemsky, Zhukovsky, the Turgenevs brothers, got acquainted with Pushkin and became his friend. The same year Krivtsov began to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1818 he worked in the Russian Embassy to London. On his return from England Nickolay Ivanovich was a governor of Tula, Voronezh, Nizhny Novgorod. Since 1818 he was married to the sister of the Decembrists Vadkovskys – Catherine Phydorovna. In 1827 he retired and settled down in Lyubichi with his family.

Krivtsov made the village an ideal one. The landlord built a school for peasants’ children, he taught young men stock-breeding and reclamation. His house was always hospitable. Nickolay Ivanovich died in this estate.

N.I. Krivtsov collected the richest library (more than five thousand books) in Russian, German, English and French. It included large volumes with autographs of Pushkin, Vyazemsky, Delwig, Karamzin, Batyushkov, Baratinsky and others. In 1895 Krivtsov’s daughter, Sophia Nickolaevna Batyushkova (the wife of a poet K.I. Batyushkov’s brother), implementing the father’s will gave this library to Kirsanov. She imposed one condition on the provincial authorities – to organize a public library-reading room for town dwellers and name it after Krivtsov. The condition was accepted. On the 2nd of January 1897 Kirsanov’s leader of the nobility S.S. Bashmakov organized

an opening ceremony of the public library-reading room named after N.I. Krivtsov attached to the building of the provincial administration. A library committee was established; among its members there was B.N. Chicherin, who had known N.I. Krivtsov since they were young men; the life guardian of the library was S.N. Batyushkova. The book fund of the library was systematized into 11 departments in correspondence with the theme of a literary work. Along with belles-lettres a significant part of the library was made up of books concerning social and natural sciences. Only the department "The God's word and history of the church" turned out to be very small; the founder of the library was an atheist and even on his tomb, made when he was alive, Krivtsov wrote: "I don't have a faith and I am not scared".

The library named after N.I. Krivtsov had a great influence on the cultural life of the region, the increase of a number of readers proved its popularity: from 1897 to 1913 their number increased by six times and reached the figure which was practically the number of the population of Kirsanov. The library was visited by many famous people in particular by a Russian poet A.M. Zhemchuzhnikov, who lived at his daughter's in the village Ilinka of the Kirsanov province in summer.

Unfortunately Krivtsov's collection was lost at the Soviet period.

A great role in the history of collecting things and philanthropy was played by a native of the Tambov province Alexey Vladimirovich Vyisheslavtzev (1831–1888) – a prominent figure of culture, an art critic, a writer and a traveler. His collection of books on the history of Byzantine, Russian, Italian, French, German, Dutch art, catalogues of museums and galleries of the world, periodicals and reproductions of pictures formed the basis of the artistic department of A Special library, which was opened in the cultural and educational centre of the Association arranging public reading of books in Tambov and the Tambov province. A person who collected a large art library and the collection of materials on art, who bequeathed them to the town, was a doctor by his profession, though in respected publications he was mentioned first of all as a traveler; he became known in our history as a specialist in the art of Renaissance Italy [1; 11, p. 587].

The Vyisheslavtzevs were of the old noble origin. Alexey was born in his grandfather's estate in the village Karaul of the Kirsanov province. Later the family moved to the village Volhonshchino of the Tambov province. The estate was a cultural centre: the Vyisheslavtzevs respected art; children's aesthetical tastes and talents were formed in the environment of beauty, kindness and love; there were two boys and three girls and they could read and write as well as to draw pictures since they were four. In 1840 after their mother's death the sons began studying at Moscow Institute of noble men – one of the best educational institutions of Russia, where such famous people as Zhukovsky, Odoevsky, Lermontov and others studied. Alexey like many talented people did not have a stable success while studying: he was fond of Russian and Mathematics and ignored other subjects, he read a lot of books, wrote poems, visited galleries and exhibitions. He was going to enter the faculty of Physics and Mathematics of Moscow University but due to the limited number of people who could be enrolled in this faculty in 1848 he became a student-medical man.

A future art critic and a traveler got a profound humanitarian training at the university. However he was destined to do other things. Having graduated the university in 1854 he turned out to be in the centre of the Crimean war – in Sevastopol where he was a doctor of Poltava infantry regiment. Horrors of the war, courage and heroism of its defenders were described by Vyisheslavtzev in his letters to home, later they were published in the journals "Contemporary" and "Russian Bulletin" ("The sixth of June in Sevastopol", "The 30th of August in Sevastopol", "Sevastopol during the last months of the siege" and others). The publications are very close to L.N. Tolstoy's "Sevastopol stories".

After the end of the war and a short meeting with relatives Vyisheslavl'tzev made up his mind to let his child's dream about travels come true – to travel round the world. Soon he became a doctor on the clipper "Plastun", which set out onto a three-year voyage as a part of the squadron in summer 1857. Letters to relatives, travel notes and sketches formed the basis of the book (it was published twice) later, which made Vyisheslavl'tzev famous; he was even compared with I.A. Goncharov, the author of travel notes «Frigate "Pallada"». Having returned from the voyage and having found an ill father who became blind after the unsuccessful operation and who lived with his younger sister Anna in Petersburg, he returned with them to the Tambov estate in April 1861. Being appointed a peace mediator of the Tambov province Vyisheslavl'tzev became interested in jurisprudence. Later he worked in Petersburg, Chernigov, Odessa for more than ten years, in 1870-1874 he lived in Warsaw. He did not have his own family. Having retired due to his health he lived abroad for a long time, where he studied art, especially painting. Travelling in Europe Alexey Vladimirovich bought engravings, pictures, pieces of sculpture, for example he purchased a marble relief of Donatello "Madonna with a baby". All this was included into the collection which was given as a present to Tambov together with the library (they were given by his sister Anna Vladimirovna). The traveler showed a great interest in Italy, its art of the Renaissance. The result of findings were books "Between temples and ruins" (M., 1880), «Giotto and giottists» (St. Petersburg, 1881), «History of art in Italy» (St. Petersburg, 1883) and others. At the end of his life Vyisheslavl'tzev spent winters in Petersburg, where he met writers and artists, collected materials on art, bought new books, and in spring went to his parents' house.

On the 21st of April, 1888 A.V. Vyisheslavl'tzev died and was buried in the necropolis of the Kazan monastery in Tambov. Dwellers of Tambov are grateful to Alexey Vladimirovich not only for his wonderful library and the collection of pieces of art. He also founded a church attached to Elizabeth's asylum, which was built due to the financial help of the elder brother – Lev Vladimirovich, a large Tambov philanthropist and educator, who was Head of the provincial administration for twenty years.

At the present moment the collection of A.V. Vyisheslavl'tzev is housed in the funds of Tambov scientific library named after A.S. Pushkin, the regional ethnographic museum and the regional picture gallery.

The work of great importance on collecting things was done by members of provincial scientific archival commissions. One of the most active commissions, Tambov commission, headed by Ivan Ivanovich Dubasov (1843–1913) concentrated first of all on the collection of documentary monuments. A significant role in this was played by Pyotr Ivanovich Piskaryov (1821–1904).

P.I. Piskaryov was born in the village Blagodot of the Ephremovsky district in the Tula province. He was engaged in pedagogical activity in many towns including a number of districts of the Tambov province. Having retired in 1877 he settled down in Tambov, where he devoted himself to ethnographic activity, began to search and work with archival documents. Together with colleagues Piskaryov worked out and described documents of Shazky archives of the provincial chancellery, formed the funds of a number of local and provincial archives, established Tambov historical archives, published valuable documents on the history of the south of the Russian state in XVII–XVIII centuries. The scientific work on the history of the Tambov region is impossible without Piskaryov's works, documents of the archives established by him. Pyotr Ivanovich deserved a right to be considered the first Tambov archivist.

Some cases are known when ethnographers literally saved monuments of history and culture from inevitable destruction. Thus, in January 1919 in Morshansk a historical and archeological museum was opened, its founder was Pyotr Petrovich Ivanov (1886–1942), who made it his duty to collect valuable things from noblemen's estates looted

by peasants. He sent an instruction on the collection of objects of art and of the old time, about 600 exhibits of the museum catalogue, to provincial schools. Ivanov gave the museum his own collection of archeological monuments which is still the main fund of the museum. According to scientists it is the only collection of archeological materials due to its size, number of objects and scientific reliable material on the history of the Mordvinians of VIII–XI centuries; the system of conservation and keeping of this collection is an example for many museums. In 1993 the museum got a status of a historical and artistic museum and it was defined as a scientific and methodical centre of museums of Russia for large work on the effective use of the historical and cultural heritage of the Tambov region [7, p. 63–64, 73].

So collections turned out to be in state repositories in different ways: they were given to towns as presents by heirs; they turned out to be in libraries and museums after nationalization by the Soviet authorities in noblemen's estates.

Interesting collections of books appeared in local museums at that period. Unfortunately, many of them are not available, because expositions cannot reflect the completeness of a collection, and museums simply do not have any means to publish catalogues. Book collections of provincial museums can give great opportunities for a serious research of the history of the material and spiritual culture of any region. For example, the book fund of the House-museum of G.V. Chicherin in Tambov has a significant collection – more than two thousand books. The fund is divided into sections: a memorial one (books from the collection of the Chicherins), a main one (books characterizing the epoch of the Chicherins) and an additional scientific one (modern publications). The greatest part of the collection is presented by books of XIX – the beginning of XX centuries, many of them were published abroad. There are G.V. Chicherin's works, published in his lifetime (From the history of the International of the youth: essays. – M., 1925 and others) and modern publications. The study of the museum book collection gives information not only about the family of the Chicherins, G.V. Chicherin's life and activity, but also about the development of book publishing in Russia. Notes in books are also valuable. Collection objects are attributed, actively studied, but many of them, for example, ancient manuscripts in Latin have not been studied yet [4].

The activity of scientific and information institutions, which perform coordinating functions in this work, has a great importance for keeping and studying collections as ethnographic resources. Today federal libraries of Russia have about eight million rare publications. Valuable things of the past are kept in provincial museums, archives, libraries, the problem of their scientific use is actual as never before, that is why the main function of an information institution, no matter how its activity is evaluated by specialists - in the traditional way or as an information centre, is still very important: to collect, to keep and to provide users with the information. The preservation of science, the availability of new knowledge for the public, the quality of the cultural and ethnographic education depend on its operative work.

An ethnographer considers a book as a special monument of history and culture, the peculiarity of which is identified by the unity of the published work and the way of its material realization. While studying books one can come across interesting findings, for example, autographs, dedicatory inscriptions of famous people, owners of book marks, which allow one to find out the belonging to this or that person, to track down ethnographic connections, friendly relationships of the owner with his Russian or foreign contemporaries.

Book monuments of the local importance recreate the history of book publishing, reflect the events of spiritual culture and its historic features in a definite place (region). An ethnographic book is one of the earliest kinds of the documentary result of settling a region and a channel of sharing experience with other generations. It is an instrument of

the transformational influence on the region, reflecting the level of studying nature, economy, population of the region; it forms a spiritual and moral character of regional people. A book of the local publishing house is an interesting object for being collected and studied as a model of printing production from the point of view of formal and contents indicators. Private book collections also have one more significant function for the native country history and culture: they keep publications which sometimes disappear from libraries; so rare books fill up the publishing repertoire of last centuries, which reflects a real range of the Russian publishing activity.

A good example of it are library documents from the fund of the sector of rare books and publications printed a long time ago of the Tambov regional educational scientific library, where famous collections of a statistician Leonid Alexandrovich Voeykov (1818–1885) are kept as well as collections of a historian and a bibliographer Dmitry Vasilevich Polenov (1806–1878), a philosopher and a public figure Boris Nickolaevich Chicherin (1828–1904) and of other collectors. A finding for ethnographers was a book “Travel notes about twenty provinces in Russia” by M. Zhdanov. Works of G.M. Holodny and other materials give ideas about the history of the Tambov gymnasium, which was established on the base of the Tambov people’s institution founded by G.R. Derzhavin in 1786. A valuable manual for ethnographers is “Essays about the history of the Tambov region” by I.I. Dubasov. Interesting information about the cultural life of the old Tambov is given in the reports of the Tambov Association arranging public reading of books. Works of P.N. Chermensky are important while studying the history and culture of the Tambov region. Employees of the Tambov regional educational scientific library have done a large research to find out books, brochures, journals, leaflets from G.R. Derzhavin’s private library – about 400 publications from his private library are kept in the sector of rare books. The club of booklovers attached to the library has published handbooks of their meetings which contain a concise material about the most valuable Tambov publications for several years. Catalogues of Narishkin’s Special library which are still considered to be reference books concerning the fund of old books are of a great importance for studying the history and culture of the Tambov region [6].

Public ethnographic organizations and collectors-ethnographers have collections of monuments of history, culture, art, valuable for science. Thus, in the archives of the public association of researchers of regional history and culture “Tambov ethnographic centre” attached to the Tambov regional department of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences collections of photo documents, postcards and philatelists’ materials have been collected for many years thanks to donations. Scientists and writers, journalists and teachers, postgraduates and students become donators. A good example of this is the formation of the ethnographic library (collections) [10].

Many ethnographers especially beginners come across difficulties connected with collecting things. Taking into consideration the fact that practically every collection as a result of the corresponding activity of its owner will be of a great scientific, educational interest, it is necessary to teach ethnographers methods of organizing collections. The Tambov ethnographic centre has developed methods of formation of a private archive (collection), what is paid much attention to while teaching students Ethnography [9].

So, to sum up, collections in local information institutions and public associations, if they are fully studied and used in the scientific and educational sphere, can give the richest material for the cultural and ethnographic research concerning many aspects. It is important to make findings in the sphere of collecting things be analyzed first of all as separate objects and then as a combination of monuments of history, culture, art; it does not mean relations studied in some historical section, but functions of monuments which refer to different periods of time within a qualitatively new education, often connected with a definite territory, region.

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Коллекционирование в Тамбовском крае (культуролого-краеведческий аспект)

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Ключевые слова и фразы: библиотека им. Н.И. Кривцова; коллекционирование; собрание А.В. Вышеславцева; тамбовские краеведы-собиратели; Тамбовская губернская ученая архивная комиссия; Тамбовский центр краеведения.

Аннотация: Рассмотрены и оценены с точки зрения социального подхода коллекции тамбовских благотворителей. Сделаны выводы о том, как артефакты собрания памятников старины привлекают пользователей, сообщая им ценные сведения о прошлом.

Sammeln in der Region Tambow (der kulturologie-heimatkundliche Aspekt)

Zusammenfassung: Im Artikel werden die Sammlungen von Tambower Philanthropen zum ersten Mal vom Standpunkt des sozialkulturellen Herangehens eingeschätzt. Es sind die Konsequenzen gezogen, dass die Sammlungen des Denkmäler der alten Zeiten der Benutzer als Artefakt heranziehen und die wichtige Information ihnen geben.

Collectionnement dans la région de Tambov (aspect culturologique et celui d'étude de la contrée)

Résumé: Dans l'article les collections des bienfaiteurs de Tambov sont pour la première fois estimées du point de vue de l'aspect socioculturel. Sont faites des conclusions que les collections des monuments de l'antiquité attirent les utilisateurs comme artefacts qui peuvent présenter des renseignements précieuses sur le passé.

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