

The Historical Reference The Chronicles of the Development of the Zabaikalye Regional Universal Scientific Library Named after Alexander Sergeevitch Pushkin

History of the Zabaikalye Regional Universal Scientific Library is typical for Russia, and it is very individual at the same time. There was not any public library in the major town of the Zabaikalye Region – in Chita – practically until the end of the nineteenth (XIX) century. There was no such public organization or the separate person, who was engaged in that task. Only when the remarkable scientist-regionalist **A.K. Kuznetsov** had moved to Chita the activity of creating the Chita Department of the Amur Unit of the Russian Emperor Geographic Society and the public library as well as the museum was determined.

The fund foundation was the first donation from the private collection of Chita citizens and varied organizations, the private collection being financial and book-referred. The major difficulty in the fund formation was put on the responsibility of organizers, including A.K. Kuznetsov, as well as **N.V. Kirilov**, being the scientist-ethnologist and doctor, both of whom had presented more than 500 (five hundred) volumes to the fund.

The Chita Town Duma determined the annual provision of 100 (one hundred) rubles. The private sacrificing was realized not only by the highest stratum and intelligentsia, but money and books were given by merchants, bourgeoisie, political prisoners, priests, officers of the Zabaikalye Kazak Troop. Hence, long before the opening of the library its stock accounted for 2265 (two thousand two hundred and sixty-five) samples. At 16-th (the sixteenth) of April 1895 at the meeting of the Chita Department of the Russian Emperor Geographical Society the solemn opening of the Regional Study Museum and Library was held. The library was opened at the tiny room of the ground floor of the timber building, belonging to **the male gymnasium**. The room was set for rent, the space was very cramped, the reading hall could hardly include 10 (ten) persons. From its foundation and for many year the space problem of the library remained to be the main difficulty.

In a year the library stock was increased twice and counted 4095 (four thousand and ninety-five) samples. The great occasion of 1896 was the enormous introduction of books from Petersburg, when Nicolas the Second sacrificed more than 2 000 (two thousand) volumes from his personal book stock, as well as he donated 3 (three) new book wardrobes for those books particularly.

The part of the book collection of the Tsar House is still kept in the funds of the regional library named after A.S. Pushkin. There are mainly fiction pieces of literature (collection editions, items, writings) of French authors of XIX-th (the

nineteenth) century there. Books possess the library print of **the Tsar village** and the golden decoration with the image of the double-headed eagle on the cover.

The major part of the library fund was settled with books of the natural contents and fiction literature. From the very beginning of the library foundation the stock of the Siberian contents, being furthermore included into the precious collection “Sibiricka”, was separately formed in it. The remarkable position was occupied by the periodicals in the fund. About 30 (thirty) names of central journals, including journals for children, were subscribed by the reading hall.

At the end of 1896 the book stock for literature spreading among population was formed. Unfortunately, its activity was not long-lasting, it was devastated in the so-called “destruction of Nadarov” – the order of the new military governor of the Zabaikalye Oblast **I.P. Nadarov** for liquidation of many cultural establishments of the town – of the museum, botanic garden, book shop and others, as well as the arrest of the Honoured Member of the Russian Emperor Geographic Society A.K. Kuznetsov. The whole decreasing of cultural life was not favourably reflected on the library, as well, but, despite its decreasing of the growth tempo it didn't seize satisfying “town public with the former book stock and fresh periodical press”. By 1905 the book fund of the library was four times increased and reached 12 000 (twelve thousand) volumes, many of which were unique and accounted for library identity. Particular value was represented by literature of **the Nerchinsk Plant** Library of the Nerchinsk Mining Region, sent to Chita in 1902. Those were libraries of the Decembrists, poet-democrat **M.I. Michailov** and other prisoners of the Nerchinsk jails.

At the beginning of January 1908 “The Order of the Chita Town Library and Its Trustee Treaty” was confirmed by the military governor of the Zabaikalye Oblast. In a month the library moved to the new building in the pavilion of the garden named after **Zhukovsky (the Park of the Local House of Russian Army)** due to the order of the town management. Frequent moving of the library, the movement of its property and even fire, having appeared in a new building influenced the condition of the unique fund. Nevertheless, activity of the library generally satisfied the citizens. “In Chita the library is the fullest and most complete library, being the unique one for general usage,” – the Chita Historian Engineer **A.I. Popov** stated. Payment for reading books at home was the following: the first range – 6 (six) rubles a year, 3 (three) rubles for half a year, 50 (fifty kopeck) a month. People, being unable to pay for reading, were allowed to use the library free of charge even if they give the certificate and the approval of the Town Head or the Merchant Monitor.

At the beginning of 1-st (the First) World War “The Rules of Book Usage and Periodical Usage” were printed by means of the printing house. At that time the library fund was enriched with the volumes: “The International Catalogue of Exact

Sciences”, sent to the Bureau of International Bibliography. The change of social-economical formation and force of Zabaikalye to bourgeoisie-democratic formation to the Soviet one in the first years didn't practically influence the activity transformation of the library. It continued working for readers despite their reference to political parties and their free status. In 1918 the meeting of **the Chita Town Duma** resolved to increase the reading payment for reading of books and journals due to their expensive status at the book markets. At the beginning of 20-ies (the twenties) of XX-th (the twentieth) century the wave of new Red Army and Partisan Readers rushed into the library.

In the years of the Far Eastern Republic the main item in the work of the town library was the involvement of new readers into its number, and the teaching of illiteracy by the Alphabet Book. Due to the common revival of Region Study and Motherland Study Work the propaganda of regional knowledge was intensified. In autumn of 1923 due to the confirmation of Soviet Force in the Zabaikalye County the public library, working at the building of the Regional Museum, was given to the Town Community Property and renamed into “The Chita Community Library”. The part of its funds was transmitted into the libraries of the National Community Enlightenment. At the end of 19214 all the large town libraries were merged into one library: the Far Eastern State Library, the Library of the Zabaikalye County Professional Council and the Chita Town Community Library, which contained 67 000 (sixty-seven thousand) books.

At the end of 1925 the Soviet Force introduced the motto “Books for a Village”. Therefore the Zabaikalye County Central Library was transformed into the County Collection, it seized being common and operatively responding to the readers' requirement. The complex position with the movement and the points of delivery on the production establishments and clubs was determined in the towns and regions. Due to that administrative-territorial division of Zabaikalye of 1926 the government library was renamed into the Chita Regional Central Library. In December 1934 it opened its doors for the second time for readers in a new building on **the Ussuriisky Street** (the Chkalov Street, 120), on which it worked until 1967.

In half a year the newspaper **“Zabaikalye Worker”** announced the Chita Regional Central Library to gain the second prize of the National Committee in the range of 3 000 (three thousand) rubles. In 1937 Chita received the telex from **N.K. Krupskaya**, stating the Government to have invested additional 25 000 (twenty-five thousand) rubles for enriching the book funds of the Chita Central Library. The significant crucial moment in library life was the acceptance of the law “About Education of the Chita Oblast”, being admitted at 26-th (the twenty-sixth) of September 1937. Afterwards the library gained the regional status. As far as the year of 1987 was the century anniversary of A.S. Pushkin's death, the library was

named after him, the great poet. In the latest postwar years were connected to the growth of the library as the centre of cultural-educating activity and its confirmation as the methodology centre for regional libraries. The work of the Chita Regional Library named after A.S. Pushkin didn't fade in the years of the Great Patriotic War. Its staff provided books and technical information for the town population, military departments, regional military hospital. In 1942 the department of the interlibrary subscription was organized in the library. In 1946 the part of the library funds moved into the additional space at **the Partisan Street, 1** (the former house of the pre-Revolutionary architect of Chita **G.V. Nikitin**). The subscription department had worked there until 1967, **the Department of Literature in Foreign Languages** operated there, as well, it having been founded in 1944. The special fund was also found there, where the ideologically harmful literature was translated due to the Order of the Education Head in 1929.

The 50-ies (fifties) of XX-th (the twentieth) century were the years of the great and complex perestroika for the regional library, aimed at creation of the catalogue system and its final formation as the regional methodology and informative-bibliography center. The first printed text-books: "What One Should of American Intervention at the Far East and in Siberia in the Civil War Years", "What One Should Read of the Chita Region of 1950-1959" put the beginning of publishing activity. In later years the bibliography guides: "125 Years of Chita", "For Nature Protection", "Literature Specialists of Zabaikalye", "Calendars of Remarkable and Memorable Dates" and recommendation guides: "What One Should Read about the Region", periodical guides "Literature of the Chita Region" and others were published. For more than 10 (ten) years the series of guides "Writers of Zabaikalye", "Regional Specialists of Zabaikalye", "Composers of Zabaikalye" and others were created. From 2003 the scientific-supplementary guide "The Book of Chita" was published in the annual series, it being the basis for further fundamental work "The Zabaikalye Book Repertoire".

In 1965 after the admission of the typical law the field departments: the notation-musical, certificate-technical, agricultural units were settled. The new building (1967) provided all the conditions for keeping the cultural value of Zabaikalye. In 60-ies (the sixties) of XX-th (the twentieth) century the priority was set to the development of the regional direction in the work of the regional library. The work for compiling Zabaikalye History was started.

For three decades of collective work the universal reference-bibliography text-book, containing basic data about important dates and events of Zabaikalye life from 1853 until today. In 1967 the group of bibliography specialists started the preparatory work for the exhibit collection and exhibition decoration of the Literature Museum of Zabaikalye. In May 1968 the Sector of Region Study Bibliography, dealing with collection and systematization of the printed

information of the Chita Oblast and pre-Revolutionary Zabaikalye was separated from the other departments.

In 1971 according to the work results the Regional Library Named after A.S. Pushkin was included into "The Book of Honour" of Chita. The library staff was three times awarded the passing Red Banner (1973, 1979, 1983) of the Minister Council. The same period and the beginning of 80-ies (the eighties) was characterized by the staff participation in special scientific-practical conferences, both oblast conferences and regional ones, including "A Library as the Assistant in Work", "Library Activity for the Sake of Production and Agriculture" and others. Due to 150-th (the one hundred and fiftieth) anniversary of the Decembrists' Uprising in 1975 the library held the cycle of topical meetings, dedicated to that aspect and participated in the all-union conference "Decembrists and Siberia", held in Chita.

In 1987 the crucial reconstruction of the literature museum, which was the first experience in the country of localizing the expositions in the library area (on the foundation of its stocks), and that enormous literary heritage, which had been collected in the Region for more than 200 (two hundred) years. From the ending of 1980-ies (nineteen-eighties) the workers of the Region Study Sector took an active part in the international Russian and regional scientific-practical conferences (in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Vyatka, Ulan-Ude) and other cities. Due to computer introduction the program "Library-2", permitting the performance of the multi-aspect literary search, was put into operation.

At the same time the town cultural life was enriched with meetings, held with the writers of Zabaikalye, jubilee meetings-appointments with literature specialists, painters, composers, memory meeting, dedicated to writers, being connected to Zabaikalye by their creative work and destiny. In 1987 due to the order of the Literary Head of the return of the original literature to the library fund great, complex and creative work was held. More than 4 000 (four thousand) books were involved into the common and rare library fund.

In the nearest past the library possessed the duplicator and the electrocardiography utensil "Era". They were both used for the fund filling and for the readers. In 1992 the Xerox, the laminator and the first computers were bought for the library. The fax and the digital mail (post) substituted the teletype. From 2001 the Center of Legal Information, using the reference-law systems "Consultant Plus", "Codex", "Garant", has been operating, its main task being the population provision the access to the legislature-law documents of International, Russian and Regional significance. The basis of local legislature is being worked.

From spring of 2003 the Internet Hall has been open in the library. The perspective is to create the corporate system, uniting all the libraries of the Chita

Oblast into the common network. In the same year of 2003 the Restoration Centre of the Rare Books was organized.

Nowadays the Zabaikalye Regional Universal Scientific Library Named after A.S. Pushkin is the biggest book depository of Zabaikalye, the richest collection (more than 1 000 000 books) of native and foreign scientific production, technical, teaching and fiction literature of all types and kinds. The library is the coordination centre of science-methodology and informative work, the favourite meeting place of Chita citizens and town visitors (guests) with the creative groups and Chita famous countrymen. The honoured culture worker of Russia N.S. Lapenkova had been the head of the library for more than 40 (forty) years. From 2010 the library is headed by N.V. Orehova.