

HISTORY

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THE MERCHANT CLASS OF TOBOLSK PROVINCE AND LOCAL FAIRS OF SIBERIA (THE LAST QUARTER XVIII – THE FIRST OF THE XIX CENTURIES)

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Abstract

In this article, analyzers participation compact Tobolsk Guberniya in the fair with the Regional aspect. Remark played the role exchange between professional traders and representatives of various social groups. The basis of the research problem-are the chronological method and the method of analysis and the principles of scientific objectivity and shop. Nov research is that the scientific revolution unpublished sources on the history of Sweden coupe outsole Tobolsk province located on the RUB of the era of XVIII - early XIX centuries the study revealed that the observation not only contributed to the purchase of goods for the trade development, but also created conditions for the emergence of new trends in the structure of commercial activity coupe groups.

Keywords: trade, guild, Yeniseisk, Ishim, Yakutsk, Obdorsk

Regional fairs remained a common form of trade exchange and commercial activities of the Siberian merchants in the last quarter of the XVIII century. Its main purpose was to provide all segments of the local community with the necessary goods, and professional traders – with a traditional form of activity. This type of merchant gathering required participants to comply with the rules of both sales and purchases. A great role in the expansion and development of fairs was played by the central and local executive authorities who strived to set control over the process of profit making. Generally, by the end of the XVIII century, it became clear that the internal trade plays an equally important role in the life of society. Foreign trade in Russia brought a big profit,

and internal trade provided the population with the necessary goods. Compliance with the protectionism principle in the economic policy did not mean just a provision of the best conditions for the activity, but rather an extension and development of internal trade throughout the territory of the huge state [1]. Due to the introduction of bans on participation of foreigners in this type of exchange, the guild merchantry became an actual monopolist. Most of the country's social classes were limited in conducting constant direct trade, so the fair has remained virtually the only permitted form of participation in monetary relations. As of 1797, there were 1,630 fairs in the Russian state not including weekly and daily small fairs. At the same time, as of 1794, there were 90 trade fairs in Siberia, of which 2/3 were held in Tobolsk and Tomsk provinces [2]. In the first quarter of the XIX century, 50 major regional fairs remained in the Western Siberia, of which 46 were in Tobolsk province. By the 1850's, there were 19 small and big fairs in the towns of Tobolsk province and 62 (146) in villages [3].

The value of trade at fairs in remote regions behind the Urals increased in the last quarter of the XVIII century. Therefore local authorities have tried to control the organizational process and trade by establishing special days for wholesale trade fairs and daily small fairs. Thus, mostly Sunday became trading days in Tobolsk vicegerency: "In order for the residents to freely bring all of their remaining earth fruits and needlework" [4]. The opinion of merchants and buyers was also taken into account due to the periodical surveys of the population. In cities, it was recommended to carry out trades on weekends or holidays, in small villages – once in winter and summer. Thus, in Tyumen region, the following fairs were organized according to the above scheme: Ustinskaya (May 9 and December 6), Tugulymkaya (October 28, December 29), Troitskaya (after Easter), Kamenskaya (July 8 and October 1). Similar surveys affected the transfer of fair days for the convenience of the population: in 1818, Pyatkovskaya fair started to be held before Christmas [5].

A volume of trade at fairs was equally important for the merchantry development, which was largely dependent on diversity of the range of products from other regions, including Siberia. Fairs with international value – Irbitskaya, Semipalatinskaya, Petropavlovskaya and Kyakhtinskaya – were the most profitable for the guild merchants of Tobolsk province [6]. But they were subject to tough competition where this group of Siberian merchantry was not always the winner. Therefore, merchants actively participated in the fairs of regional importance behind the Urals. The main feature of such fairs was their independent status, i.e., if they were not held, it had no effect on turnover of the All-Russian trade. Most of these fairs were not just a form of commercial activity, but means of communication of various categories of the population, for example, urban and rural inhabitants of a single parish, neighborhood, and district.

At the end of the XVIII century, turnover of provincial fairs was about 12% "of the amount of all sales in the towns of vicegerency", most of which (550 thousand rubles) accounted for the fur. Although in the 1800-s, turnover of local fairs amounted to about 106 thousand rubles, they were losing the value of wholesale sales [7]. In the 1830-s, the percentage of urban fairs in the Western Siberia varied from 26 to 30% and was mostly dependent of the presence of the rural population. In 1836, the turnover of fairs in Tobolsk province was, according to V.P. Shpaltakov, 42 – 43% of the fairs of this region [8]. However, a new classification emerged in the group of regional fairs – in terms of commodity circulation, commodity groups and the merchantry composition.

In the second half of the XVIII century, annual fairs in the Tobolsk North began to play the major role in the structure of the activities of the guild merchantry. They were mainly intended for the public "that did not have each permanent trade relations between each other", i.e. between nonresident traders and indigenous people of Siberia. So, Obdorskaya fair contributed to the development of monetary relations between merchants, petty bourgeoisie and foreigners of the northern territories of Tobolsk province. Unlike traditional fairs, there was no special trading area with stationary premises, as temporary tents and shelters were often used. Temporary stands installed to accommodate food product samples, and the most valuable products – leather, cloth, utensils – stored in wooden sheds. Sales range throughout this period expanded to include new products [9]. Local residents especially appreciated woolen and cloth fabrics, wood and metal products, jewelry, and buttons. Visiting buyers after asking the price of goods, went to the negotiations in merchants' houses. The indigenous population was arranged with samples of their goods on the bank of the Ob river, for example, reindeer herders arranged sleds in the shape of "horns". The August gathering was the most important fair, when it was possible to exchange fresh fish in a large volume for food products based on the entire cold season. Winter fair (January) in Obdorsk had the same mechanism – the merchants arrived to purchase different varieties of fur and "expensive rare commodity": mammoth ivory, walrus tusks, seal skins, etc.

Remoteness of Obdorsk fair and participants on both sides were likely to impose a lot of features. Trade was accompanied by "secrecy and mystery", since the negotiations on the exchange were held without intermediaries between the buyer and the seller [10]. The methods of obtaining superprofits were no less specific: nonequivalent exchange, sale on credit. Trying to put the field men under dependence, the merchants sought to sell as much as possible of their goods on credit, often they "bought back" last year's goods from their customers at an underestimated price in the next year. The foreigners had to purchase the goods at the fairs only from his creditor. This contributed to the fact that Obdorsk fair's commodity circulation in the first half of the XIX century was about one and a half million rubles.

Merchants of Tobolsk for a time have managed to become monopolists at fairs of the Tobolsk North, who after 1806 were forced to come to terms with the emergence of competitors-partners. Long-term benefit of the provincial merchantry was provided by resettlement of four Tobolsk's merchants led by I.S. Nizhegorodtsev to Berezovo in the last quarter of the XVIII century. By strengthening business and family relations in the region, Ivan Stepanovich began to control the supply of major products: bread and furs. For a time he was the leader in this field: in setting even the official prices of future goods, in performance of the duties of intermediary between the seller and the buyer, in signing of contracts for the supply of food, in implementation of pre-orders for his companions, etc. A group of partners in trading activities and river transportations has formed around the merchant from Berezovo.

So, fairs of the Tobolsk North became an important source of income of the merchantry of Tobolsk province, as they expanded the structure of business activities due to food supplies on riverboats through the Ob-Irtysh water basin. The features of transport routes provided the advantage of the guild merchantry in trade in remote districts of the province. Sometimes the merchant was the only link between aboriginal settlements and Russian-speaking settlements of the southern parishes. Therefore, performing professional activities, the merchant became the pioneer of a new commodity, a new river or land route, etc.

Fairs of the East Siberia were attractive for the merchants of Tobolsk province: on the one hand – because of not high prices for quality Barguzin and Yakut fur, on the other hand – it was not always possible to visit them because of the remoteness and the lack of accessible transport system. Often, they strived to visit settlements of the Eastern Siberia before or after the Kyakhtinskakya fair, because here they bought non-bulky and lightweight goods, which can then be sent with passing transport to the Western Siberia. In doing so, the trip turned into a severe expedition: it was planned in advance, convenient goods for transportation were bought, and merchants looked for partners or sent proxies. As mentioned above, the main attraction of such trip was the choice of furs at a low price, so the merchants tried to buy a large consignment of goods. This gave them the opportunity to trade for a long period.

Fur remained the main commodity of the Yakut fair, which attracted merchants from Vologda, Totma, Velikiy Ustyug, Irkutsk, Tobolsk, Yalutorovsk during the above mentioned time. Visiting merchants delivered European, Chinese and Russian goods to the city. Most often a visit to the Yakut fair was planned several years in advance. Because of the Patriotic War and the transfer of the Irbitskaya fair to Tyumen, Siberian market was left without Russian and European goods, and the merchants of Tobolsk province went to the eastern part. Therefore, Yakut fair stretched in time from June 1 to August 1, and the prices have increased compared to previous years by 20%

[11]. The accounting documents for 1816 stated that, although in the last four years it was visited by Vologda, Irkutsk, Totma, Velikiy Ustyug, Tobolsk merchants, just 60% of the offered goods were sold because of high prices [12]. Less significant fairs of the Yakut region were held between February and March, when the local population, paying the tribute, could dispose of the rest of the fur. Visiting merchants, as a rule, used the principle of barter, i.e. they exchanged their goods for "skins of red foxes, martens, Arctic foxes, beavers, otters, lynx, deer skin, walrus teeth, etc." In the next month, goods from fairs of the Yakut region were transported by East Siberian merchants to Kamchatka, where from they took sable furs for continental trade [13].

Fair of Irkutsk province with low turnover were visited by the merchants of Tobolsk province, as a rule, because of termination of the Russian-Chinese trade. In addition to traditional furs, many rare and expensive goods could be purchased here, for example, mammoth ivory and walrus tusks for jewelry workshops in Germany, squirrel fur for tailors from Greece, etc. [14]. During this period, the merchantry of Tobolsk province started visiting Nerchinsk fair forcing local authorities to adopt special rules for the fur trade. As noted above, the small cost of furs was the primary reason for attending fairs of this type: the cost of goods purchased for 250 thousand rubles (fair of Irkutsk province) increased 5 times at Irbitskaya fair. Only in Irkutsk province, the merchantry of Tobolsk province visited 21 different fairs with various trading volume in the above period [15].

After the 1810-s, the merchants of Tobolsk province has become more or less regularly visit the Yenisei fair, which was due to proliferation of new field of activities – river traffic. Merchants rented or built riverboats, rafts to carry various goods both in size and scope. So, in 1818, the Tobolsk merchant Veshnyakov has sent 4,000 pounds of his own goods to Yeniseisk for a total of 31,000 rubles; his countrymen, merchants Lukimatushkin and Naumov equipped two boats – the first with goods costing 25 thousand rubles with a total weight of 610 poods; the second with goods costing 15 thousand rubles (200 poods). Trips to remote areas of the Eastern Siberia were long and could disrupt the overall structure of activities of a whole family, so merchants could equip one or more boats together. So, one boat was sent by Tobolsk merchants N.S. Malkov and I.S. Malkov: the former equipped textiles for 18,140 rubles (weighing 350 poods), and the latter – textiles for 25,960 rubles; their old partners – Pilenkov, Selivanov and Shirkov – have sent several own boats to Yenisei fair with shared goods, previously negotiating on each profit share [16].

A significant role in the structure of business activities of the Siberian merchantry was played by wholesale regional fairs in Tobolsk, Tyumen, Ishim. The peculiarity of such merchant gatherings was that they were intended for both wholesale and small-scale retailing, as well as being attractive to all groups of the population. Two wholesale fairs were traditionally held in the provincial city: the one in the spring was intended for the sale of Russian goods, and

Siberian and Chinese goods were delivered to the autumn fair. The annual fair in Tyumen lasted almost a month – from January 1 to February 1, so as the local merchantry both delivered goods from Kyakhta, and also stocked up on handicraft items for Irbit. Tyumen had the status of a transit center of the Siberian merchantry, and when trading in Kyakhta stopped for a time, it became the largest trading point for the purchase of handicrafts and industrial products [17].

Ishim (Nikolskaya) fair took a special place in the group of regional fairs, named the "fat" wholesale center for the sale of bacon, fat, meat and oil. Here craftsmen and owners of processing enterprises acquired raw materials for production. As a rule, the Siberian merchants bought the goods in small batches and only for cash. The main sellers were local peasants, who for grew cattle several years, and then slaughtered it and brought for sale in large batches. Sometimes buyers from Rostov, Moscow, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Nakhichevan and even Odessa came here. But the monopoly at the "fat" fair belonged to locals – Ishim merchants, most of whom by their origin were related to the peasantry [18]. During this period, Ishim, Omsk, Kurgan and Yalutorovsk merchants opened their own industrial productions, so they tried to arrange strong business relationships with suppliers of raw materials. This allowed buying goods in large quantities with deferred payments to Irbit, but subject to the obligatory signing of a written contract (although verbal agreements were still in force between the guild merchants due to long-term partnership). By the 1830-s, goods costing 1,626,045 rubles were delivered to Ishim fair, of which goods costing 1,422,970 rubles were sold. Note that the fair value increased when the merchants from Kirgizia, Tashkent and Bukhara started bringing cattle not just to Petropavlovsk, but also to Ishim. Interestingly, the Ishim, Kurgan, Petropavlovsk, and Yalutorovsk merchants began to buy livestock, which they fed near their fat-melting plants until next spring for sale to Murom and Kazan merchants [19].

So, specialized fairs played a special role in commodity exchange of Tobolsk province, intended for sale of certain goods – agricultural products and partially rural crafts. A "horse fair" in the Bobrovskoye village became the largest market for the sale of both draft animals, and also cattle, oxen, and sheeps. Agricultural fairs were held in Turinsk in late spring for the sale of the surplus of the previous year's harvest or for the purchase of seed material for the current sowing season and agricultural equipment. The average turnover of specialized Abalak and Kurgan fairs ranged within million rubles. The fair in Kurgan was visited by local merchants with industrial goods, and peasants with agricultural products. If merchants from Russia, Volga region, Urals visited Ishim, then the Kurgan fairs did not attract local merchants with their product range. Lard and meat sold by local peasants were the most important goods in Kurgan. Since the latter were interested in selling all products, preferring to sell it in large quantities, this product was packed in barrels. Raw leather for

tanneries mostly from the neighborhood was delivered to Alabak fair.

Specialized fair for buying furs was organized in Pelymsky commissariat in late autumn – early winter, where the Tura merchants strived to get. Being only capable to purchase goods in bulk, they bought soft stuff: bear, fox, sable, wolf, moose, deer, beaver, weasel, squirrel, rabbit skins, and pine nuts. The bulk of the purchased goods were later delivered to Irbit fair.

Other types of trading gatherings were held in addition to the wholesale and specialized trade fairs in the cities of Tobolsk province. So, three fairs were held each year in Yalutorovsk and its district: Sretenskaya, Blagoveschenskaya, and Nikolskaya. Their main function was to provide the local population with food and essential raw materials for handicraft production [20]. Merchants from nearby cities of Tobolsk province came in Yalutorovsk on Candlemas with retail goods, and peasants with comestibles. The fair of the same significance was held in 25 versts from the city, where "vital supplies and other things" were delivered.

Thus, the mechanism of trading activities of large and petty merchants of Tobolsk province was formed. A merchant with goods moved from one local fair to another, the third, etc. One of these cycles began in September in Ust-Laminsk village (Ishim district), followed by Tyukalinsk, villages Mostovoye and Mokrousovkoe (Yalutorovsk district), and completed on December 1 at Nikolskaya fair.

A special group of fair gatherings included bargains and bazaars with low turnover but playing a crucial role in the life of the ordinary Siberian resident – delivery of the necessary industrial and food products by small wholesale. For example, bazaars were weekly arranged in crowded settlements to supply urban residents with food, and rural residents with industrial goods. During this period, the trading days were determined by regional legislation often taking into account "suggestions" of the merchantry [21]. The central authorities periodically sent queries "about the delivery of information from the fairs held in the parishes within a year" [22].

A one-day Blagoveschenskaya fair was held in Yalutorovsk district, near Ukovsky plant, visited by a lot of buyers and sellers – the peasants from the nearby villages and wholesale merchants. A small but noisy fair was held in the day of the Holy Trinity, after which peasants started preparing to new agricultural works. Two fairs were established in Pyatkovskaya volost of Yalutorovsk district in 1818: one on December 28, and another on January 1 [23]. At Ishim fair on the St. Nicholas day (December 6 – 9), the local residents bought food, raw materials for craft enterprises for the upcoming January holidays. Sunday considered a trading day in Turinsk, while in Tyumen it was Saturday, which were visited as necessary [24]. In addition, in the Ustinskoye village (Tyumen district), the fairs were held twice a year – on May 9 and December 6, in Tugulymkoye – on October 28 and December 29, in Berezovo – on one of the summer Sundays, etc. [25].

Often temporary small-volume fairs were more profitable for local merchants than remote well-known ones. Since May 20, they started trading fish in Turinsk under two scenarios: the first – when merchants acted as buyers of the goods brought; the second – when merchants became organizers of fishing and got products both for themselves and for sale.

Thus, temporary trading gatherings in Tobolsk province were of a regional significance. In total, in the beginning of the XIX century, 14 one-day and two-day trading fairs were registered. Most small fairs were held during holidays, when the rural and urban population preferred to have a rest. Temporary shopping streets attracted visitors by a wide variety of inexpensive items and merchants usually brought bright finery, fabrics, sweets, etc. Since the end of the XVIII century, bazaars and small fairs began started to become "universal" by nature: craftsmen purchased raw materials, closed deals for the supply of agricultural products by both and the treasury; peasants were selling farm products and bought everything needed for the upcoming work; guild merchants bought and sold commodities for future fairs. But this is the only kind of trade with the direct exchange between producers and consumers, and even a non-resident merchant could directly bargain with the local population. Bazaars became a gathering place for retail merchants, petty merchants, trading peasants and merchants-suppliers. All of these forms with low and high turnover contributed to the development of a permanent form of trade, activating and enriching the exchange process.

Regardless of the fairs, there were two types of relationships between them: subordination and equality. Every large trading center had subordinated smaller ones, and the latter could simultaneously depend from several permanent or temporary sites [26]. Ishim fair in the first quarter of the XIX century was "subordinate" to the performance of one permanent center – Moscow, and three temporary ones – Irbitkaya, Krestovskaya and Makaryevskaya fairs. Equitable relationship was stipulated by the commonality of the area of influence, or dependence on the industrial and trading centers.

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