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The Theme of the Issue:

**“WITH AN OAR AND A POLE”:
WATER COMMUNICATIONS OF NORTH-EASTERN EURASIA**

FROM THE EDITOR

“In winter in a sled with a dog harness, and in summer incessantly with an oar and with a pole”, these words of the Yeniseysk voivode A.L. Oshanin reflect a complex process of mastering the vast expanses of Northeastern Eurasia, unthinkable without creating an extensive transport network. The issue of the Historical Courier offered to the readers is devoted to the discussion of a set of problems related to the formation and development of water communications in Northeastern Eurasia (which in historiography is increasingly understood as the territory of the modern Russian Federation), starting from ancient times up to the present day. The rapid and successful development of water (both river and sea) arteries, which served as the main transport routes, provided a strong connection between the western and eastern, northern and southern territories. How important was the meaning of water communications for the study and economic development of hard-to-reach areas, what role they played in the daily life of various segments of the population, how sometimes difficult and even dramatic it was to the search and open new ways for the passage of water transport, the points of interaction in this matter between the state and representatives of private capital – all these issues are characterized in the materials published in the issue.

The heading “Trade by Rivers and Seas” combines articles devoted to the analysis of trade operations carried out (including by merchants) by waterways; problems of ensuring the security of international trade; the first attempt to establish the export of timber by sea from the Yenisei. The considered subjects emphasize the waterways’ pivotal role in the development of economic relations, interregional and international relations.

The second section “Study and Development of Waterways” will focus on the formation and development of the river communication system in Siberia and the Far East. Based on the materials of archaeological discoveries, as well as office records, sources of personal origin and periodicals, reviews of the development of waterways in Primorye and the Yenisei basin are presented; merchant projects for the development of navigation, the participation of representatives of the artistic intelligentsia in the study and popularization of Siberian water space are described; for the first time the history of memorial expeditions in the footsteps of F. Nansen, undertaken at the turn of the 20th – 21st centuries, is covered in detail.

The texts penned by an outstanding representative of the Russian merchant class – Mikhail Konstantinovich Sidorov are published under the traditional heading of the magazine “From the first person”. The sources offered to readers characterize one of M.K. Sidorov’s bold projects aimed at the development of water communication in Siberia.

The following group of articles is included in the block “Waterways and reservoirs in the daily life of the population: perception, usage”. They reveal diverse issues related to the lives of different segments of the population. Among them, the role of the reservoir in the cultural and everyday space of the provincial Russian nobility, and the organization of management and use of river transport for the daily needs of both administrative structures and ordinary citizens.

Special attention is paid to the characteristics of domestic and foreign historiography related to the stated theme of the issue. The articles presented in the section “Problems of Historiography” analyze the works on the prerequisites for the formation of the shipbuilding industry in pre-Petrine Russia and the development of the Russian Arctic and the Northern Sea Route.



The heading “The World of Books” includes a review of the notes of the famous scientist traveler of the 18th century, recently published in Krasnoyarsk, Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, as well as a bibliographic list of modern reference publications devoted to the water resources of Russia. There are also brief annotations of reference books providing some insight into their primary focus, showing their scientific and local history significance.

Finally, the section “Scientific Life” contains material dedicated to the anniversary of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, celebrated in May 2022. The creation of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1957 marked the beginning of the development of an extensive network of scientific institutions in different cities of Siberia, many of which eventually gained worldwide fame, and helped to bring domestic science to a new qualitative level. Siberian scientists have made a huge contribution, among other things, to the study of water resources in Russia. In addition, this year marks the centenary of the Institute of Mongolian Studies, Buddhology and Tibetan Studies SB RAS, with which we heartily congratulate our colleagues from Ulan-Ude. The section ends with the announcement of the National Association of Endowments about the Second competition for the “Eternal Contribution” Award. The first such competition was successfully held last year, bringing together several dozen participants from among employees of scientific organizations, teachers of higher educational institutions, local historians.

Of course, the topic included in the title of the issue is far from being exhausted by the materials presented. But we hope that the issue will be of interest to both specialists and the widest range of readers and that it will draw attention to the need for further comprehensive discussion of a complex set of questions from the history of the development of water transport communication in the territory of not only Russia, but also neighboring states, connected geopolitically, economically and culturally, the common historical path of which was largely determined by the state of the water communications system.

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