

Content and potential of database on the history of charitable institutions in eastern Siberia during major military conflicts in the early XXth century

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Abstract. The article deals with issues of development, content filling and functional opportunities of databases on the history of charitable institutions in Eastern Siberia, foundation of which was caused by major military conflicts in the early XXth century: the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905) and the First World War (1914–1918). The article has no analogues by its structure, subject area and chronological period. Notwithstanding its regional limitation, the database makes it possible to integrate materials about various areas and time periods. The represented resource is based on a set of different written sources, such as archival documents (legislative documents, documents of management and record keeping), articles from media periodicals, which significantly enhance and intensify research opportunities. The application area of the project results stretches from realization of the gained techniques in development of other historic information resources and specifically historic researches of scales, potential, directions and ways of work of voluntary public associations that gave assistance to war victims.

[Kattcina T.A., Pomazan V.A. **Content and potential of database on the history of charitable institutions in eastern Siberia during major military conflicts in the early XXth century.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(8s):76-79] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 15

Keywords: database (DB), Internet, database management system (DBMS), database structure, information resource, Russian Empire, Eastern Siberia, war victims.

Introduction

The subject area of the research is determined by memorable dates of Russian military history: the 110th anniversary of the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War. Any war is always accompanied by critical changes in everyday life, mentality, behaviour and survival strategies of the majority of population not only in the battle ground, but far behind the lines as well, and also by large increase of number of those who need help. Issues of social care to war victims are one of the most important directions in revealing the problem of general military history, social history; they are also a part of problem of civil society formation and development in Russia, everyday life history. We use the term “war victims” to speak about people who did not take direct participation in military conflicts (refugees, internees, families of officers and soldiers, orphan children and others) or those who ceased such participation in a particular moment (wounded or ill soldiers, prisoners of war).

Charitable institutions were organized all across the country to give assistance to the victims of military operations (war victims). Their activity is still poorly explored from the viewpoint of social needs and interests of the community first of all due to its extensive and multi-aspect character. The study of this issue requires significant update and systematization of a number of sources. Traditional methods of search and analysis of historic

information are considerably facilitated by their arranging into databases.

The research is also actualized by the fact that development of modern nonscience features quite active informatization. This process is reflected in more and more wide-spread introduction of methods and means of information science into historical researches. The works of O. Boonstra, L. Breure, P. Doorn [1], P. Alkhoven [2], R. Rosenzweig and D. Cohen [3, 4], L. Borodkin [5, 6], I. Garskova [7, 8] and other researchers are dedicated to the problems of theory and methodology of historical informatics, as well as to working out concepts of its development. The studies in this sphere prove that modeling of historic processes and developments in the area of archives informatization can be treated as prospective directions. One of innovation directions of historical informatics development today is connected with concepts of distributed network resources and correspondent technologies. I. Garskova emphasizes that “among information technologies that are most successfully used in historical informatics from the very beginning of its formation have always been technologies connected with building and analysis of databases and electronic documents collections” [9, p. 15].

Methodology

The term “database” is in its broad sense understood as a range of data about different objects in some area or its part. “Historical database is

organization of source's data on a magnetic medium with an aim to increase information value of the source with further processing, analysis, modification and multiple use and supported DBMS" [10, p. 28].

For building databases historians traditionally use formalized mass sources (population census, budgetary statistic and so on) that allow characterizing identical phenomena within long-term historic intervals [11, p. 119]. During our studies we faced a number of difficulties bearing objective character which is connected with irregularity of the data. We had to accumulate information about each charitable institution from a significant set of sources taken from central archives (State Archive of Russian Federation, Russian State Military and Historical Archive) and from regional archives (Archive of Krasnoyarsk Territory, Archive of Irkutsk Area). They include business correspondence, reports, questionnaires, working plans, notes, journals, proceedings journals of councils in central and local charitable institutions. We managed to gain part of necessary information only from newspapers and magazines. Working on such diverse in content and composition, but not strictly structured in form, information of historic sources we aimed at free texts input into computer memory.

The selection and systematization of the set of sources were performed by categories of war victims: refugees and internees, wounded and ill soldiers, children and families of front-line soldiers, prisoners of war.

In development of DB we consecutively solved the following problems: 1) choice of a DBMS that could make it possible to build databases and provide for processing, sorting and search for information; 2) working out architecture of data integration system; 3) creation of auxiliary modules for filling and processing received historic data; 4) location of DB in the Internet for testing; 5) integration of data and dynamic filling of the resource irrespective of location of the user.

Discussion

Structure of DB and its filling according to the processed material served as the basic source for development of the electronic resource.

File of databases today is comparatively small, it includes 70 objects. Filling of the resource is in progress. Analysis of the existing information showed that when the First World War began the quantity of public organizations as well as total number of people involved in charity increased. It was particularly important for Siberia with its vast territory, low population density, and big ethnic and social diversity. Questions of classification of charitable institutions that appeared due to the needs

of the wartime, their quantitative and professional and social composition, as well as means of assistance to the needy population groups are more detailed considered in the article "The Siberians in Voluntary Associations Brought to Life by the Needs of the First World War" [12].

The database under formation is integrated into a website with all sorts of filling and structure. The website structure was based on PHP-technologies, and the electronic resource itself is located on a free hosting. The main page of the website reveals its purpose through information about the project which is placed at the top of the page. The right-hand side of the website contains a gallery of image date where by activation of one of the elements revision of pictures is performed (social advertising in the time of the Russo-Japanese war and the First World War). The left-hand side of the website shows sections of the website as a set of links, such as "About project", "Database", "Contact information", "Administration". The right-hand part of the website displays the content of each link when it is activate.

For realization and construction of DB database management system MySQL was chosen. The information about charitable institutions was arranged and uploaded to the table with the help of Microsoft Excel. The table is a main repository of the information. The data consist of records (lines) and fields (columns). Each line corresponds to a separate record (charitable institution), each column represents a field of database: 1) name; 2) the beginning of work; 3) location; 4) administration; 5) purposes and tasks; 6) monetary funds sources; 7) objects of assistance; 8) working directions; 9) size and measures of social support; 10) sources and literature. In the table mode the screen displays several records simultaneously, which can be changed.

As we have already mentioned, the sources used for information gathering have diverse content and differ in information value degree. Due to this reason there are gaps in description of some charitable institutions. The most gaps in the studied sources refer to "administration" and "size and measures of social support" criteria.

PHP-technology enabled to integrate DB of MySQL format into the website, and access through link "Electronic DB" allowed representing visually information from the table. The detailed information about each charitable institution is reproduced by transfer to the link with the name of the institution and is formed automatically from DB in the form of information "card" (Picture 1).

On the help to war victims

Achin'sky Urban Refugee Committee

Start of activities :
August 18, 1918

Location:
Houbars, Achinsk, Yenisei Province

Board:
Chairman - Anisovich V.G.
Deputy chairman - Maslennikov A.K.
Treasurer - Gerasimov P.G.
Secretary - Turukhannov A.D.
Board members: Gerasimov P.G.
Houbars - P.
Dost V.
Rybkovskiy I.I.
Petrovskiy S.G. (1, p. 8)

Goals and objectives:
Goals and objectives providing material and spiritual needs of refugees arriving in Achinsk or in the following counties.

Source of cash:
Sources of funds 5) State-owned appropriations:
October 19, 1918 - 10000 rubles;
November 13, 1918 - 8000 rub.
December 13, 1918 - 1700 rubles;
January 12, 1919 - 1700 rubles;
February 3, 1919 - 2000 rubles;
May 6, 1919 - 5000 rubles (1).
2) received Yenisei governor 25000 rubles. By him to the hospital equipment and maintenance for refugees 1700 rubles. In total 26700 rubles (2) (p. 170).
3) received the Russian Union of Cities 2000 rubles (1, p. 170).
4) November 10, 1918 donated by various individuals and companies in 1760, 28 rubles (1, p. 8).

Objects of the help:

Areas of work:
The Committee's activity through a specially formed committee (action):
1) Commission for a reading, registration, medical surveillance, distribution and direction of refugees;
2) Hospital - for new Kurda;
3) Residence;
4) Food;
5) Labour Office;
6) Objects of aid (1, p. 8-9).

Pic. 1. Information "card" of a charitable institution

Maintenance and dynamic filling of the website with database is provided by "Administration" mode. After you input of username and password you are able to add new information to the table and to correct the existing data.

Inference

Among the advantages of information model that we worked out there are the following opportunities: sequencing and storing of data about charitable institutions, foundation of which in Eastern Siberia was caused by the needs of the Russo-Japanese war and the First World War; availability of administration mode for dynamic changes of DB; opportunity for a wide range of users to work in the Internet, since for this only a browser is necessary, whereas access restriction can only appear because of hosting server overloading.

Conclusions

1. On the basis of the developed database it is possible to obtain a number of qualitative indices (quantity of charitable institutions, quantitative and nominal content of their administration, amount of financing) and qualitative characteristics (purposes of the institution, target group, development of aid recipients selection procedures, choice of means and forms of assistance, financing structure etc.).

2. The key positive trait of the present resource is the opportunity to integrate material on various territorial and chronological characteristics, which will favour the development of All-Russian scientific base on history of social work and charitable institutions.

3. An important trait of database is its accessibility for other researchers due to the use of the Internet resources. The represented resource can favour the development of studies on a large scale of issues of civil society institutions presence in political system of pre-revolutionary Russia and their maturity level.

Gratitude

The work is carried out with a financial support of Russian Humanist Scientific Foundation according to the project "Social Care in East Siberia in the Conditions of Wars in the Beginning of the XX Century" # 13-11-24002. We would like to thank all people who sacrificed their time and shared their experience: Irina Pavlova, Olesya Dolidovich, as well as Russian Association "History and Computer" (its president Leonid Borodkin), whose methodological achievements we used as a guideline in our work.

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5/12/2014