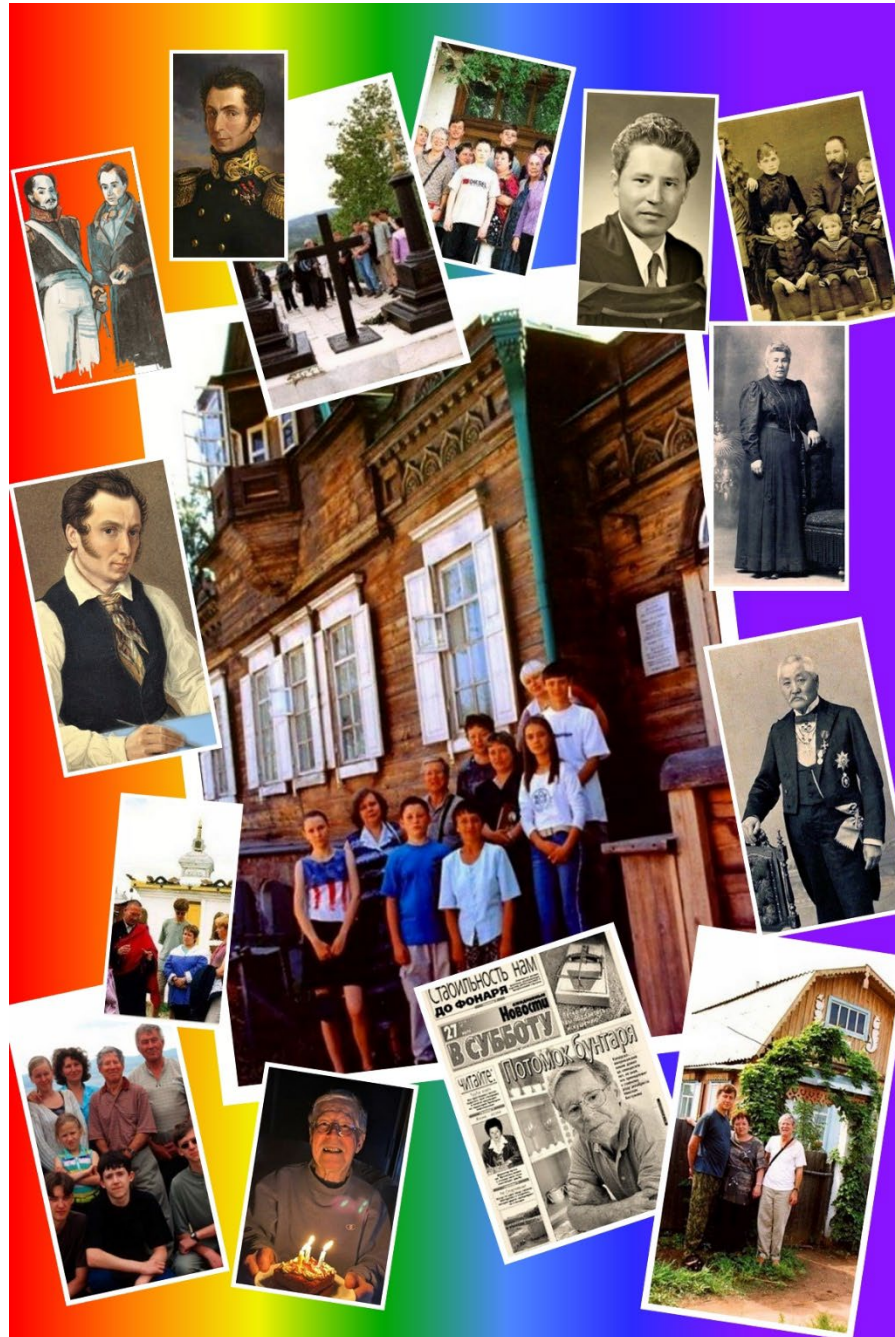


ALEXEI ZAIONCHKOVSKY IN MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS

How a trip to Siberia helped restore my family's ancestry



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I knew from childhood that most of my ancestors came from Russia. At home we all spoke Russian and English at school.

In 1994, I traveled by train from Beijing to Moscow via Irkutsk. Russia impressed me with its greatness. At that time, I knew little about my relatives in Russia, knew nothing about the Decembrists, or about my relationship with them.

In this article I want to talk about one of the highlights of my life - a trip to Siberia to the places of residence of my relatives, including the famous Decembrist Nikolai Bestuzhev - my Great-Great-Grandfather.

In 2002, the Startsev family from Vladivostok (descendants of Dmitry Dmitrievich Startsev, who adopted the children of Nikolai Bestuzhev) invited me to join a group interested in visiting Eastern Siberia. The initiator of collecting the ancestors of Nikolai Bestuzhev in 2002 was Igor Vasilievich, a local historian from Ulan Ude, a physics teacher.

I was happy that I had the opportunity to return to Siberia, collect the history of our family, learn more about my maternal ancestors, meet with distant relatives, visit memorial sites, museums, towns and cities, and visit the places where my ancestors lived. I bow to their memory.

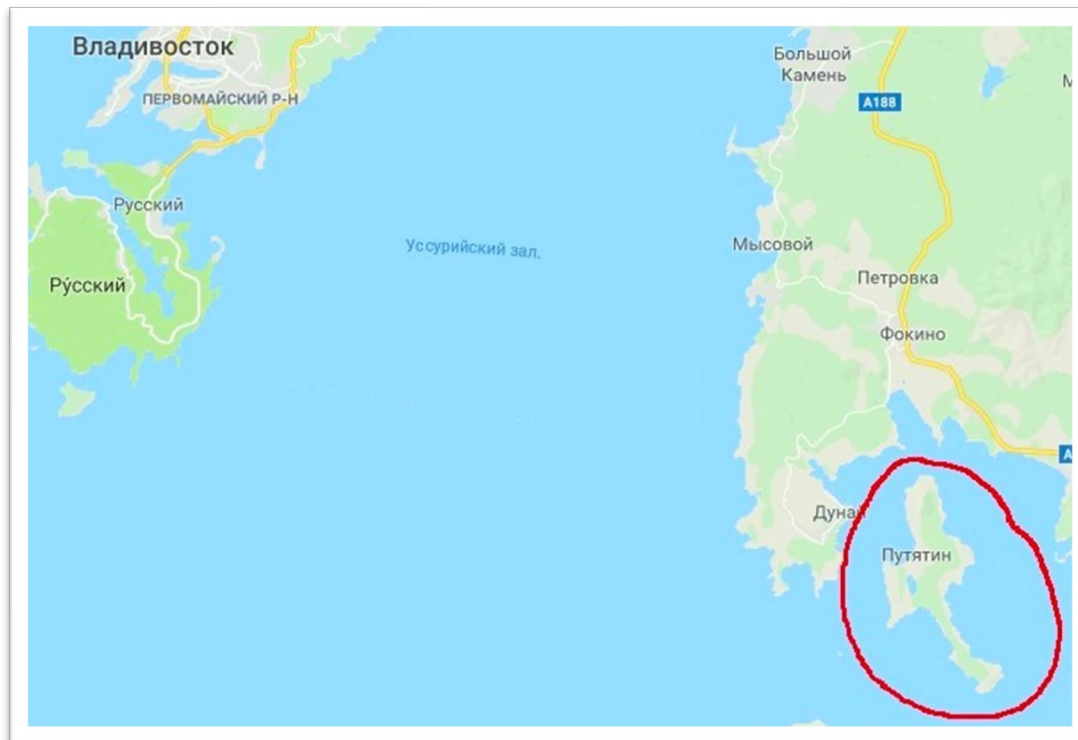
My long journey began with a flight from Vancouver to Seoul, from there I flew to Vladivostok a day later. Then I took the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Ulan-Ude near Baikal Lake. From Ulan-Ude we drove to Selenginsk to join the main group.



The main points of our trip to Eastern Siberia:
Novoselenginsk (formerly Selenginsk), Kyakhta, Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude.



Vladivostok and Putyatín Island near Vladivostok.



Before describing the journey, I consider it important to share the collected materials about my ascendant ancestors, as well as about the uprising and the life of the Decembrists in Siberia.

Among the numerous Decembrists was my Great-Great-Grandfather Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev, from whom several branches grew including to me.

Mothers Ancestry

Surname	Born	Deceased	Spouse	Children
Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev (Great-Great-Grandfather)	April 13, 1791, St. Petersburg	May 15, 1855, Selenginsk	Dusha Sabelaeva	Alexey (1838-1900) Ekaterina (1844-1929)
Dulma Sabelaeva (Great-Great-Grandmother)	Selenginsk	1851, Selenginsk	Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev	
Dmitry Dmitrievich Startsev	1814		Agnia Nikitichna Sabashnikova	Anna (1838-1910) Semyon (1840) Alexei (1841)
Agnia Nikitichna Sabashnikova	1816	1860	Dmitry Dmitrievich Startsev	<u>Adopted:</u> Alexei (1838-1900) Ekaterina (1844-1929)
Nikolai Ivanovich Gomboev (Naidan) (Great Grandfather)	1837	1905 Peking	Ekaterina Dmitrievna (Startseva)	Ekaterina (1875-1946) Natalia (1878-?) Nikolai (1879—1919) Georgi (1881—1959)
Ekaterina Dmitrievna (Great-Grandmother)	1844	1929	Nikolai Ivanovich Gomboev	Anna (1883-1955) Vadim (1886—1907)
Arnold Peter Paul von Drachenfels (Grandfather)	1880	1932	Anna Nikolaevna (Gomboeva)	Vera (1904-1967) Dorothea (1907-1943)
Anna Nikolaevna (Grandmother)	Dec 13, 1883	1955	Arnold Peter Paul von Drachenfels	Grace (1910-1964) Vadim (1913-1920)
Dorothea Arnoldovna (Mother)	1907	1943	Alexei Ivanovich Zaionchkovsky	Olga (1930-2019) Alexei (1931) Nikolai (1933)

Fathers Ancestry

Surname	Born	Deceased	Spouse	Children
Kuzma Andreevich Zaionchkovsky (Great-Grandfather)	1767		Nadezhda Andreevna	Ivan (1830) Lyubov (1812)
Nadezhda Andreevna (Great-Grandmother)			Kuzma Andreevich Zaionchkovsky	
Ivan Kuzmich Zaionchkovsky (Grandfather)	1820		Anna Pavlovna Gruzinsky	Aleksandra (1856) Olga (1858) Vladimir (1864) Zinaida (1866)
			Olga Ivanovna Gracheva	Alexei (1894-1978)
Olga Ivanovna Gracheva (Grandmother)			Ivan Kuzmich Zaionchkovsky	
Alexei Ivanovich Zaionchkovsky (Father)	1894	1978	Dorothea Arnoldovna Zaionchkovsky (Von Drachenfels)	Olga (1930-2019) Alexei (1931) Nikolai (1933)
Dorothea Arnoldovna (Mother)	1907	1943	Alexei Ivanovich Zaionchkovsky	
Alexei Alexeevich Zaionchkovsky	1931		Gloria (Anastasia) Nikolaevna (Prystupa)	
Gloria (Anastasia) Nikolaevna (My Wife)	1956		Alexei Alexeevich Zaionchkovsky	

Decembrist revolt. The role of the exiles in Siberia

On December 14, 1825, an uprising took place in St. Petersburg, organized by a group of like-minded nobles. The Decembrists got their name from the month in which the uprising took place. Decembrist officers brought about 3000 soldiers to the square.



Санкт-Петербург. Сенатская площадь 14 декабря 1825 года. Рисунок Кольмана из кабинета графа Бенкендорфа в Фалле

The organizers of the uprising were members of the secret societies of 1810-1820, which arose in Russia under the influence of the revolution in France, the Napoleonic wars, and the trend that appeared in the world to replace Feudalism with Capitalism.

In 1817, Pestel wrote the charter of the Union of Salvation, or the Union of True and Faithful Sons of the Fatherland. They set as their goal the transformation of Russia into a constitutional state, the abolition of serfdom and the liberation of the peasants, the establishment of fair trials and the equality of people of all classes before the law. Many people in Russia shared the views of the rebels and sympathized with them. The historical significance of the Decembrist uprising lies in the fact that it became the starting point of the revolutionary movement in Tsarist Russia.

More than 300 people were arrested after the uprising. According to the degree of guilt: some of the officers were demoted to soldiers, five people were executed, more than 115 people were exiled to Siberia for hard labor and serf labor and for settlement. Part of the Decembrists were sent into exile and to a settlement in the Caucasus.

Eleven wives of the Decembrists followed them into exile. Eight of them survived prison, hard labor and exile. After the decree on the amnesty of the Decembrists in 1856, only five returned with their husbands.

The beginning of the process of incorporating Siberia and the Far East into the Russian state is considered to be Yermak's campaign against the Siberian Khanate in 1581. To develop Siberia, it was necessary to populate it, but no one wanted to go there voluntarily. The peasants were afraid of a bad climate for agriculture, the nobles were frightened by the lack of cultural life, remoteness, and wildness of morals.

The exiles were sent to Siberia. Those punished for administrative violations were sent to live in Western Siberia. Others were sent to Eastern Siberia for settlement and hard labor. Convicts also served their sentences in the central prisons of Siberia and Sakhalin. There is evidence that in the XIX century. 864 thousand people were sent to Siberia in total. In 1898 there were 300,000 exiles in Siberia. Natural resources, furs, ore reserves, high quality iron, copper and gold attracted merchants and entrepreneurs. It became possible to deliver manufactured goods not only to central Russia, but also abroad.

As always in Russia, hard trials also bring huge positive results. The expulsion of the Decembrists to Siberia contributed to the democratization of the administration of territories, the rise in the economic well-being of the Eastern Siberian peoples, the softening of harsh morals, the introduction of enlightenment, education, the development of culture and industry in Siberia.

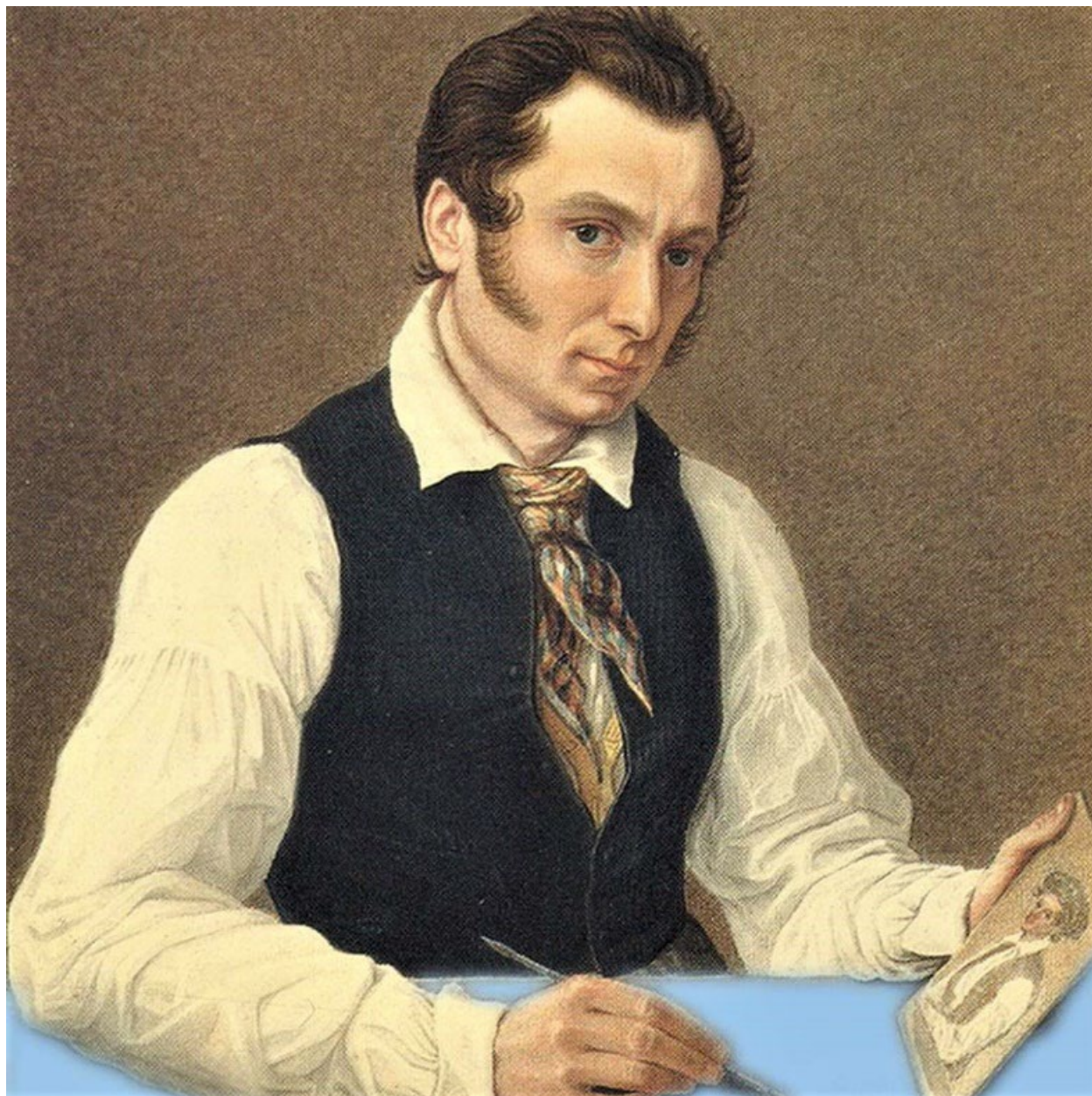
Monument to the wives of the Decembrists by Tsereteli.



The Bestuzhev Family

Decembrist Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev

was born on April 13, 1791, in St. Petersburg. He was one of the four sons of Alexander Fedoseevich Bestuzhev, a state councillor.



In 1802, Nikolai entered the Naval Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg then in 1809 he became a Midshipman, in 1814 he was Lieutenant of the Naval Corps. In 1815 he went on an expedition to Holland and then to France in 1817. In 1822, Nikolai Bestuzhev organized a lithography at the Admiralty Department, began to write the history of the Russian fleet, and in 1823 he was awarded the Order of St. Vladimir.

In 1824 he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander.

In 1824, Nikolai was accepted into the Northern Secret Society and offered to become a member of the Supreme Duma of the Northern Society. Nikolai Bestuzhev is the author of the Manifesto to the Russian People project. In 1825 he was a caretaker of the Model Chamber of the Admiralty Museum.

On December 14, 1825, Nikolai led the Guards Crew to the Senate Square in St. Petersburg. He was arrested on December 16, 1825, and taken to the Peter and Paul Fortress. In 1826 he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Nikolai and his brother Mikhail were sent to Siberia on September 28, 1827. They arrived in Chita prison on December 13, 1827, and were transferred to the Petrovsky Camp in September 1830. In 1832, Nikolai's penal servitude was reduced to 15 years, and in 1835 to 13 years.

In 1839, after serving hard labor, the brothers Mikhail and Nikolai Bestuzhev were exiled to a settlement in the city of Selenginsk, Irkutsk province.

In 1844, the mother of the Bestuzhev brothers sold the estate and received permission, together with her daughters Elena, Maria and Olga, to move to Selenginsk. After the death of mother Praskovya Mikhailovna (October 27, 1846), the Bestuzhev sisters were allowed to settle in Selenginsk.

Nikolai Bestuzhev was engaged in shoemaking, jewelry, and watchmaking in the hard labor settlement. He developed a new design of high-precision chronometer, conducted meteorological, seismic and astronomical observations. He grew tobacco and watermelons, tried to organize fine-wool sheep breeding. He described the Gusinozerskoye coal deposit.

Nikolai painted portraits of the Decembrists, their wives and children, and city dwellers (115 portraits), and views of Chita and Petrovsky Zavod.

In Selenginsk, Nikolai lived in a civil marriage with Dusha Sabelaeva, the daughter of a shepherd named Erdyna Unganov, and had two children from her: Alexei (1838-1900) and Ekaterina (1844-1929).

Due to the difference in religion, the marriage was not registered. In order to protect his children from arbitrations on the part of the authorities and public opinion, and to provide them with a decent future. Nikolai Bestuzhev registered the children in the name of their godfather, the Selenginsk merchant Dmitry Dmitrievich Startsev, with whom he had long-standing friendly relationship.

In 1851, grief befell the family - Dusha disappeared without a trace. There was an assumption that, most likely, she drowned in the Selenga River.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bestuzhev died on May 15, 1855, in Selenginsk, having accomplished a feat of true heroism when returning from a strong snowstorm from Irkutsk to Selenginsk, he overtook two old women on the icy road across Lake Baikal. He put them in a wagon, and he himself sat with the goats and continued the crossing. At the same time, he caught a cold, took to his bed, and a few days later died as a righteous man. A monument was erected in his honor in Selenginsk.

Decembrist Mikhail Alexandrovich Bestuzhev (1800-1871)



Mikhail Bestuzhev was born on October 4, 1800, in St. Petersburg. At the age of seventeen, he graduated from the naval corps and was sent to sail off the coast of France. Acquaintance with European life made a strong impression on him.

Freedom-loving, revolutionary dreams fermented in his head. On his second time abroad in 1821, he stopped in Copenhagen after leaving Arkhangelsk. The stories of his comrades intensified his positive impression of Western Europe which included Italy, Spain and Germany.

In 1824, Mikhail Bestuzhev was introduced into a secret society. A year later, Mikhail Alexandrovich was transferred to the Moscow Regiment as a staff captain. He took an active part in the events of the Decembrist uprising and urged the soldiers not to take the oath of allegiance to Emperor Nicholas. He led the company to Senate Square, along with three other companies marching under the command of Prince Shchepin-Rostovsky and brother Nikolai Bestuzhev. After his arrest, he was first sent to the Peter and Paul Fortress, and in September 1826 he was transferred to Shlisselburg, from where in September 1827 he was sent to Siberia with his brother Nikolai.

While sitting in the fortress, Mikhail came up with a "wall alphabet" for tapping information to other prisoners. This invention passed from generation to generation. He was serving hard labor was serving in Chita.

With the transfer in 1830 to the Petrovsky Camp, the situation improved and there was a lot of time left to work on his education. While still in the fortress, Bestuzhev became interested in learning major foreign languages. Within his circle of comrades who studied philosophy and history he wrote a number of essays. In 1839, Bestuzhev was released to a settlement in Selenginsk. Here he acquired a house and property and with his characteristic passion devoted himself to agriculture. Like all, Bestuzhev worked hard, knew many crafts and applied his abilities to various kinds of inventions.

Mikhail did not use the amnesty of 1856 for a long time. He also wrote a lot in prose and verse but did not publish anything. In his old age, he wrote interesting notes about the December 14 revolution and the life of the Decembrists in Siberia, as well as memoirs about his brother Nikolai. In 1867, he decided to move to Moscow.

Mikhail Alexandrovich Bestuzhev died on July 3, 1871, from cholera. He was buried at the Vagankovsky Cemetery in Moscow.

Source: <https://nrb.ru/?p=58580>

The Startsev Family

Dmitry Dmitrievich Startsev

D.D. Startsev was a wealthy tea merchant and a close friend of Nikolai Bestuzhev, he adopted Nikolai's children Alexei and Ekaterina at the request of Nikolai Bestuzhev.

Alexei Dmitrievich Startsev

One can talk endlessly speak about Alexei Startsev (the son of Nikolai Bestuzhev). He managed to do so very much for the development and glorification of Siberia and established Russia's relationships with China, Mongolia, France, England ...here we will only present most important.



Alexei Startsev first studied under the guidance of his father, Bestuzhev. Nikolai Aleksandrovich. He opened a school right at his home and taught literacy to peasant and merchant children, both Russians and Buryats. Nikolai Bestuzhev took Alexei with him on expeditions across Siberia, they visited nomad camps, visited the Gusinozersk Dastan (monastery), got acquainted with history, life, culture, and customs.

In trading affairs, Alexei became an assistant to his foster father in the "D.D. Startsev" enterprise. Having reached adolescence, Alexei began working as a clerk for Dmitry Startsev, and then for the merchant Lushnikov in Kyakhta.

In 1858 -1895. Alexei Startsev was an active figure in Russian Chinese economic and diplomatic relations. In 1861 Alexei left Kyakhta for Tianjin (China).

Alexey spoke several languages, including French. Among his most important achievements were the creation of the Russian Chinese Bank and the signing of the Sino-French agreement of 1858 in Tianjin, for which he was awarded the French Legion of Honor. In the summer of 1874, he met the merchant M.T. Shevelev, together they visited Vladivostok and organized sea transportation of tea from China to Vladivostok and further along the Amur to Irkutsk.

At the same time, Startsev and Shevelev took up the development of oil in Sakhalin and organized the Sakhalin Oil Partnership "Zotov and Co", where Alexei Dmitrievich received a large share.

By the end of the 19th century, Alexei was already a millionaire. In Tianjin, he built 40 stone houses and a printing house, donated a piece of land to the Municipality of the English Concession, where Queen Victoria Park is located. In this park, Alexei Dmitrievich built the first demonstration railway in China, 2 miles long, and a telegraph. In Tianjin he created a river fleet, participated in the construction of telegraph communications.

In 1874, Alexei Dmitrievich married the daughter of the Kyakhta merchant Nikolai Sidney, Elizaveta Nikolaevna. The wedding was celebrated in Kyakhta, and then the young people left for Tianjin. There, five children were born one after another.

Startsev named his children after his closest relatives:

- Nikolai (1881) - in honor of his father, the Decembrist Nikolai Bestuzhev
- Dmitry (1883) - in honor of his adoptive father Dmitry Startsev
- Alexander (1884). - in honor of Bestuzhev-Marlinsky
- Elizabeth (1875) - in honor of his wife
- Evdokia (1878) - in honor of her native Buryat mother, who was called "Dusha"



The Family of A.D. Startsev: wife - Elizaveta Nikolaevna, daughters - Elizabeth and Evdokia, sons - Nikolai, Dmitry, and Alexander (in his arms)

Since 1881, Alexey had been running the "big tea business" together with Kyakhta. Kyakhta merchants, having imposed a local tax on each imported box of tea, collected tens of thousands of rubles annually. With this money, a cathedral and a highway were built. Musicians, a fire brigade, choristers, a merchant assembly were organized where bosses were pompously met. The Kyakhta feasts were known throughout Siberia.

Having become a rich man and philanthropist, A. D. Startsev provided financial assistance to scientists and scientific institutions, especially in the study of the history, life, religion, and folklore of the Buryats. He financed the study of the life of the Buryats, for publication of Buryat fairy tales, and contributed to the study of the Buddhist exhibition, by donating a valuable collection of Burkhangs.

As a sign of respect for his business qualities, the Russian government entrusted Startsev with all organizational activities for the reception of the heir to the Russian throne, and the future Nicholas II. On May 12, 1891, Startsev greeted the

distinguished guest during his descent ashore from the frigate "Memory of Azov", for which he presented him with his portrait with a dedicatory inscription: "From Nicholas to the Commerce adviser nobleman A.D. Startsev."

In 1891, Startsev decided to acquire an estate on his native land and received permission to purchase 1,000 acres of Putyatin Island near Vladivostok, and the rest of the island on a long-term lease for 99 years.

So, he became the owner of the island and set out to create a diversified exemplary farm on it. He laid out a garden, marked out 70 miles of future roads. Pigs and cows were brought to the island from China and Siberia. An English geologist was invited by Startsev to look for coal there. Coal was not found, but clay was found. An English laboratory in Shanghai analyzed and determined it to be pure kaolin.

In 1894 on the island, they started operating a steam brick factory with English equipment, a foundry and a metalwork-mechanical workshop, and a porcelain factory (1895). To confirm the quality of his products, each brick was branded by Startsev. Sometimes in Russian "Старцев", sometimes in English letters STARTSEV. Many bricks were glazed. Some were used for cladding, some for foundations and walls. Many houses in Vladivostok are built from these bricks. Startsev began to produce both simple cheap dishes and thin, elegant, very expensive products.

The ship "Chaika" was purchased. It ran between Vladivostok and the island. On one of the four schooners - "Lebed", cadets of the Vladivostok Alexander nautical classes were taught seamanship. A boathouse was built for docking ships to protect the environment of the island, Startsev forbade whipping the animals. He did not allow ships to unnecessarily anchor in the waters of the island, and to throw out coal slag or garbage.

In 1896, Startsev sent refractory bricks and white clay pottery to the All-Russian Exhibition of Industrial Products in Nizhny Novgorod. At the same time, he was involved in mediating negotiations between the Russian and Chinese governments on the organization of the Russian Chinese Bank and obtained a new concession for the construction of a railway between Beijing and Russia. Startsev rendered similar services to St Petersburg and Moscow entrepreneurs.

In 1897, the silkworm was brought to the island and propagated, also a silk workshop was organized. Horses were brought in with the aim of breeding a new breed of horses. He crossbred Transbaikal horses and bred thoroughbred English horses. In addition to horses, Startsev bred cows of the Kholmogory stock, pigs, ducks and geese were raised for food. He opened a deer farm and a snake nursery, organized an apiary, planted an orchard and vineyards. Roads were also being built on the island.

In 1900, the merchant's inner circle realized that porcelain and bricks were important for the development of the island's agriculture. Cattle breeding, berries and vegetable beds, and apiary accounted for the second part of the income.

Alexei Dmitrievich collected a collection of Buddhist cult objects and a library of manuscripts and books on oriental studies. The Louvre offered for his collections 3 million francs, but Startsev refused.

During the Boxer Rebellion in May 1900, the Chinese destroyed everything that belonged to foreigners. They destroyed Startsev's house with cannon fire. Both the library and the collection were lost in the fire. When the news of this reached Putyatin Island, Alexei Dmitrievich's heart could not bare it. On June 30, 1900, he died. According to his dying wish, he was to be buried on a hill at the foot of the Startsev Mount, with a view of the entire island.

Sons of Startsev and Soviet power

After the next war that began in China in 1900, the Startsevs' entrepreneurial business in China could not be maintained. The widow sold everything that was left of her husband and left for Vladivostok.

The eldest son Nikolai, returned after studying in Vladivostok in 1902. He managed to establish production and increase the wealth of his father, but later he moved to Serbia. The daughters moved to Central Russia with their mother. The subsequent revolution and civil war confiscated all the properties from the Startsev family.

In the 1920s, the brothers Dmitry and Alexander Startsev again tried to set up a porcelain factory, but production on the island did not go on, and the factory had to be sold. They decided to organize the development of coal mines in the most economical way. However, in the mid-1920s, even this enterprise was taken away. Dmitry and Alexander were deported from Primorye to Kashira and shot on October 14 and 15, 1937.

In 1991, a monument was erected on the grave of Alexei Dmitrievich Startsev. A metal column with a bust was installed on a stone block base. At the foot of the monument there is a memorial plate with the family coat of arms and an inscription.

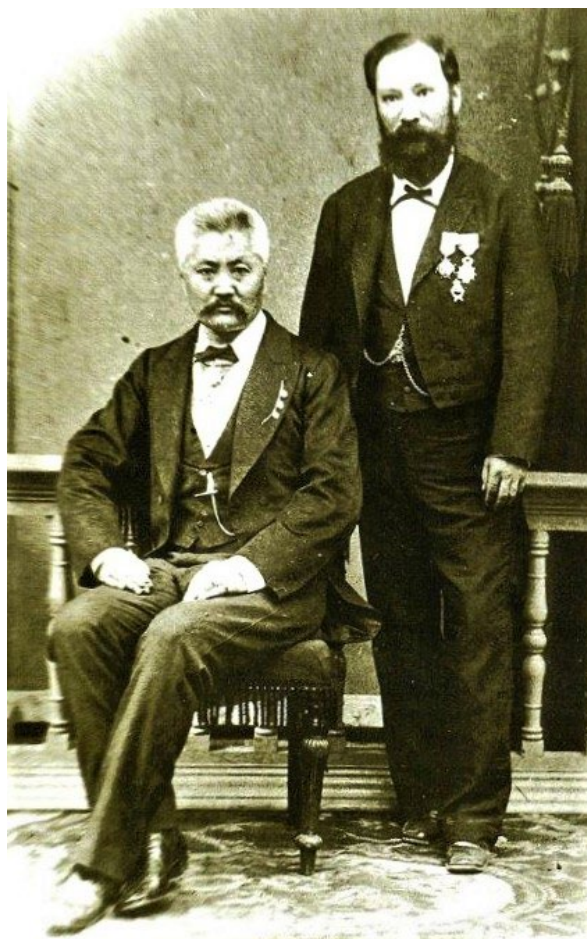


The Gomboev Family

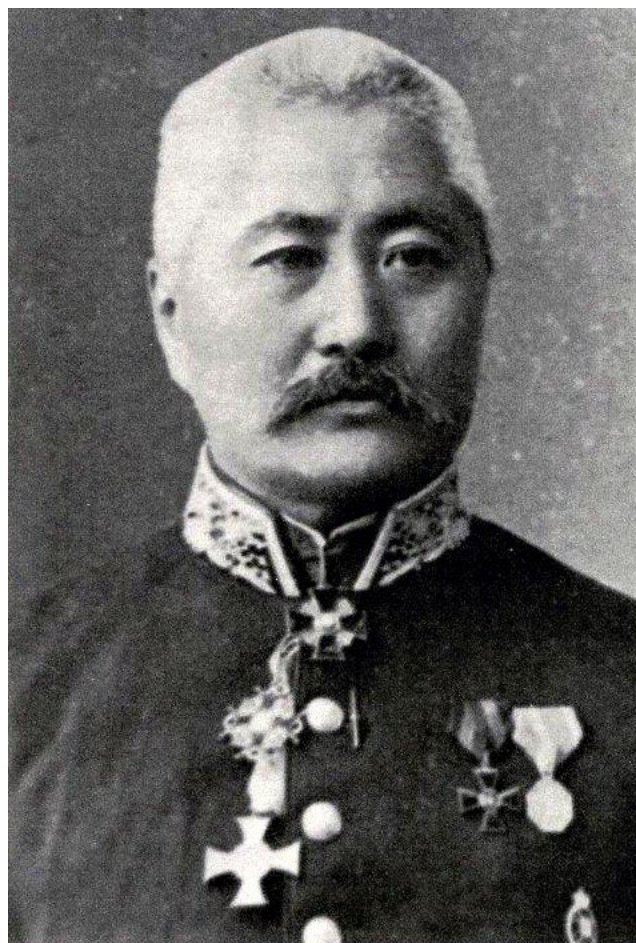
Nikolai Ivanovich Gomboev (Naidan)

was born in 1837. He was a teacher in the Mongolian Buryat School. He was a prominent representative of the Buryat intelligentsia, known for his diplomatic and educational activities, which contributed to the rapprochement of Russia, Mongolia and China.

When the position of a Mongolian translator became vacant in Urga (Ulaanbaatar), Lieutenant-General Korsakov received permission from the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia to hire Nikolai Gomboev to enter the civil service as an Officer of the 3rd Class. To do this, he had to become Orthodox. When he was baptized into the Orthodox Faith, he changed his name from Naidan to the Christian name Nikolai Ivanovich, and then was assigned to the Beijing overseas post of Russia. During his service, Nikolai Gomboev was awarded the orders of St. Vladimir, St. Anna and St. Stanislav, as well as the orders of the Prussian Crown, the Chinese Order of the Double Dragon, as well as medals for diligent merits.



Gomboev Nikolai Ivanovich and
Alexey Dmitrievich Startsev



Gomboev Nikolai Ivanovich

In 1838, Nikolai Ivanovich Gomboev married Ekaterina Dmitrievna Startseva, the sister of Alexei Startsev (my Great-Grandmother), and they had six children. Ekaterina and all their children were of the Orthodox Faith. The family lived in Beijing, where Nikolai Gomboev worked.



Gomboeva Ekaterina Dmitrievna
(Startseva) - Great-Grandmother



Gomboev Nikolay Ivanovich
Great-Grandfather

In 1903, Nikolai Ivanovich resigned from the post as head of the Postal and Telegraph Service of the Russian Embassy in Beijing. In 1905 he died in Beijing. In 1929, his wife Ekaterina Gomboeva died in Harbin.

The Zaionchkovsky Family

Great Grandfather Kuzma Andreyevich Zaionchkovsky (b. 1767)

born of Belarusian gentry, received a military rank in 1799.

Kuzma Andreevich Zaionchkovsky and wife Nadezhda Andreevna had a son Ivan born Jan 18, 1820, and a daughter Lyubov born Aug 23, 1812.

Grandfather Arnold Peter Paul von Drachenfels. (b.1880)

Grandfather Ivan Kuzmich Zaionchkovsky (b. Jan18, 1820)

Was born on Jan 18, 1820 in Tver region. Ivan was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Russian Imperia Army, and he retired in 1870.

Grandmother Anna Gomboeva (b. Dec.13, 1883)

married my Grandfather Arnold Peter Paul von Drachenfels. They had three daughters (Vera, Dorothea and Grace) and a son, Vadim. My mother Dorothea (Dora) married my father Alexei Ivanovich Zaionchkovsky in Canton, China, in 1929.

My Father Alexei Ivanovich Zaionchkovsky (1894-1978)

My father was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1894. He graduated from the Russian Naval College as Midshipman in 1916 and later became a Lieutenant in the Russian Navy. He took part in the campaigns of the cruiser "Orel". On December 1, 1918, he was at the Naval College in Vladivostok where he trained seamen.

My father left Vladivostok in 1920 before the Bolsheviks entered the port. By the end of 1921 he was in Shanghai. Then he met my mother and married her in 1929. I was born in Canton in 1931

In 1935 we moved from Canton to Shanghai where my brother and I went to school and my father worked as an Assistant Harbor Master.

After the Great Patriotic War, my father could not find any of his family in Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Apparently, none of them survived. My Father never told me much about his past but through my work in genealogy I found out that he was a descendant of the Russian nobility from Tver province.

My mother Dorothea (Dora) (1907-1943)

In Shanghai my father met Arnold von Drachenfels who introduced his daughter Dora to my father. They fell in love and got married in 1929 in Canton, China.

My brother Nikolai Zaionchkovsky

Was born in 1933. In 1951 my brother Nikolai and I immigrated to Canada to study at the University of British Columbia.

In 1958 I received my M.S. in Chemistry at UBC. Then I went to the University of Oklahoma, U.S., and received my PhD/Doctorate in 1963.



Zaionchkovsky's wedding in Canton 1929



Alex and Nick Zaionchkovsky (Alex on left and Nick on right)



Zaiionchkovsky Family with Nanny in Canton 1932



Zaiionchkovsky Family Canton 1933. Father holding Alex with Mother and sister Olga.



Zaionchkovsky Family on board of C.P.S. "S.S. Empress of Russia"
Leaving Vancouver, Canada, bound for Shanghai, China
September 21, 1935

ALEXEI ZAIONCHKOVSKY IN MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS



Alex and Nick Zaionchkovsky at St. Francis Xavier School-Senior Class 1949
Alex 2nd row and 3rd from right with Nick on top row 1st on left.



Alex at UBC 1956 Graduation (B.A.) Vancouver, B.C.

Meeting with Gloria

I started attending Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Sobor in Vancouver in the early 2000s. This is where I met my beloved wife, Gloria.



Gloria and Alex 2003

ALEXEI ZAIONCHKOVSKY IN MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS

We married on November 7, 2007, in Bellingham, Washington and we currently live in Blaine, Washington. We attend church for the big holidays and every Sunday we participate in the service using an online broadcast.



Our church wedding took place in Vancouver and Father Michael Fourik married us at Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Sobor on September 17, 2009





Holy Resurrection – Sep 21, 2014



The house in Bellingham



90th Anniversary

Visiting Selenginsk

Selenginsk was founded in 1665 on the right bank of the Selenga River, as a fortified point to protect the borders of Russia. In 1685, the walls were replaced with a wooden fortress walls 5.3 meters high. The Church of the Savior, 32 meters high, was erected in the southwestern corner. The fortress repeatedly withstood the siege and was never captured. Since 1704, the city has become a transshipment center for caravan trade with China.

In 1735, Selenginsk became the center, where the office of border affairs was located. In the city 2597 people, there were 2 churches, and about 150 households. The inhabitants bred camels, horses, sheep, grew rye, wheat, buckwheat, and oats. Fishing and hunting were of great importance.

By 1745, Selenginsk had become the largest city beyond Baikal with a population of over 4,000 people. Until 1755, state trade caravans passed through Selenginsk to China. After 1755, Kyakhta became the center of trade with China. In 1842 the city was moved to a new location on the left bank of the Selenga River.

On September 1, 1839, brothers Nikolai and Mikhail Bestuzhev arrived in Selenginsk to settle. The Bestuzhevs immediately received an invitation from the wealthy Startsev family to stay with them. Subsequently, the Bestuzhevs moved to the new home of the Decembrist Thorson. Then they built their own house.

In 1844, the mother of the Bestuzhev brothers sold the family estate and received permission, together with her daughters Elena, Maria and Olga, to move to Selenginsk.

Selenginsk. Museum of the Decembrists named after N.A. Bestuzhev

In 1975, in the former house of the merchant of the 1st guild, D.D. Startsev, the Museum of the Decembrists was opened. The museum has several halls, each of which is associated with the life and work of the Decembrists in Selenginsk. The museum presents things that belonged to the Decembrists and has a large exposition of the life in Russia in the 19th century.

In their house the Startsevs held large literary evenings and salons. There was always music in the house. The interest of visitors is the furniture of the 19th century. The gallery of portraits of the Decembrists and their wives, the work of Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev, is also very interesting.

Having settled in Selenginsk, Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev was engaged in the scientific study of the region. He became close to the Buryats and often visited them. The exposition presents a Buryat yurt, dishes and utensils of the Buryats, as well as hunting tools of the Buryat tribes.



Selenginsk - D.D. Startsev House & Museum of Dekabrists





Trunk belonging to N.A. Bestuzhev sisters.





Cross from the Chapel of the Holy Cross was built by Nikolai Bestuzhev



"Memorial furniture room" desk and chair made by Nikolai Bestuzhev

Selenginsk. Memorial of the Decembrists

A memorial complex was built over the graves of Konstantin Petrovich Torson, his mother Sh.K. Thorson, Nikolai Alexandrovich Bestuzhev, his son and wife of Mikhail Alexandrovich Bestuzhev.



Selenginsk Region. Gusinoozersky Dastan

Buryatia is a Buddhist republic. The dastan in Goose Lake was the center of Buddhism from 1783 to 1935. Traditional Buddhist services are held here. (Alex on far right)



Meeting with the Buddhist monk at Gusinoozersky Dastan

Visiting Kyakhta

The city Kyakhta arose in 1727 on the Mongolian border and became the main center of Russian-Chinese trade. Through Kyakhta, Russia exported to China cloth, silk and various manufactured goods. From China tea was imported, and in small quantities, silk, cotton fabrics and porcelain products.

In the 19th century, the rich merchant city was called by contemporaries "Sandy Venice" or "Zabaluy-town". It was the only city of millionaires in the world, where people lived in grand style. Architects from Italy were invited to build mansions, tutors from France were assigned to teach children, and local fashionists ordered outfits in European capitals.

In Kyakhta we visited one of the oldest museums in Siberia, founded in 1890. It is one of the largest museums in Russia, it is also called the Siberian Hermitage.



Kyakhta Museum, the building was donated to the city by Alexei Startsev,
Son of the Decembrist Nikolai Bestuzhev

It is the largest repository of the history of Southwestern Transbaikalia and Kyakhta. Until the 20th century it was the only research institution on the territory of modern Buryatia. The museum's collection included more than 120,000 items. These are unique archaeological collections, various samples of flora and fauna and items of Russian-Chinese trade of the 18th - 19th centuries.



Kyakhta Museum, Entrance



The Church of Uspeniya Presvyatoy Bogoroditsy in Kyakhta, Russia



"Bestuzhev" gig, invented by the Decembrist brothers Nikolai and Mikhail Bestuzhev



Similar furniture built by brothers Nikolai and Mikhail Bestuzhev

Visiting Irkutsk

In Irkutsk, we visited two Decembrists houses and museums belonging to Prince Sergey Volkonsky and Prince Sergey Trubetskoy. While I was in Irkutsk exploring the sights on my own, I discovered a street with wooden houses with decorative window frames. I also had an opportunity to photograph the Bogoyavlensky Sobor (1793) and the Savior Church (1702).

Irkutsk was founded in 1661 on the banks of the Angara at the confluence of the Irkut River. This place turned out to be suitable for agriculture and cattle breeding, and the waterway provided communication with the Yenisei and Baikal.

The oldest traces of human presence on the territory of Irkutsk dates back to about 50 thousand years. Settlements and burial grounds dating back to the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages have been discovered on both banks of the Angara.

An ironworks was opened in Irkutsk in 1730. In 1738, a postal route to Okhotsk was opened. In 1747 a glass factory and a weaving factory were opened. In the 1750s, a navigation school was established. The police force was established in 1757. In the 1750s, the Moscow Highway came to Irkutsk. In the 1770s, the city fair and bank were officially opened. In the 1780s, a public library, a theological seminary, a city school, a college, and a printing house also appeared.

In 1799, with the participation of the Irkutsk merchant G. Shelikhov, the Russian American Company was created. From the middle of the 18th century, the city began to play the role of the main base of the Pacific crafts. One of the offices, the "American Barracks" belonged to it. A blacksmith, tar, furrier and spinning factories were located here. In Irkutsk, trade deals and supply operations were carried out. Teams of industrialists and sailors were recruited, many of whom were Irkutsk residents.

In 1826, the first exiled Decembrists arrived in the city. After serving hard labor, S. Trubetskoy and S. Volkonsky were allowed to settle in Irkutsk.

In 1836 the first private bank was opened. In 1839 the first public library was opened. In the 1840s, Irkutsk turned into the "Capital of Lena's gold", which attracted gold miners. During these years, the first steamboat arrived in the city and an institute for noble maidens and a theater were opened.

Irkutsk was connected to the St. Petersburg-Vladivostok route via the Amur River in 1854. Then in 1864 a telegraph line was built to St. Petersburg.



Irkutsk Prince Volkonsky House



Irkutsk Portrait of Maria H Volkonskaya



Irkutsk Prince Volkonsky House



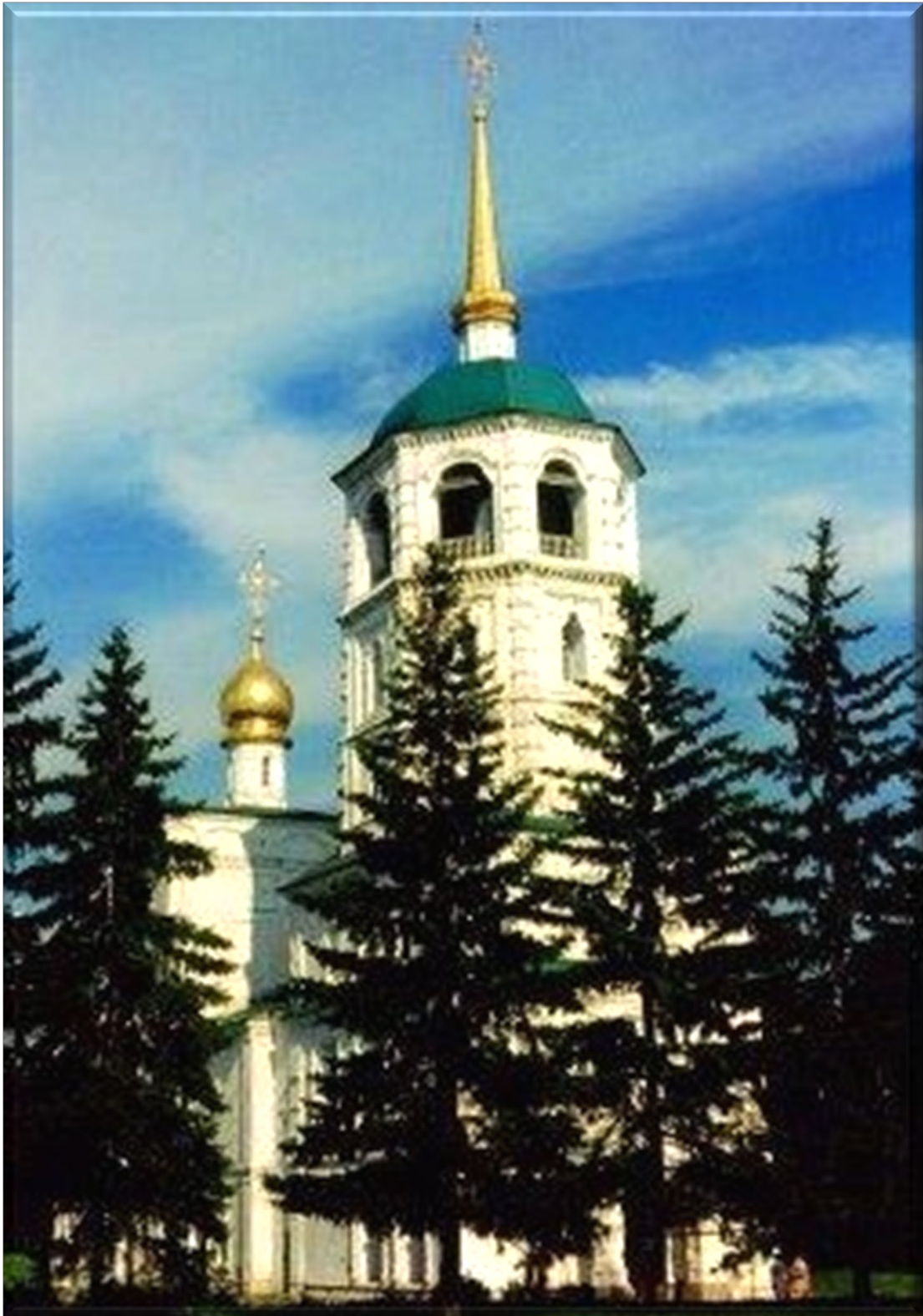
Irkutsk Trubetskoy House and Museum
Alex back row middle



Irkutsk Trubetskoy House



Irkutsk Trubetskoy House Fireplace



Irkutsk Savior Church 1702



Epiphany Cathedral 1723

Irkutsk. Wooden houses





Visiting Ulan Ude

The history of the city began with the founding in 1666 by Russian Cossacks of the Udinskoye winter hut, built to collect "yasak" from local Tungus clans and located on the high right bank of the Uda River, near its mouth. In 1689 it was turned into the Verkhneudinskaya fortress.

In 1690 the settlement received the status of a city and the name Udinsk, in 1735 the settlement was renamed Verkhneudinsk.

In 1775, the city received a coat of arms according to the Charter of Liberties for the cities of Catherine II, since 1783 it has been a county town of the Irkutsk province. In the XVIII-early XX centuries - the administrative, military, cultural, commercial and industrial center of Western Transbaikalia - Transbaikal region, as well as the administrative center of Verkhneudinsky District.

On July 27, 1934, by a decree of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, it was renamed Ulan-Ude. On July 7, 1957, the city became the capital of the Buryat ASSR.

Ulan-Ude is a major railway junction (the main passage of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the starting point of the southern line of the Eastern Railway to Mongolia and China).



Alex Zaiionchkovsky at the Railway station in Ulan Ude

ALEXEI ZAIONCHKOVSKY IN MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS

Our group visited the home of our tour leader Vasily Petrov, the organizer of this 2002 gathering of the clan invited us to his home in Ulan Ude where we stayed overnight.

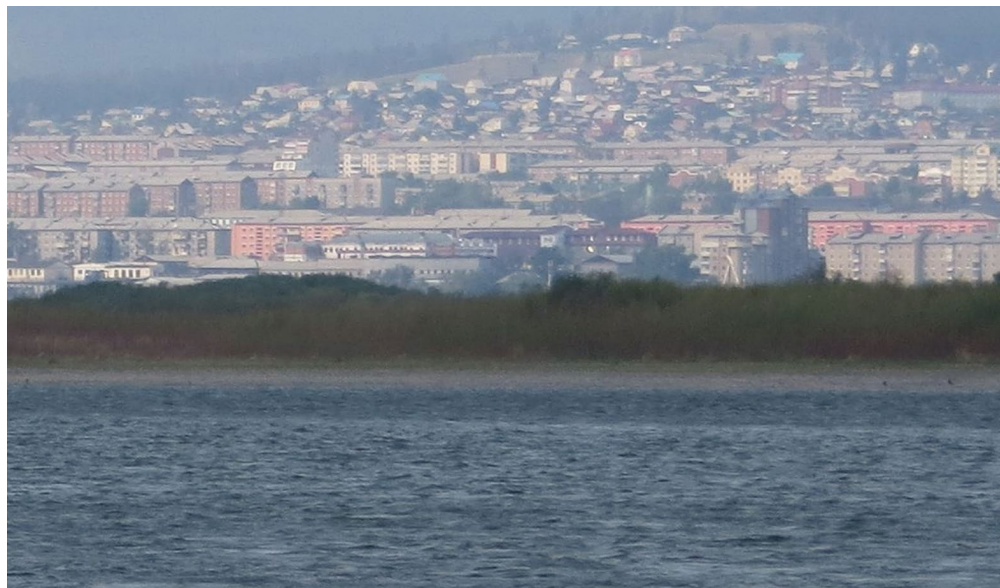


ALEXEI ZAIONCHKOVSKY IN MEMORY OF MY ANCESTORS

Ludmilla Petrovna Petrova invited us to visit their dacha outside of town where she grew vegetables and berries in her yard and greenhouse. I remember how they fed their cat raw fish from Lake Baikal.



Ulan Ude Ludmilla Andreevna Petrova's Dacha



Selenga River

Visiting Putiatin Island

In 1891, Alexei Dmitrievich Startsev became the owner of the Putiatin island. He laid out a garden and pigs and cows were brought to the island from China and Siberia. In 1894, they started operating a steam brick factory, a foundry and a metalwork-mechanical workshop, and a porcelain factory in 1895. He began producing simple cheap dishes and thin, elegant, very expensive products.

There was a ship "Chaika" which ran between Vladivostok and the island. On one of the 4 schooners - "Lebed", cadets of the Vladivostok Alexander nautical classes were practicing. A boathouse was built for docking ships. In 1897, the silkworm was brought to the island and propagated, and a silk workshop was organized.

According to his dying wish, he was buried on a hill at the foot of the Startsev Mount, from where a view of the entire island opens.



Putiatin Island Aleksei Dmitrievich Startsev Grave and Monument

Putiatin Island. Relatives – July 2002



Vladivostok

The day before I left Vladivostok the local newspaper "News on Saturday" interviewed me.



Alexei Startsev (b.1959) and his father Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Startsev (b.1928-d.2020) gave me a bilingual book on "Old Vladivostok" which contained two pages devoted to Alexei.



Aleksei Dmitrievich Startsev's mansion on Svetlanskaya Street in Vladivostok





Aleksei and his father Aleksandr gave me an embossed brick with the initials "ADS" in English.



Vladivostok Train Station

The 100th Anniversary of Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Sobor

In September 2024, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Holy Resurrection Russian Sobor and I would like to say a few words to commemorate this important occasion. It has been my honour and privilege to be a part of our dear church since in the early 2000s. I am very happy to see so many young families attending Holy Resurrection.

When I first started attending this church Father Andrey Somow was the Rector and he reminded me of a typical Russian priest that I had seen in Shanghai. I really liked Father Andrey, he was a very sincere man, a strict Orthodox no-nonsense priest. We met Archbishop Seraphim during his various visits to our church. I liked him, at first, I thought he was a Russian but then I was told he isn't but that's okay. I found him very friendly, talkative, and easy to talk to.

I remember Father James McLuckie, he was a fine priest, spoke good English, a very nice man and I really liked talking with him. I also liked Father Sipko who assisted Father Michael with the mass. He did his part in English and Father Michael did his part in Russian which was good for the non-Russian speaking congregation of the church to have a combination.

I have known Father Michael ever since he came to this parish. He is a very nice person; I really like him, and I think he is very valuable to this church not only for his hard work and dedication but for his concerns for the spiritual needs of the people.

I am glad that there is a Russian Orthodox Church in Vancouver, and I am also glad to be part of the congregation. Whenever my wife and I have travelled to Russia or any other country we always visited Orthodox churches, lit candles, and said a prayer.

My deep gratitude and appreciation to all who contributed to our dear Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Council, and may it celebrate many more centuries.

With love In Christ
Alexei Zaionchkovsky

Editor – Alexander Ovodov - Oct 2023