History of Forestry of the Mari Region in Written Sources of the Second Half of XIX—Early XX Centuries

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Abstract. The article analyzes the information potential and source value of various types of written sources on forestry of the Mari region in the second half of XIX—early XX centuries. These include legislative acts, office records of public institutions, statistical materials, periodical printing, testimonies and memories of contemporaries of the period under review. These historical sources contain valuable information on the state and development of forestry in the Mari region, changes in the natural environment, state forest policy, timber industry, timber trade and the functioning of the Kozmodemyansk forest fair, which was of all-Russian importance.

1. Introduction

In modern historical science, the problem of the influence of the natural and geographical factor, including forests, on the Russian historical process draws increasing attention of researchers. For Russia and its regions forest for a long time was one of the main components of the natural environment and the most important factor of life support and life activity of the population. The forest continues to be one of the main natural wealth of the Republic of Mari El, occupies more than 50 % of its territory, and forestry plays an important role in its economy. The relevance of the stated issues lies in the fact that the modern forest industry of the Republic of Mari El, as well as Russia in a whole, is experiencing a number of problems related to forest conservation and sustainable forest management. The solution of these difficulties can be facilitated by an appeal to the historical experience of the organization of forestry in the Mari region of the second half of XIX—early XX centuries.

2. Method and Results

The forestry issue for the territory of the Mari region is reflected in a variety of written sources, including legislative acts, office records of public institutions, statistical materials, periodical printing, testimonies and memories of contemporaries.

In legislative acts ("The Charter of the Forest" from 11 November 1802, the "Regulations on the new structure of forest lands" of 1826, the "Regulations on forest guards in state forests" of 1869, the "Regulation on forests conservation" of 1888, the "Forest Charter" of 1905 and others), information on the main directions of state policy in the field of forestry and the peculiarities of management of the forest sector of the economy in the second half of XIX—early XX centuries is reflected [1, 2, 3, 4]. The forest legislation of the period under review has largely contributed to the forestry development. First of all, the state itself, the main owner of forest resources, was interested in this. Important role had legislative acts aimed at providing relatively greater autonomy in decision-making to local government agencies and forestry workers; improvement of state forests condition with the attention to artificial reforestation and, in particular, economic care of forest plantations; training qualified specialists in the field of forestry; improvement of material welfare and official position of foresters and forest guard [5].
The actual material is contained in *office records of public institutions* deferred in the state archives funds. The Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg retains valuable information about the organization and conduction of forestry works, development of the forest industry, profitability of forestry of the Kazan province, as well as data on service of foresters and forest guards [6].

The funds of State Archives of the Republic of Mari El (Yoshkar-Ola) reflect important information that allows to characterize various aspects of forestry of the Mari region: annual reports and forest plans, forest protection materials, forest management, forest and reforestation works, tax and economic descriptions of forests, forest area size and profitability reports, documents on the use of forest areas by various categories of population; timber activities of nobles, merchants and peasants; violation of the forest charter, quantity of harvested forest, conditions of its transportation; cartographic material for various counties with indication of forest area [7].

These data are substantially supplemented by information obtained from the State Historical Archive of the Chuvash Republic (Cheboksary) containing important facts on the state and profitability of forestry of the Kazan province; unauthorized logging, forestry activities of the population [8]. In the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan) postponed the materials of annual reports, economic plans for Kazan and other forest areas of the Mari region, the functioning of fair forest trade, unauthorized uses in state forests, forestry works, the number of forests subject to the supervision of forest conservation management [9].

In the State Archive of the Kirov region, the annual reports of the foresters, information about the development of forest fisheries among peasants of the counties of Vyatka province are of particular value [10]. The Central Archive of the Nizhny Novgorod region contains valuable information on the forestry works, the condition of forestry, both in the state and in private-ownership forests of Nizhny Novgorod province [11].

*Statistical materials* constitute a special group of sources. Statistical collections on Kazan province contain important information about population, forest crafts of rural and urban residents, forestry, alloy rivers, forest management works [12, 13]. Considerable attention to the state of forestry in Urzhum County of Vyatka province is paid in the statistical collection of N.N. Romanov. The author provides valuable factual data on the number of harvested timber, losses suffered from forest fires and unauthorized logging. In his work, the author also revealed the occupation of peasants by beekeeping, hunting and timber processing [14].

Important information about the owners of factory enterprises in the field of wood processing, their location, time of foundation, number of workers and cost of produced products in Kazan, Vyatka and Nizhny Novgorod provinces is given in the publications of the Ministry of Finance, Trade and Industry of the imperial government [15, 16]. Valuable statistics about functioning of the Kozmodemyansk forest fair, development of peasant forest crafts published in annual provincial reviews [17]. In order to determine the total number of persons employed in the forest industry in the territory of the Mari region, their national and age composition, the data of the first general census of the population of the Russian Empire of 1897 are of undoubted interest [18, 19, 20].

In the study of forestry of the Mari region, *periodical printing* is of great value. On pages of specialized journals important data on state policy towards the privately owned woods, the organization of forest management were published [21, 22]. The provincial newspapers contain information about forest trade, timber activities of the population of the Mari region, distribution of forests among different categories of ownership as well as peasant timber processing [23, 24, 25].

The *testimonies and memories of contemporaries* of the period under review are also important. Among them is Spiridon Mikhailov (1821-1861)—talented historian, geographer, folklorist, the first Chuvash ethnographer. He left a rich scientific heritage on the history and culture of Russian, Chuvash and Mari peoples, including on forestry issues, forest crafts of the population of Kozmodemyansky County of Kazan
province, placement of coniferous and deciduous forests here, specifics of use of forest wealth by the state department, rural peasant societies and urban population [26]. Issues related to the situation of Mari peasants engaged in logging were reflected in the works and essays of a famous journalist, historian, archivist Nikolay Ogloblin (1852-1919). He described in detail the technology of forest alloy and hard work of burlaks on Vetluga, Vyatka, Sura and other rivers [27].

Various aspects of forestry, in particular the problem of natural renewal and artificial reforestation of the Middle Volga region, including the Mari region, are covered in a series of articles and scientific works of the outstanding forest scientist Bronisłav Guzovsky (1860-1914). These works describe in detail the measures taken by him to resume oak cutting on the example of the Ilyinsky forest area of the Kozmodemyansky County [28]. So the testimony and memories of historians, ethnographers and forest specialists of the second half of XIX – early XX centuries are a valuable written source on the history of forestry of the Mari region of the period under review. Their papers provide unique information on the state, use and conditions of the Mari region's forests, development of forest crafts among the local population [29].

3. Conclusions

Thus, a wide range of different types of written sources makes it possible to explain the facts under consideration, to identify the general and special in the state of forestry of the Mari region, to show cause-and-effect relations, to reveal the essence of the processes and phenomena, to determine the changes that have occurred, to identify trends of development and to get much closer to reproducing the real history of the object of study. Archival materials together with published sources make it possible to carry out the necessary analysis and to obtain a holistic view of the development of forestry in the Mari region in the second half of XIX—early XX centuries.

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