

ZEMSTVOS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST

Background of The Zemstvos

IN 1862, CZAR ALEXANDER II FREED THE 45 MILLION SERFS FROM BONDAGE, AND DIVIDED WESTERN RUSSIA INTO 38 GUBERNIAS OR PROVINCES (STATES), EACH OF WHICH WAS THEN SUB-DIVIDED INTO MUNICIPALITIES TERMED ZEMSTVOS (*ZEM = LAND*). THE ZEMSTVOS WERE A MUNICIPAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, ESTABLISHED TO MANAGE THE VARIOUS AREAS SO CREATED. HOWEVER THESE AREAS WERE NOT PROVIDED WITH ANY POSTAL SERVICE, WHICH THE CZAR CHOSE TO CONTROL BOTH IN DEVELOPMENT AND AS A REVENUE STREAM.

WITHIN A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME THE ZEMSTVO GOVERNMENTS REQUIRED SOME MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND SOON INSTITUTED COURIER AND DELIVERY SERVICES SOME THEN UNDERTOOK TO EXPAND THIS SERVICE INTO A FORM OF MAIL SERVICE, AND BEGAN THE ISSUANCE OF STAMPS TO GAIN A MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER THE PROCEDURES. ALTHOUGH MANY OF THESE EARLY MAIL SERVICES WERE SUPPRESSED, OTHERS CONTINUED UNTIL THERE WERE OVER 20 POSTAL SERVICES OPERATING BY 1870.

AT THIS JUNCTURE THE CZAR CONCEDED AND SANCTIONED THE ZEMSTVO POST AS WELL AS ALLOWING THE ISSUANCE OF STAMPS, WITH SOME RIGOROUS RULES REGARDING DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL JURISDICTION. WITHIN THE NEXT DECADE OVER 30%, OR 150 ZEMSTVOS BEGAN POSTAL SERVICES AND BY THE TIME OF THE 1917 BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION, OVER 2,300 POSTAL VARIETIES OF STAMPS, WRAPPERS AND ENVELOPES HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED. A NUMBER OF THE RURAL OR ZEMSTVOS POSTS WERE ABSORBED INTO THE ROYAL MAIL SERVICE AND ULTIMATELY THE RURAL POSTAL SERVICES WERE ALL CANCELLED BY THE BOLSHEVIKS IN 1917.

SCHLISELLBURG THE FIRST ZEMSTVO TO ISSUE A STAMP IN 1865



THIS POST WAS SUPPRESSED IN 1866

Extent of the Exhibit

TO PROVIDE A BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST JUST OVER 1,700 ITEMS WERE SELECTED FOR DISPLAY, WITH SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE 152 ZEMSTVOS THAT COMPRISED THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST NETWORK

Vagabond Issues & Extended Use THERE WERE A GROUP OF ZEMSTVO WHICH ISSUED STAMPS PRIOR TO THE ROYAL ASSENT, THESE HAVE BEEN TERMED "VAGABOND ISSUES". SOME OF THESE CEASED OPERATIONS VERY SOON AFTER THEY STARTED, OTHERS CONTINUED FOR LONGER PERIODS, AND THESE ARE REFERRED TO AS "EXTENDED USE"

Hand Printed Issues SOME ZEMSTVOS DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO COMMERCIAL PRINTING AND USED HAND APPLIED DIES TO PRODUCE STAMPS AND ARE SO DESCRIBED IN THE EXHIBIT.

One Design or Two Design THERE WERE SOME ISSUES THAT USED THE SAME DESIGN FOR THE EXTENDED PERIODS PERHAPS WITH SLIGHT VARIATION AND OTHERS UTILIZED ONLY TWO DESIGNS. THESE ISSUES ARE CAPTIONED AS SUCH.

Unique Issues & Designs THOSE ISSUES THAT BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIGN, OR USED A NUMBERING SYSTEM OR SOME OTHER REASON ARE UNIQUE, ARE SO DESIGNATED.

State Printed Issues THERE WERE STATE PRINTING OFFICES IN ST. PETERSBURG, PERM & MOSCOW. MANY ZEMSTVOS EVENTUALLY TRANSFERRED THE STAMP PRODUCTION TO ONE OF THESE OFFICES AND UTILIZED STOCK DESIGNS SUCH AS THE ARDOTOF, BAKHMUT AND OSTROF STAMPS. OTHER ZEMSTVOS USED THESE DESIGNS ONLY FOR ALLOF THEIR ISSUES. THESE ARE REFERRED TO IN THE EXHIBIT AS STATE DESIGN ISSUES.

ZEMSTVOS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST

WESTERN RUSSIA EXTENDS FROM THE URAL MOUNTAINS ON THE EASTERN BORDER TO EUROPE ON THE WESTERN BOUNDARY, AND FROM THE CASPIAN & BLACK SEAS IN THE SOUTH TO FINLAND AND THE BALTIC IN THE NORTHWEST. THE DIVIDED AREAS INDICATE THE OUTLINE OF THE 36 GUBERNIAS WITHIN WHICH WERE THOSE 33 GUBERNIAS WHICH CONTAINED THE 152 ZEMSTVOS THAT ESTABLISHED THE RUSSIAN RURAL POSTAL SERVICE.

THE SIX LARGEST GUBERNIAS IN TERMS OF POSTAL ITEM: ISSUED WERE MOSCOW, NOVGOROD, PERM, POLTAVA, PSKOF AND VOLOGDA WHICH HAVE BEEN INDICATED ON THE MAP, ALONG WITH NOVGOROD, WHICH IS ALSO ONE OF THE OLDEST SETTLEMENT AREAS IN RUSSIA.

COPIES OF SELECTED AREAS OF THIS MAP ARE REPEATED IN THE APPLICABLE AREAS OF THE EXHIBIT WHERE THE VARIOUS GUBERNIAS ARE LOCATED, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN ORIENTATION GUIDE FOR THE VIEWER.

CHUCHIN PUBLISHED ONE OF THE FIRST CATALOGUES ON THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST IN 1925. IN THIS PUBLICATION HE USED A RARITY RATING TO ITEMIZE CERTAIN ITEMS WHICH HE RATED AS "R" BEING LESS THAN 50 "RR" < 25, "RRR" < 10, "RRRR" < 5.

IN THIS EXHIBIT "R" ITEMS ARE SIGNIFIED BY A RED FRAME AROUND THE ITEM WITH THE RARITY FACTOR SHOWN AS WELL .



POSTAL HISTORY ITEMS FOR ZEMSTVOS ARE NOT PLENTIFUL, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE POSTAL SYSTEMS OPERATED IN VERY REMOTE AREAS, AND THE LETTERS WERE NOT RETAINED, OR THE POSTAL ITEMS OFTEN LEFT THE REGIONS AND THE ROYAL MAIL STAMPS WERE POSSIBLY PREFERABLE TO THE ZEMSTVO POST. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE 1917 REVOLUTION CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION OF MUCH OF THIS ASPECT OF THE POSTAL HISTORY. THIS RARITY OF THE ZEMSTVO COVERS IS THE MAJOR REASON THERE ARE ONLY A FEW EXAMPLES (24 ITEMS) WITHIN THIS EXHIBIT.

THE VIEWER IS ALSO DIRECTED TO NOTICE THAT THERE WAS A MARKED INFLATION TOOK PLACE IN THE LATER YEARS OF THE 19TH CENTURY, WHICH IS VERY OFTEN REFLECTED IN AN INCREASE IN POSTAL RATES, AND THE APPLICATION OF SURCHARGES ON A NUMBER OF THE ISSUES IN THAT PERIOD.

Organization of the Exhibit

THE SIX LARGEST GUBERNIAS MOSCOW, NOVGOROD, PERM, POLTAVA, PSKOF AND VOLOGDA HAVE EACH BEEN ALLOCATED TO THEIR OWN PARTICULAR FRAME WHICH IS AUGMENTED BY SOME OF THE SMALLER ZEMSTVO ISSUES AS SEEMED COMPLIMENTARY TO THE EXHIBIT.

FRAME 1 PAGE 1 - INTRODUCTION WITH BLOCK OF 4 SCHLISSELBURG STAMPS

PAGE 2 – THE ZEMSTVO MAP OUTLINING THE LOCATION OF THE VARIOUS GUBERNIAS

PAGES 3 – 16 THE FIRST ZEMSTVO WITHIN ST. PETERSBURG TO ISSUE STAMPS
& THOSE ZEMSTVOS WHICH INFLUENCED THE STATE PRINTING DESIGNS

FRAME 2 PAGES 17- 32 THE GUBERNIA OF MOSCOW WITH 5 ZEMSTVOS & 5 SMALLER GUBERNIAS

FRAME 3 PAGES 33 - 48 THE GUBERNIA OF PERM WITH 12 ZEMSTVOS PLUS SARATOF & TAVRIDA

FRAME 4 PAGES 49 - 64 THIS FRAME DISPLAYS THE GUBERNIAS OF NOVGOROD WITH 10 ZEMSTVOS & VIATKA WITH 7 ZEMSTVOS

FRAME 5 PAGES 65 – 80, THE GUBERNIA OF POLTAVA ONE OF THE LARGEST GUBERNIAS HAS 12 ZEMSTVOS WHICH UTILIZE THE FULL FRAME.

FRAME 6 PAGES 81 – 96 THE GUBERNIA OF PSKOF & KHERSON WITH 6 ZEMSTVOS EACH.

FRAME 7 PAGES 97 – 112 THE GUBERNIA OF VOLOGDA , SAMARA & THE DON TERRITORY

FRAME 8 PAGES 113 – 128 DISPLAYS SIX OF THE SMALLER GUBERNIAS

FRAME 9 PAGES 129 – 144 THE GUBERNIA OF RYAZAN, TVER & 2 OTHER GUBERNIAS

THE MAP OF WESTERN RUSSIA

