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Specifics of Service in the Archive of the St. Petersburg Office of the State Bank in the Early 20th Century

Abstract

The article discusses specific features of service in the archive of the deposits department of the St. Petersburg office of the State Bank in the early 20th century. The author reviews labor conditions and wages of archive employees. The documents storage in the deposit department was one of the largest of all such institutions in the extensive network of branches of the St. Petersburg office of the State Bank. Specific operational activities of the deposits department necessitated storing considerable volume of documents in their archive. Servicing a large clientele, who could deposit or withdraw capital at any date, required from archivists much effort not just to safeguard bank documents, but also to issue numerous account statements for various private and state institutions, as well as residents of the capital and its environs, whenever the deposit department employees demanded them. For timely provision of the necessary information on accounts to the bank officials, the archive employees listed information on each client, creating a unique database. Most painstaking was their work on compilation of the so-called "movable alphabet," index of 1.5 million cards for all clients of the St. Petersburg office (by the end of 1917). Systematization of documents and maintaining of the archive also demanded much effort. Quite often the archive employees lacked time, and thus a significant amount of random unfilled documents accumulated over time. The article discusses ways to overcome these difficult situations, for instance, by outsourcing. The article provides some information on the archive officials, their wages, bank vacation/leave policies. It is noteworthy that in the days of World War I the archive began employing women, most often

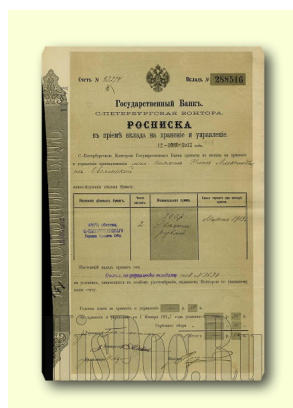
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wives of bookbinders called for military service. The experiment was extremely successful. The State Bank highly appreciated their professional qualities and willingly hired women, when there was a vacancy.

Keywords

Archivist, archive, public service, St. Petersburg office of the Russian State Bank.



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