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"I WROTE DOWN EVERYTHING I FELT IN MY HEART OF HEARTS...": A COLLECTION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TEACHERS FROM THE KAZAN PROVINCE

Abstract

The article is devoted to analysis of the collection of autobiographies written by teachers of primary schools of Chistopol and Yadrin uyezds of the Kazan gubernia in 1880s. The collection is stored in the Manuscripts and Rare Books Department of the N.I. Lobachevsky Scientific Library of the Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Autobiography, a bureaucratic document for all intents and purposes, nevertheless contains information allowing reconstruct socio-psychological image of a teacher and their daily life, and thus adds to the history of primary schools and that of the Russian peasantry as well. Teachers had to write autobiographies for further submission to public schools inspector. The purpose of such autobiographies was employment-related: they supplied information on the teachers' origin, education and previous places of employment to the educational authorities. From text of some autobiographies it clearly follows that teachers were answering questions posed by an inspector. Autobiographies must have been closely examined by an inspector, as there are corrections and stylistic editing, and also notes in the margins, all of which require further study. Every autobiography reports attitude of villagers towards school, teacher, and education. Some

assess teaching manuals and methods of education. An integral feature of all autobiographies as a source is their inherent subjectivity. However, this quality proves most valuable when working on a topic related to study of man. Autobiographies speak with living voices of the teachers telling of their attitudes, values, and problems. All in all, this collection of autobiographies of rural schools teachers is a valuable historical source that contains unique information on formation and development of national school. Teachers having sentimentalized reality, autobiographies show how the reality was perceived.

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Keywords

Historical source, collection of autobiographies of primary schoolteachers, Zemstvo school, folk school, daily life.

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