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Features of Paperwork for Appointment of Widows as Prosphora Bakers in the Tobolsk Diocese
in the 19th – Early 20th Century

Abstract

The article is devoted to studying the diocesan paperwork on appointment of widows of clergy as prosphora bakers in the 19th - early 20th centuries. It uses general scientific, historical, and special methods of document science. Despite an abundance of works devoted to the life of

clergy in pre-revolutionary Russia, the issue of the Tobolsk Spiritual Consistory paperwork concerning request of the widows of clergy to appoint them prospora bakers in the 19th - early 20th century remains unexplored. During the period of Church revival, it is of great importance to study the history of life of clergy and solution of their problems in the dioceses. The study is to identify the features of paperwork on appointment of widows of clergy as prospora bakers in the Tobolsk diocese in the 19th - early 20th century. Having studied the previously unknown archival documents from the State Archive in Tobolsk, the author has found out what affected the duration of office-work processes and the number of their stages. Most quickly were solved problems of those women, who lived closest to the Tobolsk Spiritual Consistory, and of those, whose requests were uncontroversial. Thus, there was no need to collect the lacking data, to clarify the controversial points, to enter into correspondence, and the office work included the least number of stages — seven. The number of stages and, accordingly, time needed increased with the remoteness of the widow's place of residence from the city of Tobolsk, where the spiritual consistory was located. The main stages were nearly identical, however, sometimes additional documents were demanded. In case of appointment as prospora bakers, these were, firstly, approvals expressing the consent of the parishioners and the clergy of churches in which women were to serve, or certificates of village councils, and secondly, tickets for travel to their places of service. These latter were not specific to this type of cases, but general for all personnel-related issues concerning placement in the service and transfer. Bureaucratization prevented widows from getting their desired place faster, but it contributed to a better preservation of documents, thus providing an opportunity for modern researchers to study valuable archival sources. The results of the research may interest archivists; they may be used in preparation of courses on records management, history of organization of office work, and of special courses on the history of office work in institutions.

Keywords

Historical sources, monastic paperwork, Russian Orthodox Church, Tobolsk Spiritual Consistory, clergy, widows, prospora bakers, office work.

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