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The State Optical Institute in Evacuation (1941–45): Documents from the State Archive of the
Mari El Republic

Abstract

The article analyzes documents from the fonds of the State Archive of the Mari El Republic (GARME) and considers the circumstances of the State Optical Institute (GOI) under the People's Commissariat of Armament of the USSR evacuated to the city of Yoshkar-Ola of the Mari ASSR in the days of the Great Patriotic War. The authors study materials from the fonds of departments for economic arrangement of evacuated population under the Council of People's Commissars of the Mari ASSR and the Executive Committee of the Yoshkar-Ola City Council of Workers' Deputies of the Mari ASSR; those of the M. Gorky Volga State Forestry Institute; the Ministry for Higher and Specialized Secondary Education of the RSFSR; the Directorate for Vocational and Technical Education under the Council of Ministers of the Mari ASSR; the Mari Republican and Yoshkar-Ola City Committees of the Communist Party of the RSFSR; the Council of Ministers of the Mari ASSR. They focus on the working conditions in the institute and its structural divisions, trends of scientific research, provision of its employees. On July 11, 1941, the State Defense Committee of the USSR issued a decree "On the Evacuation of Industrial Enterprises," according to which the GOI was transferred from Leningrad to Yoshkar-Ola. The institute's output was scientific work in the field of optics, both theoretical and applied, calculation of optical systems, design of optical devices and their prototypes, as well as research of new types of optical glass and its technology. In the years of the GOI's evacuation to Yoshkar-Ola (1941 to 1945), more than 70 types of optical devices were invented. The Institute performed scientific and technical management of the optical industry factories work, covered defense requests, including supervising the production activities of one of the optical industry enterprises evacuated to Yoshkar-Ola, factory no. 297 of the People's Commissariat of Armament (now a leading enterprise of the Mari El Republic, Mari Machine-Building Factory). The best work of the GOI scientists was awarded state awards, and even Stalin Prize. The complex of archival documents from the fonds of the State Military Academy of Economics, which has been introduced into scientific use, reflects the role of the party and state bodies of the Mari ASSR in organizing reception and accommodation of and assistance to scientists, engineers, designers, qualified workers of the State Optical Institute under the People's Commissariat of Armament in pilot production of new weapons samples for the Red Army, which was of particular importance in the wartime.

Keywords

Archival documents, historical sources, Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, evacuation, State Optical Institute, Leningrad, Mari ASSR, Yoshkar-Ola, Council of People's Commissars of the Mari ASSR, Mari Obkom of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

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