

Museum Network Features in Siberia

(XIX Century - Nowadays)

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Nowadays attention to the history of museums in Siberia is growing due to increasing Siberian influence on political, economical and cultural processes in Russia. The relevance of the study of museum sphere highlights the fact that museums can serve as a tool to strengthen and broadcast a positive image of the region, not only in Russia but also internationally. The paper describes the features of museum network formation in Siberia.

Siberian museums have evolved a long way. This process can be divided into 3 large stages.

The first stage of museums formation in Siberia started in the 18th century, when in 1782 the first public museum was opened in Irkutsk, then the other two museums Barnaul mining museum (1823) and the museum of mining technical college of Nerchinsk factory were opened.

These museums in Siberia were the first point to stimulate the research in history, culture and geography of this wide region, that became more intensive after establishing Russian Geographical society (1845) and its regional offices: East-Siberian in Irkutsk (1851) and West-Siberian in Omsk (1877), etc. Regional offices and branches were the base of local museums to be founded. The first local museums were dedicated to natural conditions, history, economy, the way of life and culture of the certain city or the region.

After the Great 1860's reforms the public initiative played a vital role in the establishing of new museums, such as museums in Tobolsk (1870), Minusinsk (1877), Omsk (1878), and others. With the opening of the first universities: the Siberian Imperial University in Tomsk (1888), and Tomsk Technological Institute (1900) in Siberia new museums, such as archaeological, mineralogical, zoological, paleontological, medical and art museums were opened; and most of them work with the visitors now. It is necessary to note that naturalistic, archaeological and ethnographical collections dominated among others; most of which were unique.

At this stage Siberian museums expanded horizons in such aspects as nature, geography, history, economy, culture and politics of the region, as well as population and ethnic groups, its way of life and culture features. In addition, the museums facilitated the inclusion of the region to communicative and intellectual field of Russia and the world which was expressed, firstly, in the collection's catalogues publication of Minusinsk museum, in particular, that was highly estimated in Russia and abroad, and, secondly, in the participation of Siberian museums in subject and general exhibitions of different levels.

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By the beginning of the second stage (during the Soviet period: 1920 - 1991) there were more than 20 public and academic museums in the cities of Siberia. In the first two decades of Soviet power the process of museum network formation was systematic, and its inner activity started to be controlled greatly during the whole period, which was one of the main features of this stage.

By the end of the Great Patriotic war there were only 47 museums in Siberia, but only 20 museums of local lore and 8 memorial museums could open their exhibition halls [1, P. 27], therefore the urgent problem was to save the holdings of museums and to open new museums [2, P. 166].

In this period such forms of live activities as exhibitions (especially, touring exhibitions for factories, kolkhozes, etc), lectures, meetings, historic and local historic clubs became popular. Part of Siberian museums continued research work [3, P. 3].

After the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the activity for changing the museums' expositions started and a lot of museums changed the character. For example, J.V.Stalin Museum in Krasnoyarsk was transformed into the history museum of Krasnoyarsk CPSU, Joseph Stalin memorial house in Narim was transformed into the political exiled bolshevik museum (now The Museum of political exile), etc.

At the stage the new type of museums - social museums appeared (1960's) that were under control of state museums. Such types of museums as school museums, museums of military and labor glory, Komsomol history, museums of enterprises, memorial museums became the most widespread.

There is no exact statistic date of social museums, but the active support of local history activity on the part of the party, government and social organizations increased their number in the 1960's. School museums of this type were the most spreading. Academic and university museums took a special place there, the number of which increased in the 1960's - 1980's significantly [4, P. 200].

Since the late 1960's art museums network started to appear, as well as museum system and museum conservation areas. The number of them was not great in Siberia. For example, The National Museum of the Republic of Buryat (1977), Yakutsk State Museum of history and culture of the people of the North named after Em. Yaroslavskiy (1978) [5, P. 43].

Radical changes affected the museum field in Siberia at the third stage of its development - from 1991, when political, economic and socio-cultural conditions in Russia changed greatly.

As a result of the new museums regulatory framework and current financial conditions, some museums ceased to exist.

The remaining part of the museums continued to work and had to be reconstructed: they started using the new museum technologies not only in management, but also in the expositions and work with visitors. During this period, such new types of museums as ethnographical, ecological began to appear. At the same time, private and church museums began to revive, for example, the Art gallery in Listvyanka (Irkutsk oblast, 1996), the first Museum of Slavic mythology (Tomsk, 2007), the Museum of Tomsk eparchy (2008)[6, P. 97].

During this period, new profile museums - ethnographic and environmental began to appear.

Simultaneously, the forms of work with visitors changed significantly: museum

festivals in the framework of international events “Night in the museum” took place, the interaction with real and potential visitors increased due to the Internet (official sites and social nets). This area of the museum policy was called «Museum 2.0» or “museum-participatory”, when a visitor leaves his mark in the museum space, participates in the museum content formation.

Siberian museums actively use these technologies, but their efficiency has not been assessed in detail and requires to be studied in future.

In this period it is necessary to note the development of professional cooperation in the framework of museum forums, the first of which was “Krasnoyarsk Museum Biennale”. The next one was the Third Museum Forum “Museum Treasure” in Tomsk, in which specialists all over Siberia took part.

Siberian museum network formation has long history. During the XVIII - beginning of XXI centuries the museum system transformed significantly, as well as its main components, function, character of interaction with the society and government.

To sum up, it can be noted that the development of Siberian museums reflected national trends, although it had some differences: for example, most of the first museums were established by private and public initiatives. Besides, Siberian museums participated actively in international cultural events, especially at the first and the third stages due to the support of the research and educational centers (Tomsk universities, Akademgorodok).

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