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*Dmitriev V.I.,
Student 3rd year, direction "Theology"
Institute of Social Sciences and Mass Communications
NRU BelGU Russia, Belgorod*

USE OF PARISH REGISTERS AS A SOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF PRIVATE GENEALOGY

***Abstract:** The article is devoted to parish registers and their practical use in private genealogy. The basic data on the systematization of parishioners, which are contained on the pages of the metric books, are given. The research potential of books of birth, death and wedding records is considered. Using a personal example, the author illustrates the process of searching for blood relatives through three generations.*

***Key words:** church books of records of birth, marriage, death; genealogy; the village of Kholodnoye.*

*Дмитриев В.И.,
Студент 3 курс, направление «Теология»
Институт общественных наук и массовых коммуникаций
НИУ БелГУ
Россия, г. Белгород*

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ МЕТРИЧЕСКИХ КНИГ КАК ИСТОЧНИКА ПО ИЗУЧЕНИЮ ЧАСТНОЙ ГЕНЕАЛОГИИ

***Аннотация:** Статья посвящена метрическим книгам и их практическому использованию в деле частной генеалогии. Приводятся основные данные о систематизации прихожан, которые содержатся на*

страницах метрических книг. Рассматривается исследовательский потенциал книг записей о рождении, смерти и венчании. На личном примере автор иллюстрирует процесс поиска кровных родственников через три поколения.

Ключевые слова: *церковные книги записей о рождении, бракосочетании, смерти; генеалогия; село Холодное.*

In former times, a person was first and foremost part of his family, and his lineage influenced his status in society, so an important part of historical research is the tracing of family genealogies.

Until January 1918, the main functions of civil registration were performed by the Church, keeping parish registers. Books were kept, as a rule, separately by events: birth (baptism), marriage (wedding) and death (burial). Later, these functions were transferred to the civil registry offices [1, pp. 371-374]. The peripetias of the 20th century, including the events of the October Revolution and the Russian Civil War, and the hostilities and evacuation during the World War II, led to the loss of a significant volume of primary sources, which makes the researcher's work difficult.

This article is devoted to the practice of sourcing of genealogical data and the difficulties encountered in the process of working with them on the basis of the use of parish registers. As an example of such research I would like to consider my study of the genealogy of one of the branches of my own family who lived in Kursk Province.

The starting point for beginning the research, as a rule, are family memories, often suffering from incomplete data. In my case, from family stories I knew my great-grandfather's name, surname and patronymic (Roman Fyodorovich Ts.), the assumed place of his birth (the village of Kholodnoye, Belgorod region). Additionally, it was known that in 1943 he was called up for military service and died in battle the same year [2].

Before starting the research I additionally found a report on non-callable losses of the 139th Infantry Division in the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, in which the place of birth (the village of Kholodnoye, Oboyansk district, Kursk province), year of birth (1909) and place of conscription were indicated.

Since my great-grandfather's birth date refers to the time before 1918, the main source of information for me were parish registers, which contain a significant volume of genealogical data.

The practice of keeping parish registers was developed in the pre-Peter the Great period, and the maintenance of registers for the orthodox population began in 1722.

In the parish registers of the Orthodox Church on birth (baptism) the following information about the participants of the event was given: date of birth, day of baptism, baby's name, names and patronymics of parents, their place of residence, class affiliation and religion, as well as counting what child was born in the parish of the church baptized. However, the mother's maiden name was not listed in the registers of the Russian Orthodox Church, so it is extremely difficult to continue searching for the family ties of the person concerned with relatives in the maternal line, without finding records of a wedding.

In the book of marriage records, there is not much more information about the participants of the event than in the birth records. In the information about the married couple we find information about the surname, first name, patronymic of the newlyweds, their class and age, which allows us to clarify the year of birth of the object of our search, if necessary. The next column in the book contained information about who performed the marriage ceremony. In this type of books, this column almost always contained the parish priest. Then followed a record of witnesses (guarantors) and administrative documentation about what kind of marriage it was for the church in a given year.

The approach to recording the facts of death was roughly the same as in previous cases: count of the dead, day and month of death, day for burial, name, surname, patronymic and class of the deceased, age and sex of the deceased, marital status, cause of death, who confessed and received communion before death, who and where performed the burial. These records provide much information for the social and especially demographic component of history.

To start a search through the parish registers it was vital to know the dates of birth or weddings, localities where ancestors lived, and the names of churches they attended. In the village of Kholodnoe, which was interested me, there was only one church, named the Bogoslavskaya Church, what simplified the search.

Since after 1918 all the parish registers were transferred first to the civil registry offices, and later to the state archives, I turned to the State Archives of the Belgorod region, where a parish register of the village of Kholodnoe was found. The found book had an incomplete series of years beginning from 1876 to 1914. Most of the years were missing, but the ones we needed to start our search were present.

As a result of a search through the parish register of 1909 was found a record of birth [3, pp. 322-323], dated September 29, 1909, where was recorded the newborn Roman Fedorovich Ts. and his parents - Fedor Fedotovich Ts. and Elena Pavlovna Ts.

In order to clarify data about his parents, a search was undertaken through the book of marriage records, but no record of their marriages was found in the available books. Searches for birth records of his father, Fyodor Fedotovich, and mother, Elena Pavlovna, also yielded no exact results.

But looking through all the available birth records in the records for 1884 [4, pp. 101-102], Maria Fedotovna Ts. and her parents - Fedot Leonovich Ts. and Fedora Ivanovna Ts. were found. Although it is impossible to prove kinship, given the average age of marriage and the absence of other references to Fedot Ts. in this parish, we can assume that Maria Fedotovna is the sister of Fedor Fedotovich. On

this basis, Fedot Leonovich Ts. and Fedora Ivanovna Ts. are highly probable parents of Fedor Fedotovich.

I also found Elena Pavlovna V. born July 7, 1888 by the parents Pavel Prokopyevich V. and Khristianina Nikolayevna V. Given the average age of marriage, this Elena could be the mother of Roman Fedorovich.

At this point, the search for established or presumed relatives in the village of Kholodnoe was over due to the lack of earlier parish registers. But does it mean that further searches are impossible? Let's consider several possible directions of further research.

Firstly, it is not uncommon for materials to be transferred from one archive to another. In the above example, the acquisition of the State Archives of the Belgorod Region began only in 1966, after which the archives received the funds from the Kursk and Voronezh provincial archives. It can be assumed that some of the parish registers and other materials can still be found in these archives.

Secondly, this article touched upon only the most important events in the life of any person (birth, marriage, death), which were reflected in church books. However, during the course of his life a person leaves many traces in other documents. What else can be used?

Property documents - household censuses, bills of sale (contracts for the purchase and sale of a house). Such documents can be found in the archives of the BTI (Technical Inventory Bureau). Of course, these are departmental archives and there is not always a clear catalog of cases. But property records can significantly complement and refine your understanding of your own family history.

In this article the most important aspects of the use of parish registers in genealogy research, both by amateurs and professionals, have been touched upon. Registers of births provide fairly broad information about all the most important moments in the life of a resident of the Russian Empire, and taking into account the safety of archives, they can present the biography of ancestors many generations

ago. Therefore, they represent the most important tool of private genealogy on the territory of Russia.

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