

Sergei Zhirkevich Photograph Collection

AFC 2000/026

Prepared by Sarah Bradley Leighton.



American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

November 2005

Encoded by Amarantha Dyuaaxchs, August 2006

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af006009>

Collection Summary

Collection Number: AFC 2000/026

Title: Sergei Zhirkevich Photograph Collection

Bulk Dates: 1980-1999

Repository: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Extent (original): 3.5 linear feet (3 boxes); 82 pages of manuscript material; 1 monograph with 214 pages; 1 audiocassette [missing as of October 2005]; 28 silver gelatin black-and-white photographic prints, ca. 12 x 16 inches.

Creator: Zhirkevich, Sergei, 1958-

Languages: Russian (Cyrillic); English

Abstract: This collection documents music, dance, religious processions, Maslenitsa (Shrovetide) customs, and rural traditional beliefs that persist through the political transitions of the former Soviet Union.

Scope and Content

The photographic prints, sound recording, and manuscript material were produced during an ethnographic study conducted by Sergei Zhirkevich in which he documented the enduring folk and religious traditions of regional provincial life in the former Soviet Union. Zhirkevich spent over a decade interviewing local people, recording music, and photographing in the Pskov Region of Russia, the former Baltic states, the Leningrad region, Kazakhstan, and the region north of the Caucasus Mountains. The resulting monograph, *Ot Zamogil'ia do Blagodati (From Beyond the Grave to Blessed Grace)*, was published in 1999.

Administrative History

The collection was donated to the Library of Congress by Sergei Zhirkevich after the Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, viewed some of Zhirkevich's photographs during a trip to St. Petersburg, Russia, in October 1997. Zhirkevich sent a portfolio of material to the Library of Congress and select photographs were chosen by the Librarian's office to be added to the Library's permanent collection. The material was deposited with the Archive of Folk Culture at the American Folklife Center in the spring of 2000.

Biographical History

Sergei Zhirkevich was born in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, in 1958. Zhirkevich, who is trained as a professional photographer, is a professor at the Russian Institute of History of Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia. In 1982, he began his ethnographic folklore expeditions to the Pskov Region of Russia, the former Baltic states, the Leningrad Region, Kazakhstan, and the region north of the Caucasus Mountains. His goal was to document the varied folk and religious traditions that survived the years of Soviet rule. In 1996, Zhirkevich began compiling his material for *Ot Zamogil'ia do Blagodati (From Beyond the Grave to Blessed Grace)* which was published in St. Petersburg by Ikar in 1999.

Subjects

Accordionists--Russia (Federation)--Pictorial works

Dance--Russia (Federation)--Pictorial works

Documentary photography--Russia (Federation)

Folk songs, Russian

Folklore--Russia (Federation)

Musicians--Russia (Federation)--Pictorial works

Russia (Federation)--Religious life and customs--Pictorial works

Russia (Federation)--Rural conditions--Pictorial works

Russia (Federation)--Social life and customs--Pictorial works

Instruments

Accordion

Guitar

Drum

Locations

Belarus
Caucasus
Kazakhstan
Pskov region (Russia)
Pskovskaia oblast' (Russia)
Russia
Russia (Federation)
Tallinn (Estonia)

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection was processed by Sarah Bradley Leighton in March 2005. The photographic prints were matted and boxed by the Preservation Directorate of the Library of Congress. Each print was assigned a unique identifying number and the verso of each print was photocopied to capture the handwritten notes that appear there. The verso notes that appear in the container list were translated by Sarah Bradley Leighton and Harold Leich of the European Division, but researchers are encouraged to use the photocopies of the original versos in Russian, located in Box 1, Folder 2, to make their own interpretations.

Access

Duplication of the collection materials may be governed by copyright and other restrictions.

Preferred Citation

Sergei Zhirkevich Photograph Collection, Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Extent (original)	Location	Item Numbers
Manuscript Materials			
82	pages of manuscript material	Box 1	Folder 1-3
214	pages in published monograph	Box 1	Folder 4
Sound Recordings			
1	audiocassette	Missing	SR01
Graphic Images			
28	silver gelatin black-and-white photographic prints	Box 2-3	PH01-PH28

Description of Series

Container

Series

[Series I: Manuscripts](#)

[Series II: Graphic Images](#)

The list below contains descriptions of the subject of each photograph, the location at which the photograph was taken, the date on which the photograph was taken, and the transcription of the verso caption translated from Russian to English. Also included is the physical description and dimensions of the photograph, a note indicating whether the photograph is signed by the photographer, and the page number on which the photograph appears in the monograph, *Ot Zamogil'ia do Blagodati*. It is important to note, that the location information often refers to an “oblast” which refers to an administrative territorial division within Russia and other countries formerly part of the Soviet Union.

Container List

Container

Contents

Series I: Manuscripts

BOX 1

- FOLDER 1** Finding Aid and Diskette
Copy of this document and a diskette with saved finding aid file. 8 pages.
- FOLDER 2** Copies of Photographs Versos for PH01-PH28
Preservation photocopies of the verso of the photographic prints documenting the notes written in Russian. 28 pages.
- FOLDER 3** Diary Excerpts
Typewritten excerpts from the diaries made by Sergei Zhirkevich during his field research. 46 pages.
- FOLDER 4** Monograph -*Ot Zamogil'ia do Blagodati (From Beyond the Grave to Blessed Grace)*
Copy of the book in which the photographs from the collection are published. The text contains reprinted quotations from the people interviewed. It should be noted that the form of Russian used in the text is representative of the dialect spoken in the provincial regions depicted. 214 pages.

Series II: Graphic Images

The list below contains descriptions of the subject of each photograph, the location at which the photograph was taken, the date on which the photograph was taken, and the transcription of the verso caption translated from Russian to English. Also included is the physical description and dimensions of the photograph, a note indicating whether the photograph is signed by the photographer, and the page number on which the photograph appears in the monograph, *Ot Zamogil'ia do Blagodati*. It is important to note, that the location information often refers to an "oblast" which refers to an administrative territorial division within Russia and other countries formerly part of the Soviet Union.

BOX 2

- ITEM PH01** A woman touching her head scarf, smoking a cigarette, and smiling. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Aksin'ia."
1 black-and-white print. 14 x 11 inches. Signed. Page 13.
- FOLDER PH02** A man standing on the shore of Lake Glukhoe wearing wet shorts and making the "Old Believer" sign of the cross with right hand. Pskov Oblast. 1994.
Verso caption: "Old Believer Victor, Glukhoe Lake, Pskov Oblast. 1994."
1 black-and-white print. 10.5 x 15.5 inches. Not signed. Page 19.
- ITEM PH03** A woman wearing a head scarf seated inside her house playing the accordion. Pskov Oblast. 1990.
Verso caption: "Maria Sosenkova./Singer. Accordionist, Violinist, 'white' sorceress/1990. Pskov Oblast."
1 black-and-white print. 12.25 x 16.5 inches. Not signed. Page 29.
- ITEM PH04** A woman wearing a head scarf and holding a candle with a portrait of Vladimir Lenin hanging on the wall behind. Location unknown. 1980-82?
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Bolshevik-sorceress. 80-82(?)."
1 black-and-white print. 10.75 x 15.25 inches. Signed. Page 39.

Series II: Graphic Images

Container

Contents

- ITEM PH05 A gathering of women standing in a field with a gathering of men in the background. Vinnitsy in Leningrad Oblast. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Vinnitsy. Leningrad Oblast."
1 black-and-white print. 15 x 11 inches. Signed. Page 156.
- ITEM PH06 Woman standing in front of a barn. Location unknown. 1991.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. 1991. Evdok'ia Borovikova."
1 black-and-white print. 11 x 15 inches. Signed. Page 57.
- ITEM PH07 A religious procession. Young boy and woman in foreground holding candles. Pskov-Pechory Monastery in Pskov Oblast. 1993.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Pechory. 1993."
1 black-and-white print. 14.75 x 10.75 inches. Signed. Page 58.
- ITEM PH08 A man in foreground holding a cross that hangs around his neck. In the background, a woman stands in the doorway of the house. Location unknown. 1996.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. 1996. On the path to becoming a 'Holy Fool.' Vanya."
1 black-and-white print. 10.75 x 14.75 inches. Signed. Page 61.
- ITEM PH09 A man and woman seated. Man holding a white dog. Izborsk in Pskov Oblast. 1995.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. 1995. Izborsk. Family."
1 black-and-white print. 10.75 x 14.5 inches. Signed. Page 65.
- ITEM PH10 Three women and one man standing on a dirt road near a fence. The man is playing the accordion. Pskov Oblast. 1984.
Verso caption: "Accordionist Stepan, Pskov Oblast. 1984."
1 black-and-white print. 15.75 x 11.75 inches. Not signed. Page 78.
- ITEM PH11 A smiling man (standing) and woman (seated) in front of their house. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Grandfather Savelii and his wife, Vera. (Atliakovs)."
1 black-and-white print. 11 x 15 inches. Signed. Page 87.
- ITEM PH12 Candles in foreground with people in background. Pskov-Pechory Monastery in Pskov Oblast. 1994.
Verso caption: "Prayer service at Pskov-Pechory Monastery/Assumption of the Virgin Mary/1994."
1 black-and-white print. 15.75 x 12.25 inches. Not signed. Page 90.
- ITEM PH13 Man and woman dancing in their yard while three dogs look on. Fëdorovka, Russia. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Grandfather Fëdor from Fëdorovka and his wife, Olya/Waltz: Mare's Tears/."
1 black-and-white print. 15 x 10.75 inches. Signed. Page 92.
- ITEM PH14 Man standing in a garden singing and playing the accordion. Fence posts with overturned mason jars in background. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Savelii Atliakov."
1 black-and-white print. 10.25 x 15.25 inches. Signed. Page 97.
- BOX 3**
- ITEM PH15 A group of men gathered in a field with trees in the background. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. From the series: Refuge in the forest."
1 black-and-white print. 14.25 x 10.5 inches. Signed. Page 125.
- ITEM PH16 A woman wearing head scarf smiling and playing the guitar. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Accordionist Maria."
1 black-and-white print. 15.25 x 10.75 inches. Signed. Page 133.
- ITEM PH17 People gathered in a field dancing and playing instruments. Location unknown. 1987.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Holiday. 1987."

Series II: Graphic Images

Container

Contents

- 1 black-and-white print. 15.25 x 11.25 inches. Signed. Same scene, but not the same photograph, page 134.
- ITEM PH18** A woman keening over a life-size doll as part of the Maslenitsa (Shrovetide) tradition. Pskov Oblast. 1989.
Verso caption: "Stepanida Moisenko keens (mournfully wails) for 'Maslenitsa Grandfather.' Village of Mockalianiata. Pskov Oblast. 1989."
1 black-and-white print. 11.5 x 16 inches. Not signed. Same scene, but not the same photograph, page 136.
- ITEM PH19** A man and woman dressed as bride and groom. Another man plays the accordion and another looks on holding a bottle. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Playing a wedding/Reconstruction of an old ritual."
1 black-and-white print. 14.5 x 10.75 inches. Signed. Page 148.
- ITEM PH20** A woman with head scarf singing in her house. A framed portrait of Vladimir Lenin in the background. Pskov Oblast. 1984.
Verso caption: "Liubov Berzina. Singer. Pskov Oblast. 1984."
1 black-and-white print. 15.25 x 11.25 inches. Not signed. Page 149.
- ITEM PH21** A man sitting on a chair cross legged playing the accordion. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Accordionist Vasilii."
1 black-and-white print. 10.75 x 14.75 inches. Signed. Page 151.
- ITEM PH22** A shoeless man seated on window sill of a house playing the accordion while he sings a song entitled, "Kolyma." Kolyma is the region in Siberia infamous for Stalin's labor camps. Location unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Zhora Zhukov. The first song in the new house-'Kolyma.'"
1 black-and-white print. 10.5 x 15.5 inches. Signed. Page 155.
- ITEM PH23** A woman in floral dress covering her head with a scarf and standing over a life-sized doll as part of the Maslenitsa (Shrovetide) tradition. Border of Pskov Oblast and Belarus. 1984.
Verso caption: "Preparing 'Maslenitsa Grandmother' at collective farm, 'Trudy.' 1984. Border of Pskov Oblast and Belarus."
1 black-and-white print. 11.5 x 15.75 inches. Not signed. Same scene, but not the same photograph, page 168.
- ITEM PH24** A gathering of people. Man holding a religious icon in the foreground. Pskov-Pechory Monastery in Pskov Oblast. 1995.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Pechory. 1995."
1 black-and-white print. 13.75 x 10.75 inches. Signed. Page 182.
- ITEM PH25** A cross carved into a gravestone. Izborsk, Pskov Oblast. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Izborsk. Grave of an unknown."
1 black-and-white print. 11 x 14.75 inches. Signed. Page 184.
- ITEM PH26** Outdoor religious ceremony. Priest is blessing worshippers with holy water. Location Unknown. Date unknown.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich."
1 black-and-white print. 15 x 10.75 inches. Signed. The version published on page 204 is the mirror image of the print.
- ITEM PH27** A rooftop cross silhouetted by clouds and sun. Pskov. 1996.
Verso caption: "Photo: S. Zhirkevich. Pskov. 1996."
1 black-and-white print. 15.25 x 11.75 inches. Signed. Page 207.
- ITEM PH28** Two young boys posed in front of a wall with graffiti. Tallinn, Estonia. 1982.
Verso caption: "At a wall. Tallinn, 1982."
1 black-and-white print. 12.5 x 14 inches. Not signed. Not published in monograph.