

Historical Prerequisites of Water Tourism Development in Astrakhan Region

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Abstract. The article considers the history of water activities in Astrakhan Region, discloses major stages of river merchant and passenger shipping along the Volga and the Caspian Sea. Starting from 1842, passenger carriage was performed along with freight. In 1843 Colonel Sokolovsky manufactured the first steam vessel 'Sokol'. It had a flat bottom and good interior trim and was the first to start passenger carriage. Towards the end of the XIXth century, Astrakhan was ranked number II in the total number of steam vessels, trailing only Odessa and was ranked the first in the number of sailing vessels.

Keywords: water tourism; shipping; Volga; Astrakhan; the history of navigation.

Introduction. In ancient times Greeks bartered with nomads, they built trading factories in the Black and Azov Seas; they even sailed on the Volga River, where they settled in Gelon city (in the region of Saratov). They were sailing not only on the Volga and Kama, but also on the Caspian Sea. According to Herodotus (425 B.C.) they had vessels, which could cross the Caspian Sea with oars in 15 days.

Materials and Methods Alexander the Great commanded the forests of Persia to be cut down for ship building and organized an expedition to make an inventory of the Caspian Sea and its northern coast. Greeks supposed the Volga River to be a bottle-neck between the Caspian Sea and the North Ocean. Volga was named "Oarra" by Greeks (Herodotus), Ptolemy named it "Ra". With the strengthening of the Khazar kingdom it used to be known as "Itil" and Mongols named it "Atel". In the Middle Ages it had different names: "Oara", distorted as "Babariis" or "Erdil" in Arabic. Over time it was known as the city of Bulgarian "Bulgar", Kalmucks named it "Idzil", Maries named it "Iul", Arabic writers named it "Slavonia", Turkic tribes named it "Bulga", and the Slavs named it "Vologa" which turned into "Volga".

From the Aephicus' description ancient types of water-crafts were used for fishing. A ship was narrow and sharp at the bow and stern, wide at the centre, the sheathing was pitched and fixed by wooden nails. There were six oars and as many sailors, a long oar instead of a rudder, fixed on the gunwale. The ship's crew consisted of 30 people. In the VIII century Ruses came to "Itil", dropped anchor and built temporary trade premises on the shore, imported furs, slaves, their products and brought back fish, salt and meat. They sailed even to the sea and raided the Caspian seashore. The permission for sailing the sea was received from Khazar governors. In 909 Ruses sailed the sea on 16 ships, defeated the shores of Tatarstan, and 4 years later they came on 500 boats and repeated their raid. This campaign was described in detail by Arab Maseuli. The settlers had only seen trade and fishing vessels before and were overwhelmed by the appearance of 500 boats with a crew of 50 thousand people. After having returned home Khazars made an attack on the Volga River and killed up to 30 thousand Ruses.

Materials and Methods. Sources of information, concerning these events, were collected on open source resources, namely from science and journal publications. Methods. The article uses the historical-situational method, which supposes historic facts studied in the context of the examined epoch in the aggregate with adjacent events and facts.

Discussion. In 969 Ruses under the leadership of Svyatoslav destroyed the Khazar kingdom and ravaged their capital Itil.

In the XV century names of ships such as: “PAUZOK”, “LADYA”, “STRUGs and BUSes” began to appear. These vessels were in Astrakhan with salt and fish, and their total number reached 500 units in quantity [4].

In 1471 the fleet of Vyatichi unexpectedly appeared near the capital of the Golden Horde Saray-Batu. They killed those who resisted, destroyed Saray-Batu, captured jewelry and came back with prisoners. On the way back they were caught by Tatars, but they were experienced and brave, and broke through on their ships.

After the conquest of the region Muscovy intensively began to improve relations with Asian countries. The English achieved a pass to Indo-China through Muscovy. In 1558 the eminent person Jenkinson got a charter from Ivan IV. On 28 May 1559 he sailed out to sea towards Mangyshlak on the ship specially constructed for him.

In 1562 two vessels were built for Jenkinson for the second voyage, and in 1569 the English already had a barge of 27 tons displacement [13].

In 1566 Turkish sultan Soleiman was the first who made up a plan of conquering Astrakhan back by digging the Don-Volga canal. The building of the canal wasn't successful and ships were trailed on the Volga. Their army sailed down to Astrakhan on the river. The campaign failed and after reaching Astrakhan Soleiman's army was destroyed and he turned back.

On 14 August 1634 Holstein Embassy consisting of 34 people came to Moscow with the request to get the right to trade with Persia via Astrakhan. An application was granted and at the end of 1635 Holsteins equipped the special expedition, consisting of 90 sailors, naval architects and interpreters. Scientist Adam Olearius was among the crew. The total number of members of the expedition reached 160 people. In July 1636 Adam Olearius set sail on a usual boat from Nizhniy Novgorod to Astrakhan. After getting the right of ship construction, the expedition decided to build 10 ships, but confined themselves to the building of a big one and named it “Frederic”. There had never been such ship on the Volga and the Caspian Sea before. It was a three-masted, flat-bottomed ship 120 feet in length, 40 feet wide, and a 7 ft. draft. The ship was supplied with 24 oars and canvas. It was armed with stone cannonry with plenty of lead and gunpowder. The ship was built of rot-proof pine (larch). The construction was directed by Russian carpenters. There were cabins on the ship, the crew was accommodated in the holds, a Russian pilot escorted the vessel, and Cordev M. led the ship. On 15 September 1636 the expedition stopped near Astrakhan and on 10 October sailed the sea. “Frederic” got caught in a gale at sea. At first it rode out the storm, but on 12 November 1636 it began to show damage. It began to split in the grooves because of bottoming, and to leak in the holds. On 13 November it was forced to drop anchor near Derbent. On 14 November the storm began to cease and the crew started preparing a raft. Soon native boats appeared and the ambassador was the first, who abandoned the ship and went ashore. Meanwhile the storm got worse, the vessel sunken to the deck, masts were broken, and the crew decided to cast ashore under sail. “Frederic” hurtled into the sand at full speed and got wrecked. It happened on 15 November 1636. The Holsteins didn't build vessels in Russia any more. These years various ships of the merchants sailed on the Volga. They made only 2 passages in navigation and were called “Nasad” (as belyana), “Strugs”. At the end of the XVII century even the bigger ones appeared. In 1666 a really big boat came to anchor near Astrakhan. In those days the Persian government was interested in the development of trade with Russians and Shah Abass was the first who resettled up to 30 thousand Armenians and Georgians in Mazanderzhan, relying on their experience and religious adjacency, and wishing to use migrants as trade intermediaries. Russia in its turn permitted Armenians to open their offices in Astrakhan. Armenians entered into relations with Europe and the staples were silk, leather and so on. They transported them from Perm to Astrakhan and from Astrakhan via Archangelsk to Holland and England, and received cloth and tissues.

In 1667 the highway was terminated, the decree to dispatch goods only to Moscow was issued. Having received this permission, Armenians founded a firm “Dzhulfinoва&Co” with a wide range of benefits. It was exempted from duties on Russian goods, which were exported to Persia and imported from Europe. Aspiration for trading with Persia gave occasion to Russia to open their own trade route, and thereby develop Eastern borders, by sending merchant Von Sweden with a mission to find a shipwright.

On 12 June 1667 the decree was issued to “construct a ship in Kolomensk district, Dedinovo village, for dispatching from Astrakhan to the Caspian Sea”, and then “commend the shipbuilding to boyar of Novgorod Novoshekin”.

On 24 August 1669 “Orel” saluted the city. This was the second really modern ship of the time.

Even at the beginning of the XVII century Vyatish merchants sent their goods to Astrakhan. In the ship’s journal of Astrakhan “Business Court” in 1679 there is a notation about the returning of departed vessels, and on 19 October 1687 a ship with Phillip Avral was sent to Tsar from Astrakhan to Moscow [9].

In spite of a fast-growing trade in Astrakhan, shipping, according to Soimonov, was in a worse state. Tatars and Russians didn’t have enough knowledge in navigation. They considered building and coning ships, which consisted of balks and were built as izba, to be a craft, sail to sea on them under large canvas’ only before the wind, because they didn’t know how to sail against it and therefore they couldn’t go far and dropped the anchor [10].

In 1716 besides buses the new sheeyavas: britanniza and schooner were constructed. In 1719 Peter I equipped an expedition for mapping the west coast of the Caspian Sea commanded by Van Verden with officers, among them was F.P. Soimonov. The expedition consisting of 5 ships and a troop of 150 people sailed to sea and at the turn of July it reached Baku bay. They explored the whole Astrakhan-Baku coastline. On the basis of collected data the first chart of the delta and the west of the Caspian Sea was made.

In 1724 Peter ordered to set spar buoys and beacons at the mouth of the Volga, and to turn the lights on islands [5].

The date of appearance of the first steamboats on the Volga must be considered at least by 1817. In 1819 Vsevolozhsky began the construction of a new steamboat (named “Pozhva”), which (by authority of rights-holder Berd) set sail in 1821 and came up to Yaroslavl. There he was removed from the commanding machine on the instructions of the rights-holder, and the hull was returned to the factory, where it rotted lying idle.

Meanwhile Berd obviously was disappointed in his new enterprise and shortly after the steamboat was launched on the Volga, he sold both Volga steamboats (counted five) and the right of steam navigation on the Volga and Kama to one Evreinov D.P., who began to exploit the new vessels as industrial - freight traffic activity (the first steamboats were tug only). However his business wasn’t successful, - partly because of a lack of resources, partly because of the imperfection of the steamboats, - and some years later, in the middle of the 1820s, he was completely bankrupted and liquidated his business.

In 1843 colonel Sokolovsky launched the first flat-bottomed steamboat “Sokol” with a good decoration. He was the first who began to carry passengers. In the first voyage “Sokol” transported 96 people from Nizhny Novgorod to Astrakhan.

The itinerary to Astrakhan took 9 days, and 10 days back. “Sokol” put the end of the sailing fleet on the Volga and in 1843 the company “By the Volga” was founded there. By this time there were 8 vessels on the Volga, including the steamboat “Nicolay I” specially constructed for voyage. The first paddle boats were built from wood and were similar to barge. Steamboats were topside, with a first class cabin aft. However the cabins weren’t heated and were used only as a shelter from bad weather.

On 30 September 1842 an industrial community for the exploitation of steamboats on the Volga “Steamboat Community on the Volga” was founded.

Board members were Kornilov, Polezhaev, and the Company’s Charter was approved by Nicolay I himself. After that time the tug steamboat cause was supposed to be assured.

Shipping was quite slow for many reasons; at first because of the lack of good river conditions, especially at night, by reason of what ships were staying at night; second, because of the impracticality of tugging transport vessels, intended for sailing itself. The community kept the question of the improvement of types of non-steamboats, and as a result *barges* appeared on the Volga, which soon became significant among the other similar boats.

Besides transporting, the community “By the Volga” began to carry passengers by adjusting special barges, which were crafted with plain conditions like decks and small cabins, and which were tugged with cargo cartloads of steamboats. Passengers’ tariffs were classified as the First and the Second with rates of 20 and 12 rubles from the lower reaches to Nizhny Novgorod [8].

However the obvious success of the community “By the Volga” didn’t win the confidence of the people or break the stagnancy of people, who still trusted obsolete methods of shipping [13].

The Community had big profits and in 1849 bought 2 steamboats “Kama” and “Oka”. Besides the transportation of goods they started to carry passengers en-route Astrakhan – Nizhny Novgorod. In 1848 Skripitsyn V.V. and Zherebtsov N.A. founded the second steamboat community

“Mercury”. In 1850 they received 2 wooden steamboats “Minin” and Pozharsky” with 200 horse power, 6 barges and 27 small boats sailing on the route Astrakhan – Rybinsk. These were the first transportation and passenger steamboats.

In 1852 in Astrakhan the company “Repin, Nicolsky&Co” was founded. They constructed the first steam yacht in the Caspian Sea, which voyaged between the ports of the Caspian, but it didn't last long. In July 1852 Captain Von Glazepay solicited and on the 5 February received permission for founding the association “Samolet”, which opened a special passenger business. This was the third big steamboat company on the Volga. The company received 3 steamboats with 50 rated tractive efforts. In fact they were big steam boats with iron hulls, big motive wheels on each side and unusually high double funnels. I and II Class passengers' rooms, which had only two cabins - men's and women's, were in the holds of the steamboat and were heated by iron and cast-iron stoves and lighted by oil lamps. III Class passengers were accommodated on the topside, where the casing cabins for administration were arranged for the first time. The crew lived in the fore hatch and after hatch, where common plank beds were arranged.

The company “Mercury” bought the steamboat “Silvestre&Adashev” – the first with 50 rated tractive efforts, and the steamboat “Provorny” with 24 rated tractive efforts and 37 barges. Passenger vessels had roofs, the second topside gradually improved, there was set steam-heating and family cabins appeared. That year there were set steam double-expansion engines “Compaud” with oscillating cylinders. In the 1850s a lot of steamboat-holders, such as Kolchin I.S., Juravlev M.N., and Chernov G.I. on the Volga and Ljubimov I.F. and the Kamensky brothers on the Kama, began their business and eventually set up large factories.

In 1861 N.P. Lapshin and P.P. Kolotushkin and the Degtyarev brothers organized passenger barge tugging en-route Astrakhan – Nizhny Novgorod. It used to take 16 days to Astrakhan and 20 days back [13].

Soon there appeared a new type of vessel called “trade-and-passenger”. The hold was loaded by trading goods, and passengers were accommodated on the topside, and then “express notch-towing” lost any meaning. The firm “Kamensky Bros.” equipped passenger topside with a roof. This was the main difference.

In 1866 – 67 years 30 steamboats were built there, in 1868 – 25 steamboats, and in 1869 – 50 steamboats more and the traffic of passenger ships on the Volga sharply increased. If in the 50s only trade-and-passenger ships of the community “Druzhyna” sailed to Astrakhan and the others were notch-towing, then in 1861 regular voyages were introduced: Astrakhan – Kazan of the community “Volga”, in 1861 Astrakhan – Tver of “Samolet”. In 1862 the community “Samolet” had 25 steamboats on the Volga; among them was “Aeolina”, lost near its landing stage in 1912 in Astrakhan. Steamboat community “Volga” had 4 steamboats and in 1863 opened direct traffic Astrakhan – Nizhny Novgorod [12].

On 1 June 1876 a native of Courland, A.A. Zeveke, opened the navigational route Astrakhan – Nizhny Novgorod. He skillfully organized business, attracting a large amount of passengers. He introduced a cheap IV Class. American type steamboats were fast and comfortable for passengers and these ships were ordered in Belgium in 1870. The first of them named “Alexander II”, of “Kavkaz&Mercury”, was luxurious inside and outside and could hold at least 1000 passengers. Upper topsides were for I and II Class, and III Class was below.

In the 1880s the same Zeveke introduced a new type of steamboat – flat-bottomed back-wheelers, borrowed from the South American river Amazon. The reason of its introduction was the opportunity of working in shallow-water, as deep-draft vessels couldn't sail because of the low water level and many non-dredging rifts. This type of vessel wasn't widespread because of low speed [6].

In the next years the number of steamboats was increasing. In 1886 the ship “Vera” burned down, 200 Astrakhan people died. Due to the accident, passenger traffic was dramatically reduced and the community started to renew its fleet. New steamboats appeared: “Pushkin”, “Lermontov”, “Nekrasov”, and the “Turgenev”. In 1886 – 1887 the everyday-shipments were set en-route Astrakhan – Nizhny Novgorod.

At the end of the XIX century Astrakhan was second in the number of steamboats, giving the pass to Odessa, and the first in the number of sailing vessels. “Velikaya Knjaginya Tatyana Nicolaevna” was the most famous passenger steamboat of that time. The ship “Beljana” was intended for freighting. It moved rafting downriver. “Beljana” was in use also for fishing [8].

In 1990 the steam fleet numbered 2099 vessels, 139 passenger ships among them, 244 trade-and-passenger vessels and 122 tug-and-passenger ships. The most important result of those years

was the enlargement of non-steam ships and the use of combustion engines in shipping. The contribution of the use of combustion engines in shipping, which gave 60% fuel economy in comparison with steam engines, belongs to the firm Nobel Bros. [4].

In 1911 the first passenger motor vessels began shipping on the Volga – paddle ship “Ural” and screw steamer “Borodino”. In 1912 there appeared a whole series of passenger screw steamers of a new type: “Kutuzov”, “Bagration”, “12 God”, “Tsargrad” and others.

Since 1917 there has been a decline in the total amount of both steam and non-steam boats. Year after year less of the steam and non-steam fleet was repaired for navigation. All the navigation work of 1919 was happening during the wartime: the unprecedented Civil War conflagrated the Volga. In spite of the obvious reduction in freight and shipping, caused by war and revolution, Astrakhan amazed people by the number and variety of vessels in its harbor. Fishing vessels, landing stages, steamboats and sailing ships kept persistently and monotonously dragging one after another in an endless chain. There were especially lots of sailing vessels near the Kutum, the branch of the Volga, which crosses the city. The gradual recovery of transport on the Volga began in 1920 with the conciliation of the region. The turnover of goods and the number of passengers increased [11].

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**Исторические предпосылки развития водного туризма
в Астраханской области**

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Аннотация. В статье говорится об истории развития водного туризма в Астраханской области. Раскрыты основные этапы речного торгового и пассажирского судоходства по Волге и Каспийскому морю. С 1842 г., помимо перевозки грузов, начинается и перевозка пассажиров. В 1843 г. полковник Соколовский выпускает первый пароход «Сокол» плоскодонный с хорошей отделкой, который первым начал перевозку пассажиров. К концу XIX века по числу паровых судов Астрахань занимала II место, уступая только Одессе, а по числу парусных судов I место.

Ключевые слова: водный туризм; судоходство; Волга; Астрахань; история судоходства.