

Scientific article

УДК 94(47)+94(470.45)+328

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-2-428-439

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Documents of Representative Authority Bodies as a Source on the History of Urbanonyms in Volgograd: A Source Studies Aspect: The 1950s–70s

Abstract

The article is devoted to identification and analysis of documents of the executive committee of the Volgograd City Council of Workers' Deputies containing decisions on naming and renaming of streets and squares of the city. As they reflect the historical process, the urbanonyms have great research potential. A comprehensive study of urbanonyms as a historical source involves disclosure of factors motivating to name and rename urban sites and consideration of decision-making process, which in its turn involves a wide range of documentary material. The source base of the study is minutes of meetings and decisions (with appendices) of the Executive Committee of the Volgograd City Council of Workers' Deputies. In the course of the study, a representative sample collection has been formed, the object of which is the Battle of Stalingrad. Memory of the heroism of the defenders of Stalingrad is the brightest component of the social environment of modern Volgograd. The organizational and administrative documentation has allowed the authors to reconstruct the process of naming and renaming of streets and squares in Volgograd, to determine the mechanism of names selection, to point out specific features of the City Executive Committee's work on this issue. Documents of Volgograd representative authority contain diverse historical information about the city toponymy: on causes and initiators of naming and renaming of streets and squares; on persons chosen for perpetuation in street names; on financial and technical issues of decisions implementation; on procedure for informing the executive authority bodies of names chosen for urban objects. The sources reveal the difficulties of this process, which are usually subjective in nature. Urbanonyms reflect substantive aspects of the history of city development (historical and military events), they take note of heroic guard units, role of outstanding personalities of the region and the country, population, administrative units, twin cities. In this regard, the attitude of representative authority bodies to preservation of historical memory in form of urbanonyms is important. Historical memory not only is one of the main channels for transmitting experience and information about the past, but also an important component of a person's self-identification. The authors note that decision-making procedure for naming of streets and squares has changed under modern conditions; it now involves publicity, comprehensive discussion, and collegiality, thus eliminating errors in preparation of documents and implementation of decisions.

Keywords

Regional toponymicon, urbanonyms, regulatory documents, record keeping and management documents, historical information, Battle of Stalingrad, historical memory.

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Submitted 9.02.2020, published (for citation):

SOLOVYOVA, S. V., BOLOTOVA, E. Yu. Dokumenty organov predstavitel'noi vlasti kak istochnik po istorii urbanonimov g. Volgograda: istochnikovedcheskii aspekt. 1950-e - 1970-e gg. [Documents of Representative Authority Bodies as a Source on the History of Urbanonyms in Volgograd: A Source Studies Aspect: The 1950s–70s. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2021, no. 2, pp. 428-439. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2021-2-428-439

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Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .

