

The former village and countryside location Kolomyagi is situated close to the railway connecting Saint Petersburg and Vyborg. It borders Udelny Park.

The origin of the name is unclear. Some believe that it is connected with the hill on which it is situated, while others derive the name from the verb “koloa” – clean from bark. The place might have been used for logging and peeling trees.

Peter the Great used to give such lands out for re-positioning of the peasants from central Russia. Thus, the area enclosed within the Bolshaya Nevka, the Gulf of Finland, the Kamenka and the Chernaya rivers was in 1726 given to A.Osterman, State Counselor **in charge of** state management and foreign policy.

Under the rule of Elizabeth I Osterman fell into disgrace. His land was given to Earl Bestuzhev-Ryumin. The new owner continued to develop the land having built the church of Annunciation between New and Old Village.

With the death of Bestuzhev-Ryumin, who left no heir, the estate was appropriated by the Volkonsky family.

In 1789 Princess Volkonsky sold the Annunciation **estate** together with New Village, Old Village and Kolomyagi to Sergei Sobakin who died in 1818 leaving behind seven daughters. Therefore, the estate was split to be shared between them. As a result, Kolomyagi was cut into two parts. Later on, in 1834, one of the owners, Nikitin, redeemed the village. It encompassed 960 acres of land as well as 184 serfs.

It was Nikitin who built the mansion which now can be seen on Glavnaya, former Elizavetinskaya, street. It was honored by the visits of his renowned friends whose portraits are now on display in the Military Gallery of the Hermitage.

The identity of the architect who designed it remains undiscovered. However, it could have been A.Melnikov, who also built a villa for Shishmarev, a relative of Nikitin, approximately at the same time. The mansion boasted a spacious dancing hall as well as the ornaments and decorations. The mansion was surrounded by a garden. Across the street there was a farm with a **conservatory** and several bee hives. The young owner of the estate E.Orlova-Denisova was a friend of A.Pushkin.

One of the visitors to the estate, Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky, dedicated a poem to her. It rang like this: “The mansion of Kolomyagi is rich in wonders! The gardens of Kolomyagi are a miracle of rural beauty!”

Many changes have happened since then: the gardens have become **dilapidated**, the ponds have overgrown, the elaborate iron fence has disappeared. Only some half-ruined agricultural buildings are left of the former glory.

The village surrounded by forests and located close to the Gulf of Finland was attractive to city-dwellers. As early as the 1830-s the villagers used to let their houses for summer.

After the liberation of serfs in 1861 Kolomyagi rural community was given 560 acres of land which later on became their property.

The lady of the manor kept in her property the so-called “glass hill” (now there are the church, the school and the stadium) together with some lands and forests reaching the Kamenka river.

In 1856 Kolomyagi road was built. Carriages departing from Gostiny Dvor every hour formed an intense traffic flow.

In 1878 public carriages owned by merchant Volpyansky appeared on the road. A station with stables and a restaurant was situated on 2nd Nikitskaya street.

In 1870 Finland railway connected the village with the city. The nearest to Kolomyagi station was Udelnaya. Thirty years later a train ran directly from Udelnaya to Kolomyagi along Mariinskaya (now Akkuratova) street.

In 1893 P.Avenarius built an extension of the railway. It linked Novaya Derevnya and Ozerki. There were several stations, Kolomyagi and Grafskaya among them. It was closed in the 1920-s.

The railway played a great role in the village development. City dwellers either rented or bought land allotments. In 1903 the population of the village **soared** to 1100 inhabitants in winter and 5700 inhabitants in summer as compared to 530 inhabitants in 1862. Some new streets appeared.

However, this led to the **decline** in farming. The plans for swamp irrigation were forgotten. The soil was not cultivated any more.

The Nikitin family also **profited** by property rent. At the beginning of the XX century a settlement Alekssevsky was designed. It included Pilotnaya, Novocelkovskaya and Ryabinovaya streets. Some parts were let for vegetable gardens. The roads along them were named Big and Little Desyatinnaya. With time Alekseevsky and Martynovka villages merged into one.

City lifestyle had a strong impact on the countryside. Villas rather than modest primitive houses were built. Very often they boasted beautiful designs. Pavements and street lighting were introduced.

Quite soon electricity appeared in the village.

Trade **prospered**. By 1914 as many as 29 shops had opened in Kolomyagi. Food delivery was also a common feature. A photography shop, a hairdressers' and even a piano tuner' functioned.

A concert hall had housed amateur and professional theatre performances since 1860-s. Children's parties were thrown. A boat rental station functioned on the pond.

In 1897 a fire brigade and in 1904 football club “Kolomyagi” were organized. Their football pitch was situated by the railroad. In fact, the current Saint Petersburg football club **owes** its blue and white color scheme to this first team.

A school was open in the 1860-s. At first it **numbered** 44 boys and 24 girls. As the number of the students was growing, a new building on Berezovaya street was constructed. In 1936 school moved to its present-day four-storied building.

A wooden church designed by A.Vseslavin was erected in 1906 on the “glass hill”. By that time the village was fully built. Surrounded by green **lush** vegetation, it looked picturesque. In 1916-1918 A.Blok **frequented** it.

In the first years of the Soviet rule a collective farm was created there. Soon Kolomyagi joined the city, consequently the occupations of the villagers changed. They became workers and employees.

During the Great Patriotic War many houses in Kolomyagi were dissembled for fuel. After the war the development continued. Pavements were reconstructed, running water, gas and telephone connection came into the village, new shops opened.

Story by M.Kuznetsova-Milovidova.

Questions:

1. When and how did the recorded history of Kolomyagi begin?
2. Who of the land owners left the most prominent mark in the local history?
3. What social life revolved around the estate?
4. In what way did technological progress promote the development of the area?
5. How did the population of Kolomyagi change throughout its history?
6. What did the village look like at the beginning of the 20th century?
7. Which of the places or buildings mentioned in the article can you find in present-day Kolomyagi?

Explain the words in the bold.

Find in the text the following phrases. Remember the context in which they were used.
to fall into disgrace; to be honored; to be left of the former glory; to form an intense traffic flow; to boast beautiful design; to house performances; to throw a party

Think: What makes Kolomyagi a popular dwelling area now? What can the city government do to improve it?

Project:

Find the mentioned objects on the map. Visit Kolomyagi, take photos of historical and modern buildings. Make a school exhibition dedicated to Kolomyagi neighbourhood.