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«The Village of 17-19 centuries»

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Welcome to the open-air museum site «The Village of 17-19 centuries»!

### **There's Russian spirit, there's smell of Russia...**

Under a vault of heaven, in a secluded corner of the Earth the Cossack watchtower with the view on a high mill behind a small pond with ducks, a country hut covered with straw, a small smithy is seen ...



A real village of 17-19 centuries is situated in the suburbs of the town Ertel, Voronezh region. Its creator is Vladimir Ivanovich Brezhnev, the ataman of a Cossack village Ertil'skaya, an honored farmer of Russia, the head of an agricultural association "Chance".

The vigorous figure, the active leader, Vladimir Ivanovich is engaged in the development of rural tourism in Ertel. "Chance" is a part of National association of organizations of rural tourism (HAOCT) in Moscow. There is successful future for the museum in the open air, created by Vladimir Brezhnev's hands, waiting for tourists from different countries.

First of all Vladimir Ivanovich acquaints visitors with «The museum of country life of 17-19 centuries». Each person entering the museum is welcomed by the ringing of a ship bell. Then one gets into a small hall upstairs, full of rare ancient strange exhibits.

- The museum was opened on February, 8th, 2007, - Vladimir Ivanovich Brezhnev says. An ancient distaff which belonged to Vladimir Ivanovich's mother catches our sight. Here we also see peasant labor tools which our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to work with, and joiner's tools – an ancient saw, a drill, etc. There are some exhibits of weapon and hunting trophies under the label «Hunting and fishing». There is a shock-capsular gun with a cleaning rod created in Tula in 1860. This is a gift to the museum from Spivakov A.A., a vice-president of the government, a principal of the agrarian policy department of Voronezh region.

Near the gun there is a wild boar's head and a huge pike with a wide opened large-toothed mouth. Folk music instruments, various teapots and samovars which we consider strange nowadays are collected here. There are things which peasants used in everyday life – felt boots, bast-shoes, horse harness. Various kinds of home made vodka devices are exposed too. Vladimir Brezhnev pays attention to ancient money on the table in the middle of the hall; then he tells us about a shabby, but rare book in his hands, «This is the Prayer book from all illnesses» that dates back from the 17th century. Its cover is partly burned, but it remained almost untouched by the fire inside.

Now we go from the museum to a farmstead. It is under reconstruction but still it astonishes. At the border of the farmstead there is a country log hut, small and cozy inside. The original Russian furnace



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occupies a lot of space here.

“And here is”, Vladimir Ivanovich says, “so called “red corner” where ancient icons and an icon lamp hang”.

Not far from the log hut there is a pottery with a high pipe and a well with a red-nosed "crane". Further on the way we see a smithy. There is a forge, a hammer, some forge tools in the room. It seems as if there were fire in the forge, the smithy would work as before. Near a stately mill in the farm suburb we see turkeys wandering under the leadership of a proud turkey-cock. In the center of the farmstead there is a small islet surrounded with an artificial reservoir. Happy ducks are swimming in the reservoir. We get to the islet across the bridge. Here Vladimir Ivanovich shows us a wooden sound table under a canopy for receiving guests.

“Nearby there is a bath "in a black way" he says. “And ashore there is a small fisherman's house, a peasant-mountaineer's house (saklya) and a weaver's house”.

All the constructions were created due to Vladimir Ivanovich Brezhnev's energy and eagerness. People admire his work and give thankful responses of the place. Every person can leave wishes and impressions of the museum in the visitors' book, and people use this possibility with great pleasure.

Here is one of the responses - «Vladimir Ivanovich, you are a true Russian person! Every thing created and collected by you is the history of our beloved Russia. Your work will find a worthy honoured place in the future. People will come, study and admire here. They will worship to your enthusiasm, your love for the country, your wide soul!»

The atmosphere of the place and the feeling of understanding of Russian Cossack soul after visiting the farm don't leave still for a long time. They remain in your memory forever.

On the down you can see expositions of the museum. Each page contains a photo of an ancient object with a short historical description.

### **Country log hut**

Traditions of building a peasant log hut are very ancient. Why were log huts always wooden? Because there was very little natural stone for building, but there was need to live somewhere, that's why houses were built of wood. Big and round logs were selected for that purpose – four logs were incorporated in a tetragon. There was a definite construction for a definite region.



For example, in the north of Russia log huts were wide, with deep cellars to save inhabitants from cold. Those cellars or undergrounds were intended for storage of foodstuff in winter: kvass, meat, cabbage, berries, mushrooms, jam, wheat flour. But in southern Russia log huts were narrow and small; the undergrounds in them were constructed closer to the ground level.

The traditional Russian log hut consisted of one room inside.



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The most prosperous peasants had a chamber too; the outer entrance hall separated it from the main room in a log hut. The chamber was called the "front room" - old unnecessary things were stored there; as a matter of fact the room had functions of a modern storeroom. The principal ornament of a log hut was a furnace which always stood in the right corner. In those days people didn't think of building fireplaces. The furnace was built on a separate base, as if it had been built on the same base with the house, it would have deformed the house. The base was a small frame of logs stuffed with bricks, sand and stones. The furnace was built either of bricks or of especially strong clay - more often from clay. According to folk tokens there had to live the patron of the house and the family in the furnace – a brownie.



Russians often connected the loss of things or troubles in the house with a brownie's tricks. "Brownie, brownie, play and give back", peasants used to say while trying to find a lost thing. There was another superstition. If a child was capricious and slept badly at night, mother had to treat a brownie to some food before putting her child into bed. Peasants also paid attention to their pets' behavior. Pets were considered to protect the house, therefore cats and kittens were respected. So, a cat's poisoning, for instance, was believed a bad sign. Traditionally, a log hut was heated in a black way. It means that the smoke from the furnace smoked for a while inside a log hut, and only then got outside through the hole in the roof. Such way of heating was popular, as the room got quickly warm with little wood consumption that was important in severe winters. A little later, at the end of the 18th century, the ceiling made of thin logs began to appear in log huts. Slots were filled with white clay and closed with leaves. Having the ceiling, log huts started to be heated "in a white way". Then chimneys appeared on the roof. Gradually, the building of such furnaces got spread all over Russia in spite of the fact that heating "in a white way" demanded much more fire wood. With coming of the ceiling there came the attic where spirits lived and grass was stored. They said it wasn't the wind that buzzed in the furnace, but the devil that walked in the attic. The log hut played an important role in the life of Russian peasants - it was not simply a house, it was the house possessing magic force.







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### Pottery

The pottery in Slavonic lands has ancient roots dating back neolith. On the boundary of IX - X centuries it acquired new techniques and turned into craft. The history of pottery is divided into two periods; the border between them is the invention of a potter's wheel. Kitchenware of the first period (before the invention of a potter's wheel) is called modeling, and the one of the second period — potter's, molded on the wheel. Ubiquitous usage of clay, suitable for manufacture of pots, provided wide development of this craft.



Pottery was one of the most widespread crafts in Russia. The potter was the second important trade in the country. A craftsman worked sitting astride a bench adjusted to the potter's wheel. The wheel was set going by feet - from the left to the right. The potter worked with his left hand, forming clay with his right hand. There was a special stove in the house for firing pots.



### The house of the beekeeper

Beekeeping in a tree hollow is the oldest form of apiculture, when bees live in hollows of trees. Hollows could be natural or artificial, when some hollows were carved out in thick trees at 4 - 15 meters height. There were some crosses for solidifying of honeycombs inside the hollows. Narrow long holes were used for honey gathering. The person who was engaged in hollow beekeeping was named “bortnik” (from the old Russian word “bort” which means “hollow”).





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Hollow beekeeping was known in Russia till the 17th century. It was one of the most important branches of economy. It was especially developed in woods in the basins of such rivers as Dnepr, Desna, Oka, Voronezh, Sosna and others, situated at the boundary with steppe. Honey and wax alongside with furs were the principal exports from Russia.

The main characteristics of hollow beekeepers, except knowledge, ability and gumption, were dexterity and boldness. They had to climb up high and thick trees, most often without boughs, by means of only a long rope. They had to work with

bees at the height of 15 - 20 m. Beekeepers began to use special equipment for this purpose much later.

Slowly, but steadily, with population growth and agricultural and industrial development, woods started to be cut down. There came the necessity of saving and protecting hollow beekeeping. Beekeepers began to cut hollows with bees out of trees and place them closer to their dwelling, at a specially cleared from wood plot which later was called an apiary. They learned to build houses for bees — hollow blocks. They gouged out the core in a thick log with the diameter of about 0,5 m and the length of 1,5 m. They also cut a hole on one side of the log and closed it with a lid with small flying holes. On the top of the hollow they installed fixing honeycombs "crosses" closed with the upper lid and birch bark. The blocks were put on the ground vertically (struts) or horizontally (plank-beds). Having collected all families of bees in one place at the apiary, the beekeeper did not worry about bees' protection any more. He could handle more bee families.

## Well

Long since water in Russia was precious and esteemed by people. Its force, medical nature and beauty are praised in songs, epics, and fairy-tales. The life-giving moisture became the symbol of invincibility, inexhaustibility of national spirit. In northern Russia, in Ukraine, in Kuban – everywhere people had respect for water. It is especially surprising for the country with great supply of water, unlike deserted lands.

Wells in Russia were the places of exchanging of judgments and news. Women used to gather at the well and talk for hours with a yoke on their shoulders.





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## Smithy

Smithy is a workshop where manual processing of metal is made - it's forging, as a rule. The two indispensable things in the smithy are the forge and the anvil. In the smithy almost all primary operations are possible to be carried out while processing metal – for instance, to melt metal, to pour it into the form. Subsequent operations include: free forging, forge welding, forge copper soldering, thermal processing of articles, hardening, stamping, dragging, curving, twisting, forging, minting, etc. The person who carries out all these operations and works in a smithy is a smith. Not so long ago a smithy was the main place of weapon and tools manufacturing. But due to little labor productivity and scientific and technical progress it lost its significance - manual production was replaced by factory one. Forge shops with mechanical and hydraulic hammers, rolling mills, etc. appeared instead of smithies. Workers in a modern smithy are engaged in manual art smithery and make piece articles.



The smithy played a considerable role in the life of any village. In a smithy various metal objects necessary for rural economy were forged. A smith was a respectable person in the village. He shod horses, forged stout metal bolts for doors, did simple locks and keys to them. An iron-bound chest was indispensable attribute in a rich rural house. All metal parts of a chest were forged in a smithy. A country smith could make everything - axes, staples, shears, sickles, scythes. Even such small articles as fishing hooks, nails, handles for buckets, hoops for butts and tubs - in the middle of the 19th century all those things were made in a smithy.





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## Windmill

In the 19th - the beginning of the 20th centuries in central provinces of Russia it was impossible to imagine rural landscape without windmills. The advantage of windmills was that they were constructed of accessible stuff - wood. The technology of building a mill was simple; therefore a skilled carpenter with assistants could build it quickly. As a mill was usually constructed on a hill, good wind was always at its disposal, so production costs at grain processing were low, the grinding was faster and thinner and there was less waste.



To the middle of the 16th century in Europe so-called mills on trestle (in other words - German mills) were spread. Their disadvantages were unreliability (they were often overturned by a storm) and limited productivity because trestle mills were turned manually towards a wind with the help of trestle, so they were not too big.

In central provinces of Russia there were two types of windmills: tent and trestle. The wings and a small tent-roof of a tent mill moved together.

Only a prosperous peasant could own a mill who took flour as the pay for grinding. The poorest peasants used manual millstones.





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## Saklya

**Saklya** (from Georgian *Sahli* — a house) is a monumental stone construction of inhabitants of the Caucasus; it is also a wooden house in the Crimea, mostly in a mountainous area. In the Crimean mountains it is normally a small house made of wood, clay, ceramic bricks, with a plane roof. The houses adjoined closely to each other were built on terraced hillsides. Thus, the roof of a lower building was often the floor or a yard of a higher one. The most ancient Crimean saklya was a simple one-room construction without windows, with the earthen floor, and the hearth in the middle of the room. The smoke of the hearth went out through a hole in the roof. A modern saklya consists of several rooms with the covered floor, well equipped for a comfortable life.

There was another type of saklya in the Caucasus mountains. It was a multistory, stone building with numerous loopholes. It was a comfortable dwelling-house and a firm fortress in case of danger.



## Inside a saklya







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### Hayloft

Hayloft is the place for stacking of hay and its protection from atmospheric precipitation in the course of storage.

Normally it is a shed or a canopy adjusted for storage of mown grass that was used for feeding domestic animals during unfavourable season (in winter). Hayloft is an essential attribute of the country life. In a warm season it can be used for a temporary lodging for the night.



### Watchtower

The watchtower was raised, as a rule, on a hill or on a wall of a fortified city. In ancient times watchtowers allowed people to watch locality from afar. Watchmen or patrol of the tower warned the inhabitants of someone's approaching the city walls. They were to give the alarm even if they were only suspicious about the approach of the enemy. The guards had to possess certain health, good sight and abilities. A watchman was even able to recognize a coming person by his walk.

The first patrol tower appeared in Rostoshy, a village in Ertil district, on one of the burial-mounds on the Glazatova road in about 1675 (according to the history of Ertil district.)

You can imagine yourself a patrol if you climb up this tower.





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### Visitors' meeting point

From a small fisherman's house along the cable way across the pond you can get onto a small islet where you will be treated to tasty dinner. You can try real Cossack millet soup cooked according to an ancient recipe, and a lot of other tasty things including original Cossack vodka on grasses.



### A visit to a fairy tale

It's not a secret that Russian folk fairy tales appeared long ago. They were passed on orally from old to new generations until the spread of writing. It allowed fairy tales to win popularity with large amounts of people. Today everybody can enjoy the wealth of the fantastic world which is represented in all diversity on this site and in the museum. The world of Russian fairy tales is mysterious and peculiar. There you can meet ordinary people, merchants and their wives, tsars and tsar daughters, unusual animals and imaginary characters, among which Woman Jaga and Dragon Gorynych- perhaps, one of the most picturesque characters.







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### Welcome!!!

The Ertilsky ataman, the honoured farmer of Russia Vladimir Ivanovich Brezhnev invites you to visit the farmstead "Chance". It is situated in 130 km from Voronezh in a small town Ertil. There you will find all the necessary conditions for pleasant and unforgettable rest: ecologically safe state, picturesque neighborhoods, natural products. Fans of history will appreciate the museum of country life where tools of carpenters, joiners, coopers, weavers, smiths and other masters, as well as objects of kitchen utensils of 18-20 centuries are collected. There is a possibility to observe the process of reconstruction of a handicraftsmen's settlement. Besides, some food-stuffs under the brand "Cossack" are produced here - oil, millet, vodka "Cossack" etc. There are two ponds, medical procedures with usage of dark blue clay, informative excursions, performances of the Cossack ensemble and many other things at your service!

