

HANDBAG

From the belongings of the Viller family
Russia

Early 20th century

*Flax canvas, taffeta, bronze,
plastic beads, glass beads, rhinestones,
passing and cotton threads,
embroidery, casting*

About the project

[https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/
events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/](https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/)





THE FAMILY OF ERIKH VILLER ON THE PORCH OF THEIR SUMMERHOUSE IN TSARITSYNO

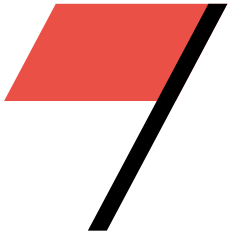
About the project

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1900s

Photographic paper, printing





ERIKH VILLER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT THE NERASTANKINO PAVILION IN TSARITSYNO

About the project

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1900s

Photographic paper, printing





SELECTED BY

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Leading Methodologist



Things have a life of their own.
It's simply a matter of waking up their souls.

Gabriel García Márquez

Over the years of my work at the Tsaritsyno Museum, I have seen many exhibitions, but one of my favorites is 'Tsaritsyno Dachas'. It is about the life of vacationists in Tsaritsyno.

At the exhibition, I noticed a purse that seemed expensive at first glance, revealing the high status of its owner. But looking closer, I realized that it was made of plain fabric, the front side decorated with a beaded net. The particular emphasis was on the bronze overlay — the figure of an angel — and the chain garland, also made of bronze. The label bore the inscription: 'Personal belongings of the Viller family'.

It should be said that the holdings of our museum feature personal belongings of only two families of Tsaritsyno summer residents. In the early 20th century, there were over 1000 summer houses in Tsaritsyno. There were other things of this family in the same display case, including photos of holidays and everyday life at Tsaritsyno. I wanted to learn more about these people, what they did, and where their cottage was located.

The exhibition offers an interactive map of the Tsaritsyno summer house area, which can be augmented with a modern map. I did just so. The Villers' cottage was located in one of the remote settlements — in Novoe Tsaritsyno. Surprisingly, it was roughly the same spot where the house of my family now stands. This coincidence cemented my desire to learn more about this family. But not only that... I am a passionate admirer of dogs and it took me no time to notice in almost every photo a Saint Bernard dog standing next to a short middle-aged man. This man turned out to be the head of the family — Erikh Viller, a merchant of the 2nd guild, owner of a foundry, philanthropist and charity provider.

He had a hobby of breeding and selecting Saint Bernards, and he first brought this breed of rescue dogs to Moscow. It turned out that Viller was a member of the Society for the Improvement of the Tsaritsyno Summer House Area Committee and contributed greatly to the development of this area. And the more I learned about him, the more I grew impressed by his kind nature and the special atmosphere in the family.

His wife Emma Viller was an excellent hostess, craftswoman, caring but rather strict mother and grandmother. Since the early 1900s, the large Villers family (more than 20 people) spent their summers at their house in Tsaritsyno.

I had an impression that it was a home filled with love and respect for their work, for the place where they lived.

Diving into the family history, I wanted to have a closer look at the Villers' personal belongings. One day, I got the chance to see this purse up close and hold it. The lining was sewn by hand, and it held no trademark or factory mark. Then I assumed that it was sewn by Emma Viller herself or her daughters or daughters-in-law, and the metal plate must have been made at the Viller foundry.

This purse is not 'empty', it is filled with memories and stories, keeping the memory of its owner and the people around her. It carries the woman's warmth, love and care that has passed through time and resonated in my heart.