**Decembrists in Zabaikalye**

The history of our town is inseparable from the uprising on Senate Square in St. Petersburg of December 14, 1825.

The participants of the uprising, who could not reconcile themselves to the existing order, denounced it and challenged the Tsar in an armed revolt. This event vent down in history as the Decembrists Uprising and became a landmark in the history of the country. The Decembrists' Uprising failed. More than a hundred officers were sentenced to different terms of exile. Many of the Decembrists were exiled to Chita. The first group of twelve convicts arrived in Chita in June 1827. The life of the Decembrists in Chita was hard.

Sometimes the authorities made them do senseless work. A small bridge near the Puppet Theatre in Chita has a gloomy history. The Decembrists lived in Chita for only three years, but they made a great contribution to the cultural development of the region in 1827, only 300 people inhabited Chita; there streets, three churches, two shops, five inns, a candle factory and a few coal mines. The Decembrists were the first to construct roads and erect two-storeyed houses in Chita. They distributed newspapers and magazines which were sent to them from St. Petersburg. The inhabitants of Chita were not used to growing vegetables.

Kyuchelbecker and Bobritschev-Pushkin took to growing vegetables, and their efforts were rewarded; the harvests were rich enough to supply both the Decembrists and the native population with potatoes, cucumbers, onions and tomatoes. It is essential to mention that there was not a single school in Chita at that time. Dmitry Zavalishin appealed to the authorities for permission to teach. Children were taught in them, irrespective of their nationality and sex. Corporal punishment was prohibited. The curriculum included handicrafts.

The Decembrists themselves supplied their pupils with books and pencils. These schools provided both primary and secondary education establishments in Central Russia. Such were the Decembrists, whose love for their suffering country was a lodestar during their penal servitude in Siberia.