

10



**LEGENDS**

YOU SHOULD  
KNOW ABOUT  
BARNAUL





## Legends of the Old Days of the City of Barnaul

Barnaul owes its birth to the reforms of Peter the Great and business activity of Akinfy Nikitich Demidov, who is considered to be the founder of the city. The late 30s of the 18th century witnessed the construction of the Copper and Silver Smelting Works in the mouth of the Barnaulka River. Works of that time were dependent on water power and wood which was burned to make charcoal for copper smelting. The remoteness of the works from the raw material source – copper ore – made the production process rather difficult, since the ore transportation was very laborious and expensive.

Zmeinogorsky Mines became the greatest storehouse of silver in Russia. In the 18th and the first half of the 19th century 90 percent of Russian silver was smelted in Altai. The Barnaul Silver Smelting Works was rightly called the largest works in the country: there were 13 smelting

furnaces producing 450 poods (7,371 kg) of silver annually. It is therefore no coincidence that since 1771 Barnaul has rapidly developed from a settlement formed near the works into the mining town: one of the largest Siberian ones. The use of the term “mining town” seemed quite logical, as mining industry dominated all spheres of life in Barnaul.

There were two “mining towns” in Russia: Yekaterinburg and Barnaul.

Today Barnaul is the only place in Russia where one can still see the buildings dating back to the period of the formation of mining industry of the 18th-19th centuries.

We hope that after you read these legends, you will get into the spirit of our city and learn more interesting facts about its nearly 300-year history.



Barnaul. 18th cent. The Silver Smelting Works

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## LEGEND 1

### The Tale of Demidov

Barnaul residents tell numerous legends and tales of Demidov. Here is one of them.

Akinfy Demidov was a man of different traits: a keen businessman, a man of wide-ranging enterprise, a courageous person capable of organizing and managing big business. Historians believe that the people of Demidov minted silver rubles in the secret basements. When the Empress discovered it, she asked him for a card game. She won the game and asked Demidov, "Whose money have you gambled away?" He replied, "We all belong to You, the mother Empress, and all we have belongs to You as well." The industrialist managed to get off scot-free, but kept his eyes open since then. Fearful of the punishment, he flooded his basements.

That is why Altai land still has Demidov's silver in its depths. Rumor has it that one can easily find it if he thoroughly studies the history of the development of Altai mining industry.



Akinfy Nikitich Demidov  
(1678 — 1745)

## LEGEND 2

### Polzunov's Shoe

Ivan Ivanovich Polzunov was the most influential Russian inventor of the 18th century.

His life was inextricably linked to Barnaul. There is only one well-known invention of his: the first two-cylinder steam engine in the world. Besides, his inventions were designed to make the working and mining process easier. City folklore was full of legends of this famous "mechanicus".

Even today one can experience the wonderworking powers of Polzunov. There is a monument to Polzunov in front of Altai State Technical University on Lenina Prospekt. Altai students believe that this monument brings good luck. Rubbing of Polzunov's right shoe on the exam day guarantees an excellent mark. Though, for some reason the power works only for hardworking and diligent ones. Idlers are not favored by the inventor of the "fire machine".



Ivan Ivanovich Polzunov  
(1728 — 1766)



Model of Polzunov I. steam engine



## Timokha the Master

The Barnaul Silver Smelting Works is covered with legends and tales.

Timokha, a fellow from a neighboring village, worked at a smelting furnace and soon became a master. Yet, in the days of old it was a hard toil to work at the works. He had a deep yearning for home where a black-browed beauty, his maid, waited for him. Timokha ran away.

He began to live on his own, gathered berries, mushrooms and trapped animals for fur. His maid, his family was over there... But Timokha grew sad and realized that the works beckoned him: in his dreams he saw the massive boiling stream of silver metal running down the channel. So, he returned to the works. The smelting furnace didn't let him go, he was forever charmed by silver.

A telling example of this is the story of Friedrich August von Gebler, who came to Barnaul to work as a doctor at the mining works. He was supposed to stay here for only 6 years, but he remained in the city until his death.

This works still radiates something invisible and inspiring that do not let Barnaul residents leave the city! And every newcomer is sure to come again. Touch the walls of the Silver Smelting Works – you might be charmed as well!



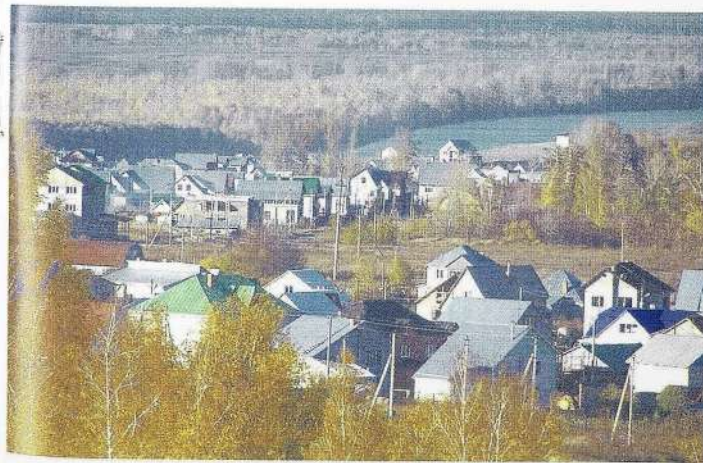
Near a smelting furnace. 18th cent.

## Lost "Serebryanka"

In 15 kilometers from the Silver Smelting Works, in the most narrow and suitable place to cross the Ob River, a village Gonba appeared in 1726. This crossing was used for trade routes, the shipment of food and ammunition to the distant capital of Russia.

One story has it that wagons with precious metals – the so-called "serebryanki" (a derivative of the Russian word for "silver") – used to pass through the village. At times the outlaws who infested the vicinities of the village with robberies made raids on them and stole state-owned silver. Usually the guards fought off the robbers.

But once the robbers managed to capture a wagon and hid it. Afterwards people spent a long time searching for it, but never found it. The treasure disappeared without a trace. Old-timers say that it is still somewhere near Gonba. Who knows, maybe someone will be lucky enough to find the lost "serebryanka"?



Village Gonba on the Ob River



## LEGEND 5

### The Blue Lady

Barnaul of the 19th century was famous not only for the fortunes of its public officials and mining officers, but also for its hospitality.

Noble mansion houses offered elegant – in European style – furnishings and the most gourmet meals. People spoke about books and music. Drawing rooms were decorated with collections of paintings and expensive porcelain...

One of the ancient beautiful mansions witnessed a story which lasts to this day.

The house of the Head of the Kolyvano-Voskresensky Mining District (Lenina Prospekt, 18) was famous for its balls.

At a ball devoted to the awarding of the Order of Saint Anna to the chief of the mining district, a charming lady, a young wife of an old general, left her self-control and opened her feelings to a young official from Saint Petersburg. The ball ended and the general – overwhelmed with anger – took his beautiful wife in a blue ball dress into the basement of the house and ordered to immure her in the wall.

Yet, this drama gave birth to the tradition: early in the morning with the rising sun people put flowers on the porch of this building to praise Femininity, Beauty and Love. If you bring a rose to the Blue Lady, she will definitely give you protection... and eternal Love.



House of the Head of the Kolyvano-Voskresensky Mining District  
(Lenina Prospekt, 18)

## LEGEND 6

### Underground Corridor

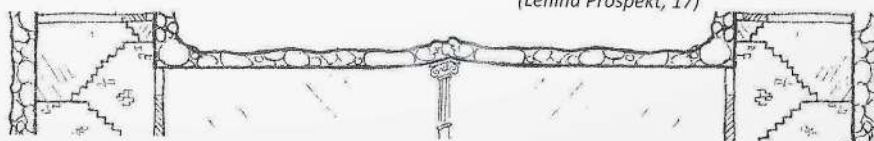
Barnaul is famous among other Siberian cities for its architecture. Anyone who happened to visit the capital of Altai Krai would hardly forget its ancient buildings located on the central avenue: Lenina Prospekt (called Moskovsky Prospekt earlier).

The building of the former Barnaul Ecclesiastical School (Lenina Prospekt, 17) and the house of the Head of the Kolyvano-Voskresensky Mining District (Lenina Prospekt, 18) are among them. These buildings have a unique feature: in the early 20th century one could easily move between buildings without going outside.

Rumor has it that an underground corridor links the two buildings. Today the Blue Lady – Barnaul well known ghost of the young general's wife immured in the wall in an act of jealousy – walks down this corridor.



Former Barnaul Ecclesiastical School  
(Lenina Prospekt, 17)





## LEGEND 7

### A Corner of Europe in Siberia

Barnaul dwellers use several expressions when they talk about their favorite city: "Barnaul is the capital of the world", "Barnaul is the Petersburg corner" and "Barnaul is a civilized city of Siberia". The latter one are the words of Carl Friedrich von Ledebour, a famous botanist of the 19th century and a professor of Dorpat University (the University of Tartu).

He visited Barnaul in 1826 and wrote, "People here are very hospitable. The streets of Barnaul are busy: gentlemen and ladies ride in elegant carriages. Everyone is decent and respectful in public settings. Among mining engineers one happens to meet highly educated people who studied at Saint Petersburg Mining Cadet Corps. A lot of people know music and participate in conversations. Gentlemen and ladies dance, host concerts sometimes and stage plays. Mr. Frolov has organized an orchestra and a wonderful choir. Ladies wear expensive dressy dresses in the latest big city fashion trends. The setting reminds you of the sophisticated European society."

Ledebour was impressed that Barnaul was so civilized.

Barnaul preserves its past. It is a city for those who remember and bring to life the heritage of our ancestors. Visit our city and experience it for yourself.



*Moskovsky Prospekt (Lenina Prospekt today)*

## LEGEND 8

### Wealth Giving City

Let us plunge into the atmosphere of 19th century Barnaul. That's how Carl Ledebour described it, "Barnaul is a planned city, it looks elegant and pleasant; its streets are wide and straight and run at right angles to each other. There are no pavements in the city, but the present governor ordered to pave the roads with slag..."

In those times the silver smelting technology was not perfect and thus, the slag (silver smelting production wastes) used to pave streets of the historical center of the city contained the particles of this precious metal. Since that time Barnaul residents have been walking along the streets covered with silver.

Silver is known for its miraculous healing properties. It helps to preserve youth and invigorate the spirit.

Walking along Barnaul historical streets, the guests and residents of the city absorb energy of this wonder metal.

You should definitely go to Demidov Square, where one may see an obelisk marking the 100th anniversary of mining industry. It is believed that if you walk around the Demidov Obelisk 3 times, each time leaving a coin near its foundation, you will certainly become rich. But remember that everyone understands wealth in his own way.



*Demidov Square Obelisk marking the 100th anniversary of mining industry in Altai*



## LEGEND 9

### Legend of Barnaul DedMedved

A belt-type pine forest once rustled on the site of Barnaul. Today, the pine forest stepped on the outskirts of the city. This forest was home to various animals, while a bear guarded the forest wealth. When people moved into this area and began to build a silver smelting works, the animals went deeper into the woods. However, the bear was seen in the city once in a while.

The bear kept an eye on how people managed the area and built the city. Local people held him in high regard: he never harmed anyone and was called "DedMedved" (lit. Grandfather Bear) for his kindness. Old-timers said that this bear always protected and guarded the area: he was seen in Barnaul rather often when the city witnessed historic events.

You may meet the bear in Barnaul even today. Many people see him under a full moon, his glossy fur shines like silver, the silver smelted at Barnaul works. Those who come across him are to prosper and succeed, especially when they have honey, nuts or sea buckthorn with them. If DedMedved accepts your offering, you will be sure to become wealthy. Strangers to the city, its guests, also happened to meet the bear. Since then, people have begun to say that bears walk along the streets in Barnaul.



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Photo: V. Moiseyenko

## LEGEND 10

### Happiness Locks

After you've toured the city with its memorable corners and modern avenues, parks and public gardens, museums and galleries, you may return to the New River Bridge over the Ob River, one of the most romantic places in Barnaul.

It is high time to join the locals who say that this bridge near the river port is the best place to go on a date and confess your love. Indeed, dozens of lovers tired of everyday worries and urgent matters come here to admire the running water, to feel the wind breeze and just to look deeply into each other's eyes. On the bridge people meet and give kisses, newly wedded couples on the day of the marriage drink champagne and throw lucky wreaths into the water. They also "lock up" their marriage: the locks are accorded the place of honor at their home, while a key to the lock is sure to be thrown away into the river, which is a true guardian of these "keys to happiness".



*The Ob, a true guardian of the "keys to happiness"*