Fulbright scholarship and research experience for Cinema and Photo Documents of American travelers to Kazakhstan in the U.S. Archives and Libraries

From August 2012 to July 2013, I have received the Fulbright scholarship grant. My home was the American University in Washington, DC. The subject was the U.S. Archives and Libraries visual documents (cinema documents, photographs and drawings) of American travelers to Kazakh land in late XIX, first half of the XX cent., as source to study the History of the Kazakh Nomadic Culture.

The search for audiovisual documents hampered due to the distortion of the Kazakh’s geographical location identification and the Kazakh nationality’s terminology definition. That is why, research conducted on visual documents made in Central Asia, Turkistan and Siberia.

William Morris Davis Diaries. 1903.

Research in the Library of Congress conducted in Thomas Jefferson building. There were studied the collection of newspaper articles, book’s publications and correspondence of the George Kennan - American traveler and journalist and George Frost - artist and painter. They, in 1885-1886, had been witnesses of the Russian Empire Exile System located in Siberia and Kazakh land and worked for the «Monthly Illustrated magazine». In James Madison memorial were studied a unique visual documents (over 20 photos and drawings) from the Siberian collection of George Kennan and his companion, George Frost.


Research in Harvard University Libraries. There discovered the Archive of William Morris Davis, the Harvard professor, famous geologist, traveler and founder of the American Geographical Society. William Morris Davis in 1903 visited the Southeastern part of Kazakhstan. William Morris Davis studied physical geographical condition of Central Asian, the structure, origin of Tian-Shan mountains and lakes, the area of the fort Vernyi (now it is our Almaty) and steppes of Semipalatinsk’s region. Have been copied 31 drawings made by scientist, in his diaries: Turkestan I, Turkestan II, which has portraits of local people, objects of national handicrafts, Ala-Tau mountains and lakes.

Research in the Archives of Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, the part of Stanford University in California. There have been discovered documentary: Chronicle, shooting Lenin and Stalin at the International Congress of the Red Trade Union in 1922. In the images of the film - famous foreign and Russian politicians: Albert Thomas, French socialist; Lunacharsky; Elizarova; the speeches of Zinoviev, Clara Zetkin to the International Women's Congress and the
Congress of the Far East Nations with the participation of Ho Chi Minh and delegates from China, Kazakhstan, India.

**Research in the Library of New York Museum of Natural History.** In the 1920s, museum had organized expeditions, consisted from photographers, anthropologists, paleontologists, zoologists, botanists. My research relates to the "Morden-Clark Asiatic Expedition of American Museum of Natural History" in 1926 to Tibet, Mongolia, China, Central Asia, as well as Woldemar Jochelson expedition to Siberia in 1910. I have copied about 250 unique photographs of wildlife, plants, nature, life and customs of nations who lived in the area, including Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Uighur, Kalmyks and Mongols. Besides has been copied a soundless film, which narrates the route of the famous expedition, as well as for more detailed description of photographic documents, have been copied diaries and reports of the expedition’s supervisors, that museum stored in a single items, in rare books library collection.

**Research in the Archive of the Museum of National Geographic Society.** In 1936, the Museum’s expedition had visited the Kazakh village Akbulak, of Akzhaik district in the West of Kazakhstan region and Kustanay city in the Central Kazakhstan. The main object of the expedition was the Total Solar Eclipse in June 19, 1936. At that very day, from the Black Sea to Khabarovsk city have worked 28 scientific Soviet expeditions, as well as 12 foreign expeditions, including the expedition of the American Bureau of Standards. I have detected 48 rare documentary photographs depicting the rare astronomical event, views of Akbulak village bazaar and its residents, as well as landscapes of Kustanay and its citizens.

According to the Fulbright program code, each participant is the ambassador for his country's culture. In this direction, I worked as a guide at the Kazakhstan’s exhibition organized by Arthur M.Sackler Gallery: “Nomads and Networks. The Ancient Art and Culture of Kazakhstan”. I have arranged private tours for the American University SOC faculty:

I also participated in the Open Day of the Kazakh Embassy in Washington DC and introduced visitors to the History and Culture of my country. The Embassy visited about 2000 residents of the capital. The event covered by the web articles: "Around the World between Breakfast and Afternoon Tea" and DC Global Affairs Magazine "Diplomatic Life / Leading Stories" has written by Dr. C.Naseer Ahmad, International Press Club journalist.

My life in DC was full of outstanding and unforgettable meetings. I have met Madam Fulbright, spouse and founder of the U.S. Senator James William Fulbright fund; I have meeting and discussion at the Institute of International Education with Dr. Allan E.Goodman, President CEO and Ms. Rachelle Johnson; Staff member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. We talked of how Capiton; works, the life of a Senate staff member and how Federal
funding, such as Fulbright, is appropriated. Also I have met Senators of Hawaii State, Mrs.Hirono and Mr.Shartzem on their informal meeting with their voters at the Capitol, when Senate is in session.

Ilya Levkov in NY, June 2013

I have had an interesting meeting with Ilya Levkov, the owner of the New York publishing house "Freedom", which produced from 1984 the best American books in Russian. Ilya Levkov spend his childhood in Kazakhstan, he told me a very interesting story of how his life was saved by one Kazakh woman-healer. Ilya Levkov sponsored several publications of the Kazakh writers.

On Thanksgiving Day, I was invited to one of the most respected lady in the USA - Esther Coopersmith, “Legend” of the Political and Cultural elite, former ambassador of UNESCO and the United Nations. Esther Coopersmith visited Kazakhstan in 1990, and her home is a kind of diplomatic center of the capital, where representative of culture and arts, diplomats of different countries meet and interact informally.


So great was my experience to give a talk in various DC Institutions:


Wilson Center. Kennan Institute. Presented talk: Illuminating the Kazakh Nomadic Culture: American Travelers (1870-1920);

The 7th Annual Mongolian Conference Co-Hosted by the Embassy of Mongolia in partnership with Mongolia Society and the Institute for Defense Studies. Presented talk: The History of Kazakh Migration to Mongolia in the 20th Century in Archival photo documents;


George Washington University. Elliott School of International Affairs. Co-Hosted by the Embassy of Kazakhstan. Workshop: Nomadic Life Styles and Narratives in Kazakhstan: Then and Now. Workshop held in conjunction with

The most interesting part of my Fulbright experience is my teaching activity. I was invited to a number of the U.S. Universities to present lecture “Recovering and preservation the Richness of Central Asian Nomadic Life: The Challenges for Public Memory”:

First of all at my home, American University for graduated and undergraduate students of faculties SOC – Visual Literacy, History of Photography courses; SIS – International relations course; History – Anthropology course.

In the U.S. different States: Indiana University. By Edward J.Lazzerini. Director, Senior Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies. Director, Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center. Academic Specialist, Department of Central Eurasian Studies. Central Eurasian Studies Colloquium. Adjunct Professor, Department of History.

Harvard University. By Laura Adams, Ph.D. Lecturer, Department of Sociology. Director of the Program on Central Asia and the Caucasus Academic Advisor to the REECA M.A. Program

Texas University. By Mary Neuburger. Director, Center for Russian East European and Eurasian Studies. Chair, Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies. Associate Professor, Department of History.

Columbia University. Harriman Institute, By Alla Rachkov, Associate Director.

University of Maryland, College Park, MD. Department of History. By Sarah Cameron, Assistant Professor of History.

Wisconsin-Madison University, Central Eurasian Studies Summer Institute, CESSI, by Dr. Andy Spencer, Director of Central Eurasian Studies Summer Institute.

My lecture at Texas University. April, 2013

On the results of the my Fulbright scholarship the following activities are planned: the formation of the visual documents’ identified list, their digitization and creation of the documents’ identified archival collection; elaboration on the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between the Library of Congress Packard Campus and our Archive; the further study of audiovisual documents from the Library of Congress – Archive of Prokudin-Gorskii, the famous Russian photographer, chemist, inventor and traveler; photographs, engravings; lithographs and drawings of Udine, merchant and collector, from Russian city Krasnoyarsk; copying the famous “Turkistan album”, as the earliest visual History of Central Asia. My big dream, that come true some day is, in cooperation with Fredric P. Williams, Assistant Director of Exhibits Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, organization the Photo Exhibition “American Travelers in the Kazakh land” and in with the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan preparation the edition of an album "American travelers in Kazakhstan".
In conclusion, I would like to tell that I was very lucky to make a number of my American colleagues and friends. I have seen many of the U.S. States. I have seen big and small towns; have talked to many ordinary people. As most people of my Kazakhstan, they do all their best to give good education to their children, to raise them healthy and happy, they almost do not travel, they are hard workers, they are patriots of their country and yet, they are optimists. I am really enchanted by all Americans. Every day I used to learn, to teach, to acquaint the U.S. people with Kazakhstan and Central Asia History and Culture, to create ties for future joint project in Archival and Academics spheres. I also worked hard and I am very grateful.