

Mariya Volkonskaya

Princess **Maria Nikolaevna Volkonskaya** (or **Razvinskaya**; Russian: Мария Николаевна Развинская (Pronounced); December 23, 1802 – August 20, 1862) was the youngest daughter of the Russian general Nikolay Razvinsky and Sophia Kozminskaya, granddaughter of Mikhail Lomonosov. In 1824, Maria married the future Decembrist Major General Prince Sergey Strykovskiy Volkonskiy. When Volkonskiy was arrested and exiled to Siberia, she followed him into exile on the condition that her children (born after her departure to Siberia) would be forever struck from the noble estate and become bonded laborers (Russian: *крепостные*), the third, however, was not put into practice.

Life

Volkonskiy had a sister Sophia. At the age of eighteen Maria married Prince Sergey Volkonskiy, who was older. Popularly known in Siberia as the Princess of Siberia, she founded a local hospital and opened a concert hall, in addition to hosting musical and cultural soirees in her home. In Siberia Maria had a blue and white furber mansion.

The Volkonskiy had four children, two died at early age, the oldest son, Nikolay (3 January 1816 – 27 January 1817) was born before the exile and died in St Petersburg after his mother's departure for Siberia. The second child named Sophia died on her birth day (1 July 1818), while Mikhail (1818 – 1892) and Yelena Princess Kotelnichey-Kaluzhinskoy (1819 – 1916) survived into the 20th century.

A number of literary works, including Alexander Pushkin's *Exotic Origin* and Nikolay Nekrasov's poem *Russian Women* were dedicated to Volkonskaya. A passage in *Exotic Origin* reads:

I recall some storm-tossing verses
 And now, I watched its waves that beat
 A path straight toward her in distress,

To pat in sequence at her feet,
 To get those waves my god was turning,
 To meet those birds with lips no yearning.^[1]

In 1900, it was proved that Volkonskaya was the subject of six poems by Pushkin written in *otzyu*, *stich*, *stich*, *stich*, *stich* and *stich*.^[2] Pushkin also dedicated a few lines to the sudden passing of Volkonskaya's little son, Nikolai. However, Pushkinist Mikhail Gorbunov rebutted the claim that Pushkin was in love with Maria.^[3] Volkonskiy himself died of heart problems on the estate of her son-in-law Nikolay Andreevich Kotelnichey (the Ukrainian village Yevand).

In September 2004 photos of the (Sverdlovsk) Volkonskiy family, their relatives and other Decembrists were provisionally handed over to the Russian State Historical Museum by Sigvart Kloss (Lieutenant of Honor, wife Princess Elena Yulievna Volkonskaya, great-granddaughter of Mikhail (1818 – 1892), in the presence of her cousin Andrei (Andrey Semyonovich) Kotelnichey of New York, great-grandson of Yelena Mikhailovna Kotelnichey-Kaluzhinskoy (1819 – 1916).

Mariya Volkonskaya



Portrait by Pyotr Sokolov

Born	December 23, 1802
Died	August 18, 1862 (aged 57)
Nationality	Russian
Other names	Marina Razvinskaya