Among saints who have become famous in Nizhny Novgorod province of Russia in all history of its existence since the 13th century the figure of Seraphim of Sarov (1759–1833) is sure to rank exceptionally. He was a hieromonk, a starets of the Sarov monastery; famous before the Revolution 1917, it stood at the very border of Nizhny Novgorod province and Mordovia.

However the life story of the saint was connected not only with the Sarov monastery but also with the Serafimo-Diveevsky convent which got its name by the name of the starets. Popularity of the saint is explained not only with the fact that in Diveevo region, Nizhny Novgorod province, the convent exists which grew to its modern status from a small mill community organized by Seraphim of Sarov, not only with pride of the “local” saint famous in whole Russia and even in the whole world, but also with special anxious attitude of simple people and of local peasantry to “father Seraphimushka,” helping in all troubles old man “with a stick…, crooked old man with a bag and a stick,”¹ good-natured and merciful saint as if he went off a typical home icon.

The starets was canonized in 1903 in spite of the fact that canonization commission made a lot of protractions and thanking to the supreme direction of Russian Emperor Nicholas II. The latter and his family visited Sarov and Diveevo in July 1903; they took part in Seraphim glorification events. As the legend says, beata Pasha Sarovskaya foretold the Emperor a glad prediction that the tsar couple would have a long-awaited successor, and a tragic one that the tsar dynasty would be broken soon.

(1) Ю. М. ШЕВАРЕНКОВА, Исследования в области русской фольклорной легенды [Y. M. SHEVARENKOVA, Researches in sphere of Russian folklore legend], Нижний Новгород, 2004, с. 99.
The first hagiography of Reverend Seraphim of Sarov\(^2\) was written soon after he had died — in 1841, but 70 years before Seraphim was officially canonized, Sergiy, a monk of the Sarov monastery\(^3\) had written it, too. Then in different years a few biographies of the Sarov hermit were published,\(^4\) in 1896 Seraphim Chichagov brought out “Chronicles of the Serafimo-Diveevsky convent,”\(^5\) the main part of which is given to the life story of Seraphim of Sarov. However, nowadays general readers learn the hagiography of the saint mainly in numerous contemporary editions and reprints.\(^6\) All above said hagiographies differing from actuality and low level of artistic merit (nevertheless the latter has never been the goal of the hagiography)