

Soltys (Village Elder), Identification badge, Polish territories of the Russian Empire, 1904 through 1917.

In bronze. Massive 48.8 wide & 3.4 mm thick medallion suspended on a chain from a horizontal bar. Obverse shows coat of arms of the Petrokovskaya Guberniya (Region), topped by the Imperial Crown. This administrative region was formed in 1867 as part of the Kingdom of Poland within the Russian Empire. Russian writing along the bottom edge is "Soltys" - a Polish word for an elected government position which combined functions of village elder and a sheriff.

Reverse shows monogram of Alexander II, the czar who not only liberated Russian peasants but also introduced sweeping agrarian reform in Poland. Writing in Old Slavonic script is "19 February 1864" - the date of the new law which allowed Polish farmers to elect local authorities. In excellent condition, shows only very light wear. Details of the artwork are very crisp.

/See Mel'nik, Mozheiko, "Civilian Badges of the Russian Empire", page 218, figure 6009/

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