



Genealogical Hidden Treasures

For Doing Research Related to Your Volga German Ancestors in Western Canada

**From a presentation by John H. Althouse, for the
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It should be noted in advance that many of the sites requiring in person visits and organizations listed here and in the accompanying presentation are currently and will like be for some time operating under restrictions necessitated by Covid - 19. Some of these will be closed completely and others operating under limited conditions. It is strongly recommended that you check the website of any of the organizations that I have mentioned in this presentation that you are following up to determine what restrictions are in place there.

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Resources Cited in the Presentation

Start with What You Have

Often, they provide more information than you think you have. We all have some pieces at home or know of some pieces that family members have. We call these “home sources.” They can include interviews of elders.

Some Tips for Maximizing “Home Sources”

Go through all your “home sources” carefully. Note everything that each of them tells you. [Too often, we focus on individual pieces of info.]. Organize all this information in some way. So, you can easily access it when needed. Let “home sources” take you as far as they will. Then, you will need additional resources to fill-in the rest of your family history. You will come to realize that at times you can find family information in strangest places!

More Than Content Alone - an Example

Home Source copy of Sattler family passport. Sent to AHSGR for translation. Issued in Libau on 27 October 1911 less than a month before their arrival in Halifax, but...the translator also noted, “This passport is unusual as they were usually issued at the provincial capital, in the case of the Sattler family from Saratov. Many of the Volga people did exit Russia from Libau, however, but I don't know how he got that far without a passport.”

From Your Genealogical Society

If you are uncertain exactly where, a Volga German ancestor settled in Western, a “provincial genealogical society” may have resources that may enable you to find that ancestor. All four provinces in Western Canada have their own “provincial genealogical societies.” All have resources that may aid in such searches. Some are open to all; others member only. In Alberta, two societies, “The Alberta Family Histories Society” in Calgary and “The Alberta Genealogical Society” [AGS] in Edmonton with nine other branches across the province. I will concentrate on what online resources “The Alberta Genealogical Society” has that may be helpful both at the society and branch levels. However, all major genealogical societies in the prairie provinces have resources that may aid your research in their respective provinces. If you are interested in any of these societies begin by looking at their websites listed here:

- Alberta Genealogical Society @ <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/>
- The Alberta Family Histories Society [Calgary] @ <https://afhs.ab.ca/>
- Saskatchewan Genealogical Society @ <http://www.saskgenealogy.com/>
- Manitoba Genealogical Society @ <https://mbgenealogy.com/>

It should also be noted that most of these societies have branches centered at specific locales within the province which often are worth visiting if your research is based in the area where they are located. For example, the Alberta Genealogical Society has branches at Brocks & District, Camrose, Drayton Valley, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie & District, Lethbridge & District, Medicine Hat & District, Red Deer & District, and Wetaskiwin. Some branches also have Special Interest Groups focusing on certain aspects of genealogy including using the computer, writing family histories, and understanding and using dna. Some focus on particular area geographic areas. Both Edmonton Branch and Medicine Hat Branch have groups focusing on German genealogy. On the Edmonton Branch website @ <https://edmontongenealogy.ca/> You can find some back copies of an old

newsletter produced by the German Special Interest Group. They are in pdf format. To get to these newsletters, click on “Activities”, a pulldown menu will appear, place your cursor on “Special Interest Groups”, a second pulldown menu will appear, click on “German”, the German Special Interest Group page will appear, scroll down this page, near the bottom a listing of the available copies of the “My German Roots” newsletter will appear, click on the copy or copies that interest you and read them on your computer, or print them out for future reference.

Here is a sample list of resources available from the Alberta Genealogical Society as well as those available from one of its branches at Medicine Hat:

A Sampling Society Resources

- Surname Database [Members Only]
- Homestead Index [Open]
- Edmonton Journal Obituary Index [Open]
- Youth Resources [Free and Open]
- Article “Guide for Searching Alberta Vital Records” at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/alberta-vital-statistics>

Sample Resources from Medicine Hat Branch AGS

- German Genealogy Group
- Alberta Digitized Telephone Directories
- Cemeteries of SE Alberta & SW Saskatchewan
- Churches of Medicine Hat and District
- Schools of Medicine Hat and District

Sample Resources from Wetaskiwin Branch

- Members’ List and Origins
- Funeral Cards
- Moore’s Funeral Home Index

Alberta Name Database [AGS] - a New Online Resource

This resource is online on the AGS website. It is useful for finding the location of individuals who have settled and lived in Alberta. You may search online by using surname or complete name. The site may provide one or more of the following: given name, local history name and page where the name can be found, the cemetery, and some obituaries. They also indicate of source of the information displayed.

Winnipeg: pre-World War I

I am going to move outside of Alberta for this resource as it is one that provided me with invaluable information about my Volga German immigrant family. It is also one that I believe may possess information for many families having the same origin. Many immigrants who came west in search of land would stop for a time in Winnipeg, then the largest city on the Canadian prairies. Here they could find lodging, work, and people to communicate with in their native tongue. Many would stay here for a time to get ready for whatever venture they planned to pursue. If your family settled in Winnipeg for a time but had other German roots, the book **The German Community**

in Winnipeg, 1872 to 1919, This book in digitized form may be found @ <http://contentdm.ucalgary.ca/digital/collection/MHSO2/id/22665/rec/12> may prove helpful in providing additional potential sources of similar information.

Church Records

A common problems during the early days of settlement period of the Prairie Provinces was that not all vital events were registered due a variety of circumstances. [Specific information about vital records in Western Canada can be found in Appendix I of this work.] Even if you find a record here, look at the date of registration as many are “late registrations” made decades after the event and making the validity of the information in the less than certain.

Under these circumstances, an alternate source of this information closer to the event is needed. Such alternate resources are uneven in terms of quality, availability, and access. Winnipeg was a common stopping place for many Volga Germans who would later settle on farms across the Canadian Prairie. “Christ Lutheran Church” was the German Lutheran Church in the North End of Winnipeg. It was the church many Volga Germans [later a few Volhynian families also] attended. Its Church books in German containing baptisms, confirmations*, marriages, and funerals can be found and accessed at the Manitoba Provincial Archives.

Confirmation Records, Too!

Many neglect these records as they are not directly related to a vital event, birth, marriage, or death as we have come to consider them. However, as you will soon see they do often contain some important genealogical information about those listed in them

My mother’s birth certificate was not filed at her birth, and one was created finally when she was 64 years of age. The baptism records of “Christ Lutheran Church” in Winnipeg contained her baptism record from about three weeks after her birth showing and confirming her birth date. Some of these church records notably the baptism and marriage records also provide another piece of family information that is often difficult to find, the mother’s or wife’s maiden name. The confirmation records also provide two other pieces that can be difficult to find, the place of birth of the person being confirmed which most often until 1920 was a place in Russia and also the place of origin of your family in Russia. In addition, they provided a birth date for that person, a great substitute where the original birth or baptism record is not readily available.

While the church records in the away example provided a good deal of useful information, locating and accessing church records is a very uneven process. Results are anything but certain. The next church book that I need is that of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church formerly in the White Sand area south of Good Spirit Lake, but that church now in Springside SK for the period 1916 to 1930. I expected it to contain 1 baptism, 1 marriage, 1 funeral and perhaps the location of 1 grave, and a number of confirmations of members of the Sattler Family. However, its church book for the period I wished to research, left along with one of its pastors at some forgotten time in the past. I made inquiries at several Lutheran archives. All failed to yield the errant records. So, here I will give you a small homework assignment: if you know where it may be found please contact me. I would of course like to get the family information I need but I would also like to let St. Paul’s Church know where it is and if possible recover it, so others with family information in it might have renewed access to it.

While these records most commonly are found in the churches in which they were recorded, there are a few limited sets of church records online for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Also, there may be other sets In addition, the church archives for the respective denominations may also possess some of these records or at least provide information on where they may be found. Also, if you have not examined the AHSGR’s “Online Store” as a number of church records for various Volga German villages have been published over the past few years and are readily available for purchase now.

Archives

Archives of various types and of various sizes may also have resources helpful in developing your family history. I will concentrate on The Provincial Archives of Alberta here, but will make reference to other large archives as well. The Provincial Archives of Alberta [PAA] is located at 8555 Roper Rd NW, Edmonton, AB T6E 5W1. Most of its collections must be accessed personally. For details about this repository, see the PAA website at <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/> If you want to check for resources in advance of your visit, search the archive collection directly on this site or search the more inclusive “Heritage Resources Management Information System” (HeRMIS) at <https://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/> While doing your research, it is advisable to determine whether the resources you need are on site [as some are not] or if they need to be brought in before hand.

PAA Resources

Resources at the PAA include Vital Records (Indexed) [see Appendix I of this article], Homestead Files (microfilmed) [see Appendix II of this article], Henderson’s Directories, Alberta Newspapers many are available here on microfilm, but all are available in the Library of the Provincial Legislature of Alberta in print form. In the 1970’s, the archives made concerted efforts to do voice recordings of many Alberta pioneers of various ethnic groups. A list of those of various German origins can be found at taped interviews of Pioneers [1970’s] see <https://sites.ualberta.ca/~german/AlbertaHistory/provincialarchives.htm> For the most part, these are in English, but most of these interviews are still on audio tape. Advanced notice is needed to make an appointment to hear them onsite and to allow time to convert the tape required to a newer, more accessible format. The site given above for the tapes also has a list of photos relating to the German community in Alberta including historic photos of several area German language churches.

Probate Files

One of the resources that I have found useful in determining the growth and success of the family have been probate files where they exist. These are available from the provincial archives in the Western Provinces. They deal with the disposal of an estate if no will was completed. These can be multi-page files [32 pages in the case of one I have used]. These provide a snapshot in time for the family in question along with a good deal of family information. I have the probate for one of my great grandfathers who died in Saskatchewan in March 1918, only 16 years after he took out his homestead. Comparing the property listed on the probate with that listed in the homestead files provides me with a clear idea of just what he with the help of the other family members achieved in that short span of time. Online genealogical sites, most notably familysearch.org provide partial probate record for two western provinces Saskatchewan Probate Estate Files, 1887-1931 @ <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918293> Manitoba Probate Records, 1871-1930 @ <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1987562> There are no similar files for Alberta but there is a great probate index organized by court district through the AGS Edmonton Branch website @ <https://edmontongenealogy.ca/probate-indexes/>

Saskatchewan Archives a Sampling of Resources [now at a single site in Regina]

- Homestead Files info about @ <https://www.saskarchives.com/collections/land-records>
- Saskatchewan Pioneer Questionnaire [1950]: Respondents List @ https://www.saskarchives.com/sites/default/files/pdf/name_and_location_listing_with_lines_nc_14jan2015.pdf
- Saskatchewan Digital Newspapers Online [1914 – 1918] and [1939 – 1945 in progress] @ <http://sabnewspapers.usask.ca/>

Archives of Manitoba

You can search its collection @ <http://pam.minisisinc.com/pam/search.htm> a search for Germans led to 53 possible resources although few appeared to focus directly on German settlers.

Small Local Archive Collections

Stony Plain Multicultural Heritage Centre

Parkland County has been active in collecting local / family history resources from residents for many years. About 25 to 30 families from Norka settled in the Glory Hills area north of Stony Plain. Some materials from those families in their collections. For further contact information, see their site @ <https://multicentre.org/museum/library-and-archives/>

Other Local Archives of Interest

Esplanade, Medicine Hat, search @ <http://archives.esplanade.ca/>

South Peace Archives, Grande Prairie - PDF Databases Online @ <http://southpeacearchives.org/research-2/online-databases/> search "Spirit River Immigration Hall Register Database" @ <http://southpeacearchives.org/online-databases/spirit-river-immigration-hall-register-database/> and search "Peace River Country Land Settlement Database" @ <http://southpeacearchives.org/land-settlement-information/>

University Collections

Manitoba:

U of Winnipeg:

- East European Genealogical Society Collection @ https://library.uwinnipeg.ca/docs/EEGS_holdings.pdf

Saskatchewan:

- library catalogue see Germans from Russia @ <http://www.saskgenealogy.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SGS-Library-Catalogue.pdf>
- The Becker Collection @ https://library.usask.ca/archives/collections/manuscripts-and-collections/pdf/Becker_Collection.pdf

Alberta:

U of Calgary:

- Germans from Russia in Alberta: reminiscences [digitized book] @ <http://contentdm.ucalgary.ca/digital/collection/MHSO2/id/17262> and German community in Winnipeg, 1872 to 1919, The [digitized book] @ <http://contentdm.ucalgary.ca/digital/collection/MHSO2/id/22665/rec/12>

Lethbridge:

Search library collection @ <https://www.uleth.ca/lib/>

Peel's Prairie Provinces

Free General Online digitized site from the University of Alberta

Sample Contents: Several small-town Alberta newspapers digitized, Henderson's Directories for Alberta and major cities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba as well, Historic Postcard Collection and Maps., and Books: a search using "Volga Germans" provided 72 pages [many digitized]. although again some strayed rather far from the search terms entered.

Cummins Maps

These are the rural equivalent of the Henderson's Directories. You can find these maps in archives but random ones may be found digitized and online as well. See Appendix III of this article for a partial listing of some digital copies.

The Value of a Good Newspaper

My interest in genealogy is not solely or mainly in collecting a massive collections of facts constituting the history of my family, but rather to use what I find to recreate their story and leave it behind for future generations of the family. In doing this, one of the most useful resources I have found are newspapers. Today, many newspaper collections especially of small local papers have been digitized. Here are some that contain paper from across the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia as well.

- Alberta: U of A, The Peel Collection [free, online] @ <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/>
- Alberta: U of C Libraries [free, online] @ <https://cdm22007.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/search/collection/p22007coll2?p22007coll18!p22007coll19!p22007coll24/order/title/ad/asc>
- Alberta: U of L "Southern Alberta Newspaper Collection" [free, online] @ <https://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/digital/collection/sanews>
- Alberta: Wainwright newspapers [free, online, searchable] @ http://libraries.arcasearchdev.com/ca/wc/?paper=___
- Saskatchewan: Archives [free, online] 1914-18 and 1939-45 [in process] browse the collection @ <http://sabnewspapers.usask.ca/browse/city>
- Manitoba: @ https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3Amanitoba_newspapers and @ <https://libguides.bgsu.edu/c.php?g=227443&p=1507142>
- British Columbia: BC Historical Newspapers, UBC @ <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers>

If you wish the newspapers for the larger centers like Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, and Saskatoon you will need to not only subscribe to newspapers.com but to the premium level its most costly subscription. Newspaper Archives another subscription site has the newspapers for Russell and Roblin, Manitoba which have provided abundant information on one branch of the extended Sattler family who have resided near those two towns.

Searching Online Newspapers

Search for more than obituaries. Do broad searches. If initial searches yield nothing, try the search again using fewer search terms. Search by place instead of name, e.g. "Canora" vs. "Brockmeyer." Why? Names can be misspelled as "Brockmeyer" was in the article, becoming "Lachmeyer" which would not have been picked up in the search. Look beyond the objective of your search. Answered my questions when and this related family left. What other useful information did it provide? The article not only told me the long sought details of the related Brockmeyer family's departure from Canada, but also narrowed the time frame for the return of my great grandparents to the USA which had occurred between the 1906 and 1911 Census. Now, I knew that they were gone from Saskatchewan before September 14, 1908. Subsequent research in one US newspaper showed them to be in South Dakota and settling in there by March 6, 1908. When doing family history research including that in newspapers, expect the unexpected. This article about family appeared in The Edmonton Bulletin the day after its initial publication. There is no reason for it being there aside from the fact that it may have fitted a blank space of

a particular size that the editor had. To date, I have found no other copy of that article.. Connect the information you gather in your research to other information you possess.

Not the Standard Genealogical Sites but Specialized Groups

They do cover our post migration families well i.e. in Canada and the USA. That is quite limited as the last available Canadian Census is currently the 1926 Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. They offer very little related to the origins of our Volga German families. The family trees on these sites should serve as guides at best as few have sources cited and many are inaccurate.

Specialized groups like the AHSGR have much more related to our Volga German ancestry. Even local chapters offer so much, For example, there much more at AHSGR Calgary Chapter Library check out their website @ <http://calgarychapterahsgr.ca/volga.html> and read a few of their newsletters as well.

There are a few things of value that few are aware of on the standard genealogical sites Search the UK Outward Passenger Lists if your ancestors came here via the United Kingdom between 1890-1960, it will provide extra details on your ancestors' journey from Russia on the right side. These details vary in quantity and depth from list to list. They most often contain the port of arrival on the east coast of the UK, Hull in our case and the destination. But some will include the steamship line on which they crossed the Baltic Sea, the port from which it sailed, and in a few odd cases even the name of the ship on which that part of the journey was made.

Also, how does one track relatives in Canada after 1926? Canadian Voters' Lists. 1935 - 1985 on ancestry.com provide one means. The Henderson's Guides provide another for families living in major cities to the mid 1990's. The Alberta Telephone books digitized by the Medicine Hat Branch AGS provide yet another.

Advantage to Joining a Specialized Group

I cannot stress the value of joining a specialized group such as the AHSGR that specializes in the nationality of your family for advancing your genealogy and family history research. Generally, this is a much better investment than purchasing a subscription to one of the major genealogical sites. It has more to offer than you may imagine including list items and relate my experience. Let's examine my personal case. I had gone as far as could using "home sources" and "standard genealogical sources and websites". I had gone as far as I could in Canada but had very little related to their lives in Russia. I did, however, know a few vital basics my grandfather Johann Sattler was born in Alexandertal as had his four eldest children. His wife Paulina [nee Weber] had been born in Dobrinka.

In 2009, during the AHSGR Convention in Medicine Hat and in its aftermath, I began acquiring resources from the AHSGR and other sources. I also learned that the Sattler family had first settled at Messer and then in Schilling before moving to Alexandertal about 1850. Starting with the first settlers' lists and continuing using the irregularly taken Russian census records of the villages, I was able to produce a fairly complete tree from the families' arrivals in their villages until about 1860 when the printed and translated census lists for the two villages ended. Now, if you've ever taken a basic genealogy source, you know that you should start at the current time and work back, but sometimes it is necessary to let the available resources dictate how you will approach each project. The Weber Family had initially worried me due to commonality of their surname. As I proceeded, I had some good fortune as it became evident that all the people with the name Weber in Dobrinka could be tied to a single initial family, good fortune indeed! But once I reached 1860, I had a potential tree to about two decades before either of my grandparents were born and was unable to tie either of them to a specific branch of that tree. I also was able to with the assist of other AHSGR resources move back in the family's German roots of both families before they came to Russia Then, I was mired down again. Finally, I contacted the AHSGR Coordinator for Alexandertal and Schilling Gary Martens in Texas. He was able to not only supply me with the information I needed on the Sattler family but

the Weber family as well for a relatively small and very reasonable fee. This confirmed the data my earlier trees, added maiden names for most of the female members of the Weber tree and a few of those in the Sattler tree, and most importantly gave me the information that I needed to link each of grandparents to a particular limb of their family tree.

Local Chapter Collections for Genealogists of German Background from Eastern Europe

Many Volga Germans settled in Calgary, particularly from Yagodnaya Polyana and Alexanderdorf (Caucasus) as early as 1892. AHSGR Calgary Chapter website is @ <http://calgarychapterahsgr.ca/volga.html> they have a large specialized which you can search for titles online through "Library Book Index" @ <http://calgarychapterahsgr.ca/libbooks.html> They also offer an "Obituary Index" @ <http://calgarychapterahsgr.ca/obitindex.html> Their newsletters are a good read and reveal the many culturally related activities this group carries out.

Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmonton holds two libraries of possible interest. at 10014 81 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T6E 1W8. It holds the library of The Edmonton Chapter of AHSGR and the library of the Historical Society of Germans from Poland and Volhynia. Hours are limited. There is contact information for the librarian on the AHSGR Edmonton Chapter webpage at <https://www.ahsgr.org/page/Edmonton> For see HSGPV, the hours and catalogue can be found at <https://hsgpv.org/>

A Vote of Thanks to Lorraine!

Some years back, I noted a lady coming to the AGS Library each Thursday, returning ten large local histories and taking out ten more. Finally, my curiosity got the better of me and I asked her about she was doing with these. The answer that I received can now be seen in the form of three books. The lady mentioned Lorraine Yackulic, a former librarian at Trinity, put together three wonderful books on German Alberta titled Step Back in Time! Each focused on a specific sector of Alberta - North, South, Central. While not devoted to any one German group, they contain much useful information on people and places connected to German background in this province. They provide lists of German names found in a large number of local histories and may serve as an excellent travel guide for those traveling to places around the province in search of their German roots.

Often in the Strangest Places!

As in the Johnny Cash song, a genealogist, family historian must adhere to the mantra. "I keep my eyes wide open all the times." As often the information we seek is out there in the most unusual places, waiting for us to find. I knew the site of Grandpa Sattler's first farm. However, I did not know the exact location of his second, a rented one, although I had an approximate idea of its location from clues. One day, I was looking at an online site and a picture of cairn marking an old school site came up. I clicked on its plate which enlarged showing the map with the names of the student attending on the quarters on which they lived including "Sattler" as "Settler."

Little Bits of Character

Although I never was blessed to meet my Volga German grandmother as she died on 29 January 1920, I learn quite a bit about her from this little piece sent to a paper by my Aunt Lydia, "My mother was peeling potatoes when I saw my mother pick up a stick, hit a rat over the head and kill it, then go right on peeling." Very practical, deal with a problem, and continue with what needs to be done right now, definitely not a "drama queen." Another article written by family friend of my parents in Saskatchewan Carl Ehrlich at age 13 years tells of loving living along the Whitesand River. Carl's farm would be on the bank of that river until he retired and moved into town and then was farmed by his son Harold. Another Ehrlich, Conrad also had his farm on the bank of that river a few miles upstream. These while not important as genealogical facts, they are indeed food for thought and grist for the

writers of family history.

Two large framed oval portraits, show my maternal Sattler family in 1919, enjoying their new life on their farm. The photographs are a testament to their progress in the eight years since they had left their village home near the mighty Volga River and that indicated that they had achieved enough prosperity to spend a little money on what under less favorable economic circumstances would have been regarded as frivolous and unnecessary. It is our work as family historians and genealogists to research to rediscover that family as it once was through various resources and to capture and retell their story and preserve it so that future generations may see the contributions of these ancestors and come to better understand not only who they were but also who we are.

Today, little remains to indicate that the Sattler family ever were present on that farm. That quarter section of land is serves as pasture land, It is devoid of buildings, The only trace of former human habitation and the struggle of the family who once lived there is a pile of rubble unceremoniously pushed into a heap. It contains wooden remnants of the former Sattler family home. Somewhere in tiny St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery, a few km west of the farm, there is a single unmarked grave that of Paulina Sattler who died at age 35 on January 29, 1920. Her death would be a catalyst that would change the members of the family and see them move to other settings.

All the other members of the Sattler family who posed for those two photographs in 1919 are also gone. We can no longer ask them about that chapter of our history. We have only that information they were wise enough to leave for us and that information we were wise enough to ask from them. What remains of the life of that single family at that farm in the White Sand area of Saskatchewan exists in the trail of records they left behind, We must diligently search for all those records and collect as many of these sources as possible if we hope to retell their story. We must also extend our research back into their past to Russia and eventually to their German place of origin. By doing this, their story can be recaptured and preserved so that it may continue to be heard by family members today and for generations of them still to be born.



Make certain that your family history does not gradually fade until it becomes totally erased from their collective memory.

Appendix I - Vital Records

Some Basic Sources

Vital Records: Birth, Marriage, and Death

Manitoba Index [searchable on this page] <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/Query.php>

Records available: Births more than 100 years ago, Marriages more than 80 years ago, Deaths more than 70 years ago. Cost fee for each record is \$12.00

Saskatchewan Index [searchable on this page] http://genealogy.ehealthsask.ca/vsgs_srch.aspx Records available: Births more than 100 years ago, Marriages more than 75 years ago [but have yet to be put online], Deaths more than 70 years ago. Cost for each record is not stated.

Alberta Indexes <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records>

Birth are 120 years or older (from the date of birth) <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records/birth-indexes>

Marriage are 75 years or older (from the date of marriage) using name of groom <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records/marriage-indexes/grooms>
using name of bride <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records/marriage-indexes/brides>

Death are 50 years or older (from the date of death) <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records/death-indexes>

Stillborn are 75 years or older (from the date of stillbirth) <https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/how-to/find-birth-marriage-and-death-records/stillbirths-accordian> Cost for each record is minimal based on the cost of copying and mailing. There are some peculiarities in searching these indexes that may adversely affect locating specific records in them. I therefore recommend reading Guide for Searching Alberta Vital Records at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/alberta-vital-statistics> before searching these indices. The ordering process is clarified at “How to Order Historical Vital Statistics guide” https://provincialarchives.alberta.ca/sites/default/files/2020-07/how-to-order-vital-statistics-online-v2_1.pdf

British Columbia Indexes

Search our indexes to births (1854-1903), marriages (1871-1944), deaths (1872-1999), colonial marriages (1859-1872) and baptisms (1836-1888) [as of 2020] Searchable online at <http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy> The BC indices are what genealogists would like all vital records databases to be. They allow you to not only see the actual document but download and save an actual copy of the document at absolutely no charge. It does this quickly and efficiently.

Please note, when searching for records related to immigrant ancestors be open to the possibility that the names you seek may not be spelled as you would expect them to be. It is a good idea to keep a list of name variations that you find and other possible variations of the name that you might consider possible. Use these variations when searching for records, especially if searching using the accepted form of the name does not result in success.

Also, be open to the possibility that vital records may simply not have been filed at the time of the event for a variety of reasons. [Also, pay attention to the date on which the documents were filled. Some were filled decades after the actual event, compromising the likelihood of their accuracy.

Appendix II - Homestead and Land Records

The individual homestead files are generally held by the provincial archives in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. They are generally retained and copies can be ordered from these archives. Name of the homesteader and the location of the grant in terms of quarter, section, township, range, and meridian are required.

Land Grants of Western Canada, 1870-1930 for all three prairie provinces [searchable by name or location] at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/land/land-grants-western-canada-1870-1930/Pages/search.aspx>

Manitoba Index [searchable on this page] <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/Query.php>

Records available: Births more than 100 years

Saskatchewan Homestead Index [searchable online] at <http://www.saskhomesteads.com/search.asp> Information on “How to Obtain Copies” from the Saskatchewan Archives at <http://www.saskhomesteads.com/copies.asp> “Viewing or Ordering Reproductions of Homestead Files” from The Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan see <https://www.saskarchives.com/collections/land-records/homestead-files-saskatchewan-archives/viewing-or-ordering-reproductions>

Alberta Homestead Indexes [searchable online] on the Alberta Genealogical website at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/alberta-homestead-index> There are three separate searchable indexes here: “1885–1897, Applications for Alberta Land Patents (Project)” at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/1885-1897-alberta-land-patent-project> “1870–1930 Homestead Project” at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/1870-1930-homestead-project> and “Post–1930 Homestead Project” at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/post-1930-homestead-project> Search these files at <https://www.abgenealogy.ca/ab-homestead-index-page> The Provincial Archives of Alberta does hold microfilms copies of the Homestead files. The Edmonton Branch AGS research group will research, locate, and produce copies of requested homestead files contact the research group for details.

“The Alberta, Canada, Homestead Records, 1870-1930” [\$ ancestry.ca] at <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60865/> Not complete but contain one to many pages of the documentation for the homesteads contained.

The Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872-1930

[\$ ancestry.ca] are listings of registrations for Homesteads in the three provinces. They give the registration number; the date of registration; and the name of the person registering for the quarter of land on the first page. This is a two-page register. Go to the second page, it gives its location quarter, section, township, range, and meridian; and fees paid related to the homestead. Some of these records will show the date of the grant on the first page of the entry. These records show not only those pieces of land that your family members successfully secured but also those they did not, and among these there may be surprises.

Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Series S 42 - Saskatchewan Homestead Records Pre-1930 series at <https://search.saskarchives.com/saskatchewan-homestead-records-pre-1930-series>

My Sattler grandfather did not initially homestead but purchased his first farm. The way to research purchased land is through the land departments who will do a historic search of a specified quarter for a fee.

My grandfather’s second farm was rented, and finding out about rented property is difficult unless you have the location and /or the name of the original owner.

My grandfather finally acquired a homesteaded as his third farm. He would farm at these three locations from 1916 to 1952 without using a car, truck, or tractor. He tended to stay with what was familiar to him.

Appendix III - Cummins Maps

These are the rural equivalents to guides. They provide information on lands that you may not find in homestead records. Random collections of these maps can be found online at various websites. All three of the provincial archives in the Prairie Provinces have collections of these maps. Search for them in these online collections

1916 Cummins Maps of quarters Saskatchewan, partial coverage of the province at <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~canmaps/Cummins/index.html>

Saskatchewan History Online several searchable Cummins Maps, 1920 - 29 online at <http://saskhistoryonline.ca/islandora/search/Cummins%20maps?type=dismax>

Saskatchewan Genealogical Society Collection of Cummins Maps 1917, 1920, 1922, 1926 (east of 3rd Meridian) and 1930 (north of Township 21) separate lists for members and non-members at http://saskgenealogy.com/databases/cummins/nm_Cummins.aspx

Alberta Homestead Maps - circa 1918 from the University of Lethbridge, a few primarily Southern Alberta at https://www.uleth.ca/lib/digitized_collections/ourheritage/maps/south_ab_ca1918_pdfs/S-24_Maps51-52.pdf

Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Fonds F 521 - The Cummins Map Company fonds at <https://search.saskarchives.com/the-cummins-map-company-fonds> and Item A0003.11 (S) - **Cummins Rural Directory Map** at <https://search.saskarchives.com/cummins-rural-directory-map-16> and Fonds F 521 - **The Cummins Map Company fonds** <https://search.saskarchives.com/the-cummins-map-company-fonds>

Archives of Manitoba, Cummins Rural Directory maps of ranges 1W to 4E, townships 1 to 3 at http://pam.minisisinc.com/SCRIPTS/MWIMAIN.DLL/121613807/LISTINGS_WEB2/DESC_REFD/19881?JUMP

Rural Municipality of Good Lake No. 274, website @ <https://goodlakerm.com/index.php> under the tab “R.M. Maps” has Cummins Maps for 1920, 1926 and 1934 as well as more modern maps of the municipality, also @ <https://goodlakerm.com/index.php?docID=135>

Building the Resource Bank

As individuals or groups with an interest in our Volga German past, besides capturing our own family story, we might also develop resources that will assist others in the future with their ancestral research centered here in the Prairie Provinces. Here, are some excellent websites that show what can and has been done by individuals having the will and drive to do this.

A library site Saskatoon Public Library @ <https://saskatoonlibrary.ca/collections/local-history/>

A village site Norka @ <https://www.norkarussia.info/>

A genealogy site for a municipality or county The R.M. of Good Lake No. 274 “Genealogy” @ <https://goodlakerm.com/index.php?docID=136>

A small archive website South Peace Regional Archives @ <http://southpeacearchives.org/>

A genealogy group the Calgary Chapter AHSGR @ <http://calgarychapterahsgr.ca/>

A genweb Alberta Genweb Digital Archives @ <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~abarchiv/>

A website for a large Society the AHSGR site @ <https://www.ahsgr.org/default.aspx>

A specialized website with genealogical ties “Saskatchewan One Room School Project” @ <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~cansk/school/>



*“We cannot bring the dead back to
life, but we can bring their memory
back to life and ensure they are not
forgotten.”*

- Jonathan Sacks