“A Long Way from Moscow”: A Collaborative Project between Archivists, Librarians, and Historians from the Steppes of Saratov Province and the High Plains of Colorado

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Abstract
This article describes the authors' interactions with Russian archivists, librarians, and historians during a 2008 delegation visit to Saratov Province, the state of archival holdings and special collections in the Saratov area, and preliminary discussions regarding proposed collaborative digitization and academic research projects. A reciprocal visit by Russian and Ukrainian colleagues the following year to participate in the Inaugural Conference on German-Russian Studies is also detailed. The authors, both members of the Joint Academic Board for the International Center for German-Russian Studies at Colorado State University, discuss outreach strategies and lessons learned regarding a wide-ranging collaborative international project with information professionals and academics in a region previously closed to the West.

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"A long way from Moscow": a collaborative project between archivists, librarians, and historians from the Steppes of Saratov Province and the High Plains of Colorado. An end will be put to various demonstrations of extremism, religious, political, and other," said the Governor of Saratov Oblast, in southeast Russia. The new czar? President Putin at his second inauguration, at the Kremlin in Moscow in May. Since becoming President in 1999, he has rolled back democratic reforms. Already this year, two terrorist attacks in Nizhny Novgorod and Saratov oblasts were prevented. Russian The town of Saratov was founded in 1590, halfway between Samara and Tsaritsyn. There are several hypotheses of origin of the name of Saratov. The first says that it is connected with the Turkic phrase “Saryk Atov” meaning “hawk island”. Another one says that it is from the Tatar phrase “Sary Tau” meaning “yellow mountain” (Saratov is surrounded by several sandy hills). More Historical Facts... The favorable location of Saratov at the intersection of the shortest overland route to Moscow and the water route from the lower reaches of the Volga and the Caspian Sea made the town a major center of trade in fish and salt. In 1763, foreigners were invited to settle on vacant lands of the Volga region, a large number of German settlers came here. An archivist's primary responsibility is determining which records are of value. This requires a great deal of understanding of the historical context of the records in question as the historical context reveals the record's relationship to other records, the intended use of the record, and the record creator's underlying motivations. Once a record is determined to be sufficiently valuable to preserve, archivists must describe and arrange the record in such a way that the institution's intended audience is able to access the information and make sense of it. Several professional fields work closely with archives including the records manager and the historian. While there is a great deal of overlap between these professions, the goals of maintaining archives are certainly distinct.