



COVER

STORY

Fabulous Rott Family Collection In Ashley Resembles Santa's Secret Treasures

This photo of Mr. and Mrs. Christ Rott was taken several years ago at the time of Ashley's diamond jubilee, with the couple wearing costumes popular in another era. ◁

The flower-patterned wash basin (left) and chamber pots are displayed on an end table popular at the turn-of-the-century. Note the old telephone in the upper right side of this picture. ▽

First impressions are that one has stumbled into another era or maybe (since it is December) the secret cove where Santa hides his treasures for only the most deserving of his Christmas customers. The room tick-tick-ticks with 162 antique clocks all ticking at once. Carnival glass sparkles from corners and other unexpected places. Every cranny, nook and cubicle is filled with cast-iron figures, roller organs, antique pictures, delicate crystal dishes and vases, porcelain, carved high-board beds, or maybe even an old 1912 Montgomery Ward and Co. catalog.

The collection is the fabulous Rott Family collection, located in Ashley, N.D., a real credit to this region of North and South Dakota.

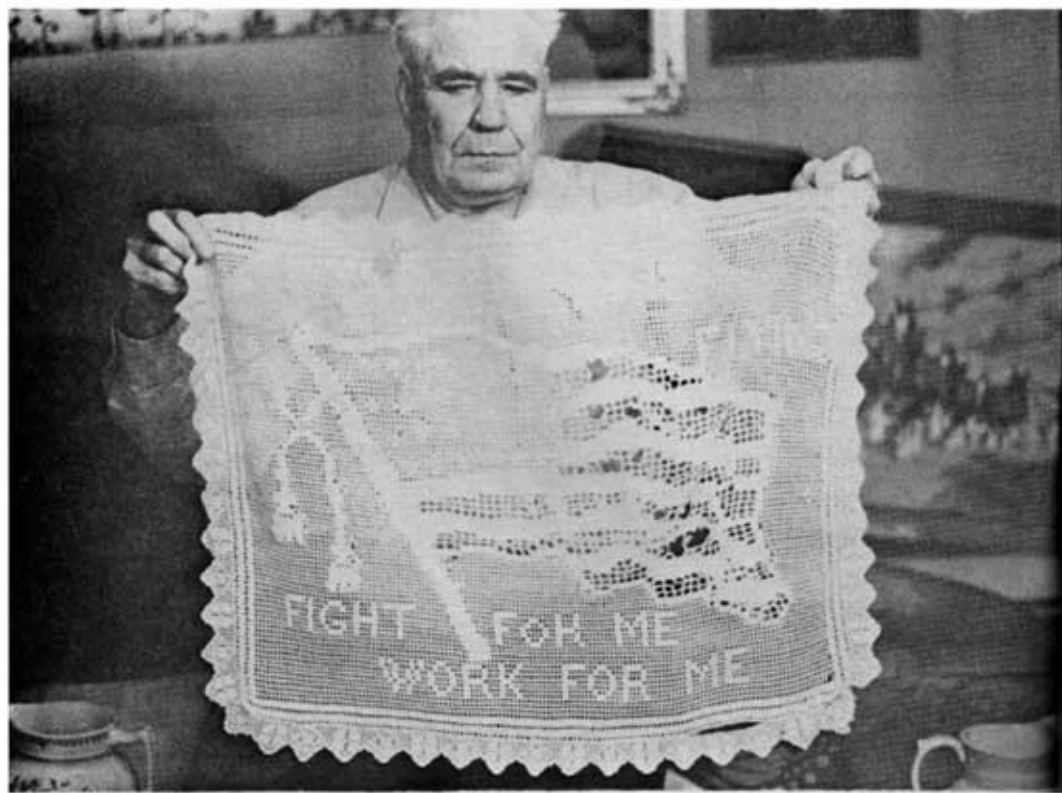
Christ Rott said that he started his private collection more than thirty years ago. "Old stuff was my hobby from a kid on," he explained. "You got to have a hobby. But," he added, "it has to be born into a guy."

It is crystal clear that Rott has a gift. He has amassed one of the most unusual private collections in the Mid-West.

The Rott Family collection is not small, by any standards. It literally fills the floor and walls of one large quanset building, a wood-frame building, and three large rooms in the basement of the Rott home. A long corridor is also lined with antiques.

Ideally, one should plan to spend several hours each visit for two or three days in order to properly view





President William McKinley is shown in this picture together with his sister and mother. The picture was taken shortly before the president's assassination in 1901. The ornate frame is decorated with gold trim.

the Rott Family collection. Diversity is the key word.

There is an Estate Radiant 646 stove, bought in 1912, which was donated to the Rott collection by the Kretschmar family of Venturia. It is in perfect condition. No patent number is listed, but it was heated by hard coal. "In those days, a ton of coal cost about \$3 or \$4 a ton, but now it costs nearly \$42 a ton," Rott stated.

Of the 162 antique clocks, what is the most valuable? Rott pointed to a delicately carved object d'art. It contains 42 crystal stones embedded in the wood. Hand-painted birds decorate the glass. "This clock is probably 60 to 70 years old," he said.

One of Rott's mantle clocks was made of marble.

He has chairs more than 85 years old. A gray wicker chair has a knitting pocket on the right side-arm. "People used to put their knitting in there," Rott explained. He said that he bought the chair from a Beasler from Kulm. He didn't remember the first name.

A picture of President William McKinley standing by his mother and sister is set into a beautifully ornate wood frame with gilt floral patterns. It is an impressive 33 inches wide and 36 inches long.

There are scores of pictures—ranging from the bawdy to the serene, each placed in its own unique frame.

Rott was amused by an old-fashioned razor-sharpener, patented in 1921. The metal inscription read: "For best results 1.) hold blade push dip over. 2.) clean leather with damp cloth. Apply little shaving cream. Rub well. Repeat often. Turn slowly. Don't overstrap pressure half down enough. Automatic pressure. Rhodes Mfg. Co. in Saint Louis, U.S.A."

Rott turned the handle in a clockwise position and the blade flipped over. "I used something like this when I was younger," he said smiling.

A three-gallon cream can with "Dan Meier" on the plate stands near one of the doors.

Henry Wahl from Kulm donated an old scrap book filled with beautiful old pictures from long-forgotten magazines.

Rott's grandmother knitted a flag, which Rott now has in his collection.

"To keep me flying—fight for me, work for me!" is the bold insignia Christ Rott's grandmother crocheted for this delicate tablecloth.

When m'lord needed his whiskers trimmed or his face shaved, this is what he used. Christ Rott estimates the shaving stand is "at least 75 years old."





This beautiful stove once warmed the home of the late Paul Kretschmar of Venturia, N.D. The stove's brand name is Estate Radiant.



The flag has 21 stars with the following motto: "Fight For Me, Work For Me."

Knitting machines (which are still in running order), spinning wheels, old telephones, delicately carved mirrors, concert roller organs, two player organs, vintage Fords, a 12-piece set of carnival glass dishes, china cabinets, pressed glass, horse collars, hanging lamps, 105 guns, and 30 good rocking chairs are just some of the items in the Rott collection.

It is hard to believe, but there is much more!

Rott believes he has the best private collection in the U.S. "Show me another private collection that's any better," he wagered. "If anyone has seen a better collection, I'll give him \$5. But I'll first go and check it out myself."

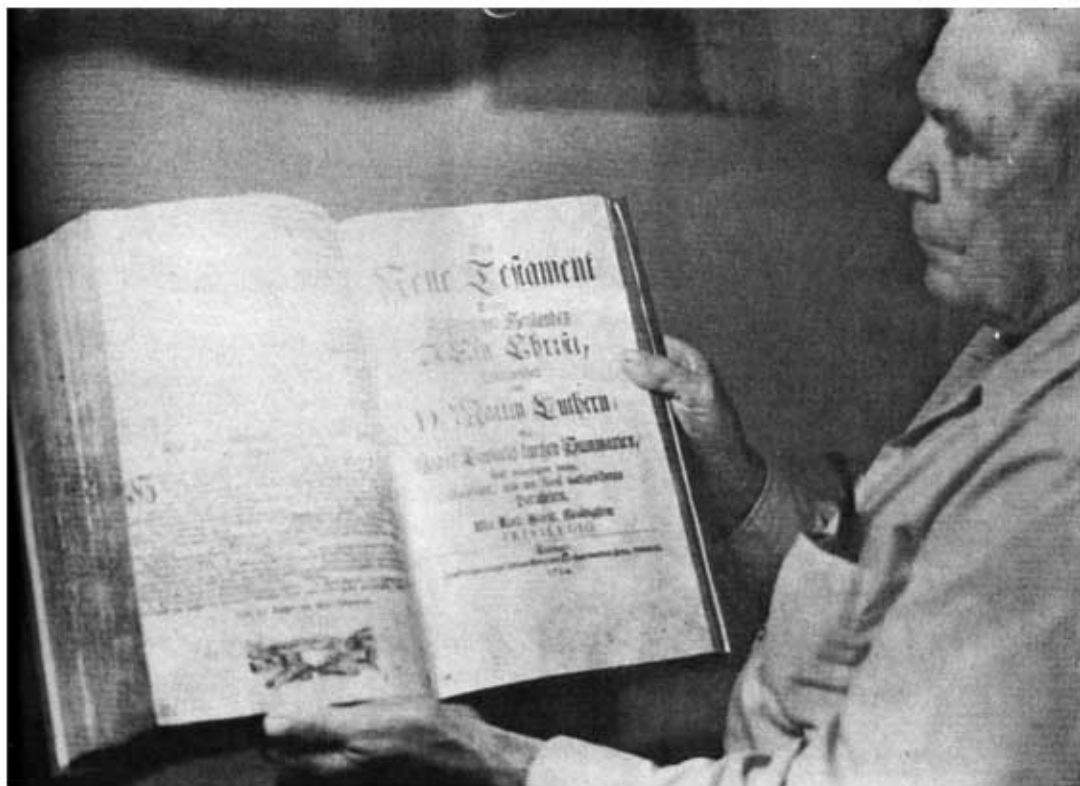
Many people tour the Rott Family collection. "I like tourists," Rott said. But then he corrected himself: "I love tourists! But they should have caution when they go through." All people have to do is telephone him for an appointment for a private showing. "It's always free," he added. However, Rott does accept donations. And he prefers that parents not bring their children.

At the conclusion of the interview, Rott wound up an old crank-type phonograph, rummaged through a stack of ancient Zon-O-Phone and

Edison records—finally selecting a three-fourth inch disc. We both savored the music of a ghostly piano plunking out "Three O'Clock in the Morning" and "Hesitation Walz."

The next record was by Ada Jones and Len Spencer, with orchestra accompaniment, titled "House Cleaning Time: A Domestic Episode." It sounded like fun, but unfortunately it was more than Three O'Clock in the Afternoon, and I could Hesitate no longer! I simply had to get back to the office!—By Warren Overlie

Christ Rott looks at one of the first Bibles brought to Ashley, published in 1724. The Bible came from Russia, but is printed in German. The book has been re-bound, since the original cover was badly damaged. The other pages, however, are in remarkably good condition.





"This is the first butter churn I've seen which has a glass crock. They're usually wood," remarked Christ Rott. The churn, which swings all the way around, is a Superior Sanitary Churn, and was manufactured in 1910. Not too long ago, Rott churned butter. It worked "real good," he said. The churn was purchased from a family in Edgeley, N.D. ▷

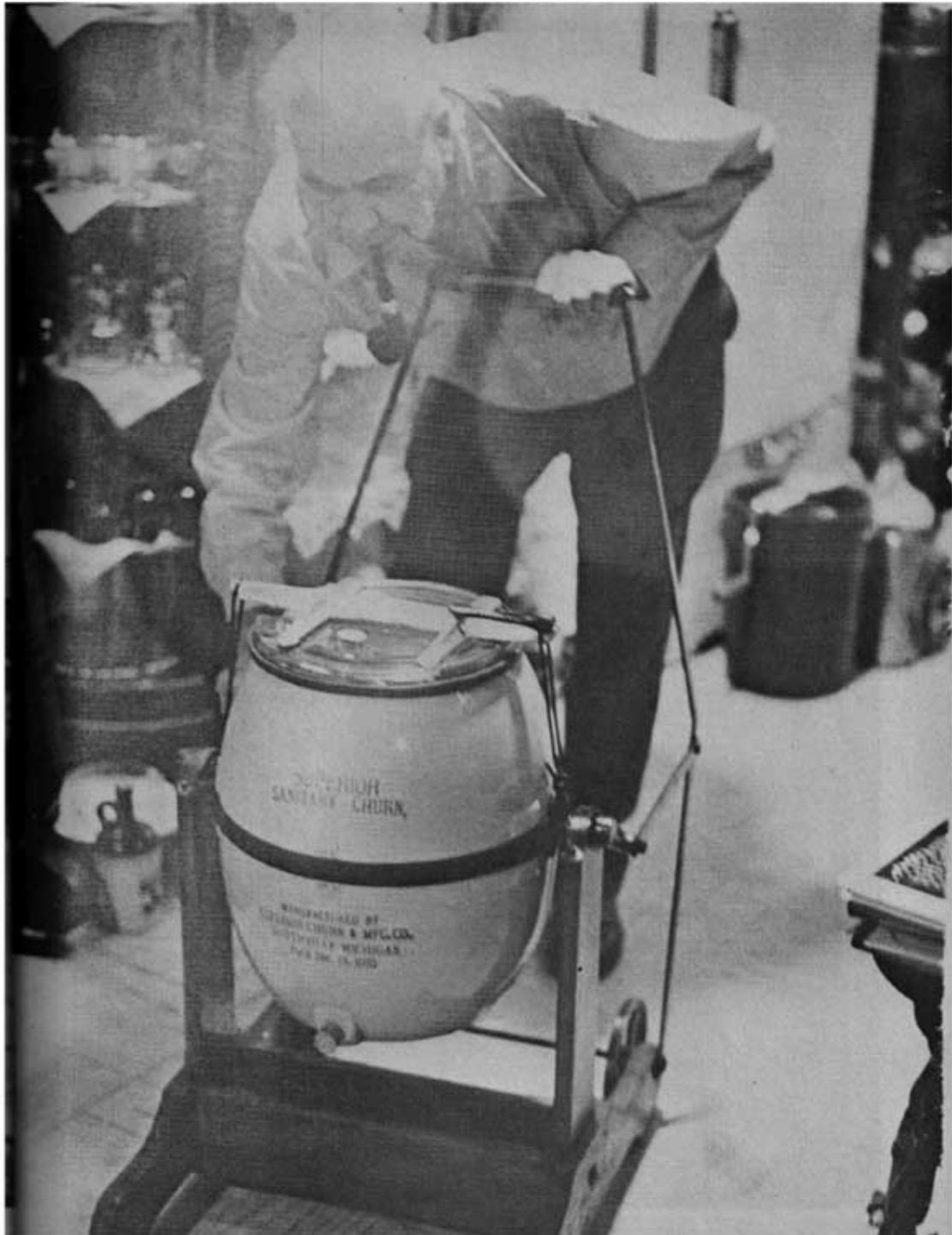


Music anyone? Christ Rott winds up one of his old phonographs, which was donated by Jake Rattei of Ashley. In the background are some of Rott's antique lamps and pictures.



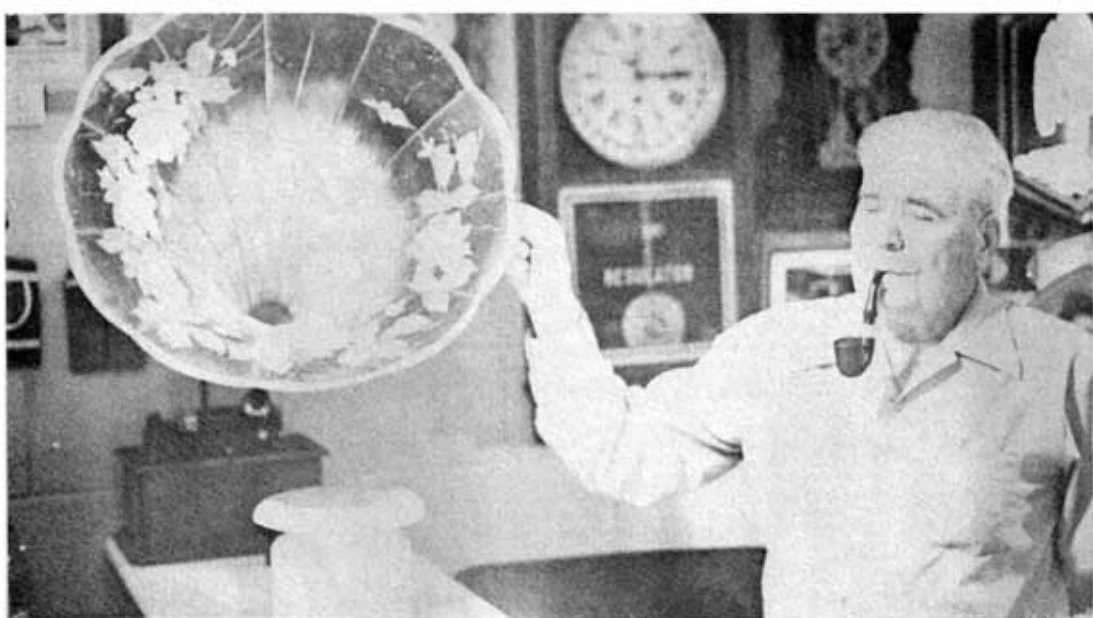
An eight-piece setting of orange carnival glass glitters in the light. The setting (shown above) is only a small fraction of the other carnival glass, pressed glass and crystal which make up the unique Rott Family Collection.





20-QUART
SANTAL CHURN

MANUFACTURED BY
SANTAL CHURN & MFG. CO.
MONTICELLO, VERMONT
PAT. DEC. 15, 1910



Whenever Christ Rott gets tired of contemporary songs, he has a collection of antique records to listen to—and this cylinder-type phonograph record to play them on. The record player is blue with delicate pink roses. "It could be about 80 years old," speculates Rott. Behind Rott can be seen part of the family's extensive antique clock collection. △



This old-style fur coat was worn by hunters living here at the turn of the century. Rott is shown here holding one of the guns from his extensive gun collection. ▷

△
Old-time coffee grinder and (in background) pump organ.

