

In Touch with Prairie Living

November 2023

By Michael M. Miller

Germans from Russia Heritage Collection
North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA
GRHC
HERITAGE COLLECTION

The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection will have a booth at the Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase at Scheel's Arena, 5225 31st Avenue South, Fargo – Friday, November 17, noon-8 p.m. and Saturday, November 18, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Our booth will include part of our newest traveling exhibit, "Building Life and Home on the Prairie," and popular German-Russian books and cookbooks for sale. Featured this year, is a new series of books called "The Joy of German Cookies," by Rose Marie Gueldner. These books make wonderful gifts for the Christmas season and are also available for purchase on the GRHC website.

Rose Marie Gueldner, a descendant of Germans from Russia pioneers, has authored an important series of books, "The Joy of German Cookies." Gueldner has worked as an educator, personal chef, writer, journalist, and businesswoman. She spent years researching history, traveling to ethnic communities, visiting cooks, and gathering data for these books. Gueldner also authored the GRHC best-selling book, "German Food & Folkways: Heirloom Memories from Europe, South Russia & the Great Plains."

Using her background in food science, history, and folklore, Gueldner helps the reader understand the 'why,' 'how,' and 'when' of food and recipes. Importantly for a cookbook, she uses her skills as an educator, journalist, and accomplished home baker to present recipes with clear, easy-to-follow instructions.

As a food historian, Gueldner puts the recipes into historical perspective by summarizing German-speaking groups in North America to groups that migrated to faraway places – east to Russia and west to North America, more than twenty groups that vary slightly from book to book depending on the recipes included. Included in each book is a map of European homelands 1790 to 1815 and one of the German Empire 1871-1918. Another map shows the percentage of Americans and Canadians claiming German ancestry.

The German groups represented in this collection are: Black Sea German, Volga Germans, Bessarabian Germans, Germans, Alsace-Lorraine Germans, Amish, Austrians, German Australians, German

Bohemians, German Hungarians, German Russians, Bukovina Germans, Moravians, Missouri Germans, South Tyrolean, Danube Swabians, Pennsylvania Germans, Amish Colonists, German Texans, Schleswig-Holsteiners, Silesians, Swiss, Saxons, and Zoarites.

Bonnie Everhart, Book Review Editor, for *The Palatine Immigrant*, shares the following comments:

"Volume I contains 140 recipes which are all made by rolling dough flat and cutting it into a variety of shapes. They are often decorated in some manner. Sandwich cookies are two rolled cookies placed together with filling of some kind in between.

Volume 2 offers over 120 recipes for drop cookies, refrigerator cookies and bars. Many of these cookies will be familiar to a read even though they may be unaware of the German connection. In addition to precise directions, Gueldner has tailored these recipes for moderate yields as opposed to the large batches baked in earlier times. Refrigerator cookies are those whose ingredients are combined, and the dough is allowed to rest, often overnight in the refrigerator, after which they can be sliced and baked as needed. The author discusses in detail the variety of fat sources and dairy most suitable for each type of cookie to achieve the desired results.

Volume 3 contains over 155 recipes for hand-crafted and molded cookies. These include balls, logs, crescents, wafers, pressed and piped cookies. A variety of glaze that would be appropriate to use on these cookies is also discussed.

Volume 4 supplies over 145 recipes for meringues, macaroons, and other whisked egg cookies. Instructions are also included for working with chocolate, specialty sugar, and flavoring extracts along with decorations and fillings.

Each volume contains a section on sources, bibliography, and an easy-to-use index. Not only are recipes "The Joy of German Cookies" according to the style guidelines used by professional food writers and editors, these three important sections are included. The Sources section lists mail-order and on-line vendors for special ingredients and equipment while the

bibliography presents works primarily used in researching German groups. An index, of course, is second in importance only to the quality of the recipes."

Rose Marie is a longtime colleague and her years of foodway research present an encyclopedia of cookie recipes made by home bakers in a variety of German groups. She reminds us that food is history – family history and community history – the scents and delights of cookies evoke special memories for all ages. Rose Marie blends her wonderful tastes of baking German cookies with a comprehensive collection of recipes, which are written clearly for the first-time cookie maker as well as experienced bakers. "The Joy of German Cookies" is not only a reliable collection of tested recipes for the baker, but also makes an attractive special gift.

Gueldner includes in the book, "Dedicated to the memory of mothers grandmothers, and other homemakers whose culinary skills, warmth, laughter, industriousness and strength of character preserved in the joy of German cookies."

For more information about donating family histories and photographs, or how to financially support the GRHC, contact Jeremy Kopp, at jeremy.kopp@ndsu.edu or 701-231-6596; mail to: NDSU Libraries, Dept. 2080, PO Box 6050, Fargo, N.D. 58108-6050; or go to www.ndsu.edu/grhc. You may also contact me directly at michael.miller@ndsu.edu or 701-231-8416.

November column for North Dakota and South Dakota weekly newspapers.