

# TRAVEL

## Drama, History, Art Combine In Eureka, Ellendale For Extravaganza Entertainment



The German play, seen by capacity crowds during Eureka's Wheat Festival, will be back during the harvest festival by popular demand. Here the young couple, played by Charlene Schrum and John Thurn, is married by the "minister," Leroy Hoffman, while the groom's mother, Erva Neuharth, looks on.

Two events this month will combine history and culture of this region in performances the public will not want to miss: in Eureka, S.D., a German play (narrated in English) depicting the lives and problems of a young pioneer couple; and in Ellendale, N.D., a pageant showing the development of Dickey County, plus an Indian artifacts display.

**Repeat performance.** The German play will be presented at the Eureka high school auditorium on Sunday, Aug. 22 at 8:30 p.m. The play traces the history of a young couple, from their matchmaking and wedding to the birth of their first child and the growth of their family. The play is spoken in German, narrated in English, and shows the lives and customs of the German people settling in the Dakota Territory. The play is directed by Rev. Walter Kranzler and Bruce Mehlhaff and is presented by local actors.

The crowds which filled the auditorium for the play's first two performances at the wheat festival were a surprise to the play's cast and its directors. Only 500 play programs were printed, and they were expected to last both nights. After running out of programs early the first night, the play's directors figured everyone had shown up! They printed 500 more programs, only to be caught short again!! The cast turned down several offers to present the play in other area towns, but conceded to "popular demand" to make a repeat performance.

Other activities will be a community church harvest Thanksgiving service Sunday at 11 a.m. at the ball park, the American Legion beef barbeque Sunday, Aug. 22 at 5 p.m. at the Lakeside Park, and an art show and a flower show.

All seven of Eureka's churches are participating in the Thanksgiving service, and a combined 120-voice choir directed by Claudia Hoffman will sing "God of our Fathers" and "Heritage," a song composed especially for the bicentennial. Rev. Howard Kusler of Waukesha, Wis., a former Eureka, will be the featured speaker.

Tickets to the beef barbeque are \$2.50 advance and \$3.50 that day, and are being sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Willard Hauck is the



**Harvesting scene: 1900s**

American Legion ticket chairman.

**Everything rosy.** The Eureka Garden Club will sponsor the flower show, "Our Heritage in Flowers," in the high school auditorium Saturday, Aug. 21, from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Anyone can enter the show, which has artistic and horticulture classes, and ribbons will be awarded. An antique doll collection belonging to Shirley Alseth of Aberdeen, S.D. will be on display at the flower show. The show will include a tea and a plant sale, and a free-will offering will be taken at the door. More information can be obtained by contacting Kathryn Schulkoski, flower show chairman.

The art show is sponsored by the Eureka Study Club, and local artists are encouraged to submit paintings, sculpture, and photographs in the bicentennial heritage theme. The art show will be at the country club on Saturday, Aug. 21 from 1 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 10 p.m., and on Sunday, Aug. 22 from 1 to 5 p.m.

**Threshing bee cancelled.** One of the festivities at Eureka had to be cancelled because of dry weather—the threshing bee. Wheat was cut in July, but it was too short to binder it.

Nevertheless, the long history that Eureka has had with wheat and other small grains is vividly recalled.

Back when it was the end of the tracks, Eureka was one of the country's primary grain marketing centers. In 1892, the number of grain

cars shipped from Eureka was equivalent to a train 30 miles long! Thirty-five warehouses and elevators and the 200 men who worked in them handled almost four million bushels of grain!

**Wheat center.** The railroad's earnings in October and November of that year were more than any other station on the Milwaukee Road. In 1897, the railroad transported a major part of the wheat produced in this country from Eureka.

The first threshing machines used horses to supply their power. The "horse-power" came from seven teams, and it was one man's job to see that they pulled equally. Each threshing crew had about six wagons which hauled bundles of grain to the threshing machine. There the bundles were pitched to a platform where another man opened and fed them into the machine. The grain was caught in a bushel tub to keep track of the yield, then sacked, loaded, and hauled away. The straw was forked into stacks. Threshing crews consisted of twelve or more men, and can be compared to today's custom of combining crews.

Later, threshing machines were powered by steam, but threshing still required a lot of manpower. The fireman had to get up early and start the fire in the steamer. Straw was pushed into the fire chamber to keep the pressure constant, and it was supplied by the straw boss. The

waterman had to haul water for the steamer in a large tank mounted on a wagon.

The swather and combine revolutionized farming! One man could do the job of ten—and do it in less time.

**Indian artifacts display.** Meanwhile, the Heritage Collection of Indian Culture—the Arikara—will be on display August 19, 20, and 21 at the Trinity Bible Institute fieldhouse in Ellendale, N.D. in conjunction with the Dickey County Fair. The display is on loan from the Dacotah Prairie Museum of Aberdeen, S.D., and was presented as a gift to the public by the First National Bank of Aberdeen in the interest of a greater understanding of Indian culture on the 200th anniversary of the United States.

Artifacts in the exhibit were obtained from the Rygh Site near Mobridge, S.D., which the Arikara had reached about 1550. Items in the display date to about 1800, the time of the first white contact. It took the Albert Schick family of Eureka, S.D., assisted by Bruce Mettler, about 200 working days to recover the artifacts displayed in the collection. The project began in 1962 and digging ended in the fall of 1968 when Missouri River waters backing up from the Oahe Dam covered the sites.

The artifacts of the Arikara point them out to having been basically a non-nomadic agricultural tribe. They lived in the large permanent earth-

lodges of the Coalescent Culture—so called because it fused the culture of the Arikara, the Mandan, and the Hidatsa tribes. Projectile points for spears and arrows suggest some degree of hunting and some warfare. Like most tribes, they had well developed ceremonies and religion also. Today, perhaps 2,000 Indians from the "Coalescent Culture" tribes remain, many gathered on their principal reservation of Fort Berthold in North Dakota.

**Dickey County pageant.** Mary Lee Randall of Ellendale, N.D. is organizing a pageant on the history of Dickey County for the Dickey County Fair August 21 and 22. Eight regions of the county are each presenting an historic event unique to that community. The pageant will be performed at the Trinity Bible Institute fieldhouse Sunday, Aug. 22 at 8 p.m.

Mrs. Randall said, "We have asked for volunteers to develop each episode. It will be a representative program running the gamut from humor to pathos. The program will be tied together with music by the Oakes Men's Bicentennial Chorus and narration." Some episodes are the naming of a town, steamboat on the James River, a home talent radio station and the importance of the railroad.

Mrs. Randall also wrote and directed the Whitestone Battlefield pageant (see PRAIRIES, March 1976), performed July 4-5 & Aug. 1. ■