“We have found a gold mine”, said Bob Dambach about the cultural heritage of the three German colonies.

We have been honored with a very pleasant and productive visit. From the state of North Dakota, in the USA, via Brazil and Entre Ríos, came Michael Miller, one of the most prestigious American Russian German historians, and Bob Dambach, director of television of a North Dakotan broadcasting company. They were surprised at the prominence of Russian German culture in the three Volga German colonies of Coronel Suárez.

Miller is the director of the GRHC (Germans from Russia Heritage Collection), a library and archive within the library system of the North Dakota State University. It contains over 200,000 documents, photographs and videos about the Russian German immigrants that settled in the USA and Canada. Dambach works as TV director at Prairie Public, which belongs to the prestigious PBS (Public Broadcasting System), an American public TV network. He is descended from German immigrants.
As ambassadors of the North Dakota State University and expert researchers of the history of the Russian Germans, they have produced seven documentaries about this subject. Accompanied by Carlos Villar, his wife, Daniel Minig, a translator and our good friends Elio Krank and Roxana, from Colonia Barón, La Pampa, and Germán Sack, from Buenos Aires, Miller and Dambach paid a visit to our colonies.

We received them in the bunker of “Unsere Kolonien” (Our colonies) After a two-hour interview, which was conducted partly in German and partly in English, with the assistance of Carlos Villar as interpreter, and a beer toast, we went to the park and museum “La Palmera”, of Pedro and Rosa Schwerdt, which impressed the visitors because of its historic elements connected to our ancestors’ immigration and its beauty.
Then, they held a press conference at the German-Argentinean Club of San José, where Dambach explained that they had come from Brazil and that the aim of their trip was to get acquainted with people from our colonies and our historic sites in order to make a one-hour documentary in 2013. Together with Miller, he has produced seven films about the Germans that emigrated from Russia to the USA; the eighth is meant to deal with the ones that settled in Argentina and Brazil. Michael Miller said that the documentary will consist of five stories of the German immigration, including the Black Sea Germans and the Mennonite community. They will start working in March 2013, in the villages of Entre Ríos and the colonies of Coronel Suárez and the Mennonite colony. This film will reach a 90% of the American and Canadian public.

They were pleasantly surprised that the city hall is involved in the conservation of our heritage and that it works towards the promotion of tourism in our colonies. The documentary will be in English. The production cost amounts to $175,000, USD.
Their attention was attracted to the similarities shared by our community and theirs, especially our recipes and the wrought iron crosses in our cemeteries, which are identical to those that are to be found in the northern country, and even more creative than the ones that exist in Germany, Russia and Ukraine. The documentary film will be produced in English and then translated into Portuguese and Spanish if funds are available.

Finally Dambach bade us farewell, saying: “We have found a very impressive cultural heritage here in Coronel Suárez, and we feel very motivated because of the potential that it has. We will work hand in hand with the local city hall on this project.”
We will be back in Coronel Suárez to film this documentary thanks to the support of the city hall, as everyone here wants us to go to their villages to do the filming. You keep a gold mine in these three colonies, and we want to show it to the world: this documentary will reach a 90% of the American and Canadian public.”

“We are very surprised at the marvelous things that we have seen these days. The North Dakota State University studies the current situation of the Russian Germans around the world, and, as a historian, I feel very encouraged by what we have found here because of the potential it has. We thank all those who welcomed us into their homes, as well as mayor Mocce, who offered us the public and logistic support for the making of this documentary, which none else did, neither in Entre Ríos nor in Brazil”, said Michael Miller, director of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection.

Meanwhile, Carlos Villar, sub-secretary of Institutional Relations, emphasized the importance of this visit, stating that the mayor Ricardo Alejo Mocce has prioritized public policies in connection with the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Volga Germans to Coronel Suárez, collaborating with the national and provincial governments. “We are going to work on this project all through the year, making all the necessary contributions.”

The most important tasks that Miller and Dambach asked us to carry out were the translation into English of much of our historic documentation regarding the Volga Germans and the arrangement of the preparations for the filming. We are particularly excited because their second visit will coincide with the Kerb week in May 2013.

*Our appreciation is extended to Nestor Suarez for translation from Spanish to English.*