

In Touch with Prairie Living

November 1996

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA
GRHC
HERITAGE COLLECTION

The heritage of the Germans from Russia is a unique part of our northern plains culture. Through this new column, the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at the NDSU Libraries in Fargo reaches out to prairie families throughout the Dakotas. Reader response with suggestions and opinions is encouraged.

Homeland Documentary

Mark your calendars to watch Prairie News Journal on Prairie Public Television December 21 and 22 at 5 p.m. The program will showcase the Journey to the Homeland Tours of June, 1996, when North Dakotans traveled to Ukraine to visit their ancestral German villages. PPTV hopes to produce a television documentary series about this historic tour and its importance for the Germans from Russia. Brother Placid Gross, a native of Napoleon and a member of Assumption Abbey, Richardton, will be featured.

Tour Memories

The visit to the former German villages in southern Ukraine was truly an unforgettable experience for 80 Americans of German-Russian ancestry. Margaret Aman Freeman of Redondo Beach, CA, writes, "People in the villages were generous and invited us into their homes, offering to prepare food for us, which they often did. Chickens, ducks and geese roamed freely. The ducks and geese seemed particularly pleased that there had been a rain. Horse drawn carts were hauling feed for the animals. It would be wonderful if more of our friends and families with roots to these German villages would have the opportunity to drive through and visit this country which is much like our Dakota prairies." The winter 1996 issue of North Dakota Horizons features an article with photographs about their travel tours to Germany and Ukraine in June.

Arizona Snowbirds

Snowbirds join us this winter in Arizona for our Germans from Russia outreach events. The NDSU Libraries is sponsoring gatherings on February 27 at Lakeview Hall #1, Recreation Centers of Sun City, 10676 Thunderbird Blvd., Sun City, 1:30-4:00 p.m. and March 1 at Mesa Regal Resort, Royal Hall, Mesa, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Featured speakers will be Ukraine tour members describing their memorable experiences.

Prairie Settlers

Our traveling exhibit, "The Kempf Family: Germans from Russia Weavers on the Dakota Prairies," is on display at the Harvey Public Library until December . The Kempf family immigrated from former Bessarabian German villages in South Russia to establish a new life in McIntosh and Dickey counties.

Growing Up in North Dakota: A Memoir by Philo T. Pritzkau, born in a sod house near Burnstad in Logan County, ND, has recently been published. The book provides a wonderful story of pioneer life--harvesting, hard times, long winters and one room country schools. His stories formed a basis for his daughter, Patricia MacLachlan's book, Sarah, Plain and Tall , later screen-written for a popular movie.

May I suggest that readers with personal computers visit the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection on the World Wide Web. Students can use the website to locate valuable information on German-Russian heritage for project papers . The web address is: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc>. For further information about the Arizona events, Philo Pritzkau's new book, PPTV's proposed documentary, future Journey to the Homeland Tours, family research, and other concerns, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, P.O. Box

, Fargo, ND Telephone: 701-231-8416
E-mail: Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu

November 1996 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.