

# In Touch with Prairie Living

November 1998

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 at the NDSU Libraries in Fargo reaches out to prairie families and former Dakotans. In various ways, it affirms the heritage of the Germans from Russia is an important part of the northern plains culture.

The NDSU Libraries and Prairie Public Television are collaborating on a groundbreaking one-hour documentary on the Germans from Russia. The documentary explores the history and culture of this unique ethnic group. Filming will include the breathtaking footage in the former German villages and the landscape in southern Ukraine. The program will premiere on PPTV in early 1999.

PPTV videographers joined the Journey to the Homeland Tours to Odessa, Ukraine in 1996, 1997 and 1998 for extensive filming. They traveled widely in North Dakota, to South Dakota and Lincoln, Nebraska for additional footage. Ron Vossler, University of North Dakota and a Wishek, N.D. native, is the documentary scriptwriter.

The limited-edition version of the videotape will contain special footage not seen in the one-hour documentary. Persons need to contact PPTV before 1 January 1999, to secure this special videotape. For further information, contact Prairie Public Television, PO Box 3240, Fargo, ND 58108-3240 Tel: 1-800-359-6900. Watch for announcements in newspapers for the premiere dates this winter.

In October, PPTV premiered the new documentary, Mennonites of Manitoba. Sixty thousand Mennonites now live on a fertile band of land hugging the Canadian American border. Their ancestors immigrated from the steppes of South Russia (today Ukraine) to the prairies of Manitoba sharing a similar history of the Dakota Germans from Russia. In the summer of 1874, a German speaking group of farmers from Russia began to flow into the virgin prairie of southern Manitoba. Their dynamic story is shared in Mennonites

of Manitoba. This dynamic video documentary is available by contacting PPTV at 1-800-359-6900.

The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection is pleased to announce the completion of the forthcoming book, *Homeland Book of the Bessarabian Germans* by Albert Kern. The book includes many photographs and histories of the former Bessarabian German villages. The book will be of much interest to many Dakotans who have ancestral roots to these villages. This is one of the most comprehensive research histories ever published in the English language on the Bessarabian Germans. Persons wishing to secure the book, can contact GRHC.

The cookbook, *Sei Unser Gast: Be Our Guest: A Collection of German-Russian Recipes* continues to be well received. Food traditions are among our most enduring folkways. The younger generation may never learn to speak the German dialect of their ancestors, but being able to prepare favorite dishes from the Old Country is often another matter. Documenting German-Russian cuisine and foodways so present and future generations can enjoy their unique culinary heritage was the purpose behind the cookbook produced by the North Star Chapter in Minneapolis-St. Paul area of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. Learn how to make Kuchen, Borscht, Plachinta, Halupsie and many other foods.

GRHC has published *Some Wonderful Old Time Recipes from Our Mothers and Grandmothers*. From the Forward by Thelma Bartel Wiest writes: "This recipe book was compiled in order to preserve the many old family recipes that are endangered, but which are still alive in the memories of many family members and, in some case, also in their kitchens. If, a hundred years from now, some curious, bright-eyed teenager, rummaging through an old trunk discovers this book, I hope she enjoys reading it as much as I enjoyed

writing it." Here one finds delightful recipes such as Pfeffernüsse, Borscht/Kraut Suppe, and Schupf Noodla. GRHC wishes to thank Dr. William and Thelma Baird Wiest, Portland, OR, for sharing this wonderful recipe book.

The various Germans from Russia groups prepare German dishes quite differently from the way they are made in Germany. They also adopted and made uniquely their own Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Romanian dishes.

May I encourage readers to inform me about published cookbooks featuring ethnic German-Russian recipes and related heritage. We are also very interested in securing German-Russian related family histories published. We wish to add these publications to GRHC.

For further information about the collection, the new Bessarabian German book, the recipe books, the future Germans from Russia television documentary, PPTV's new Mennonite documentary, the Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine for May 18-31, 1999 and German-Russian heritage, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 (Tel: 701-231-8416; E-mail: Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu; GRHC website: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc>).

*November 1998 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.*