

In Touch with Prairie Living

January 1999

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.

Prairie Public Broadcasting and the NDSU Library are pleased to announce the premiere showing of the new documentary, *The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie*, on Tuesday, February 9, 1999 from 7 pm to 8 pm (CST). Executive producer is Bob Dambach and videographer is Dave Geck both of PPTV; scriptwriter is Ron Vossler, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks and Wishek, North Dakota native; and narrator is Steve Bergeson, NDSU, Fargo. The documentary is copyrighted by Prairie Public. Dambach, Geck and Vossler filmed in the former German villages and in Odessa, Ukraine in June, 1996; and May, 1997 and 1998 to prepare for the documentary. It is a dream come true and a powerful visual of global importance for the community of Germans from Russia worldwide. I highly recommend you secure a copy of this videotape. For further information, call toll free to Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900. This is an historic and important partnership between Prairie Public and the North Dakota State University Library.

The initial idea for this *Germans from Russia* video documentary was begun in 1994 when Dr. Shirley Fischer Arends, an Ashley, North Dakota native (author of the book, *The Central Dakota Germans*); Carter Wood, former Grand Forks Herald writer (now working in the office of North Dakota Governor Ed Schafer); Peter Hilkes, East European Institute, Munich, Germany, and myself traveled to Odessa, Ukraine. We explored the possibilities of future tours and a film video documentary. The first *Journey to the Homeland Tour* became reality in June, 1996. The documentary becomes reality in February, 1999.

Prairie Public Television is seen on North Dakota stations: KBME/2/Bismarck; KDSE/9/Dickinson, KJRE/19/Ellendale, KFME/13/Fargo, KGFR/2/Grand Forks, KSGR/6/Minot; KWSE/4/Williston, and Winnipeg Cable Channel 3. Later the documentary will be shown on other Public Broadcasting Service stations (PBS) throughout the United States, including the central and northern plains. For 35 years, Prairie Public Television has supported the prairie community through broadcast and technological services. PPTV has the largest square mileage of television coverage of any PBS station in the United States. The *Germans from Russia* documentary is part of Prairie Public's new Heritage Series. In 1997, PPTV produced "Mennonites of Manitoba".

The NDSU Libraries and Prairie Public will sponsor events in California and Arizona premiering the documentary. On Sunday, February 28, from 1 pm-3 pm at Westlake Village Community Room, 571 Hampshire Road, Westlake Village, California, the one-hour documentary will be shown, followed by commentary from Michael M. Miller. Limited space is available for the event! Persons wishing to attend are requested to contact Randy Boschee (Tel: 805-685-4609; E-mail: Boschee@aol.com).

Our thanks to the Ventura Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) and the Glückstal Colonies Research Association for hosting the California event.

On Saturday, March 6, from 9:30 am to 12 noon, at the Civic Center Library, 3839 Civic Center Blvd., Scottsdale, Arizona the documentary will be shown. Local contact person is Larry Haas, Sun City (Tel: 602-583-2040; E-mail: haasle@juno.com). Our thanks to the AHSGR Sun Chapter for hosting this event. Both Westlake Village and Scottsdale events are free and open to the general public.

The North Dakota Picnic will be on Sunday, March 7, from 10 am to 3 pm at Pioneer Park, Main Street, Mesa, Arizona. The NDSU Library will sponsor information tables at the picnic where books and the new *Germans from Russia* videotape will be available.

For further information about the collection, the future *Germans from Russia* television documentary, the Arizona and California events, the *Journey to the Homeland Tour* to Odessa, Ukraine for May 17-31, 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>).

January 1999 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.