

In Touch with Prairie Living

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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. In June, I returned from our fifth Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine, and Stuttgart, Germany (May 17-31). The messages sent by tour members from Odessa with e-mail appear at the GRHC website: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/journey/index.html>. I will share their memories in a future column.

The Minnesota History Center and the North Star Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, present a special showing of the landmark 60-minute video documentary, "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie," on Sunday, August 22, 1999, at 2 pm at the 3M Theatre, followed by a reception. The History Center is located at 345 Kellogg Blvd., West St. Paul, MN. The program is free and open to the public. We expect many of our German-Russian community in the Twin Cities area to join us for this festive event.

Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, New York City, authors of the book, "The German American Family Album" and award-winning writers, share this message: "The documentary's color photography is strikingly brilliant. It takes the viewer on a round-the-world journey from the steppes of Russia to the rolling plains of the United States -- the same trip made by ethnic Germans from Russia. But the film is far more than a travelogue. A thoughtful and clear narration, combine with first-person interviews with the descendants of immigrants and commentary by experts on the topic gives the viewer a deeper understanding of the people who helped make the great American desert into the breadbasket of America. The origins of the Germans from Russia, their unique culture, and their contributions to American life are vividly detailed.

Stories of the human tragedy and triumph make this a film that anyone would enjoy and profit from. One gets a sense that there is much more the film-makers had to leave out, and we look forward to a sequel." It was a pleasure to work with the Hooblers in the preparation of "The German American Family Album" book which includes many photographs of German-Russians and stories.

To secure the landmark documentary videotape, contact Prairie Public Broadcasting at 1-800-359-6900. This "Collector's Edition" of the videotape includes 20-minute bonus video footage, "Ukraine Places & Faces" of beautiful filming from the former German villages near Odessa not shown in the one-hour documentary. See many interesting pages about the documentary at the Prairie Public Broadcasting website: <http://www.prairiepublic.org>.

The National Buffalo Museum at Jamestown, ND, features the GRHC traveling exhibit, "The Kempf Family: Germans from Russia Weavers on the Dakota Prairies," until October 15. See the GRHC website at "Outreach Programs" for Kempf family and German-Russian clothing/textile photographs: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/index.html>. Also on display is the "German-Russian Architecture" traveling exhibit from the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

Our outreach schedule includes the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention at the Ramkota Inn, Aberdeen, SD, July 8-11, 1999. Contact the GRHS office in Bismarck for more information at 701-223-6167 or <http://www.grhs.org>. The documentary videotape will be available at the GRHS Convention and at the GRHS office in Bismarck at 1008 E. Central Avenue.

For further information about the donations to the collection family histories, the Kempf display, the videotape documentary, the Journey to

the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine, Alsace, France, and Stuttgart, Germany (including the large Germans from Russia gathering called the Bundestreffen), for June 6-19, 2000 tour, "The German American Family Album," GRHC's latest publications, "Tender Hands: Ruth's Story of Healing" and "Homeland Book of the Bessarabian Germans," 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>).

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