

In Touch with Prairie Living

January 2000

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 (GRHC) 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 has announced the premiere airing early in March, 2000, of the new documentary, "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia." Date and time will be announced later.

The Germans from Russia foodways documentary is part of Prairie Public's Heritage Series. In 1999, PPTV produced the award-winning program, "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie."

In September, 1999, at St. Louis Park, MN, Evelyn Ziegler Tonra was filmed by Prairie Public Television for the Germans from Russia foodways videotape documentary. Evelyn has been a longtime member of the Minnesota North Star Chapter. She has been an active participant and mentor in the German-Russian women's group in the Twin Cities area, known as the "Verrueckte Frauen." A Beulah, ND, native, she has lived in many places, but remains connected to her German-Russian ancestry by her creative writing, ethnic cooking skills and as a talented woodworker. Her lovely poem, "Dakota Ballad" appears at the GRHC website at the section "Poems & Songs." We are pleased to have Evelyn as a colleague and friend of GRHC.

On Saturday, March 4, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, at the Scottsdale Public Library Theater (lower level), 3839 Civic Center Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ, the new documentary, "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia," will premiere. Local contact person is Larry Haas, Sun City (Tel: 623-583-2040; E-mail: haasle@juno.com). The program is sponsored by the Arizona Sun Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Prairie Public Broadcasting, Fargo, and the

NDSU Libraries, Fargo.

The North Dakota Picnic will be on Sunday, March 5, from 10 am to 3 pm at Pioneer Park, Main Street, Mesa, Arizona. The NDSU Libraries will sponsor information tables at the picnic where books and the Germans from Russia videotapes will be available.

The "Teachers Guide" to the documentary, "The Germans from Russia," is available by viewing at Prairie Public's website: <http://www.prairiepublic.org>. The guide is valuable for use with students and at home, including classroom activities and website activities.

"Tracing Your Dakota Roots: A Guide to Genealogical Research in the Dakotas" by Jo Ann Winistorfer & Cathy Langemo has recently been published. I highly recommend the book for various ethnic groups in the Dakotas. Mary Lynn Axtman, Fargo, native of Rugby, ND, writes: "The writers have teamed together to use their many years of professional writing, editing, research, publishing, art and graphics experiences to produce a real gem for those whose roots are in the Dakotas. From cover to cover, researchers or just browsers of all ages will find eye-catching tidbits, paragraphs, or in-depth pages of useful Dakota history, maps, time-lines, and ethnic group history and settlement areas." Ron Vossler, UND, Grand Forks, Mary Lynn Axtman, Fargo, and I assisted with the section in this book on the Germans from Russia. For a detailed review, go to http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/winistorfer.html.

GRHC has published the new book, "Memoirs of Father Anthony Kopp." In a book review, Fr. Jonathan Fischer, St. Paul, MN, a native of Strasburg, ND, writes: "Fr. Kopp's description of his family's trip to America and their getting situated in North Dakota was most revealing. He not only mentions sod houses but describes how they cut and laid the sod and how they formed

the roofs. Fr. Kopp details the effort of having to 'homestead' on this vast prairie, how families had to live isolated and apart from each other instead of in a friendly 'Dorf' or village, as was the case in the old country. His description of the long abandoned harvesting technique of 'heading' reminded me of one of my first farm jobs as a young boy. I too had to drive the 'header box' and worry about its proper positions alongside the header machine."

For further information about donation of family histories to the collection, German-Russian heritage and culture, new books, "Memoirs of Father Anthony Kopp" & "Tracing Your Dakota Roots," "Teachers Guide" to the Germans from Russia video documentary, Schmeckfest videotape, March events in Arizona, Journey to the Homeland tours to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany for June 6-19, 2000 & May, 2001, 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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