

In Touch with Prairie Living

April 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 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 as an important part of the northern plains culture.

What a wonderful experience in March at Mesa and Scottsdale, Arizona, to meet folks of German-Russian ancestry and many Dakotans. Our next Arizona Germans from Russia event will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001, 9:30 am-12 noon, at the Civic Center Library Theater, Scottsdale. The North Dakota Picnic is Sunday, March 4, 2001, at Pioneer Park, Mesa. We were thrilled with the warm reception and response to our Scottsdale showing of the new videotape documentary, "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia." The March airing of the program on Prairie Public Television, South Dakota Public Television and Wisconsin Public Television received an enthusiastic and appreciative response from viewers. To secure the video, contact Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900.

In the newspaper column "Plains Folk" by Tom Isern, Professor of History at NDSU, Fargo, he writes: "The best thing the documentary has going for it, though, is those faces - mostly women, mostly older women, in whose faces every line, every knowing nod, every mischievous glance is a historical document until itself. A review of this Prairie Public documentary cannot close without mention of the wonderful narrative voice of Ron Vossler, who wrote the script. This boy from Wishek is a great interpreter of a deep ethnic culture. His gift for deft description gets full play in this script, and the lyric quality of his prose is inimitable. Ron is an accomplished, but not broadly known, writer. Let me venture here the prediction that he will become a significant figure in regional letters whose work will be studied and anthologized. Let's hear more from

him."

GRHC is pleased to announce publication of "The German-American Experience" by Don Heinrich Tolzmann, German-Americana Collection, University of Cincinnati Libraries. For more information, go to the GRHC website page: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/general/tolzmann.html>.

The Public Library at Harvey, ND, hosts GRHC's traveling exhibit, "The Kempf Family: Germans from Russia Weavers on the Dakota Prairies," until November 1, 2000. "We are pleased to have the NDSU Libraries share the Kempf family exhibit with the Harvey community. The photographic exhibit provides a wonderful opportunity for people to learn more about their rich heritage of German-Russian culture, especially in central North Dakota," stated Marlene Ripplinger, Director of the Harvey Public Library.

The NDSU Libraries has selected unique Northern Plains ethnic treasures from their Germans from Russia Heritage Collection to highlight with live commentary by textile curator Jay Gage on Saturday, April 8 at 1 pm, Opening Reception and Program at the Harvey Public Library. The 1996 spring issue of "North Dakota Horizons" featured an article about this exhibit, "Prairie Weavers: New Germans from Russia Exhibit Follows Threads of the Kempf Family."

On May 5-6, I will be speaking at the California Germans from Russia Heritage Fest at the West Los Angeles Family History Center. Many former Dakotans are expected to attend. For more information about schedule and registration, contact Margaret Aman Freeman, Redondo Beach, CA (Tel: 310-540-1872; E-mail: GCRA31@aol.com).

The Teachers Guide to the award-winning documentary, "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie," is available by viewing at Prairie Public's website:

<http://www.prairiepublic.org>. The guide is valuable for use with students and in home including classroom activities and website activities.

Prairie Public Television and the Germans from Russia Cultural Preservation Foundation announce the fall, 2001 tour to "Great Capitols of Eastern Europe including Vienna, Austria, Budapest, Hungary, Prague, Czech Republic, Berlin, Germany, and Bratislava, Slovakia. A few spaces are still available for the September 14-25, 2000, "Cultural Heritage Tour." For details, contact Bob Dambach at Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900.

For further information about German-Russian heritage, donations to the collection including family histories, the Kempf family exhibit at Harvey, books and videotapes, the Teachers Guide, and the Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine for May 15-28, 2001, Prairie Public's Great Capitols of Eastern Europe Tour for fall, 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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