

In Touch with Prairie Living

May 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.

On May 31, I will be leaving for Germany, to attend the large Bessarabian German gathering on June 4 at Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart. There will be about 5,000 persons attending. Many of them were born in the former German villages of Alt Elft, Arzis, Beresina, Borodino, Friedental, Hoffnungstal, Kloestitz, Lichtental, Leipzig, Katzbach, Krasna, Kulm, Paris, Sarata, Seimeny, Teplitz, Wittenburg and many other villages. Descendants of these historic villages live throughout the Dakotas.

On June 7, I will be meeting our Journey to the Homeland tour group in Vienna, Austria, for the flight to Odessa, Ukraine. We will be in Odessa from June 7-14. The tour group will be in Stuttgart, from June 14-19, which will include a trip to Alsace, France. The tour members are coming from Bismarck, Carrington, Fargo and Gackle, ND, East Grand Forks, MN, Everett, WA, Imperial, NE, Milwaukee, WI, Missoula, MT, San Jose, West Covina and Thousand Oaks, CA, Vancouver, WA as well as Didsbury, Alberta.

The tour members will visit the former Bessarabian, Black Sea and Crimean German villages near Odessa and in Moldova including: Kathariental, Landau and Worms (Beresan District); Bergdorf, Glueckstal, Kassel and Neudorf (Glueckstal District); Baden, Elsass, Kandel, Selz and Strassburg (Kutschurgan District); Franzfel, Klein Liebental, Mariental and Neuberg (Liebental District); Alt Arzis, Alt Postal, Beresina, Brienne, Dennewitz, Friedensfeld, Katzbach, Kloestitz, Kulm, Tarutino and Wittenberg (Bessarabia); and Neustatz and Zurichtal (Crimea).

We look forward to attending the centennial festivities in Java, SD, June 15-17. GRHC volunteers Christ and

Betty Maier, Linton, ND, will be in Java for June 16-17, with German-Russian displays, books, maps and videotapes.

The NDSU Library Lower Level Gallery, Fargo, features the exhibit, "German-Russian Architecture" until June 18. The Black Sea and Bessarabian Germans who immigrated to the Dakotas brought with them a distinctive type of house form. The traditional house was single story, gable-roofed, rectangular, and compartmentalized into two or three rooms.

The Public Library in 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 exhibit provides a wonderful opportunity for people to learn more about the rich heritage of German-Russian culture especially in central North Dakota," stated Marlene Ripplinger, Director of the Harvey Public Library. Our thanks to the staff at the Harvey library for the hospitality during the Opening Program and Reception on April 8.

Prairie Public Television's new 60-minute videotape documentary, "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia" received a tremendous response from airings in March on South Dakota Public Television, Wisconsin Public Television and PPTV. KTCA in Minneapolis airs the program in June and later other PBS stations throughout the USA will broadcast the documentary. "Schmeckfest" touches the lives of our Dakota people in many ways. They can see Annie Roesch Larson, Aberdeen, SD, making her Easter bread; Theresa Kuntz Bachmeier, Rugby, ND, preparing cheese buttons (Kase Knoepfla), and Edna Goebel Johnson, Horace, ND, preparing Struedla and Knoepfla soup. Edna operated Johnson's Cafe at Lehr, ND, for 35 years. For more information

about "Schmeckfest," see these web pages: <http://www.prairiepublic.org> and <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/tapes/foodvideo.html>. To purchase the videotape documentaries, "Schmeckfest" and "The Germans from Russia," contact Prairie Public TV at 1-800-359-6900.

We had a wonderful visit on April 7 in Rugby, ND, to show "Schmeckfest" at the high school theater. My thanks to Mary Ebach and all those involved with this festive and memorable event. We extend our appreciation to Marlene Ripplinger and staff at the Public Library in Harvey, ND, for hosting the opening program on April 8 for the Kempf Family Exhibit.

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 late May/early June, 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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