

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 (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.

The website of GRHC has an attractive new design and format: <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc>. I invite you to review the web pages.

The Institute for Regional Studies has published an outstanding new book, "Unwanted Bread: The Challenge of Farming and Ranching," by Sheldon Green and James Coomber. In the "Fargo Forum," editor Jack Zaleski writes: "The book is a remarkable compilation of portraits and voices from the farm, ranch, ag research and agribusiness. The book's power comes from the insights of people who live on the land. Each story helps complete the sometimes dark, panorama of agriculture on the Northern Plains. This book is a catalogue of the lives of real people as told by those people." The book includes beautiful color photographs. The GRHC website for the book is: http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/green2.html.

The new book, "Loons in the Kitchen: Humorous & Poignant Short Stories from the Dakotas," by Tony Bender, Ashley, ND, is a wonderful addition to our Dakota heritage. Allan Burke, editor of the "Emmons County Record" writes: "Tony's stories, his original style, are a distinct reflection of life on the prairie. Call him a humorist, a philosopher if you will. He is both. Tony Bender is a powerful new voice of the Dakotas." The GRHC website for the book is: http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/tbender.html.

GRHC has published "Not Until the Combine Is Paid and Other Jokes: From the Oral Traditions of the Germans from Russia in the Dakotas," by Ronald J. Vossler, illustrated by his son, Josh Vossler, a UND graduate student. In the Introduction, Vossler writes: "This collection has been culled from twenty

years of my own personal journals and small pocket notebooks. My hope is that readers will not only laugh, or at least smile, at some of these, but that they also come away from this small collection with a better sense of Germans from Russia, and their descendants. Someone once told me that members of this ethnic group had both a hard nature, and a strong faith in God. To those two attributes, I hope readers of this collection might add one other attribute - the strength of laughter."

GRHC has published, "Gazing Forward, Glancing Back, Remembering Always: Memories Retold and Relived by the Community of Streeter, North Dakota" by Sandi Dewald. She shares a wonderful story of special memories from many longtime Streeter families.

The Old Post Office Museum, Devils Lake, ND, features the exhibit "Germans from Russia Wedding Traditions: From the Steppe of South Russia & Bessarabia to the Dakota Prairies" from June 17 to September 15, 2001. The "Grand Opening Program" takes place on Sunday, June 17, at St. Joseph's Parish Hall, Devils Lake. Speakers are Jay Gage, Kempf Family exhibits curator, and Michael M. Miller, Bibliographer.

The award-winning documentary videotapes "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie" (1999), and "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia" (2000), continue to be well received throughout North America. "Schmeckfest" was shown in March on many PBS stations. To secure the videotapes, contact Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900. The videotapes include 20-minute bonus video footage, not shown in the one-hour documentary. See many interesting pages about the documentary at the Prairie Public Broadcasting website: <http://www.prairiepublic.org>.

Because of the interest developed from the "Schmeckfest" documentary,

additional cookbooks including German-Russian recipes have been added to the GRHC web at the section, "Order," and then "Cookbooks."

For further information about donations to the collection, including family histories, outreach programs, videotape documentaries, Journey to the Homeland Tour (May 21-June 3, 2002) for Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany; German-Russian cookbooks; GRHC's publications including recent books, Ron Vossler's new book; "Gazing Forward..."; "The Germans by the Black Sea Between Bug and Dniester Rivers," "Marienberg: Fate of a Village," and "The Dark Abyss of Exile: A Story of Survival"; 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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