

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 as an important part of the northern plains culture.

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

The Glueckstal Colonies Research Association (GCRA) 2004 Bicentennial Committee met in Fargo in July to review plans for the book, videotape and CD projects. In 1804, seventy-three families left Wuerttemberg, Germany, for the Glueckstal District mother colonies (Bergdorf, Glueckstal, Kassel, and Neudorf), South Russia (today in Moldova and Ukraine near Odessa). In 1809, 104 families left Germany and settled in the Glueckstal colonies. Many Glueckstalers settled in the central Dakotas.

Homer Rudolf, Richmond, VA, committee chairperson, a native of Wishek, ND, writes: "Our goal is to produce a book, videotape documentary, and a CD-ROM that will include information about the Glueckstal mother and daughter colonies, a comprehensive look at the historical, political, cultural, and religious life of these German-Russian colonies in South Russia, as well as the 'Glueckstal' settlements in the United States and Canada. We consider this the last real opportunity to gather much of the information relevant to these people, especially their photographs, diaries, documents, and letters." For more information, go to the GCRA website: www.glueckstal.net, or contact me.

Reservations are now being taken for the Journey to the Homeland Tour (May 26-June 7, 2002) sponsored by the NDSU Libraries. The tour will include Odessa, Ukraine and the nearby former Bessarabian and Black Sea German villages; Stuttgart, Germany,

and Alsace, France.

GRHC has published two important books that unfold the tragic story of the Germans who stayed in South Russia (today Ukraine), the famine and suffering that they experienced. "We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives: 1925 - 1937," written by Ronald J. Vossler, shares a dramatic first-account story.

The new biography published by GRHC, "Why are you still alive?: A German in the Gulag" by Georg Hildebrandt, Heidelberg, Germany, writes his life story and the suffering by the Ukrainian Germans. Many Germans died in Siberian detention camps during Stalin's dictatorship. Hildebrandt's biography revives this story first published in 1993 in the German language. His biography is a shocking document of the Germans in the former USSR. He documents what happened with amazing memory and precision. Hildebrandt celebrated his 90th birthday in July, 2001.

"We'll Meet Again in Heaven," includes many letters translated from German to English including these family names: Boschee, Dockter, Eckman, Feiger, Goehring, Graf, Heupel, Hochhalter, Ketterling, Kirschmann, Kramer, Lang, Morlock, Opp, Rudolf, Rueb, Schauer, Speidel, Stock, Viel, and Wanner. Ron Vossler writes "The family names clearly show a direct link, one of old love and also of family ties, between the Dakota pioneers and those unfortunate family members who remained behind in Russia."

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. To secure the videotapes, contact Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900. The videotapes include 20 minutes of bonus

video footage, not shown in the one-hour documentary. See many interesting pages about the documentaries at the Prairie Public Broadcasting website: <http://www.prairiepublic.org>.

For further information about donations to the Collection, including family histories, outreach programs, videotape documentaries, GCRA 2004 Bicentennial projects, Journey to the Homeland Tour (May 26-June 7, 2002) for Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany; German-Russian cookbooks; GRHC's publications including recent books, Streeter, ND book; "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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