

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 Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention is August 8-11, Radisson Hotel, Bismarck. Contact GRHS at 701-223-6167 for further information or go to: www.grhs.org for registration information.

Appreciation is extended to communities of Strasburg, Zeeland, and Flasher, ND, and to the many visitors who visited the GRHC information tables during the centennial days in June and July.

On August 7, at 7 pm, Heritage Center Auditorium, Bismarck, will be the World Premiere of the new Prairie Public Television documentary: "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses on the Great Plains". The program is free and open to the general public.

The documentary premieres on Prairie Public Television on September 12, 2002 at 8 pm (CT). PPTV videotographers traveled the Dakotas, western Kansas, and Saskatchewan to film the beautiful wrought-iron crosses.

Iron Crosses stand as sentinels on the prairie landscape, framed by vast expanses of grass and sky. Though they stand silent, behind each cross is a story. "Prairie Crosses, Prairies Voices" evokes these stories: memories of the Germans from Russia, a frugal and tenacious people whose blacksmiths used wagon-wheel rims and scrap metal to fashion markers for their dead.

"Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices" explains the traditional iron art form that crossed continents and oceans, also survived famine and war - to be reborn on the Great Plains of North America.

Dr. Thimothy J. Kloberdanz, writer and narrator, states: "The wrought iron grave crosses of the German-Russians - with their unborken hearts of metal,

brightly painted stars, endless circles, banner-waving angels, exquisitely formed lilies, and rose blossoms that rust but never wilt - evoke the defiant spirit of their mortal makers."

A new videotape, "Germans from Russia on the Canadian Prairies Then and Now" is now available. There are wonderful segments including music, medicinal remedies (Brauche), cookery, games, religion, and other Germans from Russia folkways. Germans from Russia carried their traditions, culture, and language across two continents and an ocean, breaking sod on the Canadian prairies. More information is available at this web page: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/tapes/canadianprairies.html or by contacting GRHC.

The videotape, "Recipes from Grandma's Kitchen: Germans from Russia Food Traditions & Preparations", continues to be well received. The NDSU Libraries and the Germans from Russia Cultural Preservation Foundation has produced this videotape. Review the Foundation's mission and projects at: www.grculture.org. The videotape includes these persons cooking in their kitchens while reminiscing: Millie Doll Hauck, Dickinson, ND; Helen Gefroh Fischer, Hague Cafe, ND; Bernadine Lang Kuhn, Owatonna, MN; Erica Lang Wangler, Bismarck, ND; and Alma Janke Schott, Gackle, ND.

GRHC's latest book is now in its third printing since February, 2002: "German Food & Folkways: Heirloom Memories from Europe, South Russia & the Great Plains", by Rose Marie Gueldner, Anamoose, ND. The book is available at this website: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/cookbooks/gueldner.html or by contacting GRHC.

Dr. Timothy J. Kloberdanz, NDSU, writes: "Although there are German-Russian cookbooks currently on the market, this one is quite unusual because of the way it interweaves background history, ethnic heritage, and so many mouth-watering Old Country recipes. If the German-Russians have a Martha

Stewart anywhere in North America, it may very well be Rose Marie Gueldner"!

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. Each videotape includes 20-minutes of bonus video footage not shown in the one-hour documentary. To purchase the videotapes, contact PPTV at 1-800-359-6900, or contact GRHC.

The next Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany has been announced for May 20 - June 2, 2003. The tour includes visits to the former Bessarabian, Black Sea and Crimean German villages in southern Ukraine near the Black Sea. Dr. Harley Roth, San Jose, CA, writes of his May, 2002 tour experience: "It was a great trip. A trip that will impact my life forever. I made great friends, met wonderful people, ate great food, visited the most interesting places, former the most endearing memories, and found my roots!"

GRHC has produced the new "Scripture Memory Greeting Cards, Series I". The set of eight cards (4" by 5 1/2") featuring color lithography were printed before 1920s. These cards contain German Bible verse text on the front cover, with translate on the inside. The back cover contains the story of the cards. They were donated to GRHC in 2002, by Adeline Kusler McCloy, a native of Kulm, ND. The card designs can be seen at: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/notecards/scripturemain.html, or contact me.

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