

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.

Prairie Public Television's documentary: "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses on the Great Plains", premieres on September 12, 2002 at 8 pm (CDT). PPTV videotographers traveled the Dakotas, western Kansas, Saskatchewan, Germany, and Austria to film the beautiful wrought-iron crosses. To purchase this new videotape, contact GRHC.

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, Prairie 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. Timothy J. Klobberdanz, writer and narrator, states; "The wrought iron grave crosses of the German-Russians - with their unbroken 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."

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.

GRHC's new cookbook is now in its fourth printing of "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 contact GRHC.

Nicole Hvidsten in the Minneapolis Star Tribune of July 11, 2002 writes: Rose Marie Gueldner traveled to German-Russian communities, interviewed descendants, and visited ethnic celebrations. Recipes range from kraut stampflus (mashed potatoes and cabbage) to strudels and everything in between. It has recipes that probably were in my dear German grandmothers arsenal, but ones I prefer to skip right over. But not spaetzle and strudel? Now we're talking."

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 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, formed 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 the 1920s. These cards contain German Bible verse text on the front cover, with translation on

the inside. The back cover contains the story of these 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.

For further information about Germans from Russia heritage, donations to the Collection including family histories, books, notecards, videotapes, cookbooks, and tours, 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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