

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 days of May and June in Ukraine and Germany with our Journey to the Homeland Tour group were most memorable. We visited many former Bessarabian, Black Sea, and Crimean German villages near Odessa and Simperofol, as well as, Stuttgart, Germany and Alsace, France. The next Journey to the Homeland Tour is scheduled for late May/early June, 2004 with final dates to be announced by the fall of 2003.

In early May, I joined Prairie Public TV videographers for filming at the Schwab Sodhouse, east of Strasburg, ND, and at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, rural Zeeland, ND. The filming included persons reading excerpts of letters received from South Russia which were published in North Dakota German-language newspapers between 1920-1938. This filming is for a 2004 documentary on Letters from Russia which will focus on references in the letters to the periods of starvation in South Russia (Ukraine) in the 1920s and 1930s. At St. Andrew's, filming was done with the German Choir for the 2005 Germans from Russia music documentary.

We are pleased to announce the "Recipe Index Search" available for use at the GRHC website. The search includes recipe titles from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, such as Bessarabian, Black Sea, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Mennonite, Hutterite, Volga, Crimean, and the Northern and Central Plains of the USA. The cookbook title, recipe category, recipe name, page number, and person who submitted the recipe are available through this search. Go to this website: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/recipes/.

GRHC has recently published,

"Escape by Troika: The World War II Chronicle of a Bessarabian Germany", by Oskar Zimmermann, Anaheim, CA. Mr. Zimmermann has many Zimmerman relatives in south-central North Dakota. In the preface, Dr. Worth L. Nicholl writes: "Based on Oskar Zimmermann's diary, which he kept from January 17, 1945, through the end of the war, and his personal recollections, this book tells the story of his forced exile from the vanished but beloved homeland of Bessarabia." The author writes in the Dedication: "This book is dedicated to the millions of German civilian refugees who fled from the Eastern Front in early 1945." The book contains excellent maps and historic photographs. The book is available at: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/general/escape.html.

In cooperation with the Germans from Russia Cultural Preservation Foundation, a new videotape "Reflections with Monsignor Joseph Senger" is available. A native of Orrin, ND, Monsignor Senger, Minot, shares his childhood, farm life, and religious life, as a son of German-Russian immigrants. He shares his story of the emotional and unforgettable visit in May 2001 to southern Ukraine and his ancestral German villages.

Prairie Public's "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses of the Great Plains" is receiving a terrific response from viewers. Be watching for this third documentary of PPTV's Germans from Russia series on other PBS stations in 2003. Iron Crosses stand as sentinels on the prairie landscape, framed by vast expanses of grass and sky. Although they stand silent, behind each cross is a story.

Mother of Eight Designs, Butte, ND, has developed an "Iron Cross Memorial Keepsake" which has fine detail. The Keepsake is rich in symbolism from the cross itself to wheat; prairie - grass and hearts of prairie roses and the shawl which the German-Russian women wore. To see

the design go to: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/keepsakes/ironcross.html.

GRHC has published a new cookbook, "Sharing Our Best Recipes: Members and Friends of the United Methodist Churches, Medina and Tappen, ND. There are many German-Russian original recipes included.

Now in GRHC's fifth printing since February 2002: "German Food & Folkways: Heirloom Memories from Europe, South Russia & the Great Plains", by Rose Marie Gueldner, Fargo, a native of Anamoose, ND, is available.

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 draw much viewer interest, and have been shown on many PBS stations. Each videotape includes bonus video footage not shown in the one-hour documentary.

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