

In Touch with Prairie Living

March 2004

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 NDSU History Department and GRHC are pleased to announce the Theresa Mack Germans from Russia History Assistantship. The recipient will be enrolled in NDSU graduate doctorate program in History beginning with the 2004-2005 academic year.

Theresa Mack Wald, Grand Forks, ND, writes: "My gift for the assistantship is to preserve the heritage and culture about the positive aspects of the Germans from Russia. I want to provide a living legacy for the scholarly study of my heritage of which I am very proud. My parents, John G. Mack born in 1888 and Katherina Deringer born in 1890, lived in the Catholic Black Sea German villages of Elsass and Neu Schloessel, Kutschurgan District, South Russia (today near Odessa, Ukraine). My father was 14 years and my mother was 24 years when they came to America."

Two excellent popular and highly recommended books are: 1) "North Dakota: Every Town on the Map and More: A Pictorial History" documenting 700 location on film from Ashley, Wishek and Venturia to Balta, Orrin and Rugby; 2) "North Dakota Place Names" chronicles the stories of more than 3,000 towns identifying origin, anecdotes and folklore.

"The Way It Was" series of five books about North Dakota continues to be popular. The series includes: 1) The Sod-Busters; 2) Norwegian Homesteaders; 3) The Cowboy & Ranchers; 4) Germans from Russia Settlers; 5) Native People. These North Dakota books are available from GRHC. The "Germans from Russia Settlers" includes these family stories: Franz & Margaret (Thomas)

Baumgartner; Johannes & Margaretha (Braunagel) Baumgartner; Jakob & Helena (Ripplinger) Fischer; August & Christina (Rieker) Flegel; Minnie Sperling Freitag; Johann & Rosina Opp Gutschmidt; Simon Hille; Gottlieb & Christina (Beich) Isaak; Max & Julianna (Webber) Keller; Adolf Klebe; Gottfried Kurtz; George & August Leitner; Christian Maier; Johann Miller; Philip & Eva (Meyer) Mosbrucker; Balzar Thomas; and Morris & Nellie (Winchel) Weisgarber. These North Dakota books are available from GRHC.

GRHC has published its fifth book by Ronald J. Vossler, UND, Grand Forks, a native of Wishek, ND, "Dakota Kraut: Collected Notes on How I Learned to Love My Accent and Ancestry, 1983-2003." This new book is a must read for anyone interested in evocative writing about ethnicity, memory, and a small-town prairie past. "Dakota Kraut" is available at this website page: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/vossler3.html, or contact GRHC.

GRHC has published an important new cookbook, "Cookbook for the Germans from Russia", by Nelly Daes, translated from German to English by Alex Herzog, and edited by Janice Huber Stangl who writes: "This book contains not only recipes, but also humorous and heart-wrenching anecdotes from the German Russian diaspora. It is essential addition to every household." The new cookbook is available at: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/cookbooks/das.html, or contact GRHC.

The award-winning documentary videotapes, "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie" (1999); "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia" (2000); and "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses of the Great Plains" (2002) 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.

Prairie Public Television will be filming for the 2005 Germans from Russia documentary of these four concerts open to the general public and free of charge: 1) Jamestown College Concert Choir & Alive Gospel Singers - March 20, 2 pm, Basilica of Saint James Church, Jamestown; and March 25, 7:30 pm, First Lutheran Church, Harvey; - 2) University of Mary Concert Choir and guest artists: April 3, 2 pm, Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Strasburg; and April 4, 3 pm, Our Lady of the Annunciation Chapel, Bismarck. The choirs of Jamestown College and the University of Mary will perform original German-Russian music. This music documentary will be the fourth program of PPTV's Germans from Russia Series.

For further information about Germans from Russia heritage, donations to GRHC including books, 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: library.ndsu.edu/grhc).

March, 2004 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.