

In Touch with Prairie Living

May 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.

Many thanks to persons who attended the recent concerts at Bismarck, Jamestown, Harvey, and Strasburg, ND performed by the Jamestown College and University of Mary choirs. Filming was done by Prairie Public Television for the 2005 Germans from Russia music documentary.

On June 1, I leave with the NDSU Libraries' sponsored 10th Journey to the Homeland Tour Group for Budapest, Hungary (June 2-4); Odessa, Ukraine (June 4-9); and Stuttgart, Germany (June 9-14). While in Odessa, tour members will visit these nearby former Bessarabian and Black Sea German villages: Bessarabian German villages: Beresina and Lichtental; Black Sea German villages: Karlsruhe, Kathariental, Landau, Rastatt, Speyer (Beresan District); Baden, Elsass, Kandel, Mannheim, Selz, Strassburg. From these former German villages, many families immigrated to the Dakotas, Alberta and Saskatchewan in the late 1880s and early 1900s.

Tour members travel to Alsace, France to visit the villages where many families left in the early 1800s for the German villages in South Russia today near Odessa, Ukraine. On June 12, the tour group will attend the large gathering of the Germans from Russia at Karlsruhe, Germany, called the "Russlanddeutsche Bundestreffen" held every three years.

The 11th Journey to the Homeland Tour sponsored by the NDSU Libraries to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany is scheduled for May 24 - June 6, 2005.

We are pleased to announce that GRHC staff will be at the centennial celebrations of Gackle, ND and Fredonia,

ND with displays and resources about the Germans from Russia: 1) Gackle at Senior Citizens Center, June 25 (1-6 pm) & June 26 (10 am-4 pm); Fredonia at Fredonia Oil Company on Main Street; July 2 (1-6 pm) & July 3 (10 am-4 pm). I look forward to meeting folks at Fredonia and Gackle!

A new partnership has been launched with the "Germans from Russia Oral History Interview Project". Cooperating sponsors at North Dakota State University, include the Department of History, Department of Communications, & the NDSU Libraries as well as Prairie Public Broadcasting. The project will begin in the summer of 2004 with videotaping elderly German-Russians in central North Dakota.

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."

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.

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).

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