

In Touch with Prairie Living

June 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 concerts at Bismarck, Jamestown, Harvey, and Strasburg, ND performed by the Jamestown College Choir, University of Mary Choir, Alive Gospel Choir, Harvey Centennial Men's Choir, and John Gross. 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 (Kutschurgan District). 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!

On July 21, 7 pm, at the Heritage Center, Bismarck, will be the premiere of a new Germans from Russia 60-minute documentary of the Glueckstal District villages. The four mother colonies were Bergdorf, Glueckstal, Kassel and Neudorf. Families from these villages immigrated in large numbers to the central Dakotas. The West Coast premiere of the documentary will be on July 10, 1 pm, Doubletree Inn, Modesto, CA, during the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) Convention. Many Glueckstalers settled in the Lodi area of central California. The documentary and the 1804-2004 book of the Glueckstal villages is sponsored by the Glueckstal Colonies Research Association (www.glueckstal.net). For more information about the documentary and book, contact GRHC.

The Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) Convention is July 22-25, 2004, Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND. For more information, contact GRHS at 701-223-6167 or www.grhs.org. 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, and the NDSU Libraries, as well as Prairie Public Broadcasting.

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, 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: library.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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