

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.

It was a heart-warming and unforgettable experience to join tour members for the visit to Odessa, Ukraine and the former German villages. We visited these villages: Kathariental, Landau, Speyer (Beresan District); Baden, Mannheim, Selz, and Strassburg (Kutschurgan District). Other tour members traveled to the former Bessarabian German villages. We stayed overnight in Landau where we visited the boarding school. The Germans from Russia Cultural Preservation Foundation is supporting this needy boarding school.

On Saturday, June 12, we experienced the Russlanddeutschen (German-Russian) Bundestreffen at Karlsruhe, Germany, where we hosted the Amerika Haus information tables. This large event is held every three years in Germany as a gathering of the Germans from Russia. To see individuals and families searching for relatives or friends is quite an experience. More than three million persons have immigrated since 1989 back to Germany from Siberia, Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. They search for their relatives and friends in the Dakotas, Canada and the United States.

The 11th Journey to the Homeland Tour sponsored by the NDSU Libraries to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany is scheduled for May 26 - June 6, 2005.

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.

There will be four Ukrainians coming from Odessa to North Dakota in July. They will attend the GRHS Convention; visit south central North Dakota; tour a buffalo ranch; and stay overnight at the historic Lehr, ND Tabernacle Campgrounds (July 25-26). The Ukrainians will tour NDSU including the Northern Crops Institute and the Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection. The Ukrainians include: Lilia Belousova, Odessa State Archives; Dr. Sergey & Eugenia Yelizarov, Odessa Institute of Agriculture; and Pavel Pratchuk, mayor, historian and educator.

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.

The Germans from Russia music documentary now in production will premiere in March, 2005 on Prairie Public Television. Filming will be done on September 9 at the Blueroom, Strasburg, ND beginning at 7 pm including a dance with the Marv Zander Band of Mandan, folksingers and others. The event is free and open to the public.

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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