

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.

My thanks to the many people who visited the GRHC information tables at the centennials at Gackle and Fredonia, ND. We were most impressed with the interest about the history, culture, foodways, and folkways of the Germans from Russia. We look forward to the Streeter, ND Centennial for July 1-3, 2005.

The month of July was most memorable with the four Ukrainians from Odessa visiting North Dakota including the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention at Bismarck, NDSU and Fargo. I traveled to Modesto, California, for the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention earlier in July. Then I traveled with the Ukrainians to Salt Lake City where we visited the Family History Library and Archives. The Ukrainians were impressed with the warm and friendly hospitality shared by Dakotans. We visited south central North Dakota including German-Russian churches and cemeteries with the wrought-iron crosses. The overnight stay at the historic Lehr Tabernacle Campgrounds was a wonderful experience. Our thanks to State Senator Robert and Susan Erbele for their warm hospitality.

GRHC has published a new book, "The Last Link: Dakota Territory, Logan County 1887 - Old North Dakota Memories & The Weispennings & Muellers: Our Early American Experiences in Dakota Territory", by Thomas G. Mueller, Jamestown, native of Napoleon, ND. Mueller shares: "While I was writing my family history story, 'The Last Link', I realized that I had hundreds of stories I could tell, especially about my time spent on my Aunt Hulda and Uncle Martin Ehmann's

farm, southeast of Gackle, ND.

The author includes: 1) the clay brick house; 2) farming the old fashioned way; 3) stacking hay on the prairie; 4) shocking oats in the 1950s; 5) receiving the German Brauche; 6) Otto & Mathilda's wedding dinner; 6) the flat white cooking rock; and 7) Gravewitching for Great Uncle Joahnn Weispfenning."The Last Link" is available by contacting GRHC or go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/mueller.html.

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.

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 9 pm including a dance with the Marv Zander Band of Mandan and accordionist

Victor Schwan of Bismarck, and Strasburg native. The event is free and open to the public sponsored by Prairie Public Television. Prairie Public will film also in September in Colorado relating to the music of the Volga Germans. The concert choirs of the University of Mary, Bismarck, and Jamestown College, ND, are closely involved with the production of this 4th documentary in the "Germans from Russia Series of Prairie Public Broadcasting.

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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