

In Touch with Prairie Living

April 2005

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. Special holiday regards to readers of this column!

Prairie Public Television premieres the new documentary which highlights the music traditions of the Germans from Russia. Filming has captured various music traditions in the Dakotas and Colorado. The concert choirs of Jamestown College and the University of Mary were closely involved.

This music documentary premieres on PPTV on Sunday, April 24, 2005, at 7 pm (CDT). The program will be available later to other PBS stations.

These are three sponsored Premiere Events: 1) Saturday, April 16 at 2 pm, Heritage Center Auditorium, Capitol Grounds, Bismarck, ND; 2) Sunday, April 17 at 2 pm, Reiland Fine Arts Center, Jamestown College, Jamestown, ND, 2 pm; and 3) April 21 at 6 pm, Fargo Theater, 314 Broadway, Fargo, ND. Sponsored by Prairie Public Broadcasting, these events are free and open to the general public.

Major financial sponsors for the music documentary are: North Dakota Council on the Arts; North Dakota Humanities Council; North Dakota State University Libraries; Germans from Russia Cultural Preservation Foundation; and the members of Prairie Public Television.

The music documentary is the fourth in the "Germans from Russia Series". Previous documentaries are: 1) "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie" (1999); 2) "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia" (2000); 3) "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses of the Great Plains" (2002).

The new "Music of the Germans from Russia" CD of the Jamestown College (ND) Concert Choir is available.

The choir performs: Grosser Gott, Wir Loben Dich (Holy God We Praise Thy Name); Schoenster Here Jesu (Beautiful Savior), In Dem Garten, and other songs.

The music, which defined the faith and culture of the German-Russian population, traveled with them when they left Russia to settle the North American prairies and plains. This unique collection from the Jamestown College Concert Choir honors those ethnic Germans from Russia. Music, especially singing, was central to village life in South Russia. Their hymns traveled with them from their native Germany as did the hymnals. For further information, go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/tapes/JCChoir.html.

GRHC has published a new book, "Prairie Churches of Bon Homme County, Dakota Territory", written by Maxine Schuurmans Kinsley. Bon Homme County is important in the history and culture of the first German Russians settlements in Dakota Territory. Kinsley's work is especially valuable relating to churches and religion in southeastern South Dakota. For more information, go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/prairiechurches.html.

I will be attending the following centennial events: 1) Streeter, ND Centennial, Museum on main street (former Drug Store), Friday, July 1 (1-6 pm) & Saturday, July 2 (10 am-4 pm); 2) McClusky ND Centennial, City Hall, 117B Avenue East, Friday, July 8 (1-5 pm) & Saturday, July 9 (10 am-4 pm); 3) St. Luke Lutheran Church Centennial, Wishek, ND Civic Center, Saturday, July 16 (1-5 pm) & Sunday, July 17 (11am-3 pm). I look forward to my visits in July to Streeter, McClusky and Wishek. Exhibits featuring photographs will be on display as well as information tables about the Germans from Russia history, culture and foodways.

Prairie Public Broadcasting has produced a new DVD which includes these two award-winning

documentaries: "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie" and "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses of the Great Plains. For further information, go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/tapes/dualdvd.html.

The Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention is July 14-17, 2005, Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, SD. The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention is July 17-21, 2005, Westin Inn, Oklahoma City. The Festival of Germans from Russia is September 23-25, 2005, Medicine Hat, AB. For further information, go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/travel_dates/index.htm.

The 11th Journey to the Homeland Tour, sponsored by the NDSU Libraries is scheduled for May 24 - June 4, 2005. The tour includes Budapest, Hungary; Odessa, Ukraine and the former German villages; Stuttgart, Germany; and Alsace, France. Limited space is still available.

For further information about Germans from Russia heritage, donations to GRHC including books, documentaries, CDs, DVDs, 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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