

In Touch with Prairie Living

June 2006

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 Germans from Russia as an important part of the northern plains culture.

I write this column as I prepare to leave for Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany with our 12th Journey to the Homeland Tour. The first tour was in May, 1996. Visiting these ancestral Black Sea and Bessarabian German villages near Odessa, Ukraine and the Crimean German villages near Simperofol, Ukraine - is an unforgettable experience. We walk the same streets where our ancestors lived more than 100 years ago before immigrating to the Northern Plains and western Canadian prairie provinces. The July column will share some of these rewarding and memorable experiences.

We have lost a special friend and colleague well known to the Germans from Russia community in the USA and Canada. Gwen Bernice Black Pritzkau (September 7, 1932 - May 1, 2006). Gwen helped so many people through her kindness and incredible knowledge of family history sources for the Germans from Russia. She was a featured speaker at the Germans from Russia Heritage Society's (GRHS) annual summer conventions from the early 1970s to 2005. Gwen assisted many family researchers who came to visit the Family History Center at Salt Lake City.

I have fond memories of Gwen and Julius Pritzkau joining us for the Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine in June, 1996. In May, 2002, Gwen was part of our Glueckstal Monument Memorial Dedication Tour to the former German village of Glueckstal, today in Moldova. She was co-founder of the Glueckstal Colonies Research Association. (www.glueckstal.net). Through her faithful and tireless efforts in German-Russian family research, she has touched thousands

of lives.

Gwen Pritzkau was a "Special Friend" to the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. A tribute to Gwen is at this GRHC website page: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/aboutus/contributions.htm. The September, 2006 issue of Heritage Review of GRHS will be dedicated in memory of Gwen Pritzkau.

We will be at the Harvey Public Library on Friday, June 30 from 12 noon to 5 pm and Saturday, July 1 from 1 to 4 pm with our GRHC displays. Dr. LaVern Freeh, author of "Child of the Prairie, Man of the World," will autograph his book from 2-4 pm on June 30 at the Harvey Library. Harvey, ND celebrates its Centennial for June 30-July 2, 2006.

The Dakota Memories Oral History Project continues in 2006. Interviews were in May in the Linton/Strasburg/Hague area; in July in the Rugby area of North Dakota; and in August in the Kulm/Lehr area.

A grant was received from the Embassy of Canada to complete interviews in July of German-Russians in central Saskatchewan with family roots to North Dakota. Saskatchewan locations include Allan, Regina and the Tramping Lake/Luseland/Unity area.

We designed this project to document the heritage and culture of the German-Russians. This project focuses on childhood memories and family relationships, specifically, what it was like growing up German-Russian on the northern plains. For further information, go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories/index.html.

The 2005 interviews are available from GRHC on DVD. They include 31 interviews, including more than 60 hours of video. For more information, go to: library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories/order/index.html. Family names for these interviews include: Boschee, Brosy, Buck, Dewald, Fercho, Fischer, Haerter, Hartmann, Herman, Heyne, Janke, Kasemen, Kauk, Kleingartner, Klundt, Long, Meidinger, Mueller,

Miller, Presler, Schaffer, Schlecht, Schott, Wanner, and Zimmerman.

Prairie Public Broadcasting has produced the DVD, "Germans from Russia Food Pantry" which combines three award-winning public television favorites that have been broadcast throughout North America. Enjoy "Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia" and "Recipes from Grandma's Kitchen: Food Preparations and Traditions of the Germans from Russia, Volume I and II". The DVD documentary and performance CD, "A Soulful Sound: Music of the Germans from Russia" are available.

Also, Prairie Public Broadcasting has produced a 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."

The Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention (www.grhs.org) will be July 12-16, Airport Holiday Inn, Portland, OR; the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention (www.ahsgr.org) will be August 13-19 at Lincoln, NE; and the Festival of Germans from Russia, October 13-15, Leader, SK. I look forward to attending important events in Portland and Lincoln.

For further information about Germans from Russia heritage, Dakota Memories Oral History Project, donations to GRHC including books, events, documentaries, CDs, DVDs, cookbooks and the May, 2007 tour, 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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