

# In Touch with Prairie Living

December 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 want to extend special Holiday Greetings and the best in the new year of 2007 to readers of this column.

I am pleased to announce the dates for the 13th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany for May 17-28, 2007. The tour will include four days in Odessa visiting the former German villages, and six days in southern Germany. Tour members will attend the large Germans from Russia gathering called the Russlanddeutschen Bundestreffen, at Wiesbaden on May 26-27, 2007. Please contact me for further information and registration.

GRHC has available an outstanding new cookbook, "Favorite Recipes" prepared by the Southern Nevada Chapter in Las Vegas of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. It is one of the best German-Russian ethnic recipe books available. Recipes include Grandma's Halupsy, Kaseknepfle, homemade noodles, dumplings, DampfNudele, Bessarabian Halushka, Kuchen, Platchenda, and many other recipes. For more information, contact GRHC.

Debra Marquart, a native of rural Napoleon, ND, and an associate professor of English at Iowa State University, Ames, has authored an impressive new book, "The Horizontal World: Growing Up Wild in the Middle of Nowhere: A Memoir". From the earliest age, Marquart knows she wanted out - out of the milking barn, out of the nearly empty nest her farmhouse home had become once her four older siblings moved away, out of the harvests and the blizzards and the long dusty summer days full of nothing but hard work. But even after she got good at leaving, she kept coming back. It is this process of

flight - from both the landscape and the family - and the return that Marquart writes about so exquisitely.

Whether Marquart is writing about her great-grandmother dying in childbirth, Lawrence Welk's early days, the glaciers that shaped her back yard, or her father's quiet struggle with heart disease, Marquart's sense of the absurd and her graceful poeticism combine to make "The Horizontal World" a captivating read. Contact GRHC to secure the book.

The Dakota Memories Oral History Project continued in 2006. Interviews completed in south central North Dakota were for these family names: Bender, Boschee, Dahl, Dobler, Erberle, Eckroth, Engelhart, Eslinger, Herr, Glatt, Ketterling, Klein, Kraft, Kocher, Konrad, Mitzel, Presler, Pressler, Rose, Sehn, Schell, Schumacher, Schwab, Schwahn, Vetter, Wagner, Wald, Weber, Welder and Zimmerman. Lacher felt this project was a great learning experience, as "the memories kept pouring out" during each interview.

Jessica Clark (interviewer) and Will Clark (videographer), NDSU doctoral students, completed more than thirty-five interviews in north-central North Dakota and Saskatchewan. The narrator family names included: Axtman, Bertsch, Black, Boechler, Brossart, Degenstein, Dukart, Ebach, Ell, Ferner, Frehlich, Herauf, Hoffart, Jahner, Johner, Keen, Kohlman, Kraft, Krismer, Kuntz, Lang, Laturus, Leippi, Miere, Riehl, Rissling, Schall, Schneider, Sellinger, Senger, Westein, and Zeiler. Jessica Clark recalls that "everyone was truly excited about participating in this project. They welcomed us into their homes with open arms, and candidly shared their memories of growing up German Russian on the Northern Plains. They invited us to eat some tasty German meals and partake in the occasional shot of red eye or burnt whiskey."

For further information about the Dakota Memories Oral History

Project, go to [library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories/index.html](http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories/index.html), or contact Jessica Clark at 701-231-8419; [jessica.clark@ndsu.edu](mailto:jessica.clark@ndsu.edu).

The new DVD documentary, "We'll Meet Again in Heaven" funded by GRHC is narrated by Ronald Vossler, UND, Grand Forks. Vossler guides the viewer from the small North Dakota town where he found the first letter, down the "blood-dark corridor of ethnic history" to former German villages in Ukraine and Moldova that were the source of numerous immigrants to the American prairie frontier.

The award-winning DVD documentaries: "Germans from Russia Food Pantry" and "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie" & "Prairie Crosses, Prairie Voices: Iron Crosses of the Great Plains" are also available.

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention is June 11-16, 2007, Holiday Inn, Hays, KS ([www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org)); the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention is July 19-22, 2007, Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND ([www.grhs.org](http://www.grhs.org)).

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 June, 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](mailto:michael.miller@ndsu.edu); GRHC website: [library.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc)).

*December, 2006 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.*