

In Touch with Prairie Living

May 2008

By Michael M. Miller

Germans from Russia Heritage Collection
North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

GRHC

HERITAGE COLLECTION

As I write this May column, I prepare to leave for the 14th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany from May 20-30. We have tour members coming from California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oregon and South Dakota as well as Alberta and British Columbia.

While in Odessa from May 22-26, tour members will visit their ancestral Bessarabian and Black Sea German villages including: Rohrbach, Speier, Worms (Beresan District); Baden, Elsass, Kandel, Mannheim, Selz, Strassburg (Kutschurgan District); Grossliebental (Liebental District); Bergdorf, Glueckstal, Neu Glueckstal, Neudorf, Kassel (Glueckstal District); Hoffnungstal; Beresina, Leipzig, Peterstal and Wittenburg (Bessarabia).

While in Stuttgart, we will visit the Germans from Russia society museums and take a one-day trip to Alsace, France. Here we will visit towns where German families lived before immigrating to South Russia from about 1804-1810 (today southern Ukraine and Moldova).

On June 1, I will be attending the Bessarabian Bundestreffen at Ludwigsburg, Germany, where Horst Koehler, President of the Federal Republic of Germany will be the featured speaker. President Koehler is of Bessarabian German ancestry.

The dates for the 15th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany are May 20-30, 2009.

The Dakota Memories Oral History Project continues with the fourth season of interviews. We will conduct interviews of Germans from Russia in these areas: Eureka, SD (May 14-23); Richardton, ND (May 27-June 5); Beulah, ND (June 9-18) and Edgeley, ND (June 21-30).

Jessica Clark, coordinator, states "We are excited to continue this important project for the fourth season. We anticipate adding more than 40 wonderful interviews with Germans

from Russia on the Northern Plains. Plus, we are also excited to make our first venture into South Dakota. If you are interest in participating or supporting the project, please contact Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle at 701-231-8416 or acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu."

For further information, please visit www.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories.

An impressive new children's book available from the GRHC is German Immigrants in America: An Interactive History Adventure. Chapter 3, titled "Homesteading" features the Germans from Russia in the Dakota Territory of McIntosh County, ND and Menno, SD. The author, Elizabeth Raum, writes "Perhaps this book will introduce a new generation of readers to the history of the Germans from Russia."

Elizabeth Raum spent 15 years in North Dakota, and during that time she became fascinated by the story of the Germans from Russia. Raum hopes that children reading this book will get a taste of the courage and determination the German immigrants needed to make their way in America - where they settled in Texas, Wisconsin or the Dakotas.

The GRHC has published Church Book: Evangelical Lutheran Hoffnungs Gemeinde 1904-1944, compiled by Orion A. Rudolph, Ashley, ND; German script translated by Dorothea (Bergstedt) Ziegler, Dickinson, ND. The Hoffnungs Church is one of seventeen Evangelical Lutheran congregation churches in McIntosh County, ND. The book contains baptismal registers, meeting minutes, communion registers, death registers, offerings, member registers, marriages and burials. As a special enhancement for the book, Rudolph photographed all of the tombstones at Hope Cemetery (the cemetery at the Hoffnungs Church site). Rudolph also compiled all dates and had the inscriptions translated.

The GRHC has also published Memories of Friedenstal in Bessarabia 1949. This work is a translation from

German to English containing many impressive village photographs, the names of men who died in wars and a Register of Names of residents in the community of Friedenstal, the parish of Arcis, Bessarabia.

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, Dakota Memories Oral History Project, Journey to the Homeland Tour and donations to the GRHC (such as family histories), contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Library, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 (Telephone: 701-231-8416; Email: Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu; GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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