

# In Touch with Prairie Living

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

GRHC

HERITAGE COLLECTION

I want to extend Thanksgiving Regards. We are blessed and should be thankful that our ancestors immigrated to the Dakota prairies from South Russia (southern Ukraine and Moldova). I am reminded about our good life when I visited the former German villages near Odessa in May 2008. Life in these villages is very difficult with high unemployment and poor health conditions. We can be very thankful our ancestors immigrated to America.

The GRHC staff is preparing for the Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase events for Fargo and Bismarck.

We will have a booth at the Centennial Hall/Fargo Civic Center, November 21-23 (Friday, 8pm-11pm; Saturday, 10am-5pm; Sunday, 11am-5pm) and at the Convention Hall/Bismarck Civic Center, December 6-7 (Saturday, 10am-5 pm; Sunday, 11am-5pm). We invite you to join us for these festive events. We will have many new items, including more than 45 cookbooks.

We are offering a 10% discount on all purchases of \$50 or more from November 1 to December 15, 2008. Please visit our website for a complete list of items for sale. To place an order or request a free catalog, call 701-231-6596 or email [acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu](mailto:acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu).

The GRHC, NDSU Libraries has been collaborating with Prairie Public to produce a radio program, *A Holiday*

*Special: German-Russian Childhood Memories*. This program features stories from more than twenty Dakota Memories Oral History Project (DMOHP) narrators. These narrators grew up on the Northern Plains, from South Dakota to North Dakota to Saskatchewan. They each have vivid memories of winter holiday traditions - memories of the "Belznickel," "Krist Kindel," Santa Claus, wax-candle lights, midnight mass, and much more. Childhood historian Jessica Clark (also DMOHP Coordinator) has added scholarly commentary, placing these stories in a larger historical framework.

The radio program airs on Prairie Public Radio December 10th and 25th at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm (CST).

The GRHC will also offer *A Holiday Special: German-Russian Childhood Memories* on CD. To pre-order your copy, contact Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle at 701-231-6596 or [acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu](mailto:acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu).

The fall edition of North Dakota Horizons features an article titled, *Journey to the Homeland: Discovering a family's history* by Sadie Anderson, Information Specialist for NDSU University Relations. Seven members of the Mertz/Opp family joined our Journey to the Homeland Tour in May 2008.

They traveled to Odessa, Ukraine to

visit their ancestral Glueckstal District villages near Odessa and in Moldova. Family members also visited Alsace, France where the Opp ancestors lived before immigrating to South Russia in 1806. The Opp family immigrated to Eureka, SD in 1890, and the Mertz family immigrated in 1906 near Bowdle, SD. Later they farmed near Tappen, ND attending the Glueckstal Lutheran Church in Kidder County, which celebrated its 100th Centennial in June.

The 15th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany is May 20-30, 2009. Space is still available!

The AHSGR 2009 Convention is at Medicine Hat, Alberta (June 14-21) and the GRHS 2009 Convention is at Rapid City, SD (September 9-13).

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, the Dakota Memories Oral History Project, Journey to the Homeland Tours and donations to the GRHC (such as family histories), contact Michael M. Miller, Libraries, NDSU Dept #2080, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050 (Telephone: 701-231-8416; Email: [Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu](mailto:Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu); GRHC website: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc)).

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