

# 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

The year 2009 begins the 31st year of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, 1978 - 2009. This year also marks my 42nd year of work at North Dakota State University.

The West Acres Regional Shopping Center in Fargo features their annual Cookbook Festival on Saturday, February 7 from 10 am to 9 pm. The GRHC will have its many cookbooks available at this event.

In my October 2008 column, I recommended important books for research and study about the Germans from Russia. I appreciate the responses of interest to my suggestions. I would like to recommend these additional books.

The book, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, authored by Richard Sallet, translated from German to English by Dr. LaVern Rippley and Dr. Armand Bauer, was published in 1974 by the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies at NDSU. This book was originally published in the German language in 1931. Much of Sallet's book is a detailed picture of the geographical distribution of the Russian-Germans throughout various regions of the United States. Additional historical data and explanations provide the original and the names of the many localities. This information is located in, "Place Names of German Colonies in Russia and the Rumanian

Dobrudja." The author describes interesting details of the customs and the way of life of the immigrants, their religious institutions, their newspapers, and their political and civic organizations. An addition to this book is the section, "Prairie Architectures of the Russian-German Settlers," by William C. Sherman.

Sallet's book notes that by 1920, according to the census of the United States, there were 116,539 persons who were born in Russia but still spoke German as their mother tongue. There were a total of 303,532 Russian-Germans living in the USA, scattered in approximately 1,500 settlements throughout the country but being especially numerous in the prairie states between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and the Rocky Mountains.

Another important book is *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* by George Rath, published in 1977. In her book review, Edna Boardman writes: "Rath begins with a look at the original Black Sea settlements themselves - the colony groups, the provinces from which their inhabitants originated in Germany, and their culture. He traces their emigration to the Dakotas and identifies where they settled area by area. Rath notes the German-Russian talent for hard work and their hunger for land. He is aware of public

German-Russian culture: newspapers, the Germans from Germany who were sometimes their neighbors, and language change. He records facts about church and community history and interests himself in the origins of place names. He includes lots of interesting incidental details. A patent research, Rath says he labored for many years to collect the material for this book. He says of the Germans from Russia, 'Wheat raising was the object of their lives,' and form the vantage point of the 1970s, he foresees stability and continuity well into the future."

These notable Germans from Russia books by Richard Sallet and George Rath are available by contacting the GRHC or at [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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

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, The 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); the GRHC website: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc)).

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