

# 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

As I write this July column, I have fond memories of my days at Napoleon, ND and Leola, SD for their 125th anniversary events in June and July. The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection was honored to participate and to meet such a large audience of our Germans from Russia community. I was impressed with the organization and planning at these communities. I express thanks to Napoleon and Leola for sharing their warm hospitality.

The GRHC has published an important new book authored by John Philipps titled, *About Myself and Repression of the Germans in South Ukraine*. Philipps was born in the Beresan District colony of Landau, today near Odessa, Ukraine. His youth was overshadowed by poverty and hunger. He experienced the deprivation of citizen rights and wrenching deportation of his family. He was captured by British troops, and finally uprooted without a country. Petitioning for immigration to the United States, he arrived in 1952 in California. John Philipps is 93 living in Merced, CA.

Philipps writes: "My writing is based on personal and experienced facts. The tragedy of the Beresan colonies and their residents is neither a historical accident nor an exception. The suffering of all other Germans in Russia following the October Revolution be it on the land or in the cities, is similar to that of the Beresaners as two drop of water are similar." Philipps describes the development of the mother and daughter colonies, and the geographical aspects of

rivers, limans, river deltas and valleys.

Alex Herzog, translator for this book from German to English writes, "A particularly important facet of expertise John Philipps brings to this and his previous historical books is his training and experience as an agronomist in the Black Sea areas he describes herein. The fact that John Philipps traveled extensively across the Beresan region imparts his descriptions of the German villages and of how the land was worked."

John Philipps is author of other books available from the GRHC: 1) *The Germans Under the Tsars, Lenin, and Stalin*; 2) *The Germans by the Black Sea Between the Bug and Dnjestr Rivers*; 3) and *The Tragedy of the Soviet Germans: A Story of Survival*.

The GRHC will host two public forums in August: Richardton; Monday, August 10 at Sacred Heart Monastery and Napoleon; Tuesday, August 11 at Downtowner Bar & Steakhouse. The public forums will take place from 5-7 pm.

Andrea Mott, DMOHP Interviewer will present on her experiences in Napoleon and Richardton. According to Mott, "The topic of my talk will cover one main theme, my experience interviewing in the towns of Napoleon, Richardton and Dickinson, North Dakota. This will include interviewing segments, humorous stories, and digital and scanned photographs that focus on narrators as well as the local area. I will conclude the

forum by talking about what I have learned from the Dakota Memories Oral History Project, taking into account my experiences in all three venues."

The Dakota Memories Heritage Tour is scheduled for September 18-20 to Germans from Russia sites in south central North Dakota. We invite you to join us, space is limited. For further information, contact Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle at 701-231-6596 or Acacia. Stuckle@ndsu.edu. The webpage is: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories).

The 16th Journey to the Homeland Tour is May 20-30, 2010. The tour includes May 22-26 in Odessa, Ukraine visiting the former Bessarabian, Black Sea and Crimean German villages. The tour group also travels to Stuttgart, Germany for May 26-30 including a day tour to Alsace, France, and visits to the German-Russian museums in Stuttgart. Detailed Tour information and costs is at this webpage: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc) at "Homeland Tours".

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, the Dakota Memories Heritage Tour, the Journey to the Homeland Tour 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)).

*July 2009 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.*