

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 March column, I have fond memories of my visit in Richfield, MN on February 20 meeting folks in our German-Russian community - many with North Dakota and South Dakota roots. This was a wonderful GRHC outreach event. I want to express my appreciation to the AHSGR/GRHS North Star Chapter in the Twin Cities for their warm welcome. The lunch included homemade Borscht and Knoephla soups, pickled watermelon and fresh fruit Kuchen with custard.

I especially want to say "thank you" to Carol Just of St. Louis Park, MN, who hosted a dinner at her home in my honor. Carol is a longtime colleague and friend who is featured in two of Prairie Public Television's award-winning documentaries. Appreciation is also extended to James Gessele of Minneapolis, a Mercer, ND native for his wonderful hospitality. Carol Just and James Gessele were interviewed for Prairie Public's new homesteading documentary to premiere in April 2010.

Debra Marquart, author and former Napoleon, ND native, visited NDSU on March 4 and gave a presentation and book signing. Debra is author of the best-seller, "A Horizontal World: Growing Up Wild in the Middle of

Nowhere." She has a book in-progress about her family's migrations through Ukraine and Siberia, tentatively titled, "Somewhere Else This Time Tomorrow: On Geographical Flight and Cultural Amnesia." Debra received the 2009 Iowa Author of the Year Award. She will appear at other North Dakota communities early in March sponsored by the North Dakota Humanities Council. In a future 2010 column, I will be announcing a new Germans from Russia documentary produced by Prairie Public Television featuring Debra Marquart.

A new book from the GRHC is "From Gulag to Freedom: The Volga Flows Forever" by Sigrid Weidenweber. In 2008, other books published by this author were: "Catherine: The Volga Flows Forever, Book One," and "The Volga Germans: The Volga Flows Forever." This three-part book series has been published by the Center for Volga Germans Studies, Concordia University, Portland, Oregon (<http://cvgs.cu-portland.edu>). Born in Germany in 1941, Sigrid Weidenweber remembers firsthand the horrific aftermath of World War II.

LaVern J. Rippley of St. Olaf College, writes: "Sigrid Weidenweber weaves a narrative of the impossible

struggle the Germans in Russia endured through the intended famine of the 1920s, the capricious and sadistic Stalin years of collectivization during the 1930s, deportation and imprisonment to the gulags in the 1940s, and to the riches of California in the 1950s - a beautiful, correct, thrilling expose." Timothy J. Kloberdanz of North Dakota State University writes: "This story of the pioneering Volga Germans spans whole centuries and whole continents. It is an epic story and novelist Sigrid Weidenweber artfully captures this epic quality in her newest book." I highly recommend this series of three books available from the GRHC.

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, the Friends of the GRHC, the 2011 Dakota Memories Heritage Tour, the May 2011 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; the GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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