

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 month of April will be busy as I prepare for the departure with our 16th Journey to the Homeland Tour group to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany (May 20-30).

Andrea Mott, 2009 Dakota Memories Oral History Project (DMOHP) interviewer, will give a presentation on April 8 at the NDSU Alumni Center, 'My Adventures in German-Russian Country,' about her experiences collecting oral histories in the North Dakota communities of Napoleon and Richardton in June and July 2009. Mott is the first presidential fellow in NDSU's history doctoral program. The event is sponsored by the NDSU's Center for Heritage Renewal and the NDSU Libraries' Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. Check out the DMOHP web pages at www.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories.

"The Dirty Thirties: German Russians Remember" is the new program on CD available from the GRHC. The program airs on Prairie Public Radio on Wednesday, April 14, at 3 pm and 7 pm (CST). "The Dirty Thirties" features stories from the narrators of the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. Narrators share memories of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl era, otherwise known as "The Dirty Thirties." This program

features clips about dust storms, extreme temperatures, grasshopper invasions and New Deal programs. Environmental historian and NDSU Professor, Mark Harvey, has added scholarly commentary. Narrators include: Hilda Melita (Lindemann) Backfish, Pauline (Wock) Berger, John J. Gross, Jacob A. Helbling, Stanley Helbling, Roy F. Nill, Wilbert Rath and Cora (Wolff) Tschackofske. The Germans from Russia Radio Series is a cooperative project of Prairie Public and the GRHC.

The GRHC has available this excellent new heartwarming book of historical fiction, "The Kulak's Daughter" by Gabriele Goldstone, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The back cover states, "Based on a true story, Olga likes little things - especially the tiny apples in the orchard in the spring, or her baby brother's little toes. But when her family is labeled 'kulak' and exiled to Siberia, she starts to hate little things -- especially the bedbugs that overrun the barrack at night or the lice that carry the dreaded typhus. Suddenly Olga's little world is overwhelmed by Stalin's big plans."

The author shares: "My mother and dad came to Canada from Germany in 1954. I knew they had both been in the Soviet gulag after World War

II, and has promised themselves to leave the past behind and start over here in Canada. They stayed silent about the 'old country,' which was ok when I was little, but later I got curious. The stories of the German Russians were obscured by the Iron Curtain of communism, and I have been inspired to share my parents' amazing stories by writing them myself. The Kulak's Daughter, my first novel, began as a story my mother told my daughter about when she misbehaved as a little girl. Read the story behind that story." This book is recommended for ages 12 and up.

The 17th Journey to the Homeland Tour is scheduled for May 18-28, 2011 for Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany.

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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