

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 May column, I look forward to meeting members of the 16th Journey to the Homeland Tour group traveling to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany from May 20-30. We have tour members coming from California, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, Tennessee, Utah and Washington as well as Germany and Moscow, Russia.

When I return from Germany on June 7, I look forward to attending Elgin, N.D.'s 100th Centennial on June 18-19. The GRHC will have information tables and displays at the Elgin Public Library.

While in Odessa from May 22-26, for the first time we will stay at the guest rooms of the Parish House of St. Paul's German Lutheran Church which has been rebuilt and was dedicated in April. Tour members will visit these villages: Bergdorf, Glueckstal, Kassel, Neudorf and Neu Kassel (Glueckstal District); Johannestal, Worms and Rohrbach (Beresan District); Baden, Elsass, Kandel, Mannheim, Selz and Strassburg (Kutschurgan District); Alt-Posttal, Friedental, Gnadental, Kalatschowka, Leipzig, Tarutino and Wittenberg, Bessarabia; Freudental (Liebental District).

While in Stuttgart for May 26-30, we will visit the Germans from Russia society museums and take a one-day trip to Alsace, France. Here we will visit towns where German families lived before immigrating to South Russia from about 1804-1810 (today southern Ukraine and Moldova).

On May 30, some of the tour members and I will attend the Bessarabian Bundestreffen at Ludwigsburg,

Germany. This large gathering is held every two years. Many Bessarabian Germans immigrated to the Dakotas and southern Alberta. The June column will share memories from tour members of visits to their ancestral villages.

Arve Moser, Sartell, Minn., native of Medina, N.D., writes: "As a full blooded Germans from Russia with all my grandparents as direct ancestors from Russia, I have a deep almost yearning desire to visit where they came from. I want to see the landscapes and anything else remaining that will take me back in time and allow me to understand the culture a bit more. There are so many cultural influences during my childhood that have shaped me into who I am today, and I simply continue to need to know more. In looking back, it seems, the more I found out about the Germans from Russia, the more I know that if ever possible, I need to do the tour."

Gilbert Schauer, Longview, Wash., native of Wishek, N.D., shares: "As I was growing up my dad never talked about the place where he was born which was Neudorf. I think maybe he was too young to really remember too much about it. My mother and I had a much closer relationship. In the spring, she and I would walk out in the pasture looking for turkey nests. She always raised a lot of turkeys. Mother and I would talk about where she was born and raised. She was 18 when she came with her mother. Sometimes she would say it would be nice if one of her kids could go over and see where I was born. Mother had 12 children with me being the youngest. Now I will be

traveling to the village where mother was born. I am sure when I get there she will be clapping her hands up in Heaven very excited." Gilbert and Audrey Schauer travel with their daughter Tauni of N.M. to join our 16th Journey to the Homeland Tour group.

On June 1 in Berlin, I will meet with Dr. Ute Schmidt, author of the book, "Bessarabien: Deutsche Kolonisten am Schwarzen Meer" ("Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea") to be published by the GRHC in the English language in 2011.

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

The Dakota Germans from Russia online professional development course is offered for this summer through NDSU's Distance and Continuing Studies. The course deals with their migrations; their ways of life and customs; and their cultural memory and ethnic identity. For further information, go to: <http://historyrfd.net/isern/gfr> or contact the GRHC.

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, the Friends of the GRHC, the online course, the 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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