

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 column, I have fond memories of visiting with colleagues and friends at the 40th International Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention this past month in Bismarck. This was truly a rewarding experience to see folks sharing family information and researching their ancestral roots. I was especially impressed with the Youth Essay Contest, workshop presenters, displays and the many researchers in the genealogy room. Al Neuharth, a native of Eureka, S.D., and founder of the "USA Today" newspaper, was the featured speaker.

I look forward to meeting colleagues at the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention in Lincoln, Neb., August 3-8.

The German language book, "Bessarabien: Deutsche Kolonisten am Schwarzen Meer," ("Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea") was written in 2008 by Ute Schmidt of Berlin, Germany. It is a major translation project by the GRHC for hardcover publication in the English language. The English translation of this 450-page book has been completed by James Gessele, Minneapolis, a native of Mercer, N.D.

Allyn Brosz, Washington, D.C., a native of Tripp, S.D., writes: "When I read the book in German, I knew instantly that this book should be in the personal library of all who are interested in the long and fateful history of the Bessarabian Germans. It is, without question, the authoritative history of the Germans in Bessarabia. Now this

powerful translation by James Gessele will make the book widely available to North American readers."

Dr. Nancy Herzog writes: "Through bountiful illustrations, well-grounded historical scholarship and clear writing Ute Schmidt tells the sometimes heroic, sometimes tragic story of the German people who came to live in a part of the Russian Empire known as Bessarabia. This book is remarkable for the detail it provides on a wide range of topics including village life, trade, cities, schools, religion, politics and diverse ethnic neighbors. English-language readers will find James Gessele's expert translation of Ute Schmidt's German text a pleasure to read."

Carol Just, St. Louis Park, Minn., a native of LaMoure, N.D., shares: "Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea" is the book of the decade. In one volume, carefully and beautifully translated into English, it opens new windows to life in South Russia from early settlements to the present day. This is a book that will put the history and contributions of the Germans from Russia on the global map. For those wanting to leave a permanent legacy for their descendants, donating to the publication of this book is a perfect vehicle."

Dr. Elvire Necker-Eberhardt, Calgary, Alberta, who was born in Bessarabia writes: "With Ute Schmidt's book we have been given an immense source of information, a reference book for any historical, economic, cultural,

spiritual and social question of this group of Germans from Russia. Alex Herzog of Boulder, Colo., born in Odessa, Ukraine comments: "As a translator of a variety of books and articles on the history and status of Germans from Russia, I consider this book among the best - a beautifully illustrated and comprehensive record on the Bessarabian Germans in particular, and Black Sea Germans in general. For the few survivors of the 1940 evacuation and the numerous descendants now living in Germany and the Americas this is an invaluable and readable record, and it is bound to serve as a useful reference."

The GRHC needs to secure private donations for this important book to be published. For further information, feel free to contact me. We will be pleased to mail you a brochure.

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 Dakota Memories Heritage Tour (September 15-18, 2011), 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; the GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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