

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 October column, we are preparing for the 85th Sauerkraut Day on October 13 at Wishek, in the heart of German-Russian country of south-central North Dakota. The GRHC will have displays and information tables at the Wishek Armory from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Prairie Public Radio airs "German-Russian School Memories" of the Germans from Russia Radio Series on October 14 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. (CDT) on the "Hear It Now" program featuring stories from the Dakota Memories Oral History Project.

These narrators grew up in the Dakotas and Saskatchewan. During their oral histories, they share vivid memories of grade school - memories of recess games, traveling to school, the teachers, language barriers and the one-room schoolhouse. North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Wayne Sanstead, has helped to provide context for these memories with his knowledge of education on the Northern Plains.

The narrators featured on the CD are: Hilda Melita (Lindemann) Backfish, Albert Bauman, Clarence Bauman, Arthur R. Bender, Alice (Woehl) Buerkley, Theresa (Meier) Eissinger, Marjorie (Miller) Flegel, Robert R. Gab, Erwin Geiszler, John J. Gross, Melfrieda (Doll) Hauck, Willma (Becker) Haupt, Leona (Kuhn) Hoff, Marie (Rall) Klettke, Victor Knell, Ida (Zimmerman) Koepplin, Julius Miller, Rose (Boesflug) Miller, Roy F. Nill, Gilbert Ost, Norma

(Pahl) Rost, Orion Rudolph, Irene (Bender) Schauer, Joseph J. Schneider, Herbert Thurn, John D. Urlacher and Doreen (Brossart) Zeiler.

Listeners will hear memories such as Theresa (Meier) Eissinger's recollection of attending a country school. She tells of one particular cold winter day when her brother rode a horse and pulled her and her little sister on a stoneboat. It made for quite an adventure when they hit a steep snow bank and the two girls slid off taking the hay, blankets and dinner pails with them.

The Dakota Memories Oral History Project (<http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories>) is a privately funded project sponsored by the NDSU Libraries' Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. For more information and to secure this new CD, "German-Russian School Memories," contact 701-231-6596 or acacia.stuckle@ndsu.edu.

A new book available from GRHC is "Kaleidoscope: Shapes and Colors of Childhood" by Bill Kraft, Sauk Rapids, Minn., a native of Strasburg, N.D. Kraft shares his childhood memories and reflects of growing up in the 1950s in Strasburg. His writing describes the celebrated holidays, altar boys and church fairs, Christmas angels and the Belzanickl, TV in '53, Kraft Brothers Store, Mathern's Blue Room, homemade ice cream, the root cellar and canning. Many of these stories found in this book

are familiar to me having grown up as neighbors near the home of Pius and Agatha (Baumgartner) Kraft home in Strasburg. Agatha was a wonderful cook and I remember many delicious meals in the basement summer kitchen with many fine German-Russian dishes. The Kraft Brothers Store share many fine moments for those who lived in Strasburg. I specially remember being fond of tasting Halvah. The store's hardwood floors felt the feet of many early pioneer families who visited this store speaking in the German languages. It was always special to make a visit to the Kraft Brothers Store after school to visit with Aggie Keller and brothers Pius and Joseph Kraft.

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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