

# 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 September issue of the “North Dakota Living” magazine features articles about the Germans from Russia, the GRHC, St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church near Wishek/Zeeland and foodways.

We are looking forward to attending the 86th Annual Sauerkraut Day at Wishek, N.D., Wednesday, October 12. There will be a free meal from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Wishek Civic Center including entertainment with the Wishek High School band and choir. The GRHC will have displays at the Wishek Armory with the Craft Fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Acacia Jonas Stuckle, GRHC special collections associate, a native of Fredonia, N.D. and I will attend the event. Our first experience at the 85th Annual Sauerkraut Day in 2010 was most successful as a GRHC outreach program. Photographs from Sauerkraut Day in October 2010 can be viewed on this GRHC webpage (<http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/activities/sauerkraut10.html>.)

Mike Knutson on his blog, “Reimagine Rural: Building a Deep Conversation about the Future of Rural,” wrote about the 2010 Sauerkraut Day, “How about a little Twitter with that Sauerkraut?” (<http://reimaginerural.com/how-about-a-little-twitter-with-that-sauerkraut/>.) He writes about Katie Pinke and her husband, a Wishek native: “After developing successful careers in the city, they reached the conclusion that life there didn’t offer the opportunities they could find in Wishek. Upon moving to the community, she discovered that Wishek’s residents were extremely proud of their Germans from Russia

heritage, which is reflected in Sauerkraut Days. She works around the country with agricultural groups on marketing projects, but has chosen to live in Wishek for the quality of life. Katie, along with some other community members, believes Sauerkraut Day is an opportunity that needs to be leveraged. While most Wishek residents look at the celebration as a ‘local event,’ Katie sees it as an opportunity to showcase the community’s authentic culture to people from around the country.”

Since June 2010, I have been involved with the Tri-County Tourism Alliance for the counties of Emmons, Logan and McIntosh, located in south central North Dakota, the heart of German-Russian country in the Dakotas. The focus of the group is to promote heritage and cultural tourism. Sauerkraut Day on October 12, is one of the important festive events to celebrate the rich heritage of the Germans from Russia on the Dakota prairies. I am impressed with the committee’s projects working closely with the local community leaders, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Tourism, NDSU’s Center for Community Vitality and the Center for Heritage Renewal and the GRHC at the NDSU Libraries. Watch for news about the Tri-County Tourism Alliance in future months.

On Saturday, October 29, “Dakota Air: The Radio Show” will perform at the Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hopkins, Minn., 7-9 p.m., sponsored by the North Star Chapter of

Minnesota. The performance marks the show’s expansion from the North Dakota prairies into the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. To order tickets, call 952-979-1111 or order online at [www.northstarchapter.org](http://www.northstarchapter.org). Merrill Piepkorn and the Radio Stars Band, and the Dakota Airheads Acting Troupe will perform. The website is [www.dakotaairtheradioshow.com](http://www.dakotaairtheradioshow.com). The show will be recorded for broadcast across North Dakota, western Minnesota, bordering states, and into Canada on the Prairie Public Broadcasting radio network.

Featured guests for the October 29 show include Debra Marquart of Iowa State University and Napoleon, N.D. native, a versatile musical performer and celebrated author of the book, “The Horizontal World: Growing Up in the Middle of Nowhere,” singer-guitarist Sean Benz, 19-year-old student at South Dakota State University, originally from southwestern Minn.; and Bill & Kate Isles, Duluth Minn., nationally known folk musicians.

For further information about the Friends of the GRHC, the Dakota Memories Heritage Tour (September 15-18, 2011), the 18th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany (May 17-27, 2012), 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](mailto:Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu); the GRHC website: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc)).

*September 2011 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.*