

# In Touch with Prairie Living

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By Michael M. Miller

Germans from Russia Heritage Collection  
North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
**GRHC**  
HERITAGE COLLECTION

*Dakota Air: The Radio Show*, presents *A Tribute to Lawrence Welk in Honor of His 112 Birthday* at the Fargo Theatre on Sunday, March 15, at 2 p.m. The event features the sounds of Lawrence Welk, Norma Zimmer, Joe Feeney, Larry Hooper, Myron Floren, the Lennon Sisters and other Welk stars performed by Merrill Piepkorn, the Big Band Music directed by Russell Peterson, Miss North Dakota Jacky Arness, vocalist Bill Tweten, pianist and organist Jim Gurney. For tickets, contact 800-300-8300 or order online at [www.tickets300.com](http://www.tickets300.com). VIP tickets include reserved prime seating plus a post-show cast reception with Germans from Russia cuisine. The show will be recorded for later broadcast on Prairie Public Radio statewide.

Researchers at the GRHC often ask what books I might suggest for family research and for reading historical background information on the Germans from Russia. We have prepared the following link "Recommended Books for German-Russian Research" at [http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/files/recommended\\_books.pdf](http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/files/recommended_books.pdf). All books are available at [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc) in the Order Section.

For general historical information, these are important books: 1) *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* by Adam Giesinger; 2) *Memories of the Black Sea Germans: Highlights of Their History and Heritage* by Joseph S. Height; 3) *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* by George Rath; 4) *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea* by Ute Schmidt, translated by James T. Gessele.

Valuable books relating to the Black Sea colonies of South Russia (southern Ukraine) are *Homesteaders on the Steppe: Cultural History of the Evangelical-Lutheran Colonies*

*in the Region of Odessa, 1804-1945* and *Paradise on the Steppe: A Cultural History of the Kutschurgan, Beresan, and Liebental Colonies, 1804-1972*, both books authored by Joseph S. Height. Height provides the name of the original settlers for the colonies. He covers historical information, including; life in the villages, fashion, medicine, festivals, education, sayings, language, holiday traditions, wedding customs, religion, architecture, games and entertainment, songs, and agriculture. He also covers homes and food of the settlers, the geography of the area, the role of the women, and relations with the Russian neighbors. Height shares the conditions in Germany for all the people who immigrated to Russia. The book includes village plat maps and church photographs.

A fascinating collection of primary cultural materials is *Memories of the Black Sea Germans*. Height recounts the lives of pioneers on the Dakota prairie and the story of the settlement Catholic families in western Canada. Joseph Height was born in 1909 and grew up at Tramping Lake, Sask., the oldest of 14 children.

*The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* by George Rath traces emigration to the Dakotas and identifies where they settled. For some towns, he lists all of the churches. Chapters include the role of the major Protestant denominations. Rath notes the German-Russian talent for hard work and their hunger for land. Rath, born in 1891 in Nesselrode, Odessa District, was called in the Russian Army in 1916. In 1922, he came to the USA.

The book, *From Catherine to Khrushchev*, traces the flow of German-Russian history from their

arrival in Russia, through the Czars that succeeded Catherine, emigration to the USA, Canada and South America, to the takeover of Russia by the Communists and deportation of the remaining Germans to scatters parts of Russia. This book is one of the most thoroughly researched books. Adam Giesinger was born in 1909 in a sod house near Holdfast, Sask.

In 2011, the GRHC published *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea*. Dr. Elvire Necker-Eberhardt who was born in Bessarabia, comments, "We have been given an immense source of information, a reference book for any historical, economic, cultural, spiritual question of this group of Germans from Russia." Carol Just writes, "The book opens new windows to life in South Russia from early settlement to the present day. In this volume there is new information about agricultural practices, animal husbandry, vine culture, social structures, inter-ethnic communications with many other nationalities, textile and farm equipment manufacturing."

If you would like more information about the Friends of the GRHC or donations to the GRHC (such as family histories and photographs), contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 6050, Dept 2080, Fargo, ND 58108-6050. (Tel: 701-231-8416); Email: [Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu](mailto:Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu); GRHC website: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc)

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