

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

Carol Just, St. Louis Park, Minn., native of LaMoure, N.D., will be the featured speaker at the NDSU Main Library Weber Reading Room on April 21 at 4 p.m. presenting "Growing Up German from Russia in America". She will be sharing stories of her forty-year quest to learn about her heritage. Just will inspire you to take a look at your family tree and appreciate your deep roots. The general public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Just served as co-editor of the anthology, *Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers: Growing Up Germans from Russia in America*, published in 2013 by the Minnesota North Star Chapter – Germans from Russia. She is featured in the award-winning Prairie Public documentaries, *The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe*, *Children of the Prairie*, *Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia* and *Homesteading*.

I would like to share with you an impressive new book, *The German-Russians: In Words and Pictures*, by Dr. William Bosch, Spearfish, S.D., native of Linton, N.D. In the dedication, Bosch writes, "This book is dedicated to my grandma Maria, who died long before I was born. She brought her infant son, who later became my father, her two older sons and her husband safely from Rosenthal, Crimea (Ukraine) to North Dakota without losing anyone." Bosch's German-Russian ancestral villages are Rosenthal, Crimea and Neudorf and Kassel, Glueckstal District, South Russia (villages today in southern Ukraine).

Bosch writes in the preface, "Their story is a colorful and fascinating tale filled with triumph and tragedy. I hope this book will help people discover this saga of an amazing people and their achievements. The German-Russians

in each area of Russia shared many common experiences with their kinfolk. This is also true for settlers in the United States and Canada. When I was growing up in the southern part of North Dakota, all of my relatives spoke a German dialect. We all had grandparents who grew up in Russia."

Reuben Tschritter of West Fargo, native of Linton, N.D., a classmate at NDSU, writes, "It was a privilege for me to read this book and to better understand my heritage and to personally know this wonderful author. My father came to America in 1913 at the age of 26, from Bessarabia, and told me some of the same stories that Dr. Bosch has written about in his book. Our parents endured many of these stories written in this book in their early years in Russia and then as immigrants to the U.S. This is a wonderful book for German-Russian background to better understand their heritage and the hardships their families endured." Tschritter retired in 2014 from the NDSU Extension Service. His ancestral villages are Alt Elft, Freundental and Sarata, Bessarabia (villages today near Odessa, Ukraine).

Dr. Chris Huber of Minneapolis, native of Eureka, S.D., comments in his book review, "Since I am a first generation German from Russia, I found this book fascinating and stimulating. Dr. Bosch's review of the German migration to the Volga River and Black Sea regions provides one with historic and pictorial information not frequently shared by the German Russians. Considerable detail also is given about the Germans daily lives in Russia and in North America during good and bad years. Reasons are given why the Germans originally immigrated to Russia and subsequently

to North America. The development and expansion of their agricultural skills are notably summarized. The reader develops a great appreciation for the courage, determination, work ethic and values these Germans exhibited." Huber's ancestral German-Russian village is Glueckstal, South Russia, today in Moldova, a country near Odessa, Ukraine.

Bosch expands on the following topics in the chapters of his book: The Role of the Railroads; Finding a Claim and Building a Home; Cooking and Heating; Price of Agricultural Products and Land; Other Sources of Income; Fires and Blizzards; Education; Religion; Medical and Dental Care, Hunting; Fishing and Baseball.

Bosch shares, "Their schools, churches, and commercial pursuits are indistinguishable from those of other ethnic groups in the United States and Canada. Their customs of three-day weddings have died out, as have Krist Krindl and Belznickel, which have been replaced with Santa Claus. Their ethnic foods remain, and some restaurants in North and South Dakota serve German-Russian dishes. Perhaps their greatest legacy is the role they played in developing agricultural industries in their new lands in the Americas."

The German-Russians: In Words and Pictures is available by contacting the GRHC at 701-231-6596 or at <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/general/wordspics.html>.

For more information about becoming a *Friend of the GRHC* and donations 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; GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc.