The 46th Annual Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) International Convention, September 7-11, in Rapid City, S.D. provided excellent workshops and was well organized. The traveling exhibit, Women Behind the Plow, sponsored by the Tri-County Alliance was displayed and well received. The 47th GRHS Convention will be at the Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, 12-16 July 2017.

I had a memorable visit with Rodney Diede, Bowman, N.D. and Darlayne (Diede) Buchli, Rapid City, S.D., children of the late Pauline (Neher) Diede. Pauline was a special colleague and dear friend. Pauline donated historic textiles and clothing to the Emily P. Reynolds Costume Collection, NDSU. Her parents immigrated emigrated from the Black Sea villages of South Russia and homesteaded near Hebron, N.D.

Pauline Neher Diede was the author of a five-book series including: The Prairie Was Home, North Dakota: In Grateful Homeage, Prairie Echoes, Consider God’s Promises: My Christian Faith Journey and Speaking-out on Sour House Times. The books are available at http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/nd_sd/diede.html.

Pauline (Neher) Diede is featured in the award-winning documentary, Heaven Is Our Homeland: The Glueckstal District villages, South Dakota weekly newspapers – 1927-1932 compiled by Janice Huber-Stangl, where she presents letters published in the Dakota newspapers, Eureka Rundschau (Dakota Review) and Der Staats-Anzeiger (The State Gazette), translated from German to English. The book is available at http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/general/wordspics.html.

Lena Wolf, London, United Kingdom, gave a heart-warming presentation, Story of Ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union: A Punished People. Lena was born in Kazakhstan in the former Soviet Union. She immigrated to Germany with her family in the 1990s. Lena shared the story of her two grandmothers who kept the family alive after their men were taken away, either to the gulag or to be executed. Her grandmothers looked after the remaining family, fed and protected their children and to passed on the culture that was forbidden. Lena Wolf hopes to publish a children’s book of her family’s story in the English and German languages.

Janice Huber-Stangl, Ashburn, VA., native of Bowdle, S.D., presented, Communism: Its Effects on German-Russian Churches & Schools. Janice vividly shared a review of the German language letters to America written in the Glueckstal District villages, South Russia (near Odessa, Ukraine), during the years of 1927-1932. This was the time when the Communist system was being forcefully instituted which had a great impact on the churches and schools in the German villages of the Black Sea region. Stangl shared information about the Second Soviet Famine of 1932-1933, “Now we are all equal – equally poor!”

The GRHC published the book, Collectivization in the Soviet Union: German Letters to America, 1927-1932 compiled by Janice Huber-Stangl, where she presents letters published in the Dakota newspapers, Eureka Rundschau (Dakota Review) and Der Staats-Anzeiger (The State Gazette), translated from German to English. The book is available at http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/general/stangl.html.

NDSU Libraries’ GRHC is sponsoring the 22nd Journey to the Homeland Tour to Germany and Ukraine, May, 2018. Leading the tour will be Michael Miller, GRHC director, and Jeremy Kopp, GRHC special collections associate. The tour includes Berlin, Germany; Odessa, Ukraine & the former German villages, and Stuttgart, Germany. Travelers have the unique opportunity to visit the villages of their German-Russian ancestors near Odessa, Ukraine and walk where their ancestors walked and have their eyes opened to village life. Registration for the May 2017 tour is full.

If you would like more information about the 2018 Journey to the Homeland Tour to Germany and Ukraine; or would like donate to the GRHC (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; website: www.ndsu.edu/GRHC

October column for North Dakota and South Dakota weekly newspapers.