

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

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 Sod-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 Glueckstalers in New Russia and North America* – <http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/order/tapes/heavenhomeland.html>.

Tatjana Schell, a doctoral student, Department of English, NDSU, presented *My Family's History: Germans in the Soviet Union in the 1930s through the 1960s*. Schell was born in Volgograd, Russia, and is of Volga German heritage. She immigrated with her family to Germany in the 1990s. Tatjana shared the dramatic story of her family's life in Russia during the

1930s to 1960s including her mother growing up in Siberia. She speaks fluent German, English and Russian languages.

William Bosch, Spearfish, S.D., shared an impressive presentation of *Russian Agriculture in the 1880s*. Bosch is a native of Linton, N.D. He provided historic color maps from a book relating to agriculture that was published in Russia in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He shared comments from the book: "Wheat was their primary crop", "Drought was a persistent problem", "The German colonists all had rich, black dirt to farm." Bosch is the author of the excellent book, *The German-Russians: In Words and Pictures* – <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 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

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