

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

I was pleased to receive the Friend of Extension Award from Epsilon Sigma (ESP), the Extension Service honorary organization from the Extension/Research Center at North Dakota State University. The award was presented at the Fall Extension Conference in October at the Radisson Hotel, Bismarck. Photographs of the NDSU Extension Award Event can be seen at this webpage: <https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/aboutus/FriendofExtension.html>.

With my nomination of the award, this text was included; “Michael has received many awards for his commitment, dedication and generosity throughout his 50 years of service in the state of North Dakota. We feel it is time to honor him with the Friend of the Extension Award. Miller has facilitated relationships between organizations and individuals and NDSU Extension – the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Prairie Public Broadcasting, the Center for Heritage Renewal at NDSU, the Tri-County Tourism Alliance, the Welk Homestead Historic Site, and the Germans from Russia Heritage Society.

In July 2009, Extension Director Duane Hauck after discussion with Michael championed a sponsorship to offer the first Dakota Memories Heritage Tour in September 2009. Miller and the GRHC went on to host the 2011 Dakota Memories Heritage tour of Emmons, Logan and McIntosh counties, and out of that effort, the Tri-County Tourism Alliance organization was born. The Tri-County Tourism Alliance, of which Miller is a member, has relied heavily on NDSU Extension, for resources. In 2014, the NDSU Extension Service Awarded German-Russian Country: Prairie Legacy (Tri-County Tourism Alliance), a 2014 Program Excellence Award and Michael Miller was one of the team members.

Miller has worked as an executive

producer with Prairie Public Broadcasting for the award-winning Germans from Russia Documentary Series. Michael said, “I encouraged PPTV director Bob Dambach,” said Miller, “that we should explore with the Tri-County Tourism Alliance, the development of a foodways documentary filming women in their kitchens in the three counties, that would also include handing down the traditions to school youth and 4H groups. This has been especially well received with the filming of 4H students and at Napoleon School. Thus the documentary *Gutes Essen* became reality, with Prairie Public and the Alliance as co-sponsors.

The 10th documentary to focus on the Germans from Russia will be *Women Behind the Plow*; the story of the role of women in agriculture past and present. Filming and interviews were done in Emmons, Logan and McIntosh counties. This is an area strong on agriculture but even stronger on heritage and stories. Major sponsors are Prairie Public Television, the Tri-County Tourism Alliance, McIntosh County Bank, the Mertz-Opp Family, and the GRHC. The documentary will premiere on July 31 at the historic Fargo Theater, downtown Fargo.”

An excellent new cookbook is available: *From Thy Bounty Cookbook: A Collection of Scandinavian, German, and German-Russian Recipes*. Bobbi Jo (Schaffer) Cody, who prepared the German-Russian section of the cookbook, is a native of Lisbon, ND, with roots to Gackle, ND. Bobbi Jo and Todd are owners of The Red Silo in downtown Fargo. The new cookbook is available at the GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc.

The *FARGO Monthly* magazine featured this article, “Lefse, Lutefisk and Spaetzle.” The writer shares,

“The passed down recipes mixed with personal touches make this cookbook unlike anything you’d ever find. On the German side, you will find *Durch Dein Gabe* (Through Thy Bounty). The recipes in this portion were collected by Bobbi Jo (Schaffer) Cody from her Great Grandma Irma Remboldt of Gackle, ND, as well as from a bushel of Kriegar, Schaffer, Remmick, Zenker and Obenauer folks. The cookbook features recipes from the largest immigrant groups in North Dakota.”

Bobbi Jo shares, “I have vivid memories of my Grandmother, Lois Schaffer, in her housecoat filled with flour, standing over an electric fry pan making magical smells for us in her Gackle, ND, kitchen. Great Grandma Irma always had meals ready as if she sensed company. These are recipes that my great grandmother and grandmother prepared for our family as I was growing up. Many recipes are from relatives and friends who settled in the heart of German-Russian country here in North Dakota.”

The German-Russian, German and Russian recipes include: German Hot Potato Salad, Watermelon Pickles, Russian Easter Bread, Knoephla Dumplings, Crockpot Borscht, Homemade Sauerkraut, Pigs in the Blanket, German Spaetzle, Strudle, Stirrum, Fleish Kleuchla, Grandma’s Chicken and Dumplings, Pfeffernüsse Cookies, Kuchen, Lebkuchen, Ginger Cookies, Slitz Koechkla and Blaginda.

If you would like more information about the 24th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Germany and Ukraine (May 2020); becoming a Friend of the GRHC, or would like donate (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.