

In Touch with Prairie Living

June 2019

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA
GRHC
HERITAGE COLLECTION

Join us for the GRHC Open House on July 31, 2-4 pm, at the North Dakota State University Library, Fargo, to celebrate the release of Prairie Public's new documentary, "Women Behind the Plow", and GRHC's new book, "Emilie: The Girl from Bessarabia". Kuchen & refreshments will be served.

NDSU's Main Library will be transformed into a "museum" for the event, featuring a number of exhibits to view, including: 1) Women Behind the Plow, sponsored by the Tri-County Tourism Alliance; 2) Women in Agriculture, sponsored by the NDSU Libraries; 3) German-Russian Textiles & Clothing, sponsored by the Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection; 4) The Story of the Germans from Russia; Preserving Architecture: Sustaining German-Russian Heritage; Father William C. Sherman Homesteads of North Dakota Photograph Collection; and Iron Spirits: North Dakota Blacksmith-made Grave Crosses – four exhibits sponsored by the GRHC.

The World Premiere of the new documentary, "Women Behind the Plow", is July 31, at 7pm, at the historic Fargo Theatre, 314 Broadway North, Fargo. More than 20 women were interviewed for the documentary in German-Russian Country – Emmons, Logan and McIntosh counties. It is an area strong in agriculture, but also strong in heritage and stories.

The 60-minute documentary expands upon the stories from the book by the same name. It includes memories of the women featured in the book, as well as stories about women on the farm from the Great Depression until today. As daughters of German-Russian immigrants, they shared the historic traits of their ancestors: love of family, hard work, and religious faith. They embodied the German-Russian

expression "Arbeit macht das Leben suess" or "Work makes life sweet".

The 49th Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) International Convention will be held July 31-August 3, at the Fargo Holiday Inn. For more information and registration, go to www.ghrs.org. Workshops include: Christian Netz Hillius - German-Russian Emigrant to North Dakota Learns to Read at Age 62; Emmer Wheat - Gift from Russia; German Newspapers in the Dakotas - Connecting at Home and Abroad; Gottlieb Weisser German-Russian Pioneer Settlers on the Prairie; Hutterite Life - History and Social Structure; Breaking the Silence - Germans from Russia and the Holocaust in Transnistria; Separatists in Bessarabia - A Genealogist's Nightmare; Uncle Fred's Diary, January-May 1935: Selected Readings; Black Sea Folklore; and Five Years after the Annexation of Crimea - Looking to the Past and Toward the Future of Ukraine.

Other workshop presentations include: If God Would Have Mercy: Post-WWII German-Russian Refugee Letters; Letters from Bessarabian Refugees to Pfitzer Family in Java, South Dakota: Desperations Meets Generosity in Post WWII Germany; Lost in Translation, "Emilie: A Girl from Bessarabia"; Neudorf, Then and Now; Treasures from the Germans from Russia Heritage: Textiles and Clothing Collections at North Dakota State University; Struck Down, but not Destroyed: The Story of Rudolph Heupel, a German-Russian Immigrant; Gemuetlichkeit of Poetry; GRHS 101: Who We Are/What We Do; Characteristics that Differentiated and Connections that United the First German Settlers in Bessarabia; and DNA: Biological Basics of Genetic Genealogy.

Torie Jones, GRHC Collections

Assistant, will present on the Johannes and Christina (Ehni) Schock Letter and Photograph Collection housed at the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. The collection contains 368 letters received by Johannes and Christina from German-Russian refugees living in Europe in the years following WWII. These letters detail experiences both during and after the war focusing primarily on post-war conditions. This collection is valuable for future research and sheds a light on a part of German-Russian history that is often forgotten. The collection is available at www.digitalhorizonsonline.org.

During the convention, Michael Miller and Jeremy Kopp, GRHC, will host a Journey to the Homeland Tour Reunion & Future Interest, at the Fargo Holiday Inn, August 2, at 5 pm. They will share photos highlighting the 23rd homeland tour in May. Past tour members will reunite and share memories of their tour experiences. Additional tour information is available at library.ndsu.edu/homeland-tour.

The Welk Homestead State Historic Site, located near Strasburg, ND, is open Thursday to Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm until Labor Day. Newly added to the Homestead you will find historic farm machinery and a vegetable garden. More information about the Welk Homestead: www.history.nd.gov/historicsites/welk.

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.

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