

In Touch with Prairie Living

September 2019

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

GRHC

HERITAGE COLLECTION

Prairie Public's television premiere of *Women Behind the Plow* will be on Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 7 pm (CDT). The World Premiere on July 31, at the Fargo Theater had over 800 attendees and many of the women who were interviewed for the documentary traveled from Emmons, Logan and McIntosh Counties in ND.

The 49th Annual Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) International Convention at the Fargo, ND, Holiday Inn July 31 – August 3, 2019 included many excellent speakers and workshop presenters.

Dr. Thomas Isern, Distinguished Professor of History at NDSU, presented, *Heroes of German-Russian County: Making the Most of Our Narrative Heritage*. He shared stories from his book, *Pacing Dakota* including the story of Wilhelmina "Minnie" Bauer Geiszler, rural Ashley, ND. Isern referred to Minnie as "the Martyr Mother of the German Russians"; he also shared the tragic story of the Lang family who lived on a farm south of Lehr, ND, and the prairie house fire that resulted in the loss of six children. *Pacing Dakota* is available at the GRHC website.

Lowell Kaul of Organic Kaul Farms, Harvey, ND, presented, *Emmer Wheat: Gift of Russia*. Emmer Wheat is a variety of hulled wheat, considered to be the wheat of the Bible, that was brought to North Dakota by German-Russian immigrants in the 19th Century. Currently, Emmer Wheat is grown on a few farms in North Dakota and Montana.

Chuck Weisser, native of Ashley, ND, presented, *Gottlieb Weisser, A German-Russian Pioneer Settler on the Prairie*. His story is based on the lives of his great-grandparents, Gottlieb and Katarina Weisser, who immigrated to America in 1884 from the village of Glückstal, South Russia. He tells the story of homesteading in McIntosh County. Weisser shared how the family collected buffalo bones which were sold to buy chicken feed. The family

would gather manure in the pasture for mistholz to burn in the stove.

Tony Waldner, Forest River Hutterite Colony, Fordville, ND, presented *Hutterite Life: History and Social Structure*. Tony is one of the primary historians for the Hutterite community in the Dakotas. He has taught German since 1981 and is a 1980 graduate from the University of North Dakota (UND) with a major in Elementary Education. Waldner shared that Jim Kleinsasser, native of Carrington, ND, former Minnesota Vikings football player, has Mennonite German heritage.

Dr. Ann Braaten, curator of the Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection, NDSU, (www.ndsu.edu/erhcc) presented, *Treasures from the Germans from Russia Heritage: Textiles and Clothing Collection at North Dakota State University*. Textiles and clothing donated to the GRHC are housed at the Reynolds Collection. Information about GRHC's Textiles & Clothing is at https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/history_culture/textile/index.html. Included are the Crochet Patterns of Connie Dahlke.

Allyn Brosz, Washington, DC, native of Tripp, SD, presented, *German Newspapers in the Dakotas: Connecting at Home and Abroad*. The *Dakota Freie Presse* was the flagship German-Russian newspaper. Brosz covered three publications, the *Deutscher Herold*, published at Mitchell and Sioux Falls, SD, the *Staats-Anzeiger*, published at Rugby, ND, and the *Taegliche Omaha Tribune*, Omaha, NE. He shared the importance of using the Chronicling America website of the U.S. Library of Congress.

The GRHS Convention Cooking School included Blachenta prepared by Linda (Kraft) Glass, Fargo, native of Strasburg, ND. The dough turnovers were often made in the fall by German-Russians with fresh pumpkin. Svetlana Harding, Henderson, NV, born in Volograd, Russia, demonstrated the

making of Holodets (Kolodots), a form of aspic or meat jelly. For the German-Russians, this is known as pickled pigs feet and is made in the winter.

Justin Ehresman, native of Washington, living in Germany, presented, *Neudorf: Then and Now*, with the first livestreamed workshop via the internet. Neudorf is a colony of the Glückstal District. Ehresman has visited Neudorf (Carmanova) today in Moldova, and is writing a book about this village.

Ginny Lewis, German professor at Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD, presented, *Letters from Bessarabian Refugees to the Pfitzer Family in Java, South Dakota: Desperation Meets Generosity in Post WWII Germany*. Lewis has translated many letters which share the need for humanitarian help at the end of WWII. She works closely with the South Dakota Germans from Russia Cultural Center, NSU Library – sdgrf.org.

Dr. Ron Baesler, Placentia, CA, presented, *Struck Down, But Not Destroyed: The Story of Rudolph Heupel, a German-Russian Immigrant*. Heupel tells the remarkable story of his grandfather, a German-Russian emigrant from the village of Kassel, Glueckstal District, who became a beloved pastor and healer for many people in western North Dakota. Baesler has authored a book of the life of his grandfather.

If you would like more information about the 24th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Germany and Ukraine (13-23 May 2020), becoming a Friend of the GRHC, or would like to donate family histories and photographs, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, Dept 2080, Fargo ND 58108-6050 (Tel: 701-231-8416); Email: michael.miller@ndsu.edu; www.ndsu.edu/grhc.

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