



Sunflower Chapter NEWSLETTER



Spring 2012

Vol. 16, Issue 2

GEMANS FROM RUSSIA - A RUSSIAN TV DOCUMENTARY

*(Part one of this video was presented at the last chapter meeting.
Part two will be presented on May 6th)*

This DVD focused on the German deportation from 1941-1990's. Little has been said to acknowledge this ethnic group. Scholars were prohibited from publishing information or any history on them. 1, 200,000 Germans resided on Russian soil. Even before Catherine the 2nd, in the 1740's, Germans were invited to the "new world" in Russia with offers of free space and hidden treasure. The conditions in Germany were terrible and there was constant fighting. In 1762 a document of invitation to encourage immigrants was sent to Germany. It offered: land and multiple benefits; travel expenses paid; choice of where to live and occupation; exemption from taxes. Also each family was given 2 horses, 1 cow, seeds, farming tools. In 1763 the first German families arrived, tired of 7 years of war in their land. With them came their various dialects, religious traditions, and habits. In proportion, it was 3-1, protestants outnumbering Catholics. Many Lutherans and Catholics held services together, conducted by a single priest of either faith. Immigrants actually came from Switzerland-France-Austria-Denmark-and Poland, but all were called "German" by the Russians.

It was a 12-14 day journey by ship to St. Petersburg, then from there to Saratov it took almost a year. They were housed in barracks until homes were built for them. Each family received 110 acres of land. One half was for sowing; one third for hay making; and the rest was often left in reserve for future generations. The families lived in colonies. Russia paid for the boat trip, gave them the land, farm animals and before the first harvest, they were also given money. This locked the Germans to the land by the debt they now owed. The large sums of money given the immigrants left them in debt until it was all repaid.

The first homes were built of raw logs and lasted about 30 years. In time, they

built their own homes. How well they built depended on their farming success.

They battled droughts, invasions of tribes from the Ural mountains. In August of 1774 the Kirges raided 3 times; the colonies were defenseless because Russian troops were sent to war. 6,500 families lived along the Volga. Planting was by horse and plow; they were given cattle and told to plant rye. The first crops failed. The first few years only watermelons grew well due to the German's method of tilling. By the turn of the century came modern farm equipment and more successful farming. The Germans advanced industry along the Volga such as tobacco and flour mills and selling goods. Their architecture -- many of the old German brick buildings are still standing. Their craftsmen moved to the cities and built some of the ornate buildings there like "German Street" in Saratov. Russian merchants moved there and enrolled their children in German schools and bought German goods.

The Lutheran and Catholic churches along the Volga are almost all destroyed. By 1917 there were 200 stone structures, architectural marvels. Tragic to see them today: cows and horsing grazing inside. Sadly these churches will never hold services again; they just stand as tribute to the German heritage.

They preserved their language and culture; it is the only culture that didn't assimilate itself into their new country. Basically they isolated themselves from others; brought Christmas celebration and Easter bunny. Christmas Trees were rare; often only one in a colony, church, or school. On Easter children also got presents from the Easter bunny.

For Fasenacht, they drew crosses on door posts to ward off evil spirits. The church, school, and cemetery were important centers in each colony. The ground froze solid in the winter so graves were dug in summer. By the end

of the 19th century wakes were held for the dead.

Punishment ensued for pregnancy before marriage. A black spot was painted before the altar; the woman knelt there, was given penance, banished from the church for several months. Sometimes she was sent to a correctional facility. Permission was sought from Rome to marry the father of the illegitimate child.

The oldest and youngest had no rights. If the father died, the assets were sold and distributed among the children. Otherwise, the father could give inheritance as he chose.

Their values were property -church-faith-education. Until the 1880's the Russian commissioners kept colonies up to code. Town meetings were organized. Colonies consisted only of people who wanted to work. People were prosecuted for littering. Homes needed to be painted and kept up. These were their codes.

Their foods were basically coffee, sausage, soup, and always vegetables.

Deportation started in 1941; archives contain entire history of the Volga Germans. For many years the files were cut off until the 1990's, when they were "declassified". Saratov National archives are the most complete.

We will learn more on the remainder of the DVD.

After the DVD several comments were made: Tom Haas said he was part of a group of 37 local folks who went back to Russia in 2002 "Kamenka". He said all churches and cemeteries were removed when the German/Russians were deported.

Next Meeting

May 6



Social & Open Library.....11:30
Meeting 1:00
Program 1:30
Cake & Ice Cream following DVD
Open Library2:30

SPRING PROGRAM

Our program will consist of **part two** of the DVD, "Germans from Russia" that was produced in Russia and is translated in English. The video features many researchers including Dr. Igor Pleve, making this a fascinating discussion on our people. The last 30 minutes will be presented at our next meeting plus a few other items relating to our heritage!



EINE HOCHZEIT IN ELLIS COUNTY 1881

EINE HOCHZEIT



IN ELLIS COUNTY 1881

Originally performed in 1996, "Eine Hochzeit in Ellis County" was the last performance of a play written for stage production in 1991. It depicts a German wedding ceremony of the year. This DVD contains the script, music, and photos of the original production.

Ellis County locals, Judy Braun, Jerry Braun, Annette Walther, Terry Strank, Cliff & Virginia Schindler, Lawrence & Elizabeth Thiel, Eugene Rosenwald, Phil Schindler, Paul & Irene Frank, William & Rose Walther, Cyril A. DeWitt, Rosemarie, Lynn & Larry Smith, Steve & Nancy Smith, David & Nancy Smith, Douglas, Paul & Mary Ann Duffel, Betty Rosenwald, Sharon & Dennis Robinson, and Edward & Leona Pfeifer came together to make this commemorative book piece of history and heritage.

Produced by TITZEL, 1996
 Leona Pfeifer/Carol Cohen
 1991 Copyright - All Rights Reserved

Copies of the DVD, "Eine Hochzeit in Ellis County 1881" are now available for sale from the Sunflower Chapter for \$25.00 a DVD. Contact Kevin if interested in a copy, krupp@ruraltel.net

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER LIBRARY



The library is open one hour before the meeting begins and roughly 1/2 hour after the program ends. Books may be checked out at the meeting and need to be returned at the following meeting. Shirley Brungardt, our Chapter Librarian, will be glad to help you with any of your questions. Donations are being taken for any books that you might like to see added to our library.

President's Message....Kevin Rupp

Chapter Members,

On next meeting is once again around the corner and we will finish watching the DVD, "Germans from Russia - A Russian TV Documentary." There is about 30 minutes left on the DVD so we will finish out the program singing some of our favorite German songs and perhaps have a short folklore tidbit.

Looking over our renewals for 2012, we are down in members this year compared to last year. Currently we have 81 paid members compared to about 100 members last year. This seems to be the trend even with the Society at large. I encourage our members to go out and promote our chapter as well as the organization. Many years ago chapters began letting members join their local chapters without having them join the International Society, because of this, the Society is now seeing the ramifications from this. Our chapter discussed this as well a number of years ago, but felt that as a Chapter it was important to have the local members join to International Society to help to help support the works of the Society.

I attended the AHSGR board meetings, March 22 - 24. Meetings usually run from about 8:30 a.m. until about 5:00 or 6:00 p.m., depending on the committee. A lot of items are packed into two and 1/2 days of meetings.

The AHSGR Convention Planning Committee discussed the upcoming convention in Portland, Oregon as well as the 2013 convention in Ft. Collins, Colorado, the 2014 convention in Omaha Nebraska (still needs to be confirmed) and the 2015 convention.

There are just too many items to mention in the space that I have left, so I will wait until our meeting and fill you in on everything.

See you all Sunday, May 6.....and be sure to bring a friend!!!!!!

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER BOARD

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AHSGR is now on
 "Facebook"



Go to the
 AHSGR Website,
www.ahsgr.org, go down to the
 bottom of the page and click on this
 symbol and look for
 "Become a Member"!

**GERMAN FROM RUSSIA
DESCENDANT BECOMES 11TH
BISHOP OF SALINA, KANSAS**



Pope Benedict XVI appointed Msgr. Edward Weisenburger, vicar general of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, to be the 11th bishop of Salina.

Bishop-elect Weisenburger, 51, lived in Hays when he was 4 years old and again when he was 7. His mother, the former Asella "Sally" Walters, was born and raised in nearby Catharine, and his parents met in Hays. His maternal grandparents were Ferdinand and Mathilda (Ubert) Walters from Catharine, Kansas.

Bishop-elect Weisenburger will be ordained and installed at 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 1, at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Because of limited seating, only a certain number of tickets will be allocated to each parish.

**Future Meetings
Munjor Parish Hall**

Sunday, May 6, 2012
Program: Pt. 2 "Germans from Russia"

Sunday, August 5, 2012
Program: 2011 Round-Up Speakers

Sunday, September 9, 2012
VFW "All You Can Eat Breakfast"

Sunday, October 30, 2012
Genealogy Program

Sunday, Dec. 9, 2012
Christmas Banquet

**RESEARCHERS VISIT
ARGENTINA FOR FILM**

By Mike Nowatski
Originally published in AGWEEK



Michael Miller has researched Germans from Russia for more than four decades. But in the southern hemisphere, he still found some things about the people that impressed him.

Miller, director and bibliographer of the North Dakota State University Libraries' Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, spent February in Brazil and Argentina, scouting locations and lining up interviews for a documentary on Germans from Russia who settled in South America more than a century ago. He was accompanied by Bob Dambach, director of television at Prairie Public Broadcasting.

They visited people with various German-Russian ancestries, including Black Sea, Bessarabian, Volhynian, Mennonite and Volga Germans.

More than 1 million Argentina's roughly 42 million people are Volga Germans. "So, it's quite a distinct population," Miller said.

Like the Black Sea Germans who left the southern Ukraine and settled in the Dakotas, the Volga Germans left Russia in the 1870s and 1880 mainly to avoid being forced into the Russian army, Miller said.

In visiting with Volga Germans in Argentina, he learned that some immigrants thought they were going to the United States but ended up in a different America. Others arrived at Ellis Island but because of their diseases or illnesses were given the choice to return to Russia or go to South America, Miller said.

Many who arrived in Brazil soon left the forested topography for more open farmland in Argentina. In the province of Entre Rios, more than a quarter of the residents are descendants of Volga Germans, Miller said.

"They found a prairie land very similar to what you would see in North Dakota," he said. Miller said he was impressed by the level of agricultural production in Argentina, citing the fertilizer and malting plants, two growing seasons and impressive soybean crops.

"These German Russians are quite successful, I would have to say, in their field of agriculture down there," he said.

Miller and Dambach sampled Volga German foods such as fried-dough grebble, meat-filled runza and, of course, Kuchen.

They also viewed beautiful churches and cemeteries filled with wrought-iron crosses, not unlike those found in the Great Plains, where Germans from Russia settled from Texas to Saskatchewan. "The other thing that impressed me was that they have kept the German language longer than here," said Miller, who grew up in Strasburg, in a family that spoke both English and German. "They must have kept it in the family longer."

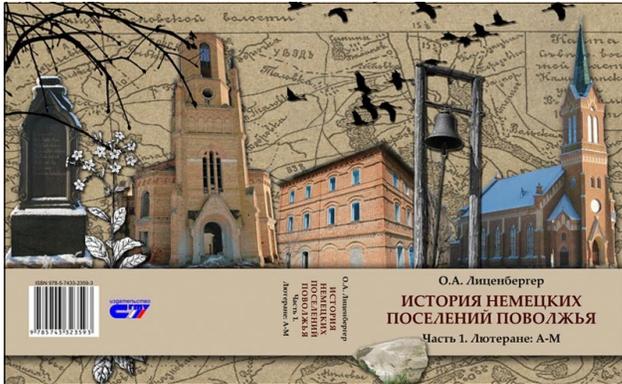
Miller said he and Dambach also were impressed with the beautiful hospitality and how interested people were in their project. There's talk of translating the document to Spanish and Portuguese if people there can raise the funds, Miller said.

Dambach said the people and landscapes impressed him most. "The people we met in Brazil and Argentina were tremendously friendly, helpful and sincerely interested in their Germans from Russia heritage," he said in an NDSU news release. "The mingling of three or four languages seemed to be no hindrance to communication."

Miller and Dambach tentatively plan to return to southern Brazil in April 2013 and Argentina in October 2013 for filming and interviews. Slated for completion in 2014, the documentary will be the eighth in Prairie Public Broadcasting's award-winning series on Germans from Russia. The seventh installment will air in July, Miller said.

**KANSAS ROUND-UP OF CHAPTERS
TOPEKA, KANSAS - FALL of 2012
Watch the Summer Newsletter for details!!!**

History of the Volga German Settlements. Volume I. Lutheran Colonies: A-M. Olga Litzenberger, Saratov, 2011. Russian language.



The publication studies the phenomenon that has long disappeared but has left a distinctive and profound imprint in the history of Russia during the XVIII – XX centuries – the Volga German colonies. As a result of migration processes, the descendants of the Russian Germans are now scattered all over the world and today are sometimes referred to as “globalization pioneers”. They are genuinely interested in the history of the “Old Country”, and many of the traditions and “German personality” traits have been passed from one generation to another. An attempt is made in this book to introduce the history of the Volga area Russian German ethnical group through a prism of a single settlement story: the story of how the colony was founded and how it developed. Every colony story in the book appears to be different and unique; every article highlights events, famous descendants, concrete facts that, as a whole, influenced the development of spiritual and material culture of the Volga Germans.

It is hardly possible to cover all of the German settlements that existed on the Volga into a relatively modest publication. Thus less than a hundred German colonies were included into the book. The first criterion for their selection was religious confession – this and the following volume will feature only those settlements where the majority of population was Lutheran. About one third of each article is devoted to the religious history of the Russian Germans which undoubtedly will provide a clue to the phenomenon of the German spiritual culture. The author is hoping that by emphasizing the role of religion in the development of the colonies and preserving the German language, way of life, and traditions, she is stimulating readers’ interest in the history of the Lutheran church in Russia.

Availability of genealogical and historical records in Saratov area archives was the second selection criterion for the colonies. Thus one of the two archives – the State Archive of Saratov Oblast (Saratov), or the State Historic Archive of the Volga Germans (Engels) – have church books of Lutheran parishes for the forty one colonies of the first volume. The details on genealogical records related to a particular village are given at the end of each article. The publication is lavishly illustrated; it contains numerous historic and contemporary photos (every article has between 10 and 20) as well as reproduction of works of art associated with individual colonies. The book is not only highly informative but also unique because it succeeds in conveying a feel of the atmosphere in which the Volga Germans lived in Russia.

The articles are arranged in alphabetical order; the first volume includes village names from “A” to “M”. The articles are structured in a way that makes it very convenient to use the book as a reference by all those interested in the history of German colonies in Russia. Each village description gives information on the following: Geographic location and data on administrative-territorial status in the XIX – XX centuries; Brief village history; School and children’s education; Religious confession of the population and its peculiarities; Church parish; Date when the church was built and its architectural features; Population and parishioners numbers; Pages of history of the church community and the parish; List of ministers; Archival sources. The book also describes how each village looks today, and if any of the German buildings are still there.

Of course, the reader will not find in the publication all the names, dates, and events from the history of a particular village but he will get a very good idea about the colony and stages of its development. Besides, the book is not only a reference. The author gives everyone another chance to look at the Russian Germans’ destiny and the dramatic history of this people.

Volume I includes articles on the following colonies:

Alexanderhoeh, Anton, Basel, Beideck, Balzer, Bangert, Bauer, Bettinger, Boiroux/Boaro, Beauregard, Brockhausen/Hummel, Brunental, Waren-

burg, Weizenfeld, Wiesenmueller, Glarus/Biberstein, Gnadendorf, Gnadentau, Gnadenfeld, Gnadenflur, Hockerberg, Grimm, Huck, Doenhof, Dinkel, Katharimental, Katharinenstadt, Sichelberg, Yost/Jost, Kaneau/Kana, Kind, Krasny-Kut, Krasnoyar, Kraft, Kutter, Langenfeld, Lauwe/Laube, Lilienfeld, Mannheim, Messer, Moor

Volume II is scheduled to be finished by the summer of 2012. The following colonies are included:

Naeb/Nab, Neu-Bauer, neu-Beideck, Neu-Boaro, Neu-Warenburg, neu-Hussenbach, Neu-Urbach, Neu-Schilling, Neu-Straub, Nieder-Monjou, Norka, Orlovskaya, Paulskaya, Pobochnaya, Pokrovskaya Sloboda/Engels, Reinwald, Reinhardt, Rosenheim, Rosendamm, Rosental, Rosenfeld, Saratov, Susannental, Unterwalden, Urbach, Philippsfeld, Fischer, Fresental, Friedenber, Friedenfeld, Zuerich, Schaffhausen, Schwed, Schoendorf, Schoental, Schoenfeld, Schaefer, Schilling/ Konstantinovka, Schilling/ Sosnovka, Stahl, Straub, Schulz, Eckheim, Enders, Aerenfeld, Ernestinendorf/ Beckersdorf, Yagodnaya Polyana, Yagodnoye.

The author is considering a volume on Catholic colonies but it is not clear at this time when this work would be completed

The price of the book is 30 euro which includes shipping costs. The book is distributed by the publisher.

More information about the author, Olga Litzenberger, can be found through the link: <http://wolgadeutsche.ru/Litzenberger.htm> or e-mail at: kolonie@mail.ru

You can find an extract from the book here: http://wolgadeutsche.ru/litzenberger/spr_11_13.pdf

Note: Please be aware that this book is only available in Russian.



SOAR



Saving Our Ancestral Records

Information in SOAR continues to expand as new information is added to existing databases and new databases are added or are being planned. If you haven't visited the SOAR site, <http://ahsgrsoar.org/> for awhile, you are encouraged to do so and see the changes as well as periodically returning to see new changes.

The life Events database features postings of wedding and engagement announcements, birth announcements, wedding anniversaries, and family reunions. There are some marriages license listings (and even a few divorcer action items). The contents of that database continue to expand and we welcome copies of newspaper articles describing similar events suitable for this database/

New items continue to be added to the obituary database by the efforts of Ron Greenwald, Lauren Brantner and Jeanette Anderson using the automated tools that have been provided by CIC. Recent additions include the 2011 collection from the Lower Volga Village Project and we are now processing additional files received from the Fresno Chapter library collection. (The Fresno Chapter collection contains the original Arthur Flegel obituary collection and was the starting point for the SOAR Obituary database.) The last of the collection from Ed Babitzki that contained obituaries from North and South Dakota and Oklahoma has been processed, as well as a large collection from Karen Penner containing many Mennonite obituaries. Problems with the auto processing system identified by the Marge Bensen, Shirley Flack, Karen Soeken, Rolene Kiesling and Robert Leichner volunteer team are being addressed with some still unresolved - but the time to get a newly received obituary placed on-line has been reduced significantly compared to the all manual indexing system we began with.

Data for 57 new Surname Charts with the associated Surname Supplemental Information were submitted by Doris Evans and CIC is now working to add them to the Surname and Supplemental Information databases.

A booklet from Delbert Amen describing Homestead Record information for Washita County OK will soon be part of the Reference Books database. Portland Naturali-

zation records, previously only in the Portland Chapter library, have been submitted by Jene Goldhammer (and other volunteers) and are planned as the data for another new database to be on-line before the 2012 Convention. These naturalization records provide a wealth of information including the name of the head of household, when and where born, name and data for the ship that arrived in which port, wife's name with date and place of birth, plus the name of children with dates and where they were born.

You will soon be able to use your personal paypal account, in addition to using a credit card as you have in the past, for any payments to the SOAR site. This adds another level of security to the processing of credit cards when a paid transaction occurs for a download. Remember: the "https" in the address line and a padlock image in the page alerts you that the link used for a credit card or PayPal transaction is encrypted and is secure.

Making these changes and adding this new data doesn't happen quickly but with only a few volunteers in the Greeley/Ft. Collins area we make advances as their time allows - so continue to look for these new databases and information in SOAR. We plan to send a message when new items are available on-line but because there might be a delay for the announcement you are encouraged to check for new items when you can. Thank you for your continued interest and support for SOAR and send us a message at:

soarcoordinator@ahsgrsoar.org

about new data you know about or what we should consider to improve the site.


SOAR


 Saving Our Ancestral Records

Find SOAR at our website ahsgr.org.
Click on the *SOAR* button and begin your voyage of discovery!

SOAR has:

Over 400,000 individual documents pertaining to

- birth
- death
- marriage
- immigration
- confirmation
- other life events of Germans from Russia
- reference works



AHSGR has the largest genealogical library for Germans from Russia in the world and a commanding Internet presence.

At Home in Russia, at Home on the Prairie

A river flows gently into its broad lagoon, its banks punctuated by once German villages, dazzling fields of grain, abundant vineyards, fruit trees and gardens. The land is fertile. The area is typical of many German settlements that once made these Russian steppes a breadbasket of grain and other agricultural products. The Germans who settled the area are largely gone now scattered in a diaspora of forced migration through difficult decades of political unrest and change. And though the region no longer exists as when the Germans lived there, it endures in the minds of the people, lingering fragilely "Da hamm in Russland," "Back home in Russia."

"At Home in Russia, at Home on the Prairie" tells the story of the Kutchurganers. The life they led in South Russia and their life after journeying to the prairies of North America.

This new DVD will be available for the first time at the 2012 AHSGR Convention.



2012 SUNFLOWER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

Member's Name _____
Address _____
City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____
E-mail _____ **Phone** _____

Birth date: Month _____ Day _____ Year (optional) _____ German-Russian Heritage Yes ___ No ___

Ancestral Names (Self) _____

Ancestral Villages (Spouse) _____

Spouses Name _____ **Spouses Maiden Name** _____

Birth date: Month _____ Day _____ Year (optional) _____ German-Russian Heritage Yes ___ No ___

Newsletter: ___ By e-mail; ___ By Postal Mail; ___ Both

DUES: Renewal _____ New Member _____ Dues for year 20____

Date Paid _____ Check # _____ Cash _____

Privacy Option: ___ Check here if you do NOT want your information published to others in the Society. (Clues/GED List)

You must be a member of the International Organization (AHSGR) before joining the local Sunflower Chapter.

_____ \$60.00 Individual / Family or _____ Pro-rated Dues (This includes national & local dues)

_____ \$10.00 Local Dues Only (International Dues have already been paid to headquarters)

_____ I am a Life Member

Membership dues for **new members** are prorated throughout the calendar year.

Prorated annual National and Local dues are as follows: Jan. 1 - June 30: \$60.00; July 1 - Dec. 31: \$30.00

Membership renewals are due by January 1

Discounted Life Membership
 Year of Birth _____
 ___ Ages 26 - 40 \$950
 ___ Ages 41 - 55 \$800
 ___ Ages 56 & older \$650

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL RENEWALS FOR
LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TO OUR
 TREASURER:
 Jerry Braun
 2223 Felten Dr.
 Hays, Ks. 67601

Areas of Interest:

We are always looking for more help in our chapter. Please mark your areas of interest:

Program _____ Newsletter Information _____ Publicity _____ Genealogy _____
 Hospitality _____ Help w/VFW Breakfast _____ Clean-up _____ Folklore _____
 Misc. _____

How did you hear about AHSGR? Website ___ Facebook ___ Magazine Ad ___
 Society Visit ___ Other _____

Name of referring Chapter or Member: _____

UNSERE LEUTE IM BILD - HOCHZEIT'S

Spring is the time when weddings begin. You remember the Tuesday morning weddings?



*Phillip and Rose (Wendler) Hertel
November 23, 1903*



*Joseph Jr. & Clementina (Dreher) Hertel
November 3, 1909*

BRAUTDUSCH

1.

Sing mit froehlichen Gemuete,
Brautigam mit deiner Braut.
Die dir Heute Goettes Guete,
Zur Gehilfin anvertraut.

Das sie dich in Augst und Plagen,
Troesten soll in dieser Welt;
Und die Buerde mit dir tragen,
Welche dir beschwerlich faellt.

2.

Tretet Froehlich zum Altare,
Betet Gott mit Ehrfurcht an,
Dessen Guete viele Jahre,
Euch gesund erhalten kann.

Bitten Jesum um den Segen,
Ladet ihn zur Hochzeit ein;
Denn daran ist es gelegen,
Wenn ihr wollet gluecklich sein.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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