



Sunflower Chapter
Hays, KS

Sunflower Chapter NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

Vol. 15, Issue 2



The Journeys of Alexander Herzog

by Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA



"I came 360 miles for this lunch," Alex Herzog joked after his introduction by Leona W. Pfeifer at the chapter's annual Christmas meeting. He had been invited to speak on his family's convoluted journey from Ukraine throughout Eastern Europe to the USA in the years during and after WWII. Although now a resident of Colorado, Alex and his family had lived here in Hays from his sophomore year of high school through his sophomore year in college.

A Long, Troubled Road from Ukraine to Kansas

Alex was born in Ukraine to a family rooted in the Black Sea area surrounding the city of Odessa. His ancestors were part of an immigrant wave that had journeyed from Alsace to Ukraine in the 1870s. (During that same time period, other Alsatians had resettled in America.)

His parents were married first in a civil ceremony and later, secretly, in a Catholic church. Alex's dad worked as a schoolteacher in various small towns from 1929 until the outbreak of WWII. The 1930s were an especially difficult time for all ethnic Germans living in the USSR, due largely to Moscow's policies of state-sponsored atheism and Russification of all the nation's citizens. But life for the Herzogs grew even more complicated after Hitler's surprise invasion of Ukraine in June 1941, when their hometown fell under the control of Nazi SS forces. Later, when the advancing Soviet Army reversed the tide of the war, the Nazis were forced to retreat--but not without first issuing a command that all families of German ethnic background had to go with them. People from Alex's village were given two days to pack.

The family's journey by wagon lasted for two months during the spring of 1944. They didn't retreat to German-held territories by a direct route, but went southward first, then northward, and finally westward, picking up additional families along the way. Traveling through the driving rains and thick mud of a typical springtime, they finally arrived in Romania by mid-May, then boarded a train for Poland. It was in Poland that Alex's dad was drafted into the German army.

The family's sojourn in Polish territory was cut short when the Soviet army began advancing toward their location in January 1945. It was at that time that his mother made the decision to flee with her children to Germany. A month later, the beleaguered family took up residence in a small cottage on the northern end of Berlin. Because of nightly bombing raids, the family had to take shelter every night in a neighbor's base-

ment. Their eyes, ears, and stomachs kept telling them something different from the news being broadcast daily in the German media--that the war was going fine. Besides the growing heaps of bombed-out ruins all around them, there were painful food shortages.

In April when the Soviets reached Berlin, Mrs. Herzog's first thoughts were of her fourteen-year-old daughter Maria. To keep the soldiers' hands off her child, she posted on her front door a sign in large Russian letters proclaiming, "Typhus!" Her ploy worked for awhile, but then she realized she had to get her family entirely out of Berlin to keep everyone safe. The Herzogs then found a small farm in East Germany where they could get room and board in return for labor. After moving there in August 1945, they were reunited with Alex's dad, who had been released from a POW camp run by the Americans. However, Mr. Herzog knew that the Yalta agreement could force his repatriation to the USSR, where imprisonment in Siberia would most certainly follow. It was time to consider another move for the family. After contacting distant relatives who had moved to the USA in 1880, Alex's dad learned of a family in Missouri who would sponsor their immigration to America. With their help, the Herzogs finally arrived in Hays, Kansas, in 1953.

During this part of his talk, Alex then rattled off a series of names of schools, churches, and businesses that made his family's years in Hays memorable and enjoyable: St. Joseph's Church, St. Anthony's Hospital, Wiesner's Department Store, O'Loughlin's Garage, S & W Supply, St. Joseph's Military Academy, and Fort Hays State College.

Next Meeting

Feb. 27



Social & Open Library... 12:30
Meeting 1:00
Program 1:30
Open Library 2:30

FASENACHT PROGRAM

Our next meeting will be Sunday, February 27 in Munjor. Since this is our Fasnacht meeting, we ask that you bring your favorite finger foods to help us celebrate before the season of Lent begins. I think you will enjoy the program that we have in store for you!

FOLKLORE

What nick-names do you remember?

MUSIC

Let's sing a few folk songs before Lent begins!

CHAPTER LIBRARY

This will be the first meeting which we will be able to use our new library cabinet. The library will be open 1/2 hour before the meeting begins and roughly 1/2 hour after the program ends. Because the library cabinet needs to remain upstairs, we will have a listing of the books that our library currently holds at each meeting. 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.

....Continued from page 1

Decades Later, the Journey Retraced

It was in the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin wall, that Alex and his siblings began speaking of going abroad to revisit all the locales where they had once lived. The trip took time to organize and execute, but eventually they succeeded in making their dream a reality.

For the rest of his talk, Alex shared photos and commentary on each of the places that he and his siblings visited, beginning with his father's birthplace. They found that nothing much is left of the small Ukrainian village of Kpache. Bad roads led them to a place where most of the buildings they could remember no longer stood, including their father's house and the old village school. All that was left of the Catholic church was an empty ruin without windows or roof. Inside, it had been redecorated with icons for use as a Russian Orthodox prayer house. The only surviving remnant of its Catholic origins was one lone Station of the Cross that had survived a fire.

Freidorf was the birthplace of Alex's mother and his sister Maria. The village's approach road, overrun with grass, consisted mainly of two deep ruts for vehicles to drive in. No school or old German-style houses remained there.

The large old seaport city of Odessa finally rewarded the Herzog family with the sight of places from their past that still were standing: the church where their parents had married; the school, abandoned but intact, where their father had been a teacher; and the house, now occupied by another family, where they had lived. Alex enjoyed viewing a statue of the man that a midwife had named him for, the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, as well as a statue of Russia's Catherine the Great, a statue of France's Cardinal Richelieu (the first governor of the Black Sea Germans), an old MIG jet set up as a war memorial, a church remodeled by an Austrian charitable group, a busy McDonald's restaurant, and a brand-new railroad station. Despite these many points of interest, however, Alex remarked that Odessa is not a tour-

ist-friendly city. Parts of it are dirty and dilapidated, and visitors seldom receive a smile, except from hotel employees.

There were only two houses left in Lichtenfeld, where Alex was born. The town was filled with piles of rubble, dirt roads, and wagons with rubber tires loaded down with hay. One resident named Sasha led the group to an overgrown area that he thought was an old German cemetery. There, Alex found an old iron cross to confirm the man's impression.

Strassenfeld was the last Ukrainian town where the Herzog family had lived before leaving their homeland. It no longer had a school, and the few remaining homes were in bad condition. However, the group did have an enjoyable visit at the farm of a Moldovan man named Nikolai, who served them homemade bread, feta cheese, and Moldovan wine. He kept a large number of animals on his spread and even an old green John Deere combine. Alex was especially delighted upon finding his favorite boyhood sledding hill.

In a central eastern part of Romania, the travelers found the birthplace of one of the Herzog brothers. In that town, a structure that once had been a German field hospital had become a library. Upon reaching western Poland, they found a school building that had sheltered them for a time. Today it is a family residence. A somewhat comical highlight of their stay in that part of Poland was discovering a US frontier-themed restaurant called the Sioux Club.

After a considerable amount of searching in Berlin, they found the building with the basement where they had hidden from Allied bombs. While in the great old city, they also visited the Bundestag, the Brandenburg Gate, and the Holocaust Museum. The family wound up their European tour at a small farm village on the Baltic Sea. The house where they once lived now belongs to a German family with the surname of "Krack"--which of course led to many jokes about their visit to "the Krack Haus."

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER BOARD

President/Newsletter

Kevin Rupp
2301 Canal Blvd.
Hays, Ks. 67601
krupp@ruraltel.net

Vice-President

LeRoy L. Herrman
2011 MacArthur Rd.
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-628-8010
LeRoyLHerrman69@msn.com

Secretary

Mary A. Taubert
1908 Walnut
Ellis, Ks. 67637
785-726-2504
mataubert@eaglecom.net

Treasurer

Jerry Braun
2223 Felten Drive
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-625-6502
thegerman.jjb@gmail.com

Membership

Juliet Honas
1206 Woodbury Street
Ellis, Ks. 67637
prairieflower@hotmail.com
and

Jerry Braun
2223 Felten Drive
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-625-6502
thegerman.jjb@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer, CSA
1703 Henry Dr. Apt. B
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-625-4814
alice53pfeifer@yahoo.com

Librarian / Historian

Shirley Brungardt
2409 Virginia Dr.
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-628-1494

Hospitality

Dolores Pfannenstiel
1243 Munjor Rd.
785-625-6452

Publicity

Juliet Honas
1206 Woodbury Street
Ellis, Ks. 67637
prairieflower@hotmail.com

Folklore

Leona Pfeifer
2700 Elm
Hays, Ks. 67601
785-625-6162

From the President.....

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Sunflower Chapter Newsletter; it's packed with all sorts of good information. In fact, we had to go to twelve pages just to get everything in this time.

For those of you who missed our last meeting, the cover story of this newsletter tells about our Christmas program. We were so fortunate to have Alexander Herzog as our speaker and I can't thank him enough for doing this.

*Membership dues are due now so please make sure that you get these in ASAP. There is a form at the end of this newsletter that you can use. **This will be your last newsletter unless you have renewed.***

Each year at the AHSGR International Convention there is a story telling contest. Stories are written by members and submitted for this event each year, and the winners are announced at the convention. On pages 8 and 9 of this newsletter are the steps to submit such a story. I know many of you have interesting stories to tell that were passed down through your families about those who came to this land. How about sharing them with AHSGR?

Some of you have submitted articles for our newsletter; keep them coming. We need your input as well as your information to make this an interesting newsletter. I want to thank Oren Windholz for his addition to this newsletter and also Marvin Rack for his generosity in defraying the cost on a colored newsletter. Marvin told me that a newsletter like this needs to be in color.

Kevin Rupp, President

AHSGR is now on "Facebook"

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"!

IN MEMORIAM

Bernadine "Bernie" Schumacher, 66, Vincent, died Saturday, December 18, 2010 at her home



south of Victoria. She was born September 10, 1944, in Victoria to Dominic and Cecelia (Sander) Dreiling. She married Robert L. Schumacher on February 24, 1962, in Victoria. She was a homemaker and owned Bernie's Drapery from 1972 to 2000. She lived in Munjor from 1964 to 2000. She was a member of AHSGR. She enjoyed sewing cooking, baking, and giving demonstration on preparing traditional German recipes.

The Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR wishes to express our deepest sympathy to Bernie's family. She was such a wonderful, joyful member of our chapter, always willing to help when there was a need. Smiling from ear to ear and always ready to have some fun. Her laughter will surely be missed at our chapter meetings.



Barbara Merker, 98, of Hays, Ks., passed away on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at St. John's Rest Home in Victoria, Ks. She was born on November 22, 1912 in Mariental, Russia to Matthias and

Walburga (Gerstner) Merker. The family came to Hays in 1923. She moved to Ohio in 1930 and returned to Hays in 1975.

Barbara was not a member of our Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR, but was probably one of the last living immigrants that came to Ellis County from the Volga region. She was a very private individual about her family history, as were many of these people that fled the Volga. Our Chapter expresses sympathy to her family.

*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord,
and let the perpetual light shine upon
them. May they rest in peace.
Amen*

Mariental on the Kar'man River – Our Heartache and Our Love - Part 2.

by Helmut Lobes

Translation from the Original German-language text to American English is provided by
Alex Herzog, Boulder, Colorado

Ed. Note: This talk on the history of Marienthal was delivered at a gathering of Marienthalers in Osnabrück, Germany, by Helmut Lobes. It was published in two parts in Volk auf dem Weg in July 2010 and August-September 2010. This translation from the original German-language text has been provided by Alex Herzog of Boulder, Colorado.

To their children, that is, those first Volga German Marientalers, they did not bequeath riches in today's sense. But they did leave to them "Pfannestiel character traits" that had been steeled in the struggle for survival, such as diligence, courage, valor, steadiness, and loyalty. They also left to them those initial positive and negative experiences and the emerging sense of reverence and humility toward their new home and toward its soil, which was soaked with their blood and sweat.

Even the sons' generation would hardly be able to turn to the work of economic, not to speak of cultural development. They spent their physical and moral efforts primarily for survival. Just the continuing abduction of animals the Kirgiz would wage past 1800, as if it were an exercise in open trade, had to render nearly impossible any real development to benefit the colonists.

Still, even if one considers the unbelievable arbitrary way our ancestors were being administered, especially as their previously special rights were suddenly rescinded in 1782, it is astonishing how those ancestors of ours were able to hold their own and even increase their numbers to a considerable extent.

Only by 1797, when Tsar Paul I canceled the 1782 decree of his mother and granted the colonists their own administration via the guardianship office in Saratov, did a gradual economic upswing develop even for the Marientalers. Our ancestors finally attained a certain degree of prosperity, their population numbers grew, so in 1800 the Mariental community built a new church, and even that church had to be expanded in 1816. In the history of Mariental, the period between 1815 and 1871 can be called a general time of blossoming, a heyday as it were.

At the onset of this, let's say, blissful era for our ancestors – in the words of our village chronicler, Schoolmaster Anton Schneider – **our former clergy, seemingly forsaken by God**, were being replaced by the *paters*, the **Jesuits**, who began to arrive in Mariental in 1802.

Anton Schneider writes as follows about these admired clerics: "They cared for purity of heart and conscience much more diligently than their own health or their own lives, and this purity was the strong bond of friendship and the grace of God." One of these remarkable clerics, Pater Aloisius Moritz, according to A. Schneider, was considered a saint even in his own lifetime. In 1905 he died a saint among his parishioners and was buried in the old cemetery in Mariental. Later on a chapel was built above his grave, the so-called *Kerchhofkapelle* [cemetery chapel].

A second chapel, 's *Kapelje* [diminutive of *Kapelle* – little chapel] stood on the opposite bank of the Kar'man river, just peeking over the orchards above the valley on the gently sloping side of Kirgiz Hill.

Looking ahead just a little, I must mention here that this chapel of "The Great Social Cultural Revolution," (which, as is well known, was marked by pure robbery and destruction) would eventually fall victim to that revolution.

It is remarkable that in the early 1930s people would dare to sing a mocking song such as the following [dialect on the left, loose translation on the right- Tr.]:

*D'r erschte Kollektiv
hat'n Volkshaus,
Un' d'r zwete gibt 'm nix 'raus
Un' d'r dritte, liwe Lait,
Der find' ke' Haus
Ai jai, jai, usw.*

*The very first collective
has a community house,
The second one won't return a
thing to anyone,
And the third one,
my dear people,
Can't even find a home.
Ay, yay, yay, etc.*

In the end, the *Kapelje* "on the Kirgiz Hill" would indeed be torn down by "Collective # 3," and replaced with a clubhouse. A few years later the same fate would befall the parish church in Herzog, and its bricks used in building the Mariental middle school. Well, all this would happen a few decades later, during the turbulent times of our own parents' generation ...

But let us get back to their and our forefathers. During 1920, the Marientalers, with a heavy heart, had to say good-bye to the Jesuits, who were expelled from Russia.

Having recovered spiritually and even materially during that era when the Jesuits served them so well, the number of Marientalers grew so strongly that they could not avoid building a new, larger stone church. By 1834 the building was completed and, as the village chronicler reports, "the highly laudable church stood ready as a bride in her wedding dress, and with grand festivities it was given the title *Maria Himmelfahrt* [Assumption of Mary] that same year." By 1849, when the church was finally and officially dedicated, Mariental had developed into a magnificent and, by then counting 3,000 residents, the largest village on the Kar'man River. Eventually it would rise to the status of an administrative and spiritual-cultural center.

By 1859, the population of Mariental had grown to 3,663 residents and, despite several climate-induced poor harvests, the final five decades of Mariental history have been called a "Golden Time." In the same period its first daughter colony, Neu-Mariental, was established about 30 kilometers [18 miles] south-east of Mariental. But soon this period of calm was to end, too.

1871 marked the time when the lives of the Marientalers would be deeply impacted by changes enacted by the Russian state. According to a law dated July 4, 1871, all rights that had been granted to the original German settlers by that same state and "in perpetuity" were now rescinded in full.

Affected the worst were the schools. In Mariental, as in all the other totally German communities, the schools were Russianized. But since the colloquial speech was German, and only German, school instruction, which had already become fairly stunted, sank to near standstill. As the German settlements officially received Russian names, Mariental became Tonkoshurovka, which would henceforth be used in official communication – a change which naturally did not keep the Marientalers from calling their village by the name *they* had given it. The Colonist Office in Saratov was abolished, and the German communities were placed administratively under the Ministry of the Interior. This ministry was also charged with the watching over "foreign confessions." And as of 1874 the sons of Mariental were subject to military service in the Russian army.

Since all these measures were nothing but efforts at Russification, this threat caused great unrest among the Marientalers, and they reacted with strong resistance. For the first time they made it known that, for the sake of their ethnic existence and religious freedom, they would be willing to give up all economic advantages and even to give up their home to leave the country. Specifically, their statement read, "You may take away the success of our work, but let us keep our German language and families, our German schools and our churches." They were not heard ... Thus, in Mariental as elsewhere, by 1874 the great overseas emigration went into full swing, people heading to the US,

Canada, Brazil, Argentina, etc. Then came the inflammatory statement contained in the 1881 manifesto of Tsar Alexander III, "Russia must be for Russians!" which would in effect "do the rest" in bringing nasty consequences to the colonists and to future generations of Germans in Russia.

The exact number of emigrants from Mariental, Graf, Herzog, Rohleder, etc. is yet to be determined. The number must be considerable, if one takes into account the resulting colonies in the US, in Argentina, and in Brazil that were established by immigrants from the colonies we have just mentioned and that carried the name Mariental. However, most Marientaler immigrants during that wave of immigration that lasted some fifty years were scattered into all directions and by now have disappeared without a trace.

Well, let's get back to our Mariental. There the horrendous effects of World War I lasted for a long time. Young men eligible for military duty fulfilled it in the Tsarist Army. Decried as helpers to the Kaiser, they died in great numbers on the Turkish front and from hunger, typhus and the cold in the gorges of the Caucasus. News from them reached their home village only in indirect ways, for they were not allowed to write in German, and most did not know Russian sufficiently.

Meanwhile, their loved ones at home were living under the great shock of the "liquidation laws" enacted by the Russian Duma on February 2 and December 15, 1915. These laws called for even the Volga Germans to be deported to Siberia, with a target date of April, 1917. The revolution of February [1917] stopped this craziness at least temporarily. For now, at least, the agenda of the country in turmoil included this item, written with emphasis: **"the right of peoples of the Russian Empire' to self-determination."** In an effort to fashion this right favorably for itself, the entire Volga region saw the emergence of political movements and activities, in which the Marientalers participated, too. **And thus it was accomplished: "The cultural life of the German colonists, the use of their mother tongue in the schools, in local administration, in**

the courts, and in public life is, as stated in the Soviet Constitution, not subject to any limitation" -- thus read paragraph 7 of the decree of October 19, 1918 "on the formation of the region of Volga Germans."

But at what price!

The years 1918 and 1919 brought good harvests. Accordingly, in 1919 Mariental delivered, as prescribed by the state-ordered plan, 200,000 *pud* [more than 7 million pounds] of grain. In return, the Marientalers received an official letter of thanks from the Soviet "President," M. Kalinin, who in the summer of 1919 visited Katharinenstadt to secure bread for Moscow and Petrograd.

The summer of 1920, however, was a very dry one. Hot winds burned the grain fields to the ground. Still, the official plan called for Mariental to deliver 250,000 *pud* [over 9 million pounds] of grain. So in the fall of 1920, grain stores and all reserve stores were emptied by the state authorities. This naturally had to lead to strong dissatisfaction and deep unrest among the Marientalers.

At this point, I may remind the reader that Mariental was a large, strict, Catholic community with seriously religious residents. Mariental was the seat of the "prelature," and Father Kraft was one of the eldest and most active priests among the Catholic villages of Mariental, Graf, Herzog, Louis, Rohleder and Liebental. Thus it was to be expected that this state-ordered robbery would not be without consequences. These consequences ended with an uprising, which was beaten down in a very bloody way by the Soviets. Mariental lost around 300 of its best farmers. Father Kraft and Father Gottlieb Beratz from Herzog were among those who were shot to death. During the spring of 1921, hardly any fields were prepared, and a subsequent dry spell destroyed anything that was sowed. Consequently a horrible famine visited the streets and the dried-up farmsteads of Mariental.

To be continued with the next issue.....

Copyright Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland e. V., Raitelsbergstraße 49, 70188 Stuttgart, Germany.

GERMAN NAME CHANGES

By: Oren Windholz

The subject of German naming is so vast an article such as this can only cover a small slice of the topic. My limited contribution will focus on a large myth and a few anecdotes from research of old newspapers and courthouse records.

How often have you heard someone say his or her ancestor's name was changed at Ellis Island? I can't guess the amount of times this has been posed to me. I have long doubted this, particularly since the Master of the Steamship certified the list of all passengers in writing. This Manifest contained errors of handwriting, but that is different from the claim it was done by a clerk at the port of entry. In fact, my grandfather was listed as Martina, rather than Martin. It was with satisfaction I learned the myth was debunked last year by Vincent J. Cannato, author of *American Passage*, a comprehensive history of Ellis Island and the emigration era. "Names were not changed at Ellis Island," he writes. He noted inspectors rarely wrote down the names of immigrants, although many later changed names themselves in their eagerness to assimilate. Voluntary name change was rare among the Volga Germans in Kansas.

However, one common name change among our people resulted from the transcription of an unmlauted vowel into English. The unmlauted letter "o", for example, is properly transcribed as "oe." Instead some families chose to just use the letters "o" or "e" or even the letter "a" that came close to how the unmlauted letter sounded in the German dialect.

Many changes occurred at the county level, particularly Ellis County, on such important documents as naturalization forms and census records. It is pretty clear that names were written down as they sounded. One of the most exaggerated I found was on the naturalization papers of Paulus Flachs. The Germans from Bukovina pronounced the letter "P" as "B" among other dialect habits. The resulting entry was "Bantus Flags". This man fared no better during the 1905 Kansas census when his first name was written as "Pawl."

In 1922 local County Treasurer and business leader J. M. Schaefer issued an Affidavit of Identity for people involved in a chain of title to land in Ellis County. He testified the name of Stecklein and Steichline were one and the same and that the first names John and Johannes were the same. The local phone book also indicates a spelling of Steckline. He continued to testify that Stramel and Stremel were the same. Mr. Schaefer summed it all up in his last statement by stating the persons preparing the instruments were not conversant in the German language.

Judge J. C. Ruppenthal wrote a comprehensive work for the Kansas State Historical Society in the 1913-14 collection, *The German Element In Central Kansas*. He attributes many German name changes to careless schoolteachers, ignorant or indifferent public officials, or by merchants and scribes of legal docu-

ments unfamiliar with name spellings. He cites numerous examples, among them a change from Pfannenstiel to Fanestil. This must have been an isolated case, as an Internet search turned up only four Fanestil names in Kansas and 15 in the country.

Much of our early Volga German history was recorded by the Capuchin Friars, particularly Fr. Francis S Laing. The scholarly priests were very accurate considering the hundreds of German names they worked with.

There are many more name change histories out there and nearly every ethnic German can cite similar stories about changes in family names.

INTERMOUNTAIN
Chapter
AHSGR PRESENTS: **2011 AHSGR CONVENTION**

2011 AHSGR CONVENTION
August 01 - August 07

Little America Hotel and Convention Center
Salt Lake City, Utah
(801) 596-5700
Hotel Rates \$99 - \$114/night
(Room rates begin 3 days prior and 3 days following event)

Salt Lake City Family History Library • Tours • Genealogy
Book Store • Welcome Night • Tabernacle Choir
Storytelling • Informative Speakers • Story Contests

American Historical Society
of Germans from Russia

"Footsteps From The Past To The Future"

It's that Time Again!!!

Renewing your AHSGR & Sunflower Chapter dues early may just win us another Early Awards Certificate, as we did for 2010.

Our date for the 2011 year have been set and here they are:

- Feb. 27** **FASENACHT (Munjor)** Celebrate with your chapter friends the foods, stories, and music that were enjoyed before the season of Lent began.
- May 15** **SPRING MEETING (Munjor)** Come share the stories of our forefathers as they were passed down through the years and check out our library for genealogical research.
- Aug. 1** **AHSGR CONVENTION (Salt Lake City, Utah)**
- Aug. 7** **SUMMER PICNIC (Munjor)** Summer is the time to renew those family activities that you knew as a child.
- Sep. 11** **VFW BREAKFAST (HAYS)** This annual event has become as much fun for those who serve the food as those who eat it - and fund-raisers like this one also keep our society financially healthy.
- Oct. 9** **GERMAN BANQUET (MUNJOR)** Homemade food from our German cooks along with prizes, genealogy speakers and help and concluding with topnotch music makes this one of our favorite meetings!!! Also our last fundraiser of the year!
- Oct. ??** **KANSAS ROUND-UP OF CHAPTERS (Wichita)**
- Dec. 11** **CHRISTMAS POTLUCK (Munjor)** Bring back those day gone memories of Christmas with the German Christmas carols, traditions and

ALL YEAR LONG, there will be items dealing with...

- **Music**
- **Folklore**
- **Genealogy**
- **Traditions**
- **Foods**
- **Dancing**
- **Dialects**
- **Storytelling**
- **Remember When's**

Plus many more things that you would like to see our Chapter do, just let one of the Officers know.

When you join or renew your membership to the Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR you are not only helping our Chapter, but you are helping AHSGR financially.

THANK YOU!!!

AHSGR



First Mass in Schoenchen, Ks. was said in this house of Henry and Rose (Bieker) Werth.

The old woman sitting is Rose's mother.

Genealogy

These are new genealogical research items that are available.

- [Rohleder](#) 1857 Census
- [Laub](#) 1850 & 1857 Censuses
- [Preuss](#) 1850 & 1857 Censuses
- [Stahl am Tarlyk](#) 1850 & 1857 Censuses
- [Nieder-Monjou](#) 1850 Census
- [Schwed](#) 1850 & 1857 Censuses
- [Dietel](#) 1874 "Family List"
- [Hockerberg](#) (AKA Bohn) 1857 Census

For more information on these and many more census lists contact:

Brent Mai
bmai@cu-portland.edu
Center for Volga German Studies
Portland, Oregon



German-Russian Handbook

A Reference Book for Russian-German and German-Russian History and Culture with place name listing of former German Settlement Areas. Items included: Detailed timelines, discussions of deportations, martyrology, Russian and Soviet currency, and many other topics make this a veritable vademecum for the research of Germans from Russia. It combines information from many fragmented sources into a single integrated listing of all localities where Germans settled in Russia, "from the largest cities to the smallest chutors" in the Volga, Black Sea, and Mennonite regions, as well as in Volhynia.

The *German-Russian Handbook*, originally titled, *Handbuch Russland-Deutsche* by Ulrich Mertens, is an impressive hardbound book translated by Brigitte von Budde and Alex Herzog, Edited by Allyn Brosz, Alex Herzog and Thomas Stangl.

Available from AHSGR.

AHSGR's German Origins (GO) page has just been updated.
Go to: http://www.ahsgr.org/FindAncestors/german_origins.htm

THE 2011 ANNUAL AHSGR STORYTELLING CONTEST

Adult Division

First Place Award - \$100.00
Second Place Award - \$75.00
Third Place Award - \$50.00
(Awards for ties will be prorated)
“Honorable Mentions” are also possible

Youth Division (14 years old or younger)

First Place Award - \$50.00
Second Place Award - \$30.00
Third Place Award - \$20.00
(An AHSGR Youth Membership will be included with each of the above awards)
“Honorable Mentions” are also possible.

ENTRY FORM FOR THE 2011 AHSGR STORYTELLING CONTEST

This completed form must accompany your story!

I hereby give my permission to allow the inclusion of the following personal story of mine in the Storytelling Contest of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia:

___ I certify that this story has not previously been published in any form, or in any publication.

___ I certify that I currently control all the copyrights to the story.

___ I hereby grant AHSGR the rights to publish my Story and Photos for AHSGR use.

My signature: _____ Date: _____

Title of my Story: _____

I am currently an AHSGR member: ___ Yes ___ No

I plan to be at the AHSGR Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah in August 2011 ___ Yes ___ No

FULL NAME: (please PRINT clearly) _____

ADDRESS: (Street & Apt. Number) _____

CITY & STATE: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER _____

AGE (if 14 years old or younger) ___ BIRTHDATE (if 14 years old or younger) _____

E-MAIL Address (please PRINT clearly): _____

Please send this completed entry form, along with 5 printed copies of your story, a copy on a CD or Flash Drive (if possible), any pictures that enhance the story, a short biography and a picture of yourself, to:

**Mabel Kiessling
11204 Braxton Road S.W.
Calgary AB T2W 1C6
CANADA**

DEADLINE: ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 1, 2011

If you are interested in entering AHSGR's Storytelling Contest, here is what we're looking for. . . .
A good, interesting, UNPUBLISHED story that pertains to the history, culture, folklore, language, or life experiences of the Germans from Russia. Examples:

- Memories of village life in the Old Country (festivals, foodways, visits by Gypsies)
- Stories about immigration to the New World (the great voyage, Ellis Island, early hardships)
- "Believe it or not" stories, ghost stories, humorous stories, inspiring stories, etc.

AHSGR STORYTELLING CONTEST RULES:

1) Each entry must follow the following rules or it will be disqualified:

- Typewritten, double-spaced, and in clear, dark print on 8½ x 11 inch white paper with one (1) inch margins in standard 12 point font/type.
- If using a computer, submit a Word Perfect, MS-Word, or RTF document. Do not submit PDF documents.
- No story can be longer than five (5) typewritten pages.
- Contestants may submit as many stories as they wish, but each entry must be separate and accompanied by a separate and completed entry form.
- Send five (5) printed copies of each story.
- Send CD or Flash Drive (if possible) which includes: 1) your story, 2) any pictures that enhance the story, 3) a short biography of yourself as author, and 4) a picture of yourself.
- Photos should be 300 dpi and unedited, and **MUST** be submitted as an electronic JPG file.

- If original photos are not available in JPG format it is the **AUTHOR'S** responsibility to have the photos scanned into a JPG file, and assure that a good quality photos can be reproduced/printed from the JPG file.
- Do not send **physical originals** of photos, as they will not be returned.

- You will be notified via e-mail upon receipt of your packet.
- 2) The name of the author/submitter should **NOT** appear on the story itself. Complete the form on reverse page and attach to your entry with a paper clip. Upon receipt, each story will be assigned a reference number (to assure fair and impartial judging).
- 3) Entrants who are 14 years old or younger must indicate their current age and their full birthdate (month/day/year). These individuals will be entered in the "Youth Division." All entrants 15 years old or older will be judged in the "Adult Division."
- 4) The title of the story should appear on the first page of each entry.
- 5) Each story must deal with some aspect of the Germans from Russia. To help put your story in context, you might want to begin with something like – *"This story is based on an actual incident that took place about 1890, in the Volga village of Straub. The story was often told by my grandfather who was born in Straub in 1875 and who immigrated to the United States in 1907."*
- 6) If submitting a story in dialect German or Standard German, a full translation (in English) must be included. Both versions must still be within the 5-page limit.
- 7) Each entry must represent the story of/by the entrant.
- 8) Submitted copies of the story, photographs and other material will not be returned.
- 9) All stories will be evaluated by a sub-committee of 3-4 AHSGR members. Entries will be evaluated using a score sheet and the final results will be announced at the upcoming AHSGR Convention. Three prizewinners and one or more "Honorable Mention" winners are possible in both the Adult and the Youth Divisions.

All entries must be received by MARCH 1, 2011

Entries received after that date cannot be considered



News from Headquarters



“Mother”, created by artist Paulina Hahn of Denver, Colorado, in honor of her mother born in Norka, Russia, was the model for this sculpture. The original sculpture, cast in heavy bronze, was donated to AHSGR by the artist and is on display at the AHSGR International Headquarters museum in Lincoln, Nebraska at 631 D Street.

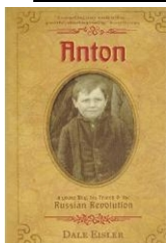
This exclusive custom resin reproduction is smaller in size than the original and measures 8.5" x 5" x 5" and weighs 3.6 pounds. The finish on the original and on the reproduction is a bronze tone; it appears lighter in the photographic image. The actual reproduction is also more handsome than it appears in the photograph.

Cost \$135.00

This can be purchased through AHSGR.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet April 7 - 8 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

WEBSITE - The AHSGR Website has found a new home in HAYS, Ks. The site was moved to the new server in January. Spencer Casey, of Casey Designs, is the owner of the server and has been helping Kevin Rupp, Webmaster, with the move. The site has been given a slight facelift and we hope to add new features to the sight in the new future.



ANTON
by Dale Eisler
Regina, Saskatchewan,
Canada
2010.

A historical novel about

Letters from Russia to Ellis County

by Kevin Rupp

This letter was written in Louis, Russia and addressed Mr. John Quint, Hays,, Ellis County, Kansas.

March 20, 1922

Dear Brother,

Best wishes from us all to you and your entire family and we hope that this letter will reach you in good health. We are all well.

My dear brother this is the fourth letter I have written to you but still have received no reply. How are you getting along? All others seem to hear from their friends in America only you seem to have forgotten us. I do not know what to do. I have tried everything possible to obtain relief, but all of no avail. I would, therefore, again ask that you help us, for we are all doomed to starvation. I can hardly sleep on account of worrying about what will follow. We have often wished if we could get only one full meal.

In my previous letters I wrote you about what we eat. We have no bread, price being prohibitive, but are forced to eat the met of dogs, cats and horses, and we do not even get enough of that. Sickness cannot be prevented. Such is the famine here. Many people have died, we do even knot the number.

I again ask you to help us. Forty pounds of flour costs 4,000,000 rubles which is more than our entire property is worth. All other people here who have friends in America or Germany seem to obtain relief. Go to our son-in-law, Clemens, and ask him to remember us in our old age that we may not starve.

The children of our brother, Jacob, have gone to the cities. Regarding the weather wish to advise that we had no snow during this last winter, such as hardly ever before. You might wonder what we did with all our property. On December 25, 1921 the Reds came and robbed us of practically everything. I was arrested and kept in prison for a month with the worst criminals, Michael was also arrested and kept in the same prison.

I could write you more about the revolution. Our poverty started then already and with no crop this year you can easily imagine how we are getting along. It is with reluctance that I write to you about this poverty.

Before closing I would again beseech you not to forget us. Kindly help us in whatever way you can. With kindest regards we are you brother and sister-in-law.

John Peter and Anna Maria Quint

Mr. John Quint of this place by whom above letter was received states that at two different times he sent money to his brother. All money was sent through the American Relief Society, but it seems that in spite of their efforts some things do not reach the destination for which they are intended.

Anton's mother's family from 1919 – 1925 set in a small town in the Black Sea region of southern Russia near the village of Odessa, from which they eventually fled the persecution, coming to North America. A good account of the situation in village life of the revolution-

ary period, told from the viewpoint of a young school-aged boy, with much suspense, even to the end, concerning the boy and his family. This can be purchased from AHSGR.



SUNFLOWER CHAPTER
OF THE AMERICAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF GERMANS
FROM RUSSIA

2011 SUNFLOWER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

Members 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

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

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

Date Paid _____ Check # _____ Cash _____

- January 1 - March 31: \$60.00
- April 1 - June 30: \$45.00
- July 1 - September 30: \$30.00
- October 1 - December 31: \$15.00

_____ \$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:

Membership renewals are due by January 1

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: _____

Send Membership Payment to:
Sunflower Chapter
Juliet Honas, Membership Chair
1206 Woodbury Str.
Ellis, Ks. 67637
prairieflower@hotmail.com

UNSERE LEUTE IM BILD.....by: Kevin Rupp

The internet has opened a window to many people sharing information on their families. Over the past year I have received e-mails from families who once had families living in Mariental, Louis, Graf, Obermunjou, and Herzog. These are their stories in photos.

On January 23, 2010 I received an e-mail from a friend in Germany who sent me an e-mail with this address.

<http://wolgadeutsche.net/karten/Herzog.jpg>

The address lead me to the 1920 map of Herzog Russia. The map looked very closely like the one that Leona Pfeifer showed us at the 2010 Kansas Round-up, but there were some differences to the map. Could this be a copy of the map that was originally lost before Johannes Riedel was able to give Leona the map?



SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

2301 Canal Blvd

Hays, Ks. 67601

volgagerman@ruraltel.net

www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net

Inside THIS NEWSLETTER

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- 2... The Journey of Alexander Herzog, cont.
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- 5... Mariental on the Karman River, cont.
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- 7... Genealogy
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**Proverbs at the bottom of the pages were taken from the book, "Heritage of Kansas" Vol. 9; #2 & 3. The German is in dialect form.*