



North Star Chapter

American Historical Society of Germans From Russia, International Headquarters: Lincoln, Nebraska

September 2005

<http://www.NorthStarChapter.org>

Volume 30, No. 3

North Star Chapter Lunch Social

Saturday, September 17, 2005, 12:30-3:00 p.m.

Glockenspiel Restaurant, 605 West 7th Street, St. Paul, MN

It's been a long, hot summer and we hope you're ready to kick off the new season of North Star Chapter activities. We'll begin with a lunch at Glockenspiel Restaurant, a German food favorite. We will order on our own from the restaurant's tempting menu. After lunch, we'll have a short presentation by Dimitri Schreiner, whose parents were born in Schilling, the birthplace of the mother of one of our members. Dimitri has been in the United States for about ten years and will talk to us about Russia today.

If you can join us for this afternoon, **please call Bob Gies at 651-994-7237 by Monday, September 12.** We want to make sure the restaurant reserves room for all of us. For a map to the restaurant (see page 14) and a peek at the menu, visit www.glockenspielrestaurant.com. Plan to spend the afternoon with your North Star friends!

Hidden Self: How Customs Influence Art

Saturday, October 15, 2005, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Berea Lutheran Church, 7538 Emerson Ave. S., Mpls., MN

Our October program features Loretta (Schantz) Bebeau, adjunct faculty for the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota. Loretta grew up in Glen Ullin, North Dakota, but has lived in the Twin Cities for 35 years. She is a graduate of North Dakota State University and Hamline University. Loretta works primarily with 2-D paper mediums and has exhibited her artwork since 1977.

Loretta will use slides of her art, as well as images from Western art history, to demonstrate how our German-Russian heritage has influenced modern art. She began exploring the origins of collage in order to validate her own artwork and says that Germans from Russia have a distinctive approach to materials and patterns. Loretta's presentation will include works by Picasso and wood pieces by Louise Nevelson (originally from Kiev, 1905). She will help us see how family values influence the young artist.

Please join us for this intriguing look at our artistic heritage and how creative efforts reveal the values and history that we share.

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Special points of interest:

- *AHSGR has a Children's Newsletter Available.*
- *Election of 2006 Officers will take place at the October meeting.*
- *Art Stabner's Spring Potluck Presentation was a hit!*
- *New German Emigration Center Opens.*
- *Note change of meeting location for September.*

The purpose of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is to bring together people who are interested in the history of Germans from Russia. Through a better understanding of these people, we will also promote a better appreciation of them and a continuation of their culture through their descendants.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Duane Stabler



As I write this message, we are into August and in the midst of the AHSGR convention and the FEEFHS

convention. It will not be long and they too will be over and we'll be heading into the fall season. This, of course, means that we'll again begin the fall season of meetings. Bob's future programs are detailed on page 8 in this newsletter. I'm sure you'll find all the meetings of great interest. We'll again end the year with the Weihnachtsfest in December.

As we proceed into fall, it has been time to form a nominating committee and identify candidates who are willing to step up and help the organization by giving of their time.

The by-laws limit one individual from running for a specific elected office for more than two consecutive years and that means Helen Kleingartner, Jorgiann Waltner, Gwen Cowherd and I are not allowed to run for the offices we've been holding.

The nominating committee has now completed the project and the candidates are announced on page 14. Our election will occur in October which will give the newly elected officers an opportunity to participate with the current officers so that a smooth transition occurs. This allows for a seamless transition which is vital to any organization whether it be a business or a

non-profit organization such as the North Star Chapter.

Bob has also been busy setting up the fall schedule which this year includes a gathering in September that will not have an official business meeting but is intended for some good friendly visiting after a busy summer. Our regular schedule will then begin in October and we'll meet at Berea Lutheran Church again.

My last request is for each of you to think about your friends, family, or workmates. Are any of them from German-Russian heritage? Have you ever taken the time to talk to them about it and encourage them to become involved in preserving that heritage or just learn more about it? Well, how about inviting or bringing them to the meeting and getting them involved. Membership for the North Star Chapter should be at least twice of what it is when you consider the number of Germans from Russia that live within the metropolitan area of St Paul-Minneapolis. So, that's my challenge to you. Bring a guest, get them involved and have them join AHSGR or GRHS. If you are thinking of a Christmas gift, maybe a membership to these organizations and then a little more, a gift of membership to the North Star Chapter, will give them a gift that they will cherish all year long.



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Please Take Note:

New Ulm Heritagefest Cancelled

After 31 years of celebrating German roots in New Ulm, MN, Heritagefest has been cancelled. The ethnic celebration hasn't made a profit since 2000 and the organizers decided they could not longer afford a quality festival. In addition to bad weather and higher expenses, the board of directors cited decreasing interest in ethnic entertainment as reasons for the declining attendance.

It's not hard to see that this same thing could happen to the efforts of the Germans from Russia. Time and money need to be donated to keep quality activities happening. Often, money is the easy part; time seems to be where many of us fall short. If you care not only to have heritage events to enjoy now, but to continue for your children and grandchildren, please consider volunteering your time. If you only have a few minutes, help with setting up meetings. If you want a more satisfying experience, lend your talents to being a committee member or chapter officer. As "Uncle Sam" once said, "I need you!"

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	AHSGR Convention	
	The AGHRS Convention is in	
	session as we go to print. A re-	
	port of the conference will be in	
	the next newsletter.	
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STAR IDEAS



Whether a certified genealogy buff or not, we're always interested in making connections with our family and neighbors. If you attended a family reunion or hometown celebration, please let us know. No writing required; your newsletter staff will take the information and let our chapter members know. This has the possibility of being a regular feature so we can share our members' experiences. Thanks to Bernie Becker for the idea.

Please check your local Community Education flyer for genealogy classes. Copy down the name of the instructor and forward to Gwen Schock Cowherd. She will then send copies of our newsletter to the instructor to distribute to class attendees interested in Germans from Russia genealogy. A lot of genealogy buffs don't even know our group exists. Hopefully this will be another way to boost our membership. Idea submitted by Gwen Schock Cowherd.

MEMBER NEWS



**Martha Kleingartner on her
90th Birthday**

Martha Kleingartner, 95, Gackle, ND, passed away May 22, 2005. Martha was the mother of Helen Kleingartner and Lil Ward. Martha is survived by four children, six step-children, 20 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Rufina Miller, 94, of Beulah, ND, passed away March 9, 2005. Rufina was the grandmother of Cynthia Miller and a charter member of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society.

Alexander Philip Cowherd, son of North Star members Phil and Gwen Cowherd was married on May 17, 2005 in New York City to Judith Bouchara, Paris, France. They reside in New York City.



Don't forget to check our website:

<http://www.NorthStarChapter.org>

North Star Chapter Members Participate in Conference of the Federation of East European Family History Societies by Nancy Gertner

St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly proclaimed Friday, August 19, 2005, as Eastern and Central European History Day in recognition of the three-day conference hosted by the Germanic Genealogy Society, the Federation of East European Family History Societies, and the Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe. Mayor Kelly welcomed the participants at the opening session on Friday.

An annual event since the mid-1990s, the conference, titled "Dare to Discover: Exploring Central and Eastern European Ancestry," was held at the Four Points by Sheraton St. Paul Capitol. Over 90 seminars featured a diverse group of over 50 speakers from Connecticut to Canada, Utah, Hawaii, and Germany, including many presenters from Minnesota, and Ed Brandt, one of the original FEEFHS founders. The conference attracted over 300 genealogists at the beginner, intermediate,

and advanced levels, and two banquets also provided opportunity for networking and socializing. Sessions concentrated on research methods using numerous

European ethnicities from Armenians to Volhynian Germans and also sessions of general historical and cultural interest. The Society for German Genealogy in Eastern

Europe hosted a research room and conducted their annual meeting on Saturday.

In addition to the nine or more North Star Chapter members who attended the sessions, the chapter participated by staffing a table in the venter area to provide information on the Germans from Russia and sell the cookbook, *Sei*

Unser Gast. The cookbook was one of the many door prizes distributed during the conference. **A special thank**

you to the members who volunteered time to staff the North Star Chapter table: Ardella Bennett, Jorgiann Waltner, Paul Oberlander, Jaci Williams, Cindy Miller, Lil Ward, Helen Kleingartner, and Eloise and Alan Kelle.



Posing is the "Host Committee" of the Saturday evening banquet celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Germanic Genealogy Society. In the center is Paul Sternberg, FEEFHS Conference Program Chair.

primary and secondary record sources, and also highlighted aspects of our rich and diverse Eastern European heritage.

The conference provided a unique opportunity to attend speaker presentations relevant to over 20

Vocabulary Review

I like it. (Es gefällt mir.)

Good Morning. (Guten Morgen.)

Where are you from? (Woher sind sie?)

Do you know my friend? (Kennen sie meinen freund?) **What's your name?** (Wie heissen?)

How much does it cost? (wie viel Kostet es?)

What are you looking for? (Was suchen sie?)

I'm thirsty. (Ich habe durst.)

Where are you going? (Wohin fahren sie?)

My name is... (Ich heissi...)

2005 GRHS Convention by Bernie Becker

Die Deutsche Glieder Chapter and the Capitol City of Pierre, SD, extended their “warm” welcome to German-Russians from Maryland to California and Texas to Canada during this year’s GRHS convention July 14-17. Next year’s convention will be hosted by the Grow Chapter in Portland. With great enthusiasm, Mr. Haas reminded us that Portland’s temperature had been 75 degrees that Saturday when it was 100 degrees in Pierre. He guarantees a great time, so now is the time to start pinching pennies to make the long trip possible.

Twelve North Star Chapter members attended. Mayo Flegel introduced his new bride, Janet, to German-Russian goings-on.

We hope she was impressed. We were impressed by her - a lovely lady!

Duane Stabler, along with Selma Opp Lapp and Keenan L. Stoecker, introduced their new book, “Researchers Guide to McPherson County SD Cemeteries”, during their workshop. Many hours, and even years, of work went into the meticulous research and compiling of this 479-page book. Complete with maps showing how to find the gravesites, colored photos, and a short history of the county, and a sampling of Duane’s postcards of this area, this book is a fount of information for those seeking dates, names of spouses and children, etc. Duane donated a copy to our

library. Be sure to peruse it during our next meeting.

There is just no way to take in all that is available at a convention. Roy and I especially enjoyed two workshops presented by Willi Wutzke. Willi, a Volhynian, told how he left Russia with the German Army in World War II, ended up in Poland, and eventually in the U.S. He brought along his accordion and favored us with music along with his presentation. An audiotape of his story is in our library.

My favorite part of the conventions is the meals. It is not so much the food, but the opportunity to meet new people and become better acquainted with people I do know. Of course, the host chapters provide great entertainment at each meal too. Especially unusual this year was “Jus Whistlin,” by Carole Skinner. Carole has won whistling championships.

Many thanks to Rachel and her crew for bringing the library to us, and to Die Deutsche Glieder Chapter for their hard work that made this year’s convention great. See you in Portland next year!

Check out the GRHS website for more convention photos. Click on “archives.”

<http://www.grhs.com>



Left to Right: Selma Opp Lapp, Eureka, SD; Keenan L. Stoecker, Leola, SD; and Duane Stabler, Minneapolis, North Star Chapter display their book at the GRHS Convention. Congratulations!



We Know Who We Are

by Cynthia Miller

My grandmother passed away this spring at the age of 94. Before we all dispersed after the funeral, my mother, my aunts, my cousins, and I went through Grandma's things, splitting up trinkets, dishes, jewelry, and furniture. I didn't have to ask if I could have anything Germans from Russia – my dad and my uncles had already put a box together for me of old GHRS Heritage Reviews and any books my grandma bought after 25 years of attending conferences.

My own library of German-Russian material is increasing rapidly, but one of the books I inherited was Dr. Arnold Marzolf's "Let's Talk German-Russian." Among the poems, memory pieces, and vignettes, Marzolf includes dozens of German-Russian sayings and how they were used. The one that leapt out at me was *mer wuessa wer mer sin*, translated into proper German as *Wir wuessen wer wir sind*, and into English as "We know who we are."

Marzolf says it was used as a sign of self-confidence when foreigners tried to denigrate our ancestors. It

was their way of saying, "Don't mess around with us! We have come through great trials, sorrows and sufferings! *And we know who we are!*" We are all fortunate to not only have been spared many of the trials of our ancestors, but to not have to face people mocking us for our accents, our language, our clothing, or our ways. Immigrants today still face those negative attitudes daily.

But we all still endure sicknesses, deaths, family members taking the wrong path, love given yet not received, plans crumbling around us. Perhaps unconsciously we find a place deep inside where our ancestors' voices linger and we do not let ourselves be pitied. We know who we are. We may still face people who think they are better than us, or smarter, or more deserving. They don't treat us with courtesy and respect. My grandma had a word which cut to the point: ugly. It had nothing to do with appearance and everything to do with attitude. If someone did not behave in a kind, polite manner, Grandma would say,

"He's just ugly." She was not afraid to say this; she knew who she was.

My grandma's family name was Herrmann. I've found out that this is an ancient and respected name; literally translated it means *Mr. Man*. It was often given to men who were leaders in their villages. I think of this if I sense people are not treating me well. The older I get, the less I will put up with that. I descend from Herrmanns. I know who I am.

In one of my favorite books, "Gone With the Wind," there is a passage discussing dignity. It mentions that a certain character acquired her dignity, but another character was born with hers. We Germans from Russia are blessed with many gifts, and I believe dignity is foremost among them. We honor this every day when we celebrate who we are and where we came from. Ultimately, we can all proudly say we know who we are.

New German Emigration Center Opens

If you are planning a trip to Germany, put Bremerhaven on your travel agenda. The Deutsches Auswanderhaus/ German Emigration Center has been officially dedicated in this northern German city. Since 1830, more than seven million Europeans departed from Bremerhaven for America, including thousands of Germans from Russia.

The Center focus on three points: experiencing emigration, tracing roots, and understanding migration. The stories are based on individuals and covers why they wanted to leave Europe, what their journey was like, and what they hoped to find in the New World. The Center features historic reconstructions, multimedia productions, and interactive displays. At the end of the tour, visitors can meet emigrants' living descendants to find out how much they still know and keep of their ancestors' culture and traditions.

A monument has also been built in Bremerhaven to pay tribute to German emigrants and was funded by contributions from German-American donors. To learn more about this exciting new museum, visit their web site at www.dah-bremerhaven.de—the information is in German and English.

Library Corner

by Bernie Becker

We have three new additions to our library:



Our own Duane Stabler edited and compiled "Researchers Guide to McPherson County, South Dakota Cemeteries" and donated a copy to our library. It took momentous volunteer time and effort for Duane, Selma Job Lapp, Keenan L. Stoecker, and many others to do the research to make this book possible—truly a labor of love. If you have McPherson County ties, you'll no doubt find names, dates, and places of interest in this easy to use book.

I hope you haven't yet thrown out your audiotape player because you will want to listen to Willi Wutzke's story titled, "Escape and Survival: How God Helped My Family." If you have Volhynian roots, this one is for you. If you liked Elvera Ziebart Reur's book, "The Last Bridge," you'll want to hear Willi's story—their experiences were very similar.

As we lose the use of our German language, we are also losing our music, especially the hymns. Prairie Public Television has produced another documentary, "A Soulful Sound: Music of the Germans from Russia. A new feature of the convention at Pierre was "A Night at the Movies" every evening, including "free" popcorn. Shown one evening was this enjoyable documentary DVD. It includes choirs, soloists, and dancing. Watch for it to be shown on PBS. The GRHS bookstore sold out and we have it on backorder.

Many thanks to Jaci Williams. She bravely undertook transferring our videotapes to DVDs. She found that each tape takes a tremendous amount of time, and it will be a long, slow process to complete it.

There are books that have been on our shelves for a long time, but hardly looked at. Now that they are categorized, we hope you will find it easier to locate books in your area of interest. And, remember, if you check books out, please return them the next time you attend a meeting so others can use them too.

AHSGR Children's Newsletter

AHSGR periodically publishes an item for your children titled "Kinderzeitung." If anyone wishes to obtain copies, please contact Diane White, Office Manager, AHSGR, 631 D St, Lincoln, NE 68502-1199. You can also contact Diane by phone at 402-474-3363 or email at dianew@ahsgr.org. If you have an item that could help foster children's interest and growth in Germans from Russia, please let Diane know.

Smiles from Children

Attending a wedding for the first time, a little girl whispered to her mother, "Why is the bride dressed in white?" "Because white is the color of happiness, and today is the happiest day of her life." The child thought about this for a moment, then said, "So why is the groom wearing black?"

Two boys were walking home from Sunday School after hearing a strong preaching on the devil. One said to the other, "What do you think about all this Satan stuff?" The other boy replied, "Well, you know how Santa Claus turned out. It's probably just your dad."

America is Beautiful

by Gwen Schock Cowherd

At the oddest of times I find myself thinking of my Germans from Russia ancestors and their brave trek to America - the land of opportunity many years ago and still so today.

One of these moments occurred at my son's New York City wedding reception in May 2005. I was dining at a French restaurant in the trendy Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The restaurant had closed its doors to the public so it could concentrate on preparing and serving the special wedding dinner. As I sat at the table waiting for one of the many courses of food to be served during the long evening, I heard many languages spoken. I was surrounded by many French-speaking people because my son married a woman, Judith, from Paris, France. The many cultures and diversity of New York City filled the seats around me. New York City was represented in its true form.

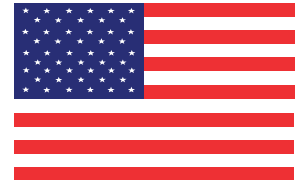
Alex, my son, showed videos of him and Judith on a television screen. After he described the

happenings, his English words were translated for everyone to understand by various attendees. His new sister-in-law (Judith's brother's wife) interpreted in her native language – Japanese, another friend interpreted in French, and a woman from South America translated in Portuguese. It was an emotional time to see them interpreting for the newlyweds so everyone could understand and participate. Even though the languages were different, the meaning and sentiments were the same – joy, happiness, and best wishes.

It was during these translations that I thought about our ancestors and how difficult it must have been landing at Ellis Island (only a few miles from where we dined), tired and worn, without English language skills, and afraid of the many unknowns of their new country. Like perhaps a few of the wedding reception attendees, many Germans from

Russia were prosperous and enjoyed special freedoms in their homeland that were being threatened by government oppression. They were futuristic thinkers, had a dream, and felt it was their duty to insure better lives for future generations. My interpretation - they were just plain gutsy.

Many still dream of a better life in America. Some are courageous enough to take the next step and are still arriving to possibly escape troubled circumstances. I am so glad that the Schocks, Lammeles, Hiebs, and Mehlhaffs were some of those gutsy people. Thank you so much for the courage and hardships you endured so we can live the American dream. America is not free of problems, but I think most of us would agree - America is Beautiful.



UPCOMING EVENTS!

November 5, 2005

Genealogy meeting with Bonnie Anderson, expert on German-Russian influence in the Caucasus.

December 3, 2005



Weinachtsfest—Volunteers Needed! Watch the website for developing details.

Poetry

*I climbed my family tree, and found it was not worth the climb,
And so I scampered down convinced it was a waste of time.
Some branches of my family tree are rotten to the core.
I found the tree was full of sap, and hung with nuts galore!*

*And though I'd bragged about my kin before I made the climb,
The truth compels me now to tell of those not worth a dime.
I beg my friends who boast aloud of their ancestors great
To climb their family tree and learn of crooks who aren't so straight.*

*I climbed my family tree and learned as I came sliding down
My tree is like a "tater vine," the best is underground.
- Author unknown*

The Dead Church

A new pastor in a small Oklahoma town spent the first four days making personal visits to each of the members, inviting them to come to his first services.

The following Sunday the church was all but empty. Accordingly, the Pastor placed a notice in the local newspapers stating that, because the church was dead, it was everyone's duty to give it a decent Christian burial. The funeral would be held the following Sunday afternoon, the notice said.

Morbidly curious, a large crowd turned out for the "funeral." In front of the pulpit, they saw a closed coffin, smothered in flowers. After the Pastor delivered the eulogy he opened the coffin and invited his congregation to come forward and pay their final respects to their dead church.

Filled with curiosity as to what would represent the corpse of a "dead church," all the people eagerly lined up to look in the coffin. Each "mourner" peeped into the coffin then quickly turned away with a guilty, sheepish look. In the coffin tilted at the correct angle, was a large mirror.

SEI UNSER GAST

Cookbook Order Form

To order, fill out the information below and mail with your check to North Star Chapter of Minnesota, P.O. Box 583642, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642, USA.
Please make your check (US funds) out to the North Star Chapter.

The cost for each book is \$11.95 for orders of 1-4 copies, \$10.95 each for orders of 5-9 copies, and only \$9.95 for orders of 10 or more. If you are not going to pick these up at a Chapter event, add these shipping and handling charges to the price of each book in your order – one mailing per order:

1 to 4 books: \$1.75 each shipping (\$3.88 each Canada)

5 to 9 books: \$1.25 each shipping (\$2.75 each Canada)

10 or more books: \$1.00 each shipping (\$2.25 each Canada)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

of Books _____ Total Cost of Books _____

Postage & Handling (see above) _____

Total Enclosed _____

Sept. 05 Thank you for your order!

If Tombstones Could Talk by Carol Just

As a child I roamed the cemeteries near our farm in La-Moure County, ND, always wondering about the stories of those buried there. I placed fresh picked prairie wildflowers at the graves of small children and the adult graves that never seemed to get any attention, and mentally calculated their birth and death dates, translating that data into stories. Children can have a wild imagination, but even now, decades later, when I walk into a cemetery, the voices begin chattering in my head.

Over the years, interest in my pioneer German-Russian heritage took me to the rural churches and cemeteries of my ancestors, often with my father, an uncle or aunt in tow. They supplied detail that only family lore can provide. I became a fixture in county courthouses as I pored over Clerk of Court and Register of Deed documents and I relied on oral interviews with great-aunts and uncles (the children of my emigrant ancestors) to help connect the dots. Most of them kindly let me page through their family photo albums and bibles, allowing me full access and permission to copy anything I wanted. I learned that photographs were great memory triggers for my interviewees, bringing to the surface memories of past events that they hadn't thought about in

years; memories that may have been buried with them had I not been in the right place at the right time. That process "blew life" into my family history as I matched the names on the tombstones to the stories and photographs that were shared with me.



Carol Just walking and talking through the cemetery.

In 2005, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Wishek, McIntosh County, ND, has been celebrating 100 years of continuous worship. In the last five decades, many rural Lutheran churches within a 20-mile radius found they could no longer keep their doors open and opted to merge with St. Luke's. The congregation saw fit to honor each merging church with their own special Sunday celebration arranged for and orchestrated by descendants of the honored congregation.

I descend from two of the merged

rural congregations: St. Andrew (Andreas Gemeinde), the "mother church," and Peace Lutheran (Friedens Gemeinde) one of four "daughter" churches. Their special Sundays were in early May 2005. To my delight, I was invited to lead the "Cemetery Walk," a journey through time as told by the cemetery markers.

This opportunity to review my decades-old research was a trip down memory lane. Paging through notes from my interviews with first and second generation children of the prairie, interviews I conducted in my early twenties, brought back sights and sounds that I had forgotten: the cadence of their accent-laced voices, the smell of sausage and kraut or simmering borscht, fresh-from-the-oven kuchen, even homemade Schnaps. Their droll sense of humor and the matter-of-fact way they answered my endless questions, without self-pity or exaggeration, just the facts, stays with me today. The stories were there, they were simply waiting for someone to listen.

Poring over church records as I prepared for my presentations, I did a cursory count and came up with more than fifty relatives buried in the two cemeteries. No wonder the chatter in my head is especially loud when I'm there.

Continued on page 11



If Tombstones Could Talk continued

Sixteen are great-great, and great grandparents. Twenty-one more are great uncles, great aunts, aunts and uncles. And at least ten members of my family tree are buried in the children's sections. While some of them lived to a ripe old age, others died young from common realities of pioneer and rural life; epidemics, farm accidents, child birth. In Friedens cemetery alone, there are 22 children under the age of one year buried there. My Uncle Otto lost his life in Europe in the final months of WWII, less than 100 miles from the village his great-grandparents left when they immigrated to Russia in 1816. His remains are buried in the American Cemetery in Luxembourg, but his family placed a marker in St Andrew's cemetery to keep his memory close.

The names on the cemetery markers read like the roster of the founding members of the Glueckstal Mother Colonies. (Glueckstal, Neudorf, Bergdorf, and Kassel) in Russia two hundred years ago. McIntosh County, Dakota Territory, opened for homestead in 1884 and was settled by descendants of those early Black Sea colonies.

The earliest markers in St. Andrew's cemetery, dating back to 1894, belong to a 49-year-old mother and to three small children from three different emigrant families. They were casualties of the raw, unrelenting prairie with its extreme heat and cold, isolation

and illnesses that even the respected *Brauchere*, gifted healers trained in South Russia, found beyond the realm of their healing ability. A small pox epidemic in the winter of 1898/99 claimed many on the prairie including three children in one family in three short weeks. My great-grandparents didn't know what hit them, their family suddenly cut in half. The influenza epidemic of 1918 [the Spanish Flu] brought many more new graves to these rural cemeteries, and the diphtheria epidemic of 1923 cut to the core, claiming my grandfather, Karl, and three of his daughters, as well as his sister, Christina, and her three sons.

Iron crosses are a distinct cultural art form of the Germans from Russia. Most examples appear in cemeteries affiliated with the Catholic Church. However, the oldest marker in Friedens Lutheran Cemetery is a large, ornate, hand-forged iron cross labeled Gottlieb Dockter. An emigrant from Neudorf, Dockter spoke several languages and served as the Clerk of Court (*Schreiber*) for his village until he journeyed to the U.S. with his family in 1889. With many sons to do the farm work, Dockter often roamed the prairie for days on horseback, always delighted when he connected with others from the Glueckstal colonies. One day he stopped at a sod house near Beaver Creek and encountered a childhood friend, Johann Heine. As a young man, Heine migrated south of Neudorf to Klostitz, in Bessarabia. Their reunion in McIntosh County

resulted in the marriage of Heine's daughter, Katharina, and Dockter's son, Jacob. Mergers of that kind were common in the early years on the prairie. As for the iron cross, the artist left no identification, but the fact that Dockter's son George was a well-known blacksmith makes the case for a son creating a tribute to his father.

In the middle of all those cemetery markers with German surnames is a marker for a lone Norwegian emigrant by the name of Frank Olson. His homestead along Beaver Creek was surrounded by Germans from Russia. Olson married Carolina Heine, but left her a widow shortly after the marriage. He was buried on the homestead next to his father-in-law, Johann Heine. In 1910, both graves were exhumed



The iron cross of Carol Just's Great-Great Grandfather Gottlieb Dockter.

Continued on Page 14

Book on McPherson County, SD, Cemeteries Published

North Star Chapter member Duane Stabler, along with Selma Job Lapp and Keenan L. Stoecker, have published a new book, "Researchers Guide to McPherson County South Dakota Cemeteries" through the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. The book includes a historical overview of McPherson County, photo postcard images, names and locations of cemeteries, data about births and deaths of individuals buried in each cemetery, maps to locate the cemeteries, and color photos of the cemeteries.

"This was an idea that stemmed from my visit to my great-grandparents' gravesite at the Neudorf Cemetery," Duane says. "That occurred perhaps 15 years ago when my uncle, Albert Stabler, first took me to visit the site that was relatively remote and difficult to access. I realized that information about these ancestors, buried in gravesites throughout McPherson County, needed to be recorded. That idea stayed with me until 1999 when I approached Margaret Freeman at a Germans from Russia convention. She agreed that collecting such information was a valuable service and it was a way of preserving important information. I asked Margaret to find some volunteers that could do the research since it was not easy for me to do it from my home in Minnesota."

Duane says that it is his hope future researchers can use the book to gain an understanding of where their ancestors are buried and can travel to the gravesite if they wish. If they can't make the trip, Duane says, "There are color photos to give them an idea of what the cemetery looks like. I'm very thankful that we were able to make this dream a reality. The positive comments I've had from people buying and seeing this book makes the effort all worthwhile and I hope it inspires others to consider recording their counties in a similar way."

Selma Job Lapp says the information comes from church records, courthouse records, word of mouth, newspaper obituaries, and the funeral homes. The research got physical at times. Selma says, "Some of the cemeteries were very remote and took a pickup truck to get close to them. Then we had to figure out ways of climbing fences which sometimes wasn't too easy but we did it!"

Co-researcher Keenan L. Stoecker says, "If Duane had not been able to take what Selma and I had extracted and convert it to something that could be published, this information would never have been available. It would have remained in drawers or never completed." Duane adds, "Without the work of Selma, Keenan, and the other people who assisted them in locating information, this book would not have been possible. I've added some other information, such as an early history which was provided by Bruce Mehlhaff, early photo postcards from my personal collection, and maps I created to assist those who have never been to McPherson County."

Glueckstal Colonies researcher Margaret Freeman says, "This is a most impressive book that sets it apart from other cemetery books. The color photos and maps are wonderfully done. It truly is a book that everyone should consider buying."

To order the book, send a check for \$65 plus \$8 postage, payable to NDSU Library, to Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, McPherson County SD Book, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 or visit www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu.

Taste of Home

Our featured recipe comes from the recipe file of North Star member Shona Dockter, who says both her grandmother and mother made this wonderful dish. It complements any meat dish, especially fry sausage. If you have a favorite recipe that reminds you of home, please send it to your newsletter staff. Thank you, Shona.

Creamed Buns

Take out one loaf of frozen dough in the morning (Shona has made this recipe with frozen pre-shaped bun dough instead of shaping buns from a frozen loaf).

Put the dough in a large plastic bag and roll it to remove the air. Close the bag at the very end with a twist tie. This method of thawing prevents the dough from drying out as it thaws.

In the late afternoon, punch down the dough, cut it into 12 pieces, and shape it into buns. Place buns in a greased 9x13 pan.

Pour at least one cup of cream (or a bit more) over the buns, sprinkle quite liberally with garlic salt, and let the dough rise. You can place it in the oven with only the oven light on. This is generally warm enough for dough to rise more quickly.

When ready to bake, remove from oven, preheat the oven to 350 or 375 degrees, and bake for 20 to 30 minutes until browned.



The April 2005 Spring Banquet hot food table. Delicious!



Art Stabner presenting at the Spring Potluck on his and Carol's trip to the homeland.

If Tombstones Could Talk continued

and the remains moved to nearby St. Andrews cemetery, when a county road was platted in the path of their resting place.

In German-Russian culture, the cemetery (Friedhof) is a place of peace and dignity, located near the church building. As a migrating people, death was a reality of life. Assured of a life hereafter, Germans from Russia grieved the loss, but placed their hope on the promise that they would meet again in paradise.

St. Andrew's, the tall white church, served as a "Beacon on the Prairie." When a church member died, the pastor or an elder of the congregation tolled the church bell the number of years the deceased lived on earth, honoring the life of the congregant and as a vehicle to notify the community - a practice that came with the emigrants in South Russia and continues at St. Luke's today.

In the early years before funeral homes were established, the deceased was laid out in the family parlor, usually in a hand-crafted wooden casket. Relatives and friends kept vigil by the casket until the funeral service.

Funerals were taken seriously

and attended by all in the community. Children were not sheltered from the grim reality of death. The procession from the sanctuary to the cemetery was a solemn one, sometimes with flower girls leading the pallbearers to the grave site. A lone voice began a graveside song joined by all in attendance. "Wo Findet die Seele die Heimat, die Ruh" (Where does the soul find its home, its rest?), or "So Nimm Den Meine Hande" (Lord, take my hand and lead me), were common choices for adults, "Muede bin ich geh zu Ruh," (Weary am I, to rest I go) was a lullaby often sung at the grave of a child. Some of these traditions survive on the prairie in McIntosh County today.

As I told my stories at the celebrations in May, I realized that my years of interviews with family elders, the many cemetery visits and the hours of research in dusty courthouses were simply part of my journey. I am the family scribe. After my presentations, I collected another half dozen stories from 3th and 4th generation descendants of the early members of the prairie churches. They approached me with a modest eagerness and I humbly accepted their stories. Truth is,

they were simply waiting for someone to listen.

Election of 2006 North Star Chapter Officers

The nominating committee is pleased to announce the following candidates for 2006. The election will take place at the October 2005 meeting. If you would like to run for any of the offices, you are most welcome to add your name to the ballot. Just let Duane Stabner or Gwen Schock Cowherd know ASAP.

President:

Lil Ward

1st VP/Program Chair:

Bob Gies

2nd VP/Membership:

Jorgiann Waltner

Treasurer:

Jaci Williams

Secretary:

Bernie Becker

At the October meeting a sign-up sheet will be distributed for various committee assignments. Please sign up and join the fun..

Map to the Glockenspiel



Grow and Enjoy *Schwartzbeeren* as They Did in Russia

One traditional Volga German foodstuff is *Schwartzbeere*', the fruit of an edible form of black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*). Sometimes known as *Blaubeeren*, *Nachschatten*, even *Scheissbeeren*, *Schwartzbeeren* are distinct from their cousins, the garden huckleberry and wonderberry.

Both in the old country and later in the new, Volga German women used *Schwartzbeeren* to top *Kuche*', to fill *Maultasche*', and as to garnish *geschmeltzte* dumplings -- *Glace*, *Klees*, *Glump*, *Knebel* -- call 'em what you will.

Schwartzbeeren are easy to grow if you have a spot that receives sunlight all day long. Just dig up and rake the area, allowing 4 to 9 square feet per plant. Sprinkle seed over the prepared area, cover with 1/16 inch of soil, and water in. Although this 2- to 3-foot-tall annual is quite drought-resistant, it will yield better if it is irrigated during dry periods. Don't be in too much of a hurry to pick your *Schwartzbeeren* though; the berries are most flavorful when they are allowed to ripen to a dull, purplish black.

If you want to grow the same kind of *Schwartzbeeren* as they grew in Russia, you can. For a free packet of seed, write or e-mail North Star member Sam Brungardt. Sam's address is 739 Como Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55103-1402; e-mail sam739is@hotmail.com Several recipes using *Schwartzbeeren* are in the North Star Chapter of Minnesota's *Sei Unser Gast (Be Our Guest)* cookbook, which Sam edited.

GENEALOGY NOTES

Knowing your genealogical background could save your life. I'm not trying to scare you into doing your genealogy, but it is a known fact that we inherit our ancestors' genes. You inherit your parents' features and coloring and you also can inherit their medical problems. Some serious conditions like cancer, stroke heart disease, diabetes, etc., can be passed on for generations. Knowing what medical problems your ancestors had can help you by discussing them with your doctor for testing and also to make lifestyle changes to avoid the problems.

The U.S. Supreme General is urging everyone to compile a family health history and is offering a free computer program to help you. Go to: www.hhs.gov/familyhistory for the free booklet, "My Family Health Portrait".

I have been obtaining the Death Certificates of as many of my ancestors as I can and I see some definite trends in the "cause of death". Some of the problems I am having now may have been averted if I had alerted my doctor earlier.

The Germans from Russia are especially susceptible because of the intermarriages in the small villages of Russia. So for your sake and your children's health, I urge you to do a family medical genealogical history. Just as we plan ahead and set goals in many areas of our life, let's do so in learning our medical history and plan for a healthier quality life style.

Courtesy of the Central California Chapter—AHSGR June 2005 Newsletter

By Jerome Goertzen

REMINDER— WE HAVE MOVED

Directions to New Meeting Location

Berea Lutheran

7538 Emerson Ave. So., Mpls.

From the intersection of 494 & Lyndale Ave, go north on Lyndale. Take a left on 76th St. (there is a service station on the NW corner of this intersection) & continue down 76th (going west). Turn right onto Emerson Ave. & go about 1/2 block north. The parking lot is on the immediate left (north side of church). We will meet downstairs.

All meetings will be held at this location unless otherwise notified. The September meeting will be at the Glockenspiel Restaurant in Saint Paul, Minnesota.



American Historical Society
Of Germans From Russia
**North Star Chapter
Of Minnesota**

Non-Profit Organization
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YEAR 2006 MEMBERSHIP FORM

_____New _____Renewal _____Individual _____Family

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip+4 _____

Phone No. _____

Email _____

Local dues are \$12.00 per year per family plus membership in an approved na-
tional Germans from Russia organization such as AHSGR or GRHS. **AHSGR**
members please submit \$62 (\$50 for AHSGR, \$12 for North Star Chapter
membership). **GRHS members please submit \$52** (\$40 for GRHS and \$12
for North Star Chapter membership).

Please make your check payable to the **North Star Chapter** and mail it to:

Helen Kleingartner, 9513 Pierce Street, NE, Blaine, MN 55434

Any questions? Call Helen at 763-205-2297

Or email at: hmkleingartner@comcast.net

I would like to volunteer. Please

check all that apply:

_____Genealogy

_____Publicity

_____Library

_____Refreshments

_____History

_____Sunshine

_____Ways & Means

_____Hospitality

_____Other (please list)