

# North Star Chapter

<http://www.northstarchapter.org>

*Preserving the heritage of the Germans from Russia, in dual affiliation with the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) and the Germans from Russia Historical Society (GRHS).*

## Catherine The Great

**Saturday, January 17, 2015**

**Berea Lutheran Church**

**7538 Emerson Avenue South**

**Richfield, MN 55423**

1:00 p.m. - Business meeting  
including budget for 2015

2:00 p.m. - Program on Catherine II

Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great, lived from 1729 to 1796. She rose from a minor German princess to the Emperor of Russia. Her birth name was Sophie Friederike Auguste. She grew up in Stettin in a small principality called Anhalt-Zebst. Her father, Christian August, was a prince of this tiny dominion, but he gained more fame for his military career.

Catherine married into the Russian Imperial Family in 1745. Following the forced abdication and death of her husband, Peter III, she became ruler of Russia in 1762. As "Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress and Autocrat of All the Russias," Catherine styled herself after the beloved ruler Peter the Great, claiming that she was following in his footsteps. She remained monarch until her death at age 67, and is credited with creating a golden era for Russia. The North Star Chapter program will feature the



*Catherine's equestrian portrait in the Preobrazhensky Regiment uniform.*

*(Wikipedia, Public Domain)*

National Geographic created video ***Empress of Ambition, Catherine the Great***, providing an opportunity to learn more about this renowned, fascinating and sometimes controversial figure in history who issued the manifesto that invited our German-speaking ancestors to settle in Southern Russia.

*Join us for the business meeting at 1 PM and the program beginning around 2 PM, to hear the colorful story of this emperor from Russia's history.*

**Follow us on Facebook at: North Star Chapter of Minnesota**

## North Star Chapter 2015 Officers

### President

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Please Take Note **Snowbirds:**

If you have a **winter address**, please notify the Membership Chair, Duane Stabler.

## Chapter President's Message

by Chuck Kurle

The North Star Chapter has concluded another successful year of interesting and informative meetings along with all the fun and socializing at the meetings, spring banquet, and *Weihnachtsfest*. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend most of last year due to my work schedule. However, I have accepted a new position at work with a more normal schedule. We attended this year's *Weihnachtsfest* and I was impressed with the amount and variety of traditional German-Russian food. Of course, Santa made an appearance for the youngsters, and the young at heart! And the entertainment by North Star member Steve Weninger playing his accordion and singing was excellent as always. Everyone was in the spirit and enjoyed singing along with the Christmas carols as well as favorite requests. What a great afternoon of celebration.

The November business meeting included election of officers for 2015. Thank you to all the volunteers for your past year of service. For 2015, 1<sup>st</sup> VP / Program Chair is Lil Ward, replacing Cindy Miller. Thank you Cindy for a great program year. Lil is already hard at work on the 2015 programs. Duane Stabler continues as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP / Membership Chair and continues to do an excellent job maintaining our current membership as well as promoting new members. Ronnie Scherbenski has served as our chapter president for the past three years. I don't know what more I can say other than "great job, Ronnie!" Ron becomes chapter Treasurer, replacing Marilyn Brink. As Treasurer for the past three years, Marilyn has done an excellent job keeping our finances within budget. Marilyn will assume the duties as Chapter Representative to GRHS, replacing Duane Stabler. Glorian Anderson was elected Secretary for the upcoming year. Thank you for volunteering, and I promise to try to keep discussion and decisions under control so our newly elected scribe can keep up with her stone tablet and chisel! Nancy Gertner continues as the Newsletter Editor, producing our newsletter that is second to none. Paul Maggitti will continue to run the kitchen / refreshments. Everyone appreciates the coffee and goodies during the always fun and important socializing time. Thanks, Paul for your hard work and making sure everything is always set up for the meetings. Art and Carol Stabner will continue to be the smiling faces you see at the Hospitality table. And Bernie Becker continues as our Librarian. She has done a wonderful job over the years and welcomes anyone who would like to help with the duties. Thank you also to John Hafner for always having our meeting place set up and the sound system ready. I know I have missed mentioning many others who have so graciously volunteered their time and talents to keep the meetings running smoothly. My apologies to anyone I failed to mention. I am new to this Chapter President job, so I will use that as my excuse this year.

As always, our January meeting will be to approve our 2015 budget (See Page 3). Please be sure to attend to voice your opinion regarding our treasury. We also have a very interesting video program titled *Empress of Ambition – Catherine the Great* - a National Geographic DVD. When mentioned at the *Weihnachtsfest*, I noticed many heads that perked up and everyone seemed excited to learn more about Catherine the Great!

I have been looking at other chapter's newsletters for any new or different ideas on improving our chapter meetings, membership numbers, or any other good ideas. Any proposed changes will certainly be run through the board and membership. I wish everyone a very Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## Library Corner

By Bernelda Becker

### AHSGR CLUES - 2013 EDITION AND GRHS DER STAMMBAUM

What are 'Clues' and/or 'der Stammbaum'? If you are a recent new member, or a newcomer to searching for your German from Russia ancestors, these two publications can be of invaluable help.

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) **CLUES** comes to us in printed form. It includes an alphabetical list of members (Family Surname Exchange) AHSGR who have submitted a *Membership Data Form*, an *Ancestral Chart* copy at library desk) and a **Family Group Chart** (blank copies of charts at Library desk). There is another list of these names, coded, to show you the names they are researching. There is also another list of these names with their mailing and E-mail addresses.

The Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS) publication, '*der Stammbaum*,' is no longer published in print. Instead, the **GRHS Surname Exchange** (as it is now called) is the online version of the '*der Stammbaum*,' updated regularly. It is very similar to 'Clues' except it requests members to send in a completed **Pedigree Chart**, (blank copies at Library desk.)

You can access the GRHS Surname Exchange by going to the GRHS home page, select Research and Surname Exchange, or click on this link: <http://grhs.org/research/surname/surname.html>.

This information can be found near the back of Heritage Reviews. Please feel free to ask librarians and/or other chapter members about these helpful publications.

On the back pages of Heritage Reviews is a list of GRHS Website Links and E-mail addresses you might find of interest in your research.

***Heritage Review in Review*** Compiled by Dr. Eric J. Schmaltz. An interesting addition to Heritage Reviews began with the June 2014 issue, Dr. Schmaltz highlights subjects of interest found in Heritage Reviews (ca. 1971 – 2005). Thus far, in the June issue – "Passenger Lists," and in September—"Dr. Karl Stumpp". We have complete sets of both AHSGR and GRHS journals in the North Star Library. A benefit of membership makes available to you this "...vast gold mine of already published resources ...on a host of subjects."

Check out page 4 of the June 2014 Heritage Review, and find member Patsy Ramberg's entertaining lesson on German and Scandinavian expressions to use when "**That's too bad!**" isn't strong enough. My favorite is "uff da," acquired when I stayed with a Norwegian grandma my first year of high school in Langford, SD." Have you acquired any favorite expressions?

### Annual Meeting Budget Approval and discussion:

North Star Chapter's new Executive Board members have been discussing benefits of membership and costs. Specifically, the newsletter costs around \$3.50 per copy per member, and four are sent each year. To be discussed at the January meeting: Should newsletters be sent to members that have failed to renew their membership? Should there be a renewal deadline? What kinds of reminders are necessary for members to renew? Email? Postcards? Phone Calls? Home Visitations? Should this be the responsibility of the Vice President of Membership, or should member renewal and recruitment be a shared chapter membership task?

Come prepared to discuss and vote on the chapter budget at the **January meeting, Saturday, January 17, 2015, at 1 PM.**



## FEBRUARY 14: GENEALOGY RESEARCH DAY IN THE LIBRARY

**February 14: Saturday Morning Show & Tell****North Star Chapter Library****open for Research 10 AM to 1:00 PM****Bring a bag lunch****Great Plains Agriculture Treasures Show & Tell****10:30 AM to 11:30 AM****Berea Lutheran Church****7538 Emerson Ave. South****Richfield, MN 55423**

The North Star Chapter genealogy research day, Saturday, February 14, 2015, opens the library for members and guests to research with the books and periodicals available in the library. The event this year features a sharing opportunity. As the meeting topic is Agriculture in the Great Plains, members are invited to share photos, small objects, toys or other items that reflect life as it was for farmers on the Great Plains. Show & Tell is planned for 10:30 AM until 11:30 AM, allowing us to share information about our family treasures related to agriculture occupations.

***Four major breakthroughs that made today's modern farming possible:***

- 1) The plow was perhaps the first major breakthrough, occurring more than one thousand years ago. It allowed for tilling the soil even if it was only a walk behind a one-bottom plow.
- 2) In the 1700's, Jethro Tull's invention, the planter, was finally adapted allowing for seeds to be planted by machine.
- 3) The threshing machine allowed for several processes in harvesting to occur. Developed by a Scotsman in 1786 and later refined, referred to as a combine in the mid 1800's. Widely accepted later in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth-century on the Great Plains.
- 4) The steam tractor evolved from the steam engine that used to power trains, and came into prominence a century ago, sometimes replacing horses. The size and cost were often prohibitive to small farmers. It was later refined but was soon replaced by the kerosene tractor which was introduced by the 1930's and became more popular just prior to the Second World War.



FEBRUARY 14: LIBRARY OPEN FOR RESEARCH

**Agriculture – A Look Back at Great Plains Farming**

**Presented at the February 14, 2015 North Star  
Chapter Meeting, 1:00 PM**

**Located at Berea Lutheran Church**

**7538 Emerson Ave. South**

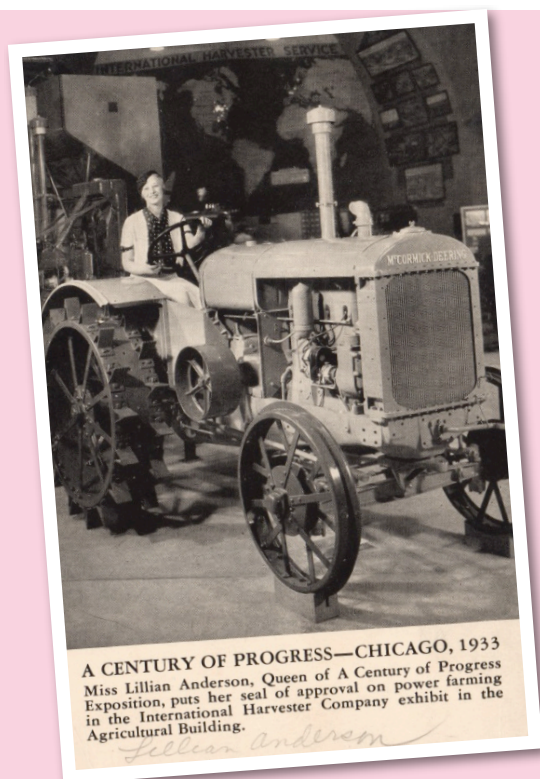
**Richfield, MN 55423**

**By Duane Stabler**

Technology and change is all around us. We frequently think of the evolution of the telephone or the advent and advancement of computers and how they have changed our lives. But there were other advancements, some within recent decades, which have been a benefit to our everyday lives. Consider agriculture; only 100 years ago when horses were the standard means of pulling a plow, and the new equipment was the steam engine. In reality, the steam engine was only one device that technically advanced agriculture.

Over several generations, farmers reduced labor requirements with technology. Productivity can be summarized in this way:

- In 1830, it took 250 to 300 labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (5 acres)
  - Using a walking plow, brush harrow, hand broadcast and sickle
- In 1890, it took 40 to 50 labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (5 acres)
  - Using a gang plow-seeder, harrow, binder, thrasher, wagons and horses
- In 1945, it took 10 to 14 labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (5 acres)
  - Using a two-bottom gang plow, a tandem disk and a steam tractor
- In 1955, it took 6 ½ labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (5 acres)
  - Using a 10-foot plow, 14-foot drill, gasoline powered tractor
- In 1965, it took 5 labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (3 acres)
  - Using a gasoline tractor, 12-foot plow, 14-foot drill, a 14-foot self-propelled combine
- In 1975, it took 3 ½ labor hours to produce 100 bushels of wheat (3 acres)
- 2015 – yet fewer hours with larger, more automated equipment, including computers and GPS systems which continue to advance the modern farm



## Book Review by Carol Just

### ***Researchers Guide to McPherson County, SD Cemeteries***

Researched by Selma Job Lapp and Keenan L Stoecker.

Edited and Compiled by Duane E Stabler

Published by Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC)

North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo, ND, 2005

Recently a cousin-in-law told me he hit a dead end while looking for his great-grandmother's grave in McPherson County, South Dakota. I said I would contact fellow researchers with SD roots for help. I was directed to a gold mine that I had no idea existed right in our North Star Chapter library. ***Researchers Guide to McPherson County, SD Cemeteries*** was published in 2005 and has been in our library since. The authors informed me this was a six year endeavor. THAT is dedication!

My direct family line goes from South Russia to Yankton, Dakota Territory to McIntosh County, ND with brief stops in the Eureka/Ispwich area of what is now South Dakota. Thus, while doing my own family research, I didn't spend any serious time perusing public records, church or cemetery records in South Dakota. I am so happy that my cousin-in-law hit a dead end because I may not have encountered this body of research that is like no other in my research experience.

Over 479 pages of really great information includes:

- Early History of McPherson Country
- Many photos of cemeteries
- Postcard images of Early McPherson County
- Indexes of cemeteries and burial plots
- 345 pages of data by cemetery or gravesite,
- Maps – Locaters to cemeteries including township maps.

The cemetery section is especially fascinating. Each page has the name and location at the top and provides the following (when available): Name, date of birth, date of death, cause of death, decedents/relatives and comments.

In many older cemeteries, the names read like the roster of surnames that settled the *Glückstal* mother and daughter colonies in South Russia, mixed with old timers in the "Old Stock American" category, meaning they descend from folks who settled first in the Eastern United States and later came to Dakota Territory to seek their fortune.

Our contemporary life experiences have nothing on our prairie ancestor's experiences. Trapped in blizzards, suffering from burns, fights that ended in death, farm accidents, haystack accidents, drowning, suicide, tangled up in horses reins – dragged to death, gun deaths and more are recorded here. Epidemics took huge tolls, as well as what would have to be identified as undiagnosed family genetic issues. Page 459 lists a family that lost 10 children of varying ages with undiagnosed illnesses between 1890 and 1912.

Many entries list military service in the various US Armed Forces going back to World War I.

For me, the most fascinating research nuggets were the birthplace village names in South Russia and the "cause of death" entries. Many in German, some in English, they tell us what medical information and names for illnesses were part of the medical vernacular at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Herzschwäche, Wassersücht, Krämpfe/Kraempfe, Lungenkrankheit, Unterleibranzundung, Gicht, Lymph Epithelisis, Brights Disease, Ascites, Nephritis* to name a few.

The information does not say who the reporting physician was - so I'm going to surmise that some of the reports may have been made by *Brauchere*, trained medical providers who brought their skills with them from South Russia (or later learned these skills in Dakota). These men and women came with years of holistic medical knowledge passed from generation to generation. They and their forbears provided necessary medical care in the colonies in South Russia and again on the Dakota prairie where medical doctors could rarely be found.

This body of research is a great example of collaboration by serious researchers who understand the value of their work and are willing to selflessly share their time and talent so the rest of us can make connections to our family tree. To them I say a robust "Thank You"!

***Researchers Guide to McPherson County, SD Cemeteries* may be purchased at GRHC at NDSU.**



## Book Order Form *Hollybocks and Grasshoppers*

Books may also be purchased at special Chapter events at:  
**Berea Lutheran Church, 7538 Emerson Avenue South, Richfield, MN 55423**  
 See chapter schedule of events (pages 1, 4 & 9) for upcoming opportunities

Send form with payment  
 to: **Book Orders,  
 North Star Chapter  
 of Minnesota, c/o  
 Carol Just,  
 2233 Oregon Court,  
 St. Louis Park, MN  
 55426**

### Book Prices

1 to 4 copies: \$12.95 each.

5 to 9 copies: \$11.95 each.

Save! Buy 10 or more books and pay only \$10.95 each.

Make checks payable to: "North Star Chapter."

### Postage/Shipping

1 to 4 books: \$2.50 per book (U.S.), \$5.75 (Canada)

5 to 9 books: \$2.00 per book (U.S.), \$4.50 (Canada)

10 or more books: \$1.50 per book (U.S.),  
 \$4.00 (Canada)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of books ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

## Time to Renew Membership for 2015!

### North Star Chapter Membership Form

I belong to:

\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renew \_\_\_\_ Individual \_\_\_\_ Family AHSGR \_\_\_\_ And / Or GRHS \_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

National Membership: \_\_\_\_ AHSGR \_\_\_\_ GRHS \_\_\_\_ Both

**Local dues are \$15 per year per family, plus membership in either AHSGR or GRHS.**

**AHSGR members please submit \$65 (\$50 for AHSGR, \$15 for North Star).**

**GRHS members please submit \$15. GRHS requests that you send your national membership (\$50) to GRHS, 1125 W. Turnpike Ave., Bismarck ND 58501**

*Please make your check payable to North Star Chapter and submit to:*

**Duane Stabler, 4544 N River Run, Savage MN 55378-2973**

North Star Chapter  
of Minnesota  
AHSGR / GRHS Affiliated  
Non-Profit Organization  
PO Box 583642  
Minneapolis, MN 55458

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## Upcoming Chapter Events

### *Save the Dates*

**March 21, 2015**

**21st Century Ukraine:** Carolyn Schott has agreed to speak about helping with the recent election in Ukraine.

**April 25, 2015**

Annual Spring Banquet with catered meal and program. Check our Facebook page for additional or updated event and meeting details.

## February Research Day Includes “Show and Tell” on Agriculture

February’s North Star chapter meeting looks at the past as Duane Stabler shows a portion of his historical postcard collection taking us back to those days when the oxen, horse, steam engine and other implements were used.

You may remember some of this equipment as a young person and maybe you can share a story about your experiences. Join us Saturday morning February 14, 2015, for “Show and Tell” (10:30 - 11:30 AM). Meeting and program presentation in the afternoon, 1:00 PM. Details, pages 5-6.

*Your historic images and stories can also be shared on our Facebook Page: **North Star Chapter of Minnesota.***

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