

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).

Book Launch Celebration

**Saturday, January 18, 2014
Berea Lutheran Church**

**7538 Emerson Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423**

1:00 p.m. - Business Meeting

2:00 p.m. - Book Launch Celebration

Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers: Growing Up German from Russia in America

It's here! Our book, *Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers: Growing Up German from Russia in America*, has been published. Over a year of work by our members and editorial team has produced a beautiful anthology of poems, essays, and photos about what it means to grow up German from Russia. Many members attended December Weihnachtsfest and purchased the first printing, and hopefully enjoyed it and passed it on to friends and family.

There will be a short business meeting followed by a celebration with a gala book launch. Join us for special refreshments, readings by several authors, and a discussion of how our chapter became the first chapter to publish its own anthology of member memory pieces. Books will be available for sale at a discounted rate to members in good standing. This is a great time to renew or begin your membership, and purchase copies for gifts and summer events. This is YOUR book...come celebrate this chapter publishing achievement!



With a little help from a Saint Nick apprentice, cartons of books arrived on a Siberian Saturday, and were eagerly unpacked by Carol Just, grandson Aidan Lattin, Bernie Becker, Cynthia Miller, and Nancy Gertner.

"Hollyhocks" began as a spark of an idea and blossomed into a beautiful 148-page soft cover book containing 35 essays by members of the North Star Chapter of Minnesota - Germans from Russia. In this, the North Star Chapter's 36th year, **"Hollyhocks"** is simply an extension of the North Star Chapter's mission to educate others about our culture by sharing memories.

Follow us on Facebook at: North Star Chapter of Minnesota

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Please Take Note **Snowbirds:**

If you have a **winter address**, please notify the Membership Chair, Duane Stabler, or Newsletter editor Nancy Gertner.

Chapter President's Message

by Ron Scherbenski

Winter has arrived in Minnesota! I hope this finds you all enjoying the wonder of the season with family at Christmas and New Year. Our *Weihnachtsfest* brought back memories of growing up in Eureka SD and attending and participating in Christmas programs at school and church. After the Christmas Eve Program at church, we went to my grandparents Scherbenski in Eureka for snacks and exchanging of gifts. Usually one or more of my dad's siblings from somewhere USA was there to make it extra special. Later that same evening we would drive to Artas (18 miles) and repeat the gift exchange with the Knoepfle side of the family. All my cousins on that side were local and that made that special too.

Our January business meeting will be to approve our budget for 2014. Be sure to attend and voice your opinion as to what should be done with our treasury. This past year the major expenditure has been in getting *"Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers, Growing up German from Russia in America"* published. It is excellent! We are fortunate to have so many talented people in our chapter. The book was put together by a committee consisting of Cindy Miller, Bernie Becker, Sharon Chmielarz, Nancy Gertner and Carol Just. A special thanks to Carol who hosted most of the meetings and pushed this project along from start to finish. GREAT JOB CAROL and committee!

Duane Stabler has an article and post card photo of some of what Rural Free Delivery was all about. (See article on page 5.) He mentioned an airplane landing to deliver mail. I remember our mail carrier was Henry Jundt. He drove a car when the roads were good and when they were not good, he would use a Jeep. One winter we were "snow bound" for about two weeks. The telephone worked OK and one day we got a call telling us to be outside at about 1PM. An airplane flew over and dropped a bundle containing about a week's worth of mail.

My plans are to leave for Florida on December 29 and return in early March. Cindy Miller will run the business meetings in January and February, and I am confident she will do an excellent job. I do feel a bit like a wimp for leaving when the weather is testing our mettle, but I am sure I will get over it soon enough. Take care of yourselves and see you in March.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Bi-annual Genealogy Workshop

Saturday, February 15, 2014

Berea Lutheran Church
7538 Emerson Avenue South
Richfield MN 55423

10:00 AM – Library open

Noon – Lunch on your own

1:00 PM – Short business meeting

2:00 PM – **Program: “What’s in a Generation?”**

A cold, snowy winter is the perfect time to cuddle up with your family trees, and our biannual genealogy meeting is a great time to check out our amazing library, talk with seasoned family historians, and make some headway on your family trees in time for summer reunions and celebrations.

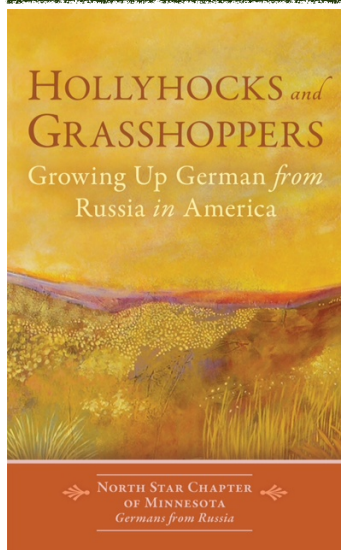
After a short business meeting at 1:00 PM (before the meeting, have a bagged lunch or get a bite to eat in a restaurant nearby), we will have a presentation by North Star Chapter member Cynthia Miller entitled “What’s in a Generation?”. Many of you have heard the terms like “The Greatest Generation,” “Baby Boomers,” and “Generation X.” What does this really mean? Cindy will tell us how demographers describe the characteristics that make up the generations in the

20th century, how these characteristics cause different generations to have different perspectives, what this can mean to society now and in the future, and how it can help you understand the challenges in history faced by our ancestors. Cindy has long had an interest in generational studies, and will have a slideshow of images to illustrate the different generations that make up America.

Get ready for a day of research, information, and fun...a great way to combat cabin fever!



Nancy Gertner visiting Pipestone National Monument, Pipestone, MN with Cousin Kent, and sisters Marcia and Joan, c 1960.



Upcoming Events:

2014

March 15, 2014

See our webpage or
Facebook page for details.

April 26, 2014

Annual Spring Banquet
Watch Facebook page for
details, or our website,

www.NorthStarChapter.org

“HOLLYHOCKS AND GRASSHOPPERS” ORDER FORM PG 6

“**Hollyhocks**” began as a spark of an idea and blossomed into a beautiful 148-page soft cover book containing 35 essays by members of the North Star Chapter of Minnesota - Germans from Russia. In this, the North Star Chapter’s 36th year, “Hollyhocks” is simply an extension of the North Star Chapter’s mission to educate others about our culture by sharing memories.

LIBRARY CORNER

by Bernelda Becker

This month I want to tell you about three new books that are new to our library shelves.

***The Russian Germans under the Double Eagle and the Soviet Star, Including a Pictorial History of Cities, Landscapes and People.* By Bernd G. Längin.** This recently published book was translated from German by Jack Thiessen and Audrey Poetker, with Pictorial Documentation by Hanns-Michael Schindler, and edited by Dr. Nancy Herzog and Alex Herzog, published by GRHC.

The great contributions of the Russian Germans advanced the cause of the Russian Empire for 200 years. Author Bernd G. Längin paints a picture of the rise and fall of a German minority under the Double Eagle and the Soviet Star. He recalls their history before all traces of the German generations on the Volga, in the Ukraine, in the Caucasus, Bessarabia and Volhynia are completely obliterated. (Filed under **J-2** in our library)

Forward In Faith by Ervin Schumacher © 1998. This book is in the 'Religious' section of our library because it is a book that recounts the German people's strong faith, a faith in God that carried them through the difficulties they encountered in their journeys from Germany to Russia to Canada. Germans – Russian-Germans- Germans from Russia or Russians, all whose roots were German—it's all covered in this good read. Donated to our Chapter by GRHC. Take time to browse this K section. It holds some interesting books. (Filed under **K** in our library.)

Are you one of those people who seldom read fiction? What about historical fiction? Have you tried it? History is fascinating when told and lived by characters in the story.

The Bannisters, A historical novel set in Dakota Territory, is a recently donated addition to our library. Who would expect Redfield, South Dakota to be the setting for an interesting novel? But Barbara Oaks did. The book begins in Wyoming, moves to the gold rush in the Black Hills, travels to Redfield, and stays there. This turn-of-the-century novel presents the reader with a clear picture of life in a small prairie town, its hopes and efforts toward growth. You'll participate in the excitement when the Dakota Territory became the states of North and South Dakota, Fourth of July celebrations, and follow the political career of the small town politician to his becoming an important 'cog in the wheel' when the new State capitol was built at Pierre, South Dakota.

I had never heard of the author, Barbara Oaks, but find she has written several books that feature life and happenings in the prairie states. Her characters are not German Russian, but they could be. The time frame of 1900 through the 1930s which her books cover is our history too. During those years our forbears also settled the prairies, and played a part in the establishment of the villages that became towns and even small cities. If you would like a fresh look at the history of that era, check out this great historical novel. (Look for it on the **H** shelf.)

Our chapter's newly published book, ***Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers – Growing Up German from Russia in America*** includes stories based in or about some such villages—Eureka, Ashley, Beulah, Hosmer, McClusky. By golly, we North Star Chapter Germans from Russia members even wrote nostalgic essays about towns in Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska.

New Copier! *The chapter now has a simple copy machine. It can also print from a computer, tablet or phone. For a small fee per page, you may make copies in our library. A dime a page will fund purchasing new ink cartridges.*

AMERICAN HERITAGE

Winter Mail Delivery in Rural Dakota

By Duane Stabler



Image from the Duane Stabler Collection

In this day and age of email, internet and social media complete with such technology as Skype, where people can communicate in real time using video, it's hard to imagine how our ancestors ever lived without it. Yet, they were living on the edge with delivery of their mail by the rural mail carrier using a horse and sleigh. The photo above is that of a postcard taken in Cresbard, South Dakota. Such an image is fairly rare but is typical of what was found throughout the upper Midwestern parts of the USA. Trips into town to pick up or send mail was rarely done more than once a week (and often monthly) and so to have Rural Free Delivery (RFD) was an advancement that greatly improved the life of those early settlers to the prairies of the Dakotas.

RFD actually dates back to 1896 and began as an experiment. It is believed that the RFD sled was probably built by local craftsmen in New Hampshire, where it was put into use in 1900, while the service was still in its experimental phase. Early rural letter carriers made their rounds on horseback, in buggies, and, during winter months, in sleds. Unlike their city counterparts, rural carriers were, and still are, responsible for purchasing their own vehicles. Early carriers, including the owner of this sled, were also responsible for supplying, feeding and stabling their horses.

As farmers across the country learned that all they needed were 100 signatures on a petition requesting the service, petitions began to flood the Post Office

Department. In the department's 1902 annual report, postal officials noted that "the people are demanding the service with impatient earnestness." That year it became an official service. By the next year, the postal service had approximately 11,650 rural free delivery routes in operation, covering about one-third of the continental United States. The service's growth in the first decades of the 20th century was astounding. By 1906, rural carriers covered well over 700,000 miles of rural America. By 1915, the number stood at well over one million miles.

As the use of RFD grew, so did the "good roads" movement at the turn of the 20th century. If roads were poorly maintained, postmasters could refuse the service to any route. This encouraged citizens to build, maintain and repair the roads. It's certain that such newspaper as the *Dakota Free Press* and other German language newspapers were delivered to my great grandparent's farm. It was their connection to their families who remained in the "Old Country". On a more official level, rural carriers continue to operate traveling post offices out of their vehicles. The operator of this sled would have carried a metal cashbox that held money, stamps, money orders, and postal stationery which patrons along the route could purchase as needed.

Rural Free Delivery brought the world to the American countryside, wagons and sleds bearing the words "U.S. Mail" on their sides (note this on the postcard image) were welcome visitors to lonely rural farms. With this innovative service, farmers could get timely livestock quotations and produce price information, which allowed them to sell their stock and goods at the best time. Weather forecasts were delivered directly to farmers, along with newspapers, magazines (remember the *Dakota Farmer* magazine) and mail-order catalogs from Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward.

So the next time you complain about that mail carrier's late delivery, or you just hop onto the internet to do that shopping using such services as Amazon, remember that perhaps this new way of getting mail or purchasing merchandise actually had its roots in RFD.

Share your memories of RFD on our Facebook page: [*North Star Chapter of Minnesota.*](#)

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 & 3) 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**

Cookbook 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 2014!

North Star Chapter Membership Form

_____ New _____ Renew _____ Individual _____ Family

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

“Weihnachtsfest”

Saturday, December 14, 2013

Our annual *Weihnachtsfest* featured holiday traditions of ethnic food, great music, and holiday surprises. Steve Weininger, accordionist extraordinaire and North Star chapter member, performed his musical magic. Multi-generational families enjoyed the pot luck meal and a visit from a guy in a red velvet suit. Saint Nick brought sacks for all the good girls and boys with traditional treats of peanuts, fruit, candy and gum. Thanks to Cheryl Presler for donating the “Nickel Candy Bars” that were the prize of the sacks. Saint Nick had a special treat for the “Very Good Girls,” Librarian Bernie Becker and assistants Marilyn Brink and Patsy Ramberg.

As with any chapter event, this special holiday celebration was made possible by the contributions of many chapter members that set up the tables and chairs on Friday and organized the food tables on Saturday, and cleaned up at the end of the day. Special thanks to John Hafner for shoveling fresh snow so the path would be clear for the rest of us!



Aidan introduced baby brother Jack to Saint Nick. Grandsons of Carol Just.

Cookbook Order Form *Sei Unser Gast*

**Cookbooks may also be purchased at Special Chapter events at:
Berea Lutheran Church, 7538 Emerson Avenue South, Richfield, MN 55423
See chapter schedule of events (page 6) for upcoming opportunities**

Send form with payment
to: **Cookbook Orders,
North Star Chapter
of Minnesota,
P.O. Box 583642,
Minneapolis, MN
55458-3642**

Cookbook Prices

1 to 4 copies: \$12.95 each.

5 to 9 copies: \$11.95 each.

Save! Buy 10 or more *Sei Unser Gast* cookbooks
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 : _____

Members Voted to Amend Chapter By-Laws at October Meeting Election of Officers Held at November 16, 2013 Meeting

At the July meeting, the Board of Directors passed a motion that Article III section 1 of the By-Laws should be amended as follows.

“The officers shall be elected for a one-year term. No person shall be elected to the same office for more than THREE consecutive terms.”

The change extends the time one person can serve in the same office from TWO to THREE consecutive terms.

Article X of the By-Laws states: “The By-Laws may be amended at a chapter meeting by a

two-thirds vote of the membership present and voting, provided said amendment has been considered and recommended by the Board of Directors and written notice of at least one week has been given by the Board of Directors prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be voted upon.”

The amendment was voted on at the chapter member business meeting held on 26 October 2013, and passed by a margin greater than the required two-thirds.

Election of officers occurred on November 16. Officers elected were President, Secretary, Treasurer, VP for Programming, and VP for Membership, as listed on page 2.

North Star Chapter
of Minnesota
AHSGR / GRHS Affiliated
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