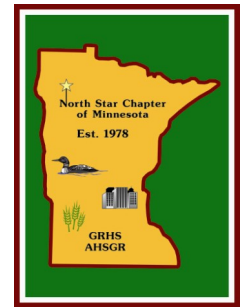


North Star Chapter

March 2010

<http://www.northstarchapter.org/>

Volume 35 Number 2



Lost in Siberia: The Rest of the Story

Saturday, March 20, 2010, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

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

Please join us for John Groh's poignant recount of his family's global journey, how the descendants reconnected, and the resulting reunion seventy years later. The Groh family was among the first settlers in the village of Grimm, along the Wiesenseite (meadow side) of the Volga River region in 1767 – just four years after the invitation to settle the area by Czarina Catherine the Great. The family stayed in Grimm as farmers until six Groh siblings gathered up their families and immigrated to the US between 1906 and 1912, first settling in the Maywood area (a suburb of Chicago), and later moving west to the Mason City, Iowa, area where they worked the sugar beet cycle. Over the next decades some stayed in Iowa, some returned to Chicago, but no one knew what happened to those left behind.

The family that stayed in Russia met a fate that took them – over several generations - from
(**Lost In Siberia**, continued on page 5)

Memories – Stories - Poetry, Oh My!

32nd Annual North Star Chapter Spring Banquet

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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

Descendants of the prairies and great plains love to hear the stories of their heritage. Whether poignant or humorous, sad or silly, the stories connect us to our heritage in ways that a genealogy family tree cannot.

Please join us for our 32nd Annual North Star Chapter Spring Banquet as we host poet Marleen Ehmann Bussma. Born in a sod house, a descendant of the village of Alt Postal in Bessarabia, Bussma is a native of Jud, ND, now residing in Dammeron Valley, Utah, following a long career in education.

In retirement, Bussma found an artistic calling writing poetry about her German-Russian heritage and her memories growing up on the prairie in North Dakota. For years her daughter asked her to write the stories she told in oral tradition. It wasn't until Bussma attended

(**Spring Banquet**, continued on Page 4)

President's Message

By Lil Ward

Spring is just around the corner but here in Minnesota we still have a few more weeks of winter and probably a few more snow storms. The February soup luncheon was wonderful. Michael Miller, NDSU, gave a great presentation profiling the German Russian Heritage Collection. Everyone enjoyed the borscht and knoeplfa soup, homemade breads, kuchen, watermelon pickles and dill pickles. I want to thank Carol Just for opening her home a couple Saturdays so a few volunteers could make the soup and kuchen. We couldn't have done the preparation, set up, or the luncheon without a lot of volunteers.

We asked for volunteers and you stepped up to help with serving the soup, cutting breads and kuchen, putting out pitchers of water, and washing the serving dishes and kettles afterward. Whatever task needed to be done, you did. We had a great crew to set up the room and again to take down. I've said it before but will say it again: we have the most wonderful volunteers. Thank you, thank you.

I want to thank Duane Stabler as he ends his term as president of the chapter. He has held the office several times and will continue to mentor me as I continue in his footsteps. They are hard shoes to fill so I am glad I have access to his knowledge and leadership.

If you have access to a computer I hope you check out the chapter website that Duane Stabler created and maintains. It includes dates and pictures of chapter meetings and national conventions. It is very user friendly – even for me.

We have some really great programs scheduled for the rest of the year which are listed in this newsletter. Also listed are the AHSGR and GRHS conventions coming up this summer. I hope you plan to attend and support these events. It is the efforts and talents of many (**President's Message**, continued on page 5)

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Library Corner

By Bernie Becker

Our library has again benefited from donated books by several people.

From Elvera Hepner Hofmann:

Log Cabin Pioneers (Stories, Songs & Sayings) by Wayne Erbsen.

Not necessarily stories of our ethnicity, this book is a fun read of early days. Have you ever wondered how you would construct a pioneer cabin, make whiskey, how they entertained their children, the tricks to cooking on an old kitchen range, or even longed for the pioneer woman's beauty secrets? This book has it all in one- and two-page bites. A fun, quick read. It checked out the first time it appeared on the "new" table.

The Romanov Connection – Novel by William M. Green

Based on a true story, this novel presents personal relationships and obligations; spies and traitors; government manipulations; chance meetings and planned treachery. This all took place in the not-too-distant past, and influenced the lives of our forbearers. Well-researched novels are wonderful ways to learn history.

From Ardella Bennett:

Adam Fritz – Offspring in America

Documenting all Fritz descendants living in America who stem from Adam Fritz (b 1790) through his second son, Michael Fritz (b 1825). But don't stop there – there are many surnames throughout the book. Take time to browse this new family history – who knows, you may find relatives you didn't know you had.

From Jim Gessele:

Handbuch Russland-Deutsche by Ulrich Mertens

Can you read German? Jim assures me this

invaluable German language book is full of information about *all* our villages – when they were founded, how many people were there, where they came from, etc. But who of us can read German? Here's a challenge – one member of our chapter did this. Using a German/English dictionary he took a stab at translation. Why not find your village and try it too?

Good news! At our February meeting, speaker Michael Miller informed me the formidable task of translating this book to English began in 2000. It is on track to publish by late 2010 or early 2011. Look forward to this valuable English addition to our library.

Last, but not least, due to the cover bent in shipping, our library is the beneficiary of a second copy of our own cookbook, *Sei Unser Gast*.

Finally – please return any you have checked out books at our March meeting. It's a long time until October when the library will be available again. Take note, too, that books you take home in March will be due in October. If you wish to return them before then, I'll be available to accept returned books at the spring banquet, or at my home any time. Call me at 952-929-5577 to make arrangement to drop them off.

Mark Your Calendars in 2010

-GRHS Convention: "Treasuring the Past, Preserving the Future," July 21-15, Bismarck, ND

-AHSGR Convention: "Celebrate!" August 1-8, Lincoln, NE

-Sept. 18: Glockenspiel Restaurant

-Oct. 16: Professor Brent Mai, Concordia University, Portland, "The Volga Relief Society."

-Nov. 20: Genealogy meeting; program by - Nancy Gertner & Cynthia Miller on using social networking to connect

-Dec. 4: Weihnachtsfest

New Internet Resource: Social Networking Sites

By Cynthia Miller

Many of us are getting familiar with using the internet to expand our genealogy research and family connections. But social networking sites, like Facebook.com, are emerging as a new way to find and exchange information and meet long-lost relatives. It's also a great way to bring our heritage to younger people.

November's genealogy program by Nancy Gertner and Cindy Miller will give you a thorough background in how to use this. But if you're already on Facebook, want to try it before November, or have children or grandchildren who can give you a hand, there are several resources to look at. We have a North Star Chapter page that gives updates on events, links to other organizations, and other information useful for genealogists. The group "Germans from Russia" has over 550 members from all over the world. Group members are using it to exchange names and places, and even tasty recipes and memories. The group "Russian Germans International" had international ties and many links not seen anywhere else.

Facebook is also a fun place to keep up with what your third cousin's kids are doing, view photos of family and friends you rarely get to see, and reconnect with people you knew way back when. Don't be afraid to give this new media a try.

Soup Luncheon is a Delicious Success

By Cynthia Miller

When the parking lot is full, you know it's going to be a great meeting! February's soup

luncheon and program was enjoyed by over 70 members and guests, including several new members. Volunteers used four dozen eggs, five cups of shortening, 12 cups of sugar, 20 cups of flour, four quarts of cream, one quart of milk, seven teaspoons of vanilla, five packages of yeast, 1/2 dozen apples, three jars of peaches, 2 1/2 pounds of blueberries and 3/4 pound of prunes, which translated to 40 beautiful kuchen. Food items that were not eaten or sold were donated to Berea Lutheran Church's homeless program. The church hosts transition families one week every month, so it was a pleasure to support this worthy cause.

After the luncheon, we enjoyed a program by Michael Miller, director of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at North Dakota State University. A highlight was learning about the oral history project conducted by GRHC. If you haven't checked out the information and activities available through this resource lately, please give it a look. The web site is www.ndsu.edu/grhc.

(Spring Banquet, continued from page 1)

an evening of Cowboy Poetry that she found her inspiration and was able to put "form" to her stories. She enjoys performing at Cowboy Poetry gatherings where the focus is on stories about life in rural communities. In that genre, Bussma found that she could take her childhood, rural, prairie, and ethnic experience and create meaningful tributes to her heritage.

Filled with homestead experiences, country school memories, foodways and folkways, Bussma's poetry will give you a dose of nostalgia mixed with an appreciation of the "ones who came before." A registration form is located in this newsletter. Please mail it in by April 24 to reserve your place.

Happy Birthday

March: Glorian Anderson, Vickilynn Kurle, Ken Larson, Marlene Walth

April: Gayle Hafner

May: Sean Beaton, Diann Bennin, Pat Ramberg

June: Robert Coates, Pat Current, John Hafner, Robert Suppan

July: Paul Bennin, Sharon Kleingartner, Rosemary Larson, Arve Moser, Martha Suppan, Paul Winter

August: Ray Current, Angie Ibarra, Chuck Kurle, Duane Maas

Happy Anniversary

April: Sara & John Groh, Vickilynn & Chuck Kurle, Shirley & Albert Pfeifle, Virginia Morton & Paul Winter

May: Janet Lohberger & Mayo Flegel, Gayle & John Hafner, Norma & Gordon Herrboldt, Rosemary & Ken Larson, Marlene & Tom Schonebaum

June: Glorian & Ron Anderson, Diann & Paul Bennin, Sharon & Pete Kleingartner

August: Sandra Brown, Cheryl & Marvin Presler, Lil & Dayton Ward

(Lost In Siberia, continued from page 1)

Grimm to Siberia. Later a branch moved from Siberia to Ukraine and, for some, a return to Germany, two hundred years after the original migration.

John Groh is retired after a long career with Drake University. With his wife, Sue, he lives in Johnston, IA. They are life members of AHSGR and charter members of the Wild Rose Chapter of IA and the North Star Chapter of MN. Groh has served on both the AHSGR Board of Directors and Foundation Board. He enjoys studying genealogy and recently published a 300-page family history.

Member News

Welcome to new members Vickilynn and Chuck Kurle, Hastings; Susan and Mark Christopher, Long Lake; Joyce and Ronald Beauchane, Plymouth; Julia Jensen, St. Paul.

Minnesota Towns

On May 11, Minnesota celebrates its 152nd birthday. While many of us hail from other states, most of us now call Minnesota home. Celebrate Minnesota Day with these interesting town names.

Choose a Date: Ada, Adrian, Albert (Lea), Alexandria, Aurora, Austin, Bertha, Blaine, Brandon, Byron, Clara (City), Crystal, Emily, Gaylord, Gilbert, Grace(ville), Grant (Valley), Hector, Helga, Henrietta, Howard (Lake), Hugo, (Lake) Elmo, (Lake) Lillian, LeRoy, Luverne, Lyle, Mabel, Marshall, Maynard, Milton, Morris(town), (New) Hope, Nicollet, Olivia, Preston, Raymond, Stephen, Stewart (ville), Tracy, Tyler, Victoria, Virginia, Walker, Warren, Wilma, Winona

Pick a President: Adams, Clinton, Jackson, Madison, Truman

Have a Snack: Appleton, Apple Valley, Butterfield, Ham Lake, Rice, Spicer, Wheaton.

(President's Message, continued from page 2)

people that make any organization work. If I remember correctly, our theme for the Chapter's twenty-fifth anniversary a few years ago was "Build it and they will come." They have built it so we must come.

Have a wonderful spring and I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Dreams of Dust

By Marleen Bussma.

Published with permission from the author &
GRHC

The weeds had over taken
And the years had not been kind.
A wall was separating.
Better days were left behind.

A pole was used to hold it
So it would not drop and fall.
I saw a gaping fissure
In the middle of the wall.

I stepped up to the mud bricks
As I tried to get a view
Of what it looked like inside;
How it may have been when new.

I saw a plaster coating
In a brightly colored hue
Applied with hope and caring
In a pleasant shade of blue.

The corners of the old house
Had been rubbed and worn away
By cattle scratching their hides
On the straw mixed in the clay.

The corners now looked concave
Where the clay was rubbed and gone.
Another change brought to it
Like the others with the dawn.

How long has it been waiting
On the prairie like a ghost
With rooms now standing empty
And walls held up with a post?

Who were the ones that built it
Mixing hopes and dreams and fears?
What sights did this house witness
As it stood so many years?

Did it see prairie fires
As a wall of red orange flame
That ate its way to ruin
Making these folks sad they came?

Did it hear cries of despair
And the sorrow of those new
To land that was so different
With the hardships they went through?

Did it feel scouring pressure
From the restless wind that blew
While cold seeped through its thick walls
And the snow left banks that grew?

Did it see wavy curtains
Of the Northern Lights that shined;
Or prairie flowers blooming
Where the trees were hard to find?

Did it hear gushing water
In the spring from melting snow
That ran past in the gully
Loud like thunder with its flow?

Did it feel like a manor
When the family first moved in?
The dugout or the wagon
Gave up shelter rights by then.

Today it stands deserted,
A reminder of the past;
A ghost out on the prairie
From a life that didn't last.

Although it is deserted
There is interest once again;
Concerning this adobe
By the likes of modern men.

Now days we want to save what
Is a relic from our past
And hold on to our hist'ry.
Things are disappearing fast.

But Mother Nature's busy
Taking back what she once gave
To those who built a country.
They were head strong. They were brave.

The walls will keep on crumbling
And we all know that they must.
When last the fourth wall tumbles
Someone's dream turns back to dust.

Spring Banquet Registration

Reservations needed by Saturday, April 24, 2010

Spring Banquet: Saturday, May 1, 2010 — Speaker: Marleen Ehmann Bussma

Social Hour at 5:00 PM, Dinner at 6:00 PM

Fee: US \$20.00 per person. Make check payable to North Star Chapter

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Number of people in your party: _____

Menu:

Baked chicken, roast pork & dressing, baby red potatoes, Caesar salad and fresh fruit, glazed baby carrots and green beans almondine, breads, coffee, punch and dessert.

Send form with payment to : Lil Ward, 5177 Red Oak Drive, Moundsvew MN 55112

Over 20,000 Sold!

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Share your German-Russian heritage with family and friends. *Sei Unser Gast* cookbooks make the perfect gift for birthdays, graduations, showers, weddings, anniversaries, and holidays. Give them to say "Danke schön." Donate copies to the libraries and schools in your community. *Sei Unser Gast* cookbooks are sold at some North Star Chapter meetings. To order by mail, complete the form below and mail it with a check payable to "North Star Chapter" (payable in U.S. dollars) and mail to: Cookbook Orders, North Star Chapter of Minnesota, P.O. Box 583642, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3642. Additional order forms can be printed from our website: www.northstarchapter.org

Name _____

St., Rt., P.O. Box _____

State/Province _____

ZIP/Postal Code _____

Home Telephone Number (____) _____

Number of cookbooks being ordered _____

Total cost of books (see insert) \$ _____

Postage/Shipping (see insert) \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

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.

Postage/Shipping

Only one mailing address per order, please.

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)

*These are North Star Chapter prices. Other vendors may charge more or less for the book.

North Star Chapter of Minnesota-AHSGR and GRHS

Non-Profit Organization

P.O. Box 583642

Minneapolis, MN 55458

Return Service Requested

2010 Membership Form

_____ New _____ Renew _____ Individual _____ Family
Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Please note that a membership directory might be provided to North Star Chapter members that would include your name, address, phone, and email. If the chapter chooses to publish a membership directory:

_____ I **agree** to have my name, address, phone and email in the published directory.

_____ Please **exclude** my information from the published directory.

National Membership: _____ AHSGR _____ GRHS _____ Both AHSGR and GRHS

Local dues are \$12.00 per year per family, plus membership in either AHSGR or GRHS. AHSGR members please submit \$62 (\$50 for AHSGR, \$12 for North Star membership). GRHS members please submit \$12.

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:
Ardella Bennett, 175 Spring Valley Dr., Bloomington MN 55420**

Questions: Contact Ardella at 952-884-4211 or ardellabennett@msn.com

For newsletter greeting only: Birthday Month(s) _____ Wedding Anniversary Month _____