



# THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA LINCOLN CHAPTER

---

VOLUME IV

JUNE 1996

ISSUE VI

---

## CHAPTER OFFICERS

President - John Stuertz  
Secretary - Gladys Herstein  
Corresponding Secretary - Delores Schwartz  
Program Chairman - Dale Dinges  
Genealogy Chairman - Shirley Robertson

1st Vice President - Dale Dinges

2nd Vice President - Samuel Sinner  
Treasurer - Lois Sorensen  
Historian - Delores Schwartz  
Membership Chairman - Samuel Sinner  
Newsletter Editor - Hugh Dobler

---

### June 2, 1996 Chapter Picnic

Pot Luck Dinner/ and Bingo  
1:00 P.M.  
Ebenezer United Church of Christ  
801 B St.

### June 10-16, 1996 AHSGR 27TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Radisson South & Plaza Tower  
Bloomington, Minnesota

### June 11, 1996 LLCGS (*Lincoln Lancaster County Genealogical Society*)

Dick Administration Building (Lower Level) Union College Campus  
7:00 p.m.

### June 15, 1996 PAF-LUG (*Personal Ancestral File-Lincoln Users Group*)

Family Service Center 3100 Old Cheney Road  
7:00 p.m.

### June 17, 1996 AHSGR Board Meeting

AHSGR Headquarters Building  
7:00 p.m.

---

### Editor's Comments:

#### Celebrate the Odyssey!

The North Star Chapter of Minnesota would like to invite you to come and "Celebrate the Odyssey". The North Star Chapter hopes you will attend the 1996 Convention held at the Radisson South. The featured speakers and their topic are:

"What Genealogists can learn from the Atlantic Bridge to Germany" by Charles Hall.

"Beginning Genealogy" by Margaret Freeman.

"Using an LDS Library" by Vicki Luker.

"Oral History: Link with the Past/ Gift to the Future" by Carol Halvorsen.

"Taking Photographs of Photographs" by Bob Hopkins.

"German-Russian Textiles: Techniques and Their Cultural Significance" by Jay Gage.

"Internet Genealogy" by Dr. Roger Ehrlich.

"Deciphering Gothic Records" by Fay Deadem.

"My Flight to Freedom" by Elvera Reurer (based on the book "The Last Bridge").

"Looking for my Volhynian Home" by Irmegard Hein Ellingson.

There are also some interesting tours which you will need to sign up for such as: A Tale of Two Cities- Minneapolis and St. Paul (this will take two days with one tour including a lunch stop) Chanhassen Dinner Theater, Mississippi River German Dinner Cruise, Mystic Lakes Casino Trip. Be sure you sign up for these!



The chapter will have there annual Chapter Picnic/Pot Luck on June 02, 1996 at Ebenezer Church at 1:00 P.M. Please plan to attend and bring a covered dish or salad etc. We will also play Bingo after lunch, see you there.

Dunga to Mary Wunder and staff who made the Garage Sale a success, I don't know what the chapter would do without such great help. Again thanks a million for your dedication, support and volunteer spirit.

## WANTED:

## WILL PAY MY SHARE

**HAROLD BAUER 429 "E" ST. LINCOLN NE.**

**PHONE 435-5117**

=====

## DER JAHRSTAG (HAPPY ANNIVERSARY)

June 1, 1946	Lillian and Victor Weber	50 years
June 2, 1966	Pauline and Benjamin Deines	30 years
June 5,	Sharon and Dennis Fiedler	
June 6, 1954	LaVerne and Robert Heidtbrink	42 years
June 10, 1961	Judith and Henry Sader III	35 years
June 15, 1968	Barbara and Daniel Dittenbir	29 years
June 15,	Elinor and Rev. Fred Wolff	
June 16, 1940	Philomena and John Lebsock	56 years
June 16, 1946	Dorothy and Edward Schwartzkopf	50 years
June 16, 1961	Shirley and Gerald Grauer	35 years
June 19, 1982	Norma and Larry Schenkel	14 years
June 21, 1947	Lillian and Edward Loos	49 years
June 21, 1942	Lydia and Henry Grasmick	54 years
June 22, 1947	Marty and Gottlieb(Scotty) Kaufman	49 years
June 26, 1927	Marie and John C. Bauer	69 years
June 27, 1981	Shirley and James Robertson	15 years

June 4, Shirley Grauer

June 5, Carl Schmidt

June 6 Henry Sader III

June 9 Harold Bauer

*June 14 Henry Kolb*

June 16 Lydia Grasmick

*June 16 Dorothy Schwartzkopf*

June 19 Kenneth Babcock

*June 23 John Fischer*

June 25 Dana Rodriguez

June 25 Helen Schwartz

June 30 LeRoy W. Stubbs



## A PLACE WHERE FAITH SPRINGS ANEW

(taken from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Magazine Dec. 17, 1995) by Bob Rashid

Almaty, Kazakhstan. For twenty five years Roland Meyle ministered to his congregation at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Union Grove, officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals, leading church functions, offering counsel and comfort. It was an orderly, satisfying life in the Racine County town.

But "orderly" no longer applies!

Today the sixty year old Meyle works as a missionary in Almaty (pronounced al-MOT-ee) the capital city of Kazakhstan, a former soviet republic in Central Asia. There he just completed his second year as pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Almaty, whose small, aging congregation revels in the chance to openly practice its faith after decades of communist oppression.

They flock to his Sunday services at the bethausen( house of prayer) dressed in the best clothes they can afford. Since the country's break from the Soviet Union in December 1991, inflation has raged and left most people in humble circumstances. Even in Almaty, with 1.2 million of the country's 17 million inhabitants, people live in tiny houses or cramped apartments in concrete high rises, where water and electric service is sporadic at best.

The majority of Meyle's 200 or so parishioners are at least as old as he is. And many have German blood, as does Meyle, a native of Esslingen, Germany.

Ethnic Germans in Almaty are the so-called Volga Germans, whose ancestors, peasant farmers from Germany, flocked to Ukraine and the area around the Volga river beginning in 1762. They came seeking religious freedom and relief from high taxes and conscription in the German army ( Around the turn of the century, some of the Volga Germans also settled in Wisconsin, in Sheboygan, South Milwaukee, Racine, Shiocton, Fond du Lac and Oshkosh, (and also in many communities in Nebraska, and other regions within the United States.)

When Germany attacked Russia during World War II, the Volga Germans were branded as traitors by the Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin; an estimated 700,000 were deported to Siberia and the area to its south, Kazakhstan. Many were put in labor camps. After the war, they were not permitted to return to the Volga region but were forced to remain on the flat arid steppes of Kazakhstan or the vast wastelands of Siberia. Even though religion was outlawed, Lutherans and other believers continued to practice their faith. When Kazakhstan declared its independence, the Lutheran Church in Germany started a ministry.

"I feel very close to these people," Meyle said. "They are very basic in their beliefs, and they've been persecuted. Their faith is what has carried them through".

Meyle first visited Kazakhstan in 1992, on a trip organized by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, based in St. Louis, to show clergy the need for missionaries.

"I heard how tough it was over here. It's dirty and hot, and no one speaks English," said Meyle, who's fluent in four languages, including Russian.

But the following year, he accepted an assignment from the Concordia Mission Society which works through the synod. He agreed to replace the congregation's 85 year old lay minister, who wanted to return to Germany. "For me it was almost like going home I found a church that accepted my type of biblical faith," said Meyle, a religious conservative who believes the Bible in the authority on which to base one's life. He had some difficulties with the transition.

"When I first got here, I couldn't even enjoy the mountains", referring to the Tian Shan Range visible from every street in Almaty. Meyle, who traveled frequently in Europe, "was used to Austria and Switzerland. Here, there are piles of trash everywhere".

He settled into a small apartment on the ninth floor of a 14 story building where the elevator works about half of the time.



"The other problem is it's heated from a central heating plant. It's turned off sometimes in March and not turned back on until mid October, no matter what the temperature is", says his wife, Janet Meyle, who elected to stay in Wisconsin. She was interviewed by phone from their home in Port Washington.

Theirs has become an intercontinental marriage, with Roland returning several times a year and Janet traveling to join him in Kazakhstan at least once a year. They settled in Port Washington two years ago to be near her ailing aunt and her mother, now deceased. It's also close to their children and their families, Karl in Schaumburg, Illinois, Kurt, a police officer in Milwaukee, and Anita Creswell, in Appleton.

At first, Meyle's Almaty mission centered strictly on religion; on tending his congregation and teaching future pastors.

Last spring, his role expanded to directing operations of a 53 foot medical and dental trailer. It travels southeastern Kazakhstan, from Almaty in the southeast to the steppes in the north to mountain villages near China. Primarily for pregnant women and children, it delivers free care ranging from immunizations to prenatal testing and counseling on dental fillings.

The clinic is equipped with an examination table, blood lab, and two dental chairs. Its waiting room contains Christian literature from Bibles to coloring books. When people line up outside for treatment, Meyle and a Russian "colleague" work the crowd. They hand out Bibles in Russian and Kazakh, said John Doyle, a Madison dentist who organized the clinic for the Concordia Mission Society. "He's very enthusiastic about his ministry".

Doyle is associate professor in the University of Wisconsin Medical Center's surgery department and is chief of the dentistry section at UW Hospital and Clinics in Madison. Based on his recent efforts to establish two free clinics in Ukraine, the Lutheran Synod asked Doyle to work with Meyle in setting up a similar one in Kazakhstan, with the government's cooperation.

Doyle solicited start-up equipment, including microscopes and dialysis and electrocardiogram machines from UW, and an x-ray machine and other items from St. Mary's Medical Center in Madison. "Outdated by US standards, the equipment was "what nobody wanted, but it still works over there," Doyle said.

He also recruits medical and dental volunteers from Madison and elsewhere in the US to assist Kazakh physicians and dentists.

"The people there are very bright, very well-educated," Doyle said. "But they haven't had a lot of equipment to assist in their diagnoses. The only thing we're doing is more or less assisting them in the use of supplies and in some medications that otherwise aren't available there.. "anything that needs to be done, Roland can do. He's the most valuable asset."

Meyle "has always had a desire to work with German people He's also working with Russians. He wanted to give them hope of the gospel, and medical hope", said Janet Meyle, a medical technician by training.

She supports her husband's efforts by giving lectures and slide presentations to church and civic groups throughout the upper Midwest, Florida and Missouri. In response, people have donated money, medical supplies such as aspirin, even mittens and scarves. (Inquiries and donations may be directed to the Concordia Mission Society, PO Box 8555, St. Louis, MO. 63126)

Janet Meyle suggested her husband has drawn strength from his congregations unwavering faith.

"Stalin was not able to eradicate all the churches," Meyle says, "but he put them under strict control. They had to be licensed and could only be built in designated places where they could not be easily seen. They couldn't be advertised as a church. The sign for our church went up in summer.

He enjoys giving sermons in the simple white prayer house where his followers gather. "Outside it looks like a house, but inside it is completely like a church".

During services, the men traditionally sit on one side and the women on the other.



One of them, Helen Katke, came from Ukraine in 1936 as a 6 year old. She remembers the month long trip by horse and cart. "We had to leave everything behind, all our cattle, everything. We had an uncle in the United States, but we had to throw away his address; they would have put us in prison. We had to bury our Christian book in the ground".

Despite its faith, Meyle's congregation is shrinking. Age has something to do with it, but there's more. Meyle said, "These people have lived here for years, but they're afraid that with Kazakhstan's new nationalization, they are going to get it in the neck again. They feel they've suffered enough. There are two reasons why they are leaving, fear of the Kazakh's and better economic conditions in Germany. If I were in their shoes, I'd go too".

"Two thirds of my parish has already gone", Meyle said. "The attendance on Sunday used to be so big that half of the people had to stand. Then after an hour, they would change places. We no longer have that problem."

Still, Meyle has just accepted another two-year commitment, which lasts until August, 1997.

"The decision to renew was easy, he said, It has been the best two years of my life".

---

**For a fun afternoon, plan now to attend our  
June 2, 1996 picnic, when we will have a pot  
luck dinner and Bingo afterwards. Bring your  
favorite dish, and share your favorite with the  
others. Meet us at:**

**Ebenezer United Church of Christ  
801 B St. at 1:00 P.M.**

---

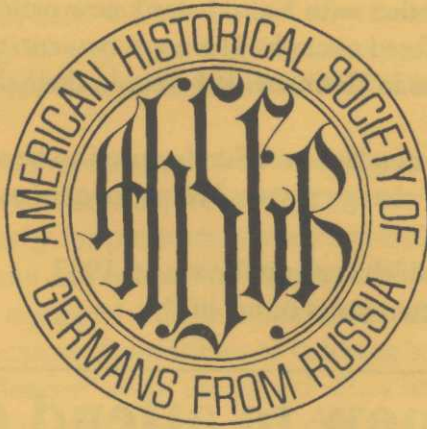
A true story:

During World War II, Harold Bauer had to peel potatoes so many times that he decided to buy himself a potato peeler. The other day, while getting ready for the annual Kraut and Brei Dinner, Harold was peeling potatoes with a peeler that had an unusual design. When asked about the unusual design, he replied this was his peeler while in the army. It's been over 50 years that we celebrated our victory of World War II and Harold is still carrying his own potato peeler!

=====

**"NO PERSON IS EVER HONORED FOR WHAT HE RECEIVED.  
HONOR HAS BEEN THE REWARD FOR WHAT HE GAVE"  
CALVIN COOLIDGE**





**AHSGR**  
**27th International**  
**Convention**

**June 10—June 16, 1996**

**Radisson Hotel South**  
**and Plaza Tower**

***Bloomington, Minnesota***

American Historical Society  
of Germans From Russia  
631 D Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502-1199

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LINCOLN, NE  
PERMIT NO. 69

Mr. & Mrs. Donald Schwartz  
1000 Butler Ave.  
Lincoln NE 68521