



Lincoln Chapter

The American Historical Society of Germans From Russia

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 1998

Broda Dinner – Friday, November 13

Speaker: Gary D. Reifschneider

“The Incredible Journey–In Search of German Roots”

Join Gary D. Reifschneider on “his incredible journey” as he visits his German ancestral village and the Vogelsberg Region in the State of Hessen, Germany. Gary will take you to the heartland of our German-Russian ancestors as he visits the historical Eisenburg Castle in Budingen, local churches, landmarks, and many of the villages where our forefathers lived prior to their departure to Russia in the mid-1760s.

Gary D. Reifschneider is a first generation German from Russia. His father, Alexander Carl Reifschneider, was born in the northern Caucasus village of Patopawa and immigrated to western Nebraska with his parents and grandparents in 1912.

Gary’s interest in his German-

Russian heritage began at an early age while attending his grandfather’s funeral in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, where many Volga Germans settled during the turn of the century. Gary was bewildered by the presence of German-speaking relatives who were all from “The Old Country–Russia.” The mystery of why people from Russia spoke German and why these people came to the United States was never answered until 1962. While teaching junior high school in Scottsbluff, a Ukrainian, who was teaching German and Russian, explained how “Katherine of Russia” had invited German farmers and craftsmen to settle in Russia, and further, explained the reasons why “our people” decided to leave Russia and immigrate to America.

Having access to American Historical Society of Germans from Russia research resources and other historical research documents from the Budingen archives and local church records, have all been contributing factors in launching Gary on his long journey in search of his German roots.

In 1992, Gary made his pilgrimage trip to Budingen, Germany, which ultimately led him to his ancestral village–Leisenwald. On this trip, Gary met his collateral relative, who like Gary, also shares the burning desire to know where one is from. Since this memorable occasion, Gary has traced his family lineage back to the 1360s...a total of 18 generations covering a time frame of over 600 years.

**Tickets for the Broda Dinner may be purchased
from any Board Member.**

NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR

**IF YOU ARE ABLE TO LEND A HELPING HAND
FOR SERVING OR CLEANING UP, CALL**

LARRY SCHENKEL-489-3213

SIDONIA BABCOCK-792-2175

GLADYS HERSTEIN-489-5976

A Message from a Concerned Member

I can't believe it is almost mid-November. I don't know where the year has gone. It was 38 years ago in October that I was blessed by the birth of my first daughter. I bought her a life membership in our organization at the last convention held in Lincoln. As I write this for the newsletter, I wonder if we will have an organization for her to belong to in the future.

Each year a membership report is included in the convention packet. It shows since 1993 we have had a declining membership. We gained 316 new members in 1996, for example, but we had 670 non-renewals.

Why do people not renew? The first answer is simple. A number of our members are quite old and so we lose members because of death. But not 670. The Lincoln Chapter, as of September 1 of this year has had 40 members who haven't renewed. As I looked over the names, I recognized some of them. There was a death in the

family. Again, not all were death related. I know some people quit because their genealogical research is done.

Genealogy is not the reason our organization exists! Our reason for existing is to preserve our heritage and the story of the sacrifices our people made to come to America and build a new country and a better life for their children and their children's children. To preserve that history and story takes a lot of committed people, and not just for genealogy research. Please, keep your membership active, and be an active member in the Lincoln Chapter meetings and activities. We have had some excellent programs, but attendance is usually the same 50-75 people. Not a very good attendance for a membership of over 250.

So I have a lot of questions: 1) Why do members not renew? 2) What can we do to keep our members? 3) Why don't more members attend meetings? Do you have any answers or sugges-

tions? Call me, Larry Schenkel, at 489-3213 and give me your thoughts. If you don't want to call, my address is 2538 South 53rd Street, Lincoln, NE 68506. My e-mail is norka@juno.com.

One of the best ways to get involved is to serve on the Board of Directors. We are taking nominations now for our election at the January membership meeting. Would you like to serve on the Board? Do you know someone who would be a good candidate? One board term is for three years and we meet on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

If you agree to run for the Board of Directors, please be serious to your obligation. You will be expected to attending meetings and serve on committees. Any board member who misses three consecutive meetings without an adequate excuse, can be dropped from the Board. We have never done this, and I think there are times we should have.

-Larry Schenkel

WANTED



Volunteers for Data Entry.
Your own computer is a must.

If you have a computer and a few hours a week, you are needed to alphabetize obituaries. We are also in need of people to translate obituaries from German into English. Is this the job for you?
Call Norma Somerheiser, 476-8976.

Lincoln Chapter AHSGR

President John Stuertz
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Second Vice Pres. Dale Dinges
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Lois Sorensen, Lillian Weber,
Ruth White, Mary Wunder

Christmas Sing

Sunday, December 13, 1998
2:00 p.m.

Friedens Lutheran Church
6th and D Streets - Lincoln, Nebraska
Refreshments will be served!



IMPORTANT DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE GERMAN RUSSIANS

<p>April 21, 1729 16-1763</p> <p>June 28, 1762</p> <p>December 4, 1762</p> <p>July 22, 1763</p> <p>1764-1767</p> <p>1771-1774</p> <p>1786</p> <p>1793</p> <p>November 6, 1796</p> <p>1796-1801</p> <p>1801-1825</p> <p>February 20, 1804</p> <p>1825-1855</p> <p>1830</p> <p>1855-1881</p> <p>1860s</p> <p>June 4, 1871</p> <p>January 13, 1874</p> <p>1871</p> <p>1881-1917</p> <p>July 28, 1914</p> <p>1915</p> <p>December 13, 1916</p> <p>February 1917</p> <p>November 7, 1917</p> <p>June 29, 1918</p> <p>1920-1923</p> <p>January 1924</p> <p>1928-1933</p> <p>1928-1940</p> <p>September 1, 1939</p> <p>June 22, 1941</p> <p>August 20, 1941</p> <p>August 28, 1941</p> <p>October, 1941</p> <p>1991</p>	<p>Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst born. She later ruled Russia under the name Catherine II. Seven Years' War. This was an important factor in bringing the Germans to the Lower Volga to establish colonies. The areas of now central Germany were devastated, creating more instability for the peasants. Catherine II ascends the throne of Russia.</p> <p>First Manifesto issued by Catherine II. It invited foreign settlers to come to Russia. This manifesto brought few results.</p> <p>Catherine II issued her second manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in Russia. It spelled out the conditions under which they could immigrate and granted special rights and privileges. Large numbers of German peasants accepted the invitation.</p> <p>Founding of German colonies along the Lower Volga River.</p> <p>Kirghiz Raids and Pugachev's rebellion, called the Pugachevshchina, ravished the Volga colonies. Mennonites from West Prussia began immigrating to Russia due to the 1772 Partition of Poland, which threatened their military service exemption as conscientious objectors. Their settlements were established primarily in the Taurida region of South Russia.</p> <p>Second Partition of Poland grants area of Volhynia to Russia. Polish landowners invite German peasants to lease land for cultivation.</p> <p>Death of Catherine II at age sixty-seven.</p> <p>Reign of Tsar Paul I, son of Catherine II.</p> <p>Reign of Tsar Alexander I, the well-beloved, grandson of Catherine II.</p> <p>Alexander I reissues manifesto of Catherine II, with some modifications, inviting foreigners to settle in New Russia.</p> <p>Reign of Tsar Nicholas I, Grandson of Catherine II, and brother of Alexander I.</p> <p>Polish Insurrection brings about immigration of many Polish Germans to Bessarabia, and some to the Volga Region.</p> <p>Reign of Tsar Alexander II, great-grandson of Catherine II; son of Nicholas I.</p> <p>Another wave of Germans immigrates to Volhynia prompted by the 1861 abolishment of serfdom, which left a significant drain on the work force in this and other areas. The Second Polish Insurrection of 1863 brought more Polish Germans to Volhynia and other areas of Russia.</p> <p>Imperial Russian Government issues decree repealing the Manifestos of Catherine II and Alexander I, terminating, after a period of ten years' grace, the special privileges of the German colonists.</p> <p>Imperial Russian Government issues second decree which amended the one of <i>June 4, 1871</i>. The second decree instituted compulsory military conscription for the German colonists. These two decrees impelled thousands of German Russians to immigrate to North and South America.</p> <p>Germany unified as a nation for the first time. This created great unease among the European nations and Russia. This is also the time of increased animosity towards foreigners in Russia due to the slavophile movement and growing nationalism in Russia.</p> <p>Reign of Tsar Nicholas II, great-great-great-grandson of Catherine II. He abdicated during World War I. On July 16, 1918, he and his immediate family were executed by the Bolsheviks. Nicholas II was the last monarch to rule Russia.</p> <p>Outbreak of World War I.</p> <p>Volhynian Germans deported to Volga Region and South Russia as a result of advancement of eastern front during World War I.</p> <p>Volga Germans ordered to be banished. This order was never carried out because of internal troubles in Russia.</p> <p>Revolution comes to Russia.</p> <p>Bolshevik Revolution in Russia led by Nikolai Lenin and the beginning of the Communist regime.</p> <p><i>October 25, 1917 by old-style Russian Calendar</i></p> <p>Lenin established Autonomous Volga German Workers' Commune, forerunner to the ASSR of the Volga Germans, founded in 1924.</p> <p>Period of famine in Russia claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. Death by starvation in the Volga-German colonies estimated at 166,000 lives, one third of the population. American Relief Administration provided assistance.</p> <p>Autonomous Socialistic Soviet Republic of the Volga Germans established.</p> <p>Second period of famine again claims many lives, throughout Russia.</p> <p>German farms and property expropriated by the Soviet government and Germans are forced into collective farms or migrate to the cities. Period of Stalinization.</p> <p>Outbreak of World War II.</p> <p>Nazi Germany invades Soviet Russia.</p> <p>Beginning of the banishment and exile of the German populations in Russia. Crimean Germans deported.</p> <p>Decree ordering the deportation of the Volga Germans to the northeastern part of the European Soviet Union, to Middle Asia, and to Siberia.</p> <p>Germans in the North and South Caucasus deported. St. Petersburg Germans also deported.</p> <p>Fall of Soviet Union.</p>
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