



Lincoln Chapter

The American Historical Society of Germans From Russia

NEWSLETTER

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March/April 2010

Where Did They Come From?

Submitted by Pam Wurst

How many times have you asked yourself this question? Why are my ancestors called Germans from Russia? Some of you may be fortunate to know the answer while others are still searching for the answer. We do know that they were German.

Maybe before we look into where they came from, we need to look back at why they left Germany to go to Russia.

From 1618-1763 a series of five wars were mainly on German soil. It started with the Thirty Years War from 1618-1648 followed by the War of Spanish Succession, 1756-1763, which the battleground was mainly Bavaria. Next was the First and Second Silesian Wars, 1740-1745, and lastly the Seven Years War or the Third Silesian war, 1756-1763. This was the breaking point of the colonists. They were tired of killing each other in the name of God and Religion, which only expanded the wealth and holdings of the ruling states at the expense of their subjects. Because of these wars the colonists faced political, economic and religious abuse. Historians estimate the lives lost at the end of this was close to 800,000.

The mass migration to Russia was more than a hundred years in the making and the second invitation of Catherine the Great came at a most opportune time in 1763 at the end of the Seven years War. The colonists thought this was their salvation.

Already, before her invitation, about 100,000 Germans lived and worked in

the large cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Odessa, having been brought there by Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great.

The idea of having foreigners populate the frontier of the Russian wilderness was not Catherine's idea but that of Elizabeth's extended plan. Catherine implemented her idea on a much larger and grander scale. Her applications of psychology in having their groups settle according to their ethnicity made leaving one's homeland and family easier. There was a minority of immigrants from France, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands, and the Slavic Nations. German immigrants comprised the largest group.

Hesse and Rhineland contributed the largest number of immigrants. These areas suffered the ravages of the wars the hardest. Others came from Thuringia and the larger states of Bavaria and Baden.

The Volga Germans came from the Hessen area predominately, including the Hessian Bergland, Rhenish Franconia, and Rhine Palatinate.

The Black Sea Germans, Beresans, Besserabians, Bukovinans and Gluckstahlers were comprised from many areas of the German States including Wuerttemberg, Baden, Sachsen, Rhein Pflaz, Palatinate, Vogtland, Westphalia, Mecklenburg, Prussia, Alsace, Saxony, Hungary, Austria and there was even one lonely Swede in the group.

The Kutschurgan District came from Elsass, Rhein Pflaz and

Wuerttemberg.

We may never know exactly where our ancestors came from but with the help of many of the Village Coordinators of AHSGR, the Gluckstahl Colonies Research group and RIG (Regional Interest Groups) of the German Russian Heritage Society and the German Origins we have many footprints to follow.

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, in genealogy, one set of footprints turns into another, and another, and — you get the idea. Take my case. As a youngster growing up in the North Bottoms, my grandparents and their relatives always talked about Norka. I honestly thought that was the only village our ancestors came from. But those footprints led to my South Bottoms grandparents, Jacob and Katrina Luft. They were from Schilling. More footprints.

My Norka footprints began with Grandma Kreick who started life as a Loos in Norka. She married Johannes Schreiber. Where did these footprints suddenly come from? How did she get from Schreiber to Kreick?

When Grandma Schreiber came to America she married Jacob Schenkel and started new footprints. After Grandpa Schenkel died, Grandma married Conrad Kreick. Grandpa Schenkel was from Doenhoff, still more footprints. And suddenly I find that I am not only a Norkan, but a Schillinger and a Doenhoffer, as well.

That is why it's hard to tell where we came from and who our relatives are.



A Tribute to Katherine Pabst

Submitted by Elsa Amen

On January 28, 2010 a gracious, talented and committed lady celebrated her 97th birthday. Katherine Pabst is well known for her unique style of playing sacred piano music. Now she plays only for her own pleasure, as all around is blackness. However, she is blessed with the ability to play by memory.

Katherine is a member of Ebenezer U.C.C. where she was organist for 38 years, accompanied the choir, was Sunday School teacher, Superintendent, two week daily Vacation Bible School teacher and coordinator. She is still a member of the Dorcas Society. To all these activities, Kate brought life and fun, as well as knowledge. If someone requested a song by title, she could tell you the page it appeared on in the Hymnal. She enjoyed the choir where she could toss out a German name for someone, for a good laugh.

Katherine and her daughter, Linda, still attend Ebenezer when weather and health permit. Only recently, during a Praise and Prayer request time, did she give a moving testimony of her love

of God's word and urged others to be diligent in its reading.

On Saturday, September 17, 1994 on the religion page of the *Lincoln Journal-Star*, the German Singers were featured and pictured. Katherine had the vision and desire to begin a chorus to preserve the hymns and language of her heritage. She sent out invitations to churches and anywhere people of German descent could be found. At the first gathering in August 1984, 28 people responded. At the 10th anniversary, the choir had grown to 48 members.

By this time the German Singers had sung at 21 churches, including the German Christmas service at Friedens. They had also entertained at 16 different hospitals, nursing and retirement homes where they were always appreciated, sometimes with smiles and many times with tears.

The audiences were always fascinated with Katherine's piano playing. Also, on the choir's agenda were 16 civic concerts. Out-of-town trips were to Adams, Bennet, Hallam and Hickman. Who could forget climbing up the

raised platform in the middle of the street in Grand Island on a very warm summer afternoon?

The Singers were also invited to sing at wedding anniversaries, birthday celebrations, reunions, funerals and at the 2006 AHSGR Convention in Lincoln.

They always enjoyed their own Valentine Party. Even after the choir was sadly forced to disband because of Katherine's failing eyesight and the aging and health of the members, they would occasionally meet for a Sunday dinner. Following the dinner, favorite requests were sung well into the afternoon.

The choir produced and sold two tapes. Many ended up all over the country.

What a tribute to Katherine Pabst as she enabled the German Singers to bring blessings to so many in times of loneliness, sorrow and joy!

LUNCH AT THE LIBRARY

Each month the Bennett Martin Library holds a program entitled "Lunch at the Library". On April 7, 2010 at 12:10pm Jim Griess, author and Lincoln Chapter member, will present a talk about his book, "The German Russians: Those who came to Sutton".

All four sets of Jim's grandparents were German Russians who came to the Sutton, NE area from the Volga and Black Sea regions of Russia.

Those who plan to attend are encouraged to bring their own lunch. Coffee will be provided.

Congratulations Alison!

Alison Nickolaus, daughter of Lowell and Jane Nickolaus graduated summa cum laude from Northwest Missouri State University on December 18, 2009. She has earned a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education.

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Officers are elected to the Board of Directors for a three-year term. However, if you are interested in serving for a shorter period of time, you could ask about a one-year appointment, to determine if it would be something you would enjoy doing.

2010 OFFICERS

President	Nancy Borrell	Treasurer	Sidonia Babcock
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“TEE” Time for Making “Golf Balls”

Submitted by Nancy Borrell



On February 10, 2010, several people gathered at Nancy Borrell's house to make “golf balls” (butter balls) for the soup supper. Barbara Schmidt and Nancy had dried the bread and made the crumbs ahead of time to be ready for the others when they arrived.

The fun began with the first of the “workers” arriving about 8:30am and all the others arriving by 9:30am. Don Weber was in the kitchen gemaching (mixing) the crumbs, eggs and butter. Barbara, Judy Runion, Delores Schwartz, and Nancy kept the bowls filled with ingredients, ready for Don to mix.

When all the ingredients were mixed, it was off to the dining room with a batch of dough. That's where Susan Stoehr, Judy, Ruby Weber, Helen Schwartz, Mary Frost, and Norma Somerheiser were, ready to roll the dough into “golf balls.”

The balls were placed on cookie sheets and when a sheet was full they were placed into the freezer for a quick freeze and then into freezer bags.

By 11:30am all the work was done and there were a total of 1200 golf balls in the freezer. The balls will be used for our soup supper on March 19th and there will also be some available for sale in one- and two-dozen packages.

Oh, and of course we had some noodle soup for lunch with a few of the “extra” golf balls. We had a great time and did a lot of reminiscing.

If any of you would like to be part of

the fun next time, call Ruby Weber (488-2313), or any of the board members and your name will be added to the volunteer list.

Pictured top left: Barb Schmidt in foreground, Delores Schwarz and Don Weber; Top right: Norma Somerheiser, Helen Schwartz, and Mary Frost; Bottom: Susan Stoehr and Ruby Weber:



Annual Soup Supper

Friday, March 19, 2010

WSI Hall, 1430 N. 10th Street

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Adults \$7.00

Children (12 & under) \$3.00

Chicken Noodle with Butter Balls

Vegetable Beef

Chili • Green Bean Soup

Tickets may be purchased from any board member or at the door. Extra noodles and butterballs will be for sale for take-home.



Who Am I?

As you may remember, we had a little contest in the September-October 2009 Chapter Newsletter. The winner of the contest was Judy Johnson of Clovis, CA. The names of those folks are on the picture shown here.

From this list of names, as far as I know, only Art Flegel is still with us. He still lives and breathes AHSGR! I have been unable to locate Sally Heib as she is no longer in Freeman, SD.

The list comes from the December 1974 Work Paper No. 16. There is a President's message that could almost have been written today. Ruth Amen outlines a list of problems and obstacles to overcome if we are to remain a viable organization.

Work Paper No. 16 is a treasure trove of Christmas and New Year lore of the Germans from Russia.

I hope this stirs some interest in some of you to go back in time when AHSGR was just getting started.



Work Paper No.16

December, 1974





HERZLICHEN GLUCKWUNSCH ZUM GEBURSTAGL HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March

Jone White
Dale Dinges
Louise Schleich
Carol Sommers
Dorothy J. Pearce
Recca J. Hansen
Kenneth A. Hardt
Peter J. Kolb
John Weber
Cheryl Kahler
Myron Pudwill
Bertha Reifschneider
Ed O'Neill
Virginia Amen
Randy Tichota
Victor Michel
Shirley Michel

April

Jane Nickolaus
Jacob Dering
Amy Frohn
Sylvia Hanner
Sue Pudwill
Bill Leonhardt
Judy Sader
Connie Trautwein
Karen Trautwein

FROHLICH JUHRESTAG HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

March

Lenny and Jan Schneider
Bill and Elsa Amen

April

Jane and Lowell Nickolaus
Carol and Jim Sommers

UNSERE LEUTE ERINNRYNG OUR PEOPLE IN MEMORY

Harvey G. Hergenrader
Dennis Dale Haas
Peter Charles Reifschneider
Rose Marie Engstrom
Richard L. "Dick" Schenaman
James Walter Schaaf, Jr.
Steven C. Schneider
Conrad Kruse

Herzlichen Gluckwunsch Zum Geburstagl

*Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday,
Your friends are all singing. May the New Year that is coming,
Bring gladness to you. May it teach you to be helpful,
Kind hearted and loving, Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday,
Happy Birthday to you.*

I learned this version of Happy Birthday at Immanuel Reformed (now just Immanuel) Sunday school. We would sing every time someone had had his or her birthday since the last Sunday.

One time I was singing this version when I became aware of another voice singing along with me. It was Henry Heckman. (Henry sang with the German Singers, too.) He had a nice, clear, baritone voice and he made me sound pretty good.

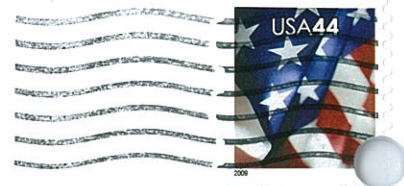
I asked Henry if he had gone to Immanuel and he said, "No, but I heard this version being sung some-time ago and I really liked it. When you started singing I just had to join in."

I think we sang this for Pam and Roger Wurst's mother's 90th birthday when we had one of our Chapter Membership meetings at Immanuel Fellowship Hall.

Lincoln Chapter AHSGR



Mr. Larry D. Schenkel
9439 Benziger Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68526



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CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

Yes, once again it's time to pay your Lincoln Chapter Membership dues. The cost is only \$12.00 for a year, which helps pay for the printing and postage for this newsletter.

Lincoln Chapter Membership Application

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Spouse _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____ Anniv. Date _____

Make your check for \$12.00 payable to Lincoln Chapter AHSGR and mail to:
Dale Dinges, Membership Chairman; 1609 S. Cotner Blvd.; Lincoln, NE 68506

If you have already submitted your dues payment, THANK YOU! We need all of you to keep this organization thriving!

If you haven't renewed your dues, please do so today, otherwise, this will be your last newsletter. Your Lincoln Chapter of AHSGR needs you! Please renew today!

