



# Sunflower Chapter NEWSLETTER



Summer/Fall 2014

Vol. 18, Issue 3

## 45th AHSGR CONVENTION - Lincoln, Nebraska

Review by: Kevin Rupp



The 45th Annual AHSGR Convention was held in Lincoln, Nebraska starting Monday, July 7, through Sunday, July 13. Pre-Convention activities started for me as I traveled to Lincoln on Thursday, July 3 to pick up one of our foreign guest speakers, Olga Zubova, deputy director of the Samara State Regional Archive in Samara, Russia and brought her back to Hays for the weekend. This being Olga's first trip to the United States she was eager to see some of Kansas, especially the area settled by the Volga-Germans. The 4th of July was spent touring the villages of Ellis and Rush County. Before we began the tour we had one problem to deal with, she could only speak Russian and French and the only words I knew in Russia were, yes, no, "Nushnick", yep that is a Russian word, dog and cow. So my vocabulary was very limited. We did download a language translator on my I-Phone so we were finally able to communicate. This brought us many laughs in the translations.

We started out in Victoria, where to our surprise, a funeral was in progress. We quietly sat in the pew and she was able to observe a Catholic funeral. Olga, who is Russian Orthodox, found this interesting to see the liturgy. She told me that in Russia she has studied architecture and because of this was very interested in the structures of our churches. From Victoria we visited Pfeifer, the cemetery, and then off to Catherine. Because the church was locked, I went across the street to get the key. Olga told me how interesting it is that I can just go up to a house and they would give me a key to the church. The rest of the day was spent visiting the other villages and lunch at Gella's. We spent the evening outside watching the fireworks.

Saturday afternoon I had to play for a wedding and so Olga came along to see how a wedding is done in the States. She was very surprised to see that the men were not in black tuxedos and that the women were not wearing long white gloves. She told me that weddings in Russia are very expensive because all the dresses are handmade and the women all wear long white gloves and the men are dressed to the hilt. In the afternoon we visited Fort Hays, the University, the Ellis County Historical Society and finished up looking at the buffalos. Sunday we headed back to Lincoln for the convention. I spent the night in Lincoln and attended the opening board meetings on Monday morning. After the meetings we broke out for our own meetings, which for me included the Archives and the Editorial and Publications meetings. You will be able to read all our annual reports in a coming AHSGR Newsletter. Our meeting started to wind down and I left once again for Hays because of prior commitments and a couple of funerals.



Early Thursday morning I headed back to Lincoln to attend the rest of the convention.

As soon as you left the registration area in the hotel you were welcomed by Heritage Hall. This is an area where many of the AHSGR Village Coordinators display their information on tri-fold boards.



Village Coordinators gathered Thursday morning as a group to discuss many items of concern and also ways that AHSGR and VC's can work more closely together. The main comment was that VC's are looked at, through the eyes of AHSGR, as being representatives of the organization. VC's are encouraged to share their information with headquarters, if anything, to have a back-up of their information in case anything happens to the VC. In the past, we have had some VC's pass away and all their material is then lost. Unfortunately, not all VC's feel this way about sharing their information with headquarters. So this did cause a lively conversation.

Later in the day, Village Meetings were held throughout the hotel in various rooms. My group was a bit smaller this year than it was in Ft. Collins in 2013.

Friday and Saturday the convention went into high gear with the various speakers, displays, dancing, Kuchen

*Continued on page 2.....*



Olga Zubova, a speaker from Samara Russia (left), Yulia Tsymbal, AHSGR translator and archive research coordinator (middle) and Olga Erokhina, a speaker from Moscow (right), pose for a portrait outside AHSGR Headquarters in Lincoln.

breaks and just a good time to be with friends.

Olga Zubova presented two presentations: "German Names in Samara Gubernia: Germans Who Left a Notable Trace in the History of Samara" and "Materials on Ethnic Germans of Samara in the Central State Archive of Samara Oblast". Olga Erokhina, who was our second foreign guest speaker, gave two presentations as well: "Overview of Russian Archives Holdings on the History of German Colonies in Russia" and "German Colonists' Fate During World War I".

Gary Reiswig, author of the book, "The Thousand Mile Stare: One Family's Journey through the Struggle and Science of Alzheimer's", gave his presentation of one Midwestern family's discovery, combining factual medical research, family genealogy, and the emotional challenges of the Reiswigs as they experience the devastating effects of early onset Alzheimer's. I was able to pick up his book for our library. Many of these speakers will have their talks published in future AHSGR Journals, so be sure to look for them.

The Lincoln chapter with the help of staff from Headquarters did an outstanding job with this convention. The research library, which is always a main part of the convention, was kept at headquarters along with the store.

Friday evening brought members together for a good old-time polka dance. The band was called the River Boys. In fact, the guy that plays the dulcimer is a Herrmann with connections to Ellis County. The band was outstanding.

Saturday morning was the Recognition Breakfast. Our Chapter walked away with a number of awards: Ribbon for 35 Years as a Chapter; Sunflower Chapter for Financial Support for 2013-2014 Year; Sunflower Chapter for Early Renewal Award; Sunflower Chapter for Honorable Mention of the Outstanding Chapter Newsletter Award; Leona Pfeifer myself received awards for participating in the SOAR program for donating obituaries and I walked away with the First Place winner of the AHSGR "Each One - Reach One" Membership Recruitment Campaign during the 2013-2014 year.

Saturday Night we all gathered for the Banquet. Those recently elected members of the board were announced. Bob Wagner was re-elected as President; Mike Meisinger, from Kansas City, is Vice-President; Dennis Zitterkopf returned to the board as Treasurer, and Karen Soekan, Secretary.

Although I found out about a week before the Convention, the Distinguished Service Award went to Corinne Koehler and myself.



Sunday I headed home, for the third time in a little over a week. The drive from Hays to Lincoln seemed to get shorter each time. Another AHSGR convention has been put to bed for another year. In 2015, the convention is set for Billings Montana, July 12 - 15. Watch the [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org) for more information. Thank you Lincoln Chapter for a GREAT CONVENTION!

## SUNFLOWER CHAPTER BOARD

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## President's Message.....from Kevin Rupp

It seems like every time I try to write this I am a month behind. First was for the Summer Newsletter and now for the Fall Newsletter. Well, Summer is now long gone and Fall is almost history as well. I want to apologize for not getting this out sooner. Because of this and because we have had so many things happening during this time you will notice this newsletter is a little bigger than usual.

Our Christmas Banquet will be on Sunday, December 14 with our annual banquet beginning at about 12:30...or so. This is our last fundraiser for the year. **Dinner tickets will be \$10.00 each, children ages 5-12 will be \$5.00 and those under 5 can eat for free.** The menu will be Turkey, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans and all the trimmings. Our board has generously offered to bring all the trimmings. Following our banquet will be a Christmas program which will be held in the St. Francis (Munjor) church, pray for good weather! I understand that we may have some special quests at our Christmas meeting. **Please be sure to RSVP by December 9 to Dolores Pfannenstiel at 785-625-6452. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO CALL AND RSVP!** Please be sure to bring your nieces, nephews and grandchildren!

At this meeting we will also discuss making our annual donation to AHSGR. The board has made the suggestion at the last board meeting to donate \$1,000.00 to Lincoln. This will be brought before them membership on December 14. One of our main responsibilities as a chapter is to help headquarters financially at least once a year. Without them we would not have a Society or a Chapter.

Membership are also due at this meeting, so please use the 2015 membership form that is enclosed. Please be sure to pay your fees to Jerry Braun and he will send your dues to Lincoln. Any question please contact Jerry Braun, 785-650-4116.

A little information about the September Breakfast that we had. We made a profit of \$1,263.00, bringing in \$3,305.50 in ticket sales. Next year we will have a contest to see who can sell the most tickets!!!

The 2014 Kansas Round-Up is now behind us and once again it was a success thanks to the Wichita Chapter for sponsoring it here in Hays. Next year's Round-Up will be Saturday, October 3rd, I am hearing, but I am waiting on the official word from Janel Moore since it will be the same weekend as the Hays Oktoberfest.

The program dates for 2015 have been set as such:

February 15, 2015

April 26, 2015

August 9, 2015

No October Meeting because of Round-Up

December 13, 2015

We will confirm these date at our December meeting.

So, until Sunday, December 14th I want to wish you an early Merry Christmas and ...

**Ich wuensch euch ein  
Glueckseliges Neues Jahr,  
langes leben,  
Gesundheit,  
Frieden und Einigkeit,  
und nach dem Tod  
die ewig Glueckseligkeit**

## 11th AHSGR Membership Campaign



July 12, 2014 - May 15, 2015

EACH ONE - REACH ONE

The Membership Campaign rewards AHSGR members and chapters who recruit new members for AHSGR or purchase memberships for new members\*. Cash prizes will be awarded at the 2015 Convention. Membership Data Forms are available through Chapters or on-line at <http://www.ahsgr.org/membership.htm>

- ◆ \$100 to the AHSGR members and \$200 to the AHSGR Chapter who recruits the largest number of new members.
- ◆ \$75 to the AHSGR member and \$150 to the AHSGR Chapter who recruits the 2nd largest number of new members.
- ◆ \$50 to the AHSGR members and \$100 to the AHSGR Chapter who recruits the 3rd largest number of new members.
- ◆ A \$25 cash prize to 3 new members selected at random.

New Members are Critical for the Growth and Success of AHSGR.

79% of New Members Join Because Someone Asked Them!



**Social & Open Library.....Noon  
Meal .....12:30  
Meeting/Program..... 1:30**

**Program to be held in the Church**

**RSVP Dolores Pfannenstiel at  
785-625-6452 by Tuesday, Decem-  
ber 9th.**



## 2015 SUNFLOWER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

Members Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ German-Russian Heritage Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Ancestral Names (Self) \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestral Villages (Spouse) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouses Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouses Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ German-Russian Heritage Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Newsletter: \_\_\_ By e-mail; \_\_\_ By Postal Mail; \_\_\_ Both

DUES: Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Dues for year 20 \_\_\_\_\_

Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_

**Privacy Option:** \_\_\_ Check here if you do NOT want your information published to others in the Society. (Clues/GED List)

**You must be a member of the International Organization (AHSGR) before joining the local Sunflower Chapter.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$45.00 Basic Annual Membership** - Includes all benefits, voting rights & notices except, **NO Journal, Newsletter or Clues**. This includes national & local dues.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$60.00 Standard Annual Membership** - Includes all benefits, voting rights, notices **including Journal & Newsletter**, except NO Clues. This includes national & local dues.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$110.00 Premium Annual Membership** - Includes all benefits, voting rights, notices **including Journal & Newsletter plus Clues & Membership Plus Subscription**. This includes national & local dues.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$10.00 Local Dues Only** (International Dues have already been paid to headquarters or I am a Life Member)

### **Membership renewals are due by January 1**

#### **Areas of Interest:**

We are always looking for more help in our chapter.

Please mark your areas of interest:

Program \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Information \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Help w/VFW Breakfast \_\_\_\_\_  
Photographer \_\_\_\_\_ Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Folklore \_\_\_\_\_  
Clean-up \_\_\_\_\_ Genealogy \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check out to the  
**SUNFLOWER CHAPTER**  
SUBMIT ALL RENEWALS FOR  
**LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TO OUR**  
TREASURER:  
Jerry Braun  
2223 Felten Dr.  
Hays, Ks. 67601

#### **Additional Commentary:**

1. **Clues** – A genealogy helper for researching family histories: Lists of villages & surnames that AHSGR members are researching. Lists AHSGR member contacts who are will to exchange research information and the AHSGR Village Coordinator Network. Provides instructions for submitting GEDCOM files to the AHSGR database. GEDCOM is an acronym standing for **Genealogical Data COMMunication**. **Important consideration:** To be listed/published in **Clues**, do **not** select the “Privacy Option” on the printable **Membership Application and Data Form**.

2. **Research Your German Russian Ancestors (GR-Research)** – with no fee or masking of search results. Visit and explore the **AHSGR GR-Research** website at <http://www.ahsgr.org/GR-Research.htm>. **Open Access GR-Research** is accessible by all members & non-members. **Members Only GR-Research** includes **Open Access GR-Research** plus additional research data that will be available to authorized membership levels sometime in mid-2015. See the full **GR-Research** description at <http://www.ahsgr.org/membership.htm>

If new member, how did you hear about AHSGR?

Website \_\_\_ Facebook \_\_\_ Magazine Ad \_\_\_ Society Visit \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Name of referring Chapter or Member: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2015 ANNUAL AHSGR STORYTELLING CONTEST

Adult Division (15 years or older)  
First Place Award - \$100  
Second Place Award - \$75  
Third Place Award - \$50  
(Awards for ties will be prorated)  
“Honorable Mentions” are also possible

Youth Division (14 years or younger)  
First Place Award - \$50  
Second Place Award - \$30  
Third Place Award - \$20  
(An AHSGR Youth Membership is included with each of the awards)  
“Honorable Mentions” are also possible.

## ENTRY FORM FOR THE 2015 AHSGR STORYTELLING CONTEST This completed form must accompany your story!

I hereby give my permission to allow the inclusion of the following personal story of mine in the Storytelling Contest of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia:

\_\_\_ I certify that this story has not previously been published in any form, or in any publication.

\_\_\_ I certify that I currently control all the copyrights to the story.

\_\_\_ I hereby grant AHSGR the rights to publish my Story and Photos for AHSGR use.

My signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of my Story: \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently an AHSGR member: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

I plan to be at the AHSGR Convention in Billings, Montana, in July 2015: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

FULL NAME: (please PRINT clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: (Street & Apt. Number): \_\_\_\_\_

CITY & STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE (if 14 years old or younger): \_\_\_ BIRTHDATE (if 14 years old or younger): \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL Address (please PRINT clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

Send this completed form, five printed copies of your story, a copy on a CD or Flash Drive (if possible), any pictures that enhance the story, a short biography and a picture of yourself, by email to [ahsgr@ahsgr.org](mailto:ahsgr@ahsgr.org) with “Storytelling Contest” in the subject line or by regular mail to AHSGR/Storytelling Contest, 631 D Street, Lincoln, NE 68502-1199.

**DEADLINE: ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 15, 2015**  
**Entries received after that date will not be considered!**

# 2014 Kansas Round-Up

Judy Hoffman



The annual Kansas Roundup was held on Saturday, October 5, also the weekend of Oktoberfest in Hays, Kansas. Karen Penner, Golden Wheat Chapter president remarked that these roundups have been going on for about 30 years. The 2nd roundup had about 200 people attend but over the years many members have passed away. Of the seven original Kansas chapters, now only 3 remain. This roundup was hosted by the Golden Wheat Chapter, and 85 people attended.

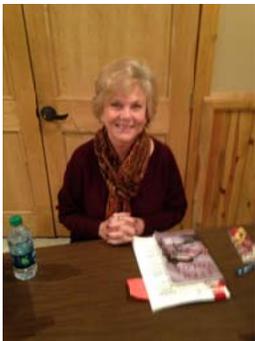
The opening ceremonies fell beautifully into place beginning with the flag ceremony, calling all veterans to file in with LeRoy Herrman carrying the U.S. flag. Garry Batt provided music for the Star Spangled Banner following the Pledge of Allegiance. Karen Penner, president of the Golden Wheat Chapter, offered the opening prayer. Frank Jacobs read off the names of chapter members who passed away this past year. A brief business meeting followed with reports and welcoming remarks from Kevin Rupp,

Karen Penner, and Janet Flickinger, Denise Grau, and Sherry Pawelko.

Karen spoke of the urgency - the great need for preserving your family history. Interview your relatives before it is too late. Google family on the internet. Write your life story.

Eileen Davis gave a brief history of the NE Chapter. In 1974 officers were elected for the Topeka (NE) Chapter. This marks 40 years for their chapter. "If we stay silent, we will be forgotten". (Ike (Isidore) Appelhans).

"SOAR NO MORE" - was the news Mike Meisinger brought. Now AHSGR is working with "FAMILY SEARCH" to make records some available to the general public. This could generate new interest and membership. We were advised to go to the AHSGR website, click on "ancestry" and discover a lot of really good information out there. There will be or already are available life events, Bessarabian records, passenger lists, federal land records for most of the western states, passenger lists, work papers, journals, departure records from Hamburg, Germany, graves...over 116 million for over 250,000 cemeteries. Just a wealth of information at your fingertips.



She drove a tractor at the age of 10; being the oldest of 4 girls, Karen Schutte, author and you could well say, historian of the Germans from Russia saga, grew up on a farm, went to a 2-room schoolhouse complete with an "out-house", lived the typical immigrant family farm life. When she retired as an interior decorator, Karen decided to learn more of her family history. Her desire was sparked by memories of the stories her grandparents told of coming to America. Karen did historical research, put it together with her family's stories and wrote the story. She found as she did this she felt as though she was a living part of what was being written. This flowed into dialogue that likely transpired and a novel was born. Soon two more books followed as the saga continued. Her ancestors left the Black Sea area because of economics and religion.

"THE TICKET" is the first book in this trilogy of novels that follow Karen's family history of migration, struggle, and sacrifice. It is a book you can't put down once you begin. Karen has a gift for making you feel as if you are living the story yourself. "FLESH ON THE BONE" and "SEED OF THE VOLGA" round out the ancestral journey to America. These books, in the hands of our young people, could spark the interest we desire to get our younger generations excited about their ancestry---and carry the torch into the future.

A delicious lunch and bingo followed. Then the first afternoon speaker, professor Eric Schmaltz, NW Oklahoma University, spoke on "Germans from Russia in Argentina and Brazil". He discovered that the Germans from Russia in Argentina and Brazil are so excited to get their story out too. They tended to settle in grasslands in the countries they migrated



to. South America was aggressively seeking immigrants, especially from west European lands, and most especially, Catholics. Brazil and Argentina are massive countries. An interesting note: the "originals", (Indian inhabitants) were forced off their lands by the government and relocated in a more tundra-like area to the far south. And their lands were made available to the European settlers. Does this not sound a bit like north America?! The newly founded colonies were allowed to remain more compact settlements which was what the German/Russians were accustomed to. Contrary to what happened to immigrants to America; the Homestead Act forced them out of their villages onto isolation on the farms. That is another story for another day.

There the winters were warmer and shorter, and they didn't get tornadoes. Also you would find palm trees beside windmills. Today there are an estimated 1 1/2 million descendants of German/Russians in Argentina, of the 41 million population. In Canada, there are 1 million of 35 million population. These are huge immigrant groups having a big impact on their environment in a good way.



Our next speaker was Yulia Tsymbal with a talk titled "From Kazakhstan to Lincoln: how Germans from Russia helped me to feel at home in America". Yulia grew up in Moscow, Russia. In 1993 she left Russia with her husband and 2 daughters. They moved to Germany where her husband had a job waiting. From there, they moved to England, and then, Nebraska. That is where she became involved with

AHSGR, first as a translator. It wasn't long and she became a member of the staff and has been there 10 years now.

Yulia spoke of her ancestry. Her grandmother wrote her story of her family's move from Germany to Russia in 1860. When the deportations took place, grandmother was not deported like so many Germans there were. Yulia became interested in studying languages which served her well in the job market. Their migration began with her husband getting a fellowship in Germany. After a few months there, they knew they didn't want to go back to Russia. So her husband found a job in England, then on to Lincoln.

Yulia's work at AHSGR has added a crucial element to the efforts to obtain records and translate them. She has managed to engineer agreements on accessing archives and find officials who understand and appreciate the desire of survivors of the Russian persecution and their ancestors seeking information. Yulia also helps Russian-speaking guests of AHSGR conventions and continues receiving articles they are publishing in Russia. Finally, Yulia has found her mission, her purpose for the historical society: to locate people who can come to our gatherings and help nourish our efforts to learn more of our history and learn what happened to those left behind.

DNA - very thought provoking - the little bit we actually know - fascinates us. It seems mind-boggling and tremendously full of potential. Frank Jacobs touched on how much history we can delve out of simply DNA. It is very complicated; it can follow back through time thousands of years. A DNA sample could go back beyond FOSSIL! There are some criteria you need if you are trying to go back thousands of years on your ancestry: you need the history (knowledge of); the time to spend on it, the biology to trace ancestry. (DNA).

One discovery through DNA is early on-set Alzheimer's, though rather rare, shows up in chromosomes. Research is pinpointing how it was passed on - inherited. It was a chromosome mutation.

Frank commented how we've long been cautioned "don't marry anyone closer than 2nd cousins". Current studies indicate the need to go out further - to 4th cousins!

Even though it was discovered that certain cancers can be passed on by father to daughter, we must be cautious on this as 'genes' seem to have like an "on-off" switch, therefore very unpredictable. It is a very complicated journey through DNA process for tracing heritage.

The fundraiser raffle drawing followed and recognition of Life Members by Leonard Schoenberger. The banquet speaker was Eric Schmaltz, with a talk on our global Diaspora: "THE GLOBAL PICTURE" We are re-connecting with our roots; connecting with ethnic groups. Celebrating many anniversaries, e.g. 250th anniversary of the first immigrant arrival in Russia; the 200th anniversary of the 1st German settlement in Belarus; the 100th anniversary of WWI; the 75th anniversary of WWII; the 25th anniversary this November of the fall of the Berlin wall.

In 1952 Eric's grandmother, Emma, came to North Dakota as a "displaced person". Emma's mother was executed by the KGB for participating in a public funeral of their bishop.

Germans from Russia are on every continent except Antarctica. In 1905 community meant a group of people living close together. In the 21st century community is no longer a place. It is who you communicate with via cell phone, internet, and Skype. It is global reach, global impact.

The aging demographic of those who still identify with their heritage, trying to preserve and promote the heritage for future generations. There will be either complete assimilation and culture death - or renaissance of culture. German/Russian immigrants were forward moving. Our task is to balance the understanding of the past - present - and future. There is a 250 year history of this "people on the move". Our ancestry is a history of connecting many parts of the world in some way: economic, cultural, religious. We Germans from Russia were instrumental globally with work ethics, faith, invention, upward mobility. Germans from Russia "have lived as humanity tossed about on the ocean of space and time" (Dr. Richard Walth - Germans from Russia historian and refugee). We are the "flotsam of world history".

## New Obituaries/Life Events Processing Procedures

As you know, AHSGR has moved our obituary database from SOAR to FamilySearch. It has taken nearly a year to get all the SOAR obituaries moved over, but that process is nearly complete. Now we are working on our process for new obituaries and life events.

**Paper Clippings:** If you have paper clippings please send them to headquarters in Lincoln for processing, (AHSGR-Obits/631 D Street/Lincoln, NE 68502).

1. If you have the equipment and the time, they are most easily processed if they are copied on to an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper (portrait orientation) with the name and date of the publication written or typed at the top of the sheet.
2. Second preference would be to use scotch tape to tape the obituary or life event to an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper (portrait orientation) and write or type the name and date of publication at the top of the sheet.
3. Third preference would be to just mail the clipping with the name and date of publication indicated somewhere on the obituary or life event. (If the obituary or life event will not fit on one page, please write "page 1 of 2" on the first page and "page 2 of 2" on the second page.)

**Electronic Obituaries and Life Events:** If you have obituaries or life events in digital form, please email them to Mike Meisinger at [mrm1970@aol.com](mailto:mrm1970@aol.com).

- A. Include the name and date of the publication.
- B. Sample: Scottsbluff Star Herald  
Scottsbluff, Nebraska  
22 July 2014

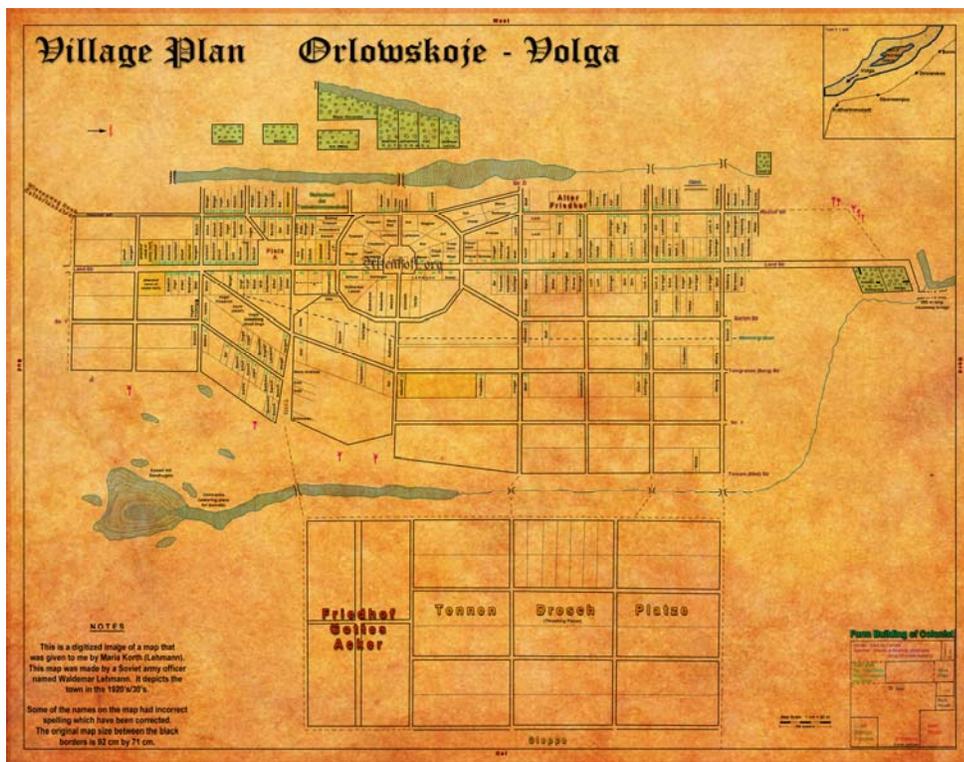
Thank you for all you help toward this project.

Mike Meisinger  
AHSGR Technology Committee CHair



## Finding Our Families on the Volga

This map of the village Orłowskioku was found on the internet page, [www.altehoff.org](http://www.altehoff.org). This is a Lutheran Reformed colony that was founded on June 7, 1767. The colony is just to the north of Obermunjou. Many of the people who lived here had connections the the Obermunjou people. Families included in the move to Obermunjou were Hertel and Zimmerman. A number of these colonists from Orłowskioku also moved to Katharinenstadt and Schoenchen, The village itself is located just towards the north of Obermunjou.

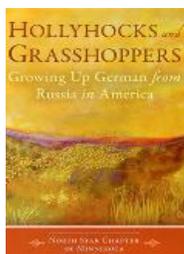




# AHSGR HEADQUARTER NEWS

## What's New.....

There are a few new items that have just been added to the AHSGR store.



The first item is a book compiled by members of the North Star Chapter of Minnesota. The book itself is a fun and easy read. The book, "Hollyhocks and Grasshoppers: Growing Up German from Russia in America" is a collection of short stories. The book is broken down into six chapters: On the Land, Homesickness, Was Sprichst Du?, Family, Townies and Full Circle. Many people from this Chapter have donated numerous stories to make this compilation, including Rosemary Larson, a native of Ellis, Kansas. She wrote the article, "Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Ellis, Kansas".



About a year ago one of our fellow board members began work on a new DVD that would be an updated history and tour of the AHSGR campus.

Jim Giess barely finished putting together the DVD when he suffered a number of strokes this past year and died. The DVD is a tribute to this man's passion for AHSGR. This 20 minutes presentation of the AHSGR campus makes an excellent program for any chapter wanting to bring it's history to the Chapter membership. The AHSGR Research Library was extremely lucky to snatch a experienced librarian to add to the staff.

Diane Wilson is actually from eastern Kansas and joined the staff in 2014. Speaking of the research library, many new documents for genealogy research has been added to the files. You will see the complete list in the 2014 Annual Archives Report when they are mailed out with the upcoming AHSGR Journal and Newsletter. Here is just a sampling of the items that the library has received.

1. Shcherbakovka Project - Births from 1902 (26 pages), Marriages 1905 (2 pages). And 1904 Deaths (10 pages).



All have been translated.

2. Warenburg - Birth records for the years 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860 and 1861. These records are in the German language and are basically easy to read.
3. Herzog - 1879-1912 family list and 1920 family list. These records are in an excel format, but are not translated from the Russian.
4. Lauwe - 1886-1912 family list, translated.
5. Deportation Lists from the Volgo-grad area. The lists are organized on Excel sheets and will eventually be put in some type of book form. The introduction to the research project will be translated, but the names of information of families will not be translated at this time.
6. Yagodnaya Polyana - We have received the 1857 census list for this colony, but has not yet been translated. We also received the 1897 family list which has been translated by a chapter member.
7. Dobrinka Communion List 1877-1891 has been translated and is on file at the AHSGR Research Library.
8. We also received some documents from the Kiev Archive for the village of Riebendorf and a number of metric book for the Lutheran Church based in Yeisk.

Many of these records are not available as a whole. The Archives Committee made a motion at the Spring Board meeting that any documents that have copyright in question can not be published. Researchers may look through all the documents at the facility in Lincoln. For those documents that have been translated, for example, the 1897 Yagodnaya Polyana. The researcher may submit the family name that they are researching to Diane Wilson and she can send you what is available on that name. Perhaps not the best way to do things, but AHSGR is

trying to comply with the requests of the Russian Archives when it comes to copyright.



The long awaited "Annotated Inventory of the Cases Handled by the Saratov Office of Foreign Settlers - Volume 2" has finally been printed. This book edited by Dr. Igor Pleve, translated into English by Dr. Mila Koretnikova and edited in the English language by Prof. Brent Mai has been printed in a spiral-bound edition by AHSGR and is now available in the bookstore.

The inventory consists of the captions and information on the date and number of pages of the lost cases handled by the Saratov Office of Foreign Settlers. The inventory contains short, but valuable precise information on the life of the German colonies, on the relations between the colonies, their relationship with the surrounding settlements and the state, and on the personal life of colonies. A valuable research book for any researcher.

### - ON-LINE RESEARCH LINKS -

1. The AHSGR **pre-2000 Journals** are now on line for your convenience. Just go to: <http://www.ahsgr.org/Products/Journals.htm> chose the year on the right hand side. Once you are at that page click on the highlighted links that say [VIEW JOURNAL](#).
2. New site for the village of Orlowskoje <http://altenhoff.org/orlowskoje.html>
3. Cemetery Searches - "Find a Grave" <http://www.findagrave.com/>
4. [www.volgagerman.net](http://www.volgagerman.net)

### NEW CENSUS LIST AVAILABLE Contact Information

**1834 Krasnoyar**  
Brent Mai ([bmai@cu-portland.edu](mailto:bmai@cu-portland.edu))

**1857 Mariental**  
Kevin Rupp ([krupp@ruraltel.net](mailto:krupp@ruraltel.net)) or  
Brent Mai ([bmai@cu-portland.edu](mailto:bmai@cu-portland.edu))

## QUAINT FOLK ON THE PLAINS

### Russo-German Colonies in Kansas

Within the past five or six years there have been moving across the Mississippi, forming new settlements on the western plains numerous small colonies of German peasants from Russia. These people, in their ways of living, in dress and manners and character, are so different from any immigrants to be seen in the eastern states that a view of them is a new and positive point in the always changing panorama of American life. About one hundred years ago the Empress Catherine collected these people from various parts of Germany and settled them in small farming colonies in the region of the Volga. In building their Russian homes they followed the nucleus plan common among the small farmers of Europe, clustering their homes closely in little towns, each with its church and school, and its common pasture. The plough lands stretched out for miles from the towns, divided into parcels of various sizes among the farmers. By this arrangement, much time and labor are lost in going to and from the tillage. Sometimes a farmer has to haul his harvest forty miles to his barns and store-houses, which are all in the town beside the houses. In return they have a more social life than would be possible if the houses were isolated. They prefer the life of the bee, reporting daily to a populous hive, to that of the solitary hawk, which cares only for its own nest. Their common pasture, to which one herd boy daily drives the gathered cattle of the whole colony, is a saving of labor and of fencing, which offsets in part the loss from the distance of tillage. Among the inducements to settle in Russia, the colonists were exempted from army service for a period of years which is just now expiring, and the same period limits their freedom of emigration. It is on this account that they have left their homes in such large numbers, and, since their object was to escape the draft, it is natural that they should seek their new fortunes in America. Here, in Kansas and Minnesota, and perhaps in other states and territories, they have already built numerous colonies. The homestead laws have so far changed their way of living as to compel them to build houses on their separate farms, but they carry out the old plan by making town houses also, gathered in close neighborhood about the church. These are their winter homes and their resorts on Sundays and their many holidays, and while the able-bodied men and women and larger children are busy on the farms, the grandmothers keep house in town for the very old men and the young school children.

There are doubtless many marked points of difference between the several colonies of German Russians, for they went to Russia from different parts of Germany, forming separate colonies of Catholics, Mennonites and Lutherans. The Colonies in Ellis county, Kansas, are Catholic. The largest of these is Herzog, standing less than a mile from the Victoria station of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. The town, conspicuous on the brown and treeless prairie, gives at a little distance a general tint of creamy white, monotonous, but not unpleasant. This is the color alike of the few stone buildings and of the fifty or sixty sod houses and pens and stables appendant. The sod houses are of one story, long and low, smeared with clay and plastered without and within. The few stone houses are made of the beautiful light-colored limestone, abundant in this region, and some of them show curious carving of window caps and other simple decoration. Here and there a frame house stands high above its neighbors, boasting its superiority by a finely perforated and scalloped cornice, suggestive of bodkins and the rich edgings of petticoats. The village store is brilliant with painted decoration, strange in color and form. A neat stone church, with a good house for the priest adjoining, stands in the center, and is undisputed head of the town – indeed its chief reason for existence. A curious fashion of fencing with a sort of basket work, woven of thick saplings, adds to the foreign look of the place. Two or three wells supply all the houses, and the constant carrying of water helps to keep up the social element even in the most quiet times. A stranger walking into Herzog on a Sunday, when all are on hand for church and dressed in their brightest colors, would be startled by the ancient look of things. Men and women, girls and boys, all seem to have dropped out of some former century. Women and girls and small children shine in striking combinations of red and blue and green, grown boys wear loose blouses of black or blue, and their fathers are solemnly respectable in black frock coats, which, from waist up, fit tight as a bodice, the long skirts gathered at the belt and hanging loose and ample. The caps of the men and boys are all alike, broad at the top,

gathered to a band, and with a visor. The hair is brushed back straight over the head and cut off with one merciless chop on a level with the middle of the ears. The girls and women cover their heads closely with kerchiefs, varying in color, but usually brilliant with red. The faces of the men, especially when observed in church, have a strangely ancient look of superstitious solemnity, which I have seen only in old German or Flemish pictures. It is likely that the sojourn in Russia, where they live in isolation from the advance of German life, and had little intercourse with their Russian neighbors, has helped to keep up the old look of their faces and dress.

The housekeeping of the Herzog people deserves attention for its economy. An important part in the house-building is the making of the oven. This, built of domestic clay bricks, smeared and plastered neatly like the walls of the house, stands between the living rooms and an outer anteroom or vestibule. The bread and other edibles enter the oven from the living room. The fuel goes in from the vestibule by another opening, leaving the large room free from litter; an important point, when it is seen what the fuel is. No costly coal exhausts the Russian's purse, nor does he seek the scanty growth of stunted wood along the creeks. His fuel is of the waste products of the farm, and is of two sorts. The first and best is the dried dung of cattle and buffalo, gathered from the prairie by industrious girls, who go about like rag-pickers with sacks on their backs, carrying home their loads to heap the growing store. This is the labor always ready, a sort of out-door knitting work, for days when farm labor is slack. The other cheap fuel is refuse straw and tough stems of hay, rejected by the cattle, dry corn-stalks and whatever rubbish gathers from the year's farming. Even with this light material the small tight houses are abundantly warmed by their clay ovens. It makes more work in feeding the fire, but boy and girls are plenty and old women abound. The houses are kept neat and well scrubbed, though the same cannot be said of the persons of their owners. The chief article of food is wheat bread, made generally of inferior flour, the best wheat being sold and the worst kept for home use. But the distinctive point in their diet is the great use which the Russians make of watermelon. This abundant product of the

Continued on page 7.....

plains, thriving when corn wilts and potatoes fade away, a luscious refreshment to the thirsty harvester or cowboy, is to the Russians a stand-by and support. Not only is it a chief part of his food in its season. It is packed away in cool cellars and kept fresh long after its natural time is past. It is pickled or soured in barrels for still later use. Syrup is made from its thin juice, and the seeds are saved and dried, to take the place of peanuts and candy.

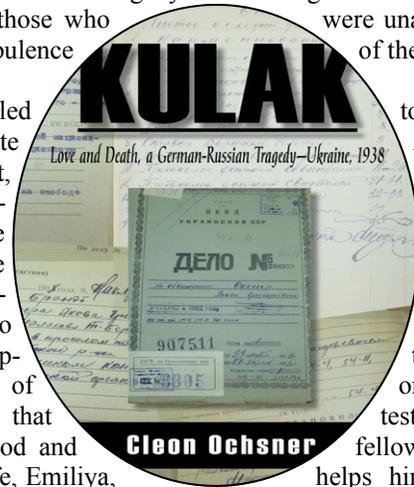
The careful economy in household expenditure does not prevent a wise readiness to spend money for costly labor-saving machinery when such outlay is advantageous. The Russian farmer is quick to see the merit of harvesters and sulky ploughs. His horses are well fed and as good as his purse allows, but the harness maker gets little of his money, for the Russian fits out his horse from the cast-off clothing of his cattle, adorning the several straps of the harness with nicely cut scallops and other devices. Men and women take nearly equal shares in the labor of the farm. One old man who lived near me and who carried on one of the largest farms, did nearly all his work by the hands of a strong posse of daughters. His one son acts as overseer, to regulate the efficient application of the abundant power. Happy faces had these mistresses of the plough and stable, and the heavy toil that would crush the spirit of other women only hardened their sturdy limbs and filled their frames with the delight of bodily [sic] force. "Frau, he [sic] work too," said a young and penniless Russian, defending the prudence of his intended marriage.

A sort of patriarchal system is seen in their family life. When a boy marries, during his father's life, he takes his young wife home as a new recruit for the service of his father's farm. Sons and maiden daughters, sons' wives and children all work for the old man as long as he lives and is able to manage his affairs [sic]. Even when a married son goes away from home to work on the railroad or in the mines, he is expected to send to his father the chief part of his earnings. But this patriarchal plan is one of the first things to be affected and altered by American example. Already young Russians are occasionally setting up for themselves with an unfilial independence which would not have been tolerated in their former homes.

**KULAK**  
**Love and Death, a German-Russian Tragedy—Ukraine, 1938**  
by Cleon F. Ochsner

There are many accounts, oral and written, concerning the history of the German-Russian experience. Most of them are simply the facts surrounding the migration of ethnic Germans from their country of origin to the Volga and later Ukraine and other so-called Russian lands. The story of their later resettlement from Russia to the U.S., Canada, Australia, South America, and Germany is also well documented. *Kulak* attempts to capture the personal side of the tragedy surrounding German-Russians during Stalin's purges in 1937-1938—those who were unable to leave in time, and were caught in the turbulence of the Soviet era.

Cleon Ochsner traveled while visiting the State came across the arrest, negotiations of Jakob Grigorenko, he translated into English account of Jakob's so moved to attempt to capture psychological suffering of to unspeakable torture that but also his faith in God and shakable love of his wife, Emiliya, that things will get better and gives him a purpose to survive.



to Ukraine in 2011, and Archives in Nikolaev, trial and execution documents of Jakob Grigorenko. After director of the archives, obtained a copy and had it translated into English. While reading the document, Cleon was struck by the substance of the trial, who is subjected to unspeakable torture that tests not only his stamina, but also his faith in God and fellow human beings. The unshakable love of his wife, Emiliya, helps him to continue believing that things will get better and gives him a purpose to survive.

"I felt Jakob was talking to me and asking me to tell his story so the world would never forget the atrocities people are capable of inflicting on others."

The book is based on the facts as outlined in the document. The main characters, Jakob and Emiliya, the witnesses and the testimonies are all factual.

"I expanded the story with flashbacks and descriptions from my own family members who experienced personally, the agonies of persecution, and wove those into Jakob's story to give it a depth of emotion."

Cleon hopes this novel will remind readers that the communist regime, especially under the rule of Joseph Stalin, was responsible for the genocide, not only of ethnic Germans, but others as well. The holocaust under Nazi Germany was in many ways surpassed by the butchery initiated by Stalin and is unfortunately often ignored in history books.

Copies of *Kulak* are on sale at the AHSGR book store and through its web site. *Kulak* may also be obtained from Amazon.com.

**Note:**

*Cleon Ochsner is a first generation German-Russian, whose father was born and raised on the Ochsner family chutor known as Podguriyevka. The family left Ukraine in 1920, migrated to Switzerland, where Cleon's grandfather had gained citizenship while in school in the small town of Schiers as a young man. The Ochsner family migrated to the U.S. in 1928. Cleon taught German in secondary schools in Canon City, Colorado and in Hastings, NE. He was named the Nebraska Teacher of the Year in 1986.*

*Retired, Cleon and his wife, Norma live in Colorado Springs, CO. He is a long time member of the AHSGR, and served two terms on its Board of Directors.*

## UNSERER LEUTE IM BILD - Louis, Russia



### SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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