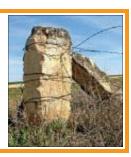


Sunflower Chapter

NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall 2010

Vol. 14, Issue 3 & 4



Kansas Chapter Members Enjoy 2010 Convention

By Juliet Honas



Jerry Braun, Juliet Homas, Denise Grau (Topeka Chapter), and Kevin Rupp participate in Saturday's events.

The 41st Annual International AHSGR Convention was held at the Embassy Suites in downtown Lincoln Nebraska from August 1-8, 2010. The convention was hosted by the Lincoln chapter. This years theme was "Celebrate! Faith, Family, Tradition".

For most of the members the convention began Wednesday with welcome night that included a cake social and entertainment

by a local group of women dancers the Shim Sham Girls whose members ranged in ages from 50 to 75 years old. They were followed by a variety musical performance by David Marsh titled "Music of Germanic Lands"

Thursday was a full day for convention attendees with several meeting including the annual membership meeting which included an election of board members. Throughout each day the bookstore was open that shared space with on-site com-

puters offering SOAR access. Attendees enjoyed many displays in the hallways outside the conference rooms. The day continued with local tours and food demonstrations that were held offsite. The afternoon was filled with speakers that were highlighted by Dr. Elena Ananyan from Russia. The evening concluded with the well-attended village night that was facilitated by village coordinators.

Friday's events continued with a silent auction, quilt raffle, visiting and networking with members from across the country and abroad. A very enjoyable event was the Dutch Hop demonstration by a group of dancers and the music of the River Boys Polka Band. More speakers were featured throughout the day. A special treat was offered for afternoon breaks on Thursday and Friday with fruit kuchen. Thursday night the room was full for a Dutch Hop dance that featured the River Boys Polka Band.

On Saturday, members enjoyed open house at AHSGR headquarters which included church tours, a memorial service in the chapel and an

outdoor BBQ for lunch. The afternoon activities concluded with speaking presentations by Isabella Kessler from Argentina and Allen Salzman of Wheatridge, Colorado. Members enjoyed the evening banquet that included the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award, introduction of new officers, directors and trustees. The evening entertainment was presented by the extremely talented Harold Popp Family. Convention activities concluded on Sunday morning with an Ecumenical Church Service.

There were quite a good number of members in attendance from across Kansas. Sunflower chapter members in attendance were Kevin Rupp, Jerry Braun and Juliet Honas. Many photos and comments of daily events can be viewed at the AHSGR Facebook page.

The 2011 national convention will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah followed by the 2012 convention to be held in Portland, Oregon.



Elmer and Evelyn Dreher (Hays Chapter) wait in line for Bratwurst and chips.

"Unverhofft kommt oft."*



Social & Open Library.	11:30
Annual Banquet	12:00
Meeting	1:00
Program	1:30
Open Library	2:30

ANNUAL BANQUET MEAL

Our annual banquet will be Sunday, September 26, 2010. The meal will consist of: pork chops & sauerkraut, dumplings, galuskies, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, beets, coffee, tea and rolls. Cost of the meal is \$10.00 a plate. Remember that this is one of our yearly fundraisers. Please call Delores Pfannenstiel at 625-6442 or Betty Pfannenstiel at 625-6441 and leave your RSVP with them.

PROGRAM

Our program will be centered around genealogy. You will learn what is available in Hays to do your research. Our speakers will be Mary Ann Thompson, Hays Public Library - Kansas Room; Patty Nichols, FHSU, Ethnic Studies Center; and Janet Johannes, archivist from the Ellis County Historical Society. Each will give a brief presentation of their holdings. After the program, time will be set aside to help anyone with genealogy. Forms will be available.

FOLKLORE

Bring something to share!

MUSIC

Always!

CHAPTER LIBRARY

This will be the first meeting which we will be able to use our new library cabinet. The library will be open 1/2 hour before the meeting begins and roughly 1/2 hour after the program ends. Because the library cabinet needs to remain upstairs, we will have a listing of the books that our library currently holds at each meeting. Books may be checked out at the meeting and need to be returned at the following meeting. Shirley Brungardt, our Chapter Librarian, will be glad to help you with any of your questions. Donations are being taken for any books that you might like to see added to our library.

It's Almost that Time Again!!!

Renewing your AHSGR & Sunflower Chapter dues early may just win us another Early Awards Certificate, as we did for 2010.

Our date for the 2011 year have been set and here they are:

March 6 FASENACHT (Munjor) Celebrate with your chapter friends the German version of Mardi Gras and enjoy traditional Lenten "Feast before the Fast" foods and music!

May 15 SPRING MEETING (Munjor) Come share the stories of our forefathers as they were passed

brary for genealogical research.

down through the years and check out our li-

July 31 AHSGR CONVENTION (Salt Lake City, Utah)

Aug. 7 SUMMER PICNIC (Munjor) Summer is the time to renew those family activities that you knew as a child.

VFW BREAKFAST (HAYS) This annual event has become as much fun for those who serve the food as those who eat it - and fund-raisers like this one also keep our society financially healthy.

GERMAN BANQUET (MUNJOR) Homemade food from our German cooks along with prizes,

Oct. 9 genealogy speakers and help and concluding with topnotch music makes this one of our favorite meetings!!! Also our last fundraiser of the year!

KANSAS ROUND-UP OF CHAPTERS (Wichita)

Oct. ?? CHRISTMAS POTLUCK (Munjor) Bring back those day gone memories of Christmas with

Dec. 11 the German Christmas carols, traditions and foods. Including a visit from the *Christkind*!

ALL YEAR LONG, there will be items dealing with...

- Music
- Folklore
- Genealogy
- Traditions
- Foods
- Dancing
- Dialects
- Storytelling
- Remember When's

Plus many more things that you would like to see our Chapter do, just let one of the Officers know.

When you join or renew your membership to the Sunflower Chapter of AHSGR you are not only helping our Chapter, but you are helping AHSGR financially.

THANK YOU!!!

2011 SUNFLOWER CHAPTER M	EMBERSHIP FORM (RENEWAL)
Members Name Address State E-mail	Zip	DUES: Individual/Family/Chapter Jan Dec. \$60.00
Phone Areas of interest:		Chapter Only ** Jan Dec. \$10.00
Program Hospitality Newsletter Information Help w/VFW Breakfast	Publicity Clean-up Genealogy Folklore	** Must be a member of AHSGR or a Life Member to pay only Chapter Dues.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER BOARD

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EDITOR'S NOTE

You may have noticed that the newsletter has taken on a different look. That's because I no longer have enough free time to do the design, and Kevin Rupp has graciously agreed to take over in that department. His design software is different from mine, so a change in the newsletter's appearance was the inevitable result. I will continue to proofread articles for the newsletter, but otherwise my involvement will be less than it has been in recent years.

After getting my theology degree a couple of years ago, I had to look around quite a while a bit for ways to put it to work. Finally, Pflaum Publishing of Dayton, Ohio, has begun offering me enough writing contracts to keep me plenty busy! I need to accept these opportunities for as long as I can get them. The last I knew, every Sister of St. Agnes who still works contributes to the support of two others who have retired. That number might even be higher by now.

One other problem is that I have developed some health issues in the past year. I am hoping that after I get thyroid surgery in Wisconsin this summer, my immune system will start functioning better. Fewer colds and flus definitely would help me clock more volunteer hours. Please keep me and all the other sick and recovering members of our chapter in prayer. Thank you.

--Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

First, I want to comment on Sister's remarks. I want to thank her for the time that she has put into our newsletter - finding interesting articles, laying it out for publication, editing it and just getting ready to be placed in your mailbox or in your e-mail box. The newsletter has come a long way since I started it as a one-sheet newsletter. But it was her expertise as a writer that at this years Convention in Lincoln that our Chapter won first prize in the Chapter Newsletter Contest. Sister Alice, well done! When she talked about resigning from the newsletter, I asked her if I were to take it over would she remain on to proof it and help when she has the time, and she said

yes. Being on the board of AHSGR I have seen many newsletters and many are excellent, but I think at this time our has the best balance of local and headquarters material for our members, and that is what the Editorial Committee based their judgment on. Yes, I am on the Editorial and Publications Committee, but I was not allowed to vote for our newsletter, so we won it fair and square!

This past Spring we were so busy with our 30th celebration that we totally forgot about the summer edition of the newsletter, so this is a combined issue.

This year the Kansas Round-Up of Chapters is located in our own back yard. Please see the back of the newsletter for more information. By now you should have also received your invitation to this event. Hays always has a good turn out so please make the effort to come and try and bring a new friend. AHSGR memberships are holding and increasing a few at a time. Each year AHSGR loses about 300 members due to death or just not renewing. The society must receive at least 300 a year to keep its current numbers in membership plus, trying to add more members to increase our rolls.

The convention in Lincoln was a great time in August. Jerry Braun and I traveled up to headquarters on Sunday and came back on Saturday. It was nice to see so many from Kansas attending this convention. Every time I go to the board meetings they ask, "Is Hays ready for another convention?" My response has been "Possibly", but it will need to be an entire Kansas effort as well as a chapter effort.. At this time we have no location to hold one.

We had our annual breakfast fundraiser this month at the VFW and we sold all our tickets and after paying our bill with the VFW we netted \$1,386.00. Many, many thanks to our sales people and also those helped with the breakfast. With the money that we make from this event we are able to help AHSGR financially and also provide our members with good meetings.

I will be going up to Lincoln for Board meetings from September 29 - October 2.

--Kevin Rupp

God-Fearing and Able to Pay

Volga Germans and Mennonites from South Russia Laid the Foundation for the Fame of Kansas as an Agricultural State

ED. NOTE: The following article by Steven Ulrich first appeared in the Moskauer Deutsche Zeitung in January 2009. It was translated from the original German by Alex Herzog of Boulder, Colorado, and comes to us through Leona W. Pfeifer.

James "Wild Bill" Hickock was reputed to have a few dozen men on his conscience by the time he became police chief of Hays City, the most disreputable locale around, s US-American hotbed of buffalo hunters, railroad workers, vagabonds, and desperadoes of all kinds. It was the year 1867. No one at the time would have bet even a cent on the fact that Hays, in only ten years, would become quite the trading center, and even the destination of Godfearing Germans from Russia, who from there would carve out a new home for themselves.

1876. The military camp of Fort Hays, which for a long time had helped to bolster the bad reputation of the city, had been declared surplus and was shut down. Months of drought had decimated the harvest, and a grasshopper infestation had done the rest. Many fled Kansas to develop land elsewhere. In such a situation, new settlers were just what was needed, especially if they knew something about farming and were willing to put some money into circulation.

Within six years about 12,000 Germans from Russia immigrated to Kansas. Having journeyed via Odessa, Hamburg, and New York, an initial 800 folks reached their destination in 1874. The first groups of immigrants were Mennonites from South Russia. During the year prior they had sent a reconnaissance mission to Kansas to check out land for settlement, to determine soil conditions, and to conduct negotiations on prices.

The director of the Immigration Bureau at the time was Carl Bernhardt Schmidt, a German from Saxony and employee of the Santa Fe Railroad Company. Several railroad companies had acquired lands that they now wished to sell, in smaller or larger parcels, to new settlers. Wherever a new railroad track was laid, land prices rose, and in that way those railroad companies financed the push to the West. The companies could not wish for better customers than the German Russian settlers. They paid in cash, wasted no time in tenacious negotiations, and usually made large purchases—changing hands were not small parcels, but whole tracts of land; not individual cattle, but whole herds; and the entire contents of supply warehouses.

These people had been thinking for some time about emigrating from Russia. After 1840, the price of wheat had dropped dramatically due to competition from the US. Furthermore, the Russian government was taking back many a privilege of earlier times, such as an exclusive license for brewing beer and, importantly, exemption from military service. Worst of all, in the opinion of the Mennonite communities, the government was beginning to mix entirely too much in their affairs, e.g., via the decree on land distribution, by which prosperous colonists had to cede cultivable land to landless members of the community. No wonder that prosperous landowners in particular would be leading the emigration movement

Many possibilities were examined: Canada, Brazil, the Near East and, of course, the United States. Plans for moving to the other side of the Atlantic were then not put off any longer after the Russian government, during the mid-1860s, offered the Mennonite communities resettlement on the Amur River in East Siberia, with free land, tax reductions, and exemption from military service. It should be said that Mennonite Bernhard Warkentin had taken a group of followers on an inspection tour in Siberia, but they had returned with great disappointment. Farms that could thrive from selling their products would be impossible there, because there was no way to transport them, nor were there potential customers anywhere nearby. Besides, they surmised, travel conditions to America should not be any more difficult than a

land transport to the still unexplored East Siberia.

In their new homeland, Germans from Russia were living in modest selfsufficiency, in settlement areas that comprised mostly large territories -some in compact village settlements-all where they were largely shielded from external influences and would therefore be able to retain their language and culture at least into the generation after the next. American ways and the English language were thus slow to make any inroads, particularly because the Germans from Russia had long been used to proving themselves largely independent in Russia, amidst an environment with other languages. By 1875, David Goertz of Halstead began to publish the first German-language newspaper. This was at a time when newspapers were largely nonexistent in many large cities in Kansas. Further papers followed, carrying names such as "Courier," "Volksfreund (Friend of the People)," Staats Zeitung," "Zur-Heimath (To the Homeland)" or "Freie Presse (Free Press)."

Even without the Germans from Russia, Kansas—famous for its wide fields of waving grain—would assuredly have grown into a significant agrarian state, but the immigrants did provide a decisive contribution. Again and again it has been reported that the Germans from Russia had brought along a certain variety of winter wheat, and had thereby provided the underpinnings for the meteoric rise of agriculture.

Meetings

Coming in 2010

Sept. 26 - Annual Banquet Munjor, Ks.

Oct. 23 - Ks. Round-Up of Chapters Hays, Ks.

December 12 - Christmas Potluck Munjor, Ks. "God Fearing and Able to Pay", continued from page 4,

HISTORICAL FACTS

- Mennonites from Russia were not the only German Russians to make the journey across the Atlantic. Volga Germans also emigrated to the US during the second half of the 19th century.
- The first group of Volga Germans came from Katharinenstadt (later to be known as Marxstadt). They had begun their journey in October of 1875 and reached the Kansas capital city of Topeka by the end of November.
- Toward the end of 1875, some 1200 German Russians, some 1200 German Russians from the Volga region, primarily Catholics in this case, came to be settled in rural Ellis and Rush Counties, which to this day report the largest number of residents in Kansas with Volga German ancestors.
- In the census of 2000, of a total of 2.6 million residents of the state of Kansas, some 868,801 persons reported having German ancestors, and some 17,734 indicated that they had Russian ancestors.
- More information may be found at <u>www.ornis-press.de/</u>
 <u>russlanddeutsche-in-</u>
 <u>Uebersee.16.0.html</u> and at the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection website, <u>www.ndsu.edu/grhc</u>.

IN MEMORIAM

Agnes Pfannenstiel, 90, Wakeeney, died Monday, August 9, 2010, at Trego County-Lemke Me-



morial Hospital, Wakeeney. She was born August 31, 1919, southwest of Ellis to Henry Jr. and Walburga (Weigel) Gerber. She married Marcellus Pfannenstiel on September 19, 1938 in Antonio, Ks. He preceded her in death on August 27, 2000. Agnes was a faithful member of the Sunflower Chapter, sharing her history and her love of her heritage. Here Agnes was showing a Brennig board that was used for baking.

The chapter will miss our dear friend.

Letters from Russia to Ellis County

by Kevin Rupp

The following is a translation of a letter received this week from Katharinenstadt, Russia by a resident of Munjor. The article was taken from the Ellis County News, Hays, Kansas, February 23, 1922. No name was listed in the article.

Katharinenstadt, Russia, October 30, 1921

Dear Cousin:

I am writing you this letter at the request of your father, to acquaint you with the conditions of his family. You have probably already heard the old man has been ailing for a numbers of years; in the summer his condition becomes better but in the winter and spring his condition is such that death might be expected at any time. He has lung trouble. Your brother George has returned from the front, but is a sick man. At the present time he is bedfast with his entire body swollen. You see there is shortage on every hand, especially this year, when a lot of other people are also suffering from hunger. You can scarcely imagine the dire want which exists here already half of Obermunjou have died of starvation and have migrated out into the world not knowing where. Whoever lives to see the spring will be a lucky man.

All the world has promised us help, but there are so many that need help. Among others there has come an American Aid Commission which promises to do everything within their power. But they know real well that they cannot alone relieve the suffering of all, and therefore request that if anyone has relatives in North America they should write to them to contribute to such an Aid Commission – the remittance will be sent here where the relatives will receive food products for the same from the American Commission. So if, therefore, you can and will help, do something for your father and family. Contribute to one of your commissions of this kind and the old man will in this way receive prompt help.

Sacrifice a horse or a cow and save your relatives from the death of starvation. Remember that, in Obermonjor most of the people are already without any horse – those who had from 12-20, have now one or two left. It is well known among us that in many colonies all of the dogs and cats have already been used for food.

You in America very likely know how such help can be gotten here quickly; for information inquire of any commission which gathers contributions for the Wolga-Germans. Perhaps your cousins could also contribute, because many can help much

I really cannot picture to you our terrible need here in Russia. I hope that if total strangers offer to help, you will not forget your old father. The dire need has really made an old man of him - - he cannot speak - - as many as three words steadily - - the tears are constantly flowing. Help and make yourself happy.

Thanks to God, I and my family are still well. Last year I buried my eldest daughter of twenty years, so that now only five children remain. I cannot write you any news. All of you father's family greet you heartily. With greetings from your cousin.

Interesting side item: Dr. Elena Ananyan was the guest of Kevin Rupp for a brief time before the 2010 Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. She visited the Ellis County Historical Society and the FHSU Ethnic Studies Center conducting research on why the German Russians left Russia and came to the United States. She found that her initial ideas in regard to Germans Russians in the United States is very different then what she has found. Her work is entitled, "Volga German Immigration to America between 1870s and First Two Decades of the Twentieth Century." Dr. Elena Ananyan is a Professor oh History at the Volgograd State University in Russia. While she was in Hays, she also visited the six villages. Upon her leaving the Victoria church, she was almost moved to tears because of the beautiful churches.

Well Worth Our Time!

By Judy Hoffman

The 30th anniversary celebration of the Sunflower Chapter of the AHSGR was another winner for advancing our appreciation and knowledge of our ancestry. I was fortunate to volunteer at the history table, which featured albums of pictures and articles chronicling the founding and history of the Sunflower Chapter. During the two hours for registration and hospitality, I enjoyed what the albums offered and found myself inviting others to take a look as I spoke of what I'd just read. This turned out to be a fun experience.

Brent Mai is always an interesting speaker. His first talk was about genealogy. His second talk, concerning the outpouring of help from Volga German Americans during the famine in Russia, was really interesting and informative. All the more reason to be proud of our heritage.

The raffle items were also quite a prize; I'd have been happy to win any one of them. As for the traditional Volga German wedding dinner, it was a crowd pleaser. The variety and bounty made sure no one went away hungry or disappointed. What a treat!

Having music throughout the afternoon was also a nice touch. The local talent (Vernon "Slim" Befort and Galen Schmidtberger) provided our favorites as registration, socializing, and checking out the displays and articles for sale filled up the time before the rest of the schedule unfolded. Very nice.

The evening's activities wound down with polka music to sing and dance to, pre-

sented by the Wes Windholz Polka band. Truly felt like a great gathering of local Germans like the old days. How good is that?!

All in all, those who were fortunate to attend will surely agree it was well worth the time!

FASCINATING FACTS from Brent Mai's talk on genealogy

- German mass migration to Russia began in 1763, but the peak year was 1766, when about 22,000 left for the Russian Empire. The total number of German migrants in that period was approximately 31,000.
- There is a similarity in format between old German records and old Russian records because Peter the Great had invited German bureaucrats into Russia in the 17th century to teach Russians how to keep thorough, accurate records.
- Russia took a census on August 28, 1941. Census records from Russia's German settlements, along with local church records, were shipped over the Urals with the Germans when they were exiled to Siberia during WWII.
- After WWII, records on the Volga Germans were sent back to the Volga cities of Samara, Saratov, Engels, and Volgograd. However, there was no rhyme or reason behind which city received which village records,

- making research today into Volga German genealogy especially difficult.
- It wasn't until after communism fell in the early 1990s that it was possible for Americans to get genealogical information out of Russia.
- US census records are really nothing like Russia's, because ours were set up primarily to help the federal government determine the correct number of Congressional representatives for each state.
- Since 1990 about four million Russians of German descent have emigrated to Germany.
- Today no real distinction is made in Russia between Volga Germans and Black Sea Germans because they were all mixed together in Siberia and various Asiatic republics during the 1940s.
- Ancestry.com is a good website to use when researching old Volga German records.

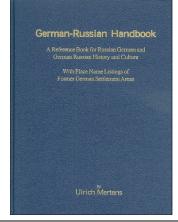
Editors Note: For those who missed Brent Mai's talk at the 30th anniversary celebration you will have another chance this October. Brent will be one of our main speakers at the Kansas Round-Up of Chapters.

NEW ITEMS FROM HEADQUARTERS

GERMAN-RUSSIAN HANDBOOK

Published by the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND. 2010, 799 pages, 3 Color Maps, Hardcover.

A Reference Book for Russian-German and German-Russian History and Culture with place name listing of former German Settlement areas. Detailed timelines, discussions of deportations, martyrology, Russian and Soviet currency, and many other topics make this a veritable vademecum for the research of Germans from Russia. It combines information from many fragmented sources into a single integrated listing of all localities where Germans settled in Russia, "from the largest cities to the smallest chutors" in the Volga, Black Sea, and Mennonite regions, as well as in Volhynia. The *German-Russian Handbook*, originally titled, *Handbuch Russland-Deutsche* by Ulrich Mertens, is an impressive hardbound book translated by Brigitte von Budde and Alex Herzog, Edited by Allyn Brosz, Alex Herzog and Thomas Stangl. Check the AHSGR Store for more details.



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2010 Kansas Round-Up of Chapters, Hays, Ks.

Friday, Oct. 22

5:30 p.m. - Tour the Ellis County Historical Society & Volga German Haus

Saturday, Oct. 23

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. - Registration 9:00 a.m. - Opening Ceremonies Memorial Service Business Meeting

11:00 - 11:30 a.m. - German Sing-Along

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Lunch

12:45 - 1:45 p.m. - BINGO

1:45 - 2:00 p.m. - Break

2:00 - 2:30 p.m. - Brent Mai

2:45 - 3:15 p.m. - "Death in Herzog"

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. - Break & Closeout Bake Sale

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. - Video - "It's All Earth & Sky"

4:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Music by Galen Schmidtberger

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. - Break

6:00 p.m. - Specials Awards

Drawing

Recognition of Life Members

Banquet

7:00 p.m. - Banquet Speaker, Fritz Kramer

Please be sure to send in your reservations to Denise Grau by October 15.

Cost is \$10.00 - Members

\$15.00 - Non-members

\$25.00 - Lunch & Banquet

Tour of ECHS & Volga German Haus \$4.00



Mark Wills, from the Topeka Chapter, browses through the many books that were in the AHSGR library.

AHSGR is now on "Facebook"



Go to the AHSGR Website, www.ahsgr.org, go down to the bottom of the page and click on this symbol and look for "Become a Member"!

http://www.sunflowerchapterofahsgr.net/ks round-up.htm

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

2301 Canal Blvd Hays, Ks. 67601

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Inside THIS NEWSLETTER

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*Proverbs at the bottom of the pages were taken from the book, "Heritage of Kansas" Vol. 9; #2 & 3