

Northeast Kansas Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.



April / May 2008

John Reb, Jr., son of chapter president John Reb and Lela Reb, provided the program for the April meeting with a hammered dulcimer demonstration.



John Jr., a self-taught dulcimer player explained the basics of the hammered dulcimer and played toe-tapping tunes including favorites such as Du, du, licht mir im herzen. John's dulcimer is one of approximately 10 made by local musician Joe Schifflbein. Joe Schifflbein also made the dulcimer on display at the Kansas Museum of History.

Ike Appelhanz contributed his memories of people at dances putting money, silver dollars usually, into the sound holes in Joe Schifflbein's dulcimer. Ike also said that the music couldn't start until after the first beer keg had been emptied, so Joe could use the empty keg as his dulcimer stand!

No June Meeting!

Due to the Germanfest celebration the June 8 weekend; the bus trip to Goesel, Newton and McPherson; and Father's Day the following weekend, the membership voted at the April meeting to cancel the June chapter meeting.

At the August 3 chapter picnic, there will be a brief business meeting at 5:30 p.m. The picnic will be at Shelter House #3, Lake Shawnee.



The AHSGR Mission Statement "An international organization dedicated to the discovery, collection, preservation, and dissemination of information related to the history, cultural heritage and genealogy of Germanic Settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants."



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Sympathy

Condolences to Charlotte Konrade-Nolan on the death of her daughter, Susan (Konrade) Ewbank.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Matthew Schieffelbein who was ordained as a deacon at Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church on May 31. Matthew is the son of chapter members Stephen and Teresa Schieffelbein.

Congratuauons to Ed and Loretta who will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on June 7th.



Mark Your Calendars!

NO JUNE MEETING

- July 28 - AHSGR Joint National Convention with GRHS, Casper, Wyoming
- Aug 3 Chapter Picnic, Shelter House #3, Lake Shawnee, 5:30 p.m.
- Aug. 3 Regular meeting
- Oct. 3 Regular meeting
- Oct. 25 Kansas Round-up of Chapters, hosted by the Golden Wheat Chapter, Wichita Best Western North; I-135, exit 13, Wichita

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Bus Trip

Forty-two people have signed up for the June 14 bus trip. The bus will be available for loading at 6:30 a.m. and will depart at 7:00 a.m. from Fairlawn Plaza. Please park south of the Eagle Auto Wash at 21st and Chelsea. Wear comfortable clothing. You may bring a small cooler with cold drinks.



Thank You

Jack and I want to thank everyone who helped us celebrate our 50th Wedding Anniversary Open House on May 18th. We also want to thank everyone who sent us cards of Good Wishes and Congratulations.

Jack and Henrietta Gleason

Trivia Q&A

Q. What native of St. Marys, Kansas, son of Volga German immigrants, is credited with the "electronic sound production and composition" for the Hitchcock movie, *The Birds*?



(answer page 3)

Chapter Membership Brochure

by Denise Grau

Recently I was asked about the pictures on the Northeast Kansas chapter membership brochure.



In case others have wondered as well, the couple in the wedding picture is my great uncle Peter Alois Gassman and his bride Anna Schumacher. I thought the typical long ribbon worn by the groom might be familiar to other descendants of Germans from Russia immi-

grants and cause them to look twice at our brochure.

The handsome couple with the two children are my great grandparents, John Sauer and his wife Catherine Wasinger. The sober-faced girl is my grandmother, Dorothea; the baby is her brother George. Incidentally, Mary Wasinger Rohr, a sister to my great grandmother, Catherine Wasinger Sauer is the grandmother to chapter members Carol Malecki and Marilyn Rohr, cousins I met after joining our chapter.



This picture of the men is believed to have been taken in 1910 when my husband's great grandfather John David Anschutz and two other Anschutz



relatives made a return trip to his birthplace, Nieder-Monjou, Russia. Only three of the men are identified. The man in the back row in western garb is John David Anschutz. The typical caps and long black boots worn by the Volga Germans are illustrated in this picture. One gentleman is smoking the long curved stem pipe which is also characteristic of the Volga Germans.

Trivia Q&A

A. Remi Gassmann paired with German composer Oskar Sala to create the electronic soundtrack for *The Birds*. The pair created the sounds effects of bird noises on the Trautonium, a predecessor to the synthesizer. Gassmann was the son of Peter Gassman and Margaret Seitz, immigrants from Mariental, Russia.

Gassmann's resume also includes professor of theory and composition at the Orchestral Hall Preparatory School of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1940 to 1946, music editor and critic for the *Chicago Times* from 1941 to 1947, wrote for the journal *Modern Music*, was director of the Composers Concerts and Seminars and a lecturer at the University of Chicago from 1942 to 1945, and director of the School of Music at Elmhurst College from 1943 to 1945. Commissioned in 1946, Gassmann created a score for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for the ballet *Billy Sunday*. He was a lecturer on electronic sound at University of California Los Angeles and Stanford University.

Gassmann died March 2, 1982, Strasbourg, France.

Famine Relief Request

Hugh Lichtenwald of Monetta, South Carolina, has been translating letters from *Die Welt-Post* and posting his translation to the GER-VOLGA mail list (<http://www.webbitt.com/volga/mail-list.html>). The letter below is one of many heart-wrenching letters written in Russia to relatives and friends in America telling of the famine conditions in 1921-22.

This letter appeared on page 5, *Die Welt-Post*, Thursday, May 25, 1922.

Gnudentau

March 20, 1922

To Mrs. George Repp, Portland, Oregon

Your husband on the Bergseite in Balzer has stretched his helping hand also to the Wiesen-seite to four communities in my Parish, Friedenberg, Gnudentau, Morgentau and Blumenfeld and another community in the Neu-Weimar Parish, Strasburg and given instructions that each community receive food in the amount of 240 Pud (8,640 lbs.) Flour, Groats and Fat.

All these foodstuffs were brought here and released for distribution. If the individual souls received a portion of a Pud it was still a help in this extreme emergency, for there were many who had nothing more to eat. Now they can again go through some days without this tormenting hunger.

Unfortunately there are three communities of my Parish, Kana, Jseeburg and Wosjanka and four communities of the Neu-Weimar Parish: Frankreich, Alt-Weimar, Neu-Weimar and Neu Galka, where assistance was not shared with them because no accounting was made for them in America. They are deeply troubled about it and reach their hands out to their American kinsmen and friends and cry out to them from their deep distress: "Turn your thoughts also to us who are also in need of a share of such assistance."

The "gifted" villages have instructed me to con-

vey to their friends in America their most cordial thanks. Such an order I gladly accept as the assistance provided to my villages was as if it had been provided to me.

I know of no better way to send the thanks of these communities than to send them to you, honorable lady, and ask you to pass them on to the American volunteers and in some suitable manner make them aware of the other local communities.

You will already have heard and read much about the horrendous famine over here, "Yes, the emergency is bad," in the Steppe communities it is indescribably bad. It exceeds any concept that those living far away could possibly conjure up.

It had already begun with the winter of 1920-21 when people in the best cases had only about 20 Pfund (1 1/2 lbs.) of grain per month per person. Many have had nothing to eat since before January 1921. The hope was that the coming harvest would end the emergency, but it was not to be. The continuing drought and hot winds destroyed the hopes of the farmers. Nothing grew, not even weeds for the cattle. What there was of the Rye harvest averaged a Pud (36 lbs.) per Desyatina (2.3 acres) and that hardly lasted the famished people the month. And then it became hot again.

Up until winter the people still fought against the hunger, they traded their clothing and all manner of their possessions for bread in the outlying areas. Of the remaining cattle, many head, often to the last one, were slaughtered. Now however, they are defenseless against the famine which has grown enormously and become widespread. Everyone is hungry and no one can satisfy their hunger.

At the beginning of the year 1922 the number of starvation victims in 5 communities amounted to 530 dead. At present there are those rare exceptions who have enough to maintain themselves with half their former ration. Their numbers will shrink from day to day and they will completely

disappear as the famine spreads.

Nearly everyone here has the look of hunger in their eyes. Last Sunday, as I passed my eyes over those attending services, my heart seized and my eyes filled with tears. I saw these men as they once were, and I saw them as they are now. I could not find among them any who had any flesh. I saw only skin covered skeletons.

How can it be otherwise if adult humans are to live on 28 Solotnik (about 3 1/2 oz.) of Rye bread? Tormented by gnawing hunger they fill their bellies with the most impossible things: "Oelkuchen" (ground oil cakes??), with "Schilfrohwurzeln" (reed roots??), with bones and hides. Dog meat, cat meat and dead cattle are not spurned. Now the hungry men await spring in order to hunt ground squirrels and use these rodents to feed themselves.

With such food shortages and with such food, everyone has become ill. The gate has been particularly opened for Typhus which is going from door to door. Entire families are seized by it.

Death is having a rich harvest.

Already in the previous year of 1921 in the 5 communities of Gnadentau Parish, 232 persons have died as a direct result of starvation. Thanks to the tremendous assistance efforts of the rest of the world, led by North America which feeds thousands of hungry children daily, the number of deaths among the children has abated. Among the adult population however, the trend is increasing.

In the community of Morgantau from January 1 to March 15, 34 died of starvation and in the tiny community of Frankreich, 29. Hundreds are down, sick and swollen and near starvation. Oh, there are still many who will have to die if help is not immediately expanded to include the adult population.

From all of that, gracious lady, you can see that the assistance that your husband gave to us came to the right place. You will also understand the joy and gratitude of the recipients.

Many carried their little sacks home with tears of joy in their eyes and there on their knees thanked the Lord for allowing them to have human food once again and asked for God's grace upon him who had sent the aid.

I also thank God that he has aroused his friends in America and stirred them to do this merciful work. It fulfills the promise given in His words to us: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Your Devoted,

J. Koseiol, Pastor to Gnadentau as well as Neu Weimar

Census Records Available

Contact Brent Mai at bmai@cu-portand.edu for further information regarding:

1857 Beideck
1834 & 1850 Franzosen*
1834 & 1857 Hussenbach
1850 & 1857 Kraft
1834 & 1857 Galka

*Brent Mai notes that Franzosen was founded as a French Catholic colony, but over time became a Protestant colony. This transformation evidently occurred, for the most part, between 1816 and 1834, as there is much movement in and out of the colony noted on the 1834 census.

SHAKE YOUR FAMILY
TREE AND WATCH THE
NUTS FALL!