

# Glückstal Colonies Research Association History

*by Margaret Freeman*

GCRA had its beginnings in 1987 when Margaret Freeman and Carolyn Wheeler sent out an exploratory letter asking people to join a new group for Germans from Russia, to be called the Glückstal Colonies Research Association. Designed for those who had ancestry in the Glückstal Colonies of South Russia, Margaret and Carolyn had consulted with Gwen Pritzkau and Arthur Flegel, who felt that the idea had possibilities. Margaret and Carolyn were convinced that the idea was a good one. The initial mailing offered a listing of the inhabitants of the Glückstal group of colonies, and included the pedigrees of Carolyn and Margaret, as far as they had been able to be researched. The offer of membership would include two newsletters annually, and a listing of the inhabitants of the Glückstal District (extracted from the Emigration List in Stumpp), for a \$10 annual fee.

Carolyn and Margaret had each gone as far as possible with their personal family research. Margaret had self-published a computer-generated Aman Family History in 1984, which included chapters on the Hoffmann and Lehr families, among whom there had been much intermarriage. In addition, while Margaret served six years on the board of AHSGR, she was co-chair and chair of the genealogy committee. From that viewpoint, she recognized that the real work in putting families together was going to be done on the village level. After all, we knew that our families had lived in the same communities in Russia, and then traveled together to North America.

The hope was that by communicating, we would find someone with information on our ancestors, or pictures of our families that we did not have. Most of those interested had done a family history and were up against a brick wall for more information. It would just be a big job to get the communication going.

Carolyn Wheeler was adamant that we set goals and objectives, and share them with our members. As written in the early issues, in order to realize the purpose of the Glückstal Colonies Research Association, the following goals and objectives were articulated:

- (1) Publish a newsletter,
- (2) Publish queries in the newsletter,
- (3) Establish a surname exchange to put families in touch with each other,
- (4) Arrange for exchange of information,
- (5) Publish a membership roster,
- (6) List all published sources related to Glückstal inhabitants and descendants,
- (7) Seek out and publish pertinent unpublished resources,
- (8) Locate and access early Dakota parish records,
- (9) Locate and access pertinent cemetery records,
- (10) Locate and access declarations of Intent for U.S. Citizenship,
- (11) Locate and list all German and English language Dakota newspapers in Germans from Russia areas,
- (12) Extract newspapers for all information on Glückstal colonists.

From the beginning, the aim was to be an association with input from our members. The goal was not a top-down organization, but rather one in which members would work jointly, sharing information, in order to learn more about our ancestors.

The beginning was difficult. Information went out to all who were known to us with ancestry in our Glückstal Colonies. There was little information available that related to the Glückstal District. Items were searched out among the books brought to the GRHS and AHSGR conventions, at the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at North Dakota State University, and also in the Archives at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

Due to unforeseen complications, the first newsletter did not come out until the end of 1987, and should have been dated 1988. There was a delay due to the confusion with the computer, the establishment of a business license, a newsletter notification for doing business under a name other than that of an individual, and getting a bank account established.

The computer programs were primitive in the first years of GCRA, before 1990, so the GCRA Newsletter had to be put together in one piece, not a series of separate files that could be melded together. Margaret

spent the time researching, writing and producing the newsletter, with Carolyn writing and proofreading. Gwen's work at the Family History Library supplied points of origin. Alice Essig started to extract the McIntosh County, ND, Declarations of Intent, which data was also welcome. Early newsletters were often a result of GCRA collecting information in one place and republishing items like passenger lists, lists of family histories, and extracts of various newspapers contributed by our members. Limited as the content was, the GCRA Newsletter was well received.

In publishing the newsletter in the early days, the procedure was for the final copy to be taken to a copy shop, and separate pages were brought home to the dining table, in multiple boxes. The pages were stapled together, addressed, and taken to the post office.

From the beginning we had an idea that we were meeting a need. We saw people at the conventions who had highlighted parts of the newsletters in order to ask questions and research further. We also had the major GR groups quote us for passenger list sources and origins, and that served to keep us going.

Arthur Flegel initially helped to set the tone by extracting data from the *Odessa Haus und Landwirtschaft Kalender*, George Leibbrandt's *Sammlung*, and other resources he had available, and making that available to our members. He spent a considerable amount of time translating and extracting the information and preparing it for publication. Several members: Stan Rall, Geoffrey Graham, Dianne Ladd, Terry Keim, Beth Hovland, and Rev. Ross Merkel, contributed a family **Parochialschein**, and Greg Dockter shared some of his extensive family histories. Passenger lists came from Allyn Brosz, Kathy Carlson, Luella Just Bitz, Clyde Eisenbeis, Adeline Weston, Duane Bittner, Mary-Lynne Harding, and others.

An early problem for the group was the collection of dues. Duane Stabler encouraged sending a statement for yearly dues, and sending additional reminders. Maintaining sufficient cash flow kept the group going, and provided the organizers with a good feeling about the project, so that they were able and willing to continue. Enthusiasm for the project continued when incoming funds covered the outgoing costs, and were reassuring to the individuals who were spending nearly every available minute on the organization.

In addition to McIntosh County, much was published about Cheyenne County, Kansas. That included the Declarations of Intent from both counties. Eventually the Campbell County Declarations by Curt Renz, and the McPherson County Declarations by Loretta Neuhardt and Marvin and Leona Warns were added. Also published were donated lists of names on grave markers in early pioneer cemeteries. Linda Johnson read early newspapers from Bowdle and Java, SD, extracting data that gave us a glimpse of life in our Dakota places of settlement in the early twentieth century. For example, it was reported that the doctor went out to a rural community on the train to treat a patient and returned the same day! The newspaper extractions prompted member Della Bennett to say, "Thanks to you, I now know where my grandmother is buried and where her funeral was, something I did not think I would ever learn. It was in Linda's article last year." When so many different people used their skills to do different things and contributed the information for publication, we all began to benefit. And perhaps more importantly, everyone began to have a stake in the success of the group.

An article by Carolyn Wheeler regarding the Rudolfs and how to search for origins appeared in Volume 1 No. 1. This was followed by an article by Joy Fisher on what she found in the Erdmannhausen records and how to use that procedure in searching for your own family. Tom Schmierer's articles on Scotland, SD, and Ruben Koerner's records of the Kasseler church in Freeman, SD, gave clues as to the early groups of arrivals in southeastern South Dakota. Mary-Lynn Harding wrote an article on wartime registration in Canada, and this all added to our knowledge of sources of information helpful in researching our ancestors.

More cemetery records came in from Floyd Aman, Elaine Bauer, LaVelle Campbell, Patricia Dunn, Rev. Ross Merkel, John Obenauer, Donnette Sonnenfeld, Elmer and Larry Schmoll, Alvena Vojta, Dale Wahl, and others.

Articles on historical background were written by Tom Stangl, Gwen Pritzkau, and Margaret Freeman. Ed Schultz translated articles from German. Arthur Flegel translated an article written about the churches and ministers of the Glückstal district, and more became available over time about schools, the earliest minister in the district, successive ministers, schools, and other conditions and situations.

In 1990, Shirley Fischer Arends' PhD dissertation at Georgetown University, *The Central Dakota Germans*, appeared, published by the Georgetown University Press. GCRA published the Michael Miller review of the book, as those with Glückstal Colony ancestry were featured in the volume.

Also in 1990, over fifty people attended the village night at the Sacramento AHSGR Convention. By that time GCRA was divided into areas of interest by villages, and many good contacts were made. GCRA established coordinators for each village in our group of colonies, and for other areas of interest such as Hungary, Poland, and for those families who moved on to various villages in Bessarabia and to other daughter colonies.

People known to have Glückstal ancestry began to take an active part in conventions. Allyn Brosz participated in the Sacramento convention program, as did Bob Freeman and various others of Glückstal ancestry. Glückstal persons have held positions on the national boards of GRHS and AHSGR, and have helped with founding and maintaining many local chapters.

Tom and Marj Green wrote about researching in the United States. Arthur Flegel shared his expertise with the German language in translating articles on the Chiliast movement, and various church records. Gary Maier sent pictures and shared the memories of his cousin, Ferdinand Maier, regarding the location of Wischina, Trigardy, Woinitsch and other small chutors near Bergdorf.

In July of 1995, James Klein presented eight books about the Germans from Russia to the Odessa State University Library on behalf of Michael Miller and the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at North Dakota State University Library. He visited the Grossliebental colonies, Glückstal, Sofiental, and Nesselrode. He also helped determine some of the logistics for establishing the Journey to the Homeland Tours, and negotiated e-mail privileges between Sergey Yelisarov and NDSU at the Odessa Polytechnic University. At the 1996 AHSGR Convention in St. Paul, he shared with us various portions of Glückstal documents copied from Fond No.'s 6, 66, and 252 that he procured from the Odessa State Archives.

After the summer 1996 visits to Odessa with Michael Miller's Germans from Russia Heritage Center,

Journey to the Homeland Tours, data suddenly became available for purchase from the State Archives of the Odessa Region. At first it was just a trickle, but the number of files offered to us has grown over the years, and today our purchases, some with translations, have totaled tens of thousands of dollars. Most translated files have been published in the GCRA books and newsletters.

Dianne Ladd read newspapers from the Dakotas and federal and state censuses, and many of her extractions were published as extensions of the Stumpp Emigration lists, separated by the various ancestral villages of the inhabitants. She sought out other sources like the state and federal censuses for us to create the extension of the Emigration List and the Revision Lists of our colonies, so that all would be properly sourced and documented. The information was separated by village and turned into extensive notebooks. Members donated copies of early church books, and we published lists of their members.

Work was also published on daughter colonies for which we previously had little information. Herb Poppke wrote an article on a daughter colony called Wakarskiye, giving history and names of inhabitants, who all migrated together to the USA. Michael Rempfer wrote about Neu Beresina, listing all known inhabitants. An article on Krontal also appeared, based on information from a Heimatbuch.

Members were donating many obituaries and cemetery lists. Some, like Curt Renz, donated for publication his entire Index of Obituaries from the *Eureka Rundschau*, and *Das Nordlicht*. Others worked on indexes of letters sent from New Russia for publication. Gus Streyle, Clyde Jundt, Cindy Horning, and Richard Guthmiller of Medina and others sent copies of records of churches no longer in existence. Henry Ehly shared church and family histories, and Kermit Karns shared work he had done in early microfilming of church records in the Dakotas, telling us where the information was available.

Bea Dufloth White wrote the memories of her father, and her family's oral history of his family's arrival in Glückstal — coming in a wagon. Information on life in the early U.S. years came from newspaper extracts on July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations, and from clippings sent in by Gladys Mettler, and others.

Persons who lived in our villages wrote about life in the villages and later in the gulags. They included the writings of Ferdinand Hoffmann & Alita (Kussmaul) Frank on their families' experiences, translated by Gerda Fadden. Other information came in from Melita Kärcher, Luisa Knorr, Rosina Tilitzky, Pauline (Obenauer) Hoffmann, and Ferdinand Hoffmann. More information came from meeting those who were born and had lived in the Glückstal colonies under the Bolsheviks, usually individuals who appeared at the **Bundestreffen** sponsored by the **Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland**.

Many church histories were donated, including the booklets printed for anniversary celebrations.

An announcement in Volk auf dem Weg encouraged Gary and Betty Schlaht to attend a meeting of Bergdorfers in Heilbronn, Germany in 1999. It developed that this reunion was mainly attended by a group of persons from Kazakhstan and Siberia who had lived in Bergdorf while awaiting permission to move to Germany. They were known as **spät-Bergdorfers** — late-Bergdorfers.

Many have regularly sent obituaries through the years, such as Gladys Mettler, Dianne Ladd, and Emma Job, whose work is continuing thanks to Earl and ArvaDell Job. Also obituaries came from Lila Jean Page, and, more recently, Michael Miller sends copies of North Dakota papers from which obituaries and other articles are clipped.

Community and statewide workshops were held in Lodi, arranged by Florence Wheeler and Dianne Ladd. This generated much enthusiasm and spurred on the effort to share information. Gwen Pritzkau was often a speaker at these day-long gatherings, and kept us abreast of what was new and helpful to our research at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

GCRA bought a copy of the Declarations of Intent for U.S. Citizenship before the Dakota Territory Supreme Court from the Pierre, SD, State Archives (that provided information on the pre-1889 migrants) and Allyn Brosz extracted the applicants' names and constructed an index. It was published in the *GCRA Newsletter, Volume 9 No. 2*, and has been shared with AHSGR, GRHS, and the State Historical Society of South Dakota. It is now hyperlinked to several listserves.

Several other individuals extracted the Declarations of Intent for particular counties, such as Alice Essig, Curt Renz, Loretta Neuhardt and Marvin and Leona Warns. Published information encouraged readers to look further among their collections, and soon extractions of films of newspapers, etc. came in. Also individuals were willing to read state, and federal censuses for certain counties and communities of heavy concentration of Glückstalers — such as LaRose Ketterling, Al Oster, Marilyn Simpson, Juanita Pleinis, Helen Combs, and Mary-Lynne Harding. Members such as Greg Dockter, Gary Schlaht and Al Graf translated family biographies.

By 1992 computer genealogy software programs were widely available to individuals for entering their family data. Among those doing so and sharing with GCRA were Della Bennett, Randal Bosche, Allyn Brosz, LaVelle (Preszler) Campbell, Ruth (Schauer) Davison, Harold Ehrman, Clyde Eisenbeis, Ed Goehring, Terry Keim, Dorothy Kerr, Dianne Krenz, Dianne Ladd, Sharon Pheil, Juanita Pleinis, Dan Roth, Anneva Sander, Dennis Roth, Richard Sandmeier, Tom and Janice Stangl, Herbert Tabert, Alvena Vojta, Carolyn Wheeler, Bea (Dufloth) White, Cecelia (Kaul) Wolf, Richard B. Wolff, Walter Wuerth and others. GCRA remains grateful for members sharing their family histories and genealogies, both published in book form and on disc. This information has been connected into a large database by Herb Tabert and published first in 2004 in *The Glückstalers in New Russia and North America: A Collection of History, Genealogy and Folklore, Disc #1*.

Jeanie White started work on the St. Petersburg records by sharing copies of all the marriage records that were photocopied and made available in our first GCRA book in 1995, under the supervision of Harold Ehrman. At the suggestion of Ed Schultz, a group began a project to read and extract all the Glückstal district records found in the St. Petersburg films, and that eventually became *Glückstal Colonies Births and Marriages, 1833–1900, and Glückstal Colonies Deaths, 1833–1900*, edited by Harold Ehrman, and published by the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University Libraries (GRHC), 1997 and 1998. Aware that there was great interest in family history and in our mutual ancestry among the returnees settling in Germany, Brigitte Von Budde of NDSU Libraries — assisted by Gerda Fadden — translated these books into German, and they

were published as *Glückstal Kolonien Geburten und Eheschliessungen, 1833–1900*, and *Glückstal Kolonien Todesfälle, 1833–1900*, in 1998 and 1999, edited by Harold Ehrman, and again published by GRHC.

Dr. Ken Goetz shared his ancestor's midwifery records from Glückstal and the Dakotas, which were published in the *GCRA Newsletter*.

Many persons with ancestry in Glückstal participated in and supported the early video of our Black Sea people, *Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie*, put out by Prairie Public Television. They continued by supporting other Prairie Public videos, produced with cooperation of Michael M. Miller at GRHC.

Some members, like Opal White, sent information they had located about the villages in Germany, where their ancestors had lived before migrating to Russia. Tom Stangl also wrote numerous articles about data found in church records of various German villages.

The connection of the Glückstal Colonies and the Bessarabian Colonies has been clarified over the years with data from Curt Renz, Ed Schultz, Dale Wahl, and Ralph Ruff. Ross Merkel wrote about Glückstal people who appeared in the records of other villages in the Black Sea area.

Over the years, many donated family histories eventually became part of the Glückstal database. Cemetery records were also consulted to add to the database. GCRA purchased Jubilee Books (both newly written, and republished) as they became available. This genealogical content was also incorporated into the database by Herb Tabert.

Many individuals donated village maps of Russia and wrote memories of life in the villages, including Ferdinand Hoffmann, Pauline (Obenauer) Hoffmann, Johann and Anneta Stroh, and Johann Stotz.

GCRA boasts one astronaut, Richard James Hieb, whose ancestral names include: Hieb, Bender, Gross, Martel, Mehlhaff and Ohlauser. With the surname Hieb he descends from Balthasar Hieb, one of the founders of Neudorf.

Elwood Dietrich shared the official data generated by his relative's coming to the U.S. under an assumed

name, when he used the passport obtained for a young acquaintance who refused to leave Russia. The record had to be corrected so the Dietrich relative could get citizenship and obtain land. The record was corrected on the local and state level, and the passenger list in the National Archives was also corrected.

James Klein added a series of articles on data taken from his 1995 trip to Ukraine, in which he discussed at length the State Archives of the Odessa Region. Tom Stangl began to describe in detail research on multiple family lines, based on findings in the St. Petersburg records. He also sorted out confusion within certain family names and their connections, such as the Maier/Myer/Mayer/Meyer/Meier family names, all of which was published in the newsletter, along with his many other articles.

Just as the arrival of computers with their ease of use gave genealogical research a huge leap forward, another huge leap was the use of email. GCRA members began using electronic communication among themselves in the 1990s and sharing their addresses. Now files are regularly sent and much communication takes place across North America and from continent to continent with this medium.

Penny Raile took on the job of creating, supporting and maintaining a web site for GCRA, available at [www.glueckstal.org](http://www.glueckstal.org). Much information is also available at Harold Ehrman's web site at [www.ehrman.net](http://www.ehrman.net). It is also possible to connect to GCRA through the AHSGR and GRHS websites, as well as the website at GRHC.

Over the years, the work on points of origin begun by Gwen Pritzkau and Carolyn Wheeler, has been added to by Fred Ball, Joy Fisher, Dr. Ken Goetz, Rev. Ross Merkel, Michael Rempfer, Robert Schauer, Tom and Janice Stangl, John Teske, Paul Whitehouse, and others. Initially appearing in the GCRA Newsletter, the Points of Origin was published in abbreviated form in *The Glückstalers in New Russia and North America ...* 2004, and more fully on Disc #1 that accompanies the volume.

In September of 1999, GCRA participated in a one-day program that was part of a Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies Convention in Van Nuys, California. Those sharing their expertise were Harold Ehrman, Joy Fisher, Larry Haas, Barbara Horn,

Kay (Kuntz) Igoa, Dianne Ladd, Rev. Ross Merkel, Gwen Pritzkau, and Robert and Margaret Freeman.

In 2000, GCRA sponsored the publication of *Marienberg: Schicksal eines Dorfes — Fate of a Village* in English and German in one volume, written by Johann Bollinger and Janice (Huber) Stangl. The book contained Mr. Bollinger's brief history of the village, transcriptions and translations of various letters from people in the Glückstal district to their relatives in North America that had been published in American newspapers, information from the EWZ records, and photos of the village. Harold Ehrman again was editor, and the volume was published by GRHC.

Over the years, translations of purchased documents came from Rev. Ross Merkel, Rev. Horst Gutsche, Karl Hoffmann, Doris Granata, Lloyd Ketterling, Adam Ketterling, Tom and Janice Stangl, Homer Rudolf, Margaret Freeman and in Russian, from Donn Koenig, Boris and Natalie Moser, Adam Ketterling, Rick Rye, Maryna Yelizarov, Serge Yelizarov, and Richard and Natasha Klein.

In 1999, the first announcement was made of plans for a book to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Glückstal Colonies of South Russia. The book came about because of the suggestion of James Klein, and was published in time to be presented at the GRHS Convention in Bismarck in 2004 — 800 pages with another 2000 pages on the two CDs bundled in the back cover. The title is *The Glückstalers in New Russia and North America: A Collection of History, Genealogy and Folklore*. Homer Rudolf edited the book, Harold Ehrman managed the desktop publishing, and contributors were Allyn Brosz, Barbara (Geiger) Horn, James Klein, Gwen Pritzkau, Penny Raile, Homer Rudolf, Sally Sologuk, Janice (Huber) Stangl, Thomas A. Stangl, and Margaret (Aman) Freeman.

Through the support of many generous donors, GCRA also produced a documentary, *Heaven Is Our Homeland, the Glückstalers of New Russia and North America*. The western premier was part of the AHSGR Convention in Modesto, CA in 2004, and the midwestern premier was held that same year to a full house preceding the GRHS convention in Bismarck, ND, at the ND Heritage Center. The narrator of the documentary was Allyn Brosz, and the text was written

by Homer Rudolf, Janice Stangl, Thomas Stangl, Allyn Brosz, Barbara Horn, and James Klein, based on a narrative of Ron Vossler. Ryan Schumacher did the graphic design, Bob Dambach and Homer Rudolf were executive producers, and the documentary was produced by Roadshow Productions for the Glückstal Colonies Research Association. The documentary has now been shown on Public Television stations across the upper Midwest, on the West Coast and in California, and as far south as Kentucky. It has won three communications industry awards: the "Crystal Award of Excellence", the top prize in the 2004 "Communicator Awards" (The award is judged on story-telling ability and technical excellence); a 2005 "Silver Telly" (the top prize) in the 27<sup>th</sup> annual "Telly Award Competition" and a 2006 "Gold Aurora Award" in the "Documentary Historical" category.

GCRA received the Governor's Award for History in the group category from the State of South Dakota on April 12, 2007. Marvin and Del Paulson of Pierre accepted the award given in recognition of the GCRA contributions to South Dakota history in the territorial and pioneer periods. The plaque of recognition is on display at the Germans from Russia Heritage Society in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Harold Ehrman has developed an interest in Martyrology — the fate of the Germans from Russia who had been arrested by the Soviets in the 1930s, and the disposition of their cases. Many of the cases against those repressed were reopened after glasnost, and revisited with the disposition of forgiveness of the charges. The records have been made public and available to the families of those involved. Harold has posted some information on his website.

Member Joy Fisher took on the job of coordination of the South Dakota Genweb, and Duane Stabler, Harold Ehrman, and Yvonne Haefner agreed to work on a county of that state. Other GCRA members also participate in this ongoing project.

Member Duane Stabler enlisted the help of Selma Lapp and Keenan Stoecker in putting together *Researchers Guide to McPherson County, South Dakota, Cemeteries*, published by GRHC. It lists cemeteries, township by township, with pictures in color and indexes. GCRA contributed to the financing of this fine book.

In many issues, Allyn Brosz shared his additions to the listings on passenger ship arrivals in the U.S. and Canada.

The translation by Janice Stangl and Michael Rempfer of letters between Ukraine and the Dakotas, that were published in German-language newspapers, have provided documentation of the relief effort from the Dakotas to Ukraine in the 1920s and 1930s.

Many read the German language newspapers and shared the news of our villages in Russia, such as Michael Rempfer, Janice Stangl, and Homer Rudolf.

Victor Goehring attended a court session in Odessa and evaluated it within the framework of his legal training. That too was published in the *GCRA Newsletter*.

Many members, such as Joyce (Zumbaum) Miller, Phyllis Pearce, Ardella (Strobel) Bennett, and Curt Renz, shared information on their families, found in documents they had privately purchased from the State Archives of the Odessa Region.

Land records were an interest of Allyn Brosz and Herbert Thurn. At various times articles were published in the *GCRA Newsletter*, and Allyn Brosz shared his expertise on federal land records at conventions.

Over the years prizes were won from AHSGR for stories later published by Sally Sologuk Backman, Anne (Veitenheimer) Pietz, and Mary Beaver.

Proofreading and extracting of data for the newsletters and books have been done by many, including Carolyn Wheeler, and Lynn Fauth, Ph.D.

In 2002, largely at the prodding of Michael M. Miller, GCRA undertook the complicated project of erecting a monument in Glinnoye, the former Glückstal, to honor all of our ancestors who were born, lived and died there. The preparation and arrangements were made by Serge Yelizarov, and Pavel Pratchuk, that included purchasing and moving the stone, arranging for the inscription, and setting it in place. The monument was dedicated in May of 2002, at a ceremony on the last day of school and attended by all the students and many of the townspeople. The school in Glinnoye prepared a pageant, and officials from schools in Moldova and Transneistria attended

and spoke. Brochures, written by Ron Vossler, were available in English and Russian. Attending were Janice & Thomas Stangl, Roger and Elaine Klusman, Tim and Judy Klusman, Dr. Ken and Cathy Vogeles, Gwen Pritzkau, Bernadette Kuhn, Harley Roth, Bob and Margaret Freeman, Oskar and Helma (Seefried) Eberle, Michael Miller and Bob Dambach.

Articles were also written by LaVern Graf on Duc de Richelieu; on WW I Veterans by Michael Rempfer; on perfect attendance and the Gaub families by Cecelia (Kaul) Wolff; **Sonderkommando** Stumpp by Allyn Brosz; Hope Valley Church of Cheyenne County, Kansas, by Dr. Jacob Sammler; fighting in Kassel in WW II by Ron Vossler; A memorial to WW II soldier, Otto Julius Dockter, and "If Tombstones Could Talk" by Carol Just; Glückstal Descendants who are athletes by Allyn Brosz and Lynn Fauth; and the use of DNA in identifying the remains of Allen Mettler who served in the Korean conflict which led to a proper burial in North Dakota, written by Allyn Brosz.

There were also articles on family searches such as that of Carolyn Wheeler and her search for Rüb origins; Carolyn Schott on her Schott ancestry; Mary-Lynne Harding on her search for Sifferman information and WW II Canadian registrations; Beth Hoveland and Diane Shultz's story on their common Liedle grandmother; along with Gordon Dobler's biography of his ancestor, Christian Buechler, founder of Freeman, SD.

GCRA published articles telling of trips to the ancestral villages by Harold Ehrman (Germany) and Dianne Ladd (Ukraine and Moldova) that generated many ideas and much excitement post-glasnost. James Klein's fact-finding trip in 1995 led to other trips, many of which were reported in the newsletter by: Arnold Fadden, Gerda Fadden, Natalie Hansen, Carol Just, Donna Larson, Diane Lewis, Patricia Lewis, Arlene Lundgren, Bruce Mehlhaff, Elaine Morrison, Penny Raile, Rev. Ted Rath, Darlene Robertson, Donald & Marjolaine Schmitt, Herbert and Mildred Thurn, Cora (Wolff) Tschackofske, Ron Vossler, Lavern Weber, Charles Weisser, and others.

GCRA has also participated in the SOAR project of AHSGR, Save Our Ancestral Resources. The digitizing of the GCRA holdings is an ongoing activity of the group.

In about 2004, with the assistance of Penny Raile, GCRA developed a brochure that has been useful in making contacts and promoting the group. In 2008, for the **Bundestreffen** sponsored by the **Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland**, the brochure was translated into German. That has resulted in many contacts and memberships from Germany.

After twenty years of existence, it is time to evaluate whether GCRA has met the goals established in organizing GCRA. Predictably, some goals have been more easily accomplished than others.

GCRA has indeed published a newsletter for all twenty years of its existence, now forty issues. There has been much of interest for all with ancestry in our colonies and actually all with Black Sea ancestry, as well as information on the pioneering years in North America. Today, the computer programs for newsletter production are sophisticated and easier to use for the initiated. For the last 4–5 years, the newsletter, now 64 pages in length annually, spread over two issues, has been produced by a professional, earlier Sally Sologuk, and now Velma Jesser

Queries are published in the newsletter, as they come to us. Of late, that is taken care of one-to-one among the members, or on the GCRA Listserve.

The GCRA surname exchange has enabled our researchers to be in touch with each other, and is a vehicle for exchange of information.

The membership roster is available to all members, and is a benefit of membership in the association.

A listing of all published sources related to Glückstal inhabitants and descendants is in process. There are many published sources today in the public domain, but there is work still needed in obtaining church records from the churches no longer in existence, before they disappear. GCRA will need to continue to publish the unpublished resources, such as early Dakota parish records, and pertinent cemetery records, as well as promoting and joining in cooperative work, such as that done by Roger Ehrich on a site known as Odessa 3.

Many Declarations of Intent for U.S. Citizenship are now on the US Genweb and the various state historical

society sites, in addition to the declarations GCRA published in the early years. Much of interest is also now available on the various genealogical sites.

Fortunately many of the German and English language Dakota newspapers in Germans from Russia areas have been identified and in most cases, microfilmed, and are being read for data relating to our colonies. Indexes of the papers have been compiled for both letters and obituaries. Some of these letters and other information have been published in the GCRA Newsletter, in *Marienburg: Fate of a Village*, on Disc # 1 of our 2004 book, and more are in process.

Our amazing and welcome ability to acquire information from the State Archives of the Odessa Region has added immeasurably to our information about our families and their lives. The purchase of the St. Petersburg Lutheran Archival records by the Family History Library of the Latter Day Saints Church was most helpful. These sources, never imagined as becoming available when GCRA was founded, have been the main impetus behind our book publishing, as GCRA now prepares for our ninth book.

GCRA has published to date:

- Glückstal Colonies Marriages. 1995.
- Glückstal Colonies Births and Marriages, 1833–1900.* 1997.
- Glückstal Colonies Deaths, 1833–1900.* 1998.
- Glückstal Kolonien Geburten und Eheschliessungen, 1833–1900.* 1998.
- Glückstal Colonies Todesfälle, 1833–1900.* 1999.
- Glückstal Colony Census, 1858.* 1998.
- Marienburg: Schicksal eines Dorfes — Fate of a Village.* 2000 & 2003
- The Glückstalers of New Russia and North America: A Bicentennial Collection of History, Genealogy and Folklore.* 2004.
- Heaven Is Our Homeland: The Glückstallers of New Russia and North America.* An hour-long documentary available in DVD and VHS format.

And now in 2008, another book has been issued, with thoughts of further publications.

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