

News from home

December 2013

Tri-County Tourism Alliance Prairie Legacy



Welk homestead barn.

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Creating a Germans from Russia historic site

It's not all about Lawrence...

There has been discussion for the past year about purchasing the Lawrence Welk Homestead along the Lawrence Welk Highway south of Linton. The 2012-13 legislators approved an expenditure of \$100,000 to purchase the six acres and buildings. This includes many of the donated historical artifacts.

- The Tri-County Tourism Alliance has agreed to support this purchase through in-kind work and any other means we can to turn this site into THE GERMANS FROM RUSSIA HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SITE.

There is much opposition to this project because of misinformation being circulated by uninformed persons.

We would like to point out the following facts.

- Germans from Russia make up 41 percent of the population that settled North Dakota.
- There are NO historic sites telling the story of these people's contribution to the settlement of North Dakota.
- This site is not about preserving the legacy of Lawrence Welk. It is all about preserving the rich culture of a very large percentage of North Dakotans.
- There are historic sites and state funds celebrating the ethnic heritage of many other cultures in the state.
- There are NO state historic sites within the three counties of Emmons County, Logan County and McIntosh County.

If you are in favor of this project, we need to know. Please send a letter to Merl Paaverud, 612 East Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, or email your thoughts to histsoc@nd.gov or call (701) 328-2666.

JOIN US

The Tri-County Tourism Alliance meets monthly in a community within the three county area of Emmons County, Logan County and McIntosh County.

There is no membership fee to belong to this group and your presence and ideas are always welcome.

Contact President Carmen Rath-Wald at (701)754-2504 or email carmen.rath.wald@ndsu.edu.



Tri-County Tourism receives grant for 'Women Behind The Plow' exhibit

The State Historical Society of North Dakota has awarded the Tri-County Tourism Alliance a grant to collect interviews and create a traveling photo exhibit called "Women Behind the Plow."

The award will be used over the next two years to collect interviews and photographs of German Russian women who assisted their spouses on farms in a tri-county area in south central North Dakota.

Photos and stories will be used to create a traveling exhibit honoring the unrecognized work of women who not only tended to household chores and children, but worked elbow to elbow with their husbands. Many of these women were not even identified on photographs, but rather referred to as "So-and-so's wife" or "Mrs. So-and-so." Their identities lost forever behind faded black and white photos.

The exhibit will be unveiled at the

2015 Wishek Sauerkraut Days and be available thereafter for exhibit in businesses and galleries around the state.

The Tri-County Tourism Alliance was formed as a nonprofit three years ago to support heritage tourism in an area largely settled by Germans from Russia in North Dakota three counties – Logan County, McIntosh County and Emmons County. Anyone interested in preserving the culture of this unique group of people is invited to attend the meetings.

If you are interested in being interviewed for this project you must be willing to do a video taped interview and to be photographed for the exhibit. The alliance would also ask for old black and white



photographs of farm life, home chores, wedding day and school portraits, etc. to supplement the interviews. Interviewees need not be currently living in the tri-county area to qualify for an interview but be born before 1950 and at one time lived and farmed in the tri-county area.

Interviewing will begin in the early spring, please contact Sue Balcom at 701-527-5169 to set up your interview.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFER ON GERMANS FROM RUSSIA FOOD CULTURE COOKBOOK

The book "Ewiger Saatz – Everlasting Yeast" is being offered as a Christmas special for \$75 with free shipping to your Christmas list within the Continental U.S. The book will be gift wrapped on request and a special card enclosed.

Its 120 pages are packed with heartwarming personal stories of gardening, butchering, baking, harvesting and surviving in three

EWIGER SAATZ: 3



Tuna and noodles and Cream of Mushroom soup

A personal column
By Sue B. Balcom



My darling daughter called the other day (a few years ago now) and asked about a recipe for meatballs she made when living at home. The recipe came from the Emmanuel Lutheran Church ladies, circa 1975.

“Copy the recipe,” I said. “But, don’t take my cookbook with you.”

When I was visiting my mom, we talked cookbooks with Edryse Miller who walked by us delivering Miller Family cookbooks to the Community Cafe.

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North Dakota counties settled mainly by Germans from Russia. The book contains some background history as well as recipes for dough foods, sausages, soap and of course, everlasting yeast.

The importance of collecting this information from the last full-blooded German-speaking citizens of these three counties cannot be overstated. When this generation passes, religion, customs and even a language will die with them. It is our mission to preserve as much of this culture as possible and promote heritage tourism in this area.

“If you want a recipe for anything, it’s in that Lutheran Cookbook,” my mom said. If you cook like a German anyway.

Garrison Keillor pokes fun at the Lutheran Church Basement Ladies in his weekly Prairie Home Companion broadcast. He even sang a song dedicated to the “casserole” dinners held at the church on every occasion. It went lyrically – “tu-na and noo-dles and Creammm of Mush-room soup...”

Don’t laugh. Even my children said how much they miss the potlucks we used to have at the church for New Member Sunday.

We eat out too much today. If we were to revive the era of hot dishes and Jell-o salad, maybe we’d be healthier. It was a way to use up leftovers, too. Sometimes, when I am trolling for a recipe to use up some leftover ham or zucchini overflow, I check that Lutheran Cookbook.

It’s instant dinner when you use a vegetable, a meat and a can of “Cream of Something” soup. Add onions and celery and bake at 350 degrees for somewhere between 30-60 minutes. Serve with your favorite colored Jell-o with shredded carrots or fruit suspended in it and you have a complete meal.

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For more information about the Tri-County Tourism Alliance, the food culture project or ordering a copy of the book, please contact Sue B. Balcom, dasguteessen@hotmail.com or call 701-527-5169.

To order a book, send a \$75 check for each book to Tri-County Tourism Alliance, 2145 34th St., Mandan, ND 58554. Please make checks to Tri-County Tourism Alliance and provide a proper mailing address, or addresses, for your gift mailings. For more information about the project visit www.dasguteessen.com or www.germanrussiancountry.org.

TUNA AND NOODLES: from 3

Not all recipes in that book are for casseroles. The book also has my favorite pie crust recipes and something called Mexicali Vegetable Soup with Meat Balls in there. That recipe has my name attached to it because my mother submitted it. (There's also a typo and it reads "Mixicali Vegetable Soup..." which is a better description of the ingredients anyway.)

Some church ladies were quite worldly their submissions. There are recipes in the Foreign Foods section for Blachinda, Basti, Finnish Flat Bread, Kuchen Dough and filling, Fattigman and Bohemian Butter Tarts.

Of course, if you grew up Lutheran, these are not foreign foods in your house.

There are also some recipes with some very "unusual" ingredients in them like: Prune Cake, Potato Cake and Sauerkraut Cake. Trust me on this one, the sauerkraut tastes like coconut and keeps the cake very moist. (But so does coconut, I believe.) Then there's my favorite, Ammonia Cookies. Thank goodness I didn't try this before my Aunt Alice told me there's a difference between baking ammonia and Mr. Clean.

Like any good cookbook, my favorite pages are bookmarked by stains and torn binding. Most of the pages are sugar-coated and toasted with age. It was printed pre-computer and the recipes are typewritten.

To fill in the white space at the bottom of the pages, there are quips like:
"The bonds of matrimony aren't worth much, unless the interest is kept up" or "A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle."

And, yes, there are recipes for Jell-o salads and desserts, nearly every one used Dream Whip, Jell-o or Pudding mix as the main ingredient. There's even a recipe for Tomato Soup Salad.

Most of all, the Lutheran Cookbook has memories. I recognize the names of ladies who cooked for the funerals and weddings on Saturdays and taught Sunday School on Sundays. There are names of classmates and friends, people who have passed away and people who I still run into once in blue moon.

I'm thinking maybe we should have more potluck dinners in this world?

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Visit dasguteessen.com for our project blog and www.germanrussiancountry.org for more information about our organization and its work.