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McIntosh County German-Russians During World War I

Faith and Family: Three Rural North Dakota Cemeteries

FROM THE COLLECTIONS

Governor's Residence Chairs Reflect North Dakota

Occupied on March 30, 1960, by Governor John E. and Pauline Huntley Davis and their three children, the newly built North Dakota Governor's Residence at the corner of Fourth Street and Boulevard Avenue in Bismarck had over 145 items of furniture. The furniture was purchased by the North Dakota Board of Administration after consultation with architects, interior decorators, and the first lady. They chose items from the Palladian furniture line made by the Baker Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

All of the furniture was of good quality, and everything was new in the State rooms. Only a few old pieces from the old mansion [at Fourth Street and Avenue B] came over. —*Former First Lady Jean Guy (1961–73)*

The dining room table was sixteen feet long and had twenty side chairs and four matching armchairs. The chair seats were upholstered in a blue and white stripe, in keeping with the blue and white decor of the residence.

In 1977, members of the North Dakota Extension Homemakers embroidered needlepoint designs for new seat cushions for the dining room chairs. The eight designs were created by Barbara Molesworth. Employing elements such as the state flower (wild prairie rose), state bird (western meadowlark), and wheat, she created designs that reflected the state in 1977. The chairs, with the newly embroidered seats, were used from 1977 until June 1998, when they were replaced during a redecorating effort during the Edward T. Schafer administration. The chairs were added to the museum collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota in 1998, where they remain preserved.

In early 2018, the 1960 home will be razed as North Dakota transitions to the new Governor's Residence.

*Mark J. Halvorson, curator of collections research,
Museum Division*



One of twenty dining room chairs used in the North Dakota Governor's Residence from 1960 until 1998. The embroidered seat was added in 1977. SHSND 1998.498.8



Plow in field in a yellow circle. SHSND 1998.498.13



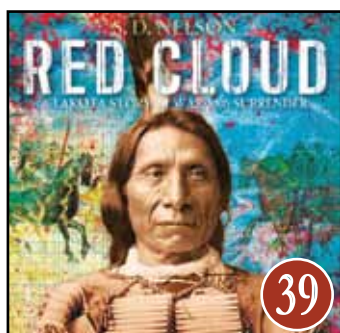
Windmill and pumpjack with prairie roses, meadowlark, and church. SHSND 1998.498.9



North Dakota and ribbon with prairie roses, western meadowlark, and wheat. SHSND 1998.498.14



Prairie chicken in a field of grass. SHSND 1998.498.11



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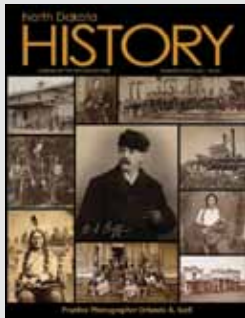
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On the cover: Edward Kurlle (1895–1961) of Wishek, McIntosh County, shown here (back row, far right) with comrades of Company E, 47th Infantry in France during World War I. Read about his brother Christian Kurlle on page 14. SHSND SA 00370-00004



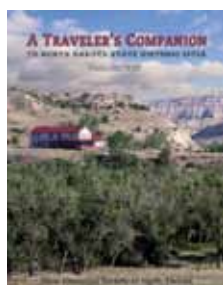
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ARE WE GERMANS, OR RUSSIANS, OR AMERICANS?

The McIntosh County German-Russians During World War I

BY GORDON L. ISEMINGER

US Army Private Christian Kurlle (left), Wishek, was presented the Distinguished Service Cross and the *Croix de Guerre* August 12, 1919, by US Army Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Rogers. Read more about Private Kurlle on page 14. SHSND 2002.108.3

This article was originally published in North Dakota History Vol. 59, No. 2, Spring 1992, and is reprinted with additional images to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the country's entry into World War I. The new introduction is by author Gordon L. Iseminger.

Historians regard World War I as a turning point in the history of the modern world. The war ended a period of four hundred years during which Europe was the center of the world. When the United States entered the war in April 1917, it marked the emergence of this non-European nation as the world's greatest power.

In North Dakota, the war had local ramifications for the German-Russians of McIntosh County. Isolated as they had been on their farms, this German-speaking ethnic group had not been unaffected by the war. For these North Dakotans who could have been identified as Russians, Germans, or Americans, that World War I was a reality for them was evident by their support of the war effort—coaxing their farms to produce more, purchasing Liberty Bonds and War Saving Stamps, subscribing to Red Cross drives, and giving up their sons and daughters to become soldiers and nurses.

German-Russian young men who may never have been away from home before they were drafted were changed by their experiences. In training camps, they had not worked from dawn to dark seven days a week, as they had on the farm. Rather than eating dough three times a day, they ate meat with their meals. They slept on beds with mattresses, not ticks filled with straw or corn husks. Camps had running water, indoor plumbing, and electric lights. When these young men returned home, they could have been forgiven for being impatient with those who clung to the old ways that had been brought from South Russia, including the German language.

Parents too had been changed. McIntosh County would no longer be as isolated as it had once been. With their sons in the service, parents had looked on maps to find Camp Lewis, Washington, Fort Riley, Kansas, and Camp Dodge, Iowa, places far from Ashley, Wishek, and Venturia. They had learned where the Somme, the Argonne, and Château-Thierry were, and they had tried to form these strange-sounding names with mouths accustomed to forming only German words.

Europe would never be the same after World War I as it had been before the war. Too much had been destroyed. Too much had changed. Too much had gone wrong. Just so, in ways the German-Russians might not have appreciated, McIntosh County, North Dakota, would never be quite the same after 1918 as it had been before 1914.

Gordon L. Iseminger, 2017



This Liberty Bond poster illustrated the anti-German, anti-Kaiser sentiment across North Dakota and all of America during World War I.
SHSND SA 10935-P0004

Richard Sallet, in his book, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, wrote that when war broke out among the major European powers in August 1914, German-Russians in the United States agonized over the question: "Which is our country?" Their ancestors had come from Germany, they or their parents had been born in Russia, and they were living in America.¹ This article will suggest how one group of German-Russians, those living in McIntosh County, North Dakota, might have answered this seemingly unanswerable question.²

People love the land of their births, and this love does not necessarily cease when they emigrate nor is it necessarily replaced with a love for their adopted country when they become naturalized. War, however, places a premium on loyalty to the nation of one's residence. "We can have," thundered former President Theodore Roosevelt, "no 'fifty-fifty' allegiance in this country." Roosevelt believed that a



Fourth of July celebration,
Ashley, North Dakota, 1902.
SHSND SA 00169-00014

person should love his country, but he was entitled to only one. "If he claims loyalty to two countries," he wrote in 1918, "he is necessarily a traitor to at least one country."³

Because World War I was perceived, both in the United States and abroad, as a war against Germany, for no group was the loyalty issue more difficult than for the millions of Germans in the United States. For several months after April 1917, when the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, there was a degree of sympathy for their plight. By the late summer, however, large segments of the American population abandoned themselves to a hysteria of anti-German sentiment. Before the war ended in 1918, this sentiment was carried to ridiculous extremes.

State Councils of Defense, the American Defense Society, and other organizations launched a drive to abolish the teaching of the German language—the "Kaiser's tongue"—in the nation's schools, because to teach it was to give aid and comfort to the enemy. According to a poll taken by the *Literary Digest*, 149 schools had done so by March 1918. William G. Bek's German courses at the University of North Dakota were not canceled, but he had few students and he suffered the humiliation of

knowing that the study of German was being prohibited in all of the state's high schools.

The governor of Iowa forbade the speaking of German on streetcars, over the telephone, or anywhere else in public. In South Dakota, concern over the loyalty of the large German population in the state prompted the state Council for Defense to prohibit the use of German in all public conversations. The language could be spoken over the telephone only in cases of extreme emergency. After much protest, the ban was relaxed to allow a fifteen-minute summary of the sermon in German at the conclusion of a worship service. So many restrictions were placed on foreign-language newspapers under the provisions of the

Trading-with-the-Enemy Act of October 6, 1917, that by the middle of 1918 practically every German-language newspaper in the country was forced either to adopt a pro-government editorial policy or to maintain a judicious silence on all questions relating to the war.⁴

German books were withdrawn from public libraries, and in Shawnee, Oklahoma, German books were burned as part of the Fourth of July celebration. In South Dakota they were thrown into the Missouri River.



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A German-Russian family—John (1856–1921) and Sophie Ochsner (1863–1948), with their older sons David and Gust, and younger children, Sarah, Laya, Johnny, and Linda—photographed about 1906.
SHSND SA 00032-MT-13-0002



Symphony orchestras learned that it was neither safe nor wise to perform works by German composers such as Wagner or Beethoven. The overzealous mayor of Jersey City forbade the brilliant Austrian-born violinist Fritz Kreisler to appear on the concert stage, and Frederick Stock, the distinguished conductor of the Chicago Symphony, was forced to relinquish his baton. Universities revoked degrees they had conferred on outstanding Germans.⁵

It became more ridiculous. In a frenzy of misguided enthusiasm, hamburgers were renamed “liberty sandwiches” and sauerkraut became “liberty cabbage.” Children no longer contracted “German” measles, but the more virulent “liberty” strain of the disease. Dachshunds, by an accelerated process of selective breeding, became “liberty pups,” that is for those unpatriotic enough to own one. In North Dakota, some thought was given to changing the name of the capital city. “Bismarck” was unacceptable to many, because it conjured up images of Teutonism and Blood and Iron.⁶

German-Russians, no less than other German-Americans, were subjected to indignities. With the entry of the United States into the war, wrote Sallet, a period of intense suffering began for them. German-Russians were admonished from childhood, for example, never to forsake the mother tongue and for many it was the only language they knew. The German language united the German-Russians, linked them to their past, and helped them maintain their cultural identity. To forbid German-Russians to use their language was to impose a severe hardship on them.

In some communities, German-Russians were forced to carry the American flag, wrap themselves in it, or kiss it as a sign of their loyalty. In some instances when Liberty Bonds

were offered for sale, hapless was the German-Russian who for lack of money could not wear a Liberty Bond button in his lapel as testimony that he had subscribed to the war effort. To encourage his change of heart, he and his property might be liberally daubed with yellow paint. Some were forced to borrow money from banks with which to purchase bonds.⁷ In areas where German-Russians were heavily concentrated, of course, such as in McIntosh County, North Dakota, they were relatively isolated from outsiders and thus spared from anti-German prejudice.

The strong sentiment against all things German during World War I indicated how very seriously—and unfairly—some people took the loyalty issue. Emigrants to the United States from one of the Allied nations, particularly from England, could be passionately devoted to their homeland and still be accepted as patriotic Americans. Not so for people with German blood in their veins.

Many Yankees were convinced that people with German blood could never completely break their ties with the Fatherland. How, then, did German-Russians feel about the issue of where their loyalty lay? A study of the German-Russians of McIntosh County may provide an answer.

McIntosh County lies on the border between North and South Dakota, the second county east of the Missouri River. Dickey, McIntosh, Emmons, Sioux, Grant, and Hettinger counties along the southern boundary of North Dakota form the base of the “German-Russian triangle,” a triangle of German-Russian populated counties having its apex in Pierce and McHenry counties.

McIntosh County was opened for settlement in 1884, and the first German-Russian settlers probably entered the county towards the latter part of the same year. They

settled near present-day Zeeland in the southwest corner of the county. Most of the immigrants were Evangelical Black Sea Germans who traced their origin in Russia to the Black Sea areas of Glückstal, Liebental, Bessarabia, and the Crimea. By 1886, many families had settled near the present-day towns of Ashley, Wishek, Venturia, and Lehr. Within twenty-five years of its opening, McIntosh County had attracted hundreds of land-seeking German-Russians, many of whom by 1914 had resided in the county for only a short period of time.⁸

Because this study focuses on the question of whether McIntosh County German-Russians considered themselves to be Germans, or Russians, or Americans at the time of World War I, it is helpful, when formulating an answer, to note how rural the county was at the time of the war and also the degree to which it was populated by German-Russians.

To understand German-Russians is to appreciate their land hunger. Promised land, Germans from Baden, Bavaria, Württemberg, and the Palatinate had accepted the invitations of Catherine the Great and Alexander I to settle in South Russia. When asked by Works Progress Administration interviewers in the late 1930s why they had come to North Dakota, most German-Russians answered: “Land.” Of the 217 German-Russians in McIntosh County old enough to declare an occupation in 1885, all but five—four men and one woman—were farmers who had taken up land. The four men were younger than twenty-one years of age and could not yet file on homesteads. The woman was unmarried and also under age.⁹

In 1890, 2,053 of the county’s 3,248 inhabitants were German-Russians. Twenty years later, in 1910, McIntosh County contained 7,251 people, most of them of foreign stock. Of the total population, 5,745, nearly 80 percent, listed Russia as the birthplace of themselves or of their parents, that is, they were German-Russians.¹⁰



Typical house of the early days. Ashley, North Dakota, 1916.
SHSND SA 00169-00005

When asked why they had come to North Dakota, most German-Russians answered: “Land.”

A common migration route followed by the Black Sea German-Russians who took up residence in McIntosh County was to travel from Odessa on the Black Sea to a German port such as Bremen by rail. Here they took ship passage across the Atlantic to New York and rail passage to Aberdeen, Ipswich, or Eureka in Dakota. Eureka, a relatively small prairie town, was for many years a terminal for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway and, despite its size,

the world’s leading primary wheat market. Eureka was also the main collecting and dispersal point for hundreds of German-Russian immigrants and, as “the

Odessa of the Northern Great Plains,” it “loomed larger than life in the consciousness of countless German-Russian emigrants.”¹¹

From Aberdeen, Ipswich, or Eureka, German-Russians made their way north to McIntosh County by team and wagon, and it would be logical to assume that they settled first and in large numbers on the more desirable land on the southern edge of the county. The census of 1910 suggests that this indeed is what they did.

Odessa, Berlin, Johnstons, Lowell, Myrtle, Jewell, and Coldwater are the names of the seven townships, west to east, on the southern edge of McIntosh County. The total population of these seven townships in 1910 was 1,607. In every township, with the exception of Johnstons in which the village of Venturia was located, every person lived on a farm. By far the majority, 90 to 100 percent (the exception again being Johnstons), of the male heads of households were farmers.

The census listed a total of 458 parents in the seven townships. Of these, 390, or 85 percent, had been born in Russia. In no township were fewer than 70 percent of the parents born in Russia, and in most townships the figure was 90 percent or over. Even in Johnstons the figure was 82 percent, suggesting that some of the townspeople who had been born in Russia had chosen not to live on farms. Of the total of 458 parents in the seven townships, almost 75 percent listed German as their only language. Clearly, in 1910 the southern tier of townships in McIntosh County was decidedly rural and populated by German-Russians who had only recently arrived in North Dakota and who had not yet learned English.

It would be unfair, of course, to extrapolate from these figures to conclude that all of McIntosh County in 1910 was as distinctly rural and as decidedly German-Russian as the southern tier of townships. In Frieda Township, however, twelve miles north of the state boundary and on the western edge of the county, every one of the 265 persons in the township lived on a farm, 65 of the 70 parents had



While in service in the Czar's Army, about 1888, these two German-Russian cousins, Jacob Krämer (left) and Jacob Kramer, had this portrait taken. Jacob Krämer (later changed to Kremer) and his wife and family immigrated to America and settled in McIntosh County near Ashley in 1889. Their son, Fred, was one of many young men from McIntosh County who served in World War I. The cousin arrived in McIntosh County in 1901, homesteading near Wishek. *Photograph courtesy of Ron Kremer, Linton, North Dakota*

been born in Russia, and all of the parents gave German as their only language. As might be expected, in Youngstown Township on the northern edge of the county—in which the town of Wishek is located—only half the parents had been born in Russia and about the same percentage claimed German as their only language.

The 1910 census listed only three towns, villages really, in McIntosh County—Ashley (683 population), Wishek (427 population), and Zeeland (196 population). Understandably, fewer of the inhabitants in the towns were German-Russians and a higher percentage of them gave English as their language. Nevertheless, in Ashley, the county seat, of the total of 211 parents, 116 had been born in Russia and 73 of them listed German as their only language.¹²

Even by 1920, when the population of McIntosh County had increased to 9,010, the county was still predominantly rural and overwhelmingly German-Russian. Just over 2,800 people lived in towns, most of them in Ashley (1,009) and

Wishek (1,003). Ninety percent of the county's land was divided into 1,025 farms and the county's 1,633 families lived in 1,604 dwellings.¹³

That McIntosh County was rural and German-Russian at the time of World War I can be established, but determining how members of this ethnic group might have responded to the question of whether they were Germans, or Russians, or Americans is not so easy. An appreciation for the difficulties involved can be gained by contrasting the German-Russians with the Norwegians in North Dakota. The two were among the largest ethnic groups in the state.

Although Norwegian immigrants were primarily of peasant stock—in Norway they had been small farmers, renters, and farm laborers—illiteracy was almost unknown among them. A law of 1736 required everyone to be confirmed, and the state Lutheran church required confirmands to be familiar with Luther's catechism, the hymnbook, and the Bible. Public schools were established in Norway in 1739. Norwegians could and did read.

German-Russian immigrants were also of peasant stock, but with this difference: Their ancestors had gone to South Russia determined to maintain their language, religion, and culture. As a consequence, they were an isolated people, a fact of incalculable significance. They took with them no educated Germans—pastors, priests, teachers, professionals, traders—and they lost virtually all contact with Germany. They were cut off from the remarkable progress that took place in Germany during the nineteenth century. Germans in South Russia were farmers. Few had the time, ability, money, or inclination to buy and read books and newspapers.

Isolation and the lack of educated people among themselves were responsible for the lack of interest in schools and education in the German colonies in South Russia. Displaying more interest in religion than in education, they lavished far more money on their churches than they did on their schools. Even when German-language elementary schools were established in the colonies, the people continued to be more absorbed in farming than in education. Because the educated people among them—foreign priests and pastors, Russian officials, and traders—tricked and abused them, Germans in South Russia distrusted educated people and had little respect for them. The few German-Russian young people who received an education did so because they were weak and sickly and therefore considered unfit to make a living from the land.

German-Russians in North Dakota exhibited the same characteristics they had in Russia. They clung to their language, shunned contact with other nationalities, neglected schools, and disliked free public education and compulsory attendance laws. Few German-Russian children

completed the eighth grade and it was unusual for a German-Russian young person to attend high school. Many German-Russian parents took it as a compliment when their children chose to help with farm work rather than spend their time reading or studying.¹⁴

Because Norwegians were educated and literate when they emigrated to America, they could stay in touch by letter with friends and family members who had remained behind in Norway. Archives, libraries, and museums in Norway today have extensive collections of these “America letters,” as they were called. These letters were important in their time because they conveyed to their recipients reliable information and thereby encouraged further emigration. The letters were also an important channel of communication between family members and between friends. Immigrants kept in touch with events in Norway and those who had remained behind learned of life in America. Letters also made separation less painful, and for many in America it was the only opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings in their native language.

These letters are valuable for researchers because by studying them they can in some measure determine how individual immigrants perceived and experienced the process of migration, assimilation, and acculturation. Letter writers may have made only infrequent references to particular historical events, but the letters are a valuable resource for social history. They reflect the character of the person who wrote them and maybe something of the recipient’s character as well. The letters provide insights into the daily lives and feelings of individual immigrants and represent their personal responses to events and experiences.¹⁵

There are no extensive collections in Russian archives and libraries of “America letters” written by North Dakota German-Russians to those who remained behind in South

Until the 1930s, many German-Russian children did not learn English until they started school.

Russia. When German-Russians arrived in Dakota, the prairie on which they settled was as untamed as the Russian steppes on which their ancestors from Germany had settled a hundred or more years earlier. They faced the daunting task of providing shelter for themselves; wresting a living from the stubborn native sod; dealing with the fearsome size of the prairie; and contending with insects, wild animals, droughts, and prairie fires. Even if they had had the time, few German-Russians were letter writers. Few kept diaries. Moreover, because of two

destructive world wars, a bloody revolution, a terrible civil war, the breaking up of former colonies, and forced migrations, many of the

documents that might have existed in Russia have been scattered or destroyed. Oral history can be of little help. Most of the McIntosh County German-Russians who were of mature years during World War I have died.

This far removed from the war, for information on how McIntosh County German-Russians perceived the loyalty issue, one must rely on printed recollections, secondary works, local histories, jubilee books published when towns observed the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries of their founding, and on newspapers.

The county’s two newspapers, the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News*, are a possible means by which one may determine the attitudes of German-Russians towards the issues raised by the war. Using newspapers for this purpose presents problems, however, so it will be best at the outset to anticipate and respond to the criticism that newspapers may not accurately reflect German-Russian opinion in McIntosh County during World War I.

C. C. Lowe was owner, editor, and publisher of both the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News*. Lowe also owned the movie theaters in Ashley and Wishek. It might be argued, therefore, that because Lowe controlled what today is referred to as “the media,” the views expressed in the newspapers did not necessarily reflect those of the county’s German-Russian population.

However, professing the credo that a newspaper was “the natural mouthpiece of the community” and insisting that “every resident and tax payer in the county should be a reader of the official county paper,” Lowe dedicated himself to publishing papers that would appeal to the county’s residents and at the same time promote the county’s best interests.¹⁶ To aid him in reaching his ambitious goal of placing his newspapers in every home in the county and convincing businessmen that advertising paid dividends, Lowe hired an experienced German-speaking staff and printed sections of both his papers in German.



Public school program, Wishek, North Dakota, February 21, 1917.
SHSND SA 00392-00001



Though most German-Russians in McIntosh County were farmers, some opened businesses in the towns. In Zeeland, Farmer's Store was owned by Henry Boshee. This 1914 photo shows Boshee (at desk) and helpers setting up harnesses. SHSND SA 00032-MT-13-00007

Albert Wallner, a competent young man who was German both by birth and by education, was Lowe's assistant in the *Tribune* office. A. R. Rudow, also in the *Tribune* office, sold ads and subscriptions. His success in signing up new subscribers—more than sixty in the first two weeks of August 1917—suggests that he got on well with German-Russians. Lowe hired Gustav Destner, “a steady, reliable and competent German editor-printer,” to handle “the German end” of the *Tribune*. Destner's wife was a German-Russian from Eureka, South Dakota, and Destner became an American citizen only on October 9, 1917. Robert O. H. Greiser, also of Eureka, was named editor and manager of the *Wishek News*. Greiser, a former school teacher, was fluent in both German and English. He purchased the *Wishek News* from Lowe in 1919.¹⁷

Lowe was no stranger to German-Russian communities. He had worked on the paper in Ellendale, the county seat of

Dickey County, another county in which German-Russians predominated, and he came to Ashley from LaMoure, North Dakota, also a German-Russian community. There he had been owner and editor of the *LaMoure Echo*. He did not sell the *Echo* until some months after moving to Ashley.

Of over five hundred newspapers in North Dakota, the *Echo* was

recognized early in 1917 as the best weekly publication in the state. That the *Echo* was selected to receive what Lowe described as a “signal honor” must attest to Lowe's ability as a newspaperman and to his rapport with his readers, many of whom would have been German-Russian.

At the time of the Armistice, on November 11, 1918, more than half the pages of the *Ashley Tribune* were printed in German—local news, legal notices (the *Tribune* was the official county newspaper), sale bills, political ads, business advertisements, and war news. Lowe wanted German

At the time of the Armistice, on November 11, 1918, more than half the pages of the *Ashley Tribune* were printed in German.

as well as Yankee readers to be informed of what was happening, even though printing in two languages required an added expenditure of money and effort because double the space was required for each item. (Lowe was forced to raise the *Tribune's* subscription price to \$2.00 per year on January 1, 1918, to cover his costs.)¹⁸

When Lowe purchased the *Ashley Tribune* in September 1915, it was a nondescript, small-town weekly with fewer than 400 subscribers. By January 1918 he had doubled the number of pages in each issue, tripled the size of the staff, and increased the number of subscriptions to over 1,000. Weekly he listed the names (and often the occupations) of new subscribers—100 of them in the issue of September 20, 1917. Most of them were German-Russian farmers. "There must be something about the paper," he editorialized, "that is worthwhile having." In March 1918 Lowe exulted: "The *Tribune* now goes into nearly every home in and near Venturia." In December he noted that almost all of the farmers "tributary to Ashley" subscribed to the *Tribune*. No longer could businessmen protest that it did not pay to advertise in the *Tribune* because so few farmers took the paper.¹⁹

The point to be served by detailing Lowe's newspaper activities is this: McIntosh County had 1,633 families occupying 1,604 dwellings in 1920, and the county's population was overwhelmingly German-Russian. The *Tribune's* circulation alone in early 1918 was over 1,000. Many German-Russian households, therefore, must have been taking either the *Ashley Tribune* or the *Wishek News*. Some county residents subscribed to both. Because newspapers such as the *News* and the *Tribune* depended almost entirely on subscriptions and ads for their revenue, it may be safe to assume that Lowe and his editors would have taken pains not to have printed anything that would have alienated or offended their German-Russian readers. And because portions of the papers were published in German by German or German-Russian staff, it is likely that the opinions expressed reflected the views of at least a portion of the German-Russian community.²⁰

In notices prominently placed on the front pages of his newspapers, Lowe advised McIntosh County young men to comply with the law requiring them to register for the draft—738 did so on June 5, 1917, alone. He also warned them of the consequences for failing to do so. Of the hundreds of county residents who were eligible for the draft in 1917 and 1918, only a few neglected to register or refused to heed their draft notices, some of them out of ignorance of the law, others because their fathers prevented them from complying with the law's provisions. Some draftees, reluctant to leave their families and farms, resigned themselves to the inevitable and heeded the government's call to service. Most entered military service willingly and not a few volunteered for the draft or enlisted

THE WISHEK NEWS Page Two

THE WISHEK NEWS
 "A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A HEADACHE"

Published every Friday at Wishek, North Dakota
 Subscription Price \$1.50 per year
 Address all communications to:
 THE WISHEK NEWS, Wishek, N. Dak.

C. C. LOWE Publisher and Owner
R. O. H. GREISER Manager.

Entered at the post office at Wishek, N. Dak. as
 second class Mail Matter



"The emblem of the land I love---
 The home of the free and the brave."

STAND BY AMERICA
OR GET OUT

What seems a puzzle to us is that people who have lived in the United States for many years, have had the protection of our government and with that protection have acquired wealth and independence, can go against the government when it is in need of help.

The writer's ancestors came from Germany, his forefather's fought for Germany—but it wasn't the Germany that has now sunk to the lowest level humanity has ever known. The Germany of that day was a different Germany than we know today.

Those same forefathers came to this country seeking freedom, as you or your forefathers. They found it. They lived and they prospered under the protection of the stars and the stripes. Today all that you have, you man in Wishek of foreign-born parentage, you owe to America. The clothes on your back came only thru America's kindness of heart in permitting you to become a resident of this land. Every particle of food that goes into your mouth is food you might not have had had you remained in the Germany that in recent years has been exploited by a man whose greed for gain does not stop at the slaughter of innocent women and children.

In the face of all this, if you cannot speak out loud for America now, now when she needs your loyalty and your help—go back where you came from and stay there. If you whisper rumors that you know are seditious, if you pause in the streets to lend your

ear to anything that is detrimental to this nation, its president or its citizens, you are unfit to longer live under its flag. If your arrest and interment comes blame no one but yourself—and count yourself lucky that you are not back in the new Germany where you would be stood against a wall in front of a firing squad.

Its a poor time to bite the hand that has fed you and yours. If you can't be an American and outspoken in your loyalty, then for God's sake have the decency to make room for the millions of us who can.

A HOME GUARD

Citizens of Wishek have probably noticed newspaper accounts of growing unrest in every section of the country, resulting in vigilant committee and flag-kissing episodes. Since the Germans hit the allied lines for a casualty of more than 150,000 hate is deeper against them than it has been. As a result people in every part of the country are hunting down German sympathizers, and in many instances they are being treated to some rough handling.

There is no question but every community should organize to protect itself. We do not doubt for a moment but the news of a great German victory would find comfort in the hearts of several right in this section. And so long as that is true there is need of a Home Guard, or Defense League, here in Wishek.

Loyal Americans of this place and this community should band together for mutual protection. It is not enough that we hang the flag on the porch and place a Red Cross emblem in our windows. We must go farther. We must come to know who is who as regards loyalty to the nation, and we must not permit sedition to rear its head in our midst.

Talk is not going to win this war. Yelling for the flag is all right but acting for it is better. Let us leave no stone unturned, no bars down. Locking the stable before the thief arrives is still sound advice. Let us get busy now through organization.

THE OLD FARM'S FOR SALE

The old farm's for sale. It is advertised in the country papers. Two hundred good acres of land, and household articles too numerous to mention—and a few horses, and some cows, and a number of sheep and hogs and the agricultural implements. To be sold to the highest bidder. All sums under ten dollars cash in hand. On all sums over ten dollars, a credit of twelve months will be given, with approved security.

The *Wishek News*, published by C. C. Lowe, frequently encouraged as well as chided Wishek's German-Russian citizens about matters of American patriotism. This April 5, 1918, edition of the paper included an article proposing a home guard as well as the remark, "If you can't be an American and outspoken in your loyalty, then for God's sake have the decency to make room for the millions of us who can."

in the Navy or Army Medical Corps. Many young women volunteered for training as student nurses.

Providing men and women for military service was not the only way that McIntosh County German-Russians supported the war effort. They economized, collected scrap iron, contributed to the Army YMCA Fund and to the Red Cross, and purchased War Savings Stamps and

Liberty Bonds. All the while, they refused to get caught up in the war hysteria that was gripping much of the rest of the nation. McIntosh County children contracted German measles, as they had before 1917, and not the “liberty” strain of the disease that so sapped peoples’ energies elsewhere in the country. Nor did county residents eat “liberty cabbage.” Grocers continued to feature sauerkraut, especially at Thanksgiving and during the Christmas holidays. The editor of the *Wishek News* believed that no purpose would be served by changing names, including that of the state’s capital. “Such things,” he pointed out, “will not win the war for us and it is advisable that time be spent doing something else more helpful.” That “something else more helpful” included what German-Russians were best at—farming and raising foodstuffs.

Providing draftees for military service, “going over the top” in Liberty Bond sales, eating sauerkraut, and coaxing more production from their fields and livestock—all may suggest something of how McIntosh County German-Russians responded to the war. But it remains to answer the question posed in the title of this article. Possessing German ancestors, having their roots in South Russia, and resident in McIntosh County, were these people Germans, or Russians, or Americans during World War I?

Although McIntosh County German-Russians had German blood in their veins, bore German names, and spoke German, it would be a mistake to confuse them with the *Reichsdeutsche*, or Empire Germans. German-Russians were known variously as “the Czar’s Germans,” because they had lived in Russia; or as North Dakota’s “other Germans,” because they had not been born in Germany and had never lived there. Timothy J. Klobberdanz suggested that a fitting designation for the “other Germans” is *Volksdeutsche*, a term that can be rendered not altogether satisfactorily in English as “ethnic Germans.”²²

When contrasted to the *Reichsdeutsche*, German-Russians may have been akin to “stomach” Germans, Frederick C. Luebke’s somewhat inelegant term for a group of German-Americans. “Stomach” Germans wanted to read the news in their German-language newspapers, drink their beer in the company of other Germans, use the German language in their worship services, and sing the old songs in their native tongue. Distinct from the stomach Germans, according to Luebke, were the “soul” Germans. Convinced that German ideals and the German spirit were the noblest and loftiest in Western civilization and believing that they should be perpetuated in America, “soul” Germans idealized, articulated, and rationalized what they perceived to be their superior culture.²³

When German-Russians arrived in North Dakota, they suffered what Elwyn B. Robinson described as “a revolution in status.” Signs of this impending revolution became evident

BIG RED CROSS Benefit Auction

Is Next War Work Feature.

The Ashley Branch of the Red Cross is in need of funds with which to buy yarn and cloth for garments. The Branch needs Money! Money! Money!

The Date Has Been Set For JUNE 20th.

AT A MEETING HELD BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, A SOLICITING COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED. THIS COMMITTEE, ONE FROM EACH TOWNSHIP, WILL COMMENCE AT ONCE TO SOLICIT THE DONATION OF PRODUCTS FOR THE SALE. ALREADY AN ORGAN AND A BEAUTIFUL SPREAD HAS BEEN DONATED BY ONE PERSON—REPRESENTING OVER \$50 IN VALUE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL MANNER OF PROPERTY WILL BE DONATED—CHICKENS, HOGS, CALVES, COWS, MERCHANDISE, FANCY WORK—ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE SOLD FOR MONEY FOR RED CROSS WAR WORK.

Let's Talk Red Cross Auction! Let's Boost Red Cross Auction!
Let's Donate Freely for the Auction!
Let's Attend and Buy at the Auction!

Big Red Cross Benefit Dinner will be Served.

Rote Kreuz Benefiz = Auction
nächstes Ereignis zur Förderung der Kriegsarbeit.

Der Ählerer Zweig des Roten Kreuzes braucht notwendig Geld, um Korn und Breg für die Anfertigung von Gewändern zu kaufen. Der Zweig braucht Geld, Geld und nochmal Geld.

Der Tag der Versteigerung ist auf den 20. Juni festgesetzt worden.

In einer am Dienstag abgehaltenen Versammlung des Financeschusses kam die Organisation eines Benefizmahlzweigs zur Sprache. Derselbe Komitee, eines von jedem Township, wird sofort mit der Werbung von Spenden in Gehalt von Produkten für die Versteigerung beginnen. Eine Person hat bereits eine Orgel und einen wunderschönen Deckenstuhl geschenkt, die einen Wert von \$50 repräsentieren.

Es erwartet, daß Schenkungen aller Beschaffenheit eingebracht werden, wie Hühner, Schweine, Kühe, Kälber, Rindvieh, Pferde, landwirtschaftliche Maschinen, Waren, etc., was in Geld für das Rote Kreuz und helfen sollte Arbeit angestrichen werden kann.

Laßt die Worte: „Rote Kreuz-Versteigerung“ unsere Parole sein. „Boostet“ Alle für die Versteigerung. Laßt uns von Herzen unsere Gaben zur Versteigerung beisteuern. Kommt Alle zur Versteigerung und bietet tüchtig.

Ein großes Rotes Kreuz Benefiz Mittagessen wird serviert werden.

From the *Ashley Tribune*, May 20, 1918.



Albert F. Stoller (1891–1961) in training camp. The “patriotic” caption accompanying it in the May 9, 1918, issue of the *Wishek News*, concluded with “Wishek is proud of its young men who have left their homes and country to fight and destroy an enemy who, if victorious, would seek to invade our country and seek to deprive us of the freedom which we now enjoy.” The caption may have been supplied by the United States Army or by C. C. Lowe, the owner and publisher of the newspaper.

as soon as the German-Russians boarded the ships that would take them to America. To their dismay, they discovered that there were very few differences between them and the peasants of other nationalities who were travelling with them. This was a bitter realization for Black Sea Germans who had come to regard themselves as belonging to a privileged class in Russia. In Russia they were leaders and in the upper social stratum. They had been admired by the Russian peasants and envied for their fine houses, productive farms, good horses, and sleek cattle. In North Dakota, they were at the other end of the social and economic scale. Other nationalities looked down on them, and many German-Russians complained that they were treated more condescendingly by the *Reichsdeutsche* than by any non-German-speaking group. Having observed this phenomenon in western North Dakota, a Roman Catholic priest wrote:

To the average German, the German-Russian was an “*Ausländer*.” A literal translation of the word “*Ausländer*” would be “a person from outside the country,” or, more briefly put, “a foreigner.” Neither definition, however, does justice to the word as a German would use it with reference to a German-

Russian. To fully appreciate the term’s implications, one would have to include in the definition what an Englishman means when he uses the word “provincial,” plus an “amused tolerance, veiled contempt, and a plentiful superiority.”²⁴

Nor did the German-Russians identify with the Germany of the *Reichsdeutsche*. Their allegiance was to the Germany of the turn of the nineteenth century, to the Germany of the time of their *Auswanderung*, or emigration. German-Russians had not shared in the remarkable economic, industrial, scientific, and cultural advances that Germans had made in the nineteenth century. There were no ‘48ers among them. They did not identify with Prussian generals named Moltke, and they took no vicarious pleasure in the Prussian victories over Austria and France on the battlefield. They did not swell with pride at mention of the Germany that Bismarck’s policy of Blood and Iron had created in 1871. They had no affinity with William II’s *Weltpolitik*, nor did they appreciate his desire to secure Germany’s “place in the sun.”

For the *Reichsdeutsche*, Germany was a distinct place—their historic homeland, their native land, their nation. To the German-Russians, however, Germany was “a deeply sentimental, even mystical,...ancient *Vaterland*.” And, despite their affection for the Fatherland, German-Russians had



Part of the crowd of three thousand people who gathered in Wishek, North Dakota, on May 25, 1918, to bid farewell to the men who were leaving for Camp Lewis, Washington. From the *Wishek News*, May 30, 1918.

not hesitated to leave in search of better conditions. International borders and governments meant little to them; they knew that both changed frequently and quickly. It seemed, observed Kloberdanz, that the only Germany the German-Russians required was “a personalized one carried deep within.”²⁵

Although German-Russians shared blood, language, narratives, proverbs, folk songs, and religious faith with Germans from Germany, they were different from them. And the *Reichsdeutsche* seemed not to consider German-Russians as with them in being German.

The first of Sallet’s three possibilities having been eliminated, were the German-Russians then Russians?

Reading the issues of the *Wishek News* and the *Ashley Tribune* published between 1914–1919, one can find no indication that the McIntosh County German-Russians had any sympathy for Russia as a political entity. The Czarist government of course remembered the German-Russians in America, and at the outbreak of the war it demanded that those with military obligations return immediately to Russia at their own expense to serve in the army. Sallet was unable to identify even a single German-Russian young man who had done so.²⁶ In their letters home that were published in the *News* and *Tribune* during the war, not once

did a McIntosh County German-Russian serviceman profess to be fighting for either the Czar or for Russia.

German-Russians could easily be identified in any American community as having come from South Russia. Their clothing, foods, architecture, and agricultural practices all revealed varying degrees of Russian influence. Their German dialects were liberally sprinkled with Russian loan words. But, McIntosh County German-Russians were not Russians, even though their Yankee neighbors often referred to them as “Rooshuns” and the United States government sometimes mistakenly listed them in the census as Russians.

Only an insignificant number of the Black Sea Germans who settled in North Dakota could converse easily in Russian and they were typically those who had served in the Russian army or those who had attended school for more than the average number of years in Russia. During a century in South Russia, German-Russians had not mingled with the Russians and they had only rarely intermarried with them. “...My father was never a Russian,” boasted one Volga German-Russian, and “no Russian blood curses my veins, even though I came into the world in Russia.”²⁷

A large number of German-Russians had planned to return to Russia once they had made their fortunes in Dakota.



Private Christian Kurle of Wishek, North Dakota, 1919.
SHSND SA 00370-00006

A McIntosh County Hero

A number of McIntosh County men lost their lives on the Western Front; many more were wounded. Others served with distinction and were cited for meritorious conduct.³³ Christian Kurle was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism on the Western Front. He also received the *Croix de Guerre*, this for rescuing a wounded comrade while under heavy enemy fire. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Rogers of the United States Army, acting on behalf of the French government, presented the award to Kurle in ceremonies held in Wishek on August 12, 1919.³⁴

Besides those who were on active duty in the United States and overseas, more than two hundred McIntosh County men were in army training camps when the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. All returned home to tearful and enthusiastic welcomes. To express their profound relief and thankfulness at having their “brave sons” home again, county residents held celebrations that included parades, speeches, dinners, and dances. There was even talk of dedicating the new \$75,000 courthouse to “the soldiers of McIntosh County, North Dakota, who fought in the Great War of 1917–1918...”³⁵



Distinguished
Service Cross –
US Army
SHSND 2002.108.1

Croix de Guerre
(French, Cross
of War)

SHSND 2002.108.5



Others regretted having left Russia and yearned to return. C. C. Becker was among the first German-Russians to settle in McIntosh County. Asked in old age by Nina Farley Wishek whether he regretted having come to the United States, he replied, "Ach, Gott, yes, I wish I was back in Russia." Becker spoke for thousands who would gladly have returned to South Russia, but only if there were a bridge over which they could have walked or ridden. Neither threats, nor promises, nor large sums of money would have induced those who had experienced a difficult voyage across the Atlantic to make the return crossing by ship.²⁸

The Russia for which Becker and other German-Russians yearned, however, was not the Russia of the Czar and his officials, but *Heimat*—a word that is only inadequately rendered in English as "homeland"—the Russia of their hearts. People were homesick for their homeland and for

Besides those on active duty, more than 200 McIntosh County men were in army training camps when the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918.

their families. Wishek observed that Becker's statement probably resulted from "the nostalgic memory of those glamorous days of youth, for certainly the few Russians who have returned to their homeland have always come back within the year to America. It is only natural for the foreigner to feel a warm and staunch affection for his Fatherland."²⁹

Not until after World War I did German-Russians begin to change their attitudes towards their South Russian homeland. Through the pages of the *Dakota Freie Presse* and other German-Russian newspapers, they became aware of how those who had remained in South Russia had suffered because of the World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War, the executions, the mass deportations, and the widespread famine. Relatives of McIntosh County German-Russians told of going into the fields and robbing the mice of their stores of grain in order to avoid starvation. After such reports, German-Russians became aware of how much better off they were in North Dakota than they would be in Russia. Not until then did they come to realize that South Russia was no longer a "paradise on the steppe." The intense homesickness they had once felt for *Russland* gradually gave way to a grudging appreciation for the prairies of North Dakota.³⁰

Proud of the fact that they had lived in South Russia for many generations and had yet remained isolated from the Russians; gratified that their blood had not been mingled with that of Russians through intermarriage; stung by being referred to as "Rooshuns" by their insensitive Yankee neighbors; and relieved that, unlike those who had remained in South Russia,



From the *Wishek News*, June 20, 1918, p.1.

they had been spared the ravages of war, revolution, forced migration, and starvation—McIntosh County German-Russians clearly did not consider themselves to be Russians.

Sallet allowed for only three possibilities. If the McIntosh County German-Russians were neither Germans nor Russians, were they then Americans?

In his detailed study of German-Russians in the United States, Sallet was able to find only two urban settlements of Black Sea Germans, leading him to the conclusion that 95 percent of those from the Black Sea area were wheat farmers. Many of them settled in McIntosh County, on land they acquired under the terms of the Pre-emption, Homestead, and Timber Culture acts. To do so, they were required to take out citizenship papers or file intentions of one day becoming American citizens. During World War I, however, Americans they were not, even though some of them had been in the county for as long as thirty years.³¹

During the 1920s, the National Illiteracy Commission, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Legion, and other national organizations sought to

inculcate in United States residents, especially in the foreign born and their children, the desire “to know America, to understand America, and to love America,” that is, to *become* Americans. Good Americans were healthy and thrifty; they were good stewards of their personal possessions and of the nation’s resources; they knew the Flag Salute and the Flag Code; they were responsible voters; and, above all, they knew how to read, write, and speak English.

Large numbers of McIntosh County German-Russians at the time of World War I were illiterate in English. Throughout the war, therefore, Lowe published substantial portions of the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News* in German, not because he was particularly defiant or courageous, but because German was the only language that many of his subscribers could read. Lowe had taken great pains not to offend his German-Russian readers and he had coaxed, begged, challenged—sometimes shamed—them to support the war. He praised them for their efforts and congratulated them for their accomplishments. He printed “honor lists” containing the names of those who volunteered for the draft, those who did not request exemptions or deferments, those who contributed to the Red Cross, and those who purchased Liberty Bonds.

Once the Armistice had been signed, however, in one strongly worded editorial after another, Lowe reproached the county’s German-Russians for not being Americans. Parents had sent their sons off to service unable to speak, read, or write a word of English. Marked by their inability to communicate in English, the young men had been singled out, discriminated against, and made the butt of ridicule. When they returned home, Lowe warned, made the wiser by their experiences, they would no longer accept anything that reminded them of “Hunism.”

Lowe deplored the state of public education in the county. Teachers were poorly trained and as poorly paid, school buildings were neglected, compulsory attendance laws were not enforced, and children were given insufficient opportunity to learn English—“the language of America, the language of the country of our choice.” Parents who were denying their children an education in American ways, charged Lowe, were doing them a grave injustice.³²

On Ashley’s streets and in Ashley’s stores, Lowe heard people conversing in German. How, he asked, could they expect to improve themselves if they refused to



Paul Fred Moeckel (1894–1944) in training camp. Typical of the photographs of servicemen published in the *Ashley Tribune* and *Wishek News* during the war, this illustration appeared in the *Wishek News*, December 12, 1918.

speak English? “Those people who expect to make America their home,” he advised, “had better adopt the American language...and stick to American methods.”³⁶

Among the most difficult cultural adjustments that German-Russians had to make was to switch from using German to using English, particularly in their church services. German-Russians would have fought God Himself had He suggested that worship services could be conducted in a language other than German. “Yes,” German-Russian parents might reassure their children, “Our Lord God knows everything—but He cannot understand the heathen babbling that is English.” As late as World War II, many McIntosh County churches conducted at least some of their worship services and Bible studies in German. Until the 1930s many children did not learn English until they started school. Portions of the *Wishek News* were printed in German until 1944 and parts of the *Ashley Tribune* in German until 1955.

Language was only one means by which German-Russians maintained their identity. They came to America with an established set of minority group defenses that was rare among immigrants. Isolated on the Russian steppes, they had perfected the mechanisms of survival amid alien surroundings. Latecomers to Dakota, they settled on the poorer land, farther from the rivers, railroads, and cities. Distance, bad roads, and a deliberate avoidance of using English separated them from people they considered to be “outsiders.” Thus isolated, McIntosh County German-Russians could maintain a way of life largely unaffected by outside influences.³⁷

American cultural forces had not penetrated their communities sufficiently by 1914 to convince German-Russians of the desirability of becoming assimilated and Americanized. Through intermarriage and retention of their language and mores, they remained as isolated in Dakota as they had been in South Russia. Not until the Great Depression and then even more quickly in the prosperous years after World War II did German-Russians come to realize how interdependent they were with the rest of America and with the rest of the world. Only then did their clannishness, isolation, backwardness, and neglect of education begin to pass away.³⁸

The *Reichsdeutsche* looked down on the German-Russians. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russians disclaimed them. They long had the reputation for resisting

Americanization. If the McIntosh County German-Russians were neither Germans, nor Russians, nor Americans, what were they?

German-Russians were admirably equipped for living on the prairies of McIntosh County. The land was their life. They were accustomed to hard and tedious work. They were thrifty to an extreme and adamant to the point of being stubborn. They were independent, self-sufficient, and resourceful. They bore and survived adversity. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his *Gulag Archipelago* wrote of the methodical German-Russians that they were good husbandmen and indefatigable workers. “Is there any wilderness on earth,” he asked, “which [German-Russians] could not turn into a land of plenty?” And wherever the German-Russians went, he noted, they settled in, “not temporarily,...but forever.” “Not for nothing,” therefore, “did Russians say in the old days that ‘a German is like a willow tree—stick it anywhere and it will take!’”³⁹ And German-Russians “took” in McIntosh County.

Adolph Boschee came with his family to the United States in 1884 from Kassel in South Russia. By rail they made their way to Menno, Dakota Territory, thence to Ipswich. In the spring of 1885 they loaded their belongings onto wagons and started north to McIntosh County, to, as Boschee described it, “our new *Heimat*.”⁴⁰

Heimat meant something to German-Russians that non-German-Russians have difficulty appreciating and understanding. It was *Heimweh*, or homesickness, but it was more than that. Joseph S. Height, in his book *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, wrote that wherever a German-Russian went he remained deeply attached to the “*Heimat*” with every fiber of his being. Height’s description details the feelings and experiences of German-Russians living on the prairie of McIntosh County as aptly as it recalls their memories of what life had been like on the steppes of South Russia. *Heimat* was:

billowing fields of grain, the long sweep of stubble stirred by the mournful winds of autumn, the white pall over the boundless winter landscape, the blustering snowstorm that turns day into sudden night and dreaded darkness, the fragrant scent of the fresh earth in spring..⁴¹

Heimat awakened in German-Russians an ardent longing for eternity, for infinity, and for God. Songs, suffering, sorrow—all were “unforgettably” in the hearts and souls of those who recalled *Heimat*. *Heimat* meant the nearness of parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors. It meant mother tongue and folklore, the wisdom of the old and the pranks

of the young. It meant the ringing of church bells and the singing of children. It meant free men walking behind their plows. “*Heimat* meant the wide horizon, the big sky, the snow-bright landscape, and the wind-swept flowers of early spring.” All this and more. Much of what *Heimat* meant to the German-Russians was inexpressible.⁴²

What were the McIntosh County German-Russians during World War I?

The Reverend Salomon Joachim, pastor to a Black Sea German congregation in Beulah, North Dakota, can help answer the question. The German-Russian, he wrote,

made his greatest contribution to society in the form of manual labor. By profession he is a tiller of the soil, a farmer, a producer of food. It fell to his lot to receive land in the semi-arid regions of Russia, Siberia, the Americas, and Canada. He built a granary out of the steppes and the prairies. He did not shout that fact to the world. A real farmer lives too close to the ground and too close to God to become a braggart. He stays humble. The dust of the earth and the smell of new-mown hay do not blur his vision.⁴³

Their lives were governed by the cycle of seedtime and harvest.

A thrifty, hard-working, God-fearing people who respected authority, McIntosh County German-Russians were aware of

the war—they read about it in the county’s newspapers and their sons and daughters were serving in it. They contributed to the Red Cross, bought Liberty Bonds, sold scrap iron, and bent every effort to coax their farms and herds to produce more. But the war was thousands of miles away. They were farmers, and, like rural folk everywhere, their lives were governed by the cycle of seedtime and harvest.

During World War I, McIntosh County German-Russians were people with German ancestors who had come from Russia and who were living in McIntosh County—their “new *Heimat*.” For them, the truth of a Latin adage was particularly appropriate: “*Ubi panis, ibi patria*.” Where there is bread, there is my Fatherland.⁴⁴



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ENDNOTES

1. A shorter version of this article was read as a paper at the Northern Great Plains History Conference, September 22-24, 1988.
2. Richard Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, trans. LaVern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer (Fargo, N.D.: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1974), p. 100. Frederick C. Luebke observed that Americans of German origin were trapped in what he described as a "crisis of loyalty" in 1917 when the United States declared war on Germany. Many of these Germans had developed a strong allegiance to the United States, but at the same time the bonds of affection for their German culture remained strong. *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 3.
3. Horace C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War 1917-1918* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 81.
4. Peterson and Fite, pp. 194-97; Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 272-73; Louis G. Geiger, *University of the Northern Plains: A History of the University of North Dakota, 1883-1958* (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1958), p. 286; Harry N. Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties 1917-1921* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 20.
5. Peterson and Fite, p. 196; Schell, pp. 272-73.
6. Peterson and Fite, p. 195.
7. Sallet, pp. 101-103; James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 261-63.
8. Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "Volksdeutsche: The Eastern European Germans," edited by William C. Sherman and Playford V. Thorson in *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History* (Fargo, N.D.: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1988), pp. 132-34, 137. For the history, culture, and experiences of the Black Sea Germans in South Russia see the trilogy by Joseph S. Height, *Paradise on the Steppe* (Bismarck, N.D.: NDHSGR, 1972); *Homesteaders on the Steppe* (Bismarck, N.D.: NDHSGR, 1975); and *Memories of the Black Sea Germans* (Chelsea, Mich.: Associated German-Russian Sponsors, 1979). Two key sources relating to the general background of the German-Russians by Karl Stumpp are *The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering*, trans. Joseph S. Height (Bonn, W. Germany: Atlantic Forum, 1967) and *The Emigration From Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862* (Lincoln, Neb.: AHSGR, 1973). See also William C. Sherman, "Assimilation in a North Dakota German-Russian Community [Pierce County]" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1965).
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14. Robinson, pp. 284-87; Kloberdanz, p. 144.
15. Solveig Zempel, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. ix-xv.
16. *Wishek News*, October 5, 1917; *Ashley Tribune*, August 23, 1917.
17. *Wishek News*, April 13, 1917; October 5, 1917; September 5, 1919; *Ashley Tribune*, August 2, 1917; August 23, 1917; October 4, 1917; October 11, 1917. The *Wishek News* was not a German paper as such, but it contained a special page printed in German that was headed "*Wisheker Nachrichten*." During the war this feature was discontinued, but a portion of the paper was still printed in German. Lowe purchased the *Wishek News* in 1916. George Rath, *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* (Freeman, S.D.: The Pine Hill Press, 1977), p. 342; Kloberdanz, p. 146.
18. *Wishek News*, April 6, 1917; April 13, 1917; *Ashley Tribune*, September 15, 1916; December 6, 1917; January 3, 1918; August 8, 1918; November 7, 1918.
19. *Ashley Tribune*, September 20, 1917; November 15, 1917; November 29, 1917; January 10, 1918; March 28, 1918; December 5, 1918.
20. For a discussion of German-language newspapers in the Dakotas during this period, see Anton H. Richter, "*Geht ihr den Vorzug*:" The German-Language Press of North and South Dakota," *South Dakota History*, 10 (Summer 1980), pp. 189-209.
21. *Ashley Tribune*, November 29, 1917; March 28, 1918; June 27, 1918; August 1, 1918; October 31, 1918; January 3, 1918; *Wishek News*, January 11, 1918; June 27, 1918. North Dakota had a good record for protecting civil liberties during the war. Edwin F. Ladd, in his first speech in the United States Senate in 1921, boasted that the state had been "an oasis of sanity in a desert of hysteria." Robinson, p. 367.
22. Kloberdanz, p. 119.
23. Luebke, pp. 27, 50.
24. Robinson, pp. 286-87; Kloberdanz, pp. 120-21, 132-33; Sherman, pp. 12-14. See also Joseph B. Voeller, "The Origin of the German-Russian People and Their Role in North Dakota" (Unpublished M.S. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1940), pp. 55-56.
25. Kloberdanz, p. 121.
26. Sallet, p. 101.
27. Adolph Schock, *In Quest of Free Land* (San Jose, Calif.: San Jose State College, 1964), pp. 90, 134-35; Sallet, p. 100; Kloberdanz, p. 127.
28. Nina Farley Wishek, *Along the Trails of Yesterday: A Story of McIntosh County* (Ashley, N.D.: Ashley Tribune, 1941), p. 235; Kloberdanz, p. 133.
29. Wishek, p. 235.
30. Kloberdanz, p. 148. Stumpp estimated that more than one million German-Russians in South Russia were casualties of World War I, the Russian revolution and civil war, starvation, and forced migrations. Schock, pp. 75-76.
31. Kloberdanz, pp. 133-34; Sallet, pp. 26-27.
32. *Ashley Tribune*, November 21, 1918; December 5, 1918; *Wishek News*, May 30, 1918.
33. *Ashley Tribune*, June 8, 1917. German-Russians obeyed the draft laws as willingly as any group in America. Nina Farley Wishek wrote of the McIntosh County young men: "They were ready and willing, even eager to enter the great struggle," *Along the Trails*, p. 430. Most German-language newspapers urged their readers to comply with the conscription laws and explained their detailed requirements for the benefit of those whose command of English was limited. Luebke, pp. 230-31.
34. *Wishek News*, August 15, 1919.
35. *Wishek News*, November 14, 1918; March 13, 1919; March 27, 1919; April 10, 1919; May 16, 1919; *Ashley Tribune*, November 14, 1918.
36. *Ashley Tribune*, November 21, 1918; December 5, 1918; December 12, 1918.
37. Sherman, pp. 139-40; Robinson, p. 286; Richter, "*Geht ihr den Vorzug*," pp. 192-94; Kloberdanz, pp. 120, 134, 140-43.
38. Schock, pp. 170-80; Robinson, pp. 286-88.
39. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), III, p. 400.
40. Height, *Memories of the Black Sea Germans*, p. 261.
41. Height, *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, p. 426.
42. Height, *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, pp. 426-27.
43. Reverend Salomon Joachim, "Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans," (Moorhead, Minn.: Committee on Publications, Concordia College, 1939), p. 23.
44. Kloberdanz, p. 121.

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Left: View posters of the Great War from the State Archives in the hallway near the Russell Reid Auditorium.

Far left: An exhibit case in the Corridor of History features items gathered from World War I veterans and local residents.

Below: An aviator's helmet, surgical tools, gas mask, and German signs are just some of the objects on display in the James E. Sperry Gallery exhibit “North Dakota and the Great War.”



THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH AND FAMILY

Three Rural North Dakota Cemeteries

BY MARJORIE PEARSON



Three rural cemeteries, located within ten to twenty miles of each other, can be seen across the rolling agricultural fields of Morton and Oliver Counties in North Dakota. Their presence evokes the turn of the twentieth-century settlement of this area by German-Russian and German immigrants. Of the three cemeteries, two (St. Vincent Cemetery and Rosebud Cemetery) are Roman Catholic, and one (Bremen

Cemetery) is Lutheran (Protestant). The two Catholic cemeteries, one with a surviving church, are set close to the road on open plots. The less visible Lutheran cemetery is set farther back from the road behind a grass-covered field and is partially obscured by trees and bushes. The three cemeteries (known as *Gottesacker* or *Friedhofen* in the German language of their founders) reveal religious affiliations,

family connections, and burial customs specific to their cultures. This account is part of a group of studies that have examined the roles and physical presence of German-Russian and German immigrants in North Dakota in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

What can a comparison of these three cemeteries tell us about the



St. Vincent Catholic Cemetery in Morton County is notable for its extensive array of both wrought- and cast-iron crosses. The only identified blacksmith for the wrought-iron crosses was Thomas Stebner, a German-Russian immigrant who lived in Mandan. In this overview looking to the west, St. Vincent Church is in the background. SHSND SA 31376

ethnic history, cultural patterns, and interactions among the German immigrants from Germany and the German immigrants from Russia, also known as German-Russians, who settled in North Dakota west of the Missouri River? Awareness of the impact of Germans from Russia began to be acknowledged and studied in the early 1970s. The similarities and differences among the two German groups can be

seen in the physical presence of their cemeteries and the use of the German language in those cemeteries.¹ Each cemetery and the church associated with it has its own story. Yet there are similarities and cross-connections within a relatively limited geographic area. This article compares those cemeteries and the monuments and markers that express the faith and family associations of their founders.

German-Russians and Germans in Morton and Oliver Counties

The German-Russians in North Dakota were largely defined by their religious identities, whether Catholic or Protestant. As immigrants came to the United States, they tended to settle with their immediate compatriots from Russian areas and adhered to cohesive religious practices. In Morton and Oliver Counties, the

German-Russians who came from the Black Sea region known as the Beresan colonies northeast of Odessa were almost exclusively Catholic.²

During the 1870s, the Catholics of Dakota Territory were initially served by Benedictine missionaries from the Conception Abbey in Missouri, under the vicariate apostolic of Nebraska, who focused on military forts and American Indian reservations due to the small number of settlers. An independent diocese, headquartered in Fargo and coinciding with North Dakota statehood, was established in 1889 under Bishop John Shanley (1852–1909).³ German-Russian Catholics began settling in central and western North Dakota as railroad lines were extended west of the Missouri River, but there was an acute shortage of German-speaking priests to minister to them. Shanley recruited Father Vincent Wehrle (1855–1941), a Swiss immigrant and member of

The German-Russians in North Dakota were largely defined by their religious identities, whether Catholic or Protestant.

the Order of St. Benedict, to travel among these communities. Wehrle became the head of the Benedictine abbey in Richardton, which had been founded by monks from St. Gall's Priory in Devils Lake. Members of the order went on to serve numerous parishes in western North Dakota under the Diocese of Bismarck, which was established at the end of 1909 with Abbot Vincent Wehrle named the bishop in 1910.⁴

The Catholic Church and the German language were important sources of community and stability for the German-Russian settlers in North Dakota.⁵ Even as they established churches, or joined existing ones, the parishioners complained about priests who could not understand



This plaque, "Made by Bismarck Foundry & Welding Co Bismarck ND," is on the back of the large cast-iron cross monument in St. Vincent Cemetery. Bismarck Foundry & Welding Company is the only identified foundry known for creating many of the cast-iron markers in Morton County and Oliver County cemeteries. SHSND SA 31376

their German language. Father Daniel Collins (1841–1909), the priest of St. Joseph's Church in Mandan, wrote to Bishop Shanley in 1907 that the German-Russians were reluctant to meet their financial obligations because of the language issue.⁶ Once small Catholic parishes and missions were established in Morton and Oliver Counties, typically about ten miles apart, they were often served by priests with a varying command of the German language who traveled from church to church before a large number of trained German-speaking clergy could be given more permanent assignments. The use of the German language remained a

constant in German-Russian parishes into the 1940s, despite broader pressures for Americanization and anti-German sentiments during the two World Wars. Not only was German the language of the scripture readings, hymns, and sermons in church services (although the Mass itself was said in Latin), it was also the language of instruction in the parish schools and at church social functions and continued to be used at home and among daily interactions with neighbors.⁷ Anthropologist and folklorist Timothy J. Kloverdanz explains that German-Russian groups shared "the same ancestral homeland; dialectical varieties of the same German language; an emphasis on close family ties; and a strong agricultural orientation."⁸



Map by Sara Nelson

The backgrounds and experiences of the Germans from Germany, also known as the *Reichsdeutsche*, differed from those of the Germans from Russia, also known as *Volksdeutsche*. Many of the Germans from Germany practiced the Lutheran faith.⁹ The Germans from Germany were German citizens, unlike their German-Russian counterparts. While the Germans

also came to homestead, some had previously settled elsewhere in the United States and then moved west.¹⁰

Immigrants from northern Germany (Bremen and Saxony) began to settle in the New Salem area of Morton County, inspired by Chicago immigration societies and the new railroad lines spreading westward. Sociologist William C. Sherman illustrates and describes the settlement patterns that spread from New Salem and Judson eastward into the fringes of Sweet Briar Township and northward into Oliver County.¹¹ These immigrants were adherents of the Protestant Lutheran faith, which had originated under the leadership of Martin Luther in Saxony, the section of Germany from which many of them came. Also known as Old Lutherans, they affiliated with the Lutheran Missouri Synod that

had been established at a meeting of pastors in Chicago in 1847 and spread throughout the Midwest and the Great Plains.¹² Sherman has been quoted as saying that “Germans usually are found wherever the Lutheran Missouri Synod church is found . . . the two are almost synonymous in North Dakota.”¹³ The North Dakota churches were initially served by traveling missionary preachers who had been trained at the Missouri Synod seminary in St. Louis. Later ministers often served more than one congregation. As with the Catholics, there were similar patterns of church establishment, with churches located approximately ten miles apart, allowing farm families to meet for weekly services. These German-speaking immigrants retained the use of German in their church services and religious instruction well into the twentieth century. While the language was a source of cohesion among the community members, it was also an important affirmation of religious faith and orthodoxy. The tenets of the Missouri Synod mandated the use of German because its clergy felt that the use of English translations of the Bible and in church services would dilute the purity of their doctrine. They also struggled with translating such key concepts as *Gerechtigkeit* (righteousness), *Heiligkeit* (holiness), and *Schoepfung* (creation) into English, fearing that their meaning would be lost.¹⁴ German Lutheran funeral services focused on important elements from the Lutheran liturgy: scripture, hymns, and a sermon that preached about Jesus Christ and salvation.

Settlement Patterns

The German-Russian settlements associated with the two Catholic cemeteries and their churches were bound by their shared faith and family connections. The first to arrive in the 1880s and 1890s filed claims for land under the Homestead Act and began to farm in the vicinity of Crown Butte, much as they had in Russia, planting wheat and ranching. In the absence of trees on the prairie, lignite, a form



Rt. Rev. Vincent Wehrle, Bishop of Bismarck. Bishop John Shanley recruited Father Vincent Wehrle (1855–1941) to travel among the German-Russian Catholics settling in central and western North Dakota. In 1904 Wehrle was named the first abbot of what would become Assumption Abbey in Richardton. He became the first bishop of the new Bismarck Diocese in 1910. St. Margaret's Church in Crown Butte was renamed St. Vincent's in his honor in 1934. SHSND SA 00113-00154

St. Vincent Cemetery



Cast-iron cross with the dates 1856–1916 with crucifix and kneeling angel at the base in St. Vincent Cemetery. SHSND SA 31376



Stone obelisk with the dates 1849–1906 surmounted by a cross at St. Vincent Cemetery with the German inscription *Hier ruhet in Gott* (Here rests in God). SHSND SA 31376

of soft coal, provided fuel during the harsh winters.¹⁵ The settlers were joined by later arrivals from their Russian villages and by members of their extended families.¹⁶ They initially clustered around Crown Butte, but, as families grew, they expanded outward with enough of them reaching into the edges of Oliver County to establish St. Anthony Church. Based on the records of the grave sites in the two cemeteries, there were strong family links between St. Vincent's and St. Anthony and its Rosebud Cemetery. At least six families with the same last names (Barth, Berger, Dinius, Ferderer, Kautzman, and Mosbrucker) are associated with both cemeteries, and at least four families (Barth, Ferderer, Kautzman, and Mosbrucker) are related by marriage.¹⁷ Other names seen in the cemeteries appear on Morton and Oliver County atlas maps, showing how they were closely spread in the two counties.¹⁸

The German Lutherans have a similar settlement pattern. The first arrivals, who claimed land under the Homestead Act, were soon joined by compatriots and members of their extended families. Many of them chose to raise cattle for dairying,

helping to establish a reputation for the greater New Salem area.¹⁹ Several founders of the Immanuel Lutheran Church and its Bremen Cemetery helped set up the local dairy at Rosebud. The family names seen in the cemetery are among those who owned land close to the church and cemetery. Like the German-Russians, many of them are related by marriage. These included the Goldes, Hoesels, and Hogers.²⁰

The German-Russian Catholics and German Lutherans were largely self-contained groups even though they spoke and read the same language, albeit with differences in their regional dialects. Intermarriage, for example, was virtually unknown. Farm ownership records show that the two groups had closely located properties, but there may not have been much social overlap, except perhaps at the local store and post office in Rosebud. The St. Vincent store and post office were very short lived and all the surrounding neighbors were German-Russian Catholics, as recounted by Rose Stein in a 1982 interview.²¹

An interesting example that suggests some interaction between the two

groups is the Ganten farm, later the Kautzman farm, on the south side of the road across from the Rosebud Cemetery. Hinrich Ganten (1838–1919) and Catherine Ganten (1849–1930) were German Lutherans who emigrated from Germany in 1885, according to census records.²² They homesteaded this farm in the late 1890s and are recorded in the 1900 census as living there with two farm laborers. By the time of the 1910 census, the Gantens, then ages seventy-one and sixty, were living with a six-year-old granddaughter, Lina Kuether, in New Salem. In the interval between the two censuses, the farm with its stone farm house and stone dairy barn was acquired by Emanuel Kautzman (1872–1927), who provided the land for the St. Anthony Catholic Church and Rosebud Cemetery. While the Gantens may have left the farm because of their ages, they may also have wanted to be closer to their religious and ethnic compatriots in the New Salem community.²³

Historian LaVern J. Rippley notes that German-Russian immigration to the United States reached a peak in about 1912.²⁴ *Reichsdeutsche* immigration would have ended at about the same



North Dakota Council on the Arts

Thomas Stebner (1879–1948) was born in Sulz, Russia, where he worked as a blacksmith and locksmith. He came to Mandan, North Dakota, with his wife, Blandina, in 1907, where he opened a blacksmith shop. He went to work in the Northern Pacific Railroad car shops and then worked for the Mandan street department. By 1932, he was the city street commissioner. Designing iron crosses was a sideline. In 1921, he applied for a patent on a safety lock. From his daughter Flora: "Friends that he maybe knew from the old country wanted him to make them [the crosses]. He liked to do things like that. He liked to work with his hands."⁶³

Historians Thomas D. Isern and Kevin Nesemeier describe his work: "The most striking feature in Stebner's grave cross design is the scrollwork, highly elaborated and artfully executed. . . . Several Stebner crosses exhibit pointed rays emanating from the nexus of the cross in a manner akin to the style of Ignatz Bobb."⁶⁴

Wrought-iron, seven-foot-high cross monument at St. Vincent Cemetery with the dates 1877–1908, with name plate in the center of the crossing. This is the most elaborate monument known to be designed by blacksmith Thomas Stebner. *SHSND SA 31376*

time. The onset of World War I in Europe in 1914 halted it altogether. While both communities remained insular, they gradually began to shift away from the use of German and into the mainstream. The change was particularly difficult for the German-Russians who had limited aims for education and focused on agricultural pursuits. As described by historian Gordon L. Iseminger, German-Russians “clung to their language, shunned contact with other nationalities, neglected public schools, and disliked free public education and compulsory attendance laws. Few German-Russian children completed the eighth grade.”²⁵ By contrast, the *Reichsdeutschen* began to pursue higher education and political activity.²⁶ The differences may be partially explained by their religious affiliations, with the German-Russian Catholics following the rituals and teachings of their parish priests. German Lutherans, by contrast, focused on preaching and the reading of scripture, which required more education.

Rural Catholic cemeteries throughout North Dakota are recognized for their distinctive iron crosses.

Despite increasing use of English and assimilation into larger society, religious and cultural traditions were maintained in the cemeteries well into the twentieth century.

Cemetery Forms and Patterns as Reflections of Cultural Background

Rural cemeteries in the area of North Dakota west of the Missouri River are not large—usually between one and two acres. Typically they were established next to the churches whose names they bear, sometimes preceding the actual church building itself. Based on observation, the overall plan is rectangular, and the cemetery is enclosed by a wire fence

with one or more gates, at least one wide enough to allow a vehicle to enter.

In rural areas, family cemeteries often preceded a church cemetery, as was the case with the Crown Butte Cemetery on the George Stein farm. The small family cemetery was superseded by the St. Vincent Cemetery. Once a church cemetery was established, family graves might be relocated or new monuments commemorating earlier off-site burials might be placed in the church cemetery.²⁷

In the Catholic cemeteries, generally the graves are laid out in straight rows, oriented north-south, with the graves themselves placed east-west. The headstones and markers may face either east or west. The section for adult burials is consecrated ground, while another section is set apart for burials of infants and children who died before they could be baptized. Often this section was later consecrated. In still active cemeteries, this section may also be used for more recent burials. A wide aisle between the two sections allows for vehicle access and also is dominated by a large shrine cross. The experience of a Catholic cemetery is recounted by researcher and genealogist Phyllis Hertz Feser: “Upon entering [the cemetery] we always knelt at the big central cross and said some prayers.”²⁸ Landscaping and plantings are minimal beyond those placed on individual grave sites. The overall impression is one of order and restraint.

Feser explains the arrangement and types of markers:

Usually people who were pompous in life have large showy headstones. The more modest or quiet the individual, the smaller and less significant the marker—some have none at all. Cemeteries often remind me of a city. The most recent part has the low modern granite

St. Vincent Cemetery



Shaped block monument for “Mutter” (1872–1942) and “Vater” (1870–1952) at St. Vincent Cemetery. The inscription reads: *Vater nicht mein sondern dein Wille gesche* (Father not my but Thy will be done). SHSND SA 31376



Wrought-iron cross, seven and a half feet high, designed by blacksmith Thomas Stebner for an unidentified grave at St. Vincent Cemetery. The nameplate, which would have been placed in the crossing, is missing. Photo by Marjorie Pearson



Father Bernard Strassmaier leads a funeral procession uphill in south central North Dakota, 1920–30. Also pictured are Dr. Aaron McGaffey Beede in the background behind Strassmaier, John Magloire “Jack” Carignan Sr. in front of horses, and Joseph Bernard “Joey” Holter driving horses. SHSND SA 00032-OL-20-00017

markers, next and of older vintage are the large granite, then a gradual regression in stones. Along the back, in the oldest section, are the iron crosses.²⁹

This pattern is reflected in the St. Vincent Cemetery. In the Rosebud Cemetery, the stones and the iron crosses are intermingled.

Feser recounts the example of her great-grandfather Jacob Herz (1856–1918), who was buried in St. Joseph’s Cemetery, fifteen miles south of Glen Ullin in rural Grant County: “Great-grandpa Jacob’s grave has a large granite stone with photos, located at the front of the cemetery. Was he a pompous individual, was he a founder, or was he instrumental in forming the community? Perhaps some of each would be correct. They were the very first settlers in that area and he donated the land on which the church and cemetery were located.”³⁰ Feser contrasts Jacob Herz’s monument with the iron cross of her grandfather Athanasius Hertz (1871–1920), also at St. Joseph’s: “Grandpa has an iron cross grave marker which is so much kinder than the cold stone markers on some of the other graves. It is made of iron that is shaped and curved to form

an interesting design. . . . his is curves and scrolls of metal with a circle in the center that has his name and dates on it. I touch the smooth, black curves of the cross and trace my finger over the raised letters that spell Grandpa’s name.”³¹

In the Lutheran Bremen Cemetery, the graves are laid out in a less ordered pattern, more clustered in family groups rather than regular rows, although the graves themselves are placed with an east-west orientation. Infant and child burials are not set aside in a separate section. Large plantings by family grave sites provide a landscaped setting. Stone markers of varied types are the norm. In some of the family plots, a large stone monument is inscribed with the family name, and then smaller stone markers are placed for individual graves. Although the church itself is no longer in place, the cemetery has much of the character of a rural Protestant churchyard.

A Sea of Iron Crosses

Rural Catholic cemeteries throughout North Dakota are recognized for their distinctive iron crosses. Since the late 1970s, folklorists and genealogists have made a concerted effort to identify and record wrought-iron

crosses as distinctive artifacts of folk art and culture.³² Most, although not all, are identified with German-Russian immigrants who brought the tradition of fabricating wrought-iron crosses as grave markers with them from Russia. Ukrainians also have a wrought-iron cross tradition, which they may have learned from their German-Russian neighbors. Historians trace the fabrication of wrought-iron crosses to sixteenth-century Germany. Then migrants from Germany brought the iron-cross tradition to regions of the Russian empire in the eighteenth century.³³ According to Kloberdanz, “those German-Russians who made and used wrought-iron crosses . . . were primarily Roman Catholic and shared similar attitudes towards life, death, and the hereafter. . . . The traditional view of many German-Russian Catholics toward life tended to be colored by an ever-present awareness of death. . . . German-Russian Catholics particularly respected the consecrated ground of their dead.”³⁴

The fabrication of wrought-iron crosses, which did not lend itself to mass production, was very much a local affair. In North Dakota and other regions of the Great Plains settled by German-Russians, the

blacksmiths who created them were immigrants from Russia who learned their skills there or were trained by other immigrant blacksmiths.³⁵ Cross-making was a secondary venture to their main blacksmithing work. Because of the time involved in fabrication, folklorists assume that such crosses were fabricated to mark the grave of an individual after his or her death and then installed some time later. The crosses take a variety of forms, usually individual to the blacksmith, who added his own distinctive patterns to the basic cross form.³⁶

The main components are wrought iron with applied plaques, either of wrought iron with applied letters or cast iron. Some have crucifixes or other Christian symbols applied in the center of the cross. Originally all had name plates with birth and death dates, some with places of birth and death, either placed in the center

These three rural cemeteries serve as testimony to the persistence of the German-Russian and German settlers who founded them and the respect of their descendants for their heritage.

of the cross or on a vertical plaque below the cross arms. (Often, some of these elements have been lost over time.) In some cases, the name plates are porcelain applied to a cast-iron base. Months, familial designations (*Mutter* [mother], *Vater* [father]) and any other inscriptions such as *Hier ruht in Gott* (Here rests in God) are in German. In our cemetery examples, wrought-iron crosses span a relatively short time period, from 1900 to about 1920.

Feser cites the frugality and ingenuity of the German-Russian creators and patrons, as well as the desire to maintain identity and self-sufficiency.

The German-Russians were a people who were not easily impressed, least of all with themselves. Perhaps therein lies one of the secrets of the beauty in the crosses. Their creation was done in a spontaneous nature . . . they used what was on hand . . . heated the iron and bent it around whatever was available in the blacksmith shop. It was much more economical to have a marker made from available scrap iron than it was to buy a stone one. . . . By relying on their local blacksmith they remained self-sufficient.³⁷

Cast-iron crosses are another significant monument type in the rural Catholic cemeteries. Cast-iron crosses and markers fall into a variety of types, ranging in size from small (two feet high) to large (five feet high). Crosses are cast in a variety of patterns.³⁸ As with the wrought-iron crosses, crucifixes and other symbols are cast separately and affixed to the crosses, and name plates and inscriptions are affixed in separate plates on the front. Like the name and inscription plates on the wrought-iron crosses, these are generally in German, although English inscriptions begin to appear in the 1920s. A foundry inscription may be cast or affixed on the back of the cross, on the cross arm, or at the base.

The only identified foundry known for creating many of the cast-iron markers in Morton and Oliver County cemeteries (as well as cemeteries in Emmons County to the southeast) was the Bismarck Foundry and Welding Company. It was established in Bismarck in 1914 by Adolf Kutchera, a German-Hungarian immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1904, according to the 1920 census. Crosses and markers from the Bismarck Foundry in the Rosebud and St. Vincent cemeteries largely coincide with the dates of Kutchera's business. Kutchera operated the Bismarck Foundry until 1922, when the business was sold to Clarence L. Thompson, who operated

St. Vincent Cemetery



Wrought-iron cross with the dates 1864–1909 at St. Vincent Cemetery, designed by Thomas Stebner. SHSND SA 31376



Wrought-iron cross with the dates 1906–08 by an unknown designer at St. Vincent Cemetery. SHSND SA 31376



Wrought-iron crosses (no dates) with heart-shaped name plates by an unknown designer at St. Vincent Cemetery. Photo by Sara Nelson



Shrine cross with cast-iron crucifix affixed to the wrought-iron cross. The corona behind the crossing and the INRI sign plaque are of wrought iron. INRI is the abbreviation for *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). The cross is placed along the middle aisle of Rosebud Cemetery. SHSND SA 31376

it as the Bismarck Welding Shop. Kutchera then shifted his business to automotive machine work under the name of Modern Machine Works.³⁹

Kloberdanz explains that cast-iron markers could be manufactured relatively quickly based on stock prototypes, then personalized with the applied name plaques. In some cases, a family might install a group of almost identical cast-iron crosses for individuals who died over a period of several years.⁴⁰

Stone Monuments and Markers

While not as distinctive as the iron crosses, the multiple examples of stone monuments and markers also highlight the cultural backgrounds of those buried in the cemeteries. Geographer Richard Francaviglia and others have developed a typology of stone monuments, based on period and form. These types can be seen in both Catholic and Lutheran cemeteries, and generally fall into the following categories: obelisk and cross-vault obelisk (1890s–1920s), tablet (1890s–1940s), pulpit (1900s–1940s), and block (1920s–1950s).⁴¹ The earlier examples in our cemeteries, beginning in the early twentieth century, are generally formed of gray marble, sometimes with inset ceramic portraits,

that were popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Later examples tend to be of granite. The Catholic cemeteries are differentiated by the extensive use of crosses rising from the tops of the obelisk markers. Both Catholic and Lutheran cemeteries have tablet and block markers engraved or incised with crosses. Monuments in both have ceramic portraits. Crosses may be placed on the slanting ledges of the pulpit-shaped monuments in both. Stone monuments and markers were probably fabricated locally at a facility like the Bismarck Marble and Granite Works.

The Three Cemeteries and Their Churches

St. Vincent Catholic Cemetery and St. Vincent Church, originally St. Margaret's Church, is located in Crown Butte, Sweet Briar Township, Morton County, fourteen miles northwest of Mandan. St. Margaret's was founded in 1896 as a mission church by the Order of St. Benedict to serve the needs of German-Russian immigrants who had begun homesteading in the area. The two-acre cemetery, with the earliest burials dating from 1897 and 1898, is notable for its extensive array of iron crosses, both of wrought and cast iron. The church parish survives in its fourth building, dating from 1934.

The first German-Russian settlers, George Froehlich (also spelled Frohlich) and George and Jacob Boehm (also spelled Bohm), came to this part of Sweetbriar Township in 1888 and 1889, from Speier, Russia (now part of Ukraine). They were soon joined by additional families from Karlsruhe, Speier, and Katherinenthal.⁴² Among them were George Yantzer (1858–1932) and his wife, Anna Mary Renner Yantzer (1866–1921), and George Franz Stein (1850–1923) and his wife, Juliana Boehm Stein (1855–1911), along with his parents, Jacob (1825–95) and Marianna Stein (1830–99).

The settlers called their community Crown Butte, after a nearby geographic feature. Father J. A. Lemieux and Father Vincent Wehrle, Benedictine missionaries, first celebrated mass in a sod shanty on the Yantzer farm, northeast of the present church site, in 1893. Lemieux continued to serve the settlers who organized St. Margaret's Church. The parish was officially founded in 1896 when a sod church was built at the west edge of the cemetery under the direction of Father Daniel Collins, who ministered to St. Joseph's Church in Mandan. George and Katherine Frohlich transferred the property for the church and cemetery to Bishop John Shanley (representing the Diocese of Fargo) in June 1896. The sod church was replaced by a frame church in 1902, built on the same site under the direction of Father Henri Breunagel. When that church burned, it was replaced in 1907 with a large frame Gothic Revival style church, built on the hill west of the cemetery under the direction of Father Leo Kaufmann, who served the St. Margaret parish and other mission churches between 1906 and 1912. In 1906, Kaufmann supervised the construction of a rectory south of the church site. A gambrel-roof frame Verein Hall (a meeting hall for German social organizations) was built to the east of the frame church sometime between 1924 and 1927.⁴³

The 1907 church was destroyed by a fire in 1933. It was replaced by the present brick church in 1934, built under the direction of Father Adolph Brandner, pastor between 1933 and 1940. The new church with a highly visible steeple recalls some details of traditional Eastern European architecture. At that time, the parish renamed itself St. Vincent's in honor of Father Wehrle, who had become the bishop of the new Bismarck Diocese in 1910. Curiously, the St. Vincent Post Office had been established in 1917 close to the church, operating out of the local store owned by Anton Kautzmann. This suggests the name change for the parish had been under discussion prior to being formally adopted. The Crown Butte Telephone Exchange also operated out of the store.⁴⁴ The rectory burned to the ground in 1950. It was replaced by a modern house in 1959 and was the residence of the parish priest until 1969, and then again between 1985 and 1991. It was rented out when it was not the residence of the priest and was demolished sometime after 2010.⁴⁵

Despite increasing use of English and assimilation into larger society, religious and cultural traditions were maintained in the cemeteries well into the twentieth century.

The cemetery has been an integral part of the parish since its beginnings as indicated by the transfer of the property from the Frohlichs to Bishop Shanley on behalf of the Fargo Diocese. The church cemetery was preceded by a small cemetery for members of the Bohm and Stein families, also called the Crown Butte Cemetery, on George Stein's farm in Section 12, southeast of the church. The deaths of these early settlers occurred between 1894 and 1909. However, almost all of the names are recorded on monuments in the St. Vincent Cemetery as well, with

the earliest death being that of John Bohm in 1894. The Bohm family monuments are grouped near the southwest corner of the east section of the cemetery. Carl and Julia Bohm are recorded on one monument; John, George, Mary, and Matilda Bohm are recorded on another. Otherwise the earliest burials, based on the death dates of 1897 and 1898 on monuments and markers, are located in the northeast section of the cemetery and extend westward. The west section of the cemetery contains infant and child burials, as well as burials of relatively recent date. The church history identifies the first recorded burial as that of Margaretha Landeis on January 2, 1903.⁴⁶

The open grassy cemetery (on the south side of the road now identified as Thirty-sixth Street, 1.3 miles east of County Road 83 [Thirty-third Avenue]) is enclosed by a wire fence. The almost three hundred graves are laid out in rows and divided into east and west sections.⁴⁷ A wide gate allows for vehicle access between the two sections, while a pedestrian gate leads into the east section. The east section is dominated by iron crosses. The group of thirty-one wrought-iron crosses fabricated by local blacksmiths and craftsmen are among the most impressive assemblages in the state.⁴⁸ The only identified blacksmith was Thomas Stebner (1879–1948), a German-Russian immigrant who lived in Mandan; he created crosses with particularly ornate scrollwork and is credited with three crosses.⁴⁹ The approximately forty cast-iron crosses set among the rows are also impressive. Bismarck Foundry and Welding Company has been identified as the fabricator of many of the crosses.

It is striking to see crosses, both wrought iron and cast iron, arranged in rows by family. The Sturn family has wrought-iron crosses (without birth and death dates) for five family members and one cast-iron cross for H. J. Sturn, who died in 1911 at the age of one. Members of the Gress families

Rosebud Cemetery



Obelisk monument with the dates 1872–1927 with a ceramic portrait and German inscription. SHSND SA 31376



Cast-iron marker for infant who died when she was four days old in 1922. The marker depicts a sorrowing angel, not a cross. Her grave is along the western edge of Rosebud Cemetery. Photo by Marjorie Pearson

have wrought-iron crosses, including one identified as the work of Thomas Stebner, and cast-iron crosses. The cast-iron crosses are almost identical to each other, although the family members died at different times between 1913 and 1916, suggesting that all the crosses were installed later, but at the same time. Three Yantzer children, all of whom died in 1898 of diphtheria, have similar cast-iron crosses with Bismarck Foundry plates.⁵⁰

Stone monuments, many in the form of gray marble obelisks surmounted by crosses, are located among and to the west of the iron crosses. Others take the form of tablets, pulpits, and blocks, as discussed in greater detail above.⁵¹ Many similar stone monuments are placed in the west section. An unusual example in the east section is the double monument for Dominick Zander (1842–1923) and Elizabetha Berger Zander (1847–1915), who had arrived in Crown Butte in 1893. A pair of columns support an aedicule (a stone canopy) surmounted by a cross with the inscription “IHS.” The monuments and crosses in the east section face west. The monuments and crosses in the west section face east. English

inscriptions appear on some markers as early as the 1920s. However, German inscriptions persist on some monuments as late as the 1950s. The 1998 study of the cemetery identified twelve stone monuments with ceramic portraits from the 1920s and 1930s, but a more recent assessment has identified twenty monuments with such portraits.⁵² A tall shrine cross is placed at the south end of the vehicle aisle. It is of wood and approximately ten feet tall with a sculptured figure of Christ suspended from the cross bar. This cross replaced an earlier wood cross that had been installed in 1908 by Father Leo Kaufman.⁵³

Rosebud Catholic Cemetery is located in Oliver County, northeast of the crossroads of Thirty-fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street, one mile north of the Morton County line, and about ten miles southeast of Center, the Oliver County seat. The cemetery and the nonextant (no longer existing) St. Anthony of Padua Church, a mission church served by the priests of St. Margaret’s (St. Vincent), were founded in 1907 to meet the needs of German-Russian immigrants who were settling in Oliver County and northern Morton County. The one-and-one-

half acre cemetery, with the earliest burial dating from 1906, is notable for its array of iron crosses, both of wrought iron and cast iron. The church was closed in 1948 and subsequently demolished.⁵⁴

The cemetery and church were established on land that belonged to Emanuel Kautzman (also spelled Kautzmann, 1872–1927), a German-Russian immigrant who acquired large amounts of farm land in Morton and Oliver Counties. Kautzman had acquired the Ganten farmstead on the south side of the road opposite the cemetery. The cemetery was named after the local Rosebud post office about four miles to the southwest of the site. George Kautzman (d. 1906), the infant son of Emanuel and Rosa Kautzman, is the earliest known burial. In the 1911 directory of the Diocese of Bismarck, the Rosebud church, called St. Anthony of Padua, is identified as a mission church under the aegis of the Crown Butte (St. Margaret) church. The church building, a frame structure, was probably built under the supervision of Father Kaufman, who served both churches. It is not clear where the church was located in relation to the cemetery; in the 1917



North Dakota Council on the Arts

Ignatz Bobb (1876–1962) emigrated with his wife, Catherina, in 1907 from near Odessa, where he was a blacksmith. In North Dakota the Bobbs lived in Crown Butte, Hebron, and Center, where Ignatz Bobb farmed and worked as a blacksmith on the side. The Bobbs were members of St. Martin’s Catholic Church in Center. According to a grandson, Ignatz Bobb and blacksmith Thomas Stebner were friends: “They borrowed ideas.”⁶¹

Historians Thomas D. Isern and Kevin Nesemeier characterize Bobb’s work in Rosebud Cemetery: It exhibits “certain signature design elements, such as the sheet iron panels between the double bars near the base and at the junction of the cross arms. The four heart-pointed rays emanating from the center of the cross also are marks of Bobb’s work. His style is distinct from any other smith in the region.”⁶²

This wrought-iron cross with the dates 1889–1912 at Rosebud Cemetery was designed by blacksmith Ignatz Bobb. SHSND SA 31376

Oliver County atlas, it is shown at the southwest corner of the site, close to the crossroads. The parish was disbanded in 1948, with worshippers dispersing to St. Martin's in Center or St. Vincent's in Crown Butte.⁵⁵

The Rosebud Cemetery has many similarities to the St. Vincent Cemetery, although it is about half the size. The open grassy site is enclosed by a wire fence and accessed by a wide gate on the west side. Like St. Vincent, it is divided into east and west sections with the ninety (or more) graves laid out in rows.⁵⁶ The majority of the graves are grouped in the northern halves of the two sections, with the earliest graves to the northeast. Infant burials are largely grouped in the west section with some interspersed adult burials. Adult burials predominate in the east section. Three wrought-iron crosses, two of which are credited to Ignatz Bobb (1876–1962), a German-Russian immigrant blacksmith who lived in Crown Butte, are located in the east section. Many cast-iron crosses and markers (approximately twenty-five) are located in both sections, a significant number of which have Bismarck Foundry and Welding Co. name plates. As in the St. Vincent Cemetery, English inscriptions appear on some markers as early as the 1920s, but German inscriptions persist on some monuments as late as the 1950s. Many grave sites are identified by flat concrete markers with the inscription "Unknown Grave."

Family groups are particularly notable in Rosebud Cemetery, and family plots may be outlined with stones; in the St. Vincent Cemetery families tend to be more dispersed. Stone monuments, many in the form of obelisks surmounted by crosses, are located among the iron crosses in the east section. Tablet, pulpit, and block monuments also can be found. Many similar stone monuments are located in the west section. The monuments and crosses in the east section face west, and the monuments and crosses in the west section face east. Based on

their style and materials, a number of stone monuments appear to be later replacements for earlier markers. The prominent stone obelisk monument for Emanuel Kautzman suggests his importance in the community. His son John Kautzman (1896–1931) has a similar monument. Both monuments have ceramic portraits. A monument for Katherine Schafer (1852–1908) takes the form of a pipe cross set behind a later granite block monument. A seven-foot tall shrine cross of wrought and cast iron, with a cast-iron figure of Christ suspended from the cross bars, is placed at the center of the west row of the east section. A wrought-iron corona surrounds the crossing, while a tablet with the applied letters "INRI" is at the top of the cross.⁵⁷

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (Bremen) Cemetery is located two-and-one-half miles east of the defunct Rosebud Post Office, about twenty-seven miles northwest of Mandan, but is associated with the town of New Salem, about fifteen miles to the southwest of the cemetery. The church and cemetery were established in 1899 by a group of German Lutheran immigrants on land donated by Max Hoesel (1865–1946), one of the church founders. The one-acre cemetery is closely associated with the founding members of the church, who established a small settlement in the immediate vicinity and initially called it Bremen. The earliest recorded burial, of one of the church's founding members, Frank Sporleder, dates from 1901.⁵⁸ Aside from one iron cross, the grave markers are relatively modest stone markers organized by family groups.

The founders of the church and cemetery, German immigrants from Bremen, Saxony, and other areas of northern Germany, initially located around New Salem and then moved northward in Morton County and into the southern part of Oliver County. The group had started meeting in 1895 or 1896 in members' homes with the Reverend Frederick Wohlfel,

Bremen Cemetery



Wrought-iron cross with the dates 1873–1914 by unknown designer at Bremen Cemetery. The inscription in English, "Forever in Our Hearts," along with the name, birth and death dates, is set on a cast-iron cross affixed to the larger wrought-iron cross. SHSND SA 31376



Obelisk monument with the dates 1883–1914 at Bremen Cemetery. SHSND SA 31376

Bremen Cemetery



Family monument in pulpit form with raised cross on the ledge at Bremen Cemetery. The side of the monument is etched with the open gates of heaven and is inscribed "Safe in the arms of Jesus." SHSND SA 31376



Cross-vault obelisk monument with the dates 1876–1922 at the Bremen Cemetery is inscribed with *Hier ruht in Gott meine leure Gattin und unsre gute Mutter* (Here rests in God my dear wife and our good mother). The indented oval once held a ceramic portrait. SHSND SA 31376

a missionary pastor of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, who was active in western North Dakota. After the church was built, Wohlfiel was succeeded by the Reverend Ferdinand Matthias. Members of the church helped establish the Rosebud Post Office in 1904, which was located in the local general store. They also established the Rosebud Creamery, which gathered milk and cream from the local dairy farmers, many of them German Lutherans, and produced butter. The creamery was originally on Emil Golde's farm, then moved half a mile west to have better access to water. Franz Emil Lindner was the president of the creamery. The Rosebud Post Office closed in 1936. In 1946, Immanuel Lutheran consolidated with the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Salem, and the church building was sold to Concordia Lutheran Church of Beulah, North Dakota, and moved there. Based on the 1917 Morton County atlas, it appears that the church was located to the east of the cemetery.⁵⁹

The cemetery is to the south of County Road 140 [Thirty-first Street], east of County Road 84 [Thirty-ninth Avenue], and set back from the road in a field. It is enclosed by a wire fence with rows of trees and bushes along the west and south sides. Bushes are also clustered by several groups of graves near the center and east side of the cemetery. Over thirty graves have been recorded in the cemetery, but it is likely that more unmarked graves survive that have been concealed by the dense vegetation. The graves are organized in family groups, some in outlined family plots, and they are identified by relatively modest stone monuments. It appears that a ceramic portrait has been removed from a Gothic arch obelisk monument for Ella Richter. Family groups include the Hoesels and Lindners, whose property adjoined the cemetery, as well as the Goldes and Goldgebauers. The grave of Mina Wolf-Golde (1872–1914), the wife of Emil Golde, has the only wrought-iron cross marker. This type

of wrought-iron cross is highly unusual in a Protestant cemetery. It has an inscription in English that was added after 2002. Most of the monuments have German inscriptions, including one for Richard Max Lindner, who died in 1963. Some English inscriptions began to appear in the 1920s.⁶⁰

A Continuing Tradition

These three rural cemeteries serve as testimony to the persistence of the German-Russian and German settlers who founded them and the respect of their descendants for their heritage. While other physical artifacts of these settlers may have disappeared or have been dramatically altered, these cemeteries and their monuments survive. The layouts of the cemeteries and monuments and markers in the cemeteries follow the practices of their faiths. Regularly spaced rows with the graves facing east or west and little landscaping characterize the Catholic cemeteries. The Lutheran cemetery, with its less formally arranged family groups, has more landscaping. A sea of crosses, whether iron or stone, rising above the prairie landscape, is the key indicator of a Catholic cemetery. The monuments in the Lutheran cemetery may have their own religious symbols such as inscribed crosses and open gates of heaven. As striking as the monuments themselves is the use of the German language on these monuments in all three cemeteries, often into the mid-twentieth century. Even though the use of that language may have changed or diminished during the life of the deceased, it claims its ongoing importance and reflects a continuing tradition in death.



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ENDNOTES

1. The first Roman Catholics from Speier came to Glen Ullin, North Dakota, in 1885, then spread east to Mandan and west to Glendive, Montana. Settlers from the Beresan colonies northeast of Odessa made up more than half the population of Morton and Stark Counties. Shirley Fischer Arends, *The Central Dakota Germans: Their History, Language, and Culture* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 38, 40. See also William C. Sherman, "Ethnic Distribution in Western North Dakota," *North Dakota History* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 9. An expanded version of this article appears in William C. Sherman, *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983). Timothy J. Kloberdanz wrote about German-Russian symbols and the persistence of the German language in "Symbols of German-Russian Ethnic Identity on the Northern Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* 8 (Winter 1988): 3–15. The Germans from Russia Historical Society had been founded in 1971 to promote appreciation of the German-Russian heritage. Kloberdanz discusses the problems of defining "Germans" in North Dakota, based on their areas of origin. While many came from Russia or other areas of Eastern Europe and gave those areas of origin to census takers, they still considered themselves German because that was the language they spoke. See Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "Volksdeutsche: The Eastern European Germans," in William C. Sherman and Playford V. Thorson, eds., *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1988), 119–121, 137–38.
2. Sherman, "Ethnic Distribution," 9. The Beresan colonies, located in the Beresan River valley in today's Ukraine, are discussed and graphically depicted in Adam Giesinger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* (Winnipeg, MB: Marian Press, 1974; repr., Lincoln, NE: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1981), 113–19. Several of these colonies were Protestant, including Mennonite and Lutheran, in their religious practices, but they did not send emigrants to Morton or Oliver Counties.
3. George Rath, *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Press, 1977), 309–15.
4. Accounts of the early history of the diocese are recounted in Louis Pfaller, *The Catholic Church in Western North Dakota, 1738–1960* (Mandan, ND: Crescent Printing Co., 1960); Patrick A. Ahern, ed., *Catholic Heritage in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota* (St. Paul: Diocese of St. Paul, 1964); Terrence G. Kardong, *Prairie Church: The Diocese of Bismarck 1910–1985* (Bismarck: Diocese of Bismarck, 1985); Marge Gross and Margaret Sitte, eds., *Perseverance in Faith: A History of the Catholic Church in Western North Dakota, Diocese of Bismarck 1910–2010* (Strasbourg, France: Editions du Signe, 2009).
5. Kloberdanz, "Symbols of German-Russian Ethnic Identity."
6. Gross and Sitte, *Perseverance in Faith*.
7. Francie M. Berg, ed., *Ethnic Heritage in North Dakota* (Washington, DC: Attiyeh Foundation, 1983), 113, contains the accounts of informants Rose Stein and Dominic Zander about their German language experiences at St. Vincent's. Edna Boardman, "English in the World, German at Church," *Heritage Review* 23 (Fall 1993): 11–14. See also "Appendix A: Foreign-Language Use in North Dakota Churches" in Sherman and Thorson, *Plains Folk*, 416–21.
8. Timothy J. Kloberdanz, "Iron Lilies, Eternal Roses: German-Russian Cemetery Folk Art in Perspective," in *Iron Spirits*, Nicholas Curchin Vrooman and Patrice Avon Marvin, eds. (Fargo: North Dakota Council on the Arts, 1982), 108.
9. Sherman, "Ethnic Distribution," 8. Kloberdanz explains some of the differences between the two groups in "Volksdeutsche," 119–21. German-Russian Lutherans from the Beresan colonies also immigrated to North Dakota but were not located in this part of Morton County. Giesinger identifies the Protestant groups in *From Catherine to Khrushchev*, 113–14.
10. For more background see Warren A. Henke, "Reichsdeutsche (Germans)," in Sherman and Thorson, *Plains Folk*, 63–104.
11. Sherman, "Ethnic Distribution," 9.
12. E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 178–81.
13. Berg, *Ethnic Heritage*, 110.
14. Nelson, *Lutherans*, 365–67; Boardman, "English in the World," 11–12.
15. Alvar W. Carlson, "Lignite Coal as an Enabling Factor in the Settlement of Western North Dakota," *Great Plains Journal* 2 (Spring 1972): 145–53, cited in Jeffrey A. Hess, Robert Hybbs, and William Casey, "Coal Mining in the Coal-Bearing Regions of Western North Dakota, 1870–1945," Hess, Roise and Company, 1992, MS 5918, Archaeology & Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of North Dakota (hereafter SHSND), Bismarck, 15.
16. Rath, *Black Sea Germans*, 249–50; Berg, *Ethnic Heritage*, 114. The spellings of the German-Russian village names vary with the source consulted. "Speyer" is a common variant of "Speier." The localities are also variously described as Russia, Ukraine, Beresan, and the Black Sea. All were part of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. Karlsruhe and Speier were two of the original Beresan colonies in the Beresan River valley. Katherinenthal was a later Beresan settlement founded between 1817 and 1829 by Catholic families from Baden and the Palatinate. See Giesinger, 114.
17. Bonnie Schlosser, Patricia Boehm, and Mary Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte, 1896–1996* (Crown Butte, ND: St. Vincent's Church, 1996) gives many family histories and their relationships.
18. *Morton County Plat Map* (Chicago: George A. Ogle, 1917); *Oliver County Plat Map* (Chicago: George A. Ogle, 1917).
19. *75th Anniversary, New Salem, North Dakota 1883–1958* (New Salem, ND: New Salem Journal, 1958).
20. Church marriage records are listed in *To God Alone Be Glory: 75th Anniversary Booklet of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Salem, North Dakota* (New Salem, ND: New Salem Journal, 1985), 24–25. This source contains no burial records.
21. Berg, *Ethnic Heritage*, 113.
22. The spelling of Ganten's first name appears in various sources as Hinrich, Heinrich, and Henry, among others. In the North Dakota Department of Health Public Death Index, his name is recorded as John Henry Ganten, b. 10/1/1838, d. 4/12/1919. Catherine Ganten's name is recorded as Kathrine, b. 12/31/1849, d. 1/20/1930. "Public Death Index," North Dakota Department of Health Division of Vital Records, accessed September 17, 2017, <https://www.ndhealth.gov/vital/>.
23. The Gantens were affiliated with the Immanuel Lutheran Church as indicated in church records listed in *To God Alone Be Glory*. Anna and Rufina Ganten were buried in the cemetery.
24. LaVern J. Rippley, "An Introduction to Richard Sallet's Russian-German Settlements in the United States," in Richard Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, trans. LaVern J. Rippley and Arnand Boyer (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1974), 15.
25. Gordon L. Iseminger, "Are We Germans, or Russians, or Americans?: The McIntosh County German-Russians During World War I," *North Dakota History* 59, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 7. In his essay "Three Centuries of Germans in America," Frederick C. Luebke comments on the role of education and culture in *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 170–73.
26. Henke discusses the involvement of the Germans in North Dakota politics in "Reichsdeutsche," 102–05. Kloberdanz discusses the education of German-Russians and the lack of political involvement in "Volksdeutsche," 144–45.
27. Lewis R. Marquardt discusses family cemeteries in "Eiserne Kreuze of Emmons County: A Forgotten Folk Art," *Heritage Review* 10 (April 1980): 14; for the Crown Butte (Stein) Cemetery and the St. Vincent Cemetery, see Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 81–83.
28. Phyllis Hertz Feser, "From Within," *Heritage Review* 12 (April 1982): 34.
29. Phyllis Hertz Feser, "Gottesacker," *Heritage Review* 10 (April 1980): 17.
30. Feser, "From Within," 36.
31. *Ibid.*, 35. This is from her childhood memory. A more recent record from

- Findagrave.com indicates that the iron cross has been removed and replaced by a carved granite monument for Athanasius Hertz and Rosa Hertz. This monument was probably installed after Rosa died in 1960. The family changed the spelling of the last name from "Herz" to "Hertz."
32. Timothy Klobberdanz, "German-Russian Wrought-Iron Cross Sites in Central North Dakota," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, North Dakota State University, Fargo, October 23, 1989; Thomas D. Isern and Kevin Nesemeier, *Wrought Iron Cross Cemeteries in North Dakota—Continuing Survey* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 2000); Feser, "Gottesacker" and "From Within"; Vrooman and Marvin, *Iron Spirits*.
 33. Klobberdanz, "Iron Lilies," 105–06.
 34. Ibid., 108–10.
 35. Vrooman and Marvin provide biographical details on many of the blacksmiths in *Iron Spirits*, 49–102.
 36. The form types have been categorized by geographer Lewis R. Marquardt, who also explains the fabrication process in some detail. Marquardt, "Eiserne Kreuze."
 37. Feser, "From Within," 39.
 38. The types were often illustrated in catalogs. Two examples are: *Iron Grave Crosses* (Milwaukee: Badger Wire and Iron Works, 1920), and *Cast Iron Crosses* (Sheboygan, WI: Kohler, Hayssen and Stehn, 1901).
 39. Marquardt cites the Bismarck Foundry for Emmons County cemeteries in "Eiserne Kreuze," 11. "Notice to Announce Change of Concern Name to Modern Machine Works," *Bismarck Tribune*, January 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 1922; Christopher Bjorke, "Still Modern After All These Years," *Bismarck Tribune*, January 8, 2011.
 40. Klobberdanz, "Iron Lilies," 107. The St. Vincent Cemetery has Bismarck Foundry crosses for Yantzer family members who died in 1898, well before the establishment of the foundry. The cemetery also has almost identical cast-iron crosses for members of the Gress family who died between 1913 and 1916.
 41. Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 61 (September 1971): 501–09, and Timothy G. Anderson, "Czech-Catholic Cemeteries in East Central Texas," *Material Culture* 25 (Fall 1993): 1–18, categorize the types of stone monuments found in cemeteries in Oregon and Texas. The obelisk is a vertical shaft of marble that rises about 58 inches to a pyramidal point. The cross-vault obelisk is a marble spire about 58 inches high, topped by a cross-vaulted "roof." The tablet, usually of marble, has a rounded arch top, with an average height of about 28 inches. The pulpit is of marble or granite, usually about 30 inches high, and resembles a pulpit with an inscription on the slanting surface. The block is of granite and tabular in form, about 24 inches high, 24 inches wide, and 6 inches deep. The forms are applicable to contemporary cemeteries in North Dakota.
 42. Francaviglia, "The Cemetery," 502–03.
 43. Rath, *Black Sea Germans*, 249–50.
 44. Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 32–34, 45–46. The deed transfer lists the name as "Frohlich."
 45. Douglas A. Wick, *North Dakota Place Names* (Bismarck, ND: Sweetgrass Communications, 1988); Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 36. A photo of the store building and telephone exchange and the telephone subscriber list is illustrated on page 31.
 46. Pfaller records the construction of the new rectory in *Catholic Church*, 116. The rectory was still standing in 2010, when the Bismarck Diocese published a centennial history, *Perseverance in Faith*. The Verein Hall was still standing in 1996. Neither building is there now.
 47. Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 80–81. The Crown Butte (Stein) Cemetery and St. Vincent's Cemetery are recorded in *Cemeteries and Burial Sites of Morton County, North Dakota* (Mandan, ND: Morton County Historical Society, 1978), and George L. Barron, *Most Cemeteries of Morton County* (Bismarck, ND: Bismarck Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society, 2002).
 48. The actual number of recorded graves varies with the source consulted. One early record is listed in Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 80–81. A typewritten transcription is given in Thomas J. (Scheffer) Hoffman, *The German Catholic Settlers in Morton County, North Dakota*, (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1993). The most recent records are available through Findagrave.com, which records 284 graves in the St. Vincent Cemetery; 90 percent of the grave sites are photographed. The names through Findagrave.com do not always correspond with those recorded in other sources.
 49. The wrought-iron crosses are recorded in Thomas D. Isern and Kevin Nesemeier, St. Vincent Cemetery, 16 November 1998, NDCRS Site Form 32 MO 186, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, SHSND, Bismarck.
 50. For more on Stebner see Isern and Nesemeier, *Wrought Iron Cross Cemeteries*, 29–30.
 51. Since the foundry was not established until 1914, the crosses must have been later replacements for early markers, probably of wood.
 52. See Francaviglia, "The Cemetery," and Anderson, "Czech-Catholic Cemeteries."
 53. See "Saint Vincent Church Cemetery, Morton County, North Dakota, USA," accessed August 15, 2017, <https://findagrave.com/>.
 54. Schlosser, Boehm, and Fried, *A Century at Crown Butte*, 195.
 55. The name of the church is listed as St. Anthony in *Oliver County 1885–1985* (Center, ND: Oliver County Historical Society, 1985), 383, and in Gross and Sitte, *Perseverance in Faith*. Pfaller, *Catholic Church*, 50, lists it as St. Anthony of Padua as a mission of Crown Butte.
 56. Kautzman's landholdings are depicted in the 1917 *Morton County Plat Map* and the 1917 *Oliver County Plat Map*, as well as listed in the *Directory of Mandan, North Dakota, including Morton and Grant Counties* (Norfolk, NE: Kreiter Directory Company, 1915, 1917). *Oliver County*, 383, has a photograph of congregants posed by the side of the church building.
 57. The cemetery was recorded by Cecilia Albers, "Oliver County Cemeteries," typescript, 2002?, North Dakota State Archives, SHSND, Bismarck. She names ninety-eight burials. The most recent records are available through Findagrave.com, which records ninety graves in the Rosebud Cemetery; 74 percent of the grave sites are photographed. The names do not always correspond with those recorded by Albers. "Rosebud Catholic Cemetery, Oliver County, North Dakota, USA," accessed August 15, 2017, <https://findagrave.com/>.
 58. The wrought-iron crosses and the shrine cross are recorded in Thomas D. Isern and Kevin Nesemeier, Rosebud Catholic Cemetery, 13 October 1999, NDCRS Site Form 32 OL 352, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, SHSND, Bismarck. For Bobb see Isern and Nesemeier, *Wrought Iron Cross Cemeteries*, 21. For stone monument forms see Francaviglia, "The Cemetery as Evolving Cultural Landscape," and Anderson, "Czech-Catholic Cemeteries."
 59. Frank Sporleder's name is listed in Barron, *Most Cemeteries of Morton County*, 225, but is not recorded in Findagrave.com. "F. Sporleder" is inscribed on the monument for Ellen Sporleder, as observed in the field.
 60. *To God Alone Be Glory*, 19–25. *New Salem, North Dakota, 1883–1983* (New Salem, ND: New Salem Journal, 1983), 97–99, discusses the establishment of the Rosebud Post Office and the Rosebud Creamery. Morton County directories list William Klein as the pastor of the Lutheran Church in Rosebud in the 1910s, but this is not supported by the church records. Klein was the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Churchtown (Oliver County). *Directory of Mandan, North Dakota* (1912, 1915, 1917); *Plat Map of Morton County*.
 61. The cemetery is recorded in *Cemeteries and Burial Sites of Morton County*, and Barron, *Most Cemeteries of Morton County*, 225, which lists thirty-eight named graves and five unmarked graves. Findagrave.com lists thirty-two burials; 90 percent are photographed. Barron lists one "iron cross" without a name. The name of Mina Wolf-Golde is now placed on the iron cross.
 62. Vrooman and Marvin, *Iron Spirits*, 76.
 63. Isern and Nesemeier, *Wrought Iron Cross Cemeteries*, 21.
 64. Vrooman and Marvin, *Iron Spirits*, 74.
 65. Isern and Nesemeier, *Wrought Iron Cross Cemeteries*, 29–30.

FROM THE COLLECTIONS

WWI North Dakota Soldiers Write Home

Joseph Walter Plunkett (1892–1981) grew up in Sheldon, North Dakota, and enlisted in the American Expeditionary Forces on August 11, 1917, at age twenty-four. He served in France with the 116th Aero Squadron as a transportation supervisor. The Joseph Walter (J. W.) ("Punk") Plunkett manuscript collection housed in the State Archives comprises dozens of letters, a transcript of Plunkett's diary in France, photographs, news clippings, and other publications. The collection is a wonderful example of the life of a small-town North Dakotan serving overseas during World War I.

In a September 1, 1918, letter to his sister Eva, Plunkett asks about his family's thoughts on the "outlook of this war" and mentions the tremendous fights at Château-Thierry and Belleau Wood, the first major actions Americans participated in during the war. He goes on to predict the war will go well for the Allies, writing, "The Germans remind me of a kid who has played hookey and is afraid to go back to school for fear he will get tanned. They know they are beaten but they are afraid to go home and tell the folks." While he may not have known the war would conclude in a couple of months, Plunkett makes clear the Germans were not winning and seems to stress the importance of the American contribution to the eventual Allied victory.

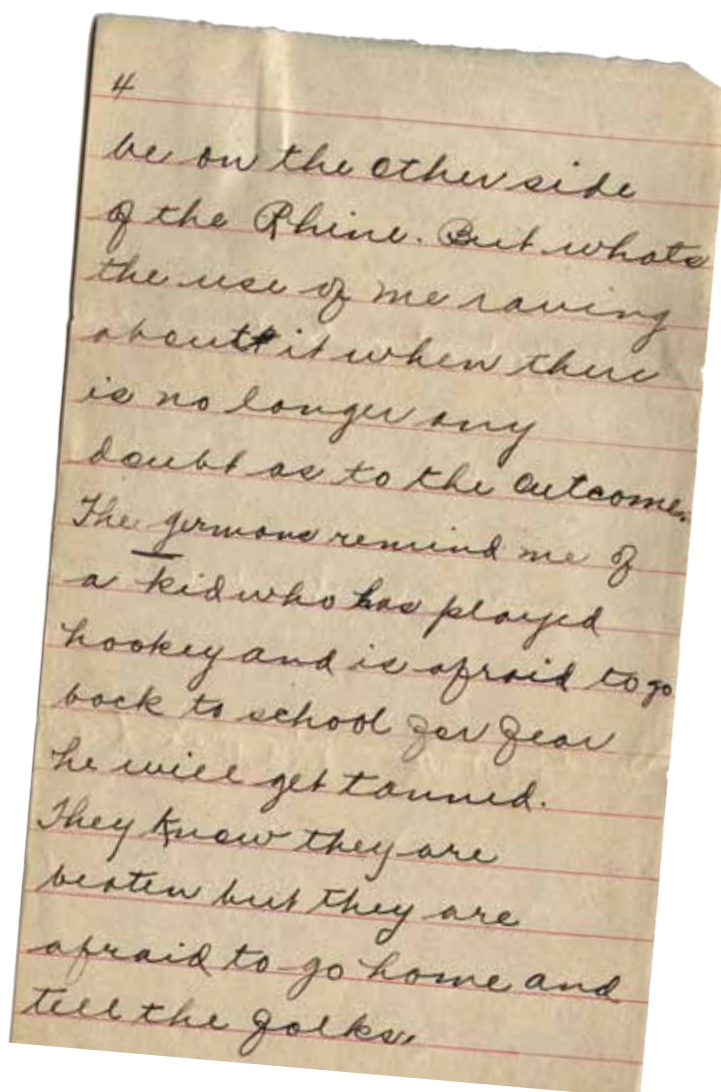
Plunkett's letter is one of hundreds from World War I soldiers available to researchers at the State Archives. Read more about "Letters from 'Over There'" on the State Historical Society blog at blog.statemuseum.nd.gov.

*Daniel Sauerwein, reference specialist,
State Archives*

A page of a letter from J. W. Plunkett to his sister Eva, dated September 1, 1918.
SHSND SA 11086-00359



Joseph Walter Plunkett (far right) with Sergeant Fay Skheeler and Sergeant Fred Roberts. A handwritten caption describes Plunkett as "the baby of the Plunkett family." SHSND SA 11086-00491



Welk Homestead Tells German-Russian Agriculture Story

The homestead of German-Russian immigrants Ludwig and Christina Schwan Welk near Strasburg in Emmons County is notable not only as the birthplace of bandleader Lawrence Welk, but also because it typifies a German-Russian farm at the turn of the twentieth century. As documented at this state historic site, the contributions of German-Russians to North Dakota agriculture still have an impact today.

From the late 1890s to the early 1900s, a wheat variety known as Turkey Red was the main crop grown in south-central North Dakota. It has been argued that all winter wheats in the United States and Canada harken back to Turkey Red in pedigree. German-Russians excelled at dryland farming practices in the United States and successfully cultivated Turkey Red, which they brought from South Russia.



Until 1908, the closest rail shipping point to the homestead for this wheat was Eureka, South Dakota, fifty miles away across open prairie. In 1892, Eureka shipped out more wheat than anywhere else in the world. From the Welks' and other nearby homesteads, the grain harvest would be collected, weighed, and consolidated for transport by horse-drawn wagons to market or prepared for sale locally.



Local buyers purchased from the Welk family directly. Pencil marks are found grouped on one wall in the granary/buggy house at the Welk site. Each group or cluster represents a customer, and each hash mark documents the purchase of a quantity of grain. There are no names near the hash marks, and some have numerical figures by them, showing the math right there on the wall.

The protection and preservation of buildings, documents, and even simple pencil marks on a wall can help us understand how our ancestors adapted to new environments and shaped North Dakota's agriculture.

Diane Rogness, former historic sites manager—south region, Archaeology & Historic Preservation Division, and Erik Holland, curator of education, Communications & Education Division

Top right: Ludwig and Christina Welk with their family in 1904 outside the Welk Homestead near Strasburg, now a state historic site. Baby Lawrence is seated on his mother's lap. SHSND SA 01065-00001

Middle right: Pencil hash marks have been preserved on the interior wall of the Welk Homestead State Historic Site granary/buggy house. Each buyer knew his or her place on the wall.

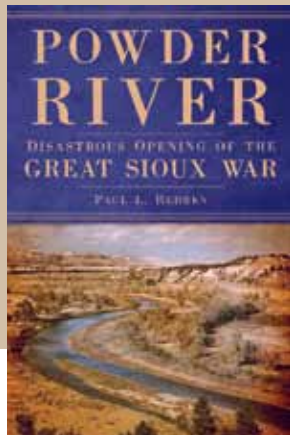
Right: The Welk family would have used a scale similar to this one to weigh bushels of wheat and other grain. SHSND Instructional Collection



BOOK Reviews

Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War

Paul L. Hedren. Norman:
University of Oklahoma Press,
2016. xx + 452 pp. \$34.95
(hardcover). Maps, illustrations,
appendices, notes, bibliography,
index.



The US Army campaign against American Indians in 1876, although ambitious, was not its most successful. A government edict told Indians living in the “unceded territory” of the Powder River country of present-day Wyoming and Montana to report to reservations by January 31, 1876. Several bands of Lakota and Cheyenne failed to do so. Military expeditions were sent to the region. Ultimately more federal troops were gathered than any time since the Civil War. On March 17, a forty-below-zero day, a battalion under Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds struck a large village of Cheyenne under Chiefs Old Bear, Little Wolf, and Two Moon and a few Lakota allies. Reynolds captured the village, burned provisions, and captured the horse herd. This became known as the Battle of Powder River. The Cheyenne recaptured about five hundred of their seven hundred horses on March 18. The botched campaign—considered a failure—inspired further American Indian resistance on the northern plains and touched off the Great Sioux War that featured the Battle of Little Bighorn in June 1876.

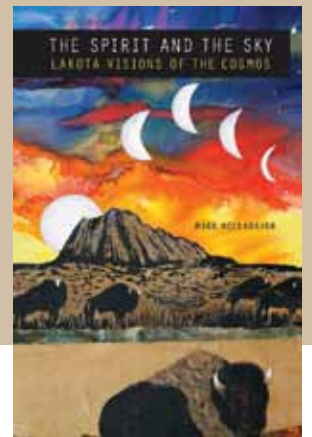
Paul L. Hedren, a retired National Park Service superintendent and one of the foremost historians of the Great Sioux War, admirably examines and interprets this significant campaign. His purpose is to present all sides of this significant event. *Powder River: Disastrous Opening of the Great Sioux War* is the most thorough history of the Powder River action and perhaps Hedren’s finest work to date. It revises and replaces J. W. Vaughn’s *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (1961) as the most comprehensive secondary interpretive source on the campaign—its origins, the battle, and its aftermath. Hedren, in this 452-page work, comprehensively considers both military and American Indian viewpoints by utilizing a plethora of military records, including the transcripts of the Reynolds court martial and other original accounts and Indian reminiscences. The story of Old Bear is especially impressive. But the main beauty of the book is the many stories of the officers’ and soldiers’ lives and

legacies. Although this reviewer would have enjoyed a bit more linkage to the remainder of the Great Sioux War in examining the effects of the Bighorn campaign, and perhaps a few epithets of how modern Cheyennes view this important episode, *Powder River: Disastrous Opening to the Great Sioux War* should be considered the definitive history of this event for years to come. It is a welcome addition to the libraries of all serious American Indian Wars scholars and history buffs alike.

John H. Monnett is professor of history emeritus at Metropolitan State University of Denver and an award-winning author.

The Spirit and the Sky: Lakota Visions of the Cosmos

Mark Hollabaugh. Lincoln:
University of Nebraska Press,
2017. xvii + 254 pp. \$50.00
(hardcover). Illustrations, tables,
appendix, notes, bibliography,
index.



In testimony presented to physician-anthropologist James R. Walker on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1903, Oglala shaman Ringing Shield said the stars have “nothing to do with mankind. . . . It is not good to talk about them.” Despite Ringing Shield’s admonition, his full statement ironically included a considerable amount of enticing ethnographic information on how Lakotas of his day viewed the stars: they are *wakan* (mysteriously sacred); they are evil since they hide from the sun; “the seven stars” served as the model for the seven council fires; other stars dance in a circle around the one that does not move; there is one star for evening and one star for morning; no medicine can be made to the stars; there are many stories about the stars; and although holy men might know about the stars, the people should not (180–81).

In his book *The Spirit and the Sky*, physicist and astronomer Mark Hollabaugh sets aside Ringing Shield’s warning and attempts to construct a coherent picture of how Lakotas viewed the stars and other astronomical phenomena from the variety of recorded and graphic evidence available. This is a project that has had few precursors, the most notable exceptions being Ronald Goodman’s *Lakota Star Knowledge* (1992), Linea Sundstrom’s more circumspect article “Mirror of Heaven:

Cross-Cultural Transference of the Sacred Geography of the Black Hills” (1996), and a recent video disc, again titled *Lakota Star Knowledge*, produced by the Center for American Indian Studies and Native Studies (2014).

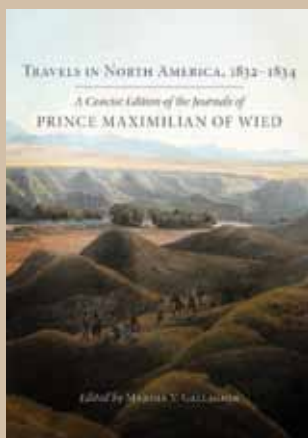
Hollabaugh begins his book by providing readers with quick tutorials on pre-reservation Lakota history, culture, and spirituality, and some basic concepts of Western astronomy. It is the following eight chapters, however, that consider how the Lakota interpreted and applied their knowledge of particular celestial phenomena that will be of particular interest to students of Lakota culture. These sections include accounts of the stars, constellations, the sun and moon, eclipses, and the aurora borealis. Amid these discussions the author also considers Lakota astronomy in relationship to Lakota time consciousness and their Sun Dance. He concludes with a brief analysis of contemporary Lakota astronomy and a final chapter that compares Lakota and Western cosmology.

Both beginning and experienced students in Lakota studies will find *The Spirit and the Sky* worthwhile reading. It will be of special importance for those wishing to pursue further research in Lakota ethnoastronomy. What is most valuable about this work, however, is the author’s irenic attitude toward Western and Lakota astronomy. He argues that these two ways of seeking knowledge of the universe achieve compatibility not through their commonalities but their differences, “from their very different perspectives and by asking very different questions” (178).

Harvey Markowitz is associate professor in the sociology-anthropology department at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

Travels in North America, 1832–1834: A Concise Edition of the Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied

Marsha V. Gallagher, ed.; translated by William J. Orr, Paul Schach, and Dieter Karch. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. xlv + 624 pp. \$34.95 (hardcover). Map, illustrations, list of flora and fauna, notes, bibliography, index.



Nineteenth-century exploration narratives, as socioeconomic, environmental, and travel history, make valuable contributions to the documentary record and Western Americana when expertly crafted and edited.

Historian Gary E. Moulton’s 2003 abridged edition of *The Lewis and Clark Journals* from the Corps of Discovery expedition is a ready example. The concise edition of *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied (NAJ)* edited by Marsha V. Gallagher is another. Whittling down multi-volume prose proved no easy feat in either instance for these seasoned editors. Gallagher worked on the University of Oklahoma Press’s *NAJ* three-volume set that appeared in 2008, 2010, and 2012. She notes the concise edition “gives a good overview and understanding of where Maximilian went in North America, what he saw, and what he thought was significant about both” (xiii).

Socioeconomic considerations, particularly the fur trade, float just below the surface in Maximilian’s Missouri River itinerary. Consider contemporary Joshua Pilcher’s 1831 “Letter to Secretary of War Regarding the Present State of the Fur Trade” in the context of Maximilian’s travels commencing a year later. Pilcher recognized for the valley of the Columbia River, “the power which possesses it will also command the navigation and commerce of the Pacific ocean.” Later, Maximilian wrote this about Pilcher’s fur-trading operation on his downriver descent, May 12, 1834: “The store had been moved. It is now on the upper floor, where we found a significant supply of pelts and skins, among them 24,000 muskrats, the packs [neatly] tied together in squares. Many beaver pelts and buffalo robes were also stacked there” (464–65).

Environmental and natural history of the Missouri River valley figure prominently in the *NAJ*. Gallagher states, “Geographical observations are a key element of any travel account” (xiii). Maximilian’s many contributions to natural history are apparent and appear throughout the volume; especially of note was his sojourn at Fort Clark Trading Post. The cultural history of Native peoples, specifically the Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras, that Maximilian encountered during his brief stay is worthy of a separate review.

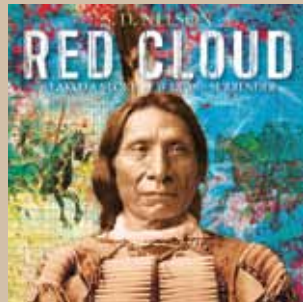
Prince Maximilian and artist companion Karl Bodmer’s link or tie to travel history have proven to be significant and long term. A 2017 German television documentary, *Ein Prinz unter Indianern: Die Reisen des Maximilian zu Wied*, exemplifies the adoration and interest in the pair’s steamboat trek to the Upper Missouri country for twenty-first century audiences in Europe and beyond. Maximilian had reported on July 10, 1833: “only in the [past] three years has anyone tried steamboats for this purpose” (225). The subtitle of William E. Lass’s 2008 comprehensive text, *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature’s Highway, 1819–1935*, echoes much the same sentiment.

Lastly, thirty-two color plate reproductions (thirty-one landscapes and portraits by Bodmer) accompany this handsome volume that belongs on the bookshelf of anyone interested in Western Americana. It is a bargain in every sense of the word—Gallagher and the entire *NAJ* project team are to be commended on a job well done.

Paul R. Picha is chief archaeologist at the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Red Cloud: A Lakota Story of War and Surrender

S. D. Nelson. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2017. 56 pp. \$19.95 (hardcover). Illustrations, notes, bibliography.



Red Cloud, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull are names with which many Americans are familiar. However, most would be unable to identify much, if anything, about these men. S. D. Nelson, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, has employed his tremendous literary and artistic skills to tell their stories.

Red Cloud: A Lakota Story of War and Surrender completes the triad of Nelson's books that include two other Lakota chiefs who were Red Cloud's contemporaries, and sometimes, adversaries. *Crazy Horse's Vision* (written by Joseph Bruchac) and *Sitting Bull: Lakota Warrior and Defender of His People*, along with *Red Cloud*, will provide readers of all ages with much needed information about these nineteenth-century leaders. They were all great warriors who resisted the US government's plans for their nation. But while Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull continued their resistance for their entire lives, Red Cloud came to the controversial conclusion that his people would be destroyed unless they followed the government's plan to live on a reservation.

Nelson takes on the daunting task of writing in the first person about a man who, like most American Indians of the time, left few of his own words. This point of view brings a vitality to the story that would be missing if it were third-person narration. The reader learns at the outset about the background of the Lakota people and their relationship to the land and other tribes. The author introduces Wakan Tanka, the "Great Mystery," which is vital to understanding the Lakota culture and religion. Quotes by Native people and whites are used in the text, and teachers could use these to reinforce the concept of primary and secondary sources.

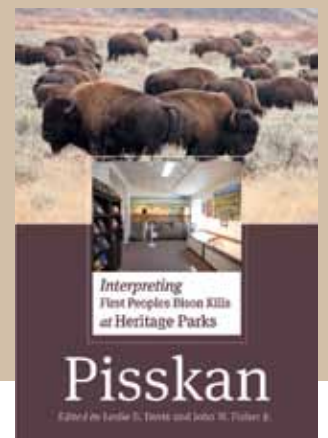
One of the great strengths of this book is Nelson's ledger-style illustrations. Young people will find these drawings to be very accessible, and a teacher might encourage students to try the style by illustrating some of the events from the timeline in the book. The history of ledger art isn't explained but can be easily found by doing online research. The book also includes period photographs.

Nelson's dedication for this book reads, "For the strong-hearted athletes on the Pine Ridge Reservation—Ho-ka hey! Lace up your shoes and get in the game. Now is your time in the sun." At the book's conclusion, Nelson's Red Cloud admonishes, "The story of my people is not finished. . . . We remain warriors, for living in the world requires strong hearts. We are not injured victims of the past." In my experience, students are very interested in learning about the history of American Indians and are outraged at the treatment they received from the US government. But too often non-Native people think of American Indians in the past tense. I hope that Nelson's words will serve not only to educate readers about Red Cloud and Lakota history, but also to remind them that American Indians continue to be an integral and vital force in our country.

Patricia Bauer is an author, former interpreter with Historic Fort Snelling, and a retired middle school teacher.

Pisskan: Interpreting First Peoples Bison Kills at Heritage Parks

Leslie B. Davis and John W. Fisher Jr., eds. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016. xxiv + 262 pp. \$50.00 (paperback). Maps, illustrations, charts, tables, bibliography, index.



Bison are an icon of the American West, so archaeological sites where large numbers of bison were procured and processed by Native Americans occupy a niche in the American imagination that borders on the mythical. This book with the odd name (*Pis'kun* is a Piikani Blackfeet term for the "deep blood kettles" resulting from bison processing) examines the intricate relationships between investigation and public interpretation in seven bison mass death sites in the Great Plains.

The book clearly has two main purposes—disseminate information about a series of key bison kill sites, and

describe the site-specific ways that they engage visitors. Almost all the authors are scientists who have spent a significant amount of time and energy determining how to provide valuable visitor experiences.

The quality of the scholarship is maintained at a relatively high level throughout the book; however, two chapters are truly exceptional. The history of research, interpretation, and management at the Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump by Jack Brink chronicles the origins and development of this United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site in southern Alberta, Canada. He discusses both the extensive archaeological research and museum development in depth, as well as underscoring the need to constantly evaluate and adjust visitor experiences and audience engagement. Brink also illustrates the value in maintaining a long-term conversation with Native groups about the intellectual direction of the institution.

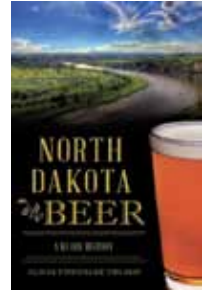
The second is one of two chapters about the Hudson Meng bison bonebed in northwestern Nebraska. Larry Todd outlines a fresh, inquiry-based perspective on audience engagement that would resonate with educators. Hudson Meng is unique among the sites described in this volume for both its size and complexity. Todd used this complexity, along with a relatively unstructured “tour” concept, to create a situation where visitors guide the conversation with archaeologists, ultimately reaching their own conclusions about what happened at the site.

This is a long-awaited collection of papers that began as a 1995 symposium on bison bonebeds and public engagement at the Plains Anthropological Conference in Laramie, Wyoming. The papers have been updated and honed into a collection of high-quality pieces. Each paper has evolved into a series of almost elegant essays on the interplay between science, science communication, and the two-way street between a public institution (e.g., a museum or visitor center) and its audience. As a zooarchaeologist who has spent many years working with materials from large bison sites, I found this book a fascinating romp through a series of classic, and sometimes controversial, bison sites. However, the museum curator in me was equally interested in reading about the unique trajectory of information to interpretation, and finally public engagement, for each of these localities. It is as important that archaeologists think about how their research engages the public as it is to perform the research itself. This book will be of interest to archaeologists who are familiar with these sites, but also to the museum professionals and historians who are perpetually trying engage the public in new and different ways.

Chris Widga is head curator at the East Tennessee Museum of Natural History & Gray Fossil site at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Bookmarks

North Dakota Beer: A Heady History. Alicia Underlee Nelson. Charleston, SC: American Palate, 2017. 143 pp. \$21.99 (paperback). Maps, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index.



West Fargo journalist and photographer Alicia Underlee Nelson traces North Dakota’s journey from a dry state to a craft beer hub in this local history of beer, brewers, and breweries. From early ale brewed at Fort Totten to blind pigs during Prohibition to the recent craft brewing renaissance, this heady history covers more than two centuries of North Dakota beer.

North Dakota Nurses Over There 1917–1919. Grace E. F. Holmes, MD. American Legion Auxiliary, Department of North Dakota, 2017. 292 pp. \$35.95 (paperback). Notes, bibliography, nurse roster index.



Grace Holmes, MD, professor of pediatrics and preventive medicine emerita at University of Kansas Medical Center, compiled firsthand accounts of World War I nurses from North Dakota. The book draws upon stories recorded in 1934–35 by the Past Presidents’ Parley of the American Legion Auxiliary of the Department of North Dakota, now housed in the State Archives.

The Prairie Post Office: Enlarging the Common Life in Rural North Dakota.

K. Amy Phillips and Steven R. Bolduc. Fargo: North Dakota State University Press, 2017. xxi + 102 pp. \$30.00 (paperback). Map, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index.



In this new release from NDSU Press, authors Amy Phillips and Steven Bolduc explore the contemporary role of post offices in North Dakota through interviews with postmasters and residents. The book includes more than one hundred photographs by Wayne Gudmundson and a history of the northern Dakota Territory/North Dakota rural postal service by Kevin Carvell.



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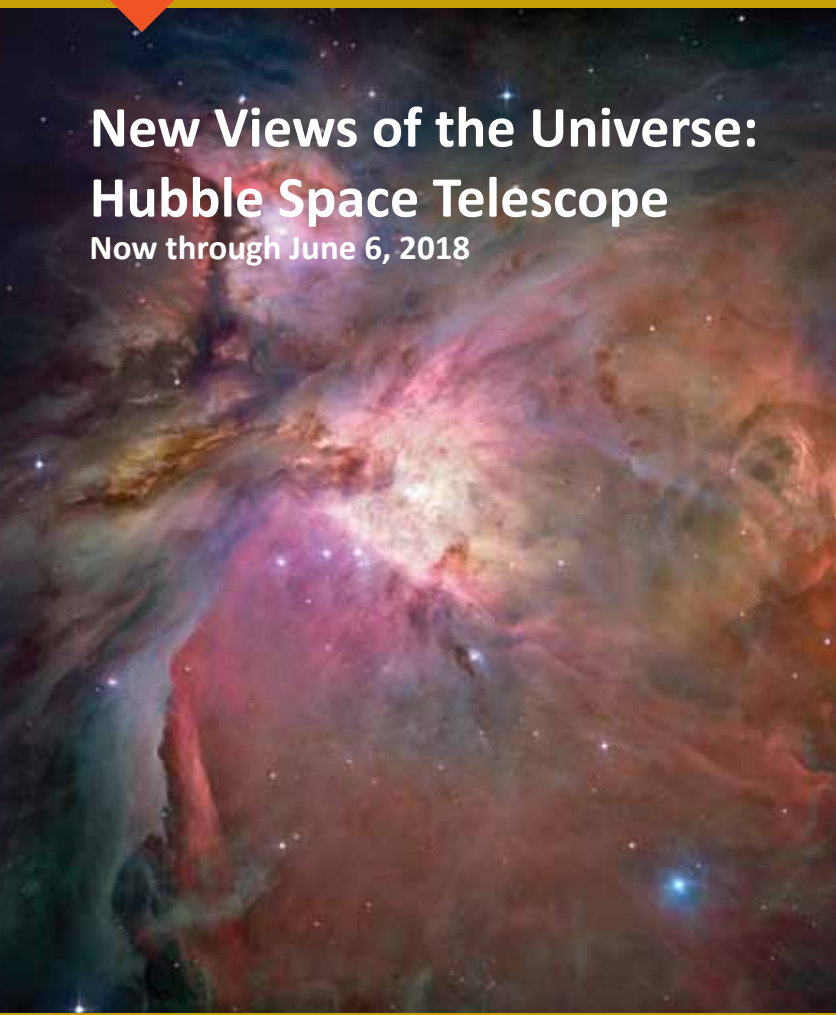
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March 25, 2018

...Though
we may roam.
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home.
— John Howard Payne, 1823



See How Building a House from the Ground Up Became a Reality. 1911. The National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by William P. Skiffington.



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