



# Chronicle Unserer Leute

Vol 24, Issue 4

July/August 2003

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is an international organization dedicated to the discovery, collection, preservation, and the dissemination of information related to the history, cultural heritage, and genealogy of Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants.

The *Chronicle Unserer Leute* (Chronicle of Our People) is published by-monthly by the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR.

Oregon Chapter website:  
[ahsgr.org/orportla.html](http://ahsgr.org/orportla.html)

Germans from Russia in  
Portland website:  
[germans-russia-pdx.com](http://germans-russia-pdx.com)

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## President's Message

Our library and research center will be of additional help to all as the travelers to Germany have returned with maps to donate that are much more detailed than those presently there.

Howard Bauer has compiled a list of census lists, village plots, and reference material we need to aid visitors to the library when researching. Lois Klaus will pick these items up at convention time and save us postage and handling charges from Lincoln, Nebraska.

How fortunate we are to benefit from the dedication of members who don't simply pay their dues as I did for years. I was intensely interested, but family responsibilities, work priorities, and local needs kept me from what would have been most rewarding. My parents kept me informed as to what was taking place.

I never dreamed that in the span of a couple of decades so many beloved family members and friends would leave us. How will we replace them?

Headquarters is worried as they should be. I don't feel that the sky is falling. If what I have in mind works to increase our membership, the younger groups will be able to finish what we have started. And there will be a place to go for research on family history for our descendants who will be vaguely aware of our GR heritage and the existence of family trees and historical material on that portion of their heritage.

The very existence of the Palatine's to America group and the Germanna Society attests to the fact that there are enough "curious genes" in the human makeup to ensure searchers for the facts.

These two societies have some members whose ancestors arrived on our shores in the 1600's and 1700's from the same areas ours left to go to Russia.

Reading their literature becomes intriguing when a fact I knew about George Washington's dentist being named Greenwood is enlarged upon, and I found Greenwood is derived from Gruenwald or Grunewald originating in the same dorfs that ours did.

Names have been anglicised and when one sees some of the results it makes me sad. I have always been proud of being German ethnically. When I saw how our GR's measured up to other groups, I was still proud.

I knew my German people--humble and God-fearing--were incapable of the excesses of the Nazi regimes in Germany.

There was nothing in my up-bringing or that of my peers to make bullies out of us. Our aggressiveness was channeled into sports, or on most occasions we attacked our work.

When one is busy, time flies! One doesn't watch the clock!

*(continued on page 2)*

*President's Message (cont'd)*

The proof, or what I determined to be the truth, is verified by our friends among the myriad ethnic groups we grew up with from the surrounding area: Scandinavians, Greeks, Irish, English, Jewish and others. We had no gang activity.

Don't become negative as to the future of AHSGR. The material we have gathered and are in the process of gathering will be of sufficient interest to generate future membership.

If any matters arise requiring a meeting, we will call one. Our next scheduled function is the picnic at the Miller Farm in Felida, Washington on the 9th of August. That is Saturday--don't forget. We start at Noon!

*Dr. Raymond P. Koch*

President, Oregon Chapter of AHSGR

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(published January 21, 2003,  
by *Ancestry Daily News*)

*Home Sweet Home  
in the Nineteenth Century*

by **Karen Frisch**

Few of us picture the comforts of home without a TV, a well-stocked refrigerator, and a comfortable sofa with an afghan for chilly evenings. Our ancestors' homes reflected a different lifestyle. Their home sweet home often wasn't even theirs. Those in cities often rented space in a boardinghouse or tenement.

They would have loved it if food were as easily available as it is for us today. If they were lucky, summer's harvest of fruits and vegetables would last through winter. Many women spent hours preserving and canning in oppressive kitchens at summer's end without air conditioning.

A simple afghan wouldn't do. Their fireplace or stove had to be stoked continuously so the family wouldn't be without heat on cold winter nights. Wood or coal had to be hauled indoors for the stove. During the

*Home Sweet Home in the Nineteenth Century (cont'd)*  
second half of the century the coal furnace in the cellar had to be tended regularly for heat to be maintained.

Great-great-great-grandma didn't linger over her cold bath with the pitcher and washbasin she kept in her bedroom. The set included a cup to brush her teeth and chamber pot to relieve herself if she woke during the night. It wasn't until a generation later or more that her daughter was able to enjoy the luxury of a bathtub in her home.

Average families who had to be careful how much water they used, would drag a large tin tub into the kitchen. The tub would be filled with water heated on the stove or fireplace. All family members would take turns bathing in it.

Late in the century many updated homes had a gaslight. Most had kerosene lamps, which were welcomed because they were so much safer than candles. It wasn't until the last decades of the 19th century that people in some areas began to enjoy the conveniences like the telephone, the phonograph, and electricity.

Families had to economize on space. Before the days of walk-in closets clothes were hung in a wardrobe. Often, the walls of the home were decorated with women's handiwork. From needlepoint to embroidery, hangings featured mottoes or floral designs stitched with desirable virtues. The sentimental Victorian woman wove the hair of family members into framed pictures as well as jewelry.

Life for the pioneers who chose the frontier was far more rugged. These hardy, self-reliant individuals lived in more rustic conditions than their Eastern counterparts. The new towns of the West had none of the comforts of established Eastern cities. Homes had dirt floors or planking if they had any money. Sometimes the family slept together on a mattress of straw.

Many Western mothers were not only preserving fruits and vegetables but also smoking and drying meat their husbands brought home. The store in rural Oklahoma

*(continued on page 3)*

*Home Sweet Home in the Nineteenth Century (cont'd)*  
where Great-great-grandma shopped probably did not sell ready-made clothing but rather cotton and other fabrics she could purchase to sew her family's wardrobe.

Unless the family was wealthy enough to hire outside help, children were expected to help with the household chores that were so plentiful during their childhood. Boys were given the dirty, more physical tasks such as cleaning ash from the wood stove, stoking the coal furnace, or pumping water outdoors.

Girls were expected to perform the typically domestic tasks such as trimming the wicks and cleaning the chimneys of lamps. They also made beds, aired the sheets, and cared for younger children--tasks that prepared them for their future roles as mothers.

*[http://www.mabrayne.supanet.com/parson\\_woodforde\\_society.htm](http://www.mabrayne.supanet.com/parson_woodforde_society.htm)*

*Karen Frisch has spent years getting lost in cemeteries. With a background in Victorian studies, teaching, and writing, she has traced her lineage back thirty generations. Her interest in genealogy began as a child when her grandmother gave her a collection of old photographs from Scotland.*

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### PASTOR SCHEIERMANN FROM SARATOV, RUSSIA

Many of our chapter members missed a memorable experience by not attending a program by Pastor Horst Gutsche who presented Pastor Alexander Scheiermann from Saratov, Russia. I was still recuperating from surgery and we were pleased that Pastor Laughlin, of Rivercrest Church, stepped forward and made arrangements to host this luncheon.

Pastor Scheiermann and Pastor Gutsche were on a fund-raising tour for Pastor Scheiermann's work as the Lutheran Missionary in Saratov, Russia where he has a congregation and is attempting to enlarge the small pockets of worship in the former German villages.

*Pastor Scheiermann from Saratov, Russia (cont'd)*

His work is supported by the German Lutheran Church on a much smaller scale than that of two other districts, and he needs help.

He is a descendant of the Yagodnoya Polyana Schiermann clan. Born in Russia, he learned to speak Hoch-Deutsch and attend divinity school after the family relocated to Germany.

Pastor Laughlin, of the Rivercrest Community Church heard of our inability to get someone to head up publicity and host a function for them and graciously offered Rivercrest Church as the host group.

What a wonderful experience it was for those who attended!

Pastor Scheiermann spoke in German and Pastor Gutsche translated his presentation which included slides and memorable scenes of the villages, meetings, churches, and his family.

The offering at our meeting was generous for the size of the group. A later presentation that same evening at the Zion Lutheran Church in Portland's west side was not as well attended.

Pastor Gutsche has informed me that the total offering after expenses at their stops in Canada, Eastern and Western Washington, and in Portland will be \$14,000.00.

This amount will cover a \$4,000.00 deficit from last year for the Saratov Parish, and their current expenses will be covered for this year.

Your President,

*Dr. Raymond P. Koch*

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*60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary!*

**Ezra and Hanni Koch** celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary in May 2003. Congratulations to you both!



COME JOIN US AT  
**THE ANNUAL PICNIC**  
OF THE OREGON CHAPTER OF AHSGR

DATE: **SATURDAY - AUGUST 9, 2003**  
TIME: **12:00 TO 4:00 PM**  
PLACE: **The MILLER Farm and Museum**  
**12511 NW 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**in Felida, Washington**  
(just outside of **Vancouver**)  
FOLLOW THE MAP!!!!

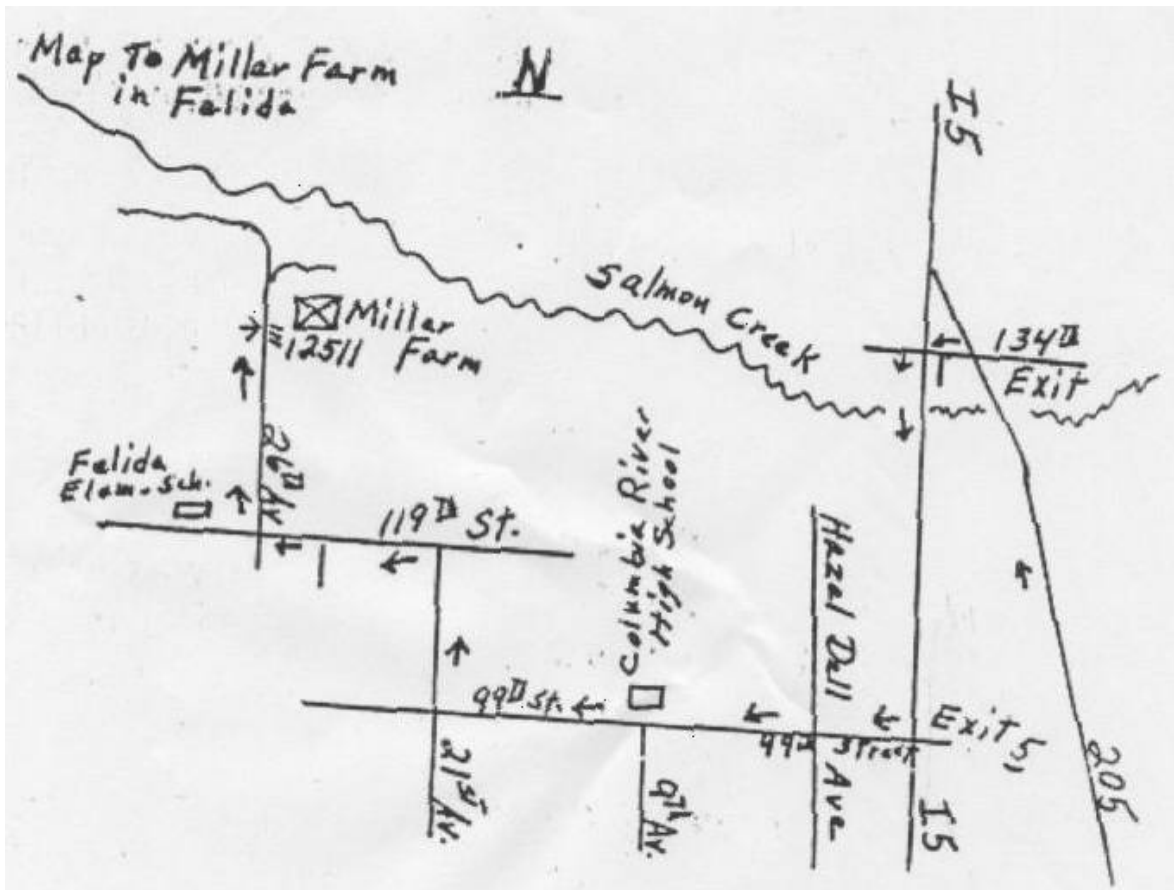
**PLEASE BRING:**  
☞ **HOT DISH, SALAD or a DESSERT**  
  
☞ **YOUR TABLE SETTING**  
  
☞ **LAWN CHAIR - SUN HAT**

WE WILL FURNISH: COFFEE - LEMONADE - SUNFLOWER SEEDS

GUESTS WELCOME!!  
COME VISIT OLD FRIENDS AND MEET NEW FRIENDS!

**WE WELCOME EARLY BIRDS AT 11:00 AM TO HELP SET UP!**

TAKE A TOUR OF THE FARM  
WATCH A VIDEO ON QUILTING  
CHALLENGE SOMEONE AT HORSESHOES



*Koch's Kolumn*  
by **Dr. Raymond P. Koch**

As this goes to the editor we are all looking forward to the Yakima Convention. What a treat it will be to see old friends, relatives and make new friends as we attend the educational presentations.

Ed and Barbara Wagner, Zane and Lela Miller and Shirley and Debbie Hurrell had a memorable two weeks in Germany. They utilized a direct flight by Lufthansa plus special introductory fares and landed in Frankfurt, rented transportation and had the experience of visiting ancestral villages and a visit with Harry and Zina Klein who guided them in the Berlin area.

Ed Wagner contacted men in the Landsmannschaft Der Russland Deutschen who are very interested in what could become a network for archive recovery, translation, and distribution in German, English, Spanish and Portuguese. We'll let the South Americans have access to the material, of course, which they translate to Spanish or Portuguese.

One-third of a century ago when AHSGR was founded we didn't dream that we could locate all that is surfacing.

We knew Emma Schwabenland Haynes had material from a church in Lubeck, Germany; we knew of the Manifesto ; we knew Art Flegel had located material in the Hoover Library at Stanford University; however, we had no vision of what would be found and is being found.

My father had explained how Germans had been short of land for centuries and had headed east to Poland, Prussia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Russia and Yugoslavia.

Plagues and wars would decimate the population in Germany temporarily, but they could not support a dense population until the industrial revolution.

What a thrill it has been to meet individuals from Russia and Germany and learn what took place since

the eighteenth century in Russia, Germany, and the Americas.

Pastor Horst Gutsche and Pastor Alexander Scheiermann treated us to a wonderful program at Rivercrest Community Church on the present status of the Lutheran Church in Saratov and the area.

Pastor Scheiermann has a difficult task as there are relatively few Germans who have returned to the area that remain there. Pastor Scheiermann is fluent in Russian and German ; he's a vigorous 36 years of age; he's a wonderfully personable young man.

With my surgery hindering my ability to generate publicity a lot of folks missed a wonderful program. I'm sorry to have let you down.

The travelers--the Millers, Wagners and Hurrells, brought back maps of the area of central and southern Germany with the scale that includes all of the little dorfs. They will be available in the library for your research in family history.

I love attending local sporting events made more interesting by the fact that I don't see just a Drake boy--I see Kramer's grandson; Tyler Neal has a Grandmother Roth, whose father was from the Odessa area; I see the Clark girls whose grandmother was an Osterreich; I see the Isaac boy whose great-grandfather's uncle had the grain elevator in Eureka, South Dakota; I see a Deg boy who is really one of the Degenharts from South Russia.

In short it is fun to go to the ball games, but a lot more so when the pitcher is the grandson of the Sheriff (whose mother was an Ochs from Yagodnoya Polyana) and the pitcher's grandmother was also on the city council when I was serving.

My friends, Al and Irene (Schlitt) Unsinger, have a son-in-law in McMinnville, Dr. Brian Kelly. Their grand daughters were great athletes and I am as sad as my G R friends, the Usingers, are that we never had the chance to see them compete. Their daughter, Nancy, teaches school. She was a favorite employee of mine during her junior and senior year of high school. She and Brian are an impressive couple.

*(continued on page 6)*

*Koch's Kolumn (cont'd)*

The Dalles has hosted the State All Star Baseball Game for years. It's been so great to see the Hergert boys, two generations of Fetzers, Dr. Sittner's son, and others of our group compete. I have my fingers crossed that Gabe Chase will be chosen this year from Grant High school in Portland. Hope he makes it! His great-uncle, Bob Chase, played football at Jefferson in the late 30's.

My youngest brother, Norm, has a grandson who was a valedictorian at North Bend High School this year. My niece asked me to come down to help them keep "proud" Grandpa Koch off the stage during the ceremony. They didn't need my help, he behaved. I just sat there being proud of the graduates as was every one in attendance.

We recently enjoyed the Rose Festival week in Portland. I'll bet even Victor Greb, our Royal Rosarian member for years, can't reel off the names and schools and years of our group's queens.

I can't give you all the princesses, but our girls who made Queen of Rosaria were: Queen Carolyn Hahn - 1930 ; Queen Frances Kanzler - 1932 (Washington High School); Queen Gloria Krieger - 1951 (Jefferson High School); Queen Jan Markstaller - 1954 (Washington High School); Queen Nancy Wyly Ryles - 1955 (Jefferson High School), she married a G-R.

Others could have been descended from our group, but I can only suspect a connection. For instance, this year Queen Priscilla Isaacs , from Franklin High school might be , but I don't know of a connection to any Isaak or Isaacs family I know.

It would be fun to research the newspaper files for the old courts to tally up the princesses to see how many were G-R's.

Material on our GR website amazes me. It seems people see what great work is being done and are motivated to relay material for inclusion in the websites. I would appreciate being informed of GR connected businesses such as Diesel Service Company on Swan Island as the possible topic for articles or inclusion in our website.

See you at the picnic at the Miller's Farm in Felida, WA, on August 9<sup>th</sup>. (see page 4) We can visit, chew sunflower seeds, watch a video and **EAT!**

*Raymond Koch*

**President, Oregon Chapter AHSGR**

*(taken from The Topeka Capital-Journal)*

*Jacobs:  
Look beyond beauty to truth  
of czars' reign in Russia*

By Frank Jacobs  
Special to *The Topeka Capital-Journal*,  
Topeka, Kansas - October 15, 2002

Topeka will have a grand display of artistic beauty for the next several months with the treasures of the Romanov family.

While I will pay to see the display, and heartily encourage others to do so, I will resist the temptation to gush romantically at what I am viewing. I will attempt to view the artifacts through a prism of history, which will remind me of the grandeur (for a privileged minority) of the pre-Civil War American South and pre-Revolutionary France, where Marie Antoinette was in mythology told that the masses had no bread.

Both groups had wonderful artistic endeavors. Yet the Russian Revolution (and its later brutalities), as with these other revolutions, didn't happen because of the wonderfulness of the times. The majority of Russians were not invited to participate in the revelries of Court in St. Petersburg or Moscow, except as servants, grooms, cooks and laborers. This included the Volga Germans, even though they were of a higher economic status than serfs.

W. Bruce Lincoln, in his book *War's Dark Shadow*, attempted to look at standard indicators of humanity: housing, employment, child and maternal health, life expectancy, crime and general morality in Russia of the late 19th century.

*(continue d on page 7)*

*Look beyond beauty to truth of czars' reign in Russia  
(cont'd)*

The abolishment of serfdom in 1861 led to major dislocation of the Russian population to urban centers, which was in no way addressed adequately by the government, which was collecting these fine trinkets on display before us. Emancipation made little effort to provide peasants with land and largely left them to their own devices. Their rural counterparts lived in one-room izarbys, rarely saw meat, and existed from day to day on black bread, pickled cabbage and a bit of onion. Before winter was over most would have to buy grain to survive, although Russia exported grain--grain that was paid to the regime as taxes, assuring affluence at the top (more money for fine art).

The vast majority of Russia's proletarians in the 1860s lived on the edge of destitution in wretched barracks or tenements. By the 1870s, the czars were ready to make certain the relatively prosperous German colonists could live by the same rules as the average Russian, and they reneged on the benefits offered our German ancestors in return for their colonizing the czar's frontiers.

Disease flourished. By the 1870s, St. Petersburg had the highest mortality rate of any major city in Europe. By 1909, of the 25,000 workers registered in the Moscow labor exchange, fewer than one in four found work. And those who found work were retained only as needed.

Women, children and infant health was abysmal. Pregnant women continued work at their looms and spindles even after their labor pains began. Fearful that they would lose their jobs for being absent, these mothers usually returned to the factory in no more than two or three days, carrying their newborn infants, because there was no other way to feed them.

It wasn't uncommon for mothers to work 18-hour days. Although the government had limited work at night, on Sundays, and on holidays for women, it rescinded those restrictions in April 1890 when factory owners complained, and then left such decisions to the owners.

Almost half the workers in 1,500 mills of the 1880s were children, reported one government factory inspector in charge of child labor laws. One factory had almost a 70 percent accident rate among children, many who had grown too tired or too weak to escape injury from the machines they tended. It was not unusual for these children to work more than 12 hours a day, including Sundays. Even after child labor was prohibited in 1882, factory owners continued to exploit children.

The lowest depth of existence was St Petersburg's Iama, the deepest most vicious of slums, a putrid wasteland peopled by men, women and children; the Iama, Dostoevskii's Haymarket, where people killed their fellows for a glass of raw vodka and stripped bodies of their clothing when dead, where bastard infants were rented out to beggars by whores, and police would collect the corpses to be sent to the morgue or the university laboratories, for medical students to cut up their bodies for anatomical studies.

Overstating conditions? I think not. The Revolution didn't occur because times were good. Our ancestors didn't spend two to three weeks in the steerage belly of a ship crossing the Atlantic because times were good.

We should gain little comfort in thinking our rural ancestors had higher status and privilege. Those privileges granted by Czarina Catherine were evaporating, and people like Bishop Kessler and others alleged that Czar Nicholas had plans to deal with these German foreigners (our ancestors) who refused to Russianize, only to have the plans preempted the Revolution.

While I will view the czarist artifacts as fine artistic and historical displays, I will not romanticize their owners' reign while they acquired their fine treasures. I would rather harken back to my grandfather's declaration of naturalization intent, stating, "I renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, particularly Nicholas II Emperor of Russia, of which I am now a subject."

*Frank Jacobs lives in Topeka.*

## **\*\*Upcoming Events\*\***

### **Mark Your Calendars!**

### **JULI**

**NO board meeting OR chapter meeting this month!**

### **AUGUST**

**9 Aug Saturday**, 12:00-4:00, pm chapter annual picnic at the Miller Farm, Felida, Washington (near Vancouver, Washington). (See page 4 for more details)

*28 Aug 1941* Deportation of the Volga Germans from their homeland. The chapter will recognize this day with a special remembrance. Date and time will be announced later.

**Genealogy Library  
will NOT be open in August**

### **SEPTEMBER**

**2 Sep Tuesday**, 7:00 pm, board meeting, Hanna Deines' house

**14 Sep Sunday**, 2:30-4:00 pm, chapter meeting, guest speaker or special program, Rivercrest Church

**17 Sep Wednesday**, 1:00-6:00 pm, Genealogy Library open

### **Meeting Places**

Unless otherwise noted, all chapter meetings and genealogy workshops are held at Rivercrest Church, 3201 NE 148<sup>th</sup>, Portland, Oregon.

Board meetings are held at Hanna Deines's home, located at 2008 NE 156<sup>th</sup> Court, Portland, Oregon. Phone: (503) 232-6036.

### **Meeting Directions and Information**

Rivercrest Community church is located between NE Sandy Blvd. and NE Halsey Street on NE 148<sup>th</sup>. Park

in the lower parking lot and follow the directional signs to the meeting rooms.

Oregon Chapter meetings held on Saturdays are generally two and one-half hours in length and include a potluck lunch. Please bring an entree, salad, or dessert to share and your own plate and utensils. At the potluck lunches, \$2 for members and \$2 for non-members is requested to help defray the cost of the meeting facilities.

Oregon Chapter meetings held on Sunday afternoons are generally one and one-half hours in length. Refreshments will be served at the meeting; and a donation is requested to help defray meeting facility costs. Please note that the Sunday after-noon meetings do not include a potluck lunch.

**Guests are always welcome to any chapter meeting or genealogy workshop.**

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### *We Want Your Pictures and Stories*

Please send:

1) **a scanned image** (200dpi)

**or**

2) **a photo quality print** (*you can do this at Kinko's or any of a number of other printing shops for about \$1 per page—and you can put a number of regular size photos on one page*)

of a favorite photo of your German-Russian ancestors with a short description of the photo including as many or all of the following as you can provide: *names of the people, date, place, event, other information, your name*

Send **scanned images** (attached to your e-mail) to:

**tw-CBL@attbi.com**

Please mention in the subject line "CUL newsletter".

Please send **photo prints** to:

**CUL Newsletter  
1830 NE 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97230**

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**Articles for *Chronicle Unserer Leute***

**Deadlines** for submission of articles for the  
*Chronicle Unserer Leute* are:

**August 15 for the Sept/Oct 2003 issue**

October 15 for the Nov/Dec 2003 issue  
December 15 for the January/February 2004 issue  
February 15 for the March/April 2004 issue  
April 15 for the May/June 2004 issue

**Please send submissions to *Terri Williams*,  
editor:**

**Chronicle Unserer Leute  
1830 NE 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97230**

or e-mail: [tw-CBL@attbi.com](mailto:tw-CBL@attbi.com)

### AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Form

Membership fees are for a calendar year that *renews each January 1<sup>st</sup>*. Dues shown below include \$10 for an Oregon Chapter membership. The remaining fee is for membership in the AHSGR international organization.

#### Membership Categories - Annual International and Oregon Chapter Dues

Individual & Family	\$ 60
Institutional	\$ 60
Contributing	\$ 85
Sustaining	\$110
Int'l Life Member	\$750 (may be paid in 5 annual installments--add \$10 to each installment for Chapter dues)
Int'l Life Member	\$ 10 (for fully paid International Life Members who pay only Chapter dues)
Student (15 - 24)	\$ 15 (Receive 4 newsletters, Youth Membership packet, Membership card, and discounts)
Youth (1 - 14)	\$ 8 on specially advertised books and special convention benefits.)
Newsletters Only	\$ 12 For non-members

New Member\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal\_\_\_\_\_ Individual\_\_\_\_\_ Family\_\_\_\_\_ Youth\_\_\_\_\_ Student\_\_\_\_\_

Membership Year 200\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my Oregon Chapter newsletter delivered by e-mail (Adobe Acrobat format) Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

In order for us to service our membership more effectively, please list all of your German family names and all villages that you believe your ancestors are from.

Ancestral Villages - Please specify for each member \_\_\_\_\_

Surnames - Please specify for each member \_\_\_\_\_

There are many opportunities to help build our chapter. Let us know if you desire to participate actively.:

Genealogy Workshops _____	Other _____
Newsletter _____	Publicity _____
Library _____	Ways & Means _____
Programs _____	Reminder Calls for Upcoming Meetings _____
Hospitality _____	Sunshine _____

**Please make all checks payable to AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER and send your membership dues and applications to:**

**Charles Williams, 1830 NE 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Portland, OR 97230-4056**

**Phone: 503-252-0902 E-mail: f26ruth@attbi.com**

**AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
OREGON CHAPTER  
4616 SE ADAMS  
MILWAUKIE, OR 97222**



Here are some photos from last year's picnic to whet your appetite. The Miller's farm is a museum too, and has some great historical artifacts to see.



This issue can be viewed online at: <http://germans-russia-pdx.com/Portland/newsletter.htm>