



# Bessarabian - Newsletter

April 2007

Volume 11 Issue 1



**Bessarabian Coat of Arms**

Heimatmuseum  
der Deutschen aus Bessarabien  
Florianstrasse 17  
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## A Treasure Trove of Bessarabian Data

This winter we've had a team of volunteers working very hard to bring together a set of web pages that are loaded with data to assist the Bessarabian researcher. The web pages are available at <http://www.grhs.org/rig/bess/>. One researcher even called it "Paradise for Researchers!"

Some of the Bessarabian data has been around for some time, but has been sorted with a different look to make it easier to use.

Among the new items available are indexes for the various censuses. This new project will be completed prior to this coming spring. For a sneak peak at some of the data available, see page 3.

We love to have "guest" contributors— If you have information about your Bessarabian families or successful searches, they would be great to share with our newsletter readers!

## Where Do We Go From Here?

It's that time of year again when it's time to renew your subscription to the Bessarabian Newsletter if you want to continue to receive a paper copy of it. Page 2 of this newsletter has subscription rates and addresses.

But as our online readership grows and our paper subscriber list shrinks, we're faced with thinking about the future of the newsletter...and whether it makes sense for this to become a completely online publication. Or possibly to merge with GRHS' Heritage Review which is expanding its coverage of the Regional Interest Groups.

The soonest we would start this would be January 2009.

So it would be really helpful to hear from you, our readers, your thoughts on this. Please contact me and let me know what you think about the online approach. (Contact information is on page 2.)

In the meantime, paper subscriptions will continue to be available. Some of you have paid for multi-year subscriptions in the past, but at this time, we will only be accepting subscriptions through December 2008.

*Carolyn Schott*  
Editor

Newsletter on-line at  
[www.grhs.org/rig/bess/](http://www.grhs.org/rig/bess/)

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### Terms, Shorthand & URLs

#### Organizational

- Village Coordinator (old Russia) ..... VC
- Area Coordinator (N. America)..... AC
- Ort Coordinator (Germany) ..... OC
- German Russian ..... GR
- Regional Interest Group..... RIG
- Village Research Project..... VRP
- GR Heritage Society..... GRHS
- American Historical Society GR.....AHSGR

#### Internet

##### Bessarabian Web Site

<http://www.grhs.org/rig/bess/>

##### GRHS homepage

<http://www.grhs.org/>

##### Bessarabian Organizations in Germany

<http://www.bessarabien.de/bess/start.htm>

##### Odessa Digital Library (aka "the pixel")

<http://www.odessa3.org/>

##### NDSU Libraries Ger-Rus Heritage Collection

<http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc>

#### Genealogical Shorthand

- \* birth/born + death/died
- ∞ marriage
- Suggested dating convention - 23 Jan 1876*



### Tech Talk and Tips

*Have you discovered these handy places?*

Judy Remmick-Hubert's site for German-Russian recipes:  
<http://www.remmick.org/GRHouseRecipes/Page1.html>

A site that explains the impact of the calendar change from Julian to Gregorian for each country or region:  
[http://homepages.tesco.net/~jk.calisto/calisto/calendars/change\\_dates\\_jg.htm](http://homepages.tesco.net/~jk.calisto/calisto/calendars/change_dates_jg.htm)

The website for the Evangelische (Lutheran) Church in Württemberg:  
<http://www.elk-wue.de/arbeitsfelder/kultur/landeskirchliches-archiv/>

Information on various archives in Germany:  
<http://home.bawue.de/~hanacek/info/earchive.htm>

A humorous article on the importance of the German language to English:  
<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/06/07/EDGDOI3B1.DTL%20>

### Bessarabian Newsletter

*This newsletter is a publication of the GRHS Bessarabian Regional Interest Group.*

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# News and Notes

## Bessarabian Regional Interest Group Report

The members of the GRHS Bessarabian RIG Listserv will be working together to form up a matrix similar to what the Beresan and Grossliebental Districts have been using for years. This will enhance the entire Bessarabian RIG effort.

VC Theophil Handel was inspired to have his Volume II for Teplitz completed and ready for sale in Germany by Christmas, but he was not able to make it. Now he is looking at next summer to have it ready. It will be another great resource and top seller!

A summary of February's GRHS Board of Directors meeting is available at: [http://www.grhs.org/rig/bess/bulletin\\_board.htm](http://www.grhs.org/rig/bess/bulletin_board.htm). (GRHS id and password required.)

For those attending the GRHS convention in July, plan to attend the Bessarabian RIG's annual meeting!

## A Sneak Peek at the Bessarabian RIG Research Site

The screenshot shows the Bessarabian RIG Research Site. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: [GRHS Home] [About GRHS] [News & Events] [GRHS BUS Heritage] [Bessarabian Resources] [Charters & RIGs] [GRHS HQ] [Youth Programs] [GRHS Library] [GRHS Store] [CONVENTIONS] [Search] [Site Map]. Below this is the title "Bessarabian Research [Bess RIG]". A red notice reads: "These files have been prepared for sharing with GRHS membership. They cannot be sold for profit or posted on any personal website. A link to the public access area of this website is however provided." Below this, another red notice says: "Data marked with a lock icon is locked and only accessible to GRHS Members (password protected)". A search bar is present with the text "SEARCH GRHS Pages". A list of resources follows, including: Audiotapes, Books, Bulletin Board, Census, Christian First Film - Index of, Church Records (see Files Listing below), Databank Data, Databank Entries, Heritage Review - Best Index, Hometown, Images, Koltsev Indexes - by the Y Page, Koltsev Databank Files, Kottman, Links, Map Indexes, Manuscripts and Prints, Maps, Pictures, and more. Some items are marked with a lock icon.

## German Genealogy Conventions....Coming Soon!

### GRHS 2007 Convention

July 18-22, 2007  
Bismarck, North Dakota

<http://www.grhs.org/news/2007convention.htm>

### SGGEE Convention

August 10-12, 2007  
Calgary, Alberta

[www.sggee.org/conventions/ConventionNews](http://www.sggee.org/conventions/ConventionNews)

### AHSGR Convention

June 10-17, 2007  
Hays, Kansas

[www.volgagerman.net](http://www.volgagerman.net)

Article on page 10 of this newsletter



## **A Letter from Siberia** **Written by Friedrich Reule of Borodino**

*Contributed by Ingrid Reule*

A letter from Siberia (without indication of place)  
July 19, 1916 (August 1st by Gregorian calendar)  
Published by The Dakota Freie Presse, 1916

Written by:

Christina Reule nee Knodel, born 14.11.1866 in Borodino, Bessarabia, oo 19.11.1895 in Klöstitz, Bessarabia, and Friedrich Reule, born 16.07.1862 in Borodino, Bessarabia.

The letter was sent to the family of Andreas Reule in North Dakota:

Andreas Reule, born 14.11.1866 in Borodino, Bessarabia, oo 10.01.1890 in Klöstitz, Bessarabia, + 17.10.1946 in Midway Township, ND, and Margaretha Knodel, born 06.08.1862 in Borodino, Bessarabia, + 00.03.1932 Cleveland, ND.

Andreas and Friedrich Reule are brothers and Christina and Margaretha Reule are cousins.

Wording of the letter:

Our best wishes from us and our children. We are still healthy. We received your letter correctly. That was a great pleasure for us, because so we knew that we still had dear relatives who are living so far away and are thinking of us. Because otherwise we do not have any comfort in this world except the one brought by our Saviour. Our son Jakob has already gone. He had to leave our home the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, and now he is on the way to Turkey. We've not yet received a message from him, and so we don't know if he is well. They have taken away the only help we had. Now we are left with only the little ones. The eldest of them is ten years old, and the youngest 7 months. Who knows what is going to happen? Maybe they are going to take Friedrich away, too [Translator's note: From this we have to conclude that Friedrich, the eldest son, was also still a child.] Just when the war began we received your photographs, and we were very pleased about them. These days we would be happy to be with you. But it was Friedrich's fault, and he has felt deep regret for that. But what's the use of still worrying about it?

Generally, everything is fine. We don't suffer poverty. But what does that mean if one has everything, but the world is in a state that one has to raise children only to give them away, and with them perhaps the husband as well. We have met the great sorrow the Holy Bible is talking about. The Lord won't listen to us any more. I will finish this letter with thousand greetings to all of you, dear brothers and sisters, with tears running. Please reply pretty soon.

Friedrich and Christina Reule

Remark (I.R.): The mentioned Name Friedrich refers to the father Friedrich.  
Translated by: Hartmut Reule



## On Dead Cats and Cane Strokes

A village teacher's letter provides a less official look at the history of Katzbach, Bessarabia.

By Dwayne Janke

Arnold Winger was born in Sarata, Bessarabia, in 1899. He went on to be a teacher and sexton in Katzbach, Bessarabia, starting in 1919, and served in the village until the resettlement of 1940.<sup>1</sup>

Concerned about recording the history of Bessarabian German colonies, he contributed his "Chronicle of the Community Katzbach" for publication in the 1929 *German Volks-Kalendar for Bessarabia*.<sup>2</sup> The account is filled with a lot of factual details and so has been invaluable for a researcher, like me, whose ancestors lived in Katzbach.

Recently, however, I was surprised and fascinated by Allen Konrad's English translation of a letter that Winger wrote.<sup>3</sup> Again, Winger gives a post-1923 history of Katzbach,<sup>4</sup> but strays quite a bit from dry facts, to provide some gems of new and less formal types of information than his *Volks-Kalendar* account.

### 1816 or 1821?

As he does in his 1929 chronicle, Winger states something in his letter that goes against most accounts about the Katzbach colony's founding. He says that the village was actually established (i.e. settlers first arrived) in 1816,<sup>5</sup> but it was not designated by the name Katzbach until 1821. If we agree with Winger's dates, it would appear that most accepted listings of Katzbach's establishment in 1821 are actually referring to it going from being a numbered colony in Bessarabia to one with its own unique name provided by the Crown. This idea needs to be researched further.

### Feline Fallacy

Did most of our Bessarabian German ancestors understand the honorable origins of many of their colonies' names as coming from battles with Napoleon? Winger's letter shows that one nearby, unnamed village didn't, at least when it came to Katzbach. These neighbours insisted that the original settlers of Katzbach found dead felines in the Aliaga stream, hence the name: cats (Katzen) + brook (Bach) = Katzbach! Though I laughed when I first read this, residents of Katzbach were obviously not amused with the alleged derogatory origin of their colony's name, "reject(ing) that to be a lie."

In fact, Katzbach (Kacazawa in Polish) is a small river in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in Poland. After a length of 98 km, the Katzbach empties into the Oder River at Prochowice. The Katzbach between Legnica and Legnickie Pole was the site of the Battle of Katzbach on August 26, 1813, during the Napoleonic Wars. The "Army of Silesia," one of four allied armies, was led by Prussian commander Bluecher. He directed an attack, with Russian army help, that saw 20,000 French soldiers who were killed, go missing or deserted in heavy rain and flooding. A jubilant King Frederick William III of Prussia awarded Bluecher the title of Prince.<sup>6</sup> A happy Russian Crown gave the name of the battle to the German colony in Bessarabia.

### A Curious Schwab List

Winger's list of settlers to Katzbach who ultimately originated from Württemberg is rather strange. In his 1929 chronicle, he lists the surnames of all 81 founding families coming from Prussia, Poland, Württemberg, Baden and Schlesien. In this letter, he includes only the small section of Württemberger. Perhaps this is an indication that the letter was going to someone primarily interested in the origins of a portion of the Katzbach colonists.

The Northern Germans among the Katzbach settlers were commonly called Kaschuben, and spoke a Platt dialect. By the time Winger's letter is written, however, he observes that everyone is speaking the Schwabian dialect from Württemberg. This kind of linguistic shift is reflected in other Bessarabian colony histories I've read. Why did it happen?



Dr. Elvire Necker-Eberhardt, who has researched Bessarabian German from a linguistic perspective, has some theories she shared with me about why Schwaebisch won out. (She noted that this was true even in marriages where one spouse spoke Schwaebisch and the other was “Kaschubisch,” Low German speaker!) In many cases, the sheer number of Schwaebisch speakers in many Bessarabian German villages lead to this linguistic domination. As well, in schools and in written materials, High German was used. Schwaebisch, she says, is a High German dialect, so it was much closer to this formal German than the “Kaschubisch” Low German dialects and so it was, in effect, reinforced. In addition, there were several kinds of “Kaschubisch” spoken from village to village in Bessarabia, reflecting differences in the dialect back in the German homeland (e.g. Brandenburg Platt, Pommern Platt, Danzig Platt, etc.)—Schwaebisch was more homogenous. Dr. Necker-Eberhardt also speculates that Schwaebisch dominated because “the Schwaebisch were and still are considered to be pretty stubborn, ‘dickkoeufig’ [thick-headed].” So, if anyone was going to switch their manner of speech in a Bessarabian German colony, it was not likely going to be a Schwaebisch speaker!<sup>7</sup>

The sample sentence Winger wrote, in what he called the Katzbach (Schwaebisch) dialect, reads as follows in English: *I am a true Schwab[bian]. We always speak schwaebisch to each other. We are and will stay true Germans. We like Katzbach a lot, if only we always have good crops.*<sup>7</sup>

### **Good or Bad Land?**

In his appraisal of the colony’s land, Winger seems to contradict his own 1929 chronicle, and the 1848 chronicle that Katzbach officials submitted to the Welfare Committee of German Settlers in South Russia (see <[www.odessa3.org/collections/history](http://www.odessa3.org/collections/history)>.) He leaves the impression that the 4,251 hectares allotted to Katzbach by the Crown was good, producing big yields with little effort. Winger seems to have changed his mind by the time he wrote the 1929 account: “The land is hilly and not very productive . . . .” and also “the land is not particularly good, therefore it must frequently be re-planted.” At first, it appears that Winger might be making a comparison between the land’s health when the settlers first arrived versus its condition a century later as he wrote the 1929 chronicle. The 1848 chronicle, much closer to the time period of Katzbach’s founding, doesn’t support this notion. “The land lies mostly on the foothills,” it says, “which affects the productivity adversely, since rain and snow water runs off too quickly.” It explains later that there were complete crop failures (1822, 1823, 1824) in the colony’s initial years.

### **No One Starves**

During those bad harvests, we learn about the solidarity that Katzbach colonists had towards one another. No one starved, says Winger, because the residents helped each other through these times. The colonists had already been through a lot together—difficult lives in their previous homelands, a long and demanding trek to Bessarabia (paid at their own expense), and arriving to find nothing but “a steppe covered with tall grass,” as the 1848 chronicle described it. They had no doubt gotten through this together; crop failures were not the time to end their cooperative spirit.

### **Land for Liquor**

According to Winger, purchasable land was plentiful during the early years in Katzbach, so colonists with money could acquire more than the initial 60 hectares given to each family by the Crown. I have no way to determine how much a few liters of brandy were worth, but Winger claims it could buy an entire farm. The implication is that land was inexpensive in the early years of settlement, before rapid population growth among the German colonists led to extensive purchase of property for dozens upon dozens of daughter colonies over several generations, starting especially in 1860.

### **Draining the Watering Hole**

After commenting on the colony’s investments in church-related items, Winger then uses what might be a tongue-in-cheek transition (i.e. “. . . a person needs strengthening for the body, not only for the spirit. . . .”) in writing about Katzbach’s tavern(s). He wrote that it was established in 1842. Men gathered nightly there to sing, drink, talk and gamble. It was shut down “at the beginning of the war,” but Winger doesn’t specify what



war he means. One might assume that he was referring to the First World War, because of the implied date of his letter. However, in his 1929 chronicle, Winger said that a tavern was built in about the same time as a prayer house and village chancellery—1835—but was “torn down in about two years.”

It doesn't matter whether there were two different taverns over widely separate time periods or just one. The point worth noting here is that the community at large, displaying the conservative moral nature so common among Bessarabian German colonists, shut them down and prevented their reopening at least for some time,<sup>8</sup> believing that a tavern resulted in harm. As Winger's 1929 chronicle put it, “Lately there is no wine or schnapps tavern here. No one wants to have one, particularly in this village, a good and sure sign that they understand moderation in drinking. (Here in Bessarabia, the tavern has a completely different meaning than the village inn of Banat or in Transylvanian Saxony or in Germany; here in Bessarabia, it is a shameful thing to go into a tavern.)”

### **The Dry Alternative: Spinning Wool and Tales**

Meanwhile, while some men were reveling in Katzbach's tavern, Winger writes that groups of “dry men” gathered with their “respectable” wives in quite spacious living rooms in homes. While the wives kept their hands and feet busy working their spinning wheels around a central light source, they also busily moved their tongues, talking energetically. Along the walls, the men sat or reclined on their sheepskin (coats?), smoking pipes, making up fantastic stories or chatting about “everyday problems.”

### **Helpful and Honest**

Winger has some good things to say about the character of Bessarabian Germans.

First, he writes that anyone finished with a farming task would help his neighbour who was not. Apparently, this was especially needed during 1877-78, the time of the Russo-Turkish War, and 1854-56, the period of the Crimean War. Winger doesn't explain precisely why here, but gives a hint a few paragraphs later, at least for the 1877 date: “troop quartering and delivering of supplies.” In his 1929 account, he wrote that during these years “residents had to put up with much from the military which was on the march to Turkey.” Unfortunately for the colonists, Clause Nine of Alexander's 1813 manifesto, outlining the rights and privileges of the German immigrants coming to Bessarabia, specified that, “The immigrants and their descendants shall be free . . . from providing military quarters, except when troops pass through.” It may be that this quartering in Katzbach and having to deliver supplies (not to mention dealing with disease), didn't impact all the colonists equally. As a result, some were delayed in their farming activities more than others, and therefore neighbours helped neighbours as some got behind in their farm work.

Secondly, if any item was found in a field, it would be brought to the village office to be reconnected with its owner. “Your loss is my gain” was not a motto applied to items that went missing in Katzbach.

### **Church-going, But Superstitious**

Katzbach colonists were pious people, holding their pastor in high regard and consistently attending worship services in their church. But Winger emphasizes they were still superstitious, believing in “all kinds of spirits.” The writer refers to his own childhood, when ghost stories told by visitors frightened him into restless sleep.

While Winger doesn't provide any further details or examples, other sources<sup>9</sup> tell of superstitions among Bessarabian Germans brought from original German homelands or picked up along the way. Here are some examples: Meet a woman with a pail—empty, it's bad luck; full, means good luck. A crying owl on the roof at night, means misfortune or even approaching death to a relative. Howling dogs, breaking an untouched tea glass or a lamp shade, a clock stopping—all bad luck. There is mention of turning to the help of witches, magic mirrors and horoscope tables, and turning to tarot card reading done by wandering gypsies.<sup>10</sup>

### **Thrashings and Strokings**

The next two paragraphs include information that is found in the 1848 and 1929 Katzbach histories (including Winger's frustration that pursuing higher education was viewed as an excuse not to work—clergy



excluded). But what is new are two clear references to corporal punishment. Winger says what most people reading his letter seem to have assumed (i.e. “It goes without saying. . . .”): school pupils “got a sound thrashing.” Winger doesn’t specify whether this was punishment for actual misbehaviour or just to encourage students to learn better!

Then Winger seems to get nostalgic for “the good old days” when the colony mayor “had lots of power.” Early community records (which would make interesting reading should we be able to find what Winger was referencing) recorded that the mayor meted out punishment for “insubordination or gossip,” etc. There seemed to have been a specified number of cane strokes administered to the guilty party depending on his misdeed. And the caning was done before an audience of students as a deterrent to encourage future “proper behaviour.”

Whatever one thinks of our modern legal system and society’s accepted forms of discipline, it was obvious that the Bessarabian Germans were not lenient in either case. My own grandfather, Jacob Janke, told me stories that support this view.<sup>11</sup>

### **Fashion File**

Winger, who is shown wearing suits, shirts and ties<sup>12</sup> in several class photos with his students, was not impressed with Katzbach residents’ fashion. They liked clothing styles, the way they liked food: “simple,” and not as trendy as the other German colonies. As an example, Winger says men came to village assemblies unsuitably wearing “unlined white sheepskin jacket[s].”<sup>13</sup> They seemed to have followed the long traditional example of the Volga Russians in this dress—another example of the surrounding Russian culture influencing the Bessarabian German lifestyle.

In his 1929 chronicle, however, Winger acknowledges that slavishly following new clothing styles can be a disadvantage for Bessarabian Germans. “One can spend much unnecessary money on fashionable clothing, additionally if the money must be borrowed.” One might guess that Winger did not go into debt buying his suits!

### **No 9-to-5**

Whatever Katzbachers lacked in trendy fashion, in Winger’s eyes, they made up for in their work ethic. He calls them “unsurpassed,” no doubt meaning they compared well with German colonies around them. In his 1929 chronicle, the teacher wrote: “The people of Katzbach are simple farmers, always busy at their work, so that they are often finished with their threshing and corn picking when people in the neighbouring villages are still working hard at the same tasks.” Winger writes that in the busy summer months of farming, they worked 18-hour days, without interruption, a pattern kept for weeks at a time.

It seems the Katzbach farmers were as trendy about farming technology as they were about clothing styles. Winger says they still used “quite primitive” machinery, being suspicious about the virtues of the tractor, seeder, etc.

### **A Final Word**

No doubt commenting on the tenacity and fortitude of the colony residents in the area, Winger ends by insisting that the Bessarabian German people wouldn’t disappear quickly. Of course, the writer could not foresee the future.

Several decades later, they would, in fact, disappear from the steppe land of Bessarabia they had so well colonized for more than a century. In 1940, 90,000 of them were uprooted and relocated to Germany, under the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact.

### **Footnotes**

1) See *Katzbach 1821-1940*, by Gertrud Knopp-Rueb, 1987.

2) An English version of this account was published in the *Heritage Review*, Dec. 1986.



3) Typed transcript - [Source] Microfilm Roll #624 Serial #842 Record Group #1035 Deutsches Auslands-Institut (DAI) #1758 Frames 5420999-5421002 Translation by Allen E. Konrad, Box 205, Rowley, IA 52329, <onamission@lbt.org>, May, 2004. It can be found on Allen Konrad's Korner of the Bessarabian Web pages at <www.grhs.org/rig/bess/>. I wish to express my deep appreciation for Allen's translation efforts.

4) We have no way of knowing to whom Winger is writing or exactly when. It is certainly not 1816, as the DAI typed transcript was labeled. Because he mentions a 1923 incident in the village, we can safely say the letter was written at some time after this date while Bessarabia was part of Romania.

Somehow the DAI got a copy of the letter. What was the DAI? An English translation of a letter (on DAI Microfilm T-81, Roll 321, Group 1035, VOMI 947, Frame 2452667-2452668) at <www.odessa3.org/collections/war/dai/link/dai321b.txt>, helps define the organization. The Deutsches Ausland Institut was created in Stuttgart in 1917. It did scientific research into the German lifestyle and the German achievements in foreign countries, providing information on all aspects of Germans living abroad. In 1938, a Research Department of German Nationality in Russia was newly created at the Institut in conjunction with the Association of Russians from Germans in Berlin. Dr. Karl Stumpp was the director of the Research Department of Germans from Russia. He was a teacher at the German Girls' High School at Tarutino, in Bessarabia.

5) Winger's 1929 account says, "In the revisions-list of 1835, it is stated quite clearly that in the year of 1816, 34 families settled there."

6) "The Battle of Katzbach," written by Sam. A. Mustafa, 2002, for use with the *Grande Armée* game.

7) Dr. Necker-Eberhardt also notes that the Schwaebisch that eventually developed in Bessarabia is different from the one they speak in South Germany. Nowadays the generation born during or after the war does not even speak it. But people with Bessarabian German roots now in Canada are often recognized as using a Bessarabian Schwaebisch. The give away is the use of the "r" in sound, some grammar peculiarities, and a lot of loanwords. You can always recognize a Bessarabian German when he uses words like "lommlich, koddrich, Deihenker," etc.

Schwaebisch is an oral language. Although Winger wrote the sample Schwaebisch sentences, there is no standard form for writing it.

8) My grandfather, Jacob Janke, who immigrated to Canada from Katzbach in 1910, told me in a 1979 interview (see <www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/history\_culture/oral/samples/jacob\_janke.html>) that the village had a "saloon" where people could drink wine. This may suggest that Winger was referring in his letter to a tavern being open until the First World War.

9) See the last chapter of *How We Had It At Home—The Wanderings of the Bessarabian-Germans* (by J. Becker, 1950), which appeared in installments as an English translation in the Bessarabian Newsletter.

10) One example is a story I heard about my grandfather Jacob Janke's brother, who consulted a gypsy in Bessarabia before making a trip with his family to Canada in 1910. The card reader indicated that the family would make it across the ocean, but hinted that there would be some difficulty. In fact there was—their young son died of diphtheria on-board the passenger steam ship and was buried at sea.

11) In an interview in 1979, he told me that anyone caught stealing, fighting or damaging someone's property in Katzbach was not automatically sent to the authorities. Instead people took personal action. "Catch 'em, put



## Mark Your Calendars for the 37th Annual GRHS Convention!

**Reminder:** Make your plans early to attend the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society which will be held July 18-22, 2007 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. This year's convention will be hosted by the GRHS Board of Directors with the help of volunteers from throughout the Society.

Registration, the convention bookstore, and research library will open at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, July 18. Workshops will begin on Thursday morning, July 19, while the opening ceremony is set for 10 a.m. on Thursday. The convention will be filled with workshops on interesting topics, business meetings, good food, kuchen tasting, entertainment, sing-a-longs, and much good fellowship.

The Board of Directors, the convention chairpersons, and the convention committees are busy finalizing the convention program; however, everyone's help is needed to make this an outstanding annual gathering. If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact Frances Feist at [feist3368@bis.midco.net](mailto:feist3368@bis.midco.net), Al Feist at [afeist@westriv.com](mailto:afeist@westriv.com), or Rachel Schmidt at (701) 223-6167 or [rachel@grhs.org](mailto:rachel@grhs.org).

In addition to reserving the dates July 18-22, 2007 on your calendar, it is important that reservations be made at the Ramkota Hotel (701-258-7700) so that you have a room at the convention center and so that you will obtain the convention rates. To obtain the rate of \$79 per night, it is important to make reservations before June 18, 2007 and to let the hotel personnel know that you will be attending the convention and want to be part of the GRHS block. Also located within walking distance (a block or so) are the Expressway Inn and Suites of Bismarck. They offer a special rate of \$64.95 for 1-2 people, Deluxe King or Double at the Expressway Inn (1-800-456-6388) and \$74.95 at the Expressway Suites (1-888-774-5566).

Registration packets will be sent out in early April, but if you want to keep up with the convention planning, you can go to the GRHS website at [www.grhs.org](http://www.grhs.org). Drop down under "News and Events" to find conventions. Updates will be posted as workshops and other events are scheduled.

Don't delay! The convention promises to be a fun-filled, learning experience. Your attendance at this annual GRHS event is important!



**Katzbach** (Continued from page 9)

'em over the bench and give 'em lashes," he explained, laughing. "Got a piece of branch, you know, . . . und give him about five, six, nine, 10 over the arsch [rear end] . . . ." He also recalled that there was a man appointed in the village to enforce a 10 p.m. curfew for schoolboys. "I vill tell you something," he said. "I was standing under a tree [on the street]. I wars a young boy und he comes. 'What you doing here so late in night?' Und hit me on my shoulder with stick."

12) See *Katzbach 1821-1940*, by Gertrud Knopp-Rueb, 1987.

13) Winger may not have been happy with Katzbachers wearing sheepskin coats to village gatherings, but interestingly that kind of person was exactly what Canada's immigration officials were looking for at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Clifton Sifton, who was appointed immigration minister by Liberal Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier, encouraged eastern European immigrants to settle Western Canada. He considered them to be hard-working, obedient, agricultural people: "I think a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers had been farmers for 10 generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality."