



Adult Essay Contest Winner 2017

A Shining Lamp

By Isaiah Durand of Chile, South America

GRHS Heritage Review Editor's Note: The GRHS \$2,000,000.00 Fundraiser includes among its provisions that an Adult Essay Contest be conducted. The purpose of this essay contest is to develop interest in preserving the GRHS. The winning essay is then published in Heritage Review. This year's winner is Isaiah Durand, an eighteen-year-old Christian homeschool graduate in Chile in South America. He enjoys writing, reading, and history. He has frequently entered GRHS Youth Essay Contests.

What is history? Why should it be studied? How do the events of the past still affect the course of the future? If we want to truly understand the importance of times past – their heroes, their successes, and their failures – and if we would strive to follow in the footsteps and virtues of our valiant ancestors, these questions are of the utmost significance. Yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever have been connected inseparably by an Almighty hand, and when the lessons of the past are forgotten, there can be but little hope for the future. But happily, there are people, groups, and societies dedicated to keeping the lamp of history burning, groups which shine that light forth upon the present generation, and pass it on to posterity. Certainly, it is in the greatest interest of those who wish to learn from the past, of those who love their freedom and cherish their heritage, to secure the preservation of such organizations by all means in their power. One such group is the Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS).

But who are the Germans from Russia? What is it in their heritage and people group which deserves the special attention of all? Though neither kings nor conquerors, as the world counts them – though often unheard of and neglected in the study of history – these groups of seemingly common, ordinary human beings were more truly conquerors than many a victorious warrior upon the field of battle. Freedom burned in the hearts of these hardworking men and women, and, cost them what it would, freedom they would have. To gain and maintain it, to pass it down, through their labor and travail, to their children, they twice gave up their homes, their ease, and their countries. From Germany to Russia and from there to the United States these indefatigable searchers for liberty trekked, no mountain too steep or ocean too wide to the eyes focused upon that multi-generational vision. Such is the heritage which the Germans from Russia Heritage Society seeks to preserve, and such the people group which it attempts to propagate.

If we want to keep the lamp of liberty passed on to us burning, however, we cannot merely sit back and do nothing. The GRHS has a true and unique value. Providing researching aids both to help and inspire the searcher, conventions, and meeting chapters to unite those who appreciate the courage and wisdom of their forefathers, and books and other materials for those who simply cannot stop there, the GRHS makes sure that those who have a desire to live in the freedom so dearly bought and to keep it alive for the future are not left without resources. Their youth program and especially the essay contest, too, are an excellent means to encourage the young to search through the records and annals of the past, and aid them to grow to value far more fully the liberties they now enjoy – I myself being an example of one who has been stirred by it to a new appreciation of this people group and the freedom for which they labored.

But what can you or I do about it? How can we make sure that these beacons of light – the tales of heroes, and the liberties which they purchased – are not put out, lost, or forgotten? Why, become involved! Donate to the GRHS, volunteer to help out where needed, write, meet, and spread the story of the freedom-loving Germans far and wide! That fiery fervor, the ardent love of liberty, once kindled in the heart, can never contain itself there. No! – it must impart its flame to all whom it knows, and must do all in its power to ensure that succeeding generations never forget the lessons of the past, or the valor of their predecessors. Do your part – invest in the GRHS – there is no better investment than to invest in your liberty, and the liberty of posterity.

What is history but the writing of an Almighty hand? What is its study but the unfolding of the tales of its countless heroes, of their struggles for freedom, and their victory at last? What is the past but the key to unlock the future? And what is the GRHS but a noble effort to pass on the lessons of the past and the heritage of our ancestors – a lamp to shine that light on the present, and pass on that love of freedom to the succeeding generations? What is an investment in it but an investment in your own liberties, and a legacy to pass on to your children?

What is your part? #