

Annual Committee Reports

2016-2017

Archives Committee

The AHSGR Archives Committee strives to follow the mission statement: ...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...*within the copyright laws they pertain to.*

Committee members include: Kevin Rupp (Chair), Bill Doos (Vice-Chair), Harold Penner, Bob Meininger, Patti Sellenrick, Ed Wagner and Leonard Welch. Sub-Committee Members: Dodie Rotherham and Jim Weibert. Staff members include: Yulia Tsymbal, and Diane Wilson.

Below is a list of our projects and accomplishments from Summer 2016- Summer 2017.

1. **Documents**: In 2014, the Archives Committee began working in the Kukkus Kanton area gathering records from the various villages. This soon developed into a subcommittee formatting and making available all the records that we have been obtaining. The focus on this subcommittee is to standardize the way village records that are obtain are translated and made available to the members and non-members through the AHSGR Bookstore. Most of these records have been made available by a donation from the Lauren Foundation and other donors for various villages. Some of the records that the Archives Sub-Committee have received and/or will be published soon:
 - a. Dinkel
 - i. Births 1794-1826
 - ii. Births 1834-1858
 - iii. Family List 1768-1834
 - b. Alt-Doenhof
 - i. Births 1815-1837
 - ii. Births 1838-1858
 1. These have both been translated and we are now looking at formatting the information.
 - c. Grimm
 - i. *Family List 1897 – This document was donated to AHSGR by John Groh and is currently being formatted into a standard form and will be available for purchased in the AHSGR Book Store by Fall.
 - d. Jost
 - i. Births 1794-1811
 - ii. Births 1834-1865
 - iii. Kukkus
 - iv. Family List 1886-1910
 - e. Laub
 - i. Births 1794-1834 (Bk 1-Births 1794-1825 In AHSGR Store)

- ii. Marriages 1825-1834
 - iii. Deaths 1825-1834
- f. Lauwe:
 - i. Family List 1886 (Now in the AHSGR Store)
- g. Neu-Laub
 - i. Family List 1920
- h. Messer
 - i. Births 1857-1858
 - ii. 1897 Census (in translation)
- i. Neu-Messer
 - i. 1917 Family List (Now in the AHSGR Store)
- j. Neu-Doenhof:
 - i. The Neu-Doenhof records became a larger undertaking than we expected. The records have been translated by Dona Reeves-Marquardt, Michael Frank and with Yulia Tsymbal finishing the translations and checking various items. The records we received are: Births 1863-1904; Marriages 1863-1901 and Deaths 1863-1884; 1897-1912. Since this project got to be such a large document by the time it went through the translations it was decided that perhaps to keep the information intact and place it on a memory stick. Then we worried about those people who do not have computers and would prefer a hard copy. The decision was then made to break up the document into three books: Births, Marriage and Deaths. We are hoping that the first book on the births will be ready by convention.
- k. Obermunjou
 - i. *1834 Census (Now in the AHSGR Store)
 - 1. This was donated to AHSGR by the Sunflower Chapter and the translation was also paid for by the Volga German Association in Hays, Kan. With proceeds going to AHSGR.
 - 2. Reinwald
 - ii. *1874 Family List (Now in the AHSGR Store)
 - 1. This document was donated by Karen Soeken and Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski to AHSGR.
- l. Schoenchen
 - i. Family Labor List 1920 (Now in the AHSGR Store)
 - 1. This was one of the first 1920 General Labor Lists and we found it interesting because no children until the age of eight are listed in the document, but are listed as number of children under the age of eight.
- m. Stahl-am-Tarlyk
 - i. Births 1794-1820
 - ii. Births 1835-1861

- iii. Births 1872-1883
- iv. Marriages 1835-1858
- v. Marriages 1871-1888
- vi. Deaths 1871-1888
- vii. Family Lists 1874-1879

n. Straub

- i. 1834 Census
- ii. Births 1794-1833
- iii. Births 1847-1868
- iv. Births 1853, 1854
- v. Confirmations 1847-1868 (Now in the AHSGR Store)

o. Warenburg

- i. Births 1812-1825; 1840, 1849-1856, 1858-1873
- ii. Marriages 1826-1840
- iii. Deaths 1826-1887
- iv. Confirmations 1826-1833
- v. Confirmations 1835-1853
- vi. Confirmations 1854-1892
- vii. Family List 1874 (Now in the AHSGR Store)

All the documents listed above except for: Alt-Doenhof, Doenhof, Grimm, Messer, Neu-Messer, Obermunjou, Reinwald and Schoenchen were obtained with money designated for the Kukkus Canton. The other documents in this list were all chapter or personal donations to acquire the records. There are still many people coming forward to donate either money or their documents to AHSGR to make them available in the AHSGR Store.

2. **Shcherbakovka Project**: This project is ongoing. A black binder is in the AHSGR research library containing all documents we have received.
 - a. The records of Gnadentau: Births 1860-1920; Deaths 1860-1882, 1902-1920 and Marriages 1876-1920 have all arrived and are now being translated.
 - b. We have received birth, marriages and death records from the colony of Rosenberg. Rosenberg was founded in 1847 by colonists from [Grimm](#), [Balzer](#), [Dreisnitz](#), [Shcherbakovka](#), [Stephan](#), [Holstein](#), and [Galka](#). In 1865, 104 colonists moved to the Kuban. Emigration to America began in 1877 when 37 colonists left. In 1886-87, an additional 184 colonists departed for America. These are in the translation process.
 - c. Stephan is another colony from this area that we have received church records and will soon be looking at translating these. All these records were purchased under a specific bequest to AHSGR.
3. **BEIDECK**—Beideck, Births (1898-1900, 1902); Marriages (1894, 1895, 1905); Deaths (1904-1905) and

Khutor Beideck – Births (1808-1900, 1913-1914) were available to us. We have purchased these records, but they have not yet been translated.

4. **Passport Project** has been completed (see 2016 Annual Report) and we hope to have this printed in a future AHSGR Journal.
5. **AWILOWO** records consisting of Births 1892-1902; Marriages 1894, 1905, Deaths 1904 are now in the process of being translated. We have sent a sample page to our translator and hope to have these documents completed before the end of the year.
6. **Discussion with Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS)** At the end of our Spring meeting it was decided that AHSGR and CVGS should come to some workable agreement to share information with each other pertaining to what we have obtained and what we will be ordering so that we may not double our efforts and waste limited funds. Sherry Pawelko, AHSGR Executive Director, contacted Steve Schreiber with CVGS. As of Spring 2017 AHSGR and CVGS has shared what documents are on order and what has come in thus far. The goal is to exchange material for each other's research library, but would not have the ability to sell the material.

This is only a sampling on what the Archives Committee has been doing this past year. We are still looking at the Don Germans, Siberia and various other projects.

As you can see, the AHSGR Archives committee has been very busy this year, especially the Kukkus Kanton subcommittee, but we can't do it all without your financial help. If you have a special place in your heart for any of these projects please send us a financial donation and be sure to mark it "Archives – (Name of Project)". No donation is too small. We will continue to keep you posted with our projects via the AHSGR Newsletter and through the AHSGR Website.

In 2017-2018 we hope to continue our work in securing more records from the various archives dealing with the Germans from Russia. We also intend to compile a list of records that AHSGR, CVGS, VC's and anyone else who is researching the colonies so that we do not double our efforts!

Kevin Rupp, Chair

Convention Management Committee

Committee Members:, Susan Nakaji, Chair, Greg Amen, Nancy Borrell, Bill Doos, Jill Gaddis, Judy Gareis, Stephan Murray, Jerry Siebert, Karen Soeken, Leonard Welch and Peter and Judy Kaland (non-board members).

2017 Convention Status: This is the first time we have tried a Sunday-Thursday run. We are curious that since we back into Labor Day weekend if this has had an effect on attendees. Registration is low.

The tours are being conducted on Monday and Tuesday; they include German Heritage Bus Tour: Old World 3rd St. German Town, beer tasting and lunch at Mader's; River Walk walking tour, Old World Wisconsin Bus Tour including German immigration and beer history with lunch at Clausen Barn Café; Downtown Walking tour; and Wisconsin Avenue Churches tour.

International speakers include Ivan Krott from Russia, Reinhard Nachtigal from Germany and Mila Koretnikov of Russia and Germany.

There will be a premier of the Biel film on Tuesday night.

Favorite activities such as the quilt raffle, coffee break, Heritage Hall, Silent Auction, Bookstore and Research room are being planned.

I would like to acknowledge Bill Doos, and Peter and Judy Kaland for their hard work organizing the Wisconsin volunteers and adding a local flavor to the convention.

It takes many volunteers to host a Convention and I'd like to thank the board members who have stepped up to help. All convention attendees are welcome to help by volunteering at the Convention. A whiteboard will be at the registration desk

for people to sign-up.

2018 Convention Status: The 2018 Convention will be in Hays, Kansas, at the Ft. Hays State University Memorial Union building on July 29-Aug. 1, 2018. Contracts with hotels near the campus are being negotiated. This will be the 50th year since the Founding of the Society. Janet Kuhn will attend the Milwaukee Convention to begin promotion for the Kansas Convention.

2019 Convention Status: The 2019 Convention will be the 50th Convention Anniversary and will be in Lincoln, Nebraska. Hotels and dates are being researched.

2020 Convention: The Intermountain Chapter expressed interest in hosting the 2020 Convention and is welcome to submit a proposal to be voted on by the committee.

Various forms and schedules are now being produced on Google Docs or Sheets. The nice thing about using Google is that the information can be shared by the committee with Headquarters and each committee member can add to or edit the information.

Susan Nakaji, Chair

Editorial and Publications Committee

Members: Chair Jerry Siebert, Bob Meininger, Susan Nakaji, Kevin Rupp, Karen Soeken.

Dan Moser was appointed as the new Publications Coordinator replacing Tom Ineck who retired in March 2017. He plays an important role in the publication of AHSGR publications and is assisted by the Editorial and Publications committee and an Editorial Board for the Journal. AHSGR is currently seeking candidates to serve on the Editorial Board.

During the past 12 months, the AHSGR Newsletter and Journal have been published and distributed on a quarterly basis. The Journal's editor is Robert Meininger, who is assisted by an Editorial Committee and other reviewers of articles. Articles are drawn from many sources and involve articles, essays, family histories, anecdotes, folklore, book reviews, and items regarding all aspects of the lives of Germans from/in Russia. High priority is given to articles that contain historical and/or genealogical information and research. Especially important are those articles that have been published in Russia, Ukraine, other former Russian or Soviet areas, Germany, and South America. A digital edition of *Jugend Zeitung* is also published on a quarterly basis and distributed via email.

In addition to the Newsletter and Journal, the 2016 edition of CLUES was published in January 2017; it was distributed by mail and email attachment. It contained a surname exchange, Villiage Coordinator contact information, instructions on accessing U.S. draft records, instructions for submitting GEDCOM files, a list of immigrants from Odenwald, Germany to Russia in 1766, an Argentina index and surname exchange, and several informative articles on accessing homestead records, historic newspapers, and naturalization petitions. Plans are to publish periodic updates online.

During the year, the last copy of "German Migration to the Russian Volga" by Brent Alan Mai and Dona Reeves-Marquardt was sold. Arrangements have been made to have future copies available via print on demand.

A number of publications based on translations are in the works and should be available in the latter part of 2017.

A new map is being offered in the bookstore. This circa 1910 map of the Lower Volga villages and colonies designed by Alan Wambold is on snowy white paper with beautiful colorful cartographical images and helpful in the search for specific villages or geographical sites. Villages are designated by the religious denomination or ethnicity of the original settlers (Protestant, Catholic, Mennonite, and Russian). Images indicate if the village was founded under the auspices of the Russian crown or by a private recruiter (Beauregard; deBoffe & Precourt; or leRoy & Pictet). One will also find rivers, lakes, railroads, and major roads. Population sizes of the villages are indicated as well.

Last summer, AHSGR premiered a film on Norka at the 2016 convention. Currently in the works is another film to be premiered at the 2017 convention by John Biel on his visit to Volga German villages in 1930. It has been remastered and a soundtrack developed.

Facilities Committee

Committee members are Chair Nancy Borrell, Pam Wurst, Leonard Welch, Jill Gaddis, Cheryl Glanz, Bob Meininger and Shirley Wilcoxon

Several elevator issues and repairs were resolved this year including state-mandated repairs. A dead tree was removed from the campus area. We have used a handyman service for small repairs. We now charge a small fee to nonmembers to view the facilities. We voted to install security cameras, inside and outside; these have been purchased and installed

Money was donated by the Lincoln Quilters and a new refrigerator was purchased. Money left over went toward a new microwave.

We have an Eagle Scout coming Aug. 19 to do some projects. He conducted fund-raising pay for and install a ramp going to the Chapel. They also are going to do some tree and shrub trimming and repair the picnic table.

Several smaller issues will be handled in the next year in preparation for the 2019 convention.

Nancy Borrell, Chair

Folklore Committee

Members: Chair Judy Gareis, Dee Hert, Karen Penner, Delores Schwartz, Norma Somerheiser, NBM.

Six entries were received for the 2017 Storytelling Contest.

The Committee will research ways to encourage more members to submit stories for the 2018 Storytelling Contest in Hays, Kansas.

Judy Gareis, Chair

Genealogical Research Service Committee

The mission of the Genealogy Committee of AHSGR is (1) to discover, collect, and preserve German Russian history and cultural heritage information of a genealogical nature, (2) to organize information in the AHSGR library on German settlers in the Russian Empire, (3) to disseminate information to German Russian descendants, (4) to educate and promote to the general public the German Russian heritage and history, and (5) to provide and maintain an appropriate facility and equipment to carry out the mission of our committee.

Committee members include Mike Meisinger, Dee Hert, Kevin Rupp, Rob Miller, Sue Nakaji, Delores Schwarz, Patti Sellenrick, Pam Wurst, and Karen Penner, Chair. Co-chair of the Village Coordinators, Joe Gertge, serves as an ex-officio member (Kevin Rupp is his co-chair).—

The Genealogy Committee oversees the AHSGR library and archival holdings, including family histories, genealogical files, surname charts, and Russian censuses, etc. Our holdings cover all areas of German Russians (GR): The Volga region, Ukraine and Black Sea region, the Volhynia Colonies, and the Mennonites. We also have South American GR holdings, including a South American CLUES. Other areas our committee oversees are the Village Coordinator program, the publication of *CLUES*, and the Genealogy Consulting Workshops and securing speakers at our annual conventions. Our link to you, our members, is through the dedicated work of our Executive Director Sherry Pawelko, Research Librarian Diane Wilson, and Yulia Tsymbal, Archive Research Coordinator. We are grateful to them for their excellent performance on our behalf, as well as their hospitality to the many visitors and researchers who use our valuable holdings, one of the

largest collection of German Russian material in the United States.

The AHSGR library holdings are available on Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC), which allows access to our library. The Arthur Flegel book collection has now been added to OCLC. Diane and many volunteers are working tirelessly to complete and update our inventory and holdings. All censuses have been catalogued. The library is arranged in an attractive way. We are most grateful to Diane Wilson, who has recruited a host of volunteers during the past several years to help her with an overwhelming agenda. A big Thank You to Diane and all our volunteers.

Arthur Flegel Library: The Arthur Flegel Library was moved from California to Lincoln in the spring of 2014. We are deeply indebted to this generous, long-time member for the gift of this large German Russian collection of books and research materials that were collected by Mr. Flegel over a lifetime. Diane has spent countless hours this past year cataloguing the 460 books to add to the AHSGR library, which she completed and are now on OCLC. Diane complete cataloguing the 500 binders of information in the Flegel collection, as well. Inventory sheets for these binders can be found in the Flegel Library and have been scanned and saved on the server.

CLUES 2016: *CLUES* is a research tool or a Surname Exchange that enables AHSGR members who are researching similar names to engage in correspondence that can prove mutually beneficial. *CLUES 2016* was sent out timely in December of 2016 and was well received. Our deep “Thank You” to volunteers Pam Wurst, Delores Schwarz, and others for all their work to update the data, and we appreciate the articles that Mike Meisinger added to the publication. Please check your *CLUES 2016* and if you find an error in your information, notify AHSGR.

Village Coordinators (VC) Program: The Genealogy Committee works with VC to preserve our village and family histories, and we solicit all VCs to make their files available in our library holdings. The large collection of village files are scanned and have been digitized. At the AHSGR Board meeting in April, the board voted to spend \$48 a year to obtain a new email address on ahsgr.org to be used for Village Coordinator communication. This allows new emails to be forwarded through Microsoft Outlook rather than RootsWeb, which will allow attachments to be sent by VCs. Unfortunately, there are many villages that do not have Village Coordinators, and if that includes your village, please consider becoming a VC. We continue strive to improve our services to the VC and to promote a strong link of communication between our members, the VC, and AHSGR.

Obituaries: Obituaries are available on FamilySearch. The obituaries for 1988-2013 (Part I) 13-1156, total 130 films, is almost complete and the indexing operations team is working on getting it through the system, adding another large number of obituaries to FamilySearch. The 1950-2016-FSI (German) - Pt 3, with a total of 690 films, is currently with our indexing operations team and being prepared for indexing and arbitration. The Genealogy Committee solicits members' obituaries of ancestors, as well as current GR obituaries, German or English. One can tape the obituary to an 8 X 11 ½ sheet of paper, with a heading of the source of the obit on the left, city and state of source in the middle, and date on the right. The obituary should be taped across the top about 1 inch below heading.

Liaison with Family History Library: Dee Hert offered to serve as liaison with Family History Library (FHL). The Genealogy Committee officially appointed Dee as FHL liaison. Dee provided a *Family History Liaison Report and Additional Projects* showing what information her liaison would provide, which is available upon request.

Surname Charts: The list of Surname Charts has been updated. Our thanks to Pam Wurst and Delores Schwarz for this work. It is not clear to the staff as to what happens to the ownership of a Surname Chart if the owner dies, and if that owner did not allow AHSGR to sell the chart. Sherry Pawelko contacted an attorney to obtain a legal opinion on the sale of Surname Charts donated as *View Only* after donor dies, and is awaiting an opinion from the law office.

Genealogy Road Show: Mike Meisinger led several genealogy workshops in the Kansas City area and a *Genealogy Road Show in Wichita* in spring, to inform people about AHSGR and its valuable resources for German Russian family research. His primary purpose was to bring in new members to AHSGR.

Family Histories: Scanning Family Histories project is in its third year, and volunteers are now working on hard-bound books, which is a much slower process. The “index list” of Family Histories will be put online for the public to see what Family Histories are available at AHSGR.

Ancestor List on AHSGR Website: There are many incorrect dates, and some of the list is not usable. Diane is working with Alton Sissel, Frank McLean, and Kevin Rupp to make corrections to the Ancestor List.

Heritage Hall is a popular area at conventions that includes pictorial displays of many of the areas in Russia, including the Volga, Ukraine (Black Sea), Volhynia and Mennonite regions. Each village or village group has a notebook with further information. You will note at the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Convention the Village Coordinators will meet at 10:15 to 11:15 on Tuesday, Aug. 29. The various Village Area Discussion Groups will meet in the afternoon on Tuesday, Aug. 29m from 1:15 to 5 p.m. Watch the convention schedule for exact time and room where your village area group is meeting.

As you research your family and village history, we continue to work in ways to provide assistance to you. If you have ideas on ways we can improve providing genealogical research help for our members, please feel free to contact any Genealogy Committee member or AHSGR headquarters. Thank you for your support.

Karen Suderman Penner, Chair

Historical Research Committee

Members: Chair Patti Sellenrick, Greg Amen, Bill Doos, Judy Gareis, Bob Meininger, Harold Penner, Kevin Rupp, Karen Soeken, Pam Wurst.

The Historical Research Committee has been actively working on various projects throughout the year, including translations, maintenance and preservation of our numerous collections and museum, and establishing relationships with scholars, researchers, organizations, and others throughout the world. Our committee members work to identify projects and resources that are of importance to the understanding and preservation of the history and culture of the Germans from Russia.

Translation of books, papers, documents and materials we receive from the archives in Russia is a primary focus and a major challenge. One of the strategies we have incorporated is to translate the Tables of Contents and Introductions of books and manuscripts we have identified. Through this process, we can inform our membership and interested individuals about the books and projects and determine interest in proceeding with translation. In addition to Russian, many of the materials are written in German, Spanish and other languages. We are interested in identifying qualified translators to assist with these projects.

The society relies entirely on donor funding to complete a project with a contracted translator, particularly in the case of books and larger manuscripts. In addition, many of our translation projects such as archival records, articles, and documents are completed through generous donations from qualified volunteers. The committee would welcome both the donation of funding for a translation project or individuals who wish to volunteer their time and expertise to help with this huge task. An agreement for both contracted and volunteer translators has been developed in order to provide a clear understanding between the society and translators as to the expectations and outcomes of the project.

Translation projects completed this past year include "*Mein Herz blieb in Russland: Russlanddeutsche erzählen aus ihrem Leben*" Larissa Dyck, Heinrich Mehl (Hg.)— 10. September 2008. Volunteer Translator Anne Stang finished the translation and the project was forwarded to the Editorial and Publications Committee for review, editing and decisions regarding how to disseminate this project.

In addition, the Spanish book, "*Crónicas De Otros Tiempos*" by Generoso Maria Stang is currently being translated by volunteer translator Jan Siebert. This is an ongoing project and a completion date has not been determined.

Other books that have been identified for translation include "*Annotirovannaa opis del kollekcii ...*" (Annotated Inventory of Collection in Engel Archives on Roman Catholic Churches) – originally published (in 2009) for

which we have received a \$1,000 donation. We are interested in receiving additional funding to complete the translation of this project. Another project scheduled for translation is "*Ethnography of Russian Germans*" by Tatiana Smirnova. Progress on this project is also dependent upon donor funding. Several other books have been identified by the committee for translation as soon as donor funding becomes available.

We have asked Village Coordinators and individuals interested in specific villages to take on the translation project for their village[s] which were included in Volumes I and II of the "*History of the Volga German Settlements. Lutheran Colonies*" By Olga Litzenberger. The goal is to get all of the chapters translated in order to make the information available to all researchers. We ask that Village Coordinators and/or individuals who have had the chapter[s] regarding their village translated contact headquarters and make the translation available so it can be included in the translation project and to ensure that we are not duplicating translation efforts.

Translation of articles and letters from the "*Die Welt Post*" which was a German newspaper published in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb., from 1916 to 1936 has been an ongoing project. These articles and letters were received from relatives in Russia and provided a window into the lives of the Germans from Russia as well as a personal update for their families in America. Progress is being made on this project and continues to be dependent upon availability of translators and donor funding. The committee would welcome hearing from translators who are interested as well from those who might donate funding to complete this project.

In addition, we continue to work on transcribing and translating the Aussiedler Tapes. We are attempting to contact members of the German Russian communities in Germany where many of these tapes were recorded and ask for assistance with this project. Although the tapes were recorded in the German language, it is the "old" German which is not used in Germany today and therefore more challenging to understand for individuals not familiar with the German Russians who grew up around the early 1900s. The tapes include information about daily life in Russia and family traditions and are a treasured resource to understand and connect to our heritage. The committee is interested in identifying individuals who have the skills to transcribe these audio tapes, whether living in the United States or elsewhere. We would like to request that anyone who has contact with their German Russian families in Germany or Russia who might be interested in assisting with this project contact either Patti Sellenrick, Chair of the Historical Research Committee, or headquarters.

The society has received a significant amount of archival documents and papers over the years that need translation. These documents are a treasure trove of family information and history and for most of us, the translation of these records is critical to actually understanding the information in them.

A great deal of this material has been publicized through the Archives Committee. Once material is received, the Historical Research Committee assumes responsibility for processing the material in an appropriate manner. This includes determining the proper means for storage, possible translation, and ultimately making it available to our membership and interested researchers either in its original form or in a translated document. Staff and volunteers continually work to maintain this collection and make the materials available either through research in the library or distribution.

Donor funds that are designated specifically for "Translation of Archival Documents" are required to hire qualified translators for this material. Donors may request that their donation be used for the purpose of translation of materials from a specific village. Otherwise the account is used for translation of projects identified by the Historical Research Committee.

Archival records from the village of Neu-Doenhof were translated through a team effort including volunteer translators Mike Frank and Dona Marquardt for most of the documents, and completed by Yulia Tsymbal through designated funds as an independent translator. The materials are currently being edited and prepared for distribution. Interested researchers may contact headquarters for information regarding dissemination of this material.

In addition, documents are being acquired through the generous donation of the Tim Montania bequest. Selection of the villages records to be obtained is based upon the specific directions and terms of the bequest. The first project named as a priority in the bequest included acquisition of archival materials regarding the village of Scherbakovka. A significant amount of these materials have been translated and are available at headquarters. Acquisition of documents and materials from the village of Rosenberg (Ymet) was selected by the archives committee as the next project. Donor funding for this project is needed to proceed with this project.

Staff and volunteers continue to work on the preservation and organization of our collections. One of the concerns that we

have had is the possibility of losing any of our collections to natural disasters such as flooding or other unfortunate incidents. Not only does the scanning of the materials allow us to preserve a copy in an off-site location, but it makes the material more accessible to our membership and interested individuals. We continue to preserve the original documents, photos and other collections in recommended archival safe manner unique to each type of collection. In addition, an ongoing project is to maintain an updated inventory of our collections.

A significant portion of our photo collection has been digitized and the originals stored in a safe manner this past year. In addition, implementing the use of PastPerfect, a software program specifically designed for use by museums, has been a priority this year. This program is widely used by museums across the country and will allow the organization to properly develop and maintain our priceless collections. Donor funding was used to purchase the software and additional funding is needed for the continuous update of the program. Interested individuals may contact Diane Wilson, AHSGR Librarian at headquarters, for more information on this project.

The volunteer museum committee has continued to work diligently to keep an up-to-date inventory of our collections, as well as organize the materials in archival safe storage. The inventories of our collections have been completed both in the museum and headquarters, as well as the other buildings on campus. This highly capable and knowledgeable group continues to develop interesting displays throughout the headquarters building that tell our story and generate interest in our heritage and the society. Whether or not you have had the opportunity to visit headquarters in the past few years, you should put this on your list of regular places to visit. The displays are changed regularly and you don't want to miss this amazing venue!

There is a significant amount of work that remains to be done as well as projects that are not mentioned here. We welcome donations and volunteer assistance to continue with this work. Many of our projects are totally dependent upon the generous donations of our members and interested researchers. Again, thank you to the staff and volunteers who are responsible for this amazing work in all areas.

Patti Sellenrick
Chair

Membership/Public Relations Committee

Members: Chair Karen Soeken, Greg Amen, Richard Davenport, Bill Dellos, Jill Gaddis, Dee Hert, Mike Meisinger, Stephen Murray, Dodie Rotherham, Shirley Wilcoxon

Recruitment and retention of our members is the priority of the committee, but also for the Board of Directors. Hopefully it is a priority for you as a member, encouraging others to join in our mission of preserving and disseminating information about our unique German Russian background and culture.

One of the major committee recommendations adopted by the Board of Directors was to change our annual membership from the calendar year to one year from the date of joining. As a result of this change implemented in July 2016, we have seen an increase in the number of members joining in the latter months of the year. As of July 15, 2017, our membership totals 2,855. That includes 1,094 Life Members, 1,405 Standard Members, 275 Sustaining Members, 32 Youth and Students members, 31 Supporting Organizations, and 18 Exchange Members.

Unfortunately this number is slightly below that from one year ago. However, we continue to reach for 3,000+ members, a goal we can accomplish only if each member is excited to share information about AHSGR and encourage others to join. You can commit to be an ambassador for the Society by promoting the benefits of membership. With your help we can continue to see our membership grow.

Here are some of the activities of the Membership/Public Affairs Committee this past year:

- Changed our annual membership from the calendar year to one year from date of joining.
- Implemented a policy of distributing publications to annual members electronically as a cost-saving

approach. Members can still receive the publications in hard copy for an extra \$15/year.

- Conducted the membership renewal campaign for those on calendar year membership.
- Worked with Headquarters staff to develop paid advertising for Michigan History and Our Wisconsin in advance of the 2017 convention.
- Reviewed the nominations received for the 2017 Distinguished Service Award and 2017 Special Citation and forwarded the names of those selected for affirmation by the Executive Committee.
- Developed a 2017 Membership/Public Affairs Committee budget presented to the Finance Committee in September 2016.
- Helped to plan the Recognition Luncheon and Chapter Leaders Meeting for the 2017 convention.
- Shared summaries of Board of Directors meetings with Chapter Leaders. The Committee welcomes your comments and suggestions about membership. Please share your ideas with the Committee chair or with the Executive Director.

Nominating Committee

During the board year 2016 - 2017 the Nominating Committee met at the October and April Board of Directors meetings in Lincoln, Neb., to prepare for the 2017 board year elections. Members of the committee are Chair Dodie Rotherham, Nancy Borrell, Rob Miller, Mike Meisinger, Karen Penner and Jill Gaddis.

One of our goals was to continue to evaluate the board cycles and ensure board membership was maintained and 1/3 of the board rotated off each year. This task has been completed and the board cycles continue to be and are currently in sync.

Cycle 2 board term ends July 2017 which automatically opens 10 board positions. In addition, there is one open position in cycle 2.

The committee developed a list of candidates to fill vacancies. Candidates have been contacted and all nominees listed have agreed to serve. As of June 2017, nine of the 10 Cycle 2 positions have been filled.

Remaining positions to be filled for cycle 2

District 2: Washington and Alaska (2 seats in district)

- 1 Three-year position 2017 2020

Remaining open seats:

District 11: Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri (2 seats)

- 1 Two-year opening (cycle 1 2016 – 2019)

District 13: Canada and other countries (1 seat)

- 1 Two-year term (cycle 1 2016-2019)

District 14: At Large

- 1 Two-year term (cycle 1 2016-2019)

Dodie Reich Rotherham, Chair

Technology Committee

Members are Harold Penner and Pam Wurst, co-chairs; Dee Hert and Kevin Rupp (website advisor).

Few problems were reported in 2016-17. The Your Membership software is working well and those problems that we had

found were addressed and we have moved forward. AHSGR's new Customer Support Specialist, Joe Coleman, has adapted to Your Membership and is doing well.

All staff computers that could be updated to Windows 10 were updated by Hannah before she left. That leaves Cindy's, Yulia's, the book store's and the public computer in the library not updated, due to being incompatible. They will be replaced in the next two years (2018-2019).

We have taken 10 of the oldest computers, three old heavy monitors and a printer that expired out of inventory. The computers were no longer supported by Microsoft and were taking up valuable space in the vault. Hannah erased their drives. This still leaves us with four spare towers, monitors and many keyboards that can be used if needed. No one wanted them after we checked with schools and day-care centers so they were taken to Goodwill. Other obsolete equipment and computer parts will be disposed of this coming year to make room in the vault.

We continue to support the staff in getting ready for convention in Milwaukee as we did last year. We are trying to be prepared for any problems that may arise. Last year we had problems with the hotel's VPN system not being able to handle the amount of equipment that we brought. Due to the small number of members from our committee attending this year because of illnesses, we will have to rely on volunteers and staff to help us with manpower.

We have been advised by Biz Co not to use the two oldest laptops (aka D. White purchase) at convention since they are no longer supported by Microsoft security updates due to their age. They are still working and good for in-house use but not internet. Due to the budget constraints, we will make do with the equipment we have this year and see if it will be necessary to replace these laptops at a later date. Diane has been using the free Drop Box app to move large amounts of information between her and Kevin. She also uses it to send information for research requests. The only drawback is the limited amount of storage space for files within the app.

We still have our wish list for future purchases. A desktop scanner is on the list so far.

Harold Penner and Pam Wurst, Co-Chairs

Ad-Hoc Fundraising Committee

The Ad-Hoc Fundraising Committee has met frequently this past year through conference calls and at the AHSGR board of directors' meetings to evaluate the current fundraising activities, determine future financial needs and develop plans to meet those needs.

Committee members Cheryl Glanz, Nancy Borrell, Jerry Siebert, Rob Miller, Dennis Reich, Bill Dellos and Co-Chairs Dodie Rotherham and Don Soeken, have developed a plan to improve and increase outreach and communications with AHSGR chapters, individual members and leaders, and a fundraising plan for 2017-2018. Outreach will be in printed and email format. Information will be focused on various programs and activities of the entire organization – chapters and headquarters office. As these plans are implemented we will evaluate progress and effectiveness of each.

Recommendations for outreach and fundraising may be given to any committee or board of directors member.

Dodie Rotherham, Chair