

55TH INTERNATIONAL AHSGR CONVENTION AGENDA

**Events with this symbol require previous registration*

Wednesday, July 30

Time	Event	Location
7:30 am-5:00 pm	Registration	Hotel Lobby
9:00 am-5:00 pm	Silent Auction open	Regents D-E
9:00 am-5:00 pm	Vendors	Regents D-E
9 am-11:30 am	Historic Tour of Lincoln's German Russian Community Led by Ed Zimmer* Board bus at 8:30 am, bus leaves at 9 am	
8:15 am	Welcome - Jack Unger, Convention Committee Chair Opening Prayer - Rev. "Bud" Christenson	Regents B-C
8:30 - 11:00 am	Day 1: Research/ Heritage Center Panel Karen Keehr The AHSGR Library and Archives holds a treasure trove of German Russian Resources. When you visit the Heritage Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, you will have access to over 7,000 books and other publications, 1200 plus Volga and Black Sea village records, nearly 500 surname charts, and so much more. AHSGR also holds approximately 7,200 linear feet of archival material with nearly 400 unique collections. Karen will show you how to prepare for your in-person visit, what to expect when you arrive, and how she processes the Archival collections for use and digitization. Emily Gengenbach Our library archive contains the largest collection of German Russian research information in the Western Hemisphere. It continues to grow as new materials are constantly added. Some titles are available for inter-library loans. An exciting part of the collection is the translated records from the Russian Archives. Many of the research items have been published and may be purchased from the AHSGR store or from a private researcher. Libby Horken AHSGR Editorial and Publications promotes the development, publication, and dissemination of publications, digital media related to the history, culture, and genealogy of Germanic Settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants. Libby will go over the different types of publications AHSGR offers and how to access select publications online such as Journals and Newsletters. Allyson Maughan - Solving your Picture Problems Pictures tell a brilliant story about our ancestors. But, what do we do when pictures have problems! No writing on the back? Too many conflicting names and dates? Unfamiliar faces? Come learn the antidote to these dilemmas and finally use those pictures in your research. Carolyn Zeisset - Sharing Your Heritage Stories This is an interactive session with prompts for telling stories from your family heritage. Bring your cell phone to record yourself as you tell a story to one other person. Please know ahead of time how to use the record feature on your phone. You will leave with at least two stories to do with as you wish afterwards.	Regents B-C
11 am-12 pm	Round Table Discussion	

Wednesday, July 30, continued

12:00-1:30 pm	Lunch on your own	
1 pm-4 pm	AHSGR Store open	Heritage Center
1 pm-4 pm	Research Room	Heritage Center
1:30 - 3:pm	Day 1: “Germany” Panel	Regents B-C
	Wayne Garman - <i>War and German Immigration to Russia 1760 to 1820</i> This presentation will focus on four wars and their aftermath during the time period 1760 to 1820. They include the Napoleonic Wars, the Seven Years War, the Russo – Ottoman conflicts, and the Polish Russian War of 1792 which resulted in the partitions of Poland.	
	Carolyn Schott - <i>1816: The Year Without a Summer and Its Impact on German Migration</i> The eruption of Mt. Tambora in Indonesia unleashed a volcanic winter that reverberated around the globe, earning the year 1816 the name “The Year Without a Summer.” Immense quantities of volcanic ash drastically altered weather patterns and created unseasonably cold temperatures that caused crop failures and food shortages. This crisis prompted many Germans to seek new opportunities abroad, both in the U.S. and in the Russian Empire, which offered both land and religious freedom. This presentation discusses the intertwined environmental, economic, and social ramifications of the Year Without a Summer, highlighting its pivotal role in the history of German emigration.	
	Eric Schmaltz - <i>“The Dutch Legacy”: Russian Mennonite Diasporas on Four Continents in the Age of Empires, Revolutions, and Extremes (1786-Present)</i> This broad interdisciplinary overview will integrate several key themes in Russian Mennonite history. This diaspora people often has pursued socio-economic opportunities and religious freedom amid ever-changing and at times even quite challenging, if not dangerous, political landscapes worldwide (push-pull factors), from the early years of the Wars of Religion and religious persecution to the more enlightened era of European rulers and countries of mass immigration worldwide inviting them as prospective settlers, to the later terribly destructive secular conflicts of the Seven Years’ War (1756- 1763), the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815), World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) to the November 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath under Soviet Communism, and even today with Globalization.	
3:00-3:30 pm	Round Table Discussion	
3:45-5:15 pm	Village Gathering - Ray Karlin, Village Coordinator Liaison	Regents B-C
6:00-8:00 pm	Welcome Night - Join fellow attendees for a light meal and fellowship, doors open at 5:30 pm Board buses to Firefighter’s Hall at 5:45 pm, returns to Embassy Suites at 8:15 pm	Firefighter’s Hall, map on pg. 5

Thursday, July 31

7:30 am-5:30 pm	Registration	Hotel Lobby
9 am-11 am	AHSGR Store open	Heritage Center
9 am-11 am	Research Room open	Heritage Center
8 am-5 pm	Silent Auction open	Regents D-E
8 am-5 pm	Vendors	Regents D-E
8:30 -10:30 am	Spring Creek Audubon Center Tour* Bus loads at 8:15 am, bus leaves Embassy Suites at 8:30 am	
8:30 -10:30 am	Day 2 Russia Panel Sandy Schilling Payne - <i>The Geography of German Settlement in the Russian Empire</i> Presented as a timeline and illustrated with maps, this session provides a sweeping survey of the locations and history of where Germans settled and migrated within the context of the territorial evolution of Imperial Russia between 1721 and 1914. Kim Phillips - <i>From Europe to Dreispitz: A Quest to Find Missing Generations in a Volga German Lineage</i> Follow a Kansas family's decades-long journey to piece together the puzzle of their German Russian heritage. Learn about the research that led to finding descendants of family members who left Germany and Sweden to settle in the lower Volga area. Reinhard Nactigal - <i>Russian Germans as soldiers of the Tsarist Army, captured by German troops in 1914-1917</i> In 1914, Russian Germans, subjects of the Russian Empire, were either caught by the outbreak of war in Germany, or were taken prisoners of war by the Central Powers. In 1915 and 1916, some more ended in German hands, when these armies advanced into western Russia. 18,000 of these Russian Germans were soldiers of the Tsarist army. The presentation aims to deal with two questions: How did the German leadership deal with their Russian German captives, enemy soldiers, as well as enemy aliens? Which plans did it develop for them in the near future, and when did it implicate such plans?	Regents B-C
10:30-11:30 am	Round Table Discussions	Regents A
11:30 am-1 pm	Annual Business and Society Luncheon Society Annual Meeting Presiding: Bob Ahlbrandt, President Standing Rules of Order for Meeting (see page 26) Appointments for meeting (Timekeeper, Parliamentarian, Minutes Review) Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting (see pages 28-30) President's Message Executive Director's Report – Karen Keehr Standing Committee Annual Reports (see QR code on page 27) Proposed Bylaw Changes (see pages 23-24) Election of Board Members (see page 31) Foundation Annual Meeting Presiding: Peter Kaland, President	Regents B-C
1:30 pm-5:30 pm	AHSGR Store open	Heritage Center
1:30 pm-5:30 pm	Research Room open	Heritage Center

Thursday, July 31, continued

1:00 -3:00 pm	Day 2 PM Russia Villages Panel Wyatt Atchley & Sawyer Flynn - <i>Those Who Stayed: German-Russians Under Russification</i> “Those Who Stayed” examines the experiences of ethnic Germans who remained in Russia amid intensifying Russification from 1871 through the post-World War II era. Exploring the numerous historical events that shaped their lives, including cultural repression, the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution, forced deportations, and the hardships endured during the Holodomor and World War II. Through compelling first-hand accounts and historical analysis, the presenters shed light on the resilience and struggles of the German-Russian community that stayed. William Ridinger - <i>The Demise of Rohrbach and the Berasan Colonies – a Personal Perspective</i> One family’s struggle during the years leading up to the German declaration of war against the Soviet Union in 1941, and the events during the occupation years and beyond. While under the control of the Romanian army, German Sonderkammerado units were mobilized to the region to indoctrinate the local Germans, or Volksdeutsche, into Nazi society. Lisamarie Griebel Small - <i>The Families that Remained: Life in the Autonomous Volga German Republic</i> The years between the World Wars were plagued by upheaval, famine, and collectivization. For Russian Germans, especially those in the Volga Republic, it was also a time of unprecedented cultural autonomy when the German language, education, and cultural expression flourished. What was life like for those who stayed in Russia? Come and explore the highs and lows of the early Soviet years in the Russian German community that maintained close contact with their American relatives.	Regents B-C
3:00-3:30 pm	Kuchen Break	Regents B-C
3:30-4:30 pm	Tanja Schell & Tatiana Zabolotneva - <i>Discovering my German Russian Heritage and my Family History: A Joint Presentation by Two Volga German Women</i> This joint presentation by Tatiana Zabolotneva of Russia and Tanja Schell of Germany focuses on their mutual interest in family history. Coming from different generational perspectives – although both have ancestral ties to the same area, the former Frank Kanton in today’s Volgograd region – they discuss their individual process of growing up and learning about their German Russian heritage while being part of a Volga German community. Elisabeth Litzenberger - <i>Fairy tales, legends and epic of the Russian Germans: the story of “Kirghiz” Mikhel and beautiful Anna from the Volga</i> As children, we were all told wonderful fairy tales. We listened to legends and read myths. The difference between them is conventional: myths are shrouded in mystery, fairy tales – magic, and epic preserves the heroic past of the people, intertwined with historical events. As long as the epic is passed on from generation to generation, it lives in the people’s memories. Lena Wolf - <i>“May The Universe Be Your Home!” - A graphic novel about the Germans from the Russian Empire/Kazakhstan</i> My story spans multiple timelines and locations: Present-day London, where I currently live; my childhood in Soviet-era Kazakhstan; the 1941 deportations when my family was forcibly moved from Ukraine to Kazakhstan; and our eventual relocation to Germany.	
4:30 - 5:30 pm	Round Table Discussions	
5:30 - 6:30 pm	Chapter Presidents Meeting	Regents B-C

Friday, August 1

7:30 am-1:30 pm	Registration	
8 am-2 pm	AHSGR Store open	Heritage Center
8 am-2 pm	Research Room open	Heritage Center
8 am-12:00 pm	Silent Auction open	Regents D-E
8 am-3 pm	Vendors	Regents D-E
8:30 - 11:30 am	Day 3 America Panel André Hammann - <i>1824-2024: 200 years of Germans in Brazil</i> Andre will discuss the 200 year history of Germans in Brazil. Brazil has the second largest German immigrants after the USA. He will discuss their hard beginning, hard work, education (language/ dialects), religion and other cultural aspects. Tina (Katharina) Siemens - <i>Talk about the migration to Chihuahua Mexico from Canada in 1922 and then to Seminole Texas in 1977</i> I opened the West Texas Living Heritage Museum in Seminole Texas featuring the history of Texas and the immigrations of the Mennonite, the Mennonite Brethren church that immigrated to Kansas who sent out missionary to the Commanche Nation in Oklahoma. Bill Pickelhaupt - <i>Kind Colony on the Volga. An in-depth look</i> Kind was a colony on the Meadowside of the Volga. Just before WWI about 10% of the village residents migrated to the United States; those who survived the early decades of communism were deported mainly to Mansky District in Kazakhstan. Mark Loudon - <i>Germans from Russia and Diversity in German America</i> Mark will examine the acculturation patterns of Anabaptist and non-Anabaptist Germans from Russia who migrated to North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and compare them with other German American groups. He will focus on three major aspects: engagement in civic life, language maintenance and shift, and participation in public expressions/celebrations of German American identity. He will further consider post-migration patterns of confessional loyalty, mutual cultural transfer, and interethnic marriage. He will show that non-Anabaptist German migrants from Russia resemble other German Americans with respect to acculturation, while among Anabaptists, the picture is more complex.	Regents B-C
11:30 am-12 pm	Round Tables Discussions	
12:00 pm	Silent Auction closes	Regents D-F
12:30-3:00 pm	Pay and pick up Silent Auction items	Regents D-F
12:00 - 1 pm	Lunch on your own	

Friday, August 1, continued

1 pm - 3:30 pm	<p>Day 3 PM: America Panel</p> <p>Jason Phillips - <i>Don't Forget About the Camels: How the Germans from Russia Have Retained their Heritage Across the Great Plains</i></p> <p>America is home to immigrant groups from every corner of the globe, but few have as fascinating of a history as the Germans from Russia. Whether discussing their heritage in Russia, or subsequent immigration to the United States, the Germans from Russia have thrived. This presentation explores how the Germans from Russia, particularly those living in the Great Plains, have understood their history and heritage by exploring published memoirs, archival research, and an examination of AHSGR's museum in Lincoln, Nebraska.</p> <p>Bridgette Crosby - <i>Stone by Stone: Volga Germans and Their Lasting Influence on Western Culture, Food, and Farming</i></p> <p>This presentation shares story of my quest to locate, preserve, and protect my great-grandfather's millstones. Imported from France in 1874, these millstones were used in one of the first grist mills west of the Mississippi River built by my Volga German grandfather. After years of waiting, I have located the millstones. My presentation will include family photographs, personal stories, and a celebration of the vital role Volga Germans played in shaping agriculture in the American West.</p> <p>Olga Litzenberger - <i>The role of religion for the Russian Germans after the deportation: interviews with contemporary witnesses, sociological and historical analyses</i></p> <p>The struggles of some survivors will be shared as well as methods used to dig out background facts.</p> <p>Michael Brown - <i>A Quest for Relatives in Kazakhstan</i></p> <p>German Russian migrations to western Siberia, including northern Kazakhstan, started in the late 1800s a few decades before periods of exile under the Soviets. Several years ago, I discovered a village in northern Kazakhstan named Karamyshevka that was started in 1906 by Germans. Karamyshevka was also the Russian name of Bauer, the village in the Volga region that was home to my German Russian relatives. I suspected residents of Karamyshevka in the Volga region started the village in Kazakhstan and wondered if my own relatives were involved.</p>	Regents B-C
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Round Table Discussions	
4:30 - 5:30 pm	Post Election BOD meeting	Chancellor 2-3
5:30 pm	Cocktail hour-Cash Bar	Regents B-C
6 - 8 pm	<p>Banquet</p> <p>Presiding: Bob Ahlbrandt, President</p> <p>Invocation</p> <p>Introduction of New Officers of the Society and Foundation</p> <p>Presentation of Distinguished Service Awards</p> <p>Presentation of Special Citation Awards</p> <p>Banquet Speaker: Mark Loudon, PhD <i>Germans from Russia and Diversity in German America</i></p> <p>Quilt Raffle</p> <p>Lantern Presentation: Jack Unger</p> <p>Closing</p>	Regents B-C