

# AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA



## MEMBER HANDBOOK



AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

Honoring our Past • Embracing the Future

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# WILLKOMMEN TO AHSGR!

Dear New Member,

Welcome to the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR)!

AHSGR provides resources to aid in genealogical research that is related to the history of Germans from Russian, the cultural and genealogy of the Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants. As you discover your family story, you are likely to connect with newfound relatives while expanding your knowledge of all things German Russian.

Your membership entitles you access to all areas on the AHSGR website, which include discounts in the Store, access to the online and the Heritage Center research library, and free admission to the museum. Our ever-expanding library contains the largest collection of Germans from Russia information in the Western Hemisphere. It includes translated records from the Russian Archives, birth records, family history lists, passport applications and immigration records, surname ancestral charts, and much more. Our newest and exciting project is the online searchable "Archive and Special Collections" database which contains images of photographs, archives, and artifacts.

Additional genealogical resources include our knowledgeable AHSGR staff, Village Coordinators, and Society members who can assist you with your research. Village Coordinators (VC) help find answers to questions specific to certain villages. (<https://ahsgr.org/village-coordinators/>). The AHSGR Facebook page is dedicated to the history of Germans who settled in Eastern Europe in the 18th & 19th centuries. Over 8k followers post information, make discoveries, ask, and answer questions. (<https://facebook.com/AHSGR/>).

The AHSGR Newsletters and Journals are published quarterly. The newsletter covers up to date announcements about new resources, the annual convention, and general news. The Journal contains articles and information pertaining to German Russian history, culture, genealogy, folklore, and families.

Local chapter meetings are a great way to make connections and discover more about your heritage. Some AHSGR chapters have their own research libraries. You can find local chapters for area-wide activities near you at <https://www.ahsgr.org/page/Chapters>. We invite you to join in both local and national activities. You might just meet a cousin or two!

We thank you for choosing to join AHSGR.

Willkommen und mach's gut!



AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

Honoring our Past • Embracing the Future

*The mission of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is to discover, collect, preserve, and share the history, cultural heritage, and genealogical legacy of Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire.*



INTERNATIONAL  
FOUNDATION

*The International Foundation of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (IFAHSGR) is responsible for exercising financial stewardship to generate, manage, and allocate resources, which advance the mission and assist in securing the future of AHSGR.*

# AHSGR HISTORY

The Germans from Russia story begins in 1762 with the Manifesto issued by Catherine the Great. Migrations to Russia were many and by the end of the 19th century, there were about 1.8 million Germans in Russia. In 1872, the Germans in Russia began to emigrate to the United States, Canada, Brazil, and Argentina.

With a large population of Germans from Russia in Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado, there was interest in forming an organization. Thus, AHSGR was founded in 1968 and incorporated that same year in the state of Colorado. AHSGR is designated as a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization by the IRS. Volunteers and staff at both local chapter and international levels search for information, translate documents, and develop a store-house of knowledge useful to current and future generations.

In 1973, the AHSGR office was relocated to Lincoln, Nebraska. On June 15, 1983, at its 15th International Convention, AHSGR dedicated its newly constructed International Headquarters Building and Heritage

Center. At the 25th International Convention in Denver, Colorado, in 1993, the complex was named the **AHSGR Cultural Heritage Research Center**. The center is between 6th and 7th streets from C to D streets, in the neighborhood known as the South Bottoms, designated by the National Park Service as a Historic District. The South Bottoms and North Bottoms neighborhoods were the principal settlements of Germans from Russia in Lincoln at the turn of the 20th century.

The **Cultural Heritage Research Center** (Headquarters Complex) includes:

- Jake Sinner Headquarters Building
- Emma Schwabenland Haynes Library & Archives, which includes the following individual collections:
  1. David J. Miller Collection
  2. Lawrence A. Weigel Collection
  3. William and Edith Spady Historical Records Collection
- Arthur E. Flegel Genealogical Center
- Museum with displays and artifacts
- German from Russia Pioneer Family Commemorative Statue by Pete Felton and Brick Garden
- Historical Village buildings:
  1. All Faiths Chapel
  2. General Store
  3. Summer Kitchen
  4. Amen Barn



*All Faiths Chapel at Headquarters Complex in Lincoln*

# WHO ARE WE AND WHAT IS AHSGR?

BY MICHAEL BROWN

On Saturday night my grandparents, who were farmers, turned on the TV and adjusted the antenna to receive the “Lawrence Welk Show.” Welk was a band leader with a music variety show that appealed to an older audience. I preferred the excellent bass playing of Randy Meisner with the Eagles, and later the songwriting of Chris Isaak. Although I didn’t know it at the time, the musicians and my family had one thing in common, we are descendants of “Germans from Russia.” A quick search reveals that Germans from Russia have been prominent in business, film, music, politics, and sports. Sounds somewhat confusing. Are these people German, Russian, or American? The answer is yes! These identities reflect the cultural characteristics and circumstances of a unique people whose history is still being written.

In the 1760s, Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, who was born into German nobility, invited German-speaking peoples of Europe to establish agricultural villages in the Russian Empire. She promised benefits including keeping their language, traditions, and religion, along with exemptions from certain taxes and military service. It was an attractive offer. The first Germans to arrive settled along the Volga River, with later groups settling the Black Sea regions, into the Caucasus and the Volhynian area of today’s Poland. They became known as hard workers, dedicated to their families and communities, with strong religious convictions. For generations these people remained German in their identity and culture while Russian in their citizenship.

The late 1800s and early 1900s brought significant social changes that threatened the German way of life. German Russians were viewed with some derision, exemptions were eliminated, and civil unrest brought chaos and hardship. The result was a movement of German Russians into the Americas. The North American Great Plains and the prairies of Canada

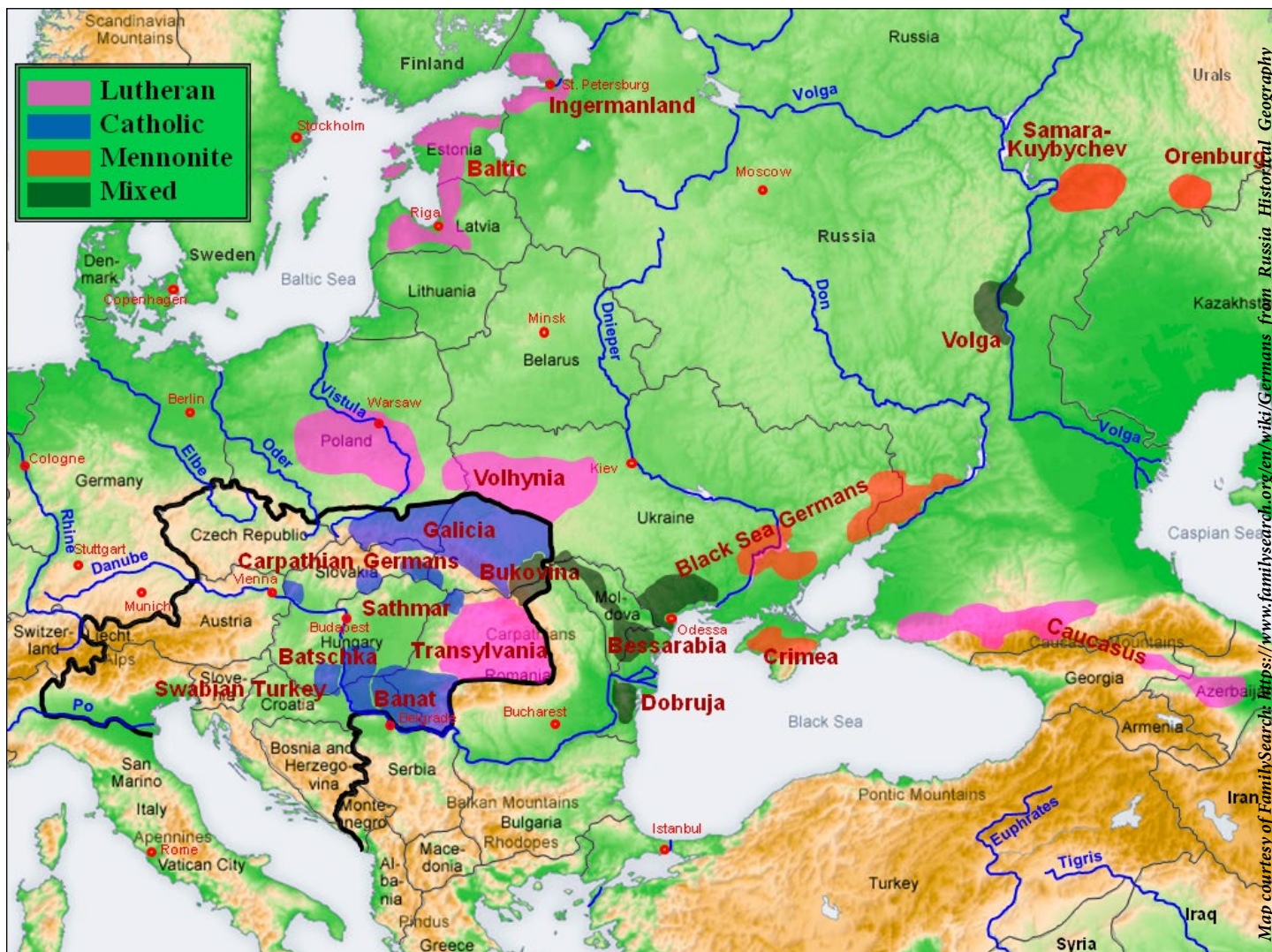
became important destinations, as did areas of South America. These are our DNA relatives, The “Germans from Russia.”

Most did not emigrate. Those choosing to stay suffered through the revolution and under Soviet policies. By the late 1920s the Soviets severely restricted correspondence with people outside the Soviet Union making contact with relatives in Russia nearly impossible. The final disconnection came when Germany invaded Russia in 1941 and German Russians were forced into exile in Siberia and Central Asia. Some died on the way, others disappeared in special settlements and gulag camps, and others were worked to death in the people’s army (*trudarmya*). When the Soviet Union finally dissolved, many of those who survived left Russia for Germany, while, again, some remained behind. These are also our relatives.

The story of what it means to be a “German from Russia” is epic with many twists, turns and tragedies and triumphs. The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) is the premier nonprofit organization dedicated to the story of Germans from Russia. Its role “is to discover, collect, preserve, and share the history, cultural heritage, and genealogical legacy of German Settlers in the Russian Empire.”

Since its start in 1968, AHSGR has been dedicated and passionate about sharing what they know. The AHSGR library and research center has an extensive collection of resources to help patrons learn about the history, folklore, genealogy, and ethnic heritage of German Russian people; and these resources help people discover their personal family history and connect with lost relatives. AHSGR provides opportunities to interact with other Germans from Russia through annual conventions, chapter meetings, and online presentations. The AHSGR Journal provides cutting-edge research and information while

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the Newsletter keeps members informed about the important work of the organization. The epic story of the Germans from Russia continues to unfold and AHSGR will ensure the story is told.

My grandparents piqued my curiosity about being German Russian and AHSGR provided the resources to guide my curiosity. Once I learned about Germans from Russia I had a greater appreciation for my

ancestors' sacrifices, and the success of people like Lawrence Welk. Through AHSGR I found that my family were original settlers along the Volga. I also found the names of relatives who moved to Kazakhstan, and I am still looking for more family. None of this would have been possible without the resources of AHSGR and their important work.

Written by Michael Brown, July 2023.

# IMPORTANT HISTORICAL DATES OF GERMAN RUSSIANS

**April 21, 1729:** Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst is born in Germany, later to rule Russia under the name Catherine II (Catherine the Great).

**1756-1763:** ...in bringing Germans to Lower Volga to establish colonies.

**June 28, 1762:** Catherine II ascends the throne of Russia.

**Dec. 4, 1762:** Catherine II issues First Manifesto inviting foreigners to come to Russia. It brings few results.

**July 22, 1763:** Catherine issues her second manifesto, spelling out conditions under which they could immigrate and granting special rights and privileges. Large numbers of German peasants accept the offer

**1764-1767:** Founding of German colonies along the Lower Volga River.

**1771-1774:** Kirghiz Raids and Pugachev's rebellion, called the Pugachevshchina, ravages the Volga colonies.

**1786:** Mennonites from West Prussia begin immigrating to Russia due to 1772 Partition of Poland, threatening their military service exemption as conscientious objectors. Settlements are established primarily in the Taurida region of South Russia.

**1793:** Second Partition of Poland grants area of Volhynia to Russia and Polish landowners invite German peasants to lease land for cultivation.

**Nov. 6, 1796:** Death of Catherine II at age 67.

**1796-1801:** Reign of Czar Paul I, son of Catherine II.

**1801-1825:** Reign of Tsar Alexander I, the beloved grandson of Catherine II.

**Feb. 20, 1804:** Alexander I modifies and reissues the manifesto of Catherine II, inviting foreigners to settle in New Russia.

**1825-1855:** Reign of Tsar Nicholas I, grandson of Catherine II, brother of Alexander I.

**1830:** Polish Insurrection brings about immigration of many Polish Germans to the Bessarabia and Volga Region.

**1855-1881:** Reign of Tsar Alexander II, great-grandson of Catherine II, son of Nicholas I.

**1860s:** Another wave of Germans immigrate to Volhynia, prompted by the 1861 abolition of serfdom, causing a significant drain on work force. Second Polish Insurrection of 1863 brings more Polish Germans to Volhynia and other areas.

**1871:** Germany unifies as a nation for the first time, creating unease among European nations and Russia. Animosity towards foreigners increases in Russia due to Slavophile movement and nationalism.

**June 4, 1871:** Imperial Russian Government issues decree repealing the Manifesto of Catherine II and Alexander I, terminating special privileges of German colonists.

**Jan. 13, 1874:** Imperial Russian Government issues second decree amending the previous one and instituting compulsory military conscription for German colonists. Thousands of German Russians eventually leave for North and South America.

**1881-1917:** Reign of Tsar Nicholas II, descendant of Catherine II and last monarch to rule Russia. He abdicates during World War I, and on July 16, 1918, the Bolsheviks execute him and his family.

**July 28, 1914:** Outbreak of World War I.

**1915:** Advancement of Eastern front. Volhynian Germans are deported to the Volga Region and South Russia.

**Dec. 13, 1916:** Volga Germans ordered to be banished. Degree not carried out due to internal strife in Parliament.

**Nov. 7, 1917:** Bolshevik Revolution in Russia led by Vladimir Lenin and beginning of Communist regime (Oct. 25, 1917, by old-style Russian Calendar).

**June 29, 1918:** Lenin establishes Autonomous Volga German Workers' Commune, forerunner to the ASSR of the Volga Germans, founded in 1924.

**1920-1923:** Famine in Russia causing death by starvation of an estimated 166,000 in Volga German colonies alone, one third of the population. The American Relief Administration provides assistance.

**January 1924:** Autonomous Socialistic Soviet Republic of the Volga Germans is established.

**1928-1933:** The second period of famine claims many lives throughout Russia.

**1928-1940:** German farms and property expropriated by Soviet government. Germans are forced into collective farms or they migrate to the cities. Period of Stalinization.

**Sept. 1, 1939:** Outbreak of World War II.

**June 22, 1941:** Nazi Germany invades Soviet Russia.

**Aug. 20, 1941:** Beginning of the banishment and exile of the German population in Russia. Crimean Germans deported.

**Aug. 28, 1941:** Decree ordering deportation of Volga Germans to northeastern part of Soviet Union, Middle Asia and Siberia.

**October 1941:** Germans in the North and South Caucasus deported. St. Petersburg Germans also deported.

**1955:** Legal restrictions are repealed allowing German Russians to relocate within the USSR from special settlement exile locations. Returning to their home village prohibited.

**1989:** Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples program implemented, which included German Russians

**1991:** Glasnost, the democratization of the Soviet Union, allowed German Russians to emigrate to Germany.

## SUGGESTED READING ON THE HISTORY OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

All the books listed below may be borrowed from the AHSGR Library via interlibrary loan, and some may be available for purchase from the AHSGR Bookstore at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org).

***Conquering the Wind*, by Amy Brungardt Toepfer and Agnes Dreiling.** This book deals with the development of the early Volga colonies, particularly with life in the Catholic villages. It also follows some of the families from these villages to the plains of Kansas where they settled in Ellis County.

***From Catherine to Khrushchev*, by Adam Giesinger.** An historian's history of Germans in Russia from the 17th century to 1970. The book includes a useful chapter locating individual colonies within their geographical and governmental districts, twenty-seven pages of maps, and a bibliography of nearly 200 items.

***The German Colonies in South Russia, Vol 1 & 2*, by Conrad P Keller.** Vol. 1 provides a historic geographical overview of all the Black Sea mother colonies, with a more detailed account of the Liebental colonies, particularly the Catholic villages of Kleinliebental, Josephstal, Mariental, and Franzfeld. Vol. 2 provides information of value for genealogists of the Berezan colonies, since it includes detailed information about the original settlers.

***The 'German Question' in the Black Sea Region and in Volhynia*, by Dietmar Neutatz.** The book covers a key period in German Russian history that involves the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as the first two decades of the twentieth century when Russian public discussion focused on the German colonists in the south and southwestern Russian empire and explores examples of the problems faced by ethnic, religious, and social minorities, when nationalism and economic difficulties occur.

***History of the Volga German Colonists*, by Jacob E Dietz.** This book is a fascinating documentation of the history, lives, economics and politics of their times. Historians have long known of the existence of the

manuscript of Jacob Dietz, which has been included in a series of bibliographic guides, but its location was long unknown. It was found only a few years ago in the Engels branch of the State Archive of the Saratov Oblast.

***Memorial Book Kazakhstan*, by Ludmilla Burghardt, Johannes Dyck, Olga Litzenberger, Waldemar**

**Schmidt, Michael Wanner.** This book discusses the state terror inflicted on Germans from 1919-1953 in modern day Kazakhstan.

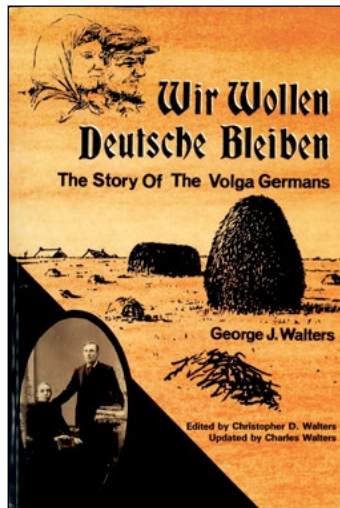
***The Odyssey of Anna K*, by Wilmer A. Harms.** The dramatic accounts of thousands of German Russians fleeing Russia and escaping through China to the Americas.

***Thunder on the Steppe*, by Dr. Timothy and Rosalinda Klobberdanz.** The authors collected numerous examples of modern Volga German folk traditions in Russia, and many of these are described in *Thunder on the Steppe* folksongs, folk medicine, proverbs, nicknames,

poetry, dialect stories, drinking toasts, and food ways including recipes for Volga style vegetable soup, Gatletta (meat patties), Grebbel, Trockne Nudel, Riwwelkuche, Petschenya (cookies), and other dishes.

***The White Lamb*, by Mela Meisner Lindsay.** A novel depicting the life of the author's mother in a Volga colony, her immigration to America, and the life of the early Germans from Russia in Kansas. This is pleasant reading enjoyed by all generations.

***Wir Wollen Deutsche Bleiben*, by George J. Walters.** Despite the German title, the book is in English. In writing this story of the Volga Germans from Catherine the Great through World War II, Walters used first-hand reports and information from captured German war documents on microfilm at the National Archives to make this book more personalized than the previously mentioned works.



***“Wir Wollen Deutsche Bleiben” by George J. Walters***

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **AHSGR JOURNAL**

This is a scholarly, quarterly publication disseminating documented information about the history, culture, and heritage of the Germans from Russia through articles, essays, family histories, anecdotes, folklore, and book reviews. The *Journal* is distributed electronically to current members. US-based members may opt to receive physical *Journal* by mail for an additional annual charge. Members may view *Journals* may be viewed in PDF format at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org) under Publications.

## **AHSGR NEWSLETTER**

This quarterly publication provides information about current and upcoming activities and programs, a list of new AHSGR members and chapter news. It is distributed to members along with the *Journal*.

## **ANNUAL CONVENTION**

Conventions are held annually and hosted by various chapters or regions. The event includes sessions on genealogy, history, culture, folklore, international speakers, research opportunities, and updates on information available from the Russian archives. The Annual Membership Meeting is held during Convention for the purpose of transacting AHSGR business. There are reduced registration fees for members.

## **AWARDS**

The Distinguished Service Award (for exceptional and meritorious service of a member who has made a noticeable and positive impact on the Society or Foundation in advancing their goals and purposes) and the Special Citation Award (for a one-time outstanding act or continued superior performance in a given area of responsibility) are presented at the annual convention. Any member in good standing may submit a nomination.

## **BOOK CLUB**

The AHSGR Book Club is held quarterly via Zoom. A host moderates a discussion of a chosen book which relates to the history, culture, and heritage of the Germans from Russia people.



*The AHSGR Research Library in Lincoln includes books, family histories, an ancestor database, and more.*

## **AHSGR ONLINE STORE**

AHSGR's online store offers an easy way to search and securely purchase German from Russia books, journals, census records, surname information, maps, cookbooks, music videos, gifts and more.

## **CHAPTERS**

Chapters are established by ten (10) or more AHSGR members and are officially recognized through the Society's chapter process as embracing the mission of AHSGR. All chapters are listed at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org). All members are encouraged to join and participate in their local chapter activities. Chapters may collect dues in addition to International dues.

## **CLUES**

Clues is a retired Surname Exchange publication that was published every 2-3 years from 1974-2019. It enabled members researching similar names to correspond. Clues may be viewed in PDF format at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org) under Publications. The Find a Member feature in the AHSGR member dashboard replaced Clues and provides up to date information to help connect members searching for the same family names and villages of interest.

## **FIND A MEMBER**

An important benefit of AHSGR membership is the ability to identify and connect with other AHSGR members who live near you or have similar ancestral research interests. To maximize the benefit of the member search function, please update your member profile including identification of ancestral names and villages of research interest. This information will help other members find and connect with you.

<https://ahsgr.org/dashboard/find-a-member/>

## **GENEALOGY RESEARCH SERVICES**

AHSGR provides many resources to aid in genealogical research related to the history, cultural history, and genealogy of the Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants. You can access some of these resources easily on our website.

## **JUGEND ZEITUNG**

*Jugend Zeitung* or “Youth Magazine” is a digital publication of 16 issues designed for AHSGR’s younger members. It features historical accounts, genealogical research how-to’s, profiles of notable Germans from Russia, recipes of the Germans from Russia and much more. Digital copies are available for viewing by all AHSGR members.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Recruitment and retention of members is one of the most important activities of AHSGR as it affects the future well-being and progress of the Society. A growing, active membership is vital for AHSGR to remain viable. All members are encouraged to recruit new members for AHSGR.

## **MUSEUM OUTREACH PROGRAM**

The outreach programs that AHSGR offers are a way for members and nonmembers to learn and connect. AHSGR hosts classes such as how to start your genealogy search and how to preserve your family photos. Along with hosting classes, AHSGR also releases videos of German recipes.

## **NEWS E-BLAST**

A weekly email series that is sent to the AHSGR subscription list which features updates on projects at the Heritage Center, upcoming AHSGR events, new items for sale, and much more.

## **RESEARCH LIBRARY**

Our extensive collection includes reference books, family histories, censuses, ship manifests, church, birth, marriage, and funeral records, obituaries (digital database of 342,000 files), German village newsletters and file inventory, journals, surname charts, and maps. Members and non-members can use the library. Members may request material through the interlibrary loan (ILL) department of their local libraries. The contents of the library can be searched online at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org)

## **SURNAME CHARTS**

AHSGR Surname Charts are donated ancestral family tree charts that have either been created by the member or purchased from researchers in Russia. All of the charts may be viewed at the Heritage Center Research Library and some are available for purchase through the online store.

## **STORYTELLING CONTEST**

The AHSGR Storytelling Contest is an annual event inviting members and nonmembers to submit stories related to Germans from Russia heritage.

## **TREFFEN TUESDAY**

Treffen Tuesday is a monthly online series that showcases speakers from around the world to share their expertise in German Russian history, culture, or genealogy. These online virtual meetings take place on the last Tuesday of each month, and signup is free to all attendees.

## **VILLAGE COORDINATORS (VC)**

Village Coordinators are an important resource providing expertise and information to members in their genealogical research. A VC is an AHSGR member engaged in the collection of historical, genealogical, cultural, geographical, and pictorial items of German villages in Russia. See <https://ahsgr.org/village-coordinators/> for the list of village coordinators.

# GENEALOGY RESEARCH SERVICES

AHSGR provides a wide range of specialized Germans from Russia resources and tools to support your genealogy research. As members of AHSGR, the best means available for learning more about one's family is to share information with others and receive what others are willing to share. For this reason, we urge all members to complete their member profile including identification of ancestral names and villages of research interest. This information will help other members find and connect with you.

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) serves as a collection point for information about Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire, from the Black Sea to the Volga River. Through the years we have accumulated a collection of resources unavailable elsewhere. Our mission is to discover, collect, preserve, and disseminate information relating to the history, cultural heritage, and genealogy of the Germans from Russia. Our extensive collection includes reference books, family histories, censuses, ship manifests, church, birth, and funeral records, obituaries, village information, journals, surname charts, maps, and an ancestor database.

Due to the time involved in identifying the information to address a research request, AHSGR charges a fee for research services. This fee is significantly discounted for AHSGR members. The fee for additional genealogy research materials and services is noted in the fee schedule below. Many additional publications, records and maps can be purchased through the AHSGR online store.

## FEES

The base fee is applicable even if the research staff is unable to find information pertinent to the request, because considerable time and effort is still required.

<b>Base Fee</b>	Members	\$30
	Non-Members	\$90
<b>Research Time</b> (prorated in 15-minute increments)	Members	\$40 per hour
	Non-Members	\$100 per hour
<b>Photocopies</b> (includes microfilm and microfiche)	Members	25 cents per copy
	Non-Members	25 cents per copy
<b>Digital Copies</b>	Members	25 cents per copy
	Non-Members	25 cents per copy
<b>Surname Charts</b> (available formats include paper, or electronic)	Members	Single chart: \$50
	Non-Members	Single chart: \$100
	Members	Two-piece chart: \$70
	Non-Members	Two-piece chart: \$120
<b>Interlibrary Loan (ILL)</b>	There is no charge for loans made in the United States. International requests may require additional fees.	

# DONOR OPPORTUNITIES

Your membership dues support the ongoing operations of AHSGR, but these funds are not sufficient to support all that we do to meet the mission of AHSGR. Our programs and services rely on the generous donations provided by our members.

We are grateful to the many people who have donated time and funds to make AHSGR what it is today. However, there is much more to be learned about our heritage. Availability of funds determines how many additional records we can purchase, translate and publish, how much of our vast collection can be digitized; and how much new content and tools can be added to our website.

Your support will help AHSGR continue its quest to keep our rich cultural heritage alive, thereby reaching from the past to the present and on to future generations yet to come. Please consider the following ways to help.

## **SOCIETY OPERATING FUND**

The Society Operating Fund supports the ongoing operations of AHSGR. This critically important funding stream allows us to operate the Heritage Center's library, museum, and campus buildings as well as providing funds for:

- business operations and member support services
- maintaining facilities and enhancing research and technology capabilities
- digitizing AHSGR's vast holdings to increase the information available on-line.

Your contribution can also be designated towards obtaining ancestral records, translation of documents, or other special projects.

**Your donation may be tax-deductible.** AHSGR is a federally registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. As such, monetary donations to AHSGR are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by an individual's or corporation's circumstances. Please consult your tax advisor for further information.

**Employee Matching Gift Programs.** Many companies match charitable donations made by their employees. Some companies continue this benefit for retirees. This is a fantastic way to increase your gift to AHSGR. Please check with your employer to determine if they have a matching gift program.

**Consider making a Planned Giving donation.** Planned Giving options include outright gifts, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, charitable income lead trusts, IRAs and pension plans, gifts of life insurance, endowment fund gifts, life estate reserved, and bequests and wills. For details on Planned Giving options, contact us at (402) 474-3363 or contact us online. Interested in making a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA to the AHSGR? Please download this form: IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution Form

## **BRICK GARDEN PROGRAM**

Hundreds of red bricks surround the base of the Germans from Russia statue at the entrance of the Heritage Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. The sale of these bricks provides revenue for the Society, as well as providing a beautiful brick garden base honoring the names of the German Russian ancestors.

*Online donations are quick and easy using our secure credit card transactions: <https://ahsgr.org/donate/>*

*We welcome donations of all sizes and payment plans - whether it's a one-time or recurring gift, part of a matching gifts program or a Planned Giving Donation.*

*If you have a unique donation request, please contact us at (402) 474-3363 or contact us online.*



*Recognize your family's German Russian heritage by purchasing a brick for the walkway at AHSGR Heritage Center.*



*The panels for "Our Immigrant Ancestors," a collection of honorary plaques purchased to celebrate people of German Russian ancestry, have been reimagined and reinstalled near the Heritage Center's entrance to continue honoring those names and families.*



*Thanks to the generous funding of our Give To Lincoln Day donors, the AHSGR Heritage Center building added new rock edging around the building perimeter. The rocks around the perimeter also covered areas where grass refused to grow and provides the building with better insulation, protection against bugs and rodents, will reduce mowing and mulching costs, and provides a more attractive and finished look to the structure.*

# AHSGR COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & RESPONSIBILITIES

The AHSGR mission provides the framework for selecting and prioritizing programs, projects, and activities. All programs are founded on scholarship and developed to support the mission and goals of AHSGR. The organization bylaws are available at [www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org) under the About Us tab. They describe the committee structure established to achieve the mission statement.

## **ANCESTRAL RECORDS COMMITTEE**

Collects, preserves, translates, and disseminates German from Russia records.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)**

Thirty (30) members are elected from the Representation Districts within AHSGR. They meet three (3) times a year, spring, fall, and at the convention, and serve without remuneration. The BOD elects the officers: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, at their post-convention meeting immediately following the convention.

## **CONVENTION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Develops and maintains guidelines and procedures for conventions and serves as a liaison between the local organizing committees and AHSGR. Recruits speakers and develops the program.

## **CULTURE & FOLKLORE COMMITTEE**

Studies, collect, record and effectively preserve traditional customs, beliefs, expressions, and teachings of German Russians. Oversees the annual storytelling contest.

## **EDITORIAL & PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Promotes the development, publication, and dissemination of publications and digital media; and approves publications prior to sale in the AHSGR Store.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Focuses on the fiscal health of AHSGR by preparing budgets for review, managing the AHSGR investment portfolio, overseeing the annual audit and review compensation and benefit plans, and making financial recommendations for the organization.

## **GENEALOGY RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

Develops and implements genealogy research tools and services; enhances AHSGR's website to support both new and experienced genealogy researchers.

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

Ensures the financial stability of AHSGR by pursuing grants, soliciting donations, encouraging corporate charitable giving, and working in partnership with the International Foundation of AHSGR.

## **MARKETING/PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Establishes a permanent, dynamic and ongoing marketing & public affairs program to market and promotes AHSGR and its products and services.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Promotes programs to increase membership in AHSGR, including the development of new Chapters. Oversees AHSGR member recognition and awards.

## **MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS COMMITTEE**

Makes decisions that support sustainable collecting of materials which document the story and family histories of Germans from Russia.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Recruits potential members for the Board of Directors.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Develops Strategic plans, monitors committee objectives and programs to advance the mission of AHSGR that ensures long-term viability.

# INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF THE AHSGR

IFAHSGR was formed in Colorado and incorporated under the Colorado Nonprofit Corporation Act in March 24, 1974, and is designated as a 501c3 tax-exempt organization by the IRS. All funds are held for the use and benefit of AHSGR in perpetuity. Members of AHSGR are also members of the Foundation. The Foundation ethically and legally is obligated to the donors in its capacity as a trustee to follow the Nebraska Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT)**

Trustees serve without remuneration. Officers (president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer) are elected by the trustees.

## **BYLAWS AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE**

Reviews the bylaws and policies and procedures manual on a regular basis to assure accuracy and compliance.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Studies market trends to seek the highest returns on investments in accordance with the approved investment policy. Responsible for developing the budget, assuring an audit, and preparing financial reports to reflect the financial condition of the Foundation.

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

Responsible for raising monies to meet the needs of AHSGR and the Foundation; coordinates activities with the AHSGR Board of Directors and assures legal compliance in those states requiring registration.

## **GRANTS COMMITTEE**

Identifies potential sources for grant money and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees; assures grants do not jeopardize tax-exempt status of the Foundation nor vary from the Articles of Incorporation.

## **LIVING LEGACY FUND**

Donors determine the amount of their donations to establish a fund to support the program they specify. Additional funds are requested in the donor's honor. The fund provides IFAHSGR with additional income to further the mission of AHSGR with the principal remaining intact.

## **NOMINATION COMMITTEE**

Responsible for identifying a recommended list of members to serve on the Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee also prepares a slate of nominees for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to submit to the newly elected Board of Directors at their first meeting each year. The Nominating Committee is composed of 5 members appointed by the President.

## **PLANNED GIFTS**

NOTE: Donors may choose to restrict the use of their planned gifts to any purpose consistent with the charitable purposes of the Foundation.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Prepares and reviews the strategic plan for progress and course of action; coordinates planning activities with AHSGR Board of Directors.

# AHSGR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF DESCRIPTIONS

## **ARCHIVIST**

Manages and provides access to the archival collections of the organization in accordance with professional standards and best practices.

## **ARCHIVAL RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

Provides research assistance and services to members and patrons of the AHSGR Library/Archive.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Manages the offices, employees, and daily operations of AHSGR; responsible to the Board of Directors who appoints and sets the salary; monitors the physical condition of all the buildings and grounds of the AHSGR Cultural Heritage Research Center.

## **MUSEUM SERVICES & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

Provides oversight of the museum's volunteer program, tours, and educational offerings.

## **OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

Performs varied support and administrative services for the organization

## **PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR**

Responsible for AHSGR publications and outreach materials and works with staff, board members, editors, authors, reviewers, and printing firms

