



Chronicle Unserer Leute

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The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is an international organization 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.

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Oregon Chapter website with the newsletter: <http://www.ahsgroregon.com>

Germans from Russia in Portland website: <http://www.volgagermans.net/portland/>

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our general chapter meeting of February 16 was blessed with a wonderful presentation by Theresa Gross of the Hutterite community in Marlin, Washington. Theresa was accompanied by her sister, Annie Gross and Mr. Max Stanton, a retired professor of Anthropology at Brigham Young University in Hawaii, currently living in Portland, Oregon, and a friend of the Hutterite people. Theresa did a magnificent job of sharing the way of life she and her extended family enjoy on a large farm in central Washington. Her verbal delivery was embellished with a candid slide presentation that enabled us to better understand this very special group of people--a community bound together by a devotion and adherence to the Word of God in every aspect of their daily life. God is the center of their world and everything in it. I have personally visited this community on two separate occasions as part of a small limited invitational tour, and have each time been moved by the similarity of the experience to that of the early years of my life when I grew up in our German Russian community here in Portland in the 40's and 50's. Zion Congregational Church was the center of my family's social and religious life throughout my childhood years. God was an integral part of daily life. We knew this from the very beginning of our life as infants. There was no television or media bombardment or intrusion of any kind. Life was simple, clean and

loving. I grew up knowing my parents loved me and God loved me--and the Bible told me so!--and there was a song about it!

It becomes more and more clear to many of us as we mature in the midst of global warming, the depletion of fossil fuels, and the accelerating chaos in the world, that the simpler life of our parents and grandparents and of the Hutterite community brought to us by Theresa Gross and her colleagues that we are being shown the way to a more meaningful way of life.

Integral to the Hutterite way is their continued memorialization of the persecutions suffered by their ancestors. They welcome the opportunity to share the sufferings and brutalities experienced by those who came before;--much as many of us feel it very much our legacy, mission and honor to remember, memorialize and convey to future generations the tragic history of our relatives and ancestors who were trapped in Russia and perished under the most terrible of circumstances.

While it is natural to want to heap mountains of material goods, good times, fine food, and all that comes with abundance--upon our kids and grandkids,--it is also important to never forget those who never made it to "the promised land" with streets "paved with gold"!

So it is with these thoughts I will be encouraging all of us to come forward
(continued on page 2)

President's Message (cont'd)

in the months ahead to share stories of our families and their hardships and struggles. Let's share our sadnesses and secrets. Let's remember those whose lives were not happy and not "Hollywood."

As a first step in that direction I would like to call your attention to recent articles appearing on the website "ger-volga@rootsweb.com" submitted by Hugh Lichtenwald from the farm in Monetta, SC. Hugh is translating select articles from "Die Weld-Post" of the 1920's into English. We will try to publish these articles from time to time here in our newsletter, and we welcome your personal family stories also. Please feel free to share.

A sincere thanks to Bill and Thelma Wiest for their dedicated efforts in arranging for Theresa, Annie and Max to come and share at our meeting.

END OF AN ERA & CELEBRATION OF YEARS OF GIVING

Ruth and Chuck Williams have given us notice of their retirement from library responsibilities at the AHSGR Oregon Chapter library. We sincerely thank Ruth and Chuck for their many years of committed service to the chapter and will be happy to welcome them to all of our meetings and functions with open arms. Please give them big hugs and welcomes wherever you see them. They deserve all the best.

NEW LIBRARY HOURS

The AHSGR Oregon Chapter library will no longer be open on a regular schedule. It can be opened by appointment only. Please call Ed Wagner at (503) 221-1837 if you wish to schedule a visit--until further notice.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY AND THE NEW "CENTER FOR VOLGA GERMAN STUDIES"

Please note these very important dates on your calendar:

MARCH 16, 2008, SUNDAY at 2:30 PM our general chapter meeting for March will be held at the Concordia University Library Building near NE 27th and Holman Street. Shirley Hurrell will e-mail directions to members. If you don't have e-mail,

please call me at (503) 221-1837, and I will either call or mail you directions. Please come and see the campus first-hand. Dr. Brent Mai will be there to answer all your questions and concerns. The AHSGR Oregon Chapter board held its February board meeting at Concordia on February 2 and all were very impressed with the facility, the plans for the new building and Brent Mai's commitment to this wonderful new "chapter" in the life of our AHSGR "chapter." ☺

APRIL 11, 2008, FRIDAY (time to be announced) - Concordia University groundbreaking for their new library building which will also house the new "Center for Volga German Studies".

This is an important event in the history of both Concordia University and our AHSGR Oregon Chapter. It is important that a strong representation be made by **ALL GERMANS FROM RUSSIA** from throughout the Northwest and beyond. Please let your friends and relatives know of this groundbreaking and encourage all to come. Let Concordia University know of our appreciation for their efforts and inclusion of our heritage in their long term plans and programs.

This is an opportunity that many of us have dreamed of for many years, and you are all a part of that dream. Come and share.

Best wishes and a hearty welcome to all as we join Dr. Brent Mai in a new and exciting adventure.

Ed Wagner

President

Oregon Chapter of AHSGR

Please send in your 2008 Dues

Your 2008 dues for the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia and the Oregon Chapter were due January 1, 2008. It would be very much appreciated if you would send your dues to:

Lois Klaus
111 N.E. 67th Avenue
Portland, OR 97213

or let her know what your future plans are.

[Editor's note: This is the 17th installment serializing Marie Krieger's autobiography. In it we get a look at life for GR's, in both rural and urban settings, in the Pacific Northwest that spans over seven decades.]

SOMETHING OF MYSELF

by Marie Trupp Krieger
(1910-2006)

(copyright Marie Trupp Krieger)

[continuing description of the Krieger's home in Portland] The reader's attention must now be directed to the bedroom, spacious enough so one can walk around the double bed. Attached to the south wall of the chamber one finds two closets divided 3/4ths of the way up from the floor--the upper 1/4th as storage areas touching the ceiling. In between the clothes



closets, a built-in chest of drawers below the window sill serves a variety of uses. The top surface supports an air conditioner which extends into the inside window resting on the sill; a storm window protects it when not in use. Another cabinet fit into the space between the closets above the window bordering the

ceiling was added later. And still later a bookcase from floor to ceiling was installed against the north wall between the bed and the room's door which leads into the kitchen. Now, how more compact can one be? One might contemplate or question the sensibility of this remodeling project, but the comfort of our home proved its worth. As time marched on, the alleyway behind the property allowed Walt to park his refuse truck under the protection of a carport surrounded on two sides by a privet hedge which I had planted while Walt served our country. Today as we near our twilight years, the location with its shopping conveniences and access to buses can't be beat.

During the remodeling period in the summer of 1941 I traveled to this house nearly every day to paint the exterior siding as it was being completed. Next, I continued painting the interior woodwork plus the area bordering the French window panes. We were

forced to change carpenters in mid-stream. An expert cabinet maker eventually concluded the finish work such as cabinets, etc., much to our delight. A paper hanger attached the required wall paper to the living room and bedroom, the work completed.

The installation of the venetian blinds, the hanging of the drapes and the laying of the rugs preceded furniture deliveries. When I had mentioned the fact of waiting for the venetian blind installer to an older neighbor, she exclaimed, "Venetian blinds, are you having venetian blinds?" The very same blinds still adorn our windows forty seven years later.

That neighbor's troublesome horse chestnut trees are still pretty much evident with their year-around mess on our sidewalk and yard although Mrs. Hilda Jefferts has been gone for many years. My list of complaints is long enough to choke a horse, beginning with the roots buckling our sidewalk to leaves so thick the sunlight seldom penetrates. Raking the leaves is good exercise up to a point--causing me to do a slow burn at the thought of the chore. I ran across an explanation entitled "A Very Fine Tree Indeed" which makes good reading. Somebody should organize a Horse Chestnut Festival, and the fall of the year is the time to hold it. The horse chestnut is a very fine tree. It lifts up bright candles of white flower clusters to greet the spring. In summer its broad leaves shade the street like the fingers of a fat hand. But in September it delivers its greatest gifts when its spiky green burs drop and split on the sidewalk and the brown nuts inside roll out landing on the grass in the lawn. Well, maybe it's a particularly fine tree when it stands in someone else's parking strip. Those husks and nuts do make a mess. But what a delight the brown horse chestnut is. When you roll it in your fingers its feel is cool, smooth and soothing. You can rub it on the side of your nose and make it shine like the top of your mother's mahogany dresser. You can carve a face on it like a little jack o' lantern, or cut a hole in it and pretend it is the bowl of a pipe. You can throw it at your sister. You can collect a bowlful and put them in the middle of the dining room table to admire. You don't eat a horse chestnut, but you don't eat the Hope diamond either, and the horse chestnut gives pleasure to far more people.

(continued on page 4)

Something of Myself (cont'd)

Having been thrifty and economical in our purchases provided us all the essential and basic equipment on a cash basis. My mother's oft remarks that the interest can eat up the principal didn't go unheeded. Direct buying at a wholesale house via an employee relative had its advantages. A long-time friend in the upholstering industry provided a custom-made davenport, chair and ottoman for cash, of course. Walt's employment at Meier & Frank's department store as a package deliverer offered the fringe benefit of charging the mahogany furniture (a poster bed, dresser with wall mirror, a secretary desk, a drop-leaf table with individual extra leaves and four chairs whose seat covers I replaced years later with my handmade needlepoint after the wearing out of the original covers, end tables, table and floor lamps)--all purchased without interest but with an agreed sum to be deducted weekly from Walter's paycheck according to a signed contract. A six-cubic foot refrigerator and a twenty dollar Hotpoint (1920's) vintage electric stove including three burners and side oven fulfilled the kitchen requirements. We did use a card table temporarily instead of a more suitable table. Very few original pieces have been replaced--the refrigerator, worn-out living-room drapes and bedroom curtains, box spring and mattress among them, a firmer mattress after my back surgery in 1960. Over the years, an electric sewing machine (a very, very important item), a radio with speakers although the 1941 push-button Sears Roebuck radio still occupies its original spot in the living room and television sets (replacements) have been added. One of Walt's refuse customers gave her deceased husband's solid oak businessman's desk to Walt as payment of a very small bill about fifteen or more years ago. I sometimes wonder if we could have managed without it. It has been handier than handy. Usually what one hasn't had isn't missed. We were solvent after our wedding day but broke and lived from pay check to pay check for several months. Walt's wages totaled \$5.00 per day--even provided a \$15.00 per month stipend to his parents.

(continued in the next issue)

KOCH'S KOLUMN

by Dr. Raymond P. Koch

We recently had the opportunity to host the Harland Eastwoods and Allen Kochs when Harland gave us a presentation on the wagon train that was comprised of a group of Volga Germans from Nebraska en route to the Northwest.

Eventually they settled either in Klickitat or Adams Counties in Washington state.

Those settling initially in the Bickleton area of Klickitat County had some traumatic times with poor crops and the flu epidemic in the post World War I era. That flu was devastating to almost all of them and moving elsewhere was an inviting option.

Those going to Ritzville and the Adams County area in Washington found better land, crops, and were happy with their choice.

Diane and I have explored the three cemeteries in the Bickleton area and have verified the story of families experiencing the loss of multiple family members to the flu.

Five children's graves in a row were in one Schaefer plot. The tears shed by the families of that small town must have been copious.

Of course, the GR's were not the only ones succumbing to the flu. That entire community was hit hard.

Harland recently sent me some issues of the Adams County Historical Society newsletter. The articles are from the area's past, and many GR's are featured from Lind, Ritzville, and that area.

For instance, Rudy Thaudt was featured in an article for having spent World War II in a Japanese POW camp. The news surprised me for two reasons. That he had survived that long and that two men from Ritzville had been captured in the Philippines at the start of the war.

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Koch's Kolumn (cont'd)

Fred C. Koch, the author of a book on the Volga Germans, lost his younger brother, Walter, who survived the Bataan Death March but subsequently died in a camp near Nagasaki.

The Adams County Historical Society newsletter will be of interest to many of us as a new source of history.

I used to get a great deal of pleasure from the Frank newsletter which is no longer published. Thank goodness others are coming upon the scene.

The Norka Newsletter by Jerry Krieger is fascinating for me, having grown up with Norka neighbors, schoolmates, and relatives. I met many in the service in World War II and Korea. I am so grateful to Jerry and his contributors such as Judy Curtis and our own Steve Schreiber.

It's a real task for the publishers as they need sources of material to fill the pages.

I will be joining the A.C.H.S. despite living over 180 miles away. There are simply so many names I have known, met or heard of my entire life that its articles are of real interest to me. Harland Eastwood has duplicated many newspaper files for news sources.

Some of you should check out existing websites by Steve Schreiber, Judy Curtis, Sherri Stahl, Michael Miller, and let us know of others you find.

The Ritz family (of Ritzville) had a mansion in Walla Walla that my Aunts Molly and Lydia and mother, Anna, were employed in as maids when twelve years and up in age. They taught the girls dining protocol and were good employers. There was no negative overtone when they would speak of them.

I have been interested in GR history since my childhood. Since our union, Diane has shared that fascination.

Think of what the German groups contributed to Russia and how much more they could have benefitted the country if allowed more freedom.

Initially the Volga Germans were brought in and settled with poor preparations, immigrant selection and supervision. The Russians learned a lesson and set up guidelines so that later groups were uniformly better suited to farming and developing an area.

The Mennonite group and those settling the Black Sea, Bessarabia, Caucasus areas were "high caliber" people. I have seen indepth research on some emigrants from Baden, Wurtemberg and Bavaria and some left families that had achieved a level of success that was admirable.

Politics, wars and religion sparked a lot of the moves made to Russia.

After a great Christmas program in December produced by Joanne Hummel, we remained in Portland to attend another Christmas party on the following Sunday afternoon.

The Deines family descendants were celebrating 101 years since Ludwig Deines and wife brought their family and inlaws to America. Hanna's husband Jack, Esther Haggstrom, and Edith Spady were all part of Ludwig's large family. Our late member, Lorraine Miller, was a granddaughter.

I'll always remember stories I heard of Jack such as his attempt in Buenos Aires to get in touch with possible descendants of an uncle who emigrated to Argentina.

There were Deines' listings in the big city phone book, but Jack didn't speak Spanish or Portuguese, and they didn't speak English or German. He had much better luck with the offspring of two aunts and two uncles who settled in Hastings, Nebraska, before Ludwig came to America.

Our children's family trees no longer are homogenous and blessed with only German names. What an ethnic mix we now have!

All those nice French, Welsh, Scotch, Irish and Scandanavian people we've met and married have made sure that we can proudly claim: "Wir sind Amerikaner!"

MEMORIES OF NORKA

by

Conrad Brill

as told to

George Brill

(manuscript provided by **Bill Burbach**)

[Former chapter member **George Brill** was fascinated with the history and folklore of the German-Russians. He would listen hours to his father **Conrad** tell stories and personal accounts of **Norka**. Son **George** wrote a paper of his father's experience on life in **Norka**. This is part 11.]

There were always many stories floating around concerning the doings of the younger generation. Naturally these were spread by the elder generation. Rev. Staerkle had a handy man named Sauer who took care of the Pastor's chores, horses and drove the Pastor's carriage. The gemeinde furnished the Pastor this handy man, a housekeeper, three matched black horses and other equipment. Sauer was an old bachelor who loved his work and he would relate interesting exploits of his travels with the Pastor. He delighted in telling of the evening he and the Pastor were coming back to Norka from Saratov and the Pastor had fallen asleep. Sauer was negotiating the carriage through a rutted road full of chuck holes so as not to waken the Pastor. The holes in the road were full of water and he had no idea of their depth. Finally the wheel on one side dropped into such a deep hole and it brought the horses to standstill. He slapped the horses with the reins and tried to get enough pull out of them to get the wheel out and at the same time not wake the Pastor. In the process the Pastor awoke and suggested that they just let the horses rest a moment while he prayed. That way it could be accomplished without them getting out into the mud. The rest and prayer didn't help and so Sauer stood up in the buggy and lashed the horses with the reins and at the same time swearing a blue streak. Finally the horses lurched ahead to get the wheel out of the chuck hole. As they resumed their trip the Pastor acknowledged that maybe a little swearing at the right time might be helpful too. Listeners always liked hearing these tales, especially if it concerned the higher society of the village.

There were three herdsmen living in the first row at the east end of unterdorf. They did this work after they were too old for the regular work, and the gemeinde set the pay scale by the number of animals they herded, and each animal owner was responsible for payment to the herdsman, be it money grain or whatever they agreed upon. Many times the herdsman had more grain on hand than did the villagers who farmed. There was this old herder named Schleuning who had worked for the Sinner family when he was younger and able to do mill work. He used to tell about old Mr. Sinner's daughter who was in love with one of the young men working at the mill. The old gent thought that his daughter should have a better man. He kept her living in the upper part of the house so she couldn't slip out to meet this lover as she was known to do. The daughter's room was up in the attic under the gable. The lover and Schleuning rigged up a boatswain's sling that the daughter took upstairs. When she wanted to get out after the folks went to sleep she opened the window and hooked the rope sling to the overhang of the roof and dropped the rope to her lover. He would let her down gently and would put her back the same way. After many months of this courtship old Mr. Sinner relented and let the couple marry.

Each street through Norka had a "klepper" (town crier) who walked the length of the street and back slowly all night watching for fires, thefts or anything a watchman would do. He would also deliver messages to any or all houses on his street when the gemeinde posted notices. He usually stopped for a chat if you were in the yard and saw teenagers slipping into the countryside on his journey. He was also a source of gossip as he made his rounds. Rather than ringing a bell he carried a wooden klepper. It was like a ping pong paddle with a knocker attached so it wouldn't wake a person like a bell would. One spring during a flood the mail carrier from Beideck didn't bring the mail because the water was over the plank decking of the bridge on the Karmisch River between Beideck and Norka. We had a family called "Rote Keibel Weber" (redheaded hill Weber). The whole family was redheaded and they had two or three pretty daughters who left Norka and moved to Schilling to

(continued on page 7)

Memories of Norka (cont'd)

work. They would send money home to the folks every month via mail from Schilling to Beideck to Norka. Because the mailman from Beideck wouldn't attempt to cross the bridge with the flood Weber impatiently decided he would drive his light wagon to Beideck to get the Norka mail himself. His horses got on to the plank bridge with the wagon. Because of the swiftness of the high water he couldn't see the edge of the planking. Soon the wheels ran off the side and both he and the horses drowned. The people thought him foolish for trying to go after the mail when the regular mailman would not. In the future people would refer to him as "Poste Weber" (mail Weber). Between Sauer who drove the Pastor, the herdsmen who spent most of the hours in the fields, and the Klepper who made the rounds all night it was very easy to keep up on all the latest doings throughout the village. These traits kept up with our people even in the U.S.A.

(continued in the next issue)

Upcoming Events

MARCH

1 March, Saturday, 10:00 am, board meeting at 1830 NE 141st Avenue, Portland. All members welcome to attend.

16 March, Sunday, 2:30 pm, general chapter meeting hosted by Dr. Brent Mai at the library building (near NE 27th and Holman) on the **CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY** campus, 2811 NE Holman Street.

APRIL

5 April, Saturday, 10:00 am, board meeting at 1830 NE 141st Avenue, Portland. All members welcome to attend.

19 April, Saturday, 12:00-2:00 pm, general chapter meeting and potluck at Rivercrest Church.

MAY

3 May, Saturday, 10:00 am, board meeting at 1830 NE 141st Avenue, Portland. All members welcome to attend.

18 May, Sunday, 2:30 pm, general meeting at Rivercrest Church.

Meeting Directions and Information

Unless otherwise noted, all chapter meetings and genealogy workshops are held at Rivercrest Church, 3201 NE 148th, Portland, Oregon.

Rivercrest Community church is located between NE Sandy Blvd. and NE Halsey Street on NE 148th. Park in the lower parking lot and follow the directional signs to the meeting rooms.

Potluck information: Oregon Chapter meetings held on Saturdays are generally two and one-half hours in length and include a potluck lunch. Please bring an entree, salad, or dessert to share and your own plate and utensils. At the potluck lunches, \$2 for members and \$2 for non-members is requested to help defray the cost of the meeting facilities.

Oliver Holmes 1922-2007



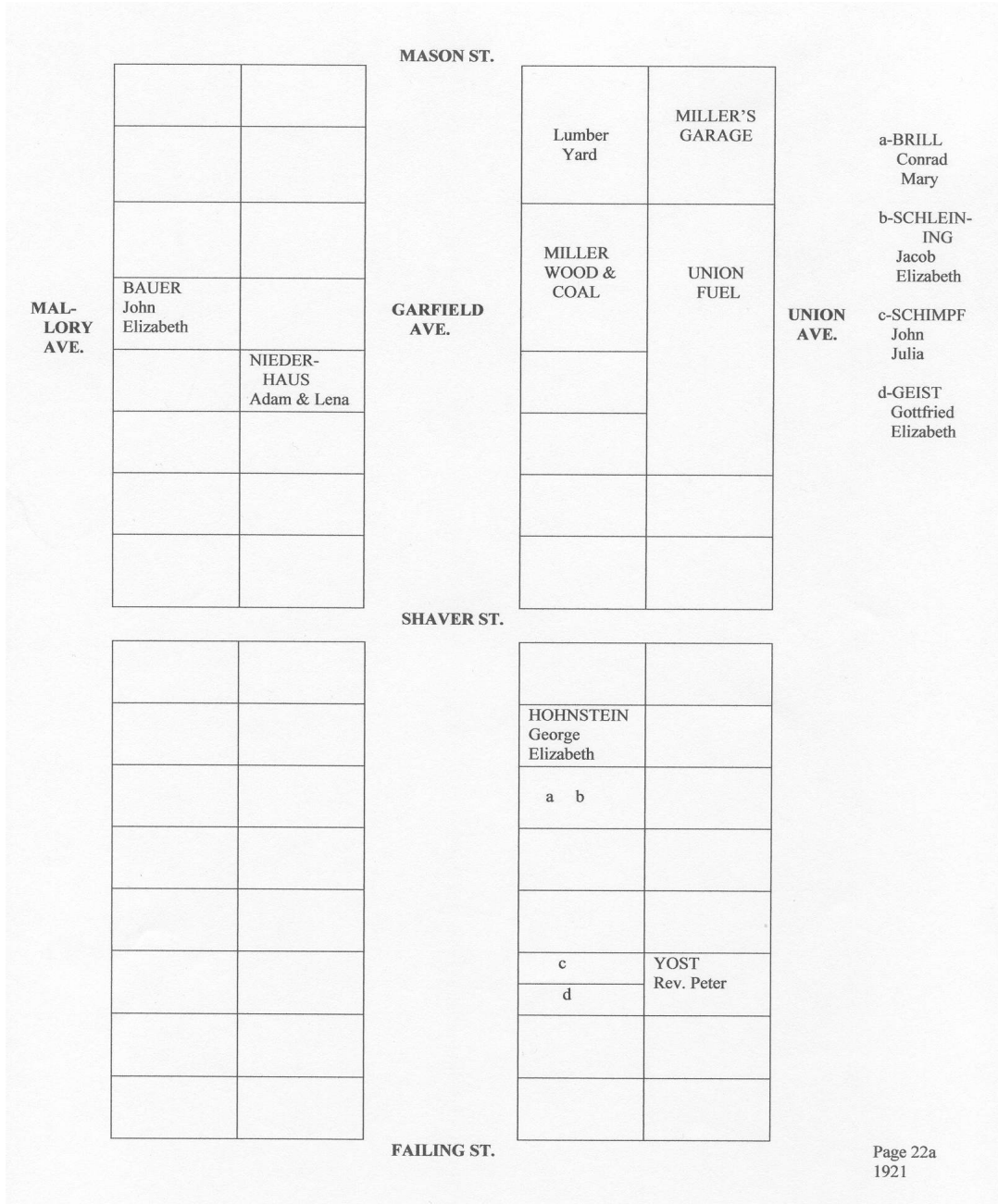
Oliver was the husband of Rachel Krieger Holmes, Marie Krieger's sister-in-law.

Oliver passed away November 7, 2007, in Concord, California. He attended many Germans from Russia Conventions and was also a member of the Oregon Chapter. Oliver was a longtime Pleasant Hill, California, resident and also a former Pleasant Hill mayor, known for his community service and commitment to public parks.

Street Maps of the German-Russian Community in Portland, Oregon

by Bill Burbach

Many German-Russians settled in NE Portland. Street maps have been prepared showing city blocks, sites and G-R occupants. This project covers areas bounded by Fremont St., Wygant St., Cleveland Ave., 15th Ave. and Fremont St., Graham St., Union Ave., and 7th Avenue. The project includes listings from the 1921 city directory, 1938 city directory, Sanford fire maps and assessor's maps. About 650 families are identified. Anyone wishing to make additions or corrections, please let Bill Burbach know either at a meeting or by phone (503) 654-4694.



It's time to renew your membership for 2008!

AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Form

Membership fees are for a calendar year that **renews each January 1st**. Dues shown below include \$10 for an Oregon Chapter membership. The remaining fee is for membership in the AHSGR international organization. We will forward your fee to AHSGR international.

Membership Categories - Annual International and Oregon Chapter Dues

Individual & Family	\$ 60
Institutional	\$ 60
Contributing	\$ 85
Sustaining	\$110
Int'l Life Member	\$750 (may be paid in 5 annual installments--add \$10 to each installment for Chapter dues)
Int'l Life Member	\$ 10 (for fully paid International Life Members who pay only Chapter dues)
Student (15 - 24)	\$ 15 (Receive 4 newsletters, Youth Membership packet, Membership card, and discounts)
Youth (1 - 14)	\$ 8 on specially advertised books and special convention benefits.)
Newsletters Only	\$ 12 For non-members

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Individual _____ Family _____ Youth _____ Student _____

Membership Year 200__

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

I want to receive my Oregon Chapter newsletter through the web (Adobe Acrobat format)? Yes _____ No _____

In order for us to service our membership more effectively, please list all of your German family names and all villages that you believe your ancestors are from. Ancestral Villages - Please specify for each member

Surnames - Please specify for each member _____

There are many opportunities to help build our chapter. Let us know if you desire to participate actively.:

Genealogy Workshops _____

Other _____

Newsletter _____

Publicity _____

Library _____

Ways & Means _____

Programs _____

Reminder Calls for Upcoming Meetings _____

Hospitality _____

Sunshine _____

Please make all checks payable to **AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER** and send your membership dues and applications to:

Lois Klaus, 111 N.E. 67th Avenue, Portland, OR 97213-5029

phone: (503) 232-3065 e-mail: lklaus@earthlink.net

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2008-2009**

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Photo portion of
**Congregational Evangelical
Brethren Church
Conference in 1930**

- "Bruder" Gorte
- Calvin Gorte
- Peter Koch
- William & Elizabeth (Miller) Burbach
- George & Anna (Walker) Lehl
- Gottfried Geist
- John Walker
- Henry & Margret Miller
- William Burbach, Jr.