

Chronicle Unserer Leute

Oregon Chapter of the American Historical
Society of Germans from Russia



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Catherine II,
the Great

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President's Message

Hello Everyone!

Well, here we are, another three months gone by, and still in the middle of this Covid-19 pandemic. Who ever thought it would go on so long? There are some hopeful signs, however. By the time this is published many of us should have been able to get at least the first dose of the vaccine. This is definitely a step in the right direction.

I found it interesting to read the accounts in the last newsletter about some of your family's experiences during the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918. I have always known that there had been a pandemic and that thousands of people died, but it didn't ever seem relevant to me. I had wondered whether it might have been only an east coast thing. My family on my dad's side was already all here in Oregon in 1918, and on my mom's side they were in Hastings, Nebraska. I never heard anything from either of my grandmothers about the Spanish Flu. I asked my elderly uncle (he's in his 90s) whether he ever remembers hearing the "old folks" talking about this pandemic of 100 years ago, and he had no recollection of that either.

Then, the Oregon Historical Society published an article about the 1918 Flu Pandemic in Oregon, accompanied by a photo of students at Benson High School with masks on! I had no idea! Reading through the article is really eye-opening, and the similarities between then and now are amazing. Here is the link to the article: <https://www.ohs.org/blog/1918-influenza-in-oregon.cfm>



Photograph courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

A couple of years ago at one of our monthly chapter meetings (remember when we used to be able to meet together?), our own Marilyn Schultz spoke to us about the importance of getting our memories down on paper. As a part of her presentation she walked us through an exercise where we all picked a memory to write about. There were a couple of us who chose to write about what we remembered about the Columbus Day Storm.



Photo courtesy Oregon Encyclopedia

For those of you who weren't living in the Portland area in 1962, the Columbus Day Storm was a huge wind storm, unprecedented, in the Pacific Northwest. There was a lot of damage and power outages from northern California clear up to British Columbia. Writing about it and what I remember and how it affected my family was a great idea. I like that my posterity will know that I was there in 1962. I think the same thing applies today. We should all take some time to write about "our" pandemic. One hundred years from now will our great-grandchildren wonder if we experienced the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020? I will want my posterity to know that I was here, that I lived through it, and I won't mind them knowing that most of the time I was pretty grumpy about it.

Well, life isn't supposed to be easy, is it? That which does not kill us makes us stronger. At least, that's what they say. So, everybody hang in there. The day will come when we can meet together again, and I look forward to seeing you all in person (hopefully, with no masks on!). Take care of yourselves!

Fondly,
Carole



From the Editor

This time of year, when the daphne is bowling me over with its fragrance and the daffodils' grassy leaves peel past the layer of brown, dry, winter scruff, I'm reminded of all the usual springtime platitudes (growth! rebirth!), but more importantly, I'm reminded that I have a lot of work ahead of me. My garden is my happy place, but more importantly, it is a busy place.

It's no wonder I chose a career in botany—I come from a long line of plant people. My grand-uncle Harry Arndt and his wife Grace were African violet growers (Grace was president of the African Violet Society in 1956), and their plant shop Arndt's African Violets on 45th and NE Sandy Blvd. was lauded among enthusiasts. Their sister-in-law, my grandmother Laverne, was also an accomplished gardener. I still have the beefsteak begonia and Christmas cactus she gave me when I moved into my first apartment in 1995. Growing houseplants and flowers came naturally to my mother, too.



The Harry Arndts (above) have many interesting new kinds of African violets. Mrs. Arndt holds Hot Tomato and Arndt has heavy blooming single pink called Pink Margaret.

Their Secret of Success

**Harry Arndts Are Experts With These Lush House Plants;
Key to Bloom, They Say, Is in Following the Proper Culture**

Oregonian coverage of Harry and Grace Arndt's African violets shop in 1956. For the record, the Arndts are not that hairy.

This is the time of year when I reassess my garden, reflecting on past challenges and my ~~hard-headed~~ optimistic goals for the coming growing season. One thing I never have to make room for is the seven herbs used to make Frankfurter's famous *Grüne Soße*: borage, chervil, cress, sorrel, parsley, chives, and salad burnet. They grow lushly, weedily, in every nook and cranny of my garden, as though they can smell the *Hessische* in my blood.

In this issue I write about the history of this wonderful springtime sauce and offer a recipe for those who'd like to add something different to their Easter table. And when it's safe again (soon!), maybe I can pot up an herb start for your own garden.

Warm regards,

Heather



Upcoming Events



Genealogical Forum of Oregon 75th Anniversary Open House

March 27 - April 3, Zoom

The Genealogical Forum of Oregon celebrates its 75th Anniversary with a free online Virtual Genealogy Open House.

Join us for 18 free classes, including Freedmen's Bureau Records, Oregon Land Claims, Indentured Servants, U.S. Census Records, and more, including these theme days:

Sunday, March 28: Irish Day

Monday, March 29: Online Sources Day

Tuesday, March 30: DNA Day

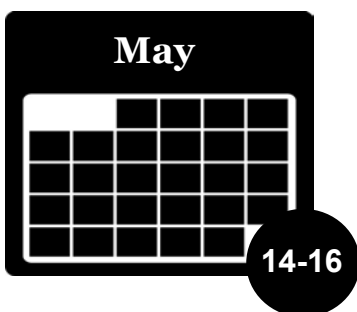
Each class requires its own advance registration. For more information and to register, visit <https://gfo.org/openhouse>



Treffen Tuesday

*Last Tuesday of every month on Zoom
(3:30-5:30pm Pacific Standard Time)*

Join AHSGR's monthly speaker series on a variety of topics. For more information and to register for attendance, visit www.ahsgr.org/news/555913/March-Treffen-Tuesday-Invitation.htm



Mt. Angel Maifest

May 14-16, 500 Hillsboro-Silverton Hwy, Mt. Angel, OR

The traditional celebration of Maifest heralds the arrival of spring with lots of food, beer, and danging the *maibaum* (maypole). Like Oktoberfest, it's a Bavarian celebration (and not German-Russian), but it's still a lot of fun for the whole family. For more information, visit www.mtangelmaifest.org/

Seven Herbs for Green Thursday



Bundles of the seven herbs used to make Frankfurter's national dish, Grüne Soße. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

by Heather Arndt Anderson

Although plenty of 18th-century German dishes made the journey to Russia, one dish that seems to have mysteriously stayed in Hesse is *Grüne Soße* (or *Grie Soß* in Frankfurt). Today, it's a food of protected geographical indication in Frankfurt and Kassel, traditionally served on *Gründonnerstag*, or Green Thursday—the day of the Last Supper, which falls on April 1 this year.

Most Germans who settled in the Norka colony emigrated from Hesse, an area of Germany with its own unique history. This was the land of fairy tales and robust pagan observances, whence seasonal traditions like the Christmas tree originated and later blended with dates and events significant to the Christians who would eventually come into power.¹ Easter Sunday is one notable example, celebrated by Christians as the resurrection of Christ, but at its core a decidedly pagan observance: a movable feast that falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, celebrated with sentient rabbits, seasonal flowers, and colorful eggs.

Grüne Soße is traditionally made of seven herbs: borage, chervil, salad burnet, cress, chives, parsley, and sorrel—countryside wildlings that, in my experience, will sooner fill in a crack in the driveway than take to a fertile garden plot. In Frankfurt and Kassel, paper-wrapped bundles of the herbs are sold at farmers' markets and produce stands. Other wild spring greens can be used as need dictates, such as dandelion leaf or stinging nettle. Lovage and lemon balm are accepted additions in Frankfurt, but anathema in Kassel. The herbs are blended with a neutral oil, a bit of sour cream and/or buttermilk, a little mustard, and chopped hardboiled egg yolk, and then the chopped white is stirred in, somewhat like a *sauce gribiche* (this may be why some people are tempted to add tarragon or dill, which are not proper). In Frankfurt it's served with halved boiled eggs, boiled potatoes, and *apfelwein* (apple wine) that's been aging since the previous autumn.

There has been a bit of controversy about the sauce's origins, but there is some evidence that it came to Hesse from France with the Huguenots in the early 18th century. The French herb mix called *fines herbes*—parsley, chives, tarragon, and chervil—not only overlap with the seven herbs of Grüne Soße, but they appear in the 17th-century French cookbook *Le Nouveau Cuisinier*. Creamy, bread-thickened sauces, common in the early modern era, appear in these same French cookbooks and greatly resemble Grüne Soße in appearance and consistency when made with *fines herbes*. Later French chefs sometimes added cress to the *fines herbes* mix and it's pretty typical for immigrants to alter dishes in their new homelands based on the availability of familiar ingredients. If she were scrambling to make a sauce of *fines herbes* for the house in which she was cooking, adding other subtly flavored herbs like sorrel, borage, and salad burnet would be a logical adjustment for a French cook to make on the fly, especially when presented with the green bounty of southern Germany.

Though the Huguenots and Germans may not have had a lot of culinary crossover before the 1760s, once Germans left for Russia, they'd come to share the sense of uprootedness felt by the Protestant Huguenots who'd immigrated to Prussia. Like the Wolgadeutsche, the Huguenots preserved their cultural identity after their relocation; however, unlike the relationship between the Russians and the Germans who settled along the Volga River, the Huguenots had regular contact with their German neighbors and overall, Germans had a positive impression of the French immigrants, who were especially renowned for their culinary skill.² To wit, Catherine the Great's childhood governess was a Huguenot, and the first time a recipe for mayonnaise (a French sauce) appears in print, it's in a German cookbook published in 1804.^{3,4}



Seed packet for growing the herb mix needed for Grüne Soße: borage, chervil, cress, parsley, salad burnet, sorrel, chives. (Note that in the photo, behind the bowl is a sprig of dill instead of chervil—Hoppla!)



Grüne Soße is so popular in Frankfurt that one fan created an entire cookbook of different uses for the sauce, including a Grüne Soße sorbet.

It's not clear why Germans from Hesse didn't bring Grüne Soße with them. Then again, in the Volga German culinary vernacular, sauces of any kind—other than melted butter, sour cream, or the occasional pan gravy—seem entirely absent.

The seven herbs have a somewhat rangy habit, and in my garden grow with the enthusiasm one might expect from what are essentially nurtured weeds. I grow them in my garden as a tribute to the place from which my ancestors came, alongside the lovage and horseradish my people might have grown in their Norka gardens, even if they didn't ever use them to make Grüne Soße. I look forward to the first fresh shoots every year in the spring—reminders that these simple signs of rebirth are as important to us now as they were to our Hessian forbears.

Notes:

1. Steven Schreiber, "Origins of the Colonists," Norka, Russia, website. available <https://www.norkarussia.info/origins-of-the-colonists.html>
2. Susanne Lachenicht. "Huguenot Immigrants and the Formation of National Identities, 1548-1787." *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 309-31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140132>.
3. John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great: Life and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.21
4. Alan Davidson, *Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.488

Remembering Albina and Alberta Public Markets



The Oregon Daily Journal, May 15, 1915

The following excerpt from Heather Arndt Anderson's book, Portland: A Food Biography (Rowan and Littlefield, 2014) has been printed with permission.

In 1913, the editor and publisher of Portland's *Evening Telegram*, John F. Carroll, publicly declared the need for a public market. He'd successfully rallied for other civic projects in previous years — one of which being the Portland Rose Festival— and was confident his idea for a market had legs. He gathered up some of his business-minded colleagues, formed the Producers' and Consumers' Public Market Association (PCPMA) and got to work.

“What is wanted is a market without partnership run in the interests of the producer and the consumer,” pled one member of the building committee. Another insisted that fairness was key; that there needed to be a standard of honesty in weights and measures. Perhaps most importantly, Portland's housewives—the ones doing the shopping—had been vociferously demanding a clean marketplace that offered fresh, wholesome foods in excellent condition. Food purity and sanitation were still at the front of everyone's minds a decade after the first reports of dirty markets and subsequent rash of food poisoning cases.

After a few years of tireless advocacy, the PCPMA opened its first market in North Portland on Knott Street, between Williams and Albina. Albina Market had its grand opening at the end of April, 1914. (One can imagine what a remarkable sight it must have been for the Volga Germans, many of whom were fresh off the boat from the Old Country, to arrive to their new American home to see a bustling marketplace swollen with bounty—complete with parades—right in their neighborhood.)



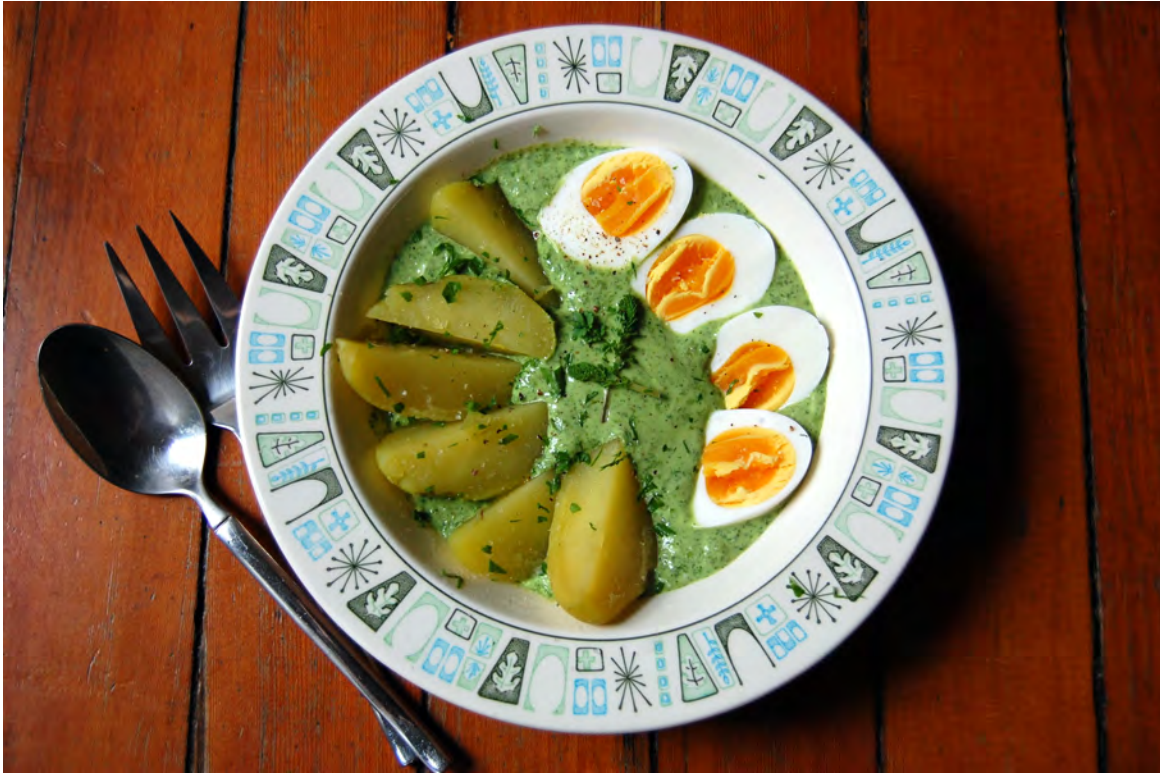
The Sunday Oregonian, May 16, 1915

The market was the first to serve Portland's eastside shoppers with wares from across town and was greeted with much fanfare. One woman sold homemade marmalade, and growers from Mt. tabor sold lettuce, potatoes, and spinach. Another vendor sold live chickens, and as an extra-special treat, one farmer promised to bring a fat hog to slaughter and sell right from his wagon. Housewives were urged to ready their shopping baskets; in anticipation, area department stores held a sale on baskets.

Happily, Albina Market had gone gangbusters, and after much celebration, another market was opened a month later on NE 23rd and Alberta, for children to sell food from school gardens.

Today, farmers' markets might be a dime a dozen in Portland, but it all started in Albina.

Recipe: Frankfurt *Grüne Soße*



Recipe and photos by Heather Arndt Anderson

All over the world, springtime foods are about renewal, about fresh eggs, and the new green things sprouting from warming soil. In Frankfurt, Germany, this is celebrated with Grüne Soße, or green sauce, made with seven herbs: chives, borage, chervil, cress, parsley, sorrel, and salad burnet. In Hesse, this creamy sauce is served with boiled eggs and potatoes for Gründonnerstag (Green Thursday), or the Last Supper—the day before Good Friday. I like to serve this dish with ham and spring peas for Easter dinner, but new potatoes and jammy-yolked boiled eggs are enough on their own as a springtime supper. Serves four.

INGREDIENTS*

1 bunch parsley
1 cup chopped cress
1/4 cup chopped chives
7 sprigs salad burnet
7 leaves of sorrel
7 leaves borage
1/4 cup chopped chervil
1 tbsp walnut or olive oil
1 clove minced garlic

1 tbsp minced shallot
1 cup sour cream
1 cup buttermilk or whole milk yogurt
2 tsp grainy mustard
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
6 peeled hardboiled eggs
1 lbs baby potatoes

INSTRUCTIONS

In a blender, puree all ingredients except the eggs and potatoes until creamy and smooth. Finely chop two of the eggs, and stir into the sauce. Season to taste, then serve the sauce with halved boiled eggs and boiled baby potatoes. It's also excellent with ham.

**If you have trouble finding these herbs, flavor-wise, arugula or nasturtium leaf are good subs for cress; tarragon or dill work for chervil; skin-on cucumber can stand in for salad burnet and borage. Use a little extra lemon juice or a slice of rhubarb stem to replace the sourness of sorrel.*

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AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER

P.O. Box 55218

Portland, Oregon 97238-5218

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

Chapter Officers

President:

Carole M. Hayden
cnees@comcast.net

First Vice President:

Vacant

Second Vice President:

Ed Wagner

Secretary:

Marilyn Schultz

Treasurer:

Jim Holstein
503-367-1757
jimholstein@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Heather Arndt Anderson

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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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