



Volume 38, Issue 1  
January-February 2017



### Mark Your Calendar

- Saturday, January 7 - 10 am**  
Oregon Chapter Board Meeting
- Sunday, January 22 - 2 pm**  
Oregon Chapter Program  
Norka Documentary
- Saturday, February 4 - 10 am**  
Oregon Chapter Board Meeting
- Sunday February 19 - 2 pm**  
Discovering German Origins
- Saturday, March 4 - 10 am**  
Oregon Chapter Board Meeting
- Sunday, March 19 - 2 pm**  
Oregon Chapter Program  
Tanja Schell - Letters From Russia



**Catherine II, the Great**  
Empress of Russia

**AHSGR Oregon Chapter**  
**P.O. Box 55218**  
**Portland, OR 97238-5218**

**oregonahsgr.org**

# AHSGR Oregon Chapter Newsletter

## Chronicle Unserer Leute

**Sunday, January 22, 2017 - Oregon Chapter Program - 2 pm**

### **Norka Film: A Passage in Time**

In January, we will show the documentary "**A Passage in Time - The Norka Film**" which was recently released by AHSGR International. The original film was taken by Heinrich Wacker, a native of Norka and resident of Portland, who visited his home village in 1928. This is a unique view into life in the Volga German colonies. Don't miss this program!

**Sunday, February 19, 2017 - Oregon Chapter Program - 2 pm**

### **Discovering my Burbach Family Origins in Germany**

Roger Burbank will share his family history adventures in Germany this past summer. Roger is an expert genealogist who has been pursuing the story of his Burbach family in Germany. Roger and Mary (who shares German Russian ancestry) traveled to Germany with their children last summer to visit many of their ancestral villages. It was the trip of a lifetime and you'll be hearing more about it in February.

### **2016 Christmas Program Cancelled:**

We apologize for the cancellation of our annual Christmas program. Due to inclement weather and cancellations by some of our entertainment providers, it was decided to play it safe this year and not risk life and limb. A large effort was made to reach all interested parties with 99% success.



### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- 01 JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2017 PROGRAMS
- 02-03 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - STEVE SCHREIBER
- 03 UPCOMING CHAPTER PROGRAMS
- 04 OREGON CHAPTER 45TH ANNIVERSARY; INTERNET SITES
- 05 HAPPY NEW YEAR; GERMAN-RUSSIANS AT THE BOAT DOCK
- 06 2017 RUSSIAN TOURS; RECRUITMENT AGENT STATS
- 07 ARA - AMERICAN RELIEF ADMINISTRATION VOLGA PHOTOS
- 08 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS; HORST GUTSCHE
- 09 CVGS SPIRIT OF GIVING
- 10-11 THE VOLGA RELIEF SOCIETY
- 12 MEMBERSHIP FORM
- 13 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 CALENDARS
- 14 CHAPTER OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

# President's Message for Jan/Feb 2017 Newsletter

Steve Schreiber, President

I would like to wish you all a very happy New Year! I hope that 2017 will be full of peace, joy, happiness and contentment.

We have some great programs coming up this year. In January, we will show the documentary "A Passage in Time - The Norka Film" which was recently released by AHSGR International. The original film was taken by Heinrich Wacker, a native of Norka and resident of Portland, who visited his home village in 1928. This is a unique view into life in the Volga German colonies. Don't miss this program!

In February, Roger Burbank will share his family history adventures in Germany this past summer. Roger is an expert genealogist who has been pursuing the story of his Burbach family in Germany. Roger and Mary (who shares German Russian ancestry) traveled to Germany with their children last summer to visit many of their ancestral villages. It was the trip of a lifetime and you'll be hearing more about it in February.

One of our most popular presenters, Tanja Schell, will join us again this year at our March meeting. Tanja has lived in Russia, Germany and the USA and is passionate about our heritage.

That's just a brief preview of what's ahead. Rest assured, we'll have more great programs for you in 2017.

As many of you know, I am currently serving in two roles; as President of the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR and as the Interim Director of the Center for Volga German Studies. I've found that there is a great deal of confusion between the two organizations and I'd like to help sort that out a bit.

Founded in 1968, The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) is an international organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska that is dedicated to the discovery, collection, preservation, and dissemination of information related to the history, cultural heritage and genealogy of Germanic Settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants. I'd like to emphasize that AHSGR represents all German ethnic groups that lived in the Russian empire. It is not a "Volga German" only organization.

The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR was organized in Portland, Oregon on April 25, 1971 and became formally affiliated with the AHSGR International organization headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska on November 21, 1971.

Both the AHSGR International and the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR are historical societies that require a membership.

The Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS) is part of Concordia University and supports research into and preservation of the heritage, history, traditions and accomplishments of the Volga Germans. As you know, the Volga Germans are only one of several ethnic German groups that settled in Russia.

The CVGS is not a membership based organization. The CVGS has its own Advisory Council and operates based on donations from interested people and organizations. All funds and materials held by the CVGS are the property of Concordia University, not the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR.



The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR shares a close partnership with CVGS. The former Oregon Chapter library is now included as part of the CVGS collection held in the George R. White Library on the Concordia University campus. Most of the Oregon Chapter meetings and programs are also held at the Concordia University library. Despite this close partnership, they are two separate entities.

I'm often asked: "Which organization should I support?" My answer is: "Both, especially if you have Volga German ancestry." Each organization has a different role and mission. The CVGS and AHSGR collaborate in areas where it makes sense for both groups. We hope to expand that collaboration in 2017.

Both organizations need your continued financial support and your personal involvement if you have time to volunteer.

I would like to thank Thelma Wiest and Herb Femling for their service on the Oregon Chapter Board of Directors. We truly appreciate your contributions and know you will remain active members.

I want to thank each of you for your continued interest and support for the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR. Without it we cannot continue the work to preserve our family heritage.

*Steve Schreiber*

President, Oregon Chapter of AHSGR

---

## Upcoming Chapter Presentations - 2017

January 22 (Sunday)

### **Norka Documentary "A Passage in Time - The Norka Film"**

Installation of Officers and Directors

February 19 (Sunday)

### **Discovering my Burbach Family Origins in Germany**

Roger Burbank

March 19 (Sunday)

### **Letters from Russia**

Tanja Schell



## AHSGR Oregon Chapter 45th Anniversary Cake



A great 45th Oregon Chapter Anniversary Celebration on November 20th, topped off with cake!



### Websites:

**Volga-German Deportations:** [https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/history\\_culture/history/stalin2.html](https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/history_culture/history/stalin2.html)

**American Volga Relief Society:** <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/manuscripts/organize/volga-relief.htm>

**American Relief Administration (ARA):** <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2011/april/famine-040411.html>

**Russian Famine of 1921-1922:** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_famine\\_of\\_1921-22](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_famine_of_1921-22)

## Wishing you a Happy New Year 2017

This might be a good time to reflect on the progress you've made during the last year and contemplate new success in 2017.

We wish you all the best in health and happiness.



THE STEERAGE OF A NORTH GERMAN LLOYD'S ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP.

## Emigrants

(from a woodcut posted to Facebook by Mike Yunker)

## 2017 Russian Tours

**Volga German Tours** is offering 3 tours to the Volga German colonies in 2017: one in June and two in August. Pick the date that works best for you, then tell us which colony or colonies you want to visit. We'll design that tour around those colonies!

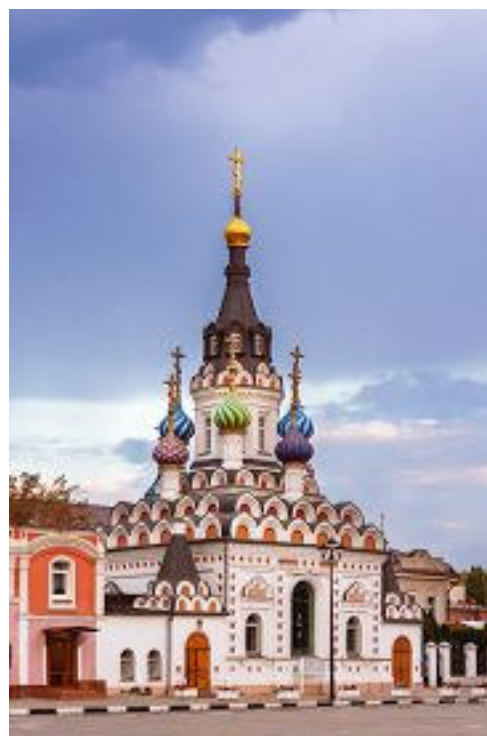
Details can be found at the website: [VolgaGermanTours.com](http://VolgaGermanTours.com)

We offered 2 last year, and they both filled up quickly. There was a long waiting list, so get your applications in soon! In 2016, we had participants from Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, South Carolina, Georgia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Argentina!

One of the 2016 tours coined the phrase "Extreme Heritage" because of the rugged terrain we covered in order to visit some of the former colonies. We were in it together, and we got to see, feel, hear, smell, and taste it all! It was a marvelous time!!

Make some once-in-a-lifetime memories as you explore the homeland of your ancestors! Invite your family and friends to join in the adventure!! If you have questions, please let us know.

**Drs. Brent Mai & Mila Koretnikov**, Tour Leaders



### Data on Settlement of Foreign Colonists in the Saratov Region by Major Recruitment Agents, 1769

	de Beauregard	le Roy and Pictet	de Boffe	Government	Total
Total number of households	1,523	1,530	434	2,946	6,433
Households capable of farming	1,357	1,347	403	2,747	5,854
Households incapable of farming	166	183	31	199	579
Males in the population	2,820	2,792	863	5,670	12,145
Females in the population	2,470	2,547	723	5,224	10,964
Total population	5,290	5,339	1,586	10,894	23,109
Horses	3,139	3,179	877	6,647	13,842
Oxen	22	153	159	370	704
Cows and calves	1,588	2,427	927	6,610	11,552
Sheep	40	78	58	2,093	2,269
Pigs	65	55	83	816	1,019
Planted (chetvert')	3,738	3,803	820	6,264	14,626
Harvested last year (chetvert')	2,792	4,533	4,489	34,691	46,506
Homes built	901	1,204	269	2,186	4,560
Grain-storage buildings built	390	417	95	1,184	2,086
Stables built	473	628	85	1,458	2,644

Source: Report by Grigorii Orlov, President of the Chancellery, St. Petersburg, February 14, 1769.



An ARA supply caravan on the frozen [Volga River](#) in the winter of 1922. (Courtesy: CVGS)

## ARA and the Russian Famine of 1921

When the Russian famine of 1921 broke out, the ARA's director in Europe, Walter Lyman Brown, began negotiating with Soviet deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov, in Riga, Latvia. An agreement was reached on August 21, 1921 and an additional implementation agreement was signed by Brown and People's Commissar for Foreign Trade Leonid Krasin on December 30, 1921. The U.S. Congress appropriated \$20,000,000 for relief under the Russian Famine Relief Act of late 1921.

At its peak, the ARA employed 300 Americans, more than 120,000 Russians and fed 10.5 million people daily. Its Russian operations were headed by Col. William N. Haskell. The Medical Division of the ARA functioned from November 1921 to June 1923 and helped overcome the typhus epidemic then ravaging Russia. The ARA's famine relief operations ran in parallel with much smaller Mennonite, Jewish and Quaker famine relief operations in Russia.

The ARA's operations in Russia were shut down on June 15, 1923, after it was discovered that Russia renewed the export of grain. (courtesy: Wikipedia)



### ARA Camel Transport

An American Relief Administration transport column on the frozen Volga in Tsaritsyn, which is now Volgograd.

(Courtesy: CVGS)

## Oregon Chapter Lifetime Achievement Award Winners

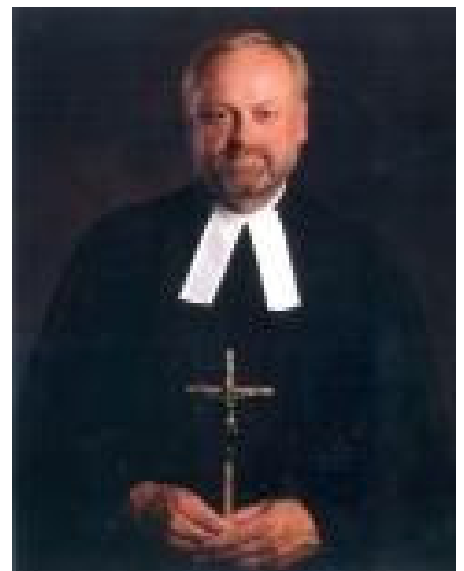


On November 20, the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR celebrated its 45th Anniversary and honored our Lifetime Achievement Award winners. Above is a photo of some of our award recipients or a family representative. From left to right: Ed Wagner, Joanne Krieger, Beverly Norton (representing her father and mother: Harold and Barbara Beck), Lela Miller (who also represented her husband, Zane Miller), Norm Koch (representing his father, Peter Koch and brother, Ray Koch) and Jim Beall (representing his father, Bob Beall).

---

### Pastor Horst Gutsche (1951-2016)

We are saddened to announce the passing of Pastor Horst Gutsche on December 8, 2016, at the age of 65. He is survived by his son, Alexander, his mother Emma, and his sister Heidrun and her family. He was predeceased by his father Edmund and brother Wilfred. A memorial service was held at Christ Lutheran Church in Mellowdale at 1pm on Friday, December 16. If you wish to make a donation in Horst's memory please consider supporting the missionary work of the Lutheran Church.





## The Volga Relief Society



**National Convention of the American Volga Relief Society in Portland, Oregon, June 1924.**

Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia the Volga colonists were forced to give up their seed wheat. Then in the fall of 1920 and 1921, total crop failures occurred along the Volga, and one of the greatest famines in years set in. Approximately 170,000 men, women, and children died of starvation in the Volga German colonies alone.

Family and friends in the United States received letters from Russia describing the terrible conditions. As a result of these letters, relief societies were organized in many different states in which the Volga Germans had settled.

According to Emma Schwabenland Haynes in her college thesis written in 1929, the Volga Relief Society was organized in Portland, Oregon, on 11 August 1921 in the Zion Congregational Church. The group's purpose was to raise funds for relatives along the Volga River who at that time were suffering from one of the most disastrous famines in European history. At this meeting John Miller was chosen president and George Repp was to be its personal representative in Russia, working under the supervision of the American Relief Administration (ARA).

At the same time that this organization came into existence, similar gatherings were held by Volga Germans living in Fresno, California and in Lincoln, Nebraska. Before long money was contributed by communities in Colorado, Washington, Montana, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, and many other states in which the German-Russian people had settled. As a result of their efforts, more than one-million dollars was raised for their unfortunate compatriots in Russia.

Historians have described the relief work accomplished along the Volga River during the years 1921-1923 as the most outstanding act of charity ever performed by the Volga Germans now living in the United States.

The following excerpt is from A History of the Volga Relief Society by Emma Schwabenland Haynes:

*Before meeting with the Volga Germans living in Portland, Oregon, Mr. Miller considered it advisable to get in touch with Herbert Hoover's organization and find out if it was possible to work through the American Relief Administration. As a result, the following night letter was sent on 8 August 1921:*

**European Relief Committee, 42 Broadway, New York City.**

*There are approximately fifteen hundred people in Portland that came from German colonies located in Russia near city of Saratov along Volga River. These people are anxious to help get food into that stricken district of Russia. They have received letters from relatives appealing for help. Will you be good enough to wire us how to proceed. That is, can we send money to you and designate that it is to be spent for food for a certain colony. Also have you any idea when relief work and food distribution will begin in Russia. There will be a mass meeting Thursday evening among our people and a regular relief committee organized for German speaking colonies in Russia. We would like very much have your reply by then giving us all information you can that may help in the organization. Have hopes extending work of this committee to other places where our people are located in California, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas. We figure that there are in the United States approximately hundred thousand people interested in these German speaking colonies along the Volga River and that good work can be done with proper help from reliable source like yourselves. Would it be possible for us to send an American citizen of our people into these colonies in Russia through your committee? That is, be indorsed by you or even sent by you as one of your workers so that he would have proper protection.*

**JOHN W. MILLER**

*Two days later, on 11 August 1921 about one hundred men who were interested in the project gathered in the Zion Congregational Church of Portland, and voted to organize a relief society. The officers elected were: John W. Miller, president; David Hilderman, vice-president; George Repp, secretary; and John H. Krieger, treasurer, although Mr. Krieger resigned in the next meeting and was replaced by Gottfried Geist. George Repp made the motion that the organization should be called the Volga Relief Society. It was also decided that all gatherings should open and close with prayer and that a second mass meeting was to take place on the following Thursday night.*

*The enthusiastic response of the Portland people to the news that an organization had been perfected was far greater than anyone could have believed possible. Throughout the following days the newly elected leaders were constantly being stopped by Volga German men and women who expressed their happiness in the creation of the society. In view of the seriousness of the crisis that existed in Russia, all religious and personal differences were forgotten, and people of all denominations and from all colonies showed a spirit of harmony and co-operation that was to remain truly remarkable. The future success of the Volga Relief Society can be explained to a great extent by the splendid loyalty of its members, which became an example for Volga Germans in many other communities of the States.*

*Mention should also be made of the wonderful help given by the pastors of the various churches. Rev. H. Hagelganz, Rev. George Zoehner, and Rev. John H. Hopp, who had Congregational denominations, Rev. Peter Yost of the Brethren Church, and Rev. Jacob Hergert, an Evangelical pastor, all attended the union meetings, and their unflinching encouragement, advice, and support were of inestimable value to the society. The hymn "Was kann es schöner geben, und was kann seliger sein", which was always sung at the beginning of all meetings, truly expressed the spirit of the Portland people.*

See also: <http://www.volgagermansportland.info/george-repp.html>

#### Sources:

Emma Schwabenland Haynes, *A History of the Volga Relief Society* (Lincoln, NE: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1982).

Bertrand M. Petenaude, *The Big Show in Bololand: The American Relief Expedition to Soviet Russia in the Famine of 1921*. Palo Alto, CA: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 2002.

Center for Volga German Studies.



*American Relief Administration Poster Requesting Help for the Russian Famine*

# AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Form

Membership fees are for one calendar year that **renews each January 1st**.

Annual dues for the **AHSGR Oregon Chapter** membership are \$25.

Membership Year 20 \_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I want my Oregon Chapter newsletter delivered electronically (preferable). Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I want to receive my Oregon Chapter newsletter in the mail (paper copy)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

In order for us to service our membership more effectively, please list all of your German Russian family surnames and all of the villages that you believe your ancestors are from:

**Villages**

**Surnames**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Annual Dues:	\$25.00
Additional Donation:	
TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$	

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

**AHSGR Oregon Chapter  
PO Box 55218  
Portland, OR 97238-5218**

**Questions? Contact Jim Holstein at [oregonahsgr@gmail.com](mailto:oregonahsgr@gmail.com)**

The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization organized under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). As such, your dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. (Federal Tax ID # 93-1313164).

Additional dues are required for [membership in the AHSGR International Organization](#).

(See <http://www.ahsgr.org/membership.htm> for current International membership levels and dues).

Please remit International dues directly to AHSGR headquarters at 631 D Street, Lincoln, NE. 68502-1199.

# January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Years	2	3	4	5	6	7 Board Meeting 10 am
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Chapter Program 2 pm Norka Documentary	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4 Board Meeting 10 am
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentines Day	15	16	17	18
19 Chapter Program 2 pm Burbach Family	20 Presidents Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

**AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER**  
**P.O. Box 55218**  
**Portland, Oregon 97238-5218**

**Address**

**Address**

**City**

**State, Zip**



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.

The  
**Chronicle Unserer Leute**

(Chronicle of Our People)  
is published bimonthly by the  
Oregon Chapter of AHSGR.

Members can find the current schedule of chapter events and newsletters on our Facebook page at:  
[facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon/](https://facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon/)

Oregon Chapter Website  
[oregonahsgr.org](http://oregonahsgr.org)

**Chapter Officers**

President:  
**Steve Schreiber**  
Steven.Schreiber@gmail.com  
503-774-9753

First Vice President:  
**Bob Thorn**  
503-635-6651  
bobthorn@hotmail.com

Second Vice President:  
**Vacant**

Secretary:  
**Mary Burbank**  
360-263-5352

Treasurer:  
**Jim Holstein**  
503-367-1757  
Jimholstein@gmail.com

**Directors**

**Roger Burbank**

**Michael Frank**  
+Newsletter Editor

**Harold Kammerzell**

**Joan Porter**

**Lee Ann Schlager**

**Ed Wagner**