

M A R I E N T A L & L O U I S

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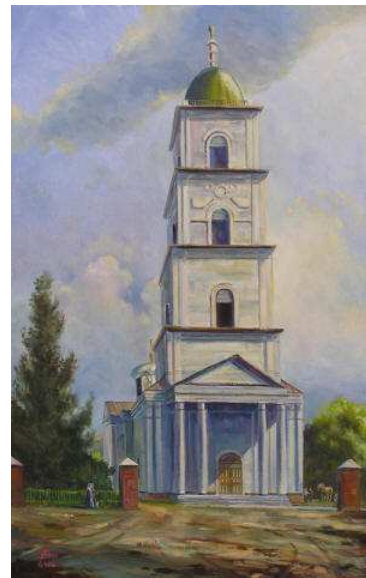
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you.

In this issue, I am featuring a couple of our very talented people that I am delighted to be acquainted with through my position as Village Coordinator for Mariental & Louis, Russia. I think you will enjoy learning about them and their dedication to the Volga German people. We are very fortunate to have these artists carrying the message of our people in their own forms of expression. The paintings by Michael Boss are extraordinary and lovely to look at. There is so much warmth in them. Note the horse and camel harnessed together in the “Herzog Harvest”. The picture on the cover page is one of my favorites of the Mariental Church. His Volga German artwork appears on Steve Schreiber’s web page: <http://www.volgagermans.net/volgagermans/>

Mike Boss is a native of Kansas and has painted most of his life. Early on he was introduced to a big world and the much larger cosmos. He was quite aware that painting and history were linked. While growing up he was reading "Fighting the Flying Circus", "men's" magazines with swash-buckling illustrations, books on dinosaurs, and outer space. The world then and now, as well as the cosmos, fought hard against the mandatory and rather perfunctory years of grade and high school.

After graduating from high school, Mike majored in music as a double bass player. While attending Southern Illinois University he called his childhood hero, illustrator Jack Leynwood. For several years he had kept an article from Private Pilot magazine, and rereading it, decided to touch base with his hero and soon-to-be mentor.

Over the years Mike has painted about everything: aviation, space, rail, marine, landscapes ,etc., as he is not into the groove of being a genre painter of one or two subjects. "Life is way too short and there are so many, many things to paint and sadly, with any artist, they won't all happen." He has won his share of awards etc., but it isn't of primary importance. The greatest award is the look on people's faces when the ideas in the painting "hit." He loves when a chord strikes and viewers go with a piqued interest in a subject.



Schoenchen, Russia



Mariental Church

His interest in Volga German history was a bit delayed. Raised in western Kansas, Mike was not far away from communities of Germans from Russia descendents, but never knew their history in any great degree. Mike met Mary (Rome) Wilmott of Colorado

Springs and she asked if it were possible to "restore" St. Peter, Kansas in paintings. With different subjects he has researched and painted, it was "a piece of cake."



"Seeing her photo of Herzog, Russia and the camels, I was hooked. Reading further, I realized the Germans from Russia carried and suffered extreme burdens.." In the paintings, Michael Boss hopes to capture the tragic as well as the good times.

Herzog Harvest



Katherinenstadt, Russia



St. Peters, Kansas - Michael Boss can be reached at:

wheaterdog@yahoo.com

This next featured artist has written a delightful Cookbook. My daughters wanted one, and even my youngest son ordered one. The step-by-step instructions with pictures are a great way to teach someone how to cook the Volga German dishes.

**Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski
Author/Publisher**

A new Volga German author has just published her Volga German Cookbook entitled “Value Meals On The Volga” It is a great cookbook, with step-by-step pictures for the recipes. This will be a wonderful cookbook for a newly married “cook” learning to make the Volga German dishes for her new husband. It will be popular with older cooks such as I, myself, as there are some differences to the recipes, than my mother used to make and they are worthy of trying. Then there is a suggested beverage with each meal. It’s quite unique and interesting. She is also presently serving as President of the Arizona Sun Chapter of AHSGR.

Check her web page at <http://members.cox.net/valuevolga>

Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski is a second generation American who is proud of her German-Russian ancestry. Her maternal grandparents were born in Reinwald and her paternal grandparents were born in

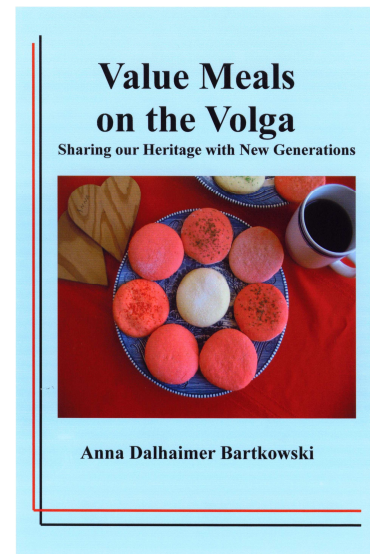


Mariental. The only grandparent still alive during Anna’s lifetime was Clementine Herrmann Thalheimer Bauer who was known as “Dina” or “Ma Bauer.”

Anna has accumulated and saved much information regarding her family’s history primarily due to her father, Joseph John Dalhaimer’s, influence. His stories and knowledge of family events led her to re discover the pleasure of traditional German-Russian cooking. Growing up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin with Bratwurst festivals, polkas and softball games kept much of the German-Russian community at the forefront of her life. Her mother, Doris, taught her to cook in the German-Russian tradition.

Always an avid reader and writer, Anna holds a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from Marquette University. She currently resides in Arizona with her two, beautiful daughters.

Anna Bartkoski and myself at her “book signing” in Chandler, AZ the 11th of November, 2006. This was a very successful event, and I am so glad that I attended. Her ancestors lived in Mariental, Russia during the same years that some of my ancestors did, and we have corresponded often through the years, so I was quite proud of her for her accomplishment. Check out her web site when you get a chance.



A sample page from her book as shown on her web page:



A Taste of Value Meals on the Volga

“Grebel was a Thalheimer family tradition on Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. This recipe, along with 12 others, are described with step by step instructions and photographs so you can make delectable delights whether you are a gourmet chef or novice cook.



This saw belonged to my grandfather, Johannes Thalheimer, whose name was recorded as Dalhaimer when he entered the United States. It is the only possession passed to his son, Joseph.

What is of particular interest is the beautiful carving on the handle. In addition to what appears to be the manufacturer's design, his initials J.D. are engraved at the top. Nearly worn away from use and only visible under close examination, is the name Mariental, his birthplace in Russia, carved directly on the handle.

The story as told by my grandmother Clementine to my father was that Johannes bought the saw in the United States. He returned to Mariental when my grandmother was extremely homesick. In Mariental, he had the carvings added to the saw. Within a short time, they again immigrated to the United States, taking the saw with him for the return journey. My father gave the saw to me in the 1980's".

MEMORIES TUCKED AWAY:

My Dad's Farm

{A German-Russian Family Story}

My Father was born in Mariental, Russia in 1897, and immigrated to America when he was about 11 years old. He told us of one of the reasons that they came to America. He said that they were farmers and the present government in power at the time, would just come and take a horse, or cow, as many as they wanted, from the Volga farmers. It was getting almost impossible to become prosperous in that type of situation. Then also, grandfather had been in the service, and didn't want his sons to be in the Russian Army, so he made the decision to move his family to America.

I came from a family of seven living children. Born during the depression, I was the middle child, with two brothers and a sister older, and a brother and two sisters younger. We were a very independent bunch of urchins, and full of what the German people were noted for – their stick-to-it-iveness. I don't say "stubborn-ish" as I am not too fond of that word. And, yes, we loved the German foods, and sauerkraut. All of us girls can cook the German dishes and still do, especially at Christmas time.

Everyone had to do their share in order to make this small farm provide for such a large family. Dad had only a fourth-grade education, but I thought he was very smart. He could do all of his own repairs, no matter what was needed. Mowers, binders, combines, harnesses, cars and trucks, all were always in need of some kind of repair. and he always patched them up somehow. One thing he couldn't fix, was the canvas top on our car, after the goats got done with it. Now in his efficient way of thinking – brakes weren't actually the most important item on a vehicle, so none of our vehicles usually had any brakes. We children learned how to drive without

brakes, a very innovative and artful way to drive. (It required some fast thinking at times, as our yard was somewhat downhill from the main road). Who knew that brakes were important – if our dad didn't think so, why should we? Our mother, driving into our yard, with her sister as her co-pilot, one day, miscalculated a slight bit, and merrily continued down through the yard into a fence, where she very artfully got the car under control. When they were able to laugh about it, much later that day, Mom recalled that Aunt Helen had said “Nuh, Dilla, wo wollen Sie gehen hier?”(Nuh, Tillie, where are you going here?)”

One place where we lived was down in a draw, with two large hills flanking the farm. Our car just couldn't hardly make it up the hill to go to town, especially when we were all in the car, so quite often dad would turn the car around and back it up the hill – very good thinking, it always worked. You see, he was quite smart.

Well anyway, Dad could doctor the animals, build buildings, and patch tires with his own patching kit, (this happened frequently on our way into town on Saturday's or to church on Sunday's).

He was also a terrific brewer – brewing his own beer – which he kept up in the attic of the house. We would often times hear a loud pop, and we all knew, there went another bottle of beer all over everything. But, it was just the attic - a very aromatic attic, though. We always helped our father “clean up” whenever there was occasion for a little beer-drinking going on. We would check all of the “empties”, drink what was left in the bottom of the bottles, while putting them away. We didn't mind doing this at all for our dad. We felt we were merely helping him out.

Now we children weren't without our own tremendous talents. We were all very good marksmen – especially when milking the cows, because we could squirt milk into any cat's mouth at quite a distance away, and even each others sometimes. So we all felt that we were very talented in that area.

We were excellent cowboys, having our own little rodeos when mom and dad would leave for town. Their very last words upon leaving were “Don't ride the steers”. Well this was a big mistake on their part – it just served as a reminder to not forget to do that very thing. We thought it was great fun. Another order they gave, was “don't slide down the roof on the barn” which was another mistake our parents were making to our way of thinking. Our large barn had a long sloping roof; very much fun to slide down, and the drop off was only about 5 feet. We never seemed to get hurt doing that, but while riding the steers, would occasionally land in the cow puddles, making it necessary to change clothing and maybe do a little washing in the horse tank right there at the end of the yard.

Whilst working on the farm, there seemed to be fence mending to do all the time. Our brothers were assigned to handle these projects. Melvin and Hubert (the two older ones) were told to dig a hole for the large corner post. When they asked how deep to dig it, dad answered, “about as deep as Robert (the youngest) is tall. So that

is what they did, using Robert as a measuring stick. Finally they decided it was as deep as Robert was tall, and left him in the hole. When Dad got home from town, he noticed one of his boys were missing, when after asking around, found that the “measuring stick” was still in the hole.

The boys grew to be quite strong and handsome men, and sometimes the hard work of “ranching” on the farm got their tempers up just a mite. One such day, brother Hubert, got a wee bit agitated at one of the steers, picked up a two-by-four, hit it over the head, putting it out of it’s “misery”. (Whatever “misery” it had.) Then, what to tell dad became a huge quandary. If they told him the truth, they would be in for some unpleasantness. But, if they told him that they found it dead, then dad would have to decide whether to butcher it, or see what had made it lay down and die. Well, Dad was so upset, he called the vet and had (through considerable expense) all of the cattle vaccinated. My brothers knew how costly their mistake had been, and never did tell dad any different. It was many years later, when they were grown and with their own families that they finally told dad what had actually happened to that steer. I remember him saying, “my god, we could have butchered that steer, and saved all that expense”.

We liked to race the teams of horses home after we were finished raking alfalfa for the day, and were very adept at handling the racers. But one day, brother Robert, was ahead of me, actually he was winning, and when he went to make the 90 degree turn to get through the gate, the wheel caught on the gatepost, hurtling Robert thru the air, while the horses in their fright, broke loose from the rake, and took off at their very best top speed for home – dragging the doubletrees behind them. All I could see was a bunch of dust, but finally found my brother, unhurt. We sat together on my rake seat, and very properly and carefully drove home. The scene when we arrived was mixed with both anger and joy. Another quandary for our parents, as they had been scared to death when the horses came flying into the yard with wild eyes, foaming mouths, and everything dragging behind them. Well, there would be another huge repair job for our father to fix that rake, but then, we already said that he was quite good at fixing things

Sister Lillian (older than me) would have to do the sewing and patching, which she loved to do and she was always so good at it. I was not quite as skilled, but did manage to do some things. I remember when my oldest daughter was in high school, I was teaching her how to make a dress, and when it was finished, we proudly held it up for inspection, and to my dismay, discovered that the zipper was under the arm instead of in the back! I don’t remember her asking me for advice anymore after that.

We were all quite skilled readers. We could, and did, read the catalog in the outhouse for a long time when there were chores to be done. Our bad luck would be if one beat the other to the outhouse. Dad or mom couldn’t say anything, because how did they know if we were having problems or not.

We did have fun times though. We made our own toys, stilts, bats, and slingshots. The younger girls, Twila and Verda, could have been professionals at jumping rope. We did play “jacks”, Marbles”, & Mumble peg”.

We all loved music. Our dad played the mouth harp. And we all sang. When we had company, the folks would make us sing and harmonize for our company. We didn't mind, because we loved to sing. It would be one of our favorite things to do while we were washing and drying the dishes. We could hear a tune on the radio, and remember it, our ear for music was quite good, but we didn't realize we had this gift until later in life. It was just a natural thing that we did. Our brother Melvin loved the song “You Are My Sunshine”, which he would sing while driving the tractor, he didn't think we could hear him, but just because the tractor was making a lot of noise in his ears, it wasn't doing that to ours. I remember he could yodel really well, and I loved to listen to him.

Yes, our German-Russian family was large, but I could write for days and there would still be things to tell. We are a very close family, and love being together. My parents, my oldest brother (killed in his cattle truck) and my oldest sister, are gone now, but never forgotten. The good memories will be there forever.

WHISPER

We are the chosen. In each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on the bones and ask them to live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but, instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the story tellers of the tribe.

All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes. Those who have gone before cry out to us: Tell our story, so we do.

In finding them, we somehow find ourselves. How many times have I told the ancestors, "You have a wonderful family, you would be so proud of us." How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for me? I can not say.

It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who I am and why I do the things I do. It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying I can not let this happen.

The bones there are bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh. It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish. How they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, their resolution to go on and build a life for their family.

It goes to deep pride that the fathers fought and some died to make and keep us a nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us. It is of equal pride and love that our mothers struggled to give us birth, without them we could not exist, and so we love each one, as far back as we can reach, that we might be born who we are, that we might remember them. So we do. With love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are they and they are the sum of who we are. So as a scribe called, I tell the story of my family. It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take my place in the long family storytellers.

That is why I do family genealogy, and that is what calls those young and old to step up and restore the memory or greet those whom we had never known before. (Author Unknown)



Russian Sleigh