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**Finding aid to the  
Laura Oster-Aaland  
Collection  
2011.16**

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## OVERVIEW

**Donor:** Laura Oster-Aaland

**Accession Date:** 21 June 2011

**Collection Number:** 016

**Quantity:** 0.50 linear feet +textiles

**Summary:** Collection of materials related to Martha Heihn; includes transcribed interview with Mrs. Heihn, a biography, a newspaper article about her, and two photographs. Also included in the collection are several textiles and the book Flegel-Pflugrath Kinship by Arthur Flegel.

**Languages:** English

**Links:**

- [“Employees donate heirlooms to NDSU Libraries’ collection”](#)
- [Laura Oster-Aaland Collection photographs on the NDSU Institutional Repository \(DSpace\)](#)
- [Images of the Laura Oster-Aaland Collection textiles](#)
- [Textiles and Clothing Collection Photographs](#)
- [Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection](#)

**Access Restrictions:** Open to the public, available upon request. Copyrights to items in this collection remain with original copyright holders or are in the public domain.

**Citation:** Laura Oster-Aaland Collection, 016, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND.

## BIOGRAPHY

Martha Heihn was born in 1915, near Beulah, North Dakota. Her father, Michael Pfenning, moved to the United States from South Russia in 1898, when he was five years of age. Martha married Ted Heihn in 1936 and Mr. and Mrs. Heihn resided near Beulah into old age. The couple had three children.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Laura Oster-Aaland Collection** consists of materials relating to Martha Heihn, including biographical information, transcript and copies of an interview, newspaper article, and two photographs. Also included in the collection are several textiles and the book Flegel-Pflugrath Kinship by Arthur Flegel. The collection has been organized into three series: Martha Heihn, Book, and Textile.

The [Martha Heihn Series](#) contains a biography of Mrs. Heihn, as well as an autobiographical sketch about her childhood, written for her grandchildren; a transcript of an interview of Martha Heihn from 2006 as well as copies of the interview on cassette tapes and CDs; an issue of the *Beulah Beacon*, dated 27 December 2001, which features a front-page story about Mrs. Heihn and her collection of teddy bears; and two small photographs: one of two young children by a house, and another of the same children with Cora Abbey.

The [Book Series](#) includes a photocopy of the book Flegel-Pflugrath Kinship: A chronicle of German families from Russia to North America by Arthur Flegel. The copied pages of the book have been put into a binder.

The [Textile Series](#) is comprised of multiple textiles including coats, collars, mittens, caps, shoes, dolls, quilts, and blouses. The textiles are listed and described in detail below.

**2011.16.04a** – Coat. Short coat, 10” from front neckline to hem; pink silk inside and out, quilted with wool fill, flat collar. On front opening has closure of two white corded frogs. Decoration down both sides of front of hand stitched in perle cotton light pink flowers with pale green leaves and stems. Small loop of pink silk ribbon stitched inside back of neckline. On small, blue painted wooden hanger, floral decal at center. Accompanying note: “Caroline’s Coat/ 1939.”

**2011.16.04b** – Collar. Hand crocheted angora fiber, 2” wide of four rows on double stitch, self-ties of chain stitch ending in large pearl bead held in place by small, clear seed bead.

**2011.16.04c** – Mittens. No thumbs, open stitch in white wool yarn with fagoting holding pink satin ribbon. One row of pink under fagoting and on edge. Attached to each other by long chain crochet in pink.

**2011.16.05** – Child’s coat. 14: from front neckline to hem; dull mustard yellow, ribbed fabric, lined in a beige twill fabric; peter pan collar; yoke delineated by cording in scallop design with X

in dark blue wool yarn in scallops. Two button closure at yoke. Manufacturers label inside back of neck not legible.

**2011.16.06** – Infant cap. Knitted, white cotton, star design at back, snowball stitch on crown and sides. Light blue silk ribbon flower each side with ribbon running through faggoting over top to connect flowers. Blue ribbon tie each front corner.

**2011.16.07** – Black shoes. Pair of shoes, black. Toddler shoes, 4 ½” long; brown top stitching between and beside air holes, some tear shape; eight lace holes each shoe with black laces. Padded on inside. Leather sole, no stitching and no added heel.

**2011.16.08** – Sheepskin shoes. Pair of shoes, moccasin type, sheepskin uppers with wool inside, has seam in back and down front. Wool cutout of rabbit face and ears on vamp with ears sticking up at tips, artificial eyes attached; red wool Y for nose. Has red strip center front under rabbit nose and as binding over seam around sole. Two hole closure with red cotton ties.

**2011.16.09** – Doll. Mammy type, 14” tall; white stockinet fabric torso, rest medium brown woven fabric. Hair of black, bullion stitch type scattered on head. Facial features sewn on: eyes have wide lashes above and long narrow lashes below, tiny white and black pupils. Nose made from straight lines down from inner corner of eyes and square on bottom. Mouth is rectangular with tiny white teeth, curved line for chin with dash for dimple above. Hands are flat with long zigzag lines for fingers; stitching at wrist. Legs extend from body and delineated by dots of black yarn to allow sitting position. Wears bright red dress with white Swiss eyelet collar and cuffs. Two rows of white stitching gather the waist in with one line extending down from center front to waist having 3 tiny mop buttons sewn on with red thread. Back closure of two white plastic buttons one at neckline and one at waist. Sewn on at ankles are crocheted red yarn booties with red chain stitch ties.

**2011.16.10** – Doll. Mammy type. 14” tall; white stockinet fabric torso, rest dark brown woven fabric. Hair of large, black, bullion stitch type scattered on head. Facial features sewn on: eyes have wide lashes above and long narrow lashes inside circle; tiny white dot on top of black for pupils. Nose made from straight lines down from inner corner of eyes and square on bottom and two dots inside. Mouth is rectangle with sides at a slant containing tiny white teeth, black yarn dot on chin for dimple. Hands are flat with long zigzag lines for fingers and stitching at wrist. Legs extend from body and delineated by lines of orange yarn to allow sitting position. Wear dull red dress having light yellow rickrack at neck, sleeve hems and at skirt hem stitch line. Has separate fabric for belt with yellow stitching. Back closure has snap at neck and waist. Black fabric sewn on above ankles and feet. Applied braid of red and yellow may delineate a shoe top. Accompanying note on yellow paper: “Dolls made by Grandma Abbey for Janice & Caroline.”

**2011.16.11** – Summer quilt. 71” x 64.” Crazy patch assembled from four large blocks, machine stitched. Foundation pieced by hand onto coarse weave white fabric. Fabrics on the top include fine wool, felted wool, large weave and higher thread count cotton, twill weaves and rayon(?). Stitches: mostly herringbone stitch and its variations with some gathered stitches and clusters on stems. Identifiable motif is a house with two windows, door and steps. Many unidentifiable

freehand motifs using stem stitch and lines. Back and binding is thin purple (blue/red) attached only at binding.

**2011.16.12** – Collar. Irish crochet, horseshoe shaped, white crochet cotton, probably size 80 or 100, in imitation of needle lace. Has individual dimensional flower and leaf motifs joined with ground of chain stitches containing picots. 17” x 18” widest dimensions.

**2011.16.13** – Pink dress and slip in silk (?) with cream insert lace around yoke and above hem; lace on sleeves and hem. Small area of smocking below yoke; French knot flowers near front hem and on yoke. Sleeves short. Back closure is one snap. Slip is sleeveless with scoop neck. Lace around hem and arm holes. A handwritten note about the dress said, “This was Caroline Heihn Oster baptismal dress – as you can see she wore it often – because in those days [babies] didn’t have many pretty dresses...”

**2011.16.14** – Blouse. Girl’s shirt of white silk (?) with short sleeves, collar and pocket on left breast. Four button closure. Red thread accent in dotted line on sleeves, collar and pocket. All buttons cut off leaving two tiny holes & red or white thread. Collar has small shredded spots at center outside edge and on points; separated or shredded at center of back seam and left shoulder seam. Tiny holes scattered around waist area in front, sides and back. An email note about this item said, “Two matching shirts that were made for Martha Heihn's daughters out of her wedding dress fabric circa 1939 - 1941.”

**2011.16.15** – Blouse. Girl’s shirt of white silk (?) with short sleeves, collar and pocket on left breast. Four button closure. Red thread accent in dotted line on sleeves, collar and pocket. All buttons cut off leaving two tiny holes & red or white thread. Spots of light brown stains on front near lowest button, by pocket and by underarm area. An email note about this item said, “Two matching shirts that were made for Martha Heihn's daughters out of her wedding dress fabric circa 1939 - 1941.”

## **SEPARATION RECORD**

The Laura Oster-Aaland collection also contains a series of textiles which are housed at the Emily Reynolds Historic Costume Collection on the NDSU campus. Advanced notice is requested for the view of these items.

## **BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

| <b>Box/Folder</b> | <b>Contents</b>                                    |
|-------------------|--|
| 1/1               | Finding aid, inventory, and historical information |

## MARTHA HEIHN SERIES

- 1/2 Martha Heihn biographical materials  
1/3 Martha Heihn interview – transcript, 2006  
1/4 Martha Heihn interview – cassette tapes and CDs, 2006  
1/5 *Beulah Beacon*, 27 December 2001

### 1/6 **Photographs 1-2**

- 2011.16.01 Snapshot of two young girls standing outside next to a house
- 2011.16.02 Snapshot of Cora Abbey, two young girls, and a handmade doll posing outside next to a window of a house

## BOOK SERIES

- SHELF** Flegel, Arthur E. Flegel-Pflugrath Kinship: A chronicle of German families from Russia to North America, California: Flegel, 1978.  
[2011.16.03]

## EPRHCC

### TEXTILE SERIES

1. Toddler's coat set [2011.16.04a-c]
2. Child's coat [2011.16.05]
3. Infant cap [2011.16.06]
4. Black toddler shoes [2011.16.07]
5. Sheepskin shoes [2011.16.08]
6. Doll [2011.16.09]
7. Doll [2011.16.10]
8. Summer quilt [2011.16.11]
9. Pink dress [2011.16.12]
10. White silk blouse [2011.16.13]
11. White silk blouse [2011.16.14]