GERMANS FROM RUSSIA
GRHC
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Finding Aid to the Ruff/ Erbele Family Collection

2011.25; 2012.18

OVERVIEW

Donor: Dianne (Meland) Gemelli and Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland

Accession Date: 19 August 2011; 15 August 2012

Collection Number: 078

Quantity: 2 folders

Summary: Erbele and Ruff family genealogical material and twenty-four photographic images of the Erbele and Ruff families, circa 1895-2011.

Languages: English

Links:
- Ruff/ Erbele Family photographs on the NDSU Institutional Repository (DSpace)
- GRHC Interview with Robert Erbele
- Letter from Johan Martin Erbele from Dakota Territory, 1889
- Dakota Memories Oral History Project: Robert Erbele

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: Ruff/ Erbele Family Collection, 078, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND.

BIOGRAPHY

Dianne (Meland) Gemelli is a descendent of the Erbele family, which can be traced back to Jerg Erbelin, who died in Germany in 1603. According to "The Erbele Family History: 1801-1984," the name *Erbele* translates to "a small heir," or landowner. Jacob Friedrich Erbele was born in 1801 in Stuttgart, Germany, and settled in Dennewitz, Bessarabia in 1813 with his family. One of his sons, Johan Martin Erbele, was born in 1836 in Teplitz, South Russia. He and his wife,

Elizabeth (Weber), had eight children. Johan was determined to give his children the best available opportunities in education, and one of his sons, Johan Martin Erbele II, came to the United States in 1885, landing in New York City. He and his family journeyed overland to Yankton, Dakota Territory, later South Dakota, before settling in Lehr, North Dakota. Johan Martin Erbele II and his wife, Maria, had two sons, Jacob and Henry. Erbele died in 1900 and is buried in Lehr. His descendants continue to live throughout the United States. (Source "The Erbele Family History: 1801-1984", by Roy Slaughter and Martha Erbele Slaughter, 2002.)

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Ruff/ Erbele Family Collection** contains two accession numbers, 2011.25 and 2012.18, because it was brought in at different times. The first accession, 2011.25, contained seven images of the Erbele and Ruff families and a family pedigree. The second accession, 2012.18, contained seventeen images of the Erbele and Ruff families and a biography page on Henry George. The collection was initially named the Dianne Gemelli Collection upon her first donation in 2011. Upon the second donation in 2012, the collection named was changed, at the donor's request, to reflect that the photographs are also courtesy of Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland. The Ruff/ Erbele Family Collection contains two series: Family History and Photographic Images.

The **Family History Series** contains a copy of a six-page handwritten family pedigree for Dianne Gemelli. This chart traces her lineage back to Jakob Friedrich Erbele. The most modern entry is that of Dianne Gemelli's granddaughter, Devin Ridler, who was born in 2001. Also included is a small leaflet copied from a book with biographical information on Henry George.

The **Photographic Images Series** consists of twenty-four (24) images of relatives of the Erbele and Ruff families of Logan County, North Dakota. These photographic images were copied from the original photographs and are maintained within this collection as photocopies, and also as digital files.

FOLDER LIST

Folder	Contents
1	Finding aid, detailed inventory, and initial inventory
	FAMILY HISTORY SERIES
1	Erbele family pedigree sheets
2	Biography page on Henry George (2012.18.18)

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES SERIES

1 **Folder 1 (2011.25.01 – 2011.25.07)**

2011.25.01 Portrait of an unidentified couple. [Notes state "Ed Ruff's grandparents"]. Circa 1895

2011.25.02 Snapshot of an old woman dressed in black dress and shawl. [Note state "Grandma Pauline Erbele, Ruff's grandmother, Andreas Erbele, Sr.'s mom"]. Circa 1920-1930

2011.25.03 Portrait of an unidentified couple, circa 1900

2011.25.04 Wedding portrait of Ed and Pauline Ruff, 1927

2011.25.05 Portrait of Ed and Pauline Ruff, circa 1970

2011.25.06 Portrait of "Andreas and Rosina Erbele's 50th Wedding Anniversary. Pauline Erbele Ruff's parents," 1942

2011.25.07 Portrait of Johan Martin and Elizabeth (Weber) Erbele. Circa 1885

2 **Folder 2 (2012.18.01 – 2012.18.17)**

2012.18.01 Portrait of the Fredrick "Fred" Ruff family. Man and a woman are seated with three boys and one girl standing behind them. The seated woman has a small child in her lap. [Inscribed: "Fred Ruff family & Emma, Rudolph, Reinhold, Gust, Ed, Wilbert"].

2012.18.02 Wedding portrait of Reinhold and Bertha Ruff. . [Inscribed: "Reinhold Ruff. Bertha 'Sher(?)enske.'"].

2012.18.03 Portrait of Gustav "Gust" and Bertha Ruff. [Inscribed: "Gust Ruff's. Fredonia, ND"]. Circa 1920s

2012.18.04 Photograph of three children identified as Idella (Ruff) Wilson, Arlene Ruff, and Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland. [Inscribed: "Idella Ruff (1929). Arlene Ruff 5-2-33, died 7-11-37. Merrlyn Ruff (1930). Fredonia, N.D."]. Circa 1934

2012.18.05 Snapshot of a seated women holding a baby with two small girls standing next to her. The woman and three children are outside in front of a house and next to some stairs

leading into the house. The woman is identified as Pauline (Erbele) Ruff and the children are Arlene, Merrlyn, and Idella. [Inscribed: “my this little girls Idella, Merrlyn, Arlene, & mom. Pauline Erbele Ruff”]. Circa 1933.

2012.18.06 Wedding portrait of Ben and Edna (Ost) Koenig. [Inscribed: “Edna ‘Ost’ Keonig. Ben”].

2012.18.07 Wedding portrait of Oscar and Viola Ost. [Inscribed: “Oscar Ost. Viola”].

2012.18.08 Portrait of Henry and Cecile Erbele. [Inscribed: “Henry Erbele. Cecile”]. Circa 1940s

2012.18.09 Wedding portrait of Floyd and Della Ruff. [Inscribed: “Floyd Ruff’s. Fredonia, ND”]. Circa 1950s

2012.18.10 Portrait of Theodore “Teddy” and Elda Erbele. [Inscribed: “Teddy & Elda. Pauline’s brother”]. [Theodore “Teddy” Erbele was a brother to Pauline (Erbele) Ruff].

2012.18.11 Snapshot of Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland and Idella (Ruff) Wilson. Circa 1950. [Inscribed: “1950. Merrlyn Ruff. Idella.”].

2012.18.12 Portrait of Martin Erbele. [Inscribed: “Martin Erbele. Never married. Merrlyn”]

2012.18.13 Photograph of Pauline (Erbele) Ruff family in a church on Edward and Pauline’s 50th wedding anniversary, December 1977. First row: Edward and Pauline (Erbele) Ruff. Second row: Idella (Ruff) Wilson, Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland, Larry Ruff, Carol (Ruff) Mayer, Darrel Ruff. Third row: Wayne Wilson, Wallace Meland, Sharon Ruff, Marvin Mayer, Etala Mae Ruff.

2012.18.14 Photograph of Hilda and William Erbele. [Inscribed: “Hilda & Bill (Wm) Erbele. Pauline’s brother”]. Circa 1970s

2012.18.15 Photograph of a church bell. [Inscribed: “Uncle Teddy Erbele hauled this bell from around Edgeley, N.D. & placed it near the tabernacle in Lehr, N.D.”]. Circa 2000

2012.18.16 Photograph of Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland and her great-granddaughter, Kaylee Ridler, making knoephla. Dated 2011. [Inscribed: “Kneophla 2011”]

2012.18.17 Photograph of Merrlyn (Ruff) Meland and her great-granddaughter, Kaylee Ridler, making knoephla. Dated 2011