As I write this column, I am busy preparing for departure on January 30th for Argentina and Brazil returning to Fargo on February 28th. Bob Dambach, director of television at Prairie Public Broadcasting (PPB) in Fargo, and I will be in South America to meet our Germans from Russia community to plan for a new television documentary. We will make visits for potential interviewees, site visits, logistics and identify new contacts. February will be summer and harvesting of crops so we will see much of the agricultural life in Argentina and Brazil.

Many German-Russians immigrated especially to Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay at the time when many immigrants came to Canada and the USA. These people were Volga, Black Sea, Volhynian, Mennonite and Bessarabian Germans. The locations where we will travel include Buenos Aires, to the north at the Province of Entre Rios, and to the south in the Province of Coronel Suarez, Argentina where many Volga Germans settled. In southern Brazil, we will be in Curitiba and Porto Alegre. In Brazil, we will meet people of Bessarabian, Black Sea, Volhynian, Volga and Mennonite German heritage.

This new documentary will be part of the Prairie Public Broadcasting (PPB) award-winning Germans from Russia Documentary Series. Plans are to return to South America in 2013 to complete the final videotape filming. It is imperative to share this important story of the immigration and life of the Germans from Russia in South America. The GRHC will work closely with PPB on this documentary project.

A new television documentary from PPB will premiere at the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention at Concordia University at Portland, Ore., in June, and at the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention in July at Bismarck. Colleagues Dr. Lewis and Dr. Dona Reeves-Marquardt of Austin, Texas, are the researchers and scriptwriters. They were closely involved with the 2010 award-winning documentary, “It’s All Earth and Sky.”

In July, I look forward to the 125th event at Eureka, S.D. This will be an important outreach event for the GRHC. Eureka was a major location for immigrant families arriving in the Dakotas settling in north central South Dakota and moving on to central North Dakota.

My Black Sea German Baumgartner ancestors arrived in Eureka in 1889 settling in the Strasburg, N.D. area. My Bessarabian German Miller (Mueller) relatives arrived there in 1893 and settled in the Krasna area west of Strasburg. We look forward to meeting our large community of German-Russian folks at Eureka.

Finally, you will find information in this newsletter about a Charitable Gift Annuity at the NDSU Development Foundation. I encourage you to contact Scott Barrett for further information. We invite you to consider making a financial donation to the NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, so that we can further develop this important work of documenting and preserving the rich heritage of our people – the Germans from Russia. We encourage you to continue to be a Friend of the GRHC with your financial donation.

Letter from the director

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NDSU is student focused and committed to its land-grant mission.
2011 Dakota Memories Heritage Tour a success

NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection hosted the second Dakota Memories Heritage Tour this past September 15-18, 2011.

Tour participants visited various German-Russian sites in south-central North Dakota.

"I learned a lot of new things, saw new places, experienced new humor, and met great people. I enjoyed visiting old churches, and the variety of subjects – like geology" told one tour participant of the most beneficial aspects of the tour.

Another tour member commented about the tour, "An unforgettable trip – Thank you!"

Sponsors for the 2011 Dakota Memories Heritage Tour included NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Extension Service’s Center for Community Vitality and Prairie Public Broadcasting.

The educational booklet for the 2011 tour can be downloaded at http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories/heritage/addresources/files/handout.pdf.

The GRHC receives 2011 AASLH awards

The NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) has been recognized as a recipient of the 2011 Award of Merit and the WOW Award by the American Association of State and Local History. The awards were presented at the National Convention in Richmond, Va., in September 2011.

The NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, in addition to being named a recipient of the Award of Merit, was also selected as a WOW Award winner. The WOW Award is given to an Award of Merit winner whose nomination is, to quote the AASLH, “highly inspirational, exhibits exceptional scholarship, and/or is exceedingly entrepreneurial in terms of funding, partnerships, or collaborations, creative problem solving, or unusual project design and inclusiveness.” Only three WOW Awards have been given this year.

The AASLH Annual Awards Program, now in its 66th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

Merl Paaverud, Director of the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND), writes: “The work of Michael M. Miller and Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle at North Dakota State University Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection has received much deserved national recognition. The work of the GRHC has been instrumental in preserving and presenting the German-Russian heritage and cultural for generations to come. The preservation projects have been extensive and impressive from translating and publishing books, producing documentaries, developing collections, producing exhibits, offering tours to the homeland and regionally, and offering outreach programs via the web. The American Association of State and Local History’s national awards, especially the WOW Award, acknowledged the quality and depth of their work. The GRHC has for decades and will continue on to give North Dakota a national presence in the field of history.”
Oster-Aaland donates family heirlooms

Laura Oster-Aaland, NDSU’s director of orientation and student success, recently made archival donations to the NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection to preserve and promote their family culture and heritage.

Oster-Aaland, a Hazen, N.D., native, donated her grandmother’s family textiles and clothing items, handmade fabric dolls, historic photographs and audio interviews of her grandmother, Martha (Pfenning) Heihn. Oster-Aaland shared, “The day I took the items to the GRHC for the staff to look at, I was honored by the appreciation they showed for my family heirlooms.”

Oster-Aaland said...“They were incredibly knowledgeable and I knew that these heirlooms would be in good hands, with people who understood their cultural significance ... the GRHC is a treasure and I am proud that it has a home at NDSU.”

Donations such as historic photographs, family documents, letters, certificates, textiles and clothing continue to support the unique culture of the Germans from Russia in North Dakota and the Northern Plains. In addition to archival donations, the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection is one of the major collections of German-Russian scholarly resources in the world. To date, the collection has 12,000 cataloged books and media on the subject of Germans from Russia.

To learn more about the NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection or to donate, go to www.library.ndsu.edu/grhc, visit room 114 in the Main Library or call Acacia Stuckle at 701.231.6596.

Tuchscherer family visits NDSU

On September 7-9, 2011, Josef Tuchscherer and his sister, Maria Tuchscherer, drove from Regina, Saskatchewan to North Dakota State University to share historically significant items with the GRHC. These items document the village of Colelia, a Catholic German Colony in the south central Dobrudsha region of Romania, their relocation to Germany in 1940, and their experience in World War II and its aftermath.

Among the treasures were a film showing Colelia families being reunited in Germany at St. Ludwig’s Convent on Dec. 27, 1940, after their deportation from Romania after its capture by the Russians. The silent film documented the Colelia villagers a few weeks out of Romania, still wearing the folk dress traditions common to Black Sea Germans. Their identifying dress included women’s black head scarves and plaited or coiled hair, mothers with infants wrapped in plaid or striped woolen shoulder shawls, and men in caps made of the fleece of black lambs.

Josef and Maria recorded a narrative for the film and recounted their journey through the war and after as refugees. Their cousin, Hermina Janer, donated a plaid shawl that had been worn by their aunt, Martha Janer, in the film, as well as written memoirs of family members recounting this tumultuous time.

The historical significance of their family’s gift cannot be underestimated, as it opens the doors to their personal experience in the relocation of Volk Deutsch to Germany, as German settlers in occupied Poland, as they fled the Russian Army when it overran Poland, and as refugees in Germany and finally Canada. The gift provides compelling primary evidence that documents this little discussed, but important part of World War II history and how it impacted our world today.

— Dr. Ann Braaten, curator Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection

Josef Tuchscherer, Maria Tuchscherer, Ann Braaten and Michael Miller examine a shawl used by their Aunt Martha (Janer) Tuchscherer. She carried the shawl with her baby, Hermina, as she left her home in Colelia, Dobrudsha, Romania in 1940 during the Umsiedlung (relocation) of ethnic German people from Russian controlled territory to Germany. In 1955, Martha brought the shawl to Canada when she immigrated. Her daughter, Hermina (Tuchscherer) Moran, presented the shawl to the GRHC this past May.
Michael M. Miller and Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle attended the Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase events in Fargo, N.D. on November 18-20, 2011 and in Bismarck, N.D. on December 2-4, 2011. The GRHC booths contain various items available for purchase. Both events had record breaking attendance.

These outreach events are the two largest sales events for the GRHC. Profit from sales of items at these events helps to fund staff salaries and various GRHC projects. Thank you to everyone that stopped by the GRHC booth in Fargo and Bismarck.

To learn more about Pride of Dakota, visit www.prideofdakota.com.

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Friends of the GRHC
NDSU Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection

Enclosed is my gift of: □ $100 □ $250 □ $500 □ $1,000 □ Other $ ______

☐ My (or) ☐ My spouse’s employer will match this gift.
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Signature ____________________________ Exp. Date _____

Contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law.
NDSU’s fiscal year is July 1 to June 30.
Make checks payable to NDSU Development Foundation.
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