



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
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**Finding Aid to the  
Dr. Richard and Donna Helm  
Collection  
2006.09 & 2010.31**

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## OVERVIEW

**Donor:** Richard and Donna Helm

**Accession Date:** 2006; 8 October 2010

**Collection Number:** 076

**Quantity:** 1 folder + textiles

**Summary:** Two wedding dresses and a pair of silk gloves, dating from 1915 to 1925; and copies of baptism and confirmation certificates for Erna Margaretha Graf, dating to 1909 and 1923 respectively.

**Languages:** German & English

**Links:**

- [Finding Aid to the Ludwig and Christina Graf-Buck Collection](#)
- [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:** Dr. Richard and Donna Helm Collection, 076, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND.

## BIOGRAPHY

Dorothea (Dora) Graf Helm was born on November 11, 1896, in Streeter, North Dakota, to parents John, Jr. and Katharina (Buck) Graf. She married Michael George Helm circa 1915-1916. The couple had two sons: Irvin Ralph who was born on November 18, 1917, and died on July 10, 1918, from influenza; and an unnamed son. Dora died on January 28, 1924, after giving birth to her unnamed son, who also died.

Erna Margaret (Graf) Helm was born on April 12, 1907, in Streeter, ND, to parents John, Jr. and Katharina (Buck) Graf. Erna was the younger sister of Dorothea (Graf) Helm. Erna married widower Michael George Helm in the spring of 1925. The couple had two sons: Ralph Michael Helm (August 1, 1926 – May 22, 2004) and Richard Kent Helm (July 15, 1932 – January 31, 2012). Michael G. Helm died on July 4, 1950, at the age of fifty-eight. Erna (Graf) Helm later remarried to Orval Haynes. Erna M. (Graf) Helm Haynes died on May 29, 1997.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The **Dr. Richard and Donna Helm Collection** consists of two wedding dresses and a pair of silk gloves, dating from 1915 to 1925; and baptism and confirmation certificates of Erna Margaretha Graf, dating to 1909 and 1923 respectively. The collection has been organized into two series: Certificate and Textile.

The [Certificate Series](#) is comprised of two documents, both of which are in German. The baptismal certificate dates to 1909 and lists Erna Margaretha Graf as being born in April 1907 to Johann and Katharina (Buck) Graf. The confirmation certificate dates to 1923 and was filled out and signed in Streeter, North Dakota by Pastor J. Bohler. Both certificates are photocopies of the originals.

The [Textile Series](#) has two wedding dresses and a pair of silk gloves. The first wedding dress was worn by Dorothea (Graf) Helm during her wedding to Michael George Helm who was a prosperous banker in Streeter, North Dakota. The ancestral villages of Dorothea's parents were Neudorf, Glueckstal Colonies and Friedenstal, Bessarabia.

The second wedding dress was worn by Erna Margaret Graf Helm for her wedding in the spring of 1925. She married widower Michael George Helm. The two silk gloves were also worn by Erna (Graf) Helm during her wedding in 1925.

### **2006.09.01**

The wedding dress is ecru colored dating to about 1915-1916. It is made of woven crepe fabric with an under layer of yellow silk medallions. Marquisette fabric is used for over layer in diagonal-lattice pattern. The neckline is slightly scooped with a flat collar, and the collar and neckline are edged with lace. The bodice has gentle gathers in front and back of neckline and waistline. This gauze-layered dress is 45 inches tall with 26 inch waistline and 54 inch hem. The sleeves are three-quarter length "Marie sleeves" with a bell shaped cuff. The skirt is full-length with four diamond-shaped floating panels edged with lace attached to waist. Side tassels are sewn to hanging corners of floating gauze panels. A silk fringe edging trims the skirt hem. A dark purple velvet ribbon encircles the Petersham waist. The same purple velvet ribbon has four attached streamers to the front waist.

### **2006.09.02**

The wedding dress is made of ivory-white crepe-back satin silk with lace inset on the skirt and both sleeve caps. The scoop neckline is finished with a bound edge, and the bodice is unfitted with a dropped waistline and a snap closure on left side seam. The waistline edge is also bound.

The short sleeves have a scalloped bound edge with two rows of self-fabric tubes trimming the sleeve below the lace cap. The skirt is twenty-seven inches long with a nine-inch wide inset of Chantilly-type lace. Two rows of shirring are visible at top of the skirt. The hem edge is bound. The wedding dress is thirty-seven inches tall with thirty-one inch bodice and twenty-eight inch waist. Under the slip is a layer of the same ivory white silk satin with both folded border and decorative borders above the hem line.

**2006.09.03**

The gloves are ivory white, elbow length, and have satin covered buttons.

**SEPARATION RECORD**

The textiles from the Richard and Donna Helm Collection, 2006.09.01-2006.09.03, are housed at the Emily P. Reynolds Historic Costume Collection on the NDSU campus. Advance notice is requested for the viewing of these items.

**BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

**2010 Small Collections Box**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>2010.31/1</b>	Finding aid, detailed inventory, and initial inventory
<b>2010.31/1</b>	<b>CERTIFICATE SERIES</b>
	Erna Margaretha Graf baptism certificate, 1909
	Erna Graf confirmation certificate, 1923
	<b>TEXTILE SERIES</b>
<b>EPRHCC</b>	Wedding dress – Dorothea Graf Helm [2006.09.01]
<b>EPRHCC</b>	Wedding dress – Erna Margaret Graf Helm [2006.09.02]
<b>EPRHCC</b>	Silk gloves [2006.09.03]



**2006.09.01**



**2006.09.02**