The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) at the NDSU Libraries in Fargo reaches out to prairie families and former Dakotans. In various ways, it affirms the heritage of the Germans from Russia as an important part of the northern plains culture.

The website of GRHC has an attractive new design and format: http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc. May I invite you to review the web pages.

An excellent new book on the Dakotas has been published: “Dakota Circle: Excursions on the True Plains,” by Tom Isern, a professor of history at North Dakota State University, Fargo. John E. Miller of South Dakota State University writes: “Confident in the regional future, historian and traveler Tom Isern is free to explore the delights of regional life — from fiberglass pheasants to Montana caviar — and to invite readers of ‘Dakota Circle’ along for some excursions on the true plains. The book informs us about our regional culture and does it in an engaging way. It is uniquely readable.”

Included in the book is a story of the Christkindl and Belzenickel of the Germans from Russia. Ernie Zahn, Velva, ND, is featured. Isern writes: “Ernie was born in 1915 to a German-Russian farm family in Dickey County, ND, the twelfth of thirteen children, and his father died when he was just three. So he and his brothers did all sorts of things to make a little money and carry the family through.”

The award-winning documentary videotapes “The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie” (1999), and “Schmeckfest: Food Traditions of the Germans from Russia” (2000), continue to be well received throughout North America. To secure the videotapes, contact Prairie Public at 1-800-359-6900. The videotapes can also be secured by going to this GRHC website at “Videotape Documentary & Other Projects.” The videotapes include 20-minute bonus video footage, not shown in the one-hour documentary. See many interesting pages about the documentary at the Prairie Public Broadcasting website: http://www.prairiepublic.org.

Because of the interest developed from the “Schmeckfest” documentary, additional cookbooks including German-Russian recipes have been added to the GRHC website, from the new GRHC main page first click “Order,” and then “Cookbooks.”

For further information about donations to the collection, including family histories, outreach programs, videotape documentaries, Journey to the Homeland Tour (May 22 to June 4, 2001 and May, 2002) for Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany; German-Russian cookbooks; GRHC’s publications including recent books, “Gazing Forward...”; “Couldn’t Be Better: The Russian Farm Community Project,” “The Germans by the Black Sea Between Bug and Dniester Rivers,” “Marienberg: Fate of a Village,” and “The Dark Abyss of Exile: A Story of Survival”; and German-Russian heritage, and the new book, “Dakota Circle,” contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 (Tel: 701-231-8416; E-mail: Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu; GRHC website: http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc).