

# In Touch with Prairie Living

May 2007

By Michael M. Miller

Germans from Russia Heritage Collection  
North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
**GRHC**  
HERITAGE COLLECTION

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 Germans from Russia as an important part of the northern plains culture.

Arthur E. Flegel, Menlo Park, CA, receives the Medal of Honor at Ellis Island, New York City on May 12. Arthur Flegel was born in 1917 at New Leipzig, North Dakota and raised in Kansas and Colorado. He continues his lifelong research and study of the Germans from Russia. Bob Dambach, director of television, Prairie Public Broadcasting, and I will be attending this event in New York City. We will be filming for a future documentary as part of the "Germans from Russia Series". In 2005, GRHC published Arthur Flegel's impressive hardcover book (864 pages), "Extended Relationships of the Kulm, Leipzig, Tarutino Communities in Bessarabia, Russia."

On May 17, I leave with our 13th Journey to the Homeland Tour group to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart & Wiesbaden, Germany. We are in Odessa, Ukraine from May 18-22 and then Stuttgart and Wiesbaden, Germany from May 22-28 May. Tour members will attend the large Germans from Russia gathering called the Russlanddeutschen Bundestreffen, at Wiesbaden on May 26. The dates for the 2008 tour are May 20-30.

Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle traveled to Fredonia, Lehr, Edgeley, and Kulm in April giving presentations on the GRHC with emphasis on the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. She was impressed with the enthusiasm to lend and donate clothing, textiles, family histories, cookbooks, and hymnals.

Stuckle said, "I had a wonderful time going out to these communities and showing a glimpse into the variety and significance of our work and projects. Individuals from each community were very interested in preserving their German-Russian heritage and culture."

We were pleased with the success of these presentations as a pilot project, with plans to visit additional communities in the future.

In April, Tom Isern (Professor of History, NDSU) and Jessica Clark (PhD Candidate, NDSU) co-presented "The Germans from Russia in Saskatchewan: An Oral History." This paper was a product of extensive archival research and oral history fieldwork in 2006 funded by a Faculty Research grant through the Canadian Embassy. Their research is currently housed at the GRHC, NDSU Libraries, Fargo in the Dakota Memories Oral History Project's digital archives. According to Clark and Isern, like the Germans from Russia in North Dakota, "the Germans from Russia in Saskatchewan have a unique ethnic identity and culture worthy of memory, study, and preservation."

The Dakota Memories Oral History Project will continue in the summer of 2007 conducting interviews in these areas of North Dakota: Rugby/Devils Lake; Bismarck/Mandan, Fredonia/Lehr/Edgeley/Kulm, and Dickinson/Richardton.

Cassie Ptacek, Oakes, ND native, and Tyler Simonson, Rochester, MN native, will be the second interview team for the 2007 season. Ptacek and Simonson will visit the Rugby/Devils Lake area in June and the Dickinson/Richardton area in August. Jessica and Will Clark will visit the Fredonia/Lehr/Edgeley/Kulm and Bismarck/Mandan areas in July. For more information, visit our website at [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc). To contact Jessica Clark (Project Coordinator) call 701-231-8419 or email [jessica.clark@ndsu.edu](mailto:jessica.clark@ndsu.edu).

The May issue of "North Dakota Living" features an article written by Jo Ann Winistorfer about the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. A CD is available of Prairie Public radio series, "Growing Up German-Russian".

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Convention

is June 11-16, 2007, Holiday Inn, Hays, KS ([www.ahsgr.org](http://www.ahsgr.org)); the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention is July 19-22, 2007, Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck, ND ([www.grhs.org](http://www.grhs.org)).

For further information about Germans from Russia heritage, Dakota Memories Oral History Project, donations to GRHC including books, events, documentaries, CDs, DVDs, cookbooks and the tour, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 (Tel: 701-231-8416; E-mail: [michael.miller@ndsu.edu](mailto:michael.miller@ndsu.edu); GRHC website: [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc)).

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