

In Touch with Prairie Living

July 2007

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

GRHC

HERITAGE COLLECTION

I write the July column as I begin my 40th year with the NDSU Library staff beginning in June 1967. My years on the university campus have been most rewarding, especially my work to document and preserve the rich heritage and culture of the Germans from Russia community in North Dakota and the Northern Plains. It has been valuable to work with a dedicated staff and willing volunteers. GRHC continues to grow with important activities including publishing, oral history, documentaries and outreach programs.

Our 13th Journey to the Homeland Tour in May was a wonderful experience with an appreciative and pleasant group. I look forward to our 14th tour for May 20-30, 2008.

In late June, I joined Prairie Public Television videographers to Menlo Park, CA, for documentary filming with Arthur E. Flegel, well-known German-Russian genealogist. Mr. Flegel will be part of a future documentary relating to the assimilation of the Germans from Russia community in American society.

Acacia (Jonas) Stuckle, GRHC Special Collections Associate, and I will be attending the Germans from Russia Heritage Society Convention, Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck, July 19-22.

The private archival libraries of Gwen Pritzkau and Alice Essig were donated to GRHC in 2006. In honor of their memory and dedication for genealogical and family research these two "special collections" are being showcased with a visual exhibit during July 15 through October 1 at the Marie Rudel Portner Germans from Russia Room, NDSU Libraries, Fargo.

Gwen Bernice Black Pritzkau Collection: Gwen Black (1932-2006) from Riverton, Utah, married Julius Prizkau, a native of Logan County, ND. He has both Bessarabian and Glueckstaler German heritage. Gwen, a Salt Lake City librarian, was co-founder of Glueckstal Colony Research Association (GCRA). Her dedicated efforts to promote expanded

archival research, was well-respected internationally in Salt Lake City; Stuttgart, Germany; St. Petersburg, Russia; and Odessa, Ukraine.

Walter & Alice Reidlinger Essig Collection: Alice Reidlinger (1911-1997), native of Sheridan and McLean Counties, North Dakota, married Walter K. Essig in McClusky. Alice was among the original founders of Germans from Russia Heritage Society, Alice's special gifts included family research consulting and translation of archival documents.

The Essig archival books are unique for her marginal notations and verified facts from personal interviews in rural communities.

Prairie Public will broadcast a new radio series, "Voices of the Heartland: German-Russian Memories," which is a collection of fascinating life stories collected by the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. North Dakota State Senators Tim Mathern and Robert Erbele are doing the commentary for the series.

"Voices of the Heartland" will begin Monday, July 30 and air until October 8 every Monday (excluding Monday, August 27) and Friday at 8:35 am, 3:55 pm, 6:30 pm, and 7:55 pm on Prairie Public Radio.

Radio broadcasts from Prairie Public Broadcasting are funded by the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection and can be heard on 90.5 fm Bismarck, 89.9 fm Dickinson, 91.9 fm Fargo, 89.3 fm Grand Forks, 91.5 fm Jamestown, 88.9 fm Minot, and 89.5 fm Williston.

The radio narratives will also be located on the Web at www.prairiepublic.org/radio. The "Voices of the Heartland Radio Series" CD will be available for purchase in the fall of 2007.

This summer the Dakota Memories Oral History Project begins its third season of interviews. Cassie Ptacek and Tyler Simonson will visit Dickinson/Richardton August 1-10. Jessica and

Will Clark will conduct interviews in south-central and central North Dakota July 10-25.

Jessica Clark expressed her enthusiasm for their July interviews, "Will and I are truly excited about starting our third season of interviewing. This year we will be traveling to the Edgeley/Fredonia/Lehr/Kulm area and the Bismarck/Mandan area. We will undoubtedly have another successful season, as our July trips are booked, and our list of potential narrators is growing. We look forward to hearing more fascinating stories and viewing historic photographs and landmarks."

To contact Jessica Clark (Coordinator) call 701-231-8419 or email Jessica.Clark@ndsu.edu. Also, visit the Dakota Memories Oral History Project on the web at www.ndsu.edu/grhc/dakotamemories.

For further information about the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, Dakota Memories Oral History Project, Journey to the Homeland Tour, and donations to GRHC such as family histories, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, PO Box 5599, Fargo, ND 58105-5599 (Tel: 701-231-8416; Email: Michael.Miller@ndsu.edu; GRHC website: www.ndsu.edu/grhc).

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