

# In Touch with Prairie Living

January 2008

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

**GRHC**

HERITAGE COLLECTION

The year of 2008 begins the 30th Anniversary of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) - 1978 - 2008. This year also marks my 41st year of work at North Dakota State University.

When the GRHC began in June 1978, I never imagined the depth of this work. Dr. Karl Stumpp, a well-known scholar, attended the Germans from Russia Society Convention at Fargo in 1978. Dr. Stumpp donated a number of items to the NDSU Library which was the impetus to begin this collection.

John Bye, University Archivist, and Dr. Armand Bauer, a social scientist at NDSU, and editor of "Heritage Review", joined Dr. Karl Stumpp and myself for the historic beginning of the GRHC. We envisioned an academic center for study, research and collecting at the university level.

Today, the GRHC has expanded its activities and projects to include audio oral history, clothing and textiles, the Dakota Memories Oral History Project, electronic discussion groups, heritage tours to Ukraine and Germany, online resources, outreach programs, photo archives, publications, and translations.

A new design for the GRHC website becomes available in January. There also will be a new section for "Research" featuring Genealogy Research, Scholarly Research, and Special Collections.

The Winter 2007 issue of North Dakota Horizons featured an article by Andrea Winkjer Collin, "Dakota Memories: History videos preserving voices from the heartland". There are eight photographs featured covering the Dakota Memories Oral History Project.

The GRHC website has added a series of articles from the Prairies Magazine published by the Ashley Tribune from 1975 to 1986. Articles include: "From Russia to Dakota", "The Dirty Thirties", "Growing Rocks", "Burnstad - Portrait of a Pioneer Town," "Passage to Dakota, A Woman's Viewpoint", "Life in Southern Russia",

and "Unsere Leute: The Story of the German-Russian People".

The Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcases in Grand Forks, Fargo and Bismarck for November and December were well attended with many people visiting the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection booth. The events provide a wonderful opportunity for the GRHC outreach program.

The Bismarck Holiday Showcase had a record attendance of over 8,000 people. We were amazed with the interest and response to the GRHC booth. At the Fargo Holiday Showcase, one person visited with me about handwritten letters in the German language written from South Russia (today near Odessa, Ukraine) to relatives at Selz, north of Harvey, North Dakota. Translation of these letters to English could uncover valuable family and historical information. Another person has located two wrought iron crosses in east-central North Dakota, and will donate them to the GRHC.

Rev. Leland Elhard of Bismarck brought with him valuable historical German language documents to donate to the GRHC. These documents printed in the old German script are Geschichte Russlands [Russian history] of the years 1814 to 1831. These years are important in the immigration the Germans coming from Europe to settle in villages of the Black Sea, Crimea and Bessarabia [today southern Ukraine and Moldova].

There were other people with family histories, old German books, and photographs they may wish to donate to the GRHC.

The dates for the 14th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany is May 20-30, 2008. The tour includes four days in Odessa visiting the former German villages and five days in southern Germany including Alsace, France. For further information, contact me or visit [www.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/journey/index](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/journey/index).

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

*January 2008 column for North Dakota and South Dakota newspapers.*