

# In Touch with Prairie Living

February 2008

By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
**GRHC**  
HERITAGE COLLECTION

I am pleased to announce the new design for the GRHC website with many new features including the Research Section, which consists of Genealogy Research and Scholarly Research.

Tyler Simonson, NDSU student from Rochester, MN, majoring in Management Information Systems, created the new website design. Tyler shared these comments: "Having the opportunity to work on the redesign of the GRHC website this past fall was a very rewarding experience. Not only will I be able to apply what I learned to my future web development position after graduation, but knowing that I was able to help the GRHC preserve German-Russian heritage is a good feeling."

Dr. Calvin Fercho made a financial donation to develop The Calvin Fercho Germans from Russia Research Stipend. It is a fund designed to collect and preserve the history and heritage of the Germans from Russia. This can be used to collect oral histories, process archival material, photographs, and textiles. The stipend provides NDSU students opportunities in historic preservation and documentation of the Germans from Russia.

Fercho lived his early childhood years at Lehr, ND before moving with his family to Fargo. He is a retired physician and founded Fercho Cataract and Eye Clinic in Fargo. His ancestral families are: Fercho from Paris, Bessarabia; Aman from Bergdorf, Russia; and Lehr from Kassel, Russia. His Lehr relatives were pioneers in McIntosh County, ND and founded Lehr, ND.

The Prairies Magazine published from 1975 to 1986 by the Ashley Tribune featured excellent articles relating to Germans from Russia families and traditions. In the February 1985 issue, the article "94 Years Young" features Theresa Geffre Pfeifer of Aberdeen, SD, born in 1890 at Leola, SD, who married Peter Pfeiffer in 1915, raising a family of ten children.

Anna Marie, a daughter, writes: "It certainly was no easy task raising a large family during the Depression years. Both our father and mother did a lot of gardening. They even developed their gardening into a small business. Mother prepared the vegetables for selling, which was done by the children who took their wagons early in the morning. On good days, the business netted from \$15 to \$30. Mother did the usual household chores: sewing, cooking, baking all the family's bread, milking one cow, taking care of chickens, and whatever else needed to be done. Children helped according to their ages as time went by."

Anna Marie continues to write: "We children all vividly recall the tantalizing fragrant smells which greeted our nostrils before we even opened the door, returning home from school. It was the delicious aroma of fresh baked bread. Who can forget such wonderful baking smells? And then there were the fresh pungent scents during the canning seasons. She also enjoys making her famous sour cream sugar cookies and molasses sugar cookies -- which her grandchildren enjoy even more! She thoroughly relishes these baking occasions."

At age 94, Theresa Geffre Pfeifer, continued to write in her diary which she had done begun in 1965. The Prairies Magazine articles appear at the GRHC website in the Media Section.

We have limited space available for the 14th Journey to the Homeland Tour to Odessa, Ukraine and Stuttgart, Germany for May 20-30, 2008. Registration deadline is March 1, 2008. For further information, contact me or visit [www.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/journey](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc/outreach/journey).

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)).

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