The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection will have a booth at the Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase at Scheels Arena, 5225 31st Avenue South, Fargo, ND – Friday, November 18, 12-9 p.m. and Saturday, November 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. We will display popular German-Russian books, cookbooks, and DVDs available for purchase.

On October 3, 2000, Paul Welder was interviewed by Betty and Chis Maier in Linton, ND. The following are excerpts from this interview.

Paul was born on April 14, 1912, on a farm near Zeeland, ND. His parents were Paul and Catharina (Weigel) Welder. Paul had eight brothers and seven sisters. He attended country school a half mile from their farm. Paul shared, “When I started going to school, I was seven years old. By the time I was in the seventh grade, I had to stay home from school. I had to be the hired man for a neighbor because they didn’t have any boys. They were just three quarters of a mile from us, and they were the Hartzes.”

“Mother baked a lot of kuchen, and it was mostly raised dough. My sister, Mary, would bake bread three times a week, as high as 18 loaves at one time. Three loaves into one big pan and there were six pans. You know what they used for fuel? Cow chips in one big pan and there were six pans. You know what they used for fuel? Cow chips in storage for rainy days.

“In the fall, we always had lots of cabbage on the farm. We made sauerkraut and maybe sometimes a 30-gallon barrel full of cabbage. For potatoes, a wagon load maybe 25-30 bushels went to the root cellar for the winter. Then there was a melon (Kochmelone) and pumpkin patch.

“I worked in the store in 1924. If a family got a baby they’d come and maybe buy 10 or 15 yards of flannel at 7 cents a yard. Then they would make diapers. They had striped dark flannel for every day and on Sundays had some white flannel ones. The women made their dresses at 27 cents a yard. Three loaves into one big pan and there were six pans. You know what they used for fuel? Cow chips in storage for rainy days.

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Paul married Phyllis Wald on November 16, 1936, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, north of Zeeland. Paul farmed until 1960 when he became a full-time adjuster and insurance agent.

Paul also talked about his own cooking. “When my children and grandchildren come home, they want the old stuff – dampfnuedla, rahmnoodla and rivel soup. Then we have pickled watermelon, sauermelone, and homemade jams. I just went to a wedding, and I took eight pints along and give them homemade jams. I made strawberry rhubarb jam, raspberry- rhubarb, apricot, and chokeberry jam. I picked crab apples and made crab apple jam, and it’s very good.” He loved to make German-Russian noodles, garden, and canned what he grew.

Paul was interviewed in May 2006, for the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. His narrative interview and photographs are available at www.digitalhorizonsonline.org. He appears in Prairie Public’s documentary, “Recipes from Grandma’s Kitchen: Germans from Russia Food Preparations and Traditions,” demonstrating how to make baking powder noodles.

Paul Welder passed away on May 24, 2010.

For more information about donating family histories and photographs, or how to financially support the GRHC, contact Michael M. Miller, NDSU Libraries, Dept. 2080, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050, (Tel: 701-231-8416); michael.miller@ndsu.edu; or go to library.ndsu.edu/grhc.

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