

## **Dedication of the Marie Rudel Portner Germans from Russia Room & Announcement of the Marie Rudel Portner Endowment for the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection**

Marie Rudel Portner 1897-1999

Marie Rudel Portner was born Maria Magdalene Rudel, in Fessenden, North Dakota, April 23, 1897. She was the ninth of twelve children of Simon and Dorothea Rudel.

The Rudel family traces its roots back to Germany. Jacob and Johanna Rudel, married in the area of Wuerttemberg, Germany, in 1795, had a first son Wilhelm (b. 1796). He was born in Germany, but died in Arzis, a Bessarabian town in southern Russia (today southern Ukraine). With his wife Johanna, he probably moved to Russia in 1829. Like many other German farmers, they migrated to southern Russia following the invitation of Catherine II. Their only son Friedrich (b. 1833) and his wife Wilhelmina (b. 1836) had fourteen children. The sixth child was Simon, born in Arzis in 1856.

Simon migrated to the United States in 1877, marrying another immigrant from Bessarabia, Dorothea Weber (b. 1865), in Scotland, South Dakota, 1882. They lived near Tripp, South Dakota, where their first six children were born. In 1882 and in 1883, they purchased land from Dorothea's brother Jacob and mother Dorothea. They farmed this land until 1892, when they purchased land in North Dakota, also from Jacob. In 1893, they moved to Oshkosh Township, Wells County, North Dakota. That first year, they lived in a sod house, but soon built a more permanent home. Besides working and living on the farm, they were active, devout German Baptists. Simon is listed on the document for the incorporation of the German Baptist Church of Fessenden. They lived either on the farm or in Fessenden, farming until retirement and moving to Spokane, Washington, in 1920. Simon died there in 1941. Dorothea died the next year, after returning to North Dakota.

In Simon and Dorothea's honor, their daughter Marie created an endowment to support the preservation and study of the Germans from Russia culture and heritage.

Marie graduated from Fessenden High School in 1917, and then she attended Valley City State Teachers College. She earned a First Grade Elementary Certificate in 1919, and she taught in North Dakota at West Norway Township, Wellsburg, and Heimdal. She then moved to Spokane, Washington, to be with her parents. She earned her Second Grade Elementary teacher certification in Washington, in 1920. In Spokane, Marie met O. H. Portner. Hal was an electrician working on the duplex shared by the Rudels. Marie married Hal on November 30, 1922, and soon moved to Los Angeles. In California, they bought and developed property in the Alhambra area. There, a Portner street was named after them. Eventually, they moved to Las Vegas. There in Nevada, Hal became an electrical/plumbing inspector for the city and the county. He was interested, also, in land development at a time that Las Vegas grew. He was also active in the Shriners, and Marie was a lifetime member of the Order of Alhambra Eastern Star #269. They were known in Las Vegas for their many charitable contributions.

Marie was widowed in 1972, and she died in 1999, at the age of 102, in Las Vegas. But her commitment to her parents and her ancestors lives on through her generosity.

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**DEDICATION**

**MARIE RUDEL PORTNER GERMANS FROM RUSSIA ROOM**

**MAY 26, 2000**

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*Welcome...*

Richard W. Bovard, Interim Director, NDSU Libraries

*Comments about Marie...*

Doug Reimer, Trust Officer, Trust Office, Nevada State Bank,  
Ashley E. Nitz, Lawyer, Nitz, Walton & Heaton, Ltd., Law Offices  
Ross Rudel, Artist, Los Angeles

*Appreciation...*

Philip Boudjouk, Vice President for Research, Creative Activities, and Technology Transfer, NDSU  
Michael M. Miller, Bibliographer, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries

*Presentation...*

John Q. Paulsen, President, NDSU Development Foundation Board of Trustees

*Closing...*

Richard W. Bovard, Interim Director, NDSU Libraries

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THE MISSION OF THE GERMANS FROM RUSSIA HERITAGE COLLECTION IS TO COLLECT, DOCUMENT, PRESERVE, EXHIBIT, TRANSLATE, PUBLISH, PROMOTE AND MAKE ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES ON THE CULTURE, HISTORY, FOLKLORE, FOODWAYS AND TEXTILES & CLOTHING OF THE GERMANS FROM RUSSIA, PARTICULARLY BESSARABIAN GERMANS, BLACK SEA GERMANS, CRIMEAN GERMANS, DOBRUDSCHA GERMANS AND VOLHYNIAN GERMANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN NORTH DAKOTA AND THE NORTHERN PLAINS

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

Germans from Russia Heritage Collection  
[library.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc)  
NDSU Libraries



Presentation of the check with gift of \$1,117,710.50 to the North Dakota State University Foundation for the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. (l-r): Ashley Ness, attorney, Las Vegas; John Q. Paulsen, President, NDSU Development Foundation Board of Trustees, Fargo; Michael M. Miller, NDSU Library, and Doug Reimer, trust officer, Las Vegas.



Ross Rudel, artist and grandnephew of Marie Rudel Portner, Los Angeles and native of Rapid City, SD, created the photomural that is the centerpiece of the display cases for the new Marie Rudel Portner Germans from Russia Room. Display cases feature the life of Marie Portner and other Germans from Russia displays.