

# NDSU GERMANS FROM RUSSIA HERITAGE COLLECTION

## The Apron

By Marleen Ehmann Bussma

It hung nearby the cook stove  
On a peg carved out of wood.  
Its daily chore and purpose  
Was most clearly understood.

T'was made from scraps of dresses  
Or an empty flour sack.  
It covered neck to hemline  
And was tied around the back.

It carried in the kindling  
To start cooking meals each day  
And held the gathered eggs that  
Hens and pullets worked to lay.

It served as a pot holder  
For the pies and cakes and bread,  
The meat and beans and taters  
That kept family well fed.

It traveled to the garden  
To bring back all ripe to eat.  
It carried in the apples  
And wiped brows wet from the heat.

It helped in shoeing chickens  
From the garden and what's more  
It chased away the house flies  
Landing on the front screen door.

It cuddled up the baby;  
Kept the ev'ning chill away.  
It dried the tears on faces  
Of those children hurt at play.

When someone unexpected  
Did stop by to make a call  
It turned into a dust rag  
Quickly wiping over all.



**Salomon Mueller and Maria Weispfenning  
Mueller. Late 1940s.**

When visitors would stop by  
 It would give a place to hide  
 To shy and bashful children  
 Who kept to their mother's side.

When meals were fixed and ready  
 To be eaten by the men  
 It served as that day's beacon  
 As it had time and again.

When held aloft and flowing  
 On a breeze it whipped and reeled  
 Then waved men home for dinner  
 When they saw it from the field.

The apron was essential  
 For each woman long ago;  
 For nurture, chores and comfort  
 And it served it's family so.

The dress's poor relation  
 Didn't get a second glance.  
 It never got invited  
 To the party or the dance.



**Martin Ehmman and his sister in law Lydia Zimmerman Mueller. Early 1940s.**