



Guide to Oral History Collections | Germans from Russia

Adams, Russel - H1985.064

Russell Adams was born southwest of Woodward, Oklahoma, in 1911. He worked on a farm doing chores and plowing fields. After graduating high school, Adams worked in a grocery and dry goods store for seven years. Additionally, he hauled gravel for the Works Progress Administration project. He shares his memories of the dust storms and the tornado of 1947 and also discusses farm machinery.

Baisch, Rudolph - H1983.032

Rudolph Baisch was born in Russia on November 9, 1909, and immigrated to the United States in 1913. His family settled in Bessie, Oklahoma, in 1914. Baisch shares stories about his early life in Russia, the trip to the United States, and why his family came to the United States. He discusses life in Bessie, notable persons of the time, cattle drives, dust storms, and Black Sunday.

Bostwick, Lydia - H1983.061

Lydia Bostwick was born in Lehigh, Kansas, in 1902. Her parents moved to the United States from Russia. They homesteaded east of Hooker, Oklahoma, and she married in 1931. She discusses her childhood in Hooker, the dust storms, and the war effort in World War I and II. This interview is available on YouTube.

Bouse, Mollie - H1986.027

Mollie Bouse was born in Oberdorf, Russia, in 1907. She moved with her family to Okeene, Oklahoma, in order to get more land and room. Her name was originally Molusha, but was changed to Mollie in the United States. She shares her memories of her childhood in Russia, including the journey to the US in the hold of a ship. Additionally, she describes her experiences during the Great Depression and the flu epidemic.

Dick, Marie - H1986.023

Marie Dick was born August 6, 1902, in Nicholaipol, Russia, to Cornelius Skolson. She discusses her early years in Russia, including the chores she was responsible for and the schools she attended. The family came to the United States in 1910, and three of the children came down with measles on the trip over; one child died. They settled in Corn, Oklahoma, where three of her mother's sisters lived, in August of 1910.

Erlich, Bill - H1986.016

Bill Erlich was born in Carney, Oklahoma, in 1898. He worked picking cotton on the family farm and growing wheat. Erlich describes his family history, including the journey from Russia and starting a farm in Oklahoma. He also shares his experiences during the flu epidemic of 1918.

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Fechner, Robert - H1987.258

Robert Fechner was born in Bessarabia, Russia, in 1897. In Russia, his family had a vineyard and made red and white wine for the town. He moved with his family to the United States in 1907, partly because of the political situation. They traveled by way of Germany and bought a farm in Shattuck, Oklahoma. He describes his childhood in Russia, including their house and the local village's day-to-day activities. Additionally, he discusses his life in America, the tornado of 1947, and the Great Depression.

Fuchs, John - H1986.020

John Fuchs was born in Yakutia, Russia, in 1885. He was raised on a farm in Russia but made the journey to the United States in 1907. He settled in Gotebo, Oklahoma, and worked on his uncle's farm. He shares memories of childhood in Russia and compares farming methods in Oklahoma and Russia.

Grauberger, Rhinehold - H1986.029

Rhinehold Grauberger was born in Russia and traveled to the United States with his family. They entered the US at Baltimore and traveled first to Michigan, then to Colorado. He worked in the sugarbeet fields with his siblings and learned to play the trombone. He spent four years in the army, and then went on to work in the Bureau of Reclamation. He shares his experiences working in the fields and his childhood. Additionally, he discusses his time in the army and the preparations for a traditional wedding.

Hartman, Alma and Hofferber, George (brother and sister) - H1983.063

Alma Hartman was born in Kansas in 1908, and George Hofferber was born in Kansas in 1906. Their parents came to the United States from Russia. The family moved to the Oklahoma Panhandle in 1916. They worked on the family ranch, herding cattle and butchering hogs. Mrs. Hartman went to work at a school in Locust Grove, where she taught all eight grades in one room. She was a flapper during the 1920s. They discuss discrimination against Germans during World War I, recipes for sausage and head cheese, and teaching in early Oklahoma.

Herth Lydia - H1986.036

Lydia Herth was born in Schwab, Russia, in 1904. She moved with her family to Oklahoma in 1907. She worked on the family farm harvesting wheat and went to school in Tangier. Her sister went to the school for the deaf in Sulphur. Herth shares her childhood memories in Russia and Oklahoma, including the schools she attended. She also relates her experiences during the Depression and the tornado of 1947.

Kelln, Fritz Mr. and Mrs. - H1985.020

Fritz Kelln was born southwest of Shattuck, Oklahoma. His grandfather moved to the United States from Russia. He worked on the family farm, growing sorghum and wheat. He bought his own farm, grew sorghum and corn, and raised chickens. After Kelln stopped farming, he ran a John Deere dealership. He shares his experiences farming and gives a history of his family.

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Mrs. Kelln was born in 1910. She explains the differences between washing on a washboard and in a washing machine. She also shares her recipe for soap and head cheese, as well as the process of butchering hogs.

Klein, Helen - H1986.026

Helen Klein was born in Lehigh, Kansas, in 1898. Her parents came to Oklahoma from Dreisptizen, Russia. She worked with her family on their ranch, helping to build fences for the cows. She shares her memories of early Shattuck, including the flu epidemic and Black Sunday.

Klein, Victor - H1984.165

Victor Klein was born near Shattuck in November 1911. His father's family left Russia in 1903 because of the treatment of the Germans by the Russians. He tells the story of his family's journey from Russia and their life in early Kansas and Oklahoma.

Kreiger, Mollie - H1986.022

Mollie Krieger was born in Russia in 1894. She moved to Texas and then to Oklahoma, where she once worked on a farm. She shares her memories of working on the farm.

Kuhlman, Mr. and Mrs. Paul- H1986.038

Paul Kuhlman was born in Rosenberg, Russia, in 1908. He moved with his family to Oklahoma for religious reasons and to escape the Russian Revolution. He worked on a farm with his family, feeding animals and plowing fields. He shares his memories of his childhood in Russia, the journey to the United States, and his life once he arrived. Mrs. Kuhlman was born in Shattuck, Oklahoma, in 1911. Her family also came over from Russia.

Meier, Katherine - H1986.031

Katherine Meir was born near the Volga River in Russia in 1919. She moved with her family to Minsk and went with the German Army to Bavaria. She had an uncle in the US who sponsored her and her family. They moved to Denver, Colorado, in 1952. She shares her experiences in Russia and Germany during World War I and in the aftermath of the war.

Miller, Frieda- H1986.083

Freida Siebert Miller was born in Russia but is of German descent. She relates stories of her life in Russia.

Ruf, Karl - H1985.026

Karl Ruf was born in Lehigh, Kansas, in 1889. His parents were born in Russia and were of German descent. They immigrated to the United States after the Russians started drafting Germans into the army. Ruf worked on the farm in Shattuck, growing wheat and doing chores. When he started school, Ruf could not speak English. During the Depression, he worked with the Works Progress Administration and farmed during World War II. He discusses his parent's life in Russia, his work during both world wars, and the dust storms of the 1930s.

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Schaefer, Phillip - H1984.174

Philip Schaefer was born October 7, 1900, in Siberia. He came to Halifax, Canada, in 1913, then settled in Shattuck, Oklahoma, in 1914. Schaefer discusses farming methods in Russia, the Russian Revolution, and Armistice Day. He moved to Michigan in 1923 and married Victoria Schoenhals in 1924. Schaefer received his US citizenship in 1936 and continued to farm until 1974. Topics discussed include the Depression of the 1930s, the dust storms, World War II, and wheat harvests.

Schlichting, J. D. - H1984.074

J. D. Schlichting was born in Russia in 1891, and his family left Prussia for Russia in 1848. They eventually left Russia for Canada and then came to Oklahoma. Schlichting's father filed on a claim in 1893. He describes life in a dugout and on the farm. Schlichting also discusses the First World War and the treatment of Germans in Southwest Oklahoma during the war. He gives a history of Corn, Oklahoma, including the changing of the spelling from Korn.

Schoenhals, Marie - H1986.025

Marie Schoenhals was born in Russia in 1908. She moved with her family from Russia so her brothers would not have to serve in the Russian army. They moved to Texas, where her father bought a farm. From there, they moved to Enid, Oklahoma. She shares her childhood experiences in Russia, including her journey to the United States. Additionally, she describes the dust storms and the 1947 Tornado in Woodward.

Schoenhals, William - H1986.024

William Schoenhals was born June 30, 1903, south of Shattuck, Oklahoma, to John Schoenhals and Eva Hefly, both Volga Germans and Russia. John Schoenhals came to Kansas in approximately 1890 from Russia and later settled in Oklahoma. Schoenhals discusses chores on the farm, wheat harvests, and his school years. Marie Huber and John Schoenhals were married in 1928.

Treiber, Rudolph - H1984.173

Rudolph Treiber was born on October 4, 1906, in the Caucasus Mountains in Russia. Treiber discusses life as a German living in Russia and why Germans moved to Russia. He talks about his parents' life in Russia under Nicholas II and the Russian Revolution. The Treiber family came to Shattuck, Oklahoma, in 1904. Treiber describes the trip to the United States from Russia, early memories of Shattuck, chores and life on the farm, and Armistice Day. He remembers the flu epidemic of 1918 around Shattuck, wheat farming and the first thrasher, changes in farming practices through the years, the Depression of the 1930s, Black Sunday, and the elevator explosion at Farto.