

German-Russian Brewing

Electronic email from Darroll Schall, Minnesota, 19 March 2017

It is fun to look back and have a few laughs rather than think about the hard times that went on at the same time. I had to laugh as I was typing the story to you as it is amazing how a persons mind can see it just like you are there today.

My Grandfather was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota in 1895 . He was the first one of his family to be born here in the United States. When he was young the Schall group moved to Zeeland, Rugby and Hague but there are not to many left there anymore. He and my Grandma Carolina (MÜELLER) Miller were married in Rugby and then moved to the Devils Lake area and farmed and had 15 children.

Grandpa lived to be 97 so maybe the brew did some good.

I grew up in the Devils Lake area until 1982 and moved to Minnesota. My Grandma's sisters stayed in Rugby and Theresa married Sebastian Schaan, Katherine married Joseph Schaan and Anne married John Kirchofner.

My Great Great Grandparents Nicholas and Marie Anna Schall are buried at Saint John's at Zeeland, ND both in 1897 (diphtheria).

My Great Great Grandparents Joseph and Barbara Schall are buried at Saint Anslem in Pierce County ND in 1930 and 1928.

My Grandparents John and Carolina "MÜLLER" Miller Schall are buried in Devils Lake, ND in 1992 and 1971.

My parents Frank and Geraldine (Blaufuss) Schall are buried in Lakota, ND in 1994 and 2015.

History does repeat itself at times as when I stopped to see my 2nd cousin Nick Schall at Rugby this summer he dug out his bottle of burned sugar and ever clear to have a good old German toast. We toasted to both of us marrying Axtman girls. It brought back warm memories both inside and outside.

The story below brought back a lot of memories and a few good laughs thinking about my Grandpa John Schall Brewing.

If it fermented Grandpa would brew it. As Grandchildren we picked dandelions, beets, choke cherries, June berries, rhubarb and a number of other things for Grandpa and he would brew it in small batches. Probably the harshest thing he brewed was from grain and would buckle your knees if you took a shot. He put a little in his brewed beer to add some kick. Can still see the smelly beer crocks with the ugly green foam on top and the bubbles coming out of it. Sometimes if to much sugar was added to fire up the yeast it sort of got away from him. I think he used the same yeast as Grandma to make bread but just gave it a little more sugar to fire it off.

I can remember some of us boys, my dad an some of my Uncles and a neighbor setting around the big table at Grandma's and the men having a sample of the brew when one of the neighbors friends stopped to get him. He

started bragging that there was nothing he could not drink and nothing bothered him. Grandpa looked at my Dad and Uncles with a smile and went to the root cellar. I did not know at the time why my Dad and Uncles had a grin on their face. My Grandpa came back with a glass of his clear brew and handed it to him. He threw it down in a big gulp. As a kid I thought he was dying. Could not get his breath, turned red, tears ran like crazy, nose ran and all the time Grandpa and the men laughed.

Grandma had to act like she was upset but we could see her laughing in the kitchen. He lived but I think his bragging stopped.

The funny part about this is that Grandpa had a dirt root cellar an an old shredded up parka and a cover for his head as some times he capped the bottles to early and they would start blowing up. He would rush down to save his brew and try to get the covers off. Flying glass was not a concern when you are saving brew. He would come up from the cellar half smiling, wet and full of brew but he would have saved some of it. Grandma would just shake her head and mutter in German.

Grandpa loved choke cherry wine and when we would go there as kids he had small cups about the size of a small communion cup he would give each of us. Grandpa got the big glass. If we would say we have to go he would tell us "no stay" as he had more to talk about. He would give us each a little more and himself a big glass. Grandma pretty much only allowed the wine when he had company.

When we finally had to leave as we went out the door Grandma was grabbing the bottle off the table. Grandpa was done with having wine for the day. We always got a laugh as we left and hoped Grandpa was not upset as we left to soon. One thing that my Grandparents always did was stand at the door and thank you for coming and they were sincere about it.

Oh what I would give to lift a glass with them today.