

# In Touch with Prairie Living

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By Michael M. Miller

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



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA  
**GRHC**  
HERITAGE COLLECTION

Our Germans from Russia community has lost a shining star with the passing of Clarence Bauman of Bismarck, ND. Clarence was born to Fred and Rosina Bauman on February 18, 1923, on the family farm near Java, SD. He died on March 6, 2023.

I was honored to attend the 100th birthday party for Clarence Bauman on February 18, 2023, at Missouri Slope Care Center in Bismarck, with Claudia Berg, former director of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Clarence was such a dear friend who was a true jewel preserving our German-Russian heritage and culture. He will always be remembered for his dedication to the Welk Homestead.

Allan and Leah Burke, former editors of the Emmons County Record, Linton, ND, shared, "We have known Clarence since 1988. He taught us lots about his German-Russian heritage. Consequently, the weekly newspapers we published over 30 years included lots of coverage of the heritage that was common to most of our subscribers. One of the great learning experiences was when he was president of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society. We always remember the countless hours Clarence gave to Pioneer Heritage, which developed and managed the Welk Homestead near Strasburg, until it became a state historic site. Clarence was one of those people who gave back much more than he received."

Carmen Rath-Wald, President of the Tri-County Tourism Alliance, writes, "From farmer to Navy man and WWII vet, working for the railroad, owner and instructor of Capital Commercial College, Licensed Public Accountant, owner of the Drumstick Café, and a volunteer feeding the hungry until his 99th year, Clarence was a busy man. Yet, he was never too busy to stop and visit friends and acquaintances. He was truly a people person which was an asset when he served on the Board of Directors and as GRHS president. His dedication to his Germans from Russia heritage was a true inspiration. His passing saddens me greatly, but I am grateful to have known him. RIP my friend."

Norbert Mayer, President of the Dakota Pioneer Chapter, and longtime friend of Clarence Bauman, writes, "Arbeit Macht

das Leben Seuss – Works Makes Life Sweet. Clarence was a firm believer in those words and was still cleaning snow off his driveway and sidewalks until he entered the Missouri Slope Care Center in November 2022, at age 99. He could demonstrate streaks of stubbornness. Having been warned about no longer using a ladder, he had a ladder accident resulting in serious injuries in 1986. His daughter Amy had to take away his ladder. Clarence and his wife, Marilyn, became very involved with the Dakota Pioneer Chapter. They would gather with chapter members to make German-Russian food along with preparing Borscht soup at their Drumstick Café for the chapter to sell at the Bismarck fall festivals."

Clarence was a member of the Pioneer Heritage Board that established the Welk Homestead near Strasburg, ND. He donated all the tools for the Blacksmith Shop at the Homestead and provided the wood roofing for the Welk house. Clarence and Duane Aman cut the six acres of grass every two weeks during the summer months driving from Bismarck to Strasburg. In June 2022, the Friends of the Welk Homestead honored Clarence with a Gary Miller art print of Lawrence Welk at the Homestead. This was the last time he would visit the homestead.

Clarence attended a country school near the family farm. He could not attend high school and had to stay home to work on the farm. He enlisted in the Navy, and was a World War II veteran who served in China and the Pacific, serving as his ship's payroll master from 1942-1945. He then finished his education in Aberdeen. He was so proud to have made the 2011 World War II Veterans Honor Flight to Washington, DC.

Clarence's father taught himself to play the violin and organ, serving as the church organist for many years. This interest in music was passed on to Clarence and served him well when he had to sing for his high school initiation using the words off a can of Van Camp's pork and beans. He had a good voice and enjoyed singing hymns in church.

Clarence married Marilyn Sauer at Java, SD, in 1950. He completed an internship in Java at the railroad depot, and then went to work in Idaho. In 1955, he became an instructor and part owner at Capital Commercial College. He then became a

Licensed Public Accountant, preparing tax returns, which he continued doing into his 90s.

Clarence and Marilyn were owners of the famous Drumstick Café from 1973 to 1995 in downtown Bismarck, well known for their homemade caramel rolls and pies. This was the hub for local German-Russians. Clarence also volunteered at The Banquet Bismarck, serving meals to the needy.

Clarence was president of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society from 1988-1991. He founded six chapters of the GRHS in the Dakotas. Duane Aman, a long-time friend, would drive Clarence to Ashley, Beulah, Dickinson, Eureka, Hebron, Java, Napoleon, and Strasburg, to promote the German-Russian heritage.

Clarence and Marilyn (Sauer) Bauman were interviewed for the Dakota Memories Oral History Project on July 22, 2007, available at <https://digitalhorizonsonline.org>.

The Welk Homestead State Historic Site is open for visitors from Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend, Thursdays to Sundays from 10 am to 5 pm. Further information at [www.history.nd.gov/historicsites/welk](http://www.history.nd.gov/historicsites/welk).

For more information about donating family histories and photographs, or how to financially support the GRHC, contact Jeremy Kopp, at [jeremy.kopp@ndsu.edu](mailto:jeremy.kopp@ndsu.edu) or 701-231-6596; mail to: NDSU Libraries, Dept. 2080, PO Box 6050, Fargo, N.D. 58108-6050; or go to [www.ndsu.edu/grhc](http://www.ndsu.edu/grhc). You may also contact me directly at [michael.miller@ndsu.edu](mailto:michael.miller@ndsu.edu) or 701-231-8416.

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