

Maple Leaf Star is County's 238th Barn Quilt

Shawano County's 238th barn quilt has been sponsored by Louise (Kennig) Feiertag, who was born in Eland in 1933. The quilt is dedicated to Louise's parents, C. John and Barbara Kennig, and her sisters and brothers. Louise now lives in Milwaukee, but during visits "up north" she admired the quilts on the barns and commented she would like to sponsor one. "She was always grateful for the advantage of being a farmer's daughter," her daughter Tina said.

Tina contacted Jim Leuenberger, Shawano County's barn quilt project coordinator, to see if he could find a barn in the Eland/Birnamwood area, where a quilt might be displayed for her mother. With the help of folks in the area, Dave and Paulette Carlson agreed to host the quilt for their barn at W17812 Church Road, Birnamwood. The pattern they selected is called Maple Leaf Star. A maple leaf was added to the center of the pattern because the Carlsons make their own maple syrup in their sugar bush on the farm.

The Carlsons purchased the 124-acre farm in 1977 when they were fresh out of college and starting their teaching careers. "The place was pretty run down and needed a lot of work," Dave said. "The land is mostly swampy or hilly so isn't much good for farming, but we think 'Glacial Garden' (the name they gave the farm) is a beautiful place to live. It was also a great place to raise our two children Erik and Lara."

The farm was homesteaded by Ferdinand Umland in 1895. He and his sons, Charles, Herman, William, Fred and Ervin, farmed here until the time of the Great Depression. In 1935, the Umlands sold the farm to Emil and Goldie Huenerfuss, who farmed it until 1950. Over the next 27 years, the farm went through a succession of six different owners, including Vernon and Imelda Huebner, Herbert and Marie Umland, and Thomas and Betty Hance, before the Carlsons bought it in 1977.

The barn was probably built in the late 1800s or early 1900s. The beams are connected with wooden pegs and the rafters are long tree trunks. The crumbling stone foundation has been repaired and the east wall rebuilt. Now the north wall needs work. A unique feature of the barn is that the silos are made of wooden staves and enclosed in a roofed structure that is connected to the barn. The barn was originally used as a dairy barn and the old milkhouse water cooling tank for milk cans is still there. Today the Carlsons raise chickens and pigs and the barn is used for storage.

"We think the barn quilt project is a great idea," Dave said, "and enjoy spotting the beautiful quilts as we drive around Shawano County, including the one just west of us on the Lester and Joyce Umland barn. They are related to Ferdinand, original owner of our farm."

The Carlson barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or by email at jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site includes photos and information on every barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.