

County's 229th Barn Quilt is a Tribute to Veterans

Doug and Susan Willcome have sponsored Shawano County's 229th barn quilt for their barn at N4803 Lake Road, Birnamwood. The pattern they chose, called Castle Garden, is painted in red, white and blue as a tribute to Susan's dad, Wayne Wilson, who was a World War II veteran, and to Doug's dad, Clarence Willcome, who is a veteran of the Korean War. "We also want our quilt to be a tribute to all veterans," Susan said.

Doug is from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was raised on a dairy farm and moved to Wisconsin in 1975. Sue was born in Elgin, Illinois and moved to Wisconsin in 1977. She has been a registered nurse at Langlade Hospital for the past 20+ years.

The barn on which the quilt is displayed was built in 1908 by John Jacob Postler, who had a dairy herd and grew crops with his sons on their 240-acre farm. After John's death, his son Paul farmed the land until his death in 1955. Mrs. Postler then sold the farm to Richard Scheers, who in turn sold it to Lloyd Feltner in the 1960s.

A fire in the late 1960s destroyed the upper part of the barn, so that section of the barn has been rebuilt. You can still see charred timbers in the lower part of the barn.

In 1973, the farm was sold to Bill Easker, who kept the land but sold the house with a few acres and the house with a few acres. Susan's parents bought the house and three acres in 1977. Doug and Susan bought the barn and six acres from Hilbert Matzke in 1997. They built their home the following year, then re-roofed the barn and had it painted in 2003. They also did some repair work on the inside of the barn and hope to keep it intact.

Doug and Susan's son, Todd, and his wife, Sara, live in the original farmhouse that the barn belonged with. Their daughter, Kathleen and her husband Neil live in Hatley, Wis.

"We are so very pleased with our barn quilt and hope to continue to enjoy living the country life with its peacefulness and wildlife," Susan said. "And we hope others will enjoy seeing our barn quilt as well."

The Willcome 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.