

Apple Tree is Focal Point of County's 328th Barn Quilt

Shawano County's 328th barn quilt, appropriately called The Apple Tree, is on display at N5964 Division Road, in the northeast Shawano County town of Green Valley. The farm was recently purchased by Donny Gumieny, who grew up across the road with his parents, Dan and Dawn, and his brothers.

The first record of sale of the farm was in 1859 when a railroad purchased it from the State of Wisconsin. In 1902, Frank and Amalie Klapper purchased the farm from Frederick and Martha Engel, who had lived there for 13 years. Frank and Amalie had five sons and one daughter. Frank and his sons built the large barn on which the quilt is mounted in 1904. It was built from lumber they harvested in their woods north of the farm.

Frank sold the farm to his son, Leonard, and his wife, Hattie, in 1925. They had four children, Alice, Marcella, Allen and Lawrence. Lawrence and his wife, Jean, purchased the farm from his parents in 1960. They had three daughters, Vicki, Tammy and Lisa. Their farming operation included a dairy herd of 36 Holstein cows and a swine herd of 36 sows. Lawrence named the farm Northridge because of the sand hills that ridged the property near the woods.

Jeff and Connie Horsens purchased the milk cows in 1996 and 80 acres of the farmland in 2014.

The Apple Tree

The apple tree on the barn quilt represents the orchard that existed on the farm in the early days of the Klapper ownership. During Lawrence and Jean's era, there was a lone apple tree near the road (and close to where the quilt is now displayed). The tree supplied family, friends and neighbors with an abundant amount of apples, not to mention Jean's homemade applesauce.

The Klapper grandchildren fondly remember grandpa Lawrence having them pick up apples from the ground under the tree. So the fallen apples are represented on the quilt as well. The farm name of Northridge is depicted on the quilt with the landscape and compass pointing north. The background represents the many beautiful sunset pictures Jean took through the front windows of her house. "And finally," Tammy said, "there is one final nod to our parents, Lawrence and Jean, and their love for this land, with their initials being carved in the tree."

Tammy and her husband, Mark Wozniak, sponsored the barn quilt. "We really want to thank the whole Gumieny family for allowing us to pay tribute to my parents," Tammy said, "by displaying this beautiful quilt on what is now their barn."

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