

Local Farm Celebrates 150 Years In The Family

Kord Herman Schwarze who was originally from Furstenthum in Lippe-Detmold, a part of northwest Germany, came to the United States in 1856. Two years later, he married Louise Puls.

In 1865, they settled on a farm between Mayville and Horicon in the Town of Williamstown within Dodge County and built the homestead on what is now the end of Schwarze Road adjacent to the Horicon Marsh. The abstract states he took ownership on April 3, of 1865. One hundred and fifty years later, the family farm is still in the family. It is now farmed by Ervin Butzlaff.

The sesquicentennial was celebrated on Saturday, August 1, 2015. Over 100 members of the Schwarze family returned for a big family reunion. On Tuesday, August 11th, Ervin Butzlaff and his family will be awarded a sesquicentennial plaque at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Kord Herman dropped his first name Kord and often went by Herman Schwarze, Sr. For 35 years he farmed in the Town of Williamstown on approximately 150 acres. He had one son and three daughters.

His son, Herman Schwarze, Jr. took over the farm on October 13, 1898 and was the farm's longest owner of 53 years.

Herman Schwarze Jr. then became Herman Schwarze Sr. when his father died and he, too, had a son, named Herman. Herman lived from April 26, 1865-August 17, 1953 and his wife, Martha Grafunder Schwarze, lived a short life from June 30, 1880-May 25, 1912.

They had five children together: Victor, Richard, Herman, Elvira (Bootsie) and Harold. Herman Sr. remarried and had one more son, Robert.

The eldest child, Victor, took over the farm in the 1950s and owned it with his wife, Lucy Marie Gleissner Schwarze. Victor Schwarze was born January 22, 1904 and he married Lucy on April 14, 1930.

They had five children with four daughters growing into adulthood, Arlene Schwarze Twardokus, John Schwarze (who died in as a small child), June Schwarze Butzlaff, Mary Ellen Schwarze Hartwig Rasmussen and Louise Schwarze Wagner.

Victor and Lucy farmed the homestead, buying it from Herman Schwarze in 1951. Vic loved to collect Indigenous peoples' arrowheads.

Victor sold the farm to his son-in-law and daughter in July of 1967: Ervin Butzlaff Jr. and June Schwarze Butzlaff. June died suddenly in 1991, but Erv continues farming on. The farm has grown extensively under his management as he has purchased a number of neighboring farms.

Erv and June had two daughters; Bambi Butzlaff Voss and Jodi (Butzlaff) Franke. Bambi and her husband, Jim, have two grown daughters: Le'erin (engaged to Ernesto Bogarin) and Chantal. Jodi and her husband, Jim, have a son, Brandon, and daughter, Kayleigh.

Bambi has done extensive genealogical research with help from relatives. She learned that the Schwarze name was carried on twice by a woman back in the 1600s.

If the woman was a land owner, the farm took on her name. When the spouse, husband in this case, married into the family, he assumed the property's name.

Over the years, farming has changed a lot. The Dodge County farm expanded when the marsh was drained and once was actually considered lake property when Lake Horicon had paddleboats on it. The farm grew wheat, rutabagas and more in the early years.

It was a dairy farm, Victor raised hogs, and Erv converted it back to a dairy farm. Bambi's grandmother, Lucy, told stories of trading with the Native Americans. Some of the last of the indigenous peoples resided near the marsh when most the others had relocated.

Now hay, oats, soybeans, sweet corn, peas and wheat are common crops. While Erv no longer milks, he raises some beef cattle.