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THE GUMMIN HOMESTEAD

The Arthur and Dorothy Gummin Homestead began with an initial purchase of 40 acres by Adolph and Martha Gummin in 1910. This purchase was financed from wages earned doing logging work in the Ladysmith area. Adolph and Martha together raised ten children on the farm, acquiring more acreage when it became available and affordable.

Their youngest son Art went into partnership with his father and purchased the homestead in 1954. He and his wife Dorothy raised seven children on the 200 acres, 100 of which are under cultivation. The forest land also produced. It was a source of game for hunting and also for the many cedar posts used in fences for the farm and for sale to others.

This was a working dairy farm for all of its existence, but early years also saw the raising of chickens, pigs, horses (initially used for fieldwork), sheep, raccoons, pigeons, one lone duck, and legions of barn cats and dogs.

The first home built was replaced with a new and larger one in 1920. The old cabin was then relegated as housing for young stock, bulls, and pigs. The first barn became a granary when the new one was raised in 1914. Teams of horses gave way to the first CH Case tractor purchased in 1938. The chicken coop/workshop was built in 1936, and the barn was remodeled and modernized to accommodate the ever-growing dairy herd. At its highest, the milking herd was at about 40 cows.

Forty feet were added to the barn, two silos eventually were erected, a barn cleaner was added, and the cans that held the milk eventually were replaced by a bulk tank pipeline system. A large shed was built to house the multiple machines that planted, maintained, and harvested the crops.

Change is inevitable. Barbed wire and cedar post fences gave way to electric fences, and farming gave way to another venture. Art and his son Randy ran a successful electrician business after the auction of the dairy herd and machinery in 1975. Since then, the tillable land has been leased to an area farmer. In the early days the crops were oats, rye, wheat, corn, alfalfa, timothy, and clover. Recent years have added soybeans and green beans to that list.

The upkeep of the farm buildings has been important to both Art and Dorothy. They take pride in maintaining the grounds. Dorothy has been a quilter for many years, and has long admired barn quilts displayed in the area. This opportunity to erect one on their own barn has been a joy and a blessing – another thing they can enjoy for many years to come.

This block was installed by the Oconto Electric Cooperative in September 2015.