

Cheyenne County farm celebrates 100 years

The owners of the Isernhagen farm, located 6 miles west and 1.1 miles north of St. Francis, will celebrate 100 years in August. The farm is now owned by Glenn and Louanne Isernhagen, who purchased the farm in 2004.

Mrs. Isernhagen has compiled the following history of the farm. It was in August 1907, that George Isernhagen bought the 160 acres northwest of St. Francis where his son, Otto, farmed and his grandson, Glenn now lives.

Young George had immigrated from Germany in 1905 and lived with brothers in Agra until he could afford to buy land. In his autobiography written in the mid-1930s, he tells about looking as far west as Denver, hoping to settle near an Evangelical Lutheran church. The land on Road 9 south of Cherry Creek suited him well enough.

He wrote, "I made my way back to town, looked up Jaqua, the land agent, who told me that the title of the land was in the name of Mr. Tressel who lived in town and that I could contest it. I went to see Mr. Tressel asking him his price. He said \$300. I told him: So much money is not in my possession, but I offer you \$90. The offer was accepted and right away we went to Mr. Jaqua to get the papers ready and signed."

According to family lore, George lived in a hillside dug-out that first winter, surviving on crackers and coffee, until he could build a modest two-room house for his new bride, Elizabeth Zwegardt. The couple was married on Oct. 11, 1908, at Salem Lutheran Church. By 1917, a new two-story home was constructed out of cement blocks which George had made himself, two at a time, with block molds. It was in this house that six children, Lydia, William, August, Emma, Otto and Martha, grew up.

George was the Cheyenne County dynamite expert and stored his explosives in a rock cave in the south pasture on the farm. Tobe Zwegardt often helped his uncle and has numerous stories to tell about blowing things up. When Otto married Alice Zwegardt on May 23, 1940, at Salem Lutheran Church, they moved into the upstairs north room of George and Elizabeth's house. This was before indoor plumbing and rural electricity.

The Isernhagen and Zwegardt families helped each other with farming, threshing and butchering. Life centered around church

and family activities.

George and Elizabeth retired and moved to town in the 1940s, leaving Otto and Alice to raise their three children, Glenn, Maxine and Fred, on the family farm.

On July 1, 2001, while Otto and Alice Isernhagen were in Longmont, Colo., attending the baptism of their great-grandson, Benjamin Husted, lightning struck their farm home and burned it to the ground. By the time they drove home the next morning, they had decided to re-build.

The town of St. Francis responded generously and for four months the Isernhagens lived in a house graciously provided by Gale and Mary Walz. A new manufactured home was constructed on the same site as the one George built of cement blocks in 1917. Otto and Alice lived in it until July 2004, when their son, Glenn, and his wife, Louanne retired and moved back to the farm. They are the third generation to live there.

With the help from Connie Holzwarth, the Isernhagen farm has been designated by the Kansas Farm Bureau as a 2007 Century Farm, an honor given to families who have lived on the same farm for 100 years. On Sept. 14, 2007, the family will be recognized at a special luncheon at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson and honored with a plaque to display.

Glenn and Louanne have been busy spiffing up the farm for its 100th birthday. Leon Merklin and his crew constructed a pergola (grape arbor) using lumber from an abandoned cattle shelter in the pasture. The lumber was originally part of the old Nixon store in St. Francis.

Inside the garden courtyard, flowers, trees, a fountain and statue of St. Francis of Assisi provide a restful, quiet space. The Isernhagens have used salvaged gates, milk cans and George's cement blocks to add historical interest. Vintage farm machinery is displayed along a fence row north of the house and Fred and Glenn just painted the old dairy barn where they used to milk cows every morning and evening. Two 4-by 4-foot quilt blocks, hand-painted by Anabelle Rueb, will decorate the red barn.

The only original buildings remaining are the two-car garage built of George's cement blocks and the dynamite cave.

The Isernhagens plan two weekends of celebrations at their farm. During the fair, August 2-5,



Isernhagen farm — middle 1930s



Isernhagen farm today

they will host a family reunion, and many relatives and friends will come from out of town. On Thursday night, Aug. 2, the Isernhagens and Zwegardts will gather for German food, music and a special historical video about the farm. On Saturday, Aug. 4, descendants of George and Elizabeth will ride and walk in the county fair parade and are invited to an evening barbecue. The St. Francis Singers and Once Again Sound Band will provide entertainment. On Sunday morning they will worship at Salem Lutheran and share in a congregational potluck dinner.

The public is invited the following weekend, Saturday, Aug. 11, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 7 to 9 p.m. for an open house. Tours of the farm, garden, house and outbuildings will be held and refreshments served. The Isernhagen farm is located at 1515 Road 9, which is six miles west of St. Francis on Hwy. 36, then north 1.1 mile on Road 9.



GLENN ISERNHAGEN sets the sign at the farm.

Maps Now Available
A great gift ideal!!!

JUST UPDATED
Cheyenne, Rawlins,
Sherman and Thomas Co.

Platmaps

By
Western
Cartographers

Available at: **Cheyenne Co. Clerk, St. Francis;**
Shay Realty, St. Francis; Atwood Abstract
Or by calling 1-800-752-3402

Other Counties available in
KS, CO, WY, SD and OK



ADM-Northern Sun
6425 Road 14 ~ Goodland, KS 67735
(785) 899-3700

LABORATORY TECH

ADM-Northern Sun is currently taking applications for full-time **Laboratory Tech** for our sunflower processing plant with benefits. Applications will be taken until position is filled.

- ◆ Medical/Prescription/Dental Insurance
- ◆ Life Insurance
- ◆ Disability Insurance
- ◆ Flexible Spending Accounts
- ◆ Credit Union
- ◆ 401K
- ◆ Competitive Salary
- ◆ Overtime available based on job requirements
- ◆ Wellness Program
- ◆ Pre-employment drug testing
- ◆ Drug free workplace
- ◆ Work-Life Program
- ◆ Paid Vacation
- ◆ On the job training will be given

We are looking for motivated, responsible people with a willingness to learn and the desire to advance within our company. Applicants must be dependable and a team player. Applicants must have a valid photo ID and original Social Security Card or original birth certificate. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. Application packets are available to be picked up at ADM-Northern Sun between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. We are located 5 miles West of Goodland on Hwy 24, turn north at Caruso. ADM is an equal opportunity employer.

WANTED
Bird City Times
Associate-Editor

Looking for an energetic person, living in the Bird City area. The applicant must have some computer, writing and some photography skills, get along well with customers, be able to cover meetings, school activities and other happenings within the communities of Bird City and McDonald.

To apply or for more information, contact Casey McCormick or Karen Krien at the St. Francis Herald, 785-332-3162 or stop by the office at 310 W. Washington, St. Francis.