

CENTENNIAL FARMS SPOTLIGHT

MARTIN & MARY GAPINSKI FARM

GAYLORD, MICHIGAN

ESTABLISHED MARCH 17, 1914

Right: The barn and silos. Below: The farmhouse.



Right: The Gapinski family in 1954. From left to right: Blasé, Velma, Mary, another family member, and Martin.



Left: A tractor in front of the barn. Below: The corncrib.



Purchasing the Charles O. Haight farm on March 17, 1914, Martin and Mary Gapinski started the Centennial Farm legacy for their family. Martin was born in Ludzisko, Poland, on November 9, 1871. When he was 18 years old, Martin and his family left Poland and moved to Chicago. Following several years in a variety of jobs, including one as a lumberjack, Martin decided it was time to settle down and grow roots in Otsego County.

Upon purchasing their farm, Martin and Mary made their living by raising a variety of crops. Hay, small grains, and potatoes were their mainstay, as well as raising milk cows, pigs, and poultry. In the beginning, Martin relied upon a team of horses to help work the fields. Then he purchased the first tractor for the farm: a John Deere Model "D." That tractor was replaced in June 1938 by a brand new John Deere Model "G," which is still at the farm, but not as a working tractor.

Originally, the farm was 160 acres, but in 1929, an additional 40 acres was purchased. Over the years, more land was added. Today, the farm is more than 260 acres with the products of cattle, hay, corn, and small grains.

In 1941, Martin and Mary became members of the Top O'Michigan Rural Electric Company. That company and several others now make up Great Lakes Energy, a member of the Michigan Electrical Cooperative Association and a strong supporter of the Michigan Centennial Farm program.

In September 1942, Martin sold the farm to his youngest son, Blasé. Martin and Mary lived on the farm until 1954 and then moved into Gaylord, where they resided for many

more years. Martin lived until he was 106 years old, and Mary passed away at the age of 91. Blasé married Velma Hansen in 1945, and the couple raised five children: Donald, Bernard, Helen, Mary Ann, and Thomas.

During the 1960s, the construction of I-75 split the farm in two and took 40 acres of farmland. A majority of the farm is located on the west side of the freeway, and a trip of four miles is needed to access the east portion.

Over the years, several buildings were constructed to help support the growing farm's production of dairy cattle, including cement silos, a cement garage, and a milk house. In 1984, the family sold their dairy herd and focused on raising beef cattle.

In 1998, Blasé passed away. Velma still resides on the farm, which is worked by her son Bernard and other Gapinski family members. ☒



Top: Digging potatoes. Above: The farmhouse in the winter of 1941. Right: An aerial photo of the farm.



**Martin and Mary (Switalski)
Gapinski**

July 2, 1900