

Keywords

Potatoes

Elmira

Certified Seed Potatoes

Potatoes

Father was Joseph. Parents married in Poland in 1912 and moved to Michigan. In 1916 came to farm in Elmira. Purchased from William Hepfner. Kept expanding acreage. Had 14 children all born at home on farm. Midwives delivered children. Mrs. Slivinski was midwife when Isadore was born.

Isadore went to the Rodgers school located at intersection of M32 and 131 where gas station is now. Part of Warner Township.

Isadore got married in 1954. Bought his dad's farm. 200 laying hens. Traded eggs for all the groceries they need at Stanley Cherry's store in Elmira. Continued to expand acreage. His sons, Tom and John bought the farm in 1991. Consists of 910 acres of which 700 is tilled. Grow 140-200 acres of certified seed. Sell certified seed to larger farmers downstate and in Canada. Much of this is for chip stock and potatoes are sold under contract to Frito-Lay.

Originally there were potato warehouses in Elmira. Farmers brought their potatoes which was mainly table stock to warehouses and then the potatoes were shipped by rail to various locations. These were in 100 lb bags. When the stores got them they would put potatoes in barrels and then customers would buy by the pound.

Markarewicz's sell certified potato seed. They are trucked by buyers. Each one can carry 50,000 lbs. These are loaded at the farm where they have their own storage facilities. Certified seed potatoes are shipped beginning in March. At one time Elmira was called the Certified Potato Capital of Michigan.

The potatoes are certified by the Certified Seed Association of State of Michigan. Farmers pay to have potatoes certified. They are inspected in the fields, at harvest time and when loading out.

One job is to walk the rows of potatoes during the growing season and pull out the diseased plants..

At one time Elmira had it's own bank, a barbershop, grocery store, restaurant. Ralph and Pat Robarge live in the old Catholic Church. Old Buell farm is large house, now yellow, on M 32 just west of Catholic Church.