

A History of God's Little Acre on Stormy Lake

God's Little Acre is located at 5762 Country Road K West, a lot with 100 feet of frontage on the southern shore of Stormy Lake. The lot was originally owned by Stanley M. Koenig and then was sold in 1958 to Raymond W. Dreger who built the original house not long thereafter. That house consisted of a small kitchenette, a living room, two bedrooms, a ½ bathroom, a front deck, and a partial basement. Dreger was a bachelor, as one could see from the cozy size of the original house (approximately 650 square feet of living space). His clearing of trees on the shoreline made his home site one of the most visible on Stormy Lake, as it is to the present day.

Raymond Dreger sold this property in 1962 to Rev. Henry C. Gieschen, who named it "God's Little Acre" as a confession of his Christian faith that God is the creator and has given us all that we have. At the time, he was a Lutheran pastor in Rib Lake, Wisconsin, and later served congregations in rural Wausau and Merrill, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Lily, had been scouting summer lake property to purchase for a few years when they were shown the Dreger property and immediately fell in love with Stormy Lake's crystal clear water and the sandy beach of this lot. They knew it would be a place where their family would enjoy countless hours of summer swimming and peacefulness. Their six children have many fond memories of coming to God's Little Acre almost weekly in the summers during their childhood years of the 1960s and 70s. Lily, however, was afflicted with early onset Parkinson's Disease that was diagnosed shortly after this property was purchased and was seldom able to enjoy it.

Because Henry C. Gieschen had a large family and also desired to spend his retirement years at God's Little Acre, in 1967-69 he had a two car garage built and also had the original house expanded with a substantial 1000 square foot addition to the main floor that provided a larger kitchen, a double-face fireplace, a formal dining room where the outdoor deck used to be, two more large bedrooms, and a full bathroom with laundry facilities. The partial basement was also expanded to a total of 1500 square feet and includes a double-face fireplace. William Frederick, a local Conover builder, did most of the construction, and it was finished by L K Building and Supply Company. The expanded house features five large picture window combinations across the front—three on the main floor and two on the basement level—with views overlooking Stormy Lake. After the expansion, the house began to be rented out during some summer weeks.

Upon the death of Rev. Henry C. Gieschen in 2002, the property transferred to his oldest son, Rev. Henry D. Gieschen, a Lutheran pastor in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Because of the distance from southern Missouri to northern Wisconsin, he usually was at God's Little Acre only for a week or two each August, but his siblings and Stormy Lake neighbor, John Gantz, helped maintain the property. He made several improvements to the house after receiving it, but passed away suddenly in 2010. As with his father, it was his strong desire that the property stay in the Gieschen family.

God's Little Acre then transferred to his youngest brother, Rev. Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, who is a professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Charles fondly remembers when his parents first bought God's Little Acre and has visited there almost every summer since 1962. He is thankful to share the beauty of Stormy Lake with his wife, Kristi, and their children, Stephan and Lauren, as well as his extended family. The house is undergoing some interior improvements and continues to be available for rental when not used by family. 2012 will mark 50 years that God's Little Acre has been in the Gieschen family who continues to treasure it as a gift from God.

Compiled by Charles A. Gieschen with assistance from Susan M. Gieschen (20 August 2011)

John and Margery Gantz' History at Stormy Lake

We purchased our home on Stormy, 5774 Highway K West, in the fall of 1980. It got the name "Mostly Cloudy" one summer when it was just that most of the summer. A friend, after spending a week in the clouds, said that she thought a good name for the cottage would be 'Mostly Cloudy', and the name stuck. However, a neighbor commented about the supposed unpleasant implications of "Mostly Cloudy" and so the sign on the road sometimes reads "Sunny Today" - even when it's raining.

The home had been built by Mr and Mrs Clarence Dahl in 1963. They bought the property several years before that and lived on the land in a tent while they built the house. After they built, they lived in the house without electricity for four years because they did not want a swath of trees cut down for an aerial power line. When the Andrews built their house next door in 1967, a buried line was installed to both houses, saving most of the trees. The Dahls lived here from mid-April through mid-November at which time they would go to their home in Florida. Mrs. Dahl told us that she would get in the lake every day, sometimes breaking ice to get in.

We added a two car garage to the property in 1985 and replaced a fixed window with a window that would open. Other than that, we have made no changes to the property. This winter (2000) we hope to enlarge and remodel the cottage and add a pole building in the summer.

We started coming to Stormy in 1965, renting at the Stormy Lake Resort. At the time we lived in Springfield, Il. Our children have loved coming to Stormy, skiing, swimming, sailing, and now Scuba diving in the lake. Now they bring their children who are loving it as well. They squeal with delight at the 'critters' that come to the feeder we have outside the dining room window; watch with wonder the deer and their fawns that come; taunt the bats at dusk; cast their bait with daddy as they patiently wait to get one of Stormy's elusive fish; run to the lake after one of those late afternoon thunderstorms that roar in from the north to see beautiful rainbows, walk to the lake edge at night to see if there are any northern lights over the north shore. There have been lots of evenings around a fire at the lake edge, roasting marshmallows, telling stories, laughing at jokes (or groaning), and singing to the accompaniment of a guitar. And we have formed wonderful friendships with other Stormy Lake residents.

Many years of happy, happy memories,
and for this we are very thankful to our God!

United States, by the President,
U. S. Grant (with seal of the
General Land Office),

Grantor

To

Crosier Davison,

Grantee

U. S. Patent
Dated July 1, 1870
Recorded December 21, 1908
Vol. 2 Misc. page 462

GRANTS: E 1/2 NE of 12-41-9 E, and Lots 1 and 4 Sec. 12-41-9 E,
containing 172 acres.

Instrument recites as follows: "Whereas, In pursuance of the Act of Congress, approved March 3, 1855, entitled "An Act in addition to certain Acts granting Bounty Land to certain officers and Soldiers who have been engaged in the Military Service of the United States", there has been deposited in the General Land Office, Warrant No. 93834 for 160 acres, in favor of John Baumann Teamster served as John Bowman U. S. Quarter Masters Department War with Mexico with evidence that the same has been duly located upon the (lands above described) according to the official Plat of the Survey of the said land returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General the said warrant having been assigned by the said John Baumann to Frank J. Mora and by him to Crosier Davison in whose favor said tract has been located".

ABTRACTOR'S NOTE: The supposition is that E 1/2 NE 12- and Lots 1 and 2 were intended to be conveyed, that is if the acreage 172 acres is correct.

No.

2

(1)

Hi Margie,

I didn't forget about writing something, so here it is. Anything that doesn't pertain can be left out.

I am writing about the property on Stormy Lake at 5768 County K-West. We purchased the property from Ruth Luethke in March 1975. Ruth & Earnest Luethke bought it in the 50's from Stanley Koenig (I'm quite sure). They built a cottage. Ernie retired and moved to Conover permanently in 1972. They were building the house on K (with the gambrel roof) and planned on living there but kept the lake cottage also. But Earnie died (Nov 1974) before the house was finished.

Denny was building the house with Earnie before he died. Ruth wanted to stay here, so she asked Denny if he wanted to buy the lake property. Ruth didn't drive and needed someone to help her. We were building a house on Chicago Ave and owned a restaurant in town. We sold the house on Chicago Ave and bought Stormy Lake on a land contract.

(2)

We sold it to Misirian's in 1989.

We moved to Conover, Sept. 27, 1968. and bought the restaurant.

We had a daughter (Denise, 5 years old), she went to first grade, which was in the basement of the town hall, now Joe's Pool Hall. Second grade she went to the 2 room school on the back street. Her teacher was Stanley Koenig, who lived where Hegglands are, in a little shack, which they made into a little cottage.

If I remember right, he owned all the property from Kadivars out hadavars I don't know how to spell it to Hoheners. When he needed a different vehicle he would sell a piece of property. Mr. Drager (an attorney in Eagle River told us he got \$2.00 a foot. He lived very meagerly and died in about 1980. He drove to town, called an ambulance from the phone booth by the Red Owl store, drove back home and had them pick him up on Starling to take him to the hospital, where he died.

Sincerely,

Dennis & Shirley Bailbagon
P.O. Box 190 Conover, W.V. 54519

Gloris & Don Heggeland

Our home is at 5726 County K - west at the south end of Stormy Lake. The property previously was owned by Stanley Kering, a bachelor who taught science at the Eagle River high school.

Stanley was a recluse and a junk collector who would build a shack, cover it with tar paper - never finish it and go on to build another one that he would cover with tar paper and go on to build another one that he did four times. He lived in one of these 13x19-foot buildings with no heat or running water and a light bulb hanging from a cord in the middle of the room. His bath tub must have been Stormy Lake.

When we bought the property in 1980, we hired our neighbors, Denny and Shirley Baillargeon to haul away fifteen truckloads of trash. The job took them two weeks.

Our house was built two years later in 1982-3 by Michael Kamper-Crowe. One tar paper covered structure was placed on a cement foundation. That part became 2 bedrooms and a bath. The remainder of the house was built and attached to those rooms to make our house.

Nike was a good builder and did a great job making a home for us out of what we gave him to work with. We have remodelled and put some additions on the house through the years.

Our son Paul finished the outside of one shack to match the house and we use that for rafts, inner tubes, life jackets and garden supplies.

Stanley Koenig

The story goes that Stanley Koenig owned 1500 feet of shoreline. He was often seen checking out his property with a shotgun on his shoulder. When he needed some money, he would sell off a lot on the western end of his property.

One day Stanley felt a sharp pain in his chest and at 81 he figured the end was near. Since he didn't have a telephone, he got in his pick-up truck and drove to the public phone in Croover where he called for an ambulance.

The operator told him to stay by the phone. He then realized he didn't have his wallet with him, so he got back in his pickup, returned to his home for his wallet and drove back to Croover where the paramedics were waiting for him. He died in the Eagle River hospital that night.