



Russ & Marilyn Rosenboom Pilot Grove Farm

9144 W 6000S Road
Herscher, IL 60941

Quilt Block: Lone Star

Original Owners: Joel Hawkins

Age of Barn: Built in the early 1900's.

Original Use or Purpose of Structure: Farm animal accommodations

Materials and Architecture: Handmade concrete blocks and wood

History of the Farm: The first house in Pilot Township was a log cabin built by Joel Hawkins in Pilot Grove in 1847. Pilot Grove owes its name to the grove of hardwood trees which in early times was a landmark that helped "pilot" travelers on the open prairie so they arrived home safely.

Morey Frink bought the land from Joel Hawkins in 1853 and in 1858 built a stone house which is still standing on the top of the hill. The limestone for the house was hauled by horse and wagon from quarries at Old Lehigh in northeast Pilot Township.

The cupola on the house had windows on all sides, allowing the family to view the vast prairie and the road from Kankakee when visitors were expected. A large brass telescope aided the viewing. The cupola was removed when extensive repairs were made to the roof in 1942.

Morey Frink and Ellen Goodrich of Michigan were married in September 1860. She was a teacher in Kankakee. A son, Fred Goodrich Frink, was born April 16, 1862.

Mae Frink, the widow of Fred Frink, gave this information about her husband's birth in a letter to Howard Wilcox in 1948: "Mrs. Frink immediately carried him up the narrow stairs to the cupola, since it was her belief that a child must be carried up before it is carried down, in order to become an aspiring and ambitious adult."

Frink's Pilot Grove Farm contained more than 500 acres. Pilot Grove is the second highest point in the county. The grove has been the site of many community picnics, especially on the Fourth of July, in its early years.

Morey Frink died in 1863. His widow and son remained on the farm for another 12 years, with various farmers hired to work the crops and livestock. The manager from 1872 – 1877 was Charles Goodrich, Mrs. Frink's younger brother. Mrs. Frink and her son made an extended trip to California and then lived in Englewood and Kankakee. After graduating from the University of Michigan, Fred Frink ran the farm with tenant farmers.

After Fred Frink died in 1929, his widow Mae and her three children ran the farm for several years with tenant farmers. She eventually moved to Palo Alto, California.

Little change has been made to Pilot Grove Farm in the last 150 years. The stone house and grove of hardwood trees have been preserved by subsequent owners, including the current owners, Russ and Marilyn Rosenboom. Their grandson currently resides in the house.



References: County West – A Sesquicentennial History of Kankakee County by Jim Ridings