

## **Pope-Will Family Barn Quilt**

The farm family chosen for the second barn quilt is the Pope-Will farm located on Pope Road just north of Merrill. This farm was a 2009 Century Farm Award recipient.

The farm where the quilt is hung was established in 1897 by Ben Pope, and his wife, Augusta (Detert) Pope when they purchased a 40 acre parcel in the Merrill Township. Ben worked in town and Augusta "Gustie" did the farm work. When Ben's co-workers asked him to bring surplus milk, they became his first customers. In 1907, Ben began peddling milk in Merrill on a regular basis. He then bought a milk wagon, hitched his horses to it every morning and headed to town. On February 14, 1929, son Harold, who lived a mile east of the Pope farm on what is now called Pope Road, bought out his parents and moved back to the home farm. At that point Harold and his wife Christena "Tena" (Kasper) Pope started a separate route, his brother Fritz also having a route. In 1934, the Cream Top bottle franchise was acquired and their business flourished. When raw milk was no longer sold, the Cream Top bottle became a relic and the Pope Dairy name was again revived. In 1957 Pope Dairy was sold to Seeger Dairy, Merrill. Harold and "Tena" had three daughters, Ruth Dreger, Harriet Olivotti and Cora Pope Will. Cora and her husband Fred purchased the farm in 1959. When hearing about the Lincoln County Barn Quilt project, Fred decided to sponsor a quilt in memory of his late wife Cora and to honor the heritage of her family's farm.

Working with Natalie Watland, an artist from the Tomahawk area, the family designed a quilt pattern incorporating the Pope Milk bottle. The hanging of the quilt was done on August 19, 2014 by Dan Prebig, Coy Zimmerman and Dale Marquardt from RTL Electric in Merrill.