

JOHN BEIER FARM

CHINA TOWNSHIP • ESTABLISHED SEPTEMBER 16, 1862

The John Beier Farm was founded on September 16, 1862, in China Township, Michigan. John; his wife, Marie; and their eight children immigrated to the United States from Hardenbeck, Prussia, on the passenger ship *Olbers* in 1855. The Beiers eventually purchased 40 acres and settled in China Township. During

the farm's early years, John raised cattle, sheep, and swine and grew barley,



corn, oats, wheat, potatoes, apples, and peaches.

When John died in 1874, his son, August, briefly assumed ownership before selling the farm to his brother, William. William's wife, Wilhelmina, maintained the farm after his death in 1901 before deeding it to their son, William A. Beier, with a life lease. William A. married Lillian Osterland and purchased an additional 40-acre parcel down the road from the original property. In 1953, he granted a life lease on the property to his son, Wallace.

Wallace and his wife, Marjorie, purchased the farm's first tractors and

*Top: The original barn, built in 1883.
Bottom: An overall view of the farm looking north.*

installed running water in the house. The farm mainly produced milk, but when the U.S. Department of Agriculture's milk regulations became too costly to uphold, Wallace sold most of the cows. He began a job with the St. Clair County Railroad Commission but continued to farm part-time for many years. Wallace and Marjorie's daughter, Diane, received the farm following her parents' deaths in 2010 and 2015, respectively. Currently, the major products on the 55-acre farm are corn and soybeans. Diane's son, Michael, has a life lease on the property and will carry the Beier Centennial Farm into its sixth generation. ☒



JOHN AND LENA KAMPHOUSE AND JOHN AND LENA OVERBEEK FARM

MARION • ESTABLISHED APRIL 26, 1913

The John and Lena Kamphouse and John and Lena Overbeek Centennial Farm was established on April 26, 1913, in Marion, Michigan. John Kamphouse and John Overbeek were cousins who lived in Holland, Michigan, prior to their move to Marion. Their wives, both named Lena, accompanied them on the journey from Ottawa County to Osceola County.

The cousins purchased adjoining 40-acre parcels and began farming the land. They purchased cows to milk and grew corn, hay, and wheat. However, Lena Overbeek grew lonely at the farm and, in 1918, the Overbeeks sold their land to the Kamphouses and moved back to Holland. Soon after, John and Lena Kamphouse purchased a house from Park Lake—a nearby logging town—and moved it to the farm using horses and sleighs. In their new home, they raised six sons and one daughter.

Lena passed away in 1944, which left John alone to care for several children. One son, Adrian, was fighting in World War II at that time. After the war, Adrian returned to Marion to help look after both the farm and his siblings. In 1949, John deeded

the farm to Adrian. One year later, Adrian married Freda Baas, with whom he had five children. They continued to raise dairy cows and grow crops.

Adrian and Freda retired from farming in 1984 and moved three miles down the road from the family farm. Their son, Dennis, and his wife, Beverly, purchased the land and went on to have five children. Over the years, the couple removed and replaced many of the farm's original buildings, though the house moved from Park Lake still stands. The couple also expanded the family farm to include almost 400 acres, on which they grow corn and alfalfa. ☒



An aerial view of the farm.



The original John and Lena Kamphouse homestead.