

The Franckowiaks

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Kenneth Franckowiak's grandparents, Frank and Lucy Lijeski (left), great-aunt, Sophie Lijeski, and great-grandparents, Anna and Michael Lijeski, stand on the front porch of their farmhouse in this 1914 photo. Frank and Lucy's daughter, Eulalia, was born in 1919. She married Joseph Franckowiak, and Kenneth is their son. Eulalia still lives in St. Hedwig.

Fred Owens 26.APR.06

ST. HEDWIG - When Kenneth and Ellen Franckowiak were married in 1995 and built a new home on a farm that had been in Kenneth's family since 1902, they decided to give the farm a name, High Moon.

"We decided to call it High Moon because that name had a lot of significance for us," Kenneth said. "The farm never had a name before."

The farm descended to Kenneth Franckowiak through his mother, Eulalia Franckowiak.

The dates of ownership are as follows: Mike Lijeski from 1902 to 1921, Frank Lijeski from 1921-1979, Eulalia (Lijeski) Franckowiak from 1979 to 1994, and Kenneth and Ellen Franckowiak from 1994 to 2006.

First generation

Mike Lijeski was born in Poznań, Poland, and came to Texas by way of Maryland. Three of his children had died in Maryland from illness and disease, so he moved his family to Texas for a better climate and environment.

Mike and his wife, Anna (Gorlaska), had five children who lived to adulthood: Theresa (Lijeski) Malinowski, Frank Walter, Louise (Lijeski) Stolowski, Emelia (Lijeski) Pieniazek, and Sophia (Lijeski) Pieniazek.

On Jan. 13, 1902, Mike bought 160 acres from Louis Tudyk. The land was part of an original survey owned by Francisco Cardenas.

Mike raised cotton, the dominant crop in the area at that time. In addition, he raised cattle, hogs, corn, mules, and horses.

Mike became a U.S. citizen on June 15, 1904. His name was spelled Michael Levwski on the certificate.

Second generation

Frank Walter Lijeski, Mike's son, acquired title to the 160 acres on May 26, 1921. Frank raised cattle, corn, cotton, hogs, mules, horses, and bees. Frank married Lucy Pieniazek, and the couple had four children: Josephine (Lijeski) Franckowiak, Alouis, Eulalia T. (Lijeski) Franckowiak and Clara (Lijeski) Ciomperlik.

In the late 1920s, a large barn with an upstairs hayloft was built to replace a barn that burned. The barn is still in fair condition with the original cement mule feed troughs.

In 1960 Frank and Lucy sold the state 5.184 acres for the right of way for F.M. 1518.

Third generation

Frank and Lucy's daughter, Eulalia, acquired title to 89.65 acres on March 3, 1979. She and her husband, Joseph T. Franckowiak, raised cattle and hay.

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Joseph received the Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award in 1985 for completing a four-year conservation improvement program on the property.

Eulalia and Joseph had three children: Gregory, Kenneth, and Vincent (now deceased).

Fourth generation

Kenneth acquired the land in 1985 and 1994 and currently owns 78.36 acres, which were originally bought by his great-grandfather, Mike Lijeski.

He and his wife, Ellen, raise cattle and coastal Bermuda. The cattle are a Charolais crossed with Limousin. "There is only a little bit of green for them to nibble on right now," Kenneth said referring to the drought. "They have been on supplemental feed for a long time."

The St. Hedwig Feed Store, located just east of the Franckowiaks' home on F.M. 1518, is also on the farm property. Kenneth jointly owns the business along with his brother, Greg.

Kenneth is retired from a home construction business, but he is working with Mike Michalec now to build a parish center for Annunciation Catholic Church.

Eulalia Franckowiak lives on a nearby farm that she inherited from her husband's family.

An old cistern

There is a cistern on the property, more than 100 years old, which caught rainwater from the roof for drinking and washing.

"My grandparents had a well, but the water had an iron taste, so they used the cistern for water right up into the 1970s."

The cistern is shaped like an inverted light bulb and lined with plastered brick.

"It still holds water," Kenneth said.