

# The Strawberry Garden

10 December 2008 Howard Emery

Prior to settling in the Britt community Roman Glinski lived on his farm adjacent to the C.W. Stahl farm at Gheen, MN and he was the builder of the Novak Store at that community now located kitty corner east of the old Coop store on highway 53 there.

On 3 September 1935, Roman, a 41 year old bachelor purchased the SE1/4 of the NW 1.4 of Range 27 from Ida M. Andeline. This land was originally homesteaded by William Wright in 1902 and became property of the Virginia & Rainy Lake Lumber Company in 1913.

With the removal of the white pine by the Virginia & Rainy Lake Lumber company by 1912, the sandy loam soil of the land was ideal for his intent of growing strawberries and vegetables. He was an intelligent, multi-talented farmer that was up to the task of turning the land into a profitable truck farm. Over the years Roman improvised a joker made from a GMC truck for a tractor, a dragline to dig ponds, an irrigation system and many other tools and equipment needed for his farm. He also provided employment for some ladies and boys of the community. He sold his produce from a stand that he built along side of Highway 53 for many years. His largest single crop was strawberries although he also grew raspberries, boysenberries, currants, bing cherries and vegetables for sale. During the peak of the berry season the International Falls bus would stop often to pick up cases of them to ship northward.

Roman was also a teacher for a couple of lads in the neighborhood instructing them in the fine skills of snaring snowshoe hares, checker playing, work and proper behavior. The economy from the end of WWII through the early 1950's was pretty lean and wild game was a necessary way to put some meat on the table. Roman taught me to construct snares out of picture wire and how to properly set them. He also showed me when not to use those hares with boils on them for food. Today when I look out the window of my home, I remember the hours I spent on the planter seeding potatoes and corn riding on that steel seat behind his tractor. My labor was compensated by some of the crop ending up on the family dinner table. I can also recall spending hours that he told me would improve my muscles by providing the power for his drill press when he was engineering projects. I did end up with some pretty heavy arms from turning that crank wheel on that old press.

The Ladies Aid at the Sand Lake Chapel often put on dinners, I recollect one time when Roman, dressed up in white shirt and dress pants attended one of those functions. He was seated at the table talking with one of the serving ladies, Alice Tausch who was standing along side of him, when he began to stuff her white apron into his waist band. When she asked, "Roman, what are you doing?" He replied with a very embarrassed look, " I thought my shirt tail was out of my trousers!"

"I remember Roman's extraordinary skill in playing the harmonica. It didn't take much encouragement to get him to start playing, and he could play just about anything", wrote Jim Curley. Jim also adds, "He was an avid reader, and was very knowledgeable on a number of subjects. He borrowed a bible I got from Bert Stanway, and read it from cover to cover. He probably had more Bible knowledge than a lot of preachers."

Ray Stahl tells of a tale that Roman frequently shared of his deer hunting days as a young farmer in Gheen. His home was sparsely furnished with what he had at hand, including some inverted kegs used for chairs. He was about to do some butchering of a shoulder of venison when he noticed that company was approaching his abode, so he quickly stowed the shoulder in one of the kegs he used as chairs before inviting his visitor in. Roman asked the visitor, who turned out to be the game warden inquiring whether he had heard anything of the rumors of deer being poached in the area, as he took a seat on the keg. They visited for a time of conversation and even a cup of tea while Roman assured him he knew nothing of the rumor, but he would keep his ears open and pass it on if he did.

For my two youngest siblings, Penny and Charles, born in the 1950's after the deaths of our grandparents, Roman became the grandfather in their lives and they truly loved him as such.

For some years he spent part of the winter season in Florida and when he departed for there his pickup truck was full of birch Yule log candle holders that he sold there for the Christmas season. Roman purchased a piece of property in Homestead Florida, and spent the winters there growing pole beans. He brought the idea back to Britt and tried it there, but it never went over very well. The last winter he spent in Florida, he suffered a heart attack. He blamed it on Florida, so he sold his property and never went back.

Roman Glinski died outdoors on a cold January evening of a massive heart attack in 1968, at age 74, while thawing a fuel oil heating line. He was found the next day with snow shovel and tea kettle still clenched in his hands. This gentleman's death created a void in the community and he was dearly missed by all that knew him.

Roman had quite a sense of humor as evidenced by his interaction with my two oldest sons, who would follow him around like ducklings tailing their mother. At the time he was raising ducks and pheasants. He had Bantam hens to incubate the pheasant eggs because the pheasant hens would not hatch them and was placing their eggs in nests for the Bantam hens. The boys must have been questioning him about why he was doing that so he explained incubation to them and convinced the younger of the two, Howie that he also could hatch an egg in his hands if he kept it their long enough and sent him back to grandpa's house with an egg in his hands to keep it warm. I don't recall how long he kept that egg, but it was enough to keep him occupied for some days.

Vitals: Roman Glinski

Born on 23 December 1893 at Minto, North Dakota to Francizek and Veronica (Osowski) Glinski. Roman's father, a postmaster from Czesk, Poland came to Winona, Minnesota at age 29, later relocating to the Dakota Territory. His mother died and his father remarried resulting in a conflict with the children. In 1904 Roman came to Virginia, Minnesota at age 11 to live with his siblings, Alex, Anna and Martha. Alex returned to North Dakota in later years.

MN Death Index:

GLINSKI, ROMAN

CertID# 1968-MN-001562

Date of Birth: 12/23/1893

Place of Birth: MINNESOTA

Mother Maiden Name: OSOWSKI

Date of Death: 01/11/1968

County of Death: ST. LOUIS

SS Death Index:

Roman GLINSKI

Birth Date: 23 Dec 1893

Death Date: Jan 1968

Social Security Number: 468-52-0593

State or Territory Where Number Was Issued: Minnesota

Death Residence Localities

ZIP Code: 55710

Localities: Britt, Saint Louis, Minnesota

MN Death Index:

[Roman's sister]

JAMINSKI, MARTHA

Date of Birth: 28 Jul 1884

Place of Birth: OUT OF STATE

Mother Maiden Name: OSOWSKI

certid# 1964-MN-017774

Date of Death: 18 Aug 1964

County of Death: ST. LOUIS