

A Latsch Valley Farm Book

Willow Wind Farm

Betsy's Story



Anne Pellowski

WILLOW WIND FARM:
BETSY'S STORY

Also by Anne Pellowski

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Winding Valley Farm: Annie's Story

Stairstep Farm: Anna Rose's Story

Willow Wind Farm: Betsy's Story

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Willow Wind Farm: Betsy's Story

By Anne Pellowski



Illustrated by Roseanne Sharpe

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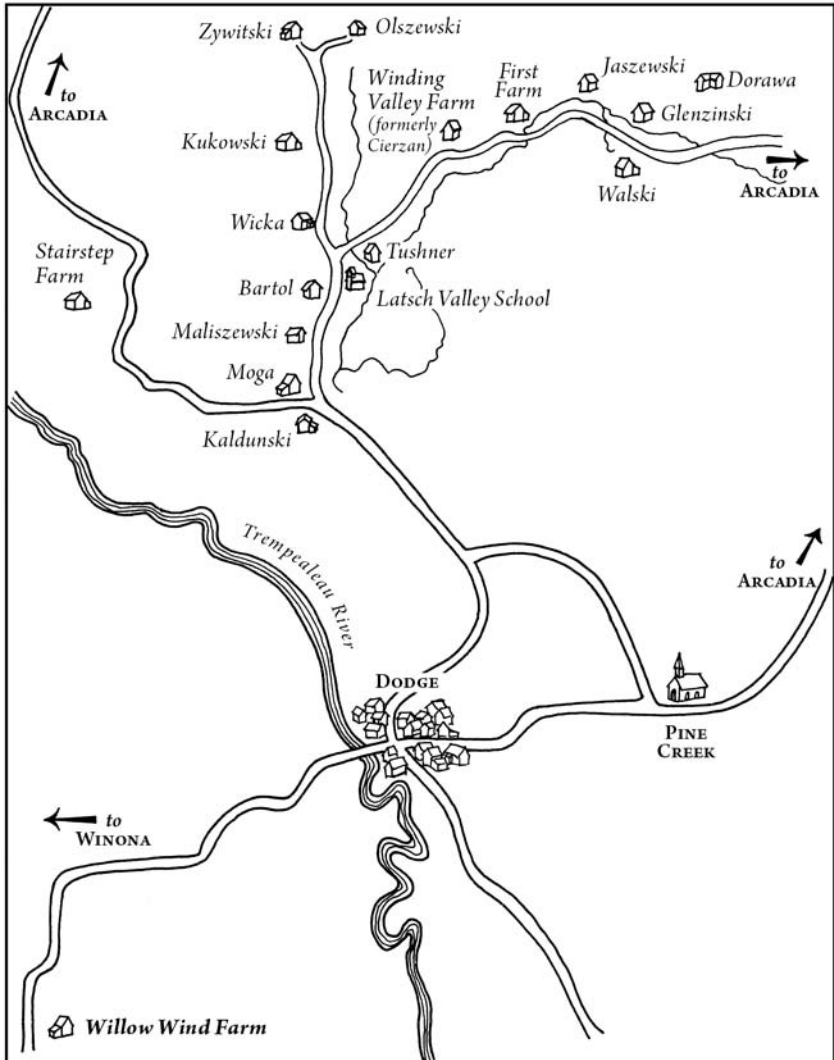
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*Dedicated to
all of my nieces and nephews
because they gave me most of the ideas.*

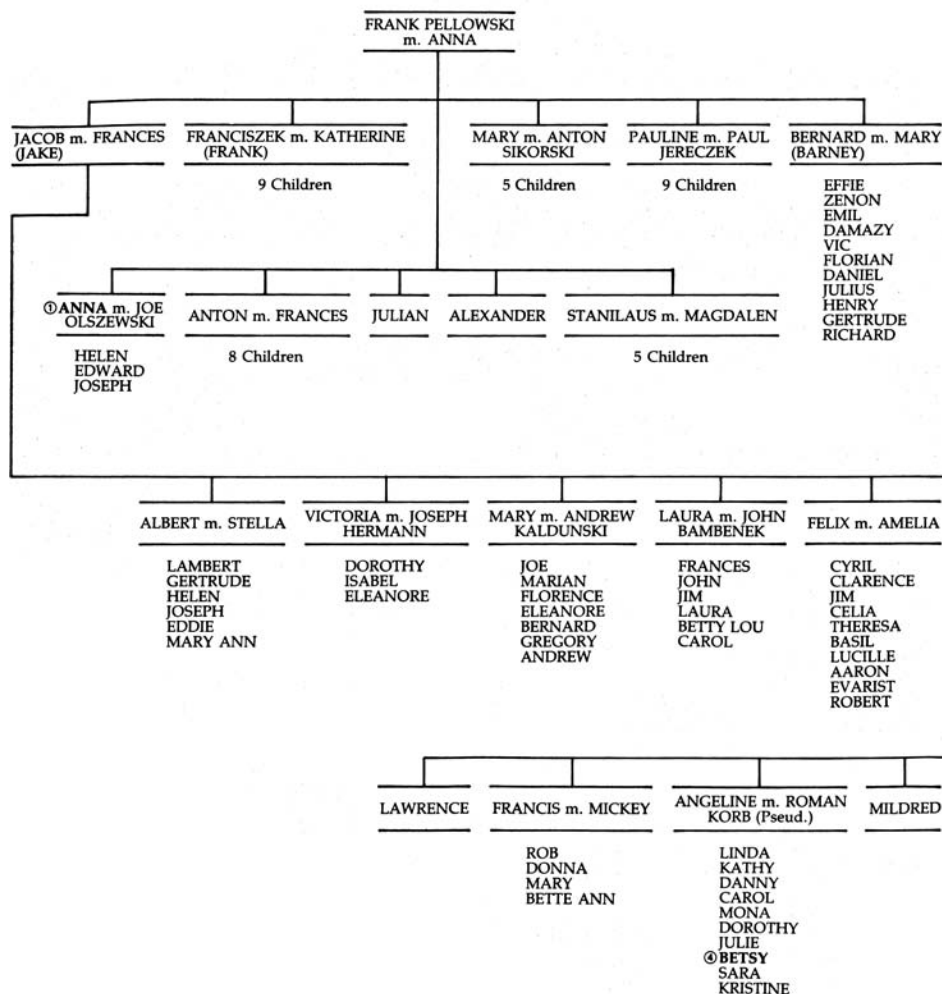
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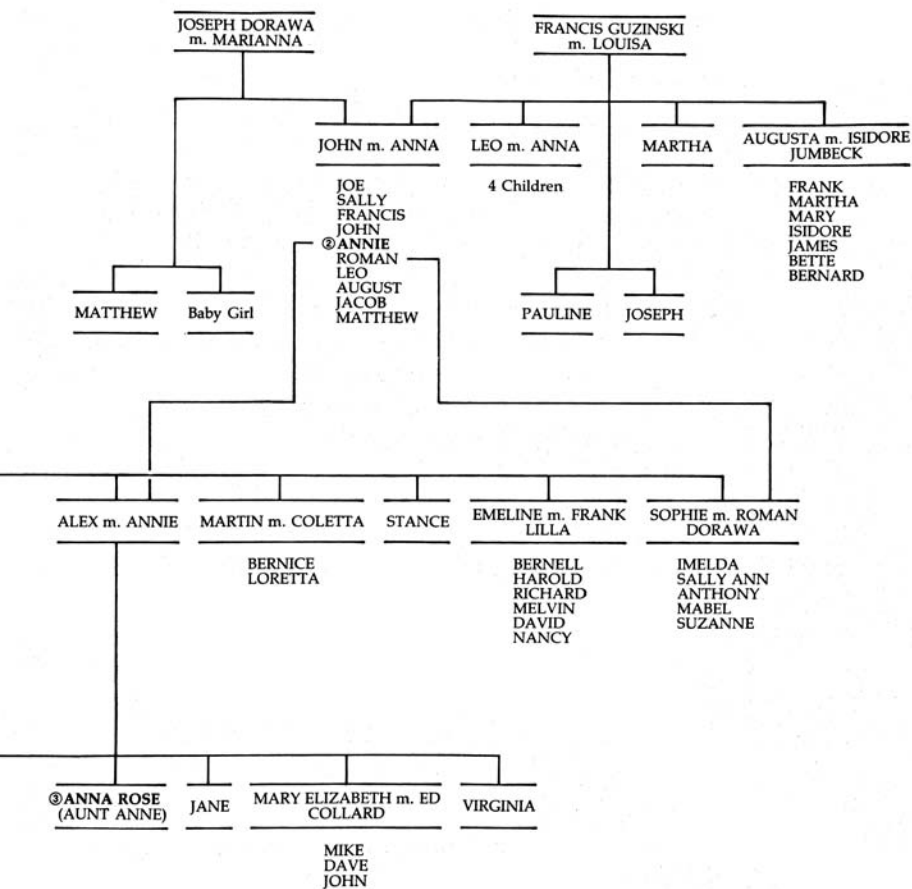


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Family Tree





① Anna of FIRST FARM IN THE VALLEY.

② Annie of WINDING VALLEY FARM.

③ Anna Rose of STAIRSTEP FARM.

④ Betsy of WILLOW WIND FARM.



The Big Family

NOT TOO long ago, on a farm on the ridge of a hill, lived a big family. There were ten children. Betsy was not the oldest and she was not the youngest and she wasn't even the one in the middle. She was the seventh daughter and she was seven years old.

There were nine girls in the family, and only one boy, Danny. He was sixteen years old and almost grown up. Whenever people would visit the family, someone would usually ask him:

"How does it feel to be the only boy in such a crowd of girls?" Danny would just smile and not say anything. He kept his thoughts to himself.

Two sisters were older than Danny—Linda and Kathy. They were both blond, but Linda wore her curly hair short, while Kathy's wavy hair was long. They studied a lot because they wanted to go to college.

After Danny came Carol. She had even blonder hair. It was almost white and it curled softly around her face with its large, round blue eyes. Carol always looked calm and easygoing. She was going to be a nurse some day.

Then came Mona, who had dark red hair, almost brown. Mona loved to do math in school. She had helped Betsy a lot in first grade, with her arithmetic problems.

Dorothy was a year younger than Mona. She had hair that was between blond and brown. It made little ringlets around her neck and forehead. Her skin was always brown, even in winter.

"She's my little Indian daughter," Mom would say fondly.

Dorothy liked poetry and reading.

Two years after Dorothy came Julie. She was the only one in the family with long, straight hair. It was a nice, shiny brown. And then came Betsy, with her crinkly brown curls.

After Betsy were Sara and Kristine. They were both born on the same day, only one year apart. Sara was tall and thin for her five and a half years, and at four and a half, Kristine was short and chubby.

Sometimes, when the floor got all messy again just after she had swept it carefully, Betsy would think to

herself: "I wish there weren't so many people around here." But most of the time she was glad she had her mother and father, her sisters and brother. It was nice to live in their big old house, where her daddy had been born. Her daddy's grandfather had bought that farm, right after he came over from Germany, a long time ago.

Some of Dad's brothers lived on farms near by. They had big families, too. The mailman did not always know to which Korb farm he should take the mail, especially when it was addressed to one of the children. One time, Kathy got an invitation to a party in the mail, only the party was over before she got the card.

"I'm going to give our farm a name," announced Kathy in a determined voice. "Then, if we ask our friends to write the name on the envelope, the mail will come here instead of going to another Korb farm." It took her a few days to think of just the right name, but at last she reported she had found it: "We have willows growing all along the edge of the road, and it is windy up here on the ridge. I think Willow Wind Farm is a perfect name."

"I agree," said Mom, and so did all the others. Kathy learned how to register the name in the county courthouse and from then on, they called their farm Willow Wind.

Willow Wind was a medium-sized farm, but it had many animals and barns and fields. There were thirty milking cows, twenty-six heifers, twenty-five steers, twenty-four pigs, eighteen chickens and one rooster, ten cats and kittens, and two dogs.

The cows lived in the big barn in winter, and outside in the pastures in summer. The heifers and steers had their own small barn, and a fenced-in area across the road. The pigs had a pen with a low shed at one side, and a barn for the winter. The chickens roosted in their small coop behind the big barn. The cats and kittens had their special places in different corners of the hay loft. The dogs stayed in the farmyard.

There was always so much to do on the farm. Every day, the girls each had to take turns helping with chores. There were the chickens and pigs to feed, water to run into the tanks for the heifers and steers, bales of hay to push down for the cows to eat, silage to throw down from the silo, and many other tasks. One of them helped their mother to milk in the morning, and another always took a turn helping Danny or Linda with the evening milking. Dad didn't do the milking during the week, because most days he went to work at the Farmer's Exchange. He only milked on Sundays.

Mom was the fastest and best milker. There were three buckets with suction cups attached to them. After they were hooked up to three cows, Mom would get the other cows ready to be milked. They had to have their udders washed with a cloth dipped in warm, soapy water. Then there would be no dirt getting into the milk, and they would get a better price for it.

Mom knew just when each cow was finished. She would hand-strip the last squirts of milk from each teat, and empty the buckets into one of the tall milk cans sitting in the cooler. Then she would whisk the

bucket and suction cups over to the next cow. It took no more than five minutes.

When Betsy was the helper, she had to run and get clean pails of fresh, warm water for her mother, to use for the udder washing.

"Pospiesz się," called out Mom. That was Polish for "Hurry up!" Sometimes she said it in German, too: *"Rasch machen!"* She had learned Polish from her parents and some German from Grandma and Grandpa Korb.

After the milking, Betsy washed and rinsed the buckets in soapy water and her mother scalded them.

"I wish we had one of those machines that takes the milk right from the cow into a big tank," said Betsy. She had seen one at her Uncle Robert's farm.

"They cost a lot of money," answered Mom. "It will take us quite a while to save up for one."

In the spring and summer there was extra work in the fields. In one long shed they kept all the machines to do the field work. The first machine to come out in the spring was the three bottom plow. That was used to get the fields ready for planting. First, they had to be plowed, and then dragged. Only when they were smooth and even could Mom or Dad or Danny go out and plant the corn and oats.

Once Betsy went out in the field with Dad, to plant corn. She liked to stand on the back of the tractor, behind the seat, and watch the corn planter push kernels of seed corn into the ground. The tractor pulling the planter had to go along nice and straight, so each row lined up at the correct distance from the

one next to it. Then they would be able to cultivate the weeds out later, without tearing out the corn plants.

"How many kernels does the machine put in each time?" Betsy wanted to know.

"About two or three," answered Dad.

"Are we supposed to be able to see them sticking up?" Betsy asked, because she could see yellow specks, in neat rows, gleaming against the dark brown earth.

"No, they should go deep enough to get covered," said Dad, as he looked around. He stopped the tractor so suddenly, Betsy almost fell off.

"See that part that pokes the kernels in the ground? That's called the shoe. Maybe it's stuck," Dad said. "Go and count how many kernels are in that last row over there."

Betsy ran to one of the rows where a small hillock of yellow corn kernels showed. There were definitely more than three or four. She began to count.

"What's taking you so long?" called Dad, after less than a minute.

"I'm still counting," replied Betsy. "Only now you mixed me up. Was I at 32 or 42?"

"So many? I guess I'll have to get off and have a look at the planter." While her dad tinkered with the machine, Betsy counted kernels:

". . . 98, 99, 100 . . . 98, 99, 200 . . . 11, 12, 13, 14. Two hundred fourteen seed kernels!"

"It's a good thing I had you along to be my lookout," said Dad, "otherwise I would have wasted all that corn for nothing."