**Brief History of The Forest Road Farm**

The Forest Road Farm is in the town of Plattekill, which was created in 1801. The farm is located on a well-traveled road thoroughfare that connects New Paltz and Newburgh. The first settlers of English and German descent arrived as early as 1773. In his will of 1793, Rev. Rueben Drake left the plot of land where the current farm stands to his daughter Rachel Sherwood. It appears that the lands surrounding Forest Road and Hunt Road (current name) contain several farms operated by Ruben Drake and his sons. In 1855, Rachel conveyed the land to Daniel Gee. Later in 1899, Valentine Kopaskie purchased The Forest Road Farm at an auction from Martha Purdy. Valentine and Anna Rosalia Nowack Kopaskie are the first generation of our family to own the Forest Road Farm. Valentine was born on January 26, 1846, as Valentinus Koperski, in the Gniezno region of Germany, now in present-day Poland. Valentine married Anna Rosalie Nowack in the parish of Pawlow on November 18, 1870.

In 1873, he migrated to America with his wife, Anna, and their one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Mary. They sailed from Hamburg, Germany on May 3rd, and arrived at Castle Garden, New York City on June 4th, on the ship Saxonia. According to their family, they proceeded to Newburgh to work for Dr. Howland in Plattekill New York. Valentine and his family lived in a small tenant house behind Dr. Howland’s big yellow house, that still stands today. Within 6 years Valentine had enough money to buy a small 10-acre farm in the town of New Burgh. By 1901 Valentine had accumulated 6 parcels of land into a 130-acre farm in the Kings Hill area worth $6,000 in 1911. In 1899, Valentine purchased an 88-acre farm on Forest Road from Martha Purdy at an auction. In the 1900 census, it is shown that Valentine's son-in-law, Archie Hectus, along with his wife Mary and daughter Anna, and Valentine's son, John Kopaskie, were living on the Forest Road farm. Due to Bright's disease causing his failing health, Valentine's son, Martin Kopaskie, and his newly married wife, Margaret Clark Kopaskie took over the management of the farm. The ownership of the farm was transferred to Martin and his wife Margaret in 1909. Valentine died May 11, 1911, of stomach cancer. Valentine’s obituary is [here](https://theforestroadfarm.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Valentine-Kopaskie-obit-newspaper-May-1911-scaled.jpg).

Bernard and Emma managed the running of his father Martin's farm from 1935 to 1959. In 1959, Martin transferred the farm ownership to Bernard. Initially, farming provided enough income to support their family, but the changing economic landscape and growing family size made it difficult. By 1949, they had seven children - six girls and one boy. Bernard eventually started working for the union in construction as a laborer, but the family still had to maintain the farm and its many animals; cattle, horses, milk cows, chickens, geese, and crops to feed the animals – corn, hay. As well as the food for the growing family to for the food to be stored, canned, and frozen, and crops had to be picked and weeded. I still think of the long rows of green beans that needed to be picked now! As the family continued to grow, with twelve children by 1959 - seven girls and five boys - Bernard worked in construction until retiring in 1977.

Upon Bernard's death in 2004, the Forest Road farm was inherited by the 4th generation of the Kopaskie family. Today, in 2024, the 5th generation of the Kopaskie family still owns the same farm on Forest Road.