

Lansings unite Field of Dreams with purchase

By GREGORY SHRIVER

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Don and Becky Lansing, owners of "The Field of Dreams Movie Site" in Dyersville, on Friday acquired the remaining portion of the popular Iowa tourist site from Rita Ameskamp.

Ameskamp sold 93 acres, formally known as "Left and Center Field of Dreams," to the Lansings, Becky Lansing confirmed on Saturday.

Farms belonging to the Lansings and Ameskamps were selected as the site for the popular 1989 film "Field of Dreams" starring Kevin Costner.

The baseball fairy tale, adapted by screenwriter/director Phil Alden Robinson from W.P. Kinsella's novel "Shoeless Joe," is about a farmer (Costner) who becomes convinced to build a baseball diamond in a cornfield.

In the years after the release of the film, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture, the site became a pilgrimage or stop made by more than 60,000 people each year at last count — many of whom described walking up to the ball diamond, cornfield and white farmhouse for the first time to be like walking onto the movie set - so pristine was it kept.

The Lansings and Ameskamps, however, did not agree on how to operate certain aspects of the business and subsequently the field was divided — with the Ameskamps controlling left field and part of center and the Lansings the rest of the site. The families even had separate souvenir stands.

"Contrary to the popular notion that the Lansings and the Ameskamps were no longer 'friends,' both parties would like to put an end to the rumors that their relationship was contentious," Becky Lansing said in a news release.

"We have been neighbors as well as friends since the early 1960s, and while we have not always agreed we have remained friends," according to Rita Ameskamp. "We look forward to a continued friendship."

The acreage making up the field has been part of the Lansings' heritage for more than 100 years.

"Having the opportunity to purchase the remaining acreage that was included in the original farm from 1906 has completed a circle for my wife and myself," Don Lansing said in the news release.