

## Rausch Herefords is located in the heart of Blue Blanket Valley

Blue Blanket Valley is a narrow valley about 20 miles long and 6 miles wide in Potter and Walworth Counties. The town of Lebanon is located near the south end of the valley and Hoven, SD is located near the north end. A creek in the center flows north and ends up in Swan Lake which can overflow into the Missouri River.

Early American Indians named the valley Blue Blanket Valley after witnessing a blue haze that often hangs over the valley. Peter and Pierre Rausch, two pioneer Rausch brothers homesteaded in the narrow ridge of rocky prairie hills located on the SE shore of the valley. They later discovered flatter and better farmland toward the north end of the valley. They then relocated as neighbors and developed their farms. Peter had four sons and one daughter. All the brothers married and farmed as neighbors.

In the beginning the Rausch family summer pastured horses and cattle in the hills on the south end of the valley and wintered the stock on the farms on the north end of the valley. Prior to Cars, trucks and trailers, the stock was trailed these 20 miles on horseback in the spring and fall. The herd of horses were broke as teams by doing the farming. They were then marketed as teams by loading them on the train and sold in Minnesota.



*20 mile trip home from summer pasture for 350 head of registered cows*

Today, over 100 years later, the Rausch generations haul the registered cow/calf pairs the twenty miles to their specific summer breeding pastures. At weaning time, the calves are hauled back to the winter quarters. The cow herd is later trailed by horseback for 20 miles to the winter quarters.

Prior to the Rausch Brothers coming to **Blue Blanket Valley in the 1880s**, two Arbach brothers were the first to come to the Hoven community. They were looking to settle near water, so they staked a claim on the edge of **Swan Lake** on the north end of **Blue Blanket Valley**. They built the area's first sod house on the claim and then sent a message back for their wives to join them. They were the first white women in Walworth County.

Other points of interest on this Historic Tour Stop are the train depo that was located in Hoven and a historic hip roof tile horse barn that was built in 1918. Today the seventh generation of grandchildren come to this historic site for play day with grandpa Shannon and grandma Sue.

**We hope you enjoyed this bit of Rausch Herefords history.**