

Fink's Second Barn Quilt is Road to Damascus

Richard, JoAnne, and Danielle Fink have sponsored their second barn quilt and Shawano County's 285th. It is displayed on their farm at W4057 Old Dump Road, Bonduel. "We wanted to use a Christian-based block pattern, using Nebraska's colors of goldenrod (the Nebraska state flower) and green farmland," JoAnne said, "so we chose Road to Damascus: from Acts 9:2-4, when God converts, rather than destroy, the chief enemy of his church." The quilt is very visible from State Highway 47 just south of Bonduel.

This parcel of land was homesteaded in 1873 by Ferdinand Genzke. In 1909, it was sold to Charles and John Kock. When they died, 80 acres were sold to their nephew, Rudolph (Rudie) Horn, in 1930. The 80 acres had been used for pasture, with a water hole and willow brush in every field.

A friend of Rudie's laughed at him for buying this farm saying, "the only thing that farm will raise is skunks" because the house and grainery had a crawl space, perfect for skunks. Rudie set out to prove him wrong, ditching the land and clearing the willow brush.

The barn was a "drive through" hay barn, setting on a one-foot high rock wall. Rudie spent three winters gathering stones from John A. Fink's farm, a half mile west at the end of Happy Lane, using a stone boat and team of horses. He logged his woods with a cross cut saw. Using his team of horses, he dragged the logs up to the barn, then hired a man to chop the logs into beams. He hired a carpenter, and using screw jacks, they raised the barn eight feet. They set it on railroad ties for the summer months while a stone mason built the walls under the barn. The beams were then laid on the walls and a wood floor was nailed down.

When the barn was completed, Rudie had 11 stanchions for his Jersey herd, three box stalls for his young stock, and horse stalls for the work horses. He also built a silo for corn silage. A flock of sheep was raised in the old barn.

After Rudie died in 1984, John M. and Beverly Fink purchased the farm to raise heifers. In 2003, Richard and JoAnne bought the farm and use the barn for their heifers. The farm is still referred to as "Rudie's Farm."

The quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com or 715-524-5685. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber website includes photos and information on every barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.