

# Mousel Brothers

devoted to

## Nebraska

Michael Mousel (1847-1902) came to America from Sandweiler, Luxembourg, in 1869 and settled near Bellevue, Iowa, where he farmed and learned the English language. It was there that he met and married Mary A. Lawler (1854-1907) and their first child, Charles, was born. The rest of the children—Robert D., Henry L., Lucille and Aaron M.—were born in the sod house on the homestead when they moved to Frontier County, Nebraska.

In 1874, Michael came to Nebraska from Iowa and took a homestead by preemption on a quarter section of land about two and a half miles east of Cambridge, in Furnas County. In 1876, he sold this land and made homestead entry in Frontier County, for which the patent was issued by President Arthur in 1883. During the early pioneer days of the 1870s, the Texas cattle drive trail to Ogallala, Nebraska, and beyond, passed near Culbertson. In a five-year period, Ogallala was the end of the trail for more than 100,000 head of cattle. These vast herds were driven north each spring, and newborn calves that were too weak to follow were destroyed or given away to settlers. Michael would meet these herds, follow them for a time with his team and wagon with two milk cows tied behind, gather up calves, load them in the wagon, milk the cows, feed the calves and return home. When the calves matured, they had long horns. However, by using a good grade of sires, a good grade of cattle was produced.

The firm of Mousel Brothers was founded in 1898 by sons Robert D. Mousel and Henry L. Mousel, who were in their early 20s. They had taken an interest in breeding and improving beef cattle from their past experiences with their father in raising cattle descending from the Longhorn type of cattle and their keen interest in the cattle breeding program of the renowned firm of Gudgell & Simpson, Pleasant Hill, Missouri. The story of Gudgell & Simpson has no parallel in the history of American domestic livestock.

The firm of G & S was established in 1876 with the purpose of improving the Hereford breed. The hind quarter, especially, was deficient. They decided they should go to England and, if a bull they believed could do the work could be found, they would buy him. He must be a bull with a "hind end on him." Anxiety 4th 9904 was that bull—"the Father of American Herefords," imported from England in 1881 along with a group of females. G & S's plan was to concentrate the blood of Anxiety 4th through line breeding.

It was at the time of the 1906 American Royal Livestock Exposition at Kansas City, Missouri, that Mousel Brothers first visited the G & S herd then located at Independence, Missouri. This visit was the turning point in their career as Hereford breeders. The following year, Beau Mischief 268371 was shown at the American Royal by J.A. Larson, Everett, Kansas, standing fourth in the junior yearling class and just below the Mousel entry, Alto Hesiod 236293. The Mousels took a fancy to Beau Mischief and tried to buy him from Larson. A couple of years later, when Beau Mischief had been returned to Gudgell & Simpson as a shy breeder and in poor health, they did buy him for \$150. In the meantime, they used Alto Hesiod and sons of Princeps 4th.

Beau Mischief's get was very satisfactory, but the Mousels noted that when he was mated with the G & S-bred cow, Mabelle 20th, the calves were outstanding. This led the Mousels to study the pedigrees of Beau Mischief and Mabelle 20th, and they discovered that in mating these two descendants of Beau Brummel and



SCENE ON MOUSEL RANCH JULY 1922



THE MICHAEL MOUSEL FAMILY  
Front- Michael, Aaron, Mother Mary. Back- Henry, Charles, Robert, Lucille. 1895



H. L. Mousel on his favorite horse "Pussyfoot"  
Cambridge, Nebraska Dec. 1919

Lamplighter, they were following exactly the method that had proved so successful in the G & S program. The Mousels had purchased a few cows from G & S from time to time.

Early in 1916, it was learned that the G & S herd was to be dispersed. Mousel Brothers hastened to visit the G & S ranch at Edmund, Kansas, and purchased 32 cows and 25 yearling heifers. They were allowed to make their own selections from the herd. All of the cows either had calves at foot or dropped calves shortly after arriving in Nebraska. Most of the calves were by Domino and Bright Stanway, and a majority of the cows were bred back to these sires. It was the first time that G & S had allowed anyone to top their herd of breeding cows.

When the Mousel Brothers had the opportunity to buy their pick of the G & S herd in 1916, the results were as they had hoped for, and these excellent cows and sire combinations produced the type of Herefords they envisioned. They took the progeny to compete in several large Hereford shows. In 1921, their Hereford sale at Cambridge, Nebraska, averaged \$4,410 for 60 head, a new auction record.

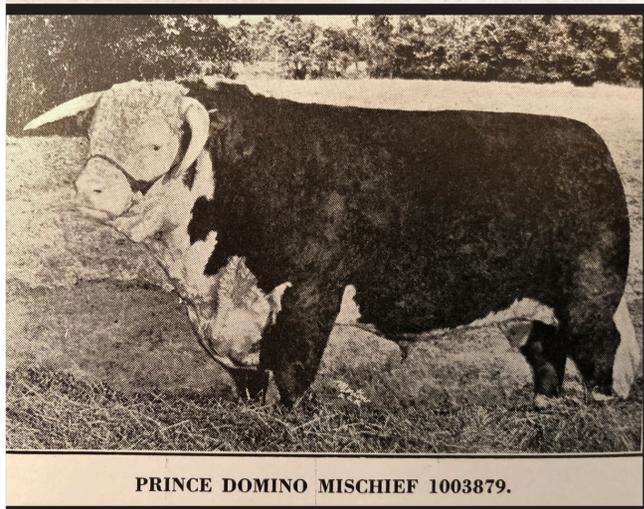
Mousel Brothers were not showmen to any great extent. They made show appearances at the American Royal in Kansas City, the International in Chicago, the National Western in Denver, the Frontier County Fair in Stockville, Nebraska, and the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln. They showed more often at Denver than anywhere and won more than 150 prizes in the aggregate of all shows, 24 of them for Grand Championship of the breed. They also consigned many times to the National Western Hereford sale in Denver and sold many two-year-old range bulls there at private treaty in the stockyard. Mousel Brothers attended the National Western for more than 50 consecutive years.

As the sons of Mousel Brothers grew up, ownership of cattle increased to the point where, in the 1930s, it totaled 10 men, including both fathers and original firm. However, through agreement with the Mousel Brothers, the registration of most of the cattle continued to be in the name of Mousel Brothers. By the mid-1950s, Robert D. and Henry L. Mousel had ceased to be active in perpetuating the blood of Anxiety 4th 9904, having given that responsibility to their descendants.

In 1952, the Mousel Brothers were inducted into the University of Nebraska Block and Bridle Club Hall of Fame for their work in preserving and improving the Hereford breed. Their portraits are on display in the Animal Science Building at UNL. Their portraits are also on display in the Terminal Building at the Union Stockyard in Omaha. In 1968, they were posthumously honored by the American Hereford Association, and their portraits hang in the association's building in Kansas City, Missouri.



The Mousel Brothers in their senior years...  
Henry L. & Robert D. Mousel



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