

SEE 4A

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Amsterdam: Land of dikes and ditches?



This photo (taken in 1960) shows the school built in 1955. The trees around the yard were planted by Mr. Schulz about 1950.

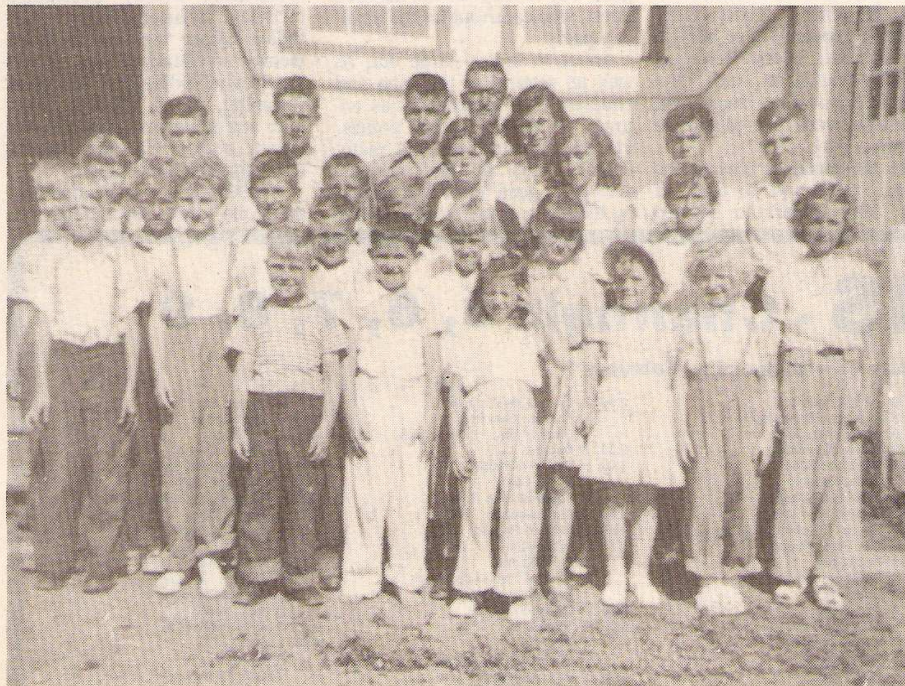


Photo shows the original Amsterdam School in 1951 with pupils and teacher Harold Schulz (presently principal of Plum Coulee School). Family names at this time were the following: Schellenberg, Hiebert, Hoepfner, Letkeman, Funk, Schroeder, Winter, Klassen, Buhler, Doerksen, Driedger, Braun, Siemens, Redecop, Dueck and Fehr. This school served until 1955 when a new school was built.

• by J. C. Fehr

The name Amsterdam recalls to mind a city in the country of Holland, the land of dikes and ditches. Whether this had anything to do with the naming of this district is not known.

When the district was first established there were no dikes or ditches here. The land is low lying and of heavier soil, and was therefore one of the later areas of the Rhineland Municipality to be settled.

One of the first uses of this land was around the year 1890, when farmers of the surrounding area leased it from the government for making hay.

This district was established by Rhineland By-law No. 50 on June 2, 1896, as S.D. No. 885. It operated as a public school from the start and continued until July 1, 1965, when it became part of Consolidated Rosenfeld. However, in the early years the pupils were taught in private homes or empty granaries. In 1900 three acres of land was bought and the first school was built on SE 35-2-1W. (Presently home of Wesley Braun.) Most of the district is in the R.M. of Rhineland, a small part is in the R.M. of Montcalm.

The mode of settling this area was somewhat different from the earlier settlements in the R.M. Instead of settling in a village, they settled on individual quarters. Very often these homesteads were abandoned or sold after a few years because of the persistent flooding. The land was bought by farmers from higher ground, who used it for hay.

The Buffalo Channel ditch, east of Highway 30, better known as the Double Dike, was dug in 1904 by a floating dredge. Because of frequent summer flooding, the dikes were built in 1928. This greatly improved the area, but some flooding problems persist even to the present time.

In the Great Depression the abandoned homes were repaired and once again occupied. This influx caused an increase in students, making the one-room school bulge its seams with up to 60 pupils.

Information source: Peter J. Schellenberg, Rhineland History Book manuscript. Photo: Courtesy Harold Schulz.