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Blumengart village in 1983.

Blumengart/Ekfrid S.D.

• by J. C. Fehr

Blumengart was one of the earlier villages settled by the Old Colony Mennonites. By the year 1879 they had 233 acres under cultivation, growing wheat, barley, oats and flax, also potatoes. In that year there were 14 families or farmsteads with a population of 67. They had two horses and 20 oxen, so apparently the virgin prairie was broken up by oxpower.

This was also one of the villages with a church. It was here that the people of the

neighboring villages like Gnadenthal, Friedensruh and Kleefeld came to attend services.

In the early 1920s, when the residents of Blumengart moved to Mexico, they sold this village as a unit to Hutterites from South Dakota. (This was a preferred method of selling out, but the only village that did it that way.)

When the delegates from Russia came to America in 1873 to seek new land for settlement, the Hutterites were also part of the delegation. Some Men-

nonites and the Hutterites decided at that time to settle in the U.S.A. After World War I many Hutterites came to Canada. They established a number of colonies in Manitoba, one of which was Blumengart, the only one in the R.M. of Rhineland. With good soil and good management, this Colony is one of the most prosperous in the province. All the original buildings have been replaced by modern new ones. They have an intensive farming operation that includes the raising of ducks, geese, turkeys, hogs, the growing of grain, corn and

sunflowers, producing eggs and milking cows. It is indeed a splendid sight to see half a dozen big combines clearing off a field of grain.

They have their own fire department, which also serves the R.M. by helping out at fires in the surrounding area.

The Ekfrid S.P. came into being on March 2, 1921, by a Rhineland By-law No. 280. On January 1, 1973, it became part of Garden Valley School Division. The one room school in the village is still in operation. (It is situated on NW 15-2-3W about 5 miles SW of Plum Coulee.)