

7

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Blumenort (South Park) one of 1st villages

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Blumenort was one of the first villages in the West Reserve when the settlement was begun in 1875. It was settled by the Old Colony Mennonites.

For the first winter the people lived in semlins located close together at the West end of the village.

Being located along the Canada-U.S. border it is within a mile of the Pembina River about 4½ miles West of Gretna.

The bush alongside the river provided lumber and fuel, also wild fruit for canning.

In the years 1877-1895 a Mr. Johan Wall had a steam-powered flour mill and a sawmill. This provided lumber for building, and flour for the residents and for a large surrounding area. People from as far away as Neubergthal came to have their flour made here.

Mr. Wall, being progressive and well-informed in technical things, planned and installed a heating system in the first school. It was installed in a small basement and proved quite successful.

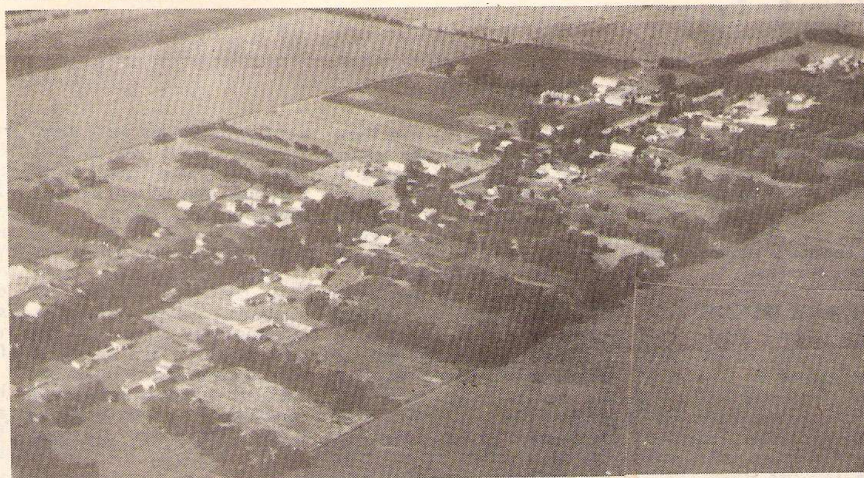
One of the first things the pioneers did was plant trees for shade and shelter. These are still very much in evidence today. Nestled as it is along the border away from the main roads, it looks like a very pleasant place to live.

The Pembina River provided excellent swimming holes for the growing boys of an earlier era. The residents also rented 10 to 20 acre lots of the bush for making winter fuel.

This village started off with 24 farmsteads which it has retained to this day. Only today many residents are people who work elsewhere. It is one of the best-preserved villages in the R.M. of Rhineland.

The land in this district is very good. Over the years it has gained a reputation for producing exceptional yields.

The private school, started in the early years, operated until 1925 with the last teacher being a Mr. Jacob A. Enns. In the ear-



Aerial photo of Blumenort 1981



The dwelling of Gerhard Kroekers in 1924 the year before they left for Mexico in 1925. Mrs. Kroeker was well known for the many flowers she grew in this garden facing the street. She sold flowers to people from across the border. They also made the name of the village literally true (Blumenort — Place of Flowers). The summer kitchen to the right of the house was used in summertime for cooking and dining, leaving the house cool and comfortable. When the emigration to Mexico was begun in 1922, the people of this village were at first reluctant to leave. Most of them, however, also left for Mexico in 1925, leaving behind such homes as this one. (Photo courtesy Peter Kroeker)

ly 1900s some of the people of North Dakota who wanted their children to learn German sent their children here for schooling.

The South Park S.D. No. 2141 was established on October 6, 1925. It operated until July 1, 1968, when it became part of Consolidated Gretna. The school was moved to Gretna.