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Gnadenenthal pupils with their teacher, Susie Peters, who taught here from 1945-49.

Gnadenenthal had 'weibernot'

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Located eight miles southwest of Plum Coulee is the Village of Gnadenenthal. It was first established in 1880 as a daughter colony, so to speak, of the Village of Schoenwiese. Schoenwiese was first settled in 1875 and after five years it became rather full. A number of young single men and a few young married men began looking for a place to make a new village. So it was that the Village of Gnadenenthal was settled mostly by single men. As a consequence it became known as the "Weibernot" Village, (wife-famine village). By the year 1884 though most of them had married.

This place was organized as a village complete with a community pasture to the north and land set aside for hay to the southeast. Each settler received 160 acres. Even though they began with equal property, it changed over the years.

By the year 1922, when the land was sold, the land owned by each of the villagers ranged from 40 to 640 acres. Also by that time the farmsteads in the village had doubled from the original 20 to 40 residences.

It is interesting to note that the houses and barns on the

north side of the street were all built in-line, while on the south side the houses were built at right angles to the barns.

The village has remained fairly well populated over the years. In 1982 there were 32 residences in the village proper and another 14 residences in the surrounding area belonging to this district.

The Manitoba School Legislation in 1916, a major factor in the emigration from Manitoba to Mexico, was the cause of an almost complete population change in the early 1920s. Only one original family remained. The immigration to Manitoba from Russia at that time, again filled up the village.

The first public school was established as Wells S.D. No. 1998 by Order in Council on Feb. 21, 1920. The old private schoolhouse within the village soon proved inadequate and a new one-room school was built on the present school site south of the village in 1924. This also soon was too small and a new two-room school was built in 1938. It was at this time that the name Wells S.D. was changed to the village name of Gnadenenthal. In 1964 the Kleefeld school (near Plum Coulee) was moved

here to provide a third classroom.

The pupil count has always been quite substantial, starting at 68 pupils in 1924-25 to a high of 93 pupils in 1962-63 with only 2 teachers. A new three-room school was opened here in 1982, which is part of the Garden Valley School Division. At present there are only two teachers as enrollment is down somewhat to 49.

The soil in this area, being on the lighter side, is well suited to special crops like potatoes, corn and sugar beets. There is also a network of shelterbelts to minimize the wind erosion problem that is inherent with lighter soils.

A point of interest is that a Mr. J. J. Livingstone of Baden, Ontario, owner of an oil industry, at one time in the early years was owner of Section 8-2-3W (northwest of village). He used this land for growing flax until 1895, when he sold it to the miller, Johan Wall, of Blumenort.

Photo shows the Gnadenenthal pupils with teacher Susie Peters who taught here from 1945-1949.

Information Source: Gnadenenthal Book 1880-1980.