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## Hoffnungsort dates back to 1890s

• by J. C. Fehr

Hoffnungsort School District No. 821 is located on the northern boundary of the municipality, five miles NW of Plum Coulee. It is not known when this district was first settled, but German minutes of 1895-1918 school meetings indicate that a private school operated here prior to 1895. The area was established as a district by a Rhineland By-law No. 29, on September 5, 1893.

The first public school meeting of the ratepayers in Hoffnungsort No. 821 was held on July 4, 1895. Trustees elected at this meeting were: Johan Hiebert, Sec.-Treas.; Jacob Hiebert, Chairman; and Gerhard Froese.

At this meeting it was decided to buy the old private school for \$170.

That first winter they had a special meeting on February 8, 1896, where it was decided to postpone the building of a new school for that year. It was also established that the schoolyard on SE 27-3-3W was not for sale

but only for rent. A new site was chosen in 1897, Sec. 28-3-3W, but for one reason or another no school was built there until 1901.

Meanwhile at a meeting on June 16, 1900, it was decided to revert back to a private school. No reason was given.

The Hoffnungsort district at this time consisted of sections 21-22-27-28-33-34 and half sections of 20, 29, 32, 35, 26 and 23.

The school year was for seven months — October, November, December, January, February, March, and June.

The new school (total cost \$377.45) built in 1901 was 44 ft. x 22 ft., with the classroom 26 ft. x 22 ft. and the teacher's residence 12 ft. x 22 ft. There was a 6-foot hallway. The wages for the teacher was \$25 per month (\$175 total) plus each farmer had to give one bushel each of wheat, barley and oats.

By 1918 (end of the minutes book) the wages had gone up to \$45 per month, the term still being seven months.

Apparently a new public school was built in 1921, but the

last year of operation of the private school was 1924. The private school was later used as a teacherage. The public school building was replaced by a new school around 1950. This operated until 1971. It was sold to the Prairie Mennonite group, who use it today as a private school at Grimsby, south of Plum Coulee.

A railway going from Gretna to Carman went diagonally through the Hoffnungsort district. This railway was broken up in sections, first Gretna to Plum Coulee, second Roland to Carman, third Roland to Kronsart and finally the section from Plum Coulee to Kronsart.

At one time this district also contained many poplar and willow bluffs. These were popular places for picnics. Either small outings or the year-end picnics combined with the neighboring districts like Hamburg, Greenfarm, and New Kronsthal. The most popular place was the Reichert farm owned by the Plum Coulee postmaster.