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Hoffnungsthal: Home of Mennonites, Lutherans

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Hoffnungsthal district is located in the northeast corner of the R.M. of Rhineland. It also took in a small part of the Montcalm Municipality. This area was one of the later-settled parts of the R.M. This was one of the few districts that was not settled entirely by the Mennonites.

The school district was established by Rhineland By-law No. 101 on August 6, 1901.

At the time this part of the R.M. was settled was also the time the Lutherans came to Manitoba from Poland. They left the old country for very much the same reasons that the Mennonites did, because of religious prosecution. When they arrived here they worked for the Mennonite farmers until they had earned enough money to establish their own farms. The only land available in the R.M. was the northeastern part. Much of the land north and west of Rosenfeld was covered with

sloughs, making it unsuitable for settling at that time. Later when the drainage came through that was changed, but in the early years the pioneers carried smudge pots on their trips to town because of the mosquitoes. They had coined a name to describe this low lying area of sloughs and grass, they called it the "Lamond".

The school, located on Sec. 24-3-1W was attended approximately half and half by Lutherans and Mennonites. They had no problem getting along with each other as they have a lot in common.

English was the main language taught, with German as the second language which they both used in church. They also both have their own dialect for everyday use.

One of the first teachers was a Swiss, who made school interesting for the students. He divided the school days into English only, or German only or a free-for-all when they could

speaking any language.

Some years when there was no teacher for the first month or so, some of the students attended a French school in the neighboring district to the east.

The soil in this area is of the heavier type, well suited to grain farming. One advantage that it has is that it is consistent from one section to the next. When the drainage came through the sloughs were also farmed.

Probably because of the heavier soil and dirt roads the farmers have over the years left this district to establish farmsteads closer to town.

Today this district is likely the least populated area of the Rhineland Municipality. Only a few abandoned farmsteads dot the landscape where once the school of Hoffnungsthal served the community until January 1, 1964 when it became part of consolidated Rosenfeld. The name was changed to Hopevale on August 28, 1950.