

ECHO July 25, 1984

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Picture shows what's left of Melba school yard. (Photo by J. C. Fehr)

Melba S.D. formed in 1920

• by J. C. Fehr

Melba School District No. 2039 was established by arbitration on April 19, 1920. That same year a school was built on NE 34-3-2W. This was on the northern boundary of the R.M. of Rhineland as part of this district was in the R.M. of Morris.

The first teacher in this school was Peter J. Dyck. Later on a Mr. Derksen was teacher. He was a man who believed that games should be played just for fun, so no score was kept as he didn't believe in competition.

This area was also quite well populated at one time, the school pupil count being up to 40 or possibly 50 students. At that time the pupils had to share one-seater desks. Many fine Christmas concerts live on in the memories of former residents.

The school operated until January 1, 1967, when it became part of Horndean S.D. The building was sold and is today being used as a home near Lowe Farm.

As with most of the northern part of the R.M., the farms in this area have become larger.

As a result, in the last decade more and more abandoned farmsteads have made their appearance.

The flat land and heavier soil type likely are contributing factors to this phenomenon. Before the dikes and ditches were improved, it was always a yearly concern . . . the spring flooding of the land.

Sometimes, even in summer heavy rains farther west caused the almost mature grain to drown out. When this happened, the soil could not be brought in to condition to produce a crop even in the year following.