

Schoenthal: on the shores of Buffalo Lake

• by J. C. Fehr

Schoenthal started off as a village in the early years within two miles of Altona — to the northwest. The Buffalo Lake coming from the south meanders through this district.

The village site was along the municipal road along the east side of the Buffalo.

This community had at one time a private school and a Sommerfelder church. Both were located on the east side of the road. The private school operated until 1910-1911 when it was replaced by a public school on the opposite side of the road. The public school district was established by a Rhineland By-law No. 175 on December 6, 1910. It operated until January 1, 1967, to become part of Consolidated Altona.

The church was in use until 1959, when it was dismantled and used to rebuild and enlarge the one in Altona (presently the Optimist Centre). The Schoenthal cemetery on the same yard as the church was, is still being used.

The public school yard, being on the west side of the road, was close to the Buffalo Lake. The lake was handy for some pupils with skates to use as a transportation route to and from school in the wintertime.

A famous resident of this community was J. J. Siemens. He was born in 1896 on the farm homestead of his father, Johann Siemens. After 10 years of teaching in Halbstadt, Grossweide, Lowe Farm areas, he became a farmer on his father's farm. He was a strong supporter of the cooperative movement. He was one of the organizers of the Rhineland Consumers Cooperative, the Rhineland Agriculture Society, the Co-op Vegetable Oils (presently CSP Foods), was a charter member of the Manitoba Beet Growers Association and was involved in various other organizations.



Top — The parents of the community were socially minded. Picture shows group together in the Christmas season in 1948.

Middle — Front row (l-r): Lena Abrams, Ann Abrams, Joanne Peters, Karen Fehr, Bruce Peters, Henry Bergen, Henry Klassen. Second row: Ann Dueck, Lorna Fehr, Esther Harder, Betty Fehr, Lena Klassen, Ruth Stoesz, Kathy Bergen. Back row: Jake Bergen, Harry Klassen (hidden), Henry Klassen, Peter Fehr, Cliff Peters, Ed Fehr, Justina Dueck, Leona Klassen.

Bottom — The Sommerfelder church in process of being dismantled in 1959.

