



This school photo of the new school in 1940 shows teacher P. J. Peters (centre). Others in the photo include Jake Wiebe, Lena Doerksen, Tina Hildebrand, George Hildebrand, Pete Thiessen, John Hildebrand, David Doerksen, Lisa Doerksen, Henry Hildebrand, Anne Hildebrand, Sara Hildebrand, Mary Schroeder, Nettie Doerksen, Abram Wiebe, John Wiebe, Elsie Doerksen, Henry Friesen, Nettie Hildebrand, David Wiebe, Nettie Wiebe, Jacob Doerksen, John Gerbrandt.

Sommerfeld's layout diagonal

• by J. C. Fehr

Travelling east of Highway 30 along PR421, we pass through Gnadefeld and Neuberghthal before coming to the village of Sommerfeld.

It is one of the earliest villages established 1878, that was settled by people coming from the East Reserve. It is one of the relatively few of the many villages established by people of the Bergthaler background that has survived the years. It also has the distinction of being the only village of the West Reserve that is patterned after Steinbach. The street runs diagonally from NW to SE. Some say this was done so that the prevailing NW winds in wintertime can better blow right through without blocking the street. In actuality there is a natural ridge in the lay of the land, which was the original reason.

A famous resident of this village was Bishop Abram Doerksen, the first bishop of the Sommerfelder Church. The church, still in use, they say was the first one built by the Sommerfelder congregation. It is over 90 years old.

Another famous resident of Sommerfeld was a "chiropractor", Mr. Hildebrand. People came from far and wide, as far as 300 miles away, for the benefit of his gifted hands. On Wednesdays, which was his day



The house of Bishop Abram Doerksen with two of his granddaughters with twin Holstein calves. Note the board fence and the picket fence along street in background.

of work, his yard was always filled with vehicles.

The soil in this area is generally very productive, though there is a wide variation in type. The hollows have extremely heavy soil, while the ridges have a very ideal soil type. The hollows, which in early years was used as pasture, have been drained and today are being cropped.

The school district of Sommerfeld was established by Order-in-Council on February 11, 1921. It originally was given the name of Barker S.D. No. 2058. It operated as a school district until August 18, 1971, to become part of Rhineland

School Division. The original private school building was being used by the public school until 1940, when it was replaced by a new school. A few years later another school from Lowe Farm was moved here to provide the second room.

After the school closed the yard was bought by the community and is today used as a community centre. Here the people of the community come together once a week in the wintertime. They also still have an annual picnic in the summertime.

A number of homes in this village are now in the fourth generation of the same family.