

The Home Front



by
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The story of Horndean

The people, school and church, the life and times of the Horndean community are recalled in a history book *Horndean Heritage*, edited by Cleo Heinrichs, which was published through efforts of the History Book Committee, headed by the late John H. Wiebe.

Horndean was established four miles east of Plum Coulee, a setback for this town, after local farmer' petitions won out over CPR's reluctance and by 1911 a siding with a store and elevator had been built. Horndean had arrived!

The Canadian Pacific Railway came through to points west in the early 1880s setting up stations at Plum Coulee, Winkler and Morden. Local historian Cleo Heinrichs says her grandparents (Driedger, from Greenfarm) had moved to their first farm, circa 1894.

"When the elevator was built a siding was needed, and local farmers including my grandfather, did the work of building up the bed for the rail siding. This was work done with horses and a man-handled scoop, a long slow process," says Heinrichs.

Apparently the little settlement was named Horndean by the rail company, according to a book *Places Names of Manitoba*, after a village in Berwickshire, England.

In the 1940s corn production was

increasing, farmers organized the Southern Manitoba Corn Co-op Association in 1941, and Horndean was one of the sites chosen for a shelling, drying and cleaning plant but unfortunately corn did not stay as a viable crop for long.

And when Co-op Vegetable Oils decided to establish a crushing plant in Rhineland municipality, where the leadership and support was located, Horndean was one of the sites considered though the choice did go to Altona.

Also in the 1940s A. J. Thiessen of Rosenfeld received a franchise for a bus service between Winkler, Plum Coulee and Horndean, with daily service to Winnipeg.

Education until 1932 continued to be at Steinreich S.D., southwest of Horndean. Organized as Steinreich SD No. 820 about 1892, it operated as a one-room school. Between Christmas-to-New Year's 1932 it was moved to Horndean and in 1936 a second room was added.

By 1938 a high school room was added, in 1942 the school's name was changed to Horndean School, and high school classes for Grades 9-11 continued until 1962-63. Then the school operated with three elementary grades to 1974-75, and the last class ran to June 1979.

Elevators were important. John Schwartz built the Horndean grain elevator in 1914, a modern elevator was built in 1950, and for a time a Co-op and Federal elevators served farmers.

These businesses served Horndean community: coal sheds and petroleum tanks, Wiebe's shoe and harness repair, Unrau's blacksmith shop, Reimer's shoe repair, Horndean Auto Wrecking, 1920s; Stillwasser's Store 1920s, garages and industrial machines.

A few other businesses were a lumberyard, 1915; Horndean Traders general store 1918; garage, 1919; a Co-op store, 1937; Horndean Egg-Grading station 1947; The Cafe, 1947; John Doell's blacksmith shop, 1949; a credit union, Horndean Motors and Horndean Feed Service.

The CPR station built in 1918 served as a waiting room, and store-room for express parcels, cream cans. At first a flag stop, Horndean became a regular stop in 1911. There was no agent. The post office was situated in different stores, and also in a private residence.

At first the people met for worship in homes, then in the school, and later held monthly *Jugendvereins*. A church building was needed and in 1952 a chapel was moved into the village.

Horndean MB church traces its origin to the Grossweide S.D., northwest of Horndean. The church's Ladies Mission Aid was quite active, and Rev. Abe Quiring was the first pastor.

The school with an orchestra, held dramas, and many young people were in 4-H clubs.