







Rosenfeld Manitoba



& Neighbouring Communities

1875-1975

Ink Drawings by Luther Pokrant

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Important Notes Before You Begin

The Rosenfeld History Project is a living organism – ongoing, ever growing and evolving. The gathering and documenting and storage of information and material will not end with the publication of this book.

The sections of the book that cover the general history of the Rosenfeld area consist mainly of articles, excerpts and essays that were written by a variety of people over a span of many years. Readers will have the remarkable opportunity to hear a medley of voices – voices telling stories, voices describing the every-day and the consequential, voices sharing knowledge, impressions and ideas. Only a few items were written by the book committee.

Many of the family histories or stories were written by family members specifically for this publication. Some were extracted from existing genealogy books, obituaries, local newspapers, or history journals.

Most of the short anecdotes scattered throughout the book were originally posted on Rosenfeld’s Facebook site. A few were shared via email, interviews, or conversations.

In selecting articles and making choices, the editors leaned less towards genealogy and more towards descriptions of how people lived – patterns of the day-to-day, civic issues, local culture and lore.

When it came to family histories, an effort was made to maintain a balance. However, the editors could work only with the material they were given and the space they were allotted, so sometimes balance was challenging to achieve. We apologize to families who feel they were under-represented.

For the most part, the material that was found by or submitted to the committee was reproduced as it was presented, with few changes except for minor stylistic adjustments (punctuation, spelling, spacing, etc.) In some cases, when clarification was needed, or the editors felt that additional information was required, the writers were contacted for further input when possible.

Excerpts from books and other publications were either retyped, or scanned and converted to Word format. Every effort was made to present these items as they were originally.

Except in the case of obvious typographical errors, newspaper articles were retyped as they were. Newspaper style is quite different from academic or every-day writing. Readers will notice a wide variety of writing styles throughout the book.

When it came to audio-recorded interviews, the conversations were not always transcribed word for word. In some cases, editorial prerogative was exercised to summarize and clarify details and to create a coherent story. Every effort was made to convey the intentions and tone of the interviewee. Sentences enclosed in quotation marks are direct quotes from the subject of the interview.

[Square brackets] within a text enclose words or phrases added by the editor to clarify meaning and/or intent, and to correct or provide additional details.

Regarding the photographs: Many of the pictures in this book were initially posted on Rosenfeld’s Facebook page, by many different contributors. Those Facebook photos were generally not high enough resolution to make good reproductions, and some were of poor quality in their original forms. Every effort was made to have contributors re-scan their originals and re-submit them for the book; however, not everyone was able to respond. Friesen Printers applied as much of their skill as their technology allows to create the best possible results.

In the case of photo captions, the person who submitted the photo is credited as the source and named in [square brackets]. It was not always possible to know who actually took the picture. Most of the captions were written by the book editors.

The era of history the book covers and the culture of the community at that time were patriarchal. Most farms and businesses were owned and/or operated by men. Men tended to spend more time in public and often travelled further afield in the course of their work and civic duties. A family was identified by the male head of the household. Women were often identified by their husbands’ names; e.g., “Mrs. Peter Berg”. These are facts of history that the editors were unable to change.

Although the intent was to contain Rosenfeld’s history within the 1875-1975 span, there is spillover in some articles into later decades, necessary to complete a story.

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Your Rosenfeld History Book Committee

Glenn Friesen, chairperson, took up the challenge of becoming the project leader, formed a team, and pulled the group together to see the book through to print.

Art Wiebe, researcher and archivist, is considered the lynchpin in the project; it was his collecting and cataloguing of documents and photos since 1975, the interviews he conducted, his ceaseless quest for stories and details, his creation of the Rosenfeld history Facebook page in 2007, and his attentive management of that site, that led to the book becoming a reality.

Lois Braun, chief editor, gathered up all the archived material, added new material, gave it structure, and shaped it into a manuscript; she sent and answered hundreds of emails, solicited photographs and family histories, pursued leads, and assisted Art with research.

Elizabeth Falk, assistant editor, worked with the editor and provided valuable consultation; she also wrote a number of articles for the book, retyped documents when needed, and served as the initial proofreader.

Carol Schroeder, treasurer, took care of the bank account and, having worked in the printing industry for many years, advised the team on print details.

Acknowledgements

Our contributors – the many Rosenfeld “oldtimers”, as well as the younger generation, who took time to search for photographs and deliver them to the committee, often by hand, usually by email; and those who spent many hours researching their family histories and writing biographies.

Facebook Friends of “Rosenfeldhistory Westreserve” who responded to our posts and questions, sharing photos and memories and information.

The D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, Inc. – grant

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Gordon Goldsborough – Manitoba Historical Society

Jim Benedict – descendant of the Acheson family, who provided a wealth of information and photos

Our unofficial consultants – those who gave the committee tips and leads and helped fill in little details.

All the folks who gave support and encouragement to the committee and showed enthusiasm, not only for the book project, but also for the history of their community.

Preface

Someone has said, “History is not what you thought. It is what you remember.” How we view our history is often tainted by the passing of time, the writer’s view and by a much different and removed audience. How we view our history can often be greatly influenced by how we want to remember certain events rather than what actually happened.

Reflecting on my journey as a Rosenfeld history seeker reminds me of purchasing a puzzle from the local thrift store: There are many pieces in the box, but there is a distinct possibility that you will not have all the pieces, or that you might even get some pieces that don’t belong. Collecting the Rosenfeld story has been much like that. Over the past 43 years, many of our history puzzle pieces have been collected. The majority of our puzzle pieces fit together, and new pieces have been discovered. However, some are still missing at the time this book is going to print. Mysteries linger. While technology has brought our communities closer together, it is simply the passing of time that accounts for most of our lost history. Nonetheless, every effort has been made to provide the readers of our Rosenfeld experience with as accurate a re-counting of events as is conceivable.

I started collecting Rosenfeld history back in 1974 when the Rhineland School Division hired me as a first-year teacher to teach a Grade 3 and 4 class in the 1937 Rosenfeld Coronation School – a grades 1 to 8 school. My first interest in collecting information about our community was kindled when I slid open the drawer of my tiger-stained-oak teacher’s desk, and discovered a set of 14 pictures displaying parts of what Rosenfeld looked like back in 1963. These black-and-white photos had been left by Ken Hildebrand, the previous year’s Grade 3 and 4 teacher. I used these pictures that first year as part of our social studies class when presenting the topic, “Our Community”.

Then in 1980, I had the opportunity to meet two relatives of the Alexander Acheson family, who in 1892 purchased the land on which our current village is located, and after whose family members the majority of our streets are named. The Achesons owned and operated the Acheson General Store in Rosenfeld, probably the first store in town. When his descendants came to Rosenfeld on one of their fact-finding visits, gathering information for their family history book, *Who’s That Sitting in Our Family Tree?*, I had the distinct pleasure of giving them a tour of our school.

I got to know Gus Pokrant, who was a guest teacher for my class the majority of the times when I was unable to be there, and later as our village secretary-treasurer when I was elected to the Rosenfeld Village committee in 1980. Mr. Pokrant was a former *Red River Valley Echo* correspondent and historian who had researched Rosenfeld’s past and published his works in our local paper.

Then, while I was chairperson of our UVD of Rosenfeld, we received the opportunity to purchase 25 large black-and-white photographs showing Rosenfeld in 1909 from a Saskatchewan estate that was being wrapped up:

To the residents of Rosenfeld

These photos are enlargements of negatives from files that were given to me by the widow of Emil Mengerling, who was a resident of Rhein, Saskatchewan, as long as I can remember. As was Jack Kinzel, who I credit the photography of these photos. Here in Rhein, Mr. Kinzel and Mr. Mengerling were the operators of the hardware store. Later on Mr. Kinzel ran the Imperial Lumber Yard.

I have marked some of the photos with post-it labels, that had markings on the edge of the negative, other than that I can be of no help as to identify any of these photos. Hopefully you have a few 100-year-olds that remember.

Sincerely,
Irvin Hilderman
Yorkton, Saskatchewan

When I retired from teaching in 2007, I started attending the Rosenfeld coffee shop, where I met many of the local men, including Helmut Martel, owner of our Martel's Garage. Mr. Martel was a walking history book, who was more than willing to share details of Rosenfeld's past with so many details and such clarity, that after many of our gatherings I would go home and spend the next hour recording what I remembered him saying. Others around the table who would share the history of Rosenfeld included Rev. David Friesen, the late Arnold Pokrant, Abe Heinrichs, and Tony H. Friesen.

John and Sarah Friesen, from the Reichenbach School District just west of Rosenfeld, had been collecting pioneer family history and Rosenfeld history for Canada's Centennial in 1967 and Manitoba's Centennial in 1970, material I was fortunate to receive through Leona (Hildebrand) Nickel. Included in this collection were Gus Pokrant's and Eileen Martel's research published in our local papers back in 1967 and 1970.

December 8, 2011, almost six months after Mr. Helmut's passing on June 23rd, not receiving any new information about our community's history, I launched the Rosenfeldhistory Westreserve Facebook history site. Individuals were encouraged to spread the word about this site and urge people to connect with their roots, review their family estate pictures, and submit memoirs and stories. The hope was that all this information might serve as a catalyst to publish our first Rosenfeld history book. Families with roots in our community started posting pictures and sharing their experiences growing up and living in and around the Rosenfeld area. What a rich and interesting history started to unfold! As of December 6, 2017, we had a total of 408 Facebook friends, more than 1000 pictures organized in 70-plus albums; but more exciting was the fact that a committee had been struck that included Lois (Nickel) Braun, a local professional writer with roots to the Rosenfeld community, who had accepted the challenge of becoming the editor and organizer for our Rosenfeld and community history book!

I have to thank my wife of 41 years, Mary Ann, for giving me the support necessary to spend countless hours in front of the computer – posting pictures, researching, conducting interviews, scanning photographs, and responding to e-mails – instead of helping her with the housework and taking care of Kitty, our black female house-cat-with-an-attitude.

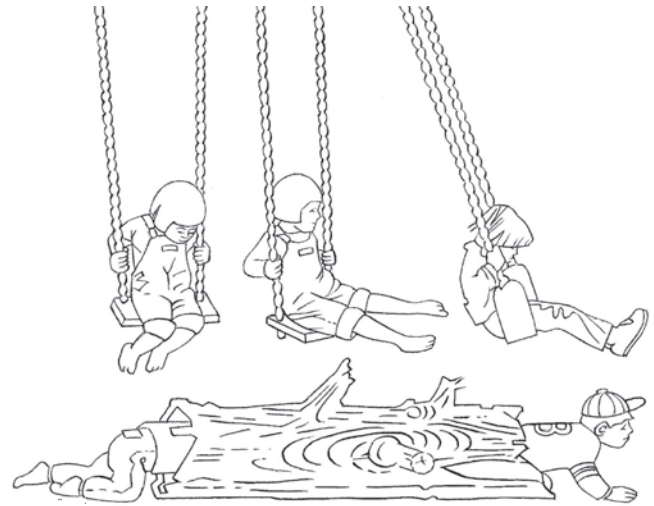
The history of Rosenfeld Dorf and Village is both rich and interesting. Each family with a connection to these two communities has a piece of this historical puzzle. Many of these puzzle pieces have come together in this book; there could be more tucked away in people's memories, and in old shoeboxes and photo albums throughout the world.

Art Wiebe
Rosenfeld History Seeker

Regarding Rosenfeld's presence on Facebook:

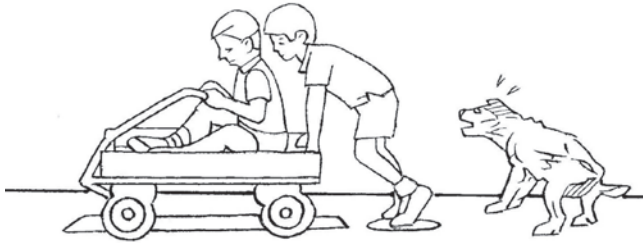
When I initially started posting Rosenfeld's history on Facebook back on December 8, 2011, it was a personal site under the name *Rosenfeldhistory Westreserve*. This was not in keeping with the Facebook regulations, which requires an individual to use his/her everyday name, and for this reason the site was renamed *William Arthur Wiebe*.

Lois Braun and I have started a page on Facebook, in keeping with their regulations, still entitled *Rosenfeldhistory Westreserve*. While this new site does not contain all the amazing historical artifacts and conversations we've collected, it serves as a link to my personal site, which does contain the initial photos, documents, and conversations (Albums and Comments.)



If you did not have a chance to submit your family history, memoir, or historical documents to this book, you can at any time take steps to assure that it will be preserved and available for the next version of a Rosenfeld history book: Post it on Rosenfeld's Facebook page, and/or deliver it to a committee member or to the Altona and District Heritage Research Centre (Archives).

This book has something for everyone: lists; short stories and long ones; humour and tragedy; scholarly writing and casual conversation; science and art. And if you enjoy looking for slip-ups, you will no doubt find some of those, too! (Blix, the editor's cat, was known to occasionally tiptoe across the keyboard.)



Regarding errors (other than typos): Although the committee made attempts to verify facts set forth in this book, the committee recognizes that there may have been inaccuracies in articles written by contributors. It is very important that errors be noted and recorded by you, the readers. Please notify a committee member to make a correction; or, submit a correction to the Altona and District Heritage Research Centre (Archives). Those corrections will be documented, and a copy placed with the book in the local archives, so

that future Rosenfeld historians can publish an updated version of this history book. Corrections will also be noted on the Facebook page.

Introduction

Community Snapshot

The Canadian government opened up a land grant in the part of Manitoba west of the Red River called the West Reserve. Russian Mennonite farmers from Fürstenland and Chortitz – “Old Colony” settlements in Russia – started the first Village of Rosenfeld in 1875, having arrived on the Manitoba prairie by steamship along the Red River. The original Rosenfeld Village (*Dorf* or *Darp* Rosenfeld) was situated about two km almost due south of the present location, on the north half or middle of section 32, township 2, range 1 west (NE 32-2-1 W in a southwest/northeast direction) and on the south shore of what was formerly known as Buffalo Lake. The shallow lake was dammed here, and thus a sufficient quantity of water was provided for the entire village. Another reason for locating the village here was that the area was well above Red River flood levels.

The Gretna-Rosenfeld rail line cut through the easterly portion of the original village, placing Lots 7 to 10 on the east side and leaving Lots 1 to 6 and 11 to 16 on the west side of the railway tracks.

Buffalo Lake, later called Buffalo Creek, then Buffalo Channel, played an important role in the establishment of the first Rosenfeld village, and eventually had an impact on the town of Rosenfeld, as this crucial drain that led snow melt from the Pembina escarpment to the Red River frequently overflowed its banks and inundated the town, as well as many farms.

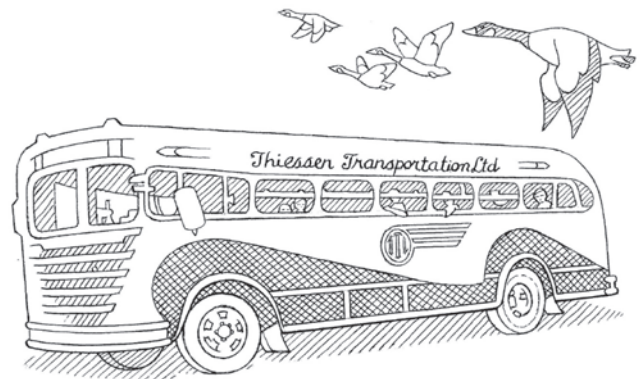
The Red River is 18 km east of Rosenfeld. The present Buffalo Channel is almost one-and-a-half km south of present-day Rosenfeld. The Knopf Drain is just to the north of town. The Hespeler Drain is six km west. The drains were constructed over time to carry rainwater and spring run-off from the Pembina escarpment and farmland towards natural creeks and rivers.

The area around Rosenfeld is rich, flat, agricultural land. Farming began with wheat, then later became more diversified: oats, barley, flax, sunflowers, sugar beets, corn, canola, legumes, buckwheat. Poultry, dairy, and hog operations eventually sprang up in the surrounding area. As time went on, many of the small family farms became enveloped by larger operators and/or corporate farms.

Up to 1949, the town was governed by the Rural Municipality of Rhineland and represented by a Ward 5 councillor. But Rosenfeld residents’ frustration over the inconvenience of the wooden sidewalks frequently floating away during spring run-off spurred the village to form a UVD (Unincorporated Village District). Besides having an elected UVD committee and its appointed secretary-treasurer, Rosenfeld was able to craft its own budget (which needed to be approved by RM of Rhineland Council), issue its own cheques, and run its own meetings. Concrete sidewalks soon replaced the wooden ones.

Under the Provincial Municipal Act, Rosenfeld’s designation was changed to LUD (Local Urban District) in 1997, giving the RM of Rhineland the power to issue all cheques; its CAO recorded minutes of all LUD meetings and acted as treasurer, the Ward 5 RM of Rhineland councillor attended all LUD meetings with full voting rights, and purchases of \$5,000.00 or more needed to be sent to RM of Rhineland for approval.

Currently, Rosenfeld is a bedroom community, with most people working in Altona, Winkler, Rosenort, and as far away as Winnipeg. Over the years, numerous young people have moved into the village. Back in 1974 the majority of Rosenfeld’s population consisted of residents who were 55-plus. Currently there are fewer than 10 families in this age category remaining in Rosenfeld.



Rosenfeld History Timeline



FARMERS AND RAILROADS

1875 – Russian Mennonites from Fürstenland and Chortitz start the first village of Rosenfeld.

1878 – The village consists of eleven families; population: 55.

1882 – The Canadian Pacific Railway completes a line called the La Riviere Subdivision running approximately 100 km south from Winnipeg. Its purpose is to transport grain from the farms in the area and deliver supplies to their inhabitants.

1882 – December 1 marks the first regular CPR passenger service through Rosenfeld.

1883 – On August 1, CPR begins mail service for Pembina Junction (Rosenfeld) and Gretna.

1890 – With the plan to extend the La Riviere rail line west towards Plum Coulee and Morden, meeting the Gretna spur just two km north of the village of Rosenfeld, that is where the CPR decides to construct a telegraph office and a small station.

INDUSTRY AND ACHESONS

1891 – Two elevators and a grain warehouse are under construction in the vicinity of the railway station and telegraph office, and so a new Rosenfeld springs up, called “Rosenfeld Junction”. The original Mennonite settlement is referred to as “Dorf Rosenfeld” or “Darp Rosenfeld”.

1891 – The first German Lutheran, named Hoffman, comes to the Rosenfeld area and works for Mennonite farmers. Many German Lutheran immigrants followed.

1892 – CPR has the new town surveyed.

1892 – In April, Alexander Acheson purchases the section of land on which Rosenfeld Junction is situated, and he and his wife Sarah move to the town, along with their seven children: Joseph, Sarah (Sadie), Mary Jane (Minnie), Maude, Wier, Emily Gertrude, and baby Alexander (Sandy). Their arrival brings the population of the new town to 79. Sarah opens a general store.

1893 – A new public school is built (on the site of the present West Reserve commemorative cairn), as well as a grain loading platform and a lumbyard.

- 1893 – The CPR rail line going west of Rosenfeld Junction is completed, and regular rail passenger service and mail service are established.
- 1894 – “Das Dorf” ceases to exist as a cohesive village, as inhabitants take up residence on their farmlands, often taking their buildings with them.
- 1896 – The oldest burial marker in the Rosenfeld Cemetery marks the passing of baby August Pokrant (1896-1896).
- 1897 – Alexander Acheson passes away at age 49 and is buried in the Morris cemetery.

SLOW GROWTH AND SETBACKS

- 1895 – Rosenfeld population: 87 (Assessment Roll Canada Census).
- 1900 – The first large drainage ditch is dug two km north of Rosenfeld to divert rainwater and spring run-off from farmers’ fields, creating more arable land in what had been a swampy area.
- 1901 – Rosenfeld pop. 84 (Assessment Roll Canada Census).
- 1912 – A new two-story public school with a bell tower is built approximately east of the current school.
- 1915 – Rosenfeld area has its best crops when grain prices are at their highest.
- 1916 – Sarah Acheson and family leave Rosenfeld, moving to Macdonald, Manitoba (near the historic St. Andrew’s Church).
- 1918 – During the war years, especially the last year (1918), the first men from Rosenfeld enlist for action, and ship overseas; several of these lose their lives on the battlefields of France.
- 1918 – A few cases of Spanish influenza are reported in the fall; the Spanish flu was a pandemic that killed millions throughout the world after WWI ended.
- 1919 – There are many burials at the Rosenfeld cemetery as the flu takes its toll.

BOOM TIMES AND FADING GLORY

- 1919 – A new wooden grain elevator is built in Rosenfeld, later labelled as Manitoba Pool Elevator “B”.
- 1925 – Julius Martel opens Martel’s Garage.
- 1932 – Renowned for their prowess in the field, the Rosenfeld Hawks softball team wins many of the day-long tournaments that are held throughout the 1930s.
- 1932 – A.J. Thiessen enters into partnership with G. H. Fast, buying, selling and transporting chickens and eggs in the local area.
- 1935 – Hydroelectricity comes to Rosenfeld and parts of southern Manitoba.
- 1936 – Thiessen and Fast are awarded a Chrysler Plymouth dealership.
- 1937 – July: Coronation Rosenfeld Public School is built just south of the 1912 school.
- 1946 – A.J. Thiessen enters the transportation business with the formation of Thiessen Bus Lines, later called Grey Goose Bus Lines.
- 1948 – Manitoba Pool builds a second wooden grain elevator in Rosenfeld, called Manitoba Pool Elevator “A”.
- 1949 – Rosenfeld becomes a UVD: Unincorporated Village District, with an elected committee of three and a committee-appointed secretary-treasurer. Up till then, the town was governed by the Rhineland Municipality represented by their Ward 5 councillor.
- 1950 – Dikes meant to keep escarpment waters at bay fail, and the town is completely swamped by a serious spring flood; the Red River also floods, wreaking havoc in Winnipeg.
- 1950-1970s – Some businesses and industries in Rosenfeld move to the bigger centre of Altona, some die out as Altona grows into a larger commercial centre. And so Rosenfeld becomes a bedroom community for larger centres nearby. The 50s, 60s, and 70s see little development or growth in Rosenfeld.

A COMMUNITY

- 1970s – Rosenfeld citizens begin to recognize potential in their village once again, and a mini-boom starts to take shape; roads and highways are improved, more people own cars, and water and sewage services are on the horizon; many citizens are making a steady income in jobs beyond the town.
- 1979 – A 14-unit senior citizens home opens: Rose Village Villa.
- 1981 – In October, a group of residents launches the construction of two lit tennis courts.
- 1982 – A new five-classroom elementary school is built, with resource room, library and gym (40x60).
- 1983 – The Rosenfeld Sanitation Co-op Ltd. is formed to provide sewage services to residents; the building of the lagoon and water reservoir is awarded to JKW Construction of Plum Coulee; EF Moon from Portage la Prairie is awarded the trenching of the water and sewage line, fire hydrants, and initial private individual connections.

- 1984 – Oct. 5: Low-pressure water sewage system starts operation.
- 1985 – Residents feel the need to expand the small community centre and a kitchen facility is added: Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre.
- 1986 – The first *five*-member committee is formed during municipal elections to represent the UVD of Rosenfeld.
- 1989 – A modern outdoor skating facility is constructed, led by a group of interested citizens.
- 1990 – Manitoba Pool Elevators builds six fertilizer bins.
- 1996 – Manitoba Pool closes its grain elevators.
- 1997 – UVD of Rosenfeld is changed to LUD (Local Urban District) under the Provincial Municipal Act.
- 1997 – Another flood threatens the town.
- 2000 – A permanent flood dike is constructed on the west, north, and east sides of Rosenfeld by the province of Manitoba on a one-third cost-sharing basis with the federal and provincial governments and the LUD of Rosenfeld; later, the LUD of Rosenfeld share is reduced to 20% of the total cost.
- 2000 – The first kindergarten class in Rosenfeld Elementary School opens.
- 2000 – October 24: The two Manitoba Pool elevators are demolished, forever erasing the skyline that had marked the town's existence for many decades.
- 2008 – Former Rosenfelder Martin Friesen purchases land adjacent to the town from the Nickel family.
- 2011 – Rosenfeld population: 348; private homes occupied by residents: 102
- 2012 – Martin Friesen begins creating the infrastructure for a new residential development called Nickel Estates.
- 2012-2018 – The Rosenfeld and District Skating Rink undergoes major renovations, with a Zamboni purchased from Gretna, and rink boards that were originally used at the Washington Capitals' former practice facility in Piney Orchard, Maryland.

*The Red River Valley experienced floods in 1902, 1903, 1904, 1941, 1945, 1948, 1950, 1955, 1966, 1979, 1997, with the 1950 flood being the worst one.

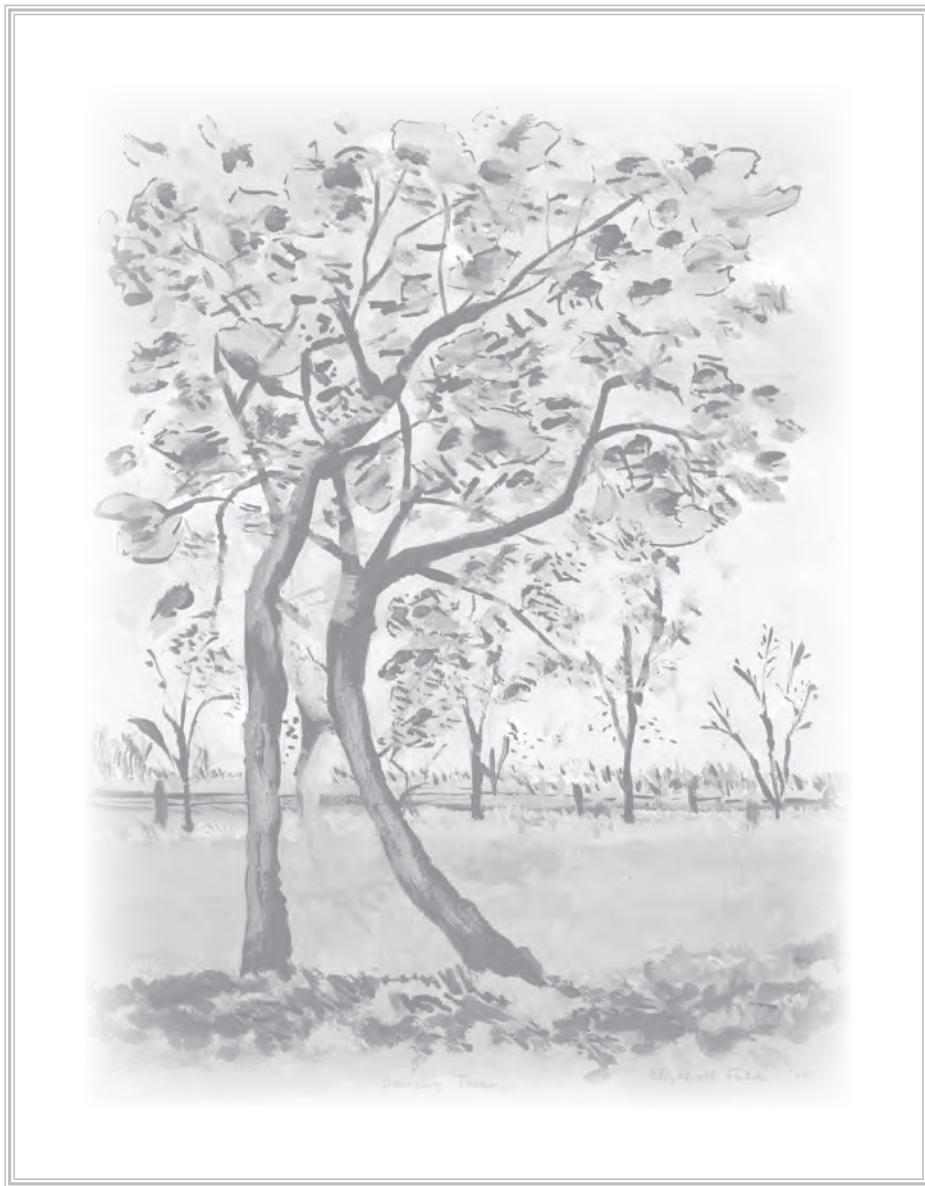
Sources:

- Acheson/Webber family history: *Who's That Sitting in Our Family Tree?*
- Volume 2286, files connected to Rosenfeld, regarding the Niebuhr (Rs06 in 1880 village census) and Bushman families of Rosenfeld – Conrad Stoesz, Archivist, Mennonite Heritage Centre
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Chapter I



Beginnings and General History



Elizabeth Falk: "Dancing Trees", 2005. Acrylic, 8½in.x11in. From a photo of two trees at the back of the house on a yard on the original Dorf Rosenfeld village site.

Album A



The only photo discovered so far that was taken in the original village of Rosenfeld, called *Darp* or *Dorf Rosenfeld*: the Isaac Wiebe family. Although only eight people are visible in the photo, the website cited below lists nine people as being present that day. L-R: parents Isaac and Susanna (Klassen) Wiebe; daughter Lizzie, son Isaac, daughter Sarah; Henry Dyck and daughter Edith (Judith); daughter Tina and her husband, Peter J. Dyck. The house was moved to the town of Altona where the original CFAM offices were later built. [Photo found originally at wiebe-martens.com; website no longer accessible]



At the edge of Dorf Rosenfeld, in the picnic area referred to as “Rosenfeld Bush”, “Buffalo Bush”, or “Smith Bush”. [1909 collection]



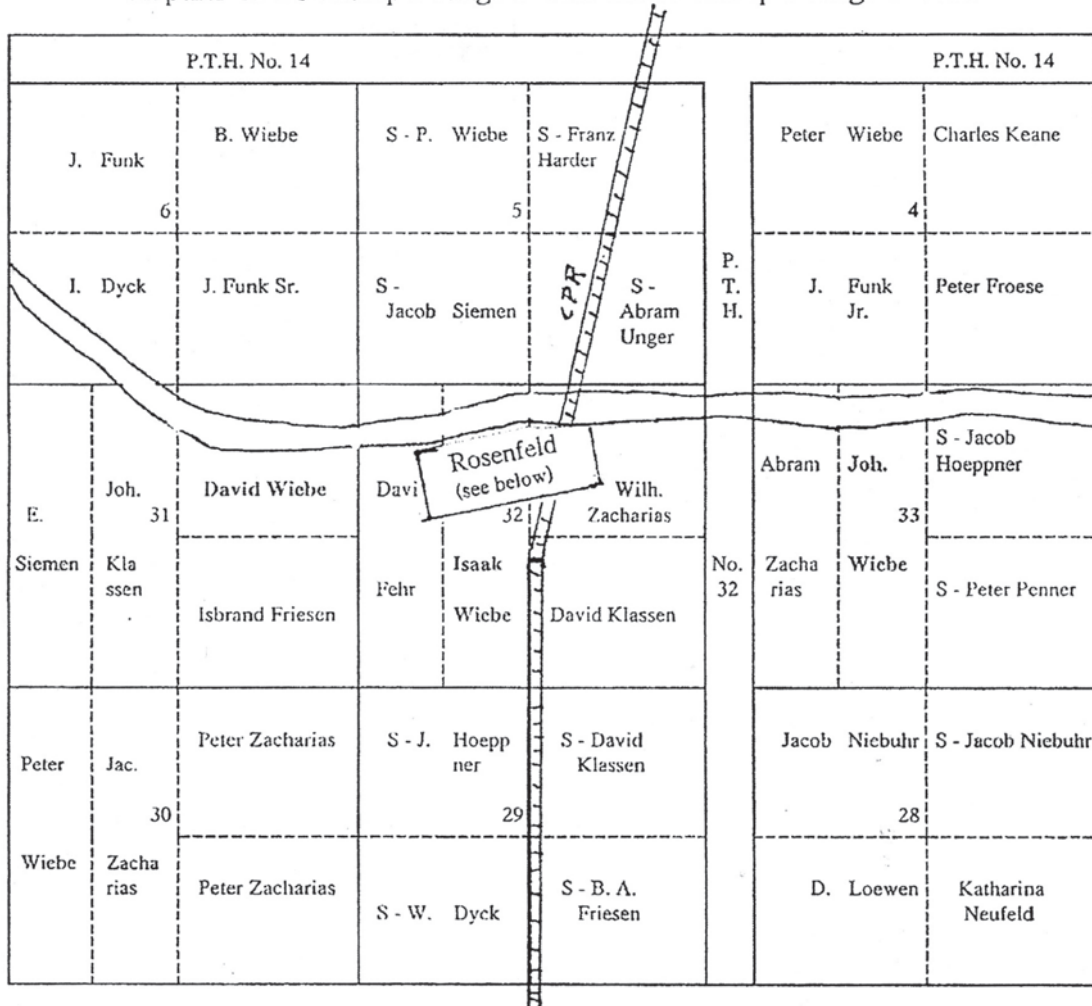
1898 photograph. A letter accompanying the photo was written by Jake Siemens, and in it he identifies the occasion and his family members: The Gerhard and Agatha (Wiebe) Siemens family at a pig-slaughtering bee, October, 1898, at their farm just northwest of Rosenfeld, which later became the Pokrant farm. L-R: Gerhard's sisters, Margaret and Anna Siemens (the first nurses in Altona); Gerhard's mother, Helena (Peters); Agatha's mother; the next three are unnamed neighbours; then, Gerhard and Agatha's son Frank and his wife Sarah with baby and children; Agatha's father in the apron; G and A's daughter Helena; G and A's daughter Agatha; Agatha the elder with her infant son George; Gerhard with their little son Jake at his knee; their son Bernard; and the hired man on the wagon. [Submitted by Ken Pokrant]



Buffalo Lake at Dorf Rosenfeld, exact location uncertain, names of people in rowboat unknown. [1909 collection]

Darp Rosenfeld

and homesteaders on nine surrounding sections - ca. 1880
on parts of Township 2 range 1 west and township 3 range 1 west.



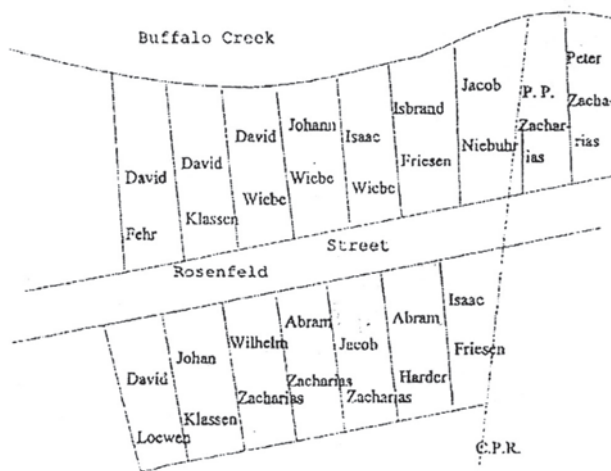
The village was located on the north half or middle of section 32 - township 2 range 1 west. The above map shows the first landowners in each section around the village. Lands marked with an 'S' were sold to those owners, all other lands were homesteaded. Section 29 in every township was set aside for school lands and had to be purchased; section five was for some reason also purchased rather than homesteaded. The Klassen and Fehrs and Zacharias families were related to the wives of David and Isaac Wiebe.

Darp Rosenfeld

1875-1896

on north half or middle of sec. 32-2-1w. showing likely situation of lot owners.

Based on a sketch drawn by Jacob Klassen and on information from homestead records.
By John Dyck grandson of Isaac Wiebe.



Map of homesteaders around Rosenfeld c. 1880, with inset showing the names of the settlers in the original village. [John Dyck, grandson of the Isaac Wiebes of Dorf Rosenfeld]

Village of Rosenfeld established 1875 situated ne-32-2-1w in s/w , n/e direction			
Lot # 16 n/a Isak Friesen	R o s e n f e l d	Lot # 1 nw-32-2-1w David Fehr	
Lot # 15 n/a Abram Harder		Lot # 2 se-32-2-1w David Klassen	
Lot # 14 sw-30-2-1w Jacob Zacharias		Lot # 3 ne-31-2-1w David Wiebe	
Lot # 13 sw-33-2-1w Abraham Zacharias		Lot # 4 n/a Isak Wiebe	
Lot # 12 nw-33-2-1w Johann Wiebe		Lot # 5 se-31-2-1w Isbrand Friesen	
Lot # 11 ne-32-2-1w Wilhelm Zacharias		Lot # 6 ne-28-2-1w Jacob Niebuhr	
south C.P.Railway		C.P. Railway > north	
Lot # 10 nw/sw -31-2-1w Johann Klassen		Lot # 7 ne-30-2-1w **Cemetery** Peter Zacharias	
Lot # 9 sw-28-2-1w David Loewen		Lot # 8 se-30-2-1w Peter Zacharias	

A number of the residents of Rosenfeld were related to Jacob Niebuhr. Most of Jacob's aunt Anna Klassen's (nee Buhler) family lived here.

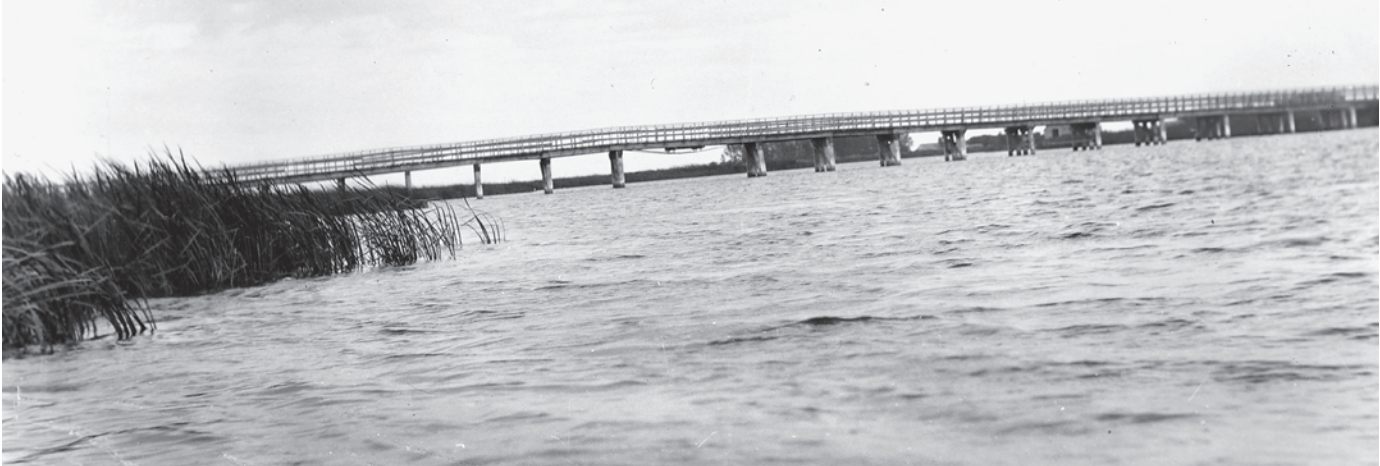
- daughter Anna married David Fehr
- son David Klassen
- daughter Katharina married David Wiebe
- daughter Susanna married Isaak Wiebe, David's brother
- son Johann Klassen
- daughter Maria married Abraham Zacharias
- Maria Zacharias' son Jacob

Most of the rest of the residents were related to each other

- Isbrand Friesen was Isaak's father
- Peter Zacharias was Abraham's father's half-brother
- Wilhelm Zacharias was Peter's son
- Johann Wiebe was David's brother
- Isaak Friesen's wife Margaretha was the daughter of Peter Zacharias
- David Loewen and Abram Harder seem to be unrelated

A map of Rosenfeld from the 1880 Manitoba Mennonite Village census showing the Niebuhrs' yard-site.

A portion of Volume 2286, files connected to Rosenfeld. Conrad Stoesz, a descendant of the Isbrand Friesens, says: *Isbrand Friesen (1829-1890) and his wife, Mary Fehr (1835-1914), were among the original settlers of Rosenfeld. The family lore is that Mary consulted with a fortuneteller in Russia who told her that her sons would be leaders in the church. When the train tracks came through the village the brothers relocated to establish Rosenheim. Three sons – Isaak, Abram, and Wilhelm – became leaders in the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church. The Friesens' two other sons were Jacob and Isbrand.* [Conrad Stoesz, Archivist, Mennonite Heritage Centre]



Original CPR railway bridge at Dorf Rosenfeld. [1909 collection]



Buggy on bridge crossing Buffalo Creek/Lake between Dorf Rosenfeld and Weidenfeld, date unknown. [Grant Nickel]



Four elevators; photo taken looking towards Rosenfeld in a northeasterly direction from Hwy #14. [1909 collection]

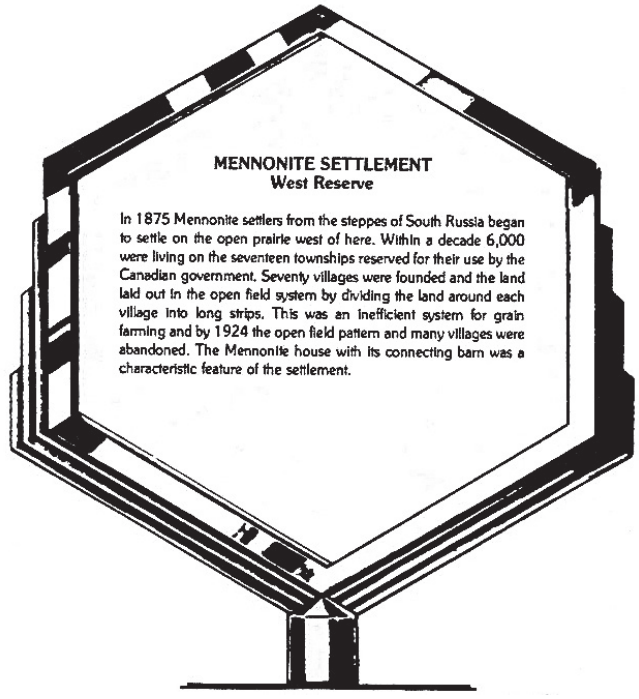
Land Department. 27176
Canadian Pacific Railway Company,
 Winnipeg, Manitoba. *15 August 1881*
 Lt. Col. Dennis
 Deputy Minister of the Interior

Sir, As I understand the smallotted sections in the Mennonite Reserves are to be offered for sale to the Public, I beg to apply on the part of the Canadian Pacific Railway (for Section Nine (9) - Township Three (3) Range One (1) West, which is required for Railway purposes.

Should this section be available to the Company only by purchase, I herewith enclose my balance cheques, in which you will please fill the amount necessary to secure it.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
 Your most obedient Servant *Wm. McTavish*

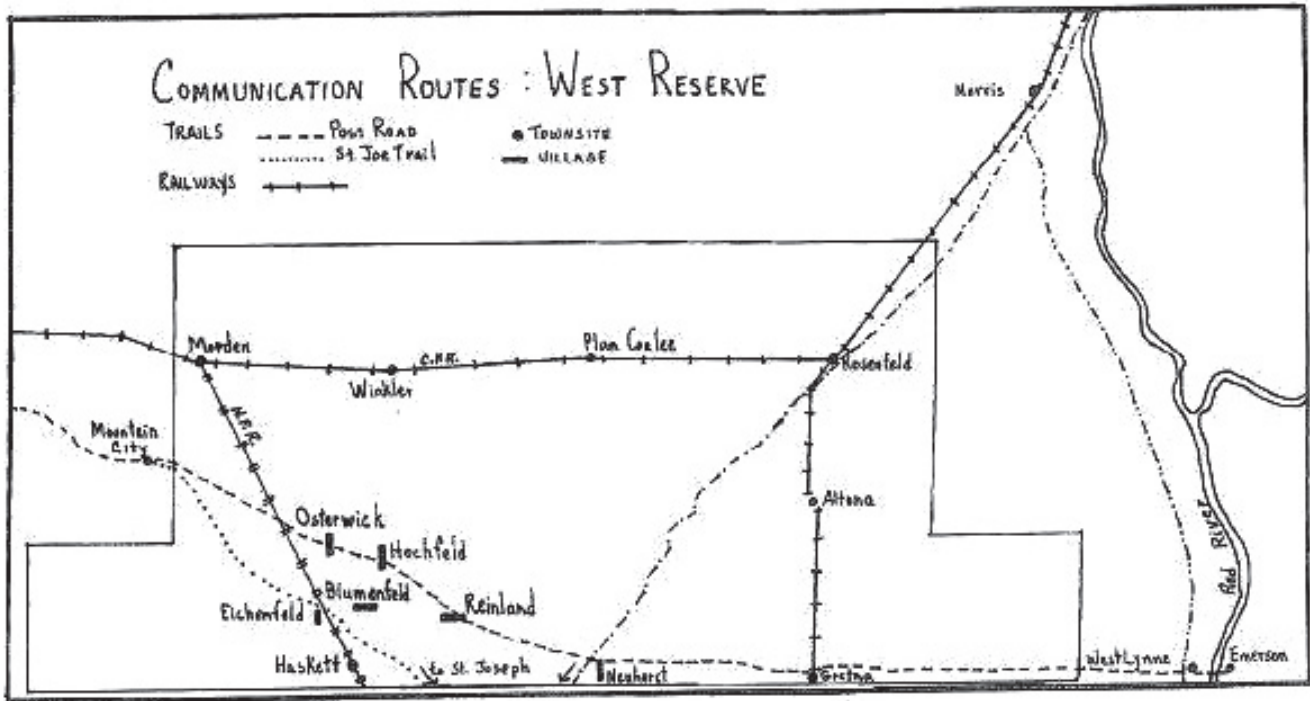
Canadian Pacific's application to secure land at Rosenfeld for the railroad line (Section 9 - Township 3 - Range 1W; there were no buildings or farms at that location at all at the time. [National Archives Canada]



This plaque, originally erected by the Historic Sites Advisory Board of Manitoba, was relocated in 1982 directly west of the Rosenfeld & District Community Cemetery on the site of the first school built in 1893 in the Acheson School District #755. It confirms the start of the West Reserve by the Mennonites in 1875. Originally, the marker was an engraved board hung from two chains on log framing, and was situated west of the former Esso station (Martin's Corner) at the south end of the village. [Art Wiebe]



A cairn, situated beside the West Reserve marker, was unveiled as part of the town's centennial celebrations. Committee members were: Henry Fast, Ernie Recksiedler, Arnold Pokrant, August Lang, Gus Pokrant, Walter Martel, and Abe J. Thiessen. *To all those pioneers and settlers who founded and developed the village of Rosenfeld and community we respectfully dedicate this memorial on the occasion of this centennial year of the Province of Manitoba on August second 1970.* [Art Wiebe]



In this map, note the dark line showing the "METIS TRAIL TO WINNIPEG" passing through Rosenfeld and Morris. Also called the St. Joe or St. Joseph Trail, it went from present-day Walhalla to the Forks and Lower Fort Garry. According to local lore, the trail was used by Louis Riel, who often visited Walhalla (St. Joseph).



A memorial marking the original Dorf Rosenfeld has been erected on the site. It commemorates one of the founding families, the Anton Funks, and states that both the plow and the land are still owned by Funk descendants. [Lois Braun]

Pre and Early History of the Rosenfeld Region

By Lois (Nickel) Braun

20,000 years ago, the region of North America in which Rosenfeld is now situated was at the southern edge of an enormous sheet of ice as much as four km thick in places. This vast glacier formed during the Ice Age and slowly bulldozed its way southward, depositing soil and stones and boulders at the same time as it flattened and gouged the landscape. With so much of the planet's moisture tied up in snow and ice in the centre of the continent, the world's ocean levels dropped significantly during that period. In fact, a land bridge emerged in the Bering Strait in the northwest corner of North America, allowing prehistoric tribes of people to easily migrate from the Asian continent. Some of those people actually found good hunting in the Canadian Arctic and remained there as permanent though nomadic residents of North America.

Back to our glacier. Over many thousands of years, the climate changed again. The ice sheet melted a bit, refroze a bit, melted some more, eventually turning into a massive inland sea later named Lake Agassiz. The place where Winnipeg is now situated would have at one time been covered by water 213 meters deep. Creatures such as the *mosasaur*, also known as the "sea-rex", cruised the lake for prey during the Cretaceous period. (A fossil of this prehistoric monster was discovered near Thornhill, Manitoba, in the 1970s.)

But the waters of this lake very slowly and gradually receded. Some of it evaporated, much of it found gouges in the land along which to flow – rivers – and after a long time, drained back to the oceans, leaving sediment behind.

The wind blew, carrying soils and organic matter. As temperatures continued to increase, burrowing rodents began to inhabit the soil, aerating it and allowing moisture to settle beneath the prairie. 10,000 years ago, with a dramatic warming trend in the climate, southern Manitoba became almost lush with plant life – most notably, grasses and deciduous trees. And as this warming period continued, the tribes of people who had been living in the Arctic migrated southward, chasing herds of giant *Bison antiquus* and a larger but lighter version of the musk ox. Those herds were wiped out, or became extinct for climatic reasons, and by the time the European traders and settlers arrived, the tallgrass prairie of southern Manitoba was a beautiful, sparsely populated wilderness, occasionally traversed by meandering herds of buffalo and by human hunters.

Before the arrival in Canada of Europeans, the south-central region of Manitoba was a vast, flat sea of grass. It was sandwiched between the Pembina escarpment and Lake of the Woods. Shrubbery and trees, like willow and maple, sprang up along rivers and around creeks and sloughs; cattails, chokecherry bushes, sedges, wild roses, orchids, asters, lilies, and goldenrod abounded. But grass was by far the most prevalent plant. Living among the creeks and sloughs were whitetail deer, whitetail jackrabbits, ground squirrels, badgers, and red foxes. Canada geese were plentiful, even then, along with hawks, magpies, meadowlarks, burrowing owls, and the lowly sparrow, among others. These animals further enriched the soil. A mid-summer day would have been alive with the movement and sounds of the native inhabitants of the tallgrass prairie.

And yet, the people who first lived here were not permanent residents. Hiding places were scarce. The winters could be extremely harsh and there was little shelter from wind and snow on the flat terrain. Travel would have been arduous, hunting difficult, and prey not quite plentiful enough to sustain large groups of people.

Plains Ojibwe, also called Saulteaux, moved into the tallgrass prairie from southern Ontario in an effort to escape the pressures of European settlement in eastern Canada. This indigenous group had a transitional culture, meaning that they were influenced by the Ojibwe, who lived in woodlands, and by the Cree, who lived north and west of the tallgrass prairie. The Saulteaux adapted to the prairie using tools, methods, and attitudes borrowed from these neighbours. After the soil was tilled up by farmers around Rosenfeld, much evidence was found

of the presence of hunters: mainly, arrowheads and other stone artifacts; local folklore identifies certain traditional campsites. The *Saulteaux* themselves eventually moved further and further west, trying to stay ahead of the European traders and immigrants.

In the 1860s, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald launched into his vision of establishing farms on the central plains to feed the populations of Canada's growing cities. *Métis* and French settlers were already farming along the Assiniboine and on the Red River south of present-day Winnipeg. In the early 1800s, farms had been established on the banks of the Red River by Lord Selkirk's Scottish settlers, who had received a large land grant called Assiniboia from the British crown. (Lord Selkirk entered into a treaty agreement with Peguis, a *Saulteaux* chief, in 1817.) Those Selkirk Settlers farmed north of Winnipeg, and along parts of the Assiniboine River. By the time a new wave of farmers – displaced Eastern Europeans – arrived on Manitoba's doorstep to develop the western prairie in the late 1800s, some of the treaties between the Canadian government and indigenous groups had already been signed, and reserves were in the planning. According to Treaty One, the stretch of tallgrass prairie labelled the West Reserve was ceded to the government by the indigenous people, and although no permanent indigenous settlements existed there, the ethics of the Canadian government taking over traditional indigenous lands are presently being called into question.

In fact, there *was* a group guarding the virgin soils of southern Manitoba at the time, prior to the region achieving provincial status: the *Métis*. They were the descendants of European fur-trader men and their indigenous wives, and had been hunting and farming in the region for decades.

Canada purchased Assiniboia/Rupert's Land from England. Surveyors arrived on the tallgrass prairie to create a system of land identification and distribution. In 1869, Prime Minister MacDonald sent William McDougall to Assiniboia to set up a Canadian province. There was a definite urgency to create a political entity on the 49th parallel because of the threat from American expansionists. MacDonald feared that the fertile prairies – his breadbasket – would be lost to the Americans.

The *Métis*, who laid claim to this land, especially the area around the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, were incensed by the audacity of a foreign government intruding on their homesteads, hunting grounds, and lifestyle. The *Métis* interfered with both the work of the surveyors and the arrival of McDougall. Near what is now St. Norbert, a band of *Métis* men intercepted McDougall's entourage on a well-used trail on the bald prairie, and barred

the group from proceeding to the Forks. Following that, *Métis* leader Louis Riel declared the Red River region a country named Assiniboia, formed a government there, with Lower Fort Garry at the Forks as its headquarters, and refused to recognize it as part of Canada until assurances had been given that the lifestyles of both the *Métis* and the indigenous people in the area would be protected.

Negotiations ensued. Land grants were promised to the *Métis* people. On May 12, 1870, Assiniboia became the Province of Manitoba. It was often referred to as a "postage stamp", because it consisted then only of a smallish, square-shaped territory extending from the U.S. border north to the southern tips of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg, east to the Whitemouth and Winnipeg Rivers, and west to a little past Portage la Prairie. The terms of the *Métis*-Canada negotiations were ultimately mostly ignored, and the *Métis*, seeing the large numbers of Europeans being given farmland on the prairies, migrated west, seeking freedom and autonomy.

But one more threat lay on the horizon that could have thrown a monkey wrench into the establishment of Mennonite reserves on the prairie. In 1871, well after Manitoba became a province of the Dominion of Canada, one of Louis Riel's former compatriots, William O'Donoghue, still entertained visions of grandeur and saw himself as the leader of an independent Manitoba. He wanted to raid the postage-stamp province and set up his own government. To do so, he enlisted a group of Irish insurgents called the Fenian Brotherhood to stage a raid on Manitoba. The Fenians were mostly ex-American Civil War soldiers who ultimately wanted to free Ireland from the British, and believed they could help achieve that by attacking Canada. The efforts they'd made in eastern Canada had been thwarted, and now they saw one last opportunity to defy the British Commonwealth.

O'Donoghue and a handful of Fenians under the leadership of John O'Neill made their way to Pembina, North Dakota, and took over a Hudson's Bay trading post there. As news of a possible invasion reached Upper Fort Garry, Lieutenant Governor Archibald called for volunteers to travel south. Spurred by reports that thousands of invaders were perched on the border, hundreds of men from the settlements along the Red River signed up to fight the enemy, and on a cold and rainy fall day, began the trek to Pembina.

Meanwhile, the US army captured John O'Neill and sent word that everybody could relax; the threat was over. O'Donoghue, however, escaped, was never charged, and lived out his life in Minnesota.

And so it was that, in 1874, when the first

Mennonites steamed down the Red River in paddle-wheel boats, having been granted a giant chunk of land on the prairie to turn into farms and homesteads, Manitoba remained a full-fledged Canadian province – a postage stamp in the middle of Canada, only a mere shadow of its future glory. In 1875, under the leadership of Bishop Johann Wiebe, 580 families (3,240 persons) made their way from Russia to Canada’s West Reserve. In the following years, learning that the West Reserve had better land and fared better in wet weather, another 300 families eventually moved here from the East Reserve (east of the Red). All these farming settlers in the West Reserve, in accord with the colonialist attitudes of the Canadian government, began immediately to alter the natural landscapes to suit not only their needs but also the customs they brought from Russia: yards that were laid out just so; trees lined up a certain way; shrubs and decorative plants at certain spots; gardens and orchards arranged according to the traditions from their homeland. Oral history among the local indigenous people tells of their ancestors giving advice to Mennonite settlers about footwear, edible plants, and what to hunt.

Newcomers to the West Reserve may have had interactions with Métis people, may have seen their unique wagons – Red River carts – being pulled by oxen along the trails crisscrossing the prairie; Métis communities existed south and west of present-day Morden; a trail connecting St. Norbert, Manitoba, with Walhalla, North Dakota, passed right by the village of Rosenfeld. After the Roseau River Rapids First Nations Reserve was established just east of the Red River, its indigenous residents often visited Mennonite farms west of the river, selling beadwork and braided rugs; some of them were hired as temporary farmhands. Few settlers on the West Reserve at that time fathomed what Canada’s first nations had lost with the abrupt conversion of tallgrass prairie into farmyards, permanent villages, and rigid rules of land ownership. Few settlers understood that what they saw as the nothingness of the tallgrass prairie was actually a rich and ancient habitat with myriad species of flora and fauna and its own complex life cycle.

The Mennonites and German Lutherans at Rosenfeld did not have to personally deal with violent conflict over their rights to the land. They lived a relatively peaceful co-existence with each other, with the ever more marginalized indigenous communities relegated to a very different kind of reserve, with the French-Canadian neighbours who eventually moved into the eastern edge of their territory, and with English and Scottish settlers further west. Rosenfeld began in 1875 as a tiny, one-

street village perched atop a grassy plain that was about to be transformed into one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the world.

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Old, Old Post Office/Peter Funk’s Shop

William Kroeker: I remember [postmaster Abram H.] Funk getting the mail when the train delivered it and then he would sort out the mail and put it in the appropriate mailboxes. My dad’s mailbox number was 207. People would congregate in the post office. I think it was usually around noon. Also a great place to meet and talk with farmers and neighbours. On the same site there was a small variety store. It was managed by Johnny Schellenberg. Helen, my wife, used to clerk in that store. It became a young people’s hangout. Bill and Johnny Schellenberg really liked young people.

Roger Leuzinger: I played the snare drums in that shop with Peter Funk, J.J. Nickel and one other party – might have been my favourite uncle, J.B. Nickel. The four of us would meet every couple of weeks and play a little jazz music as a quartet. I was only 16 at the time; however, the other gentlemen treated me like an adult. Great memories, as these were all very special men to me





Gustav "Gus" Pokrant was one of Rosenfeld's most scholarly and prolific historians. He was a true writer, a person who, despite his teaching job in the Rosenfeld schools and his various community activities, always had time to read extensively and develop his distinctive literary style.

Rosenfeld: Sketches of Its Past

By Gus (G.P.) Pokrant

From the *Red River Valley Echo*, Wed., Nov. 15, 1967, Centennial Section – p. 17

Usually when we attempt to relate the history of a community or of a country, we are prone to list the dates and events in the order as they occurred or as we encountered them. In so doing, it frequently happens that the human elements related to and in this history, are neglected. The result is a history in which the people with their dreams, their aspirations and their failures are involved only in a superficial or insignificant way.

The years following the Napoleonic Wars brought many upheavals and even revolutions in Central Europe. As it happened in the 16th Century, at the time of the Reformation, the hardships that were generally endured in all of Europe, fell most heavily on the lowly, helpless German peasant. This was due in a large measure to a very disorganized government system and to the policies followed by the landlords who took the lion's share of the peasant's crop for rent and other services. The revolt around 1848, which broke out in many states in Germany, had no common aims or leadership. In reality, these revolts had their beginning in the stomachs of men who struggled unceasingly to escape starvation. Many of these starving peasants were obliged to fill their bellies with grass in a desperate attempt to remain alive.

Thousands of these extremely poor and landless serfs walked from one place to another, to find some merciful landlord who would rent them a few acres of land, even if the terms were most severe. In their desperation, they were in no position to bargain, and the landlord, who knew this all too well, enforced the most exacting terms in the rental agreement. Therefore, when these wandering peasants did settle down, it proved to be only temporary.

At this time Russian and German landlords in Russia and Poland were granted new lands on condition that they promised to bring in new settlers who would clear the forests and till the soil. When large numbers of German settlers made their way into Poland and Southern Russia, certain definite promises were made by the lords before a long-term rental agreement was accepted by the renters.

Naturally, this meant a more permanent home and more freedom.

SHORT-LIVED HOPE

But this hope for a promised land did not last too long. The 1860s saw many changes in Russia and new rental contracts, written by the landlords became much more exacting and severe. Now after many years of hard work, the land had been greatly improved and the settlers were unwilling to move again, hence the landlord could enforce his terms.

Military service was demanded by the Russian government when many of the new settlers were promised exemption. Others felt that since they were not Russian citizens legally, they should not be asked to do military service. Freedoms in school and languages were also curtailed and other demands were made by the government under the Czars. Therefore, the peasants who had lived in Russia for many years, and who had made good progress in material things, again began to dream of the day when they would be privileged to own outright even a small plot of land. This longing to become a permanent landowner had always been strong.

Now, when the New World with its limitless areas of good farmland beckoned, the enslaved and landless Russian renters were to wander once more, this time into a strange and unknown land. It was this strong desire to own property which proved sufficient inducement to leave homes and families, often wife and children, in exchange for a life of uncertainty in a distant and unknown land called Canada.

Many of these rather backward and unschooled men who undertook the long journey to the New World, were like the eager young lovers who anticipate the bliss of married life without giving thought to its responsibilities and duties. They knew so little about their new country that they were in no position to assess the many hardships and the great trials that awaited them. These were all overshadowed by the glitter of the promise of free land, which could be obtained as personal property without the interference of landlords and governments. Millions were prepared to begin a new life with little more than a pair of willing hands and a strong back.

EXODUS TO CANADA

And so the great Exodus to the Canadian Prairies began. Even at the very beginning the parting from friends and relatives, from everything that had become near and dear over a period of years, was a sad one indeed. The long and tedious ocean voyage across the Atlantic on poorly equipped and badly staffed ships left much to be desired. When seasickness added to the misery, the passengers often

found it difficult to make themselves understood in a new and strange language. Most of the conversation was conducted with the aid of hands and feet. Upon arrival at Halifax or some other seaport, the immigrants had to undertake the long journey by rail to their destination in Manitoba.

Those who came around the year 1870 [1874] had to travel by rail through the United States to Fargo or another small port along the Red River. From there the paddle steamer made its slow and cumbersome way down the Red River, and like the Israelites of old, they finally reached the Promised Land, a land that did not flow with milk and honey but rather with water and mosquitoes.

Emerson became the port of entry into Canada.

When these newcomers finally reached their destination, an entirely different way of life for them had its beginning. On the bald and windswept plains in the Rosenfeld area the severe snowstorms and the seemingly endless months of cold weather tested the endurance of these new settlers to the breaking point. Fuel was very scarce, clothes were mostly flimsy, and the buildings were poorly constructed for weather that continued for weeks around the forty below zero mark. Besides this physical suffering, there was loneliness for friends and relatives in distant Russia.

MATTRESSES BECAME FEED

There is a story that relates how difficult weather conditions could be in those early days. Two brothers who lived about four miles apart had made the trip together to the neighbouring village for supplies and on their way home stopped for a few hours at the farm of the older brother before the other made his way home.

In a matter of minutes a blizzard began and, as the hours passed by, it increased in intensity and violence. There was no way to make the trip home for the younger brother, but conditions grew more desperate when the storm continued its raging course the next morning. What made matters even worse, there was no feed in the barn and the brothers were unable to make the short trip to the barn for fear that they might get lost. Towards evening of the second day, the two ventured forth determined to get several armfuls of hay from the stack near the barn. But this proved hopeless. As fast as they removed the handfuls of hay, the storm blew them away. In the end, the two returned to the house half frozen and still the horses and cattle remained unfed.

When, on the following morning, the storm still continued in all its fury, only one last desperate measure remained. The hay-filled mattresses from the beds were manfully shouldered and carried to

the barn where the contents were emptied into the mangers of the half-starved animals.

The vast majority of these early pioneers were a hardy lot. They were forced to exercise their ingenuity because the occasion demanded it.

Around the year 1900 a group of young men in Rosenfeld who were idle during the winter, resolved to find a good supply of water. Most wells produced very salty water, therefore it was decided that a deep well be dug, because it was believed, even by water diviners in the village that at these levels a soft water supply could be tapped.

This undertaking lasted several weeks. The workers constructed a crude hoist to bring up the earth, and when the well became so deep that there was not sufficient air below, an old blacksmith's bellow and a long rubber hose were put to use to provide the workers with a fresh supply of air. And as the well was dug deeper, new sections of boards had to be put into place to prevent the walls of the well from caving in. When the depth finally reached seventy feet, it began to fill very rapidly with water, but alas, it was very salty water again. The men were obliged to abandon their project, one which had taken many hours of hard toil and a considerable expense in materials.

FOOTWEAR

Most of these early Canadian settlers knew no other kind of footwear but fairly high leather boots, which reached to within inches of the knee. These boot-wearers did not know such comforts as stockings because in Russia these were literally unknown, especially among the poorer classes. Instead of covering the foot with stockings, the feet were wrapped into fair-sized pieces of cloth before the boot was put on the foot. And it did require considerable effort to force the boot on, and, all too often when the boot was in position the wearer discovered that the foot-cloth had folded and bunched in the process in such a fashion that it was impossible to find a measure of comfort in walking. This meant that the whole process of getting properly booted had to be repeated a second and maybe a third time.

The wide-open prairies, cold and forbidding in winter time, provided excellent breeding grounds for the millions of mosquitoes in summer. Then to make conditions even worse, during the summer the hordes of flies joined in the misery making. And the poor housewife had to fight these pests without the aid of poisons, screens, or swatters. Many of the older folk will remember the early fly-chasing episodes. Equipped with rags, towels, sacks, and papers of every size and description, the parents and the children, sometimes by the dozens, joined

in the wild chase to get the flies out of the house. Sad to say, it usually happened that the number of flies driven out was roughly equal to the number that entered the house through the open portals during the chase.

In the early years of its existence, Rosenfeld boasted a fairly large herd of cows and calves. In order to keep these on green pastures the village engaged the services of an experienced cow herd, whose duty it was to gather the herd in the morning, drive it out to graze during the day, and bring the cattle home again at six o'clock in the evening.

For this work each owner paid a monthly fee which was fixed at the beginning of the year and which the cowherd had to collect himself when the month was over. During the depression years, when the herd numbered more than fifty head, the cowherd's income became the envy of the entire community.

LOVED FUN

In spite of numerous hardships and scarcity on every hand, these new settlers often engaged in fun-provoking practices. They needed some outlet, some form of activity that would break the monotony of everyday life. Men would start some strange gossip, which the women folk repeated only to discover that what they had said was far from the truth. The old benches in stores, garages, blacksmith shops, elevator offices, hotels, and poolrooms became the accepted meeting places where the latest news was heard and where the community storyteller gathered his audience.

Some men, after a few years of practice, became good carpenters and made many useful pieces of furniture for the home or for the house of the neighbour. Others who lived on farms had to haul feed for horses and cattle. But there was always time to get together for a friendly meal and visit. When the neighbours made their visit, they talked till the wee hours of the night.

When we consider that these people read very little, they had no radio or telephone, or television, yet they always found topics of interest to keep them in conversation for long hours during many a winter's night.

The first or old village of Rosenfeld ["Dorf" or "Darp" Rosenfeld] was located just east [and west] of the CPR and on the south shore of the Buffalo Creek. This village boasted a wide main street with tall rows of poplar trees and a goodly number of large farmhouses. Even as late as 1914, there were still several of these farmhouses located at this site. In these dwellings the chimney of the second floor was enlarged sufficiently to provide facilities for

smoking meats and sausages. From accounts of these early settlers, the old village of Rosenfeld was one of the first to be founded west of the Red River. It had its beginning shortly after the first group of settlers came into the area in the 1870s. Here on the shore of the Buffalo Creek the land drained well and the creek was dammed to provide water for the village.

Stories are told of the water thieves even as late as 1915. The steam engines used for threshing required several tanks of water daily. During the dry years the small dugouts became shallow sloughs. Well water could not be used in steam boilers because of its salt content. If the thresher was to keep his machine running, water was an absolute necessity. The watermen were sent out on forays during the night when they took water without permission from a neighbour's dugout or at the dam in Buffalo Creek. If several tanks of the precious water could be obtained during the night, the old steamer would be able to operate at least for another day.

THEN CPR CAME

The old village of Rosenfeld had a rather short history, for in the 1880s the CPR built its spur to Gretna to connect with the branch-line running westward from here. A small railway station was built at the north end of the present village and it was officially named Rosenfeld.

By the year 1900 the new village had already built itself up to include several stores, two elevators, a hotel, a lumber yard, a blacksmith shop, a livery barn, and a score of dwellings which were located mostly in the south end of the village along Railway Street because the government road running through the village had not yet been surveyed.

The school district was also organized during this period, and since it was located on land belonging to the Acheson family, the first name of the district also had the Acheson name.

Later, part of the village was built on a section of land, which belonged to the Hudson Bay Company. It is interesting to note that several quarter sections of land just east and south of the village have mentioned on their titles of ownership an Indian [Métis] trail which appeared to have passed the village from the northeast and running southwest to the Buffalo Creek.

Among early family names in the district are the following: Acheson, Stewart, Johnson, Worden, Buhr, Klassen, Siemens, Zacharias, Fehr, Friesen, Wiebe, Derksen, Funk, Finklestein, Woodlinger, Pokrant, Recksiedler, and the late Karl Knopf. All of these settled here well before the turn of the century.

It was shortly after 1900 that the first drainage ditch just north of the village was dug about one and a

half miles north. The dredge that was used floated on the water that followed the machine as it dug its way. This opened a newly surveyed area for settlement and a group of land-hungry "sod busters" promptly moved in, many of them taking up homesteads eastward between Rosenfeld and St. Jean. During the first years these rather inexperienced and poor settlers suffered severely from floods at all times during the year. There were those who literally banked their farms with sods to keep the water out. However, the rains came in summer and the farm assumed the appearance of a huge saucer filled to the brim.

BUMPER CROPS

But this area experienced a great boom in 1915 when a very large crop was harvested at a time when wheat had its highest price due to the war demand. As a result of this additional wealth, many new farmyards were built and many others were renovated. Most farmers were able to free themselves from the land speculators whose interests and their rates often reached 12 and 15 per cent on mortgages.

A second bumper crop in 1918 brought a land boom and hundreds of new settlers, many of them from the United States, who took up homesteads or bought farms in the area between Lowe Farm, Rosenfeld, and Morris.

The first farm tractors made their appearance and the automobile grew to be a status symbol. Therefore, a farmer if he were to be considered a man of means had to purchase one of these horseless buggies, even though grandmother and grandfather pronounced it an invention of Satan himself. It was somewhat ironical, too, that many of the older folks who bought this marvelous vehicle were rather helpless when it came to its operation. It required a few new maneuvers, which those drivers, who were used to the whip and reins, could not acquire easily without considerable practice. Thus it happened that this self-propelled buggy frequently ran wild much to the consternation of the innocent operator. And "Whoa! Gee! Or Haw!" were commands that always went unheeded.

During these years many new dwellings were built in the village as well as on the farms. In 1912 a new school was built which was wrecked and replaced by the present structure in 1937. In 1900 the first St. John's Church was built. It was enlarged and improved in 1922. In 1945 it was taken down and a new church was built on the same site. Later, the Bergthaler congregation built its house of worship on Acheson Street. It too has seen enlargements such as a full basement. The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church was built on its present site and was enlarged and placed on a full basement in recent years.

FLU STRIKES

Yet, if progress and prosperity was in evidence everywhere in the community, the war years also brought anxiety and fears. It was during these years that the first soldiers from the village enlisted for action, and several of these lost their lives on the battlefield. When the war finally ended and a measure of relief was felt everywhere, the dreaded "flu" struck with frightful consequences in 1919. Many tombstones in the village cemetery and in quiet little corners on neighbouring farms, serve as mute evidence to the fact that the disease often resulted in death.

During the month of March 1919, a full week of funerals were held in the village and sometimes the number of mourners was so small that it required several hours to close the grave. Everywhere entire families were struck by this sickness and often help was just not available. In many instances individuals and groups who knew that the disease was very contagious, simply disregarded all precautions and went to the assistance of their sick neighbours or friends.

The village of Rosenfeld has suffered from other hardships as well. An elevator, a hotel, stores, a bank, several dwellings, and a garage have been destroyed by fire. However, usually more modern and more spacious replacements were made.

Had the first founders of the village originally made a more careful survey of the area, the location possibly would have been different. For too many years the spring floods have caused considerable damage to the village residents and the farmers in the area. From the very beginning until more recent years the people in Rosenfeld have learned to respect the rushing floodwaters. When bridges and wooden sidewalks were still used in the village, these were annually removed by the floodwaters and were carried northward where they were deposited on the canal grades several miles away. But even the floods did some useful work. When spring came and the lanes were piled high with refuse from barns and houses, the floodwaters made a quick cleanup job as it floated these heaps eastward to the Red River.

GREAT DEPRESSION

In 1929, after a succession of relatively prosperous years, this golden age was suddenly and quite unexpectedly brought to an end. Farmers who sold their grain and bought futures at the grain exchange were closed out over night when the price of wheat dropped to below 50 cents a bushel, and feed grains were almost worthless. In fact, some farmers used barley to heat their stoves during the winter. If one commodity became very scarce indeed, it was money.

People in the village who kept cows and who had a surplus of milk competed with one another for the odd customer who was obliged to buy milk. In the end 20 quarts were delivered during the month for the pitiful price of one dollar. A carload of oats was sold for \$125 and this was just enough to pay board and room for three students for a period of two months. In the spring during the early lean 30s, a large number of men and boys turned out to shovel snow from the sidewalks. They were paid 25 cents an hour and most of them did not work more than two hours. But the few cents did buy coffee, salt, tea, or tobacco.

However, even this depression period with its poverty, its drought, its grasshoppers, and its poor crops finally came to an end. When Hitler went on the warpath, things began to improve again. The age of the horse ended; the combine replaced the threshing machine; hydro came to the village in 1935; a high school was opened; gravel highways were built, and the drift of the young people to the cities to find work had its beginning during this period.

NEW IMMIGRANTS

Rosenfeld also received its share of new immigrants during the years following World War II. These came from different parts of Europe but soon found many friends who helped make their first years more pleasant and easy. Because of immigration from many lands, Rosenfeld has always been the home of different nationalities and groups, but it can be said quite truthfully that in spite of these differences in race, creed, etc., all of the residents in the village and those on the surrounding farms have had few differences and have lived in great harmony over a period of many years. It is rather interesting to note that some of the best and closest friendships have been established and have existed among those of different national groups.

During its close to one hundred years of existence, Rosenfeld has had several headline robberies, some fatal traffic accidents, and a number of war casualties. Since the 1930s until more recent years most of our early pioneers have gone to their reward – and in some cases even a fourth generation is carrying the torch which the pioneers lit.

It is to these pioneers that we must pay a tribute as we celebrate our nation's one-hundredth anniversary. They came for a purpose – to acquire a farm or a home, which they could call their very own. They learned from bitter experience that this undertaking was not to be accomplished without great sacrifice and toil. But to all of them the price of freedom was not too high. They toiled willingly and in the end they were rewarded for their efforts.

It is rather interesting to note when one visits the peaceful little village cemetery and studies the inscriptions on the tombstones of the pioneers, we find that the great majority reached a goodly age. There are a group who reached 90 years and over, a large number passed the 80 year mark, and very few died before they reached 65 or 70 years.

From this it would appear that hard work and “prairie-busting”, floods, poverty, and large families all proved to help in some measure to promote a healthy and long life. In fact, there is no record of a local citizen who went to a hospital before the year 1918. Either these pioneers were an extremely hardy lot, or the conditions under which they toiled and lived were of such nature that they supported health and a long life.

DEEP FAITH

In our very materialistic age, we all too often belittle and fail to see the importance of a very common characteristic that was most evident among our pioneers. They possessed a deep and abiding faith. No matter how difficult the conditions, how great the obstacles, they maintained a straight course and refused to be sidetracked in things spiritual. The daily practice in their faith in God was perhaps the greatest driving force in their lives. It gave them a purpose and a direction. They remained uncompromised with things evil, they displayed a rugged individualism, and, above all, they were unafraid to speak out against wrongs and injustices, against evil of all kinds. They made it their concern to battle against anything that was not in harmony with the Scriptures. It was this sincere faith that urged them onward in their search for freedom, for a new home where they could work and practice their religion in freedom.

These then are the pioneers who have laid the foundation on which has been built the structure of our community. Like thousands of other hamlets, villages, towns, and even cities in Canada, Rosenfeld has had its “forefathers” – its first builders. These pioneers built with rugged hands, a strong back, and raw courage. They were sustained in their struggle with the untamed environment by a faith which literally moved mountains and which was sufficient to carry them on even in the most trying conditions. On this occasion of Canada's one-hundredth birthday we salute our pioneers, both the living and the dead. They built much better than they realized and although their struggles often were very difficult, their toils were assuredly not in vain.

The David Klassens came to Canada on the ship *SS Moravian* in 1875, on their way to settling in Darp Rosenfeld – a summary of essentials needed for passage on the ship. [Glenn Friesen, great-grandson]

Conditions

1. The amount paid (including the per head money in Amerika) entitles the emigrants the following:
 - a. Transportation from Hamburg to Hull, Grimsby or Hartlepool by ship (cabin between deck)
 - b. Transportation from Hull, Brimsby or Hartlepool to Liverpool by train
 - c. Lodging and meals in Liverpool until the ship departs
 - d. Trip from Liverpool to America on a first class steamer outfitted according to English laws
 - e. The following provisions will be stored weekly and served well cooked in appropriate portions daily at meal times by the ship's waiters:

White buns	2 ½ lbs	Potatoes	3 lb	Sugar	1lb
Fresh bread	2 “	or Rice	1 lb	Butter	1 lb
Flour	2 “	Beef	3 “	Salt	6 ?
Oatmeal	3 “	Pork	1 ½ “	Mustard	1 “
Rice	1 ½ “	Fish	1 “	Pepper	1 “
Peas	1 ½ “	Tea	4 ?	Vinegar	1 bottle
		Coffee	4 “	Water (daily)	3 bottles

Children ages 1 – 12 receive half portions

Cabin passengers eat at the captains' tables

2. Passengers (except for the cabin passengers) must provide their own eating, drinking and washing utensils.
3. During illness on board the necessary medications will be provided free of charge
4. Each adult cabin passenger is allowed 20 cubic ft. of luggage. Passengers between the decks are allowed 10 cubic feet of luggage. Children are allowed one half the amount. The luggage is delivered free to each destination but we are not liable for delivery problems. A charge of (1 ? per Crt. Per cubic foot) will be payable.
5. In accordance with English and American regulations there must be a space of 14 sq. ft. per passenger on each deck. For passengers between the decks there must be a maximum of 6 sq. ft
6. If the ship cannot make the voyage due to unforeseen problems, the passengers will be transported to their destinations on another ship without penalty since the ship is insured.

These arrangements are insured by:

1. In Hamburg by Caution Preuss. Crt. 6000---Reich 18,000
2. In Liverpool by the English government Caution 1000 Pound Sterling (Preyss, Crt. 7000).

N.B. If this contract is not fulfilled, the emigrants may contact the below mentioned north German consul in Liverpool: **Mr. Otto Burchardt.**

This is a personal contract and may not be transferred to someone else. Failure to make use of this contract does not entitle you to a refund.



This essay about the history of Rosenfeld was written by Gus Pokrant at a different time and wasn't published in the Echo. Although there are many similarities between this article and the previous one, both are relevant for inclusion in this book.

Rosenfeld: Beginning and Progress

(abridged)

By Gus Pokrant

In the early 1870s, the Mennonites were arousing quite a bit of interest in Manitoba. In 1870, the province of Manitoba was formed after the defeat of Louis Riel and the taking over of the Hudson Bay Territory by the Dominion Government. In Europe, the Franco-Prussian War also came to a conclusion and a new nationalism had its beginning. It was during this period that the Canadian Pacific Railway was nearing completion, thereby opening up vast territories for new settlers. If the railway was to prosper, it required goods for transport; therefore, the Dominion Government together with the Canadian Pacific Railway did everything possible in order to bring in new settlers from Central Europe.

The large Mennonite colonies in Southern Russia were beginning to feel uneasy when the Russian Government embarked on a more militaristic policy and insisted on military training of all males from the age of eighteen to forty-five years. Since these Russian Mennonites were very capable farmers, and since they felt they could not conform to the Russian military requirements, deputies were sent out to the Canadian West to investigate the possibilities of settling in Canada. As a result of all these factors the British Government granted these settlers from Russia two large areas of land in Manitoba. These were located on each side of the Red River in Southern Manitoba and became known as the East and West Reserves.

The first group of Mennonite settlers arrived by riverboat at Emerson from Moorehead. Some of these disembarked and set out into the vast prairie regions between the Red River and the Pembina Hills. The others proceeded until they came to a spot where the Rat River and the Red River meet. These became the original East Reserve settlers. One unique feature of these early settlements was that they were made in groups or villages. In January 1878, there were about twenty-five villages in the West Reserve. These villages varied in the area of land they controlled and the size of their population. Some of the larger villages then were Hoffnungsfeld with 24 families and a population of 120, Blumenstein had the same population. Chortitz and Schoenwiese were two of the larger villages with populations of one hundred

and seventy-one and one hundred and seventy-two. Rosenfeld at that time had only eleven families and a population of fifty-five.

It did not take too many years when the first signs of dissatisfaction with the village system became evident. There were reasons for these disagreements. Often when the land was parcelled out, there were those among the villagers who felt they had received a less productive area. Others felt the village life was too restrictive. There were also problems in the educational field, and later, when the public school system was introduced, more factions were formed. It would seem that this educational issue was one of the main causes for the disunity in the first village of Rosenfeld.

However, another factor which figured prominently in the breaking up of some of the original villages was the coming of the railway. When the railway was built connecting Gretna and Rosenfeld, the Canadian Pacific Railway also built a station at the junction and within a short time a new Rosenfeld had its beginning. Mail services were established, elevators were built, hotels, livery barns and large machine shops mushroomed at the point where shipping connections could be made conveniently. Thus it happened that the new village grew at the expense of the old. Many of those villages that were more remote were not so greatly influenced by the railways, such as Blumenfeld, Chortitz, Schanzenfeld, and several others. As the new village grew and prospered, a public school was provided in 1893, grain-loading platform, regular rail passenger service was instituted, a mail service was initiated and a lumber yard was built. All these changes and the new services provided did much to hasten the end of Old Rosenfeld. The years just before World War I were relatively prosperous ones and many farm families felt with this greater wealth they could now build their own, more modern farmyards on their own land or farms.

These years also developed many more modern trends. Farm acreages were greatly enlarged and this meant many of the farmers had to move to new locations where prairie lands were still available at a reasonable price. The war years greatly increased grain prices and everywhere farmers and even non-farmers were eager to till more and more land. Thus it happened that the region north of Rosenfeld between Morris and Lowe Farm was opened for cultivation. Large drainage ditches or canals were built and these helped to empty large sloughs found in the endless tracts of prairies. The first large ditch a mile and a half north of Rosenfeld was dug in 1900. It brought in a large number of new settlers, many of them from Ontario, from the United States and from Poland. The post-war years brought many changes. These

were the years when the first automobiles made their appearance. Many a beginner at the steering wheel had most interesting experiences when the vehicle did not stop when the driver shouted "Whoa...!" At other times the horseless buggy refused to go forward in spite of every effort by the owner. Sometimes the auto would not move forward because the gas tank was empty or the machine was parked in very wet and slippery clay areas.

In 1915 the Rosenfeld area had one of its best crops when grain prices were at the highest. As a result of this additional wealth many new farmyards were built and many more were renovated and enlarged. Most farmers were able to free themselves from the land speculators, who often charged fifteen to eighteen percent interest on farm mortgages. By this time the team of oxen were forgotten and were replaced by the much more reliable and efficient horse. However, a new, far more reliable source of farm power was about to take over. This was the gasoline tractor. Until now some meadow-breaking was done with the large unwieldy and cumbersome steam engine. This machine required wood or coal in large quantities in order to keep moving and in many instances the low water roads were in such poor condition that it was next to impossible to haul the coal from the village to the distant farms. Soon the farm tractor made its appearance, and the automobile in a more refined model grew to be a status symbol. Therefore, a farmer if he was to be considered a man of means had to purchase these gas-driven machines, even though grandfather or grandmother pronounced it an invention or a creation of Satan himself. Imagine if you can when the large family of twelve or more individuals, large or small, on a Sunday morning, dressed in their very best garments, mounted this self-propelled buggy. Naturally, father, always being the complete boss and not permitting a word of criticism, sat at the steering wheel, although he was a very ignorant operator of this new machine that had its own strange whims. Sometimes his verbal commands went entirely unheeded and the travelling party landed in a muddy ditch instead of in church.

Until the year 1929, Rosenfeld residents kept cows, chickens, pigs, and in some cases, a horse or two. When the dry Depression years struck, the milk, the eggs and the meat from these animals and birds was practically the only source of food. Until this year, the village hired a cowherd, who was paid a dollar per head, and it was his duty to herd the cattle, some fifty or sixty in number, during the day along roadsides or inside the railroad fence.

We could say the Village of Rosenfeld never fully recovered from the setback of those Depression years. Jobs were scarce, the younger generations

drifted to the large centres and others moved away in search of new opportunities in far-away places. However, the Depression period, with its hardships and poverty, finally came to an end. It happened when Hitler went on the warpath in 1939 and things began to change. The horse age ended in the early thirties and the combine replaced the threshing machine. Now a farmer and his son could harvest more of the crop in one day than a threshing crew of twenty or more workers could do in two days.

Perhaps one of the greatest conveniences and a most important labor-saving utility came to Rosenfeld in 1935 when hydro came to Southern Manitoba. Now the housewife was freed from many of her backbreaking jobs. Such appliances as the refrigerator, the electric washer, the electric iron, cream separator and many other smaller machines did much to give the housewife a far greater measure of freedom for other pastimes and social activity.

During the last several decades, the Village of Rosenfeld, like thousands of other villages/has had its ups and downs. New dwellings have been built, older ones have been destroyed by fire or have been moved away. People come and go, especially during the last ten or twenty years. Sometimes we feel that the population of Canada is on wheels. At present no one is able to predict the future of the smaller villages. The city folks often dream of a quiet home in the country, while the country dweller longs for the conveniences of the larger centres.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow describes his "Village Blacksmith" as:

*Toiling, – rejoicing, – sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.*

*Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!*

These words would equally apply to our ancestors when they first came to the wild, open, and all too often cruel prairies.

Rosenfeld Village Relocated

By Elizabeth Bergen, from the *Echo*, March 30, 1977

The first village of Rosenfeld, according to accounts of these early settlers in this village, was one of the first to be founded on the east side of the West

Reserve. It was located east of the C.P. Railway and on the south bank of Buffalo Creek. In other words, it was a mile and a half south and half a mile west of the present village of Rosenfeld, and was settled about 1876 by the Old Colony Mennonite church people, often referred to as the *Fuerstenlaender*.

The first to serve the congregation here was Elder Johann Wiebe of the village of Reinland. "Following the official organization of the Fuerstenlaender people as Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde (Reinland Mennonite Church) in 1880, very strict rules were introduced. It was more difficult to enforce these rules in this village after the area was surrounded by the more liberal members of the Bergthal and Chortitza Colonies.

Shortly after 1880 Rosenfeld was dropped as a village of the Reinlaender Gemeinde, and from 1880 to 1887 it was served by Chortitza elders from the East Reserve," writes H.J. Gerbrandt in his book *Adventure in Faith*.

In the old village of Rosenfeld no Mennonite church building was erected in the short period of its existence. What eventually happened to the families that lived here is not recorded but it is assumed that they joined the newly formed Sommerfelder Mennonites after the church division in 1892.

Then in 1906 the first Bergthaler church registers indicate that there were 26 names from Rosenfeld recorded. Of these, according to Gerhard H. Fast of Rosenfeld, 18 left to settle in Saskatchewan and the others joined other churches. The first central brotherhood minutes referring to Rosenfeld date back to 1903, when the Peter Buhr family joined and in 1904 when the David Funk family joined.

By 1904 services were being conducted regularly in Rosenfeld but for some reason were discontinued. However, these services were then carried on in the schools at St. Peters, Melba, Amsterdam and Langevin. By 1913 Rosenfeld was once more the centre for these local services. By this time the Lutheran congregation had outgrown their building and offered it for sale. However, no official steps were taken about this offer until the Bergthaler church central brotherhood meeting in the summer of 1919. The result was that the offer was tabled without comment. By September of that year Rosenfeld was once more dropped as a regular preaching centre for the simple reason that there had been little incentive coming from Rosenfeld. Then in December Rev. John D. Loeppky was made responsible for heating these facilities. From 1916 on the Rosenfeld community had sufficient members to warrant the appointment of regular levy collectors.

By 1928 Rev. Loeppky served as the leading minister and Rev. Peter P. Epp of Morden was the

assistant. While the first services were held in the school, it was customary to ring the school bell announcing the services would be held as usual unless the minister was not able to make it. From the school, the services were moved to the old Acheson store, where this small congregation paid \$10 rent a month. Mr. Fast goes on to say that these years of the 1930s were possibly the period when this community saw the closest community and church spirit ever, for it was then that Bergthaler members and non-members worshipped together. When collections were held, man or woman gave as he or she could afford – some times as little as 25 cents, and sometimes even that was a sacrifice shared willingly.

In 1937 a delegation made a presentation to the central brotherhood meeting, reporting that the Rüdnerweider (now the Evangelical Mennonite Mission church) congregation was building a house of worship in Rosenfeld and that this building would be available to the Bergthaler group for some Sunday morning services. However, the Sunday school, choir practices and evening services would be under the leadership of the Rüdnerweider church.

By 1938 the need for a local Bergthaler church was voiced and a delegation informed the central finance committee that they had \$400, that they could collect another \$400 and that another \$1,200 to \$2,500 would be required to build the church needed. This was presented at the June 1938 brotherhood meeting of the Manitoba Bergthaler Mennonite church and tabled for a year.

Canadian Pacific Railway Company (abridged)

By Gordon Goldsborough, from *MHS Centennial Business*, www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/business/cpr.shtml

To discuss the history of the CPR and its involvement in our great province, you have to go back to the very decade of Manitoba's entry into confederation. In 1874, the community of Winnipeg discovered that plans were being drawn for the construction of a transcontinental rail line to run through Selkirk to the north. Immediately, a citizens' committee was established and a petition was delivered to Ottawa. In true Canadian fashion, debate over the issue lasted for seven years when in 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was formed and agreed to construct the line through our present provincial capital. This important decision would help pave the way for Winnipeg to become the "hub of commercial activity in the northwest." For the next 16 months following, immigrants migrated to the city in search of employment and hope causing the population to explode from a few

Canadian Pacific

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING DEPT. — CANADIAN PACIFIC BLDG., WINNIPEG 2, MAN.

February 24, 1967

Mrs. H.A. Martel,
Rosenfeld, Manitoba

Dear Mrs. Martel:

I regret the delay in answering your query on information regarding Canadian Pacific origins at Rosenfeld, Manitoba, but we have had a large volume of Centennial requests in the same vein and have had to deal with them as received.

The following is all the information our records have to say:

Rosenfeld: Track laid 1882. Station first appears in Timetable No. 11 dated Dec. 2nd., 1883. Passenger Train No. 5 was daily from Winnipeg, arriving Rosenfeld, 11.00 a.m. Passenger train No. 6 was daily to Winnipeg, leaving Rosenfeld 4.35 p.m.

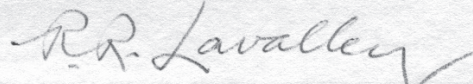
There was also Mixed Train No. 9, Mon., Wed., & Fri., arriving 12.20 pm and Mixed Train No. 9 Tues., Thur., and Sat., leaving at 1.00 pm.

In addition, a freight train, Nos. 55 & 56 which operated daily except Sunday, arrived at 11.00 a.m. and departed at 3.15 p.m.

The station was constructed in 1890 and the section house in 1900.

Hope the above is of some benefit in reconstruction of your story of the "Old Years".

Yours very truly,



R.R. Lavalley
Advertising Representative

hundred to 14,000. Due to this massive influx, the CPR announced 2,000 new jobs at their shops.

This period was an intensification of the expansion of the mid-1870s on a scale which was unprecedented in Canadian history. For a short time, the sky was the limit. Winnipeg was again “the new Chicago” and speculation drove the prices of lots on Portage Avenue or Main Street above the going rate for similar frontage on Michigan Avenue or State Street in the “Windy City.” Emerson and West Lynne, its long-since devoured twin across the Red, were touted in local and eastern papers as improved versions of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Crystal City, Rapid City, Nelsonville – a long list of metropolises-to-be clamoured for the attention of settlers and received that of speculators. Winnipeg was prompted by the speculation fever to move heaven and earth in order to secure the crossing of the Red River by the new Canadian Pacific Railway.

During this time, construction of the railway was supervised from offices in Winnipeg. Facilities were located near the Point Douglas area of the city. During the early part of the 20th century, this marshalling yard was one of the largest in the world. It was the centre point of the Dominion, moving material and goods in both directions between eastern and western Canada.

Over the years, this railway company has changed and evolved in many aspects including service lines, modes of transportation and even things as simple as its name. CP Rail System, or CPRS, was changed again to Canadian Pacific Railway Company in 1996. The nature of Manitoba-based railway services have also evolved throughout the 20th century and beyond, including operations across the nation.

The railway employs thousands of Manitobans and spends approximately 2 billion dollars in our province on payroll, provincial taxes, purchases and capital spending. This is in addition to indirect spending generated by business done with Manitoba-based suppliers. It maintains and operates approximately a 2000 km network of line to serve its Manitoba customers and connects them to terminals and major coastal ports throughout the North American continent.

An article in *CP Rail News* dated 28 August 1974 had this to say about the Canadian Pacific Railway’s involvement in the building of our province: “The diversification of Canadian Pacific operations is well known – but would you believe 50 years in the entertainment business? Winnipeg Beach was where it all started at the turn of the century when CP Rail opened an amusement park, complete with roller coaster, Ferris wheel, merry-go-round and dance

hall, among other things – and a rail line to get people there. The company also built a hotel on the site – the Empress – where, in its heyday, picnickers could buy a gallon of beer for 25 cents and the Sunday concert was the social event of the week. There was a 400-foot pier and an 800-foot boardwalk where families strolled up and down in the sun, and friends and lovers did likewise, more or less on moonlight excursions.”

Sources:

- Cummin’s Rural Directory Map for Manitoba published by the Cummins Map Company, 404 Chambers of Commerce, Winnipeg, 1923. [Copies held by Edward M. Ledohowski and Gordon Goldsborough]
- Canadian Pacific Timetable, Folder C, Western Canada and Transcontinental Schedule, April 27, 1958 to October 25, 1958. [Charles Cooper’s Railway Pages]
- *Canadian Pacific’s Western Depots: The Country Stations in Western Canada* by Charles W. Bohi and Leslie S. Kozma, South Platte Press, 1993.
- We thank Chuck Bohi, Matt Bialek, and Mike Lisowski for providing additional information used here.

Cool Wheels!

Jacob Peter Kroeker’s first car was a 1927 Overland Whippet. According to www.allpar.com, *the 1927 four-cylinder Whippet had about 35 horsepower, and 90 ft lbs of torque. In the light body of the Whippet, the little engine made the Whippet feel lively and quick. The cars were light, sturdy, fast, dependable, and inexpensive. They ranged from a fairly well equipped lead model at \$525 all the way up to \$850. People mobbed the showrooms. One estimate had over 14 million people visiting Overland showrooms in the United States in the first three weeks. The Willys Whippet was neat, well made, stylish, and well promoted, and sales took off.*

Wayne Kroeker: I dreamed of owning that car. I played in it in Granddad’s old barn. It was covered in straw and all sorts of junk, but we were able to get in it and play. I last saw that Whippet in 1965 when Granddad hauled it out of the barn with his 1952 Pontiac. Three generations that appreciated that car: Granddad Jacob, his son Isaac, and me, the 15-year-old grandson. Granddad was a mechanic at Martel’s garage.





The Martel name is very familiar in Rosenfeld and nearby communities. Eileen Schultz married Helmut Martel, who ran the local garage, and she eventually took up the pen to carry on researching and recording the history of her adopted village. Here she fills in many details about the development of the community.

Rosenfeld... Historic Landmark

By Eileen Martel, from *The Journal*, Morris, Man., Nov. 22, 1967

Although Rosenfeld may not be the most progressive town, it too has a story to tell. Why this location was chosen, who its first inhabitants were, and why the population hasn't increased in the past thirty years or more?

With a population of a little over 250 persons, many are farmers living in town who still work their land. The larger percentage are elderly retired folks that settled here to get away from the noise usually found in bigger towns. Here they can enjoy the quiet country air and also have the convenience of being close to a store, garage, post office, church or bus service for that matter.

One very important item lacking, is water and sewer facilities and each home owner is responsible for their own needs. Although considered an inconvenience, many families have had sewer systems installed and water is hauled in from one of the neighboring towns.

But let's start at the beginning! Some records dating back to the turn of the century have been located at one of the churches and school. So this with the help of the older citizens has made a report possible.

The intended town was started at a location approximately two miles south of the present site. When the railway was extended to the United States Border, the early settlers found it more suitable to settle where both the west bound and south trains stopped so the former place slowly developed into a farming area.

RAILWAY

The track from Rosenfeld to Gretna (called Smugglers Point) was known as the South Western and Pembina Mountain Branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Grading on this branch line commenced in 1881 and was completed in 1882, when it was put into operation.

From 1883 to 1890 the station agents lived in boxcars. Mrs. Edith Robson, a resident of the Tabor Home at Morden remembers quite vividly when she came with her parents from Ontario to take up residence in these boxcars. An only child, and her

father sick, meant that the job of attending to the work at the station had to be done by her mother, Mrs. Alice House. Although 87 years of age, Mrs. Robson recalls that as a youngster, she'd travel by train to Morden every Monday morning, attend school during the week, and again return home on Friday. She also learned the work of a station agent and was quite capable of sending and receiving messages by telegraph. After her marriage she moved to Thornhill, where her husband was a grain buyer. Her son Walter followed in the family tradition and presently is in charge of the station at Macgregor, where he is due for retirement in two years. Mrs. Robson's other son resides in Winnipeg.

FIRST BUILDINGS

Following the completion of the railway station, a hotel was erected directly across the road from it. Constructed in the late 1800's, its first known owner was Mr. Jewel. In this hotel, Mrs. Emma Recksiedler, now 80 years of age, obtained her first job after the family's immigration to Canada in 1898.

Fire destroyed the hotel in 1934 and another one was moved in from Plum Coulee. For several years the hotel remained at the same location and in the fall of 1950 was re-located at the corner of highways 14 and 14A. In May [1965], this building too, was completely demolished by fire, and the town has since been without these accommodations.

The land on which Rosenfeld is situated, first belonged to Mr. [A.J.] Acheson. Purchased by Mr. Wadlinger [Wodlinger], the early settlers obtained their land from him.

Mr. Acheson's name certainly belongs in the history of Rosenfeld. He built the first store which also housed the post office and later the telephone exchange office. The first school district was named after him and a street still carries his name. In all likelihood, the town should have been called Acheson. Actually no one knows where the name Rosenfeld derives from.

Among the first buildings was a store operated by Mr. C. Stewart. Besides the store he farmed and managed a lumberyard. A blacksmith shop situated where the now J. Martel garage stands, was owned by Mr. George Worden. He also had a machinery agency, but the type of the equipment sold is not known.

An important need of a farming community were grain elevators so shortly after the completion of the railway, Lake of the Woods proceeded with the construction of an elevator. The man placed in charge of buying grain was Mr. Wieber, a son-in-law of Mr. Acheson.

Being without electricity in those days, other

means of augering the grain up into the various bins had to be found. Their method may seem very complicated to us but it worked splendidly at the time. It was done by means of a horse moving in a circle to keep a large wheel at the base of the elevator turning, which pushed the grain to the higher levels. By 1904 there were three elevators handling the large amount of grain harvested in the vicinity. The Lake of the Woods elevator destroyed by fire in 1918 was replaced with a new building, and the other two were dismantled and bigger ones erected in their place. So today there are still only three elevators.

TELEPHONE

Telephone service was extended to Rosenfeld in 1904 when a long distance office, in operation by the Bell Telephone Company was placed in the village.

The telephone exchange office remained in Rosenfeld until 1947 in the charge of Mr. Jacob Loewen. Dial phones were established in 1963 and they have proven most beneficial for the previous service was badly overloaded. The automatic, electronically controlled exchange office is located in Altona.

SCHOOLS

A petition signed by nine ratepayers was presented to the rural municipality of Rhineland asking that a school district under the name of the School District of Acheson be formed. It stated that 30 children of school age and none more than three miles from the proposed site of the schoolhouse, would attend classes. The site was fixed at the village of Rosenfeld junction.

On May 16, 1893, when the Rhineland council assembled and under the power given them by the Public School Acts, the rural district of Acheson was formed. Signatures affixed to the by-law were D. Schellenberg, clerk and Jacob Heppner, reeve.

In the same year a schoolhouse was erected on a lot next to the cemetery, and classes commenced upon its completion. The earliest records available indicate that Peter Dueck was the first teacher to teach at the Acheson school.

In 1921 the name of the school district was changed from Acheson to Rosenfeld. The following year grade nine classes commenced, and by 1933 grade 12 was available. For a number of years these grades were taught in the second floor of the hatchery, a yearly tuition fee of \$10.00 had to be paid by the students.

With the rapid increase in population, an urgent need for a bigger school grew. As the result of a by-law a new three-room school was built in 1937. Erected on the old grounds it is being used for

teaching today, with some changes in the structure having been made through the years. Before the high school students were transferred to Altona, sometimes as many as five classrooms were being used to accommodate all the grades. Grade 11 was taken out in 1964 and since 1965 grades 9 and 10 have also been going to Altona.

The school districts of [Hopevale], New Kennedy, Reichenbach and Amsterdam became the Consolidated School District of Rosenfeld, No. 885 in 1965 and the following year part of the Weidenfeld district joined the consolidation.

CHURCHES

Although the English speaking and Mennonite people were the first settlers to become established here, the first church was built by the German Lutherans. Arriving from Volynia, Russia in 1893, these immigrants were served by Pastor Willing. In 1896 when regular services became in effect, Pastor Berthold who resided at Gretna had in his charge Rosenfeld along with Morris, Brunkild and Plum Coulee.

On March 2, 1900 this group met in the schoolhouse and with 34 families present, resolved to organize themselves into a congregation. Six weeks later a house of worship costing \$800.00 was completed and dedicated.

In 1921 the church edifice was enlarged and re-decorated and in 1925 the congregation became self-sustaining.

The man who served this congregation longest was Pastor Keitel. His ministry at Rosenfeld began in 1926. The same year a parsonage was purchased, the Luther League organized and the congregational school started. Their choir was organized in 1935 and the same year the annual picnic and outdoor worship began. Two years later memorial services took place at the village cemetery and since 1957 this has become an annual joint venture with the other two churches.

Early in 1945 the project of replacing the old church was undertaken and on October 14, 1945 the new church, this present structure dedicated. A new parsonage built in 1952 was first occupied by the Pastor L. Koss family.

Since Pastor Keitel's retirement in 1951 three ministers have served the congregation. The present one in charge is Pastor L. Grendze. Coming to Rosenfeld in October 1963 from Bryant, Indiana, his life started in the little country of Latvia where he was born and raised.

Before any individual Mennonite church was built the people joined in a community congregation. Beginning in 1928, services were held in the

schoolhouse. When in 1936 they were refused the use of the building, the upstairs of Achesons store proved quite adequate so for \$10 a month the members agreed to congregate here. Converted into a classroom another location had to be found and Krevacks store, granaries and other buildings soon became places of worship. Rev. John Loepky, a Bergthaler minister served these people.

When in 1937 Mr. A.B. Thiessen donated land for the erection of a church, a group of the Rüdnerweider members took the initiative and proceeded with the building.

Completed with a total cost of a little over \$2,000, dedication services were held on December 21, 1937. Rev. Peter Berg and Elder Wilhelm Falk officiated.

Mr. and Mrs. Abe Nickel were the first newlyweds to become united in the new church on June 30, 1940.

Another change of significance was in 1959 when the original name "The Rüdnerweider Mennonite Church of Manitoba" was dropped and the name "The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference" (E.M.M.C.) was adopted. At the same time it became completely localized as far as financing is concerned.

The Bergthaler congregation held services in the Rüdnerweider church until 1940 when an old garage, purchased from D. Heppner of Lowe Farm was moved onto a small piece of purchased land and remodelled into a church. Most of this work was done voluntarily too but Anton Schellenberg was hired as carpenter, and also looked after the construction of a basement and enlargement of the church in 1949.

Rev. John P. Heinrichs took over the duties of minister following the death of Rev. Loepky and since 1956 Rev. D.J. Neudorf has served the congregation. After his resignation in 1966, Rev. D.L. Hildebrand and Rev. Bernie Wiebe have presided over the congregation.

One highlight of the church in recent years was sponsoring George Fast, Jr. as a pax worker. He served in Switzerland and Germany from 1958 to 1960.

Their present membership totals a little over 100 persons.

The man responsible for bringing these Mennonite families over from Europe was William Hespeler, the appointed German consul to western Canada. The Canadian government asked him to go to southern Russia and bring back a delegation of Mennonites. They came and looked over the land in the Red River Valley and after the tour, a deal was made and the families started to arrive.

These Mennonites were known to be skillful tillers of the soil, and decided to leave their fertile

land in Russia only because they could not practice their religion there. It was the Mennonites who proved to other settlers that the prairies of Manitoba could be turned into rich farmlands.

The Hespeler dike located about three miles north of Rosenfeld was named after this distinguished German-Canadian man who did so much in developing the southern part of Manitoba. He played a major role in the immigration of the Russian Mennonites to Canada.

GROWTH, IMPROVEMENTS

So people kept moving in, started business, and for many years the town prospered and grew and up until the late 1940s the place was alive with action. Businesses to start functioning during the first quarter of this century were quite a large number for a small settlement like this. There were two butcher shops, two lumberyards, three garages, three stores, a restaurant, two blacksmiths, several machine and car agents who made a rather successful living. A bank destroyed by fire in 1921 was never rebuilt.

SPORTS

Community minded, ball clubs were organized, and for over 20 years the men and ladies ball teams were a going concern, showing much enthusiasm among both the players and spectators. Although never entered in a ball league, both teams participated in tournaments held in the surrounding area.

Early in 1930 a hockey club became established and a skating rink built. It has been relocated [at least] four times, first in the centre of town, then moved to the south end and back to the centre again, with a new rink having been constructed in the fall of 1966. This is located at the extreme easterly section of the town. Hockey still is a favourite pastime for the younger boys and even though the team isn't as strong as their predecessors, the boys play mostly for recreation and enjoy it.

The curling club started out shortly after the Second World War and residents both young and old found it an enjoyable sport. With an immense drop in membership during the past five years, the doors were kept closed for the 1966-67 season. All those wishing to continue with curling had to join a club at a neighbouring town. It is hoped that since all the necessary facilities are available here, the rink will be able to function again next winter.

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Before the hydro was installed in 1935, electricity was supplied by a power plant, first operated by Mr. A. Ginter and since 1925 by J. Martel. This supplied enough power for a few streetlights, skating rink

lighting and a number of home owners had the convenience brought into their dwellings. The biggest improvement in the way of lighting appeared in 1958 when the Manitoba Hydro replaced the dim old street bulbs with mercury vapour lights.

In March 1949, ratepayers agreed to make Rosenfeld an unincorporated village, and [keep] records of the town councils and annual meeting.

The mud roads always were a problem and starting in the early 1930s, three carloads of cinders were placed on the streets every year. Graveling in 1948 gave the town good streets but still another situation was created by the improvement. Dust raised by the moving vehicles made the place dirty and unhealthy as well. Speed limit signs set up at both the north and south entrance to town eased this problem somewhat, but not entirely. It only was eliminated completely by the hard surfacing of Main Street, which was done in 1957. Another great improvement are the concrete sidewalks, which have replaced the old wooden ones. Still work continues every year and roads are being made wider, ditches removed, and hard surfaces put on some of the side streets.

TURNING POINT AND DECLINE

Up until the late 40s and early 1950s it could be said that the town was progressing at a rapid pace, then came the turning point. Successful businesses began to move out. Probably the largest one was the Massey Ferguson and Dodge agency under the

management of Mr. A.J. Thiessen, who in 1956 moved his headquarters to Altona. Following suit shortly after was the Beaver Lumber Company, originally called the Empire Lumber Company and located on Main Street. It was started in the early 1900s. The buildings were dismantled and the grounds are now vacant.

The Nickels [Nikkels] general store and Enns garage were forced to close, due to lack of business. Both owners have found employment in Winnipeg. The store has since been pulled down and the garage stands empty. The south end garage built around 1930, hasn't functioned for almost three years.

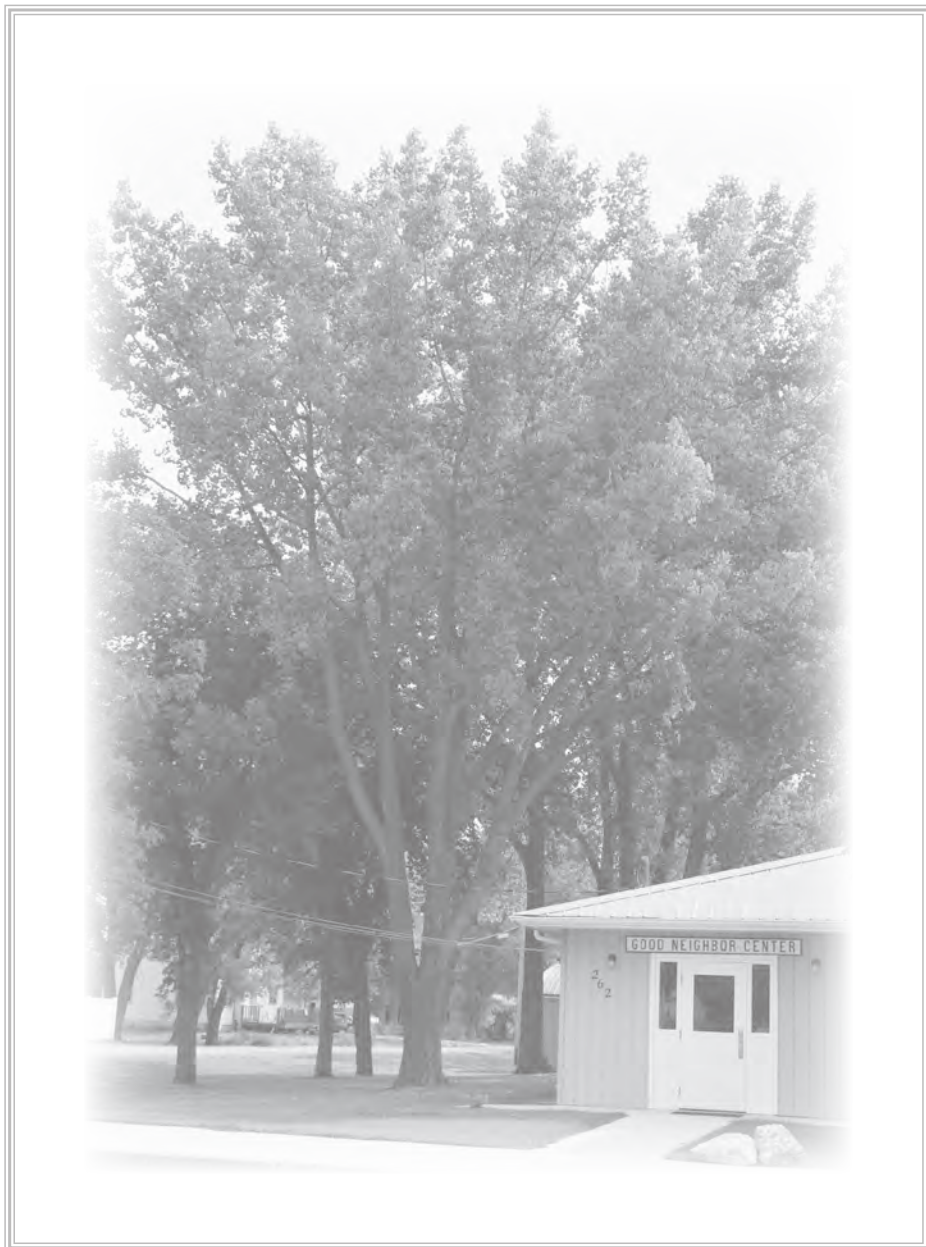
An electrical appliance shop managed by Pete Funk thrived for numerous years and Mr. Funk had a host of customers satisfied with his services. The building housed the post office for thirty years, now it stands like a hollow shell in an almost ghostlike appearance. Mr. Funk holds a responsible position with the Altona Co-op and repairs electrical appliances with his specialty being television sets.

The Henry Martel blacksmith shop begun in 1914, expanded into a repair business for John Deere implements which they sold and also was in charge of Imperial oil bulk sales for many years. Numerous other ventures like selling cars and fertilizers were also carried on at this location. A new building constructed in 1947 was re-located in Altona in 1963 where the John Deere agency, fertilizer sales and repair shop are being continued.

Chapter II



Digging Deeper



Art Wiebe



If You're The Kid...

Roy Martel: This all brings back memories of myself at 8 or 9, my cousin Douglas (Butch), about 7 or 8, and Frankie (The Kid) Muench, about 6 or 7, hanging out together. Despite us tormenting young Frankie, he always tagged along. One episode was us sending him into the culvert to check out if the skunk was still there. Frankie got sprayed and I had to answer to his mom and dad, with a follow-up visit behind the woodshed with my dad.



Curling Rink Memories

Gail Tomashewski: My dad [August Lang] curled in this league for years. He used to take me with him and that is how I learned. I would throw rocks up and down the ice while he played, and he would set up the rocks and tell me what to do. I was 8 at the time and I was hooked. I'll never forget – we had an all-girls bonspiel and Dennis Martel made the draws up. My mom and Gail [Martel's] mom made the food. We had teams from Emerson, Morris, Plum Coulee. What great fun!

Album B



View of Rosenfeld looking southeast. [1909 collection]



Passenger train steaming through Rosenfeld on its way to Altona and Gretna; these communities had regular rail service four times a day – twice a day heading south and twice a day heading north to Winnipeg. According to CPR archivist, Jo-Anne Colby, this photo is of a CPR steam locomotive #95, renumbered as #76 in 1909. Ray Verdone, a former CPR employee, says that it was scrapped in April, 1911, after 28 years and five months of service. [1909 collection]



Acheson family on the Rosenfeld train station platform. (L-R): Sarah Acheson; her daughter Gertie; unknown woman with two children; Sarah's daughters Minnie and Maudie. Likely taken c. 1905-10. [Jim Benedict]



Acheson Store coins are in the Ottawa Currency museum. Brian Kroeker inherited some of these coins from his grandparents, Rosenfeld residents Jacob and Elizabeth Kroeker. The coins are aluminum, measuring one inch across and as thin as a dime. [Jim Benedict]



The "Mrs. S.B. Acheson General Merchant" business – probably the first store built in Rosenfeld; it also housed the post office and later the telephone exchange office. [Jim Benedict] A sign marks the post office entrance at the southeast corner of the building. According to the 1910 survey map of Rosenfeld, the store was located at the northeast corner of Alexander Ave. and Main Street.



A calendar from the Emil "Rusey" Weber store in Rosenfeld, c. 1905-1910. [Calendar submitted by Menno Friesen, whose grandfather had it]. Weber married into the Acheson family.



In the 1934 CPR station registry, the population of Rosenfeld was pegged at 498, and the Leland Hotel was listed as having 15 rooms. [Photo submitted by Jim Benedict]



Store located approx. half-way between Alexander Ave. and Gertie Ave., on the east side of Main St. [1909 collection]



Looking east from Railway Street behind the St. John Lutheran Church. Note the unpainted outhouse back of the church and the Empire Lumber Yard to the south. In the distance you see the Wally Eisbrenner farmyard. [1909 collection]



Livery Barn, south end of Main St., c. 1905-1907 – owned and operated by Jacob H. Funk in Rosenfeld (Edna Siemens' great-grandpa). The tall man standing in the doorway is probably his son, Abram J.H. Funk, and the other man is his father, Jacob. The man holding the horses could be Abram's brother, Henry. Unable to ID the lady with the camera standing on the sidewalk behind the white horse. [Edna Siemens]



Main Street, looking towards the northeast. The first building is selling De Laval cream separators, and John Deere and Moline farm implements; the second is the C.K. Stewart General Merchant and Furniture store, and connected to it was Stewart and Smirl Hardware. Those two buildings stand on the approximate site of the later Red&White store. Further on is Martel's blacksmith shop, on the site of the present elementary school. [1909 collection]



East side of Main St., probably across from the Lutheran Church – residences, telephone lines, wooden sidewalk, young trees, and fences. [1909 collection]



[Jim Benedict]



Inside the Stewart General Store. [1909 collection]



Brummtopp, c. 1905 – Abram J.H. Funk, the one on the farthest right, is holding what looks like a horsewhip in his right hand. *My grandfather is not in costume, so he must have been the leader. It says on the back: 'Grampa and his gang of Happy New Year wishers in Rosenfeld, Mb.'* [Edna Siemens]



Railroad crew near Rosenfeld, c. 1907 – Abram J.H. Funk is in the back row, third from the right. [Edna Siemens]



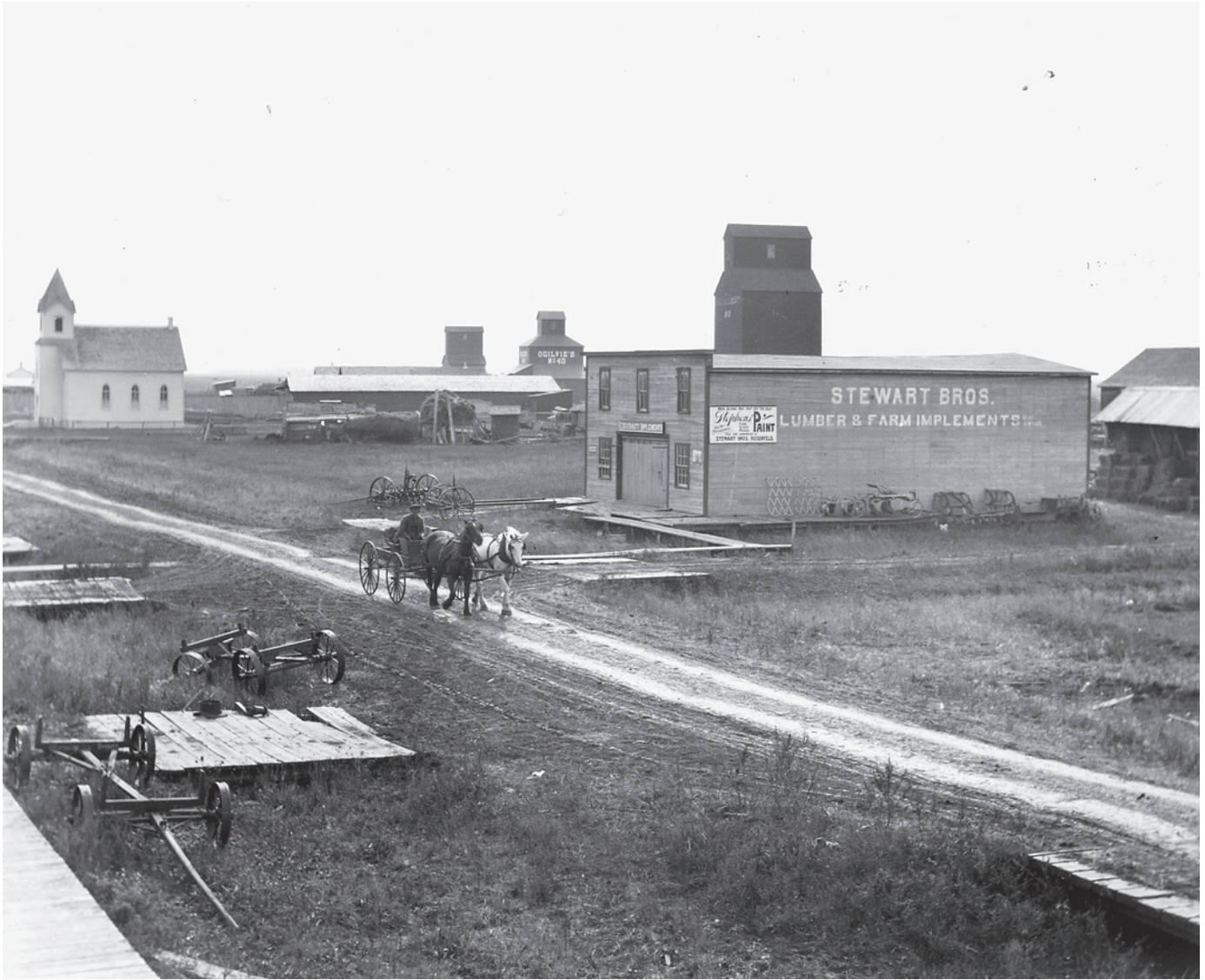
John Funk – Edna Siemens' grandfather's brother was born in 1882. John Funk began working for the CPR as a section man and later was responsible for the care of the coal dock, retiring from his job in 1949. [Edna Siemens]



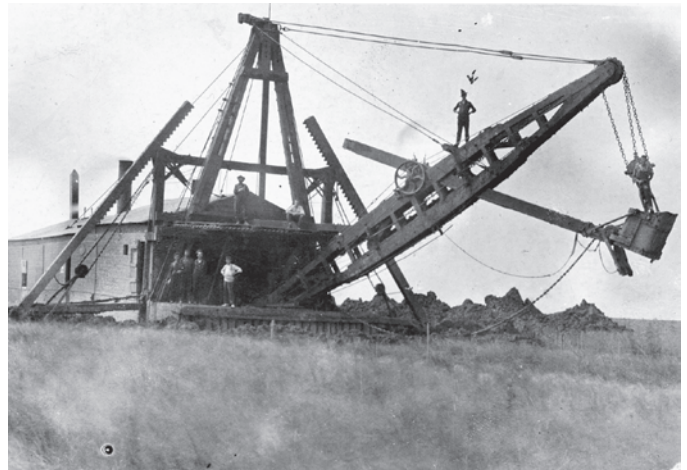
Rosenfeld from the top of a grain elevator in the very early 1900s. [Jim Benedict]



Looking northeast from Railway Avenue in 1909. Buildings in the distance are actually located on Main Street, as Railway Ave. ran at an angle from southwest to northeast. [1909 collection]



"Traffic" on Main St. heading north. The Stewarts were also in the lumber-and-farm-implements business. Photo likely taken from the balcony of the Stewart general store. [1909 collection]



Abram J.H. Funk (see arrow) working on a dragline near Rosenfeld, 1905-1907. [Edna Siemens] Annual flooding of the Rosenfeld and Plum Coulee area resulted in the area being placed under the Drainage Act. In 1903, dredging began in an area going east to the Red River. In 1904 severe spring flooding retarded drainage work, but a six-mile canal was dug in an easterly direction from Buffalo Lake, providing considerable relief to adjoining lands and the village of Rosenfeld.

Among the Mennonites



This is the best description and record we have of life in the original Dorf Rosenfeld. How amazing that an aristocratic Englishman, travelling in Canada on the newly completed railroad, on a whim decided to visit the tiny village in the 1880s, and then recorded and published his experiences there!

From Bill Barry's "Virtual Saskatchewan": Barneby came from Bredenbury, Herefordshire, England, where he was lord of the manor and a member of the British aristocracy. He visited western Canada three times – in 1881, 1883 and 1888, travelling by rail as far as it would take him. He seemed quite intrigued with Canada, bought land in Manitoba (near Otterburne), made friends here, and wrote books on his experiences.

Barneby, William Henry. *Life and Labour in the Far, Far West*. London; New York; Cassell 1884.

Excerpt – Chapter XXIV

Pembina – Rosenfeld – The Mennonites – Victims of Slander – How they Live – Their Gardens – Their Mode of Farming and of Settlement.

We left Manitoba City [now Manitou] at 8.15 a.m. on Monday, August 6th. At first the land was all grass, lying rather low, but flat and open, and with a good deal of scrub-wood; I should think the best use to make of it would be as a cattle range. We again saw most beautiful prairie flowers, growing in masses on each side of the line. After the first ten miles the land did not look so good as that we had seen round Manitoba City. The railway track was terribly out of order, and our car swung and rolled about, almost as much as if we had been crossing the Atlantic. About ten o'clock the appearance of the country changed, for we came to the first Mennonite Village settlement.

These people are emigrants from Russia, though I believe they were originally of German extraction. In accordance with their religious tenets they refused to serve in the army, or to fight, being "men of peace"; the Russian Government therefore gave them ten years in which to seek a new home. This clemency is now cancelled, but thousands had previously availed themselves of the chance, and, under good guidance, many settled here, others going to the States. Their settlements are always in the form of small villages or communities; and they have apparently been well-advised both in their selection of a locality and in their choice of particular lands, for they occupy some of the finest land in the Red River Valley, where the depth of the soil is fully three feet or more, and too good and rich to require manuring for many years to come. Six townships – i.e., thirty-six square miles – were accorded them in this part, about the year 1871-2. Within this area they have built themselves seventy-five villages, each of which contains from ten or twelve to twenty-five farms. How many Mennonites there may be altogether in Manitoba I cannot tell; it is said that there are in all one hundred villages; 14,000 fresh emigrants came over only five years ago, but at the present time the permission for others to leave Russia has been withdrawn.

We had two or three hours to wait at Pembina junction, and, noticing one of these Mennonite villages (that of Rosenfeld) only about a couple of miles away, we determined to walk over there and pay a visit to its inhabitants. We had been told that they were bad settlers, unpleasant neighbors, and dirty in their persons and dwellings; but we were much pleased to find that the exact reverse was the truth; and my notes will tend to show that other settlers have much to learn from them, both in their method of working the land, and in the general form of settlement which they adopt. I certainly considered their system of farming better than any I had previously noticed, and their crops

the best I had seen; but, whether from belonging to a different nationality, or from the exclusive nature of their communities, the fact remains that they are not popular with the ordinary settlers. In coming up the line we had seen some five-and-twenty of their villages, situated at almost equal distances apart, on the perfectly flat level plain; but perhaps a description of the one we visited will sufficiently show what the others are like, for I assume that there would be a certain amount of uniformity in them all. The form of the village is generally a broad prairie street dividing two lines of houses, each with a very large and beautifully cultivated garden attached, stocked with every description of what we should call old-fashioned flowers, and an abundance of vegetables.

The homesteads are very picturesque, being, as nearly as possible, exact copies of the inhabitants' old Russian homes; a very few are built entirely of wood, but most of them had wood-framing, plastered and whitewashed at the base, the two gable ends being of wood, and surmounted by a thatched roof.

The living-room, stable, cow-house, and waggon house all join, communicating throughout with doors; but the pigs have, as a rule, a separate establishment to themselves outside. Over the whole building (living house, stable, &c.) there is one large open loft which forms a kind of granary, and serves every sort of purpose, being not only a store-room, but a general receptacle for everything, whether because not wanted downstairs, or as requiring shelter. The first house we visited stood back out of the line, and a little apart from the others; on entering it we found the owner, with his mother-in-law, wife, and child, all seated at a table with a tin dish of milk and sour kraut before them; this constituted their dinner; they were all eating out of the common dish, though, happily, with separate spoons.

The floor of the room was partly of earth, and partly neatly boarded, and a ladder communicated with the loft above. The earthen floor formed, as it were, the parlour of the establishment, the boarded portion being used as the dairy, and for the various utensils not in immediate use which were ranged here on little wooden forms, or small square tables. The buckets were generally placed in threes, and many of the other utensils appeared to have special forms allotted to them, and were placed three or four in a row. All was clean and perfectly neat; indeed, it was more like a show house at an exhibition than an ordinary dwelling-room.

There were but few copper utensils, but those I saw were quite bright inside, with their outsides as black as ink. In the windows stood neat little pots of flowers and prairie roses.

Opening out of this combined room (in which the

difference in the flooring was the only distinction) were two bedrooms, separated by a boarded partition with a curtain drawn across. The family treasures, consisting of china, glass, spoons, &c., were kept in one of the bedrooms, on shelves in a window opening into the sitting room. Thus the contents of the room could be seen on both sides; and we noticed an old Dutch clock against the wall, also a silver watch and chain hung up as a grand ornament.

There were in the rooms two wooden beds, a crib, and a very large oak case; a table with a pile of winter blankets, and what we should call eider-down quilts, and a couple of stools, completed the furniture. The curtains to the bedroom-windows were closed. The oven opened out of the bedroom; from the sitting-room passed an open chimney, which acted partly as an escape for the smoke from the stove below, and partly as a ventilator.

Under the same roof, and communicating by a door, were the stable, cow-house, &c.; and I think it is very possibly owing to this arrangement that the report has been spread that these Mennonites are such a dirty people, living under the same roof as their animals. For my part, I must say I do not think it is at all a bad arrangement, but, on the contrary, very suitable to the climate, for it enables the owners to get to the stock without having to go out-of-doors; and, as far as I could ascertain, the plan was not open to objection on the score of want of cleanliness.

After seeing the house, we next went to visit the garden. This we found was beautifully kept, and well filled with vegetables and flowers of every variety. The following is a list which I give in the order that I took the names down in my note-book:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Potatoes | 21. Sour Krout |
| 2. Sunflowers | 22. Rhubarb |
| 3. Poppies | 23. China Aster |
| 4. Nasturtiums | 24. Mignonette |
| 5. Pinks | 25. Caraway seed |
| 6. Beans | 26. Sweet Briar |
| 7. Currants | 27. Manitoba Cherry |
| 8. Sweetwilliam | 28. Swedes |
| 9. Pansy | 29. Hollyhock |
| 10. Beetroot | 30. Peas |
| 11. Onions | 31. Horse Radish |
| 12. Indian Pink | 32. Vegetable Marrow |
| 13. Scarlet Star | 33. Cucumber |
| 14. Marigold | 34. Camomile |
| 15. Gooseberry | 35. Watermelon (which
does not grow well) |
| 16. Lettuce | 36. Balsam |
| 17. Carrots | 37. Roses |
| 18. French Beans | 38. Portulaca |
| 19. Wild Gooseberry | |
| 20. Sage | |

The sunflower seed came direct from Russia. The vegetable garden was in the centre, and the flower gardens formed the borders, in the same manner as one may see any day in old-fashioned English gardens. The second house that we visited was much the same as the one I have just described, and everything was equally in order. The only difference in the garden was the addition of plum and dwarf mulberry-trees, also of cotton-wood and poplar. The two latter were eventually to be planted out, and, in the end, to be used for firing. The potato crop here was exceedingly good.

The third house we went to belonged to the "boss" of the village; and was an exact imitation, in wood, of a Russian house. In this garden we found, besides the vegetables and flowers enumerated above, some wild hops, Scotch kale, very fine cabbages, and a few apple trees; but these latter do not grow well in Manitoba. The flowers were, in every case, beautiful and well-grown; the vegetables, on the whole, were also very good and creditable, the potatoes, in particular, being excellent. The name of our guide was Peter Zorokarriors, that of the proprietor of the second house was Abram Zacharis, and that of the "boss" of the village was David Klason. They were all most friendly, and followed us about, every one being anxious to show us their homes and gardens; so we soon had the majority of the village walking about with us. Their knowledge of the English language was not very great; but their anxiety to be friendly and to show us everything fully made up for this, and we managed to understand each other pretty well.

The oldest settler in this village has been here eight years. With regard to the farming of the Mennonite community, they have some excellent land, a part of the Red River Valley; in fact, it is some of the best in Manitoba, excepting, perhaps, that immediately adjoining the river. Upon examining the crops, I found some very good, though weedy, wheat (the best that I have seen in Manitoba); the oats were also good, and cleaner. The soil seemed almost too strong and rich, and inclined to make too much straw. These crops were the result after six years' continuous wheat-growing, with the exception of one year's fallowing. I noticed here a small field of mown barley, which is the first crop I have seen ripe and cut in Manitoba. The settlers told us that, after four years' cropping, they had found the land had become too weedy and dirty; so they now adopt the following rotation, the first year, of course, having been devoted to breaking and backsetting. After that, Second year, Wheat. Third year, Wheat. Fourth year, Oats. Fifth year, Wheat. Sixth year, Fallow.

This last they call the "black year." Thus it will be seen that they adopt the principle of fallowing

every fifth year. It must be remembered that (in this part of the Red River Valley) the soil is three feet deep, and manuring would as yet probably make the land too rich, therefore I think the fallowing system is the best to adopt here for the present; all the same, I think it will eventually be found that it must be resorted to oftener, and that only to fallow every fifth year leaves too long an interval between. At any rate, however, these Mennonite settlers have commenced a regular system of fallowing, which other settlers in Manitoba have as yet failed to do; for the only idea of the latter (as I have said before) as far as I could see, was to crop as often and as hard as they could: they will learn by experience that this plan is not the answer. In the Mennonite settlement I saw one field of wheat which had been cropped for seven years in succession; it looked bad, thin, and foul, and this could not be the fault of the soil, for nothing could exceed its richness. Wheat was apparently cultivated more than anything else; after this came oats; but there was very little barley, and what there was was indifferent, while the wheat and oats, when properly cultivated, were excellent.

I also noticed a small patch of Swedes [turnips], which were fairly good, but small, considering the time of year. The prairie grasses were good, and their greenness quite remarkable when compared with the North-West Territory. At Rosenfeld there did not seem to be much stock, but on nearing some of the other villages we saw many herds of cattle. The stock belonging to each separate village community graze in common, every member contributing half a dollar a head for the herdsman. On the same principle, a general subscription is raised for a schoolmaster – who, it appears, instead of keeping a school for the children to come to, visits instead, and teaches at each house in turn; but how this plan could work was not quite clear to me.

It was apparent that there was a controlling hand directing the arrangements of these Mennonites; their villages were all regularly laid out on a uniform plan, and situated at equal distances apart. On their northern side the prairie was left unenclosed, in a stretch thirty-six miles long, for grazing purposes. On the southern side of each village was the mowing-ground for hay, and behind this again lay the tillage lands, all adjoining each other, instead of being scattered about here, there, and everywhere. I assume that each village has its recognized boundary. The houses were much more roomy and more comfortable than any I had previously seen, and, on the whole, I think the Mennonites should be congratulated on the success they have thus far achieved. I certainly observed no signs of the uncleanness which is attributed to them.

They were growing the best crops I have seen, either in Manitoba or the North-West Territory; and they struck me as being a happy, contented, and prosperous people, with more of the real settler about them than I had noticed elsewhere. When once settled, they remain, and look upon the place as their home, working the land with the intention of making the best of it, without any idea of selling and moving on should an opportunity occur of turning their holdings into cash, and thus restlessly seeking a new home almost before they had become established in their old one. Indeed, I am not at all sure that they are allowed to sell; if they were, I think there would soon be plenty of customers seeking to buy their property.

The latest comer in the settlement said that of his 160 acres he cultivated fifteen as hay, nineteen as wheat, eleven as oats, and four acres only as barley, the rest of his holding being grass. He possessed one cow, two calves, and three horses. If settlers elsewhere would but break up their 160 acres in the same proportion, there would be less rush and fluctuation of population, and a better chance for the future steady development of the country. This man's old home had lain between Moscow and Odessa, rather to the northeast of Kiev, and he said it was very much colder here than there. Nothing, however, would have persuaded him to go back to Russia, and he seemed even to dread the very idea of such a thing ever being possible; which tends to show the horror and aversion in which the oppressions of the Russian Government are held by these people. Another of the settlers stated that of his 160 acres, thirty were under wheat, fourteen were oats, five barley, and one potatoes. We bought some eggs here at eighteen cents per dozen; the Mennonites like a bargain, but are very careful to be exact about it. I believe they are fair in their dealings, and that their charges are moderate. It is possible that the undoubted prejudice which exists against them may partly owe its origin to the fact of their selling the produce of their farms at a more reasonable and moderate rate than the other settlers do. As regards the "mode of settlement" practised by the Mennonites, I think other settlers have a great deal to learn by their example; for, in the first place (as I said before), they farm their land, not as a speculation, but with the intention of remaining on it, and making it their home; and, secondly, they work it on a system, and break up less land, thus reserving a larger proportion of pasture, which I feel sure is right. As the country opens up more grain will be grown, and therefore the price of wheat will fall, while stock, on the contrary, is continually increasing in value, and ought eventually to be produced in far larger quantities throughout all these provinces.

I also like the adoption of the village plan:

considering Manitoba and the North-West Territory include such a large area, I cannot help thinking that it would be very simple to try the experiment of laying out some townships on an approved model village plan, in order to see how the project would be received by the public. The female part of the population would, I am sure, look on it with approval, for the present monotony of a long winter in an isolated district must be terribly dull for them. With the Mennonites the manure from the cow-houses is cut into oblong pieces, just in the same manner as peat is cut in Ireland; it is then dried in the sun, and afterwards stacked like a peat-rick; it is used in winter, when mixed with wood, to kindle a fire.

Editor's note: This book is in the public domain and can be found in its entirety online.

German Lutheran Immigration From the book, *The Municipality of Rhineland: Volost and Municipality, 1884-1994*

by Gerhard Ens

Mennonite immigrants...were not the only new settlers in the RM of Rhineland during this period. German Lutherans from Polish Russia were also entering the area in significant numbers. These Lutheran peasants, coming mostly from Volhynia, settled in the Rosenfeld area in the early 1890's. Having heard of opportunities in Canada from neighbouring Mennonites and Canadian railway agents, these immigrants settled in Manitoba at places such as Winnipeg, Emerson, Beausejour, Brunkild, Morris, Friedensfeld and in the RM of Rhineland at Rosenfeld, Plum Coulee, and Gretna.

These Lutheran immigrants had come to Canada for reasons very similar to those of the earlier Mennonites. Two factors were of paramount importance: the availability of land and the freedom from compulsory military service.

Most German Lutherans in the western provinces of Russia had eked out an existence on plots of land which were only 20-30 acres in size. These lots were leased from Russian or Polish nobles and barely enabled the peasant to support his family. When these leases came due in the 1890's many German Lutherans left for Canada. The other major reason for coming to Canada was the compulsory military service in Russia, which took many youths thousands of miles from home. Unable to speak Russian many of these German speaking Lutherans often received brutal treatment at the hands of Russian officers.

Those Lutherans that settled in the RM of Rhineland came because they wanted open land not bush. Tired of clearing wooded land in Russia, they settled near Rosenfeld where land was ready for the

plow. Another attraction of the area was the plentiful work available among the Mennonites in the area. Friendly and mutually advantageous relations between the Mennonites and German Lutherans went back to Russia and had existed in southern Manitoba since the Mennonite immigration in 1875. In that year a German Lutheran by the name of Otto Pappel accompanied the Mennonite group that founded the village of Neuanlage. Here he and his family worked for Mennonite farmers until he was able to buy land in the area in 1897. This pattern was repeated many times in the 1890's.

The first German Lutheran to settle in the Rosenfeld area was a man named Hoffman. He came to the area in 1891 and began to work for Mennonite farmers. Other families, generally relatives or friends, followed serving as farm workers and carpenters for the more established Mennonite farmers. Some would work for Mennonite farmers the whole year, working for room and board during the winter months. By hard work and frugality they were able to build their own homes after a few years. Most worked approximately seven years before they bought land... Other German Lutherans settled in Gretna and Plum Coulee opening businesses, or adding to the expanding labour forces in the two towns. By 1900 Lutherans were a significant segment of Rhineland's population. Religion was a high priority among these recent arrivals and church services among the German Lutherans of Rosenfeld, Plum Coulee and Gretna were originally held in private homes. These services were overseen by Rev. Willing of Gretna until he left for Ebenwald, Saskatchewan in 1896. The area then came under the care of Rev. Berthold of Langenburg. By 1897 a Lutheran Church had been built in Gretna and shortly thereafter the settlers of Rosenfeld organized the St. John's Congregation (March 2, 1900) with 34 charter members. Although it was part of the same parish as Gretna, this congregation immediately set about building a permanent home. Under the leadership of trustees: Ferdinand Pokrant, M. Recksiedler, and G. Dreger, a new church was built in less than six weeks at a cost of \$800.

The most important new activity of the municipal council in the 1890's was the attempt to secure better drainage in the northern part of the municipality. Persistent flooding in the 1880's and early 1890's resulted in petitions to the municipality to have a ditch dug near Plum Coulee to aid in handling the heavy spring run-off. In March of 1894 Reeve Jacob Heppner went to Winnipeg to try to get some financial aid to dig a ditch from Plum Coulee to Rosenfeld

and from there to the Red River near St. Jean. This scheme, the council believed, would open another seven sections of land for farming. Receiving a promise of \$1,000 from the Manitoba Department of Public Works, surveyors were dispatched to layout the ditch and a contract was signed by July of 1894. Little is known about the particulars of this ditch but in 1896 run-off and heavy rains flooded much of the area.

By this time it had become evident that piecemeal drainage and dredging was not going to alleviate the problem and in 1899 the RM of Rhineland Council petitioned the government to bring three townships under the Drainage Act. This initiated long term drainage projects that would allow such farmers as the Pokrants, Recksiedlers, Schroeders, Knopfs and Jankes to farm the land north of Rosenfeld.

Editor's note: Research shows that many of the first German Lutherans to settle in the Rosenfeld area started out in Gretna, where a Lutheran church had been established. They spent their first few years working as domestics, labourers, and farmhands. Not all pursued farming; many of the men were skilled in the metal trades, opening blacksmith and/or machinery-repair shops, or implement dealerships.

Poignant Memories

Wayne Kroeker, about his Kroeker grandparents, Jacob Peter and Elizabeth: Jake, Peter, Betty, Ike (my dad) and Bill were the five children. There was creeping Charlie for grass that smelt so good, and caragana trees with bursting pods, a rhubarb patch that we would raid with sugar in our hands to sweeten up the sour, old wooden sidewalks out front over which we pushed an old metal wagon Granddad had. The church doors were always unlocked and a couple of times I gave a "sermon" with my sister Sharon sitting in the pews. My sister and I lived in that house for a few months under the care of our grandparents. I could only speak Low German then. Don't speak a word of it now. I remember the pond out back, the summer kitchen, the dreaded outhouse, the barn with the 1927 Overland Whippet with wooden wheels stuffed away under layers of all kind of things. Grandma worked in the bean fields just behind their house.





Gerald “Jerry” Frank was a history buff and highly respected genealogist, originally from Rosenfeld. According to *Your Genealogy Today* contributor, Dave Obee, “The most important element of research in Eastern Europe is confirming the place of origin. Jerry Frank did more than anyone else I know to help people find their ancestral villages in northwestern Ukraine and Poland. The help he provided has raised the level for all researchers, and we should all be grateful for that.” Jerry was one of the original founders of the Society for German Genealogy of Eastern Europe. He died in Calgary in 2014.

The German Lutheran Connection to Ukraine

By Jerry Frank

Many of the German families that came to Rosenfeld arrived from Volhynia, a Russian gubernia, which we usually refer to as a province, but it could be considered the equivalent of a state as well. Its capital is Zhitomir, near Volhynia’s eastern border. A gubernia was broken up into wolosts (counties).

Today, Volhynia is in northwest Ukraine, starting roughly 80 km west of Kiev to the border with Poland. Belarus is the border to the north. Today, Volhynia is split into three Ukrainian administrative districts: Volynska, with Lutsk as the capital; Revnenska, with Rivne (often called Rowno) as its capital; and Zhitomir, with Zhitomir as its capital.

Historically, Volhynia was once a province of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was taken by Russia in the Partitions of the late 1700s when Poland was erased from the map. After WWI (in 1921) it was split in half, with the western side (to just east of Rowno) returned to Poland and the eastern side remaining part of Russia. After WWII, it all reverted to Ukraine. There was a German presence here since before 1800 with a glass manufacturing community at Koretz. The Lutheran Church was first established in Zhitomir in 1800.

German farmers started to migrate into Volhynia around 1815-16, but not in significant numbers until the early 1830s, after the first Polish rebellion (in Russian Poland) of 1831. Even then, the number of Germans was somewhat low, with only about 5,000 or so in all of Volhynia. The big migration started in the 1860s after the second Polish rebellion of 1861. By 1900, there were well over 200,000 Germans scattered about in over 1400 villages in Volhynia. The second migration was also a result of the emancipation of the serfs, which occurred in Russia about 1860, resulting in the nobility-class landlords inviting the Germans to come and farm on

their lands under long-term lease arrangements. No royalty or royal decrees were part of their migration experience.

Mennonites were also part of this migration, but only in a relatively minor way, with perhaps a dozen or so known settlements. They generally came from Galicia (with earlier origins in Switzerland), and often moved on to the other Mennonite settlements in the Black Sea region. If you look at the gubernia map, these settlements were south and east of Ostrog, and south and southwest of Nowograd Wolhynski.

The migration away from these areas pretty much followed the same pattern as the rest of the Russian Germans, whether Lutheran or Mennonite.

I travelled from Kiev to the Rowno region in 2012 to visit my ancestral villages.

The following records show some of the very early Volhynian German families that lived in Rosenfeld. There is no certainty that all lived in the village itself. They may have been on a nearby farm. However, there are other records listing people as part of the Rosenfeld parish, but in another location, such as Weidenfeld. The folk listed below are all said to be living in Rosenfeld. Some of them, of course, stayed only a short while before moving on to other parts of Manitoba or even further west.

The data is extracted from the original *Pastorale Diarium* of Pastor Willing, who served the Gretna Lutheran parish in the years 1893 to about 1896/97:

Belzer, Heinrich – on a visitation record
Bokrant (Pokrant) – confirmed 29 Mar 1896, parents Friedrich P. and Albertine
Bokrant (Pokrant), Daniel – b. 6 Mar 1894 to Ferdinand P. and Leokadia nee Huebner
Dreger, Mathilde – b. 22 Dec 1893 to Gottfried D. and Ernestine nee Lutomsky
Froehlich, Wilhelmine – b. 23 Nov 1894 to Michael F. and Rosalie Kuentop (Kintop)
Hoffmann, Ottilie – b. 13 Sep 1892 to August H. and Beata nee Lilke
Jabusch, August – confirmed 1 Jan 1895, parents Ferdinand J. and Eleonore
Kurbis, Emma – confirmed 21 Apr 1895, parents Rudolph K. and Henriette
Lieske, Gottlieb – confirmed 29 Mar 1896, parents Wilhelm L. and Wilhelmine
Recksiedler, Heinrich – b. 29 Aug 1893 to Carl R. and Mathilde nee Belke
Recksiedler, Helene – b. 19 Jan 1894 to Diengott R. and Henriette nee Jabusch
Riske, Heinrich – b. 11 Jun 1894 to Carl R. and Pauline Fuerst
Zieske, Wilhelmine – on a visitation record



Ferdinand Pokrant was one of Rosenfeld's pioneers. This gripping account of his experiences as an immigrant in the early 1890s was written for the Nordwestern Kalender, 1929. It received first prize in the personal experience category. The story has been abridged for publication here.

From Wolhynien to Canada: True Experiences During the Voyage & Early Life in Canada **By Ferdinand Pokrant**

In March, 1893, people living around Tutschen, Wolhynien, Poland, which was under Russian rule, at the time, felt an excitement spreading, because shipping company agents were encouraging tenant farmers, in Wolhynien, to emigrate to Canada, where land could be owned, and where also much more land was available. In Poland only the rich could own land.

I was still a very young man, with energy, ambition and desire to accept a challenge. I had a young, faithful wife, and one daughter, a year and a half old, still in her mother's arms. [Leocadia and I] had been married for only three short years.

After carefully considering the agent's offer, we decided to emigrate, with the hopes and dreams of making a better future for ourselves in Canada than was possible in Poland.

We sold everything from horses, cows, buildings, fences, and whatever we had in terms of equipment and tools, but the money we realized was not large, in total. Neighbours knew we had to sell, so bidding was shrewd. Yet, we felt we could pay our own way to Canada.

Agents told us that legal passports from the Russian government would be quite expensive, and delays could be lengthy. So, agents operated by "smuggling out" the people who agreed to emigrate, and the cost would be five rubles per head – three rubles for the drivers, and two rubles for the agents' services. Only the men would have to be smuggled out, women and children could cross the border freely.

I was raised to be honest and righteous; the idea of being smuggled out from my land of birth bothered my conscience, although costs and delays were also careful considerations. The view held by some Baptists of our group was that smuggling was not among their sins. With me..., agreeing with the proposal of being smuggled out brought me added fears and costs, for I later had to bribe Russian border guards to gain my freedom to get to Germany.

Meanwhile, plans called for beginning our trip, by boarding the train at Rovno, which was the nearest

railway station from our house near Tutschen. We had to get to Rovno by wagon, on our own.

The hour to leave for Rovno arrived, and we mounted buggies and wagons. We each had friends to take us to the train. Many local friends accompanied us, for several miles, making a procession; however, we in the lead, could not see all the people behind us. It now resembled a long funeral procession, for there were abundant tears shed.

The wagon ride to Rovno was uneventful, and we found our agents waiting for us. They told us that an epidemic of cholera had broken out in parts of Russia, and as result travel was somewhat restricted. Only the "herrschaft" (wealthy class) could travel. Baggage was strictly restricted to one hand suitcase. The agents advised us to put on our best clothes and act above our class...

We felt very sorry, that we could not take our feather bed, which brides traditionally received as an inheritance or wedding gift. I had rolled it tightly and bound it with string, determined we would take it along with us. My wife wept when she realized she could not take it. It had been an object of affection, because it had been a family gift.

As we entered the railway coach, I realized that all there was left was I, with my suitcase in my hand, my youngest brother, Henry, fatigued, barely twelve years old, my wife, Leocadia with our only child, Bertha, in her arms, and nothing more.

The first railway station ahead was Wilna. Upon our arrival, we were taken to the bureau. There we had to pay all our railway fares in advance for Rotterdam, Holland. Our agents supplied us with one agent to lead us. We did not know in advance how many roads we would need to choose to avoid falling into the hands of the Russian Border Patrols. We were asking ourselves, were the agents trying their best to reach the deserted wilderness and forests in an effort to smuggle us over the border, or were there restricted travel routes because of the cholera outbreak? We did proceed from Wilna to Kowno, and from there, on to Schwalli. This was a great distance around the historic city of Warschau.

Schwalli was a small unimportant city, but for me, it became most significant. Firstly, it was the last railway station in Poland, and secondly, it was still eighty werst [1 werst=about 1 km] to the German border, and thirdly, we had to sleep on louse-infested straw. The punishing ride on the wooden chase (buggy-like wagon) was so bumpy that we thought we would get all our bones broken. No wonder that our beloved wives cried more than they ate during these rough trips.

After driving for two days and one night, as fast as we could manage, with barely any time for the

driver to feed the horses, we arrived at a pub, which was still several wersts from the German border. From here, our driver took the women and children directly to the German border and unloaded them immediately after crossing the border. Women and children could cross the border freely, but this was not the case with the men.

The men, in our particular group, were given a guide, who happened to be a small boy. He led us into a large forest and eventually to his parents' home. This older couple was of Catholic faith. The little boy told us that he had two large, very strong brothers, who worked many nights smuggling emigrants out of Russia.

There was still a large, dangerous, frozen river that had recently begun to melt and break up into ice blocks that lay between us and the German border. The two strong brothers had not yet returned from their last crossing that they had made with a boatload of escapees, so we had to wait for three days before our guides returned across the river.

In the meantime, many more escapees had gathered to wait for their turn to be canoed across the dangerous river. The group included every kind of people. The guides became very afraid when they saw so many people waiting. But nothing else mattered. The guides had to get these people across the river, across the border and out of Russia.

So the guides resumed their duty, and succeeded in getting us across the river, with the ice banging at the sides of the canoe. The current of the river was like a torrent. We all saw death flash before our eyes and we prayed for the grace of God. We all got across safely, Praise God!

Now, there was still a barren wilderness before the German border, where there were no border patrols, but the smugglers had been reported to the government, so a very vigilant watch patrol had been placed there to capture all escapees.

Fortunately, our guides were strong men, who could wheel a club effectively. At one point, we were taken by surprise by the patrol, who cried out, "Postote!" (stand still) and some warning shots were fired. Our guides yelled to us, "Run back to the patrols. It's not permitted for them to shoot." So the battle ensued, both sides swinging clubs and wooden sticks. Our group of ten wanted to run away, but strayed in the dark, only to find ourselves in a small creek, hip-deep in cold icy water. No more running away – all drenched, boots filled with water, and the patrol took our group of ten captive. The remaining twenty had succeeded in fighting off the patrol and managed to get across the border and avoid capture. I was the only German among the captured group.

But, because the Russian border patrols were

always greedy for money and cared very little about what was right, I was able to bribe the patrols to obtain my freedom. I had some exigency money sewn into my underwear. The patrols allowed me to cross the German border, but chased me back into the wilderness.

There I stood, alone, deserted, and without advice. Upon my pleading for advice, I was told to get a different *prowaknik* (guide), so that I would not fall into the hands of the same border patrol. But, where should we go now, in this dark cold night? My wet clothes were frozen stiff, to the point that my body became inflexible. After running hither and yon, I found a simple fence of laths, and discovered after further investigation, that it was a cemetery, or God's acre. In the past, I had been scared and nervous in a cemetery, but not this time, because I would now rather be with the dead than with the living. I saw and leaned against the fence, submitting myself to God's will, hoping to rest or to perhaps fall asleep, when all sorts of thoughts stormed my mind – concern about my young family, who, too, were alone and deserted somewhere. So, I gathered all my remaining strength and pushed on, finally coming to some human habitations. Here I screamed until heard, begging to be let in, for it was midnight. The inhabitants of the house were Polish *litauer* (people) residing in what I later found out was the Masurischen vicinity, between Libau and Tilsit.

Here I was able to thaw out my frozen clothes and dry them out at the clay stove. I subsequently engaged a new guide, who went with me thirty werst eastward. The great dangerous river bent somewhat eastwards, so I had to once again cross the river to get to Germany. Now, this great, furious river again stood between my family and me. We were on the east side and my wife and child were on the west side of the river. We were in the beautiful and friendly German village of Herman, and I have to say, that these folks took great pity on me, after I told them of my struggles to get out of Russia. But, they could help me very little, since the nearest bridge was at Tilsit. No canoe could cross the river due to the heavy current and the crunching ice. I had to hire a team of horses and buggy to transport me to the Tilsit bridge and then back the 30 werst on the other side of the river to reach the spot where my family was staying.

Then, we returned to the village of Tilsit by wagon and took the all-night train through Germany. We finally arrived in Berlin. Then we went on to Rotterdam, in Holland. From Rotterdam, we boarded an old, small, ship to Hull, in England. Then from Hull, we took a train across England, to the city of Liverpool.

From Liverpool, we boarded a very dilapidated ship, likely an old freighter converted into a passenger ship. We received very poor treatment and little in the way of accommodations. We froze most of the time and went hungry, getting little in the way of food. If we complained about the “dog’s menu”, the staff ridiculed us and treated us as slaves. If my story is actually published, many other pioneers will corroborate my testimony and vouch for my veracity. What angered me the most was that we were not told what was actually written on the contract we were forced to sign. Later, we discovered that we had unwarily signed a paper, which stated that we were most satisfied and even pleased with the quality of the accommodation and the services of the staff aboard the ship.

The voyage overseas was over nine days from Liverpool to Halifax. It took another four days by rail to get to Winnipeg. In Winnipeg our first concern became a reality: No jobs were to be found. It was a season of high unemployment and no one had time to be concerned about newly arrived immigrants.

So, I submitted my destiny to fate. We decided to venture further afield and took a train from Winnipeg to Plum Coulee, which was a very pleasant Mennonite settlement. It was not very well established or very prosperous, but we hoped we could at least find a job there. Farming meant work. Also, the Mennonites spoke a language we understood, so we could communicate easily.

I walked and walked, looking for work, until I developed blisters on my feet. Finally one day, I found a farmer who was willing to hire me as a hired hand, however it was at a very low wage and for only a term of several months. Fortunately, this farmer was willing also to accept my wife as a maid, in exchange for room and board. So my little family all lived in the same house.

My employer was a very strict and practical farmer, which meant hardship for me but in the long run it was beneficial, for I learned what Canadian farming was all about. We saved and exercised thrift and were soon able to build our own little house, in a small village [Rosenfeld]. We were no longer so lonely.

I progressed from a carpenter to a master carpenter, who contracted work and employed my own crew of men. We lived with less restraint and with some luxury. After several years, we managed to save over a thousand dollars, which permitted us to buy a quarter section of farm land. We made arrangements to pay annually and with our other savings we bought horses, machinery, cattle, seed grain, and fodder for our livestock.

To be sure, I had paid for the land in several years,

so I bought a second quarter section of land, again on an annual payment plan, for now I had established a credit rating as a diligent worker and as an honest man. I continued to buy quarter section after quarter section until I owned six, which was equal to nine hundred and sixty acres. The price of the land varied in value, from two thousand dollars, to five thousand five hundred dollars, per quarter section.

In the last few years, I have worked very little but live comfortably well. Therefore, I must praise Canada. I like to recognize that with diligence and hard work, one can get ahead and become financially independent, afford a good standard of living and above all, be happy.

The Runaway

Roy Martel: Uncle Heinrich the blacksmith built us a horse-drawn, low-slung sleigh for winter milk delivery. One could easily step in and out and reach the milk bottles in the crates. The seat was an eight-inch plank that rested on the sides of the sleigh, but was not fastened. One very cold winter morning Dad and I were doing our morning deliveries as usual; he would do one side of the street while I did the other. It was Friday. The weekly pay system consisted of money owing being placed into the returning empty quart bottles. We had just turned onto Main Street. Dad had the short delivery to the Funks and I was still returning from the Wiebe delivery. The horse had been trained to just wait. I saw Dad as he was about to step into the sleigh and was already holding the reins when one end of the seat plank lifted and then banged down. The horse bolted and took off. Dad tried to hold onto the reins as he bounced along the snow-covered street on his stomach, but had to let go soon. The runaway horse galloped straight down Main Street, the sleigh hitting the hydro poles. All we could do is stand and watch as we saw empty bottles with money flying and breaking, bottles full of milk smashing, parts of the sleigh flying, and the horse continuing home. No one was hurt. The horse stood waiting at the barn door when we had walked back. Uncle Heinrich had a fix-up job to do and we had a story to tell to help pass the long, long winter.





In 1899, the provincial electoral district of Rosenfeldt comprised Townships One, Two, and Three in Ranges One and Two West. The towns of Rosenfeld and Altona were in this district. The electoral district of Rhineland was to the west, and included Plum Coulee and Winkler.

Early Politics in the Electoral District of Rosenfeldt

James Urry. *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe–Russia–Canada, 1525 to 1980*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006.

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pages 170–172 (reproduced courtesy of University of Manitoba Press)

By the end of 1899... the [Thomas] Greenway [Liberal] government, which had been in power for over a decade, faced a new election. The decision of when to call the election was complicated by increasing opposition to the provincial Liberal Party and to the policies of the Liberal Dominion government in western Canada. Against the advice of the principal organizer of the party in the West, Clifford Sifton, Greenway called an election for December 7. The Conservatives, however, were better organized than the Liberals and the leaders of the national party in Ottawa threw their weight behind any candidate they considered could unseat a sitting Liberal member and bring down the government. In Rosenfeldt Enoch Winkler faced none other than William Hespeler. Two German-speaking candidates with a record of assisting Mennonites since their emigration were thus competing for whatever Mennonite votes might be available. Hespeler, though, declared himself an “independent” rather than a Conservative and declined to be called an “opposition” candidate; Sifton’s *Free Press* “confidently expected” Winkler to be returned.⁴³

According to a report by Klaas Peters in the newspaper *Nordwesten*, at a well-attended meeting in Altona, Johann Hiebert, Erdmann Penner’s son-in-law, introduced Hespeler as “our candidate,” while Hespeler played on his long association with the Mennonites and his role in their immigration.⁴⁴ In a letter to the same paper, David Friesen, also of Altona, stressed the need for a “German” in the legislature and suggested that as Hespeler had been a friend of “us” Mennonites, it was our “duty” (*Pflicht*) to elect him.⁴⁵ Winkler, realizing the threat to his position, wrote a letter to the newspapers suggesting that Hespeler was presenting himself as an opposition candidate and not just as an “independent,” and that he had stated at Altona and Rosenfeld that he would not attend election meetings at which Winkler and his “Greenway band” were present.⁴⁶

Ahead of the 1899 campaign some sections of

the conservative Mennonite leadership expressed renewed doubts on the correctness of Mennonites being involved in politics. The Bergthal elder Gerhard Wiebe criticized Mennonites who allowed “themselves to be nominated for secular office,” and the leaders of the conservative Kleine Gemeinde forbade members from nominating themselves for office and voting.⁴⁷ The results also revealed divisions among Mennonite voters. Whereas in 1896, less than 32 percent of registered voters in Rosenfeldt actually voted, in 1899, almost 51 percent exercised their rights. In Gretna Winkler beat Hespeler by nine votes (sixty-five to fifty-six) but in Altona the result was reversed in favour of Hespeler (sixty-four to fifty-six). In identifiable Mennonite centres, Bergfeld, Neuhoftung, and Rosenfeld, Hespeler carried the day with only Rosenheim giving Winkler a clear advantage. To the shock of the Liberals and their many Mennonite supporters, Hespeler defeated Winkler by just seventeen votes (258 votes to 241). The Liberals immediately accused Hespeler of acting improperly, of presenting himself to Mennonites during the campaign as a supporter of the government, when in fact he supported the opposition.⁴⁸ There may be some support for a charge of confusion as Valentine Winkler, who regained Rhineland with a healthy majority over his Conservative rival, secured a majority in Plum Coulee, Winkler, and Schanzenfeld, all of which contained Mennonite voters.⁴⁹ A recount was called in Rosenfeldt and a formal electoral petition in the names of Jacob Reimer of Gretna and Dietrich Klaassen of Neuanlage was filed with the courts.⁵⁰ Hespeler’s conduct was further questioned when shortly after the election he declared that he was now an “Independent Conservative” and intended to support the newly elected Conservative government.⁵¹ The entire affair spilled over into the *Mennonitische Rundschau* when “A Mennonite” provided readers with a detailed account of the election, Hespeler’s deception, and the dubious support he received from certain Mennonites.⁵²

In the face of the debacle of 1899, the Manitoba Liberals in Rosenfeldt reorganized themselves. In early August 1900, Enoch Winkler called a meeting in the Altona School to organize a “Rosenfeldt Liberal Association.” Thomas Greenway was elected honorary president and J.J. Loewen of Altona became president of the association. The newspaper report of the meeting lists almost thirty members of the association, nearly all of whom were local Mennonites. Those present indicated their support for the trade policies of the Liberal Dominion government and rejected those of the Conservatives; they also selected representatives to attend the Manitou Liberal Convention just a few days away where a candidate

for the Dominion election was to be selected. The meeting also denounced Hespeler for his actions in the previous election when he had “solicited and received many votes among our people by representing himself to be the candidate favourable to the Hon. Thomas Greenway, when in truth he was opposed to him.” Addresses were made in English and German and the meeting “closed with three cheers for the Queen.” The report concluded that the “Germans and Mennonites are for the Liberals.”⁵³

- 43 *Manitoba Morning Free Press*, 17 November 1899, p. 2; *Manitoba Morning Free Press*, 27 November 1899, p. 2; Hespeler had been an alderman on the Winnipeg city council and his conservative sympathies were well known in the city, if not in the countryside.
- 44 *Nordwesten*, 30 November 1899, p. 1; in the same issue Peters was accused by a correspondent of corruption as his position as an immigration agent was a form of patronage from the Liberal Party.
- 45 *Nordwesten*, 30 November 1899, p. 7. Hespeler was also German Consul in Winnipeg.
- 46 *Nordwesten*, 30 November 1899, p. 1; repeated in *Nordwesten*, 5 December 1899, p. 1.
- 47 Gerhard Wiebe, *Causes and History*, 64 (dated January 1900); in July 1899 the Nebraska, Kansas, and Manitoba leaders of the Kleine Gemeinde meeting at Blumenort resolved that its members could not hold political office or vote. See Henry Fast, “The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America,” in Delbert Plett (ed.), *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach: D.F.P. Publications, 1987), 126.
- 48 *Manitoba Free Press*, 14 December 1899, p. 1. The Liberals were obviously annoyed by the shift in Mennonite votes and, somewhat ironically, Liberal-backed English newspapers in the province questioned Mennonite claims to be the “quiet in the land” and uninvolved in politics. See *Nordwesten*, 3 May 1900, p. 1, quoting reports from Brandon, Morden, and Winnipeg newspapers.
- 49 *MFP* 26, 142, 8 December 1899, p. 5. In contrast to Rosenfeldt, however, the turnout in Rhineland was lower with only 34 percent voting, although this was an improvement over the less than 26 percent in 1896. In both years (and in 1892), these represented the lowest turnout of registered voters in the province, itself a reflection of the general Mennonite unwillingness to vote.
- 50 *MFP*, 15 December 1899, p. 1; *MFP*, 16 January 1900, p. 1; *Nordwesten* 11, 37, 18 January 1900, p. 1; the cost of filing a petition was £750, a considerable sum at this period but this was probably met by the Liberal Party; the petition was unsuccessful.
- 51 *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide* (Ottawa) for 1900, 385 noted that after the election, Hespeler declared against the Liberal government and, in his personal entry to the *Guide*, he described himself as an “independent with a strong Conservative leaning” (379); he was elected speaker of the assembly but still had to defend himself against Mennonite attacks; see *Nordwesten*, 29 March 1900, p. 1; *Nordwesten*, 5 April 1900, p. 1.
- 52 *MR*, 31 January 1899, pp. 2, 4.
- 53 “Liberals of Rosenfeldt organization and resolutions on the Tariff, Greenway and Hespeler,” newspaper cutting dated 6 August 1900 probably from the *MFP*, in the Julius Siemens Family Papers, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Fresno), Personal Paper Collections. Although he had returned to the United States, Siemens was reported to be present at the meeting and obviously kept this cutting of the event.

Manitoba’s Railways: The First Forty Years

By George A. Moore

...an abridged version of Mr. Moore’s essay that appeared in two parts in a publication of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association called *Canadian Rail*. His original essays were printed in No. 282, July, 1975, and No. 285, October, 1975. (All issues of the *Canadian Rail* magazine can be found online.)

As far as Manitoba was concerned, the first definitive steps towards communication by iron rail were taken... in 1874, [when] a charter was granted to the Pembina Branch Railway. Under the terms of this charter, the Dominion Government agreed to construct sections and branches of the “Pacific Railway”, including the first section to be built from Fort Garry south to Pembina, on the International Boundary. The contractor was Joseph Whitehead and the Pembina Branch was Manitoba’s first operating railway, being opened in November 1878. It should be understood that the Pembina Branch, as it was subsequently called, today part of CP Rail’s system, is not the oldest portion of this vast railway network. The oldest portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and CP Rail is in Quebec and was opened for service in 1847.

The steam locomotive used to haul cars during the construction of the Pembina Branch and in its first months of operation has survived to this day, 102 years from the time when she was outshopped at the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia, PA, USA in 1872. Named “Countess of Dufferin” by Whitehead, she was built originally for the Northern Pacific Railway as their Number 56. She was purchased by Joseph Whitehead and was brought to Winnipeg by barge down the Red River, arriving on October 9, 1877.

The Dominion Land Survey began subdividing the prairie lands in 1873, in advance of the coming of the railways. The survey progressed at a leisurely rate, anticipating the route of the “Pacific Railway”, and was almost complete by 1881. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, incorporated on February 15, 1881 and granted Royal Assent the following day, was constructed in a “bits-and-pieces” fashion across the greater part of the rolling prairies. As far as Manitoba was concerned, by December 1882 there was a continuous line of railway from Winnipeg to Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, a distance of nearly 500 miles.

Various branch lines were also being built by the Canadian Pacific in Manitoba at this time and the work proceeded throughout the 1880s. For example, the Stonewall Branch, Rugby Junction to Stonewall,

18.2 miles, was completed; the Southwestern and Pembina Mountain Branch, Rugby Junction to Manitou, Rosenfeld and Gretna, 125 miles, was opened. The Selkirk Branch, Rugby Junction to Selkirk, 22 miles, began operation and the Souris Branch, Kemnay to Estevan, Saskatchewan, 156.1 miles, was completed.

There were, in addition, some private railway companies chartered, which were eventually absorbed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, either through lease or purchase. The Manitoba South Western Colonization Railway Company constructed lines from Rugby Junction to Glenboro (102.7 miles), Manitou to Deloraine (100.5 miles) and Elm Creek to Carman (12.2 miles). The Manitoba and North Western Railway Company of Canada started from Portage La Prairie and built a line to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, 222.5 miles, and a branch from Binscarth to Russell, 11.0 miles, today the Russell Subdivision of CP Rail. The Great North West Central Railway Company was chartered in 1880 as the Souris and Rocky Mountain Railway Company. A change in corporate title occurred in 1886 and, in 1900, the lines from Chater to Gautier and Gautier to Hamiota were leased in perpetuity to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

The 1880s in Manitoba were characterized by a rate of growth of railways experienced only during two other periods in the history of Canada. From 1855 to 1870, the Grand Trunk Railway, the Great Western Railway and the Intercolonial Railway were completed and placed in operation. From 1900 to 1915, the National Transcontinental, from Moncton, New Brunswick to Winnipeg, Manitoba was completed, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the National Transcontinental's westward continuation, was opened to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. The Canadian Northern Railway, from humble beginnings in Manitoba, completed its trans-Canada railway from Quebec, on the St. Lawrence River, to Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Canadian Pacific land-boom of 1881-82 accelerated the fevered rate at which the rails were laid across the prairies and the City of Winnipeg became the undisputed centre of a rapidly growing rail network in Manitoba. Following the boom of the early 1880s, a decline in the rate of railway construction ensued and fewer immigrants came to Manitoba to seek their fortunes. It is, of course, axiomatic that, west of Winnipeg, the Canadian Pacific Railway dominated the railway scene in these years. But a cursory look at the statute books of Manitoba and the Dominion of Canada shows that, on paper, the Canadian Pacific was not without a few rivals. During the 1870s, no fewer than 15 railway

companies were incorporated in law in Manitoba, but only four of these laid any track. One was the Canadian Pacific. The figures for the years 1880 to 1889 are most surprising, as out of 40 incorporations, only six railways were built. The best laid plans often failed to materialize, under the baleful influence of the almighty CPR and its "Monopoly Clause".

Towards the close of the Eighties, there was a considerable outcry in favour of competition for the Canadian Pacific, which was enjoying rapid, undisciplined growth in the shelter of their exclusive charter. Among the clauses of the contract with the Government of Canada was one which guaranteed that no railway company would be chartered to construct lines on either side of the CPR's main line for a period of 20 years. In response to the public outcry against this monopoly, and in the hope of reducing freight rates to the east, the Manitoba government under the leadership of Premier Norquay, ratified the incorporation of the Red River Valley Railway Company and authorized the Railway Commissioner for Manitoba to build it from Winnipeg to West Lynne (now Emerson) Manitoba. Subsequently, it was to be turned over to a private company for operation. On September 4, 1888, the Red River Valley's name was changed to the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway Company, while the line from Winnipeg to Emerson, 65.81 miles to the south on the International Boundary, was opened to traffic on September 1, 1889. To no one's surprise, the Northern Pacific & Manitoba turned out to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Northern Pacific Railway of the USA.

The Northern Pacific and Manitoba received its provincial charter in 1888, with authority to construct and operate the Red River Valley Railway from Winnipeg to the International Boundary, from Winnipeg to Portage La Prairie and from Morris to Brandon.

The number of people immigrating to western Canada declined sharply in the early 1890s. This was the result of many factors, including better times in Great Britain and increasing competition for a share of the emigrating classes by other countries. In addition, lower prices for farm produce in Canada acted as an additional deterrent. The weather also failed to cooperate; there was a succession of dry seasons and damaging early frosts. A lack of available land, south of Riding Mountain district, was another contributing factor.

But, as the '90s unfolded, the situation improved steadily and, once again, there was considerable activity in the construction of new railway lines and

the extension of existing ones. The Canadian Pacific Railway opened the Souris Branch from Kenmay to Oxbow, Saskatchewan in 1892, this branch being the direct result of the failure of the Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway to honour an agreement with the Government of Manitoba to extend their Souris Branch to the coal fields in the southwestern part of the province. In 1890, the Government of Manitoba asked the Canadian Pacific to complete this railway.

Immigration to Manitoba increased somewhat in the mid-'90s, but its traditional pattern had changed, with a significant percentage of new Canadians now coming from countries other than the United Kingdom. Waves of Ukrainian immigrants swept into Manitoba in 1897, 1898 and 1899, the people settling mainly in the northwest portions of the province. By the end of 1897, available land was scarce and it grew more so as the turn of the century approached.

Railways were constructed rapidly across the prairies west of Winnipeg and stations of varying shapes and sizes were erected along the tracks. In the first few months after a new line was opened, it was usually considered sufficient to "ground" an old boxcar on the station site, providing the bare necessities for the agent's survival and the care and handling of passengers, their baggage, express and freight. A pioneer of the era recalls:

The station on wheels soon arrived and was placed on a small track behind the platform; apparently an old boxcar converted for use by the B&B gang [railway workers responsible for maintenance of bridges and buildings].

It had an office at one end, a bedroom at the opposite end, and the space in the centre was intended for use as a passenger waiting room and storage for freight and baggage. The total length of the car was about 36 feet. Two bunks in the sleeping quarters were torn out so that it could be made into a regular bedroom. When the two bunks were ripped from the walls, thousands of dead bugs fell to the floor, the result of a previous fumigation.

A second boxcar reached Pierson soon after and was placed at the end of the first car to be used for storage of freight and baggage. The two cars served as a railway station for two years when a nice station was built in 1897 with good living accommodation.

"Along the Old Melita Trail" – Isabel Reekie
Saskatoon, 1965: Memoirs of G.F. Morrison,
first Canadian Pacific Railway agent at
Pierson, Manitoba.

Canadian Pacific Railway records show that, with the exception of principle towns and villages,

very few permanent stations were built prior to 1900. Most were built after that time. Many towns depending of course on their state of prosperity, local politics and sundry other matters, were awarded beautiful station structures, surrounded in time by lush floral gardens and trimmed hedges, the result of scrupulous maintenance by the agent. Other towns made do, through the years, with the aforementioned old boxcars or other portable structures, converted to suit the needs of the railway, not the aspirations of the citizens.

The Twentieth Century brought yet another boom to western Canada, with the majority of new immigrants travelling right through Manitoba, seeking their fortunes in the country further west. Despite this inevitable circumstance, since available farmland was fast disappearing in Manitoba, the province did receive a proportion of the new Canadians.

In the decade 1900-1910, more miles of railway were constructed in Manitoba than in any other similar period. Branch lines were located and built primarily to encourage settlement on the prairies and to transport the agricultural products of these new areas. This is not to say that agriculture was the sole justification for these new lines; minerals, mainly coal, in the period about 1900 were also a justification for these new lines.

The Midland Railway Company of Manitoba, incorporated provincially in 1903, was a venture in joint ownership by the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railways of the United States. Lines were built from Portage La Prairie to Gretna and from Haskett to Morden. On 1 July 1909, the Midland was purchased by the Manitoba Great Northern Railway, mentioned above. The Midland retained its switching trackage in Winnipeg and subsequently obtained running rights over the Canadian National Railways' line from Portage Junction (Winnipeg) to the International Boundary at Emerson.

During the ensuing years, the importance of the branch lines criss-crossing the southern half of Manitoba diminished considerably. Passenger service on all of the branch lines described in this study is now non-existent, a situation which is directly attributable to the automobile and the modern highway system. Farmers are, in the majority of instances, now trucking their grain to elevators located on secondary or primary main-line sidings and, because of the heavier weight on axles of loaded covered hoppers, old grain elevators are disappearing from branch lines that cannot support these heavyweight cars at a steady rate. Some of the

branch lines have not seen a train in years and such is the fate of Canadian Pacific's Carman Subdivision, between Carman and Kronsart, which has not been used since 1964, although it is still included in the 27 October 1974 CP Rail employees' timetable.

The Country Railroad Station of Manitoba
Charles W. Bohi, H. Roger Grant, *Manitoba Pageant*, Spring 1978, Volume 23, Number 3

Small-town railroad stations are no longer critical to the transportation needs of Manitobans. Observant individuals can easily find abandoned and decaying depots dotting the provincial landscape. This, however, was not always true. Before rubber-tire vehicles gained their current degree of dominance over flanged-wheel ones, the railroad station held special significance for most residents. Of all the regions of Canada, railways were once most vital to the Prairie West. Farmers were nearly totally dependent on them to market their bulky crops; few had access to water arteries. Merchants and citizens of the ubiquitous "false-front" towns similarly relied on the railroad for their commercial and personal needs. The "deepo" undeniably served as the gateway to the world. Visitors, in fact, regularly judged a community by the appearance of its station; a flimsy wooden building likely meant a struggling village, while a commodious brick one gave tangible evidence that a town had come of age.

The most important purpose served by small-town depots was to provide railways with a place to offer their services. Passengers could buy tickets and have a comfortable setting in which to wait. Freight and package express could be stored until they were loaded onto trains or delivery drays. Local industries, especially grain elevators, could order freight cars and have them billed for shipment. Telegrams, whether personal or business, could be sent or received. Not only did the depot serve as an economic centre, but it became a popular place for local socializing. "Loafers" were regular fixtures in country depots.

A less obvious function of depots and agents was to assist in train control. By having agents report freight and passenger movements past their stations and by using these employees to relay orders to crews, dispatchers could plan meeting and passing points. Thus, even if there were few local customers, depots were still needed for the safe operations of a railway.

In the small agricultural communities of Manitoba transportation needs could be easily met by erecting a "combination" station. By providing space for a waiting room, office, and freight house under a single roof, construction costs could be

minimized. Few communities in the province ever grew to the point where separate (and presumably custom-designed) freight and passenger stations were justified.

Since agents often found housing difficult to find in Manitoba's rural hamlets, the companies generally included living quarters in their combination depots. Usually this was done by adding a second storey and rear annex. This extra investment was thought worthwhile: carriers considered married agents more responsible and better representatives than single ones, and occupied buildings lessened vandalism and burglaries.

Since railway building was expensive, it followed that the cost of station construction must be kept low. Consequently, most Manitoba depots were built to standard plans, though companies made their blueprints sufficiently flexible to allow variations to meet local needs. Wood was almost universally used, although the Canadian National frequently gave their depots a coat of stucco. Wooden or cinder platforms rather than more expensive brick or concrete typically adjoined stations. Indoor plumbing, central heating, and electricity were amenities that waited for later remodelling, if indeed they ever came to a majority of Manitoba's depots. Stations generally lacked insulation when initially constructed, a surprising omission considering the region's climate.

So cost conscious were the railways that the first depots in most hamlets were primitive portable ones, designed to be transported to a site on a flatcar. These cheap buildings made it possible for a serviceable structure to be installed quickly and inexpensively when a line opened. If traffic grew, a more elaborate and, of course, permanent station would be erected.

During the formative years of railroad construction even the larger buildings that replaced the portables were spartan. Not until the turn-of-the-century did the railroads of Manitoba give careful attention to making depots attractive as well as functional.

The desire to have more impressive structures is likely related to political and competitive pressures. Until the 1890s the Canadian Pacific (CP) enjoyed a virtual transportation monopoly in Manitoba, but not always the friendliest relations with patrons. By 1900 the company had become so unpopular with the shipping and travelling public because of high and discriminatory rates and alleged poor service that demands for competitive lines and for tough regulation developed. No doubt, too, many communities had been dissatisfied with what they perceived as inadequate facilities. No town wanted an unattractive station to serve as its entrance. As consumer unrest grew and as competing railroads

invaded its territory, it is understandable that the Canadian Pacific thought the investment in more architecturally pleasing depots worth the expenditures.


The Canadian Pacific owns a richer variety of standard station designs than any other railway in Manitoba. This can be explained in part by the fact that the CP constructed its lines over a much longer time period than did the others. Between the 1880s and 1930s – the era of greatest railroad building in Western Canada – there was ample chance for depots to wear out, be destroyed by fire, windstorm, or some other means, or for management thinking about design to change. Furthermore, the Canadian Pacific absorbed smaller firms that had their own notions about station planning. By mid-century, depot styles had become thoroughly mixed along the CP system.

Time has not been kind to Manitoba's country depots. By the 1970s most were no longer needed. Economic and technological changes allowed railway companies to retire scores of stations. While this is understandable, it must be remembered that these depots once throbbed with life and were crucial to the communities served. It is hard not to feel a sense of loss as more are removed or converted to non-railway uses. Attempts by individuals to save these fine old buildings mean that a significant portion of Manitoba's architectural heritage is being preserved.

The Station House

Bruce Martel: I used to hang out with Maureen Corbett at the train station. Her dad was the stationmaster and sometimes he'd let me climb up inside the engines when they stopped in Rosenfeld. I still remember the sounds and smells of the old steam engines. Our dog Jake would howl whenever the steam trains blew their whistle. And I remember trying to ski down the coal dock slope as a kid – weren't many hills in Rosenfeld steeper.



 *The story of the 1923 post office robbery in Rosenfeld and the assault on Helen (Warkentin) Buhr has been rewritten here from the account of the trial covered in the Manitoba Free Press in March of 1924. In writing this summary of the crime, the editor made every effort to recreate the events and testimonies accurately. The newspaper reports were not always clear.*

Rosenfeld Postmistress Attacked in Armed Robbery

12:30 pm, Tuesday, Sept. 18, 1923: Twenty-one-year-old Helen Buhr, wife of postmaster, Henry C. Buhr, is filling in for her husband at the Rosenfeld post office. She's near the roll-top desk in the office behind the wicket when a suspicious looking man enters the building. She sees him through the grill. He's around her height, wearing a long dark overcoat, his cap is pulled down over his ears, and a red handkerchief covers the lower part of his face. She doesn't recognize him. He comes through the swinging door into the office area, points a revolver at her, and says, "All right, little girl, put her up." His voice is muffled and hoarse.

Helen backs away from him and he follows her, which brings his face into the light from a window. Upon seeing his eyes illuminated by daylight, she recognizes the man and says softly, "Jake, you would not do that."

"Shut up!" he says. Helen now recognizes his voice as well.

With that, the man strikes her above the eye with the revolver, knocking her to the ground, then goes to the till where the cash is kept. After taking the money from the till, he hits Helen again and kicks her twice. She later testifies that he had no reason to attack her, as she'd been afraid of him and had not shown any resistance or aggression towards him.

12:31: Helen Buhr's 14-year-old sister, Mary Warkentin, enters the post office on her way back to school. She approaches the wicket and spies a man in a dark coat and a dark cap slipping out through the back door.

Then she notices her sister on the floor. "Lena! Lena! Lena!" Mary cries out. She goes through the swinging door into the office and sees that Helen is lying in a pool of blood with a scarf wrapped around her forehead, and breathing heavily.

12:33: After taking Helen's arm and helping her up from the floor, Mary assists her out of the post office and they proceed to walk back to Helen's house, Helen in obvious distress. No sooner have they started down the sidewalk, than the first person they see is Mrs. Neiman, out in her front yard, coming toward

the sidewalk. "What happened?" Mrs. Neiman asks. Her daughter Sarah also asks what has happened. And then, 21-year-old Jake Neiman – Sarah's brother, Mrs. Neiman's son, a former classmate of Helen's in the Rosenfeld School – suddenly appears in the front yard of the Neiman home.

"Lena, what happened?" he asks.

Helen looks at Jake and says, "You did it!"

"What are you talking about?" he replies.

"I know it was you." To Mrs. Neiman, Helen says, "Jake nearly killed me!"

Jake steps towards Helen and grabs her wrist. At the same time, Mrs. Neiman responds, "He could not have, he was having his dinner with me."

Henry Martel, the town blacksmith, who is strolling down the sidewalk on his way to the post office, overhears this exchange, and later comments in his testimony in court that the roads at the time were nearly impassable, and that he'd seen no strange cars or strangers that day, implying that it was highly unlikely that a random stranger would have braved the muddy roads and then happened into the village to attack a young woman working behind a wicket.

Helen pulls away from Jake and, seeing Mr. Martel, asks him to take charge of the post office. She and her sister then continue on to her father's house because it's nearby; Helen's home is half a mile away. Her head wound is ministered to, but it takes her three or four days to recover from the assault.

Shortly after the exchange between Helen and the Neiman family, a Mr. Newman, having heard about the robbery, possibly from Henry Martel, looks behind the wicket and sees the blood on the rug on the floor. In his car, he drives along the street and he sees a man he identifies as Jake Neiman dressed in the aforementioned garb, near the post office corner.

A bit earlier that day, before 12:30 some time, 10-year-old Louis Pokrant and 10-year-old Abe Neufeld were on their way back to school. They'd been at the community well where the horses were tied, and as they headed to school, they passed the stable situated behind the Neiman's store, which was close to the school. Lurking behind the barn was a man in a "big old coat." He was kneeling on a box with one hand on his knee and the other on his chin. Something about his demeanour and dress suggested to the boys that he might be drunk. Louis Pokrant recognized him. "It was Jake Neiman." He testifies later, emphatically, that the man was Jake Neiman, because he saw his face quite clearly as he, Neiman, peered around the corner of the stable. When Louis goes home at the end of the school day, he tells his father about Jake Neiman's strange behaviour.

In his testimony, Abe Neufeld says he saw the man in the coat and cap, with a red handkerchief around his chin, walking towards the post office. Two boys playing in the schoolyard, Peter Neufeld and John Neufeld, also testify to seeing the suspicious man walking towards the post office. All the boys, in their testimonies, state that he appeared to be drunk.

Another witness, John Thiessen, adds that he not only saw the man in the big coat and "winter cap" enter the post office, but that he also saw the man leave the post office and go to the back of the barn, and assumes he went inside. Detectives later find the clothing behind the stable door.

The authorities are alerted. Major Clarke, district sheriff and provincial police inspector, arrives in Rosenfeld at three pm, Sept. 18, arrests Jake Neiman and takes him to Morden, where he's put into jail. At 8:30 am the next morning, he is interrogated by Clarke. A search of Neiman's clothing has revealed \$210 in his coat pocket, a red handkerchief in his pocket with initials on it (but not Neiman's initials), and blood on his boots and pants. W.R. Duncan of the provincial police is put in charge of the detective work in the case. A search of the post office turns up parts of a revolver handle scattered on the office floor. A search of the Neiman stable reveals a package containing a revolver hidden behind a wall between the studs.

The detectives take the revolver and the broken pieces to Henry Dyck of Gretna, who used to work at a garage in Rosenfeld. In court, Dyck testifies that Jake Neiman had a year earlier brought a .32 or .38 calibre British Bulldog revolver to him at the Rosenfeld garage to see if the broken hammer could be repaired. Dyck identifies the revolver, with the broken bits of the handle, as the same one Neiman had given him at that time, but he says he put the gun away on the repair shelf in his garage, which was four blocks from Neiman's store, and as far as he knew, Neiman never came back to pick it up.

Nevertheless, things don't look good for Jacob Neiman.

Neiman's first trial takes place in late fall of 1923. It ends in a hung jury.

The retrial takes place in March of 1924. Reports of the second trial are covered extensively in the Winnipeg newspapers, because by now, publicity has ramped up and the courtroom is packed with onlookers and press.

Witnesses for Neiman's defence include his mother, who is identified in news reports only as "Mrs. Neiman", and her daughter, Sarah Neiman. Both swear that Jake Neiman was sitting at the table in the Neimans' breakfast room having lunch when

the robbery and attack occurred. The father had finished his lunch earlier and wasn't there when his son came to eat. Mrs. Neiman claims she saw a tall, strange man walking outside the house during lunch. In Sarah's testimony, she says she did not eat lunch with her mother and brother, but only took a piece of cake and ate it in her room. She was still in her room when she heard the screams outside and saw Helen Buhr and her sister on the sidewalk. Both Mrs. Neiman and Sarah disavow any familiarity with the coat and cap and bandana Jake was described as having worn that day. But Mrs. Neiman had noticed the coat that the stranger she saw was wearing, and that it had a fur collar. During the kerfuffle on the street following the robbery and the police coming to pick up her son, Mrs. Neiman sees a man she knows named Fred Sontag coming out of the post office and

tells him that his brother's son has a coat like that. She tells Sontag that she saw a man wearing that coat run into the stable.

After a day of hearing the crown's witnesses, the trial concludes.

The jury finds Jacob Neiman guilty.

On Mar. 27, 1924, Neiman is convicted of "robbery with violence" and sentenced to seven years in Stony Mountain Penitentiary. In sentencing Neiman, Chief Justice Mathers concludes, referring to the attack on Mrs. Buhr, "There is no doubt you intended to kill her, as she was badly injured."

Interesting that, in her testimony in court, Helen Buhr recalled how, only two days earlier, Jake Neiman had been to her home to visit her husband, who had been sick at the time.

Brummtopp, Brommtopp, Brommtopf

Lois Braun: Mennonite tradition included a type of "mumming", which took place on New Year's Eve. Among the villages, it was common for groups of local men to dress up in costumes humorously put together from bits and pieces of wardrobe, and to disguise their faces with home-made masks or face-paint. One of the men would be in charge of the brummtopp, a barrel or metal tub with a piece of calfskin stretched over the top. A swatch of horse's tail was attached to the centre of the hide. When wet hands were rubbed along the horsehair, the hide vibrated, resulting in a loud, unearthly roar magnified by the empty barrel. The men would go from house to house in the village, announcing their arrival by "playing" the brummtopp. The homeowners were expected to open their doors and allow the mummers to jostle their way inside, where they would proceed to behave boorishly and sing a special Low German New Year's Eve song, accompanied by the brummtopp. They wouldn't leave unless the hosts gave them portzelky (a traditional Mennonite pastry) and a glass of schnapps. For the young children living in the household, the whole experience was frightening yet exhilarating, and not always looked upon favourably by the more conservative villagers. The mummers, in the meantime, were nice and warm and in "high spirits" by the time they reached the last home in the village. This tradition is no longer common

today, but is revived every once in a while when a new generation decides to try it out.

Judy Fehr: I've heard they used to have a lot of fun, come into the house, be very rowdy, kiss the women, and stuff like that.

William Kroeker: My brothers Jake And Pete, along with Thiessen boys, Pete and John, were in a group like that ("broom tops"). We lived on Railway St., across from the Federal grain elevator, and as very young boy, I remember them crowding into our kitchen and performing their antics.

Marge Schellenberg: My dad was part of a group like this. I remember as a kid they used to scare the bejeebies out of me! My mom did not appreciate them so much because of the mess this created on her kitchen floor!



Famous Writer Aboard!

Lois Braun: It appears that Mark Twain, world-renowned author of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, passed through both the original village of Rosenfeld and the town the morning of July 26, 1895, on his way by train to a two-night lecture engagement in Winnipeg. Perhaps the train even stopped for a bit in Rosenfeld while he was aboard. He was accompanied by his wife, one of his three daughters, and his promoter. Twain (real name: Samuel L. Clemens) was incredibly famous at the time and was on a world tour. His promoter, who kept a journal of the tour, wrote that Twain was amazed and impressed by the oceans of wheat stretching to the horizons as the train chugged through the southern regions of Manitoba. (Philip V. Allingham, Mark Twain Journal, Vol. 36, No. 2, Fall 1998, pp. 2-12.) Just think: Some of that wheat was planted by our great-grandfathers! Little did our Frintschaft know as the steam locomotive rumbled along the railway tracks through their fields that morning that this much-loved novelist and humorist was aboard! (And yes, from descriptions in the journal, we know he crossed the border at Gretna, not Emerson.)



The Swimming Hole

On Aug. 26, 1957, the Rosenfeld Village Board passed a resolution to post a sign "prohibiting bathing at the village pond."

Henry Teichroeb: Seems like a lot of us learned to sink or swim in this water hole. I was thrown off the diving board. Sunk once and somehow managed to dog-paddle back to shore.

Tina Wolfe: Most of the boys were swimming in their gitch.

Bob Derksen: The sign may have been a result of my father catching me and the Lilke boys swimming in the dugout in early spring. My dad threatened me that him and Mr. Lilke were going to dump motor oil into the pond so no more swimming would take place there. I was devastated that they were going to do this. What would all my friends say? Fortunately they did not do it. This happened a few years before the sign went up.

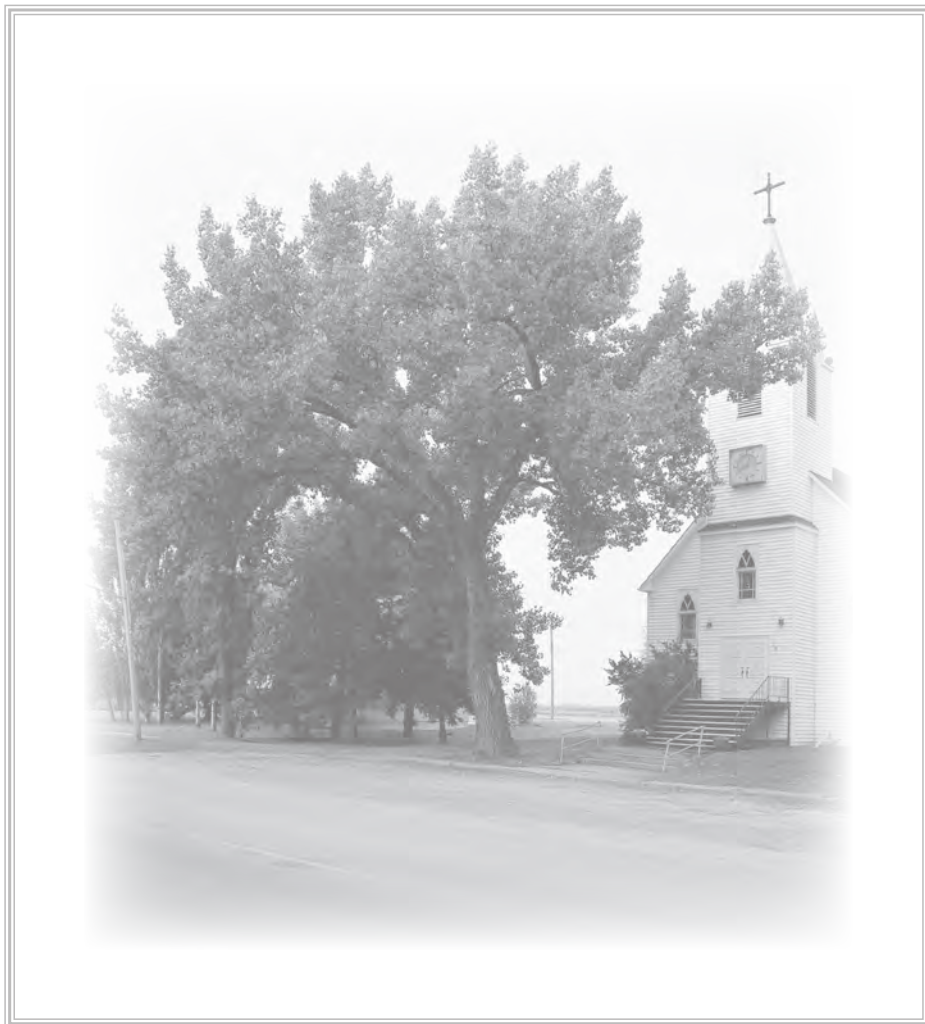
Gail Tomashewski: Not too sure if the near drowning of a girl was the cause. My dad and another saved her.



Chapter III



Churches and Schools



Art Wiebe

Album C



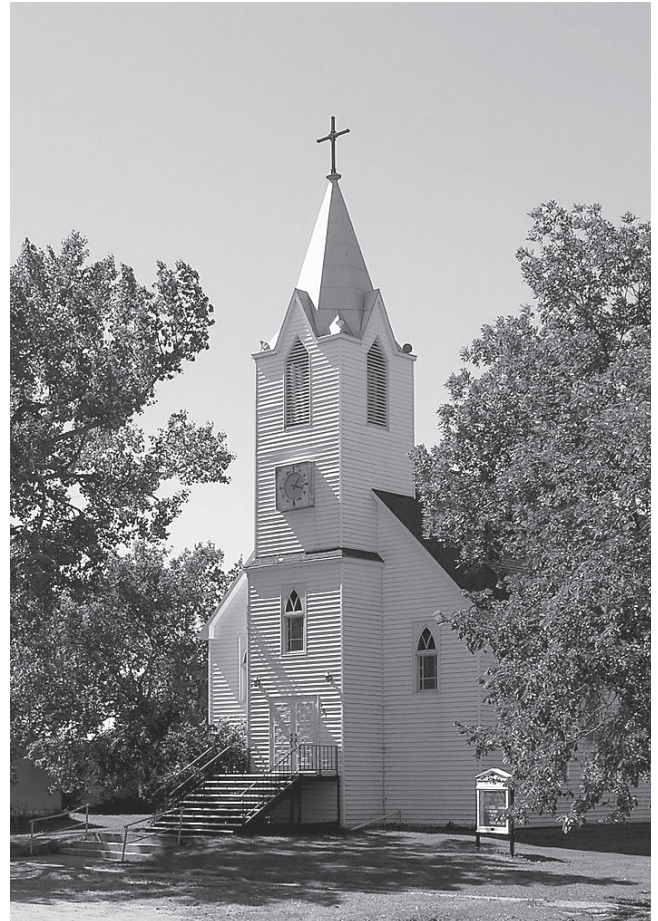
Rosenfeld Lutheran church band, some time before 1905. Back row, L-R: Emanuel Dreger, August Teske, Henry Schroeder, William Teske, Karl Knopf, Emil Manthei; front row: Alex Woitt, Gottfried Shroeder, August Schwark, Rudolf Schwark. [Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke]



Rosenfeld Lutheran congregation – photo taken in 1900. [Elsie Pokrant/ Eleanore Schroeder]



First Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld – photo taken in 1922. [Elsie Pokrant] The church was built in 1900. It took six weeks, cost \$800, and was dedicated on Apr. 16. The church was enlarged and renovated in 1921. Electricity was installed in 1935.



St. John Lutheran Church in later years. [Gerald Frank]



Church group getting ready to go to the Red River on a Sunday School picnic – likely only the Lutheran congregation. The church is on the left of photograph. [Bill Kroeker]



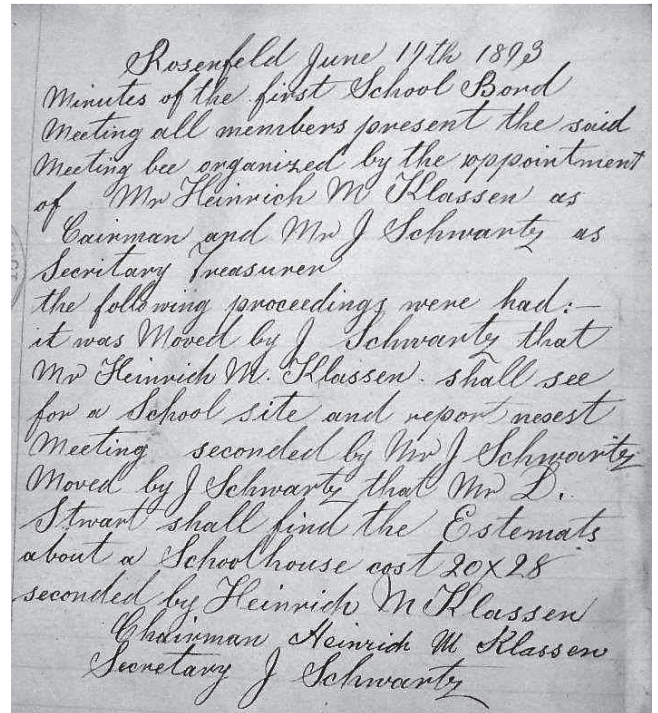
Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church. [Church archives]

Looking northwest from Main St. The house at the corner was used as a Lutheran parsonage; the building to the south (left) was used by the Lutheran Church as a Sunday School, a Saturday German school, and a meeting place for the Lutheran youth (Luther League). [Roy Pokrant]





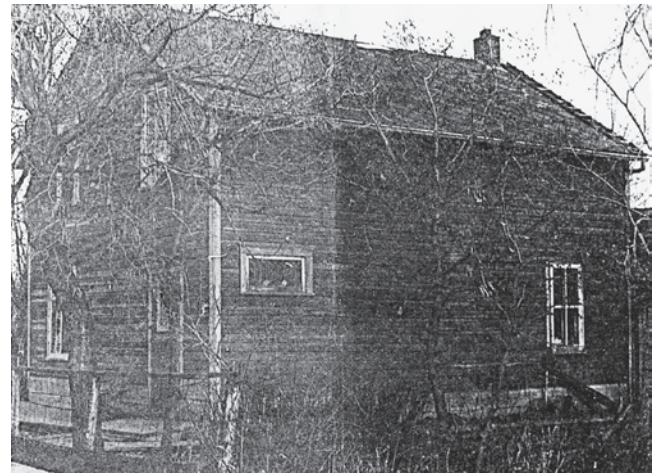
Rosenfeld Rüdnerweider Church, c. 1960. [Found in a Rosenfeld School teacher's desk drawer.]



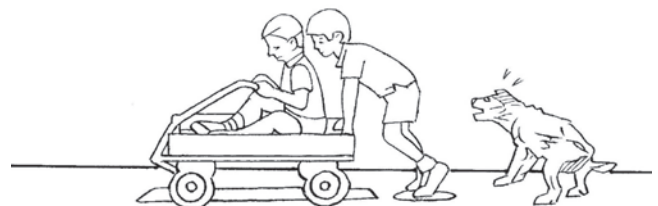
A page from the Acheson School District minutes book, 1893. Rosenfelder Martin Friesen found the minutes book in an abandoned building in Rosenfeld in 1948, and hung onto it for over 60 years. In 2012, he presented it to the Altona and District Heritage Research Centre archives.

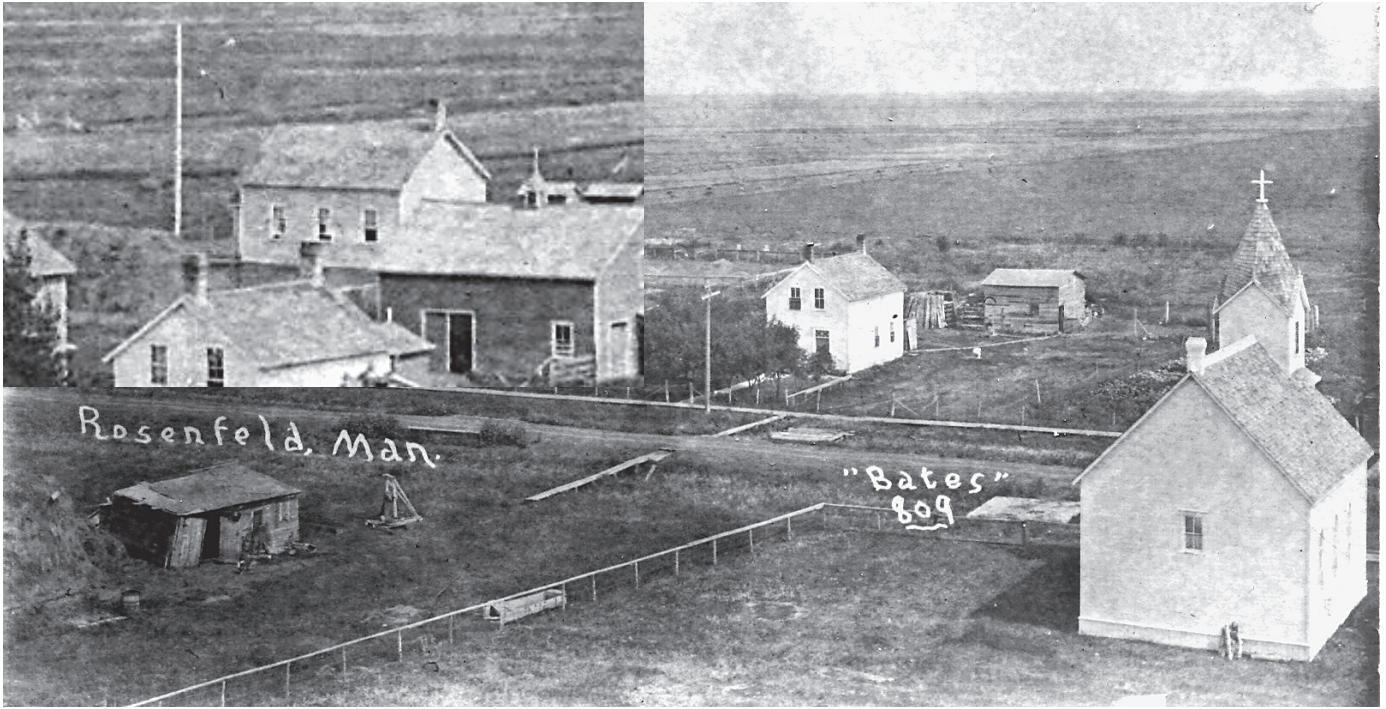


In front of the Rüdnerweider Church, 168 Acheson. The twins are Linda and Lena Klassen (whose family moved to Virgil, Ontario); middle girl is Tina Sawatzky, whose family lived on the west side of Acheson Street. [Doreen Loewen]



Believed to be the first Rosenfeld school, 1893. This unused house was provided for the first few months after the Province of Manitoba formed the Acheson School District, while a new school was being built. [Acheson family archive – Jim Benedict]





The second Rosenfeld school (the first new one) in the northeast corner of town, built in 1893. [Jim Benedict]



The 1937 "Coronation School" on Acheson St. in Rosenfeld (1970). [Arnold Mekelburg]



Third school – built in 1912 on Acheson St. [G.G. Neufeld; Manitoba Archives, from "School Inspectors' Photographs"]



Demolition of the 1912 Rosenfeld school; Circled in black is the school's bell. [Lynne Martel] (See Hedy Mazinke's memoir to find out what happened to the bell.)



The A.J. Thiessen trophy was presented for General Proficiency in Grade VIII at the Rosenfeld School. The names that appear on the reverse side of the bowl: 1952 Helen Fehr; 53 Mary Paetkau; 54 Gertrude Janke; 55 Helen Fast; 56 Reinhold Martel; 57 Gail Lang; 58 Ruth Sawatsky; 59 Leslie Winter; 60 Marlene Schroeder; 61 Carol Schroeder; 62 Mica Lewycky; 63 Kathy Heinrichs; 64 Terry Berg. [Art Wiebe]



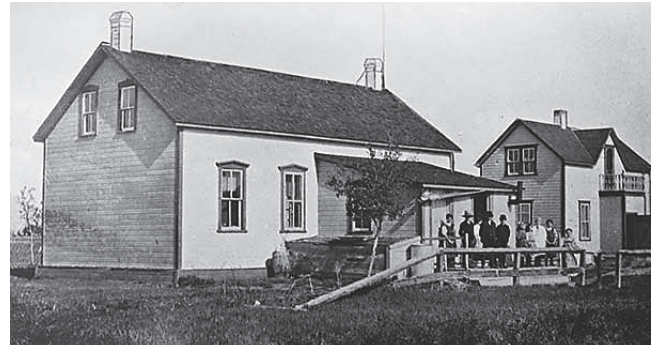
1955 – High-school students on stage in the basement of the 1937 school at the west end of the gym. L-R: Leonard Pokrant, Arnold Janke, Marion Doell, Ben Hiebert, Marlene Kotchorek, (unknown), and Hank Fast. [Bob Derksen]



Hoffnungsthal School No. 1136, later renamed Hopevale, SE24-3-1W (1901–1964). [G. G. Neufeld, "School Inspectors Photographs", Archives of Manitoba]



New Kennedy School No. 1573, SE 32-3-1 W (1911-1965). [G.G. Neufeld, "School Inspectors Photographs", Archives of Manitoba]



Amsterdam School No. 885 and teacherage, SE 35-2-1 W (1896-1965). [Education Department Report, 1913, Manitoba Legislative Library]



Reichenbach School No. 1198, SW 8-3-1 W (1902-1965). [G.G. Neufeld, "School Inspectors Photographs", Archives of Manitoba]



First Roseville School No. 1990 (formerly Clyde School) c. 1930; SE 32-2-1 W (1920-1971). [G.G. Neufeld, "School Inspectors Photographs", Archives of Manitoba]



Weidenfeld School No. 988, SW 36-2-2 W (1898-1966). [G.G. Neufeld, "School Inspectors Photographs", Archives of Manitoba]



Fifth and current school – built in 1982 on Main Street, west of the two previous schools, at a cost of \$400,000.00. Originally a Gr. 1-6 school, it has been expanded to include kindergarten, and now includes three additional re-locatable classrooms. [Art Wiebe]



Looking northeast, the street in the foreground is Railway Avenue. The house in the foreground belonged to Jacob Loewen and family. The white house with two windows and the lean-to, outhouse and two sheds is the house where Bill Kroeker was born. The long white building is the lumberyard. Directly behind it is the Lutheran Church, which had a small barn to keep the horses while families from out of town were in church. This photo was taken from the upper window of one of the elevators by Jacob Kroeker in the 1930s.

Rosenfeld St. John Lutheran Church Marks Its 100th Anniversary, June 11, 2000

From the commemorative booklet printed for the occasion – author unknown



Although the Mennonites arrived and settled in the Rosenfeld area ahead of the German Lutherans, they were not the first to establish a church. The early Mennonite villages were served by visiting pastors and meetings in homes. The Rosenfeld St. John Lutheran Church was planted in 1900.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of our congregation it is fitting to recount the significant events of the past and to retrace the paths along which God has chosen to lead us.

During the years 1893-1900 a small number of Lutheran families from Russian Poland arrived in the prairie regions of Southern Manitoba. At first most of these immigrants served as farm workers for the more established Mennonite farmers. After a few years of hard work and great frugality they were able to build their own homes.

By 1896 Pastor Willing, who had only recently arrived from Germany, and was a resident of Gretna, conducted worship services in private homes with a group of Lutherans in Rosenfeld. They were delighted to share Word and Sacrament brought to them in the German language. But Pastor Willing's area extended over a vast, unpopulated region, so he was unable to visit the different settlements in Manitoba with regularity. All too often he was obliged to walk from one village to another. In those years it was considered a great luxury to travel on horse back or by horse and buggy.

In 1896, Pastor Willing received a call and assumed his new duties at Edenwold, Saskatchewan and Pastor Berthold took charge of the missions in rural Manitoba. Since more and more Lutheran settlers arrived around the turn of the century in the Rosenfeld area, Pastor Berthold felt the time had come to organize a congregation. This organization was completed on March 2, 1900.

At the same time the new 34-member congregation decided to build a house of worship. A building committee of three members, G. Dreger, M. Recksiedler and F. Pokrant, was elected to take charge.

Several lots in the village of Rosenfeld were donated to the congregation by good hearted strangers. At last when the needed sum was raised for lumber and other materials, construction began. Within a period of six weeks the church was completed and all was in readiness for the day of dedication on April 6, 1900. The church records show that two distinguished guests were present and attended the service of dedication. One was Pastor Beer from the United States and the other was a great friend of the German new comers to Manitoba, the Canadian Consul, Mr. William Hespler of Winnipeg.

From 1900 to 1926 Rosenfeld and Gretna were served by one pastor. In 1921 the old original St. John was rebuilt and an additional altar space was added. At the front entrance cloak rooms were built on each side of the tower. The ceiling was lowered and the entire building was plastered. In 1926 Rosenfeld became a self-supporting congregation. A parsonage was purchased. It stood near the southern limits of the village and the Pastor Keitel family were the first occupants. On the 25th anniversary of St. John, Pastor P. Ludwig D.D., General Secretary of the United Lutheran Church of America from New York, was the guest speaker.

In 1938 a parish school was built. At first this building was located on the grounds of the parsonage. Later it was moved to a new site near the church.

In 1926 a Luther League was organized. During the years this organization did much to assist the church financially and spiritually and to render service to the young people in the congregation. The funds to purchase the illuminated outdoor bulletin board near the church were raised by Luther League members when they worked in the sugar beet fields and then contributed these earnings. This gift to the church was then dedicated on May 10,

1953 to the memory of one of the League members, Doreen Schroeder, who passed away suddenly in 1952. The League members also provided the means to support a missionary in India over a period of sixteen years. Since the 1960s, the Luther League has ceased to function.

In 1935 hydro was installed in the old church. This made it more convenient and practical to use the church for evening services and meetings.

In 1939 the congregation rejoiced with Pastor Keitel on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. Among pastors present for the occasion were Heiman, Hartig, Spohr, Guettner and Mohr.

The Ladies Aid, later known as Women of the Church, was first organized on October 4, 1939. This congregational auxiliary carried out a variety of activities in addition to conducting regular monthly meetings. Due to diminished membership this group held its last meeting on December 5, 1989.

By 1940 it was realized that the first church building was becoming too small for the growing membership, but the plans for the proposed new house of worship had to be postponed until 1945. On January 25th of that year, by majority vote, it was decided to undertake the building project. Elected to the building committee were K. Knopf, G. Schroeder, Ed Pokrant, Dan Pokrant, Leo Recksiedler and William Pokrant. The last service in the old St. John was held on April 15, 1945 after which the old structure was dismantled. Every usable board was salvaged in a matter of a few weeks. These were piled up to be used in the new building. In this way the old provided a fitting link with the new Church.

In early spring the Municipality of Rhineland provided the heavy machinery to excavate the large basement where the original church stood for a period of forty-five years. At that time there was considerable discussion about having the new church built at the southern limits on the large parsonage grounds. However the decision to use the old lot in the center of the village has since proven to be the proper one. Later Mrs. Leocadia Pokrant donated the lot opposite the church and a few years later the new parsonage was built on this site. In this way St. John was able to build its church and house adjacent to each other in the center of the village.

During the construction of the new church, worship services were held in the school auditorium. When the cornerstone was placed, an open air service was conducted near the building site. A list of members, a hymnal, the congregational constitution and other documents were placed into a large sealed jar which was then secured in a block of concrete below the foundation.

On October 14, 1945 the new church was

dedicated. Services were held in both the morning and the afternoon. Many visiting pastors spoke. Among these were: Gnauk, Schmidt, Spohr, Goos and Mortelmayer. Many gifts had been given and a list of these was announced. Messages from neighbouring congregations expressed best wishes for the future. The new electric organ, given by the G. Schroeder family in memory of their son Ernest who was killed in action in France, was played for the first time during the morning service. The old sturdy bell originally donated by the C. Kletke family had been moved to its new location and again pealed its call to worship and prayer. The old altar, a new pulpit, old and new pews and some old altar appointments served well to forge a link with the past and the present. In fact, the old church actually found its place in the structure of the new one.

On July 3, 1949, the Rev. K. Keitel, the only son of the pastor, was ordained in St. John. Taking part in this solemn act were the Pastors Becker, Lenz, Heiman, Wulf, Mortelmayer and Winter. The father, assisted by Dr. Heiman, performed the ordination.

During Pastor Koss' years of service the congregation undertook another important project. The old parsonage was sold and a new one completed within a few months during the summer of 1952. July 6 was another great day of rejoicing when the parsonage was dedicated with the Koss family moving into the new residence. This parsonage was occupied by the serving pastors until it was sold in the 1990s due to the varying housing needs of the pastors and their families.

In 1957 the congregation entered into a federated parish agreement with Lutheran Church of the Cross in Morris. This plan was terminated in 1960 at which time a parish alignment with St. Paul's Lutheran Church [in Dominion City] was organized.

Also in 1957 the congregation initiated a radio program "Lutheran Vespers" which was broadcast over CFAM each Sunday evening. This program ran for a period of almost three years.

English RSV Bibles for the pulpit and lectern were dedicated as a gift of the family on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the late Emil Marsh.

On September 25, 1960 the 60th Jubilee of the congregation's founding was celebrated. President R.G. Sedo delivered the sermon at the morning service and an edited version of this service was broadcast over CFAM that evening. Pastor L. Koss preached the sermon at the afternoon service and Pastor K. Keitel presented a message to the youth. Pastor L. Schwabe brought greetings from the Conference. Among letters of greeting from former members and neighbouring congregations was a letter from Dr. F. Fry. In preparation for this event the Women of the

Church made special anniversary plates available. A guest book as well as the memorial book was started. In preparation for the celebration the congregation renovated the chancel. Included improvements were a new altar, communion rail, credence table, dorsal curtains, clergy stoles, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font and carpet. A new brass altar set consisting of crucifix, candlesticks, missal stand and vases were dedicated as a memorial to the late August Recksiedler, a gift from the family. Also dedicated was an Altar Service Book, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Fred Janke in memory of their sons Walter and Arthur. The band from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Winnipeg presented an informal concert on the lawn during the noon hour.

In 1962 the purchase of 125 new Service Books and Hymnals was approved and almost entirely paid for by memorial and presentation gifts. Special meetings during Advent helped the members prepare for effective use of this new worship tool. This new hymnal was first used on the 4th Sunday in Advent.

A new Baldwin organ was dedicated on July 25th, 1965.

In 1967 the exterior of the church was repainted as a Centennial project.

In 1968 the church basement was completely redecorated providing Sunday School classrooms, indoor toilet facilities, and a modern kitchen. All labour was donated by the members of the congregation.

1970 marked the 70th anniversary of the congregation. This event was celebrated with a Service of Thanksgiving on October 11. Dr. Otto A. Olson Jr., President of the Central Canada Synod and Kurt J. Keitel, Dean of the Manitoba district were the guest speakers. A fellowship meal followed the service. There was a display of photos and newspaper clippings detailing the life of the congregation, which was of great interest to the members.

The 75th anniversary of the congregation was celebrated on August 31, 1975. A special anniversary booklet was printed. Dr. Otto A. Olson Jr. was once again present for the occasion. A Service of Thanksgiving and a banquet were held. A band was organized for this special event.

Two new stained glass windows were dedicated by Dr. Treusch on December 19, 1982. Both of these windows were gifts in the memory of Gus Pokrant and Albert Recksiedler.

On May 1, 1983 the new Lutheran Book of Worship was dedicated. This gift was from the memorial fund in memory of Mrs. Albert Recksiedler.

The interior of the Church was again remodeled in March of 1984. The ceiling was stippled and the walls were repainted. A memorial gift of carpeting was placed in the memory of Mr. Dan Pokrant.

The summer and fall of 1986 saw a number of

building projects undertaken: Vinyl siding, new steel doors, electric heat as well as a public address system was installed in the church building. Two windows were replaced in the parsonage.

In November of 1987 St. John hosted the Agassiz Conference Convention.

In November of 1994 the Parish agreement with St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Dominion City was terminated at their request. At the present time St. John provides services every second Sunday to St. Paul, D.C. as well as pastoral care.

The years 1999 and 2000 again brought discussion regarding a joint agreement with Lutheran Church of the Cross of Morris. This agreement was voted on and passed on April 30, 2000.

Again, in preparation for the celebration of our centennial, interior renovations were completed in the early spring of 2000.

St. John also played a leading part in making great improvements on the local cemetery. The plots were cleaned up and in many cases new headstones or grave markers were placed. The general appearance of the cemetery was improved by the planting of trees, flowers and shrubbery. Regular annual Decorations Day services have been held since 1926. At the present time clean-up and maintenance is provided by both St. John and the Bergthaler Church of Rosenfeld.

Pastors That Have Served St. John

1900-1901 Pastor Berthold	1957-1963 Pastor J. Kunkel
1901-1903 Pastor Burgdorf	1963-1974 Pastor L. Grendze
1903-1905 Pastor Arndt	1974-1977 Pastor T Jannuska
1905-1906 Pastor Runge	1978-1982 Pastor E. Treusch
1906-1917 Pastor Baenish	1982-1985 Pastor T. Kamprath
1917-1922 Pastor F. Ewald	1985-1990 Pastor P. Schwindt
1922-1925 Pastor Martin	1991-1994 Pastor R. Olson
1926-1951 Pastor H. Keitel	1995- Pastor G. Russel
1951-1957 Pastor L. Koss	

Noteworthy Facts About St. John

1. Between the years of 1895 and 1950 the most popular day for a wedding was a Wednesday.
2. During the early years sponsors for Baptism were often picked from the congregation.
3. Recorded baptisms to date – 812
Recorded confirmations to date – 590
Recorded marriages to date – 224
Recorded deaths to date – 226
4. Oldest person to become a member was Karl Knopf at the age of 92.
5. Largest confirmation classes were in 1922 and 1923, both having 14 confirmands.
6. The surname Bielhke (maiden name of Mrs. Carl Recksiedler) has the most spelling variations in the registry numbering 7.
7. First baptism in records was Margaretha Bonschkowski, who was born September 27,

- 1892 at Weidenfeld, Manitoba and baptized June 26, 1893 at Rosenfeld. Daughter of Gottfried and Maria Bonschkowski (nee Macrullek).
8. First baptism in the church was Martha Huff, born March 16, 1900, baptized April 16, 1900. There were 4 other baptisms in 1900: Wilhelm Kletke, Helene Dreger, Huldina Mazinke and William Hubner.
 9. First baptism in the new church was Cora Amelia Ritz and Tessa Gertrude Martin on April 21, 1946. Last baptism of the 1900s was Derek Tyler Mazinke on October 10, 1999.
First baptism in the new century was Michael Sean Recksiedler on April 23, 2000.
 10. First recorded confirmations were August Jabusch on January 1, 1895 and Emma Kurbis on April 21, 1895.
 11. First confirmation class in the old church was March 31, 1902. The confirmands were Alwin Kube, August Winter, Amalie Janischowski, Emma Mazinke, Juliane Steckler. On April 13, 1902 Frd. Wilh. Grafer, Julius Lucht, Adolf Kletke, Mathilde Hubert, Friedrich Ganski, Julianne Kohler and Juliane Sommerfeld were confirmed.
 12. Last confirmation class in the old church was the class of 1945. The confirmands were Adolf Kletke, Walter Mazinke, Karl Minch, Friedrich Frank, Marion Recksiedler, Velma Herman, Ruth Martel, Hedwig Pokrant, Maria Pokrant and Edith Peter.
 13. Our records seem to indicate that the first class in the new church was in 1946. This group was comprised of Elmer Kruschel, Arthur Kletke, Irmgard Peter, Ida Schimonek and Adeline Schimonek. The last confirmation of the 1900s was Amanda Kletke's on June 13, 1999.
 14. First recorded marriage was that of August Dreger and Augusta Teske on January 30, 1898.
 15. First marriage in the old church was Johann Schopp and Therese Teske on December 17, 1900.
 16. Last marriage in the old church was Arthur Schroeder and Leonora Bobert on October 19, 1944.
 17. First marriage in the new church was Herman Fuchs and Bertha Mazinke on December 14, 1945.
 18. Last wedding of the 1900s was the marriage of Patricia Doerksen and Nathan Bolduc.
 19. First recorded death was Ludwig Furst who died on August 13, 1894 at the age of 34 years. He was struck by lightning. The funeral was held on August 14, 1894.
 20. First funeral in the old church was Wilhelm Jabusch on March 17, 1904. He died on March 16, 1904 at the age of one month, 16 days.
 21. Last funeral in the old church was on January 5, 1944 for Christoph Ganke.

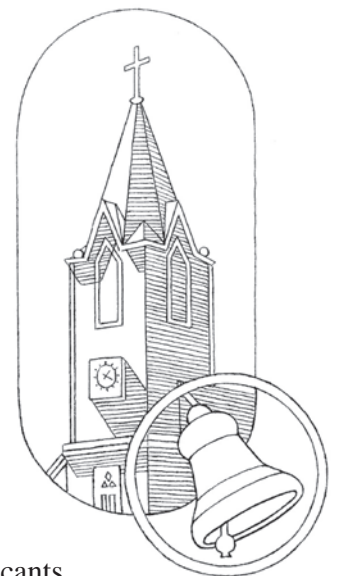
22. First funeral in the new church was on October 31, 1945 for Mathilde Kletke. Last funeral of the century was Mrs. Annie Schimonek's.
23. First funeral in the new century 2000 was for August Recksiedler on January 13.
24. First woman on St. John Lutheran Church Council was Eileen Martel. Mrs. Martel was first elected in January, 1984.

...and from the 75th anniversary booklet of the Rosenfeld St. John Lutheran Church

The earliest membership list that we have is in the year 1918.

The families of:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ferdinand Pokrant | 40. Ludwig Hubner |
| 2. August Pokrant | 41. Friedrich Sonntag |
| 3. Daniel Pokrant | 42. Simon Hubner |
| 4. Julius Marsch | 43. Gottfried Hubner |
| 5. Friedrich Janke | 44. Gottfried Eckert |
| 6. Carl Braun | 45. Jakob Kopfschinske |
| 7. Carl Knopf | 46. Ferdinand Mazinke |
| 8. Christof Ganske | 47. Heinrich Mazinke |
| 9. David Neumann | 48. Reinhold Recksiedler |
| 10. Christian Kletke | 49. Martin Bach |
| 11. Adolf Kletke | 50. Robert Eckert |
| 12. Julius Bobert | 51. Eduard Kletke |
| 13. Gustav Bobert | 52. Friedrich Janke |
| 14. Martin Schiewe | 53. Albert Janke |
| 15. Emil Schiewe | 54. Heinrich Kletke |
| 16. Franz Schimonek | 55. Albert Ganske |
| 17. Wilhelm Wonek | 56. Eduard Pokrant |
| 18. Gottfried Schroeder | 57. Wilhelm Schiewe |
| 19. Heinrich Pokrant | 58. Wilhelm Bobert |
| 20. Gustav Mazinke | 59. Philipp Sonntag |
| 21. Carl A. Recksiedler | 60. Johann Hintz |
| 22. Heinrich Recksiedler | |
| 23. August Recksiedler | |
| 24. Carl M. Recksiedler | |
| 25. Jakob Kletke | |
| 26. Gottlieb Ganske | |
| 27. August Hintz | |
| 28. Philipp Sonntag | |
| 29. August Bunkowske | |
| 30. Otto Bunkowske | |
| 31. Friedrich Bunkowski | |
| 32. Rudolf Kletke | |
| 33. Emil Marsch | |
| 34. Samuel Munch | |
| 35. Gottlob Eckers | |
| 36. Heinrich Martel | |
| 37. Anton Plucinske | |
| 38. Ferdinand Hubner | |
| 39. Fritz Hubner | |



253 Souls, 126 Communicants



Herman Kuhl and his wife Helen (Pauls) have been long-time citizens of Rosenfeld. Besides having a long career as a teacher in the town and later in Altona, Herman was a staunch and faithful member of the Rosenfeld Bergthaler community, as was Helen. Helen was active in the ladies' fellowship, sang in a trio for around 40 years, and conducted the junior choir for 18 years. Herman served the church as lay-minister for a time, and he and Helen both served as deacons.

The Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church Submitted by Herman Kuhl

Rosenfeld was basically the first settlement at the east end of the West Reserve. The old village dates back to about 1875. Their elder was Johann Wiebe, who lived in Reinland in 1880.

The first Rosenfeld Brotherhood meeting was held in 1903, when Peter Buhr and David Funk joined the Rosenfeld church. In 1904 they had regular church services. However, they had to discontinue, and so services were held in public schools such as St. Peter's (near Lowe Farm), Melba, Amsterdam, and Langevin.

The first Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church was registered in 1906 with 26 members. Of these, 18 moved away to Saskatchewan and the remaining members transferred to other churches.

In 1913, regular worship services resumed. At this time the Lutheran Church offered that the Bergthalers could purchase their building. However, that never materialized, and in September of that year the regular worship services were discontinued. Rev. Johann Loepky was asked to find a suitable building and rent it for weekly services. From 1916 on, there were enough members to warrant having a regular offering.

Since 1928, services were far more regular, with Rev. Johann Loepky as leading minister and Rev. Peter Epp from Morden as assistant minister. Because people were not always sure whether a minister would come or not, they would wait at home until they heard the large bell, which was at the school where the services were conducted. They also had a very active youth program (*Jugendverein*). In 1937 the place of worship was changed to the old Acheson Store, which was rented for \$10.00 per month. Together with visitors, this place was filled to capacity. There was a real sense of unity, despite the fact that many came from different church backgrounds. It was possibly the best church unity that Rosenfeld has ever experienced, with Mr. A. B. Thiessen as songleader, Rev. Johann Loepky as minister, and Rev. Peter Epp as assistant.

Collections were taken and everyone gave as

he was able to, up to 25 cents. Times were tough! Later A.J. Thiessen and Johann Klassen became songleaders (Vorsaenger). As the store was being remodelled into a hatchery, they were forced to find another place. The EMMC group (Rüdnerweider) were considering building a new church, and so they offered the Bergthaler group that they could use their church for some mornings. The Sunday school and choir practice were led by the EMMC group.

Then in 1938 the Rosenfeld Bergthaler group began to express a strong desire to have its own church building. Consequently, a delegation consisting of A.J. Thiessen, A.J. Klassen, and Rev. Peter Loewen was sent to the finance committee with a request for help. They had \$400.00 and another \$400.00 could be collected. They needed \$1200, although some thought that might not be quite enough. This project was presented in the Brotherhood on May 8, 1938. The request was not granted until 1940. At this time the congregation had to leave the place of worship because it was renovated into a hatchery. In the meantime, they had bought a parcel of land for \$175.00 from Mr. Janzen, Dominion City. Again the Bergthaler Church was asked for some financial aid, approximately \$2,000.00. The total project with a building 28'x48' was to cost \$2500.00. Again it was presented to the Brotherhood, and finally, on July 8, 1942, Rosenfeld was in the process of acquiring a church building. They bought a garage (\$700.00) from Diedrich Heppner, Lowe Farm. The moving was done by brothers Abram Klassen (deacon at the time), John S. Klassen, and Jacob F. Klassen. The garage was renovated – a steep roof was put on. All labour was voluntary. Even members from other churches came to help. Anton Schellenberg was the carpenter. He was paid the going rate at the time: 45¢ an hour!

On December 6, 1942, the church was dedicated. There was great joy! In 1949 the basement was dug and the church was moved on. The basement served as Sunday-school classes. This cost about \$4,600.00, with \$2,000.00 coming from the Bergthaler Finance Committee. In the winter of 1974-1975 another renovation took place: new classrooms in the basement, electric heat, modern toilets, and rug flooring in the sanctuary.

The first minister ordained in Rosenfeld was Rev. Johann Loepky on April 6, 1915. He was the son of Rev. Diedrich Loepky from Halbstadt. Loepky had poor eyesight; however, he was well liked. He officiated at many weddings and funerals. He died on October 27, 1947, leaving behind a sorrowing congregation. More than 1000 people attended his

funeral. Two choirs served and eight ministers spoke.

The second minister was Rev. Johann Heinrichs from Plum Coulee. He moved to Rosenfeld in 1944 and served the church together with Rev. Loepky for a short time. Rev. Heinrichs served the church sacrificially. He had to feed a large family – lived only on rented land. Due to many functions he was away from home a lot. In one of his messages, he said, “Why do the ungodly enjoy life so much and we have to run alongside?” He died in 1956, April 27th, leaving behind a sorrowing congregation. Someone in the congregation commented that, now we can close the church, because we cannot find a better minister than we have had.

The third minister was Rev. Diedrich Neudorf, who served together with Rev. Heinrichs for a short time. Rev. Neudorf was ordained March 2, 1958, as deacon, and later in the same year as minister. Up until that time, services were conducted in German. Despite continuing pressure from some of the congregation to allow both English and German services, Rev. Neudorf was slow to act. He finally resigned his post and moved to Altona. After that, it didn't take long for the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church to switch to English services. But it came too late for some, and by then, the church had already lost a number of members and regular worshippers to the Altona Mennonite Church.

In 1957 Rev. D.L.D. Hildebrand moved from Plum Coulee to Rosenfeld and became the assistant to Rev. Neudorf. Thus, when Rev. Neudorf moved away, Rev. Hildebrand became the leading minister.

Some men who helped the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church with the pulpit work in the 1960s were Victor Sawatzky, a Bible-school teacher at Altona Bible School, and Bernie Wiebe, who was employed at the Christian Home Hour.

In 1968, Peter Penner, from the Kleefeld Evangelical Church, was called into the ministry. He was ordained on June 9, 1968. When he left, there was again a vacancy.

The first deacon ever ordained in Rosenfeld was Abram J. Klassen in 1939, May 18th. He later moved to Roseisle, Carman and then to Morris. On April 15, 1962, John Doell from Horndean was ordained as deacon. Two other nominations at that time were Henry Fast and Johann Hiebert. However, both moved away.

The Rosenfeld Church has had various difficulties. One was the loss of members due to its slow response to the desire of the congregation to have English services. Another had to do with Rev. Froese. From 1972-1974, John G. Froese served in Rosenfeld. He was so much appreciated, that when he left, quite a few congregants were very unhappy.

Rev. Froese tried to make up for this by continuing to visit many of the members, as well as bringing a message from time to time on Sunday morning.

Thus, in 1975 Rev. D.L.D. Hildebrand was the only one serving the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church, except for frequent visiting ministers from the churches in the area.

On January 1, 1976, Brian Epp from Nebraska was called by the church. He came to serve as pastor both in the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite Church and the Halbstadt Bergthaler Mennonite Church. On October 3, 1976, the two churches agreed to ordain Brian Epp as pastor. The ordination service took place in the Halbstadt Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

In 1977, catechism classes were held by Pastor Epp during the Sunday-school hour. Baptism was held August 21st in the morning and Communion service was held at 7:30 p.m. Eight persons were baptized and accepted as members of Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church.

Pastor Epp, meanwhile, married a home economic teacher employed by Garden Valley Collegiate, Winkler, MB. Diane was an American citizen and desired to move back to the United States. Consequently, Brian Epp terminated his three-year tenure prematurely, to the disappointment of everyone in the church.

Then in the spring of 1979, the church asked Herman Kuhl, a public school teacher in Altona, but living in Rosenfeld and worshipping at the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church, to consider the lay-ministry for a three-year term. After much soul-searching, he accepted the challenge and was commissioned on Feb. 17, 1980. At the end of the three years, the congregation asked him to continue serving. He agreed to another year after strong affirmation from the annual membership meeting. This continued year after year. During that time, the church relied heavily on ministers in the area to help with Sunday-morning speaking. Herman Kuhl served with messages for approximately 20 Sundays out of 52. The remaining Sundays were served by speakers such as Rev. Dave Adrian, Plum Coulee; Rev. Abe Born, Altona; Rev. Wiegand Friesen, Altona; Rev. Harry Siemens, Altona; and Rev. John G. Froese. In February, 2001, Pastor Kuhl submitted his resignation, effective June 30, 2002. The congregation agreed to find a replacement who would be willing to serve on a half-time salary.

In the meantime, the church was not increasing its net membership. Although new members were joining, just as many were transferring to other congregations. In 2002, the church consisted of 83 members.

The search committee asked the membership

to submit ideas and to suggest names of potential candidates. Several names came forward. After a few meetings with Walter Hiebert, a teacher at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, in Gretna, MB, the search committee presented his name to the membership. On Dec. 9, 2001, members voted 100% in favour of Walter Hiebert as half-time pastor at the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church. He began his term August 1, 2002.

In February 2003, at the annual meeting, Dick Klassen was elected as the congregational chair, and Kathy Schroeder was elected as chair of the education committee and Sunday school superintendent.

In February, 2006, Dick Klassen's term as congregational chair ended and he did not accept re-election. Herman Kuhl said he would be willing to take the chair on an interim basis on the condition that a younger person would come on board whom Kuhl could mentor. This person would attend all monthly meetings. The agendas would be discussed with him and there would be a debriefing after each meeting. After one year, this person would then assume the chair and continue the three-year term. Tim Cornelson stepped forward, and in 2007 assumed the position of congregational chair.

Between the late 1980s and the present, a number of changes and milestones occurred within the church:

- In the late 80s, it became apparent to some people that more deacons were needed. John Doell was getting on in age and younger deacons should be called to assist him. For the first time in its history, the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church adopted the practice of commissioning deacons for term instead of lifetime positions. It was also the first time that a husband-and-wife couple was commissioned as deacons. Abe and Jean Heinrichs were ordained for a three-year term. When that was up, they did not accept another term. The church experienced some difficulty calling another couple. After much praying and searching, the church council was able to present two couples willing to serve as deacons for five-year terms (as allowed by revisions to the constitution.) The two couples, Bill and Margaret Friesen, and Ronn and Loretta Smith, were commissioned on May 28, 1995.
- In 1994, the church council was encouraged to check into the cost of building a "hut" that could be somehow attached to the existing building to serve as a Sunday school. The construction of the new Altona hospital was nearing completion, and during the construction, a building of 1200 sq. ft. had been used as a temporary kitchen. The building was put up for tender, and the Bergthaler

Church got it for \$30,000. It was moved onto the Rosenfeld site in late summer. The space was used for adult Sunday school classes, and as a kitchen and dining room.

- In 2002, the church had 83 members, with a strong contingent of young couples with small children, and a number of them took on leadership positions. Vivian Dueck (nee Kuhl), for example, assumed leadership in Sunday-school singing, allowing Abe Heinrichs to retire after many years of serving. From 1996-2002, two leadership positions traditionally held by men in our church – congregational chair and Sunday-school superintendent – were filled by two women: Jean Heinrichs and Anna Peters, respectively.
- In 2004, with the resignation of two deacons, replacements were needed, and Herman and Helen Kuhl accepted the call. On Oct. 31, 2004, they were commissioned to a five-year deacon position.
- Another major event in the latter years was the basement renovation. The building fund established in 2004 did not receive a lot of money. In February there was approximately \$12,000 in it. Several special membership meetings were held to discuss possibilities and options. The cost of a new building at one million dollars came up for discussion. Renovating for a cost of \$400,000 was on the table. Finally, at the annual meeting on Feb. 16, 2011, the church council presented the membership with a plan to renovate the basement and fix the water problem, which had been there for years. The cost was projected to be approximately \$60,000, which was approved. Another meeting followed a few weeks later and a more comprehensive renovating plan was presented for a total cost of \$90,000. This plan would: dig out the basement floor; put in drainage tiles under the floor; pour a new cement floor with heated water coils; straighten out the south and north walls; brace the walls on the inside; put in drainage tiles outside the north and south walls, as well as sealant plastic and Styrofoam on the outside walls; the inside walls would be studded, insulated, and dry-walled. This plan was accepted and there seemed to be a lot of rallying together. The project was started in the beginning of May 2011.

As time passed, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find members agreeable to serving as deacons. After Harry and Ellen Schmidt's term ended in the summer of 2006, they declined nomination for a second term, and so the ministerial (Walter and Marlene Hiebert and Herman and Helen Kuhl) began to work on the deacon issue. The membership

was again asked to submit names, and the ministerial would approach these individuals. A year later, no one was willing to accept the position. In the spring of 2007, the ministerial approached Harry and Ellen Schmidt again. They were asked to consider a two-year interim. They consented to this, and on Mar. 25, 2007, the congregation gave its affirmation.

After the Schmidts' term ended in 2009, Pastor Hiebert continued to work on the deacon issue for the next year-and-a-half, without any success. Herman and Helen Kuhl agreed to take on another five-year term.

In the fall of 2011, the Hieberts announced their intention to retire at the end of March, 2012. In April, they would be going to Zambia, Africa, for a three-month teaching assignment.

On Jan. 1, 2013, Stefan Froese became the next pastor of the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church. He and his wife Lisa served the congregation until Dec. 31, 2015. After they moved away, the church carried on without a pastor for many months, and, for various reasons, the number of congregants continued to dwindle.

At the annual general meeting in February of 2017, a group of fewer than 20 souls met to decide the fate of the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church. Seeing they could no longer provide the resources to sustain it, they voted to close the church. Sunday, March 5, was the last service. Herman Kuhl led the solemn ceremony. A fellowship meal to commemorate the occasion followed. It was a sad day.

The Rosenfeld Rüdnerweider/EMMC Church: 1937-1972

By Elizabeth Falk

Central to the story of the church of my childhood is the fact that the *Rüdnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde* was newly separated from what was then referred to as the *Sommerfelder Mennoniten Gemeinde*. The story begins with a nameless searching – propelled as if by a dry and restless prairie wind that kindled a spark, ignited even before the Great Depression. Eventually flames of spiritual renewal spread throughout Southern Manitoba. Brian Froese of CMU in *California Mennonites* relates how, in the early 1900s, Mennonite congregations in California were served by travelling evangelists who “made faith a profoundly personal experience”.¹ As it happened, in 1917, Isaac P. Friesen, a businessman from Saskatchewan was vacationing in California where he experienced the life-changing ministry of such an evangelist from Russia. Subsequently, he was himself ordained to the ministry. Rev. John D. Adrian interviewed my father, Wilhelm H. Falk, for Adrian’s version of this story, *Die Entstehung*

der Rüdnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde 1936 (The Beginnings of the Rüdnerweider Gemeinde 1936). In 1958 Adrian wrote, “It happened, that in February of 1934 Rev. I.P. Friesen from Rosthern, Saskatchewan, came to the village of Reinfeld, not far from Winkler, Manitoba... He loved to present short evangelical messages. He had a warm demeanour and very clear message. When he came to Reinfeld, the vicinity where his brothers and nephews had their farms, he was invited to preach at evening meetings in the village school. The school filled up completely. Brother Friesen, in the strength of the Spirit, presented the powerful Word of Salvation.

“After several evenings, he gave an invitation for people to make a decision for the Lord. On that first evening, five people responded. They encountered salvation. The services continued for a time, and more and more people made the decision. The school was unable to accommodate all who wished to hear him, and after two weeks, the services were transferred to Winkler to accommodate a larger audience. The Bergthaler generously allowed the use of their church, and the work continued. Brother Friesen preached, and people made decisions for Christ. When, after a few weeks, that church could not hold the audience, the services were transferred to the Mennonite Brethren Church, again for several weeks. Many people found peace, and were happy to witness of their experience. People came from far and wide to participate in the blessings. Southern Manitoba has probably never had another awakening of this size. It was the Lord’s doing. The honour goes to Him alone.”²

I wasn’t there in the mid-thirties when revival fires swept across Southern Manitoba but I know they touched my father, a minister in the Sommerfelder church since 1927. I’ve read a private letter he received from I.P. Friesen, handled the souvenir gifts from California, read his treasured hardcover volumes of Friesen’s poetry, “*Im Dienste des Meisters*”. Three other Sommerfelder ministers were also deeply moved: Isaak Hoepfner, Gerhard J. Froese, and Peter S. Zacharias. According to Adrian, the main cause of disagreement, which ended in their eventual separation from the Sommerfelder Church, involved the place of Scripture, the Bible. “During the ministerial meetings attempts were often made to solve spiritual questions based on traditional moral precepts. The Word and its teachings remained set aside. If at such times the younger minister brethren pointed toward direction in the Word, discussion was blocked and reached a dead end.” *Eine Stokung (Totenpunkt) in der Verhandlung*. Meanwhile, these four ministers were being invited to conduct evening services by various locals and this became

a point of contention, so much so that a bishop from Saskatchewan was invited to a ministerial meeting to deal with the matter. After one such fruitless meeting, the older ministers met without the four younger ones; at the next full ministerial meeting the older ministers advised that they would visit each member, requiring of them that they choose, whether to remain in the established church, or adhere to a group with the four ministers. "The result of the visits determined that approximately 1,200 baptized members and 1,600 unbaptized members chose to go with the young ministers."³

On November 17, 1936, according to Adrian, at the general organizing assembly in Rüdnerweide, Wilhelm Falk as the chairperson presented the large congregation with a prepared agenda, one of six items being: "Based on the command of the Lord Jesus according to Mark 16:15 we want to engage in missionary work, as well as make known our interest in this matter by inviting travelling missionaries to share information about their work."⁴ Given opportunity to discuss the presentation, at a request from the attendees this point was read a second time. It is worthy of note that personal evangelism and foreign missions was a foundational principle of the new church.

In January of 1937 Wilhelm was ordained bishop of the newly organized Rüdnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde, so named after the place where the founding meetings occurred.

While there are those who suggest that in Rosenfeld the uprooted members might have joined the "struggling Bergthalers" and formed a community church in the old Coblenz store,⁵ the four ministers, left with this scattered *Seelenzahl* in their care, rose to the challenge to form a new Gemeinde.

With no houses of worship, several thousand people gathered across the valley in farm buildings including barns, granaries, machine sheds and a garden. Twenty to thirty people (some coming from Bergfeld) met across the highway from the original site of the village of Rosenfeld in the lean-to of the house-barn of Maria Zacharias, widow of Abraham Zacharias.⁶ There may have been an overflow from the services in Bergfeld. In her 2008 biography of our father, *A Prairie Pilgrim*, Mary Neufeld quotes him in a recorded interview: "In Bergfeld we had a big hayloft – Zacharias barn. It got so full at times that we were afraid it would break down."⁷

Doubtless ties between families and friends played a part in regrouping the dispersed people. Of all our father's siblings, only his sister Elizabeth and her husband Peter Berg of Weidenfeld shared his vision, wholeheartedly supporting him in the

direction the new church was taking. In April of 1937 Wilhelm Falk ordained his brother-in-law as an elected minister of the new Gemeinde, and in September, a meeting of the Bruderschaft allotted the sum of four hundred dollars toward the building of a church in Rosenfeld. Peter Berg became the construction foreman, assisted among others by John Unrau, and by the Schellenberg brothers, Anton and Bill. By the time the building was dedicated on December 21, 1937, membership had swelled to approximately fifty people; Johan Funk of Rosenfeld was ordained to assist as a deacon of this church.

Sunday mornings all Rüdnerweider ministers travelled down a dusty maze of country roads to preach the gospel wherever "the list" said they should go, accompanied in my father's case, by our mother and as many children as could be piled into the family Ford. On those Sundays when he was "free" we attended church in Rosenfeld. In my mind's eye, heavenly sunshine streams through cathedral-like arched windows, falling without discrimination on people and pews and dark brown, varnished floorboards. Up the narrow stairway we climb, into the enclosed loft, where Sunday school superintendent Dave Funk directs the children in singing *Gott ist die Liebe*. When evening falls, haloes of soft light emanate from milk-glass fixtures, suspended from the ceiling by long dark metal chains. Someone flips a switch, the lights go out, and now there are coloured slides of exotic wild animals, trees and flowers and somehow everything is connected to saving lost souls, their bodies projected larger than life on the curved white wall at the front of the church – the final slide always a warning that the sun is setting on deepest darkest Africa, India, Panama or Peru. When the Rüdnerweider church's first missionaries, my mother's siblings, Aunt Agatha, Uncle John, his wife Aunt Alice and their four children were home on furlough, church and family were ever more closely intertwined.

From Jack Heppner in *Search for Renewal*: "Throughout the early decades, Peter D. Berg was the resident minister in the Rosenfeld church, but like all other ministers he was away on the circuit most of the time."⁸ Dave Sawatzky recalls that while Berg was "not gifted to present to the public what was on his heart" mainly because – like many of the other ministers – he could not speak a fluent English, he was a "pusher", a "very conscientious person with a burden for the lost". Berg invested time and money to spread the gospel, travelling around the globe for three months at a time, visiting missionaries and making contacts, inviting them to come to Rosenfeld as guest speakers.⁹ Among many others, John

Thomas of India visited our home, bringing gifts of chocolate and wafers known as “ice-cream cookies” for two of my sisters, unaccountably presenting me with a large bag of oranges.

Zeal for saving lost souls extended to home missions. During two weeks of evening services with Evangelist John D. Friesen of Saskatoon, his passionate sermons were balanced by the singing of a visiting male quartet accompanied by their own pianist. At the age of thirteen, though I had of course been “saved” at home at a very early age, I was still filled with an adolescent *Seelenangst* and fear of hell. One night Rev. Friesen announced a contest: Whoever could answer the question, “What is the one thing God cannot do?” would win a prize. It was so easy. The following night, after standing up in the congregation and publicly confessing “God cannot remember our sins if we ask for forgiveness”, I was rewarded with a paperback copy of Billy Graham’s *Peace With God*.

Since the new Gemeinde’s identifying feature was that “faith was a profoundly personal experience” *Evangeliums Lieder* and gospel music became an important expression of that faith. As in the mother church, musical instruments were still frowned upon by the Bruderschaft and it was ten years before the Rosenfeld church installed a piano. Rev. Berg is said to have been the first pianist, followed by his son Henry, Carol Unrau Bergen, Shirley Sawatzky, and Herbie Neufeld. Special music often featured duets: Bill and Betty Ginter, Pete and Elda Reimer, Jake and Jan Martens. I recall Mark and Rose Gripp singing: “He took away my heart of stone, I am the Lord’s and His alone...” The extended George Sawatzky family from Altona was drawn to the Rosenfeld church when Linda and Henry Schmidt’s preteen daughter Lorraine was paired with Dave and Anne Sawatzky’s daughter Shirley in a duet. Mary Schellenberg and her family, where – quoting her son Gene – “basically everybody played everything”, performed many special numbers. While a student in Winkler Bible School, son Henry conducted the Rosenfeld church choir. Under the direction of Jake Martens, a teacher in Rosenfeld, the choir travelled and Dave Sawatzky preached. How many people were in the choir? The whole church – about thirty people.¹⁰

While the balcony of the building allowed for overflow during special evening services, it was also designed for Sunday school classes. On Sunday mornings, the space was closed off with hinged wooden panels, and sliding curtains divided the tiered floor space into four classrooms, creating room for fifty children. Dave Sawatzky observed

that it was when the church changed from German to English that attendance dropped. While making the language transition, it was in the area of evening services and Sunday school that mutual efforts were made to join with others in the community. Just over a decade after its birth, the Rosenfeld church reached a pivotal point in development.

Mary Neufeld wrote that by 1948, Sunday school in the Rosenfeld Rüdnerweider Church was being taught in English and by 1950, attendance at the Rosenfeld Church was low. At the August general ministerial meeting, Wilhelm Falk suggested moving the church building to Altona. At that time Rüdnerweider members living in Altona attended the Altona Bergthaler Church where a Rüdnerweider minister served once a month. The ministers at this meeting placed their bishop at the centre of the planning process, suggesting that the Rosenfeld local organize the move. In November he informed his fellow ministers that because the Kleine Gemeinde was building a larger church, the smaller church at Rosenhoff was available for \$22,000. Although the *Kirchen Komitee* (church committee) investigated and reported in December that this large building would be fairly expensive to move, the ministers were still prepared to proceed. In less than a year it was moved onto a basement in Altona and ready for use. The church was dedicated on October 14, 1951. Whereas Rosenfeld had been our home church up to this point, Altona now became our home church and we began to attend Sunday school there.¹¹

According to Dave Sawatzky, a community church in Rosenfeld was not feasible during the early days of formation of the Rudnerweiders, though such a venture might have succeeded at this time. Ironically, within the Rüdnerweider Gemeinde, there was increasing tension between young and the old. In 1955, Jacob H. Friesen replaced my father in his role, and in June of 1959 a new constitution was voted in. Thereafter the Gemeinde was known as the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference or EMMC. In the same year, my father’s first home church, the Schoenthal Sommerfelder Church, was closed. Rev. Peter Berg resigned that year and on June 21st Dave and Ann Sawatzky were ordained into the ministry, their time in Rosenfeld overlapping briefly in the transition. Soon after being called to be a deacon in Rosenfeld, Dave Funk was invited to Austin, Manitoba, as a pastor, and the deacon role remained unfilled.

From Jack Heppner in *Search for Renewal*: “The Rosenfeld group was in the forefront of the pressure for localization. When Dave Sawatzky was elected to the ministry in 1958, he wanted to be seen as a

local minister, not a member of the Rüdnerweider circuit.”¹²

Son of John and Anna Sawatzky, Dave grew up as a neighbour to the Bergs, “almost like a son” to Elizabeth Berg; at the age of sixteen he had helped in building the church. My older brother John recalls a young Dave and Anne (Stoesz) Sawatzky responding to an altar call at an evangelistic meeting led by A.M. Friesen in the Rosenfeld Rüdnerweider Church. Dave remembers that during his ministry many Lutherans attended the special services, and that he had pulpit exchanges with Lutheran pastors.

Rose Hildebrand wrote: “Rev. Dave Sawatzky, being a mission-minded man, saw to it that there would be a mission conference in the fall of each year. As speakers they had men like Oswald J. Smith, his son Paul, and Mark and Rose Gripp. The messages and missionary reports brought many people to the church and the church would be packed almost every evening.”¹³ Dave Sawatzky reminisces that in his lifetime he travelled to thirty different countries including the Holy Land – overseas three times, one trip lasting 49 days – preached in a hundred different churches all over the globe and always had connections wherever he went. He says he can still remember all the different places he visited and who was the minister there.

Back home in Rosenfeld, long before the days of wireless technology, when the Kroekers living next door to the church could no longer attend, a wire intercom was installed for broadcasting services to them.¹⁴

By early 1972, while children and youth programs in the Altona EMMC church had become a drawing card, Dave Sawatzky had been struggling with illness for five years. Not knowing if he would ever come back to serve the Rosenfeld Church, the congregation came to the inevitable decision to follow the trend among surrounding rural churches to amalgamate with the Altona EMMC church. On February 27, 1972, Rev. John Bergman, pastor of that church, preached the message during the final service in Rosenfeld. While some members chose to attend the Word of Life Church in Altona, most of the members transferred to the Altona EMMC Church.

Rose Hildebrand commented “It is always sad to see an era come to an end, but the convenience of transportation, a changing world all around, difficulties of a small church supporting a pastor, were all factors in closing the church. The trend of the 70s was for schools and churches to urbanize.”¹⁵

Situated on Acheson, a short walk south from the village cemetery, the building was sold on June 9, 1973, partially dismantled, moved away and lost

in obscurity. His name synonymous with Rosenfeld EMMC, Dave Sawatzky died at 97 years of age in March of 2018. He and Anne are buried in the Weidenfeld Cemetery.

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Rosenfeld School Cheers

Rosenfeld School cheer as remembered by a former Rosenfeld teacher, Mr. G.J. Siemens. The cheer or chant went as follows:

*Ice cream, watermelon, ginger beer and pop,
Rosenfeld
Rosenfeld
We're always on the top.*

Eleanore Schroeder: When our school class went to see King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in Winnipeg in 1939, we had the following cheer:

*Boom a langa, boom a langa, ring ching cha,
Rosenfeld, Rosenfeld, rah, rah, rah.
Ice cream, sauerkraut, ginger ale and rum.
Rosenfeld, Rosenfeld, here we come!*

I remember it very well, as Mr. Gus Pokrant was our chaperone and whenever we got restless waiting for the Royal appearance, he would have us do the Rosenfeld Cheer and the crowd loved it.



School in Dorf Rosenfeld



A certain Jacob P. Zacharias wrote an article in the 1920s telling a bit about the early years of Dorf Rosenfeld and its schools. It was translated from German by Edward Enns, whose grandfather Abram is named in the list of teachers.

The village of Rosenfeld was established in 1875 and occupied until 1894 along the south side of the well-known Buffalo Creek. It was not a very large village. On the east end of the north side lived first of all, my grandparents, Peter Zachariases. The second ones were the Anton Funks – Father’s step-brother and cousin. Next to them, the Canadian Pacific Railway had a right-of-way, which cut across the village from south to north. West of the railway on the north side were Isbrand Friesens, Isaac Wiebes, David Wiebes, David Klassens, David Fehrs. Beyond the right-of-way were Niebuhrs, Johann Klassens, Abram Zacharias, Jacob Zacharias, then my parents, Peter Zachariases. If I remember correctly, there were several others whose names I do not know.

The first teacher in the village was Jacob Zacharias. School was held in his home. When in 1894 the village was disbanded, the school was located at 29-2-1 west, on the northwest quarter. It was built by Jacob Hoepfner. The first teacher in that place was Cornelius Epp, who was also a minister of the Sommerfelder Church. After a year, Uncle David Klassen bought that quarter section and a school was built on 32-24 west on the southeast quarter [where the school still stands]. ...Cornelius Epp served there for a year. He was succeeded by Heinrich Wiebe, who served for a year. He was followed by Cornelius Enns, a recent immigrant, who, if I’m not mistaken, had a poor reputation. He was succeeded by Abram Enns, who in turn was succeeded by Jacob E. Nikkel, who served for about seven years. He was followed by Peter K. Unrau, who served until the emigration to Mexico took place in 1922. Klaas Harder succeeded him until the school changed over to English in 1924. The first teacher then was Mrs. Driedger, who taught until Christmas, after which her husband, Johann K. Driedger, took over. The school was given the name Roseville.

A note from Edward Enns: “Among the 80 letters my grandfather [Abram Enns] wrote as correspondent for the Mennonitische Rundschau [a newspaper for Russian Mennonites] between 1893 and 1910, almost half are written from Rosenfeld between 1905 and 1910 and mention several people found in the Zacharias document. He writes hardly anything about the school and his teaching, but relates the doings and the “dyings” of people of the

community and beyond. Prior to this, he held teaching positions in Altberghal, Rüdnerweide, Myrtle, and Kronsgart. He left with his family in April of 1910 to take up homesteading in the Hodgeville area of Saskatchewan. In 1920 he took his family and settled in Oregon, from whence he returned to Rosenfeld in 1930, where he died in 1936.”

Rosenfeld Schools Timeline

By Art Wiebe

1. First school building – was a house (exact location in Rosenfeld unknown) rented from Peter Dueck at \$5/month for two months till the first official school had been built. Mr. Dueck lived in the Acheson School District #755, located in Rosenfeld. The school district was formed by the Douglas By-law #13 of August 19, 1884. The first three trustees (Heinrich M. Klassen, M.L. Stewart, and J. Schwartz) were elected at a ratepayers meeting held in the Alexander Acheson home in Rosenfeld on June 15, 1893.

2. Second school building – The first new schoolhouse (one classroom, measuring 22’x28’) was built at 26 Gertie Avenue by Peter Wiebe for \$590 in the Acheson School District #755. It was located on the property directly west of the Rosenfeld Cemetery (south side of the avenue).

3. Third school building – The second new school (two classrooms, one on the main floor, the other on the second floor) was built in 1912, still in the Acheson School District #755. It was located in the area of 247 Acheson Street, facing east on the west side of street.

4. Fourth school building – The third new school was built in 1937 for \$8,000 at 237 Acheson Street, located immediately south of the 1912 school, facing east on the west side of the street. This school had a total of five classrooms: two classrooms on each side of the hallway on the main floor, with stairs leading up to the staffroom directly above the inside stair entrance to the school; plus one classroom in the south west corner of the basement. Both washrooms were along the south side of the basement, with the auditorium/gym along the north side of the basement; it included a stage area at the west end. The custodian’s room, filled with supplies like sweeping compound, toilet paper and paper towels, was underneath the stairway going down to the basement. The furnace room, directly across from the custodian’s room, served as a science lab for Grades 9-11 until the high school section was discontinued in 1964. This school closed in 1982.

5. Fifth school building – The fourth new school (six classrooms, \$400,000) opened in 1982.

It was part of the Rhineland School Division #18, formed August 18, 1971, and was located at 248 Main Street (west/northwest of the 1912 and 1937 school buildings) on the east side of the street. The school's parking lot was on the site of the former blacksmith's shop. Originally a Grades 1-6 school, with a resource room, library, computer lab, and gym (40'x60'), it was expanded in 2002 to include Kindergarten, with enlarged classrooms, requiring the addition of one two-room hut moved in from Gretna (currently used as the library and a classroom) and two high quality re-locatable classrooms (\$200,000 each). These additions have all been connected to the original 1982 school structure.

Art Wiebe: While searching for Rosenfeld historical photos on the Internet, I came across a picture of the first official building used as a school in Rosenfeld. This building stood on the land where the community presently has a cairn. This land was donated by A. J. Thiessen for historical and cemetery extension. Later, this building was used as a home. If I understood Helmut Martel correctly, Mr. Thiessen's parents might have lived in this building before it was dismantled in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

Snow Hills West of the Railway Station

Brian Kroeker: My dad told me stories of the tunnels and caves dug into huge snowdrifts. In one of them they even had a wood stove.

Bob Derksen: We played there every winter, lots of fun.

Helen Kroeker: I remember boys like Donald and Gordon Loewen and Jack and George Flett would start tunneling into the snowbanks early in winter and, as the snow built up deeper, they would keep the original tunnel hole open and excavate more snow, until the burrow would extend the height of three snow fences. Actually the snow fences were a means of protecting the railroad and the station house. Rosenfeld was a major junction, so the snow fences were very practical. We children benefited, in that it provided us a winter recreation.



In 1984 and 1985, J.C. Fehr wrote a series of short articles for the Red River Valley Echo, telling the history of the rural schools in the Rhineland municipality.

Amsterdam: Land of Dikes and Ditches January 25, 1984

The name Amsterdam recalls to mind a city in the country of Holland, the land of dikes and ditches. Whether this had anything to do with the naming of this district is not known.

When the district was first established there were no dikes or ditches here. The land is low lying and of heavier soil, and was therefore one of the later areas of the Rhineland Municipality to be settled.

One of the first uses of this land was around the year 1890, when farmers of the surrounding area leased it from the government for making hay.

This district was established by Rhineland By-law No. 50 on June 2, 1896, as S.D. No. 885. It operated as a public school from the start and continued until July 1, 1965, when it became part of Consolidated Rosenfeld. However, in the early years the pupils were taught in private homes or empty granaries. In 1900 three acres of land was bought and the first school was built on SE 35-2-1 W. Most of the district is in the RM of Rhineland, a small part is in the RM of Montcalm.

The mode of settling this area was somewhat different from the earlier settlements in the RM. Instead of settling in a village, they settled on individual quarters. Very often these homesteads were abandoned or sold after a few years because of the persistent flooding. The land was bought by farmers from higher ground, who used it for hay.

The Buffalo Channel ditch, east of Highway 30, better known as the Double Dike, was dug in 1904 by a floating dredge. Because of frequent summer flooding, the dikes were built in 1828. This greatly improved the area, but some flooding problems persist even to the present time.

In the Great Depression the abandoned homes were repaired and once again occupied. This influx caused an increase in students, making the one-room school bulge its seams with up to 60 pupils.

Information source: Peter Schellenberg, Rhineland History Book manuscript.

Hoffnungsthal: Home of Mennonites, Lutherans

June 6, 1984

Hoffnungsthal district is located in the northeast corner of the RM of Rhineland. It also took in a small part of the Montcalm Municipality. This area was one of the later-settled parts of the RM. 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 RM 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 persecution. 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 RM 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. 24-3-1 W 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 speak 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 neighbouring 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.

New Kennedy Once Hayland Sept. 12, 1984

New Kennedy S.D. No. 1573, situated on the northern boundary of the Rhineland Municipality

directly north of Rosenfeld was established on June 29, 1911. The school, built in 1912, was located on SE 32-3-1 W. This district operated until July 1, 1965, when it became part of Rosenfeld Consolidated.

Being a low-lying area, this district was one of the last of the RM to be settled. In the early years it was used mostly for making hay, by farmers farther south. The land was mostly owned by a few large landowners. One of them was a Jack Kennedy. It was after this man that the district was named.

As the story goes, there already was a Kennedy school in Manitoba, so this one received the name of New Kennedy. This district differed from most of the other rural districts in that there were people of four different faiths living here.

There were Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites. There also have been teachers of these various faiths who have taught in this school.

After the drainage came through, this has become a prosperous farming area.

It is interesting to note that the school was built with a bell tower, however no bell was ever placed into it. A portion of the school served as a teacherage until 1938 when a two-room annex with basement was built on to the west end of the school. This arrangement was very convenient for the teacher, as he didn't have to go outside in inclement weather.

Reichenbach Settled in 1880s Nov. 7, 1984

One mile west of Rosenfeld along Highway 14, we come to the Reichenbach S.D. Turning north under a canopy of trees, we come to the location of the school. Of course the school closed in 1965, but the building is still there, presently being used as a residence by A. Neustater.

Reichenbach is a small district between Rosenfeld to the east and Rosenheim to the west. It also took in an area south of Highway 14 down to the Buffalo Creek. It was originally settled in the 1880s. One of the homesteaders, John D. Klassen, built a private school on his land, SW 8-3-1 W in 1885. He was teacher there for the first 10 years.

Reichenbach S.D. No. 1198 was established as a public school district on July 6, 1911. It used the original school until approximately 1920 when a new school was built across the road on SE 7-3-1 W. Jacob F. Klassen, son of the first teacher, served as a trustee of this district for 14 years. In 1965 they consolidated with Rosenfeld. In good weather the pupils always had to walk, but in wintertime some of the parents clubbed together to take turns hauling the students. This made for more enjoyable transportation to and from school.

The soil in this area varies quite a bit from the heavy gumbo in the northern part to the rich black loam in the southern part. Some of the older residents can still remember when the northern area was used only for hay. It didn't seem possible that it would ever be used for cropping. With the drainage coming through that has changed, so that today there are no hay fields left, except in the dikes.

Roseville: On the Bank of Buffalo Lake Jan. 9, 1985

This week we travel to what was one of the smallest districts in the RM of Rhineland located four miles north of Altona. Even though it is small, still it has an interesting history.

This district was first settled as a village in 1875, being one of the original ones. It was established in the middle of section 32-2-1 W, two miles S.W. of Rosenfeld along the south side of Buffalo Lake. The name of the village was also called Rosenfeld. As to the reason they chose to settle here separate from the other original villages one can only guess. Someone suggested they settled here beside the lake (it was a lake before the Buffalo Channel was built) as protection from prairie grass fires. Or maybe it was the exceptionally fertile soil right beside a good water supply. Whatever the reason, they were quite a distance from church headquarters. (Rheinland was more than twenty miles away). As a result, they were soon assimilated with the settlers of the East Reserve who settled the surrounding area within the next few years. This has caused some frustration for people who wanted to trace their family tree, thinking they were of Bergthal background.

The village was broken up around 1896. The many trees of the village remained and for many years was a favourite spot for school picnics, wiener roasts, open air band concerts, gatherings, ball games, etc. The place was affectionately known as "The Bush".

The first school was held in private homes in the village. Later a yard was bought one half mile south of the village site, where the school operated until August 18, 1971. A public school district was established on February 1, 1920, by Order-in-Council, the official name being Clyde No. 1990, which was later changed to Roseville. Presently it is part of the Rhineland School Division.

In the early 1940s a community choir was organized by the then teacher, Miss K. Peters. Over the years the choir expanded somewhat and today is known as the Ebenezer Choir, which brings regular programs at the Ebenezer Home. They sing for the sheer joy of singing and after more than 40 years still have some of their original members!

Weidenfeld: A Village in 1876

January 16, 1985

Adjoining Roseville on the west side is the district of Weidenfeld. The Buffalo Lake coming from the south passes through the eastern part of this district before making a 90-degree turn to the east. Indications are that on the west bank of the Buffalo the pioneers had settled as a village possibly as early as 1876. Memories of older persons recall having plowed through raised sections of earth where the homes supposedly had been. Also an 1858 five-kopechi (a Russian coin) has been found there.

Some of the pioneers left relatives who settled in Minnesota on the way here from Russia. How long the village was in existence before they moved out to their homesteads is unknown.

The soil in this area near the Buffalo is exceptionally fertile and productive. Farther out to the west and south this district had a large area of bulrushes. A drain was constructed with horses to make this area useable. Later better drainage was made through that area.

This district was established as a public school district, Weidenfeld No. 988 by Rhineland By-law No. 66 in the year 1898. A school was built on SW 36-2-2W, which was replaced by a new school around 1926-27. This new school operated until January 6, 1966, when it became part of Horndean and Rosenfeld.

Before it became a public school district the children were taught in private schools located in various private homes and different locations.

Much controversy existed in the years of transition from the private to public school, as was the case in many districts. They operated here simultaneously until 1912 when the private school closed. The controversy did not end, however, as they experienced some difficult years (1916-19) when the district was run by the official trustee, Mr. Greenway. Records indicate that in the years 1905-1966 the total number of students that attended the Weidenfeld School was 469, with more boys than girls.

A graveyard is located right next to the school site, but this district never had a church. The residents attended church services at Schoenthal when there was still a church there. One famous resident of this district was Bishop David Schulz, who was leader of the Bergthaler church for many years.

Memories of the New Kennedy School District

By Ken Schmidt

My Schmidt family emigrated from the Chelm area of Poland. Grandfather Gustav Schmidt came to

the Gretna area in 1893, and Grandmother Eva (nee Bartz) followed about five years later. From there they moved to Rosenau, a village along the Roseau River near Dominion City. By 1913 church records indicate that they were somewhere in the Rosenfeld area, probably closer to Lowe Farm. In 1920 they moved onto SE 33-3-1 W, half a mile directly east of New Kennedy School, renting the land from a family by the name of Pieper from Gretna. The Schmidt family consisted of: Amalie married to Henry Herman and farming in the 1-6 area south of Morden; Emilie married to Gustav Mazinke (son of Pauline née Pokrant) and living one mile south of the school; and Bertha, Frederick William, Elsie and Adelma.

Eventually Fred took over the farm, and in 1938 he married Leocadia Marsch. Pauline Pokrant had lost her husband Wilhelm Mazinke in 1903, and married the widower Emil Marsch in 1907. They had two more girls – Pauline, who married Julius Martel, and my mother, Leocadia. I was born in 1942, an only child. I attended New Kennedy for ten years, taking my last year, grade 10, by correspondence. After high school in Rosenfeld and Altona, I went to U of M and became a teacher in Steinbach and later Brandon. Fred died suddenly in 1966, and Leocadia moved to Steinbach. She died in Brandon in 1985. The farm was rented out for some years and eventually sold.

Some of the roots of the New Kennedy district can be traced back to the arrival of five families from the Volhynia area of Ukraine, often referred to just as Russia. Brothers Ferdinand, Heinrich, and August Pokrant and their sister Pauline, married to Wilhelm Mazinke, and their cousin Friedrich Pokrant, came to the Rosenfeld area in the late 1800s. Ferdinand, Heinrich, and Friedrich all settled north of Rosenfeld, and eventually they and some of their descendants owned most of the land adjacent to the road leading to the eventual location of New Kennedy School. August Mazinke, son of Pauline, was one of the first teachers at New Kennedy. In 1914, while teaching at New Kennedy, he became ill and died. Since the school only opened in 1912, it is most likely that he was the first teacher. To the best of my knowledge, the school operated continuously until the summer of 1947. Louis Pokrant, son of Ferdinand, was the teacher for at least 12 years leading up to its temporary closing in 1947.

J.C. Fehr points out that the district was unique in that it served peoples of four different faiths: Baptist, Catholic, Mennonite and Lutheran. To this can be added the fact that at the approximate centre of the section on which the school was located, lived a Jewish family by the name of Finkelstine. While I

could not find evidence that any Finkelstine children attended the school, a Mr. C. Finkelstine is shown as a trustee in 1915 and in 1920. Another feature of the district was that, while most of it was in the RM of Rhineland, a small part extended into the RM of Morris.

My recollections of the school go back to 1949, the year I entered grade one. There were enough students to re-open the school and warrant hiring a teacher. That first teacher was Otto Funk, followed by Abram Bergen in 1952, Albert Groening in 1955, and Edgar Enns in 1957.

There were fifteen students that first September. The Martin Neufeld family had moved onto property one mile west of the school – Edna, Martin, George and Helen were of school age. One mile further west, and technically in the Melba district, was the Ben Dueck family – Edna and Willie of school age. In each family there were younger siblings to ensure more students for future years. About one mile NW of the school was the Jake Wiebe family. Son Jim was in Grade 9, the oldest in the school. Next door was the Peter Schroeder family; between 1952 and 1960, Rodney, Laurie, Wayne, and Delores attended New Kennedy. One mile north of the school lived the John Klassen family. Marvin was in Grade 1 with me. About 1955 the Klassens sold to the Theo Schieman family, and Len started at New Kennedy that fall. Across the road to the east of the Klassens was the Peter J. N. Dyck family. Son Ben was in Grade 8. About 1955 Mr. Dyck married a Mrs. Wiens from Altona, and for several years after that there were four Wiens siblings attending. Half a mile north of the school was the Albert H. Pokrant farm. Alvin and Darlene would be students in coming years. Just south of that was the Ed Yanchura farm. They never had children of their own, but Mr. Yanchura contributed many years as a member of the school board. In 1958, their nephews, Wayne and Vernon Newman, came to live with them. They were students at the school until spring 1963. Half mile east, but on the south side of the “dike”, or Hespeler drain, was the Fred Pokrant farm. Lawrence and Elmer started the year, but moved to Winnipeg before Christmas. Half mile south of the school was the Bill Pokrant farm. Richard, Clifford, and Jean had all been students in earlier years. Roy Pokrant bought this land, and his sons would also attend New Kennedy. One mile south of the school was the Gustav Mazinke farm. Faith Abraham, granddaughter of Gustav, started grade 1 that year. By Christmas her family had moved to Transcona. In 1955 the Martin Neufeld family moved away, and a Wiebe family moved in.

The New Kennedy classroom seemed large. The library was two shelves of books, each shelf about

two to three feet long. There was a door at the front of the classroom that led into a storage room that was about six feet deep and the full width of the school. This room was sometimes used for disciplinary reasons, so it was best to avoid being asked to go into that room. Beyond that was an attached teacherage – a bedroom and a kitchen, both quite small, but the teacher didn't have to leave the building to get to work. It also meant that it was relatively easy for him to stoke up the old Booker stove early enough in the morning to get the school warm by the time students started arriving.

That first year there was no electricity in the school. Light, when needed for the occasional evening meetings, was provided by gas mantle lamps. All of the windows were on the south side of the building, so light during the daytime was not a problem. Within the next year, the magic of electricity arrived, opening up so many opportunities. The teacher was able to order films from Winnipeg and obtain the use of a projector. That was always a very exciting day for us! But now light was a problem – the classroom needed to be darkened. At some point, one of the teachers came up with the idea of making blinds out of tarpaper. So the strong odour of tarpaper became the sweet smell of moving pictures to our little minds.

The barn was still used in my early years at the school. The only gravel road was the north-south road leading to Rosenfeld. Most of the families lived along country roads that had never seen gravel, so when it rained, the horse and buggy were the most reliable form of transportation. Sometimes the students would come by themselves, stable the horses for the day, and then hitch up and drive home at the end of the day. In winter, roads would become impassable and remain that way for weeks at a time. Then the horses would be hitched up to a cutter or caboose for the trip to the school. As horses became less fashionable, the older students would be seen driving a tractor to school on occasion – the small Ford tractors were a favourite.

Arguably the highest point of the school year was the Christmas concert. (After all, this was probably the biggest test the teacher had to face!) Practice would begin early in November. A stage would be built several weeks before the concert, and regular classes were kept to a minimum and practising parts and songs were the highest priority. Our concert was almost always the evening of December 23rd. Most of the community would attend as well as friends and relatives from nearby – the school would be

packed. Some years there would even be a Santa Claus. I remember the first one. I was suspicious of the questions he was asking me, only to find out that it was my cousin from the Sewell area. There were presents for each of us from the teacher, and if memory serves me correctly, we had also drawn names and bought a gift for one of our classmates.

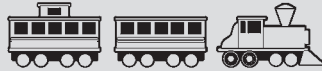
Another major community event was the school picnic on one of the last school days of June. This was always shared with one or more of the neighbouring school districts – Reichenbach and Roseville come to mind. There were various track-and-field events such as high jump, races, shoe scrambles, three-legged races, and usually some ball games. There were rewards for the winners, both in the form of ribbons and money. There was also always a refreshment stand where we could buy drinks, candy, and especially ice cream with the money we had won, or maybe money Mom or Dad had given us.

Because all the windows were only on the south side of the building, there was no possibility of cross ventilation. May and June always seemed to be hot months in those years and we looked forward to every opportunity to play outside. The favourite sport at this time of year was softball. Friday afternoon was always awaited with anticipation because frequently we would travel to another school for a game, or they would come to us. Communication being what it was, another school might arrive unannounced. It never took long to put our work aside and head out to the diamond. The mode of transportation used is worth noting. If a school was small enough, the students might have been transported in several cars. More often it was a farm truck that was used. We had a 1937 Chevy 1½ ton truck with a wooden box capable of hauling about 150 bushels of wheat. All of the students would climb into the box and, with the teacher as the driver, off we would go. Nobody ever thought about liability insurance.

In 1960 Art Harder followed Edgar Enns as teacher and the school remained open until June of 1963. Some years later the school was dismantled, and the yard became farmland again. As everywhere across the prairies, the landscape was changing. Farmyards where large families once lived now stood empty or had disappeared altogether. Farms were much larger, and with consolidation and then the formation of school divisions, the political structure of education was changing. And so has the nature of the community provided by the one-room country school.

Trick Or Treat

Hartley Pokrant: I vividly remember those days of Halloween – “shobba knocking” [schowanocking]. In the late 1960s, the local boys would plan and prepare for days on how we could execute the strategic Halloween night plan to block Main St. and tip over as many outhouses as possible (myself excluded, of course). Headquarters for the operation was a wooden fort built from huge stacks of railway snow-fence boards built behind the beet loader. One year a couple of old cars were pushed across Main St. and gaps filled in with 45-gallon barrels and wooden planks. Lots of large garden melons were sometimes “acquired” earlier from town gardens and stashed until that special night, when they were used as flying projectiles off of speeding bicycles. For several years, four gentlemen split up into teams of two and patrolled the suburbs of town by car and communicated with each other with state-of-the-art plastic walkie-talkies borrowed from their kids. (Picture four hyper Deputy Barney Fifes). It was a cat-and-mouse game for these two teams of deputy patrol officers to catch the boys in the act of tipping toilets and other mischief. I think they enjoyed the fun as much as the boys did.



Custodial Duties and Piano Lessons

Herb Neufeld: My dad, Jacob Neufeld, was the custodian at the Rosenfeld school from 1960 to 1964, when he passed away. I was 14 at the time. I remember pretty much every inch of the building. I had to help every day with the sweeping, clearing garbage cans, and filling those ten-gallon ceramic water coolers with water. Each classroom had one. They had a spout at the bottom with a button which you pressed to fill your paper cup – the cone-shaped type. The room in the basement, with the furnace behind it, was definitely a science lab (among other things). I remember playing with the mercury when I was supposed to be cleaning; the exposure wasn't of a concern to me at the time. The auditorium had a piano where I took piano lessons from Miss Lenzmann. It's also there where I played the piano in public for the first time—I played “God Save the Queen,” accompanying the audience, at the end of a concert.

Gloria Miller: I remember cleaning this school with my parents and siblings... I cleaned all the desks and sinks, my brothers and sister swept floors and emptied garbage cans. This paid for our grocery bill at Kehler's store every month. We all attended this school as well and lived across the street on Gertie Avenue.



California comes to Reichenbach

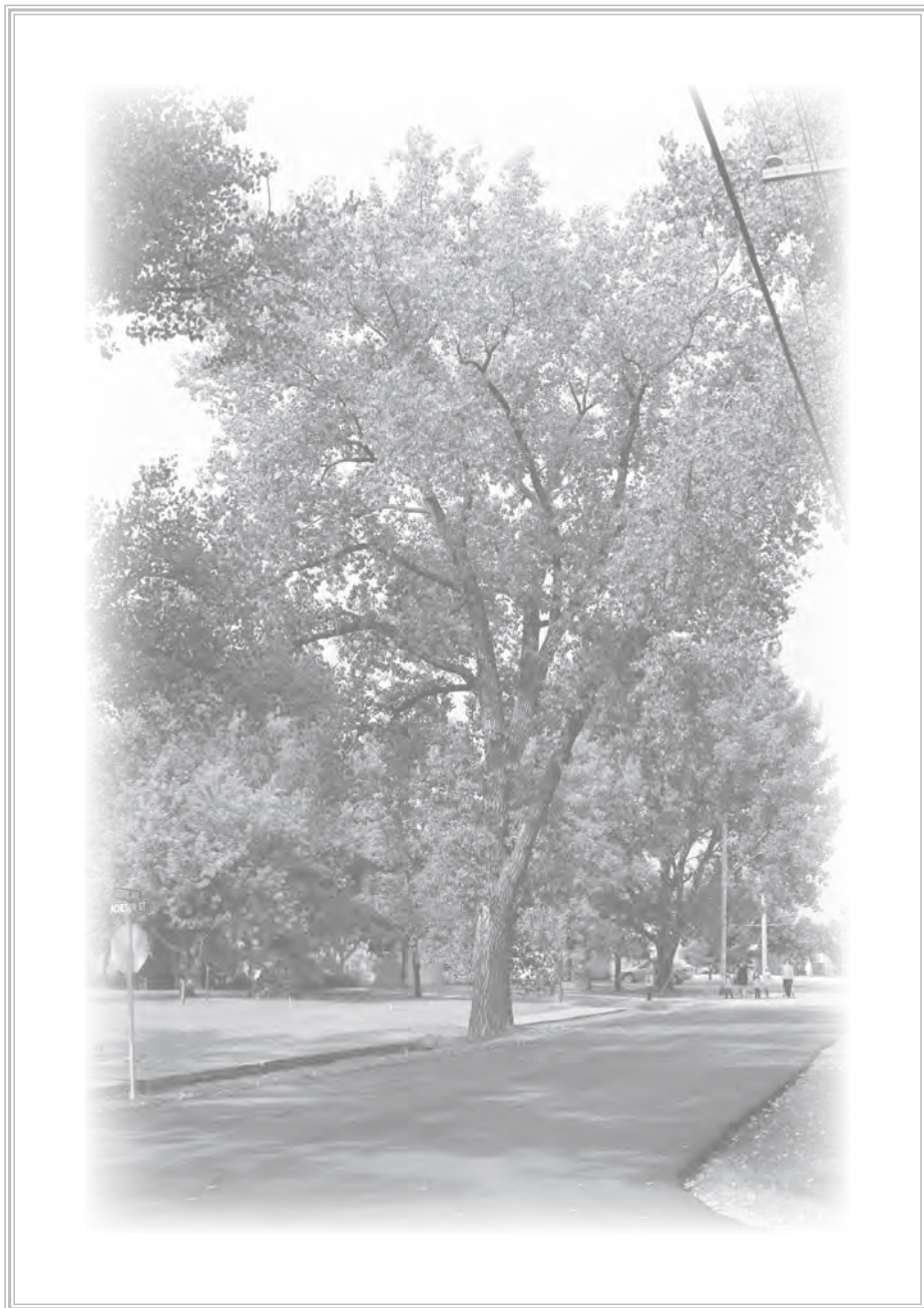


Lois Braun: In the mid-1950s, my dad, Jake Nickel, whose favourite place to visit was Long Beach, California, decided to bring a little of it back to our farm 1 mile west of Rosenfeld. Aside from designing a house and yard that echoed the properties he admired in the Golden State, he also turned a maple on the front lawn into a palm tree. The replica was very life-like, and for years travellers on Hwy 14 would screech to a halt, reverse the car, and stop to gape at the phenomenon. Some of these strangers even rang our doorbell to ask how anyone could manage to grow a palm in Manitoba! Well, the maple eventually rotted, and one day the palm tree toppled to the ground, only to be resurrected in our back yard, where travellers never saw it.

Chapter IV



Farming and Rural Life



Album D



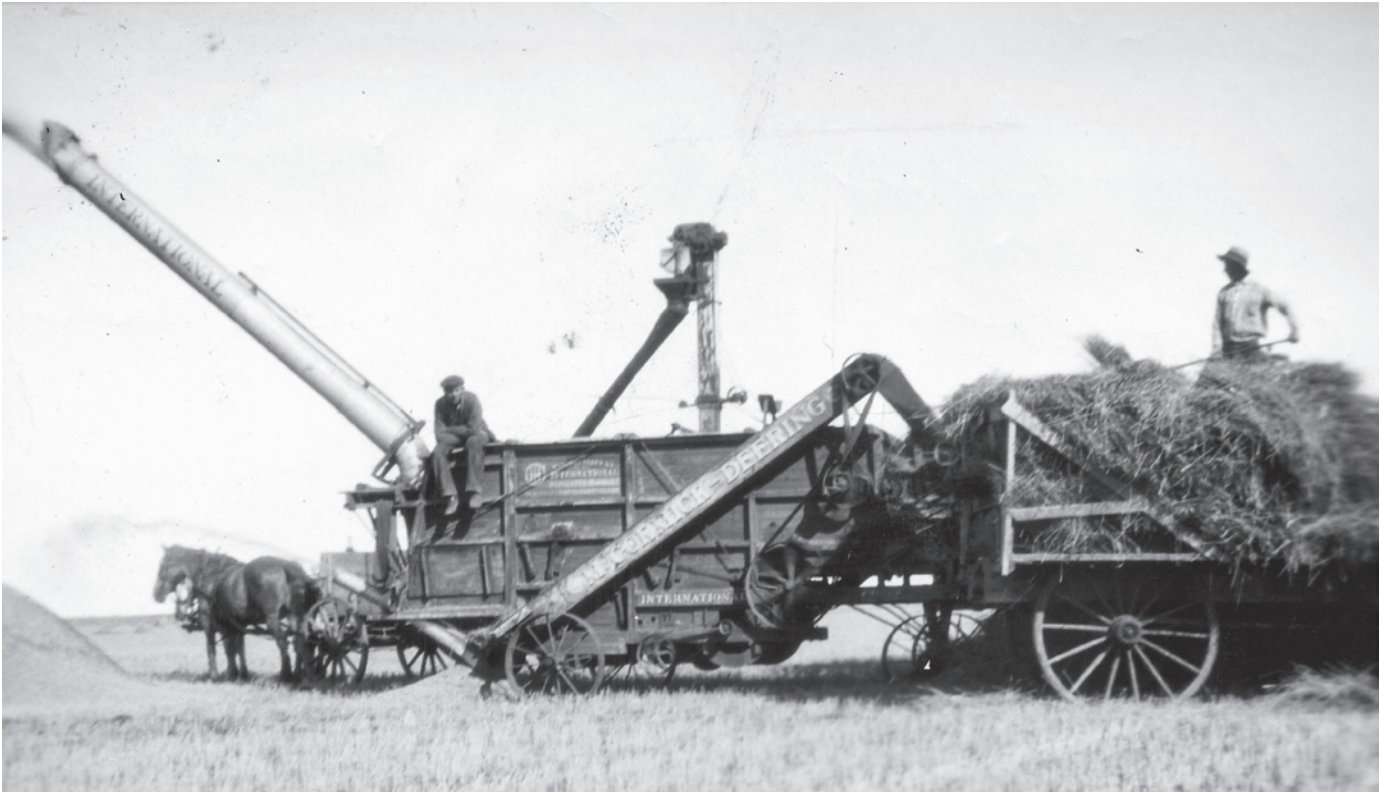
Pig-slaughtering bee in Rosenfeld in the 1920s, most likely at the Aaron Funk home. The woman on the far right is Elizabeth (Dyck) Kroeker, mother to Bill. [Bill Kroeker]



1920 – horse-drawn binders forming bundles to put into stooks before threshing. [Elsie Pokrant]



Albert Schroeder's custom threshing business, 1937. [Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke]



Threshing at the August Pokrant farm. [Elsie Pokrant]



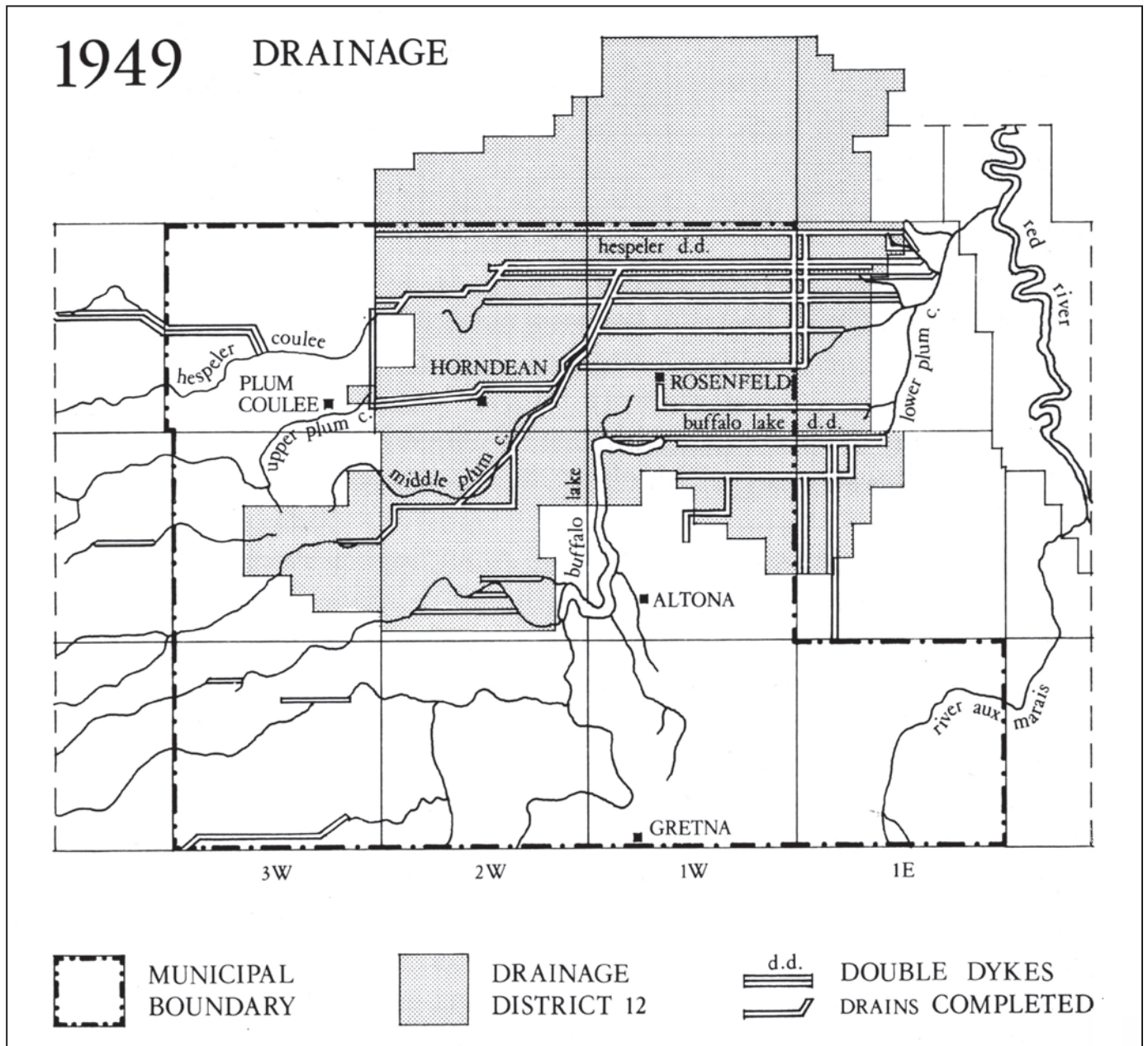
Threshing during the war years – take note of the homemade portable hopper wagon, on the right, to which the threshing machine is sending the grain. Because farm help was in short supply, Roy's dad designed this 100-bushel wheat hopper wagon so that the wagon could be emptied without having to shovel the grain. The wheels were taken from an old threshing machine. [Roy Pokrant]



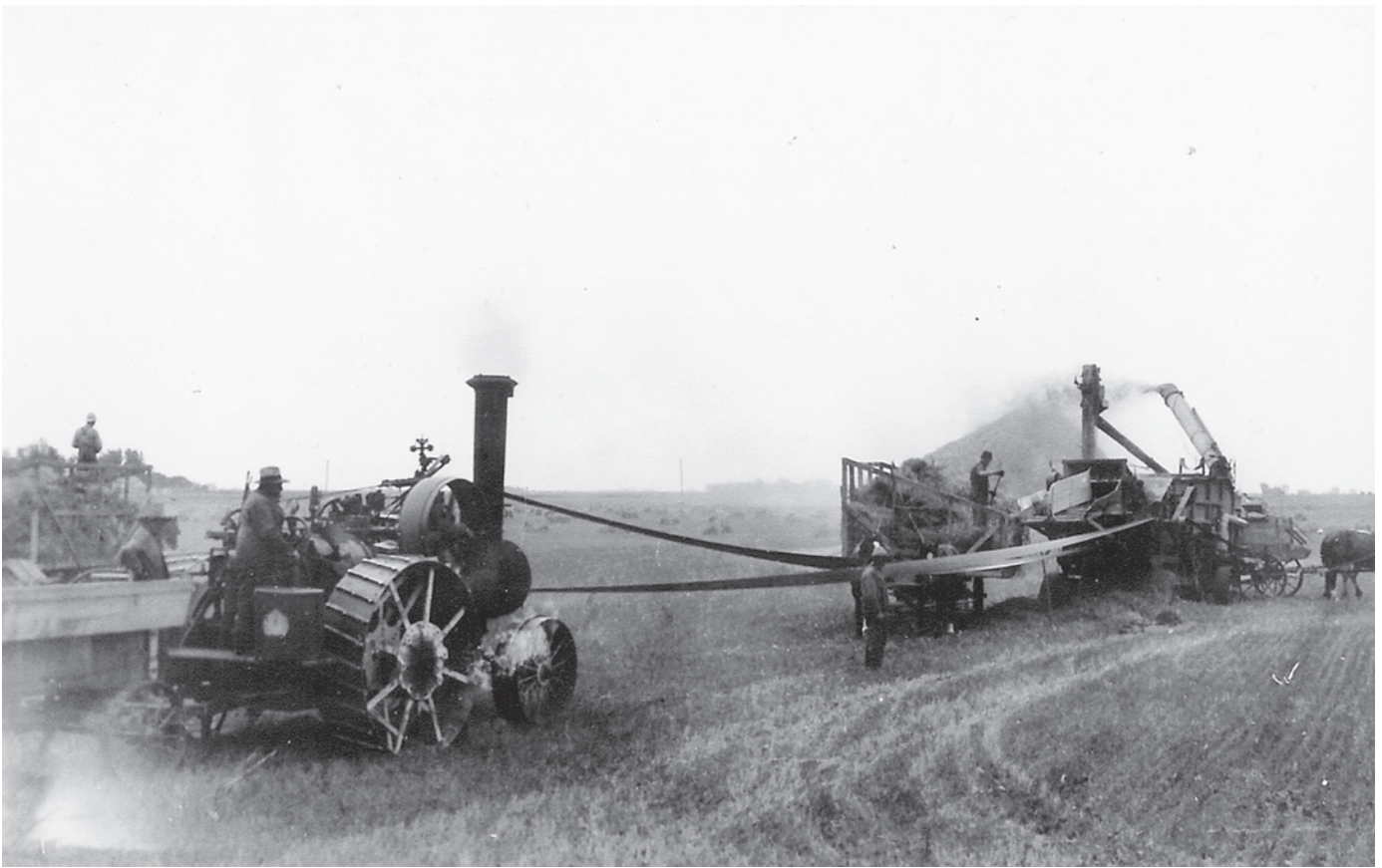
August and Alfred. August Lang rented land north and south of Hwy 14, approx. one mile east of Rosenfeld. In the early years, August's brother Alfred was a welcome helping hand. [Wendy (Lang) Thiessen]



Sugar beet harvest northwest of Rosenfeld, across from the Ed Pokrant farm yard. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



1949 map of double-dyke drainage plan in Rhineland. [from *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland: Volost and Municipality, 1884-1984* by Gerhard Ens, p. 211]



David Klassen's threshing machine, Roseville, 1930s-40s. [Glenn Friesen]



Road gang working on Highway #14A, now #30, near Rosenfeld. Undated. These men are using Fresno scrapers with teams of four horses to smooth the road. The Fresno scraper was invented in 1883 by James Porteous in Fresno, California. It would scoop up the dirt and was controlled with a lever to cut deeper and also to dump the dirt. Note: Paving of these highways started in the mid-1950s. [Judy Fehr]



Looking northeast, horse auction in stockyard in Rosenfeld. Buildings on Main Street, from right, Fehr & Sons Garage, Neufeld's, Friesen's Store, John and Luella's Restaurant, Martel's Blacksmith Shop. Jacob Kroeker took this photograph in the 1930s.



Sugar beet harvest at the Diedrich Klassens' in Roseville in the 1950s. [Glenn Friesen]



Pete Funk harvesting his sugar beets northwest of town. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



Johnny Enns poking his head out of the office, supervising the unloading of sugar beets at the Y in the railroad tracks, 1943 or 44. [Wesley Berg]



Pete Funk's 1940 sugar beet crop. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



Unidentified farmers at harvest, c. 1955. [Bob Derksen]



Imperial Elevator #31. [Judy Fehr]



Rosenfeld's grain elevators in the late 1950s. [George Fast] The narrow black structure in the distance on the left is the coal dock, used by CPR steam engines to fill up with coal.



A typical southern Manitoba farmyard in the early-to mid-1900s, this is the original Karl Knopf property, where David Thiessen lived with his family; Thiessen was Knopf's right-hand man; the land was later purchased by August Lang. [Judy Fehr, David and Margaret Thiessen's granddaughter]



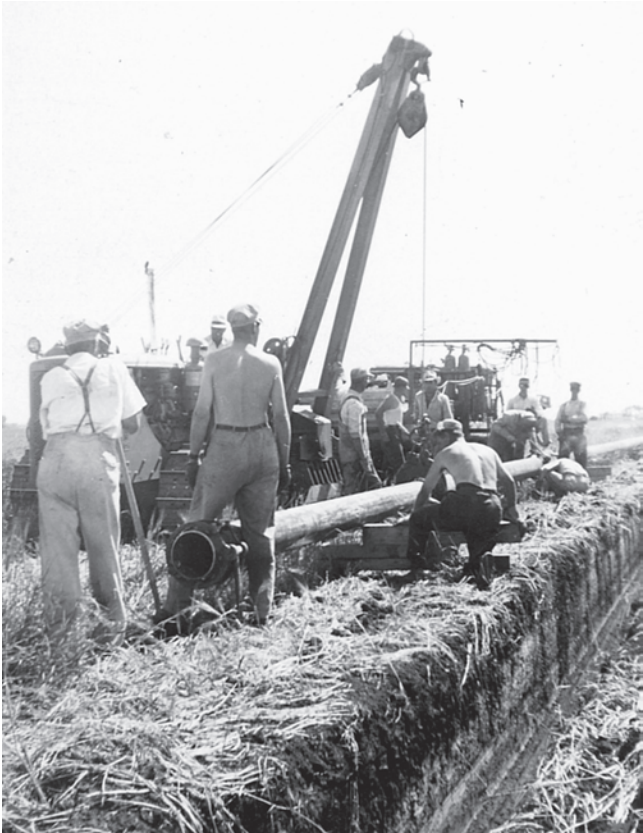
[Found in Rosenfeld School teacher's desk drawer]



Digging the double dyke near Amsterdam S.D. [Paul Reimer]



1956 flood, one of many that impacted spring planting for Rosenfeld area farmers. [Harvey Bergen]



Laying pipes for oil, Amsterdam area, 1950s? [Paul Reimer]



Collapsing barn on former Solomon Doerksen farm. [Bob Derksen]



Rosenfeld from up on the grain elevator, date unknown. [Lynne Martel]

What Lies Beneath



Something for the science lovers: These two articles were discovered online. They are reports on the rocks and soils in the Rosenfeld area, where the Canadian Pacific Railway conducted extensive tests back in the late 1800s.

1. Excerpts from a paper entitled: “Older Geology of the Red River and Assiniboine Valleys”, written and presented by George Bryce, LL.D, in 1891 to the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba (found at www.mhs.mb.ca)

The Rosenfeld Boring

Perhaps the most useful operation we have had for obtaining an accurate knowledge of our Red River valley rocks was the boring conducted by the Canadian Pacific railway in 1885 at Rosenfeld Station, 60 miles southwest of Winnipeg. By the use of a percussion drill, after boring a little more than a thousand feet, the Laurentian foundation was reached. The logbook kept by the drilling party has enabled the geologists to make out a complete section of the limestone and sandstone rocks, such as we have from no other source. It is true that these rocks at this point are thicker than had been supposed, and there are grounds for thinking that as we come northward to Winnipeg they will not be so thick. The revelations made by the drill quite fit in with the geological observations made of the Stony Mountain, Red River, and Lake Winnipeg exposures. It is now possible to make out a general view of the rock formations from the boundary line to the basin of Lake Winnipeg.

Our Inference

...At one time the higher rocks extended over the whole valley and basin, and that some mighty agency hollowed out this vast Silurian and Cambrian trough. Undoubtedly this powerful agent was the great glacier or ice sheet of Lake Agassiz. The whole valley shows signs of this denuding and crushing power in the striae which are observed. The fine drift deposit or soil which covers the rocks on our Red River prairies, if examined with the microscope will be seen to be largely of limestone rocks ground down to powder, as well as crushed rocks from the Laurentian area. The erratics or boulders found in this drift are simply larger fragments of these same rocks. Much of the material which was dug up and hurried along, no doubt, went down the glacial lake, and was carried away by the Mississippi, into which the Red River then flowed. What the surface of the Laurentian, on which the later rocks rest, may be, is unknown to us. Probably it is not flat like our prairies, but is diversified by what were once great granite ridges which had lakes lying between them.

Rosenfeld Salt

...The nearest salt springs to Winnipeg city are in the valley of Riviere Sale, a few miles this side of the railway station of Oakville on the Northern Pacific Portage branch. Other springs are found on Lake Manitoba, while near the Marais River, some 55 miles south of the city well known springs occur, and in the Rosenfeld boring a great flow of brine was struck. From these indications we can infer that, though the rocks are not visible on account of the drift, salt bearing strata run across the country from Lake Manitoba, east of Poplar Point, east of Oakville, and near the town of Morris. Of course the lower rocks, may have brine filtered through them from above, where the upper rocks are salt bearing. This was actually the case at Rosenfeld, where the strongest flow of brine was met below the Trenton. The force of the brine at Rosenfeld was so great that it rose in a pipe eighteen feet above the surface of the prairie. This Rosenfeld salt was examined by Mr. Hoffman, of Ottawa, and was declared to contain paying quantities of excellent salt. Indeed the old Fort Garry salt, which was sold twenty years ago,

though black with impurities, was of good quality. In old Red River days, a manufactory of salt was carried on from 25 salt wells on Lake Winnipegosis by James Monkman for the Hudson Bay company. The old price was 12 shillings sterling a bushel.

2. Information and tables from a report from 1893 entitled, "Artesian and Underflow Investigation. Final Report of the Chief Engineer, Edwin S. Nettleton, C.E. to the Secretary of Agriculture, with accompanying maps, profiles, diagrams, and additional papers."

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Rosenfeld Junction well. – Located in T. 166 N., R. 54 W., town of Rosenfeld Junction, State of Manitoba. Owned by Canadian Pacific Railroad. Drilled by Swan Company. Depth, 1,037 feet. Elevation above sea level, 780 ft.

Strata passed through are as follows:

	Thickness	Total
	Feet	Feet
Black soil	4	4
Blue clay	111	115
Sand and gravel	10	135
Bowlder clay	12	137
Boulders	6	143
Gray shale	62	205
Limestone	15	220
Red shale	5	225
Gray shale	10	235
Limestone	30	265
Fine gray sandstone (small flow brine)	40	305
Chalky limestone	30	335
Red shale	160	495
Cream-colored limestone (Galena limestone passing above Trenton)	305	800
Red shale	75	875
Soft sandstone (brine flow, St. Peter)	50	925
Dark red shale	50	975
Reddish and green shale	25	1,000
Bluish and gray shale	20	1,020
Laurentian granite	2	1,037
Red shale	15	1,035

P. 93

The Archaean rock underlying the [Red River] valley is a gray rock called by the Canadian geologist "Laurentian granite." It is claimed by some that this is not a granite, but a very hard impure sandstone. Whatever it is, its presence is constant under the

valley wherever holes have been put down deep enough to reach it.

Location	Elevation	Was struck at about–	Sea level
	Feet	Feet	Feet
Moorhead	903	550	353
Hillsboro	901	600	301
Grafton	827	903	-76
Hamilton	824	897	-73
Rosenfeld Junction	780	1,035	-255
Winnipeg	750	1,000	-250

It is stated that the granite is below the surface. This shows an average dip to the north of 3 feet to the mile, about five times the dip of the present surface.

With the exception of the well at Hamilton, no flowing water is found in this rock although it was penetrated some 1,250 feet at Moorhead, 115 feet at Hillsboro, and 650 feet at Hamilton. At Grafton and at Rosenfeld Junction work stopped when the granite was reached.

Overlying this rock is a thin stratum of sandstone not always present. It contains no water.

Above the sandstone is a deposit of shale of varying thickness. At Rosenfeld Junction it was 160 feet thick; at Hamilton, 130 feet; at Grafton, 200 feet; at Hillsboro, about 200 feet thick; at Moorhead, 105 feet thick. This shale all contains sand. At Rosenfeld Junction the upper 50 feet was so sandy that it was classed as "sandstone."

On top of the shale comes limestone of varying degrees of hardness and of varying thickness. At Rosenfeld Junction it was 380 feet and furnished a flow of water 33 per cent salt at 300 feet below its upper surface. At Hamilton it was 455 feet thick; at Grafton, 310 feet; at Hillsboro, a little; and not present at Moorhead.

Above the limestone comes more shale of various colors and degrees of hardness. These shales vary in thickness, but come up to the sand or sandstone, which furnishes the main artesian flow. They are thickest to the north, being 350 feet thick at Rosenfeld Junction, and apparently coming so high up as to entirely pinch out the artesian sandstone, being there immediately overlaid with bowlder and bowlder clay*, and coming within 145 feet of the surface. At Rosenfeld Junction, Hamilton, and Grafton a light flow of brine was found in this shale, but of small pressure and amount.

The artesian sand, or sandstone, lies on top of this shale. It varies widely in thickness in different places, and is, as mentioned several times in this report, sometimes entirely wanting. At Rosenfeld

Junction it is wanting. At Hamilton it is 4 feet thick, and seems to take the form of quicksand. At Grafton it is 60 feet thick. At Hillsboro it is thin, wanting in one hole. At Grandin it is only a foot thick, and seems to be gravel. At Moorhead it takes the form of quicksand, and is 70 feet thick. Along the western edge of the basin it varies widely in thickness, and seems to be in many cases sand or gravel.

This artesian sandstone is overlaid in nearly all cases by cemented gravel, or red shale, especially in the northern portion of the basin. At Hamilton it was overlaid by 6 feet of cemented gravel (locally called “hardpan”); at Grafton by 13 feet of red shale; at Hillsboro it was overlaid by clay; at Caledonia by red shale; at Moorhead by blue clay.

Above this cemented gravel or shale comes clay and boulder clay. The boulders are granite and very troublesome to drill. The weaker flows are found in veins of quicksand scattered through the clay. The thickness of these quicksand strata vary; frequently they are not present, and at times become 25 to 30 feet thick.

Above this boulder clay comes blue clay without boulders, then yellow clay, and then soil.

These are, in a general way, the strata found in the valley.

**Boulder (boulder) clay – in geology, a deposit of clay, often full of boulders, which is formed out of the ground moraine material of glaciers and ice-sheets wherever they are found. It was the typical deposit of the Glacial Period in northern Europe and North America; also known as till (German: Blocklehm, Geschiebemergel) – en.wikipedia.org*

Dryland Farming

Manitoba Historical Society Timelinks

Between 1880 and 1920, advances in dryland farming permitted the establishment of a stable agricultural community on the semi-arid Canadian Prairies. Before 1900, farming on the open prairie was a very hit and miss affair, with crops being destroyed by drought or early frost as much as 40% of the time in the dry-belt of southwestern Manitoba.

Only with the application of scientific agricultural methods did farming the prairie become a more viable and predictable enterprise. Developments in technology ranged from the introduction of hard spring wheats like Red Fyfe and later Marquis, to seed drilling and the introduction of bluestoning, a chemical treatment which destroyed crop damaging smut.

The most significant advances, however, were made in the area of water conservation. Prairie soil contained marginal levels of moisture, and farmers

and researchers expended great efforts to optimize techniques of ploughing, discing and summer-fallowing so as to capture and conserve every bit of precipitation.

Finally, dryland farming was accomplished on expansive operations. It was a capital intensive operation which demanded a high level of mechanization. The introduction at the end of the 1880s of steam engines changed the face of ploughing and threshing. The age of steam lasted from 1890 to about 1915, when a new invention, the lightweight and inexpensive gasoline tractor sparked a new revolution that permitted farmers to attain a new level of self-sufficiency.

The development of scientific agriculture in Western Canada in the late nineteenth century was led primarily by Ontario-born agriculturalists in a co-operative effort in which all levels of government participated. It took the form of individual and institutional experimentation led by agricultural institutes, universities, experimental farms, and farmers themselves, who communicated their innovations through the many agricultural periodicals.

Secret Cache

While E.F. Moon Construction was trenching the main water and sewage lines down the back lane behind this house in 1984, the high-hoe broke a clay crock. A member of the construction crew went down in the trench and retrieved a second clay crock still filled with moonshine. Locals tell the story that some residents had their own private “medicine” recipes and would bury their crocks on town property to protect the owner’s anonymity. It is also a well-known fact that, after the Rosenfeld Hotel fire in 1965, a group of local teen-aged boys discovered that, because the beer cooler had been above the cistern, a lot of the cases fell into the cistern during the fire. After dark, the boys fished a whole bunch of undamaged beer out of that cistern and buried it beside the railroad track somewhere and had beer for much of the summer.





“Bonanza farms” was a label given to extremely large tracts of land sold off at low prices by the Great Northern Railway in North Dakota and Minnesota. Buyers were often absentee farmers who hired managers to run the operation.

Mennonite Farmers
from *Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley* by Hiram Drache, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

The twenty-five townships reserved for the Mennonites in Manitoba were divided between some very poor and some very good land. The land east of Morris was very wet and very low and was not particularly conducive to successful settlement, but the townships granted to the Mennonites around Altona were better drained and proved to be a choice bit of land for these people. The Canadian government twisted the arm of the Mennonites a bit by demanding that they take all of the land in these townships rather than letting them have their choice as was the case with the individual homesteaders when they came to any given area. It was in the Altona area where they became permanently established and to this day are some of the most successful farmers in Canada. It was in this region also that one of the large farms, the Lowe farm, west of Morris, was established. This farm, which closely resembles a typical bonanza, was operated by three men, including Mr. Lowe. It employed some of the first mechanized plowing and threshing to take place within the area of western Canada.

Generosity

Roy Martel: The Rosenfeld post office had already been moved to the centre of the village, by Martel's Esso and Gus Pokrant's general store. Farmers would come in for their mail and usual chats. I was the recently arrived refugee kid with the other kids and we were just making a nuisance of ourselves. I did not know the farmer that came up to me and pulled me into Pokrant's general store. I learned later that it was Karl Braun whose farm was just northeast of the village. I recall running home in a complete new set of clothes that he bought for me. I remembered the event later in years; however, I never made the effort to thank him before he died. I now very much regret that.



A summary of the farming scene in Manitoba, abridged from a series prepared by the Manitoba Agricultural Museum for the Manitoba Co-Operator in 2017 in celebration of Canada's 150th Birthday.

Manitoba Agriculture Reviewed

Between the Wars

As the smoke cleared from the battlefields of Europe, the landscape had changed dramatically for Winnipeg, Manitoba and Prairie agriculture generally, particularly in the area of grain marketing.

Wheat prices fell to less than \$1 a bushel and by 1922 Alberta and Saskatchewan farmers were calling for the re-establishment of a compulsory government wheat board. The division of powers between the federal government and the provinces resulted in both having to pass legislation.

The federal government passed legislation providing for a national wheat-marketing agency with the conditions that at least two provinces enact legislation to provide such an agency with certain powers and these provinces found people of the necessary experience and ability to manage the agency. Alberta and Saskatchewan promptly passed such legislation, however, then found they could not find people to manage the agency.

The final blow against the agency came in April 1923 when Manitoba refused to pass the necessary legislation allowing for an agency. With a compulsory board out of the question, Prairie farmers then turned to the idea of voluntary provincial wheat pools. By July 1923 organization of such pools was underway along with the organization of a Central Selling Agency to market for the provincial pools. The Alberta Wheat Pool was formed in 1923 along with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. What became Manitoba Pool Elevators formed in 1924.

The early 1920s were significant for Manitoba agriculture as a result of a number of developments. By 1920, it was recognized that the homestead era was over, the pool of undeveloped land in Manitoba that was suitable for agriculture was largely drained with the exception of some areas on the northern fringes of the cultivated area. Mixed farming became more prominent, a necessity because of the combination of collapsed grain prices and the reality that much Manitoba land by 1920 had been in grain production for over 20 years. The natural fertility of the soil was being exhausted and weeds were becoming a serious issue in many areas.

The mid- to late 1920s saw a return of decent prices for agricultural commodities. During this period mechanization of Manitoba farms continued

onwards with tractors replacing horse traction and combines beginning to appear. The generally good economic conditions saw roads improved which reduced the isolation of many rural areas.

The dream of a railway to Hudson Bay was resurrected and was completed to Churchill in 1929 with the port grain terminal being in operation by 1931.

However, the prosperity of the 1920s came to a sudden halt in 1929 as a result of a drought and the collapse of the stock market in October 1929, which in turn caused a crash in commodity prices including agricultural commodities. The drought of 1929 continued on through to 1932. These issues produced a dire situation all across Canada and Manitoba was not spared.

The cultivation practices of the time, plowing combined with summerfallow, resulted in giant dust storms all across the Prairies. Money in the hands of farmers became scarce. Horse traction made a comeback, as farmers could not afford fuel or repairs for tractors. Trucks were replaced by wagons. There was no money for repairs of any sort and buildings became shabby. Even telephone subscriptions declined significantly. In some areas, farmers removed engines from their cars to convert them to being pulled by horses. Farm foreclosures were common as was the writedown of farm debt held by dealers, machinery companies and other suppliers.

The depths of the Great Depression are illustrated by the wheat market and the events that led to the Canadian Wheat Board. The Pools had set too high an initial price in mid-1929 for the 1929 crop. To make matters worse they had not hedged their grain on the futures market. The debt situation of the Pools became so dire that their respective provincial government stepped in and issued financial guarantees.

The government decided rather than continue to provide temporary support to wheat farmers, it must act and in 1935, established a government organization, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), to administer the sales and handling of the Canadian wheat crop. The CWB was not a monopoly at this point and existed in conjunction with the private trade. It also did not have any responsibility for any grain other than wheat. However, the establishment of the CWB in 1935 points to the absolute nadir of Prairie farm fortunes in the 1930s, in that farmers were willing to accept significant government involvement in their business.

The situation remained poor through the late 1930s. A good Canadian harvest in 1938 combined with good harvests elsewhere and the threat of war in Europe resulted in wheat prices collapsing after

a mild recovery beginning in 1936. Manitoba farms remained diversified in this period and the wheat situation merely increased pressure to diversify. In 1938 a sugar beet refinery began construction in Fort Garry with provincial assistance.

The 1930s resulted in machinery on farms generally being in poor condition by 1939. The war demands saw many Canadian farm machinery plants converted to war production. Shortages of foreign currency curtailed the ability of Canada to purchase U.S. machinery. Farmers mainly had to make do with the machinery they had in 1939, as worn as it may be.

The Winnipeg slaughter industry was of importance in meeting the needs of the Canadian Armed Forces and of the Allies. Manitoba livestock prices through the war were good. Wheat was an issue however, with the government accumulating large stocks at the lakehead, so large that several very large temporary storages were built there. The situation eased somewhat in 1943 as a result of a short U.S. wheat crop.

Manitoba's Golden Years for Agriculture

The Second World War ushered in an era of challenge, change and growth for the Manitoba agriculture sector.

One development of the war years was the construction of a vegetable oil-crushing plant, Co-operative Vegetable Oils Ltd., in Altona, Manitoba in 1943. This plant was the beginning of the crush industry in Western Canada. The war had reduced imports of vegetable oil into Canada from Russia and Argentina along with creating an increased demand for vegetable oils in Canada. While there was a crush plant in Eastern Canada at the time, the cost of rail freight to the East reduced the price of oilseeds on the Prairies.

The Mennonite community in Altona recognized the opportunity, raised money for the plant locally and managed to secure financial assistance from the provincial government. At first the plant crushed sunflower seed.

Another development of the war years was the Canadian government aided the Canadian farm machinery manufacturers to convert them to war production which meant the purchase of new production equipment, hiring engineers and retraining staff to operate the new equipment and learn new production processes. The capacity of these manufacturers improved greatly. With the end of the war in 1945, a flood of pent-up demand for new equipment immediately appeared. The self-propelled combine rapidly became common on Manitoba farms along with new tractors, trucks and

machinery of all sorts. Horse traction was largely retired in the years after 1945.

Life on the farm was significantly eased after 1945 by two developments: rural electrification and the building of a modern road network by all levels of government. Rural electrification had begun in 1938 but was suspended with the outbreak of war and restarted with vigour in 1946. Not only were modern appliances and equipment available in farm homes and shops, the sheer convenience of having a power source available at any time merely at the flip of a switch made life far more easy.

The capacity of road-building machinery had increased during the war years along with the cost of such machinery falling. Municipalities and the provincial government embarked upon road improvement and building programs.

Another development of this period was the increased use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on farm. While Cominco had begun fertilizer production at its Trail, BC smelter in 1931, economic conditions did not warrant the use of fertilizer in many areas of the Prairies in the 1930s.

The years between 1945 and 1965 can be seen as the golden age of the old pattern of Manitoba agriculture; quarter section to half section mixed farms serviced by a network of branch railways and by a network of small towns often complete with elevators, stockyards, dealerships, service stations, stores and other services.

Saturday nights in these small towns were characterized by farm families coming into town to shop and socialize. By the standards of the 1930s, life was prosperous. Modern conveniences made life much easier.

Under the surface however, change was coming. Many rural people, particularly the young, recognized that there were better opportunities and lives elsewhere and began to seek them out. Rural depopulation became an issue. Improved roads took traffic away from the railway branch lines and allowed people to travel easily to larger towns where there was better shopping and more services. The smaller towns and villages began their decline.

The Crow rate was still in effect and the railways were losing increasingly large amounts of money on grain movement. In addition, railways in general changed their attitudes towards branch lines. The railways began to push governments into allowing them to abandon branch lines.

While the CWB had pioneered wheat sales to Communist China in 1962, the opening of this market was not enough to stave off another collapse in wheat prices in the late 1960s.

European agriculture had recovered from the

Second World War and between the U.S., Argentina and Canada there was too much wheat and other cereals for the market to absorb. The cereals situation resulted in further pressure for Manitoba farmers to diversify into livestock. The grain situation changed in July 1972 when Soviet Russia purchased some 10 million tons of U.S. grains resulting in a market rally. Grain prices remained decent for the remainder of the decade. However, pressure on agriculture continued.

The railways' financial losses on grain movement as a result of the Crow rate were in the millions per year which led them to demand the Crow be removed and refuse to make investments in grain cars or related assets. The railways did win the case on uneconomic branch line removal and the first round of abandonment got underway in 1972. Various levels of government began to purchase grain cars to allow continued movement.

One very positive development of the late 1960s and 1970s was the emergence of canola as a crop plus the growth of the crush industry on the Prairies to handle at least a percentage of the Prairie canola crop. While canola was perceived as a premium oilseed from the start as a result of the colour and taste of the oil, later it was also seen as heart-healthy oil, so cementing its reputation as a premium product and allowing it to take an even larger market share.

In 1983, the federal government managed to bring into effect the Western Grain Transportation Act which did allow freight rates to rise to some extent. While the railways still incurred losses, they received a subsidy from the government. In 1993 the federal government implemented the Western Grain Transition Payment Program, which provided one-time payments to farmers to assist them in making the transition away from subsidized shipping. Today, rail freight rates on Prairie grains are governed by the maximum revenue entitlement clause of the Canada Transport Act. Generally the system is far more commercial than in the past.

Farm consolidation continued onwards for a variety of reasons: the recognition that individual farmers must realize economies of scale, farm machinery growing in capacity, challenges to farm profitability, recognition of better opportunities elsewhere, the list of reasons goes on. As farm populations decreased, many small towns and villages lost their economic base and so ceased to exist or are on life support.

Manitoba agriculture has faced and continues to face significant issues. Pests continue to evolve as does the competition. Who would have thought in 1990 that a major customer of Canadian grain, Soviet Russia, would be a significant and

growing competitor for grain sales? New crops and opportunities continue to appear. Today the issues are more complicated by an activist public questioning aspects of agricultural practices and technologies and being very prepared to intervene in a situation that is complex, to say the least. However, Manitoba farmers are adaptable and so will meet the challenges of the future.

Dredging Buffalo Lake

The Rural Municipality of Rhineland: Volost and Municipality, 1884-1984 by Gerhard Ens pp. 96-98

Annual flooding of the Rosenfeld and Plum Coulee area during spring run-off convinced residents to petition the provincial government to bring part of the municipality under the Drainage Act.

Between 1902 and 1904 spring flood waters covered farm lands in the Rosenfeld area for almost two weeks making farming extremely precarious in the area.⁶ This problem was caused by a gradual drop in elevation in the area. During spring run-off water was carried from the escarpment by three large coulees, Buffalo Creek, Plum Coulee, and Hespeler Creek, which had well defined channels until they reached the flatter land in Rhineland. Here the creek beds disappeared and as a result the water spread evenly over the land.⁷

By 1902 the Public Works Department had sent out hydrographic engineers to survey the area and a drainage district encompassing over 120,000 acres was defined. Lands to be used for drainage canals were then listed in area newspapers and bought by the municipality.⁸

The planned drainage ignored local drainage and concentrated on digging channels for the water from the point where the coulees lost themselves in marshes, to a point where the channels were once again well defined near the Red River.⁹

Actual dredging was commenced in 1903 as 60 miles of drains were finally located and dredges, including a floating dredge, were brought in. These dredges were steam powered, burning the wood which had been stockpiled the winter before. Since a floating dredge required a minimum of four feet of water, dykes were constructed a half a mile ahead of the dredge to maintain adequate water levels.¹⁰ That first year approximately 17 miles of drains were completed along with five platform truss bridges and six culverts.¹¹

In 1904 severe spring flooding retarded drainage work, but a 6 mile canal was dug in an easterly direction from Buffalo Lake providing considerable relief to adjoining lands and the village

of Rosenfeld. The dredge was then moved to Plum Coulee and a channel was commenced to connect that coulee with the Hespeler Coulee, two and a half miles further north. This was stopped for the season after constructing half a mile.¹² By 1907 most of the proposed drainage work in the district had been completed. In all, 33 miles of dredge canals and 57.55 miles of lateral drains had been dug benefitting over 132,836 acres.¹³ It was during this period that Lutheran settlers around Rosenfeld and Plum Coulee began farming the lands in the northern part of the municipality.

This large drainage project had involved close co-operation between the municipality and the provincial government, and while this increased government involvement was welcomed by the municipal council it was not without its problems. The Public Works Department had helped fund and construct the drains in the drainage district, but it was left to the municipality to maintain the drains. This became more and more of a problem as teams and labour in the municipality were unavailable during the summer months, and wind erosion partially filled the drains with silt.

Roads presented less of a headache at this point since there were few automobiles and roads were only roughly graded. Despite this, most road allowances in Rhineland had been graded by 1914. This work was accomplished with the use of graders hauled by steam tractors up to 1907 and gasoline tractors thereafter.

6. *Nordwesten*, April 14, 1904.

7. John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba", (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1960), page 293.

8. *Nordwesten*, March 12, 1903.

9. John Warkentin, op. cit., page 293.

10. Interview with William Toews, Plum Coulee, July 9, 1983.

11. Annual Report of the Department of Public Works for the year 1903, Manitoba Sessional Papers #10 (1904).

12. Annual Report of the Department of Public Works for the year 1904, Manitoba Sessional Papers #16 (1905).

13. Annual Report of the Department of Public Works for the year 1907, Manitoba Sessional Papers #18-19 (1908)

Double-Dykes

From "Water and Adaptive Strategies in Settling the Canadian West" by John Warkentin, published by the Manitoba Historical Society in "MHS Transactions", Series 3, Number 28, 1971-72 season. Mr. Warkentin was Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Manitoba, engaged in research on the settlement and regional geography of Western Canada until 1963, when he became an Assistant Professor at York University. He taught at York until retirement in 1993.

In 1895, the Province of Manitoba took a firm, positive stand toward rehabilitating those poorly drained areas. That year it passed "The Land Drainage Act 1895" providing for the creation of large "Drainage Districts" in order to plan and build comprehensive engineer-designed drainage systems, together with the authority to make long-term loans, backed by the government, to finance digging ditches and canals. The first Drainage District was created in 1896. By 1903, there were 13 districts, covering just over 1,000,000 acres. In 1920 they had increased to 20 districts, comprising 2,087,240 acres, with 2,552.1 miles of drains, extending over much of the southern part of the Lake Agassiz basin in Manitoba.

Large channels were excavated, connecting the marshes, into which the streams coming down the Escarpment debauched, to the short tributaries leading into the Red River. Feeder ditches led into these main drains. Significant agricultural improvements were made possible in many districts as the marshes were gradually drained. But the flooding problems were only partially solved, because the main channels all too often were clogged with snow and ice in spring when they were most needed, so that when the snow-melt from the upper watershed and the plateau entered the plugged drainage channels, the water simply spilled over and spread over the flat lands covering them once more. There the water would remain until it evaporated in late spring and early summer, delaying seeding until it was too late to put in a crop. This problem became worse as the wooded lands in the upper watershed were cleared, and as roads and ditches were built in that area, hastening the spring run off.

The tendency of the drainage ditches to be useless at the most critical time of the year was a technological problem solved in the second decade of the 20th century by introducing what was called the double-dyke system of drains. This scheme was referred to in at least one engineering report in 1917, but there is a record as well that farmers in one of the districts most drastically affected by "foreign water" were the first to suggest it, and that the idea was backed by them. Two parallel drainage channels were dug about 300 feet apart, with the spoil-banks heaped on the outside of each channel to form dykes. If the twin channels were clear of ice and snow in spring, water flowed freely within them, but if they were blocked because of special seasonal weather and run off conditions, the water spilled out of the ditches to be confined in the 300-foot wide spillway between the two dykes, thus saving thousands of acres of land beyond the dykes from flooding. The first double-dyke system was built in 1919-23, with

dykes about 3½ feet high, and it helped to control flooding in 1924. The land within the spillway was used for summer pasture or haying if the flood waters did not subside soon enough to permit seeding of crops. In this way the "foreign water" from the upper watershed was controlled and conveyed across the flat lands to the Red River, so that great stretches of land could be brought safely into production.

By 1935, the surface land drainage system in southern Manitoba, consisting of 23 districts covering about 2,100,000 acres, had cost almost \$7,000,000, but this investment was returned many times over by the benefits derived. Land often tripled in value after drainage, and cases are cited where its value even increased 10-fold.

Settlement had lagged significantly in the poorly drained flat areas of Manitoba, and some property, while idle, fell into the hands of speculators, often Americans, who assembled large holdings. Today this is fertile grain land, but the background of poor drainage, and its effect of retarding homesteading and substituting fewer large properties for many small farms, was evident for years in the fact that farm size on the flat lands near Winnipeg, the largest city on the prairies, was greater than that on the better drained slopes immediately below the Escarpment and on the plateau to the west.

Since WWII, great earth-moving machines have become available to dig channels, and the landscape between the Red River and the Manitoba Escarpment has changed again. Double-dyke systems proved expensive to maintain, and some have been replaced by single, very wide channels with gently sloping sides that are seeded in grass which is mowed in summer. These channels are so wide that winds have a very good sweep within them and blow them clear of snow during the winter, so that they are ready to function in spring. The former lake bed, however, remains a distinctive landscape in Manitoba, with its many lesser ditches along the section roads interspersed at wide intervals by modern, spacious channels and the remaining double-dykes, all of which made farming possible on thousands of acres of fertile flat land.

Sources

- J.A. Griffiths. The History and Organization of Surface Drainage in Manitoba. A Paper Presented before the Winnipeg Branch, Engineering Institute of Canada, March 20, 1952. Mimeographed, 25 pp.
- G.B. McColl, and S.E. McColl. Report on Drainage. Rural Municipality of Morris. Winnipeg, 1917. Typescript, 7 pp.

Rosenfeld's Grain Elevators

- In 1909, the most southerly elevator in Rosenfeld was Lake of the Woods Milling Co. (located just

west of the intersection of 3rd Avenue and Railway Street), powered by a one-horsepower engine.

- The next elevator to the north was the Ogilvie Milling Co. Ltd #40, fueled by a six-horsepower engine.
- Next in line was the Imperial Elevator Co. #31, driven by a 10-horsepower gasoline engine, and its capacity is listed at 28,000 bushels.
- The most northerly elevator in 1909 belonged to the Great Northern Elevator Co., and had a capacity of 12,000 bu.
- Later, two Manitoba Pool elevators, “A” and “B”, replaced the four original ones; “B” was used for special crops.
- Manitoba Pool Rosenfeld “A” later became Agricore.
- The two elevators that had for so long been known as the Pool elevators were demolished in the year 2000, leaving Rosenfeld with none. (Rosenfeld residents remember the old equipment and metal parts of the buildings being salvaged, but all the lumber was discarded.)

Amsterdam Vignettes

By Bill Schellenberg, from his memoirs entitled, *From Russia to Canada in 1875 and From Ox-Cart to Horse & Buggy Days*, printed in 2000.

De Eeza-Boahn Derch Aumsterdaum

Recently I was reminded of something I hadn't thought of for a long time. And that is the fact that at one time there was a rail-line running through our land. The roadbed, 'De Eeza-Boahns Daum', as we used to call it, was still there in the early twenties. There was a certain company that wanted to build a rail-line to the west, from Emerson and all the way west to Turtle Mountain, to give the farmers a better transportation service. So they started building, and had completed some 20-25 miles before they fully realized that they did not have the right to do so. The CPR had an agreement with the Federal Government that no one else could build a line south of their trans-continental line that was already there. So they were forced to give it up and tear up what they had already done. All that was left of it now were some rusty nails and maybe the odd piece of plate iron.

It was now a good place for gophers and moles to start building their homes on higher ground and out of reach of floodwaters. And in time this would be good hunting ground for those young fellows that needed a bit of pocket money. Aside from that we could enjoy some pretty wild roses that were to be found in many places along the side of the dam. And not only that, but some very good tasting strawberries as well.

This very same dam caused us some trouble each spring, when the floodwaters came our way, because it lay across our land on the east side of our yard, at a 45 degree angle. The water coming from the west would be driven into the southeast corner, where our yard was located. And so, after a couple of such years it was decided to remove this obstacle. As I remember, it was being plowed down a couple of times. Finally with the help of a small grader [they] were able to get it down to a more workable level. And that was the end of 'De Eeza-Boahn...

The Flower Garden

Mom did not only have a vegetable garden but a flower garden as well. There were rows and rows of different kinds in the main garden, and there was a large area on the south end of the house that held a variety of different kinds and colors. The following is a list of some of the names that I can remember. As I have learned to know these by their German names, I will also write them that way.

Yeryeeni, Ockilei, Redashpoa. Chrass, Petaches Blomi, Berbeni, Bunta Joseph, Bluetendes Herz, Lengya ye Leva, Heute Rot, Begonye. Moan, Oape Mool, Pictoonye, Zinse, Morgye Blome, Fia Negelche, Botta Blome, Shwaulm Oagchi, Tulpe, Lelyi, Stockrose, Rose, Katreenche Blomi, Aumraunye etc...

The Crystal Set... 1925

We eagerly listened to radio broadcasts whenever we had a chance. The programs were interesting to listen to. We had some real nice band music, and even stories that were spellbinding. I remember how we sat there, huddled around the set, (at that time we had only one set) taking the headset apart, so that two could listen at the same time, taking turns with someone else that wanted to listen. Maybe a year or so later, we had already enough experience, and started building sets ourselves, from parts we were able to order from 'EATON' catalog at that time. The setting up of a set was quite simple. It took about 50 ft. of aerial wire, strung from one building to the next, up a couple of feet above the house ridge, with a lead-in wire through a small hole, or under the sash. I think there also had to be a lightning arrester installed. People stayed up late, listening to their favourite programs, the same as they are doing today, on TV or Internet.

It is possible that, at this time, the 'RADIO' became known in our district. I can think of at least one person that had one of these new inventions, and was quite proud of it too. It was in wintertime that we usually had choir practice at the school, once a week. And it was at one of these nights that this individual

showed up with his equipment, to demonstrate this new invention. Now, I must explain that there was quite an assortment of items that were needed to make this thing work. I can't even tell you what it all was. But one thing I remember was, it seems to me, a sort of an aerial that sat on the radio or close by, and had to be turned around to a certain angle to pick up the signal. And of course a bunch of batteries were required as well. I think there were three different kinds that were needed. An A, B and a C. The set itself was big and clumsy to handle. The reception was quite poor, with lots of static.

Sugar Beet Memoirs

Grant Nickel (as recorded by Art Wiebe): A number of farmers in the Rosenfeld area started planting sugar beets in the early 1940s. The first beet harvesters would dig out only one row at a time. Depending on the beet spacing, an acre could have as many as eight to nine rows of beets. If you wanted to load the beets directly into a truck, you would initially need to drive over a couple of rows of beets before a wide enough area had been harvested, and every acre would require a truck to drive a minimum of four round-trips. In an effort to minimize the amount of beets wasted by driving on them and the number of trips to load a truck per acre, six to eight rows of beets were laid in windrows using a tube hanging from the side of the beet harvester. This tube was controlled by a farmer walking along beside the harvester, holding onto the base of the tube in order to direct the beets to form a windrow. The beets in these windrows were picked up by a loader (conveyor belt/potato chain), pulled by a tractor driving beside the windrow, loading the beets into the truck or trailer to be hauled to the beet loader, where the beets were weighed and loaded into rail cars or stored in huge piles to be hauled into Winnipeg at a later date via the railway.

Ronn Friesen, formerly a vice-president of the Manitoba Sugar Beet Producers Assn., provides the following information:

This is a list of some of the beet growers that hauled to the Rosenfeld piler prior to 1975, and most of them were still growing beets up to the demise of the industry here:

Ben Driedger

Dave Friesen, son Don and grandson Jerry

Peter H. Friesen and son Willie

Tony F. Friesen

Tony H. Friesen and sons Ronn, Larry, Bill

William H. Friesen and son Ed

A.J. Froese and son Art

Ed Funk

Pete Funk

Abe Heinrichs

John S. Klassen

John Henry Neustadter

John C. Nickel, son Jake and grandson Gary

J.J. Nickel, sons Grant and Melvin

J.J. Peters and son Ed, and grandsons Dwight and Terry

Dave Sawatzky

Ed Schwartz and son Larry

The Rosenfeld loading station was located in the Y at the north end of Rosenfeld just south of the railway station.

Editor's note: In 1990, The Manitoba Sugar Beet Producers Assn., which was headquartered in the Rosenfeld area at the time, published a book called, Growing Sugar in Manitoba, 1940-1990. In it, author Susan Hiebert describes in detail the process by which the sugar beet was developed as a prairie crop, and how the Manitoba Sugar Co. and the growers' associations were formed.

Les Kletke's "Lessons from the Sugar Beet Field":

1. Life is not fair. We lived 32 miles north of Hwy. 14, which was the dividing line for soil types; south of there, farms could grow beets; north of there, they could not. The truth is that beets *grew* in the heavy soil north of that cement line, but equipment of the day did not allow for them to be removed from the ground. So, it became apparent that there were beet growers and beet hoers. I was from the area that produced hoers, and so when I was about 11 or 12, I was able to accompany my mother to the fields and begin earning some of my own money.

2. There is no union in the sugar beet field. You are rewarded for the work you do; it is that simple. That means if you get up early and go to work, and don't dawdle during the day, you make more money. I can't say that I enjoyed getting up at five a.m. to go and hoe sugar beets, but when I thought about being able to afford a mini-bike by July, the alarm clock was not as much of a problem.

3. A job well done has its rewards. Hoeing sugar beets was not a one-and-done kind of job. You went back several weeks later to "check" the beets you had hoed. If you did a poor job, the weed was now higher than the beets and required a lot more chopping; a job well done the first time meant checking went a lot faster, and if done very well, you could check two rows at a time.

4. Invest in good equipment. A hoe was the only tool you had in the battle of weeds, so it paid to have a good one. I think we are one of the few areas of the world that had a triangle-shaped hoe; the point on it

allowed you to get between the offending weed and the beet, and the beet stayed put.

5. Maintain your equipment. It was Abe Lincoln who said if he had eight hours to chop wood, he would spend six hours sharpening his axe. That might be a little much, but a trip to the grindstone every evening kept an edge on that blade, and you could touch it up during the day with a file. A sharp hoe was your best friend in the field. Henry Martel manufactured some hoes from retired discs, and those were a premium, because the hardened steel kept the edge.

6. Just because you're eating outside, it is not a picnic. Beet hoeing does not facilitate fine dining. You were eating a sandwich in the shade of your car and perhaps in a lawn chair, if you bothered to bring one. The only similarity to a picnic was the ants.

7. You meet good people. I was 11 years old when I set out in the world of beet hoers and Ben Driedger gave me a job. I had a focus for my work and he allowed me enough acres to pay for that mini-bike. He treated me like an equal. Mr. Driedger was fair with his wages and the job he expected. It was a good introduction to the working world, and forty years later we shared a backyard fence line and talked about weeds in our potatoes.

8. Suntans happen. I remember in later years of beet hoeing when people would see the colour of my skin and ask if I was a lifeguard. Nothing that glamorous, I hoed beets and the tan happened. Who knew about sun tan lotion or sun screen? You had a pair of shorts and runners, the rest tanned!

Gary Nickel

It was sugar beet harvesting time and it was always cold; bone cold. It was always cold because beets were never pulled in summer and it was always November when every beet farmer was trying to pull his crop out of the ground before the Manitoba winter froze the roots into permafrost.

And, it was always dark. The darkness of a late November. The kind of darkness made darker by the glaring white floodlights at the beet loader in Rosenfeld. The glaring lights forced a black-and-light kind of atmosphere. Facing the light, the figures of men were always black – gesturing, arguing, clouds of breath billowing out of their mouths like cartoon balloons with their voices inside.

Away from the light, a complete and abject blackness. Your eyes couldn't adjust fast enough; when you talked to the person behind you, his face was lighted by the light behind you but behind him was blackness, and when you turned to the action everything was blinding light and black silhouettes. With cartoon balloons coming out of their mouths.

Around it all was the noise. The clanking and

screeching metal-on-metal sound of the machinery of the beet loader – a giant device engineered to take the dumping of a beet truck, pass the load over and through a series of shakers and sieves designed to separate the Manitoba gumbo and scrawny roots from the full-grown sugar beets. Screeching, bellowing carried on in cold November air.

Beet trucks lined up to deliver their loads. They stopped on a weigh scale and the scale-master inserted a form into his device in his little, heated shed, and pressed a device that imprinted the gross weight of the truck onto the form. The weigh-master was good at his job. He had been doing it for quite a few years and even though he was missing an arm – King, I think his name was – he was extremely efficient at processing the intake.

After unloading their beets on the upper level, the truck would drive around, down, under the unloading platform and wait for the sieving device to dump his “tare” back into his truck – the gumbo soil and scrawny roots that had been dug up by the machinery on the field that wasn't acceptable to the beet company. The driver would then return, in the opposite direction, across the same scale, present his weigh slip to the weigh-master and wait for his final result. The tare weight would be stamped by the one-armed weigh-master on his ticket and the driver given a copy. Originals were retained by the Manitoba Sugar Beet Company and net weights used as the basis for issuing “beet cheques” later.

The beet truck drivers were always under a great deal of pressure to return to the field so the harvest could continue. Without the trucks the harvesters could not run. They unloaded on the fly into the trucks as they dug the beets. Stories of skill abounded, like the man and wife who each drove a beet truck and when they passed each other, coming and going, one empty the other loaded, they would click their side mirrors together as they passed each other to and from the field.

A time of great stress. Beets paid well but harvesting was always stressful.

Black, light, black, light.

One of the black figures shouted at me, “Gary, get out of the way! If that cable snaps it's going to shoot shrapnel all over the place.” I knew it was Hank Fast by the way his hair was silhouetted up against the light. I could read panic in his condensed, frozen breath. One of the beet trucks had broken an axle between the weigh-scale and the loader and a service tractor was straining at the steel cable trying to pull the disabled truck through the process. A long line of beet trucks waited. Exhaust plumes. Waiting to be weighed. It was late. It was cold. There was tension.

Somehow the accumulated gesturing of all the black figures managed to get it done and the clanking and screeching resumed.

It was the most excitement in Rosenfeld since that guy slowly tipped over into the ditch trying to turn west onto 14 from 14A with a half-full 1,000-gallon tank of water. Well, everyone knows that a half-full tank of water turns about five minutes after you do.

One Thin Dime

Bob Derksen: I remember George Fast, Sr., telling me a story about when he arrived in Manitoba. He had 10 cents in pocket and it looked very tiny to him. So he took the dime and tossed it away. Then he could say he started with nothing in Manitoba.

Rosenfeld Gravediggers

In years past, the UVD of Rosenfeld Village committee passed a motion that whenever possible, graves at the Rosenfeld Cemetery were to be dug by hand. Recently, Frank Paetkau shared the following historical details regarding this topic: John and Dave Funk, sons of "Coal Dock" Funk, did the majority of grave digging in Rosenfeld. Late spring, summer, and early fall weren't an issue, as long as they had a second spade to clean the "tiger manure" (heavy, sticky clay soil below the surface) that stuck to the spade. When the ground was frozen, it was a totally different process that was required. First, the snow was cleared away from the area where the grave was to be dug. Second, wood and/or coal were set ablaze. Sometimes even old rubber tires were used as a heat source. Third, once the flames were reduced to embers, an old bathtub was placed over the embers, leaving just enough space between the ground and the tub to allow the embers to receive a continued supply of oxygen and forcing the majority of the heat generated to thaw the frozen ground. Fourth, after some time had passed, the tub was removed, the embers were scraped aside, digging went one or two feet down, and then the process was repeated all over again. Some very cold winters with hardly any snow, the ground could be frozen till the six-foot mark, the bottom of the grave.



John J. Friesen is a professional historian the Rosenfeld community is proud to count among its ranks. With a PhD. in history and theology, he has taught at Mennonite colleges, and wrote the book, Building Communities: The Changing Face of Manitoba Mennonites. He decided to make his contribution to this book a colourful memoir about his own life on a farm in our community, with a few historical details to round it out.

Memories of Growing Up in Roseville

By John J. Friesen, Roseville

My parents, Abe and Dora (Sawatzky) Friesen, moved from Plum Coulee to a farm two miles south of Rosenfeld in the spring of 1948, when I was almost eight years old. The Derk Klassen family from whom we bought the land was preparing to move to Paraguay later that summer, together with about 750 people from the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church in Manitoba. They were leaving Canada because of their perceived ever-increasing threats posed by modernity: the intrusion of media like radios, the diluting of primary communities with the mobility provided by automobiles, the teaching of nationalism and militarism in the schools, which had resulted in many of their young men serving in the military in World War II, and the growing wealth which threatened to overwhelm simplicity and modesty. Not much of this did I catch as an eight-year-old, but I do remember intense discussions by adults about the pros and cons of emigrating.

For a number of months we lived on the same yard with the Klassens as they, in preparation for leaving, canned meat, baked bread, packed household goods, sent farm machinery ahead in large crates, and said their good byes to an endless stream of family members, friends and relatives.

My mom and dad, plus four children, settled into a large two-storey house on a big yard, with a huge fruit garden of plum trees, apple trees, many kinds of berries, choke cherries, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, a pear tree and much more. The Klassens had installed a private electricity system for the house, barn and yard, generated by a windmill on the barn roof, with a large array of batteries in one of the bedrooms on the second floor of the house. We used this system until the early 1950s when Manitoba Hydro extended electricity to rural Manitoba.

My mother's parents, John and Anna Sawatzky, lived less than three miles away in the district of Weidenfeld, and all my mother's siblings lived in the same district, even closer to her parents than we did. We were a tightly knit extended family, doing many things together: slaughtering hogs, making hay, harvesting, and of course visiting. A large clan of

Friesens, not related to us, lived in our school district. They adopted us as one of their own. They included our family in their endless rounds of birthday parties and other social gatherings. We felt welcomed and accepted in our new community.

My new school, Roseville School District #1990, was across the road from our yard, within easy walking distance. My first day at school, some boys and I walked across ice that had formed on puddles on the school yard from recent snow melt. The ice broke, and some of us filled our boots. The teacher, Mr. Kroeker, punished us for going into puddles, contrary to his instructions. He kept us in school during recess that day. This was my initiation to the school.

After a few days in school, I asked one of the boys if anyone spoke Low German, having not heard anyone speak it. In the Hamburg school, near Plum Coulee, our teacher Mr. Krushel had allowed us to speak Low German. I was told that Mr. Kroeker forbade students to speak Low German at school, and would punish any disobedience. This was my introduction to acculturation.

Later I learned that the school district of Roseville used to be called Rosenfeld. Rosenfeld was a Mennonite village founded in 1875, about three quarters of a mile north of the Roseville school yard. Rosenfeld had begun as an Old Colony Mennonite village. Since it was located about 12 miles from the nearest Old Colony village south of Plum Coulee, distance made it difficult for Old Colony ministers to serve this outlying village with church services, communions, baptisms and weddings.

So, when Bergthaler Mennonite settlers from east of the Red River moved to this area in the late 1870s, they founded new settlements near the village of Rosenfeld, like Reichenbach and Weidenfeld, and established a church in the village of Schoenthal, about four miles south of the village of Rosenfeld. Rosenfeld was then administratively transferred to the Bergthaler Church to be served by its ministers, as well as by its fire insurance organization and Waisenamt ("Orphans Bureau", which regulated inheritance patterns, operated a child and family services system, and was the local savings and loan organization.)

The village, or district, of Rosenfeld had a private elementary school which operated until February 21, 1920, when a public school was forced upon the district of the village of Rosenfeld by an Order in Council of the Manitoba government. The legislation was proposed by J. F. Greenway, the government appointed trustee for Manitoba Mennonite schools. A public school was established for the district on land requisitioned from a local farmer, and the costs charged to the rate-payers in the district. The school

was to be conducted in the English language during the regular school hours, and was required to follow the Manitoba curriculum. The school's German name was changed into an Anglo-Saxon name, Roseville. The name may have come from a small town called Roseville in County Durham, England, or from a settlement near Waterloo, Ontario, by the same name.

For a number of years, our annual school picnic was held close to the site of the original village of Rosenfeld in the midst of a grove of trees. In the centre of the grove was a clearing, large enough to have a baseball diamond and hold relay races. The grove of trees was called the "Smith Bush," because it was located on land owned by a local farm family, Russell and Mary (Friesen) Smith.

Every spring, the Buffalo Creek flooded. The channel of the creek ran north a mile and a half west of our yard, then turned, and ran east a mile north of us. Three bridges spanned the Buffalo Creek: one along what is now Hwy. #30, the railway bridge half a mile west of the highway, and a third another half mile west. It spanned the creek at the next mile road. All three bridges had many crossbeams in their support structure. These crossbeams caused the spring ice to jam. These jams caused the water to back up and break the dike, flooding the countryside. To break up the ice and get the water to flow, the municipality set dynamite charges in the ice.

One spring, in the late 1940s or early 1950s, the north dike broke, and the town of Rosenfeld flooded. In a subsequent spring, the south dike broke and water flooded farmland almost up to our yard. When our bachelor neighbour got up the morning the dike broke, he stepped into a foot of water on his bedroom floor. That year, the melt water was so high, and the ice jams so severe, that all three bridges were destroyed. The water that flowed through the broken dike washed out Hwy. #30, and created a deep gaping hole.

The town of Rosenfeld, by the 1950s, had many businesses. Most were owned either by Lutherans or Mennonites: a number of grocery stores, at least one lumber yard, a number of car service and repair shops, John Deere, Massey Harris, Dodge/Chrysler dealerships, and more. One general store was owned by a Jewish merchant.

In the centre of town stood a Lutheran church with a spire – the tallest building in town except for the grain elevators. On the eastern edge of town were two Mennonite churches. One church was part of the Bergthaler group of churches and the other part of the Rüdnerweider group. The latter church group renamed itself the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference in 1959.

I took grades two to nine at the Roseville School, and by the time I was in grade nine, my three siblings, Henry, Dorothy and Mary, had joined me in school. Mother had the task of preparing four lunches each day, except for the occasional days we ran home for lunch. My youngest sister, Amy, started school later, after I had finished high school. My brother Davey died at three years of age when I was in college.

My teachers during the eight years were Mr. Kroeker, Mr. Enns, Jake Krueger, Nick Neufeld, and Mrs. Anne Hildebrand. We sang "O Canada" in the mornings, and "God Save the King" at the end of the school day ("God Save the Queen" after 1952.). Our school day was lengthened by half an hour in the morning for instruction in German language and literature, and half an hour in the afternoon for religious instruction, like Bible stories and catechism instruction. Our school day thus extended from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Each day, we students took turns raising the British flag on the flag pole at the south end of our school building. One day, when the inspector visited the school, he noticed we had raised the flag upside down. He berated the teacher and us students for not showing proper respect for the British flag and what it represented. He took great pains to demonstrate how to properly raise the flag.

During May and June, on Friday afternoons, weather permitting, our school played baseball games against neighbouring Mennonite schools. We never played against a team from a Lutheran or a French school. The religious and ethnic boundaries were strictly observed in inter-school sports.

I loved to study. Arithmetic, science and history were my favourite subjects. But I also enjoyed sports. At noon we gulped our lunch, and ran off to play sports: soccer (outdoors) and ping pong (indoors) in winter, and baseball and prisoners' base in spring and fall.

In grade four, at one point when the weather did not allow us to play outdoors, some of us boys climbed into the attic via a step ladder. Here we discovered booklets about German military machines used during World War II, including fighter planes, tanks and submarines. The English language booklets had glossy, large photos, with detailed descriptions about the technical superiority of the German military equipment. Throughout the booklets were numerous swastikas.

Coming from a family where my dad and a number of uncles were COs during World War II, war was a forbidden but fascinating world for me. The fact that the booklets were stored in the school attic where neither school inspectors nor board members were likely to find them, further added to

their mystique. We were not sure how the booklets got there, but the information was both scary and attractive. In hindsight, it also seems that the booklets were not only designed to provide information about the German military, but also to impart propaganda.

School allowed me to enter the world of imagination. I eagerly read the few books in our school library. For a number of years I read every book it contained. Then one year, the school board bought a multi-volume set of *Books of Knowledge*. This opened a whole new world of subjects not available in our limited library, including history, art, and Greek and Roman mythology. I hurried through my course assignments so I could read the *Book of Knowledge*.

In grade eight, our teacher conducted spelling bees. Students lined up in two opposing teams on opposite sides of the one room school to spell words the teacher assigned. I did not like spelling bees. I preferred to read the *Book of Knowledge*. So when it was my turn to spell, I deliberately misspelled the word so I could sit down. I picked up a *Book of Knowledge*, and read during the rest of the spelling bee. I remember the teacher glaring at me, recognising my tactics, but helpless to remedy the situation.

At the end of June, a school sports day picnic closed the school year. In the first years, our school had its own picnic. After that, two or more schools got together for a joint picnic. The day consisted of running races, three-legged races, legs in gunny sack races, high jumping, long jumping, and more. Participants were divided into grade, or similar age groups. Prizes were given to the winners. Usually prizes consisted of tickets for purchases from the "store" set up to sell candies, chocolates, ice cream and drinks. (I still remember the Orange Crush and Wynola drinks.)

The major sports events of the picnic day were the baseball games. When three or four schools competed at the same picnic, there were a number of baseball games, with the final playoff game in the evening. Those were exciting times.

For grades ten and eleven I attended the small two-room high school in Rosenfeld. Each room had an enrolment of about 25 students. We had a Lutheran and a Mennonite teacher. About half the students were Lutheran and half Mennonite. I don't remember any students from other backgrounds. The students socialized together, and developed friendships. I don't remember any divisions along religious lines in the high school.

During my high school years, I played on the Rosenfeld men's fastball team. The CPR station agent was the organizer. I was one of the pitchers.

The other teams in the league came from Altona, Plum Coulee, and some of the villages and school districts around Altona. Our team normally did fairly poorly, but one year we won a benefit tournament in Altona for a player who had broken his leg while playing ball. The player was a young farmer, and the money collected at the tournament was designated to help defray costs due to his injury. This benefit tournament was the height of the accomplishments for Rosenfeld's softball team during the years I played in it.

Much of my life on the farm was shaped by routine. There was the daily routine: morning chores, breakfast, school, chores after school, supper, clean eggs, separate milk and play outdoors. In winter we played table games like crokinole, checkers and Chinese checkers. On Saturdays there was extra cleanup, and on Sundays attendance at church and Sunday School. Sunday was also the time to go visiting, or to have company over for "*Faspa*."

There was also the routine of the seasons. In fall, school would start, and this meant entering a new grade. Fall was also the time to clean out the garden, dig potatoes and pick apples. Sugar beets were harvested, corn husked and sunflowers combined. The laying hens housed in a small barn had to be caught and transferred to a section of the animal barn to protect them from the cold winters.

In fall, my brother and I went with our Dad to the villages southeast of Altona to buy unwanted calves from dairy farmers. The calves were fed during the winter and sold in spring. The return from these sales provided my brother and me with spending money for the year. In late fall, hogs were slaughtered to provide pork for the winter. I was too young to fully participate, but hung around the edges, helping my uncles and aunts where possible, and listening to their interesting conversations.

In winter the outside activities largely ceased, except for the daily chores of feeding the cows, horses and calves. Of course eggs had to be gathered, cleaned, boxed and shipped to a hatchery in Winnipeg. When the snow fell, my dad cleared the yard and long driveway with a tractor and bucket. When the drifts got too high, he hired a neighbour with a caterpillar to push the snow aside.

Because the school yard had trees all around it, huge drifts collected on the yard. Some years the small shed which housed coal for the stove in the school was completely covered with snow. We dug long tunnels through the snow drifts to the doorway of the shed, and added additional tunnels. These tunnels provided many hours of imaginative games for us boys.

Spring was an exciting time. The snow melted,

and nature slowly came back to life. Ditches filled with water. The dugout filled up. Sometimes snow drifts in ditches had to be moved so melt water would not flood onto the yard. Trees began to bud. Spring was also a busy time. Seed had to be cleaned, flax treated, and machinery repaired in preparation for field work. Little chicks were ordered from Winnipeg. They arrived by train, and were housed in a newly cleaned chicken barn, complete with heat lamps to keep them warm.

When I got to be old enough to drive a tractor, I was excited to help my dad with the seeding, at times missing school to provide assistance. After seeding was finished, my dad required that my brother Henry and I hoe at least four acres of sugar beets (34 rows). In contrast to some of my friends who had to hoe their beets for free, my father always paid us the same wage he paid other sugar-beet weeders.

Summer was a busy time. At the end of June, or very early in July, my brother and I had to "check" our four acres of sugar beets. This meant removing the weeds we had missed during the first hoeing, and thinning out beets we had left as doubles. If the first hoeing was done thoroughly, checking was fairly simple. If the hoeing had been sloppy, checking could be a lot of work. Sometimes my brother and I also had to check the rows done by other weeders who had done a sloppy job the first time, and had not returned to do the hard work of checking.

Early July was the time to make hay. Our hay was gathered along the roadways and from the grassed strips of land along the CPR railway which ran across our land. We cut the grass, raked the hay into piles when dry, pitched it by hand onto a hay rack, and pulled the hay rack to the yard either with horses in the early years, or with a small Ferguson tractor in later years. The hay was pulled up into the loft of the barn with large slings. Haying was a backbreaking process. It seemed we were always under pressure to get the hay stored before the rains came. Rain often seemed to come on or shortly after July 4.

Summer was also the time when I cultivated and harrowed summer-fallow fields. The hot summer sun on the black fields often burnt me to a crisp, especially my ears. Driving back and forth along the half mile fields was boring, but necessary work. Drinking lukewarm coffee out of a quart jar offered some relief for a thirsty, dry throat.

In August the ripe grain had to be harvested. My grandfather John Sawatzky and my mother's three brothers, Henry, Dave and John, and my dad each had some of their own machinery, but harvested as one large team. By the late 1950s, the family had two swathers, three pull-type combines and two three-

ton trucks to haul the grain. Harvesting any one field went quickly. My job for a number of years was to drive a small tractor pulling a combine. Sometime after I turned 16, I was allowed to drive our truck and unload the grain into bins on the yards, using augers.

Harvest time was always exciting. Every combining day was a family gathering with uncles and cousins. Hot meals were brought to the fields so the combines could continue without interruption. The family on whose fields we were harvesting provided the meals. Usually everyone was in a festive mood.

After harvesting we had to work the fields. Plowing fell into disfavor during my growing-up years, because without trash cover the soil was prone to erode when the winds blew at the end of winter. So, cultivating or disking became the options of choice for working the fields after harvest.

In late summer, or early fall, sugar beets were harvested. We usually had about 30 acres of beets. They were hauled to the Rosenfeld beet loader. In the years when I attended college, I used my dad's three-ton truck to haul beets. I was paid by the ton, and the wages I earned paid for my tuition, plus room and board, for the year.

Rosenfeld was a good community in which to grow up. I had the opportunity to connect with people from different churches and ethnic groups. In addition to Mennonite churches, there was the Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld, a United Church and Kingdom Hall in Altona, and Catholic churches in St. Joseph, St. Jean and Letellier. Contact with people from different church groups helped to broaden my world.

Business dealings also brought us into contact with a number of ethnic groups. There was the constant interaction with Lutheran businesses in Rosenfeld. We sold our lentils to French merchants near St. Jean. Indigenous people from the Roseau River Reserve were hired to hoe sugar beets. Some of our grain was sold to German merchants in Gretna. We shopped in stores owned by Jewish merchants, especially Gladstone's store in Winkler, and sold produce to Jewish peddlers who came to our farm yard in their trucks. Jewish fish peddlers occasionally stopped by. At times Jewish peddlers were invited to stay for a meal if they came around meal time, and I remember my parents' consternation if the meat for that meal included pork, or being pleased when the meal did not include pork.

Even though we lived on land originally reserved exclusively for Mennonite settlement, during my growing-up years my world was quite multi-church and multi-ethnic. Within this setting, my immediate

and extended families and the local community provided a safe and secure setting in which to grow and develop.

The Reichenbach Corner

By Lois (Nickel) Braun

Reichenbach School was situated one mile west of Rosenfeld, about a quarter of a mile north of Hwy. 14. The railroad track running west from Rosenfeld was just a little north of the school. The school itself sat at the edge of a prairie slough we kids referred to as "the swamp". In spring, this large pothole, over-arched by willows, provided great entertainment for the local children: we built amazing rafts and sailed on it; we put our rubber boots on and daringly waded in it; we observed water fowl and muskrats and insects swimming in it; we studied the interesting plants growing in the water and at its edge. In summer and fall, when the slough had dried up, my friends and I would stroll through it among the tall marsh plants and make up stories set in this peculiar environment that was so different from the boring fields that surrounded it. Adding to the mystery of the natural habitat were two ponds, both enclosed by old trees and dense underbrush that prevented us from accessing them easily. Needless to say, the "swamp" was a potential source of great danger in spring, and some of our teachers laid down strict rules about playing near the water during recess. Somehow, our parents were less concerned, leaving us to our own devices after school hours.

West of the school were the Unraus and the Giesbrechts and the Berg boys; south were the Neustädters; north were the Funks and the Schellenbergs. My family lived at the corner of Hwy. 14 and the mile road that led to the school. (The mile road didn't have a formal name or number in the years I was growing up; today it's Road 5 West.) We were one of four families occupying that intersection in the 1950s-60s:

David D. and Maria Friesen lived in the southwest corner. They were already an older couple in my growing-up years; their adult son, Tony, and adult daughter, Mary, lived with them. Across the highway from the Friesens, in the northwest corner of the intersection, were the John D. Doells. Helen Doell was the daughter of David D. Friesens, and she and her husband had two daughters, Virginia and Christina, who were very conveniently the same ages as my sister and I. (The aforementioned swamp was on the Doells' property.) The northeast corner of the intersection was home to the Klassens, John S. and Sarah. In my time, they had a daughter my age – Maureen – and her older brother Ken living

with them, but several older children had already married and moved away: Bill, Eddie, Elma, Mary, Art, and Harold. My family of five – the Jake and Agatha Nickel clan – and my grandfather, John C. Nickel, and his second wife, Eva, occupied the southeast corner. At some point in the latter years of my childhood, a new family joined the group at that corner: Rev. David F. and Mary Friesen set up a new farmyard just west of the Doells. David F. was the son of the David D. Friesens. He and Mary brought with them four young children: Johnny, Linda, Kathy, and Marianne.

I don't remember having much of a connection to the David D. Friesens, aside from a memory of often seeing Mrs. Friesen in her gardens. But since my friend Virginia was their granddaughter, she did occasionally invite us to their home to wander in those gardens and to admire her Uncle Tony's handiwork; Tony was not only a painter of landscapes and wildlife, he also dabbled in taxidermy, and I remember being blown away the first time I saw his collection of "stuffed animals". My general impression of Tony, Mary, Rev. Dave, their younger sister Anne, and Virginia's mother Helen, was that they were all the kindest, loveliest, most gentle people, very different from my noisy, rambunctious, outspoken aunts and uncles.

I spent a lot of time at the Doells'. They had cattle, so it was fun to watch the cows in the pasture and fool around with the electric fence. The private cemetery on the west side of the yard held some fascination for Virginia and myself, too, since we had very active imaginations. Mostly, though, she and I talked about the books we were reading and wrote poems and stories together. At the moment, Virginia and Christina still own their parental home, and a few years ago, I went to visit them there. The first thing I noticed was the creeping Charlie plants growing around the house. Creeping Charlie had been common on my childhood farmyard and theirs, but not so common elsewhere. I greeted it like an old friend.

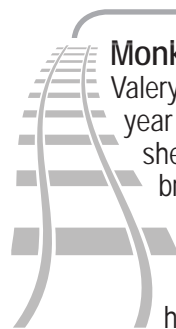
Maureen Klassen (now Stoneham) was my first-ever friend. I still remember, when I was a child of maybe four or five, her mother coming down their long driveway across the road from our driveway, leading a four-or-five-year-old Maureen by the hand, to visit us and introduce these two little girls to each other. (The Doells moved into the community a bit later.) When we were older, Maureen would show me the .45 recordings her brother Ken had brought home from the CFAM radio station where he worked in Altona. These were promotional recordings sent to CFAM and rejected. But Maureen and I loved going

through the records and listening to them in hopes of finding something we could dance to. "Misty", sung by Sarah Vaughan, was one treasure we found in the pile. We couldn't dance to it, but it definitely appealed to our adolescent sense of romance. At my house, we also had a good collection of rock-and-roll .45s and LPs, so Maureen and I spent a great deal of time jiving in the rec room of our basement. Maureen's dad was a busy farmer, and quiet, as I recall. Maureen's mother was older than mine, and she was almost like a grandmother to me. I remember how the Klassen house would often fill up with Maureen's older siblings and their kids; there was a never-ending supply of lively, interesting adults and children of all ages at Maureen's place, it seemed.

And so, we three – Virginia, Maureen, and I, with our younger sisters occasionally tagging along – could be found exploring our little world there at the Reichenbach corner, walking or biking, scavenging the ditches beside the road, being enchanted by the smallest things: a toad, a June bug, a wild rose, an unusual stone amongst the shoulder gravel. We'd amble along the railroad track, completely dismissive of its perils, and play beneath bridges. And way back in my memory is an image of my brother and I, one spring after a fast melt and then a hard freeze, skating to Rosenfeld along the ice in the ditch beside Hwy. 14.

Our world changed when my friends and I finished Gr. 8 and moved on to Rosenfeld High School in 1962. Not only had we become teen-agers, but we were also entering a whole new environment, going from a one-room school where there might have been only 15 students total, to a Gr. 9 class that had 15 students in the one grade, most of whom were girls at that time. And they liked to dance, too.

My mother is 98 years old now, but my father and grandparents, the J.S. Klassens and the John D. Doells and the David D. Friesens, are long gone. I would gladly relive those years growing up at that corner one mile west of Rosenfeld. Farm life was nourishing for body and soul and our neighbours were very good people.



Monkey Puppet
Valery Czarnecki: My first-grade teacher, the only year I went to this school, was Ms. Enns, and she became my role model as a teacher. She brought Schnigglefritz the Monkey puppet to my house when I was home sick. I got a similar monkey puppet when I taught Grade One, and I always tried to emulate her. I had a chance to tell her how important she had been to me.



In 2003, this remarkable woman, who grew up on a farm northeast of Rosenfeld, completed her detailed, neatly handwritten memoir of rural life. The 96-page book was duplicated and several copies published in spiral binding. Besides descriptions of day-to-day life, the book includes diagrams, drawings, recipes, a German glossary, and illustrations from mail-order catalogues – a truly epic project! Gladys Winowich died in 2015. Here is an excerpt.

Precious Mem'ries, How they Linger **By Gladys Marlin Lilke Winowich,** **Hoffnungsthal/Hope Vale**

The house that I called home was a modest two-storey house. No carpets or tile. The floors were covered with linoleum, which mom washed while she was on her hands and knees. Upstairs, the floors were painted boards.

Downstairs there were four rooms, a large kitchen, large dining room, a small living room and a tiny bedroom. There was an archway between the living room and the dining room.

A coal-burning heater, kept the three rooms at the south end warm and cozy. The kitchen was a single storey added to the north end, and the cook stove provided the heat there. During the winter, if no one got up once or twice to add wood or coal to the fire at night, it was bitterly cold when we got up in the morning. I remember seeing a layer of ice on the drinking water in a pail, in the kitchen.

The windows were nothing like the windows homeowners have today. On the inside each window had four panes of glass. In the fall, screens half the size of the window were removed and storm windows were installed. The storm windows were the same as the inside windows and were brought inside before installation to remove old, cracked putty. New putty was applied around each pane, to seal it well. Then the glass was cleaned and windows were put in place outside. In spring, screens were repaired and took the place of storm windows. The screens and storm windows were stored in a small building just north of the house.

The furniture was sparse and nothing fancy. Only pieces we needed, and no knick-knacks, just a few pictures and a small number of plants.

What amazes me to this day is the very small amount of closet space that proved to be more than adequate.

An old cream-coloured dresser with four drawers held all the folded clothing for the family. The dresser and a double bed were the only pieces of furniture in the bedroom, mom and dad occupied. A space under the stairs was used as a closet for shoes and everyday clothes.

One closet upstairs was used for our “Sunday Best” and out of season coats and clothes.

A matching wine coloured davenport and chair, rocking chair, a small table and a cabinet that held the radio, phonograph and records were the furnishings in the living room. My bed was made on the davenport every night. On the table was a large fern that covered the top of the table and draped over the edge. There was a large bay window to the south. Above it there was a narrow stained glass window, which cast a pretty pattern on the floor on a sunny day. I spent a lot of time in this room. It was a sunny, warm place.

In the dining room, the furnishings consisted of a dining room table, wooden chairs, buffet, writing desk, sewing machine, heater and a couch that could be extended to make a double bed. This couch was [my brother] Orvil's bed.

When [my brother] Glen was born in 1949 I was promoted to a double bed in a large room upstairs. A wooden crib, now in the living room was a bed for the baby.

The room upstairs was not as cozy as I was accustomed to downstairs. The door to the stairs was opened to allow heat to the upper floor. A chimney in the room also provided a little heat. The only furnishings I recall were the double bed, a small table, extra wooden chairs and a trunk. There was a long narrow room at the north end of the second storey. Here a workbench held batteries being charged by the wind charger. There was an unpleasant odour of battery acid.

The kitchen was furnished with the wood stove, a washstand, wooden table, bench, and wooden chairs. There was very little cupboard space and no counters. All the food preparation was done on the table.

An enclosed pantry in the southwest corner of the kitchen had numerous shelves to store pots, pans and containers of flour, sugar, and other goods. The cream separator was also in the pantry.

The floor in the pantry had a trap door, which revealed stairs to the cellar. The cellar was damp and smelled awful. There were shelves to hold jars of canned goods, a coal bin and a vegetable bin for potatoes, turnips, carrots and onions. Oh, how I dreaded to go into this dark, damp, smelly cave, to retrieve something for mom.

In the pantry, there was also room to store egg crates, cream cans and large crocks, used to make pickles and sauerkraut.

A porch was added to the east end of the kitchen. The washing machine, tubs and a folding rack to dry clothes were stored here. Chopped wood and kindling was also kept here. The porch was unheated so it was used more in the summer. Mom washed clothes here, and we kept our outdoor chore clothes

and boots here, when it was warm. A full size screen door to the south allowed fresh air in.

A cement cistern was under the house, next to the cellar. A hand pump on a small stand beside the stove in the kitchen provided us with water for cooking and household use.

There were household chores, not often required today, that had to be done daily or weekly. Daily chores were to bring in wood and kindling so it would be dry and near at hand when needed. Coal skuttle was filled with coal from the cellar.

Ash pans below the firebox on cook stove and heater had to be emptied. A tool that resembled a small hoe with a long metal handle was used to bring out loose ashes from the bottom of stove where ash pan set. We took great care not to drop any hot embers on the floor. However, the linoleum in front of both stoves had burn marks.

All clocks had to be wound every day or else "time" stood still. Lamps also required care and attention. Wicks were trimmed or replaced. Coal oil was added and the glass chimneys were cleaned to a gleaming shine.

Most of these chores were usually done on Saturday. As well, the floors were washed, the dusting was done and extra baking took place to be ready, just in case company dropped in on Sunday.

Shoes were polished, men's pants were pressed and every member of the family washed their hair and had a tub bath. It was not unusual to see women and girls with their hair in curlers or pin curls all day Saturday. When we got ready for church Sunday morning, we looked good, really good.

A lot of singing could be heard around the house. Mom sang songs like, Don't Fence Me In, Good Old Summertime, Daisy Daisy, There's a Bluebird On Your Window Sill, You Are My Sunshine, Beautiful Brown Eyes and many others. Wartime songs like Lilly Marlane, Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree, The Old Lamplighter, and Pack Up Your Troubles were also heard often. Another favorite of hers was, With Someone Like You. I would be amiss if I did not mention a song called That Silver Hair Daddy of Mine, which she sang with tears streaming down her cheeks after her father died. A silly little song, Frog Goes A Courtin' was one I often requested.

And then there were the hymns and gospel songs. The first one I was taught was Jesus Loves Me, Do You Know How Many Stars, In The Garden, and The Old Rugged Cross.

At an early age I was taught to play the Dobro guitar. The first song I learned was Little Brown Jug, because the chords are easy.

As time went on, I learned other songs, but gospel songs were always my favourites.

Dad often played the guitar and the harmonica at the same time. The harmonica was held in place with a metal holder that fit around the back of the neck and kept the harmonica in place in front of him, so hands were free.

We did not have television. No videos. So we had to be inventive to entertain ourselves. Mom made a checkerboard on the back of an old calendar. Large buttons in two colours, from the sewing basket, completed the game. Other games were a deck of cards and a box of dominoes.

The real fun began when dad bought a crokinole board. We laughed and screamed with delight when we made a good shot, but that ruckus was nothing compared to the noise adults made when they played crokinole in teams. They raised the roof!

We did go to the movies in Altona, from time to time. There were newsreels before the "picture show." There was usually something about the war on these reels and was not pleasant. The "show" I remember best and truly enjoyed was Annie Get Your Gun. I liked all the movies with Jane Wyman. A movie on newsreel that depicted cruelty found me with eyes closed, ears covered and cowering in my seat. Occasionally, I cried.

House parties took place in homes around the neighbourhood during the long winter evenings. The adults played whist or rummy. At our house it was most likely crokinole. A keg of beer and some white lightning made for a very lively get together. Some times, someone provided music with fiddle, accordion or guitar. That led to dancing or hours of singing the old German songs like, Ach, Du Lieber Augustine, Du, Du Liegst Mir Im Herzen and many others. I recall this often continued till dawn. Pickled herring with lots of onions was a popular dish at parties.

We had a radio powered by batteries Dad charged up using the wind charger, built just north of the house. The radio was used sparingly to reserve the battery power. At noon the radio was on, if dad was in the house, to hear the Farm Report and get the latest price being paid for grain and livestock. That was followed by a newscast. The war effort was of great interest.

Sunday afternoon it was a must to turn the radio on and listen to the Back to the Bible Hour. The program opened with a choir singing, Heavenly Sunshine.

Whenever there was battery power the radio was on in the evening to listen to programs like Fibber McGee and Molly, Miss Brooks, Jack Benny, Inner Sanctum and The Untouchables where Elliott Ness always got his man. There were Westerns like Roy Rogers and The Lone Ranger. I also remember The Grand Old Opry, and Polka Party.

A phonograph that required winding up with a crank also offered many hours of enjoyment. Now

we are hearing songs like Doggy in the Window, On Top of Old Smokey, Sentimental Journey, I've Got My Love to Keep me Warm, Good night Irene, Glow Worm, Daddy's Little Girl and many others.

There was not much reading material around the house. The only books I remember were The Bible, Song Books and Recipe Books. I loved to read. The Country Guide, and the Free Press Prairie Farmer were the only publications we received. The comics, short stories and pen pal pages were always of interest to me. I really did get tired of paging through the Eaton's catalogue, Simpsons catalogue, Army and Navy catalogue, along with seed catalogues.

We had booklets, all pictures with a comic book format that were Bible stories. I recall Creation, the story of Jesus that started with His birth in Bethlehem and ended with His crucifixion and ascension to heaven. Some booklets depicted parables, miracles, and The Sermon on the Mount. The pictures had speech bubbles for the characters and a Bible verse below each picture. I read these so many times, I am sure I knew them by memory from cover to cover. I don't recall how we acquired these wonderful books. Perhaps they were sent from Back to the Bible Hour for a donation.

After the supper dishes were done, and the eggs gathered that day were washed, dried and crated (usually my job) we settled around the dining room table with a lit lamp in the centre and kept ourselves busy till bedtime.

Mom was usually darning socks, patching clothes or replacing buttons. Sometimes she was knitting or embroidering. Dad repaired clocks and pocket watches for people in the community. Often four or more mantle clocks Dad had repaired were lined up on the buffet. When they all started to clang on the hour, every hour, Mom had a look of dismay. Dad on the other hand looked satisfied and grinned, knowing the clocks were working. A great deal of time was spent reading and writing letters.

When we were hooked up to hydro there were changes. Welcome changes!

The pop-up toaster and the refrigerator were such fun. The motor on the washing machine changed from gas powered to electric. A metal tank with a heating element in the bottom was filled with snow to melt and heat the water. During hot weather a hot plate was used to cook meals so the kitchen was cooler.

A heating lamp replaced the heater for chicks in the brooder house.

No more lanterns in the barn. Dad could now work in the barn or the car shed, well after dark, with electric lighting.

Dad welcomed a heating pad with open arms to soothe aches and pains from endless toil.

The yard light was a big deal! We could now play outside after dark. In the winter there was always a huge snow bank at the end of the driveway where it ended in the yard. Lots of sliding fun! A sled did not slide well as runners cut into the snow, so we used pieces of cardboard to slide until we got a toboggan. On the prairie you can see for miles, so I remember the yard light was used to send a message at a prearranged time.

A radio that could be on all the time was great. It was also nice to have a gramophone that did not have to be wound up by hand.

Electric clocks did not require winding. Slowly over time our family acquired more appliances, which were such a novelty. The vacuum was a very noisy strange contraption!

No more lamps, and what fun it was to turn the lights on and off, on and off.

There was an array of travelling salesmen. I best remember Watkins and Rawleigh. Mom and Dad purchased ointment, salve and liniment that cured every injury and illness known to mankind. Seasonings, spices, and cold drink mix were also available.

I don't remember visiting a doctor until I was in my teens. Home remedies were the answer for every ailment. Even though we were given that awful cod liver oil every morning, I did get colds and flu.

A chest cold was cured with a mustard plaster. Mom mixed flour, dry mustard and warm water. The thick, batter-like mixture was spread on a piece of cloth from an old sheet or pillow case and placed on my upper chest which had been covered with Vaseline.

Mom checked often to see if my skin was getting red, as leaving the plaster on too long could burn the skin. The best part of this treatment was that I could snuggle into Mom and Dad's bed that was covered with a down-filled comforter.

A head cold was treated, by breathing in steam from a simmering pot of water. A dab of Vicks VapoRub in each nostril and rubbed on neck and chest relieved congestion enough to get some sleep. Hot tea with honey and lemon, if available was a soothing drink. Sometimes I was given tea made from the dried leaves of a weed. I very quickly announced I was feeling better so I would not have to drink anymore of that awful tasting concoction.

Memories of the forties must include the outhouse (toilet) a neat little wooden structure situated a short distance from the house. It featured a two-seater, a large hole and a little hole to accommodate anyone of any size who sought relief. This little place was equipped with old catalogues and publications to read, of course. Then the pages were torn free to become the wipe.

Tissue wrappers from apples and oranges were saved, neatly straightened and placed in the toilet. However, we were instructed not to use this luxurious wipe. It was to be left there for guests.

I did not have many toys. The lack of toys meant I had to improvise. Mom gave me an old pot that had holes in the bottom. A stick became my stirring spoon, an empty sardine can a perfect cake pan. Oh, what fun I had, making mud pies and cakes. I was so good!

Birthdays and Christmas did not yield a large number of gifts. I got one solitary gift on my birthday and one at Christmas. A Kodak Brownie camera was a gift one Christmas. I was thrilled!

From my grandma I usually got a pair of mittens she had knit. A set of stationery, handkerchiefs, handmade apron, colouring book, crayons, jigsaw puzzles or knit slippers were usually gifts from others.

I never owned a teddy bear!

I recall few decorations in the house at Christmas. One year I remember a pine tree, firmly anchored in a pail of water. A string of popcorn and only a few ornaments adorned the tree. Candles that fit on clips were placed on the tips of some branches and then the candles were lit. Enchanting! Dangerous!

The words of a song “Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home” are very true. Home is where the heart is, and the house on the prairie was my home sweet home.

I have sweet memories of sunrise and sunset easily visible on the open prairie. The dew drops like diamonds on the grass in the morning, the clean air and birds chirping and singing their songs, roosters crowing at dawn. What a sweet sound! A truly wonderful “Wake Up Call.”

Living on a farm is much different than living in a town or city. Farm families today are not likely to be as isolated as we were in the forties. The black gumbo in the southern Red River Valley was near impossible to navigate with a vehicle when it was wet and raining. The road surface at one point was very slippery and then became so sticky the mud would plug the space between fenders and tires.

Ploughs did not remove snow or maintain country roads like they do today, so the only means of transportation a lot of the time was by horse drawn sled, enclosed cab, buggy or wagon. In some cases a tractor replaced a team of horses to move people from place to place. Weather conditions had to be considered when choosing whether or not to travel and by what means.

Weddings were like huge parties that did not want to end. In German, the word for wedding is Hochzeit. When you translate that word to English it says ‘high time’ and that is exactly what a wedding was.

Days in advance of the big day folks gathered

at the site of the reception (usually a farm) to help with preparations. While the ladies were cooking up a storm, the men set up tables and seating. They also prepared a place for dancing. Sometimes a granary or machine shed was swept clean for the upcoming celebration. At other times the barn loft was cleaned up and a staircase was built from the ground to the loft.

Seating was set up around the perimeter of the dance floor. A platform on stage was built for the musicians.

After a church ceremony, everyone made their way to the reception. Everyone pitched in to help in serving a big meal to a large number of guests. Even the men helped to wash stacks and stacks of dishes. Tables were set several times to accommodate all the hungry folks. Mom usually had her best apron with her and helped with this huge but joyous task. Sometimes she also brought food she had been asked to prepare.

The leftover food and clean dishes were left on tables, buffet style, so guests were free to eat anytime. Later pickled herring, cheese and sausage were added to the bounty.

When the music started the dancing began. Oh how they danced! The polka, waltz, schottische, butterfly, wedding march, two-step and kolomeyka could be heard until dawn.

Then folks went home to sleep for a couple of hours, do the chores, dress up and go back for more feasting, dancing, singing and drinking. This day of festivities was called the “after wedding.”

The bride and groom had to be prepared for a lot of ribbing. Someone usually moved around the gathering with hat in hand to collect coins for the newly weds. This was called “diaper money.” Wedding gifts were opened and on display.

Folks with kids brought blankets and kids slept blissfully in a car or truck, or under a bench on the dance floor, while adults were celebrating.

I don’t remember wedding invitations being mailed out as they are today. I think an upcoming wedding was announced at church and all of the “church family” was invited to attend. Family or relatives living outside of the community were probably invited in person or in a letter.

I recall several receptions where cook stoves were set up outdoors for all the cooking. Tables and seating were also set up outside when weather allowed.

Whether a wedding was indoors or outdoors, you can be sure everyone had a good time. A very good time!

We moved from this place to a farm near Manitou in the spring of 1953. It was a sad day! I did not know then that I would never see this place again...

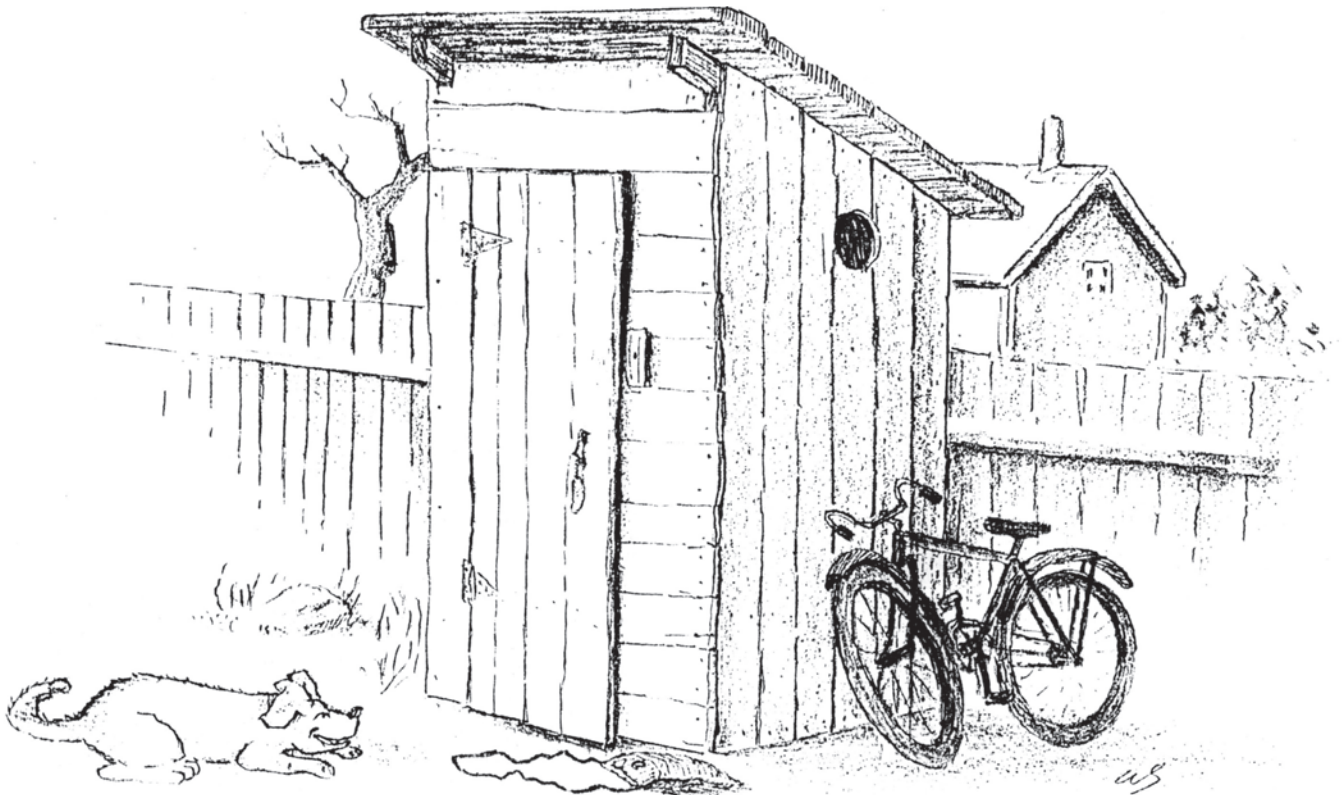
**Our Norman Rockwell:
William Schellenberg**

Like the well-known American artist, Bill Schellenberg created various kinds of images, including serious paintings and sketches. In the 1950s, he travelled to BC and to Florida with fellow artist Tony Friesen, taking pictures of animals and mountain scenes, which he transferred to paint on canvas in wintertime. And as a carpenter, he saw and captured the visual beauty in empty and abandoned buildings scattered across the landscape.

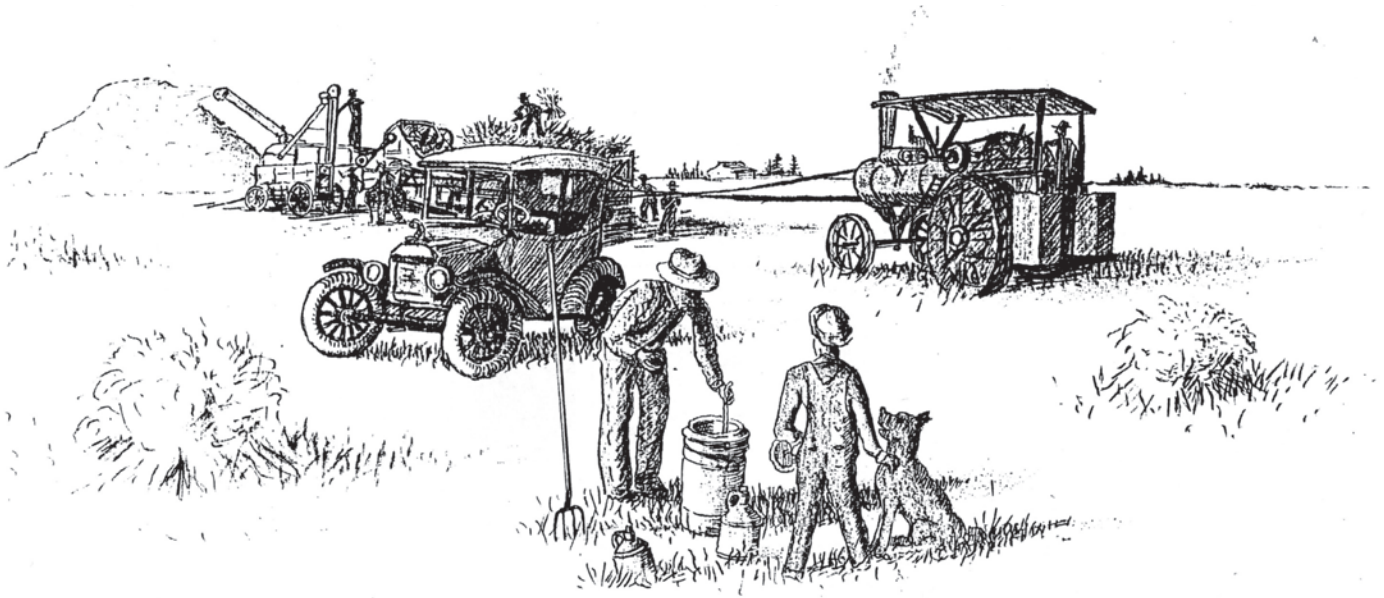
But, like Rockwell, Schellenberg seemed to take a special joy in documenting the day-to-day ironies of rural life. Inspired by his surroundings on the farm in Amsterdam, he often sketched scenes with a comical twist. Bill was reluctant to sell his work, never believing it was good enough. He died in 2006. Many of his sketches, as well as his written commentaries about Rosenfeld and life on the farm, have been preserved in a series of single-copy, self-published books.



Bill Schellenberg: He often imparted a cartoon-like humour to his sketches.



Bill Schellenberg: A common sight on farmyards and town yards alike.



Ideal threshing weather means warm dry weather conditions. This in turn calls for refreshing cold water for the workers. Threshing in the early nineteen hundreds was somewhat different from what it is today. Even by 1920-22 there was a change from steam to gas powered engines.

* * *

Aus daut dan easht tom drashen tchen
 Dan wea be uns daut seya drock.
 De Oabeit shea tchen eng wull nehmen
 Dan yingk daut meist rund om de Clock.
 Loat bat en de Nacht wordt don yeshauft
 Daut faild manch mohl aun meya Krauft.
 Doch wan easht aules foadich weya -
 Dan freiyd wee uns doch seya. * * *

Bill Schellenberg: Early 20th C. harvest scene.



Bill Schellenberg: Abandoned farm somewhere in southern Manitoba.

The Grain Elevator, and Shipping Grain

George Fast, Jr: From time to time the pit in the elevator needed cleaning. One operator hired schoolboys. One would go down and fill pails while the other would pull them up and empty them. When the operator would leave for coffee, the boys would use the counter-balanced lift to go to the top of the structure. Going up was easy – the weight was more than two boys. Going down they really had to pull up on the rope!

Bruce Martel: Been up the man lift to the very top. Also hauled grain to the elevator in my stepfather Harold Pokrant's 1949 Mercury two-ton truck – without hydraulic box hoist. The wooden platform in the elevator was designed to tilt, thereby dumping the grain into the hopper below.

Bob Derksen: When I was in high school, many a time I took the man lift to the top of the elevator. I had to put extra weights on the lift so I could get back down. When on top I would sit on the man walk between the elevator and the annex looking to the east. I believe I have a picture from up there.

Les Kletke: Loading producer cars was another happening – having a car spotted and then taking the auger to town and loading the car yourself. Did a few of those.

Bob Derksen: Loading grain cars was what my dad taught me how to do. Before loading the car we had to put temporary grain doors in the boxcars. This process was known as “coopering the car”. Then you had to jack the car in place

to line up with the grain spout. The spout was turned so it would load the north half of the car first and then you would turn the spout to load the south half of the car. All the grain was weighed into a hopper bin, weighed and then dumped into the pit where the elevator took it to the top and dumped it into the grain car spout. When the grain car was full, you removed the spout, closed the car doors and attached seals to both doors. These door seals were obtained from the railway station agent, thus guaranteeing the shipment at Thunder Bay.

Bruce Martel: The things that were done in those days seem lost. I remember seeing those seals on train car doors. Growing up with the tracks and elevators virtually in my back yard as a young lad I watched in amazement. I was always fascinated and a bit in awe of trains and elevators as a boy!

William Kroeker: I rode to the elevator on a farm wagon hitched to two big horses and loaded with grain (wheat, as I recall). In harvest time there were long lines of wagons along main street waiting to be unloaded. There was a fascination with railroad grain cars, as the grain in the boxcars needed to be levelled. I remember doing that with grain scoops; each one had two handles to dig into the grain and the scoopful had to be emptied in the proper place. Wheat was okay, but barley was very “itchy”.



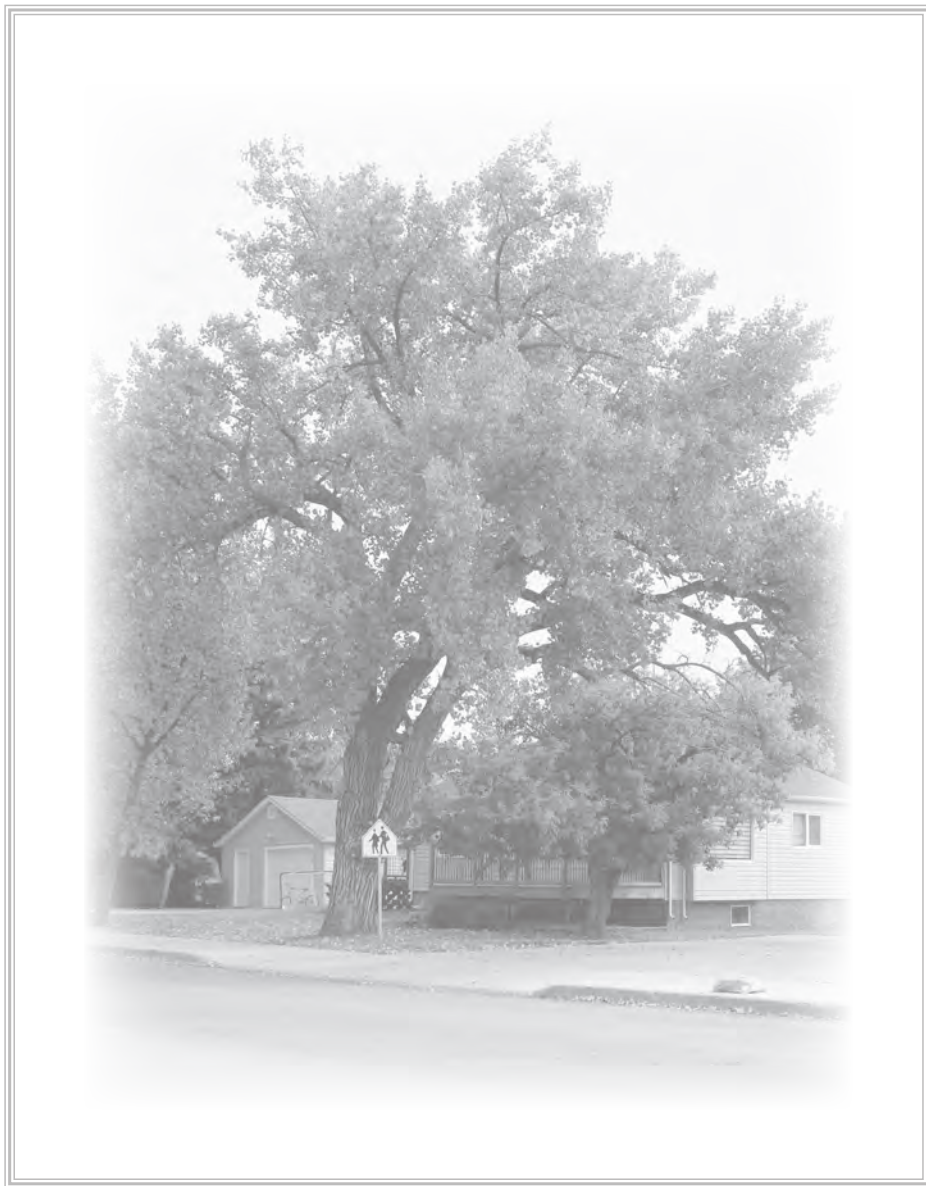
More Tradesmen

Tony Klassen: Dan Lilke was a blacksmith and if you had an idea, he could make it into a reality. Jake Nickel had this idea that he needed something that would cut wild oats [in flax fields]; this was before there was wild oats spray. He took the idea to Dan, and Dan made a cutter with two nine-foot knives, which were run by a motor. This was attached to the tractor and it cut the heads off the wild oats, which was higher than the flax.

Chapter V



Character of the Community



Art Wiebe

Album E



Abram H. Funk (1884-1972), son of Anton and Maria Funk. Served in the Canadian Army in World War I, fought at Vimy Ridge, and later became postmaster in Rosenfeld. [Mary Friesen/Virginia Doell]



Ralph William Eisbrenner, eldest son of Adolph and Maria Eisbrenner. Called to active duty after basic training in the Intelligence Corps in 1941; served in Europe, and also with the American Forces during the invasion of Kiska in the Aleutian Islands. After the war ended, he was called to help document military equipment; returned to Canada in 1945 and retired from services as a Staff Sergeant.



Walter Arthur Eisbrenner, youngest son of Adolph and Maria Eisbrenner. Joined the military when he was of age, and completed basic training with the Royal Canadian Signal Corps; honourably discharged as a corporal in order to work on the family farm.



John Alfred Eisbrenner, second son of Adolph and Maria Eisbrenner. After training in 1940, he joined the Royal Canadian Signal Corps, served in Europe, and was injured during the Liberation of Holland. After the war, he was commissioned to help clean up concentration camps, the worst one being at Auschwitz; returned to Canada in 1945 and retired from service as a Sergeant.



Pte. Ernest Eric Schroeder, son of Gottfried and Helena Schroeder. Joined the Canadian military on January 22, 1943. After basic and specialty training, he left for Europe in July of 1943 where in December he became a proud member of the Canadian Paratrooper Battalion, Company C; participated in the D-Day invasion of Normandy on July 6, 1944, parachuting behind enemy lines. Pte. Ernest Schroeder lost his life on

August 1, 1944, in France at the age of 20 years and six months, and was buried in the Ranville War Cemetery in France. A bench dedicated in his honour is located at the Glenlawn Cemetery in Winnipeg.



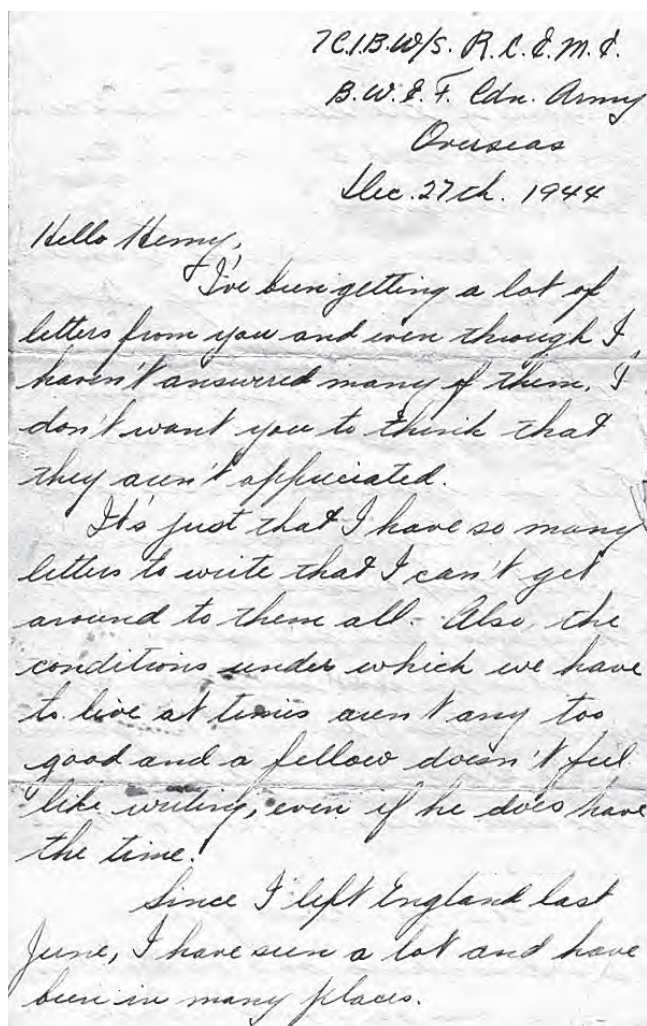
Roy Pokrant as a young man in the Canadian military. He trained in and served out of Vancouver from 1941-1944. [Roy Pokrant]



Edwin B. Nickel, son of John C. and Helena Nickel of Reichenbach. Signed up in 1941, a few months before he was actually of age (19), fictionalizing the date of his birth; served in WWII as a member of the Saskatoon Light Infantry; saw action overseas; drove a Bren gun carrier. [James Nickel]



Walter John Martel, son of Henry and Hannah Martel of Rosenfeld, served in the Canadian military overseas in the Second World War. [Sharon Martel]



This is just one page of a letter serviceman Wally Martel sent from Europe to his cousin, Helmut ("Hemy") in 1944. The entire letter and another letter he wrote are on the Rosenfeld history Facebook site. [Eileen Martel]

Jewish Peddlers On Horse-Drawn Wagons

William Schellenberg recalled the regular appearance of these travelling salesmen at his family's farm in Amsterdam. From one of his sketchbooks: "Mama, de Fesh Yüd es heah!"

This was usually of interest to us younger boys, and the prospect of a good fish fry coming up! The *Fesh Yüd* and the *Orr'nt Yüd* [selling fresh produce] made regular visits during the summer and fall season.



The Empire Lumber Co. was located at the northwest corner of Main St. and 2nd Ave. [Photo taken between 1904 and 1935 by Jacob P. Kroeker, father of William, grandfather of Robert W. Kroeker]



Possibly the former Bank of Hamilton, later a branch of Altona's Canadian Bank of Commerce, then, in 1928, a private home for Gerhard Henry Fast and his wife Anna. The bank vault, moved outdoors, is visible in the photo. [George Fast collection]



East side of Main Street, 1930s. On the left is the Neufeld home; this garage and car dealership was owned by Corny and Susie Fehr. One car doesn't have a licence plate and may have been the only one for sale. [Jacob Kroeker]



Says George Fast, Jr.: *The derelict store in the middle of town was purchased by the Kotchorek family and rebuilt into the Red & White grocery. The living quarters were in the back. The girls were friends of my sister Helen.* [George Fast]



The Rosenfeld Post Office when Abram H. Funk was the postmaster, located at the southeast corner of Main Street and Alexander Avenue. Later, it became the first Rosenfeld Boy Scout headquarters. It was also Pete Funk's Appliance Sales and Repairs at one time. This building was finally moved out of the village (.5 miles north and 1 mile west), where it currently remains. [Tina (Friesen) Wolfe]



Martin's corner, 1942, south end of Main St. at Hwy 14. This multi-service establishment, run by Ed and Gertrude Martin, was an iconic landmark for residents of the town and surrounding communities. [Ron Martin]



Fred Wonnick's pool hall/barber shop built in 1947, located on the south side of Gertie Avenue, southeast of Martel's garage, or directly south of the schoolyard. The Wonnicks' residence is partially visible behind the barbershop. [Bob Derksen]



Main Street, the Hotel Royal, and one of A.J. Thiessen's buses. [Morris, MB Journal]



H. Martel and Sons implement dealership on the left, John and Luella Thiessen's café in the centre. [Jacob Kroeker]



A.J. Thiessen Bus Lines. [William Kroeker collection]



At the Minneapolis Moline regional warehouse in Winnipeg. A.J. Thiessen Transfer (Rosenfeld) and Wiebe Bros. Transfer (Plum Coulee), each loaded with a pull-type combine, ready to be assembled for threshing grain. [Ron Thiessen]



The Rosenfeld post office from 1952 until some time in the 1990s. Prior to that, William Schellenberg's small stationery store stood in this spot on Main Street, and prior to that, a livery stable. [Found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



July 1954 in front of the Massey Harris-Chrysler-Plymouth-Fargo and Fast & Thiessen business (around 284 Main Street). Note the spelling of THIESSON on the sign. Couples in the photo are friends of Rosenfelders Harvey and Eleanor Bergen. L-R: John and Anna Regehr (Kenora, Ontario); Helen and Art Giesbrecht and their daughter. Later this building become Dave's General Store, run by Dave and Sue (Wiebe) Kehler, followed by the Howard Brauns, then the Loftus family, when the building was lost in a fire in the mid-1980s. [Harvey and Eleanor Bergen]



After the A.J. Thiessens sold their rural property south of Altona and moved to Winnipeg, this sign was found in a shed on the yard. The new owners, the Wally Martels, cleaned out the shed and "stored" the sign in the bushes at the edge of the property. Over 30 years later, Scott Martel found a buyer for it in Saskatchewan, who recognized the sign's uniqueness and paid the Martels a tidy sum for it.



George Fast / A.J. Thiessen business, Main St., Rosenfeld. [Luther Pokrant]



Inside the George H. Fast Economy Hatchery, located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Alexander Avenue. Pictured are George Fast, Sr.; his niece, Anne Peters, who was a live-in helper for the family; and his little daughter, Helen. [Louise (Fast) Buhler]



Fast Brothers General Merchants store in the 1960s, originally the location of the Leland Hotel in the late 1800s. [Tina (Friesen) Wolfe]



Abandoned Abe Nikkel grocery store, corner of Henry Avenue and Main Street in the 1960s. [Tina (Friesen) Wolfe]



Esso bulk station. [Found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



Abe Winter's "Gas-a-teria", located at the southwest corner of Main and 2nd Avenue in 1963. [Found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



Helmut Martel's garage in the 1960s. [Tina (Friesen) Wolfe]



Nickel Bros. garage located towards the south end of the village on the west side of Main Street, north of Ed Martin's Esso. Ray Klippenstein later used this building as a chicken hatchery. [Found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



The 11-room Royal Hotel as it appeared in 1960 after it was moved to the south end of the village in the fall of 1950. According to p. 16 of *The Journal* (Morris, Manitoba), dated Nov. 22, 1967, this hotel was initially moved from Plum Coulee to the north end of Rosenfeld after fire destroyed the Leland Hotel in 1934. "In May of 1964, this building too was completely demolished by fire, and the town has since been without these accommodations." Note: *Altona Echo* article accurately states the year of the fire as 1965. [Found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



Martin's corner, 1960, with the Martin family home beside it. [Ron Martin]



Business on Main St. owned first by A.K. Braun, then J.J. Sawatzky, then Bill Pokrant. [Gerald Frank]

Curling Rink Memories
Hartley Pokrant: That old rink was located right across the street from our house. I confess to shooting hundreds of slingshot rounds against the corrugated tin siding from our yard, as it made a nice loud clang on impact. I was told that a lot of the curlers carried a mickey of medicinal libation in the rear pocket to serve as "aiming juice" for improved rock delivery and also increased circulation against the cold.



Rosenfeld Transfer office during one of the spring floods. [Kathy Derksen]



Rosenfeld Curling Rink. [Pic found in a teacher's desk drawer in Rosenfeld School]



Spring in Rosenfeld, 1942. [Les Dueck/Carole Falk]

Skating around town

Art Wiebe: The five locations of our Rosenfeld Skating Rink. Dates to be confirmed. 1) West of the Martel's blacksmith and the Red & White Store on CPR property in the early 1930s. Prior to this time skating took place in ditches or Buffalo Creek, half a mile south of the village. Wallie Pokrant remembered the rink at this site using foot-high planks as a border and a thin layer of wheat straw placed over the frozen ground or snow before flooding with water from one of the village's two ponds. 2) Rink was moved south of the cemetery, five blocks west of the village easterly pond, and remained there until it was moved to the southwest corner of the village, most likely prior to the Bergthaler Church purchasing the property south of the cemetery. 3) Rink was located directly north of the southwest pond in the village. We have aerial pictures of the village showing the rink, and pictures of our Rosenfeld Hawks hockey team taken at this location during the 1940s. 4) Rink was relocated to the south side of the curling rink; here water was piped underground to the curling club and rink from the pond on the east side of the village. 5) Final move for the skating rink was directly north of the village's easterly pond. This pond was closed a number of years after Rosenfeld hooked up to a treated water system in October of 1984 and used as a parking lot for rink activities.



Snowmobiles on Main Street

Art Wiebe: The Pembina Valley Development Corporation used to sponsor three-day snowmobile safaris, in which some Rosenfelders participated. In 1973, more than 140 snowmobiles took over Main Street for a one-hour lunch of soup and sandwiches.

Harvest

Lois Braun: My dad, Jake Nickel, his brother John, brother-in-law Ed Schwartz, and their sons harvested one another's crops together. I loved it when they were on our fields, and I could help my mom pack up hot meals to take to the combines – beef stew, or chili, or sausage and scalloped potatoes, with all the trimmings. After supper, as a young teen-ager, I would often stay on the field with the crew until they were done for the day. I still recall those times with great pleasure when I happen upon a regiment of combines threshing wheat at dusk, the sky still aglow from sunset, a moon just starting to emerge above the eastern horizon, the lights on the machinery gliding in straight lines up and down the field, the roar of engines and straw-choppers and cutter bars and augers. Being on a field at harvest was a full-sensory experience, the sights and sounds blended with the taste of wheat kernels chewed into a gummy paste; the chirping of crickets; the aromas of dust and straw; the itchy chaff between your shirt and your skin; the stubble poking your ankles if you weren't wearing proper footwear. I imagine being with Dad in the cab of one of those combines, or sitting in a grain truck with the driver – one of my older boy-cousins – reading Archie comics under the dome light.



Snowmobiles on Main Street

Hartley Pokrant: I drove those sleds with open face helmets or none at all and no heated grips, and sleds with about two inches of suspension travel. I still have a 1964 Ski Doo Olympic but now prefer riding my 2016 Ski Doo Renegade 1200. We've come a long way.

William Hoepfner: I drove in that snowmobile safari two times with a 1970 Arctic Cat Cheetah 399 with a pink fuel tank I had purchased from Mr. Ed Doell. Great times.

Helmut Martel Memoirs

In conversations with Art Wiebe, 2008



Helmut's lifelong love of fixing and repairing led him to spend most of his life working at Martel's Garage, first with his father, Julius, then his son, Stan. This was a job Helmut never fully retired from. Until a week before he passed, he was still walking to the garage in the mornings before going for coffee to the community centre.

World War II

Although the RCMP were stationed in nearby Gretna, they were very seldom seen in Rosenfeld. This all changed during the Second World War, when the RCMP were observed regularly stopping at the Rosenfeld Post Office and talking with the postmaster, Mr. A.H. Funk, who himself was a veteran from the First World War. Residents in the Rosenfeld area who were of German descent had to report regularly to Mr. Funk. If they were late reporting, or forgot to report, there were consequences. Rumour had it that two individuals from Rosenfeld were being closely watched.

Friendship and Being Canadian

Mr. Flett was the Rosenfeld station agent at one time; he spoke only English and lived at the north end of the village. Pastor Keitel, minister of the St. John Lutheran Church, spoke only German and lived in the Lutheran parsonage towards the south end of the village, at the corner of Third Avenue and Main Street. These two gentlemen, whose family backgrounds were totally different, would visit each other one evening a week for the purpose of teaching each other their respective native languages.

Prior to Electricity

Prior to Hydro coming to Rosenfeld in 1935, Julius Martel (Helmut Martel's dad) purchased a lighting plant from C. C. Fehr in 1925. This plant consisted of a row of six to eight six-volt batteries, each battery measuring approximately 18"x12". This bank of batteries, connected in series, was located along one side of the garage owned and operated by Mr. Martel. Several times a day, a single-cycle gas generator kept the batteries charged. Electric wire was strung along 12-foot poles south till the Empire Lumberyard, located just to the south of the St. John Lutheran Church and north of the Martel garage. Each home or business that wanted to be connected normally had one 40- or 60-watt bulb. The cost was rated per bulb, which amounted to less than \$5.00 per month. This energy source was used very sparingly, and it should be noted that some villagers felt it was a waste of electricity when a number of the village boys would often play cards till late into the evening at the Empire Lumberyard office.

Prices (according to records kept by Mr. Julius Martel)

New suit – \$35.00 (Oct. 1, 1930)

31 lbs. of turkey – \$4.75 (Nov. 19, 1930)

6-volt car battery – \$6.25 (plus allowance of \$1.50 for old battery)

45 gallons of distillate \$6.98 (fuel used for tractors) – very volatile

3 lbs. of grease – 33 cents (April 27, 1940)

Ice House

Before electricity and deep-freezers, ice houses kept many perishables from spoiling. Although there were no

ice houses in the village, some people would bury one or two 250-gallon metal tanks in the ground on the west side of their houses. This type of underground reservoir was used not only to collect water from the roof for purpose of drinking and washing, but so that items could be lowered down just above the water to them keep cold.

In the rural areas, farmers would dig a hole into the north side of their earthen dugout dykes, board out the hollow, and place inside it a couple of two-foot thick chunks of ice that were covered by wood shavings, straw or hay. Items that needed to be kept really cold were placed on this covering, while items that needed not to be kept as cold were placed on the ledge around the "ice hole", or hung from the ceiling. If properly managed, the ice would often last till the next winter, when it would be replenished by hauling 2' x 4' x 2' thick chunks from the Red River.

Railway Station

If you were a youngster in the village of Rosenfeld in the 1920s, the place to be on a Saturday morning was the CPR railway station. The Winnipeg passenger train would arrive at around 11:00 a.m., while the passenger train from the west arrived around 12:00 p.m., creating a one-hour lay over. During these 60 minutes, passengers and local farmers would often haggle over farm produce (eggs, butter, chickens), trying to get the best prices possible. Often all sense of time was lost during these intense exchanges, resulting in a mad rush to the station to catch the train back to Winnipeg. Occasionally, passengers' packed carpetbags and suitcases would accidentally open and spill. Village youngsters got a kick out of watching these Winnipeg passengers trying to salvage whatever eggs had not been crushed from the impact.

Chrysler and Massey Dealership

It put Rosenfeld on the map. After the war, Mr. A.J. Thiessen had six brand-new cars brought in by railcar. This was the most cars brought in at one time during those years in all of southern Manitoba, as the standard practice was to bring in one car at a time for a customer who had already made a commitment to purchase it. People came from as far away as Manitou to purchase their automobiles in Rosenfeld.

Two Robberies

In the 1920s, the Rosenfeld post office was robbed. When the post office attendant recognized the voice of the masked individual, she was hit on the head with a blunt object, knocking her unconscious, and the thief escaped with an undisclosed amount of money.

C.C. Fehr Dealership had a large safe and provided farmers with a grain-ticket cashing service.

One evening during the late 30s or early 40s, the doors to the safe were blown off and an undisclosed amount of money taken.

Milk

Villagers who didn't have cows purchased their milk from the John Neufeld family who kept extra cows for this purpose. In 1948, the Otto Martel family kept three to four cows for the purpose of delivering milk in syrup pails to families in the village. Village children would often jump on the horse-drawn wagon for a free ride to school in the mornings. This milk-delivery practice stopped in the 1960s, when the Provincial Health Department set new standards requiring that all milk sold was to be pasteurized.

Herdsmen in the Village of Rosenfeld

In our present village of Rosenfeld, the village herdsman system was used until the early 1940s. Often there were 10 to 15 cows in the village. In the spring, a committee of three men from the village met to make the necessary arrangements, including renting the property a mile south of the village owned by Mr. H.D. Friesen (Tony H. Friesen's dad). The total herdsman's fee was based on the cost of the pasture rental and the herdsman's wages, which were divided by the number of cows being pastured. This usually amounted to \$2 to \$3 per cow/month. In Rosenfeld, the John Neufeld family had four or five boys, and two of their boys usually got this job.

Herding the village cows usually started in spring when the grass in the pasture was tall enough and the ground not too soft. At 7:00 a.m., when most villagers had already milked their cows, the village herdsman would walk the village from the north to the south end ringing a bell alerting the villagers to send their cows into the main street to be herded for the day. He would then walk back to the north end of the village and start the process of herding the cows through the village to an enclosed pasture a mile out of town beside Buffalo Creek.

At 6:00 p.m., the herdsman would herd the cows back to the village. Traffic along the road had to slow down and often stop to direct the cows to the side of the road. As the cows entered the village, most of them remembered which yards were theirs. Those that didn't relied on the herdsman to direct them. The process was repeated until fall ended. This system was abandoned when fewer and fewer families kept their own cows, and pasture land for herding was hard to find due to land being seeded.

Four Different Faiths in Rosenfeld

Mennonite, Lutheran, Baptist and Catholic. This was never the cause for splits in the community. This

is supported by the present practice of the annual joint cemetery memorial service held the last Sunday in June, and in previous years also included a joint community service in August.

Lorraine (Martel) Pokrant Memoirs

In her own words

In the early years, 1935–1940, the village of Rosenfeld was our playground. Helmut was the oldest. My younger sister Ruth and I were constant companions, and from a young age visited and were welcomed in most every house in the town – maybe for something to do, or were we such social butterflies? We were always welcomed and treated with a candy or cookie. And sometimes mother would give us each an egg to trade in for candy at the old Julius Hinz store. He always obliged. Then we would visit the elevators on our way to the Y [where two converging railroad tracks form a Y-shape] looking for wild flowers such as wild roses, lady’s hair, violets and buttercups – all which grew abundantly in the tall grass. Another place we visited occasionally was the “coal dock” – all such interesting places. Never in these wanderings did we feel unsafe or afraid of being kidnapped or abused. Everyone was a trusted friend.

We often visited the [Louis] Huebners – he was a beekeeper – and the Beidingers. Mr. Hinz, a widower, had three girls, and one of them, who was older already, answered an ad in a paper for someone from Alberta looking for a wife. He said he would come to Rosenfeld to get her, so she got a wedding dress ready. I remember when we visited the Hinzes seeing that wedding dress hanging in the front hallway for many weeks while she waited for the man to show up. Eventually she married the man and moved out west.

Later when we were older – ten or so – we also enjoyed spending time at the train station. Ursula, the daughter of the station agent, was a best friend and so we had a good reason to meet the trains. In fact my first train ride was when the “Peanut Special”, as it was called, came only up to Rosenfeld to pick up mail and freight and turn around in the Y to head back to Altona and Gretna. Ursula managed to get us on the train to the turn-around in the Y. What a privilege! The way I remember it, the Peanut Special went to Winnipeg every Friday morning and came back in the evening. Mrs. Flett, the station agent’s wife, would go to Winnipeg and do her shopping. Basic farm produce, like eggs, cream and butter, were collected by Jewish peddlers from the local farmers, and then sold to passengers who were coming through town on the train and waiting for the connecting train.

Sometimes our girls’ baseball team would travel to other towns to play, and we’d ride in the back of a big truck. The town skating rink was south of the cemetery. George Fast would go to Winnipeg to get skates to sell in Rosenfeld. My mom and dad wouldn’t buy me skates, but I borrowed some from Mr. Fast, and I went skating!

Our family of five suddenly increased when brother Harry was born in 1939 and Herb in 1941. By that time I was nine, and eleven when Herb came along, and we older three helped to take care of these babies. We had one of those big English prams – I don’t know where my mother got that thing from – and those babies were walked up and down the sidewalks of Rosenfeld countless times to put them to sleep or keep them amused. We were also fortunate to live next door to Grandmother and Grandfather Marsch, my mother’s parents, and an unmarried aunt, Leocadia Marsch, who was our second mother. She and Mother sewed many a dress, etc., for my sister Ruth and I, especially every Christmas. Always identical dresses. Then we were ready for the Xmas concerts, both school and church. The one school Christmas concert I recall was my first year at school, in the old original school, where I spent only one year. That old school had one classroom on the main floor and one classroom on the second floor. After the concert of course Santa came bouncing in and we all in turn had to sit on his knee to receive our treat bag, which contained peanuts, an orange, and a little bit of candy. When we came home I asked my mom how come Santa smelled like Anti-Pain Oil. She said maybe he had a toothache!

I remember the building of the Lutheran Church. We lived right beside it, and all the meals for the labourers were cooked at our house, with some people bringing food from their homes as well. Most of the work building the church was done by volunteer labour.

I remember the weddings in those years, the early forties, especially my aunt’s wedding held in the Recksiedler barn. Weddings were held in granaries, machine sheds or barns. Several I remember were at the August Recksiedler farm on the corner just south of Rosenfeld in the big red barn. Children were always included and had a good time even though we were not of the “cocktail” age. There were many “happy” guests at these weddings. After a delicious supper supplied and cooked by the family of the bride, the keg was tapped, the accordians and the orchestra tuned up and the celebrations began. Often the orchestra was the Neumann boys. At midnight there was an old European ritual – the *Braut Diener*, who was usually the accordion player, would recite a certain poem, guests would try breaking china

plates with coins and the new couple got to keep the money. The bride and groom were tossed up as high as possible on their chairs to a loud cheering. Also around midnight, another lunch was served, consisting mainly of pickled herring. And so it went until sun-up. And sometimes there was an “after-wedding” the next day to eat and drink the leftovers.

Hedy Mazinke Memoir

As interviewed by Art Wiebe, March, 2017

We lived in a German settlement. I went to Hoffnungsthal School. During the Second World War, because Canada was fighting the Germans, we couldn't be taught German in school any more. They used to have German lessons after four, but I never got those lessons, because all the German books had to be gotten rid of. Every once in a while, the inspector would come and look. There were to be no German books in the school library, either. But – I knew where all those German books were: They were up in a far corner of the attic, and he was too fat to climb up there.

Our teacher was taken away because he made some [supportive] comments about Germany. I remember the police coming to the school to pick him up. He had to go work in a munitions factory or something like that. Anyway, the trustees decided to change the name of the school to English: Hope Vale.

We couldn't drive cars in the wintertime because they didn't open the roads. We went to school by sleigh. And the roads were mud for a long time. But Wally C. Miller [MLA 1936-59] got us gravel roads. We didn't get hydro at our place until 1951. That was a big change! No more coal oil lamps and no more walking to the barn with lanterns. First we got a hotplate for cooking. We kept our old cookstove because we needed it to heat the house, along with the old wood and coal furnace. Later we got a furnace with a stoker, and eventually we got an electric furnace.

The bell in the Rosenfeld Lutheran church was donated to the church by my grandfather when my grandmother died. We could sometimes hear that bell ringing on our farm, five-and-a-half miles away.

I didn't ever go to school in Rosenfeld. In my time, if you wanted to continue your education after Gr. 8, you could take Gr. 9 and 10 by correspondence, but if the school in Rosenfeld was full, you couldn't go there. You would have to try Morden, or maybe Morris, or some even went to St. Jean to the convent. You couldn't just pick up and say, “I'm coming to school,” if you didn't belong to that district. Some people from the Rosenfeld area, like the Pokrants and Abe [J.] Thiessen, went to high school in Steinbach.

They boarded there. The Loewen boys, who lived not too far from our place, walked from the farm to Rosenfeld to get their education. That was four-and-a-half miles! They had relatives in Rosenfeld, so they might have stayed there when it stormed.

My mother spoke only High German. This was a problem, because my dad died when I was quite young – I was only 11 – and we had the farm, and we had a French person working our farm. He couldn't speak German and my mother couldn't speak French, but he could speak some English. I and my sister were in school all day and speaking English, and one day I said to my sister, “This is it – no more German at home. Our mother has to learn to speak English.” And she did. She could speak English and she could write English. My older sister living in Washington was writing her letters in English, so Mom could finally read them. It was the best thing that ever happened to my mom. After my dad died, we kept the farm going. Our farm was in the family for 111 years.

Around 1948, a group of men decided to build a curling rink in Rosenfeld. They dismantled a coal shed, which was beside the railway track. Funds were scarce, so there were no shingles on the roof the first year. Water was hauled in to make the ice. Later they dug a well close to the rink and piped the water from a water pond that was a little northeast of the rink. In February, jam pails were hung on the rafters to catch the water drips, and if some water didn't hit the pail, then there were little bumps on the ice. Then they'd scrape the bumps off, but an odd one was missed, and if the curling rock hit this, it would take a little side trip. Many happy hours were spent there. Whenever there was a bonspiel, the ladies would make big pots of soup, and delicious pies were baked. The rink closed when Altona built a new rink and had artificial ice. Therefore a lot of the [Rosenfeld] curlers became members of the Altona rink.

The old Rosenfeld school had a bell. When they built the new school, they didn't want that bell. I don't know why, they just didn't want a bell, I guess. The Lutheran church in Rosenfeld knew that Greenwald, north of Beausejour, was building a new church, and they needed a bell. So the Rosenfeld Lutheran Church bought the bell, and the people from Greenwald came and picked it up and put it into their church. [My husband Ed and I] moved to Beausejour in 1969. Our youngest daughter got married in the Greenwald church, and that bell tolled for a Rosenfeld girl on her wedding day!

Editor's note: The Rosenfeld school bell was purchased by the newly-built St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Greenwald, Manitoba, in 1938.

Since the Greenwald church is no longer active, Art Wiebe has explored the possibility of retrieving the bell so that it can eventually be incorporated into a memorial in Rosenfeld. However, the former parish of Greenwald plans to use the bell in its own memorial.



Very Few Birthday Parties

A headstone in the Rosenfeld Cemetery marks the grave of August Mazinke. He was only 22 years old when he died in 1914. What is remarkable about the monument is that it says he was born on Feb. 31!

Threshing Crew and Icehouse Reflections

By Eleanore (Eisbrenner) Schroeder, 2014

Those were the days when neighbors helped each other. I remember when Ernest Pokrant, Bill Pokrant and my dad, Adolph Eisbrenner, were together in a crew during the threshing time. Feeding the crew was a full-time job and a nightmare for the women. The crew would stay overnight during the threshing season. The women fed up to 20 or more husky men three times a day, plus a four-p.m. lunch. There wasn't any electricity or refrigeration. Thank goodness for the ice houses.

Since there were three families in this threshing outfit, each one provided as many men, hayracks and horses as were needed. My brothers were included in the crew.

When the crew was at our place, they all slept in the hayloft or granaries as was available. Therefore, most of the laundry was done by the [host] families. The hired help never had many possessions with them. The crew usually slept in their work clothes. I remember one weekend one of the hired hands asked my dad for his week's salary, and so Dad paid him. He walked to Rosenfeld to purchase some clothes. As usual, mom had pails of water, soap and towels for the crew to wash up before they came in for the meals. That Sunday morning Mr. "Cookbook" Dyck came into the house, shaved, hair combed and neat as a pin. But before he came in to eat breakfast, he dressed in his new clothes, picked the old clothes up with a pitchfork and took them to the manure pile and buried them. He was a wonderful man and it was a joy to listen to his stories. He preferred to be called "Cookbook", but I believe his name was Jake. Out of respect to him, my parents insisted that I call him Mr. Dyck.

I am sorry I do not have any pictures of the icehouses. During my childhood, I remember we had two. One was built in the 1930s and the other in the

40s. Please visualize the 1930 icehouse. It was built in the bank of a dugout (or water pond). Dad hitched a horse onto a scraper bucket. With reins about his neck and hands on the scraper handles, [he found it] a tedious job to get a hole dug to accommodate a space in the earthen bank. It was then [shaped] by hand to square it to the size needed. It was reinforced with boards complete with a roof, which was covered with ground, and a door was attached. In winter, Dad cut blocks of ice from the dugout and placed them in the icehouse in layers. This was then covered with a generous layer of sawdust. We used it as a refrigerator, as all the dairy products were put into pails, and the sawdust was piled around them. This method was successful till in late fall. I think we were one of the few families in the area to be able to make ice cream all year round.

The second one was constructed of wood built over a root cellar. This one was about 8'x10', as it housed our cream separator and all the milk equipment. Again, ice blocks were lowered into the cellar, and as the ice would melt, binder twine was attached to the handles of the pails and lowered onto the ice. Now we didn't need any sawdust anymore. At that time, it was quite an achievement.

Rosenfeld's street names history

Alexander Ave. and Acheson St.—named after the first storekeepers in town, the Alexander Acheson family.

Gertie Ave.—named after Alexander Acheson's youngest and "favourite daughter".

Oliver Ave.—named after Oliver Cromwell, 17th C. English political leader; Grandmother Acheson's roots trace back to Cromwell.

Henry Ave.—named after Mrs. Acheson's great-grandmother, who was a Henry before she married a Miller and had 13 children, one of whom became Alexander Acheson's wife; also named after one of Grandmother Acheson's sons, Weir Henry, who went missing in action overseas in WWI.

Bredin Ave.—Bredin was Grandfather Acheson's mother's maiden name.

Carolyn St. – named after Rosenfeld businessman A.J. Thiessen's daughter, Carolyn.

Tobea St. – (unknown at this time).





Frequent flooding in spring was a constant, harsh reality for the citizens of Rosenfeld and farm families living in the Buffalo Creek area. For the older generation still with us today, the 1950 flood was the most memorable.

Flood Waters Subside In Rosenfeld; Damage Extensive

By Gus Pokrant, from the *Echo*, 1950

Those exaggerated flood rumours that have circulated here for the last several weeks finally became a reality about the middle of the week when huge quantities of muddy water from all directions and channelled by roads, dykes, railways and fences, found its way into our innocent little village. Although most reports were somewhat glamourized or overdone, the tide rolled in with its usual old time speed, sweeping away everything in its path. Never before did the flood strike so swiftly and leave the district with such despatch.

Now that the slimy surface has reappeared again the full extent of the damage has become very evident. Bridges, roads, railways, sidewalks, basements, woodpiles, buildings, cattle and fowl, all these suffered more or less from the raging waters. Perhaps the greatest damage was caused when the rushing waves inundated thousands of acres of cultivated farmlands. Tons and tons of the best topsoil is gone, many fields are cut by deep ditches and others are covered with soggy stubble...

In spite of all this, the youngsters enjoyed some of their best holidays. School was closed and water was plentiful. The older folk found that another spring flood could still provide new thrills as well as a score of headaches and inconveniences. As for the farmer, he was obliged to contend with rafting chickens, soaked grain, flooded buildings and a host of other interesting and impossible situations. Roads and railways were out north, east, west and south of town and this rather sudden isolation provided its own problems. Thanks to a diligent crew of some 70 railroad workers, train connections were re-established in record time. As for highways, some motorists travelled 55 miles to get to Altona. Gretna lay on the other shore of this vast ocean. We presume there was not too much dry land between these two points.

Rhineland again bore the brunt of these unprecedented floods. In this connection the Altona Echo, The Tribune, as well as the member of the Morris constituency, deserve a word of commendation and our whole-hearted support... Only two years ago our municipality was obliged to finance large expenditures due to floods. Taxes rose sharply. This year the situation is even more serious. The general opinion is quite plain. If ever

this municipality required and deserved financial support from the province, it is right now; otherwise most of the planned public works will have to be postponed in order to pay for flood damages.

Caused by the flood: Little children pressed their noses to the windowpanes, gazed wide-eyed over the vast expanse and gurgled, "Water da, da water." Four-buckle overshoes may be used in place of boots even if the water reaches the knee and we don't mind the chilly sensation. We like to travel when we have no streets. An ordinary glass basement window does not keep the water out. We have proof of this now. Most women don't believe that water always finds its level. They fear it may bubble up through the cellar door. When floods come it's a good idea to have your woodpile in order or else your neighbour's wood supply will increase. Boating in these regions means the making of scores of portages. Some folks, when surrounded by water, can become very irritable, others grow utterly unreasonable. Until now we never realized the truth of the Ancient Mariner's statement, "Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink." A man with boots, wading knee deep in water, wearing a hat on a windy day presents an amusing sight when the hat leaves its base, but a man wearing oxfords stranded on an island parting company with his hat deserves our sincerest sympathy – so utterly helpless. To some of our citizens the flood came as a blessing in disguise – they got a job. We discovered too that some pumps move more water than others – we mean those that have no handles.

In spite of our numerous griefs and woes we are still among the more fortunate when we think of our neighbours along the river. Instead of a few inches their houses are flooded several feet deep. To them the flood means weeks of hardship. Their losses are severe indeed. If we suffered it can only bring us to realize the greater hardships that these people have to endure. To them we express a word of sympathy and encouragement.

That Old Team of Mine

By Louis Pokrant, the *Echo* (date unknown)

The Rosenfeld Hawks [were] a softball team that was active and that played together for several years during the 1930s. This team was renowned and respected for its great prowess and skill on the ball diamond.

Yes, even in the depths of the so-called Great Depression hardball and softball were played for recreation and many sport days and daylong tournaments were held just as is the practise today.

The most popular game at that time was softball and not fastball as at present. In softball only the catcher was allowed to use a glove and the base

runner could not leave the base until the ball thrown by the pitcher had crossed home plate. In other words there was no leading off from the bases before the pitcher delivered the ball.

Another difference was that in softball ten players were employed, the extra player being another shortstop between first base and second base.

All the members of the Rosenfeld Hawks were home-grown talent; that is, they were natives of the town, though for some tournaments the team was bolstered and strengthened with the addition of a very gifted pitcher from Winnipeg who had relatives in the community and who usually just opportunely happened to be visiting them when his services were required.

Thumbnail sketch of each player:

Peter Thiessen spent 4½ years in the armed forces. Later engaged in business in Thompson and in Winnipeg.

William (Bill) Enns operated a garage and auto dealership at La Riviere for several years. Later moved to Winnipeg and is now employed by Grey Goose Bus Lines.

John Thiessen established and operated a restaurant and taxi service in Thompson until his passing.

Louis Pokrant, teacher in southern, eastern and Interlake regions of Manitoba.

Abram (Abe) Funk worked for Swifts abattoir in St. Boniface for 35 years until his retirement.

Ralph McDonald's whereabouts are unknown. No contacts appear to have been maintained by any other team member.

Abram (Abe) Neufeld farmed at Gretna for many years; later moved to Winnipeg and was a painter for St. Vital School Division for almost a decade.

Walter Martel operated John Deere agency automobile dealership and gasoline and fertilizer agency with his dad and brother and later with his own family, first in Rosenfeld and then in Altona.

John Kehler, manager of Federal grain elevator at Sewell and later at Gretna.

Oscar Martel operated John Deere agency and automobile, fertilizer, and gas and oil business with his dad and brother, first in Rosenfeld and then at Altona.

Peter Neufeld presently resides in Vancouver, first worked as miner and then graduated to becoming an explosives expert.

Abram J. Thiessen, manager, founder and operator of Thiessen Bus Lines, later Grey Goose Bus Lines, and sundry other businesses.

Expression of Thanks: I would here like to express my sincere thanks to Abram Neufeld for his assistance in assembling and compiling some of this material.



Art Klassen is the son of John S. and Sarah Klassen. The family farm was just one mile west of Rosenfeld in the Reichenbach district.

Playing Hockey for Rosenfeld: Art Klassen Remembers

Based on an interview by Art Wiebe, Oct. 21, 2016

Klassen played for the Rosenfeld Hawks hockey team in the mid-1940s, beginning at age 16, before going on to play for Dryden, Portage la Prairie, and finally the Altona Maroons. He would sometimes get picked up by the St. Jean team during provincial play-offs. He also played fastball for Rosenfeld in the summer when he was in his mid-teens, usually pitching or manning third. He recalls the Thames team, with a family of Zacharias boys who distinguished themselves in the sport. The Rosenfeld team attended the big fastball tournament held in Morden every Dominion Day.

The reason Klassen spent time in Dryden was, his brother-in-law, who worked out of Vermilion Bay, asked him to drive truck for him. Klassen tried this out and didn't care for it. But nearby Dryden had a hockey team, and after being invited to become one of them, Klassen got a job at the paper mill there, had his equipment shipped up, and joined the team at the age of 18.

The Rosenfeld Hawks' uniforms were red and white, and they played against teams from various villages in the area, including Sommerfeld and Neubergthal. These outdoor rinks did have electric light bulbs strung across the ice, but Klassen remembers the first time he played in Neubergthal, and the bulbs being of inadequate wattage. "It was like: Where's the puck?!"

Hockey tournaments were organized from time to time. He specifically recalls one that took place in Morden, when his team had to take the train from Rosenfeld to participate in the tournament because of a snowstorm having made the roads impassable. Besides Morden, two other teams that were involved in that particular tournament were Winkler and Roland. Klassen says that both Morden and Winkler had recruited "outside" players – Winnipeg guys. Klassen remembers how, going in, everyone considered Morden to be the most powerful team and the favourite to win. Klassen normally played defense, but was in goal due to an injury to the regular net-minder, Eddie Neufeld. The first game the Hawks played against Morden, Klassen delivered a shut-out. The next day, playing against Roland, he says, "I couldn't stop anything!"

The Hawks' coach was Ed Buhr. He knew how to set up interesting drills, such as throwing tires on the ice and having the players stick-handle through

the maze. However, "Eddie Buhr didn't even know how to skate!", says Klassen.

Art Klassen's brother Eddie and their brother-in-law, Ervin Pluchinski, also played for the Hawks. They were fast, agile players, he remembers, "jumping over hockey sticks". August Lang was "quite a competitor. He wasn't afraid to mix it up." Forward Bill Enns scored quite a few goals, says Klassen. "He'd hang around the net and wait for the puck to come." Their power line in those days was "the three E's": Eddie Klassen, Erv Pluchinski, and Eddie Recksiedler. Some of the Rosenfeld team went on to play for Letellier, which was a step-up calibre of hockey.

Bauer was a common brand of equipment, even at the time, along with CCM. "A pair of skates would have cost about \$20 to \$30 at the time," says Klassen. "Sticks were about two bucks. The club bought the goalie pads." Nobody wore facemasks. The blades of the sticks were not curved, as they are today. "And we didn't have a red line in those days." The boards of the Rosenfeld rink were much higher than today. "You can tell from pictures that they were probably about eight feet tall, or at least taller than the guys." The snow was shovelled off the ice over the boards, but sometimes they had to bring in a front-end loader. The ice was "conditioned" between periods by volunteers from the audience using manual scrapers. (Rosenfeld currently has its own Zamboni.)

But when it came to the total cost of outfitting a player in those days, Klassen emphasizes that expensive equipment wasn't in the cards for these small, rural teams. "There just wasn't the money." Admission fees to a game in the 1940s might have been around 50 cents.

"We often had over 100 spectators at games," Klassen recalls. "We played even when it was twenty below. If a game was scheduled, you went and played. We had a warm-up shack. One end was curtained off for a dressing room. The shack was heated with wood or oil. It was quite comfortable." The hockey season in the villages began close to Christmastime, and ended in March, when the quality of the ice began to deteriorate due to fluctuating temperatures.

Did he ever get hurt? "I remember one time, when I was playing defense, I did block a shot with my forehead. It took 25 stitches to close it. We were playing in Winkler, but I waited until after the game to go to the Altona hospital to get the stitches."

Winkler spectators didn't care for Klassen's body-checking style, and frequently chanted, "Klassen-Go-Home!" One time, when Klassen was playing for the Altona Maroons, they were facing the team from St. Jean in the play-offs, and the Altona fans were fully aware that one of the better players for the opponents

was a ringer from Winnipeg. The fans urged Klassen to "get him!" Sure enough, early in the game, the player in question was coming down the ice with his head down. "Big mistake! I nailed him pretty hard."

Hawks Players Reunion

The *Echo*, March 5, 1965 (author unknown)

Forty-two people, some of them coming all the way from Winnipeg, showed up at the Altona Elks Hall for the reunion of Rosenfeld's Hawks Hockey Players, on Saturday, February 29. A terrible blizzard was raging at the time and those coming out from the city had travelled for five hours. These few spent an enjoyable evening, in the morning waiting for the storm to cease. However, when the winds didn't abate the ones who had come a long distance were asked to stay until driving conditions improved. Mr. and Mrs. John Reimer of Winnipeg remained at the Walter Martels; the Irvin Pluchinskis, Bill, Ed, and Art Klassen of Winnipeg stayed at their parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Klassen; returning home with the J.J. Nickels was their daughter Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pokrant, and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Giesbrecht of Winnipeg; Mr. and Mrs. Abe Enns of Winnipeg spent the night at Mr. and Mrs. Art Corbett; Mr. and Mrs. Bill Friesen were guests at the Ed Martin home, while Mr. and Mrs. Harold Giesbrecht went to Plum Coulee where her parents live. Some of the others left for home despite the storm.

Since 175 persons had been invited another social evening was held on February 27, this not only included the hockey players, but fans and anyone who helped support the club during its existence from 1932 when Rosenfeld had their first skating rink until 1950.

One hundred and five persons registered in the guest book at this gathering. Ribbons of red, white and blue, representing the colours of the club's uniforms, were pinned on each of the guests: also pictures of the players and other important events were displayed in the hall for the occasion.

Master of ceremonies was Oscar Martel, who related some of the highlights of the club's activities. After the audience was entertained with some singing by the barbershop quartet consisting of Harold Giesbrecht, Bill, Abe and John Enns, all former hockey players were asked to come up front. In all 25 players were present.

The evening closed with a lunch.

Rosenfeld Curling Rink

From the *Echo*, February 15, 1950 (author not credited)

Official opening of the new Rosenfeld curling rink was held Thursday, Feb. 9. Built entirely from

funds raised through voluntary donations from people living in Rosenfeld and surrounding area, this rink represents the wholehearted effort of the community.

“A community achievement,” one of the visitors at the opening called it.

Aside from being a community achievement the rink also represents many hours of hard work and determined effort. This rink was the first curling rink ever to be built in Rosenfeld.

Not unlike other curling rinks which dot the villages and towns in western Canada, the rink is equipped with all the essentials conducive to good curling. It has two sheets of ice, a spacious waiting room, is well lit by several strings of lights, and has a walk separating the two sheets of ice to allow for spectators to enter the rink proper during the games.

The curling club has also procured sets of matched curling rocks, something many older curling clubs in southern Manitoba have not got.

Guest speaker at the official opening of Rosenfeld’s curling rink was Mr. Karl Knopf, one of the pioneer residents of Rosenfeld. “A resident of 57 years standing,” as Mr. Knopf puts it.

“Let me say a few words in tribute to the members of the curling club,” said the speaker. “Many hours of hard work were spent in the planning and construction of this structure, even though it is not quite finished, but in time it will be.

“I understand the labour was all free of charge. That shows the good neighbour spirit and goodwill of this community’s residents, which I hope will continue to pervade in this area.

“When I think back some 15 or 20 years there was a movement underway to build a curling rink in Rosenfeld. Donations were accepted, but the enterprise never materialized.

“When we enter Rosenfeld today there is a sign which reads, ‘Sign of Progress – It’s Yours – Use It.’ You have contributed to this progress.

“But let me say, I think that all the credit is not coming to you. I remember 57 years ago when the first determined pioneers settled in this area. Nobody then dreamed of a curling rink. There were only a few houses, a post office, general store, a poor excuse for a school house, and a broken down blacksmith shop.

“The end of civilization was about three miles south of Rosenfeld. From there on north, east and west there was a vast sea of grass almost to Winnipeg.

“Today Rosenfeld has all the modern conveniences comparable to all the towns in the province. Telephones, hydro, and the accessories that go with them. Three churches, a modern school building, shops, a daily bus service which is operated out of Rosenfeld, a transfer line, to mention a few.

“The oxen and horse have given way to the tractor

and the automobile. Ramshackle pioneer huts have been replaced by handsome permanent homes and barns. Roads and drainage systems now crisscross the countryside. Swamps have been drained.

“The farmer today should appreciate the efforts of the hardy pioneers who opened up this country. Appreciation can be readily shown if pains are taken to preserve the precious soil, which was so laboriously broken.

“In my time I have seen the productivity of the soil in this district decrease considerably through laxness in conservation measures.

“Of course many will say it’s not our fault. They blame it on the weather, and we work the land better than our forefathers. Still the fact remains that the soil does not produce what it did 50 years ago. It’s better to fix a leak in the roof as long as the sun is shining, than when it starts to rain.”

In closing Mr. Knopf wished the Rosenfeld Curling Club success in the future.

Other speakers during the opening ceremonies were Mr. Henry Martel of Rosenfeld, and Mrs. Alf Whitwell, a former resident of Rosenfeld, who made the trip especially to be present at the official opening. Executive of the curling club consists of George Wilson, president; Oscar Martel, secretary-treasurer; Arnold Schroeder, Albert Schroeder and John Reimer.

Visiting rinks on opening day were a ladies’ and men’s rink from Steinbach.

Memories of Rosenfeld: 1951-1961 By Bruce Martel

After many years and much reflection, I have come to cherish my memories growing up in Rosenfeld in the first ten years of my life. Though I only lived there from 1951-1961, the imprint it left on me was indelible. I had the classic Canadian youth of family, freedom, and hockey.

My parents, Oscar and Dorothy, met in Rosenfeld, but were married on September 25, 1938 in Winkler, MB. My father, Oscar was the sales manager at the Martel and Sons John Deere franchise along with my uncle Wally, who was the general manager. Their first family home was in Rosenfeld, which is now #149 and expanded by renovations. The two-storey home can still be found on the west side of Main Street. It was directly across the street from the Abe Nikkels’ store. On either side of us were the Funk household and the BA Service Station. Behind us lived the Giesbrechts and a different Nikkel family. We lived in the same home until I was in school, and when my brothers and sisters had all left the household, we moved across the street to the Abe Nikkels’ house.

They raised four children in their first home, with the oldest, Dennis, followed in close succession by Gail and Douglas. About 10 years later, on December 16, 1951, I entered the world. My sister Gail told me I was brought home on Christmas Eve because in those days, they kept mother and baby in the hospital for a week or so before discharging them.

Memories of my siblings are fleeting, as there was a ten-year age gap between us. My brother Doug was always working for my uncle Wally in his teen years and I never saw much of him at home as he was always driving a truck somewhere or hauling equipment from Winnipeg to Rosenfeld. He was handy and could drive just about any vehicle or piece of equipment he touched. He was also very mechanically inclined and though school didn't spark his interest, he could draw diagrams of engines and spark plugs that were very impressive! He used to drive a motorcycle and hung out with the Martin boys, who also drove motorcycles. He'd give me rides on the back of it and go like a bat out of hell with me clinging on for dear life! He was nick-named Butch for a good reason, because although he never looked for trouble, he never shied away from it either.

My only sister Gail was more of a mystery to me because she was so glamorous and hung out in her room with her girlfriends. Her room was pretty much off limits for us brothers. She was really hooked on Elvis at the time and she even had the jellyroll hairstyle going for her. She wore a black leather jacket and black jeans and I thought she was pretty "neat" at the time. I admired her, as she was so beautiful and talented. She was very gifted musically and in my opinion, she sang just like the opera star I heard on the radio! She also played the piano in the living room and I would sit quietly listening. When she married Al Braun at the tender age of 18, the piano went with her and it was the last time I heard my mom and her play "Georgie Porgie" or "Chopsticks" together in our house. It was really quiet around the house without her singing and playing.

My brother Dennis was a very good athlete, hockey player, ball player, curler and student. At 18 he played for the Altona Maroons on defense for coach Harry Sulkers, who was a hockey legend in those parts at the time. Dennis was also a very avid and skilled curler and competed at a very high level. I worshipped the ground he walked on and was always trying to hang out with him and his friends whenever I got the chance.

He was my hero always, and especially after the time he saved someone from drowning at Morden Beach by swimming from the shore to rescue her. He had this heroic aura about him and I was so proud of him!

Both of my parents took great care of me, and since I was the last child left at home, they both had a lot more time for me. My mom took special care of me when I was sick by administering a battery of faithfully-prepared home remedies, such as mustard plaster for chest colds and "Familex" liniment mixed with milk and honey for stomach ailments. She made steam tents for chest congestion with a pot of hot water and eucalyptus oil and a blanket as the tent. All these concoctions consisted mainly of remedies or products my grandpa, Alex Heim, used to sell door-to-door. My mother, who loved music, always sang to me as a child and the song that would bring me to tears every time was "Poor Babes in the Woods" which she sang so tenderly and beautifully.

Although she knew how to care for us in those days, there was this one time she told me about bumblebees and that they didn't sting, or that's what I understood. Well, one fine summer day while "lurking" about in the front yard near the hollyhocks, I encountered this giant bumble bee flying from flower to flower gathering pollen. He looked so friendly, fuzzy and soft and I thought maybe I'd try ever so gently to pick him up and hold him, because they don't sting, right? Much to my horror and dismay, it stung me right on the thumb! I ran inside bawling like a new-born calf.

"You told me bees don't sting," I whimpered accusingly.

Mom quickly pressed my finger down on an ice cube until my finger was numb with cold and then she pricked out the stinger with a sterilized needle, just like that. She then gave me some fresh warm sugar cookies with milk and all was forgiven! She did tell me after I had calmed down that what she meant to say to me was, "Bees don't sting you unless you bother them or disturb their nests." Or, as in my case, try and pick them up and hold them!

My dad often took me with him on his many sales trips out in the country. I loved those road trips because we would usually stop somewhere along the way for soft ice cream or a burger at some chip stand. Or we might get cookies or cake at some farmer's house after he had made a deal on a new John Deere. I remember my dad as a person who could talk to just about anyone, whether they be someone like then-Premier Duff Roblin, John Diefenbaker or a farmer living in a humble house with a dirt floor. He taught me at a very young age that everyone, regardless of their station in life, deserved an equal portion of respect on first meeting. However, after that respect had to be earned based on character and integrity. Perhaps it was the greatest gift he ever gave to me. He had the gift of the gab and was well liked by many.

He also loved fishing and took us on summer weekend fishing trips. My Uncle Wally built this big wooden boat in the shop one winter as well as a trailer, and fishing trips in that boat were my very first memories of fishing. On those trips my dad would cook the fish and we loved it because he was very generous with the butter! For someone who loved to fish as much as he did, he wasn't exactly a great fisherman. He rarely caught anything, yet he was content to be out there away from it all. I used to rob his tackle box and it always seemed I'd catch a fish with one of the lures he told me never caught anything. As for cooking, there were only three things my dad could cook, one of them being fish. The other two were potato pancakes (his mother's recipe), which were really good, and scrambled eggs with crackles (*grieben*). My mom never cooked them, or potato pancakes, so it was always a treat when he cooked, which wasn't that often.

Both of my sets of grandparents lived only blocks from our house. Alex and Eleanora Heim lived just a half a block to the south of us. Alex Heim had moved to Canada from a town near the Black Sea: Nikolayev, Russia. He gained his skills as an apothecary after his family was killed and he was conscripted by the Red Army during the Russian Revolution, but he managed to desert and walk across Europe and take a steam-ship to Canada. Known as "Doktor Heim", he went farm to farm selling Familex and Watkins health products and remedies, first with a horse and buggy and later with a Model T Ford, always closing his sales with, "Muss noch glauben" – "you must now believe" in order for the remedy to work.

My grandma, Eleanora (Möbus) Heim, was raised in a convent by nuns, and later renounced Catholicism and turned to the Lutheran faith. She was a devout Christian in her ways and raised her six children accordingly. She also had a quick wit and a sense of humor. She possessed this incredibly infectious belly laugh that started from her toes and went all the way up to the top of her head. She would make everyone else laugh once she started laughing. She loved telling us the story of "Mrs. Schmidt", who became so constipated after eating too much Bothwell cheese that they had to use dynamite to relieve her – of course always followed with her earthshaking belly laugh.

Henry and Hanna Martel lived farther north up Main Street, just west of the school grounds. Henry was a hard-working though stern blacksmith and an enterprising entrepreneur. I was fascinated to watch him work, forging red-hot molten steel and then hammering and cooling the pieces as he took them in and out of the forge to temper them. I was in awe of his skill and the strength he had to do it all. He could

load a 45-gallon drum of diesel fuel on the back of a truck by himself! He did take us for rides out in the country or down Highway 14. He loved showing us where all the old roads once were and where the "old highway" #14 used to be. He started the John Deere dealership in Rosenfeld. His two sons, Walter and Oscar, worked with him and the business became H. Martel & Sons. When he passed away, my uncle and dad took over the business, eventually auctioning off his blacksmith equipment and relocating the business to Altona.

My grandma, Hanna (Schultz) Martel, was the ultimate homemaker, gardener and cook extraordinaire. Her garden was like a jungle, but it had the biggest and juiciest strawberries I have ever seen – and her vegetables and tomatoes were all so big and delicious. She cooked wonderful meals on her old oven and I can still remember her on Christmas Day giving orders like a little general in her tiny kitchen, cooking for about 30 people or more. She was famous for her roasted "yucy shicken" and her "sheeze cakes". When I came to visit, she always gave me a small packet of seeds, which she had collected from her best plants, labelled in half German and English – like "kreb aepfel". She was very kind to me and I loved staying over at their house and sleeping upstairs in the feather bed, with a feather blanket and pillows stuffed with "shicken feathers".

I attended school in Rosenfeld up to Grade 5 and Miss Sarah Janzen was my very first, and favorite teacher! Truth be told, I had a huge crush on her, and apparently a few others as well. She loved music and one day she took the whole class to Altona to sing live on-air in the CFAM radio station! We sang "Ich Bin der Doktor Eisenbardt" in German and she gave me the solo part – what a gig!

I walked to school with my dog Jake trotting beside me, sometimes catching a ride on my Uncle Otto Martel's horse-drawn wagon he delivered milk and cream with for the village. He used to talk in German to his horse in low tones. While carrying the milk and cream to doorsteps along the way, his horse would move ahead on its own and stop at the next house. He really loved that old horse!

Summers were endless and carefree with frequent trips on my bike to Buffalo Bush to catch whatever was lurking near or under the bridge, including garter snakes, toads, frogs, salamanders, bullheads and the odd jackfish left stranded in the pools after the spring run off. Buffalo Bush was teeming and humming with meadowlarks, killdeers, red- and yellow-winged blackbirds, ducks of all kinds, crickets, grasshoppers and frogs. It was a kid's paradise for me. In the village there was the pond

where we would go swimming and catch crayfish and frogs. I remember my brothers throwing me off the dock one day because we kids always muddied the water near shore, so that's how I first learned to swim. I'm pretty sure they would have saved me if I hadn't kicked my feet or flapped my arms around and made it back to the dock... or at least I'm pretty sure they would have?

The winters were cold but we didn't care because there was hockey on the outdoor rink and playing my accordion! I inherited my brother Doug's hockey skates, which were several sizes too big. Of course I skated on my ankles, even with three pairs of socks! When I showed up on the ice for the very first time with stick in hand, shuffling along on my ankles, I was told to get in the net and stay there, which I was quite happy to do. I never had a desire to play any other position after that, though. Inside the hockey shack, the red-hot pot-bellied stove hissed with steam from the ice on our skates we sloughed off and threw on it. There was this lingering smell of sweat and manure on the boots warming up near the stove. Some would come directly from doing barn chores to the rink wearing their work boots, which often were their only pair of boots. Despite the cold, we spent a lot of time playing hockey, skating or hanging out in the curling rink watching the older kids and adults curl.

My first 10 years were idyllic. I had both sets of grandparents within walking distance and my mom was always at home for me after school and my dad came home for supper. I had siblings who looked after me and cousins and uncles and aunts surrounding me. Everyone in the village knew me and I pretty much knew everyone. I was blessed to grow up there and for that, I'm forever grateful!

Bruce and his wife, Joanne, live in Naramata, BC. In retirement, he is enjoying fishing, wine-making, singing, acting, playing accordion and harmonica. He is a member of the Naramata Community Choir and Soundstage Productions, and still likes to go walking with his dog.

Federal and Provincial Governments

When Rosenfeld began as a small, traditional street village in 1875, it would have been governed according to the customs back in Russia, where each Mennonite village was managed by its own citizens; there was a mayor (schulze), secretary, teacher, cowherder, and fire insurance secretary. The larger Mennonite reserve was headed by an Obervorsteher – basically, a reeve. It was he who looked after the building and maintenance of roads and bridges and managed any affairs that pertained to the whole colony.

In 1880, the provincial government created counties and municipalities. Rosenfeld became part of the Municipality of Rhineland in the County of Manchester, and was governed, as it is today, by an elected reeve and council. Rhineland consisted of townships 1, 2, and 3, ranges 1, 2, 3, 4 west, and the eastern two tiers of sections in range 5 west. Three years later, however, Rhineland was deemed too big to handle, and the eastern half, including Rosenfeld, was divided off and given the name Douglas. In 1890, Douglas was eliminated, and Rosenfeld once again belonged to Rhineland.

Source

- Ens, Gerhard John. *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland: 1884-1984*. RM of Rhineland, 1994.

Federal Riding of Provencher

Early on, Rosenfeld fell into the federal riding of Lisgar. A 1901 map of federal ridings shows Rosenfeld at the eastern edge of Lisgar. Then, for a very long time, until the election of 1997, when it was redistributed into Portage-Lisgar, Rosenfeld belonged to the federal riding of Provencher. The Provencher electoral district was created in 1871 after Manitoba joined the Canadian Confederation in 1870. It is notable for being the district that elected Louis Riel to the House of Commons. The riding elected Liberal Party of Canada MPs from 1904-1957, but for the better part of the last half-century has been one of the more conservative ridings in Manitoba and all of Canada. Nevertheless, the riding has fallen to the Liberals at high-tide elections, such as from 1968-1972 and 1993-2000.

Author Tony L. Hill writes this about the Rosenfeld area when it was part of Provencher:

A peek at the map around Altona reveals not only a flurry of German names, but communities spaced much more closely than any towns along railroad tracks would be. Driving along the back roads, one can see huge stockpiles of hay and other commodities more resembling government warehousing than the output of isolated bonanza farms. The people of the riding share some of their family values with the communal and traditional Mennonites: the riding has the lowest percentage of single parents in Canada, seven percent.

The riding had been Liberal territory for most of the first half of the 20th century. Walter Jorgenson became the Tory MP in 1957, a year before the Diefenbaker sweep. The riding then went Tory in every election until 1993, except in 1968 when a Liberal beat Jorgenson, only to be beaten himself in the next election. (Typically,

the largely Francophone communities along the rivers – the Red, the Seine, the Rat, and the Winnipeg – have been kinder to the Liberals, while the overland Mennonite areas...have been better for right-of-centre parties.) That ascendant Tory in 1972 was Jake Epp. Epp stayed on for more than twenty years, becoming minister of health and welfare under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Canadian Politics, Riding by Riding
Tony L. Hill; Prospect Park Press, 2002
p. 326

Members of Parliament from Provencher

Parliament	Years	Member	Party
		Provencher	
1st	1871-1872	Pierre Delorme	Conservative
2nd	1872-1873	George-Étienne Cartier	Liberal-Conservative
2nd	1873-1874	Louis Riel	Independent
3rd	1874-1875	Louis Riel	Independent
3rd	1875-1878	Andrew Bannatyne	Liberal
4th	1878-1879	Joseph Dubuc	Conservative
4th	1879-1882	Joseph Royal	Conservative
5th	1882-1887	Joseph Royal	Conservative
6th	1887-1889	Joseph Royal	Conservative
6th	1889-1891	Alphonse Alfred Clément Larivière	Conservative
7th	1891-1896	Alphonse Alfred Clément Larivière	Conservative
8th	1896-1900	Alphonse Alfred Clément Larivière	Conservative
9th	1900-1904	Alphonse Alfred Clément Larivière	Conservative
10th	1904-1908	Joseph Ernest Cyr	Liberal
11th	1908-1911	John Patrick Molloy	Liberal
12th	1911-1917	John Patrick Molloy	Liberal
13th	1917-1921	John Patrick Molloy	Liberal
14th	1921-1925	Arthur-Lucien Beaubien	Liberal
15th	1925-1926	Arthur-Lucien Beaubien	Progressive
16th	1926-1930	Arthur-Lucien Beaubien	Liberal-Progressive
17th	1930-1935	Arthur-Lucien Beaubien	Liberal-Progressive
18th	1935-1940	Arthur-Lucien Beaubien	Liberal

Parliament	Years	Member	Party
		Provencher	
19th	1940-1945	René Jutras	Liberal
20th	1945-1949	René Jutras	Liberal
21st	1949-1953	René Jutras	Liberal
22nd	1953-1957	René Jutras	Liberal
23rd	1957-1958	Warner Jorgenson	Progressive Conservative
24th	1958-1962	Warner Jorgenson	Progressive Conservative
25th	1962-1963	Warner Jorgenson	Progressive Conservative
26th	1963-1965	Warner Jorgenson	Progressive Conservative
27th	1965-1968	Warner Jorgenson	Progressive Conservative
28th	1968-1972	Mark Smerchanski	Liberal
29th	1972-1974	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
30th	1974-1979	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
31st	1979-1980	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
32nd	1980-1984	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
33rd	1984-1988	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
34th	1988-1993	Jake Epp	Progressive Conservative
35th	1993-1997	David Iftody	Liberal

From en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provencher

Provincial Ridings of Rosenfeldt, Rhineland, and Emerson

In 1888, the provincial electoral district (riding) of Rosenfeldt comprised Townships one, two, and three in Ranges one and two West. The towns of Rosenfeld and Altona were in this provincial riding. The provincial riding of Rhineland was to the west. 1899 was the last election where Rosenfeldt was an electoral district. After that, the town of Rosenfeld, along with Altona, was absorbed into the Rhineland electoral district. In 1914, Rhineland became "Morden and Rhineland". In 1949, redistribution made new boundaries and the name reverted back to Rhineland. Jacob M. Froese, the last Social Credit MLA in Manitoba history, represented this riding from 1959 until 1973. In 1989, the provincial riding of Rhineland was eliminated altogether, and Rosenfeld was absorbed into the provincial riding of Emerson.

Provincial Representatives of Rosenfeldt Electoral District

Election	Political Party	Candidate Elected	Votes
Manitoba (July 11th, 1888)	Liberal Party of Manitoba	Enoch Winkler	106
Manitoba (July 23rd, 1892)	Government	Enoch Winkler	172
Manitoba (Jan. 15th, 1896)	Government	Enoch Winkler	170
Manitoba (Dec. 7th, 1899)	Independent Conservative	Wilhelm Hespeler	258

Political Party Name	Times	Seats Won	Candidates
Liberal Party of Manitoba	2	1	1
Government	2	2	1
Opposition	2	0	2
Undeclared/Unknown	1	0	1
Independent Conservative	1	1	1

Candidates

Wilhelm Hespeler
 E Penner
 C Pieper
 Enoch Winkler
canadianelectionsdatabase.ca

Provincial Representatives of Rhineland Electoral District

Name	Party	Took Office	Left Office
Valentine Winkler	Lib	1892	1914
Wallace Miller	PC	1949	1950
	Lib-Prog	1950	1959
Jacob Froese	Social Credit	1959	1973
Arnold Brown	PC	1973	1988
Jack Penner	PC	1988	1990

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhineland_\(electoral_district\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhineland_(electoral_district))

Provincial Representatives of Emerson

Name	Party	Took Office	Left Office
William Nash	Opposition/Conservative	1879	1880
Thomas Carney	Cons	1880	1883
Frederick Burnham	Lib	1883	1883
Charles Douglas	Cons	1883	1888
James Thomson	Lib	1888	1892
David McFadden	Cons	1892	1907

Name	Party	Took Office	Left Office
George Walton	Lib	1907	1910
David McFadden	Cons	1910	1915
John Baskerville	Lib	1915	1920
Dmytro Yakimischak	Farmer	1920	1922
	Independent	1922	1927
Robert Curran	Lib-Prog	1927	1932
	Lib-Prog	1932	1936
Herbert Wright	Independent/Liberal	1936	1941
John Solomon	Independent/Pro-Coalition	1941	1945
	Lib-Prog	1945	1953
	<i>Independent Liberal-Progressive</i>	1953	1957
John Tanchak	Lib-Prog	1957	1969
Gabriel Girard	PC	1969	1973
Steve Derewianchuk	NDP	1973	1977
Albert Driedger	PC	1977	1990
Jack Penner	PC	1990	2007
Cliff Graydon	PC	2007	present

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerson_\(electoral_district\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerson_(electoral_district))

Red River Valley Echo “Social Notes”

For many years, the Red River Valley Echo featured community news columns written by local reporters. Rosenfeldt’s social notes at one time were credited only to a “special correspondent,” most likely Gus Pokrant. Here is a selection from 1941...

Our local hockey team, the “Hawks” came home from the Altona Hockey Tournament with the convictions, that in order to have a good team, we must have a rink to practice on. Let’s keep this in mind for next winter, boys.

Electric lights have been installed in the Rüdnerweide Church recently.

The War Savings Drive has started and the local committee reports \$400 subscribed to date and many monthly pledges.

A large number of citizens and farmers availed themselves of the reduced [railway] fares to take a trip to Winnipeg during the week of Jan. 20th to Jan. 25th.

Since the highways have been blocked, the local cattle shippers have been very busy loading their stock by rail, and attracting many farmers from far and near to our little village.

On Thursday Feb. 6th, our hockey team "The Hawks" went to Altona and came out on the short end of an 8-5 score. Keep trying boys, you'll win sometime, someplace.

Mrs. J.P. Loewen and Mr. John H. Funk left for Winnipeg on Monday Feb. 10th, as two of four delegates representing eight Mennonite Congregations in Southern Manitoba. A total of \$1,700.00 has been donated by these churches for British Relief, and these delegates went to Winnipeg for the purpose of buying clothing and cloth, of which the ladies are asked to make baby clothes. In Rosenfeld, the Mennonite Ladies Sewing Circle has charge of materials.

Mr. Henry Pokrant brought home a new 1941 Dodge Truck from Winnipeg on Friday, June 14, 1941.

A group of about 12 friends visited Tony D. Funk at his school at Weidenfeld on Sunday, Feb. 16th. They went via bobsleigh, and after a tasty lunch, left for home.

Students of the Rosenfeld High School presented a program in the school auditorium on Friday night, Feb. 21st, under the able chairmanship of Mr. L.M. Flett. Two one-act comedy plays, "Deferred Proposal" and "Axing her Father", were very well rendered. Musical numbers, duets etc., helped to complete the program. About 150 people were present. Proceeds of the program went to the Red Cross.

Mrs. H. Gancher, our Hotelkeeper, has left for an extended visit to Ontario. She plans to be gone for two or three weeks. Mr. John Thiessen and wife are in charge of the hotel.

A group from the Altona High School presented a well-acted play at our local auditorium on May 2. Owing to the fact that it was not advertised in advance, very few were present, which was a pity because it really was very stimulating. Songs were also very well rendered. Edith Loewen who is attending high school in Altona had one of the main parts in the play entitled "The Laughing Cure." Proceeds of \$7.80 were donated to our local Red Cross. We are very thankful to the Altona group.

John C. Nickel started planting beets May 3rd. This is about 12 days earlier than last year.

Petitions are circulating to have the government construct a double dyke 3 miles north of Rosenfeld. Up to this spring, the majority of farmers were against this move, but the flood this spring changed their minds.

George Braun visited his parents here the weekend of Apr. 26. George is attending law school at Winnipeg.

The Altona Choir, under the able leadership of Rev. J.N. Hoepfner, rendered an Easter program in the local Rüdnerweider church, May 4th. The church was filled and a collection was taken in aid of the Altona Hospital. The choir consisted of about 60 voices, and they rendered their selections very well.

J.J. Loewen, our local drayman has been indisposed for a week, necessitating putting Wm. Lerch in his place.

Mr. John E. Nikkel took his young son, Edward, to the dentist at Altona on Monday, to have 7 teeth extracted.

The Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 4, 1940 (Page 9)

Sports' Day Nets \$78 For Red Cross

(Special to The Winnipeg Tribune)

GRETNA, July 4. — A total of \$78.88 was realized for the Red Cross from a July the First Sports' Day held at Schellenberg's farm, a mile northeast of town.

The following ball teams competed: Gretna, Winkler, Rosenfeld, Reinland, Silberfeld, Sommerfeld and Edenburg.

Edenburg team won the competition and turned the prize money back into the Red Cross fund.

The girls' ball tournament was won by Rosenfeld.

Brandon Daily Sun, March 19, 1908 (Page 1)

A BLAZE AT ROSENFELD

(Special to The Sun.)

Rosenfeld, March 19.—Fire broke out at ten o'clock this morning in the office and engine house of the Imperial Elevator Co. building here, destroying the office and furnishings. By splendid work the townsfolks succeeded in saving the elevator where much grain was in store.

Brandon Daily Sun, February 24, 1916 (Page 2)

PASSENGER TRAINS COLLIDE AT GRETNA

hour of the wreck, but the eastbound train is here awaiting a crew to remove the debris, which is blocking its passage to Winnipeg.

W. F. Lanigan Had Narrow Escape in Wreck on Canadian Pacific Wednesday

TO INCORPORATE RED CROSS

Ottawa, Feb. 24.—Sir Robert Borden has given notice of a bill to incorporate the Canadian Red Cross society. The bill will formally define the powers and scope of the society.

Rosenfeld, Man., Feb. 24.—The eastbound train on the Deloraine branch of the C.P.R. ran into the train running from Winnipeg to Gretna while entering the yards here Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock. The wreck was caused by a defective air brake on engine No. 478. The southbound train was hit near the front end of the third car, which was the last passenger car. This car was disconnected by the impact and derailed. The windows on the north side were shattered and the hind trucks were thrown off the car. The last car of the southbound train was the official coach of W. F. Lanigan, whose car was derailed and also badly smashed in the front end. The engine of the eastbound train had the cow-catcher and cylinder badly broken. No one was injured.

The south train left within half an

Flames Destroy Rosenfeld Hotel

No one was injured in the fire which early Thursday morning destroyed the Royal Hotel at Rosenfeld and all the contents.

Volunteer fire fighters from Altona were notified by the Altona RCMP detachment who happened to patrol along Highway 14 and noticed the fire at approximately 12:10 a.m.

Hotel owner Phil Pelletier, his wife and five children were forced out of the burning building just before mid-night.

There were no guests in the stucco frame building, which was composed of 11 upstairs rooms, living quarters downstairs, a beer parlour, a dining room, and a restaurant.

Witnesses reported that the fire was first seen on the south side of the hotel.

"I looked up, and saw the flames leaping out of the building," one observer, who was on the scene at about 12:15 a.m., stated.

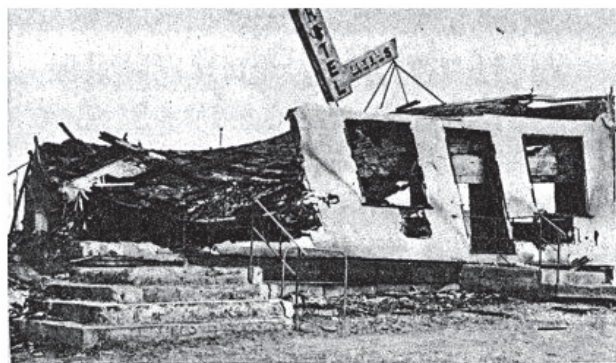
The Altona volunteer fire brigade arrived on the scene at 12:20 a.m. with 15 firemen, and began dousing the flaming building with water.

When they arrived, the south wall and roof were enveloped in flames. "It was difficult to get at the burning partitions inside," Fire Chief Ben K. Neufeld said.

The firemen were hampered by the lack of water and were forced to pump from the pond near the hotel. "We used about 75,000 to 100,000 gallons of water and took about 28 inches of water out of the pond." Mr. Neufeld said. They stayed at the scene until about 6:00 a.m. Thursday morning.

The hotel was reportedly covered by \$40,000 insurance but the total loss involved is not available.

The cause of the fire has not been determined but investigations are being conducted by both the Altona RCMP detachment and the Manitoba Fire Commissioners Office.



This is all that remains of the 11-room Rosenfeld Hotel which was destroyed by fire early Thursday morning. Cause of the fire is not known. (Echo photo)

The Winnipeg Evening Tribune, August 19, 1939 (Page 3)

Novice Burglars Overdo Their Act

MOST of the residents of Rosenfeld, Man., were awakened at 2:55 a.m. today by a loud explosion. Investigation showed it had been caused by a clumsy attempt to blow open a safe in the garage and service station of Peter Fehr.

The inexperienced cracksmen had used too much dynamite and the 1,600 pound safe, which contained no money, was blown to pieces, damaging the office in which it was located and blowing out the front door of the garage. The entire interior of the garage was scarred by pieces of flying steel.

The cracksmen, who apparently waited outside the garage for the dynamite to explode, fled empty handed.

Rosenfeld Farmer Fined For Remarks

[Special to The Winnipeg Tribune]

MORDEN, July 6.—Karl Braun, elderly Rosenfeld, Man., farmer, was found guilty and a neighbor, Karl Knopf, was committed to stand trial, by Magistrate C. C. Milne at the court house Friday afternoon under the defense of Canada regulations for making statements likely to cause dissatisfaction to His Majesty, the King.

Braun was fined \$50 and costs or one month in prison. Knopf was released under bond to await trial.

Charges were laid against both farmers by Lance Corporal R. D. Toews, Winnipeg detachment of the R.C.M.P., who investigated complaints against the men.

The crown was represented by A. MacAuley, K.C., Morden, crown prosecutor R. K. Finlayson, Winnipeg, acted for Knopf and A. Shaw Morris, for Braun.

Brandon Daily Sun, September 25, 1913 (Page 1)

CAUGHT IN SHAFTING: CLOTHES STRIPPED OFF

Rosenfeld, Man., Sept. 25.—A peculiar accident occurred to John Buhr, buyer for the Lake of the Woods Milling Company here. While he was working around the engine his clothes caught on a shaft. He was found lying unconscious on the floor in a nude condition. His clothing, a mass of rags, was hanging to the shaft. There were a few bad bruises on his head, arms and body, but otherwise Mr. Buhr was all right, and he is again moving around as usual. How he missed death is more than those at the mills can understand.

Built own post office EisBrenner in 31st year

• by Elmer Heinrichs

Past the age of 60 and with retirement in sight, Rosenfeld postmaster W.A. EisBrenner feels he's still "a spring chicken", and why shouldn't he? His father a resident of Rose Village Villa, will be celebrating his 90th birthday with a celebration in the Good Neighbour Centre November 17.

The postmaster has completed 30 years of service for Rosenfeld and community from his Main Street office building, one that he constructed the year prior to his appointment as postmaster, succeeding on October 1, 1923, then retiring postmaster Abram H. Funk.

"It was a political appointment," acknowledged a smiling EisBrenner. He had been aware of the impending appointment for about a year before it took place.

Built own office

So he constructed the small, squat 24x28 ft. building, modelled after the old Manitoba Telephone System building in Morden, for the post office, and that's where it's been ever since.

The office's 212 mail boxes have always been adequate. About 150 are now in use. From about 113 at the time when he started, Mr. EisBrenner watched them gradually rise to 160 a few years ago, but it has now dropped back because part of the population is transient.

And "we do bend the regulations a little in order to serve the public," says EisBrenner. Service is on a personal basis and included a little conversation with each stamp sold. And the "no loitering" signs in the lobby are often obstructed by neighbours conversing for a few minutes.



Rosenfeld postmaster, W.A. Eisbrenner

Rosenfeld, Gretna Split Double Header

GRETNA, Man., Feb. 17.—¹⁹³⁹ In a double-header between Rosenfeld Hawks and Gretna Canucks, Thursday, the local team won the afternoon game 1-0 and tied the night game 3-3. The teams are rivals in the local five-team league and the Canucks are now in the lead.

In the afternoon game Ed Falk scored for Gretna. The masterful net-minding of Latotzke kept Rosenfeld from scoring.

In the night game Lang put the Hawks ahead in the first session. In the second period Friesen equalized the count for the Canucks, but Enns, of Rosenfeld, by brilliant stick handling put his team ahead again. Ed Falk and M. Falk secured the other two counters for Gretna.

Lineups:
Rosenfeld Hawks — Neufeld, Funk, O. Martell, D. Nikkel, Streiner, Lang, W. Martell, H. Nikkel, Enns.

Gretna Canucks — Latotzke, M. Falk, Smith, N. Bachelor, Friesen, E. Falk, D. Bachelor, W. Falk, Loepky, Giesbrecht, Schuppert.

Continental Section, The Red River Valley Echo, Wed., Nov. 11, 1967

53 YEARS IN BUSINESS

1914 to 1967
John Deere Agency
SINCE 1917
(Fifty years with John Deere)



HENRY MARTEL
Founder



ROSENFELD — Martel's Blacksmith Shop in 1914 at left.

1926
The picture at left shows the first John Deere tractor — a 1926 2-speed Model D with spoke flywheel being demonstrated and sold as a result of this demonstration at the Kerl Knopf farm.



1937
A new shop in Rosenfeld and the John Deeres ride on rubber.




1947 — H. MARTEL & SONS LTD. Implement dealership and quonset storage building.

Half A Century and More . . .

Mr. Henry Martel started in business at Rosenfeld in 1914 operating a blacksmith shop. Soon thereafter he took on the John Deere agency and this year marks a half-century link between the Martels and John Deere farm equipment.

As the boys grew up, they worked in the business and the firm has been known as H. Martel & Sons since the early 1930s.

They found it advantageous to move their business to Altona in 1960 and the business has flourished.

Since 1922 they have successfully combined an Elephant Brand fertilizer franchise with their farm machinery business. They have been handling bulk fertilizer for two years and have just recently put into operation a vertical bulk blending plant (picture at left). Their four 4-ton spreaders and one 2-ton and the two 6-ton tenders are available for rent to the customer.



THE MARTEL BULK PLANT



WALTER MARTEL
General Manager



DON MARTEL
Parts Man



HENRY P. LOEPKY
Mechanic



A. FEHR
Mechanic



ART FUNK
Mechanic's Helper



OSCAR MARTEL
Sales Manager

H. Martel & Sons Ltd.

4th AVE. N.E. PHONE 324-5215 ALTONA



This is a description of a tradition that was apparently carried out in some of the communities surrounding Rosenfeld, having been brought here by immigrant families.

Braut Diener (Bride's Servant)

By Karl Pokrant

In the early twentieth century, wedding invitations were carried in person by a *braut diener* to the families' homes, who were on the invitation list. The family of the bride chose the *braut diener*.

Beribboned, and mounted on an eye-pleasing steed, also with beribboned mane and tail, and the rider holding tight the reins to make the steed trot proudly, the straight upright gentleman looked like a queen's horseman.

Entry into the home of the family to be guests was done in precise protocol, and with properly memorized script, and with great decorum. The presentation of the oral invitation, on behalf of the bride, was presented. Greetings were exchanged, and the host replied with a glass of beverage, and a "prosit". The *braut diener* would speak in a solicitous voice, telling the prospective guests how honored the bride would be to have the guests at the wedding. The script, and the procedure of the invitation, was laid out...similar to an actor's script, complete with directions for acting to suit the occasion. The scripts were handed down from generation to generation. Indeed, the *braut diener* was the "star" for a week or so prior to the wedding, and at the bride's presentation after midnight at the wedding reception. The invitation included the church and home reception.

With expressions of pleasure on both sides, the *braut diener* would formally bid goodbye, sometimes singing a little happy wedding hi-lee-hi-lo, and mounting his steed, proceed to the next family. The script and acting during the time of an invitation was a rival to a Broadway show. The invitation was in fact a pleading request to the guest, to honour the bride, and to accept the request. The schnapps at each home raised the blood-alcohol level of the diener, often endangering his own safety.

For winter weddings, the diener would travel by horse and cutter, and he would be bundled up in heavy fur-lined blankets, scarf and over-the-ears cap. It did happen that the cozy warmth of the clothes would put the diener into a half slumber by the alcohol. Funny incidents could be related which embarrassed the "ambassador-gentleman's" self control.

With the emergence of the automobile, the diener would ride around in a Model T Ford, the peasant's car. One diener came along a high road, and as he approached a bridge over a deep ditch, a load of hay

Original documents for the Acheson School District have surfaced. They were first rescued in 1948, but have now been given to the archives.

Greg Vandermeulen
The Red River Valley Echo

The Altona & District Heritage Centre has a brand new, but very old treasure, thanks to former Rosenfeld resident Martin Friesen.

The first minute book of the Acheson School District (which

later became Rosenfeld) was presented to archivist Al Schmidt.

He said the minutes are one of a kind, something that simply could not be replaced without the originals.

"This is exactly the stuff that shouldn't get lost," he said. "We're interested in any one of a kind historical documents."

The book is still easily read, although some of the minutes are written in High German in Gothic script.

The book includes minutes from 1893 to 1918.

It was actually saved more than 60 years ago by Friesen.

He found the book in an abandoned building in Rosenfeld in 1948.

Schmidt said anyone who has original historical documents can give him a call at 324-5442.

was coming from the opposite direction, and the diener, a bit tipsy, threw up his arms and kicked up his feet to greet the friend driving the team and load of hay, and the diener's Ford side-swiped the load of hay. The Ford jumped the railing of the bridge and dove down, landing belly-up in the soggy, shallow, water surface. He had catapulted into the back seat, and when the friend halted his team to go down to see how the diener had fared, he heard the diener grumbling that he could not find the switch to stop the engine. Of course, he was in the back seat, and didn't realize there would be no switch there. The friend reached in, stopped the motor, and helped the diener out, and with a few more passers-by helping, he was put back in his car and on the road. Such incident sobered up the diener with a bit of a scare.

Other dieners were thrown off the horse when a horse balked, frightened by a high speeding, roaring automobile. Not all horses liked automobiles. The diener would then have to walk, deeply humiliated, until he reached the next home where he would be provided with another horse.

At the church marriage ceremony, the braut diener had no part. For the home banquet and reception, the diener would again put on his ribbons. He would walk around the crowd, pouring drinks. After hours of merry-making and dancing, a halt was called. The diener took charge of the presentations to the bride. The married couple would be seated at a small table in the center of the dance floor with the diener standing by. A strict procedure was followed. The diener would formally call for order, then he would recite a series of admonitions to the young couple, always including those pertaining to being fruitful and multiplying.

The diener would call to the musician, "First auf Musikant," asking for a brief few bars of peppy music, to which the diener would step a circle or two, like one swings in a square dance. Again, halt. Now he would make pleading requests: "For the first time, I humbly ask you," addressing the Matron of Honor. "For the second time, I humbly ask you." "For the third time, I humbly ask you." She would then come forward and dance a bar or two with the diener. Following that, he would ask for the bride's mother and dance a step or two. This procedure would continue with each of the three bridesmaids.

After that the diener would instruct the bridesmaids to bring the males to dance around the table and make their cash gifts on a plate. Then the best men would be requested to bring all the women to the presentation. Each partner that the bridesmaids or best men brought would receive a small glass of wine and a piece of wedding cake. The older guests, many of whom could not dance at all, would simply

walk around the table with the bridesmaid, make their donation, drink the wine and then be escorted back to their seats. When all the guests had made presentations, the general music and dance resumed. The diener would continue to spread hospitality to the people. Photo taking was limited, but the diener appeared on pictures with the matron or the bridal couple.

P.S. Presentations had to reflect the state of wealth of the donor, and rivalries became like bidding at an auction. Men got the dickens from their wives when they showed off by giving too much money.

P.P.S. The diener rode on the buggy carrying the bride and a shotgun. The driver was ordered to leave church first and to prevent any other team from overtaking him. It was considered bad luck. A shotgun blast would be given triumphantly if they succeeded in arriving home first.

Rosenfeld Surveyors

Bob Derksen: In the early 1950s, the Manitoba government saw the need to construct a system of drainage channels in southern Manitoba to confine flood waters coming down from the Pembina escarpment. Rosenfeld experienced these floods. The province sent a surveyor to southern Manitoba to do the required surveys for the proper construction of these drainage channels. His name was Henry Wiebe from Winnipeg. Mr. Wiebe hired Clifford Pokrant of Rosenfeld to assist in doing the required survey work. In turn, Cliff hired directly or indirectly the following personnel from the Rosenfeld area: Edwin Nikkel (Pickle), Jake Friesen, Art Shimonek, Art Kletke, John Warkentine, Johnny Sommer, Henry Thiessen (Trico), Edgar Schroeder, Adolf Kletke, Ron Martin, Gordon Martin, Martin Friesen, and Cecil Brown (whose father was a section foreman for CPR). Larry Harder, Dwight Friesen, Richard Martel, Abe Friesen, Henry Teichroeb and Bob Derksen also were surveyors, but surveyed for the Highways department. Additional people from Altona and Horndean also worked as surveyors as a result of this activity. Many of the above made a life career of this work. During my research for this article I discovered that Henry Wiebe was a great-uncle to Larry Harder.



Album F



Rosenfeld Ladies Aid on an outing at the P.D. Berg farm (date unknown, probably 1930s). The mode of transportation pictured – a wagon box that was normally mounted on wheels in summer – was commonly called a bobsleigh. [Wesley Berg]



Rosenfeld Ladies' Sewing Circle (*Nähverein*), 1956. Front to back: Sarah (Mrs. John S.) Klassen, Mrs. Kroeker (?), Mary Warkentin, Mrs. J.C. Dyck, Mrs. Kehler, Barbara Derksen. [Bob Derksen]



Rosenfeld *Nähverein*, possibly in the 1960s. L-R: Sarah (Mrs. John S.) Klassen; Dora (Mrs. John) Doell, Horndean; [unknown]; Lena (Mrs. David L.) Hildebrand; Barbara (Mrs. David) Derksen; possibly Elizabeth (Mrs. David) Paetkau; possibly Mrs. John Heinrichs (first name unknown); Mary (Mrs. David) Warkentin; Elizabeth (Mrs. Jacob P.) Kroeker; possibly Anne (Mrs. Abram J.) Froese; Elizabeth (Mrs. Peter D.) Berg. [Judy Fehr] According to Maureen Klassen Stoneham, daughter of Sarah Klassen: *The ladies group rotated between each other's homes for devotion. They read scriptures, sang hymns, quilted (for projects), did embroidery, and of course had faspa, prepared by the hostess, before they closed their meeting.*



People who donated to the new Rosenfeld curling rink in 1950. L-R: Henry Martel (blacksmith), a Mr. Whitewell (CPR station manager), Karl Knopf (farmer) with his favourite White Owl cigar, and the fourth man is unidentified. [Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke]



In the Rosenfeld curling rink. Standing, L-R: Oscar Martel (John Deere dealership); John Reimer (Beaver Lumber agent); Albert Schroeder (farmer/construction). Kneeling, L-R: George Wilson (Rosenfeld hotel manager); Arnold Schroeder (farmer). [Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke]



Thiessen Transportation Trophy Winners 1955/56. L-R: Bob Derksen, Ken Klassen, Johnny Sommer, Gail Martel. [Altona Echo]



At the Granite Rink Curling Club in Winnipeg during the 1954 Manitoba High School curling championships – winners of the 3rd event. Standing, L-R: Leonard Pokrant, third; Oscar Martel, coach; Hank Fast, skip. Kneeling: Dennis Martel, lead; Bob Derksen, second. [Ron Thiessen]



Rosenfeld Hawks baseball team, c. 1933, after winning first place at the La Riviere tournament. Back row, L-R : Pete Thiessen, third base; Bill Enns, pitcher and fielder; Johnny Thiessen, fielder; Louis Pokrant, shortstop; Abe Funk, first base; Ralph McDonald, fielder. Front row, L-R: Abe Neufeld, catcher; Wally Martel, fielder; Johnny Kehler, pitcher or second base; Oscar Martel, fielder; Pete Neufeld, coach and shortstop; Abe J. Thiessen, general manager and factotum. The building in the background is a lumberyard run by Peter Kehler. [Wally and Bonnie Martel collection]



Rosenfeld Hawks hockey team, 1938-39 season. Back row, L-R: Dave Nikkel, Herman Nikkel, Abe Nikkel, Hank Enns, Bill Enns. Front row, L-R: Oscar Martel, Art Enns, goalie Abe Neufeld, Wally Martel, August Lang. [Wesley Berg]



1945 Rosenfeld Hawks hockey team. Back row, L-R: Ernie Recksiedler, Eddie Recksiedler, Dave Nickel, Pete Derksen, Bill Enns, Ervin "Ply" Pluchinski, Wallie Pokrant. Front row, L-R: Harold Giesbrecht, August Lang, Art Klassen, Eddie Klassen, Herman Nickel. [Photo: Kay (Wiebe) Lang (wife of August); hockey player's names: Helmut Martel]



Rosenfeld Hawks in the late 1940s. Back row, L-R: Ernie Recksiedler, Wally Martel, Arnold Pokrant, Bill Enns, Eddie Recksiedler, Abe Enns, Abe Neufeld. Front row, L-R: Ervin "Ply" Pluchinske, Harold Giesbrecht, Eddie Neufeld, (unidentified), Helmut Martel. [Lorraine (Martel) Pokrant]



Reichenbach hockey team, arrow pointing to Peter Berg (date unknown). [Wesley Berg]



One of the 1940s floods, Main Street, Rosenfeld. Roy Pokrant and his brother Gus are in the buggy parked in front of the Hintz-Krivak-Nikkel store. [Roy Pokrant]



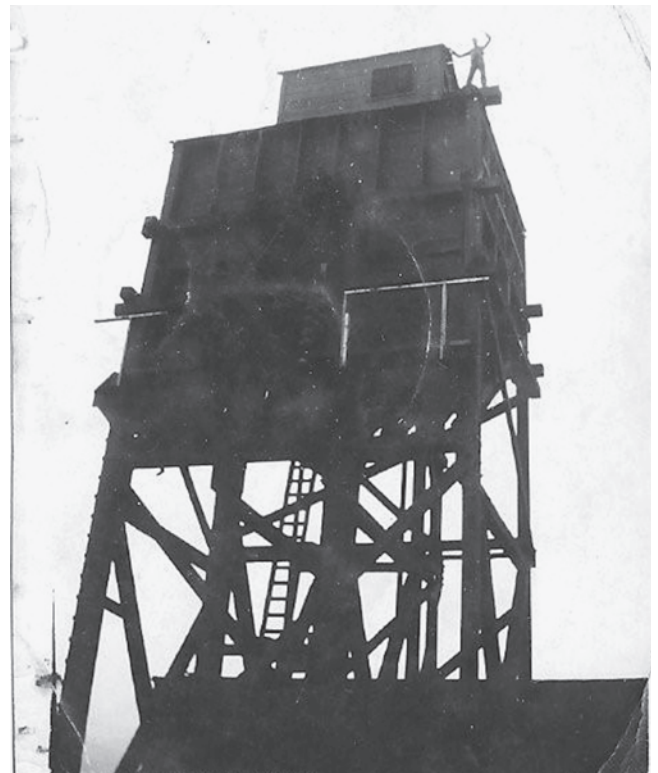
The best mode of transportation in a flood – gathering at 2nd Ave. and Main St., 1942. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



Ride-sharing, Rosenfeld-style, 1942. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



Unknown rider racing through the floodwaters on Main St. [Les Dueck/Carole Falk]



April 29, 1945 – The Rosenfeld coal dock was situated at the Y near the railway track so the westbound and northbound trains could take on coal and water here. John Funk, known as “Coal Dock” Funk, looked after this and may be the man on the photograph. [Jacob Kroeker]



Otto Martel's milk delivery wagon. Erica Martel: *We believe this is the original Rosenfeld transit bus. This particular day, Dad was enjoying giving many village children a ride. Two of the passengers were my brother Roy (in the stripey shirt), and in front of him is Donald Martel. We could not identify the other passengers.* [Roy Martel]



The old town pump on Main Street. It was finally removed in 1979 when improvements were made to Hwy. 332 through town, and a curb was placed on the east side of the street. [Wendy (Lang) Thiessen]



Locomotive coming through town in the 1940s; next stop: Altona. [Ray Funk] Ray himself worked for CN for many years, in Saskatchewan first, later in B.C. Not liking the mountains, he returned to the prairies when he retired, where he felt at home.



1947 Winter Carnival. The "monarchy" that year consisted of: Queen – Betty Braun (later married to Harold Giesbrecht); 1st princess – Doris Heim (later married to Oscar Martel); 2nd princess – Dorothy Pokrant (later married to Fred Rudy). Might the men in the photo have participated in a beard-growing contest that winter? [Lorraine Pokrant]



Passenger service was common for many decades, and continued until 1969. [Ray Funk]



The Mennonite emigration to Paraguay, 1948. A.J. Thiessen of Thiessen Bus Lines organized a trip to Montreal for locals to see the emigrants off on the S.S. *Vollendam*. Peter G. Buhler of Amsterdam was on that trip and had high praise for how the bus trip had been planned and conducted. [Paul Reimer]



Jacob Kroeker's 1927 Overland Whippet, made by Whilly's Overland, powered with a 4-cylinder Jeep engine. *I last saw that Whippet in 1965 when Granddad hauled it out of the barn with his 1952 Pontiac. Three generations appreciated that car: Granddad Jacob, his son Isaac, and me, the 15-year-old grandson.* [Wayne Kroeker]



Neil Friesen's brother Abe, Bill Klassen, and Bill Kroeker enjoying a wiener roast near Roseville school, south of Rosenfeld. [Neil Friesen]



April 1959, Bob Derksen, son of David and Barbara, in his 1955 Plymouth, heading south out of town; Elmer Hildebrand of CFAM was the original owner of the car. [Bob Derksen] (Note "Coal Dock" Funk's house at the corner, with its enclosed veranda and the two chimneys.)



1986: John Warkentin and Laurie Schroeder, members of the UVD of Rosenfeld committee, presenting Wally Eisbrenner with a plaque in recognition of his many years of service as postmaster. [Terry Eisbrenner]



Grant Nickel, son of John J. and Helen, 1958. [Bob Derksen]



John T. Nickel, garbage collector from c. 1972-1995. [Annie Nickel]



An aerial photo actually taken from an airplane instead of a grain elevator! Rosenfeld looking towards the southwest, 1952. [Phyllis (Penner) Giesbrecht]

Rosenfeld Had A Bank?!

The June 1910 survey map of the Village of Rosenfeld shows the Bank of Montreal located at the southeast corner of Alexander Avenue and Main Street (north of the present-day Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre). The Bank of Montreal is also referred to in the book, *Who's That Sitting in Our Family Tree?* (page 57). "... the youngest Acheson, Sandy, began his lifetime career in the small Bank of Montreal in Rosenfeld, and later was promoted to the larger bank in nearby Altona. In those days the main requirement for a start in a bank was to be able to add long columns of figures accurately and to have good penmanship."

Yolaine Toussaint, Corporate Archivist (BMOFG): Branches listed in the early annual reports of the bank confirm that [the Bank of Montreal] had a branch in Rosenfeld, MB, between the period of 1906 and 1911. The 1910 CPR Survey does confirm that we had a branch in Rosenfeld during that time period, and the location of it. We have very little information about the bank in Rosenfeld. This is probably because of its short life. I can confirm that the Bank of Hamilton opened a branch there in September 1919. This branch closed in January 1922.

Jill ten Cate, CIBC Corporate Archivist and Fine Art Coordinator: The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce opened a subagency to its Altona branch in Rosenfeld on June 19, 1925. It was open on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week. It would have had the same manager as the Altona branch, L.C. Bitzer, for the few years it was open. This subagency closed on January 11, 1928.



Railway Station

Jo-Anne Colby, CP archives: Our records show that a western-type depot was constructed in Rosenfeld in 1890, possibly to replace a car body or portable station that was there. In 1900 CP built a section house, tool house and bunkhouse. The coal docks were added in 1910, and improved upon in 1925. Unfortunately CP Archives does not have any photographs taken at this location.

The Daily Train

Angela Funk Plett: I recall my dad Peter talking about helping Uncle Abe at the post office, and one of the things he did was to "catch" the mailbag as the train came through Rosenfeld. The train brought the mail from Winnipeg. If the mail bag landed wrong, the mail might have scattered and our dad would have been the one to pick it up! My brother Ray and I believe the bag with the outgoing mail was put on a big hook that the train would catch as it went by. Ray estimated the speed of the train would be quite slow, five to ten mph. I remember when I was in Grade 1 in 1969 that our class walked to the train station to take a tour of the passenger train at the Rosenfeld station. The reason we took the class trip was because passenger service was being discontinued and this was the last passenger train to go through Rosenfeld. I remember the dining car. The tables were set with dishes.



Counterfeiters?!

Jim Benedict: Farmers bringing their farm and garden produce to the Acheson store in the very early 1900s received "Acheson currency" in exchange, so it would be re-spent there and not at the competing Stewart's General Store. When Stewart's complained that the Acheson store was minting its own money, a federal inspector came out and ordered the practice stopped.

Farmer's Market

Rev. David F. Friesen: During the Rosenfeld train station years there usually was a layover of one to two hours between the trains coming out of the west and heading to Winnipeg. During this time interval people living in Rosenfeld and surrounding farmers would bring their various wares to sell and or trade with the passengers heading back to Winnipeg.

Artists of the Rosenfeld Region

Luther Pokrant currently lives in Winnipeg. He was born in Rosenfeld in 1947 and lived there until 1965. He attended art school at University of Manitoba and New Mexico. He works primarily as a painter in acrylic and oil, and as an illustrator in various media. He is inspired by the natural beauty of Manitoba's lakes and forests, reflected in colourful landscapes and water lily paintings. He has exhibited extensively, and his work is included in many private and corporate collections. He is represented in Winnipeg by Mayberry Fine Art and by Assiniboia Gallery in Regina.

Barb Wiebe lives with her husband Don on a 10-acre farmyard that once belonged to the Klassen family, just southwest of Rosenfeld. They have renovated the tin-sided barn into a studio, with a working space on the main floor and a gallery and shop in the loft. Barb works with clay, producing wheel-thrown and hand-built pieces. They are either high-fired in a gas kiln, or raku-fired for a decorative look. She finds inspiration in the very mundane and ordinary that she sees all around her. Barb has shown her pottery in galleries in Winnipeg, but mainly in the Gallery in the Park in Altona, and welcomes guests from all over Manitoba to visit her studio during the annual Pembina Valley Studio Tour. Barb says, "I have always loved to create, and clay responds to human touch like nothing else. It represents my vision and spirit and reflects my moods and experiences."

Elizabeth Falk first identified as an artist at the Roseville School. Continuing to explore various forms of art throughout her life, she studied Floriculture and Textile Design at Olds College, AB. In 1994, she exhibited her floral designs at the Manitoba Legislature. As a grandmother living at the site of the former village of Rosenfeld, she painted "Dancing Trees". She found her medium of choice when she joined a fibre arts guild: assembling used clothing and jewellery with found materials. In 2018, her work was exhibited at Gallery in the Park, Altona, in collaboration with artist Margruite Krahn of Neubergthal.

Tony Friesen was born and raised in Reichenbach SD. He farmed with his father, David D. Friesen, one mile west of Rosenfeld, and also developed his own tree farm further west in the Winkler area. Tony's hobby was painting – mostly landscapes that often featured wildlife, although he painted portraits as well, and did some political cartooning. He found inspiration in the natural world surrounding him, his travels, and fishing trips to Whiteshell Provincial Park. He spent a few winters in Victoria, BC, where he found new perspectives and new inspiration. Although he never formally exhibited his work, it continues to reside in the homes of his family and friends. Tony died in 2001.

Eva "Bonnie" Martel grew up in Rosenfeld, married a local, and raised her family there. Besides being the mother of seven, she was a schoolteacher and also helped in the John Deere business owned by her and her husband, Wally. In later life, she took up painting, mostly in watercolours, studying with various instructors in the local community. Bonnie participated in art shows in Altona and Winnipeg. She died in 1999. Her work now graces the homes of her children.

Gail Sawatzky is presently living in Weidenfeld with her husband John, where they farm together with their daughter Joni. Rosenfeld played a key role in their lives by providing an education at the elementary school for Joni. It is also where they attended the Rosenfeld Berghaler Church. Gail remembers delivering her first load of grain to the Rosenfeld elevators. As an artist Gail works primarily in acrylics. The ever-changing prairie landscape provides endless inspiration with a new vibrant color palette ushered in with each new season. Gail has participated in exhibits in the Gallery in the Park, Altona; Centennial Concert Hall; Manitoba Legislature; and various galleries in Winnipeg, throughout Manitoba and beyond. Gail's paintings are held in private and corporate collections across North America and Europe. www.gailsawatzky.com

Dave Wolfe presently lives in Rosenfeld and his connection to the village is the fact that he met his wife Tina (Friesen) of Rosenfeld, and has lived here since they married in 1968. He carves different woods and animal horn. The painting is done by hand brush and airbrush using acrylic paints. He's been a birdwatcher his whole life and loves the outdoors. His work has been on display at the Prairie Canada Carving Show held in Winnipeg every spring.

Anna Elias came originally from Reinfeld, MB, but moved to Roseville SD after marrying woodworker Jake Elias. They lived on a park-like acreage very near the site of Dorf Rosenfeld. This picturesque setting was to provide most of the inspiration for her art, which she plied in a studio converted from an old chicken coop. Anna and Jake also loved to rove the countryside looking for subjects for the camera and paintbrush. Although mostly self-taught, she worked hard to improve her skills, using various mediums to create a large collection of paintings. Anna was a member of the Manitoba Society of Artists. She exhibited her work in many local shows, as well as at the conservatory in Assiniboine Park, the Manitoba Legislature, and the Mennonite Heritage Village. She died in 2006. annaelias.org



Luther Pokrant: "Bell Bottom Blues", 2015. Oil on canvas, 50in.x30in.



Still you are my flesh and blood, and carry on the name. It is something to be the father of a good young soldier. Can't you see why I care so much about you, and why all that you do concerns me so closely? Still, let us both take heart of hope and faith. The link between father and son is not only of the perishable flesh: it must have something of *aeternitas* about it. There is a place called 'heaven' where the good here unfinished is completed; and where the stories unwritten, and the hopes unfulfilled, are continued. We may laugh together yet . . .

JRR Tolkien

Letter to Michael Tolkien while an Officers Cadet at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst
9 June 1941

Elizabeth Falk: "Betrayal", c. 2013. Mixed media collage, 19in.x23in., featuring a print of Warner Sallman's "Christ in the Garden," a Christmas gift from Rosenfeld Sunday School.



Barb Wiebe: Pottery array.



Tony Friesen: Acrylic. (No other information available.)



Eva "Bonnie" Martel: Watercolour. (No other information available.)



Gail Sawatzky: "Portrait of a Sunflower", 2010. Acrylic on canvas, 24in.x18in.



Anna Elias: Whitethroats, v.2, 1999. Watercolour.



Dave Wolfe: Wood carving of a male eared grebe.

Chapter VI



Early Families



Art Wiebe

Album G



Cousins, c. 1924: Smaller boy on right – Alfred Abraham; older boy on right – Edmund Abraham; smaller boy on left – Henry Bobert; older boy on left – “mystery boy”. [Darlene (Abraham) Hafso]



Acheson family picnic in Rosenfeld, 1908 – Emil “Rusey” Weber (in bowler hat) and Sadie Acheson in back (they married in Rosenfeld in December, 1909). The three Achesons on the right in the front row are: Maudie (holding the dog, Spot); to Maudie’s left, Gertie (after whom Gertie Avenue was named); to Gertie’s left, Sandy (Alexander), who worked in the Bank of Montreal in Rosenfeld until he was promoted to the larger bank in nearby Altona. Couple on the far left of the photo unknown. [Jim Benedict, from Winifred Benedict’s inscription on the back of the photo] Location of this picture is most likely what was known in the early 1900s as Smith’s Bush, or Rosenfeld Bush.



C.C. Fehr home on Main St. [Doreen Loewen and Barbara Marie Toews]



C.C. Fehr and sons Henry, Jake and Peter. This building was located where you now find Martel’s Garage. The sign over the door above the car reads: *Hudson, Essex*; the sign over the door where Mr. Fehr is standing reads: *Canada Permanent Mortgage Corporation*; the sign held by C.C. Fehr states: *Notice: If your car is sick bring in and let me cure it.* [Barbara Marie Toews]



Abram J.H. Funk's house in Rosenfeld. L-R: Edna Siemens' uncle, Henry Funk; her Grandpa and Grandma Abram and Anna (Harder) Funk; her mother, Helena Funk, age 16, before she was married. [Edna Siemens] Note the fence around the property. According to Helmut Martel, the purpose of such fences was two-fold: to keep the free-ranging chickens in the yard, and to keep the cows out of the garden when the village herdsman took them to Buffalo Creek each morning and back again in the evening. [Edna Siemens]



Aganetha (Hiebert) Funk in traditional Mennonite clothing. [Edna Siemens]



Jacob N. Funk (1851-1933) and his wife, Aganetha (Hiebert) Funk (1853-1939) in front of their home in Rosenfeld. [Submitted by great-granddaughter Edna Siemens, from her grandmother Anna (Harder) Funk's collection]



At the Knopf farm, c. 1917. Standing, L-R: Mrs. Karl Knopf, Amelia Kletke, child in front of her is daughter Martha, Mrs. Gottfried Schroeder, Gottfried Schroeder, their daughter Bertha, Wilhelmina Schwark, August Schwark, Mrs. Behrant; in the chair is Karoline Schroeder. Kneeling, L-R: Rudolf Ganske, Albert Schroeder, Roy Schroeder. Janet (Mazinke) Reimer: *I wonder if my Aunt Martha ever thought at that time that the little boy in the picture with her would one day be her husband.*

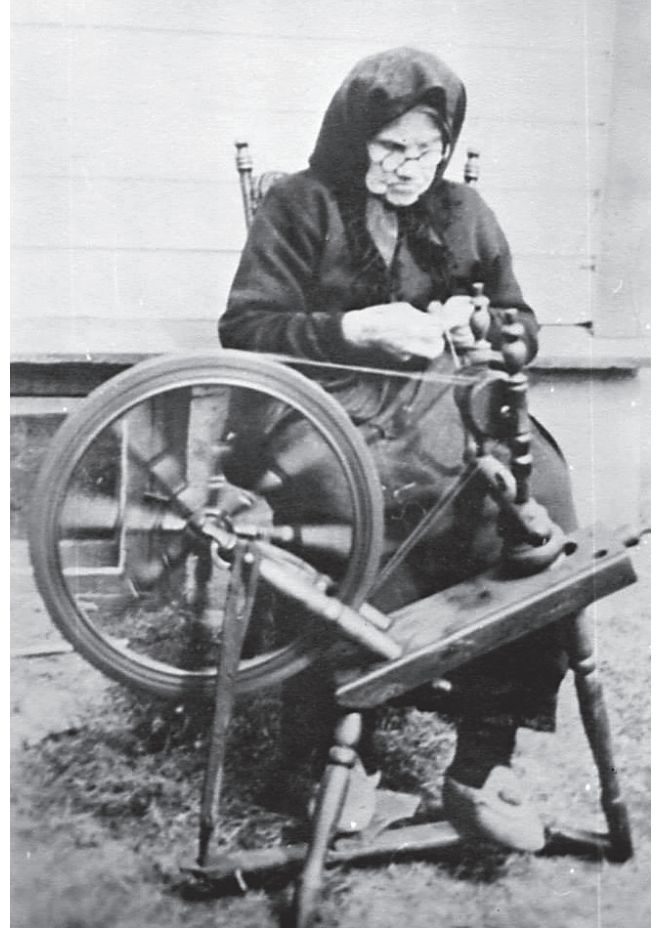


Clara (Funk) Phelps, daughter of "Coal Dock" and Aganetha (Wiebe) Funk, on her 100th birthday in 2014. Her daughter Sylvia Holloway says: *We took over ten pictures and she was bent forward, but finally my brother James Phelps came up behind and talked to her. She wondered why he was behind her, and she looked up to see, and we got the picture with her head up.*



CHRISTIAN KLETKE BUILT THIS HOME FOR WIFE ANNA KESLING AND THEIR NINE CHILDREN, IN 1900 NORTH EAST OF ROSENFELD, MB
SOUTH HALF OF SECTION 24-3-1W
THE STRUCTURE WAS 32' x 52' LIVING QUARTERS AT ONE END, ADJOINING ROOM & BARN.

[Kathy Connor]



Elizabeth (Hiebert) Kroeker, wife of Jacob Peter Kroeker, at her spinning wheel, date unknown. [Wayne Kroeker]



Judy Fehr: *I believe this photo was taken at the Knopf home when my grandparents were already living there – late 30s or early 40s. From left they are my grandfather David Thiessen; his brother-in-law Jacob Loewen; his father-in-law Johann Loewen. Jacob and Johann Loewen both lived on Railway Ave. Jacob, with his horses Sadie and Jessie, was the drayman in Rosenfeld.*



Johann and Helena (Friesen) Loewen farmed near Rosenfeld on SW 14-3-1 W. By the 1921 Census, Johann was living on Railway Avenue in Rosenfeld and was a labourer doing odd jobs with an annual income of \$950. Soon after his wife died, Johann married Helena (Arnds) Hiebert. [Judy Fehr]



Henry and Albertina Pokrant on their farm north of Rosenfeld, parents to Roy. [Roy Pokrant]



David and Margaret (Loewen) Thiessen lived on Gertie Street in Rosenfeld, having moved into the home in 1943 to care for David's mother, Susana Thiessen. They continued living there through the 1950s. David was a mechanic and worked for Karl Knopf on the farm, and later for his nephew A. J. Thiessen, maintaining his trucks and buses. David died in 1959 and Margaret moved out of the home in 1962 when she married her next-door neighbour, Derk Wiebe. [Judy Fehr]



G17. Anna and Derk Wiebe of Reichenbach. [Paul Reimer]



Amsterdam School students, c. 1905. Judy Fehr: *My grandfather David Thiessen is the one with the black mark. He was born May 27, 1895.*



1955 postcard of Rosenfeld. [Terry Eisbrenner/George Fast, Jr.] 1) H. Martel and Sons 2) CP railway station 3) Royal Hotel 4) Coronation School 5) Wonnick barbershop 6) cemetery 7) Bergthaler Church 8) Rüdnerweider Church 9) curling rink 10) Dan Lilke garage 11) Schroeder Construction 12) Ogilvie elevator 13) CPR snow fencing 14) coal dock 15) Imperial elevator 16) Beaver Lumber 17) Lutheran Church 18) Esso bulk oil 19) stockyards 20) Julius Martel garage 21) telephone exchange 22) beet loader

Love Of Education

Darlene Hafso: I attended the [Rosenfeld] school from 1960-1968 (Grades 1-8). Then we were bused to W. C. Miller Collegiate for Grades 9-12. I remember the smell of the dark hardwood floors, especially when playing pick-up sticks with my friends at “indoor” recess. I have so many good memories of this school. Mr. Herman Kuhl organized a Halloween party in the school auditorium for our Grade 8 class in Year 1967/68. My mom made me a “witch’s costume” using orange and black crepe paper purchased from Dyck’s store. My love of education was fostered in our little Rosenfeld School.



Rev. Jacob and Tina Unrau House

Susan Harder: There was a row of bushes along the north side of the garden. Me and Norma Harder were at Norma’s grandparents house and we were sitting along the bushes eyeing the strawberries (we were only about 8 or 9) and we were accused of taking some, but we didn’t...not that we weren’t tempted!! The Unraus always had a wonderful garden.

Rosenfeld Flour

Art Wiebe: Harvey Bergen shared an interesting story regarding his dad, Abram D. Bergen (born in 1908), who lived seven miles west of Altona on Hwy #201. Every fall his dad would travel all the way to Rosenfeld to purchase the family’s yearly supply of flour. Rosenfeld seemed to be the place of choice to purchase flour. Interesting, when Gretna and Altona would have been so much closer.

Too Many Garages In Rosenfeld?

Anton Schellenberg (from his "Reflections", 1992): Now, Mr. David Enns, a local grain buyer at that time, had a growing family of six boys and some girls. The Enns family, by the way, was also musically inclined. John Conrad from Wpg. at one time came down there and gave violin lessons.... Mr. Enns estimated he needed work for his boys. So in the spring, in April of 1938 he came to our yard on the farm and offered me a deal. He would borrow me a second-hand car on terms that I would come build a garage for him. This offer I accepted, and in about two months later, Garage No. 3 was open for business. Naturally this did not work out very well. The Thiessen garage soon ran out of business and became for sale by 1942. What is bad luck for one person can be a benefit for someone else.



Pumping Gas

William Kroeker: A.K. Braun, my first employer, owned a little gas station. He supplied farmers with tractor fuel and sold flour. There was a little warehouse behind the shop. I pumped many a gallon of gas from that pump. I had the responsibility to deliver distillate [a type of fuel] to farmers occasionally. [Braun] owned a light delivery truck and, as I remember, I had to learn to balance 45-gallon drums while loading and unloading the truck. I had to fill the drums from a storage tank and weigh each drum accordingly. What a job, but a memorable one!



Trick or Treat

Lois Braun: When I was in Gr. 9, some of us girls went trick-or-treating in town on Halloween. There were a lot of rolls of toilet paper in the streets, and the only naughty thing we did that night was throw some of it around a bit. After that we went to our principal Edgar Enns's house to ask for candy. When he opened the door and smiled at us, Mica Lewycky recoiled in horror, pointed at him and shrieked, "Mr. Enns, your tooth!" He wasn't wearing the one false front tooth he always had in when he was at school. Well, he gave us candy, but looked a little disgusted, and as we returned to the street, we giggled like crazy as we chastised Mica about her cheeky outburst. The next morning, we arrived at school to find that some Halloween tricksters had soaped up all the lower windowpanes. When we got to the classroom, Mr. Enns (tooth in place) made us girls clean all those windows, even though we hadn't messed them up. Maybe he thought we'd been laughing at him the night before. Anyway, we were outraged that he'd picked on us, while most likely somewhere in that school, the real culprits were having a good laugh.



So, How Big Was The Family?!

Paul Reimer: The Brits captured Germany's newest fighter just before the war ended. Took it back to England for display. After, it came to Canada. The fighter was displayed in major cities, with Winnipeg being one. Staunch Sommerfelder Peter G. Buhler, my grandfather, decided he would take his family to see it. He loaded up his family and four spare tires. They had three flats by the time they reached Highway 75. Peter decided to return home, not wanting to risk another flat tire. They didn't get to see the German fighter.

Dear Friends!

As we firmly hope and believe that through God's wisdom and decree He has led these two, well known to you, our son David and Elizabeth, daughter to Johann Klassens, have promised to enter into marriage and wish to have priestly blessings bestowed on them.

So we invite with this writing the friends listed on the reverse side in the order listed, next Thursday, that is the 18th of this month at 12 o'clock to our home to invite with us the blessing from the originator of marriage on the newly wed couple.

In anticipation of your acceptance of this invitation we sign this as your friends,

David and Katharina Klassen
Rosenfeld Nov. 15, 1897

[Guests listed on back of invitation:]

Rosenfeld

Johann Klassen
Jacob Funk
Aron Doerksen
Jacob Funk (the older)
Jacob Funk

Hochstadt

Johann Klassen (the younger)
Johann Abrams
Johann Klassen

Dog-Gone It!

Bob Derksen: An incident that happened in front of this store that I remember: Blacksmith Mr. Henry Martel used to make shoe scrapers to take the mud off your boots. One of these scrapers was located in the front of [the general] store on the north side of the building. In those days dogs were called by their owners' names. Hence Teddy Fast, a medium-sized dog owned by Henry Fast family, and Rip Martel, a huge dog owned by Wally Martel, were doing a dog chase. Well, Teddy was being chased by Rip. Teddy in his wisdom decided to run through this foot scraper, and Rip in pursuit followed. Bam! and the chase was over. Rip couldn't make it through the scraper and was knocked out.



The following three articles were part of a series called, "Pioneer Portrait of the Past". In the second half of the 1970s, Elizabeth Bergen and Lawrence Klippenstein wrote over 200 such articles about Mennonite pioneers in southern Manitoba. All are available on the Internet. These three are about the earliest Dorf Rosenfeld settlers.

Derk and Helena Klassen

By Elizabeth Bergen, *Pioneer Portrait of the Past*, #122

Helena Abrams, born on February 5, 1883, was united in marriage with Derk D. Klassen on November 25, 1904. Derk, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Klassen, was born on July 24, 1881, whose family had come from South Russia to the East Reserve in 1874, but were by now farmers in the village of Rosenfeld, West Reserve.

Three children were born to them before Mrs. Klassen died in 1908. They were: Katharina, Mrs. Jacob P. Zacharias of Altona (b. 1905); David (1906-1908); Johann (b-d 1908).

On July 6, 1909, Mr. Klassen found a second helpmate in Miss Katharina Hildebrand of Sommerfeld Village, Altona. She was born on October 15, 1887. Of this union five children were born: Anna (1910-1942); Maria, Mrs. Henry Falk and resident in Bolivia (b. 1912); Aganetha, Mrs. Peter K. Zacharias, of Paraguay (b. 1913); Peter (1915-1928); Diedrich (b. 1917) is married to Anna Friesen and resides in Altona.

On November 25, 1918, Mr. Klassen was widowed for the second time. Then, in November 1919 he was married to Mrs. Helena Friesen, widow of Johann Friesen.

The four children born to them were: Susanna (b. 1920), Mrs. Jacob A. Klassen of Altona; David (b. 1922) is married to Agatha Winter and resides in Altona; Abram (1923-1924); Jacob (b. 1925) is married to Tina Winter and lives in Paraguay.

In 1948 the Klassens sold their home near Rosenfeld and moved to Paraguay, where Mrs. Klassen died on August 9, 1960, and Mr. Klassen on December 30, 1972.

Peter and Margaretha Zacharias with Margaret

By Lawrence Klippenstein, *Pioneer Portrait of the Past* #48

Peter the son of Wilhelm Zacharias was born in the Ukraine, Bergthal colony, in 1822. He was married to Margaretha Rempel, who was born in 1825. They came to Canada in 1878 and first settled in the Rosenfeld area, north of Altona. They homesteaded on the one farmyard that remains of the first village of Rosenfeld, founded on the banks

of Buffalo Creek. It is in the area of the present Roseville S.D. west of Rosenfeld today.

There were four children in the Zacharias family: Peter (1846-1930), Heinrich (1848-1849), Elizabeth, Mrs. Johann Klassen (1852-1919), later of Rosenfeld, and Margaretha (1858-1928). The latter became Mrs. Isaac Friesen, her husband serving as minister of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church. They lived in the Rosenheim area northwest of Rosenfeld.

Mr. Zacharias passed away in 1887, his wife having predeceased him in 1884.

Information courtesy of Jacob Zacharias, Altona, Manitoba – a grandson of Peter and Margaretha.

Rev. Isaac and Margaretha Friesen and Family

By Lawrence Klippenstein, *Pioneer Portrait of the Past #76*

Isaac Friesen was born in 1858 in south Russia, the son of Isbrand and Maria Fehr Friesen. Margaretha, born in the same year, was the daughter of Peter and Margaretha Rempel Zacharias (cf. P.P. No. 48). She came to Canada with her parents in 1878, and Isaac came about the same time. They were married in 1879.

The Isbrand Friesens first settled in the village of Rosenfeld, south of Buffalo Creek, at the present site of Roseville S.D.

Isaac and Margaretha later farmed in the Rosenheim S.D. west of Rosenfeld. Mr. Friesen was called to the ministry of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church in 1896. In 1920 they retired from farming and moved to Altona.

The Friesens had the following children: Margaretha, Mrs. Diedrich Dueck (1882-1965); Maria, Mrs. Abram Doerksen (1886-1970); Elizabeth (1891-1892); Isaac, also a minister in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church (1893-1964); Elizabeth, b. 1900 and presently residing in the Ebenezer home in Altona.

Mr. Friesen passed away in 1909, and Mrs. Friesen died in 1928. They are buried in the Rosenheim cemetery.

Information: Jacob P. Zacharias, Altona, Manitoba.

Oscar Abraham and Otilie (Bobert)

By granddaughter Darlene (Abraham) Hafso

Oscar Abraham (1888-1963) and Otilie Bobert Abraham (1892-1984) were married July 20, 1913, in southern Manitoba, and homesteaded northeast of Rosenfeld (NW 15-3-1 W and NW 22-3-1 W). They had three sons, Edmund (born 1915 in St. Joseph, MB), Alfred (born 1922), and Eric (born 1925 on the Rosenfeld farm). Otilie Bobert's parents, Julius Bobert and Julianna Leime Bobert,

immigrated to southern Manitoba in 1894, settling east of the Red River and town of Emerson. Otilie's grandparents, Daniel Bobert and Wilhelmina Hadel Bobert followed in 1896 and arrived aboard the SS Labrador. Their destination was Gretna, Manitoba, where their son Julius Bobert and family were already living. According to family history, the Boberts were Germans from Russia. (See photo accompanying August Recksiedler history.)

The St. Joseph/St. Joe Trail

Lois Braun: After Louis Riel and his followers staged a rebellion at Lower Fort Garry and brought about the Manitoba Bill, recognizing his people's rights, he declared, "No matter what happens now, the rights of the Metis are assured by the Manitoba Bill: it is what I wanted – my mission is accomplished." He then proceeded to his mother's home in St. Vital, but fearing for his and their safety, he took refuge at the mission of St. Joe's in Dakota territory."

The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine: A Thematic History, 1734-1850

by Robert Coutts

p. 54

This is significant, because St. Joe (or St. Joseph) was the former name of Walhalla, North Dakota. It was a fur trading post run by Antoine Blanc Gingras, a wealthy entrepreneur who owned trading posts at Pembina, ND, and Fort Garry as well, and who was a friend of Riel's. There is evidence indicating that Métis carts sometimes travelled back and forth between the Forks/St. Boniface and St. Joe on a trail that ran across the land Rosenfeld sits on. It's likely that Louis Riel used this trail when, fearing retaliation from the Feds, he fled Manitoba in 1870 and went into exile.



Seeing Red

George Fast: Our hatchery was opposite four CPR buildings – the station, the station-master's home, the icehouse, and the maintenance foreman's building. Dad decided never to paint any of our buildings red, even the farmyard we later bought!



Although they lived in Rosenfeld for a relatively short time, and left no descendants in the community, the Alexander Acheson family has been given a substantial biography in this history book because they at one time actually owned the property the town sat on and were instrumental in the development of commerce in Rosenfeld; the school district was named after them, and they were rather exotic, coming as they did from Ireland. Luckily, descendant Jim Benedict and other family members have documented their ancestry in the book, *Who's that Sitting in My Family Tree?* (Although the family archivists were under the impression that Alexander was the first teacher in Rosenfeld, and that he taught school here, records do not substantiate this. He is listed in Canada Post archives as "postmaster" in Rosenfeld in 1897.)

Alexander Acheson Family

Submitted by Jim Benedict

www.genealowiki.com/bin/view.cgi/Acheson/AlexanderAcheson1848 (abridged)



Alexander Acheson's family – photographed prior to purchasing the land the town of Rosenfeld was situated on in April, 1892. Back row (L-R): father, Alexander Acheson; first-born, Joseph Alexander; wife, Sarah Breden (Miller). Front row (L-R): Mary Jane "Minnie"; Sarah Isabella "Sadie"; and baby Weir Henry. Not yet born: Gertrude and Alexander Jr. [Descendant Jim Benedict, from Winifred K. Benedict's inscription on the back of the photo]

Alexander would have been born in north Ireland but for the potato famine there. A devastating blight had spread across the potato fields of the island,

causing massive starvation and exodus from the land. The famine lasted just four years, but it destroyed an entire generation in the rural countryside.

Joseph and Isabella Acheson headed to the new opportunity in New York, America.

Alexander was born in New York [in 1848]. Shortly after younger brother Weir was born, the family returned to County Tyrone in Ireland, where the three sisters and a younger brother were born.

...In 1863, Alexander's family made one last emigration overseas, to the fertile area of Perth county in Canada West. His two older sisters, Ellen and Elizabeth, stayed behind. It is rumoured that Ellen was too sickly; she died before the family departed Ireland. Elizabeth remained there, later marrying in 1878.

Perhaps the move from the old Irish homestead was suitable to Alexander, as he decided to become a teacher, rather than farm like his father. Like his younger brother Weir, he attended the Model College in Clinton, about 30 miles west of the farm in Sebringville. In 1875, he received his third-class county certificate of teaching, although not with outstanding marks. It appears he failed in reading, writing, composition and education/school law, with barely a pass in the other subjects, although, for some reason, he did excel at spelling.

It was time for our young schoolteacher to get settled down. Sarah Braden Miller was born at Ellice township, Perth county in Ontario on December 3, 1853, the daughter of Joseph Miller and Sarah Braden Henry. Sarah was age 23 on her wedding day, Alexander was 27. After the marriage, the couple stayed at the Miller farm near Sebringville, Ontario, as their first child Joseph was born there.

At the late age of 30-ish, Alexander returned to the Clinton Model School for at least three years to gain his permanent teaching certificate. [The Achesons'] first child, Joseph, was born at the Miller family farm at Sebringville, Perth county, Ontario, in the fall of 1878. The family moved on to Clinton for father to attend school and for the next in line, Sarah (Sadie) to join in, then Minnie. Alexander and Sarah resided in the nearby city of Goderich for a short period.

In 1887, Alexander's first teaching position in the West was in the Parish of St. Charles, soon to be engulfed by the growing Winnipeg. The parish was then located just outside the west edge of Winnipeg on the south bank of the Assiniboine River. For many years after their move to Rosenfeld, the Achesons continued to own and visit their summer cottage there. Winnie (Webber) Benedict remembered it well, especially its huge hammock, slung between two giant trees by the river near the cottage.

In St. Charles, the Acheson offspring increased to seven. Our teacher must have feared that his wife Sarah, still in her thirties, might catch up with her mother's precedent of thirteen offspring, since he decided to purchase a whole section of land that included the little railside village of Rosenfeld, fifty miles south of Winnipeg.

When Grandfather Acheson purchased his section of land, it had just been surveyed by the Canadian Pacific Railway. There were only two elevators and a grain warehouse and a scattering of residents in the hamlet of Rosenfeld, total population then about 70, so the arrival of nine Achesons in April of 1892 was a real population explosion.

It was the Mennonites in the West Reserve that influenced growth of the village. Sarah handled the business in the family and set up a general store in Rosenfeld. Back in Russia, the Mennonites had depended on Jewish peddlers and businessmen for their outside needs, and in their early years in Manitoba, they relied on non-Mennonite entrepreneurs. So Grandma Acheson's general store received their trade in a mutually beneficial barter type as the natural order of things. Thus began a new life for the Acheson children, with Mother running the family general store.

Later in life, daughter Sadie shared family stories with her daughter, Gert. She gave the impression that Grandfather Alexander Acheson was a rather stern, self-centered man. As a teacher, she thought he was excellent, but as a disciplinarian, much too harsh on his own sons, often with little reason, although Sadie did admit her two older brothers were pretty high-spirited and fearless. Perhaps, too, grandfather was trying to compensate because grandmother spoilt her boys, usually giving them what they wanted. The girls, on the other hand, were expected to wait on their brothers, hand and foot. Grandfather provided a balance, for he was kind and generous to the girls and as dedicated to their education as that of the boys. Grandma apparently worried because she thought a postmistress was "after" Grandfather (hardly his fault); also, that his occasional social glass was yielding to "old devil gin".

Well, Grandfather died in Rosenfeld when only 49, and Grandmother told her daughter it was the gin that did him in, and later Sadie would warn her boys about gin, and they did seem to avoid it specifically.

It has been said that "no man is a hero to his butler", and perhaps, likewise, few fathers are heroes to their children. Looking into Grandfather Alexander Acheson's history, Gert discovered quite a different person than that pictured by his oldest daughter. She saw a husband and father having enough adventure to head west to the wilds of Winnipeg (as

St. Charles was then), and when that became too settled, taking on a whole section of land to farm. When his children left his public school, he made sure they went to nearby centres or to Winnipeg for higher education, and he encouraged other students to do likewise. When Gert revisited Rosenfeld, and talked with those who knew of Granddad, she got a picture of a very kind man, dedicated to education, and always willing to help in the community. He was fluent in both German and English, and voluntarily taught adult Mennonites English and gave them legal and business help with documents and red tape problems.

And on the home front, he and Grandma raised an outstanding family; an attractive, gutsy, fun-loving clan, upwardly mobile despite life's share of setbacks and tragedies.

Sarah as a Mother

When Miller or Henry girls got married, they came with homemaking skills, any one of which would have made them artisans today. Their weaving of patterns from home-dyed, home-spun, home-carded, home-grown wool into bedspreads and wall hangings were works of art, as were many of their patch-work quilts, hooked rugs, tatted and crocheted tablecloths and covers. Not only could they make their own dresses, they could design and cut their dress patterns, and in cottons weave their own materials. And in cooking, the Miller girls were Julia Childs, slinging big, basic hunks of food together without recipes, and substituting ingredients with wild abandon. Yet the results were tasty and properly served, and all knew which fork to use. No Miller needed Miss Manners to enter high society. Great-grandmother Sarah (Braden) Miller was determined that even if her family were raised in the backwoods, they could eat with the elite and not be embarrassed. Like education, the social graces were considered by the Henry/Miller clan to be assets that could never be taken away.

Until she moved to Rosenfeld, we know little of Grandma (Miller) Acheson's life after marriage. There our tiny, graceful grandmother proved to be ahead of her time in business for women of her day. She ran a country general store (the generic of today's mall), supervised farm business, and enjoyed a little wheeling and dealing in real estate. But with her four marriageable daughters – Sadie, Minnie, Maudie and Gertie – she was overly protective, even for the late 1880s. When a young man was invited to the house, the four girls often had to guess which one of them was the young man's "date", for Grandma alone gave permission to date a daughter, and then only if chaperoned by at least two sisters. On her first

date with Rusey Weber (our dad), our mother Sadie said she refused to dance the home waltz with him because she thought sister Maudie was his date. And Dad often joked that a quick peck in the pantry was the closest he got to kissing our mother during their courtship. However, Dad was grateful Grandma did not ship Sadie away, as she sometimes did with other daughters when she disapproved of their suitors (Maudie to California, Minnie to Minaki); and all in turn took high school in a convent for safekeeping. [Emil "Rusey" Weber opened a hardware store in Rosenfeld after he married into the Acheson family.]

But though Grandmother Acheson restricted the girls' social life, she made sure they "looked their best" when they did go out. She would periodically invite her dressmaking niece from Stratford, Minnie Miller, to be the Achesons' resident dressmaker. Grandma's Rosenfeld store had bolts of satins, silks, damask, dotted swiss, and huge spools of velvet ribbons, braids, fringes and Amsterdam lace. Minnie Miller was free to use any of it for haute couture for the Achesons. So the girls stepped out in luxurious clothes, elaborately designed, or elegantly simple or tailored.

The Final Years for Alexander and Sarah

Alexander died in 1897 as a relatively young man of 48 years. He was buried in the Morris cemetery of Manitoba.

Sarah was then left with seven children to raise in the prairies of Manitoba, Sandy being the youngest was then only seven years. Their mother was only 45 by that time when her husband passed away, but she went into mourning for the rest of her life. She continued to wear black hats, trimmed with black lace, ribbons and beads, and choker-necked, long flowing black dresses.

[The Achesons left Rosenfeld in 1917.] Sarah died on February 17, 1919, in Winnipeg.

Adolph Eisbrenner – 1893

As interviewed in 1983 by Art Wiebe, just prior to Mr. Eisbrenner's 90th birthday

Adolph was born on November 17, 1893, in the Village of Valentinow, or Walenty now, the town of Ludzk, in the province of Wolynia, Russia, in the Ukraine. His parents were John and Julia (Schultz) Eisbrenner. He attended and received all his eight years of schooling there prior to coming to Canada in 1914.

It was that year that Mr. Eisbrenner landed in Halifax and came to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he got his first job in Canada constructing streets in the area where the University of Manitoba is presently located. In those years, horsepower was the prime

source of power used in construction. Jobs were hard to find, and often if it was discovered that a worker was from Europe, the immigrant was fired.

From Winnipeg, Mr. Eisbrenner worked one year for the railway between Edson, Alberta, and Prince George, British Columbia, blasting mountains, constructing tunnels, and filling ravines to lay ribbons of iron for a meagre 35 cents an hour, seven days a week.

During the winter, he worked on an Alberta farm in exchange for a place to sleep, food to eat, and a good time.

Winter 1915 saw Mr. Eisbrenner working on a farm near Elie, Manitoba. The farmer's wife was a teacher, and it was here that Mr. Eisbrenner says he received most of his English education.

From 1916-1918, Mr. Eisbrenner worked as a night watchman at Swift's. He also delivered their products using horses, and became a truck driver for Swift's [Swift Canadian Wholesale Market] when they changed their mode of deliveries.

In 1918 Mr. Eisbrenner worked on a farm near Emerson. It was here that he met and married Mary Kien. They had three boys: Ralph, Johnnie, and Walter, and one daughter, Eleanor.

In 1919, the Eisbrenners moved to the New Kennedy School area, where Mr. Eisbrenner bought 160 acres of land. He was also elected as a trustee for the New Kennedy School District.

In 1929, the Eisbrenners purchased an additional 160 acres of farm land .5 miles east of Rosenfeld, where they farmed till 1965. During this time, Mr. Eisbrenner was elected a trustee for the Rosenfeld School District and was one of the three trustees involved in the construction of the Rosenfeld School, built in 1937. Mr. Eisbrenner served a total of 14 years as a trustee for the Rosenfeld area.

All three Eisbrenner sons saw action in the war. Ralph Eisbrenner, former mayor of Emerson, also was an immigration officer for many years. Johnnie was a manager of a large hotel in British Columbia. Walter lived on the Eisbrenner farm .5 miles east of Rosenfeld, was postmaster for the Rosenfeld and area community for thirty-some years, and was one of the founding directors of the Rose Village Villa. Adolph and Mary's daughter, Eleanor Schroeder, was the secretary/receptionist for the Agri Office in Altona.

In 1970, five years after retiring from farming, Adolph and Mary moved to Rosenfeld, buying a house northeast of the Berghaler Church. In 1973, Mrs. Mary Eisbrenner, Adolph's wife of 55 years, passed away.

On April 21st, 1979, Mr. Eisbrenner moved into the newly opened Rose Village Villa. He died in 1989.

Adolph and Mary had 14 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. In retirement, Mr. Eisbrenner enjoyed reading (and later, listening to recorded books supplied by the National Institute for the Blind) and gardening. Shortly before his ninetieth birthday, he harvested 57 pears from his fruit orchard, located at his former place of residence in the village.

Cornelius C. Fehr – Recalling Past Days: An Accident Changed His Life

By Elizabeth Bergen, from the *Echo*, Nov. 18, 1981



Cornelius C. Fehr [Doreen Loewen and Barbara Marie Toews]

It was an accident that changed the lifestyle of Cornelius C. Fehr of Neuenberg village, near Winkler, from that of a labourer to a businessman.

Cornelius was 17 years old when he lost his left arm in a threshing machine during harvesting operations at Rüdnerweide village. After this turn of events, he was offered the position as teacher

in the private Mennonite school at Rüdnerweide in 1897. By 1900 he was teaching at Gnadenfeld, near Altona. It was here that he met and married Mary Loewen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Loewen, on July 19, 1900. Since the school term was only seven months of the year, it was an opportunity for him to work as peddler for an Altona merchant during the remaining five months.

His peddling outfit consisted of a team of horses and a “democrat” with a cab in the back for the dry goods, trinkets and groceries. Under the cab was a space large enough to hold the chickens he took in trade for merchandise. In the front of the cab was a box that served as the driver’s seat and inside this there was room for four cases of 30 dozen eggs each. He also took orders for goods which he delivered on his return visit; usually a week later.

By 1904 the Fehrs lived in the village of Old Altona for a short time, before Mr. Fehr purchased property at Halbstadt from a Peter MacCall and opened a store. About the same time he also bought out Jacob Heinrichs, who operated both a store and a post office. He had his own peddling outfit by this time and hired extra help to carry out this end of the business. The men that worked for him were a Henry Esau, then his brother-in-law, Henry Loewen (he later moved to Gretna), Wilhelm Neufeld and a John Schmidt.

In 1912 Fehr added a two-storey store to the shanty that had served as the family residence. By this time he was also in the machinery business and to house the machinery he built a large machine shop.

His next business venture was that of buying and shipping cattle and hogs with his partner Isaac Hildebrand of Blumenthal. These were taken to the Altona railway loading platform and from there shipped by rail to the Winnipeg stockyards.

By 1912 his sons, John and Cornelius, were old enough to help in the store. When John was 15 years old he hauled freight and mail from Emerson – a distance of 10 miles each way. At first this was generally twice or five times a week. Some of this merchandise was purchased from Harold and C.A. Whitman, and a Mr. Casselman, the druggist. There were times when John picked up freight at Emerson’s three railway stations but mainly it was at the station at Christy Siding, about a mile and a half north of Emerson. Those days, all this freight was hauled by horses. But times changed. By 1915 the Fehrs owned a second hand model T Ford and a Ford truck.

The size of the family had also grown to 10 children, five sons and five daughters. One day the parents, together with the children, saw the opportunity to expand the business. The choice was the C.K. Stewart store and family residence in Rosenfeld. They sold their business to Peter B. Sawatsky and Frank B. Schroeder, who also took over the post office. By March 1919, the deals were made.

A year later Fehr bought the machinery business from George Warden, including the North Star Oil business in Rosenfeld. This time he went into business partnership with Peter A. Toews and Jacob J. Rempel. Soon they were also in the cattle business, shipping from Rosenfeld to Winnipeg. At the same time Fehr also had the International and Cockshutt agencies. Business was good in 1920, with a turnover of \$80,000. At this time Peter A. Loewen was hired as clerk and remained with the Fehr business for several years.

On January 1, 1921, the Fehr store, Al Guenther’s hardware business, and the Bank of Hamilton were destroyed in a fire. Fehr saved most of his stock, which was later sold at a special fire sale. The fire, which was reported to have started in the bank, was believed caused by overheated stovepipes.

Mr. Fehr then bought a store at the north end of Rosenfeld from a Jewish merchant. This building was shared with a Wolf Neuman, who used the south side, and the Fehrs the north side. Eventually Mr. Fehr also took over the south side of the store, to which he added a warehouse at the back. Son John

was married by this time but continued to help manage the Rosenfeld business until 1925, when the Fehr family opened a small business in Altona, which John operated until the summer of 1927, when Cornelius C. Fehr sold the Rosenfeld store to Wm. Coblentz.

In the meantime Cornelius C. Fehr also had two International trucks on the road, and the Hudson agency – selling Essex and Hudson cars. He also remained in the cattle shipping business until he died on November 30, 1933.

Mrs. Fehr remained a resident of Rosenfeld, where she died in 1941.

Their children were: John, Cornelius, Jacob, Peter, Henry, Margaret, Mary, Anne, Helen and Susie. Those still living are: John, Altona; Helen, New Brunswick, N.J.; Anne, Winnipeg, and Susie, Swan River, Man.

August Frank Family

By Jerry Frank, Calgary

The August Frank family, including several siblings, arrived in Manitoba from Volhynia in the mid 1890s. They had been sponsored by already established Mennonite farmers and worked off their debt for a few years, living at Neuanlage [a settlement near Gretna].

A distant cousin from Michigan told me that the Franks owned land in the States. I did not believe that story, but went to Cavalier, ND, to check it out. Land records show that, indeed, they did own small parcels of land from about three to ten acres in size along the Pembina River, west of Neche. Other names on the plat map showed that many others, including Mennonites, also owned small land parcels there. I was quite certain they were not looking to build weekend cottages along the river, so why did they do this?

Further investigation showed that these properties were in the bush that grew thickly for a significant distance back from the banks of the river. It became clear that the Canadians were buying these small acreages to harvest the trees in the wintertime, hauling them back to the treeless Gretna region to sell, probably for firewood, but perhaps also for fencing.

Once the Volhynia Germans had worked off their obligation and had saved some money of their own, they moved elsewhere, purchasing their own farms. The Franks moved on to Friedensthal, south of Dominion City, but before they could do that, they had to sell their acreages. There must have been some kind of tax implications because, in several instances, the land was first sold to a wife and then, a week later, to another person.

It was almost 50 years later that August Frank's son, Gustav, moved his family to Rosenfeld.

Heinrich Friesen 1883-1967 First Wife, Margaretha Funk 1887-1913 Second Wife, Anna Klassen 1883-1971 By Glenn Friesen



Heinrich Friesen; first wife Margaretha Funk; second wife Anna Klassen [Glenn Friesen]

Heinrich was a pioneer whose relatives surrounded and embraced the original Village of Rosenfeld. He once purchased a quarter section of land from a Jewish landowner with a handshake and a down payment of a dollar bill, all the money he had in his pocket, before the gentleman stepped off the train from Winnipeg at the Rosenfeld Railway Station. Remembering Rosenfeld in the Dirty Thirties, his son Tony recalled harrowing a field with a team of horses to prevent the soil from blowing away. Walking side by side with Heinrich's brother David, at times the dust was so dense, the two could not see each other. Surviving the Great Depression, Heinrich Friesen, a carpenter as well as a farmer in the Rosenfeld area left behind a notable legacy.

Heinrich Friesen's ancestors have been traced back to 1750 in Friedrichsthal, Bergthal Colony, Russia. His grandparents Peter Friesen and Maria Rempel moved from Russia to Halbstadt, Manitoba on July 19, 1875. In Canada, the Peter Friesen/Maria Rempel family prospered and grew in numbers. Their son David (1885-1928) who married Helena Neufeld (1858-1951) and lived in Halbstadt had six children, the oldest being Heinrich. As a young man Heinrich developed carpentry skills in a building group led by his Uncle George. While on a building project in Rosenfeld, Heinrich met Margaretha Funk. They were married in 1908 and had three sons, David, Henry, and Tony. After giving birth to Tony, Margaretha became ill and died three months later, October 27, 1913. This was a difficult time for

Heinrich. After the loss of their mother, her three young sons stayed with Heinrich's brother Peter in Halbstadt. They were returned nine months later on July 7th, 1914 when Heinrich married Anna Klassen. Eight more children were born. Abraham and Helena died in infancy, and Isaac died in 1922. Anna Friesen worked tirelessly, teaching and providing for her large family.

In 1917, Heinrich's parents David and Helena joined the family in Rosenfeld, moving to a farm owned by Heinrich. At this time the government was implementing many changes and Heinrich had great concerns with the school system. In 1922, together with a large portion of the Sommerfeld church, he decided to move to Mexico. In Halbstadt, Mexico, they initially camped under the Friesen Tree, alongside the local creek. Being the excellent carpenter he was, Heinrich soon built a brand new house for his family in Halbstadt. However conditions there were not what they had been accustomed to in Canada, and within eleven months they moved back to Manitoba. Having traded their new house in Mexico for a machine shed in Blumenort, Manitoba, the shed was moved to their homestead on NW 32-2-1 W, the original site of Rosenfeld. In time Heinrich's first wife's father, Anton Funk, gave the young couple the NE¼ of SEC 32-2-1 W where they lived until Heinrich's death in 1967.

Today, in 2018 an old plow that turned the sod in 1875 still stands at the head of the long driveway to the original Village of Rosenfeld. For many years Heinrich employed a full time gardener here, a Mr. Janz whose duties included taking care of a large apple orchard. As a carpenter, Heinrich built dozens of houses and barns in the Rosenfeld area, including a guesthouse on the Friesen farm, providing a temporary home for numerous families after their arrival from overseas.

Seven of Heinrich's children and their spouses resided within two miles of this homestead. Five sons, Tony, Peter, John, Jacob, and Willie, all became farmers and lived within one mile from home. Their only daughter, Mary, married Russell Smith. If you knew the Friesen Brothers, you knew they and their wives all kept meticulously groomed land and farmyards. Mary and her husband Russell did not take a back seat to any of them. Russell Smith loved cattle and he and Mary kept a sizable dairy. Their barn was so clean you could eat Sunday dinner in the barn and enjoy the meal.

Son Peter Friesen married Mary Zacharias. John married Sarah Buhr, and Jacob married Anna Wiebe. After Anna passed away, he married Tina Wiebe.

Son Willie (Wm.) Friesen married Anne Martens. In addition to being a farmer, he devoted a lot of time

to the ministry and became Bishop of the Reinländer Church of Manitoba. As bishop, William covered and travelled all of Manitoba, parts of Ontario, Alberta, and Missouri, USA. In this role, he was in charge of baptisms, communion, and elections.

Son David Friesen married Elsie Harder and followed his dad's footsteps and became a professional carpenter in the town of Winkler.

Son Henry Friesen married Justina Dueck, maintained his interest in agriculture, and instead of farming went on to study at University of Manitoba, where he obtained his Bachelor of Education Degree as well as a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture. He taught all his life in rural Manitoba, North Dakota, and Morden, Manitoba.

Son Tony married Katie Harder. He helped build the original Highway 30 running from Rosenfeld to Gretna with a grader and a team of eight horses. Tony and Katie had four sons who all farmed and resided within two miles of the family farm. Together with his sons, Tony became an Elite Seed Grower, specializing in Registered Rodney Oats. He was on the Roseville School Board for many years, and was also on the Board of Directors of the original Altona Credit Union.

Heinrich, Margaretha, and Anna Friesen were all laid to rest in the Friesen Family Cemetery on the land they farmed their entire lives.

Anton Funk and Maria Harder **Submitted by Angela (Funk) Plett, with research provided by Ray Funk**



Funk siblings: William (age 25); Mary (20); Peter (27). [Angela (Funk) Plett]

Anton Funk was born 1860 in Russia. His parents were Abram and Sara (Rempel) Funk. He was orphaned and taken in by Peter and Margaretha (Rempel) Zacharias. The Zachariases had four children: Peter, Heinrich, Elizabeth (Johan Klassen) and Margaretha (Isaak Friesen).

June 1878, Anton, aged 18, and the Zacharias

family immigrated to Canada and settled in Darp Rosenfeld village along the south shore of Buffalo Creek.

June 1877, Abram and Margaretha (Rempel) Harder and daughters Justina and Maria left Russia. Abram Harder owned a lot in Darp Rosenfeld. Fate intervened, ship records indicate Margaretha arrived in Canada a widow. Abram most likely died en route; it is unlikely mother and teenage daughters would continue if her husband passed away prior to the voyage.

There is a family anecdote that Anton Funk was simply following a young woman of interest in his immigration to Canada. We cannot assume what social conditions existed and it would seem rather unlikely that such romantic interest rested with Margaretha Zacharias or Maria Harder, who was three years his junior. Nonetheless, in 1881, Anton Funk and Maria Harder married.

1885 marks the year Anton Funk was naturalized as a British subject. The importance of becoming a British subject gave Anton the right to become a legal landowner in Canada.

There is no record of Anton Funk in the 1881 Canada Census; however, he shows up in the 1891 census, married to Maria Harder. The household contained four children: Peter (9), Abram (7), Margaretha (5), and Henry (6 months). The final member of the household was Margaretha Harder (70), Maria's mother. There are no records of Justina Harder, daughter to Margaretha and sister to Maria, and it is assumed she died prior to 1891 census.

The 1901 census adds two children to the Funk family: Maria 1896 and Tina 1900. 1903 was a grim year for the Funk family: newborn Elizabeth, toddler Tina, as well as mother Maria passed away. There is a cemetery at the original Rosenfeld Darp. Presumably, Maria, Tina and Elizabeth are buried there.

Elsewhere in the West Reserve, Jacob Friesen of Sommerfeld passed away. His widow Maria Friesen, along with daughters Maria, Susanna, Katharina, Anna, and son Abram, became members of Anton Funk family when they married in 1904.

The 1906 census reflected the new configuration of the Anton Funk family. Now married to Maria Friesen, he had 11 children. The Funks owned twelve horses, five cows, and five other animals, according to census. Three more children were born to Anton Funk and Maria (Friesen) Funk: Johan 1905, Sara 1908, and Neta 1918.

Anton Funk remained at Darp Rosenfeld site until 1928, possibly establishing a modern yard site south of the original settlement and east of the rail line. Upon retirement, the yard site was sold to his son-in-law, Heinrich Friesen.

Anton and Maria (Friesen) Funk retired to Altona and he passed away in 1934. His investments in Deutsch Marks became worthless due to the collapse of the German economy. These failed investments did not make Anton destitute; assets were distributed to his wife and 11 children, including the Friesen stepchildren. Considering the era, with the stock market collapse in 1929 and the dust bowl conditions of 1930s, the orphan who came to Canada did well financially. His second wife Maria passed away in 1960. They are buried in the Sommerfeld Church Cemetery in Altona.

Male members of the Anton Funk family used a middle initial to distinguish themselves from other settlers of the same name. Anton and Maria's sons Peter and Henry used the initial A from their father's first name – Anton. Their son Abram, who enlisted in the army used the initial H for his mother's maiden name Harder.

Abram H. Funk was single, his occupation listed as Merchant. In 1916 he was 26 years old and enlisted in the army, one of the few Canadian Mennonites to serve in World War I. He joined the 78th Battalion, 4th Canadian Division, tour of duty in France; it is possible he was part of the Canadian troops fighting in Passchendaele. The battlefield experience affected him deeply and he ended up in the military hospital. An unsigned WWI Christmas card was discovered among Anton's important papers. It fits the era of Private Abram H. Funk's tour of duty in France.

In 1919, he returned to Canada and the farm near Rosenfeld, into his parents' care. Abram H. Funk was considered shell-shocked; today we refer to this as PTSD. He farmed with his father and brothers. At some point after his return, Abram married widow Anna (Dyck) Buhr – she passed away in 1945. She is buried in Rosenfeld Cemetery beside her son and first husband.

In 1933 OAS appointed Abram H. Funk as postmaster in Rosenfeld. He held this position until his retirement in 1955. Abram H Funk is the only descendant of Anton Funk to work and live within the village of modern Rosenfeld. Abram's nephew Peter F. Funk worked with his uncle in the post office, telling his children stories of catching mailbags at the train station in Rosenfeld. We heard more stories of Uncle Abe than we heard of our grandparents. He moved to a retirement home in Grunthal, MB. He passed away in 1972, buried with a military funeral in Rosenfeld.

Peter A. Funk was 22 years old when his father Anton married Maria Friesen in 1904. He was eleven years senior to his stepsister, also named Maria Friesen. The new blended family lived together in

Rosenfeld Darp. Peter was a quiet, reserved young man and the younger Maria was lively and outgoing. They both lost a parent and now lived under the same roof. When young Maria reached the age of 16, Peter A. Funk and Maria Friesen married. In 1908 Peter A. Funk purchased 160 acres, coinciding with marriage.

Peter A and Maria (Friesen) Funk established a house on the land. In 1921, Peter was farming 160 acres on NW 8-3-1 W, and living on 40 acres of SE 18-3-1 W with his wife Maria, children Peter, Wilhelm, and Maria, as well as lodger, Peter Klassen. A hip roof barn was built on the yard. Workers earned 15 cents per day in addition to room and board. Tennis courts used by the people of Rosenfeld were located on this property as well.

Peter and Maria's son Jacob passed away when he was two years old. Jacob is buried in a small cemetery on NE 7-3-1 W. There are three gravestone markers: one marking the grave of Jacob Funk, and approximately twenty small graves with no markers.

Peter and Maria continued to live in the farmhouse on SE 18-3-1 W. The house was renovated, changing it from a small two-storey to a house with a verandah and kitchen. Eventually a basement was constructed under the kitchen. Their son Peter F. was living at home and recalled the work of using a bucket to haul dirt from the new "basement" out through the house and into the yard. It took a long time to complete the excavation.

Son Bill married Helen Thiessen and moved to his own farmyard. Daughter Maria (Toots) married Scotty Badman and moved to Winnipeg. Oldest son Peter showed interest in electronics and spent a few years working in Winnipeg before returning to the farm. He continued to live and farm with his parents. Peter A. and Maria Funk retired to Altona in 1957. Maria Funk passed away in 1962 and Peter A. Funk passed away in 1964. They are buried in Altona Municipal Cemetery.

Peter F. Funk was the first-born child of Peter A. and Maria Funk. He was quiet and reserved. His siblings more outgoing and adventurous. Peter was a bachelor, farmed with his father and brother, helped his uncle in the post office, and fixed electrical appliances. In addition to this, he was the choir director for the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Church. Peter was in his forties and his mother worried he might never marry. She let him know of a nice, older, single teacher, Gerta Loewen, living in Rosenfeld. She enjoyed music, so it was quite natural for her to volunteer to sing in the church choir. The story goes that with his mother's prodding, Peter eventually asked Gerta if he could walk her home after choir practice. They must have enjoyed each other's company because within a year they were engaged.

The time came for Peter to meet Gerta's parents. Upon meeting his future son-in-law, Wilhelm Loewen greeted Peter with the tale of how they were related. Wilhelm Loewen and Peter F. Funk are both descendants of Abram and Sarah (Rempel) Funk. Peter and Gerta married in 1957 and started life together on the farmyard near Rosenfeld.

Peter continued to farm and work at Co-op in Altona, fixing radios and TVs. Gerta stayed home with the family that followed: Raymond 1958, Charles 1959, Angela 1963, and Darrell 1964. Co-op built a new store and discontinued the department Peter work in. Peter decided to operate a home-based business known as Funk's Radio and TV.

Raymond and Charles attended Reichenbach school until it closed and continued at Rosenfeld School. In 1969 Gerta returned to teaching, Angela started grade one and Darrell started Kindergarten. The midday school bus service with Dave Zacharias as driver allowed Darrell to attend Kindergarten in Altona. Gerta was hired to teach in New Hope School District and she spent 20 years teaching primary grades.

May 29, 1977, the hip roof barn built for our grandparents was struck by lightning. It was raining hard and our Dad saw the lightning hit the top left corner of the barn as they returned home. They waited in the car, watching for any sign of fire. The rain stopped, no sign of fire, so they entered the house. We sat down for fasma and Dad notice a wisp of smoke coming from the barn. The fire department was called, Dad tried to save items but there was not much time. The only thing saved was a box of newborn kittens. Everything burned in the fire. The house was saved by the fire department.

The next day we left the yard seeing blackened wood, a burned-out tractor and not much else. The bus came and took us off to school, the clean-up began. By the time we returned home there was no trace of the mess left by the fire. Our neighbours, Peter K. and Marj Schellenberg, Ed and Hilda Funk, Dave and Martha Zacharias, Arnold and Olga Pokrant and many residents of Rosenfeld came to our farm with tractors and trucks to clean up everything. This was a humbling experience for our parents and they were grateful for the help.

Peter and Gerta's children completed high school and started adulthood in their chosen paths – post-secondary education, marriage, jobs – and Peter and Gerta continued to live on the farmyard near Rosenfeld. In 1987, they moved to Altona when daughter Angela and her husband Armin Plett bought the 40-acre farmyard on SE 18-3-1 W and rented the 160 acres on NW 8-3-1 W, which was previously sold to a German investor in 1970s. Angela and

Armin lived here until 1992. Peter officially retired but continued to help on the farm. Gerta taught for another two years and then she retired from teaching and became the Rosenfeld News correspondent [for the *Echo*].

On April 27th, 1997, forty years to the date, Peter and Gerta Funk celebrated their wedding anniversary at Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre. The celebration was planned months in advance, but this was the “Flood of the Century” year. Five days before this celebration, Rosenfeld Main Street was under water. Fortunately, floodwaters receded and the celebration continued as planned in the location where it all began – Rosenfeld.

Peter F. Funk passed away a few months later. Gerta continued to live in their retirement home until her death in 2006. They are buried in the Altona Municipal Cemetery.

John “Coal Dock” and Aganetha (Wiebe) Funk; Bernhard and Margaretha (Dyck) Wiebe

By Sylvia (Funk, Phelps) Holloway, from the research of Wendy Jean Holloway



John “Coal Dock” Funk and his bride, Aganetha (Wiebe), c. 1910. [Wendy (Lang) Thiessen]

Born in Neche, ND, in 1882, Johann Funk lived close to the CPR station, and worked shovelling the coal for the steam engine. My mother, Clara, said his hands were permanently stained black from the coal. When he went to the beer parlour, he had his own

marked mug because of his black hands. The upside of his job was that he earned a steady salary, and could afford special things. Mother told a story about how, when the soldiers came home after World War II, he hired a band to play in the L-shaped, screened-in veranda of his house, to welcome the military boys home as they got off the train. Later on, he replaced the screens in the veranda with glass windows. “Coal Dock” Funk married Aganetha (Nettia) Wiebe, May 20th, 1910, in Rosenfeld, Manitoba. He bought her a pipe organ because she also played the organ in church. He was also the first one to buy a gramophone in Rosenfeld, and he invited the townspeople to listen to it. He also bought a sewing machine, and my mother said no one taught her how to sew, her father just bought her the material. She wondered later what her first dress must have looked like! She did become a talented seamstress.

Coal Dock and Nettia had two children, both born in Rosenfeld: a son, Abraham W. (Alec) Funk, born in 1911, and my mother, Clara Greta (Funk) Phelps, born 1914. Nettia was never well after the birth of her second child. She died in November of 1915, at 30 years old, and was buried in the Rosenfeld graveyard. In 2010, Art Wiebe, a councillor of Rosenfeld, showed us her grave. After Nettia died, the organ was sold and replaced with a piano, which I used to try to play on as a child when my parents left me at Grandpa Coal Dock’s house. Also, Grandpa would give me a nickel to buy an ice cream, and I would lose the nickel between the boards of the wooden sidewalk. In those days they had wooden sidewalks and dusty roads, not paved streets.

“Coal Dock” Funk’s son, Abraham, and Abe Thiessen of Thiessen Bus Lines took their correspondence in high school together. As an adult, Abraham legally changed his name to Alec. He had four children: Nelson, Wayne, and twin girls, Sharon and Karen. The second child of John and Aganetha was my mother, Clara Greta (Funk) Phelps. My mother told how, as a little girl, she would go to her Grandma Wiebe’s at the opposite end of town, and would be given a cookie and have a visit, and then go to her Grandma Funk’s, who lived across the road from her home, and would help her grandma punch the bread dough. Mother always said boys were given a preference for education, and she had to quit school at 14 years of age. She had three children: James A. and Donald E. Phelps, and myself, Sylvia (Phelps) Holloway.

Aganetha (Nettia) Wiebe, born in 1885, came to Canada with her parents in 1902, at the age of 17 and was the daughter of Bernhard Wiebe and Margaretha (Dyck) Wiebe, who lived at the opposite end of town from Coal Dock Funk, where the grain elevators

were and near to the church. Altogether, they had 13 children, but five died soon after birth. They had two of their children after they came to Canada: my Aunt Maria (Mary) Wiebe, and Uncle Gerhard (George) Wiebe, who were the youngest sister and brother to Nettia. Bernhard and Margaretha Wiebe lived the rest of their married lives in Rosenfeld. At the church, Bernhard became a part-time language teacher, led the church choir, and did carpenter work on houses. However, in Russia, Bernhard Wiebe had graduated from Chortitza Zentralschule and became a schoolteacher in Rosenthal, Chortitza. Bernhard Wiebe died young, at 63 years, and was buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.



Wedding portrait of Bernhard and Margaretha (Dyck) Wiebe, married by Pastor Heinrich Epp in Chortitza, Russia, on Sept. 28, 1882. One-time residents of Rosenfeld, they were the parents of Aganetha Wiebe, wife of John "Coal Dock" Funk. [Sylvia (Phelps) Holloway]

Coal Dock's second wife was Margaretha Dyck, b.1894 in Altona, MB. They had seven children: Margaretha (Margaret) b.1917, Johann (Johnny) b.1921, the twins, Anna and Eva b.1924, Maria b.1925, David b.1926, James (Jimmy) b.1932.

Coal Dock Funk's parents lived across the road from his house and owned the livery stable that boarded horses for travellers. Coal Dock Funk's parents were Jacob (b.1851) and Aganetha (Hiebert) Funk (b.1853). Both were born in Chortitza, Russia. Jacob died in 1933 and Aganetha in 1939. They had a garden and chickens, and it was said that Aganetha fed the chickens until three days before she died, and then she went to bed, and told her visitors not to wake her up but to let her die peacefully. She died in her own bed. Their first of seven children was Jacob N. Funk, their second was Abraham J.H. Funk, and their third child was Johann "Coal Dock" Funk. He died in the care of his daughter, Margaret, in Calgary in 1963.

Clara (Funk) Phelps lived to be a 100, in Vancouver, cared for by her daughter Sylvia Holloway and granddaughter Pamela Holloway.

Christian Kletke

By Janet (Mazinke) Reimer

My great-grandfather, Christian Kletke, was born January 13, 1857, in Poland. On April 25, 1893, Christian left for Canada, leaving behind his wife, Anna Kesling, and their five children: Christian, Helena, Adolf (my grandfather), John and Rudolf. It was on this day that their sixth child, Jacob, was born. Prior to 1894, my great-grandfather was a parochial school teacher.

In 1896, my great-grandfather sent for his family. On August 28, 1898, their seventh child, Henry, was born. In 1899 the family rented the south half of section 24-3-1 W from Mr. Donovan, a dentist from Neche, North Dakota. Later they purchased that farm. The family practised mixed farming. A unique building was constructed on the site. It was 32' x 52' with living quarters on one side, an adjoining room in the middle, and barn on the other side. On August 1, 1900, their eighth child was born, William. On April 1, 1902, August, their ninth child, was born. On May 19, 1903, my great-grandfather became a naturalized citizen.

My great-grandmother, Anna, passed away on January 4, 1910. Great-grandfather, Christian, died Mar. 31, 1931.

The Descendants of Christian Kletke

By Art Kletke, from his *Kletke Genealogy*, 1983 (abridged)



Adolf Kletke (brother of Helena); Friedrich Lilke and his wife Helena; she is holding their son August, and standing on the chair is their son Daniel. [Kathy Connor]

Helena Kletke was born on December 4, 1882, in Poland, the daughter of Christian and Anne Kletke, coming to Canada in 1896.

On January 25, 1906 she married Fredrich Lilke at Rosenfeld, MB. Living with her parents for a short time, then taking up residence east of Rosenfeld on the NE quarter of section 12-3-1 W. To the Lilkes were born three sons, one passing away as a small child. At this location her brother William served as babysitter on different occasions. Mr. Lilke passed away at a very young age in 1910.

In 1911 Helena was remarried to Karl Zotzman at Gretna, MB, taking up residence in Green Bay, MB. This marriage was only short spent and Helena with her two small children moved to Brunkild, MB. They lived at her brother Christian Kletke's, who served and provided as a father for the family. This is where her son Herman [Zotzman] was born.

In 1918 with the help of her brother Adolf and her father she moved back to Rosenfeld. She lived three years with her father and brothers, then moved to a yard site that was set up near the Adolf and William Kletke farm yards. The yard surrounded with a pasture enabled the family to raise cattle, pigs, chickens, and other livestock. The fodder consisted of hay mowed along road allowance with her brothers' horses and equipment. Oats and sweet clover grown on her brothers' farms was cut to hexal or chaff. Whole grain, which was often obtained from the spillage at various straw stacks after the threshing machine crews had left, was all used to feed the livestock.

Potatoes and *mangols* [mangels: large garden beets] were also a main source of food for livestock. Some was cooked in an outside cooker or on the kitchen stove and mixed with crushed grain known as chop, and some were simply cut into small pieces and fed as a raw material.

Her boys continued school attendance at Hoffnungsthal School during the winter and worked on various farms during the summer with jobs like herding cattle, milking cows, stooking sheaves and other pioneer farm duties. They also participated in the Rosenfeld brass band regardless of not being able to read notes.

Dan opened an extremely successful machinery repair shop in Rosenfeld which included welding and blacksmithing. He sold out and took up employment with Krushel Machinery in Morden and later served as a machinist at Versatile Machinery in Winnipeg, MB. August, besides farming operations, served the community as repairman for alarm and grandfather clocks, a skill which he mastered efficiently. Herman continued farming with an ambition to make the Revenue Canada boys earn their wages and in the later years he achieved his goal.

One thing mother must have never told them was to "go west young man go west" as they all three crossed the Red River to the east to choose their brides.

One memory that will never be forgotten by Adolf and [myself] is the 1933 Chev Coupe that Herman purchased while living with his mother. Many rides with him [were] obtained by the two boys and his nephew Helmut Lilke to Rosenfeld. The car being a coupe had a wide ledge at the rear window, which promoted the boys to lie on this ledge while travelling. This created great amusement for Herman as he would wait until we were well established and then slam on the brakes so we would roll off onto the floor. Then he would tell us "the road sure is rough today." After a while we got the message as there were not that many rough spots on the well travelled road and the bridge sites.

As Helena grew older she felt that she wanted to be closer to one of her children in town as well as the mail, store, etc. This would be more convenient as she had no means of transportation of her own. In 1942 she purchased a lot next to her son Daniel Lilke. Having foundations constructed for the building she hired Mr. Karas, who was both a mover and farmer from the Plum Coulee area, to move her buildings from the country residence to the hamlet of Rosenfeld.

Here she continued her operation with a smaller amount of livestock, with feed provided by her



Herman Zotzman, Daniel Lilke, August Lilke, and their mother, Helena Lilke Zotzman. [Kathy Connor]

sons and brothers. She also gathered broken sugar beets from near by fields, which were the same ingredients as the mangols to the animals. After the Dan and August Lilke families left the Rosenfeld area, Helena again felt she wanted to be closer to one of her sons. She sold her property in Rosenfeld and moved to a small house located on the property of the son Herman Zotzman. By this time all of her grandchildren were grown up, and some married with families. Her pride and joy was seeing and visiting with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Helena Zotzman passed away peacefully on March 3, 1967, at the age of 85 years. She was a faithful lifetime member of the St. John Lutheran Church, where her funeral services were held, with interment in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

Adolf Kletke was born July 24, 1885, in Plock, Poland. He came to Canada with his mother, sister Helena, and brothers Christian, John, Rodolf and Jacob, at the age of eleven. Their father, who came to Canada in 1893, was happy to be reunited with his family as they arrived in Gretna, MB, in August, 1896.

Adolf attended school in Poland, but was taught the balance of his education in Canada by his father, who was a parochial school teacher in Poland.

On January 27, 1910, Adolf married Amelia Boehm at St. John Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld. Amelia was born on December 14, 1892, in Russia. 1910, according to the Kletke records, was a year of joy and sorrow combined, as Adolf's mother passed away on January 4, 1910, and his brother-in-law on December 29, 1910. Their first residence was taken up at his father's, as the home had been left motherless.

They later set up their own yard site on the northwest of section 24-3-1 W. It was here that all of their children were born. Martha in 1914, being the oldest, had many days of herding cattle, which she attended to with her faithful horse that she rode bareback. Being only a small girl she had no problem unmounting when she got to her destination, but it was the remounting that created a problem. But as most Kletkes would have it, "where there's a will there's a way." Her father taught her to hang on to the horse's mane when it bent down its head to graze; then when the horse raised its head, with some fancy shifting, the mount on the horse's back was again completed.

Gertrude was born in 1918 and as she grew up she soon became tractor operator for her father. After Gertrude's marriage, Lydia was assigned to her duties. Dorthea was born in 1921 and Lydia in 1925.

Dorthea was assigned to many of the household duties, herding cattle, farmyard duties, etc. Hedwig was born in 1929; therefore, being the youngest in the family, was shared by all for the various duties. In her father's later years, as his health began failing, she spent most of her time with him. It was around this time that he acquired a permanent hired hand from North Battleford, SK, by the name of Clifford Valliere.

Adolf at this point could still drive his own car, which was about a 1930 Pontiac Coach. He gave Hedwig, or Hattie [Hedy], as she is better known, and his two nephews, Adolf and Art Kletke, and his oldest grandchild Elmer Schroeder, many rides to town. This also guaranteed a sure treat for the children at the Coblentz General Store in Rosenfeld on each particular trip.

He took up the hobby of weaving jute rope from binder twine. Due to the fine job he made, the demand from his neighbours and friends soon grew for his product. It was at this point that he manufactured a machine with a wheel and hooks that he would crank by hand which rapidly increased his production. The only cost that his customers ever faced was the cost of the twine. On another occasion a hardwood bushing became wore out on his binder used for cutting the grain. After visiting his dealer he found that this part would take about four days to obtain. He arrived home with discouragement and sadly announced his problem to wife, Amelia, who in turn suggested that with his ability he could perhaps make one. Having seen a piece of hardwood in his brother William's machine shed, he went over and borrowed it to begin his task. William in turn laughed and was hoping his brother was feeling all right in taking on such a precise operation. With many long hours of carving and whittling away, when the wee hours of the morning arrived, the part was ready to install and the hired help was back to cutting grain. This bushing lasted the life span of the machine.

By the early forties, Adolf's health began failing rapidly and he passed away on May 9, 1941. Amelia, with hired help and the help of the family, carried on the farming operations.

Amelia remarried Gustav Marsch on September 2, 1945, at Rosenfeld. This marriage ended shortly after her youngest daughter's wedding; Gustav Marsch drowned in a fatal ferry crossing accident in the Red River at Letellier, MB, on July 18, 1948.

At this time Amelia purchased a house in Rosenfeld and her children took over the farming operations. After finding it difficult to live alone she moved to the Morris Manor. Here she resided until her death on May 25, 1979, with funeral services

held from St. John Lutheran Church and interment in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

Janet (Mazinke) Reimer adds this: *My mother and father (Hedy and Edward Mazinke) took over the family farm and operated it as a mixed farm till 1965. Thereafter it became a grain farm, which they worked at tirelessly till 2011, when my husband Larry and I received the farm. Presently we rent the land to my cousins, who continue to operate it as a grain farm.*

Now the buildings are all gone, the trees all removed and ponds closed up. The farmyard may be gone, but the memories will always be there. It will always be my home.

William Kletke was born on section 24-3-1 W northeast of the village of Rosenfeld on August 1, 1900, to Christian and Anne Kletke. A cradle that was built of oak wood for his brother Henry by his father was his first sleeping facility. We all know that at that time there were no power tools, and I remember the fancy carving very well. This same cradle was also used for the three oldest children of William Kletke and six of the August Kletke children.

One interesting story to remember is when the cradle was being used for Orlean, the oldest daughter. The parents and hired help were out doing the chores when a sudden lightning storm came up. The house was struck by lightning and little flakes of wallpaper were ripped off the wall and covered her completely in the cradle. Her brother Adolf quickly scrambled through the wallpaper shreds while Art went for Mother and Dad's help. When it was over, everything turned out fine except for cleaning up the confettied wallpaper and eventually redoing the wallpaper.

As a young boy, William also helped with the pioneer farming operations and he and some of his brothers attended the Hoffnungsthal School during the winter. [Later] William served on the school board for many years, attending school conventions in Winnipeg, delegates being housed at the Royal Alexander Hotel, which at that time was quite an honour.

William married Matilda Sachvie, the daughter of Edward and Marie Sachvie, on October 22, 1929, at Green Bay, MB. They lived for a short period with his father and brother August and Edith, then starting their own farm site on the NE 4 of section 23-3-1 W.

William and Matilda's first son, Adolf, was born in 1930. In 1932, second son Arthur was born, and in 1937, their first daughter, Orlean. In 1941, Verna was born, and in 1943 Eleanor came along. By the time the girls reached the ages four and five their ambitions of moving things rose to quite an extent.

The big willow tree just west of the house supplied a lot of shade and shelter and was soon chosen as their home centre. With the aid of the little green wagon, boards, boxes, etc., were no problem to be moved from behind the barn, which was located on the opposite side of the yard. This eventually was carried out to such extremes that father would have the boys move back some of the material. This only remained behind the barn until father left the yard and moving again went into full force by the two little girls.

In the early hours of the morning of October 29, 1945, Matilda suddenly passed away at the age of thirty-five, suffering from a heart attack. Matilda's was the first funeral to be held from the new Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld, which was constructed that year and dedicated only two weeks before, on October 14, 1945.

William with his great courage kept the family closely knit, with their many problems that they shared together. On November 28, 1946, he married his sister-in-law, Linda Sachvie, of Green Bay, MB. Farming operations continued with an abundant amount of livestock. In 1948 a new home was built on the same farmyard.

William was also known in the district for his many haircuts that he gave to his relatives and friends. During wet periods and on long winter evenings it was very common for William to give from eight to ten haircuts a night. As the men usually brought their children with them for a haircut, the cost was always zero, except for a lecture from William for not bringing their wives along to visit with Mrs. Kletke. The haircutting was done with scissors and manual clippers by kerosene lamplight. This gradually discontinued after a barbershop was again opened in Rosenfeld, although his two oldest sons did not have a haircut in a barbershop until they were eighteen.

In 1952 William served on the building committee for the construction of a new parsonage in Rosenfeld. Together with Mr. William Pokrant and Mr. August Lang, they spent most of the year in a very busy manner. It was somewhere around this time that he was elected to the Lutheran Church council which he served faithfully for many years.

In 1955 William and Linda were blessed with the first child, Leslie. Verna, Eleanor and Leslie all graduated from the W. C. Miller Collegiate in Altona. Leslie continued his education at the University of Manitoba with a degree in agriculture.

Due to William's heart condition, he and Linda sold the farm to the youngest of the family, Leslie, in 1980. They retired that same year to a new home constructed in the village of Rosenfeld.

With his failing health William appreciated greatly the tender loving care that was given to him by his wife Linda. He also enjoyed the frequent visits from his children, grandchildren, and many friends. He passed away peacefully on August 17, 1983, with his wife and all his children at his hospital bedside.

August Kletke was born April 1, 1902, on the southwest quarter of section 24-3-1 W, northeast of Rosenfeld. He was the youngest child of Christian and Anne Kletke. The family lost their mother in 1910. The children learned to do a variety of chores such as washing, mending and ironing clothes, and even baking bread.

For a number of years August farmed with his father and brothers, Henry and William. This continued until the boys each found their bride.

When August began making continuous trips to Beausejour, his family soon realized that he had found someone special. This someone special was Edith Schroeder, the daughter of Henry and Juliann Schroeder (nee: Dreger). August and Edith were married on March 10, 1926, by Pastor Mikkelson in the Lutheran Church at Green Bay near Beausejour, MB. Their first residence was taken up at the Kletke homestead at Rosenfeld, MB.

During the Dirty 30s, times were hard. The children's school lunch consisted of bread spread with lard, salted and peppered (jreevashmalt). A special treat was homemade jam on bread. A regular excursion in the fall was a trip to Morden to pick fruit, such as apples and plums. The apples were kept in a wooden barrel so they would keep for a considerable length of time.

The soil at Rosenfeld was known as heavy gumbo, or Osborne clay. Summer rain caused the ground to become extremely sticky and heavy. Sometimes while herding cattle the children would construct "mud men", similar to miniature snowmen.

The children attended both Saturday and Sunday school at Rosenfeld Lutheran Church, where Rev. H. Keitel taught German, both written and oral.

The children attended the Hoffnungsthal School, which was a mile and a half away from their farm. In the winter the children took their horse "Daisy" and the sleigh to school. When they got to school they would send the horse back home. When it was near closing time, August would hitch Daisy up and send her to school for the children. Needless to say they were always waiting for the faithful old horse.

Harvest was always a busy season. Threshing machines powered with steam, or distillate tractors were used. Work crews came with as many as six stook teams plus numerous field pitchers. The women of the neighbouring farms all helped one

another during this peak period preparing food. As times improved, August purchased his first tractor, which was a 10-20 McCormick Deering. His second tractor was a Model-A John Deere, followed by a brand new A-R John Deere. In 1943 he bought his first combine, a pull-type.

Due to flooding and losing crops, August began to seek a new farm in a different area. August was advised by his brother-in-law, Leo Jeske, that there was a farm for sale in the Teulon area. In November of 1943, August drove to Teulon in his 1934 Chevy sedan to inspect the farm he was advised about.

On January 15, 1944, he returned to Teulon to purchase the John N. Campbell farm. On October 17, 1944, after completing harvest in Rosenfeld, he moved his family and all their belongings to Teulon, MB. With neighbours' help, including at least six trucks, the furniture, cattle, feed, and all belongings were moved all at once.

Edith passed away on October 15, 1981. August passed away on June 9, 1983, with both interments at the Windsor Cemetery in Teulon, MB.

Karl Knopf – Rosenfeld Pioneer Still Active Farmer

By Eileen Martel, the *Echo*, October 2, 1963



Karl and Jacobean (Behrant) Knopf, date unknown; most likely their wedding portrait. [Janet (Mazinke) Reimer]

One of the last remaining pioneers who have seen Rosenfeld change during the years is Karl Knopf. Although he has lived in town for only five years, the district has been his place of residence the last 60 years.

Mr. Knopf was born in Poland and in 1893 left the "old country" to start a new life in Canada. He arrived here on August 18, 1893, and on the following day was hired by Martin Friesen to work on his threshing crew. For several years he worked as a hired man for different farmers and in 1900 bought his own farm.

During the winters, John Braun who owned a mill at Altona, hired him as engineer, and in summer he worked his farm.

Land was cheap at that time and could be bought for \$4.00 an acre, but drainage wasn't very good so that most of the time it was covered with water.

Being disappointed with his purchase, he sold the land only to buy 160 acres in 1902. This land he kept with increases of property through the years. Now he farms two sections.

Still surprisingly active, and in good health at the age of 90 you will often see him driving his tractor or combine on the field. Even though he has hired help. Mr. Knopf does not stay at home and take life easy. He's up at the break of dawn and he's usually the last one to quit at dusk.

In 1905 he was married to the former Jo Robine Berndt [Behrant], who is now 80 years old and at the time of this writing is in the Altona hospital. She has suffered from a heart condition for years, but despite her failing health continues to be in good spirits at all times.

The Knopfs have had 58 years of married life, something attained by very few. Life has not been just one big chore for them, for they have spent several winters in the southern states.

One of Mr. Knopf's favourite pastimes is reminiscing about old times. And looking back on those years, he says the hardships they endured helped them in later years to overcome many an obstacle that stood in their way.

August Mazinke

Submitted by Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke

August Mazinke, son of Pauline (Pokrant) Mazinke and William Mazinke, was born February 19, 1892.

At a young age, he and his friends were playing around the railway tracks when he was hit by a moving train. His friends put him on their sled and took him home to his mother. She was so shocked to see him hurt so badly. He had to have his leg amputated.

He was determined to get an education so he would drive his bicycle with one leg and carry his crutches with him on the bike. He got his elementary schooling in Rosenfeld and his high school in Gretna, Manitoba. He would work for room and board while continuing his education. Then off to Normal School in Morden, Manitoba.

His father died in 1903.

His first school to teach at was Hoffnungsthal, a little country school about six miles northeast of Rosenfeld. He would drive his bike while carrying his crutches to school where there was a little house for him to live in. There was a family living across from the school where he could buy eggs, milk, butter and cream. My mother would often bake bread and send it along with her brothers-in-law, who were also attending school. August had to start the fire in the big-belly stove in the school early every morning so all would be nice and warm when school started. He also had to keep his little two-room house warm in winter.

He was my mother-in-law's (Bertha Schroeder Mazinke) first teacher. Little did he know that one day she would be his sister-in-law.

Then he developed pneumonia and passed away at the age of 22 in 1914.

Talk about determination and hard work.

The Pokrants, Loewens, and other vignettes

(Author not credited, probably Eileen Martel), from *The Journal*, Morris, Man. Nov. 27, 1967

Buildings and landmarks are important in any event, but it's the people that developed the country who played the significant part. Their stories are both interesting and informative but still at times rather sad too. Hardships were certainly endured by all the newcomers but then Canada meant a whole new adventure for these people.

Among those around when Rosenfeld was starting to sprout is Mr. Dan Pokrant. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Pokrant, arrived in Canada in 1893, making the trip across the ocean in what had originally been a cattle ship. Strangers in a new world they must have felt quite alone, with all their relatives and friends back in the old country. The voyage itself had been most unpleasant and resulted in them becoming sick. The continual rocking of the ship had been most annoying and the meals served on board consisted of slimy cooked fish, so these ill after effects seemed unavoidable.

Setting foot on land again, their journey wasn't over yet, but at least the sea was disappearing from sight as their train started westward. Travelling through the rocky countryside of Quebec and Ontario

their first impression of Canada was somewhat disappointing, and once again they felt just a little sorry for leaving their homes in Russia. This feeling left them once they crossed the Manitoba border, and the open prairies stretched for miles and miles ahead.

Reaching the Winnipeg immigration office, officials here inquired if there wasn't someone they knew in the province. Well yes there was a Hoffman family at Plum Coulee who were slight acquaintances. Sent to Plum Coulee, Mr. Pokrant obtained work the following day, with a Mennonite family. This luck didn't last long, for when hail destroyed their entire crop Mr. Pokrant was paid a sum of twenty dollars for a month's work and the task of looking for another job started.

Following another short employment period on a farm owned by a Klassen family, Mr. and Mrs. Pokrant settled down in the town of Rosenfeld. For a number of years Mr. Pokrant did carpentry work; many of the old buildings still in existence are examples of his fine workmanship. The first house constructed for their own use is even today used as a dwelling. Owned by Mr. O. Heim it is presently occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Neustadter.

Mr. Pokrant's main ambition was to farm, and in 1900 he purchased a piece of land one mile north of Rosenfeld. This very farm was passed on to his son Dan; he too has retired and since 1960, Walter, a grandson of Ferdinand Pokrant, has lived in the family dwellings.

The pioneers who settled at Rosenfeld lacked important things like cash and material possessions, but while times were hard and money scarce there was one consolation that taxes in those days, too, were low. Around 1890 taxes for a quarter section of land amounted to \$4.00.

Mr. Jacob. J. Schellenberg recalls that by 1900 the taxes had gone up somewhat. He remembers, that one particular autumn in the early 1900s his parents sold their entire flock of turkeys and netted a sum of \$35.00. This amount was sufficient to pay for the taxes on their one farm.

Other early pioneers of Mennonite origin are the Jacob Loewens. They came to this area in 1901 and the family took up farming north east of town.

Arriving in Manitoba in 1875, the Loewens were among the first Mennonites to come here from Russia. These families came up the Red River by boat, stepping on shore at the Rat River near Ste. Agathe, first settling in the area extending till Steinbach. Many of them later came over to the West Reserve and the Loewens were among the ones who made the change.

Retired now for several years, Mr. Jacob Loewen received the little schooling that he did right here at

Rosenfeld. The first few years while attending the Hopefarm school, he studied German and learned his English at the school in town. Most of the studies consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic with hardly any history, geography or science being taught at all.

His whole life wasn't spent in Rosenfeld, for after his marriage he moved to Saskatchewan. A four-year stay in that province drained them of all their earnings, only to return and start where they had left off. So from 1918 to 1957 he managed a dray business. As he recalls, the first years were hard since all the hauling was done with a team of horses, and only in 1949, could he afford to buy a truck. So for the last eight years until his retirement in 1957, the work was somewhat easier.

There are others that grew up in this environment and like to reminisce about days gone by. Mr. David D. Friesen relates an incident that occurred to his father shortly after their arrival in 1875. This particular winter (he couldn't recall the year) had been exceptionally cold with lots of snow and plenty of blizzards. While on a trip across the border to get flour off of a boat frozen up in the Red River, a terrible blizzard started. Unable to find their bearing, and the horses almost exhausted, they were forced to stop and wait until the storm let up. His companion froze to death and Mr. Friesen too would have perished had not the Indians found him and taken him into their shelter.

The shock of losing his companion was quite evident, but otherwise the only after effects of the ordeal were the loss of some of his toes which had to be removed because of severe frostbite. Mr. Friesen recovered and went on other trips after that, but never did get over that harassing experience.

The Friesens lived at Halbstadt at the time, moving to Rosenfeld in 1915.

August Pokrant – 1893

By Helen (Pokrant) Recksiedler, July, 1970

August Pokrant left Poland in 1893 as a young man of 22 years, and went to Detroit, Michigan, where he worked at the railroad until 1895, when he came to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and started working in a butcher shop.

Katherin Mattern came to Winnipeg from Austria with her parents and three sisters and one brother in 1893. After a short time she started working in laundry, but later took up housework and worked for Mr. and Mrs. Port.

Some time after August Pokrant came to Winnipeg, he met Katherin Mattern, and on January 31, 1897, they were married in the Trinity Lutheran Church (located at that time on Henry Ave.) by

Pastor Ruccino. Later they moved to Rosenfeld and were living in town where he did carpentry and other kinds of work.

After a time, he bought a quarter section of land five miles northwest of Rosenfeld and built buildings on it. In 1908, they moved on their own land. This was all prairie and he broke and worked the land to be cropped.

In 1908, they bought a half section of land one mile northeast of Rosenfeld. This was also all prairie. For their living quarters, a small house was bought and moved onto the farm. Then a barn and other buildings were built, and in 1910 they moved on to their new farm. After a few years they bought more land, and by 1915 they had five quarters of land.

Hired help was always necessary, as all the farm work had to be done with horses. At times as many as 20 horses were needed, also a number of cattle and other stock, to keep the family provided with food.

The family consisted of three daughters and three sons: Elisabeth, Helen, Bill, Ernest, Hedwig (Heddy), and Leo.

In 1916, a new house was built and the old one was sold to New Hoffnungsthal School District, where it was moved to be used for living quarters for the teacher.

Transportation was all by horse and buggy or sleigh until 1918, when they bought a new Chevrolet Baby Grand touring car.

They lived on the farm till 1934, when they bought a house in Rosenfeld and moved in. By this time all the children were married, except Leo, who was still at home.

They were thankful to the Lord for giving them good health and prosperity in all their undertakings. In 1935, August Pokrant became sick, and in a short while, passed away. Two years later Katherin, being very lonely and after a short illness, followed her beloved husband.

August Pokrant and his wife Katherin were devoted Christians upon their arrival in Rosenfeld. They belonged to the St. John Lutheran Church all their life. August held many offices in the church council, being treasurer for many years.

Their family tree carries on with 15 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.

August & Emma Recksiedler By Grant Recksiedler

August and Emma Recksiedler and their family moved to Rosenfeld in 1925, where they resided and farmed at the southeast junction of Highways 14 and 30.



Darlene (Abraham) Hafso: *Both sets of my grandparents, August and Emma (Mazinke) Recksiedler and Oscar and Otilie (Bobert) Abraham on October 15, 1947, at the Recksiedler farm site, southeast corner of Rosenfeld, on the wedding day of Alfred Abraham and Laura Recksiedler. [Darlene (Abraham) Hafso]*

August Recksiedler was born a twin on February 6, 1883, in Poland. His twin did not survive and he had only one older sibling, Karl Michael, born January 6, 1873, in Poland. Their parents were Michael and Wilhelmiene (Jabusch) Recksiedler, who came to Canada in 1894 from the country of Poland, Russian Empire, the district of Wolnicia Grabowksi, in the province of Lodz, and village of Marjanow. The family landed in Canada aboard the SS *Numidian*. They settled around the De Wet, Manitoba, area, later changed to Sewell, and Michael began farming with his brother Karl. Michael died in 1905 and Wilhelmiene in 1907, and are buried at the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

In 1903, August married Emma Mazinke, daughter of Wilhelm and Pauline (Pokrant) Mazinke. August and Emma had 13 children, of which eight survived. Four children died at ages 3-13 months, and one at 11 years of age. Helena (Mrs. Fred Pokrant) farmed near the New Kennedy school district area and moved to Winnipeg; Lydia (Emmanuel Janke) farmed in the Rosenfeld area; William (Erica Janke) and Gus (Ethel Janke) farmed in the Sewell area; Leo farmed in the Rosenfeld and Sewell area; Edward farmed at Rosenfeld; Ernest (Irma Mekelburg) farmed in the Rosenfeld and Sewell area; Laura (Alfred Abraham) farmed in the Rosenfeld area.

Getting established wasn't without hardships and challenges. The first few months of their marriage August and Emma lived with his brother Karl at Sewell until their house was built. August and Karl had to travel to the wood mill in Beausejour for the lumber to build their house. This was a three-day journey one way by horse and sleigh, with stops at Union Point and Winnipeg. However, their house

was completed in time for their first child born in 1904.

Water supply was also a challenge, needing to be hauled approximately seven miles, from St. Jean. August and his brother Karl dug a 90-foot-deep well with much manual labour and a horse-powered drilling device, only to find to their disappointment that it was only salt water.

In 1933 August and Emma's eldest son William with his wife Erica started farming the land originally settled at Sewell, which had since been farmed by August's grandson Len, and currently by his great-grandson Bill Recksiedler (Tammy Harder).

August was a family man and active member of the St. John Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld. In his early days he walked nine miles many a time to attend services. In his later years he was an active elder and council member of that church.

In 1925 August and Emma Recksiedler purchased land from Abram P. Friesen when they moved to Rosenfeld, and farmed with their family until August's health failed and he passed away on August 8, 1958. Emma then lived in Rosenfeld with family members until her passing on March 31, 1974. August and Emma are buried at the Rosenfeld cemetery. They were married 55 years and had 29 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren, and five great-great grandchildren. Their children and grandchildren were actively involved with church, local community events, school, sports, and farming. August and Emma's descendants have since relocated to many areas of Manitoba, Canada, and United States.

Carl A. Recksiedler – 1892

By Louis Recksiedler, July, 1970; submitted by Sarah Friesen; edited by Les Recksiedler

One of the early settlers of southern Manitoba, he came to Canada from Poland, arriving in Gretna on May 2, 1892, with his wife, Mathilde Biehlke, and a daughter Emilie, three years old. Not getting any work in Gretna and having no money, Carl walked to Winnipeg, where he got work at the CPR as a section man to work at Reaburn, Manitoba, for 75 cents per day. A week or so later, his wife and daughter came to Winnipeg by train and got some work at a market gardener named Mr. Kruger. Several weeks later the little girl became sick and died and Karl came in from Reaburn to Winnipeg for the funeral, but for that he lost his job at CPR. Shortly after, about the middle of August, 1892, they came to Rosenfeld and Karl worked at many places, mostly doing carpenter work. While living in Rosenfeld, a son, Heinrich (Henry), and a daughter, Helena, were born. Later that year they moved to Beausejour, Manitoba,

where they started farming. Their first power for farming was a yoke of oxen, but in a year or so they bought some horses. In Beausejour, two sons were born: Reinhold (Roy) and Ludwig (Louis), and they had a family of three boys and one girl.

In 1902 they bought a quarter section of land at DeWet, Manitoba, later changed to Sewell, and in 1903 they built a house and barn all in one and moved to their new farm. This land was all prairie and had to be broken and disked to prepare for grain farming. After the move to Sewell, five more children were born: Gustave, Daniel, Adelina, Ferdinand, and Ottilie. They now had a family of six sons and three daughters. The family all worked and were quite prosperous. More land was bought and they owned a total of four quarters of land. All this land was worked with horses and they had a total of 18 horses for this. Besides the horses, they had up to 20 head of cattle and young stock.

It took a lot of work to grow and store feed for all the animals, but everyone had his job and worked hard at it, and on the whole everyone enjoyed his part and was happy.

Transportation until 1917 was all by horse and buggy, and in winter by sleigh. It was just common to drive 10 or 12 miles for the family needs, in winter as well as in summer, and on Sunday to church. In winter it was quite a drive, but was done regularly. Then in 1917, they bought a brand new "shining" Model T Ford touring car, the pride for summer driving.

For recreation it was mostly just visiting friends and neighbors, some house parties and dances. Nearly every summer there was always the big outing when all the family went to Morris to the fair. This was always a big celebration, and Dad would give everyone 25 or 35 cents to spend "as you want."

In 1916 they built a large new modern home, so the family did not have to live in the living quarters on one end of the barn anymore.

By 1917 some of the children were grown up and getting married, and by 1932, all except Ferdinand and Ottilie were married. Strange as it may seem, two sons, Henry and Ludwig, were married to two daughters of the August Pokrant family, and three sons, Reinhold, Gustave, and Daniel, married three daughters of the Janke family.

The family then spread to different parts of Manitoba and some went to United States.

Carl A. Recksiedler and his wife Mathilde had a venturesome and hard-working life in their adopted country, but never felt sorry for leaving their land of birth.

Carl and Mathilde were devoted Christians and members of the Lutheran Church and when they

moved to Sewell they joined the St. John Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld and were faithful members.

They enjoyed mostly good health and were thankful to the Lord for all the good health and prosperity He bestowed unto them.

On Jan 26, 1931, Mathilde Recksiedler became ill and passed away to her heavenly reward. Four years later, July 21, 1935, at Sewell, Carl, after a somewhat lengthy illness, passed on to be with his beloved wife. They both passed on with the knowledge that their earthly work was done with the Lord's blessing.

Although they are not living now to know, their family would include 27 grandchildren, 66 great-grandchildren, and 12 great-great-grandchildren.

(Some of this information came from the *Diarium Pastorale* by Pastor Wilhelm Willing.)

With Saunche-mum in Amsterdam: Johann A. and Elisabeth Schellenberg

By Elizabeth Falk

One of fifteen children, Johan W. Schellenberg of Amsterdam is said to have left the impression that he came from Russia with his parents, alone, and always remained an only child. His parents (my great-grandparents) Elisabeth Warkentin (1846-1919) and Johann A. Schellenberg (1839-1919) were married in the village of Warshnau, Prov. Taurien, in 1864. They and four children are listed on the *S.S. Manitoban No. 36*, arriving in Quebec on July 27, 1875.

Looking up into the branches of their family tree I trace the outline of empty spaces, not there, reaching out to embrace a dim memory of Susanna, only child of Johann A. and Elisabeth's daughter Elisabeth. I remember her from very long ago as *Saunche-mum*, all but lost here in a shroud of identical names that reach back to my ancestors in Russia. She is not in a sepia photo labelled: *Grandfather Johann Schellenberg farm home in Neu-Anlage in 1896*. Six-year-old Saunche has left for Gnadenfeld with her parents Elisabeth and Jacob Kroeker.

In this photo, surrounded by five children, Johann A. and Elisabeth are seated on chairs in the front yard, a buggy in the background. It is summertime, a grove of trees in full leaf to the left. A white picket fence encloses the front of the house with the *Gank/corridor*, separating it from the barn. The gate of the fence is standing open. The door into the barn is open...

Also missing from the photo are Johan W. (1867-1946) and his wife Maria Rempel (1868-1943). They left this home for Amsterdam the previous fall, taking with them their daughter Elisabeth, and son Johan. Their youngest son, Bill Schellenberg, describes

the challenge his parents faced in Amsterdam in 1895: "The conditions must have been harsh and disappointing, considering the poor drainage in the area. Flooding of the land resulted in late seeding, poor yield and quality, but they hung onto what they had."

Being the youngest in a family of many sons who farmed in close proximity to their parents, Bill was not needed on the farm. Growing up he observed and supported his mother, at the same time developing skills as an artist and a writer. In his memoir he acknowledges Saunche. Her parents Elisabeth and Jacob having died, she moved with her grandparents, Johann A. and Elisabeth, to Amsterdam to a little house on the yard of Johan W. and Maria, a dozen or so years after that family photo was taken. Bill calls her *Sanna*:

Their small house was conveniently located at the other end of our garden, which was quite a nice arrangement for them, to be able to walk into the garden when ever they felt like it and watch things grow. They also kept a few hens to provide them with eggs, and it gave them something to do as well. Sanna also had a cow, which was kept at our place with our animals. And she would come over at milking time to help with the milking, and then carry her pail of milk home.

I think Sanna must have been a bit lonesome, since she had no brothers or sisters and now no parents, and maybe not many friends either. She was frequently being observed looking out the window toward the east, to see if maybe, just maybe, some one might come around the corner and head their way and come and visit them for a while. At that time, I myself could have been about six years old. And I remember quite clearly visiting her and the grandparents. And of course I remember eating Plüme-mooss, out of a special earthenware bowl that grandma had...

Living at the end of the garden was just the right thing for grandma, because she enjoyed walking in the garden, to see how everything was getting along. Our family members would frequently observe her from the windows of our house, and mother would sometimes say: Na noo es Groadt Morrache aulwadda em Goade.

These are the nine children of Johan W. and Maria Schellenberg:

Elisabeth (1891-1975) married Bernhard Penner. Their children: Johan, Eva, Anna, Maria, Bernhard, and Jacob. They moved to Paraguay in 1927. Elisabeth returned as a widow in 1964, with Anna, Maria, and Anna, Maria's daughter.

Johan (1894-1958) lived with his parents. Deaf and mute he remained a recluse in a tiny upstairs room, dying at age sixty-four of a heart attack.

Jacob (1896-1981) and Agatha Klippenstein farmed north of Rosenfeld. They had eight children: John, Maria, Jacob, Helena, Peter, Mary, Anne, and Elma. Jacob survived the death of Agatha, married Helena Thiessen and out-lived her by ten years. His son Peter K. and his wife Marjorie also farmed north of Rosenfeld.

David (1898-1965) and Anna A. Braun lived in Amsterdam, then in Steinbach where he was a builder. Their children: David, John, Annie, Erdman Benjamin, Bertha, and Mary. Erdman (Ed) preserved genealogical family records.

Peter J. (1901-1986) and Mary Klippenstein farmed in Amsterdam. Their children: Leonard, Verna, Edgar, Esther, Leona, Delores, Sandra, and Arlene. They moved back and forth to Rosenfeld several times. After Peter J. died, Mary lived at the Rose Village Villa where, from her window to the west she watched over her son Edgar and his family across the road. (Edgar and Marge lived in the former home of Henry and Gladys Berg on Main Street from 1964 until 2015, Edgar working in construction and Marge as an E.A. at the Rosenfeld School.)

Susanna (1904-1995) lived in Amsterdam with her parents. When Maria died in 1943, Susanna looked after her father. After his death in 1946, Susanna moved to town with her brothers, Tony and Bill.

Heinrich R. (1906-1992) and Anna P. Braun farmed on a quarter section, north of where his parents lived. Their children: Laura, Reynold, Elvera, John A., Marlene, Linda, and Milton. Marlene and Walter Hiebert lived on the original family farm for c. twenty-five years.

Anton J. (1909-2000), carpenter, lived in Amsterdam and Rosenfeld.

Wilhelm J. (Bill) (1911-2006) carpenter, artist, writer in Rosenfeld. From the early 1940s to the early 1950s, Bill operated a stationery store in what is now the Rosenfeld Post Office. In the early 1950s, Tony and Bill operated North End Lumber on Main Street, now the Good Neighbour Centre. In winter, they built rafters in the back in preparation for the building season. The front of the building was a hardware store where, on Saturdays, their brother Peter J. cut hair.

* * *

Johann A. and Elisabeth's youngest son Heinrich J. (1885-1978), a teacher and a carpenter, and his wife Agatha Hiebert (1883-1959) moved from Altona to Rosenfeld at the end of the school year for the

summer of 1927, briefly operating a Chevrolet and Massey Harris dealership there. Three of Heinrich J. and Agatha's children returned to live in or around Rosenfeld and raised their families there:

Katharina (Tina) Schellenberg (1909-2001) and Deidrich F. Klassen (1906-2002) farmed in Reichenbach near his parents Johan and Susanna Klassen. They raised three children, Dorothy, Ruth, and Steve.

Elisabeth Schellenberg (1912-1978) married the widower Wilhelm H. Falk (1892-1976) with whom she farmed in Roseville and raised a blended family of twelve children. [See photo in Wilhelm Falk family history, "Later Families".]

Henry H. Schellenberg (1920-1997) and Mary Penner (1922-2013) moved to Rosenfeld from Altona in 1959 with their children: Mary E., Henry A., John D., Joseph, Eugene, and Martha. All gifted musicians, they lived in a two-storey house, at the corner of Main Street and Henry Avenue, situated just south of the salty village well. Henry H., a piano tuner, worked frequently in the Swan River area. Mary E. remembers her parents playing together, on two separate pianos, in a garage on their yard where he restored pianos and violins. In 1965, the house was torn down and a schoolhouse moved to the lot from the Flowery Bank School in the RM of Morris. In 2018, Gene lives in the family home and operates a welding shop next door where he designed and built a CNC (computer numerical control) machine, venturing into projects like antique tractor parts.



Susanna (Saunche) Kroeker, date and place unknown. [Elizabeth Falk]

Looking to the north, past Bunge, from the library windows on the fourth floor at The Gardens on Tenth in Altona, I can see a house with dark green siding and a light gray roof. There's an upstairs balcony, facing east, on the relocated former home of Johan W. and Maria Schellenberg of Amsterdam. The windows of the two-storey home are boarded up and a chain link fence surrounds the area. Moved there from Amsterdam, the house is used by the Altona Fire Department to practise rescue operations, using fake victims in rooms filled with theatrical smoke.

As an only child, Susanna Kroeker (1890-1965) was a wealthy young woman in her father's death. She lived throughout her life with family and friends, dying at the home of Anna Bergen in Altona. She is buried at the Altona Municipal Cemetery. I will remember Saunche-mum as a mild-mannered gentle woman who wore gray felt slippers.

Gottfried and Helena (Schwark) Schroeder Submitted by Marlene (Schroeder) Baskerville



Gottfried Schroeder at the wheel, c. 1916; his children on the running board – L-R: Bertha, Albert, Roy. [Janet (Mazinke) Reimer]

Helena Schwark and family lived in the Hoffnungsthal area when she met Gottfried, a farm worker from the Amsterdam area. They married in December 24, 1902, settled on the Schwark farm and raised their family of ten children. They retired to Rosenfeld in 1944 and lived in a house on Main Street immediately south of the current post office building.

Gottfried served on town council for a short time as well as being the organist for the Rosenfeld St. John Lutheran Church. They are buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

The oldest child, Bertha, took over as church organist after her father retired. She married Henry Mazinke, moved to the Sewell (Morris) area and raised their eight children. Henry and Bertha are

buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery. Members of the family still reside in the Morris area.

Roy married Ida (Pokrant) and farmed two-and-a-half miles north of Rosenfeld, where they raised four children. Roy and Ida are buried in the Rosenfeld cemetery, as well as two of their children: Doreen, who passed away at age of 17 from measles in 1952; and Edgar, who continued to farm until his passing in 1996.

Albert and Martha (Kletke) are buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery. They had one son.

Arnold and Marge (Redekopp), had three children, and Arnold is buried in Rosenfeld. Marge continues to live in Winnipeg.

Art and Lenore (Nora Bobert) are buried near Steinbach. They had four children.

These three brothers – Albert, Arnold, and Art, with their families – farmed in the Hoffnungsthal area and later took up residence in the Morden, Winnipeg, and Steinbach areas respectively.

A son, Edward, died at age 13 in an accident from a blow to the head by a horse. As well, a daughter, Wilhelmina, lived only a few days before she died. They are buried in the Hoffnungsthal Cemetery.

Ernest, the only son who saw action overseas during World War II, died August 1, 1944, in France, at the age of 20. He is buried in the Ranville War Cemetery, France. A memorial bench is dedicated to our brother and uncle at Glen Lawn Cemetery, Winnipeg.

Alfred and Eleanore (Eisbrenner) farmed in the Rosenfeld area and raised four children. Besides farming, Alfred was an accomplished craftsman, both in woodworking and making marvellous stained glass pieces. He owned and operated Western Woodworking in Altona and is buried at Glen Lawn Cemetery, Winnipeg. Eleanore worked for many years with the Provincial Department of Agriculture in the Altona Agricultural Office.

Penny (Elsie) is the youngest in the family. She married Ernest "Ply" (Pluchinski) and moved to the west coast, where she currently resides. They have two daughters. Ernest is buried in the Sewell Cemetery.

The Schroeder family has always considered Rosenfeld their home community, many being educated in the Rosenfeld School and moving on to other areas for education and/or training. Various careers have taken many of them to different communities and provinces.

As the family continues to expand to include great- and great-great-grandchildren, it is amazing to think the continued successes and the impact family members have had on our society started with two people – Gottfried and Helena.

Abram B. and Susanna (Braun) Thiessen By grandson A.J. Thiessen



Abram B. Thiessen and Susanna (Braun) Thiessen [Judy Fehr]

Grandfather Thiessen was born January 20, 1861, in Einlage, Ukraine Russia.

Grandmother was a maid on the Thiessen farm. They were married in Einlage on October 2, 1880. New regulations in Russia were enacted, forcing all Mennonite youths 18 years and over ([even if] married) to do voluntary service in forestry. Grandfather began serving in 1880 and was in charge of 60 men. I have letters he wrote to Grandma during his time of service, written in rhyme. Since they are love letters, I don't know whether they should be circulated.

Two boys called Abram were stillborn and the third Abram (my father) was born on July 7, 1887. Two more children, Jacob and Susanna, were born before [the family] immigrated to Canada in 1892, possibly in October. They spent the first winter in a dugout on the banks of the Red River near St. Agathe. Next summer he ran the ferry across the river, and in the fall of 1893, he took the position of schoolteacher in the village of Chortitz, south of Winkler. He taught there for one year, but [the villagers] being members of the old colony church, Grandfather did not abide by all their church customs. He had a mustache and voted on establishing a municipality – two no-nos. So they were expelled from the church. They then moved to Rosenfeld and spent the first summer on a farm later occupied by Ferdinand Pokrant, one mile north of Rosenfeld. They moved to their farm at Amsterdam in 1895, I believe. They rented the farm from M. Christie of Emerson and continued renting the farm until 1915, when they retired to Rosenfeld, where they lived until they passed away.

He was an active man and served the municipality of Rhineland as weeds inspector for 12 years. He was also janitor of the Rosenfeld School for about 8 years. He had a green thumb and loved

gardening and tree-planting. He planted all the trees surrounding the Rosenfeld schoolyard. Children born to them in Canada were George, Katherine (Mrs. John Loewen), David, Henry, and Isaac. Grandfather died in their home in Rosenfeld on August 12, 1935, of heart failure. My mother moved in with my grandmother after his death, and then in 1941, Mr. and Mrs. David Thiessen moved in with her until her death. Grandmother died in the Altona hospital on July 19, 1948.

Since I was the oldest grandson, I received a lot of personal attention from my grandparents. In fact, Grandfather was closer to me than my father. I stayed on the farm with them for weeks at a time when I was only four, but I have a lot of memories. When I started school, Grandfather led me to school on my first day. He had severe arthritis in his hands, so on his weed-inspection trips, I did the driving at the age of 11 and he helped with the other hand. He also advanced me \$200.00 to take my Grade 11 in Steinbach in 1929. It took me four years to repay this, but this showed his interest in education, which my father did not have. Incidentally, I believe that Grandma could not read or write; I never saw her read. On Sunday mornings, Grandpa would read to her from the Bible and sing hymns from the old *Gesangbuch*. He had a beautiful baritone voice and served as *vorsänger* for at least 30 years in the Bergthaler Church. Three days preceding his death, he called his sons in and also asked me, since my father was not present. He invited Bishop Schultz and related to us that he had peace with God and advised his descendants to be sure that they would not deviate from the true faith in God. That night he lost consciousness and had a stroke, from which he did not recover.

We, as his descendants, should be proud of this heritage. Our grandparents did not accumulate wealth, but they had a respect and lifestyle that we all could well emulate.

Abram B. and Susanna (Klassen) Wiebe Submitted by Wendy (Lang) Thiessen

Source: *The Lineage of Gerhard Wiebe & Anna Redekopp*, by John Dyck

Abram Wiebe was born August 30, 1883, in Rosenthal in the Chortitza Colony of Russia. He and his parents came to Canada in 1902 and settled in the Rosenfeld area. Within five or six years he was teaching at Reichenbach school, one mile west of Rosenfeld. He boarded at the Klassens' home, across the road from the school, where he met his future wife, Susanna Klassen. Their six children were Olga, Margaret, Anne, Kay, Erna and Abe. (One boy died in infancy.)



Abram B. Wiebe, long-time Amsterdam teacher. [Judy Fehr]

Abram had finished his high school in Russia but in order to upgrade his teaching qualification and his command of the English language, he attended the MCI in Gretna in 1909. After a year there, he obtained a teaching position at the Amsterdam school. He taught grades 1-8 and Grade Nine correspondence students.


Abram and Susanna's children were born and grew up in the house that was on the same property as Amsterdam school. My mother, Kay, says he never favoured his own children in class. Occasionally he would provide a treat of fresh fruit to the other students.

Not only did he teach at the school, but he was also required to clean the school and heat it in the winter, and the barn was to be ready for horses of children that came to school by sleigh. He was the leader of a community choir, a mixed school children's choir, and a men's choir. The all-men choir gathered in the evening at the school and my aunt, Anne Rempel (Wiebe), said her sister Olga Toews (Wiebe) would play the organ.

His musical abilities included violin, guitar, harp, and organ, and his daughters inherited the gift of music. Most of them played one of these instruments and the girls also sang. Our mother Kay told us of the times they sang at barn dances and weddings.

Abram augmented his earnings by working with the threshing gang as Kaustemaun (threshing machine operator). As well, he was employed as appraiser for the businesses of the municipality of Rhineland. He continued with this even after his retirement in 1938 due to ill health.

Abram died in Winkler on May 15, 1941. Susanna died December 22, 1989, in Altona, MB.

 *The Peter B. Wiebes of Weidenfeld raised two of their children to become prominent in their professions: Agatha, a registered nurse, and Cornelius, a general practitioner and politician, were both trailblazers for Manitoba Mennonites in the field of medicine. They both studied at the Mennonite Education Institute in Gretna, and then the Mennonite Collegiate Institute.*

Agatha Wiebe (1887-1979), Pioneer Registered Nurse

By niece Marjorie (Wiebe) Hildebrand, from *Preservings*, No. 14, June 1999

Peter B. and Anna Wiebe lived in Weidenfeld, near Rosenfeld, Manitoba, where Agatha was born in 1887. She had three older sisters, Cornelia 8, Anna, 4 and Helena, one-and-a-half years old. After [younger sister] Maria's birth, Peter and Anna had four sons. The three girls, older than the boys, were sent to Rosenfeld until they got a school closer to home in 1898. Later all of the Wiebe children attended MEI except Peter, my father, who preferred farming to sitting in school benches. Peter B. Wiebe was involved in establishing the MCI in Gretna which must have influenced Agatha in her educational interests. Of her school days she writes as follows: "My school days I spent in Rosenfeld, since that was the only public school in our area. The school year was from November till March, according to the weather. When I was nine we got a public school in Weidenfeld and at age eleven my school days were over since my help was needed at home." Agatha remained on the farm till she was 17.

In 1904 she registered at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute where she finished her Grade XI. Agatha entered nurse's training at the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1911 at age 24. Her father, Peter B. took her down there and told her she would have to stay till she was finished for they could not afford to have her come home for a visit in between. She spent three years in training and graduated with an RN certificate in 1914. Because her U.S. standing was not recognized in Canada she took a postgraduate course in communicable diseases at the King George Hospital in Winnipeg and then wrote her Canadian RN. exams, thus receiving her Canadian standing. She served seven years as nurse in the TB Sanatorium in Ninette, Manitoba, ending up as head nurse in her last years there. Agatha may well have been one of the first Mennonite woman to graduate as a registered nurse.

Cornelius W. Wiebe (1893-1999)

From *Dictionary of Manitoba Biography* by J.M. Bumstead, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999

Born at Altona [Weidenfeld], he was educated at Wesley College, the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Medical College (graduating in 1924). He began to practise medicine in Winkler in 1925. During the course of his medical career, which ended in 1978, he delivered more than 6,000 babies, often after journeys by sleigh to farm homes. He served as Liberal MLA from 1932 to 1936, founded Bethel Hospital in Winkler in 1935, and established a school for mentally challenged children in Winkler. He was President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba (1945) and the Manitoba Medical Association (1952-1953). Wiebe served on the Winkler School Board from 1929 to 1953 and was a life member of the Liberal Party. He received a Manitoba Golden Boy Award (1967) and was inducted into the Order of Canada (1999).

In the community history book, Kane: The Spirit Lives On 2000, David Penner recalls:

[Dr. Wiebe] passed away in July of 1999 at the age of 106 ...and was my substitute teacher in the spring months of 1921. He earned his way through medical school this way. One day he took us kids into the basement of the school and let us look at his microscope. He dissected a fly and put the parts under the microscope and showed us how big the legs and feet looked. To me, a kid of eight, the feet looked like huge suction cups. Then he said, "Just look at that! First they go outside and crawl around on the cow dung pile, and then they come in the house and crawl on the butter!" Well, that day when we got home from school, my mother had just finished churning butter, but somehow my appetite for fresh butter had disappeared.

The Lineage of Gerhard Wiebe and Anna Redekopp: 1806-2005

From *Our Heritage*, compiled by John Dyck, published by the Wiebe family history book committee, 2005

Chapter 10, p. 166

The village of Rosenfeld has a significant history with the Wiebe family. David and Katharina (Klassen) Wiebe, Isaac and Susanna (Klassen) Wiebe and widower Johann Wiebe were founding members in 1875 of the village of Rosenfeld, which was south of the present Rosenfeld. (*See photo of Isaac Wiebes in Album A.*)

On July 26, 1875, the above three Wiebe families

filed application for homestead, in the area of what became Darp Rosenfeld. This village was located south of Buffalo Creek on section 32-2 I W, running diagonally in a west to easterly direction with most of it in the north half of the section.

Rosenfeld became a local point for others who followed when they arrived in Manitoba. Heinrich Wiebe, single, arrived in Rosenfeld a year later (1876) and after marrying Maria Abrams moved on to Neuanlage, Hochstadt, and then south of Swift Current, Sask.

When Jacob and Elisabeth (Wiebe) Teichroeb and widower Gerhard Wiebe II came to Canada in 1891 they spent some time at Rosenfeld before settling south of Morden and north of Rosenfeld respectively.

When Bernhard Wiebes came in 1902, they also spent some time in Darp Rosenfeld before moving to the Town of Rosenfeld and later Morden. Many of the Wiebe descendants later moved to western Canada, to Mexico, Paraguay, and the USA.

[Rosenfeld] was the first stopover for many of the later arrivals. It may well have been the first village to break up when residents started moving into the homesteads in the 1890s taking their buildings with them.

There are still two surviving cemeteries on the section on which the first village of Rosenfeld was located. Some Wiebe descendants and many Klassen relatives are buried here.

The Buffalo Creek was important to early settlers as a source of water for their cattle. In spring the creek became quite a lake and boating was common here for many years. In later years people came from the Town of Altona to go boating here. The Wiebes had this recreation at their doorstep.

Annual flooding of the Rosenfeld and Plum Coulee area resulted in the area being placed under the Drainage Act. In 1902 and 1904 the area flooded, covering the land for two weeks. The land is fairly level, particularly to the north of the Town of Rosenfeld. In 1903 dredging began in the area going east to the Red River. In 1904 severe spring flooding retarded drainage work, but a six-mile canal was dug in an easterly direction from Buffalo Lake providing considerable relief to adjoining lands and the village of Rosenfeld.

The CPR railroad built in 1882 also went through Darp Rosenfeld. It came up from Gretna at the USA border, crossed the CPR Pembina Mountain Branch (coming from Morden) at the Rosenfeld junction, and continued up to Winnipeg. At that time only a telegraph office and a small station had been constructed at the Junction of the Pembina Mountain and Gretna Branch. No development occurred until

increased immigration and agricultural expansion opened the area in the 1890s. By 1891 two elevators and a grain warehouse were under construction and in 1892 CPR had the Town of Rosenfeld surveyed. By 1909 the Town of Rosenfeld had 5 elevators with a capacity of 79,000 bushels.

Farm sizes had by now also increased. While most farms consisted of 160 acres in 1875, by 1884 the average acreage had increased to 191 acres and to 231 acres by 1905. Land prices also increased. While land prices for 160 acres had been \$800-1,000 in 1885, by 1889 the price increased to \$1,500 and by 1900 was as high as \$5,000.

All that remained for many years of the Darp Rosenfeld were the trees which the early settlers had planted. The "Rosenfeld bush" was a favorite picnic ground for many surrounding schools, even into the 1940s.

The Rosenfeld Village area originally probably included all of sections 29, 30, 32, 33, ¾ of 31 and ¾ of 28. Evidence indicates the village... remained more or less intact as a Mennonite village until circa 1894 when it apparently began to disintegrate. Modern Rosenfeld town must have had its beginnings on sections 8 and 9 of township 3, range 1 west about that time or perhaps a few years earlier.

Source

Atlas of Original Mennonite Villages, Homesteaders and Some Burial Plots of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba by John Rempel and William Harms; Altona, Manitoba, 1988.

Max Wodlinger

From the *Winnipeg Tribune*, Fri., May 24, 1935

A farmer in the Rosenfeld, Man., district for almost 20 years, Max Wodlinger Thursday celebrated his 75th birthday. Mr. Wodlinger was born May 24, 1860, near Odessa, Russia, and arrived in Winnipeg, May 24, 1882. He was on railway construction work for 18 months, moving west with railhead almost to Medicine Hat. Later he worked for a time with the CPR on the north shore of Lake Superior. He returned to Winnipeg in 1884, married Miss Toba Halperen, and went into business here and in Gretna, Man., until the end of the century. From 1901 until 1916 Mr. Wodlinger ranched near Gull Lake, Sask., when he returned to Manitoba and settled in his present home. His wife died in 1923, and a son, Harry H. Wodlinger, died in Winnipeg in 1933. Surviving sons and daughters are: Abe Wodlinger, Winnipeg; M. Wodlinger, Flint, Mich.; Allan M., farming with his father at Rosenfeld; Mrs. W. Balcovske, Winnipeg; Mrs. Anne Sugarman, Vancouver; and Mrs. Rose Shieane, living in New York city. Mr. and Mrs. Balcovske will entertain a few of Mr. Wodlinger's

old friends at a little party in his honor, this evening.

Editor's note: Susie (Wiebe) Funk says that she remembers a man named Wodlinger who lived in Rosenfeld around 1930 and had a barn with thirty horses east of the railroad tracks. She remembers that her family shared his house, and her dad, Abram Wiebe, was his hired hand. Her dad would often take her to the barn to look at the horses in their stalls. She says that the names of the first four horses just inside the barn door were: Oliver, Doll, Clint, and Lady, and that her mother, Katherina (Kehler) Wiebe, often repeated the names of other horses in sequence, like, "Jack and Mary, Prince and Harry," even though their stalls were at different locations in the barn.

According to the book, Gretna: Window on the Northwest, by F.G. Enns, Mr. Wodlinger was a horse trader and an entrepreneur, active in commerce in Gretna and Dominion City, as well as Saskatchewan. "Max and Lazar Wodlinger exemplified the Jewish immigrant who had lived among the Mennonites in Russia and sought out the Mennonite reserves when they came to Canada in 1880 because they were familiar with the ways of the Mennonites. The Wodlingers started out in the west by working for the CPR, but when they were able to get their homesteads, they chose to settle near Gretna." ³⁷

37. Wodlinger Corres., Jewish Historical Society Collection, PAM

Abram Zacharias and Maria Giesbrecht Families

Submitted by Ernest Klassen



Zacharias/Klassens: The Klassen family, descendants of Abram and Maria (Giesbrecht) Zacharias, at the original Zacharias farm south of Rosenfeld, just on the outskirts of the original Dorf Rosenfeld, in 2017. L-R: Elvin, Ernest, Katherine (Kroeker), Ruben, Mary (Lymburner). The lean-to of the barn was used for meetings of the Rüdnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde in its early years. [Ernest Klassen]

Abram Zacharias the elder married Maria Klassen on Sept. 16, 1854, in South Russia. They came to Canada in 1876 on the *SS Mississippi* and settled SW33-2-1 W on the outskirts of Dorf Rosenfeld. The six children they brought with them were Anna, Maria, Katharina, Abram, Johann, and David. Abram, the father, died on Feb. 28, 1899, and his wife Maria died on June 11, 1900.

Abram the younger married Maria Giesbrecht in 1886. They had nine children, four of whom did not live to see adulthood: Abraham (1889-1895), a second Abraham (1899-1899), Jakob (1901-1918), and Justina (1903-1913). The five who survived were Johann (1891-1936), Maria (1893-1981), Anna (1896-1985), a third Abraham (1900-1988), and Katharina (1906-1994). Abram died on Nov. 13, 1918, but his widow continued to operate the farm along with her children.

Maria Giesbrecht was the daughter of Johann and Anna (Friesen) Giesbrecht, who arrived from Russia on July 6, 1879, aboard the *SS Polynesia*, with seven other children. The Giesbrecht family settled in Schönwiese, Manitoba. Johann died May 4, 1919, and his wife Anna died June 27, 1937.


The last of the Zacharias family to live on the Rosenfeld farm were Katharina "Tina" (Zacharias) and her husband, Peter F. Klassen, from 1937 to 1967. Peter was born in Schönthal, MB, in 1906, and died in 1997 in Steinbach. Katharina also died in Steinbach. Ten children were born to the Klassens when they lived on that farm: Elda, Katherine, and her twin brother Abram (stillborn), Lawrence, and his twin brother Leonard (died in infancy), Elvin, Ruben, Mary, Ernest Peter, and his twin brother Eldon (died in infancy).

Several family members are buried in the cemetery on the farmyard at SW33-2-1 W, one-and-a-half miles south of Rosenfeld, on the east side of Hwy. 30. Those headstones still exist today in the southwest corner of the yard, facing east, with the setting sun filtering through a row of evergreens. A large, impressive, weathered barn, built by the Zacharias family, also still stands today, its lean-to once the site of early Rüdnerweider Church services. The barn was originally situated parallel to the north-south road (now Hwy. 30) and the original house was attached to it. The Peter Klassens changed the barn's orientation, so that it sat perpendicular to the road. This allowed for a wider driveway and more distance between the house and the animal smells.

Throughout the years, this farm and the family has provided shelter and solace to others, sometimes to strangers who were stranded in snowdrifts on the highway and needed a place for the night. After the wars in Europe, Grandma Zacharias sponsored a family who helped on the farm and later lived in Rosenfeld. The large garden and extensive orchard provided produce and fruit for a large family but also for any needy families. An uncle from Rosenfeld regularly came by for earthworm bait on the way to his fishing trips. Farm work and homegrown food contributed to healthy families.

Local lore had it that, "Many of the first settlers of Rosenfeld who believed the soil was too poor here would plant their first gardens at the Zacharias farm where they found a very kind hearted couple who gave generously of what they had." (*Red River Valley Echo*)

Fond Memories

Terrol Bobert-Rogers: My grandparents and great-grandparents... all Recksiedlers and Pokrants settled and lived and farmed [in the Rosenfeld area]. My father helped finish the Lutheran Church steeple. My parents Elvira Pokrant and Henry Bobert were raised and married there. I was baptized there. I have fond memories of many family gatherings, weddings and funerals. Although I didn't grow up in Rosenfeld, we spent many, many good times there. Playing in the streets, and running through corn fields. This is where my heart is from...



Cattle Drive

Art Wiebe: Eleanore Schroeder tells of a cattle farmer from Gretna, by name of Smith, who would drive his cattle all the way to the Winnipeg stockyards in fall once all the fields had been threshed. On one such drive in the late 1920s, Mr. Smith stopped over at Mrs. Schroeder's parents' farm – Adolph and Maria (Kien) Eisbrenner, north of Rosenfeld – with his 100-plus head of cattle to be watered, fed and rested, before continuing the rest of the journey to the city the following morning. Wondering: How many days and other stops would there have been before arriving at the stockyards in Winnipeg?



Beer Alley

Raymond Funk: I think we were all sworn to secrecy! Actually, around 1975 to 1979, there was a group of us, known to be troublemakers of course, who found quite a bit of entertainment in the great outdoors. I'm sure you all remember. My dear departed friend (who shall remain nameless) used to call it "solving a difficult case", usually 12 clues at a time. Anyways, one of our favorite spots to stop was east of Wally Pokrant's farm, down an unused road allowance, and there was a triangular shaped piece of uncultivated land there where we would while away the afternoons. We called it Beer Alley, but as I recall, it was named that by an earlier generation. It could get quite lively out there, but I never recall any trouble. Perhaps the local RCMP felt we were best left out there where we did not bother anyone else. There were a few such gathering spots. Another one was Rosenfeld Beach, which was the dam at the east end of the Hespeler dike.




The RCMP Scare

Roy Martel: I forget who all belonged to the "auto club". We were a group of four, if I recall. We each had to contribute ten dollars toward the purchase of, first, a '37 Ford for forty dollars, and later, a '41 Dodge for a similar amount. We were all about 13-14 and drove these cars along the back-country roads unlicensed, uninsured and underage.

RCMP Corporal John Ewashko was in charge of the Rhineland detachment. One day I was coming home from school when I saw the RCMP cruiser on our yard. I knew we were driving illegally and was concerned that we would all be in trouble. I delayed my return; however, I had chores to do and therefore had to get to work. It was a relief to find that Ewashko was on the yard only to talk with my dad in his mother tongue, my father probably being the only other Ukrainian-speaker in his territory. I found out later that Ewashko had turned a blind eye to our "auto club".



RFPD?



Art Wiebe: Apparently Rosenfeld once had a police force of one – a Mr. Janzen in the 1940s and 1950s -- who served as the Rosenfeld School District truant officer during the day, connecting with parents who weren't sending their children to school. He served as a policeman in the evenings for the UVD of Rosenfeld, assisting parents with their children being home by the village's 9 pm curfew. Apparently he even wore a uniform.

Chapter VII



Later Families



Art Wiebe

Album H



Renowned educator Anne (Enns), second wife of farmer and storyteller, Peter P. Berg. [Wesley Berg]



Eleanora (Möbus) Heim, wife of Alexander. [Bruce Martel]



Alexander Heim, husband of Eleanor, father of Nan, Dorothy (Doris) Pokrant, Beatrice, Viola, Elsie, and Alvin. [Bruce Martel]



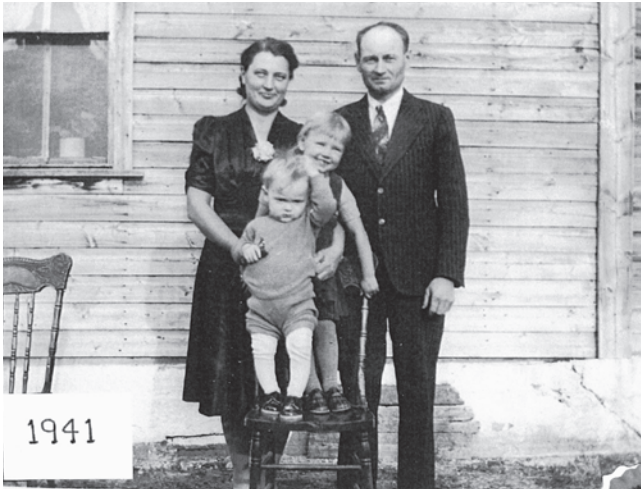
Abe Enns, date unknown. [Angela (Funk) Plett]



The David Derksen home, with daughter Helen and son Bob on the front porch. [Roy Pokrant]



Emil Marsch at age 101 on Main Street, Rosenfeld, in 1955. [Luther Pokrant]



The Lilkes: Ella (Fuchs), August, Gladys and Orvil. [Kathy Connor] (Gladys wrote the memoir, *Precious Mem'ries, How They Linger*, excerpts included in this book.)



Henry (Heinrich) and Hannah Martel family, 1940s. Hannah and Henry seated in the front. Back row, L-R: their children Oscar, Augusta (Gussie), Walter (Wally). [Gail (Martel) Braun]



Donnie Martel, son of Wally and Eva, heading north on Acheson St., c. 1958. [Gerald Frank]



Oscar Martel with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, possibly at the 1956 leadership convention in Ottawa, where Oscar was a delegate for Rhineland. These two men connected as prairie boys who were both staunch lifetime members of the Conservative Party. [Ron Thiessen]



Henry (Heinrich) and Hannah Martel family, c. 1920. Front, L-R: Oscar, Walter, Henry, Augusta. Back row: Henry's half-brother Julius Martel, Henry's wife, Hannah (Schultz). [Gail (Martel) Braun]



1939: Ruth Martel on the left, her sister Lorraine on the right, and their friend, Ursula Flett, in the middle. [Lorraine Martel]



Leo A. Recksiedler. Darlene (Abraham) Hafso says: *Remembering our dear Uncle Leo, a farmer from Rosenfeld, who was born on Groundhog Day in 1919. Not only was he a wonderful uncle to all of his nieces and nephews, he was also a staunch Progressive Conservative supporter.* Wikipedia states Leo A. Recksiedler was a representative who understood the concerns of farmers. He campaigned for the Manitoba legislature in the Rhineland District in 1953 and 1959. Uncle Leo died in 1998.



Cornelius Wiebe in front of his shoe repair shop. The shop was located in front of the house. Although the shop portion has been removed, the main house still remains today at 112 Main Street. [Kathy Derksen]



Peter Reimer (1958) lived in Rosenfeld from 1953 to 2014, having come from the village of Hamburg, northwest of Plum Coulee. He worked for the CPR from 1947-67, then as a carpenter, first with Edgar Schellenberg, and then Henry Siemens. [Marlin Reimer]



Eida Reimer (1960) married Peter Reimer in 1957. Her parents were the Peter F. Klassens, who lived 1.5 miles south of Rosenfeld on Hwy 30. She and Peter lived at the corner of Bredin and Main, from where she operated a custom draperies business. [Marlin Reimer]



In 1949, after being treated for TB at Ninette and St. Boniface Hospital, Cornelius Wiebe (seated) took a shoe-repair course in Winnipeg, and in 1950 opened a shop in Rosenfeld; the other man in the photo is his brother, John. [Kathy Derksen]



Cornelius Wiebe's first house in Rosenfeld, 1930; the children are Peter Wiebe (Kathy Derksen's uncle) and Marie Wiebe (her mother). [Kathy Derksen]



Aerial view of Rosenfeld, scanned from the 1981 Manitoba Pool calendar, exact date unknown, most likely 1970s.



Rosenfeld's barber, Ferdinand "Fred" Wonnick giving a haircut to his first customer (identity unknown), in his new barbershop at 18 Gertie Avenue, west of the Rosenfeld Cemetery. [Floyd Wonnick, Fred's son] Bob Derksen: *If I remember correctly, the barbershop built by Mr. Fred Wonnick was in front and the pool room was located in the back of the building.*



The Wonnick family. Front row, L-R: Hilda Spicer, Rosalie Wonnick, William Wonnick, Elsie Mackus. Back row, L-R: Henry Wonnick, Erna Recksiedler, Erwin Wonnick, Ludwig Wonnick, Alvina Hastman & Ferdinand Wonnick (the barber). Centre: Esther Schalla. [From Bob Derksen, who received the photo from Janet, Ludwig's daughter.]

Variations In The Spelling Of Rosenfeld

Art Wiebe: I have been gathering information about our village since 1974. Here is a list of the various spellings I have encountered, besides the current spelling:

Rosenfeldt, Rosenfelt, Rosenfield, Rosenfeld Junction, Rosenfeldt Junction, Rosenfelt Junction, Rosenfield Junction.

The Beidinger Family:

Rose's Story – Coming Out of Russia in 1930

Rose (Beidinger) Rettaler as interviewed by Art Wiebe in 2017

“I’m 97 years old. I never used to talk about this. I don’t know why. My husband was already gone 13 years before I started talking about this. And now I’ve been talking and talking about it.”

Rose Beidinger was a refugee from the Soviet Union in 1930 when she arrived in Rosenfeld. As a young girl, she had already observed first hand the many struggles of the people under Stalin’s regime.

Rose’s parents were Daniel and Katherine. Both had been widowed with children before marrying each other. Katherine and her first husband had nine children. Daniel had four boys and one girl from his first marriage.

In 1922, Rose was born on a farm “south of Moscow”, where the climate was balmy enough to allow people to grow a wide variety of crops, including fruit. The Beidingers were mostly grain farmers, though, and when the Communists confiscated the farmers’ wheat, the farmers couldn’t seed their fields. Daniel Beidinger’s daughter from his first marriage, 16-year-old Adelle, got a job in a factory. Her daily pay was a few handfuls of grain. The government used various tactics to control the people, to make them subservient. When Rose was just a toddler, her family and neighbours were told by the authorities to attend meetings. Rose’s parents heard, at those meetings – and one assumes they were indoctrination sessions – that the women and men would be separated and the children would attend classes. In fact, the Communists used the lure of proper food – “nice white bread” – to try and get the families to relinquish their children into their hands. The Beidingers feared that their children would be taught that there was no God. Rose remembers her mother telling her years later, “I said, I will not give up my baby. I don’t care if she dies at my breast, I’m not giving her up.” Some families did allow their children to be taken and never saw them again. Starvation and disease were common, especially among children and the elderly. Many of both Daniel’s and Katherine’s children succumbed or simply disappeared.

The Beidingers packed up little Rose and their belongings, and fled in a wagon pulled by two horses, their destination a village north of Moscow where Daniel’s brother Emil and sister Ida lived. Adelle accompanied them.

On the way to their destination – a village north of Moscow – they ran out of food. Katherine was a seamstress, and at times, was able to trade the clothing she’d made for something to eat. One day, while taking a rest in one town, the Beidingers saw a wagon full of big loaves of bread. Rose says, “My parents told me that, when I saw the bread, I yelled and ran to the wagon and grabbed a loaf. And the owner of the wagon yelled, ‘Hey-hey!’ and my dad said, ‘Let her have it!’ My mom brought out a pair of men’s pants and they exchanged it for the bread. Because even the Russians were having a hard time finding clothing to put on. And the Communists thought they were making a new Utopia out of Russia. Hah! Brainless....”

North of Moscow, they lived in a village with a long central street. The climate was different there from where they’d come from. Rose remembers the winters, how they were very much like Manitoba winters. “And it was country the same as here. We had the same flowers there as we have here on the prairie. We kids would pick the crocuses in spring. There they grew taller. We found them in tall grass. We didn’t even want the white ones, because the dark purple ones were so pretty.”

Rose did not go to school in the village. Her mother taught her how to read and write in German. It was against the law not to send children to school, but no one ever reported Rose Beidinger to the authorities. Christian church services on Sunday were held secretly in a clearing in the bush.

Although the village had a store, once the Communist regime created shortages, food and other supplies became scarce. When Rose was nine years old, the Beidingers heard that the German government was offering to help extract German-speaking people who wanted to emigrate from the Soviet Union to start new lives elsewhere.

The Beidingers decided to leave, and were told that they would have to go in the middle of the night. All they could take was a bit of food and a few personal belongings. Everything else they owned would have to be abandoned. The neighbour came with a hayrack to transport them to the train station seven miles away. "I remember my mother with this bundle," says Rose. Besides clothing and food, it contained her mother's precious seeds, "...because she knew wherever she was going, she would have to plant."

The Beidingers went to Moscow, arriving there in November, and boarded with wealthy people who rented rooms for a price while the refugees waited to be transported out of the country. The Beidingers heard that the Soviet authorities were picking up resisters off the street and imprisoning them temporarily. Much later, Daniel's brother Emil, who had become a Christian pastor, was scooped up and never heard from again. In Moscow, the Beidingers stayed close to their lodgings.

There were three groups of these German evacuees that were going to leave Moscow by train. The Beidingers had tickets for the second group. "My dad's daughter Adelle and her husband and their baby girl had tickets for the third group," says Rose. "I remember when we got on the train, Adelle was crying and crying, saying, 'Papa, I'll never see you again!' and he said, 'Yes, you will, you have your ticket – you will.'

"We'd heard that before the Russians let you get on the train," Rose continues, "they would take all your gold jewellery and money. Some women had their earrings ripped right out of their ears. Dad still had two dollars [rubles]. And there was a market at the train station. So Dad went and bought green grapes with his two dollars. I'd never eaten grapes, and were they ever good!"

Shortly after that, the Soviets closed their borders. Adelle and her family never made it out. Once in Canada, Katherine exchanged letters regularly with Adelle and other relatives and friends. Adelle recounted in her letters how that third group of emigrants that wasn't allowed to leave Moscow was shipped back to where they'd come from in unheated, unfurnished cattle cars. "It was November," Rose points out, "and it was cold. A lot of those people didn't make it. Adelle's eight-month-old baby got sick and died. It was just awful..."

After about five years, the letters from Adelle stopped coming. "We tried and tried and tried to find ways to get our letters through," says Rose, "but we were told that no one was picking them up any more. We never heard from her again."

Rose and her parents arrived in Germany a few weeks before Christmas and spent the winter of

1929-30 in Hammerstein. They were lodged with other refugees in World War One barracks until spring. "We got enough to eat there. At mealtimes big vats of hot food were rolled into the main hall and we took our bowls and got them filled. Every once in a while we got bread. The people looking after us even gave us little Christmas presents and lit candles and made it feel like we were really celebrating Christmas."

From there, they went to Dover, England, for five days, to wait for the ship. It was here that Rose remembers seeing airplanes for the first time. "We never saw airplanes in Russia. Even my parents hadn't seen airplanes. It was very exciting!"

The ship was called the *Montcalm*. After sailing for ten days, it arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, after which the Beidingers were put on a train heading west. Their plan had been to go to Saskatchewan, where they had relatives. But when the train stopped in Winnipeg, they were told that there was a bad drought in Saskatchewan, and were advised not to go there. They were told, however, that the Lutheran church in the small village of Rosenfeld, in Manitoba, was willing to take two families of refugees. "My dad said to my mom, 'They know best. We will stay.'"

So they went to Rosenfeld, arriving on Apr. 9, 1930. "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martel had a dinner for us the first day. We stayed the night with them. In the morning they said, 'We're going to make a Canadian out of Rosie,' and they cut my hair! I was all right with that. They gave us a house that was livable, and everybody brought something to give us a start – somebody brought cups and saucers, somebody brought a sugar bowl, and so on, and that's how we survived." Another immigrant family soon moved in, occupying the second floor of the house.

"Dad worked all summer at August Pokrant's farm a mile out of town," says Rose. "August could rely on my dad because Dad had been a farmer in the Old Country."

The first winter, they lived upstairs at the Ed Pokrant farm home, then moved into what had once been Rosenfeld's butcher shop. Daniel bought it for \$18 and had it moved to Pokrants' yard, added a kitchen, and that's where the Beidingers stayed for five years. A Lerch family lived nearby. "Those years Arthur and Delma Lerch and I walked three miles to and from school every day." The Beidingers attended St. John Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld, chauffeured by the Pokrants in their car. Rose was confirmed there when she was 14.

At the age of ten, Rose went to school for the first time. Rose loved school in Rosenfeld, and did very well in her studies. Her mother had taught her

well. "As a child from another country, I didn't have really nice clothes, but the other kids at school were so good with me. Nobody ever teased me, even though I couldn't understand English. They accepted me." The teacher instructed the children to speak only English to Rose, so she could learn. She did learn very quickly. Gus Pokrant was one of her teachers. "And his wife was my friend! Can you believe it? She was so much older. But I was older than the other kids, too. She often invited me to her house."

As to the activities Rose enjoyed: "Baseball was really on our minds. When we lived a mile out of town that first spring, I would walk to school with Arnold [Pokrant] and we'd get to school really early so we could play ball before class started."

After five years at the Pokrant farm, Rose's family moved to Rosenfeld. Her dad had purchased four lots there a few years earlier, and now he had his house moved from the farm to one of the lots. The rest of the land became Katherine's large, luxurious garden. "She planted vegetables and berries and all kinds of things and gave a lot of it away," remembers Rose. "The saying was, 'If you want beans, go to Beidingers!'"

Rose's dad took a job as janitor at the Rosenfeld school. "The kids loved him," Rose says. "My dad was a lot of fun."

When Rose was 16, she pleaded with her parents to help her look through the newspaper classifieds for job listings in Winnipeg, and found an ad that they believed would suit her. She was hired by a Jewish family as a maid, and as a nanny for the children. She worked for them for three years. The children were very dark-haired and Rose was fair-haired. "The parents introduced me to their friends as their blond daughter." She also helped out in that family's general store, selling candy over the noon hour when the school kids stopped in to spend their pennies.

Rose met her husband when she was 19. By then she was rooming in Winnipeg with Elsie Huebener from Rosenfeld and working as a waitress. One day in June, her landlady said to her, "Rosie, I want you to meet my milkman!"

Rosie wasn't really interested, and when she was eventually introduced to him, she wasn't impressed at first. "But then he took off his cap, and he had beautiful hair!" Long story short: After a whirlwind courtship, Rose married milkman John Rettaler from Ridgeville that same summer.

It wasn't until Daniel and Katherine Beidinger were settled in Rosenfeld and began to tell visitors to their home about the hardships and starvation and death they'd seen in the Old Country, that Rose

learned the details of her family's escape from the Soviet Union. "I was a very quiet girl, and I would listen, and when I heard the stories, I told myself, I can never hurt my parents. They've already been hurt so much. I could hear it in their voices." Daniel and Katherine lived out their lives in Rosenfeld. "They wanted a life of peace," says Rose.

John and Rose moved to Dominion City, then to a farm at Greenridge, where they stayed for 16 years. They had six children: Lorraine, Dorothy, Adelle, Danny, Donald, and Katherine. Along the way, John took Rose to hear an evangelist speak at Dominion City one evening. Moved by this man's telling of the Gospel, Rose went forward, accompanied by two of her children, and accepted Jesus Christ as her saviour.

In 1961, Daniel and Katherine Beidinger died within six months of each other.

Rose never knew her stepsisters in Russia because they had either died from illness by the time she was born, or had married and moved away. Her mother had stayed in touch with the oldest of these for a while after the Beidingers came to Canada, but no one had heard from her for a long time. After the Beidingers had already passed away, a letter came to Rosenfeld addressed to them. The postmaster, Wally Eisbrenner, found Rose's address in Greenridge and forwarded the letter to her. It was from her long-lost stepsister, with a picture. "She looked so much like my mom!"

At Greenridge, Rose's husband John, knowing how much she loved crocuses, would find them growing on a sandy hill beyond their farmyard every April and carry pocketfuls of these small flowers to his wife. "They were a light purple colour," Rose recalls, "and I would bring out a dish and put them in water. They had such short stems. But I loved them anyway."

John passed away in 2003. Rose made her home at a seniors' residence in Emerson for a time, and died at the age of 97, on Aug. 2, 2017, very shortly after Art Wiebe concluded his interviews with her.

My Family in Rosenfeld: the Ennses and the Bergs

Submitted by Wesley Berg

My great-grandfather, Abraham Enns, was born in Schönhorst, Chortitza, South Russia in 1861. He married Katharina Mantler, who died while still in Russia, and emigrated to Canada in 1893 with Anna Toews, his second wife. On arriving in Canada they travelled to Rosenfeld, where they stayed for a while with a relative, Ludwig Esau, until Abraham was able to find a teaching position in Bergthal. A son, David, my grandfather, was born in August

shortly after they arrived in Rosenfeld. After living in Myrtle and Plum Coulee, he and his family moved back to Rosenfeld in 1905, where they stayed until they moved to Hodgeville, Saskatchewan, in 1910. Because Abraham Enns was a correspondent for *Die Mennonitische Rundschau*, a newspaper read by Mennonites in Russia, the United States and Canada, we have a fairly detailed account of life in Rosenfeld and surrounding areas from 1893-1911.

My mother, Anne Nancy Enns, was born on a farm near Herbert, Saskatchewan, but her family of four sisters and eight brothers moved to Rosenfeld, where David Enns and his wife Katherine owned the Southside Service Garage until they left for Gretna in the 1940s. It was here that she met my father, Peter P. Berg. They were married in 1939. I was born in November 1942, just after my father had left to serve as a Conscientious Objector in the forests near Black Creek on Vancouver Island. We stayed with my grandparents, Peter D. and Elizabeth Berg, for the two years he was away. My brother Robert was born in 1944.

The Enns household was full of music. David Enns played the Hawaiian guitar, Hank was a gifted improviser at the piano, and Peter, the eldest son, was an accomplished cellist who went on to play in a string quartet that toured Southern Manitoba in the 1940s. His younger brother Bill also played the violin and there is a photograph of them as members of K.H. Neufeld's Winkler-Morden Orchestra taken around 1936 or 1937. I was told that K.H. Neufeld and his cello would travel to Rosenfeld for an afternoon of music making with the Enns family.

After moving to Gretna, David Enns organized and conducted the Gretna Maple Leaf Band, in which five of his children played instruments and the youngest daughter, Patricia, was a majorette. I have memories of following the band as they marched to Neche on the Fourth of July and played during the afternoon baseball games.

My grandfather, Peter D. Berg, was born Apr. 21, 1892, in Gnadefeld, MB, one of five children born to Derk and Maria Berg, and was married to Elizabeth Falk of Schönthal. He was a farmer always interested in the latest advances in farming techniques and equipment. He was also one of the founding members of the Rüdnerweider Church, which split from the Sommerfeld Church in 1937, and served as a minister in the church for many years. His parents, Dietrich (Derk) Berg and Maria née Friesen both died in their thirties and he and his five siblings were orphaned when he was nineteen months old. He was taken in as a foster child by Martin and Sara Klassen, who lived two miles west and one mile south of Rosenfeld, and there he



Peter D. Berg and Elizabeth (Falk) Berg on their wedding day, 1913. [Wesley Berg]

attended Weidenfeld private school. Martin Klassen was remembered fondly by Peter and his brother Henry as a gentle, playful grandfather.

My grandfather was part of the wave of rural folks who learned to play instruments in the depths of the Great Depression. He travelled to Winnipeg by train in the 1930s to take violin lessons and often played hymns from the *Evangeliums Lieder* with Grandma Elizabeth at the piano. His violin is now played by his great-grandson, Colin Berg. In retirement, my grandfather's interests included gardening, carpentry, miniature models, and visiting. He died in 1977.

My grandmother was born Mar. 28, 1895, to Heinrich and Justina (Unrau) Falk. After her father died in 1899, her mother married Rev. Abram Bergen. Grandmother was baptized in the Sommerfeld Church in 1911, and in 1937 joined her husband as a charter member of the Rüdnerweider Church. She enjoyed singing, as well as playing piano, violin, and mouth organ. Elizabeth (Falk) Berg died in 1988.

After Anne Nancy died in December 1948, my father, my younger brother Robert and I lived with my grandparents on their farm a mile south and a mile and a quarter west of Rosenfeld. We attended Reichenbach School, trapped gophers, skated on



Peter P. Berg with his first wife, Anne Nancy Enns, and their two sons, Robert and Wesley, 1947. [Wesley Berg]

Buffalo Creek, shovelled grain, weeded sugar beets and later spent many hours on the tractor working with our father on the farm.

We lived with my grandparents until 1955, when Peter Berg married another Anne Enns. She was also from a large family of seven sisters and five brothers. She grew up on a farm southwest of Steinbach and had come to Rosenfeld as a schoolteacher in 1949, where she taught with Ann Driedger and John Bergen, both of whom became lifelong friends. She also participated enthusiastically in the Rosenfeld amateur theatre group. I remember the Reichenbach school students travelling to Rosenfeld to watch a matinee performance of *The Admirable Crichton*.

Before getting married, my future stepmother went to teach in Winkler for a year. After their marriage in October 1955, she stayed home for a few years while the house and yard on the highway one mile south of Rosenfeld were established, and then she began a long career in Altona, first as an elementary school teacher and then as a resource consultant with the Rhineland School Division.

My grandparents' eldest son, Henry Berg, married Gladys in 1940. Although he started out as a farmer, it soon became apparent that his interests lay elsewhere. He became a builder and helped build both the Rüdnerweider and the Bergthaler church buildings in Rosenfeld. He and his family lived in a house that he'd built on his father's farmyard, from 1947 until 1954, when he moved it to Rosenfeld. It had such innovative features as in-floor radiant heating, which I enjoyed when my family rented the house for the 1955-56 school year. Henry worked on pipelines with the help of a Piper PA 12 that he flew from a runway on the east side of and parallel to the road into Rosenfeld. He became a building supervisor

for the construction firm Peterson and Fonger, with the Altona high school one of its projects. In 1966 he became the Building and Janitorial Supervisor for the Manitoba Frontier School Division, which led to a move to Dauphin. Henry and Gladys had three children: Patricia, Richard, and Terry.

One of the great gifts parents and grandparents can give their children and grandchildren is to tell stories. My father had many stories to tell. Some of them were tales of the strength and stamina men and women of the time possessed. There were stories of men harnessing themselves to plows and engaging in plowing contests, and of a man with sons so strong they could lift 45-gallon drums of gasoline onto the back of a wagon. But my favourite is the story of the night the Rosenfeld hockey team played a team from the Roseau Reserve. The young men of the Reserve ran the 17 or 18 miles to Rosenfeld, played the game and then ran back the same night. These are the stories that truly tell us how much times have changed.

David and Barbara Doerksen by Bob Derksen



Federal elevator agent Dave Derksen welcoming a customer. [Bob Derksen]

The Doerksens moved to Rosenfeld in 1929. David had acquired a job with Maple Leaf Milling Company as a grain buyer. They purchased and moved into the house on Main Street.

After a year of working with Maple Leaf, the company was sold to Federal Grain Ltd. David and Barbara were unsure if his employment would continue with Federal Grain, but it did. It lasted for 35 years. Along with being a grain buyer came the responsibility of selling flour and coal. These commodities were phased out in later years.

David also acquired the authorization to sell fire insurance for Red River Mutual. As well, he served a few terms as a school trustee.

David and Barbara had seven children: Eva (“Bonnie”) in 1922; Helen (“Toots”) in 1925; Arthur in 1926; Norman in 1931; Elmer in 1933; Ruby in 1936 (she died in infancy); and Robert (“Bob”) in 1940.

Barbara was kept busy with raising the children, and was very involved with the Ladies Sewing Circle.

During the time the children were born, David decided to drop the “o” in the Doerksen name. As a result, the last three children were registered as *Derksen*.

The Doerksens retired from work in 1965, and moved to Altona.

David passed away in 1971 and Barbara in 1985.

Wilhelm, Sara, and Elisabeth: The Falks of Roseville

By Elizabeth Falk



Wilhelm and Elisabeth Falk's blended family c. 1947. L-R, back row: Sarah, Justina, Henry, Peter, Willie. Middle row: David, Mother, Martha, Mary, Father and John. Front row: the two youngest, Elizabeth, and Magdalene. Missing from the photo: Susie and Ben Sawatsky, and their children, Rosella and Walter. [Elizabeth Falk]

On the *shtapp* with my father, the late Ronald Sawatsky saw his grandfather applying soil to an open cut on his hand, telling the young boy that since man was created out of the dust of the ground, the earth would serve to heal the wound. Though Wilhelm Falk had purchased this land in Roseville from his father-in-law, Peter A. Friesen, in 1918, it wasn't until 1926 that Wilhelm and Sara and four children moved from Schönthal into the old house on the Friesen homestead. Located halfway between Rosenfeld and Altona along what was then known as Highway 14A, Sara's older brother Cornelius and his wife Justina lived with their own family across the highway, just a little farther north.

Wilhelm was elected minister in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church the following year. Sadly, Sara died on Christmas Eve of 1930 having given birth to her eighth child. Her sister Aganetha cared for the newborn baby in her own home during the critical first months of her life.

Surviving a period of deep grief and loss, Wilhelm fell in love with and married the very capable young woman he had hired to help his oldest daughter with the children and the housework. Five years into his marriage to Elisabeth Schellenberg, he was elected bishop of the newly founded Rüdnerweider Mennonite Church. In addition to the household, the second wife and mother now faced the increasing challenge of managing the farm during those times when, as a self-supporting minister, Wilhelm was away on matters related to the church.

I was born in the crowded old three-room house, mid-December of 1942, historically referred to as The Black Winter of Hitler. Mother said she bathed me very early, in the same room where a succession of men would consult with Father at his writing desk, later the same morning. (In the fall of 2017, I was deeply moved to see our father's signature at the bottom of a Conscientious Objector card, enlarged and appearing in a running script across a wall in the central rotunda of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg, acknowledging freedom of conscience as a human right.)

It appears my birth was a tipping point. In the spring of 1943 the drafty old house was dismantled while the family moved into the granary and the hayloft of the barn. Father purchased material from a lumberyard in Rosenfeld and appointed Heinrich J. Schellenberg as the contractor. Quoting my sister Mary Neufeld in her 2008 biography, *A Prairie Pilgrim: Wilhelm H. Falk*: "...whatever was salvageable was used in the building of the new house. A friend by the name of J. Fehr paid for all the gravel used in the building project. The estimated cost of the house was \$1,500, but the actual cost was \$3,300. A loan had to be made with a lien against the eighty acres at Hochstadt."

Men from the Rüdnerweider churches took turns, building a five bedroom two-storey house with a private *stäfche* upstairs for Father's desk, a cot, and a painted cupboard with glass doors. Behind the glass were his books and a mysterious reddish brown *papier-maché* owl, thought to be Father's last Christmas gift from Sara. A window to the east overlooked a double row of sugar maples shading the sandbox, behind that, a large garden, and then a field of grain. To the right, the long driveway to the highway where horseradish – and perhaps sorrel – grew wild in the ditch beside the crumbling old bake

oven where first Sara's stepmother Anna, then Sara, and then Elisabeth baked the bread.

Mother was pregnant with her eighth and last child, Menno (stillborn on March 1, 1949), when Father wrote this letter from the Mennonite World Conference in Goshen, Indiana, dated August 5, 1948. Translated from the German:

My dearly beloved Elisabeth! –

I was very happy to receive your precious letter today. I am, thanks be to God, very well. Tomorrow morning at six, the Lord willing, we will travel to Newton, Kansas. We plan to stay there till the end of the Conference, so that we will leave for home the morning of the 11th, perhaps arriving there the evening of the twelfth, I want so very much to be home for your birthday.

Now concerning the R.O.P poultry (Hühner) about which you write in your letter. I would think you should order them, only count the poultry first, and then tell Loewen, he will know how many he should order for us, maybe ten will be enough, if not, then order only as many as necessary. If Kehler has already sold the combine, then just get the Ford and put it in the machine shed, hopefully the boys have brought the Model A to Horndean and picked up the truck? I pray for you, beloved wife and the children, greet all children and grandchildren. How one immediately longs for all loved ones. In love your husband and father of the children. X

Around the margins of the first page Father added a postscript:

Your letter, my beloved Lizzie, made me so happy, and was worth as much to me as the first letter I ever received from you. X

As a child, why the spirit of Mother's predecessor continued to visit every Christmas Eve at the school concert was a mystery to me. Remembering her, Father's emotional closing remarks on the makeshift stage, his presence and his deep rumbling voice filled the one room school. No matter that my sisters and I had painted festive designs on iced sugar cookies while Mother taught us to sing a special song that night, wearing identical wine-coloured dresses with velvet trim. Afterward, we walked single file through the dark smoky entrance, wishing our neighbours a *freelijche Wienachte*, then huddled together in the caboose, pinpricks of light in the canvas like stars above us while we shivered under a buffalo hide, the comforting clop, clop, clop of horses pulling us home through the snow to red and green sugar cookies, date-filled oatmeal cookies, iced chocolate cookies with bits of walnuts, icebox cookies, jam-jams, Father's favourite cream cookies, both light

and dark fruit cake, all waiting for Christmas in the frosty back porch of the big white house where the coals in the basement furnace had gone cold.

Wilhelm and Elisabeth sold the farm for \$30,000 in 1962, moving to a bungalow in Plum Coulee. Father died in July of 1976, Mother in September of 1978. Their remains lie side by side in a country cemetery, guarded by a stone angel at the entrance; Sara's body rests in the restored graveyard behind the old Sommerfelder Church in Altona.

I like to imagine all of us gathered around a family table with Wilhelm, Sara, Elisabeth, and all their descendants, no cookies, just broken bread and communal wine.

Gerhard (George) Henry Fast As interviewed by Eileen Martel in 1967



George and Anna Fast. [Luther Pokrant]

Many of the businesses that operated successfully for years were either forced to close or move to another location due to the tough competition by firms in neighbouring towns. The only persons still managing a business that was started right here at Rosenfeld some forty years ago are Mr. George Fast and Mr. Julius Martel.

Both hail from Russia, and famine, revolution, and war are just some of the hardships they endured. Determined to better their living conditions if ever a chance arose, they realize now that immigrating to Canada was the greatest piece of fortune that occurred in their life. Many years have gone by since they left their old homeland and though the first few years were filled with long hours of work, in order to survive, they now see that hard work also has its purpose.

Mr. George Fast was born in Osterwick, Russia; coming to Canada at the age of 19 years, with his

parents, three brothers, and three sisters. Since his father farmed in the old country, they continued along this line of work; first settling in Winkler and later taking up more permanent residence at Gnadenthal.

The idea of becoming a farmer didn't exactly appeal to George, so in 1928 he brought his bride, Anna, to Rosenfeld, establishing a home and starting out on his first business venture.

Shoe repairing in those days wasn't any more profitable than it is today, but for six years he laboured to make a success of his job. There were times when it hardly paid enough to buy food and clothing for his family, so gradually he expanded to selling second-hand clothes. These he would purchase on trips to Winnipeg, when he'd go to the city to sell chickens.

The latter, too, was a business, since the chickens were bought at a lower price than what he'd hoped to sell them for. This finally led to a transferring occupation and in 1934 joined with Mr. A.J. Thiessen who for many years did the transporting with a car and small trailer. Most of their business then consisted of hauling chickens to Winnipeg and returning with a load of goods, which usually were mail order articles that had been ordered by the residents.

When farmers finally asked to have their livestock shipped, a more suitable vehicle was purchased. One truck served the purpose for awhile, but during the ensuing years several more were added to their fleet. This with the Chrysler Auto Agency taken over in 1937 was their means of livelihood until 1948.

After acquiring the Koblenz store, George went into partnership with his brother Henry, and Mr. A.J. Thiessen bought out the transfer business. This wasn't Mr. Fast's last business venture with Mr. Thiessen, for from 1948 to 1956 they successfully held the Massey Harris Agency.

Although never too active in farming himself, Mr. Fast owns a section of land, which is worked by renters; he attends to the hatchery, which he has operated for nearly twenty years. For the past few years the orders for receiving chicks here are filled from other hatcheries.

His interests have not only been with earning a living for his family, but also participated regularly with the affairs of the community. He served on the school, church, and town councils and even when not on the administrative board worked hard to make this a better community to live in. Whether it was a matter of improving roads or providing some form of sport or entertainment for the younger folks, his endless never tiring spirit somehow seemed to get things rolling.

Anecdotes from George Fast, Jr., about his dad

As newlyweds, my parents purchased a small house in the middle of town that had been a branch of the Altona bank. The bank left a large safe and offered Dad the combination for some money, but he declined. When the bank finally abandoned the safe, Dad had a local craftsman remove the mahogany panelling and make a cupboard for the kitchen. Another resident took the shell and used it as a rain barrel.

Dad started out as a leatherworker (harness, shoes, etc.) in the living room, then sold that and purchased two chick-hatching units, each 3x3x7 feet tall. A few doors south of Economy Hatchery was a small grocery, soda fountain, and restaurant. Next door south was a residence built like an elevator – planks laid flat and nailed. South of that was a very old abandoned grocery store, still containing shelving, counters, scales and an appliance for cutting large wheels of cheese.

During this time he and A.J. Thiessen purchased a small truck and started a "transfer business" – hauling cream, livestock, and other merchandise to Winnipeg and returning with supplies for local farmers and businesses. They also built a small stockyard near the tracks to be used when there was greater movement of cattle in and out of the area.

About 1950, Fast & Thiessen bought a former garage at the south end to service farm machinery and trucks. Ron Thiessen and myself helped the mechanic and pumped gas for a few summers. The Funks across the street looked after the coal and water station beside the tracks for the CPR.

In the early days of Fast & Thiessen the trucking business, Dad did most of the driving. He would leave early in the morning to make the rounds of farmers to pick up milk, cream and other items destined for Winnipeg. To reduce the wait time at each farm he would honk his horn before he arrived. Some farmers insisted they did not hear him. Fast then had the blacksmith (Martel) attach a valve and air horn to the exhaust with a control wire through the floorboards. Now everybody in the area heard him coming!

My dad bought a house beside the Funks to house Mennonites returning from Mexico.

During World War II many farm machinery factories in the US had been converted to making military equipment. Around the end of the war, farmers did not have enough combines to bring in the crops so the US government issued special permits to Canadian farmers to cross the border to assist in the harvest. Fast & Thiessen formed a convoy with

two large combines on trailers, several grain trucks, a fuel truck and a specially built enclosed trailer that served as kitchen and living quarters for a couple to cook and launder. They started in the spring in the southern US and worked their way north. By the time they reached Manitoba, the crops here were ready.

Until the early 1940s, Rosenfeld taxes were managed by the Municipality of Rhineland. Several families, including the Fasts and Thiessens, were not satisfied with the system and arranged for the village to become unincorporated, meaning Rosenfeld could form a council and determine how their tax money should be spent. George Henry Fast was the first “mayor”.

One day my father came in from the outhouse somewhat distraught. He’d dropped his pocket watch and was unable to retrieve it.

A couple of times farmers traded plots of land for machinery. Dad consolidated some land and had his sons, myself and Henry (Hank) do the farming. After several years, I left the area and Hank continued on his own.

Otto Fielman

From *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland: Volost and Municipality* by Gerhard John Ens

Born in 1928 near Rosenfeld, Otto Fielman was educated in Rosenfeld. During the 1950s he became active in farm politics, serving as a local officer of the Manitoba Farmers’ Union. He also became involved in co-operatives serving on the Board of Rhineland Consumers Co-op, which in 1970 became Sun Valley Co-operative. He served on this board from 1964 to 1973, and from 1981 to 1983 he was president. From 1962 to 1972 he also served on the Rosenfeld Pool Elevator Board. Between 1972 and 1980 he was also a provincial director of the Manitoba Pool Elevator District 2.

Martin P. and Tina (Katharina) Friesen

Submitted by Tina (Friesen) Wolfe

Martin P. and Tina (Katharina Neufeld) moved to Rosenfeld in the fall of 1951 with seven young children: Henry (b. 1943), Martin (b. 1944), Betty (b. 1945), Abe (b. 1947), Peter (b. 1948), Tina (b. 1950), and Susan (b. 1951).

They had two more children: Ben (b. 1952) and Eva (b. 1955) in the small house at 236 Carolyn St. Martin P. started his career as a mechanic for A.J. Thiessen and G.H. Fast, and later in Altona when the business relocated, working in the Chrysler and the Massey-Harris dealership, plus spending time with Thiessen Bus Lines.



The Martin P. Friesen family, with their 1950 Dodge in front of their Carolyn Street home, 1957. They called the car their “Tinny Dodge” and could all fit in if they staggered their seating. The picture must have been taken on a Sunday, or before a special occasion, as some of the children seem to be dressed up. The girls: back – Betty (left), Tina (right); front – Eva (l), Susie (r). The boys: back – Henry (l), Martin (r); middle – Abe (l), Peter (r); front – Benny. [Tina (Friesen) Wolfe]

They resided on the same yard in Rosenfeld until 1994, having replaced the original house in the late 1960s. Their daughter Tina still resides in Rosenfeld in 2017.

Henry (a carpenter and building contractor) married Irene Driedger. They have two daughters, a son, and six grandchildren, and live in Morris, MB.

Martin (a plumber and heating contractor and real estate developer) married Dorothy Wiebe. They have a daughter and a son and four grandchildren. Their home is in White Rock, BC.

Betty married John Warkentin (a Manitoba government employee). They have three sons, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren and live in Altona, MB. Betty began working in the Altona Sewing Factory before she married John, then took a break when she had the first two boys. She is extremely fast when sewing and has been known to sew a finger. When the boys began school, she went back, but stopped when the family moved to Morden. Moving to Altona, she went back to sewing until the business closed. Not one to sit around, Betty began working at Friesen’s Corp. book department, where soon she was specialty coordinator until she retired.

Abe (a Manitoba school custodian) married Audrey Taylor (deceased) and has a son and a daughter. He lives in Winnipeg.

Pete traveled in Alberta and Manitoba and had many different jobs. He now lives in Altona.

Tina married Dave Wolfe (a Manitoba road construction supervisor). They have one son and three grandchildren. Tina began working at Dave and Sue Kehler’s grocery store in Rosenfeld when her son began kindergarten. She worked at the store for 10 years and another five after Howard and

Susan Braun bought it. She moved on to Penner Foods in Altona and worked in the meat department for five years, then as deli manager for five. Just for fun she took over the writing of the Rosenfeld News column for the *Echo* from Gerta Funk. She took a break to take a course and became an ESL instructor for Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults (PVLEA) for five years, and then as a volunteer for another five. Tina changed direction and became involved in the Altona and Area Family Resource Center. She ran a number of courses at the Rosenfeld School and would have continued had she not been involved in a motor vehicle accident. She continues to write a column for the *Carillon* in Steinbach.

Susan married John Charles (a Manitoba Telephone employee). They have two sons and one grandchild and live in Winnipeg. Susie began her career at the Victoria Hospital after her children were in middle school. She worked at the Victoria Hospital as an imaging (X-ray) clerk and a billing clerk for the radiologists for 23 years, then she retired.

Ben (a dealer in antiques and precious metals) married Linda Fedak (divorced). He lives in Surrey, BC.

Eva married Pierre Vermette (divorced). They have a son and a daughter and six grandchildren. Eva is now married to Rasheed Mohammed and lives in Selkirk, MB. She also began as a stay-at-home mom, but began at the Red Cross Blood Clinic when both her children were in school. She changed careers and worked with unwed mothers at Villa Rosa in Winnipeg. Always looking for a challenge, Eva began working with special-needs teenagers at St. John's School. She went back to homemaking, but is busy taking in foster children.

Diedrich and Elizabeth (Wiebe) Harder **By Larry Harder**

Diedrich and Elizabeth Harder farmed in Weidenfeld in the 1940s with their son Erdman and his wife Cornelea. In 1946, Erdman and Nellie experienced a great heartache: They had two sons, Larry and Norman, at the time, but Norman passed away at the age of two and was laid to rest in the Weidenfeld Cemetery.

A year later, almost to the day, a daughter was born and they named her Norma, as this was the custom then – to name the next child after the deceased sibling. In the year 1948-1949, the family moved to Rosenfeld. There, Erdman and Nellie had three more children: daughter Linda, and sons Harvey and Leslie. Diedrich worked as a janitor at the school and at the Bergthaler Church. Erdman worked for the local post office and had a watch



Wiebe/Harder family. L-R: Justina (Mrs. Johann) Wiebe; her son, Henry; her daughter, Elizabeth Harder; Elizabeth's daughter-in-law, Nellie Harder; Elizabeth's husband, Diedrich Harder; Elizabeth and Diedrich's son, Erdman. [Larry Harder] Bob Derksen points out that this Henry Wiebe was the person who hired Cliff Pokrant to provide surveyors for the construction of drainage channels in the Rosenfeld area. [Larry Harder]

repair shop in Fast's store. Diedrich, Elizabeth, Erdman and Cornelea were laid to rest in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

Kuhl Memoirs **By Herman and Helen Kuhl**



Helen and Herman Kuhl, long-time citizens of Rosenfeld and very active in the Bergthaler Church. Herman also taught school in Rosenfeld for many years.

The Rosenfeld area was totally strange to us. We both came from the Morden area and had never really gone out to Rosenfeld. We had just gotten married at the end of July, and Rosenfeld School had an ad in the daily paper for a teacher for the Grades 6-7-8 classroom. These grades were the desired classes; application was accepted and so we moved into Rosenfeld in August, 1960 – a new

and strange community. Helen was not excited at all about moving into this community. I said, "Well, for two or three years you will survive, and then we will move on." After all, in those years teachers stayed only about two or three years in one place.

Teaching full time for a great salary of \$3,100 per year – how much better could it get! In two years we started our family – and eventually we had two boys and two girls. Helen and I both became active in the community, especially in the church – teaching Sunday school, committee work, and Helen in children's choir, singing in a trio, leading a ladies group for about 10 years.

After six years of teaching, I was also offered the role of principal, on top of my teaching, which I accepted and then held for three years. After eight years of teaching here in Rosenfeld I moved my teaching to West Park School in Altona.

Eight years later, Parkside School was built and I moved with the Grade 7s and 8s to that school, but stayed living in Rosenfeld. By this time Rosenfeld had really become our home place.

In 1984 I was seriously asked to consider moving my teaching position to W.C. Miller Collegiate. I decided to try it, stayed for nine years, and then retired.

After retirement I continued to serve the Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite Church as lay pastor for another nine years – a total of 22.5 years. During these years I was also very much involved in working together with the Rosenfeld Lutheran pastor in planning the joint Annual Memorial Worship Service.

Helen and I both served on the Rose Village Villa board, although at different times. Helen served a three-year term before I was called. After a few years on that board, I was asked to be the chair of the board and served two terms in total. It was a challenging but interesting experience. I got to know the residents and went to the Villa several times a week just to touch base with the residents and sometimes to settle problems.

In 1999 the committee of the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre disintegrated and the Centre was without leadership. A community meeting was called. Several ideas were expressed: maybe we don't need the Centre; no, we cannot let the Centre close and finally disappear. But no one wanted to be in the committee. A deadlock!

That is where I felt I needed to step up. I volunteered to be on the committee, and consequently several more volunteered. We formed and organized the committee and I was made chair. The committee was immediately asked whether the Centre could be used as a coffee shop. The answer was yes. I have

made myself responsible to open the door, put on the first pot of coffee, clean up after, and lock the door. So since 1999 there has been coffee in the morning for the men and the ladies. This has continued all these years, now the end of 2017.

We have reached the age where people are frequently asking, "Are you still living in Rosenfeld?" Or, "Why are you not moving to Altona?" The answer is, because Rosenfeld is home. We have lived all our married life here. We have raised our family here. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren want to go to Rosenfeld.

We have made many lasting friends here, of whom many have passed away already. In 1960 just married, we had no idea what lay ahead. We moved into the Rosenfeld community with some reservations, into a totally unfamiliar area.

Here we are, 57 years later, and Rosenfeld is home. As the saying goes, "There is no place like home."

August Lang **From *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland* by** **Gerhard Ens, 1984**



August Lang and daughter Gail, 1948 or 49. Daughter Wendy says: *We were living about one mile east of Rosenfeld, off Hwy 14. If the snowplows didn't get to our place in time, we would hitch the horse to the sleigh, and off to Rosenfeld School we would go. In 1951, August would also use this mode of transportation to get to the Rosenfeld curling rink.* [Wendy (Lang) Thiessen]

August Lang was born February 11, 1915, the son of Samuel Lang and Elizabeth Smith, and married to Kay Wiebe. August Lang was a long time farmer in the Rosenfeld area.

Involved in municipal politics for many years, he was first elected councillor for Ward 5 in the autumn of 1955 at the age of 40. He served the RM of Rhineland for 18 continuous years under five different Reeves. For several terms he also served as Deputy Reeve and he held the position of Drainage Trustee for the combined Rhineland and Montcalm Drainage District F until the new watershed council was formed in the late sixties. August Lang

represented the RM of Rhineland when the Pembina Valley Development Corporation was first formed.

He also served as the Chairman for the Rhineland Centennial Committee for Manitoba's 100th birthday celebrations. He was one of the leaders promoting the Altona-Rhineland Park and Swimming Pool, which today stands out as one of the beauty spots in Rhineland. August helped to organize and establish the Manitoba Pool Elevator Local and was the first president of the Rosenfeld Pool Local Organization. When Mr. Harold Sneath, the President of the Manitoba Wheat Pool presented a scroll in tribute to August, Mr. Sneath stated: "August is a senior member of Manitoba Pool Elevators, one of a dedicated group of men and women whose spirit and faith made possible the realization of this our fiftieth anniversary. To him we present this scroll in tribute and gratitude".

August served as a director with Sun Valley Co-op for nine years, during several of which he was appointed Vice-Chairman, and also served as a delegate to the Federated Co-op Annual meeting at Saskatoon. He promoted and helped to organize and bring into being the senior citizens home at Rosenfeld known as Rose Village Villa. He served as Chairman for five years. Later he helped to organize the Rosenfeld Sanitation Co-op Ltd., which was incorporated on January 3, 1983.

Editor's note: August Lang died Aug. 20, 1997, and is buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

Kay (Wiebe) Lang

By Gail (Lang) Tomashewski and Deb Lang

Kay was the wife of August Lang. Her parents were Abram and Susanna Wiebe [who lived in the Amseterdam district]. She was one of six siblings. Their home was always open to friends and relatives. Their family played an important role in the community.

Deb: When I was in the 4H garden club I think all I did was put the seeds in the ground and Mom took care of the rest. One year I placed first for my zinnias. In reality, Mom should have worn that ribbon. Then there was the summer job of hoeing beets. Guess who was at my side always encouraging me, and hoeing twice as fast as me, probably because I was complaining of the hot weather?! And Mom always took time to drive me to swimming lessons in Altona, and before they had a pool, it was all the way to Neche, ND. Like she didn't have enough to do between cooking, taking meals out to Dad on the field and the gardening/canning. Bottom line: She and Dad did so much for us, I really don't think we

wanted for anything. Although I never did get a pony or piano!

Gail: Some of my earliest memories are of our mother teaching herself how to drive. The car was a 1950 pale green Ford. It took quite a bit of backing up and down and it was a good thing the farmyard was big. She was a very determined woman. All this was to ensure she would be doing her part as a farmer's wife. Our father never took time to even eat, so Mom used her driving skills to take food out to the fields. To me it was like a picnic, but three times a day was serious business for her.

Mother was an avid reader and belonged to a book club for many years. I believe that is where my love for reading came from. She was also very talented, but was very shy about it. She could play piano and the organ just beautifully – never any formal musical training, it was all by ear. She also enjoyed singing in the church choir and always said she sang "second voice," which I later determined was alto. The choir was led by Leo Recksiedler, and Christmas Eve was always the best.

She belonged to the ladies' church league in the day of the fowl suppers, which I remember with great awe because all the food was so good. She contributed from behind the scenes, always working without hesitation, doing whatever was needed. To me spending all the time in the kitchen seemed like a lot of work, but being out of the limelight was exactly how she wanted it.

Editor's note: Kay Lang died in Altona on Dec. 13, 2013, and is buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery. She was 94 years old. Besides their three daughters, Gail Tomashewski, Wendy Thiessen, and Debbie Lang, August and Kay had five grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

Helmut Arthur Martel

By Eileen Martel

Helmut was born in Rosenfeld, in the house just north of the Lutheran Church, on Jan. 4, 1929. His parents were Julius and Pauline (Marsch) Martel. He attended elementary and secondary school in Rosenfeld, then received his mechanic's certification in Winnipeg.

Helmut worked as a mechanic at Martel's Garage in Rosenfeld all his life, alongside his father and later his son, Stan. (Stan still runs the place today.)

On May 23, 1953, in St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Helmut married Eileen. They had two children: Stanley, born in 1955, and Grace in 1953. Grace married Walter Schroeder, and they have a daughter, Erin. Eileen helped her husband in the



Helmut and Eileen Martel at their cottage at Buffalo Point, June, 2000. [Eileen Martel]

garage business, looking after the office work, and continues that job today for her son.

Helmut was devoted to his family, church, and his work. He sang tenor in the church choir in his teens and again later in life, served as secretary on the Lutheran Church council, and served as a trustee on the Rosenfeld school board. He played defense for the local hockey team and took part in curling bonspiels. Helmut was always willing to help out in community affairs and promotions.

Martel's Garage had always sold gas and other Esso products, but in 2011, with new environmental laws enforced, the gas tanks had to be removed, and the garage remained as a repair shop.

Helmut Martel passed away on June 23, 2011.

Pioneer of Rosenfeld – Julius Martel

By Eileen Martel, from *The Journal*, Morris, Manitoba, November 22, 1967

The only two persons who started out here and remained are Mr. George Fast and Julius Martel. Both hail from Russia, and famine, revolution and war are just some of the hardships they endured. Many years have gone by since they left their homeland, and the many years of hard work in order to survive in the new country are also behind them.

Mr. Julius Martel, son of a blacksmith was born in 1898 in Volynia, Russia. He was the third oldest son in a family of ten. Much trouble and little happiness fell to the share of this family that lived on a five-acre piece of land, which contained a shabby house and shed.

A great sorrow befell him at the age of five years when death took his father away. With the land, two cows and a few chickens the family managed to survive. And besides doing the work at home, Mr. Martel was able to attend school until the age



Julius Martel family, 1933. Helmut (age 4); Lorraine (age 3); Ruth (age 2). [Lorraine Martel]

of 14 years, learning both the Russian and German language.

His mother of course had it the hardest, and he remembers her walking to town and back in one day, a total distance of 24 miles. She didn't go very often, maybe once or twice a year when clothing for her family was purchased.

After their mother remarried, things improved a bit. The stepfather, Mr. Meckleberg was a carpenter by trade and made furniture, which could be sold at a small profit. The only furniture possessed by the inhabitants were a couple of chairs, table and beds and even these were crudely made.

About this time the landowners asked help in clearing trees off the land, so Mr. Martel and his mother undertook the job of clearing out one acre. It took them one year and the next summer they were able to plant a crop. The agreement with the landowner was as such, once all the trees were removed the land could be used by them for three years. Imagine the many hours of toil and labor before the land was ready for cultivation. Trees had to be cut down and made into cordwood, the stumps removed and the ground prepared for seeding. The cordwood was taken by the owner, but the stumps were left so the laborers took it home and used it for firewood.

When war broke out in 1914, the family remained

on their place for the first winter, however, when the Russian army started retreating and the Austrians advanced into the territory everyone was forced to flee. Moving further inland they stayed with relatives for one month, and once again returned home when the Austrians had taken over. During their absence the Russians had stripped the places of its furniture and food. Complaining to the Austrian officials resulted in them getting back their furniture at least, but food had to be found out on the battle scarred fields and this left many families with very little to eat.

The poverty was so great and hardly any food to eat, Mr. Martel and a few other 15-year-old boys set out for Germany, arriving in East Prussia in April 1912. Here he obtained work, first on a farm and then got a job as machinist in a flourmill.

When at last in 1921 he saw his chance to come to Canada, applications were made and soon he was on his way. At Liverpool, England a six-week delay because of an improper visa drained him of quite a sum of money, but finally given the okay proceeded on to Canada. Again at Quebec some difficulty was encountered because of the passport not being in order. This cost another forty dollars to correct, and was granted to stay in Canada.

With \$600 saved up from working on farms and in the bush-lands, he purchased his own garage in 1925. He pursued this with his usual vigour and became well established. A lifelong dream had at last come true. Even today he manages to put in several hours work and very rarely has missed work because of ill health, or gone away on holidays. His only absence for any length of time was in 1947 when he underwent spinal surgery, two trips west, and in 1954 when the garage was destroyed by fire and several months were needed to erect a new building.

Mr. Martel was married to the former Pauline Marsch in 1927. Their family consists of three sons and two daughters, who are all married and have families of their own.

Otto Martel Family

By Erica (Martel) Sommer and Reinhold "Roy" Martel

Prior to World War I, Otto Martel and wife Leokadia were farming the parents' original family farm in Volhynia, a province of the Russian Empire. After the War, in 1919, the western part of Volhynia, as a result of re-drawn boundaries, became a part of Poland. Their son Heinz was born in Nikolaipol, Poland. They continued farming their original family lands until February, 1940, when they were relocated to Warthegau, Poland, which was a German resettlement area annexed by Nazi Germany



Otto and Leokadia Martel with starter dairy herd in a pasture at the north end of the village (along the north side and whole length of Oliver Ave from Main St. to Tobeia St.), c. 1952. Buildings in the background were the Rentz family home (also refugees) located at Acheson St./Oliver Ave. [Roy Martel]

in the World War II Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939. There they were assigned a farm in Loewenstadt near the current city of Lodz, Poland. Their son Reinhold and daughter Erica were born there. Otto and Leokadia, by this time in their lives, had been Russian and Polish nationals, and now were German nationals/citizens.

In January, 1945, with the impending defeat of the German forces, all German citizens living in this area were ordered to flee to Germany. This unanticipated journey by horse-and-wagon just ahead of advancing Russian forces was most difficult and very dangerous. Otto lost his younger sister Emilie in one of the strafing attacks by Allied aircraft. The rest of the family survived and spent three years as refugees in Herringhausen, Germany, awaiting immigration to Canada.

Canada attracted hundreds of thousands of European war refugees soon after the end of World War II. The refugees were given the euphemistic title of "displaced persons," abbreviated to "DPs". Many of these refugees had previous ties to Canada through family relations. Rosenfeld, originally settled by a large percentage of ethnic Germans, was therefore a destination for a number of German refugee families.

The Martel family arrived in Rosenfeld in April of 1948, sponsored by Otto's older brother, Heinrich (Henry) Martel, an established Rosenfeld businessman (blacksmith, and later, owner of a John Deere dealership), and a neighbouring farmer, John S. Klassen, who vouched for the refugees' employment in his sugar beet operations.

The family lived with Uncle Henry and Aunt Hannah until a house and lot were purchased in the north end of Rosenfeld on Acheson St. Originally, Otto and Leokadia worked in the sugar beet fields for local farmers – the Klassens, Sawatzkys and Nickels. In the early 1950s, Otto had the opportunity

to purchase a pasture with a barn from the Muench family at the north end of town. The barn had space for 12 cows, and he and the children began delivering milk and cream to Rosenfeld residents by horse-and-wagon and/or bicycle. Otto was soon supplying many Rosenfeld residents with various dairy products, through to the 1960s. He didn't mind if children hopped onto the wagon for a ride, as long as they didn't spook the horse.

"We couldn't speak a word of English," Erica recalls, "and I can remember playing with our cousins, the Rentz children, and making up words pretending to speak English. The first day of school was scary. Reinhold and I walked to school together. He took me to the Grade 1-2 classroom, pointed to a desk and told me to sit down. I was afraid, but not for long. We were so fortunate to have Miss Enns (Mrs. Anne Berg) for a teacher, who, with the help of a monkey puppet, SchniggleFritz, provided a caring atmosphere."

By the early 1960s, things changed drastically for the Martel family. Lightning struck the barn in a violent storm and it burned to the ground; laws changed and selling unpasteurized milk was no longer allowed. Also, Otto had a serious stroke, Leokadia became ill, and the dairy operation was terminated.

The pasture was sold to Herman Kuhl, and since then, five family homes have been built on it.

Walter and Eva (Derksen) Martel

By Lynne Martel

My grandparents, Henry and Hannah Martel, moved to Rosenfeld, Manitoba, in 1914, when his father-in-law, August Schultz from Niverville, Manitoba, found him a blacksmith shop in Rosenfeld. Henry had emigrated from Russia in 1909 to Ellis Island. He worked in New York for a while, and finally made his way to Steinbach, Manitoba, where he met and married Hannah Schultz in 1913. They had travelled to Winnipeg to be married but could not do so until the next day; Granny would chuckle when she told this story. They had three children, Oscar, Augusta, and Walter.

My Auntie Gussie told me the story whereby if her and my dad got into trouble, Granny would put them in the cellar, and sit in a chair over it so that they could not get out. The two of them would hold onto each other for the duration. She also said that Granddad would tell Wally what time he needed to be home at night... and would lock the door at that time. They could never figure out how Dad got in. He would climb the tree by Gussie's bedroom window, and she would let him in.

Wally (1917-1986), after serving in WWII,

married Eva ("Bonnie") Derksen (1922-1999) on July 1, 1947. Eva was the oldest child of David and Barbara Derksen of Rosenfeld. Her siblings were Helen, Art, Elmer, Norman, and Robert. Bonnie was a teacher and I have been told that she was an excellent one. Wally, with his brother Oscar and his dad Henry, had a John Deere dealership in Rosenfeld, where Wally was a welder. They also sold Elephant Brand (Cominco) fertilizer. Mom did stop teaching, which she loved, early on to take up the bookkeeping at the dealership. After that, she substitute-taught occasionally.

Mom said that at their wedding, one of the ways to help a newly married couple monetarily was to throw silver dollars onto glass bowls, and the number of bowls broken would tell them how many children they would have. Seven bowls were broken, and yes, they had seven children. Donald was born in 1948 (d. 1994); Lynne in 1950; Richard in 1951 (d. 2016); Brenda in 1952; Gordon in 1953 (d. 2016); Glenn in 1956 (d. 2015); and Scott in 1958.

Both Wally and Bonnie were very involved in the St. John Lutheran church, and all seven of us completed our catechism there. Church on Sunday was a must, but after church the seven of us would have to wrestle Mom from Dad, who were cuddling on the sofa, so she could make lunch for us. Our parents got us a pony at one point – Topper was his name, and it was brother Don who did most of the work with him. It was me, however, that would have to go after him if he got loose. If he saw Donald, he would run; if he saw me, he came. I think it was the apples and fresh buns I used to give him. Don also had the paper route in Rosenfeld for many years. The Martel household was noisy and a busy place. Mom would say the only quiet time was when the grace was said before a meal and when we were put to bed.

Donald, Richard, and Scott continued on at the John Deere dealership in Altona through their working lives. Don was active in civics and often went fishing with his dad. Rick married Sharon Falk and raised a family, also involving himself in the political scene. (I think he learned this early on, as one of the rules of the home was, if you got spanked at school, you would be spanked at home; many times he successfully talked Dad out of this.) I, Lynne, moved to Calgary after graduating from college and worked in the special education field until retirement. Brenda married Don Prytula and moved to Calgary, where she raised a family and was a senior financial advisor at the Bank of Nova Scotia until retirement. Gordon, after serving a few years in the Canadian Navy, obtained his degree in electrical engineering from the U. of M., and worked in the oil industry in places like Libya, Sicily, and

Texas, eventually ending up back home with the Altona Rural Water Services Co-op. (As children, Brenda and he would get themselves into many interesting “situations.” One of them was when they decided to pick potato bugs and burn them in the burning barrel behind the garage. The fire did not get big enough for them, and one of them had the idea to add gasoline. This did the job. I remember them coming in the house and looking up at Mom – no eyelashes, no eyebrows, and the top of their hair singed. They had to look in the barrel to see if the gasoline worked!) Glenn spent most of his work life up north as a heavy duty mechanic, and would involve himself with airplane flying lessons, helicopter flying lessons, scuba diving lessons. Scott is retired and living in the house his brothers built on an acreage just outside Altona.

Both Wally and Bonnie were avid readers and this is something that all of us did, ordering books from the University of Manitoba by mail. Mom kept personal diaries as we were growing up, and would write poetry. She took up watercolour and oil painting later in life. The John Deere dealership moved to Altona, Manitoba, in the early 1960s and a few years later the family moved there as well.

The Martin Family

By Ron, Gord, Sheila and Myrna Martin

Our father, Edward Julius Martin, was born September 2, 1917, in Giroux, MB, and died June 22, 2003. Our mother, Gertrude (Kletke) Martin, was born August 16, 1918, in Rosenfeld, and died May 2, 1984. Our parents were married on November 23, 1939, in Rosenfeld. They had five children: Ronald (b. 1943) married Dyanne Jupp (deceased); Gordon (b. 1944) married Joan Kehler; Tessa (b. 1946) married Henry Zacharias (both deceased) and had one son, Christopher; Myrna (b. 1947) is the mother of Bridgette and Tamara; Sheila (b. 1948) is the mother of Damon.

Gertrude, the daughter of Adolf and Amalie (nee Boem) Kletke, was born and grew up near Rosenfeld on a farm. Mom’s dad bought a tractor (a Fordson, then later a W-30 McCormick Deering) and taught Mom how to drive it so she could help out on the farm. She also milked cows, baked bread and cooked meals; there was no running water, every pail of water was carried from the pump house by the barn.

Mom played the organ in the Lutheran church in the early years and also sang in the church choir.

Dad grew up in Niverville, and came to Rosenfeld to work on a farm, where he met and married our mother. They lived in Rosenfeld for 25 years.

Mom and Dad owned the Esso service station located at the south end of Rosenfeld by Hwy. 14;

I guess it would have been considered a truck stop. This included the serving of gas, oil changes, tune-ups, tires and minor repairs.

Within the service station was a restaurant with the best nips-and-chips, coffee, and apple pie in town, all made from scratch by Mom. She had a huge garden and did a lot of canning and freezing for making the meals in the restaurant. It was a favourite coffee shop for many people during the day, and in the evenings it was a favourite hangout for teenagers. It was like a drop-in centre for many of our friends and the kids in Rosenfeld. We had a jukebox in our restaurant with the latest music hits. Anyone looking for their kids could find them at Martin’s Corner, watching the baseball game on Dad’s TV. Chairs were lined up in the back room and most times filled. Dad and Mom had a lot of patience for young people, and never complained when we would eat up all the store profits – Cokes, ice cream, chocolate bars.

Within the service station was also a grocery store with all the basic essentials: canned foods, fruits, vegetables, milk, bread and a deli. In the back room Dad ran a radio and TV sales and service, selling brands like Marconi, RCA Victor and Electrohome.

You could always count on Mom to get the job done; she was organized, efficient and never left a project unfinished, even with five children running underfoot. At Christmas time she would always make a big supper: turkey, homemade cabbage rolls, potatoes, gravy, and oh so much home baking, spending countless hours and weeks making cookies and cakes.

We were one of the first families to own a TV. Dad built the tallest TV tower in the area, somewhere around 100 feet high. It was a narrow tower and he consistently climbed to the very top to make changes to the antenna. The tower blew down a number of times due to storms; Dad had no fear of heights, he would just remove the bent sections and put it back up again. It just became a little shorter each time.

Dad ran a car dealership from the service station, selling Studebakers, a car that no longer exists. He also ran an implement dealership from the station – Cockshutt farm equipment. Don’t think it exists anymore, either. He would let his sons drive the new tractors home from Winnipeg. On one of the trips, the boys decided to continually turn the steering wheel back and forth as they were driving, as it was a long and boring drive. When they arrived in Rosenfeld, Dad noticed the front tires were severely worn down. What a disaster that was! But Dad seemed to have taken it okay, with only a shake of the head. We also had a tow truck that my dad would let his daughters drive on our back field. This made us the “good drivers” we are today.

Besides all this, Dad was in partnership with Albert Schroeder on a heavy road construction company building roads and drainage ditches in Manitoba. Every fall the equipment was normally brought back to Rosenfeld for servicing during the winter. When he had to unload a small caterpillar off a flat-bed trailer, instead of using a ramp or a loading dock, he got on and cranked it around 90 degrees and slowly started to back it off the trailer. He proceeded another inch and the cat dropped to the ground. The cat was now in a near vertical position. He continued to reverse until the front dropped to the ground, and then he drove it into the garage. It was somewhat frightening and dangerous, but apparently he did this many times.

For the first few years the family lived in the back of the store, and in 1948 built a new home with indoor flushing toilets and running water, and no more shovelling coal, as it had an oil-fire, forced-air heating system.

We kids rescued a crow and kept it as a pet we named Joe. The crow would fly into our garage and sleep there in the evening. Every morning the crow would sit on the front of our panel truck and come to school with us. He would patiently wait outside the windows, with his eyes covered in snow. The teachers would take pity on him and let him into the classrooms. Joe could be very naughty. He would pull the clothes pins off of the clothes on the wash lines. He also liked to pull out the onion plants in the gardens around town.

Dad was an extremely generous person; we most times got what we asked for, even when there was not a lot of money. Ron and Gordon had a very small motorcycle, which they used for delivering newspapers. (They were probably doing this before they were legally old enough to drive). Later, Ron found a 650cc Triumph motorcycle at the Northwest Cycle shop in Winnipeg for \$350. Dad was hesitant about buying this bike, as it was much larger and more powerful. They had a couple of days to convince Mom. At first she said no, not even maybe. But eventually, Dad gave Ron the money for the bike. We still do not know what Dad said to Mom to convince her to let them buy the bike.

I believe that this was the same bike that Gordon took out later at night, and was in a serious motorcycle accident. He drove into the back of a tractor that had no lights on the back. He fell off the bike and lay on the side of the road until a car came along. Gordon lay unconscious in the hospital for many weeks. When he did finally wake up he was unable to walk for over a year, but he did manage to overcome this. We now understood why Mom did not want that bike.

Dad was a local school trustee for many years. And for a few years, every Sunday he recorded the services at the Rosenfeld Lutheran church, where the whole family attended faithfully, for CFAM broadcasts.

Mother was sick for over 20 years. Dad spent countless hours driving to Winnipeg to doctors and treatments, but he never complained.

After selling the service station and house in Rosenfeld, Mom and Dad moved to Altona, where he opened a radio and TV shop, and Mom worked in a restaurant (the Sunflower Inn).

Dad was a member of the Altona Elks Lodge No. 447 and served as secretary-treasurer for many years. He arranged and chaperoned the Altona Elks teen dance parties. This would give the teenagers somewhere to go and be safe. In later years, he was amazed at how many kids remembered those dances.

Edward and Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke By Hedy Mazinke



Hedy (Kletke) and Ed Mazinke in the centre, with daughter Janet and her husband Larry Reimer on the left, and daughter Lana and her husband James Zieske on the right, with their son, Justin. [Janet (Mazinke) Reimer]

We were married June 9, 1948. We had a big wedding and we also had a big flood that year. The roads were washed out, so planks were put over the washouts so the cars could drive over. I never heard of anyone who missed the planks, even after the wedding, although most travelled home in the early morning hours, so it wasn't dark.

We moved into the home my father built in 1929, the year I was born. I never moved from my home place. Even though we moved to Beausejour in 1969, we continued to farm the land till 1975, when we rented it to our relatives.

Ed was involved with our country school, Hopevale (name changed from Hoffnungsthal), which closed as there weren't enough children in attendance. So we became one school district with Rosenfeld.

Both Ed and myself enjoyed curling during the winter months. So much so that Ed made his own curling rock to practise with. If the ice did not freeze smooth on the pond, the rock was taken into the hay loft of the barn and thrown on the smooth loft floor. This was a well-built barn, as the rock never broke through the end wall of the barn.

We have two daughters: Janet, who married Larry Reimer, and Lana, who married James Zieske. They have one son, Justin Zieske.

Ed was a member of the Farmers Union and was a delegate that went to Ottawa in an effort to secure better grain prices for farmers. He also was involved with the Manitoba Pool grain buyers.

Ed and myself were both baptized, confirmed and married in St. John Lutheran Church. Ed served on the church council and I was a member of the Lutheran Ladies group.

After 7½ years in Beausejour, we moved to Portage La Prairie, where Ed worked till 1989, when he retired and we moved to Winnipeg. Ed passed away on June 11, 2013.

John C. and Helena (Buhr) Nickel Family Jacob B. and Agatha (Broesky) Nickel Family

By Lois (Nickel) Braun

John C. Nickel and his family originally lived in Weidenfeld, but Horndean and Plum Coulee



John C. and Helena Nickel family, early 1940s: Back row adults, L-R: Ed Schwartz, Edwin Nickel (single), Helen (Friesen) Nickel, John J. Nickel, Jake Nickel. Front row adults, L-R: Edna (Nickel) Schwartz, Helena (Buhr) Nickel, John C. Nickel, Agatha (Broesky) Nickel. Children, oldest to youngest: Larry Schwartz, Myrna Nickel and her brother Grant. Edwin later married Helen Derksen from Rosenfeld. [Lois (Nickel) Braun]

were their stomping grounds. In 1938, John and his second youngest, Jacob, who was 21 at the time, bought the property at NW5-3-1 W, one mile west of Rosenfeld on the south side of Hwy. 14, from the Diedrich Wiebes. John C., his wife Helena, and their two sons, Jacob and Edwin, moved into the home there. The Weidenfeld house was taken over by John and Helena's daughter, Edna, who had married Ed Schwartz.

In their youth, Jacob and his older brother John J., along with Kutz Schuppert and Peter Ginter, formed a band called the Rhythm Ramblers and often played at dances in the region.

In 1941, Edwin signed up in the armed forces and saw action overseas; Jake went into reserve training at Portage la Prairie for one winter. A year later, he got engaged to Agatha Broesky from Gretna and spent the summer of 1942 building a small one-and-a-half-storey house for himself and his bride-to-be on the same farmyard as his parents. They married in December of 1942. The family had at one time belonged to the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church. Because of his participation in military training, Jake could no longer belong to a Mennonite church, and he and his wife joined the newly formed United Church, attending first in Morden, MB, and later in Altona.

John C. Nickel, his three sons, John (Helen Friesen), Jake, Edwin (Helen Doerksen), and his son-in-law Ed Schwartz were dedicated farmers and often worked together. Besides growing the usual grain crops, Jake acquired a sugar beet contract early on. He loved trees, and following the traditions of Mennonite rural culture, planted many on the farmyard, along with a variety of shrubs, perennials, and fruit trees. Helena and Agatha carried out traditional women's roles of that era as advisors, mothers, gardeners, housekeepers, hosts, cooks, and canners.

Jake and Agatha's first child, Gary, was born on June 28, 1946. Their daughter Lois was born on June 14, 1949, and Janet was born on May 6, 1952. The three children attended Reichenbach School, a quarter of a mile to the north. Gary and Lois moved on to Rosenfeld High School for Grs. 9 and 10, and then to Altona Collegiate; when Reichenbach closed, Janet took Gr. 8 in Rosenfeld, then finished her secondary education at the new W.C. Miller Collegiate in Altona. For most of their growing-up years, the Nickel kids' neighbours were John S. and Sarah Klassen and their family across the highway to the north; David and Maria Friesen and a couple of their adult children across the road to the west; kitty-corner were John and Helen Doell and their two daughters.

Helena Nickel died of cancer in 1948. John C. eventually married Eva (Klippenstein) Canvin, who brought two teen-aged children with her, Allan and Doreen. John and Eva attended the Bergthaler Church in Rosenfeld. Jake and Agatha, meanwhile, sold their little house, and on the spot where it had been located, just to the northwest of his parents' house, they built a modern bungalow facing Hwy. 14. Jake patterned the house and the landscaping around it according to the properties he'd seen in California on family vacations there. He even transformed an old maple tree on the front yard into a realistic-looking palm tree, which brought many passers-by to a screeching halt.

John C. Nickel died of a stroke in 1962. By then, Doreen and Allan were married and living elsewhere. Upon her husband's death, Eva moved to Morden. The old farmhouse was sold and moved a mile or so northwest of Rosenfeld to the P. K. Schellenbergs'. The house still stands on that spot at the time of this publication.

Jake owned farmland beyond the original property, having purchased the land on the south, east, and north sides of Rosenfeld, and 80 acres a few miles further east, and he continued planting the usual crops. Then, in the early 1960s, he began growing certified pedigreed seed and converted one of the barns at the back of the farmyard into a seed-treatment plant. He sold and delivered sacks of treated grain to farmers in the area, as well as to North Dakota and Minnesota. Eventually, 10% of all seed wheat exported from Canada to the US came from his operation.

For the J.B. Nickel family, recreation included travel, fishing, summer vacations in the Whiteshell and at Detroit Lakes, and a few weekends a year in Grand Forks, ND. Jake and Agatha socialized a lot with many friends, and with siblings on both sides, and particularly enjoyed dancing. Agatha took singing lessons and belonged to the local community choir. She was well known for her excellent cooking and baking, her taste in fashion, and her general spiritedness. Gardening wasn't her favourite thing. Jake spent his winters in the seed-cleaning plant, went on the occasional deer-hunting expedition in fall, and used his spare time in spring and summer pursuing his main hobby: horticulture.

Gary stayed true to his farm roots, working for the marketing branch of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture for a time, before ultimately settling into a career as a food technologist/scientist and manufacturer. He married a local girl, Jane Zotzman, in 1968. They've lived in Winnipeg, Kitchener, and Minneapolis. Lois became an elementary school teacher and married teacher/farmer Ronald "Joe"

Braun in 1969. They have lived in the Altona area all their married lives. Lois published several books of short fiction while teaching at West Park School, and became a free-lance editor after retiring from teaching. Janet also became an education specialist, and in 1973 married teacher David Penner of Altona. Janet and David lived and worked in Lac du Bonnet, MB, for many years, spent five years teaching overseas, and retired in Winnipeg to be near their daughters and grandchildren.

Jake died suddenly of a heart attack in 1971 at the age of 54. At the time, he and Agatha had one grandchild, Andrea Nickel. Three more grandchildren came into the family later, and eventually five great-grandchildren. Agatha stayed on the farm until she married Johannes Tapper of Minneapolis and moved to Edina, Minnesota. The farm and seed-treatment plant were sold to Jake's nephew, Grant and Leona Nickel, in 1975.

John J. Nickel family

By Myrna (Nickel) Block

John J. Nickel was born to John C. and Helena Nickel on the family farm in the Weidenfeld S.D. He married Helena Friesen, daughter of Jacob J. and Katherina Friesen, on October 24, 1937.

They started married life on a farm in the Rosenheim S.D. John farmed with his father, brother Jake and brother-in-law Ed Schwartz during the early years. In the spring of 1944, John and Helen moved to Weidenfeld with their two children, Myrna and Grant. Two more children, Melvin and Rhonda, were born later.

After attending high school in Rosenfeld, Myrna left for the Big City where she was employed at Manitoba Telephone Systems as a long-distance operator. In 1958 she married Richard Pokrant from Rosenfeld. They had two children, Cynthia and Darryl. Cynthia and Dave Kennedy with daughter Natasha, live in Vancouver, B.C; Darryl and Glenda (Bailey), with their children Ryan and Brandy, live near Stony Plain, Alberta. Richard and Myrna divorced in 1974 while living in the Edmonton area. She later married Bud Lenz and lived in Stony Plain until 2002. Bud died from cancer in 2000. A few years later she moved to Abbotsford, B.C., where she married Henry Block, a former schoolmate from Weidenfeld.

Melvin married Janice Hamm and had two children, Michael and Desiree. After a divorce, Melvin married Mary Enns. Their daughter is Lisa Marie.

Rhonda graduated from W. C. Miller Collegiate and attended Red River College in Winnipeg. She graduated as a registered nurse, then married

Lawrence Homenko. They have two children: Keith, a confirmed bachelor, and Allison, who married Ryan Chatel. Lawrence and Rhonda have two grandchildren and live in St. Andrews, Manitoba.

When Grant and Melvin were older, they farmed with their dad. Later on, Mel decided to leave the farming business. Grant, married to Leona Hildebrand, and their sons, Kevin and Kurt, continued farming with John. Kurt also decided farming wasn't for him, so now the home place is farmed by Grant and Kevin. John and Helen moved to Altona in the fall of 1993.

Grant and Leona moved to the Jake B. Nickel yard in 1976 and still live there, but in a new house.

Kevin and his wife Jackie (Braun) raised their daughters, Raven and Mattea, on the old home place in Weidenfeld. Kevin and Jackie gained two sons-in-law in 2017.

John J. enjoyed the farm and his yard. He took great pride in manicuring the grass for the week-end! He loved to go fishing with his friends, and later, took up golfing, too. He was a faithful member of the Elks Lodge in Altona. Music was another love of his life! He was a whistler, so, you always knew where he was, which was very helpful at Eaton's in Winnipeg. During his younger years, he played at dances with a group of his friends. He also sang in the Altona United Church choir until his illness in 1998. Helen enjoyed her garden, preserving all the produce possible. Sewing and knitting for her family were an enjoyable pastime. John and Helen enjoyed travelling with their friends in later years.

After a long illness with cancer, John passed away on July 3, 1999. Helen remained in her house until 2011, when she moved to Eastview Place. She passed away at the age of 99 on December 18, 2013.

John J. Peters of Weidenfeld

From an interview with Anna (Sawatzky) Peters

John J. Peters married Katherina Friesen on Nov. 22, 1926. They farmed in the Roseville district, beside Buffalo Creek, and had seven children: Eva (Benjamin Friesen); Ed (Anna Sawatzky); John (Deanna Hamm); Ruth (who died at age 15); Esther (Vic Klippenstein); Margaret Rose (Dennis Klinski); and James (Lorraine).

Katherina "Tina" Peters was an exceptionally good cook and housekeeper. Her family was very important to her. She belonged to the local Women's Institute, and is remembered as a sociable person who loved company, when her husband's busy schedule permitted. She and her husband sponsored and housed the Peter Teichroeb family when they emigrated from Russia/Germany in 1948.

John J. Peters was an intellectual man who was

knowledgeable about and active in the political aspects of agriculture. He supported the co-operative movement, and together with people like J.J. Siemens, founded Co-operative Vegetable Oils in Altona. He was also a founding director of the Altona Credit Union. But not many understood his visionary thinking; he was a man ahead of his time. Nevertheless, he remained a humble and fair man in his dealings with people of all stripes.

In an essay Peters wrote in 1959, called, "The Farmer Meets the Challenge", he said this:

My father bought his first quarter section of land for \$10 and his second for \$160. He broke the sod with oxen, later threshed his grain with a portable steamer; then graduated to a mobile steam tractor, and lived to see the day when he owned a modern gas tractor and car.

In the days when he used to plant 50 acres of oats to supply the feed which produced the horsepower to work his three quarters of land, the farm was more or less self-sufficient.

The farmer had a few cows, chickens, hogs, sheep, geese or ducks – something of everything to supply the family and even a bit of surplus to trade for spices, coffee, some yard goods and boots.

Financial institutions were little used and it was considered poor farming practice to sell the grain. It was good insurance to sell when the next crop was in stock.

All that changed when the concept of farming as a way of life became one of farming to make a profit.

In the 1930s, after a complete breakdown of the Canadian (and world) economy and several years of drought, rust and grasshoppers, farmers found it impossible to grow only grain and still stay on the farm. (They couldn't indulge in the luxury of simply going bankrupt, because there was nothing to go bankrupt with.)

Peters' essay continues outlining and discussing the various agricultural strategies pursued by prairie farmers throughout the 20th Century: crop diversification, the refining of plant byproducts, ventures such as the formation of Co-op Vegetable Oils in Altona, the establishment of credit unions, the development of growers' associations, etc. He laments the trend towards bail-outs and subsidies to keep farms afloat, and concludes:

Granted, there has to be a certain amount of protection for the farmer in the economy where all others, such as industry and commerce are protected, but by taking the risk out of farming we are creating the very evil we are trying to prevent: namely, corporate farming, absentee ownership or feudalism – call it what you like. I submit that the farm is more than merely a food factory. It is a way of life...

Through untiring efforts, the farmers of this area have tried to make it possible for the efficient farmer to maintain a fairly decent standard of living, and make his contribution to the development of this Canada of ours.

John J. Peters died in 1969 at the relatively young age of 64. By that time, he and his wife had moved to the Hamiota area. Tina died in 1995.

Editor's note: Mr. Peters' entire essay can be found on Rosenfeld's Facebook page.

Gustav Pokrant **By Luther Pokrant**



Karl and Gus Pokrant, c. 1947. These two brothers were for many years the main teachers for Grades 5-11 at the Rosenfeld School. [Ron Thiessen]

Gustav Pokrant was the fourth son of Ferdinand and Leocadia Pokrant of Prussian ancestry who immigrated to Canada from Tuchin, Volhynia in 1893. He was born on the family farm in the Rosenfeld district on Jan. 25, 1907, and spent most of his life as a teacher in southern Manitoba, except for several years as a general store owner in Rosenfeld. He received his elementary school education in Rosenfeld, high school in Winkler and Steinbach, and teacher training in Winnipeg. He taught school in Rosenfeld 1933-1947 and 1956-1959, New Bothwell 1959-1963, Gretna High School, Grimsby, and Roseville. He married Vera Dreger of Morris, and they had three sons: Leonard, Luther, and Mark. He had five brothers: Daniel (Bertha Rausch), Albert (Emma Dreger), Fred (Helena Recksiedler), Karl (Elsie Dreger), and Louis (Bertha Dreger); four sisters: Bertha (Julius Marsch),



Vera (Dreger) Pokrant

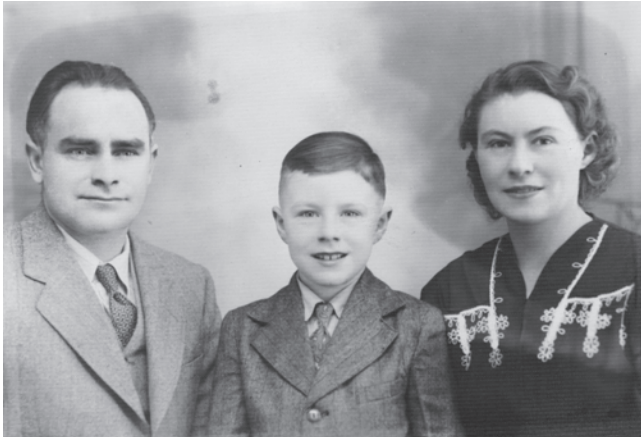
Martha, Lydia (Edward Stegman), and Almina (Wilf Vetter); and two brothers and one sister who died in infancy. It was remarkable that four Pokrant brothers married four Dreger sisters.

Mr. Pokrant was active in many church and community affairs throughout his life, but particularly during his retirement years. He served a leading role

as organizer and secretary of the Rosenfeld Village council, secretary-treasurer of the Rosenfeld School District, and member of the Altona Hospital board. He facilitated the establishment of the Rosenfeld Recreation Centre, the senior citizens group, and the Rose Village Villa Senior Citizens Home. He served as secretary of the church council, and superintendent of the Sunday School. For many years, he acted as lay pastor of St. John Lutheran Church when the pastor was ill or away. He was the local correspondent for the Altona *Echo*, the Steinbach *Carillon News* and the *Pembina Times*, and contributed numerous letters and articles. After World War II, he conducted English classes for newly arrived immigrants, wrote and translated letters, assisted in citizenship applications, pensions, unemployment insurance, etc. Other offices he held were poll clerk or returning officer for provincial and federal elections, making up voters lists, as well as helping to prepare and compile a Directory of Services to aid senior citizens of Manitoba for the Rural Community Resource Centre.

Mr. Pokrant had a deep commitment and concern for his community, and exhibited an abiding good nature and ability to associate with all types of people. He was a natural storyteller and had a boundless store of jokes and anecdotes. He enjoyed writing and translating between English and German, and spent countless hours at his typewriter producing stories, novels, and local history accounts. He enjoyed carpentry and woodworking of all kind, carving elegant birds and toys which he gave to friends and relatives. He had a natural creative spirit, tempered by the ethical self-discipline and stoic nature of a rural village upbringing. He died in Rosenfeld on Nov. 27, 1981. He will be remembered as a humble man who took pride in his beloved Village of Rosenfeld, and tried to do his best to contribute in whatever way he was able.

Albert and Martha (Kletke) Schroeder **By Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke**



Albert and Martha (Kletke) Schroeder with their son, Elmer, c. 1941. [Janet (Mazinke) Reimer]

Albert and Martha lived on their farm from 1933 to 1947. Albert had a threshing machine and did custom threshing in the area.

In 1947 they moved to the town of Rosenfeld and built a house directly across from the curling rink on Acheson Street. Albert and Martha were very involved in helping with the building of the rink and were quite happy they only had to walk across the street to get there.

They rented their land to some relatives so Albert could start a new venture. He started a heavy construction company. While Albert and his crew worked on building new roads, etc., Martha would do the cooking for the crew. His last job was the South Saskatchewan Dam. After that was completed, he and Martha retired and started spending their winters in Florida.

They raised one son, Elmer, who received his elementary education at the Hope Vale School, high school in Rosenfeld and university in Winnipeg. He married Elda Recksiedler and they had three daughters: Kim, married to George Andrews; Laureen, married to Rodger Echols; and Valerie, married to Shane Kuros. Valerie and Shane have two daughters, Celynn and Reese. Elmer and Elda live in Morden and they still own their land, although it is now all rented out.

When Albert and Martha were well on in age they moved to Morden to be close to their family. They were married 68 years when Martha passed away November 2, 2001. Albert lived to 100 years old and celebrated his birthday in grand style with a large party in Morden. Not many become a centenarian. He was born June 10, 1909, and passed away November 16, 2009. Both Albert and Martha are buried in the Rosenfeld Cemetery.

Susanna Sommer Family **By John and Erica Sommer**

Susanna Sommer and her six children had a difficult life in Dubno, Russia, after her husband Ludwig died. The children and Susanna decided to emigrate to North America to search for a better life. In 1904 they arrived in the Rosenfeld area and lived with relatives for the summer.

In order to help support their mother, some of the boys herded cattle. Susanna and family then moved to Beausejour, purchased some land and lived there for a few years. They heard they could homestead land in North Dakota, so in 1908 they moved again. Susanna's son John and his wife Julianna homesteaded land in Dunn County, and this is where their son Edward was born.

When Edward was a young man, he came back to Rosenfeld to visit relatives, Ed and Annie Pokrant. On one of these visits, he met Elinor Pokrant, whose parents Dan and Bertha were neighbours of Ed Pokrant. Edward and Elinor were married in Rosenfeld in 1937, and he took her back to North Dakota to live on his cattle and grain farm. In March of 1945, Edward died of leukemia. Elinor and her four-year-old son John moved back to Rosenfeld to reside with her parents until 1963, when she built a house in Rosenfeld. Her son John purchased the Ernest and Elsie Pokrant farm, which was northeast of Rosenfeld, to begin grain farming.

John married Erica Martel in 1966 and they raised three daughters – Lisa, Krista, and Rachel.

John was active in the community, serving on the local Manitoba Pool Elevator board, the St. John Lutheran Church council, and the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre committee.

Erica taught at Elmwood School in Altona, as well as Rosenfeld Elementary for many years.

They sold the farm and retired to Altona for a few years, then followed the girls and their families to Winnipeg.

Friedrich Sontag **Submitted in part by Sandra Miner**

Friedrich Sontag retired from farming in the Rosenheim district shortly after his wife's death (Emilie in 1928). He was 73 yrs old at the time and may even have retired to the village of Rosenfeld prior to her death. The retirement house in Rosenfeld no longer exists, but old-timers recall it very well. The lot was situated between the present two properties on Main Street in Rosenfeld (between 194 and 204 Main Street). It consisted of a small house and large red barn. He continued to raise some chickens, pigs and two cows and had a large garden, as all town retirees did in those days. Mr. Martel, town garage

owner, recalls hauling chop and hay for the pigs and cows for a small fee. He recalls Friedrich getting his groceries from the local store and hauling them home with a little four-wheel wagon. He recalls scaring him by driving up behind him in his truck and honking the horn (apparently Friedrich was quite deaf). This became a town joke – scaring “Old Man” Sontag.

Friederich had company in his last years. His death record entry indicates that he left behind a spouse named Maria Vogt. Details of this marriage have not been uncovered. Friedrich passed away on January 27, 1940.

Gravestones mark the burial plots of Friedrich and his first wife, Emilie, in the Rosenfeld cemetery. No records of Friedrich’s second wife’s death have been discovered. According to local town people, a lady from Winnipeg visits the graves of Emilie and Friedrich each summer and plants flowers on them. Her name is Lillian Fisher.

Peter’s Journey

Submitted by Henry Teichroeb

...the biography of Peter Teichroeb, based on interviews conducted c. 2004 by an author whose name could not be found....



This photograph was taken in Russia when Peter Teichroeb was in the Red Army, probably in 1939 or 1940; he’s the one in the middle. The identity of the other two soldiers is unknown. [Henry Teichroeb]

Cheerful little Peter Teichroeb enjoyed frolicking with his dog, Fix, and with his village friends in Kanzerowka, at the foot of the Ural Mountains. He never dreamed that the policies of his country’s government and world events would soon change his life forever. Little did he know that he would have to leave his parents and siblings, his home, and his beloved village, never to return.

During the 1890s, the congregation of the Mennonite Colony at Chortiza, in the Ukraine, bought a large tract of land for their landless farmers. This land was situated in the Orenburg area, near the Ural Mountains of Central Russia, 3000 km east of the mother colony, Chortiza. Kanzerowka, Village #3, was one of 24 villages established in this area.

For hundreds of years, Russia was ruled by czars, who had complete power over Russian life. Some of the czars kept Russia cut off from the progress being made in Western Europe, causing frustration and discontent among the people. The last czar and his family were murdered in 1918, and the nation was plunged into World War, revolution, civil war and Bolshevik (Communist) dictatorship. Into this setting, in 1917, baby Peter was born to Jakob and Susanna (Block) Teichroeb, the fourth child of eight. Peter’s grandparents, with their large family, had settled in Kanzerowka, hoping to fulfill their dreams of peace and prosperity in this newly acquired land.

Early childhood was a happy, carefree time for little Peter. Even though he had to get up at five in the morning to do chores before school, and chores again in the evening, there was still time to skate during the long, harsh winters and to play ball in the short, hot summer. During those early years, there was always enough food on the table, and he slept under a warm blanket provided by American Mennonite relief.

Seven years in the village school was the extent of Peter’s education, learning to read, to write, to do arithmetic and to memorize, with all instruction conducted in the German language. His parents encouraged him to continue his education in the Central School, in Village #14. They drove him to school on Monday mornings, but he was not interested; he would run away, over the mountain, across the fields, and be back home by Tuesday. According to old Mennonite tradition, a spanking in school would merit a spanking at home as well, and Peter remembers that he was no exception to the rule.

New Year’s Day was celebrated in the schools, but due to the atheistic Communists there were no Christmas celebrations or programs. At home, Peter’s family observed Christmas in secret, the children setting out bowls to receive their candies

and cookies, and perhaps a colouring book or pencil. There was no fruit available because of the harsh climate, so oranges were never received as a Christmas treat.

In 1929, when Peter was 12 years old, drastic changes started happening in his life: “Collectivization. *Dekulakization*. A child might not understand these words. But the same child would experience the direct effect of Stalin’s policies.”

Kulaks, the top stratum of farmers, were targeted for elimination. Their property was confiscated and turned into collective farms. Thousands of property owners were executed, imprisoned or sent to forced labor camps in Siberia. Thus ended personal freedom for the Teichroeb family. There would be no more freedom to live well. The government confiscated their land, machinery, their 12 horses and other animals. They were able to keep their house, one cow, one pig, and some sheep. From that one cow, 75 liters of milk per year had to be delivered to the government, and the skin of the pig, if slaughtered, also had to be forfeited.

1929 was also the year Peter’s mother died of a stroke, and his father remarried the following year. The younger siblings were placed in kindergarten and school, while the parents and older children were forced to work on the collective farm from five o’clock in the morning till after dark. No one was in the house during the day. Peter was 12 years old when he started working on the collective farm, walking barefoot, all day, behind the horses and plough or harrow. Since he had no shoes to wear, his feet were bloody and sore. His father worked as a carpenter and thresherman, and his new mother worked on the fields. No one was paid for the work.

During this difficult time, the Mennonites had no more freedom to govern their own civic or religious affairs; churches were closed and turned into granaries or social clubs. At great risk, Peter’s family attended secret church services and Bible study in private homes, hiding their small Bibles in their boots. Since the Communists were confiscating all Bibles, the Teichroeb family buried their large family Bible in the lean-to attached to the barn. All four ministers in Kanzerowka were imprisoned, including Peter’s grandfather. He had been forced to shovel snow even though he had no shoes to wear, so he had wrapped his feet in gunnysacks. He died in 1932 of malnutrition.

The government policies caused a severe famine in the early 1930’s. Harvests declined due to the elimination of the top grain farmers, unrealistic quotas of grain were imposed, and not enough grain was left for next year’s planting and to feed the people. The Teichroeb family survived on grits and

vegetables from their small garden. One Christmas, the children were given their last slice of bread, and their father told them they would have to wait till the next harvest to receive more. If the land yielded more grain than the imposed quota, the excess was divided among the workers.

Young Peter was often forced to stay on the field overnight, to guard the horses and equipment. He was usually very hungry, and since there was no food, he resorted to his only option: a supper of field mice. He caught six mice and cooked them in a can of water over an open fire. To this stew he added a cup of wheat, making it “a supper that was more delicious than any turkey supper served today.” In the spring, he would drown out gophers and eat them. Everyone was hungry, and many people died of starvation. Whenever a calf would die at the collective farm, it was hauled out behind the barn. News would spread fast, and soon the villagers gathered to chop it up and take home pieces to make soup.

There was no unemployment, but there were also no wages. Peter recalls that there were no happy people at all. Working conditions were harsh. Everyone was overworked and hungry. People were afraid to talk to each other, or to speak out against authority, for fear of exile or execution. The government paid hungry individuals to spy on their friends, relatives and neighbours. Nobody knew whom they could trust.

In 1939, at age 22, Peter was drafted into the Red Army. He was forced to leave his family and friends, his home, and his village, and was never able to return. Peter was shipped off to Finland, but since Russia had just won that war, he was rerouted to Poland. This is where Peter received his military training, and where he had to dig trenches by hand to position their cannons.

Hitler and Stalin had made a secret pact to divide Poland between themselves and also not to attack each other. The German army controlled the western half of Poland and Russia controlled the eastern half. On June 22, 1941, what the Russians had long feared took place. A huge German force invaded Russia, pushing back the heavily out-numbered Red Army. Peter remembers his unit sleeping in tents, when they were awakened at four in the morning to the roar of bombs dropped by the Germans. Fighting on this front was the most difficult time of Peter’s entire life. On the first day of fighting he was issued 10 bullets, with orders to use nine on the enemy and the tenth on himself. No one was to become a prisoner of war.

On numerous occasions Peter felt God’s hand of mercy and protection. The Red Army was so out-numbered and over-powered, that they were often dispersed – fighting, running, hiding and scrounging

for food. On one occasion, Peter and his superior managed to enter the home village of his superior, where they ate a hurried bowl of soup with his wife. While she went out to look for civilian clothes for them, they had to flee to escape pursuing Germans. The officer was shot and ordered Peter to keep running. Peter covered him with his coat, bade him farewell and fled.

In another incident, to appease their hunger, Peter and two comrades raided a beehive on a collective farm. While on the run, a bee attacked Peter's neck. Since he did not want to drop his gun, he had to throw away the honeycomb in order to get rid of the bee. Fellow Russians, who labelled them "enemies of the people" for stealing honey from their own people, shot both of his comrades in the head. Peter is convinced that God sent the bee to save his life.

Approaching the area west of Kiev, the Red Army retreated into a forest, while the German front passed by. Hungarian and Italian prisoners of war, who were drafted into the German army, were left behind to guard all around the forest. Thousands of Russians were shot when they tried to escape. The soldiers stayed in the forest for ten days without food and water. After the guards left, Peter and several companions escaped to the village of Svenarka, a distance of 20 km, where they hid in a garden. German police were left behind to patrol villages when the front advanced towards Moscow. They warned villagers not to harbor any Russian soldiers, or they would be shot. The women who found Peter and his friends in the garden were very willing to take that risk, since there were no men left in Svenarka. Peter was given a big woolen sweater and a ragged cap so that he could discard his uniform, and then he was given the job of tending sheep in the hot August sun. News of the men travelled fast.

Mrs. Skoropad, whose husband had died of starvation in 1933, persuaded Peter to come visit her sixteen-year-old daughter, Tatjana. He consented and even though there was a language barrier, they were soon married, and Peter started working at the collective farm in the village. Soon after their wedding, Peter was called to a scene where Tatjana's only brother and his three little friends were killed. They had found an unexploded mine, thrown it into their bonfire, and Peter was left to pick up the pieces.

When the German police came to the collective farm for some straw, they found out that Peter could speak German. He was immediately recruited as a translator and worked for the German police until 1943. The Red Army had regrouped by now and was starting to push the Germans back through the Ukraine. To save his life, Peter was told to discard his German uniform and head for the railway station.

Peter, Tatjana, and their little son, Henry, along with many other refugees, were loaded into cattle cars and transported westward to Poland, while all around them mines and bombs were exploding. The train behind them, carrying German soldiers on leave, hit a mine and was destroyed.

At Lodz, Poland, the train stopped, and everyone was disrobed and deloused. Then they were transported to a refugee camp at Leipzig, Germany. The following day Peter was taken to a tank factory, where he was forced to labour 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for the next eight months. Life was difficult; bombs were falling, food rations were meagre, and housing was poor. After he complained to the German police, Peter and Tatjana were taken to a farm, where they worked under very harsh conditions with little food. A dynamite factory was his next place of work. When the war ended, he started a welding job. By this time their second son, John, was born.

Under the Yalta agreement, the Russians were rounding up all Soviet citizens who had escaped into Germany, and deporting them to Siberia. Peter feared that this was the fate that was awaiting him when he was arrested and sent to a prison near the Swiss border. Just before he was to appear before a committee of American, French, British and Russian authorities, an American officer advised him not to speak any Russian. He told him to wait for an interpretation of questions and then answer in German. After he bluffed his way through the interview, he was told he was free to go. Another one of God's many interventions!

Peter remembers: "Life was very difficult. Germany was crowded. There was no future. I worked 12 hours a day, but we couldn't buy things. Everything was rationed. We didn't even have a chair to sit on." By this time, the Canadian Mennonite Central Committee was working to get Mennonite refugees out of Germany. When Peter and Tatjana were contacted, they immediately applied for immigration to South America. Fortunately, Peter met a cousin of his, who informed him of an uncle living in Canada. With the help of MCC, and the sponsorship of Mr. [and Mrs. John J.] Peters, Peter and his family arrived in Canada in 1948; a new country with new opportunities.

In Canada, Peter found employment, repaid his travel debt, and settled in Rosenfeld. Two more children were born to Peter and Tatjana: a daughter, Susan, and another son, Jake. Peter found employment here – as a mechanic in garages, at the beet loader, and finally in construction, until he suffered a heart attack in 1981. He was able to take a trip to Germany to visit with his youngest sister and

brother, whom he had not seen for 50 years, each with their own tragic stories to tell.

Someone once said: "Our riches are not measured by how much we have, but by how little we need." Perhaps Peter has not found great wealth in his new country, but he has found freedom again – the freedom that he lost at the tender age of 12: freedom to own property, freedom to worship without fear, freedom to speak out, freedom to live well, and freedom to have hope and dreams. Peter is very thankful for this opportunity.

Gets Parcel from Russia

By Eileen Martel, from the *Echo*, Dec. 8, 1965

Mrs. Peter Teichroeb recently received a parcel from Russia with the most unusual contents. It was sent by her mother, Mrs. Sophia and contained dehydrated plums and cherries which were grown in their garden and they themselves had dried. Mrs. Teichroeb's mother and step-father live in southern Russia, or otherwise known as the Ukraine, and they report that this year the fruit crops were very heavy.

Goods of any kind were previously not allowed to be sent out of the country and in the last few months [the Teichroeb's] have also received clothing, an item quite hard to obtain there. The materials of these articles are quite different from those manufactured here and their colours are exceptionally bright.

Mr. and Mrs. Teichroeb and their sons Henry and John came to Canada in 1948 to settle in Rosenfeld. Mr. Teichroeb served in the Russian militia during the last World War and after being taken prisoner by the Germans was interpreter for them since he knew both languages well.

Mrs. Sophia was with her daughter for the greater part of the war, but when the Germans started retreating they became separated and haven't seen each other since. Attempts were made to get passport papers for the older lady, but for reasons unknown she never did obtain them. She then returned to her home in the Ukraine, while Mrs. Teichroeb joined her husband in their journey to a new home in Canada.

Mrs. Sophia is 62 years old and would like to come for a visit at her daughter's. Although she has tried for years to get a visa, both mother and daughter have not given up hope that someday she may be allowed to come to Canada for a short holiday.

Abram J. Thiessen (1910-2002)

By Conrad Stoesz, archivist, Mennonite Heritage Centre and Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg. Published in the *Mennonite Historian*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, September 2009

Abram J. Thiessen, Manitoba Mennonite entrepreneur and businessman, was born on

December 12, 1910, to Abram A. Thiessen (1887-1960) and Susanna Braun (1882-1945) on a farm south east of Rosenfeld, near present day Altona. Abram's maternal grandfather Johann Braun (1858-1941) was a mill owner in Niverville and later in Altona. Abram's paternal grandfather, Abram B. Thiessen (1861-1935), was a school teacher in the village of Chortitz.

Abram attended school in the village of Rosenfeld and took further schooling at Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI). Some of his early employment experiences included working for the CPR replacing railway ties at 25 cents an hour, and later at Ogilvie's with the grain elevator repair gang. In 1928 he returned to school in Rosenfeld.

Abram J. Thiessen (or AJ, as he was often called) was baptized by Bishop David Schulz on May 21, 1928, joining the Bergthaler Mennonite Church. This event implanted a desire to become a missionary, which stayed with him for a number of years, but in the end he had little money to go to the necessary college. "This was very disappointing to me...this missionary desire burned in my heart until 1933."¹

In 1931 AJ began to sell used clothing and groceries in partnership with George Fast. AJ also picked up extra work by selling insurance for the Wawanesa Insurance company and teaching English classes to new immigrants and helping them prepare for citizenship. In 1932 Thiessen began his trucking business by using his grandfather's car. He removed the back seat and transported eggs and chickens to Winnipeg. He took passengers for 75 cents one way. Soon a trailer was needed and in 1934, a 1929 Chevy truck with a homemade cab was purchased and they received a license to transport livestock and freight.

AJ married Lenora Friesen (1914-2007) on July 28, 1935, in the Edenberg Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Together AJ and Lenora had five children, Ronald (1936-), Bernhard (1939-), William (1941-), Irvin (1944-), and Carolyn (1948-). The early years of their family life were especially difficult for Lenora. AJ worked long hours six days a week and was often away from home. In addition to looking after the children, Lenora was also responsible for the hogs, cattle and chickens. AJ credits MCI where all the children attended for high school in helping raise his children. Eventually all the children became involved with the business making it truly a family business.

The Fast and Thiessen Company delivered cream to Winnipeg for the farmers and returned from Winnipeg with Eaton's orders. The business expanded in 1936 by becoming a Chrysler dealership and in 1948 the Massey-Harris dealer. In 1952 they

had the highest Massey-Harris dealer sales in the province. They kept the Chrysler dealership until 1957. In the end it was not profitable.

The Fast Thiessen Company of Rosenfeld continued to invest in the trucking enterprise. In 1942 they bought Wiebe Brothers Transport of Plum Coulee. In 1943 Hiebert Trucking of Altona was purchased. In 1943 they expanded into the retail business with a general store they purchased from William Coblentz.

On January 1, 1945, George Fast and Abram Thiessen divided their business operations, keeping the dealerships together but with Thiessen taking the trucking business and Fast retaining the store. In 1946 AJ was one of the four applicants for the franchise to operate a bus service. After the license was granted, Thiessen Bus Lines was born and headquartered in Rosenfeld. The service ran between Gretna, Altona, Rosenfeld, Winkler, Plum Coulee and Winnipeg.² By 1950 Thiessen had five buses in service.

In 1947 the Western Canadian bus industry was revolutionized with the first bus tour, which took 23 people from Southern Manitoba to Mexico to visit relatives, with AJ as the bus driver. In 1948 another tour was organized taking Mennonite clergy to the Mennonite World Conference in Newton, Kansas. The tours included lively singing of hymns and gospel songs. "Circle Tours", which officially started in 1966, developed out of these early tours.

In 1955 the Thiessen family moved from Rosenfeld to a farm in the Gnadenfeld school district south of Altona where the younger three children attended a one-room country school. AJ continued buying land until 1956 when they farmed 640 acres. In 1965 the farm was sold to cover a bad business purchase and the family moved permanently to Winnipeg.

In 1961 the company began to expand again with the purchase of Grey Goose Bus Lines, which operated in Western Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. In 1962 Western Flyer, a manufacturer of buses, was purchased. In 1969 Manitoba Motor Transit of Brandon was added to the fleet and Western Flyer was sold. To continue to expand, more capital was needed and so in 1970 Grey Goose Company went public. In 1971 AJ exchanged controlling interest in Grey Goose for equity stock in Laidlaw Transportation, headquartered in Hamilton, Ontario. In 1971 Acme Sanitation Services was purchased, launching the company into the waste management industry. In 1974 and 1976 Grey Goose acquired Yellow Cab in Edmonton and Calgary.

In 1977 A.J. Thiessen gave up day-today management of Grey Goose and just retained the chairmanship of the Grey Goose Corporation. This

was a difficult transition for the man who started the company from the ground up. By that time Bernie managed the Manitoba bus operation, Bill managed the waste management division in Manitoba and Ron, in Edmonton, headed the waste management and taxi-cab operations in Alberta.

Family and close friends had always been important to AJ and many of them worked with AJ for Grey Goose.

Thiessen was a man with vision and energy, and spent time with his family. In 1973 a cottage was purchased at Clearwater Bay, Ontario, where the Thiessens enjoyed hosting family and friends. Fishing became a passion for AJ and Lenora.

While A.J. Thiessen was operating his business, farming and raising a family he also had energy and interests in politics and other community development projects. In 1953 Thiessen planned to run in the federal election for Provencher as an independent, but party leader George Drew convinced him to run as a Conservative. With light voter turnout, Thiessen lost by a wide margin. He garnered 2,141 votes, while the Liberal candidate [won with] 6,542.³

In 1962 Thiessen was encouraged by Conservatives and Liberals to run against incumbent Jake M. Froese of the Social Credit Party. This time there was more energy and publicity poured into the campaign. Thiessen's campaign was linked to the successful record of the then premier Duff Roblin of the Progressive Conservatives. In the end Thiessen narrowly lost by 17 votes.⁴ In reflecting on his forays into political life Thiessen said he learned a lot about human nature and was glad for the experience. He later realized that if he had won, it would have negatively affected his business.⁵ Thiessen held no ill feelings towards J.M. Froese, who later became one of the early leaders in the bid to establish a Mennonite radio station.

Perhaps as result of his earlier visions of becoming a missionary, coupled with his role as member of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba Radio Committee in 1955, AJ conceived the idea that the Mennonite community needed a radio station. In March 1956, Thiessen brought together in his home Rev. J.M. Pauls, John Brandt, Dennis Barkman, Dave Fehr, J.A. Penner, D.K. Friesen, T.E. Friesen, and C.W. Thiessen to discuss "... a station that would provide good programs and could be a witness to others in the listening area".⁶ By the next meeting on May 18, 1956, the group had grown to 21 men.⁷ By May 1956 A.J. was elected as chairman of the board⁸ and by March 13, 1957, the station in Altona was on the air.⁹

Soon after the station started, tensions became

evident, and by November 1957, Thiessen had resigned from the CFAM Board and sold his shares.

AJ served on the Elim Bible School building committee, and was involved with the Altona and Winkler Senior Citizens' Homes. He was on the MCI board the longest of any committee or board – 1950 to 1967, serving as chairman from 1960-1965.

The MCI board continuously dealt with grumbling in the constituency over issues such as the location of the school. After a decisive vote to keep the school in Gretna, AJ was elected chair of a building committee for a new residence for the school. Although AJ later resigned before the completion of the project, he continued to be a strong supporter. In 1981 he was able to honour his long time friend and fellow board member, Paul Schaefer, with funding for building the Paul J. Schaefer library at MCI.

The MCI was not the only educational institution he served. He was on the Rosenfeld school board as early as 1942. After 1955 he was on the Gnadefeld school board. In 1947 he was elected a director of the Manitoba School Trustees Association (MSTA). At various times he served as director, president and vice president. One year he served as president of the Canadian School Trustees and was made an honorary life member. His involvement with MSTA drew him to be involved with a Government Advisory Board on Education, the Teachers' Pension Fund Board, a Teachers' Discipline Committee and the Municipal Assessment Committee.

Seeing a need for a unified voice against the formation of larger school divisions, Thiessen organized the Mennonite School Trustees Association. It was made up of the trustees from the Rhineland (Altona area), Stanley (Winkler area), and Hanover (Steinbach area) school divisions. They were opposed to the formation of larger school divisions in fear that larger school divisions meant larger schools with less input and supervision from parents. In the end, larger school divisions were legislated by the Province of Manitoba and the Association discontinued.¹⁰

In 1973 Thiessen was brought into the Manitoba Development Corporation headquartered in Winnipeg. The corporation operated as a lending institution and worked with economic development in the province on behalf of the Manitoba government. Thiessen served on the board of directors and on the loan committee. In 1973, 87 loans worth \$40 million were approved and in 1974, \$23.5 million. In addition to providing loans the organization helped businesses apply for other federal and provincial funds. In 1974 the board of directors met 18 times and the loans committee eight times. The organization employed 46 people.¹¹ Thiessen served in this capacity until 1976.¹²

Abram J. Thiessen died at his residence at Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home, Winnipeg, on March 7, 2002. His funeral was at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and he was laid to rest in the Rosenfeld cemetery. Lenora died December 13, 2007, and was also buried at Rosenfeld cemetery.

Like his father and both grandfathers, AJ Thiessen was involved with education, business and politics and slightly with farming – perhaps the reverse of many of his local peers. AJ Thiessen's circle of influence was large. He served the Mennonite community and the wider public through his business ventures, his forays into politics, and service on church and secular business and educational committees. The amount of volunteer time he poured into the various committees and boards was possible only through the support of his wife and children.

Endnotes

1. A.J. Thiessen, *My Background and Life's Experiences* (A.J. Thiessen: Altona, Manitoba, 1982), 35.
2. Gerhard Ens, *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland* (RM of Rhineland: Altona, Manitoba, 1984) 187.
3. "Jutras Wins Fourth Consecutive Election", *Red River Valley Echo*, Altona, Manitoba, August 12, 1953, 1.
4. Thiessen p.62. Other sources such as Wikipedia, "Manitoba general election, 1962", give the difference as 32 votes. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manitoba_general_election,_1962 accessed August 12, 2009.
5. Thiessen, 62.
6. "First Meeting of Persons Interested in Establishing a Radio Station in Altona", March 15, 1956.
7. "Minutes of the meeting of shareholders of the proposed Radio Station at Altona", May 18, 1956.
8. "Minutes of the meeting of shareholders of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company", May 25, 1956.
9. Esther Epp-Tiessen, *Altona: the Story of a Prairie Town* (D.W. Friessens: Altona, Manitoba, 1982), 249.
10. Thiessen, 97.
11. "Manitoba Development Corporation Annual Report 1974", 5-6.
12. Telephone interview with Mr. James Kilgour by Conrad Stoesz May 2009. Mr. Kilgour is the current manager of the Manitoba Development Corporation.

Henry D. ("Trico") Thiessen

In his own words

I was born northeast of Rosenfeld on a farm in the year 1937, Nov. 25th. We lived on this farm till I was four years old, when we moved to Rosenfeld to take care of Grandma Thiessen, my dad's mom. We lived in the old school house of Rosenfeld before the new one was built across the street. [This house was beside the pool hall.] I started school at five years of age not knowing a word of English. It was hard for me to catch on to what the teacher was saying. So when [my parents] asked what I had learned, all I could say was a new English word.

During my time of growing up I got into two

accidents, all with my school buddy, Hank Fast. One was, we were dragging an old counter with a tractor on a rough back alley. [I was riding on the countertop.] It caught a bump in the road and flipped me right over onto the angle iron on the tractor hitch, nearly taking out my right eye. The next was moving an old combine, but it had a pickup that could be taken off. The wheels turned, so you took it down the road sideways. My foot slipped off the running board of the truck and I got stuck under the pickup some place and dragged down a country road a ways before Hank noticed I was gone. I had a gash on the right side of my head that Doc Toni said one quarter of an inch and I wouldn't be walking out the next day like I did.

Life had its ups and downs. I quit school at age 16 and went to work helping on the Rosenfeld transfer with Ed Giesbrecht, who was running it for A. J. Thiessen. That lasted almost a year. After that I went to work with brother Abe [in Winnipeg] who was working for a deaf man by the name of Joe making garage pads, sidewalk or patio pads. Then my dad phoned me on Monday after the weekend to let me know a fellow from Rosenfeld had been over and asked if I would be interested in taking a job working for the survey with him, and to be home next weekend.

Needless to say, I went home next weekend. When the fellow came over I agreed to go – meals and so much a day, plus either hotel or a trailer parked at Brunkild. I only needed my own bedding. I worked on surveys for four years, the last year for a guy by the name of Art Kletke, who got mad at me and fired me just after I got married to Esther Unger from Plum Coulee.

So I found a job in the city. First I was a garage jockey plus grease monkey, got along good with the mechanic, so would do “road tests”, which generally were coffee breaks or beer breaks. Drove ambulance for about a year after taking the first aid course. From that we moved [from a rental at 99 Ruby St. in the west end] to a house on Stephens St. in the north end. Ambulance at this time was taken over by Metro Winnipeg to be in the fire halls, so I found a job as a gas pumper working at a company called Anglo Oils out of Brandon. I enjoyed selling tires, pumping gas, making gas deliveries.

A.J. Thiessen told me I could make money working for him, so after four years I made the switch to driving bus. After 3.5 years I went into construction working on a townhouse project back in west end one summer. After that I went into trucking and worked for Seaway Midwest Distribution, which was bought by Molson Companies Ltd., which was bought by Eastern Distribution. Two guys, Vic and Bill, helped me get my semi license.

But in 1983 while unloading a truck at the K-Mart on Henderson I felt short of breath suddenly. I kept unloading to finish. After I unloaded, I went home and Esther and I got ready to go out to Ed's place 'cause we had a garden to clean. It was a hot weekend, so I went to shave my face with a razor, but all the shaving cream ran off my face. Esther got mad and said I was going to the hospital. I spent the night in the hospital and was told by Doc to take it easy – no more work.

I had my first heart surgery Jan. 20th, 1984. I had to take it easy for a year and a half.

I was placed on a three-ton, making deliveries in smaller loads. Eventually I got into semi driving.

Then on Dec. 23, 2003, I had an accident with my own truck – a 1984 Chev S10 – on the slippery road. The lite turned green going south but a guy came thru the red lite going north on the Pembina and Stafford corner. I hit him broadside, causing us to get thrown sideways and hit by another car.

This being X-mas, I had to wait till after the holidays to see the doc. He found a second heart valve was not in sync. Tests were taken, nothing worked. Surgery was needed to replace the mitral valves. Surgery was done October, 2005. They were not lucky enough to get both valves in sync, so now I have a hard time to walk 150 ft. before I get shakey. But I'm living – not to my liking, but it's a life.

The aortic and mitral valves have both been replaced with metal that make me sound like an old Chev that needs a valve adjustment. The cardiologist declared me totally disabled and that meant never to work again. Papers were signed and accepted by Canada Pension Disability. I had worked [part-time at Garry Bowling Lanes] for 24 years, but I could no longer work at selling coffee, renting shoes, and liquor sales because of this total disability claim.

And that is my life till now, age 75. I hope to get to Grandma's age of 90 years.

Editor's note: Henry passed away in 2015, three years after writing this autobiography. He and Esther had one son and one daughter.

The Treichel Family

Submitted by Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke

Samuel and Martha (nee Schneider) were born in Poland, and also their first daughter, Della. In 1928 they arrived in Canada and moved to Rosenfeld. Martha had relatives in Rosenfeld; my grandmother, Anna Kletke, was her aunt.

Samuel worked on farms surrounding the Rosenfeld area. They raised eight children: Della, Laura, Eleanor, Leo, Ruth, the twins Ernie and Esther, and Hannah.



Martha (Schieder) and Samuel Treichel with their daughters Laura (obscured behind her mother) and Della, possibly sometime in the 1930s. [Hedy (Kletke) Mazinke]

Martha had a huge garden where the curling rink was later built. They had chickens and a cow from which they sold milk to other people in Rosenfeld. You could not buy milk in the grocery store because there was no hydro. So people had cows in town. In the summertime there were certain people who would take the cows from the town to Buffalo Creek south of Rosenfeld where they had grass to graze and water. When it was milking time the cows were brought back and people milked their cows and kept them in their barns till the next day, and again off to Buffalo Creek.

The Treichel children would pull a little wagon with the bottles filled with milk and deliver it to their customers. You could sure hear them coming, as the sidewalks were wooden.

In 1944 the Treichel family moved to Winnipeg. Samuel and Martha celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. In 1998, March 28th, Samuel passed away at the age of 98. The following year, on March 2nd, Martha died at the age of 95.

Abram and Anna (Wiebe) Winter **By Leslie Winter, Sr.**

Abram and Anna lived on a farm three and a half miles east and half a mile north of Rosenfeld. They had three sons: John (Kathy Hildebrand); Abram (Ann Klassen); and Bernie. Their four daughters were: Anna (John Letkeman); Agatha

(David Klassen); Tina (Jacob Klassen); Mary (Peter Doerksen). Abram was born Feb. 10, 1892, and died Dec. 9, 1960. Anna was born Aug. 24, 1894, and died May 13, 1977.

John farmed five miles east of Rosenfeld until he retired.

Abram farmed for a few years, then moved to Rosenfeld to run a service station and garage, which also had a small coffee shop.

Bernie farmed until his father passed away, then moved to Altona with his mother. There he ran a bicycle repair shop until he retired.

Mary and Peter Doerksen farmed one mile east of Rosenfeld until retirement.

Agatha and David Klassen moved around for a time, then settled in Altona, where they started the Macleods store.

Tina and Jacob Klassen moved to Paraguay.

Ann and John Letkeman farmed in the Rosenfeld area, moved to Bolivia to continue farming, then returned to live in Altona.

John Winter

One of Abram's brothers was John Winter. He was born 1886 in Gnadenfeld, MB. His parents had come to Canada from Berghthal Colony, S. Russia, c. 1876. In the early 1900s, the Winter family moved to Hope Farm, west of Saint Jean. John left Manitoba and travelled west, working at various farm jobs, eventually landing in BC, where he worked in lumber camps. From BC, he travelled south and worked at various jobs through much of the US. He returned to Manitoba after around 25 years. He lived and farmed with his sister, Anny (Anna) Winter, a few miles east of Rosenfeld. Being so close to Hwy. 14, they often provided refuge to travellers stranded in winter storms. At least once, a bunch of passengers travelling by bus were put up for the night at the Winters' home.

Martha Martens remembers her father, Henry D. Dyck, relating the following story about John Winter:

Those years that he lived away from Rosenfeld, no one really knew where he was, as he did not keep in touch with his family. One blistering cold winter day, he arrived in Rosenfeld by train, but was not recognized by anyone he encountered. He started walking toward the farm home. The sun had set, the snow was drifting, and the temperature had dropped.

When he arrived, he could see the lamplight through the frosted windows. He went to the door and knocked, and when the door opened, there were two women. He asked if he could come in and warm up because he had walked and he was cold

and hungry. The women, who were sisters, looked at each other and hesitantly said yes.

But who was this man, snow-covered, with frost on his long facial beard and long hair? It was a stormy day and they could not send him away. They served him some food, they chatted a bit. But John showed no indication of leaving. The women did not know what to do, but became more relaxed, and as the conversation continued, John started to ask questions about their family. Suddenly the sisters recognized his voice and asked: "John, is it you?!"

Yes, it was him, their long-lost brother.

Maggie Bourgeois recalls: "Mr. Winter used to come and visit my grandparents, David and Margaret Thiessen – always had those white scotch mints in his pocket, complete with pocket lint. Candy was a luxury and we always appreciated them."

He was never married. Anny passed away in 1974, her brother John in 1975.

The Beet Loader

Hartley Pokrant: That's where we went to smoke cigarettes and build forts from the big piles of snow-fence boards the railway had stacked up for the wooden fences along the tracks. A big event would be hitchhiking to Altona to buy a pile of fire crackers, like ladyfingers, and two-inch-length- and maybe a few four-inch-blockbusters if you had an extra quarter. We would head back to Rosenfeld and blast them off all over town. Try that now and you would have the RCMP tactical unit out with an armoured car.



Lawrence Klassen

I was born in Altona, Manitoba, to John and Maria (Winter) Klassen and attended school in the Kleinstadt School District. I spent most summer holidays at my Uncle John Winter and Aunt Annie Winters'. They lived on a farm approximately three miles east of Rosenfeld on Hwy. 14.

My mother passed away in 1950 when I was 12 years old. After that I frequently walked the five miles north to my uncle and aunt's farm on weekends to visit, as well as to help with farm chores.

When I was age 14, Uncle John asked me to come live and work at the farm, which I did.

At age 18, I spent the winter months working in Winnipeg for a glass company. In spring I returned to the farm. Then after a year, I went back to Winnipeg and applied for a job with Federal Grain. They gave me a job in Rosenfeld so I could still stay at the farm. Later the next year, the manager of the glass company came to Rosenfeld and asked me to come back to work for them. I worked in the glass industry until 1976, after which we moved to Alberta. My wife Katherine and I currently reside in Red Deer.

Birth Registration

Bob Derksen: A.H. Funk [one-time postmaster] reminds me of a story that happened with him. When my brother Elmer was born, birth registrations were done at the post office. When my dad came to register Elmer's birth, Mr. Funk asked my dad how the name was spelled. My dad did not know. So Mr. Funk asked if it was spelled like on the jam can. So my brother was registered Aylmer, like on the jam can.

Modern Make-Up

Tina Wolfe: Dad worked at A.J. Thiessen's garage when he began the bus route and us kids could help clean the bus once in a while. On one such day we found what we thought was a tube of blue lipstick, and we were flabbergasted that women would consider wearing this and it wasn't anywhere near Halloween! I talked about it at school and learned from a more educated girl that this was eyeshadow. She had seen it in one of her mom's "love-story" magazines. ☁️☁️☁️

What a relief!



Dray Loewens

Judy Fehr, gathered from her conversations with her uncle, William Kroeker, in 2012: Jacob Loewen operated the dray in Rosenfeld and knew almost everyone in town. When the Jewish peddlers came to town in their horse-drawn wagons, Mr. Loewen would host them at his home and they would sell pots and pans and some medicines, like liniment and wonder oil. Gus Frank took over the dray from Jacob Loewen, but by that time they were already using a truck instead of wagon and horses.

Ranch Rosenfeld

Wally and Lorraine (Martel) Pokrant: Benny Neufeld may have been one of Rosenfeld's village herdsmen. John Neufeld was his father and they had a small herd of about half a dozen cows just south of the Henry Martel's Blacksmith Shop (current Rosenfeld elementary school parking lot) on the east side of Main Street. Some families had their cows graze in the Y, west of the village, across the railway tracks. To keep the cows from being hit by a train, each cow was posted – a halter with a rope leading to a stake pounded firmly into the ground at an angle, with sufficient length of rope to allow the cow to graze during the day without getting tangled in the rope, and out of reach of the railway tracks.

When President Kennedy Was Assassinated...

Lois Braun: I was in Gr. 9 at Rosenfeld High the day we found out President Kennedy had been killed. It was lunchtime. I ate lunch at school because I lived on the farm. Sunshine was streaming through those lower south-facing windows. Wayne Newman came into the classroom. I don't know where he'd gone for lunch, because he lived wa-a-a-ay outta town – maybe just to the store. Anyway, he was excited and nervous and wide-eyed. He told us Kennedy had been shot. Can't recall which teacher was on noon-hour duty that day – Herman Kuhl or Edgar Enns – but one of them ran to find a radio. I remember the clicking sound of Wayne opening and closing one of the snaps on his Rosenfeld jacket over and over again. ☁️☁️☁️



Chapter VIII



In Retrospect



Gail Sawatzky: "Tree of Life", 2014. Acrylic on canvas, 20in.x30in. Old willow at north end of Main Street.

Album I



Mary Schellenberg on Hawaiian guitar and her son Gene on washtub bass, jammin' in the kitchen of their house on Main Street in 2012. Mary was the wife of Henry, the local piano tuner. The family loved music and often played and sang together – still do, although Henry and Mary have both passed on. Also present at the time the photo was taken, but not pictured, were Henry and Mary's daughters, Mary E. and Martha. [Source: Wally Wicha, Martha's husband]



Rosenfeld's Farmers' Orchestra playing during one of the annual Sports Day celebrations – picture taken in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Individuals identified are: Peter Funk (front right) – violin; on his right, D.B. Friesen – cello; facing him is George Fast – mandolin; on Fast's left, Jake Penner – violin; behind D.B. Friesen is Leonard Schultz – guitar; identities of the other men in the orchestra uncertain. The couple standing against the wall is Emanuel and Lydia Janke. [Art Wiebe]



Inside the Rosenfeld "coffee shop" in the 1970s at Dave's General Store, owned and operated by Dave and Sue (Wiebe) Kehler. Sitting around the table mid-morning, L-R: Don Smith (CPR agent), J.J. Nickel (farmer), Dave Kehler (store owner), Peter F. Braun (farmer). [Grant and Leona Nickel]



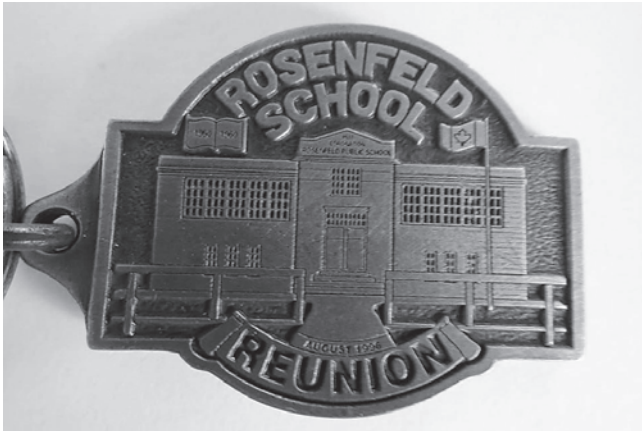
Rosenfeld Sports Day parade, 1984. [Bradley Schmidt]



Senior citizen home, Rose Village Villa, on Grand Opening Day, Aug. 14, 1979. [Art Wiebe]



The Rosenfeld Cemetery, with a magnificent cottonwood keeping vigil. [Art Wiebe]



Keychain memento of 1996 school reunion. [Art Wiebe]



Rosenfeld's "Fresh-Air Astrodome", 2012. The main building features a kitchen, viewing area, two change rooms, two washrooms, electrical room, storage area, floor heat and matted flooring to protect the skate blades. A generous donation from developer and former Rosenfelder Martin Friesen, and the work of numerous community volunteers, who disassembled and re-installed the puck board, made this all possible. [Art Wiebe]



In the fall of 2014, Valley Internet Provider (VISP), the first fibre-optics-based wireless Internet provider in the area, erected its tower in the town of Rosenfeld. [Art Wiebe]



The Rosenfeld rink decked out in 2018 for a game between the W.C. Miller Collegiate Aces and the Carman Cougars, who were celebrating 50 years together in Zone IV hockey. [Jason Pilkington]



Main Street looking south from the corner of Alexander Avenue. [Art Wiebe]

A new development at the south end of town on land previously owned by descendants of John C. and Helena Nickel. [Art Wiebe]



Semi-truck parking lot north of Rosenfeld, Oct 21, 2017: Many trucker families live in Rosenfeld and the surrounding area. Each unit is extremely heavy and can be up to 85 feet in length. The RM of Rhineland constructed this site for truckers to park their rigs. Because truckers are permitted to drive only a certain number of hours in a 7- or 14-day period, they need to take breaks to comply with Canada's regulations. [Art Wiebe]



The women's coffee group at the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre, 2014, painted by Neubergthal artist, Margruite Krahn. Clockwise around the table, starting with the woman standing on the left: Helen (Pauls) Kuhl, Marge (Friesen) Schellenberg, Sandra (Klassen) Pokrant, Leona (Hildebrand) Nickel, Leona's daughter-in-law Jackie (Braun) Nickel, Eileen Martel, Sheryl (Friesen) Peters, Anne (Sawatzky) Winter, Phyllis (Hamm) Friesen; holding the coffee pot: Martha (Penner) Friesen.



Train coming through town, Jan. 6, 2018. [Art Wiebe]



The men's morning coffee group at the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre, 2009, by Margruite Krahn. L-R, clockwise: Arnold Pokrant, Rev. David F. Friesen, Reeve Don Wiebe (with the coffee pot), Larry Schwartz, Len Schieman, Rod Pokrant (with his head turned), Grant Nickel, Kevin Nickel, Doug Enns, Barry Pokrant, Abe Heinrichs, Frank Rempel, Tony H. Friesen, Herman Kuhl, Helmut Martel.



Rosenfeld, 2000 – freshly made drainage channels on the fields. [Leah (Dyck) Boutet]

Many Changes Recalled At Rosenfeld Since 1941

By Gus Pokrant, from the *Echo*, September 5, 1956

To many readers of the *Echo* the past fifteen years will no doubt seem to have passed as if on wings of magic. Yet in this short span of years, totalling about 780 weeks, numerous editions of the *Echo* have been printed. From its small beginning, this newspaper has steadily progressed and has produced many pages of neighbourly news, all of which was of great local interest. This is vouched for by the steadily increasing number of subscribers. In order, therefore, to review the changes and progress during the last decade and a half, the old editions of the *Echo* provide a revealing background on our community history.

Truly the years have gone by very quickly, yet we were much impressed when we set out to list the changes that have come to pass since 1940. Here in the village the larger number of business establishments have been remodelled or rebuilt. The following business places were not here when the *Echo* sent out its first edition: Ed Martin Service, Johnny's Service, Beaver Lumber Company, G. Pokrant Store, Fast & Thiessen Agency, Funk's Radio Shop, Schellenberg's Woodworks, H. Martel and Sons Agency, Red & White Store, J. Martel Garage, the Berghaler, Rüdnerweider and St. John's churches, the curling rink and the post office.

Among new and rebuilt houses we find: J.E. Nikkel, Rev. Jac. Unrau, Albert Schroeder, Wm. Friesen, Aug. Hintz, D.P. Harder, Henry Fast, George Fast, Jake Harder, Otto Martel, Walter Martel, R. Rentz, S. Mekelburg, O. Abraham, A. Abraham, Ed Martin, Aug. Lang, W. Eisbrenner, G. Schroeder, Henry Brown, David Paetkau, Rev. L. Koss, Mrs. J.J. Janzen, Mrs. G. Marsh, Mrs. R. Kletke.

Considerable changes and improvements, especially in dwellings, are also evident on the surrounding farmyards. New dwellings built in the last fifteen years were: F. Fielman, P.P. Funk, Ad. Eisbrenner, Jake Nickel, D.D. Friesen, Alfred Schroeder, A.H. Pokrant, Dan Pokrant, Arnold Pokrant, Roy Schroeder, Emil Shmunik, Wm. Wonnick, Wm. Kletke, J.S. Klassen and Teo. Schieman.

Besides all this material progress a new era in agriculture has gradually become evident. The old familiar and endless wheat fields have given way to a much more diversified crop: the most modern machinery has replaced the horse and the hired man; new methods have greatly increased production and quality. Although this area is still devoting its major effort in producing crops, the diversified type of farming has done much to insure a regular income.

Losing Young People

The old order is continually changing, yielding place to the new, but in some respects this does not always benefit a community. Since the last war and even before, a definite trend has been established which appears to be heading in the wrong direction. The young people, partly because of the large initial investment required to start farming and also because of the scarcity in employment in rural areas, are steadily moving into the cities.

This large and steady exodus away from rural areas is a definite loss. Rural communities spend large sums in training and educating these future citizens, only to find when they reach maturity, they leave to take up residence elsewhere. We have often wondered why no effort is made to keep this greatest of all potential wealth where it could serve best.

As a result of this steady and increasing drift to the larger centres of population the older citizens are obliged to carry on as well as they can, often devoting long hours to keeping the farm plant in production. Although these pioneers have already done their share in building a community from the raw prairies, some of them over the seventy mark are still with us. They deserve to be classified among the respected members of the district, and on this occasion, we cannot deny them honourable mention.

On top of the list we must place Mr. Emil Marsh, Rosenfeld's grand old gentleman, who will celebrate his 100th birthday next May. Others are: Mr. and Mrs. Jac. J. Neufeld, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Knopf, Mr. D.D. Klassen, Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Klassen, Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Funk, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Friesen, Mr. and Mrs. Aug. Recksiedler, Mr. John Winter, Rev. and Mrs. Jac. Unrau, Mrs. J.J. Janzen, Mrs. Aug Hintz, Mrs. J. Goertz, Mrs. Henry Pokrant, Mrs. H. Zotzman, Mr. and Mrs. Gottfried Schroeder, Mr. and Mrs. J.N. Funk and Mr. and Mrs. Schapansky. Mr. J.N. Funk holds the distinction of being the oldest resident in the number of years actually lived in Rosenfeld.

Made Contribution

Of the pioneers a large number have been laid to rest in the last fifteen years. Many of them have contributed equally if not greater effort to make our district a better place to live in, therefore it is only fitting at this time to pause in their memory and mention their names here. Most of them were pioneers among us and their faces were very familiar over a long period of years.

Among these are: Mr. Jac. A. Thiessen, Mr. and Mrs. F. Shmunick, Mr. and Mrs. John Loewen, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Janke, Mrs. E. Marsh, Mr. Henry Pokrant, Mr. Henry A. Funk, Mr. John Goertz, Rev. J.P. Heinrichs, Mr. P.J. Kehler, Mrs. A.H. Funk, Mrs. G. Schmidt, Mr. J.J. Janzen, Mr. Aug. Hintz, Mrs. Jac. Unrau, Mr. Adolf Kletke, Mr. Rudolf Kletke, Mr. A.B. Thiessen and Mrs. A.A. Thiessen, also Mrs. Leocadia Pokrant and Mrs. A.D. Klassen.

Village Boards

In 1949 Rosenfeld became an Unincorporated Village, when a group of interested citizens together with the reeve and councillor, Ed. Pokrant and Jac. A. Thiessen, held several meetings to organize for this purpose.

The first village board, W. Martel (chairman), G. Schroeder, J.E. Nikkel, rendered good service for the first term of three years and began with a plan to replace all wooden sidewalks with concrete walks. This plan was completed last year under the present board, the Messrs. Geo. H. Fast (chairman), Jac. E. Brown and Erne Janke.

The Rosenfeld Village Boards have always served ably and well. They have devoted much of their time and energy to the affairs of the village.

Improvements in district roads, especially in the main system on Highways 14 and 14A, have been made since 1940. Today these highways are passable all year round. The road north of town to Highway 23 was re-graded and gravelled. Bus and transfer services are among the best in the province.

School Expansion

An extra classroom was opened several years ago when the school population increased sufficiently to warrant a fourth teacher. This year a fifth classroom may be added.

Canadians generally are opposed to foreign investments. But when the opportunity presents itself and the door is wide open for worthwhile and profitable projects, we are too hesitant, and perhaps just a little too reluctant to take the risks while the Americans are only too eager to invest their capital. It has been truly said that it is easier to make money than it is to invest it properly, wisely and unselfishly. What greater benefits can we gain if we give the next generation a brightly burning torch to carry on.

The Red River Valley Echo provides an excellent illustration of what a local enterprise is able to accomplish if the initiative and the leadership is present. From a very small beginning, when type was set by hand, it has grown to become the leading weekly in rural Manitoba. At present this large printing business provides employment for a considerable number of local young people who otherwise would have left the district. And the future may mean even greater expansion.

On this their 15th anniversary, the Village of Rosenfeld together with the surrounding district, extend to *The Red River Valley Echo* best wishes for continued success. We will be expecting further progress and expansion, the best in news and printing service. In this we feel very certain that we will not be disappointed because the past has proven what the future still holds. Best wishes and a hearty thank you to the publishers, the editor and the entire staff of D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., well done these last fifteen years.

A Night at the Rosenfeld

By Peter Desbarats

...originally published in the Montreal Star in January, 1967, and subsequently reprinted in Steinbach's Carillon News. Desbarats (1933-2014) was a well-known Canadian author and journalist who worked for various newspapers and television networks during his distinguished career. He received the Order of Canada in 2006.

The opening of the new Chateau Champlain this week made me think of the worst hotel in Canada. Not that there was any similarity between the bay-windowed wonder south of Dominion Square and the Rosenfeld Hotel south of Winnipeg. The Chateau is brand-new. The Rosenfeld died about five years ago, which is why I can write about it without fear of libel. While it lived, it undoubtedly was the worst place in the country to spend a night.

The Rosenfeld, even when I stayed there nine years ago, was an anachronism. Rural Manitoba had already moved into the motel age. Most communities of respectable size had at least one motel to provide comfortable if not luxurious accommodation for travellers. The Rosenfeld Hotel belonged to an earlier era when 20 or 30 miles was a considerable journey on a horse-drawn wagon or bucking jalopy over gumbo roads. Rosenfeld itself, about 60 miles south of Winnipeg, in the flat Mennonite country near the North Dakota border, was a relic. It consisted of a few stores and houses and a few hundred people stagnating at the junction of Highway 14 and 14A. In the centre of its main street towered the two-storey, imitation-brick hotel. At first glance, it looked like an ordinary general store, but above the front door there was a wooden sign that said, somewhere beneath the prairie dust, HOTEL.

Careful Planning

I had lived in Winnipeg only a short time, and seen nothing of rural Manitoba when The Tribune assigned me to cover a provincial election campaign. One of my first assignments was an evening meeting in Winkler and an afternoon gathering the next day at Altona. In an unusual burst of efficient planning, I drew up a detailed itinerary. A brief study of the map had shown me that mid-way between Winkler and Altona, there was a community called Rosenfeld. Obviously the clever thing to do was attend the meeting at Winkler, stay overnight at Rosenfeld and continue to Altona the next morning.

In my most authoritative “eastern Canadian” style, I picked up the telephone in the newspaper office and ordered the operator to reserve “the best room in the best hotel in Rosenfeld” for that night. The Tribune operator was a native Manitoban. “Where?” she said. She called back a few minutes later to say that there was only one hotel in Rosenfeld and that she had booked a room for me.

(Only later did I realize that I already at that stage, had made history in Rosenfeld.)

Farmer Obliges

When the meeting at Winkler ended that evening, I cornered the local political organizer and asked if anyone could give me a lift to Rosenfeld. “Where?” he said. I explained that I had a hotel reservation at Rosenfeld. “Oh, there,” he said. “Are you sure there’s a hotel?” He looked at me as if I were trying to convince him that the Empire State Building was located in the centre of Winnipeg, but he finally introduced me to a farmer who was passing through Rosenfeld on his way home.

“I suppose that is a hotel,” mused the farmer as

we jounced along 14 in his pick-up. “Never heard of anyone from the city staying there, though.”

It was about 11 p.m. when we turned off 14 and drove into Rosenfeld. It didn’t look like a town at all. As we drove along the road, the farmhouses got thicker for a while, and then petered out again, and that was it. We’d been there. We turned around and managed to spot the general store on the way back.

“That must be it,” said the farmer, looking up and down the “main street” and the few houses on either side. “Couldn’t be anything else.”

I pounded on the door. Eventually a light showed. A few minutes later, a man in long underwear opened the door.

“I phoned for a reservation,” I said. It couldn’t have sounded more ridiculous if I had asked for directions to the Khyber Pass.

“Oh, yeah,” he said. “When it got past eight, I figured you weren’t coming.”

“Do you have a telephone?” I asked. “I have to phone in a story to the newspaper in Winnipeg.”

“What’s that?”

“I’m a reporter,” I explained.

“What’s been happening?” he said.

A New Experience

He wasn’t hostile. Merely astounded. A few minutes later, I was sitting at the kitchen table behind the store, typing my story. At the other side of the table sat three sleepy-eyed children, watching me. The man’s wife, her hair in curlers, made coffee. I phoned in the story from the telephone on the wall, had coffee, chatted, then asked to be shown to my room.

There were about six beaverboard cubicles along the passageway above the store. Mine was furnished with an army cot, two moth-eaten army blankets, a torn green blind and a broken window. I have stayed in hundreds of hotel rooms since then but none has stuck so vividly in my memory.

Incredible as it might seem, there were other guests. Or ghosts. During the long sleepless night as the cold prairie air poured through the window, as I shivered beneath the blankets and the contents of my suitcase, as I prayed for dawn, I could hear breathing and coughing from somewhere. Maybe it was just part of the nightmare.

At six a.m., I got up, tried to shave in the cold-water sink nailed to the wall of the passageway, crept downstairs and started to hitch-hike to Altona.

A few years later the hotel burned down. Or collapsed. Or died from shame.

Rosenfeld Revisited

By Gerta Funk, from the *Echo*, June 19, 1985

Two grandchildren and one great grandchild of Alexander Acheson and Sara Bredin Acheson visited Rosenfeld on the last Tuesday in May, seeking their roots for a family history they are writing in honour of the upcoming 100th birthday of Gertie (Acheson) Eagles, the only one of seven Acheson children still living.

The two grandchildren, Winnie Benedict from Calgary and Gertie Lawrie from near Victoria, and the great grandchild, Marion Gertie Thompson from Winnipeg, were given a warm welcome and a great deal of information by Vera Pokrant and her brother-in-law.

From there they went to the general store, built on the site of the old Acheson General Store, where Minnie Acheson, mother of Winnie and Gertie, had helped her mother for many years.

The teaching staff at the Rosenfeld School showed great interest in the original 1910 map of Rosenfeld the visitors brought with them and their explanation for the names of the streets. Though many of the places on the map of 1910 had been victims of fire and the great depression, i.e. the Bank of Montreal, the Leland Hotel, the Acheson and the Stewart general stores, the visitors had copies made of this map of historical interest at Friesen Printers in Altona.

Actually, this was the visitors' second trip to Rosenfeld in so many days. The preceding Sunday, three carloads of Acheson descendants, being in Winnipeg from far-away places for a family wedding, had come with great interest to Rosenfeld.

They were not disappointed in the lovely little village, but were sorry that there was no one around to give them more information. Most of them had to leave for their homes the following day.

So Winnie, Gertie and Marion agreed that they would return again when businesses would be open. On Sunday, they had been touched to find the grave of Sadie (Acheson) Webber's first child, the infant brother of Winnie and Gertie, and related to most of the visitors who were standing around the tiny tombstone. Winnie checked with David Kehler for graveyard records, and the church records which Vera had kindly obtained for the visitors. But there was no mention of where Alexander Acheson had been buried when he died in Rosenfeld in 1897.

But the visitors were given a good lead as to which convent the four Acheson daughters, Gertie, Maudie, Minnie and Sadie, had attended to receive their high school education, before going on to Winnipeg Business College.

Richard Webber and Linda Philip were the bride

and groom of the wedding held on May 25 at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, with a reception at the Assiniboine Golf Course. The bride and groom settled down in Irricana, a small Alberta village the size of Rosenfeld.

1996 Rosenfeld School Reunion

A portion of a letter sent to the Altona *Echo* by reunion organizer, Ron Martin

On August 2, 3 and 4, 1996, Rosenfeld, Man., held a school reunion. It was the only school reunion ever held in Rosenfeld. It was promoted as an Event of a Lifetime, as there may never be another. The Reunion included all grades between the years 1950 to 1960.

The three-day program consisted of the following events:

Friday: Registration and an old-fashioned wiener roast held at Gail (Martel) and Al Braun's farm. Approximately 180 people attended the wiener roast, which had to be one of the largest ever held in this area.

Saturday: Pancake breakfast, attended by 170 people. The afternoon consisted of various sporting events, viewing of memorabilia and old photos, and socializing.

The evening barbecued-steak dinner and social were the main event. Over 225 attended this event. There were numerous speeches, presentations, and dancing to the music of a local band called The Country Twist.

Sunday: The Sunday morning church service was a combined effort of both Rosenfeld churches. Following the church service, a farewell barbecue of farmer sausage and baked beans was held. Immediately after the barbecue the closing ceremonies commenced, which consisted of a free stage for various entertainment and speeches.

Approximately 300 people attended these events. The majority of events were held in a large white tent that was erected on the tennis courts. Over one third attending were from other provinces. A large contingent came from British Columbia and Alberta, and some came from as far as the Yukon Territories and Bolivar, Tennessee.

1996 Rosenfeld School Reunion organizing committee:

Ron Martin, chairman
Gord Martin
John Warkentin
Betty Warkentin
Grant Nickel
John Teichroeb
Erica Sommer
John Sommer

Arnold Janke
Herb Neufeld
Carol Toews
Valerie Czarnecki
Tina Wolfe
Gail Shimonek
Hank Fast

The following song was written especially for the 1996 Rosenfeld School Reunion:

FIELDS OF ROSES

*Fields of roses have drawn us back
to the place we all called home;
Bidding old friends to reunite,
those who stayed and those who roam.*

*Chorus: Old memories, like roses held,
Have bloomed for us in Rosenfeld.*

*When nurtured well some left this place –
to sail the sea, walk the plain.
But like roses that need to feed
we turn to our roots again.*

Chorus

*We walk once more these well worn halls
rememb'ring truths, oh so dear,
Our school dispensed by teachers rare;
hail their dedication here!*

Chorus

*Some old dear friends could not return;
they have left us ever gone.
Their time was short, blossoms shut tight,
just like the roses before dawn.
But this wee wchool where faith prevailed
taught us to look past the gloom;
Put our trust in heav'nly glory,
where God's sweetest roses bloom.*

*Chorus: Old friends now gone, rosebuds refined,
Burst forth in bloom for us in mind.*

*We've returned here in ninety six;
relived past times Fifties style;
Renewed friendships, retold old tales;
smelled the roses for awhile.*

*Chorus: Old memories, like roses held,
Have bloomed for us in Rosenfeld.*

©1996, Phyllis (Frank) Whitten

Skeeter-Fogging, 1940s Style

Art Klassen: Harold Giesbrecht and I both played hockey for the Rosenfeld Hawks. His dad was a teacher at Reichenbach School for many years, right across the road from my house. Harold's dad had an old Essex during the war years. And he would always mix the gas with kerosene. When he went down the road, you didn't have to worry about mosquitoes!

A Legacy Of Music

Doreen Loewen: My Loepky grandparents [John D. and Mary (Epp)] lived on a farm two miles from Rosenfeld. We lived with my grandparents for much of my early childhood. Walking home from school the first farm would be the Recksiedlers, then the Eisbrenners, and the Fielmans. At that corner, we would turn to go to our farm. Our neighbours were the Solomon Doerksens. Besides being the choir director, my dad [Cornelius Loepky] started a small musical ensemble with Dave Klassen (first violin); Bill Schellenberg (second violin); Pete Funk (viola); Dad (cello); and Mildred Loewen (piano). They played some fairly difficult music – even "The Poet & Peasant Overture" by Von Suppe. My dad also conducted large community choirs and they preformed out in the rural area. The musical get-togethers were known as "Sängerfests" (singing festivals).



1930s Jugendverein

Anton Schellenberg (from his "Reflections", 1992): The [first] Rosenfeld public school was a square box of about 30x30 ft., two stories high. One classroom on the main floor, the other on the 2nd floor, in which there was occasionally church service also. And every two weeks we had a program Sunday evening called Jugendverein, on which songs recitations and readings were rendered on a selected theme. Rev. John D. Loepky usually toward the end would have a short message and prayer. This was all mostly in the German language. Mr. Peter. D. Berg and Corny Loepky sometimes would render musical selections on the violin. It was said that Mr. Berg had a violin that cost him \$100. In today's [1992] money about \$1200. He was for some time also the choir leader. Later Corny Loepky took over those duties, then followed by Henry Berg. Anna Fehr and Leana Kehler were good at singing duets. We did not attend those programs regularly, because travel for us was horse and buggy those days.



In closing...

...around a hundred voices from both the past and the present have blended to tell Rosenfeld's story: historians, scientists, news reporters, family chroniclers, memoirists, church pastors, teachers, farmers, artists, and many more.

History is all about changes. The earth on which first the tiny village and then the larger town were built was fabricated by wind, dust, the roots of prairie grasses, birds and small animals, and a warming climate. Indigenous peoples traversed the land, rejoicing in the beauty and bounty of its summers, and in the amazing sky that stretched to an unobstructed horizon in all directions. With the immigration of Europeans to North America came the need for political expansion and more and more food, which led to the surveying of the Canadian prairies and the division of land.

That is how the Mennonites, joined soon after by German Wolhynians, both seeking freedom from oppression, found themselves on that spot of earth marked out for them by the government surveyors. One of the first groups of pioneers to disembark from the steamboats on the Red River chose to settle beside a lake and creek. They dug into the earth that had been formed by wind and dust and flora and fauna and planted seeds the prairies had never seen before: wheat, potatoes, apple trees, hollyhocks. They divided up the land further, into fields and yards; they built roads. They called their village *Dorf Rosenfeld*.

Wheat and supplies and people had to be transported; territory had to be protected. Along came the railway, and with it, changes in settlement. As a train station, grain elevators, a hotel, a post office, and stores sprang up at Pembina Junction, just north of the original village, Dorf Rosenfeld was at the same time becoming obsolete for a different reason: families reorganized as they grew, and moved away, or moved further out onto their land holdings. The village vanished. The shiny new town at the railroad junction held onto the name Rosenfeld, and continued to grow.

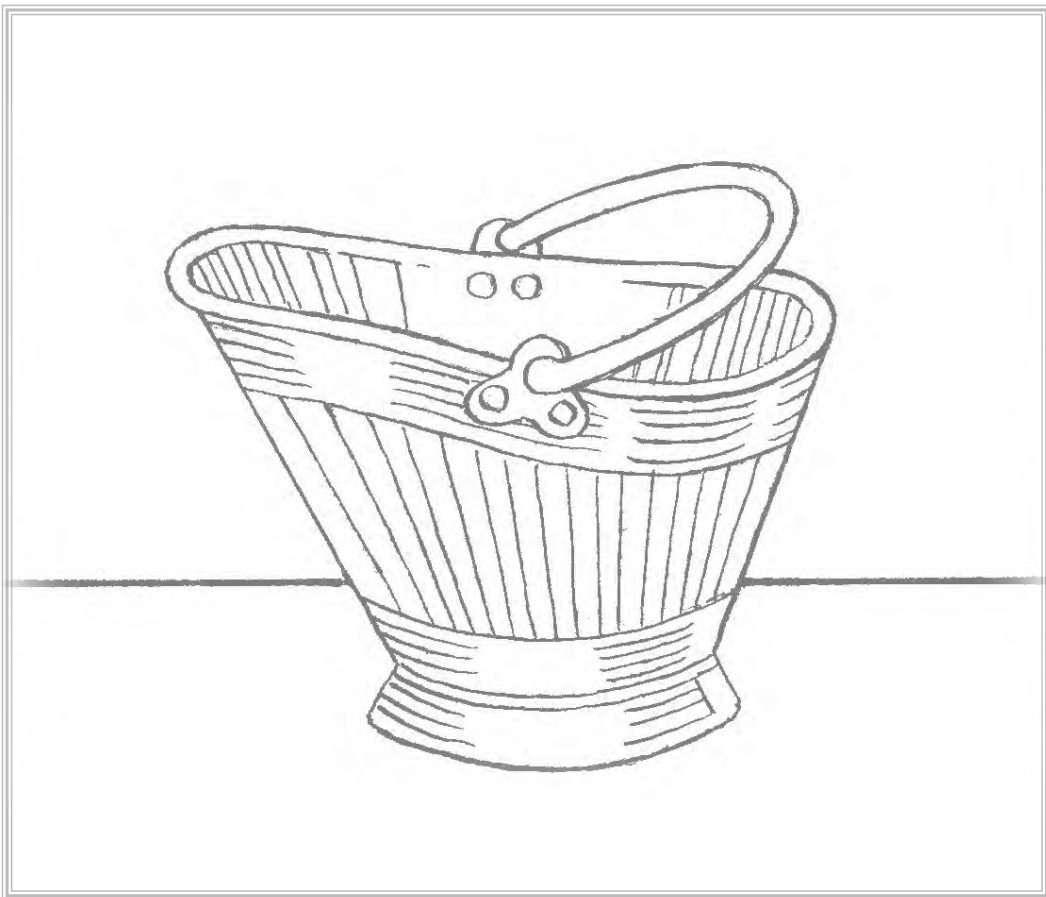
Though never large in population, Rosenfeld soon became a hub for the surrounding Mennonite and German Wolhynian communities. Churches and a school were established; implement dealerships and a blacksmith served the farmers; livery stables were available; later, automobiles were for sale and mechanics became indispensable; truck transport and insurance offices could be found; hotels were built, sometimes burned down, and replaced; merchants ran flourishing businesses. All the while, the trains rumbled through town, twice a day, bringing and taking away.

And all the while, the character of the community deepened and strengthened; farm and town families alike gathered and shared their stories, their thoughts, their recipes, their celebrations, their losses. Sports teams and ladies' aids were formed. Folks socialized at the curling rink. The whole town was the children's playground. Some of the locals had colourful personalities; some were known for their business or farming savvy; some were applauded for their good cooking or their athleticism; some were valued for their kindness. And, even if they didn't live in the town but only came here for church, school, or business, they were all Rosenfelders.

Change never stops. With the growing population of southern Manitoba came the growth of nearby towns. With prosperity and improvements in transportation and communication came the desire by young people for higher education and "modern" careers. The family farm became endangered. Eventually, retiring farmers and merchants were not replaced by their offspring, or businesses moved to larger centres. Today, few businesses are left in Rosenfeld.

People still live here. A few are descendants of those long-ago citizens. The St. John Lutheran Church is still active. Some of the locals have colourful personalities; some are good cooks; some are valued for their kindness. But anyone who ever lived here remains a Rosenfelder. And who knows what changes the future holds? Meanwhile, the trains continue to rumble through town.

Lists



Postmasters

(from Library and Archives Canada, Government of Canada)

Office name: Rosenfeld

Electoral district: Lisgar (Manitoba)

Date established: 1892-11-01

Name of Postmaster	Date of Birth	Date of Appt	Date of Vacancy	Cause of Vacancy
Joseph Burke		1892-11-01	1896-12-22	*
Alex Atcheson		1897-02-01	1897	Death
Mrs. S. B. Atcheson		1898-01-01	1911-05-20	Resign
E. J. Weber		1911-12-15	1915-09-14	Resign
Jno. A. Klassen		1915-12-15	1918-03-28	Resign
Henry C. Buhr		1918-07-01	1919-08-12	Resign
Frank Epp		1919-10-25	1920-06-14	Resign
H. C. Buhr		1920-08-16	1927-02-21	Resign
Mrs. Anna Buhr	1893-07-17	1927-05-07	1933-06-27	Resign
Abram H. Funk (OAS)	1884-09-07	1933-08-01	1953-05-08	Resign
Walter Arthur Eisbrenner		1953-10-01	1986-10-31	-
D. Heinrichs		1986-11-03		-

Editor's note: Since Dorothy Heinrichs, there have been three more postmasters – Mary Klassen, Trudy Wiebe, and Connie Kauenhofen.

Grocery/Convenience Stores in Rosenfeld

North end in the area of the Leland Hotel:

Acheson family

Coblentz family

Fast & Thiessen

Fast General Store

Dave's General Store (Dave & Sue Wiebe Kehler)

Howard & Susan Braun

Jack & Margaret Loftus (till the store burned down in summer of 1997)

Gus Pokrant General Store (1950s-60s, till he went back to teaching – located on their yard at the southwest corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue)

Red & White Store, north of the Rosenfeld Telephone Exchange:

Bill Friesen, prior to 1953

Kotchoreks

Ernest Janke, till the 1960s

Peter Dyck family, 1960-1971, when it burned down.

General Store, located at the southeast corner of Main and Henry Avenue:

Julius Hintz

Frank Krivak

Abe Nikkel

In the southeast room of the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre:

Altona Highway Inn (Paul Villeneuve)

Southerly-most room of the current post office:

Neil & Dorothy Heinrichs

John & Trudy Wiebe

Conscientious Objectors, WWII

from *Alternative Service in the Second World War: Conscientious Objectors in Canada, 1939-1945*

<http://www.alternativeservice.ca>

Berg, Peter P. Black Creek, BC

Doerksen, Henry Seebe, AB

Dyck, Peter Prison

Enns, William Clear Lake, MB

Falk, Peter F. Farmhand

Falk, William F. Clear Lake, MB

Friesen, David F. St. Boniface Hospital, Wpg

Funk, David W. Clear Lake, MB

Funk, Henry H. Portage, MB mental hospital and Bienfait mines

Kroeker, Peter Farmhand

Neufeld, Edward Clear Lake, MB

Nikkel, David Clear Lake, MB

Nikkel, Herman Clear Lake, MB

Rempel, Isbrandt J. Clear Lake, MB

Thiessen, Abram Jacob Clear Lake, MB

Rosenfeld School Staff 1921-1975
Compiled by Jacob Hildebrandt and Art Wiebe

1921-1922

Grades 1-3 A.J. Enns, Sept.–Jan;
Agnes Wiebe, Jan.–June
Grades 3-9 J.G. Toews

1922-1923

Grades 1-3 Agnes Wiebe
Grades 4-9 J.G. Toews

1923-1924

Grades 1-3 Sarah D. Enns Sept.– Apr;
Anne V. Elias May–June
Grades 4-8 J.E. Suderman

1924-1925

Grades 1-3 Annie V. Elias
Grades 4-7 J.E. Suderman

1925-1926

Grades 1-3 Annie V. Elias
Grades 4-8 J.E. Suderman

1926-1927

Grades 1-3 Annie V. Elias Jan.–Jan.
Anne Elias
Grades 4-8 J.E. Suderman

1927-1928

Grades 1-4 Anne W. Peters Sept.– Dec.
Grades 4-8 J.E. Suderman

1928-1929

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-10 J.E. Suderman

1929-1930

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-9 John G. Feller

1930-1931

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-8 John G. Feller

1931-1932

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-9 John G. Feller

1932-1933

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-9 John G. Feller

1933-1934

Grades 1-4 Annie V. Elias
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-10 Karl Pokrant
Grades 11-12 John G. Feller

1934-1935

Grades 1-4 Anne Elias

Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 John G. Feller

1935-1936

Grades 1-4 Anne Elias
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 G.J. Siemens

1936-1937

Grades 1-4 Tina V. Warkentin
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 G.J. Siemens

1937-1938

Grades 1-4 Tina V. Warkentin
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-12 G.J. Siemens

1938-1939

Grades 1-4 Tina V. Warkentin
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1939-1940

Grades 1-4 Tina V. Warkentin
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1940-1941?

1941-1942

Grades 1-4 Anne Wiebe
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1942-1943

Grades 1-4 Anne Wiebe
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1943-1944

Grades 1-4 Anne Wiebe
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1944-1945

Grades 1-4 Mildred Loewen
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1945-1946

Grades 1-4 Mildred Loewen
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1946-1947

Grades 1-4 Eva Derksen
Grades 5-8 Gus Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1947-1948

Grades 1-4 Eva Martel

Grades 5-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 Karl Pokrant

1948-1949

Grades 1-4 Frieda Krahn
Grades 5-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 H.M.Friesen

1949-1950

Grades 1-2 Frieda Krahn
Grades 3-4 Tina Redekop
Grades 5-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 H.M.Friesen

1950-1951

Grades 1-2 Anne H. Enns
Grades 3-4 Anne Driedger
Grades 5-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 John J. Bergen

1951-1952

Grades 1-2 Anne H. Enns
Grades 3-5 Anne Driedger
Grades 6-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 John J. Bergen

1952-1953

Grades 1-2 Anne H. Enns
Grades 3-5 Anne Driedger
Grades 6-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 John J. Bergen

1953-1954

Grades 1-3 Anne H. Enns
Grades 4-5 Anne Driedger
Grades 6-8 Louis Pokrant
Grades 9-11 John J. Bergen

1954-1955

Grades 1-3 Frances Dyck
Grades 4-5 Gerta Loewen
Grades 6-8 Miss R.J. Heimann
Dorothy Dyck
M. Froese
Grades 9-11 Edmond Dyck

1955-1956

Grades 1-2 Frances Dyck
Grades 3-5 Gerta Loewen
Grades 6-8 Dorothy Dyck
Grades 9-11 Edmond Dyck

1956-1957

Grades 1-3 Frances Dyck
Grades 4-6 Gerta Loewen
Grades 7-8 Joe Reimer
Grades 9-10 A.G. Toews
Grade 11 Gus Pokrant, Principal

1957-1958

Grades 1-3 Sarah Janzen
Grades 4-6 Lorna Harder
Grades 6-8 Joe Reimer
Grades 9-10 A.G. Toews
Grade 11 Gus Pokrant

1958-1959

Grades 1-2 Sarah Janzen
Grades 3-4 Dorothy Penner
Grades 6-8 A.G. Toews
Grades 9-11 Gus Pokrant

1959-1960

Grades 1-2 Sarah Janzen
Grades 3-5 Helen Toews
Grades 6-8 Susan Schroeder
Grade 9 Herman Kuhl, Geo. Driedger
Grades 10-11 A.G. Toews

1960-1961

Grades 1-2 Lorna Giesbrecht
Grades 3-5 Helen Braun
Grades 6-8 Herman Kuhl
Grades 9-10 Edgar Enns

1961-1962

Grades 1-2 L. Lenzman
Grades 3-5 M.A. Rempel
Grades 6-8 Herman Kuhl
Grades 9-10 Edgar Enns
Grade 11 A.G. Toews

1962-1963

Grades 1-2 Luella Lenzmann
Grades 3-5 June Vanderburgh
Grades 6-8 Herman Kuhl
Grades 9-11 Edgar Enns

1963-1964

Grades 1-2 Joan Fisher
Grades 3-4 Katie Hildebrandt
Grades 5-6 Ken Doell
Grades 7-8 Eva Martel, Anne Penner
Grade 9 Herman Kuhl
Grades 10-11 Edgar Enns

1964-1965

Grades 1-3 Ruth Siemens
Grades 4-5 Marlene Schellenberg
Grades 6-8 Rudolph Thiessen

1965-1966

Grades 1-2 Ruth Siemens
Grades 3-4 Marlene Schellenberg
Grades 5-6 Helen Epp
Grades 7-8 Herman Kuhl

1966-1967

Grades 1-2 Esther Froese
 Grades 3-4 Helen Epp
 Grades 5-6 Jake Martens
 Grades 7-8 Herman Kuhl

1967-1968

Grades 1-2 Esther Froese
 Grades 3-4 Ruth L. Peters
 Grades 5-6 Jake Martens
 Grade 7 Elmer Sawatzky
 Grade 8 Herman Kuhl

1968-1969

Grades 1-2 Delores Schellenberg
 Grades 3-4 Ruth L. Peters
 Grades 5-6 Jake Martens
 Grade 7 Menno Hildebrand, principal
 Grade 8 Herman Kuhl

1969-1970

Grades 1-2 Delores Schellenberg
 Grades 3-4 Miss A. Fehr
 Grades 5-6 Donald Bergen
 Grades 7-8 Jake Martens, principal

1970-1971

Grades K-1 Erica Sommer
 Grades 2-3 A. Fehr
 Grades 4-5 Ken Hildebrand
 Grades 6-7 A. Hildebrand
 Grade 8 Jake Martens, principal

1971-1972

Grades 1-2 Anne Zacharias
 Grades 3-4 Ken Hildebrand
 Grade 5 Esther Heinrichs
 Grade 6 Donald Bergen
 Grades 7-8 Keith Wiebe

1972-1973

Grades 1-2 Clara Hildebrand
 Grades 3-4 Ken Hildebrand
 Grades 5-6 Esther Heinrichs
 Susan Giesbrecht (part-time in Feb. –
 Grade 6)
 Grades 7-8 Bruno Mekelburg, principal

1973-1974

Grades 1-2 Clara Hildebrand
 Grades 3-4 Ken Hildebrand
 Grades 5-6 D. Gemmell
 Grade 7 Susan Giesbrecht
 Grade 9 Bruno Mekelburg, principal

1974-1975

Grades 1-2 Marilyn Eppler
 Grades 3-4 Art Wiebe
 Grades 5-6 D. Gemmell
 Grade 7 Susan Giesbrecht
 Grade 8 Bruno Mekelburg, principal

Rosenfeld and Area Residents: A Work in Progress

This is a blend of two lists of (mostly) male heads of households: one list from the *Rosenfeld Centennial Service and Reunion Day* booklet, Aug. 2, 1970 (edited), and the other from the memoirs of William Schellenberg, date unknown (edited). Whether or not to include these lists in the history book was a very difficult decision; the women of Rosenfeld are almost completely absent, some residents have been unintentionally left out, many occupations/achievements are absent or sketchy, and there are likely other errors. **Correcting and adding to this data is an ongoing project; readers' input is welcome.** (Note: St. John Lutheran Church pastors are listed in a separate article in this book.)

Abraham, Oscar – farmer

Abrams, Alfred –

Abrams, Henry J. –

Abrams, Oscar –

Acheson, J.S. – general store owner

Beidinger, Daniel – school custodian

Berg, Diedrich – grain buyer

Berg, Henry – carpenter/contractor

Berg, Peter D. – farmer, preacher

Berg, Peter P. – farmer

Bobert, Dan – farmer

Bobert, Julius – farmer, village board

Braun, A.K. – insurance agency

Braun, Howard – general store

Braun, Jake – “Elevata Brün”

Braun, Johann – farmer

Braun, Karl – farmer

Braun, Peter S. – farmer, councilor

Buhler, John – machinery

Buhr, Mrs. Cornelius – midwife

Buhr, Mrs. Henry –

Buhr, John C. – grain buyer, trustee, post master

Cassell, Ed – section boss

Coblentz, Bill – general store owner

Corbett, Jim – CPR agent

Cowen, Bill – CPR foreman

Derksen, David – elevator agent

Derksen, John – school bus driver

Doell, John D. – farmer

Dreger, August – farmer
 Driedger, Abram – farmer, cattle buyer
 Dueck, Derk –
 Dyck, Abe – Imperial Oil and Fertilizer
 Dyck, Bernard – CPR
 Dyck, Jake – CPR
 Dyck, John C. – Lake of the Woods elevator
 Dyck, Peter – Red&White Store, bus driver
 Dyck, Peter E. – Bray Chick agent
 Einbender, Sam – hotelkeeper
 Eisbrenner, Adolf – farmer
 Eisbrenner, Walter – postmaster/farmer
 Elias, Anna – school teacher
 Enns, Abe – mechanic/garage
 Enns, Anne – school teacher
 Enns, Art –
 Enns, Bill – mechanic/garage (violinist)
 Enns, David – Ogilvie Grain elevator (musician)
 Enns, Edgar – school teacher/principal
 Enns, Hank – welder/garage (pianist)
 Enns, John – mechanic/garage (guitar player)
 Falk, Gerhard G. – farmer
 Falk, Jacob J. – farmer
 Falk, William H. – farmer, founding Bishop of Rüdnerweider Church
 Fast, George H. – store, hatchery, car sales, farmer, musician
 Fast, George. Jr. –
 Fast, Hank – farmer, son of George H.
 Fast, Harold – storekeeper, son of Henry H.
 Fast, Henry H. – storekeeper
 Fehr, Cornelius C. – businessman
 Fehr, C.L. – cattle buyer
 Fehr, Henry L. – garage and trucking
 Fehr, Jacob L. –
 Fehr, John L. – Coblantz store clerk
 Fehr, Peter L. – garage and trucking
 Fielman, Ferdinand – farmer
 Fielman, Otto – farmer
 Finkelstein, Charles – farmer
 Finkelstein, Max – farmer
 Flemming, Peter –
 Flett, L.M. – CPR agent
 Friesen, Abram – farmer
 Friesen, Bill –
 Friesen, David D. – farmer
 Friesen, Heinrich – farmer
 Friesen, Henry D. – farmer
 Friesen, Isaac A. – farmer, trustee
 Friesen, Jacob J. – farmer
 Friesen, John – farmer
 Friesen, Martin – mechanic
 Friesen, Peter H. – farmer
 Friesen, Peter N. –
 Friesen, Tony H. – farmer
 Friesen, William – Red & White Store
 Froese, Peter D. –
 Funk, Aaron –
 Funk, Abram – section man
 Funk, Abram H. – postmaster, WWI veteran
 Funk, Anton – farmer
 Funk, David – son of “Coal Dock” Funk
 Funk, Henry A. – farmer, trustee
 Funk, Jacob – farmer (town)
 Funk, John – coal dock foreman, veterinarian
 Funk, John – teacher in rural schools
 Funk, John H. – deacon, farmer, cattle buyer
 Funk, Peter A. – farmer, trustee
 Funk, Peter F. – radio repairman
 Funk, Peter P. – farmer
 Ganske, Christoph – farmer
 Gefellers, Hans – school teacher
 Giesbrecht, Bill – carpenter
 Giesbrecht, Ben –
 Giesbrecht, Ed – Thiessen bus driver
 Giesbrecht, John D. – Reichenbach teacher
 Ginter, Bill – carpenter
 Ginter, Cornelius –
 Ginter, Peter –
 Goertz, John –
 Grechens, Mike – CPR worker
 Harder, Diedrich –
 Harder, Ed – son of Diedrich
 Harder, Jacob – mechanic
 Heim, Alex – peddler of natural remedies
 Hiebert, John –
 Hildebrand, David – preacher
 Hildebrand, Isaac – preacher
 Hintz, August – farmer, church trustee
 Hintz, Julius – storekeeper, butcher
 Hoffman, William – farmer
 Huebener, Fred – grain buyer
 Huebener, Ferdinand – section man
 Huebener, Gottfried – farmer
 Huebener, Ludwig – section man
 Janke, Emanuel –
 Janke, Ernest – farmer, Red&White store
 Janke, Friedrich – farmer
 Janzen, John J. – farmer, trustee
 Johnson, August – farmer, section foreman
 Kehler, John – farmer
 Kehler, Peter J. – lumberyard, trustee
 Kennedy, Jack – farmer, M.L.A.
 Klassen, Abram D. – farmer, trustee
 Klassen, Andrew – potato grower

Klassen, David D. – farmer
 Klassen, David Sr. – farmer
 Klassen, George –
 Klassen, Jake –
 Klassen, John –
 Klassen, John D. – farmer, school trustee, teacher
 Klassen, John S. – farmer
 Klassen, Peter – preacher
 Kletke, Adolph – farmer, trustee
 Kletke, Christian – farmer
 Kletke, William – farmer
 Korolchuk, Marvin or Martin – hotel owner
 Kotchoreks – Red&White store
 Knopf, Arthur – farmer
 Knopf, Harry – farmer
 Knopf, Karl – farmer, councillor
 Krivak, Frank – store owner
 Kroeker, Jacob – mechanic
 Kuhl, Herman – teacher, pastor

 Lang, August – farmer, councillor
 Lang, Sam – farmer
 Lerch, William – labourer
 Letkeman, John – CPR
 Lilke, Dan – machine shop
 Lilke, Friedrich – farmer
 Loeppky, Corny – farmer
 Loeppky, John D. – preacher, farmer
 Loeppky, John K. – farmer, cattle buyer
 Loewen, Abe –
 Loewen, Gerta (later Funk) – teacher
 Loewen, Henry –
 Loewen, Jacob J. – drayman
 Loewen, John – district telephone supervisor
 Loewen, John A. – farmer

 Marsch, Gustav – farmer
 Marsch, Emil – farmer, village board
 Marsh, Ed & Julius – bankers
 Martel, Helmut – garage
 Martel, Henry – business man, trustee
 Martel, Julius – garage
 Martel, Oscar – John Deere dealer, trustee, politician
 Martel, Otto – dairyman
 Martel, Walter – John Deere dealer
 Martin, Ed – gas station, radio repairman
 Mazinke, August – teacher
 Mazinke, Ed – farmer
 Mazinke, Gus – farmer, church trustee
 Mazinke, William – farmer
 Mekelburg, Bruno – teacher
 Mekelburg, Sam – CPR section man
 Muench, Carl – dairyman

 Neufeld, Jacob – farmer, village board

Neufeld, Jacob J. – farmer
 Neufeld, John – trucker, dairy
 Neuman, Adam – farmer, trustee
 Neuman, David – pool hall
 Neuman, Frank – farmer
 Neuman, John – farmer, trustee
 Neuman, Paul – farmer
 Neuman, Wilf – storekeeper
 Nickel, Jacob B. – farmer

 Nickel, John C. – farmer
 Nikkel, Abe – storekeeper, trucker
 Nikkel, Erdman – farmer, trustee
 Nikkel, Jacob – Maple Leaf Construction
 Nikkel, John – carpenter

 Paetkau, Dave – farmer
 Peters, Gustav – CPR
 Peters, John – farmer
 Pokrant, Albert F. – farmer
 Pokrant, Albert H. – farmer
 Pokrant, August – farmer
 Pokrant, Dan – farmer
 Pokrant, Ed – farmer, councillor, reeve, church trustee, school trustee
 Pokrant, Ernst – farmer
 Pokrant, Ferdinand – farmer, trustee
 Pokrant, Fred F. – farmer
 Pokrant, Gustav – teacher, businessman, sec.-treas. for village board
 Pokrant, Henry – farmer
 Pokrant, Karl – teacher
 Pokrant, Louis – teacher
 Pokrant, William – farmer

 Recksiedler, August – farmer, trustee
 Recksiedler, Ed – farmer
 Recksiedler, Ernie – farmer
 Recksiedler, Leo – farmer, politician
 Recksiedler, Karl – farmer
 Recksiedler, Michael – founding member of Rosenfeld St. John Lutheran Church
 Redekop, Ben – shoemaker
 Redekop, Dave – labourer
 Recksiedler, Karl A. – farmer, school trustee
 Reimer, John – Beaver Lumber Yard
 Reimer, Pete – CPR, carpenter
 Rempel, Henry – clerk for A.K. Braun Agencies
 Rempel, Jacob J. – councillor, farmer, cattle buyer

 Sawatzky, Corny –
 Sawatzky, Helmut – rink ice technician
 Sawatzky, Henry –
 Sawatzky, Jake – elevator construction
 Sawatzky, John – elevator construction

Sawatzky, Peter – elevator construction
 Schapansky, George –
 Schapansky, Peter –
 Schellenberg, Anton – carpenter
 Schellenberg, Henry H. – piano tuner
 Schellenberg, Jacob J. – farmer
 Schellenberg, John – farmer
 Schellenberg, John B. – store clerk
 Schellenberg, P.J. – road construction
 Schellenberg, Peter K. – farmer, chicken barn
 Schellenberg, Susie – housekeeper
 Schellenberg, William – variety store
 Schiewe, Emil – farmer
 Schiewe, Julius – farmer
 Schiewe, Martin – farmer
 Schimoneck, Franz – farmer
 Schimonek, Emil – farmer
 Schimonek, Percy – bulk Esso station
 Schmidt, Fred – farmer, trustee
 Schopp, Karl – teacher
 Schroeder, Albert – road construction
 Schroeder, Alfred – farmer, woodworker
 Schroeder, Arnold – farmer
 Schroeder, Gottfried – farmer, founding member of
 St. John Lutheran Church
 Schroeder, Laurie – carpenter
 Schroeder, Peter F. – Manitoba Highways
 Schroeder, Roy – farmer
 Shimonek, Emil – farmer
 Siemens, Cornelius – farmer
 Siemens, George – farmer, school trustee
 Siemens, Henry J. – carpenter
 Siemens, John – garage owner, thresher
 Smith, Alex – hotelkeeper
 Smith, Russell – farmer
 Sommer, Elinor – widow of Edward
 Sommer, John – farmer
 Sontag, Friedrich – village board
 Stewart, Chas, K. – general store owner
 Stoesz, Henry – carpenter
 Suderman, Jacob – teacher
 Teichroeb, Peter – mechanic, construction

Thiessen, Abram A. – grain buyer, lumber yard,
 farmer, school trustee, notary public
 Thiessen, Abram B. – farmer, RM weed inspector,
 trustee, village board
 Thiessen, Abram J. – Grey Goose Bus Lines
 Thiessen, David A. – mechanic
 Thiessen, Isaak – farm labourer
 Thiessen, Jacob A. – farmer, councilor
 Thiessen, John – trucker, bus driver, café owner
 Thiessen, Pete –
 Toews, Bishop P.A. – farmer, reeve, businessman,
 cattle buyer
 Treichel, Sam – CPR
 Unrau, David –
 Unrau, Jacob – preacher
 Unrau, John –
 Unrau, William D. – farmer, trustee
 Wall, Fred – egg grading station
 Warkentine, Abram – cattle buyer, butcher
 Warkentine, David – CPR
 Warkentin, John – surveyor
 Wiebe, Abram B. – teacher in rural schools
 Wiebe, Cornelius – shoe repair
 Wiebe, Derk – farmer
 Wiebe, Jacob –
 Wiebe, John – transfer truck
 Wiens, John E. – watchmaker
 Winter, Abram – farmer, service station/coffee shop
 Winter, John – farmer
 Whitewell or Wittwell? – station agent
 Wodlinger, Max – farmer
 Wolfe, Dave – road construction
 Wonnick, Fred –
 Wonnick, William – farmer
 Worden, George – businessman
 Zacharias, Abram – farmer
 Zacharias, Henry – carpenter
 Zacharias, Peter –
 Zacharias John A. – farmer, trustee
 Zotzman, Helena Lilke – Herman's mother
 Zotzman, Herman – farmer





