



*Two Penner brothers, Leonard (l) and Harold (r) with a friend, WWII.*



*Cameron Hyde.*



*Tom White. WWII.*



*Tom White and Harold Penner at the Kane Store.*



*John Braun.*



*Harry Braun.*



*Sisters Liddy and Ellen Groening with brothers Dave and Neil Thiessen.*



*Dave Thiessen off to Africa, Italy & Europe with Scottish Regiment of Canada, 1943.*



*Frank Giesbrecht, 1943.*



*Abe Blatz served in the Canadian Army Corps from 1943-1946.*

### **A CLOSE CALL**

*by Helen Penner*

John W. Penner enlisted in 1941, and was trained as a navigator at the RCAF base at Portage la Prairie. He went overseas and was attached to a RAF crew in England, with John being the only Canadian.

He flew many missions and on one trip their plane was hit, killing one crew member and seriously wounding their pilot. John attended to the pilot's wounds and put the pilot's leg up on his shoulder, enabling him to fly their plane back to England, where it crash-landed. John received a slight wound on his thigh. The pilot never flew again. John was transferred to another crew and flew with them until the war ended in Europe.

He was told to report for duty in the Middle East and was given a leave to visit his parents at Kane. While at home he got the news that the war was over.

John returned to the career he always wanted — "farming".

### **THE C.O.'s STORY**

*from Furrows in the Valley*

On September 10, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany. In June 1941, the government announced that Alternative Service would be provided. It was a form of national service which the Canadian government required of Conscientious Objectors (C.O.'s) in lieu of military training or service. The Canadian Government respected the C.O.'s objections to war, and made provision for exemp-



*Pilot Officer John William Penner (third from left) with his new crew after the air attack.*



*Henry Schellenberg spent four winters in CO Camps and worked on farms in the summer as a CO. Logging equipment at National Mills on Man/Sask. border, 1942-43.*



*The Lumber Camp at Kapuskaysing, Ontario. The men are thawing their frozen lunch over a fire, 1945-46.*



*Ministers of the Sommerfelder Church came visiting the CO boys at National Mills. Rev. Jacob Unrau on the right, 1942-43.*



*Beinfelt Coal Mine, Sask., 1943-44.*



*Henry Schellenberg helped load this truck at a CO Camp in 1944-45.*



OTTAWA, March 27, 1946.

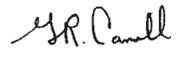
**NOTICE**  
To  
Postponed Conscientious Objectors in Agriculture

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Because of the urgent need for increased agricultural production and in view of the impending shortage of agricultural workers, I have been authorized to notify each postponed conscientious objector presently engaged in agriculture as follows:

As an incentive to stimulate agricultural production, the final employment period for which a payment to the Canadian Red Cross Society is required from a postponed conscientious objector while he is engaged in agriculture is that employment period ending March 31st 1946.

In the event that a postponed conscientious objector leaves his employment in agriculture without the consent of his Divisional Alternative Service Officer, he immediately becomes subject to Red Cross deductions from his earnings.

  
 G. R. Carroll,  
 A/Chief Alternative Service Officer.

tion by order-in-council in 1873. *Any person bearing a certificate declaring his doctrine of religion is adverse to bearing arms, and refuses military service, shall be exempt.*

The C.O.'s came from the United Church of Canada, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Friends, Christian Science, Plymouth Brethren, Methodist, but the majority were Mennonites. This was an unpopular cause at a crucial time in Canadian History, but it is known that the C.O.'s made an important contribution to the Canadian economy.

Millions of cedar, fir and hemlock were planted in the forest of British Columbia by the C.O.'s. Some served

in the Medical Corps as hospital orderlies or stretcher bearers. They were engaged in fighting forest fires, in the logging industry, tree nursery work, fuel wood cutting, unloading and loading grain at the Lakehead, and in some instances, as emergency farm workers, for the production of food.

The average C.O. was entirely sincere in his desire to do anything short of actual combat duties to be of service to his country in wartime. Of the C.O.'s wages, he could keep 50¢ a day for himself. A married man received an additional \$5-\$10 a month allowance, with \$5 for each additional child. They were paid the going rate for their jobs, but the employers were required to divert the rest of their earnings to the Red Cross; this money came at a great time of need. The total amount paid to the Red Cross in Manitoba alone from C.O.'s to the end of 1945, was over \$650,000. Manitoba had the highest number of C.O.'s in the country, over 3,000 in World War II.

**C. O. REUNION**

*Kane News: from The Echo*

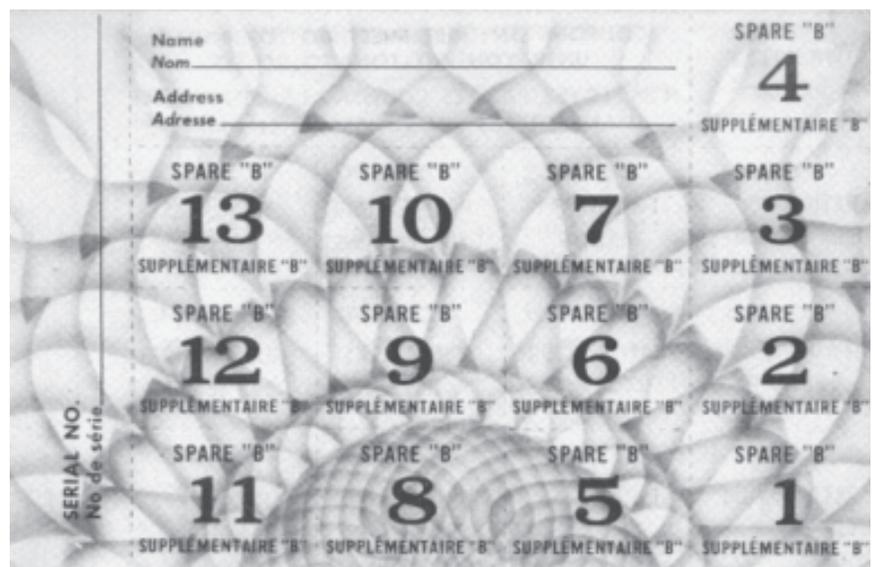
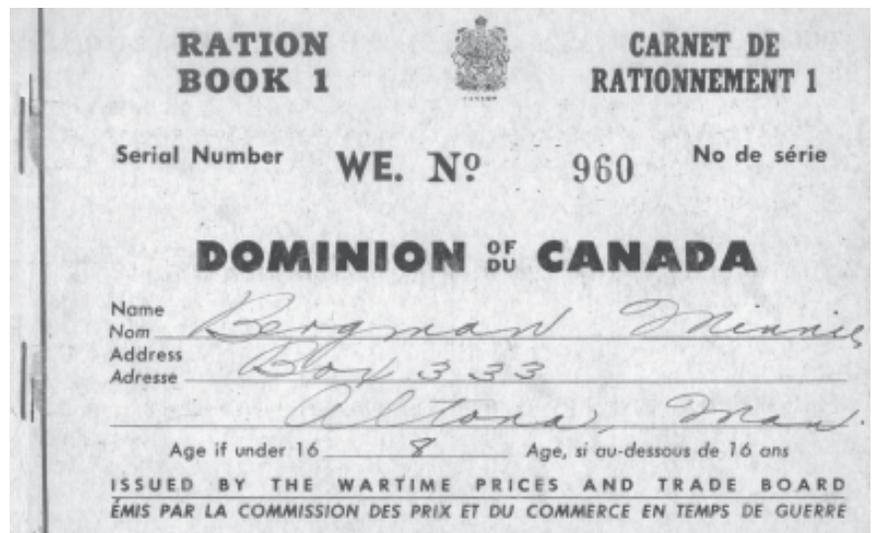
Sunday, September 13, 1981, dawned a beautiful day and soon the Kane Community Centre was buzzing with C.O.'s (Conscientious Objectors) and their wives who had come to celebrate the 40th anniversary since they had served together in places like Clear Lake, Manitoba; National Mills Lumber Camp; Radium Hot Springs, B.C.; Campbell River, B.C.; and others. They came from Swan River, Austin, Halbstadt, Gretna, Rosenfeld, Altona, Plum Coulee, Winkler, Manitou, Winnipeg, Lowe Farm, Morris, Morden, Riverton, Horndean, Gladstone, Crystal City, Thornhill, Boissevain, Carman and one couple came from Paraguay, S. A. Some 160-170 people had gathered.

The planning and welcoming committee for this reunion were Mr. and Mrs. Jake Unrau, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Klassen and Mr. and Mrs. Anton Dyck.

**AT THE HOME FRONT**  
*from Furrows in the Valley*

Iron and steel were in short supply, as were rubber and silk. Scrap drives cleared the countryside as people donated any useable items for the war effort. Gasoline for cars was rationed, as well as other commodities such as tea, coffee, sugar, jam, preserves, butter and meat. In 1942, everyone was issued ration books. Canned goods disappeared from store shelves.

At home, the war years were not happy times. Everyone had a relative or friend who was in the armed services. Many women did knitting for the Red Cross, making useful things for the boys overseas. Other items sent to the boys were pure chocolate bars, and soap to wash hands and clothes. Locally, many people worked to present concerts to raise money for the Red Cross, and for Milk for Britain. "Red Cross" programs were held once a month in the schools.



*World War II Ration Book belonging to Minnie (Bergman) Penner, formerly of Kane.*



*Gertrude Schellenberg was employed with the Canadian Red Cross Blood Transfusion Services from 1953-1958.*

### **PRISONERS OF WAR** *by Dora Hildebrand*

An Internment Camp for the German Prisoners of War (POW) was temporarily set up three miles west of Kane where the #23 Highway and the Lateral Ditch meet. There was a good sized dugout at that location supplying the CNR locomotives with water from the water tower which had been built for that purpose. According to Lena Schellenberg's diary, the prisoners came on September 20, 1946, and left that November 23. During this time, they helped with the beet harvest in the local farmers' fields.

The prisoners were treated very well by the Canadians. They had the freedom to visit homes in the area (without a guard), and often went to the Peter & Katrina Schellenberg home, just a mile south. Here they enjoyed the waffles, pancakes and other Mennonite foods, along with good fellowship!

One special friend, Joe Wimmer, visited the Schellenbergs 35 times during his short stay in the tent camp. After the war, in 1963, he came back to the Schellenbergs for a visit, just as he had promised he would



*German POWs harvesting beets at the John J. Toews farm, 1946.*



*Joseph Wimmer, POW at Kane in 1946, and good friend of the Schellenberg family. Picture was taken in 1963 when Joseph Wimmer of the Congregation of Alexian Brothers, USA, came to visit the Schellenbergs.*

when a free man. He was on the way to California to make an inspection to see if it was necessary to build a large nursing home for Catholic men. Joe was the Rector General of the Congregation Of Alexian Brothers out of Tennessee at that time. "He was a real Christian," said Lena, and sister Anne nodded in agreement.

It was not an uncommon sight for about a half dozen German prisoners to stroll into the Kane School for a Sunday morning church service, especially if it was in German. The prisoners were in uniform, but had a guard with them in such a public place.

The officer's tent caught fire late that fall of 1946, and because of this incident and the cold, the camp moved to Shilo, Manitoba.

A few prisoners went to the Weaver farm where they stayed until the beet harvest was finished. Mr. Elton Weaver says they had a guard at each end of the field with orders

to shoot if they got out of line. The POW's all wore blue uniforms with a big red circle on the back. According to Elton, these prisoners were well educated men and some of them had made a number of sortie flights over Britain during the German attack in the Second World War.

In the summer of 1989 when Don Pfrimmer was working the land in the area of the water tower, he dug up a beet knife which the prisoners had left behind over a half century ago! The POW's, the tent camp, the large pond, and even the water tower are all gone, and the present generation has no idea what happened right here at home during the war years unless we tell them.

## THE COMING OF THE JAPANESE

*by Dora Hildebrand*

Due to the threat of invasion by Japan during the Second World War, all people of Japanese descent within 20 miles of the west coast were sent inland. They were told by the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) that "when the train arrived on Friday, they had better be on it" and each family was allowed only 150 pounds of luggage. They made a list of all their possessions (that were left behind), thinking that they would return in a few months, and left it with the BCSC. They could lock the doors, but were not allowed to board up the windows. As a result in some cases, their possessions disappeared the second day after they left! Their white British Columbia neighbours did not approve of this.

The Japanese had a choice - move to the prairies and work on the farms or go to the Concentration Camp, where the families would likely be split up. Many came to Manitoba and a camp was set up at the Thomas Weaver farm on Section 11, and one at the George Miller farm on Section 5.

Mr. Thomas Weaver got his Japanese workers through the Sugar Beet Company. They had six families from Hainy, B.C. They came in April of 1942 and stayed until 1944 inclusive. The Weavers built houses for them, one on Section 23 and two on the home place on Section 11. They also moved another two buildings

to this location. The Japanese had been market gardeners on the West Coast; some growing strawberries, and one family had a hatchery selling day old chicks to the Hambly Hatchery in Winnipeg. In fact one of their boys went to work for the Hamblys when they arrived in Winnipeg. (Elton believes this family had been better off financially in British Columbia, than the Weavers were!)

The Japanese at Weavers worked mainly in the beets, but also drove tractors and did other farm work, as the Weavers worked about 1200 acres at that time. The wage was set by the BCSC and the workers were self-supporting. Elton remembers going to Winnipeg to shop at the wholesalers for their groceries. The Japanese could move around and visit other camps, but had to have permission. The children went to the Myrtle School.

Some family names of the Japanese working at the Weavers were: Sakiyama, Turmers, Suzuki, Fruhacowes, Odaguchi. The Suzuki's had left a brand new tractor behind. The Sakiyama family had a \$40,000 home in B.C. that was sold for \$5,000 by the B.C. Security Commission, which they then kept. When Mr. Weaver was asked if the Japanese were bitter about the whole matter, he shook his head and said he didn't think so. They didn't seem to want to go back to British Columbia, and after the war some went to Carman, some to Ontario, and one man, Miniruh Odaguchi, is retired in Winnipeg. Elton Weaver still has occasional contact with him.



*Four Japanese families lived on the Weaver farm on Section 11. The low buildings on the right were their homes.*



*Schowichi Ito of the Japanese family that worked for the Millers on Section 5, attended the Kane School during the 1941-43 school years. Schowichi is the fourth pupil from the left, in the first row.*

The Millers also had six families at their farm, but they stayed less than two years. They worked mostly in the beets, since Mr. Miller had 160 acres of beets that year. "They were big people and all the guys could drive trucks," recalls Elton. "This group came from the B.C. bush country and were used to hauling timber," he added. One family name was Ito and they had a son attending the Kane School during the 1941-43 school years.



*Young Japanese fellows meet the Kane gals.*

## THE PEACE HYMN

God of the nations, near and far,  
Ruler of all mankind,  
Bless Thou thy people as they strive,  
The paths of peace to find.

The clash of arms still shakes the sky,  
King battles still with king  
Wild through the frightened air of night  
The bloody tocsins ring.

But clearer far the friendly speech  
Of scientists and seers,  
The wise debate of statesmen and  
The shout of pioneers.

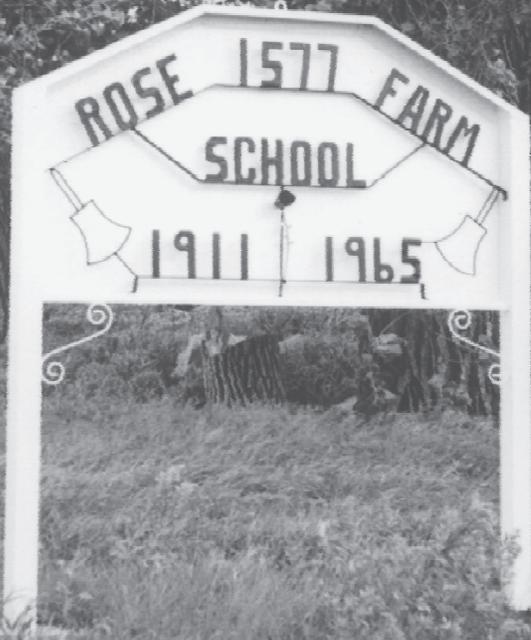
And stronger far the clasped hands  
Of labours teaming throngs,  
Who in a hundred tongues repeat  
Their common creeds and songs.

O Father, from the curse of war,  
We pray thee give release,  
And speed, oh speed the blessed day  
Of Justice, Love, and Peace.

*Author Unknown*

*The spirit*

*lives on...*



*...in the hearts  
of Rose Farm*

**PIONEERS OF ROSE FARM**  
*by the late Dan G. Blatz*  
*and as researched by Art Hiebert*

To write the history of the Rose Farm District No. 1577, one has to go back a bit and reminisce.

A Mr. Rose settled in the district sometime in the 1870's. It is said he homesteaded on section 17-4-2W or received it as a grant. He must have had good financial backing, or was rich in his own right. He put up very large buildings including two large dwellings, one for the boss and one for the hired man. He also put up one large barn for horses and cattle, one sheep shed and one large machine shed. He brought in two big stationary steam engines, which had to be pulled across each end of the field by horses or oxen. Each had a winch on the front with a 1/4 mile chain attached to pull a turn over plow across the fields. This was very inconvenient. It is said they farmed in midsummer, due to wet weather and marshy land. The crops froze most years. This area was referred to by the people as the Big Marsh Country. I remember as a young lad, in 1917, my brother and the Gluck boys who lived there, hauled those chains to Kane siding to be shipped to the smelters for the war effort. They used four horses and four mules on each wagon with a shallow box. Cables had not been invented at the time.

This farm was used by the incoming settlers to live in, until their own buildings were ready to move into. My folks said, when they moved in fall, that they lived there until the next summer. At that time there were four families beside the De Fehr's, who farmed only a small acreage. The rest was rented to other settlers for crops, hay land and pasture. The whole country was virgin prairie.

Other earlier settlers in the district came from further west to settle here. Most came from old Ontario to Roland and Carman area, where they had relatives. They came to settle on the edge of the marsh. Mr. Jim Brooks settled on section 7-4-2W, Ward Brooks on section 6-4-2W and Frank McLean and brother Tom on south half of section 18-4-2W. A Mr. Ted Service settled on SW 20-4-2W. Jim Brooks was the first in the district in 1891. The McLeans and Service came the next year or so, along with the Frank J. De Fehrs. Other settlers filled up the area from 1895 on. Tom Chisholm came to J. Brooks farm from Scotland, to be his foreman for eleven years (1905-1916). He joined the army for World War I and when it was over, he stayed in Scotland.

Mr. Brooks was the first breeder of mules in the district. We lived one and a half miles east from his place. Some clear mornings you could hear his burro or jackass, braying all over the country. (jackass is the daddy to the mule). It was said the mule skinnners needed a special place in Heaven because they are tough animals to drive. The first thing the settlers did was plant trees; cottonwood, poplar, maple and ash were fast growing. Wild plums and wild strawberries grew on the prairies or pastures.

Uncle Daniel Blatz and family homesteaded on NW 16-4-2W, his son-in-law Isaac Dyck on NE 16-4-2W, in 1895. Our parents, the Jacob Blatz's and family and Uncle John Blatz settled on NW 9-4-2W in 1896. Later, Dad bought the southwest quarter of 9-4-2W.

Derk Boldt came in 1896, and settled on SW 16-4-2W, and 10-4-2W. The Peters brothers came in 1897. They built a grist mill, wind driven, for grinding grain for surrounding neighbours. They moved to Saskatchewan with the Daniel Blatz family in 1908-1909. They had lived on SE 16-4-2W.

The Abram Groening family settled on section 21-4-2W in 1897-1898. This section was later subdivided among their four children, namely the Peter Funks (daughter) 1898, the Henry Groenings 1900, the Abram Groenings Jr. 1905 and Helen Groening, later married to Cornelius Wiebe in 1916, who practised as Doctor in Winkler.

The Frank Giesbrecht family came to settle on section 15-4-2W, in 1897. Four unmarried children came with them. They had a total of eleven children. The others had married earlier and five of them came to settle in Rose Farm area eventually. Jacob Blatz (Aganetha Giesbrecht) 1896, on 9-4-2W; John Giesbrecht on 16-4-2W; Frank Giesbrecht 1914, on 4-4-2W; Jacob Groening (Katherine Giesbrecht) 1900 on 28-4-2W; and David Unrau (Maria Giesbrecht) 1910 on 28-4-2W.

**ROSE FARM SCHOOL DISTRICT**

No. 1577

*by the late Dan G. Blatz*  
*and as researched by Art Hiebert*

The early settlers had no trouble naming their school after the first settler's name. Rose Farm was born in 1897, and continued until 1965, as District No. 1577. The rate payers bought two acres from our father, Jacob Blatz, on the northeast corner of our homestead, one acre for a school, and one acre for a cemetery, which was incorporated and is used to this day. Some families have four generations buried here.

The first school building was about 24 by 30. The north end was used by the teacher, center used as a hall, and south as the school. The school was moved from this location in about 1912 to the northwest corner of SW 9-4-2W. The old one was used as a teacherage, and a new school was built in 1913, which served until 1950. The school, at times, had 63 pupils. There were three rows of benches, with three to a bench. We learned our three R's together, with many cousins. Education was not taught just with a pencil and book.

In 1950, a new modern school was built, with full basement, hydro and furnace. High school education was hard to come by, as the town schools were full. In 1953, we organized a Continuation School with a classroom in the basement. There were eighteen students from Rose Farm, Melba, and Bloomfield Districts, taking grades nine to eleven. Mr. Abe Heide, from Horndean, was principal



*Rose Farm School in the early twenties with Peter Giesbrecht as teacher. Families represented include John and Frank Giesbrecht, three Friesen families, two Bergman families, Widow Dyck, Peter Dyck, J. Abrams, D. and Jake Harder, D. Penner; Jacob Blatz and Ben Toews.*



*The Rose Farm School (1913-1950) was purchased by a local resident, moved onto his property a half mile east of the Rose Farm Church, and made into a private home.*



*Miss Alvina Kroeker, teacher at the Rose Farm School from 1953-1956.*

for seven years, until the larger school division came in and the High School was transferred to Kane. In 1965, Rose Farm School closed it's doors. The school had stayed in operation for about seventy years, and taught an average of forty students per year.

The first trustees for the district varied a lot, as people moved in and out. My father, Jacob Blatz, served many years. Mr. Peter Bergman usually served as secretary, as the minutes were in the German language until about 1911.

When the first up to date school registers were brought from the Department of Education, the bare minimum of minutes were kept. From then on, we had bilingual education until the late 1920's - English and German. I remember the English-German dictionary was standard equipment. The subjects were reading, writing, and arithmetic, plus religious instruction. The Bible and Catechism were used as textbooks, as well as German storybooks. By 1910, English was used extensively. The teachers who taught, started to vary. Mr. Peter Epp taught for two years. Mr. Jacob Loepky taught one year, Mr. Bernard Wiebe, three years, Mr. Cornelius Ginter, two years, Mr. Cornelius Harms, two years, Mr. Henry Hildebrandt, two years and Mr. Peter Voth, four years. These were the teachers who taught from 1897-1913. During this period the school was classified as a private school. When World War I came along, the Department of Education tried to put in an official trustee, which was rejected by the ratepayers. They took the stand. They had managed so far and they could manage in the future; hiring teachers, etc. They organized a fully integrated school and had been such until it closed it's doors in 1965.



*The new Rose Farm School built in 1950, with the elementary class of 1964.*

Period from 1911-1965 (54 years)

Secretaries and years of service

Mr. Peter Bergman	10 years
Mr. Isaac Brown	10 years
Mr. John Penner	10 years
Mr. Jacob Dueck	4 years
Mr. Anton Penner	10 years
Mr. Abram Groening	4 years
Mr. Martin Hiebert	6 years



The total number of teachers who taught in this school was about 32. The shortest time taught was by Miss Gertrude Giesbrecht, from January 1914, until June. She married Mr. Isaac Brown. The longest time taught was by Mr. Peter Giesbrecht for six and a half years from 1918-1926. Mr. Abe Heide taught high school from 1953-1959.

A list of teachers who taught from 1914-1965, along with their qualifications:

- Miss Gertrude Giesbrecht 1914  
grade nine and teaching permit
- Mr. Jake N. Giesbrecht 1914-1917  
grade eleven and Normal School
- Miss Sarah Giesbrecht 1917-1918  
grade nine and permit
- Mr. Peter Giesbrecht 1918-1925  
grade seven and permit
- Miss Anne Friesen 1925-1926  
grade ten and permit
- Miss Helen Janzen 1926-1927  
grade eleven and permit
- Mr. John Bock 1927-1928  
grade ten and permit
- Miss Helen Warkentine 1928-1929  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Henry Schellenberg 1929-1931  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Gustav Penner 1931-1935  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Bill Born 1935-1939  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. John Wiebe 1939-1940  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Bill Born 1940-1942  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mrs. Susan Driedger 1942-1947  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Miss Evelyn Giesbrecht 1947-1948  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Miss Margaret Bergen 1948-1949  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. George Groening 1949-1952  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Dave Friesen 1952-1953  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Miss Alvina Kroeker 1953-1956  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. Otto Toews 1956-1957  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Miss Esther Friesen 1957-1959  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Miss Hilda Dyck 1959-1960  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. John Zacharias 1960-1963  
grade twelve and Normal School
- Mr. John Hildebrand 1963-1964  
grade twelve and Normal School

Mr. Henry Dueck 1964-1965  
 grade twelve and Normal School  
 Mr. Abe Heide 1953-1959  
 grade twelve and Normal School  
 some University courses  
 principal/teacher: grade nine-eleven

**ROSE FARM HIGH SCHOOL**  
*by Abe Heide*



*Abe and Eva Heide, 1947.*

The Rose Farm School operated as a one-room rural school until the summer of 1953, when the lower room (the basement) was changed to serve as another classroom. Bookshelves, equipment shelves, desks, and other items were obtained. This new classroom served as the one-room high school from September 1953 to June 1959 - six school years.

In the years prior to 1953, students from the district that wished to continue their education, needed to do so by correspondence with the Manitoba Department of Education, or by leaving home and attending an established high school elsewhere. The need to provide further education had become a high priority within the district. The discussion about having their own high school had been going on for several years before it became a reality. The people wanted a high school, but they also wanted to



*Rose Farm High School: Helena Penner, Bernice Giesbrecht, Burton Groening, John Hildebrand, Linda Groening, Jake Froese, Mildred Penner, Minnie Bergman, Art Harder, Harry Bergman, Catherine Hildebrand, Evelyn Harder, John Hoepfner, Margaret Dyck, Martha Froese, 1956.*



*School Friends: Irma Bergman, Phyllis Penner, Helena Penner, Eva Froese, Margaret Groening, Mildred Penner, Nora Bergman, 1957-58.*

have their sons and daughters at home as long as possible.

In January of 1953, the three members of the school board of the Rose Farm S.D. came to visit me at the one room school near Rosenfeld, where I was teaching. They asked me if I would be willing to come to Rose Farm, and be their high school teacher for all the subjects in grades nine, ten and eleven. I was quite shocked at this offer, but I accepted their invitation. I have never regretted this move even though it frightened me at that time. The attitude towards learning was excellent in the young people that came to be my students. In retrospect, those six years at Rose Farm come back to my mind as having been "The good old days".

During the first of the six years, there were grade nine and ten students only. After that year, we had all three grades with anywhere from two to eight students in each grade. The total yearly enrollment varied from a low of thirteen, to a high of eighteen students. With each grade taking six or seven subjects, there would have to be fifteen to twenty class periods per day for the teacher, each with an average length of about fifteen minutes duration. It was a busy time and it could not have succeeded without the cooperation of the students and their excellent work habits.

Keeping the required work up to date needed a strong determination from everyone. But we did have our lighter moments as well. Our fifteen minute recess periods at 10:30 in the mornings and at 2:30 in the afternoons were spent in different ways. Baseball, flag football, volleyball, table tennis were some of our favorite pastimes, although there were others as well. Both the girls and the boys were involved in most of these activities. We occasionally competed against neighboring towns such as Horndean, Plum Coulee, Kane and Lowe Farm.

During the years of the operation of this high school, the Department of Education conducted a large number of final examinations for all high school grades. Grade nine students were required to write only one such paper which was mailed to the department and marked by their markers. Grade tens wrote these exams in five subjects. The teachers of the high schools were sent a copy of the answer key for each subject, and were required to do their own marking. All grade eleven students wrote a department exam for each of the subjects that they were taking. All the marking and grading was also done by the department.

During the school year from 1958 to 1959, a province wide campaign was being conducted by the Manitoba Department of Education for the vote on whether or not the people of the province would be willing to accept the larger School Division for administering the schools of the province, rather than the tiny school districts. Rose Farm was only one of hundreds of small school districts in the province. If this method of school administration were to be adopted, Rose Farm would become part of the Morris-Macdonald School Division. During this campaign period it became very evident that the voters in the area



*1955 Graduation: Abe Penner, John Dyck, Henry Dyck, Raymond Penner, Hilda Bergman, Sarah Froese, Leona Ginter.*



*Rose Farm High School, fall of 1957.*



*1958 Graduation: Art Harder, Harry Bergman, Mildred Penner, Tony Kahn, Phyllis Penner, John Hildebrand, Helena Penner.*

were still very eager to keep the operation of the school in local control. In the vote count in this district, there were only three votes in favour of the new plan. All the others were opposed. However, with the vote in the whole of Morris-Macdonald, the vote carried.

For a few years, the high school students were bussed to Lowe Farm. Later, all of the high school students of Rose Farm, Kane, and Lowe Farm were taken to Morris. Later, even the students in Grades one to eight from Kane and Rose Farm were taken to Lowe Farm.



*Rose Farm High School outing, spring of 1959. Standing: Mrs. Abram Hildebrand, Abe Heide (teacher), Virginia Brown, Ray Hildebrand, George Braun, John Hildebrand, Irma Bergman, Eva Froese, Bill Driedger. Sitting: Eva Heide (teacher's wife), Nora Bergman, Margaret Groening, Maureen Blatz.*



*Rose Farm High School van at Kane School in spring of 1960. Shirley Hildebrand, Katherine Heppner, John Hildebrand, Nora Bergman, Mr. Frank Bergman (driver), Judy Blatz, George Braun, Virginia Brown.*

**ROSE FARM EMMC**  
(Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference)  
*as researched by Art Hiebert*



*Sunday School class, taken in the early thirties, at the Rose Farm School.*

So much lies buried in the past at Rose Farm! For many people, Rose Farm has been the hub around which, at least, part of their lives have rotated. Only a remnant remains rooted in the soil which gave rise to the Rose Farm Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC). For most of us, Rose Farm is a memory - a constellation of memories - locked into the recesses of our hearts.

Mennonite settlers first came to the Rose Farm region in the 1890's. By the mid-1930's, Mennonite churches in the region included the Mennonite Brethren Church at Grosseweide, the Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Lowe Farm, and the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church at Kronsweide. A Sunday School which had been started in the Rose Farm School in the 1920's, by Rev. Peter Gerbrandt was continuing to operate.

The revival movement that swept across Southern Manitoba in the 1930's was fueled, no doubt, by the traumatic migrations of the Mennonites to and from Canada in the 1920's and the devastating depression of the following decade. By the time the winds of renewal had subsided, a new church had been born; "Die Rudnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde". Eleven hundred members had left the Sommerfelder Church to form their own fellowship.

During the summer of 1937, many of these families met in barns, granaries, or even in the open, since they had no church buildings of their own. In the Rose Farm area, a group gathered in the barn of the John P. Dyck farm for the first time on May 6. Planks, covered with building paper, served as benches. Those who remember these meetings do so with a great deal of nostalgia.

Throughout that summer, plans were being made to build a Rudnerweider Church at Rose Farm. Everyone knew that the barn would serve only for the summer. A committee of three; Jacob Gerbrandt, Bernhard Hildebrand and John P. Dyck, were chosen to direct the project. John P. Giesbrecht donated a piece of land, and construction began. There was some debate about whether or not to have a slanted floor. Some felt it would resemble a movie theatre too much, but in the end the floor was sloped. Winter was already closing in when the roof was put on, but by late December, the building was done. It was dedi-

cated at a special service on December 20, 1937.

Already that spring, Jacob P. Bergen of Kronsweide had been elected as a minister. However, as was custom in those years, ministers travelled to all Rudnerweider locals on a circuit so that a resident minister was away from home frequently. The following year, 1938, Jacob P. Gerbrandt, of Kronsweide was elected as well. A few years later George Froese, who had been elected as minister in 1937, in the Winkler area, moved to the Melba District.

The original building had no basement. In 1946, a basement was built and the church moved onto it. That same year, the Sunday School moved from the school to the church. For the next twenty years, the Sunday School was in the basement during the same hours as the worship service for adults in the main sanctuary. In 1966, this was changed so that Sunday School classes were held for all ages in the first hour, followed by an hour of worship for everyone.

The local choir was started in the school in 1941 by George Brown. In 1947, Ervin Groening took over. In 1950, the choir was moved to the church and thus became less of a community choir. Ed Penner became the choir leader in 1955, and was in charge until the church closed.

By 1953, none of the early ministers were left at Rose Farm. The Bergens had moved to British Columbia, George Froese had been killed in a train accident in 1947, and the Gerbrandts had moved to Altona. To meet the need for local leadership, Corny Harder, who had been chosen as a local deacon in 1951, was called to the ministry. He served as the resident minister, travelling the circuit. After the formation of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC) in 1959, the new localizing trend allowed Harder to stay at Rose Farm more often. He served until 1965, when he was called to serve in the Austin EMMC Church. The following year Norman Groening was elected as the local minister, and was ordained on April 23, 1967.

By the mid-1970's, various pressures combined to bring about the decision to close the church. With a declining rural population, it was increasingly difficult to keep up attendance and a full program of activities. On May 4, 1975, the church held a closing Thanksgiving service. It was a memorable occasion, as the many who had touched base with the Rose Farm Church some time in their lives came to celebrate 38 years of God's faithfulness.

Now, the Rose Farm EMMC lives on in the memories of those who knew her. There are memories of the ministry of Rudnerweider ministers in regular services, and special week-long services in January. Who could ever forget the "Jugendverein" programs, the Christmas programs, and the Sunday School picnics? What about the missionary conferences, the Thanksgiving services, and the choir socials, or memories of conversions, rededications, tragedies and heartaches.

But more than that, Rose Farm lives on in the lives and ministries of those who have spread around the world, from this country church on the Canadian prairies. In the old church, we used to sing, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through..." We are reminded today that we are pilgrims on a journey. Our situations in this world may change, but the God we learned to know at Rose

Farm will forever remain the same.

The Rose Farm EMMC may have been but a drop in the bucket of God's world-wide mission, but it was a drop that touched us all. The history of the world would have to be written differently, had it not been for the Rose Farm experience.



*Rose Farm Sunday School class, 1939 or 1940. Back row: George Penner, Agatha Penner, ?, Lena Dyck, Nettie Heinrichs, Jacob Dueck, Ed Penner, Theodore Groening (teacher). Front row: John Dueck, Cornie Bergman, Gerty Brown, ?.*



*Some of the 1961 Sunday School classes. The church had a large Sunday School of approximately 120 children.*



*The Rose Farm EMMC in 1974. The church was built in 1937 on 9-4-2W.*