

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTED

Mennonite Immagroration

There is significance to the Mennonite settlement in the Whitewater area which deserves mention.

The earliest of the pioneers came one or two families at a time to claim their land allotment based on the Federal Homestead Act of 1862. This often caused a sense of isolation.

The first of several Mennonite groups came to this area in 1874. These large groups each consisted of several extended families. Their churches, central to their convictions, became the catalyst of interaction and networking; helping to establish stability and permanence to the new communities. Earlier scouting trips were used to locate soil and weather conditions similar to those in the Prussia, Germany, Ukraine territories from which the Mennonites came. Generally, areas of Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota were best suited to their familiar farming practices.



The First Emmaus Building

When they came, the Mennonites brought wheat seeds with them, introducing a crop which would thrive in their new country. The Turkey Red wheat variety changed area agriculture from providing table food and sufficient oats for maintaining horses to producing a quantity of wheat that changed the local, state, and national economies.