

# Hoffnungsthal Settlement

## Points of Interest

### 1. The Church

The floor area shows what is believed to have been the actual size of the first house of worship built by our ancestors. The pews would have been hand hewn from trees felled in the near vicinity, and the roof was thatched with reeds cut in the area around the Church.

### The Old Gum Tree

Before the construction of their house of worship, religious services were conducted under this majestic tree. It was referred to then as the old gum tree, which makes it difficult to estimate the age of the tree. Logs placed in the shelter under the tree were used for seating. One of these large logs, still in perfect condition, was unfortunately destroyed in a fire lit and left unattended by an unwelcome and unannounced camper in 1981. Fortunately the Lyndoch C.F.S. was summoned and it arrived in time to save this wonderful old gum tree.

### 3. The Lagoon

As the main street of the Hoffnungsthal village is now documented to have been in a straight line from the Church to the Cemetery, it is easy to visualise that, after the torrential rains and resultant flooding, some of the homes and many stock yards were in or under water. The 8 foot markers, the stated depth of water in the lagoon in 1853, give us the opportunity to realise the extent of the flooding, and why the decision was made to vacate the area.

### 4. Water Well

This was the first well dug by the early settlers, and proved to be too salty for drinking or cooking. However, it was suitable for use in washing and cleaning. The well situated on the neighbouring fence line was dug later, and produced a better quality water.

### 5. Threshing Floor

This depression is clearly visible as being used to roll the heads of grain, and remove the husks from the grain. Imagine a pole in the centre with a tapered wheel attached, being drawn round and round by a horse walking outside the perimeter of the grain. By then tossing it in the air, most of the husks were blown away by the wind.

### 6. Home Site

Here is evidence of what was possibly a 2 room cottage built of stone. No doubt many cottages like this lined the street of Hoffnungsthal. The native roses or briar bushes grew profusely, and the flowers from these bushes were used to decorate their homes and the Church.

### 7. The Village Water Tank

We were told that village families were rostered to replenish this community water tank with spring water brought from the creek over the hill to the south/east. This water was only to be used by the residents for drinking and cooking.

### 8. The Morgue

This dug-out cellar with a thatched roof was a necessity for keeping the deceased body and coffin until burial. It could be many days after a death before a minister could be summoned, and then arrive at the village to conduct the burial service.

### 9. Hoffnungsthal Cemetery

Although there were no actual records of the persons buried in this cemetery, research and family recordings have since determined the names of those buried here. They are now listed on the plaque on the road near the church site. Many of those buried here were children, often the victims of diphtheria. The eldest son of Joachim and Caroline Zerk is known to be buried under the almond tree.