

The New

MANFRED NEWS

Volume 14, Issue 3

April 2022

A Warm Welcome to Manfred!

Come join us for the

2022 Manfred Festival and Field Day
Wednesday, September 7th

Festival 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Field Day 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The Early Years of the Manfred Community - The Farmers -



An example of homesteading settlers in the Manfred area

Homesteaders John and Malena Johnson, shown at left, in front of their sodded shanty
Two of John's brothers, shown at right, were living in the sodded shanty to the right while contemplating their next plan

Homesteading

Homesteaders were those who filed on 160 acres of free land somewhere in the vast lands of the USA

Who could file on 160 acres of free land offered through the Homestead Act of 1862?

Anyone who was the head of household or 21 years old, and either a US citizen or who intended to become a citizen. Filers could be either men or women of any race, who promised to till additional acres each year and to live on the claim so many months each year for five years. At the end of five years, after paying a small fee and providing proof of fulfilling the requirements, the homesteader received the patent of ownership.

Who were those who created the Manfred community?

Most of the settlers were first generation immigrants, with a few being born in the USA to immigrant parents. Some came directly to Manfred from their country of origin, but most had made successive moves westward before settling at Manfred. The countries of origin included many from Norway, several from Russia of German descent, as well as, Sweden, Canada, Hungary, Denmark, England, Germany, and Luxembourg. The filers were of all ages, 21 and older, either having families or single, with determination and the hope of a better life.

The early years of the Manfred community

This issue is the first of a two-part series entitled 'The Early Years of the Manfred Community.' This issue features early farmers, and the next issue will feature businesses who served Manfred's farming community, though the business owners may have also farmed. This issue begins with a brief survey of the presence of people in the area before the coming of the settlers, followed by narratives and photos of many of the early homesteading farmers, what it might have been like for the early homesteaders, and early implements.

Thank you so much for enabling Manfred to share its inspiring settlers' story with present and future generations!

The New Manfred News

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MHP, Inc. General/Newsletter Fund

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Lila Anderson in memory of Marvin Miller
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Peter and Jacquelin Anderson
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in memory of Patti Jo Ravnaas
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Richard and Wanda Melchert
in memory of Darlene Quenette
Margaret Thorson

In Memory

The 'In Memory' column will appear
in the next newsletter issue

MHP, Inc. Designated Gifts

School

Lila Anderson
in memory of Betty Steinberger
Kevin and Tresa Boese
William and Nancy Conner
Steven and Jisele Mitchell
John M Quie
in memory of Lorraine Quie
Jerry and Dorothy Stansberry
Jacque Thuma
in memory of Adele Hanson

Solheim House

Audrey Solheim

Comfort Station

William Detling in memory
of Mathias and Mary Detling,
Leo Detling, and Clara Detling Elhard
Craig and Vicki Harper
John and Mary Hovey
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Wayne and Chris Everett
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Wayne and Chris Everett

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Larry Fisher
Andrea Holtman
Bill and Sandy Krebs
in memory of Darlene Quenette
Larry Ostrem

Bank/Post Office

Myrna Flick
Linda Letness
Sandra D Skroch

Vang Church

Larry Ostrem

Anderson House

Richard and Denelle Smith

Manfred Festival and Field Day

Join us in Manfred – Wed., Sept 7, 2022!

10:00 am-2:00 pm – You are welcome to tag along to 7 learning stations for 4th Grade students in conjunction with their North Dakota Studies course. Bring a picnic lunch, or bag lunch available at church.

2:00 pm-4:30 pm – Visiting and coffee, guided tour of Manfred will be available.

4:30 p.m.-6:00 pm – Catered meatball supper, \$10 per person. Please call for reservations: 701-870-4627 or 701-399-6782.

The Historic Presence of People in the Wells County Area

Activity of people from ages past in the Wells County area

The prairielands were frequented by Indian tribes from ages past as they followed the bison; in later times came French explorers, Hudson Bay Company hunters, fur hunters from the trading posts along the Missouri River, and, beginning in the 1840s, the Red River buffalo 'bison' hunters from Pembina. The first written account of people in the future Wells County area was of this Pembina group recorded by Rev. Father George A. Belcourt in October of 1845. He accompanied the group during one of their twice-yearly hunts near Butte de Morale – a landmark well-known by Indians and hunters alike, located about 12 miles northwest of Manfred, near Selz, ND.

Other recorded visitors in the Butte de Morale area: In late July of 1853, a camp of the Pembina group was photographed (Spoksefield, p. 20) by Governor Isaac I. Stevens' Expedition when they passed by the south side of Butte de Morale while mapping a path for a railroad to be built to the Pacific Ocean; in July of 1862 and again in 1863, Captain James L. Fisk's wagon train of gold seekers passed to the north of Butte de Morale.

The Homestead Act enacted amid strife

At the time the Homestead Act was passed by Congress in 1862, much turmoil was going on for the USA.

- The Dakota Sioux Uprising of 1862 also known as Little Crow's War or the Dakota War of 1862-1863 had a profound impact on the future for Indian tribes. An expedition led by General Sibley was sent to handle this and on July 23, 1863, Sibley and his army passed through Wells County. General Sully's Army came in late July 1865, fording the Sheyenne in the Harvey area and then passed by Butte de Morale.
- The issue of slavery and the Civil War. On January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, he also signed an emancipation proclamation for the freedom of all slaves. The Civil War had begun in 1861, which lasted until 1865. Reconstruction took place until 1870.

The first homesteaders to Manfred Township

Frank and Anna Kolasky (more on pages 11 and 12 serving as an example of what homesteading might have been like) Frank Kolasky (1843-1933) and Anna Stoos (1857-1926) were the first settlers to Manfred Township in 1883. Frank was born in Poland and immigrated to the USA in 1875. He met and married Anna in 1880 at Winona, MN. Their first child Elizabeth was born in 1881 in Cass County. In 1883, they homesteaded in Manfred Township and in November their second child, Peter, was born, the first child born in Manfred Township. Eight children were born to Frank and Anna. In 1906, they sold their farm and moved to Montana.

Jesse and Julia Fincher and Family

Jesse Fincher (1831-1903) and Julia Hitchcock (1834-1902) and family settled in Manfred Township the spring of 1886. They homesteaded on land that later became part of the townsite of Manfred. Jesse and Julia were born in the state of New York. They lived in Pennsylvania and then in Washtenaw County, Michigan for many years. Their three adult children moved with them to Manfred. Their son Herbert married Eliza Cone, daughter Hattie married Daniel Jones and daughter Amy married Robert T. Roberts. Jesse and Herbert farmed with oxen their first six years. They were carpenters by trade and perhaps built area homes and businesses.

Other early homesteaders

Other early homesteaders to Manfred Township were William Goedecke and Charles and Katharina Bartsch in 1887, Mathias and Elizabeth Biever in 1889, and Peter B. and Anna Anderson in 1892. Upon completion of the Soo Line Railroad to Manfred in 1893, several homesteaders filed on homesteads that fall. The following pages feature quite a few of the homesteaders who settled during the early years in Manfred Township.

Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area



P. B. and Anna Anderson - 1936



Ole and Anna Berve – Before 1925



Mathias and Elizabeth Bieber Family
1899



Louis and Ella Boese – c 1950



Gullik and Margit Dahle
c 1900

Peter Beck and Anna Anderson

Born in Norway, Peter Beck Anderson (1859-1948) and Anna Johnson (1863-1942) filed in 1892 on land in Manfred Township, settling there in 1893. They both had immigrated to WI: Anna with her family in 1869 to West Salem, and P. B. in 1880. In 1885, he filed on land in Eddy County, Dakota Territory. He and Anna were married in 1886 in WI. They farmed first in Eddy County before coming to Manfred Township. They had eight children. In 1922, they retired and turned the farm over to their youngest son, Perry and wife Lilly (Rodne) Anderson.

Ole and Anna Berve

Ole Berve (1854-1925) and Anna Olson (1857-1938) were born in Norway and married in 1881. They immigrated in 1884 to Traill County near Buxton, building a sod house. They made their own furniture, used straw in the mattresses, heating the house with wood and flax straw, Anna spun their own yarn to make clothes, and Ole made shoes from wood. They moved north of Manfred in 1896. They had nine children. Those remaining in the region were Eilert, Oliver, Casper, and Olida who married Ingvald Ravnaas.

Mathias and Elizabeth Bieber

Mathias 'Math' Bieber (1857-1935) and Elizabeth Schneider (1861-1935) were born in Germany. Math came to the USA in 1881: NY one year, then Cass County, ND marrying Elizabeth in 1885 who immigrated in 1881. In 1889, they were one of the first homesteaders in Manfred Township. They had seven children. Those remaining locally: Joe ran businesses in Manfred and Fessenden, Anna and Mike Jenny farmed near Manfred, Matt had a gas station and his wife Jerret was the Manfred postmaster, and Josie married Anton Breyer owner of the Manfred Hotel.

Louis and Ella Boese

Louis Boese (1884-1953) made a harrowing escape from Russia in 1886 with his family when Louis was age 1½. They moved to Madison, SD. In 1893, the family moved south of Manfred. After growing to manhood, Louis lived in California for a time where he met and married Ella Mennegar (1889-1958). In 1915, Louis and Ella moved back to the farm. In 1938, it was sold because of foreclosure. Louis and Ella started again that year north of Manfred. They had eight children, several of whom remained local. The farm passed to son Wesley and wife Esther (Bailey) Boese.

Gullik and Margit Dahle

Gullik Dahle (1862-1834) and Margit (1859-1925) were born in Norway and married in 1892. In 1893, they came to the USA, filing on a homestead north of Manfred. Sadly, they lost their only child in childbirth the winter of 1893-1894 while staying with his cousin and family in their sod house. Gullik and Margit were active in the church and community. In the early years, Gullik served as a blacksmith for a short time and was very talented in played the hardanger violin.



Andrew Deede Family – c 1904

Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area

Andrew Deede Family

Andrew Deede (1853-1949) of German descent was born in Karlsruhe, Russia where he married Dorothy Frank. In 1892, they immigrated to the U.S. with their four children, homesteading southwest of Manfred. Dorothy died in 1901 leaving Andrew with seven children. He married Mary Hauser also from Karlsruhe, Russia who had four children from a previous marriage. Children continuing to farm locally: daughter Kate and John Hirsch Korn, daughter Mollie and Alex Miller, and son Phillip and Hilda (Rodacker) Deede.



Tannes and Ingrid Dybing – c 1901

Tannes and Ingrid Dybing

Tannes Dybing (1868-1954) and Ingrid Kopseng (1865-1938) were born in Norway. Tannes immigrated in 1888 to MN where he worked for five years before moving to the Sykeston area. In 1896, he filed on a homestead north of Manfred. Ingrid came to the USA in 1893. In 1897, she filed on a homestead adjacent to Tannes' claim. They met and married in 1899 and built up a fine diversified farm. They had three children. Their son Clarence and his wife Clara (Solberg) Dybing were the next farmers, and daughter Mary and Leonard Rogelstad farmed near Manfred.

Bert and Mary Fehr and Beilda
1912

Bert and Mary Fehr

Born in Germany – in 1906, at age 17, Brechter 'Bert' Fehr (1889-1976) and two friends earned their way to the USA by caring for a shipload of horses. Bert joined his brother Peter in Iowa and in 1908 their parents and other siblings joined them there. They all settled near Manfred that year. Bert met Mary Egger (1887-1963) when she came from WI to teach. In 1911, they married in South Dakota where they farmed until 1917, then purchased a farm SW of Manfred. Seven children grew to adulthood. Those farming locally: daughter Beilda and Warren Hoover, son Eilert and Marie (Pitkin) Fehr, and son Walter and Leona (Richards) Fehr.

Rudolph and Augusta Fiebick Family
c 1912

Rudolph and Augusta Fiebick

Rudolph Fiebick (1872-1961) and Augusta Mietz (1877-1968) were born in Russia of German descent. They both immigrated to the USA in 1892 and were married in 1897. In 1900, they homesteaded 1½ miles east of Manfred along the James River and farmed there, raising eleven children. They retired to Fessenden in 1937. Their son Emil worked for Standard Oil in Manfred for a time.



Ole and Ida Frovig - 1915

Ole and Ida Frovig

Ole Frovig (1877-1931) and Ida Eilertson (1887-1973) were born in Norway. Ole came with his parents in 1894 to Buxton, ND. In 1895, his father filed on land west of Manfred. Ole purchased adjoining land and later purchased his father's farm. Ida immigrated to Iowa in 1910. Ole and Ida married in 1915 and farmed, except for 1920-1923 when they lived in California. They had eight children. When Ole died, Ida continued farming until 1940. She married Ingebrecht Trovik in 1944, and he died in 1952. Daughter Lena and Clarence Alvesshere farmed locally.

Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area



Wilhelm Goedecke Family – 1890s

Wilhelm Goedecke

Wilhelm Goedecke (1853-1929) immigrated to the USA from Germany in 1884, first to Fargo, then homesteaded in Manfred Township in 1887 - among the first to settle in Manfred Township. In 1889, he married Mathilda Pagel. They had three children. Mathilda died when she was only 30 years old and is buried in the small cemetery SW of Manfred. Wilhelm married Anna 'Lena' Glaue in 1897 and they had two children. Albert Bieber became the next farmer of this farm.



Ole and Ingrid Hedahl Family - 1900

Ole and Ingrid Hedahl

Ole Hedahl (1868-1917) and Ingrid Jorstad (1863-1956) were born in Norway. They married in 1889. In 1893, they arrived in MN. In 1895, they homesteaded north of Manfred. In addition to farming, Ole worked at Rogers Lumber Company in Manfred for six years. In 1905, he was elected as Wells County Register of Deeds for six years. In 1913, he served as chief enrolling and engrossing clerk for the North Dakota Legislature. They had eight children. After Ole's passing, the family went out west for a while, but then returned. Those children farming locally: daughter Gina and Frank Mattis and son Conrad and Clara (Granstad) Hedahl.



Tollef and Bertha Haugen - 1880

Tollef and Bertha Haugen

Tollef Haugen (1855-1942) and Bertha Jomen (1854-1940) were born in WI to Norwegian immigrants. Tollef and Bertha married in 1880. When they moved to Manfred in 1904, they rented a farm from Tollef's uncle Harald Thorson until purchasing their own farm SW of Manfred. While their house was being built, they rented the Ole Hedahl farm during the time Ole was serving as Wells County Register of Deeds in Fessenden. They had six children. Those who farmed locally: son Alfred and Mary (Roble) Haugen and daughter Alma and Martin Melby.



Nils and Marit Hovey family
1897

Nils and Marit Hovey

Nils Hovey (1854-1921) and Marit Hoyme (1856-1941) were born in Norway. Marit moved to Laverne, MN in 1885. Nils and Marit married in early 1886 and then settled in Eddy County where two children were born. In 1893, they moved to Wells County, homesteading just north of Manfred where three more children were born, for a total of five. Those remaining in the area: daughter Marit 'Mary' served as the switchboard operator from 1923 until 1953 and son Ole and his wife Thora 'Mabel' (Ellingson) Hovey farmed north of Manfred.

Jens and Bertha Hustoft

Jens Hustoft (1867-1937) and Bertha Aageson (1865-1939) were born in Norway. Jens immigrated to Buxton and Mayville areas about 1887. Bertha arrived in the USA in 1890 and worked on the Granden Bonanza Farm until her marriage. In 1893, Jens homesteaded in the Manfred area. In 1895, Nils and Bertha married at Manfred, settling on his homestead near Manfred. They had three children. Their son Edward and Myrtle (Moen) Hustoft continued on the Hustoft homestead.



Jens and Bertha Hustoft Family
c 1920s



John and Malena Johnson Family
c 1905



Thomas and Ragndi Jorstad
c 1950



Jacob and Fredericka Koenig
c Early 1940s



Gullik and Ragnhild Lindbo Family
c 1902



Knud and Guri Melby Family
c 1897

Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area

John and Malena Johnson

John Johnson (1871-1960) was born in WI and Malena nee: Johnson (1874-1925) was born in Iowa. They were both children of Norwegian immigrants and became neighbors in WI. When John reached age 21 in 1896, he filed on a homestead in Manfred Township where his sister Anna Anderson and her family were located. John built a sod shanty on his claim and returned to WI where John and Malena were married that same year. They had six children. Their son Leslie and wife Olga became the next farmers on this farm.

Thomas T. and Ragndi Jorstad

Thomas Jorstad (1869-1953) and Ragndi 'Randi' Råbølle (1871-1953) were born in Norway. In 1900, they were married in St. Paul, MN and the following year homesteaded in Manfred Township. They were active in the community and Thomas also did carpentry work such as building one-room schoolhouses in Fram Township. Thomas and Ragndi were parents of four children. In 1928, they retired to Harvey. Their daughter Mayme and her husband Walter Larson purchased the farm and continued farming the land.

Jacob and Fredericka Koenig

Jacob Koenig (1874-1943) and Fredericka Hildenbrand (1880-1965) were born in South Russia of German heritage. In 1889, they each immigrated with their parents to the USA. In 1898, Jacob and Fredericka married. They lived at first near Goodrich. In 1907, they moved to Manfred Township and in 1912, they purchased their own farm. Jacob served as manager of the Manfred Livestock Shipping Association. Eleven of twelve children grew to adulthood. They retired in 1940, moving to CA. Their son Fred and wife Marlys (Hagen) Koenig continued farming.

Gullik and Ragnhild Lindbo

Gullik Lindbo (1863-1936) and Ragnhild Sætra Vigen (1862-1905) were born in Norway. Gullik immigrated to MN in 1887 where he met and married Ragnhild, a widow with one son. They farmed in MN until moving to Wells County in 1893. In 1902, Vang Church divided into two congregations. Gullik and Ragnhild became Charter members of the East Vang congregation. Seven of eight of their children grew to adulthood. Son Gotfred 'Fred' and his wife Anna Ongstad farmed locally.

Knud and Guri Melby

Knud Røe (1843-1927) and Guri Melby (1844-1921) were born in Norway. In 1861, they married and farmed for 20 years before moving to the USA in 1881. Knud and Guri worked for their sponsor three years to pay off their ship passage and to gain funds toward starting their own farm. In 1884, they homesteaded in Griggs County. In 1887, they moved to Foster County and in 1893 they filed NW of Manfred and were charter members of Vang Church. They retired from farming in 1911. They had ten children. Those farming locally were sons: Ole and Mary (Skattebo) Melby, Martin and Alma (Haugen) Melby, and Oscar and Bertha (Nordtorp) Melby.

Some of the Early Farmers to Settle in Manfred Township



David and Amolia Miller – c 1920

David and Amolia Miller

David Miller (1858-1931) and Amolia Kunz (1861-1924) came from Karlsrude, Russia, born to German parents. David and Amolia and their children settled on their homestead south of Manfred in 1896 in hopes of a better life for their family. They were charter members of the Manfred SDA Church and donated the land where the present church is located. Five of their seven children grew to adulthood. The farming tradition continued: their son Ben and his wife Emma Rodacker took over farming the homestead and their son Alex and his wife Molly Deede purchased farmland nearby.



Matt and Marie Miller – c 1950

Mathias and Marie Miller

Mathias 'Matt' (1867-1954), born in Luxembourg, came to the USA in 1888. He started in MN, then worked for a rancher near Bowden, ND with his pay being six cows. He then obtained a homestead claim and a timber claim west of Manfred in 1897 and drove his six cows from Bowden to his Manfred land. His first wife died in 1904, after which he went back to Luxembourg. In 1905, Matt married Marie Fonk (1882-1964) also of Luxembourg. They had three children and farmed west of Manfred until 1920, when the family moved to Harvey.



Lars and Tomine Natland – 1894

Lars and Tomine Natland

Lars Natland (1863-1927) and Tomine Erfjord (1867-1953) were born in Norway. Lars immigrated in 1888 to Buxton, ND and Tomine had come several years earlier with her family. They were married in 1894 at Buxton, ND, and in 1895, they moved to Manfred by covered wagon and oxen. They led a cow and calf behind the wagon and had a few chickens and farm tools in the wagon. They became parents of six children. Sons Samuel and Selmer continued on the farm.

Mads and Sigrid Nertrost

Mads Nertrost (1848-1898) and Sigrid Strand (1845-1926) were born in Norway. They married in Norway in 1877 and in 1880 immigrated to the USA, first in MN, then in 1882 moved to NW of Cooperstown. In 1893, they filed on land NE of Manfred with their five children: Bertha, Mads, Jr, Sennev, Anna, and Nels. After Mads died, Sigrid remained on the farm participating in the Manfred community until 1925, when she went to live with her daughter Sennev. Children farming locally: Bertha and Helge Myhre and Nels and Cora (Anderson) Nertrost.



c 1880



c 1920

Mads and Sigrid Nertrost

Sofus and Rena Ongstad

Sofus (1858-1936) and Rena Asleson (1869-1941) were born in Norway. Sofus came to the USA in 1868, first to WI and in 1869 to MN. After college graduation in 1886, he served in the MN Legislature. In 1893, he filed NW of Manfred. In 1903, he became bank cashier in Manfred where he met Rena who immigrated to MN in 1871 and taught school. In 1901, she filed on a homestead NE of Harvey. Sofus and Rena married in 1904 and had two children. They lived in Manfred until 1915 when they moved to Sofus' homestead. Their son Herbert and Margaret (Christensen) Ongstad continued on the farm.



Sofus and Rena Ongstad Family
c 1925

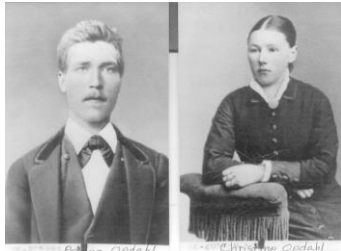
Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area



Ole and Gina Onstad - 1938

Ole and Gina Onstad

Ole Onstad (1873-1953) and Gina Rogne (1879-1954) were born in Norway. In 1896, Ole filed on 120 acres in Manfred Township and 40-acres in Norway Lake Township. In 1899, Gina moved to the USA, first in WI. In 1903, she filed near Tioga, ND – during the winters, she worked for families in Wells County where she met Ole. In 1909, Ole and Gina married and had two children. They retired from farming in 1949 and moved to Manfred. Son Emil (Linda Brusven) continued farming for a time and daughter Annie (Helmer Solheim) made their home in Manfred.



Peder and Kristine Opdahl
c 1880

Peder and Kristine Opdahl

Peder Opdahl (1859-1930) and Kristine Rustad (1856-1928) were born in Norway. Peder immigrated in 1883. It is known that Kristine attended cooking school in Iowa, going on to cook for the governor of Iowa. Peder and Kristine met and married in the USA. They settled first at Northwood, ND. In 1896, they moved to west of Manfred where they lived the remainder of their lives. They had four children. Peder fell ill with spinal meningitis, so their son Edward left business college to farm for his dad. Ed and his wife Sophie Rogness then continued farming.



Even and Kjersti Ostrem - 1956

Even and Kjersti Ostrem

Even Ostrem (1882-1975) and Kjersti Haen (1880-1958) were born in a part of Norway having little arable land. Even and Kjersti married in 1903. As the eldest son, Even was destined to inherit his parent's farm. Even and Kjersti decided to go to the USA and make enough money and return to the Ostrem farm in Norway. In 1909, Even and Kjersti moved to Tioga, ND. In 1929, they lost their farm, but Bendik Rogne leased his Manfred farm to them where they farmed until 1942. Ten children were born to them. They retired to a house in Manfred, purchased by their son Lars.



Ole and Guri Ranum - 1935

Ole and Guri Ranum

Ole Ranum (1858-1938) and Guri Melby (1862-1938) were born in Norway. They came to the USA with their parents: Ole in 1870 and Guri 1881. In 1884, Ole took over his parent's farming operations in Lyon County, MN. That same year, Ole met Guri when she and her family were in route to settle in ND. Ole and Guri married in 1885. In 1900, they moved to Voltaire, ND, and in 1905, to a farm north of Manfred. Born to Ole and Guri were six children. In the 1930s, their daughter Clara and her husband Ole Gladheim took over farming this farm.



Ingvald and Olida Ravnaas - 1961

Ingvald and Olida Ravnaas

Ingvald Ravnaas (1885-1963) was born in Norway and came to the USA in 1903. Olida Berve (1891-1969) was born in Traill County ND to immigrants from Norway. In 1896, her family moved to a farm north of Manfred. In 1906, Ingvald filed in Adams County but worked at times for farmers in the Manfred area where he met Olida. They married in 1911. Ingvald and Olida farmed various farms in Manfred Township, raising their ten children. In 1956, they retired to Manfred. Continuing at Manfred were son Ivar and son Morris and his wife Joyce Brewer.



Torstein and Guro Roble Family
1899



Rodne Brothers – 1890s



Bendik and Kari Rogne - c 1930



Nikolai and Everina Rogness
1927



Emil and Anna Shirley - 1953

Some of the Early Settlers Who Farmed in the Manfred Area

Torstein and Guro Roble

Torstein Roble (1859-1943) and Guro Skogstad (1853-1924) were born in Norway. Torstein and Guro married in 1884. In 1886, they immigrated to the USA with a group of relatives, settling to MN where Torstein taught. In 1890, the group moved to Foster County ND, and in 1893, Torstein and Guro settling west of Manfred. Torstein and Guro were active in the community. In 1912, Torstein was elected to the ND House of Representatives, serving two terms. They had five children. Daughter Mary and Alfred Haugen farmed locally.

Rodne Brothers

Ole J. (1864-1947) and Maggie Knutson (1869-1964) filed north of Manfred in 1893. Ole's brother Haldor (1867-1953) arrived in 1894, staying with Ole and family. In 1900, Haldor filed on nearby land. In 1901, he married Delia Ring (1870-1952). Ole L. (1871-1956) came to Buxton in 1892 before settling near Manfred in 1893. In 1896, Ole L. married Anna Lunde (1875-1939). All couples were born in Norway. Ole J. had 8 children, Ole L. 11 children, and Haldor 8 children – a child took over each farm, with other children also farming in the area. Photo L/R: Ole J., Severin, Ole L., and Haldor. Severin did not stay in the USA but went back to Norway.

Bendik and Kari Rogne

Bendik Rogne (1861-1938) and Kari Nyhagen (1869-1985) were born in Norway and married in 1892. Bendik built a hotel in the early 1890s but in 1893 leased the hotel and moved to the USA, first in WI before filing north of Manfred. Kari frequently served as a mid-wife. They were parents of three children. In 1926, Bendik and Kari retired and moved to California. Bendik returned each year to check on his farm, leased first to Halvor Olsen, then Lars Ostrem, and later they sold the farm to Leonard Rogelstad.

Nikolai and Everina Rogness

Nikolai Rogness (1869-1941) and Everina Hauge (1869-1959) were born in Norway. Nikolai immigrated to the USA in 1890 and Everina in 1892, paying off her passage fare by doing housekeeping for her sponsor. Nick and Everina married in 1894, settling first at Mayville, ND. In 1897, they moved north of Manfred. They were parents to ten children. Those who remained in the area were daughters: Martha and Halvor Olsen, Sophie and Edwin Opdahl, Nora and Rudolph Peterson, and Anna and Ralph Hager.

Emil and Anna Shirley

Emil Shirley [originally Sjolie] (1872-1961) and Anna Thompson (1872-1965) were born in MN to Norwegian immigrants. Emil homesteaded north of Manfred in 1893 and Anna came to ND from MN in 1902. Emil and Anna married in 1903 at Fessenden, ND and settled on Emil's homestead where they farmed and raised their four children. Their house burned down in 1933 but was immediately rebuilt. During the Depression, Emil was at risk of losing his farm, but his son Adolph stepped forward enabling the farm to recover and prosper.

The names and dates on pages 11 and 12 are actual, but the general narrative is a compilation of experiences common among early homesteaders.

Starting Up on a Homestead

Let us pause to imagine what it might have been like for the early homesteaders in their settling process. Manfred's first homesteaders, Frank and Anna Kolasky, can serve as our example. Every homesteader's experience would have been unique, but the following might represent some of their common experiences.

Frank Kolasky, born in 1843 in Poland and raised there, immigrated to the USA in 1875 at the age of 32. It is not known how he paid for his passage – if he had a sponsor, or if he had family or friends already in the USA. But it is known that he made his way to Winona, Minnesota where he met and married Anna Stoops in 1880. Anna was born in 1857 at Winona and raised there, the daughter of parents who were born in Luxembourg.

Preparing for the Move

Frank and Anna moved to Cass County, North Dakota where their first child, Elizabeth, was born in 1881. They likely stayed with family or friends while living in the Cass County area. As was common to do, Frank may have made a trip to North Dakota in 1882 to choose and file on a quarter in Section 35 of Manfred Township which had a water source. Likely, he may have brought along a hammer, saw, lumber, fasteners, and tar paper to build their first home – a simple one-room structure with a door and likely a window. He might have also built a simple table, a couple seats, and a trundle bed (bed with slide-out open compartment underneath).

After Frank returned to Cass County, he and Anna's conversations and efforts during that winter of 1882-1883 would have centered on preparing for their move to their homestead in the spring. They packed the wagon box carefully and balanced the weight. In the bottom of the wagon, they packed things they would not need until they arrived at their homestead: a small stove with pipe fittings, breaking plow, harrow, scythe, garden and building tools, twine, wire, buckets, wheat and oat seeds, vegetable garden seeds and seed potatoes, medical tonics, dried meat, flour, salt, sugar, coffee, and any other foods that keep well like root vegetables, and a washboard, tub and lye soap. Frank likely worked for their lodging and perhaps earned a little more to help toward their move.

Frank and Anna would have also packed a chest of precious items such as their Bibles, linens, other precious items, sewing supplies, and basic clothing for themselves and their daughter. Perhaps a spinning wheel went along. Packed on top were cooking supplies, food that kept well, Frank's gun, and some jugs of water which they would refill as needed. Their straw-filled mattress and a few blankets or quilts would have been included in the top layer.

The Trip

On the appointed early spring day in 1883, a few cages of chickens and a roster were added in the wagon, and a cow was put on a lead behind the wagon having a calf beside her. After Frank yoked the pair of oxen to the loaded wagon, the family was ready to start out. They possibly had acquired a half-grown puppy that accompanied them. Each evening, they would have camped near a water source, if possible. Frank would unyoke the oxen so they could graze, as well as the cow and calf and the chickens. Frank and Anna would have rounded up kindling for a fire. Frank maybe hunted for a small animal like a rabbit. They cooked with kettles above the fire making coffee in one of them, and had a few cups, dishes and utensils. Placing their straw-filled mattress between the wheels under the wagon for sleeping, they may have hung blankets from the wagon box to create a 'room.'

From Cass County to Manfred Township is about 185 miles as the crow flies. Traveling about 10 miles per day, the trip would have taken approximately 18 to 19 days. As they drew closer to the homestead, the excitement would have mounted for Anna to have her first glimpse of their own farm. Frank might have anchored the shanty when he built it the fall before, but with the strong North Dakota winds it might have blown over which they would have tipped back up with the help of their oxen with little damage. They could then set up housekeeping for their first night sleeping in their shanty home. This tiny shanty would serve them well for a short time, until they were able to build a larger framed house or add onto their shanty.

The First Year on the Homestead

Starting Up on a Homestead, Page 2

Though Frank and Anna were the only people living in the area at the time, they had each other. There was much to do during the first year. After settling into their small shanty, Frank would have started plowing some of the land. Yoking the oxen to the breaking plow, he plowed a few acres over several days. After this, if he had a harrow, he yoked the oxen to it to go over the plowed area to break up the clumps and smooth the soil. When the plowed area was smooth enough, it was time to broadcast the wheat seeds by hand, and perhaps he sowed oat seeds, too. The prepared soil nearest their shanty was set aside for growing garden vegetables. They obtained milk from their cow and made butter, eggs from the chickens, and when they had enough chickens, this could be a source of meat. Frank would have needed to protect his livestock especially the chickens to ward off predators. Other meat and fish would have been obtained from hunting and fishing in the area, some of which they preserved as food for the winter.

Once the seeds were sown, the next task would be to plow more land to obtain 'sod bricks' in order to build a sod barn and to sod up their shanty. Frank, again, attached the breaking plow to the oxen, and plowed land close to where the barn would be built. Building the sod walls was a day-by-day steady project. As described by David Andrew Brown in *Living in an 1800s Sod House*, "the settlers learned that they needed to cut out only the bricks that they would use in one day. Otherwise, the sod would dry out and crumble if left out." Sodding was a slow process and hard work but was vital in preparing for the coming North Dakota winter for both themselves and their animals.

When their grain crop had matured, Frank and Anna likely worked together to harvest it. Cutting the grain was done with a scythe, a long-curved blade attached to a handle. Sheaves of grain were bundled together with twine or straw and then stood up together to form shocks. Once the shocks had dried, it was time to separate the grain from the rest of the plant. It is not known how they managed to thresh their grain, but it was likely done somehow by hand. Frank then hauled wheat grain to the nearest elevator, a 5-6-day round trip, keeping some grain back for putting in the next year's crop. That first fall, he may have also sold bison bones gathered from their land. With the proceeds, Frank could purchase a farm implement such as a seeder, as well as any supplies needed like coal and maybe more lumber. By fall, the garden vegetables had been harvested and stored, and hay stored up for their animals. It was critical to locate material to heat their stove/heater for the coming winter months. In addition to the supply of coal, they likely rounded up bison chips/pies, corn cobs and made straw twists from the grain straw. Their second child, Peter, was born in November of that first year. Each year, Frank would have used the breaking plow and harrow for turning more acres into crop production. With the sale of wheat each year, he could purchase more equipment to help him in the farming.

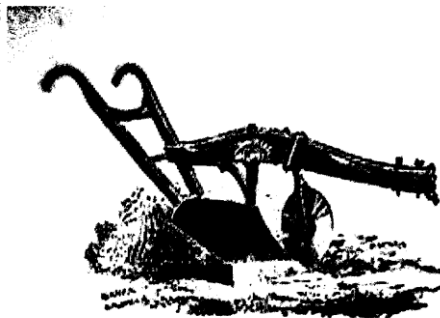
Witnessing the Development of a New Community

The spring of 1886 was very eventful with the arrival of their first neighbors, Jesse and Julia Fincher and their three adult children Hattie, Herbert, and Amy. Herbert and his wife Elizabeth had a daughter, Jennie, born in 1885. Likely, there were enjoyable visits back and forth between the families. That year, a third child, Mary, was born to Frank and Anna. The next year, 1887, William Goedecke and the Charles Bartsch family arrived and that November, Frank and Anna's fourth child, Frank, Jr., was born. The Mathias Biever family arrived in 1889 and that year Frank and Anna's fifth child, Nicholas, was born. The P. B. Anderson family filed in 1892, and that year Frank and Anna's sixth child, Louis, was born. Also in 1892, the Soo Line Railroad bed was being built less than a mile north of Frank and Anna's farm.

Frank and Anna had seen many changes since they arrived in 1883, and now ten years later in 1893, they witnessed the railroad track being laid and the water stop established two miles northwest of their farm. In 1894, their seventh child Anna was born, the first Manfred businesses opened including an elevator, the post office was established, and many more homesteaders began streaming into the area. Now that an elevator and other businesses were so close, Frank no longer had to make the long trips to sell his grain and obtain their supplies. In 1900, Frank and Anna's eighth child, John was born. A Wells County Free-Press News entry in August 1905, reported that Frank was busy hauling sand and bricks for the new bank building. Frank must have been ready for a new frontier, as in May of 1906, he sold their 320-acre farm to Mark Wilson of Fessenden. Frank thought at first of moving to Canada, but instead relocated to Montana where he and Anna lived the remainder of their lives. In 1912, Mark Wilson sold the farm to Jacob and Fredricka Koenig, and in 1940 their son Fred and wife Marlys Koenig took over. In 1997, Earl and Barbara Sisson purchased the farmstead and now their son Christopher has the farmstead. The 'farmland' is owned by Shirley Koenig Freeze et al.

Early Farm Equipment

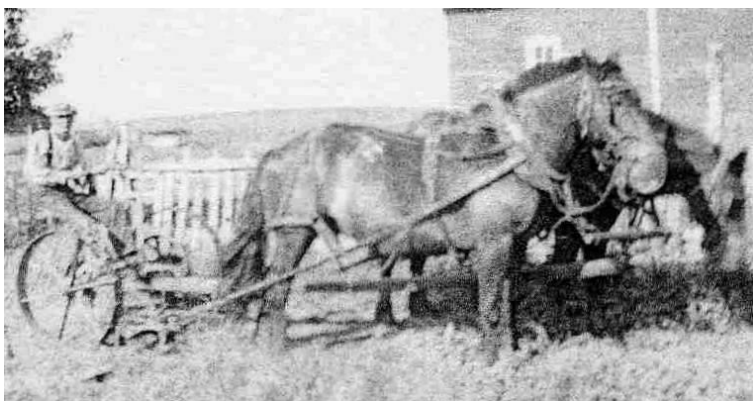
What must it have felt like for the homesteaders to have a large expanse of 160 acres filed in their name? For new arrivals, it was like a dream come true. With hearts full of joy and eagerness, they were embarking on a brand-new chapter in their lives. Essential to start farming was a breaking plow to 'break' the sod. If a homesteader did not have their own breaking plow, they could borrow from a neighbor. Oxen were generally used to pull the breaking plow because of their strength to turn over the sod. The breaking plow was also known as a bottom plow or moldboard plow. Homesteaders walked about 20 miles a day behind the breaking plow. The following verses are printed on a panel in the Farm Exhibit located in the south garage on the Melby-Rogness property. A breaking plow given by the William and Lorraine Brye family is part of that exhibit.



The Breaking Plow



Even Ostrem plowing with four oxen



Even Ostrem using an implement with two horses

Verses taken from

The Breaking Plow

I am the plow that turns the sod
That has lain for a thousand years;
Where the prairie's wind-tossed flowers not
And the wolf her wild cub rears.

I come, and in my wake, like rain,
Is scattered the golden seed:

I change the leagues of lonely plain
To fruitful gardens and fields of grain
For men and their hungry breed.

I greet the earth in its rosy morn,
I am first to stir the soil,
I bring the glory of wheat and corn
For the crowning of those who toil:
I am civilization's seal and sign,
Yea, I am the mighty pen
That writes the sod with a pledge divine,
A promise to pay with bread and wine
For the sweat of honest men.

I give the soil to the one who does,
For the joy of him and his;
I rose the slumbering world that was,
To the diligent world that is.
Oh, seer, with vision that looks away
A thousand years from now,
The marvelous nation your eyes survey
Was born of the purpose that here, today
Is guiding the breaking plow.

By Nixon Waterman

From the May 13, 1915,
issue of the Wells County Free Press

Early Farm Equipment, Page 2

Rural towns throughout the prairielands served their farming communities faithfully through the many years. 'Manfred District,' placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017, is serving as an example of a community celebrating the farming tradition. Farm artifacts being gathered at Manfred include several ox/horse-drawn implements, general farm equipment, and livestock related artifacts. Livestock were vital for the early homesteaders to survive and thrive on the prairie. Below are listed equipment used by the homesteaders.

EQUIPMENT FOR CROP PRODUCTION

Plow – The plow turned over the soil and could have one or more plowshares/blades.

Harrow – The harrow smoothed the soil to make a good seedbed. A harrow had sharp teeth, tines or spikes that dug into the soil. If the implement had sharp, circular plates instead of teeth, it was called a disk.

Seed Drill – Early on, seeds were sown by hand broadcasting until a seed drill could be purchased. A seed drill, unlike hand broadcasting, sowed seeds at precise intervals into a straight furrow of constant depth.

Cultivator – Manfred's artifact collections include a few ox/horse-drawn cultivators for both grain and corn.

Harvesting the mature grain consisted of (1) cutting, (2) drying, and (3) threshing

(1) Cutting

Scythe – The scythe was a curved blade with a handle used to cut sheaves of grain manually.

Reaper – The reaper implement might have been used in place of cutting the grain manually with a scythe.

(2) Drying

After the sheaves of grain were cut, they were tied into bundles, and stacked against one another vertically to form a "shock" to air dry.

Binder – Once the farmer acquired a binder, he saved steps as this implement cut the grain, gathered it into bundles, and tied each bundle with a piece of twine. After drying, the bundles were gathered ready to be threshed.

(3) Threshing

Threshing is a process of separating the grain from the straw. The early homesteaders likely threshed by hand.

Threshing Machine – A threshing machine mechanically separated the grain from the straw, at first with ox/horsepower and later with steam engine power. One threshing machine might be shared among several farmers, or farmers would hire someone with a threshing machine to thresh their crops.

OTHER EARLY FARM EQUIPMENT

Hay is grass that was cut by hand with a scythe or with a **Sickle Blade Mower** implement, dried a few days, after which the hay was gathered by hand or with a **Rake** implement. The hay was pitched into their wagon or stone boat and later the settlers would have used a **Hay Rack** to haul the hay to the barn to be stored for use during winter as livestock feed. If there wasn't enough room in the barn, the hay was stacked outside in haystacks. Important were **Wagons** and **Stone Boats** that served the farmer in a multitude of ways.

Manfred Heritage Museum is honored to celebrate rural America and the farming tradition!

Acknowledgements for "The Early Years of the Manfred Community – Farming"

Library of Congress website "Immigration to the United States, 1851-1900;" 4th Grade North Dakota Studies "Part 2: The Great Dakota Boom, Section 2: Obtaining Land;" Living In An 1800s Sod House – Amazing History, Online January 15, 2016 by David Andrew Brown; "The History of Wells County and its Pioneers" by Walter E. Spokesfield; Manfred Heritage Museum resources and manfrednd.org-Biography and Newsletter tabs. Audrey Solheim-historian, Wanda Melchert-editor.