

The New MANFRED NEWS

Volume 7, Issue 1

August 2007

Change of Mailing Address

Should your mailing address change, please notify:
MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND, 58341,
Help MHP, Inc. save on return postage charges. Thank you kindly!
manfrednd.org
Enjoy visiting Manfred's web site: manfrednd.org
Tabs of special interest: Biography, Business, Newsletter

A hearty welcome to The New Manfred News!

Our apology for the newsletter delay – a 'whirlwind' of activity has struck Manfred again this spring and summer. Since 2000, this tiny but wonderful place has been vulnerable to such beneficial occurrences, made possible through your dedicated and caring help as volunteers and contributors - enabling Manfred to 'live', so it can share its great story. See herein, significant and exciting progress taking place for Manfred's history and restoration projects! Speaking of history, what an honor it is to feature The History of Manfred in this issue.

Celebrating Significant Improvements at Manfred!

► The Vang Church Basement Walls

In 2002, Preservation North Dakota awarded Vang Church a *Grass Roots Preservation Grant*, which helped with grading the land for better drainage of water away from the 1918 stone-rubble foundation. New gutters and downspouts were also installed at that time. Now in March 2007, that foundation was found to be in good condition when the basement walling was replaced through a project by the Vang Ladies Aid. Contractor Greg Seidel and his assistant Daryl Bergrud removed the old warped walling. They found it necessary to rebuild the studs for the east wall, after which they installed insulation, a vapor barrier and then the new walling.



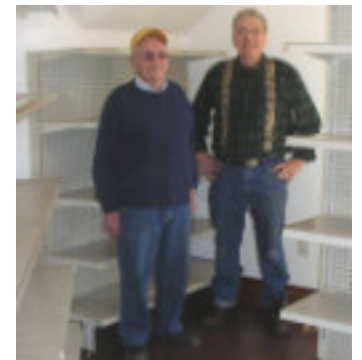
The new walling was painted in May by Rose Anderson, Verna Bowers, Betty Melby, Pam Norstedt and Herbert Ongstad. Wanda Melchert painted the metal ceiling.



Curator, Pam Norstedt, and members of the Museum Division are pleased to have a place now to house the archival collections.

► The Upstairs of the Melby/Rogness House

Restoration work upstairs sped ahead during the early months of 2007 to enable MHP, Inc. to install the Archives thanks to the help of a *Cultural Heritage Grant* through the State Historical Society of North Dakota which had a May 1 deadline. Thank you to volunteer Ron Widiger who kindly installed window and door molding last year; to contractor Greg Seidel in completing the molding work; to volunteers Wesley and Esther Boese and Wanda Melchert for sanding, painting and varnishing; to Orren Anderson who designed the shelving arrangement for the Archives, and to Peter Anderson who assisted Orren with the installation. The shelves came from Marv's Hardware of Mandan when it closed in 2006.



Orren and Peter Anderson installed the shelving for the Archives



Hotel structure was stabilized by June 2007. Exterior now under restoration.

...in viewing this historic photo, we can envision how the hotel will proudly look again one day.



Hotel Johnson - built in 1906. Photo taken in 1907.

*Once upon a time,
the hotel proudly stood...*

► The Hotel Structure

In consultation with Preservation ND, the Melby Heritage Society non-profit group felt encouraged to see if the hotel structure could be rescued. In April, contractor Charles Bolin, assisted by his brother Bill, began the attempt. Jacks were borrowed from Pete Anderson, Wesley Boese, Wanda Melchert, and Herbert and Bill Ongstad. Interior supports were installed and also exterior repairs were made. Many thanks to Wesley Boese for using his loader tractor to help straighten up the hotel's SW corner and in cleaning the hotel yard! Many thanks to the Ongstads for use of their boom truck to help lift the roofing materials up to the roof and to set the outhouse straight! Painting the hotel and the Olaf and Lena Anderson House is planned during the next couple of years.

The New Manfred News

Thank you to Mid-Dakota Lumber Company of Harvey for their ongoing help to the Manfred projects in securing supplies and providing helpful advice. Thanks to all who participated in the work day held June 2 with yard clean-up or in serving lunch: Pete and Rose Anderson, Sam Anderson, Wesley and Esther Boese, Verna Bowers, Larry Johnson, Wanda Melchert, Pam and Lloyd Norstedt, Herbert Ongstad and Ruth Widiger. Thanks to all who are mowing properties in the care of the Manfred projects: Wesley & Esther Boese, Bridget Harkness and family, Wanda Melchert and Herbert Ongstad. Thanks to Reiner Widiger and Wesley Boese for spraying, and to Wesley Boese for servicing the mowers.

In Memory

Arvin Ravnaas

January 9, 1919 – February 17, 2005
Son of Ingvald and Olida Ravnaas

Patricia Beyer

October 24, 1936 – February 25, 2007
Wife of Wally Beyer who is the
Grandson of Nils Jacobson Melby

Lawrence Wagner

July 9, 1925 – March 2, 2007
Longtime resident of rural Manfred

Esther Rodacker

August 2, 1924 – March 15, 2007
Lived in the Vang Church parsonage in the 1950s
with her husband Roy and children Paulette and Tom

Robert 'Bob' G. Anderson

March 14, 1944 – March 19, 2007
Son of Gordon and Christine (Ostrem) Anderson
Paternal Grandparents Olaf and Lena Anderson
Maternal Grandparents Even and Kjersti Ostrem

Olive Schmidt

October 25, 1917 – April 15, 2007
Her husband Fred Schmidt serves
Vang Church of Manfred as Pastoral Assistant

Erin Calloway

August 15, 1966 – April 18, 2007
Daughter of Joan Lake
Granddaughter of Clara Hedahl

Grace Detling Thueringer

March 20, 1938 – May 14, 2007
Daughter of Matt and Mary Detling
who famed near Manfred

Orville Rodne

August 28, 1934 – May 26, 2007
Son of Oliver and Inga Rodne
Grandson of Ole L. and Anne Rodne

Delaine E. 'Del' Pepple

March 3, 1928 – July 19, 2007
Husband of Betty Froeber Pepple
the daughter of John Froeber

Lena Roble

September 6, 1920 – July 31, 2007
Wife of Orval Roble who's father Olaf Roble was a
Manfred businessman and his grandfather
T.O. Roble was a Manfred area homesteader

With the continuing help of supporters, Manfred is growing toward its exciting mission to help tell the story of rural North Dakota. In grateful thanks!

General Fund

Contributions to the General Fund are vital for the current work of MHP, Inc. The projects are advancing with this help!

In memory of Bob Anderson

Peter and Rose Anderson
Verna Bowers

Christine Anderson
Wesley and Esther Boese
Muriel Boyum

In memory of Erin Calloway

Jeff and Sheryl Bateman
Delores and Mark Bullis
Elaine V. Bullis
Rebecca Holand
Mary Bullis Hoyt
Emil and Denise Jansky
Joe and Joan Lake
Michelle Parks
Judy Paul
Valerie Staberg
Virginia Steed
Muriel White

Leo Detling
Fessenden Thrift Shop

Jim Helenski
Joe and Joan Lake

In honor of Edith Bodewin

Fred Lindbo
Herbert Ongstad
Marlys Piatz
Edward and Lorraine Ravnaas
Olive Rodne
Merlin and Laurie Schwartz
Violet Seidlinger
Arlene Triebold

In memory of Lawrence Wagner

Agnes Wagner
Audrey Solheim
Reiner and Ruth Widiger

Endowment Fund

An everlasting fund providing for the future

Leo Detling
Richard and Wanda Melchert
In memory of Bob Anderson
Reiner and Ruth Widiger
In memory of Orville Rodne

Designated Gifts

\$200 given by Harvey Eagles Club
for a future park area in Manfred

Manfred Newsletter Subscriptions

Thank you for your newsletter subscriptions!
15 new or renewing subscriptions have
been received since the previous issue!

The New Manfred News

A quarterly newsletter published by
Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.)
P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341.

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News and history items are most welcome!
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Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.)

'A Settler's Village Celebrating Rural America'
A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded July
25, 2000. Its mission is to compile and share the
history of Manfred, North Dakota and its traditional
trade area, and to encourage community pride and
restoration of its historic structures.

Website: www.manfrednd.org

Manfred Heritage Museum

An educational entity of MHP, Inc. and of
the Manfred community dedicated July 26, 2003.
Its purpose is to provide present and future
generations the opportunity to learn about important
contributions that rural places such as Manfred
have given to North Dakota and to America.

Museum Hours

May 15 through October 15: Tues-Sat 10-4
Summer 701-547-2564
Winter 701-547-3123, 701-324-2091, 701-324-2027

The success of Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. is made possible through:

1. Volunteers

Four Divisions have been established where people
are invited to volunteer in their areas of interest:

- *CORPORATE – Compiling the history, Grant writing
- *MUSEUM – Cataloging the collections
- *BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS – Care of Manfred
- *EDUCATION – Developing exhibits and programs

2. Financial Contributions

Financial contributions are vital to the work of
MHP, Inc. Ideas for giving include -
*GENERAL FUND for current expenses
*DESIGNATED GIFT
*ENDOWMENT FUND for Manfred's future
Consider including MHP, Inc. in your Estate Plans.

Federal Tax ID# on record
State of ND Solicitation #4111

3. Historical Contributions

At the core of the projects is the history of Manfred
and its traditional trade area. Historical materials are
welcome to help tell Manfred's story such as:

- *ARTIFACTS – Historical items
- *ARCHIVAL MATERIALS – Histories, Documents
- *GENEALOGIES – and other historic materials

Board of Directors

Audrey Solheim, President
Laverne Johnson, Vice President
Esther Boese, Secretary
Ruth Widiger, Treasurer
Wanda Melchert, Museum Director
Rose Anderson, Pete Anderson,
Verna Bowers, Herbert Ongstad

MHP, Inc., dedicated to education and the well
being of rural America, is a member of the Harvey
Chamber of Commerce and Preservation North
Dakota, and also partners with the Wells County
Historical Society, State Historical Society of
North Dakota and other historical groups.



Manfred... a remarkable history, a remarkable place!

The family histories in various issues of *The New Manfred News* share courageous and interesting stories of the immigrant settlers who made the big move from their homelands in Europe to their new homes on the American frontiers. (See www.manfrednd.org) In this issue is a brief history of Manfred, one of many villages established during the westward settlement of America. The faith, the hope, the determination, the resolve of these settlers provides inspiring examples for us to follow as we live our lives.

Introducing the History of Manfred

Manfred is a place...

- ...Where settlers first began arriving in the area in the later 1880s with horse or ox-drawn wagons.
- ...Established by the Soo Line Railroad as a watering stop for its steam engines in 1893.
- ...Founded as a bustling village in 1894 with a post office and various businesses.
- ...Faithfully serving the farm community through the many years in this rural setting.
- ...Now in the process of restoration to serve as an example of a settlers' village.
- ...Delighting all who come—inviting them to experience and learn in this historic environment.
- ...Where history is portrayed in the place where the history took place.

The story of the establishment of towns, such as Manfred, along the railways is of lasting importance. It's the story of the settling of the USA, fondly call America! It's a story about the immigrants - a story of finding a place to call home, a place to raise their families, a place enabling them to enjoy the blessings of freedoms and well-being.

It's an all encompassing story... for settlers, descendants of settlers, everyone!

History of Manfred Acknowledgements

History of Wells County and its Pioneers by Walter E. Spokesfield Copyrighted 1929; *Pioneer History of Wells County* chapter on the *Pioneer History of Manfred and Community* by Sennev Nertröst Whipple 1966; *The P.B. Anderson Account* written in the early 1900s contributed by Peter Anderson; Church histories compiled by Bertha Nertröst Myhre, Olga and Laverne Johnson, Annie Solheim, Mildred Reising, Karen Rodne Beutler and others; Manfred Township's history; Research on the naming of Manfred by Ora Gladheim Thompson and her niece Pam Nelson Norstedt; *History of the Manfred Post Office* by Edgar Flick, photos from Myrtle Melby Sailer, Edgar Flick and many others, Oral histories from Adolph Shirley, Lilly Anderson, Leslie Johnson, Bertha Melby, Herbert Ongstad and many others; Stories from several people such as Russell Johnson and Clarence Alvethere; *Fagerlund Sons of Norway Lodge History* by Annie Solheim 1977; Manfred Homemakers Club history; The many histories of *Fessenden Diamond Jubilee 1893-1968*; *Fessenden, A Centennial History 1893-1993*; The many histories of *Growing With Pride Harvey History Book 1906-1981*; Histories from the region compiled by Gerald Tween; Speech July 9, 2007 by Gerald Tween for the Wells County Historical Society; Wells County Court House records; property records and other records; Census Records 1900-1930 from the State Historical Society of North Dakota Archives at Bismarck; *Wells County Free Press-The Manfred News* and its transcribers Ethel Melby Bolyard, Maridel Hoover Sprenger, Pam Nelson Norstedt, Elaine Nelson Homan; news article by Warren A. Stickley, reporter-*Wells County News* as reprinted in the August 6, 1981 issue of the *Wells County History*-Official publication of the Wells County Historical Society; *1911 Wells County Atlas* and subsequent issues; *The Overlander's View of Manfred* as printed in the November 4, 1913 issue of the Bismarck Tribune; Ongoing news articles in the Herald-Press and other newspapers and periodicals such as the Minot Daily and Washington Post; The many people who have compiled family histories; Audrey Solheim and Wanda Melchert currently compiling Manfred's history with the help of many people.



Peter B.
Anderson



Sennev Nertröst
Whipple



Walter E.
Spokesfield

*Pictured are
some of the
first writers to
record historical
accounts about
Manfred*

Before the coming of the settlers

For eons of time before the settlers established places such as Manfred, the land had been enjoyed by others. In a pasture near Manfred, there is a large rock believed to have been used as a rubbing stone by the American bison, commonly referred to as buffalo, so numerous across the prairies. The native people camped along the James River, most likely the Lakota tribe of the Sioux Nation who enjoyed hunting and fishing along its banks. These people used stones to hold down the edges of their skin-covered circular dwellings. Many of the circles of stone were yet in evidence at the site of Manfred when the settlers first arrived, and also had yet been seen in nearby riverside pastures by more recent generations.

The settling begins in the Manfred area – Late 1880s to early 1890s

***The first settlers to Manfred Township**

The later 1880s greeted the first settlers to Manfred Township. P.B. Anderson wrote that when he and his family came to Manfred Township in the spring of 1893 there were four settlers who had arrived about 3½ or so years earlier: Charles Bartz, Frank Kolosky, Jesse Fincher, and William Goedecke.

***An example of the immigrants making their way westward**

A number of the immigrants moved one or more times during the settling process. Sennev Nertröst Whipple wrote, “After a voyage of six stormy weeks, my parents together with two children arrived in the harbor of New York City in 1880. They spent two years in Northfield, Minnesota. Then they decided to go to Dakota Territory to file on a Preemption claim of 178 acres, traveling by train as far as Valley City, where the railroad ended. From here, on a June day in 1882, a covered wagon caravan started out in the direction of the setting sun, en route to what now is Jessie, nine miles northwest of Cooperstown, Griggs County, Dakota Territory. In this company were several families who became our neighbors. Although poor, as the common lot of all pioneers, we were rich in the love that held us together as a family. It was the coming of the Soo Line Railroad that brought home seekers to Wells County. We arrived at Manfred in 1894 where father made use of his Homestead right establishing permanent residence on a quarter section of land four miles northeast of Manfred.”

***An early settler's experience**

P.B. Anderson wrote about his experience of settling, “With the coming of the Soo Line Railroad through North Dakota - opening of new lands in the northwestern part of the state - land for settlers close to the railroad became available. In the spring of 1892, T.K. Rogne, Nels Hovey and I struck out looking for a place to start a new life. Having been hampered with long distances to market (at their previous location in Eddy County, North Dakota), we agreed not to go more than three miles from the railroad survey. We started to prospect where the survey crossed the James River near Kensal. We took notes of different quarter sections as we went along. After we got out in the center of Wells County, the settlers were very few and far apart.” P.B. went on to say, “After looking over our field notes of the different descriptions taken down, T.K. Rogne and I agreed to file on Section 20 and 29, taking some of each section. This location is half way between Fessenden and Harvey so we figured we could not miss getting close to a town. Going back we stopped at Sykeston and made application for filing with Webster Sanford, Clerk of Court at that time. In July that same year, T.K. Rogne, L.O. Burkum, and I came back and brought a load of lumber with us and put up a shanty 12 feet by 16 feet. We also put up about 25 tons of hay. After completing our haying, we went home again. Late in the fall, I came back out here again. This time I had C.O. Roble along with me. He filed on Section 20. On his land, part of the village of Manfred is located. At this time the railroad graders were at work and the grade was nearly finished.

The next spring, I loaded my worldly possessions in a wagon drawn by three oxen and two cows led behind and started out for what I expected to be the Promised Land. The first day I was overtaken by a snowstorm, so I had to stay with a farmer about 10 miles east of New Rockford. The next day, I managed to get into New Rockford. Bright and early the next morning, I left New Rockford. Every low place was filled with water, so I had quite a time in coming through. Crossed the James River on a bridge at John Fosses place. Coming three or four miles west, I met a farmer who informed me that it would be impossible to cross the river at the next crossing as there was no bridge. Stopped that night out on the prairies. The next morning I went back and re-crossed the bridge at Fosses and followed the south side of the river. This was Sunday and a very beautiful day with bright sunshine.

About three miles east of the claim I was overtaken by my brother-in-law, my wife, and my three husky boys ranging in age from three to six years. They drove a horse and buggy. Coming out to the claim, we found the shanty was plumb full of snow, but as we had a small tent, we were not so bad off after all. The next day we cleared the snow out, moved the shack on a dry spot and before night we were domiciled in our new home. This was April 21, 1893. Two or three weeks after our arrival, T.K. Rogne and family came out and built their shanty about 30 rods from ours. From now on things commenced to move very fast. In the last part of May, the rails were laid, and trains commenced to run. New settlers came in thick and fast and all land subject to homestead was gobbled up in short order.”

An equation for the birth of new communities along the railways...

Railway and Water Source + Settlers = New Communities

A factor that helped bring people to America was advertising in Europe by the American railroad companies, encouraging thousands of people to cross the ocean to a place where the thought of having their own land beckoned them. Manfred and many other towns began as water stop sites, set up by the railroad companies, in order to service their steam engines.



Water from the James River was pumped by windmill to the water tank for use in supplying water to the steam-powered locomotives



Towns established along the Soo Line Railway in Wells County from east to west: Cathay, Emrick, Fessenden, Manfred and Harvey

The year 1893 – Railroad in service, Land taken up, Manfred townsite platted

Many things were starting up in the region in 1893 - Watertanks, windmills and section houses were set up at the designated water stops throughout the region, the rail was laid and the Soo Line Railroad was put into service. By the fall of 1893, much of the land subject to homestead in the area around the Manfred water stop had been spoken for by settlers. Shanties, sod houses, and hay stacks were suddenly beginning to dot the land. The townsite of Manfred was platted on Section 28.

The site originally chosen by the railroad as a water stop was located three miles west of the present site of Manfred, where Highway 52 crosses the James River. That site was owned by Torstein O. Roble, now owned by the Opdahl family. Engineers, at that time, determined the present site then owned by Torstein's brother, Christen Roble, to be more suitable for building a dam to supply the locomotives with water. A dam is still in the same location just east of the bridge on the north side of Manfred. The dam created, what people through the years have called, Lake Manfred. In honor of the 'lake,' the county road that crosses the James was named Lake Street, now officially called Lake Avenue after the establishment of the 911 Emergency Addresses.



View of the dam at right on the James River just east of Manfred and Lake Manfred during a spring 1941 runoff

Photo from the Boese Collection

The James River Crossing of the Mouse River Trail

In earlier years prior to the time of settlement, there had been a trail crossing the James River just east of the present Manfred Dam, known as the James River Crossing of the Mouse River Trail. Parts of the Mouse River Trail were visible in nearby pastures as reported by grandchildren of settlers, but traces of the trail have gradually silted over.

The Naming of Manfred

History has often reported that Manfred was named for a gloomy, solitary hero of Lord Byron's tragedy. Two accounts have come to light as possible sources for the naming, and beg further attention for anyone who would like to look into this:

1 Pam Nelson Norstedt related, "My aunt Ora Gladheim Thompson met a man that lived in her apartment complex in Spokane, WA whose last name was Manfred. He said that he had always been told that one of his great grandfathers helped build the railway through Wells County during the time when Manfred was starting and that the town was named for him. He thought he could provide proof of this. Before Ora was able to look into this further, she became very ill and passed away."

2 Dianne Johnson Aull related, "When I lived in Manfred, I did janitorial work at the church for a few years. One day, a retired couple stopped by the church. They were traveling and wanted to see Manfred – the town named after her father. The woman went on to say that her grandfather was the foreman on the railroad crew that built Soo Line tracks across North Dakota. When they were working at the location where our town was to be, he received word that his wife had given birth to a son and had named him Manfred. Thus, he named this particular town Manfred, after his newborn son. His wife had named the infant after the Lord Byron poem 'Manfred', which was popular at the time."

*The Original Landowners of the site
where the Village of Manfred was platted*

***The Jesse Fincher Family**

The first settlers at the James River Crossing of the old Mouse River Trail were Mr. and Mrs. Jesse E. Fincher and their son, Herbert J. and wife, and also Jesse Fincher's daughters, Hattie (Mrs. Dan Jones), and Amy (Mrs. R.T. Roberts). Jesse E. Fincher born August 23, 1831 and his wife Julia A. Fincher born April 21, 1830, were of English descent born in the state of New York. They resided in Pennsylvania for a time and later lived in Washtenaw County, Michigan, for many years.

Herbert J. Fincher was born in the state of New York, August 8, 1861. He was united in marriage with Miss Eliza Cone before leaving Michigan. They were the parents of several children who were the first ones born in the vicinity of Manfred, Jennie M., Jessie J., Cora M., Grace A., and Nellie H. Jennie married Axel L. LeGrand of Manfred. In 1895, Herbert Fincher and family moved to Fessenden to reside, where he entered into a contract with the United States government. His position was to carry the mail by stage between Fessenden and Oberon, which he did for three years.

Jesse and Herbert were both carpenters. In the spring of 1886, they homesteaded at Manfred. Herbert farmed with oxen for six years. He also hauled buffalo bones to Sykeston several years for additional income.

***Christ Roble**

Christ (birth name Kristen, spelled as Christen in America) Roble, Manfred, was born in 1864 in Norway. In 1892, he homesteaded land which later became part of the town site of Manfred. In 1898, Christ married Anna, who was born in 1862 in Norway. She came to South Dakota in 1897. From their home in Manfred, Anna ran a boarding house for 25 years. Christ died in 1941.

Tragically on September 27, 1945, Anna was assaulted and was so badly injured that she was entered in the hospital at Harvey. She was able to identify her assailant, and then on October 1 passed away. The story, as passed down, relates that one evening the assailant was following another woman back to Manfred. Upon arriving in Manfred looking for that woman and seeing a light on at Anna's home, the assailant entered her home instead.

***Axel L. LeGrand**

Axel Ludwig LeGrand was born July 18, 1871 in Malmo, Sweden, son of Joseph and Anna LeGrand. When nine years old, he came to this country with his parents who located at Northwood, ND. Axel came to Manfred in 1895 and lived in the community for 34 years. He was a farmer, grain buyer, and also postmaster for a time.

Axel drove the Fincher mail and stage line between Fessenden, Viking and Oberon in the middle '90s. He took a claim adjoining the town site of Manfred and later platted a part of his farm into 'LeGrand's Addition to the Village of Manfred.' Axel was united in marriage to Jennie Mae Fincher, November 20, 1903, and to this union six children were born, namely: Norman, Evelyn (Carter), Herbert, Helen (Ruber), Lyle, and Genevieve 'Jean' (Thomas). Axel died January 5, 1929. In 1938, Jennie married Guy Fisher. She died in 1971.

Christ and Anna Roble



The home of Christ and Anna Roble which also served as a boarding house for 25 years



Christ and Anna Roble's home at north end of street

In view from left: C.C. Melby Store, Drug Store, Manfred Post Office at the time, Johnson's Place, First State Bank of Manfred, the Roble home at the north end of the street, Anderson Livery, two small buildings unknown, Manfred Hotel, Renden Blacksmith Shop

Axel and Jennie LeGrand and family



From left: Back: Evelyn, Helen, Lyle
Front: Norman, Axel, Jean, Jennie, Herbert

Manfred – Faithfully Serving the Farming Community Through the Years

The transformation of the open prairies to farming communities

The prairie has been generous throughout the ages in providing life-sustaining sustenance to all who have come to it. And when the land was transformed from open prairie to farming communities due to the westward settling across North Dakota in the late 1800s, again it provided sustenance to all who came. Upon the arrival of the settlers, the land was suddenly bustling with energy and activity, as never before, as the newcomers settled and began farming the land.



The John and Malena Johnson sod home
Many settlers used sod from the earth in the construction of their first dwelling on the prairie, until they were able build a house



Cutting and binding the grain on the Emil Shirley farm
In the early years, the farmer's steady work partners included oxen or horses

The year 1894 – A village born to serve the new farming community

In the Manfred area, all homestead land had been filed on by the fall of 1893, and a few families had moved onto their land by that year. It was the spring of 1894 that saw a tremendous influx of people streaming into the area to settle on their new land. The village of Manfred quickly began to take shape to meet the needs of this new farming community.

Gullik R. Nordtorp, as agent for the Smith & Rogers Lumber Company, founded the first business house in Manfred in 1894. Also that year, Torstein K. Rogne and Lars O. Burkum opened the first mercantile store. In May, the Manfred Post Office was established and located in the Rogne and Burkum Store with Torstein Rogne, as the first post master.

First Business, Smith and
Rogers Lumber Company
Gullik Nordtorp, Agent →



Shows a part of Rogers Lumber Co. building,
sporting its name printed on the roof

First Store Owners



Torstein K. Rogne
and



Lars O. Burkum

Other firsts at Manfred

First depot agent, Rasmus Jacobson
First elevator, Royal Elevator-Erick Gartland buyer
First blacksmith, Gullik Dahle
First doctor, Dr. Peter Boyum

Countries of origin as recorded in the 1900 Census for Manfred Township

Austria
Canada
Denmark
England
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Norway
Poland
Russia
Sweden

Churches and Schools

Of primary importance to the settlers were to have schools for the children and to organize congregations. In 1892, the Manfred and St. Anna Townships voted to organize as one school district, named the St. Anna School District. Records indicate that by 1895, school terms were being conducted in three school buildings in the Manfred area. In 1897, the Manfred and St. Anna School District was divided in two, and thereafter the Manfred School District continued until 1973.

The Manfred School District:

- #1 Manfred School
Open until 1973
- #2 Nertrøst/Solberg School
Open until 1935
- #3 Rogness School
Open until 1928

Congregations organized in the Manfred area:

- 1894-Open Manfred Seventh Day Adventist Church
- 1894-Open Vang Lutheran Church
- 1896-Merger* Bethania Lutheran Free Church
- 1896-1994 Bethel Lutheran Church
- 1901-1943 East Vang Lutheran Church
- 1927-1935 Manfred Evangelical Church

*In 1945, Bethania merged with Trinity Lutheran Church of Harvey

The plat map of Manfred

The town of Manfred was platted on Section 28, township 149 North, range 71 West, on land first patented from United States by Jesse E. Fincher and Christ O. Roble. Later Axel LeGrand platted a portion of his farm as LeGrand's Addition to the Town of Manfred.

P. B. Anderson wrote, "Manfred at its height of prosperity boasted of three or four general stores, two hardware stores, two blacksmith shops, two lumber yards, two barber shops, two pool rooms, bank, drugstore, livery

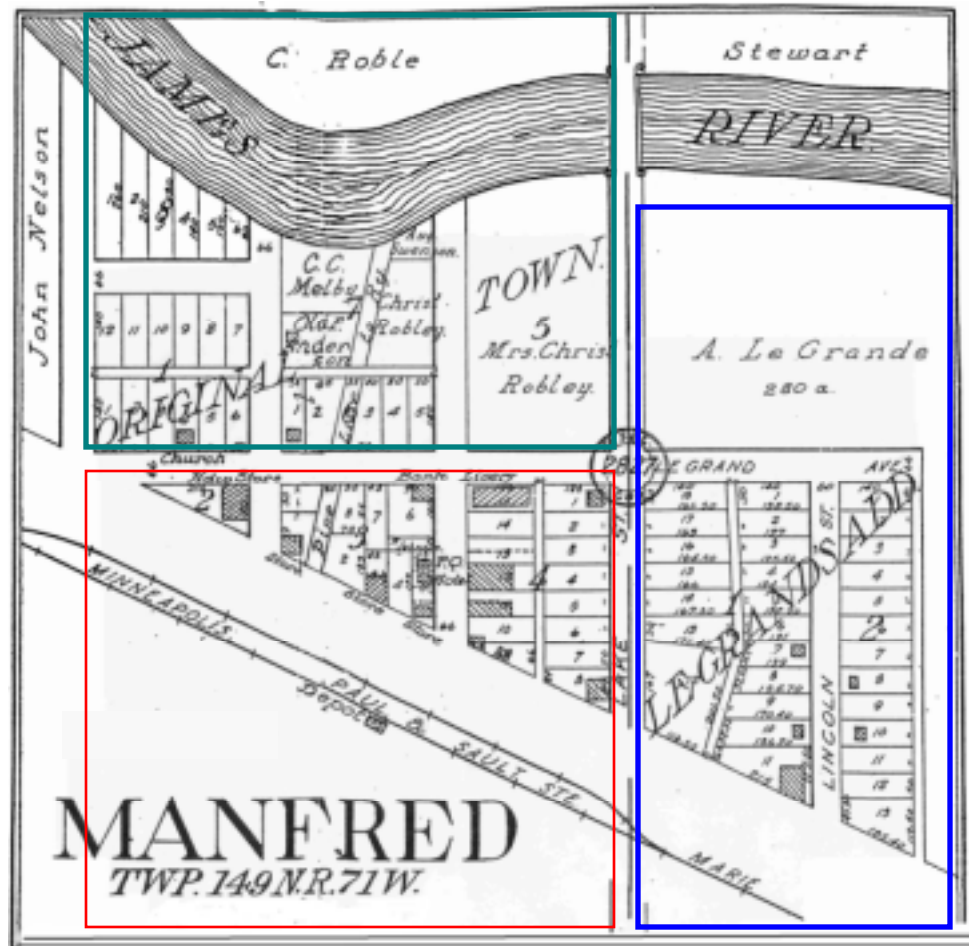
Manfred was platted on portions of land from these owners:

Christ O. Roble

Jesse E. Fincher

Axel L. LeGrand

Color coded to plat map



Manfred in 1908



Listed below from left are buildings in the western portion of Manfred in the spring of 1908, James River in view to north.

Facing Elevator Boulevard, south side: O & M Elevator and office, roof of Regan and Lyness Elevator and Office.

Facing Elevator Boulevard, north side from east to west: John Nelson Implement, T. L. Beiseker owner at time-use yet unknown, Ole J. Rostvedt owner at time-use yet unknown/former Kodalen Hotel, *Mead and Nelson General Store, *Sletten and Elsaas Store, Willborg Grocery Store, Burkum Store, Rogers Lumber Company in its second location. (*Later in 1908, were turned and moved north on Main.)

Buildings barely visible in background from left to right: Home behind Rogers Lumber unknown, Sorenson Hardware Store behind Burkum Store, Vang Parsonage, Vang Lutheran Church, Anton S. Texley owner-moved later by river, portion of second schoolhouse behind Nennie Johnson Home, horse barns, Sorenson Home/earlier Solheim Home, S. N. Willborg Home/earlier Aasand Home.

Buildings at center facing Main Avenue: Portion of Jens Renden Blacksmith Shop-an earlier building, Hotel Johnson, First State Bank of Manfred/earlier Manfred Post Office, Anderson Livery Barn.

Facing Lake Avenue, west side: Ole K. Melby Home, Olaf Anderson Home, Rasmus Jacobson Home/earlier N. Johnson-later Lars Ostrem.

Facing Lake Avenue, at right in foreground: Manfred Lumber Company, Ole J. Rostvedt, Lars O. Burkum Home, roof of Jens Renden Home.

The plat map of Manfred

The town of Manfred was platted on Section 28, township 149 North, range 71 West, on land first patented from United States by Jesse E. Fincher and Christ O. Roble. Later Axel LeGrand platted a portion of his farm as LeGrand's Addition to the Town of Manfred.

P. B. Anderson wrote, "Manfred at its height of prosperity boasted of three or four general stores, two hardware stores, two blacksmith shops, two lumber yards, two barber shops, two pool rooms, bank, drugstore, livery

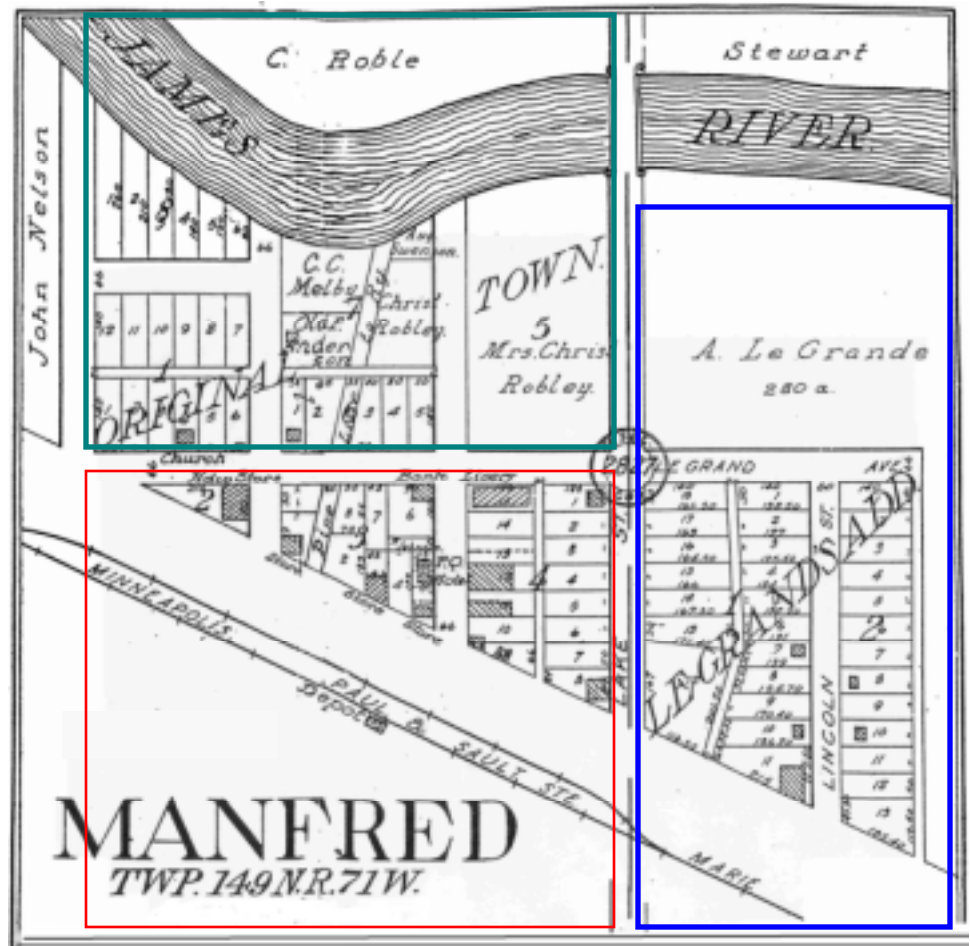
Manfred was platted on portions of land from these owners:

Christ O. Roble

Jesse E. Fincher

Axel L. LeGrand

Color coded to plat map



Manfred in 1908



Listed below from left are buildings in the western portion of Manfred in the spring of 1908, James River in view to north.

Facing Elevator Boulevard, south side: O & M Elevator and office, roof of Regan and Lyness Elevator and Office.

Facing Elevator Boulevard, north side from east to west: John Nelson Implement, T. L. Beiseker owner at time-use yet unknown, Ole J. Rostvedt owner at time-use yet unknown/former Kodalen Hotel, *Mead and Nelson General Store, *Sletten and Elsaas Store, Willborg Grocery Store, Burkum Store, Rogers Lumber Company in its second location. (*Later in 1908, were turned and moved north on Main.)

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Early News Articles Featuring Manfred

The following are two early news articles: a 1903 article, *Up At Manfred*, (page 9) and a 1913 article, *Overlander's View of Manfred*, (pages 10 and 11). Accompanying these articles are, photos and other information of interest. These early news accounts are priceless in helping to give us a little taste of the times when Manfred was a very young and booming town.

Up at Manfred

By Warren A. Stickley

From the Fessenden, Sept 10, 1903 issue of the *Wells County News*

As printed in the August 6, 1981 issue of the
Wells County History Historical Society newsletter

We received an invitation last Tuesday from W. A. Kunkel to drive to Manfred and accepted the invitation. Upon arriving in town Kunkel got busy at once and we sauntered uptown, dropping in on Sletten and Elsaas. Mr. Sletten was out, but we found Mr. Elsaas in his usual good humor and waiting on his trade. This firm is thinking of putting on a big bargain sale this fall and if they do, Mr. Elsaas says there will be bargains for everybody.

We called on Ben Sorenson and found his clerks busy, but Ben was out setting up a nice new pump, which he had sold to someone, so we didn't see Ben.

Coming down the street we heard a brass band playing "Washington Post March" and our mind ran back to the time when we played that march and "Ta-Ra-Ra-De Boom De A" from the author's manuscript before either were released to the public. Following up those familiar strains we found Nennie Johnson had an up-to-date graphophone in his pool room and was giving quite a concert. Nennie's place is headquarters for the boys.

We called upon Swan Willborg and were pleased to find him so nicely situated. His double store is large, commodious and stocked with a nice clean line of general merchandise. He also has the post office in his store. We regretted to find that our old friend, John Benson, formerly a partner of Mr. Willborg, has been compelled to quit business and leave the country on account of his continued ill health. John is now in the hospital at Battle Creek, Michigan and his many Wells County friends hope for his speedy recovery.

The Manfred Bank was the next place we visited and we found cashier Sofus H. Ongstad at his post dealing out and raking in the long green. This institution is quite an acquisition to Manfred and a great accommodation to the people of that community, who heretofore had to do their banking either at Fessenden or at Harvey.

E. W. Stein was found busy in his hardware store and harness shop. Mr. Stein has an eye on a location, which he believes is much better and as a consequence offers his place of business for sale. A good chance for someone to get into business.

John Nelson is a man of varied interests. We found him in his office busy as a cranberry merchant and keeping his meat market, feed mill, machinery business and other interests running slick as a whistle. Jack Holting presides over the meat counter. Mr. Nelson has a cozy home just outside the city limits and seems to be enjoying life perfectly.

We didn't see Erick Gartland – as he was taken up with business. (Erick was a grain buyer for the Royal Elevator.)

We called at the lumber office of Ole K. Melby, but we understand Ole was over at his new residence, which is nearing completion; hence we failed to see him. But Ole is certainly building a nice large house and when completed will have one of the most comfortable homes in Wells County.

We wanted to see a few more of our acquaintances, but at this moment, Kunkel came driving down the street with the "high ball" sign out and we boarded his Stanhope and listened to William's good stories clear into Fessenden.



Congratulations being offered on the new
Sletten and Elsaas Store

Pool Room 
Soft Drinks, Cigars and Tobacco, Pea-
nuts, Candy, Crackerjack and
Chewing Gum.

HOT COFFEE AND SANDWICHES ALL HOURS
N. JOHNSON, Manfred, N. D.



S. N. Willborg Store

LUMBER
Independent Yard
Lumber, Lath, Shingles, Sash, Doors,
Moulding, Building Paper, Lime,
Cement and Brick.
If you wish to buy anything in the line of building material and BUT
IT RIGHT give us a call and get our prices.
O. K. Melby, Proprietor
Manfred, North Dakota



This molding board, found during restoration
work in Manfred, indicates on the back side
that it came from O. K. Melby's lumber yard.

Manfred and It's Role in Serving the Farming Community

The key purpose of Manfred's existence, was in serving the farming community - emphasized in this 1913 news article.



Shows farming the land and producing crops, to selling the grain to the elevators that then ship the grain by railroad to distant markets.

From the November 4, 1913 issue of the Bismarck Tribune

In 1913, the Bismarck Tribune sponsored a ride by the 'Overlanders', a dozen horsemen, to many towns in promoting the sale of the Tribune.

Overlander's View of Manfred

...Some six miles up the main line of the Soo after leaving Fessenden, the Bismarck Tribune Overlanders came to the town of Manfred. Manfred is a town of four hundred progressive souls - what else? And is in the same county as Fessenden, Wells, although it is not the county seat, Fessenden having claimed that distinction.

In Heart of Grain Country

Manfred is in the best of the grain country, and every year its elevators are filled to overflowing. Every fall there is more demand for cars to ship grain direct from the field than the railroad can supply. The farmers in the vicinity are thrifty and intelligent farmers, who farm their land according to the best methods they can find. Give such a class of farmers the rich land, which about Manfred is admitted to be, and nothing is so certain as success.

Farmers are the Support

Manfred lives for the farmers in its territory. Its business places are there for the patronage the farmers give them. Although Manfred itself is not so small - having four hundred in population - it has no mill or any industry, which would serve to set it apart from any other town along the Soo or any other railroad. The difference lies in its territory. Rich soil, giving prodigious yields of wheat, barley, oats, flax and rye, is the source of wealth. And the wealth derived from the soil for miles around Manfred flows into that town, in exchange for groceries, implements, clothing, and makes Manfred really what it appears at first glance not to be—a town of live business.

Cash Versus Romance

G. D. Fisher deals in farm machinery, Deering binders and mowers, and P & O and Emerson plows. This store will often take stock in exchange for merchandise, thus affording the farmer with a crop to harvest to get along until then as comfortably as after threshing. Harness, cream separators and gas engines are also handled by this store. Feed is also ground for the farmers by the same store. Joe Biever is local manager for the firm, and is a versatile man, being able to demonstrate a cream separator with one hand and an eggbeater with the other.

Hardware and Furniture

Manfred has a hardware and furniture store, also, of which S. S. Aasand is the proprietor. The store carries in stock hardware, paint, furniture, harness, high-grade cutlery, sporting goods, notions and stoves. Mr. Aasand told a Tribune reporter that he had been in business at Manfred for three years and estimates his stock carried on hand at almost \$7,000.

Fessenden Enterprise

The Regan and Lyness Elevator Company has its home office at Fessenden. The owners are: J. Austin Regan and W. W. Lyness, president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. The local elevator at Manfred is managed by Frank Bowers, who gives the amount of grain bought and shipped last fall as 125,000 bushels.

(Continues on page 11)

*Overlander's View of Manfred (Continued)***General Merchandise**

S. W. Willborg, dealer in general merchandise, has a light, but comprehensive grip on all the needs of the community. Mr. Willborg isn't in Manfred for his health, but—even at that—he doesn't intend to break up anyone else's. He deserves a trial. There will be no appeal from your verdict.

Rack's 'Em Up on Call

Nennie Johnson, who expertly racks up the balls when you thump the floor with a cue, dispenses soft drinks as a sideline to the pool and billiard hall. He is a good fellow and always on the square, and has built a comparatively lucrative trade.

Meat Market Man

J. J. Eucksaw is the snappy, businesslike proprietor of the Manfred Meat Market. He buys all his cattle from the farmers about the town- from men he knows, and his meats are always above criticism, both as to freshness and as to age.

Osborn-McMillan Elevator

A. L. LeGrand is the manager of the Manfred branch elevator of the Osborne-McMillan company. Mr. LeGrand is also a farmer, having been unable to keep out of the good thing himself. He owns two hundred and fifty acres close to town. Last year he stated his elevator bought and shipped 130,000 bushels of grain.

Oldest Here in Residence

J. G. Renden is probably the oldest - in point of residence- of all Manfred's businessmen. He came to Manfred eleven years ago and ever since has prospered at his business of general blacksmithing and wagon making. His shop is very busy this year, which goes to show that his work suits the farmers.

Livery and Feed Stable

Olaf Anderson is proprietor of the livery and feed stable and the auto livery. He also owns the dray line. Mr. Anderson has been in business in Manfred for twelve years - just tops Mr. Renden, and hasn't thought of quitting. For that matter, neither has anybody else.

Farmer's Elevator

The Manfred Farmers' Elevator company has as officers the following men: G. Jenson, president; G. H. Dahle, vice president; Ole Ranum, secretary, and W. Gordesky, treasurer. The local manager of the elevator is R. Jacobson. Last year Mr. Jacobson bought 180,000 bushels of grain. The company also handles wood, coal and fence posts.

400 people - 3 Elevators

Three elevators in Manfred - a town of four hundred! Buying and marketing last year a total of 435,000 bushels of grain. And who can say how much of the wheat was hauled direct to the flour mill in Fessenden?



Enjoying the commodore at Johnson's Place, barber shop and pool hall:

From left: Hans Opsal, Jacob Klev, Jens Renden, George Skogmo a painter from Elbow Lake, Martin Melby Nennie's building exists today, having served many years as the cash store.



Across the street was Jens Renden's Blacksmith Shop with signage that included the head of a horse ringed by a horse's shoe at the peak of the building.



North on Main was Olaf Anderson's Livery which worked with horses and also later became a dealer for automobiles.



Printed on this post card: 'Part of Manfred, N. Dak. From Klev's hill north of town. Photo by Storlie Photo.'

People were able to obtain almost anything they needed at Manfred: clothing, groceries, farm equipment, furniture, and much more!

Manfred – Through the Years

Like many of the frontier towns, Manfred experienced a period of rapid growth in its early years, after which a time of continuing energy through the 1920s and then a gradual decline in succeeding years. The census records for Manfred indicate: 1910 of 445 people, 1915 of 449, 1920 of 439, 1925 of 436, and 1930 of 414. New advancements in technology were taking place and the original settlers, many of whom lived to the 1920s or 1930s and a few into the 1940s to 1950s, had opportunity to experience the coming of this technology during their lifetime.

The coming of new technology

Life for the settlers revolved around the rhythm of the four seasons and the farming cycle. With the coming of new technology, oxen or horse power for pulling implements gave way to fuel-powered tractors to operate farm equipment. Communication by letter or talking with people in person gave way to the technology of the telephone, after poles and lines were installed for the Manfred-Fram Telephone Company. The Manfred Telephone Exchange started in 1909 serving 175 farms and businesses. At that time, all phone calls came through a telephone operator in the Central Office building in Manfred. Oil lamps gave way to light plants and wind power, and then to the coming of electricity to the region. The horse and buggy gave way to the automobile, the early ones similar to a buggy but being powered by a motor rather than a horse. An early writer commented, "From the beginning of time, no man had been able to travel faster than a horse could run. The invention of the steam train and later the automobile changed this and subsequently changed the entire world."

The years of continuing energy

Manfred had much going for it... It was a thriving primary market for grain and served as trade center for a large area. Five grain elevators and one stock yard served the region. Dr. P. A. Boyum located his practice at Manfred serving during parts of the years 1908-1912 with his office upstairs of the C. C. Melby Store. Dr. W. R. Owen practiced in Manfred 1910-1925. The home and office he built continues to serve as a residence. The First State Bank of Manfred was in business until 1919 with S. H. Ongstad and Roy Adams as early cashiers. Later, this building served as an office, and afterward the Manfred Post Office. This building still exists in good condition and is said to be one of the last remaining buildings of the T. L. Beiseker banking empire. Many other businesses thrived in Manfred such as for auto, implements, gas station, hardware and furniture, groceries, clothing and general merchandise, lumber, blacksmith, barber, hotel, boarding house, pool hall and café.

Organizations and Activities

In addition to numerous Manfred School and area church activities and programs, the Manfred area enjoyed the existence of several other organizations. Manfred Township was organized in 1907 with its first officers as Torstein Roble and C. C. Melby-Judges, and John Paulson, A. Fisher and P. B. Anderson-Supervisors. Other organizations included Modern Woodman of American organized in 1908, Manfred Homestead Brotherhood of American Yoeman organized in 1900, the Wells County American Red Cross Chapter-Manfred Branch active particularly during WWI, Manfred Homemakers Club organized in 1931 discontinued in 1943 during WWII and started again in 1947, the Meadowlark 4-H Club organized in 1948 for both boys and girls with leaders Leslie and Olga Johnson, Fagerlund Sons of Norway Lodge organized in 1920, Manfred Shipping Association organized to ship cattle, and the Manfred Community Club. Other activities included baseball, dances, movies and masquerade parties.

Faithfully serving through the years

With the passing of years, Manfred was slowly beginning to diminish with businesses closing, people relocating and some buildings that were moved out of town or burned down. Businesses that continued included: the Manfred Farmers Union Elevator and the Manfred Grain Company providing a market for great quantities of grain and selling such things as fertilizer; Schlenker's Café and Bar fondly remembered as a pleasant gathering place; Stella Sorenson's Manfred Cash Store selling grocery items; D & R Welding later; as well as Vang Lutheran Church and the Manfred Post Office. After Stella's store closed, postmaster Edgar A. Flick carried a few grocery items and milk at the post office. Manfred remained a neat attractive little town, and a pleasant place to live. The Manfred Post Office closed in 1992.

Even today, Manfred continues to serve the farming community. The Manfred Branch of the Fessenden Coop Elevator is open daily to receive grain as always. Services continue at Vang Lutheran Church every other Sunday in rotation with Hoff Lutheran Church of Heimdal. Located south of Manfred, the Manfred Seventh Day Adventist Church is doing very well and blessed with a beautiful new sanctuary. The Manfred Heritage Museum, the new entity dedicated in 2003, invites all to experience this delightful place called Manfred - "A settlers' village celebrating rural America."



The settlers made tremendous changes in their lives by taking on the challenge of moving to America.
At such places as Manfred, they found a place to settle and to call their home.
And here too, our hearts are welcome to such a place to call home!

Modern day history in the making

The pioneering spirit is alive and well for Manfred through the resolve of caring volunteers and contributors. Amazing what has been accomplished in such a short time! The smiles are continuing to broaden on behalf of this tiny town. What a cheering section for Manfred!

2000

*Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.) non-profit founded to benefit Manfred

2001

*MHP, Inc. obtains the Melby-Rogness House and restoration work begins

*Vang Lutheran Church placed on the National Register of Historic Places

*Manfred Days-a two days celebration of the history of Manfred and the work of MHP, Inc.

*First issue of The New Manfred News published, and the manfrednd.org website originated

2002

*MHP, Inc. named as the 'Preservation North Dakota Success Story for 2002'

*Grass Roots Preservation grant (matching) awarded to Vang Church for its drainage project

2003

*Manfred Heritage Museum is dedicated starting with three buildings: Melby/Rogness House, First State Bank of Manfred/Manfred Post Office and Vang Lutheran Church

*Johnson/Ostrem Preservation Fund founded to benefit the Johnson/Jacobson/Ostrem House and restoration work begins

2004

*State Historical Society grant (matching) for setting up the cataloging system, and Verendrye Electric Coop, Inc. grant toward the museum computer

2005

*Rural Vestige Alliance founded with a focus to benefit the Manfred School

*Melby Heritage Society founded to benefit the hotel, cash store, post office, the Olaf and Lena Anderson House, and restoration begins on the Olaf and Lena Anderson House

2006

*State Historical Society grants (matching): Vang Exhibit & Collections and Museum Office

*100th Celebration of Vang Church building, and dedication of Rogers Lumber Co/Solheim Service Station and Johnson/Jacobson/Ostrem House into the Manfred Heritage Museum

2007

*Three restoration projects completed: upstairs of Melby/Rogness House restored, new walling for Vang Church basement, hotel stabilized

An inspiring example

Sennev Netrost Whipple wrote this about the settlers, "The early settlers were of hardy stock. They were courageous. They were people of conscience. To practice their religion they were willing to sacrifice and risk funds. They were energetic and inventive. Grueling tasks were merely challenges, and they knew how to make crude substitutes for tools, equipment, clothing, and materials they lacked. The majority of them had great physical endurance - men and women of character and vision."

In sharing Manfred's story about the hard-working, hopeful, and determined settlers we, of the present and future generations, can be inspired in our lives to make a difference in the places wherever we live... encouraged to persevere through the challenges against all odds as the settlers did.

Manfred - A wonderful story to share

Though horses and wagons are no longer seen or heard at Manfred, nor the crowds of people flocking to this tiny town and the bustling business and community activities - even so, wonderful things are in progress for Manfred. Manfred's story is coming together through the history and restoration projects, and as a result this tiny town has been given the opportunity to serve as a voice for rural places. Through Manfred's story, we are able to learn about the important contributions such places have provided to North Dakota and to America. We are celebrating this small town and the wonderful story it has to share!

A very warm welcome to the quaint little village of Manfred!