

# The New MANFRED NEWS

Suggested Annual  
\$10.00 Contribution  
For Newsletter Expense

*A quarterly newsletter published by Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.), a non-profit corporation founded July 25, 2000 for the purpose of gathering and preserving the history of Manfred and its trade area and for restoring and caring for some of its sites. Suggested annual contribution to help defray the cost of this newsletter is \$10.00 payable to MPH, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341. You are invited to visit Manfred's website at <http://www.manfrednd.org>.*

Volume 2, Issue 3

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September 2002

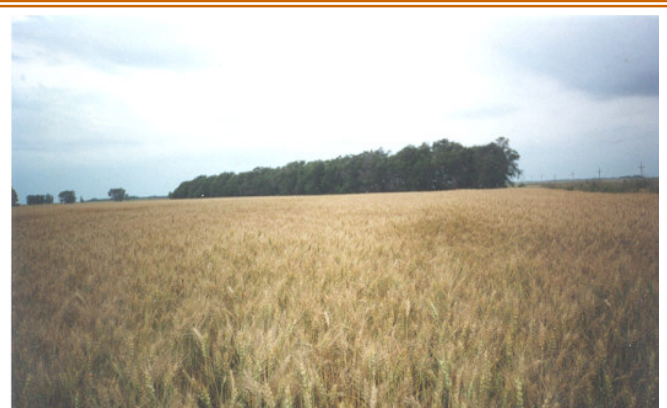
## GREETINGS FROM MANFRED, NORTH DAKOTA!

Bless Lord, the labor  
We bring to serve you  
That with our neighbor  
We may be fed...

Welcome everyone, via this newsletter, to a place where the sowing of seeds and the harvesting of crops have continually guided the yearly rhythm of life since settlers first began arriving in 1892 to cultivate this land.



*then gathered when golden and ripe...*  
Herbert and Bill Ongstad Farms in 1999. Bethel Church in background.



*The glorious grain soon ready for harvest...*  
Pete and Perry Anderson Farms in 1996.

Sowing or tilling,  
We would work with you...

The land had no need of people or animals and had managed very well on its own through the eons of time, depending only on the blessings of rain and sun to sustain it. But people and animals had need of the land, and the land welcomed these newcomers with grass for the animals and soil to bless their labor.



*gives of itself generously to nourish us all.*  
Hildor Deede and Sons Farms in 1979.

Harvesting, milling  
For daily bread.

Lutheran Book of Worship  
'Praise and Thanksgiving,' p.409, v.2

So it was throughout the land, that village after village was soon established to serve its farm community; and to this mission these villages faithfully served and thrived. Many of them are now gone. It is a great privilege for the Manfred history projects to recognize and celebrate the important contribution these villages and the many farmers have made throughout the past, as well as today.

## The New Manfred News

Known to have visited Manfred during the summer to see progress on the Melby-Rogness home included: Robert and Margaret Hagemeister Walz of Phoenix, AZ, Doris Piercy (sister to Myrtle Rogness) and her daughter Donna of Bremerton, WA. Sue Wilson, daughter of Bernice Hovey Grabe, made a second visit to Manfred this year together with her husband to visit with Herbert Ongstad to learn more about her family. Glad you could all come! A reception box will soon be installed at the Melby-Rogness home so visitors can record their visit.

*Excerpt below is from 'Growing With Pride'.*

*See Pages 9, 10, 11 for more history:*

Oliver (Froviq) drove his 1937 Chevy to Seattle, Wash., in the fall of 1940. He was accompanied by Russell Johnson, Ted Ostrem, and Magnus Johnson. He lived in southwest Seattle until March 5, 1941. Oliver then volunteered in the Army and served for four years.



*Celebrating Ruth Widiger's birthday after the August 4, 2002 MHP, Inc. meeting.*

From left: Pete & Rose Anderson, Ervin & Evelina Boese, Esther Boese, Verna Bowers, Reiner & Ruth Widiger, Donald Anderson, Herbert Ongstad. Photo by Wanda Melchert.

## In Memory

*June-August 2002*

**Fern Bendickson Heisler**

*November 26, 1928 - March 28, 2002*

**Marie Nelson Vargason**

*November 12, 1919 - June 19, 2002*

**Anna Ekrem Bymo**

*May 6, 1911 - June 21, 2002*

**Edna Stradinger Glad**

*February 27, 1912 - July 24, 2002*

Needed for the Melby-Rogness home:

*Heavy glass ceiling lamps*

*Old-fashioned curtain rods*

*Etched glass insert for front door*

*Thank you all for your many contributions  
to benefit the Manfred history projects*

### Contributions to MHP, Inc.

*(General Fund)*

Anna K. Aasand  
Richard Aasand  
Clarence Alveshere  
Melvin Alveshere  
Ward Alveshere  
Christine Anderson  
Donald Anderson  
Orren Anderson  
Pete and Rose Anderson  
Peter and Jackie Anderson  
Rod Anderson  
Dale Bentley  
Butch and Darlene Boese  
Lydia Boese  
Lowell Boyum  
Muriel Boyum  
William and Lorraine Brye  
Anna Bymo  
Edgar and Jeanne Flick  
Carolyn Golberg  
Frances Goldade  
Gerald Hagemeister  
Hertz Funeral Home  
Myrna Hoekstra  
Ralph and Judith Hofrenning  
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Bill and Sandy Krebs  
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Ella Lenz  
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Ronald McBain  
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Orlien and Zeldia Melby  
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Marv Nelson  
Robert Nelson  
Pamela Norstedt  
Herbert Ongstad  
Orvin Ongstad  
Arnt and Phyllis Ostrem  
Harold and Phyllis Pantsari  
Betty Pepple  
Wilbur and Mary Peterson  
Donna Piercy  
Doris Piercy  
Darlene Quenette  
Karen Ravnaas  
Darlene Roble  
Roger and Bobbi Rogelstad  
Doris Rudel  
Marcil and Marilyn J. Saint  
Rolene Schliesman  
Fred and Olive Schmidt  
Merlin and Laurie Schwartz  
Joelyn Scriba

Irene Skogmo  
Margaret Sprague  
Bryce and June Streibel  
Theodore & Margaret Thorson  
Emmett Turner  
Carl and DeVella Vik  
Dean Vorland  
Robert and Margaret Walz  
Gladys Werth  
Janet Olson Wright

### Contributions To Help Defray Newsletter Expense

Clarence Alveshere  
Melvin Alveshere  
Ward Alveshere  
Sigrid Langseth  
Floyd Lindbo  
Alma and Audrey Nelson  
Pam Norstedt  
Phyllis Pantsari  
Berger and Olive Rodne  
Emmett Turner  
Marilyn Turner

### Historic Items Contributed

Ervin & Evelina Boese – Boese General Store  
coffee measurer, historic photo,  
Iverson & Braaten Sales receipt pad

Items from Burkum Estate:

Ethel Bolyard – Piano  
Wanda Melchert – Piano stool, Rod Iron Bed  
Pete Anderson – Early Farming Items  
Betty & Gene Melby – Burkum photos and  
Manfred related items

Edgar & Jeanne Flick – three glass ceiling lamps,  
stove from Cash Store

Alma and Audrey Nelson – Farmstead Photos

Myrtle Rogness, Elsie Martinson, Wanda Melchert-  
Items from the Fagerlund Sons of Norway  
Lodge: dishes, silverware, chairs, table

Astrid Ongstad – Oscar Ongstad's WWI Uniform  
and Gas Mask

Alice Smith – Three books that had been owned  
by O.K. Melby

Annie and Audrey Solheim – Vanity with mirror  
that had belonged to Annie's grandmother,  
Marit Rogne. Also Manfred memorabilia and  
other historic items

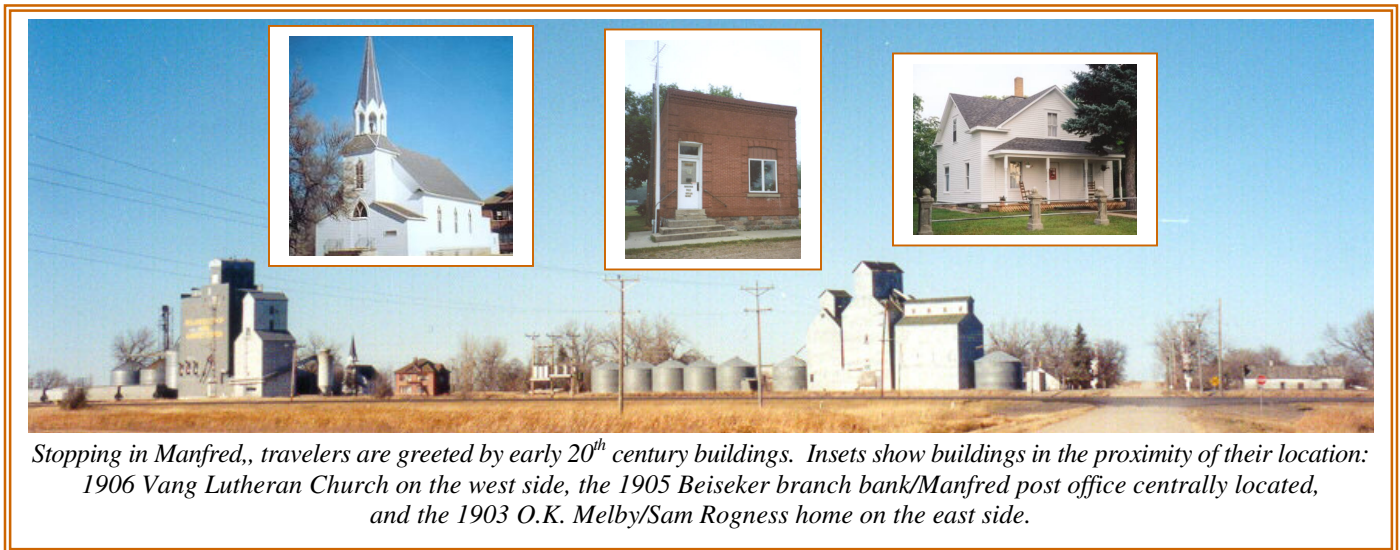
Ruth Widiger – Roll top desk given to her father,  
Perry Anderson, by Sam Rogness

# Welcome everyone to Manfred...

## celebrating rural North Dakota history!

The village of Manfred is busy preparing for the day when it can begin sharing the story of how it was founded by settlers in the 1890s to serve the surrounding farm community, then and on through the years. Wow! The very exciting news is that the vision of establishing a museum heritage center in Manfred will soon become a reality through the dedicated help of many people, through both financial contributions and volunteer help. Museum opening: July 1, 2003.

### *Some historic buildings in Manfred, North Dakota...*



*Stopping in Manfred, travelers are greeted by early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Insets show buildings in the proximity of their location: 1906 Vang Lutheran Church on the west side, the 1905 Beiseker branch bank/Manfred post office centrally located, and the 1903 O.K. Melby/Sam Rogness home on the east side.*

For volunteer help: Volunteer help is needed and most welcome. Come join this fun and rewarding work for the benefit of the Manfred history projects. The exterior of the home was restored in 2001, and this summer the efforts have focused on basement foundation work. A review on pages 4 and 5 details this amazing effort guided by Paul Gunderson. Once the foundation is completed, work can begin inside. Much is yet to do; but with the help of volunteers, work can proceed.

For funding: Financial contributions are needed. Nearly 70 friends, as listed on page 2, have already made contributions totaling over \$3,500.00, ranging in size from \$5.00 to \$500.00 in response to a fund raising letter sent this summer. Thank you so much for these contributions to help the Manfred projects. You have set the fund raising efforts off to a great start! The goal is to raise approximately \$8,000.00 by way of contributions from individuals and businesses, and also by application for grant funds! Tax ID #45-0458460, Solicitation #4111.

Please send your tax-deductible contributions to:  
MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341.

*Thank you for your contributions and volunteer help!*  
*The Manfred Heritage Museum has a bright future,*  
*because of your support and encouragement.*

### *In this issue on farming...*

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the farming articles in this issue. Acknowledgements include:  
Page 1 – Photos from Pete and Rose Anderson, Wanda Melchert, Nellie and Hildor Deede.  
Page 6, The Threshing Crew – Photos from Solheim Photo Collection. Information compiled by Wanda Melchert from interviews.  
Pages 7 & 8, Cook Car Days – Article by Annie Solheim, Photos from the Solheim and Melby Photo Collections.  
Pages 9, 10, 11, Frovig and Alveshere History – Photos and information from the Alveshere family including Clarence, Loren & Kathy, Melvin, Orv, and Ward. History from the 'Growing With Pride' History Book, and interviews. Article by Clarence Alveshere. Excerpt from Poem by Orv Alveshere.



*Thanks so much to all the volunteers for the many ways they are helping the Manfred projects!*

## *Melby-Rogness Home Restoration Progress Report!*

There's a 'block party' going on in Manfred... that is 'block' as in 'cement block!' Those attending this event, being held in the basement of the Melby-Rogness Home, report having a great time working together on it. Two phases of the basement foundation work were completed during the summer, with the final phase to do this fall. We give thanks to the volunteers helping with this project, and we especially wish to express much gratitude for the wonderful help given by volunteer contractor, Paul Gunderson of Heimdal: for his friendship, his professional advise throughout, his kind guidance to the crew, and his partnership in the work. Progress of the basement project could not have been possible without his very generous participation to help Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. He estimates the actual cost for this basement project would have been well over \$20,000.00. But with the help of volunteers supplying about 400 hours of their time so far this year, plus use of their tools and equipment, and donation of the cement blocks - the total cost will be under \$1,000.00. The future is very bright for this building, as a result of obtaining a firm foundation. You are invited to join in the fun of helping with the restoration efforts. By way of this photo narrative, enjoy sensing the excitement going on.

*Many thanks to all who have participated,  
in some way thus far, in the basement project:*

Tom Alveshere	Mark Faul
Donald Anderson	Paul & Harriet Gunderson
Jacob Anderson	Wanda Melchert
Lowell Anderson	Bill Ongstad
Perry Anderson	Herbert Ongstad
Pete & Rose Anderson	Dale & Shirley Opdahl
Peg Bell	Greg Seidel
Wesley & Esther Boese	Harvey Ready Mix
Verna Bowers	Mid Dakota Lumber Co



*Volunteer contractor,  
Paul Gunderson together with  
his wife Harriet*

### *Melby-Rogness Home Basement Project in Three Phases*

Phase 1: During June and early July, a Reinforcement Wall was constructed across the east side in the basement and also the east end of the north side, in order to support the stone foundation that remains firm. Included in this phase was the start of a Foundation Wall for the east end of the south side, to replace the crumbled stone foundation.

Phase 2: During August, the Foundation Wall on the south side was completed, as well as, a start on the Foundation Wall on the south end of the west wall. During this phase, the house was jacked at its southwest corner.

Phase 3: Planned for September, will be to complete the wall work for what is left to construct on the west and north sides.

The basement project was off to a great start this spring, thanks to Dale and Shirley Opdahl who contributed cement blocks located in the basement cavity of their property in Manfred, where the former Bertha Melby home had once stood. During April, about half the blocks were recovered and cleaned by Herbert Ongstad and Wanda Melchert, and in July Pete Anderson joined them to recover and clean the remaining blocks. This effort was made possible with the help of Herbert and Pete's tools: crowbars, pry bars, a sludge hammer, chisels and small hammers. Pete's loader tractor was a big help with transporting the blocks, and also for hauling debris away from the Melby-Rogness home. Peg Bell contributed a number of cement blocks that she did not need, which have now also become a part of the 'new' basement.

In order to begin work at the Melby-Rogness home, the electricity needed to be connected so on June 4, 2002 the power for the property was activated. Wow! To connect to electricity may seem like a small event, but it heralds the dawning of the wonderful 'future use' for this property. Perry Anderson provided the outdoor electrical outlet, Greg Seidel of Cathay installed it to the pole, and in this way electrical service for MHP, Inc. was officially begun with OtterTail Power Company. Also on June 4<sup>th</sup>, Greg together with his crew (who had made the roofing, porch, and exterior repairs to the building in 2001) made a few carpentry repairs to the house and also encased the badly deteriorated basement section of the chimney with a plywood shell. Then later on June 7<sup>th</sup>, this basement portion of the chimney was filled with cement. Thanks to these efforts, the chimney continues safe and secure, towering handsomely above the roof as it always has.

Next to do. In order to accomplish excavation for the basement work, Mark Faul kindly fit into his busy schedule visits to Manfred with his backhoe. He gave his first visit on June 4<sup>th</sup> free to MHP, Inc., when he came that day to Manfred on a job to remove an old sidewalk at Vang Lutheran Church. At that time, he dug the first opening at the house on the southeast corner of the basement near the front porch, to clear out the dirt and rock where the foundation had slumped.



1. Pete Anderson and Herbert Ongstad recovering cement blocks with the help of tools



2. Cement blocks are cleaned and stacked ready to use



3. June 4- Greg Seidel installing an electrical outlet at the pole

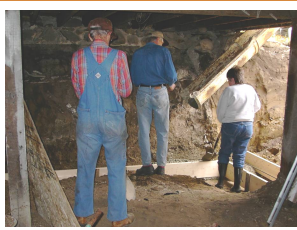


4. June 4- Mark Faul digging with his backhoe at the SE end of the Melby-Rogness home

## Progress Report (Page 2)



5. June 7-Harvey Ready Mix cement truck ready to pour first section of footings



6. June 7-Footings being poured in northeast, east, and southeast portions of basement



7. June 7-Footings crew: Paul and Harriet Gunderson, Herbert Ongstad, and Wanda Melchert



8. June 8-Wall building crew: Herbert Ongstad, Wesley Boese, Tom Alveshere, Paul Gunderson, Lowell Anderson, and Wanda Melchert



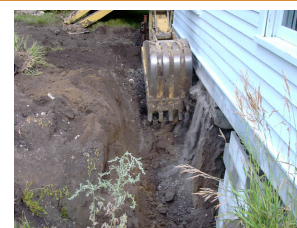
9. June 8-Wesley Boese, Paul Gunderson, and Lowell Anderson beginning the wall work



10. Aug 1-Preparing for the jacking, Pete Anderson & Herbert Ongstad remove large stone from SW corner



11. Aug 1-Jacking and cribbing crew Perry Anderson, Pete Anderson, Herbert Ongstad, Paul Gunderson



12. Aug 3-Mark Faul digs trench along south side and also south part of west side

Phase 1: Once the first portion of the basement had been excavated, there was a quick series of activity: Paul Gunderson set the wood framing in place for the footings that were then poured on June 7. During the following day, a six-person team nearly completed the construction of the east wall and also the east ends of the north and south walls. Lowell Anderson assisted Paul in the buttering and laying of blocks, Wesley Boese and Wanda Melchert assisted them, Tom Alveshere kept them all well supplied with blocks, and Herbert Ongstad operated the cement mixer. Pete Anderson provided the water tank, and Paul provided the mixer. Lunch was served by Verna Bowers and Esther Boese, and enjoyed by all on the front porch. The first phase was completed by mid June.

Phase 2: The second phase commenced later in July. First some sidewalk was removed at the SW corner with the help of Verna Bowers, Donald Anderson, Herbert Ongstad, and Wanda Melchert. Then, the large stone at the corner was removed by Herbert Ongstad and Pete Anderson, and a 12' steel beam was then inserted through the hole. Before excavating the rest of the south side, the house was jacked by a team of Paul Gunderson, Pete Anderson, Perry Anderson, and Herbert Ongstad. A 'crib' was constructed of whatever useful wood beams could be gathered from Paul, Pete, Herbert, and Bill Ongstad, among which were old telephone cross beams, landscape timbers, as well as, regular cribbing beams. Then several jacks from Paul and Herbert were employed for the jacking operation. With the house then jacked, Mark returned on August 3<sup>rd</sup> with his backhoe to dig out the rest of the south side and the south end of the west side, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> Paul framed the footings and they were poured that same day. Most of the blocks were laid on August 14 and 15 with the help of Paul, Pete, Herbert, and Wanda. Wanda also rolled tar on the outside walls to serve as a moisture barrier. The foundation beams, given by Herbert Ongstad, were laid in place on top of the foundation. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, a basement window was set in by Paul and the house then lowered onto its new foundation.



13. Aug 3-Mark Faul lifted old fuel tank out of with his backhoe



14. Aug 3-With the old wall gone, the house rests cribbing supporting the steel beam brace



15. Aug 5-Footings poured on S and SW portions with help of Paul, Wanda, and Herbert



16. Aug 5-Paul ready to shovel the cement along the channel of the footings frame



17. Aug 15-A lovely lunch with the Andersons: Rose, Paul, Pete, Jacob, Perry and Wanda



18. Aug 15-Jacob removes a coal bin partition, in preparation for third phase of wall work to come



19. Aug 15-Pete 'butters' the ends of the cement blocks with mortar



20. Aug 15-Paul working on the south end of the west side, as the wall nears completion



Ever so brief intro to...

## The Threshing Rig and Its Crew

The Oscar Melby Threshing Outfit serves as an example here to help orient us to the world of threshing



*The Steps of the Threshing Season*

Cut the grain and bind it into bundles.  
Stand 6-8 bundles in groups, called shocks, to dry.  
Thresh the grain through a separator machine, as seen at left.

*The Oscar Melby 12-Bundle Hauler Rig and some of the Crew*

From left: Martin Melby's truck in front of straw pile, Ole Onstad's truck with Emil Onstad climbing over the box-note the separator spout pouring wheat into the truck box, the Great Minneapolis separator with separator man Albert Nordby on top, unknown man, Oliver Ravnaas a spike pitcher pitching bundles, Ansel Olson a bundle hauler next in line to unload his bundles, note the belt connecting the separator to the steam engine, the straw-burner Advance steam engine, Oscar Melby the engineer monitoring the steam engine, water tank with a Melby boy barely visible sitting on top of tank.

Information provided by Kenneth Melby and Gene Melby. Photo taken in 1941 by Helmer Solheim the fireman.

## The Crew of the 12-Bundle Hauler Threshing Rig and Their Duties

The labor of both men and horses was vital to the success of the threshing operation, each having key responsibilities.

**STEAM ENGINEER & BOSS/MANAGER** As engineer he monitored the steam engine to be sure all indicators were in the safe range, and keep moving parts oiled. As boss he oversaw the threshing operation. As manager he hired the crew, kept daily records of crew hours and bushels threshed for each farmer, collected money from farmers, and paid the crew.

**FIREMAN** Worked very closely with the engineer on the steam engine for any repairs and care of the steamer to maintain it at the proper pressure level. Did all the firing of the steam engine by pitched the straw from the straw pile into the firebox making sure the fire remained at the proper heat level.

**SEPARATOR MAN** Came several weeks ahead of harvest to do repairs and maintenance on the separator, and made sure it was in tip-top condition. He oversaw the operation of the separator.

**3 SPIKE PITCHERS** Two wagons loads of bundles would be pitched into the separator at the same time, one on each side of the separator. It was the job of two of the spike pitchers to assist the bundle haulers to pitch their loads into the separator. So there were always two spike pitchers and two bundle haulers pitching bundles into the separator. Because the spike pitcher's job was quite strenuous, three men would rotate into these two positions. The third spike pitcher would be kind of resting and cleaning up the front of the feeder.

**12 BUNDLE HAULERS** Each took their wagon and team out into the field, collected the grain bundles by pitching them onto the wagon, returned to the threshing rig to wait in line for his turn to pitch his bundles into the separator, and then go collect more bundles from the field. Many of the same bundle haulers came from MN each year after the harvest there had finished.

**WATER MONKEY** When the straw monkey was old enough, he graduated on to become the water monkey making 5-6 trips to the James River to pump water by hand into the water tank to supply water to the steam engine. When the water monkey was old enough, he graduated to be a bundle hauler-a full man's job.

**STRAW MONKEY** The youngest crewmember. Drove the straw wagon to the separator where the separator man would turn the blower onto the rack and fill it up with straw, then the straw monkey drove over to the steam engine and push the load of straw off the rake to the fireman.

**3-4 GRAIN HAULERS** These were generally the farmers whose fields were being threshed. They backed their truck to the grain spout and loaded grain into their truck box then hauled it to grain bins to unload.

**ELEVATOR MAN** Drove the grain elevator up to the bin using horses and elevated the grain into the grain bins.

**2 COOKS** Did all the cooking and baking on a cook stove for the threshing crew, working from 3:30 a.m. until 11 p.m.

**FLUNKY** Oversaw the cook car and making sure it was well supplied with food. Purchased all supplies, provided the eggs and butter, and often took the lunches out to the field.

**Threshing Work Schedule:** Mon-Sat with Sun off as a rule  
4:00 a.m. Engineer & fireman begin steaming up the steamer  
5:00 a.m. Fireman blows steamer whistle as wake-up call  
6:00 a.m. Day begins with breakfast for crew  
6:45 a.m. Whistle blows to alert crew to get their wagons and horses out to the field  
7:00 a.m. Start pitching bundles into the separator  
9:30 a.m. Morning lunch is taken to field  
12 Noon Dinner at the cook car  
1:00 p.m. Back to work  
3:00 p.m. Afternoon lunch taken to the field  
6:00 p.m. or so Quit hauling bundles and take care of horses  
By 9 p.m. Supper over. Free time of visiting, horseplay, and then to bed in the hayloft of the barn

## Threshing

Photo at right:

Christy Ostrem Anderson who worked in the cook car in 1935, identified the following from left:  
*Front:* ?, ?, Lars Ostrem, Hank Ostrem with his guitar, ?, ?, ?, Arnt Ostrem.  
*Back:* ?, Oliver Ravnaas, ?, Roy Melby, a Johnson, ? child



Several of the crew in front of Oscar Melby's cook car in 1935. Photo from the Solheim Collection.

# *Cook Car Days with the Threshing Machine*

*By Annie Onstad Solheim*



*Annie Solheim*  
Photo taken in 2000

Owners of large threshing machines (12-bundle hauler) had a cook car that followed the huge machinery from farm to farm to help feed the many bundle haulers and other crewmembers.

Imagine, if you will, a large box-like rectangular structure, with small curtained windows on its side walls. The entrance was located on one end of the cook car, and on the other end was a shelf attached to the cook car equipped with a washbasin, soap and towels with a mirror nailed to the wall for the threshers to use for clean-up before meals. Wide-rimmed wheels made of iron were attached to a frame under the cook car, providing mobility for the cook car in moving from farm to farm with the aid of a team of horses. The driver sat in the doorway that normally had a screen door and a regular door but were taken off the hinges for the move.

The inside of this mobile vehicle, was a long table reaching nearly the full length of the cook car. Opposite from this oilcloth-covered table was a small worktable with places underneath for storage. Next to it was a cupboard for dishes and baking needs. Near the door was a folding cot with a thin mattress, sheets and a blanket for the weary cooks to sleep at night.

The cooks were usually two young women who had some experience in cooking. For two to three weeks, they toiled from 3:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. for 18 to 20 or more men, except for the grain haulers who were usually fed in the (farmer's) homes, and went to their own home at night. A day in the life of the cooks began very much like this. In order to have breakfast ready at daybreak, the cooks had to be up at 3:30 a.m. to get the fire in the big coal range warm enough for cooking. The breakfast menu consisted of oatmeal, pancakes, syrup, various kinds of fruit sauce and coffee. "Take-out breakfast" was prepared for the engineer, separator man and the fireman who were busy getting the engine's steam up to the desired heat, cleaning moving parts, and oiling the machinery to get it in good working condition for the day.

After breakfast, hot water from the coal range's reservoir was used to wash dishes. Then the bread dough, prepared the night before, was ready to make into loaves and baked in the oven. Each day twenty or more loaves of bread were made. The ladies changed off baking, one made bread while the other made pies, and prepared dough for cookies, cake or donuts.

By 9 a.m. the forenoon lunch was in the making, it would be called for at 9:30 a.m. by one of the grain haulers. It consisted of sandwiches of various kinds, donuts, cookies, cake or bars along with two large coffee boilers of hot, strong coffee. The afternoon lunch procedure was similar. Often, after the cooks had sent out the lunch to the threshers, they would invite the threshing family's homemaker and children to visit them in the cook car for coffee and cookies as a goodwill gesture.

The noon and supper meals were big meals of the day. The farmers provided the potatoes and milk. The threshing rig owner's wife furnished butter and buttermilk, and purchased the meat and other necessary staples used by the cooks. The noon meal could vary, but often it would consist of roast beef or pork, or meatballs and always brown gravy, with boiled potatoes and a vegetable of either cabbage, corn, string beans, or carrots, and bread and butter.



*A brief pause in the busy cook's day*  
Cooks for the 1932 Season, Annie Onstad together with Norma Renden



*The Cook Car*  
Cooks for the 1940 Season, Mildred Gladheim and Ruth Melby

## *Cook Car Days with the Threshing Machine (Page 2)*



*Muriel Melby Making Pies  
1941 Season*

*A peek inside  
the cook car...*



*Christy Ostrem Kneading Bread Dough  
1941 Season*

*Visiting the cooks Annie and Norma in 1932*



*From left: Annie Onstad, Bert Ostrem, Norma Renden, Wylma Ostrem (Mrs. Ivan), Christy Ostrem*

For the meals, there was pie for dessert. The pies varied from coconut cream, raisin-custard, rhubarb, peach, apple, lemon, or chocolate. Four pies were usually made for a meal. At the noon hour, "take-out" dinners were sent out to the engineer, separator man and the fireman as steam had to be maintained, inspection and oiling machinery were necessary, besides fire protection was important. The evening meal would probably have soup, hash brown potatoes or American fried potatoes, stew or other meat, vegetables, and pudding or sauce made from fresh or dried fruit, coffee, and cake or cookies.

There were times a move had to be made from one farm to another while a meal was being prepared. Since the cook car had no rubber tires only wide iron wheels, and the roads were either gravel or plain dirt, the going was rough. It swayed over humps and bumps. Therefore, it was necessary for the cooks to secure everything in the cook car. Then, the washbasin, soap and towels from the outside bench were brought indoors, as were crocks used for storage under the cook car. The last to be loaded were the steps. The driver hitched the horses up to the cook car, and off he would go very slowly. Can you imagine the work that faced the young lady cooks when the cook car reached its destination? The unpacking in it was a hurry-scurry deal, besides preparing the next meal.

As soon as the supper dishes were washed and put away, the bread dough was made for the next day's baking, and the menu prepared for the next day. Then at last, the folding cot was a most welcome spot for the cooks in the cook car.

The farmers joining together as a threshing crew in order to harvest the grain, was an important event all the way into the 1940s. Then, the combine became popular and eventually replaced the threshing machine. Using a combine enabled families to do their own harvesting, and only two or three people were needed.

*Those fun and  
memorable years...*



*Annie & Norma in '32*

### **Cooking in the Cook Car**

Annie Solheim worked in the cook car during the 1931, 1932, and 1933 threshing seasons. She cooked together with Cora Melby and Norma Renden.

*of cooking together  
in the cook car!*

## ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ANNIE SOLHEIM ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

Both of Annie's parents, Ole Onstad and Gina Rogne, immigrated from Valdres, Norway, though it was not until they moved to Manfred that they met each other through friends. After an extended friendship, Ole and Gina were married at Vang Lutheran Church. Annie was born at her parent's homestead northwest of Manfred on December 5, 1909, her brother Emil on October 13, 1913. She attended grade school at Manfred, then high school at Harvey graduating in 1928. The following year, she attended business college in Fargo. Her training in office work led her into many interesting positions beginning with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which she gladly accepted for \$45 per month. With her first month's salary, she was not only able to pay for her room and board, but also had enough left over to buy her first silk dress. In 1934, she was hired as Deputy Superintendent of Schools for Wells County. Beginning in 1937, she worked for the National Farm Loan Association. Then during the early war years, she worked in Washington, D.C. for the U.S. Navy in the legal department of the Bureau of Aeronautics.

On October 12, 1943, wedding bells began to ring when she wed Helmer S. Solheim at the Lutheran parsonage in Harvey. Annie and Helmer had first met at Luther League functions when the Bethel and Vang Leagues met together on occasion. Their friendship was strengthened during her cook car days, where Helmer was working as fireman on Oscar Melby's threshing rig. Annie and Helmer made their home in Manfred, North Dakota. Their daughter Audrey was born February 18, 1945. In 1945, they bought the Standard Oil service station in Manfred from Harley and Lydia Boese. They owned it until Helmer died in 1969, at which time it was purchased by Ted Jorstad. From 1968-1976, Annie served as Deputy Superintendent of Schools for Wells County. In 1986, she moved to Bismarck, and since 2001 has been living at the Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center. Her beautiful outlook continues to inspire all who visit her.



*Annie & Helmer Solheim*



## FROVIG AND ALVESHARE FAMILY HISTORY

*Ole and Ida Frovig**Ole and Ida Frovig in 1915*

Ole K. Frovig was born May 31, 1877 in Norway and died April 1, 1931. He emigrated from Norway with his parents in 1894 to Buxton, ND. In the spring of 1895, Ole's father Johannes filed on 160 acres of land near the James River, four miles west of Manfred. Ole was not yet old enough to file a claim. In the spring of 1896, the Frovig family moved from Buxton to Manfred in a covered wagon, using it for shelter until their one-room home was constructed and later sodded. In time, Ole was able to purchase adjoining land and later purchased his father's farmstead. In 1909, a new two-story home replaced the sod house. Ida was born October 25, 1887 and died November 20, 1973. She was born in Norway, and immigrated to Iowa on April 16, 1910. Ole and Ida farmed with the aid of hired help raising grain, cattle, and geese until 1920 at which time they rented the farm to Mike Stoltz, and with their four children then moved to Wilmington CA. Ole worked in oil refineries there, and their twin girls were also born there. In the fall of 1923, they returned to ND and began farming with 60 head of cattle, 18 horses, a few hogs, and 500 leghorn chickens. Their last two children were born during this time. After Ole died, Ida remained on the farm for several years. Later, she began working at Bismarck where she met and married Ingebrecht Trovik a bachelor from Almont, ND on October 25, 1944. He died in 1952. Ida then visited her children, staying primarily at the farm of her daughter, Lena and Clarence. Later, she moved to the Halland Home in Rugby, remaining active all her years and an inspiration to everyone.

*The Children*

Pearl      Fern      Nora      Cora      Irene      Lena      Oliver      Ella      Ida

*Ida and her children are pictured from oldest to youngest beginning from the right.*

Ella born August 17, 1915. Married Melvin Alveshere June 28, 1934.

Children: Lois, Orval, Marvin, Duane, James, Donald, Laurie, Christie.

Oliver born November 13, 1916. Married Helen Winter March 31, 1946. No Children.

Lena born March 10, 1918. Married Clarence Alveshere January 5, 1940. Children: Carol, Loren.

Irene born March 8, 1920. Married Walter Koenig December 4, 1939. Children: Ervin, Sharon, Joyce.

Cora born March 17, 1923. Married Jack Freeman October 27, 1945. Children: Donald, Janis.

Nora born March 17, 1923. Married Ward Alveshere May 25, 1953. Children: Noreen.

Fern born March 3, 1925. Married Robert Bradley June 25, 1967. Children: Darlene, Gail.

Pearl born January 11, 1926. Married Jack Carlson June 4, 1944. Children: Wilma, Gretchen.

*The Frovig Farm*

*In remembrance of a special place and the remarkable woman who made a go of this place.*

*Ida in 1968**The Frovig farm, painted by Irene Frovig Koenig*

## FROVIG AND ALVESHARE FAMILY HISTORY

## Conquering The Odds, Ida Frovig Trovik



Ida

Ole K. Frovig and Ida Eilertson had married in 1915, and then shared together in running the Frovig farm located four miles west of Manfred. But sixteen years later on April 1, 1931, Ole died leaving her a widow with eight children, the oldest being sixteen years of age and the youngest five years of age. In order to manage the operation of the farm herself together with raising her children would be a huge undertaking. But, on the appointed day and acting as guardian for her children, she stood courageously before Judge B. F. Wipple and said, "We will keep the farm going." The judge said, "It may be difficult!" Ida said, "We will try."

Such determination served as a powerful model for her children, who joined her in making a go of the farm. The children did farm work far beyond their years taking care of the livestock, as they took care of themselves, following Ida's example. Remembering those times when he was but 15 years old, her son Oliver wrote that even though the spring of 1931 started out dry, he and Oscar Elie drove four horses each with eight-foot disks. Ernest Knuteson also helped by driving six horses on a 10-foot press drill in sowing the wheat. They then plowed 80 acres of land for oats with eight horses on a triple plow, and six horses on a gangplow. Ida and the older girls were doing their share of chores and household work, but they too were often helping with the fieldwork.

1931 was the beginning of the drought years and also the depression. On March 6, 1933 the banks closed. Oliver worked with WPA for a while to supplement the family income. The drought was so bad that year that they had to mow most of the grain fields, the main 'crop' being Russian thistles. They mixed the thistles with molasses and supplemented this with some old straw that had been in a stack for 17 and 18 years, thus managing to pull the cattle herd through that winter.

They participated in the soil conservation and shelterbelt plan by strip farming and planting 30 acres of trees, 10 rods wide and two miles long. Just prior to this, they experienced some violent dust storms and soil erosion. 1936 was a promising year for the wheat crop, but just before harvest time, the grasshoppers came in great hordes and cut most of the wheat heads off. Better years lay ahead, as seen in the photo of Oliver on the binder cutting and bundling the wheat. By 1940, the Frovig family was one of the last ones in Forward Township farming with only horses. In the fall of 1940, the Frovig family quit farming, and sold the livestock and farm equipment. Ida rented out the land, but continued to live in her home for several years.

*Compiled by Wanda Melchert- from Oliver Frovig's 'Growing With Pride' article, and also thoughts from Orv Alveshere*

*Excerpt from:*

### OPERATING A HARVEST GRAIN BINDER

*Each year they celebrated the ripening grain;  
Acres of amber waves, across the fruited plain.  
When hard, red wheat 'heads out,' and shimmers in the sun;  
Then each green head turns visibly gold...one by one.  
Soon, anxious farmers, on foot, would crisscross, each field;  
Estimating the harvest date...and the yield.  
Thankful this season's warmer, wetter, and kinder;  
And that this grain field is ready for the binder.*

© From the writing of Ida & Ole's grandson, Orv Alveshere



Oliver Frovig  
Harvesting wheat on Frovig farm about 1937



## FROVIG AND ALVESHARE FAMILY HISTORY

*Three Frovig Sisters Married Three Alvesheres*

As harvest time was fast approaching in 1931 after her husband Ole had died that spring, Ida Frovig asked the advice of Ole Brye for who would be a good hired man to help with the fall work. He recommended Melvin Alveshere, whom Ida then hired and was very satisfied with his work. In this way, the Frovig and Alveshere young people were first introduced to each other.

Melvin and Clarence Alveshere are brothers. Ward Alveshere is the son of their older brother Ben.

Each couple enjoyed farming careers: Clarence & Lena near Manfred. Melvin & Ella, and Ward & Nora near Harlow.

*Ella Frovig  
married  
Melvin Alveshere*



Melvin & Ella  
*Taken in 1934*

*Lena Frovig  
married  
Clarence Alveshere*



Clarence & Lena  
*Taken in 1940*

*Nora Frovig  
married  
Ward Alveshere*



Ward & Nora  
*Taken in 1956*



Ella and Melvin Alveshere  
*Taken in 1994 upon the occasion of their  
60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*



Lena and Clarence Alveshere  
*Taken in 1993 in front of the Vang Lutheran  
parsonage, where they were married in 1940*



Nora and Ward Alveshere  
*Taken in about 1996*

*Driving Cattle to the Manfred Stockyards*

*By Clarence Alveshere*

This took place in 1926 or 27, when my folks and myself and brother Melvin lived south of Harvey on the Erick Ford farm. This was also the farm where the trapper got caught in a snowstorm in one of the Gulchs on that farm. He had dug into a side hill in the Gulch for shelter; and to survive he butchered his pony and that spot is visible today. Erick Ford showed me the place.

Erick Ford homesteaded that land. He said he had to haul his grain to Sykeston with oxen, and it would take two days for the trip. He also told me that in the early days, he let his whiskers grow to a length of a foot or so. But one day, the long horns of his oxen got caught in his whiskers. After that, he shortened the whiskers to about three or four inches. That's what he had when I knew him. His whiskers were white as snow. He had an old Maxwell truck that had solid tires (no flat tires there, ha). He would come and stay with us a month or two in the summertime, as he lived in Iowa otherwise.

Now back to 1926 or 27. We had 15 or 20 head of cattle to ship to St. Paul, MN by rail, so my brother and I got our horses, lined up the cattle and sorted, and started the trip to Manfred, ND about 20 miles away. We arrived in Manfred in good daylight, and Jacob Koenig was there. He was the organizer for the shipping, and had the gates open for the stockyard. Olaf Anderson had a livery barn in Manfred, so we put our horses in there for the night. Somebody came and got my brother and took him back to the Ford farm. I went out and stayed at my brother Ben's place that night, as he lived where my son Loren now lives. In the morning we went down to Manfred and got the horses, as I was to ride them back to the farm in Pony Gulch. I got on Kate and was to lead Bud. Olaf said, "Give me the lead rope," and he tied it to the tail of Kate. I thought, "How is this going to go," but everything went smooth. Kate and Bud were the name of the horses we rode.