

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 2

Page 1

June 2002

GREETINGS FROM MANFRED, NORTH DAKOTA!

*Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.
named North Dakota's
"Preservation Success Story for 2002"
by
⌘ Preservation North Dakota ⌘*

During a press conference held May 17 at Dickinson State University, the Manfred community was honored when Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. was named the "Preservation Success Story for 2002" by Preservation North Dakota during their annual conference held May 17-19. The following was written in honor of this recognition.

Excerpts follow:

"How can 'Historic Preservation' breathe life back into a small community? Take a lesson from the folks in Manfred, ND. An active group of preservationists called Manfred History and Preservation, Inc., has revolutionized life for those in tiny Manfred and also for those that 'remember' what life was like in a Manfred that bustled with people.

A non-profit corporation, Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. was founded in July 2000, following a May mini-conference in observance of National Preservation Week – 2000, by Preservation North Dakota. The following year during Manfred Days, the people learned that Vang Lutheran had been accepted onto the National Register, and that the Melby-Rogness House was on its way to becoming the Manfred Museum and History Gallery. Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. has launched a newsletter and a website at www.manfrednd.org to keep interested folks informed of the ongoing projects.

The board of directors and other volunteers are doing all they can to preserve some of the key buildings in Manfred. The organization has assisted Vang Lutheran Church with grant applications. Vang Lutheran is among the first groups to be offered a "Grass Roots Preservation Grant" by Preservation North Dakota. They plan to repair and preserve the foundation of Vang Lutheran Church, improve the landscaping around the building, and install rain gutters to provide drainage of water away from the foundation. The historic preservation movement seems to have caught on. The 1915 John and Malena Johnson Home, a Sears Roebuck Catalog home, is in the process of being nominated to the National Register by Laverne Johnson, and there may be plans in the works for the development of a nomination for the 1905 Beiseker Bank building as well. The interior work on the Melby-Rogness home restoration is slated to be completed by the end of 2002, so that a history display can be installed and ready for the grand opening of the history museum in 2003. This will proudly mark the 100th anniversary of the home's construction in 1903.

Stop in sometime, give Manfred a visit and see what a small group of dedicated folks can do to foster community development using historic preservation as a tool. Preservation North Dakota is proud to showcase the work of Manfred History and Preservation, Inc., as our "Preservation Success Story for 2002," for taking control of their future by cherishing and protecting the past."

From the press release written by Dale Bentley, Executive Director of Preservation North Dakota, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization promoting preservation for the people of North Dakota

The New Manfred News

Wow! There's much excitement going on...

The volunteer workers are busy making progress on the Melby-Rogness Home in Manfred. A very successful workday was held, March 3 to finish removing the plaster from the interior. Clean up took place April 10... thanks to Pete Anderson for the help in hauling debris using his loader tractor.



Lunch break at the home of Wesley and Esther Boese during the March 3rd workday. From left: Pete Anderson, Bill Ongstad, Dan Fiesel, Kerry Ebel, Paul Gunderson, Jerome Gunderson, Wesley Boese, Esther Boese.

Special thanks to Dale and Shirley Opdahl for the contribution of cement blocks from their property in Manfred, where the former Bertha Melby home had been located. Herbert Ongstad and Wanda Melchert removed and cleaned nearly 300 blocks during April that will be used in constructing a retaining wall in the basement of the Melby-Rogness home.



Herbert Ongstad using a chisel and hammer to loosen old mortar from cement blocks.

Many Thanks to the Volunteer Workers During March-May, 2002

Pete Anderson	Jerome Gunderson
Wesley Boese	Paul Gunderson
Verna Bowers	Wanda Melchert
Kerry Ebel	Bill Ongstad
Dan Fiesel	Herbert Ongstad

On May 10, Vang Lutheran Church was notified by Preservation ND that a "Grass Roots Preservation Grant" through the Prairie Churches of North Dakota Project had been approved. This \$1,504 matching grant will be used for corrective measures to protect the still solid 1918 basement foundation. The three-part proposal, to be completed this year, includes replacing the protective cement covering on the exterior of the basement foundation, grading the landscape to provide for better drainage, and installing new gutters and drain spouts.

On May 17, 2002, Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. was honored by being named the "Preservation Success Story for 2002" in a press conference held at the start of the three-day Preservation North Dakota Annual Conference. In addition, Wanda Melchert, President of MHP, Inc. was one invited to speak on the topic "The Importance of Preserving Small Town, ND."



MHP, Inc. holds monthly meetings, generally the first Sunday of each month. Board members pictured from left. Back: Herbert Ongstad, Esther Boese, Pam Norstedt, Verna Bowers. Front: Rose Anderson, Pete Anderson, Ruth Widiger.

Manfred... celebrating rural ND history!

In Memory

March-May 2002

Edna Rogness

March 16, 1913 – March 13, 2002

Donald Melby

Feb. 20, 1924 – April 11, 2002

Jon Charles Houtkooper

Nov. 4, 1944 - April 19, 2002

Virgil Sommer

Jan. 20, 1923 – May 13, 2002

Contributions

Thank you so much to the following for your financial contributions to Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.
March - May 2002

Contributions to MHP, Inc.

(General Fund)

Clarence Alveshere
Loren Alveshere
Tim Cook
Ella Lenz
Elsie Martinson
Myrtle Rogness

Contributions To Help Defray Newsletter Expense

Clarence Alveshere
Loren Alveshere
Orville Dovre
Robert and Donna Foster
June Friesen
Ella Lenz
Elsie Martinson
Orval Roble
Roger Rogelstad
Myrtle Rogness
Harold and Patty Sauter
Joelyn Scriba
Mark and Marcella Sommer
Virgil and Irene Sommer
Bryce Streibel
Carl and DeVella Vik
Carol M. Weymouth

The welcome mat is always out at Manfred!! Visitors stopping by this spring were Sue Wilson from Urbandale IA daughter of Paul and Bernice Hovey Grabe, and Mr. and Mrs. Marv Nelson from Olympia WA. Marv is the son of Melvin and Inga Nelson.

History Contributions

Thank you to the many people who have given contributions of history to MHP, Inc. in the past. Though it would be difficult to name them all, please know that each contribution has greatly enriched Manfred's history.

Items received March-May 2002:

Roger Rogelstad-old Manfred postcard
Clarence Alveshere-photo
Rhoda Harwell-memoirs and photos from her mother Bielda Fehr Beyersdorff
Earl Sisson-items from the Koenig farm
Lydia Boese-news clippings of Manfred
Lilly Anderson family-photos & items

Wonderful news! Festival Hall restoration in Fessenden is coming along great.

Welcome Everyone - We are Celebrating Manfred...

And what a celebration this is! The smiles on the tiny village of Manfred are growing wider and wider all the time. Wow, to be named the "Preservation Success Story for 2002" is such a great honor for Manfred and for all who care about her! We thank the non-profit organization Preservation North Dakota for this honor. Congratulations to everyone!! See the New Manfred News section for more exciting news.

A hearty welcome to everyone in this sixth issue of the quarterly New Manfred News! Thank you to the contributors: Esther Boese, Evelina Boese, and Marlys Piatz for their help with the article about the Manfred Homemaker's Club; and to Marie Nelson Vargason and her family for the photos of her father Albert Nelson taken while he served as a Rural Route Carrier for Manfred. Also included is a wonderful poem and article written by Adolph Shirley together with the accompanying photo from the Leslie and Olga Johnson Collection, and a speech by Wanda Melchert presented to the Preservation North Dakota Annual Conference.

Looking ahead to the September issue, the theme will be on farming. You are invited and encouraged to submit photos of farmsteads and of farming activity, as well as your memories of farming in the Manfred area. Should you have photos of the Manfred Stockyards, please let MHP, Inc. know.

Together we are celebrating Manfred and its history!! Watch for an important letter to arrive later in June.

"Preserving the Spirit of Place"

"Preserving the Spirit of Place" was the theme for Preservation North Dakota's Annual Conference held at Dickinson ND, May 17-19, 2002 during Preservation Week 2002. Speaking of this theme, Dale Bentley, Executive Director of Preservation North Dakota said, "There is little else that has such an impact on the future of a community. Every community has a spirit of place that identifies it as special and unique. It may be a building, monument, street, public square or a view of distant mountains. It sets the community apart from every other... and gives residents a sense of connection with their shared heritage." Based on this theme, Wanda Melchert, President of Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. was invited to speak on "The Importance of Preserving Small Town, ND" at a Round Table Discussion on May 18. A small portion of that speech follows here...

Hearty greetings to you from Manfred ND, a tiny microscopic size town located among miles of farmland in the central ND county of Wells in Manfred Township. It is indeed a great honor for me to speak today about the importance and urgency of preserving small town ND, and about the projects underway at Manfred.

What is so important about preserving small town ND? To be sure, the small towns are decaying; the census records indicate less and less people are living in the small towns and their trade area. In general, there are very few children; and then not many of these children are settling in their home area. There are very few businesses remaining. There are generally a number of unoccupied buildings that are in varying stages of deterioration... some appear ready to fall down. One wonders if there are any around who care? But, don't these small towns deserve better? People might say there is nothing left in the small town, nothing of importance, and that these small towns have no future.

But wait, small towns DO have MUCH importance. Here are a few thoughts regarding the tremendous contribution and historical significance of small towns. For, isn't it true that these tiny, but mighty, places played a very significant role in helping North Dakota and America to be successfully established? It was hard-working, hopeful, and determined settlers who came in droves that resulted in the founding and success of small towns ever westward across America. Though these settlers came with very little personal belongings, they were blessed with much longing and eagerness to obtain land to settle and live their life. What an exhilarating day it must have been when these settlers - be they a family, single person, or married couple - stood upon the land they had filed on realizing that they now had a place they could finally call home.

And isn't it true that small towns provided a vital support system for the settlers of this young bustling frontier... a place to market their farm products, a place to obtain goods or services they needed, a place to socialize. Not only did these people produce nutritious farm products that benefited others, but also many of their children went out into the world making a positive difference as leaders and role models, after having been raised in these wholesome close-to-the-earth rural places. Also, such communities as these helped made it possible for America to come through WWI and WWII successfully, having sent their young people into military service while, at the same time, the home front worked tirelessly in every way they could to help in the war effort. Indeed, small town ND possesses great importance worthy to be remembered and preserved for present and future generations to learn about.

Preserving the Spirit of Place...cont.

Let me take a moment to share some things that are unique about the small town of Manfred established in 1894 after the Soo Railroad Company had finished building the track through the Manfred area in 1893.

1. The James River, flowing on the north side of Manfred, was an important source of water for the steam locomotives of the trains. The site location of Manfred came to be, because this place was an excellent water source. A windmill drew water from the river that then pumped it to a water tank by the railroad tracks. The James River was also productive in the winter, from where ice blocks were cut and supplied to the trains and other places.
2. Manfred was an early hub, for a time, in supplying raw building materials to new towns in the area such as Heimdahl and Wellsburg. To help with this, carloads of materials were delivered to Manfred by train. The two local lumberyards had quite a time trying to keep up with the demand. Several local dray services maintained a steady business hauling supplies, and the masons and carpenters had a long waiting list of jobs to do.
3. Manfred was also an important location through the years for shipping grain and animals. Manfred, at one time, had five elevator companies and one stockyard. Today there are still two elevator complexes in Manfred, one set is privately owned and the other set is an active part of the Fessenden Cooperative Association.
4. Another unique history of Manfred relates to pre-settler days, when people traveled through the region by way of the Mouse River Trail that crossed the James River in the Manfred area. Though much of the trail can no longer be detected, local folks like Pete Anderson recall being able to see indentions of the trail out in the pasture, which today still remains undisturbed as a pasture. The winds of time have pretty much blended the trail into the surrounding landscape. Folks also speak of a buffalo wallow and rubbing rock in the area, as well.

In Preserving the Spirit of Place, I am happy to report that there are some sights and sounds that are still seen and heard at Manfred today... just like always...

1. The train whistle still announces the approach of trains that pass by Manfred each day, though they no longer stop to deliver materials for the waiting drays of yesteryear.
2. The bell still peals to begin regular services at the little white steeple church nestled in Manfred. The train whistle and the lumbering sounds of the train passing through, commingle today as they always have with the hymns and prayers of the settlers and their descendants.
3. The waters of the James River still quietly flow by, adding a refreshing touch to the village scene.

No longer seen or heard are the horses and wagons, the crowds of people flocking to Manfred, the business places and sales activity, many of the buildings have been moved to other places, and gone are the many functions held by the fun-loving people of Manfred. Though these things are no longer present, in July of 2001, Manfred was honored with a two-day history celebration called Manfred Days that featured many activities reminiscent of it's early days. During these jam-packed days, Manfred was filled with people, horses and early vehicles were again seen on Manfred streets. There were history talks, tours, programs, and even the first ever Manfred parade featuring the Harvey City Band. What a thrill it was to hear the Star-Spangled Banner being played and sung right in Manfred. Very special is the fact that two of the band's members are descendants of people who had been members of the Manfred Cornet Band in the early 1900s.

Now once again, the sounds of workers wielding their tools and equipment can be heard at Manfred just as in the early days, this time for the purpose of restoration work under the direction of the non-profit organization called Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.

Through Preservation ND's Prairie Churches of North Dakota Project, Vang Lutheran Church has been awarded a Grass Roots Preservation Grant that will help with the preservation work to be done on the church foundation this summer. (The speech continued telling about the work of MHP, Inc. and closed with the following...) The goal for 2003 is to install a history display in the Melby-Rogness home, at which time, this home will begin serving as the Manfred History Museum. Though this museum will tell Manfred's history, it will be dedicated to giving voice to rural villages in ND in order to provide opportunity for present and future generations to learn about the important contributions these villages have provided to North Dakota and to America. What an exhilarating day it will be when Manfred's history finds a place it can call home. Watch for news of the opening of the Manfred History Museum.

On behalf of Manfred History and Preservation, Inc., I would like to express our thanks to Preservation ND for the honor it received in being named as the 'Preservation ND Success Story for 2002'. How is it that MHP, Inc. is managing to succeed in these history and preservation projects, since the Manfred area has so few people to draw upon? I believe it is made possible in the spirit of settler-type determination, and volunteers with the talent and interest to help with the different aspects. As coordinator of the Manfred efforts, I feel blessed to see first hand the miracles that keep taking place in Manfred.

The welcome mat is out ready to greet all who come to Manfred, located between Harvey and Fessenden on Highway 52. We are celebrating this small town and the wonderful story it has to share. Thank you.

By Wanda Melchert

Manfred Homemaker's Club

Updated history based on the "Growing With Pride" book. Photos from the Manfred Homemaker's Club archives.

There are two consecutive homemaker's clubs bearing the name Manfred Homemaker's Club.

Manfred Homemaker's Club

1931-1943

The first homemaker's club was organized in the spring of 1931, with Mrs. Albert (Lucy) Biever as President & Mrs. Nels (Cora) Nertröst as Secretary. Their meetings and activities were much like the Homemakers clubs of today. They went to Fessenden to get their project lessons; had booths at the Wells County Fair some years, and entertained their husbands with a dinner about once a year. They continued meeting until 1943. Because of gasoline rationing during World War II, the meetings were discontinued.

The membership of the 1931 Manfred Homemaker's Club

Mrs. Perry (Lilly) Anderson
Mrs. Albert (Lucy) Biever
Mrs. Frank (Bessie) Biever
Mrs. Ernest (Eva) Braaten
Mrs. G. M. Christianson
Mrs. L. C. Grinney
Mrs. Ralph (Anne) Hager, Sr.
Mrs. Conrad (Clara) Hedahl
Mrs. Nora Lardy
Mrs. Nels (Cora) Nertröst
Mrs. Halvor (Martha) Olsen
Mrs. Edwin (Sophie) Opdahl
Mrs. Rudolph (Nora) Peterson
Mrs. Sam (Lilly) Rogness
Mrs. Edna Syverson

Homemaker's Lessons in the early 1930s:

Salads all the year
Nutrition garden
Shortcuts in cooking
Making the most of house plants
How to know meat and how to serve it
Hot-pack canning of vegetables
Well Fed Family
Harvesting and storing ice
Hog butchering
Control of insect pests
Cleaning methods that save time
One-dish meals
Birth and death registrations
Art of arranging flowers
The vogue in quilts
Women writers of the present time
Hints to news writers
Reports and election
Developing the personality

Manfred Homemaker's Club

1947-Present

Following the war, County Agent Roy Harens met with thirteen ladies of the Manfred community on November 4, 1947 to organize a club. Officers were elected, project leaders were chosen, and plans for the year's work were discussed. The club decided to pay annual dues of fifty cents each.

Officers elected in 1947 were:

*President, Mrs. Perry (Lilly) Anderson
Vice Pres., Mrs. Helmer (Annie) Solheim
Sec.-Treas., Mrs. Leslie (Olga) Johnson
Program Chrm., Mrs. Albert (Rose) Nelson
Project Leaders, Mrs. John (Veronica) Froeber, Mrs. Calvin (Myrtle) Neuenschwander, Mrs. Russell (Mary) Johnson and Mrs. Mike (Anna) Jenny.
Other members were, Mrs. Oscar (Christine) Ongstad, Mrs. Rudolph (Martha) Hieb, Mrs. Calvin (Beatrice) Bender, Mrs. Emil (Lena) Schepp and Mrs. V.J. Munt.*

A variety of lessons have been studied through the years. The club has met regularly once a month and is still going strong. There have been several meetings involving the community on topics such as estate planning, highway safety, microwave ovens, and vaccination for pets. Donations have been made to many charitable organizations. Some of the activities enjoyed during the years have been Christmas parties and picnics, including the families of the ladies.

Fair booths have been an annual project. Several times the Manfred Homemaker's Club booth was judged outstanding, receiving the coveted rosette ribbon, as well as other ribbons through the years. Individual members have exhibited yearly and have been ribbon winners both at county and state fair for a wide range of talents.

The membership has gradually become smaller since the first meeting in 1947. Our latest losses were Bonnie Schmitz July 22, 1999 who died in a car accident, and charter member Olga Johnson who died July 30, 2000.

Our lessons deal with time management, stress reduction, computers, cell phones, etc. related to the way we live today. Working outside the home has brought many changes and we've changed with it.

2002 Officers

President, Mrs. Loren (Kathy) Alveshere
Vice President and Program Chairman,
Mrs. Ervin (Evelina) Boese
Sec.-Treas., Mrs. Wesley (Esther) Boese

Other members:

Mrs. Pete (Rose) Anderson
Mrs. Verna Bowers
Mrs. Harold (Patty) Sauter
Mrs. Virgil (Irene) Sommer
Mrs. Lewis (Judy) Weigelt

**Membership list of the
Manfred Homemaker's Club
1947 to the Present**

(*Denotes Charter Members)

Mrs. Loren (Kathy) Alveshere
 Mrs. Perry (Lilly) Anderson*
 Mrs. Peter (Rose) Anderson
 Mrs. Chris (Marion) Anhorn
 Mrs. Mike (Dianne) Aull
 Mrs. Calvin (Beatrice) Bender*
 Mrs. Ervin (Evelina) Boese
 Mrs. Wesley (Esther) Boese
 Mrs. Verna Bowers
 Mrs. Donald (Lillian) Breyer
 Mrs. John (Veronica) Froeber*
 Mrs. Ralph (Donna Lea) Hager, Jr.
 Mrs. Victor (Lou) Harrison
 Mrs. Rudolph (Martha) Hieb*
 Mrs. Dave (Alvina) Hildenbrand
 Mrs. Roy (Lillian) Hirschhorn
 Mrs. Warren (Bielda) Hoover
 Mrs. Mike (Anna) Jenny*
 Mrs. Leslie (Olga) Johnson*
 Mrs. Russell (Mary) Johnson*
 Mrs. Fred (Marlys) Koenig
 Mrs. Joel (Becky) McCarty
 Mrs. Gene (Betty) Melby
 Mrs. Kermit (Lillian) Melby
 Mrs. V. J. Munt*
 Mrs. Albert J. (Rose) Nelson*
 Mrs. Vern (Bernice) Nelson
 Mrs. Calvin (Myrtle) Neuenschwander*
 Mrs. Talmer (Myrtle) Olson
 Mrs. Oscar (Christine) Ongstad*
 Mrs. Emil (Linda) Onstad
 Mrs. Dale (Shirley) Opdahl
 Mrs. Ervin (Arlene) Rittmiller
 Mrs. Harold (Patty) Sauter
 Mrs. Emil (Lena) Schepp*
 Mrs. Mark (Bonnie) Schmitz
 Mrs. Helmer (Annie) Solheim*
 Mrs. Vernon (Lillian) Sommer
 Mrs. Virgil (Irene) Sommer
 Mrs. Fred (Lorraine) Sommerfield
 Mrs. Louie (Rose) Thomas
 Mrs. Arnold (Janice) Wagner
 Mrs. Lewis (Judy) Weigelt
 Mrs. LeRoy (Josephine) Weisser
 Mrs. Reiner (Ruth) Widiger

Manfred Homemaker's Club...

Homemaker's Creed

I believe my home is sacred; a place where love, faith, hope and devotion have their beginnings; where each has rights respected by others; where joys and blessings, sorrows and disappointments are shared in common; where God is revered and honored, fellow men respected and love is law.

I believe it is my duty to live up to the best that is in me to attain this, to fear things unworthy, to conquer difficulties by daring to attempt them, to be a companion as well as a counselor to my family, and to teach and live, love of home, country fellow men and God.



**WELLS
COUNTY
FAIR**



2001 Christmas Party

From Left: Ervin & Evelina Boese, Patty & Harold Sauter, Esther Boese, Verna Bowers, Wesley Boese, Rose Anderson, Judy & Lewis Weigelt, Pete Anderson, Kathy & Loren Alveshere. Inset: Virgil & Irene Sommer



Homemade Hats - 1955

Back Row: Olga Johnson, Evelina Boese, Bernice Nelson, Rose Thomas, Esther Boese, Marlys Koenig, Louella Harrison. Front Row: Betty Melby, Lillian Melby, Beatrice Bender.



Bicentennial Float - 1976



1985 Fair Booth

'Chinese... For Your Guest to Please!'

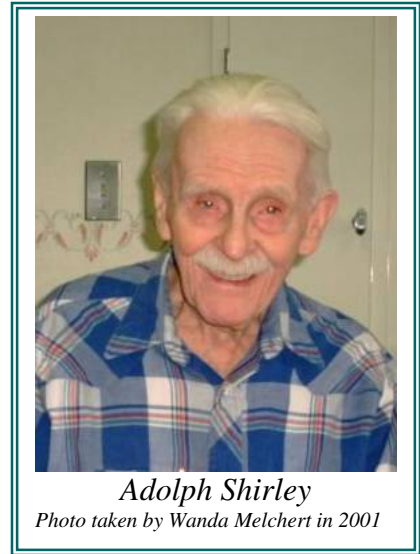


1998 Fair Booth

'Deco a Plate'

Prairie Schooners

By Adolph Shirley



Adolph Shirley

Photo taken by Wanda Melchert in 2001

Written in 1986...

Having lived in Wells County all my lifetime of 81 years, I recently reminisced of some of the things that were of special interest in my early years of life – one of them being the covered wagons of the pioneers moving westward in search of free homestead land. These covered wagons were called “Prairie Schooners.”

I can distinctly remember these ‘schooners’ coming from the east, some from the south, all heading westward. Land in this area had, at that time, already been mostly claimed by homesteaders, and those I remember seeing had to continue their journey westward in search of land. Sometimes there was only one or two in company, and at one time I can remember there were about six or seven in one caravan. As I watched them... some just kept on going, and others stopped and talked with my dad.

I remember especially one who asked permission to ‘park for the night’ west of our grove of trees. Of course my dad gave permission. So, the man unhitched his team, watered his horses at our well, and prepared for the night. Later in the evening, after my dad and mother had milked the cows, the lady in that ‘schooner’, with a small daughter of possibly five summers at her side, came to my mother with a gallon pail in her hand asking if she could spare a little milk. After possibly half an hour’s conversation, my mother filled her pail with fresh milk. A great ‘thank you’ was the reply, and she was off back to the ‘schooner.’ The following morning they left, continuing on their journey westward.

Recently, I began to think about where and when, these schooners came to a stop – how much further they went from here, and what success the pioneers had in obtaining a homestead. In a mental picture, I have envisioned some of these ‘schooners’ still standing (only remnants left) in some abandoned place, grove of trees, or a fence corner and left to their own fate to crumble. So I decided to write this poem – dedicated to the still existing remnants of an Old Prairie Schooner.

*Excerpts from an article that appeared in the September 17, 1986 of the Harvey Herald Press.
Adolph, now 97 years old of keen mind and living at St. Aloisius Medical Center in Harvey ND,
continues to delight friends and family with his wit, wisdom, and wonderful stories.*

Dedicated to the Still Existing Remnants of An Old Prairie Schooner

*There, exposed to wind and weather,
Prevalent in every season
Stands a remnant, still remaining,
Of an ancient prairie schooner.*

*It was once a glorious wagon,
The joy, the pride, of a pioneer.
Freshly painted canvas cover,
Transportation without a peer!*

*Land was free in a wild, wild country
"North Dakota" 'twas called by name
Open now to willing settlers
Seeking land and a future home.*

*With schooner loaded, all was ready,
The unknown journey to begin.
Into the wild, unopened spaces
Visions of a home never dimmed.*

*Westward, westward, was the journey
O'er miles and miles of prairie sod.
A wide unknown expanse before them
Unknown to man – but known to God.*

*Days of travel – slow but surely,
Onward – Westward – with the sun.
And when the journey was completed
The schooner's noble deed was done.*

*Rest in Peace – Old Prairie Schooner,
Slowly, crumbling into dust
For like the Pioneer who owned thee,
You have earned "Eternal Rest."*

*There you stand – alone – and silent,
As if kneeling down in prayer,
Thanking God for that glorious era
Of pioneers, who settled here.*

By Adolph Shirley, son of a settler
and lifelong resident of Manfred Township



THE POEM

*Savor the powerful imagery
of this poem by Adolph Shirley
from impressions ingrained
during his early childhood*



Photo from the Leslie and Olga Johnson Collection

THE PHOTO

Nennie and Dave Johnson (Uncles to Russell, Leslie, Everett, Miles, Alvin, Pearl, and Edna Johnson) together with their friend Sven Grane, are pictured traveling by covered wagon in 1896 from Wisconsin on their way to North Dakota. Later, Nennie Johnson built a hotel in Manfred in 1906, and then later built a barber shop/pool hall known more recently as the Cash Store. Both of these buildings still exist in Manfred. Dave Johnson moved to Canada where he and his family settled. Sven Grane, Manfred's early and colorful news reporter later moved to western ND, continuing there in the newspaper business.





More on the...

Manfred Post Office

In 'Memories Of The Town I Was Raised In' appearing on Page 7 of the March 2002 Issue, Marie Nelson Vargason told about her father Albert Nelson when he served the Manfred community as a Rural Route Mail Carrier from 1920 until 1952. We want to thank Marie together with her daughter Diane and son-in-law Jon Buss for sending to MHP, Inc. these marvelous photos of Albert pictured with modes of transportation he used on his mail route.

Top photo:

Albert Nelson in the 1920's going on route. His daughter, Marie Nelson Vargason, born in 1921 relates that she, as a tiny tot, was in the buggy with her father when this picture was taken.

Middle photo:

Albert is ready to go deliver the mail with the help of his Model T. Looks like his mail bag is full of letters and also he has several packages to deliver to his Manfred rural route patrons. Marie said the Model T was not dependable in the winter, at which time Albert made use of a team of horses.

Bottom photo:

Albert about 1930 with his Model A. Another mailman invented the caterpillar type apparatus you see pictured with its clog chain looped around the rear tires. Marie said that they were quite a job to change. Notice the skis under the elevated front tires. One of Albert's rural patrons asked him to pose in front of their home for this picture. Does anyone recognize this farm?

Photos such as these are adding much richness and understanding to the history of Manfred. Please join in this wonderful effort, by sending your photos, memories, and history of Manfred and your family to MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey ND 58341. Thank you!