

# The New MANFRED NEWS

Annual Subscription of  
\$10.00 for the  
Manfred Newsletter

*'The New Manfred News' is a quarterly newsletter published by Manfred History & Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.), a non-profit organization founded July 25, 2000 for the purpose of gathering the history of the Manfred area and encouraging preservation of its historic buildings. Historical and financial contributions as well as volunteer help, enable the Manfred history and preservation projects. Thank you for your help! The Manfred Heritage Museum is located at Manfred, ND along Hwy 52 in Wells County. Call 701-547-2564 summer, 701-324-2091 winter.*

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August 2004

## *Manfred, North Dakota A village celebrating renewal*



The historic village of Manfred at home by the James River  
Aerial photo taken August 12, 2004 by Bill Ongstad

*We are who we are, because they came...*



Greeting the future... MHP, Inc.'s first Annual Meeting, July 25, 2004

The settlers to North Dakota came with hearts full of hope for a better future. They came out of great desire, determination, courage...  
They started from scratch, many as a matter of survival, as pioneers, with vision for the future...  
Villages like Manfred dotted the land, nourishing and supporting its rural community.  
We are who we are, because they came! Their story - our story is coming alive through that same great desire, determination, courage...  
Dear friends, this story's being shared and village renewal underway, with vision for the future...  
Manfred once again is nourishing with down-home hospitality, this time to pioneer spirited visitors.

# The New Manfred News

## In Memory

Eilert B. Fehr

March 26, 1914 – June 2, 2004

Vernon Lithun

August 14, 1945 – June 13, 2004

## Review of the Grant Project



As part of the grant process, a visit was made on August 30 by Claudia Berg, Director of Museum and Education for the State Historical Society of North Dakota, pictured at left. Meeting with her were Esther Boese, Pam Norstedt, Ruth Widiger, Verna Bowers, and Wanda Melchert. Claudia was given the final report for the grant written by Danielle Stuckle, Acting Collections Manager for this successful cataloging project.

In the cozy atmosphere of the Melby-Rogness House, whirling around the room were laughter, memories, and exhibit ideas focusing on the settlement such as the coming of the railroad, electricity, telephone... home canning, life before TV, and on. Lunch was provided by Rose Anderson for this lovely visit.

## Prairie Churches of North Dakota Exhibit

*There is still time to see this exhibit at the  
Heritage Center, Bismarck, ND  
before it closes the end of September*

## Museum Contributions

Cash Store items-Wanda & Richard Melchert  
Hoover photos-Maridel Sprenger  
Langseth documents-Judy Abbey and  
Dorothy Stansberry  
Mark and Marie Lithun-footed bathtub  
Adolph Shirley-cook stove, corn cultivator,  
John Nelson safe, artifacts, and papers  
Vang Lutheran Church artifacts

## Thank you for your subscription to the Manfred Newsletter

The subscription notice for the 2005 Manfred Newsletter will appear in the Oct and Dec 2004 newsletter issues.

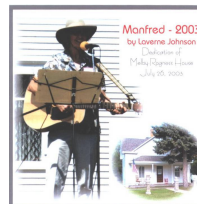
Jim and Judy Abbey  
Clarence Alvashere  
Loren and Kathy Alvashere  
Jerry and Darlene Axtman  
Maggie Brodehl  
Bill and Lorraine Brye  
Arleen Craven  
Russell J. Johnson  
Robert Knutson  
Linda Letnes  
Gene and Betty Melby  
Curt and Jean Mortenson  
George and Verna Pederson  
Orville and Pat Rodne  
Jerry and Dorothy Stansberry  
Emmett Turner  
Dean and Alicia Vorland  
Mary Vorland  
Lucille Wiese  
Ron Widiger

## Laverne's Manfred Song - 2003

The professional recording, of the song composed and sung by Laverne Johnson for the dedication of the Manfred Heritage Museum July 26, 2003, is available on either cassette tape or CD. It's Free with a contribution of \$10.00! If ordering by mail, add \$2.00 for packaging and postage. All profits are donated to MHP, Inc. Send mail orders to:

Laverne Johnson  
2126 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Jacket cover of CD →



A listing of recent contributors will be provided in the next newsletter issue.

## Grant Project Volunteers

*Thank you to these people for their volunteer hours with the grant project in cataloging the collections of the Manfred Heritage Museum*

Tom Alvashere  
Perry Anderson  
Pete and Rose Anderson  
Claudia Berg, Advisor  
Esther Boese  
Verna Bowers  
Jeanne and Edgar Flick  
Joyce Ravnaas  
Betty Melby  
Wanda Melchert  
Herbert Ongstad  
Audrey Solheim  
Danielle Stuckle  
Ruth Widiger  
Jenny Yearous, Technical Support

*With the continuing help of supporters, Manfred is growing toward its exciting mission to help tell the story of rural North Dakota. You are standing with Manfred as it recovers! In grateful thanks!*

## General Contributions

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

Marvin and Diane Alvashere  
Donald Anderson  
Peter Beck and Jackie Anderson  
Jerry and Darlene Axtman  
Verna Bowers in memory of Eilert Fehr  
Muriel Boyum  
Edwin and Maggie Brodehl  
Wayne and LoAnn Dybing  
Donald and Jacqueline Earl  
Cindy Ehni  
Nick Hertz of Hertz Funeral Home  
Hurdfield Quartet in memory of Eilert Fehr  
Russell J. Johnson  
Bob Keller of BJ Auto  
Harley and Virginia Kittelson  
Robert Knutson  
David and Kathleen Lauter  
Linda Letnes  
Elsie Martinson  
Curt and Jean Mortenson  
Cora Nelson  
Arlene Rittmiller  
Darlene Roble  
Selmer and Nora Rodne  
Roger and Bobbi Rogelstad  
Myrtle Rogness  
Arlyn and Doris Rudel  
Fred and Olive Schmidt  
Merlin and Laurie Schwartz  
James and Helen Severud  
Audrey Solheim in memory of Eilert Fehr  
Audrey Solheim in memory of Vernon Lithun  
Donald Strauss  
Margaret and Ted Thorson  
Emmett Turner  
Carl and DeVella Vik  
Dean and Alicia Vorland  
Louise Wachter  
Reiner and Ruth Widiger  
in memory of Eilert Fehr

## Designated Gifts

*Gifts designated to special projects*

Ivy Brye	Given toward
Betty Pepple	the road sign
Arlene Rittmiller	project.
Bryce and June Streibel,	

## Endowment Fund

*An everlasting fund providing for the future*  
Orren Anderson

Ivy Brye

*Congratulations Orren and Ivy as having the honor of starting the Endowment Fund!*

## Other Sources of Funding

Grant from Verendrye Electric Trust, Inc.  
Grant from State Historical Society of ND funded through the ND Legislature

Craft sales by Verna Bowers at the MHP, Inc. Annual Meeting

Sales from Laverne's Song (See listing)

Museum donation jar





*Organizational meeting August 8, 2004 of the first elected board of MHP, Inc*

From left back: Herbert Ongstad, Laverne Johnson, Esther Boese

Middle: Ruth Widiger, Pete Anderson

Front: Audrey Solheim, Rose Anderson, Verna Bowers, Wanda Melchert

# Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.

(MHP, Inc.)

Review of a successful non-profit organization founded  
to help benefit Manfred, ND and its history

*A warm welcome to the Manfred Newsletter!*

In this issue,

we pause from the task of recording the history of Manfred,  
in order to celebrate the work and vision of MHP, Inc.

## Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.)

### Purpose

To gather, organize, and share the history of the village of Manfred, North Dakota and its traditional trade area, and to encourage community pride and restoration of its historic structures.

A function of MHP, Inc.

### Manfred Heritage Museum

#### Purpose

To provide present and future generations opportunity to learn about the important contributions rural places such as Manfred have given to North Dakota and to America.

### Board of Directors

*Buildings and Grounds:*

Pete Anderson

Verna Bowers

Herbert Ongstad

*Corporate:*

Laverne Johnson

Wanda Melchert

Audrey Solheim

*Museum:*

Rose Anderson

Esther Boese

Ruth Widiger

### Officers

Wanda Melchert, President

Laverne Johnson, Vice President

Esther Boese, Secretary

Ruth Widiger, Treasurer

*Wonderful news...*

*Renewal is underway... a bonding of their vision and our vision!*

*"It only takes a spark to get a fire going..."*

The early pioneers bravely envisioned a future on the open expanse of Midwest prairie, thus sparking the fires of thriving communities. Over time due to changing factors, a number of those fires died out; others waned to mere embers. In the village of Manfred, its few residents, the Manfred branch of the Fessenden Coop Elevator, and Vang Lutheran Church remained steadfastly glowing among the surrounding darkness of decay.

Then one day, modern-day pioneers, envisioning renewal for tiny Manfred, founded MHP, Inc. for the purpose to help benefit this place and its history, thus sparking the fires of hope and encouragement. Remarkable progress is underway around this village because of people making a positive difference through their volunteer help and financial support.

Why should it matter to renew such a tiny place as Manfred and bring together its history? What is so important? MHP, Inc. is on an urgent mission to gather Manfred's history and rescue its historic buildings in order to help tell a wonderful story... a story of the westward settlement of America exemplified in the setting of this rural village... an enriching educational experience people can enjoy now and for ages to come.

*MHP, Inc. is growing up so much!*

Wow! This organization is going great... Thanks are due to everyone helping to raise such a happy healthy 'child.' Because of your help, MHP, Inc. has become one of the most successful history projects underway in the state of North Dakota! All are welcome to join in helping this worthy cause.

**Born:** July 25, 2000, MHP, Inc., as a happy bouncing baby busy learning about the world in which it came to live.

**Began walking:** July 26, 2003, when over 230 people witnessed it taking its first steps with the dedication of the Manfred Heritage Museum.

**Starting school:** In 2004, bylaws were written, first annual meeting established its first elected board and officers, and committees set up. The museum collections, plus policies and procedures, begun.

*MHP, Inc. is in very good hands in having its first elected board*

# Some tender loving care astir...

Through the encouraging example and vision of MHP, Inc. with its restoration work on the Melby-Rogness house, other property owners have begun restoration work on some of Manfred's historic properties. As you can see below, much has been accomplished and much is underway. With the help of owners and volunteers, improvements are steadily taking place. Come share the joy of helping with some TLC on any of the various projects. Exciting, too, is the prospect of highway signs for Manfred... more on this in upcoming issues.

## Bank-post office

The bank-post office has new roofing on the lean-to, and a large tree against the foundation removed.

## Cash store

The cash store has new roof, and also tree growth removed including large tree that was endangering the building. Expected as the next project will be restoration of the north exterior side. One tin is missing if anyone might have a 28" x 60" piece.

## Johnson-Ostrem house

The Johnson-Ostrem house has a new roof, and scraping of the exterior has begun. Future projects include roofing the garage and privy, rebuilding the two porches, and continue with exterior scraping and painting. Volunteer workers are needed. Contact Rod Anderson or MHP, Inc. if you would like to help... a work party gathering next summer would be wonderful.

## Melby-Rogness house

Painting work was continued on the south garage. Work on the NW corner of the house foundation will soon start after which other basement work is planned.

## Service station

Work on the service station property includes: a new roof, tree growth removed, a dilapidated shed and a steel hopper attachment removed, the interior cleaned out, scraping of the exterior begun, leveling work done on the land, with replacement of the base plate and repair of the cement foundation soon to begin. Audrey plans to restore her father's station to how it looked as a Standard Oil station. She is interested to assemble a display of Standard Oil items. If you would like to help as a volunteer worker or if you have fitting items for this museum display, please contact Audrey or MHP, Inc.

## Vang Lutheran Church

The window of the Sunday school room at Vang church repaired, as well as other minor exterior repairs.

## Other projects

The chimney of the Manfred school repaired, a hole by the chimney of the Rogness-Soderback-Solheim house patched, part of parsonage back porch removed because of deterioration and trees cut, the open areas of the roof of the Olav and Lena Anderson house covered over with patches as a temporary repair, the basement cavity of the former Bertha Melby house filled and the property landscaped, and plans are to level and landscape two Ravnaas lots as well. A new culvert was installed at the corner of Lake Ave and LeGrand Street. Nothing is underway as yet for the hotel, however, Preservation North Dakota wishes to explore options during the coming year of retaining a presence of this important structure in Manfred.

Permission granted to reprint this article from the July 10, 2004 issue of the Herald-Press

## Johnson-Ostrem house being restored By Rod Anderson



*Johnson-Ostrem preservation project chartered June 25, 2004 at Mandan. From left: Dale Bentley, Veronica Miller, and Andy Gress of Preservation North Dakota together with Board members Audrey Solheim, Rod Anderson, and Wanda Melchert.*

The Johnson-Ostrem house in Manfred, due to celebrate its centennial in 1905-06, has now become chartered by the North Dakota Secretary of State as a non-profit corporation. Affiliated with Preservation North Dakota, the house is now undergoing restoration. Funds donated to the effort are tax deductible under the 501 ( c ) 3 stipulations under the Internal Revenue Service. The house is the latest attempt to honor and memorialize the pioneers who began the effort to build modern North Dakota.

Though much money, labor, materials, and furnishings are being donated to restoring and preserving the town of Manfred, not insignificant expenditures are made in the local area, which contribute directly to the economy.

Built on the corner of Lake and LeGrand, the Johnson-Ostrem house was constructed in 1905 by Nennie Johnson, as his honeymoon cottage. Johnson also built the Manfred Hotel, and the Cash Store, two buildings that still exist and which are undergoing various levels of preservation.

In 1907, Johnson sold the cottage to Rasmus Jacobson and his wife Margaret, who was a sister of Bertha Melby. Their son, James Jacobson, was born in the house. Later he became the manager of the European branch of Chase Manhattan Bank. Jacobson would often return to visit relatives and friends in Manfred and Harvey.

The Jacobsons sold the house in 1917 to the A. A. Nelson family, who in turn sold the house to Lars Ostrem in 1942. The house has remained in the Ostrem family for the past 62 years. During that time, the house and its yard were the location for countless family gatherings – holidays, anniversaries, picnics and too many games of croquet to mention. Perhaps the best-known member of the extended Ostrem family is Larry Fisher, a nationally recognized artist, who grew up in Manfred and Harvey.

# Setting up the Manfred Heritage Museum

## Cataloging the collections and developing museum policies and procedures

This summer provided the opportunity to begin cataloging the collections and to develop museum policies and procedures, as a next step following the dedication of the Manfred Heritage Museum in 2003.

Through a matching grant awarded by the SHSND from funds appropriated by the North Dakota Legislature, Danielle Stuckle, a highly recommended graduate student from NDSU was hired. Danielle ably took charge of cataloging the collections and to introduce us to this important work. She also took it upon herself to apply for a grant through Verendrye Electric Trust, Inc. that helped in the purchase of a computer dedicated for the work of the museum. Thanks so much Danielle for your wonderful help in organizing the collections department! Very best wishes from Manfred!

Danielle shares these words with us, "Our identity, our sense of self, is dependant on the places we come from and the history that can be found in those places. When we neglect that history, the stories and memories that explain who we are and where we've come from are in danger of being lost. The Manfred community can be commended for their fight to save their heritage. The project I worked on this summer was an important step in preserving Manfred history. We created the cataloging system that will allow us to document where the museum artifacts came from and why they are so special. This was a significant project that developed a professional method of cataloging that reflects standard museum practices. I enjoyed working on this project and am glad to see the Manfred community taking such a pro-active stance on saving their heritage."



Danielle Stuckle at the museum computer funded through a grant from Verendrye Electric Trust, Inc. and a designated gift from Barbara Simons.



Danielle is seen writing detailed descriptions of artifacts, this being one of the steps in cataloging the collections.

Below with Danielle are Jenny Yearous, Curator of Collections for SHSND at center and at right Audrey Solheim, the Manfred Heritage Museum historian. This photo appeared with the Herald-Press article.



## Manfred Heritage Museum

### Setting example for others

"Manfred is opening others' eyes to what could be," said Danielle Stuckle. Stuckle has spent 12 weeks at the Manfred Heritage Museum cataloging collections and establishing procedures for the museum. She was hired with grant money procured by Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.

Stuckle, who is finishing studies for a Master's Degree in History at NDSU, said, "It was a wonderful project to be involved with. I enjoyed the work very much. Everyone was so nice, and interested in what I was doing for the museum. A lot of times you don't see the community interested in what you're doing; there's a lot of apathy and, regrettably, people aren't historically aware of their surroundings." This was not the case in Manfred.

Stuckle said, "North Dakota has a lot of history and much of it is being lost. Unfortunately, museums across North Dakota are understaffed, underfunded and a lot of them cease to function. They lock the door and you have to call for an appointment to get in. This isn't a good thing, we need vision." Stuckle said, "Other communities don't have the resources or know how to do this. I think Manfred is a good example of what you can do. It's a community effort and that's what it should be; no one can do it themselves."

There was a gentleman, Lester Burkum, who passed away in the area. When arranging his affairs, they found many photographs. No one knew he was an amateur photographer. He had accumulated photographs of the construction of Garrison Dam and Highway 52, courthouses and grain elevators from all over the state. Some of these entities are no longer standing. "What a treasure trove of history we found," said Stuckle.

The Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. board's goals are to collect and preserve the history of the village and trade area of Manfred. Thanks to funding from the State of North Dakota and Verendrye Electric Trust, Inc. the organization has received the impetus to move ahead with their vision. Stuckle concluded, "Manfred should be an inspiration to other organizations in the state. You can make things happen, even with limited resources. Vision and commitment will be your guides."



# Manfred's website located at [www.manfrednd.org](http://www.manfrednd.org)

Have you visited Manfred's website recently? Located at [www.manfrednd.org](http://www.manfrednd.org) this interesting site continues to have many visitors each week. As an example, during the week of August 22-28, 2004, there were 218 people who visited the site: they viewed 641 pages and opened pages 1,746 times. As of August 28th, there had been a total of 19,821 visits to site pages since it was first opened July of 2001. A report of this nature is provided by Mind Tremors, the company who hosts the site.

Jarrold Schroeder, great grandson of Manfred pioneers Ingvald and Olida Ravnaas, is the webmaster. He has computer training and works for a computer programming company in Minneapolis. There are about 919 files within 165 folders on the site. This will be increased as information becomes available.

This summer, the method for viewing the pages on the site was transferred to Adobe Acrobat, a free software program that may already be installed on your computer. If you do not have the program, simply search for Adobe Acrobat and download it from the Adobe Acrobat website.

*What the heading on the website home page looks like:*

## MANFRED HISTORY AND PRESERVATION, Inc.

P.O. Box 321, Harvey, North Dakota 58341

[Archives](#) - [Beginnings](#) - [Biographies](#) - [Contact](#) - [Events](#) - [Guestbook](#) - [Home](#) - [MHP Info](#) - [Newsletters](#) - [Site Info](#)

*How to use the manfrednd.org website:*

The home page is the page that you see upon arrival to the site. Below the title of the organization and address, there is a line that has several words starting with the word *Archives* that you can click on to visit various pages.

### Archives

By going to the *Archives* you will see the information that was placed on the site as we first began. There have been many changes since those first pages, and quite possibly at this point in time there may be items of interest that were on the first pages that have not yet been loaded to the current section.

### Beginnings

The stories located at *Beginnings* are from the early days of Manfred and are very interesting.

### Biographies

The *Biographies* section is the one I'm working on currently. These are listed alphabetically – Click on the letter, then the name, and you'll be able to read about that family. If your family isn't listed yet, be patient, or contact me to make sure I have information about your family to put on the site. It is a time consuming project, but I'm working on it constantly so keep watching for new items.

### Contact

The *Contact* section will give you, with just a click on the word Contact, an email composition page for you to write to me. I'd love to hear from you – Suggestions are helpful, corrections necessary, information and photos great, and just a hello will be fun too.

### Events

The *Events* section is divided by years – this is where you would have found that the Bismarck Tribune had a front-page story on Manfred. There are several items in the 2004 section, and items from earlier as well.

### Guestbook

The *Guestbook* was used frequently at first, but now it's been months since anyone has signed in. It is a way of making contact with those who use the website. Please make use of it.

### Newsletter

You will be pleased to know that all issues of this newsletter are available on the website. To view these newsletter issues, just go to the section entitled *Newsletters*.

I think you'll find this a user friendly website. Once the biographies are finished I'll be working on the history of early businesses and local organizations, including the churches.

Happy viewing!

Audrey Solheim, Website Administrator

*Preservation efforts keeping tiny Manfred alive*

# North Dakota's living history

By Lauren Donovan



Lauren Donovan

In coffins or in cars packed for elsewhere, people quietly left the Wells County village of Manfred. Almost alone, it fell into a deep slumber, and while it slept, trees and bushes grew wild and water and wind found cracks in abandoned houses and buildings. Like Rip Van Winkle, the village dozed on unaware that, except for a few homes still occupied, decrepitude was creeping on.

It slept fathoms deep until one day, a woman gave it a gentle shake on the shoulder. The woman found the old village fascinating in a way that no one else ever had. Wake up, the woman said, wake up. More than anything, she wanted the village to tell its history and all its stories before the deep sleep slipped into death and all there was to know was forever lost. The woman poked at Manfred with an urgency fueled by her own age. Past her mid-50s, time is already measured below the half-full line.

Wanda Melchert grew up in Mandan and settled in New Mexico. She had never lived in Manfred, but her mother and her mother's people had. In wanting to know her family's past, she found a passion. The awakening of Manfred has become her singular obsession. It has fueled others to join her. In T-shirt, jeans and chin-length hair flying, she is everywhere at once.

Esther Boese lives on a farm a scant quarter-mile north of Manfred on the other side of the reedy James River. She is gracefully aging, her recent years unexpectedly enlivened by the energy Melchert inspires. "It's lonely out here," said Boese, who remembers when the village was alive. "It's nice to have a place to be together."

Manfred will not become a ghost town, at least not like ghost towns are generally understood. Its ghosts will be up and talking. In some cases, they are already are. They talk in photographs, documented histories and in buildings resurrected from ruination.

The town's history is being told where the history took place, in a village established along the now Canadian Pacific railroad nine miles east of Harvey. One by one, Melchert and Manfred History and Preservation Inc., have rescued buildings within the few blocks of the old town proper. So far, those include two houses, the town's first bank, the cash store and a two-story hotel. Three buildings in town -- the historic bank, a home and the Vang Lutheran Church -- are dedicated to the Manfred Heritage Museum and open to the public on days when the flag is flying. Others will be added.

They've gotten the historic Vang Lutheran Church listed on the National Register of Historic Places and received preservation grants for the church and to catalog and archive historic buildings and artifacts. Preservation North Dakota named Manfred History and Preservation Inc., its 2002 success story. They've got their eye on the old brick schoolhouse and the oldest house in town, a two-story, Norwegian beauty on the banks of the James.

Others have come along on their own, peeling back the overgrowth to find what's underneath. There's a woman who's restoring her dad's old gas station, literally taking a chainsaw to get at it, and a man who's restoring his childhood home.

After getting into the history quest knee deep, Melchert was at a crossroads. She could stay in New Mexico or she could make her summer excursions into Manfred's history a full-time life. Rose Anderson, friend and wife of a third-generation Manfred farm family, had one word. "She said, 'Come,'" Melchert said. So she did.

Her friend Rose Anderson has country-bred kindness, serving noontime lunch at her kitchen table. Part of the Anderson home is the old homestead shanty, hauled in sometime around when the railroad came through in the 1890s. It is older than the 1915 barn that stands taller than any tree on the place. Pete and Rose Anderson can see Manfred from their farm. The farm's grain still gets hauled to the Manfred elevator, but it's been decades since they did any other commerce there. Pete Anderson values Melchert's work to make the village a museum and history tour. "Her enthusiasm has spread like the early pioneers', who had to build up the town and the country," he said, pausing to pass sliced tomatoes and summer sausage.

### *North Dakota's living history (cont.)*

More than 400 people are on the Manfred history and preservation newsletter mailing list. To Melchert, Manfred's history includes the countryside, the Anderson farm and others. Near Manfred is a locally famous Sears catalog home, built by John and Malena Johnson in 1915. The property is owned by six descendants, all siblings, who live and gather there on and off during the year. The grand old house is surrounded by a tight enclosure of trees and bushes, lending shade and privacy. Larry Johnson of California was touching up porch pillars with a fresh coat of white paint. Keeping the house is a labor of love, but Johnson said he and his brothers and sisters are committed. "It's a combination of where it is and that it's such a unique house," he said. "I think if we take care of it, it will last a long time."

Manfred is in Manfred Township, and in the 1920s, about 430 people lived on farms and in the village. Today, fewer than 50 people occupy the whole township of 36 sections. The dwindling number heightens Melchert's sense of urgency. Those few left to tell the stories are the children of settlers. "We're losing them," she said.

Danielle Stuckle, a graduate history student from North Dakota State University, is spending this summer cataloging and archiving the Manfred museum buildings and contents. She said the local history group "is at the head of the class" for its work to preserve an entire setting, rather than simply pick up structures and move them to a heritage park. "It's so important not to move buildings," Stuckle said.

Well, the buildings were never going anywhere, except where gravity would have finally demanded. Now, some are being saved and visitors can see history as it was made, from the original ground up. To Melchert, there is still much to do with what remains. "It's like a work in progress," she said.

*Photos and captions appearing with the Tribune article by Lauren Donovan*



A view of Manfred with the original bank and cash store in the foreground. Three buildings in the old village town site are part of a museum collection.



Pete Anderson and his sister, Verna Bowers, at the historic Anderson farm just outside Manfred



Wanda Melchert in the vestibule of the historic Vang Lutheran Church, which is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church still has Sunday services and the weekly count of 15 or so posted where always includes one extra for God.

## Manfred making history

*Editorial by Dave Bundy for the Tribune*

By the standards of much of our still-young nation, and certainly by the standards of Europe and Asia, we're not too far removed in time from the beginnings of our state. And one can stumble upon historical sites all over our communities.

Our heritage matters to us, so preservation of our history matters to us. And in Manfred, as chronicled by Lauren Donovan in Sunday's Tribune, an effort is under way that deserves notice. Fueled by an interest in her own family's history, Wanda Melchert has jump-started preservation efforts in the Wells County town, and other local folks or folks with local ties have joined in.

The 400 people Donovan reported on the mailing list for the Manfred history and preservation newsletter is a testament to Melchert's work, especially since the whole township surrounding Manfred is home to fewer than 50 people.

The efforts to save buildings is all the more laudable because the buildings are being saved in their natural settings. History carted off to a heritage park is still history, but there's no substitute for being able to view beautiful and old buildings in their original context.

Donovan wrote of Melchert's sense of urgency as residents age and move away. Manfred isn't the only place where history is vanishing before our eyes. Manfred likely won't be reborn or restored to its heyday. It's like a lot of swindling North Dakota towns that way. But the town offers an important example. Manfred folks know they still have something to contribute, and while they're out saving their own village, they're saving something for all of us.



Review of

# Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.

2000

2000 through 2003

\*Manfred history and preservation projects first introduced to the March and April Manfred Township board meetings by Wanda Melchert.

\*Preservation Day May 19. Talks by Dale Bentley-Preservation North Dakota, Rolene Schliesman the then architectural historian for the State Historical Society of North Dakota, and Wanda Melchert; followed by a potluck dinner and Preservation North Dakota board meeting. Documented by two Minot television stations and the Herald-Press.



Preservationists from around the state and nation take a close look at historic sites in Manfred. May 19, 2000



Founder's Day, July 26, 2000

From Right to Left: Reinar Widiger, Donald Anderson, Ruth Anderson Widiger, Jeanne Melby, Kenneth Melby, Pam Nelson Norstedt, Lorraine Rau, Laverne Johnson, Shirley Opdahl, Leslie Johnson, Olga Johnson, Betty Melby, Gene Melby, Verna Anderson Bowers, Jeanne McBain Flick, Herbert Ongstad, Edgar Allen Flick, Wanda Melchert, Eileen Haugen, Rose Anderson, Richard Melchert, Hadley Haugen.  
(Not pictured - Peg Bell, Perry Anderson, Jacob Anderson)

\*Founder's Day July 26, 2000. Articles of Incorporation signed by Rose Anderson, Verna Bowers, Wanda Melchert, Pam Norstedt, and Herbert Ongstad. Founder's document was signed by everyone present.

\*First MHP, Inc. meeting held Sept. 23, 2000 and a second on October 29 at which time officers were named: Wanda Melchert, Pres; Verna Bowers, Vice Pres; Pam Norstedt, Sec.-Treas; Pete Anderson, Rose Anderson, and Herbert Ongstad, Directors. Added later as Directors were Perry Anderson and Esther Boese. Ruth Widiger became Treasurer in Sept. 2001.

\*Manfred's website [www.manfrednd.org](http://www.manfrednd.org) originated in July by Susan Nelson Sommerfeld. Jarrod Schroeder took over January 2001 with Audrey Solheim assisting. First issue of the Manfred Newsletter published December 2000 with Wanda Melchert editor assisted by Audrey Solheim.

2001

\*April 18: MHP, Inc. obtained its first property, the O.K. Melby/Sam Rogness home. Roofing and repair by contractor Greg Seidel, and painting by Verna Bowers and Wanda and Richard Melchert.

\*June 21: Vang Lutheran Church placed on National Register of Historic Places authored by Wanda Melchert. A large group accepted the award at a ceremony in the Heritage Center on November 17, 2001. (December 2001 Manfred Newsletter.)

\*July 25-26: Manfred Days, a celebration of Manfred and its history, included a banquet, tours, church services, picnic, parade, and program. About 400 people from around the country gathered for this event. (September 2001 Manfred Newsletter.)

\*October 26: The John and Malena Johnson Sears Catalog Home was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places by their granddaughter Laverne Johnson.



Melby-Rogness home exterior restored in time for Manfred Days, July 14 and 15, 2001



Vang Lutheran Church is the first property from Manfred Township to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The award certificate now hangs in the church sanctuary.



Sunday, July 15, 2001 catered picnic dinner under the big top tent as part of the Manfred Days' festivities



## 2002

\*Melby-Rogness House restoration work – Interior gutted. A good portion of house jacked and much of cement block basement walls built under guidance of volunteer contractor Paul Gunderson.

\*May 10: Vang Lutheran Church awarded a “Grass Roots Preservation matching Grant” of \$1,504 through the Prairie Churches of North Dakota Project. Contractors were Mark Faul, backhoe; Brian Elverud, mason; Robin Rost, gutters and downspouts; and John Dethloff, landscaping.

\*May 17: MHP, Inc. named North Dakota’s “Preservation Success Story for 2002” by Preservation North Dakota. (June 2002 Manfred Newsletter.)

\*November 15-16: Manfred’s first Brochure debuted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor’s Conference on North Dakota History.

\*Dec 26: Manfred featured statewide in an article by Cleo Cantlon, correspondent with the Minot Daily News. (March 2003 Newsletter.)

### *Some of the restoration activities...*



Some of the wall builders:  
Herbert Ongstad, Wesley Boese,  
Tom Alveshere, Paul Gunderson,  
Lowell Anderson



Lunch with the Andersons: Rose,  
Paul, Pete, Jacob, Perry and Wanda



Paul Gunderson, volunteer contractor



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



Mark Faul with his backhoe at the Melby-Rogness House



Perry Anderson restored water damaged portion of dining room wall

## 2003

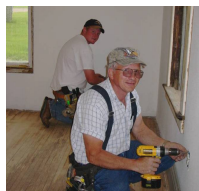
\*Melby-Rogness House restoration work completed for three rooms on first floor: Fritz Wohl, electrical wiring; Wesley Boese, Pete Anderson, Wanda Melchert, insulation; Greg Seidel, sheetrock; Lefty Erickson, taping; Paul Gunderson, texturing; Wesley Boese and Wanda Melchert, wood floors; Wanda Melchert and Rita Seidel and crew, painting; Herbert Ongstad, wood molding and base boards. Curtain material given by Muriel Boyum, sewn by Kathy Alveshere, and installed by the Manfred Homemaker’s Club. Pole jacks installed in basement. Part of south garage painted by Verna Bowers and Reiner Widiger.

\*The Beiseker Bank/Manfred P.O. renovated to serve as a historic photo gallery. Painted by Pam Nelson Norstedt and Lloyd, Wanda Melchert, Crystal Roller, Ashley Weigelt, Rita Seidel and crew. Photos prepared by Dianne Johnson Aull, Muriel Boyum, Laverne Johnson, Lyle Schultz, Audrey Solheim, Maridel Hoover Sprenger, Louise Fandrich Wachter.

\*July 25: The Manfred Heritage Museum dedicated with three buildings: Melby-Rogness House, Bank/Post Office, and Vang Church. Laverne Johnson composed and sang a song especially for the dedication. About 230 people attended.

\*September 21: Manfred featured nationwide in an article by Jason Wilson published in the Washington Post Magazine.

\*November 14: Wanda Melchert named Bentley Award “Volunteer of the Year” by Preservation North Dakota.



Fritz Wohl, electrical



Lefty Erickson, taping



Preparing photos to install in the bank/post office



Ribbon cutting for the new Manfred Heritage Museum



Laverne Johnson performing



Dedication held outdoors on a lovely day



## Guest Book

Curt and Jean Mortenson, Rochester, MN  
 Myrtle Rogness, Harvey, ND  
 Elsie Martinson, Harvey, ND  
 Denise, Danielle, and Sophia Stuckle, Fargo, ND  
 Myron and Virginia Soiseth, Inver Grove Heights, MN  
 George Soiseth, St. Paul, MN  
 Sheila Schroeder, Harvey, ND  
 Lois Schaff, Harvey, ND  
 Kathy Holte, Minot, ND  
 Ruth Widiger, Fessenden, ND  
 Terry Weckerly, Hurdsfield, ND  
 Rick and Ann Hornung, Pettibone, ND (Danielle Stuckle)  
 Alberta Hornung, Pettibone, ND  
 Wilbur and Myrle Mauch, Sykeston, ND  
 Ron Schneider, Harvey, ND  
 Dianne Aull, Bismarck, ND  
 Ruby and Earl Gutschmidt, Devall, WA (Pearl Johnson)  
 Lisa, Teresa and Jordon Vaughan, Wilbur, WA (Johnson)  
 Laverne Johnson, Bismarck, ND  
 Bob Knutson, Minot, ND (Caroline Thune)  
 Fred, Martha, Emilie, Frederick Wolter, Hastings, MN  
 Donna Brown, Harvey, ND  
 Arlene Rudel, Phoenix, AZ  
 Sharon Calheim, Harvey, ND  
 Jennifer Donarski, Harvey, ND  
 Verna Bowers, Harvey, ND  
 Rod Anderson, Goodyear, AZ  
 Mark Lithun, Fessenden, ND  
 Betty Melby, Manfred, ND  
 Norm and Diane (Larson) Boese, Winter Springs, FA  
 Rich and Karen (Ehni) Turner, Saint Jo, TX  
 June (Boese) and Janice Farias, Andover, KS  
 Susie and Lee Blattner (Overland), Vancouver, WA  
 Dale and Shirley Opdahl, Harvey, ND  
 Jim and Judy (Langseth) Abbey, Brier, WA  
 Jerry and Dorothy (Langseth) Stansberry, Woodinville, WA  
 Peter and Rose Anderson, Manfred, ND  
 Glen and Nan Bendickson, El Paso, TX  
 JoAnn Bendickson Telehey, Voltaire, ND  
 Denise (Miller), Marlin, Michelle, Jared Weikum, Franktown, CO  
 Darlene Miller, Harvey, ND  
 Edgar and Jeanne Flick, Manfred, ND  
 Kathy Hoornaert, Manfred, ND  
 Janice Schlenker Muscha, Casselton, ND  
 Trygve Skolness (Albrecht)  
 Blake and Crystal Roller, Manfred, ND  
 Jared Hoornaert, Harvey, ND  
 Lori, Darcy, Natalya, Colton Muldner, Glendale, AZ (Fischer)  
 Gloria (Fischer) Pake, Phoenix, AZ  
 Art and Ruth Fischer, Harvey, ND  
 Marvin Koenig, Fessenden, ND  
 Maridel Hoover Sprenger, Bismarck, ND  
 Muriel and Lowell Boyum, Mandan, ND  
 Lewis, Judy, Ashley Weigelt, Manfred, ND  
 Justin Martin, Harvey, ND  
 Jacob Anderson, Harvey, ND  
 Pamela Nelson Norstedt, & Lloyd Harvey, ND  
 Curtis and Brittney Nelson, Devils Lake, ND  
 Herb Ongstad, Manfred, ND  
 Patti Patrie, Bowdon, ND  
 Hadley and Eileen Haugen, Fessenden, ND  
 Audrey Solheim, Bismarck, ND  
 Josh Harkness, Manfred, ND  
 Dale Bentley, Veronica Miller, Daryl Van Hall, Preservation ND  
 Oris and Corrine Thompson, Belleville, KS (Anita's sister)  
 Anita Schindler, Harvey, ND  
 JoAnn Helvig, Breezy Point, MN  
 Sandy Pramann, White Bear Lake, MN  
 Lucille Wiese, Fessenden, ND  
 Kathy Kessler, Fessenden, ND  
 Suzanne Kelley, West Fargo, ND  
 Tom Isern, West Fargo, ND  
 Ron McBain, Fessenden, ND  
 Roger and Donna Eaton, Feeding Hills, MA  
 Roger and Marilyn deVeer, Bowdon, ND  
 Carol Alvshere Moldenhouer, Dodge/Minot, ND  
 Clarence Alvshere, Harvey, ND

## Old and new friends enjoying Manfred

Whether visiting Manfred and reminiscing as old friends or coming as new friends seeing the village for the first time, people of all ages are enjoying the experience of this tiny rural place and its history.



Myrtle Rogness and Elsie Martinson together with their nephew Curt Mortenson and his wife Jean



Brothers, Myron and George Soiseth



Norm and Diane (Larson) Boese



Bob Knutson

Bob's mother was Caroline Thune



One of the images brought to the museum by Bob was of a program held in the old Sons of Norway hall.



Susie and Lee Blattner of the Overland family



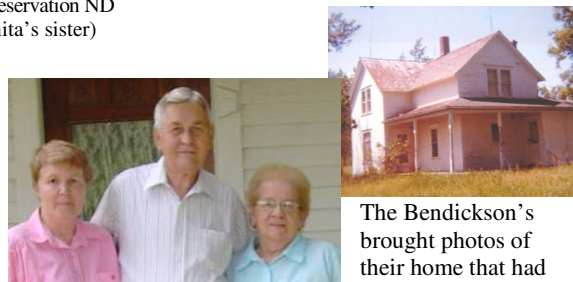
Tourists... The Wolter family from Hastings, MN enjoying a stop in Manfred while on their way to Canada.



Art and Ruth Fischer on their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary July 20<sup>th</sup> with their daughter Gloria Pake and family



Jerry and Dorothy Stansberry and Judy and Jim Abbey  
 Judy and Dorothy brought historic documents regarding their father Alvin Langseth. They were pleased to learn that in 2006 the Vang church building will reach its 100<sup>th</sup> year since construction.



Nan and Glen Bendickson and Glen's sister JoAnn Telehey



The Bendickson's brought photos of their home that had been located on the west side of Manfred.



Darlene Miller (Dale) back left and daughter Denise right together with husband Marlin Weikum and children Michelle and Jared.