

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 to gather and preserve the history of the Manfred area, and also to encourage preservation of its historic buildings. Suggested annual contribution to help defray the cost of this newsletter is \$10.00 payable to MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341. You are invited to visit Manfred's website at <http://www.manfrednd.org>. Wanda Melchert, newsletter editor, wrmelchert@westriv.com.

Volume 3, Issue 1

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March 2003

'Group Restoring Manfred Into Historical Village'

Excerpts from a news article December 26, 2002 by Cleo Cantlon, correspondent with the Minot Daily News

A very warm thank you to Cleo Cantlon for her article on Manfred that appeared in the Minot Daily News, and thereafter went out on the AP appearing in such papers as Bismarck, Dickinson, Grand Forks, and Fargo.

Manfred – Don't try to tell members of the Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. group that small rural towns are doomed. They can't hear you because of the noise of tools and people working to preserve their village. They have accomplished major tasks toward their goal, establishing the Manfred Heritage Museum within a village dedicated to honoring small rural towns.

Vang Lutheran Church, built in 1906 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, has enjoyed ongoing care. This year's refurbishing efforts at the church included rain gutters, foundation work and landscaping. The group is now working on the O.K. Melby-Sam Rogness home, a story-and-a-half house erected in 1903. They plan to have it ready for the museum opening July 26, 2003. MHP, Inc. President Wanda Melchert has acquired the Beiseker Bank-Manfred Post Office building and is looking for others.

Melchert spearheaded the campaign that led to MHP, Inc. and the museum concept. "Manfred is fortunate to have the railroad, the Manfred branch of the Fessenden Elevator, and the Vang church still operating," she said. "They lend to us the feeling of an active small town."

Assisting with the work are contractor Greg Seidel and volunteer contractor Paul Gunderson. Gunderson, whose family has been active in

construction, saved the group thousands of dollars in labor and material costs, Melchert said.

"Manfred was a core community for the area, the place where the railroad first stopped. Many of the buildings in this area, as far away as Esmond and Fessenden, were built with lumber hauled from Manfred yards," Gunderson said.

Work on the church was assisted with grant monies. Dale Bentley of Preservation North Dakota, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, the Wells County Historical Society, and many other individuals have encouraged the Manfred group. Melchert said a November visit with Jason Wilson, a regular correspondent with the Washington Post magazine researching endangered prairie churches, has given efforts a boost. "People who own vacant buildings or slots in Manfred have really begun a big effort to clean up since we've been working," she said, "and we really appreciate that."

**Establishing the
Manfred Heritage
Museum within a village,
dedicated to honoring
small rural towns.**

Workers like Pete Anderson have made big contributions to the effort, especially on the Melby-Rogness house. "I remember visiting here when Myrtle and Sam Rogness lived here, sitting at the dining room table right under that south window," he said.

The old house was in disrepair when MHP, Inc. took over. The sky was visible through the roof and Gunderson said a disintegrating foundation caused the house to settle five inches at one point. Basement repairs have nearly been completed for this 28-foot-square house and its 12-foot square kitchen addition.

"We have a 1890s piano, vintage linens, and other items ready to put in it," Melchert said. "The house will be museum headquarters, with a computer here for historical research." The museum will also have other modern aspects, a newsletter for 450 subscribers & its website <http://www.manfrednd.org>. Melchert pointed out salvaged treasures in the house: columns from Anderson's family farm home, leaded glass from the stonemason who constructed the original foundation, and cement blocks from Melchert's grandmother's house.

The Manfred Heritage Museum is a giant undertaking, but Melchert and her fellow workers think it can and should be done. "Manfred is not just for local people," she said. "I see it as a representative, a voice for rural America."

The New Manfred News

On Jan. 26, 2003, Marlys Piatz, president of the Well County FCE awarded Esther Boese and Evelina Boese 50-year pins as members of the Manfred Homemaker's Club.

Manfred supporter and long time lawyer having served many people in the region, John Tebelius died Sept. 28, 2002 at the age of 91.

The Melby Round Robin celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2002. The children of Oscar and Bertha Melby started up a Round Robin shortly after their daughter Ethel married Joe Bolyard in 1952. It continues today with all eight family lines: Cora-husband Emmett Turner, Roy-daughter Brenda Skalet, Ruth-son John Hovey, Muriel, Orlien, Kenneth, Gene, and Ethel, as the robin makes its round every few months.

If you have a computer and would like to help with a wonderfully fun and easy project, please contact wrmelchert@westriv.com or asolheim@bis.midco.net

During January the wiring was installed in the Melby-Rogness home by electrician Fritz Wohl, insulation installed by volunteers, and a good portion of the sheetrock installed by contractor Greg Seidel... made possible because of your contributions to MHP, Inc. Thank you so much! Your continued help is needed! Restoration work is steadily progressing under the guidance of volunteer contractor Paul Gunderson.

The dark green color chosen as the accent color for this issue is in honor of Olga Johnson, it having been her favorite color.



Malena Johnson, on the right in the back row, together with her parents James and Pernila Johnson, and her siblings Joseph, Casper, Adolph, Julia, Gena, and Adelia. (See history piece page 4 & 5)

In Memory

Annie Onstad Solheim

December 5, 1909 - December 12, 2002

Dolores Renden

November 12, 1917 - January 31, 2003

History Contributions

Thank you so much to the following people, for your recent contributions for the Manfred history collection

Historical Information And Photos

Ruth Aarthun
Wesley and Esther Boese
Lowell Boyum
John Johnson descendants
Doreen Olson Kartes
Anne I Melby Beyer (N.J. Melby)
Ken and Katherine Oxta (Alveshere)
Mae Thompson (Natland)

Historical Item

The Manfred School Organ given by the Johnson Family in memory of their parents, Leslie & Olga Johnson



Dec. workday on the basement project:
From left Paul Gunderson, Wanda Melchert, Wesley Boese, Pete Anderson.
Photo by Cleo Cantlon, Minot Daily News



Information Box
donated by
Pete Anderson

Financial Contributions

Thank you so much to the following people, for your recent financial contributions to Manfred History and Preservation, Inc.

Contributions to MHP, Inc.
(General Fund)

Rose Anderson
Dianne Aull
Muriel Boyum
In memory of Anna Ekrem Bymoene
Joelyn Bymoene Scriba
In memory of Ole & Ida Frovig & family
Helen Frovig Kegerreis
Laverne Johnson
In memory of Leslie and Olga Johnson
Rev. Klaus Raab
Steve and Sandy Krause
Scott and Laurie Lloyd
Nelson Funeral Home
Selmer and Nora Rodne
Marilyn Sjaastad
In memory of Annie Solheim
Helen Fritchie
Arden and Linda Georgeson
Richard and Wanda Melchert
Reiner and Ruth Widiger
Merlin and Laurie Schwartz
Emmett Turner
Carl and DeVella Vik

Contributions To Help Defray Newsletter Expense

Kevin and Tresa Boese
Mark and Sharla Boese
Norman and Diane Boese
Wesley and Esther Boese
Jeff and June Farias
Charles Johnson
John Johnson
Russell J. Johnson
Russell L. Johnson
Terry Johnson
Arlene Krause
Scott and Laurie Lloyd
Elmer and Mary Melby
Orville and Pat Rodne
Marilyn Sjaastad
Maurice Ravnaas
Selmer and Nora Rodne
Willis Rogelstad
Floyd and Barbara Simmons
Lawrence and Agnes Wagner
Margaret Walth

*Friends of Manfred,
your contributions
are needed!*

*Manfred Heritage Museum
Grand Opening Dedication - July 26, 2003*

Celebrating a bright shining future for Manfred!

A warm welcome to everyone as the 'Manfred News' begins its third year! It's a publication that celebrates the history of the Manfred area and also chronicles the remarkable work of Manfred History and Preservation, Inc., a non-profit organization founded July 25, 2000 with the twofold purpose to gather and preserve the history of the Manfred area, and to encourage preservation of its historic buildings. Wow! These two purposes will join together this next summer in the dedication of the Manfred Heritage Museum, comprised of historic buildings, in which the history of the area will be told right in its authentic historic setting. No longer are the words 'Poor Manfred' heard, but rather hearts are encouraged. The Manfred area is blessed as residents and area volunteers steadily make a positive difference for the benefit of this quaint historic village and its surrounding area. You are invited to mark your calendars for the dedication of this new museum to be held Saturday, July 26 in the afternoon. Together we celebrate Manfred's bright shining future!

MHP, Inc. is indeed making great progress, and if you have given financial contributions to MHP, Inc. then you have helped made restoration work in Manfred possible. Thank you!! Your help is needed now at this key point, in preparation for the museum opening. Kindly send contributions to MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341.

The Johnson Family History

Three of Nils Jensen's children settled at Manfred: Anna Johnson (Mrs. P.B. Anderson), John A. Johnson, and Nennie Johnson. Below is the history for Nils, and the remainder of this issue features the history of John A. Johnson and his family. Future issues will feature the histories of Anna and Nennie. Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the history articles in this issue: Laverne Johnson for the 'History of John and Malena Johnson' and the 'History of Leslie and Olga Johnson,' Dianne Johnson Aull for the poem entitled 'Malena,' 'Some Facts and Thoughts Relating to the Johnson Ancestry' by Leslie Johnson (1995), Stories by Russell Johnson, Memoir papers from Everett Johnson, Family history from Eileen Mead and Pete Anderson, Photos from the Johnson and Anderson Collections and from Andrene Everson, Charlotte Hyatt, Jessica Johnson, Russell Johnson, Eileen Mead, and Audrey Solheim.

Nils Jensen

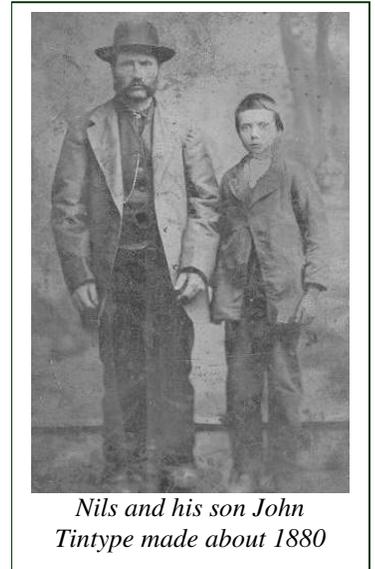
Between 1863 and 1867, Nils Jensen and his family emigrated from Nordland, located in the northern part of Norway where they had been farmers and fishermen, to West Salem, Wisconsin. The following story, as told by Leslie Johnson, tells how the family name changed from Jensen to Johnson: "Upon enrolling in a country school, the children were, of course, asked their surnames. The obviously ignorant teacher said, 'Jensen? That's no American name!' She wrote down 'Johnson.' Nils said, 'All right, if that's the way it is in America, we are Johnsons.'"

*Entries as printed in the Manfred News column of the Wells County Free Press,
Sven Grane, Manfred Correspondent:
August 11, 1905*

Nels Johnson arrived in Manfred last Thursday morning and will visit a week or two with his sons, Nennie and John. Mr. Johnson is a prosperous farmer at Downing, Wis. He is a very pleasant old gentleman to meet with and is quite enthusiastic over North Dakota and its broad, level prairies.

August 25, 1905

Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Anderson gave a reception at their home last Sunday in honor of Mrs. Anderson's father, Nels Johnson, who is up from Downing, Wis. on a visit. Those present were Messrs and Mesdames A. Skogmo, S. H. Ongstad, J. A. Johnson, and N. Johnson, Miss Hollan, and Messrs. S. P. Grane, E. Gartland, and G. Gunderson. The weather was fine for the occasion and everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. A bountiful and appetizing repast was served in the evening to which they all did credit.



*Nils and his son John
Tintype made about 1880*

The children of Nils Jensen (Johnson):

1. Anna 1863-1942 married Peter B. Anderson 1859-1948. Farmed at Manfred. Twelve children, eight reached adulthood: Arthur 1887, Ninnie 1888, Orren 1890, Cora Nertrout 1893, Esther 1895, Perry 1899, Florence Simon 1901, Mathilda Burg 1903.
2. Ole 1869-1967 married Bertha?. No children. A professional soldier, Ole served under Gen. Arthur MacArthur (father of Douglas) in the Philippines during the Spanish American War.
3. John 1871-1960 married Malena Johnson 1874-1925. Farmed at Manfred. Eight children, six reached adulthood: Alvin 1898, Edna Howie 1900, Pearl Gutschmidt, 1903, Leslie 1910, Russell 1912, Everett 1917.
4. Nennie 1872-1945 m. Alpha Skogmo 1887-1979. Businesses at Manfred. Two children: Harriet Everett 1907, Winnifred Gustafson 1909.
5. Dave (dates unknown). Unmarried. Career as a policeman at Seattle, Washington.
6. Albert (dates unknown). Lived in Wisconsin. He and his wife died young of tuberculosis. One child: James.
7. Dora (dates unknown) married an Olson. Four children: Reuben, Alma, Petra, Della.
8. Mary (dates unknown) married a Gunderson, both died young. Five children: Ralph, Harry, Lincoln, Tillie, Millie.

John and Malena Johnson

Based on the Johnson family history by Laverne Johnson

John Andy Johnson was born February 2, 1871, at West Salem, Wisconsin and raised there. His older sister Anna and her husband P.B. Anderson had procured Preemption and Tree Claims in Paradise Township near what would later become the town of McHenry in Foster County. At that time, John was not yet old enough to file his own claim, but he, along with his brother, Nennie would come out to North Dakota during the summers working in the area on various jobs, such as construction on the Wells County Courthouse, and working in the harvest fields. During visits back to Wis., Malena (nee Johnson), a neighbor girl who had been cool to him formerly, began regarding him as a dashing and romantic figure, and they became engaged. Malena was born August 16, 1874 in Iowa.

Poor land, drought, and grasshoppers prompted Anna and Peter Anderson, along with several of their Paradise Township neighbors, to look elsewhere for permanent settlement, which they found in the newly opened lands of Wells County. In 1896, John filed on a homestead northwest of Manfred, adjacent to his brother-in-law, Peter Anderson's homestead. John built a sod shanty and went back to Wis. where he and Malena were married April 28, 1896.

Life for a young pioneer family on the prairie had its share of hardships, and John and Malena's first child, born in the sod house, died in infancy. (See sod house story, page 8). In 1898, John replaced the soddie with a small frame house he had bought from a neighboring homesteader. Their son, Alvin, was born the same year. Five other children were also born in this house: Edna in 1900, Pearl in 1902, Miles in 1908 died at 6 months of age, Leslie in 1910, and Russell in 1912. The old house is still standing in the farmyard and was used as a granary for many years.

After a few years of successful farming in small grains and some livestock, John and Malena expanded into the dairy business. John obtained an exclusive contract with the Soo Line Railroad to provide milk for the Soo Line restaurants located at Harvey, Portal, and Enderlin. The restaurants leased by the Soo Line Railroad were owned by W.M. Laslie, after whom John and Malena's son, Leslie (with a slight variation in spelling) was named. John and Malena called their property Riverside Farm, and this remains the official name as registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State.

In 1914, John and Malena decided to build a bigger house for their young family, and chose "Sears Modern Home No. 114" from the Sears Roebuck Catalog. The basement was dug in the summer of 1914 by Oscar Ongstad. John hauled the materials, shipped by rail from Chicago to Manfred, to the farm in a horse-drawn wagon in the spring of 1915. Meland Brothers from Wellsburg were the builders. The Johnsons moved into their new home in the fall of 1915. Everett was born in 1917. The Johnson Sears Home is now in the process of being listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*.

John and Malena were members of Vang Lutheran Church, and all their children were baptized and confirmed there. They were a viable part of the community, attending special church events, Sons of Norway dances, and other community activities. Malena died in 1925, having just turned 51. Daughters Edna and Pearl came home to help with the three youngest children, Leslie, Russell, and Everett, ages 14 to 7. John also hired housekeepers to help out. He continued the farming and dairy business with the help of his sons. Then after retiring, he moved to Long Beach, California, where he resided until his death in 1960.



John purchased this home in 1898, and he and his family lived here until 1915.



The barn, built in 1910 by Strom Bro., was destroyed by a windstorm in 1990.



Photo taken between 1910-1915, shows the house with an addition at far right.



Shows new home as a residence and old home as a granary, 1915 or after.



*From left: Russell, Leslie, John, Everett
Photo taken about 1940.*



Malena

By
Dianne Johnson Aull



The morning's cold. She pulls her shawl around her shoulders tight.
She stokes the wood into the stove; the fire flares up bright.
Dips water into the coffee pot, and sets it on to boil.
She'll add some grounds and when the brew releases its bouquet,
Then it will be the time that everyone wakes up and starts the day.

She'll wake the older children soon, but now she's glad for quiet.
To think about the field up North. "I wonder if we should try it..."

We put it into wheat last year, but if we had more corn,
Those dairy cows might make more milk..."
That stove is finally warm.

"Edna, wake up, come and help me with the breakfast now.
Alvin, go and get some eggs. Pearl, where is the cow?
Oh, never mind, go get the baby; he needs his diaper changed.
I'm busy making buckwheat cakes.
Let's get the table arranged."

"Father went to Manfred early, but he should be back soon."
Efficiently she manages tasks within the room,
But she and John are partners full, from sun till next day sun.
She's good at business, they agree; two heads better than one.

She bakes the bread, raises the kids, and has some turkey hens.
Sometimes she thinks about back home, how life was easier then.
Back in Wisconsin as a girl, her family's house was large.
She didn't have to work so hard, and she was not in charge.

But John and P.B. went out West, and found a place to be.
And they could get some extra land if they would plant some trees.
John's sister married Peter Beck; Malena married John.
And now they build their dreams and homes under Dakota sun.
Along the riverbank they live, and farm, and also play.
They go to Manfred when they want;

It's just a ways away.
And it's been growing quite a lot in recent times it seems.
And dairying is working well, with extra cash from cream.

Malena's cleaning up the stove and setting bread to rise.
She washes up the baby's hands; plants a kiss between his eyes.
But not too much for silliness, she shoos the kids away.
And takes a breath and readies for another long hard day.

*Dianne wrote this poem January 2003, in tribute of her Grandmother Malena whom she never met.
Dianne relates that since she never met her grandmother, she can only imagine
what Malena's days were like from the stories her dad and other relatives told her.*

John
and
Malena



John & Malena's Children



Edna, Russell, Alvin, Leslie, Everett, Pearl
Photo taken in 1925.

Alvin
1898-1993. Moved to Seattle in the early 1920s, married
Lila Kielly. Children: Marlyce, James, Landis, & Darrel.

Edna
1900-1980. Married David Howie. They moved to Seattle in
the 1930s. Children: Ada Mae, Eileen, Jeannine, Malena, &
David.

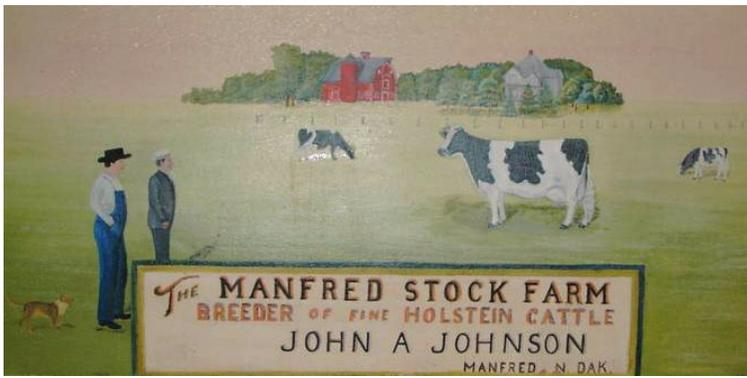
Pearl
1903-1986. Married Edward Gutschmidt. They lived in Seattle.
Children: Marlyce, Earl, JoAnn, Carol, Edward, William (Bill),
Mylo, Roy, Everett (Nicky), Charlotte, Ralph, and James.

Miles
1908-1908. Died at 6 months of age.

Leslie
1910-2002. Married Olga Opsal, and they farmed at Manfred
all of their married life. Children are Larry, Laverne, James
(Orville), David, Dianne, and Marilyn.

Russell
Born 1912. Married Mary Phippen in Washington. They lived
on the Johnson farm from 1946-1951 before moving to Seattle.
Children: John, Russell (Russ), Terry, and Charles (Chuck).
Russell lives in Retsil, Washington.

Everett
Born 1917. Moved to Seattle where he became a Merchant
Mariner. Everett was twice widowed. No Children. He and
his wife, Winifred, reside in Wenatchee, Washington.



The John and Malena Johnson farm as painted by John's brother, Nennie Johnson.



John and Malena Johnson together with Alvin, Edna and young Pearl, c.1905



Pearl, Leslie, Edna, 1911

John and Malena Johnson

Building upon their dreams under Dakota sun with their children...

Alvin, Edna, Pearl, Leslie, Russell, Everett



John plowing with his John Deere tractor, 1940s

As occurred for so many people of the times, in order to better themselves during the Midwest drought and Great Depression, Alvin, Edna and Pearl, along with their families moved to the Seattle area. Edna and Pearl both attended Valley City Normal School where they obtained their teaching certificates.

Alvin Johnson



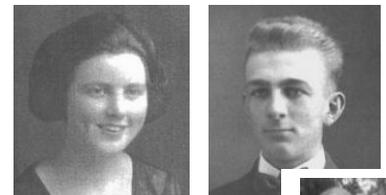
Lila & Alvin Johnson

Edna Johnson Howie



David & Edna c.1925 Howie

Pearl Johnson Gutschmidt



Pearl & Ed Gutschmidt



Alvin, a man of many talents - farmer, sawmill worker, and machinist - was active in politics and labor organizations; being self-educated he was, nevertheless, an intellectual of myriad interests. Alvin left for the West Coast to work as a seaman out of Seattle when he was in his early twenties. He came back in the summers to work on the farm, and while in North Dakota met and married Lila Kielly. They farmed for a while near Pillsbury, North Dakota and then moved to Seattle where they settled permanently, raising one daughter and three sons: Marlys, James, Landis, and Darrel. Alvin died in 1993 at the age of 96.

Edna and her husband David Howie were married shortly after her mother Malena died. They first lived at Golva, North Dakota where David was from, later they moved to Beach and then Dickinson. It was just shortly after Pearl Harbor had been bombed that the family arrived in the state of Washington where David worked in the shipyards. He, being an expert mechanic, had no trouble finding work in the defense industry in Seattle. Edna enjoyed a successful sales career. They raised four daughters Ada Mae, Eileen, Jeannine, and Malena, and a son David. Edna died in 1980.

Pearl taught school in North Dakota, Provo, UT and Bovey, MN. After Pearl and Ed married, they first lived at Harvey and then went to the state of Washington just before WWII. They raised a family of twelve. Marlyce, Earl, JoAnn, Edward, William (Bill), Mylo, Carol, Roy, Everett (Nicky), Charlotte, Ralph, and James. Bringing up a dozen children in the city was no easy task. In 1958, they moved to Mercer Island where Ed and his sons became successful and well-known builders of beautiful homes. Pearl, having a teaching certificate, became a substitute teacher. She died in 1986.

Leslie and Olga Johnson

by Laverne Johnson



The Leslie and Olga Johnson Farm in 1980, homesteaded by Leslie's parents John and Malena. From left: The 1910 barn, First home 1898-1915, 1915 Sear's Catalog Home, Turkey operation.



Leslie and Olga, together with Russell Johnson, Martha Opsal, 1939

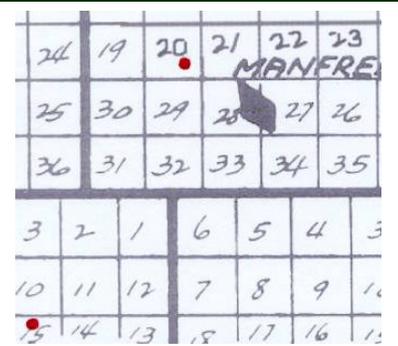
Leslie Johnson, born December 27, 1910, grew up on Riverside Farm 1½ miles northwest of Manfred that his parents had homesteaded. He graduated from Harvey High School and attended North Dakota Agricultural College (NDSU) in Fargo. After college, Leslie farmed with his father and brother, Russell. Olga Opsal was born on December 16, 1914 at rural Manfred to Ole and Annie (nee Opsahl) Opsal, pioneer immigrants who had come from the Eidsvoll area of Norway. She had one older sister, Martha, and a brother who had died in infancy. Olga finished the eighth grade at the age of eleven, spent a year at home, and then attended Harvey High School, graduating in 3½ years, at the age of 15. She attended Minot State College and taught school for several years.

One day when Leslie was delivering milk to the Manfred Elevator, Mrs. Severson, the elevator manager's wife asked him, "Why don't you go out with Olga Opsal?" Leslie and Olga had known each other all their lives as their parents were friends, and in high school they were in the same class. With Mrs. Severson's verbal nudge, Leslie started thinking about this pretty schoolteacher in a new light. He wrote her a letter asking if he could pick her up Saturday night. Olga thought that this tall, handsome Johnson with the deep voice to be appealing, and she decided to go.

After they had dated for a while, Leslie was getting serious and Olga was getting cold feet so they broke up and both dated others. About a year later, Leslie thought he would try once more, and by now Olga knew that he was the man of her dreams. They again dated for almost a year, and on June 24, 1939, Leslie and Olga were married in Harvey by Pastor Bretheim. Their attendants were Olga's sister, Martha, and Leslie's brother, Russell.

Leslie frequently attended NDAC extension classes and was always eager to look at new and innovative farming practices. Besides small grain farming and dairying, he also raised capons, laying hens, and Hereford beef cattle. In 1945, he discontinued the cattle and other ventures except for crop farming and started raising a few hundred turkeys. This diversification eventually led to a turkey enterprise of up to 12,000 birds annually.

In 1946, Leslie and Olga bought a farm half a mile northwest of the original homestead, and with their two children at the time, Larry and Laverne, moved up there. Leslie's brother, Russell, and his family moved to Riverside Farm where they lived for five years until relocating back to Seattle. Leslie and Olga then moved their family, now including James and the young twins, David and Dianne, back to Riverside Farm. Marilyn came along later.



Leslie was born and raised in Manfred Twp, Sec.20, T.149, R.71.

Olga was born and raised in Rusland Twp, Sec.15, T.148, R.72.



Olga with her sister Martha and parents Ole & Annie Opsal, c.1950



Olga and Leslie, 1939

Both Leslie and Olga were the kind of people who really made a difference in the world. Leslie pursued innovative farming methods and pioneered a low-cost market feed for turkeys that revolutionized the turkey industry. When the Federal Government attempted to institute marketing orders in an attempt to control animal agriculture, Leslie testified at a United States Congressional Hearing and was later told by North Dakota's Congressional delegation that his testimony had been instrumental in killing the marketing orders. Leslie was also active and served in leadership roles in church, community, and state organizations.

Olga worked tirelessly to advance opportunities for handicapped individuals on the local, state, and national levels. She was a founder and charter member of both the *North Dakota Association for Retarded Citizens* and the *Central Association for Retarded Citizens*. She was a two-term president of the *NDARC* and served on the board of directors for many years. She coordinated and served on an educational panel that traveled to every area of the state working to establish Special Education classrooms in the schools, and she taught leadership training seminars across North Dakota. Leslie worked beside Olga in all these endeavors and they proved to be a powerful team leaving a lasting legacy that has benefited countless individuals. Olga was also committed to other organizations, and held office in many church, community, and state organizations.

In keeping with their adventurous spirits, one of Leslie and Olga's favorite things to do was travel together. They traveled on five continents and in later years took close to 20 trips by cruise ship. Olga could read and speak three languages, and Leslie was known by family and friends as a "walking encyclopedia." Olga died July 30, 2000, and Leslie died February 2, 2002.

Leslie & Olga making a difference



Leslie with the turkeys, 1957



*Olga receiving an award at the
ARC Convention, 1966*

The Leslie & Olga Johnson Family



*1989. Leslie and Olga together with their children
Larry, Dianne, Marilyn, David, Laverne, Jim.*

LARRY, recently retired, now spends as much time as he can on the farm. After his graduation from NDSU, he worked his entire career in Quality Assurance Management for major fresh and frozen food companies on the West Coast. He and his former wife, Jan, have two sons. Don, along with his wife, Lynette, and their son, Nicholas, live in Indianapolis where Don works for United Airlines. Stephen Leslie lives and works in California.

LAVERNE, also recently retired, lives in Bismarck, and she, too, spends as much time as possible on the farm. She was a teacher and Speech/Language Pathologist who worked most recently at Mandan High School. She and her partner, Gwyn Herman, an Assistant Professor at the University of Mary, sing and play in their two-woman band, *Sunrise*, providing entertainment for dances, programs, church services, and other functions.

JIM is the Mercer County States Attorney, and his wife, Shirley, owns *CIA*, a business which specializes in wedding cakes, invitations, and accessories. Jim and Shirley live on a farmstead near Stanton. They have two daughters, Jamie (Mrs. Josh Meier) who is an investment banker in Portland, Oregon, and Laura who is working and attending the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks.

DAVID lives independently in his own apartment in Minot. He was married for ten years to Peggy Brennan Johnson who passed away in 2001. David is actively involved in working to improve conditions for people with disabilities. He has been involved with the *People First of North Dakota* organization and *Magic City Advocacy*. He has testified at hearings which have been instrumental in getting expanded bus service in Minot and automatic doors in businesses, such as Wal-Mart. David has served as president of *Magic City Advocacy*.

DIANNE who has degrees in Psychology and Education, is presently working in health care as an independent massage therapist in Bismarck. She also teaches part-time at Bismarck State College through the University of North Dakota, Williston Branch in Bismarck. She has three daughters and one son. Kyla is a music teacher and performer in Minneapolis. Achala (Jessie) is an artist who lives near Boulder, Colorado. Lindsey is a student at the University of Montana in Missoula, and Benjamin, a falconer apprentice, is a student at Bismarck High School.

MARILYN, who has lived in both China and Japan, has Master's Degrees in both Psychology and Chinese Medicine. She is an owner and practitioner of the *Jade Screen Clinic* in Eugene, Oregon.

Stories of Manfred

By

Russell Johnson

Russell was born at the Johnson Riverside Farm of Manfred in 1912 and raised there. He moved to the state of Washington where he met Mary Phippen and married Nov 1942. They lived on the Johnson farm from 1946-1951 before moving back to Seattle.

Russell now lives in Retsil, Washington, where he is writing stories of his remembrances. We are pleased to print some of his stories of Manfred here.



The Sod House My father, John A. Johnson filed on a homestead 1½ miles northwest of Manfred. He built a shack on it that was suitable for himself, but later with plans of marriage, the shack was not adequate.

Two brothers Nennie and Dave and a mutual friend, Sven Grane, made the trip to Manfred from West Salem, Wisconsin in a covered wagon. For everyone to spend a comfortable winter, they decided to construct some buildings. They built the buildings pictured below. A sod barn was built later. The brothers went on to other things after the first winter. Nennie later built and operated the Manfred Hotel. Dave was a policeman in west Seattle until his retirement, after which he lived there for many years. Sven Grane homesteaded adjoining land, which my father later bought from him.

My parents lived in the sod house for several years and then bought a frame house and moved it onto the property. We lived in it until 1915 until the present house was built. The picture below shows my parents, and Uncle Dave standing with Sven Grane seated. The horn chair, to the right of the window, was made by my Uncle Nennie.



Traveling from Wisconsin in 1896, John and his wife Malena met up with John's brothers Nennie and Dave together with their friend Sven Grane at John's homestead land near Manfred, where they all settled in for the coming winter. John and Malena lived in the soddie in the foreground, Nennie and Dave in the soddie to the right, and Sven Grane lived on his own homestead nearby. Manfred's archives are blessed to have Sven's writings when he served as Manfred's colorful news reporter for the Wells County Free Press.

Indians and Buffalo

As we know, ancient and more modern Indians roamed this land. Indications of their presence are mostly gone now. My father, John Johnson, picked up about a dozen *stone clubs* with a circle around the middle for the handle. They had one flat end and the other rounded. He placed them together with other stones around a bush in our front yard. All are gone now. I found only one myself while threshing.

There were about 20 *circles of stones*, according to my father, near the pond of the James River in our pasture. There must have been many more at Manfred. The stones were each about the size of two fists and were used year after year during the summers, while the buffalo were still here, to hold down the lower edge of the tepees. When the Indians moved out in the fall, they placed the stones in a perfect circle, except for a few at the east where the entrance flap was. All are gone now.

The stones were just the right size for making concrete and so most were probably picked up by the builders of the railroad. As a child, I did not know what they were for. They made a nice splash so I threw a lot of them into the river. My father picked up some *buffalo horns* that are still in the possession of the Johnson family. My Uncle Nennie made a clock out of a *buffalo skull*.

There were some *buffalo trails*. Buffalo put one foot ahead of another so their trails are rounded. Cattle put their feet down side by side and therefore their trails are flat.

According to the P.B. Anderson account, my father, my father's sister (Mrs. P.B. Anderson), and three Anderson boys traveled from McHenry in a buggy while P.B. drove oxen with a cow tied behind. The boys said that there was very little grass around the *large stone (buffalo rubbing rock)* that stands at the east end of the Burkum land.

More Manfred Stories by Russell Johnson

The Sailboat



Russell Johnson navigating his sailboat

In early Manfred, Nennie Johnson, Jens Renden, and Jacob Klev made an iceboat that they sailed on the Manfred Pond. They had constructed its sail mast, as well as all other gear. This iceboat was capable of 100 miles an hour. It's been said that on one last turn, Jacob Klev fell off and went spinning on his backside for quite a distance, without injury.

In 1937, with the help of my brother Leslie and neighbor Emil Onstad, I made this 16' boat, patterned after the many small boats I had seen in the Philippines. The boat was made from parts of the original iceboat and with parts of a threshing machine that I had scrapped earlier. The blower, joined at the middle formed the hull. The top of the sides required stiffening, so we used half inch boards bolted together. We had no bit for our drill, so we 'drilled' the holes with a 22 rifle. We fastened the boards; first with clamps and then one would hold them together firmly with a large blacksmith's tong, then the bolt with washer were put in place.

We sailed at the Harvey pond. (When the snow covered the ice, I fitted the boat with skis. This was only moderately successful because there was not enough sail to move it except in a high wind.) One day while sailing, we keeled over during a strong gust of wind; the boat filled with water and went to the bottom in ten feet of water. The next day, I fastened a pulley to a barrel, swam out with that and 150 feet of old hay rope that we had, and then dived down and fastened this rope to the bow of the boat. When I gave the signal, Everett said 'giddy up' to the horses and the boat came up and was pulled ashore. I never sailed again on water, but did use that boat, outfitted with oars or with an outboard motor when available. The mast of that sailboat now serves as the flagpole on the Johnson farm.

Note: The boat continued to be used into the 1950s, until it was beyond repair. During the preceding years, Leslie's children would patch it every spring with tar, and equip with a bailing bucket when set afloat. One summer Leslie's son Larry had powered the craft with a washing machine engine.

The Air Sled



*Russell Johnson seated in the air sled,
Emil Onstad standing, 1940*

The air sled was owned and operated by Emil Onstad. If snowmobiles had been invented by then, it was unknown to the general public. It was powered by a Model A engine, with the propeller bolted to the engine in place of the flywheel. This ruled out having a starter. Starting the engine, if you're alone goes like this: With the ignition off, the engine should be turned over, with the choke out. Then, you turn the switch on and give the propeller a good flip and the motor should start!

A buggy axle was used to mount the rear skis. It was complete with springs. The front ski had automotive steering complete with steering wheel. It had an automobile seat and an automobile windshield. The body was made of canvas, with no doors - just open sides. Emil had built and designed the propeller himself. This propeller shattered in an accident, and other replacement propellers never equaled that original one.

The air sled was used during the 1940s for hunting, and for trips to town, especially if the roads were blocked by snowdrifts by using the railroad right of way. Emil used the white coat, pictured, as camouflage for hunting fox. He would cover his head with a white cloth, lie down in the snow and draw his legs in under the coat. I would make a big circle, then come down through making all the noise I could. If the fox ran as planned, he would run very close to Emil's position. Emil would then rise up and fire. Sometimes it worked very well.

Note: During the winter of 1948 when Leslie's family was blocked in, Emil's air sled served as an emergency vehicle transporting baby Jim (Orville) Johnson, ill with pneumonia, to the Harvey hospital.



Emil Onstad fox hunting, c. 1938

Everett Johnson

Everett, born and raised at Manfred, joined the Civilian Conservation Corps at age 19 helping build a park near Escalante, UT. The next year, after taking his father from ND to Seattle, he helped build the Grand Coulee Dam. In 1940, he began an adventure-filled 40-year career in the Merchant Marines.

During WWII, November 1941-May 1942

When Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941, Everett was serving under Captain Stall in the Pacific on the 5000-ton cargo ship, the SS Collingsworth, of the American Mail Line. The ship had sailed from Seattle on October 30, 1941 enroute to Shanghai, but on November 2nd these orders changed for Pearl Harbor arriving there on the 14th. From there the ship ended up going to Port Moresby, New Guinea and then to Port Darwin, Australia which was bombed shortly after they left there. Arrived to Bataira, Java 12-30-41 with flour. Arrived to Singapore 1-31-42 which was being bombed day and night by Japanese Air Force. They loaded on rubber, also had orders to evacuate the American citizens of 87 women and children. The men stayed to blow up American owned oil tanks and so forth, and were to be flown out later. The docks were not bombed until their last day there. Shrapnel from a bomb hit the ship. No one was hit on board, and the American citizens remained safe. They had a safe two-day run to Batavia where the passengers were taken ashore. The next port was Sourabaya, Java where five of their crew volunteered for a failed mission and were captured by the Japanese. On 2-15-42, the captain had orders to sail at once even though they were midst loading cargo. Their route took them through Sunda Strate at night doing an estimated 16 knots despite the fact that this type of ship normally made 9 knots. Their U.S. Destroyer escort that time was bombed on its return to the Java Sea. Tea was loaded at Columbo. Since the crew had run out of coffee on board, all became tea drinkers! Arrived Cape Town 4-4-42, and then had a 30-day run to New York. Over thirty cargo ships were sunk during this wartime tour. During 1941-1945, a total of 757 American merchant ships sunk, and over 6,000 seamen lost their lives.

Summarized from Everett's memoirs of WWII.

Rescue at Sea, March 29, 1963

On Feb. 20, 1964, the U.S. Department of Commerce Maritime Administration presented the Gallant Ship Unit Citation Bar to Everett G. Johnson, Oiler, SS Philippine Mail in recognition of his participation in the action by which his ship was recognized as a "Gallant Ship".

The award reads in part: "The courage, resourcefulness, expert seamanship, and teamwork of her Master, officers, and crew in successfully effecting the rescue of nine persons from a sinking ship (a Chinese ship, the Hai Ziang, sinking off the north tip of Formosa) under extremely hazardous circumstances (gale force winds) on March 29, 1963 have caused the name of the PHILIPPINE MAIL to be perpetuated as a Gallant Ship. Everett G. Johnson is congratulated upon the performance of an action which was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Merchant Marine. Robert E. Giles Acting Maritime Admtr.

The Philippine Mail of the American Mail Line and its crew also received the Ship Safety Achievement Award for 1964. The winning ship of this award receives a blue, green, and white award pennant to be flown for one year, and individual certificates are awarded to the captain and crew who were aboard at the time the achievement was performed.

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Everett and Winifred Johnson, 2001

Valdez, Alaska Earthquake and Tidal Wave, March 27, 1964

The 10,815-ton SS Chena, with Capt. Merrill Stewart and a 39-member crew, received the Ship Safety Achievement Award for 1965, the highest honor given annually to one U.S. flag vessel for demonstrating safety training and discipline. Everett's certificate reads in part: "The Marine Section of the National Safety Council joins with the American Merchant Marine Institute in presenting this Certificate of Award to fireman Everett G. Johnson of the Chena for his part in saving the CHENA from destruction and aiding the Town of Valdez in the Alaskan earthquake of March 27, 1964."

From news reports: The Chena, commissioned in 1942, one of the ruggedest most reliable ships afloat, has logged miles, year in and year out, through typically furious storms of the Gulf of Alaska. Crowning her career was the wildest ride an ocean-going ship ever took, at Valdez in 1964 when waves from the Good Friday quake tossed her 50 or 60 feet above normal sea level, carried her back and slapped her down on the mud a quarter of a mile inland. And she survived. The event was precipitated by a major earthquake and resulting tidal wave. Quoted by Everett in The Seattle Tribune: "The bridge rang down for full speed ahead and with the wave receding we were able to get to deep water. The main engine was running full ahead for 10 minutes before we started to move. If we hadn't had power, the Chena would have still been sitting in the middle of Valdez." The ship amazingly sustained no apparent damage except a bent propeller. The SS Chena continued on in full service until decommission in 1971.

