
MANFRED HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

P.O. Box 321 Harvey, North Dakota 58341

Greetings from Manfred!

This biography was prepared by Manfred History and Preservation.
Please visit www.manfrednd.org for more information.



Marie Hovey

Full Name: Marie Hovey

Place of Birth: Griggs County, North Dakota

Father's Name: Nils Olson Hovey

Mother's Name: Marit Hoyme

Siblings' Names: Ole, Carl, Julia, Nora

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Marie Hovey
from the Wells County Paper August 1952
1886-1953

Marie Hovey Retires: Thirty years of devotion to duty and service to a community seldom duplicated ended August 1, 1952, when Marie Hovey retired from her job as switchboard operator for the Manfred Telephone exchange.

Although her position may seem like an insignificant one to the rest of the world, few people will ever receive from their neighbors the honor, love and respect for a job well done that the people in the Manfred area show Marie for her unselfish devotion to their welfare and convenience.

Ill health forced her retirement. She is now making her home with her brother, Ole Hovey, and his wife who live northeast of Manfred. Mrs. Harley Kittelson has taken over Miss Hovey's job.

Miss Hovey took over as switchboard operator for the independent exchange June 1, 1923 and served in that capacity until her retirement without a vacation. The longest she was away from the switchboard during the 30 years was in 1952 when she spent 11 days in the Harvey hospital.

Although occasionally someone would fill in for her while she went to a neighborhood party, she seldom left the exchange building where she made her home. One winter when she was crippled with rheumatism she had casters put on the bottom of her chair so she could wheel herself from her bed to her place at the switchboard, should a call come in at night.

Miss Hovey placed herself on 24 hour call. There was understanding among the customers of the company that no calls would be placed after 10 p.m. but countless times Marie got out of bed late at night to place an emergency call, try to ring or locate someone being called long distance.

Another example of the service she rendered was given by S. A. Rogness who said "Marie saved me driving many extra miles when I had the bulk gas truck. When a farmer left word that he needed gas, Marie would call around the countryside until she found me to tell me that I could make my delivery on my way back to Manfred."

The exchange started in 1909 at one time served 175 farms and businesses. The consolidation and enlarging of farms, the depression which forced some farmers to drop or discontinue phone service, the reduction in the number of businesses and residences in Manfred, and lines which were torn down because of construction and were not rebuilt contributed to the curtailing of services of the exchange which now has about 60 phones.

Marie would not see some of the people she served until they paid their bill at the end of the year, but she could always recognize the people by their voices.

A collection has been taken in the Manfred community and a sizeable sum will be presented to Marie as a gift of good will from the people of the area.

The material rewards she received for her efforts were small, but Marie Hovey has a place in the hearts of the people of Manfred that no amount of money could buy.

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Marie Hovey, 67, died in the Harvey hospital on December 5, 1953, after a lingering illness. She was born September 25, 1886 in Griggs County. She is survived by two brothers, Ole Hovey of Manfred and Carl Hovey of St. Paul. Rev. A. B. Solberg conducted the services at the Vang Lutheran Church in Manfred. Burial was at the Manfred cemetery.