
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 [for more information.](#)



Knud and Guri Melby

Husband's Full Name: Knud Olsen Melby

Husband's Place of Birth: Rudi, Øystre Slidre, Valdres, Norway

Husband's Father's Name: Ola Mikkjelson Rudi

Husband's Mother's Name: Ragnhild Knutsdatter Holdal

Husband's Siblings' Names: Marit, Ola, Anne, Ole, Ingebjorg, Ragnhild,

Wife's Full Name: Guri Kristensdotter Melby

Wife's Place of Birth: Melby, Øystre Slidre, Valdres, Norway

Wife's Father's Name: Christen Mikkelson Rogne

Wife's Mother's Name: Ingebjorg Iversdotter Melby

Wife's Siblings' Names: Knut, Ingebjorg, Ragnhild, Marit, Guri, Ivar,

Ole, Ingebjorg, Ola, Torstein, Knut

Children's Names: Guri, Ole, Christen, Knute, Ragnhild, Gulbrand,

Marit, Caroline, Martin and Oscar

Knud and Guri Melby

Knud Olson Rudi b. 1843, was the fourth son of Ole Mikkelson Rudi together with his second wife Ragnhild Knutsdatter Holdal. Knud's older brother inherited the Rudi farm, Ole. When Knud came of age he was ready to establish his own farm. He and Guri Christensdotter Melby b.1844 were married in 1861. Knud obtained his share of the inheritance money from his older brother, which he then used to buy the Melby farm from Guri's parents. Guri had been blessed with parents who had each inherited a farm. Her father, Christen Mikkelson Rogne had inherited Røgnemarke farm #43/5 and her mother, Guro Gudbrandsdotter Melby had inherited Melby farm #41/1. Guri was the oldest child and when she came of age and was ready to marry, she was given the inheritance of the Melby farm. Her parents and her siblings then moved to Røgnemarke.

Knud and Guri commenced with farming Melby, and also began their family. Born to them in Norway: Guri 1862, Ole 1864, Christen 1868, Knute 1870, Ragnhild 1873, Gulbrand 1877, and Marit 1880. It was not so easy to provide for a large family living on the small Melby farm. There was the pull to go to America which they had resisted considering so far over the years. But the pull was becoming stronger because in the recent years several of Guri's siblings had immigrated to the USA and were sending back wonderful reports about that place where a large piece could be obtained for only the filing fee. They finally made the decision to go, sold the Melby farm and departed the spring of 1881 with their seven children, ranging in age from 19 to 8 months.

Their destination was to Goodhue County Minnesota where others from Valdres already had successful farms established. They stayed there three years while becoming acquainted with their new homeland. New areas

further west were continually being opened for settlement. In 1884 they were ready to file on their own land and start farming. They first went to Griggs County, North Dakota where two more children were born to them: Caroline 1884 and Martin 1886, and in 1887 they moved a little further west and farmed in Foster County for six years. It was there that, Knud's home served as the first mail stop during those years. Also, Knud together with others in his family organized the first school district, which was called Melby, and he served as it's first chairman. Knud and Guri's 10th child was born here: Oscar 1890.

The crops were failing during those years, so it was not easy for the people. The Soo Railroad track was being constructed westward through the region, so all the men went to work helping to build the track. But their first love was farming and so as the track was being laid they had opportunity to see the new lands that would be soon open to settlement. Knud and others in his family thought that Wells County looked good, and so they went to Sykeston, the location of the first court house in Wells County, and each filed on a new claim which were all located not far from the railroad track. Back in Foster County, they loaded up all their meager belongings on wagons. Knud even took his barn apart and laid it flat in sections on a wagon, they gathered their domestic animals together and caravanned to Wells County to their new claims in Manfred Township.

Everyone was busy with putting up sod houses to use as temporary quarters until they could obtain lumber to build their homes. Knud erected his barn, and it is this barn that can be seen on the photo of Knud and Guri proudly standing in front of their home. Their house still stands, though abandoned. And though the barn Knud had brought from Foster County did not survive the years, the granary and the pig and chicken house are still standing. The granary can be seen in that same photo. The photo showing Knud and Guri with nine of their ten children was taken at the home of their son, Ole, in the village of Manfred. This home still stands, though abandoned.

Knud was one of five founding fathers of Vang Lutheran Church in 1894. Many of their children were starting to have families of their own, and Guri always had lots of cookies on hand when they came. Music was always a part of family gatherings, and Knud and Guri were gracious hosts. Knud and Guri farmed until 1911, at which time they moved into Manfred and their son Oscar continued on their farm. Guri began to fail in her later years and died in 1921. After that, Knud would often stay at the home of one of his several children living in the area. Knud died in 1927. Both Knud and Guri are buried at Vang Lutheran Cemetery at Manfred.



Knud and Guri Melby Family
Left back: Ole, Martin, Nellie, Oscar, Caroline, Chris, Guri,
Gilbert, Knute
Knud and Guri are seated in front.
Daughter Mary, not pictured.