
MANFRED HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

P.O. Box 321 Harvey, North Dakota 58341

Greetings from Manfred!

This biography was prepared by Manfred History and Preservation.
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Olaf and Nina Roble



Standing, left to right: Wayne, Nina, Olaf, LaVone and Orval.
Seated: Jean and Jerrold.

OLAF ROBLE

Husband's Full Name: Olaf Roble

Husband's Place of Birth: Kenyon, Goodhue Co, MN

Husband's Father's Name: Torstein O. Roble

Husband's Mother's Name: Guro Skogstad

Husband's Siblings' Names: Mary, Gina, Andrew and Melvin

Wife's Full Name: Nina Swedlund

Wife's Place of Birth: Wheaton, MN

Wife's Father's Name: Nils Swedlund

Wife's Mother's Name: Christine Lindquist

Wife's Siblings' Names: Lillian, Roy, Ida, Dewey, Dancy, Edna, Tony, Una

Children's Names: LaVone, Orville, Wayne, Jean and Jerald

Olaf and Nina Roble

Olaf Roble was born to Mr. and Mrs. Torstein Roble (Guro Skogstad) at Kenyon, Minn. in 1886. He died at Harvey in 1933. He moved with his parents to homesteads near McHenry and Cooperstown in Eddy County. Then they moved to another homestead between Manfred and Harvey on the James River alongside the Soo Line Railroad.

He went to school in Manfred and skated to school on the ice on the James River during the winters. He attended Fargo College where he took up manual training, steam engineering and music. He mastered the valve trombone, cornet, violin and saxophone. At Manfred he played with the Manfred Cornet Band.

He started in business in Manfred as a coal dealer selling coal out of a box car. He went into business with Fremont Hanson in a general store, was a barber, worked in the Ford and John Deere dealership under Olaf Anderson who sent him to Harvey to run the A.B. Motive Power Co. The "A" stood for Anderson and the "B" was the previous owner and partner, O.E. Blanding. He had a big steam threshing rig, complete with cook car, which he had nine successful seasons.

Olaf Roble went to Swift Current, Sask., Canada with Lars Hanson and stayed a year and acquired a quarter of land by homestead laws of Canada. He returned to Manfred in 1916 denouncing the Queen of England and became an American citizen again.

In 1917, he married the school teacher that came from Velva and the Minot State Normal School, Nina Swedlund. She lived in Manfred, on the Halvorson farm they purchased west of Manfred and in Harvey.

She became a widow in 1933 and had five children, age 15 and below. She continued to run the 640 acre farm, acquired full ownership of the business and property of the A.B. Motive Power Co., about eight or ten rental houses and the home which was built new for her at 221 Brewster Street in 1928-29.

The children are: LaVone Roble Johnson Clark has a dry cleaning and pressing business in Portland, Ore. She has a son, Heydon Johnson, who has three sons.

Orval Roble, retired from Roble Chev-Pontiac-Olds Co., married Lena Fronk in 1944. They have six children: Susan Roble Bertch, Tom O. Roble, Marcia Roble Rindy, Joan Roble, Gail Roble and Paul A. Roble.

Wayne T. Roble, with Roble Chevrolet-Pontiac-Olds Co. from 1948 to 1971, now is a beauty shop supply wholesaler and real estate agent in Denver, Colo. His wife is the former Phyllis Nilson. Their children are Karen Roble Braaten, Dick Roble and Terry Roble.

Jean Roble Swang had a shoe store in Big Bend, Miller, S. Dak. and Moorhead, Minn. Her husband was Merwood Swang. He died in 1974. Jean died in 1963. They had two children, a boy and a girl living in Moorhead.

Jerrold Roble, who has farmed since World War II (paratrooper and M. Police), moved into town and farmed from town from 1962 to 1979. He has rented out his 640 acre farm and now drives school bus. His wife, Darlene Mathison, is a registered nurse. They have two girls, Ranae and Rachele, and three sons, Jay, Craig and Jon.

In Harvey, Olaf Roble managed and operated the A.B. Motive Power Co. He had Ford until 1926 when Ford stopped production for the Model A. He then became the Chevrolet dealer and also Buick, and Case machinery. He was a partner with L.A. Rogensack, a house mover who brought about twenty houses to Harvey from Manfred, Drake, etc. Olaf Roble was one of the promoters of the Harvey City Band. They were successful in getting the town mill levy which is still used today to run the band. The instruments--bass drum, snare drum, sousaphone, baritone horns are still in use.

He was a past master of the Masonic Lodge, a member of the First Lutheran Church and had just been elected mayor of Harvey and served a couple months when he suffered a stroke and passed away June 1, 1933.

Mrs. Olaf Roble's brother, Roy E. Swedlund, ran the business upon Olaf Roble's death in 1933 and kept it going through the great depression in the 30's for 11 years. The old lumber yard building burned in 1935 and a 50' x 50' brick and tile building was constructed. Roy Swedlund died in 1952.

This was taken from the Herald Press, Saturday, January 8, 2000 and written by Orval Roble of Harvey about his father.

Olaf Roble was born of Norwegian parents in Kenyon, MN, in Goodhue County, south of the Twin Cities. The family moved to New Rockford when Cooperstown was their local Post Office. He later followed the Soo Line west, settling at the James River Crossing three miles west of Manfred. When Olaf completed school at Manfred he sold lump coal and, for nine years, operated a threshing crew before entering business in Manfred as co-owner of the Roble-Hanson Department Store.

When the store burned down, Olaf went to college in Fargo studying steam engineering as well as the violin. After buying a farm five miles west of Manfred, he went to work for Olaf Anderson's Ford dealership in Manfred. Anderson later merged with Blanding Motors in Harvey, a Ford dealer, which later became a Chevrolet-Buick dealer under the name A. B. Motive Power Co. They also sold Case implements and Fordson tractors. By 1933, Olaf owned 85 percent of the business, in which his sons succeeded him.

Olaf was elected mayor of Harvey in 1933, but died before taking office. He had been a trumpet player in the Manfred Cornet Band from 1916-1922 and was active in the Harvey City Band.