

Happy Holidays!

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 of gathering and preserving the history of Manfred and its trade area, and for restoring and caring for some of its sites. Suggested annual contribution to help defray the cost of this newsletter is \$10.00 payable to MPH, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey ND 58341. You are invited to visit Manfred's website at <http://www.manfrednd.org>.

Volume 1, Issue 4

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December 2001

## Winter at Manfred

The weather man is very bold,  
He hands out weather good and cold,  
The mercury dropped to forty-two,  
Right here in Manfred on the Soo.

Everything is frozen up tight;  
The ground is covered with white.  
Now, if that isn't going some,  
And the worst is yet to come.

When the wind blows from the pole  
You will depend upon your coal.  
Outside you ought to have a grove;  
Within your house a hard coal stove.

Protect from cold your tender toes,  
Never mind your ears and nose.  
Dressed in furs from top to toe,  
You resemble now an Eskimo.

When a blizzard comes along  
Be careful or it will go wrong.  
We have something that looks like meal,  
'Twill cover you from head to heel.

All the snow has now cut loose.  
'Twill make you shiver in your shoes.  
It's no use to kick and curse,  
But thank the Lord it isn't worse.

By J. A. Johnson 1871-1960  
Published in the January 19, 1912  
Issue of the Wells County Free Press

Grandfather  
M  
Manfred

## The One-Finger Mitten

Some of Grandfather's clothes intrigued, although  
Deceased, he was a man, we didn't know.  
But, one item really had us smitten;  
It was his yellow one-finger mitten.  
To us, it's design seemed, really dumb;  
It had one finger; and, also a thumb;  
The color of a small, yellow kitten;  
This unusual, one-finger glove and mitten.

Through the trunk of clothes, that we were mining,  
Discovered gloves, with a heavy lining.  
A flashback in years, as this is written;  
About the mind bending, yellow mitten.  
Perhaps, it was made as a hunting glove;  
After work, that's one sport, he'd dearly love.  
We each tried on the pair, just for fitten';  
Of Grandpa's unusu'l, one-finger mitten.

The three of us were totally spellbound;  
About some of Grandpa's clothes, we had found;  
So, on this trunk, three of us were sitten';  
Trying on that old one-finger mitten.  
The suspenders were soon cast aside;  
That's because, our attention, would abide;  
Not, on any scarf, of Grandma's knitten';  
We squabbled, over the one-finger mitten.

Now, just what could be the technical name?  
For fun, we contracted, a title, just the same.  
You'll bet, none of us, forgotten';  
When we named that old, one-finger mitten.  
Can you imagine? They looked so funny,  
The best entertainment for our money.  
Three fingers together, with one splitten',  
We called these unusual gloves, "Glittens".

We planned to be very concise, that day;  
We three boys discussed, and agreed to say,  
"They're definitely not gloves, they're not mittens,  
But, a combination, we called Glittens."  
By Orv Alveshere, Copyright. A memory about  
his grandfather, Ole Frovig 1877-1931

## The New Manfred News

The end of September found Scott Loerch of Loerch Video in Harvey ND, together with Wanda Melchert, finishing the production of a two-hour video about Manfred Days. Since that time, 65 copies have already been distributed. The video is filled with the sights and sounds of this amazing Manfred Days gathering... including Manfred's first known parade, a delightful program, a history talk, footage of people such as family groups, former students, teachers, and much more. Goodness... The parade entry described as Clyde Moldenhauer, is actually Marvin Alvshere riding on a horse. Please accept our apology. See page 9 to order this video keepsake.

We seek to be correct in the Manfred history efforts, and are grateful to be alerted to any errors that are noticed. In the September Newsletter of those attending Manfred Days: The name Strauss was written in error with the name Judy Weigelt. Thanks Judy for your gracious understanding!

Monthly MHP, Inc. meetings are held on behalf of Manfred. These meetings form a wonderful support system of local folks gathering together, as the Manfred projects proceed forward. The last meeting was blessed with eleven in attendance, and words cannot express adequately the thanks for their presence and interest!

Manfred Days in July was a tremendous undertaking. Thanks to the many who *helped*, because it was you who made this event possible and successful. Thanks to the many who *attended*, because it is you who made this event memorable and heartwarming.

The Manfred mailing list continues to expand and is now around 380 in number.

History alert!! The hope is to finish gathering the history of Manfred within the coming year. You can help this effort by sending your memories, photos and other historical items about Manfred and of your family. Thank you to everyone who has been sending in such items... they each add to the rich fabric of Manfred history. Future issues of the Manfred Newsletter will give opportunity to feature some of these things. The thanks are endless to Audrey Solheim for her wonderful work in organizing Manfred's history.

October 26, 2001 was a very special occasion for Manfred when the John and Malena Johnson Home was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in a unanimous vote by the North Dakota Historic Preservation Review Board. The nomination was presented by Laverne Johnson, who gave a wonderful presentation including her verbal review together with showing slides of the home. An outstanding exhibit was on display: the original blueprints and sales document, photos of the generations of the Johnson family, a Johnson history, and other items. The nomination document is now in its final stages of preparation, after which time it will be sent to The Keeper of the National Register in Washington D.C.

November 17, 2001 marked yet another special event for Manfred, when Vang Lutheran Church received its award certificate for having been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Looking for special gift ideas? Shop at the MHP, Inc. Store on page 9 for the '2002 Manfred Calendar', and other great ideas.

The pleasant fall weather was not only wonderful for the harvesting of crops in the area, but also provided the opportunity to finish applying the final coat of paint to the Melby-Rogness Home in September. Our thanks to Verna Bowers and Wanda Melchert.

Great news! Phase 1, the restoration of the exterior of the Melby-Rogness Home, is now completed! This phase included exterior repair, shingling, and painting. A very big thanks to all of you who helped make this effort possible through your contributions of funds, contributed items for the house, volunteer hours, and encouragement. See page 5. The building is well-protected now, and looks fabulous!! Smiles can be seen all around. Come see!

The excitement continues as we move into Phase II...the main projects will be in working on the interior, basement, and spindles. Preparations have already begun, so that the work can commence in the new year. A very big thank you to Jacob Anderson, Perry Anderson, Pete Anderson, Verna Bowers, Wanda Melchert, and Herbert Ongstad for their time, energy, and equipment this fall to clear out pipes, old boiler, and much other junk stuff. The burn pile and recyclers are thus blessed!

All are invited to come visit the Melby-Rogness Home! One can almost sense the coffee pot might soon be brewing. Please give thought to including a 'work' stop at Manfred in 2002. Helping hands are much needed. Some of the jobs include: removing the plaster and laths, installing insulation, electric wiring, walling, and woodwork, reinforcing a portion of the basement with footings and cement block, & assembling and installing spindles for the front porch.

## *~ Welcome ~*

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Manfred Newsletter! December is a natural time for a holiday theme. Thanks so much to everyone who has shared memories of the Holidays at Manfred. What a great honor it is to present in this issue, literary pieces written by two of Manfred area's own poets. Thank you to Leslie Johnson and family for permission to print 'Winter at Manfred', a poem written by Leslie's father John A. Johnson. Thank you to Orv Alveshere for permission to publish the first in a series of his writings. Orv recounts that the memory for his metered rhyme called, 'The One-Finger Mitten', had taken place during a snowstorm when he was about 7 or 8 years old at the farm of his grandparents, Ole and Ida Frovig, located 2 Mi W and 1 Mi S of Manfred. Also in this issue, we will learn about Manfred's first National Register listing of Vang Lutheran Church, and read excerpts from the Nomination document written by Wanda Melchert. An initial listing of veterans from Manfred is included, plus information about the exciting history and preservation projects now underway for the benefit of Manfred. Please give thoughtful consideration of how you might like to help with these projects. Thank you so much to those who have thus far contributed to MHP, Inc. The names are listed below and also in the September Newsletter. Financial contributions, whether large and small, are vital to the success of the Manfred projects and much appreciated. If we have missed acknowledging your name among any of the lists, please let us know. Talking about lists... you are invited to come shop in Manfred's MHP, Inc. store on page 11 for great little gifts to help with your holiday shopping!

## *~ Contributors ~*

### *Contributions to Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. (MHP, Inc.)*

*Contributions to MHP, Inc. help fund the history and preservation projects at Manfred.  
Thank you so much to the following for your contributions, September through November 2001.  
For contributors made prior to this, please see the September Newsletter.*

*Marvin and June Biever  
Inez Ravnaas Burgstahler  
Fagerlund Sons of Norway Lodge #203  
Peggy Wagner Gandrud  
Carolyn Smith Golberg  
Nick and Lorna Neilman  
David and Jill Howie, in memory of  
Edna Johnson Howie*

*Orin Melby  
Dennis Opdahl  
Gerald and Jeanne Schlenker  
Adolph Shirley  
Audrey Solheim  
Arlene Hustoft Triebold  
Vang Lutheran Church Ladies Aid  
Lawrence and Agnes Wagner*

### *Contributions to the Newsletter Expense*

*Thank you so much to the following people for contributions received so far  
to help defray the cost of the Manfred Newsletter expenses.*

*Ward Alveshere  
John Anderson  
Christy Anderson  
Marvin and June Biever  
Art and Ruth Fischer  
Gerald and Betty Froeber  
Ivan and Peggy Gandrud  
Frances & Larry Goldade  
Nick and Lorna Heilman*

*Lorene Koenig  
Orlien and Zelda Melby  
Dale and Darlene Miller  
Robert and Marion  
Nicholson  
Dale and Shirley Opdahl  
Rodney and Lori Opdahl  
Betty Pepple  
Maurice & Lori Ravnaas  
Arvin & Helen Ravnaas*

*Joyce Ravnaas  
Berger and Olive Rodne  
Myrtle Sailer  
Violet Seidlinger  
Arlene Triebold  
Emmett Turner  
Marilyn Turner  
Lawrence & Agnes Wagner  
Jim and Janet Wright*

## *People Who Have Served In The Armed Forces From The Manfred Area*

*The following is the start of a list of the people stemming from the Manfred area who have served in the armed forces.  
Your help to complete this list would be much appreciated. Please submit names of those who are missing.*

Donald Anderson	Russell J. Johnson	Robert A. Nelson	Walter Ongstad	Allen Rogness
Orvin L. Anderson	Orville Johnson	Robert O. Nelson	Arnt M. Ostrem	Richard Rogness
Peter O. Anderson	Alfred H. Jorstad	Vernon Nelson	Henry A. Ostrem	Harold E. Skogmo
Kenneth Elton	Ole O Jorstad	Warren Nelson	Theodore C. Ostrem	Helmer S. Solheim
Lester R. Elton	Richard H. Jorstad	Thomas W. Nelson	Lowell R. Peterson	Fred Sommerfeld
Oliver Frovig	Joel A. Langseth	Edwin Olstad	Rudolph Peterson	Lorraine Sommerfeld
Edgar A. Flick	H. N. LeGrand	Halvor Olsen	Wilbur E. Peterson	Arnold Wagner
Gerda Gladheim	Floyd Lindbo	Oscar E. Olsen	Arvin Ravnaas	Niobe E. Wigness
Ordean Gladeim	Donald B. Melby	Duane Ongstad	Edward Ravnaas	Merlon Wigness
Freemont Hanson	Kermit T. Melby	Margaret Ongstad	George Ravnaas	Herbert Weisser
Oscar Hedahl	Orlien B. Melby	Mildred Ongstad	Ivar Ravnaas	
Swen O. Hedahl	Roy G. Melby	Orvin C. Ongstad	Harley Rogelstad	
Matt Jenny	Owen Nelson	Oscar Ongstad	Roger Rogelstad	

## *Home For The Holidays*

*Families gathering together during the holiday season remains a heartwarming tradition throughout the generations.  
Here we take a peek at some of the gatherings and activities during two holiday seasons of WWII,  
as recorded in the Manfred News of the Wells County Free Press 1943-1945.*

### **Winter of 1943-1944**

Masquerade Dance – Manfred, Friday, Dec 31<sup>st</sup>. Old & New Time Music by Harvey Hot Shots. Costume prizes.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sailer from Beulah arrived here Friday to spend the holidays at the M.K. Melby home.

Wilbur Peterson left Wednesday for Wilton to spend the holidays with his father and other relatives.

Mr. and Mrs. John Froeber and Gerald and Betty were dinner guests at the Joe Holzer home.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Koenig and family drove to Clifton Sunday to visit Mrs. Koenig's sister, Mrs. Bentz.

The free wedding dance given by Mr. and Mrs. Hadley Haugen was well attended and everyone had a good time.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Rogness were guests at the Martin Olschlager home Friday evening.

Sgt. Matt Jenny of New Jersey arrived here Sunday to spend a short furlough visiting relatives.

Mrs. Anton Breyer was a business caller at Fessenden Monday.

New Year's dinner guests at the Emil Pepple home were Mr. and Mrs. Tony Breyer and Joanne, Mr. and Mrs. Jake Schlenker, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Schlenker, and Mr. and Mrs. John Pepple and family of Heaton.

Mrs. Lloyd of Fessenden is substituting in the primary room this week as Mrs. Peterson's son is at the hospital.

Rev. Langseth of Pelican Rapids held services here in the Lutheran church Monday.

### **Winter of 1944-1945**

Leonard Rogelstad came home from the hospital Saturday, after spending many weeks there. We are glad to know he is on the road to recovery.

Cpl. and Mrs. Arnt Ostrem of Hempstead, New York are visiting at the E. Ostrem home and other relatives.

Quite a few Manfred folks attended the Junior class play at Fessenden Tuesday night.

The Manfred School gave a Christmas program Friday evening. Everyone enjoyed the program.

Hugo Boese of Miles City, Montana arrived here to spend the holidays with his brother L.W. Boese.

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Nelson and family moved to Fessenden Friday and Mr. and Mrs. Helmer Solheim moved into the home they vacated.

Mr. and Mrs. Con Hedahl of Sawyer, came down Christmas day to visit at the Hedahl and Mattis homes. A number of friends surprised them as the occasion being their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Delores Renden of Dickinson and Olene Renden of Bismarck spent a couple days this week at the J.G. Renden home. Ed Hedahl met them at Steele.

Seaman Anton Rogness and family of Grand Forks spent the holidays at the A.J. Rogness and N.H. McCain homes.

Esther Anderson of Minot is spending a week visiting with her father at the Nels Nertrout home.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Faul and family spent Sunday at the Breyer home.

Mr. and Mrs. O.C. Anderson from Canada arrived here to spend the holidays with P.B. Anderson and other relatives.





## *A Three-Year Plan For The History Of Manfred*



*April 2001... just as exterior restoration work was beginning on the Melby-Rogness Home*

*The Vision Is  
Becoming A Reality  
Because of your help!*

⊗ *The Vision* ⊗

*A Three Year Plan*



*The restoration of the exterior of the Melby-Rogness Home was nearly completed at the time of Manfred Days, July 14-15, 2001.*

*The project currently underway for the benefit of Manfred by the non-profit organization, Manfred History and Preservation, Inc., has been organized into in a three-year plan to be realized in 2003. There are two intertwined components to this project, as are detailed below. They are:*

- 1. To complete the gathering and organizing of Manfred history, and then prepare a documentary.*
- 2. To prepare the Melby-Rogness Home as museum to display the history of Manfred.*

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### ⊗ *The History of Manfred* ⊗

*Three-year Plan:*

- 2001 - Through this newsletter, friends are learning about the Manfred projects and actively gathering history.*
- 2002 - Finish gathering and organizing the history of Manfred, and begin work on the documentary.*
- 2003 - Prepare and install a history display in the Melby-Rogness Home, and complete the documentary.*

The history of Manfred and its trade area is currently being gathered and organized. Once this phase is completed, a history display will be developed and also a video and/or CD documentary will be produced to serve as a record of the 'History of Manfred' for all to enjoy. This documentary will draw from historic items such as photos, historic information and memories, movie footage, tape recordings, and music. A sample review of Manfred History can be seen on the Manfred Days Video.

*~ 2 ~*

### ⊗ *The Manfred History Museum* ⊗

*Three-year Plan:*

- 2001 - The exterior restoration of the Melby-Rogness Home is completed! Congratulations friends of Manfred!*
- 2002 - Planned next is the interior restoration , installation of porch spindles, and basement reinforcement.*
- 2003 - Prepare the Melby-Rogness Home with display equipment and install the history exhibit.*

The Melby-Rogness Home has a bright future ahead... to serve as a place where rural America can be celebrated and given voice... of the then and now. A place where we and future generations can come learn about life in the rural community called Manfred... its settlers, its farmsteads, its businesses, its organizations, its 'heart'. Wow! It shall be marvelous history display. The Melby-Rogness Home has another reason to be all dressed up for 2003, as that year will mark its Centennial... having been built in 1903.

*Come help Manfred realize its vision!  
Together we are celebrating Manfred history!*

## Christmas Memories

*The goal of the Manfred history project is to finish gathering the history in the coming year. You can help in this exciting effort. Memories are a way of bringing history alive. You are invited to submit your memories of the Manfred area. You can start by looking through old photo albums, and then begin writing your memories or share them with family or friends. The memories will begin to come, and be fun for everyone. Pages 6 and 7 contain a few memories of Christmas that came recently through E-Mail, and also a sampling of memories from Melby family interviews gathered by Wanda Melchert over the past years. There are many possible topics for Manfred such as that of farming, of entities such as the post office, elevators, stores, churches, schools, the Wells County Fair, of its people, and on. So come, join in with the fun by recording your memories of this special place.*

### Christmas at Home

Christmas Day was a time to spend with friends and relatives, and there was always a big noon meal followed by a time for opening presents and taking pictures. *Audrey Solheim*

We always had lutefisk and lelse, and also meatballs for those of us who didn't care for lutefisk. There were a few of us. Mom always made Julekake, and then all the Norwegian cookies like berlinerkransers, sandbakkels, krumkake. Some of the gifts at Christmas were very humble. I remember I only ever had one doll, and my doll never had hair. One year for Christmas, Mom made a wig for my doll. My sister, Muriel, used to have real long hair, and later on it had been cut. Mom had saved that hair, and some years later she made this wig for my doll. Sometimes we would hang a Christmas stocking, and on Christmas morning we would find apples, oranges, and things like that in it. On Christmas Day, I remember our family being together. All my sisters and brothers would be home. *Ethel Melby Bolyard*

The wonders of a house decorated for Christmas and days off from school due to a storm will always be warm memories in my mind, and I also looked forward to the Norwegian baked goods made by the ladies in the neighborhood. We would often have oyster stew or lutefisk for meals over the holidays, which were not favorites amongst the children. Having to wait to open presents until after the cows were milked and supper was served, was a real exercise in patience for both parent and child. We would be so excited to open gifts sent from family afar, as well as those from parents. We also would read the Christmas story and sing. *Karen Rodne Beutler*

We would be busy at home and all the kids were excited. The older sisters and brothers were home. It was really an exciting time. We were all really small and they were telling us Santa Claus was coming. We all had to go into the kitchen, and they shut the doors. They told us to be quiet and listen. All of a sudden, we heard an awful commotion upstairs. Pretty soon, we heard footsteps coming down the stairs. In awhile, we were allowed to come out. We could see that all the presents had come, and Santa was there too, all dressed up. After all the gifts were passed out, Santa left. After this Aunt Anne came into the room. We kind of realized that she had been Santa Claus. *Gene Melby*

### School Programs

School programs were held just before school let out for the Christmas holidays. We had skits and monologues, songs and lots of fun practicing for the big event to which the whole community came. Santa always found his way there to give candy, peanuts and perhaps an apple to everyone in attendance.

*Audrey Solheim*

At the country school we would put on a play for the neighborhood and then have wonderful treats to eat. *Karen Rodne Beutler*

We always had a Christmas tree and since this was before electricity, they used candles on the tree for lights. One year the tree caught on fire and had to be taken out of the schoolhouse before the building caught on fire. I don't remember who the hero was, but it sure was exciting, and scary too. *Annie Onstad Solheim*

I remember a tree set up in the primary room, where we all celebrated Christmas, during school hours. This was for the children, only. Ernest Langseth was dressed as Santa, with flammable cotton trim. The cotton caught fire. Ernest started running, was tackled by Melvin Paulson, who threw him down and extinguished the blaze. Pastor Langseth was summoned, came in and said, "Bring him home, we may as well turn it into a hospital, anyway." Daughter Agnes was sick in bed, and an infant son was in bed, terminally ill. Quick action by Melvin, saved Ernest from more serious burns, possibly death. *Leslie Johnson*

## *Julebukking... A Unique Tradition*

*In Norway, children delight in dressing up in costumes and masks at the end of December to embark on a custom called julebukk, Christmas goat. Anytime between December 26 and New Year's Day they go from neighbor to neighbor in search of cake, fruit, cookies, and other sweets in the same fashion as American children do on Halloween. Today it is typically only the very young who julebukk in Norway, children up to about the age of 12. Instead of playing tricks they often sing carols in exchange for treats.*

Located by Audrey Solheim in the December 1998 Viking Magazine

In the Manfred area, the Julebukks came sometime between Christmas and New Years. We would dress up in unrecognizable costumes and sing our favorite song, 'The Julebukk Song'. Treats were given at each house and we tried to keep our identities a secret until people guessed who we were. The people at the homes would often dress up and come along with us to the next place.

At the last place there would be songs, and more holiday festivities. *Audrey Solheim*

Imagine the Julebukks going from door to door around the Manfred area singing...

*We are the Christmas Fools,  
We don't believe in schools;  
We are the Julebukks;  
Just dig our crazy looks!  
We're out to have some fun,  
Then we'll be on the run,  
But we just came to say,  
"Merry Christmas, and Happy  
New Year!"*

The Julebukk Song  
By Laverne Johnson  
(tune: Rah, rah, rah, boom-de-ay)

## *Sunday School Christmas Program*

When I was growing up, on the afternoon of Christmas Eve I would go to the church to practice for the evening program. From the time I was about 8 years old I always had a piano or organ solo or duet for the program, and as I got older I played the prelude and for the singing. Programs were held on Christmas Eve and started at 7:30 p.m. At 5 o'clock I rang the church bell signaling the beginning of Christmas, a custom that has continued each year.

*Audrey Solheim*

I remember going to the Christmas Eve program in a bobsled. Riding in the sleigh was very exciting. Dad would always put sleigh bells on the horses. Every time they would trot, the bells would jingle. Aunt Emma would be with us each year for Christmas. We would all bundle up and get in this sled. They would wrap us kids up under the robes to keep us warm. This is the way we would get to church in the winter. We would take off east across the pasture, and head into town. Many other families would come with their teams and sleds, too. The church had a barn, so people would put their horses in the barn, or tie them to the sled. *Gene Melby*

At Christmas, Auntie Emma would usually be with us when we went to church in the sleigh. She kept calling roll call because it was so cold. It was about 30 degrees below zero. We would all have to answer, so she knew we were OK. We were all bundled up with a blanket over the top of us. There were bells on the horses, and we would sing carols along the way. *Cora Melby Turner*

Christmas Eve, we always went to church because this was the Sunday School Program. It was so much fun because we always had a real big tree at our church. It would go way up to the ceiling. Everybody just looked forward to it because it was so pretty. It was like magic that it was there. There were always a lot of lights on it. *Ethel Melby Bolyard*

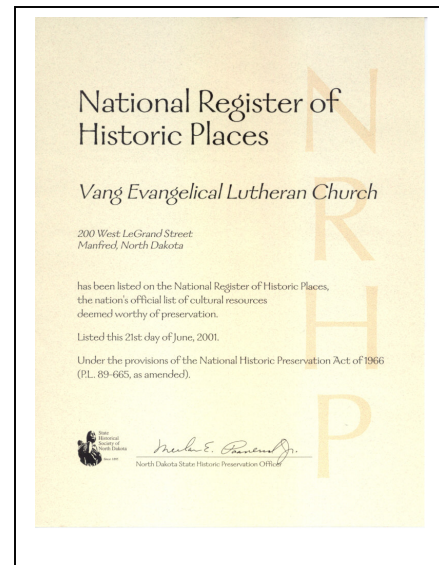
It was always a big event to dress in a new outfit and go to the annual Christmas program where we stood and said our Christmas piece or sang carols to what looked like a vast audience in a church lit by the Christmas tree, and then to get the brown bags filled with candy and peanuts and popcorn balls. *Karen Rodne Beutler*

The Sunday school program was sometimes a pageant. One year I remember being a shadow to an angel. LoAnn Anderson was the angel - she was older. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men were all a part of the pageant. After the children had sung their songs, given their parts all in their brand new clothes for the holiday, there would be bags of candy and apples distributed by the teachers or ushers. Then the gifts that were under the Christmas tree were distributed. If a person were going to exchange a gift with anyone who would be at the program, that gift would be brought to the church for the exchange. No one would open their gifts until they got home, however. It was an exciting time! *Audrey Solheim*

Christmas Eve, we went to Vang Lutheran Church to the Christmas Program. Normally, I was one of the 'three kings from orient are'. Walter Ongstad, Donald Melby, and I had to sing that song as we three kings came down the aisle. *Orlien Melby*



## Vang Lutheran Church



## Receives National Register Award



*Attending the National Register Awards Ceremony from left:  
Jim Johnson, Dianne Aull, Leslie Johnson, Laverne Johnson, Audrey Solheim, Maridel Sprenger, Rose Anderson,  
Shirley Johnson, Verna Bowers, Muriel Boyum, Betty Melby, Lowell Boyum, Amy Sakariassen presenting the award,  
Wanda Melchert the nomination author, Gene Melby, Richard Melchert.*

Vang Lutheran Church was awarded its certificate for being listed on the National Register of Historic Places, at a ceremony taking place in the North Dakota Heritage Center at Bismarck ND on November 17, 2001. The certificate reads as follows: "Vang Evangelical Lutheran Church, 200 West LeGrand Street, Manfred, North Dakota, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's official list of cultural resources deemed worthy of preservation. Listed this 21st day of June, 2001. Under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Signed by: Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr., North Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer."

The award was presented by Rolene Schliesman, architectural historian of the State Historical Society of North Dakota and by Amy Sakariassen, member of the North Dakota Historic Preservation Review Board. Those accepting the award on behalf of the Manfred community were: Rose Anderson, Dianne Aull, Verna Bowers, Lowell and Muriel Boyum, Jim and Shirley Johnson, Laverne Johnson, Leslie Johnson, Gene and Betty Melby, Richard and Wanda Melchert, Audrey Solheim, and Maridel Sprenger.

Of the many properties in North Dakota having been listed since 1966, Vang Lutheran Church holds the distinction of becoming the 400th property from North Dakota to be listed on the National Register.

Excerpts from the National Register Nomination, p 1 of 2

## *Vang Lutheran Church National Register Nomination*

Included on this and the following page are excerpts taken from the Vang Lutheran Church Nomination Document authored by Wanda Melchert. This document consists of a four-page application, a 31-page narrative detailing the architectural and historical significance, a bibliography, a map, and photos. Copies of the complete nomination document are located at Vang Lutheran Church in Manfred and at the North Dakota State Historical Society in the Heritage Center, Bismarck ND.

### *Description of the Setting*

Surrounded by miles of relatively flat farmland, Vang Lutheran Church is located in the small-unorganized village of Manfred, located in Manfred Township in the central North Dakota county of Wells. Manfred is situated approximately midway between the towns of Harvey and Fessenden, bordered by the James River to the north and the Canadian Pacific Railroad and Highway 52 to the south. As one approaches the village from any direction, the two elevator complexes visually announce the presence of Manfred in the distance. Coming nearer, the eye is greeted with a quaint village scene consisting of a few buildings and trees accented by a white steeple church building standing in its grassy home...

### *Statement of Significance*

Vang Lutheran Church, Manfred, North Dakota, is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A for its historic significance pertaining to the ethnic heritage of European settlers from Norway in the broad pattern of settlement during the westward expansion of America; and to the social history of the settlers especially for the important role the Ladies Aid Society played, and for Vang Lutheran Church serving as a witness through the years to the changing customs of this Norwegian-based group of people during the period of significance 1906-1952. (The years of significance 1906, 1918, 1920, 1951, 1952 are briefly described below.) Vang Lutheran Church is also nominated under Criterion C for its architectural significance with its continuing high degree of integrity among comparable buildings in Wells County, with it serving as the best and last remaining example of a religious structure in Manfred, with its strong structural impact as the most socially and ethnically significant building in Manfred, and with its harmonious and excellent use of materials and furnishings representative of the late Gothic Revival style in American architecture.

### *Brief Chronological History and the Years of Significance*

The chronological history of the Vang Lutheran Church building began with the purchase of Lots 4 and 5 in Block 1 of the village of Manfred in 1905, and the erection of the Vang Lutheran Church structure in the year of significance 1906 by Andrew G. Beito, then from Elbow Lake MN and later Effington SD. The Ladies Aid Society was the prime mover in completing the fine interior features. Many of the furnishings were purchased and installed during 1907, and the final furnishing of the altar painting by August Klagstad of Marinette WI was added in 1908. Because of the desire of the Ladies Aid to have a meeting place for social gatherings of the congregation, Lot 6 in Block 1, which contained a house, was purchased in 1913. Over time, it was determined that this home was not suitable to meet their needs; and therefore, in the year of significance 1918, the house was sold, moved off the property, a rubble-filled concrete basement foundation constructed, and the church rolled onto this new foundation. Also of importance during 1918, the first periodic English-speaking services were introduced. The embossed tin paneling for the sanctuary was installed in the year of significance 1920, and completed in 1921. A privy was built in 1928. In the year of significance 1951, the members elected their first president of the congregation and also granted the women equal right to vote. In the year of significance 1952, the first woman was elected to the Church Council. In 1956 and 1959, two small additions were tastefully added on each side of the bell tower, a coatroom and an enclosure for the basement stairway, respectively.

## *Beginnings of Vang Congregation*

It was within the walls of the modest sod shanties, that a new congregation had its beginnings in 1893 among the Norwegian settlers. A mission minister named Pastor I. L. Oksendahl of Viking, North Dakota, began visiting them occasionally, conducting worship services and officiating for the first burials, baptisms, and weddings right in their humble homes, and later in schools. During the summer of 1894, Pastor Oksendahl officiated at the rites of the first funeral at Manfred for Mrs. Jacob O. (Hilda) Hagen. She lies buried in an early community cemetery, known as South Cemetery, located just a little south of the village of Manfred.

While living in their previous locations, the church had been the foundation of the settlers' communities, serving as an integral and necessary part of their lives. Therefore, it was natural for them to wish to organize themselves together as a congregation in their new setting. So, after worship services held at the Nertrøst School on October 7, 1894, the charter was established with the help of Pastor Oksendahl. They took the name of Vang Evangelical Lutheran Church, more commonly known as Vang Lutheran Church. The following officers were elected: Secretary, Gullik R. Nordtorp; Treasurer, Gullik H. Dahle; Trustees, Knud O. Melby, Torstein O. Roble, Ole K. Melby. The first Annual Meeting was held on December 13, 1894. At this meeting the following were registered as members of Vang Lutheran Church, in addition to the above named officers: Ole Foss, John Hanson, Ole S. Hovey, Mads Nertrøst, Christen Roble, Tollef Roble, Ole J. Rodne, Gudbrand Rogne, Peder Skattebo, and Ole Skattebo.

Late in 1894, Pastor Oksendahl officiated for the first wedding ceremony of Vang Lutheran Church for Christian C. Rogne-Melby and Anna Ranum in the home of Gullik R. Nordtorp and family, in what was known as the Stone House. The first baptisms were solemnized in the Stone House on May 23, 1895. Jennie Regina, the daughter of Gullik and Ragnhild Nordtorp, and Carl Anton, the son of Nils and Marit Hovey, were baptized in the same water by Pastor E. T. Quam of Sheyenne, North Dakota. On February 2, 1896, a church constitution was adopted. A committee consisting of O. K. Melby, T. O. Roble, and Ole Skattebo were chosen to select a suitable cemetery location. The first recorded confirmation class, confirmed on May 2, 1896, consisted of David LeGrand, Sarah LeGrand, Marit Melby, Matt Nertrøst, Sennev Nertrøst, and Beatta Stoa. Vang Evangelical Lutheran Church was incorporated on November 2, 1896. The original Certificate of Incorporation, written in English, still exists, and is framed and mounted on the west-facing wall in the vestry...

## *Closing Statement of the National Register Nomination*

Vang Lutheran Church has weathered the transformation of its people, from the traditions of the old to the traditions of the new, with very little change to the building's physical structure. We can stand in awe of the statement of faith beautifully expressed through the structure the early members built, and can appreciate the great care and respect members have given to it through the years, enabling it to stand tall to this day. The strong lines of the steeple and gable roof, serve to remind us of the inner strength and resolve the early settlers demonstrated, the curved lines and vaults can remind us that they felt God's care and protection surrounding them throughout their lives, and the altar reminds us that they worshiped their God faithfully and devotedly to life's end. The design elements flowing throughout the inside and outside of the building, uniting the structure into a harmonious whole, can remind us of the men and women who worked side by side to bring this building into reality and that through this organization they did many good acts of charity. When we see the Vang Lutheran Church building, we are reminded that hopes and dreams can come true. Though life seemed quite bleak in their native land, the immigrants were filled with hope and determination of finding a better life. The bell still rings merrily, telling the world that these immigrants were successful in reaching the land that fulfilled their dreams. The relationship of place and people has continued ever since the days when the railroad rails were laid and the settlers first arrived. The train whistle announcing the train's approach into the community and the lumbering sounds of the train passing through, have commingled with the hymns and prayers of the settlers and their descendants at Vang Lutheran Church throughout the generations.

Manfred History and Preservation, Inc. Contribution and Order Form
Please send your reply to: MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey ND 58341

MHP, Inc. Contributions

I (We) would like to help the Manfred history and preservation projects with a contribution to MHP, Inc. of:
\$1000\_\_\_, \$500\_\_\_, \$250\_\_\_, \$100\_\_\_, \$50\_\_\_, Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

I (We) would like to help through the following:

A contribution to the Manfred Newsletter for newsletter expense (Suggested \$10): \$\_\_\_\_\_

Help at Manfred with renovation work \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution of photos, history, personal memories, other \_\_\_\_\_

Send your items by regular postal mail, or you can also write by E-Mail to asolheim@btigate.com or wrmelchert@westriv.com.

Please send a copy of the newsletter to: \_\_\_\_\_

MHP, Inc. Shop

Come shop with MHP, Inc! The items below are great gifts or stocking stuffers for your gift list, and will at the same time help the Manfred history and preservation projects. To order: Fill in the form and then detach, checking to see that your address is correct on the reverse side. Mail this order together with your check to: MHP, Inc., P.O. Box 321, Harvey, ND 58341. The price includes postage and handling. If your order comes to us by mid December, we should be able to ship in time for Christmas. Price includes postage and handling.

Thank you so much for your purchases!

Items available for sale by MHP, Inc.:

Manfred 2002 calendar..... #\_\_\_ at \$6.50 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

8 1/2" x 11" calendar featuring 13 historic Manfred photos with description, plus a map of Manfred and a page of Manfred business ads dating from 1905-1906 issues of the Wells County Free Press. An informative and useful item for you or as a gift.

MHP, Inc. wooden nickels ..... (\$.25 each or 5 for \$1.00) ..... #\_\_\_ for total of \$\_\_\_\_\_

1/8" x 1 1/2" natural-color wooden disk imprinted in burgundy with the words: Side 1 'WOODEN NICKEL - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA' encircling a silhouette of a buffalo and three stars. Side 2 'MHP, INC. Manfred, ND.' Lots of fun for kids of all ages!

'I Love Manfred' pins, magnets, and key chains..... #\_\_\_ at \$1.50 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

#\_\_\_ pins #\_\_\_ magnets #\_\_\_ key chains

The 'I Love Manfred' emblem you see on the back of this page in a 2 1/2" plastic coated disk made either as a pin, magnet, or key chain. Smiles will be all around when people see this cute emblem. Great conversation pieces to display and proudly use.

MHP, Inc. writing pens .....#\_\_\_ at \$1.50 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Imprinted with the words "Manfred History and Preservation, Inc." A little bit of Manfred in hand as you write.

Manfred note cards with envelopes .....#\_\_\_ set(s) at \$6.00 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

12 blank note cards in each set. (4 cards of each sketch by Dorothy Miller including the Cash Store, Manfred School, and the Post Office) People will love receiving a Manfred card written from you, or you can give them as gifts.

MHP, Inc. tote bags .....#\_\_\_ at \$12.00 each=\$\_\_\_\_\_

10"x14" home crafted tote bags, machine embroidered with the letters "MHP, Inc." Available while supply lasts. A fun way to cart all sorts of treasures, and be reminded of Manfred at the same time.

Lollipops (10 in a pack) ..... #\_\_\_ pack(s) at \$6.00 each=\$\_\_\_\_\_

A mixed variety of delicious flavors such as cotton candy, black cherry, banana split, strawberry shake, lime sherbet, blueberry cheesecake, cherry snow, caramel popcorn, pina colada, watermelon slice. Mmmmmmmmm! What a tasty treat!!

Manfred Days Video #\_\_\_ at \$12.00 each = \$\_\_\_\_\_

This video documents the festivities of Manfred Days and includes a 14 minute brief review of Manfred history. It is sure to delight the viewer with fond memories of Manfred.

TOTAL ORDER \$\_\_\_\_\_