
MANFRED HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

P.O. Box 321 Harvey, North Dakota 58341

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Greetings from Manfred!

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Courage and Strength

North Dakota blizzards can call for courage, even now, but more so in the prairie years of the early nineties.

(The following accounts show the bravery and hardships endured by our early pioneers. Even today, blizzards batter our homes, wildlife and vegetation; but it cannot break our spirit and love of the prairie.)

Gullick Nordtorp's Act of Heroism and Bravery

Self sacrifice, heroism and personal bravery, symbolic of pioneers, were exemplified by Gullick Nordtorp of Manfred, when he risked his life to save that of another.

It concerns a young mother-to-be, who with her husband, lived in the Nordtorp home. She was awaiting the arrival of their first child. During the ordeal, grave complications set in and medical aid became a dire necessity. It happened during a snowstorm, when roads were blocked, making horse and sleigh travels impossible.

Mr. Nordtorp decided to call a doctor, by walking on the railroad tracks to Fessenden, eight miles distant. Dressed in warm clothing, with a grain sack over his fur cap and face, he began the arduous journey. By forethought, should necessity demand, he deemed it wise to arm himself with a long staff resembling a cane by which he could feel his way along the rails, enabling him to follow the tracks.

After he had traveled half way, the strong wind whipped up a blinding blizzard, which proved to be a grueling challenge. Through faith and courage and determination, and the guidance of his staff, he finally reached his destination, which was Fessenden.

A west-bound freight train arrived just in time and carried the doctor and Mr. Nordtorp back to Manfred. The mother's life was saved, but due to the long delay, the child was still-born. A posthumous Carnegie Medal is due this brave pioneer for his courageous and noble service to humanity.

Blizzard of 1891

A rather unusual blizzard incident of seventy-five years ago was experienced in the southern section of our state. Picture, if you can, a country schoolhouse, built of sod and a partial earthen floor.

This particular day when school was in session, a blinding blizzard struck the community without warning. It would have been sheer folly for the anxious parents to even attempt to reach their children. As darkness came on, a little flame from a lone candle barely lit up the school room. At the eerie hour of midnight, the winds, with added flurry, moaned and groaned around the eaves.

Presently the teacher heard a muffled commotion outside the door. At first she became fearful, but finally decided to investigate. To her great surprise she found a small flock of sheep huddled together at her doorstep. She let them enter, thinking that they might shed a little warmth to the chilly room. Though the chilly and eerie night hours she stood guard over her charges, the children in winter wraps nestling among the wooly invaders, and oblivious to the ordeal.

When morning arrived, the frantic parents had to do some shoveling to gain entrance and through the air inside

wasn't of the purest, they found their children, the teacher, and the sheep safe and sound.

March Blizzard of 1906

There may be many of our older folk who recall the three-day March blizzard of 1906 which took its toll on human lives and hundreds of cattle.

I shall cite an instance when a pig saved the life of a man, Mr. Barreson, who was returning from McClusky to his home near Manfred.

He was driving a horse drawn lumber wagon with a cow tied behind. In the wagon box was a good-sized pig grunting on a pile of straw. A blinding blizzard suddenly overtook the victims as they were in Hustoft's pasture, about a mile west of Manfred.

Travel became impossible. The only thing to do was to stop and wait. He unhitched and tied the team to the wagon. Mr. Barreson wrapped himself in available extra clothing and when night came on he snuggled down beside the pig.

After several anxious days and nights, morning dawned, clear, cold, calm and crisp. He barely managed to ride horse back to a nearby snow-bound farmstead, which was the P. B. Anderson home. Here he was cared for until his many wants were satisfied by the ever good Samaritans, Peter and Anna Anderson.

At first, Mrs. Anderson fed him warm milk by the teaspoonful. His frozen feet were thawed out, but several damaged toes required amputation. A close call, when a human life was saved by the presence of a lowly pig.

Fury of Storms

Blizzards have raged since time immemorial and will continue. The storm of March 2, and 3 1966, in several instances, was the worst ever experienced in North Dakota, when six human lives and thousands of cattle and sheep were lost. Quoting from Mr. Moses, in the Fargo Forum, "In terms of ferocity, this storm of 1966 may well rank as the worst in recorded Weather Bureau history. It is doubtful if any other winter storm in history has circled on itself twice, as this one did, or hit so large an area, with so much, for so long."

Source: Sennev Nertrorst Whipple

Date: March 1966

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