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# MANFRED HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

P.O. Box 321 Harvey, North Dakota 58341

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## Greetings from Manfred!

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### 1895 Prairie Fire

A serious menace that faced the early settlers was the frequent prairie fire. A specific instance took place in 1895 on the west area of Manfred, one early summer evening.

It was here that the Gullick Nordtorp family resided. At the time, he was away from home building a house for a distant friend. The mother noticed a flaming western sky, but at first thought it was a brilliant sunset. Realizing the situation, she spread the alarm.

In great haste Bert Fincher, Mrs. Guy Fisher's father, raced to the scene, to help in saving life and property. The fire, racing over vast grassy stretches and with a stiff breeze, gained such speed that it jumped the James River.

Ordinary firebreaks were no-impediment to the fiery demon. Hastily Mr. Fincher backfired a wide stretch west of the houses reaching to the firebreak. He rushed the family cow into a sod shed. Water soaked blankets were hung over the west windows of the house, to prevent cracking of panes caused by the terrific heat. Fortunately the dwelling was sodded to the eaves, which proved a most effective insulation.

With the help of volunteer fire fighters, the walls of flame were subdued and brought under control. From where they were working, Mr. Nordtorp and Ole Hedahl, noticing volumes of smoke emerging into the sky, frantically rushed home. When they reached the hill north of Manfred, they discovered the home intact and the loved ones unharmed, and they breathed a prayer of gratitude.

*Source: Sennev Nertrøst Whipple*

*Date: March 1966*

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