

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Frederick and Maryanna Manfred HouseOther names/site number: Blue Mounds State Park Interpretive Center

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 1431 Quarry Rd (141<sup>st</sup> Street and US Highway 75)City or town: Luverne State: MN County: RockNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_national \_\_\_statewide \_\_\_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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Signature of commenting official:

Date

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Title :

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State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐  
Public – Local ☐  
Public – State ☒  
Public – Federal ☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>                    </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

OTHER: WRIGHTIAN

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone, glass, wood

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Frederick and Maryanna Manfred House is located in southwestern Minnesota, approximately two miles north of the City of Luverne. (Figures 1 and 2) The house is positioned at the southern edge of a geographic feature known as the Blue Mound, a linear escarpment of Precambrian Sioux Quartzite bedrock, which features a range of vibrant tones including pink, red, and purple. However, in the distance it is said to have appeared blue to early settlers, and thus acquired the name Blue Mound. Parts of the cliff are up to 100 feet high, very unusual in the surrounding prairie landscape. (Photo 1)

Built at the location of a former quarry, the Manfred House is integrated into its site. (Photos 2-4) It is positioned below the crest of the Blue Mound and merges into the natural landscape. The house extends along the rock face of the quarry wall, and is characterized by an overall rectangular form, which also incorporates complex triangular and hexagonal elements. The main body of the one-story house is covered with a shed roof, while a bay that projects to the south is covered with a gable roof. A six-sided cupola projects above the roof. The design of the house features Sioux Quartzite, expanses of glass, v-joint, horizontal Redwood siding, and broad

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overhanging eaves supported by large projecting beams. Perhaps the most remarkable design feature of the house is a living rock wall, which forms the entire rear wall of the interior.

This highly organic house, also referred to as the Wrightian style, was designed by architect Myron Kehne and completed in 1961 for the author Frederick Manfred. The site for the house was selected because the Blue Mound epitomized Manfred's deep connection to the land and the literary inspiration it provided. Views from the house encompass both Iowa and South Dakota, part of the region that Manfred featured in many of his works.

In 1972, the house and land were acquired by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as an addition to nearby Blue Mounds State Park. The park utilized the Manfred House as an interpretive center, but since 2016 the building has remained vacant.

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### **Narrative Description**

The complex design of the Manfred House results in multiple orientations. The prominent projecting bay is oriented to the south, while the large section of the house to the east of the bay has a southeasterly orientation. The section of the house to the west of the bay has a southwesterly orientation. Yet, the house presents itself almost as a single elevation, extending along the landscape for 118 feet at its longest point. The width varies from 24 to 50 feet. The rear of the house and most of the sidewalls are built into the natural rock walls, yet are defined by stone parapet walls that extend above the rooflines.

The house is built on a concrete slab and features Sioux Quartzite and wooden beams and rafters that were salvaged from a 19<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouse in Luverne. Additional stone was gathered on site.

The description of the property is divided into five sections including the south-facing projecting bay, the sections of the house to each side of the bay, the roof, and finally the cupola.

### **South Elevation**

The south-facing bay has the appearance of a triangular projection, yet represents the exterior walls of a hexagonal seating area on the interior. (Photo 5) Four of the sides of the hexagon are exposed on the exterior. The roof of the projecting bay is supported by 12 inch by 12 inch beams, one placed at the center of the bay and one along each side wall. These large beams support 3 inch by 13 inch rafters. All the beams and rafters are of Norway pine, salvaged from the schoolhouse in Luverne.

The prominent south facing walls of the projecting bays feature window arrangements organized as mirror images. A large, fixed pane of glass in a trapezoidal shape that conforms to the slope of the roof and extends to the ground fills the majority of the space. A rectangular casement window with a fixed, trapezoidal window placed above is positioned toward the center. One casement window was recently broken and has been boarded over with plywood. A third side of

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the hexagon is at the east and features paired casements with a fixed rectangular window above. The fourth side to the west features a large, fixed pane of glass with a rectangular casement window to the left. A fixed square window is placed above. (Photo 6)

### **Southeast elevation**

The southeast elevation is defined by a long, largely rectangular wing that extends from the projecting bay towards the east. It includes the main entrance to the house and the bedroom wing. (Photo 7) This section of the house is covered by a shed roof supported by 3 inch by 13 inch rafters arranged in pairs. The entrance, with a single leaf door, is located toward the west end of this elevation. To the east of the entrance, a quartzite wall, laid in a random ashlar pattern, rises to the sill level for the remainder of the elevation. (Photo 8) Three identical sets of windows are arranged above the stonework, corresponding to the location of three bedrooms. Each includes a window with a fixed, single pane of glass, which is flanked by a casement window to each side. Areas between and above doors and windows along this elevation are clad with horizontal Redwood siding.

At this point, the building steps back five feet and then continues to the east until its termination. This section of the house includes a secondary entrance door and next is a series of windows, which represent the location one additional bedroom. First, there are two pairs of casement windows and next three windows with fixed panes of glass. At this point the building makes a right angle and merges into the living rock wall. This east side of the house includes one window with a fixed pane of glass followed by a pair of casement windows. Finally, a stone wall extends to the eaves. (Photo 9)

### **Southwest elevation**

Located to the west of the projecting bay, this elevation is defined by a sliding glass door, which reflects the location of the dining room. Next, there is an angled wall section that reflects the location of the kitchen. The wall is clad entirely with horizontal Redwood siding and includes a pair of casement windows at the right and one casement window at the left. The wall then angles to the west and includes one casement window and an entrance door. Finally, the west end of the house terminates in a stone wall that merges into the existing rock face. (Photos 10-12)

### **Roof**

All sections of the roof are covered with asphalt shingles. A stone parapet wall with a concrete coping rises above the roofline along portions of the north, east, and west sides of the house. The wall is stepped as it rises in response to the increasing height of the roof. The masonry mass of the fireplace also projects above the roofline. (Photo 13)

### **Tepee**

The cupola, referred to as a tepee by Manfred, served as his writing studio. The space, identical in size to the hexagonal sitting area, is positioned at the rear of the house and extends onto the

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top of the Blue Mound. The lower portion of the walls are built with Sioux Quartzite. The upper walls of the three southerly facing sides each feature a large window with a fixed pane of glass flanked by casement windows. The rear walls feature horizontal Redwood siding above the masonry. An entrance door is positioned on the westerly side of the tepee. A hexagonal hip roof with broad eaves covers the tepee. (Photos 7, 9, and 14)

## **Interior**

*Access to the interior of the Manfred House is not permitted by the DNR because of concerns over air quality issues. As a result, there are only two current photographs of the interior, which capture images of the fireplace and adjacent living rock wall that were taken through the sliding glass doors in the dining room. The written description of the interior is augmented by a copy of the original floor plans, a copy of the floor plans depicting changes made by the DNR, and previous interior photographs. (Figures 3, 4, and 16-19)*

An interior floor plan by the DNR dated September 5, 1974 is a tracing of architect Myron Kehne's original plan for the house from 1960. (Figure 3) Of particular note is a dash-dotted line near the back of the house depicting the position of the natural stone wall. The plans describe this wall as the "cliff rock line." The irregular nature of the wall influenced the triangular and hexagonal design elements of the house. Also of note is the relationship between the natural stone wall and the man-made masonry wall that sits atop the stone to form a level surface to support the roof structure. The man-made wall is often set back from the edge of the natural stone wall, creating a shelf-like space.

The interior of the house features concrete floors, vaulted ceilings with exposed beams, and walls of Sioux vibrant Quartzite. Partition walls are faced with plaster or oak paneling.

The main entrance leads into a hallway that then opens into the main living areas of the house, which are organized as one large open space. The living areas, including a sitting area, the dining room, and the music room, are dominated by a massive stone fireplace with a cantilevered triangular hood. (Photos 15-16) The dining room is located to the left of the fireplace and the music room to the right. To the front, three steps lead down into a hexagonal area with built-in seating on all sides. This sunken sitting area was referred to as a kiva, which is defined as a Pueblo Indian space, usually round and sunken, used for ceremonial or social purposes. A wrought-iron railing separates the kiva from the other living areas. The railing, which features images of peace pipes and arrows, was crafted by Alfred "Fritz" Wiese, who operated a blacksmith shop in the nearby town of Kanaranzi. Originally, a large boulder was positioned in the middle of the kiva, but it has been removed by the DNR.

A small kitchen opens off the dining room. Off the kitchen is a utility room, which also has an exterior entrance. The utility room contained a water heater and the water pump.

A hallway leads from the main living areas into the bedroom wing. There are three bedrooms of identical size along the right side of the hallway. Next, there is a short hallway to the right leading to a door to the exterior. At the end of the main hallway is the entrance to the master

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bedroom. A second bathroom off the master bedroom is depicted in the original plans. While the partition walls were built, the bathroom was never installed. Instead, the space was used for storage.

A bathroom, laundry room, store room, and hall leading to the tepee are located along the left side of the main hallway. These rooms extend to the natural stone wall at the rear of the house. The hall to the tepee leads to a spiral staircase providing access to Manfred's writing studio. The staircase features the same wrought-iron work with images of peace pipes and arrows installed alongside the kiva. The stairway was also crafted by Fritz Wiese. The tepee is a single space without any partition walls.

The original plans also depict the location of clerestory windows that brought light into the music room, bathroom, laundry room, and what was to have been the bathroom off the master bedroom. The plans denote the location of the clerestory with two lines of dashes and the notation "clerestory above." However, the clerestory was removed by the DNR.

### **Blue Mounds State Park Interpretative Center**

When the State of Minnesota purchased the Manfred property in 1974 for an addition to Blue Mounds State Park, modifications were made to the house in order to facilitate its use as an interpretive center. The DNR prepared a floor plan that delineated the changes that were about to be made. (Figure 4).

The changes included one modification to the exterior, while the majority of the changes were made to the interior. The exterior change, which also impacted the interior, was the removal of the clerestory windows. The interior changes included the conversion of the bedroom located immediately to the east of the entrance hall into an office, which included a service counter for visitors. A conference room was created in the adjacent two bedrooms by the removal of the common partition wall. In the main bedroom, partition walls were removed that had been built to enclose the bathroom delineated on the original plans but never installed. This space was described as an audio-visual room.

The bathroom, laundry room, store room, and hallway leading to the stairway to the tepee were also modified. The bathroom was converted into a women's rest room with new fixtures installed. The partition walls between the remaining spaces were removed. A men's restroom was built next to the women's restroom. The remaining space was left open and referred to as exhibit space. A tile floor was installed in the kiva along with a drain. No changes were made to the major living areas, but they now included exhibits and a number of exhibit cases.

In the 1980s, the restrooms were rehabilitated and new fixtures installed. In the late 1990s, a new roof with asphalt shingles was installed. Other changes include repairs to the stone parapet walls and painting the exterior woodwork a light yellow. Gutters and downspouts were also installed along portions of the roofline.



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At present time, the building is largely empty except for some items remaining from its use as an interpretive center, such as some display cases and related items.

### Assessment of Integrity

The Manfred House retains high integrity of **location** and **setting**, which are particularly important to the significance of the house because both were precisely chosen because of Manfred's connection to the Blue Mound and the literary inspiration that the site and its views provided. The site remains in pristine condition with no intrusions. Similarly, the Manfred House also retains integrity of **feeling** and **association** because the property continues to convey its historic character.

There has been some loss of integrity of **design**, **workmanship**, and **materials** because of changes made to the property after it was acquired by the DNR and converted into an interpretive center. The major change to the exterior was the removal of the clerestory windows. Another exterior change was the painting of all the beams and woodwork to a light yellow. While reversible, the current color contrasts with the original dark stain specified by the architect, which had a more organic expression as seen in historic photographs. Access to the property was also changed. The DNR abandoned Manfred's road and constructed a new road and parking to the southwest of the property. The new road and parking lot do not encroach on the Manfred property.

Changes to the interior involved the removal of partition walls in secondary areas of the house in the bedroom wing to create office and exhibit space, which are reversible changes. There were no major changes to the primary living areas or Manfred's studio. The studio is of utmost significance because it is where Manfred created his literary works. The main living area presents perhaps the best representation of the most impressive architectural element of the house, the integration of living rock walls into the design.

The circumstances that resulted in the closure of the interpretive center also merit discussion. The DNR closed the building in 2016 because of what are described as problems resulting from moisture intrusion through the rear wall of the house. Over time, a major beam in the main living area near the fireplace was said to have deteriorated and bracing was installed, and there was also a concern over air quality. A 2021 report for the DNR by the firm of Braun Intertec stated that if there is to be short-term occupancy of the building additional posts should be installed in the main living area to support the existing beams.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there may also be a loss of integrity of **materials** relating to certain beams. However, the poor condition of a beam(s) does not have substantive impact on the building's overall integrity of **materials**.

Thus, overall, the Manfred House continues to convey its historic qualities and meets the National Register's standards for integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> "Structural Conditions Assessment," prepared for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources by Braun Intertec, June 30, 2021 and revised July 13, 2021, 1-9.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LITERATURE

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1961-1972

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Manfred, Frederick

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Kehne, Myron, architect

Frakes, Marion, contractor

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Frederick and Maryanna Manfred House is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. The property is significant in the area of Literature for its association with Frederick Manfred, an important Minnesota author whose works were notable for their historical accuracy, sense of place, and lyrical depiction of heroic characters. Many of his books are set in a fictional area he called Siouxland, which encompassed the four corners region of Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska and the watershed of the Great Sioux River. The early Siouxland novels, such as *This is the Year*, which brought him national attention, present realistic stories based on his own experiences and knowledge of farm life, including depictions of the struggles of farmers during the Dust Bowl years of the Great Depression. The name Siouxland entered the vernacular as way to describe the region by scholars and residents alike, and its depiction by Manfred has been compared with author William Faulkner's works about Yoknapatawpha County in Mississippi.

Manfred also wrote epic stories about the Wild West in a series of books known as the Buckskin Man Tales, which became his best known novels. Each book deals with a different era in American history and include *Lord Grizzly*, perhaps his most successful work, depicting the era of mountain men, *Riders of Judgment*, about the range wars in the west, *Conquering Horse*, about the Native American during the pre-white era, *Scarlet Plume*, an account of the U.S. Dakota War of 1862, and *King of Spades*, the story of the gold-rush era in South Dakota.

Manfred's works exemplified the concept of "literature of place" and his characters were often shaped by their connections to the land while in search of self-identity. He also received notable praise for his authentic depictions of Native Americans. Nominated four times for the Nobel Prize in literature, and once for a Pulitzer Prize, Manfred continued to write until the end of his life.

Manfred's house on the Blue Mound is intrinsically connected to his literary works. He first visited the Blue Mound as a boy and returned over the years until it became his home. The Blue Mound epitomized Manfred's deep connection to the land and the inspiration it provided. From his writer's studio he could look out onto the expansive landscape, with views as far as Iowa and South Dakota, engage with the land, and create his stories of the region and its people.

The Frederick and Maryanna Manfred House is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The house represents an exceptional example of organic design, other referred to as the Wrightian style. Engaged with a living rock wall of vibrant Sioux Quartzite, the house is sensitively placed below the crest of a hill and embraces its site. When viewed from the north, east, and west, the building recedes into the landscape and is scarcely visible. The use of native materials, common in organic design, takes on particular meaning as the construction stone was quarried from the

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Blue Mound itself, allowing the masonry walls to blend visually into the existing rocky outcroppings.

The complex geometries of the house are a response to the topography of the site and are also incorporated in the design of interior spaces, which, along with expanses of glass, maximize the engagement with the natural environment and the views the site affords. The incorporation of the natural environment continues in the interior with the living rock wall forming the entire rear wall of the interior. Of particular note is the dramatic fireplace with a cantilevered stone hood that merges into the living rock.

The Manfred House represents a high level of realization of the principles of organic design and a remarkable integration of the built and natural environments.

The Frederick and Maryanna Manfred House is considered significant at the statewide level because of Manfred's acclaim as an important Minnesota author and because of the property's unusual and distinctive architectural design. The Period of Significance begins in 1961 with the completion of the house and ends in 1972 based on the National Register's 50-year guidelines.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Early Years**

Frederick Manfred was born Frederick Feikema on January 6, 1912 on a farm near Doon, Iowa, located in the northwestern part of the state. His father, Feike Feikema, was of West Friesian descent, while his mother, Alice, was of East Frisian and Saxon ancestry. Manfred was the oldest of six brothers, all over six feet tall. He was the tallest at six feet, nine inches. A literary career seemed unlikely as his father, who could not read, discouraged him from reading, and Manfred had to hide his books in the hayloft. He recalled writing poems while still in grade school.<sup>2</sup>

Manfred attended Calvinistic parochial schools in Doon and Hull, graduating from the Western Academy, a school operated by the Christian Reformed Church. While in high school, Manfred excelled as a baseball pitcher, and contemplated a career as a professional player. Two years after graduating, he attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He played basketball, joined various literary, philosophical, and dramatic clubs, and began his writing career. Manfred published seventeen poems and short stories in the yearbook and in the college newsletter, *The Calvin College Chimes*. He graduated in 1934 with a B.A. in English and a teaching certificate.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Clarence A. Andrews, *A Literary History of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1972), 113

<sup>3</sup> Andrews, 113.

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Following graduation, Manfred spent two years hitchhiking across the United States. He then headed east and spent eight months in New Jersey, working for the U.S. Rubber Company and also becoming involved in local politics. He then headed west, spending time in Sioux Falls and visiting Yellowstone National Park. At the end of his travels in 1937, Manfred worked as a sports reporter for *The Minneapolis Journal*. He lost his job in 1939, along with his colleague Eric Severeid, possibly because of involvement in union organizing for the American Newspaper Guild.<sup>4</sup>

### **Glen Lake Sanatorium**

Sometime after he left the newspaper, Manfred developed tuberculosis. In April 1940, he entered Glen Lake Sanatorium, a treatment facility for tuberculosis operated by Hennepin County located in the present-day suburb of Minnetonka, west of Minneapolis. Upon his arrival, Manfred recalled hearing a physician state that he doubted Manfred would survive the night. He remained in the sanatorium for two years while recovering. While there, Manfred met his future wife, Maryanna Shorba, a journalism graduate from the University of Minnesota. He later wrote of the experience:

It saved me as an organism and helped make me a writer. It taught me how to live both as a natural animal and musing human being. It drilled into me an early-to-rise, catnap-at-noon, early-to-bed kind of health discipline. It also gave me two 'free' years to think about where I had been, where I was, and where I might go. It gave me a chance to take a deep breath and a good look around before plunging into the battle again.<sup>5</sup>

Upon his discharge in 1942, Dr. Sumner Cohen, the sanatorium's medical director, warned Manfred that writing fiction would be too stressful for him and suggested part-time work in other venues.<sup>6</sup> But in 1943, after a brief period working as a writer for *Modern Medicine*, aiding Hubert Humphrey's Minneapolis mayoral campaign, and his marriage to Maryanna, Manfred decided to become a full-time writer. In 1944, he and Maryanna purchased a house in Bloomington, now a suburb of Minneapolis, overlooking the Minnesota River Valley where he began his writing career.

### **Launching Manfred's Literary Career**

Manfred was assisted with a writing fellowship from the University of Minnesota, which allowed him to publish his first book in 1944, *The Golden Bowl*, a story about the Thor family struggling to survive the Dust Bowl years in southwestern South Dakota. Writing under the name Feike Feikema, the book was inspired by his hitchhiking experiences. In 1945, after receiving a grant-in-aid from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and

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<sup>4</sup> Andrews, 114

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Andrews, 114.

<sup>6</sup> Freya Manfred, *Frederick Manfred: A Daughter Remembers* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1999), 16.

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a writing fellowship from the University of Michigan, Manfred published *Boy Almighty*, an autobiographical account of his time at Glen Lake Sanatorium. Manfred gave Dr. Cohen, the sanatorium's medical director, a copy of the book to review for accuracy. Cohen told Manfred that until he read the book, he had never understand the sanatorium experience from the patient's perspective.<sup>7</sup>

Manfred's next novel, *This is the Year*, published in 1947, depicts Iowa farm life with an ethnic flavor and also presents an indictment of farming practices that led to the Dust Bowl. Nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, the book appeared on the *New York Times* best-seller list for four weeks and on the *New York Herald Tribune* best-seller list for two weeks, bringing him national attention. (Figure 5) At about this time, Minnesota sculptor, Evelyn Raymond, created a bust of Manfred. (Figure 6)

It was in his book *This is the Year* that Manfred first coined the name Siouxland, a reference to what he considered his "home territory," encompassing the four corners region of Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The name was also a reference to the watershed of the Big Sioux River and his way of acknowledging the Native Americans who lived here first. Manfred said there was also a practical consideration since by using the name Siouxland he no longer had to type the names of the four states over and over. Manfred included a map of Siouxland in *This is the Year*. (Figure 7) The map was intended to add reality to the story and Manfred considered the map essential to the narrative. He populated Siouxland with many towns, some real and some fictitious. Sometimes he would change the name of an actual town. For example, Luverne was renamed Whitebone.<sup>8</sup>

A number of Manfred's novels are set in Siouxland and he believed that by providing a map it would give the reader a good visual outline of the country, the farms, and the environs of his literary territory. Interestingly, Siouxland became a popular term throughout the region.<sup>9</sup>

In time, Manfred's interest was drawn away from Siouxland to the part of the West of the northern plains, from Minnesota and Iowa west, through the Dakotas and Nebraska and into Montana and Wyoming, from Mississippi to the Rockies and from Kansas to Canada. He turned from realistic stories about Siouxland based on his own experiences and knowledge of farm life, to epic stories about the Wild West that came to be called the Buckskin Man Tales. He discovered heroic material of the mountain men and the Native American. In the Buckskin Man Tales, Manfred created a series of fictional, although historically accurate accounts, each of which dealt with a different important era in the history of America: in *Lord Grizzly* (1954) about mountain men; in *Riders of Judgment* (1957) about the Johnson County cattle wars; in *Conquering Horse* (1959) about pre-

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin Rezmerski, ed., *The Frederick Manfred Reader* (Duluth: Holy Cow! Press, 1996), 406.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald R. Huseboe, "Feikema to Manfred, From the Great Sioux Basin to the Northern Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* (Fall 2001), 309-310.

<sup>9</sup> Huseboe, 310.

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white days in which a Native American searches for personal identify; *Scarlet Plume* (1964) about the U.S. Dakota War; and in *King of Spades* (1966) about the gold-rush era in Deadwood, South Dakota.<sup>10</sup>

It was the first of the Buckskin Man Tales, *Lord Grizzly*, where Manfred immersed himself in the historical research that so enriches the books in this series. *Lord Grizzly*, a best seller and finalist for the National Book Award in 1954, is based on the true story of Hugh Glass who suffered horrific injuries at the hands of a grizzly bear along the Grand River in South Dakota and his epic struggle to survive. Manfred had first learned of the incident in a copy of the *WPA Guide to South Dakota*.<sup>11</sup> To add authenticity to the story of Hugh Glass, Manfred walked for over 70 miles through the Dakotas, sometimes getting down on his stomach and eating insects as Glass had done. Back in Bloomington, he configured his leg in a sling and crawled along a hill to get a sense of what it would be like to drag a broken leg.<sup>12</sup> Manfred also created a map that represented the geographic area featured in *Lord Grizzly*. (Figure 8)

When Manfred began work on a new book, he would compile detailed notes in a notebook that would guide his research and preparation. *Riders of Judgment* provides an example of his meticulous process. The notebook for *Riders of Judgment* contains a list of 115 books that Manfred wanted to read for his background research. Ninety-nine books have a check mark, suggesting he read all but 16 books. The notebook also contains a list of places to visit and people to interview. There are detailed notes about specific characters, including their characteristics and phrases they might use. There are notes for 101 scenes and a map depicting the geographic area associated with the story. To add accuracy to his understanding of a cowboy, he compiled a list of all the clothing and equipment that a cowboy would require. He estimated it cost \$189.50 to outfit a cowboy.<sup>13</sup>

His research skills would also play a particularly important role in *Scarlet Plume* where Manfred depicts the U.S. Dakota War with remarkable even-handedness and accuracy. At the time of the book's 1964 publication, it is not likely there was widespread understanding in Minnesota of the origins of the conflict, and responsibility was placed largely on Native Americans, something Manfred sought to correct.

After completing the Buckskin Man Tales, Manfred returned to his writing semi-autobiographical regional novels, which he had written earlier in his career. His characters are often on a search for identify while being impacted by an enduring connection to the land.

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<sup>10</sup> Huseboe, 314.

<sup>11</sup> Huseboe, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Ronald Barron, *A Guide to Minnesota Writers* (Edina: Burgess International Group, 1993), 107.

<sup>13</sup> "Riders of Judgment Notebook," Frederick Manfred Papers, Upper Midwest Literary Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



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Manfred published his books under the name Feike Feikema until 1952, when he legally changed his name to Frederick Feikema Manfred. He explained he made the change for ease of pronunciation and recognition. He chose Manfred because he said it was an Anglicization of Feikema with “Feike” standing for Fred or Frederick and “ma” standing for man.<sup>14</sup> *Lord Grizzly* was his first book published under the name Frederick Manfred.

Manfred wrote his first twelve books between 1944 and 1960 from his home in Bloomington where he lived with his wife Maryanna and their three children, Freya, Marya, and Fred Jr. Their house was a single-story, shingle-clad rambler, which had been built as a ski lodge for the neighboring property that was then remodeled to serve as a residence. Manfred first called the house “Long Look” because of its expansive views of the Minnesota River Valley. But he later changed the name to Wrâlda, a Frisian word for “world.”<sup>15</sup> Manfred built a small “writer’s shack” on the property where he worked each day.

During this time, Manfred developed close connections with the Native American community. When a party was held at Wrâlda after *Conquering Horse* was published in 1959, Freya Manfred recalled how “More than one hundred Lakota Indians from South Dakota and Minnesota showed up with drums and colorful outfits and danced and sang until dawn in honor of the book, which, they said, spoke the truth about their people.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Constructing the Blue Mound House**

Frederick Manfred had first visited the Blue Mound with his father when he was a boy. The family farm in Doon, Iowa was located just 30 miles to the south. His father asked him if he wanted to see some mountains and then showed him how the Blue Mound commands views of three states. Over the years, Manfred continued to return to the Blue Mound and the broader Siouxland region while researching his books. Freya Manfred sometimes traveled with her father, recalling how they always stopped at the Blue Mound because her father said there was no other place where he wanted to live and wished he could someday build a house there.<sup>17</sup>

In about the mid-1950s, Manfred decided to make his dream house a reality:

Finally, some eight years ago [I] conceived [the] idea of building a house up on the] highest part from which I might view my beloved Siouxland while I wrote about it, living in the very heartland itself instead of from the periphery.<sup>18</sup>

Manfred discussed purchasing land from Vernon and Anna Louise Noll, whose farmland included land at the south end of the Blue Mound. He also contacted his friend Myron Kehne, an

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<sup>14</sup> Van Vleet, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Freya Manfred, 28-29.

<sup>16</sup> Freya Manfred, 28.

<sup>17</sup> “Chronology,” September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers; Frey Manfred, email to Rolf Anderson dated May 16, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> “Chronology,” September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers.

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architect from St. Paul who Manfred had met while both were attending Calvin College. He and Kehne visited the Blue Mound on June 11-13, 1959. Kehne completed two small sketches of features for the house during the course of their visit. The sketches depict a sunken seating area with a fireplace in the center.<sup>19</sup> Then on August 20, 1959, Manfred drove his wife, Maryanna, and their three children to the Blue Mound for a picnic so they could visit the site for their new home.<sup>20</sup>

In April 1959, Manfred traveled back to Luverne and acquired an option to purchase land from the Nolls with the condition that the purchase was contingent on whether he could find water at the site. He also met Arnold Paulsen, a well-driller from Jasper, who examined the site and agreed to drill for water. On that same trip, he was introduced to Marion Frakes, a contractor from Luverne, who would go on to build Manfred's house. Manfred and Frakes also visited the site and identified the parcel of land that Manfred wished to purchase. The land was then surveyed in order to create the legal description for the property.

Manfred met with Kehne in the fall of 1959 to discuss the design of the house. Kehne provided Manfred with his first sketch for the house in March 1960. Both men, along with Maryanna, traveled to Luverne in July 1960 to visit the building site. Kehne and Frakes took measurements along the cliff wall where the house was to be sited so that Kehne could relate the measurements to his initial sketch. Kehne continued developing the plans for the house over the summer.

In August 1960, the Manfred house in Bloomington was sold. The family moved to Luverne and rented a house from Marion Frakes until their new house could be completed. Manfred also moved his writer's shack from Bloomington to the new property.

In the meantime, Manfred and Frakes had been searching for a source of building stone for the house. They learned that the Luverne school board wanted to sell an 1895 school, which was built with Sioux Quartzite. Manfred bought the school for \$1.00 and Frakes began dismantling the building. It was estimated the cost of dismantling the school would cost about \$6,000.00, although it was thought this money could be recovered by selling stone and timber not needed for the house.

In early November 1960, the well drillers located water at the site and construction of the house got underway. Work began on the footings and the stone wall at the back of the house. By mid-December, the roof had been covered. Kehne's final set of architectural plans for the house are dated December 13, 1960.<sup>21</sup> (Figures 9-11)

On December 5, 1960, the Manfreds formally completed the purchase of 3.98 acres of land from Vernon and Anna Louise Noll for the sum of \$1,500.00.<sup>22</sup> Just to the east of Manfred's property

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<sup>19</sup> "Architectural sketches by Myron Kehne," Manfred Papers.

<sup>20</sup> "Chronology," September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers; "Drawings," Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>21</sup> "Chronology," September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers; Myron Kehne, "Blue Mound Residence for Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Manfred," architectural drawings dated December 13, 1960 provided by Freya Manfred.

<sup>22</sup> Warranty Deed #85938 dated December 5, 1960, Rock County Courthouse, Luverne, Minnesota.

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line, there is a 1,250-foot-long line of rocks said to have been aligned by Plains Indians which marks where the sun rises and sets on the spring and fall equinoxes.

Because Manfred's land was contained within the Noll farmland, he obtained an easement from the Nolls in order to access his property. He built a road that approached the house at the rear and then continued around the east side of the property and down the hill to the front of the house.

Manfred moved his office equipment and books into his new writer's studio, or tepee, as he called it, on April 10, 1961. On April 11, he began to write in the house for the first time, working on *Scarlet Plume*. The family moved into the house on April 28, 1961. Manfred referred to the house as Blue Mound.<sup>23</sup>

A number of photographs were taken of the exterior and interior of the house at the time of its completion. The house was also featured in several newspapers, including an article in the *Worthington Daily Globe*.<sup>24</sup> Together, these photographs provide a detailed depiction of the house at the time of its completion. (Figures 12-19)

### **Architect Myron M. Kehne and the Design of the Manfred House**

Architect Myron M. Kehne, AIA, was born in Minneapolis on November 17, 1917. He received his degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota. From 1947-1950 he was employed as designer and head draftsman for R. V. McCann. In 1950, he established his own firm, and by 1956 his office was located at 1879 University Avenue in St. Paul. His works included Cook County High School, 1951 (Grand Marais); St. Joseph's School, 1952 (Red Lake Falls); Powers Regulator Office, 1953 (Minneapolis); and Little Flower Mission, 1954 (Onamia).<sup>25</sup>

By 1960, when he designed the Manfred House, he was a partner in the firm of Kehne and Carmody, with offices located at 1953 St. Anthony Avenue in St. Paul. By 1962, the firm had moved to 7803 Southtown Circle in Bloomington. Additional works included St. Mary's Parish Church, 1955 (Milaca); Onamia Hospital, 1955 (Onamia); Crosier Seminary, 1957 (Onamia); Melrose Hospital, 1958 (Melrose); and St. Odilia School, 1961 (Shoreview).<sup>26</sup> At the time of his death in 1968 at age 51, Kehne was employed by Ellerbe Architects.<sup>27</sup>

Kehne's design for the Manfred House is an example of organic architecture, which is characterized by the integration of the built and natural environments. Organic designs respond to the natural environment rather than impose upon it. While other modern stylistic movements promoted straight lines and right angles, organic architecture favored natural shapes and interesting geometries. A design for a building was conceived as reactive to both the environment and to the building materials and developed "organically" into one harmonious

<sup>23</sup> "Chronology," September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>24</sup> "Rock and Sky Surround High-Level Home near Luverne," *Worthington Daily Globe*, July 20, 1961, 1, 6.

<sup>25</sup> George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1956), 291.

<sup>26</sup> George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1962), 369.

<sup>27</sup> "Library Official Myron Kehne is Dead at 51," *The Star Tribune*, June 10 1968, 19.

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whole. An organic architect would carefully study the exact site for a house and then create a design that grew from within. Organic architecture is designed for a specific location with local materials adapted to the conditions of the site.<sup>28</sup>

Frank Lloyd Wright is considered America's premier organic architect and a building in this style is often referred to as Wrightian. His most famous organic design is Fallingwater, a house built in Pennsylvania in 1936-1939, which is set within a rocky landscape and cantilevered over a waterfall. Although when compared to the Manfred House, the use of living rock at Fallingwater is limited to a hearth stone.

Wright designed several houses in Minnesota, including a house for Frieda and Henry L. Neils in 1950 (National Register of Historic Places, 2004). The house is typical of Wright's organic designs with complex geometry, careful placement on the site, stone walls, and expanses of glass to capture views. Yet, even among Wright's designs, or those of other proponents of organic architecture such as John Howe, Wright's chief draftsman who established a practice in Minneapolis beginning in the 1960s, a house in Minnesota comparable to the Manfred House has not been identified. The Manfred House may well be a singular design in the state with its integration into the site and the incorporation of a wall of living rock that extends the entire length of the house. Its complex triangular and hexagonal geometries, dramatic features such as the cantilevered fireplace, vibrant stone, and expanses of glass, present a powerful architectural statement.

### **The Sale of the Blue Mound House**

Unfortunately, even before Manfred's dream house on the Blue Mound was completed, problems began to arise. Manfred had said he did not want the cost of the house to exceed \$23,000.00, the net amount he hoped to realize from the sale of his house in Bloomington. He thought the burden of a mortgage would have an impact on his ability to write. But it soon became clear that the house would cost well beyond that amount. However, a legal contract had never been executed with the contractor, Marion Frakes. The agreement to build the house had been completed with a handshake. Ultimately, it is believed that the cost of the house was well in excess of \$40,000.00.<sup>29</sup>

To make matters worse, Manfred fell down the spiral staircase that led to his writer's studio as a result of a step that had not been properly installed. He suffered a concussion and seventeen broken ribs. The injury along with the excessive cost of the house led to litigation between Manfred and Frakes. Ultimately, an out-of-court settlement was reached concerning the cost of the house, and Manfred received an insurance settlement due to his injury. But the settlements did not cover the expenses for which Manfred was still responsible and he was forced to borrow funds from the First National Bank of Luverne.<sup>30</sup> Architect Myron Kehne felt badly about the ultimate cost of the house and only accepted Manfred's initial payment of \$900.00 toward his

<sup>28</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 656-660.

<sup>29</sup> "Chronology," September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers; Freya Manfred, 39-40.

<sup>30</sup> Freya Manfred, 40; Ben Vanderkooi, email to Rolf Anderson dated January 23, 2022.

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6% fee for the design of the house.<sup>31</sup> Manfred also remarked that the litigation and injury interrupted his writing.

Because of the cost overruns, a number of features specified in the architectural plans were never completed. For example, the concrete floors were to have been surfaced in terrazzo and a second bathroom was to have been installed in the main bedroom.

When the actual cost of the house was becoming known, the Manfreds first thought they would sell the house and find a home they could afford. But they ultimately decided to remain in the house, although it would continue to be a challenge for them financially. Then in the early 1970s, the State of Minnesota approached the Manfreds about purchasing their property for an addition to Blue Mounds State Park. At the same time, the state was making plans to purchase the surrounding property from the Nolls. It seemed like an ideal solution to the Manfreds. They could clear up their debts but also remain in the house under a rental arrangement with the state. The Manfreds also believed they were being provided with a life estate. On October 26, 1972, the Manfreds sold the house for \$61,332.54. Technically, the house was sold to the Minnesota Parks Foundation, which served as the temporary owner until the state could acquire the necessary funds.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, the state acquired the funds from at least two sources, a donation from the Bush Foundation as well certain federal funds.

When, after the fact, Manfred noticed that none of the paperwork mentioned the life estate, he contacted U.W. Hella, the then director of the Division of State Parks of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Hella explained that because the state had accepted some federal funds for the purchase, it was not permissible to offer a life estate, but he assured Manfred that the state would have no need for his house for some years. Manfred seems to have believed that he and Maryanna would likely be able to remain in the house for at least 10 years.

Manfred became alarmed when he received a letter dated March 6, 1974 from Don Davison, the new director of the Division of State Parks, stating the state wished to proceed with developing an interpretive center in the house. The Manfreds were requested to vacate the house by May 1, 1974, less than two months from the date of the letter from Davison.<sup>33</sup> Manfred replied to Davison in a letter dated March 8, 1974 in which he recounted his understanding of the arrangement with the state in detail. He stated:

Your letter came as a great shock. If you will look at the enclosure you will see why. The original plan was that I would always have life rights in the place. . . . I have written my best books up here and I fully plan to write more good books up here. Thus my family and I are determined to resist this request to vacate by May 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Chronology," September 7, 1964, Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Deed Record No. 63 dated October 26, 1972, Rock County Courthouse, Luverne, Minnesota.

<sup>33</sup> Don D. Davidson, letter to Frederick Manfred dated March 6, 1974, Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Frederick Manfred, letter to Don Davison dated March 8, 1974, Frederick Manfred Papers.

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Manfred sent copies of his letter to various political figures including Governor Elmer L. Anderson and to other individuals hoping to enlist their assistance. Correspondence between Manfred and the state went on for some time and he also consulted an attorney. But he had no recourse since he had never been legally granted a life estate to remain in the house. The state ultimately advanced the date for vacating the house to March 31, 1975 and then finally until July 31, 1975.<sup>35</sup>

These events placed a final strain on the marriage between Fred and Maryanna and they divorced. After their debts were settled, Fred gave Maryanna all the remaining funds from the sale of the house, stating he wished he could give her more. Neither ever remarried.<sup>36</sup>

Manfred recalled the importance of Maryanna in his life:

My wife, Maryanna, has been of much help to me. She has pitched in financially at times; she has helped with the typing and proofreading. She never sees my manuscripts until they come back in galleys. She serves, with her bright and compassionate mind, as a friend who will listen to suggestions for plots, ways of handling scenes, analyses of people we meet and the like. She makes a good traveler when I am out on research. When she comes along, I actually go with two pairs of eyes.<sup>37</sup>

Just before he left his house on the Blue Mound, Manfred wrote to a friend and recounted the importance of the house and its setting to his literary work.

I turned out more work and better work than at any other time in my life---and that despite the fact that I gave part of my time to the University of South Dakota as "writer-in-residence." It has been heaven up here in this tepee so far as work goes. I was sitting on a ledge in the middle of my country SIOUXLAND, much as a Faulkner in his Yoknapatawpha County or a Hardy in his Wessex country, and really letting This Place use me as its mouthpiece.

In the letter, Manfred listed the books that he wrote while living in the Blue Mound house, noting that he also completed *Wanderlust* at the house.

Scarlet Plume (1964)

The Man Who Looked Like the Prince of Wales (1964)

Winter Count (1966)

King of Spades (1966)

Apples of Paradise (1968)

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<sup>35</sup> Don D. Davison, letter to Frederick Manfred dated March 28, 1974, Frederick Manfred Papers; Don D. Davison, letter to Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Manfred dated June 27, 1975, Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>36</sup> Freya Manfred, 43-44.

<sup>37</sup> Carmen Nelson Richards, ed., "Frederick Feikema Manfred," in *Minnesota Writers: A Collection of Autobiographical Stories by Minnesota Prose Writers* (Minneapolis: T. S. Denison & Company, Inc., 1961), 218.

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Eden Prairie (1968)

Milk of Wolves (not published until 1976)

Conversations with Frederick Manfred (1974)

Green Earth (not published until 1977)

The Manly-Hearted Woman (1975)

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He concluded by noting:

The new place [Roundwind] will never never come close to being the good workshop that this tepee was. This tepee was a magic place as the above list of work indicates.<sup>38</sup>

### **Roundwind**

Once Manfred realized he had no option but to leave his house on the Blue Mound, he proceeded to borrow the money to purchase six acres on a hill above the Rock River east of Luverne. The land has expansive views to the west and also of the Blue Mound off in the distance to the northwest. Stating he had \$1.00 in his billfold, he proceeded to borrow more money to build a house. He began by moving his writer's shack from the Blue Mound house to his new property. The new house was constructed in three stages. The initial dwelling was built in 1975 and constructed into the hillside. There was a garage and guest bedroom at grade level with one room below at the walk-out level that included a kitchen, laundry, and bathroom. In 1981, he extended the building at the walk-out level, adding a kitchen-dining-living room and two bedrooms. In about 1984, he built a six-sided writer's studio at the north end of the house at grade level, which was similar to the tepee at the Blue Mound house. Leroy Luitjens, a construction superintendent from Luverne, was involved in the construction along with James Van Hove. Manfred called the house Roundwind because the wind came in from all directions.<sup>39</sup>

Roundwind features fieldstone, which Manfred gathered himself, expanses of glass, and wooden shingles. Certain wall sections are clad with fieldstone, and fieldstone is also used to construct battered piers, which divide the house into bays at the walkout level. Sliding glass doors are positioned in the bays. The exterior walls of the walkout level are clad with wooden shingles. The roof is flat except for Manfred's studio, which is covered with a hexagonal hip roof. (Figure 20)

Manfred's daughter, Freya, would sometimes ask him to go for a walk on the Blue Mound. She recalled, "...he'd go reluctantly, sadly, and reflectively. 'I never wanted to give this place up,' he'd say."<sup>40</sup> One happy occasion when he returned to the Blue Mound was the 1976 marriage of

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<sup>38</sup> Frederick Manfred, letter to Ben Vanderkooi, Sr., July 5, 1975, Manfred Papers. Yoknapatawpha County is a fictional county in Mississippi created by author William Faulkner and largely based on Lafayette County.

<sup>39</sup> Freya Manfred, 44; "Roundwind House," Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form, April 21, 1995, including a letter from Freya Manfred dated September 26, 1994, Inventory No. RK-MGT-006, State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>40</sup> Freya Manfred, 44.

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Freya to Thomas Pope. The ceremony was held a short distance north of the Manfred House near a rock outcropping that Manfred called Eagle Rock. (Figure 21)

Manfred said that the stress of leaving his house on the Blue Mound interrupted his writing for some time, but he returned to writing and completed a dozen more books during the last eighteen years of his life. Included among the books he wrote at Roundwind are *The Wind Blow Free* (1979), *Sons of Adam* (1980), *No Fun on Sunday* (1990), and *Of Lizards and Angels* (1992), a book set in Siouxland. Frederick Manfred died on September 7, 1994 at age 82.

### **Frederick Manfred's Three Houses**

The three houses where Manfred lived and wrote are all important locations associated with his literary career. They include Wrâlda, his house in Bloomington; his house on the Blue Mound, which he called Blue Mound; and Roundwind, his house east of Luverne. In terms of deciding which house represents the most appropriate property for listing in the National Register, both Wrâlda and Roundwind fall out of consideration at the present time. Wrâlda is said to have undergone significant changes since the Manfred's sold the property and thus may not retain sufficient integrity. Roundwind is not yet 50 years old and thus does not meet the National Register threshold for age. But it is possible the property could be evaluated at a future date. The house on the Blue Mound could stand on its architectural significance alone as an important example of organic design. Yet the house on the Blue Mound also best represents Manfred's literary career. The Blue Mound was the one place where he had always wanted to live and it was a source of inspiration to which he returned throughout his life.

### **Frederick Manfred's Literary Legacy**

The works of Frederick Manfred are listed below, including books, poetry, essays, short stories, and letters, as well as an interview, recorded lecture, and video portrait. Stories, essays, and other individual works published in periodicals but not collected are not included in this list.

*The Golden Bowl* (1944)

*Boy Almighty* (1945)

*This is the Year* (1947)

*The Chokecherry Tree* (1948)

*The Primitive* (1949)

*The Brother* (1950)

*The Giant* (1951)

*Lord Grizzly* (1954)

*Morning Red* (1956)

*Riders of Judgment* (1957)

*Conquering Horse* (1959)

*Arrow of Love* (1961)

*Wanderlust* (1962; revised version of *The Primitive*, *The Brother*, and *The Giant*, published in one volume)

*Scarlet Plume* (1964)



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*The Man Who Looked Like the Prince of Wales* (1965; reprinted in paperback as *The Secret Place*)

*Winter Count* (1966; poems)

*King of Spades* (1966)

*Apples of Paradise and Other Stories* (1968)

*Eden Prairie* (1968)

*Conversations with Frederick Manfred* (1974)

*Writing in the West* (1974, recorded lecture)

*The Manly-Hearted Woman* (1975)

*Milk of Wolves* (1976)

*Green Earth* (1977)

*The Wind Blows Free: A Reminiscence* (1979)

*Sons of Adam* (1980)

*American Grizzly* (1983; video portrait)

*Dinkytown* (1984; chapbook)

*Winter Count II* (1987; poems)

*Prime Fathers* (1988, essays)

*The Selected Letters of Frederick Manfred, 1932-1954* (1989)

*Flowers of Desire* (1989)

*No Fun on Sunday* (1990)

*Of Lizards and Angels* (1992)

*Portrait* (1991; interview by Freya Manfred)

*Duke's Mixture* (1993)

*Moon Calf* (unpublished)

*The Wrath of Love* (unpublished)

*Black Earth* (unpublished)

Manfred scholar Professor John Rezmerski describes his work as follows:

For the Midwest, Frederick Manfred's work epitomizes the literature of place. He coined the term Siouxlend to refer to the region in which most of his work is set . . . an area with its own characteristic pattern of social, economic, and cultural evolution.

Manfred details that pattern for us in his works. The books tell of the ways of the Dakota before the coming of the whites, the early intrusions of the fur traders and "mountain men," the encroachments of settlers and soldiers, the hardships of pioneer life, the growth of farming communities, and the contemporary lifeways which developed from this history. His books deal with all the strata of society, vividly depicting the situations and roles in which men, women, and children discover themselves within these cultural contexts. In down-to-earth fashion, he incarnates the myths people of the region have lived by, and documents details of

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life at an earlier time that have mostly been missed by historians and collectors of artifacts.<sup>41</sup>

While Siouxland was a fictional area, it was defined by an actual geographic area and one that was populated by people with qualities and characteristics with which Manfred was familiar. The term also came into vernacular use to describe the region.

Rezmerski goes on to discuss significant aspects of Manfred's writing. One aspect is "historical," including the relationship between Indians and the land, the conflict between the white takers of the land and the Indians, the formation, or failure to form, new attachments to the land on the part of whites, the abuse of the land that led to the Dust Bowl, followed by new prosperity and a flight to cities. Another component is "cultural," including the artistic, religious, social, and linguistic influences and conflicts between Indians and immigrants.<sup>42</sup>

Manfred was notable for his accurate depiction of Native Americans and he maintained ties with members of the Native American community throughout his life. In his 1964 book *Scarlet Plume*, he presents a balanced account of the U.S Dakota War, unusual for the time. Professor Joseph Flora wrote that, "his imaginative participation in the life of the American Indian is one of his greatest achievements."<sup>43</sup> It was noted that perhaps no white person could accurately describe the Native American experience, but if anyone could it would be Manfred.

Manfred scholar Nancy Owen Nelson writes how the concept of spirituality of place played a key role in Manfred's novels. She writes that Manfred's discovery of this Native American belief may have been the result of his own intuitive understanding of Indian culture. She quotes Manfred speaking about his motive behind writing about Native Americans.<sup>44</sup>

We are living on their land. They were already adjusted to it and used to it. They were a piece of it. The land and they were one. We are not . . . So I wanted to show how the Indian lived at that time [1800, the setting of *Conquering Horse*]. Why he did what he did. His beliefs and his fate came up out of the land.<sup>45</sup>

Over the years, Manfred received mixed reviews from the Eastern literary establishment and at times had difficulty in finding a publisher for his works. Early in his career he was assisted by his friend Minnesota author Sinclair Lewis who persuaded a publisher to print several of his books. Manfred had been labeled a regionalist by some publishers who believed his works would only appeal to those who lived in the area about which he was writing. Although it should

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<sup>41</sup> Rezmerski, xvii.

<sup>42</sup> Rezmerski, xviii.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Barron, 107.

<sup>44</sup> Nancy Owen Nelson, "Sacred Siouxland: Wakan Places in Some Novels by Frederick Manfred," *Heritage of the Great Plains* 28 no. 1 (1995): 41-42.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick Manfred, *Conversations with Frederick Manfred*, moderated by John R. Milton (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1974), 129, quoted in Nancy Owen Nelson, 42

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be noted that such criticism was never directed at William Faulkner when he wrote about Yoknapatawpha County.<sup>46</sup>

The average reader may have a different opinion. Mary Ann Grossman, book editor for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* wrote:

Nominated four times for a Nobel Prize in literature, Manfred has been praised for his historical accuracy, sense of place and lyrical writing about heroic characters. That's what the "lit crowd" says. If you were to ask an average reader, he or she would probably say Fred Manfred writes exciting adventures.<sup>47</sup>

Manfred was also praised for avoiding common stereotypes in his Western novels. Following the publication of *Riders of Judgment*, a reviewer wrote:

Frederick Manfred with "Lord Grizzly" and now with this new novel is among the few responsible for bringing serious intent and the novelist's craft, in full depth and richness, to a field ridden with clichés. . . .

As in "Lord Grizzly," the sense of place and time is vivid, the talk is natural and yet in period, the physical scene is closely observed. Manfred's eye and ear are both acute, and what is seen and heard in this wide-flung landscape of plain and mountain lends sensuous veracity and liveliness to his narrative, and pungent differentiation to his people.<sup>48</sup>

For his contributions to this genre, Manfred was made an Honorary Life Member of the Western Literary Association in 1967.

Another important contribution of Manfred's was his role as a teacher, nurturing and inspiring younger generations of writers. He served as writer-in-residence at Macalester College in St. Paul in 1949-52. Among the classes he taught, it is known that in 1950-51 he taught a seminar in writing fiction.<sup>49</sup> He also served as writer-in-residence at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, from 1968-82. Beginning in 1983 and for many years, he served as the chair in regional heritage at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps Manfred himself best described his literary legacy when he said, "It has long been my thought that a "place" finally selects the people who best reflect it, give it voice, and allow it to

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<sup>46</sup> Rezmerski, xxiii

<sup>47</sup> Mary Ann Grossman, "Manfred, a literary giant in life, work," *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, January 3, 1988, 3E.

<sup>48</sup> John K. Sherman, "Riders of Judgment: Manfred Goes 'Western' Without Stereotypes," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, May 27, 1957, 14.

<sup>49</sup> "Schedule of Classes 1950-51," Frederick Manfred Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Nancy Owen Nelson, "Frederick Manfred," in *Twentieth-Century Western Writers*, Geoff Sadler, ed. (Chicago and London: St. James Press, 1991), 442-443.

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make a cultural contribution to the sum of all world culture under the sun.”<sup>51</sup> He believed he had been chosen to produce a canon of work that gave voice to the people and the land of his native region.

**Save the Manfred House, Inc.**

The Manfred House has remained vacant since the Blue Mounds State Park Interpretive Center closed in 2016. In recent years, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has expressed an interest in demolishing the house. The DNR states there has been on-going deterioration in a number of structural beams due to water infiltration and resulting air quality issues.<sup>52</sup>

As a result of the DNR’s interest in demolishing the house, friends, family members, and colleagues of Manfred created a non-profit organization in 2019 called Save the Manfred House, Inc. The goal of the organization is to rehabilitate and preserve the house. This National Register Nomination has been prepared on behalf of Save the Manfred House, Inc.

**Conclusion**

Frederick Manfred was larger than life. At six feet nine inches tall, he was a towering figure. His lifelong goal to produce a body of work that gave voice to an entire region over a span of 200 years was perhaps larger than life as well, and a remarkable literary achievement.

The Manfred House on the Blue Mound was also a remarkable achievement. Perhaps it is not surprising that someone who was so closely connected to land would wish to build a house that was equally united with the land. The result was a design both bold and extraordinary in concept with its incorporation of living rock and integration with the natural landscape. The Manfred House represents one of Minnesota’s most unique and powerful architectural expressions in residential design. (Figure 22)

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Freya Manfred, 9.

<sup>52</sup> Discussion with Rolf Anderson on April 20, 2019; Freya Manfred stated that when the house was first built there were occasions when water would infiltrate from the rear wall. However, she said her father would correct the problem by, for example, creating a trench at the north side of the house to divert the water.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Andrews, Clarence, A. *A Literary History of Iowa*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1972.

Barron, Ronald. *A Guide to Minnesota Writers*. Edina: Burgess International Group, 1993.

Grossman, Mary Ann. "Fred Manfred, a literary giant in life, work." *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*, January 3, 1988.

Husboe, Arthur, R. "From Feikema to Manfred, From the Great Sioux Basin to the Northern Plains." *Great Plains Quarterly* (2001): 309-319.

Manfred, Freya. *Frederick Manfred: A Daughter Remembers*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1999.

Nelson, Nancy Owen. "Sacred Siouxland: Wakan Places in Some Novels by Frederick Manfred." *Heritage of the Great Plains* 28 no. 1 (1995): 41-51.

Rezmerski, John Calvin, ed. *The Frederick Manfred Reader*. Duluth: Holy Cow! Press, 1996.

Richards, Carmen Nelson. *Minnesota Writers: A Collection of Autobiographical Stories by Minnesota Prose Writers*. Minneapolis: T. J. Denison & Co. Inc., 1961.

Sadler, Geoff, ed. *Twentieth-Century Western Writers*. Chicago and London: St. James Press, 1991.

Sherman, John K. "Riders of Judgment: Manfred Goes 'Western' Without Stereotypes." *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, May 27, 1957.

"Suits Enmesh State Novelist's Dream House." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 15, 1962.

Van Vleet, Miranda. "Frederick Manfred House," Minnesota Individual Property Inventory Form," 2020. State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Archives

Upper Midwest Literary Archives. University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: Upper Midwest Literary Archives, University of Minnesota

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** RK-MND-014

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 3.98

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☒ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 14 | Easting: 726010 | Northing: 4841260 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A tract of land in the Southeast Quarter of Section 26, Township 103 North, Range 45 West, County of Rock Minnesota, described as follows: Commencing at the Southwest corner of said Section 26, thence North 90°00' East (assumed bearing) along the South line of said Section 26 for 4161.0 feet, thence North 0°00' East for 844.0 feet to the point of beginning, thence North 0°00' East for 445.0 feet, thence South 89° 46'47" East for 390.0 feet, thence South 00°00' East for 443.5 feet, thence South 90°00' West for 390.0 feet to the point of beginning, containing an area of 3.98 acres, more or less.

Refer to Figure 23 for a boundary map of the 3.98 acres purchased by the Manfreds in 1960. This land is now part of a larger parcel owned by the State of Minnesota.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the 3.98 acres purchased by the Manfreds and the building that was historically associated with the property.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rolf T. Anderson  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 212 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55408  
e-mail: roanders6@aol.com  
telephone: 612-824-7807  
date: January 31, 2022

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.



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## Photo Log

Name of Property: Frederick Manfred House

City or Vicinity: Luverne

County: Rock

State: MN

Photographer: Rolf T. Anderson

Date Photographed: October 29-30, 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 16. Photo of rock outcropping at the southeast edge of the Blue Mound, approximately 2,500 feet northeast of the Manfred House, facing northwest
- 2 of 16. Manfred House, facing northwest
- 3 of 16. Manfred House, depicting integration into the Blue Mound, facing southwest
- 4 of 16. Manfred House, with view to the southeast toward the Rock River, facing southeast
- 5 of 16. South elevation, depicting the projecting prow, facing north
- 6 of 16. West elevation of the projecting prow, facing east
- 7 of 16. Southeast elevation, facing northwest
- 8 of 16. Masonry detail, east section of the house, facing northwest
- 9 of 16. East end of the house depicting integration into the cliff wall, facing southwest
- 10 of 16. West end of house with cliff wall, facing northeast
- 11 of 16. West end of house, facing northeast
- 12 of 16. Stone wall at west end of house depicting integration into the cliff wall, facing north
- 13 of 16. Projecting stone parapet wall and masonry mass of the fireplace with view toward the Rock River, facing southeast
- 14 of 16. Teepee and views to the southwest, facing southwest
- 15 of 16. Cantilevered fireplace in the living area, facing northeast
- 16 of 16. Fireplace and adjacent living rock wall in the living area, facing northeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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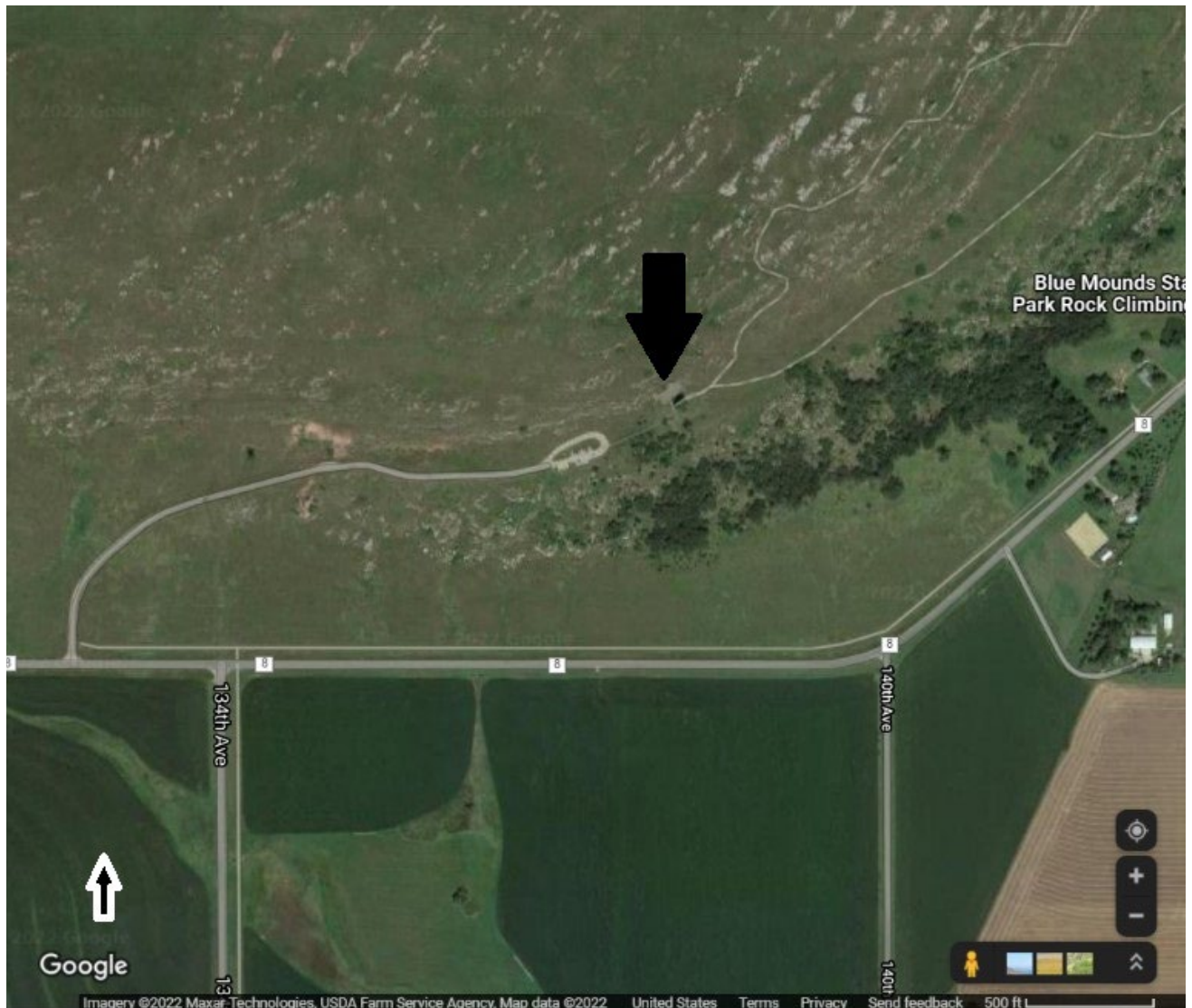


Figure 1. Aerial view showing the location of the Manfred House at the southern edge of the Blue Mound noted with a black arrow. Google Maps.

UTM Coordinates: Zone 14, Easting 726010, Northing 4841260

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Figure 2. Aerial view of the Manfred House depicting complex geometry and southeasterly orientation. Google Maps



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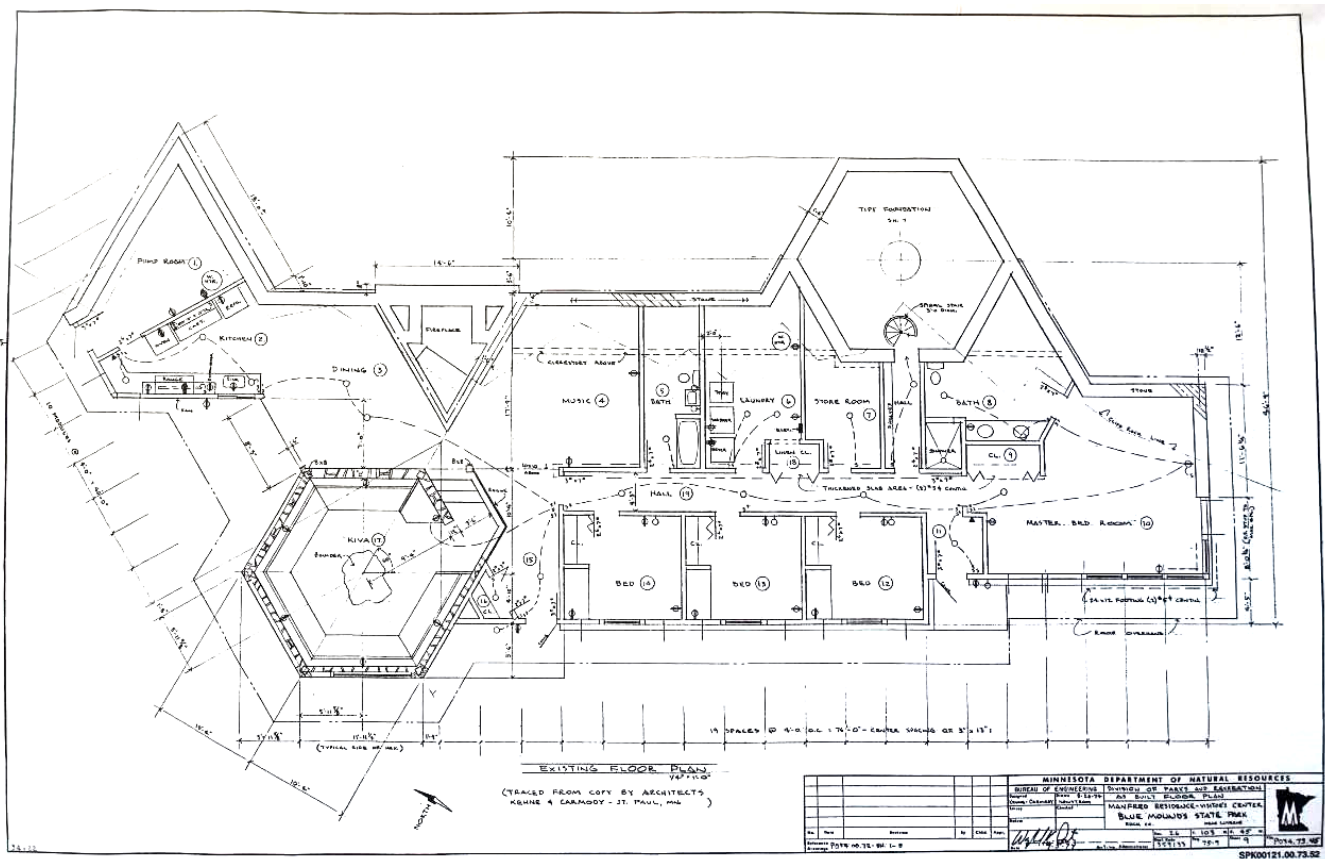


Figure 3. Floor plan of the Manfred House by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dated September 5, 1974 based on architect Myron Kehne's original drawing. Plans courtesy DNR

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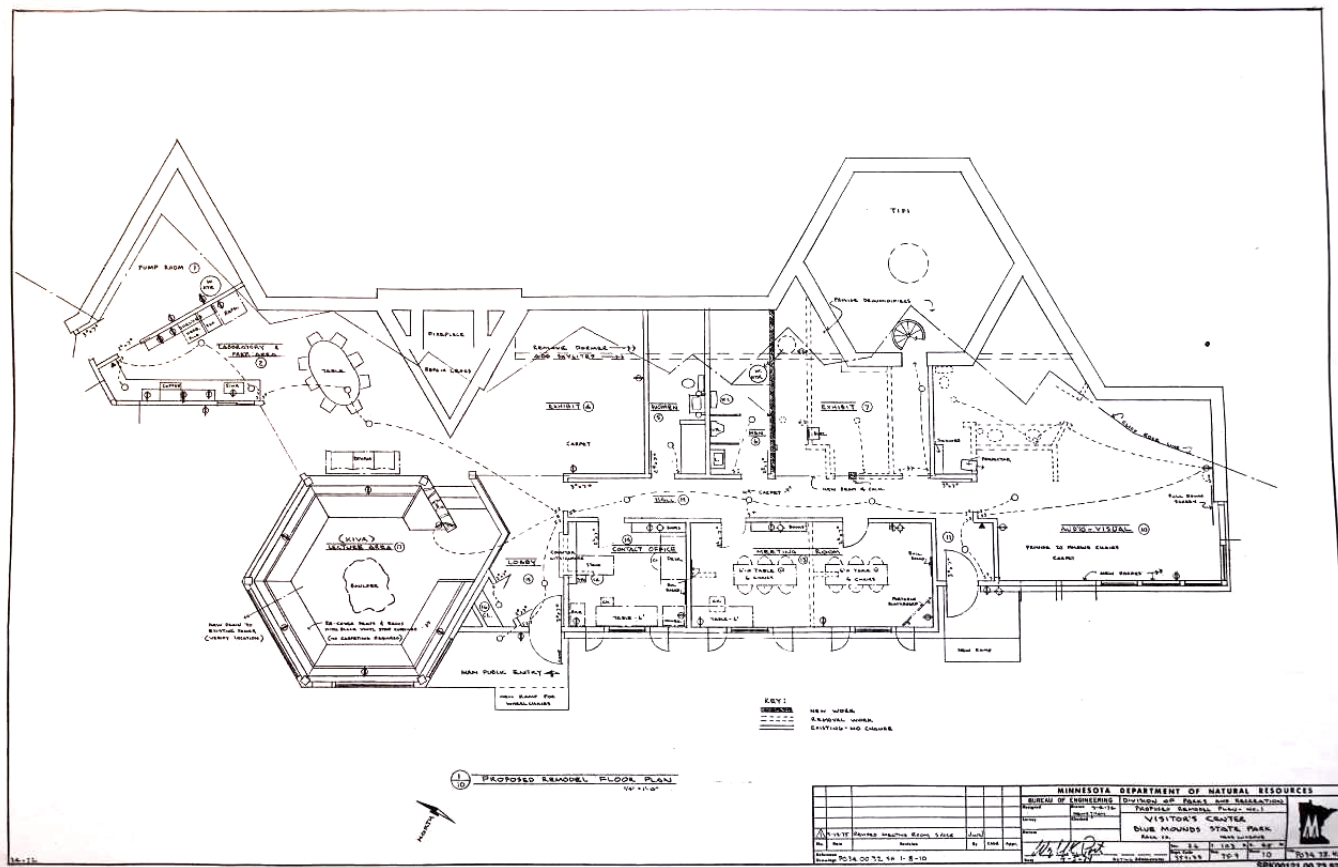


Figure 4. Floor plan of the Manfred House by Minnesota DNR dated September 5, 1974 depicting changes to the building implemented by the DNR. Plans courtesy DNR

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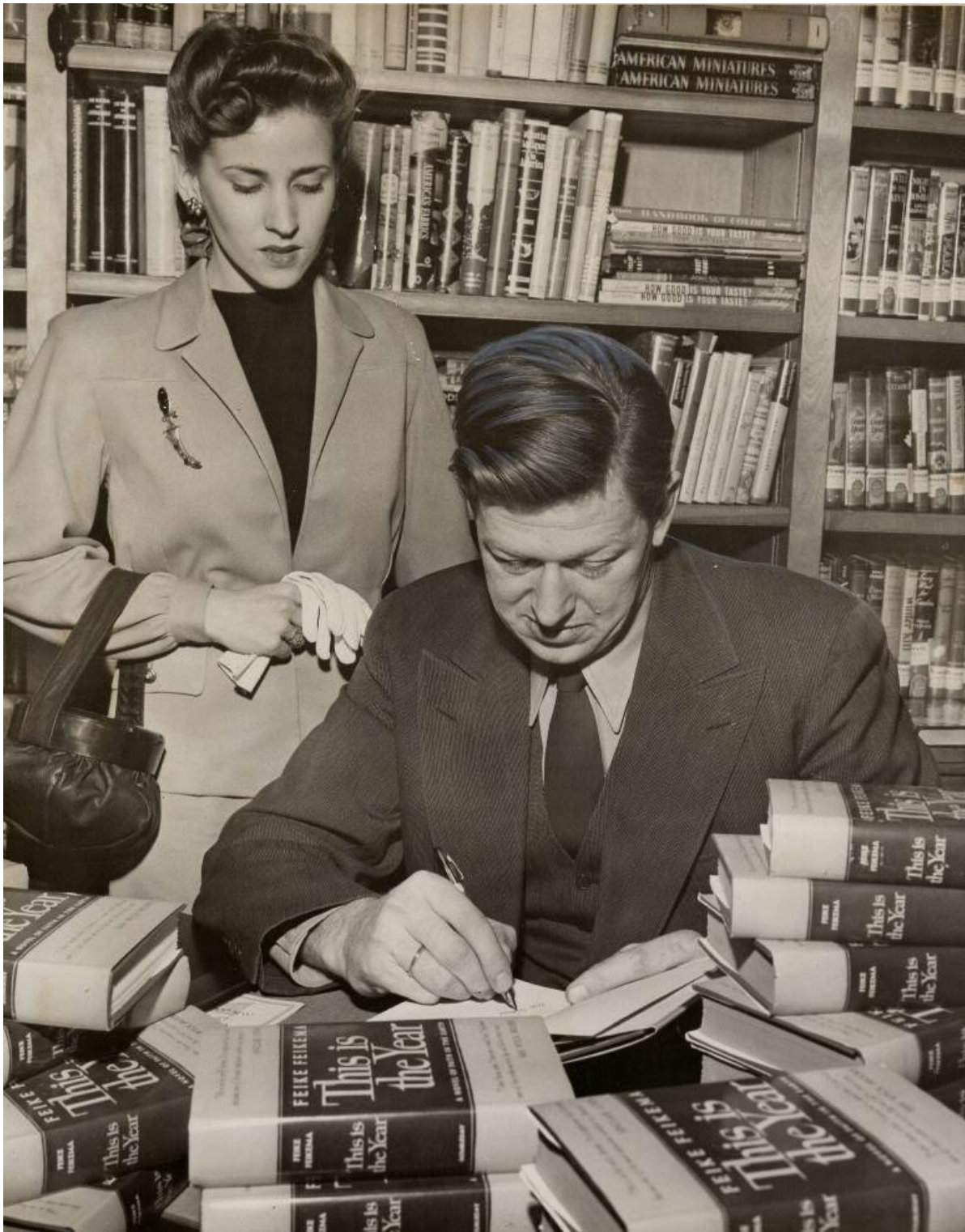


Figure 5. Frederick Manfred autographing copies of his book *This is the Year*, ca. 1947.  
Photo courtesy Freya Manfred



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Figure 6. Minnesota sculptor Evelyn Raymond creating a bust of Frederick Manfred, ca. 1950.  
Photo courtesy Frey Manfred

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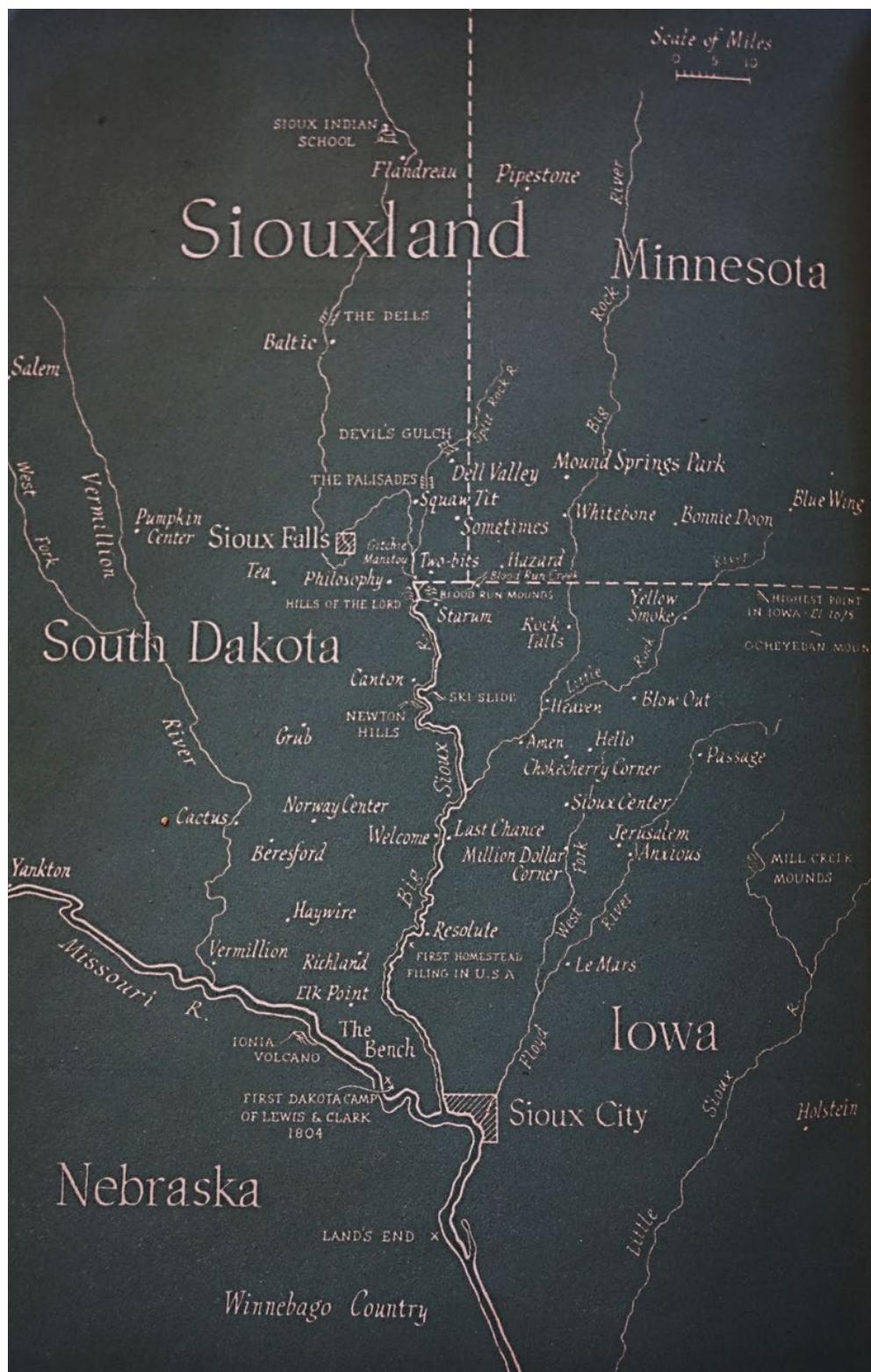


Figure 7. Map of Siouxland. Map courtesy Freya Manfred



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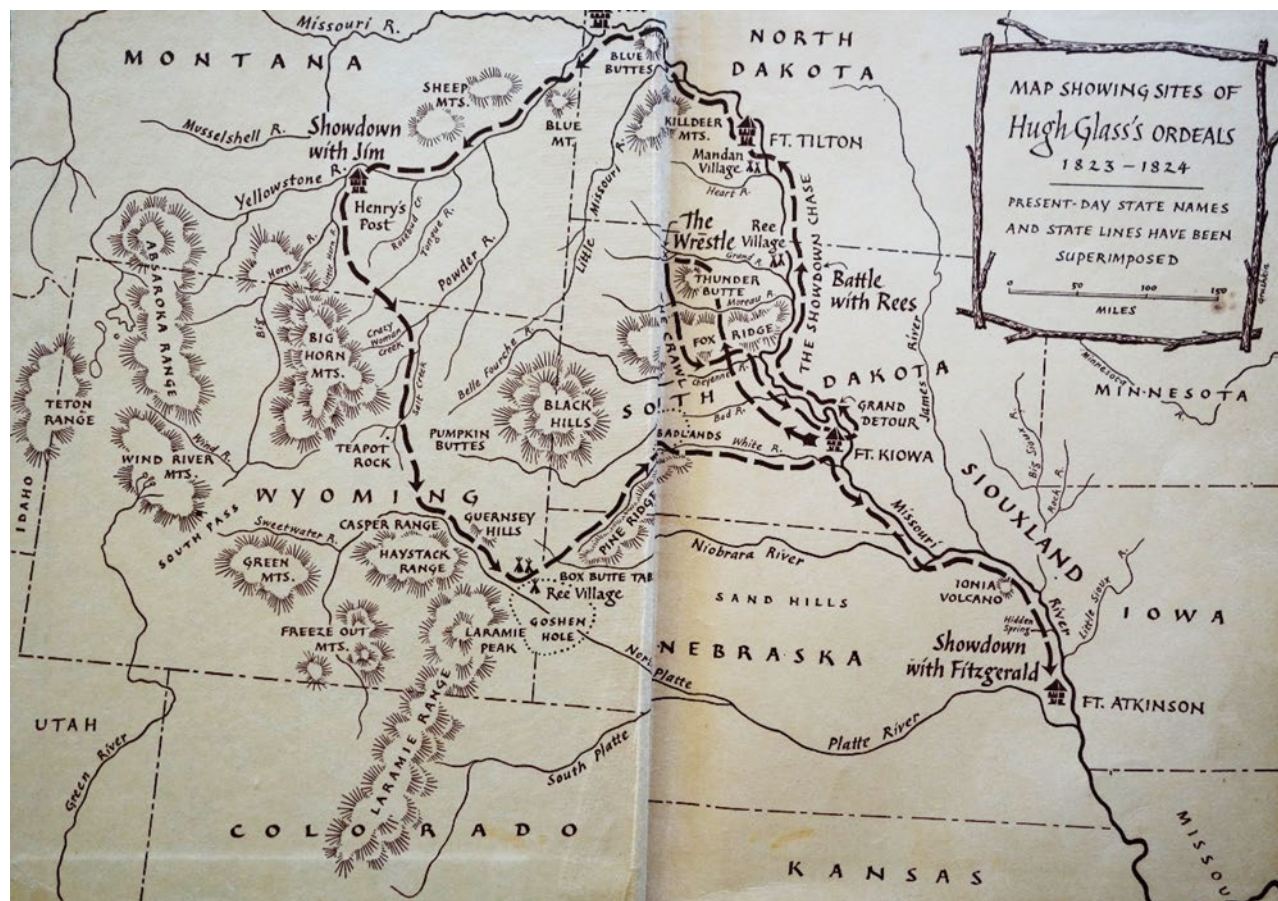


Figure 8. Map depicting the geographic area featured in Manfred's novel *Lord Grizzly*. Map courtesy Frey Manfred

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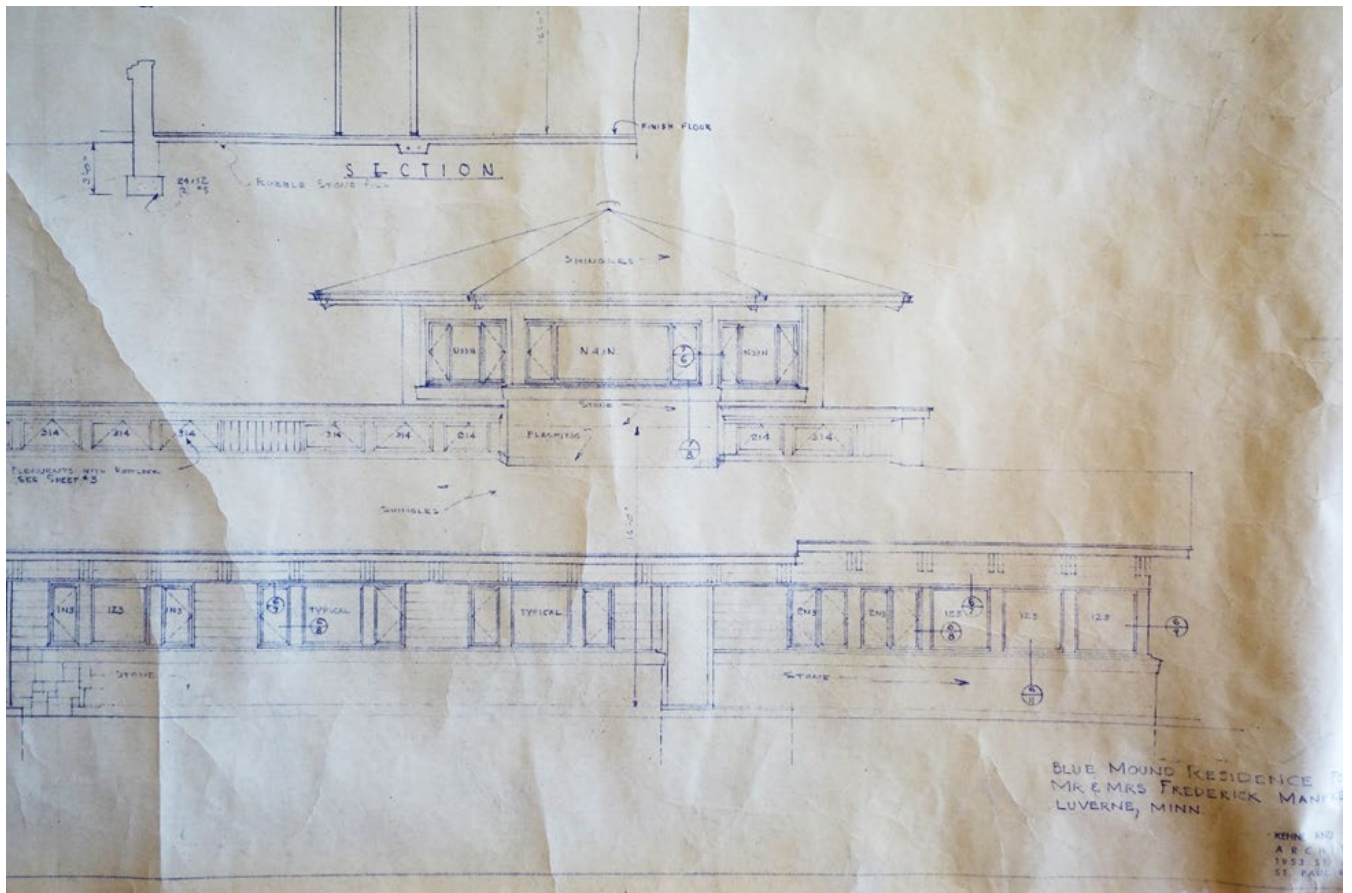


Figure 9. Original elevation drawing by architect Myron Kehne of the southeasterly portion of the Manfred House dated December 1960. Drawing courtesy Freya Manfred

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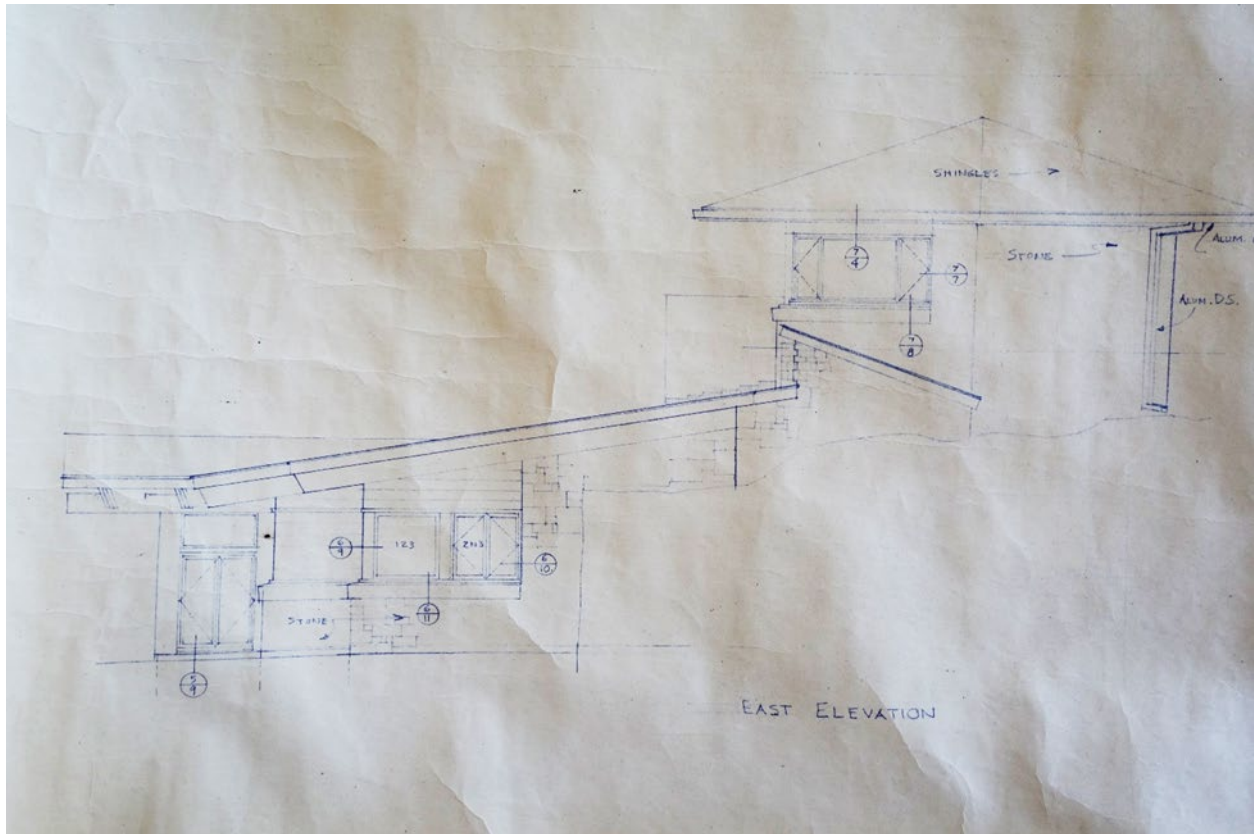


Figure 10. Original elevation drawing by architect Myron Kehne of the east elevation of the Manfred House dated December 1960. Drawing courtesy Freya Manfred





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Figure 12. Aerial photograph of the Manfred House with the original road to the property, 1961.  
Photo Manfred Papers



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Figure 13. Photograph of the Manfred House, 1961. Note Manfred's writer's shack that he moved from Bloomington at the upper right. Photo Manfred Papers

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Photo 14. Photograph of the Manfred House, 1961. Note the original clerestory. Photo Manfred Papers

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Figure 15. Photograph of Frederick Manfred with the house in the background, 1961. Photo Manfred Papers



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Figure 16. Interior view of the Manfred House with the fireplace at right and the dining room at the upper left, 1961. Photo Manfred Papers

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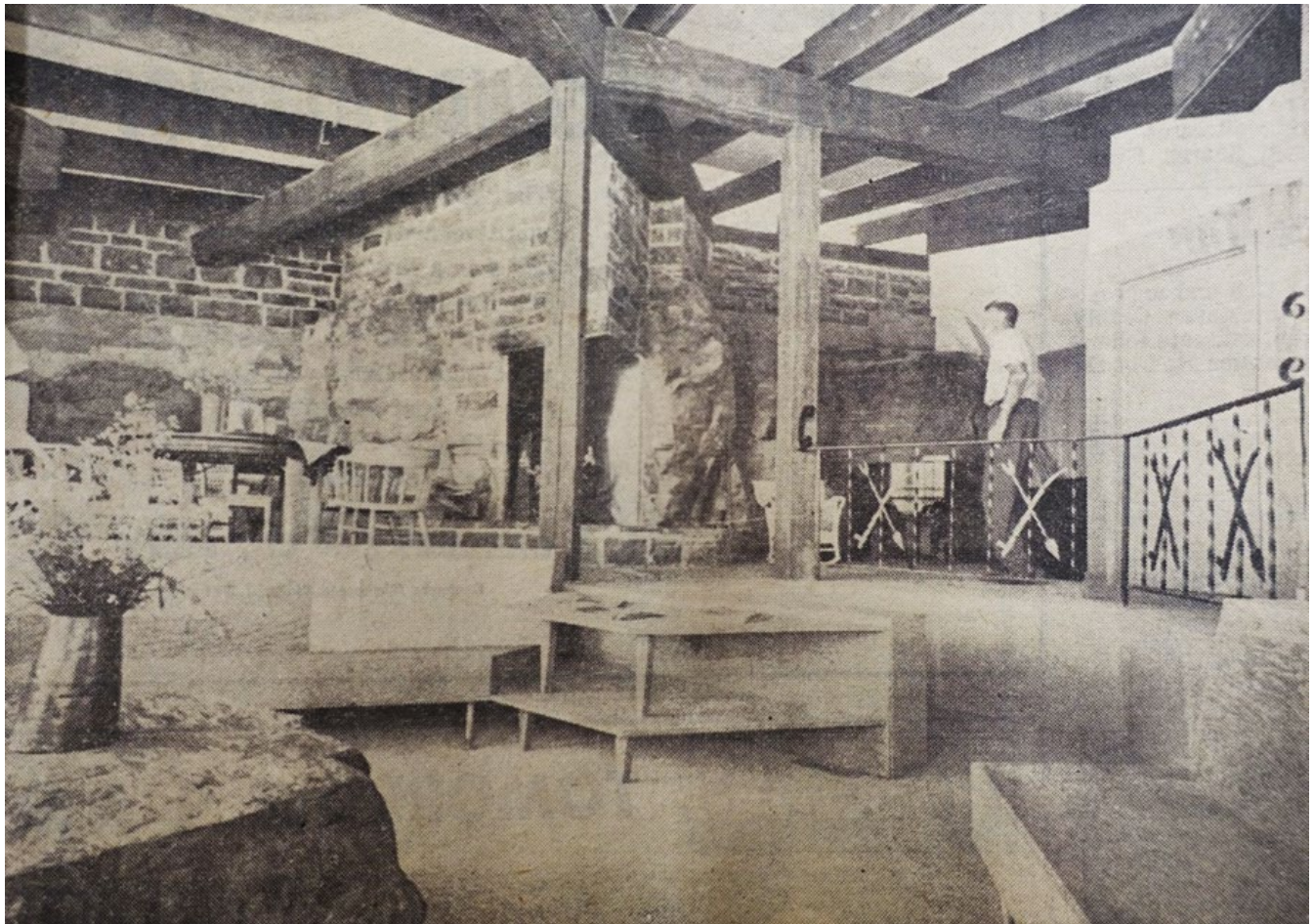


Figure 17. Interior photograph of the main living areas of the house, including the sunken sitting area, or kiva, in the foreground, note the boulder in the center of the kiva at the lower left; the fireplace in the upper center; the music room at the upper right, and the dining room at the upper left. Note the wrought-iron railing at right. Photo *Worthington Daily Globe*, July 20, 1961.



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Figure 18. Photograph, from left to right, family physician Dr. Northrup Beach, Maryanna, Marya, Fred Jr., and Frederick Manfred in the dining room, 1962. Photo courtesy Freya Manfred

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Figure 19. Photograph of Frederick Manfred standing near the top of the spiral stairway in his writer's studio or tepee. The wrought iron railing features a peacepipe and arrow motif. Note the bookshelves above the windows and the expansive views. Photo Manfred Papers.

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Figure 20. Photograph of Roundwind with the hexagonal writer's studio in the foreground.  
Photo courtesy Freya Manfred



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Figure 21. Freya and Frederick Manfred on the day of her 1976 wedding to Thomas Pope on the Blue Mound. Photo courtesy Freya Manfred

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Figure 22. Photograph of Frederick Manfred in front of the Blue Mound house, ca. 1970. Photo courtesy Frey Manfred



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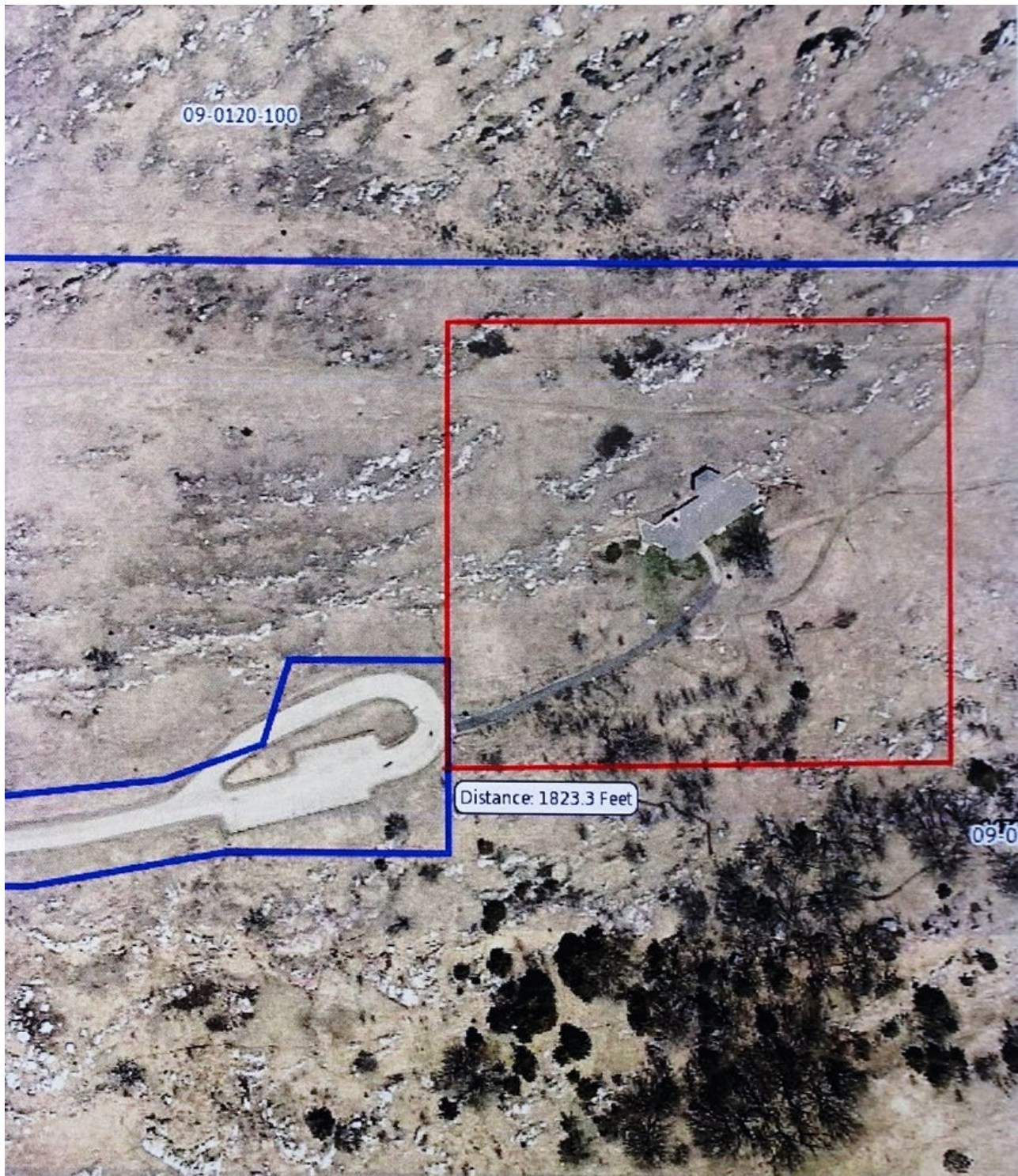


Figure 23. Map with a red line depicting the boundary of the 3.98 acres purchased by the Manfreds in 1960. Note the location of the house near the center. Map prepared by Rock County Land Records Office, October 29, 2021.