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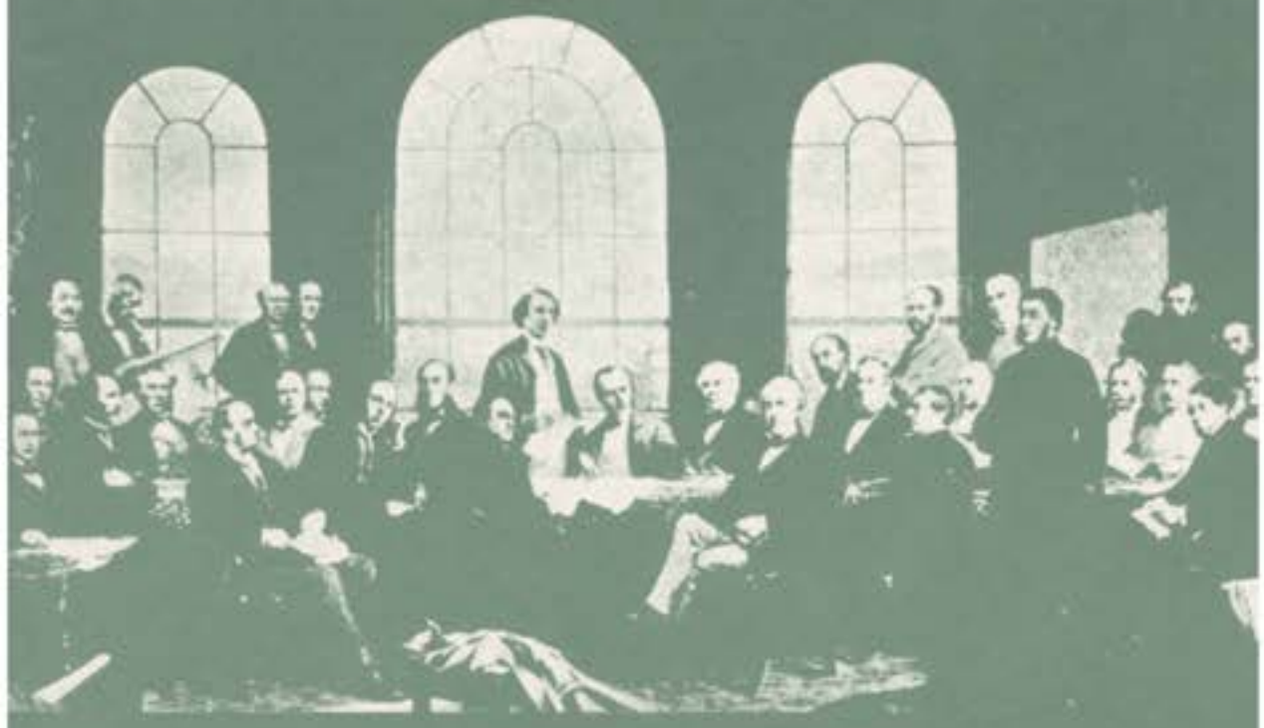

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Icelandic National League
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You are cordially invited to attend

The 61st Annual Convention

of The Icelandic National League
which will be held in the auditorium of the
First Lutheran Church,
580 Victor Street, Winnipeg, Man.
April 25th and 26th, 1980

The Icelandic Canadian

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EDITORIAL

THE CANADIAN DREAM ABIDES

Early this century Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier epitomized the CANADIAN DREAM when he said, "The nineteenth century belonged to the United States; the twentieth will belong to Canada." He undoubtedly envisioned the slow evolution of a distinct Canadian culture, enriched by the variegated mosaic of the contributions of the many ethnic groups that constitute our nation, a culture that would be on a par with the finest in the world's history, noble in vision, effective in performance, and wide in scope.

This great Canadian statesman cherished his French heritage, but in his mind there was no place for parochialism or xenophobia. While he realized that the French fact is such an integral part of the fabric of Canadian nationhood, and that the continued existence of Canada is unthinkable without it, also that the foundation of this potentially great nation was laid by the hardy settlers on the banks of the St. Lawrence over three centuries ago, nevertheless he was first and foremost a Canadian.

Were Sir Wilfred alive to-day, how would he assess the present situation within our borders?

He would witness divisive trends and parochialism rampant throughout the land, and at times a "gloom-and-doom" mentality. He would be saddened, but he would not despair. He would know that this aberration is but a passing phase in the inevitable attainment of the fulfillment of the Canadian Dream. He would realize that the present mentality is but a reflection of the malaise that is afflicting the whole world of to-day.

We, Canadians, are the inheritors of the centuries. To us is transmitted a land of unbounded opportunities, a youthful land pulsating with the vigor and enthusiasm of a young giant who has just begun to realize his strength. This vast land! This land of freedom and opportunity! This land so bountifully endowed by nature! This land of the future! This Canada! This land is ours.

Canada's stirring past is a challenge and an inspiration. One thinks of the questing prows of gallant Leifur Eiriksson sailing over trackless seas towards the sunset, the splendid pioneering fervor of Champlain, the romance of the fur-traders adventurous exploits in the vast, lone western land, the settlers hewing homes from the virgin forest, the slow evolution of our freedom. Ours is a saga of seemingly insurmountable obstacles encountered and overcome by the unconquerable fortitude of the human spirit.

The vision of its founders gave birth to this nation. The character of our predecessors sustained it through dangerous and troublesome times. Though much has been accomplished, much remains to be done. From failing hands an older generation hands on the task to its progeny. With tolerance, understanding, and a willingness to compromise as its prime consideration, the certainty of the fulfillment of the Canadian dream abides.

A.V.

AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

In the winter edition of **The Icelandic Canadian,** an unidentified photo taken prior to 1895 was published along with a request for information from anyone able to identify it. Mrs. Lilja Lamoureux of Calgary has identified the couple in the picture as her grandparents, Halldor Einarsson and Vilborg Gunnlaugsdottir, formerly of Vestfold, Manitoba (near Lundar). The children are Helga, Sibba and Einar Einarson (Lilja's father). Halldor was the son of Einar Gudmundsson (from Egilssel in Mulasysla) and Jarthrudur Gudmundsdottir, early settlers at Reykir, Hnausa, before moving to North Dakota. Halldor's wife, Vilborg was from Flaga in Breiddalur.

* *

Excerpt from a letter from La Donna Breidfjord-Backmeyer, Rock Island, Illinois.

For many months now I have planned to send you a contribution in the memory of my grandparents, EINAR JONSSON BREIDFJORD AND GUDNY JONASDOTTIR BREIDFJORD, but, for one reason or another, I never seem able to come up with any amount of money which would seem appropriate. Therefore, each month, for as long as I am able, I will be sending you a check for five dollars.

* * * *

Thank you, Mrs. Breidfjord-Backmeyer, for your interest, thoughtfulness and generosity.

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BATTLE

by Paul A. Sigurdson

This narrative appeared in the prestigious JOURNAL OF CANADIAN FICTION, NUMBER 23, 1979, a publication that accepts only the best short stories written by Canadian authors. This year's issue consists of 352 pages, the number of short stories being limited to five.

Hastings, the young British captain, had not recovered from his sudden unexpected defeat. The ruins on the chess-board lay before him; the handsome hand-carved Viking men scattered helter-skelter like a routed batallion. He sat on a low stool, elbows on his knees, his hands concentrated in a vice grip in his wavy dark hair. Flushed and uncomfortable he had torn open his shirt at the collar.

He glowered at the chess-board. The livid welt on his left temple was throbbing and the memories of Nazi snipers, smoke and flak in the skies of France, assailed him. Now a year later he was a thousand miles away from the war. There had been the hospital in London — ten days of rest and chess with a diabetic Colonel — then a month's furlough and a promotion; and finally, without warning, the posting to Iceland. Iceland: country of ice and fire, fog and midnight sun, its strategic importance suddenly come to light — Hitler had called it the "unsinkable aircraft carrier."

Only the British war office knew how many troops were sent to "occupy" the island. Because the country was defenceless, the Icelandic parliament had sanctioned their presence. But the ordinary citizens were revulsed by the sight of foreign troops. They were a peace-loving people. They had never had an army. From the first they were sullen and unfriendly, and Hastings, put off by their coldness, regarded them with subtle disdain.

But now Hastings was seated in the crude dwelling of an old Icelandic farmer. Lost and half-frozen in a violent storm, he had abandoned his stranded jeep in a snowbank and half crawled to the nearest shelter, the Sigfus Jonasson farmstead. The old sheep farmer had taken him in like s stray dog, fed him and given him a change of clothes. Once out of uniform, Jonasson had treated him like a guest. His confidence regained, Hastings had challenged the old man to a game of chess. He was wishing now he had never challenged him.

Little Sigga, Sigfus's nine-year-old grand-daughter, put down her book, approached Hastings and stood watching him. "Afi beat you," she said, with a mischievious twinkle in her intelligent blue eyes.

Immediately Hastings drew himself erect. There was arrogance in his long English nose and high arching eyebrows, but the look was softened by the firm honesty of his mouth. His eyes were alert, bright, full of daring. It did not occur to him to see himself as he was now, dressed in crude woolens, a fisherman's sweater and a pair of lumpy trousers. He pictured himself in his captain's uniform tailored to fit his trim imperial body like a soft glove — a model of Tudor poise. "One battle doesn't win the campaign," he pronounced.

Little Sigga darted to the book-shelf. She consulted a dictionary and found her source. She paused, poring over the page, thinking. Hastings meanwhile took another disconsolate look at the chess-board. It was an incontrovertible fact. He had been beaten by a mere sheep-farmer, a thousand miles from civilization.

"So you mean to have another battle with

Afi,'' she said laying a gentle stress on the word ''battle.''

''Yes. Decidedly.''

''And you then think you'll win the campaign,'' said the girl pertly. ''Like Napoleon.''

Hastings stared at her down the angle of his long nose. He had not expected the child's precociousness. He smirked and she responded with a knowing smile. Chortling, he pinched her little cheek. It was the eighteenth-century gentleman's approval of the barmaid of a country inn. ''Youshould be a few years older,'' he said winking.

She giggled. The grandmother, who had been continuously knitting in a dimly lit corner of the room, droned a few words in her native tongue. Immediately little Sigga went to sit with her.

Left to himself Hastings began to examine his surroundings. He was in a sodhouse, finished inside with boards nailed vertically. There were two rooms, one for sleeping and the main room for day use. There was a large wooden table, square-legged; also stools, chairs and benches, all hand-made. The workmanship was second-rate except for one armchair elaborately carved with strange dragons, runes, ships and Viking horns. There was no running water and no sink, and the stove was a part of the fireplace. Several faded tapestries were hanging on the wall and a hand-woven runner draped the bookshelf. Only one oil-lamp provided the room with a sombre tawny light.

The more he appraised, the more he decided Sigfus Jonasson's life was bound by cheapness and mediocrity. Hastings suddenly felt cheated, useless to king and country. He had joined the army to beat Hitler. What was he doing on this island moonscape clinging precariously to the edge of the world? And yet—? His mind flew back to the chess game. He could not bypass the fact of his defeat. He tried to console himself saying it had been only a lucky fluke, but the more he thought about it, the more he wanted revenge.

''Where's your grandfather?'' he asked the little girl.

''He is feeding the sheep,'' she said approaching him again. ''They are all in safe from the storm. Grandfather is thankful the storm didn't catch them in the high pasture of the Western Mountains.''

''Of course. I'm sure he's thankful.''

''Grandfather owns one hundred and twenty ewes,'' said Sigga proudly.

''Almost a second Solomon,'' said Hastings sarcastically.

''Oh, no!'' cried the child. ''King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. He got 666 talents of gold every year!''

Hastings looked surprised. ''So you are a theologian too,'' he said bowing to her.

She cocked her head, puzzled. There was no limit to her English vocabulary.

''How old are you, Sigga?''

''Nine.''

''Bravo, bravo. Congratulations!''

As he spoke Sigga, who had found his officer's cap, plunked it on her head with a saucy flourish. ''I'ma king,'' she said.

''Take it off,'' said Hastings. ''Thatcost me two guineas and I don't want your fingers mucking it up!''

Quickly Sigga replaced the cap, looking hurt. Once again the grandmother turned to face them. Her hexagon face was highlighted against the dark shadows behind her. It was a stern face, a tired face, with high cheekbones and a firm chin showing patience and strength. She was wearing her common native costume: a black dress, a tight bodice and a long apron. She sat very erect, as Icelandic women have always had to sit to balance the little tassled pancake hat, the *skotthufa*, on their heads.

The blizzard continued, the wind keening over the bleak lonely land. It roared horizontally over the fields of frozen lava and stony hills. Nothing checked the wind, no

trees, no shelter. It blew willy-nilly, lord of itself, defiant of all. Always the grandmother kept her ear cocked for the sounds. She could remember frozen bodies on lonely, barren trails in the remote valleys. Quietly she listened, measured, waited, never missing a stroke with her needles, yet knowing intuitively when Sigfus was due to come in. In such a blizzard she knew a man could lose his way and perish, trying to get from the house to the sheepshed less than a hundred metres away.

After a while sounds of hawking and coughing and the heavy stomping of feet were heard at the door and a wave of cold air swept into the room. With it Sigfus Jonasson, sheep farmer of Hraunakot, emerged from the storm, a gaunt powerful man slightly bent from toil.

He removed his snow-packed sheepskin cap revealing a large well-formed head with a mane of smooth white hair falling gently over both ears. His eyes were steady, stern, blue as a cold lake in the summer sun. He wore a full beard, fuzzy as newly washed wool. It covered his face except for his small nose and two round cheeks which were as pink as a child's. Except for a slight heaviness in his walk he looked like a strong man in his prime. In reality he was just over seventy.

''It's not fit for a dog out there,'' he said in Icelandic. ''I pity those on the sea tonight.''

''God help them,'' said the grandmother gravely.

''Are you going to starve us, Runa?'' he said with feigned resentment.

She gave him back in kind: ''Complain! Complain! You get more sour every day. When did I fail to give you supper!''

Sigfus shrugged. ''Did you cook the svid?''

''No.''

''Why not? This is an occasion.''

''It is?''

''Friend or enemy we will treat him like a guest. He is just another human being. He has no uniform now. While he is here we will forget his allegiance.''

Runa, the grandmother, nodded. ''So it will be. Tomorrow I will cook the svid.''

Ten minutes later the food was prepared and Runa called them to eat. She served fresh cow's milk, oatmeal porridge and slatur. For dessert there was that rare delicacy, skyr. Hastings watched with fascinated distaste as Vigfus broke off little chunks of slatur with a spoon and swallowed them with the porridge. Hastings ate only the porridge. He would not touch the slatur nor the skyr.

''This is king's fare,'' said Vigfus, eagerly scooping up the shiny white skyr. ''You must try it.''

''No, thank you.''

''Iinsist you try,'' said Vigfus with some feeling.

''No, thank you, sir,'' said Hastings.

''This is our grandest food,'' said Vigfus as if he had been personally insulted.

''I prefer crepes suzette flambé,'' said Hastings, gingerly wiping his lips with his linen handkerchief.

Grumbling, Vigfus took out his Copenhagen. With deft movements of his hand he shook out a miniature mountain-range of snuff measuring from the knuckle to his index finger half-way to the wrist on the back of his left hand. Then with two oblique strokes past his nose he drew the snuff into one nostril and then the other. With that he uttered a sigh of satisfaction.

''French cuisine,'' he said coming out of a mood, ''Has never been of interest to me.''

''Cuisine?'' Hastings wondered where he had stumbled upon such a word. He glanced at the small shelf of books. The titles he saw were new to him: *Edda*, *Njals Saga*, *Havamal*, *Sturlunga*. There was one Eng-

lish title: *The Scarlet Letter*. The English title was vaguely familiar.

"Do you know French?" Hastings asked.

"Some words," said Vigfus Jonasson.

They finished the meal. Vigfus began to read newspapers. He sat head bent, in profound concentration, the paper on the table before him, the lamp at his left elbow. As he read, he sometimes smiled to himself and a fleeting look of good-feeling laid bare the depth of his character. To his surprise, Hastings counted five different newspapers. One contained only four pages, another perhaps sixteen. Vigfus read them all.

Presently Vigfus put aside the newspapers and Sigga, who had been waiting for an opportunity, spoke out: "Mr. Hastings think he can beat you, Afi," she announced in a big voice. "He wants another game."

The old man set his papers aside and eyed Hastings questioningly.

"I don't believe in surrender," said Hastings. "It's only fair play to give me a chance to even up the score."

"The storm is long," said Vigfus. "You are lonesome. Time is cheap. Why shouldn't we play again? It is a civilized game."

They went back to the chess-board together and set up the men. Off and on Hastings paused to examine a chesspiece closely.

"The chessmen are very dear to me," said Vigfus. "Every piece is unique and each bears a runic message. My great-grandfather carved them over one hundred years ago. These white pieces are native birch but the dark ones are from a piece of ebony he found in the fjords as flotsam."

"Did he do other carvings?"

"Many of his pieces are in the National Museum in Reykjavik. He was a very superior artist."

Hastings smiled condescendingly: "But hardly a Reynolds or a Gainsborough."

The old man flinched. "Man does what he can with what he has," he said quietly.

Little Sigga, who was getting more restless by the minute, could not hold in any longer. "Afi will beat you in twenty moves," she said, her eyes dancing with excitement.

Hastings shot a dark look at her. Then, trying to be off-hand, he said: "I insist we have silence when we play."

The old man passed Sigga a silent warning with his eyes. "Sigga will not speak once the game begins," he said. "You have the white. Begin!"

Grimly, Hastings took his first move. It was not the atmosphere to which he was accustomed: the bright spacious rooms at Lion's Hill: the leather-cushioned chairs, green as beech leaves in the summer shade; the high ceiling and the rows of cups and trophies on the wall-shelves. But smarting under the first defeat, he played the game as he had never played before. He was not only playing for himself, he was playing for the very heart of Englishry, for King and country. It was for 1066, for Nelson dying at the mast, for John Stubbs holding up his bleeding stump and praising his beloved Elizabeth. It was for Shakespeare's grandest syllables. No, he would not be humbled again. He flogged his brain trying to make it excel.

Vigfus met him square on. He was steady as a mountain, confident, inventive, unyielding. Hastings played an aggressive game, forcing a bloody exchange of killings on the ninth move, but he lost three pawns, a knight and a bishop. The old man lost only four pawns and a knight. When the dead had been taken off it was obvious he had also secured a superior field position.

The game went on: two strong men locked in the silent clash of wills. Hastings broke out in a sweat. His imagination told him he could not lose, but reality impinged on his brain. He knew deep down he was gradually, mercilessly, being forced to yield. An old sheep farmer from an unknown island was pressing hard to undo him.

Meanwhile Sigga had been quietly watching. Intuitively, she knew her Afi was gaining the advantage. The waves of fortune made their patterns known in a mysterious way. Now she sat very straight and very prim, looking down on Hastings with an air of undisguised superiority. She was sucking on a pawn and sometimes, when she thrust it out of her mouth head first, it looked as if she was sticking out her tongue at him. "Let her choke on the damn thing," thought Hastings.

The game went on. Except for the low moans of the mournful Arctic wind and the tinkle of the grandmother's needles, only the soft sounds of the chessmen being moved on the board could be heard. Hastings, one of the indomitable breed, dug in. He forced himself to concentrate, to sharpen his thinking. He held on, but there grew in him the sickening feeling he stood on shifting sand.

The old man's concentration was unnerving. Even Hastings' magnificent confidence was shaken. He had come to the stark realization that the old man had reserves about which he knew nothing. He did not know the character of the Icelandic country man. He knew nothing about his heritage: that he had felt the first glow of poetry in his breast as he took his mother's milk, that many of the great sagas were in his head before he cut his first tooth, that his grandmother had brightened his dreams with the tales of fairies, elves, trolls, and outlaws throughout all his early years. His natural intelligence had been honed by careful study, and wide reading had given him broadness of mind far beyond the common man. Almost alone, he had learned to read French and German. English he could read and speak. Danish he could read and speak flawlessly. He was also a master of his mother tongue, proud of what the poet had called "*vald orda*." Since he was four years old he played chess and had studied the

game assiduously. He felt no disgrace at being a farmer who stepped in dung every day. He kept his eyes uplifted to Esja, the fabled mountain, whose deep purple always gave promise of God and better days. Because Hastings knew none of those things he was not prepared for the old sheep farmer's play.

On the twenty-third move Vigfus Jonasson thrust his queen deep into enemy territory, killing a pawn and threatening imminent checkmate. Hastings turned weak as his stomach felt sick. Under his breath he cursed the army, the storm, the Icelanders. He cursed his own failure. He knew the old man had trapped him. It took all the magnificent control of his English breeding to keep from sweeping the board clean and sending, with one revengeful stroke, the chessmen flying across the room. But he held back, feeling his fingernails cutting into the soft wood of the bench he sat on. He bent over the board clutching his hair in both hands until his scalp seared.

Now the old man, sensing victory, hardened himself. Now was the moment to strike. Now he, on this little island, could on this board upend the proud Englishman and undo the Empire which girdled all the world. Now for once he could erase all the feelings of inferiority a man may suffer when he lives in a little country. It was the chance of a lifetime. Flushed with pride he contemplated his next move. He looked at Hastings. His face was dark and set hard like a man racked with pain. Checkmate was imminent. The old man savored the moment like a tiger sure of its prey and set to spring.

Then, as if the Norns had suddenly intervened, something strange happened. It was little Sigga. Uncannily everyone was aware at the same moment that she was in distress. She stared rigid, eyes large, shining, and swollen with an unknown terror. She tried to speak and gagged; tried again. Only a choking gargle could be heard. Almost instantly her cheeks swelled unnaturally, flushing a livid red.

Even before their minds told them she was choking, they had felt the nightmarish terror of the threat of death. Wildly gesticulating, clawing at her throat, she flew into her grandmother's arms. Tears streamed from her eyes. Her face was already an ugly purple color.

As the grandmother clumg helplessly to the child the old man explained about the pawn in a few rapid phrases. But he too looked lost, paralyzed with a feeling of helplessness. In his desperate frustration he shouted at the grandmother to do something. The child's bloated face had turned a hideous blackish blue.

Suddenly, the old man, frantic with fear, tore the little girl from her grandmother's arms and hugged her to his heart, moaning and groaning. Then, uttering snatches of old prayers, he thumped her back with violent blows, but the pawn was stuck fast.

In this crisis, Hastings who was only a step away had instantly metamorphosed into his other self: the experienced soldier who had developed his primitive instinct to keep himself alive in the bombardments of the front lines. Miraculously his mind opened like a clear morning at sea. He was now alert to everything — his brain absorbed every stimuli. Before his eyes the little girl was choking. He knew death was only minutes away. Cool as a calculator, his mind fed his answers, details, methods. As the last resort it told him the knife was the answer.

By now the grandparents had completely lost control. Out of their love and fear, they were shouting at one another like mad creatures. Desperately, the old man hugged Sigga to his heart, crooning and half-sobbing, his eyes closed. The grandmother threw herself in the chair, keening.

Suddenly coming to life Hastings tore the little girl's limp body from the old man's covetous embrace. Then he upended her like a doll, exposing her bare legs and white

panties, and shook her over and over again, as one shakes a piggy-bank which refuses to give up its last penny. In the yellow lamplight his face shone with sweat. He paused to rest a few seconds then tried shaking her again, but the pawn stuck fast. The child's face was now an ugly bloated black.

As he worked Hastings' brain was feeding him, instructing him, telling him death must be defied. He reckoned he had another three or four minutes before her brain cells would begin to die from lack of oxygen.

"A knife, a knife, sharp knife!" he shouted.

But in that instant his brain fed him an answer other than the tracheotomy. Without a second thought he carried Sigga out into the blizzard and once clear of the house he grasped the little girl by the ankles and with all his strength and agility he swung her round and round like an athlete about to throw the hammer.

It was a weird sight in the gloom, the grandfather and grandmother huddled in the doorway watching this strange exhibition while the wind blew and the snow swirled madly around them. Hastings kept swinging until he almost collapsed with exhaustion. He fell to his knees. Got up, swung her again, collapsed and finally got up again. But the child was still choking.

"Have you *brennivin?*" cried Hastings. It was the only Icelandic word he knew.

Again Hastings tried the same swinging, this time jerking her violently as he whipped her round and round, until he was too spent to go on. Then he staggered into the house with her, throwing her onto the table like a sack and shouting again for *brennivin* and a knife. The child was seconds away from death. There was only one way left — to cut the throat into the windpipe. He was not a surgeon. He did not know how to do it, but he would do it, because it was the last resort. He would not yield to fear. He would not let her die when there was one last choice left. It was not like an English officer. Speculatively he touched his own throat and by applying pressure located his own windpipe.

The old man stood at the table with a quart of gin and a meat knife. He was trembling and there was a look of ineffable sadness in his face.

"Give me the knife!" said Hastings, bracing himself, his voice husky under the strain.

With a comatose gesture, the old man handed him the knife which Hastings immediately anaesthetized by stroking it in his gin-soaked handkerchief. Then turning Sigga onto her back he dabbed her throat with gin to prepare for the vital incision.

As he bent over her with the knife poised he sensed something strange. He paused. Her coloring had changed. The dark purple had softened. He waited, scarcely daring to draw a breath. Very gently he lifted her by the waist and tipped her upside down again. There was a slight retching movement in her throat, then her lips parted. White spittle oozed from her mouth, then webs of saliva appeared and the black pawn.

Immediately the body responded, the diaphragm sucking in a great breath of life-giving air. In a few seconds the color of life had returned to Sigga's face, and the light of intelligence to her eyes.

"Oh God!" cried the old man in a thick voice. The grandmother, still shaking from the experience, hobbled to the table and embraced the child, who lay very quiet. Then she took hold of Hastings' hand with both her hands, smiling up at him showing her bare gums, and weeping.

Hastings leaned on the table trying to get hold of himself. It seemed he was about to faint. He lowered his head and closed his eyes. He looked older. He was exhausted. All at once he began to shiver. He made a grab for the bottle of gin, then he held it to his mouth with unsteady hands and drank liberally. For a moment he seemed to lose his balance. He swayed then; knees still shaking, he felt his way to the stool. He was fighting to overcome the shock.

The old man moved and sat opposite him in respectful silence. After a few moments he asked, "Are you alright?"

"Yes, yes, perfectly," was the reply, though he was really in some distress. "Put the child to bed," he ordered weakly. "Give her a little water, but no food."

The old man translated and the grandmother carried little Sigga to bed. Meanwhile Hastings leaned back and closed his eyes as if to sleep.

A moment later he opened them and looked about as if coming out of a trance. It struck him forcefully that he and the old man were in their original seats and the same game lay on the table before them. Hastings stared at the board. To him it was a hideous sight. It brought pain to his face, and the pain was real. He turned away.

The old man saw his face and he saw the pain. He looked hard at the English captain with the long nose and the Tudor bearing, saw the old marks of pride and discipline. He saw behind the exterior the true richness of Englishry. Yes, the pride was there, but it was a pride deserved. Again he looked at Hastings and saw him in a new light.

Suddenly he thought no more about the game, nor victory, nor the assertion of his own national pride. The game was something of the past. Let it be an old memory. The greater victory had been won. He pulled up his shoulders, raised his head proudly, and with a gentle scooping motion of his hands he knocked over his king and wiped all the chessmen from the board. Hastings stared at him with puzzled amazement.

"The time for games is past," Vigfus Jonasson said. "I concede. You win the game today. I am too unnerved to continue."

"But sir!" protested Hastings.

"And put on your uniform, my English friend," the old man said.

Hastings responded with a weary, thankful smile.

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SETTLERS IN MIKLEY (HECLA ISLAND) 1878

Compiled by Nelson Gerrard

(Continued from the Winter Issue)

29. Gudmundur Gudmundsson — Bjarg: from Utibleiksstadir in Midfjördur, Hunavatnssysla, born in 1847, the son of Gudmundur Björnsson at Reykir in Midfjördur, and his wife, Kristin Einarsdottir. Gudmundur and his wife, Gudrun Magnusdottir, born c 1845, emigrated from Hnausakot in Hunavatnssysla in 1876 with two sons, Gudmundur and Olafur. They spent the first winter at Reykjanes. Gudmundur settled at Bjarg the following spring of 1877 and lived there until the family moved to North Dakota in 1880. After spending one winter with Halldor Fr. Reykjalin (nr. 32), near Mountain, N.D., Gudmundur settled the adjoining land, naming it Bjarg after his home in Mikley. Two sons were born to this couple during their stay in Mikley: Halldor, born Feb. 14, 1878 and Kristmundur, born June 16, 1880. Of seven children, two sons were living in 1920: Olafur and Halldor.
(ThJ II, 126; et al.)

30. Hjalmar Hjamarsson — Fagurholl: from Myrar in Eyrarsveit, Snaefellsnessysla, born 1841, the son of Hjalmar Sveinsson and Johanna Vigfusdottir. Hjalmar emigrated from Hofsstadir in Helgafellssveit in 1876 with his wife, Jofridur Josefsdottir, born c 1856, and two daughters, Elin and Ingveldur. Hjalmar and Jofridur arrived in Mikley on Sept. 2, 1876 and spent the first winter with Johann Straumfjörd at Barkastadir on the southeast shore of Mikley. Egill Gudbrandsson also wintered there. In December of 1876, Hjalmar and Magnus Magnusson (nr. 8) were caught in a blizzard on Lake Winnipeg while making a trip to Gimli. Hjalmar lost a good part of both feet as a result and was crippled for three years. In the fall of 1877 the family moved to Fagurholl (Holl) where Hjalmar, walking on his knees, cleared one of the largest fields on the island, a six acre area. In March 1881 Hjalmar moved to Winnipeg and from there nine years later to Churchbridge, Sask. After 7 years there the family moved again, living in several towns in Western Manitoba and Eastern Sask. In 1921 Hjalmar and Jofridur moved to Betel at Gimli. Hjalmar died there in April of 1930. Two children were born in Mikley: Johanna Sigridur on Nov. 15, 1879 and Albert Julius on Oct. 19, 1880. Another son, Johann Petur, was born in Winnipeg on June 1, 1881 and a daughter on April 10, 1884, Elin Kristin, (became Mrs. Symons, Zeneta, Sask.). One other daughter was living in 1930, Ingveldur Anna, (Mrs. Brown, Emerson, Man.). Hjalmar's son was Hjalmar B. H. Hillman, Winnipeg.
(ThJ III, 7-10; L 10. April, 1930; et al.)

31. Egill Gudbrandson (Brandsson) — Egilsstadir: from Hals in Eyrarsveit, born c 1829, son of Gudbrandur Brandsson. Egill emigrated from Hals in 1876 with his wife, Salome Thorhalladottir. Salome was from Kolsstadir in Dalasysla, born in 1841, daughter of Thorhalli Halldorsson and Thorunn Natanaelsdottir. Four children came with their parents: Matthias Stefan, Magnus Kristjan, Thorunn and Kristny. In 1882 the family moved to Winnipeg. When Salome died in April 1894, they were living on Portage Ave. Four children survived their mother. One son, Magnus Brandsson lived in Chicago. Matthias died in Winnipeg in 1914. Egill died at the home of his daughter in Selkirk on Aug. 27, 1916.
(L 4. April, 1894; L 7. Sept. 1916; ThJ II, 128; Dalm III, 433.)

32. Halldor Fridriksson Reykjalin —

Melstadur: from Brandsstadir on Reykjanes in Bardarstrandasysla, Western Iceland, born in 1824, the son of Rev. Fridrik Jonsson at Stadur and Valgerdur Palsdottir. Halldor learned carpentry in Reykjavik and lived on many farms in Northern and Western Iceland before emigrating to Canada in 1876 with his second wife, Sirgurros Halldorsdottir, born c. 1832, and eight children from both marriages: Sigridur, Anna, Fridrika, Halldor, Margret, Egill, Jon and Fridrik. The two youngest boys died of the smallpox during the first winter. Halldor and his family moved to Mountain, N.D. in 1880. Halldor died there on July 20, 1905. He was survived by his second wife and four of his ten children: Fridrika (Mrs. Cuzner, Winnipeg); Halldor H. Reykjalin, merchant at Mountain; Margret Bjornsson and Egill H. Reykjalin, Vards Co, N.D. Halldor's eldest daughter, with his first wife, Sigridur Jonsdottir, was Sigridur, married Kristjon Finnssen (nr. 45).
(L 18. Jan. 1906; Dalm III, 330; et al.)

33. Kristjan Jonsson Geiteyingur — Lundur: from Geitareyjar on Breidafjördur, Snaefellsnes, born in 1834, the son of Jon Sigurdsson, goldsmith at Geitareyjar and Katrin Gudmundsdottir. Kristjan emigrated in 1876 with his wife, Elinborg Stefansdottir from Straumur on Skogarströnd, and five children: Jon, Katrin, Arni, Kristjan and Oddur. The family settled in Mikley that same year, spending the first winter in the same house as Jon Sigurdsson and Gudbjörg Gudbrandsdottir (nr. 41). The following summer, 1877, Kristjan built a house at Lundur in partnership with Benedikt Petursson (nr. 34). The family moved to Winnipeg around 1882. Kristjan was a well-known carpenter and Elinborg was a midwife, delivering many of the children born in Mikley during the first years. Kristjan died in Winnipeg in Sept. 1907 and Elinborg a year later. All their nine children predeceased them, eight sons and one daughter. They brought up Pall, the son of Petur Palsson. He lived in Winnipeg and took their name, Johnson. Two of their own children did live to maturity: Katrin, married Jon Ag. Jonsson, Winnipeg, and Arni Niels Johnson, married and lived in Winnipeg.
(SIV, III, 196-7; L 8. Nov. 1906; L 24. Sept. 1908; H 31. Oct. 1907; et al.)

34. Benedikt Petursson — Lundur: from Hareksstadir in Mulasysla, Eastern Iceland, born c. 1839, the son of Petur Bjarnason and Solveig Eiriksdottir. Benedikt emigrated from Eastern Iceland in 1876 with his wife, Sigurbjörg Sigurdardottir and two children: Ingibjörg and Tryggvi. Sigurbjörg, born c. 1833, (an aunt to Sigtryggur Jonasson) was a daughter of Sigurdur Jonsson at Nedstaland in Öxnadalur. Benedikt and Sigurbjörg settled at Lundur in Mikley c. 1877 and Benedikt built a house there in company with Kristjan Geiteyingur (nr. 33). In 1879 the family moved to Bad Throat River on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg and from there to Winnipeg (Point Douglas) after a short time. After three years near Akra, N.D., Benedikt and Sigurbjörg returned to New Iceland where Benedikt practised his trade as a shoemaker at Gimli for some years. From there they returned to North Dakota. Benedikt died at Gardar, N.D. on July 31, 1906. Sigurbjörg died at Mountain on Jan. 20, 1927. Their daughter, Ingibjörg, married Sveinbjörn Gudmundsson from Mountain. Tryggvi married in Winnipeg but predeceased his father and was buried at Gardar.
(ThJ II, 128-9; L 30. Aug. 1906; L 25. Jan. 1927; et al.)

The names and information regarding Jon Sigurdsson, Helgi Tomasson and Fridbjörn Stefansson (Numbers 26, 27 and 28) appeared in our autumn issue, but the details regarding their agricultural output were omitted inadvertently.

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY

NAMES OF SETTLERS	NAMES OF FARMS	persons in house	house: length	house: width	house: height	cellar: length	cellar: width	cellar: depth	well: depth	cleared: acres	cultivated: acres	fence: fathoms	ditches: fathoms	hay: 40 kg units	roads: length	roads: width	potatoes: sown
26. Jon Sigurdsson	Bakki	3	16	12	9	12	10	5		3	2	60	—	75	—	—	7
27. Helgi Tomasson	Reynistadur	4	18	12	9	13	11	5	—	3	2	70	—	75	—	—	7
28. Fridbjörn Stefansson	Birkiland	3	18	12	10	8	6	5	—	3	2	180	15	50	—	—	7
29. Gudmundur Gudmundsson	Bjarg	5	14	10	9	9	7	5		2	1	200	—	75	—	—	8
30. Hjalmar Hjalmarsson	Fagurholl	4	17	12	9	10	8	5	—	2	1½	216	—	75		—	8
31. Egill Gudbrandsson	Egilsstadir	5	20	15	9	14	8	4	5	4	2	100	24	160	—	—	9
32. H. Fr. Reykjalin	Melstadur	6	21	17	10	14	13	5	7	2½	2	100	12	160	—	—	10
33. Kristjan Jonsson	Lundur	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1½	240	—	75	—	—	7
34. Benedikt Petursson	same residence	5	22	18	17	16	12	5		2	2	240		60	—		10
35. Sigfus Jonsson	Höfdi	5	16	12	9	12	10	5	—	2½	2	240	10	50	—	—	8
36. J. T. Hallcrow	—	2	24	16	10	12	10	6		18	8	500	8	50	—	—	6
37. Magnus Hallgrimsson	Ingolfsvik	3	21	14	8	13	7	5		4½	3½	368	80	200	—	—	6

NAMES OF SETTLERS	barley: sown	barley: yield	potatoes: sown	potatoes: yield	turnips: sown	turnips: yield	rye: sown	rye: yield	oats: sown	oats: yield	wheat: sown	wheat: yield	cows	oxen & bulls	calves	chickens	number	capacity	fathoms	hooks	number	number
26. Jon Sigurdsson	50							½					1						60	20	100	960
27. Helgi Tomasson	56							½					1		2	2		10	80	30	500	1300
28. Fridbjörn Stefansson	100												3					10	35		200	1200
29. Gudmundur Gudmundsson	100	—	—	—	—								6						50	20	200	300
30. Hjalmar Hjalmarsson	113												17		1	—		7	52	30	190	2138
31. Egill Gudbrandsson	180			½		½							36	2	2			8	60	40	200	2000
32. H. Fr. Reykjalin	180	—	—	½		½				½			20	2				8	60	30	200	2100
33. Kristjan Jonsson	150								—				15			2			100	16	340	1000
34. Benedikt Petursson	90	—			—	—							52					8	140	30	400	1000
35. Sigfus Jonsson	117												12					10	100		280	1700
36. J. T. Hallcrow	110	3	75						—	—			20			6	2	16	60		100	600
37. Magnus Hallgrimsson	90	2	60			½		10					10	2	2			4	80		600	250

35. Sigfus Jonsson — Höfdi: from Refsmyri in Mulasysla, born in 1843, the son of Jon Jonsson and Gudbjörg Sigfusdottir at Refsmyri. Sigfus and his wife, Gudrun Hildibrandsdottir, born in 1848, emigrated from Eastern Iceland in 1876 with two daughters, Gudbjörg and Gudrun Johanna. Gudrun was a sister of Jon Hildibrandsson at Kolsstadir near Riverton. They settled in Mikley where two children were born, Anna Katrin on Oct. 12, 1877 and Hildibrandur on Feb. 26, 1880. In 1881 the family moved to Winnipeg. Five years later, Sigfus and Gudrun returned to New Iceland, settling first at Icelandic River and shortly thereafter in the Isafold settlement where they named their home Starmyri. Due to flooding at the turn of the century, they moved to the Framnes district where Sigfus died in Sept. 1905. Gudrun died at Betel in Gimli in April 1921. Of nine children, six daughters reached maturity: Gudbjörg married D. T. McDowell, Winnipeg; Gudrun Johanna died at Starmyri in Oct. 1897; Anna Katrin married Thomas Fletcher, Winnipeg; Hildur Jonina married Jon James Johnson, Arborg; Gudny Ingibjörg married Sig. Arnason, Tarzan, Calif.; and Sigurbjörg married Charles Worby, Winnipeg.
(L 11. Oct. 1897; L 26. 1905; L 19. May, 1921; et al.)

36. James Thomas Halcrow — (saw mill): Thomas Halcrow is said to have been caretaker of the sawmill and store located on the island when the Icelanders came. At first there were several disagreements with ''bad-tempered Tom'', as he was called by some of the settlers. This is documented by Framfari. In April of 1878, however, he married an Icelandic woman by the name of Anna Margaret Thorlaksdottir, 45 years old. She emigrated to Canada in 1874 with Magnus Hallgrimsson at Ingolfsvik (nr. 37). Nothing further is known of this couple.
(JB church records et al.)

37. Magnus Hallgrimsson — Ingolfsvik: from Brekka in Kaupangssveit in Eyjafjördur, known as Magnus ''postur'', born in 1833, the son of Hallgrimur Sigurdsson at Brekka and Gudrun Thorsteinsdottir. Magnus left Iceland in 1874 with his wife, Sesselja Danielsdottir and one son, Ingolfur. Sesselja was from Kilnes on Melrakkasletta, born there in 1834, the daughter of Daniel Illugason and Gudrun Jonsdottir. After one year in Ontario, Magnus and Sesselja moved to New Iceland, arriving at Gimli with the first settlers in 1875. In the spring of 1876 Magnus went to Mikley in search of work at the mill and a place to settle. He is considered the first Icelander to settle in Mikley. The land he chose was a prime location, just north of the mill. During the mid-1880's the family moved from Mikley to Icelandic River where they settled at Nes. Magnus died at Nes about 1890. Sesselja later moved to the Vidir district where she died in 1912. Of five children, two sons lived: Ingolfur lived in Selkirk and Armann in Vidir.
(ThJ II, 131, et al.)

(To be concluded in the summer issue)

THE CHASE OF SKULI (SKULASKEID)

by Grimur Thomsen

Translated by Dr. Björn Jonsson

THE TRANSLATOR

Dr. Bjorn Jonsson was born in Saudarskrok, Iceland, May 21, 1920. He graduated from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, Senior Secondary School at Akurevri in 1940, and from The Department of Medicine, University of Iceland, in 1947. He did post-graduate work in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manitoba, until 1950. He practiced in Baldur, Manitoba from 1950 to 1952, and in Benito, Manitoba, from 1952 to 1957. Since then he has been stationed in Swan River, Manitoba.

Dr. Jonsson's Literary contributions have been an essay he wrote on certain topographical features in the interior of Iceland, an article published recently in Lögberg-Heimskringla, and translations of Icelandic poetry into English.

FOREWORD

Grimur Thomsen's poem is based on one of the folk tales printed in Jon Arnason's big collection of folklore (Vol. II, p. 123, second edition, 1954).

The story, which is a short one and without a fixed setting in time, tells of a certain man by the name of Skuli who, having received a death sentence at Althing, mounted his horse and fled homeward. Chased by his enemies, Skuli directed his horse on to the entirely impassable parts of Iceland's wilderness where no one else would dare to cross. As he reached his home, his horse collapsed from exhaustion and received a dignified burial with the traditional commemorative feasting.

Skuli is the only character the folk tale mentions by name. In his poem Grimur Thomsen adds other names, especially those of men and horses. The name Sörli,, with its distinct legendary overtones, is particularly impressive. One may say that both folk tale and poem epitomize the time-honoured loyalty of the Icelandic horse by showing that ''this most useful of servants'' may be prepared even to offer the supreme sacrifice on the altar of his master's good fortune.

H.B.

They chased him on eight horses, onward thrusting,
with two outriders each for relay suited.
But as old Skuli on Sörli alone was trusting,
his pursuers could hardly be eluded.

While the trails lay smooth and free before them
neither did they lag nor make his capture,
but when the chase on hills and heathlands bore them
for Skuli it was no more a case of rapture.

Sörli surged ahead and leaping galloped
heedless over clefts and boulders hurling,
rocky crags with wellshod hoofs he walloped,
behind him lavadust in whirlwind curling.

The flock of foes no longer counted many,
on Giant's Knoll five steeds expired gasping,
and at Willow Glen there was not any
able, but Svein's Brown, his breathing rasping.

No rest they had, were unabaited driven,
the chargers slimmer now had grown and meager.
But though the racers were from hunger riven,
in spirit and endeavour they were eager.

Now Skuli wearied, in this game grew bolder,
at Ok dismounted, saddle tighter girded,
Sörli's high-arched neck he stroked and shoulder,
an appeal he to his steed thus worded:

"Oh, Sörli dear, as foal I have you tended,
the finest fodder given and best forage,
now my life is to your feed commended,
safeguard me now and show your noblest courage!"

The blessed beast seemed to have comprehended
his master's plea, with neck and ears upraising,
he neighed and fast, with forces unexpended
and fetlocks taut the lava fields took pacing.

His talent Sörli used, unmatched forever,
the dwarfs were stunned as rocks reverberated.
And in the annals of the nation never
was horsemanship and skill like this related.

Quicker than a sandpiper can scurry,
sinew-taut his legs over clefts went bounding.
Horseshoes rang as in the flailing flurry
flew hail of stones, rent by relentless pounding.

Faster than an arrow rushes racing
like whirlwind over rockstrewn desert dashing,
hoofspoor chiseled rocks his route still tracing,
where footsure Sörli made his way in passing.

They did no longer do so well in chasing,
the others one by one drop from the story.
The sagas this account of Skuli's pacing
give, and no more. This was his glory.

He rescued Skuli from a fate most dire,
his life and weal spared not, a generous giver,
with bleeding legs and bursted lungs expire
he did. Dropped dead near the White River.

Sörli is howed at Husafell, there gnawing
his bit, in harness from his stall is gazing,
at his lava-bedding restless pawing,
waiting on new mountain trails for pacing.

SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER CRAIGIE
1867 - 1957

by Dr. George Hanson

THE AUTHOR

Dr. George Hanson was born in Chicago, the son of George W. and Vigdis (Gudmundsdottir) Hanson. His mother was born at Bjarnanes i Nesjum at Hornafjördur, Iceland. She came to Canada with her parents, Gudmundur and Sigridur (Arnadottir) Gudmundsson, who were early settlers in the Arborg area.

George Hanson received his B.A. degree in English from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois and his M.A. degree in Library Science from the University of Chicago. His thesis was "The National Library of Iceland During the Twentieth Century." He received his doctorate in the history of education from Loyola University (Chicago). He was elected a University Fellow during the 1977-78 academic year, with a stipend of $3,800, which enabled him to continue his research on his doctoral dissertation ("Icelandic Education, Tradition and Modernization in A Cultural Perspective") at Cornell University and in Iceland.

Dr. Hanson has visited Iceland five times, or, perhaps more correctly four times, because during the 1961-62 academic year he lived in Iceland where he taught at the Keflavik Dependents School. Currently Dr. Hanson is Chairman of the Learning Resources Center of Truman College in Chicago.

* * *

The quietly dignified, rather reserved, unfailingly kind and companionable Scotsman, modest in his tastes and tidy in his habits, was universally acknowledged as the ablest and most productive lexicographer of his time, the supreme master of the art and techniques of dictionary making. His capacity for work was enormous, and during his long life he did the work of two or three men. This kindly and unassuming genius of humble Scottish origins (his father was a gardener) was also acknowledged as one of the leading authorities on Icelandic literature and language. Over the whole extent of Icelandic literature, ancient and modern, he gained a greater mastery than perhaps any non-Icelander has ever done. His devotion to Icelandic scholarship covered a period of sixty-five years. Some of his earliest writings relate to Icelandic studies and his last work, published during the year of his death, is the second edition of the monumental **Icelandic-English Dictionary.**

This long interest in Icelandic studies may well be called a love affair with Iceland, a country which was for the greater part of Craigie's long life his spiritual home. His good friend, Snaebjörn Jonsson, observed as early as 1927, "It is certain that Iceland has no greater friend among the nations of the world than Craigie."

Craigie was born on August 13, 1867 at Dundee, Scotland. His parents, James and Christina (Gow) Craigie were Lowland Scots who spoke the local dialect. His interest in linguistics came early. His maternal grandfather taught him some Gaelic when he was only three or four. Later he became greatly interested in the Scottish language and began studying on his own Scottish writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In 1883 he entered the University of St. Andrews from where he was graduated five years later with honors in classics and philosophy. In addition to his studies at the university, he taught himself French by reading **Revue des Deux Mondes.** Also on his own he learned German. As one of his contemporaries recalled concerning this period, "Craigie took all the prizes . . ."

In 1888 Craigie went on to Balliol at Oxford with a Guthrie scholarship, and only after one term, he proceeded to Oriel at Oxford. Here he continued his Celtic studies and here also his interest in the Scandinavian languages, especially Icelandic, was kindled by a gift of a small book of Norwegian songs. The illness and death of Gudbrandur Vigfusson, then a professor at Oxford, prevented him from studying with this eminent scholar from Iceland.

After the completion of his studies at Oxford, where he received firsts in both Classical Moderations (Mods) in 1890 and in **Literae Humaniores** (Greats) in 1892, he went immediately to Copenhagen (at that time the center of Icelandic studies) where he continued his studies in Icelandic at the Royal Library and the University Library. Here, of course, he had access to the great Arnamagnaean Collection. Here also he became associated with eminent Icelandic scholars and writers — Jon Stefansson, Valtyr Gudmundsson, Thorsteinn Erlingsson and Finnur Jonsson.

During these years he became interested in Icelandic **rimur** (ballads or metrical romances), an interest which was to last the rest of his life, as well as an area in which he became an acknowledged authority. His edition of **Skotlands Rimur** (1908), a collection of Icelandic ballads on the Gowrie Conspiracy, written by an Icelandic clergyman, Einar Gudmundsson, who lived during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, set a new standard for the editing of Icelandic **rimur** and has been the model for all subsequent editions.

After his return to Scotland in 1895, Craigie became assistant to the Professor of Latin at St. Andrews, a position he held until 1897 when he was asked to work on the **New English Dictionary** with Sir James Murray and Henry Bradley. From 1901 to 1933 (when the work, including the supplement, was completed), Craigie was co-editor. For this dictionary he produced the letters N, Q, R, U, V, Si-Sq and Wo-Wy — or nearly one-fifth of the main work and one-third of the supplement. He worked seven and one-half hours daily on this project.

So immense was his knowledge of other languages and so great was his instinct for solving problems that Craigie was asked to come to The University of Chicago to work on the **Dictionary of American English.** He commenced this work in 1925 and remained in Chicago until 1936. Thus, for some time he was occupied simultaneously on three major dictionaies (the third being

the **Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue,** which he began in 1925). Yet he always had time to render assistance and advice to scholars and students who sought his help. At The University of Chicago, for example, he was the most accessible professor.

While working on dictionaries, Craigie also held academic positions. From 1905 to 1916 he was lecturer in Scandinavian languages at the Taylor Institute at Oxford University, and when the Chair of Anglo-Saxon was restored at Oxford in 1916, Craigie was appointed to this position. During this period (1916-1925), he lectured in Old Icelandic.

Although Craigie returned to England in 1936, he continued to work on the **Dictionary of American English** until its completion in 1944. He also wrote numerous scholarly works, and of these, a considerable number relate to Icelandic studies. As early as the 1890's he contributed translations from Icelandic and Danish to Andrew Lang's **Fairy Book** and **Dreams and Ghosts.** In 1896 his own **Scandinavian Folk Lore** was published by the Cambridge University Press. In this book, as he states in the preface, he ". . . endeavored to explain clearly not only what the Icelandic sagas are, but how it happened that they arose in a place so remote from the rest of Europe."

The Icelandic **rimur,** as already noted, was one of Craigie's great and lasting interests. He edited the **Synisbok Islenzkra Rimna** (Specimens of Icelandic Metrical Romances) which was published in three volumes in 1952. Not only did Craigie write about and edit Icelandic **rimur,** but he also wrote **rimur** himself, which his Icelandic friends pronounced technically perfect. When the Rimnafelagid (Icelandic Rimur Society) was founded in 1947 in Reykjavik, Craigie was largely responsible for its coming into existence.

Indeed, so great was Craigie's knowledge of the Icelandic language that no less an anthority then Professor Halldor Hermannsson of Cornell University wrote on the occasion of Craigie's 70th birthday (1937) that if the Icelanders should ever undertake to publish an historical dictionary of the Icelandic language, no better qualified a person than Craigie could be found to head the work. Such a work was not undertaken in Craigie's lifetime, the closest such work being the **Icelandic-English Dictionary,** initiated by Richard Cleasby, but revised, enlarged and completed by Gudbrandur Vigfusson and first published in 1874. The second edition of this monumental work, with a supplement by Craigie, was published in 1957 by the Clarendon Press at Oxford University. It was the last work Craigie was to publish.

Many honors were bestowed upon Craigie. In 1928 he was awarded honorary doctorates from Oxford and Cambridge Universities. On June 28th of that same year, he was knighted by King George V. He was elected to membership in numerous learned societies, among them the British Academy. Honors, of course, came from Iceland. In 1925 Craigie was made Knight of the Order of the Icelandic Falcon and in 1930 he was made Knight Commander. In 1946 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Iceland.

The occasion of Craigie's 85th birthday in 1952 was marked by the publication of **A Memoir and A List of Published Writings of Sir William A. Craigie.** Subscribers to this work were worldwide, but by far the greatest number were from Iceland.

Sir William A. Craigie traveled extensively. Indeed, one year he and Lady Craigie (whom he married in 1897 and who was his life-long companion for 50 years until her death in 1947) made a trip around the world. Although he traveled the world, there was no country, with the possible exception of his native Scotland, that Craigie loved more than Iceland and where he visit-

ed four times — 1905, 1910, 1930 and 1948.

In all his dealings with scholars of other lands, Craigie had no greater satisfaction and joy than with the people of Iceland, an association which began in Copenhagen in 1892 and lasted until his death in 1957. J. M. Wyllie observes: "In Iceland more than anywhere else in the world Craigie found a life and literature firmly rooted in nature and reality — for poetry is still a natural and vigorous growth there — and a capacity to recognize and appreciate genius which was as free from envy and affectation as his own." Likewise it may be truly said that nowhere was Craigie more loved and his works more appreciated than by the people of Iceland.

Lady Craigie also had a deep interest in Iceland. On one of their early visits there, she deplored the waste of natural hot water and envisioned that such a natural source of energy could be used to heat homes and greenhouses. Her visions, of course, later became reality.

Craigie last visited Iceland in 1948, and once again it was a time to visit old friends and make new ones. (It was observed that Craigie had the natural capacity to make dictionaries and friends.) During this visit, Craigie, then in his 81st year, lectured on "Nokkrar athuganir um rimur" (Some thoughts on rimur) to an audience which filled the largest hall of the university and kept them spell-bound for an hour.

Craigie's deep affinity for Iceland is perhaps no better illustrated than by an incident which took place during one of his visits to Iceland. While riding through the Icelandic countryside — some distance from Reykjavik — he and Lady Craigie stopped by the side of the road to rest. Soon an Icelander and two companions appeared. After talking with Craigie for a moment, he shouted to his two friends who had slowly gone on, but were not far away: "You must come and meet this foreigner who is an Icelander in spirit."

Sir William Alexander Craigie died on September 2, 1957, nineteen days after his 90th birthday.

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THE PJETUR PALMASON FAMILY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Christine E. Olson

The Canada Iceland Foundation has received a donation of $10,000.00 from Christine Emily Palmason Olson of Bellingham, Wash., U.S.A., to establish a permanent scholarship fund to be known as the Pjetur Palmason Family Memorial Scholarship. This is in memory of her father Pjetur Palmason, her mother Holmfridur Palmason Davidson, and her stepfather Gudni Davidson. The interest is to be divided annually between two selected winners.

Pjetur Palmason emigrated from Iceland to Canada at the age of eight, with his parents Palmi Hjalmarsson of Thverardal, Hunavatnsysla, and Helga Stefansdottir of Flatatungu, along with his three brothers and sister. They settled in the Gimli area. His mother Helga and two of his brothers died in the small-pox epidemic. After about three years the family moved to North Dakota, U.S.A. There tragedy struck again. Pjetur's sister Helga, then wife of Jakob Lindal, and pregnant, lost her life in a fire along with a friend, also pregnant. Pjetur and his brother Thorsteinn were then the only surviving children. Pjetur married Holmfridur Asmundsson of Seidisfjordur, Iceland. Emily, their only child, was born in Akra, N.D. in 1893. They moved to Piney, Manitoba, in 1898. Pjetur established the first store and Post Office in Pine Valley as it was then called. He helped organize the first school term and hired the first teacher. Pjetur had a very fine singing voice and was in very great demand as a performer. Pjetur, with three instrumentalists, provided very fine music in the settlement. According to Emily they probably had the best music of any pioneer community.

It is interesting to note how the musical genes come to the fore in other branches of the family, for instance, Thorsteinn's two sons, Dr. Edward Palmason of Seattle, Wash., well known vocalist, Victor, violinist, and Victoria, pianist, his daughter. Also two children of my father, Sveinn Palmason, (cousin of Pjetur), namely Palmi (deceased) and Pearl Palmason of Toronto, both well known violinists, and no doubt others, especially in Iceland.

Emily's parents moved from Piney to Winnipeg in 1916. Emily received her early education in Piney, Winnipeg Public schools, Wesley College, and Mayville Normal School, N.D.

Emily married during the war, moved to the west coast. She taught school for about ten years (including a short period at Piney). From 1933 to 1943 she went into social work in Bellingham and Whatcom County, Wash. She returned to teaching in the Bellingham area from 1943 to 1953. Emily then taught school in California until she retired at age 75.

Along with her career in social work and teaching, Emily found time for post-graduate studies at Columbia University,

New York, Washington State University in Pullman, and San Jose University in California, mainly in sociology.

Emily is now 87 years of age, in good health except for some arthritis. She has written three books which have been published, and is now writing her fourth.

Both her children, her two sons, James Palmason Channing and Edward Theodore Olson, are now deceased.

A short anecdote. In 1971, in a letter to Emily, I mentioned I had planned to go on a charter trip to Iceland from Winnipeg. One morning, in Reykjavik, my phone rang in my room at Hotel Holt. It was Emily calling from her room in Hotel Borg. She said she decided to surprise me, had flown from California. That's our Emily. Of course she joined our tour group sightseeing. She was then 79.

Emily's life has been one of doing for others. She has helped so many students by providing free room and board, and in a number of cases clothing and spending money for periods up to several years. This has involved High School and University. One young man she put through Medical College, and he now has his M.D. In each case she has asked them to help someone else. She has set up a trust fund to provide clothing for needy children. Emily has established a memorial scholarship for her son Ed, another one pending for her son Jim, and plans for two more by 1982.

The recipients of the scholarship "must be of good moral character, Icelandic descent, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies" at High School, College or University level. They are asked to sign a pledge that "somewhere along the highway of life" they will try to provide comparable help to another needy student. In Emily's words, "the pledge is simply to be a reminder. Some will forget. If we can help them become better people it will be worthwhile".

I have visited Emily twice in Bellingham, last summer for a week. She is still helping students. She has a lovely apartment in a building she owns, lives on her rents. The rest goes to students who need help. This is not inherited money. She has earned it.

My cousin Emily is an outstanding humanitarian. I have never known anyone like her.

Some time ago in our correspondence, Emily told me about her wish to establish a scholarship in Manitoba, and was having problems. I volunteered to help. My first thought was to phone Prof. Bessason, who immediately suggested the Canada Iceland Foundation. I must say I am happy with the results.

Applications may be sent to Prof. Haraldur Bessason, Icelandic Department, University of Manitoba, R3T 2N8.

Ruby Dawson

THE THUNDERSTORM

by Stephan G. Stephansson

Translated by Thorvaldur Johnson

Twilight hides the heaven's rim,
Thick clouds bellow thunder -
Lightning from the shadows dim
Rip the skies asunder.

I

Fast comes the torrent down
Tempest-tossed on the ground,
Over the roofs it runs trippingly
With ice-cold sough.
Down from the mountain-crown
Sleet and fog whirl around,
Through the low pass they run rippingly
Look at it now!
Tossing the little birds flippingly,
Ripping the aspen leaves clippingly,
Whipping the grasses, blow upon blow.

II

High in the heavens the trumpet calls sound—
War-cries of storm as it hews out a path.
In every direction the wind whirls around
The fire-laden clouds in the might of its wrath.
It seems that the firmament earthward is falling,
The cowering earth with its cold arms embracing.
Thunder and lightning with hail and rain squalling
Make din as of seas when the breakers are racing—
Air, water, and land seem in violent motion
And the heavens on fire in senseless commotion.

Stephansson was an experimenter. This is an attempt to make words describe a sudden thunderstorm.

The first four lines represent anticipation — what's coming?

Section I describes the sudden violence of the storm.

Section II tries to describe the majesty of the commotion. Hence the slow, majestic rhythm in contrast to the swiftness of the rhythm in Section I. This is more successful in the original than in the translation.

ICELANDIC UNITARIANS

by Harold Robson

''The spirit of inquiry and freedom in matters of religion was not something new learned by the Icelandic people after they settled in Canada and the United States. It was a spirit brought with them from over the sea. It was already ingrained in their hearts and minds.''

(from The Story of the Icelandic Unitarian Church by Rev. P. M. Petursson)

* * *

The Members Book of the Unitarian Church of Winnipeg begins with a listing of 350 members of the First Icelandic Unitarian Church of Winnipeg built in 1904 at Sargent and Sherbrook. Such clearly ethnic names as Einar Olafsson, Mary Benedictson, Signy Olson, Kristmundur Solmundson, Sigurdur Vilhjalmsson, Asmundur Eyjolfson, Asta Baldvinsdottir, T. J. Guttormsson, Helga Jonatanson, Malena Thorsteinsdottir, Asgeir Finnbogason, Pall Jonsson Kjerulf, and Ragnheidur Strandberg (most of them long since dead) appear on the list. The next 354 names are from the roll marked Federated Church include Pjetur Fjeldsted, Th. Gottskalksson, Jon Tomasson, Johann Vigfusson, Petur Erlendsson, Jona Gislason, Sveinbjorn Arnason, Signy Hannesson, Harvardur Eliasson, Ingimar Thorarinsson and Asthildur Briem. There can be no doubt that Unitarianism in Manitoba owes a great deal to that ''spirit of inquiry and freedom''.

The Directory of the Unitarian Church today lists only eighteen names that are clearly Icelandic in origin. Probably there is an equal number of families in which a female of Icelandic descent has taken on the name of a non-Icelander. Also it is quite believable that Icelandic Unitarians have been influenced by the same trend as many other Protestants and people who claim to have a liberal religious belief — and they simply stay away from church. More than likely the ''new'' religion that all Manitobans (including those of Icelandic origin) need is still to be found. The extent to which the Icelandic ''spirit of inquiry and freedom'' will participate in forming this religion of the future will be seen as the plot unfolds, but certainly Unitarianism in Manitoba owes a great deal to those Icelanders who laid the foundation for the church in this province.

POLICE CHIEF WHO HANDLES FOUR JOBS

By Andy Blicq

Robert L. Jonsson

Mr. Jonsson's father, Jon Axel Jonsson, was one of the six sons of Jon Jonsson of Selkirk, Manitoba. The others were Mundi, Fusi, Ben, Gus, and Dr. Eyjolfur (Oli). They had one sister Freda (Mrs. Lloyd Pollock). Runa, Gus' widow, (now Mrs. Fred Magnusson), Thorey, Dr. Oli's widow, and Anne, Ben's widow, still live in Selkirk. His mother (née Freda Ateah) has lived at Victoria Beach since 1910.

He was educated at St. John's College School, Winnipeg; served with the R.C.A.F.; joined the R.C.M.P. in 1948, and retired in 1966 using military time to compile a twenty-year service record. He has been local municipal policeman since 1970.

He and his wife (née Donalda Marie Breadner) have three children, Brenda (Mrs. David Coke), John Robert, and Joan.

VICTORIA BEACH — Holding down four jobs may seem like too much for one man until you visit this quiet summer cottage community on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg.

Besides being the full-time municipal police chief here, Robert Jonsson is also chief of the 26-person fire department, building inspector and predator control officer for the rural municipality of Victoria Beach.

But one of the reasons why this community is spared the boisterous crowds who invade Grand Beach — 22 kilometres south of here on weekends is, between June 21 and Sept. 3, ''you can't drive cars in there,'' said Jonsson pointing to the Victoria Beach gate.

''People ride bicycles, haul wagons and you walk,'' he said during an interview in the wooden building which serves as his office and police station.

'And they love it'

''And they love it. There are no street lights and no noise,'' he added. Opening the 12-foot-wide roads in the no-vehicle area of the beach ''is something they'll never vote for. If they opened it to traffic I'd be going to the morgue every day.''

However, the beach has its own small share of action which keeps Jonsson busy in the summer.

''I'm supposed to have a five-day week,'' Jonsson said in a recent interview, but ''the hours are long in the summertime. I'm not beefing because I take it easy in the wintertime.''

On weekends he is assisted by two part-time helpers.

Jonsson said there are about 200 permanent Victoria beach residents and about 1,600 cottages. However, only 200 permits are issued for service vehicles allowed in the no-vehicle area and ''there are never more than 15 cars in there at one time.''

Cottage owners pay $1.50 a day, less for longer periods or $15 for the season to park in a 1,200 plus car lot outside the gate.

Under a lease agreement with the municipality, the parking lot operator is required to offer a taxi service for residents, Dr. Sam McMorris, reeve of the municipality and a cottage owner, said.

McMorris said the community is "very unique. I don't ever recall being to any place in North America where they don't let cars in."

Cottages worth up to $50,000

Most cottages in Victoria Beach are worth between $20,000 and $50,000, McMorris said.

But, "there are houses here that you and I would never be able to afford," he added.

Until around 1960, the community was serviced by the Canadian National Railway. The vehicle restriction, however, has been in place since 1933 when a provincial statute was passed allowing the municipality to regulate traffic.

"It's wonderful for children," said one resident walking down a narrow, tree-lined street. "There are no cars, just the taxis for the old people."

"It's a marvelous place," said Jim Young, a 91-year-old resident who spends his summer at a cottage he built himself.

"It's a family beach. Everyone comes down here with the idea of giving the family the very best."

Young, who still drives from Winnipeg to the beach where he began building his cottage in 1922, said being here gives him great satisfaction.

"Everything about this building — and that includes the electricity and fireplaces — I did myself," he said.

And it is the same community pride which brought Jonsson home after 20 years as an RCMP officer "to the peace and quiet of Victoria Beach" remembered from his childhood.

The Winnipeg Free Press

BOOK REVIEW

by Dr. George Hanson

Wernick, Robert, **The Vikings,** by Robert Wernick and the Editors of Time-Life Books. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1979. 176 p. $10.95.

* * *

They were ruthless raiders who plundered and murdered. Chapter one, aptly titled, "From the fury of the Northmen deliver us, O Lord," begins with an account of a Viking raid on the monastery of Lindisfarne off the coast of Northumbria. Famed for its magnificent Lindisfarne Gospels — perhaps the most beautiful illuminated manuscript of this period, with the possible exception of the Book of Kells — this monastery contained gold and silver, wealth which the avaricious men of the North sought. Intruders they were, who came in ". . . long, low black ships with tall, curving prows and broad, red-and-white sails, dancing over the waves . . ." — and they feared neither God nor man. Terrified monks were felled before their altars by Viking swords. No wonder the prayer — **"A furore Normannorum libera nos, Domine"** was uttered in English monastery chapel and village church for 250 years.

The Vikings also feared neither wind nor wave. Master ship builders, they sailed West — to Iceland, Greenland and to the North American continent. To the East, they penetrated into Russia and to the South, they went as far as Constantinople.

The unfortunate monks (and laymen, as well) who felt the fury of the Vikings did not see the other side of the Vikings, an enormously constructive and creative side. They became traders and settlers. In Iceland they established their most lasting settlement where their descendants recorded their deeds long after they were forgotten in the lands of their origin.

A good part of the book is given over to an account of the Viking achievement in commerce, nation building and exploration. There is a good description of such early trading towns as Birka (Sweden) and Hedeby (Denmark), as well as a detailed explanation of Viking ship construction.

Chapter five — "Bold pioneers in a land of ice and fire" — is devoted to the settlement of Iceland. Brief accounts of Ingolfur Arnarson and Hjörleifur Hrodmarsson are provided, as well as Audur, the Deep-minded, and Skallgrimur Kveldulfason, father of the great warrior-poet, Egill. Surprisingly in the account of Audur, no mention is made of her Christianity. Near her home at Hvamm, as the **Book of Settlements** relates, "She used to say prayers at Cross Hills (Krossholar) and had crosses erected there. She had been baptized and was a devout Christian." Surprisingly, too, in the section relating to Greenland and Viking explorations to the West, Thorfinnur Karlsefni is called "the valiant," but "the enterpriser" or the "man of means" would be a better translation. The book, too, is very weak on the ancient religion of the Vikings.

The book has numerous and good illustrations in color and black-and-white (which include the famous 16th century Dutch map of Iceland and fanciful 17th century Icelandic pictures of Egill Skallagrimsson and Grettir the strong). The book also contains a good bibliography and index.

As an introduction to the Vikings, this work is useful. However, for a better in-depth and scholarly history of the Vikings, **A History of the Vikings,** by Gwyn Jones and **The Viking Achievement,** by Peter G. Foote and David M. Wilson are recommended.

JON SIGURDSSON CHAPTER IODE SCHOLARSHIPS

Mary Peterson

The IODE Music Scholarship was awarded to Mary Peterson, presently attending the Toronto Opera School.

Mary has attended the St. Mary's Academy, the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Music degree in voice performance, Aspen Chamber Choir, ARCT diploma at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (gold medalist), Masters of music at the university of Arizona.

Mary is the daughter of Mr. Halldor Peterson and the late Elizabeth Peterson of Gimli, Manitoba.

✦ ✦ ✦

Gary Isleifson

Our second winner in the Johanna Gudrun Skaptason memorial IODE Scholarship, another excellent student, Gary Isleifson, who has excelled in the A to A plus standing in Grades Eleven and Twelve at Murdock MacKay Collegiate. Gary excelled in the areas of Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry, he is ambitious and sets high goals for himself. He is an active member of the First Lutheran Church; interested in, and has participated in sports, hockey, soccer and baseball and has a keen interest in music, having obtained his Grade Eight Royal Conservatory in Piano. This interest in music has branched out into the making of instruments with his father.

Gary is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Isleifson of Winnipeg.

Dana Sigurdson

The Johanna Gudrun Skaptson Memorial IODE Scholarship was awarded to Dana Sigurdson who has achieved excellence academically as proven by her A to A plus average in Grades Eleven and Twelve. She was a member of the Model Parliament, President of the Political Science Club, and served on the Student Council. She is an active member of First Lutheran Church. In her graduating year from Tuxedo Shaftesbury High School was chosen as Valedictorian. She won the Manitoba Symposium Science Silver Medal and received a Certificate of Scholarship in six subjects.

Dana is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. Sigurdson of Winnipeg.

✦ ✦ ✦

Brenda M. Wishbiwski

The Valdina Gottfred Memorial IODE Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Brenda M. Wishnowski.

Brenda graduated from Riverton Collegiate Institute, winning three scholarships, she took the Royal Conservatory exam in Grade V piano with honors and is actively interested in sports, especially volleyball.

Brenda spent two summers at Icelandic Language Camp, and corresponds with a cousin in Iceland.

In Grade Eleven, Brenda's French class formed a 'French Club' to raise funds to travel. They sold raffle tickets, set up canteens at school functions and catered to the Grade Twelve Graduation Dinner.

Brenda is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Wishnowski, Riverton Manitoba.

✦ ✦ ✦

Janet McMahon was awarded the Elinborg Hanson Memorial IODE Scholarship.

Graduating from the Vincent Massey Collegiate, Brandon, Manitoba, with distinction, winning the school's two highest awards for leadership, academic excellence and athletic ability. Has been active in Knox United Church, Brandon, and active in recreational activities for children as well as the handicapped.

Janet is the daughter of Mrs. Olof McMahon and the late Gerald McMahon of Brandon, Manitoba.

✦ ✦ ✦

DIANNE BARKAS: AN EXCEPTIONAL SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dianne J. Barkas has received the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Sells Award for exceptional performance on the Uniform C.P.A. examination, and has been selected as the recipient of an award to be presented by the Idaho Society of C.P.A.'s for achieving the highest score of those from Idaho who sat for the exam. The honor attached to the national award is especially significant when consideration is given to the number of candidates taking the examination. 53,696 candidates across the United States completed a total of 196,987 in the May 1979 exam and Dianne came 6th. She graduated with honors in accounting from Idaho State University and is now practicing as a C.P.A. with a partner in their own accounting firm in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Dianne, who was born in Winnipeg, is the daughter of the late Maria Breckman Bailey and Jim Bailey, now residing in Palo Alto, Calif. Her grandparents were Gudmundur and Jakobina Breckman of Lundar, Manitoba. Dianne and her husband Roy Barkas, flew to Winnipeg in their Cessna 150 from Idaho Falls to spend their 1979 Christmas vacation with relatives.

SAILING BACK TO ICELAND

by Bill Holm

I sailed into Reykjavik on Jan. 2, 1979, a bitterly cold but clear night, a strong NE-wind blowing up a heavy chop on the sea, slapping against the iron hull of the Bakkafoss. The sun went down at about 3:00 P.M. as we passd Eldey, the first view of land in Iceland, a 300-ft. sheer-sided rock sticking up by itself out of the Atlantic, home of thousands of gannets, but no men. The sailors came out on the bridge of the ship to look at Eldey in the dying light. They had spent Christmas and New Year's at sea in heavy weather, transporting frozen meat to the military base, and cars and industrial goods to Iceland. They were anxious to be home, inside cement houses and flats, hot sulphurous water gurgling through the pipes in the winter cold, leftover *hangikjöt* (smoked lamb) and Christmas cakes on the table. The Icelandic radio station, now clear after days of scratchy reception, played Handel's *Fireworks Music* (with unintended humour!) as we floated past the bare, rugged lava on the Reykjanes peninsula. The northern lights danced around like strobes in a Reykjavik disco. Reykjavik itself looked immense in the darkness and bareness of the snow and rock, a metropolis with well-lit concrete highways wending off to the suburbs, a large church, Hallgrimskirkja like a lighthouse beacon over the city. Incredible, I thought to myself, here I am, a Minnesota farm-boy, sailing into this impenetrable polar darkness my relatives sailed out of a century ago, with Handel, the aurora borealis, and my last legal bottle of beer for a year!

Snaefellsnesjökull glacier, a view from a nearby lava field. A landmark in the entire Faxafloi Bay area. —Photo G. Hannesson.

I grew up in Minneota, Minnesota, a farm town on the prairies about 1,700 miles from the nearest ocean. Nevertheless, I was surrounded by second-generation Icelandic immigrants who had somehow adapted to life without boiled fish, sea birds crying, and the ocean surge. At least part of the consciousness of old people, however, was still Icelandic — or at least as I understood it, not American. They spoke their strange, burry, inflected language whenever children were not to understand, and surrounded themselves with old leather-bound editions of sagas, books of poems, and (if they happened not to be freethinkers) the *Passiusalmar*. They also maintained mentally a vision of Iceland as the fount of intelligence, virtue, and beauty. One old Icelandic farmer, J. B. Gislason, would in the midst of heated arguments with neighbouring Norwegian farmers, pound on the kitchen table and declare: "The Icelanders were the kings and aristocrats of Norway, who left because they would not bow their heel to Haraldur Harfagra." After the coffee cups stopped rattling, his wife Lukka, hardly bothering to look up from her knitting, would add phlegmatically, "Anybody who had two cows in Norway was a king."

Everything is New

So I arrived in Revkjavik with some preconceptions of what it ought to look like, and feel like. In the course of living and working in Iceland for half a year, I have discovered that it is a very different place from what the Western Icelanders remembered, but also in some ways unchanged.

The first thing that strikes a visitor to Iceland is that while the map says that he is technically in Europe, and therefore in an old civilization, it does not look like Europe. It is not old. Compared to Reykjavik, Boston looks like Athens, and even Chicago and St. Paul have a dignified and ancient demeanour. Revkjavik looks like a boom town in Nebraska which has just discovered oil in the outskirts, row upon row of new cement houses and apartments, construction sites everywhere, neon signs announcing businesses, plate glass windows lit up and full of fancy and modern goods. Inside the houses, the impression is even stronger. There are almost no antiques, no funny old bric-a-brac, no sleazy overstuffed chairs with erupting springs. Everything is new, elegant, sleek, tasteful — as if the inhabitants had lost everything in a tornado, and had been to the furniture store the day before yesterday with their insurance money. In the driveway sits a relatively new car — an unrusted Volvo, a gleaming Golf, a Ford. On the walls hang good landscapes or abstracts painted by living artists, no crinkly-cornered, gilt-framed daguerreotypes of old Sveinn and Ingibjorg who lived intimately with sheep in Eyjafjördur in 1890. One reads, of course, that cities have grown rapidly, and that prosperity has arrived recently in Iceland, and that therefore the country looks modern, but it still strikes the visitor strangely. Under the modern veneer, you imagine sheep, grass growing from the roof of an old farmhouse, ancient warriors with fierce eyes and gleaming axes.

A Lonely and Beautiful Landscape

In the countryside too, one is struck with how little is left of the past in this harsh landscape. Ireland, Germany, even Sweden are full of ruins, castles, burial mounds, fortresses; ancient and overgrown. Here in Iceland, you can almost imagine yourself as the first human being to set eyes on most of the landscape. The sailors on Bakkafoss played for me an Icelandic country-western song. When I heard it, I almost fell into the

Atlantic laughing. A cowboy in Iceland! Imagine!

I'm an Icelandic cowboy
On my Icelandic pony
And I've wandered all over the West.
I know my way around Snaefellsnes —
'Cause that's where my baby stays.

When I saw the Snaefellsnes peninsula (and a multitude of other such places in Iceland) I stopped laughing. Give or take a lava flow here and there, John Wayne could have ridden out behind a butte (on a slightly smaller horse), hell-bent for vengeance in Dodge City. The land has the same quality of bareness and loneliness — the "big-sky" feeling — that you get in the very best of the cowboy epics. Where the country itself becomes a participant in the violence of the action. Even the volcanic look of the country occurs in the American West, in Yellowstone, and in the Snake River plains of Idaho.

So Iceland reminds me in many ways of the West of my own country — big, lightly peopled, mountainous, and beautiful. It is also like the West in that a mythology has grown up in it, and a literature has grown out of that mythology — the sagas -- those bloodthirsty and magnificent stories of honour and vengeance among farmer-kings, who as aunt Lukka would have it, owned two cows in Norway (or Ireland or France). One thing that has not changed much in Iceland is the reading habits. Almost every home still has its set of these sagas, by this time, I suppose, better edited and more elegantly bound. But the feeling of the sagas — the stubbornness, the sense of adventure, the prickliness at being wronged or humiliated — still exists in the Icelanders.

Cathedrals Carved by the Sea

And the landscape itself, though it has an occasional concrete city, and has in places been badly eroded by overgrazing, looks much as it must have looked when Hrafna-Floki named it. For all its harshness, and the difficulties of living prosperously on it, or of warming one's bones in the cold summers, its beauty is extraordinary and moves the heart (mine at least . . .) in ways that are difficult to describe. On clear winter days, I watched Snaefellsjökull from Reykjavik, 100 miles away, a gleaming white cone lit up with pink light on the NW-horizon. It was as if the mountain had fingers, inviting me to some strange banquet, attended by ghosts, far across the water. At the beginning of the summer, I drove to it on one of those rare brilliant and cloudless days that are like unexpected gifts. You could see the mountain almost the whole way. We got to Hellnar, just south of the mountain, late in the afternoon. By this time of year, day and night melt into each other, the late light softer and gentler, laving the rocks with splashes of lavender. Hellnar is only a few houses of fishermen and farmers, and an old church, built on a fertile meadow sloping down to the sea from the mountain. Below Hellnar the land ends in black lava cliffs, carved into cathedral arches by the sea, and whitened with the dung of a hundred thousant birds — gannets, fulmars, kittiwakes, gulls. I lay in the soft moss above those cliffs for hours, surrounded by the first buds of arctic wildflowers, listening to the cacophony of sea birds nesting below, and watching Snaefellsjökull glow far above me. I realized then that whatever had altered in Iceland since the leaded hand of the twentieth century took hold of the island, I would have differed from my relatives in one way. I never would have left. Like Gunnar in *Njal's Saga*, I would have tripped the horse, and looked back at the slopes. Ten minutes of light on Snaefellsjökull would get the human spirit through ten years of inflation in the concrete suburbs.

Courtesy of Atlantica and Iceland Review, 4-1979, Volume 17

MELANKTON

by LaDonna Breidfjord-Backmeyer

Melankton holds the bones grown cold,
Of pioneers whose lives grew old,
And some so young as had not known,
This life, and could not call it home.

These pioneers, they gave that we,
A better life might know and see;
They worked and starved and fought the wind,
Were weak, yet strength they held within.

The life they knew was bitter hard,
Yet turned they to their well-loved God;
'Tis He who taught philosophy,
When life knew work, but seldom play.

Bless these poor souls who led the way,
And taught us to await the day,
When God shall end the darkest night,
Allow the doves to take their flight.

Bless Einar, old, so old and worn,
'Tis he, this man Icelandic born,
Who led his kin to this new land,
And fit the plow within his hand.

And Gudny, gentle, true, and kind,
'Tis she this work-worn man did find,
When they were full of hope, and young,
Before their seven young did come.

Seven, the young they did so crave,
But only three the Lord did save,
Three to grow up so strong and tall,
Four to stumble down, to fall.

Upon this dust-blown prairie land,
With fields of gold on either hand;
Amidst this sandy, sodden soil,
These people here did end their toil.

Some died in war, some died in strife,
Diphtheria took too many a life;
Skarp-Hedinn, headstrong, free-willed lad,
At six years old this breath he'd had.

Melanton Cemetery near Upham, North Dakota.

And Kristin lived not quite one year,
Yet gave his love to all those near,
The names upon these stones are carved,
Of those who suffered, those who starved.

Old Halla's fiddle oft did play,
Throughout the night and into day.
And Asta, blessed ten year old,
So gentle, quiet, hair of gold.

So many names upon the stones,
So many seasons come and gone;
The winter snows in drifts so high,
The winter winds that heave and sigh.

Spring melts the snows and brings the rain,
'Till floods run o'er the land again,
'Till summer sun brings forth its warmth,
'Till prairie flowers and grass come forth.

In autumn leaves do tumble down;
They lie so crisp upon the ground.
The cover for the winter's night,
The cause for birds to take their flight.

And now the wind sweeps o'er the graves;
It whips the prairie grass to waves;
It throws the sand upon the tombs;
It leaves its print, a mark of ruins.

But those whose bones beneath us lie,
Their heroism does not die;
a part of them lives on in us,
That part which does not turn to dust.

The God they knew, the books they read,
The love they taught, the good they bred,
From tilling soil to hist'ry's page,
From these did spring our heritage.

Sod huts gave way to wood and glass,
Because of those whose lives did pass,
Within this oft-told ancient story,
Within Melankton's well-earned glory.

BLESSED BE THEIR MEMORY.

FIVE EMINENT ICELANDIC PIONEERS

STEPHAN G. STEPHANSSON
(1853-1927)

Born in Iceland, 1853.

Emigrated to the United States, 1873.

Emigrated to Canada (Alberta foothills), 1889.

Foremost Icelandic poet in North America. One of the greatest of all Icelandic poets, and, as an adopted Canadian, an author with an eminent place in our own literary annals. (Watson Kirkconnell)

Five volumes (about 2000 pages) of his collected poetry published.

A wide range of subject matter.

Freedom-loving; hatred of war and exploitation of people; liberal in religion; life philosophy; nature poems; themes from the Icelandic classic literature; love of country, Canada and Iceland. Granite strength and deep feeling.

Reviews of Stephan G. Stephansson

Dr. Watson Kirkconnell: University of Toronto Quarterly, No. 2. January, 1936.

Professor Skuli Johnson: The Icelandic Canadian Magazine.

✦ ✦ ✦

DR. JON BJARNASON

A pillar of the Icelandic Lutheran Church in America, 1877-1914.

Born in Iceland, 1845.

Attended Grammar School and Theological Seminary in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Ordained, 1969.

Married, 1870.

Emigrated to the United States, 1873.

Taught at Decorah College, Decorah, Iowa, 1974 — Latin, Greek, Geography, etc.

President of the Icelandic Society of America, founded in Chicago, 1874. (Due to migration, this society was short-lived.)

Editor of the "Budstikken", a Norwegian language paper, Minneapolis, 1876-77.

Accepted a call to the newly founded Icelandic colony on Lake Winnipeg (known to the settlers as New Iceland), 1877.

Organized five congregations in New Iceland and served these, 1877-80. Preached also to the Icelandic congregation in Winnipeg, 1877-80.

President of the Synod which the New Iceland congregations formed, 1879-80. There was only one annual conference.

Returned to Iceland, 1880-84.

Accepted call to the Icelandic Lutheran congregation in Winnipeg, 1884, and served that congregation till 1913, a year before his death. He built up a strong congregation.

One of the prominent founders of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North America, 1885, and was President for 23 years. In 1890 there were 23 member congregations and in 1900 32 member congregations, in Western Canada and in the United States. Including associated congregations, there was a peak membership of 5,000.

Founder of the **Sameiningin** (Unity), the monthly periodical of the Synod, 1885. Served as Editor for 28 years (1885-1914) without remuneration.

Dr. Bjarnason was a notable preacher. His sermons were noted for their clarity and wealth of imagery.

Dr. Bjarnason was a doughty champion of his church, which was relatively liberal Lutheran, against the more conservative Lutherans of the Missouri Synod 1877-80, and against the Unitarians, after 1891.

He was the chief founder of the Jon Bjarnason Academy, in Winnipeg, which functioned 1913-40.

He was one of the outstanding leaders of the Icelandic community in Winnipeg and worked for the preservation and the passing on of the Icelandic cultural heritage.

His **Book of Collected Sermons** (Icelandic), published in 1900, received high commendation and was rated second in the Icelandic language to the collected sermons of Bishop Jon Vidalin, of Iceland. A book of his essays and addresses was published in 1946. Dr. Bjarnason translated **Ben Hur** for the **Sameiningin.**

Dr. Bjarnason was a noted spiritual leader, far sighted, and a doughty fighter. He was a good Canadian citizen.

✦ ✦ ✦

BALDVIN L. BALDWINSON
(1856-1936)

Came to Canada, 1873.

A prominent leader among the Icelandic people in Western Canada in his day.

As Canadian immigration agent in Iceland, he helped to bring over some 7000 Icelandic settlers.

Owner and editor of the Icelandic language newspaper **Heimskringla** in Winnipeg, 1898-1913. This paper was conservative in politics and liberal in religious matters. Subscribed to in all the Icelandic settlements, including in North Dakota (as was its opposite number Lögberg).

Three times member of the Manitoba legislature 1899-1907; 1910-1913. A witty speaker and personally popular.

Deputy Provincial Secretary, Manitoba Government, 1913-1922.

✦ ✦ ✦

DR. ROGNVALDUR PETURSSON
(1877-1940)

Born in North Dakota.

Attended Wesley College, Winnipeg; Meadville Theological Seminary, and Harvard University (Perkins Scholarship).

Unitarian minister in Winnipeg in the early years of the century (1903-).

Noted for his leadership qualities, personal charm and pulpit strength. The outstanding leader among the Icelandic Unitarians in Western Canada and North Dakota.

Field Secretary for the Unitarian Conference among the Icelandic Unitarian churches in Western Canada. In 1923, there were 13 congregations.

One of the founders of the Unitarian periodical **Heimir** (1904), a pre-eminently literary publication, and a regular contributor.

One of the outstanding leaders among the Icelandic people in Western Canada in the first half of the century.

One of the mainstays of the weekly newspaper **Heimskringla** for about a quarter of a century.

A gifted writer and made a notable contribution to Icelandic Canadian letters with his historical writings, travel stories, essays and literary reviews, and as editor and publisher, Chief promoter of the publication of the works of Stephan G. Stephansson.

One of the founders of the (Icelandic) National League, a cultural association with member chapters in Western Canada and in the Icelandic settlements in the United States.

✦ ✦ ✦

SIGTRYGGUR JONASSON
(1852-1942)

First Icelandic settler in Canada, 1872.

A pioneer among the pioneers, a leader, enterprising and venturesome, a man of vision.

The chief founder of the Icelandic colony on Lake Winnipeg, 1875.

Canadian immigration agent to Iceland, 1875 and later.

First president of the Colony council (The colony was outside Manitoba, 1875-81). Active in formulating the system of government.

Founder and for a short period the editor of the newspaper **Framfari** (Progress), published in the colony, 1877-80.

Active in business enterprises in the colony. A partner in a sawmill enterprise, 1881, and in active shipping on Lake Winnipeg. The lake steamer "Aurora" built about 1890 by a small group.

Editor of the Icelandic language weekly **Logberg,** in Winnipeg, 1895-1901. This paper was Liberal in politics and supported the Lutheran Church.

First Icelandic member of the Manitoba legislature, 1896-99. Member 1907-1910.

IN MEMORY OF WILL AND JONA KRISTJANSON

Kris Kristjansson, Winnipeg $50.00
Joe Martin, Toronto $25.00

Gratefully received.

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Who can identify the family on this photograph? Anyone recognizing these people is requested to write to the editor of THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN.

IN THE NEWS

MANITOBA EDUCATOR RETIRES

A large group of friends and former associates of Professor Carl Bjarnason gathered together on December 5th last to recognize his contributions and to wish him well on the occasion of his retirement from the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

Dr. Bjarnason spent most of his career as an educator in the western part of Manitoba, notably around the Brandon area. After graduating from Brandon Normal School, he started his teaching career in a one-room school (fifty pupils) at Bannerman, Manitoba. From such modest beginnings he rose to become a school principal in Brandon, served for a period of time as President of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and was for many years a Superintendent of Schools for the Brandon area. He joined the Educational Administration Department of the Faculty of Education in 1967 and served a stint as Head of that department. During the year prior to his retirement he was Acting Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education.

A mere recitation of his achievements, however, gives no idea of the regard in which he has been held by all who have come in contact with him. Mr. Michael Czuboka, who gave the principal address at the gathering, paid tribute to his quiet humour, understanding, and general good sense.

Carl Bjarnason is by no means the only person of Icelandic extraction who has made a distinguished contribution to education in this province, although he is probably one of the more notable examples.

Carl and his wife Edna plan to make their home in Victoria, B.C. They have two sons: David, who lives in Brandon, and Dan, who is seen regularly on the CBC's National newscasts giving reports from overseas.

HONOURED BY THE MANITOBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On Saturday, January 12th at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg, the Manitoba Historical Society honoured several individuals and groups for their contributions of written works.

Among those receiving the Margaret McWilliams medals were Dr. S. O. Thompson (posthumously) for his book, **Riverton, an Icelandic Settlement.** Heather Mackintosh, his granddaughter, accepted the award. The Gimli Women's Institute received a medal for their book, **The Gimli Saga.** Also being honoured was Dr. Michael Ewanchuk for his book on the Ukrainian settlement around Gimli, entitled **Spruce, Swamp and Stone.**

* * *

SUNDAY MORNING

Alone I stand,
list'ning, waiting
peace invades my soul.
I feel at one with the universe,
God's presence around me.
Sky — so blue — like Mary's robes,
she — the mother of God.
A leaf floats through the air
drifting —
drifting —
drifting —

Elma Gislason

* * *

SUNDAY MORNING received honorable mention in the last Alberta Poetry Contest conducted by the CANADIAN AUTHORS, Edmonton Branch. One other entry from Winnipeg also received honorable mention, plus five more from different points in Manitoba.

TWO OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Lillian (Lil) T. Sumarlidason

Johanna (Josie) Jansson (Mrs. W. E.)

Articles by these sisters, the daughters of Thorarinn and Hallfridur Gudmundson, appeared in recent issues of THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN. Lil had made contributions previously. They were born in Tindastoll (Markerville), Alberta, the home district of Stephan G. Stephansson, the Rocky Mountain poet.

Josie resides in Red Deer, Alberta, where she in previous years taught school. She was president of the Hillsdown and Valley Centre Women's Institute; secretary and later president of the local School Board; has held various offices in Senior Citizens' groups in Red Deer. Her husband was Wm. E. Janssen, who has since passed away. They have three children.

Lil resides in White Rock, B.C. She taught music in the schools of Edmonton, and is now a piano teacher in White Rock, pianist for the Golden Age Choristers, and secretary for the Senior Citizens' Association. In 1926 she married Henry M. Sumarlidason, who farmed at Elfros, Saskatchewan, later Imperial Oil agent in Wadena, Saskatchewan, and for Boeing Aircraft in Vancouver, B.C. He supervised the drilling of oil wells in Lloydminster and the construction of schools and hospitals in Edmonton. He passed away in June, 1977.

NEW MEMBERS OF OUR MAGAZINE BOARD

Sigrid Johnson and Lorna Tergesen, pictures and biographical sketches not available.

Eric Jonasson, See page 32 in the winter issue, 1979.

JOHN S. MATTHIASSON

Dr. John S. Matthiasson was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the son of Dr. Matthias J. Matthiasson and Jonina T. Matthiasson (nee Johnson).

He received his early education in Randolph, Wisconsin and his secondary education in Winnipeg, Manitoba. After completing undergraduate studies at United College, in Winnipeg, he did graduate work toward the M.A. degree in Sociology at Michigan State University. His doctorate in Anthropology was awarded at Cornell University in 1967. Dr. Matthiasson has taught at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the University of Saskatchewan, (summer field training program in Rankin Inlet, NWT.), and since 1967 in the Department of Anthropology of the University of Manitoba. His research has focussed on the Inuit peoples of the Canadian arctic and the development of new communities in the Canadian north.

He is presently engaged in a long-term study of differential patterns of adaptation of people of Icelandic descent in Iceland and Canada.

Dr. Matthiasson is the author of more than thirty articles in scholarly journals and books.

ELVA SIMUNDSON

Elva has been a resident of the town of Gimli for the last ten years, where she has worked at the Gimli Composite High School and at the Interlake Recreational Centre. She was employed last winter by the Gimli Chapter of the Icelandic national League on

a project involving the writing of a history of the Icelandic immigrants in America under the sponsorship of the Multicultural Branch of the Secretry of State of Canada. The book TRACING: A STORY OF THE ICELANDIC PEOPLE IN AMERICA will soon be published by Queenston House Publishers.

Her parents are Gunnar and Margaret Simundson of Arborg, Manitoba; her husband Jerry Jonasson, a teacher at the Gimli Composite High School. She is presently enrolled at the university of Manitoba in an arts program.

MANITOBA'S CHIEF SHERIFF RETIRES

As of February 29, 1980, Manitoba's chief sheriff, Stefan J. Stefanson, retires, having served with the Attorney-General's Department since 1952. While still a farmer at Gimli, Stefan acted as a bailiff for the Eastern Judicial District. His father, Valdi Stefanson, also served as a bailiff for the Interlake.

Stefan's record of community involvement is extensive. For years he was the Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Gimli. He is the past president of the Icelandic National League. He was an instrumental force in organizing and establishing the Gimli Museum. He is still involved with the Icelandic Festival. He is a founding member of Viking Travel, an agency which specializes in charter flights to Iceland. Undoubtedly he will continue to serve the community for years to come.

* * *

An excerpt from an article featuring Stefan in the performance of one of his duties follows:

WHYS AND WHY NOTS OF JURY DUTIES

by A. J. MacIver

Early one morning, Stefan Stefanson was motoring on the outskirts of a small rural community in the Eastern Judicial District of Manitoba. It was a typical autumn morning. One could almost taste the coming frost. The air was crisp. No clouds hindered the radiant sunshine or the beauty of an endless sky of blue.

Stefan glanced at the summons. Although he was on duty and travelling with a purpose, he was aware of the surrounding autumn sea of yellow.

The car slowed as he pulled into the driveway. Having worked a farm himself, he knocked on the door of the farm house half-knowing there would be no answer. It was harvest time and the farming community was busy. A short wait with no response and he headed for the barn.

On entering, he was not surprised to find two rows of cows on either side of the barn from one end to the other. Otto greeted him just inside the door and, after introductions, Stefan said, "I am pleased to announce that you have had the privilege of being selected for jury duty for the next assize."

Waiting for the chance

Otto looked down at the summons, concerned for a few moments, and then looked back at Stefan and sighed, "I've been wondering a long time when I would get my chance to serve on a jury."

Just then Otto's wife came up carrying two pails filled to the brim with milk. Otto looked at her and said, "Edna, this man is here from the city and he's giving me one month's holiday to come and serve on a jury."

The smile left Otto's face when Edna replied matter of factly, "You go and you take your 38 cows with you."

Stefan Stefanson is the sheriff of the Eastern Judicial District of Manitoba and former reeve of a rural municipality. He has been sheriff for some years now and he carries out his duties in a fair and unofficious manner.

His duties allow for a discretion to excuse prospective jurors if: they are over the age of 75; they have served as a juror within the past two years; they belong to a religion that makes service as a juror incompatible with their religious beliefs; they are afflicted with blindness or deafness or mental or physical informities or ill health; to serve as a juror may cause serious hardships or loss to him or others.

Sheriff Stefanson's background gives him the experience to exercise his discretion with compassion. Otto is not the only person to be excused on grounds of hardship.

—Winnipeg Free Press Dec. 31, 1979

WINNIPEG'S FOLKLORAMA

By Ivan Harmata

The city of Winnipeg is generally regarded as Canada's multicultural capital. Here, enviably living side by side, we find Canadians of many different ethnocultural backgrounds. If we lump together those of English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh background — frequently and incorrectly referred to as English Canadians — they constitute the largest percentage of the population. But even in toto they constitute only a plurality and not a majority. Following them, Ukrainians constitute the second largest population, followed by Germans in third place, French in the fourth spot, then Polish, Dutch, Jewish, Scandinavians and so on.

The motto of the city of Winnipeg appropriately reflects the nature of the city's multicultural population. It is in Latin so as to avoid petty bickering between the pecking order of the English and French languages in Canada. The motto reads, "unum cum virtute multorum." Freely translated, it means, one with the strength of many — an excellent motto for the unity of all Canadians.

But the showpiece of Winnipeg's multicultural roots has been for a number of years its annual Folklorama — a festival of nationalities. More than thirty different ethnocultural groups open the doors of their pavilions for one week, to welcome and to get acquainted with visitors in the cultural setting and atmosphere of their pavilion. Adding up visitors at all pavilions, the total attendance runs into the millions.

The basis of success of Folklorama is very simple. Every participating group respects the right of everyone of their members to be different in language, tradition, customs, cuisine and manner of worship, but willing and anxious to share their lifestyle with all who visit their pavilion. The success of Folklorama by any standard has been phenomenal, which in turn means a phenomenal approval of the principle of respect for one another.

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