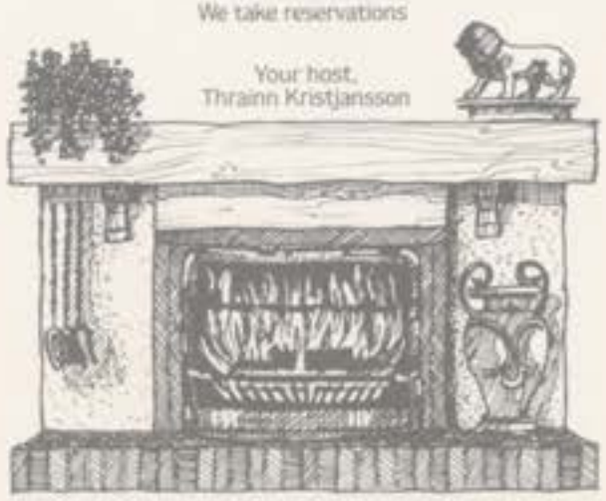

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WINTER, 1980

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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The Icelandic Canadian

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GUEST EDITORIAL

WHO OWNS CHRISTMAS?

At this time of year we are surrounded by the sounds and signs of Christmas, and as each day brings us nearer to December 25, these grow steadily more apparent and intrusive. The functioning of Christmas as a season and an event is so immense and interwoven that there is scarcely a part of our community life not touched by it. With so many groups involved for so many different reasons, it is not strange that at times there is tension about what Christmas is all about, and to whom it really belongs.

There are people in our economic structure whose whole job is Christmas. They spend a whole year ahead planning and preparing the specialties such as greeting cards, wrappings, toys and other novelties. Among other merchandisers, most find the Christmas trade spelling the difference between a good year and a poor one. Producers of turkeys, nuts, candy and liquor all count on the season; and certainly some growers of mandarin oranges in Japan must look with anticipation each year to the Winnipeg market.

Increasingly, it is the time of year for travel agencies to offer special holiday packages; and in the fields of entertainment, eating places, and through every part of the broadcast media, people get ready special programs and events with the Christmas label.

For very many of us, the meaning and happiness of Christmas is very closely related to family tradition, and to our religious and cultural heritage. So it is not surprising that there are people who speak out on behalf of the Church and the family to protest what they see as a takeover by commercial interests. One must respect their concern, but also to remember that the Church itself took over for Christmas the place of an earlier pagan festival at the time of the winter solstice, and that there is still plenty of room, even in our day, for people to celebrate the event in the light of their own understanding of its meaning and value.

For Christians it is the celebration of the Incarnation — ". . . the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth" — and I must confess that as I mark that event in congregation and family I appreciate the work of those who make available to me so many items which may give physical shape to the love and joy I want to share. Especially am I deeply appreciate of the technology and marketing of those who make it possible to reproduce in our homes with such beauty and fidelity our glorious heritage of Christmas music.

I have to resist the efforts of those who would entice me into senseless and even sinful extravagance; and politely to refuse the eager offers of the money merchants to put me into debt for a whole year or more. I must also regret how easily we overspend on our own pleasures when there is still so much unnecessary poverty and injustice in too many places in the world.

Almost everyone shares Christmas in the light of his own understanding and priorities, and receives from it according to his own evaluation. I am convinced, of course, that those who see its deepest meaning as "God with us" are most blessed in celebrating it. Christmas truly belongs to those who will receive it as God's gift for himself. It has always been a joy and a blessing to me, at every changing stage of my life, and I fully expect that it will again be such an occasion in 1980. My prayer for all of you, then, is that it may be so for you and yours, and that it may again speak its message of hope and peace, and of goodwill among men, to all the world.

Rev. Ernest P. Johnston, D.D.

THE REV. ERNEST P. JOHNSTON, B.A., D.D.

(A brief biographical sketch)

Son of Paul and Helga (Bardal) Johnston. Born in Winnipeg, and received his early education in west end public schools. After some years in the business world, took Arts and Theology at United College, and was ordained by the Manitoba Conference of the United Church in 1947. Served pastorates in rural Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and then was nine years at King Memorial Church in Elmwood, and five years at Dauphin. The University of Winnipeg conferred an honorary Doctor of Divinity in 1969. Appointed the first Executive Secretary of Manitoba Conference in 1970, and after six years in this position returned to the pastorate at Crescent Fort Rouge Church in Winnipeg. Married in 1945 to Elizabeth B. Welch, the Johnston's have three daughters and two sons. On retirement in 1982, their plan is to establish residence in West St. Paul.

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ULFHILDUR THE ELF-WOMAN

There was once a farmer who lived north of the lake known as Myvatn. The distance around that lake is at least forty kilometres. One time at the beginning of the haying season, while all the folk were mowing hay in the cultivated home field, a woman came to the farm from the direction of the lake. She spoke to the farmer and asked his permission to spend the night there. The farmer granted her request. When he asked her name, she replied that it was Ulfhildur. He asked her where she was from, but she disregarded his query.

In the evening, when the hay was ready to be stacked, Ulfhildur asked for a rake. She raked together no less than any other two women did working together, and the stacks she made were of fuller measure. The following morning Ulfhildur wanted to rake along with the other hired women, but the farmer told her he had no need of her and would be most gratified if she would take her departure at once. Ulfhildur then broke into tears, upon which the farmer permitted her to stay there that day. The next morning the farmer told her that now she had to leave, but again she began to weep. The farmer took pity of her and gave her permission to stay a week. At the end of the week the farmer advised he could not keep her any longer, but as before, Ulfhildur burst into tears. The result was that he promised her she could stay until the end of the summer. That made her exceedingly happy.

All the people on the farm liked Ulfhildur and it seemed to them that none of them had ever known a doughtier, cleaner woman or one of better moral character. At the approach of autumn it was decided that Ulfhildur should remain until the end of the year and a little later she was asked to stay on for the following year.

That winter, as it was drawing near to Christmas, the mistress of the house brought her some cured hide to make shoes for Christmas for herself and the two hired men she looked after. She made the shoes for the hired men, but neglected to make any for herself. On Christmas Day everyone went to church, except Ulfhildur, who stayed home alone.

Nothing of note happened until the next Christmas drew near. Again the mistress brought Ulfhildur some hides to make shoes, just as before, and again she made shoes for the hired men but none for herself. On Christmas Day everyone went to church, except Ulfhildur, who was at home alone.

On Christmas Eve, however, one of the hired men had the impression that Ulfhildur had gone out for a time, and decided if he were still there the following Christmas, to observe more closely how things went with her.

The Christmas season passed and the rest of the winter. Ulfhildur was in especially good favour with everyone and people thought that in many respects they had never known her equal. Now nothing happened until the third Christmas season was approaching.

As usual, the mistress brought Ulfhildur the leather to make shoes for Christmas. Once more she made shoes for the hired men but none for herself. The mistress had a

THE COVER PICTURE

The members of our Magazine Board are grateful to Helga Miller for permitting us to use the painting of CHRISTMAS IN ELFLAND as our cover picture. This picture is based on the Icelandic folk story ULFHILDUR THE ELF-WOMAN, a charming story that exemplifies the good-will that pervades the hearts of all of us during the blessed Christmas season. This story appears in this issue of our magazine.

conversation with Ulfhildur and told her that now she had to attend church on Christmas, for the pastor was putting the blame on her for Ulfhildur's never attending church. Ulfhildur had little to say and paid no attention.

After everyone had gone to bed on Christmas Eve, the hired man mentioned previously stayed awake. Ulfhildur got up very quietly so no one would hear her, but the hired man followed her when she slipped out of the house. Upon arriving at the lake she took a pair of fine gloves and rubbed them together, whereupon there suddenly appeared a bridge across the lake. She crossed over the bridge, the hired man close behind her. On the other side she rubbed the gloves together again, causing the bridge to disappear. Ulfhildur continued her journey and it seemed to the hired man that she was descending below the surface of the earth. The way was very dark, but still the hired man was able to see and follow her. They went on for a considerable time in the dark until, little by little, the way began to grow brighter. At last they arrived on a beautiful level plain. There were flowers in profusion and the hired man had never seen a place to equal it in beauty. The road had flowers on both sides and the grassy plain was fawn-coloured where the sunlight glinted off the dandelion flowers and ripening fruit on the trees. A flock of sheep was sporting on the level ground, eagerly feeding from time to time on the flowers. Nature was clad in her fairest garments.

In the middle of this plain stood a magnificent palace which the hired man thought must be the palace of a king, it was so splendid. Ulfhildur entered the palace but the hired man remained outside, in an alcove in the wall.

Beside the palace stood a very beautiful church. After a short time Ulfhildur came out of the palace, clad in a queen's robes, a gold ring on each of her fingers. She was carrying a child in her arms. At her side walked a man wearing a crown and dressed in royal robes. The hired man imagined them to be a king and queen. They entered the church accompanied by a great throng of people, all of them splendidly arrayed and with expressions of happiness on their faces. The hired man approached the church door without anyone seeing him. Nor was Ulfhildur aware of his presence.

At this juncture the service began, the beautiful singing accompanied by the exquisite sounds of harps. The child Ulfhildur had in her charge became restless during the service and began to wail. She took off one of her gold rings for the child to amuse itself with, but the baby flung the ring onto the floor and the hired man managed to get hold of it. At the conclusion of the service everyone left the church. Ulfhildur and her splendidly dressed husband disappeared into the palace and it seemed to the hired man that everyone wore an expression of grief.

A little while later Ulfhildur hurried out of the palace, wearing the clothes she had on at first. She followed the same route by which she had arrived, the hired man following behind her. Nothing is reported on their journey until they arrived back at the lake, which they crossed the same way as before. She rubbed the gloves together on the shore of the lake and the bridge appeared. They crossed over and when she rubbed the gloves again, the bridge disappeared.

In the nick of time the hired man managed to get home ahead of Ulfhildur and get into bed. By the time she got home and into bed it was just about daybreak. It was soon time for people to get up. The mistress told Ulfhildur that she positively had to go to church that day, but the hired man broke in, saying that she certainly didn't have to go to church that day as she had attended church the night before.

"You're the most fortunate of men if you can prove that," said Ulfhildur. The hired man thereupon related the whole story of the night's adventures, producing the ring in evidence. Now Ulfhildur became delighted indeed, and related how things stood with her. She acknowledged herself to be the daughter of a king in Elfland and said she had had an argument with an old crone who them put a spell on her to the effect that she would have to spend the rest of her life among humans or in the world of men unless a human man managed to come with her to the land of elves on Christmas Eve the first, second or third year after the spell was laid upon her. The only concession the crone granted her was permission to visit her husband on three Christmas Eves. Ulfhildur then told how she laid a spell on the old crone, condemning her to death if she succeeded in escaping from her spell.

Ulfhildur spoke to the hired man: "I solemnly declare that you will henceforth be the luckiest of men. Tomorrow you shall go down to the lake, where you will find two purses. You shall keep the smaller and give the larger to the master of the house."

Ulfhildur then made preparations for her journey and took leave of everyone with friendly words. She hastened down to the lake and disappeared, never to be seen again but missed by the entire household.

The following day the hired man went down to the lake and found there two purses, both of them large. In the smaller purse were gold coins and silver coins in the larger. The hired man is said to have achieved success in everything he did from that time on as long as he lived. And that is the end of the story.

GOOD NIGHT

by Guttormur J. Guttormsson

Translated by Jakobina Johnson

Stillness reigns — The winds are sleeping.
All the world is bent on keeping
Tryst with night, whose wings are sweeping
From the west each ray of light.
Dusk, — a soft and silken cover
Over all is seen to hover
In its readiness to cover
All the drowsy world, — Good night.
Earth, — a restful bed inviting
All her tired to sleep, — Good night.

Those who labored long, untiring,
Hail this time of rest, — desiring
Strength renewed through sweet retiring,
— Welcome thoughts of short respite.
And through spaces real or seeming
Find the Eden of their dreaming,
Soar to starry ways, — redeeming
Hours of toil and pain. — Good night.
With the golden suns of heaven
As companion-stars. — Good night.

God of Sleep, descend embracing
All the weary souls, effacing
Pain and grief, — Thy pinions tracing
Airy ways in dreamy flight.
God of Dreams, prolong endearing
Scenes for all whose luckless steering
Wrecks their ships; — who go careering
Past all loveliness. — Good night,
Those who, drifting, miss the beauty
Of their waking hours. — Good night.

Peace of heav'n on all descending,
With this stillness softly blending
Here abide. — Our thoughts ascending
In a fervent prayer unite:
From the pain of wounds relieve us,
— May the joyous sun receive us
When the morning breaks. — Good night.
— All in peace await the radiant
Angel of the dawn. — Good night.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD

(This story is dedicated to my son, Kristjan)

by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, before your pappa was born, even before your grandfather was born, a small family journeyed across the stormy seas upon a ship. They traveled from Iceland, their old home, to America, their new home. This family had loved Iceland very much, but the times were very bad there, so bad that the father, Einar, was afraid that his family would surely starve if they were to stay in that old land. So the family sold the sheep, the cattle and the horses (those that had survived the avalanches and the volcanoes). They packed up the books and the spinning wheel, some wool from the sheep and the old coffee grinder, and they sailed to America to find their fields of gold. However, as you and I both know, it takes many, many years of hard work and quite a bit of good luck to become rich in America, so the family remained poor for a very long time.

It so happens that the year in which our story takes place was an uncommonly poor year for that farmer and his family. It had been many years since this small group of people had immigrated to the new land, but although they had worked unusually hard, that bit of good luck had eluded them. All through the spring of that year the rains had fallen heavily. The meadows were undrained and swampy, and Einar, being a determined farmer in spite of bad health, would come home each day after clearing more land, wet to the waist and cold. One of the horses had died from swamp fever; the other went lame from a barbedwire cut and had to be sold. And the lambs were dying, most of them shortly after their birth. So by the time summer finally arrived, the family had only five or six sheep, one milk goat named Rosa, an old cow named Branda, a two-year-old heifer named Krossa, and one yearling whose name cannot be remembered. One would think that all this was bad luck enough, but there was more bad luck to be had. One night the old cow, Branda, fell into the manger and twisted her neck. The next morning the oldest child of the household found that blessed creature dead. "Mamma, Mamma," the child cried out. And the whole family came running to view that dear though wretched old beast, each of them fighting the tears that they shed.

It rained and it kept on raining throughout the season. There was not much sunlight that year. It rained so often that the sod of the roof had no time to dry, so the oldest children, Thura, Willy and Freda, slept under the bed more often than they slept on its top. One night it rained unusually hard and the rain dripped everywhere through the sod of the roof. Gudny cradled her baby close to the warmth of her own body. She held that baby, who was much too small to crawl under the bed with the older children, and she stood behind the cookstove, the one dry spot in the house. All through the night she stood in that spot, keeping the rain water off her baby, praying that her children would not get sick from the cold and the damp. And Einar, who kept a smudge pot burning to ward off the mosquitoes, stood by her, prayed with her. Their whispering voices were drowned in the roar of the rain.

To be sure, these times were very bad indeed. Even though the rain continued to fall, and even though there were no horses to help with the work, the farmer had to farm his land. Einar sowed the seed for his crops, scattering the seed by hand that summer. He cut his hay with a scythe, and when the hay had cured — thanks to a short span of relatively good weather — he rolled it into bundles and carried it home on his back. Einar often thought that, when he had a little money in his pocket, he would buy himself a team of oxen. He especially thought about that team of oxen when he walked the fifteen-

mile trip to town for groceries — and when he made the trip home from town, lugging the flour in a one-hundred-pound sack on his back. Oxen were good animals, sturdy and strong. It was during the fall of that year that Einar began to use a cane whenever the air was damp.

And so the year passed, until it was nearly Christmas and there was no money to be found on that poor homestead. There would be no bright and shining toys bought from Eaton's catalogue that year. Not even one gift, not even the smallest gift could the couple afford.

"We must make do," the mother said.

"We've not much choice," said the father.

And so they did.

Every weekday morning, after a breakfast of oatmeal and milk-coffee, Gudny would bundle the older children into the mittens and caps she had made from the wool that Einar had sheared from the sheep. Then, before sending the children off to school through the cold and the snow, she would draw a pair of Einar's great wool socks over each little pair of legs, fastening each sock tight at the top with a piece of string. And, for each child, she had one hug and a kiss and one old and much-used lard-pail of lunch. "Go and be blest, little daughters of mine," said the mother each morning as she lifted the latch on the door. "Go and be blest, little son." And for Willy, being the only boy of the household, she had one more extra-tight hug. "Be careful," she would call out to them. And as the snow drifted through the doorway, she would draw her sweater closer to her chest, protecting herself from the draft. "Be careful to watch for the bear and the wolves," the mother would warn as her children entered the Fort Pelly Trail that led through the woods to the school.

Then, after Einar had finished the chores, had chopped the wood and drawn the water, after the baby was asleep for her morning nap, the farmer and his wife would work with scraps of wood and bits of cloth and paper in the small log cabin with its tufted and snow-covered roof, making toys for the young ones for Christmas. And when each gift was finished, it was wrapped in brown paper, tied with a string and stored in the trunk or the shed. Thura, Willy and Freda never did get much for Christmas, usually only one gift apiece and one not-too-filled stocking from Santa, but that didn't make these three any less curious. Even Gudda and Gunna, Gudny's two little sisters who lived on the farm at the other side of the field, would stop each day on their way home from school to peep and to peer into every corner as they sat on the stools by the table, swinging their brown-stockinged legs and eating kleinurs. Only Asta, the baby, remained unaware, she being too young to have any knowledge of the giving or hiding of gifts.

There was so terribly much work that had to be done, for according to tradition the home would have to be spotlessly cleaned in honor of the birthday of Christ. So while Einar was cleaning the barn or the chicken hut, Gudny would spend her afternoons with a broom and a rag. She swept and dusted, scrubbed and polished, until at long last not one speck of the hateful though normal grime remained in any corner. Even the canning jars, both empty and full, were polished. She cleaned while the bread was rising, and while the rice soup was cooking for the evening meal. She cleaned as the seven layers of the Christmas vinarterta were baking in the wood-fed stove, and as the filling for this Christmas treat popped and bubbled in its heavy black pot. Every day she cleaned once again all of those things which she had cleaned the day before, and she cleaned a little bit more.

And in the evening, after the lamp was lit and the supper had been eaten, Einar would entertain the children with tales of Gryla the wretched giantess of the mountain, or of the Jolasveinar, Gryla's mischievous Christmas boys. Gudny would sew or she'd weave,

making clothes for the family for Christmas. All of God's people, or so Gudny believed, had to have at least one new piece of clothing to wear for Christ's birthday, even the baby. This was a very old and treasured custom. Styles were copied from the pictures in the catalogue, and new dresses were made for the girls from old dresses of a larger size. Gudny made an apron for herself out of an old scrap or two of cloth, and she wove new cloth for Einar's vest and Willy's pants. The baby's white gown had been made months before. Trimmed with embroidery work and handmade lace, the gown had been carefully wrapped and placed in the rough-cut Icelandic trunk that served as a chair near the homemade and equally crude table. Only Willy's pants were not ready by Christmas. Gudny had run out of thread and there was no money for new thread. The woman wiped away her useless tears and took the stitching out of that part of the pants she had finished. Then, using the thread she had saved, she stitched two neat patches onto Willy's old pants, and that on the day before Christmas.

Then came the eve of Christ's birth. There was no hangikjöt this year, due to the loss of the lambs, but a pot of rice pudding was bubbling gently on the cookstove, ready for the Christmas Eve supper. There were even a few raisins in the pudding, these being gained by Gudny through barter. The table was set with a meager though tempting Christmas feast, and the family and friends, all of them dressed in their very best, stood quietly with heads bowed while Einar recited the evening prayer. Gudny's father and step-mother, Jonas and Johanna, and the youngest of their children, Dori, Gunna, Joi and Gudda, had joined the family for the festive evening, as did old Kristjan Skagfjord and his son, Alli.

These last were good friends and well thought of as neighbors. Einar recited the prayer with great dignity and humble gratitude, but his voice, as always, cracked a bit as he mentioned the people back home in the motherland. "May God bless all who gather here," the farmer prayed. "And may He also bless all those whom we have left behind." Einar stopped for a moment, then he continued: "We thank Thee, my God, for all of the blessings which You in Your goodness have already bestowed upon us, and we hope that we who have gathered within this humble home can be worthy of the love and the care that You have given to us. We honor Thy name and the name of Thy son, Jesus, on this — the holiest night of the year." And all of the household repeated in unison, "Amen." Kristjan Skagfjord took a hanky from his pocket and blew his nose as Johanna wiped a tear from her cheek with the back of her hand. And the children, who had displayed quite a bit of patience up to this time, grew restless and wanted to eat.

There certainly was no grumbling about any lack of food. Everyone present agreed that the feast was truly festive. Johanna had contributed brown bread, slatur and skyr to the table. And Kristjan Skagfjord had trapped two rabbits on the day before. The old man had dressed these rabbits and had baked them in buttermilk. After being warmed in the oven, they too were added to the feast. Gudny's rice pudding had been topped with cinnamon and sugar, and each ponnukokur

had been spread with wild cranberry or strawberry jelly before being rolled. The vinarterta, which had mellowed with age, sat at the center of the table, between the platter of freshly warmed rabbit and a bowl of steaming potato soup. No person left this table hungry. Even Jonas, big though he was, looked very much like a satisfied man. With his hands resting on the plank of the table and the dampness of coffee glistening on the red of his beard, Jonas leaned back after the meal had finished and said, "That meal was fit for the King of Denmark, daughter of mine." To which Einar replied, "Any meal is fit for the King of Denmark. This one was fit for an Icelander, especially an Icelander of Canadian persuasion." And they all laughed before rising from the table.

The living room, which also served as a bedroom, was lit with tallow candles, and the Christmas tree that Einar and the children had brought home from the woods stood tall at one corner of the sparsely furnished room, its trunk placed in a milk-pail of hard-packed sand, its branches draped with paper chains and delicate paper snowflakes, all of which were child-made. An angel rested at the top of the tree, the golden-haired cherub nesting on a cloud of white fluff. Einar stood close by the tree holding the Bible in the palm of one hand as he turned the terribly thin and ancient pages to the book of Luke. The man's voice did not falter as he read the story of Christ's birth to his people. In fact, no teacher at Cropper Tops school had ever read so well. The children were very proud of this farmer who stood so straight and read so beautifully. And after the man had closed the book gently, the children in turn thanked him for his reading. "Thank you, Pappa," said his own children as they each gave him a kiss.

"Thank you," said Gudny's little brothers and sisters, and they too kissed the farmer for this was the proper way to show one's appreciation in those days.

Alli Skagfjord tuned his violin and the family and friends gathered to sing the carols that told of the blessed birth of the Christchild. Einar was song-master as his voice was true. Even little Asta seemed to be singing along, though her words were but sounds of soft coos and gurgles. On the other hand, Freda and Gudda sang with great gusto, especially when they alone sang "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem." They sang it in English as they had been taught it at school. And they sang songs of Iceland and Iceland's seabirds, white birds with silver sun-tipped wings, sailing up, up over Iceland's cliffs and down to the sea again.

It was later that the people of the house opened their gifts, after the children had draped strings of cranberries around one of the trees at the front of the cabin and had put out seeds and grains for the birds and the beasts. It was then that Einar and Jonas began to hand out the gifts that had been placed beneath the tree, one at a time, one to each person. Stilts and blocks, scarfs, treasure-boxes and embroidered handkerchiefs, and picture-books made from scraps of oil cloth and pasted on pictures from Eaton's, all had been opened save one, and that one for Gudny from Einar. This was a special gift and all of those present on the evening of feasting knew that this gift must hold some special quality. Whereas all of the other gifts had been wrapped in brown paper, this last one was wrapped in a tissue of white.

"How?" asked the woman.

"I dug deep," said the man, and his eyes grew bright — like a mischievous child. ". . . For the paper that is," and he laughed lightly as his eyes grew tender with the look that one has when one loves another. ". . . Open it," the farmer said to his wife.

And all in the house tried to peek as Gudny pulled back the tissue, some peeking over her shoulder, some standing on tiptoe close by her side. The gift was of wood and in places had silvered. A small hand-carved sea bird sat on the cloud of white paper she held in her hand.

"Oh-h-h," said the family and friends as

they studied the masterful work of the bird. "Oh-h-h."

And the farmer was very proud of his work, of the time he had spent in the fields, in the woods, away from the house — whittling in spare moments, in stolen moments. And he was proud of the woman.

"It's like you, konan min," the farmer said with great tenderness. "The bird is like you . . . it's home, konan min . . . The bird and you . . . they are home," and he touched her cheek to wipe away the happy tear.

And that is a part of the story of your heritage, little friend* of mine. Of such as these are memories made, a Christmas bird and blue knee-patches, and an evening ended with a game of Whist. But there is a secret key to the passage of happy memories, and if you were to look hard enough within these pages, I think that you will find that key. As a man named Ellard Swanson once told me, "Those were hard times . . . very, very hard times, but we were very HAPPY." And his voice sang.

*LaDonna's little son, Kristjan.

A TRIBUTE TO A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR WILHELM KRISTJANSON

by Judge Roy St. George Stubbs

On a bright Saturday morning, in midsummer, many years ago, I visited my parents, who then lived on Camden Place, in Winnipeg. My mother met me on the front porch of their home. "Dad is working in his garden in the back," she said. I went around to the back and found that my mother was not up-to-date. My father was no longer working in his garden. He was chatting over the back fence with his next door neighbour. When he saw me, he said, "Roy, come over here and meet the best neighbour I have ever had." That was my introduction to Wilhelm Kristjanson.

Now that he has done his work and lived his day, I wish to pay him a tribute of friendship.

Wilhelm Kristjanson was born in Lundar, on December 28, 1896. He grew up in an old-fashioned Icelandic home in an atmosphere favorable to learning. As a schoolboy he gave high promise. He had talent: he had industry — that unbeatable combination. They carried him to distinction in the academic world. After completing his B.A. at Wesley College in 1924 (where his athletic career was as impressive as his scholastic), he was awarded an I.O.D.E. scholarship to study at Oxford.

Oxford set her seal firmly upon him. In 1935, he published a small book, which he dedicated to the I.O.D.E., entitled 'Glimpses of Oxford', in which he acknowledges his debt to that unique university.

He had the true instinct of the Icelander. He could not live without books. For the complete life, they were as necessary to him as the air he breathed and the food he ate. I speak, of course, of real books, not, to borrow Charles Lamb's phrase, 'things in books' clothing'. His love for books shines through these words which he wrote after a visit to the Bodlean Library. "Well may we tread softly and feel the touch of reverence; this is the fifteenth century part of the Bodlean library. Here belonged men who dreamed, and aspired, and wrought, who acquired beauty of mind and spirit in their search for knowledge and truth, and gave expression to the beauty that was in them. They have done their work and lived their day . . . they have . . . contributed to the upbuilding of civilization."

The book shops of Oxford, which are nearly as numerous as the book shops of Reykjavik, were a never-ending source of delight, fascination and inspiration to him. "The Greeks have their Elysian fields," he wrote, "Oxford is the happy Hunting Ground for the book lover. The lure of the Oxford book shops is irresistible. They are at almost every turn, with books old, and books new."

His life's work was in the field of education. The main duty of education in his view, was to fit a man, or a woman, to live as a good member of the human race. This task could not be accomplished by forcibly feeding a student with the food of knowledge. The better part of education is self-education. An environment must be created in which the student may find his intellectual feet. The system nurtured by Oxford was his ideal. In speaking of the loose rein placed upon the student at Oxford, he said: "Self-activity in education is indeed put to the test, and shows its possibilities and dangers. Many gather in the rose-buds of pleasure while they may, but very many garner the rich educational harvest that opportunity offers."

In stressing his belief that education consists in more than the accumulation of men-

tal lumber, he referred to the Oxford system: ''Character is moulded by character, inspiration begets inspiration. One may forget detailed facts that one has accumulated, but the glow of the heart; the glory of the vision splendid may abide or renew themselves. Education may be inspirational, with the emphasis on spontaneity, or it may emphasize regimented activities. Oxford life is varied and spontaneous, and not regimented.''

Wilhelm Kristjanson was on the side of the humane virtues. He was a firm believer in liberty and equality and a true lover of humanity. He did not love humanity in the abstract, in the fashion of the professional virtuoso. He loved Tom, Dick and Harry — his neighbour and the man across the street. As he once wrote of an educationalist whom he admired: ''He warned, too, against the danger of the general — general philosophic maxims, general love of humanity — and emphasized the need for Blake's ''particularism,'' or love for particular human beings, the essence of the teachings of Christ.''

He was a heavy trafficer in words, both as editor, and author. He edited this journal for many years. In 1965, he published 'The Icelandic People in Manitoba', a sound piece of work, a significant contribution to history, judged by the most uncompromising standards. It is written in a clear narrative style. He does not hesitate to express opinions, or to exercise critical judgements; but, on its broad canvass, there is an absence of those negative qualities — prejudice and intellectual arrogance.

He cast a wide net which embraced many interests. In none of them did he serve only for shekels. He did not have material gain in mind, when he devoted many years to writing 'The Icelandic People in Manitoba'. There was an important job to be done and he elected to do it, in the full knowledge of the time and effort it would cost him.

After a lengthy illness, he died on March 30, 1979. As the years closed about him, he had retained his intellectual and cultural interests. Despite the burden of age, and physical suffering, his spirit had remained young to his last day. His life had not been all smooth sailing. On the journey, he met both fair weather, and foul. He knew, with Aeschylus, that ''trouble may wander far and wide but it is always near,'' and that each man must expect to shoulder his full share. He was equal to everything, and accepted it in the spirit and style of the true Viking, that life sent his way.

He once made a free translation of the Eddic poem Havannal:

> cattle die,
> kinsmen die,
> each one dies likewise,
> but an honourable reputation
> which one has earned
> never dies.

By the example of his good life, Wilhelm Kristjanson earned an honourable reputation. By his good works, and his good deeds, he placed himself on the list of memorable Canadians — a Canadian who never lost touch with his Icelandic heritage.

Recently, while digging into Manitoba's early history, I came upon an article in the Manitoba Free Press, for March 16, 1912, under the caption ''The Icelandic People', which I read with incredulity and amazement. This article was written by someone whose initials were W.C.V. This is part of what he wrote: ''Arriving in Manitoba, they (the Icelandic People) were met with a prejudice equal to that shown towards orientals — minus the intent pity we all feel for the Chinaman. A labour delegate twelve years ago proposed to the government that a $500 tax be placed on the Icelandic immigrant, when the Chinaman was entering the country at $50. per head. 'Why, they thought we were Eskimos, and hooted after us.' '' I cannot but believe that these words are greatly exaggerated. But if there was ever any hooting after the early Icelandic settlers, it did not last long. They soon proved themselves, in every field in which industry and intelligence are the requirements for success. The reason is not far to seek — they produced men of the sterling worth of Wilhelm Kristjanson and women to match their men.

THE "LAKES SETTLEMENT" OF SASKATCHEWAN

by Gustaf Kristjanson

People are inclined to look upon the settlements in the Interlake area of Manitoba and the northeast counties of North Dakota as the only rural settlement of any significant size of Icelanders in North America. One should not overlook the fact that quite considerable pockets of Icelandic rural settlement existed in Saskatchewan as well. Judge W. J. Lindal, former editor of this magazine (and himself a Saskatchewan homesteader at one time), has developed in considerable detail the history of these settlements in his book **The Saskatchewan Icelanders.** Much of the material presented in this article is based on information contained in that volume.

As Judge Lindal points out, there were two main waves of immigration into Saskatchewan by Icelanders seeking to establish themselves in farming communities there. "The first settlers came fifteen to twenty years earlier than the second group and they came almost direct from Iceland. The second group of settlers came by a circuitous route, that is, they had been somewhere else in this continent for an appreciable length of time." The first group, that arrived in the 1880's and 1890's took up homesteads in what is now east central Saskatchewan (notably around the village of Churchbridge) which was at that time a part of the Northwest Territories. The second came after the turn of the century — most of the settlers becoming established in the area from Foam Lake on the east thence westward along the shores of the Quill Lakes as far as the village of Dafoe. This area was known as the "Vatnabyggd" or Lakes Settlement.

The eastern extremity of this area was actually something of an offshoot of the Thingvalla district around Churchbridge (southeast of Yorkton). In 1892 three or four families, discouraged by the drought that afflicted that district in the early nineties, trekked westward as far as Fishing Lake, reaching that point in June, 1892. In their search for adequate fodder for their cattle, they located a hay meadow a few miles to the south, which was in fact the dried up lake bed of Foam Lake. Within a couple of years these settlers had moved to the new location by the hay meadow. Incidentally, after the dry cycle of years passed the meadow became a lake again. Soon more families followed, settling on farms around the margin of the lake. These were hard years — before the coming of the railroad. The nearest doctor and the nearest centre for shopping was the village of Yorkton, some fifty miles away. "Spring trips (to Yorkton) were always eventful. Creeks were swollen into rivers and the old Icelandic custom of fording rivers on horseback had to be revived . . . Market cattle were driven on hoof, the trip to Yorkton taking about three days." Randy Martin, a grandson of Hjorleifur Hjorleifsson, one of the original settlers of Wynyard, Sask., has compiled a most informative history of the Lakes Settlement. In it he quotes (from the memoirs of Skuli Bjornson, one of the original Foam Lake settlers):

> "There were wide open spaces with no roads, fences, or plowed fields. Everyone in the area shared the same single bottom plow which had long handles. Old cattle corrals were torn down and the ground was plowed up for potato patches. The settlers got together in the spring after winter feeding to brand and de-horn the young stock."

We get a real feeling in this of a pioneer people opening up the virgin prairie.

The major influx of settlement, however, was not to occur until after the turn of the century. Regarding this new wave of settlement, Walter Lindal points out: ". . . these settlers did not come direct from Iceland and their experience before coming to these new districts varied greatly. A majority came from North Dakota and the Argyle district. (in Manitoba) One man, Magnus G. Isfeld, came from Brazil, where he had lived for many years and raised a large family. Others came from Winnipeg and had very little if any experience in farming. A few had been fishermen who came from Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Winnipeg. Some came almost direct from Iceland . . ."

One important factor that gave impetus to new settlement was the extension of railroads into what was then still the Northwest Territories. By 1904 the C.P.R. had extended its line as far as Sheho, only a few miles to the east of Foam Lake, while the C.N.R. line to the north reached as far as Wadena at this time. For those settlers who came into the area before the coming of the railroad these were the jumping off spots. Wadena was closer to the western portion of the settlement (Elfros to Kandahar). The C.P.R. line was not extended to Foam Lake until 1907 or to Leslie, Elfros, Mozart and Wynyard until 1908.

Another circumstance that made settlement easier was the appointment of Thomas Paulson (who had settled in 1898 on the west shore of Foam Lake) as agent for the Canadian government to conduct Icelandic immigrants to the new area. Generally speaking, Paulson encouraged them to settle in those areas which mingled some open terrain with sloughs and poplar and willow bluffs and which would therefore be more suitable for mixed farming.

From 1902 on a number of new settlers began to come into the area. Generally, this tended to be an extension of settlement northward (Kristnes district) and westward from Foam Lake. The latter concentrated around what are now the sites of the villages of Leslie and Elfros and the small districts of Holar and Mount Hecla to the south of these villages. The first families that moved into the Mozart district south from Little Quill Lake — were from the Morden area of Manitoba. This whole area around the Quill Lakes was soon to experience a major influx of settlers.

Lindal describes the background to the new migration in this way: "By the turn of the century the North Dakota colonies of Icelanders had become overpopulated. Information had reached them about the lands that were being opened up in the Canadian prairie west. Early in 1904 meetings were held and it was decided that a delegation be sent to investigate . . . Their destination was Foam Lake where they contacted Thomas Paulson who directed them on a tour of inspection as far west as Big Quill Lake." The delegation was highly impressed by what they saw, and preparations were made at once to make the move from North Dakota.

This exodus from North Dakota was in two main groups, one in 1905 and the other in 1906. Special trains were engaged for the purpose. The first train arrived at Wadena then the closest railway station to the new settlement — in May of 1905. As Randy Martin describes it: "Most of the settlers had chosen their homesteads in 1904 and arrived in the area the following year. The initial Icelanders came as a group because a trainload received a fare discount. The train included 36 box cars and five passenger coaches, with over a hundred persons including children. The trek overland was made in any kind of conveyance available, through bush, across bridgeless streams, or unmarked prairie . . ." The following year another trainload of people and effects were unloaded, this time at Quill Lake, the railway stop west of Wadena. This time the logical access to the new settlement was over the narrows between Big and Little Quill Lakes. As Paul Bjarnason described this journey in his memoirs, this must have

been quite a challenge. ''The lengthy southern approach was so mucky that only oxen could pull the empty wagons across and fortunately there happened to be a team of oxen in the shipment. All the loads had to be carried across, piece-meal, through the knee-deep mud, by the men in the party.''

Settlers continued to flock in, but by the end of 1907 most of the better land open for homesteading had been taken up.

Much of the land from Wynyard to Leslie was either wooded (poplar and willow bluffs) or covered with low brush. It required more than a little effort to clear this land for growing crops, especially when the settlers had the help only of their own tools, their walking plows, and their oxen. This land was highly suited for mixed farming. The western part of the district, from a point between Wynyard and Kandahar as far as the alkali flats that begin near the hamlet of Dafoe, the terrain was much more open — relatively treeless prairie. This was the area that attracted settlers from the Argyle district of Manitoba. It was ideal for those who wished to emphasize grain farming, providing there was sufficient rainfall. The contrast between the ''Argyle'' farmers that lived in the Kandahar-Dafoe area and the ''North Dakota'' farmers who occupied the lands to the east was one of the distinctive features of the Lakes Settlement. Many of the first homes in the settlement were crude huts with sod roofs. To quote Randy Martin once again: ''A great many of the homes had hand-made furnishings, with tables made of poles and boards, and benches to sit on. Some settlers had brought furnishings with them. There were quite a number of organs in the district but only one piano.'' This, of course, represents pioneer conditions. Frame houses with shingle roofs quickly became common and furnishings more elaborate. Field machinery was equally basic at first.

> ''The machinery needed was a breaking plow, stubble plow, either walking or sulky, a set of harrows, a seeder, and a binder. Up to 1909, oxen provided most of the power, with only a few using horses . . .''

For many years farmers attempted to be as self-sufficient as possible — using salted or smoked meat from the animals they raised themselves and producing their own butter, eggs, and potatoes. Common Icelandic dishes such as ''skyr'' and ''mysuostur'' were a common feature of diet. Those who raised sheep would wash, dry, and tease their own wool, as well as spinning it and knitting it into socks and mitts.

Icelanders have always placed a heavy emphasis on education, and it is not surprising that they should have lost little time in establishing schools in the district. A school was erected in the original Foam Lake settlement in 1899. The Westside School District (southeast of Leslie) was formed in 1905 as was Akra in the Kristnes area north of Foam Lake. Grandy (north of Wynyard) and Mountain (west of Wynyard) followed in 1906. In the following year or two others followed — Little Quill, Nordra, Harvard. The names of other schools in the area reflect the heavily Icelandic character of the community: Sleipnir, Gardar, Mount Hecla, Walhalla, Mimir.

And the community was very heavily Icelandic in the early years. A glance at a survey map of the period showing homesteads occupied indicates the overwhelming preponderance of Icelandic names. As the years went by this changed as members of other national groups moved into the community. Many of the early postmasters in the settlement were Icelanders. For example, Halldor J. Halldorson, a pioneer and promoter of the emigration from North Dakota, set up a small store in his home in 1905 and obtained authorization to become the first postmaster in the Wynyard area. The Post Office was called Sleipnir. When the actual townsite of Wynyard was set up three miles further west, store and post office were moved to the new location.

Icelanders, as might be expected, played a prominent role in public life and community service. The list of reeves of rural municipalities in the Lake Settlement is too extensive to set down here, but some served for lengthier periods than the others. Hence special mention might be made of Helgi Helgason of Foam Lake, Thordur Arnason and Augusto Isfeld in the R. M. of Elfros, and Egill Laxdal in the R. M. of Big Quill. W. H. Paulson was a member of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly for many years.

Church organization was an important feature of life in the early days. Nine Lutheran congregations were established, from Foam Lake on the east to Kandahar near the western edge of the settlement. In addition, the Federated Church built in Wynyard has been served by Lutheran pastors from the state church in Iceland, but has maintained an affiliation with the American Unitarian Association. In many cases the formation of Ladies Aids preceded the formation of congregations and in some cases was independent of them.

Cultural life was not neglected, and was generally related to the concerts and other social events that were organized. Of particular note in these social events was the Islendingadag (Icelandic Festival) held annually at Wynyard on August 2, where speeches, poetry reading and music were the order of the day. This celebration attracted people from the whole of the Lakes Settlement and was a great unifying force. The midwinter concert or ''Thorrablot'' in Leslie and the ''First Day of Summer'' (Sumardag Fyrsti) in Mozart, were other examples of events where Icelandic music, speeches, occasional plays and always good Icelandic food were much in evidence.

The settlement boasted some Icelandic writers of distinction. One might mention Dr. Sig. Jul, Johanneson and W. H. Paulson in Leslie and Paul Bjarnason in Wynyard, but this is only to give representative names. Special mention should be made of Johann Magnus Bjarnason, who spent his latter years (1922-45) in Elfros.

In somewhat less intellectual activities Icelanders in the district were prominent as well. The first brass band was formed in Wynyard in 1910. It was called the Viking Band and of course most of its members were Icelandic. In later times (the 1930's) Fusi Baldwinson conducted the band which had been re-formed in the community. A band was performing at one time in Leslie as well organized by Paul Magnusson. A succession of dance bands were active in the Wynyard community, with a preponderance of Icelandic members. Baseball tournaments, including many Icelandic players wer always popular in the Lakes Settlement, but perhaps the most distinctive sport that the Icelanders brought to the district was the Iceland wrestling (or ''glima'') that was a feature of the annual Icelandic Celebrations.

Many Icelandic businessmen played a significant role in the development of their communities, but for these, as well as for the list of all the settlers who homesteaded in the various parts of the Lakes Settlement, the reader is directed to Walter Lindal's **The Saskatchewan Icelanders.** It would be impossible to list the names of prominent pioneers in the district without the risk of omitting many names which are just as worthy of inclusion.

The ''Vatnabyggd'' has changed through the years as have almost all communities. Many of the sons and daughters of original settlers have moved on to greener pastures, or at least different pastures. Some have gone to Winnipeg, others to Regina and Saskatoon. Great numbers have ended up in Vancouver or at other points on the Coast. However, a considerable Icelandic element is still to be found in the community and they are playing their part no less than their forefathers did as builders and as good citizens.

THEY NEITHER JOG NOR EAT YOGURT — THEY JUST LIVE

by Michael Kilian, Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON – New figures are out showing that the world's healthiest country is just the one I thought it would be.

It is not the United States all that jogging, dieting, and Perrier water swilling not withstanding.

The world's healthiest country is the one that would be my favorite even if it was the world's least healthy Iceland. Life expectancy at birth in Iceland is now 73 years for men and 79.2 years for women -- the highest expectancy on the planet. This compares with an American life expectancy of 68.7 years for men and 76.5 for women and Uganda's of 12, depending on Idi Amin's mood at the moment.

One curious aspect of Iceland's extraordinary longevity is the number of supposedly healthy, life-prolonging things Icelanders do not do.

For example, Icelanders do not jog. They sometimes play soccer, or climb about the glaciers, or swim "in a heated pool." But there is none of this daily thumping, painting and heaving Neither do Icelanders go in for health food diets They have nothing to do with yogurt, wheat germ, egg shell juice, or puree of fern They eat fish, lamb, mutton, potatoes, bread and cheese in copious amounts. And, on social occasions, they do not traipse about with glasses of Perrier water with line lime chunks floating in them. This peculiar American practice would make absolutely no sense to them.

Iceland's remarkable life expectancy isn't a matter of genetics. Iceland was settled by Norwegians, Danes, and to a [illegible] pectancy is 71.3 years for males and 77.6 for females. Denmark's is 70.3 years and 76.3 years, respectively While both are high, they don't compare with Iceland's 73 and 79.2 years. Ireland's is just 68.5 years for men and 72.8 years for women.

It certainly isn't Iceland's climate, which produces some of the rottenest weather in the world. Rain and sleet can be expected every day of the year. The average amount of sunshine in January totals 21 hours yes, hours. The average temperature for the month of July is 54.4 degrees.

But the reason for Iceland's wonderful longevity is obvious — as obvious of the difference between night and day, or if you will, the difference between the crystalline sky over Reykjavik and the mucky air over Gary, Ind.

Iceland has no pollution. In our terms, absolutely none. Its industry is clean. Its electricity comes from hydro-electric turbines, not foul coal-burning or oil-burning plants. Iceland heats its cities with underground steam. It dumps nothing into its rivers. It has even made the deposit of doggie poo on the streets of Reykjavik a capital crime for dogs.

Those millions of American idiots out pounding the park paths every morning are fooling themselves. They're not prolonging their lives an hour; indeed, they're probably decreasing them by breathing in all that extra poison. America has so fouled itself that the only way running can be a key to long life is if you keep on running till you're out of the country.

SETTLERS IN MIKLEY (HECLA ISLAND) 1878

Compiled by Nelson Gerrard

(Concluded in this issue)

38. Johannes Björnsson (Bray) — Sandar: from Keflavik on Snaefellsnes, born there in 1852, the son of Björn Jonsson and Anna Gudmundsdottir. Johannes emigrated from Os on Skogarströnd in 1876 along with many others from the neighbouring districts. That same year, he settled in Mikley, among the earliest settlers. On Jan. 4, 1878, Johannes married Herdis Jonsdottir, a young widow from Thorsteinsstadir in Dalasysla, born in 1845. Her parents were Jon Magnusson and Björg Hallsdottir. Herdis's first husband was Gunnlaugur Arason. They had five children of which two lived. A daughter, Rosbjörg, came to Canada with Herdis. Herdis spent the first winter in the home of Jon Sigurdsson and Gudbjörg Gudbrandsdottir (nr. 41). Herdis and Johannes had one child while living in Mikley, Anna, born Feb. 19, 1878, died young. After two years in Mikley, Johannes and Herdis moved to Sand River on the east shore of the lake where they lived for a little more than a year. They then moved to Winnipeg where both died, Johannes in March 1903 and Herdis in Jan. 1934. Johannes took the surname Bray after coming to Canada. Their children were six in number. Three daughters reached maturity: Arora Sigurbjörg, married M. Wood; Anna, married W. J. Crooks; and Kristin Normandia, married G. M. Banke, all in Winnipeg.
(L 9. April, 1903; Alm 1935, 80-7; Dalm III, 340-1; et al.)

39. Arni Egilsson — Bjarnastadir: from Bakkasel in Eyjafjördur, born at Gil in Öxnadalur in 1848. Arni's mother was Helga Einarsdottir. His father is registered as Gisli Jonsson but he was considered the son of Egill Tomasson at Bakkasel, grandfather of Sigtryggur Jonassson and Baldvin L. Baldvinsson, both of whom became MLAs in Manitoba. Arni emigrated in 1876 with his wife, Sigridur Björnsdottir (from Spana in Skagafjördur) and one son, Björn. Their daughter, Helga, born Nov. 12, 1877, was one of the first Icelandic children born on the island. A son, Arni, was born on Jan. 3, 1880. After some years on the east shore of the island, Arni and Sigridur moved to land on the west shore which they named Leiruvik. Around 1900 the family fled the high water, living at Icelandic River for a short time before settling in the Lundar area. From there some of the family moved to The Pas. Arni died at Otto P.O. in Sept. 1920 at the home of his daughter, Helga, who married Asgr. Halldorsson at Otto, Man. Of twelve children, seven, including Helga, were living in 1920; Björn, the Pas; Herdis, married H. Derushie, Norfolk, Va.; Egilsina, married F. P. Truax, Scoby, Mont.; Rosbjörg, married E. H. Stevenson, The Pas; Sigridur and Rosa, Noonan, N.D. (1920).
(H 15. Sept. 1920; et al.)

40. Sigurdur Erlendsson — Skogar: from Storulaugar in Thingeyjarsysla, born in 1831 at Höskuldsstadir, the son of Erlendur Eyjolfsson and Ragnhildur Jonsdottir. Sigurdur emigrated in 1876 from Klambrar in Thingeyjarsysla with his wife, Gudrun Eiriksdottir and five children: Jakobina, Stefan, Johannes, Kristjana and Sigfus. Sigurdur and Gudrun settled in Mikley that fall, spending the first winter in a hovel near the mill. In April, 1877, Sigurdur took land which he called Skogar, about a mile north of the sawmill, and built a log cabin with the help of his eldest son, Stefan. Here Sigurdur and Gudrun made their home with four of

their children. Jakobina worked near Winnipeg the first winter, joining the family later. Sigurdur lived at Skogar for many years. He died at the home of his daughter, Kristjana, (who married Bergthor Thordarson in Gimli) in March 1919. Of seven children, six reached maturity: Sigridur; Jakobina, married Johannes Helgason (nr. 47); Sigrun, Wpg.; Stefan, merchant at Hnausa; Johannes, merchant at Gimli; and Kristjana. Sigurdur's son with Kristjana Einarsdottir was Sigfus, Lundar. Gudrun's daughter was Ragnheidur Davidsdottir.
(Alm 1919, 82-90; et al.)

41. Gudbjörg Gudbrandsdottir — Jonsnes: from Holmlatur on Skogarströnd, Snaefellsnessysla, born in 1834, the daughter of Gudbrandur Magnusson and Kristin Gudmundsdottir. Gudbjörg emigrated from Ytra-Leiti in 1876 with her third husband, Jon Sigurdsson from Oddastadir in Hnappadalssysla, and five children: Stefan Teitsson, Kristin Teitsdottir, Jon Gudnason, Helgi Armann Helgason and Teitur Gudjon Jonsson. They spent the first winter in Mikley in company with Kristin Jonsson (nr. 33). Two of their children died from the smallpox, that winter. The following spring they settled at Jonsnes. In April 1878, Jon drowned while fishing on the ice. A son, Jon Teitur, was born later that same year on Oct. 7, 1878. After six years in Mikley, Gudbjörg and her children moved to Winnipeg. Of Gudbjörg's nine children, only two survived her when she died in Dec. 1925. From her first marriage to Teitur Stefansson, there were two children: Stefan, lived in Winnipeg; and Kristin, married Bardur Sigurdsson, Winnipeg. Gudbjörg's second husband was Helgi Helgason. Jon and Gudbjörg had five children, two died in Iceland and two in Mikley. The youngest, Jon Teitur (Tait) lived in Winnipeg.
(ThJ II, 132-3; H 16. Dec. 1925; H 18. Feb. 1909; et al.)

42. Johann Eliasson Straumfjörd — Höfn: from Straumfjardartunga on Snaefellsnes, born in 1840, the son of Elias Sigurdsson and Halldora Björnsdottir. Johann first came to Canada alone in 1874, returning to Iceland after spending a year in the eastern provinces. In 1876 he brought his wife, Kristbjörg Jonsdottir and three sons: Jon Elias, Johann and Kristjan. The family went to Mikley that fall, and settled at Barkarstadir, a little north of Bordeyri. In the spring of 1877 Johann moved farther north, settling at Höfn on Gull Harbour. During the winter of 1878 their home at Höfn burned to the ground, almost trapping the family inside. Johann moved farther north again, this time to land which he called Grund. After three years in Mikley Johann moved his family to Engey (Goose Island) in 1879. In 1880 high water forced them to flee Engey and the next year or so was spent near Gimli. When the water level went down, the family returned to Engey, living there until 1902 when flooding again forced Johann to move. From that time until his death in 1914, Johann and Kristbjörg made their home in the Lundar area. Johann was well known for his skills as a doctor. Two children were born in Mikley: Ragnheidur on Feb. 5, 1878, and Asgrimur on Oct. 5, 1880 and possibly Astridur. Jon farmed at Lundar; Johann lived at Blaine, Wa.; Kristjan lived in B.C.; Astridur married Ingimundur Sigurdsson, Lundar; and Ragnheidur married Agust Magnusson, Lundar.
(ThJ II 99-104; et al.)

43. Einar Gudmundsson — Fagratun: from Fagridalur in Holsfjöll, Thingleyjarsysla, born 1834, the son of Gudmundur Gudmundsson at Halland on Svalbardsströnd and Sigurlaug Jonsdottir. Einar and Rannveing Sveinbjörnsdottir emigrated from Fagridalur in 1876. Einar was separated from his first wife and Rannveig was a widow with two children from her marriage to Brynjolfur Arnason, Jonas and Brynjolfina. Einar and Rannveig's children born in Iceland were Karl, Albina and Tryggvi. The family settled just south of Gimli at Engimyri. There, Albina and Tryggvi died of the smallpox. Einar and Rannveig lived at Engimyri for nearly two years, moving to Mikley in early June 1878. A daughter was born during the move, on June 7, 1878, and named Albina after her sister. A son, Jon Tryggvi was born on Dec. 20, 1880 in Mikley. Einar and Rannveig lived at Fagratun on the northwest tip of the island until the spring of 1882 when they moved to Winnipeg. They were married at Fagratun on Feb. 20, 1881 by Halldor Briem. Of Einar and Rannveig's five children, three lived to maturity: Karl Goodman, Winnipeg, married Fridrika Jonsdottir; Albina, married Thomas Dodds, Winnipeg; and Jon Tryggvi Goodman, Winnipeg married Olöf, a daughter of Olafur from Espiholl. Rannveig's children: Jonas Brynjolfsson , married Gudridur, a daughter of Thordur Magnusson (nr. 1) lived at Winnipegosis; Brynjolfina, Mrs. Cooney, Winnipeg.
(ThJ III, 51-2; Alm 1930, 85-6; et al.)

44. Gisli Magnusson — Kirkjubol/Gislakakki: from the Borgarfjördur area, Western Iceland, born c 1854. Gisli came to Canada in 1876 with the large group that left Myrasysla and Dalasyla that year. He was then 22 years old. He is listed at Kirkjubol, the home of Halldor Thorgilsson but apparently had taken land which he named Gislabakki by the end of 1878. At that time, he was single. Nothing more can be determined about him.

45. Kristjon Finnson — Melstadur: from Keflavik on Snaefellsnes, born at Klettsbud in 1853, the son of Finnur Jonsson and Kristin Tomasdottir. Kristjon emigrated from Iceland in 1876 with the family of Halldor Reykjalin (nr. 32) and settled in Mikley that fall, living at Reykjanes with Halldor. On Jan. 4, 1878 Kristjon married Halldor's eldest daughter, Sigridur, born in 1858. They were married at Egilsstadir along with two other couples (nr. 23 and nr. 38). Two children were born in Mikley, Sigridur, born at Reykjanes on March 11, 1878, and Sigurdur, born Jan. 7, 1880. Kristjon's first wife died c 1882 and the children were taken to their grandfather, Halldor Reykjalin in North Dakota where they stayed until Kristjon remarried in 1885 to Thorunn Björg Eiriksdottir. The family then settled at Tjörnes near Vogur, living there until 1893. From Mikley Kristjon moved to Icelandic River where he operated a sawmill and store. After the death of his second wife in 1911, the family moved to the Vidur district. Kristjon died at Arborg in July 1924. His eldest daughter, Sigridur, married Gunnlaugur Martin, Hnausa; Sigurdur Finnson farmed at Vidur. The children from Kristjon's second marriage were: Ingunn, married Asg. Fjelsted, Arborg; Kristin, married Jon Baldvinsson, Hnausa; Sigurros, married Helgi Helgason, Hnausa; Kristjon, farmed at Vidur; Fridjon, Hnausa; Wilfred, Hnausa; Sigridur, married Arni G. Anderson, Arborg; and Gudrun, Gimli.
(ThJ II, 113-4; et al.)

46. Gudmundur Finnsson — Kirkjubol: from Klettsbud in Keflavik, brother of Kristjon Finnsson (nr. 45). Gudmundur was born in 1853 and emigrated in 1876 at age 23, settling first in Mikley. In 1878 he was single, staying with Halldor Thorgilsson at Kirkjubol (nr. 16). He worked at the sawmill in Mikley while it was running in 1878 and then became engineer for the mill at Icelandic River, owned by Sigtryggur Jonasson and Fridjon Fridriksson. Around 1885, Gudmundur took land north of Riverton but worked mostly on the lake. From 1891 to 1908, he worked for the mill at Selkirk and after that at the Selkirk Hospital. He died in May 1922. Gudmundur's wife (1883) was Ingibjörg Ofeigsdottir from Klaustursel in Mulasysla. They had seven children: Kristinn, lived in Vancouver;

Felix, Selkirk; Gustave; Fanny, married S. H. Wilson, Calif.; Gustave Adolph, B.C.; Finnur Ofeigur, Calif; and Gudmundur Wilfred, Wpg.
(VI, IV 53-4, et al.)

47. Johannes Helgason (Bergen) — Skogar; from Jörfi in Hnappadalssysla, Western Iceland, born there in 1857, the son of Rev. Helgi Sigurdsson and Johanna Gudmundsdottir. Johannes came to America in 1876, at age 19, and spent the first winter in St. Paul, Minn. In 1878, Johannes was staying at Skogar with Sigurdur Erlendsson and shortly thereafter he married Jakobina, Sigurdur's daughter. Their first child, Helgi, was born on Feb. 5, 1880 in Mikley and christened at Skogar. Johannes spent the next years in Winnipeg, Selkirk and Mikley working as a captain on the lake and other jobs. In 1893 he moved to Seattle, Wa., working as far afield as in the Klondyke. In 1903, in Seattle, he married his second wife, Elinborg Gudlaugsdottir Johnson from Myrasysla. Elinborg died in Sept. 1915 in Seattle. Johannes married a third time, to an American woman. Johannes died in Los Angeles in Jan. 1931. He took the surname Bergen shortly after coming to Canada. The children from his first marriage were: Sigurdur Helgi, Wpg.; Joseph Andres; and Johanna Lara (born at Bordeyri in 1886), married Victor Eyjolfsson, Riverton. Johannes and Elinborg's children: Ingibjörg Ethel; Johannes Franklin; Helga Gould, married Thorsteinn Magnusson, B.C.; and Hafsteinn Lincoln Bergen, Riverton.

(H 2. Sept. 1915; L 5. Feb. 1953; H 4. Feb. 1931; et al.)

48. Thorvaldur Thorarinsson — Jonsnes: from Krossholt in Hnappadalssysla, born in 1855 at Hagi, the son of Thorarinn Thovaldsson and Kristin Jonsdottir. Thorvaldur emigrated as a young man in 1876 and spent the first year in Winnipeg. He also worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway for six months before going to New Iceland. In 1878 he was staying at Jonsnes, possibly as a helper to Gudbjörg Gudbrandsdottir who was recently widowed. Gudbjörg's husband was from the same district as Thorvaldur. Thorvaldur settled at Icelandic River in 1880 and homesteaded Flugumyri where he was joined by his parents, a younger brother and two sisters in 1881. During the floods just after 1900, Thorvaldur book another homestead, Holar, northwest of Flugumyri after seven years. In 1912 he bought Skriduland, making his home there until his death in 1929. Thorvaldur was married twice. His first wife was Sesselja Eyjolfsdottir from Unaland, Icelandic River. One daughter, Steinunn, lived to maturity. In 1893 he married Helga Tomasdottir from Engimyri, Icelandic River. They had eleven children of which ten reached maturity: Sigtryggur; Thorarinn; Albert; Stefan; Jonas; Tomas and Kristjan; all of Riverton, Larus, Calgary; Vilhelmina, married Ebenezer Palsson, Riverton; and Kristin, married Stefan Olafson, Riverton.
(ThJ I, 39-40; et al.)

AGRICULTURAL SURVEY

NAMES OF SETTLERS	NAMES OF FARMS	persons in * one	house: length	house: width	house: height	cellar: length	cellar: width	cellar: depth	well: depth	land: cleared acres	land: cultivated acres	fence: fathoms	ditches: fathoms	hay: 40 kg. units	roads: length	roads: width	potatoes: sown	potatoes: yield (bushels)	wheat: sown	wheat: yield (bushels)	oats: sown	oats: yield (bushels)	barley: sown	barley: yield (bushels)	flat beans: sown	flat beans: yield (bushels)	round beans: sown	round beans: yield (bushels)	corn: sown	corn: yield (bushels)	root crops: yield	livestock: cows	livestock: oxen & bulls	livestock: calves	livestock: chickens	boats: number	boats: capacity	nets: fathoms	fish lines: hooks	whitefish: number	other fish: number
38. Johannes Björnsson	Sandar	3	16	14	10	10	9	4	7	3	2	240	10	50	—	—	8	60	½		⅛	¼	—	—		⅛		--		--	11	1	1	—	—	2	20	80	20	550	1400
39. Arni Egilsson	Bjarnastadir	4	20	13	8	14	8	5	--	3½	2	240	--	75			7	100	1	20		-		-							10	1	1	—	3	1	7	60	16	300	300
40. Sigurdur Erlendsson	Skogar	7	24	15	10	14	10	6	--	4	4	290	20	130	--	--	8	11	1	1		⅛		⅛		¼					20	2	—	1	2	1	10	60	—	1000	1200
41. Gudbjörg Gudbrandsdottir	Jonsnes	6	18	14	10	12	8	4	—	5	4	350		150	-	-	8	100	1			½		⅛		1					5	2	—	1	2	1	6	100	20	500	1600
42. J. E. Straumfjörd	Höfn	7	17	12	9	14	8	6	8	3½	2	284	—	100	—	—	7	90													4	2	—	1	2	1	12	100	40	270	1500
43. Einar Gudmundsson	Fagratun	8						—	—	1	1	---	—4	200	---		8	55													—	3	1	2	5			60		200	220
lausamenn																																								
44 Gisli Magnusson	Kirkjubol (Gislabakki)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1½	--	—	-	—	—		3	54																							
45. Kristjon Finnsson	Melstadur	3	—			—	—	—	--	—		--	--	—			3	51														3	1	2		—	—	40	20	100	600
46. Gudmundur Finnsson	Kirkjubol	1		—	—	—	—	—	--		--	—		—	—	—	3	54																			30	—	30	100
47. Johannes Helgason	Skogar	1			—	—	—	—		1	1	150	—	—	—	—	3	25	-																		30	—	50	100
48. Thorvaldur Thorar(insson)	Jonsnes	1	-	—		—	—	—	—	½	½	80	---	—	—	—	3	24																			20	—	20	80
48 settlers	TOTALS	204	33			26			9	111	76	7058	339	3785	1	1	268	3462	8 ½	155	1 ½		1	10		8				7½	331	53	7	35	39	30	261	2536	962	20	48

THE GREAT DOG RACE

By G. Bertha Johnson

A STORY OF THE CANADIAN NORTH

The Great Dog Race is typically Northern Manitoba as the races were run in the earlier days of the late twenties and the forties. In the forties it was a marathon of endurance from The Pas to Flin Flon. At that time dogs were still used extensively. Now they have been replaced by snowmobiles, bombardiers, and even trucks.

The sun had disappeared behind the dwarfed evergreens fringing Reindeer Lake when Rod Duncan lifted the last net. Untangling gills from wet meshes, he flipped the fish onto the ice. Behind him, Napoleon Perron dressed them with one dexterous slash of his dressing-knife, and gathered them into the boxes on the sled.

Casting down his last fish, Rod turned his attention to the dogs. In response, the six wolfish huskies, sensing approaching release, growled joyfully.

"Hi, mush!" Rod shouted, jumping on the sled and cracking his rawhide dangerously near their bristling backs.

"We had a good catch today," he muttered, glancing at th heaped fish-boxes. "But I've taken my last fish this season. At sunup tomorrow, I'll head south for the races at Gateway."

At camp, Rod unharnessed the dogs. He tossed chunks of frozen caribou meat to appease their ravenous appetites, running his mittened hand firmly and appraisingly along their legs and spine.

"Not fat. Solid — bone, and muscle, and rugged endurance," he boasted to Big Gus, his boss.

"Yep," Gus agreed. "Good dogs, them."

"They've got speed and endurance," Rod continued. "I never seen a leader like that there Whiskey. I'm leavin', Gus. I'm going to try 'em against the best in the North."

"I hate to lose a good man, Rod, but I wish you luck," Gus said. "They've got quite a lineup. This morning, I heard on the radio, there's even a woman musher — Rose-Anne McLeod, the daughter of Louis McLeod, trader from The Swamps."

Rod Duncan boasted the mixed heritage of the Metis. In his veins flowed the blood of Scot, and Cree, and French voyageur. For generations his ancestors followed the fur trade. And true to the restless spirit of his forebears, Rod Duncan, too, was a rover.

Employed briefly at Uranium City, Rod was left unmoved by the enthusiasms of miners. With his earnings, he bought five huskies, and headed out. At Bull Moose Point, he purchased a white, unmanageable pup from a brawny Icelandic fisherman.

"He'll make a good sleighdog," old Jon prophesied. "He's of a matchless breed — my husky bitch mated with a wild timberwolf, I'd say, from his fiery spirit. I call him Whiskey. Seems to fit a creature of his temperament."

With his new team and the pup, Rod crossed the "Land of little sticks" to Wollaston Lake, where he worked for a month before continuing south to Reindeer. At the end of the fishing season there, with his huskies, he followed the tractor trails over lakes and portages to Steel. He passed through Gateway, enroute to The Swamps for the spring trapping. There, when trappers lounged around the pot-bellied stove in Louis McLeod's trading post, he heard of the races on the Saskatchewan.

"Think I'll try next time," Rod announced.

A murmur of disbelief ended in open derision.

"You wouldn't get far with your starved-lookin' curs," someone scoffed.

"Yeh. They ain't fat — but they've come a long trail. Next year I'll train Whiskey to lead," Rod argued.

"Them dogs from Cumberland and Grand Rapids," a weathered old fellow interposed. "You oughta see 'em. Shiny, strong, fast as muledeer."

The roar of a plane channelled their interests elsewhere, and the trading post emptied itself of every man, woman, and child, who rushed to the dock to see it land.

"Last supply plane till after break-up," the old-timer offered, limping beside Rod. "Sure hope she's got tobacca. With all them swamp trappers a-comin', McLeod's post hasn't had none of my brand for weeks. Hard on a fella, that is."

"Yeh," Rod said, his attention drifting from the garrulous old man to the young woman alighting, and reaching her arms up for a small crippled child.

"I couldn't leave him," she explained to no one in particular as she put him into the wheelchair the pilot produced from the freight compartment.

"That's Rose-Anne, old Louis' daughter," the old-timer informed. "Danged purty girl. Now if I was a mite younger, I wouldn't let her go back," he added, chuckling.

Rod's pulse quickened at the sight of her, tall like a young birch, and as lithe. Her raven hair, soft and curly, crowned an olive brow; her eyes resembled limpid pools on a hot summer's day; and her voice held the gentle music of a woodland stream.

Later, when trappers renewed their gossip of the races, Rod was still aware of the girl's charm as she worked behind the counter.

"Sure was glad I took me a trip outside to Gateway for a spell," the old-timer was saying. "That Laviere come first. Such dogs!"

"I have dogs," Rod said, knowing full well the girl's eyes surveyed him. "Next winter, I'll beat Laviere and all of 'em."

The trading post rocked with the trappers' laughter.

"I dont' think nobody has dogs to beat Laviere," the old-timer said.

"Rose-Anne paused in her sugar-weighing.

"Joe Fidler, of Spruce Rapids, has white Alaskans. Joe's in the San, but next winter I'll drive those huskies. So, Roderick Duncan, to win you will have to outstrip both Laviere and me."

Rod lingered at The Swamps till break-up, waiting for open water and passage on the river-boat.

Rose-Anne and little Barney were at the river watching a flock of Canada geese honk northward, the day Rod brought in his full quota of muskrats. He laid aside his pack-sack of pelts, and settled comfortably on a fallen birch.

"Ice is all out," he said. "Planes'll be comin' in any day now."

"The Norseman is coming today to pick up Barney and me."

Rod followed her gaze to the high-flying geese.

"They're off to the nesting grounds. Let's follow 'em North, Rose-Anne," he entreated earnestly. "There's a priest at Caribou Point."

"No-o-o, I can't," the girl hesitated, but an overwhelming compulsion induced her to join Rod on the log.

"This Joe Fidler, with his Alaskans —" Rod choked hotly.

"I must help our people," she whispered, her words drowned by the drone of the approaching plane.

Next day the river-boat came. Rod resumed his nomadic life — idling, fall fishing, and finally winter operations on Reindeer with Big Gus, whom he forsook for the race.

At Gateway, Louis McLeod, from The Swamps, was on hand to greet Rod.

"Ah, here comes my friend from Reindeer," he exclaimed. "How'd you get here, so far?"

"My huskies," Rod grinned.

"Three, four hundred miles?" Laviere interposed. "And you'll race after that?"

"You seen the dogs?" Louis asked. "Siwop's and Allan's; Eskimo Kong's, and Joe Fidler's Alaskans?"

"With a girl musher," Laviere scoffed. "But you think you can beat my winners?"

"Maybe," Rod said.

"Come. Tomorrow is the race. Tonight we'll dance in the streets."

Rod followed Laviere and the trader out where the music issued from loudspeakers. The swirling crowd was light-footed and gay. His moccasined feet did a double shuffle, the fringes of his mukluks adding gay color to the dance.

He followed Laviere as he gaily edged through the throng. Then his searching dark eyes saw the girl whirling into the circle of light with a stranger in beaded parka and Daniel Boone cap. Rod did not cut in. He continued his solitary dance till his jig became the centre of interest, and the crowd fell back in an admiring circle.

He manoeuvred his way to the girl.

"Hello," he said. "Rose-Anne, you remember me?"

Morning came to Gateway, spilling bright sunshine on the old stern-wheeler, rotting on the Saskatchewan. Past this relic, Rod mushed his yapping huskies to the west side of the bridge, where already a dozen teams barked, and tugged at their traces. They spread the full width of the river, on whose banks the breathless spectators waited.

A shot pierced the tumult. Whips cracked; huskies growled; and mushers shouted in English, French, Eskimo, and Cree.

They were off, and the crowd went wild.

"Hi, Whiskey! Mush! Mush!" Rod shouted, cracking his rawhide.

Mile after gruelling mile, the race continued. Up the river; across rough portages; on to the Big Lake, stretching a vast white

expanse. On and on, till, beyond a seemingly endless wilderness, the belching smokestacks of the mine at Steel rose out of the dusk.

As he approached, Rod saw the houses, clinging haphazardly to the rocks; and he became aware of the spectators lining the lakeshore, and scrambling over the boulders for a better view.

Rod cracked his whip.

"Come on there!" he urged, his words sharp as the whiplash.

In a last spurt of energy, Whiskey responded, baring his fangs in a snarl of hate as his team overtook Siwop's ahead. But already the crowds were cheering the winners of the first lap: Laviere, Allan, and the girl.

They made an early start next morning. Rod counted the six teams, ghostly in the gray dawn. With the race but halfrun the others had given up, stiff, exhausted, and beaten.

Already favored or handicapped in the order of last night's arrival, they were away, Laviere and Allan together, Rose-Anne following close, her featherweight unfelt by Joe Fidler's snarling Alaskans. In fourth place, Rod was already minutes behind.

"Come on, Whiskey!"

The white husky was off like a shot, leading his team well ahead of Siwop, and Kongo the Eskimo, whose fan-hitch spread his malemutes like a ptarmigan's tail over the snow. Between them and Gateway lay more than a hundred miles of drifted wilderness.

Urging his huskies to the limit, Rod determined to keep the leading teams in sight. No necessity to overtake them; better they should drain their energies breaking trail, he reflected, running lightly behind his team.

Hour after hour, in a marathon of endurance, they kept their pace over lakes, and portages, and muskeg. Shadows were lengthening eastward when the course curved to the final portage.

This portage, Rod recalled, had a sheer ascent in a series of bushtrails, narrow and difficult. It had scarcely enough clearance for a single dogteam to snake its way over it, and the far end of it dropped sharply to the river. It was a strategic quarter-mile that might well decide the outcome of the race.

Rod snatched his snowshoes from the sled, twisting his feet into them.

"Gee! Whiskey! Gee!" he prodded, his whip circling with a wicked crack that left the huskies untouched.

Leaving the trail, he cut across, breaking a new one with his snow shoes as he plunged ahead of the dogs. He passed Rose-Anne while the portage was still a long way off, then the others, one by one, till he and Laviere were abreast in the lead.

"Mush! Mush!" yelled Laviere.

"Astum, Whiskey! Astum!" Rod urged in Cree.

Three hundred yards; two hundred. But Rod could not pass the French-Canadian. Laviere had reached the portage, his power-

ful animals climbing easily up the hazardous incline.

Rod followed, removing his snowshoes on the double.

He reached the top, and his dogs in a series of wild spurts snaked their way past their rivals, their tongues hanging from gaping chops in their fierce efforts. On the down-grade to the river, Rip, his wheel-dog, tripped, and he made his way out of the portage with difficulty, dragging his left hind leg.

Rod pulled aside to unhitch.

The other teams poured off the portage, spreading over the river-ice: Laviere, Rose-Anne, Bill Siwop, the white trader, and Kongo, the Eskimo, whose fan-hitch had tangled on trees and bushes; yet once back on the ice he gained speed, Rod observed angrily as he tucked Rip into the cariole and was after them like a demon.

He lashed the air with his flourishing whip, shouting in English; in Cree.

"Mush, there! Meyas Kowao! (Pass him) Whiskey!"

Whiskey caught the urgency of the moment. It was like the pursuit of caribou on Reindeer Lake. Wildly, he pawed the snow, firecely, the whole team took up his pace, till the bridge was in sight, where the tumult of spectators waited.

Past Kongo, and Bill Siwop whom Jim Allan had outrun. Past Allan in a din of barking and a swirl of snow; and now there were but two ahead, their dogs footsore, lagging, and visibly winded. With but three hundred yards to the finishing line, despite Whiskey's speed, Laviere and the girl were still in the lead.

But Laviere's dogs were spent. The girl passed him; Rod passed him, and a hush of expectancy gripped the spectators.

Abreast of Rose-Anne's dogs, Whiskey pawed furiously till he edged his bristling white body ahead of her leader to cross the line.

Rod dropped on his knees beside the cariole to examine Rip's injuries. Only vaguely was he aware of the burst of applause, of the clicking cameras, and the announcer shouting excitedly into the microphone. But he was fully aware of the girl at his side.

"I didn't really think I could beat you, Rod," Rose-Anne confessed. "But I have all I wanted — enough money to pay the city specialist for little Barney, and he will walk again."

"And then —?" Rod asked.

"Who knows? — I'll follow the flight of the wild geese when they honk their way North in the spring."

OLD MAN OF THE SEA

by Kristiana Magnusson

old man of the sea,
nudging up to 80,
stubbornly strains at
entrails of corks and leads and twine
bound up in an
infinity of nets
mining the treasures of the deep.

for this free spirit
independence
life and work
blend into the timeless
rhythm of the tides
lapping gently at
the sands of time.

SUMMERS IN THE LAND-ISLES

by Hallfridur G. Schneider

This article shared first prize in the Islengingadagurinn Reminiscences Contest, 1979.

My parents moved their family from the Land Isles to Reykjavik when I was five, but within two weeks I went back, sitting up front in a truck as far as the road went. Where the road ended, Björn was waiting with two horses and we rode for miles across sandy rivers and down the plain, grassy banks before reaching Fagurholl. There his daughter (who'd been my mother's maid and who had invited me to her farm), her mother Kristin, her two sisters and a brother, and old Sigga all greeted me warmly. From then on I felt at home and I was to spend eight delightful summers there. I could hardly wait for school to end in the spring so that I could go there, and I cried when I had to leave in the fall.

The farm was primitive and everyone, including myself, worked very hard. I mainly helped Kristin, who was kind and gracious and looked like the Virgin Mary. Every morning at 8 A.M., an hour after the adults had gotten up, she brought to me in bed a cup of coffee and milk mixture and when she handed me the sugar cube, she said, "God give you a good day. Now it's time to fetch the cows." While drinking the coffee I looked around this main room, where four beds, two on each side, were attached to the walls. I slept with Sigga, the son in the bed behind us, Kristin and Björn opposite us and two daughters behind them; one daughter slept in the small parlor bed.

I dressed, ran through the kitchen and to the lean-to, where the water barrel, the food barrels, the stack of clipfish, the anvil, the grindstone, and the joiner's bench stood. There I took a whip from a nail, called my friend Kopi and off we ran through the lane, over the marsh, jumping from mound to mound to the fenced-in area where the cows spent the summer nights. Standing by the gate, they were anxious to be milked and as soon as I opened it, Laufa, the oldest, led the other nine down the trail to home. These were my friends and I talked to them in between telling Kopi not to frighten the duck, the snipe nor the plover off their nests, but he had to bark and chase at least one of them.

When the weather was good, Kristin and her daughter milked the cows in the barnyard. They sat down on old horse skulls, centered the hobble (made of braided horse hair, with a loop on one end and a bone from a sheep leg on the other) on the cow's right hind leg, twisted it a few times, then closed it around the left leg by pushing the leg through the loop. They rubbed the teats with udder cream and started milking into the wooden buckets. While they milked I played with Kopi, the cat, the orphaned lamb, or the harnessed calf or I made mud pies, looked for chicken eggs in the mangers of the lamb house, talked to the sitting hen, or went to the cow barn and pumped water from the deep well into the barrel in the lean-to.

After the milking, Kopi and I drove the cows out to the boggy grounds where they grazed until we fetched them for the evening milking. Taking a short cut home, I was careful not to fall into a deep pit filled with brown bugs, which I had been told would eat my liver if I fell in. I wasn't afraid of many things except ghosts and darkness. That's why I always ran through the dark and narrow corridors that led from the main house to different out buildings. I didn't want the river king, who lived in deep pools of the river, to get me either, and I didn't want to fall into the dunghill.

I could hear the daughter sing over the hum of the separator when I neared the house, where Kristin waited with a delicious

breakfast of skyr (like yogurt), warm milk, and brown bread with meat- or blood-pudding. After eating came my favorite chore: feeding all the home animals. Kopi and the cat got milk in their bowls; the lamb, milk from a nippled bottle; the calf, a bucketful of curds and whey; and the chicken, a bowlful of scraps with a bit of corn or rice added. Next I washed the separator, the most complicated thing on this farm, where there was no electricity, no telephone and no machinery of any kind. I couldn't understand how it could let the skim milk come out of one "arm" and cream out of the other. While I was young, Kristin took it apart and put it together and I carefully washed all the parts in the steaming hot water in the big basin she had brought to the separator table. When we were done there, she carried the basin to the kitchen table, where I did the dishes for the day. Because each person had his own bowl, mug, knife and spoon, which he used all the time, dishes were washed but once a day.

My chores differed in relation to what the adults were doing. If they hayed near the farm they came home for meals; if they hayed in the outfields I brought them coffee in bottles in woolen socks tied together at the ends, which I balanced over my shoulders. If they hayed in the meadows further away, Kristin put their main meal in a bucket, which she put into a burlap sack. She balanced this sack against another, containing a sod clod, over my saddle on Vinur, the slowest of the horses, and away I rode. When the people hayed in the swamps I had to wash their stockings every day in the river and hang them in the shed.

Special occasions were endless, such as when after heavy storms I went with Björn or Sigga to see if something valuable had drifted on shore (I was thrilled over my snail and shell collection, but dreaded coming upon a dead body or a boot with a leg in it, which had been found); when I went with Sigga to earmark new-born lambs or colts; when all the sheep were rounded up, folded and fleeced in the spring (the fall round-up was sad because then many sheep were to be sold or shot, but it meant delicious food); when the wool was washed over the open fireplace and dried on the hummocks; when I helped with the haying and heard the adults tell stories and recite poetry; when it poured and stormed and everyone stayed inside talking; when the potatoes were harvested; when oil lamps were lit in the fall; when we rode to church every other Sunday (the pastor served two parishes), where I watched instead of listened and looked forward to the dancing afterwards; and when everyone except Kristin rode far away to country fairs.

I thought I'd stay in Fagurholl forever once I'd finished my compulsory schooling. But at fourteen I changed my mind. The reasons were that Kristin and Björn had adopted a beautiful little girl, one of many children of poor parents, whom everyone loved except me; that Kopi, my beloved friend had died; and that I no longer wanted to undress in front of the son, who I thought had started looking at me.

THE BAY
by Emilia Palmason Olson

The Bay is forever changing
From gray shroud to beauteous blue;
Colors which vie with the rainbow.
Yes old, but to me ever new.

The ships which sail out in the evening,
Take on the light of the sun.
Later they're specks on the horizon,
Just when their journey's begun.

The lonely cry of the seagull,
The rhythmic beat of the wave,
The warning moan of the fog horn,
Are the sounds which make me feel grave.

But oh! the beauty in springtime,
Is a wonderful sight to see,
It has rhythm in the springtime
That is sweet music to me.

THORDUR BREIDFJORD, A CHARACTER SKETCH OF THE MAN AND HIS LOVE

by Jon Willard (Bill) Freeman and LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

This article originated from three sources. The editor, LaDonna Backmeyer, who resides in Rock Island, Illinois, transcribed a portion of one of the letters she has received from Bill Freeman, who resides in Morris, Minnesota. She also includes in the article comments of her own regarding her uncle, Thordur. As a result of a three way correspondence, LaDonna with Bill's consent forwarded this human-interest story to the editor. The form of the story is refreshingly unique. It reads much like an interview.

* * *

Thordur Jonsson Breidfjord was born at Saelingsdal, Hvammsveit in Dalasysla, Iceland. He immigrated to the United States at the turn of the century and settled at the Mouse River Settlement in North Dakota. He was close to thirty years old at this time. In the 1940's, he moved to Blaine, Washington, but did not stay there long. He returned to his friends and his relatives, and died at Rugby, North Dakota in 1953. He, too, is buried at Melankton Cemetery near Upham, North Dakota. Thordur was a small man, about 5'5", but he could work with the best of them. Blessed be his memory.

Bill writes in a letter to LaDonna:

"Thordur often talked of his life in Iceland, and, like most of the immigrants, had a deep and abiding love for the old country. In Iceland he had worked for a minister-farmer by the name of Sera Eirikur Kuld. Thordur idolized Sera Eirikur and was forever quoting this and that the man had said and talking of the great things Sera Eirikur had done. Loyalty? We don't know the meaning of the word anymore. Thordur might not have thought much about that word, but loyalty and faithfulness were as much a part of him as his arms and his legs. There was no guile or pretense in the man. He persisted in his courtships, in his own way, no matter how often spurned, because that is the way he felt and he knew no other way."

LaDonna adds in a letter to Axel Vopnfjord:

"Thordur was my great uncle; he was also a man who was in love with Bill Freeman's mother, Sigridur Johnson. Thordur lost this love to another man, Olafur Freeman, then went on to become a friend to the entire family of the woman he had lost. He later fell in love with Bill Freeman's aunt, a sister of the woman he had first loved. This second woman, who taught art at some school in New York, also spurned Uncle Thordur, but Thordur remained faithful to his love, quite possibly until death. Uncle Thordur was quite a man. He was extremely handsome, an excellent horseman, stubborn though gentle, and a very hard worker. I admired this man a great deal, and still do cherish his memory. I have not heard one story about him that was not filled with color. Thordur never did marry, but he did leave a legend behind, the legend of a man who was led by his heart, not his head."

Bill writes further:

"Thordur took a special liking to me, possibly because he thought that with some luck I might have been his son. When I was a child, I usually spent summers with my grandparents. Thordur batched in a small house which was right on the route from Grandfather's farm to Upham, so we often

stopped to visit him while on our way to town. Thordur always had various treats on hand, peppermints, cookies and the like — rare things for us back then. He was generous and hospitable, and very neat about himself and his housekeeping, something which could not be said about most bachelors in those days. It was many years before I was to learn that Thordur had been in love with my mother,then with Mother's younger sister, Anna. Thordur must have been twenty-five or thirty years older than Mother, and the age difference was even greater with Anna. Anna never did marry. She secured her education, then came back to North Dakota often on visits. Thordur persisted. Bless his old heart; never was there any bitterness there. It was not in him to resent the rebuffs.''

LaDonna comments:

''It sounds as though Uncle Thordur lived his life in much the same fashion as he drove his car. My Aunt Thura and her family often talk about Thordur. According to these people, Thordur was not a man that one wanted to ride with too often, not unless one was bent upon suicide. They say that he would aim his Model-T Ford in the direction that he wanted to go, then he would drive — over the yard, through the ditch and across the prairie, always with his destination in mind and his horsehide robe draped over the seat beside him. There were no roads for Uncle Thordur, only that one point far ahead.''

Bill continues:

''Many of the old-timers drove that way, those who drove cars. These people had used horses all of their lives, and, to them, the car was a horse with a motor. My father drove nearly as dangerously as Thordur.

''Thordur was very fond of my father, even though he had lost his first love to him, and Father was fond of Thordur. Thordur often worked for Dad at various things and was very good to us kids. Then too, Dad would often take him along for company if he had business in the country, and Thordur liked that.

''I suppose that Thordur must have moved from his homestead to Upham sometime in the 1920's. He had a small place in Upham, a few acres of pasture, a cow or two and at least two teams of horses. He had good horses and was well known for his excellent horsemanship. Thordur could also work with the best of men, even though he was not a large man. One winter, about 1931 or 1932, Thordur worked for me. We batched and hauled hay for 80 cattle and 200 some odd sheep. Those were hard times and

hard winters. And, although Thordur was in his sixties and I was twenty, I had to hustle to keep up with him. It was a bitter cold season and the work was tedious. We did not often get to town, nor did we often see anyone, and there were times when cabin fever nearly got the best of me. We did have differences that winter, one time over the fact that he did not believe that part of the hemisphere was enjoying summer while we were feezing at 35° below zero, but on the whole we did get along very well. That had to be thanks to his patience and his gentle good humor.''

LaDonna:

''I know about his patience; Uncle Thordur taught me to play whist when I was nine years old. But, I have also heard of times when Thordur did not display such patience.

''At one time Uncle Thordur was visiting at the home of his niece and her husband, Thura and Hadley Olafson. A neighbor, new to the town and new to the country, came to their home for coffee. Uncle Thordur could not place the man's accent and was very disturbed by this knowledge that he did not have. While the others sat at the table and chatted over their coffee, Thordur paced back and forth across the kitchen floor. Every once in a while he would cease his pacing, lean heavily on his cane, and listen closely as the stranger spoke. Still he couldn't place the accent. Finally, not able to withstand the suspense any longer, Thordur leaned toward the man, shook his head and said, 'By gullies. And what kind of a man might you be?' The stranger, taking offence at Thordur's question, rose and left quickly. Poor Thordur. He certainly hadn't meant to offend the man, but he hadn't been able to find the right English words, nor could he wait for the answer to the question which weighed so heavily upon his mind.

''Yes, Uncle Thordur was quite a man; he was loved, admired and enjoyed.''

Bill ends his letter by saying:

''Maybe we are overly sentimental about those old folks. They sure enough were ordinary people, but I think that what captivates those of us who feel as we do is that they had integrity, an honesty, a frankness and that loyalty which I already mentioned — all of these seemingly getting harder to find. I now admire their austerity, which I had formerly mistaken for unnecessary frugality. They didn't want to complicate their lives. There were more important things.''

BOOK REVIEW

by George Hanson

Tomasson, Richard F., **Iceland, the First New Society.** Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1980. 247 p. $10.95.

* * *

One of the agonies of modernization inevitably involves the destruction of the old or, at the best, its adaptation to the new. This is especially true concerning Iceland where cultural traditions going back centuries are being challenged by a new age of technology and increasing contact with the outside world. All this has taken place very rapidly in Iceland — almost in a generation or two.

Richard F. Tomasson, a professor of sociology at the University of New Mexico and who (despite his name!) is not of Icelandic ancestry, has written a book dealing primarily with modern Icelandic society. His work is actually the first one dealing with modern Icelandic society written by a sociologist. Data relating to contemporary social conditions are given, and much of this data is the result of empirical studies of social institutions in Iceland. Considerable attention, for example, is given to illegitimacy in Iceland, the rate of which is extremely high. Tomasson also presents the historical background with statistics going back to the early eighteenth century. Much of his conclusions come from the 1703 Icelandic census, one of the earliest ever taken in any country.

One of the great social problems in Iceland is drinking. Although Icelanders, as Tomasson points out, actually drink less than other people (their per capita consumption of alcohol is the lowest of the five Nordic countries), they get very drunk when they drink which is usually on weekends.

The cultural heritage of the Icelanders which they have for centuries preserved in their long isolated land — "a sort of national park of Nordic culture —" is not and never was the possession of a "cultured class." To the contrary, it has always been the possession of all Icelanders. Chapter 5, titled "Literacy and Cultural Life," deals with the literary heritage and literacy. It is, of course, well known that the Icelanders are one hundred percent literate and that they publish more books per capita than any other country. The number of bookstores in Reykjavik astound the visitor. But what of this literary heritage in a rapidly changing society? Based on the results of a questionnaire which Tomasson distributed among fifty Icelanders in Reykjavik and rural areas as well, he concludes that Icelanders are well acquainted with their writers whom they generally admire. On the other hand, they are less familiar with foreign writers and, quite surprisingly, with the sagas.

Unfortunately, Tomasson's book suffers from a considerable number of errors, as for example, when he states, ". . . there are no women clergy in the country" (p. 110). Actually, a few years ago Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson ordained a woman. Tomasson also states that during the nineteenth century Iceland had only one academic school (the Latin Grammar School), but this is not true. To mention only two others, a theological school was established in Reykjavik in 1847 and a medical college was founded there in 1876. One of the most glaring errors is found on page 119 where Tomasson refers to the **Passiusalmar** (Passion Hymns) of Hallgrimur Pétursson as a prayer book!

In his treatment of the literary heritage, Tomasson makes no mention of the great importance of the **Passiusalmar** and the Bishop Jon Vidalin's **Huspostilla** (Household sermons), both of which had a profound influence on the Icelanders. In

Tomasson's discussion of the Icelandic language, no mention is made of **Gudbrandsbiblia** (the first Bible in Icelandic, published in 1584, and a monumental work in the history of printing in Iceland) and the tremendous amount of books (mainly religious) which Bishop Gudbrandur Thorlaksson published at the Holar press during his episcopate of 56 years.

When Tomasson writes that the Reformation in Iceland came about just as peacefully as the adoption of Christianity in the year 1000 and that ". . . the new faith was formally accepted with hardly a murmur" (p. 179), he is simply unaware of the Icelandic history of this period. Bishop Jon Arason of Holar led a strong resistance against the forces supporting the new faith. Numerous clashes occurred, military forces were sent to Iceland, and the Bishop and his two sons were murdered by the Danish authorities in 1550. The Danish king then seized extensive church holdings and a long period of misrule, culminating in the cruel and devastating Danish trade monopoly, began. Indeed, so extreme were the excesses of the Danes that Marteinn Einarsson (---- — 1576), Lutheran Bishop of Skalholt, resigned his office in 1569 in protest. If the Reformation in Iceland appeared to have come about "peacefully," it was only because the Icelanders were powerless to resist injustice after injustice. (For a better and fuller account of this period, one should read Knut Gjerset's **History of Iceland,** a work, unfortunately, long out-of-print.)

Tomasson's bibiliography, containing works in English and Icelandic, as well as other languages, is extensive. A few important works such as Amy Jensen's **Iceland, Old-New Republic** (which generally is a more accurate work than Tomasson's book) and Jon Jonsson Adils' **Gullöld Islendinga** are omitted.

Iceland, The First New Society is a very valuable study of modern Icelandic society and is recommended to those who know Icelandic history well enough to discern the errors in Tomasson's study. For a better introduction to Icelandic history and society Sigurdur A. Magnusson's **Northern Sphinx, Iceland and the Icelanders from the Settlement to the Present** (Montreal, 1977) and Knut Gjerset's **History of Iceland** (New York, 1924) are recommended.

BOOK REVIEW

by Peter Pauls

Gentle Sinners: a novel by W. D. Valgardson. Published in Canada by Oberon Press, 1980. 213 pp.

* * *

Gentle Sinners, is the story of a boy at a critical stage in life, a little more than a year away from the age of majority, independence and maturity. He runs away from the evils of the city, from his self-righteous, fanatically religious parents, and seeks refuge in the backwoods of Manitoba with his uncle Sigfus who in simple but ritualistic fashion re-christens him "Eric."

It is this new setting that Eric must come to terms with people like Big Tree and Little Tree, money-grubbing enemies of the soul, and with Larry, his **doppelganger,** who materializes out of nowhere at crucial moments, to tempt him with his appeals to the primitive, violent and avaricious instincts. However, it is also in this harsh environment that Eric meets and learns to love people like his uncle Sigfus, Sam Pawles and Melissa, gentle sinners all.

The affair with Melissa is especially beautiful and redeeming. The secret meetings of these youthful lovers are precious moments of escape from the sordid world of their elders. In the end, Eric must leave Melissa and return to the city but the reader is left with the feeling that all this has not been in vain. Eric even promises that he'll be back "in less than a year."

W. D. Valgardson has long been recognized as an excellent writer of short fiction. This "coming of age" story, his first novel, is as masterfully executed as any of his earlier shorter works. In **Gentle Sinners,** he vividly describes his young hero's inner struggle with demonic forces. There are no unqualified victories, but there are some important decisions. Eric's uncle puts it very succinctly at one point: "It's not a matter of whether a man will have gods but which ones he'll worship." Eric ultimately chooses those who can save him.

—Inside Info., University of Winnipeg

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BOOK REVIEW

SETTLEMENT POEMS

by Kristjana Gunnars

This small volume, recently published by Turnstone Press of Winnipeg, brings a new dimension to the story of Icelandic pioneers who left their homeland in the nineteenth century to take up a new life in the settlement on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg.

Ms. Gunnars is a native of Iceland who has studied at the University of Oregon and also at the University of Regina. She has been a teacher both in Iceland and in this country. But it is her research into the history of the Icelandic migration to Canada which has given the impetus for this collection of poems. One gets the impression that she has been most successful in projecting herself into the attitudes and feelings of those migrants.

The experience of tearing up one's roots and re-establishing oneself in a new culture and surroundings is always a stern challenge at the very least. When the process involves long sea voyages as well as incredibly long and arduous land journeys, when the hardships endured include extreme physical privation, hunger, disease, and even death, the experience can be traumatic. The journals and oral accounts of individuals who have lived through it can be inadequate when it comes to expressing the sense of fear and deprivation that must have been the lot of many of those first immigrants. Presented poetically as personal memories and impressions in the hands of an artist such as Kristjana Gunnars, however, the emotions of these people become very vivid, almost overpowering.

The poetry is characteristically "modern" in style, like clean, spare prose. Its direct quality, as well as the vivid, almost brutal imagery and skilled use of metaphoric language translates the hardships of the immigrants into a form where we can identify with their feelings, feelings of grim resignation bordering at times on despair.

Those interested in getting a new perspective on the odyssey of these Icelandic pioneers of a century ago, stripped clear of the mists of romantic nostalgia which often accompanies the subject, will be interested in reading this volume of verse by an exciting new writer.

G. K.

IN THE NEWS

THE LEIF EIRIKSSON ICELANDIC CLUB CALGARY, ALBERTA

by Lilja Hiebert

The Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club does not have a large membership, however we attempt to become involved in cultural activities within the wider community. Our participation has been considered worthwhile in terms of visibility and friendships which have been gained.

Icelandic language classes went ahead in September with Sigrun Magnusson instructing a group of eight.

The development of the Icelandic section of the library at the Scandinavian Centre is continuing, and the focus of our efforts is the development of a Cultural Corner in the Saga Room. The Executive Committee allocated $250.00 for the acquisition of books and library materials, in addition to which Margret Geppert, one of our members, made a donation of $250.00 designated for books. Twenty-five books have been purchased this year and in addition we have acquired five books through the generosity of members and friends.

The Calgary club joined the Edmonton and Markerville clubs at the 'Islendingadagurinn" in Markerville. Highlight of the afternoon being the concert in which persons from all three clubs participated. Featured was the film "The Icelandic Heritage in Alberta" showing one of the Markerville Icelandic Celebrations, the surrounding countryside and interviews with many of the local Icelandic people. A new booth had been built in Markerville and our Club presented a $300.00 cheque to The Stephan G. Stephansson chapter towards this booth.

Gunnar, Mr. and Mrs. Henrikson's son, sang at the opening ceremonies of the Calgary Stampede, and Sharon, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson, was our representative in Icelandic costume at the opening program for Canada Day During stampede time we had visitors from Iceland who thoroughly enjoyed the stampede festivities.

Our annual Christmas party was enlivened

by our dancing around the Christmas tree, and a greater than ever selection of Icelandic food and entertainment. Particular interest was the participation of our young people dressed as the 'Jolasveinar', the door slammer, the pot licker, etc. followed by a visit from Santa Clause.

Within the last three years our club has welcomed eight Icelandic families, three this winter, totalling thirty-five people, whose energy and enthusiasm have been an immense boon to our club.

Our Annual meeting was followed by a potluck supper and two films from the National Film Board. "Stefansson; the Arctic Prophet" showed the role of a permanent Icelander in exploration of the Canadian Arctic. "The Bayman," a film showing life in a typical Newfoundland outport. These films were chosen to show some aspects of Canada to the newer arrivals from Iceland. Both films were entertaining and educational, and we feel were successful in portraying what we intended.

With regard to the Stephan G. Stephansson House in Markerville, this year's program has been planned to replace all decayed logs and place the house on a concrete foundation with a supporting reinforced concrete beam under the centre for support. As the original house was not on a concrete foundation, this will be camouflaged to look like the original. The house is to be completely closed in by fall so it may be heated.

Mrs. Jane McKracken of the Historic Sites of Alberta Culture Department has been researching the project for over a year. She has been collecting all available information of Stephan G. Stephansson as a poet, farmer and citizen, as well as his part in public affairs. Her report will be in the form of a biography and hopefully will be published later this year. To aid her in the research, Ninna Campbell of Edmonton and Bjorgvin Sigurdson of Calgary have translated most of the four Volumes of 'Bref og Ritgerdir' (Letters and Articles). This, in conjunction with his poetry that has been translated has given her an idea of his philosophy and ability as a man of literature.

The Restoration Committee met with Mrs. McKracken in Markerville April 13th, 1980. It was resolved to try to collect all translations of Stephan G. Stephansson's poems and print them in a pamphlet form. First copyrights have to be cleared. It was also decided that a thorough attempt be made to have more of his poems translated into English. So a plea goes out to all poets to consider this undertaking. This project will be difficult, as to be able to do it properly a thorough understanding of both languages is mandatory with limitless vocabulary.

The highlight of the year took place April 18th when we were entertained by the fabulous Sigfus Halldorsson, Gudmundur Gudjonsson and Bill Holm. Approximately 160 people were in attendance at the University of Calgary to hear this exciting program,

and although half of the audience did not speak any Icelandic all reports were favorable. A wine and cheese reception followed where many were able to chat with the performers and have the 'Songbook' autographed. An event long to be remembered. Jon Asgeirsson, who is touring with the group on behalf of the Committee for Promotion of Relations between Iceland and People of Icelandic descent in North America, has certainly succeeded in bringing about closer ties with the two countries.

The Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary will reach its 10th Anniversary in 1981 and plans are underway for a gala celebration. We hope that other clubs will join us for the festivities planned.

It is the hope of our club that we may help to strengthen the bonds between Icelandic groups on this continent and to do our share to keep alive the finer parts of the Icelandic cultural heritage.

Our Executive for 1980-1981 — Dr. Ron Goodman, President; Dr. Ray Thorsteinson, Vice-President; Sigrid Gudmannsson, Secretary; Al Olafson, Treasurer; Cliff Marteinson, Public Relations; Ed Jonasson, Past President.

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POWER PLAY

by Henry Bjornsson

The lizard, tailless, crawls slowly
toward where the folded lawn chair
leans against the wall,
his silly tail a spare part
removed and lying on the porch,
and where it should attach,
his rear end cut off square.

And Sasha, watching with yellow eyes,
ponders and decides its reptile fate.
His paw reaches, pulls the lizard
back, and yellow eyes resume
the humorless vigil.

The lizard, tailless, crawls again
across the wide and sunlit porch
toward the shelter of the chair.

KRIS KRISTJANSON NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE MANITOBA HYDRO BOARD

The appointment of Kris Kristjanson as chairman of the Manitoba Hydro Board is, perhaps, the culmination of a career that encompasses many varied activities and achievements. Kris is eminently qualified to assume this demanding and responsible task not only for personal reasons, but also because of his training as an economist, and his administrative experience as former vice-chairman of the Hydro Board, a position he held for a number of years.

The Kristjanson family has come a long way from its modest beginnings at Gimli, Manitoba. His five brothers and two sisters are playing a prominent part in the society of today. Leo was recently appointed President of the University of Saskatchewan. Albert is professor of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. Ragnar Lawrence is commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board. Baldur, formerly head of the Farm Credit Administration, spent many years in Tanzania working for the foreign aid program of the United Nations. Burbank spent many years in Rome working for the food and agricultural organization of the United Nations. Their two sisters, Alda Johanna Westmacott and Maria Gudlaug Learned, richly endowed with common sense, do not take a back seat to their brothers in their sane outlook on life.

Their parents, Elin and Hannes Kristjanson, whose supportive role in their children's formative years bore fruit, would have every reason to be proud, indeed, were they alive today.

THE HEKLA SINGERS IN QUEBEC

A group of Icelandic singers were honoured by the provincial government recently when they were chosen to represent Manitoba at an annual cultural festival in Quebec. The Department of Cultural Affairs selected Len and Karen Vopnfjord and the Hekla Singers to be Manitoba's ambassadors at La Societe Des Arts Traditionnels du St. Laurents Folk Arts Festival of Quebec, held June 26th - 29th, 1980 at St. Octave De l'Avenir in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The singers looked smart in traditional Icelandic costumes while performing in the company of other groups representing the Chinese, Hungarian, Polish, French, and Spanish cultures among others. The group sang STOD EG UT I TUNGLSLJOSI, RIDUM, RIDUM, REKUM YFIR SANDINN1 and other Icelandic songs as well as one French tune UN CANADIENNE ERRANTE which the largely francophone audience appreciated and responded to warmly. The Hekla Singers were the only vocal group to take part in the festival, the other groups being dancers.

Since returning, the entire group performed for the Prime Minister and a large crowd at the Winnipeg Convention Centre where they met Mr. Trudeau and even taught him a few words in Icelandic.

1Perhaps the first time Icelandic has been heard in the predominantly French-speaking Gaspé Peninsula, unless, perchance, Thorfinnur Karlsefni's abortive Icelandic colony was located there nearly a thousand years ago.

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SIGURBJORG STEFANSSON REMEMBERED

Out at Gimli, we have a very clever lady, Miss Sigurbjorg Stefansson. She taught for years and had a very brilliant career there. Then she decided to build a library that was quite worthy of her . . . I just wish you would step into Gimli and see that library. It would be a credit to any city library. She was not satisfied with that; she had a dream. And the dream was that there could be a

From left to right: Kristin and Erica Stewart-Hay, Kris Vopnfjord, Tristin Tergesen, Lindy, Karen and Len Vopnfjord. (Photo taken in Quebec City, July, 1980.)

convention, and that the convention would bring people from all over Canada, United States, and even Iceland itself, to Gimli . . . Three years ago (that dream materialized) there was a very successful venture. A whole week of wonderful reunions . . .

—Courtesy of the Alumni Bulletin, 1980, University of Winnipeg.

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ERIC JONASSON ATTENDS CONGRESS ON GENEALOGY IN SALT LAKE CITY

On 12-15 August 1980 almost 12,000 people from more than 30 countries met in Salt Lake City, Utah, for the second World Conference on Records. Under the general theme "Preserving Our Heritage", more than 300 lectures and workshops were presented dealing with various aspects of international genealogy, history, sociology, archival science and demography.

Alex Haley, author of the best-seller "Roots", together with more than 230 international authorities on genealogy and family history presented information on the records and sources essential to the study of family history and history in general, and stressed the need for their preservation.

Eric Jonasson of Winnipeg, founder of the Manitoba Genealogical Society, was one of four Canadians invited to present papers at the conference. Mr. Jonasson is well known internationally as the author of "The Canadian Genealogical Handbook", which is regarded as the standard textbook on Canadian genealogical research. He presented two papers at the conference, each of which dealt with genealogical sources in western Canada.

The 1980 World Conference — the largest known gathering of its kind — was sponsored by the Genealogical Society of Utah. Its success clearly underlines the increasing popularity of genealogy, now regarded as the largest hobby activity in North America.

The first World Conference, also held in Salt Lake City, took place in 1969 and was instrumental in increasing the awareness and preservation of historical records around the world. It is hoped that the second conference will have a similar effect on records preservation in the future.

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ICELAND'S FIRST LADY

Vigdis Finnbogadottir

Vigdis Finnbogadottir, 50, a determined lady who for years ardently campaigned against the presence of U.S. troops in Iceland, has been elected president of her country.

She is the first woman to be elected to that high office. Iceland is the only NATO country with no military forces of its own. Since 1951 we have been responsible for its defense.

Many Icelanders, however, oppose the special rights we have at the Keflavik air base and want our men out. In October 1974, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the U.S. and Iceland calling for our continued use of defense on mutually acceptable terms.

Apparently these terms are not acceptable to Miss Finnbogadottir, divorced mother of an adopted 7-year-old daughter. Iceland, however, because of its strategic location in the North Atlantic, is a necessary intelligence link in our advanced-warning system.

Incidentally, Icelanders always use their Christian names followed by their father's first name, then add "son" or "dottir", according to their sex.

ARDAL LUTHERAN LADIES' AID MARKS 75th

The Ardal Lutheran Ladies' Aid of Arborg celebrated its 75th Anniversary on Sunday, September 14th, 1980 at the Ardal Lutheran Church. This Ladies' Aid was founded on April 2, 1905 with a membership of 19 Icelandic pioneer women. A constitution was drawn up, which has been more or less followed, all through the years. Members have been mostly Icelandic women with a few welcome exceptions.

The main aims of the L.A. have been to support the Ardal Lutheran Church and other Christian endeavours. For many years they also took an active part in all community affairs, such as sponsoring plays and concerts, catering to wedding receptions, meetings and other social gatherings.

Most of their funds were used to support the church by cash donations and other gifts, some of these in memory of deceased church members.

For many years L.A. members were very active in Sunday school work, acting as teachers and superintendents. Sunday school supplies were also donated. They were also active in the Lutheran Women's League, and helped to support Sunrise Lutheran Camp among other projects of the League.

The Ardal Lutheran Church choir was supported through the years, both financially and in promoting music in the church. Many of the organists have been Ladies' Aid members, and there have always been L.A. members in the choir. The president Mrs. Magnea Sigurdson has been organist and choirmaster for many years but has just lately retired.

Other church groups are affiliated with the Ladies' Aid, such as the Dorcas Society, the Junior Ladies' Aid and in later eyars there has been good will and cooperation with the L.C.W. The two groups have shared World Day of Prayer, Mission weeks and Congregational suppers, also annual visits to the Arborg Personal Care Home, and other projects.

Annual visits are made to Betel Home at Gimli, with a lunch program and a small donation left in the hands of the matron, to add some cheer and comfort to the Betel residents.

Memorial Funds dating from 1929 have been used exclusively to further the work of the church, both with cash donations, and furnishing the church with carpets — several renewals, and in later years a new electric organ. Also equipment for the Fellowship Hall, such as cutlery, dishes, urns, stacking stools etc.

The present name of the fund is "Ardal Lutheran Ladies' Aid Memorial Fund," and the custodian is Mrs. Magnea Sigurdson.

A Sick Visiting Committee has been active ever since the L.A. was formed in 1905. They are allotted some funds from the L.A. to use as they see fit. In times of sickness and trouble, a helping hand and a word of cheer and understanding is always appreciated.

Other rules of the old constitution that are still followed: Monthly meetings start with an Icelandic hymn and Bible reading and close with the Lord's Prayer in Icelandic. Members still take turns supplying a short program, reading an interesting article or poetry — some English, some Icelandic. Though the meetings are conducted in both languages, the minutes are still written in the Icelandic language.

The celebration on Sunday the 14th of September took the form of a "Home Coming." All former members were invited, also the "Ardal Lutheran Church Women" and our neighboring Geysir Ladies' Aid. There was a good turnout and everyone was pleased to see that one of the original founders in 1905, was able to attend. She is Mrs. Kristveig Johannesson.

A short program was held. Pastor Jacobson opened the ceremony with a prayer and Bible reading.

The M.C. Mrs. Gudrun Johannson called on the "Arborg Youth Choir" to render a few songs accompanied at the piano by their director Mrs. Kristine Johnson.

The next item was a piano duet by Mrs. Magnea Sigurdson and her granddaughter Heather Sigurdson. Then Mrs. Emily Vigfusson gave a short report of the activities of the Ladies' Aid from 1905 to 1980, partly from memory, but mostly with reference to the records that have been faithfully kept during all these years, all written in the Icelandic language. These records are a tribute to a group of dedicated women serving their church, and the community at large, through several generations. Following this was a vocal duet by Mrs. Kristine Johnson and Mrs. Gudrun Vigfusson accompanied by Mrs. Magnea Sigurdson at the piano. They sang two songs, one in English, the other in Icelandic.

Greetings were presented by Mrs. Blanche Bjarnason on behalf of the Geysir Ladies' Aid. Mrs. Kathie Johnson spoke on behalf of the "Ardal Lutheran Church Women."

A former member of the L.A., Mrs. Freda Danielson brought greetings from our Winnipeg friends. She also reminisced about former times when she was an active member of the Ladies' Aid. Mrs. Danielson was usually the leading lady and director of the annual plays sponsored by the L.A. She paid special tribute to all those who gave of their time and talent, and helped to bring pleasure and an appreciation of the arts to the community at large, by taking part in these plays. This was before television invaded our living rooms.

Following the program a lunch was served in the Fellowship Hall, and old friendships were renewed.

Surprisingly, the weather was very cooperative which helped to make this day a memorable one.

—Courtesy of the Interlake Spectator

Emily Vigfusson

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