

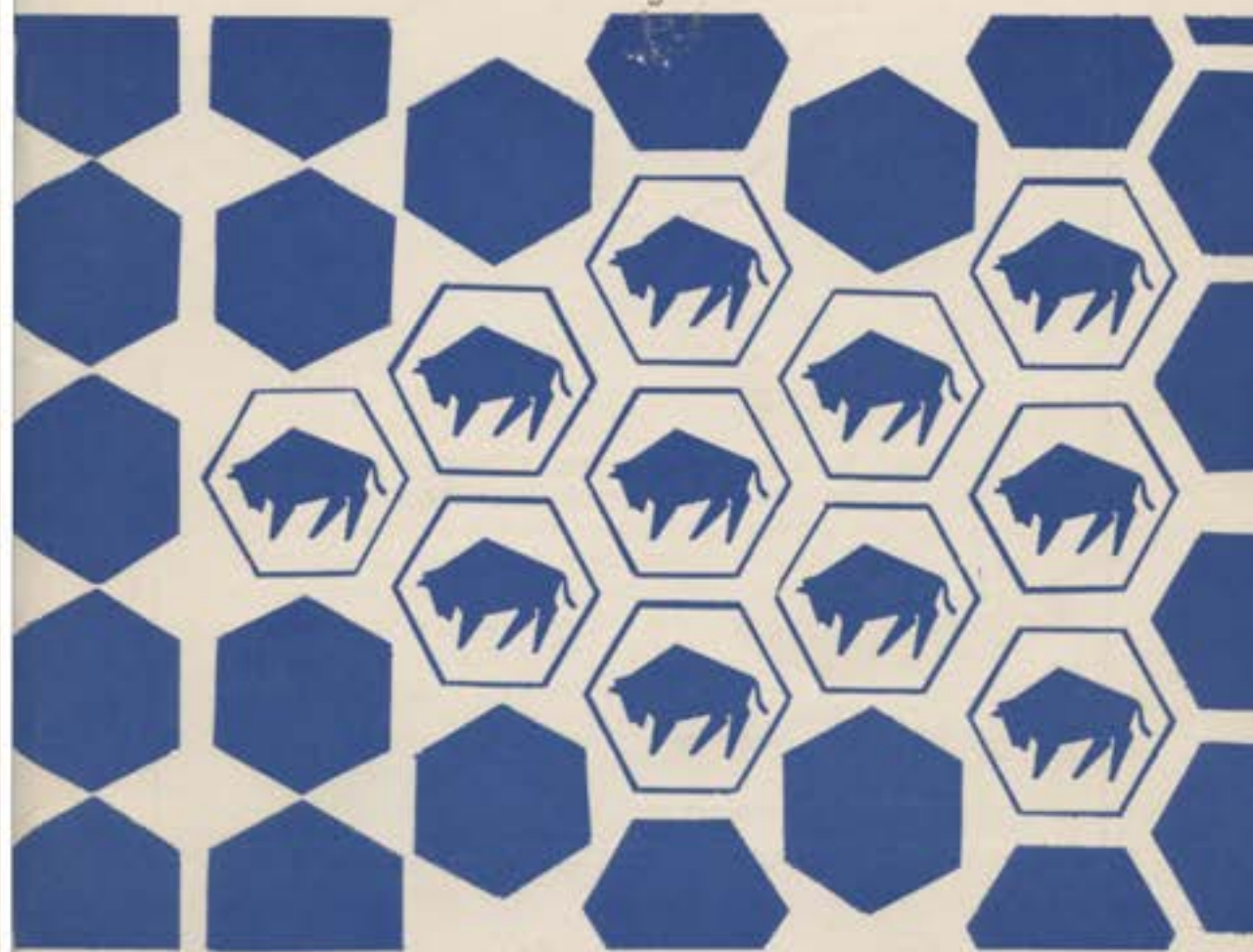
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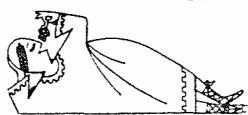
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# The Icelandic Canadian

Volume XXVIII No. 4

Winnipeg, Canada

Summer 1970

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## THE ROYAL FAMILY



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, His Royal Highness Prince Philip, His Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne

This picture is taken in the salon of Sandringham House, Norfolk.

Guest Editorial:

## The Contribution of the Icelandic People to Manitoba

In a society such as ours, immersed in the present, the backward look imposed on us by the Centennial celebration of three years ago is having a salutary effect. It has forced us to place a valuation on the elements that have entered into our society and are now in the process of being melded into some sort of nationhood. Not least of its value is that it forces us to come to some conclusion as to what form this nationhood should take.

The Icelanders, who emigrated to this country nearly a century ago, are one of these elements, important especially in Manitoba, and it is natural that at this time we should consider what contribution they have made to this province, though that can scarcely be distinguished from their contribution to the nation as a whole.

When people pull up their roots and transplant themselves to a new country it is certain that they imagine that they will continue their ethnic identity in their new environment. The people who settled on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg in 1875 had no intention of losing their ethnic identity and had all the more reason to think they could maintain it because their settlement was actually outside the then boundaries of Manitoba. They knew that they and their descendants would make some contribution to their adopted country but they were doubtless too concerned about living on from one day to the next to give it much thought. They had certain qualities that were important in determining the nature of that contribution, but these qualities are perhaps more readily discerned by their descendants than they were by themselves.

The first quality, necessary for survival, was their hardihood. Another was the ambition that their children should have a better life than they themselves ever had. A third quality was their thirst for education. It is likely that their education was better than that of other immigrant groups of that time: almost all of them had command of the three Rs; and they knew that education was a prerequisite for economic advancement. A fourth quality was their love of poetry and other literature. They had a further advantage, not perhaps perceived as such at the time: their close relationship to the Anglo-Saxon element in racial origin, religion and language. They did not look very different, and their language was closely enough related to English to make it easier for them than for a Slav or an Italian to learn the English language. As a consequence, the somewhat prejudiced Anglo-Saxon accepted them more readily than they

did some other ethnic groups. But this acceptance had a pronounced effect on the survival of the Icelanders as an ethnic group. Intermarriages with the English speaking elements became so common that now, less than three generations later, it is estimated that Icelandic-Icelandic unions occur only about once in every ten marriages. Icelandic blood has, indeed, become diluted; and that dilution is one of the main factors in the loss of Icelandic speech in Canada and the United States.

Though the loss of Icelandic speech may be considered regrettable, it was merely an accompaniment of the rapid integration of the Icelandic element in the national life of Canada, and this integration was economically beneficial to individuals composing the Icelandic community. Fortunately, the partial or total loss of Icelandic speech has not been accompanied to any great extent, by the loss of ethnic identity. Second and third generation individuals, even those only partly of Icelandic descent commonly feel proud of their origin and show an interest in acquiring knowledge of their ancestors and their history.

However Icelanders may look at this, Anglo-Canadians would generally consider that the mere fact of the fusion of the Icelandic element with the rest of the community is a contribution to Canadian nationhood; and, indeed, it must be admitted that many of the achievements of the people of Icelandic descent would have been impossible except for their integration especially with the English speaking elements. This has applied especially to the entry into so many business establishments which were often more reluctant to accept members of other ethnic groups as partners or associates. To this sort of prejudice, more common in the past than now, Icelanders have

been exposed less than some other ethnic groups.

The thirst for education, so characteristic of the immigrants and their children, has borne fruit in a host of university graduates who have found their way into law, medicine, engineering, the arts, and the sciences. The number of individuals who have entered into politics is remarkable, especially when one considers that the Icelandic community has been so small that these politicians have had to depend on support acquired from non-Icelandic voters. Icelanders have also been prominent in many aspects of industry, and those from Manitoba have played a leading part in the expansion of fisheries to the Northwest Territories.

These practical contributions are too well known to need much emphasis here. It is perhaps less generally realized that Canadian Icelanders have made two other important contributions. One is the documentation of the Icelandic settlements undertaken long ago in O. S. Thorgeirsson's *Almanak* and culminating in the books produced by W. Kristjanson and W. J. Lindal. This is a gift to Canadian history. The other is in the literary field—the mass of fine poetry written in America in the Icelandic language: a gift to Canadian culture if only it could be converted into the language of the country. A few non-Icelandic Canadians realize the value of this gift. Watson Kirkconnell in his *Canadian Overtones*, published in 1935, states: "I foresee a further value in this poetry. It should help to develop in succeeding generations a Canadianism nourished by pride in the individuals past. There is nothing so shallow and sterile as a man who denies his ancestry".

Fortunately there have been many fine translations from this poetry: some by Kirkconnell, others by Icelanders such as Jakobina Johnson, Paul Bjarnason, and Skuli Johnson. Since there will be another centennial in five years' time to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of Icelandic settlement, would it not be worth while to sponsor the publication of the best

of these translations. It should be done, and it should be done while we still have with us literary men who are sufficiently competent in both Icelandic and English to be able to judge the value of the translations, especially as some poems have more than one translation to choose from.

Thorvaldur Johnson



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS — MANITOBA CENTENNIAL 1970

### EVENTS OF ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS

June 28 — July 5	Homecoming	Glenboro
July 4	4-H Rally	Baldur
July 6	Local Celebrations	Baldur
July 14 — 15	Gimli Centennial Celebrations—including Centennial Ball, Parade, Country Auction and Fair, Barbeque	Gimli
July 26 — 31	Centennial Regatta	Yacht Club, Gimli
August 1	Home Coming	Lundar
August 1 — 3	Íslendingadagurinn — including Art Exhibits, Dancing, Parade, Sports, Entertainment	Gimli
August 8	Exhibition and Fair	Arborg
August 21 — 30	Manitoba Federation of Allied Arts — Training Program	Gimli



## The Royal Visit to Manitoba

W. Kristjanson

Manitoba welcomes Queen Elizabeth and the other members of the royal family — Prince Philip, and Prince Charles and Princess Anne — on their visit to take part in the Province's centennial celebrations.

This visit gives rise to reflections on the importance of the Crown, to Canada, to the Commonwealth, and to many other countries. The Crown is a symbol of unity between the many diverse peoples of the Commonwealth and an influence towards the growth of that unity. And the unity of the Commonwealth is of far-reaching importance. In our age of instant communication and fantastic speed of travel, the whole world tends to become a global village, exposing us increasingly to abrasive international contacts. There is thus an imperative need for world-wide pacifying and harmonizing influences.

Ideally, we should be able to look to the United Nations for such influence on the world-wide scale. While the U.N. is doing great work in many

fields, its peace-keeping role is strictly limited. Suez and Cyprus were important achievements, but the U.N. is not equal to controlling any antagonistic super-powers. Pending such a development, the world must rely on local and regional forces of law and order and harmony. Our Commonwealth is one such influence. It is in a sense a beacon and a model for world order.

Not only as a symbol of unity and harmony does Manitoba welcome Queen Elizabeth II. She is welcomed in her own right as one who is personally known and loved. Prince Philip is welcomed for the same good reason, and now the younger members of the royal family will become personally acquainted.

The people of Manitoba — and this includes a representation from some sixty different countries, a varied and colorful population picture — bid Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, and Prince Charles and Princess Anne a royal welcome.

## Premier Ed Schreyer's Remarks

at the Flag Raising Ceremony at the Civic Centre, Winnipeg,

on May 12, 1970

As Manitobans, as Canadians, we are quite an undemonstrative group. We don't carry our hearts on our sleeves; we are not militant Canadians, and we are not blatant in our patriotism. It is only on special occasions, really, that we step out of our traditional reserve to show our interest in and our affection for our Province and for our Nation.

We see it in wartime, when hundreds of Canadians voluntarily flock to the colours. We see it on occasions such as this when, with warm affection, we re-dedicate ourselves to the continued development and social progress of our province and our country.

May 12th is such a special day. One hundred years ago, royal assent was given in our Federal Parliament to the Manitoba Act, which created the Province in which we live. This Act was officially proclaimed July 15, 1870, and it was on that date that we joined the original four provinces in The Great Experiment of nationhood. As we were the first to join these original four, in consequence we proudly look upon ourselves as the First Daughter of Confederation. We represent, too the first westward step of a nation that now stretches from sea to sea. So our entry into Confederation was important indeed, and as we celebrate it we do so against the background of the full sweep of history.

And if I said earlier that we are a quiet lot, and not given to patriotic

demonstration, we have history behind us in this aspect too.

One hundred years ago today, one would have thought there would be great activity and celebrations in the Red River colony. But the truth is, no one here knew about it. The telegraph line from Eastern Canada didn't reach here until 1871. The first intimation the colony received of the great event of May 12 was when one of the three delegates from the Red River settlement, the Reverend N. J. Ritchot, sent a telegram on May 14 by the only existing link — that was via United States circuits to St. Paul, and then northward. All his telegram said was negotiations had been concluded. The first confirmation that the Manitoba Act was passed came on May 23, and the full text was first made available in the May 27th edition of the **New Nation**. So while we were being created as a province, the settlement at the time was more interested in preparing for the May 24th Birthday of Queen Victoria, when a grand concert was held at the Court House, with proceeds for the orphans, and a grand target match, with the first prize being two double-barrelled shotguns.

When Father Ritchot finally returned to the settlement on June 17th, a 21-gun salute was fired to confirm his successful mission.

And even on July 15, our official birthday, we have one short line in the journal of the great chronicler of the







## AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

### KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

People in the country have one important advantage over city people: theirs is the opportunity to live close to Nature and to enjoy the companionship of creatures, tame and wild, bird and beast.

Pictures come to mind from the past, on a Manitoba Interlake farm.

A still frosty afternoon at dusk . . . a tiny clearing around the house . . . seventeen ruffled grouse in the poplar branches, mere feet away, pecking away for their supper in perfect security.

A warm midsummer afternoon . . . A squirrel hopping through the open kitchen window . . . pushing the lid off the food kettle on the cold stove.

Nellie, of collie blood, despatched to bring in a flock of sheep, perhaps a quarter of a mile away, darting to and fro, keeping would-be laggards up with the flock.

Now moving farther afield, first into a more distant past.

St. Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226), founder of the order of the Franciscans, or the Grey Friars, called all creatures his brothers and sisters.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed in Great Britain, in 1824; in the United

States in 1866. Similar societies have been formed in most civilized countries of the world.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), of Alsace, was a highly gifted person. While still young, he received high acclaim as organ player, author, and spiritual leader, but at the age of 30, in 1913, he turned his back on the honors and comforts of civilization, to devote himself to healing among the backward native people of Gabon, in equatorial Africa. By precept and example, Albert Schweitzer preached respect for all creatures, a reverence for life, of whatever form. Digging a post hole, he carefully brushed up the insects that had crawled in.

Jack Miner, Canadian farmer philosopher, had made his Ontario farm a virtual bird sanctuary, in 1904. The Miner Migratory Bird Sanctuary was created by the Ontario Government near Jack Miner's farm, at Kingsville, Ontario, in 1916.

The following account of Ada Fleming's Kindness to Animal Clubs is based on an article in the Christmas 1969 issue of the Atlantic Advocate.

Ada Fleming, wife of Hon. Hugh Fleming, former Premier of New Brunswick, has dedicated herself to the promotion of kindness to animals and human beings.

"One of the most extraordinary accomplishments is that a woman seemingly frail, who toils through the days

and half the nights to spread a doctrine throughout the world.

"She is a woman of laughing eyes and gentle voice. But beneath her gentleness is a will of steel and the dedicated zeal of a missionary or a revolutionary."

Ada Fleming's doctrine is kindness to animals. Her doctrine she bases on the premise that kindness is not an inherent or spontaneous quality of the human race, but must be fostered. Through children, she stresses, the adults of the future, we can develop a generation that is kind.

So, in December, 1959, she formed a Kindness Club of young people to campaign against cruelty to animals through hunting, trapping, circus acts, and operations on living animals in the name of science.

Each club is to number no more than a dozen children, and these not more than seventeen years of age. As each club grows, it splits in two. Each club has the name of an animal. Hundreds of branches have been formed in Canada, United States, Europe, and elsewhere. Four such clubs have been formed in Winnipeg, including the Buffalos, the Blue Jays, and the Beavers.

Each branch has a copy of the Kindness Club text-book, "How To Be Kind", copies of which may be obtained from the Kindness Club Foundation in Fredericton.

Kindness to animals — and people — is not featured as prominently on the front page of newspapers as wars, murders, robbery, and other forms of violence, but fortunately, in the overall picture of the human race, acts of kindness probably far outnumber acts of brutality or other forms of violence.

### BETEL BIRTHDAYS

Six residents of the Betel Home at Gimli, who have birthdays in March, were guests of honor at a party held on March 19, 1970.

Three of the ladies are in their nineties, two are 82, and the youngest is 77.

Mrs. Ingvaldur Kernested, who at 95 is still active and alert with just the handicap of failing eyesight, was eight months old when she landed at Willow Point with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hjalmarson, and the rest of the first group of colonists, who arrived in New Iceland, October 21, 1875.

Birthday congratulations, if somewhat belated ones, to Mrs. Ingvaldur Kernested.

Vigfus Guttormsson, of Lundar, Manitoba, who was 1½ years when he arrived with his parents at Gimli in 1875, died in 1964.

If there are any other members of the 1875 group surviving, besides Mrs. Kernested, the Icelandic Canadian would be interested to know.

### The Transmutation of a Family Name —How Jónsson became Collins

Mr. J. J. Collins of Roblin, Manitoba, whose parents were born and raised in Iceland, writes of the origin of the Collins family name. An ancestor of his in Iceland, perhaps his great-grandfather, Jón Jónsson, initiated the change.

"At an early age this young man was sent to Copenhagen as an apprentice to a carpenter or a craftsman whose name was Jón Kollín (pronounced like the Irish Colleen). The young Jónsson boy was adopted by this Dane; thus he became Jón Kollín.

"I am not sure of how many years my forefather stayed in the Kollín home, but the longing for his place of birth or 'til áttahagana' became too

strong and he came back to Iceland. Then a strange thing happened, the name was continued. Instead of the first name being passed onto son, the second name was used. Thus my father emigrated to Canada as Jón Kollín.

Some few months after landing in Canada my father applied for his citizenship papers, and, when he gave his name it was written down as John Collins, that was considered the in English version. Thus we have an Irish name that originated in Denmark.

#### THE ROTARY CLUBS IN ICELAND

The Icelandic Canadian has referred to the Kiwanis Clubs in Iceland. It is fitting that the Rotary Clubs in Iceland should be mentioned also.

The first Rotary Club in Iceland — Rotary klúbbur Reykjavíkur (The Rotary Club of Reykjavík)—was founded in 1934. The newest one is Rotary klúbbur Ólafsvíkur, established in 1968. There are now twenty-one Clubs in Iceland, with a membership of 730. Helgi Tomasson is one Icelander who has held office in the Rotary International.

The first Rotary Club was founded in Chicago, in 1905. The founder, Paul Harris, was a lawyer and the members rotated their meetings weekly from one office to another; hence the name "Rotary". In 1910 the then sixteen clubs formed a "National Association of Rotary Clubs" and later Clubs were chartered in Winnipeg, Dublin, London, and elsewhere. In 1922, a worldwide organization of business and professional men united in the idea of service, was renamed "Rotary International".

The objects of the Rotary are development of acquaintance as an opportunity of service; high ethical standards of business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian of his occupation as an opportunity to serve society; application of the ideal of service by every Rotarian to his personal business and community life; advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world of fellowship of business and professional men united in the ideal of service."

The motto is Service "Above Self".

In 1926 there were over 8,000 Rotary clubs in the world, with over 400,000 members.

#### DR. RICHARD BECK LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF PROMINENT AMERICANS

Dr. Richard Beck, professor emeritus of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, this spring was advised by the Research Centre at Saratoga, Florida, of his election and listing in the National Register of Prominent Americans.

The Research Centre serves as a clearing house of requested information concerning those listed in the National Register. Selection is made on the recommendation of an executive advisory council consisting of noted Americans in various fields of achievement.

Dr. and Mrs. Beck are now living in Victoria, B.C.



## HÖFN — The Icelandic Senior Citizen Home, Vancouver, B. C.

by Jón K. Laxdal

The influx of ever increasing numbers of Icelanders to the Pacific Coast settlements, particularly Vancouver, during the decades of the 1930's and 1940's included both young and old from almost every Icelandic settlement east of the the Rockies. The principal reasons for these migrations were: a favorable climate, better opportunities for work during the depression years, and higher wages during the years of World War II. Among these migrants were older people who sought relief and refuge from the rigors of the long cold prairie winters in the mild coastal climate.

By the early 1940's the need for a senior citizens' home for those of Icelandic descent who wished to spend their sunset years within the circle of the Icelandic community was keenly felt. Many of these for lack of financial resources or other circumstances were

unable to find satisfactory accommodation at the time of their retirement. The success enjoyed by the Betel home at Gimli, Manitoba, and the ever increasing need for a similar home on the west coast prompted some of the leaders of the Icelandic community to take action to probe the possibilities of establishing a similar home in Vancouver. The sponsoring group headed by Mr. C. F. Frederickson met in January 1946 at the Frederickson home to discuss this proposed project. At this meeting a committee was elected with Mr. Frederickson as first president, Mrs. A. C. Orr as secretary and Dr. P. B. Guttormson, treasurer. Mrs. H. J. Thorson became the representative of the active Ladies Auxiliary "Sólskin" and Mr. G. Guðmundson represented the Icelandic Lutheran congregation. Within a short time an active central committee with sub-

committees to investigate, submit plans and report on all aspects of the proposed project was working with untiring zeal and enthusiasm. Without funds and without experience in organizing and undertaking of this kind the task at first seemed insurmountable. The committee did, however, have what was most needed — the wholehearted support of the entire Icelandic population in and around Vancouver and where there is the will there is always a way.

Initially the two most urgent undertakings were a canvass for funds and the purchase of a suitable property to house the residents until finances permitted the construction of a favorably located permanent building specially designed to satisfy the needs of the occupants.

The canvass for funds was vigorously pursued, with personal visits to prospective donors, by means of personal letters and through the media of the Icelandic papers. The response from many quarters was immediate and in most cases very generous, in both cash contributions and in future pledges. The eventual success of the project appeared assured when the provincial government promised financial support to the extent of one-third of the cost, stipulating, however, a maximum contribution of \$36,000.00.

Numerous properties, considered suitable, were investigated and inspected by committee members. The final choice was the very favorably located property at 3498 Osler Street which the committee was authorized to purchase for \$29,500.00. The purchase price included a considerable amount of usable furniture. This property was made available to the committee on October 1st, 1947. At the time of purchase the organization had on hand funds totalling \$18,439.25 which in-

cluded a \$12,000.00 grant from the provincial government of British Columbia. An additional interest free loan was obtained from the Betel building fund amounting to \$10,000.00 to defray additional expenses. This loan was fully repaid in 1955.

Although the property had been used by the Hotel Vancouver during the war years to accommodate the overflow of guests and was consequently fairly well furnished, it required the frantic efforts of committee members and work crews to prepare for the official opening October, 1947. The president, Mr. G. F. Gislason, had secured talent for a suitable opening program and Mrs. Thora Orr had arranged for an enjoyable refreshment hour. This was indeed an occasion to which the Icelandic community in general, the various committees in charge and the newly initiated residents in particular had long awaited. The sponsors had now reached the first milestone in their eventual objective of a permanent home where the pioneers, some after years of poverty, privations and hardships, could spend their reclining years in well earned ease and comfort. The opening ceremony was indeed a festive occasion which no doubt justly filled many hearts with satisfaction and a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Several appropriate names such as "Vestfold" and "Dvöl" had earlier been suggested. The name Höfn inferring a haven for the elderly was finally unanimously approved. The original group of residents at the home consisted of six men and eleven women, each of whom contributed \$30.00 a month towards their board and room. Shortly, however, the home was filled to capacity with fourteen men and thirteen women. Mrs. Bjorg Thompson, whose remarkably efficient man-

agement showed a small surplus after the first month of operation, became the first matron. Prior to the opening of the home committee meetings had been held in the homes of the various committee members, but thereafter, all but the earlier annual meetings were held in the reception room of the home.

The immediate successful operation of the home and the satisfaction expressed by the residents for the pleasant surroundings, excellent care and harmonious associations with other members of the Icelandic community within their own age group soon flooded the institution with applications for admission far beyond the capacity of the available accommodation. Besides the inadequate accommodation two other factors prompted the directors of the Home to initiate a new drive for funds to erect more spacious permanent quarters. Firstly, the Shaughnessy ratepayers association was pressing the city council of Vancouver to rescind a temporary war regulation permitting multiple dwellings in this district, as they continually petitioned the council to restore the area to its former status of a one family dwelling district. Secondly, it soon became evident that the old property needed almost continuous expensive repairs and renovations. Hence, at the February meeting in 1954 a new building committee was elected. This included all the male members of the general committee under the chairmanship of Mr. B. O. Howardson. Numerous other committees were elected and appointed to study all aspects of the planning for a new permanent building for the Home. The fund raising committee continued with its former widespread appeal. The property investigating committee inspected sites in all parts of the Greater Vancouver area and

after due deliberation selected what appeared to be a most suitable view site located on the high bank on the north side of S.E. Marine Drive at 2020 Harrison Drive, overlooking the north arm of the Fraser River, the Richmond area and the Mountains beyond. This property, owned by the City of Vancouver, was available at either the full price of \$28,367.00 including permanent tax exemption or at one-half the price without tax concessions. The committee was given a period of ten years to decide which offer to accept so that when finances permitted the full purchase price was paid to take advantage of the property tax exemption.

The phenomenal success of the fund raising committee indicated prompt action to proceed with the construction of the new building. After inspecting other senior citizens' homes to help decide the best type of construction suited to the site and after receiving approximate estimates for a building deemed suitable and sufficiently spacious, the building committee was authorized at the annual meeting January 29th, 1962, to proceed with the construction of the new building; engage architects to submit plans, call for tenders when the plans were finalized and approved, arrange for the sale of the Osler Street property, apply to the provincial government for the available grant amounting to one-third of the total cost and borrow an estimated \$50,000.00 needed to complete the first two wings of the proposed structure for occupancy. This would satisfy the residential requirements for the present. The remaining wing could then be completed when need for accommodation was required and finances permitted. Architect Mr. Duncan McNab was engaged to submit plans for a building which,

when completed, would accommodate sixty residents and include residential quarters for a matron and a staff of six.

Fortuitously, the visit to Vancouver of the president of Iceland, His Excellency Ásgeir Ásgeirsson and his party took place during this stage of the planning of the construction of the new Home. At the request of the building committee he graciously consented to officiate at the sod-turning ceremony thus giving a most appropriate historical significance to the occasion.

As plans for the building progressed the building committee was fortunate in securing the services of the Thorson Bros., consulting engineers, who were placed in charge of all planning details, building specifications and communications with the provincial government on matters of finances, government regulations, building standards and other matters pertaining thereto. The plans for the building were submitted to the committee, April 1st, 1962. The steeply sloping lot necessitated a four split level building. The first level contains the spacious recreation room with all glass front facing south to take full advantage of the view of the Fraser River and the area beyond. This room was recently enlarged to dimensions of 36' by 64'. This level also houses the east wing residential rooms. The lower wing comprises the second level. The third level forms the upper east wing rooms, the dining room and kitchen, while the uppermost level is composed of a large reception room, office, the upper west wing residential rooms as well as a room for residents needing temporary special care. All floors are of a concrete construction supported by fireproof beams and pillars. The upper level walls and roof are of frame construction.

During the period of construction the members of the building committee gave generously of their time whenever needed. Two engineers, Victor Thorson and Norman Kolbeins, rendered valuable professional services. Mr. Thorson served both as finance chairman and building inspector. Mr. Kolbeins checked the plans and specifications and inspected all the electrical work. Both donated all their professional services to the cause. Later, when the demand for additional accommodation was required, the unfinished wing was completed at a cost of some \$22,000 with an additional \$18,000 spent for furniture. The total cost of the completed original building, exclusive of furniture amounted to \$298,527.42, including the provincial government grant of \$88,707.04. So generous were the gifts of money from widespread sources that all the indebtedness on the property and furnishings was discharged by December 1967.

The official opening of the new Home took place on Sunday, April 28, 1963. Mr. Sig Sigmundson, (past president during whose term of office the campaign for the new home began), officiating. During the official part of the ceremony Pastor Indriðason blessed and dedicated the home, The Icelandic Consul John Sigurdson, as well as civic and provincial government representatives spoke briefly. Mrs. Emily Thorson, the untiring and efficient secretary of Sólskin and treasurer of the Höfn committee, cut the ribbon officially opening the Home. The male voice choir under the direction of Sigurbjorn Sigurdson contributed musical items to the program.

The organization, since its inception, has been most fortunate in not only the wholehearted support of the entire Icelandic communities but also in the quality of the personnel that has head-

ed its committees. The first president Mr. C. F. Frederickson, was forced to retire owing to ill health, shortly after the organization. Mr. G. F. Gislason, who served as president during the formative years 1948-52, contributed richly of his time and talent when his exceptional organization ability was most needed. Mr. L. Summers continued the good work already begun during his term of office 1953-54. His untimely death was keenly felt within the organization. Mr. Sig Sigmundson capably steered the committee during the years 1954-55 as the fund drive for construction of the permanent home began. Call of duty to Brazil terminated his tenure as president. During the years 1955-59 Mr. C. Eyford gave freely of his administrative talent and knowledge of construction during his term of office. The committee was most fortunate in his successor to the presidency, Mr. J. S. Johnson, an engineer by profession and a man himself engaged in the construction industry, when the new home was in the planning stages and under construction. He served the cause most ably from 1960-69. No member of the organization was better fitted, by long service as vice-president, to assume the presidency than the present incumbent Mr. B. C. Howardson. He has been a member of the Board of Directors almost continuously since 1949. He is moreover a firm believer in the value and service the home renders. He has worked with zeal and enthusiasm on almost every committee in promoting the welfare of the home and its residents.

The Board of Directors has been equally fortunate in finding capable hard working secretaries who have given unstintingly of their time and talent to the cause. The following people have served in this capacity:

Mrs. Thora Orr, 1946-58, who besides her secretarial duties headed many other important committees. Space does not permit a full account of the many other duties undertaken by these officers: Miss Carrie Christopherson, 1958-89; Mrs. Nanna Sigurdson, 1960-61; Mr. K. V. Guttormson, 1961-62; Miss Evelyn Axdal, 1962-64; and Miss Soffia Goodman from 1965 to this date. Only a careful perusal of the minutes of the meetings recorded by these secretaries will reveal the exacting and onerous service rendered by these people. The duties of treasurer were first undertaken by Dr. P. B. Guttormson carried on in this capacity until his departure for Watrous in 1948. These duties were then taken over by Dr. B. T. H. Marteinson, who in spite of heavy professional schedule carried on until 1952. The treasurer's duties then fell into the capable hands of Mrs. Emily Thorson, who continues to record precise reports and give her undiminishing enthusiasm to the office to this day. A tribute for the successful operation of the home must be paid to the matrons in charge. The first of these was Mrs. Bjorg Thompson, who organized the housekeeping, and food services and rendered untiring service to the comfort and welfare of the residents. She was followed for a short period by Mrs. S. Sigmar and Mrs. Matth. Frederickson, until Miss May Stevenson took over. Then followed Mrs. Sigurður McDowell, who assumed the matron's duties in 1962 and served most efficiently until her resignation in 1969, and Mrs. Jakobina Sveinsson, whose short time in office has already demonstrated her fine qualities and capabilities for the office. Two other ladies, Frú Guðriður Jónsdóttir, of Iceland, and Mrs. June Isaacs served temporarily as matrons for brief periods.

Any account of the sponsoring organization, the growth and development of the home "Höfn" would be incomplete without giving due credit to the magnanimous financial support and manifold assistance rendered by the Ladies' Auxiliary Sólskin (The Sunshine Club). This organization dates its origin back to November 1917 when a few ladies of Icelandic descent met, essentially for the purpose of banding together to send parcels of food, clothing and cigarettes to Icelandic soldiers serving overseas during World War I. The beginning was modest but by determined united effort considerable sums of money were raised by promoting a wide variety of activities such as sales of food and handicrafts, concerts, dances, dinners, etc. Space does not permit a full account of the many services rendered by the Ladies of Sólskin, but when the home "Höfn" became a reality this organization began to devote most of its efforts and activities to raise money for the building fund, purchase furnishings and promote various welfare projects for the comfort and pleasure of the residents. To date they have donated over \$14,000 in cash, and bought furnishings and equipment to the extent of several thousand dollars. They hold birthday parties every month for the residents whose birthdays occur during month. They also organize an Christmas party and give small to every resident. They also the refreshments for the annual birthday party which celebrates the opening of the home. This has an occasion to receive gifts of for the home. The annual summer and sale of homecooking and handicrafts as well as their autumn cooking sales have been most generously supported and have become large source of revenue for the

The untiring, united efforts of the members of Sólskin and their most generous support of "Höfn" cannot be praised too highly. Indeed, so great is the esteem held for this organization by the Board of Directors that when the federal government requested that a beneficiary be named in the event that the currently constituted Board of Directors cease to function the board asked the Sólskin organization to assume the responsibilities of beneficiaries.

The enviable reputation that the home has enjoyed for fine accommodation, good food and care since it began operation has in recent years resulted in an overflow of applications creating a waiting list of applicants for admission. Even before the original building and furnishings were paid up the Board of Directors began planning an expansion of the existing facilities as the lot could accommodate an extension of the east wing to provide additional 8 single rooms. The building committee was again empowered with the authority to procure plans, call for tenders and borrow an estimated \$22,000.00 required to complete such an addition and include in this contract a twelve-foot extension of the recreation room which had become too small for major functions. The contract was also to include a retaining wall along the south side of the property. This was intended to serve a twofold function of minimizing traffic noises and help prevent erosion of the steeply sloping front of the lot. The contract for this work was let to the lowest bidder, The Eyford Construction Ltd. for the sum of \$47,264.00. The provincial government of British Columbia again contributed one-third of the cost of construction. This addition was completed and opened for occupancy in May 1969. The home

now has accommodation for 70 residents and is always filled to capacity.

The home like all other institutions and all aspects of our economy has been caught in the vicious spiral of inflation. Rising costs of food, salaries of staff, services and maintenance have of necessity forced up the price of residential accommodation, by modest gradual increases to the present rate of \$90.00 per month for double occupancy and \$105.00 for private rooms. These rates compare very favorably with the cost in other rest homes of similar nature.

While the residents are predominantly of Icelandic origin, applicants of all other ethnic backgrounds must be accepted when vacancies occur, since the institution enjoys financial support from the public treasury. The home since its founding has been operated on non-sectarian basis and members of all races and religious affiliation enjoy equal claims on available accommodation. Religious services have been preformed mostly by the Icelandic Lutheran ministers, but while the Reverend A. E. Kristjansson actively served the Unitarian congregation at Blaine, Washington, his services and visits to the home were greatly appreciated and enjoyed by all.

Recreational facilities within the home have not been neglected. The spacious recreational room is furnished with a piano, television set, record player with a good selection of Icelandic and other records, billiard table and

facilities for card-playing, chess and other games. The home also possesses a fine library of both Icelandic and English books. The core of this library was taken over from "Ströndin", the Vancouver chapter of the Icelandic National League, but books from libraries of other Icelandic communities and from private donors number in the hundreds.

The objective of the small group of Icelanders that twenty-five years ago envisioned a home for their aged have now been fulfilled far beyond the expectations of the most ardent original founders. Höfn has become a haven where the residents, many of widely different backgrounds, live together in peace and harmony in a troubled world beset with discord and distrust. The writer asked one of the residents, a friend of long standing, who had long suffered illness and experienced many hardships how he liked life in the home. His answer was simple and direct "I have never had it so good nor did I ever dream of ending my days in such ease and comfort".

A few of the original group of founding members still remain in harness and continue the work so well begun. They can look back with pride and gratification for the part they have played to fulfil objectives of the sponsoring group. Those who are gone will be long remembered and revered by those who now enjoy the fruit of their labors.

## ONE OF THE OLDTIMERS



This picture was taken in 1918 at East Bullhead of Sigurjon, Johnny and Steve with one of Sigurjon's dog-teams

During Manitoba's Centennial it seems quite appropriate that this magazine should honor some of the "old timers" by recalling and recording some of their more interesting experiences encountered as they grew old along with the province.

One such personality is Sigurjon Isfeld who became ninety-five years young last April twenty-fifth. Sigurjon resided in Gimli until he was unable anymore to face the rigors of being a fisherman, at which time he went to reside with his daughter Emily in Edmontonton.

Interesting experiences he had indeed by way of being, in some way, associated with the Sir Ernest Shackleton expedition to the South Pole, the filming of a movie in Chicago, and Admiral Byrd's second Antarctic expedition.

These interesting experiences he had, take on a much greater warmth and feeling when related by his daughter Emily Restrick and therefore I shall take the liberty of quoting her as she revealed the information to me.

'In 1914, just before World War I, Dad was one of those who supplied Sir Ernest Shackleton, the explorer, with dogs for his expedition to the South Pole. He loves to reminisce about this trip, taking the dogs over to England by ship—"The Empress of Britain". Another Gimli resident, J. B. Johnson, went too. They had a wonderful trip — caring for the dogs on the ship and just enjoying every minute of the trip. When they docked in London, a lot of people were interested in the huskies from Canada, as

you can well imagine, because the English love dogs and our dogs were really beautiful, strong, and healthy; which of course they had to be. I remember him telling me how Lady Shackleton came to see the dogs with some of her socialite friends. They cut pieces of hair off the dogs for souvenirs. Dad was somewhat annoyed about this. She just laughed and said: "It'll grow back in". Sir Ernest Shackleton treated them royally for the two weeks they were there, taking them around and showing them the sights. Dad sure enjoyed the "pubs" as you might know. While there, Sir Ernest Shackleton tried to persuade Dad to go on the expedition with him. He was so insistent that Dad wired or cabled my mother for her permission. Mother of course, realizing the dangers, just cabled back "Come home!" Dad still thinks of the money he would have made and feels confident that he would have endured any hardships and made it back safely. However, he came back on the Empress of Britain and has never forgotten this wonderful experience from his younger years.

Before Dad's departure back to Canada. Sir Ernest Shackleton gave him a beautiful gold watch and chain —engraved to him "From Sir Ernest Shackleton", and also a very expensive razor. These treasured gifts, as well as a medal he won wrestling (glíma), are kept in safe keeping by my brother Johnny in Gimli.

Dad and two other Gimli residents, Capt. Baldi Anderson and Gudjon Arnason were in a motion picture with their dog teams. The picture was filmed in Chicago and Detroit. This was in the early days of film making. The story was about a young girl going up to the Yukon during the gold rush days by dog sled. Dad called the picture "The Wild Goose Chase". It is the same story, called in a later version

of it "Call of the Wild", with Clark Gable. Dad called the star of the picture "Miss Daley". Whether that was her own name or the name she used in pictures, I do not know. She just loved the sleigh dogs and completely spoiled them—feeding them candy and treats. When she got on the back of the sleigh they just would not obey her and all came to her and jumped all over her. Dad had to be hidden behind the camouflaged scene and call to them (so that the camera could take the desired pictures)—"Mush" "Haw" or "Gee". She wanted to buy the team but Dad thought it better to keep them in spite of the money involved. He, however, found that they never did obey him as well after that. Dad was asked to be an Indian in some of the scenes but he was too big a man, over six feet, weighing 240 lbs. But I believe Gudjon and Baldi were Indians in the movie. Dad found all this very fascinating.

Dad also supplied Rear Admiral Byrd with a lot of his dogs when he made his second Antarctic expedition in September, 1933. Allan Innes-Taylor (who is Pep's brother, Dad's son-in-law—married to my sister Aurora)—was on this expedition with Admiral Byrd, and he knew how well Dad trained his dogs and how healthy they were. For these expeditions with all those hardships the dogs had to be the best obtainable. Allan told Admiral Byrd about Dad and how he had supplied Sir Ernest Shackleton with his dogs. He sent Allan to Gimli to buy some dogs from Dad.

I do remember Dad had a beautiful team of all white huskies, everyone of them snow white and almost identical. Those were sold to a gentleman who trained dogs for the Orpheum Vaudeville circuit; a gentleman by the name of Mr. Bloomfield.

Nick Ottenson was a very good friend of my Dad's. Nick operated River Park (Amusement Park) in Winnipeg—during the time they had the roller coaster and big dance hall and such there. In the winter in February they always had a Bonspiel there. For many years, I remember my Dad taking dog teams there and my mother and us children helping to make very big colorful woollen pom poms and fancy ribbons to fasten to the dog collars. The sleighs were very colorful too—made out of cow hide—fur on the inside and the outside painted in bright colors. Doddi Thorarson and brother Steve each drove a dog team and Dad one. Others that drove teams were Oli Isfeld, Alli Jonason, Gilli Anderson and Ed Smith. They took people for pleasure rides a mile up the river and back for 25c per person. This was a big thing. People loved it; especially the children. The dogs were very tame, beautiful animals with their bushy coats and curled tails. Dad was very proud of them.

Dad has had a full life, loved dancing and while his brother Oli played in orchestras, he called off the square dances. He belonged to the Old Timers Society in Gimli and for years, they put on dances, the proceeds of which were given to the needy.

Dad was 95 years young April 25th; not bad for a man who only weighed 3 lbs. at birth! He never would have survived if Grandma Ingibjorg hadn't been a midwife and knew what to do. He was about 13 years old when his mother and stepfather (Thorsteinson) heard about this country "where the streets were paved with gold". They had everything they could wish for in Iceland. Grandma had many servants, a big huge home and servants' quarters—in Mjóafjörður. They sold everything and the family hiked over the mountains to Seyðisfjörður where they took a boat to the promised land. They settled firstly in North Dakota where the soil was very poor. This was a big disappointment — so they stayed there only a short time and knowing a lot of Icelanders were settled in Gimli, along Lake Winnipeg, they came there and settled in Husavick."

It has been a pleasure to reminisce and feel some of the thrill of the "growing up" of our province. The past was not without its glamour and it is indeed a rare pleasure to be able to share the excitement and adventure that the rugged "Old timers" experienced.

E. R./A. I.



## Lt. Hallgrimur Jonsson, M.C.

One of the many young men of fine character and much promise whose life was sacrificed in World War I was Hallgrimur Jonsson, of Winnipeg. The following is a fragment of a letter written by him from the Vimy Ridge sector in March 1917, when the warm spring sun in blue skies warmed the ground after the six weeks of frosty weather in the winter of 1916-1917.



LT. HALLGRIMUR JONSSON, M.C.

"I am enclosing a little pressed flower. Few days ago my path lay through very unfrequented ruins of a French village near the line where we are. It is in full view of a town of considerable size behind the German lines, and therefore not counted among the summer resorts of Europe at the present time. Still it is fairly safe for one or two men. Just on the outskirts of the ruins, in the sides of an old shellhole, I spied some snowdrops, the first flowers I have seen this spring. Something prompted me to stop and pick some. It was such a queer place to pick flowers, with the guns administering their afternoon straff . . . That flower, growing there on these ruins, is to me the symbol of the purer and nobler life that will grow up on the ruins and carnage of this war. If I am right then the price is not too high."

The following are excerpts from a letter written by Mr. Jonas Jonasson,

in response to a request for information about Hallgrimur Jonsson, a college friend and a member of the same battalion on enlistment.

". . . I wholeheartedly approve of your intention to publish that letter from Hallgrimur Jonsson in the next issue of The Icelandic Canadian. That letter has a message, today, for those who wish to listen. It was written in March, 1917, to his brother Baldur who was then an invalid at Ninette. Baldur gave it to me when I returned from England in May, 1917. Halli was with a work battalion in France—I believe mostly railway construction. He left Camp Hughes with a draft of officers in August, 1917 (I think after the middle of August)—he was in England at an officers' training camp or school for a very short time before going to France. He won the military cross in October—he wrote me a few lines telling me of it, but he could



not set down on paper any details—he merely said, “for good work one night”. Later I heard, I believe from Bjossi Stefansson, that he and his work party had been buried by a shell and that Halli had dug himself out and gone for assistance and all the men had been rescued.

“When I think of the men of World War I and of those who were my friends and companions I can not bear to listen to some of the talk we hear today . . . doubts as to whether there is a Canadian identity . . . talks of the generation gap and of the frustration of youth.

“But to return to another matter — you asked if I could give any biographical material about Halli—the main facts are in *Hermannabók*—I knew Halli from the time I came to Wesley—we were classmates and close friends, took the same course (history and English), took Normal in 1913—went teaching and both enlisted at the same time, Christmas vacation, 1915. Joe Skaptason introduced us to Colonel Bradbury and he offered to give us commissions. Halli had taken an officer’s training course after finishing Normal and he reported immediately—I a little later after I took a would-be-course in January and February—we were both in “C” Company 108th. As stated in *Hermannabók* Halli came to Canada at the age of 15 in 1900. This was just after his mother’s death and he and a younger sister, later Mrs. Sigríð Olson, came with their aunt (on their mother’s side, Mrs. J. Thorgeirsson.) They made their home with their aunt from that time—Sigríð was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Thorgeirsson. Halli’s father came with the rest of his family in 1903. At first Halli worked as delivery boy for a grocery, but I believe he had started to work for Eaton’s before he entered College—at any rate, he worked in the

Men’s Furnishings at Eaton’s in the summer time the first years he was at college. He had never had one day of formal schooling before he entered the Matriculation Department at Wesley College—in Iceland he had the instruction usually given in the home by itinerant teachers at that time. I was asked to write a short article about him in *Logberg* after his death. I remember that I wrote that before he left home he had read most of Icelandic literature, available at that time. His father told me that it would have been more appropriate to write “the Best”. At any rate, Halli was fond of literature, particularly poetry—before he entered college he had read much English poetry—he told me once that he had read all of Byron. It was love of learning that induced him at the age of 20 to enter matriculation, without any previous schooling in this country. I sometimes think of this and similar cases when I head that our Federal Bureau of Statistics equates education with the number of years a person has spent in school and classifies all those who have not spent so many years in school as “illiterate” — I think of my own parents and other Icelanders who had never had one day of formal schooling and yet were better versed in many ways in World Affairs than some college graduates today.

“But to return to my theme: Halli was keenly interested in learning — particularly literature and history — today, I am sure he would have liked to be in the Civil Service, the Foreign Office. He entered teaching because of a genuine love for teaching — he taught a year at a country school near Grandview and then went to Manitou in August 1914. His name is probably on the Honor Roll in The First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg and in the First Lutheran Church there is a cop-

per plaque to his memory. He was a member of that church from the time he came to Winnipeg and attended church regularly with the Thorgeirsons—I know he rarely missed a Sunday and more often than not was there twice on Sunday. He worked wholeheartedly at whatever he undertook—never anything by halves. He was an active member of The Icelandic Student’s Society—its president in 1911-12—he took part in debating and drama. When he entered teaching he did so from a genuine desire to impart knowledge and when he enlisted he did so from a sense of desire to serve. At Christmas, 1915, as you well know, there were no illusions about the glamor of war—the events of 1915 were too real. At Camp Hughes he was impatient with the monotonous routine of squad drill and he was also impatient with the dull routine of an officers’ training school in England—he took the first opportunity to get to France. In 1918 he entered the Air Force as an observer—he wrote me from France and was enthusiastic about the

work—as he wrote, “No mud up here”.

The following details, though out of sequence, add to the picture.

In 1905, he entered the Matriculation Department at Wesley College. At mid-term he temporarily discontinued his course to help his brother Baldur to continue with his studies, and to assist his father, who had arrived in 1903, with a large family.

He graduated in 1912, with a bronze medal in English literature.

. . . he was full of energy, a terrific worker, cheerful, and a fountain of good cheer in company.

He was awarded the military cross in October, 1916. One of his officers said that he was one of the bravest men he had ever known.

In March 1917 he was in charge of a light railway behind the lines.

After his transfer to the R.A.F., he was married to Miss Lucille Ritchman, of London. Late in July he left for France, and was killed in air combat on September 3, 1918. —W.K./J.J.

#### GET THEM INTERESTED WHILE THEY ARE YOUNG



Mr. and Mrs. Ken Sveinsson and two-month old son Kenman Lyf

The accompanying picture is of Ken Sveinsson and his wife Jan of California, and their two-month old son Kenman Lyf.

Kenman Lyf was the youngest person of Icelandic origin in attendance at a 1970 Thorablót dinner at San Mateo, California.

Perhaps the main address of the evening was too long for Ken.

★



## MANITOBA SCENES – CONTINUED

## SNOW DRIFTS

Guttormur J. Guttormsson

(1878-1966)

Translated by Watson Kirkconnell

Over blinding plains of snow	Flung together, tossed and spread,
North winds sweep and smother;	Snow wreaths drift and glare, —
Here they lay a snow-heap low,	Winter from her frozen head
There they raise another.	Combs her falling hair.

Borne on cloudy bridges high,	Crystal breakers rise and fall,
Blizzard hosts are shrieking.	Ever ebbing, flowing;
Swirling snowflakes eddy by	All are merged in one vast pall
In Protean streaking.	Ere the gale cease blowing.

In that play of frenzied storm  
All things suffer change:  
Lofty crests grow uniform,  
Hollows filled and strange.

## IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL FALL DAY

It was a beautiful fall day, warm and drowsy, and the little village of Pelican Bay lay basking in the sunshine.

It was a day to gladden the heart of any man, but Donald McTavish was too preoccupied with his thoughts to see the riotous colours of the poplars and maples clad in their fall best, or the tall stately pine trees that fringed the lake and encircled Pelican Bay.

He walked slowly and reluctantly towards the pier that stretched out in the sparkling waters of the lake and perched himself on the top step of the white light house.

Well, here was the **Northland Queen** just rounding the south point, steaming majestically into the Bay, bringing Tanya Ellis back after all these years.

from **TANYA**, by  
Kristine Benson Kristofferson

## MANITOBA SCENES – CONTINUED

## A WINTER SCENE, WITH A NEW ICELAND PIONEER'S LOG CABIN

All day the wind had swept angrily about the little house in the clearing, whistling down the chimney and rattling the panes of the little windows threateningly. Now it was beginning to snow. The white flakes whirled about in the eddies as if reluctant to descend to the humble earth. The big trees that stood like sentinels around the patch of cleared land rocked their branches drunkenly and murmured ominously among themselves. Altogether it had been a wild day and the coming of night promised to be no better.

from **THE VIKING HEART**, by  
Laura Goodman Salverson

## A WINTER SCENE ON LAKE WINNIPEG

The days sped on. Now the ice was over two feet thick and each day the men took a little longer to open the holes in the ice. The piles of ice chunks beside the holes looked like crystal cairns, reflecting the sun's rays in prisms. Nearly every forenoon the wind rose and no matter which direction it came from, it was always bitterly cold. By sundown the wind was gone, and the evening sky was lit by bright stars and either the rainbow colours of the northern lights or bright moonlight, and the sled dogs raised muzzles to howl in defiance at the wolves on the mainland.

from **COLD ADVENTURE**, by  
Violet Ingjaldson

## THE OLD LIGHTHOUSE AT GIMLI

"The old wooden lighthouse was gone from the end of the dock, and he felt a nostalgic loss, for the lighthouse had had its sides carved and scribbled with names. He had known the keeper, had watched him trim and fill the large kerosene lamp, and wind the spring that turned the reflector. He had listened to the keeper tell tales of boats caught in storms. He remembered crouching beside Nick on the lee side of the lighthouse when a north gale was blowing and sending huge waves over the dock. And he remembered sitting there when moonlight shot a beam across the lake as smooth as a sheet of ice at a curling rink."

from **COLD ADVENTURE**, by  
Violet Ingjaldson

## A Railroad to Northland

From the Icelandic by J. P. Pálsson

Translated by Caroline Gunnarsson

A vigorous and lively writer, Dr. J. P. Pálsson, who hailed from New Iceland, wrote astronauts like a small community applauding local heroes.

When the railroad crossed Canada before the approach of the century, the cheers were scattered and isolated, for what was said at one end of the country was not heard at the other. a short fiction story about a committee of Icelandic pioneers attempting to have a railway surely no thrill, before or after, could exceed that of the pioneer when the iron horse finally chugged into his village, belching steam and smoke, ripping apart the solitude of years with bells and clangs and whistles, arrogantly announcing that this was the opening up of the world and life would never be the same again.

Everybody needed and wanted the railway. It was the issue of elections, the rise and fall of governments. Oldtimers thrilled to the memory of its arrival and attending controversies well into the third decade of the century.

A vigorous and lively writer, Dr. J. P. Pálsson, who hailed from New Iceland, wrote a short fiction story about a committee of Icelandic pioneers attempting to have a railway laid to their small Manitoba community. He named it "Alfur A Borg", after the hero of his narrative. It was published in a 1924 issue of "Saga", a magazine edited and published semi-annually by P. P. Þorsteinnsson, a poet, a writer of short fiction and author of a history of Icelandic immigration to North America. The story has been translated for this centennial issue of The Icelandic Canadian and entitled "A Railroad for Northland".

Caroline Gunnarsson

Helgi rested his elbows on the table to elevate the hands holding up his head above the Latin book under his nose. Out of mind were the spring exams and the strifes of Caesar. Latin had nothing to say to him a tthat moment. He was caught in the jostling babbling murmur of the street, which rode the soft spring breeze through his open window. To sit like this above the busy thoroughfare was to relax in the whirlpool of life, to be in the middle of the stream but not pushed by it, part of the drama and yet an on-looker. Life kicked, pulsed and sparkled on the street in spring, he mused. To look upon it was to love it and all who lived it.

What? A vision out of the blue! Helgi rubbed his eyes and aimed them straight at a tall, husky figure of a man who strode along the opposite side

of the street and carefully scrutinized the numbers on the houses. He carried a long, rolled up package under one arm and even from his perch across the street, Helgi discerned the stout rope which secured it. What could bring Alfur of Borg to the City? It was certainly none other. There was only one such pair of shoulders and one such beard in the whole world and they belonged to Alfur, who farmed the homestead he had named Borg in the Icelandic community of Northland in Manitoba.

Helgi sprang from his chair, took the stairs in a leap and shot across the street.

"Alfur! Alfur!" he called. "Sæll and many times blessed."

"Many times blessed yourself, my Helgi. Now it's good to see you. I was trying to find your house, but must

have got on the wrong side of the street."

The big man seemed all strength and . The joy welled up in the blue eyes and spilled over to light up the feature to the crest of the cheekbones, spreading over the beard, out to the shoulders and down to the waist. So smiled Alfur of Borg. He stroked the beard and sobered, the smile still twinkling in quick darts as he changed expressions.

"Bless you, old friend," Helgi said . . . "Come into my hovel and tell me the news. How's everybody at Northland? What are you doing in the city and what's in that big roll you're carrying under your arm?"

In Helgi's room Alfur stood his roll in a corner and looked around while the young man shot questions at him and received no answers.

"Aren't you going to tell me anything?" he asked at last.

"Not if you keep on asking. I can't keep up with this wild pace. You're all slaves, you young people, swept up in a mad swirl. If your backsides touch down somewhere the mouth keeps going like a windmill in a gale."

Helgi laughed.

"I came to ask you a favor, my Helgi." Alfur went on, ignoring the barrage of questions. "I must talk to a man who unfortunately speaks nothing but English. Will you interpret for me?"

"I would be glad to. I owe you more than that little chore."

"I wouldn't say that, but you'll get paid for it, anyway."

"Certainly not. Do you think I've forgotten how good you and Thorunn were to me, a lonesome, penniless immigrant? I'll funnel your message across for you. You're not after the Governor-General about something, are you?"

"I have no business with the Governor-General. The man I want to see has more power than that one, I'm thinking."

Helgi sensed that Alfur was not joking. He was known in the Northland community as an arrogant eccentric with no taste for cliques or organizations. All attempts to enlighten him politically at election time had resulted in humiliating defeat for the electioneers. He dabbled in genealogy and had traced his ancestry to Egill Skallagrímsson of Borg in Iceland. He took pride in being linked by blood to the fabled viking, and it was rumored that he himself had spirited his bride from the bosom of her family, one of the proudest in Iceland, and carried her off to America. Helgi did not have this straight from Alfur, but believed him capable of such a feat. To be sure, Thorunn was an enlightened lady with dignity of spirit and bearing.

Uneasily the youth watched Alfur stroke his beard. "I have to see the president of the railway," he said in a matter of fact tone.

"How're we going to go about making him see you and me?" Helgi asked in amazement. "Members of the Legislature, committees and boards wait for weeks before they're notified that they will be granted an audience, and then they wait again."

"I'll tell you how my boy. Twelve times the quavering beggars from Northland have come here in committees asking that the railroad be brought to the area, twelve times they've come snivelling back to report progress. I hear they're loitering somewhere around the city now, supposed to see Thorbjorn at two o'clock tomorrow afternoon. We'll go in there with them and talk to Thorbjorn ourselves."

"But Mr. Thorburn, or Thorbjorn as you call him, will just politely dismiss us all."

Alfur appraised Helgi calmly. "He will not try that," he declared.

"What's your business with Mr. Thorburn, Alfur?"

"I'm going to suggest that we get the railroad."

"I understand that the committee has the same thing in mind."

"Yes, yes. I know, and our M.L.A. will do the talking and finish up with his old platform as good as new, still spouting the old line to fight for the railroad and see the courage and industry of the pioneers rewarded. I'll tell you, my Helgi, a man of Thorbjorn's mettle is sick of the sight of them. He has the blood of Northern Kings and he's as deaf to these whimpering pups as the moon is to baying dogs."

"But Mr. Thorburn is a Scot," Helgi ventured.

"Comes from the north of Scotland, where the vikings landed, and he's descended directly from one of them. A poor boy setting out for a new continent and making his way to the most powerful position in the country! That's viking blood. Even if his name weren't Thorbjorn, that blood would tell."

"But I thought you didn't want the railroad," Helgi argued hopefully. "I understood that was the quarrel between you and the rest of them out at Northland."

"I don't want the railroad, but I can't take the shame of these aimless excursions in here any longer. Year after year these committees waste their time and our money displaying their weakness before the powers of this land. Once a year they kneel in prayer to Thorbjorn, turn tail and trudge

home with his double-meaning answers. I'll see that there's an end to this performance."

"Are you going to get Mr. Thorburn to promise that there will never be a railroad to Northland?"

"I'm going to get from him a word that means what it says. Either he intends to lay the railroad soon or he doesn't. Youth needs a railroad. To be men they must work the land and run their errands sitting down like dowagers."

Helgi had forebodings. He wished he hadn't promised to go with the old man.

"You're ashamed to be seen with me, my Helgi," Alfur observed sadly, "and I suspect you'd rather face Thorbjorn with the committee men. That's because you can't see men as they are, lad. You'll see them tomorrow, writhing before Thorbjorn like cods on dry land, wriggling like earthworms in their cheap Sunday suits, and feeling privileged to grovel before the throne."

Alfur sharpened his voice. "Thorbjorn is my kind of man," he asserted firmly. "He is what he seems to be, true to himself. Streams of empty talk won't lead him anywhere. Don't you think I know the mettle of the Northmen, Helgi." The giant was on his feet, an immovable mountain powered by some fiery force of mystic origin.

"What do you say, Helgi?"

Helgi's eyes glowed with the clear light of blue sky after rain. "I'll be with you when you talk to Thorbjorn, old friend, and for once in my life I feel that it's good to be an Icelander."

Joy welled up in the old man's eyes again, spilled over on his beard and lit it up as it billowed like a ruffled sea under a midnight sun.

Beside the bearded giant in neat, plain working clothes, Helgi was a

slight young gentleman of modest manner as the two walked into the railway president's waiting room just before two o'clock the following day. With his great roll under his arm, Alfur was an odd sight, but he must do this his way, and Helgi was undisturbed.

They greeted the representatives from their home community, who sat close to the edges of their chairs, uncomfortable and subdued in their Sunday best. Their spokesman, the M.L.A. for the constituency and an Icelander, drew his eyebrows into a knot above the bridge of his nose and asked one of his followers whether Alfur of Borg was on the committee. At that moment the door to Mr. Thorburn's office opened and a clerk invited the committee to enter. Alfur and Helgi held back, then slipped in unobtrusively behind the committee.

The M.L.A. named each committee man as he entered, and in turn each was greeted cordially by Mr. Thorburn.

"How do you do?" he said, grasping Alfur by the hand.

"Kondu sæll, Thorbjorn," Alfur responded.

"What did you say the giant's name was?" Thorburn asked the M.L.A.

Helgi stepped forward. "This is Alfur of Borg and he greeted you in Icelandic."

A shudder ran through the entire committee. "What a damn disgrace," the M.L.A. fumed inwardly. "Curse the old devil for his pains. We Icelanders will never be able to lift our heads again." Aloud he explained that this man was not a member of the committee, but must have been in the city and decided to come along.

"Obviously he's in the city," Thor-

burn observed. "Now I'll hear your case."

Helgi withdrew to a corner of the office where Alfur stood leaning on his roll like a great stone statue. Remarkable how accurately the old man had described the afternoon's performance the day before the first time he witnessed it.

Mr. Thorburn listened attentively to the M.L.A., at the same time shooting quick glances at Alfur in his corner. Finally the recital was over. He sat for a minute in respectful silence, then rose from his chair, praised the pioneers of the Northland community for their courage and industry and the committee for its initiative. He declared that their demands were justified, promised to take them up with the executive board which would be certain, give serious thought to them, and communicate with the M.L.A. in writing within a month.

The committee hastened out when Thorburn opened the door for them. Alfur stepped forward and drew himself up to his full height.

"I wish to have a few words with you, Thorbjorn," he said, and Helgi instantly turned the words into English.

"Wait a second," Mr. Thorburn said to Helgi as he hurried after the committee men to shake their hands, then returned to his two remaining guests and closed the door.

During this little ceremony, Alfur had unknotted the rope around his roll, wound it into a neat skein and stuffed it in his pocket.

"The floor belongs to the big man now," Mr. Thorburn declared, turning to Helgi. Tell him to speak up and you tell me what he says. I should offer you chairs, but the giant seems more

than able to stand on his feet.”

Alfur unrolled his package on the floor and spread out a big bear pelt mounted on a bigger hand-woven rug with a handstitched design around the edge and in the corners.

“It was the custom of our forebears, Thorbjorn, the chieftains of the North, to bring gifts when they visited their equals. I would ask you to accept this memento of our meeting and let it remind you that men and women inhabit the community of Northland I took this pelt off a bear that I conquered and you will not find it flawed by trap or bullet holes. My wife Thurunn, wove the fabric of the rug and stitched into it pictures of pioneer life at Northland, events that we older people will not forget. I challenge your noble blood, Thorburn, that you will not let me carry this package home again, that you are kin to the proud spirits of the race, who see greatness in that which small men call humility. If you accept this gift, I shall take you to be a man, and not one to answer a sincere question with double talk.” Alfur paused to look hard at the president of the railroad.

“Does your company intend to lay a railroad to Northland? If so when?”

Thorburn listened in thoughtful silence, without taking his eyes of the speaker. Now he rose from his chair, walked toward the two men, took the rug from Alfur and examined it closely, then turned to Helgi.

“Will you tell this Nordic chieftain that I thank him for the honor of his

visit. Tell him that it pleases me to see a mighty viking stride a thousand years out of the past for an interview with me. Tell him that within two years I shall return his visit and that I never travel as far as Northland except in a private railway car. Tell him too, that I shall not forget this promise, for the great bear will lie on the floor at my bedside where I take my first and last steps each day. I thank him for a precious gift.”

Less than two years later Northland celebrated the arrival of the railway. The village was still in the process of birth, since it was the offspring of the railroad, and such towns don't develop in a day. But a hall had been rushed into being for the feasting. It was a glorious occasion, for the president of the railway had chosen to honor Northland, of all places, with his presence. In order of importance, the M.L.A. was seated next to the president, then the municipal council and the past members of railway committees. Long speeches praised the pioneers and the M.L.A. for their courage, perseverance and initiative. Mentioned in passing were backward eccentrics, the self-centred old codgers who lived to hold back progress. A well deserved dig at the likes of Alfur of Borg, it was felt. No one noticed Alfur's absence from the gathering until the president of the railway asked about him.

When he was assured that Alfur would not be found anywhere but at home, Mr. Thorburn excused himself from the party, hired a livery and drove to Borg.

## HOUSES I HAVE KNOWN

by Dorothy Garbutt

In the old days it was a charming district around Sargent Avenue and Victor Street. For it was here that most of the prominent Icelandic families lived. Prosperity for them was brought by good educations, the erection of sturdily built apartment blocks with good solid Norse names like the Vingolf, the Vinborg and the Alf-höll, and, spacious homes. And no home was more imposing than the Eggertson's at 766 Victor Street, three storeys tall and turreted. Together with their neighbors, Dr. Bjornson and Dr. Brandson, they could look away across the pretty little Notre Dame Park, not cluttered up with parks board paraphernalia as today, away across to the spire of the Icelandic Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Church and a much smaller General Hospital. No Nurses' quarters nor maternity pavilions obstructed the view then.

It was at this hospital that these two greatly respected Icelandic physicians came to prominence in their profession. Not too proud to be known as general practitioners, they had a friendly rapport with their patients which often proved a deep psychological factor in their recovery. I know my father, Murray Colcleugh, held them in very high esteem, both as professional men and personal friends and often I would go around to the prescription counter

in his drug store at Sherbrook Street and Notre Dame Avenue and find them all in deep conversation, mostly over the politics of the day.

The old Icelandic Lutheran Church on Sherbrook Street has changed hands with the changing ethnic population in the area. But, in its day, it was the centre of Icelandic social and religious life and each New Year's Eve it staged a symbolic Viking funeral on the pavement in front of the church. Everyone came to watch and right on the stroke of midnight the flames shot up and the old year was sent off to the ancient Norse Valhalla, keeper of years and the souls of men.

And as I walked down Victor Street last week, the snow crisp beneath my feet, I looked attentively at the large solidly constructed homes of the Icelandic elite of that earlier day. And I thought of what hardships their fathers had suffered when they came down the Red River and up the west side of Lake Winnipeg to Gimli, suffering the terrible smallpox epidemic, fishing and living on fish. And I was filled with admiration at their courage and determination. I was happy, too, that the house at 766 Victor is still standing in the area they themselves used to call Sargent (with a hard G) and Wictor. Up the Goolies!

—Winnipeg Free Press

## W. J. LINDAL HONOURED

Readers of the Icelandic Canadian will be interested to know that Judge Walter J. Lindal is one of nineteen prominent and representative Manitobans presented with the Manitoba Historical Society Centennial Commemoration Medal. These medals were presented by His Excellency Governor-General Rolan Michener on behalf of the Society at the society's dinner at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, April 27. Judge Lindal received his medal *in absentia* for, while his condition is now improving, he is still in Deer Lodge Hospital.

The medal was received by Mrs. Ruth Hilland, of Calgary, on behalf of her father, Judge Lindal.

The medal is inscribed: Medal of Honour, The Honourable Walter J. Lindal.



Hon. Walter J. Lindal

The Manitoba Bar Association, in conjunction with the Law Society of Manitoba, held a testimonial dinner, May 19, in honor of living members who were called to the Bar or admitted as Solicitors in Manitoba fifty years ago or more. Hon. Richard S. Bowles, Lieutenant-Governor, was chairman, and the dinner was held in the Marlborough Hotel. A handsome bronze medal, suitably engraved, was presented to each of the members honored.

Judge Walter J. Lindal, Q.C., was one of the members thus honored. Judge Lindal received his B.L.B. (Manitoba) in 1919, after his return from war service in France; he practiced law in Winnipeg, 1919-1942; was appointed K.C. in 1932; served as County Court Judge in Minnedosa, 1942-1962, and has been Counsel to William R. ... since retirement from the Bench.

## GLIMPSES OF

## THE ARBORG DISTRICT

by HOLMFRIDUR DANIELSON

When I agreed to do a short article on the history of the Arborg district, I knew it would be a difficult task, as very little has been gathered and published about this western part of New Iceland, which takes in the Arborg and Framnes districts.

Most, if not all of the original settlers have departed our sphere of earthly activity, and the memories of their descendants, whom I was able to interview, are very hazy about facts and figures. In spite of everything and with the aid of my own memories, I have now gathered together enough material to fill a book. However, as this is to be a short article, the difficulty will be to skim along and pin-point a few highlights. I shall not vouch for all the facts being correct, but perhaps this short piece of "historical" work will spur others to fill in the gaps and correct the mistakes.

### The Beginning of Settlement

At the turn of the century, the new Iceland settlements had stretched west from Lundi (Riverton) and Hnauša through the Geysir district. The western-most farms in the Geysir district were at Hofi (Sigurður Sigurðsson), at Hvanneyri (Jón Borgfjörð) and at Melstað\* (Guðmundur Borgfjörð). After the new settlements (Arðal and Framnes) took shape, these three farms

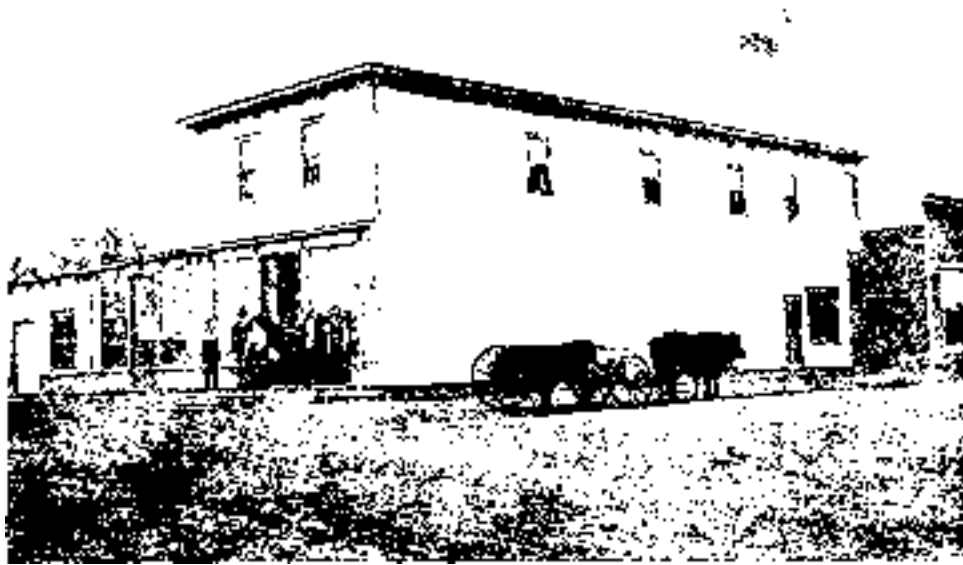
were always counted with it, rather than with the Geysir district.

Actually the first homesteader in the Framnes district was Guðmundur Nordal, who came from Geysir, but he sold his farm a few years later. The real settlements began with the influx of people from North Dakota, and a large group of settlers from the Isafold district (Howardville) north of Riverton who were flooded out at this time by high waters in Lake Winnipeg.

In November, 1901, four men came from Hallson, N. Dak. to look at the land in this heavily wooded, unsettled district. Among them was Tryggvi Ingjalðsson, who later was to play a large part in the progress of the community.

In a short two years the whole of the community was settled, all the way from Geysir, on both sides of the Icelandic River, and reaching five miles west of what is now the town of Arborg. All the farms fronted on the River, with the quarter sections a quarter of a mile wide and one mile deep. A few were also taken north of these river lots, but here the settlement was more thinly scattered.

\* As was the custom in Iceland, all the settlers gave names to their homesteads, often bringing the names with them from their own farmsteads in Iceland, or naming their farms for some famous places, and other spots of note in the old country.



The "CORNER STORE"; to the left: drugstore; harness shop.

Stefan Guðmundsson, also from Dakota, was among the first in the district. He named his home **Ardal**, and here the first Post Office was established in 1902. The district bore that name until the railroad came, in 1910, when it was changed to Arborg. The Framnes Post Office was established in 1905.

The first task of the settlers was to cut roads through the heavy bush, after having built some sort of shelter for themselves and their families. The ones furthest west had twenty miles to go for their necessary provisions, to Hnausa, or twenty-five miles to River-ton. The hastily built trails were almost impassable in summer, if the season was wet, so transportation of goods was a precarious task. This situation was alleviated somewhat when Tryggvi Ingjaldsson established a small store on his farm which was five miles west of Arborg. He brought his goods from the Stefan Sigurdson store at Hnausa. Later another Framnes

farmer set up a small store, ((Guðmundur Magnusson). These stores helped to supply the settlers with the most needed provisions, but were discontinued when the railroad came to Arborg and stores were established there. I remember that my sister Sella and I, had the adventurous experience of being sent to Tryggvi Ingjaldsson's store, on a bright winter day. We were about eight and nine years old, and we had five miles to go and five miles back. We were bundled up in all the warmest clothing we had, with heavy woolen stockings under our thin Icelandic sheep-skin slippers. We pulled a small sleigh and we ran and ran, never seeming to get tired in the crisp cold air. There was no mishap on the way and Hólmfríður (Tryggvi's wife) gave us some warm and nourishing food to sustain us on the way back. We got home just as it was getting dark, and were very proud of our successful sojourn into this faraway world.

### Cultural Beginnings

As always among the Icelandic settlers, after the merest necessities had been looked after, the first concern was to establish religious exercises, a school and a library. The Ardal Lutheran congregation was formed in 1902 and the community hall (Félagshúsið) was built in 1903, a mile west of Arborg. It was a joint effort of the Ardal and Framnes settlers, and was built entirely by volunteer labour, the lumber being acquired through donations by the homesteaders. It served as a school, church and concert hall. The first teacher was Bjorn I. Sigvaldason, later a homesteader in the newer Viðir district. The children and young people came from as far east as the two Borgfjord families, which for them meant a distance of over four miles.

School districts were organized in Ardal in 1905, and shortly thereafter in Framnes. The first teacher at the Framnes school was Kristveig Metúsalsmáldóttir (later Mrs. Valdi Johanneson). The first teachers at Ardal were Johannes Pálsson (later a doctor in the district), and B. I. Sigvaldason. Church services were held at the "Félagshús" with Rev. R. Marteinsson coming all the way from Hnausa, sometimes on foot, to minister to the religious needs of the people. Sunday school was also held, with Hólmfríður Ingjaldsson, Guðmundur Magnússon and Eiríkur Johannsson as leaders. Thorsteinn Hallgrímsson, a musically gifted man, led the church choir and also organized and led musical efforts at concerts. There was no organ, or other musical instruments at first, and he used a tuning fork or a musical whistle to set the tone.

Shortly after the hall was built a play was staged called "Mávarnir" (The Seagulls) written or adapted by

Johann Magnus Bjarnason. The leading lady was Kristveig Metúsalsmáldóttir. This was the beginning of a long tradition of dramatic activity and excellence in the Arborg district. A library society was organized in 1904 in Framnes, many of the books being brought by the settlers from the Isafoldar settlement, north of River-ton, where a library had been in existence. This library flourished for a great many years and had over 600 books in stock. A library was also established at Arborg, which grew steadily through the years and is now being incorporated into the Evergreen Regional Library.

The Ardal congregation built a church in Arborg in 1911 or 12, and halls were built in Arborg the same year and in Framnes in 1913. The Ardal church is still being used, now with a substantial addition at the rear for a meeting hall and kitchen facilities. A small ladies aid in Framnes was incorporated into the United Farm Women's organization in 1914. The Lutheran Ladies Aid in Ardal was organized in 1905, and has been a bulwark in the community, supporting the church, giving service to the needy and furthering all cultural activities. In 1914 the L.A. was instrumental in starting a Dorcas society, made up of teen-aged girls and younger married women, within the church. These two organizations were responsible for all play productions through the years, which lasted until 1940. During the years 1920 to 1939 there were usually two full length plays each year, an Icelandic play sponsored by the L.A. and an English play put on by the Dorcas Society, while it functioned.

The L.A. yearly gives substantial sums for the upkeep of the church and in 1950 donated \$1,000.00, to the fund



for the addition to the church, which was built in 1952.

The L.A. has supplied many of the handsome items inside the church, such as carpets, communion service, etc. It has supported all good causes: The Jon Bjarnason Academy (in its time), The World Lutheran Action, Save the Children Fund, the Red Cross, the Lutheran Women's Summer Camp at Husavik. Together with the Ladies' Aid of Viðir and Geysir, the Ardal L.A. gave complete furnishings for one room in the Arborg Red Cross Hospital, when it was built.

#### The North Star Creamery

At the start of the settlement farming consisted, naturally, mostly of stock-raising, but soon little plots were cleared out and ploughed for grain, and now this district is considered one of the best grain-farming sections in the Interlake. The farmers wanted to sell cream, but where to sell it, that was the problem. Tryggvi Ingjaldsson an enterprising man, had established a small butter-making plant beside his store in the early years, but more and better facilities were needed. A few farmers from Geysir, Arborg district and Viðir formed the impetus to build a creamery in 1907, the first co-operative creamery in Manitoba. It has now been flourishing for sixty-three years, come September, with ever-growing success, and been a great boost for the district. The original shareholders were forty-four in number, and the leaders in the movement were Gestur Oddleifsson, Thomas Bjornsson, B. I. Sigvaldason, and P. Stefan Guðmundsson. It should be noted that two women, Guðlaug Sveinsson and Jóhanna Sveinsson were in the original group of shareholders.

There were many set-backs at first and especially during the war years, 1914-18, with determined competition and opposition from powerful concerns in Winnipeg, but with dogged determination the work went forward and within three years there were over eighty shareholders. The first chairman of the board was Thomas Bjornsson, who served in that capacity for a great many years. Gestur Oddleifsson was chairman for many years. Secretaries during the first twenty-five years were: B. I. Sigvaldason, Jón Jónsson, jr., Th. M. Sigurdson, Ingimar Ingjaldsson and G. O. Einarsson.

Butter production the first year was 10,000 pounds, and in 1913 it was 30,000 pounds; in 1914, 56,000 pounds. As mentioned there was a slump during the war years, but by 1921 the production had reached 211,000 pounds.

The first manager of the Company was S. M. Sigurdsson, a shrewd businessman, who on occasion loaned money to the concern, and looked after its interest with keen foresight. The company early established a good regimen of sanitation, and hired cream-testers from Winnipeg. The leading men, influenced some young men from Arborg to take the short dairy course at the University of Manitoba, and they served in various creameries in Manitoba, first as cream-graders, and finally worked themselves into positions as Supervisors in the Dairy Branch, Manitoba Dept. of Agriculture, or as Creamery Managers elsewhere in the province.

For us onlookers there were some interesting side-effects of the Creamery operation. It was necessary to find some way to utilize the vast amount of buttermilk from the creamery, and a sizeable hog farm was established across the river from the plant. The buttermilk was conveyed across

in a pipe from the plant, and fed to the pigs thus creating another fairly successful industry. Anyone who wanted could come to the creamery and get as much buttermilk as they could carry away to feed their pigs and chickens. My sister and I were diligent in carrying buttermilk for our small stock of animals. It was close to half a mile to go, but we made frames of wooden slats (vatnsgrind) which we dropped over our bodies, to hold the pails from bumping into our sides as we cheerfully trotted along, slopping some of the precious contents along the way, no doubt.

Another thing that intrigued us youngsters was getting a ride in the creamery van, which went all around the country-side collecting cream in big cans from the farmers. To go all the way to Viðir, to visit friends, a distance of some twelve miles, was a full day's adventure, as there were stops at every farm, (no doubt coffee drinking along the way). There was never any charge made for letting us ride in the creamery van so this was profitable as well as pleasurable for us.

The North Star Creamery has had a large share of prizes given out for best butter, both in Manitoba competitions and in National competitions. The company has had efficient men at its head, and good management. Herman von Renesse (originally from Germany) was manager for over twenty years, and also butter-maker, an excellent man, with the technical knowledge needed to up-grade the work in every aspect.

During the 1930 and 40's there was an expanse in the work, and a freezer and locker plant was added to the creamery establishment. The story of the North Star Creamery would fill a book, which will perhaps be attempted

at some future date. But it may be said it has been one of the happiest and most stable enterprises in the community.

#### The Coming of the Railroad

The settlers of the Arborg district did not have to go through the dire disasters and calamities that beset the earliest immigrants of New Iceland in the Gimli and Riverton districts. But nevertheless they had to contend with the difficulties and privations of settlers anywhere in a wilderness country. First there was the difficulty of just getting there, with such stock and household goods as they could muster from their previous homes in North Dakota and Houardville (Ísafoldarbyggð). There were no roads, not even trails to follow for much of the way. They had to load their families and goods in wagons or other crude conveyances and trek off into the unknown. As history has recorded of pioneers everywhere they showed great fortitude and patience and ingenuity in just being able to reach their promised land. The story is told of one pioneer, Halldor Abrahamsson, who came to Dakota in 1882, of how he rode all the way to the Arborg district (Framnes) in 1901, on horseback, then over eighty years of age. My father, Ólafur Ólafsson Johnson, walked all the way from Dakota to the Ardal district and herded his few head of cattle. My mother had to come by train to Winnipeg, to Selkirk, from Selkirk to Hnausa by boat, and thence the last lap, by horse-drawn sleigh to Ardal, a distance of ten miles by the road as it is now, but a much longer trek on the pioneer wilderness trail. This she did alone, and not yet knowing the English language, with three small children and an infant in arms,

in the bleak month of November. There were no doubt many others who came on foot, and braved the elements with courage and hardihood.

But now the railroad was coming to Arborg. What a relief! My mother sold her farm to the C.P.R. Co., all except ten acres which she kept for herself, and work commenced on the roadbed from Teulon north. Tryggvi Ingjaldsson, who had acquired some primitive road-working equipment, and built such graded roads in the community, as were in existence then, bravely took on the contract to build the railroad bed, through the last four miles of swamps just south of the river. Though he and his gang worked with foresight and good will, Tryggvi lost heavily on the contract.

The tracks were finally laid and there was joy in the community when the first train pulled into the handsome looking station at Arborg in the fall of 1910. Enterprising individuals were making plans to set up businesses in the new village, but the most enthusiastic and enterprising of all was Sigurjón Sigurdson, a merchant from Winnipeg, who with his brother-in-law Karl Vopni, started building his store in the spring of 1910 and actually had it open for business before the railroad tracks crossed the river from the south. It was situated along the River road, just a few yards west of the railroad bridge across the river, and was the initial building on the main street leading north from the river. Along this street all the business enterprises of the village were situated for many years until the town started spreading in all directions, but that was not to happen for many years.

The coming of the Sigurjón Sigurdson family was a happy event for the village of Arborg. Not only was Sigurjón a handsome young gentleman of

imposing appearance, with a charming manner, sweet temper and generous business ethics. The whole family was to take leadership in church work, community enterprise and cultural life of the district. For one thing, the musical talent in that family is now well known, culminating in the daughter Snjolaug becoming a noted pianist, who had her debut in Town Hall in New York.

But more of that later when we take a quick look at the cultural efforts of the community in general.

The second merchant to set up shop in Arborg was S. M. Sigurdson who came from the Geysir district where he had operated a small store. His building was further north along the same street, and both Sigurjón and S. M. Sigurdson had commodious living quarters over their stores where the families lived. Next to Sigurjón's store was built the Sigurdson-Thorvaldson store, by partners from Riverton and Hnausa, (or rather from Gimli, as Johannes Sigurdson had then a large business establishment in that town). A hotel was built just north of S. M.'s store, and the first hotel keeper was a Frenchman by the name of St. Goddard. Other small businesses began to fill up the street until there was a complete row of buildings, some eight or nine of them from Sigurjón's store (which was always called the Corner Store) and north to the hotel.

Another good addition to the village was the Bert Wood family from Teulon. Bert Wood set up an implement shop in town and also became a most energetic promoter of sports among the young men, especially hockey, and baseball. When the motor-car era reached Arborg, Bert enlarged his establishment into a garage which he operated along with his implement sales. Some years later Hallor S. Er

lendson opened an implement shop and garage which he operated successfully for about thirty years. His partners in the implement business were Thor Lifman and P. K. Bjarnason. As of today the town of Arborg, expanded to about a thousand souls, has some twelve or thirteen garages, if my count is correct.

No attempt will be made to enumerate the vast number of business enterprises and cultural facilities in this expanding town of Arborg. I will mention, haphazard, just a few. The town was incorporated in 1964. Kenneth Reid is the Mayor, and an able administrator. There is a fine large community hall, curling rink, with four sheets of ice, a skating rink, a fabulous new high school complex, a new elementary school, a handsome Legion Hall. In addition to the Red Cross Hospital, Arborg now has a medical clinic. There are dry good stores, clothing stores, beauty parlors. In June, 1969 a feed plant was built, The Scientific Feed Ltd., at a cost of \$85,000, to serve the Interlake. It produces pelleted rolled, ground or mashed grain for livestock, poultry, turkeys, hogs, and is owned by Peter Loewen.

In March, 1969, a cheese factory, a 102 x 64 foot steel structure, was built in conjunction with the North Star Creamery Ass'n. The cheesemaker is Peter L. Horton originally from Queensland, Australia. It will produce various types of Canadian cheddar cheese to the amount of 3800 pounds a day, or some 1,000,000 pounds per year, requiring 39,000 pounds of raw milk a day, and dairymen in the district stand to gain financially due to the fact that a more complete use of raw material is used in cheese manufacture. The product will be for use in the Interlake area, with the balance

handled by the Manitoba Poultry and Dairy Co-op Ltd.

There is an active Chamber of Commerce, an Agricultural Society, and a branch of the Evergreen Regional library was opened in 1968. The main streets were paved in 1964 and sewer and water works have been put in. There is a fifty-bed hostel for senior citizens operated by the Sisters of St. Benedictine, their excellent school of many years standing being converted to that purpose.

A small voluntary school is operated for retarded children. There is a choral society, and teachers of piano, singing, violin, accordion, guitar and fancy skating. Recently eight new businesses have opened down town, the premises are modern and convenient. Trade is expanding, and the good farm land is productive. The land is used for mixed farming and good beef cattle are produced. One rancher has raised as many as 168 cattle in two years.

The population is still about one-half of Icelandic descent, various other nationalities (Anglo-Saxons, Ukrainian, Polish, etc) making up the rest, all working together for the betterment of the community. One of the Centennial projects of the Canadian Legion was to start work on beautifying the banks of the Icelandic River, with the idea of a park and recreational area.

This spring The Interlake Development Corporation was formed, with the head office being in Arborg, and Mayor Ken Reid elected the first president, with Joe Sigurdson of Lunder as first vice-president. Second vice-president is Selkirk councillor Alan Cooper; secretary Ed Hewler of Teulon, and treasurer is Norman Valgardson of Gimli. The Corporation has high hopes that major improvements will be made to the economic base of

the Interlake region, and a prior consideration is being given to the development of better tourist facilities. The corporation is a non-profit and non-political organization, and its main role is to carry out research, prepare and co-ordinate plans and undertake projects which will improve the quality of life in the region and develop a sounder economy. At present the main industries in the Interlake are farming and fishing and there are many problems facing these occupations, especially in the fishing industry, at the present time. At a dinner which concluded the I.D.C. organizational meeting, Mayor Rooney of Teulon des-

ciplalities involved". This includes all sential partnership among the municipalities involved". This includes all the area from Stonewall and north in the Interlake to Ashern and Moosehorn.

The twelve-man board of the Corporation has now appointed Eric Stefanson, former M.P. for the constituency of Selkirk, as general manager of the Interlake Development Corporation. The Corporation office is located in the Rural Municipality of Bifrost building in Arborg.

A few more glimpses of community and cultural life will be given in the September issue of the Icelandic Canadian.

### THE MARCH CONCERT

Icelandic is the second language to many of the young people taking classes at the Department of Icelandic, University of Manitoba. To others it is only an extra language that curiosity has driven them to explore.

Yet it came naturally enough to the young people who used it as an instrument of entertainment at a concert sponsored by the Icelandic Canadian Club on March 20, in the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church. Gissur Eliasson, president of the club, opened the program. Haraldur Bessason, head of the Department of Icelandic, introduced his students.

Howard Reilly, who has studied Norse literature in universities in the U.S. and is now enrolled in the Department of Icelandic at U. of M., gave an address in English on Norse mythology, the poetry of the Eddas and prophecies of the sybils. Mr. Reilly is not of Icelandic ancestry.

Nine young people recited humorous verse dating back to the eighteenth century, losing nothing in mood, mean-

ing or metre. Sigrid Johnson read an old folk-tale in a delightful manner. Sigrid is the daughter of Snorri and Guðrún Johnson of Arborg, Man.

The poetry of Robert Johannsson was new to many in the audience. The young man, a teacher of English at the University of Manitoba, read a few selections of his sensitive and searching verse, written in modern style. It was a pleasure to hear but deserves to be thoughtfully read and savored.

Dr. Brekke, head of Norse studies at the University of North Dakota, ended the program with a showing of slides and informal commentary. Born and raised in Norway, Dr. Brekke made a point of showing areas native to the first Norwegians who sailed to Iceland as well as the places where they settled in Iceland.

Concerts like this belong on a yearly agenda of the Icelandic Canadian Club. There's inspiration in them and we can't afford to forego it. —C.G.

## HON. JOSEPH T. THORSON RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE FROM UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Four honorary degrees were awarded at the University of Winnipeg convocation, May 24. Hon. J. T. Thorson, of Ottawa, and J. A. MacAulay of Winnipeg, received honorary doctor of laws degrees and Rev. Adam Cuthand and Rev. A. G. Smith, both of Winnipeg, received doctor of divinity degrees.

Mr. MacAulay is a former president of World Red Cross for six years and was president of International Red Cross in 1962, when it received a Nobel Peace Prize.

The following is the citation of the honorary degree to Hon. J. T. Thorson.



### The Honourable Joseph Thorson, P.C., Q.C., B.A., LL.B., J.D., LL.D: DOCTOR OF LAWS

The Honourable Joseph Thorson is a native of Winnipeg. His formal education was taken at Carlton School Collegiate Institute, Manitoba College, and New College of Oxford which he attended as Manitoba Rhodes Scholar (1910).

Dr. Thorson began his law career as barrister-at-law of the Hon. Soc. of the Middle Temple, London, England (1913). The same year he was called to the bar in Manitoba. From May, 1921 to September 1926 he served as Dean of Manitoba Law School. He resumed practice of Law in 1927 continuing as a barrister and solicitor in Winnipeg until 1941.

He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1926. In 1941 he was appointed Chairman, War Expenditures Committee of the House of Commons and in the same year was sworn to the Privy Council for Canada and appointed Minister of National War Services.

In 1942 he was appointed President of Exchequer Court from which he retired in 1961. In 1964 he became President of the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada to which he had been appointed a judge in 1959.

Dr. Thorson has served as President of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and as President of the Canadian Citizenship Council (1964-1966).

At the Manitoba Bar Association — commemoration of having been called to the Manitoba Bar, fifty years ago or more. Law Society Testimonial Dinner, May 19, Hon. Joseph Thorson, P.C., Q.C., was presented with a bronze medal in

## DR. JON GERALD COLLINS OF ROBLIN, MANITOBA

DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE



Dr. Jon Gerald Collins

Dr. Jon Gerald Collins, of Roblin, Manitoba, is one of the many young Canadians of promise who have sought a career abroad.

Dr. Collins received his elementary and secondary school education in Roblin. In grade XI he won the Governor-General's medal.

At Brandon College he continued to distinguish himself: he received a studentship from the Man. Government, a scholarship from the University of Manitoba Alumni Association, and a scholarship for highest marks in Second Year Mathematics, Second year Physics, and Third Year Chemistry. He received his B.Sc. degree from Brandon College in 1961.

His next step was to proceed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Alberta. There he was awarded National Research Council pre-doctoral fellowships three years in succession, each carrying a monetary value of \$3,000. His doctorate in chemistry and physics he received in 1967. The subject of his thesis was "Ionization Studies with High-Energy Protons."

Then followed 2½ years on a post-doctorate fellowship at Rice University at Houston, Texas, a privately endowed institution to some extent exclusive. There he continued with research in the field of Ion sources, working with some of the most distinguished authorities in this branch of chemistry. Some of his findings have been given at Chemical Institute conventions.

For the past year or so Dr. Collins has been doing research for an oil and chemical company, using a process in which Ion molecules are examined in mass (by mass spectrometer).

Dr. Collins is married and they have two children.

Dr. Collins is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Collins of Roblin. Mr. Collins is of Icelandic descent and he has excellent command of the Icelandic idiomatic language Mrs. Collins is of part English descent.

W.K.

## AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

A Manitoba Centennial Letter to our Grandchildren

W. KRISTJANSON

On July 15, 1970, we celebrate the one hundredth birthday of our Province of Manitoba.

Without a picture in mind of life as it was in pioneering days, our celebration will have little meaning to you. How can it be otherwise in this jet-atomic-moonshot age!

What was life like in pioneering days? You can get the story of the Selkirk settlers in many books, but I propose to tell you something about our own family. I hope that a personal relationship to the people in the story will make it more meaningful to you.

Why is the story of the pioneers important and to be stressed in our Centennial year? The pioneers built the foundation for our way of life today. But for their enterprise, hard work, and endurance, we would not know and enjoy a multitude of things we take for granted. It is arduous work to climb a steep slope, but easy to run along the level hill top. We owe a debt of gratitude for getting us to the hill top.

My people came from Iceland in the last century, when economic and political conditions caused a large-scale emigration. The first Icelandic settlers in Manitoba—285 in number—arrived in 1875, locating on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg and in Winnipeg.

In 1887, nearly 1700 arrived in Canada. My paternal grandparents, Kristjan and Margret, and their family, including my Dad, Magnus, then single, were in this group. They located in Winnipeg, in what was then an

Icelandic concentration on Ross and Jemima (Elgin). This was seventeen years after the Province of Manitoba was formed.

In July, Grandfather and Dad were working on the railroad, near Moose Jaw, and in the next two years Dad and his younger brother, Sigurbjorn, worked on the Morris-Brandon branch and on farms.

Sigurbjorn, then seventeen, worked the first summer on a farm some twelve miles north of Winnipeg. He had full care of fifty cattle and horses. After three months he received one dollar and some old clothes.

In the fall of 1887, the oldest daughter, Holmfridur, worked at a hotel. Her wages were eight dollars a month. Her mistress was in the habit of hitting and kicking at the hotel help, so after two months Holmfridur obtained work elsewhere, at fifteen dollars a month. For fifteen dollars she bought a sewing machine for her trousseau.

A younger daughter, Margret, did housework for six months. She received six dollars a month for the first four, then eight dollars and fifty cents. Everybody was good to her and liked her work, wrote Grandfather.

The youngest daughter, Kristjana, age ten, also did housework. She washed dishes, swept and scrubbed floors, polished shoes and so forth. Her pay was two dollars a month. Early in October, she began attendance at public school and she also attended Sunday School at the new Icelandic Lutheran Church, McWilliam and Nina (Pacific and Sherbrook).

That first winter, Dad worked on a farm fifteen miles south of Winnipeg, for three and a half dollars a month.

In the winter of 1887-1888, wrote Grandfather in May, he had had no work worth mentioning besides sawing and splitting wood, and this only intermittently. His winter's earnings amounted to forty dollars. Since Easter, he had been out of work. Because of unemployment, a large number of the Icelandic people in the city were moving out on farms.

My story now moves to the western part of the Manitoba Interlake district. In 1887, a few Winnipeg Icelanders began a settlement at Lundar. In 1889, others, my Grandfather included, proceeded a few miles farther north-easterly, to the Suffren locality.

The prospect was promising; the land low-lying but dry and the grass breast high. Even with a scythe, it would not take too long to cut hay for a few head of cattle. In the first year a community library was started and lumber was set aside for a school.

Then the rains came. The summer of 1890 was exceptionally wet and at midsummer three of the settlers moved south, to the north end of Shoal Lake, then a lake thirty miles long. Two of these were my Grandfather and Dad. They homesteaded on the west half of Sec. 28, Tp. 19, Rge 3, W. Jakob Crawford, who had arrived in New Iceland in 1876 and had served with the Prince Albert Volunteers in the Rebellion of 1885, was the third. Thorsteinn Hordal, a first cousin of my Grandfather's and from the same part of Iceland as he—Hörðudal in Dalasýsla—arrived on the scene in the summer, but did not bring in his family and established himself in the land till in the fall. He had arrived in New Iceland in 1876, had migrated to the

Sandhills district near Cavalier, North Dakota, before 1880, and was now returning to this part of Manitoba in search of better farmland.

Others followed from the Suffren locality and presently log cabins fringed the northern part of Shoal Lake. The abandoned settlement site the Shoal Lake settlers ever after referred to as "Siberia".

Haying began in July. Dad and Jakob Crawford owned jointly a "Warrior" mower; Crawford and Thorsteinn Hordal each contributed a team of oxen and his son-in-law, Daniel Backman, a team of steers to a joint hay-making operation.

During summer, log-cabins were built, for Grandfather and for Jakob Crawford. Ours was completed first.

In 1890, Dad had a Warrior hay-mower for a joint hay-making operation.

The country into which the Icelandic settlers were beginning to move in 1887-1890 was a vast sprawling, sparsely inhabited region. To the south, on the east side of the lake, was Loch Monar; on the west side was Harperville, at the end of the steel laid on the projected Hudson Bay railway of the 1880's. Along the east shore of Lake Manitoba was the Mission Road, through St. Laurent and Oak Point. A few English settlers had located at Seamo, seven miles south-westerly from the north end of the lake.

There were no roads in the Icelandic settlement and in the spring the virgin parkland was studded with ponds and sloughs.

For trade, the settlers usually made two trips annually to Winnipeg, or to Stonewall, six-day round trips. Their farm produce was at first chiefly butter. Cattle were sold on the hoof to those who came to the district.

In the mid-nineties Dad made a special trip to Winnipeg with his sister, Holmfridur, and her seven year old son, for the boy's medical treatment, I believe. This must have been in the spring, for the road from Stonewall to Winnipeg was under water. A thin sheet of ice glassed the surface and from Stonewall on Dad walked ahead of the horses, breaking the ice.

With my grandparents and Dad settled in Shoal Lake, the scene shifts to Iceland.

My mother was born at the farmstead of Hólmlátur, on the west coast of Iceland. Eric the Red and his young son Leifur stayed there his last winter in Iceland, before settling in Greenland.

In 1893, my mother, then fifteen and a half years old, was faced with the prospect of domestic service at sixteen.

"I would sooner go to Amercia", she said, and she went that summer, in the company of relatives. The family followed the next year.

Arriving in Winnipeg, she did housework, first with a McLennan, then a LaLonde family, both in the Logan Avenue area. The General Hospital, then one small building, was visible across a stretch of prairie.

A young girl of fifteen, as yet with no knowledge of English or of household ways in Canada, received three dollars a month at her first place and five dollars at her second. The McLennans were good to her, except that she was often hungry there.

The family arrived from Iceland in 1894. Dad met them in Winnipeg with a team of horses and a lumber wagon, to convey them to Shoal Lake. In the party were my newly-arrived grandparents, Daniel and Kristjana, and their two youngest, Hjalmur and Jensina, age eleven and nine; also grand-

mother's father, Jörundur. The oldest children remained in Winnipeg.

Among the household goods was my mother's spinning wheel, now preserved in our front room.

In tow was grandfather's stock: two steers, potential draught oxen, and three cows.

The road first followed the Hudson Bay Railway grading, then cut over to the lake, where the road soon became a mere trail. This was mid-summer and the trail wound its way, skirting bluffs, on dry meadow land.

That night the company bivouacked under the wagon. Did the newcomers, looking up at the Manitoba sky, think of the stars over far-away Iceland?

By this time Dad had added a frame building to the original log house—although a year passed before the floor was installed—and here the new-arrivals were housed for their first winter in Shoal Lake.

Great-grandfather Jörundur, grandmother Kristjana's father, came to Canada with his daughter's family. In Iceland, he had been a prosperous farmer and a noted horseman, but now he was 74 years of age and his active days were numbered. He derived pleasure from puttering around, gathering sticks for firewood. On the treeless Icelandic country-side fuel had consisted of peat and caked sheep's droppings. Jörundur saw the family's promised land, but he died in October. He was buried in a home-made coffin stained with berry juice. He was buried in the cemetery already established on Dad's land.

Grandfather Kristjan conducted the burial service. For the next few years my two grandfathers and a third layman conducted most of the funeral services in the district; also baptisms. A former theology student, Ingvar Buasson, walked from Winnipeg in

1895 and once each summer for a few years.

Grandfather Daniel homesteaded two miles to the east of our place, near the lake. His log home was provisionally thatched with grass and had a grass floor for the first year. When it rained, pots and pans were set out to catch the drip, "Still we were happy" said uncle Hjalmur, years later.

Dad and mother were married in Winnipeg on May 17, 1895. The minister was Reverend Hafstein Pjeturs-son, of the Icelandic Tabernacle Church on the corner of Sargent and Furby. What a contrast between the gay and noisy wedding procession of today and a 75-mile drive on a lumber wagon from Winnipeg to Shoal Lake in 1895.

There was work ahead at the pioneer home. Digging a well, fencing, clearing a few acres and breaking the sod. In the fly season the tormented cows often moved into the unsettled back country. The transportation problem did not ease till 1904, when the railway reached Oak Point, eighteen miles away.

The pioneer women had their share of work. The following account is of a fairly extreme case. There were ten children in the family.

"Mother washed the wool, carded spun and knitted it into mitts, socks and underwear for the whole family. For some years she made all our shoes from sheep-skin . . . She made butter from the milk of ten to fifteen cows. When the men were away she often milked all the cows. . . My mother might make fifteen hundred pounds of butter in a whole summer."

But it was not all work and no play, even in the early days. There were house parties, where the accordion provided music for dancing, a few

picnics, visiting and cards and chess, and *refsakak* (fox-chess), and reading, in the winter evenings.

The settlement filled in rapidly till just after the turn of the century it was approaching the 300 mark.

Organized community life developed early. A post office was established at Otto (so named after a highly respected merchant in Iceland), in 1894, and shortly thereafter at Markland and Vestfold. The mail brought riches: letters and Icelandic and English language newspapers and periodicals.

Community life flourished early. There were, in the nineties, gatherings in private homes, with dancing to the music of the accordion, and community picnics. The circulating library, organized in Siberia, had egihteen members in 1896, at which time a tombola was held in its support. The proceeds amounted to \$17.65. The annual subscription fee was at first one dollar, but this was later reduced to 75 cents. In 1911 the library had 300 volumes; ultimately, I believe, some 700 volumes. Guttormur J. Guttormsson, a poet of real stature, who homesteaded in Shoal Lake just after the turn of the century, and lived there for some years, termed this library, with its excellent collection of books, his university.

A Young People's Society was organized in 1902, with a social, cultural, and sports program. A Farmers' Institute was organized in 1903, with an initial membership of sixty. The farmers were interested in improving their stock of cattle and flocks of sheep.

There was much to do, building, fencing the quarter-sections, haying, and digging wells.

Schools were founded: Vestfold in 1894; Markland in 1895, and Norður Stjarna (North Star), Highland, and Maple, in 1903. An early Markland

school teacher was Miss Bjorg Thor-kelson, who was a classmate of Nellie (Mooney) McClung at Normal School in Winnipeg, in 1889-1890. For the first several years, there was summer school only, and to walk a mile, or two miles or 2½ miles to school was not considered a hardship, even for seven-year olds.

The young people in the district were interested in sports. Fred Olsen, a Manitoba College student who played brilliantly in goal for the Victoria hockey team of Winnipeg, as in a Stanley Cup game in Montreal, coached his Shoal Lake pupils in soccer. John Hordal, of nearby Lundar, had distinguished himself in the 24-hour walking matches in Winnipeg, in the late eighties. On the school playgrounds, too, there was baseball, jumping and running, and wrestling (including glíma and Indian wrestling).

and such games as pomp-pomp-pull-away, anti-anti-high-over, and blind man's buff.

The Icelandic settlers valued their citizenship in the new land and took a keen interest in public affairs, including politics. Dad's naturalization papers, dated April 19, 1892 read in part:

". . . has become naturalized as a British subject and is, within Canada, entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges and is subject to all obligations to which a natural born British subject is entitled to or subject within Canada."

Young men of the 1890's in Shoal Lake served freely in World War I. Several attended university and became prominent in the professions and in community work. But that is stretching the story of the first decade.

Thus it was in the beginning.

### JOAN AILEEN KRISTJANSON WINS AWARD



Joan Aileen Kristjanson

Joan Aileen Kristjanson, of 2809 Queen Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, received her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, on May 15. She majored in . . .

Her brilliant all-round academic standing has been recognized with a \$1,000.00 scholarship.

Joan was born in Wynyard, Saskatchewan, and at an early age moved with her parents, Jonas and Emma (nee Anderson) Kristjanson to Regina, where her father assumed a position as Agricultural Engineer with the Saskatchewan government. At Regina she attended public school, high school, and University. She persistently won high standing, with special awards in each of the last three years.

She has also taken a very active part in music circles, being a member of one of the city bands for several years. She plays piano and saxophone and has acquired first class honors at music festivals in Regina.

Paternal grandparents are Hakon and Guðny Kristjanson.



## ISLENDINGADAGURINN 1970

The Icelandic Festival — Íslendingadagurinn, at Gimli, August 1, 2 and 3, will have much of interest to offer from the beginning of the weekend events with the ten-mile road race, Saturday, at 9:30, to the closing dance in the pavilion, Monday night.

In addition to the Icelandic Festival Committee sponsored ten-mile road race, there will be, starting at 9:00 a.m., the Western Canada Championship ten-mile road race.

Senior sports will be at the Canadian Forces Base, Gimli, on Sunday, and the children's events will be on Monday.

A varied exhibition including paintings, sculptures and ceramics, a hootenanny, and a midnight dance will be Sunday features, and the parade, the formal afternoon program, community singing in the evening, and a dance, will be the attractions on Monday.

On the Monday afternoon program, the toast to Canada will be given by the Hon. Richard S. Bowles, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and the toast to Iceland by His Excellency Magnus V. Magnusson, Ambassador

for Iceland to the United States and Canada

The Canadian Forces Base Band and the Gimli Band will perform and the Gimli Centennial Choir will take part. Reg Frederickson, popular baritone, accompanied by Snjolaug Sigurdson, and the singing Jakobssons, the family group from Neepawa who captured the hearts of their audience at the Icelandic Canadian Club mid-winter concert, will make their contribution to the music of the day.

Reg Frederickson and Hermann Fjellsted, accompanied by Jona Kristjanson, will conduct the community singing in the evening.

### PURCHASE PRIZES DISPLAY

Valuable purchase prizes will be awarded for the best painting, sculpture and ceramic at the second Annual Exhibition of Artists of Icelandic descent to be held in Gimli on Íslendingadagurinn, August 2nd, and 3rd, 1970.

Application forms are available from Miss S. Borgford, 1292 Valour Road, Winnipeg 3, Telephone 772-4888.



## GORDON DRYNAN'S RAILWAY MUSEUM



A corner in Gordon Drynan's recreation room set up as the old railway station offices were with the desk, oil lamp, telephone, telegraph key schedules, etc.

Hobbies of various kinds are enjoyed by a great number of people; some collect stamps, coins, paintings by budding artists, writing and many others. While on a visit to Edmonton, Alberta, I was introduced to Mr. Gordon A. Drynan, who was a Canadian National Railway conductor for forty years. He is married to Minnie McKague, daughter of James and Groa McKague. Groa was a sister of Mr. John Lindal of Lundar, Man.

Mr. Drynan has a very interesting collection of railway office antiques in the recreation room of his home. One end of the room is set up as an old Canadian National telegraph office, complete with a sounder relay and sounder box, which has been in use since 1900. There is a ticket wicket and cabinet; an old station clock, spring wound, made in October, 1919,

and used until February 1966, when small agencies were closed and electric clocks installed.

There is a dispatcher's telephone, used when train orders were given by telephone on the main lines before the telegraph was used; he has the telegraph key in good order. A cast-iron pot-bellied stove complete with stove pipes used before 1900 is in the office. Mr. Drynan has put an electric wire through the pipe to give the impression of fire burning in the stove; lifter, poker and coal scuttle are there too.

An old wooden wall telephone is there, the long type refinished to look as it was when manufactured in 1905. He has connected it to another telephone at the end of the office, which can be used.

In the office there is an old oak desk and chair with green insulators on the bottom of the legs, to enable the agent to move easily from the desk to the telegraph keys. These green insulators are difficult to acquire as collectors are very interested in buying them.

The office is complete with the ever present cuspidor. Two wooden filing cabinets, which hold tariff files were obtained from The Canadian National, The Canadian Pacific and Northern Alberta railways.

At the wicket is a pane of heavy glass under which are Mr. Drynan's

long service pass, issued in 1969, and his father's annual pass, issued in 1905. Father and son were given the same names so the passes are most interesting. There are train orders copied at Leney, Saskatchewan, October 1912, signed by Mr. N. B. Wilton, vice-president of The Canadian National Railway.

Mr. Drynan has also collected other antiques. He has a pump organ, in excellent condition, built in 1881; an individual silver coffee service, vintage 1925, presented to him by the dining car staff on his retirement in 1966; an Edison cylinder gramophone made in 1910; a complete set of railway hand lamps dated 1886; an engineer's torch and tallow pot oil can.

In the front yard of his home Mr. Drynan has two link and pin drawbars used on trains nearly eighty years ago.

He is making plaques exclusively for conductors in the form of an oven door of a caboose, with the conductor's name, the date he started with the railway and the date of his retirement. So far he has made thirty and has orders for many more.

In 1931 he started collecting advertising pencils and pens and has over seven thousand from all over the world, including sixty different railway pens. He has been known to drive on if a gasoline station does not have pens for their customers.

It seems that railroaders have a penchant for nicknames and Mr. Drynan did not escape. Some are called "Butch", "Slim", "Bud" and others. Mr. Drynan was given the rather distinctive name of "Friday". He dropped some hot coals on the floor of a caboose and the conductor came in and accidentally stepped on them. He became quite upset and said "that guy should be on the island with Robinson Crusoe", to which the brakeman said, "That's my boy 'Friday'!". He very often receives mail addressed Friday Drynan.

The Icelandic Canadian Magazine Committee wishes Mr. Drynan many a pleasant hour with his unique and interesting hobby.

—Mattie Halldorson

### FILM NIGHT WITH DR. FINNBOGI GUDMUNDSSON

Dr. Finnbogi Guðmundsson, National Librarian of Iceland, while on a visit to Canada this spring, presented a colored movie "One Hundred Years in America", at the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church on Victor St., Winnipeg, on May 5. This film was produced by Dr. Finnbogi, based on pictures taken during his tenure as Chairman of the Department of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba, in the early fifties. The source pictures,

were taken by Kjartan O. Bjarnason, photographer, and Dr. Finnbogi, on an eleven thousand mile tour through Icelandic communities in Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota, Utah, California, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Dr. Finnbogi supplied the commentary.

This presentation was co-sponsored by the Icelandic Canadian Club of Winnipeg and the Frón Chapter of the National League.

### A TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND —

## Tímóteus (Tími) Böðvarsson

I first met Tímóteus (Tími, Tim) Böðvarsson in the early 30's. They were the years of trials and deprivation—the depression years. Yet there was that genuine joy in living, which does not exist in our age of plenty, and Tími was one of those that always looked on the bright side of life. His ready wit, love of song and a keen sense for the dramatic made life more joyous and meaningful for those that worked with him. I know that my lot as a stranger and new-comer in Geysir was made easier by the friendship and consideration of the Böðvarsson's family.

Tímóteus was born in Iceland, son of Böðvar Jónsson and his wife Alfifa Halldórsdóttir. He left at the age of eighteen, spent two years in Hafnarfjörður and then decided to immigrate to Canada, the land of freedom and golden opportunities. He arrived in New Iceland in 1905, worked first as a common labourer, then took a homestead in Geysir and married Sesselja Skulason, daughter of Jón and Gudrun Skulason, pioneers of that district.

In 1912 he became Postmaster of the "Geysir Post Office" and in 1925 also the "Mail carrier" delivering the mail from Arborg to Geysir.

During his twenty years of service in that capacity he earned the gratitude, love and respect of all his friends and neighbors for the unselfish service rendered on their behalf.

Tími took an active interest in all community affairs. He was a self-educated man, endowed with a brilliant mind, a keen sense of humour, and a true, strong and deep bass voice. All these talents he used for the betterment of his community. He was the

director and often the leading actor in plays performed in the district, usually to obtain funds for the library "Vísir". He founded the debating society "Grettir" (1914-1920) and was active in the Geysir Community Club. He was a good member of the Federated church, Arborg, sang in the choir and was on the Church Board. After moving to Arborg in 1945 he was a staunch supporter of the Icelandic Chapter "Esjan" and there as in Geysir the library was his chief concern.

Throughout the years he had gratified his love of music by belonging to the "New Iceland Choral Society" and other choral groups active in the community. He was also sought after as a singer of the "Rímur" and I have many fond memories of him singing "Andri hlær svo höllin nærri skelfur . . ." and many other old rímur.

The Böðvarsson's home was a happy one and the family was noted for its friendliness and hospitality. Five of their six children live to thank and mourn their devoted parents: Skuli, teacher, Winnipeg, Mrs. Frank Lux (Gudrun), nurse, St. Paul, Minn., Mrs. Pete Bjornson (Hulda), Arborg, Man., Sigfús, Hay River, N.W.T., and Mrs. W. Wolkosky (Margret), Unity, Sask.

Friends and neighbors pay tribute to a good man. A man who by his life made his community a better place to live in.

hveims sér góðan getr.\*  
". . . orðstírr  
deyr aldrigi

—H.S.

\* Freely, a person's good report never dies —Editor.



## The Icelandic Club of British Columbia

### Life Membership presented to Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Sigurdson

At the farewell party held in honor of Mr. and Mrs. M. K. Sigurdson and their family, the Club President Pali Johannesson presented them with certificates of life membership in the Icelandic Canadian Club of British Columbia. These awards were made in recognition of their innumerable contributions to the Club and the community.

### The Club Anniversary Ball: Ragnar Bjarnason's Return

The popular Icelandic singer, Ragnar Bjarnason, whose Vancouver show of 1968 is still the talk of the Club, will entertain members and friends again this fall. The occasion will be a Ball celebrating the sixty-second anniversary of the Club. The date is October 30.

Independence, the most important political event in Icelandic modern history, will be celebrated by the Club on Saturday, June 13.

### Address by Professor Bessason

Professor Haraldur Bessason, of the Department of Icelandic, The University of Manitoba gave an address at a club meeting held on Sunday, June 21, in the lower hall of Hofn, 2020 Harrison Dr., Vancouver.

### The Helga Sigurdson Concert

When it rains in Vancouver it is usually a drizzly, bearable rain. But on the night of a recent benefit concert by Manitoba-born Helga Sigurdson in this west-coast city it rained the way it does on the Prairie in mid-summer. It teemed down, clearing the downtown streets of pedestrians just as 120 music lovers, mostly from the Icelandic Canadian community, queued up to enter the intimate little Playhouse theatre.

A few minutes later the New York concert artist began a performance that warmed the rain-dampened audience with selections from the works of Chopin, Ravel, Rachmaninoff, Schumann, and Gluck-Silotti.

"That's quite a program," music critic Max Wyman had commented glancing down the list. He was later to describe the performance as "technically excellent".

Helga Sigurdson is perhaps better known in Manitoba as Agnes, which is the first of her two christian names, under which she started her musical career in Selkirk and Winnipeg.

While visiting her parents, former Manitobans Bjossi and Bogga Sigurdson, who now live in Vancouver, Miss Sigurdson had offered to donate her talents for the benefit concert for the Scholarship Foundation of the Icelandic Canadian Club of British Columbia.

## THOSE WERE THE DAYS MY FRIEND —

### THE WINNIPEG FALCONS OF 1920

by Dennis Bell

Frank Fredrickson thumbed through a stack of dog-eared photographs from the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, lost in shimmering memories of the team he led to Canada's first hockey gold medal.

"By God, what a team," he sighed, looking up from a scrapbook as thick as a New York City telephone directory. "There'll never be another one like it; never, never again."

The team was the Winnipeg Falcons — nine Icelandic Canadians and one "forgeiner," Anglo-Canadian goalkeeper Wally Byron\*, all from howling blizzard country around Winnipeg.

They brought Canada its first Winter Olympics gold medal as well as the world amateur hockey title in the first fully sanctioned international tournament.

That was 50 years ago, on April 26, 1920, before a virtually pro-Canadian crowd in the Antwerp Ice Palace. As expected, the Falcons bombed the Swedish national team in the final 12-1.

Fredrickson, now a silver-haired 74, scored seven goals that night and in the process put hockey on the international sports menu for keeps. It was also the first step in a brilliant professional career back home in Canada that earned him membership in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

"I remember that after we won the title I was telling everybody who'd lis-

ten that some day, in the foreseeable future, there would be a world hockey league," Fredrickson said.

"Well, I still think I'm right. It's only a matter of time before everybody gets together on it."

The Falcons came into being in 1919 when Fredrickson and several of his teammates got together in the Manitoba capital following First World War service.

"We were a pretty motley team," Fredrickson said, "No two players wore the same-colored socks, pants or sweaters, and four of us had been off skates entirely during the war."

When the Manitoba Senior Hockey League refused the Falcons entry, Fredrickson enlisted the support of the late Bill Finlay, sports editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, and the two of them put together a new league.

Under the stern tutelage of coach Fred (Steamer) Maxwell, the Falcons jelled into a potent goal-scoring machine, took the title in their own league and clobbered the MSHL winners to earn the provincial title.

The Falcons whipped the Lakehead winners, then went on to Toronto to repeat the feat against Toronto Varsity to win the Allan Cup and the Canadian berth in the Winter Olympics hockey tournament.

Also entered in the Olympics was what Fredrickson describes as "one of

the toughest United States teams ever to take to the ice," led by centre Frank (Moose) Goheen, another Hockey Hall of Fame member. The 11-man U.S. team included six Americans and five Canadians.

There were also five European national teams entered—host Belgium, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Czechoslovakia—but everybody knew it would be strictly a two-way contest between the U.S. and Canada.

The Europeans who organized the tournament didn't have the foggiest idea what the game was all about," Fredrickson recalled. "But it didn't really matter because everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was strictly a two-way fight between us and the Americans."

He shucked out from the stack a picture of the Swiss team, pointed at a rather decorous gentleman clutching a goalie stick as though it were a manure shovel, and chuckled softly.

This, Fredrickson explained, was a certain Monsieur Savoie, net minder of the extraordinary Swiss team and probably the most inept goalkeeper in the history of hockey.

M. Savoie wobbled onto the ice for the tournament opener against the U.S. nattily attired in a snappy cardigan, white shirt and tie, and English cricket pads on his legs.

The American team clobbered M. Savoie and his countrymen 29-0.

The tournament rules called for two 20-minute periods, which meant the Americans were scoring goals at a rate of one every 90 seconds for most of the game. There were seven men to a side and no forward passing.

'All through the tournament we tried to limit ourselves to 14 or 15 goals a game against the European teams," Fredrickson said; "Believe me,

it was difficult; but we managed to stay within reasonable bounds."

Sweden, Canada and the U.S. made it into the second round undefeated. The Swedes got the bye, and Canada and the U.S. squared off in the big game the night of April 24.

In addition to Fredrickson and Byron, the Falcons had Konnie Johannesson and Bobby Benson on defence, Mike Goodman and Halli (Slim) Halderman on the forward line, and, as their seventh man, rover Huck Woodman. Chris Fridfinnson, Ed Stephenson and Harvey Benson warmed the bench in reserve.

The game got off to a fast start with Fredrickson and his linemates utilizing pinpoint passing plays and controlling the puck for much of the first period.

The Falcons did everything but score. "I had a bad first period," said Fredrickson. "I think I missed more easy goals in that game than I ever did before or after.

"I hit the post, I hit the crossbar, I drilled it into the side of the net, but I couldn't get it in."

The first period ended in an uneasy scoreless tie. Fredrickson finally connected on a one-man breakaway at the 10-minute mark of the final frame with a drive that beat U.S. goalie R. F. Bonney.

Johannesson blasted in a pass from Fredrickson five minutes later. The game ended with the Canadians on top 2-0 and the crowd went wild.

The Swedes had no illusions about downing the fired-up Falcons, and arrived for the final two nights later loaded with borrowed Canadian equipment.

"They were without doubt the best of the European teams, very friendly fellows and we liked them a lot," Fred-

rickson said. "The game went about as we expected."

That lone Swedish tally, scored by a stocky little forward from Stockholm, was more in the nature of a present to the Swedes for a job well done than a legitimate marker.

"I guess it's safe to confess we gave it to them," said the former Falcons captain. As if by some miracle, the entire Canadian team bumped into one another, crashed into the boards and fell to the ice late in the game, allowing the Swede to zip in for a clear shot on Wally Byron.

He tucked it neatly behind the Canadian goalie.

"The Swedes went wild," Fredrickson said. "They were yelling and cheering, shaking hands with themselves, shaking hands with us. It was great."

Fredrickson went on to become a pro hockey star.

"But the Olympics were the high point of my life in hockey. There was nothing that could rival the thrill of winning the world championship and the Olympics for Canada with the Falcons."

Now a retired businessman, Fredrickson said he knows of only two other surviving Falcons—Byron, who still lives in Winnipeg, and Mike Goodman in Florida.

"Nineteen-twenty was a great year for me, and I think, a great year for hockey."

—Free Press

\* Wally Byron is of Icelandic origin; Huck Woodman, a sub with the Falcons in the 1919-1920 season, was not of Icelandic origin, also, coach "Steamer" Fred Maxwell was non-Icelandic.

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## IN THE NEWS

### THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON GROUP MEDICINE COMES TO WINNIPEG

As mentioned in the winter issue of the *Icelandic Canadian*, Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, of Winnipeg, conceived the idea of a congress to provide a forum for the discussion of effective health service for this modern age.

Preparations for such a congress were made by various committees numbering close to a hundred people, with Dr. Thorlakson giving leadership to all of them. The congress planners reserved 1,200 hotel rooms throughout Metro Winnipeg for out-of-town participants. Promoting the congress involved virtually every trade mission the federal government has around the world. The cost of the gathering was initially estimated at \$125,000 to \$150,000. About half the cost, Dr. Thorlakson said, would be covered by registration fees. "It is hoped the remainder will be paid by grants, donations, and exhibitors fees. The entire effort will be financed by Manitoba sources."

'Group practice may well be the medicine of the future', is a statement made. Canada has now 450 clinics.. What accounts for this growth of group practice? The increased patient loads brought on by medicare seems to be a part of the answer. Also, group members have set hours of work and are not on duty or call day and night for seven days a week. Group practice facilitates the collaboration of specialists.

The congress was held in Winnipeg, April 26 to April 30. There were 850

delegates from 21 countries in attendance. Governor-General Roland Michener performed the opening ceremony; Dr. Thorlakson was President of the congress, addresses were delivered by upwards of fifty international experts on topics including group medicine, medical cost insurance, and clinic and insurance administration.

The First International Congress on Group Medicine was rated an unqualified success and an invitation was received to hold a second congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in May, 1973.

—W.K.

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### THE ARBORG ELKS LODGE SUPPORTS LOCAL ATHLETICS

The Arborg Elks Lodge has continued its support of worthwhile causes by becoming patrons of the Arborg Flying M. Track Club. A sum of \$150.00 has been contributed to the Club funds by the Lodge.

★

### ALBERT L. HALLDORSSON'S CENTENNIAL MURAL

Albert L. Halldorsson's Manitoba

Centennial project is a seven-foot by four-foot mural of Manitoba in oil. Albert Halldorsson started his project in the spring of 1969 and it took 1600 hours to complete. The mural, called Pan-O-Man, was exhibited at Hotel Fort Garry, Winnipeg last April. The artist's home is at 435 Golf Boulevard, St. James, Assiniboia.

★

### ERIC WILSON, CELLIST

On March 27, 1970, twenty year old Eric Wilson, who is studying at the



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Julliard School of Music with world famous Leonard Rose, gave a recital in Eva Clare Hall at The University of Manitoba. His mother, Mrs. Kerr Wilson, was his accompanist.

Professor Chester Duncan, music critic for the Free Press said that she was a "sensitive, competent accompanist".

In his review of the recital the professor reported that the cello was played as if it were the easiest instrument to play instead of the most difficult. The Bach Unaccompanied Suite Number Five, the most challenging work on the program, was splendidly musical. He said that Mr. Wilson is a very gifted and potentially great Winnipeg artist. A wonderful tribute.

Eric will attend the three-week Music Festival in Sarasota, Florida in June. He will be in Winnipeg and will give a recital either July 22nd or 29th in the summer series of The University of Manitoba.

#### J. CARLISLE WILSON—VIOLINIST

Mr. John Carlisle Wilson, Associate of The University of Manitoba in

Music (Violin) received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He has registered for his Masters degree this coming season.

These two gifted musicians are the sons of Kerr and Thelma Wilson. They will no doubt make a very distinct mark in the field of music.

—Mattie Halldorson

★

#### DR. OSKAR T. SIGVALDASON AWARDED SCHOLARSHIP FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Dr. Oskar T. Sigvaldason has been awarded a scholarship by H. G. Acres Ltd. of Niagara Falls, for pursuing a year of post-doctoral studies at Harvard University. During his appointment as a member of the Water Resources Group at Harvard, he will maintain liaison duties with the Centre for Population Studies, for studies being currently conducted by both Harvard University and Acres on water usage in East Pakistan.

At the completion of his sabbatical next fall, Oskar will return to Niagara Falls where he will resume his responsibilities as Head of the Applied Mechanics Department at Acres.

★

#### PAUL FREDERICKSON, OF WINNIPEG, ONE OF THE GROUP CAPTAINS PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AT BLUE BOMBER GAMES

The Blue Bombers Club executive are planning a concerted drive to promote the sale of season tickets to the Blue Bomber home games, in an effort to put the team back on a sound financial basis. General Manager Earl Lunsford's goal is 12,000 season ticket holders.

Project-engineers will be the 78-man football club executive, which will be divided into seven groups, each with

a captain. One such group captain is Paul Frederickson, of Winnipeg.

★

#### REGINA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS MUSIC COMPOSITION BY DR. HALLGRÍMUR HELGASON

The Regina Symphony Orchestra, with Howard Leyton-Brown conductor, presented the compositions *Intrada* and *Canzona*, of Dr. Hallgrímur Helgason, on February 22. Compositions by Verdi, Mozart, Saint-Saens, and Sibelius were featured on the same program.

Dr. Helgason's works were well received by a large audience, and he received two curtain calls.

This is the third of Dr. Helgason's compositions presented by the Orchestra, the others being *Rapsodia* and *Icelandic Suite*.

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On April 11, The Folksong Choir Harmony which Dr. Helgason has conducted since 1967, presented a musical program of 33 compositions by Schubert, Beethoven, Hindemith, and others, and two Icelandic folk dances. Dr. Helgason wrote the score for these folk dances.

\*

### ICELANDIC FESTIVAL COMMITTEE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Icelandic Festival Committee of Manitoba (formerly the Icelandic Celebration Committee) is offering a \$100.00 scholarship and a fifty dollar scholarship, tenable at one of the three universities in Manitoba: the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, and Brandon University.

The following is the basis for selection :

- Icelandic or part Icelandic descent.
- A first class academic standing is desirable; a "B" standing is the minimum.
- Participation in extra-curricular or community activities is significant.

Applications for these scholarships, with relevant details, are to be forwarded to the Secretary of the Festival Committee: Mr. Dennis Stefanson, 39 Keats Way, Winnipeg 22, by August 15, 1970.

Information required includes:

- Age.
- Parents names.
- Secondary school attended; also University, if already in attendance.
- A transcript of the marks obtained on the most recent examinations.
- Extra curricular and/or community activities.

### ICELANDERS FROM BRANDON AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS HONOR JOHN P. SIGVALDASON

Icelanders from Brandon and surrounding districts gathered at the Prince Edward Hotel on Sunday afternoon, March 1st to honor a fellow countryman, Mr. John Sigvaldason. At least one hundred people were present. The planning and preparations were made by the Western Manitoba Icelandic Centennial Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Paul Finnbogason.

In introducing Mr. Sigvaldason, Prof. Barney Thordarson paid tribute to his achievements in the field of education as a teacher, inspector and finally as chief administrative officer with the Department of Education.

After serving with the R.C.A.F. during the war, Mr. Sigvaldason joined the Canadian Foreign Service in 1946. His career in the diplomatic service was distinguished by progressive advancement. From the position of Administrative Secretary in the office of the High Commissioner in London, England Mr. Sigvaldason was promoted to Counsellor and Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan and in 1960 was appointed Ambassador to Indonesia. After serving in this capacity for four years he held the appointment as Ambassador to Norway and Iceland until his retirement in 1968.

Not content with all these exciting activities and his performance of National and International services, he joined the Department of Political Science of Brandon University in September of 1969, lecturing on "Canadian Foreign Policy" and "Asia in World Politics".

John Sigvaldason is making a valuable contribution to higher education

which only a man with his personal talents and wide experiences could render.

In his address Mr. Sigvaldason related anecdotes derived from his wide experiences and touched on various aspects, personalities and incidents

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which he had observed while serving abroad.

Mr. O. F. Thorsteinson thanked the speaker for a most interesting and entertaining address.

It was reported by the secretary of the Centennial Committee that more than sixty volumes in translation of Icelandic books had been placed in the Brandon University Library and were now available on loan to anyone interested. This collection of books include Sagas, Histories, Short Stories, Anthologies, Eddas, and Novels all by Icelandic authors.

A mixed choir of twenty voices under the capable direction of Mrs. Halldor Martin sang several numbers including "Ó Guð Vars Lands", "Sofðu barn mitt sætt þig dreymi", "Hvað er svo glatt", "Sú rödd var svo fögur".

During the social hour that followed old friendships were renewed and

new ones made. It was the consensus of opinion that gatherings such as this should be held more frequently, by members of the Canadian Icelandic community that they might renew and enjoy the rich heritage that is theirs.

—B. Thordarson

★

#### RICHARD BECK Jr. HAS AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SUN-STRAND CORPORATION

Richard Beck Jr., of Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., last winter was appointed manager of engineering for the new Denver-based division of the Sundstrand Corporation. In that capacity he heads a large staff of engineers who will work on new product development. Mr. Beck joined the firm in 1962 as a research engineer and participated in development of high speed Sun-

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dyne pumps. He holds a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of North Dakota and earned his master's degree at Cornell University. He is the son of Dr. Richard Beck, professor emeritus of Scandinavian studies at the University of North Dakota, who now lives in retirement at Victoria, B. C.

★

#### P. SVEINBJORN JOHNSON APPOINTED HONORARY CONSUL FOR ICELAND IN CHICAGO

P. Sveinbjorn Johnson, a Chicago, Ill. attorney, last winter was appointed honorary consul of Iceland in Chicago with the office of the consulate at 100 West Monroe Street. Mr. Johnson has been active in Icelandic affairs for the past several years and received the Order of the Falcon, Knight's Class, in 1963, from the president of Iceland.

★

#### A MONTEREY CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION

A chapter of the American-Scandinavian Foundation was formed at Monterey, California, early in 1970. This chapter was formed largely through the effort of Dr. Loftur Bjarnason.

When not yet two-months old, March 27, the chapter had 59 members and 91 persons attended the March 1. meeting.

Because of the widely separated membership drawn from five Monterey Peninsula towns and the Salinas Valley area, a 15-member governing board has been appointed for a 6-month "get acquainted period", with an election slated for September.

The Board is investigating the feasibility of Scandinavian language classes, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic and Finnish.

The serving officers are President, Dr. Loftur Bjarnason; First vice-President, Dr. R. E. Johnson; Second Vice President, Prof. Curtis M. Wilson; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Joanna B. Farnsworth; Executive Secretary, Mrs. Violet C. Beahan.

★

#### THE WASHINGTON ISLAND CENTENARY

This is the year of the Centenary of Manitoba; it is also the year of the centenary of the Icelandic settlement on Washington Island, Wisconsin. In May, 1870, four men from Eyrarbakki, on the south coast of Iceland, sailed for America and settled on Washington Island. This was the beginning of a period of unbroken flow of emigration from Iceland to America.

Washington Island will observe this centenary in July of this summer. Valdimar Bjornson, State Treasurer for Minnesota, and well-known to the Icelandic Canadian community in Winnipeg will be a guest speaker at this celebration on July 18 and 19.

Centennial Greetings from . . .

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### MISS YOUNG INTERNATIONAL BEAUTY PAGEANT WINNER

Ungfrú Henny Hermansdóttir, 18-year-old dance teacher from Reykjavik, Iceland, placed first in a Miss Young International Beauty Pageant in Tokyo last March. In addition to the distinction involved was a \$3,000 prize. Forty-two countries were represented in the pageant.

Place winners in the contest were 1. Iceland, 2. Japan, 3. Phillipin Islands, 4. Costa Rico, 5. Denmark.

The Pageant is a feature of Expo 70.

★

### ARBORG CENTENNIAL WEEK

Arborg plans a Centennial week of celebrations from August 4 to 9. Plans

include two dances, a pancake breakfast, agricultural fair and Interfaith service. The recreational centre and fair grounds are being improved and each service club and organization in Arborg has its own Centennial project.

★

### LUNDAR CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Lundar Centennial Celebrations included a rodeo on May 31, agricultural fair on June 12 and 13, and an Interfaith service in July at Lundar Beach, and an antique show including a log cabin. The homecoming committee had almost 1000 names collected before the end of May.

CENTENNIAL GREETINGS FROM

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### JAN MADDIN RECEIVES RECOGNITION

The School of Physical Education of the University of Manitoba recently named Jan Maddin as one of three outstanding athletes of the year.

Jan has been named to the International Student Games team which will be competing in Italy during September.

★

### GRADUATES WITH FIRST CLASS HONORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Donna Rae Valgardson graduated from the University of Alberta at Spring Convocation with 1st class honors, with a major in English. She is going to further her studies this fall at York University in England. She is the daughter of Earl and Pearl Valgardson, 6515 112A St., Edmonton 62. Earl is originally from Gimli, Man.

★

### REUNION WEEKEND AT LUNDAR, MANITOBA

The highlight of the Lundar Centennial Celebration will be a Reunion Weekend to be held on August 1 and 2 in Lundar. Over 1000 letters have been sent out to all parts of Canada and the U.S.A. to former residents of the Lundar community, inviting them to make their personal centennial project a trip home this summer. A variety of events are being planned for the Reunion Weekend including Antique shows, musical and sporting events, a teacher-student reunion, street dancing, special foods, an old-fashioned picnic. All past or present Lundarites, and anyone else who wants

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F. Goranson,  
Lundar, Man.

★

**W. D. VALGARDSON WINS WRITERS' AWARD**

W. D. Valgardson, who won first prize in the Free Press non-fiction contest sponsored by the Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association last December, tied for third place in the poetry category of the Winnipeg Writers' Society writing competition this spring.

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**SKAGFJORD GOLDEN WEDDING**

A large gathering of friends and relatives honored Mr. and Mrs. Th. (Leifi) Skagfjord of Selkirk, Man., in March on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. The event took place in the Parish Hall at Selkirk. They were married 50 years ago in Selkirk by Rev. Niels Steingrimur Thor-

lakson. Present for the anniversary were two of their daughters with their husbands, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Empson of Winnipeg and Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Gregory of Vancouver, B.C. A message was received from their third daughter and her husband in California, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Schnerch. Messages were received from Iceland U.S.A., as well as other parts of Canada.



PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

**NOTICE**

THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT makes specific provisions regarding:

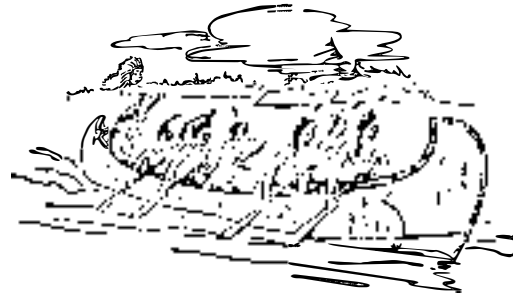
- ★ Full disclosure of the terms and conditions of agreements for time sales, lease-purchases, loans, variable credit accounts and refinancing arrangements. Note particularly that all agreements must be signed and the debtor must receive a copy **BEFORE CREDIT IS EXTENDED UNDER ANY ARRANGEMENT ENTERED INTO AFTER MARCH 2nd, 1970.**
- ★ Prepayment privilege now given to debtors and rebates of credit costs that have been calculated in advance.
- ★ Debtors' rights in the event of default under an agreement and in the event of seizure of goods.
- ★ Warranties on sales of goods and services.
- ★ Buyers' right of cancellation within four days of making a "door to door" purchase over ten dollars, whether for cash or on credit.
- ★ Buyers' rights against persons or companies who buy credit agreements from merchants and dealers.
- ★ Licensing of bonded Collection Agents, Bonded Vendors (door to door sales companies or distributors) and Direct Sellers (door to door salesmen) must be licensed after April 1st, 1970.
- ★ Establishment of a Consumers' Bureau.
- ★ Penalties for non-compliance or breaches of the Act.

The Act introduces many changes so it is very important that all borrowers and lender, buyers and sellers should be aware of its requirements.

For further information write to the Consumers' Bureau, 270 Osborne St., North, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba.

The Hon. A. H. Mackling, Q.C.,  
Minister, Consumer and Corporate Affairs.





## The Original Canadians

THE SEKANI, HARE, DOGRIB  
AND YELLOWKNIFE

by FREDERICK J. TERRENCE

—The Canadian Scene

The Sekani occupied the land in the valley of the Peace River, then around Bear Lake. They were primarily hunters, living on moose, caribou, bear, porcupine, beaver, and they despised fish as a food. Even today, they are contemptuous of those who look to fish as a staple food.

Wood, bone, horn and antler were the raw materials of most of the things they made, although they did use flint for arrow heads and adzes. Their social and political life was simple. Tribes were divided into bands, each under a leader. Alone among all Canadian tribes, cremation of the dead was a practice. Babies were carried in fur bags, and the children were subject to fasting in the bush as they grew older—a practice so common among all Canadian Indians from coast to coast.

The Hare tribe lived in the vicinity of Great Bear Lake, and earned their name through their dependence on the rabbit for food and hide at most times. They hunted caribou, moose and beaver and were skilled fishermen. Their clothing was made largely of rabbit fur, and they used few ornaments. Their implements were of stone, caribou antlers, beaver-tooth, and they used rawhide snares and willow-fibre fish nets. The present day population of the Hares is not too different than in those days when they roamed the reaches of ancient Great Bear Lake.

The country between Great Slave

and Great Bear Lake was the land of the Dogrib Indians, whose language was much like Chipewyan. Their food was largely barren-ground caribou. They seldom spent much time in treeless areas because of lack of fuel, but on such excursions they carried a supply of firewood. Their fishing nets were made from willow-fibres; their dwellings were conical, skin-covered in summer; in winter a rude hut of poles.

The Yellowknife lived in the area of Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, and were much like the Chipewyans in custom and in appearance. Often harassed by the Chipewyans, they in turn raided the Dogrib, Slave and Hare tribes. They were crushed by the Dogrib in 1823, when they joined the Chipewyans.

They learned to use copper for hatchets, ice-chisels, awls, knives and spear heads, and adapted many customs from other tribes. They practiced few ceremonies, and were a typical edge-of-the-woods people, living much like the other Indians of the area. Certain Eskimo ways crept into their lives—the use of Eskimo double-bladed paddles, the manner of carrying babies on the backs of the women, and others.

In general, these four tribes lived somewhat the same sort of life, simply because they lived in the same sort of territory and were subject to the same conditions. They believed in a guardian spirit but engaged in no tribute to their beliefs.

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