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The Icelandic Canadian

Volume XXXIX, No. 3

Winnipeg, Canada

SPRING, 1981

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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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dedicated to the preservation of the Icelandic heritage.

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EDITORIAL

OUR ORPHAN — A LABOUR OF LOVE

This little publication has no home, no quarters, no office nor any office staff. Yes, our beloved journal is, indeed, an orphan. However, it is cherished by many, and several of these volunteer to dress and feed it with prose, poetry and related articles in the form of stories, essays, etc., which relate to weaving our Icelandic heritage into the Canadian fabric. Several of these interested volunteers are chosen as members of "The Magazine Board".

The members of the "Board" share in keeping this orphan billeted and see to it that the material between its covers is suitable and accurate also that the contents vary enough to satisfy the diverse tastes of its subscribers.

The four issues published each year, "Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter," are in the making in every day of the year. The "Board" solicits articles, chooses what seems relevant, decides on the order and placement of articles being used and published in the current issue. The "Board" is responsible for seeing that the necessary material reaches the printers.

When the galley proofs are ready the members of the "Board" volunteer to proof-read them and correct any errors. This leads on to page-proof reading. When the issue is printed and bound, the "Board" members address, package and sort the magazine into the various subscribers' areas. The magazines are then loaded onto a truck and taken to the post office. The "Board" members now get busy with the material to be used in the next issue.

In no way can the "Board" find time to work towards increasing the circulation. This task should be in the hands of a separate volunteer "Board" and known as the "Circulation Board".

I have been a member of the magazine "Board" for twenty-six years and I am leaving the "Board" this spring. I have enjoyed working with the dedicated members who give so much time to the magazine.

Occasionally the "Board" receives letters from subscribers who suggest "this or that" about increasing the circulation of the magazine. One particularly makes me chuckle every instance it crosses my mind. The writer had visions of the "Board" being housed in a large building, with offices for "Board" members who are paid salaries and are loaded with equipment. The situation of course is the direct opposite. Everything the "Board" members do is gratis. All members of the "Board" pay for his or her magazine. This shows how interested they are in keeping this "orphan" alive.

During my twenty-six years on the "Board" I drove my automobile over three thousand miles on magazine errands, read over three thousand feet of galley proofs and page proofs and loved every moment of it! Please! Don't let this lovely Orphan down!

G. B. Arilius Isfeld, B.A., B.Ed.

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ARILIUS ISFELD



The resignation of "Alli" Isfeld as Assistant Editor of THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN was received by the Magazine Board with profound regret. For twenty-six years — the longest continuous tenure of any member of the Board — this modest, self-effacing man served loyally without much recognition. His suggestions were always comprehensive and timely and, being devoid of any display of egotism, were the more impressive and acceptable. For this the Board thanks him.

The Board can look back upon a twenty-six year period without one discordant note being struck by its Assistant Editor. This also is appreciated.

"Alli" was born at the homestead, Hofi, in the Husavik district, Manitoba in 1913, a scion of early settlers in New Iceland. He attended Jon Bjarnason Academy at the time that the Rev. Runolfur Marteinsson was principal. He completed his Grade XII there; graduated from the Manitoba Normal School in 1933.

He taught school for a total of forty-two years, twenty years in rural Manitoba, first at West Libau, then at Kjarna School in the Husavik district, at Franklin school, and as

principal at Benito, Manitoba, where he was mayor of the town for eight years.

Having been appointed to the Winnipeg teaching staff, he taught in Junior High School classes for twenty-two years, fifteen years as student counsellor. While in Winnipeg he completed his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees.

His hobbies are bee keeping, horticulture, and photography. He taught horticulture in adult classes at Sisler High School. He has an orchard in Husavik where he spends much of his time. He has propagated a fine apple cultivar known as Hermanson-Isfeld. He now has several cultivars from the seed of Hermanson-Isfeld that are hardy and palatable. He does his own grafting.

The Magazine Board thanks "Alli" for making a major contribution in keeping our "ORPHAN" hale and hearty. From now on he will continue to direct his "labor of love" to an avocation that has fascinated him all his life. He will continue to do research and make discoveries in the intricacies of horticulture, but we know that he will forget neither us nor his devotion to our quarterly which he served so well for so many years.

Au revoir but not good-bye. A.V.

THE COVER PICTURE

This issue of our journal is dedicated to Iceland's Saga Age. The sagas record the deeds of many famous people amongst them two men whose achievements are featured in this issue. We thank Prof. Loftur Bjarnason and the Iceland Tourist Board for securing for us pictures of the statues of these men, one of them being our cover picture. The other one accompanies the article The Vinland Sagas, written by Gudrun Jorundsdottir. The women have not been forgotten. Dr. Eylands' well-researched article deals with four famous women of that age.

AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

Increase in the Subscription Rates

Due to increasing production and distribution costs the Magazine Board of **The Icelandic Canadian** had no alternative but to increase the subscription rates as of April 1, 1981 in order to maintain a measure of solvency. The cost of printing has escalated 25% in one year, and increases in the postal rates are pending.

The new rates will be:

Regular: \$10 (Overseas the same rate).

Special: \$25 for a 3-year subscription (when paid during the first subscription year).

Gift: \$8.00 each (if 3 or more are ordered and paid for at the same time).

Single Issues: \$2.50 but \$3.00 to include postage and handling.

* * *

In a Letter from Sigurbjorg Stefansson, Gimli, Manitoba

Grateful as I am to the Icelandic-Canadian for the kind remarks about me in the winter 1980 issue, I feel obliged in justice to others to ask for a correction. I have never had a hand in organizing any convention, though some other Stefans(s)ons from Gimli have. As to establishing and maintaining our Evergreen Regional Library, it has indeed been my dream, but far from mine alone. The project was originally suggested by Lara Tergesen of Gimli to its original sponsors, the Gimli Women's Institute, and then adopted by five municipalities covering most of New Iceland. Its three libraries were set up and have since been managed by their Evergreen Regional Library Board, three of whose founding

members completed fifteen years of service in 1980: Gunnar Simundson of Arborg, long-term chairman, Steinunn J. Johnson of Gimli, long-term treasurer, and Gunnar Helgason of Riverton, now reeve of Bifrost. I shall admit to having had the privilege of working with these dedicated people.

Incidentally, I was not born in Iceland, as elsewhere stated, but near Mountain, North Dakota.

* * *

Erratum in the Article Skalholt Cemetery; page 34, Autumn Issue, 1980

The author, Liney Swainson, has been informed that the following statement is incorrect: I believe that it is twenty-eight years since the last burial there took place, that of my aunt, Gudrun Paulson. According to Mrs. Swainson's informants a number of other people were buried there subsequently.

* * *

Icelandic Folk Tales

A number of nineteenth century folk tales were compiled by Jon Arnason and others in Iceland. This collection has been translated by Dr. George Hauser and Helga Miller. One of the foregoing folk tales, **Ulfhildur, the Elf-Woman**, appeared in the winter issue, 1980 of **The Icelandic Canadian**. It is the intention of Joan Parr and her Queenston House Publishing Company, 102 Queenston St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, to publish in book form a translation of a selection of these folk tales.

The editor apologizes to Dr. Hauser and Helga Miller for not including this information in connection with the publication of the foregoing article.

SPRINGTIME

by Fridrik Hansen

Translated by Jakobina Johnson

Fair and radiant world of beauty,
Life renewed, intense and strong!
Day of sun and day of gladness,
Far and near a vibrant song.
Angel-wings of love and springtime
Moved by longing sweet and true!
In the south hear swans rejoicing
Over moorland lakes of blue!
Distant hills in mood exalted
Wear a halo of repose.
Over white and gleaming glaciers
Misty clouds are folded close.

O the joy of waking, waking,
To a longing sweet and true!
In the south hear swans rejoicing
Over moorland lakes of blue!
Sunlit fount of silent spaces
Let me drain your brimming cup!
At the call of brooks and streamlets
Sheltered flowers are looking up.
Scene of beauty ever cherished,
Golden light o'er uplands blue!
O the joy of waking, waking
To a longing sweet and true!

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FROM THE VINLAND SAGAS

LEIF EXPLORES VINLAND

translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson

Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1965.

Some time later, Bjarni Herjolfsson sailed from Greenland to Norway and visited Earl Eirik,¹ who received him well. Bjarni told the earl about his voyage and the lands he had sighted. People thought he had shown great lack of curiosity, since he could tell them nothing about these countries, and he was criticized for this. Bjarni was made a retainer at the earl's court, and went back to Greenland the following summer.

There was now great talk of discovering new countries. Leif, the son of Eirik the Red of Brattahlid, went to see Bjarni Herjolfsson and bought his ship from him, and engaged a crew of thirty-five.

Leif asked his father Eirik to lead this expedition too, but Eirik was rather reluctant: he said he was getting old, and could endure hardships less easily than he used to. Leif replied that Eirik would still command more luck² than any of his kinsmen. And in the end, Eirik let Leif have his way.

As soon as they were ready, Eirik rode off to the ship in which was only a short distance away. But the horse he was riding stumbled and he was thrown, injuring his leg.

"I am not meant to discover more countries than this one we now live in," said Eirik. "This is as far as we go together."³

Eirik returned to Brattahlid, but Leif went aboard the ship with his crew of thirty-five. Among them was a Southerner called Tyrkir.⁴

They made their ship ready and put out to sea. The first landfall they made was the country that Bjarni had sighted last. They sailed right up to the shore and cast anchor, then lowered a boat and landed. There was no grass to be seen, and the hinterland was

covered with great glaciers, and between glaciers and shore the land was like one great slab of rock. It seemed to them a worthless country.

Then Leif said, "Now we have done better than Bjarni where this country is concerned — we at least have set foot on it. I shall give this country a name and call it *Helluland*."⁵

They returned to their ship and put to sea, and sighted a second land. Once again they sailed right up to it and cast anchor, lowered a boat and went ashore. This country was flat and wooded, with white sandy beaches wherever they went; and the land sloped down to the sea.

Leif said, "This country shall be named after its natural resources: it shall be called *Markland*."⁶

They hurried back to their ship as quickly as possible and sailed away to sea in a north-east wind for two days until they sighted land again. They sailed towards it and came to an island which lay to the north of it.

They went ashore and looked about them. The weather was fine. There was dew on the grass, and the first thing they did was to get some of it on their hands and put it to their lips, and to them it seemed the sweetest thing they had ever tasted. Then they went back to their ship and sailed into the sound that lay between the island and the headland jutting out to the north.

They steered a westerly course round the headland. There were extensive shallows there and at low tide their ship was left high and dry, with the sea almost out of sight. But they were so impatient to land that they could not bear to wait for the rising tide to float the ship; they ran ashore to a place

where a river flowed out of a lake. As soon as the tide had refloated the ship they took a boat and rowed out to it and brought it up the river into the lake, where they anchored it. They carried their hammocks ashore and put up booths.⁷ Then they decided to winter there, and built some large houses.

There was no lack of salmon in the river or the lake, bigger salmon than they had ever seen.⁸ The country seemed to them so kind that no winter fodder would be needed for livestock: there was never any frost all winter and the grass hardly withered at all.

In this country, night and day were of more even length than in either Greenland or Iceland: on the shortest day of the year, the sun was already up by 9 a.m., and did not set until after 3 p.m.⁹

When they had finished building their houses, Leif said to his companions, "Now I want to divide our company into two parties and have the country explored; half of the company are to remain here at the houses while the other half go exploring — but they must not go so far that they cannot return the same evening, and they are not to become separated."

They carried out these instructions for a time. Leif himself took turns at going out with the exploring party and staying behind at the base.

Leif was tall and strong and very impressive in appearance. He was a shrewd man and always moderate in his behaviour.

1. Earl Eirik Hakonarson ruled over Norway from 1000 to 1014.
2. "Luck" had a greater significance in pagan Iceland than the word implies now. Good luck or ill luck were innate qualities, part of the complex pattern of Fate. Leif inherited the good luck associated with his father.
3. A fall from a horse was considered a very bad omen for a journey. Such a fall clinched Gunnar of Hlidarend's decision not to leave Iceland when he was outlawed (*Njal's Saga*, Chapter 75).
4. *Southerner* refers to someone from central or southern Europe; Tyrkir appears to have been a German.
5. Literally, "Slab-land"; probably Baffin Island.
6. Literally, "Forest-land"; probably Labrador.
7. Booths were stone-and-turf enclosures which could be temporarily roofed with awnings for occupation.
8. On the east coast of the North American continent, salmon are not usually found any farther south than the Hudson River.
9. This statement indicates that the location of Vinland must have been south of latitude fifty and north of latitude forty — anywhere between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and New Jersey.



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FOUR FAMOUS WOMEN OF ICELAND'S SAGA AGE

Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands

When Vigdis Finnbogadottir was elected president of the Republic of Iceland on June 29th, 1980, she became instantly the most famous woman in Icelandic history, and attained at the same time preeminence among women the world over. There have been, of course — and there are — women performing as chiefs of State, but they have inherited the office. But the Icelanders are the first nation to elect a woman — indeed a member of the intellectual aristocracy in the land, a person held in high esteem in the field of education and drama — to the highest office in the country, thus departing from a timeless universal tradition of masculine preference.

Such an event is bound to stimulate a great deal of discussion in the public media, and among all people who are interested in social activities and world politics. There are those who see in this election only a manifestation of a restless, fumbling age trying to find its way out of its present precarious predicament. Others regard the election of a woman to an office such as this a long overdue recognition of the equal rights of women, and a most welcome emancipation from their centuries-old confinement to the Germanic concept of "a children-cooking-church" programme. It is now high time for the "fair sex" to come forth with their "fair play". Let women show on the national level their domestic specialty of justice, loving concern and tactful leadership. Congratulations to Iceland for its courage and initiative. They were pathfinders in the democratic way of life among the northern nations, and now, after eleven hundred years they have reaffirmed their faith in the democratic process and the basic principle of equal rights for all people regardless of sex, social or economic status.

The many people of Icelandic extraction living in North America are very much interested in this unique event in the history of the old mother land. The Editor of the **Icelandic Canadian**, has taken due cognizance of it by planning to place a photograph of Her Excellency on the front cover of the summer issue 1981 of the magazine, and by requesting a short essay on four specified women of the Saga age, namely **Audur (Unnur) Ketilsdottir, Hallgerdur Höskuldsdottir, Bergthora Skarphedinsdottir** and **Gudrun Osvidfursdottir**. This may perhaps be considered as a Toast to the women of Iceland. It is obvious that Iceland has throughout its history had women who were loved and adored in their generation, but also those who were hated and feared. But the four named above tower like mountain peaks in the ancient sagas, which furnish the only information we have concerning them.

It should be noted that the ancient sagas purport to relate events which are supposed to have taken place eight or nine generations before they were put in writing. We may assume that the basic events and personalities existed, but also that the oral tradition on which the stories are based, were kneaded and variously moulded by the writers to suit their taste and purpose. It should also be observed that we of today can not judge the conduct and conversations of the Saga people by modern standards of social conduct. The people of the Saga age lived in a period of transition from paganism to Christianity. This is very well illustrated in the sayings of Njal at the time of the burning of Bergthorsvoll. To the offer to leave the burning house and thus saving his life, he replies: "I have no wish to go outside for I am an old man now and ill-

equipped to avenge my sons; and I do not want to live in shame." Then turning to his household he says: "Be of good heart — Put your faith in the mercy of God for he will not let you burn both in this world and the next." (Ch. 129) The basic principle of human relationship was honor. For the violation of honor, there was no effective remedy but **revenge**, which usually meant the shedding of blood. The lot of the women was particularly difficult. They were suppressed and supervised in turn by father, brothers, husbands or sons. It was a cruel men's world. Marriages were usually arranged by the father of a girl, often without consulting her or seeking her approval. To be a true helpmate to her husband a woman was expected to engage in all sorts of intrigue, and exhortations to revenge for insults suffered. Some of them did this with true conviction; others became introverts in the process, and turned their white fury upon their loved ones. The women of Iceland have travelled a long way from the degradation of the Saga age, to the triumph of Iceland's most famous woman of our day.

I.

AUDUR, THE DEEP MINDED — PRINCESS AND PAUPER

She is the first woman mentioned in Icelandic history, and is spoken of in the earliest available records of the original settlers. In the **Book of Settlements**, (Landnamabok) there is a record of 430 individuals who settled in Iceland, and Audur is the only woman in the group. She enjoys this distinction not only due to her sex, but also because of her background and previous history. She was born a princess, and when she came to Iceland she was the widow of King Olaf the White, who had ruled a part of Ireland until he fell in battle. But Audur was obviously a resourceful and courageous woman. When tragedy struck she would not allow herself to be crushed,

but took to the woods with a large number of her followers. There they built a ship which was dragged down to sea when completed and used for transportation for herself and company, first to Scotland, then the Orkneys, then to the Faroe Islands, and finally to Iceland where she settled. She assumed possession of a very large portion of western Iceland, including what is now most of the municipality of Dalasysla. Out of this large area she staked out a number of farms which she gave to her slaves whom she set free, and to other followers and friends. It is believed that much of the Celtic influence which is clearly present in the Icelandic people even unto this day is due to the settlers who came with Audur from Ireland and the island adjacent to the north coast of Scotland. Not much is known of Audur personally, except that she was the "great lady" of Iceland in her day. She lives to this day in the traditions of this area, and place names perpetuate her memory. A place where she is said to have had breakfast one day is called Dögurdarnes, (Breakfast Head). Lady-like she seems to have been concerned about her hair, as she is said to have lost a comb in a place which now bears the name of Kambsnes. (The promontory of the comb.)

Audur stood apart from the original settlers of Iceland in that she was perhaps the only baptized Christian among them. There was, however, no priest in her company and she built no churches in her wide domains. But she is said to have conducted worship services in the hills which came to be known as Krossholar (The Hills of the Cross) where she had crosses erected. It is said that her family abandoned the Christian faith after her death, and that they built a temple for heathen worship where the crosses formerly stood. This became one of the first known cemeteries in Iceland as these people believed that upon dying they would literally go into the hills.

Audur's story ends with a peculiar tale

concerning her burial. When she felt that her end was near, she invited her friends and relatives to a great feast which lasted for three days. At this time she gave expensive gifts to her guests, and free advice to anyone interested. At one point she declared that from then on the assemblage would engage in her own funeral feast, because she would soon die. This came to pass. She was buried on the seacoast at high water mark, because, says the record: "having been baptized, she did not want to lie in unconsecrated ground." A princess, a queen, the owner of a whole municipality, she died a pauper without a plot of ground for her burial, but had her body confined to the sand and the sea.

There has been much speculation concerning the significance of this burial place. Was this simply the manifestation of the eccentricity of an old woman? How could the ebb and flow of the sea compensate her for the lack of consecrated ground? Perhaps she calculated that since the sea touches the shores of all lands, she would somehow be brought into contact with the world community of Christians in this manner. Or was it an act of purification after the manner of Christ's baptism in water? Or was she "deepminded" enough to envision her Christian faith which had been temporarily submerged by the heathenism of her contemporaries, as being washed ashore with the tide of Providence and spreading to conquer and bless the land? We shall never know what she had in mind, but this we know, that Audur Ketilsdottir was the first famous woman in Iceland's history. She was a princess, a pathfinder, a puritan, and yet a pauper in the midst of all her possessions.

II.

HALLGERDUR HÖSKULSDOTTIR — THE UNTAMED SHREW

Hallgerdur is the most wicked woman in Njal's Saga, Iceland's most famous story. A

thoughtful reader will marvel at the imaginative powers of the writer of this story, his creative skill, and his simple narrative style. He shakes persons, such as you have never met, so to speak, out of a hat, makes them engage in conversations such as you have never heard, and all this with masterful simplicity so that you are apt to think you are actually reading a true story.

There may, indeed, have been a Hallgerdur in the centuries old tradition which the writer wove into his story of Njal and he created her in the image desired by endowing her with all the worst traits in human character, and making her the scapegoat of a large catalogue of crimes. The reader⁹ is prepared for this extraordinary career in the opening chapter of Njal's saga, when we are introduced to Hallgerdur as a tall beautiful girl, with silken hair so long that it hung down to her waist. Her father is exceedingly proud of her as she is playing on the floor, and he asks a visiting relative what he thinks of her. This relative remarks coldly: "I can not imagine how thief's eyes have come into our kin." It is difficult to imagine how any man in right mind would make a remark like that about a child. This little girl was not a child of a miserable crofter whom one could insult at will. Her father was one of the great chieftains of the age, a close friend of kings and potentates, and her mother was also prominent in the society of that day. Common sense would rule out a remark of this nature, but the author is creating a Hallgerdur of his own making. He is going to make her a thief and an untamable shrew and endow her with all the hatred, maliciousness and the murderous rage of the age. Giving her "thief's eyes" was a good beginning, preparing the reader for what is to come.

Although impetuous and wilful, Hallgerdur is married early, without consultation in the matter and against her will. She resents this, as well as the arrogance and overbearing attitude of her husband. The marriage is miserable from the beginning,

and the young wife turns out to be an inefficient and extravagant housekeeper. The husband rebukes, they quarrel, and he slaps her face so hard that blood flowed. Shortly thereafter this would be disciplinarian had his head split open with an axe, at Hallgerdur's tacit approval. The second marriage to one Glum Olafsson seemed to have been happy to begin with, but soon came to the same sorry end as the first one. The third time she selects her own bridegroom in the person of Gunnar Hamundarson, "the Prince Charming" of the community and of the entire Saga. This marriage seems to have been based on mutual love at first sight. They presented a most striking appearance as a couple. The future seemed bright. But "fate" was against Hallgerdur in her matrimonial ventures. She soon became involved in a personal feud with Bergthora and Njall, Gunnar's best friends. Hallgerdur was insulted, when as an invited and seated guest, Bergthora insisted she stand up from the table and give her seat to another woman. Hallgerdur's ire flared up instantly and she retorted: "I am not moving down for anyone, like some outcast hag." This was the beginning of life-long hostility between these two strong-willed viking-spirited women, costing many of their man servants their lives in mutual retaliatory slayings.

This exchange was also the beginning of domestic difficulties for Gunnar and Hallgerdur, which culminated in the unforgettable bow-string episode. Gunnar is, of course, the great hero of the story, blameless in spite of all the blood he had shed. But

finally he was outlawed. When he refused to obey the law of the land, he was besieged in his home by forty armed men who came there determined to kill him. He put up a remarkable defence until one of the enemy managed to cut his bow string with a sword. At this very critical moment he turns to his wife and says to her: "Let me have two locks of your hair, and help my mother to plait them into a bow-string for me." Hallgerdur asks: "Does anything depend on it?" He answers: "My life depends on it." "In that case" says Hallgerdur "I shall now remind you of the slap you once gave me. I do not care in the least whether you hold out a long time or not." This is the sentence which has made Hallgerdur notorious. She has been cursed and cried over in countless Icelandic homes where this saga has been read throughout the centuries. Assuming that she was correctly quoted in the story people were entirely certain that she was a historic personality.

It seems strange that this myth has so long persisted. Obviously the whole episode is the creation of the writer's imagination. First of all, there was no competent witness present to report this conversation between them at the time of the siege. Aside from that, Gunnar's alleged request was utterly unreasonable and absurd. Even if all the women of the Rangarvalla district had made their hair available to him at this moment, it would have done him no good. Making a bow-string was a long and complicated operation, requiring ingredients other than hair, such as sinews and glue. It is hardly likely that the army of angry men attacking

Gunnar for the purpose of putting him to death would have agreed to a truce while he was having his women make another bow-string. A thoughtful reader must therefore declare Hallgerdur innocent of this basic charge that history has made against her. What we have here is a literary device to heighten the drama, and crown Hallgerdur's unsavory reputation.

Hallgerdur's end was as sad as her life had been. She had been married to three men and seen them all die violently. Toward the close of her life we see her in the company of a wretch named Hrappur. In due time someone ran a spear through him, at which time a very casual conversation takes place which throws a clear light on the credibility of the narrative generally: As Hrappur's arm is hacked off, he says to the adversary: "What you have done certainly needed doing, that hand has brought harm and death to many." "This will put an end to all that," said his assailant as he ran Hrappur through with a spear. With Hrappur dead Hallgerdur disappears from the story. She had completed her role in Njal's Saga as the untamable shrew.

But in spite of all, Hallgerdur has found mercy in the legends of the nation. Once upon a time a grave was being dug in the cemetery at Laugarnes, near Reykjavik. The grave diggers came upon what appeared to be the skeleton of a woman with an extraordinary abundance of hair. This could be none other than Hallgerdur, who in her old age, according to the legend, had moved there to live with her son and had died there. Sigurdur Breidfjörd, a noted poet (1798-1846) must have believed that this was true, because in a poem about Hallgerdur he says: "ad Laugarnesi liggur nar, lands ad biskupssetri." (She is buried at Laugarnes, the seat of the bishops of the country.)

Thus we have legend upon legend, and an endless speculation about the boundaries of fact and fiction.

III.

BERGTHORA SKARPHEDINS-DOTTIR — A WOMAN WHO WAS NOT THE 'BETTER HALF'

The average Njala reader will admire Bergthora, but condemn Hallgerdur, yet in the early chapter of the story they seem to outdo each other in intrigue and in stimulating strife and bloodshed. The plain fact is that apart from her words and actions on the last day of her life there is very little that can be said in praise of Bergthora. She was the one who started the fatal feud with Hallgerdur when she insulted her after she was seated as a guest in her own house, by telling her to get up and give the seat of honor to another woman who had just arrived. Nearly always when Bergthora is mentioned she is planning to have someone killed. The fires of hatred and the spirit of vengeance seems to have burned with greater intensity in her soul than in any of her menfolk. Njall tried repeatedly to restrain her fury, but she will not be assuaged. She challenges her sons again and again and chides them for their reluctance in going forth on slaying expeditions. The very thought of missing an opportunity for revenge seems to have been to her a great affliction.

But the most memorable event in her story is when she has to choose between life and death. The anguish and lamentations of the women of the household become ever louder as the fires leap along the ceiling and the walls of the dwelling place. Flosi, the chief of the incendiaries becomes magnanimous and says to Bergthora: "You come out, for under no circumstances do I want you to burn." There it is that Bergthora makes herself immortal in Icelandic history and literature by declaring calmly: "I was given to Njal in marriage when I was young, and I have promised him that we would share the same fate."

But actually, she did not have much of an option. She had heard her husband respond



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negatively to the offer of leaving the burning building, and she knew that all her men would soon be dead. Even if she walked out of the fire it would be only to face a world of loneliness and shame. From now on, she would have no one to send on expeditions of death and revenge. She could do nothing but to accept her fate, but she did so with calmness and dignity which the world has admired. She manifested supreme loyalty to her husband, and perhaps a vague faith in the merciful God of whom he had spoken. The old couple walk calmly hand in hand to their deathbed as though it was their bridal chamber. Such fortitude in a fiery trial is indeed rare in history.

IV.

GUDRUN OSVIFURSDOTTIR — THE TRAGIC LOVER

The Laxdaela Saga is in the main, the story of Gudrun's love affairs. The geographic background is that of her great kinswoman, Unnur the Deepminded, who settled and lived in those parts about a century earlier. This story gives an excellent portrayal of social conditions in the country at the time, as well as the prevailing philosophy of life. It appears that people were strong believers in prophetic dreams and premonitions which would indicate to them the dictates of fate which no one could distract or avoid.

Gudrun had many strange dreams which upon interpretation revealed to her that she would be married four times. The first husband was represented by an illfitted head-dress which she would soon throw away; the second, a silver armband which would slip out of her hand, suggesting that the man would be drowned; the third, by a gold armband which she would shake off her hand, implying that this man would be slain, at her suggestion; the fourth, by a helmet set with gems but it would roll off her head into the sea, warning her that this man would also be drowned. Upon hearing this interpretation, Gudrun remarked rather sadly to the wise

man who thus predicted her fate: "... have many thanks ... yet wise as thou mayest be, mayest thou not dimly through these tangles see?" These predictions did not fit her hopes at all; at an early age she had an infatuation for Kjartan, her lovely dream boy. The fact that he did not enter into her predestined matrimonial plans led to the love-triangle and the tragedy which is the theme of the story.

Gudrun now had the roadmap of her life laid out in front of her. There is no use quarrelling with destiny, she must travel upon the road assigned. Like Hallgerdur with whom she had many things in common, such as temperament and personal charm, she is married at age fifteen much against her will. She turned out to be an extravagant and wasteful wife. The husband scolds and slaps her face. She compliments him on the deed and says: "Now you have given me something that we women prize very highly, a healthy color in our face."

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She did not try to avenge herself by hurting or killing this man. She simply ignores him, squanders all his money, and then leaves him and gets herself another lover. The fact that this second man was already happily married was to her a matter of no importance. She encourages him successfully to leave his wife so that she herself could marry him. But shortly thereafter this man was drowned. In the meantime Kjartan and his brother Bolli had been in Norway. Bolli returns stating that Kjartan will most likely remain in Norway, and that he is on very intimate terms with Ingibjörg, the sister of King Olaf. After a while Bolli proposes marriage to the already twice married Gudrun, and she accepts him reluctantly, still thinking of Kjartan, her childhood lover. Then all of a sudden Kjartan returns, the royal romance having come to an end. Finding Gudrun married to his foster-brother, Bolli, he does everything in his power to insult and hurt the newly married couple, until Gudrun can endure it no longer, and takes matters into her own hand. She now plans and puts into execution the most dastardly plan of which there is a record in the otherwise bloodbespattered saga literature. She makes her husband and brothers ambush and kill Kjartan. At first Bolli objected to this plan since it involved the slaying of his best friend and step-brother. Gudrun agrees with him that this is an unfortunate and embarrassing situation, but quietly expresses her disappointment at having a man for a husband who lacks the courage to vindicate his wife's honour, but that since such is the case she will forthwith leave his board and bed. She knew that this was his weak spot, as he loved her dearly. Bolli surrenders, and later that same day kills Kjartan with his own hands. He comes home crestfallen, and tells the sordid news to his wife. Gudrun seemed highly pleased, but expressed a sentiment which was both vile and contemptible: "What I think is most important is that Hrefna (Kjartan's

wife) will not go smiling to bed tonight." Of course this led to a chain of revenge and counter revenge, costing Bolli his life, with several other men, leaving Gudrun a chance to marry the fourth time. But this marriage — like her second one — was terminated by the man's accidental drowning.

As Gudrun grows older she is left with her many unpleasant memories. She speaks of her four husbands to one of her sons, one of whom was worthless, one wealthy, one wise, and the fourth a great lawman. "But which one of them did you love the most?" asked her son. After some evasion and hesitation she says softly: "I was worst to him whom I loved most." This is one of the famous "last words" of an important personality, and they have become the theme of endless stories and plays in many languages, analysing and elaborating on the eternal love triangle. Some Icelandic writers have gone into ecstasy over Gudrun Osvifursdottir. William Morris, a well known English poet immortalized her in English literature in 1968 by writing in her honor a very sentimental and romantic poem of 5000 lines, entitled "The Lovers of Gudrun".

According to the record Gudrun became very religious in her old age; she even became the first Icelandic nun, and spent much

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time in prayer and meditation. Grimur Thomsen, one of Iceland's great poets, summarizes her last years in a well known poem, of which one stanza is given here in a line for line and word for word prose translation: "Hatred is quenched, the wounds of heart/have gradually, but completely been healed/The tears of faith polished the wounds/at the same time they have dimmed my vision./The years of life are soon spent/I am at peace with all men/My old age will be filled with remorse/until I fall asleep in Helgafell."

By this brief and superficial study of the "famous four" Icelandic women of the

Saga Age their common traits have been noted: They were strong personalities, ambitious, ruthless, basically honest, hot tempered, loyal to their friends, and loving freedom. These characteristics have been found in Icelandic women in all ages, varying in intensity with the standards and the life-style of each generation. But the whole nation has been moulded and refined in the crucible of experience during the many centuries since the Saga Age, and now in a flexible and changing generation the women of Iceland have surged forth to their greatest victory by placing one of their own sex into the White House of the nation.

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THE VINLAND SAGAS

by Gudrun Jörundsdóttir

History or Fiction

In the past century the Vinland sagas, i.e. The Eirik's Saga and the Graenlendinga Saga have received a great deal of attention both from scholars and amateur historians. Opinions have differed greatly. Some have believed almost every account, others have considered the story of Vinland the Good as merely the medieval fable of Insulae Fortunatae rewritten by Icelandic rationalists.

The controversy over the authenticity of the two sagas is by no means settled. They conflict with each other in several important aspects which seems to fuel the discussion. Still there can be no doubt about the central facts of exploration and attempted colonization on the North American continent. There is enough evidence in other sources to argue convincingly that the Icelanders knew of some countries south-west of Greenland. A short geographical description, usually attributed to the 12th century Abbot Nikulas of Munkathvera, shows beyond doubt that the Icelanders' knowledge of the countries in the northern hemisphere was much greater than that of their learned contemporaries on the continent.

In all this squabble over the historical value of the Vinland sagas it seems to have been overlooked that the author of neither the Graenlendinga Saga nor Eirik's Saga was primarily concerned with geography and historical accuracy was kept only as long as it was convenient. The sagas record chance sightings of unknown lands to the west and tell of the various voyages undertaken by different people and an abortive attempt to settle there. The focus, however, remains on the people themselves, what spurred them to go on such perilous journeys and their reactions in the new country where they were on their own, away from

the pressures and restrictions of an organized society.

Vinland explored

Recent studies, in particular those of the late Professor Jon Johannesson, have shown Graenlendinga Saga to be the older and more historically accurate of the two sagas. According to its account a certain Bjarni Herjolfsson first caught sight of the new lands. He, however, did not go ashore as he considered these countries either too good or too bad to be Greenland. His shipmates were none too pleased and later, when Bjarni was to tell of his voyages, he was blamed for his lack of curiosity.

It fell to the lot of more adventurous men to be the first to set foot on the shores of North America. Eirik the Red was the first to explore Greenland where he founded a colony. His son, Leif, was to follow in his father's footsteps as an explorer. After buying Bjarni's ship he left Greenland in search of the new lands. First he came to the land that Bjarni had deemed worthless. He, too, considered it worthless but went ashore first and gave it the name Helluland (Baffin island?). Leif and his men then put to sea again and soon came upon another land which they named Markland (Labrador). Then they set sail again and sailed south for two days before they saw land for the third time. The men went ashore and the dew on the grass seemed to them the sweetest thing they had ever tasted. They explored the coastline a little further until they found a suitable place to stay.

1. The Vinland Sagas were translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson, and published by Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, England, 1965.
2. The reference to pages throughout the article are from Graenlendinga Saga and one from Eirik's Saga.

Leif seems to have possessed all the curiosity that Bjarni lacked. When he found land that he considered good enough, he decided to stay for a while and explore. It is almost as if he had a preconceived idea of what he was looking for. As soon as his German crew member claims to have found wild grapes, Leif decided to pack. He had obviously found what he thought would keep his name aloft for centuries to come.

It is clear that Leif never intended to settle in the new-found land. The object of the trip was more to test his strength and his abilities as a leader. Leif's voyage was a success due to his careful planning and foresight. He was in complete control of his men and displayed both caution in unknown regions and concern for his crew. After he decided to stay, he immediately built houses to provide shelter, sent half of his men on exploration trips, the rest being left behind to guard his houses. He went with his men on alternate days and carefully instructed those he sent out always to be back before dark.

When he decided to leave, he gave himself plenty of time to load the ship of what he thought the Greenlanders would be most in need of; timber for houses and grapes to make wine. It is mentioned in *Fostbraethra Saga*, rather regretfully, that drinking parties in Greenland were few and far between.

Leif's willingness to go out of his way to rescue shipwrecked people also showed the humanitarian side of a good leader. After that he was called Leif the Lucky. Leif gained greatly in wealth and reputation from his Vinland voyage, and when he was back in Greenland, there seemed to be no doubt as to who was to take over the Brattahlid dynasty.

The Vinland voyages were, however, not to end there. Leif's brother, Thorvald, probably wanted some share in that wealth and reputation and declared that Vinland had not been explored enough. Thorvald was the first to look upon the new lands from a farmer's point of view. "It is beautiful

here," he said. "Here I would like to make my home." (p. 60) That was not to be, however, Thorvald was not endowed with the same good luck as his brother. He showed a lack of judgment in killing unsuspecting Indians whom he found sleeping under their canoes. He should have known that there would be more Indians around than those eight. Thorvald was later killed by an Indian arrow and acquired the dubious honour of being the first white man buried in North America. Later his brother, Thorstein, set out with the intention of bringing his brother's body back, but he never made it past the coastal waters of Greenland.

Settlement attempted

Finally, a man of stature comparable to that of Leif Erikson attempted the first settlement in Vinland. This man was Thorfinn Karlsefni, an Icelandic merchant who

took along livestock of various kinds with the intention of making a permanent home in Vinland. The small settlement of 60 men and 5 women seemed to have managed quite well for there was never any shortage of food. "They made use of all the natural resources of the country that were available, grapes and game of all kinds and other produce." (p. 65)

Sooner or later, however, they were bound to come into contact with the Indians. In the beginning both sides seem to have been equally afraid of each other. But Thorfinn realized that he could not fight them off so he tried to establish some trading relations despite difficulties of communication. The Indians gave Thorfinn valuable furs and both sides seemed satisfied. It was not until one of his men, through no fault of Thorfinn himself, killed one of the Indians that this truce is ended. Realizing that the small Vinland colony could not withstand the continuing onslaughts, Thorfinn decides to move back to Greenland. By then he and his crew had stayed in Vinland for three years and his wife had given birth to a son whom they named Snorri.

Thorfinn went back to Greenland with a valuable cargo of furs and other commodities. And in spite of the threat of attacks by the Indians the Vinland voyages still offered a good prospect of fame and fortune.

The next voyage to Vinland was undertaken by Freydis Eiriksdottir, the sister of Leif the Lucky. The expedition set out in two boats, one led by Freydis and the other by two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi. Lack of planning and disunity brought this voyage to a disastrous end. Freydis neither won fame nor fortune; instead everyone thought ill of her and her family after their return to Greenland.

The women in the Vinland sagas

Saga characters are mostly delineated by their own actions. By placing them one after another in similar situations the author



Statue in Reykjavik of Thorfinnur Karlsefni.

came to Greenland from Norway, and spent the winter with Leif at Brattahlid. There people talked of little else than Vinland voyages and Thorfinn was urged to go there. The description of rolling hills and fertile fields must have sounded promising for he

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provides an interesting insight into what he thought was good or bad behavior. To go to Vinland was a dangerous and ambitious undertaking. All the people that were tempted to go were driven by a need for something they thought would enhance their position. They all fared differently; some were successful, others were found wanting. The outcome of their voyage was in direct relationship to their motives, their ability to display leadership and their sense of honour.

The most interesting contrast that Graenlendinga Saga offers is perhaps between the two women, Gudrid and Freydis. Gudrid is womanly virtue incarnated. Although her entrance into the story is somewhat lacking in dignity, being found shipwrecked on a skerry, the author is at great pains to describe how attractive and what a wonderful woman she is. "Gudrid was a woman of striking appearance. She was very intelligent and knew well how to conduct herself among strangers." (p. 62) If one were to judge from the saga for a woman to know how to behave was to be totally self-effacing. Gudrid certainly knew her place. She never asserted herself in any discernible way and when asked for her hand in marriage, she demurely referred to the head of the household though as a widow she had every right to decide for herself. The only thing that attests to her stature and will is the fact that she must have been one of the most widely travelled women in her day. She lived in Greenland, North America and Iceland and ended her days by going on a pilgrimage to Rome.

Freydis on the other hand is the complete opposite. She is not hiding her lust for power and is introduced into the story as an arrogant, overbearing woman married to a feeble man.

It has been said that the sagas abound in influential women. Very few of them, however, ever went out and did anything on their own. Any direct influence on the action is

generally either through husbands or sons and most often with disruptive effect on the social order. Women's role in society was clearly meant to be limited to their own households. Freydis knew no such restrictions. When she negotiated with the two brothers about the voyage to Vinland and later when she leased the houses from her brother, she had clearly, from the saga writers' point of view, overstepped her role as a woman and usurped that of a man. But as a woman she cannot completely fulfill that role. Being unwilling to endure the restrictions society put on her as a woman, she was not likely to endure willingly those put on men by a manly code of honour. In Vinland the people found themselves in a situation where the will of the strongest one is law. Freydis was no doubt the most powerful person in that expedition and she knew no limits. First she wanted a bigger share; then she did not want a share at all. Claiming to have been dishonoured, she threatened divorce if her husband did not kill the members of the other group. When the men refused to kill the defenseless women, she having no such scruples, picked up the axe and killed them herself. Thus earning the reputation of being the most evil woman in all saga literature.

Contest between Christ and Thor in Eirik's saga

Eirik's saga is a good deal longer than Graenlendinga saga and more detailed. Direct quotes being mostly one liners in Graenlendinga saga have given way to fairly long conversations. Thus the author was able to outline his characters more fully and did not find it necessary to contrast them merely by trying them out one after another in successive voyages to Vinland. He, therefore, recounts only three trips arranging the material so as to make the role of Leif the Lucky and Thorfinn Karlsefni the most important.

Moreover, in Eirik's saga religion, espe-

cially the contrast between paganism and Christianity, has been moved more to the forefront, e.g. In Eirik's saga Leif's good luck has clearly religious overtones. "He showed his magnanimity and goodness by bringing Christianity to the country and by rescuing these men: he was called Leif the Lucky." (p. 86) Graenlendinga saga on the other hand makes no mention of Leif being a missionary.

The voyage of Thorfinn Karlsefni is, however, afforded the greatest space. The members of the later voyages in Graenlendinga saga have been added to his expedition, increasing the number of people he brought to Vinland from 65 to 160. In addition, Thorfinn was no longer the sole leader of the voyage. The people set out in two ships and there is a clear religious rift between them. What in Graenlendinga saga is merely a test of character has in Eirik's saga evolved into a contest between Christ and Thor. The settlers ran out of food and the pagan, Thorhall the Hunter, spirited a whale out of the sea. When he proudly boasted that Redbeard had proved more supportive than Christ, Thorfinn and his followers refused to eat the meat and committed themselves to the mercy of God. But those who ate of the meat all became ill.

As the two groups could not agree on where to look for Vinland, they soon parted. Significantly the pagans turned north. Theirs was a way of life belonging to the North. On the other hand Thorfinn and his men decided to look for better lands further south and sailed right into the land of the Unipeds and other legendary countries. The pagans got what they deserved but Thorfinn found Vinland.

Karlsefni himself told the story

The inconsistencies and contradictions between the two sagas and the many fabulous elements found in both of them do not necessarily have to discredit them completely as a historical source. The difference

between them attest to different times and outlook but the similarities are also many and bear witness to either a common tradition or the fact that the author of Eirik's Saga had used freely the material from Graenlendinga saga, molding it to suit his purpose and adding what he knew from other sources, both native and foreign.

Graenlendinga saga ends by saying: "It was Karlsefni himself who told more fully the story of all these voyages which has been to some extent recorded here." (p. 72) There is really no reason to doubt this statement. Thorfinn Karlsefni and his wife Gudrid went back to Iceland and settled in Skagafjörður where their descendants prospered. Bishop Brandur Saemundsson of Holar was a grandson of Snorri, who was born in Vinland and it is likely that Graenlendinga saga was either written by him or under his auspices.

It is tempting to believe that the descendants of Karlsefni and Gudrid warmed themselves on cold winter nights by tales of their forefathers' exploits and of voyages to lands with self-sown fields and grapes in abundance. That dream was, perhaps, still in the minds of those people that 800 years later decided to seek their fortune in the wilderness of Canada.

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THE WILSON FAMILY

by Thelma Wilson*



The Wilson Family. Photo taken in 1958. From left to right: Carlisle, 14 years, Kerr, Kerrine 12, Mark 2, Thelma, Eric 9.

Having been asked to write a short history of the Wilson family, as pertains to their musical achievements, I shall endeavor to relate events in a somewhat chronological order.

Around the turn of the century our forefathers emigrated to this country seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Kerr is the son of the late Carlisle and Sarah Wilson who came from the Northern part of Ireland and eventually settled in Winnipeg in 1915. Thelma is the daughter of the late Bjorn and Helga Guttormson, and the grand-daughter of Jon and Svava Kernested. The Guttormsons and the Kernesteds were

among the early pioneers of Manitoba, who had left Iceland around the 1880's to establish their home on the shores of Lake Winnipeg.

Kerr and Thelma lived in the same neighborhood, attended the same schools in the west end of Winnipeg. Kerr's early musical education was in violin which he studied with the late Thorstein Johnson. Thelma began piano lessons at the age of eight with Louise MacDowell. It was not too long before Kerr and Thelma were providing musical entertainment at school, church and

**The editor requested Mrs. Wilson to write this article.*

social affairs. There was great demand for their talents — there followed a weekly radio show which continued for three and one-half years. By this time Kerr was playing the violin less and concentrating on his singing. His voice was truly remarkable — a natural lyric baritone quality.

The marriage of Kerr and Thelma took place in the First Lutheran Church in 1941. There were four children: Carlisle, Kerrine, Eric and Mark. Life in the Wilson household revolved around music.

During these years, Kerr performed extensively on Radio and TV with regular weekly series including the CBC Canada Matinee. A highlight was the visit of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip to Winnipeg in 1959, at which time Kerr had the unique honor to sing for Her Majesty at Government House. Kerr and Thelma are the proud owners of a beautiful silver tray presented to them in commemoration of the event.

Along with home responsibilities, Thelma kept up a busy schedule of teaching and performing. She has adjudicated music festivals in various parts of Canada and the USA. As a member of the Music Teachers' Association, she has served as Provincial and as National President. Many gifted students have excelled under her training.

At a very early age, Carlisle, Kerrine and Eric showed their aptitude for music. Inherently talented, it was natural for them to begin music studies, each at the age of six years. Carlisle took up the violin, two years

later Kerrine, the piano, and three years later Eric, the cello. The family scrapbook is filled with news clippings of their achievements in Festivals and Competitions, as individuals and in trio. Most amazing was their ability to play the trio repertoire from memory. Many happy hours were spent in this creative way.

Carlisle (Violinist), Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Wisconsin; A.M.M., B.Ed., University of Manitoba; is a Teacher and Instrumental Music Consultant for the Winnipeg School Division. He is Conductor of the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra and performs as a member of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Kerrine (Pianist), A.M.M., L.M.M., Bachelor of Music, University of Manitoba; teaches piano and takes an active part in musical activities. She is the newly-appointed President of the Wednesday Morning Musicales and a Past President of the Junior Musical Club of Winnipeg.

Eric (Cellist), Master of Music, Juilliard, New York; is currently Artist-in-Residence and Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia. He was awarded the Bronze Medal in Geneva, 1971; the Loeb Prize for Highest String Achievement upon graduation from Juilliard, 1973; and, as a member of the Emerson Quartet, winner of the prestigious Naumberg Award, 1978.

Mark the youngest, has a basic knowledge of music through his piano studies. He

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lives in Calgary where his interests lie in outdoor sports, art and photography.

One must make mention of the six grandchildren, all of whom are pursuing music in varying degrees. Tiffany, Keri-Lynn and young Carlisle Wilson study piano, flute, trumpet and other orchestral instruments. Kristen and Erica Stewart-Hay study piano and are members of the Hekla Singers led by Len and Karen Vopnfjord. Their little sister Jocelyn is showing a remarkable precocity for her three and one-half years.

This writing would not be complete without mention of the marvellous trip to Iceland in 1976 when Eric performed the Bloch Cello Concerto with the Icelandic Symphony and his mother Thelma played the piano accompaniments for his Radio and TV cello recitals. The tremendous hospitality will never be forgotten. It was thrilling to be hosted by one's relatives, numbering over forty whom one had never seen or known existed. It was in the spring of the year, March, when the blizzards were blinding but the Symphony Hall was filled to capacity. Eric has performed in many parts of the world and many stories could be written about his experiences. Outstanding perhaps, would be his participation in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the premiere of the Ligeti Cello Concerto in

New York, and its performance in Copenhagen.

It is interesting to reflect on one's life and to realize just how much our pathways are determined by those who have the most influence over us. Kerr's mother brought her violin here from Ireland. the Kernesteds owned the first piano at Winnipeg Beach. Bjorn Guttormson bought his first violin when he was 18 years old. The love for music which was instilled in their children is being perpetuated through later generations.

Through God's gift of music the Wilson family has been truly Blessed!

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SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF DR. AND MRS. PAUL H. T. THORLAKSON

by Dr. T. Kenneth Thorlakson

The reception was held at Briarmeade, the home of the Thorlaksens' son-in-law and daughter, George and Tannis Richardson, 9th of November, 1980. The following is the tribute to his parents by Dr. T. Kenneth Thorlakson:



**Dr. and Mrs. Paul
H. T. Thorlakson**

On behalf of the family, I wish to thank you all for coming out to Briarmeade this afternoon to share with our family this celebration of Mother's and Dad's 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Sixty years ago, the young Manitoba couple, Dr. "Thor" from Selkirk and Gladys Maree Henry from Killamey were married in Calgary, Alberta at the home of the bride's parents, Robert and Elizabeth Henry. The groom's parents, the Reverend Neil and Erica Thorlakson, had travelled from Selkirk to be present. The groom's father performed the holy rites of matrimony. This was the beginning of one of the happiest and most successful marriages, as everyone here today can attest.

There are so many similarities between today's celebration and the one on that afternoon so many years ago. For instance we are gathered in a family home, one as noted by the warmth of its hospitality as was the home of the Henrys.

Today the weatherman has arranged a little snow, a gentle reminder of the blizzard which struck Calgary on that day in 1920, but he has also provided a little Manitoba sunshine to grace the occasion.

According to this morning's forecast, Winnipeg is the only city in Canada where

the sun is shining today. Pierre Trudeau must have arranged this especially for us Westerners!

The Stampeders are in town today to represent the city of Calgary; a city which has exploded into prominence, but which on that day in 1920, because of the blizzard, could generate only enough gas pressure to barely heat its homes and hotels.

There are some differences in the two events. In 1920, western pioneer parents were there, in 1980, the great-grandchildren of these pioneers are here. Also, today's celebration is on the 9th of November (one day early). After all, as Karen's husband Frank Somers points out, Dr. Thor has to be down at the clinic seeing patients tomorrow!

I know that Mother and Dad treasure the statement made by David Richardson when he spoke on behalf of the grandchildren on the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. What he said in part, I am sure he would agree, should be said again today, and I quote:

"We have been very fortunate that our grandparents live in the same city. Throughout the years they have played an active part in our lives and aided our development. They have attended school closing, sports events, and out of school activities. Even when it was not convenient they made us feel that it was the very thing they wanted to be doing at that time."

It is small wonder that these past sixty years have been happy and rewarding years. Those of us here today admire the thoughtfulness and devotion which Mother and Dad have had for each other.

There were other qualities which they shared with their family and their many

friends. In our family home, as in our grandparents' homes on both sides of the family, there was active participation in community affairs as well as keen interest in books and learning, in music, in travel and a great affection for animals.

There was a great awareness of one's cultural background. Three young grandchildren (David, Hartley, and Derek) were taken to their country of origin by their grandfather, who later in 1974, addressed the government and people of Iceland on behalf of the government and people of Canada to commemorate the arrivals of the first settlers in Iceland in 874.

The love of books and learning was evident outside the home by Mother's twelve years on the Board of Governor's at the University of Manitoba and Dad's Chancellorship of the University of Winnipeg.

There was great affection for animals. How can Bob, Tannis or I forget that summer in 1930 when we arrived in the family Hupmobile at Ponemah Beach with a Boston terrier, two cats, two rabbits, a canary, and a guinea pig! There was always a dog or two chasing alongside our bikes, and horses on which we learned to ride and to compete. Today, some of the grandchildren are as at home in the saddle as Mother was, as a girl on her cutting-horse; Bonnie.

There was always music in the home, as manifest by the sweet (and sometimes not so sweet!) sounds of the violin, the piano, and of singing.

Mother and Dad shared a great interest in other countries of the world and travelled extensively. The far East held a special attraction because Dad's brother, our Uncle Tavi, was a missionary in Kobe, Japan, and Mother's sister, our Aunt Florence, taught school in Canton and Shanghai. This legacy has continued. Tannis and George travel extensively to all parts of the world. Bob and Fran as well as Lorna and I lived for five years in Britain. The grandchildren have

lived for various periods in France, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, and now England.

But perhaps the greatest virtue of the couple we honor today was their respect and love of people — their close friends, colleagues, and good neighbors.

Every one here this afternoon has a special place in the hearts and memories of Mother and Dad.

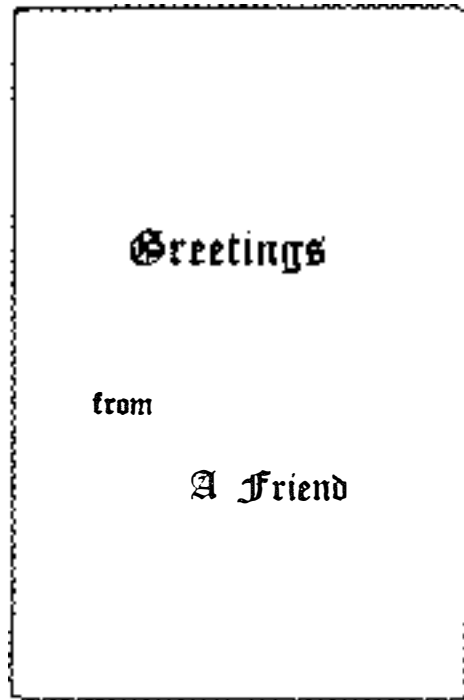
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Mom and Dad, we, your family and friends, are grateful to you for sharing some part of these wonderful 60 years with each one of us.

We congratulate you on your 60th Wedding Anniversary, and hope that you may be granted many more years with us in health and happiness.

* * *

Ladies and Gentlemen, would you all join with me in a toast to Dr. and Mrs. Thorlakson . . . Gladys and Thor . . . Grandfather and Grandmother . . . Mother and Dad.



SPORT IN THE ICELANDIC HERITAGE

by Hal Sigurdson, Sports Editor, Winnipeg Free Press

What I tried unsuccessfully to explain to Terry Tergesen when he asked me to write something about the sports achievements of Manitobans of Icelandic descent is that he was talking to the wrong guy.

It's true I've been earning a living writing about sport for perilously close to 30 years and it's also true my own heritage is proudly Icelandic. Nevertheless, I have never made any special effort to document the achievements of athletes of Icelandic ancestry as they moved across our sporting stage.

The historian in our family was my late father, Einar. Unfortunately, not much rubbed off, despite the enormous patience and effort he exercised in his attempts to drum a proper appreciation of Icelandic history and tradition into an offspring with a distressingly brief attention span.

Many of these lessons were conducted with the pupil perched atop a hay rack. That gave the teacher the opportunity to refocus his attention by dumping a forkfull of hay over his head when it became apparent he had become distracted by the flash of color offered by a passing oriole or goldfinch.

It must have been an effective teaching tool. I can still remember my father assuring me Iceland has more poets per capita than any other nation in the world; that Icelandic society deems knowledge should give its owner a higher social status than mere wealth; that you can hardly find a gun on the entire island; that virtually every Icelander over the age of six can read and write; that the althing, Iceland's parliament, is the world's oldest.

He even assured me our family is somehow related to Jon Sigurdsson, the poet-turned-social-reformer whose statue now graces Manitoba's legislative grounds. But apart from confessing a fondness for "the glima" and soccer in his own youth back in

Iceland, we never discussed Icelandic heritage in terms of sport.

Not that sport wasn't frequently discussed, because it was. Our log farmhouse north of Churchbridge, Sask., did not come equipped with many of the amenities of life our children take for granted, but it did have a magnificent radio — a marvelous instrument which could bring the world into a tiny farmhouse that had neither electricity nor running water.

Friday nights were spent listening to Don Dunphy describe the Friday Night fights for Gillette. Saturday nights in winter meant the voice of Foster Hewitt coming to us from the gondola in Maple Leaf Gardens. Early October afternoons meant listening to Mel Allen or Red Barber describe the drama of the World Series.

But it was just sport, not sport with an Icelandic accent. Sports discussions with father were more likely to centre around his firmly held view that cheering for the New York Yankees was like cheering for U.S. Steel rather than in reliving the glories of Frank Fredrickson.

So frankly, I grew up thinking Icelanders were people who spent all their time either reading books or writing poetry when they weren't fishing or raising sheep. As nearly as I could determine the closest thing to a traditional Icelandic sport was the naked spirit. This, I gathered, was performed immediately after a steam bath had been followed by a roll in the snow.

A lot of Icelandic-Canadian kids of my generation, one suspects, grew up with similar notions. The "cerebral" nearly always ranked ahead of the "physical" in their parents' conversations.

Later, of course, I came to realize the famed Winnipeg Falcons were perhaps the most gifted hockey team every produced

entirely within this province and that all but one of its members were of Icelandic heritage. Much later I came to know Fredrickson, the team's most gifted player.

He was a typical Icelander. Though he was one of the greatest freelance talkers I have ever known, his topics rarely included sport. Flying, politics, music and Icelandic history all rated a far higher conversational priority than the games people play. He never talked about his own athletic accomplishments even though they made him one of the earliest inductees into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

But despite this national disinclination to talk about their own athletic involvement, one discovers Icelanders have a tradition in sports that dates back nearly as far as the althing itself.

Painfully aware of how ill-equipped I was to complete the assignment willed on me by Mr. Tergeesen, I turned to the Free Press library for help. Through sheer good luck the first title to catch my eye was "The Icelandic People in Manitoba," Wilhelm Kristjanson's marvelously lucid and immaculately researched history.

In typically Icelandic fashion, Mr. Kristjanson filled 454 pages before he deemed it necessary to devote a chapter to sport, but it was a chapter which contained a goldmine of information.

There was one other reference to sport, however, — one which I trust you will find as welcome and significant as I.

In the first chapter of his "Manitoba Saga," Mr. Kristjanson tells us of Iceland's beginnings . . . how the island was originally settled in 874 by well-heeled Norwegians looking for a place to stretch out and be free. Then he informs us how a national assembly (althing) was formed in 930 and how it met for fortnight each June.

But let him tell it:

" . . . the place of assembly being the Plains of Parliament (Thingvellir), near the site of the present city of Reykjavik. the oc-

casion had its festive aspect; the elect gathered from all parts of the island and it was common practice for the men to bring their wives and daughters. There was a variety of entertainment, including wrestling, swimming, ball games, recitation of poetry and story-telling."

So there you have it. The Winnipeg Blue Bombers may think 50 years of football existence is an occasion worth celebrating, but sport has been part of Icelandic lifestyle and heritage for 1,050 years. (So, one dares hope, is sports writing since it does not seem too far-fetched to believe at least some of those early story-tellers were recounting the exploits and perhaps some of the foibles of the wrestlers, swimmers and ball players of their day).

I don't know about you, but I consider that good news. While it's a source of pride to know one's forebears were literate folk of poetic bent, it's also reassuring to learn they also were competitors who prized the healthy bodies and mental discipline demanded by sport.

And though most Icelanders don't seem to have made much fuss about the games they play, great numbers of them play them extremely well.

Mr. Kristjanson related that the first recorded instance of Icelandic participation in a Manitoba sports event was in the walking matches popular in the latter part of the 19th century. These were usually 24-hour races with time out only for brief rests, refreshments and a rubdown. Some allowed for a 12-hour break between two 12-hour walking sessions. A first rate walker could cover more than 100 miles in 24 hours.

The first Icelandic immigrant to compete in one of these matches was Sigurdur Antonius. He reportedly covered 132 miles in a Winnipeg competition in 1879, but glory day for Icelandic competitors came in a 24-hour race on June 15, 1888.

History records that three Icelanders — John Hordal, a youth of 17; Thorarinnn

Jonsson and Magnus Markusson — were included in the field of seven who competed in that race, a race plagued by squalid conditions. But let Mr. Kristjanson tell it.

"The race began at 9 p.m., in the presence of a large crowd. Seven men took to the track which was in very good condition. Music was furnished by the Infantry School band and it was curious to watch the effect on the runners. At 10 p.m. Texas Jack Hornsby and Jonsson were leading at seven and six miles, respectively, but at 3 a.m. the order was Hordal, 34 miles; Jonsson, 32 miles; Markusson, 32 miles; Texas Jack, 31 miles.

"Heavy rain fell during the night, testing severely the stamina of the runners. All through the drenching downpour of Friday night the six men left in the race marched on or ran on. The track became very soft and bad in the morning, but still the procession went round the track till it was tramped down hard. When day came the men began dropping out and in the afternoon only the three Icelanders were left in the race.

"John Hordal was the winner. Greatly exhausted, he pluckily kept to the track till the time was up, making a desperate effort to beat the record of 102 miles made by a runner named McDermott in the previous race. Had it not been for the rain, he would have succeeded as he covered all but a mile of the distance and the spectators applauded him warmly as he staggered over the last few laps. Markusson, lightly built and a beautiful runner, but lacking the sheer physical strength of the sturdily built Hordal, was taken ill towards the end of the race and only by sheer grit did he keep going until the time was up.

"The final standing was: Hordal, 101 miles, one lap; Jonsson, 97 miles, 1 lap; Markusson, 85 miles, 6 laps; Hornsby, 66 miles, 3 laps."

That was the beginning and the progeny of those early settlers have been doing ex-

tremely well in Manitoba sport ever since.

The Falcons, provincial, Canadian and Olympic champions of 1920 are the most famous, but there are others . . . far too many others to even attempt a complete list.

Instead, let us simply consider a broad sampling, with forgiveness begged of those who should have been mentioned, but aren't.

First to the Falcons. The members of the team were Frank Fredrickson (captain), Wally Byron (goal), Konnie Johannesson, Mike Goodman, Halli (Slim) Haldorson, Bobby Benson, Harvey Benson, Ed Stephenson, Chris Fridfinnson (sub) and Huck Woodman (sub). The coach was Fred (Steamer) Maxwell, who wasn't Icelandic. The manager was Herbert (Hebbie) Axford, who was.

It's worth mentioning that Fredrickson later played and coached in the National Hockey League before settling in Vancouver where he became prominent in civic politics. Konnie Johannesson went on to become one of Manitoba's aviation pioneers and Mike Goodman, the only surviving member of that storied team, was also a speed skating champion.

He also had some athletically gifted sisters. Freda Goodman and twin sisters Babe and Goody were prominent members of the Ramblers softball team, one of the best in Manitoba in the late '20s and early '30s. So was Lillian Blondal, another girl with the blood of Iceland in her veins. She was rated as the top pitcher of the day.

There have been so many other prominent Icelandic athletes, it's hard to know where to begin.

One of those I have admired most is Sveinn Sigfusson, who wandered into Winnipeg from Lundar one day and promptly set a Canadian record for the hammer throw. He remained at or near the top of the throwing sports for an incredibly long time. He won his first championships in 1954 after having taken time out to fight a war.

If you want my greatest personal sporting thrill, it was the first time I stood on the same sheet of curling ice as Leo Johnson and actually competed against that great Canadian champion. Leo was something far more important than merely a superb athlete (he also excelled in baseball). He was a superb human being. The rink he skipped to so many championships included his brother Lincoln, Mamo Fredrickson and Lawrence Stewart, the only non-Icelandic member.

Over the years I've been fortunate enough to have watched a number of gifted athletes of Icelandic heritage up close. Right now the hottest competitor is Danny Haldorson, a regular on the Professional Golf Association tour. This year he has a chance to break the single season earnings record for a Canadian golfer, no mean feat considering people like Stan Leonard and George Knudson have been there ahead of him.

Other names spring readily to mind.

There's Tommy Johnson, a member of the Hockey Hall of Fame and presently assistant general manager of the Boston Bruins. Or how about Lorne (Boom Boom) Benson whose brilliant career with the Blue Bombers was cut short by a knee injury? Manitoba basketball has produced few if any better players than Freddy Ingaldson and Herbie Olafson. Toss in Bob Sigurdson (no relation) of curling, and Chris Oddleifson of hockey.

But as Mr. Kristjanson notes in his chapter devoted to sport, the sons and daughters of those early Icelandic pioneers have carved a record of distinguished achievement.

In baseball Kristjan Backman and Agust Blondal rated among the best of their time. Backman was also one of the top sprinters of his day. In case you didn't know, a Winnipeg team has already won the Stanley Cup. The Victorias captured it in 1903, thanks in no small measure to the goaltending of Fred Olsen.

Ingvar and Oddgeir Gislason won provincial wrestling championships during the '20s; so did Jens Eliasson. Around the same time Petur Sigurdsson, a former Winnipegger, won the middleweight championship of B.C.

In boxing Paul Frederickson of Baldur won the Canadian amateur featherweight title in 1927 and Arni Johannesson was Manitoba lightweight champion in 1929 and 1930.

In 1913, Sgt. J. V. Austmann won the Manitoba Rifle Championship.

Today, "Icelandic names" continue to dot the daily sports pages and community club rosters.

When I follow my hockey and baseball-playing sons around the province, I discover their team mates and competitors often have names like Gislason, Stephenson, Sigfusson, Arnason, Olsen and Guttormson.

EDEN

by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer



*LaDonna's little son, Kristjan,
Christmas, 1980.*

*Great-grandson of Einar mentioned
in the story.*

The sun splashed down on the blond hair of the child as he squatted in the grass and played with his bones. Leg bones, knuckle bones, the feet from sheep lay scattered all about him. They were his play-toys, his animals. He knew every one of the bones by sight and he called them by name. In his play, he was the shepherd of the herds, the owner of the croft. It was a fantasy he created, like the creator of a grand piece of music. It had been summer and he had carried his stock high into the mountains for summer pasturing, but now the days were getting shorter and he knew that winter was coming on. He joined the other shepherds in a sorting of the sheep and began to herd his own flock home for safekeeping.

Thuridur stood stooped within the doorway of the sod hut for a moment and watched her first-born son. She watched as he carried his bones, one by one, down the tiny hillock of land that he called his mountain. "Einar's Holl," is what he called it. And the other members of the family, amused by his act of naming the small patch of ground, called it, "Litla Einar's Holl."

Thuridur watched him for a moment, then

she called out to him; "Einar, Einar minn," she called, "your soup is getting cold."

But the child refused to come. He was looking for Blessa, a leg bone, one of his cows. "Blessa is missing," he answered as he parted the grass in search of the cow. And she knew that it would do no good to threaten the boy, no good at all. Never would the child come in without one of his animals, not even if it meant that he must go hungry. The new babe started to cry, and Thuridur ducked back through the door of the hut to nurse litla Thura.

Einar found his Blessa hiding in the long grass. He wrapped his cattle and sheep and horses into the old rag that he carried for that purpose and started back toward the hut. The long grass swished against his short legs as he walked. "Swish - swish," the grass sang. "Sh - sh." And the boy started to sing the song of the grass to himself. "Sh - sh, sh - sh." On and on the music sounded, until it seemed as though it would fill eternity. And the boy knew by the tone of the music that the grass was soon to be cut and placed into stacks at the back of the croft. He knew that the summer lightness was soon to be over, and that the darkness of winter was about to begin. Einar forgot about the soup getting cold. He spun in one circle with his arms reaching high toward the brilliant blue expanse of sky, then he spread himself, belly down, upon the grass and felt the cool, damp earth against his cheek. Another world, a daydream world of snow-filled winter dark, took hold of him, and the present vanished, all except the warmth of the sun. Of that he was vaguely aware.

He dreamt of a winter's night. Father was home from the mountains. The warmth and the smell of the cattle crept up the stairs, into the room filled with people above. He felt the presence of the others in the croft-hut,

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heads bent, hands working. The wheel was spinning. And the sound of Grandfather Grim's voice rose above the whir of the wheel and became the voice of the winter's night. The voice spoke of the ages past. And the ages slipped away until the past became reality. Now he, Einar, was the brave and valiant Viking. He was Skarp-Hedinn, leaping boldly over streams, gliding above the deep waters, swinging a short-sword of steel.

"Scamp. You are a scamp." Grandmother Ingibjorg's voice roused him with its anger. "The soup can't stay hot once the fire has gone out. Get in here . . . Now."

And the mighty and fierce Skarp-Hedinn was once again a little boy. He scrambled to his feet and past the angry grandmother, down the three steps to the stable, and up the stairs to the room above. His mother, who was busy crooning to the new baby, did not greet him, nor did his grandfather, Grim. Einar cast a glance toward the old man, who sat on the farthest of the beds that lined three walls of the room, but Grim did not look up.

It was not like his grandfather to be so quiet, not until three days ago, the day the old dog, Rosa, had lifted her heavy head from crossed paws to announce the coming of guests. There was only one guest. The guest was a man of God, but he did not dress like *Séra* Eiríkur, nor did he have much to say about God. The stranger spoke of America, which he called "God's own land." Night came, and still the men talked. The smell of coffee rose above the moldy smell of the sod, and the dim light of the train oil lamp put the boy into a hypnotic trance. He drifted into sleep, never knowing that moment in which sleep overtook him.

In the morning, the man left and Grandfather Grim grew silent and thoughtful. Now it had been three days. Einar knew that his mother and his grandmother were both worried about the old man. Many times a day, one or the other would turn to Grandfather Grim, to ask him if he were well. And

Grim would answer, "As well as any old wretch can ever hope to be," or something of a similar sort. Then he would turn quietly back to his books or his scribbling. Now he was sitting idle and bent over with a book upon his lap, at a time of the day when the lamps had not yet been lit. Every once in a while he would hack or sputter into the big old handkerchief that he kept folded up and tucked into his pants at the waist; then he would sigh.

Einar placed the old rag filled with bones under his bed and climbed up beside his grandfather. It was dark in the hut, and getting darker. Even though the sun was still quite high in the sky, its light barely penetrated the stretched membrane that covered the one small window set into the roof. Grim rose to light the train oil lamp, and he patted the boy on the head in his rising. The boy smiled. His mother's music filled the emptiness of the hut, and, in his heart, the boy sang the words with her:

Bi bi og blaka,
altírnar kvaka,
eg læt sem eg sofi
en samt mun eg vaka.

Bium - Bium bamba,
bornin litlu thamba
fram a fjallakamba
ad leita ser lamba.

He liked the familiarity of the song. It made him feel good; it quieted him.

Einar ate the soup that his grandmother brought to him from the kitchen hall. The baby was asleep now. Her breathing seemed to match the flicker of the lamp. Thuridur rose and tucked the infant into bed, brushing her lips across the baby's brow as she put her down. Einar finished his soup, and the grandmother took the bowl from his hands, giving him a pair of knitting needles and a bit of yarn in its place. The boy was awkward with his knitting, being so small, and the mother would put her work aside to help the boy untangle his yarn. "Ah, *litli* Einar

minn," the mother would say as she touched the boy's cheek or wiped away his tear, "It looks as though some mischief maker has been busy with your yarn." And the two of them would struggle to unknot the woolen threads, the mother kneeling on the floor, the boy sitting upon the high bed with his legs hanging free.

The two women and the boy worked, but the old man sat silent and close by the lamp, reading the literature that the man of God had left with him. And because there was no one reading aloud, Grandmother Ingibjorg, as she stitched a pair of skin-shoes for the boy, began to tell the tale of the Hidden-Folk, how the Hidden-Folk had been created by God. The boy had heard this tale many times, but he listened closely, letting the needles fall unused to his lap.

"This happened a short time after Adam and Eve had been tossed out of Eden," Grandmother Ingibjorg began.

"Mother Eve had spent a very busy day putting her new home to order, a very tiresome business for any poor body, but especially for one who came straight from Eden, a place where work was unknown. It was coming on evening, with a nice breeze blowing in from the grove to trees that grew down near the side of the sea. Adam was dawdling down by the well, possibly attempting to find a new road back to paradise, but most likely admiring his newly grown beard. There was no help to be had from him. And there were the children, all of them unwashed and dirty, all of them except Cain and Abel that is. They, to be sure, had their faces all scrubbed and sat on bright new chairs, swinging their legs, proud before all the world.

"Just at that moment, poor Eve looked down toward the grove of trees, and she saw that the Lord was out walking, taking in some air. 'Oh! What's to be done,' thought poor Eve. So frightened she was. She did not want to be found a bad mother, as she had once been found a mischievous maid.

The Lord God was coming to call. She knew that deep down in her bones. And there sat all of her little wretches, all except Cain and Abel that is, covered with bramble scratches, berry stains and plain old dirt to boot.

"'Quick, little ones of mine!' Mother Eve spoke sharply and waved her broom. 'Run and hide. And for goodness sake, keep quiet!'

"So the Lord God found a tidy house and a tidy woman, and Cain and Abel, very politely, jumped down so that He could have one of their chairs.

"'How goes the struggle, Mother Eve?' the Lord God asked very kindly.

"'Not too badly,' says Eve. 'Not too bad at all. Except that Adam tends to lean too long on his hoe, to my way of thinking.'

"'Hmm,' said the Lord, surprised, but still very gentle. 'And are these all of the children, Mother Eve?'

"Eve hung her head. How could she bring those dirty little wretches into the presence of the Lord God, He who was dressed in splendid robes of purple and gold? How could she show those dirty little children to Him, He who held the power of life and death in His hands?

"'Lord God, these are all,' she said. 'Yes, only these.'

"And the Lord God rose, and His robes made a sweeping sound, as of many winds, and His voice was as terrible as the thunder.

"'Hear me then Eve. What thou hast hidden from God, God shall hide from man.'

"And these unwashed children," Grandmother Ingibjorg ended her tale, "the Hidden-Folk, took up their dwelling in the mounds and the hills and the rocks. No man can ever see them, not ever, lest they, the Hidden-Folk themselves, wish to be seen."

Einar was nearly asleep. The needles lay idle upon his lap, and his head rested on the shoulders of his grandfather. The voices sounded farther and farther away.

Grim put aside his reading.

"Eden and America, Ingibjorg **min**," he said, "they are the same. Did you know, Inga **min**, that in America there are pastures, green pastures, all through the year? And they say there is both sunlight and darkness to every day. And in the evening, at the time of sunset, the fields, they turn to gold. Gold, Inga **min**, gold. And the land, it is so fertile, that we in this barren Iceland cannot imagine a land that can produce so much.

"And there is a river, Inga, a river so big and so beautiful as the sea itself . . ."

Einar was falling asleep. His mother steadied him on his feet long enough to slip his clothes off of him; then she tucked him

into his bed, beneath the heavy quilt that made him feel so snug. And the voice went on, the voice of the winter's night, and it told of a new land far away. But the voice was cloudy and dim. It grew very, very distant.

"The trees so tall . . . Forests filled with wild animals, strange animals . . . All that a man needs to live . . ."

And the visions of America, which was Eden, kept appearing out of the darkness. Someday . . . someday . . . someday . . .

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HALLDOR BJARNASON ANOTHER TERRY FOX

by Gloria Meadows



This being the Year of the Disabled, it is, indeed, appropriate and timely that Halldor Bjarnason has been awarded the Special Self-Achievement Award by the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE.

Halldor is a fine young man, bright, energetic, serious, but he is handicapped due to cerebral palsy. Despite this he works hard to overcome the limitations cerebral palsy places on him. If the weather is fine, he uses a tricycle to get to school. If the weather is poor he takes the bus.

Halldor's academic achievement and activity participation at school "do him proud."

In Grade X he completed 9½ credits (20 are needed for a complete Senior High School Standing). Five more marks in any

of his 9½ credits would have given him an 80% average. Also in Grade X he was a member of the "Spiel" Company in Junior Achievement; of the regular School Band and the Stage Band; and Assistant Manager to the school's Football Team.

Other accomplishments outside of school should also be noted. Halldor is a Queen's Scout; is a Free Press carrier, the year round; swims weekly with the Handicapped Swim Program where he has achieved his Red Cross Intermediate Level; is a server for St. Patrick's - St. Jude's Anglican Church; has taken the Athletic Therapist's Course sponsored at the University of Winnipeg during the summer; does two weeks of Volunteer Work with the Red Cross, also in the summer months; has an outstanding collection of badges which were photographed and publicized in a local newspaper two years ago.

* * *

Editor's Comment: An account of the other Jon Bjarnason IODE awards will be published in the summer issue of THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN.

THE SUZANN "E"

by Thordis Thompson

The motor vessel Suzann "E" of Winnipeg a fish packer of 84 gross tonnage, was built in 1914 by Captain Ed. Nelson for the Selkirk Fisheries, Limited. In May, 1965, the ownership of this vessel was transferred to the Booth Fisheries Canadian Company Ltd., and she made regular trips out from Selkirk during the fishing season.

The Suzann "E" left Selkirk September 24, 1965, at 10:40 A.M. on what was regarded as another routine voyage to points on the shoreline of Lake Winnipeg under excellent weather conditions. On board was a crew of nine — Richard Johnson, master or captain, Bjorgvin Holm, chief engineer, Richard Zillman, second engineer, Clifford Everett, mate, and four deck hands, William Potoski, Allan Clements, Ronald Cook and Tache Everett. The ninth member of the crew was the cook, Christine Settee, who had worked on the boat for several summers. There was also one passenger, Peter Goosehead. They were all happy on this bright morning, after a weekend spent on shore with their families and eager to be away on more trips. There was no premonition that the only one who would live to see another sunrise was the mate, Clifford Everett.

The Suzann "E" was 71 feet in length and 18 feet in width. She was lightly loaded with empty fish boxes and some 20 oil barrels which were stowed in the hold. On the main deck was a steel fishing boat that was being shipped to a northern fishing station. This boat was a little longer than the beam of the Suzann "E", and to make room for it the main deck hatchway to the hold was left open. The loading door on the port midship side was also left open. This was not regarded as hazardous and cargo had been accommodated in this manner on other

occasions. In this instance it had tragic consequences, as the open door and hatchway created a wind-tunnel which caused the freighter to capsize as it attempted to turn about when caught in a violent gale later on that day.

The first port of call was to have been Berens' River, approximately 140 miles distant. Towards evening the wind began to freshen from the northwest and by the time the freighter reached the end of the lee area of Grindstone Point the waves were increasing in strength. With the freshening winds came flakes of snow and lower temperature. Shortly after Grindstone they met another freighter, the J. R. Spears, proceeding south. It was running with the wind and encountered no serious trouble.

As the Suzann "E" continued north, facing the gale, she was being pounded with increasing violence. Some three or four miles north of Grindstone Point the Captain evidently decided to turn about and proceed to the shelter of Gull Harbor on Hecla Island.

At 6 P.M. Clifford Everett 24, had handed over the wheel to Capt. Johnson, whose shift would be from 6 P.M. to midnight, and Everett went to his bunk to rest and to try to sleep. Two or three hours later he was aroused by the unusual rolling of the vessel. It seemed to him as if the Captain was trying to turn the ship about, and was in difficulties. He dressed quickly and went up on deck to the wheelhouse. As he later testified at the official inquiry "just about this time, everything happened".

In a matter of seconds the ship was on its side and he was struggling to keep from being tossed into the water. The primary cause, quoting from the subsequent inquiry, was "the entry of water through the open

side door to such an extent that she lost her stability, was overwhelmed and sank”.

The whole superstructure was swept off by the waves and Everett was in the water trying to hang on to a part of the wheelhouse. All this happened, he thought, in a matter of one or two minutes. The captain and one member of the crew also clung to the floating wheelhouse, while another man held on to a piece of plywood. He saw Mrs. Settee face down in the water, and sensed that she was dead.

The master and the mate hung onto their piece of wreckage and were carried in a southerly direction by the wind and current. The time was approximately 9 P.M.

They drifted on through the blustery night and repassed Grindstone Point, then after a few hours were swept close to the shore of Deer Island. There Everett saw one of his companions try to reach the beach. At the time he thought he had made it”.

Although the shore of Deer Island was close, Everett was loath to try for it and decided to remain with his captain.

They were blown by the gale towards the Gull Harbor light, which they could see clearly, but it was evident that they were going to pass between the beacon and Black Island. The captain appeared very tired and weak, and Everett thought he must have passed away at this time, some eight hours after the Suzann E. sank.

About 6 A.M., as a new day was dawning, Everett noticed that the wind direction had changed and he was being carried back towards the shore of Black Island. When he was finally washed up on the shore, he was able to summon enough strength to drag his dead companion up beyond the water's edge, and then lay there himself for a while to rest.

Everett then staggered along the beach hoping to locate a fishing camp where people might be present. He finally came to a camp occupied by Paul Paulson and his wife from Hecla Island. He aroused them and they quickly brought him in to their

warm cabin and did their utmost to comfort him by providing hot coffee, dry clothing and warm blankets.

Clifford Everett was brought to the doctor's office in Riverton later that day. He appeared surprisingly fit after the terrible endurance ordeal that he had been through. He went on to Selkirk where his people lived and spent a few days in hospital there.

The body of the captain, Richard Charles Johnson, was also brought to Riverton. On Sunday evening a preliminary inquest was held at the home of the coroner, Dr. S. O. Thompson. The body was then sent to the Winnipeg General Hospital for autopsy.

Mrs. Settee's body was located the next day. Evidently, unknown to the others, she had been carried along with the wreckage of the wheelhouse, because her clothing was firmly caught in it. Her body was also sent to Winnipeg for a post-mortem.

A preliminary inquest was held at Riverton, September 26, 1965, presided over by the coroner. As it was expected that other bodies would be recovered, the inquiry was postponed until December 10, at 10 A.M.

In the meantime on October 14 and 15, 1965 Transport Canada conducted an inquiry into the loss of the Suzann "E". The conclusions were that —

1. The vessel was structurally sound.
2. There was no evidence of mechanical failure.
3. It was clear from the evidence that the Suzann "E" sank quickly and that the primary cause was the entry of water through an open side door to such an extent that she lost her stability, was overwhelmed and sank.
4. the heavy loss of life may be attributed to the very bad weather conditions and the suddenness with which the disaster overtook the vessel.

On May 27, 1966, the Deer Island region of Lake Winnipeg yielded up three badly decomposed bodies. They were identified by the lone survivor, Clifford Everett, as the remains of Dick Zillman, 65, William Po-

toski, 25, and Peter Goosehead. Mr. Everett was able to make positive identifications because of a wrist watch worn by one man, a belt and buckle still attached to another, and by the heavy work boots worn by the third man.

On October 8, 1966, a body thought to be that of Ronald Cook, 20, was found on the lake shore about one mile south of Hecla dock. Identification was made in Winnipeg by comparing spinal x-rays of Ronald Cook on file at the General Hospital with those taken of the body recovered at Hecla.

On August 4, 1967, an attempt was made to salvage the Suzann "E", lying in 60 feet of water some 2-1/2 miles north of Grind-

stone Point. In the course of this operation the submerged vessel broke in half, releasing some of its contents to the surface. With the debris came the body of Björgvin Holm, engineer on duty when the freighter capsized. Positive identification was later made by his wife.

There are still two men missing as a result of this Lake Winnipeg tragedy — the worst in sixty years. They are Allan Clements and Tache Evritt. Along with the bones of many others, Lake Winnipeg will probably cradle their remains for all eternity.

Information from Dept. of Transport, Ottawa, and from inquest reports.

IN THE NEWS

JOHANNA SOLVASON AT 107 A TRUE CANADIAN PIONEER



Thought to be Saskatchewan's oldest citizen, Johanna (Amm) Solvason celebrated her 107th birthday on December 4, 1980 at the Golden Acres Nursing Home, Wynyard, Saskatchewan. In 1895 she emigrated with her husband, Sigurdur Solvason, from Iceland to North Dakota. In 1905 they homesteaded near Wynyard. They celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary at their home. Four of their eight children are living: Salborg Mercer, Sam Solvason, and Margaret Josephson. She has 10 grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, and five great, great grandchildren.

It is noted in her biography that her memory is 'unbelievable'. She retains the ability to recite poetry and remembers her catechism. She was an avid reader in Nor-

wegian, Swedish, English, and, of course, Icelandic. Now failing eyesight prevents her from enjoying the pleasure of reading.

Mrs. Solvason is one of three residents of Golden Acres who have surpassed the century mark. The others are Gudrun Gudmundson who is 103 and Domhildur Johnson who reached 102 in October.

—The Wynyard Advance,
December 4, 1980 (Abridged)

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COUNTRYSIDE REDEVELOPMENT IS MAN'S LONG-TIME PROJECT

by Elizabeth Whitney
St. Petersburg Times Business Editor

Promoting "the redevelopment of the American countryside" has been the hobby and the dream of G. B. Gunlogson for the last "30 or 40" of his 92 years.

He and his wife Esther leave their winter condo in downtown St. Petersburg to drive to their home in Racine, Wis.

Their car is packed with Gunlogson's briefcases full of his writings and correspondence on what he says is an evolving "town and country economy."

Now with mid-census and preliminary 1980 census figures showing a trend back to the countryside, Gunlogson has been busy writing background papers to promote the organization of a nationwide Countryside Association which he envisions as "a countryside chamber of commerce."

Across the nation, Gunlogson says, there are about 16,000 countryside communities which, he stresses, are neither "rural" nor "suburban." He defines a countryside community as "any city primarily tied to a rural economy." In size they range from 1,000 to about 20,000 and have streets, utilities and services already in place.

The dramatic migration turnaround of the 1970s — contrary to that predicted by most demographers — is particularly satisfying to Gunlogson. When he established his Countryside Development foundation with his own money after World War II, the big migration was from farm and small town to the big cities.

When he first became interested in this movement, he visited more than 500 towns, talking with mayors and business people.

Through the years he's also sponsored surveys and influenced colleges to establish courses on countryside economics, noting

especially those at the University of Southwestern Minnesota and the University of Georgia.

His interest was sparked by his own life — which began on a farm his parents were homesteading "on the rim of a wilderness" in North Dakota.

"We had oxen and horses but we began to dream of power farming," he recalls. Later, as a mechanical engineer, he saw how power farming made it possible for each worker to produce 8 to 10 times more.

This eliminated jobs for thousands of farm workers who flowed into the cities in search of work, reducing the farm population from 30-million in 1940 to 7.80-million in 1977 — a time span when overall population was growing.

OVER TIME, we all know what happened to many of these big manufacturing cities as industry and more affluent citizens moved out. Meanwhile notes Gunlogson, a "vast system of, highways, power lines and public facilities was being built across America."

He notes, too, that many big city-based plants have moved or started branches in established towns where parking is usually no problem. Small town people, he adds, have a pride in "their factory" that usually is missing in larger cities.

The interrelationships between town and country, he says, "are only beginning to be developed. For example, more than half of all farm families derive more than half of their cash income from off-farm sources."

Today, he adds, "Most of what once was rural has become modernized and restructured into a new kind of town and country economy."

HALLDORSON: STRICTLY FIRST-CLASS NOW

by Larry Tucker

Dan Halldorson came home from a golf tournament yesterday. That, in itself, is hardly anything new.

The way he arrived is, though.

There was a time — not long ago — when Halldorson came home from tournaments in a van. More often than not, he was early . . . pulling into the driveway Sunday afternoon, when many of the guys he'd been golfing with Thursday and Friday were still working on the back nine.

Only the immediate family knew he was back in town.

Yesterday, when he arrived at Winnipeg International Airport, Halldorson said thanks to the flight attendant, climbed out of his first-class seat and strode into the terminal.

He was not the least bit surprised to be greeted by reporters and photographers. And he was non-plussed when a total stranger walked over to say hello and offer

congratulations. This time he came home a world champion. His yearly salary is six-figure material. He is one of the large success stories of the 1980 Professional Golfers Association tour. His work consists of playing the game he loves.

If you think the best golfer who ever called Shilo home is happy, you're wrong. He's ecstatic. The entire year has been a dream come true, capped with a tour win at the Pensacola Open and the victory he shared with Canadian teammate Jim Nelford last weekend at the World Cup championship in Bogota, Colombia.

"I didn't want to go to Colombia at one time," Halldorson said. "But it meant playing for Canada. Besides, we hadn't won in 12 years.

"Winning the Pensacola was a big thrill. But the World Cup was different . . . playing for your country. It's the best thing that's happened to me in golf."



Dan Halldorson, living a dream come true, is greeted at Winnipeg airport by his wife Sharon.

—Courtesy Winnipeg Free Press, December 17, 1980

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED**The Wilhelm Kristjanson Memorial Scholarship**

The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba offers the Wilhelm Kristjanson Memorial Scholarship to students who have completed one year of post-secondary education, whether at a university or a community college.

The \$200.00 scholarship is awarded annually to a deserving student of Icelandic descent. The following are the criteria for selection:

- the applicant must be of Icelandic or part Icelandic descent
- a first class "A" academic standing is desirable and a "B" standing is the minimum
- participation in extra-curricular or community activities.

Applications for this scholarship with relevant supporting information, including a brief description of the activities in which the applicant has been involved, the name of the college or university attended and the most recent transcript of marks are to be forwarded by March 31, 1981 to:

Mrs. Kristine Perlmutter
212 Sherburn St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 2K6

* * *

NAOMI EINARSON AWARDED A SCHOLARSHIP

Naomi Einarson taking her Grade XII at Coquitlam, B.C. has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for high level achievements in the field of visual and performing arts. She is the daughter of Norman and Elsie Einarson of Coquitlam, B.C. Her grandparents: the late Olafur and Margret Anderson formerly of Gimli, and Gudrun Einarson and the late Steindor Einarson of Langruth, Manitoba.

CAROL WESTDAL RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP

Carol Westdal is one of two students awarded a Pjetur Palmason Family Memorial Scholarship. This generous award, in the amount of \$500.00, and open only to students of Icelandic descent, was offered for the first time in 1980.

An interesting feature of the scholarship is that in accepting it the recipient pledges to help someone else in a similar way "somewhere along the highway of life".

Carol is well known in local Icelandic circles having sung at numerous functions alone and with her sister Laureen. She is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. P. H. Westdal of Winnipeg.

*Emily Palmason Olson of Bellingham, Washington donated \$10,000 to the Canada Iceland Foundation to establish a permanent scholarship fund, the interest is to be divided annually between two selected winners.

* * *

THE PJETUR PALMASON FAMILY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Two scholarships in the amount of \$500 each are available. The recipients must be of good moral character, Icelandic descent, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies at High School, College or University level. They are asked to sign a pledge that "somewhere along the highway of life they will try to provide comparable help to another needy student."

Requests for application forms should be sent to Mrs. Johanna Wilson, 820 - 188 Roslyn Road, Winnipeg, Man. R3L 0G8. Phone: 453-2538, on or before April 30, 1981 or Ruby Dawson, 308 - 10 Edmonton St., Winnipeg, Man. R3C 1P7. Phone: 943-3923.

IN THE NEWS**FRANK FREDRICKSON'S GRANDDAUGHTER GRADUATES**

Kristin Fredrickson, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. John Fredrickson of Toronto and granddaughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank Fredrickson has graduated in Honours English from Victoria College, the University of Toronto.

She is presently studying German at the Goethe Institute in Staufen, West Germany. Kristin's father, who is a professor in the University of Toronto Department of Medicine, took part in the graduation procession. Kristin has a sister, Lisa, in Theatre Arts at the University of Windsor, and a brother, Erik, at the University of Toronto.

* * *

THE CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Canada Iceland Foundation offers or processes scholarships to students of Icelandic or part Icelandic descent:

1. High School graduates proceeding to a Canadian University or the University of Iceland.
2. University students studying towards a degree in any Canadian university.

Scholarship awards shall be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities.

Scholarship applications are to be received before April 30, 1981. Application forms may be obtained from:

Mrs. A. F. Wilson, Secretary,
Scholarship Committee,
Canada Iceland Foundation
802 - 188 Roslyn Road,
Winnipeg, Man. R3L 0G8

THE PJETUR PALMASON FAMILY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Two scholarships in the amount of \$500 each are available. The recipients must be of good moral character, Icelandic descent, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies at High School, College or University level. They are asked to sign a pledge that "somewhere along the highway of life they will try to provide comparable help to another needy student."

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DR. T. W. THORDARSON: DOCTORAL PRESENTATION

Our readers will recall the article by Arnetta Moncrief about that eminent educator, Dr. T. W. Thordarson which appeared in the autumn issue, 1980 of *The Icelandic Canadian*. The following picture of Dr. Thordarson and his family is self-explanatory.



Your Neighborhood Taxi

GENERAL MANAGER OF ST. VITAL CENTRE



Charles Finnbogason, at 26, is the general manager of St. Vital Centre, one of Winnipeg's newest, largest and most innovative shopping centres.

Mr. Finnbogason's father is Alan Finnbogason, who was originally from Lundar, but moved to Winnipeg at an early age, and is now head of food services for Eatons in the city. Alan is also very active in Winnipeg Enterprises, the Tourist and Convention Association, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and other organizations devoted to promoting the community.

★ ★ ★

RAY JONASSON PROMOTED



Mr. Keith R. Ebborn, Vice-President Western Canada Division, is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. R. O. (Ray)

Jonasson to the position of Vice-President Marketing, Western Canada Division, located in Calgary. In this capacity Mr. Jonasson will coordinate the marketing of all the Company's construction and fabrication operations throughout Western Canada.

Mr. Jonasson joined Dominion Bridge in 1949 after graduation from the University of Manitoba and has held several senior management positions within the Company, the latest being General Manager of the Alberta Branch.

Ray was married to Jean (nee Apland) in 1951. Their children are Kistjon Olafur, Barbara and Carl. He is the son of Jennie and the late Olafur Jonasson of 1025 Clifton St., Winnipeg, Man. Grandparents: Gudrun and J. K. Jonasson; Johanna and Petur Peterson.

*Jennie has moved to Penticton, B.C. She will be missed by her many relatives and friends in Winnipeg, where she has played a prominent part in many activities of Winnipeg's Icelandic community.

★ ★ ★

HEADS ENERGY CONSERVATION SECTION



John B. Thorsteinson, district maintenance supervisor for Government Services and a former vice-president of the electrical manufacturing firm of FPE Pioneer Limited, has been named chief of the province's energy conservation section.

Energy and Mines Minister Don Craik said that in his new capacity Mr. Thorsteinson will be responsible for the development and direction of energy conservation programs in Manitoba, as well as for conservation programs under the Canada-Manitoba energy agreement.

MAGNUS ELIASON ELECTED



In the elections held in October, 1980 for the Council of the City of Winnipeg, Mr. Eliason was elected in the Redboine ward with a substantial majority. Magnus has played a prominent part for years in civic affairs. He has been a councillor twice before. He is now the Council representative on the Library Board.

★ ★ ★



Mr. Maurice C. Eyolfson has been named President of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Mr. Eyolfson is Assistant to the Deputy Minister of the Manitoba Department of Labour and Manpower.

Next year will mark the 92nd consecutive year of the festival, popularly known in the Icelandic community as "Islingadagurinn". Festivities will be held in Gimli on August 1-2-3 and with the town observing its centennial year, the celebration will be centred around the 100th anniversary.

★ ★ ★

SETTLERS IN ICELAND (874 - c. 930 A.D.)

In the Landnamabok (Book of Settlement), written some three hundred years after the event, are recorded the homes of 1003 of the settlers. Of these 846 came from Norway, 30 from Sweden, 1 from the Faroes, and 126 from the British Isles (Ireland 52, Scotland 31, Hebrides 26, and Orkneys 4).

KRISTJANSSON HONOURED



Trainn H. Kristjansson of Winnipeg, flashes a broad smile as he receives the first personal achievement award conferred by the University of Minnesota — Crookston Alumni Association. Kristjansson was honored for his

career accomplishments as a successful restaurateur in Winnipeg and elsewhere.

★ ★ ★

REUNION — FORTY YEARS OF MUSIC AND MEMORIES

A musical treat of particular interest to the people of the Interlake area recently appeared on the market. The record title, "Reunion — Forty Years of Music and Memories" is apt. While the album contains the easy listening, danceable music which has been loved by the people of the area over the past forty years, it will be cherished particularly by many for the memories which it recalls.

Included are representative samples from long-time favorites such as Johnny and His Musical Mates, Geraldine Finsson, Harold Bjornson, Roy Gudmundson, Lloyd Gudmundson, Dennis Olson, The Whiskey Jacks, Fred Oleson, Clifford Lindstrom, Laugi and Einar, "Gil" Eastman, The Hnausa Orchestra, Solli Sigurdson and The Hometown Singers.

Anyone who has enjoyed the music of Johnny and His Musical Mates or any of the other artists featured would certainly find this record both entertaining and nostalgic. Records may be obtained from: Sunshine Records Ltd., 228 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2W 2L2 (Phone 204-586-8057).

— Kristine Perlmutter

POINT ROBERTS—THE UNIQUE COMMUNITY



Traditional Icelandic costumes worn by local grandmother and granddaughter.

Since its first appearance on a Spanish explorer's map in the year 1791, the little peninsula of Point Roberts, then called Punta Zepeda, has enjoyed a unique and colorful career, playing its own role in the history and development of the Pacific Northwest.

Considered part of the disputed Oregon Territory (neither British nor American) from 1811 until the signing of the Treaty of Washington in 1846, the area received little attention until the time of the Fraser Gold Rush, when the lively community of Roberts Town developed to cater to the miners and prospectors heading North.

As the Gold Rush era passed, the Point slipped into a time of temporary obscurity. The area was designated a military reserve by the U.S. Government, thus making homesteading illegal, and became a popular hiding place for smugglers and others not willing to tangle with the law.

Permanent settlers began to arrive by the 1880s. Though still considered "squatters"

by the Government, these early pioneers, many of whom were of Icelandic origin, worked hard and diligently and eventually carved a community of neat homes and farms out of the wilderness.

It was not until June 1908 that the settlers of Point Roberts were granted full title to their lands by President Theodore Roosevelt, an occasion for much celebration.

In those early days fishing and farming were the main activities. The economic base for the community was founded with the opening of two large salmon canneries in the early 1890s: the Alaska Packers Association operated in the area now called Lilly Point, and the George and Barker Cannery was established at the old Township site. Between these two many tons of salmon were handled annually, and much needed employment was provided for local people. Many more Icelanders came over from Victoria at the prospect of working in the canneries. In the 1930s a third cannery was started, just North of Lighthouse Park—the Lighthouse Packing Co.

When the fish traps were made illegal by new Fishing Legislation in 1934, the major canneries closed down, and the main source of employment in the community was lost. During subsequent years, life revolved mainly around farming activities, with a few of the more adventurous locals involved otherwise during Prohibition.

With the rapid expansion of the city of Vancouver, B.C. many Canadians began purchasing summer homes on the waterfront at Point Roberts. Several of the local families sold much of their acreage, which was developed into small recreational communities with attractive cottages and cabins. The opening of the Deas Island Tunnel (later renamed George Massey Tunnel) in 1959 increased the ease of access to the Point and made the area even more popular with weekend and seasonal visitors.

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*Prices in effect thru April 30, 1981 and subject to change.



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