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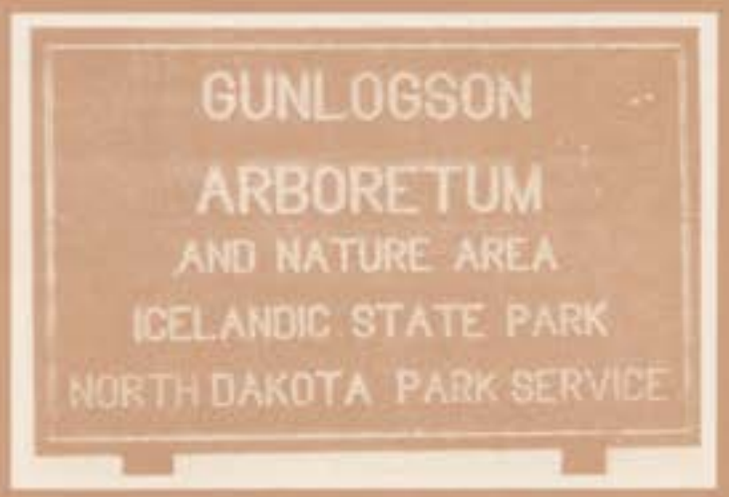
FORTIETH WINTER ISSUE, 1981

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

North Dakota's Icelandic State Park. The old Gunlogson Homestead in the centre.



Sign on Highway 5 west of Cavalier marking the entrance to the Arboretum.

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EDITORIAL

CHRISTMAS

Nearly two thousand years ago, a mere speck in mankind's turbulent past, a child was born to a humble woman, who lived in a backwater village of a tiny country. Grown to man's estate, He had a solution for the sorry plight of the world of His day. His solution did not receive much popular support. The indifference and the inertia of many people in comfortable circumstances were proof against new doctrines. It was much more pleasant to enjoy the well-ordered life that they were accustomed to lead, and to partake of the pleasures that this world offers, than to undertake the task of trying to be Good Samaritans in a thankless world. Like Cain, these people were not their brothers' and sisters' keepers. "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." As it was then, so it is now.

For nearly two thousand years the Christian world has professed to believe in His teaching, and in social contacts and within the small confines of the community it has been more than a profession. Innumerable cases of kindness and neighborliness bear witness to that. But in business and international affairs a somewhat hypocritical world has given mere lip service to the precepts of the Master. In too many instances it has been prone to look upon Jesus as an impractical visionary, whose precepts sound good, but are impossible of fulfillment in this work-a-day world of ours.

As a matter of fact, He was the most practical realist that the world has ever known. His philosophy of life is the soundest that has ever been offered to the human race. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," He said. He had the profoundest respect for man's accomplishments in the past, his initiative, resourcefulness, and stubborn endurance.

But, with a clearer eye than that of anyone else, He saw what was standing in the way of human happiness. He understood that this fruitful world of ours could produce an abundance of all the commodities necessary for human needs, if all were but to work together. If all the energy employed in the mad scramble for power and wealth, and in seeking vengeance for wrongs real or imaginary, were used in the furtherance of human happiness, if all the forces of the human character were diverted along constructive channels, what a different place this world of ours would be!

* * *

He preached a doctrine of faith, a faith in a kindly, loving Supreme Being, who has given us the intelligence of making this world of ours a Paradise on Earth. On a clear night, when amidst the myriad of stars that dot the sky, the Moon shines resplendent in her glory, it is difficult to be an atheist. At such a time the majesty of creation, the wonderful order evident in the Universe, must fill one with the realization that all this could not have come by chance. When one considers, too, that all the heavenly bodies are moving according to well defined laws along more or less unchanging paths, that they scarcely stray an inch from their orbits, and that they are seldom a second behind schedule, one cannot but be filled with humility and reverence.

He preached a doctrine of faith in the inherent goodness of the human race, and in Man's slow but sure ascent to a higher destiny. It is difficult to have such a faith at the present time. One is apt to think: "Man is a greater savage than he ever was before". Most assuredly his potential destructiveness is far greater than it ever was before. But

when we think of our ancestors, cowering in superstitious fear when the lightning flashed, offering their most beloved as a sacrifice to a cruel, capricious God, when we think of their cold, comfortless huts; the dirt, the squalor, the ignorance, the want, the disease that were their lot, we know that some progress has been made. We know that not so long ago women were old while still young in years, worn out by the back-breaking and never-ending toil of a home without modern conveniences. In all primitive communities the men made the women do the hard work, while they enjoyed themselves. Surely, the emancipation of women is a sign of progress.

But one may ask: ''How long is it going to be until the stupidity, greed, cruelty, and selfishness still so evident all around us is going to cease to stand in the way of human happiness?'' We must, however, remember that a few thousand years is but a drop in the ocean of eternity. Inevitably progress is sure, but slow. Most of it is due to the work of a few souls who have the vision and courage to blaze the trail and, in so doing, like Jesus, sacrifice themselves.

He preached a doctrine of hope — ''hope that rises eternal in the human breast,'' no matter what calamities have befallen, and regardless of the difficulties that are in the way.

There are times when everything we hoped for, believed in, trusted, lies in ruins at our feet. Our faith is often badly shaken. At such times, like a beacon light on a dark night, hope sustains us. The human race has passed through many a calamity, suffering, starvation, war. It could not have carried on but for that God-given quality, HOPE.

He preached a doctrine of charity, which is love, not a submissive, passive, wishy-washy sort of love, but a red-blooded, creative, hopeful, charitable love, guided by a faith that never wavers.

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Jesus knew that there is such a diversity of opinions in the world, so many different creeds, so many different customs, and so many races. All have a great deal of good in them, even if they are not our own. ''So many ways, so many creeds, so many paths that wind and wind, whilst just the art of being kind is all this old world needs.'' This world of ours to-day, so full of misunderstandings between individuals, religious groups, social classes, and nations needs most of all the healing balm of tolerance and charity. ''And now abideth faith, hope, charity — these three — but the greatest of these is charity.''

* * *

The Christmas season is consecrated to His message. —A.V.

AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Magazine Board extends to its subscribers and other friends its cordial wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous coming year. GLEDILEG JOL OG FARSAELT KOMANDI AR.

* * *

THE COVER PICTURE

As the cover picture indicates this issue of The Icelandic Canadian is dedicated to the Icelandic pioneers in North Dakota and their descendants, to the Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, the father of the settlement, and to our good neighbor and friend, the State of North Dakota.

* * *

From a letter by ARNETTA MONCRIEF De Witt, Arkansas

I have a suggestion that every subscriber give a year's subscription to a friend or a relative. That is how I got acquainted with The Icelandic Canadian. A very dear friend sent a year's subscription as a present. I feel certain that a number of people of Icelandic identity are not aware of this fine magazine's existence.

* * *

Perhaps some of our friends will remember this suggestion at Christmas.

JONAS THOR APPOINTED EDITOR OF LÖGBERG HEIMSKRINGLA

Our Magazine Board extends its cordial welcome to Jonas Thor on his assumption of the editorship of Lögberg-Heimskringla: This fine publication is an indispensible medium in maintaining the tenuous link connecting people of Icelandic extraction scattered throughout the North American continent.

We thank Margret Bjorgvinsdottir and Haraldur Bessason for the high standard of journalism they invariably maintained during their two-year tenure of the editorship. We also thank them for the cordial relationship that always existed between our two publications during their term of office.

* * *

WALT LARUSSON MEMORIAL FUND

A memorial fund is being set up in memory of Walt Larusson, who was a member of the staff of the Faculty of Education and teacher of Icelandic in the Faculty of Arts. The award will take the form of a

book prize for highest standing in a first year Icelandic course.

Those interested in contributing should make their donations to the H. V. Larusson Memorial Fund, c/o Prof. C. E. Henry, Awards Director, 400 University Centre, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2N2.

—University of Manitoba *Bulletin*
March 26, 1980

* * *

From a letter
by JOHN THOMPSON
Big River, Saskatchewan

In spite of the anglicized version of our names, my sister and I are Icelandic-born, but raised at Langruth, Manitoba. We would like to see something no matter how small — about that community in The Icelandic Canadian.

* * *

The Langruth district has received scant attention in Icelandic publications. Yet in years gone by a flourishing Icelandic community existed in that area. A number of prominent people had their origin there, among them the late Prof. Barney Thordarson of Brandon University and John A. Christianson who was a member of Premier Duff Roblin's cabinet. Also, there are no doubt, others with whose names the writer is not familiar. Hopefully these brief comments will inspire some resident — or former resident of Langruth to write an article about that community past and present — for The Icelandic Canadian.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE JOLASVEINAR?

The Icelandic folk heritage is rich in traditions of strange beings such as the following account of the thirteen Jolasveinar (Christmas giants, or sometimes described as little people). The following is for children and the young at heart with imaginative minds. The Jolasveinar were described in various households in North American communities, such as Langruth, in the early years of this century. The re-telling of their activities renews an old Icelandic heritage and adds another dimension to Christmas in addition to the spiritual element and the excitement of Santa Claus.

A great variety of unusual creatures with magical powers has been seen around the world. This was particularly true long ago, but there are still places where some people see ''little folk,'' fairies, mischievous imps, dwarfs, witches and giants. Only people who believe in them will see them. It has been said that every time a child says, ''I don't believe in fairies!'', one of these wee, delicate creatures grows sad and sickly and fades away into a puff of dust.

Iceland has been the home of many strange and magical creatures — little people, giants and ogresses!! One group is the Jolasveinar — the thirteen mischievous giants who appear just before Christmas. Have you seen them? When they appear in the countryside, of Iceland, they pull many naughty pranks.

If you are awake, very late at night on December 12th, you may see ''Stiff-Legged Sheep Chaser'', the first giant to appear. He loves to chase the sheep and other farm animals in order to make them upset and confused. Because of him the farm animals must be rounded up again.

''George Oaf'' appears on the night of December 13th. He sneaks into the milking barns with a sly look and steals the creamy froth from the fresh warm milk. Some of the bubbly magic of the milk is lost, forever.

On the evening of the 14th, rolly-polly ''Shorty'' visits the kitchens. He delights in borrowing full kitchen pans and cleaning them in order to fill his ever-empty tummy.

''Spoon Licker'' appears on the 15th. He is tall and lean — a skinny stick of a giant! Food left in a deserted kitchen is his goal.

Fifth is ''Pot Scraper'' who tries to eat all of the left-overs before the children can. Pieces of cake, bits of pudding, skyr and

By Leigh Syms, Illustrations by Stefan Tergesen

other delicacies to which the children have been looking forward disappear.

''Pot Licker'' arrives on December 17th. He hides under the bed and creeps out to steal food. He even stoops so low as to stealing food from the pets.

On the 18th you are likely to hear ''Door Slammer''. He enjoys disturbing everyone's sleep.

The eighth giant arrives to stuff himself with dairy products. Milk, cheese, butter and skyr are in grave danger of disappearing.

''Sausage Stealer'' arrives on the 20th. He tries to finish off all the smoked food that has been prepared for Christmas. Smoked sausages, bacon, rullupylsa and hangikjöt may disappear in a flash.

On the 21st, ''The ''Peeper'' who is the 10th giant comes to frighten the children and to steal presents. Christmas gifts and toys may disappear if children try to hide under their beds.

''The Sniffer'' is number eleven. He arrives on the 22nd and, with his sensitive nose, sniffs out food to fill out his skinny body.

If you listen carefully on the evening of the 23rd you may hear ''Meat Hooker'' walking along the roof. He reaches down the chimney with his hook to snag meat that has been left out overnight.

Finally, on the 24th of December, ''Candle Beggar'' arrives to steal children's candles. He cannot resist taking unattended candles that are left burning.

A greedy lot, they are! Their mischievous pranks can do much to spoil Christmas. Food and presents must be, carefully, put away. If children are good and do as they are told, the Jolasveinar can do little harm.

The Jolasveinar are best known in the isolated mountainous area of Iceland. Many of their activities, there may be hidden by the fog. However, they do appear wherever groups of Icelanders live and believe in them. Do they also reside in the low-lying areas of Hecla Island or Riverton in the Manitoba Interlake? Are they to be seen near Langruth, Wynyard, Gimli, Arborg, Minneapolis, Brandon, Seattle, Markerville or other communities?

They will be seen only if you believe in them. Beware, and be good and they will do no harm.

HJALMAR VALDIMAR LARUSSON

by Doris Baker

Hjalmar Valdimar Larusson

By the time this memorial is published, approximately two years will have passed since the death on January 18, 1980, of Hjalmar Valdimar Larusson. It is an honour and a heartwarming experience for the writer, who knew him as a fellow student, as a professional colleague, and as a personal friend, to recall for readers of *The Icelandic Canadian* the life among us of this fine Canadian of Icelandic descent.

When recalling the life of Hjalmar Larusson (known as 'Valdi' by his family and Icelandic friends) it seems particularly fitting to be, as the writer is, looking out over Lake Winnipeg which was, throughout his life, a source of renewal to which he returned year after year. Here it is easy to see again in the mind's eye, Valdi Larusson walking along the breakwater — or when water levels permitted — along the sand in front of his summer home — feeding the gulls whose antics never ceased to fascinate him. Even death did not separate him entirely from his beloved lake, for as he wished, his ashes were buried in the family plot in Gimli cemetery.

Born in Gimli on November 21, 1912, Valdi Larusson was always keenly aware of his heritage, and his links with Iceland were both numerous and strong. In the early 1890's, his parents, Palmi Larusson of Hunavatnssysla, grandson of the great national poet Hjalmar Jonsson (Bolu-Hjalmar), and Gudrun Steinsdottir of Skagafjordur, had decided to join those seeking a better life in New Iceland. Like other pioneers, they were forced not only to say farewell to family and friends but to leave behind many of their possessions. Thus they had packed what they could take of their belongings, including the spinning wheel that had been Palmi's first gift to Gudrun, in the old wooden chest that travelled with them to their new life. This chest, with its traces of blue paint, and the spinning wheel were treasured by Valdi and kept in his cottage home at Gimli. At the time of their coming to Canada, Palmi and Gudrun had two children — Sigridur and Osk. Seven more children — Palmi, Sigursteinn, Benedikt, Anna, Jonina, Brynjolfur and Hjalmar (Valdi) — were born to them in Canada. All eight brothers and sisters predeceased Valdi but their children and grandchildren were a continuing source of joy and interest throughout his life, possibly the more so because he himself never married.

After completing his elementary and secondary schooling at Gimli, he obtained his teacher's certificate by attending the Winnipeg Normal School. Thus began what was to be a very satisfying and highly successful career. He had wisely chosen a life's work that enabled him to give expression both to his love of learning and his empathetic interest in people. His early teaching years,

which were spent in the north, were the basis of many vividly told stories that revealed his affectionate understanding of his pupils, his appreciation of the relative freedom of life in the north and his awareness of the beauty of the unspoiled countryside that was always nearby. He left the mining town of Sheridan (later to be moved across Lake Winnipeg to become the town of Lynn Lake) only when he felt it was time for him to begin his university studies.

Returning to Winnipeg, he joined the 'Class of '41' at Wesley College (soon to become 'United College'), affiliated with the University of Manitoba. Although older than the majority, he soon became a much appreciated member of his class. "H.V.", as he quickly came to be affectionately called by his fellow students, gained recognition as a keen and able student of English language and literature, particularly of the middle English of Chaucer. Nor did he neglect other aspects of college life. His keen participation in college dramatics was a forecast of his later interest in community amateur drama groups such as the Little Theatre.

Like many other men in his graduating class, Valdi volunteered for war-time army service and as a student took some training towards a commission in the artillery. After obtaining his B.A. he was posted as an artillery officer to Newfoundland, and attained the rank of captain. For the rest of his life, Newfoundland and its people held a special place in his affections. The stories he told so vividly of his Newfoundland experiences revealed the extent to which he had been able to communicate with the people of the then island colony. Following the end of the war, 'Larry', as he was called by his army friends, returned to Manitoba and his teaching career, joining the Winnipeg school staff. He did, however, retain a commission in the army reserve and spent several summers as adjutant at an army camp at Dundurn, Saskatchewan.

As a teacher he was noted for his ability to work effectively with the young adolescents of the junior high school grades. His sincere interest in the individual, his lively sense of humour and his insistence upon disciplined behavior earned him the reputation of being a very effective teacher of his age group and he was often called upon to work with classes considered particularly difficult to manage. His skill in working with adolescent boys certainly stood him in good stead when, as an exchange teacher in England, he found himself posted to a "secondary modern" school in the notorious east end of London!

In January, 1955, he accepted an invitation to join the staff of the Manitoba Teachers College as a teacher of English. Here 'Walt' as he was known to fellow teachers, soon carved a place for himself as a particularly effective instructor. In 1965, when the Teachers College was incorporated into the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, he continued his work in teacher education, holding the rank of assistant professor.

Always central in his life was his interest in everything Icelandic, particularly Icelandic history and language. Further, he was completely bi-lingual. In a memorial article published in the January 31, 1980 issue of *Morgunbladid*, and reprinted in the *Lögberg-Heimskringla* of March 14 of the same year, Professor Sveinn Skorri Hoskuldsson attested to the excellence of his Icelandic, declaring that he spoke it better than any other North American Icelander he had ever met — in fact — as if he had never left the northern pass where his mother had been raised!

Valdi's interest in things Icelandic did not in any way limit his interest in other cultures. As an exchange teacher in England he found time to explore sites associated with English history and literature — explorations which he continued on later visits. He also explored much of western Europe and travelled widely in every Canadian prov-

ince, as well as making several trips to Iceland.

Wherever he travelled, Valdi was always much more interested in people than in places, a fact clearly demonstrated in his travel photography. His souvenir photographs almost invariably included people as they carried out their ordinary activities. Thus he photographed people waiting for buses, walking along esplanades, and working in their gardens. He photographed bus drivers, shoppers, barmaids, and children at play.

His interest in language was, essentially, an interest in individuals and what they were trying to communicate. His fine collection of pictures, reflective of many styles and mediums, showed his appreciation of the graphic arts as avenues of communication. His personal library, in which Icelandic and English books were almost equally represented, reflected his wide ranging interests. He saw nothing incongruous in having a book of Al Capp or Giles' cartoons next to his novels of Jane Austen: all were valid communications!

His knowledge and appreciation of Icelandic language and history led to his becoming a part-time lecturer in the Department of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba. His work in this department and his association with its head, Professor Haraldur Bessason, greatly enriched his life and gave him a sense of purpose that might otherwise have been lacking, especially when ill health began to exact its toll. In the February 8, 1980 issue of the *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, Professor Bessason paid tribute to Valdi's contribution to Icelandic studies in Manitoba.

It was Valdi's misfortune to be the victim of a cardiac condition which, from its first appearance in the latter months of 1954, just at the beginning of his career in teacher education, until its sudden final victory, exacted stringent conditions in exchange for his life. On many occasions over the years, an attack would mean another ambulance trip and another stay in hospital. He faced these crises and their inherent threats of death with an equanimity bordering on the stoic. Few could have equalled his self-control or could have accepted the realities of such a condition without being defeated by them.

So it is that we can look back from this point in time, almost two years after his death, and give thanks that Valdi — H.V. — Larry — Walt — Larusson lived among us, enriching our lives and strengthening the fabric of our society. Truly, it can be said of him as it was of Chaucer's clerke — "Gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche."

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. RICHARD BECK

by R. J. Asgeirsson

ROBERT J. ASGEIRSSON

THE AUTHOR

He was born in 1943 in Winnipeg, the son of Ingibjorg and the late Jochum Asgeirsson. He has worked in television and motion picture production since 1964. Much of this time has been spent working for the CBC and CTV networks filming documentaries and variety productions throughout the world. Several of these films have won national and international awards. He has lived in Vancouver since 1969 and has his own small but active film production company called PUSH TWO PRODUCTIONS LTD. He has served for a number of years on the Board of Directors of the Icelandic Canadian Club of B.C., including three years as President. Since 1979 he has been the West Coast Representative for the Icelandic National League.

* * *

As I sought an understanding of our Icelandic heritage, my father, Jochum, suggested that I talk with his friend Dr. Beck. After all, he's not far from here, and I think he would give you better answers to your questions than I could." My father was a modest man when it came to expressing opinions, but his advice was always sound, as you will see.

The following conversation between Dr. Beck and myself took place in the winter of 1972 at his residence in Victoria. I remember the sun shining in through the living room windows warming us as we drank — what else? — good Icelandic coffee. I started my tape recorder.

Q.: What were the circumstances that caused you to leave Iceland?

Dr. Beck: Well, my principal reason in leaving Iceland to go to America was to continue my education. I had already graduated from the college at Reykjavik and I decided that, in as much as I intended to study English language and literature as well as Icelandic and Scandinavian languages and literature, I would have a better opportunity if I went to an institution such as Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, which combined high advanced study in both fields. Now I might say also that, doubtless, a factor in my coming here was that I had close relatives in Winnipeg. I came to Winnipeg in the fall of 1921, the year after I had graduated from the college at Reykjavik, and I spent the next winter in Winnipeg. I did some reading and studying and, incidentally, my first work in this country during the winter of 1921 and 1922 was to teach Icelandic for the Icelandic National League. The Icelandic National League sponsored general teachers in Winnipeg. We went from home to home. I was engaged in that that winter and also we had a Saturday School.

. . . I'm rather proud of the fact that my first occupation, outside of such work as building construction in the summer to earn money, was teaching Icelandic.

. . . I left Iceland with the definite idea that I would come back and become a teacher in Iceland, preferably of English, after I had completed my advanced work at Cornell. As a matter of fact, I was ready to go to Iceland when I had received my doctorate and become a teacher of English there, but at that time there wasn't any position available which meant that I would go into teaching first in this country. So I taught English at St. Loyola College in Northville, Minnesota and also at Tier College in Greenwood, Pennsylvania and then, in 1929, I was asked to become Professor of Scandinavian Languages and Literature at the University of North Dakota.

. . . I had pretty well adjusted to the situation that it would be my — I won't use the word fate — that it would be my life work to teach in the closely-related Icelandic and Norwegian field, you see. You take, for instance, I taught Norwegian history for years. It is impossible to teach Norwegian history without being involved in Icelandic history at the same time. In the first place, one of the basic works of Norwegian history is of course *Heimskringla* by Snorri Sturluson, the Icelandic historian. So I felt quite reconciled to the idea that, while I would have wanted to work in my own country, I was going in some way, at least to the best of my ability, without in any way failing to do the work that I was supposed to do. I would do my best to repay Iceland their cultural debt which any Icelander has if he stops and thinks about it. We are very rich people, as your father knows . . . There has never been in the minds and hearts of men like your father and myself and a great many others any clash whatsoever between our attachment to Iceland as the native land, the land of our forefathers, and the debt which we as citizens have to pay to the country where we live, whether it is the United States or Canada. Now this is something that's very important. For example, the first statement in the constitution of the Icelandic National League states that it is to contribute towards or stimulate Icelanders to become the finest citizens of the country of which they are a part. Then the constitution goes on to talk about the preservation of the Icelandic language and literature. In other words, we feel that we are short-changing our adopted country if we do not give them the best that we have and wherever possible help to weave the Icelandic heritage — its finest features — into the framework of the country of which we are a part.

Q.: Do you think the Icelanders are doing this? What's happening to their children?

Dr. Beck: Now we have to remember that we cannot expect that our children have the same feeling for the land of our birth as we have. We expect and respect them for it that they will have a parallel attachment to their land of birth, be it the United States or Canada, as we have to ours. I think that's sound. I think it is sensible.

. . . Now let me put this in parentheses. I have increasingly condemned the melting-pot idea. I have increasingly approved of the mosaic idea because when you talk about melting pots I think that any ethnic group — Icelandic or other — is impoverished if it lets go by the boards its heritage, cultural heritage which, as we all know, has been earned, if you please, in sweat, blood and tears and no where more so than in Iceland.

. . . Now I am certain that other nations have to go through great difficulties. Their heritage has been bought at a price which they cannot evaluate. And I come back to you with the ethnic groups. I think every ethnic group, whether it is in the United States or Canada, ought to maintain and more than maintain whenever possible its heritage. Now as far as the language is concerned, I'm afraid that is going to be a difficult situation. I rejoice in every Icelander who stays with our own group — every young Icelandic-Canadian or American-Icelander who is willing to make the effort to learn his language. But I always used to say that in our field where we've been labouring — your father and I — I used to say we would speak to our people in Icelandic as long as we can reach them. When we can no longer reach them on Icelandic subjects in Icelandic, we will speak to them in the language that they understand, which I think is only practical.

. . . The language is, of course, the golden key to the literary heritage. There are the sagas, the eddas, the ancient poetry or folklore — not to forget the rich modern literature of Iceland. Young people should be encouraged to take Icelandic as a second language whenever it's available.

Q.: What do you think about the fact that there are diminishing numbers of people speaking Icelandic in Canada?

Dr. Beck: I think it was quite natural that they would drift away from the language. I think that's almost unavoidable in any large numbers.

Q.: Why?

Dr. Beck: Well I think in a good many cases they're not ready to put forth the effort and perhaps more than anything else they don't feel the need to learn it.

Q.: The point I am making is that perhaps the older generation has to sell the younger generation on the values of the culture and the only way that they're going to understand these values is by learning the language. So maybe we should set up proper schooling for the youngsters in the Icelandic language?

Dr. Beck: You know I've devoted a great deal of my spare time from my immediate work to this very problem of encouraging Icelanders as such. Your father and I have been co-workers for many years. But the thing is, you know, I think the question is now we are in the third and fourth generation and you're up against this problem that the parents of Icelandic origin, excepting a very few exceptions, they're not teaching their children the language.

Q.: Do you think that's regrettable?

Dr. Beck: Yes, I think it is in a way. Although I would like, of course, to see the thing continued, I'm willing to face up to reality.

Q.: Do you think that the reality may be that it's just that Icelanders in Canada here don't care if the culture is maintained and they're not making an effort to teach the young and convince them that it is worthwhile learning Icelandic?

Dr. Beck: Well that may well be. You may be right on that. But what I'm thinking is this. Once you're removed from the first generation or second generation, then they are not hearing the language at home. They're getting to think in terms of it as a foreign language. And then they have to study it. We Icelanders have one of the most beautiful languages, to us at least, in the world. One of the richest languages, but it is also one of the most difficult languages to learn from a grammar point of view.

. . . I would say that by all means let us make every effort possible to teach the language but I think that we have to make more effort in the future to continue interest in the cultural heritage through the use of the English language. I think that while that is only half a loaf, I would say that I would rather have half a loaf than none. And with increasing numbers of translations — admitting that translations are at best in most cases an approximation — I think we're going to reach our people much more readily. You will see, and your father knows, that many of the people are going to Iceland now. They don't speak the language. I lament it

heartily, but yet they've got sufficient interest in their background to go, which to me is something to be applauded.

. . . I remember during the war years — I think in 1941 or 42 — I was in New York for a convention and was interviewed by the editor of a Norwegian paper in New York, and he asked me what about the ethnic studies at the university. I told him, "I predict that as the young generation becomes far removed from its origins, from the pioneers, it is gradually going to develop historical interest." And this is exactly what has happened. Now that historical interest may take and does take in many cases a renewed interest in the language. But probably in a greater number of cases, it takes more of an expression of interest in the cultural background, in the history.

Q.: How does that resurgence of interest happen in the people after say the third or fourth generation?

Dr. Beck: Well, I think they begin to realize better that we have a heritage. Where did we come from? What sort of a country . . . where did our people come from? What did they bring with them, in a cultural way?

. . . I think you're dealing here with a process which we old Icelanders may dislike and not approve of. That you're dealing with a current that you very well cannot control. And doubtless we have all been negligent in not stressing it at the time we should have but there are so many factors that enter into this whole situation. So I think that we will have to — at the same time as we stress the teaching and study of Icelandic as much as we can — face up to the reality that probably in the future it will be limited largely to students in the higher levels, university, and those who have special interest in the language and literature field.

Q.: Do you think that in Iceland today they might be facing a similar sort of situation with the influx of the English language and English business and marketing?

Dr. Beck: I have no fear of that. I am well aware that the Iclanders themselves are on guard against the foreign influence. At the same time I think the Icelanders now recognize that they have got into the mid-stream of the cultural currents of today and, at least when I was going to school, the second language of Iceland was Danish and a great many of our textbooks in college were in the Danish language, although we recited in Icelandic. But all those books have long since been replaced with Icelandic texts. There are, of course, certain influences from abroad that the Icelanders are on guard against and I think increasingly so, but I anticipate that while the young people may not have as great a knowledge or appreciation of the sagas, for instance, as the old people do, all these things have been taught in the Icelandic schools from low grades up. I think the Icelanders will adjust to those influences within the framework of the preservation of their language.

. . . Certainly, as far as the Icelandic language is concerned, I think we were in far greater danger of going down to the Danish language than we are now from the English influence.

Q.: Do you really think that they are going to be on guard as much as they were when Denmark was the oppressor? Now they are free and the English-speaking peoples are not an oppressor, rather they offer different ways of life, better business patterns, more money and manufacturing. You see they're not oppressing Iceland, so Iceland may not have its guard up. When the Danes were there, they were sort of bound and determined to resist.

Dr. Beck: In that case it was a political struggle that was also, of course, cultural but the Icelanders withstood it. I think that while there are foreign influences that I and many other Icelanders would not approve

of, I have every faith and confidence that the Icelanders will take such measures — and they're already taking them — to be on guard against such influences and that they will continue to retain their national identity and the special characteristics that mark them as Icelanders.

. . . I think the basic element in the Scandinavian and the Icelandic culture is this: On one hand, there is in us generally speaking a strong strain of adventure, spirit of adventure. On the other hand, there is in us just as deep a strain of attachment to the soil. Now this is at the heart of the tragedy of immigration.

. . . We have had sense enough to realize that we are, in a sense, planted in a foreign soil. That our roots are on the other side, but we have never let it interfere with our sense of obligation as citizens to the new land. And I think it is to the credit of all of us.

. . . But the background of your father and I and all native Icelanders, our history, our saga is all in Iceland. It takes a long time to build a culture. It takes a long time to write history.

Q.: Would you like to go back to Iceland to live now?

Dr. Beck: I would live in Iceland but I don't think I could go. You see you have your children and your grandchildren in America. You cannot divide your family. This is what you get into, you see. But, you see, your immediate ties and your immediate obligations are to your family. They would supersede anything else. I could very well live in Iceland and enjoy it, although I think we have to recognize that not only has Iceland changed a great deal, but we have changed much more than we realize.

. . . I am hopeful that the trend which is now more evident on the part of the young people of Icelandic origin, that trend of historical ties, will continue to be strong. Cultural ties may even be strong enough for some Icelandic descendants to decide to take a look at this language, the magnificent Icelandic language.

IN SEARCH OF AUD THE DEEP MINDED:
Audr/Unnr Ketilsdottir hin djupudga

by Elizabeth Hoisington Stewart

IN A LETTER FROM MRS. STEWART TO THE EDITOR

I am of Scottish and English descent on both my maternal and paternal sides. Only my paternal ancestry has been traced back before about 1600, so I know of Aud being an ancestress only on my father's side, though it is quite possible other lines descend from her to my mother also.

"The Deep-Minded". The name stood out from the page of handwritten genealogical charts and caught my mind's eye. Who was this 9th century Viking ancestress of mine? What did her name signify?

When I was a girl my aunt, Edith N. Hoisington, a professional genealogist, gave me a handwritten, looseleaf notebook of genealogical charts which she had drawn up of my paternal ancestry and, ever since, she has added to it, sending me more pages as she pushed knowledge of our ancestry back, generation by generation, in one line or another. She has used records of births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths, wills, shipping records, and census lists. Genealogists seem to be a close fraternity, sharing through books, periodicals, and personal correspondence their questions and the results of their research. Much that has been discovered is on file in genealogical libraries, pre-eminently, those of the Mormon Church.

My aunt gradually traced her ancestry (which is also half of mine) back through the 1700s and 1600s in the United States, through the Middle Ages in England and Scotland, to the Norse earls of the Orkney and Shetland Islands and northern Scotland in the Viking Age.

When a genealogist comes to a Norse ancestor of the land-owning class, he must whoop with joy. To the Scandinavian people, knowing one's ancestry was important not only as a matter of pride, but also because he had to know his relationships to others, even distant cousins, in case of legal matters such as proposed marriages, support of indigents, or compensations for killings or thefts. The result was that, even in the first millenium A.D., when most men were illiterate, Scandinavians kept track, learning their ancestry and the exploits of their forebears by heart. After Christianity came to northern Europe and Iceland and clerics started to keep written records, this oral history was written down.

So, once back to the Vikings who conquered Caithness in northern Scotland and the Orkney and Shetland islands north of Britain, my aunt could call on the genealogical information in the Norse sagas. She traced some of our lines to the Norse earls of the highlands and islands, back through Sigurd the Stout, who died at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014; his father, Hlödver Season-Prosperous; and his parents Grelod and Thorfinn Scull-Cleaver (marvellous names they had!), Fifth Earl of the Orkneys and Shetlands. Grelod was the great-granddaughter of Aud the Deep-Minded.

The charts which my aunt prepared remained for me merely lists of names and dates, carefully inserted in my looseleaf binder, until my husband's ill health caused me to retire and to stay at home. Then I undertook a project of writing in narrative form a summary of the information in the charts, plus, for recent generations, what my parents could tell me about their lives.

As I worked on this mass of family history, the name "Aud the Deep-Minded" tugged at my imagination. I decided to see what I could find out about her. For over a year I have been living with the shadowy presence of Audr hin djupudga growing ever more real as I have learned more about her life and times and as I have become more and more impressed with what a remarkable woman she was.

In a hostile country, Scotland, far across the sea from her native land, Norway; father, husband, and son all dead — the men a woman of the Viking Age depended on for protection; with a houseful of grandchildren to save; she got away from her enemies and sailed out in an open boat over the north Atlantic to become a pioneer in a new land, a chieftain in a man's world, one of the founders of a new nation, Iceland.

In case others would like to retrace my steps, I will mention some sources. First, I should like to take this opportunity to thank the librarians of several Scandinavian collections for their assistance: A. Gerald Anderson, Scandinavian Area Specialist of the University of Washington Libraries; Marguerite A. Christensen of the University of Wisconsin Library at Madison; Franklin D. Scott, Honnold Library, Claremont College; Thorkell Grimsson of the National Museum of Iceland; and, especially, for the generous help of Vilhjalmur Bjarnar of the Fiske Icelandic Collection of Cornell University. The University of Rochester and the Rochester Public Library let me consult their stacks. My town library borrowed books for me, one all the way from Manitoba. Librarians are wonderful!

The primary sources I consulted were: *Laxdaela Saga*, *Landnamabok*, and *Orkneyinga Saga*. Secondary sources, too many to list here, included old and recent history books and articles, such as *Islendinga Saga* by Jon Johannesson.

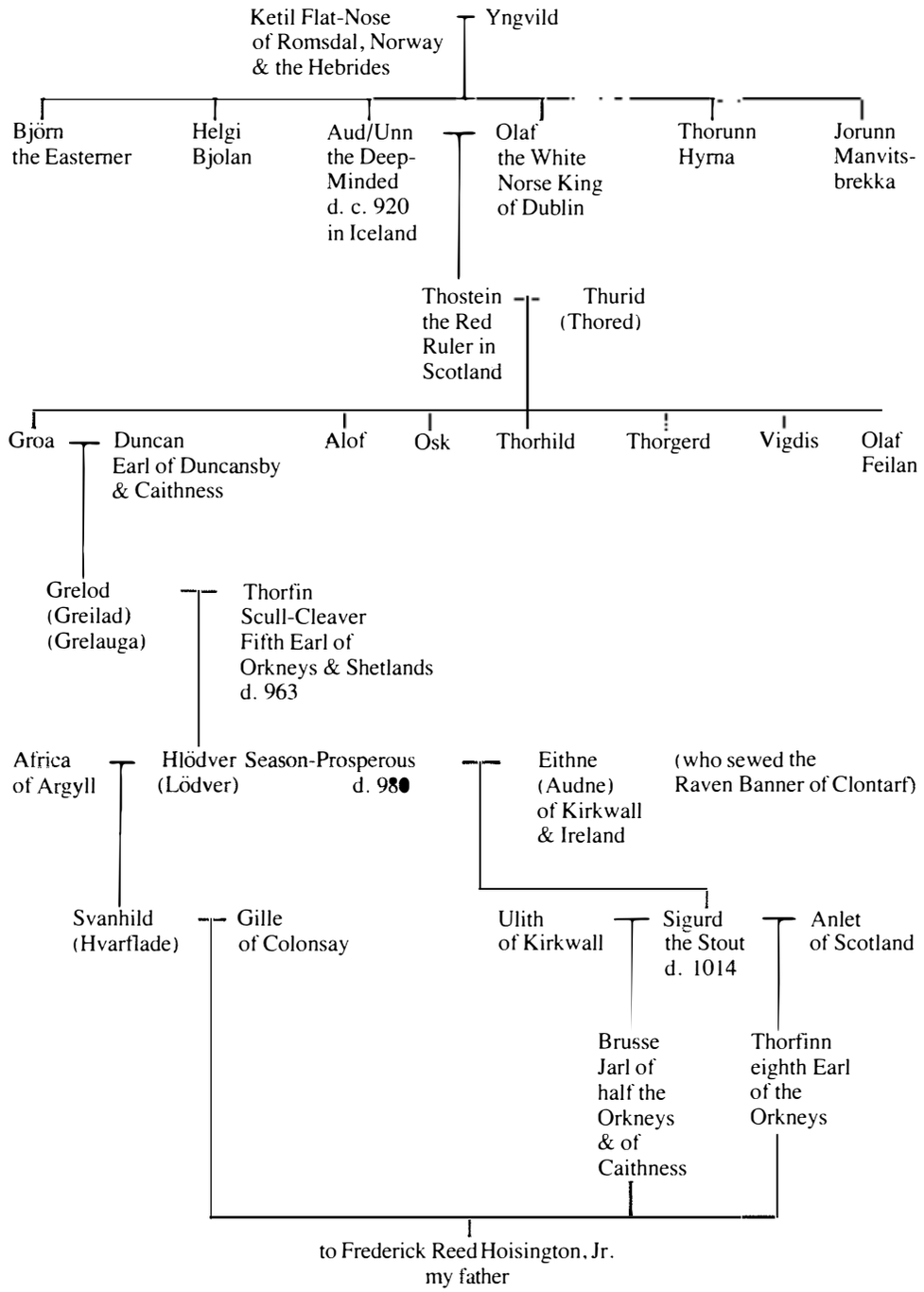
I read with fluency only English, so I am limited in the sources I can use — a real handicap in this project. I managed to translate one article from the German but was stumped by one in Icelandic until the editor of *The Icelandic Canadian*, Axel Vopnfjord, very generously translated it for me.

My intention now is to write an article — or perhaps a booklet — about Aud the Deep-Minded. Certainly I have personally discovered nothing new about her, done no archeological digs, found no long-hidden documents. But, as far as I have been able to discover, all the material about her has not yet been pulled together in one publication, in English.

One gap, in particular, in my information remains: knowledge of Aud's home, the land she claimed and settled in Iceland, Hvamm in the Dales, Hvammr i Dölum, on Hvammsfjördur at the head of Breidafjördur. Unfortunately, I have never been there (though I have been to Orkney where my line descended from her). If any readers can send me information — machine copies of photographs or detail maps, written information about the ruins of Aud's homestead or her memorial stone, etc. — I should be most grateful and should be glad to include their contributions in my book.

I hope others will be inspired by her as I have been.

(Mrs.) Elizabeth H. Stewart
143 Pelham Road, Rochester
N.Y. 14610
United States of America



DESCENT OF THE AUTHOR FROM AUD THE DEEP-MINDED

Source: Edith N. Hoisington
Professional Genealogist

Chart prepared by Elizabeth Hoisington Stewart

A VISIT TO NORTH DAKOTA'S ICELANDIC STATE PARK

The writer (left) and Park Superintendent Horner in front of the Gunlogson family home built in the 1880s.

As our readers are aware, Mr. G. B. Gunlogson of Racine, Wisconsin donated the family homestead to the state for the purpose of establishing a park in memory of the Icelandic pioneers of that district. Mr. Gunlogson, now 94 years of age, has not allowed the passing years to impede his manifold interests and activities. "Old age has yet his honor and his toil".

Earlier this year the writer received a cordial invitation from Mr. Gunlogson to visit the park. Needless to say, the writer took advantage of this welcome suggestion. With a companion he drove to Cavalier, then seven miles via Highway No. 5 to the park. At the entrance the girl in the box office told us, "Any friend of Mr. Gunlogson is doubly welcome. Enjoy yourselves". We then contacted Mr. Horner, the superintendent of the park. In the role of a most gracious host, he spent most of the afternoon providing us with a thorough inspection of this beautiful park.

According to Mr. Horner the Park Service of the state has extended the park to 800 plus acres since Mr. Gunlogson's donation of the family homestead. Approximately 20,000 campers and visitors from numerous American states and Canadian provinces come to the park every year.

We visited the old family home built during the latter part of the nineteenth century with its antique but comfortable furniture. We examined the yellowed pages of books, many of them Icelandic, and were reminded of Lord Dufferin's statement that in every home he visited in New Iceland — no matter how humble — the most cherished part of the furnishings was a collection of books.

We spent the afternoon along the winding roads and meandering trails, entranced by the beauty and tranquility of this woodland retreat "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife".

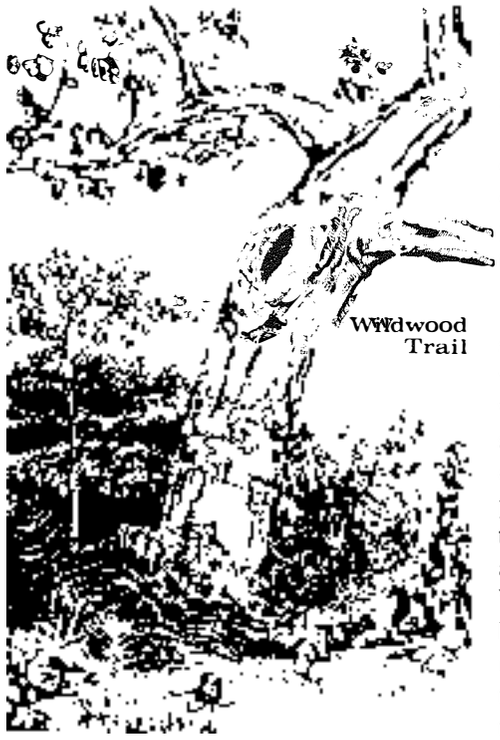
When the sun was getting low on the western horizon, with regret we decided we must start our homeward trek.

We shall now continue in Mr. Gunlogson's words published in the brochure given to us at the park.

* * *

Enter this wild wood and view the haunts of nature. This Arboretum tells a living story about how the land was formed by glaciers, water, wind, plant growth and time. These forces leveled the upland, carved out the river bottom, sorted out soil types and created a wide variety of ecological situations that harbor different kinds of trees, shrubs, grasses, wild flowers and pond life in their special haunts or adaptations for life.

My parents homesteaded here in 1880, which was then the Dakota Territory. Here they found a friendly environment and a picturesque setting in which to build their



Gunlogson Arboretum

home. There were trees to break the winter winds, for building logs and for fuel. Pure water was abundant, and there was grazing for cattle and clearings ready to be plowed for garden and grain crops. Nature could hardly have been more generous. Berries, plums, grapes and hazelnuts grew in the borders; and wildlife and song birds were nearly always within sight or sound.

The changes in the seasons were inspirational experiences. The grandest and most exciting of all was the coming of spring, which would fill our senses with a symphony of sounds and colors and a feeling of aliveness. Then slowly the soft songs of summer and the drone of bumble bees would take over to soothe our senses, and provide a delightful interlude before the coming of autumn and the more dramatic changes that followed.

We will always be moved by these miracles of nature because we are a part of these miracles. Our physical form and fitness and all our senses were acquired in the primeval cradle of nature. Our senses of sight and hearing and even our moods became attuned to this environment. Because of this heritage, nature areas dedicated to inspirational and educational purposes may become increasingly important to our cultural development in the future.

For many years the homestead provided a subsistence way of life for the family, but with changing times and circumstances it was thought that the land could better service the community and the state as a cultural resource rather than for agricultural production. Scientists and naturalists from the universities became interested in the area as a center for research and education. When plans for the nearby Icelandic Park began to unfold, it was decided that the natural resources and historical aspects of the homestead could best be developed by the Park Service. Accordingly, the 200 acre tract was turned over to the state.

People from all parts of the country come here to view this unique area of natural diversity. Teachers and pupils make this their outdoor schoolroom. The Arboretum affords people of all ages opportunities to observe and enjoy the workings of living nature, undisturbed by man. As time goes on, it is hoped that this Arboretum and old homestead will become increasingly appreciated by visitors who enjoy the tranquility of the surroundings and the simplicity which characterized the lives of our early settlers.

FRANK FREDRICKSON INDUCTED INTO SPORT'S HALL OF FAME

Frank Fredrickson

At the request of the Fredrickson family of Toronto, none of whom were able to be present, the writer attended the ceremony at Winnipeg's Convention Centre where a number of outstanding athletes, including Frank Fredrickson, captain of the Falcon hockey team, were inducted into Sport's Hall of Fame. The writer accepted the award on behalf of the Fredrickson family. The acceptance address follows:

Mr. Chairman, Fellow Sports-Lovers:

I've had my idols in the field of sports among them baseball's Grover Cleveland Alexander and hockey's Jean Beliveau of the Montreal Canadiens, but Frank Fredrickson was — and still is — my number one idol. That may be because we were both Canadians of Icelandic extraction. I saw Frank's famous Falcons (He was their captain) play at the old amphitheatre against the Selkirk Fishermen and the Brandon Wheat Kings. I was at the Free Press Building when an account was broadcast of the game for the Allan Cup between the Falcons and Toronto Varsity. I was thrilled whenever Frank scored.

Upon their return to Winnipeg after winning the gold at Antwerp, Belgium in 1920, the Falcons, all of them of Icelandic descent with the exception of "Huck" Woodman, were honored, according to Maurice Smith of the Free Press, "as no hockey team had been honored before or probably since".

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I crave your indulgence in quoting an excerpt from a letter by Alix Fredrickson, Frank's daughter-in-law;Dear Axel:

We are delighted that you will represent the Fredrickson family at the Manitoba Sport's Hall of Fame on October 3. Please convey to the committee how honored and happy we are. It might be nice if you said a little bit in Icelandic, as Mr. Fredrickson was very proud of his ancestry (end of quote). I am sure none of you will have any difficulty in understanding when I say, "Kaerar thakkir fra Fredrickson Fjolskylduni fyrir thennan mikla heidur."

What I am going to say now isn't just empty words. I mean it wholeheartedly. It is, indeed, a great honor to accept this award on behalf of the Fredrickson family.

The Fredrickson Family

Both of Frank's parents, Jon Vidalin Fridriksson and Gudlaug Sigurdardottir were born in Iceland. Frank was born in Canada. He married Johanna Sveinros Beatrice Peterson whose parents were also born in Iceland. Their children are:

Frank, married to Valerie Phillips, lives near Vancouver where he is a Labour Relations Consultant for Hospital Industries of

B.C. Their children are Grant, Jon and Signy.

Marilyn, a successful actress both in live theatre and on T.V. Lives in Toronto. Has three grown daughters, Robyn, Marney and Melissa.

John, married to Alix Gordon, lives in Toronto. He is Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto. They have three children in the University, Kristin, Lisa and Erik.

A.V.

THE BOY GROWS OLDER: THE MINNESOTA DECADE 1920 - 1930

by Carl Bjarnason Dahl

An article entitled "A Boy's Winnipeg Decade 1910 - 1920" by Carl Bjarnason Dahl, written in his own distinctive, refreshing style, was featured in the autumn issue, 1980 of THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN. Mr. Dahl had been working on another article, a sequal to the first one, entitled, perhaps, "A Youth's Minnesota Decade 1920 - 1930". The high quality of his writing engendered a hope in the minds of the members of our Magazine Board that he would become a regular contributor to our quarterly for years to come. The fates decreed otherwise. Carl Dahl was struck by a truck while walking near his home in Oklahoma City, resulting in his death.

Carl was an honor graduate of Minneota High School in 1924, exhibiting even then his writing skill for which he became widely known. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1929 with a double major in Education and Library Science. After a distinguished career in various parts of the United States, he and his wife, Alice, moved to Oklahoma City in 1948, where he worked as Business Manager and Technical Librarian for the city library.

The editor received recently from his widow, Alice, via Valdimar Bjornson of Minneapolis, Carl's good friend, a copy of the first, uncompleted draft of his second article. Excerpts from it are published herewith. The beginning of it is a continuation of his first article which ends as follows:

"His Winnipeg decade was closing. In 1920, the year the Winnipeg Falcons, nearly all Icelanders, won the gold at Belgium's Antwerp Olympics, his mother, Maria, told him they'd be leaving Winnipeg and Canada to move to the States, Minnesota. He did not want to go. But she persuaded him it was best for both, however fond he was of his friends, his school, his city, his aunt Gerda's family at Winnipeg Beach. He accepted it. His Winnipeg decade was over."

As in Carl's previous article, this article depicts a graphic, nostalgic portrayal of the life style of a bygone age when life was uncomplicated and innocent.

* * *

Arrival in Minneota

It had been a sooty ride from Winnipeg, rather slow. The boy's mother said that the train goes past the farm where they will live. The boy looked out, hoping to see it. No, not yet. More lights flashed by. The train had not slowed except as it passed through the little towns on the Chicago Northwestern line. They were both tired. They had slept in their seats throughout the journey.

On the platform waited with some trepidation Johann Gudmundson who was to become the boy's stepfather. In his youth at Reydarfjord in Iceland's east coast, he had known Maria Bjarnadottir, the boy's mother. In Iceland, a fisherman, he was now a Minnesota farmer, farming some 150 acres belonging to his affluent cousin, S. A. Anderson. After greetings, Johann took their suitcases and led them to a wagon and horses, tied nearby. It was a high-sided grain wagon. Then they started east out of town to the farm a mile away. Thus the boy and his mother started another life in a strange place, near a strange town, in a strange country, among people mostly strange to them, on a farm raising grain, corn and forage, with dairy cows, Duroc pigs, chickens, and horses.

Johann's Farm

The farm was in segments, hard to work, till, and cultivate. This was all done with horses, and not many of those. He loved his horses, especially Kiddo, Dick, and old Tip. He had affection too — but not as much — for the little broncho Lady and her mother, Susie, a long and loose-legged bay with a rather weak back. But she had a tremendous stride. It was like being on billowing water in a 15,000 tonnage vessel.

Part of the acreage to be worked was south of the house, on the other side of the railroad tracks which meant you had to go up an incline, cross the tracks, and down the other side. Forty acres were half a mile east of the main land. One had to haul binder, hay-rake, bucker, cultivator, harrow when you worked it, guiding them along the narrow graveled road leading east, with traffic coming from each direction. The rest of the land was north of the pasture. All of this had to be fertilized and that was done with manure from the barn, with a spreader.

The Farmhouse

It was one-storey. It faced the graveled county road, and the railroad tracks beyond the road. It had a shed where the washing was done; a separator-room where the boy turned the cream-separator after the milk had been brought in from the barn. This room also had a water-pump and sink; the water was drawn up by the pump from a well below the house. Stairs went up to the attic, unbearably hot in summer. Next room was the kitchen and next it was the room of Johann's mother Jardthrudur, a gentle lady. From kitchen one went into the front-room or parlor, on each side of which was a bedroom with a drape separation. Below the kitchen was a small cellar, reached by stairs revealed when a trapdoor was pulled up. It was used to keep milk, cream and other foods cool. Lighting was by kerosene lamp, one fixed on a bracket in the kitchen near the woodstove. The others, five of them were portable.

The Front Room

The front room was, after the kitchen, the house's biggest room. It held a big coal and wood burning heater, five feet tall. In one corner was the Neutrowound radio in its cabinet. Near it was the big leather chair. In another was the leaf table where the boy did his reading and studying. There was a library of sorts, mainly in Icelandic consisting of Icelandic saga material, and religious books in Icelandic. The leaf table held a kerosene lamp. His studying, working on school lessons, any writing was done on that table. In the summer the lamp gave off much heat, adding to the discomfort of the summer temperature. In the winter its warmth was pleasant.

School Days

For all his experiences growing up, the boy was shy. He didn't say much, but he

listened, and observed, storing away his listenings and observations.

In Winnipeg his last grade was the sixth, Miss Steer's class. He was told to go and see a Miss Askdal, a local grade teacher, who would determine where to place him. They talked at her house. He would go into the 8th grade. Next, there would be high school. In time he realized that the School Board of Minneota was made up of men to whom good education policies were important. There was basketball, very popular. Academically the curriculum included Latin, Caesar and Cicero: eventually he had two years of Latin, which he never regretted. The teachers were mostly young women who were recruited from other areas in Minnesota and surrounding states. The boy's best subjects were English literature, history, and writing.

Horseback Riding

The boy early learned to ride horseback. Johann bought him a saddle, and when the farm work was not too heavy would let him ride the little broncho bay Lady to school, keeping Lady in a stable of the cousins. Often he would ride without a saddle; it was less trouble, easier riding. Mornings he would carry a quart of milk into one of the cousins, retrieving the can in the evening before riding home. The little broncho had a tendency to shy at things beside the road, and only once did he fall off her back when she did this, being catapulted past her neck still holding the milk container and keeping hold of the reins. Lady would stand stock still until he was ready to remount which he did by just sort of scrambling up on her back. She was a sturdy little thing and he was fond of her. Sometimes after bringing her out of the cousins' stable, he would go uptown to the post office and come galloping past the school on the return trip. It was a kind of showing off. He became a good rider.

The Boy's Triumphs

The farmhouse, a one-storey affair, had no library of books except some Icelandic works of religion, and some sagas brought over from Iceland in the immigration around 1900 that brought Johann Gudmundson, his mother and father to America. The boy loved to read but there was not much of interest to him. He loved music, and played a violin. In the evening he studied at the table in the corner of the front room, with a big kerosene lamp giving the light, and giving off very much heat in the summer evenings. He acquired a typewriter. On this he turned out the papers and compositions required by his school work. Whenever the opportunity came, he would enter writing contests connected or not with school. In one of these contests he won a small cash prize. In 1942 in his high school second year, he entered a state writing contest sponsored by the 'Gateway Magazine', a literary magazine published by Macalester College, St. Paul. We was awarded 'Special Distinction' for what he entered in the contest. In 1943, he entered the same writing contest of Macalester College, and won it.

The Boy Learns About the Sagas of the Icelanders

Haying and harvesting was work and talk. It was done by three people: Johann, Einar Olafson, and the boy. The boy was taught how to build the haystacks and the grain-stacks. The two men pitched the hay up to him in bundles. The two talked as they worked, the boy listened as he tramped back and forth building the stack. He heard names like Palna-Toki, Olafur Tryggvason, the Jomsvikings, Olafur Pa that were tossed back and forth as though they were clumps of hay on the pitchforks, as though the speakers knew the persons having these names intimately. Actually these names were all of dead men, long gone, some real, some legendary. It was said of Einar Olafson, who walked with head bowed as though he were heading into a wind, that he so walked because in Iceland he had been a postman walking up hill and dale so much that anywhere he walked through habit he would lean forward, into a wind. As is usual with young people when they hear their elders telling of their old country experiences, the young are inclined either not to listen, or to dismiss what they hear as silliness, or twisted fact, or unbelievable. When their elders tell of experiences in Iceland, it sounds fantastic. There can't be such a country. Einar was 'katur', usually in good spirits; it was stimulating to be where he was. And he was a good worker, quick of movement. Johann owned some of the sagas of the Icelanders; he would exchange his sagas with those owned by a good friend, Kjartan Edwards. From the sagas men like Johann, Einar, and Kjartan would draw strength; they did not let the past die.

The Boy and His Friends

His friends were mostly, almost entirely in the town, Minneota. Through school he found friends in his class, and became early acquainted with the Björnson family. Their father was the publisher and editor of The Minneota Mascot, weekly paper. It was printed in town, and the boy after the evening farm chores were done would walk the mile in to the newspaper office or the house which was on the outskirts of the town, on a corner. It was exciting to him to go to the Mascot office when the editor and the printers worked late to get out the paper, which happened several times a week, especially when the big flatbed press was rolling out the paper, shaking the building and making noise that required shouting to be heard. It was a warm place, friendly, smelling of ink and machinery. It was a place of high spirits, joking, raillery, joshing. The boy would also go to the Björnson house, another fascinating place, most fascinating being Editor Björnson's study. Its perimeter was lined with books in cases, a veritable library of all kinds of literature.

The Björnson boys helped their father, Gunnar, produce the town paper, THE MINNEOTA MASCOT. Hjalmar, Valdimar, Bjorn. A warm, friendly family, full of ability. Gunnar Björnson: his editorials were always on his mind, of course. His was an active and capable mind, that of a good writer, a pre-eminent speaker. He had a gift for sarcasm; he enjoyed it. He was material for high political office, but was far above the goal of just being a politician. He was probably pre-eminent in debate.

The Boy and Johann Stop for Morning Coffee

When Johann and the boy would drive to town, the destination was usually the downtown store area. This was an adventure for both. They would buy their groceries at the Big Store and the meat at Finnegan's Market. Johann usually took several hours to make such a trip. It gave opportunity for visiting in each store, and perhaps they would meet friends on the street for more visits. On the way home they came to a little one-storey house in the lane, almost the last house, and would tie the horses and knock at the door. It was the home of Gudny and Fridrik Gudmundson, friends. They would be invited in, for coffee and a visit. It didn't take long, maybe half an hour, there would be much talk, joking, which the boy listened to, if not always understanding everything that was said. But it gave him a good feeling. Then they would say their goodbyes, untie the horses, climb into the wagon or buggy, proceed south down the lane and onto the graveled state road, turning east, and in a few minutes were home.

Johann and His Friends

Charlie Edwards. They exchanged books including the sagas.

Olaf Dovre, a Norwegian. Johann liked the Norwegians. He subscribed to the *Decorah Posten* for years, a paper published

in Iowa. His favorite cartoon characters were in 'Posten' — *Ola and Per*, whose antics were humorous, keenly enjoyed.

Johann's relatives in Minneota, Sigurdur (S.A.) and Otto and Ole Anderson had no doubt helped him when he came from Iceland in the early 1900s with his father Halfdan and mother Jardthrudur. He was interested in farming, but his first job was as a section-hand on the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The crew using a hand-car patrolled up and down the tracks east and west of Minneota to Taunton St., Ghent east, maintaining and repairing trackage and ties. The crew would pass daily a small farm east of town. It had a small house, granaries, corn-crib, pig houses, barn and other outbuildings. This farm was owned by his cousin S. A. Anderson who eventually rented it on a share-basis usually to his cousin Johann. Johann thus became a Minnesota farmer.

He had to learn to speak English when he arrived from Iceland. He never became very fluent. When the time came to 'take out' U.S. Citizenship, he applied for a 'Declaration of Intention', received the card. But he went no further, thinking that he could never pass the tests, the questions he would be asked, etc. So it stood that way until his life was over. We are much more lenient today. We close our eyes at the rush of illegal aliens entering the U.S.

One fall his stepson (the author) took some of his corn-ears to the Twin Cities, on his way to enroll at the University, and entered it at the Minnesota State Fair; Johann won a second-place ribbon.

After the young man's graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1929, life beckoned beyond the borders of the State of Minnesota. His Minnesota decade was nearing an end.

ICELAND REVISITED: FIFTY YEARS LATER

by Prof. Loftur Bjarnason

The summer issue of The Icelandic Canadian 1980 featured this article by Prof. Bjarnason, but due to an oversight on the part of the editor, several paragraphs were published out of their context, thus destroying the continuity of the article. The editor takes full responsibility for this careless mistake, and extends his apologies to the author.

In fairness to Prof. Bjarnason and our readers the article is hereby re-published.

"Do you think the sun will ever come out? Will we get to see the country at all?"

"Not if this rain and fog continue."

"Even when it stopped raining for a few minutes, the fog was so thick that we couldn't see much. Now it is coming down harder than ever. Do you think they will hold the celebration if this weather continues?"

"Oh, I'm sure they will. After all, the Icelanders have had a thousand years to get used to such weather. They are not likely to postpone such an important event merely because of a little rain and fog."

It was the 20th of June, 1930, and we were approaching Reykjavik harbor. We had been a week aboard the MONTCALM, having boarded it at Montreal, Canada. Through the fog and the rain we could dimly make out a mountain to our left front and the outline of buildings to our right front. The ship was approaching the land cautiously, sounding her fog horn with boring repetition. My father and I stood on deck, bundled up against the cold southwest wind which seemed to cut right to the bone. I was almost beside myself with excitement, for we had come back to the home of my father's people to attend the millennial celebration of the Icelandic Althing, which was, so I had been told repeatedly, the oldest continuing parliament in the world, much older than that of England. I had just graduated from high school and would celebrate my seventeenth birthday in a couple of months. I had been looking forward to the trip, planning for it, and saving whatever money I could earn for at least two years. It was without doubt the greatest event in my life up to that time.

Perhaps a more experienced sailor would have disagreed, but to me the passage had seemed rough. Most of the people on board had been seasick; in fact, even now as we approached Reykjavik harbor, many were still in their cabins, unwilling or possibly unable to venture out on deck.

"Look over there to the northeast. Isn't that beautiful?" I heard someone say. Sure enough, the rain was stopping, the clouds were breaking up, and the mountain, that only a few minutes before had been all but hidden by fog and rain, now shone forth brilliantly green, imposing, and beautiful.

The transformation from heavy rain and dense fog to almost unendurably brilliant sunshine was so sudden that one scarcely had time to adjust.

"That's Esja," said my father, as I wondered at the transformation. With the ceasing of the rain, the air was unbelievably clean; the buildings of Reykjavik harbor stood out sharply in the brilliant sunshine. On one of the buildings I could make out the words EIMSKIPAFELAG ISLANDS: It seemed like a frightening long word. I had tried to learn a little Icelandic before I left home, but it was only a little. The length of the words

was almost appalling. I found out later, of course, that Icelandic joins several words together to make one long word whereas English generally hyphenates as in *brother-in-law*, a *good-for-nothing* person, or a *fast-moving* train.

After disembarking from the ship, we strolled through the town of Reykjavik. Compared to Salt Lake City where I had grown up, it seemed small indeed. the streets were narrow, the stores old fashioned, a few of the buildings were of stone or concrete, but many of the shops were frame and covered with corrugated tin. In what was obviously the older part of town there seemed to be no rhyme or reason to the streets; they intersected at odd angles. It was clear that this section of the city had not been planned: it had just happened. Quite obviously many of the people on the streets were Americans who had come for the same reason as we. One heard English, or more rightly, American, spoken almost as much as Icelandic. There were only a few automobiles on the streets and what few there were were taxis. It was clear that very few Icelanders had private cars. The streets in the main part of town were paved or bricked, but as we sauntered out toward a great gray structure that turned out to be the recently constructed Catholic church, we noticed that the streets were unpaved and scarcely even graded. Just beyond the church the roads gave way to fields of fish drying in the brisk wind. Acres of white fish with girls going up and down the rows turning the fish to allow them to dry faster and more thoroughly.

The Icelanders had prepared carefully for the great number of tourists that they knew would attend the millennial celebration. The committee on housing had requested just about everyone in Reykjavik who had an extra room or two to make those rooms available to the foreign guests. The two or three hotels in Reykjavik could not begin to provide enough rooms for the newcomers. We were told to report to Solvallagata 14; there would be a room for us there. It was a large three-storey house, obviously only two or three years old and built as many of the newer houses were, of cement rather than wood. We rang the bell. A moment later a handsome, well dressed woman appeared with a friendly smile on her face that soon changed to a look of unbelief and then to amazement when my father told her who we were and why we had come. The conversation had been in Icelandic of which I knew only a few words, but now the woman turned to me and said, "So you are the young Loftur? Welcome to Iceland. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy your stay here." My eyes must have blinked in wonder at hearing such a greeting delivered in perfect English with only the slightest trace of an Icelandic accent. As I learned later, this was Steinunn Hjartardottir Bjarnason who had taken lessons in English from my father twenty-six years earlier when he was in Iceland as a missionary for the Mormon church. She now taught English in the Kennaraskolinn (women's college) in Reykjavik and was highly respected for her learning and her command of English. What a remarkable coincidence that of all the homes in Reykjavik my father should have been directed to go to the home of someone whom he had known and whom he had taught twenty-six years earlier. Later on, we met Steinunn's husband, Brynjolfur H. Bjarnason, a respected merchant and wholesaler in Reykjavik, the brother of Agust Bjarnason, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Iceland.

Because the celebration was held at Thingvellir, nearly 50 kilometers (just over 30 miles) from Reykjavik, transportation was a serious problem. The committee on transportation had requisitioned every public vehicle they could lay their hands on. That was still not enough, so private citizens who owned automobiles — and there were not too many of them — were urged to place their cars at the service of the committee, either driving them themselves, or turning

them over to experienced chauffeurs to operate. Even that proved to be too little. As soon as a driver delivered one load of passengers to Thingvellir, he had to return to Reykjavik for another load. So it went all day long. In the late afternoon and evening, it was just the reverse: the problem then was to get the people back to Reykjavik. As we rode out from Reykjavik to Thingvellir, I noticed group after group of people riding on what appeared to be absurdly small ponies. They all seemed to be in a holiday mood, apparently enjoying the ride although the weather was cool and brisk, cold rain interspersed with welcome sunshine. As I learned later, most of these people were not from Reykjavik but rather from the country. Many of them, in fact, had come from as far away as Vik, on the southern coast of Iceland or even farther and had been riding for several days in order to attend the festival. They had come prepared to camp out as their ancestors had done centuries earlier in order to attend the Althing.

For those who understood the language and could follow what was going on, the celebration which lasted several days must have been interesting and enjoyable. For me, however, Icelandic was still a foreign tongue and since I did not understand the speeches, they seemed interminable. I remember that I wondered at the beauty of the landscape, enjoyed the crystal clarity of Lake Thingvellir, and was amazed at the number of nations represented by the multitude of flags flying over Lögberg (the Hill of Laws). I had come improperly dressed for such cool, brisk, and wet weather and looked forward eagerly to getting back to Reykjavik and a warm room out of the cold rain.

Despite the cold and the rain, I enjoyed Iceland, and when my father asked whether I would like to spend the summer on an Icelandic farm, I agreed with eagerness. So it was arranged: my father returned to the United States via Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, but I took a bus to Gardsauki in Rangarvallasysla where I spent the summer with Thorgerdur Jonsdottir and her husband Einar Einarsson. Thorgerdur was the daughter of my grandfather's brother. I'll leave it to the imagination of the reader how I got along for the first week or two. I could speak only a few words of Icelandic, and no one on the farm knew any English. But everyone was helpful and my fluency in the language increased day by day, and in a few short weeks I could understand most of what was said and could even carry on a simple conversation. At Gardsauki there was no radio; television had not yet been invented, so the major form of amusement was reading and talking. The farm hands, both male and female, enjoyed asking me questions as to life in the United States, whether I lived on a farm or in the city, what I took in school, whether we owned an automobile, what kind of food the Americans ate — absolutely endless questions, and I enjoyed telling them about the United States, our vast prairies, the Rocky Mountains, our big cities, etc. One evening I was invited to a tombola, that is to say, a dance at the recreation hall near the church. Young people from all the farms in the vicinity came to join in the fun. Naturally, there was no band in the usual sense of the word. The music was provided by someone playing the accordion. Several people took turns playing while the others danced.

If Einar was not the first farmer in the district to buy a mowing machine, he must have been one of the first. Farmers came from far and near together with their wives to see the strange machine that made so much noise and could do as much in one day as a team of men with scythes could do in a week. It was clearly meant to be used on firm hard soil; the wheels were thin-rimmed, so that it was constantly getting stuck in the soft ground. Moreover, the horses which were harnessed to pull it were nervous. They were undoubtedly more accus-

tomed to being saddled and ridden than to being hooked up to a noisy and threatening machine. Finally, the *thufur* presented a problem: the cutting blade either dug too deeply into them, or it skimmed over the grass growing between them. Still, the machine was used to good advantage on the *tun* where the ground was relatively level. It was of less value out in the bogs. Out there one had to use the old-fashioned techniques that have been used in Iceland for centuries. The grass was cut by a man wielding a scythe, raked into rows by the farm girls, turned several times to dry, gathered together into bundles, the bundles tied with a homemade horsehair rope, one bundle placed on each side of a pony, and thus brought to the hay barn. A long line of ponies with bundles of hay on their backs is called a *lest*. Even after the hay is brought to the barn, the manual labor continues. The bundles must be manhandled into the barn, untied, the ropes gathered together and placed back on the horse to be reused. It was slow, tedious work, but very necessary for most Icelandic farmers depended upon their cows for milk, butter, cheese and even in some cases meat. Hay was thus vitally important to the Icelandic farmer and occupied his attention the whole summer long. I thoroughly enjoyed such work and kept at it until the end of the haying season, late in September.

During the summer I had obtained permission from my parents to remain in Iceland in order to go to school. Early in October I returned to Reykjavik and enrolled in the Kennaraskoli (the teachers college), taking mathematics, Danish, geography, history and especially Icelandic. I was particularly fortunate to have such a man as Freysteinn Gunnarsson as my teacher of Icelandic grammar and rhetoric. By this time I had learned to understand most conversational Icelandic and could express myself reasonably well, but I found that Freysteinn Gunnarsson had much to teach me as far as style of writing was concerned.

We always walked to school; in fact we walked everywhere even when we had to wade through the snow or when it was pouring down rain. Iceland is possibly one of the few places in the world where the rain and snow fall not vertically but horizontally. If they had any buses in Reykjavik that winter, they kept them well hidden. I do not recall seeing any on the streets of the city, though they were available for long distance travel. I rode, for example, to and from Gardsauki on a bus, and I heart that buses made weekly trips to Akureyri and other towns. There were a number of taxis in Reykjavik, but it didn't occur to me that I could possibly afford such luxury as riding in one. No, everyone walked. On Saturday evening almost everyone went downtown and paraded up and down Austurstraeti, the boys on one side of the sidewalk going west and the girls on the other side of the sidewalk going east. Then they would turn around and reverse the procedure. It gave everyone who cared, an opportunity to get a good look at the other person. This would go on for two or three hours every Saturday evening and was considered great sport. After all, very few people had radios in those days, and it was a good way to spend an hour or two before going to a movie or to a dance.

At the suggestion of a friend, who was aware of my interest in literature, I approached Professor Sigurdur Nordal, who was teaching at that time at the University of Iceland, and asked him whether I might have permission to attend his classes. Permission was granted, and I began to attend his lectures. He was the ultimate authority at that time on Icelandic literature and Icelandic culture, and it was a great opportunity for me to sit at his feet, so to speak, as his disciple. We soon became friends. He had been invited by Harvard University to deliver a series of lectures on Icelandic literature during the school year 1931-32 and thus was looking for an opportunity to practice

his English. It was fortunate for both of us. I helped him with his English, and he shared with me his inexhaustible knowledge of Icelandic culture and literature. I shall be forever in his debt. Toward the end of the year he proposed that I apply for admission to the University as *Haskolaborgari* (i.e., a registered student of the University). Following his suggestion, I applied, was granted the honor of being a *student* and had the right to wear the little cap which characterizes the *studentar* of Iceland. I have since been told that I was thus the first American of Icelandic descent to matriculate and to study as a regular *student* at the University of Iceland.

It is now fifty years since the millennial celebration of the Icelandic Althing was held at Thingvellir. Have these fifty years brought much change to Iceland in general and to Reykjavik in particular? As Jonas Hallgrimsson expressed it:

> Thad er svo bagt ad standa i stad,
> og mönnunum munar annadhvort
> aftur a bak, ellegar nokkud a leid.
> (It is so difficult to remain stationary. One either degenerates or progresses.)

One need be in Iceland only a few moments to ascertain that tremendous changes have taken place. Perhaps the first and most noticeable change is the fact that most travellers now arrive in Iceland via the international airport at Keflavik; very few now come by ship. Keflavik itself is a relatively small town, but the international airport which bears its name is modern in every respect. The airport is shared by Iceland and by NATO and can handle the largest and most up-to-date planes. The duty-free gift shop on the base, and therefore easily accessible to incoming tourists, is one of the best duty-free shops in the world and compares favorably, so I have been informed, with that at Shannon, Ireland. Here one can buy sweaters, blankets, mittens, and shawls of the finest Icelandic wool as well as a myriad of other things ranging all the way from the finest wines and liquors to frozen or canned fish and meat. As the name suggests, this is a duty-free station, so the prices are quite reasonable.

I arrived at six o'clock, the morning of 27 March 1980. It was cool and crisp, but much to my surprise it was not raining. There was practically no wind, and by the time we had claimed our baggage, cleared customs, and come outside, the sun was just coming up in a clear blue sky. The mountains to the east and north of the airport were capped with snow, indicating clearly that winter was not yet completely over, but the brilliant sunshine, the lack of wind, and the relatively warm atmosphere were a welcome surprise.

As we approached Reykjavik, I could hardly believe my eyes. Even at the distance of several miles I could make out skyscrapers standing in what I remembered as open fields. Just to the south of Hafnarfjord we saw a huge building — obviously a factory of some sort.

"What is that?" I asked my friend who had driven from Reykjavik in his own car to pick me up at the airport.

"Oh, that is the aluminum plant," he answered and then went on to tell me that it had been build principally by Swiss businessmen to produce aluminum because of the relatively cheap electrical power obtainable in Iceland. So, Iceland had become commercialized!

As far back as 1930 the Icelanders had been talking about the possibility of harnessing the hot water from the *laugar* (hot springs) to heat the public buildings of Reykjavik, and I had heard and read that they had done so, but I was not prepared for the extent to which this ambitious undertaking had been carried. Not only all the public buildings but even the private homes and apartments in Reykjavik and the surrounding area are now heated in this manner. It is considered a public utility, and one

pays for his heat on the same monthly bill that he pays for his electricity. One can have it as warm or as cool as he likes, merely by turning a thermostat on the wall. Only relatively isolated farmhouses up in the country now burn expensive imported oil, and even they are subsidized by a tax on the heat from the hot springs. It is expected that eventually all homes and buildings in Iceland will be heated and much of the electricity will be generated by the steam from the hot springs. That does not mean that there is a dearth of hydroelectric power: I have been told — though I have not confirmed it — that there is enough potential power in Iceland if it were properly harnessed, to light and heat the United States from the East Coast to the Mississippi. In the next decade or so Iceland may very well become a power-exporting nation.

In 1930 the population of Reykjavik was approximately 25,000, possibly fewer during the summer when so many people went out to work on the farms or to the various fishing villages and more during the winter when people came to the city to go to school or to enjoy the lively social life of the capital. At that time there were six to seven miles of open fields between Reykjavik and Hafnarfjord where one could stroll all day long if the weather allowed along a one-way road just barely wide enough for an automobile and definitely not wide enough for passing except at certain places. Now, as I noticed with amazement, the road leading into Reykjavik from the south is a super highway that would do credit to any American city. It is at least two lanes in each direction, and in some places three. This is only one of the many two- and three-lane highways in and near the city of Reykjavik.

The old part of town that I remembered so well from the thirties, has changed relatively little, but the newer suburbs have high-rise condominiums and apartments that rival those of major American cities; at least the architecture is often more pleasing. From approximately 25,000 in 1930 the population of greater Reykjavik has grown to very nearly 125,000 with almost that many automobiles, for there are few families that do not have at least one automobile and many have two or more. There is no longer a stretch of bare fields between Reykjavik and Hafnarfjord: the whole area is built up with big and impressive houses. In 1930, Ellidara — a great place to go on a Sunday afternoon to watch the horseraces and other sports — was at least an hour's walk from the city limits. Now there are houses, schools, and condominiums out that far and even beyond. In 1930 the Althingishusid

(Parliament Building) housed the University as well as Parliament. Now the University has several buildings larger than the old Althingishus. In 1930 Hotel Borg was probably the most imposing building in downtown Reykjavik, now there are at least a half dozen buildings much larger and more imposing.

One could go on comparing Reykjavik of the 1930's with Reykjavik of today, but enough has been said to indicate that it is a different city entirely. Aside from the fact that it is so spread out as to make walking from one point to another time consuming, there is little to criticize. Even the distances are not a serious handicap, for the public transportation system in Reykjavik, the so called SVR, is excellent. The traveller who comes to Reykjavik in the 80's has his choice of at least five or six modern, up-to-date hotels, all of them serving excellent food and offering their guests heated swimming pools, sauna rooms, beauty shops, and other luxuries. As was mentioned above, nearly everyone has a car, taxis are plentiful and relatively inexpensive, public transportation is reliable and on time, and buses run daily between the major cities of the country. Many Icelanders, however, prefer to fly, for air transportation is faster, more convenient, and relatively inexpensive. If in 1930 Iceland seemed to have one foot in the 19th century, in 1980 it seems to have one foot in the 21st century. It is modern in every respect.

COINS OF ICELAND ARE SUPERB

by Edward Banning

At a time when even the coins struck specifically for collectors are often ugly, when the centennial of just about any event is an excuse for an over-priced commemorative, and when artistic quality often takes a back seat to the mundane practicalities of production line minting, it is extremely pleasing to see the new coinage for Iceland. The Central Bank of Iceland, and whoever else may be responsible for the decision to issue these coins, are to be commended for a great service; bringing fine art to the general public through the medium of coinage.

The beautiful new coins owe their existence to a less happy event — staggering inflation. At the beginning of this year, in a currency reform, Iceland attempted to abate its inflation problem by replacing the old 100 krona with a new one-krona, effectively dividing all incomes, prices and bank accounts by one hundred. As new notes and coins are put into circulation, the old ones are being withdrawn.

But the new coins are not the characterless or crowded pieces, now issued in many countries, which can only be called "functional". These show a spirit not unlike that of ancient Greek coins. They are clean and simple. The five-krona coin displays two leaping dolphins on its obverse which would not displease the ancient Sicilian coinage artist, Euainetos. The one-krona with its codfish, the 50-aurar with its deep-sea prawn, 10-aurar with its flying squid and five-aurar showing an outspread skate with the numeral "5" infused on its back, are all stunning coins, with sensitive renderings of the creatures so familiar to Icelandic fishermen.

On their reverse, each of the subsidiary coins shows one of the country's "landwights" or guardian spirits: the giant, the dragon, the bull and the bird. The five krona shows all four in a group.

—Globe & Mail, Toronto
April 25/81

REPORT ON THE HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, June 15, 16, 17, 1981

Ms. Elva Simundsson

The Canadian Multiculturalism Directorate, in a study completed in 1976, found that ethnic populations of Canada were strongly in support of the retention of their ancestral languages. The primary responsibility for the retention of ancestral language and culture rests with the parents in the home. The study recognized that primary and secondary schools also had a role to play in the retention of ancestral languages, arts and cultures. The study resulted in federal and provincial assistance for the teaching of heritage languages being made available to communities and schools throughout Canada. At the Heritage Language Education Conference, it was pointed out that this governmental assistance is being taken advantage of by a vast number of communities and ethnic groups; from Gaelic pre-school programs on Cape Breton Island, to the establishment of standard programs of Athapascan language teaching among the different dialects spoken by the Dene people of the North West Territories.

Each group represented at the conference had problems to discuss and possible solutions to present. From my viewpoint, I felt that our situation, that of the Canadians of Icelandic ancestry, was rather unique in the problems we face. For instance, in Toronto where there are a quarter million Italian speaking Canadians, their problems center around the overcrowding in their heritage language school programs. Our situation is such that it is doubtful that there are that many people in all of North America conversant in the Icelandic language. In the few rural communities in Canada where Icelandic was once the predominant language, there are very few people under the age of forty who are fluent speakers of Icelandic. Unfortunately, there are many Icelandic-Canadians who speak only English but who come from homes where their parents acquired English as a second language. In the Evergreen School Division in *"New Iceland"* an Icelandic Core program was set up in the Arborg, Riverton and Gimli elementary schools in 1976. The program has subsequently been dropped in Gimli because of inadequate enrollment in the program. This seems to indicate that the Icelandic language has become obsolete in the town which boasts of being the home of the largest Icelandic Festival in North America.

This loss of the language to the Canadians of Icelandic ancestry poses another theme dealt with at the conference: is the survival of the Icelandic cultural community possible without the language? The consensus of those attending the conference was that without a bilingual approach to the ethnocultural community, the community could not survive. The younger generations are assimilating into the Canadian "melting pot" so fast that the Icelandic cultural community will either disappear entirely as is happening in some areas, or it will suffer some major changes as is happening in other areas. Where the language is still in use, the Icelandic spoken by most Icelandic-Canadians has suffered from such an infiltration of English that it is almost unintelligible to an Icelander who does not also understand English.

In almost all ethnic groups in Canada there is a strong emotional wish to transmit the ethnic language to the younger generations for cultural self-preservation, for nostalgic

reasons, for a sense of forging unity among the people of the same ethnic background across the country as well as being a link with the past they do not want to sever. However, the emotional feelings of the older generation are not always shared by the younger. For many of us who are third and fourth generation Canadians, the link has already been severed.

There are utilitarian reasons for the retention of heritage languages. It has been conclusively documented that bilingual children have generally better cognative learning skills and also they find it easier to acquire other languages than do monolingual children. Second languages serve a purpose in certain jobs, positions and in international dealings. Knowledge of a second language is useful in pursuing certain studies and is an entrance requirement into post-graduate faculties in almost all Canadian universities. In the prairie provinces (and perhaps elsewhere in Canada) there is a policy of accepting a second language learned in a non-school setting as fulfillment of a university entrance requirement. There are also social benefits such as strengthening ties between children and their grandparents, and emotional benefits such as enhancing a child's identity and self-awareness.

In Canada, the Icelandic language has become "an endangered species". What can be done to preserve or revive it? The heritage language program in the Evergreen School Division can only hope to achieve a limited goal in the preservation of the language. A large share of the burden of preservation must come from the community. Community awareness and involvement is necessary to re-enforce the school language program. In areas where the language is already lost but the culture remains, community involvement is especially necessary to maintain that culture. For language preservation both the federal government and most of the provinces in Canada have heritage language support programs for the development of learning aids, for children's summer language camps and for linguistic programs both in the schools and outside the public school system. Ultimately, the most effective solution to the preservation and revival of the Icelandic-Canadian cultural identity and language is the transfusion of new blood. This has proven the most effective method of culture and language retention among other ethnic groups. Individual Icelandic-Canadian Cultural groups, provincial ministries of cultural affairs as well as the Canadian Department of External Affairs should all be involved in providing for student and cultural exchanges. A resolution to this effect was to be forwarded to the two levels of government from the Heritage Language Education Conference.

The conference on heritage language education stressed that language is preserved through culture, culture is preserved through language and one is vital to the survival of the other.

ON PUGET SOUND

From the Memoirs of Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands

There is a story about a pastor in Iceland who, having been duly appointed, came to his parish in a remote part of the island, and once there, wrote to his bishop: "There is no church here . . .". In a hard year the farmers in the area had torn down the church building, and used the lumber for fuel. When I came to Bellingham, Washington in July, 1931 I ran into a similar situation. The church building, supposedly the home of the St. Mark's Lutheran congregation, was indeed there and a very nice building it was, but the congregation seemed to have disappeared. I found only an old couple, of Swedish extraction and their two old maid daughters, and two old Estonians who lived on a farm a long distance from the city and they came to church religiously once a month, but the old Swede never darkened the doorsteps of the church. I soon discovered that this congregation had recently experienced an upheaval and an explosion which had scattered its members far and wide in frustration and anger. Up to this time the church had been maintained mostly by relatively wealthy beer manufacturers of German origin. But my immediate predecessor had antagonized those worthies in some manner so that they left St. Mark's and joined another church, taking most of the congregation with them. Since this was supposed to be my home congregation, I began to wonder how they had managed to send me a Call. There was only a handful of people there on the first Sunday of my tenure, and only three of them admitted that they were members of the church. This did not happen to be the Sunday of the month when the two Estonians attended. I discovered, to my dismay, that both the lights and the water had been turned off in the church due to lack of payment to the city.

There was a certain signature on the Letter of Call, representing the chairman of the Church Board. On inquiring I was told that he had moved out of the city quite recently to a permanent residence elsewhere. Further conversation with old Mrs. Eklund and her daughters disclosed that they had really had nothing to do with calling me. The Call had been issued by the Home Missions Committee of the Pacific Synod, acting for the congregation and that the now absent chairman had simply signed the letter as a matter of form. The Mission Committee had estimated the amount of monthly salary they should pay me, and this was to be supplemented by a certain amount from the Missions Board of the general church body, the United Lutheran Church in America. These women informed me that there was no chance of the remnant of the congregation being able to pay me the suggested salary which was only minimal. A few days later I learned that the Call to me had been issued by the president of the Pacific Synod who resided in Everett, Washington, who had sent it in good faith believing that the Home Mission Committee of the United Lutheran Church in New York would continue to support the work in Bellingham, financially, as they had done for many years. But this New York Mission Board had decided to withhold further support of Bellingham due to the situation prevailing there. But the president of the Pacific Synod had not been notified of this board action, hence this rather unfortunate misunderstanding. But I had come to a point of no return, finding myself without a home, and without a congregation in the city where I believed I was to reside.

In a few weeks I discovered that several of the members of St. Mark's were still

around, and not attached elsewhere. They had simply gone into hiding, awaiting developments. The predominant German element which had been the backbone of the congregation up to this time became adamant on learning that a non-German pastor had been called. St. Mark's had boasted and justified its existence by the fact that they were the only English speaking congregation in the city without the use of some other mother tongue in some or all of its services. This was true although the racial element was very noticeable. Now, they claimed, the church was filled with uncouth foreigners. This charge was due to the fact that several Icelanders who lived in Bellingham, or its neighbourhood, started to attend church after I became the pastor. Many of them had lived in the area for decades and never come near any church, but they had a reading club for themselves and most of them attended its monthly meetings. I believe that the fact that I was, like themselves, an Icelander was the main reason why they came to attend St. Mark's. I certainly appreciated their support, and they knew it. But it was quite obvious that they had been out of touch with the church for a long time, and the services were to them something like the meetings of the reading club. Often they would come into the church auditorium rather early on Sunday mornings, sit in a group and start conversing with one another in Icelandic, "Hvernig lidur ther? Hvad segir thu gott? Ha?" They would carry on in this manner until the time of the opening of the service, obviously quite unconcerned about other people around them. This lack of decorum was, of course, offensive to those who thought they knew better, or were not familiar with this type of church goers. The German aristocrats became highly offended, saying that St. Mark's was being filled with riff-raff. They then left for good, and became untouchables so far as St. Mark's was concerned.

But this Icelandic group became a nucleus of a new congregation. It never became a strong organization numerically or financially. I served this church for seven years, and some time after that it merged with other Lutheran congregations in Bellingham which, by that time, had given up their nationalistic tendencies. Several of my old friends from the Melankton congregation in Upham moved to the coast, settled in or near Bellingham and joined St. Mark's. Some of them became leading members of St. Mark's and in due time, assisted with the Lutheran merger program in the city and have been faithful to their church to this day. The country in and around Bellingham is beautiful and the climate is delightful but I have never been in a place where church work is more difficult. The country is a playground summer and winter, and the people, on the whole, appear not to feel the need for a house of God built by human hands.

(Continued in the next issue.)

STAFHOLT NEWS

The afternoon fellowship recently took residents to Denny's for treats. The group included Louise Gudmunds, Cecile Foss, Walt Horgdal, Agatha Thompson, Karl Hoart, and Sarah Rhoades. Marla Tuske, her husband Glen and several other ladies escorted the excited men and women and they had a great time. Even the raindrops didn't dampen the enthusiasm as they were seen going out the door with coats, hats and afgans. Thank you to all for your interest and help.

* * *

"If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow." — Chinese Proverb.

AN APPEAL FOR THE DONATION OF BOOKS
To be placed in the Stephan G. Stephansson House in Markerville, Alberta.

Donations of these specific books would be welcome, but the Committee is also willing to purchase them for a fair market price. The books listed below are known to have been in the Poet's library and are necessary to the interpretation of the House.

Anderson, R. B. *America Not Discovered by Columbus*. Chicago, 1874.

Arngrimsson, Frimann B. *Asters and Violets: Some Stray Poems and Verses*. Akureyri, 1915.

Baliley, L. H. *The Principles of Agriculture*. New York, 1907.

Bailey, L. H. *The Principles of Vegetable Gardening*. New York, 1907.

Balzac, Honore de. *Old Father Goriot*. London.

Barrie, J. M. *A Window in Thrums*. New York.

Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. New York, 1911.

Bjarnason, Bogi. *The Parson's Dream*. Foam Lake, 1922.

Bjornstrom, Fredrik J. *Hypnotism: Its History and Present Development*. New York, 1889.

Brown, Wm. Montgomery. *Communism and Christianity*. Galion, 1922.

Caine, Hall. *The Deemster*.

Cannon, Fanny. *Writing and Selling a Play*. New York, 1915.

Carlyle, Thomas. *Sartor Resartus: Lectures on Heroes*. New York.

Casson, Herbert N. *The Crime of Credulity*. New York, 1901.

Clark, S. W. *A Practical Grammar in which works, phrases and sentences are classified according to their offices and their various relations to one another*. New York, 1868.

Coburn, F. D. *Alfalfa*. New York, 1906.

Cone, Orello. *Gospel-criticism and Historical Christianity*. New York, 1891.

Corpus poeticum boreale. The Poetry of the Old Northern Tongue. Vols. I, II, Oxford, 1863.

Daudet, Alphonse. *One of the "Forty"*. New York. 1888.

The Dodd System of Lightning Protection. Regina, 1928.

Draper, John Wm. *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York, 1900.

Gordon, Adam Lindsay. *Poems*. London, 1910.

Gordon, Jas. L. *The Young Man and His Problems*. New York, 1911.

Hubbard, Elbert. *Little Journey to the Home of the Great Performer Henry George*. New York, 1907.

Hudson, Thomas Jay, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*. Chicago, 1912.

Intestinal Ills. New York, 1915.

Iron, Ralph. *The Story of an African Farm*. New York, 1883.

Irvine, Wm. *The Farmers in Politics*. Toronto, 1920.

Irving, Washington. *The Sketchbook*. New York, 1820.

Jordan, David Starr. *War and Waste*. New York, 1914.

La Monte, Robert Rives and H. L. Menchken. *Men versus the Man. A Correspondence*. New York, 1910.

The Latin Reader. 1865.

Light, Liberty, Right: The Index. Boston, 1884, 1885, 1886.

McArthur, Peter. *Sir Wilfred Laurier*. London, 1919.

Mackay, Chas. *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and Madness of Crowds*. Vol. I-II. London, 1852.

Modern Christianity: A Civilized Heathenism. New York.

Morris, Wm. and Belfort E. Bax. *Socialism*. Chicago, 1913.

Muir, M. M. Pattison. *The Story of Alchemy and the Beginnings of Chemistry*. New York, 1907.

Newcomb, Simon. *Astronomy for Everybody*. New York, 1907.

Nolete, Joseph. *Glimpses Behind Nature's Veil*. Stettler, 1920.

Parker, Richard Greene and J. M. Watson. *The National Fourth Reader*. New York, 1867.

Peple, Edward. *A Night Out*. New York, 1915.

The Philistine. September 1907. Periodical.

Renan, Ernest. *The Life of Jesus*. New York.

Roberts, Isaac Phillips. *The Farmers' Business Handbook*. New York, 1906.

Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies*. New York, 1885.

Rutherford, J. F. Deliverance. New York, 1926.

The Saga Library. Vol. I-VI. London, 1891-1905.

Savage, M. J. *Belief in God*. Boston, 1881.

Sinclair, Upton. *The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism*. Pasadena.

Sinclair, Upton ed. *The Cry for Justice*. Pasadena, 1921.

Spencer, Herbert. *First Principles*. New York, 1909.

Summerleaf, Emil V. *Love and Pride*. Winnipeg, 1920.

Tuttle, Hudson. *Religion of Man and Ethics of Science*. Chicago, 1900.

Underwood, B. F. *Essays and Lectures*. New York.

White, Andrew Dickson. *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christiandom*. New York, 1898.

William Sivering's Surrender. Winnipeg, 1901.

Donations of books should be sent to:

Mrs. Jane McCracken,
Old St. Stephen's College,
8820 - 112 St., Edmonton,
Alberta. I6G 2P8.

Anyone wishing to sell their books, should write to:

Mr. G. A. Arnason, Chairman,
Stephansson Committee,
14434 McQueen Rd.,
Edmonton, Alberta.

THE END OF A LONG LIFE

Mrs. Johanna Solvason passed away in Golden Acres Lodge in Wynyard, Sask. July 26, 1981 at the age of 107 years, 7 months.

The Magazine Board extends its condolences to the family of this venerable lady.

SEA MORNING
by Paul H. Sigurdson

The rhythmic surf —
Sun-white, rolling,
Laps the burnished sands
Like liquid lace;
And the billow-choir,
In gliding majesty,
Thunders the primal anthem
Of the Creator.

IN THE NEWS

MARATHON WOMAN

Diane Palmason is the fastest Canadian woman marathoner in her age group. And she doesn't even sweat. Winter and summer, Palmason, 43, sticks to a training regimen. She ran in the Avon International Marathon in Ottawa.

By Greg Barr

Diane Palmason

The sidewalks of Ottawa are slippery with rain as Diane Palmason and I run south along Alta Vista Drive toward Charlebois High School, the halfway point of our seven kilometre route. I hear the thudding of my own feet as they meet the wet concrete, while she seems to glide along, making barely a sound.

For Palmason, 43, this is hardly a workout. For this writer, nearing 30, it borders on lunacy. I am a casual jogger, and the pace that she has set is beyond my usual capacity.

Palmason exemplifies a type of competitor unknown a decade ago: the Masters athlete. The Masters category begins at age 35 for women and 40 for men and extends to people who are well into their 80s. There are now 630 men and women who belong to the Canadian Masters Athletic Association, which was founded in 1972 to oversee and organize championship meets among these senior runners, sprinters, high jumpers and pole vaulters. Palmason holds nearly all the Canadian Masters track records for women: the 800, 1,500, 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 metres, plus the 10 kilometre and 20 kilometre road races and, last but not least, the marathon. She's also the only Canadian to hold a North American Masters record (for 800 metres). Never has she been in better shape, physically or mentally.

Her neat, efficient style of running is matched by her clothing — a medium-weight track suit under a blue and yellow nylon outer suit for protection from the elements, a white toque and mittens and, most important, her New Balance track shoes, one of 16 pairs from which she makes her daily selection.

I clench my teeth and step up the pace to match hers, hoping she isn't holding back too much. I listen in numbed silence while she describes her weekly regimen.

"I usually run to and from work, winter or summer, unless there's a really horrendous storm, but I try not to let the snow stop me, because I have to put in the miles," she says evenly, while I try to hold back the gasps caused by my ever-increasing oxygen debt. "A couple of days a week at noon hour I put in some fast laps on the track, especially for the indoor season. I take Saturdays off and go for a 15 to 20-mile run on Sunday."

Palmason was born in St. Catharines, Ontario, of hardy Icelandic stock. When she was 12 her parents moved to Montreal, where her talent for running was noticed by the coach of the Mercury Athletic Club, Myrtle Cook. Cook had carried Canadian colors into the 1928 Olympics as a member of the national women's relay team. In her day young girls were denied the opportunity to compete in anything but the sprints; by the 1950s, when Palmason was a teenager, nothing had changed. She was selected to be a member of the national track team and run in the 220-yard race at the 1954 British Commonwealth Games, but she didn't make it into the finals. She was unsuited to running short distances but she did not realize it at the time.

Palmason was married in 1960 after obtaining her B.A. from Queen's University and doing graduate work at McGill. During the next decade, while she raised a family of four, her track career became just a memory. She injured her back in a fall on ice in 1963 and gained 35 pounds, which brought her weight up to 155 pounds on a five-foot-eight frame and put additional strain on her deteriorating spine. After a spinal fusion operation on New Year's Day in 1975, she had to walk with a cane. Her doctor told her to forget about running.

Later that year, Palmason read an account of the first National Capital Marathon in Ottawa and became determined to prove the doctor wrong. She would run in the next marathon, come hell or high water. After consulting a doctor and a physiotherapist at Carleton University's clinic of sports medicine, she began a series of back-strengthening and flexibility exercises the following winter, and with only six weeks to go before the 1976 marathon, she obtained a last-minute training schedule from a local Masters runner and coach, Bill Arnold.

Palmason entered the 26-mile, 385-yard race on a sunny afternoon in May and finished in three hours, 54 minutes and 36 seconds — about 40 minutes after the female winner. Since then she has competed in 15 other marathons and set her best time at the Manitoba International Marathon in June 1981. Kathy Tanner, a 26-year-old runner from Toronto, was the first woman to finish with a time of two hours, 52 minutes and 17 seconds; Palmason, 17 years her senior, hit the tape just six seconds later.

While most of us look upon the aging process with dismay, Palmason and her peers relish the thought of another birthday. "When I turn 45 I'll move up to the next age category, 45 to 49, and then I'll be the new young kid on the block. That's when I hope to go for some world records, because I'm still working toward my peak. Then when I'm 65 and retired, I'll become a full-time athlete."

—Toronto Star
"Today Magazine"
Aug. 22, 1981.

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QUEEN OF THE CORN AND APPLE FESTIVAL MORDEN, MANITOBA

Morden's Queen, Sylvia Sigurdson.

Sylvia Sigurdson is shown here with her grandmother, Mrs. Pauline Sigurdson, minutes after she was crowned queen at Morden's fourteenth Corn and Apple Fes-

tival. Sylvia is at present taking her final year of high school at the University of Winnipeg. Besides being an excellent piano player, she sings and plays the alto sax. She has a keen interest in sports especially volleyball. After graduation Sylvia has it in mind to take a course in Physical Education. She is the daughter of Paul and Ivadell Sigurdson of Morden, Manitoba.

THORA COOKE, RESEARCHER FOR THE WESTERN PICTORIAL INDEX

Each month Thora Cooke, researcher for the *Western Pictorial Index*, prepares an item of interest on the Index's collection.

In August 1982 the Fire Department of the City of Winnipeg will observe their 100th anniversary. To mark the occasion members and former members of the department are already working and making plans to tell their story.

Included in these plans will be the use of photographs in a variety of ways to illustrate their history to the public. The photo shown here was taken during the fire which destroyed the Winnipeg Theatre December 23, 1926.

Many local fire buffs have kept photographic records of famous Winnipeg fires and many of these pictures have found their way to the archives of the Winnipeg Fire Department. No doubt there are a great many other pictures and memorabilia to be discovered. Anyone willing to lend or donate their pictures should contact the WESTERN CANADA PICTORIAL INDEX in the Media department at the University of Winnipeg, telephone 786-7811, ext. 571.

—Inside Info, University of Winnipeg.

KIRKJUKOR LANGHOLTSKIRKJU ON A CONCERT TOUR IN CANADA AND U.S.A.

The church choir of Langholtskirkja in Reykjavik gave several concerts in August in Toronto, Winnipeg, Selkirk, Gimli and Minneapolis. This choir consists of highly trained singers and was conducted by Mr. Jon Stefansson, one of Iceland's most versatile musicians. Last, but by no means least, one of Iceland's most renowned opera singers, Mrs. Olöf Hardardottir, the principal soloist of the choir, received a standing ovation at every concert the choir gave on its North American tour. The concert held in the Winnipeg Centennial Centre, one of Canada's major professional performances, may be singled out for mention. To put it briefly, quality of performance and good attendance helped make the concert one of the most pleasurable events of our summer season.

We take this opportunity of thanking the choir, its members, conductor and soloist. Many people worked hard during the planning stages of the concerts. In Winnipeg Mr. Neil Bardal served as principal organizer and deserves much praise for his hard work and careful planning.

—Lögberg-Heimskringla
September 11, 1981

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THE ICELANDIC COMMUNITY IN SAN FRANCISCO

We members of the Icelandic community in San Francisco and the surrounding area were very pleased to meet the young singers, Helga Muller and Johann Helgason who sang and entertained us at our 17th June dinner and dance at Moffett Field Officers' Club. They were most enthusiastically received. We wish them well and commend them to your attention.

—Ted Schweitzer

BILL VALGARDSON WINS AWARD FOR HIS NOVEL "GENTLE SINNERS"

W. D. (Bill) Valgardson, currently a member of the Creative Writing Department at the University of Victoria, has won the fifth annual Books in Canada Award for First Novels for his novel *Gentle Sinners* published by Oberon Press. The award, which carries with it a cheque for $1,000, is made each spring for what the judges consider was the best first novel published in English in Canada during the previous calendar year.

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Michael Ewanchuk, who received the LL.D. in 1979, is the author of a new book entitled *Pioneer Profiles: Ukrainian Settlers in Manitoba*. The book is about the Ukrainian pioneer settlers in Manitoba and it deals with the life of the Ukrainian people who began to settle in Canada as early as 1892. the book consists mainly of taped interviews with Ukrainian nonogenerians and octogenerians. The interviews were conducted in Ukrainian and translated and edited for publication in English. The oral history project was researched by Dr. Ewanchuk and was suggested by the Manitoba Chapter of the Ukrainian Teachers and the Interlake and Gimli Ukrainian Historical Society. The book will contain area and homestead maps, pictures of buildings, churches, schools and other institutions, as well as pictures of pioneers at work.

Dr. Ewanchuk's book has not yet been published.

GRADUATES IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Stephen Sigurdson graduated this year with a degree in Civil Engineering, receiving the Doupe Medal for being second in his class. He is now attending Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, taking his first year of Law. He is the son of Paul and Ivadell Sigurdson of Morden, Manitoba.

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A TALENTED MUSICIAN

Friday, March 13, 1981 proved to be a very good day for **Diane Norberg** of Brandon. She competed in the Brandon Festival of the Arts in the Grade IV Bach Piano solo and Piano Sonatina Grade IV. She came first in both competitions that evening.

She is the daughter of George and Olive Norberg of Brandon, and granddaughter of Ingi and Liney Swainson of Winnipeg.

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OIL WELLS OFF THE COAST OF LABRADOR

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