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The Icelandic Canadian



Special Features—

**HANNES HAFSTEIN, THE FIRST PRIME
MINISTER OF ICELAND—**John J. Bildfell

IMPRESSIONS OF ITALY—Capt. H. F. Skaptason

REMINISCENCES OF AN IMMIGRANT GIRL—
Dagbjört Vopnfjord

Vol. 4

Winnipeg, Man., June 1946

No. 4

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Our War Effort

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Since the cessation of hostilities we have given considerable thought to the wording of the caption "Our War Effort." We considered the possibility of eliminating the word "war" as standing for something we would all wish to forget. We thought of changing the caption to "Our Services Department" or "Those Who Served" or some other similar phrase. We are creatures of habit, however, and have become accustomed to using the words "Our War Effort" in referring to the sacrifices and achievements of our boys and girls and of our men and women who played such a heroic part in the struggle for peace. After all, changing a name will not mitigate the suffering caused by the war. And so the caption remains, at least for the present.

To date the Icelandic Canadian has printed information with photographs of about 650 service personnel of Icelandic extraction. This is a record of inestimable value and a great deal of time and energy has been expended in gathering

material for it. But it is work that is well worth the effort.

The job has to be finished. As we so sincerely hope that this will be the last world war it is almost imperative that a record be obtained of every man and woman of our kith and kin who served in any of the services at home or abroad. It is but natural that they themselves hesitate to send in information so we ask that relatives and friends take on this worthy task. If you can't get all the information give us what you have.

Please send photographs and not snapshots, if at all possible, as it is rather difficult to make a clear newspaper cut from a snapshot. The information required is: full name, rank and unit, date and place of birth, full names of parents, length and place of service, when and where served. For further particulars please write to Miss Mattie Halldorson, 558 Arlington St., Winnipeg, Man., who is in charge of "Our War Effort" department, or telephone her at 73 560.

A New Feature

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The last issue of the fourth year of the Icelandic Canadian is just going to press. So we try to take stock of our achievements and of our resources and future prospects for continued service to the public.

We find that a large field of virgin soil has been broken, and energetic spade work done by enthusiastic workers. The letters of congratulations from

our readers, together with their warm and friendly encouragement have given us added incentive in building up a worth while publication.

The magazine has come to mean a great deal to the cultural life of people of Icelandic descent who are scattered far and wide on this great continent. It has also served to create a new bond of kinship among them. Indeed, it has by

means of its features and photographs, been instrumental in bringing together friends who have not been in touch for thirty years.

It is evident from letters and requests received by the staff that, generally speaking, people like "to keep in touch" with their kindred, and with companions of their childhood days. In view of this, we are planning to start a special feature, namely a column devoted to news from various districts where people of Icelandic descent engage in cultural and social activities.

A few who have given thought to such a column have already sent in items of interest, and it should be possible to establish contacts in all parts of the continent in order to make this

feature a real connecting link between our people.

We are therefore at this time making a special appeal to all of you who are interested in the success of the Icelandic Canadian, and in this particular idea, to appoint someone among you to act as news reporter for your district. Such a reporter should send us from time to time, authentic news items which would be condensed and used to the best advantage in our magazine.

Please co-operate with us in making this new feature attractive and of real value to our readers. Send your contributions to the editorial secretary, whose name and address you will find elsewhere in this issue.

The Icelandic Canadian

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Hannes Hafstein, the First Prime Minister of Iceland

By JOHN J. BILDFELL

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Ed. Note:—The following is part of an address delivered by the author to the Icelandic Canadian Evening School. The magazine hopes to be able to publish from time to time, lectures or parts of lectures delivered at the school, particularly those that deal with subjects of a general nature which do not require a background of knowledge which the average reader can hardly be expected to have. This address centres around one of the leading men in Iceland during the period from 1874, when Iceland was granted self-government in internal affairs, to 1918, when by the Union Act Iceland became a kingdom in union with Denmark under a common Crown.

There are a number of men who have taken outstanding and definite part in the struggle for the freedom and political independence of the Icelandic people. First and foremost of those was Jon Sigurdsson, the well-known statesman and patriot, who not only assisted in that noble work, but devoted his entire life to it. He showed the way and laid the foundation for the successful conclusion of the complete independence of the Icelandic nation.

When Jon Sigurdsson died in 1879, another very able man took up the banner of liberty in Iceland and kept it unfurled and floating in the ever increasing national demands, and ever-increasing national understanding until he died in 1899. This man was Benedikt Sveinsson, co-worker of Jon Sigurdsson. Jurist of note, a brilliant orator, a man of steadfast purpose, clear vision, and undying patriotic fervor.

Next in line, as to time, political importance and unquestioned national leadership, is the man whom I have chosen as a principal character of my message tonight.

Hannes Þórður Hafstein was born at the historic farmstead of Möðruvöllum in the valley Hörgá, in the north of Iceland, on the fourth day of December, 1862. His father, Jörgen Pétur Hafstein, of Danish descent, was a man of sterling character, good education and commanding personality. By profession, he was a jurist and held a judgeship in Múlasýslum, but was later appointed

county councillor in the north and east districts of Iceland; this position he occupied with distinction until he died in 1875. The mother of Hannes Hafstein was Icelandic. Her name was Kristiana Gunnarsdóttir, daughter of Rev. Gunnar Gunnarsson at Laufás. Her brother was the well-known patriot, parliamentarian and merchant, Trygvi Gunnarsson. Kristiana's mother was a Briem, sister of Eggert and Ólafur Briem at Grund, and therefore closely related to the well-known poetical strain of the Breim family. Kristiana was the councillor's third wife, and his junior by 24 years.

It was pardonable if friends and others doubted the wisdom of such a marriage, and many were the forebodings among the closest of kin in that respect. The bridegroom had aristocratic standards and a rather domineering attitude. The bride was young, inexperienced, reserved by nature, refined, and of gentle disposition. But there was no cause for trepidation, for the young Mrs. Hafstein took up her duties with a masterful hand and mature judgment. She surmounted all difficulties and fulfilled all the demands, which her aristocratic home made upon her. But more than that, she grew steadfastly in grace, christian splendour, and motherly dignity and was respected and loved by all who knew her, or who came under the sway of her generous and sunny disposition. Such was the influence, and such was the home in which Hannes Hafstein grew up.

Early in life, Hannes Hafstein was active and aggressive. He took part in all the youthful activities in his neighborhood, delighting in any scrimmage and not sparing himself when the occasion arose. Of course, he loved to be the conqueror, as do all boys, who have any grit. When he lost, he took it like a man, never cried or squealed, but went off, alone, to some isolated spot, where he could think it over.

When Hannes Hafstein entered the college in Reykjavik, he was quite young but he proved to be a very good student and mastered all subjects with ease, except one—history. When it came to repeating and learning historical dates, he seemed to lack all patience. The valor and heroic deeds of the warriors of old held no fascination for him.

At college, he was respected by the whole student body, not only for his scholarly attainments, but also for the magnetic power, which radiated from his personality. His popularity was even greater because he seemed to have the uncanny knack of getting, not only himself, but his friends, out of difficult situations.

Hannes Hafstein graduated from the college at Reykjavik with honors in 1880. The same year, he sailed to Denmark to study law at the University of Copenhagen, where he spent six years and after a scholarly record, graduated in law with honors, in 1886, when he was only twenty-four years old.

At this youthful age, Hannes Hafstein had become a nationally known figure through his poetry, which he had published in papers and magazines. This poetry was something different from what the Icelandic people had been accustomed to—romantic ideals both in song and story. Hannes differed sharply from that style in thought and expression. His appeal was a direct one. His thoughts were more materialistic than spiritual. He was young and impatient. He was a man of instant action. His young and powerful voice broke in upon the complacent and sluggish life of his

people like a hurricane, bending, breaking, and cleansing everything, that was unwholesome or out-dated. He was the gallant gladiator, who attacked the half-baked thoughts and ideals of his people. He was the man who wanted to erase all antiquated methods and systems. But Hannes not only set out to destroy; he was also a builder. He was prepared to replace everything weak and vanquished with a new vitality, which he felt within himself, and which he saw in the mighty waterfalls of his country, its rushing rivers and its spouting hot springs. These qualities, he placed in the service of his native people, and, with the will and courage of the people themselves resurrected, he saw the vision of his native land rising in splendour and in majesty.

Hannes was no stranger to the Icelandic people, when he returned from Copenhagen in 1886. On the contrary, he was a much-talked of man. People saw in him a champion of new ideas, and the revived courage of old—the future hope of young and old alike.

Shortly after he came home from the University, he was appointed district judge in Ísafjarðar judicial district, later procurator in Reykjavik, and in 1889 he became Secretary of State, which position he held until 1904.

Before I proceed further with my narrative of Hannes Hafstein, I wish to review a short period in Icelandic political history.

Jon Sigurdsson, the great patriot and statesman, died in 1879, eight years after the constitution of 1871 was granted to Iceland by the Danish parliament. In the main, this constitution was the work of Jon Sigurdsson. In Icelandic it was called *Stöðulög*, meaning a law defining the status of Iceland and Denmark. From the beginning, it was regarded by Jon Sigurdsson and the Icelandic nation as a temporary measure only. After Jon Sigurdsson died, the fight for the constitutional rights of the Icelandic people persisted, under the able leadership of Benedikt Sveinsson,

a parliamentarian, orator, and statesman. Twenty-three times the Icelandic parliament passed a constitutional bill and twenty-three times, the bill was rejected by the Danish government. The situation became precarious and desperate.

In 1885, the Icelandic parliament adopted a new approach to its constitutional demands. A bill was passed providing for a governor, appointed by the King of Denmark, who was to form an Icelandic government, responsible to the parliament of Iceland. The governor was to be the King's representative in all Icelandic matters and the office of the *landshöfðingi* was to be abolished and all members of parliament were to be elected by the people. This new idea did not find favor in the eyes of the Danish government. Not only did the government refuse it, but told the Icelanders plainly, that it was useless for them to keep on wasting money and energy on these endless requests, for they, in Denmark, had made up their minds never to agree to any constitutional change. The Icelandic people did not give up but when it became apparent that the Danish government would never agree to the demands of the Icelanders in full, a new way was tried in 1895. This new approach included only one request and that was that the King of Denmark should appoint an Icelandic minister, who resided in Iceland. This request was refused.

At this juncture, a private individual stepped into the limelight. Dr. Valtýr Gudmundsson, a member of the Icelandic parliament, went to the Danish government and proposed a way to satisfy the insatiable demands of the Icelandic people. This was to appoint an Icelandic minister in Copenhagen, who would be responsible for all his governmental actions to the Icelandic parliament. To this proposition, the Danish government agreed. In 1897, a bill authorizing this constitutional change came before the Icelandic parliament but it was rejected. Again in 1899, it was

brought before parliament and defeated. While this was going on in Iceland, a political storm raged over what the Icelanders called "*Valtýska*," meaning the political propositions of Dr. Valtýr Gudmundsson.

In Denmark also, there were important events happening. The rightest or Tory party, which had controlled the political fortunes of Denmark for half a century, was defeated in a general election by the leftists or the Liberals. This change of government brought a ray of hope to the Icelandic people in their struggle for independence and home government. When the Icelandic government reported on the so-called Valtýrs bill, which was eventually approved by parliament in 1901, the parliamentary leaders in Iceland pointed out, that although the Valtýrs bill had passed in parliament, nothing but a home government or a government located in Iceland would satisfy the people. This statement of the Icelandic parliamentary leaders found favor with the new government in Denmark. The Danish government prepared a bill to change the Icelandic constitution in such a way as to give the Icelandic people a minister of Icelandic birth, domiciled in Iceland and chosen by the people themselves. This bill became law in Iceland on the third of October, 1903, and Hannes Hafstein was selected as first Prime Minister of Iceland on the first of February, 1904.

You may wonder why the mantle of trust, honor and distinction should fall upon the shoulders of this young man who, in the political field, was a comparatively inexperienced man. But those who knew him best, were in no doubt that he was the man, and possibly the only man, who would be able to undertake and discharge the onerous duties and heavy responsibilities resting upon the shoulders of the first Prime Minister of the Icelandic people.

Magnus Stephenson, the Danish appointed governor of Iceland, who knew Hannes Hafstein better than others at

that time, made this remark when he turned the reins of power over to him: "Hannes Hafstein possesses the spirit of originality and its attributes necessary to clear the way for new ideas. His eyes are not only open to many of the most pressing national requirements, but he has the ability to find ways and means to meet them. He possesses the forcefulness to carry his ideas and his undertakings through to a successful conclusion."

Anyone who undertook to deal with conditions, as they existed in Iceland at that time, needed a sympathetic understanding, a strong will, undaunted courage and steadfastness of purpose. Economically, the Icelandic nation had been at a standstill for generations. The endless disappointments and disasters on land and sea had so cowed the spirit of the proud people that their hopes and aspirations were on the wane.

Hannes Hafstein stepped into no easy task, when he became Prime Minister of Iceland. He knew that he would be condemned for every action that he took, be it good, bad or indifferent. But that did not prevent him from taking the bold step forward, the boldest that has ever been taken in the commercial field in Iceland — the construction of the marine cable and the building of a telephone system, which at one stroke connected Iceland with the outside world and gave the Icelanders at home a much-needed system of communication. Although in office for only one year Hannes Hafstein accomplished this so efficiently and with such despatch that only his closest friends knew what was happening. The nation knew nothing until it was all over and the contract with the great Norwegian company had been closed. This daring action stunned the people at first. Then outbursts of criticism broke loose throughout the country and Hannes Hafstein was attacked from all sides. A strong political party condemned the undertaking as unwise and reactionary. It claimed that the wireless should have been selected

instead of the old fashioned wire cable, which would readily break. The people, at large, said that Hannes would bankrupt the nation with this fantastic undertaking. Nearly 400 farmers swept down upon the capital in a single night and demanded that the project be abandoned.

To all these people, Hannes said in effect: "You mind your own business and do your own work. At present, I am running the government." The marine cable and the telephone system were built and both proved highly successful but it took a strong will and real courage to get them through.

In the year 1906, King Christian the ninth of Denmark died and his son, Fridrik the eighth, ascended the throne. Fridrik was very sympathetic to the Icelandic people. At his instigation the members of the Icelandic parliament were invited, at the expense of the Danish government, to visit Denmark to become better acquainted and to talk over existing differences. All the members of the Icelandic parliament accepted this invitation, except five, who could not go. — The Icelanders were splendidly received in Denmark and they had a heart to heart talk with the Danish lawmakers, who had been delegated by the Danish parliament to discuss the differences, which existed between the Danes and Icelanders. All the representatives of both governments agreed that Hannes Hafstein handled the case for Iceland with a firm hand and gentlemanly tact.

In 1907, King Fridrik, together with forty Danish parliamentarians, who had been invited by the Icelandic parliament, visited Iceland. While there, the King informed Hannes Hafstein that he had decided a committee of twenty men should be appointed to deal with the status of the two countries and should frame a new constitution satisfactory to both. Fridrik himself, had already selected two of the twenty—J. C. Christinsen, Prime Minister of Denmark, who was to be chairman and Hannes Hafstein, Prime Minister of Iceland, who was to be vice-

chairman. The others were to be elected by their respective parliaments, twelve by the Danish and six by the Icelandic parliament. This was done and the international committee of 1908 came into being. That committee sat in Copenhagen and after much deliberation and considerable time, reached a majority agreement and prepared a majority report, which was signed by all the committee men except one. That man was Skuli Thoroddsen. His reason for not signing was, that he was convinced if the majority report became law, the Icelandic people would not gain anything, but might even lose some of the rights they then enjoyed. He pointed out the following objections to the majority report:—

1. The Danes were to conduct the foreign affairs of Iceland.
2. They were to supervise all military matters on land and sea.
3. The fishing industry of Iceland was to be under Danish protection.
4. A reciprocal citizenship was to be enjoyed in both countries equally.
5. The Danes were to keep control of the issuing of Icelandic currency.
6. The supreme court was to remain in Copenhagen.
7. Icelanders were to be allowed to fly their own flag in their territorial waters only.

The Icelandic nation would have been subject to these terms for 37 years, if the majority report had become law. But it did not become law. Instead it was badly defeated in the general election of 1908 and Hannes Hafstein and his government were defeated with it.

Hannes Hafstein married an Icelandic lady of rank and refinement, in 1889—Ragnheidur, daughter of Rev. Stefan Helgason, son of Bishop Helgi Thorarensen and his wife, Sigrídur Olafsdóttir Stephensen from Viðey. Ragnheidur was a remarkable woman and in every way, a fitting consort for the first citizen of Iceland. She died in 1913 and the whole Icelandic nation stood in sorrow, with bowed heads, at her bier. The widower

Hannes Hafstein, had erected on her grave the most remarkable memorial which I have ever seen. It is a replica of an oak tree, one of the strongest trees in the sylvan family, broken just above the roots. You may read the balance of the life story of Hannes Hafstein in that broken tree.

In the year 1912 there was a general election in Iceland, in which Hannes Hafstein and his party were returned to power for another four years. Many and important were the questions that confronted him, and his government, when he took up his duties as prime minister for the second time. New and improved highways were sorely needed. Rivers had to be bridged, educational facilities extended. The Constitutional question was still unsettled. The opposition to the union act of 1908 was very definite, and rapidly gaining momentum under the able leadership of Björn Jonsson, the brilliant journalist, who with ever-increasing following, demanded greater privileges for the Icelandic people, than the Danes were willing to grant. The attitude of Hannes Hafstein to these demands was moderate. He desired to arrive at settlements of the differences between the Icelanders and the Danes in a conciliatory way, something like Jon Sigurdsson, in connection with the declaration made in 1873 at Thingvellir when he refused to submit it to the King of Denmark, because the demands made were unreasonable.

The session of parliament in Iceland in 1914 was a momentous one. The two ideals—the moderate ideal of Hannes Hafstein, and the more demanding ideals of Björn Jonsson met there in a hot debate, with the consequence that Hannes and his government had to resign, but during that session some very important laws were passed, such as the law abolishing the six members of parliament who were elected by the King of Denmark making all the members of parliament nationally elected.

A law was passed abolishing the rights of the Danish minister to decide Iceland-

ic matters in the Danish governmental council.

The franchise was extended and votes were given to women.

When this takes place Hannes Hafstein is 52 years old, and not as robust as formerly. The heavy responsibilities of governmental duties, personal be-reavements, and a sickness which he contracted in 1913 and never recovered from, made it very difficult for this splendid man to cope with the demands made upon him by his party and by the public at large. Yet for all that,

Hannes lead his party to victory in the general election of 1916, and he himself received a greater majority of votes than any other candidate in that election. The prime ministership was his for the third time, but he declined it owing to his weakened physical condition. His last act was to redeem his political party from defeat and prove without a shadow of doubt, that he still held the first place in the hearts of his country men.

Hannes Hafstein died in Reykjavik in 1922.

Icelandic Canadian Evening School

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The closing program of the Icelandic Evening School was given in the First Lutheran Church Parlors, Tuesday evening, May 14th.

Mrs. H. F. Danielson, director of the school, presided, and gave a report on the work of the school. During the past two seasons, she said, twenty-four lectures have been given on the history and literature of Iceland, and between twenty and thirty students have attended the language classes. The teachers were: Miss L. Guttormson, Capt. W. Kristjanson and Mrs. H. F. Danielson. The series of lectures given the first year was published in book form last December. The book is called "Iceland's Thousand Years," and has been very well received, and has sold so extensively that a second edition has now been printed. This second edition was printed on heavier paper and will be handsomely bound. The Icelandic Legation in Washington has purchased five hundred copies of "Iceland's Thousand Years" for the purpose of distributing them among those who are anxious to learn something of Iceland's culture and history.

Dr. R. Beck gave an address on "Mod-

ern Icelandic Novelists and Dramatists". Musical numbers were given by a double quartette from the junior choir of the First Lutheran church; a children's choir from the Icelandic Saturday school; and vocal solos by Miss Ingibjorg Bjarnason. There were readings by Miss Beatrice Olafson and Rade Calich. Mr. Calich is not of Icelandic extraction and the audience was taken pleasantly by surprise to hear him recite Icelandic poetry with only a slight trace of accent.

Rev. V. J. Eylands, president of the Icelandic National League, spoke briefly, paying tribute to Mrs. Danielson's leadership in the field of community culture. He congratulated the Icelandic Canadian Club on its educational achievements, mentioning in particular the quarterly magazine published by the club, the book, Iceland's Thousand Years, and the Evening School.

At the conclusion of the program, the social committee of the club served refreshments and a brief social period was enjoyed by those present.

The school will be re-opened next fall and another series of lectures given.

Impressions of Italy

By CAPTAIN H. F. SKAPTASON

★

"All roads lead to Rome" has for many centuries been a proverb. In the past this has been no exaggeration for Rome has been the hub of cultural and spiritual leadership of the western world.

It must be born in mind that these impressions are of a people that had endured several years of Fascist dictatorship and some years of war. Many of their most beautiful churches lay in ruins about their feet; some of their finest paintings had been carried into Germany as loot and the songs on their lips were drowned by the din and roar of battle. The Italian people were our enemies and did not know what to expect of us.

Italy is a country of some 119,000 square miles compared with Canada's 3,000,000. Its population is approximately 45,000,000 compared with Canada's 12,000,000. The national per capita income is about \$103,000 compared with \$480,000 in the United States. Approximately one-ninth of the population of Italy lives in the larger centres; the remainder live in small villages and on farms. More than 60 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture.

To understand the attitude of the natives toward the Allied troops it is necessary to go back to the growth of Fascism. After the First Great War a tremendous growth in communism and socialism developed. These two ideals, though differing in theory, had a common direction and had a common appeal to the peasants of Italy who had been burdened for centuries by a form of feudalism which they had never been able to shake off. The promise of equality was welcomed. The communist revolution, carried on by force, was countered by an organized opposition which had the support of the upper classes whose position was being endangered by the extremes of communism. This opposition grew in strength and in the

hands of a few irresponsible persons became a ruthless rule by force. The average Italian was powerless to oppose it and eventually grew to accept it just as the people had accepted a feudalism which they were equally powerless to oppose. And now a third factor arose and again the people were powerless—military rule. It may be said that it was benevolent but that was true only in so far as the exigencies of war allowed. The attitude of the individual was one of sullen indifference and suspicion.

The first Italians encountered in the invasion of Sicily were definitely hostile. Men and women were caught sniping at Allied troops. However, the policy of kindness adopted by the Allies, became known and spread into the interior. This had its effect; the reception given the Allied troops became better. It must be conceded that in some cases this reception was genuine but it must also be added that in the majority of cases it was a matter of diplomacy in not biting the hand that was expected to carry the food.

The Italian people have changed little since the times of Julius Caesar. Though Italians have emigrated in astonishing numbers to every part of the world, migration into the land has been almost negligible. Italians remain primarily of Greek origin in Sicily and the Naples area, of Latin origin in Rome and Etruscan in Florence. The language is basically Latin with some changes due to foreign influence.

The standard of living in Italy is much below that of any European countries visited. The farmers, as we know them, are referred to as peasants and that is precisely what they are. Most of the land is owned by large landowners and worked on a share-crop basis. The tenant gets little more than the privilege of eating what he grows in return for his

work. In Sicily and the southern parts of Italy the main crop is grapes and olives. On each farm there is generally a very small plot of wheat which barely yields enough to provide bread for the coming season. Agricultural methods are unbelievably primitive when it is considered that Italy is one of the oldest countries in the Western world. There are literally no farm implements and practically all of the work is done by hand. In the whole of southern Italy one threshing machine was seen and it was so incredibly old and obsolete that it most likely could not be used. It has been estimated that agricultural production could be doubled if proper farming methods were adopted.

The centre of these farming communities is a small village. The centre of the village and the community is the church. Communities with populations of several hundreds, though with their beautiful churches, very often do not boast a single store. Produce from the farms is bartered for the few necessities which cannot be grown. These villages, though often very poor, are very picturesque. They are invariably built on the highest point of land in the vicinity. There are possibly hundreds of these villages that were never reached by car until some adventurous Canadian drove up the steep slopes in a Jeep.

Living accommodation on these farms is as simple as it is practical. An accepted type of farm home consists of a two-storey frame structure. The ground floor is used as a barn with a stair leading from the barn to the living quarters above. The living quarters usually consist of three rooms—two bedrooms and a combined living room and kitchen. The cooking is nearly always done in the fireplace or a charcoal pot. Outside of the larger centres, electricity is unknown. House lighting is done by dipping a piece of string such as a grocery string into a pan of olive oil and igniting one end of it. As a matter of fact, however, this is generally unnecessary as

the natives go to bed with the sun and arise with it.

The fare for young and old in these farm communities consists in the main of very poor wine, whole wheat bread and spaghetti. The wine is used like water, for all meals. It is made by crushing the juice from the grapes and allowing the flies and elements to ferment it. The bread is made by taking a few handfuls of wheat and crushing it with a mortar and pestle. In spite of this extremely simple fare one of the favorite pastimes in these communities is eating. Many Canadians who served in Italy will attest to this fact. I recall several occasions on which I was invited to houses for dinner. Massive quantities of spaghetti and wine were served followed by plates of nuts and fresh fruits. Two to three hours are allotted for these meals.

The standard of living in the larger cities compares quite favorably with that of our own cities. Rome and Naples have some very beautiful apartment houses with all the amenities known to the western world. However, here the schism between the rich and the poor is more pronounced. The rich live in the most luxurious splendor while the poor live in the most filthy squalor.

One of the beautiful cities of Italy and the favorite of most Canadians, is Florence. It was a leave centre for Canadians during the winter of 1944-1945, and its lovely cathedrals and the famous Ponte Vecchio bridge were the subjects of many thousands of photographs. The city is situated in a lovely valley in the heart of the Appenines. The weather was warm and the grass green all winter while less than 40 miles away in the mountains we lived in sub-zero weather and blizzards.

One of the remarkable features about Italy is the very large number of people who speak English. This is not book-learned English, but one that was learned mostly in America. There must be thousands of people in Italy who lived at one time in the Americas and then

returned to their native country. When questioned about this the answer invariably was that they returned for health reasons. I strolled into a hotel in Florence one day and requested in stilted, book-learned Italian, to be shown to a room. The receptionist, who was a lovely young Italian girl, enquired in

very good English if I could speak English. The answer was yes. Upon further enquiry it was revealed that she was born in Winnipeg and that her father owned quite a well-known restaurant on Portage Avenue. And believe it or not they returned to Italy for reasons of health.

Professor Sveinbjorn Johnson

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Professor Sveinbjorn Johnson passed away on March 19th, 1946. His death at the relatively early age of 62 is a distinct loss not only to his adopted country, the United States, and to the country of his birth, Iceland, but also to the loosely co-ordinated community of people of Icelandic descent, scattered widely throughout North America. To each of these in the course of his busy and useful life he made a contribution.

Dr. Johnson, in the great tradition of Abraham Lincoln, is an example of the triumph of character over seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The immigrant boy, handicapped by the twin barrier of language and poverty, rose to eminence because of natural ability combined with a capacity for hard work, and a deeply rooted sense of duty.

He was born in Iceland on July 10th, 1883, and at an early age migrated to the United States with his widowed mother, who settled at Akra, North Dakota. After a distinguished scholastic career, he chose to devote his talent to the legal profession, and became successively attorney-general of North Dakota, judge of the Supreme Court of that state, professor of jurisprudence in the University of Illinois, and later legal adviser of that institution. In 1935 he was appointed by President Roosevelt to administer a huge appropriation of money allotted to the state of Illinois to alleviate the distress caused by the depression. His success in the performance of this

difficult task aroused widespread attention.

It is amazing that he found time for literary pursuits. He translated into English the ancient Icelandic code of laws, Gragas, an accomplishment which, in itself, ensures him the remembrance of posterity. His "Pioneers of Freedom" commemorates the establishment of the world's first Parliament, the Althing, at Thingvellir, Iceland, in 1930. In a notable article, "Old Norse and Greek Ideals," published in the periodical, "Ethics of Law," he drew attention to the fundamental similarity between the moral and political philosophies of the ancient Greeks, as depicted by Aristotle, and those of the Norsemen, as described in the Havamal.

Dr. Johnson was one of the representatives of the United States at the millennial celebration of the foundings of the Althing, held at Thingvellir, Iceland, in 1930. During his sojourn there he was awarded an honorary doctor's degree by the University of Iceland. On another occasion the University of North Dakota honored him similarly.

His life is an exemplification of the fact that a division of loyalties does not necessarily detract from one's achievement. His love for Iceland, its language, its literature, and its culture, did not lessen his loyalty to the United States, nor were his services to the land of his adoption rendered less effective by his efforts on behalf of the land of his birth.

Editor's Note:—We hope to publish a photograph of Prof. Johnson in our next issue.

Vegurinn

Eftir DAVID STEFÁNSSON frá Fagraslógi

★

Einn talaði um veg yfir vegleysur og hraun.
Einn vitnaði í samtök, er ynnu þyngstu raun.
Einn mældi fyrir vegi og vissi upp á hár,
hvar vegurinn ætti að koma. . . Svo liðu hundrað ár.

Það breyttist ekki, hraunið, og björgin lágu kyrr.
Í byggðinni var talað um veginn eins og fyrr.
Einn hafði góðan vilja, en öðrum þróttur þraut,
og þriðja fannst það heimska, að leggja nokkra braut.

Og urðin gretti brýrnar og beið í kyrrð og ró,
en björgin steyttu hnefann og áin skellihló.
Menn fótbrotnuðu í klungri og féllu niður í gjár . . .
þá fóru menn að rumskast . . . eftir liðug hundrað ár.

Í byggðinni var margur, sem eftir öðrum
en ýmsir þóttust hvetja, en sögðu þó um leið:
Menn ættu að geta fetað í feðra sinna slóð
og farið yfir hraunið, sem drottinn sjálfur

En loksins hætti æskan að lúta þeirra sið,
sem líta fjærst til baka, en aldrei fram á við.
Og æskan, hún var samhent og . . . Hér er eg.
Og sjá, hún ruddi hraunið og lagði nýjan veg.

Er starfinu var lokið og leyst hin mikla þraut,
fannst lýðnum öllum sjálfsagt, að þarna væri braut.
En víða eru í byggðunum björg og keldur enn,
sem biða ykkar, starfsglöðu vegabótamenn.

The Road

VEGURINN by STEFANSSON

Translated by HÓLMFRÍÐUR DANIELSON

★

One spoke about a way over crag and pathless moor.
One talked of joint endeavors, which victory ensure.
One visions had, and wisely saw which way the road should lie;
He ventured to stake out the way. . . A hundred years went by.

No change was wrought in basalt,—the boulders stayed right there.
The neighbors talked about the road, as they did yesteryear.
One had the will to labour, another's strength gave way,
The third deemed foolish fancy this fabled road to lay.

The rocky sward with wrinkled brow in patience waited long,
The boulders clenched their fingers, the river's laugh was strong.
Men broke their limbs in bramble and fell into the gorge. —
The dim dull thoughts of men—it took a hundred years to forge.

In the district were so many who waited and stood
And many claimed to quicken,—yet doubted and said:
The road our fathers travelled is not too steep for us.
And we can scale the lava the Maker fashioned thus.

But Youth at last shook off the yoke of those who look
Who cannot see the future for the veil across their mind.
And Youth, it was united, and said: just call on me!
And lo, it cleared the rubble, . . . the road lay wide and free.

And after all was over, the master task was done,
The people said that certainly, that's where the road should run.
But widely scattered through the land are crag and mire
Which wait the eager hand of Youth, its vision and its skill.

Reminiscences of an Immigrant Girl

By DAGBJORT VOPNFJORD

★

Editor's Note: The author's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elias Kernsted, who emigrated from Iceland in 1881, settled temporarily in Ontario prior to the incidents related in this article. The author was three years old at the time.

My parents arrived in the Husavik district in 1883 with a family consisting of an old lady and three children. They settled on a quarter section of land about a mile and a half west of Lake Winnipeg. Some one had obviously lived there before,¹⁾ as there was a log-house on the homestead. If my memory serves me correctly, there were windows in it, but a cloth of some kind served as a door, until my father

had made one from lumber which he sawed from logs.

Naturally many incidents escape the attention and understanding of a youngster, but the years mature one's powers of observation, and innumerable, unforgettable incidents relating to a pioneer's life crowd upon my memory.

Incessant toil and hardship were the daily lot of an immigrant, even after the ordeals of the first years were past. It is a slow, laborious process to clear the forest with no other tool than an axe, to fence in gardens and pasture-land with materials wrested from the woods which, as necessity dictated, were carried and dragged to the site. Haying was conducted in a primitive manner. The grass was cut with a scythe, piled in heaps with a fork, and the remnants raked.



The heaps were then carried to the stacking-site, which was enclosed with a fence. The conditions under which these operations were carried on were far from ideal, the scorching heat, the myriads of mosquitoes which necessitated the wearing of a protective net whenever the sun was not shining. The hay stacks were left in the enclosure until winter, when oxen were used to haul the hay to the barn.

It was generally the task of the older children to take the cows to pasture, and to bring them home from milking. It was necessary at times to carry on a lengthy search through the primitive forest with its thick underbrush and fallen trees, and to wade through stretches of marshy country, infested with mos-

1) Editor's Note:—Probably members of the large group of Icelandic settlers who arrived in 1875.

quitoes. The cattle sometimes fled home from these pests. At such times smudge-fires were made to drive them away.

Water was scarce, particularly during periods of drought. Wells were dug with shovels, and clay hauled up with pails. The wells were often too shallow. Whenever possible the cattle were driven for watering to sloughs in many cases a considerable distance away. During the winter water for domestic purposes was obtained by melting snow on the cook stove, accentuating the various inconveniences with which the housewife had to contend.

Fish was abundant in Lake Winnipeg at that time, and it was not necessary to row very far from the shore in order to secure a good catch. Fish formed the staple diet of the people, but at that time fishing had not become the commercial enterprise it is now. For those who lived at a distance from the lake, it was a slow process made difficult by poor roads. Such people confined their activities to the spring and autumn. During these periods they carried home a sufficient quantity for the table, but salted down the bulk in containers which they stored in the sheds owned by people, who lived near the lake. It was taken home as the need arose. To preserve the fish for summer use, gold-eyes and catfish were smoked, and pickerel dried during the spring season.

It is difficult to explain why seemingly minor incidents linger vividly in one's memory, while events of much greater import are long forgotten. One such trivial scene of the spring fishing season has survived the obliterating effects of the fleeting years. I do not remember how old I was at the time, but it must have been some years after we arrived in the district. I had been sent on an errand to one of the neighbors, and my path crossed the road leading to the lake. When I arrived at the cross-roads, I caught a glimpse of my father returning from a fishing trip. He must have been laying nets, as he carried no fish on his back. He was a tall man, broad-

shouldered, well - proportioned, and usually light of foot, the type of a man who habitually does his work briskly, and never complains of fatigue. Many a time I had seen him walk along wet roads, with heavy gumbo sticking to his shoes, but never had I seen him as he was walking now. There he was trudging with a stoop, tired-looking, slow of foot. This kind of a life ages a man—even a man of his calibre—before his time. He was not yet sixty. I stopped suddenly, and these thoughts raced through my mind. "Is this my father? Is he getting old?" Then I hurried on, as I was afraid that he could read my thoughts, if he were to see me. I could not account for it, but I would have been ashamed to have him see that I realized that his Viking strength and spirit were declining.

Young and old helped with the daily tasks. In the evenings the women utilized their free moments to card wool, to spin, and to knit. Socks and mitts were sold to secure the wherewithal to purchase the few necessities of life that could not be produced on the farm. Then my father was never too busy or tired to read a passage from the Scriptures, while the whole household, in reverent silence, listened.

While the busy fingers of the women folk plied their handicrafts during many a long winter's evening, an age-old Icelandic custom was maintained. The father and the older children took turns in reading the Old Icelandic sagas. While prairie blizzards raged, Gunnar again refused to leave the weird beauty of his Icelandic homeland, and turned back to face the wrath and the spite of his sworn enemies in preference to an outlaw's restless, homeless existence on foreign strands. Again Skarphedinn, leaning on his now impotent battle-axe amidst the burning, crashing timbers of his enemy-encircled dwelling, with toothy, mocking, unflinching grin defied the foe and the unyielding fates, against whom at long last his mighty strength and unwavering courage could avail

nothing. Iceland's Heroic Age lived once more, in a Canadian setting. Other historical, literary, and contemporary books and magazines were read. While nobody had an extensive library, there was always a sufficiency of reading matter, as books were exchanged and circulated throughout the community. The maintenance of the long-established custom had a distinct educational as well as recreational value.

Shopping trips were made periodically to Gimli, five miles away, the chief articles of purchase being coffee, tea, sugar and tobacco. Once during the winter the trusty oxen were hitched to a sleigh for a shopping trip to Winnipeg or Selkirk, where commodities were cheaper and more varied. It took the oxen, the pioneer's faithful servants, and slow but dependable means of transportation, a week to make the trip to Winnipeg. Summer trips for the same purpose were made by boat to Selkirk.

New immigrants arrived from time to time during those early years. They were welcomed with the utmost hospitality; housed and fed, and given unstinted assistance until they had become established. I can recall several families who stayed with my parents under those circumstances. True comradeship flourished during the pioneering era, a spirit

of mutual assistance, a genuine desire to help those in need, a spirit which the advent of comparative prosperity has unfortunately dimmed.

In spite of its hardships the life of the pioneers nevertheless had its bright side. Whenever time permitted visits were exchanged. At such times conversation waxed enthusiastic, eyes brightened, as the older people recalled events and scenes of the long ago in Iceland, and as the younger people, in glowing colors, painted a roseate, verbal picture of the future that was to be theirs in this young land of opportunity. Conversation in those days flowed freely and spontaneously, never ceasing to give delight.

On the whole the pioneers were characterized by courage, a spirit of sacrifice, and perseverance, which resulted in greater educational opportunities and a brighter future for their children. Most important of all, however, they transmitted to their descendants qualities of paramount value in the arduous task of removing the many and difficult obstacles in the path of a strong, unified, purposeful Canadian nation, which in time—it is our hope—will play a noble and a potent part in bringing peace, prosperity, and good will to this troubled world.

To Our Readers

Readers are invited to send in news of people of Icelandic extraction, especially our soldiers overseas. Original articles and poems as well as translations from the Icelandic would be appreciated. Letters to the Editors may be published. You are invited to let us know what you think of our publication.

THE EDITORS

OUR WAR EFFORT



Trp. Oskar K. Sigurdson



Pte. John T. Sigurdson

Jan. 1942 and posted to 31st (Alta.) Reconnaissance Regt. Discharged Jan. 1945.
TROOPER OSKAR K. SIGURDSON—Born at Leslie, Sask., March 29, 1907. Enlisted in R.C.O.C. Posted overseas Dec. 1944 and is now serving in Germany.
SONS OF MRS. GUDRUN AND THE LATE SIGURDUR SIGURDSON, VANCOUVER, B.C., FORMERLY ARBORG, MAN.



LIEUT. COMDR. MAGNUS G. MAGNUS-SON—Born Jan. 11, 1897 in Isafirði, Iceland. Was commanding officer with the Greenland patrol and in the South and Central Pacific. Son of Magnus Örnólfson and Guðrún Isaksdóttir, Isafirði, Iceland.



LT. G. R. SWANSON—Born at San Francisco, Oct. 21, 1919. Enlisted in U.S. Army Feb. 1, 1941. At present with the motion picture dept., Army Air Corps at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Sumarliði Swanson, Long Beach, Calif., formerly Winnipeg, Man.



W.O. Jon Arthur Eastman



Flt.-Lt. G. V. Eastman

W.O. JON ARTHUR EASTMAN—Born at Riverton, Man., Aug. 5, 1925. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. Feb. 1943, arriving overseas March 1944. Completed a tour of operations with the R.A.F. Bomber Command. Released Dec. 1945.

FLT.-LT. GUNNSTEINN VINCENT EASTMAN—Born at Riverton, Man., Dec. 3, 1923. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Dec. 1941. Embarked for overseas Feb. 1943. Was instructor with R.A.F. in England, later served with Can. Bomber Group. Released Dec. '45.

SONS OF MR. & MRS. G. S. EASTMAN, WINNIPEG, MAN.



Radio Art. 4/c DONALD W. AXFORD—Born at Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 16, 1920. Enlisted in communications branch of R.C.N.V.R. Nov. 11, 1943. Served with Atlantic Mid-Ocean Escort Group. Now stationed at Halifax. His three brothers were in Sept. 1943 issue. Son of Mrs. & the late Mr. G. A. Axford, Winnipeg.



PFC JOHANN GUNNLAUGUR SIGURBJORN JOHANNSSON—Born July 19, 1910 in Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in the American Army Air Force Sept. 1942. Trained in California and North Carolina. Posted overseas June 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Jonas Gottfred Johannsson. Pt. Roberts, Wash., formerly Winnipeg.

MOTHER AND SON



Cpl. Christine A. Jonasson



F.S. Magnus Sigurdson

CPL. CHRISTINE A. JONASSON—Born Dec. 17, 1900 at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. (W.D.) Nov. 20, 1941. Served at Dunneville, Ont., and Brandon, Man. Daughter of Mrs. Margaret (Anderson) Lang of Gimli, Man., and the late Sgt. Brynjólfur (Bill) Anderson, who served with the 223rd. Batt., World War I.

FLT.-SGT. MAGNUS SIGURDSON—Born Nov. 21, 1916 at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Dec. 16, 1940. Served as instructor at Carberry, Neepawa and Brandon. Now stationed at Trenton, Ont., with the permanent force, R.C.A.F. Son of Mrs. Christine A. Jonasson and the late Magnus Sigurdson, who was killed in action in World War I, Nov. 1917.

Probably the only Icelandic Mother & Son who served in the Canadian Armed Forces at the same time in World War II.

FLT.-LT. WALLACE MALCOLM THORVALDSON



Flt.-Lt. W. M. Thorvaldson

Born January 23, 1920 at Calgary, Alta. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. June 5, 1941. Trained at Regina, Brandon, Rivers and Winnipeg, before embarking for overseas in March 1942. In May 1945 he was awarded the D.F.C. The citation read, in part, "this officer has at all times displayed great skill, courage and determination." He was later posted to transport duty between England and India.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Thorvaldson, Calgary, Alta.





Ens. F. J. Asmundson Lt. (j.g.) P. M. Asmundson W.O. G. T. Asmundson

ENS. FRANKLIN J. ASMUNDSON, U.S.N.R.—Born June 28, 1922. Enlisted in United States Navy Jan. 1942. Graduated from V. 12, April 23, 1945.

LT. (j.g.) PEARL M. ASMUNDSON, U.S.N.R.—Born Sept. 6, 1923. Enlisted in the United States Navy Nurses Corps, July 1943.

W.O. GISLI T. ASMUNDSON—Born Oct. 28, 1914. Enlisted in the Medical Corps of the United States Navy 1939.

**SONS and DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. JONAS ASMUNDSON,
CALIFORNIA, U.S.A., FORMERLY HALLSON, N.D.**



L.A.C. SIGURDUR JOEL—Born at Baldur, Man., June 2, 1914. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Feb. 1941. Trained at St. Thomas; went overseas in March 1943. Awarded the D.F.C. Arrived home Aug. 1945. Son of Fred Joel and wife Gudny (Antonius).



A.O.M. 3/c SVEINN CALVIN STORM—Born May 2, 1925 in Chicago, Ill. Served in U.S.N. for 3 years and is now discharged. Son of Mr. Sveinn J. and Mrs. Hansina Stefansson Storm, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



S. L. Magnusson, P.N. Pte. M. E. Magnusson Cpl. G. V. Magnusson

MISS SVANBJORG LEOLA MAGNUSSON, R.N.—Born at Duxby, Minn., Nov. 7, 1923. Joined U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, Aug. 1943. At present she is assistant supervisor in surgery at Deaconess Hospital, Grand Forks, N. D.

PTE. MARVIN EINAR MAGNUSSON—Born at Milton, N. D., July 8, 1926. Inducted into U.S. Army Nov. 14, 1944. Embarked overseas April 1945 and is serving with the army of occupation in Germany.

CPL. GUDRUN VIOLA MAGNUSSON—Born at Duxby, Minn., Nov. 7, 1923. Enlisted in U.S. Marine Corps, Jan. 1944. At present with the A.W.R.S. Naval Supply Branch, Cherry Point, N.C.

**SON and TWIN DAUGHTERS OF MR. ALLI G. AND MRS. LAUGA (FINNSON)
MAGNUSSON, MILTON, N. D.**



3rd MATE HANS E. GLEASON—Born in Los Angeles, Calif., June 10, 1922. Joined U.S. Navy Aug. 1942. Son of Mrs. Freda (Einarson) Gleason and the late William Gleason, Los Angeles, Calif.



SGT. GISLI JOHANNSSON—Joined U.S. Navy Oct. 1941. He is a college graduate. Grandson of the late Mr. & Mrs. Gisli Johannsson, Hallson, N. D.



F.O. Owen Hanson



Flt.-Lt. Paul N. Hanson

F.O. OWEN HANSON—Born Jan. 12, 1918 at Winnipeg, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Oct. 11, 1939. Went overseas Feb. 1940, with 110th sqd., which was the first R.C.A.F. sqd. to leave Canada. Served overseas 3½ years, remustered to air crew and returned to Canada. Received pilot's wings and commission at Gimli, Man.

FLT.-LT. PAUL N. HANSON—Born Sept. 20, 1921 at McCreary, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. July 1941. Received his commission as air observer Nov. 1942 at Paulson, Man. Served in eastern air command and Atlantic patrol.

SONS OF MR. JOSEPH AND MRS. HILDA (HOLM) HANSON, McCREARY, MAN.



OSKAR FRANKLIN KRISTJANSON—Born at Lundar, Man., May 13, 1918. Enlisted in R.C.A. June 10, 1942. Embarked for overseas Dec. 26, 1942. Served in Italy, Sicily and Holland. Is now with army of occupation, Germany. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Sigurbjörn Kristjanson, Lundar, Man.



S/SGT. ISAAC THORSTEINSON—Born at Point Roberts, Wash., Dec. 29, 1916. Enlisted in U.S. Army Air Force June 12, 1942. Served in Alaska, Aleutians and South Pacific. Received Asiatic Medal and 4 battle stars. Returned Nov. 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Thordur Thorsteinson, Point Roberts, Wash., U.S.A.



Pfc. Fridbjorn W. Bjornson



1st Lieut. Gudrun Bjornson

PFC. FRIDBJORN W. BJORNSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., June 26, 1921. Enlisted in U.S. Army Dec. 9, 1943. Served overseas, returning to U.S.A. May, 1945. At present stationed in Japan.

1st LIEUT. GUDRUN BJORNSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., July 12, 1922. Graduate of Grafton Deaconess Hospital. Enlisted in U.S. Army Nurses Corps Jan. 24, 1944. Served in England. Returned Oct. 1945.

SON AND DAUGHTER OF MR. FRIDBJORN A. AND MRS. GUDLAUG (SAMUELSON) BJORNSON, MOUNTAIN, N. D.



FORREST AYLAN EINARSON—Born on Mar. 5, 1926 at Hallson, N. D. Joined U.S. Navy Mar. 1, 1944, taking basic training at San Diego, Cal. Posted overseas Jan. 1945, where he still serves. Son of Mrs. Rosa Einarson, Los Angeles, Calif., and the late Allen Einarson, Hallson, N. D.



GRIMUR S. LAXDAL—Born at Kristnes, Sask., Dec. 27, 1920. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. 1942. Trained at No. 8 Repair Depot until posted overseas June 1945. Was with 428 Sqd. (The Ghost Sqd.) until his return to Canada in August 1945. Discharged Oct. 1945. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Th. E. Laxdal, Kuroki, Sask.



Cadet N. K. Johnson



A.C.C.M. V. M. Johnson

CADET NORMA KRISTIN JOHNSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., Nov. 30, 1924. Graduate of Deaconess Hospital, Grand Forks, N. D. Now at U.S.V.A. Downey, Ill.

A.C.C.M. VERNON MARINO JOHNSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., Nov. 4, 1920. Enlisted in U.S. Navy Dec. 1940. Served 3 years in Hawaii. Now at San Diego, Cal.

SON AND DAUGHTER OF MR. ARNI V. and MRS. ROSE (HALLDORSON) JOHNSON, MOUNTAIN, N. D.



L.A.C. BERTEL VALDIMAR GILLIS—Born June 20, 1921 at Wynyard, Sask. Joined R.C.A.F. Dec. 1, 1942. Trained at Saskatoon, Toronto, St. Thomas and Winnipeg. Was air frame mechanic. Discharged Jan. 1946. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Magnus Gillis, Wynyard, Sask.



1st Lieut. GUDMUNDUR OSKAR GISLASON—Born Dec. 23, 1901, Árnessýslu, Iceland. Enlisted in U.S. Army Aug. 1943. Served overseas in Normandy invasion, Belgium and Holland. Son of Gisli Brynjólfsson and Kristin Jónsdóttir, Árnessýslu, Iceland.



TEL. MURRAY K. EYFORD—Born Nov. 18, 1925 at Piney, Man. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. May 18, 1943. Trained at Cornwallis, N. S., and St. Hyacinthe, Que. Served on minesweeper and frigate on Atlantic convoy. Is now discharged. Son of Mr. & Mrs. S. V. Eyford, Piney, Man.



GEORGE YOUNGBERG—Chief Motor Mechanic. Born in Gloucester, Mass., 1902. Enlisted in U.S. Navy Aug. 15, 1942. Served overseas in Sicilian campaign and in the Mediterranean. Son of Anton Youngberg, Hergones, Sweden, and Steinvör Jónsdóttir, Ísafirði, Iceland.



SIGMN ALBERT N. ISFELD—Born at Regina, Sask., March 28, 1924. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. Feb. 1943 and was discharged in fall of same year. Enlisted in Can. Army March 1944. Stationed at Edmonton, Alta., with N.W.T. and Yukon radio system. Son of Mrs. Emily and the late Albert H. Isfeld, formerly of Mozart, Sask., now of Vancouver, B. C.



PFC 1/c ROBERT THORVALDSON—Born Mar. 22, 1925 in Boston, Mass. Enlisted Feb. 17, 1943 in U.S. Marine Corps. Served in So. Pacific and was wounded at Iwo Jima. Awarded the Purple Heart and received a commendation letter from Commanding General for action in Marianas Is. Son of Jacob Thorvaldson of Reykjavik, Iceland and Gertrude Youngberg of Gloucester, Mass.



S/K 3c Rose Gudmundson



Pm.M. 1/c E. A. Gudmundson

SK 3/c ROSE GUDMUNDSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., July 17, 1922. Enlisted in W.A.V.E.S. July, 1943. Received her boat-training at Hunters College, New York. Discharged Feb. 1946.

Ph.M. 1/c EDWARD A. GUDMUNDSON—Born at Mountain, N. D., June 29, 1917. Enlisted 1942. Was stationed at the Naval Hospitals, Great Lakes, Ill., and Oakland, Calif. Served in the South Pacific from Dec. 1942 to Feb. 1945. Discharged 1945.

SON & DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. CHRIS. S. GUDMUNDSON, MOUNTAIN, N. D.



Pte. Olafur Goodman



Pte. Palmi Goodman

PTE. OLAFUR GOODMAN—Born at Wynyard, Sask., Nov. 6, 1926. Enlisted Jan. 1944. Trained at Saskatoon, Hamilton and Camp Borden. Discharged Oct. 1945.

PTE. PALMI GOODMAN—Born at Wynyard, Sask., Sept. 21, 1919. Enlisted May, 1941. Went overseas June 1942 serving with the 16th General Hospital Unit.

SONS OF MR. & MRS. SIGTRYGGUR GOODMAN, WYNYARD, SASK.



Lt. Eileen Johannson



R.T. 3/c James Johannson

LT. EILEEN JOHANNSON—Born Mar. 27, 1922 at La Grange, Ill., U.S.A. Joined the U.S. Army Mar. 15, 1944. Is now stationed at Oliver General Hosp., Augusta, Ga.

RADIO TECHNICIAN 3/c JAMES JOHANNSON—Born Dec. 11, 1917 at Glenfield, N. D. Joined the U.S. Navy, April 29, 1944.

SON & DAUGHTER OF MR. & MRS. BJORN JOHANNSON, BUFFALO, N. Y.



CARP. MATE 3/c FREDERICK GISLI T. FRIDGEIRSON—Born Feb. 4, 1899 in Iceland. Enlisted in U.S. Navy Aug. 27, 1942. Trained at San Diego, Cal. Son of Mrs. Thorbjörg & the late A. Fridgeirson, Gimil, Man., (formerly Arborg).



SIGMN. SVEINN SIGURJON VOPNI—Born at Wynyard, Sask., June 12, 1921. Enlisted April 1942 in R.C.C.S. Embarked for overseas Dec. 1942. Now stationed in England. Son of Mr. & Mrs. Sigurdur Vopni, Kandahar, Sask.

In Memoriam

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CADET BJARNI BJARNASON

Born at Mountain, N. D., April 6, 1921. After graduating from Mountain High School he attended the University of North Dakota for one year. On May 6, 1943 he enlisted in the U. S. Army Air Corps. Died as a result of a flying accident in camp at Tampa, Fla., Nov. 8, 1944.

Son of Tryggvi Bjarnason and Guðný Kristjánsdóttir (Jónsson) Bjarnason.

★



Cadet Bjarni Bjarnason

★

SGT. STEFAN AUGUST LOFTSON

Born May 26, 1923 at Lundar, Man. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. Nov. 5, 1942. Embarked for overseas in August 1943. He was killed in action following air operations over Germany, Feb. 28, 1944.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. B. M. Loftson of Lundar, Manitoba.



Sgt. Stefan August Loftson

★

PTE. STEFAN GUDMUNDUR LOFTSON

Born September 9, 1921 at Lundar, Man. Enlisted in the Canadian Army in April 1943. Embarked for overseas in September 1944. Was wounded in action in Germany on April 21, 1945. Returned home Nov. 19, 1945.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. B. M. Loftson of Lundar, Manitoba.

★



Pte. S. G. Loftson

Graduates From University of Manitoba



Top row: Olina T. Asgeirson, Stefan August Bjarnason, Anna Ruth Lindal.

Middle row: Roberta Jean McQueen, Robert Earl Helgason, Emily Una Johnson.

Bottom row: Franklin M. Arnason, Harold D. Jonasson, Gudm. L. Markusson.



Top row: Jakobina M. Bjarnason, Emma Eleanor Olson, Margaret E. Tipping.
Second row: Larus Sigurdur Gislason, Audrey Adalbjorg Amundson, Hafsteinn Snydal Bond.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Glen Lillington, (University Silver Medal), son of Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Lillington, Winnipeg. Picture appeared in June, 1944-45.

BACHELORS OF ART

Olina T. Asgeirson, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Thor Asgeirson, Mozart, Sask.

Stefan Agust Bjarnason, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Loftson, Lundar, Man.

Anna Ruth Lindal, daughter of Judge W. J. Lindal and the late Mrs. Lindal, Winnipeg.

Thora Sigurdson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sigurbj. Sigurdson, Winnipeg. Picture appeared June, 1944.

Audrey Adalbjorg Amundson, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. August Amundson, Selkirk, Man.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Harold D. Jonasson, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Jonasson, Winnipeg.

Gudm. L. Markusson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Einar O. Markusson, Gimli.

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOR COURSE

Margaret E. Tipping, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Tipping, Winnipeg. Mother Icelandic.

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE

Hafsteinn Snydal Bond, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. V. Bond, Toronto, Ont. Mother Icelandic.

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Robert Earl Helgason, (B.A. Sask.), son of Mr. and Mrs. Helgi Helgason, D'Arcy, Sask.

Roberta Jean McQueen, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. McQueen, Winnipeg. Grand daughter of Capt. Stevens, Gimli.

B.Sc. HOME ECONOMICS

Jacobina M. Bjarnason, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Karl Bjarnason, Baldur, Man.

Constance Lillian Johannesson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Konnie Johannesson, Winnipeg.



Lilja Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Johnson, Winnipeg.

Emma Eleanor Olson, daughter of Mrs. J. Olson, and the late Dr. J. Olson, Winnipeg.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Franklin M. Arnason, son of Gudjon and Petrina Arnason, (Grandson of the late Baldwin (Baldi) and Lena Anderson, Gimli, Man.)

DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURE

Larus Sigurdur Gislason, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thorstein and Louise Gislason, Morden, Man.

B.Sc. AGRICULTURE

Emily Una Johnson, daughter of Tryggvi and Sigrun Johnson, Baldur, Man.

DIPLOMA IN INTERIOR DECORATING

Helen Kristbjorg Sigurdson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sigurbj. Sigurdson, Winnipeg, Man. Picture appeared, June 1945.

★



Herbert Skuli Johnson, B.Sc., University of Saskatchewan. Student at McGill university this past year. Received the Research Council Fellowship of \$750. He plans to continue his studies at McGill another year to secure his Dr. of Philosophy in Chemistry Degree. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sigurdur Johnson, Winnipeg. (Formerly of Sask.)

★

LADY STICK OF HOME ECONOMICS

Kristin Anderson, has been elected lady stick of the faculty of Home Economics at the University of Manitoba. Winner of Cora Hinds scholarship, Miss Anderson has been active in numerous debates. She has been co-editor on the staff of the Echo, a Home Economics publication and is co-chairman of the publicity committee of the faculty. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Anderson, of Baldur, Man. Picture appeared in December, 1943.

★

—Photographs of students by courtesy of Davidson Studios, Winnipeg.

KENNEDY PRIZE IN GEOLOGY



Harold Alexander Craigie Johnson, won the Kennedy Prize in Geology, \$25. He is the son of Prof. and Mrs. Skuli Johnson, Winnipeg.



Eggert T. Felsted, M.D., won the Scientific Club of Winnipeg Research prize, \$150. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Eggert Felsted, Winnipeg.

Adalstein F. Kristjanson, is continuing excellent scholastic career, by winning two scholarships in his 3rd year Law. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fridrik Kristjanson, Winnipeg. Picture appeared, June, 1944.



August Sigurdur Johnson, received his Master of Science Degree at the U.M. this year. B.Sc. graduate from U.M. 1943. Won the Isbister Scholarship in 1942. That same year he was senior stick in Agriculture and class president. August took an active part in social life at the university and was outstanding in sport, having won the 3-mile race at the inter-faculty meet for two consecutive years. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ragnar Johnson, of Wapah, Man.

★

WINS TWO SCHOLARSHIPS

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Force Memorial scholarship, \$100. Son
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GRADUATES FROM THE UNIVERSITY
OF SASKATCHEWAN

Bachelor of Arts:

Lily Gudrun Kristjanson Wynyard.
Willis Merwyn, B.Sc., Beadle, Sask.

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Eng.:

Harold Arnason Westberg, Wallwort,
Sask.

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture:

(In Mechanics):

Einar Sigurjón Jónasson, Man.

Barbara Rose Olafson from Unity,
Sask., won a scholarship . . . 2nd year
Household Science.

Magnus Hjalmarson

MAGNUS HJALMARSON

The noise of the train chugging into Nanking, capital city of China, was almost drowned out by the chattering throng on the station platform. Many of the people had come to see and to pay homage to the stalwart American who was here to help their country, and they stepped back, bowed and smiled as Magnus Hjalmarson descended to the platform, seemingly none the worse for his 2,000 mile trip into the interior.

This was only one of many such trips into the interior of China being undertaken by Hjalmarson and his group of seven engineers who left San Francisco last winter for Shanghai. They are employed by a West Coast construction firm and working under the Chinese government to make an extensive survey of the Chinese transportation system. The tour will take six months and will take them to all parts of China.

The group of eight engineers is divided into four parties. Each party, accompanied by two or three Chinese engineers, is escorted into the interior by Chinese troops, who not only afford protection, but also act as porters, drivers, interpreters, and guides. Everything has been done to overcome the

difficulties usually encountered on the travels into the interior, where it is not safe to accept any food except boiled tea. Each party travels on a special train, equipped with diners and sleepers. All the food is taken along, together with medical supplies and water purification tablets.

At all the larger centres, where stops are made, the party is royally welcomed; there is much entertaining and excited interest in this super-colossal project which will do so much for war-torn China.

The survey itself is but a preliminary to the multi-million dollar Yangtze river development project to build up Chinese industry and its transportation system. When the survey is completed the engineers will make recommendations for the beginning of a network of highways, railroads, waterways, and airports, geared to the needs of a modern industrial nation.

Magnus Hjalmarson, University of North Dakota graduate in civil engineering, has wide experience in heavy construction in Mexico and Central America as well as in this country.

During the war he was in charge a part of the network of naval and air bases for the defense of the Panama canal, and outposts from which American ships and aircraft could attack German U-boats.

Prior to the war he directed the construction of numerous projects, including the All-American Canal, tunnels of the Pennsylvania turnpikes, railroads in Venezuela, and several tunnels in the giant aqueduct of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Hjalmarson lived formerly at Akra, N.D. He is the son of Halldor Hjalmarson, and his wife Margret Björnsdóttir, (Hall-dorson). His wife is the former Beth Thorvaldson, daughter of Sveinn Thorvaldson, of Akra. Their home is in Los Angeles. —H. D.

Who Built Reynir Church

— A LEGEND —

The following legend is from the ancient folklore of Iceland. Because it is typical of the stories told of old and because it is translated so remarkably well that none of its original interest is lost, it is hoped that the reader will appreciate its appearance in this journal.

A certain farmer once lived at Reynir, in the district of Myrdal. He was ordered by the bishop to build a good church hard by his farm house, but had so much difficulty in getting enough timber before the hay-making season, and then so much trouble in finding proper builders, that he feared he should be unable to finish the work before the winter.

One day as he was walking in his field, thinking sadly over this matter, and how he should excuse himself to the bishop for failing to obey his bidding, a strange man, whom he had never seen before, met him, and stopping him, offered him his services in building the church, declaring that he should require the services of no other workman. Then the farmer asked him what payment he would think the due meed of such labor, and the man made the following condition—that the farmer should either find out his name before he had finished the church, or else give him his son, who was then a little boy six years old. The farmer thought these terms easy enough, forsooth, and laughing in his sleeve, gladly consented to them.

So the strange builder set to work, and worked with a will by day and by night, speaking but little to anybody, until the church rose beneath his hands, as quickly as if by magic, and the farmer plainly foresaw that it would be finished even before the haymaking was over.

But by this time he had rather changed his mind about the payment he had

before thought so easy, and was very far from feeling glad that the end of the church building was so near; for do what he would, ask whom he would, and search the country round as he would, and have done, he could not, for the life of him, find out the name of his quick-handed mason. Still the church went on, not a whit slower for his anxiety, and autumn came, and a very little more labor would finish the building.

One day, the last day of the work, he happened to be wandering outside his field, brooding in deep grief, over what now seemed to be the heavy price he would have to pay his master builder, and threw himself down upon a grass mound which he came to; he had scarcely lain there a minute, when he heard someone singing, and listening, he found that the voice was that of a mother lulling her child, and came from inside the mound upon which he had flung himself down. This is what it said:

"Soon will thy father Finnur come
from Reynir,
Bringing a little playmate for thee,
here."

And these words were repeated over and over again; but the farmer, who pretty soon guessed what they meant, did not wait to hear how many times the mother thought fit to sing them, or what the child seemed to think of them, but started up and ran with all speed, his heart filled with joy, to the church, in which he found the builder just nailing the last plank over the altar.

"Well done, friend Finnur!" said he, "how soon you have finished your work!"

No sooner had these words passed his lips than friend Finnur, letting the plank fall from his hand, vanished, and was never seen again.

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THIRD and FOURTH VOLUMES
1944 to 1946

A Quarterly Magazine
Published by The Icelandic Canadian Club
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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