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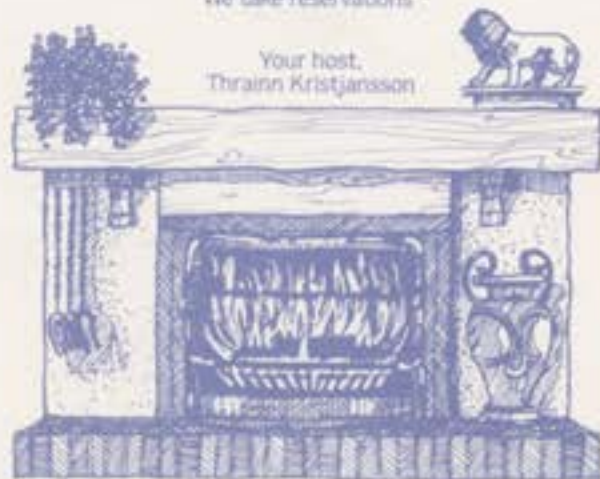
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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

A North American quarterly published in Winnipeg, Canada,
dedicated to the preservation of the Icelandic heritage.

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EDITORIAL

AN URGENT MESSAGE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND FRIENDS

Part I
by The Editor

In spite of the fact that all the members of our Magazine Board serve without remuneration, the continuing increases in the cost of printing and mailing has created a serious financial crisis for THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN journal.

It has been suggested that in order to maintain the continued publication of our quarterly, we should increase the subscription rate to \$20/annum, but in view of the recent increase to \$15/annum, the Board is reluctant to implement that suggestion.

In the first instance our immediate need is financial assistance, which we earnestly request our friends to consider. Secondly it is self-evident that in order to maintain our solvent position in the future, what we need most of all is a substantial increase in the number of sub-

scribers. We now have approximately 1100. Perhaps the following suggestion may be worthy of consideration. If a half of our subscribers were to persuade one friend or acquaintance to subscribe, our financial problem would be effectively solved.

We firmly believe that we are contributing something of permanent value to the preservation of the Icelandic cultural heritage in North America by the quality of our articles, also by creating lasting, reliable historical records for the benefit of future generations.

This editor and all the members of our Magazine Board would greatly appreciate the receipt of letters from our subscribers expressing willingness to provide financial support for a worthy cause.

Part II
by the Business and Advertising Manager

The “Icelandic Canadian Magazine” is a truly unique periodical in this day and age, not only because it keeps alive the rich heritage of a small, unique ethnic community, but because it is almost solely financed through its subscriptions and advertisers. Many other publications of this kind today depend on a multitude of grants and donations from various sources to meet the increasing costs of their publication.

Approximately 75% of the total revenues of the “Icelandic Canadian” comes from its regular subscribers, with

an additional 17% from advertisers. Altogether, over 90% of our revenues are generated by these two means. Consequently, as the cost of producing and shipping the magazine rises, we are compelled to pass these increases on to our subscribers and advertisers in the form of increased subscription and advertising fees. This creates a considerable dilemma for the Editorial Board (all members of which serve the magazine on a voluntary basis), which must find ways to increase revenue or reduce costs.

Several various solutions have been

considered recently, including a further increase in subscription and advertising rates, a reduction in the overall size of the magazine, locating and using additional grant monies and donations, and the expansion of our subscriber and advertiser lists. The Editorial Board is very reluctant to implement the first two considerations, not wishing to either increase present rates nor reducing the size of the magazine. The Board is presently investigating new sources for grants and donations, but would prefer to use any revenues from these sources as a contingency for upgrading the magazine and for special projects rather than to depend on these revenues for operating expenses. This leaves the prospect of increasing the number of our subscribers and advertisers as the best method of resolving our financial dilemmas.

We are a fortunate periodical in that we are not experiencing any decline in our regular subscribers, and have over the past few years seen our subscription list increase slightly. This certainly indicates that our publication is popular within the Icelandic community and is viewed as an important link to our cultural heritage. We know that there are many people who see and read our magazine but who are not subscribers. Many of these see the "Icelandic Canadian" at the homes of parents and other relatives. All must value the magazine, or they would not bother to read it.

We would like to encourage everyone who sees the "Icelandic Canadian" at the home of a relative or friend to consider taking out a subscription of their own. We would further like to ask that subscribers, whose copy is passed from one friend or relative to another, encourage these readers to become subscribers as well. By spreading the financial load in this way, we can ensure that

subscription rates remain reasonable for everyone as well as guaranteeing that the financial situation of the "Icelandic Canadian" remains healthy in the future.

— Eric Jonasson



AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

In our spring issue, due to some unfortunate misunderstanding, the translations by Paul A. Sigurdson's of the poems THE NIGHT OF THE NEW YEAR and WHO'S TO WEARY? got strangely blended. To compensate for this unfortunate error the latter poem is published in this issue. The former will be re-published in our autumn issue.



READERS' FORUM

From Kristiana Magnusson, White Rock, B.C. We certainly enjoy the style and format of the Icelandic Canadian.

* * *

From Una Eastman, Riverton, Manitoba.

Regarding the photograph of an ox team which appeared on page 47 in the spring issue, 1985 of *The Icelandic Canadian*, the man on the left is my father, Gisli Jonasson, who was bringing fish for consumption to our family home at Geysir, Manitoba.

PEOPLE



REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Twenty-six year-old blonde Sigridur Einarsdottir is Icelandair's first woman pilot. She won top grades in tests for her professional pilot's license and instrument rating and joined 14 men added to Icelandair's pilot staff in March. Sigridur is single and is presently flying domestic routes within her homeland of Iceland.

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Dr. Baird M. Bardarson

Baird was born in Seattle, Oct. 28, 1926. He grew up in Carmel, California, and went several years to the University of California at Berkeley and spent 2 years in the Infantry in World War II before moving back to Seattle in 1947. He and his wife, Peggy, have five grown-up daughters.

He graduated from the University of Washington in 1955 with his M.D., interned for 1 year at Los Angeles, and has practiced the past 30 years in Renton, a smallish city of 30,000 which neighbors Seattle.

Most of his practice years have been in Family Practice and to this day still is to some degree. Over the last 10 years he has developed his skills in providing Abortion services and this now occupies most of his practice time.

His hobby is racing small planing centerboard sailboats and editing the news-

letter for this class of sailboats. Peggy is a violinist. They ski. They enjoy cruising the waters of British Columbia.

Parents: Otto and Gertrude Bardarson. Grandparents: Sigurdur and Gudrun Bardarson.

* * *

*The Icelandic Community Owes Him
A Debt of Gratitude*



A.F. KRISTJANSSON Q.C.

One of the life-sustaining attributes of the democratic process is the fact that in times of crises the right person appears — sometimes unexpectedly — at the right time in the right place.

When Lögberg-Heimskringla had serious problems, along came Steini Kristjansson. Under his leadership along with the support of a number of dedicated people, this historic periodical — soon to celebrate the centennial of its publication — was saved from a tragic fate, its demise.

He is to be commended for this noteworthy accomplishment.

Adalsteinn Fridriksson Kristjansson (Steini) was born August, 1923 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His parents were Fridrik

Kristjansson and Holmfridur Josefsdottir: grandparents Kristjan Jonasson and Guðbjörg Thorsteinsdóttir. Fridrik was born near Akureyri, Iceland on June 16, 1885. He immigrated to Canada in 1906. He passed away February 24, 1954.

Holmfridur Josefsdóttir was born in Geitastekki, Dalasýsla, Iceland on October 6, 1892. Her parents were Josef Jonsson and Astridur Gunnlaugsdóttir. She immigrated to Canada in 1910.

Steini attended Winnipeg schools and the University of Manitoba, graduating from the Manitoba Law School with a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1947. He received a scholarship in each year of Law School and upon graduation. The University of Manitoba awarded him The Honorable Alexander Morris Exhibition in law for the year 1947 for having the best aggregate standing on examinations during the four years leading to the degree of Bachelor of Laws.

Steini married Carol Joy Palmason in 1949. Carol is the daughter of Hannes John Harold Palmason and Florence Sophia Einarsson. They have four children — two boys and two girls all of whom are now of adult age.

In 1948 he was called to the Manitoba Bar as a barrister and solicitor. He is

presently a partner in the law firm of Tallin and Kristjansson. He acted as a Head of Course and lecturer in the Law Society Bar Admission Course in the subjects of Real Property, Mechanic's Liens, Leases and Corporations, upon the commencements of that course for articling students.

He has been involved in many community activities, such as being a member of the Lions Club of Winnipeg since 1955 and has held the following offices:

(1) Past President of the Lions Club of Winnipeg (1968 - 1969).

(2) Past District Governor of Lions International for the area of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario (1974 - 75).

(4) Served as a member of the Board of Directors of Lions Manor for approximately eight years, including two years as President and Chairman of the Board of Directors.

He is a Past President of the Board of Directors of Lögberg-Heimskringla (1980 - 1984), and presently serving as a member of the committee organized by the Icelandic Community to obtain funds to permit the expansion of services provided by the Icelandic Chair at the University of Manitoba.

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AN EVENING IN RIO

by Gustaf Kristjanson

Readers will recall that a recent issue of *The Icelandic Canadian* featured an article on Icelandic settlers in Brazil a little over a century ago. Reference was made in that article to a visit by Dr. P.H.T. Thorlakson to Brazil during the course of which he met with descendants of some of these settlers.

Not long ago a couple of the members of the Board of this magazine had an opportunity to chat with Dr. Thorlakson about the occasion and obtain further information about it. The conversation elicited not only further information on these Brazilian pioneers, but also the background as to his reasons for going to Brazil, which in turn is very much related to his standing in the international medical community.

Dr. Thorlakson had been invited by Dr. Juljan Czapski of Brazil to come to Sao Paulo in the spring of 1972 to assist in the preparations for the Second International Congress in Group Medicine to be held in Rio de Janeiro the following year. This was logical, since Dr. Thorlakson had been so prominent in organizing the First International Congress in Group Medicine held in Winnipeg in the spring of 1970. In any event, he addressed the Symposium in Sao Paulo, drawing comparisons between Brazil and Canada in terms of their vast size, their untapped natural resources, and their ethnic diversity, among other things. He also went on to emphasize the importance of a coordinated health care system in serving the needs of a whole population.

Knowing that he would be going to Rio the following year, he contacted the Icelandic Consul in Winnipeg at that

time, Mr. Grettir Johannsson, who in turn contacted the Icelandic Embassy in Washington, and he was ultimately referred to Mr. Kaare Ringseth, representing Iceland as Consul General in Rio de Janeiro. He wrote to Mr. Ringseth in February of 1973 requesting that he try to arrange a meeting with some of the descendants of the Icelanders who had emigrated to Brazil in the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, when Dr. Thorlaksson arrived in Rio a month later, he was invited to the home of Mr. Ringseth, who had managed to locate two families of Icelandic origin in the area. These two couples, named Hoffman and Tembarowski, were likewise invited and a most pleasant social evening ensued. Although the melting pot which is Brazilian society had blended strains of Portuguese, German, Polish, Swedish, Italian, French, and English in these visitors, it was the strain of Icelandic which some of them possessed that became the topic of conversation.

Vinicius Tembarowski, for example, although of Polish ancestry on his father's side, is the great-grandson of Jensina, the sister of Kristjan (Gudmundsson) Isfeld, the first Icelander to make the trek to Brazil. In Thorstein Thorsteinsson's book *Aefintyrid: fra Islandi til Brasiliu*, the ancestry of the Isfeld family is traced back to Kolbeinn of Kalfaströnd, who lived in the Myvatn area of Iceland in the seventeenth century. Incidentally, this same book (on page 359) makes reference to the fact that there was correspondence between relatives of Jensina in Brazil and other relatives in Canada up until the 1920's,

but since that time there had been no news of her or her descendants. If this has been the case, Mr. Tembarowski's meeting with Dr. Thorlakson may represent the first renewal of a "North American connection" in a long time.

Mr. Alceu Hoffman's father and grandfather were Brazilian, but it would seem that his grandmother was of Icelandic origin. Also, according to Dr. Thorlaksson's notes made at the time, Mr. Hoffman's wife, Emmy Sueda Kronland de Andrade, is the daughter of Hector Andrade and Ema Alina Beingson. The parents of Ema Alina were Ernest Beingson and Kristrun Sigurdardottir Laxdal, an Immigrant from Iceland in the nineteenth century. There is a rather interesting anecdote about this Kristrun. Her intended destination when she left Iceland is said to have been San Francisco, California. When she disembarked, however, she found that she was in Sao Francisco do Sud, in the state of Santa Catarina in Brazil! One can imagine her distress. This was not the glamorous San Francisco she had read about.

Dr. Thorlakson had a most interesting evening conversing with these two couples about their background and their activities. He learned that Mr. Tembarowski is a design engineer specializing in the chemistry of cement. The Tembarowskis have four children. The Hoffmans have two. With each passing generation, of course, the Icelandic strain in them diminishes. They are, naturally, wholly Brazilian in culture and are obviously making a worthwhile contribution to that culture. We were shown pictures of these two couples taken on that occasion in the home of the Ringseths. One of them was taken in front of a painting. This painting had been done by Augusta Thors in 1964, and had been presented to the Consul and his wife on one of the Thors' visits to Brazil.

We are indebted to Dr. Thorlakson for sharing his experience with us. It is interesting how fate and circumstances can bring people together from widely scattered corners of the world and uncover information which would otherwise have remained hidden.

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SUMMER IN ICELAND

by Kristjana Gunnars

In Manitoba, April is not "the cruellest month," as Eliot says. April is perhaps the kindest month. The last grips of frost loosen, the chilly evening winds warm, the snow melts away, and the first blades of green show on the grass. Children with soccer balls and bicycles fill the streets, couples walk hand in hand down sidewalks, and whole families are out to clean and rake up the winter's dust and debris from the yards. We have had a long winter in the Canadian West; week after week of twenty to thirty-five below, and everyone is glad to go outside without an overcoat. Here summer is a time when memories are made. Everyone gets the customary vacation; families go on trips and children go to summer camps. North American summer seems especially designed for the children. Educational programs, sports outlets, and summer fairs abound. It must be a delight to have two months off from school with the express purpose of enjoying life; wheeling in the sun, going to the beach, playing tennis and baseball, having picnics, and staying up late to watch the VCR.

I am thinking all these thoughts on an April Saturday in Winnipeg. It is the first really warm day; neighbors are out in their t-shirts building a garage and I am raking the grass. The familiar noise of a lawn mower and a power saw has started up. Children yell down the street. I try to recall my own childhood summers in Iceland. If summers are for memories, I have surprisingly few. Even though I grew up in Iceland, I have very little recollection of how I spent my summers there. There were always the swans on the lake; how they glided gracefully white against the dark blue water. The

dusky nights that never darkened; the distant cry of a loon winging heavily through the night air; the surprised chortling of a grazing sheep in the hills when you come upon it: all these I remember fondly. But those are poetic memories, somehow weighted down and not so carefree as summers here seem to be.

It is curious to me now that even in childhood, the Icelandic summer was not associated with the kind of "happiness" it is on this continent; that I should have felt like Wordsworth who said "...while the birds thus sing a joyous song/ And while the young lambs bound.../ To me alone there came a thought of grief." In trying to find poetic equivalents for summer in Iceland, I find it is not Wordsworth I can turn to, "trailing clouds of glory" out of childhood. Instead it seems that Charles Dickens comes nearer the mark. Describing an industrial town: "Their wearisome heads went up and down at the same rate, in hot weather and cold, wet weather and dry, fair weather and foul. The measured motion of their shadows on the walls, was the substitute (the city) had to show for the shadows of rustling woods; while for the summer hum of insects, it could offer, all the year round, from the dawn of Monday to the night of Saturday, the whirr of shafts and wheels."

The truth is, the Icelandic summer was designed not for memories, but for work. Children are out of school for four months instead of two, but the reason for such an extended vacation is that the kids have to return to the farm and help with the haying. Whoever said the Japanese are the hardest working

people in the world, forgot to consider the Icelanders. It is normal in Iceland now for every family member to hold a job, and it is commonplace to have two or even three jobs at once. In the summers especially, the city and towns hum with work. Buildings go up, fish are brought in, cargos are loaded and unloaded. Changes that took five hundred years to affect in mainland Europe, have taken only fifty years to develop in Iceland. Changing the face of society in a few decades requires a work force no one is excluded from participating in. This includes the children's work force, of which I was a member. And children join up during the summer months.

Much of what I do remember of the Icelandic child's summer is therefore made of material the mind prefers to shove away. There were long hours at the playgrounds where I watched over kids all day, while their mothers worked elsewhere. That was where you sat on the edges of sandboxes or in an empty swing, watching your chosen charges yelling and screaming at each other, and where, when you looked over the high concrete playground walls, you caught the motions of cranes in the air, and the "whirr of wheels." There were other long hours of packing tin cans into boxes in the "Ora" cannery in Kópavogur where I had a job. Tin after tin went into rows, full of green peas or carrots for the winter diet of a country without greens. That was where lunch consisted of a can of "svid", eaten while watching the fishwomen in white chop the heads off little unnamed fish.

Summer was a time when your friends were away, all working somewhere, shipped to farms or fishing villages. Even my own sister was absent. She had gone up north to Raufarhöfn to salt herring. There the workers were roused from their berths at any time, day or

night, whenever the herring boats came in. They would jump into their oilskins and boots and salt herring on the pier until the catch was all in barrels; putting in shifts as long as sixteen or twenty hours at a time. When she was not doing that, she was planting trees for the Forestry Service, digging holes in the ground.

During the fifties, when I was a child, it was not as common for the housewives to work outside the home as it is now. But even they pursued some form of cottage industry besides housework, either knitting seaters or embroidering sheets to sell. My own mother worked a loom in the hall, weaving scarves for the tourist shop. When my workday at the playground, babysitting, or at the cannery was over, I recall picking up the knitting needles myself, trying to join the women's end of things in my own halting fashion. The most outstanding summer memories I have are when I got to accompany my father on one of his geological expeditions into the interior. But even that was work — for him. The best summer job I had was helping a geological survey crew for his little company. Even though I was tied to a pencil and a note pad, at least I got to romp over the tufts and moss.

In any case, I have never thought of summer as a particularly carefree and happy time as a child. It was often lonely and tiring. This recollection of mine would no doubt have a different tone if I had grown up in the country, or lived on a farm, where I am assured the children are ecstatically joyful. But kids on the farms work very hard too; milking cows, shoveling dung, gathering eggs, tractor-ing on the fields. The summer workday goes from sunup (in the spring) to sundown (in the fall). And in the fall your friends come back, work is over, and you take to the streets for a brief period

of true happiness until the rigors of school set in once again.

But this is Manitoba and April is a kind month. Even though I am still plagued by the daily admonition of the Icelandic childhood: to make myself *useful*, I am going to have a North American summer. I will spend quite a time in the yard; there will be barbecues and long relaxing cool drinks with a

good book; I will go canoeing and hiking, making sure no progress is made anywhere except in enjoyment. We do not live with the work ethic here to the same extent as in Iceland, and Progress itself is a dubious word by now. Yet I find that the manner in which you spend your childhood sets the tone for the rest of your life. So I expect there will be a lot of work as well — Icelandic summer style.

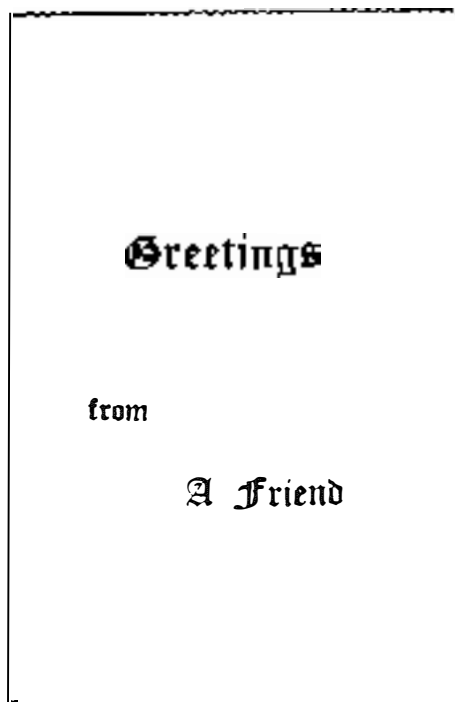
“NEW ICELAND” TOUR

The Icelandic Canadian Frón will be sponsoring a two-day bus tour of “New Iceland” and other Icelandic settlements in the Interlake area on 14-15 September 1985. The tour cost will include all meals (except breakfast), transportation; admission charges, and overnight accommodation at the Gull Harbour Resort on Hecla Island. This tour is an expanded version of one which was offered by the Manitoba Historical Society in 1983.

Participants will tour “Historic New Iceland”, travelling along the “Colonization Road” between Winnipeg Beach and Riverton with stops at Husavik, Gimli, Arnes, Hnausa, Sandy Bar and Riverton. The group will tour Hecla Island and stay overnight at the Gull Harbour Resort. After a tour along the Icelandic River, participants will travel to Arborg and Vidir and then on to The Narrows (an extension of the tour to Reykjavik, Manitoba, will take place, time permitting). Returning to Winnipeg, the tour bus will travel through Lundar and the Shoal Lakes Icelandic settlements. The excursion will leave Winnipeg at 8:00 a.m. on 14 September and return by 8:00-9:00 p.m. the following day.

Participation in this tour is limited, so interested individuals should indicate

their interest as soon as possible. Pre-registration is required. For further information, contact Eric Jonasson (885-5792) or the Icelandic Canadian Frón, Scandinavian Centre, 764 Erin Street, Winnipeg R3G 2W4.



FOREWORD

My most poignant and haunting memories of our visit to historic Barkerville was the Cemetery, set on a forested ledge above one end of the town. The men buried there are from all parts of the world and so many died so young in their relentless search for gold. One tombstone even told the reason for the suicide.

STREET OF DREAMS

by Kristiana Magnusson

When the shadows lengthen on the mountain ridge above historic Barkerville, British Columbia, the mountains take on a deep mauve color, while the peaks are edged with the blazing fire of the setting sun. As dusk descends the sky becomes like velvet, soft and mellow, and the stars hang in a blue-gray mist over Barkerville Cemetery.

To walk into the Barkerville Cemetery, set high on a forested hilltop ledge, is to step back in time. As the wind, sighing and whispering, ruffles the grass in undulant motion, we hear once again, the clink of pick and shovels as the miners toil along the creek beds and mountainside in their search for gold. We see 28 year old Gustav, the blonde-haired, blue-eyed Norwegian miner, his face streaked with grime and sweat, as he slowly trudges back to his sparse cabin. There he will fill up on his daily ration of beans and bread and tea.

Gustav has his dreams. As he wearily stretches out on his narrow cot, his thoughts wander back to his beloved Norway. How he longs for the sight of the beautiful fjords, with fishing boats laden with fish, sailing into the deep bays; the magnificent buildings in Oslo with their quaint cupolas and dormers; the tree-lined parks with their gushing fountains; all in such sharp contrast to the stark reality of Barkerville, with its

false-fronted stores huddling on stilts along the single, narrow and rutted street.

Gustav hears once again the sound of the band music in the Oslo park as he sits with his sweetheart Helga, planning for the future. Once again he tells her he must go to Canada, where there is a fortune to be made at Barkerville. With shining eyes he adds that someday soon, when he has struck gold, he will come back to Norway. There he will buy a fishing boat and be part of that fishing fleet sailing along the beautiful fjords. This dream gives Gustav renewed vitality as he rises each day at daybreak, to toil feverishly in his search for a fortune.

Above the sighing of the wind through the gnarled cedars in Barkerville Cemetery, we hear the shouts of laughter and the blare of music from Denny's Saloon.

We see 25 year old Jimmy, a Londoner, enter the saloon, his tall slim figure striding up to the bar. With brown eyes sparkling and his full mouth creased in a happy grin, Jimmy recklessly tosses a gold piece on the counter, shouting, “One for the house Bartender. I got me some gold nuggets today.”

A fever of excitement grips Jimmy as he dreams of more lucky strikes and bigger stakes. As the dance music starts up again he quickly grabs a buxom blonde hurdy gurdy girl for a dance. As he whirls her around on the dance floor he is reminded of his favourite place, Piccadilly Circus in London. Above the raucous din of boisterous miners at the bar and the blare of the honky tonk piano, he hears once again the old familiar shouts of the London Bobbies, the music of the street performers around Piccadilly Square, and the clatter of carriages rolling along Oxford Street.

Through the haze of the garish saloon lights he sees once again, his English

lassie Margo, her long blonde hair flying in the breeze, a soft smile on her full red lips as she waves him goodbye and promises to join him when he has made his fortune. Someday soon, he dreams on, she will arrive on the Barkerville stagecoach and they will begin a life together in Canada. In the meantime, he will have another pint, another whirl on the dance floor and tomorrow will be another day.

From the far end of the street we hear the faint sounds of a different language spoken, in Barkerville's Chinese section. We see 35 year old Chang Wu, his thin face drawn, as he enters Wa Lee's General Store. His spirits lift as he hears the old familiar greeting of Wa Lee and as he savours the smell of familiar food. He carefully counts out his silver for his supply of rice and green tea. He longs to buy the warm parka which is for sale. But that is not possible. He must save his money.

As Chang Wu leaves the store a sudden rain drenches the narrow street. He huddles inside his cotton jacket, his thin body shuddering with cold. A pang of loneliness for his homeland overwhelms him.

Chang Wu has a dream. He has been saving his meagre earnings and soon, perhaps in a year's time, he will have enough to go back to his ancestral village in Southern China. Once again he will see the rice fields and will worship at the hillside shrine; once again he will hear the sound of the singing river and the shouts of happy children at play. He will go back to China, a wealthy man in his village, and there he will take a wife. Then his children and his children's children will hear the sound of the singing river and will worship at the same hillside shrine. This dream sustains Chang as he struggles daily at the mines.

Here, in the peaceful setting of Bar-

kerville Cemetery, with the wind rustling the grass and the trees softly swaying under the velvet dome of the night sky, the sounds of Barkerville life gradually fade away and die.

The inscriptions on the tombstones tell the story; — of a beloved dream suddenly shattered by a mining accident; of a life frantically searching and waiting for a loved one to come, gradually despair, then a suicide; of a dream of returning to an ancestral village, a dream snuffed out by malnutrition.

All who lie here at Barkerville Cemetery once had hopes and dreams. Here, with the mountains as sentinels, they are united in a brotherhood of peace and love, their lives forever a part of Barkerville's history.

IN MEMORIAM

by Barney Johannson

Dedicated to the loving memory of Gestur Johannson (1889 - 1973), father, afi, friend.

Born to the Nordic heritage, bred from the men of the sea,
Strong and tall was this Viking, proud may his family be,

Proud of his toil unending, the help given others in need.
To give was his greatest pleasure, never a selfish deed.

No wish had this gentle Viking to walk in the halls of the great,
But none on this earth walked taller, nor trod life's path as straight.

Gone are his honor and friendships, his loyal family bond
Off to his ancestors' Valhalla, the mystical Great Beyond.

Nothing can fill the void, as his body lies 'neath the sod,
But Gestur has not left us. He's only gone home to his God.

THE MUSICAL MARTIN FAMILY

Submitted by Prof. H. V. Vidal

Sigmar, Pauline and Melvin Martin are the three youngest of five children born to Halldor and Lilja Martin, formerly of Hnaua, Manitoba. All of them began their musical studies with Lilja, a pianist, and Lilja's brother, the late Johannes Palsson, a violinist. Joining them in recital are Sigmar's wife Deborah, their son Todd, and Melvin's wife Jacqueline Milne.

Leaving home at age fourteen, Sigmar Martin accepted a full scholarship to study with Albert Pratz and Francis Chaplin at Brandon University. In 1975 he moved to London, Ontario to continue violin and chamber music studies with Ralph Aldrich, Gwen Thompson and Tsuski Tsutsumi. He joined London Sinfonia in 1975 and served for two years as personnel manager of the London Symphony Orchestra. He has been principal second violinist of that group (now known as Orchestra London Canada) since 1981. Sigmar's interest in bows and string instruments has inspired a small repair business. Following

studies with bowmaker William Salchow of New York, he has enjoyed some success as a maker of violin and cello bows. He plays a Paul Kaul violin, made during 1937 in France.

Deborah Martin grew up in Inglis, Manitoba, and received her Bachelor of Music degree from Brandon University in 1974. A soprano, she has been a student of Leonard Mayoh and Garret Brooks, and has toured Europe as a member of the International Peace Choir. She currently studies with Linda Vaughn. In addition to vocal recitals in London, she performs with the London Pro Musica Virtuoso Choir in London, Stratford, Kitchener and Hamilton. One of London's foremost instructors of the Suzuki Piano Method, Deborah enjoys teaching piano to a large class of students.



Todd Martin was born in 1975 to Sigmar and Deborah in London. He began to study violin at age two-and-a-half, and piano at age four. He has performed solo recitals in London and has

taken part in annual Kiwanis Music Festivals in London. An active young man, Todd also enjoys playing hockey, soccer and baseball.



Pauline Martin has performed to critical acclaim in Canada, the United States and Iceland. She is frequently re-engaged for recital, concerto and chamber music appearances, as well as radio and television broadcasts. Pauline was a student of Gordon Macpherson at Brandon University until graduating from high school. She left Canada to study with Menahem Pressler at Indiana University, where she completed Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano performance. After a year of college teaching in Harrisonburg, Virginia, she went on to earn the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in performance from The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, under the tutelage of Gary Graffman, Theodore Lettvin and Andre Watts. She currently resides in West Bloomfield, Michigan with her husband Haukur Asgeirsson, a native of Reykjavik, Iceland.



Melvin Martin, in his youth, was a student of Tom Williams and Francis Chaplin at Brandon University, and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance at Indiana University studying with James Buswell and Franco Gulli, and his Master's degree at The University of Michigan under Paul Makanowitzky, Charles Avsharian and Eugene Bossart. During this period he served as Concert Master of their Symphony Orchestra. He has also studied with Igor Ozim in Cologne, Germany, the Orford String Quartet and the Beaux Arts Trio. Currently a member of Orchestra London Canada, Melvin met his wife Jacqueline while employed in the Orchestra Sinfonica de Veracruz, Mexico.

Jacqueline Milne is a native of Springfield, Massachusetts. She began playing the viola at the age of thirteen and has been enjoying an exciting career every since. Jacqueline has attended many music festivals and was principal violist of the Symphony of the Hills Festival of the Arts for two years. Equally talented



String Quartet. After pursuing a degree in viola performance, she accepted a position in the Orchestra Sinfonica de Veracruz in Mexico. While performing as soloist and chamber musician in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, Jacqueline has also studied with William Preucil of the Stradivari Quartet and the well-known Paul Doktor, and is currently a student of the world-renown soloist and teacher Donald McInnes. She resides with Melvin in London, where she is Assistant Principal Violist with Orchestra London Canada.

The Martin family has been invited to become a part of this year's Icelandic Festival at Gimli. They will perform at the Celebrity Concert at the Gimli Composite High School at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, August 3, 1985. Undoubtedly a large audience will be present to enjoy the contribution of this talented family.

in chamber music, she attended the Brunswick Music Festival in New England where she was coached by David Sawyer, cellist of the Guarneri

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A TYPICAL WINTER EVENING AT THE HOMESTEAD

ELMA GISLASON — MARCH 1985

Frost lay like thick velvet on every window pane, glittered on exposed nails in the scantlings. Dusk had fallen. It came much earlier down here in the valley than up on the prairie.

Just before the turn of the century, my father, Ingolfur Arnason, had chosen this lovely spot for his homestead. It was in one of the curves of the Assiniboine River, about fourteen miles north of Glenboro, Manitoba, in the Icelandic community Skalholt.

Tonight we were all in the inner room, seated around the heater which was sending firelight eerily dancing on rafters of ceiling and walls.

One by one, our mother, Maria, lit the kerosene lamps, which she had so carefully polished and refilled this morning. She had the lamp chimneys gleaming by polishing lastly with crumpled newspaper; carbon acting as an excellent polishing agent. Now, the lamps sent a mellow glow throughout the room.

Sitting at the Spinning Wheel, Mother set it humming, her nimble little foot on the treadle. The Carders scratched a steady rhythm under Dad's expertise, stopping only when he reached for more wool from the steadily dwindling supply nearby.

Coffee beans browning in the oven since early morning, spread a wonderful aroma throughout the whole house. Mother preferred buying the beans green and browning them herself. This she did by spreading them thinly on large cookie sheets, and roasting them for many hours in the oven at a very slow, steady temperature. Stirred now and then, they browned thoroughly through. This resulted in much superior coffee than that bought in the stores.

In this delicious odor and near-mesmerizing atmosphere, we learned about the great Vikings and heroes of the past as Dad recited by heart the Sagas and other epic poetry: heard the folk and art songs of Iceland Mother sang, her beautiful voice indelibly imprinted in our hearts and minds. We lacked not, first-rate entertainment.

Out in the kitchen, big sister Leona was grinding some of those newly browned coffee beans. Soon enticing aromas lured both Spinner and Carder away from their tasks. Mother's great, deep violet eyes, always expressive 'neath abundant dark brown hair, lit with pleasure as she daintily sipped her coffee with a piece of broken very hard cube sugar. Dad heaved great sighs of contentment, his lavish, near-black moustache coffee-soaked. After two cups each and, after treating us to tiny pieces of cube sugar with our evening glass of milk, they returned to their work.

Happily we tramped behind them and prepared ourselves for bed. We kept our eyes, ears and noses alert, not missing an iota of what was going on.

We saw Dad stir the embers in the heater, sending sparks flying wildly. Counted the birch and dry poplar logs he piled into the heater. Savored the bit of aromatic wisps of smoke that escaped before the Birch bark sprang into crackling flames.

Our ears picked up a new sound! Clicking of knitting needles had replaced the hum of the Spinning Wheel, the scratch, scratch of the Carders.

Cuddling close to our parents, we recited and sang our Icelandic evening prayers and hymns — and all around us glowed the warmth and security of their love.

ICELANDIC ROOTS IN IRELAND

by Thomas R. Einarson

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Enclosed please find one copy of a manuscript entitled "Icelandic Roots in Ireland", that I would like to have considered for publication in Icelandic Canadian. This represents one small portion of the product of research that I have done on my family history. I am a Ph.D. student in Pharmacy Administration at the University of Arizona in Tucson. While studying in the library here, I discovered many volumes written in Icelandic, and even some in Old Norse. I have traced my family history (as can be seen in this manuscript) back into pre-history in many lands. I have prepared all of my findings in the form of a book that I am in the process of having bound. I wish to share some of the more interesting findings with other Icelanders who may enjoy reading about our common past. I hope to produce more articles, if such stories would be of interest to you and the readers of Icelandic Canadian.

When I was a student of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, one topic of discussion was the origin of the Icelanders. My professor, Haraldur Bessason, turned to me and said, "I can see the Irish in you." This came as quite a shock, for I had always considered myself to be a purebred Icelander. After all, both sets of grandparents had come directly from Iceland. How, then, could this be?

It was not until last year that I came to realize the veracity of Professor Bessason's comment. My cousin, Richard Hordal, had moved to Iceland where he engaged a geneologist friend to investigate our lineage. This geneologist pro-

duced a document that traced our family back to the Norwegian kings. This work kindled in me a burning desire to know more about our family's past and about our ancestors in far away lands.

I began to read many books about Iceland and its history, especially the sagas which preserved our past so admirably. The list of ancestors swelled in proportion to my reading. Bessason's words indeed rang true through the words of the books of history, as three paths of pedigree led to Kjarval, King of Ireland by way of three of his daughters. These princesses had married vikings and settled in Iceland, melding the Celtic with the Norse.

First was Raforta who married Eyvindur the Eastman, second was Fridgerdur who wed Thorir Himo and third was Gormflaith (Kormlod), wife of Grimolfur of Agde. These three men played prominent roles in the settlement of Iceland and the conduct of its affairs during the formative years.

Their father, Kjarval (spelled Cearbhall, but pronounced the same by the Irish), was an interesting character in history as it pertains to Iceland. He inherited the title of Lord of Ossory from his father, Donnghal. Through political as well as military maneuvering, he became Protector, then King of Dublin. He allied himself with the Norsemen and married four daughters to vikings of repute. Besides the three daughters previously mentioned, another daughter named Edna was said to be married to Hlodvir, son of Thorfinnur Skull-Cleaver. However, the dates attached to this last daughter seem historically impossible for her to have been this Kjarval's daughter.

Such an important person as Kjarval would no doubt warrant considerable attention in the Irish history books, I reckoned. Thus, I decided to further probe the Irish branch of the family tree. One Icelandic saga, Ambales Saga, cited several Irish works in its geneology of settlers in Iceland. Researching these and other Irish sources revealed that our pedigree was traced in Irish annuals back to Adam and Eve. The names of descendants from Adam to Kjarval as recorded by the Irish annalists through history are listed below in the Table.

O'Donovan states that the names recorded here may be historically accurate or may be inventions of historians of bygone days. In any event, the number of generations does match the relative time frame and these names are recorded for future generations to accept or reject. It should be noted that the Irish chroniclers recorded historical events in great detail in the Gaelic language for centuries, even millenia.

The daughters of Kjarval emigrated to Iceland with their husbands, bore chil-

**Melkorka did not marry Höskuldur Dala-Kollsson, but their son, Olafur Peacock, was possibly the most handsome, and the most noble person described in the Laxdaela Saga; even more so than his gallant, glamorous son, Kjartan, and most assuredly more so than Bolli Thorleiksson, who betrayed and murdered his foster brother, Kjar-tan.*

dren, and readily blended into the culture of their new land.

These three were not alone, as two other Irish princesses appeared in the family tree. Interestingly, both were sold into slavery, but fate dictated that their future should carry them to Iceland where they were to marry prominent Icelanders. These women were Melkorka*, daughter of Myrkjartan (Muircheartach in Irish) and Muirgeal, daughter of Gljomal, both kings in Ireland.

A thorough search of the Irish literature revealed no trace of King Gljomal, but as many as 25 prominent men in Ireland bore the name of Muircheartach. Of them, only three lived around the turn of the tenth century, and only one was a king. This was the son of Niall Glundubh. If he were indeed the father of Melkorka, his family tree intertwines that of Kjarval at many points throughout history. However, this identity is not known for certain and can only be considered conjecture at this point.

Nonetheless, these five princesses added their noble blood to the royal viking lineage of our family pedigree, enriching the culture with their contributions from the Emerald Isle.

It all becomes quite clear now that Professor Bessason was correct in his pronouncement. The Irish influence lingers on, even after 32 generations, and I bear the marks of that contribution. It appears that Iceland has benefited much from that influence and we, the Icelanders, should not forget the

Irish branch of our unique roots which wind far back into the ages of forgotten history.

TABLE
PEDIGREE OF KING KJARVAL
According to Irish Annals

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Adam | 31. Archaidh |
| 2. Seth | 32. Defhatha |
| 3. Enos | 33. Bratha |
| 4. Caidhionan | 34. Breoghan |
| 5. Malalel | 35. Bile |
| 6. Jareth | 36. Milidh |
| 7. Enoch | 37. Eireamon |
| 8. Matusalem | 38. Irial |
| 9. Lamhiach | 39. Eitreol |
| 10. Noah | 40. Folloch |
| 11. Japheth | 41. Tighernmhas |
| 12. Magog | 42. Eanbhoth |
| 13. Baath | 43. Smiorghall |
| 14. Fenius | 44. Fiachaidh |
| 15. Niul | 45. Aonghus |
| 16. Gaedhal | 46. Maon |
| 17. Easru | 47. Rothachtaigh |
| 18. Sru | 48. Dian |
| 19. Eibher | 49. Siorna |
| 20. Beodhaman | 50. Oilill |
| 21. Oghaman | 51. Giallachaidh |
| 22. Tat | 52. Nuadha |
| 23. Aghnon | 53. Aodhan |
| 24. Laimhfionn | 54. Simeon |
| 25. Eibher | 55. Muiredach |
| 26. Adhnon | 56. Fiachaidh |
| 27. Feibric | 57. Duach |
| 28. Neanuall | 58. Eochaidh |
| 29. Nuadha | 59. Ugainne Mor |
| 30. Alldod | 60. Laoghaire |
| | 61. Oilill |
| | 62. Labraidh |
| | 63. Oilill |
| | 64. Aonghus |
| | 65. Bresal |
| | 66. Fearghus |
| | 67. Feidhlimidh |

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- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 68. Fearadhach | 89. Aingeadh |
| 69. Criomthann | 90. Eochaidh |
| 70. Mogh Airt | 91. Gebhuan |
| 71. Art | 92. Niadh |
| 72. Allod | 93. Cairbre |
| 73. Nuadha | 94. Conall |
| 74. Fearadhach | 95. Ruamann |
| 75. Oilill | 96. Laighneach |
| 76. Fiachaidh | 97. Bighe |
| 77. Bresal | 98. Colman |
| 78. Connla | 99. Cennfaolaidh |
| 79. Nuadha | 100. Scannlan |
| 80. Carrthann | 101. Ronan |
| 81. Labraidh | 102. Cronnmhaol |
| 82. Lugaidh | 103. Faolan |
| 83. Oilill | 104. Anmchaidh |
| 84. Seadna | 105. Coinchearca |
| 85. Iar | 106. Amhalguidh |
| 86. Criomthann | 107. Feartghal |
| 87. Aonghus | 108. Donnghal |
| 88. Laoghaire | 109. Kjarval |

*From Irish Annals.

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WHO'S TOO WEARY?

by Stephan G. Stephansson
(Paul A. Sigurdson, translator)

Who's too weary-worn from day,
Just to spend one night in singing,
Let the spirit freely play,
In the most refreshing way,
Put the brazen horn away,
Take the golden harp for stringing?

Never were my songs too sweet,
Many heard them glad & willing!
I bestowed them as a treat
to the friends I chanced to meet,
Soothing them with quiet beat,
Adding joy for their fulfilling.

Now I stroke it gently, light,
Like the breeze, the willows stringing,
Tuned with April's gentle might,
Powerful, yet mild & bright,
Songs of gladness, like the night
Echoing a river's singing.

How refreshing it can be,
Joined with friends to share the
pleasure,
Dreaming with them longingly
As the night-sun rims the sea.
For my life I've gained a day,
Others missed this extra measure.

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by Freeman Skaptason



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During the year 1985 the Betel Personal Care home celebrates its 70th birthday. On March first 1915 the first residents of Betel were welcomed at the first home at 854 William Ave., Winnipeg. The residents were 9 in number and the first Matron was Miss Eleanora Julius. The first Chairman was Doctor Brandur Brandson who served from 1914 until 1944.

Then as now the home was soon found to be too small and in 1917 Betel

purchased the old Lakeview Hotel in Gimli, Manitoba which provided homes for 40 residents. Since then an addition has been added along with an infirmary and now houses 94 residents.

Also associated with the Gimli home is an 11 apartment Elderly Persons Housing unit.

During the early 1960s there was a long waiting list of persons waiting to get into the home. With exemplary lead-

ership from such people as Dr. P.H.T. Thorlaksson, Grettir Eggertson, Victor Jonasson, Dr. George Johnson, K.W. Johannson, S.V. Sigurdson and others, plans were made to build a second Betel home in Selkirk, Manitoba. This was officially opened in June, 1970 and now comprises 95 beds including a fully equipped infirmary.

President Gordon Gislason reports that plans are now underway to build a new and modern home in Gimli to replace the present home parts of which are about 80 years old. In addition to the new home in Gimli, a committee has been active for some years in an effort to build a personal care home and a housing complex in Winnipeg.

THE NORSE IN NEWFOUNDLAND

by Birgitta Wallace

Near the top of Newfoundland's Western Peninsula, 240 km northwest of St. John's, is L'Anse aux Meadows, site of the oldest known European settlement in the New World and Canada's newest National Historic Park. For the past four summers, Parks Canada has conducted excavations there. The major portion of the site was first excavated between 1961 and 1968 by a Norwegian team led by Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad, who discovered the site while in search of Vinland: the first Viking Settlement in North America.

L'Anse aux Meadows (derived from l'anse aux méduses or bay of jellyfish) is the only Norse site found in North America. Its exact dating is not yet clear, but is probably from the 11th century and the time of the legendary Leif Ericson.

The Norse were, however, only one of many groups who lived on the site. The first inhabitants were peoples of the Maritime Archaic culture who lived there at least 5,000 years ago. The Archaic people lived there until the 10th century A.D. or even later. The site was also occupied by Dorset Eskimos from the 6th to the 9th century A.D.

In the last 200 years, human occupation of the area has been away from the site, with a French fishing station on Colbourne Point, a peninsula less than 1 km to the



Reconstructed sod buildings.

northwest. The present village of L'Anse aux Meadows, from which the site takes its name, was established early in the 19th century and is about 500 m north of the historic site.

Situated on the eastern shore of the Strait of Belle Isle, at the northernmost tip of the Great Northern Peninsula, the site lacks sheltering mountains and forests except to the south where a low ridge rises to a height of 15 m above sea level. Cold western, northern, and eastern winds have free play over the area. Today, the forest line lies 10 km to the south, and the only trees now present at L'Anse aux Meadows are dwarf species, mostly balsam fir, *Abies balsamea* (L.), Mill tamarack, *Larix laricina* (Du Roi), K. Koch birch, *Betula sp.* and willow, *Salix sp.* It is not known if the area was always as open and exposed as it is

now. Local people tell of sizeable trees that grew on or near the site a couple of generations ago. In fact much of coastal Newfoundland that is bare now, was wooded when settlements were established in the 17th and 18th centuries. The need for lumber led to the stripping of the woods. Research now underway may establish whether large trees existed at the time of the Norse.

The climate at L'Anse aux Meadows is cool and moist. The mean July temperature is only 15°C and the January average is -12°C. The yearly precipitation is about 750 mm.

The Archaic and Dorset settlements at L'Anse aux Meadows were chiefly on the southern shore of Epaves Bay.

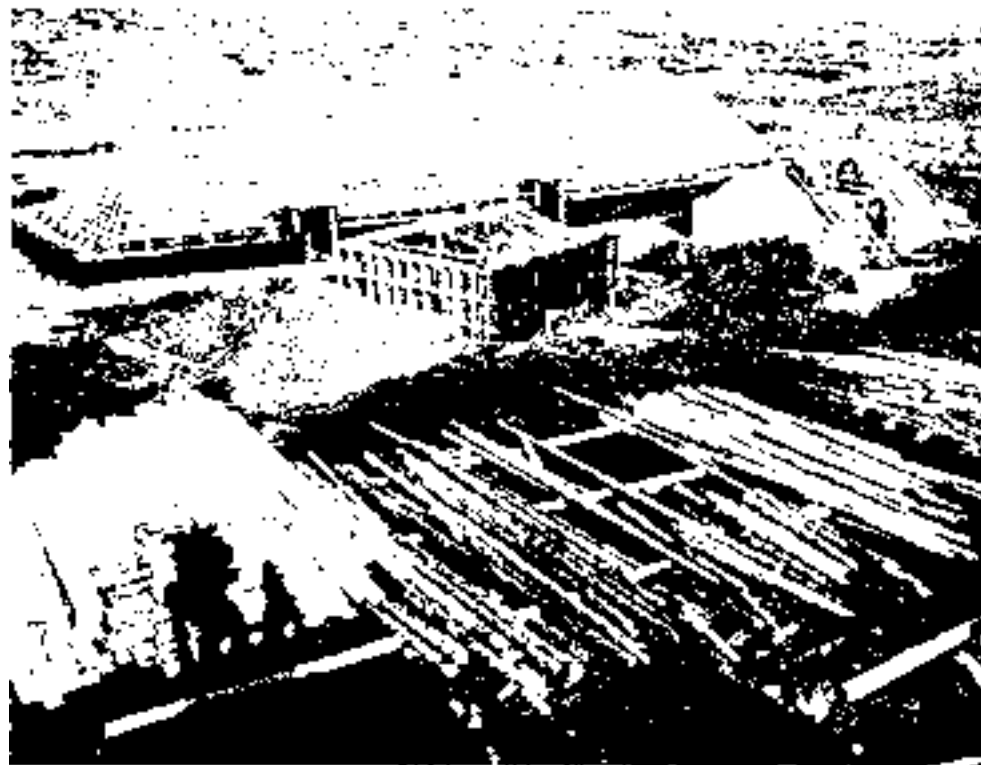
The Norse settlement is on the eastern shore of Epaves Bay, a little inland on two former beach terraces which together encircle

a peat bog. A small brook, Black Duck Brook, runs along the southern and western edges of the bog and issues into the bay.

The Norse remains consist of eight sod buildings. All but one, a smithy, are on the terrace east of the bog. Three are large dwellings, the rest small buildings which may have been workshops or had other special functions.

The northernmost dwelling is the largest. Termed House F by the original excavators, it contained six rooms arranged in three parallel rows, with three rooms in the centre row. The combined inner length of this central row was about eighteen metres.

The southernmost building, House A, was even longer, with an interior length of nearly 25 m. It is about 90 m from House F, and contains four rooms, all in one row. House D, which is situated between Houses F and A, has an interior length of



Sod buildings during reconstruction.

about 9 m. It has two rooms in a row and one room on its western side.

All the buildings had sod walls and roofs. However, because of sod's poor structural strength, heavy roofs were supported on the inside by one or more rows of posts.

The main purpose of the sod was to provide insulation, so the walls were wide, up to 2 m in places, and for stability, they were wider at the base than at the top. To reduce the amount of sod needed, most walls had only a shell or facing of sod and a centre core of gravel. The gravel was good insulating material; it was plentiful and easily procured. The gravel also provided drainage for the run-off from the roofs, which were not overhanging but set back, with the edges touching the middle of the walls.

The roofs were made of two or more layers of sod, resting on a framework of wood, either planking or lattice of branches. The bottom layer of the sod had its grassy side down, the upper layer the grassy side up. Floors were of tamped earth.

The only interior features that remain are stone hearths, used for heating, lighting, and food preparation; and firepits for slow roasting.

In some of the buildings are small, square boxes made of slate pieces set on edge. The Dorset people used identical slate boxes for heating and cooking; but the boxes at L'Anse aux Meadows appear to be integral parts of the Norse buildings, and were probably used for storing embers.

More than 2,400 items have been found. Almost 1,500 of these are of wood and were found in the bog. The oldest artifacts are generally those that were found farthest out in the bog and at the greatest depths, but the stratigraphy is confusing so there is no easy way to determine their age and origin. Radiocarbon dating is not conclusive for artifacts made from driftwood will



Interpretive guide with tourists.

appear older than their date of manufacture. Parks Canada is now working to establish which artifacts or wood pieces are of driftwood.

One of the more exciting discoveries at L'Anse aux Meadows was the discovery by the Ingstads of iron slag in close association with charcoal that has been radiocarbon dated to between A.D. 860-890 and A.D. 1060-1070.

The Ingstads also found 85 artifacts associated with the Norse occupation: Parks Canada has uncovered another forty-five. This is hardly an impressive number but in terms of West Norse building sites, the result is quite fruitful. At the site of Hvitarholt in Iceland, which had about the same number and types of buildings as those at L'Anse aux Meadows but where three building stages were found on top of each other, only about 88 artifacts were retrieved.

At both L'Anse aux Meadows and Hvitarholt, most by far of the artifacts are iron nails or rivets and unidentifiable iron fragments. One soapstone spindle whorl was found. Spinning was a feminine occupation in Norse society, so we can infer that women were present at L'Anse aux Meadows. A bronze pin found in one of the cooking pits in House A could have belonged to a man or a woman. The same is true for a glass bead and a bone pin with a flat, triangular head with a drilled hole in

the centre, both found in House D. Another ornament, a small piece of brass with a striated decoration, was also found in House D. A couple of whetstones and a plain stone lamp are mementos of ordinary household activities.

Most of the objects found by Parks Canada are wooden and were found in the bog below the terrace but close to the buildings. One was a small sewn container of birch bark which, filled with stone, might have been a netsinker of a kind that has been found on late Viking Period and early Mediaeval sites in Sweden. Another seems to be part of a floorboard of a Norse boat. Close to it was a bundle of coiled roots, probably for lashing, and a large iron nail of Norse type.

One of the most interesting pieces is a decorative finial. Similar in appearance and size to a bedknob (which it isn't), it was

carved, not turned, and flat on one side so as to fit on a backing.

The Parks Canada excavations were undertaken to answer a number of specific questions concerning the nature of the settlement. Was it a lengthy occupation, and if so, was the site inhabited continuously? What was the economic basis of the settlement? Were lumber, pastures or iron the chief drawing points, or were there other reasons for the Norse to settle here? What was the relationship of the Norse to the native people, whom they called Skraelings? Were they on the site at the same time, and if so, were they Indians or Eskimos or both?

Some curcial areas remained unexcavated. The Ingstad excavations had concentrated on the buildings themselves but many of the areas immediately outside them remained untouched (or so it was



believed). It was later found that much had been disturbed by drainage- and construction-trenches for shelters erected over the excavated remains in 1962. Nor had the Ingstad excavations touched the bog which obviously had a rich archaeological potential.

The Parks Canada excavations have established that there were probably native people on the site at the time of the Norse and that these people were Archaic Indians, not Eskimos. There is no trace of Dorset people on the site after the 9th century A.D.

As for the Norse, various criteria indicate the duration of settlement. One is the number of repairs or rebuilding stages that can be observed in the buildings. A Norse sod building has been found to have an average life of about 25 years. After this, it usually needs complete rebuilding.

Two or more of the buildings at L'Anse aux Meadows appear to have been abandoned and burned, but there are no signs of rebuilding: although it is possible that one room in House A was added later than the others. Thus, none of the buildings was inhabited for more than about a quarter of a century. Most Greenland and Icelandic sod buildings have foundations of stone. At L'Anse aux Meadows there are no stone foundations even though excellent building material was available on the sandstone ridge on the southern edge of the site. One small outcrop of sandstone lies only a stone's throw from House F. This absence of stone in the building foundations is significant. In Greenland and Iceland it was primarily temporary buildings which lacked stone foundations. Thus we are tempted to conclude that the same buildings at L'Anse aux Meadows were not erected with any anticipation of permanence.

As for the number of people, the settlement surely was small. From what is

known about Norse households, the maximum number of people that could be housed in any of the dwellings was about thirty. More likely it was not more than twenty. If all dwellings were occupied at the same time — which is not certain — the maximum number of people in the settlement was possibly 90, but probably less than sixty.

One of the characteristics of a long-term settlement is the presence of large middens. These middens consist chiefly of food remains in the form of bones, along with ash, charcoal, and fire-cracked stones from the firepits, as well as broken tools and utensils.

The only middens of any note at L'Anse aux Meadows have been found on the terrace slope toward the bog and are now buried under 10 to 60 cm of peat. These dumps are composed mainly of broken wooden artifacts and chips and slivers resulting from log trimming.

Not all the cut wood or all the artifacts are Norse. Some layers predate the Norse, others are later. The wood debris occurs in especially heavy concentrations on the slope below House D and between House E and F. They are no doubt middens but the portions believed to have Norse content could easily have accumulated in a short time, during the construction of the buildings. The presence of ash and bone would have been a better clue, but the acidity of the peat dissolves these materials. They may, however, be traceable chemically, and the Newfoundland Forest Research Centre is performing analyses for ash or bone. If the results of these tests are negative, we can conclude that the Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows was short lived, lasting only a few years.

One wonders what caused the Norse to settle at L'Anse aux Meadows which, although scenic, is not a hospitable spot. It may have been owing to winds and cur-

rents. A ship, left to the mercy of the elements in the seas southwest of Greenland, almost invariably ends up in the Strait of Belle Isle because of the powerful Labrador current. Once in the vicinity of the Strait of Belle Isle, L'Anse aux Meadows is likely to attract attention because of the exposed location on the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula. L'Anse aux Meadows, at least as it appears now, also bears a striking resemblance to Iceland and southwestern Greenland, areas to which the Norse were particularly well adapted.

A number of resources must, however, have been attractive to the Norse. The proximity of timber would have been vital to the Greenlanders who otherwise have had to rely on driftwood or timber imported from Europe. The L'Anse aux Meadows area also offered seal, walrus, whale, codfish, salmon, caribou (now extinct), and fox, all desirable commodities.

Before elephant ivory became common on the European market in the late Middle Ages, Greenlanders provided much of Europe's ivory in the form of walrus tusks. Leather, especially ropes made from walrus hides, is mentioned in mediaeval sources.

After conversion to Christianity, the Norse discovered that dried fish, especially codfish, was a highly saleable item on the European market and they increased their fishing beyond household needs. The birch bark net sinker at L'Anse aux Meadows might be an indication of such commercial fishing, although the rich cod grounds of Newfoundland are not mentioned in the Norse sagas.

Traditionally, because of the northern climate, poor soils, and short growing seasons, the West Norse practised little or no agriculture. Their primary staples were meat and dairy products and good pastures were the overriding consideration in the selection of areas for settlement.

L'Anse aux Meadows with its vast expanses of heath compares favourably to Iceland and Greenland, and one wonders if the Norse brought cattle or other domestic animals with them. Two pig bones were found in House A, but it is not known if they are from the Norse occupation or later. No portions of the buildings are obviously barns. The lack of faunal evidence could be attributed to the high acidity of the bog and soils of the terraces. The spindle whorl indicates that spinning took place; but there are no signs of sheep. Fibres other than wool could have been spun or wool could have been brought over in bales rather than on the backs of sheep.

Iron was worked on the site and one could suspect that iron was one of its major attractions. Conditions for iron production are favourable: substantial bog iron deposits along the brook, and plentiful fuel for smelting and forging. Smelting sites are generally traceable through large slag heaps. As previously mentioned, iron slag has been found at L'Anse aux Meadows, but only in small quantities, a maximum of 15 kg of which 10 kg were collected. The ratio of iron produced to the quantity of slag, was about 1:4 or 1:3, which means that at the most, a total of 5 kg of iron was produced at L'Anse aux Meadows (that is, provided all the slag is smelting slag and not from forging, a question not yet resolved). This is not a sufficient amount of iron to have been the economic mainstay of the settlement. It is more like a one-time operation to meet an immediate need.

On the available evidence, our conclusion is that the Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows was relatively small and short-lived. It may not even have been intended as a permanent settlement but rather as a seasonal resource camp. This conforms well with the Vinland sagas. Late Archaic Indians may have been on the site at the same time as the Norse, and, if so, may

have been the Skraelings of the sagas. Whether L'Anse aux Meadows is the long-sought Vinland, or merely a previously unrecorded Norse camp, the site is unique in the new world.

Already about 4,000 tourists find their way to L'Anse aux Meadows each year, and more will come when the road up the Great Northern Peninsula has been improved. To protect the site and its environment, Parks Canada has acquired an area of

about 95 km² around it. A temporary Visitors' Centre has been opened, with displays describing the site and the Norse. Future plans for L'Anse aux Meadows include permanent displays and replicas of one or more of the solid buildings where the Norse lived 500 years before Jacques Cartier's arrival in the new world.

Birgitta Wallace is a member of Parks Canada's Archaeological Research Division.

“ÖSKUBUSKA” The Icelandic Cinderella

*Translated by
The Reading Class of
The Icelandic National League
Gimli
per Dilla Narfason*

Once upon a time there lived a wealthy couple in a town and they had only one daughter. Now it happened that the woman became very ill and was dying. She called her daughter to her bedside and said to her, “Be a good and honest girl, my dear child, and then God will help you and I shall look down upon you from Heaven and will always be close to you”. With that, her Mother closed her eyes and shortly thereafter died. Everyday the little girl walked to her mother's graveside in the churchyard and cried. She remained good and honest. When winter came, snow spread over the grave like a white blanket. When the spring came and the sun had melted the white blanket of snow on the grave, her father married again.

This woman had two daughters whom she brought with her. They were pretty and looked attractive but inside they had mean and ugly thoughts. Now life was

becoming miserable for the poor step-daughter. “Should this stupid, wench sit in the same room with us?” the sisters said. “Those who want to eat must work for their food, go out to the kitchen”. They had her take off all her pretty clothes and gave her an old grey cotton dress and a pair of wooden shoes to wear. “Just look at the beautiful princess, see how she is decked out now”, they said laughingly and then ordered her out to the kitchen. There she had to work from morning till night and she had to do the worst and most difficult chores. She had to get up before daylight, fetch water, light the fire, cook the food, wash the floor and all the other chores that needed doing. Besides all this, the sisters tormented her in every way they could. They teased her, made fun of her, and strewed beans into the ashes on the floor and she had to stoop to pick these up while they stood laugh-

ing. When she was exhausted at night, she was not allowed to sleep in a bed like the others but rather, she had to lie in the ashes in front of the hearth. That was why she was always dirty and covered with ashes. So the sisters named her "ÖSKUBUSKA" (Cinderella).

Now it came to pass, that her father was going to the city to shop. He asked his step-daughters what he should bring them. One said "pretty clothes", and the other said "gold and jewels". "And you Öskubuska, what would you like to have?" "My dear father, I would like the first branch that touches your hat on the way home". "If you would just break it off for me". He bought pretty clothes, gold and pretty jewels for his step-daughters. When he was riding towards home through the green forest, a hazelwood branch bumped into and knocked off his hat. He snapped off this branch and took it with him. When he came home he gave his step-daughters what they had asked for and he gave Öskubuska the hazelwood branch. She thanked her father for it and took it out to her mother's grave. While crying she planted it on the grave and it was watered with her tears. The branch grew and became a tall and beautiful tree. Öskubuska walked to the tree three times a day. She prayed and cried and every time a small white bird came and sat in the tree. Whatever Öskubuska longed for, then the little bird immediately fulfilled her wish.

Now it happened that the king of the land was planning a celebration to last for three days and he invited all the pretty maidens in his kingdom because his son was going to choose a wife. The step-daughters were surely delighted at this news that they were both invited to the ball. Then they called Öskubuska "Come and comb our hair and polish

our shoes, we are going to a wedding party in the king's castle". Öskubuska obeyed them and began to cry because she longed so to go with them to the ball and pleaded with her step-mother to let her go too. But she answered "You who are covered in ashes and dirt! to think you can go to a wedding party, imagine that! You want to go to a dance and you have neither clothes nor shoes". But Öskubuska pleaded with her step-mother and finally the step-mother said to her, "I'll strew a bowl of beans into the ashes and if you can pick them all up in two hours you may go with the girls". So Öskubuska hurried out the door and behind the house and out to the churchyard and called, "My tame doves, and turtledoves, and all the birds out of the sky, come down and help me pick the good beans into a jug and the grey, spoiled beans into the dove's nest". At that moment, two white doves flew in through the kitchen window and after them the turtledoves, followed by a flock of birds chirping and singing they all set down around the ashes. The doves nodded their head and began picking and the other birds did likewise. Their beaks said pick, pick, pick, pick, all over the kitchen floor. Then they brought the good beans to the jug Öskubuska was holding and they left the others for birdfood. In barely an hour, they had finished and flown out through the window. Then the young girl proudly went to her step-mother with the bean bowl and thought she would be able to go to the ball. The old woman said "I don't think it will come to that Öskubuska, you have no clothes and don't know how to dance and everyone will laugh at you". The young girl began to cry and her step-mother said "If you can pick and clean two full bowls of beans out of the ashes in one hour, you will be allowed to go".

But all the while thinking to herself "she will never be able to do that". When the step-mother had strewn the two full bowls of beans into the ashes, Öskubuska went to the back of the house and called, "My tame doves, turtledoves and all the birds from the sky, come and help me pick the beans. The good beans into the jug and the dark and spoiled beans into the birdhouse".

At once two white doves and turtledoves came flying through the kitchen window and following them chirping and singing came the flock of birds from heaven and all settled down around the ashes. The doves nodded their heads to the other birds and they began to pick the beans and the others did the same. Their beaks went pick, pick, pick, pick, all over the kitchen floor. They brought the good beans to the jug and put the others into the birdfood. Before a half hour had passed, the work was finished and they flew out the window. Then the young girl proudly took the bean bowls to the step-mother and was so happy that she would be allowed to go to the ball. Then said her step-mother "This is all for naught, you are not going one step, you do not have clothes and do not know how to dance. You will put us all to shame". She turned her back on Öskubuska and hurried out with her proud and haughty daughters.

When Öskubuska was alone she went out to her mother's grave and under the hazelnut tree she said "Listen my tree, shake yourself and shower me with silver and gold". The bird tossed down to her a woven dress of silver and gold and silk slippers stitched in silver. Öskubuska hurriedly donned the dress and went to the ball. Neither her step-mother, nor the step-sisters recognized her and thought she was an unknown princess, so beautiful was she in her gold em-

broidered dress. Öskubuska never came to their mind and they thought she was sitting at home in the dirt still picking beans out of the ashes. The prince came toward the unknown girl, took her hand and danced with her. He did not want to dance with any of the other girls and would not let go of her hand; if anyone else asked to dance with her, he said "This is my dance maiden".

She danced all night and when she wanted to go home, the prince said "I am going with you, I want to accompany you", because he wished to know where she lived. She slipped away from him and ran into the dove house. There the prince waited until her father came home and told him about this unknown girl who ran into the dove house. The old man wondered to himself "could this possibly be Öskubuska". He asked that an axe and sledge hammer be brought to him to break down the dove house. He found no one there. When they went into the house, Öskubuska was lying in the ashes, back in her dirty clothing. A dim light came from the oil lamp on the hearth. In her flight, Öskubuska slipped through a vent at the back of the dove house and ran to her hazelwood tree. There she took off her pretty clothes and laid them on the grave. A little bird took them away. Öskubuska had hurried and changed into her old clothes and went to lie down in the ashes.

When the ball commenced again the next morning, and Öskubuska's father, step-mother and sisters were gone, she walked out to her hazelwood tree and said "Listen my tree, shake yourself and shower me with silver and gold". The bird then tossed to her a more gorgeous dress than the day before. When she arrived to the ball in this beautiful dress, everyone was in awe of her beauty. The prince had prayed that she would come

and he immediately took her hand and danced with her and her only. When other men came to ask her to dance, he said, "This is my dance maiden".

When evening approached, Öskubuska started off for home, the prince followed her to see where she was going but she out ran him and crept into the garden at the back of the house. There stood a big and beautiful tree covered in beautiful pears. Like a cat, she climbed into the tree amongst the green branches and the prince did not know where she had disappeared to. He waited until her father came home and said to him, "The unknown girl slipped away from me, I think she must have climbed up into the pear tree". The old man thought to himself "could this possibly have been Öskubuska". He sent for his axe and chopped down the tree but there was no one in the tree. When they entered the kitchen Öskubuska was lying amongst the ashes as usual because she had slid down the other side of the tree; returned her pretty clothes to the bird and again donned her dirty clothes.

When the parents and step-sisters had gone on the third morning, Öskubuska went to her mother's grave and said to the hazelwood tree, "Listen my tree, shake yourself and shower me with silver and gold". Now the bird tossed down a dress which was more resplendent and glittering than before; the other dresses did not compare with this one. The slippers were like gleaming gold. When she arrived in this dress, everyone was speechless with wonder. The prince danced with her and her alone. When someone asked her to dance he said, "This is my dance maiden".

When evening came Öskubuska started off for home and the prince was going to go with her but she walked so fast he could not keep up with her. He had

formed a plan and had the stairway smeared with tar so that when she ran down a slipper stuck to one of the steps. The prince picked up the slipper and he saw it was small and dainty and glowed like gold.

The following morning, he went to Öskubuska's father and said to him, "no girl will be my bride except the one who fits this golden slipper". The sisters were happy to hear this because they had pretty feet. The older sister took the shoe and went into her bedroom with her mother to try it on. No matter how she tried, she could not get her big toe into the slipper, it was too small. So her mother handed her the axe and said "Chop off your toe, my dear, because when you become queen you will not have to walk". She chopped off her toe and squeezed into the slipper. Gritting her teeth to keep from crying out with pain, she walked out to the prince and he took her for his bride. He put her on the back of his horse and rode away. The path led past the churchyard and the grave. Both the doves were sitting there in the tree and said loudly

"The bride hue,
bloods in the shoe,
Ruin-footed doesn't rate
the right one sits at home and waits".

He then looked at her foot and saw where the blood oozed out of her shoe. He turned the horse around and returned the false bride. He said this was not the correct bride and asked that the other sister try on the shoe. She went to the bedroom with her mother and managed to get all her toes into the slipper but her heel was too big. Her mother passed her the axe and said, "Chop off your heel, child, when you become queen you will not have to travel by foot". The girl chopped off her heel and forced her foot into the slipper. She grit-

ted her teeth and walked to the prince. He took her for his bride; put her on the back of his horse and rode away. When they passed the hazelwood tree both the doves sat there and they cried out

"The bride hue,
bloods in the shoe,
Ruin-footed doesn't rate
the right one sits at home and waits".

He looked down at her foot and saw where the blood was oozing out of the shoe. Her white stocking had turned bright red. He turned the horse around and took the false bride to her home again. "This also is not the correct bride", he said to the step-father, "Do you not have another daughter?" "No", replied the poor fellow, "except this half crippled-like poor Öskubuska, daughter of my first wife; it cannot possibly be that she would be considered for a bride". The prince asked that she come to them but the step-mother said, "Oh no, not by any means, this poor thing is too dirty, no one should see her". The prince insisted and they didn't dare but call her. She washed her face and hands and walked to the prince and bowed before him. He passed her the golden slipper. She sat down on the foot-stool and took her little foot out of the ugly large wooden shoe and put on the golden slipper. It fit her perfectly, as if it had been made for her. When she

stood up and the prince looked at her face, he recognized the pretty maiden that he had danced with. Then he said, "This is the right bride". The step-mother and sisters were shocked speechless and turned pale with rage. He took Öskubuska and put her on the back of his horse and rode away with her. When they passed the hazelwood tree there sat the doves who said

"No one hue,
no blood in the shoe,
Neither toe nor heel pains,
the prince with the right bride reigns".

When the doves had finished saying this, they flew and settled on the bride's shoulders, one on the right and one on the left, and sat there quietly. They were given a special place in the splendid wedding ceremony.

FRIENDSHIP

by Paul Bjarnason

As long as the sun has brilliance,
As long as the years endure,
As long as a saint has virtue
As long as the truth is pure,
As long as the heart has feeling,
And the mind has a thought to spare,
A friend will have friends aplenty,
And friends for each other care.

ICELANDIC IMMIGRATION

S.S. WALDENSIAN

(From Glasgow to Toronto — 1879)

by Donald E. Gislason

(Continued from the Spring issue, 1985)

Name	Occupation	Age		Destination
		M	F	
142. Asvaldur Sigmundsson	Labourer	20		New Iceland
143. Ingridur Halfsdottir? (Ingridur Halfdansdottir)	Wife		24	Minnesota?

144. Gudmundur Gislason	Farmer	60	New Iceland
145. Sigrídur Jónsdóttir	Wife		54 New Iceland
146. Gísli Jónsdóttir?	Wife? (Child)		13? New Iceland
(Gísli Guðmundsson or Gíslína Guðmundsdóttir)		(13)	
147. Jón Ólafsson	Farmer	49	New Iceland (Chief and interpreter), assisted passage.
148. Helga Jónsdóttir	Wife		48 New Iceland — assisted thru passage.
149. Eggert Jónsdóttir?	Labourer	16	paid own passage. New Iceland
(Jónsson)			
150. Guðni Jónsdóttir?	Lad	12	paid own passage. New Iceland
(Jónsson)			
151. Albert Jónsdóttir?	Lad	13	paid own passage. New Iceland
(Jónsson)			
152. Sigurður Jónsson	Farmer	56	United States
153. Margrét Jónsson?	Wife		52 United States
154. Stefan Jónsson?			
(Sigurðsson)	Family	25	United States
155. Benj.(amin) Jónsson?			
(Sigurðsson)		28	United States
156. Marteinn Jónsson	Labourer	24	Quebec to Toronto
157. Þorsteinn Jónsson	Farmer	40	New Iceland
158. Guðrún Björnsdóttir?	Farmer? (wife)		30 New Iceland
(Guðvin Björnsson).....	(Farmer)	(30)	
159. Stefan Björnsdóttir?			New Iceland
(Þorsteinsson)		5	
160. Vilborg (Þorsteinsson)	Family	4	New Iceland
161. Bjarni (Þorsteinsson)		2	New Iceland
162. Jarfríður Jónsdóttir	Domestic		56 New Iceland
163. Jón Bjarnason	Farmer	47	New Iceland, Man.
164. Kristinn Bjarnason?	Labourer	17	New Iceland, Man.
(Jónsson)			
165. Halldór Bjarnason?			
(Jónsson)	Child	12	New Iceland, Man.

166. Tómas Bjarnason?			
(Jónsson)	Child	9	New Iceland, Man.
167. Helga Gísladóttir	Domestic		37 New Iceland, Man.
168. Kristján Benediktsson	Child	12	New Iceland, Man.
169. Dignus? (Magnus) Jónsson	Labourer	46	New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
170. Kristjana Andreasdóttir	Domestic		38 New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
171. Sesselía Andreasdóttir	Domestic		20 New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
172. Jón Andreasdóttir?	Labourer	16	New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
(Andreasson)			
173. Sigurður Andreasdóttir?			
(Andreasson)	Lad	13	New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
174. Jónatan Andreasdóttir?	Lad	10	New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
175. Kristján Andreasdóttir?			
(Andreasson)	Lad	6	New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
176. Nína? Andreasdóttir	Child		3 New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
177. Kristinn Andreasdóttir?			
(Andreasson)	Infant		1/2 New Iceland, stop-off in Toronto
178. Sigmundur Steingrímsson	Farmer	53	New Iceland
179. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir	Wife		56 New Iceland
180. Margrét Sigurðardóttir?	Domestic		23 New Iceland
(Sigmundsdóttir)			
181. Benedikt Kristjánsson	Farmer	33	New Iceland
182. Holmfríður Kristjánsdóttir?	Domestic		30 New Iceland
183. Sigurbjörn Kristjánsdóttir?			
(Benediktsson)	Child	4	New Iceland

FOREWORD

In Iceland, Americans of Icelandic descent are not called Americans. They are called Vesturlendingar (Western Icelanders). The following is an account of two Western Icelanders returning to their roots.

JOURNEY INTO HERITAGE

by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

When my friend Disa Petursdottir returned to Iceland, she extended an invitation: "Don't forget to come and visit," she said. "You have to visit the homeland of your ancestors." My husband, Stephen, agreed. Nine months later our four-year-old son, Kristjan, and I boarded a jet at Chicago's O'Hare airport.

We arrived in the homeland of my grandparents in mid-May. A brisk, cold wind raged across the lava-strewn landscape, against which the sea looked warm. Disa and her children were waiting for us on the observation deck at the Keflavik airport. Later, over a hot cup of coffee and a table tastefully spread with numerous pastries, Disa proceeded to outline the course of our lives for the next three weeks. This time, spent with friends, relatives, and people long admired, is now a precious memory.

I could not sleep through the Icelandic spring. The midnight sun brushed mountains and glaciers with lightness, then dipped to rest a bit before rising to share the sky with the moon. The pastel hues of the island were brilliant. During the first week of our visit the world consisted of little color, a blue that slipped into lavender, shades of gold, black and white. But we were there to see the earth awaken. Multicolored mosses sprang from lava fields and tiny wildflowers scattered bits of color upon a carpet of vibrant green. The air was clear and delicious, though sometimes bitter in the mountains. The Icelanders claimed we brought the good weather from

America. In a nation that commonly knows spring as a time of rain, the land was dry.

Three days after our arrival, and one morning after a party in my honor at the home of a third cousin, Audur Eydal, Disa, her daughters, Kristin and Anna, Kristjan, and I boarded a ferry that carried us across Hvalfjord from Reykjavik to Akranes. Disa had rented a cabin a short distance beyond Borg a Myrum, the home in the tenth century of Iceland's most famous poet, Egil Skallagrímsson.

I expected to find primitive facilities. I was wrong. The Icelanders do not find antique conditions romantic. The cabin was furnished with Danish furniture, hand-crafted wall hangings, a chess set, books, games for the children, very good china, copper pots and pans, eider-down quilts, and modern appliances. Everything had been scrubbed and scoured prior to our arrival. A deck surrounded two sides of the structure, and numerous windows looked out upon mountains and glaciers. Disa put the teapot on the stove while I put groceries in the cupboard. Then we went for a hike in our new-found paradise, skirting the many mounds of earth where it is said the hidden-folk dwell.

There are few trees in Iceland, and those that do survive the lava-strewn earth are dwarfed. This, along with the brilliance of light in an unpolluted land, produces a sensation of mystery. This is a land created for the super-natural. Giants live within the mountains, and

the spirits of many sorcerers roam the cliffs above the sea. It is a gentle land, with sheep grazing plentifully upon the hillsides and farms lying deep within the valleys, but it is also a rugged land. It is a land that stands at the beginning of creation, with a history that is peopled by a greater number of eccentric individuals than those countries whose legends go far deeper into the past. As we drove, the five of us somewhat dusty in Disa's little Trabant, we retold much of the history of Iceland, identifying historical locations with the aid of a very complete travel guide. It is far more interesting to travel when one can people the landscape with heroes, both legendary and real.

For the next week we were very busy. We stopped to climb the Holy Mountain (Helgafell) on the Cape of the Snow Mountain (Snaefellsness), the home of Snorri the chieftain in the tenth century and the burial place of Gudrun Osvifsdottir, the beautiful, proud, and fiercely independent heroine of *Laxdoela Saga*, a saga in which Snorri also appears. It is said that Kristjan and I are descended from both. We visited Hjarðarholt, once the home of Olaf the Peacock, and we stood in wonder beneath the crag upon which Aud the deep-minded had erected a Christian cross over one thousand years before. We also visited Laugar, Dalasysla, the birthplace of the before-mentioned Gudrun and the childhood home of my grandfather.

The farm of Laugar is now a boarding school for children during the winter months, and in the summer it is a tourist hotel. School had closed the day before our arrival, and the hotel wasn't due to open for another two weeks. But Oli Olafsson, the cook, welcomed us warmly, though he hadn't expected guests. He put coffee on the table, clean linens in two of the rooms, and pro-

ceeded to cook an elaborate dinner for the five of us. The hotel was ours, he said, and he brought me a set of the books *Dalamenn*, a history of the farms of Dala County from the seventeenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

We walked before reading. We hiked along the River of the Happy Valley (Saelingsdal River) and were entranced by the Cathedral of the Elves (named Tungustapi), an erie rise in the land above the river about which many tales are told. Kristjan and I picked choice chunks of lava to bring home, and Kristjan threw rocks into the very river that his great-grandfather tossed stones into over one hundred years before. My grandfather once herded sheep in the surrounding mountains. It was here that he taught himself to read and to write, perhaps with his mother's help, and it was near here that he met my grandmother. My grandmother, whom I called *Amma*, grew up on the Cape of the Snow Mountain, on the opposite side of the Broad Fjord (Breidafjord), the body of water from which my grandparents took their American name.

We stayed in Dala County for three days, celebrating my birthday at the home of Steinunn Thorgilsdottir, my father's second cousin. Steinunn, the family matriarch, is a published poet and an active gardener at ninety-one years of age. As in many Icelandic homes, the family is extended, scattered members of four generations living under one roof. Kristjan spent most of his time in the barn with the sheep or jumping off the haystack with the children. He decided that, when he grows up, he will emigrate to Iceland and become a sheep farmer. He later told me the days spent on and near his great-grandpa's farm are the happiest memories of his whole life, all four years of it. I'm happy we made our journey.

After leaving the west coast we traveled through parts of Iceland's interior, stopping at the many famous historical and geological sights, and visiting Iceland's Plains of Parliament (Thingvellur), the home of the world's oldest surviving democracy. We also stopped at the home of Halldor Laxness, who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1955.

I had not intended to disturb this internationally famous man, but Disa insisted that guests were not considered a disturbance in Iceland. She drove into the yard and rang the bell while I stayed in the car.

"Come in," said Halldor, who answered the door himself.

Disa explained that she had an American friend in the car and that we were very dusty and dirty from travelling. "My friend merely wishes to meet you," she said.

But Halldor stood firm and repeated his invitation with words of welcome. Thus, dressed in jeans, sweaters, and hiking boots, we entered the Laxness' beautiful and modern home.

The hospitality, as in all Icelandic homes, was overwhelming. Halldor's wife, Audur, came home from a walk with the grandchildren. "It is always a pleasure to have company," she said. "Especially American company." Then she disappeared into the kitchen, reappearing a short time later carrying trays filled with cookies, glasses of juice, and steaming cups of coffee. The children, who were tired and hungry from the day's traveling, were delighted.

I, too, was delighted. As my coffee grew cold I enjoyed a most interesting conversation with a man whose work I had discovered at the age of seventeen, some of which I have read time and time again. Halldor proved to be as brilliant as his prose, which includes novels,

short stories, and plays, and his sense of humor and powers of observation are as keenly whetted as a viking sword. He and his wife told us of a young American they once invited in for dinner. The American, who looked poor and ragged, was hiking along the road that passes the Laxness home. Halldor and Audur were eating lunch and decided the poor man could possibly use a meal. They invited him in and had a very enjoyable and intellectual afternoon. The ragged American was a professor at the University of California.

Kristjan, too, was impressed by Halldor. Previously he had thought that only 'moms' wrote books, but now he found that men could write as well. Later, while visiting the presidential home of Vigdis Finnbogadottir, he discovered that women could be elected to the presidency. "I can be anything I want to be," he said.

"You certainly can," I answered.

Iceland was good to us. Kristjan changed in many ways while on our journey, growing in self-confidence, independence, and world view. As for me, I came to love more deeply this island home of fishermen, shepherds, poets, artists, craftsmen and children, which I now know also contains computerized chess, disco dancing, European fashions, women's liberation, and a great amount of politics. One can play soccer and golf at midnight, and hang gliding is a popular sport. A friend of mine once told me that Iceland has a book shop on every corner, whereas America has banks. I now know this to be true. And although the island does have television, viewing hours are limited to evenings only. There is no T.V. on Thursday, a day set aside for visiting.

An American friend, Marjorie Miller, traveled with us to and from the coun-

try. After an afternoon spent discussing Iceland's numerous schools, colleges, parks, museums, libraries, theaters, art galleries, hospitals, clinics, churches, and elderly high-rises, most of which are government supported, Marjorie asked: "How can they possibly do this with a mere 225,000 people?"

Perhaps the mountains could answer. Or the sea.

On June 7th several of our friends,

both old and new, drove us back to the Keflavik airport, so ending a journey that had been a dream since childhood. There were no tears until our plane lifted from the land.

Iceland, island home of my ancestors, I hold you close within my heart. I will return.

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REVIEWS

Sun Over Darkness Prevail — A record album by Richard White
by Solli Sigurdson.



Last summer I spent an afternoon with a young man describing to me the meaning of Stephan G. Stephansson's poetry. Stephan G., as he is called among Icelanders, lived in Markerville, Alberta, wrote only in Icelandic and is acclaimed as one of the all time best Icelandic poets. Indeed, what did this young man — not at all Icelandic — know of this. I, myself, an Icelander and something of a poet, had to plead ignorance on many points. He had just spent the better part of the summer interviewing such Western Icelandic poets as Kristjana Gunnars of Winnipeg, Siggı Vopnford of Arborg, Paul Sigurdson of Mor-den and many others willing to talk about Stephan G. From his passionate

report that afternoon, interviewing is the wrong word — philosophical discussion might better characterize the interactions. The high point of our exchange was his interpretation of the poem "Evening" from which he had chosen the title for his album — a phrase, he claimed, characterized Stephansson's view of life:

SUN OVER DARKNESS PREVAIL

Richard White, the young man, a guitar-playing folk singer, moved from Ontario out west a few years ago. He got a job helping with the Stephansson House Restoration. He put a poem of Stephansson, translated by Siggı Vopnford, to music and linked it so well (as did his audiences) that he checked around for government monies to support his (far-out) idea of making a whole album of Stephan G.'s poetry set to his music. He received lots of support including some from our own Icelandic Society of Edmonton.

The real story behind this album, however, is not the origin or financing of the record but the songs themselves. As unlikely as it seems — a Canadian folk singer from Ontario setting to music English versions of some of the nicest words ever written in Icelandic —

the songs are stunning. The words by Stephan G. through six different translators (with modifications by White) are clearly the highlight but the melodies composed by White certainly compliment the many moods from the haunting "Close of Day," to the hard driving railway song, "En Route," to the incredible loneliness of "The Exile." Finally the musical arrangements, ranging from "blue grass" to trumpets to acoustic guitar, provide an appropriate variety to the settings for the songs. Every selection on the record is outstanding, but "The Child Poet" is not only surprising but with White's sensitive rendition, absolutely charming.

In spite of the lyrical musicality of the record, in the final analysis, White has provided us with an evening of philosophy set to music. Like all philosophy you must sit back and allow it to work on you. Those of us who don't read Icelandic owe Richard White (and the translators) a debt of gratitude for making Stephansson's ideas available to us, even in this highly transformed version. The seriousness of the record is complimented by a superb two page insert complete with notes, pictures, and the words to all the songs. If you are a western Icelander, this is your heritage. You owe it to yourself to give a listen.

Again, thanks Richard.

*

THE ICELANDIC UNITARIAN CONNECTION

by V. Emil Gudmundson

180 pp., Winnipeg, The Wheatfield Press, \$14.95 (paper)

by Norman Sigurdson

Lutheranism is the official state religion of Iceland and has been for some centuries. Even today, every Icelandic child is baptised into the national religion and in order to follow another faith (or none at all) an Icelander must officially resign from the state church. The majority of Icelanders who joined in the great waves of immigration to western Canada and the northern United States at the end of the last century remained faithful to Lutheranism as have most of their descendants (allowing of course for the general trend away from organized religion in the last few generations).

Surprisingly though, a significant minority of the Icelandic community in the new world was attracted to the Unitarian-Universalist movement, a liberal, more humanistic credo which originated in New England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a reaction against the Puritan con-

finances of orthodox Calvinism. A rationalistic philosophy which rejects the traditional Christian doctrines of original sin, predestination and eternal punishment, Unitarianism also believes in the single personality of God as opposed to the concept of the Trinity, and thus denies the divinity of Jesus Christ.

How and why early Icelandic immigrants were attracted to the teachings of Unitarianism is the subject of a new book prepared posthumously from the papers of V. Emil Gudmundson by his widow, Barbara J. R. Gudmundson under the editorship of G. Eric Bjornson. Dr. Gudmundson, himself a Unitarian minister, who was born in Lundar, Manitoba as a third generation Unitarian and served the denomination in many capacities throughout the United States, died in 1982 while still at work on a history of the Icelandic Unitarian Churches. The present book,

although "an unfinished story" in the words of Barbara Gudmundson, is an attempt to place before the public and other scholars the fruits of Dr. Gudmundson's research.

The first half of the book, after a foreword by Prof. Conrad Wright of the Divinity School of Harvard University (which was founded by an early Unitarian, Henry Ware, in 1819) consists of the text of the Minns Lectures (a memorial fund which has sponsored six lectures on religious subjects annually since 1938) which Dr. Gudmundson delivered in 1981. These lectures trace the history of the Icelandic community's involvement with Unitarianism up to the year 1900. Prof. Wright admits that as transcribed lectures Dr. Gudmundson's prose suffers when transferred to the page, and laments that because of his untimely death Dr. Gudmundson "had not had a chance to rework and polish the manuscript. No doubt he would have been distressed at the thought that his incomplete work would be published without the perfecting care he would have given it."

Still, the story that Dr. Gudmundson tells is an important one that provides illumination not only on aspects of the history of religion in North America but also on the social life of early Icelandic immigrants. Dr. Gudmundson sets out to explore the strains of Unitarian thought that were available in Iceland, through the work of religious philosophers like Magnus Eiriksson and Matthias Jochumsson, and the effect that this rationalistic trend had on immigrants to a new land where the structures of the state supported religion had diminished influence.

"The Icelandic immigrants," he writes, "brought to North America the vibrancy and enthusiasm of (a) new renaissance which was a curious blend of

romanticism and independence, of socialism and individualism, of religion and rationalism, of poetry and politics." Coupled with this freedom of thought was a general erosion of the hold that religion previously had on their everyday lives. Dr. Gudmundson points out that in nineteenth century Iceland, as indeed in Mexico today, Christianity still retained many pagan features: "The myths, legends, and practices of the past were most often associated with the topography, geography and climate of this rugged island, and for many the rocks, cliffs, and valleys were the living abodes of these legends. When the emigrants arrived in the New World with vastly different topography and geography, the old myths and superstitions were often dropped and replaced with either a purer and more orthodox Christianity or Lutheranism or with a new Rationalism."

He goes on to describe the growth of the Unitarian movement, from a splinter group within the Lutheran Church, to the founding of the First Icelandic Unitarian Church in Winnipeg in 1891 (with thirty-six members) to the ensuing period of growth in the new century. There Dr. Gudmundson's lectures ended, but his story is supplemented by the information contained in eleven appendices that make up the latter half of the volume. This section contains much original source material, as well as maps and photographs. The by-laws of the First Icelandic Unitarian Church of Winnipeg, and a translation of an abridged text of Magnus Skaptason's 1891 "break-away" sermon in which he rejected traditional Lutheranism, are of particular interest. It is hoped that other scholars will make use of this material and other of Dr. Gudmundson's valuable work to augment this story, the beginnings of which are traced in **The Icelandic Unitarian Connection.**

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION

We invite students of Icelandic or part-Icelandic descent to apply for the following scholarships which are offered or processed by The Canada Iceland Foundation.

Emilia Palmason Student Aid Fund

Two awards of \$500.00 each to be given in 1985. The recipients must be of good moral character, Icelandic descent, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies in high school, college or at University level. They are asked to sign a pledge that "somewhere along the highway of life" they will try to provide comparable help to another needy student. Closing date for applications **June 30th**.

Thorvaldson Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded in 1985. This annual scholarship will be awarded to a student in University or proceeding into a University in Canada or the United States. The recipient must demonstrate financial need and high scholastic ability. Closing date for applications **Sept. 15**.

Einar Pall & Ingibjorg Jonsson Memorial Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded in 1985. Award to be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a High School graduate proceeding to a Canadian University or the University of Iceland. Closing date for applications **Sept. 15**.

The Canadian Iceland Foundation Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded in 1985. Award to be deter-

mined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a University student studying towards a degree in any Canadian University. Closing date for applications **Sept. 15**.

The Gunnar Simundson Memorial Scholarship

One scholarship of \$300.00 to be awarded annually. This scholarship will be awarded to a student enrolled in a Canadian university who demonstrates high scholastic ability and financial need. Closing date for applications **Sept. 15**.

Students wishing to apply are asked to submit applications with supporting documents indicating scholarship applied for. Information and application forms may be picked up at Lögberg-Heimskringla office. They are also available by telephoning 475-8064 or contacting:

Canada Iceland Foundation
c/o Mrs. P.H. Westdal, Secretary
40 Garnet Bay
Winnipeg, MB. R3T 0L6

IN THE NEWS

MARATHON TOURS OFFERS FOUR-NIGHT PROGRAM IN ICELAND FOR BIG RACE

NEW YORK — One of America's foremost agencies specializing in running marathons has introduced a four-night ground package in Iceland for the second annual Reykjavik Marathon on August 25.

Marathon Tours of Cambridge, Mass. is offering its land program at \$203. It features four nights' accommodations

on a double occupancy basis at the first class Hotel Esja in Reykjavik, continental breakfast daily, hotel taxes and gratuities, roundtrip airport transfers in Iceland, a pasta party, a post-race awards banquet, and a commemorative racing jersey.

Competition will be held in both women's and men's divisions, with full-marathon or half-marathon participation possible. The full-marathon will be 26.08 miles, and the half-marathon, 13.04 miles. The course ranges from Reykjavik's mini-lake at the edge of the business district across the old Viking capital and back again. Parts of the course border the North Atlantic Ocean.

Entry fees, not included in the package, are \$11 for the shorter race, and \$15 for the full-marathon.

Roundtrip airfare to Iceland should be added to the ground package costs. Sample fares available in conjunction with this tour include: \$568 from New York, \$589 from Baltimore or Detroit, and \$599 from Chicago. Onward travel to Luxembourg, in the heart of western Europe, is offered at small additional cost, with return on Icelandair from there to the USA.

For bookings, further information, or a brochure, write to Marathon Tours, 1430 Mass. Ave., Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass. 02138 (phone: 617 492-3088).

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* * *

IN THE NEWS LOOKING BACK, 1969

Blaine Resident Celebrates 100th Birthday

Two gatherings last weekend celebrated the 100th birthday of August Breidford, who resides at Stafholt nursing home in Blaine.

Saturday, a family gathering at Blaine's Peace Arch Park drew 90 persons, including many of Breidford's 101 descendants, spanning five generations. The Rev. and Mrs. Albert Kristjansson were special guests.

Conrad Pedersen provided accordion music, and birthday cake was served by Mrs. Marie Bring of Blaine, Breidford's eldest granddaughter.

On Sunday, Stafholt commemorated Breidford's centennial year. Guests were his three sons, Elias, John and Leonard; and his daughters, Mrs. Laura Kley and Mrs. Emil Gudmundson, all of the

Blaine area. Also his daughters, Mrs. Harold Bame, Bellingham; Mrs. Wesley Brock of Edmonds, and Julina Breidford of Seattle.

The Breidford Quartet sang, with Mrs. Wilbur Freeman as piano accompanist.

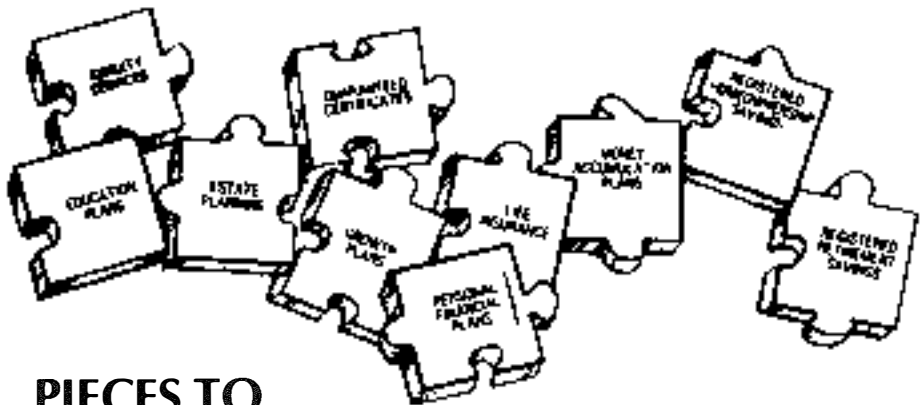
August Breidford was born in 1869 in Iceland, and came to Canada when he was 25 years old. He first lived in Manitoba, where he married Margaret Kjernsted. In 1916 They moved to Blaine. Mrs. Breidford died in 1937.

Breidford was a farmer and mill worker, and at one time worked on the first paving of the road between Blaine and Ferndale. Although he is blind, Breidford keeps up on world affairs through his radio. He still plays his accordion frequently.

AUGUST BREIDFORD
100 Years Old

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