

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN MAGAZINE

Canada Iceland Foundation Inc.

*An organization funded by Canadians
of Icelandic Descent, dedicated
to the preservation of their
Cultural Heritage.*

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The ICELANDIC CANADIAN



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In terms of history, very few people have been privileged to experience the arrival of a new millennium. Not since the days of the historic Vineland voyages has civilization experienced such an anniversary, and it is unlikely that our forefathers recognized it's significance then. It is certain that neither would they have fully appreciated the scope of their amazing discovery. We have the benefit of a thousand years of documented history to draw on. We have the legacy of the Sagas.

The Sagas of the Icelanders are the foundation upon which we will build our millennium celebrations, as we reflect with pride upon the accomplishments of our forefathers. Though shrouded in the mists of time, these ancient writings bring to life these epic voyages, which were to light the way for other Europeans five centuries later. In Iceland today, the Leifur Eiriksson Millennium Commission is making plans to support the re-enactment of the Vineland voyages with the sailing of an authentic Viking ship or *knórr*, the "Íslendingur" from Iceland to Greenland and on to L'Anse aux Meadows in the summer of 2000. They will also sup-

port a number of artistic and cultural programs and events which Iceland will share with us during that milestone year.

In Canada, the Millennium 125 Commission was organized to represent Canadians of Icelandic descent in planning and coordinating events which will be of particular interest to our cultural community. One very meaningful and lasting event we have organized is for the unveiling of a statue of the Icelandic heroine, Guðriður Þorbjarnardóttir and her son Snorri, the first child of European parents born in this New World. The statue will be presented as a gift from Iceland to Canada, and will be placed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull. The unveiling is scheduled for April in the year 2000. This will set the stage for a number of highlight events which will take place across the country, as branches of our Millennium 125 Commission formulate their plans. The year 2000 will mark 125 years since the founding of New Iceland, and that will be reason enough to celebrate. Across the country descendants of the more recent Icelandic settlers will showcase monuments to honour those pioneers who rose above staggering odds to make a new life for themselves and for us, their descendants.

Yes, we have much to celebrate and to be thankful for as we pause to reflect on the old millennium which is fast drawing to a close, and to look with open and excitement to the new millennium which is now at hand.

- David Gislason, chairman of the Millennium 125 Commission.

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The ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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*The views expressed in all contributions which appear in **The Icelandic Canadian** are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the publisher or editorial committee.*

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On the Cover

LINDA LUNDSTRÖM^{TM/MC}



Editorial

by Sigríð Johnson

When the Icelandic Canadian Club launched *The Icelandic Canadian* magazine in the fall of 1942, it was begun on the proverbial shoestring and was dedicated to service without profit - all members of the magazine board rendered their services on a purely volunteer basis.

The policy of the magazine as approved at a meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club contained five clauses: 1. To assist in making the things of value in our Icelandic heritage a living part of ourselves as Canadian citizens and thus improve the quality of our contribution to the distinctively Canadian pattern; 2. To provide an instrument by which the children of the ever increasing mixed marriages may be reached, and through which we would seek to instil in them a better knowledge and keener appreciation of our heritage; 3. To provide a means whereby Canadians of Icelandic extraction, pure or mixed, can become better acquainted with each other and thus strengthen the common bond of the past which in itself will strengthen the common bond of the future in the larger Canadian scene; 4. To stimulate greater effort by making known to our readers the contributions of Icelandic Canadians to the highest and best type of citizenship; and 5. To place before the people of Canada and particularly the other ethnic groups, our interpretation of the position we should take as Canadian citizens, and thus contribute to Canadian unity by helping to form a common basis of approach.¹

The policy of *The Icelandic Canadian* in 1942 continues to be - perhaps more relevantly so - the policy of the magazine today. And, financed as it was at that time - on a shoestring with all members of the magazine board volunteering their services - so *The Icelandic Canadian* continues to be produced today.

Today, with the exception of the layout

and printing functions, the magazine is produced entirely through the work of volunteers. Until this past year, the magazine board had been fortunate to have among its members many who were retired or semi-retired. These individuals were able to devote countless hours to the production of the magazine. The magazine now has a board made up, mostly, of individuals who work or attend school full-time.

Today the magazine is financed, as it has been since its founding, through subscriptions, advertisements and donations. *The Icelandic Canadian* does not receive Government of Iceland funding as does its sister publication, the weekly newspaper, *Logberg-Heimskringla*. However, the board is researching possible avenues of provincial and federal government funding.

Because of the volunteer nature of the board and of shoestring financing, the magazine production schedule has been erratic over the last few years. Printing and mailing costs have continued to increase and board members, more experienced in the editing process than with the handling of finances, have found that more and more of their time is spent on business matters. It is therefore after much deliberation that the board has decided to increase the cost of an annual subscription. The board also hopes that the sale of back issues of the magazine will generate much needed income.

During the past year Jean Reykdal and Mildred Storsater retired from the magazine board. These two dedicated volunteers had served as the magazine's circulation manager and treasurer respectively, and between the two of them had served on the board for some thirty years! Kristine Perlmutter, who has served on the board since 1976 - first as secretary and then as interview editor - also stepped off the board in order to devote more time to her family and career. Kristine's contribution to the magazine is sorely missed and

the board hopes that when other commitments are not so great, she might find time to serve with us on the board once again. Meanwhile, the board wishes to welcome new board member Rick Loftson who has joined the board as treasurer and to thank board member Erla Anderson for agreeing to assume the position of circulation manager. However, there remain vacancies on the board so if you, our subscribers, have time to volunteer (or know of someone who does) and are interested in the continued production of the permanent record of important aspects of our Icelandic heritage, please give some thought to joining the board of *The Icelandic Canadian*.

In this issue of the magazine, subscribers will find a variety of interesting articles, stories, poetry and book reviews. Profiled by

Helga Malis, Kristine Perlmutter and Sigríð Johnson is "Linda Lundstrom: successful Canadian entrepreneur."

Also featured in this issue are a translation by Árny Hjaltadóttir of a short story by Margrjet Benedicsson, a note on the Snorri Program by Kendra Jonasson, a short story by Ken Kristjanson, "The North-West Rebellion 1885" by Wilhelm Kristjanson (originally published in summer 1953), an article on Icelandic folk architecture by David Butterfield, an interview with teacher Lesley Peterson by Lorna Tergesen, poetry by Lesley Peterson, and reviews of two recently published books of interest to our subscribers.

As always, read and enjoy! And remember we are always open to submissions of articles, book reviews, shorts stories and poetry.

"Every nation ascribes to itself some peculiar treasure; some unique culture; some imperishable virtue which it firmly believes to be an inestimable inheritance from the past . . . It is right that we should cherish this inheritance, and we should remember with humility rather than pride that we are the repositories of humane tradition; that we are the sons and daughters of heroic men and women whom neither tyranny nor indescribable hardships could make to falter from their steadfast faith in the cardinal virtues of justice and liberty and the dignity of human life."

- Laura Goodman Salverson, Volume 1, No. 1, 1942

Icelandic Canadian Magazine Inventory & Price List

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1	1	\$50.00	
1	2-4	\$25.00 ea	
1	Complete		\$100.00
2-4	Each	\$25.00	\$75.00
5-30	Range	\$5.00 - \$25.00	\$25.00 - \$100.00
31 plus	Each	\$5.00	\$20.00
50th Anniv. Comm.	Each	\$10.00	



Linda Lundstrom

Successful Canadian Entrepreneur

by Helga Malis, Kristine Perlmutter and Sigrid Johnson

Strong, tall, Nordic blonde, successful entrepreneur - warm, vulnerable, honest and humorous - it takes a myriad of adjective to describe Linda Lundstrom.

This dynamic businesswoman feels the same anxiety as we all do when deciding what to wear when "going out" and often relies on her Mom's opinion as any "girl" would. After twenty-plus years in business, and seemingly having it all together, she can still have self-doubt just like the rest of us, and admit to it. This is a CEO with a difference.

Of Swedish and Icelandic descent and very proud of it. Her father was born in Jokkmuk in the Lapland area of northern Sweden and emigrated with his family to Eriksdale Manitoba and her mother was born in Eriksdale to parents who had emigrated from Akureyri and Reykjavik, Iceland. Linda is the very talented designer of the LAPARKA coat.

Born in Red Lake in Northern Ontario, Linda grew up in nearby Coshenour - a small town of about 300 people, where her father Richard Lundstrom, was in the mining business and her mother, Olavia, operated a home business selling fabrics out of her basement. Surrounded by sewing machines and fabrics, Linda learned early on to master a sewing machine and was making her own clothes by the time she was eight years old. She has said that "the idea of having my own business was the most natural thing in the world for me."

Her formal training came with the study of Fashion Design at Sheridan College in Toronto, Ontario. Then with a loan from her parents she started her business in a two-bedroom apartment on St. Clair Avenue in Toronto. The year was 1974 and Linda Lundstrom was 23 years old.

Linda Lundstrom's most successful and best known product is the LAPARKA. And Linda credits, in part, the Canadian north for her "vision of LAPARKA."

When visiting Japan in 1982 she was struck by how versatile the traditional Japanese kimono was as a basis of design. She wondered what in Canadian fashion could be akin to this garment in usefulness and style. Soon after her return to Canada, the answer came to her in the form of a "vision." She envisioned a winter scene in which there appeared a woman in a long, softly draped coat with a hood that ended in a point had had fur lining its opening. The vision occurred in 1982. Always one to take cognizance of dreams and visions, she followed her instinct, worked out the design and the production of LAPARKA began in 1985. The name LAPARKA came about because Linda's father came from northern Sweden. Said Linda, "The Laplanders of northern Sweden dressed in layers, and the layers have braids and ribbons on them and bright colours. The Eskimos here use the same principles. I took my Canadian heritage, drew inspiration from the Eskimo and combined it with my Scandinavian heritage and used the principles of layering against the cold together with the brightly decorated garments. This is where the name comes from, LAP and PARKA."

Linda Lundstrom, the company, very much reflects Linda Lundstrom the person, and is steered by her personality and philosophy. Linda grew up in a family where work and play were not necessarily compartmentalized, but were woven together. That everyone worked hard was an expectation and playing hard was a given. She has adopted this standard as company policy - that of employee and owner working hard together not unlike a family, being task oriented, having little chit-chat but good communication going on, everyone knowing what his/her job is and how it fit into the overall plan, as well as knowing how the company is performing. Linda believes that giving employees information and getting feedback from the in partici-



Sonia, Chrissie, Olive and Linda

patory communication helps everyone at the company realize that they are making a difference, and feel they are in it for more than a pay cheque. In an effort to create a positive and energetic work environment, the work space has been fitted with Duratest Vita light. According to Linda the lights "actually reproduce natural sunlight up - up to 95%. Colours aren't distorted and it's much healthier for people than fluorescent lighting. They get sick less often, and they don't get headaches or eye strain."

Eight process teams, sharing team members (key staff members can be on more than one team) work together to produce the award winning LAPARKA coat line as well as other fashion products including dresses and two pieces, pants and skirts, sweaters, footwear and purses, jewellery and ski and resort wear.

The award winning designer has learned how important it is to find and maintain balance between work and family life. The many stresses of having been on the fashion treadmill, developing a very successful company, working an 80 to 90 hour week, being a wife (she is married to Joel Halbert, a chartered accountant, who is also the company's chief financial officer), a supermom (she and her husband have two young children) and gourmet cook, of trying to do everything took

its toll on Linda's health a few years ago and forced her to reassess her life. She believes that she needed to get sick in order to learn about body/mind limits - how the mind strives towards endless possibilities about the body objects! It is a constant challenge to be in a healthy relationship with herself, as she asks more of herself than anyone else. Taking time for herself, needing to "fill my tank up and not run on empty" as Linda puts it, is part of that balance. She believes we must respect, trust, honour and nourish ourselves as we all have a breaking point. Linda says she learned three things from her experiences.

The first one deals with people and the richness of relationships. A relationship between the company and its employees, clients and suppliers must be cultivated to be mutually loyal and respectful. This encourages satisfaction for employees and customers alike. The second is to value intuition and trust it. Creativity and intuition often go hand in hand in successful enterprises. Linda believes everything happens for a reason and our job is to find out what we are supposed to learn from even most tragic occurrences. This idea of being attuned to intuition and coincidences, a sort of "third eye" approach if you will, seems rather "Icelandic" what with the age old legends of huldufolk and trolls. Linda

comes by this naturally as her mother, Olavia, reads coffee cups professionally! Thirdly, Linda has found that you can visualize a goal to make it happen, and she calls this "remembering the future."

In her company, once a realistic date is set for completion of the visualized project, a plan is developed as to how the success will be celebrated. Creating a detailed vision of the celebration is part of the planning tool. Putting up pictures, objects and other reminders of the upcoming party in the work place, helps everyone focus on completing the project. The celebrations will be on company time, like a family working and playing together.

In an effort to reduce work place stress, Linda established within her company a "Wellness policy," wherein an employee can take a "wellness" day when a break is really needed, emphasizing staying healthy rather than being sick. Similarly, the company over-time policy provides employees with a "time bank" that tracks their extra hours - time that can be taken off at a later date when a need occurs.

Linda's social conscience has led her to begin a "GreenNotes" label fabric program which recognizes that the fabric manufacturing process itself causes pollution as it uses harsh chemicals for dyeing and finishing. As part of "GreenNotes," as much as possible the company is asking its suppliers for and using fabrics that have been made using environmentally friendly methods.

Her conscience has also led her to see the damage that racial prejudice has caused the aboriginal people in her hometown and the

wider community. For Linda Lundstrom, the relationship that she has forged with members of Canada's native community has added meaning to her work.

Growing up as she did in Northwestern Ontario, she was uncomfortable about the racism directed towards native people there in the form of segregation and injustice.

"I'm prepared to say I was a racist," she has commented. "We told jokes about natives. We mimicked them and imitated their accents. I could have spoken out but I didn't. Somewhere deep down in my subconscious, it felt wrong. It's something that strikes very deep. I'm forgiving myself. With each thing that I do, I feel I'm healing myself."

The healing began when Linda happened upon a Peter Gzowski interview with Canadian Native Arts founder, John Kim Bell. She was so inspired by what she heard that she contacted Bell and, through her connection with him, met Native artists such as Abe Kakepetum. Kakepetum, along with others such as the gifted Natalie Rostand, collaborated with Lundstrom to create LAPARKA designs that feature native artwork appliques. Each design has a spiritual meaning in the native culture which is explained on a special coat tag.

"My hope is that these garments will enable people to gain awareness of the rich culture of Native people and that they will enjoy sharing its message with others," suggests Linda. In addition to Native artwork designs, hand-beaded accessories and jewellery from the Niichiikwewak (Companionship of Women) Beaders are also included in the Lundstrom collection. These

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talented Native women have a cottage industry in the Red Lake district which employs approximately twenty-five women. Linda Lundstrom's collaborations with Native artists and craftspeople have contributed to the uniqueness of her line.

Linda is a very spiritual person who is attracted to Native symbolism and who believes that everything happens for a reason. She believes that she was born in Red Lake for a reason and that her experiences there were a gift given to her so that she could become a messenger and build a bridge between the whites and Natives in her own



community. As a result, she established the Kiiwhik Fund in the Red Lake district. Kiishik means "sun" in Oji-Cree and refers to enlightening, nourishing and bringing things out of the darkness into light. It is also the surname of the Native families who have lived in the Red Lake area the longest.

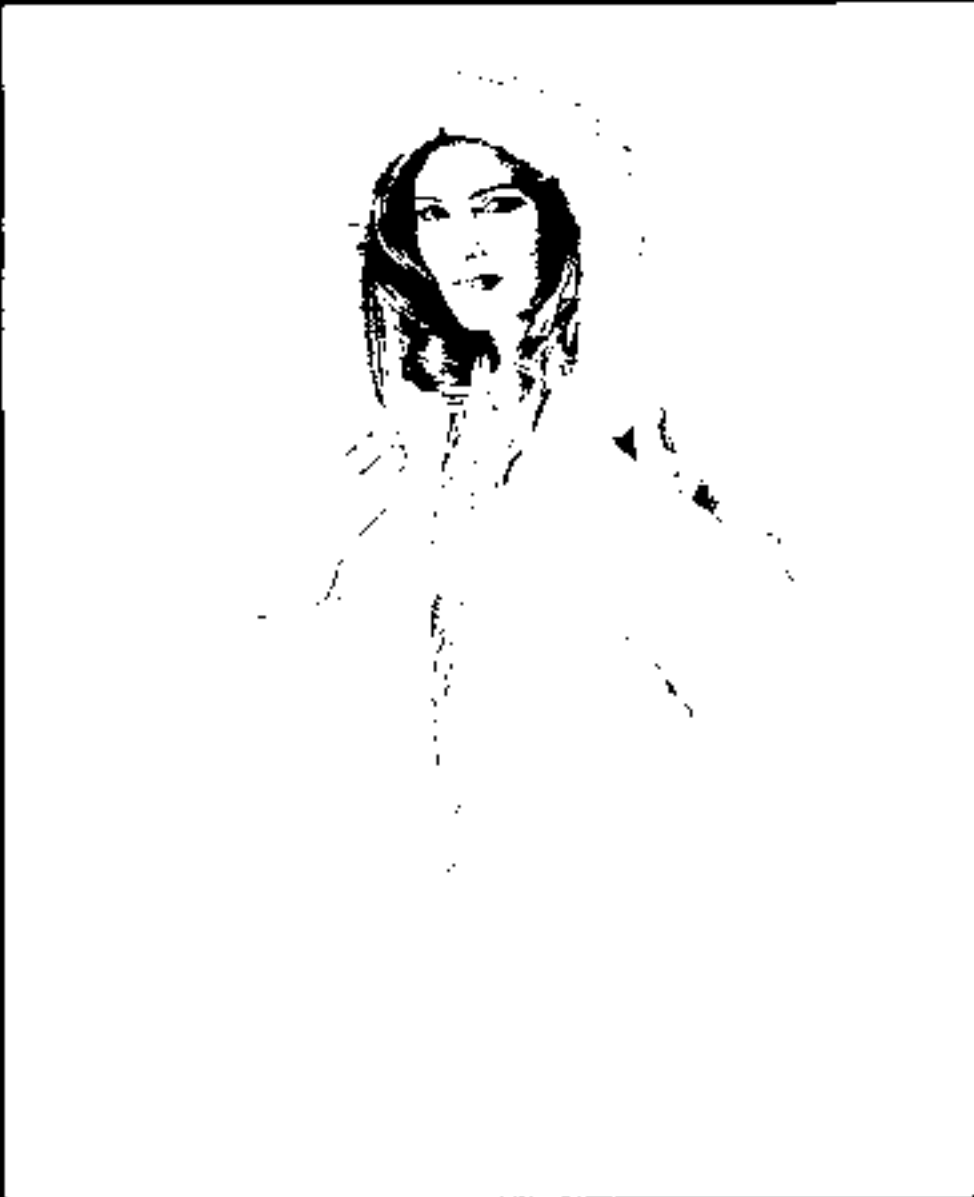
The Kiishik Fund promotes Native awareness in the Red Lake area. It focuses on educating children about the heritage of the First Nations people by bringing them into classrooms to share their language, their art and their traditions. It also provides Native children with role models. For the past few years, Kiishik has organized the Red Lake Trappers' Festival. Linda Lundstrom has said, "I want to satisfy the natural curiosity of

children. I want to enable them to see that not only are we all equals but to recognize that the Native People are the very foundation of our identity as Canadians and must be respected as such. I want to tell the history of Canada from the Native perspective and to prevent the conspiracy of silence, with which I grew up, from being passed on to future generations. I also hope to help the healing process of others, like myself, who still feel guilt from having participated in Native segregation."

Linda Lundstrom's main liaison to the Native community in Red Lake is trapper Kaaren Dannenmann. This is ironic since their relationship began when Kaaren called Linda to alert her that she was planning a protest at the Red Lake Trappers' Festival. Dannenmann and other trappers did not appreciate the fake fur hoods and cuffs on the Lundstrom LAPARKA. As a result, the current collection offers a choice of real fur or fake fur and Linda Lundstrom has become a proponent of fur as a renewable natural resource.

Honoraria from all of Linda's speaking engagements and a portion from the sale of Niichiikwewak hand-beaded accessories in Linda Lundstrom's collection go towards the Kiishik fund.

Active in community affairs as well as in the business community, Linda has been honoured with numerous awards over the past decade. In 1987 she was named "Designer of the Year" for the city of Toronto. She received the Snow Country Award in Las Vegas in the Most Versatile Design Category in 1994 and 1995. In 1994 she was given the Lifetime Achievement Award and Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award by the University of Toronto. In 1995 Linda Lundstrom was presented with the most prestigious award the provincial government bestows on its residents, the Order of Ontario - an investiture that rewards people who have enriched the lives of Ontarians by attaining the highest standards of excellence and achievement in their chosen field of endeavour. And, at the 1997 Spring Convocation, Ryerson Polytechnic University of Toronto granted an honorary doctorate to Linda Lundstrom, retailer and manufacturer of Canadian fashion.



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Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Otter

Northwest Rebellion

by W. Kristjánson

War came to Western Canada in 1885, and more than twenty Icelanders served in it. At the time of the outbreak, the dangers stemmed from both Indians and Metis. The buffalo, chief source of food on the plains, was virtually exterminated. At the same time, the Indians had been placed on reserves outside of which they were forbidden to hunt, and were denied their traditional activities of fighting, horse-stealing and gambling, no small source of grievance. White settlers were beginning to move in, and some of these newcomers showed lack of tact towards the proud and sensitive Indians, or treated them as dirt, while south of the United States border, the government there was waging a war of attrition against them. The Indian does not make a good farmer, and in 1894, the Stonies on their reserve were faced with famine. Thus it was that when Canadian Pacific Railway steel reached the Blackfoot reserve, some of the braves, believing that the terms of the treaty by which they had surrendered their sovereignty over the country and accepted reserves for their settlement, to be broken, and were spoiling for a fight. The task of maintaining order among some 25,000 Indians in 375,000 square miles of territory developed on a body of five hundred North-West Mounted Police.

Meanwhile, there was growing unrest among the Metis on the Saskatchewan River. They had made petitions to the Dominion Government, since 1873, regarding their claims to landscrip, and, more recently, for patents for their squatters' lands, but had received no satisfaction. When the square-survey lines began to cross their river lots they feared the worst and sent for their idol, Louis Riel, then living in Montana.

Riel arrived at Batoche, in July, 1884, and was greeted as a deliverer. His procedure was at first constitutional, and his demands to Ottawa reasonable. However, he received no immediate reply, and the government did not

act until a commission was appointed in March, 1885, in the face of an impending outbreak.

Riel's revolutionary instincts soon came to the fore. A follower of his tried to stir up the Indians at High River, and the braves began to do the war dance. In March, 1885, Riel set up a provisional government, with himself as president. The west was faced with the horrors of an Indian war and massacre.

It has often been assumed that nothing could have happened, but this is far from the truth. For weeks the slightest mistake, an act of undue severity on the part of the Police, an indication of weakness, a casual quarrel between an Indian and a settler, a temporary success won by the rebels, any or all of these things and innumerable other unimportant occurrences might have brought the Blackfoot out on the warpath. This, however, did not happen, thanks to the sagacious leading of Crowfoot, the wise counsel of Father Lacombe, and the careful management of the Police.

(M. MacInnes, *In the Shadows of the Rockies*, Rivingtons, London, 1930, p. 108.)

Were the claims of the Metis just? Was Riel motivated solely by desire to help the Metis, or partly for personal power? These questions are of historical importance, but they were not the immediate issue for the country in 1885. Faced with the horrors of war, with massacres, the people of Canada, especially Manitoba and the West, could have no thoughts but to quench the conflagration as soon as possible. Perhaps the Icelandic people in Winnipeg, as Liefur, believed that Riel's desire to rule was chiefly to blame for the outbreak.

Riel's next move was to gather a force of Metis and Indians, and to seize a quantity of supplies at Batoche, March 25. The following day superintendent Crozier, of the North-

West Mounted Police, and some forty-five Prince Albert Volunteers, marched to Duck Lake, to secure supplies stored there. He was engaged on the way by a force of Metis and Indians, who, from sheltered positions, poured a deadly fire into the small advance party of Volunteers and within thirty minutes killed ten and wounded six. At Frog Lake, April 12, eight white people were massacred, and Big Bear's Indians mad with excitement, raged about the settlement firing rifles, looting and taking prisoners and threatening to kill the white men and women who had escaped the slaughter.

After Duck Lake, Riel proclaimed himself the prophet of a new religion of the people of the West, and sent runners to the Indian tribes. Most of the chiefs remained loyal, and restrained their more war-like followers, but the success at Duck Lake produced such wide-spread excitement among the Indians that in some cases they became uncontrollable. One false move might have precipitated a general war.

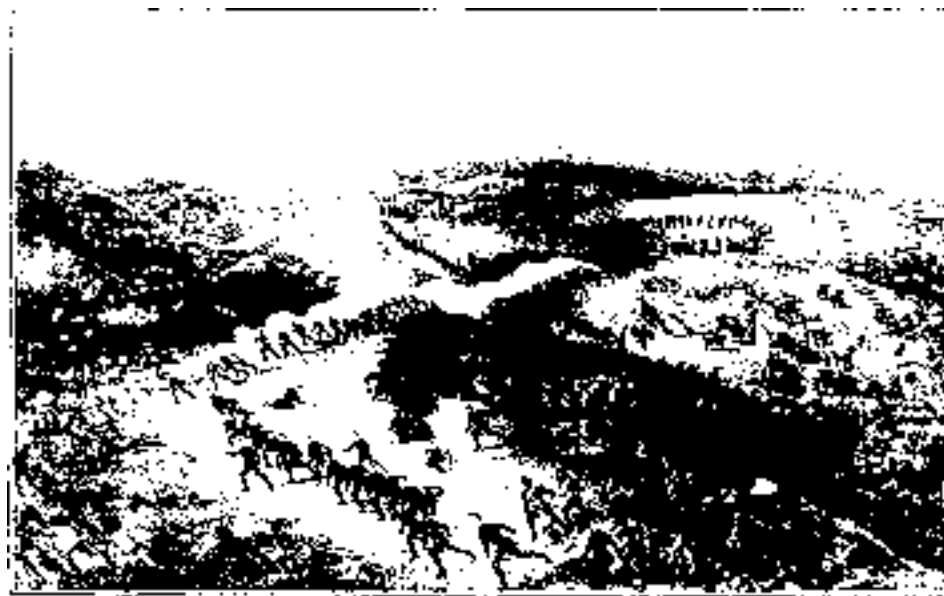
The people of Canada were aroused by the news and volunteers came forward, two thousand in the West and three thousand in the East.

Previous to the war, Winnipeg had one battalion of militia, the 90th Winnipeg Rifles;

a small troop of cavalry, and a field battery. When Poundmaker and Big Bear joined the rebellion, Lt. Col. Thos. Scott was commissioned to raise the 95th (later the 92nd.), Battalion Manitoba Grenadiers and Lt. Col. Osborne Smith, the 91st Battalion Winnipeg Light Infantry.

The Canadian force advanced in three columns; General Middleton from Qu'Appelle to Batoche; Col. Otter from Swift Current to Battleford, menaced by Chief Poundmaker, and Major-General Strange from Calgary, against Big Bear, somewhere north of Edmonton. The left wing on the 90th moved forward, March 25, to Troy, a station on the C.P.R. near Qu'Appelle, two days before the arrival of General Middleton from the East.

At least eighteen Icelanders served in the field, seven with the 90th; four or more with the Manitoba Grenadiers; two with the Winnipeg Light Infantry; one with the 10th Royal Grenadiers, of Toronto; (Sgt. J.G. Goodman, of Toronto); one with the Prince Albert Volunteers (Jacob Crawford, a Manitoba man who as a young lad was employed with the military forming the small-pox quarantine cordon at Netley Creek, 1876-77), and the three with the transport, which was under fire. Others were enlisted, awaiting the call to proceed on active service.



BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE HILL, NORTHWEST REBELLION OF 1885

The story of the Icelandic soldiers who served in the Rebellion may be derived, in part, from the general account of the campaign. Middleton's column marched at the rate of over twenty miles a day, an average maintained to Clark's Crossing (now Saskatoon). On the day of the start, April 6, the thermometer registered 23 degrees below zero. As the column advanced, the weather moderated, but on Salt Plains "the roads were in terrible order and the Infantry, in spite of all my care, had constantly to wade up to their knees, sometimes up to their waists" (S.P. A1886, no. 6). There were difficult river crossings, with inadequate equipment, and troops were virtually untrained citizen soldiers.

General Middleton moved forward from Clark's Crossing to Batoche, about forty miles away, with his force of some eight hundred men, in two bodies, one on each side of the river. The enemy under the leadership of Gabriel Dumont, engaged the Headquarters column at Fish Creek. The numbers were not unduly disproportionate, Middleton's force engaged being about 350 strong; the Metis numbering about 150. (George F.G. Stanley; *The Birth of Western Canada*, p. 359). The Canadians had the advantage of artillery, but the enemy had strong position, chosen by themselves and ingeniously strengthened with rifle-pits, and every man had been used to fire-arms from boyhood, while in the 90th there were several who had not fired a rifle prior to target practice at Qu'Appelle.

Dumont stationed his main body in a small ravine, and when Middleton's men advanced he was able to fire on them from behind the trees and bushes of the ravine. As the battle progressed, however, the Metis became hard pressed, and they attempted to drive back the troops by setting fire to the prairie, but without success. The pressure of numbers, and the heavy fire of the soldiers, particularly from the artillery, discouraged many of Dumont's men, and several deserted.

General Middleton did not press home the attack, and on the whole the result of the engagement was indecisive, and he chose to delay his advance for over a fortnight. His casualties amounted to ten killed and some forty wounded.

The 90th Battalion was first in action at Fish Creek, and took a prominent part in the fighting, and was named by the enemy "The Little Black Devils." The Icelandic members of the unit acquitted themselves well in this action.

On May 7th, Middleton resumed his march on Batoche, with some 850 men. A gatling gun had been added to his armament. Then followed the four day battle of Batoche, May 9th to the 12th.

The Canadians found the rebels in a well chosen and strongly entrenched position on a curve in the river. "I was astonished at the strength of the positions and the ingenuity and care displayed in the construction of the rifle pits." (General F. Middleton: S. P. A1886, V. No. 6a). The enemy's main position extended along the edge of a range of hills running parallel with the river. The slopes of these hills were fairly well wooded and cut by several coulees which afforded excellent protection. Independent of the main line of rifle pits, which extended along the brow of the hill, were many others, placed at various points on

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the hill, which might possibly become commanding positions. The pits were about three or four feet deep, with breastworks of earth and logs, channelled for rifles. From these pits a constant fire could be maintained with more or less impunity. Below the enemy's main position, the ground sloped down to the river. Upstream, the river bank was bold and steep and well covered with timbers and undergrowth. Nearing Batoche, the ground gradually flattened out, to rise again further down. The approach to the river was defended by a line of rifle pits or trenches, extending down river for nearly a mile.

On the first day of the action, the Canadian troops advanced to the crest of the hill, but further progress was checked by a steady fire from the trenches. This operation was repeated on the two following days, the troops reitring each time after a skirmish. On May 12, the militia, both officers and men, beginning to lose confidence in General Middleton, took matters into their own hands. At the same time, the Metis were becoming short of ammunition. Advancing with a cheer, the troops carried the rifle pits, and drove the scattered enemy before them. In a few moments Batoche had fallen. The Canadian casualties listed were eight killed and forty-two wounded.

The 90th, including the Icelandic men in the unit, was engaged in the action at Batoche. At least one of the Icelanders was wounded. "Last Friday night ten wounded soldiers arrived in the city from out west, including Magnus Jonsson, who was wounded on the third day of the Battle at Batoche. He is fairly well recovered, but will likely feel the effects for a long time, for the bullet pierced the muscle of the upper arm, close to the bone. Regardless of this, he carried on as if nothing had happened until an hour later, when General Middleton ordered him, unwilling, to be taken back to camp." (Leifur, June 5, 1885). One of the Icelanders, according to an oral account preserved, distinguished himself in an attack on a building.

The transport was under fire at one stage in the Battle of Batoche, and several men and horses were hit. One of the Icelanders in the transport, Thorarinn Breckman, a lad of sixteen was under sharp fire in the course of the

campaign, his horses being shot, and in all probablity this was at Batoche.

One other Icelander, in addition to Magnus Jonsson, appears ot have been wounded in the campaign, Steve Oliver, of the 90th, although not officially listed, had the story to tell of a scalp wound received while on sentry duty.

Riel surrendered after the engagement at Batoche, as did Poundmaker, who at Cut Knife, May 2, had successfully checked Col. Otter's reconnaissance in force. Middleton, with the 90th in his column, proceeded to Fort Pitt, in pursuit of Big Bear.

Meanwhile, General Strange's column, including the Winnipeg Light Infantry, had proceeded from its base at Calgary, and engaged the enemy in a strong position at Frenchman's Butte near Fort Pitt. Here the W.L.I. was under fire for about three hours. At least one of the Icelandic soldiers (Sigurður Anderson) felt the closeness of a bullet. The enemy outnumbered the column, three to one, but after the battle, Big Bear's man had begun to desert and on July 2, Big Bear surrendered. The war was over.

Riel was taken in custody to Regina. One of the detachments assigned the duty of guarding the prisoners was Jon Julius, of the Manitoba Grenadiers. "I saw Riel and Poundmaker yesterday," he says (unpublished letter dated at Regina, July 15, 1885), and remarks on Riel's commanding presence. Of the Indian chief he says, - "Poundmaker is tall and keen-looking, with braids reaching to his waist." There is in the letter an expression of longing to be home with his wife and family, and five dollars were enclosed, as in a previous letter from Qu'Appelle, written in April.

One Icelandic soldier, at least, qualified as a souvenir-hunter, in the War of 1885. Thorarinn Breckman brought home from Riel's quarters at Regina, his beaver cap, and a table cloth. Subsequently, Breckman's young son discovered that the cap made a good football, and ultimately it was lost.

General Middleton's main force, including the 90th, and a portion of the Light Infantry, arrived in Winnipeg, July 15th. The city gave them a royal welcome. There was a torch parade on the evening of July 17th. The

order of the procession was: St. Andrews Society, St. George's Society, and the Icelandic Progressive Society, followed by others. It was an impressive sight. Two thousand torches made Main St., an undulating sea of light, and the people massed on the sidewalks, and filled the windows on either side.

The Icelandic community had a welcome home banquet for the first arrivals July 18, and a second, and more pretentious affair, August 1, both in the Progressive Socieity hall. There was a large attendance at the second meet. Johann Palsson, of the 90th, related many incidents, especially from the battle of Batoche, and Jon Julius, of the Manitoba Grenadiers, gave an account of Indian customs and manners, including the war dance. For the first reception, the poet, Kristinn Stefansson, composed an ode to the 90th, reflecting the spirit of the occasion; there has been heroic conduct in the battle, but now the swords are sheathed and the banners of victory up and welcome to the brave.

The Icelandic soldiers received good commendation. "Major G.H. Young (90th Battalion) reports that they have acquitted themselves splendidly, and that they were brave soldiers, ever ready to do their duty . . ." (Leifur, June 19, 1885). Jon Julius (in his letter from Qu'Appelle, April 30, 1885) voices his appreciation at being in Col. Scott's battalion, the commanding officer giving special attention to the welfare of the Iceanders in his unit. He states that the Icelanders have done well at target practice and that Capt. Rome is pleased wo have them in his company. "They have acquitted themselves well . . . They and their comrades have won an honour which will never be forgotten, and no one can deprive us of the distinction that we are Icelanders, although few in number, have done our part manfully for we doubt that any other racial group has contributed as many in proportion as we have . . ." (Leifur, June 19, 1885). The good service of the Icelandic soldiers enhanced the positon of the Icelandic people in the eyes of their fellow-citizens more perhaps than anything else they had previously done.

Following the cessation of hostilities, there was apprehension of a possible recurrence of trouble, and the reserves were kept

up to strength for some time. In 1886, an Icelandic company of forty in the 91st Winnipeg Light Infantry, was under process of formation, with Jon Julius as Colour-Sargent, and Erlendur Gislason and Jakob Johannsson as sergeants. Other Icelandic men joined the 90th.

Thus a contingent of Icelandic settlers in Manitoba, coming form a land that had no army, not a single man in uniform, and wholly unused to fighting, received their initiation in war.

- Reprinted from the Icelandic Canadian Summer 1953.

The following are the names of the Icelanders who served in the North West Rebellion in 1895:

In the 90th Winnipeg Rifles: Johann Palsson, Cpl. Thorsteinn Petursson, Gudmundur Johannsson, Stefan Gudmundson, (Steve Oliver), Magnus Jonsson (m. Johnson), Jon Dinuson, Andres F. Reykdal, and Runolfur Runolfsson.

In the Manitoba Grenadiers: Jon Julius, Jon Blondal, Bjorn Blondal, Stefan Gudmundsson (S. Goodmanson).

Wpg. Light Infantry: Sigurdur Arnason (Sigurdur Anderson).

Prince Albert Volunteers: Jakob Crawford.

Transport Service: Thorarinn Breckman, Jon (Jonasson) Landy.

Toronto 10th Royal Grenadiers: Sgt. Jon Gudmundsson (J.G. Goodman).

Others may have served, but verification of service is needed, including Jon Gudmundsson, and Jakob Johannsson, Winnipg Light Infantry, Helgi Bjarnason, Manitoba Grenadiers.

The Ninetieth Battalion

From the Icelandic poem by Kristinn Stefansson
Translated by Dr. Watson Kirkconnell

Noble is it to guard one's native land,
And noble seems the soldier's life at death,
When the spent warrior leans upon his brand
And with his heart's blood renders his last breath;
But the dear land is safe, its foes lie strown,
Fallen like grasses in a field new mown.

The men of Middleton for duty fought;
Against the yelling enemy they strode;
"At them, brave lads!" The loud call answe brought:
Deep tides of thunder down the heaven flowed.
Dark tongues of flame assailed the soldier's flesh
And licked his dying blood with zeal afresh.

Then out of swelling wounds the lifeblood gushed
As dusky foemen kissed the cold, hard clay;
A hail of shot the foliage tore and crushed
Where rolled the fiery volleys of the fray.
On the red plain no fierce bright light flamed higher
Then gleaming sparks of old Icelandic fire.

The Ninetieth Battalion did not yield
But still rushed forward with their volley'd flame;
With valour and renown they won the field
And waved aloft the golden wand of fame,
So that the praise of all in that grim fight,
Was raised from darkness to a shining light.

It is more meet to gird oneself for war
Than suffer one's fair land to be reviled
Or see it wronged by the conspirator;
The wound one feels at fatherland defiled
More deeply in the noble heart is set
Than red-hot shot and shining bayonet.

It is more fitting on the field to die,
Yes, far more fit are bullets through the heart,
Than is a share in foolish infamy
Or as a hanger-on to play one's part.
Nobler it is by tyrants hands to fall
Than, pigeon-hearted, heed their beck and call.

Now swords are sheathed and victory's banners raised,
Each welcomes back the ranks of heroes thinned
In far-off conflict where the volleys blazed
And death on points of bayonets fiercely grinned,
Stained with the blood of dying enemies
In battle-frenzy on those grassy leas.

In truth we honour those who, thus enrolled,
As soldiers of our fair free land are found;
No curs are they, short-leashed, who all unbold
Circle and cross a tiny patch of ground.
We honour these brave lads, we hymn their story,
Who did not dread to walk the path of glory.
- *Leifur, July 24, 1885*

He and She

by Brynhildur
Translated by: Árný Hjaltadóttir

It was a cheerful group of people, this small group of boys and girls who were entrusted to determine the strategy of the team's method for defense and attack for the next year, who left for the golden Glæsivellir; where discussions concerning how the team, which had severed its spiritual fetters, should stand against the multitudes who fought against them. Some of them were tied by those strings which assured them a fellow-traveller for the rest of their journey - - - the journey of life. Others were single and fluttered unbridled and lighthearted, looking at the world with hopeful friendly eyes, certain that somewhere he or she, who would become a fellow-traveller for their journey would be. Yes, and it could even be that he or she was in this cheerful group.

The god of love never misses an opportunity and here he also saw a chance to shoot his arrows in a suitable place. When the expedition was over **he** was the only one left of all their travel companions. **She** saw nobody else but him.

Was it like that for him as well?

Time passes and love ties the bonds of those who love one another with greater faith. If any woman ever loved a man then she loved him. If any woman has ever seen, or thought she had seen, the image of all virtues, all perfection in one man, then she saw it in him, and she loved him because of it - because she adored perfection - - - that which she knew to be the best and most virtuous.

But did he really possess these qualities? Or was it merely the reflection of her own virtuous soul which she in her blind love attributed to the first man she truly loved?

He was a faithful fiancée. He spent all his free time with her. If he finished work before her then he went to where she worked and waited for her. All her free time was given to

him, him alone. All her thoughts centered around him and slowly she lost track of her old friends; **he** stood between them and her, but how it happened she never knew. But her love for him filled her heart and satisfied her every longing - - - every desire. In him alone she found fulfilment. **She** and **he**, that was her world, her life and delight.

Oh, bewitching, alluring, deceptive LOVE! How totally you blind the eyes of the children of men! You who turn adversity into bliss and make bitterness sweet. In your magic cup everything becomes bright.

• • •

A year has passed since **they** first began their journey - - - a whole year. But how short it seemed to her! Would she find the next one as short?

For a whole year she has lived and moved in the mysterious realm of blissful love and dreamt about eternal satisfaction. Would she be able to find it?

She was happy this morning because last night he had set the date for their wedding. Now she had to make her wedding gown and invite their friends. Most of them were **his** friends.

"I couldn't live without him," she told her girlfriend, and she meant it.

• • •

"Now it's over," **he** said. "Our paths don't lay together any more. Tonight we part."

This was the evening before their supposed wedding day, the evening before he had set the date for their marriage and this was his goodbye.

She was showing him the wedding dress, but stopped in mid-sentence in speechless astonishment. And what could she say? She

looked at him and was afraid he had lost his mind. Or was he testing her? If so, it was unnecessary. Or was he perhaps playing with her feelings? If so, he was wicked. She looked at him - - - this came like a thunder from a clear sky and it had paralysed her - - - paralysed her mind and soul.

"Yes, it's finished. I never intended to go any further," he said; and the skin on his broad, flat face, with its hair combed back, puckered, when he sneered as he had sometimes done when he was maligning her friends to her and removing her from them so that she, would stand alone, so terribly **al-one**, at this moment which he had long ago foreseen.

"**You don't want to . . . ?**" he said and looked at her. She understood. No, she didn't want to. No, she didn't.

Rumour had it that he had won two other girls by such means, but she didn't know that. Now he played his last trompe, to win everything for nothing. But she stared silently and surprised. Was this the man she had loved and trusted? Certainly it was him, and now . . .

"Parted and separated," he said, laughed nastily and left. Outside he met one of his acquaintances, told him his tale and then left and had fun that night.

But she?

Yes, but she? Who can tell what she suffered. "I couldn't live without him," she had said. And now he was gone - - - lost to her. Was he the same man? Not the man she had thought him to be, but rather the man **some** had known him to be.

Her wedding day dawned, and then she

became ill. But he didn't come to see her. **He** who had killed her, killed the joy in her heart, killed her hopes. He who continued his daily work, continued to pinch pennies, as if nothing had happened. He who adorned his finger with the expensive ring which she had given him for Christmas and payed for from her small earnings, which she saved because of him, not because she herself was a miser, but rather because she wanted to make him happy. She, who so often was painfully sick and in poor health, while he, who made profit at every turn, didn't even give her five cents worth.

Where is she now? you ask.

She ran away - - - n away from the place where she met him - - - away from the place where her love and hopes died. She is gone dressed in clothes of sorrow. Lonely! Oh, so lonely.

Where is he, you ask?

Still in town, penny pinching. **Penny pinching! Penny pinching!**

And his broad flat face, with the hair combed back, is as self-satisfied as he has always been.

Do I know who he is?

Yes, I know, and if you want to know, then it is . . . No, I shall tell you later.

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may be permitted by the 1976 Copying Act or in writing by the translator.

Translator's Note on Margjet Benedictsson:

Brynhildur is one of several pen names used by Margjet Benedictsson. She was born at Hrappstaðir in Vidiðlur in Vestur Húnavatnssýsla in Iceland on March 16, 1866. She emigrated to North-Dakota in 1897 and three years later she moved to Winnipeg Manitoba where she met Sigfus Benedictsson and married him in 1892. In 1897-98, they set up a printing press in Selkirk and in February 1898 the first issue of the monthly magazine "Freyja" was published. It was the only woman suffrage paper published in Canada and many of the articles and poems and short stories were written or translated by Margjet Benedictsson. All of her short stories and some of her poems were published under pen names.

Publication of "Freyja" ceased in 1910 when Mr. Benedictsson "put a hold on all the mail addressed to the paper and refused his wife access to the printing press." That year

she left him and later moved to Blaine in Washington where she worked for New York Life - an insurance company. Her daughter, Helen, married Gustaf Dalsted, a man of Icelandic descent who became a postmaster in Anacortes. Mrs. Benedictsson stayed with her daughter the last years of her life. She died on December 13, 1956 in Anacortes.

While visiting in Iceland, at Christmas in 1992, I decided to do some research on Canadian-Icelandic women writers at the Icelandic National Library. After speaking with the head librarian, Finnbogi Gudmundsson, I found out that some of Mrs. Benedictsson's manuscripts were housed at the library: three books of poetry, including some letters and a few stories about childhood memories from Iceland. At the back of one of the books there was a note, probably written by her daughter, Helen, which revealed that Mrs. Benedictsson had written under the pen names Brynhildur, Myrrah, Ragnhildur and Herold, and a list of her short stories published in Freyja. "He and She" is translated from "Hann og hun" in Freyja 9:5 (1906), pp. 29-32. "Hann og hun" was written under the pen name Brynhildur.

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Icelandic folk architecture

by David Butterfield

A reverence for wood, a respect for the sea and a grounding in the Lutheran faith can all be read in many of the folk buildings of northern Europe. Icelandic folk architecture, particularly, is rooted in the architectural traditions of Germany and the Scandinavian countries. In Iceland, with its volcanic terrain, virtually devoid of trees, these traditions still found expression. With imports of wood from Norway and Denmark, Icelanders were as familiar with those materials as the mother countries. In urban areas especially, wood frame, and the decorative potential of that material, was exploited for many types of buildings. But there was a considerable vari-

ety of other architectural models in use. At the moment when Icelanders were arriving in Manitoba in 1876, distinctive stone and turf buildings were an integral part of the landscape.

In their new North American home, with the pinched financial circumstances that accompanied all immigrating groups, Icelandic settlers realized only a restrained version of their architectural heritage. Indeed, few of the traditions - the forms, materials, details - appear to have made it to the new land. Many buildings were, nevertheless distinctly Icelandic. Naturally, those that most powerfully illustrate



A traditional rural Icelandic scene: a set of houses and outbuildings set in a line, forms a distinctive multi-gabled face; in the background a small church is distinguished by a simple tower. All the buildings are sheathed with vertical boards over a timber frame, with decorative touches at the eaves.



Churches at Gimli (top, now gone), Hecla (lower left) and Grund (lower right) are excellent examples of Lutheran Church architecture. The most visible expression of the cultural roots can be read in the towers, each one an example of forms drawn from centuries of tradition.

Icelandic church architecture in Manitoba rests on a foundation of the basic Protestant tenets of Lutheranism, and in the forms and details of medieval Gothic architecture. In Manitoba, we find these two powerful traditions expressed within the limits of a small population, finances and skill. Some of the church buildings are remarkable; most, in both rural areas and small urban centres, are invariably small, often of modest appointment. But all are still potent, and powerful, symbols of faith.

Accompanied with a sense of their history, and some practice examining churches, you can distinguish a Lutheran church a kilometre away. Why is that? Like almost every Protestant faith the architectural vocabulary is Gothic Revival, that nineteenth century impulse that resurrected the religious spirit and craftsmanship of the Middle Ages. Thus inevitably we see pointed arched windows and doors. We usually see a steep roof. And of course we see a pointed steeple or a castellated parapet. Many Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, United and former Methodist churches all have these appointments as well. Whithin this ubiquitous vocabulary of basic elements, however, you often can still spot the roots that distinguish a church with an Icelandic congregation. Usually, you just have to look at the tower. The now-lost church at Gimli is a perfect example (illustrate).

That gigantic tower could only be Lutheran. The way it flows up directly from the tower vestibule, with insert gables, is one of the most common design expressions used medieval towers of German and Scandinavian churches. Those gable insets are actually a typical Lutheran feature, appearing

in a less vertical form in many towers. Another distinctly Lutheran steeple technique includes a faceted spire (Hecla). The church at Grund has a complex tower, with curved side elements at the lower level, a decorated cap to the tower (with moldings and balustrade) and a sweeping metal steeple that draws the whole form to its heavenly conclusion. A few other architectural features and details of purely Icelandic origin that invariably appear on Lutheran churches are more modest; sunburst or oak leaf wood carvings in gable end boards and wave-like bargeboards along the gable end.

The Icelandic domestic architecture left behind by emigrating pioneers in the mid-1870's was varied, to say the least. A welter of sizes, styles, materials and detail conventions were available for the picking. In Iceland at that time, you would have seen thick, rough houses with multi-gables sod roofs and walls fronted with vertical boards. You would also encounter sturdy stone buildings in villages and towns, with hipped roofs and broad projecting entries. Perhaps more commonly you would encounter wood frame houses with decorated gable fronts. Even prefabricated corrugated iron buildings imported from England were becoming popular.

In spite of the comparative wealth of domestic architectural models, the transfer of much of this heritage to a new continent was up against a formidable challenge. With its own powerful vernacular traditions already well established, all settlement groups arriving in western Canada quickly assimilated North American trends (side halls, bungalows, Victorian or Edwardian two-storeys).

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The poet (and farmer, Jon Guttormsson) is seen here (top, left), in front of a typical rural multi-gabled house near Riverton. Later Icelandic domestic examples include the simple but dramatic forms seen on Hecla Island (middle, right) and the modest North American side hall decorated with distinctive Icelandic sunburst eave details (middle, left). The ambitious Bjornson house (bottom, called "Vindheimer"), south of Riverton, is an especially ambitious building with a variety of Icelandic details, like the wave-shaped gable-end boards, the oak leaf cut outs at the eave and the projecting quasi Norwegian prows on the dormers.

No wonder, then, that buildings recalling the brief settlement period, when vestiges of old world architectural sensibilities held sway, are of such abiding interest.

We do know that the traditional Icelandic multi-gabled house with a hint of vertical boarding, was built in Manitoba (illustrated), but none of the first buildings still stand. And other early buildings, typically rudimentary log structures, exhibit no special cultural traits. Unfortunately, there are no examples of any of the familiar Icelandic forms found in Manitoba. This is not to say that there is no architectural remnant that can be described as Icelandic. Indeed, there is one particularly striking group of houses, on Hecla Island, that can be said to define the pioneer Icelandic experience. What makes this group of buildings significant is that there does not appear to be any particular original Icelandic architectural style duplicated. They are made-in-Manitoba designs, a melding of basic forms and materials (North American and Icelandic) with the sensibilities of a sea-faring people. Here, in several small buildings, we have a sort of half boat, upturned (illustrated). The steep roof is truncated on the face, so that a dramatic form results. Its back is aerodynamically suited to slough off the westerly winds, and the flat entry surface faces the water with dignity, even defiance.

In other houses, both rural and in small urban centres, we find typical North American vernacular expressions (in bungalows, simple side hall buildings, two-storey four-squares) readily accepted by Icelanders, distinguished with some distinctly Icelandic details. Sunbursts, curved eave boards, wave-like ridge boards, sometimes even a Norse prow shape curving off the end of a gable are all seen on houses whose builders sought to reveal their cultural origins. And inside we will sometimes find a truly distinctive Icelandic undertaking: murals painted directly onto the walls depicting Icelandic scenes and myths.

Fortunately, a number of important buildings of distinctly Icelandic character have been preserved and protected over the years. Churches have been a favourite choice, but other building types are represented. The province of Manitoba has designated as Provincial Heritage Suites Grund

Lutheran Church and Tergesen General Store in Gimli. Municipal governments have protected Gimli Unitarian Church, Grunnavatns Lutheran Church (Lundar area), Grace Lutheran Church (Langruth) and the former Einar Jonasson House (Gimli). And of course, many individuals also honour their Icelandic heritage with careful attention to the preservation of the historic buildings in which they live and work.

If any readers have additional information of the distinctive Hecla Island houses, please contact Mr. David Butterfield, Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Main Floor, 213 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1N3.

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The Snorri Program

Discover your Roots in Iceland

Iceland introduces the Snorri program

by Kendra Jonasson

An Icelandic Saga tells of the many men and women who sailed to North America in the beginning of the eleventh century in search of new lands to settle. One of the first expeditions was led by Porfinnur Karlsefni and his wife Gudridur Porbjarnasdottir. Their son Snorri Porfinnsson was the first European child born in North America. The Icelandic colony was short lived and the family returned to the old country to settle in Skagafjörður.

The Icelanders were to return to the New World to a much more successful settlement. Iceland lost 1/5th of its population between 1873-1914. The reasons for the emigration were many and diverse. With most of this emigration going to Canada and the U.S.

The Icelandic people are anxious to reconnect with their western cousins. The Snorri Program could be a good way to begin.

The Snorri Program has several aims; to strengthen the bonds and contacts between people of Icelandic origin in the western hemisphere and in Iceland; to give young descendants of the Icelandic emigrants knowledge about their roots in Iceland, about their ancestors and their culture; to increase understanding and knowledge of the destiny of the Icelandic emigrants among people of Iceland.

The Snorri Program offers young people 18-23 of Icelandic descent the chance to seek their roots in the land of their forefathers. This is a six week program running from the beginning of July to the middle of August.

The Snorri Program is divided into three (3) parts; week one will consist of an intensive course in modern Icelandic. Lectures will introduce one to Iceland's general history, rich culture and heritage, and the history of the emigration. The week will conclude with a visit to the Emigration Centre at Hofos; in weeks two to five the participant will live with a family, preferably in the geographic area where one's ancestors came from. During this time the participant will become

part of the family's everyday life and take on a summer job similar to that of one's Icelandic counterpart. The participant will also receive a stipend or allowance during this time; week six will be an adventurous tour travelling around the beautiful and exotic locations of Iceland. One will climb mountains and glaciers, visit volcanoes, go river rafting, camp in the wilderness and bathe in the natural outdoor hot springs.

There will be 20 participants for 1999 and 40-50 for the following year of 2000.

For further information contact the Icelandic National League Office, Box 99, Gimli, Manitoba, R0C 1A0, Inl@ecn.mb.ca.



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The Anchor

by Ken Kristjanson

Lake Winnipeg is known for commercial fishing. When the first Icelandic settlers arrived in 1875, they caught fish in such abundance that commercial fishing became their prime means of livelihood. However, the distinction of being the first commercial fishermen does not belong to the early Icelandic settlers. It is believed to be held by two men originally from Ontario, named Reid and Clark, who then resided in Selkirk. They set nets near Elk Island in 1882 from a sailboat. They were so encouraged by their catch that they returned the next year with two sailboats and a steam tug, "The Lady Ellen". They had very successful season fishing mainly around Hecla, landing 127,177 pounds of whitefish. They sold some of their catch in Winnipeg with the bulk going to markets in the United States. They earned a considerable profit. Fishing stations sprung up all over the lake and when the CPR track reached Gimli in 1907, fish production was already in high gear.

On Lake Winnipeg's 9,000 square miles of fresh water and its hour glass design, tides occur when the Lake moves (which happens frequently) from the north basin to the south basin and vice versa. This movement results in currents that cause the fishermen many problems in the anchoring of their nets. Sometimes nets were lost, resulting in additional expenses for purchasing new nets. At this point in time, the basic method of anchoring the nets was to attach a large boulder or large stone, which could easily be found on the beach or in the fields, but which had to be loaded on to flat bottom boats and moved to the position on the lake where the nets were to be placed. This was time consuming work and required heavy manual labour. A rope was tied around the stone with the end of the rope attached to the net. The stone was then dumped overboard to land at the bottom of the lake. In that manner the nets were anchored.

This was very difficult and when it came time to lift the anchor, it was best to simply cut the rope to detach the net and leave the stone. Of course, this meant leaving a long and expensive manila rope, since the cut was made in the rope at the point of its attachment to the net and that portion of the rope extending from the net to the stone was lost and the deeper the water, the greater the loss.

In order to eliminate the loss of the rope, a young fisherman by the name of Tryggvi Jonasson invented an anchor line cutter which could be submerged to the stone at the bottom of the lake. Once the cutter reached the bottom the fisherman could cut the rope leaving the rock on the bottom, salvaging the rope.

However over time a major problem developed in finding suitable boulders or rocks to use as anchors. The time involved in transporting these boulders to that part of the lake where the nets were to be anchored could be put to better use. In 1929, two young fishermen named Kristjanson, Hannes, then sixteen years of age and his younger brother, Ted, fourteen requested a local blacksmith named Jakob Sigurgeirsson to make an anchor out of steel which could be retrieved and re-used time and again. Jakob was one of four sons of a Lutheran minister from Iceland. The entire Sigurgeirsson clan were very inventive and industrious. In later years they operated a mill on Hecla as well as several fishing stations on Lake Winnipeg including freight boats.

It should be noted that ship anchors in those days had two hooks which made them unsuitable for nets since this type of anchor could not hold the net on the bottom of the lake during storms or when the current was strong.

Jakob Sigurgeirsson designed an anchor with four hooks which was so successful that this type of anchor is still in common use today. He produced twenty-two anchors, sell-

ing them to Hannes and Ted for two dollars each, a large sum for those days. His work was very distinctive because of an extra ring in the eye of the shaft. The reason for that extra ring is now lost in antiquity, but because of that extra ring the anchors were known to be his work. Hannes being the senior fisherman received two more anchors than Ted.

A fisherman will tell you that you need two anchors for each set of nets which probably better explains the reason for the unequal division. Only one anchor has survived to

this day and upon Ted Kristjanson's eightieth birthday, his older brother Hannes gave him the last remaining anchor with its distinctive extra ring. Finally, the division was equal. Ted has this anchor on display in his museum in Gimli and will gladly share this story and many more for any who care to visit him during the summer months. Ted's museum is located at 127 - 5th Avenue in Gimli. I know you will enjoy meeting my father, seeing his museum and enjoying his stories.

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By Gene Walz
Great Plains Publications, 1998. Pp. 222
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The ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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5 vols. Reykjavík: Menningar-
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1940-1953.

Matthiasson, John S.
"Adaptation to an Ethnic
Structure: The Urban Icelandic
Canadians of Winnipeg."
In *The Anthropology of
Iceland*, ed. Paul Durrenberger
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remember how your finger lay
against my throat where you said
Rocka my soul
you could see my pulse beat soft
soft (there)
just yesterday

the moment of arrival
approaches i know
by the frank slide
some kind of annunciation

so high, you can't get over it,

but i wasn't expecting this
after all these years
so raw so little green
it will not heal
what's going on here

so low, you can't get under it,

know what you need, know
what you've always needed
what we've always known may be
here in full measure

greetings this sullen shovelful
of dust and gravel
stubborn as the sun
announces deliverance over
and over again
why won't it just go away
how could i
So wide, you can't get around it,

You will be safe without me
i know it know you've studied
the sound of my heartbeat
should do it should shore up
you new opened as you are
in upon the old twisted seamfolds
be careful
try to carry it with you
in this space we have each of us entered



Sigridur Peterson

2. misericordia hospital

she didn't break it you know the bone
fractured first and then she fell
emergent

Rock of ages, cleft for me,

promise me you'll never die you say
promise
so i do

if only i hadn't

Let me hide myself in thee.

don't offer me any more headlines here
i've had it with history
the dead are the dead

if i put the phone under my breast
will it ease your pain
and here i am writing the mother
absent again

1903 them here now '93 and her there
fracture and fall when the wait is too much to bear
picture me driving by on the other side
as sisyphus taps out his rhythm
you've heard this song before
i believe
in slow seasons of healing
and the rush of despair
Let me hide
hold onto your stone

there are some who surfaced

I want to know what happened to them
to their children to their children's children
where they went whether they went hungry
the names of the ones whose bones
carried the rule of fracture through their days
who lived on to lacerate each other
out of rage
out of place or memory
the dark angel flame

Let the water and the blood

your tears are a good sign they mean
there's sensation
can you feel this yes then
you're lucky



Donna Munroe

3. crowsnest pass

i will come back from this place come back to you
saved from out of this hospital for tourists
in this salvaged institution i will rise up and walk
into the green out the windows everywhere rain
falls green and golden on slopes i can't see past
lines that splinter into wind and sun and a single
bluebird hovers slips around curves that are skin
where collisions spill into mist and i want to say
how i've missed the rhythm of hills how can you listen

Count your belssings,
by the second count the seconds

i know i promised
i'd be there forever and i try to say it's only
five sleeps and i'm writing

a judith poem and you say you're not really
sure that's worth waiting through five long nights for
and i say maybe it's not and you say you're not
coming home early are you and i say i will if i really
have to and i mss you but my ticket is
non-refundable after all

i rented a car
drove here from calgary
at some expense
you say you don't need
to remind me

how could i

writing and money between us and foothills and planes and
rin and a telephone line and a time zone and mommy don't go

Count your blessings, name them one by one
Oh, rocka my soul.



Judith Anderson

4. turtle mountain

you cry quiet you go on
 and on holding yourself
 in weak as patients breaking
 out of anaesthetic
 with their picks desperate to celebrate
 they escape from the grave to look down
 on the impossible
 Amazing

should i tell you how there is white dust
 drifting on the floor around my feet
 sifted through my pores
 even as we speak
 How sweet
 hair-line fractures wait
 to steal the scene
 with one grand gesture
 my words will crash in a heap
 smash some innocent instant into a postcard
 I once

and you so eager to let me teach you need
 after sleeping so many years with the hunger
 in your gut the thorns a the gate
 the hands on your neck the cold that kept you
 together without me
 if only i hadn't

But now

forget the dead it's lazarus i cry for
 the pain that wakens after you escape

after birth
 after the moving of stones

now take our histories look down our throats

we are bone

On April 29, 1903, at 4: 10 a.m., 82 million tonnes of limestone crashed from the summit of Turtle Mountain and buried a portion of the sleeping town of Frank in just 90 seconds. The rock mass that fell is 500 feet deep, 1,400 feet high and 3,280 feet wide.

The primary cause of the Frank Slide was the mountain's unstable structure. Underground coal mining, water action in summit cracks, and severe weather conditions may have contributed to the disaster.

The bustling town of Frank was home to approximately 600 people in 1903. Of these, roughly 100 individuals lived in the path of the slide; 23 escaped death. An estimated 70 people were killed.

Temporarily trapped, 17 underground coal miners dug their way to freedom 14 hours after the slide.

An interview with Lesley Peterson

by Lorna Tergesen



Lesley is an innovative creative thinker, but just as importantly, she gets things done. Kristin is one of Lesley's sisters and she too, seems to thrive on challenge and bringing about improvement. Jean Chretien honoured these two sisters. They received The Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in June of 1998. They both teach at Sisler High School in Winnipeg. Lesley heads the English department while Kristin teaches English and mathematics to Grade IX students while acting as department head for Grade IX. Kristin has been at Sisler for 14 years and taught in Arborg before that. She is known for being the developer of the first public school all-girls and all-boys classes in 1992. Many are following this trend today. Lesley is one of two co-ordinators of the school's innovative self-directed learning program, offering the students flexible timetables and career internship. Both quickly qualify their success by saying they work with a "great school team."

Their Icelandic heritage is very precious to them, as they grew up in Montreal with little or no contact to the Icelandic community. They are the daughters of Sveinbjorn Eggert Peterson and his wife Donna Munroe. Their grandparents were Sveinbjorn and Sigridur Peterson. Sveinbjorn was born in Gimli, while Sigridur came to Canada as a small child. Later both father and son worked for CN moving to several locations in Canada. Sigridur was a teacher too, attaining her Bachelor of Education at the age of 56 and taught for several years after that. Their mother was also a teacher, but gave up that to raise her family and to make certain that they were well taught. The children all read at the age of four.

Lesley took her University at Queens in Kingston majoring in psychology. she acquired her MA in 1996 and now teaches a night class at the University of Manitoba as well as at Sisler. She took Creative Writing when she moved back to Winnipeg. Her teacher was David Arnason. She claims a close knit group of writers truly helped her writing skills. This group met frequently to encourage and criticize each other's material. Lesley said she has always written and has a fondness for poetry. When she was a young girl her Amma gave her a scrapbook to keep all her work in. Their home had several good poetry anthologies that she loved. Her early reading was fantasy and science fiction. She said her home always had several books that she couldn't read because they were Icelandic.

Lesley has a foster daughter, Judith Anderson. She too, has Icelandic roots. Judith is referred to in the poem.

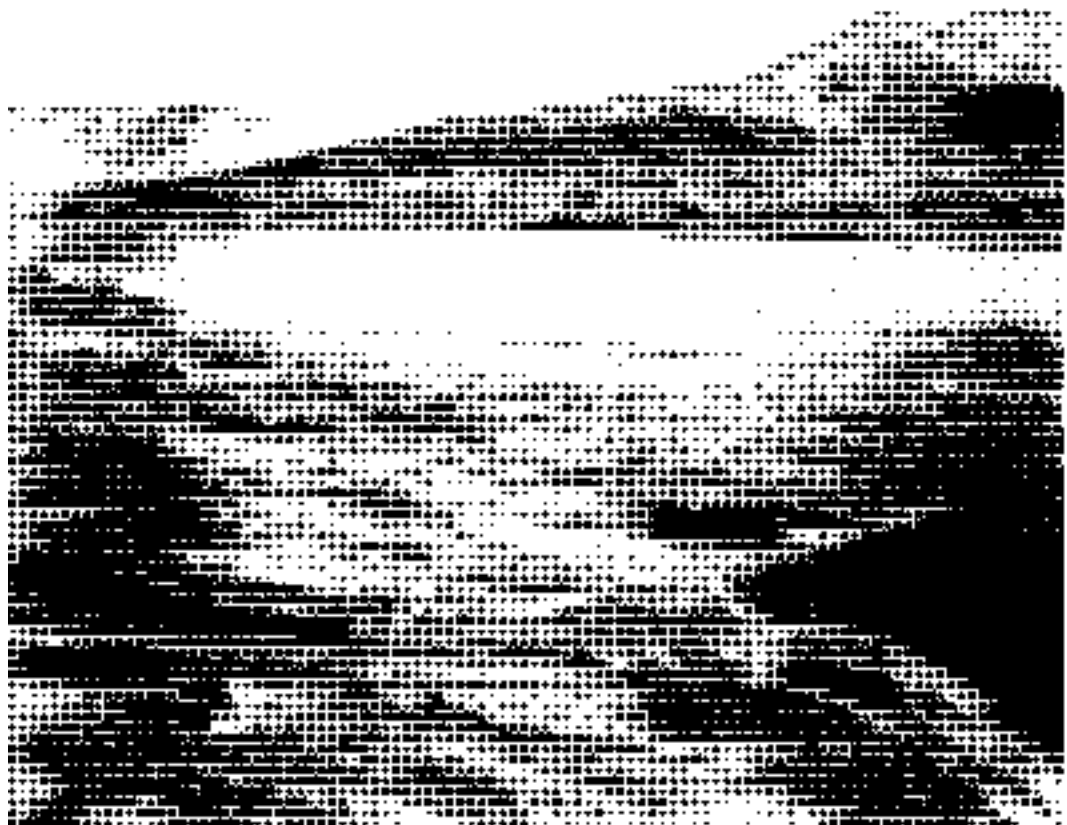
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Erla Louise Colwill Anderson

Erla received a B.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Victoria in 1991. She is completing an after-degree in Education

at Brandon University, and is writing her masters' thesis on Icelandic-Canadian literature, at the University of Manitoba.

In 1993, Erla studied Icelandic at the University of Iceland under full scholarship. She has taught Icelandic in Winnipeg and Brandon, and translates between Icelandic and English. During her studies, she conducted graduate research, chaired a forum at the University of Manitoba's Department of Icelandic conference, and delivered papers at the University of

Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan, the Learned Congress, and as a invited speaker at McGill University.

Erla served on the board of the Logberg-Heimskringla. She is currently a member of the Falkinn Club of Brandon. She gave a keynote address and exhibited her photographs for the Toronto Chapter of the I. N. L. In addition, Erla has worked professionally in theatre, photography and film industries.

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Book Reviews

The Icelandic Voice

by Daisy L. Neijmann,
Toronto: Carleton University Press, 1997
Reviewed by Gudrun Gudsteins



John Matthiasson and Anne Brydon, which demonstrate that the Icelanders in Canada have established a comfortable balance between their dual backgrounds. Matthiasson explains that Iceland, being a country of extreme contrasts, bred a readiness in its people to embrace "two-sidedness" or "structural opposition" within cultural and social institutions, establishing unity through "factionalism" and "love of debate" (3). And as Neijmann notes: the Icelandic immigrants were perhaps exceptional in that they left a country which itself had been settled by immigrants from Norway almost a thousand years earlier and had recorded its settlement history in a vast body of literature. Iceland was, in other words, itself an immigrant country.... [T]he emigration to Canada and the settlement of a "New Iceland" were, in a way, a historical re-enactment of the Icelandic past,

Daisy Neijmann's book *The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters: The Contribution of Icelandic-Canadian Writers to Canadian Literature* launches a new series on Nordic Voices, published by the Carleton University Press. This opening of the series is most appropriate, Neijmann's book being the first comprehensive study of the massive literary output, in Icelandic and English, by Canadians of Icelandic descent. The duality and continuity that Neijmann stresses throughout as being peculiar to the Icelandic legacy in Canada is indicated in the cover design of the book, depicting an animal skull and a beached boat-wreck in relief against sunrise over water.

Neijmann's impressive overview of over a thousand years demonstrates how important literature has been for Icelandic-Canadians as a means of integrating into Canadian culture, meanwhile retaining their Icelandic legacy. As Neijmann explains in her introduction, the aims of her study are "to provide an analytical English survey of both the earlier literature in Icelandic and the later literature in English, taking both the Icelandic cultural background and the Canadian cultural context into account" so that her study may "contribute to a better understanding of how cultures are transplanted and adapt, and how they can survive even as they are integrated in the larger culture that is Canadian" (xii-xiii).

Neijmann points to studies conducted by

parallelling and re-establishing historical continuity in the new land (1).

Neijmann also observes: "Rather than being a quaint and reified relic from an immigrant and Old World past, Icelandic culture has evolved into a specific type of New World culture which, although it is informed by Icelandic culture, is firmly rooted in Canadian soil" (xiii).

The mainstay of Icelanders through the ages and the most treasured heritage brought over by the settlers, literature served as an important forum for the immigrants' vision of the future of their new homeland. Neijmann points out that the early Western Icelandic authors, such as Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason and Guðrún Finnsdóttir, writing narratives in Icelandic, envisioned "a Canadian mosaic society long before this concept was ever formally introduced in Canada" (171) and that Laura Goodman Salverson, writing in English, "was a pioneer in expressing this idea of a cultural mosaic through her fiction to the Canadian public at a time when most Canadians still entertained assimilationist ideals" (179).

Considering the importance of contemporary Icelandic-Canadian writers, such as W. D. Valgardson, David Arnason, and Kristjana Gunnars, who "have contributed to the multicultural ideal with works written from an ethnic-Canadian sensibility," Neijmann finds it ironic that effect of the Multicultural Act, as it has been implemented, has been adverse to its aims, producing ethnic ghettoization rather than integration into the literary mainstream (384). She says: Once the label 'ethnic' has been attached to a work of literature, it is no longer eligible for the label 'Canadian.' As a result, writers like Valgardson, Arnason and Gunnars, who have won their spurs on the prairies with various prizes and medals, are rarely included in anthologies, collections or curriculums of Canadian literature.... The impression articulated by many critics, that multiculturalism as a policy is used to appease minority discontent while endorsing the status quo of Anglo-Canadian dominance, is reinforced....

It is little wonder, then, that, coming from an ethnic community which has traditionally kept its ethnicity private and avoided ghettoization through public assimilation,

Icelandic-Canadian writers are returning to this strategy. From the very beginning, Canadians of Icelandic descent have expressed in writing their desire for a Canadian culture which would incorporate the cultures of all its immigrants. (383)

Neijmann suggests that this ghettoization is grounded in the assumption that literature labelled as "ethnic" is not measured by the same strict standards as other writing and gets dismissed as being inferior. Her concluding remarks in the book are: "In the case of Icelandic-Canadian literature, multiculturalism has failed its authors by re-assimilating them into the homogeneity of Anglo-Canadian mainstream writing" (384).

There may be a lot of truth in Neijmann's criticism that Icelandic-Canadian writers feel that they lose their visibility by being explicitly "ethnic" in their writing; however, the reason may be less a tendency to turn a blind eye to ethnic writers than the fact that so far Canadian readers have had very little to assist them in reading the works of the Icelandic diaspora. Not until recently have books presenting a specifically Icelandic-Canadian or Western-Icelandic tradition in writing been available: *Unexpected Fictions: New Icelandic Canadian Writing*, edited by Kristjana Gunnars (1989), *Western Icelandic Short Stories*, edited and translated by Kirsten Wolf and Árný Hjaltadóttir (1992), and *Writings by Western Icelandic Women*, edited and translated by Kirsten Wolf (1996). Even Canadians of Icelandic descent may be unaware to what extent there is a continuity between the Icelandic and the English literary tradition in Canada, except by hearsay. Only the most intrepid researchers are likely to chase down the numerous articles—mostly in Icelandic—to get the broader picture. And then there remains the daunting task of comprehending to what extent this tradition has been informed by the Icelandic literary tradition. It is therefore not at all surprising if the ethnic aspects of Icelandic-Canadian writing suffer a certain lack of visibility, nor is it surprising if writers give up on writing about a background which is easily misunderstood and in a tradition easily overlooked because most readers lack the necessary frame of reference. A book like Neijmann's provides the

needed context.

There is in fact much more to Neijmann's book than powerful argumentation and severe questioning of the effect of the multicultural policy upon successfully assimilated ethnic groups, like the Icelanders in Canada; *The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters* is a necessary handbook for anyone interested in Icelandic Canadian literature and its roots in the cultural history of Iceland and Canada. The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter I, "Literary History and Background of the Icelanders," provides an overview of the Northern European heritage of literature and lore that the settlers of Iceland originally brought with them, its blossoming in Medieval Iceland due to attempts to maintain cultural continuity, and its development in the ensuing ages. Chapter II, "Emigration and Settlement in the New World," surveys the cultural environment in Iceland in the nineteenth century, the emigration and settlement in North America, and the cultural activities aimed at preserving the Icelandic identity as well as coming to terms with a new environment. Chapter III, "Icelandic Immigrant Literature," places Western Icelandic literature within the context of immigrant writing, noting the astounding literary output, mostly in Icelandic, and the uncommon degree of participation among the Western Icelanders in literary production, as well as their decided preference for poetry. For a more detailed discussion Neijmann selects the poetry of Káinn (Kristján Niels Júlíus Jónsson, or K. N.), Stephan G. Stephansson, and Guttormur J. Guttormsson, the narratives of Magnús Jóhann Bjarnason and Guðrún Finnsdóttir, all written in Icelandic, as well as the transitional works of Laura Goodman Salverson, written in English.

Chapter IV, concludes Neijmann's survey. She views "Icelandic-Canadian Literature in English" from 1940 to 1970 against the backdrop of Canadian poetry and prose of that period, and then proceeds to discuss the Icelandic-Canadian writers who emerged after multiculturalism became the official cultural policy of Canada, as the aspects of the Canadian past and identity which are not French or Anglo-Celtic came to the fore in literature. Neijmann examines how this exploration, documentation, and

reinvention of Canada's ethnic past and present is manifested in the works of Valgardson, Arnason, and Gunnars—thematically and stylistically, as well as through aspects of myth and story telling. Although Neijmann selects these three most important authors for extended analysis of continuity and innovation, she also includes less known Icelandic-Canadian writers, both in her survey and in her "Selected Bibliography of Western Icelandic and Icelandic Canadian Literature."

The Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters is rigorously documented and gives an extensive overview of relevant research which readers can pursue further to gain deeper knowledge and insight into the subject. But its main value lies in the way it makes this wealth of material accessible: it is a lively and readable analytical survey of Canada's living roots in an ancient Northern European literary heritage. Professor Neijmann teaches in the Icelandic Department at the University of Manitoba and her book is an important addition to the efforts made by the depart

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Bone Dance

by Martha Brooks
Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997
Reviewed by Lara Arnason

Martha Brooks provides us with a refreshingly spiritual book in her latest novel, *Bone Dance*. The novel is an account of two teens who, having both experienced great loss, are thrown together by circumstance. As they each learn to make peace with the past, they spiritually connect with the land they both love, with their Native heritage, and finally with each other.

Bone Dance focuses on two teens, Alexandra and Lonny. Upon the death of her father, a man she had never met, Alexandra finds she has inherited a cabin on the prairie. When she endeavors to explore her father's legacy, she meets Lonny LaFrenière, whose family previously owned the land. As the story unfolds, these seemingly lost souls find themselves together, a comfort to each other in a world of confusion.

Brooks' character development is one of the strongest points of the novel. Her characters are realistic, fascinating individuals, whose souls are completely revealed to the reader. This exposure of the characters allows the reader to gain insight into their confusion, and to enjoy the book on another level, because they know and understand the protagonists.

Contrary to the conventional protagonist-antagonist focus in novels, this book spotlights two protagonists.

It is difficult to determine to which audience this book is meant to cater. The novel is an easy read, something an 11 or 12 year old could handle with ease. The protagonists are 17 and 18 years of age however, and the book is largely engrossed in their emotional states at this point in their lives. Because of this, readers under 12-14 years of age may find it difficult to relate to the circumstances of these characters, and consequentially to the characters themselves. On the other hand, someone



"...a beautifully compelling novel."
School Library Journal

mature enough to fully grasp and relate to these characters may find the book a bit elementary. Readers aged 12-17 would probably be the prime audience for the book.

Bone Dance explores the intense spirituality of Native youth, and in doing so invites the reader to explore his own spirituality. The novel demonstrates the state of confusion in which many young Aborigines find themselves; they are torn between their modern lives and the peaceful connection to the earth of their ancestors. But aside from just showing that this ambivalence exists, *Bone Dance* shows that it can be resolved.

I would recommend *Bone Dance* as a good book to read. As Alexandra and Lonny search to find themselves and their spirituality, the reader is in turn put in touch with a sense of self, and is reconnected with his own spirituality. To experience this book is to realize that there is more to life than what meets the eye.

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Terry & Lorna Tergesen in memory of Albert Kristjanson

Contributors

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SIGRID JOHNSON is the Librarian of the Icelandic Collection at the Elizabeth Dafoe Library on the University of Manitoba Campus. She is the acting editor of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine. She is involved in several other organizations.

KENDRA JONASSON is the President of From the Icelandic National League Chapter of Winnipeg, Manitoba

KEN KRISTJANSON is the retired vice president of Royal Bank of Canada Dominion Securities, and a summer resident of Gimli.

WILL KRISTJANSON was a very devoted promoter of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine, serving for several years as editor. His book *Icelandic People in Manitoba* still serves as base for studying the Icelandic settlements in Manitoba.

HELGA MALIS is a native of Gimli, Manitoba who, following years of living and working in Ottawa, Ontario, moved back to Manitoba and soon thereafter joined the board of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine. She is the secretary to the Icelandic National League.

KRISTINE PERLMUTTER is a resource teacher with the Fort Garry School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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LORNA TERGESEN is a member of the board of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine. She is involved in several other Icelandic community organizations.



*This photo was taken in Wynard, Saskatchewan
in approximately 1915. Can anyone identify these lovely dancers?*

The back page

*we
understand*

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