

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN MAGAZINE

Canada Iceland Foundation Inc.

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

Treasurer: Paul D. Olafson, CA
54 Siddall Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2K 3W6
Telephone: 1-204-667-1168

The ICELANDIC CANADIAN



ISSN 0046-4453

Vol.56 #4 (2001)

The Book of Life PROJECT



The Book of Life is a computer based collection of the family histories that records the genealogies and stories of Canadians and Americans of Icelandic descent.

Through the use of text, images, sound, and video, The Book of Life aims to create a living record of Icelandic North American history and culture suitable for the information age.

The inclusion of your family's history is key to the success of the Book of Life. Please consider participating in this exciting endeavour.



For more information please contact:

Ryan Eyford, Project Coordinator

104-94 1st Ave. Gimli MB R0C 1B1













Ph. (204) 642-9868 Fax: (204) 642-9382

email: bookoflife@mb.sympatico.ca

*The Book of Life is a United Icelandic Appeal Project operating under the sponsorship of the Betel Heritage Foundation

The ICELANDIC CANADIAN

VOLUME 56, No 4 (2001) • WINNIPEG, CANADA

	On the Cover	131
	Editorial - Ryan Eyford	132
	Millennium Silver Commemorative Coin Set Features Leif Ericson - Allan Swenson	135
	Letters from Bosnia - Len and Karen Vopnfjord	140
	The Story of Emily Long - Darrell Gudmundson	144
	Home - Sara Arnason	154
	A Visit to Canada - Kristin Adalsteinsdóttir	158
	Poetry - by Mackenzie Jenkyns	164
	Book Reviews Laws of Early Iceland: Gragas II - reviewed by DeLloyd J. Guth	166
	Dropped Threads - reviewed by Lillian Vilborg	169
	Contributors	171
	Submission and Subscription Information	139
	The Back Page	172

Cover: Leif Eiríksson Commemorative Coin.

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

North America's quarterly magazine in celebration of the Icelandic Heritage published by Canadian Icelandic Heritage, Inc., Winnipeg, Canada.

MANAGING EDITOR / LORNA TERGESEN
CORPORATE SECRETARY / LORNA TERGESEN
DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY / KAREN EMILSON

SENIOR EDITORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / SIGRID JOHNSON
FAMILIAR ESSAYS / SHIRLEY McCREEDY
FICTION / HELGA MALIS
INTERVIEWS / HELGA MALIS
POETRY / DAVID ARNASON
REVIEWS / LORNA TERGESEN
SCHOLARLY ESSAYS / POSITION VACANT
COMPETITIONS/ VALERIE HOSHIZAKI-NORDIN
MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES / STEFAN JONASSON, BRENDA JOHNSON,
WENDY JOHNSON

REGIONAL EDITORS

SASKATCHEWAN / CONNIE GELLER
BRITISH COLUMBIA / KRISTIANA MAGNUSSON
ICELAND / MARGRÉT BJÖRGVINSDÓTTIR

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS MANAGER-TREASURER / RICK LOFTSON
CIRCULATION / BRIAN GUDMUNDSON
PACKAGING / DAVE AND DONNA SOLMUNDSON
ADVERTISING & PROMOTION / ANDREA HOLM, ALLISON HOLM

NOTE TO READERS: Due to circumstances beyond our control there were a number of type errors of Icelandic characters in the last issue of the Icelandic Canadian. We apologize for this technical problem.

Subscriptions, advertising & editorial correspondence:

The Icelandic Canadian, Box 1156, Gimli, Manitoba R0C 1B0 CANADA
CONTACT: Lorna Tergeesen (204) 642-9650 to inquire about the magazine.

Subscription rates: \$32 per year, \$64 for two years (U.S. & Canadian funds). Single copies, \$8.00 plus postage.

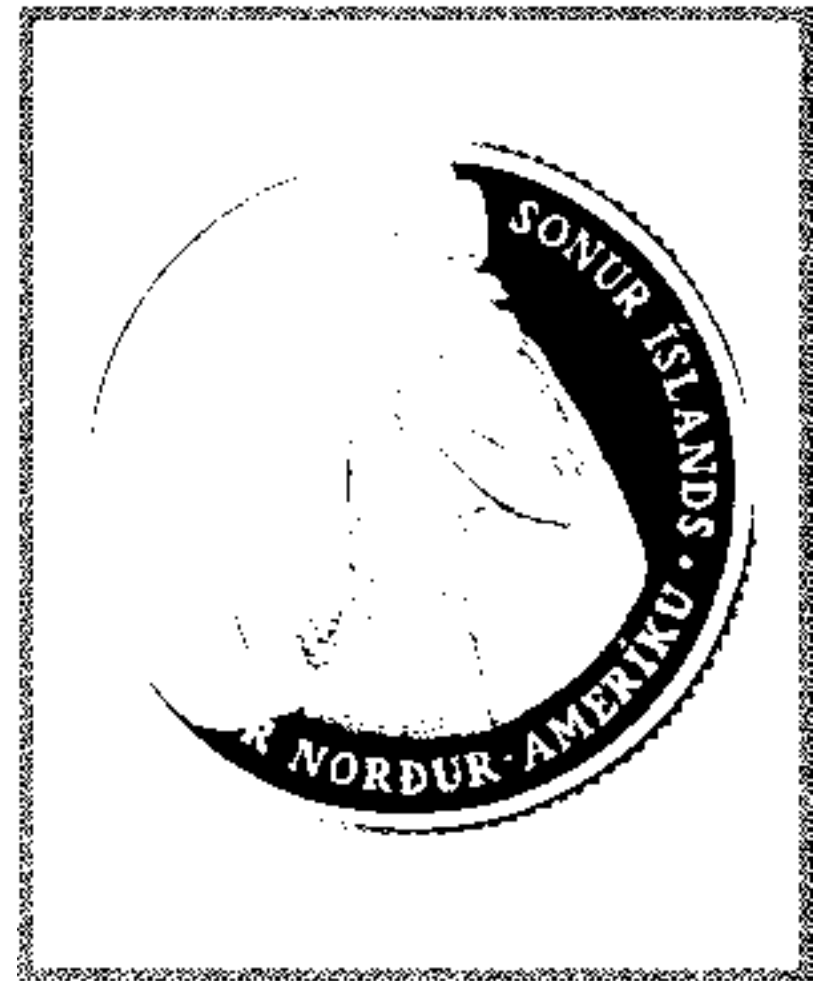
Typed submissions of articles, book reviews, short stories and poetry are welcome. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. E-mail submissions welcome: icelandiccanadian@yahoo.com.

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.

PAP registration # 09999 and Postal Agreement # 1397893

Printed in Winnipeg, Canada.

On the Cover



The Leif Eiriksson Commemorative Coin.

Editorial

by Ryan Eyford

The United Icelandic Appeal, a sub-committee of the Betel Heritage Foundation is the steward of the Book of Life project. The purpose of the United Icelandic Appeal is to help assist The Betel Waterfront Foundation, in the raising of 1.5 million dollars of private funding necessary for the Betel Waterfront Project.

The Book of Life was established as a benefit to Donors who so generously supported the effort of the Betel Heritage Foundation. As the Project Coordinator of the Book of Life, I invite you to participate in the Book of Life by submitting your family histories. In order to sustain this mandate it is necessary to continually appeal for donations. Your support will insure The Book of Life continues to grow, change and become the record, the saga, of generations now and in the future. We gratefully accept your donations to The Book of Life and appreciate your interest and passion for the maintenance of our history.

Through my work on the Book of Life, I continue to be amazed at the efforts individuals and families have put into ensuring that their history will be preserved for future generations.

I asked myself the questions: What will distinguish the Book of Life from histories that have been written earlier? How can the Book of Life add to the already vast amount of material that is out there? After considering these questions, I came to the conclusion that computers and the internet are the great strength of the project.

People, especially young people, are increasingly turning to the internet as a source of information. In a May 2000 study conducted by Opinion Research Corp. it was found that 84% of Americans surveyed between the ages of 18-24 said that they are more likely to check the internet for information before going to their public library. University libraries around the world are

aware of this phenomenon and are increasingly making their catalogues available online for people to search. Some academic journals are abandoning the print medium altogether and publishing their journals exclusively online. What does this mean for the preservation of the Icelandic presence in North America? Clearly, we must embrace the new medium as a way of preserving our culture and heritage.

This is a lesson that has quite clearly already taking root. Many Icelandic cultural groups in Canada and the US already have their own websites, and the INL mailing list fosters lively email discussions on a variety of topics as well as facilitating links between people scattered across the continent.

The great strength of the Book of Life is its use of the new medium. The website, at www.bookoflifeonline.com, can be constantly updated and added to, creating a living historical record of families and communities across North America who share a connection with Iceland. New stories and new features can be added, and updates made. The Book of Life does not go out of print, and errors can be fixed with little effort. It can be viewed from almost anywhere in the world, an important feature for our highly mobile society.

The Book of Life is, in short, the wedding of the old traditions of genealogy and family history brought from Iceland with the new technologies that are fast becoming a regular feature of our everyday lives. In my view heritage is a reverence for history, for knowing the saga of your family in both the new country and the old.

The 12th century author of the Icelandic Landnámabók (the Book of Settlements) wrote:

People often say that the writing about the Settlements is irrelevant learning, but we think we can better meet the criticism of for-

eigners when they accuse us of being descended from slaves and scoundrels, if we know for certain the truth about our ancestry. And for those who want to know ancient lore and how to trace genealogies, its better to start at the beginning than come in at the middle. Anyway, all civilized nations want to know about the origins of their own society, and the beginnings of their own race.

It seems that the Icelandic people heeded this passage closely over the centuries. They possess one of the most well documented genealogical records among Western European nations. Many people who are not of Icelandic descent are amazed to find out that we can trace our ancestry back to the Viking Age and even farther.

When the Icelandic settlers came to North America at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, they recorded their experiences. The wide spread literacy among the immigrants led to a history that focussed on ordinary people and on their families, occupations, homes, customs, joys and sorrows. This body of work forms an amazing record of the early history of the Icelandic settlers in their new home. After the immigration period had ended, family and community history continued to appear in the newspapers, Lögberg and Heimskringla, the annual Almanak Ólafur S. Thorgeirsson, the Icelandic Canadian Magazine and a host of other publications. Even later, the plethora of local history books published all over North America added to the wealth of information about the lives of people of Icelandic descent across the continent

How it came to be The Book of Life

About a month ago, I received an email from a person in Calgary who told me that she had reason to believe that we were related. After comparing notes we found that we were in fact related through a mutual ancestor who was born in the early nineteenth century. To the general public, investigating such a distant connection might seem strange, but to many people of Icelandic descent this kind of correspondence is not at all unusual. Over 125 years after the first groups of settlers left

their island home in search of a future in a new land, the ties between many of their descendants have remained strong. During the past year and a half I have had the good fortune to hear many similar stories of the remarkable network of connections that exist between the far-flung descendants of Icelandic immigrants in Canada and the United States.

In June of 2000, I was hired by the United Icelandic Appeal to create the Book of Life, a computer based collection of the family histories of Canadians and Americans of Icelandic descent. At the time I had just completed my fourth year of a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in History at the University of Winnipeg. That year, I had written three different papers on aspects of the history of New Iceland. Needless to say I was thrilled at the prospect of working on the Book of Life, a project that seemed to coincide directly with my academic research interests. Looking back on the time I have spent on the project, I can say that along with a greater knowledge of the sources and methods for researching and writing the history of the Icelanders in North America, I have also gained a much more profound sense the shared culture and heritage that connects people who live in such different places as Spanish Fork, Utah, Markerville, Alberta, Lundar, Manitoba, and a thousand points in between.

I invite you to visit the website at www.bookoflifeonline.com to learn more about this exciting new project. Read, explore, sign the guest book, and find out how you can include your family story in the Book of Life. Your comments, on what you liked or what you felt needs improvement, are greatly appreciated. With your help, we are hoping to build an internet resource that people of Icelandic descent everywhere can be proud of. The United Icelandic Appeal is presently chaired by Dan Johnson and the Executive Director is Kathy Arnason. For further information please call Kathy Arnason at: 204-642-9868.

Millennium Silver Commemorative Coin Set Features Leif Ericson

by Allan Swenson



The U.S. Coin

At last, Viking history has been verified and vindicated. Leif Ericson has been declared the "Founder of the New World" on a Commemorative Coin just issued by the U.S. Mint.

Equally significant, the Icelandic Commemorative Silver Kronur also makes that historic point on their coin, "Leif Ericson, Son of Iceland, "Founder of North America."

The idea for a Leif Ericson Commemorative Coin had originated years ago with Ivar Christensen, founder and president of the Leif Ericson Society International. The landmark joint minting of the U. S. Silver dollar and the Icelandic Silver kronur were strongly supported by Congressman Martin Olav Sabo of Minnesota, who was a founding member of the Congressional Friends of Norway Caucus.

Praise for the issue of the Commemorative Leif Ericson Coins focused on the importance and significance of the messages they carry on them.

"Acknowledging the truth about the original discovery of the New World, nearly 500 years before Columbus is a landmark in honesty and historic fact recognition by the United States government," according to Allan A. Swenson, a Norse-American author, writer and founder of the Viking Information Project International. "At last the truth has been officially recognized and celebrated with the dramatic, appropriate and significant Leif Ericson 'Founder of the New World' commemorative coin," Swenson emphasized.

The United States Mint issued the magnificent and historic set of Leif Ericson Millennium Commemorative Coins in June, celebrating the millennium of the discovery of the New World by Leif Ericson.

"This jointly-issued coin set magnifi-

cantly symbolizes a shared history and friendship with the Republic of Iceland that dates back through the last millennium," said U.S. Mint Director Jay W. Johnson.

"What a beautiful way to celebrate the 1000 years since the discovery of the New World by Leif Ericson, by issuing a first of its kind U.S./Foreign Commemorative Coin Set."

"The Leif Ericson Commemorative Coin is really the perfect millennium collectible," said David Pickens, Associate Director for Numismatics, "commemorating a 1,000-year anniversary in the year 2000."

Dennis Johnson, immediate past President of the famous Leif Ericson Viking ship Norseman, based in Philadelphia, was one of the first Viking organization leaders to add his praise.

"Our group is delighted by the issue of the Leif Ericson coin. It took the hard work of many people to bring about this great commemorative act of the Millennium year 2000, and we are grateful to those who have played a part in making this happen," Dennis Johnson says.

"Our mission for over 20 years has been to help the truth be told to all Americans about the true founder of the New World, and we shall continue in that mission with our ship and our organization for many years to come," Johnson emphasizes. "The marking of the Leif Ericson Millennium Celebration by the issuance of this coin symbolizes the full acceptance by the U. S. Government of the truth about the first Europeans in North America, Leif Ericson and his comrades from Greenland and Iceland."

Icelandic businessman and founder of the West Nordic Culture House in Hafnarfjordur, Iceland, Johannes Vidar

Bjarnason, added his thoughtful comments.

"For hundreds of years we Icelanders have been aware of that incredible voyage of exploration and discovery by Leif Ericson. He was actually born in Iceland and grew up in Greenland," Bjarnason points out. "His birthplace in Iceland is an important national site and his home in Greenland has been made into a major international landmark this summer.

"It is especially significant that this Icelandic Leif Ericson Commemorative Coin and the U. S. Leif Ericson Silver Dollar Commemorative coin be issued in this Millennium Year. Together we celebrate that remarkable voyage of exploration that led to the discovery of North America 1000 years ago," Bjarnason says.

The two beautifully detailed coins, designed respectively by the United States and the Republic of Iceland, are minted by the United States Mint. Both coins are legal tender and are struck from 26.73 grams of 90 percent silver. They come packaged in a handsome satin-lined presentation case with a Certificate of Authenticity.

The coins may be purchased either in a two-coin proof set or separately: United States Proof Silver, United States Uncirculated Silver, or Iceland Proof Silver.

The United States Proof Silver and Uncirculated Silver coins display an heroic

portrait of the intrepid explorer, Leif Ericson, on the obverse, the "heads" side, designed by Mint engraver/sculptor John Mercanti, and a depiction of his Viking ship under full sail on the reverse, the "tails" side, designed by Mint engraver/sculptor James Ferrell.

The Icelandic Proof Silver coin's obverse side features an image of Stirling Calder's famous sculpture of Leif Ericson, presented to Iceland by the United States in 1930 to commemorate the millennium of the Althingi, the Icelandic Parliament. That original statue is now located in front of Hallgrímskirkja Church in Reykjavik, Iceland.

The reverse of the coin depicts the eagle, the dragon, the bull and the giant from the Icelandic Coat of Arms. The designer of the coin is Icelandic artist Throstur Magnusson.

U. S. Congressman Martin Olav Sabo from Minnesota was one of the leading figures in achieving the minting of the Leif Ericson Commemorative Coin.

"The Leif Ericson Millennium Commemorative Coin Act, (H.R. 31) called for the creation of silver coins in commemoration of the 1000-year anniversary of Leif Ericson's discovery of the New World. Proceeds from the coins will benefit student exchanges between the U. S. and Iceland," Congressman Sabo explained.

"Many people do not know that Leif

Ericson actually preceded Christopher Columbus in the first European discovery of North America," Congressman Sabo explains. "He came here around 1000 AD. It is fitting that we recognize Ericson as we mark the millennium of this daring achievement," Congressman Sabo believes.

"These coins will appropriately recognize Ericson's remarkable achievement, standing as symbols of his courage and perseverance, virtues we can all embrace" Sabo added.

"They will honour all Americans of Scandinavian descent. For generations, they have proven themselves brave and loyal Americans, carrying on the tradition of courage and exploration started by their Norse ancestors, including Leif Ericson," Congressman Sabo emphasized.

"It is appropriate that the Leif Ericson commemorative silver dollars will support student exchanges between the U. S. and Iceland. This is an appropriate way to pay tribute to the pioneering spirit of Leif Ericson. These coins will stand as symbols of his courage and perseverance, virtues we all must embrace in order to accomplish our goals," Congressman Sabo concluded.

The Leif Ericson Millennium Commemorative Coin Act directed the U. S. Mint to issue up to 500,000 commemorative silver dollars for the 1000-year anniversary of Ericson's landing in North America, in conjunction with a series of coins to be minted in the Republic of Iceland. The coins will be sold with a \$10 surcharge, with proceeds supporting student exchanges between the U. S. and Iceland.

Proceeds from the Icelandic issue will be allocated to the Leifur Eiríksson Foundation which will award study grants to Icelandic students in the USA and vice versa. The Foundation, which is managed at the University of Virginia, has a Board of five Directors, two appointed by the President of the University of Virginia, one by the Prime Minister of Iceland and one by the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Iceland. The fifth Director will be appointed for a term of two years at a time, on a rotating basis between the USA and Iceland.

The Proof Silver United States and Proof Silver Republic of Iceland Coins are available for \$37.00. The Uncirculated Silver United States Coin is available for \$32.00.

The United States and the Republic of Iceland Two-Coin Set is available for \$68.00. Both coins are minted by the U. S. Mint which will handle sales outside Iceland. The coins are 9/10 silver, weighing 26.73 grams and with a diameter of 38.1 mm. The Icelandic coin will be legal tender in Iceland with a value of 1,000 kronur, in a high quality Proof issue with a maximum mint quantity of 150,000.

The designers of the U.S. Commemorative coin are John Mercanti and James Ferrell. Mercanti has been a sculptor and engraver for the U. S. Mint for 26 years. His work on commemorative coins include the 1986 Statue of Liberty obverse, the 1989 Bicentennial of the Congress and the 1991 Mt. Rushmore obverse.

His most recent designs were the bimetallic obverse and silver reverse for the 2000 Library of Congress coins. Mercanti's congressional medals include the obverses of George Bush and Hubert Humphry.

James Ferrell has worked at the U. S. Mint for 10 years. He created numerous coin models for countries such as Panama and Egypt while employed with Franklin Mint. He produced artwork for the Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Franklin D. Roosevelt commemorative coins. In addition, Ferrell is credited with recent congressional gold medals that include portraits of Ruth and Billy Graham, Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela.

The designer of the Icelandic Commemorative Coin, Throstur Magnusson studied at the Icelandic School of Arts and Crafts and continued his studies at the Gothenburg School of Arts and Crafts. Magnusson has designed approximately 180 stamps which have earned him several merits, including "The Most Beautiful Icelandic Stamp of the Year" every year from 1986 until 1992. Magnusson designed the current Icelandic coinage and several commemorative coins

NOW IN OUR 40TH YEAR OF SERVICE

Thorvaldson Care Center

An Intermediate Care Facility

Heaton Thorvaldson, President

24-Hour Supervision

Government Approved Facility

We offer a Brand-new Facility

Personal Furnishings Welcome



495 STRADBROOK AVENUE
452-4044

WE INVITE YOUR INQUIRIES

for the Central Bank of Iceland.

Customers may order the Leif Ericson Commemorative Coins directly online via the U.S. Mint secure web server at www.USMINT.gov and pay no additional shipping and handling charges. Customers who prefer to fax their orders may download an order form from the web site and fax it to (301) 344-4150, ATTN: Order Processing.

Customers also may order by telephone by calling 1-800-USA-MINT. Operators are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to take orders. Customers may also order by mail; send check or money order to United States Mint, P.O. Box 382614, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-8614. Please allow 8-10 weeks for delivery.

Proceed from sales of both new U. S. and Icelandic Leif Ericson coins will support the Leifur Eiríksson Foundation at the University of Virginia, created this spring to finance graduate-level student exchanges between both countries.

The foundation will promote the advanced study of Iceland, including its history, culture, literature, science, law, business, medicine, technology and other areas. The Eiríksson Foundation also is working as a partner with the White House Millennium Commission to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of Leifur Eiríksson's discovery of The New World.

"The Leifur Eiríksson Foundation will provide significant resources that will enable generations of students to explore

all of the educational opportunities that both countries hold," said Robert Kellog, Univ. of Virginia Professor emeritus of English and chair of the foundation's board of trustees. "The University of Virginia, its Health System and Graduate Arts and Sciences programs are especially excited about this endeavor, given all the treasures of the Republic of Iceland processes n genetics, the environment and literature,"

"In genetics, for example, they've done some incredible work," Kellog says, explaining that researchers have compiled what is essentially a 'genetic' map of the nation's relatively small population of 270,000 people.

The Eiríksson Foundation is a cooperative effort of the Univ. of Virginia and the Central Bank of Iceland and is a natural outgrowth of a number of cordial and productive relationships between Iceland and students and faculty of the University over the last 50 years.

The foundation will supplement the resources from the U. S. Mint and the Republic of Iceland with support from private individuals and corporations that encourage international education. Additional information is available from the Leifur Eiríksson Foundation, c/o Univ. of Virginia Foundation, PO Box 400218, Charlottesville, Va 22904-4218.

Editor's Note: The American spelling of Eiríksson is Ericson.

Gerist áskrifendur!
Subscribe now!

Renew your acquaintance with your Icelandic heritage by returning this form, together with your cheque/money order payable to:
The Icelandic Canadian

- One year subscription (4 issues) \$32
 Two year subscription (8 issues) \$64

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/TOWN

PROV/STATE

COUNTRY

POSTAL CODE/ZIP

Return to:

The Icelandic Canadian
P.O. Box 1156
Gimli, Manitoba
Canada R0C 1B0

**Fishing Lore Myths and Legends Urban Sagas Connections
and Kin Huldafolk Tales Oral Histories Heartfelt Moments
with Amma and Afi Philosophical Musings Acts of Courage
Letters from the Farm Nature and Nature Pioneer Spirit
Biographies Poetry Short Stories Tall Tales Passionate
Politics**

Are you harbouring your own little modern-day saga and need somewhere to share it? Do you have a story, poem, biography, or favourite memory just waiting to be expressed? The Icelandic Canadian welcomes all original articles of interest to our readers and would like to hear from you!

Our editorial staff will consider all submissions, and are willing to assist you to prepare your work for print. In addition to your article, we also welcome accompanying photographs, and a brief autobiography.

Please send written material to:

The Icelandic Canadian Magazine

Box 1156, Gimli, Manitoba R0C 1B0

E-mail submissions to: icelandiccanadian@yahoo.com



PRINT EXPRESS
& COPY COMPANY INC.

Call Dave Benediktson

Tel. 956-1357 • Fax 956-1371

Located in the Winnipeg Convention Centre
2nd Floor — 375 York Avenue

We do it ON TIME and We do it RIGHT!

Design
Digital Copying
Offset Printing

Letters from Bosnia

by Len and Karen Vopnfjord



April 18, 2001
Hello from Bosnia and Herzegovina:

The last time I wrote we were being invited to meet the Chief of Police in order to register as long term residents here in Tuzla, Bosnia. We were escorted to his office at the police station by the former Minister of Reconstruction, Dr. Benjamin, who has befriended the Canadian Urban Institute and is of considerable help to us. We were served Turkish coffee while the Police Chief explained to our translator, Alma, just what was required for us to remain here. Apparently we needed to get a "work permit." We are consultants with CUI, on a Canadian International Development Agency sponsored program. Even though we are not paid by anyone here, it is mandatory to have a "work permit" in order to get permission to stay here on a long-term basis. To make a long story short, we just received the official stamp in our passports last week after over 2 months of filling out a variety of forms, each one requiring the payment of a fee. It appears that they have so many staff that each one must have something to do. It ended up

costing 400 Deutche Marks and it is good for one year.

After the war 35 private banks opened; there were already 17 socially owned banks operating in BiH. We put our money into a State operated bank when we first arrived. Later we discovered that some banks were in danger of collapsing and a German NGO reported losing 1,000,000 DEM when the bank they dealt with went under. Since then we have moved our account to an Austrian bank where we feel somewhat more secure. Banking in the state bank is unlike anything we had ever experienced before. Masses of people push their way to the counter, with very little "first come first served" service. When you finally make it to a teller, with whom you dealt the last time you made a transaction, you might be told to go clear across the enormous Russian overbuilt bank floor to another teller. Here a piece of paper is dealt with and then you find your way back to another teller to receive your cash. The entire process can take upwards of an hour and everyone in the group surrounding you is completely aware of your entire transaction. The money received is Bosnian convertible marks, based on the German DeutcheMark. There is hope that the new private banks will be reduced in number and provide much better service.

I mentioned before that we were trying to buy a car. We were advised not to get one here in Bosnia due to the bad roads and the poor condition of used vehicles, so we went to Vienna. We actually were in Budapest on a work related trip and Vienna is only 3 hours by train from there on the Orient Express. Our hopes were high as we travelled leisurely in the private cubicle in the coach of the train. We arrived in Vienna and took a taxi to the nearest VW used car dealership. Our eyes were bright as we walked among the old cars; this was

going to be so very good. Having selected a few likely options we strode into the dealership and caught the eye of a young salesman. To make a long story short, once again, we could not register a car in Austria unless we were residents. We could however buy a car there and register it in the country in which we were residents. As we were not registered in Bosnia at that time, because we didn't have a "work permit," we were just right out of luck.

Since then Alma, our translator has purchased a new Skoda (VW engine) and she more or less drives us wherever we need to go. Alma went to the municipal hall and filled in a form for Len to keep in his passport giving him permission to use her car. So things are looking up.

Dr. Benjamin, and his wife have, as I mentioned, been very supportive of CUI and have on occasion invited us to travel with them. Just over a month ago, on our first trip with them, they took us to Bihac, which is in northwest Bosnia, and is an 8-hour drive from here. They speak very little English and at first we were just a bit uneasy as we drove from Tuzla, thinking that an entire weekend of charades was ahead of us. After an hour driving they turned on the radio and an old familiar song came on. "Q'est Sera Sera, what ever will be will be..." Len and I started to sing along, and the next thing we knew we were all singing. The radio was turned off and we were amazed at the number of songs we had in common. We sang for over 2 hours, sometimes they sang the Bosnian lyrics while we sang in English. Everything was going to be just fine.

As we drove, we began to notice country homes that were damaged during the 1991 - 1995 war. More and more; shells of houses, rubble and burned out cars appeared, until, for miles there was nothing but ruins of deserted houses. We asked our hosts who had caused this damage. They told us that it depended on where exactly we were. During the war, the Serbs blew up the Muslims and Croats homes in certain areas and the Croats blew up the Serbs and Muslims homes in others. It seems that the Muslims just got the worst of it all around. Some survivors of this area have been relo-

cated to other countries in Europe, Canada, the US and Australia, while the less fortunate are homeless refugees. The first ones relocated to new countries were in mixed marriages.

We went into Banja Luka, which was designated in the Dayton Accord to be a Serb area and is in RS, Republica Srpska. Dr. Benjamin and his wife had not been there for over 10 years; before the war. We could tell that they didn't feel all that comfortable as we walked around the downtown. It is an old town with a picturesque old fort in the centre and a wide river runs through it. Although there must have been damage, there was very little if any that we could see. At one point, as they walked along in front of us, arm in arm, we couldn't help but ask ourselves how this war among people who are virtually the same blood and who speak the same language could ever have happened. The city luckily in which they live is a safe place for many because Tuzla is considered to be an open city, which means intermarriage between Serbs, Muslims and Croats is tolerated. He is a Serb and his wife is Muslim.

We finally arrived at Bihac, almost at the Croatian border and found a hotel right on the Uno River. It was named "Uno" by the Romans, because of its clear emerald green colour, it was "number one." The next day we drove to the headwaters of the river, which just seemed to spring from the earth. Streams of water swirled around tiny homes, which were over one hundred years old. We met an old man, who was Serbian, and through a rough interpretation learned that his parents had lived beside the river where it cascaded down into an incredible series of falls. He pointed out a little white-washed, red tile-roofed house and said that he was born there. For over one hundred years the water flowed almost up to the doorstep of the house but never flooded it. He was very friendly and spoke to our Bosnian friends about how much he loved people from Canada and pointed to a Canadian flag pin that I had on my jacket.

As we left him standing by the river, an army vehicle pulled up in front of us. I saw SFOR on the hood of the jeep and a Canadian flag on the side. I think I that I

almost pulled the door of the jeep off as I greeted the young soldiers. They told us that things were pretty quiet in that area and the Canadian base was nearby. Mostly they were there as peacekeepers but more like goodwill ambassadors. They even offer assistance to people in the area who are trying to rebuild their damaged homes. There were three from Canada and the fourth soldier was their Bosnian interpreter. They were from Winnipeg, Regina and Thunder Bay.

We knew, when we left Canada last December, that we were going to miss our family and friends and this was especially so at Christmas, when we spent a very quiet holiday alone. So as Easter approached we decided that we would borrow Alma's new car, drive to the Coast and spend the holiday in Dubrovnik. We had been to Dubrovnik many years ago when we travelled for 6 months in Europe and at that time had fallen in love with this beautiful old walled city. Going back was like revisiting a friend. As we walked the steep walls surrounding the city, it was obvious just how bad the war damage was. Almost 70% of the roofs of the old buildings had been replaced with new red tiles. The Serbs had shelled this beautiful UNESCO World Heritage City. Above the city the hills were scorched where fires had been set to the forests. We learned that on one day alone in 1991 over 800 shells fell on the city. The war continued there until 1995.

As we explored the narrow streets we saw that the work going on to make repairs was being done with the utmost care to make it look as it was. This little city is over 1000 years old. The inhabitants and shopkeepers are determined to make it as good if not better than it was before, but one wonders just what was lost.

The drive to the coast and back was incredibly beautiful. This part of Bosnia and Croatia is mountainous with valleys full of fruit trees. When we exit the long tunnels along the route we felt that we were seeing villages that were very different from each other. It's hard to explain, but each one is unique probably due to the hundreds of years many have existed prior to the building of the tunnels.

As we headed south for the coast, convoys of SFOR vehicles were headed north from Mostar. There had just been problems with Croats who were upset with Internationals making some adjustments to banks there. There is a hard core of Croats who do not want to be part of Bosnia and the SFOR troops had no doubt been there on their peacekeeping mission. We wondered why there were so many heading north and later heard on CNN that Colin Powell was in Sarajevo. That explained it.

At our first glimpse of the sea, Len and I suddenly felt homesick. We hadn't realized how much we miss the ocean, but when you live beside it as we do on Vancouver Island it has become a part of us. The drive along the coast to Dubrovnik felt very much like our home in Canada and was almost therapeutic. We went to the little port just outside the walls of Dubrovnik and found a small boat and after some negotiating we were out on the blue green water. The owner of the boat spoke perfect English and asked us where we were from. We told him that we lived near Vancouver, British Columbia thinking that he might not be familiar with our City of Victoria. He nodded and said that he had been to one of the most beautiful cities on earth called Victoria. He went on and on about how much he loved everything about that city. What a surprise! Len didn't tell him that he had been the Director of Planning for Victoria, we just sat back feeling very happy as the waves danced around us like diamonds in the sun. It was a very good holiday.

The work that we are doing here has expanded since we first arrived. We are meeting more internationals and coordinating our resources to make the projects more successful. Our first task was to prepare a new development plan, "Spatial Plan" to serve as a tool for the management of growth and development. As well as working on the "Spatial Plan" with the Urban Institute of Tuzla, we are assisting the Minister of Social Affairs and the Minister of Urbanism in better organizing and training their respective staffs. By law, here in Bosnia, 30% of those elected in the

government must be women. Gender strategy is one of our projects in raising awareness of the importance of gender gaps especially in the area of local planning and decision-making.

Encouraging participation from the ground up, rather than the old communist method of top down is one of our priorities. A new community radio station has been granted a license and when we are out in the cantons presenting workshops we hope to assist the radio producers in finding people who will be interested in receiving training so that they can put together local programming for the station. There is a great need for solid waste management here and hopefully we will be able to assist in starting recycling programs in some of the cantons. Many of the cantons have community groups already established so we will encourage these people to get recycling started "at source" in their communities. Garbage is a worldwide problem but here it is especially great. Finding a place to put a garbage dump is difficult due to the number of land mines in the country. Apparently even cleaning up wild garbage sites is hazardous with land mines under the refuse.

We have met many young people here who have decided that rather than abandon this country as many of their friends have chosen to do, they will stay and try to make a future for themselves and their children. It is this attitude that we find most refreshing. There are many in the old guard that cannot or will not ever change, and they make things difficult for this younger generation. The declaration of independence in 1991 and then immediately being thrown into a war until 1995 devastated not only the economy but left a quarter of a million dead, over a million homeless refugees and more than a million left the country.

Joining the European Union is a dream for many, but they have so far to go it will take so much of their young lives in the attempt. Last week Bosnians were told that they now have to get a visa to enter Hungary, as of June 1st. That was a heart-breaker for many, who felt that maybe things were getting easier.

The University of Tuzla was founded

in 1976 and presently has about 6000 students. Our colleague, Dr. Benjamin retired from politics during this last election in November and is now the Dean of Philosophy at the U of Tuzla. There has been an effort to improve the university as it has had problems of "corruption" as it has been described to us. Some excellent, bright students have chosen not to attend until things improve. Information gathered from the Internationals here as well as workshop tours to Canada and other countries appear to be of immense value to Tuzla decision makers who have gained access to that experience.

So many lives have been lost, ruined or changed completely during this past decade. War criminals who are indicted by the UN War Crimes Tribunal or arrested for trial in The Hague are spoken about quietly, with heads shaking. The massacres that took place seem to be of another time, as if time can heal these wounds. Every time we hear about the latest Balkan crisis we shudder. We hope that this area has found a peace that will last. With all the peacekeepers on the ground for the time being, these people are getting on and are making the best of their future. Everyone here has experienced a horror that we in Canada have never and hopefully will never see.

Until next time,
Karen and Len

The Story of Emily Long

by Darrell Gudmundson

I remember Emily Long. Through the 1950s, when I was growing up, she was an annual visitor—a frail, stooped old lady with liver-spotted face, but eyes of the clearest blue; hair wispy thin and grey, tied up in a hair-net. Her voice was strong, with an untraceable accent, not quite British. She walked with me to inspect the lilacs, wild-flowers and the vegetable garden. We did jigsaw puzzles together. I remember little she said; but I remember her presence, her firm approach to life, and the invisible presence of Love.

Emily Long was one of the very first trained nurses on the Canadian prairies. She was instrumental in the founding of several of Saskatchewan's hospitals, and was honoured by the Canadian Legion for distinguished service in the Red Cross during the First World War.

The Longs of England

The Long family of Iceland were founded in the 1700's by Richard Long, a son of a trading family from the South of England, probably on the channel coast. In the early 1700's, Long's owned a trading Company; with at least one ship, and a store on the docks—the city is unknown. They traded up and down the European coast, possibly into the Mediterranean.

The Long family had three sons, Richard being the youngest. They knew the sea-trading business, and the eldest son was ready for greater responsibility. Accordingly, their parents allowed the three boys to assume command of a relatively 'safe' trading voyage; and they accompanied the ship's captain as representatives of the Family.

The voyage went horribly wrong. The ship was attacked in the North Sea by

pirates. They were said to be dark swarthy fellows; likely Moors from the South of Spain or the North of Africa. The ship was boarded, and all crew were either captured as slaves or put to death and dropped overboard, including the two elder brothers. Richard alone was spared because he was still just a child. Richard never saw his family again.

A pirate crew was put aboard; and the ship was taken in the direction of Denmark. This may have been a food-raiding mission; or they may have had there a "fence" for their stolen cargo. In those days, it was common in Scandinavian countries, as well as England, for pirates to raid coastal farms to capture sheep. (Moors were reported to have raided even the coast of Iceland, taking sheep.)

The pirates dropped Richard at dockside in a Danish city, likely Copenhagen. There he was, alone in a foreign country, without friend or family. However, he soon caught the eye of a kindly Danish trader, who immediately liked the boy. This merchant, having been denied sons of his own, took Richard home and virtually adopted him.

The kindly Dane's wife also took to Richard as her own son, and they were delighted to have him help in their store. Richard's command of English would have been a help in dealing with the many foreign vessels that stopped; and his knowledge of the trading game was considerable as well.

An Icelandic Dynasty

Iceland was then a protectorate of Denmark (much to the distaste of the Icelanders), and trade between Denmark and Iceland was great, due in part to the protective policies of the Danes. Richard's



Emily Long

adoptive father asked him, as the only one he could trust, to travel to Reykjavik and establish a store there. Richard agreed, and armed with a large bag of gold, set out for Iceland. A store was soon established; and Richard found himself the proprietor of a thriving trading business.

In due course, the attractive Icelandic women drew the attention of the prosperous young merchant. Richard married, and settled down to found a modest Icelandic dynasty.

By the time Emily Long was born, her particular branch of this family had fallen on tougher times. They may have been reasonably well-off, but poor health seems to have been their nemesis. In any case, they were able to provide Emily with good education, which seems to have been gained just in the nick of time.

Emily received training as a nurse at Seðisfjord on the East Coast of Iceland, during three years attendance at a well-known girl's school there. (The building is still in use as a private home.) Her own family in Iceland were all ill, dying or dead of tuberculosis—her brother, for example, had tuberculosis of the bone & lost several limbs, one after the other, before death. One gets the impression that by the time she emigrated, there was virtually no one left of the family but Emily. She was alone in the world except for relatives in Canada.

Relatives in Manitoba

Emily had relatives in Winnipeg, to whom she came. Her aunt, Valgerður Pallson (in her 2nd marriage) lived at 532 Beverly Street. Valgerður was my mother's great-grandmother, on her mother Lizzie's father's side. Valgerður was originally a Long—her father was Richard Long, a descendant of the original Richard. She also had a brother Sigmundur Long in Winnipeg—Emily's uncle who was a noted writer and poet. He is remembered as being tall, thin, and with brown-grey hair and beard (Sigmundur was recently mentioned as having been the owner of a very recently discovered ancient Icelandic manuscript from the 15th century.). Sigmundur had a

daughter Freda, who may be still in Winnipeg, though likely under a married name.

After coming to Canada, Emily repeated her entire nursing training in Neepawa, Manitoba, graduating in 1910. It may have been a requirement, or she may have done it just to learn the terminology in English. Some of her notebooks from Neepawa are still around—and they reveal a beautiful strong handwriting, with margins and covers inscribed with English Poetry which she had found inspiring. The verses which she chose to copy out were invariably calls to service and urgings to display strength - service and strength clearly were the watchwords of her life.

In Manitoba around that time, Emily became acquainted with Nellie McLung, a prominent feminist and author who led the charge to gain the vote for women in Manitoba. They knew each other well, and corresponded over the years.

From Neepawa, Emily went to serve as a doctor's nurse around Wadena. This would have been influenced by the fact that her relatives, the Arngrimsons, my mother's family, were twenty miles away at Elfros and at Mozart. At Wadena Emily worked with Dr. Rawlins. In those days, nurses would drive out to the patient's farm or village home with the doctor, there to stay in the patient's home till they were recovered. There were as yet no hospitals in those communities. Since Elfros was the location of Emily's closest family, she came there to rest up at the farm of Sig and Lizzie Arngrimson when the heavy load of caring for the sick became too great.

The Great War

At the onset of the Great War, Emily went over to England representing the Canadian Red Cross, embarking in 1914. She was immediately put in charge of a hospital on Channel Coast. It promptly filled up (all hospitals in Britain quickly filled up), so the wealthy and titled people opened their large homes for use as hospitals and convalescent homes.

One such titled person was Lady

Willingdon, of Wales. When Lady Willingdon opened her house, Emily was sent there to run it as a hospital. Lady W. moved into the "small" gatehouse (the gatekeeper then being in military service), taking only her butler with her, and leaving the other servants to help in the hospital, or to perform other war-related duties. All furniture was taken out of the house, and all fine rugs rolled up. In went army cots, ten to twenty cots per room, and other hospital equipment. In an impressive display of support, the whole town turned up as volunteers, to tend the sick, tend the grounds, cook and clean.

Wounded were moved in in large numbers, and Emily was worked to exhaustion as matron. In the midst of confusion, a tiny elderly lady approached to be given instructions. Emily, not even looking up, said "You can scrub these floors. There's a bucket over there—everything has to be disinfected. The lady got down on her knees and disinfected ward floors. Day after day she showed up and resumed her task.

After several days, the wounded had all been accommodated, the place had settled down to routine, and Emily's floor scrubber approached her. Emily was nearing exhaustion - once again. This time it was an invitation to tea - at the gatehouse! Lady Willingdon could see that her supervisor had worked, around the clock, even harder than she had done scrubbing her mansion floors!

At the appointed tea-time, Emily set out along the path to the gate-house, to

find that the walk was fully five miles! Lady W. had made the walk, rain or shine, adding ten miles each day to the task of scrubbing the floors. They became the best of friends, with renewed respect for one another.

Emily spent most of the war at Willingdon till hospital space was freed up, then went to a hospital at SouthSea, where she remained till 1919.

Before leaving Britain, Emily was invited to London, where she was decorated for her wartime service by Queen Alexandra, the Queen Mother.

Homecoming to Wadena

Emily finally came home in an exhausted state, and got a new job right away. When a new Wadena hospital was built in 1919, in Wadena, Dr. Rawlins recommended her. In those days, the matron was hospital administrator as well as chief nurse. Emily found that the hospital committee, all farmers, had built an entire building of nothing but bed wards—no kitchen, no dispensary, no waiting room, lounge or laundry. Furthermore, the committee had assumed the matron would be on duty 24 hours, but provided no room for her to rest up! Emily made a comment about "dumb farmers," and then proceeded to re-make the plans of a facility already built. I always wondered why the waiting room of the old Wadena hospital was so very tiny. It was because it was originally intended as a single-bed patient room—

John Harvard, MP

Charleswood St. James-Assiniboia
Chair, Northern & Western Caucus

3050 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0Y1
Ph: (204) 983-4501
Fax: (204) 983-4728
www.johnharvard.com

Room 774 Confederation Bldg.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Ph: (613) 995-5609
Fax: (613) 992-3199
harvaj@parl.gc.ca



duty - she simply remained too exhausted to keep up her former pace.

Then Emily was called to go to Kerrobert to staff a new hospital there. She stayed in this position for quite a few years. She worked at her usual punishing pace, but saw to it that she took a long break every summer, travelling either to Winnipeg, Gimli or Elfros to rest.

Illness strikes at Edam

Then came a disastrous episode. In the mid-1920's, Emily was called to take over a hospital at Edam. She was hired as matron - it was the usual prairie scene; Edam had a tiny little hospital - no thought had been given to the matron's comfort - it was assumed that she would live in the hospital and be on 24 hour duty. That, if it had been all, would have been alright!

Emily arrived at Edam, and was given a tiny hospital room as her only living quarters. What no one told her was that the room's previous occupant had died of Erysipelas.¹ The staff, if there was any, had not disinfected the room adequately, if at all. Emily promptly contracted Erysipelas, and very nearly followed her room's former inhabitant into the grave!

Emily became gravely ill within hours of occupying the contaminated bed at Edam. She went unconscious and lay in a coma. As she had just been hired, and was

unknown in the town, no one knew who or where her nearest kin were. Therefore they arranged to announce her plight over radio, asking for her family, if any, to contact the Edam hospital at once. My grandmother, Lizzie Arngrimson of Elfros didn't have a radio—many did not in those days. Fortunately, Mrs. Anna Kristjanson of Elfros, whose husband Swain was a local businessman, heard the broadcast and telephoned the Arngrimson farm. Lizzie phoned immediately to Edam and offered to come. Emily was still unconscious so there was no point in going, but Lizzie kept in touch regularly. Emily was not ready to leave hospital for quite some time. Finally, the hospital sent a nurse with her to Saskatoon and put her on the train to Elfros.

When Emily arrived at Elfros she was completely bald, the disease having caused all her hair to fall out. She remained very thin-haired the rest of her life. Furthermore, the skin had come off her face & hands, leaving new skin as fresh as a baby's. She was very weak, and walked only with support. She came in early spring, and needed the entire summer to recuperate. Memory fails, but that would have been about the summer of 1928.

Incident at Vonda

Eventually, Emily returned to Saskatoon and the nurses' registry. Other

assignments followed one after the other, too numerous to mention. However, one such was at Vonda, near Saskatoon, where Emily was witness to a strange chain of events in the town.

The bank manager in Vonda, and his wife, had always kept themselves a cut above the townspeople. They had come from a larger centre, and clearly felt they were among the hayseeds. Then the bank manager unfortunately lost his wife to illness. While she was ill, they had hired a servant girl to keep house. Some time after the wife's death, the banker married the housekeeper. Unfortunately, he also began beating her.

Emily happened to be in Vonda, on a nursing case, when the word was spread throughout the town. It seems that several of the town women got together, and spoke to their husbands about the beatings suffered by the banker's young wife. Spurred on by their wives, the husbands came at night to the banker's back door and asked to see him. They then took him, in the dead of night, down the back alley, pulled his pants down, and spanked him soundly! What implements, if any, were used, remains unknown. They then made it clear to him, that any repeated injury to his wife, and they would repeat the treatment, in the full light of day, on the Main Street in front of the bank. Enough said. The banker eventually left town after a short stay.

The Welding Outfit

Another interesting incident occurred in a town whose name has been forgotten. Emily was called from the registry to travel to this town, where she was met at the station. The young doctor in the town had worked in the city, but was new to the countryside. The patient had pneumonia, and the doctor had announced his inability to save him. He was dying.

Emily's reaction was vehement. "Don't be silly", she snapped. "Of course he's not going to die." She applied warmer blankets, then threw the window open to the chill air. She then called for oxygen.

"There's nothing like that here!" said the doctor. Emily said "Nonsense! Get the mechanic from the service station." They brought the bewildered mechanic, and Emily sent him back with instructions to bring the tank from his welding outfit, along with other bits to make a makeshift tent. The young lad was fine in no time at all.

The family wrote, and sent annual gifts, for years after that. They even wanted Emily to come and live with them in her later years!

Easing into semi-retirement

After that Emily stayed in Saskatoon, and took no more matron jobs except every summer in Gimli, at Betel, the Icelandic home for the aged. Income from that one treasured job was carefully guarded, and this tided her through the winter. She would come to Elfros at Easter, often staying till summer when she went to Gimli. She could still be counted on to come and care for aging and ailing relatives on occasion.

In Saskatoon, Emily rented a single room from Maud Devine, a feisty lady with strong Conservative views (could it be?). Maud ran a huge rooming house in a former mansion which was multi-storied, pillared and with a broad but collapsing front portico. It sat on Spadina Crescent, a block from the Bessborough Hotel, where the Sheraton Cavalier is today. Emily had a tiny room, closet-sized, with single bed, table with kettle & toaster; a tall chest of drawers with a hotplate. There may have been a writing desk. Fortunately, to offset the cramped character of the room, Emily also had use of a generous rear balcony where she could take fresh air; such air was in short supply indoors.

From 1947 to 1952, my mother was convalescing after two full years with Tuberculosis at the Saskatoon Sanitarium, a landmark which is now demolished. She was required to take the train into Saskatoon for regular follow-up checks, first every 3 months, then every 6, then yearly. From ages 4 to 6 I often accompa-

*D*ee's RESTAURANT

Ichabod's LOUNGE

FAMILY DINING

FULLY LICENSED

- Steak • Seafood • Ribs • Pizza
- Chicken • Veal • Children's Menu

We deliver all our menu items

Lounge • Big Screen TV • VLT's

• Facilities for group parties (up to 60)

- Dine in - Take out

- Home delivery

Ichabod's Lounge 889-7887

888-3361



nied her by train to Saskatoon. A highlight of each trip was a visit to my beloved 'Aunt Emily', when she was in the city, and when she was well. Always there would be coffee and cookies in her tiny closet of a room, and sometimes a visit to the riverbank, with the marvellous multi-coloured fountain near the Bess. Once I recall walking slowly to the Kinsmen park containing the miniature train - a different one than is ridden on by kids today. Then it was back to Maud's run-down, falling down old porticoed mansion on Spadina. You had to watch your step on the front steps and front platform; the boards would flex and some had broken.

Emily still made wonderful Easter visits to our farm, where she would stay up to a month or two at a time. She always pulled her weight, whether helping in the kitchen, at the woodpile, or caring for me. I remember her fondness for jigsaw puzzles, playing cards, and subtly teaching a small boy

about her attitudes to life. Her stays were probably longer during my mother's convalescent period.

Maud's old house, what remained of it, was bought, I am told, by the Catholic Church nearby, which then re-sold it when the Sheraton was constructed. I understand that Maude had a room or suite in the upper floors of the Bessborough hotel until she died.

"Retiring" to Betel

Emily left Saskatoon for good around 1953, to stay in the Betel home at Gimli. This home, on the Gimli main street, has now been replaced by a modern nursing home. She will already have been well-known there, due to all the summers she worked.

In 1955, at the age of 12, I was sent to visit relatives in Winnipeg. In due time, I

was taken to their cottages at Gimli. My uncle took me to visit Betel. Emily would then have been there about 2 years, and I had missed her frequent visits to our farm. She was nowhere to be found. She was not in the main floor living room or lounge area; not in her tiny room up the prominent flight of stairs. Finally, a member of the staff was asked. We were advised to check the kitchen. There was Emily, in the great hospital-style kitchen. She was scouring out huge 5 gallon soup kettles which dwarfed her tiny frame in size. That tells all about Emily Long, then age 82. She could not be without work to do.

A cousin, Ben Peterson of Saskatoon, himself a veteran, had at one time arranged

for Emily to have a small pension through the intervention of the Canadian Legion, in appreciation of her wartime service to the wounded of the Great War. In those days, there was no Canada Pension, and the standard old-age pension would not have supported anyone in the 1950s.

At her death, the Legion took over, and handled the funeral, with full honors.

1. Erysipelas: Acute infectious disease of the skin or mucous membranes cause by a streptococcus and characterized by local inflammation and fever.

Serving Rural Manitoba

*When the hardest decisions
need to be made...*

Contact us,
or visit our website,
for information on pre-need arrangements,
funeral and cremation services.

Our professional staff would be pleased to
provide your family with quality advice,
products and services.

Funeral Home:
984 Portage Ave. at Aubrey St.
(204) 949-2200

Crematorium:
3030 Notre Dame Avenue
(204) 949-2204

Ask us about
"Life Legacy"
Recording Project

PHARMACISTS:
Ernest Stefanson
Garry Fedorchuk
Claire Gillis

642-5504

PS PHARMASAVE

**We care
about your health**

Centre and Fourth / Gimli MB / R0C 1B0

Home

by Sara Arnason



Wayne Arnason, Sarah Arnason, John (Afi) and seated, Amma Amma Runa Arnason.

We drive past the prairies made yellow and purple by the flax and mustard in full bloom. In the distance I spot the old grain elevator, letting me know that we are almost there. My uncle's van finally turns the corner onto Centre Street, the hub of Gimli, Manitoba. I am home.

In the late 1800's my ancestors on my father's side began to settle in North America. One of the first places my Icelandic relatives came ashore was at the White Rock. Little did they know at the time, this historic site was just a few miles down the road from the future location of the small fishing village, soon to become tourist attraction, suitably named Gimli, "home of the gods." Since then, Gimli has become the centre of Icelandic culture in North America. For one weekend every year, this tiny town of only one mile squared draws thousands of people from all across Canada, North Dakota, and Minnesota. During these few days in August this sleepy little town, normally inhabited by retirees, magically comes to life.

Each year, as my father and I drive into Gimli from the Winnipeg airport, I feel this great sense of pride swelling in my chest. I can't help but think that I must be one of the luckiest people alive. Once a year I get to rediscover my heritage and my roots, which means more to me than anything in the world. Though the weekend generally holds the usual events that I have been participating in for almost eighteen years now, as the years pass, I seem to realize a new meaning in every moment. When I recall past *Islendingadagurinn*s (the proper name for the Icelandic Festival) I can't help but think of all the cultural events I have attended. I have seen slide shows and countless documentaries telling the stories of my ancestors' struggles. There have been

plays written by Icelanders produce in the Aspire Theatre/Gimli Unitarian Universalist Church and sermons preached in the same building by proud Icelandic Canadians. I have heard the Reykjavik Choir, witnessed traditional Glima Wrestling and visited a recreated Scandinavian village. I have even made *ponnukokkur*, an Icelandic dainty, taken pictures with the President of Iceland, and presented flowers to the *Fjallkona*, symbol of the festival, while dressed in traditional Icelandic costume, all in one day! What I have realized from this reminiscing, however, is that it is not the cultural events of the festival that make these weekends so magical or informative. It is simply the quality time that I get to spend with my ever growing extended family that has taught me the most about who I truly am and where I have come from.

I think first about my Amma amma—my great-grandmother. Just three years old when she came to Canada, little Gudrun was raised according to the rules and ethics of hard labour. Her family had brought her into a country that was newly settled and still needed much work. She grew up strong and healthy, married Johann Vilhjalmur Arnason, and soon had the full time job of raising nine children. Gudrun Arnason's hardworking life style paid off immensely. My Amma amma got to see four more generations come along before she died at the age of 109, holding the title of the oldest living Icelander in the world at the time of her death. I remember singing and acting out the children's song "On Top of Spaghetti" in her nursing home room when I was small. In return she would serenade us with an old Icelandic folk song. She had a wonderful sense of humour and a personality that would light up any room.

The most important lesson I feel I have

learned from my Amma amma is to never let your age inhibit your life. Of course her physical capabilities became limited as she grew older, but she never let her age dull her spirit. Up until the last few years of her life she always seemed involved in, and up for, any activity, whether knitting, attending a nursing home or festival event, or being interviewed for yet another newspaper. She would go outside to look at the lake whenever possible and tell stories or sing for whoever would listen. I also do not believe one week passed where my great-aunt Anna did not come in to color the gray out of her mother's hair. When asked about her longevity, Amma Amma claimed the secret to her long life was coffee. If I were asked that question, I would say with conviction that it was truly her hard work and the love she gave and received to and from her family. The characteristics I have mentioned I strongly believe my Amma amma successfully passed down to every member of my family, of which there are more than one-hundred of us still living. The two men I admire the most, my father and grandfather, or Afi, definitely possess aspects of my great-grandmother. They have both lived their lives believing in hard work, devotion, the importance of humour, and unconditional love.

My Afi, who could turn any situation into a joke, worked his way up the corporate ladder to become President of the Manitoba Hydro - Electric Power Company, while raising four children who adored him. My father has been a Unitarian Universalist Minister for about twenty years, is very well respected, and puts up quite well with a crazy daughter and equally crazy wife, who think he is the most wonderful man alive. With influences like these in my life, I can only hope to turn out half as successful as they did. Though I can attribute much of my life lessons to immediate family members, I can't forget those who I am not as close to, but have still affected my life greatly.

As I stated before, there are over one-hundred members still making up the Arnason clan. Most are cousins in some form or another. The most special thing about our family is that though many of us

only are in contact once a year at festival time, the bond is there no matter what. After a year, you are still greeted with a hug and a friendly grin. Every family member, even the new in-laws (or out-laws as we like to call them), is welcomed with open arms and a dozen questions about how your year has been. I'd have to say, that once you are a member of the Arnason family, you are a member for life. Whether separated by divorce or distance, you are never forgotten. The need to never forget where you have come from is also constantly present, as is the sense of humour that I described in my Amma amma.

Just last summer a few cousins put together a slide show of all the cousins of my father's generation and their parents when they were young. Cousins Susan and Debbie, dressed as the two old ladies who used to work at the Gimli movie theatre, gave us tickets, served us popcorn, and encouraged the entire family to sit back, relax, and remember. At intermission the youngest cousins of my generation performed the Dixie Chicks song "Goodbye Earl." All generations seemed to blend together till we were just one mass of happy Icelanders who wanted nothing more but to simply be in that moment. The night was wonderful and I think I can speak for everyone when I say we felt complete. Being an Arnason has meant so much to me. It means that I must be hardworking, caring, and open to new possibilities. It means that I must have a sense of humor in all situations. It means that I can never forget where I have come from or any of those who have helped me along the way. Most of all it means that family is the most important thing anyone can have and one should never take that for granted. In my mind Gimli, Manitoba, Canada will always be the most magical place on earth, but I must remember where the magic has really come from. I must remember what makes this tiny town truly feel like home.

Atkins & Pearce
Canada

Hugh Holm
PLANT MANAGER

P.O. Box 101 Bldg. 66, Portage Road
Southport, Manitoba Canada R0H 1N0
(204) 428-5452 FAX: (204) 428-5451

Calling all Young Writers!!

The Icelandic Canadian is looking to publish
the work of young authors.

Now accepting any type of writing including poetry. For your first entry we are looking for a humorous story. What makes you laugh? Did something funny happen to you or someone you know? Write a short story of 150-200 words. You have a chance to be printed in the Icelandic Canadian or to win a great book prize.



Enter now!

Category I Children 11 and under
Category II Children 12 and over

Please send your entry to:

Icelandic Canadian Magazine

17 Centre St., Box 1156, Gimli, MB R0C 1B0
or email to: icelandiccanadian@hotmail.com

A Visit to Canada

by Kristin Adalsteinsdóttir



Kristin with Sam Guttormson as she studies to understand the life of new immigrants.

Over a cup of coffee, Haraldur Bessason was telling me a story, one of his incredible stories, but not the story I am about to tell. This time I interrupted Haraldur and said, “I am going to Canada for a year. Where shall I stay?” His answer was immediate: “You should go to Victoria; they have a good university, Butchard Gardens, and constant mild weather.”

To make a long story short, my husband Hallgrímur and I rented our house in Iceland and bought tickets for Canada. After a very long flight, the prairies appeared below us. I thought about the Icelanders who had fled the difficulties and hardship of their lives in Iceland, just over a hundred years ago, to start a new and better life in Canada. As a child, the stories about the immigrants were, for me, almost like fairy tales. In Lögberg Heimskringla, which my father bought, I saw pictures of beautifully dressed people in America, astonishing surroundings, and sheep with strange tails. However, thoughts about the immigrants disappeared when the fabulous wonders of the Rockies came into view. I had certainly entered a new world this autumn day in late September 2000.

The first days in a new country, one’s senses, are definitely open for new experiences and almost everything is of interest. We were first struck by the beauty of Victoria: the gardens, the Arbutus tree, the beaches, and the Olympic Mountains. However, our eyes gradually opened wider to encompass not only the land, but the people. We had been in Victoria for only two days when our neighbours took us for a ride around the city to show us its qualities and beauty. The following weekend they showed us around, beautiful harbours, vineyards, and coffee houses. Later they invited us to a Thanksgiving dinner

with their family. Throughout the year, we met many people; they all seemed to have in common these incredible manners, manners that seemed to be rooted in consideration rather than tradition.

Why do Canadians seem to be so considerate and kind? Perhaps the answer can be traced to life in a multi-cultural society, in which people must learn to accommodate themselves to many different ways of doing things and thinking. Or, as a friend of mine said, “The pioneers had to be considerate of each other—otherwise they would never have survived—and this may have worked into a cultural characteristic.”

The Canadians are not only friendly; they also wish for reciprocal behaviour. On my third day in Victoria I was out, walking quickly, bending forward against the wind, as often is necessary in Iceland. Of course there was no wind to fight against in Victoria, but I had not yet changed my way of walking. A young man approached me, and said, “Smile!” I was shocked. Why was he asking me to smile? What did I look like? What did I do wrong? This incident made me think. I began to realize that people I met in the neighborhood smiled at each other, and often commented on different subjects. As the days went, this simple, uncomplicated habit did mean more to us than might be comprehended at first glance. We felt that this kind and friendly behaviour was a welcome.

A large announcement at the University of Victoria caught my eye in November. The Beck Trust announced “Lectures on the Icelandic Heritage,” presented by Nelson Gerrard, for three evenings. Could this be true? Out of curiosity, we decided to attend the meetings. We expected five to ten people to attend, which demonstrated our ignorance about the strong Western-Icelandic com-

munity in Victoria. The first evening 80 people showed up, and more people came the following evenings. This was the astounding. The interest in the lectures was immense, but for us there was much more. It was an opportunity to meet people—people who now have become our good friends. They made our stay in Victoria an adventure. Through them we have learned about their lives and experiences and their interest in Iceland, and we have learned about their Icelandic ancestors. Although their hospitality would require a long article in itself, I must mention one visit: our first visit to Baldur and Betty in Duncan. They are in their eighties, were born in Canada, and visited Iceland for first time a year ago. Nevertheless, they speak Icelandic as well as any person who has lived in Iceland from birth. We had heard that this might be the case, but the experience of meeting Baldur and Betty was fascinating. At Betty's coffee table, cakes and bread were served, as they would be in any stately home in Iceland. The Icelandic culture seemed to have been maintained.

We wanted to learn more about Icelandic heritage in Canada, but we also wanted to travel around the country. Knowing that the Rockies were not far away prompted us to go Banff in October, and to Red Deer to visit Hallgrímur's cousin, Darlo. Two of Hallgrímur's relatives immigrated to Canada in the beginning of last century. When staying with Darlo, Hallgrímur realized that he had hundreds of relatives in Canada. It was a pleasant occurrence, especially because Darlo was very knowledgeable about the family.

We engaged in other travels during our stay in Vancouver Island, exploring Pacific Rim National Park and South and North Vancouver Island, including Cape Scott. On Vancouver Island, nothing was as astonishing as the Rain Forest. Walking in this magnificent and untouched natural world is an experience that will stay with us. By this time we had seen two bears, both at very close range. I think we were relatively unaware of the danger of meeting these creatures. In fact, the second time I saw a bear, I thought it was a dog.

Our major travelling achievement was driving across Canada in April. The 6500-km trip provided us with pictures: one picture of the country as a whole and many smaller ones. Traveling through Rogers Pass and the Rockies for the second time did not lessen the effect of these majestic parts of Canada. A few hours later, at the top of Central Tower in Calgary, viewing the city and that widespread endless flatland, we could hardly imagine that we were still in the same country. Canada is certainly a land of contrasts. It took us only a few minutes to discover that oil and gas are the major sources of livelihood in Calgary; whereas in eight months in Victoria we never found out how people make their living.

From Calgary the prolonged flatland persists, but then there are the history and legends that become important for the traveller. In Medicine Hat, the legend says, the Cree and the Blackfoot were fighting, when the medicine man decided to flee. In his haste, he forgot his hat. The Cree saw his escape as a sign of bad fortune, stopped fighting, and were all killed by the Blackfoot. Later, we drove towards Indian Head, another place rooted in the Native culture. We did not relate this place to Canadian Indians, but to an Icelandic man from Akureyri, Jón Rögnvaldsson. Early last century, Jón travelled all the way from Iceland to Indian Head to study forestry at the Prairies Farm Rehabilitation Association, where he learned the value of shelterbelts and brought his knowledge back to Iceland. All the way to Winnipeg we noticed that shelterbelts were a common feature around the farmland and that they changed the landscape of the prairies.

On our way, we tried to spot museums, with diverse outcomes. In Regina we saw the smallest museum we had ever seen: the Prairies Museum. They had a remarkable glass art display—a beautiful cornfield made of glass. In Whitewood we eagerly looked for a museum that would demonstrate the life of the immigrants and their settlements. After several attempts we found the museum, but were disappointed to find it abandoned and in poor condition.

This disappointment, we thought,

might be compensated, as we were approaching Gimli. In my eyes, as a child, Gimli was Canada. I cannot remember having heard of other settlements. Our expectations were high. After 750 km of driving that day, we came to Libau, not far from Gimli, where Nina and Dennis waited for us. We had met them in Iceland on several occasions. It was Dennis who told us about his ancestors and their settlement. Through Dennis's narration, the land arose, and took life; every spot had its history, destiny, happiness, and joy. We saw his great-grandfathers Árni and Guttormur coming to the Gimli area, we saw how land was cleared of bushes and trees, how herds were developed, hay harvested, houses and barns built, paths carved, and boats built. We also heard how his great-grandmothers Albína and Ásdís Pálína adapted to unfamiliar circumstances. We heard about the grandfathers Þorsteinn and Einar and grandmothers Guðrún Helga and Hólmfríður, father Þorstein Andrés, and

mother Ásdís Sigrún, about brothers and sisters working and playing. We visited some of Dennis' relatives, among them brother Gary and uncle Sæmund Guttormsson. Uncle Sam is a man who lives alone, owns a great deal of land, and is interested primarily in taking care of his cows. He reminded me strongly of the many loners still living in isolated valleys in Iceland. He told me that his father, Einar, used to call him Sæmundur fródi or Sæmundur sterki and that he liked to be compared to Icelandic heroes. Sæmundur has not travelled, but when I asked him if he would be coming to Iceland, he said: "If it happens that I get married I will go; then I have a companion."

After exploring this endlessly flat land, it seemed no longer flat. It came alive. The first Icelandic settlers' destiny and faith did not leave my mind during these days. It was easy to visualize their first steps on Canadian ground at Willow Point (Vidnesi), one autumn day in 1875, but it



A kissing bridge in Heartland, New Brunswick.



My husband Hallgrimur at Indian Head, Saskatchewan.

was harder to imagine their suffering, their pain and disappointment the first year in the Promised Land. Besides having to experience completely different conditions, almost one-third of the first settlers died from smallpox the first year. But, the Icelanders were used to hardship, and their strong spirit seems to have helped them. I cannot deny that at some point I felt sad to have missed all these good people from my country. What would Iceland be like if they had never left? However, I feel very strongly that they have not quite left; the history of these people appeals greatly to me and is a part of me as a person.

It is not right to forget oneself in nostalgia. We left the prairies and soon the landscape changed: granite rocks, frozen lakes and pine forest most of the way to Thunder Bay. In Thunder Bay we had been invited to stay with Dennis' sister Louise and her husband Rod, people we had never met. Their gentleness and hospitality towards us was unforgettable, with home-made breakfast served on an embroidered white tablecloth.

The hospitality we received continued

to warm us, which was fortunate, as the next two days of our trip was wintry. Through Northern Ontario, along Lake Superior, the weather was bad, with constant snow and rain, causing us to miss a part of Canada we had been told was very beautiful. But other things were noteworthy. In a supermarket in Ontario, we suddenly realized that people no longer spoke English, but French, and on the merchandise, the French text was now turned forward. This change made us feel that we had arrived in a different world. We wondered if this difference emerged in any other way, and we saw that the design of houses and surroundings had differed from those of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

To our pleasure, in Rouyn Noranda, we found a small museum that displays the lives of Canadians in the beginning of the last century. We could see a post office, a store, equipment, and a family house. To my surprise, I saw many utensils that my grandmother had used when I was growing up. But my grandmother did not have this grand kitchen stove with a mirror on top, which allowed her to watch the children come and go and served many other functions. The kitchen stove was both elegant and superior, which can also be said of Ottawa and Quebec City, where we spent the next few days. In some ways, Ottawa reminded me of Prague, the most beautiful city of cities, and in Quebec the atmosphere of European culture and French bourgeois is prominent--a pleasant experience.

A large part of our trip across Canada was through the countryside, with contrasting landscape and views. As we drove along the St. Lawrence River on our way to New Brunswick, we thought for a while that we were back in Iceland—in Eyjafjörður, with its showy mountains, large farms, and small villages. Later, in wonderful weather, we drove along the St. John River in Grand River Valley. The view was fabulous as we drove through Bath, Bristol, and Hartland. In Hartland, we saw a covered bridge, “a kissing bridge.” Structured in this way, the bridges were built to last longer, animals had less fear of crossing, and the structure allowed people to be affectionate behind the walls.

What an idea!

Coming to Nova Scotia was pleasant, and we agreed that this was a part of Canada we surely want to visit again. We have a tendency to relate things and places to our own experience, and the shore of Nova Scotia reminded us of Iceland, while the countryside, hills, and fields reminded us on Britain. But, there were other places we wanted to be acquainted with. Therefore, I made the decision to spend my last month in Canada in Gimli, where these

lines are written. The power of the place is within me. One day, I may be tempted to write about my stay in Gimli.

After a fantastic year in Canada, I will be back in Iceland soon. What do I look forward to? It is to enjoy the fragrance of Icelandic vegetation, the beauty of the mountains, and the brightness of the air; and to speak Icelandic.



Ipsos Reid

North America
Europe
Latin America
Asia
Middle East

Ainsley Holm

Human Resources Associate
Corporate Human Resources

ainsleyholm@
604-893-1684 tel
604-658-9568 fax

Pjóðræknisfélag Íslendinga í Vesturheimi



PRESIDENT: SIGRID JOHNSON

*Support Icelandic culture and heritage
by joining your local chapter, or contact:*

THE ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE

#103-94 First Ave. Gimli, MB R0C 1B1
Tel: (204) 642-5897 • Fax: (204) 642-7151

Poetry

love is a ghost slowly solidifying

by mackenzie jenkyns

love is a ghost slowly solidifying, being born again. it lived before, it was murdered, it waits in the shadows to be (re)discovered.. it beckons with silence, with patience.. will it be seen? (wondering and hoping and wishing) love is a prayer behind my lips that i recite when your legs beguile my wits.. in praise of a violent god that shakes me, makes me shiver as it finds resurrection in the slow, soft connection of our achingly (dripping down your) bodies entwined by love, lassoed by some outlaw love, held at gunpoint by an impatient now love that wills to wish again.

love is a wish that swims through rivers. its eyes are fish and it feels the violent kicks, the sinking nothing. cocktail dramas erupt and don't you know that love wants up? it wants to possess, to be possessed, to be the only thing that could come between us.

the dream city

the dream city, drunken and bruised, loped over its shadow. whenever the shadow tried to move the sun to accommodate its maliciously symmetrical growth, the city would slide and crush its malignant double. the sad truth

(and i'm very sick of the word "truth")

is that having such a dim clone is sheer insanity. the city grows mad with jealousy. why should this shadow thing gain such an easy existence? not when the dream city has laboured so—the architects of trust feel ripped off, shamed. the evil twin has committed a forgery.

the malaise is the primary reason why the citizenry of the dream city opted to make their city mobile. to keep the evil twin of shadowy reproduction at bay, to leave no xerox trace, to be self-sufficient, to not have the moral plague of shadow to steal its glory.

and so, in this dream city, there is no night. caught under the sun all day, the citizens never sleep. always they must be

working to move everything around. purity is difficult to maintain. the constant cleaning, the constant moving of buildings one inch to the west, one inch to the west. uprooting parks and rivers. even those who were trained in the arts and non-labouring professions have been made to give up their vocations—not without some highly understandable embitterment. the cost of freedom is an enormous undertaking. in fact, the only thing that keeps the tension bearable is the unimaginable promise that the next move will be the final one, the escape from the shadows, the final divorce from the evil twin.

the divine city

through wild cities race the children of god. they will overtake the cities, make them slither back. the snake cities—the charming children.. the buildings will rise (some say "loom") and dance (some say "quake") and women will fall (some say "leap") from the building-tops only to snap their necks on the silent streets. the men all cry out in unison: "why must so many immaculate conceptions create such travesty?"

the trouble is that each of these women felt unfathomably deceived. if honesty were not so lacking in the sinister and corrupt cities and times into which they had been born, they may have been more forgiving of the fact that their immaculate child of god was not the second coming but one of many such second comings. jesus christ was so so singular unlike these multiple messiahs. divine repetition (some even thought "indifference"). one can easily understand how this would diminish (some would say "devastate") the pride and self-worth of these women who had imagined themselves to be the mothers of a new god—an utter fiction, a complete fraud.

"why did he do this?" the men wondered as they picked up their women. the children continued to laugh and dance with delight. the city would soon be theirs to rule. in time, the men would become completely entrance by these children, swooning at their every word, servile to the end.

Book Reviews

LAWS OF EARLY ICELAND

Grágás II

ANDREW DENNIS
PETER FOOTE
RICHARD PERKINS

Laws of Early Iceland: Gragas II

translated by Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote and
Richard Perkins

University of Manitoba Press, 2000, Winnipeg
\$74.95

Reviewed by DeLloyd J. Guth

In 1980 these three scholars translated and published *Grágás I*, which selected parts of the *Codex Regius*, the original manuscript now located in the Old Royal Collection, Copenhagen, and known to Icelanders as *Konungsbók*. The collecting of these laws began about 1117, their writing down in the *Codex Regius* was about 1260, and it was put into Icelandic print by

Vilhjálmur Finsen (3 vols., 1852-1883). The first English volume (1980) gave us sections of the *Grágás* that are crucial to understanding Iceland's medieval institutions and criminal law procedures: how the Assembly operated, the duties of the Lawspeaker and Law Council, the *wergild* (man-price) system and the law of homicide. There is also the Christian Laws Section, which dates from about 1122, following on the mandatory baptism of all Icelanders in 999/1000.

Now *Grágás II* gives us the rest of *Codex Regius*, with the remaining focus on civil matters and procedures: rules of inheritance, kinship, betrothal and marriage, possessory rights in land and chattels, contracts, titles, defamation ("mocking" or unsolicited "love poetry"), and even "bites from a dog" (p. 201). Medieval Icelanders certainly loved the rule of law. But did they live the rule of law? We can never know, if it is law enforcement evidence that we require: the medieval equivalencies of police and judicial records. These do not survive, even if the institutions producing such records ever then existed.

But if we read carefully the legal culture in the *Grágás*, alongside of the magnificent medieval sagas, we encounter a uniquely sophisticated jurisprudential world. Its characteristics match any modern model for a fully participatory legal system, operating eight centuries ago on an isolated North Atlantic island: it expressed substantive law within the "if . . . , then . . ." logical dialectic, starting from a conditional or suppositional statement (i.e., if one does this, then the law will do that); for its authority, it did not rely on some moral imperative (i.e., do right and do not do wrong) or some transcendent source (i.e., the gods and goddesses so command!), and thus each law's authority rested on the community's positivist command; it con-

sisted of positive prescriptions for human behaviour (defining what is to be done, if . . .), rather than negative proscriptions (denouncing "thou shalt not . . . "); it required an act, so it was always post facto and backward looking (i.e., no law against doing nothing, against not acting), and it was not intention-oriented, requiring evidence of an actor's state-of-mind-at-the-time (unlike modern Canadian criminal law's concern for motive); it never cited an actual case, although the sagas are full of them; thus, the law itself was non-cumulative, non-evolving and did not learn precedentially from previous judgments in similar cases; it was always generic, asserting the principle or rule, "if . . . , then . . . ," as opposed to allowing each case to be a possible exception to the law, to be judged on its own factual merits, as in English equity; it had a wide variety of penalties and compensations to award, from licensing the winner to self-help against the loser, to a range of fines (i.e., pay the *wergild*/man-price to the family of the person one kills), with a special emphasis on outlawries or ostracism (e.g., "If a man pisses on somebody, the penalty is lesser outlawry, (full) outlawry if a man shits on somebody" (*Grágás I*, 230); its law was book-based, making literacy, not oral memory, its declaratory medium; it required public participation, with all issues of fact decided by, usually nine, jurors, who were thus fact-finders, not oath-helpers (who simply swore support for one of the two adversaries), and with witness testimony always required; and, the single most fundamental characteristic of medieval Iceland's legal system was its meticulous emphasis on procedure, suggesting that how the law operated (i.e., according to due process for everyone) was even more important than the substantive law itself.

All this can be gleaned from these two volumes, which are carefully, comprehensively edited. This second volume provides detailed footnotes, a "Guide to Technical Vocabulary," a thorough bibliography and a brief index, as did the first volume. In other words we are the beneficiaries of three Icelandic-English experts who have produced as complete a model for scholar-

ly excellence as our academic world can still muster. The Icelandic community in Manitoba should be especially proud, both for its legal-literary heritage and for its continuing commitment to fund modern access to it, by way of intellectual enterprises such as this.

To get some sense of how significant for legal history the *Grágás* remains, consider the simple fact that none of the world's earlier cultures—Greece, Rome, Egypt, Israel, Arabia, China, India—has preserved evidence of such an integral, democratic, law-centred, procedure-based culture. At the very least the *Grágás* shows us a people trying to substitute reason for force, peace for war, negotiation for violence within human relationships. What other thirteenth century country had equal respect for a dual status for females? "Debts are not to be separately attached to a woman—not so as to give other men any right of claim on her—as long as her husband is alive, unless she has debts personal to herself" (II, 219). Any plaintiff can convene "a debt court . . . onto the assembly slope . . . and name witnesses in the hearing of a majority of the assembly participants" (II, 163). As with classical Roman law *judices*, "the two sides nominating the (twelve) judges are to invite challenge of them" and "the court-sitting is to end by midday next day" (II, 165) to insure that justice is prompt. "Now all who claim property there are to swear oaths . . . (with

GIMLI AUTO LTD.

Your Ford, Mercury,
Lincoln Dealer
Covering the Interlake

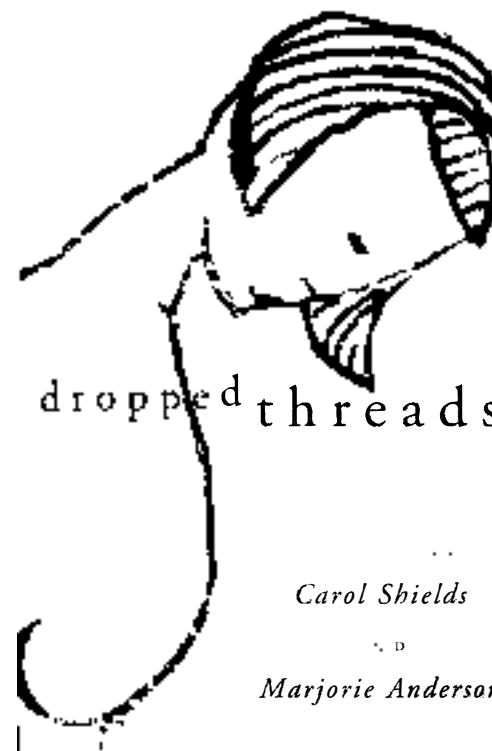
642-5137

what they have as means of proof" and they must plead in person or lose their lawsuit. Twenty-first century Canada rarely performs better in its law courts.

This, then, is a society ruled by law and reciprocal relationships. "A land deal is to be formally agreed" by both parties; otherwise it is as if no deal is made. They are to arrange between them to walk the boundaries . . ." together (II, 101). The test for an heir's mental capacity is straightforward, so to speak: "That man is also not a lawful heir who does not know whether a trough-saddle is to face forwards or backwards on a horse, or which way he should face" (II, 5-6). Then there are whale fishermen's rights to "finder's blubber" (II, 147), the farmer's "ownership marks . . . on the ears" of live-

stock (II, 168-9), "commune rules" for villages of "twenty householders or more" (II, 185), and rules against transvestism (II, 219). This brief itemisation of rights and duties only begins to catalogue the culture, making law the mirror for daily life in medieval Iceland.

Legal historians can no longer ignore the Grágás, for its intrinsic textual value and even more for its comparative value in studying the world's great legal systems. Scandinavian and German philologists have worked closely since the 1800s on its unique linguistic structure and its vocabulary. Thanks to the University of Manitoba Press, an education full of wonders awaits English readers of this beautiful and error-free book.



Dropped Threads

edited by Carol Shields and
Marjorie Anderson
\$22.95, Vintage Canada, ISBN 0679310711

Reviewed by Lillian Vilborg

This book has topped the best seller lists for months. But when it first came out I heard and read such conflicting views of it, I hardly knew what to expect. The Globe and Mail review said that women talking about their response to lived experience was overdone, boring and we didn't need another book on it. A young woman told me there was too much male bashing in it for her. Then again, another woman told me that she read a review of it in the Winnipeg Free Press, phoned McNally Robinson to set aside a copy, went straight down to pick it up, and sat down and read it from cover to cover—she said she couldn't put it down. In another review, the reviewer, confessing not to have read the

whole book, claiming in the same breath that no reviewer ever did, complained that the book was disappointingly non-intellectual.

So, I kind of steeled myself to be disappointed. However, I wasn't. I found no male bashing in the book—not a trace of it. It wasn't intellectual, in the academic sense. The pieces aren't footnoted, and hundred dollar words aren't used when a ten dollar word will suffice.

There aren't a lot of references to post-modern theorists, or to theorists of any kind. The pieces are thoughtful and mostly well-written. And because I find it very interesting to read about women's lived experience, I am perturbed when a reviewer objects to women telling their stories. As if those stories were finite.

The premise behind these memoirs and personal essays is that there are silences in our lives, silences which leave us unprepared for what life has to offer.

The silences that women live with are as varied as the thirty-five voices in this book. The pieces on childbirth and not childbirth—abortion are especially moving, as these quintessentially female life experiences are so shrouded in secrecy, films and prenatal classes notwithstanding. The searing consuming pain and ecstasy of childbirth is new for every childbearing woman, and shame, the dark secret of abortion, for those who undergo it.

Some of the writers deal with women's solidarity. Margaret Atwood wonders why women are her biggest critics, her most unreliable supporters.

There are some very well known authors in this book, like Atwood, Joan Clark, Bonnie Burrard, Lorna Crozier, Sharon Butala, Miriam Toews and June Callwood. There are also well known public figures such as Eleanor Wachtel and Sharon Carstairs. The editors, Marjorie Anderson and Carol Shields, both with an Icelandic connection (Carol is married to a man of Icelandic origin) approached people to write for the anthology. A high percentage responded, and some who heard about the work in progress, offered to submit.

The book seems to be loosely organized with pieces of similar content side by

H.P. Tergesen & Sons



**H.P.
TERGESEN
& Sons**

GENERAL MERCHANT
Established 1899

Box 1818
82 1st Avenue
Gimli, Manitoba
R0C 1B0
Tel (204) 642-5958
Fax (204) 642-9017



**THE CULINARY SAGA
OF NEW ICELAND**
RECIPES FROM THE SHORES OF LAKE WINNIPEG

The Culinary Saga of New Iceland - Recipes from the shores of Lake Winnipeg
by Kristin Olafson-Jenkyns
Coastline, 2001 \$32.95

"This magnificent compilation of recipes, comments, vignettes and photographs will become a classic to be treasured and passed on to those children and grandchildren who did not have the opportunity to be immersed in their cultural roots by their ammas and lang-ammas."
- Elva Jónasson, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

All orders: add GST plus \$5 mailing

side. There is, however, no table of contents to clarify this. I missed a table of contents. For me, it provides a framework for a book. And a way into it. At the back of the book is a list of authors, each with a short biographical sketch, but with no page reference to their contribution.

The cover art is done by Katrin Koven of Toronto, who also has an Icelandic background.

Contributors with an Icelandic connection are Martha Brooks, who writes of moments of ecstasy in her life, which began when she was a small child. Betty Jane Wylie is light hearted in her piece entitled *The Imaginary Woman*. It is with a wry humour that she discusses the profession of pataphysics. Nina Colwill's *The Worth of Women's Work* centers on her grandmother's work and wisdom, when she said "Never undervalue the work that your foremothers carved out as their special

domain, for in doing so, you undervalue yourself."

Some of the pieces in this book left me wanting to hear more—so then what happened, how did it work out, what else was going on. It's as if, given the opportunity to fill the silence, the women fill it only so much. Perhaps so that there is space left for more stories.

This is a book about silence and its opposite voice. It is about stories not told, the untelling of which leaves gaps of knowledge in women's lives.

Dropped Threads gives voice to these silences, it fills in some gaps for some women, and in so doing, illuminates the path for those who read the book.



**Pickeral • Salmon
Shrimp • Goldeye
Lobster • Crab
Hardfiskur
and more!**

We pack for travel




**596 Dufferin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
589-3474**



Rev. Stefan Jonasson
ARBORG UNITARIAN CHURCH
GIMLI UNITARIAN CHURCH

9 Rowand Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 2N4
Telephone: (204) 889-4746
E-mail: sjonasson@uua.org

Contributors

KRISTÍN ADALSTEINSDÓTTIR was born in Þórunnarseli, Kelduhverfi, and she has lived in Iceland, except for several years of studies in Norway and the UK. She is an Assistant Professor in Education at the University of Akureyri. As far as she knows, none of her close relatives immigrated to Canada or the USA, which is uncommon for most Icelandic people.

SARAH AMANDA ARNASON is a first year student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She is the daughter of Wayne Bergthor Arnason, granddaughter of Lilia and John Arnason, and great-grand daughter of Gudrun Arnason. Sarah has spent all her summer vacations in Gimli since the age of three.

RYAN EYFORD is at Carlton University in Ottawa pursuing Masters Degree in history. Ryan has been a valued employee for the Icelandic Appeal over the past 2 years.

(JON) DARRELL GUDMUNDSON is a Professional Electrical Engineer, Business Planner, Marketer, Writer, and Public Speaker. He was born at Wadena, Sask., in 1943, schooled at Elfros, Mozart and Wynyard, and attended the University of Saskatchewan. He and his spouse, Edith have two daughters, Elena and Thora, and one son, Jon.

DELLOYD J. GUTH, Ph.D., is Professor of Law and Legal History in the Faculty of Law, The University of Manitoba; a Permanent Visiting Professor of Medieval Legal History, Central European University, in Budapest; Director of the Canadian Legal History Project; and, General Editor of the Supreme Court of Canada Historical Society's biographical series. E-mail address: djguth@cc.umanitoba.ca.

MACKENZIE JENKYNS is a singer/songwriter, book designer and poet who lives in Eden Mills, Ontario. He designed "The Culinary Saga of New Iceland" by Kristin Olafson-Jenkyns, his poetry is included in 'Words and Wonders: A Guelph Area Anthology', he is reading at the Eden Mills Writers' Festival, and his band Karma Repair is organizing multi-platform art events in southern Ontario. In the past year, he also produced two CD's and was the music director for a theatrical production.

ALLAN SWENSON is a Norse American writer, newspaper columnist with 25-plus years experience and the author of 50 published books. He is also a national magazine feature writer.

LILLIAN VILBORG retired after 26 yeears with the University of Alberta as Law Librarian and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Law. Lillian has re-located to Winnipeg, the city of her birth and formative years.

LEN AND KAREN VOPNEFJORD left from Victoria, although they have deep Manitoba roots. Both Len & Karen enjoy singing and have entertained the Icelandic community often.



PHOTO COLLECTION OF TERRY TERGESEN

Thingvellir, Iceland
How did she get there?

The back page

BARDAL 1994
100 YEARS

we understand

BARDAL 
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORIUM

Winnipeg's Original Bardal Funeral Home
843 Sherbrook Street Phone 774-7474
Across from the Health Sciences Centre