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# The Icelandic Canadian

Volume XXIX, No. 1

Winnipeg, Canada

Autumn 1970

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GUEST EDITORIAL — by Hrund Skulason

## OUR MANITOBA

The name Manitoba means different things to many people. But what does it mean to us the people that have made it our permanent home? We could look far back in history to 1870 when it became a province of the great Dominion of Canada, next year to celebrate its Centennial. The memories of grand-or great-grand-fathers are also too remote, so let us just take a look at the Manitoba of fifty years ago and the changes they have brought. Take a glimpse now, when all the talk is about Manitoba, the poorest province. Manitoba of the coldest climate. The Manitoba everyone is leaving because of its poverty and hardships. And yet, it is the same Manitoba where so many of us have lived full and contented lives during those past years.

No one will deny that the pioneers of Manitoba lead difficult lives. But have not the pioneers of any country or province faced almost unsurmountable difficulties? And did any pioneer ever count the cost in the struggle for a dream?

The pioneers had faith in the future of the province.— Maybe they did not have as many politicians to run it down, and tell them that it was a poor miserable place to live in. — They saw beyond the reality. They saw only the vision of the beautiful place it could become, if they perserved and gave their lives to the building of it.

Let us take a look at the Manitoba of the long ago. The roadless, powerless, mosquito-infested muskeg and

dense bush land that was our province. Think back and take a look at the people that lived and struggled through those bleak years. The people living on the lonely farmsteads, miles apart, surrounded by dense forests. The roads only narrow trails merely wide enough for a team of oxen or horses, and in many instances only walking trails where one had to wade through sloughs knee deep in muddy water. Still no one thought it was a chore to visit a neighbor four-five miles away, carrying a leafy branch to ward off the cloud of mosquitoes that buzzed all around. Such were the "good old days" when people were content to face hardship for the realization of a dream. Nothing was too much sacrifice if each year brought a little ray of hope, a few more acres of tilled land, one or more heads of cattle added to the herd, a few miles of passable road, maybe a railway a few miles closer to home. A glimmer of hope that next year one room could be added to the old house for the growing family. And thus our province was built step by step by hard work and hope.

Gradually the log cabins disappeared, oxen were replaced by horses and the horses by the motor cars. A new generation took over to reap the harvest the pioneers had sown. Roads were built, telephone and hydro lines were erected and every year brought more prosperity. The cities grew in magnitude and beauty. Industry boomed and natural resources were discovered.

Every year brought more flourishing farms. Acres of golden grain appeared where the forest had been, herds of cattle grazed on cultivated pastureland and the old outdated machinery vanished. In its place came the modern powerful machinery saving hours of backbreaking work leaving the people free for leisure never before dreamt of. And so the vision of the pioneers is slowly becoming a reality.

One hundred years is not a long time in the life of a nation, and not until 1970 will our province celebrate its centennial as a province of the Dominion. Yet we compare and criticize it because it does not meet the standards of education and culture of the centuries old civilization of Europe and Asia. Is it a fair comparison? Why not give ourselves a few more years to develop our culture and potentialities.

There is little likelihood that our climate will ever change for the better, and our soil resists even the most modern methods. But now the population demands leisure and easy living as their right, forgetting the past struggles of the pioneers, forgetting that our province is still in the pioneering stage so that it demands the strength and endurance of its people. The centennial preparations have brought a new understanding and a pride in its worthiness. Maybe in riches and natural beauty it does not meet comparison with the more scenic and prosperous provinces, but it is the place where we have chosen to live and as such we treasure and honour it. Where there is little to strive

for and few challenges to meet, life gets to be pretty drab, and at least the climate keeps one guessing. One day you roast, the next you freeze, and that in itself is worth a man's mettle.

Manitoba will ever keep within its boundaries the strong and the faithful. The sons and daughters that are willing to sacrifice the warmth and leisure of warmer climes to face the challenge of the cold and the hard work required to develop our province and make it the place of vision our forefathers saw in their dreams.

May we be given the courage to face the future unafraid. To keep building and giving our Manitoba the devotion it asks of its people, and someday it will have met all our expectations and reward its citizens for their faithfulness. Let us cherish this Manitoba, our hard fought heritage and say with one of its faithful sons:

"Take me back across the mountains

O'er the rolling prairie breast,  
Back to good old Manitoba

And the Gateway to the West.  
Leave me loose and let me wander

North between the lakes afar,  
Let me gaze in brilliant sunshine

On the jewels that they are;  
Think how often their abundance

Fed the hungry, sick and worn  
In the early days of struggle,

In the land where I was born."

• Written 1966





## AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

### HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH: A Centennial Wish for Manitoba

"Together then, let's express the desire and the wish that mutual respect, friendship and brotherhood inspire the full flourishing of Manitoba and become the measure of a happy and prosperous society."

★

### JUDGE W. J. LINDAL, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

Due to a severe and lengthy illness, Judge W. J. Lindal has relinquished his position as Editor-in-Chief of the *Icelandic Canadian*. In recognition of his many years of unstinted service in the interest of the magazine, he has been elected Editor-in-Chief Emeritus.

Judge Lindal was active in the foundation of the *Icelandic Canadian*, in 1942, and in the first number he is listed as Editorial Adviser. At the same time he was legal adviser. He was Chairman of the Editorial Board, (a synonym for Editor-in-Chief) in the years 1944-1946 and became Editor-in-Chief in 1955, a position he has continued to fill until now. He has been a frequent contributor to the magazine, including several articles on citizenship.

As Editor-in-Chief Emeritus, Judge Lindal's association with the magazine continues unbroken. ★

### THE WASHINGTON ISLAND CENTENNIAL, 1870

The first Icelandic settlers on the North American continent, after the time of Thorfinn Karlsefni's expedition, about 1000 A.D., was a small group of fewer than twenty people who settled in Utah, in the United States, in the years 1855-1871. This group, however, bore no relationship to the mainstream of Icelandic immigration to America, which commenced in 1870. In that year four men from Eyrarbakki in the south of Iceland, John Gislason, Gudmundur Gudmundson, Arni Gudmundson and Jon Einarson, arrived in the United States, settling on Washington Island, in Lake Michigan. The historic event is being celebrated this year, the main festivities taking place in July. An account of this will be received in due time.

For more details on the settlement of Washington Island, see 1968 Summer issue of *Icelandic Canadian*, p. 18.

★

### THE EARLY ICELANDIC SETTLEMENTS IN CANADA: Sigtr. Jonasson

"The Early Icelandic Settlements in Canada", is the title of an address delivered by Sigtryggur Jonasson at a meeting of the Manitoba Historical Society in 1901. A reprint of this address is now available from the Man-

itoba Historical Society, M211, 190 Rupert Avenue, Winnipeg 2, for \$1.00.

Sigtryggur Jonasson was known as the Father of the New Iceland settlement which originated in 1875. He was an able writer and speaker and this address is one of the very valuable sources of the history of the Icelandic people in Manitoba.

★

### THE ARGYLE SETTLEMENT NINETY YEARS

Ninety years ago, in August 1880, Sigurdur Christopherson and Christian Johnson set out from New Iceland to explore to the north of Pilot Mound with a view to settlement. They travelled by row boat to Winnipeg, by steamer to Emerson, and from Emerson they walked, camping at night on their three-day trek, for there were few houses on the way. What they saw of the beautiful Tiger Hills pleased them and at the Nelsonville (near Morden) land office Christopherson filed entry on a homestead on the S.E. quarter, Section 10, Township 6, Range 14, West, which he called Grund (grassy field or plain). This was the first homestead entry in the Icelandic settlement in Argyle. Johnson also filed entry Shortly thereafter, in the same period. Skafti Arason, William Taylor, Halldor (Arnason) Anderson, and Fridbjorn (Fridriksson) Fredrickson arrived in Argyle and selected

homesteads. This was the beginning of the Icelandic settlement in Argyle, the Baldur-Glenboro district.

★

### CANADIAN CENTRE FOR FOLK CULTURE STUDIES

The Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, a division of the National Museum of Man, at Ottawa, has awarded fourteen contracts for field studies in the current year. These studies include Sikh and Chinese communities in British Columbia, Negro communities in Nova Scotia, German communities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Ukrainian and French communities in Manitoba and others. Recently, a study was made in New Iceland by Mr. Magnus Mullarky, now head of the Germano-Scandinavian Section of the Centre. Mr. Sigurdur Thorlaksson, of Toronto, is a technical assistant in this section.

The bulk of the Centre's Collection of artifacts is composed of items reflecting the cultural heritage of various groups in Canada. Temporary "ethnic" exhibits are being prepared for the opening of the renovated Victoria Museum Building in Ottawa.

As a rule, the permanent exhibits will be organized on a cross-cultural basis and will cover single themes or topics, such as costumes, folk music instruments, and songs of various ethnic groups in Canada.

## THE ROYAL VISIT, 1970

by David Bergman

This year four members of Canada's Royal Family, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Princess Ann, travelled to Canada to join the people of the Northwest Territories in their centenary celebration of its establishment as a Canadian territory, and to be with the citizens of Manitoba during their celebration of the province entering Confederation.

The trip to the Northwest Territories was the first occasion a sovereign had visited that part of Canada. This region was immense and the people sparsely distributed. During their five-day visit the Royal Family had great opportunity to see and meet many people in an informal manner. During the entire tour this relaxed manner was maintained, much to the delight of all those who had the opportunity to see the Royal Family and especially those who were spoken to by one of its members.

One political result of the visit was to emphasize Canadian sovereignty over our vast northlands at a time when other countries were looking to develop its resources. There were several comments made by the Queen, Prince Philip and Prince Charles that our North be developed carefully and with judicious wisdom. It is to be hoped their words will be remembered.

From the start of their visit the Royal Family quickly warmed to the people and were relaxed. Many reporters and others were impressed by this and also the enjoyment the family was having among themselves. Throughout the tour the informality never detracted from the dignity of the family.

In Manitoba the greater part of the time was spent in the rural areas with the last two days in Winnipeg. In the urban areas security measures tightened up but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the people, or the Royal Family.

The royal visit on this occasion was important also for the reason that it was the first visit to Canada of Prince Charles and Princess Ann. The reaction of the people to Charles was delightful and the people responded to him with enthusiasm. In the earlier part of this year the Royal Family made an extensive tour of Australia and New Zealand and the people there took to Charles as the people did here. His manner in speaking to people was characterized by a genuine interest in them and many were impressed by his warm, friendly personality and sense of humour.

Princess Ann was not as forward as Charles but her position in the Royal Family was quite different and she intended to conduct herself in the fashion of a lady. Her remarks were quiet and typically made to small groups and individuals.

The Royal Visit was successful in bringing to the Northwest Territories and Manitoba a grand climax to their centennial birthday celebrations. It also served to demonstrate to the people in these regions and also the rest of Canada that people of all nationalities feel a deep and rich loyalty to our Queen and her family. It was a happy experience to participate together with many others in welcoming our Royal Family. For many people this visit was over too soon.

## A TOAST TO CANADA

Delivered by His Honor, Richard S. Bowles, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, at the Icelandic Festival at Gimli, August 3, 1970

You invite me to propose a toast to "Canada" at this annual gathering because, of course, I occupy at this point of time — the high office of Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba — and in this year of Manitoba's centenary it is fitting that such be done by that office. But I would be less than frank with you if I did not confess my personal delight in being here and the pleasure your invitation gives me as an individual, apart from my official capacity.

I am particularly happy to be with you on the same occasion as you welcome the distinguished ambassador of Iceland to Canada, His Excellency Magnus V. Magnusson. I remind him that he is one of a long line of distinguished Icelandic ambassadorial appointments, all men of great human understanding, keenly perceptive and altogether delightful companions. His predecessors have won our respect and affection both for themselves and their country. So while His Excellency may feel that he comes as a stranger, let me assure him that we feel he comes as a welcome member of the family. I look forward to listening to him propose the toast to Iceland though I confess that my Icelandic is not what it would have been had the former Prime Minister of Canada, Lester Pearson, carried out his suggestion to abolish both English and French as official languages and establish Ice-

landic. He expected to cut in half the debating time in the commons.

It is to be expected that any toast to Canada will have words of praise for our country and our Canadian people. On such a subject, praise might sound better from the lips of a non-Canadian. Perhaps His Excellency should speak to the toast to Canada and I to the toast to Iceland. For I could speak so fittingly of the magnificent Icelandic people who have made such an outstanding contribution to Manitoba and Canada. And while every Canadian may have his own explanation of why Icelanders are so prominent in our province and so successful in its business, government and professional affairs, all agree that one reason is that they are people who respect the art of learning. The Icelander is a man of the mind. A man who is trained to think, and a man who respects the virtue and creativity of other minds irrespective of national or racial origin.

For no race or nation has any monopoly on the search for or the discovery of truth — but Icelanders, each and every one, are men who believe and practice the art of the exercise of the mind, and who sit at the feet of learning, wisdom and understanding.

Not only are our Manitobans of Icelandic descent "thinkers" they are also "do'ers". Thought without action is not enough. So we find them leaders in every profession and every field of

community, government and business enterprise. I submit that when we find **people who think and then who act** we have found **people who care**. And I suppose that two reasons they care (that is that they are concerned about others) are that every Icelander has the heart of a poet and is sensitive to the pain of being a man.

And the other, that life was not always easy for our early Icelanders. When we read of the hardships they faced with such fortitude and the trials they endured and the difficulties they overcame we wonder if today we could equal them were we subjected to such a severe testing.

If, as Seneca said, "The Gods are only happy when they see great men contending with adversity," then surely they must have been delighted by the struggle of our early Icelanders.

But triumph they did and they and their descendants have woven into the fabric of Canadian life the great virtues of their national character. For in this our land of Canada, they found **opportunity**. In that, the Icelander is exactly the same as the English, the Scots, the Irish, the Ukrainian, the German; each found opportunity. And each seized opportunity to make a better life.

My toast to Canada, then, is really to the land that gave us a chance and to our pioneers who seized that chance to make a better life.

We Canadians ought to recognize those things which have made us what we are and to dedicate ourselves to those things which will make us what we want to be.

For our present well being we ought not assume too much credit to ourselves. We are the inheritors of spiritual insight whose sources rise in the early Judaic-Christian world. We are the beneficiaries of the intellectual and

artistic riches fashioned in early Greece and Rome. We have been taught the skills, crafts and knowledge born and nurtured in older civilizations and older nations with out which we could not enjoy life as we know it today. We here inherit a land of great future from those who toiled and saved, sacrificed and struggled to tame a wilderness. Here they came to make a new life and here to wrest a better living from this rich earth. Many came to a new language and new customs, forsaking the familiarity, security and comfort of the old, here to face a greater challenge and here to share a higher hope.

We cherish the infinite variety brought by all our different ethnic groups that make Canada the vigorous country it is today.

Then in a toast to Canada we ought to remember the men and women who left us for a greater cause, those who shall not grow old as we who are left grow old, neither shall age weary them, nor the years condemn and at the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall honor and remember them.

For all, we are indebted to those others in other lands whose mind and work created the greatness of the spiritual, cultural and material heritage we have adopted as our own; and for what our fathers did for us we should take no credit to ourselves but remember and give thanks.

For I am persuaded that Canada is smiled upon by fortune and touched by the hands of a great destiny.

We are blessed with good neighbors.

We are granted a bountiful land stocked with the riches and resources of an abundant providence.

To whom much is given of him is much expected. As we move from this first to our second century as a great

province in a great nation may we speak in unity and in strength.

That we may earn and keep the respect of our sister nations.

That we may not live for ourselves alone.

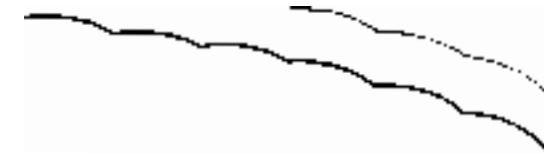
That we may discharge our responsibilities in this world of which we are a small part.

And that whether we be English

speaking Canadians, Icelandic speaking Canadians French speaking Canadians or newer Canadians of other mother tongues, we speak as one in heart; that the scripture may be fulfilled that "The latter splendour of this house shall be 'greater than the former'".

I propose the toast,

"Canada our country".



#### DR. P. H. T. THORLAKSON HONORED BY BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, founder and director of the Winnipeg Clinic and chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, last spring was presented with doctor of science degree, honoris causa, at a convocation of the University of Brandon at Brandon, Man.

Internationally known as an eminent surgeon, Dr. Thorlakson graduated in medicine from the University of Manitoba following overseas service in the Canadian army in the First World War, and over the years was professor of surgery in the faculty of medicine and the University of Manitoba, and in 1954 was named surgeon-in-chief of Winnipeg General Hospital. In 1938 he served as member of the first

medical research committee of the National Council under the chairmanship of Sir Frederick Banting.

He is a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada and of the American College of Surgeons of which he was governor for three years. He received international recognition in 1968 in Tokyo, Japan, where he was elected honorary fellow of the International College of Surgeons.

In 1920 Dr. Thorlakson married Miss Gladys Henry, a graduate in home economics. Of their three children two sons follow in their father's footsteps and are now on the staff of the Winnipeg Clinic.



## TRAGIC OCCURRENCE

by Axel Vopnfjord

On Tuesday, June 9, 1970 death came to Dr. Bjarni Benediktsson, his wife Sigríður Björnsdóttir, and their four year old grandson Benedikt Vilmundarson. It came suddenly in the night as the fire fiend engulfed their summer home on the hallowed plains of Þingvellir. Over the air waves flashed the message "The Prime Minister of Iceland burned to death". Outside the building where the ancient Alþing now convenes, a saddened crowd gathered to pay tribute. Many were weeping. A hush fell upon the daylight-blessed northern metropolis of Reykjavík. On the sun-drenched prairies of Western Canada in city, town, hamlet and farm many people of Icelandic descent and others were shocked and sorrowful.

Who was this man, Bjarni Benediktsson, that his death should evoke such a reaction?

Perhaps it was because he was the Prime Minister of a little island in the North Atlantic, an historic island, a tradition-haunted island, whose hard-working, solid, dependable people have for a thousand years encountered and overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. It may have been a tribute to the Icelandic people.

Perhaps it was because he was one of the representatives of a tradition a "way of life" which with all its many and grievous faults, is still the best which the world has hitherto evolved, a "way of life" now gravely threatened, but still the main bulwark against the flood of Oriental Despotism,

which from time immemorial has grievously afflicted mankind with its tyranny and oppression and which once again threatens to engulf us.

Tennyson wrote:

"You ask me why though ill at ease  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till  
That sober-sided Freedom chose,  
A land where girt with friends  
or foes,  
A man may speak the things he will.

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where freedom slowly broadens  
down  
From precedent to precedent".

It might have been a manifestation of our love of freedom.

It may be that the reason for this reaction was the man, Bjarni Benediktsson, himself, and "lest we forget" — his gracious wife, and grandson whose little life had scarcely begun.

His was, indeed, a varied and illustrious career.

Brought up in a home where the traditions of his country occupied a paramount place, and where the concept of service was accepted as self-evident, his early environment was reminiscent of President Kennedy's often-quoted admonition, "Think not

what your country can do for you, rather think what you can do for your country."

Positions of increasing responsibility were thrust upon him in rapid succession. Having graduated in Law, he was appointed in 1932 Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Iceland at the youthful age of twenty-four. In 1940 he was elected Mayor of Reykjavik. In 1946 he was chosen as his country's delegate to the United Nations. Prior to his elevation to the Prime Ministership in 1963, he held several positions in the Icelandic government, such as the ministries of Justice, Industry, and Education. As Minister of Foreign Affairs he led the movement bringing Iceland into Nato. For three years 1956-9, he forsook public life to become the editor of Iceland's leading daily newspaper, "Morgunblaðið".

In closing this tribute to a distinguished son of Iceland, the writer is not forgetful of his devoted wife whose inspirational influence must have been far from negligible, nor their little grandson whose potential contribution to the welfare of his fellow countrymen the fates have so ruthlessly suppressed. The writer may be forgiven if he inserts at this point two quotations that he thinks aptly apply to this departed statesman. The first is by a Latin writer: "Homo sum: humanum mikil alienum puto" (I am a

man; I consider nothing pertaining to mankind alien to me). If Bjarni's versatility, varied interests, and diverse activities are a criteria, then he might have said these words himself. The other quotation is from Kipling's "If":

"If you can walk with crowds  
and keep your virtue,  
Or talk with kings nor lose that  
common touch."

With his modesty and "common touch" he endeared himself to his hosts when he visited Western Canada in 1964.

The writer cannot but feel that Mark Anthony's tribute to Brutus dead applies — at least in part — to the late patriot:

"This was the noblest Roman  
of them all;  
All the conspirators save only he,  
Did what he did in envy of  
great Caesar.

He only in a general honest thought,  
And common good to all,

made one of them.  
His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature

might stand up  
And say to all the World:

This was a man.



## THE SONGBIRD

(SÓLSKRÍKJAN)

from the Icelandic of Thorsteinn Erlingsson

translated by Paul A. Sigurdson

Her voice was so lovely, so blithesome and free;  
It came from the woodland so gently possessing;  
And nightly she trilled out her music to me,  
In heavenly phrases, so clear and caressing;  
Her one song of love, oh how dear it might be,  
If you knew the glory her voice was expressing.

She sang of her valley in summer display,  
Where freedom and gladness are peacefully blending;  
And of the fresh grasses where June breezes play,  
And winter's cold sadness is brought to an ending.  
How good to be dreaming and singing that way,  
Her love and her gladness to everyone sending!

A triumph of life was the theme of her lay—  
The simple delights of the valley-folk telling,  
Of thickets and heatherlands stretching away—  
Her breast for the wilderness poverty swelling;  
Her song bursting in like a sun-warming ray,  
Of spring and its beauty so joyously telling.

She sings from the depths of a true lover's soul,  
Of wide sweeping moorlands, still virgin and gleaming;  
Of joys and the rapture of life's brimming bowl,  
Which vainly protests to the time's onward-streaming—  
While listening silent, the soft evenings fall,  
The dark edging nearer, expectant and dreaming. —

Your friend hears the singing, my little songbird,  
An echo of childhood, far off and forsaken; —  
And yearns for his home and that voice he once heard;  
And oh, how he wishes his spring could awaken—  
The nightingale's song strikes an alien chord:  
His heart, for his rugged old homeland is aching.

## Laura Goodman Salverson



Laura Goodman Salverson

Laura, whose husband, George, is of Norwegian descent, was not a strong advocate of the retention of the strictly Icelandic bond, although she was proud of her ancestry, which she regarded as Norse rather than Icelandic. The first paragraph in her first editorial clearly sets out her concept of the Norse ancestry.

"Every nation ascribes to itself some peculiar treasure; some unique culture; some imperishable virtue which it firmly believes to be an inestimable inheritance from the past. The Icelandic people are no exception. We have our Golden Age, our Ancient Classics, our pride in ancestors who loved freedom above lands and possessions. We like to glorify those hardy Norsemen who pioneered in Iceland, established there a remarkable Republic and instituted the first government patterned upon democratic principles."

That first editorial concludes with a prophecy which the editor ascribes to an unknown author but who probably was Laura herself, as she was a poet as well as a fiction writer.

"Leif was a man's name —  
Over the great white shoulder  
Of the World he came;  
Into a land as distant as a star  
That God had set aside  
For mortals not to mar;  
Too vast for men —  
Not till Leif's sons  
Set foot upon the moon  
Shall such a deed as his  
Be done again!"

All members of the Management Board of The Icelandic Canadian, and that may include those of the past as well as of the present, felt a keen sense of loss when they heard of the passing of Mrs. George Sr. Salverson, Laura Goodman Salverson, on July 13, last.

Laura Salverson was the first editor-in-chief of The Icelandic Canadian, which was launched on October 1, 1942. The management consisted of the following:

	Laura Goodman Salverson
	Stefan Hansen
Literary Editor	Helen Sigurdson
Circulation	Hjalmur Danielson
Business Manager	Grace Reykdal
Editorial Advisor	Judge W. J. Lindal

It is significant that the very men who first set foot upon the moon represent a nation in North America, a continent which was discovered by those Vikings of old, led by the dauntless Leifr Eiriksson.

As would be expected Laura Goodman attracted young men to her who had a literary bent or, as she herself said in her first book, "The Viking Heart", felt "those pangs which are the penalty of intelligence".

There was Baldur Jónsson, a most promising student who knew hardly a word of English when he migrated to Canada in 1905; he went to Wesley College, commencing with Part I Matriculation, and, majoring in English, won the medal (only silver medals awarded at that time) when he graduated in the Spring of 1911. Baldur contracted tuberculosis and in 1917 died in the Manitoba Sanatorium, near Ninette, Manitoba.

There was Rev. Runolfur Fjelsted, medalist in The Classics, who translated choice English poetry, like Enoch Arden, into rhythmic Icelandic. Unfortunately he died after serving only a few years in the Lutheran Church. Then there was Bjorn Hjalmarson, first Icelander in Canada to become a School Inspector; Hallgrimur Jónsson, M.C., killed in action in World War I; and yours truly, medalist in Mathematics in the Spring of 1911.

Laura used to visit her sister, Anna, wife of Sveinn Kristjanson, who homesteaded near Elfros, Saskatchewan. Those young men were attracted to the Kristjanson home, let it be frankly

admitted, because Laura visited there during the summer holidays. Laura recited poetry, and Anna served coffee, cake, and, of course, Icelandic pancakes.

Under the circumstances it is deemed more appropriate that I should quote others rather than endeavour to record my own impression of the poet, the fiction writer, the home-maker, Laura Goodman Salverson. The following appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press on July 17, 1970:

"Laura Goodman Salverson, who died in Toronto last Monday, was Manitoba's first native born novelist of distinction and the first representative of a long line of novelists of non-Anglo-Saxon origin. Her first novel, The Viking Heart, appeared in 1923, and was acclaimed by both critics and public. She continued her writing career for over thirty years. Among her many honors were Governor-General Awards for both fiction (The Dark Weaver) and non-fiction (Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter), and the Ryerson Fiction Award for The Immortal Rock.

"Her death, coming only two days before Manitoba's one-hundredth birthday, introduces a sad note into an otherwise happy occasion. But the memory of a life so rich in achievement involves much more than sadness. Her writings remain a distinguished part of our legacy and an inspiration for others to follow her pioneering example."

—W.J.L.

## Hospital Director—Dr. Asa MacDonell



Dr. Asa MacDonell

In the Winter 1969 issue of The Icelandic Canadian I wrote a brief sketch on Dr. Asa MacDonell, then Assistant Director of Deer Lodge Hospital, primarily a War Veterans' hospital. Dr. I. Sutton, the Hospital Director, retired on July 3, 1970, and now I find myself in the fortunate

position of being able to announce to readers of this magazine that on July 6, 1970, Dr. Josefina Asgerdur MacDonell was appointed the Hospital Director of Deer Lodge Hospital to fill the vacancy.

Dr. MacDonell, who even in the hospital is commonly called Dr. Asa MacDonell, has brought honor both to the Icelandic people, from whom she has descended, and to women who are in the medical profession.

She is a daughter of the late Fridrik Kristjansson and Holmfridur Kristjansson, nee Josephson, who now resides in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1943 she married Dr. Jack A. MacDonell; Director of Geriatric Services, Director of Home Care, and Consultant in Chest Diseases at Deer Lodge Hospital, which has a capacity of 620 beds.

This magazine extends congratulations to Dr. Asa MacDonell, and I append personal felicitations.

—W.J.L.

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### AN APPRECIATION

I should take advantage of the opportunity the present Editor-in-Chief, W. Kristjanson, gave me when he asked me to write the preceding and subsequent sketches. I appreciate the honor the Magazine Board of The Icelandic Canadian bestowed upon me in appointing me "Honorary Editor-in-Chief Emeritus" of the Magazine. I presume that under the constitution of the Management Board I continue to be a member, but aside from that I value very much the honor

the Board has shown me by this appointment. It has caused me to feel that I have reached the category of Bruce Hutchison, who, upon retiring from the Editorial Board of The Vancouver Sun, was made "Editor-in-Chief Emeritus" of the Vancouver Sun of Vancouver, British Columbia.

**W. J. Lindal,**

Former Editor-in-Chief

536 Central Park Lodge,  
70 Poseidon Bay,  
River Heights, Winnipeg 9, Man.



Matt Bjarnason

Matt Bjarnason, geologist with Texaco Canada Limited of Calgary, died in the crash of a helicopter on June 11, 1969 some 175 miles north of Norman Wells, N.W.T. Thus terminated the career of a young man who, had he lived would have lent his name to the growing list of illustrious Icelandic Canadians.

At the time of his death Matt was officer-in-charge of an airborne reconnaissance geological survey with headquarters at Ennak Lake near the edge of the barrens and about 100 miles south of the Arctic coast. Also deceased in the crash of the helicopter were Hughes (Pilot), and E. J. Hamilton, Matt's immediate superior and Chief Geologist for Texaco. F. J. Hamilton was a brother of Alvin Hamilton, a former Cabinet Minister in the Federal Government.

Matt was born in Port Arthur, Ontario, the second son of Alfred and Victoria Bjarnason. His early years through to the end of his primary school were spent on a farm near Leslie, Saskatchewan, birthplace of his

parents. He completed secondary school in Calgary, Matt graduated at Calgary with the degree Bachelor of Science. Matt is survived by his parents who reside in Calgary, two brothers, Fred of Calgary, and Lee of Prince George, B. C.

Matt was gifted with an acute and well disciplined mind. He was an extremely literate man and his love for reading stemmed from restless curiosity. He could converse with a labourer, a scientist, or an executive with equal ease. Moreover, he was an interesting and charming conversationalist. He enjoyed music and derived much pleasure from singing. Matt took much pride in his Icelandic ancestry.

Unassuming, utterly sincere and ever cheerful, Matt made friends wherever he went. And he enjoyed people. He will be long remembered by his host of friends. As a tribute to his memory his classmates have organized a fellowship to be known as the **Bjarnason Award** which is to be given annually, on the basis of academic achievement to a student entering fourth year in geology.

Matt was keenly interested in the Arctic where he planned to make his career. A proposal to give his name to an island in Canadian Arctic Archipelago has been approved by the Canadian Board of Geographic Names. Bjarnason Island borders on the Arctic Ocean at latitude 80° 00' N.

Those of us who were close to Matt through his brief career feel a sense of deep personal loss by his departure, and the geological fraternity has lost a highly promising member at the very beginning of his career.

Raymond Thorsteinson

## FANTASIA ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

by Dr. L. A. Sigurdson

It has always been my ambition to see the story-book places of Greece. Egypt and Israel and this year I was able to go with my wife Helen, my cousin Allan and his wife Ella. We had planned to go by ship and accordingly after a flight from Winnipeg and Chicago respectively, we boarded the Greek ship Fantasia in Venice, Italy, on the twenty-sixth day of March, 1970, for a sixteen day cruise with many stop-overs.

The Fantasia is British built and used to ply between Belfast and Liverpool. Now it belongs to the Chandris Line and is used as a cruise ship on the Mediterranean. Ours was the first cruise of the 1970 season.

When we woke on the morning of March 27, we were running down the Adriatic to Corfu, Greece, a distance of 477 nautical miles from Venice. The sea was quite rough and there was a cold wind. A few of the passengers were ill and unable to participate in the boat drill. In the evening the captain entertained the passengers at a welcoming party. Since there were 496 passengers on board, we had to have two sittings and the captain held two welcoming parties.

Due to the storm, we arrived late at Corfu, the first of the Ionian islands. We went by bus across the island along a narrow road bordered with old olive trees and orchards of citrus fruit. The traffic was heavy, ranging all the way from over-laden donkeys to Rolls-Royce cars. At Gas-

touri, we watched an exhibition of Greek folk dancing. The dances were held on the grounds of a palace called the Achilleion, which is now a casino. It was built by the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, who was interested in the legends of ancient Greece, hence the name Achilleion. There is a magnificent statue of Achilles in one of the gardens and in the palace an unpleasantly realistic painting showing Achilles dragging the body of Hector behind his chariot around the walls of Troy. There are also portraits and souvenirs of Franz Josef of Austria and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. On the way back we passed the estate where Prince Philip was born.

At four a.m. the next day, we were awakened to see the Corinth Canal which cuts through the Isthmus of Corinth, joining the Ionian and the Aegean Sea. Since the canal is only twenty-three meters wide, it was necessary for us to be towed by a small tug, the short distance of 6.3 kilometers (4 miles). The canal was dug in 1893. About every hundred yards, there were lights on both sides and when we came to the end, we passed under the railway and highway bridges.

On arriving in Pireaus, we took a bus directly to the Acropolis in Athens. Since this was Easter Sunday, all the church bells were ringing. On our way to the top of the Acropolis, we passed the ruins of the Propylaea, which in its time was a gallery of fine arts, and



Dr. L. A. Sigurdson and Allan with the Great Sphinx in the background

even now, the fragments all about us bore a mute evidence of the beauty of masterpieces never since equalled. When we finally reached the flat surface at the top and looked about us, we saw that on three sides the walls of the Acropolis were nearly perpendicular. We saw the ruins of buildings, columns and statues from some of the

most beautiful temples the world has ever known. To name only a few, the Wingless Victory, the Dionysis theatre, the Theseion, the Olympieion and at the very top of the ruins of the Parthenon, which represented the ideal simplicity, beauty and perfect proportion of Greek Art 2,400 years ago. On the way back to the ship, we saw

the Stadium, the Temple of Zeus, the Arch of Hadrian, the University, the Royal Palace and the world famous archeological museum.

After lunch, we hired a taxi and drove out to Sounion. We especially wanted to see this because it was here the Athenians kept a watch for ships coming from the south and from Asia. When a ship was sighted, the watchmen lighted a beacon to signal the approach of the ship to the Athenians. The ruins of the Temple of Poseidon built by Theseus stand at the top of the cliff where once the beacon was lighted. It rained part of the time but the drive along the Aegean was something we will always remember. The water close in was green, farther out almost purple, (Homer's "wine-dark" sea). We were fortunate in our view of the Temple of Poseidon, pure white marble columns against a very blue sky. We drove back by another road, which ran inland through a number of towns. Here were stone houses with open arched doors and by the lights inside, we could see people eating and drinking around long refectory tables. The traffic was heavy and we arrived at the Fantasia only fifteen minutes before they pulled up the gang plank.

We left Greece for Alexandria, Egypt, a distance of 509 nautical miles. During this time, we had a good opportunity of getting to know our fellow passengers. There were three Canadians, four Icelanders, twenty-five Americans and the rest were from Britain, France, Germany and other European countries. The Icelanders were Dr. Erlingur Thorsteinson, an ear specialist, and his wife Thordis and Mr. Hjortur Jonsson, a business man and farmer and his wife Thorleif.

On the morning of the sixth day of the cruise, we went on shore at the

port of Alexandria, which is known as the "Pearl of the Mediterranean" and is at the crossroads of the continents of Asia, Africa and Egypt. We took a bus through the Nile delta to Cairo. There were flat mud fields on each side of the road with men and women planting cotton and other crops. Many of the plows were drawn by oxen and camels, but in some places, tractors were used. The peasants live in villages and go to work in the fields. Most of the houses were mud huts thatched with straw. Irrigation was carried on by primitive methods in many places. The water was pumped by donkeys, bullocks or camels walking in a circle. Since pigeons are one of the sources of food; in every village we saw countless clay towers with openings for these birds.

At the end of our three hour bus trip, we arrived at the Hotel Nile, which must have been the height of elegance during the British occupation. Due to the extreme heat in Cairo, the ceilings were of necessity very high. The floors were all of marble. The hotel was clean with plenty of staff even though they had to work under difficulties with out-of-date elevators and kitchens far from many of the dining room tables. Lunch was typically Egyptian, noodles with lamb stew. For dinner, I ate pigeon for the first time in my life. There was delicious fresh fruit for dessert.

Cairo is a wonderful place to visit, the very old and new intermingled. It was the very old that we came to see. Modern Cairo was founded about one thousand years ago and now has a population of about four million people. In the afternoon, we went to the Egyptian museum, unlike any other in the world, for in this museum we saw the contents of the tomb of

Tut-Ankh-Amun, who reigned about 3500 years ago. The mummy was placed in a coffin of thick gold and then there were several coffins outside of this. There were other treasures too numerous to mention. I considered the saddest thing about this museum was that all the priceless antiquities were housed in glass cases cross-taped as in cities under siege and sand bags were piled between the cases and in all the corridors.

Later we visited the citadel and the Mohammed Ali Mosque and the Sultan Hassan Mosque, which was built in 1354 and is considered one of the most beautiful mosques in Cairo. In the evening we visited the Bazaar. The narrow streets were crowded. A man went by on a bicycle with a huge flat basket of bread balanced on his head. The women all wore black dresses and shawls. Many had small children sitting astride their shoulders. Just before returning to the hotel we went into the Omar Khayyam Oriental Perfume House, where they manufactured and sold perfumes of "enchanted fragrance and loveliness" with exotic names such as Flower of Sahara, Secret of the Desert, Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt and Queen Nefertiti.

The next morning we took the bus to the Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx, considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The pyramids are located on the west bank of the Nile so that one can look upon the endless sands of the Sahara desert and the setting sun. They are tombs of large blocks of rock built by hundreds of thousands of men working with primitive tools. Each of these is built in the shape of a pyramid. Of these, the Pyramid of Cheops is the largest and is therefore called the Great Pyramid.

The second pyramid is the pyramid of King Khephren. Outside the en-

trance to this vast tomb were many camels with their colorful camel drivers. I was persuaded to go for a short ride on one of the camels, and was seated in the saddle when without warning the driver signalled and



I was nearly pitched over the camel's head, but soon all was well and I felt like a Bedouin as I sat there with Helen holding the bridle of the noble beast and the excellent guide standing beside her.

Then Allan and I went with one of the parties into the pyramid. First we climbed the side of the pyramid for a distance of about thirty feet and then we went down a very long narrow steep ramp, finally reaching a large room. There we saw a very large box inside of which was some very sophisticated X-ray and other equipment that was used to study the inside structure of the pyramid. They were hoping to find some rooms that had not been robbed by vandals and other plunderers like the Romans.

Close by is the Great Sphinx. It is enormous and has been cut out of the natural rock with the head shaped like a human head, to signify intelligence, and the body of a lion to signify strength. It measures sixty

four feet from the crown of the head to the flat platform where the outstretched paws have rested for over six thousand years and may well be the oldest work made by human hands. On seeing the pyramids and the sphinx, one is struck by the logic that thousands of years of Egyptian civilization must have existed before this high degree of culture was attained six thousand years ago. It is sad to know that the Moslem fanatics long ago mutilated the magnificent face of the Great Sphinx, but in spite of that, one has the feeling that it will stand forever serene into eternity.

As we left the bus to go back to Cairo we had one last look at the Great Pyramid, that enormous structure built to a height of four hundred and eighty two feet with each of its

sides measuring at the base seven hundred and sixty four feet and having eighty five million cubic feet of masonry facing the four main points of the compass.

We left Cairo with regret because there was still so much to see. One of these was the Tower of Cairo, built in the form of the Lotus Flower, the sacred flower of ancient Egypt.

On arriving back to Alexandria we went straight back to the Fantasia. As we left the harbour Allan and I counted over two hundred ships of many nations including many Egyptian naval ships.

In the evening we were on our way to Limassol, Cyprus, a distance of 280 Nautical miles.

(First of two parts)

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### JUDGE W. J. LINDAL HONORED BY THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Hundreds of ex-servicemen gathered at the Minto Armouries in Winnipeg in June as part of the Royal Canadian Legion's special centennial week celebrations, and joining them for a few hours of good food, companionship and recollections was General G. R. Pearkes, V.C., former Canadian Defence minister who took the salute from more than 1,000 men.

General Pearkes and Judge Walter J. Lindal, then an officer, were in the same battle in November 1917, the attack on Passchendaele.

Judge Lindal became a member of

the Canadian Legion when it was formed at a convention in Winnipeg to combine the different war veterans' associations. Present for the occasion was Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, commander-in-chief of British Forces in Europe during the war and subsequently head of the British Legion.

It was General Pearkes' wish that an honorary life membership in the Legion be awarded to Judge Lindal for his outstanding service to Canada.

He is author of two historical books, *The Saskatchewan Icelanders* and *The Icelanders in Canada*.

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PICTURE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN ARGYLE, MANITOBA, TAKEN IN 1896



Some of the Sunday School teachers in the picture are: Reverend Jon C. Clemens; Christian Johnson; Mrs. Clara Anderson; her daughter Jónína Anderson.

Pupils representative of some of the families are: Haraldur Sigmar; Arni Stefansson; Sveinn Sveinsson; Hermann Arason; Felis Fredericksen; Bjorn Jonsson; Jon Christopherson; Carl Thorsteinsson; Helgi Helgason; Jack Bahlsin; Sigrun Fredericksen; Bjorg Olafsson; Guðjón Guðmundsson; Lauga Svædal.

## SOME REMINISCENCES OF ARGYLE

by Jonas Th. Jonasson

To most of us who were brought up in Argyle near the turn of the century the word "Church" brings memories of The Church Of Frelsis Congregation, often referred to in later years as Grund Church. For decades it was the centre of all community activity. It was built in 1889 when the settlement was only eight years old. It stands on high ground, as near as possible to the centre of the settlement—the site was donated by Sigurjon Snidal. For almost twenty years it was the only Icelandic church of the district—then churches were built at Baldur, Bru, and Glenboro. For many years it was the custom of the four congregations to have one joint service in the Old Church—they also gathered there for special occasions. Now Frelsis Congregation has disbanded and its members have joined the congregations at Baldur, Bru and Glenboro. But the Church stands—a stately and noble memorial to the ideals and optimism of its builders.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the building of the Church, in 1929, Dr. Haraldur Sigmar said that to his mind this had always been "The Big Church, the Beautiful Church, the Majestic Church". I am confident that these words will find an echo in the hearts of all whose childhood and youthful memories are connected with the Church.

My first recollections go back to 1896. In that year Reverend Jon Clemens first came to the congregation

that had been without a pastor for three years—this brought new life and enthusiasm into the work of the congregations. In that year a steeple was built and a bell was placed in it. The spire towers high above the surrounding landscape—can be seen for miles and became a distinguishing feature of the landscape. The bell could be heard at a distance of five miles, calling all to come to church. The same year the Icelandic Lutheran Synod held its meeting in Argyle. A meeting of the Synod was much more than a meeting of pastors and delegates to discuss church matters—it was the social event of the year. A meeting lasted for four or five days and visitors came from Winnipeg and other communities. It was also a festive occasion for the people of the community—whole families came and spent the whole day at the Church. I remember another Synod meeting held in 1903. I would not presume to report on any of the activities of The Synod at these meetings—but I know I was there on more than one occasion and some of the events are clear in my mind.

For a number of years it is no exaggeration to say that the Church was filled whenever the weather was favorable. There was scarcely a home in the district that did not attend church regularly—some came at a distance of seven or eight miles—others from north of Glenboro, a distance of fifteen miles. If certain homes were not represented it was a matter of concern

that there must be sickness in the home. I do not recollect seeing people with oxen at church—but people came on foot, in lumber wagons, in democrats, and on buggies. When I first remember, the farmers of Argyle were beginning to pride themselves on smart driving-horses and fashionable democrats and buggies. When a farmer or a young man bought a new horse or a new buggy, the time to display it was on Sunday. Then there was the era of the bicycle—for a number of years it was the ambition of every youth to have a new bicycle. I remember two or three rows of bicycles stacked against three walls of the Church.

Those were the days of the long sermons—a sermon was not considered worth listening to if it was much under an hour in length. I would not pretend that I listened to these long sermons, that I understood them, or that I remember them—but in later years I have thought about it and I am confident that sitting through them did me no harm. The Icelandic custom was followed of having an Elder read the prayer at the opening of the service. I have a very distinct remembrance of being impressed with the dignity and reverence with which some of the senior members of the congregation read the prayer. I also remember most of my Sunday School teachers and some of the things they tried to impress on our minds.

After church service came Sunday School. During Sunday School the older members would gather in little

groups outside—they would have their social visits—discuss weather, crop prospects or politics. I am certain that when crop prospects were good more than one binder was sold at church on Sunday.

Besides the Sunday services The Church was the centre for many concerts and other gatherings. Argyle was fortunate in having a number of people with considerable musical talent. These people gave generously of their time and talent at church services and other concerts. I would not mention any names for any list of names I might mention would of necessity be incomplete. Each person's memory will bring forth its own names. In addition to local talent there were often visiting artists.

For many years there was always a large attendance at Sunday School with a large Bible Class. There is a picture of the Sunday School taken in 1896 by Jon Blondal of Winnipeg. In the picture there are at least 120, with a considerable number of young people about the age of twenty.

For a period of years Icelandic Day celebrations were held on June 17th. There were visiting speakers — sometimes a band, and visitors from other communities. The badge of admission was a large ribbon on which was lettered: "Íslendingar Viljum Vjer Allir Vera." This I would translate as: "We, All Of Us, Wish To Be True To Our Icelandic Heritage."

A most memorable occasion was the celebration held on June 15, 1905, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary

of the beginning of the settlement. There was a special excursion train from Winnipeg to Glenboro. At Glenboro, farmers met the train with democrats and buggies to drive the visitors to Grund—a distance of some seven miles. Each driver was eager to show that he had the best team and the result was a free-for-all, as exciting as the chuckwagon race—luckily there were no mishaps. There was a varied sport's program and a program of at least four or five long speeches. I remember only one of the speakers, W. H. Paulson of Winnipeg, and I remember his opening sentence: "It is well that we are here at Grund — It is well that we are here in Argyle — It is well that we are here in Canada—

It is well that we are here in the British Empire". I feel that it is safe to say that these words found favor with his audience.

One of my early recollections is a celebration at Baldur on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. We jolted on a lumber wagon over hilly and rocky trails, a distance of five miles, to take part in this celebration. Don't ask me what the program was — what I do remember is that my parents considered attendance at this celebration a MUST to show respect to the land that had come to be our home and to honor the Sovereign and Government of that land.

That was the spirit of Argyle.

### ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB DINNER AND DANCE

The annual dinner and dance of the Icelandic Canadian Club turned the spotlight on two historic milestones in 1970.

It paid tribute to Manitoba's first century in Canada's federation of provinces and to Iceland's first quarter-century of independent government. All days are festive days of Manitoba's year-long birthday party, so in honor of the ancestral sod, the date of the annual banquet and dance jumped from midwinter to midsummer this year. It was held at the Hotel Fort Garry in Winnipeg on June 19, two days after Iceland's independence, June 17, 1944.

Chairman was Mr. Gissur Eliasson, president of the Icelandic Canadian Club. The Hon. Dr. Philip M. Peturs-son, Manitoba minister of cultural affairs, brought greetings from the province and outlined some of its triumphs

and hopes for this anniversary year. Representing Iceland, Mr. Grettir L. Johannson, Iceland's consul-general, spoke at length on the country's road to independence.

As guest speaker, Rev. J. V. Arvidson, pastor of First Lutheran Church, told of his impressions as a Swedish American serving a predominantly Icelandic congregation. He spoke with warmth and humor of the virtues, vanities, and unique idiosyncracies of this mass of kissing cousins which make up the Icelandic community of Winnipeg. It was a sparkling performance, warmly applauded.

Two gifted artists delighted the audience with musical selections. Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson first cast her spell with a piano solo and then accompanied Mrs. Heather Ireland singing English and Icelandic favorites in her rich contralto voice.

Caroline Gunnarsson



## A LETTER FROM REVEREND ROBERT JACK

The Manse,  
Tjorn, Vatnsnes,  
Iceland.

My Dear Readers,

When Mr. Wilhelm Kristjanson asked me to drop you a note he mentioned that although the letter would have to be in English—and me a Scottish Nationalist—he said that any Lowland Scots would not be excluded. That reminded me. The auld Glaswegian standing on the banks of the River Clyde said to his American cousin. “Ye ken that ship sailing by?” “No” replied American. “That’s an auld Scots tramp steamer, ye ken.” “How do you know that?” replied the cousin. “Och aye, use yer eens, maun, there’s nae sea gulls following it.”

Glasgow is my home town or rather Mulguy some ten miles from the centre of Scotland’s biggest city. As a boy I remember on one or two occasions going down to the Anderson district of Glasgow where the big steamers set off for distant places. I remember seeing White Star liners setting sail for Montreal and wishing I were on board. In those days I had an abundance of the spirit of adventure, something, I feel, much more common to the youth of then than today. We had no television to show us, in our homes, how others far away lived. Our adventurous spirit was like a thirst which could not be quenched. In those early days after the First World War an encyclopedia was published by the famous children’s author, Arthur Mee. It had twelve volumes and cost a lot

of money. My mother, always keen that I should learn, bought it for me. In one of the books there was about half a page on Iceland. It gave me the idea that this land was extremely primitive, its natives eating nothing else but fish. Indeed the picture which accompanied the data showed an old woman spreading fish on a few rocks. At school Iceland was barely mentioned.

After High School, University in Glasgow and journeys through many countries of Europe I paid my first trip to Iceland in the late summer of 1936. I still recall that time in Reykjavik with mixed feelings. The people I saw in the streets appeared to me gloomy, sullen and generally unattractive. And the buildings reminded me of many on the outskirts of Leningrad, rough with little architectural design. But the people were like the houses. Behind the outward shell there was that congeniality and cosiness. Then I only acquainted those who spoke English. Later when I spoke the language of the people I got to know all classes. In the rural parts of Iceland where I have served for twenty-six years, with the exception of two years in Manitoba, I have always found a great difference between the kind of Icelanders I met in my early days here and the country man. The difference is horizons. I admit it is always a refreshment for me to get to the capital and speak to people, in their language, who have travelled. The narrow-mindedness of the man in rural parts whom I have served with in the last twenty odd years has,

definitely, worsened. When I started my ministry I met parishioners, mostly elderly men who are now dead, who were prolific readers of old and new sagas. They were well versed and could talk on many subjects, although they had never travelled far from their farm-houses. Then around the 50s the economic changes in the country wrought havoc. People flocked to the towns to make money. Those who remained in the rural parts had no longer time for reading, except the newspapers and the odd magazine. With fewer hands on the farms everyone had to work long hours. The cultural life suffered severely. Now with the incursion of the television a new thought will, undoubtedly arise. The medium of television will be the new encyclopedia which should widen the mind of the country man and others, if it has not fallen into a state of unreparable dullness.

Looking back now over the years, since I attended classes at the University in Reykjavik and at the same time served in the Y.M.C.A. of the British Occupational Forces during the last war, I have seen too many radical changes to be healthy for a small nation like Iceland. I feel that in the economic turmoils of the last twenty-five years Iceland has forgotten the intrinsic meaning of democracy. It is primarily a spiritual testament, from which certain political and economic orders naturally follow. But the essence is the testament; the orders may change but the testament stands. The testament, this ideal of citizenship, Iceland owes to no one teacher. This democratic testament derives from Jon Sigurdsson as well as from others of his realism and ideals. It has two main characteristics. The first is that the ordinary man believes in himself and in his ability, along with his fellows,

to govern his country. It is when people loses its self-confidence that it surrenders its soul to a dictator or an oligarchy. Now in this country everybody is in a Union, even the ministers. These outfits can hold the pistol at the head of the government, when and whenever they like. At this moment of writing Iceland is losing millions, yes, billions of krónur through a strike which is almost completely general. The second is the belief, which is fundamental also in Christianity, of the worth of every soul—the worth, not the quality. For the last twenty-five years we have walked the broad road. We have had it good. The Big Shot complex has been far too evident in all sections of Icelandic life. The dance around the Golden Calf is an invigorating, sensuous affair but a ‘hang-over’ in various affects is always the inevitable outcome.

I would like to think that we up here in the Far North are like children who, having found a newly invented toy, want to play with it until we get tired of its attraction. However we in Iceland have become involved. We shall need men of great vision and equally great courage to set about and put our house in order. Only circumstances will bring that about, circumstances from **without**. Since our days of poverty before the last World War we have been excellent copiers. We, like those we have copied from, will have to learn to enjoy our emoluments in a civilized fashion which means an upsurge towards spiritual perfection.

In this letter to you I have attempted to keep to facts with, I feel, a realism akin to my ethnic group. While I write the golden rays of a midnight sun stream through the window of my study. Its a glorious night. One which reminds me of the words of St. John on the island of Patmos when he wrote

in Revelations "and there shall be no night there".

And these multi-coloured rays of the sun shine on the homes of my congregation, (Tjarnarsókn) a better of which I cannot imagine: We understand each other despite our great differences in background and upbringing. I quite believe that in the sight of God all are good, at least they appear that way to me. None have the hardness of the Norseman. All are Celtic with a keen sense of humor, kind, agreeable and honest.

Their church here at Tjorn is admired as one of the most beautiful rural churches in Iceland and the average attendances of seventy percent of the congregation is surely a record in this country. We are not an affluent society in this district of Vatnsnes. But I should say that we are fairly well civilized. Although Celtic in origin we haven't the bigotry of the many Protestant and Catholics in Ulster today. But then, to that extent, we don't here live in a divided country. We admire Miss Devlin for her courage and we dislike the Rev. Ian Paisley for his attitude, especially to his sons whom he tossed out of his house in Belfast because they called him Father. That's real narrow-mindedness. And actually up in this unsophisticated place we just can't appreciate the story of the lawyer, the minister and the doctor who were shipwrecked on a far off island. When the mist cleared in the morning they found, to their delight, that land lay only some miles from the island. One of them had to swim for help so after a tossing of a coin it fell upon the lawyer to get to the mainland. He dived into the sea and struck out towards the land. Suddenly a school of sharks swam up. Immediately the minister on seeing the danger sank to his knees and prayed. While

he prayed the doctor who was observing the situation called out to the minister, "look". The minister on looking up saw that the school of sharks had separated and made a channel through which the lawyer swam through unmolested. "Praise God", shouted the minister, "the power of prayer has worked a miracle". "Oh no", answered the doctor "just a simple matter of professional courtesy."

The weather here at present is a bit cold and the temperature no more than between the 50s and 60s. It was such a pleasant change to get to Italy in May. It was then in the 80s in Milan and at the Swiss border near the beautiful little town of Edelweiss, made famous in the movie, The Sound of Music. I was in the company of a party of Scots who sang all the old songs like 'Glasgow belongs to me'; I love a lassie; Loch Lomand; Annie Laurie and many more. Ave, the Sound of Music wasn't in it. With the precious water of Glenfinnan to soften our vocal chords Gigli and Roberto were not just in it. No chance. Even a good Catholic customs officer at Malpensa Airport in Milan saw the job of one of our party. It happened that he didn't declare a bottle of mal-whiskey which is coloured white. The officer took it from his bag, opened it and said "but you havespeerit in thees bottle". "Good Lord" replied the Scot. "Glasgow water turned into wine. A miracle!" He got away with it.

To end with I hope you are all well and that illustrious gentleman, Judge Walter Lindal, will regain his health and 'come out fighting' as has been his mode for a long time now.

With every good wish,

Most sincerely,

**Robert Jack**

## Kristmann Guðmundsson

Icelandic Novelist with an International Audience.

by Dr. Richard Beck



KRISTMANN GUÐMUNDSSON

(This article is based on a paper originally presented at an annual meeting of The Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, but here expanded and brought up to date).

★

Kristmann Guðmundsson is one of those relatively rare writers who have earned for themselves a place in the literary history of two nations: in his

case in both Norwegian and Icelandic literature, to list them in the order in which he achieved prominence in the literary field.

He was born on October 23, 1902, at the farm of Þverfell in Borgarfjörður in western Iceland and spent his early years and later in the Snæfellsnes district. He, therefore, spent his formative years in impressive scenic surroundings. Towering blue mountains rimmed the horizon inland, above the fertile farming district, while on the other hand, a wide sweep of the surging sea, with all its fascination, met the eye. The rugged and the softer aspects of the Icelandic landscape thus met and mingled in the early environment of the future writer, and naturally left their mark upon him and are reflected in many of his books.

The common saying that there is no royal road to literary fame is strikingly illustrated in the career of Kristmann Guðmundsson. At a very early age he had to shift for himself, and for more than a decade he waged a relentless struggle for existence. The great vicissitudes of fortune marking his early years recall the hard battle fought by the great Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun during his days as a struggling young author.

The catalogue of Guðmundsson's occupations during his long years of ceaseless struggle reads as follows: a roadbuilder, farmhand, fisherman, day-laborer, storekeeper, office man, an assistant in a lunatic asylum, brewer, agronomist, painter, bricklayer, a

travelling salesman, insurance agent, merchant, a teacher of languages, boxing, and swimming, a reviewer, editor of a newspaper, and of a periodical, and so forth. (Cf. Stefán Einarsson, **History of Icelandic Prose Writers 1800-1940**, 1948, p. 191.)

When I first became acquainted with Guðmundsson years ago, he was clerking in a store in one of the neighboring fjords in eastern Iceland, at the same time nurturing his literary interest and latent creative talent. Patiently, he listened to my reading of some of my youthful poems. I cherish the memory of that very pleasant meeting, which was the beginning of our lasting friendship.

Thanks to his unconquerable spirit, Guðmundsson emerged, however, in the end victorious over ill health, want, and other trials, and he even managed to master foreign languages and acquire substantial general education, and read extensively both Icelandic and foreign literature, though his formal schooling had been limited. His varied experiences and associations with all kinds of people in the course of those early years of struggle were for him a fruitful if a hard school, and provided him with a wealth of material for his later literary work. One does not have to go far afield in his books to find ample evidence of that fact.

Since entering upon his literary career at an early age, he has been an unusually productive writer. The extensiveness of his literary production is illustrated by the collected edition of his major works, **Ritsafn I-VIII**, 1952-1954. No attempt will, however, be made here to list all his books. In stead, these observations will center around some of his most representative and outstanding works, with special reference to those of his novels which have been translated into English.

Kristmann Guðmundsson began his literary career with a slight volume of lyrics in his native Icelandic. **Rökkursöngvar** (Songs of Twilight, 1922), which was deservedly favorably reviewed, for these youthful poems showed considerable promise, not least in the matter of mastery of form, and at the same time revealed the poet's deep-seated optimism and determination to succeed, come what may.

Imbued with a strong spirit of adventure and realizing his limited opportunities to earn a living as a writer in the Iceland of that day, Guðmundsson decided to seek literary fame and fortune abroad; probably he was also inspired and challenged by the example of his older Icelandic contemporaries such as Jóhann Sigurjónsson the dramatist and Gunnar Gunnarsson the novelist, who had gone to Denmark and achieved great literary success. Guðmundsson, however, headed for Norway, thus following in the footsteps of numerous Icelandic skalds of old.

Only two years after his arrival in Norway he published his first book in Norwegian, a collection of short stories entitled **Islandsk Kjerlinghet** (Icelandic Loves, 1926), which not only revealed a remarkable mastery of the Norwegian language, but a great narrative talent as well; the critics praised the book highly, and it was an unqualified success. Included in the collection are some of the author's best short stories such as "The Conscience of the Sea" and "Such is Life", both of which are included in an English translation in **Icelandic Poems and Stories**, collected and edited by the writer of this article. (Originally published by The American-Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1943; second edition, published by Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, New York, 1968.)

Guðmundsson's first full-length novel, also written in Norwegian, **Brudekjolen** (The Bridal Gown), appeared in 1927, and will be dealt with below. There followed during the next decade no less than nine full-length novels in Norwegian, which were generally well received by the critics and no less by the reading public, making Guðmundsson during those years one of the most widely read authors in Norway. His Norwegian novels have been translated into his native Icelandic either by the author himself or by other Icelandic writers.

In some of his novels, such as the idyllic **Den blaa Kyst** (The Blue Coast, 1931) and **Den Forste Varr** (The Spring, 1933), as well as in the more mature and substantial story, **Hvite Netter** (White Nights, 1934), the love theme is fundamental and the autobiographical element much in evidence. In fact, he is the acknowledged master of the love story among present-day Icelandic writers, and he interprets young love with uncommon insight and deep sensitiveness.

Guðmundsson has, however, reached greater heights with his novels on more general themes, where he deals with life in Iceland in the near past and present, such as the already mentioned **Brudekjolen**, **Livets Morgen** (The Morning of Life, 1929), discussed later, and **Lampen** (The Lamp, 1936). The last-named story of the passionate inner conflict of the principal characters is marked by penetrating psychological analysis, as well as by a vivid portrayal of the impact of the environment upon the people who battle the long winter on a remote farm in Iceland. All in all, in terms of concentration and gripping theme, this book ranks high among the author's novels.

It is however, surpassed by his two great historical novels, **Det hellige**

**Fjell** (The Holy Fell, 1932) and **Gyðjan og uxinn** (The Goddess and the Bull, 1937-1938). The latter, which has been translated into English under the title **Winged Citadel**, will be considered further below.

On the other hand, it is to be greatly regretted that **Det Heylige Fjell** is not as yet available in an English translation, because it is unquestionably one of the author's best and most important works. The scene is laid near Helgafell (hence the title **The Holy Fell**) on the Snæfellsnes peninsula, in Guðmundsson's youthful haunts, and the story takes place during the settlement period of Iceland. It is a profound interpretation of life and the cultural currents, the Norwegian and Irish national strains, Paganism and Christianity, in ancient Iceland, when the Icelandic nation was in the making. Colorful and dramatic, it is, without question, one of the finest novels that have been written about ancient Iceland, and it received very high praise from Scandinavian critics. The prominent Icelandic writer and literary critic, Dr. Guðmundur Finnbogason, concluded his review of it (in **Skírnir**, 1933, pp. 242-43) as follows: "It is a remarkable book, and the author reveals here as before a deep understanding of the primitive forces in life, a great imagination in the creation of the characters and events, a keen feeling for nature, and he writes well."

In spite of his literary success and popularity in Norway, for which country and its people he has a deep and abiding affection, Guðmundsson was at the same time strongly attached to his native Iceland, as memorably revealed in his novels, and he returned to his ancestral land in 1938 to make his home there permanently.

Since his return he has published a number of novels on contemporary

themes. Among these **Náttrollið glottir** (The Night Troll Grins, 1943) reveals in various ways, the author's reactions upon his return to Iceland, and attests his powers of observation, frankness, vivid character portrayal and characteristic narrative ability.

Far more important, however, is his historical novel **Þokan rauða I-II** (The Red Fog, 1950-52), which harks back to the settlement period of Iceland. It is written on a very fascinating theme. The central figure, whom Guðmundsson, highly imaginatively, portrays as being the author of the famed Eddic poem **Völuspá**, is born in Breiðfjörður in western Iceland, the son of a Norse father and an Irish mother, and during his youth comes under both Pagan and Christian influences. During a sojourn in Ireland he becomes closely acquainted with Irish ways of life and culture. Upon his return to Iceland he exerts his leadership qualities there, as well as engaging in further heroic ventures abroad. Though a man of action, he always remains at heart the dreamer and the poet, whose external and inner struggle during an eventful life, has greatly enriched him spiritually. The great poem **Völuspá** comes to him in a poetic vision in the early hours of an enchanting summer morning in his beautiful Breiðfjörður. In this highly symbolic story, with its universal application, Guðmundsson's growing interest in mysticism is a basic and elevating element. It is to be lamented that this rich and thought-provoking novel of his has not as yet been translated into any foreign language.

Guðmundsson's latest work **Smíðurinn mikli** (The Great Carpenter), published in the fall of 1969, is a historical novel dealing with the life of Jesus here on earth. Unfortunately, I have not as yet had an opportunity to read it, but look forward to doing so

shortly. An authority on the subject, Professor Jóhann Hannesson of the Department of Theology of the University of Iceland, has, however, reviewed the book with discerning insight and equally sympathetically (*Morgunblaðið* 20. des. 1969), and concludes by saying: "In the autumn's flood of books I have not become aware of another better book". This assures me in advance of its high quality, its worthy treatment of a subject which has challenged numerous noted poets and scholars, as Professor Hannesson also rightly calls attention to in his review.

Besides his large number of novels, Guðmundsson has also written, in Norwegian and Icelandic, numerous short stories, articles and essays. Some of these stories are included in the collected edition of his works, **Ritsafn**, referred to above, and a small selection of his articles in **Leikmannsþankar** (Thoughts of a Layman, 1949). Reference has been made to his early poems. Down through the years there have appeared from his pen in Icelandic publications other well-wrought poems clearly showing that he has retained his fine lyric touch, and a collection of poems of his, **Kristmannskver**, appeared in 1955. A selection from his short stories and poems, **Völuskrín**, was published in 1961, where his writings in both fields appear to good advantage.

Guðmundsson's wide and sustained interest in literature is amply revealed in his 2-volume **History of World Literature**, **Heimsbókmenntasaga** (1955), the first of its kind in Icelandic. It is a very readable and highly informative survey, based on extensive reading of pertinent works in several languages.

His four-volume **Autobiography** (1959-62) is a notable work, a vividly written and highly personal account of his unusually eventful life, his

struggles and victories, his hopes and disappointments. His philosophy of life, evolved down through the years, is written large on the pages of his **Autobiography**, and it is to his great credit that in spite of the adversity which has often been his lot, he has retained a sound positive outlook upon life.

Guðmundsson's books have been translated more widely than those of any other Icelandic writer, into over 30 languages. It is, therefore, far from being an exaggeration to refer to him as an "Icelandic Novelist with an International Audience". And now a somewhat closer look at his three novels which have been translated into English, beginning with **The Bridal Gown**, which appeared in English in 1931..

The story takes place in a river valley in Iceland. Against a background of scenic grandeur: majestic mountains, moorlands, lakes and rivers, the author pictures the everyday life, and even more the emotional life, of people of strong feelings, over whom traditions hold a mighty sway.

The principal character is Björn Ísleifsson, the leading farmer of the district, descended from old chieftains. His young wife, Sigrún, dies in childbirth, and now it dawns on Björn that he has failed to keep the promise made to her on their wedding-night: —to conquer his weaker self and assume his rightful place of leadership in the valley. Remorse fills his soul, and at his wife's bier he vows to make amends for his failure. All his later life is profoundly influenced by this decision. Sigrún's bridal gown—from which the book aptly takes its title—becomes to Björn an object of worship. But even if Björn frequently holds the center of the stage, others play important parts. The novel is also the story of Björn's daughter, Kolfinna,

her early life and the rivals for her hand.

**The Bridal Gown** is then clearly a love story. Love, requited or unrequited, largely determines the fate of all the characters, and the author interprets the love-life of his men and women with understanding and artistry. The novel is, however, much more than a love story; it has social significance; it describes a period of transition, the struggle between the old and the new, conservatism and progressivism, as personified in the main men characters.

Guðmundsson tells his story well, it holds the reader's attention throughout; he writes with sympathy and psychological insight; his characters are convincingly and effectively drawn not least the women. Many passages in the novel have genuine lyric qualities, especially, of course, in the original, and the descriptions of the Icelandic scenery are frequently both colorful and elevated in tone. Indeed, a most remarkable first novel by a young writer.

And American reviews of **The Bridal Gown** in its English garb were appreciative and laudatory. The reviewer of **The Boston Transcript** had this to say:

"The principal charm of the novel lies in its picturing of the life and manners of rural Iceland, its vital, proud people of ancient culture, rugged, industrious and enduring, lusty in work and play, yet possessing an ingrained idealism."

The reviewer of **The New York Times** commented: "Mr. Guðmundsson has written with fine sympathy and psychological penetration a book that deserves to rank high among current fiction."

**The Morning of Life**, published in English in 1936, is deservedly ranked among Guðmundsson's best books; and

this family saga, for that is what it can rightfully be called, has much in common with the Icelandic sagas of classic fame; deep-rooted love and hate are the warp and woof of this stirring novel, which apparently takes place in Iceland in the early years of the present century, and the principal characters are both whole-hearted and cast in a heroic mould: Halldór the fisherman, who is the hero of the story is indeed "a strong and noble character pitted against fate"; and Salvör, the heroine, is no less a whole-souled individual, proud, and much akin to the austere saga-women of old. Other less prominent but flesh and blood characters walk the stage of this vigorous and excellently told story, which abounds in action and incidents. The author succeeds admirably in harmonizing environment and characters. "The sea is no less a character in the novel than are the principal actors. The economic indispensability of the fruit it yields and the awful tyranny it exercises over the lives of the men who fish it for a living is never lost sight of. Guðmundsson makes this physical world powerfully real and he reminds one of Thomas Hardy in his ability to use the unity which exists between certain manifestations of nature and the mental attitudes of his characters in strengthening the story he has to tell." (Hjálmar Björnsson in **The Minneapolis Tribune**).

Other American reviewers were equally generous in their praise. Stanley Young, writing in **The New York Times**, said:

"Superbly built novel. It is impossible to communicate the massive emotional effect which this writer builds up through his concentrated ability to make every incident and character contribute to the general movement. But the fine fact remains

that here is a moving story of minor epic stature."

Agnes Rothery struck a similar note in **The Saturday Review of Literature**:

"There are superb incidents, notably the shipwreck commencing with the storm which smashes Halldór's boat and flings the half drowned crew upon the iron boulders. This bit is supremely well done and so, in briefer compass, is Halldór's saving of the English yacht, and his rescue of Ragnar from the tawny flood of the river while the ice floes are forced through the rapids. **Morning of Life** has emotional tension and magical wild setting."

Nor was the high praise which this novel received limited to American reviewers. **The Times (London) Literary Supplement** had this to say about it and the translation:

"The blend of new and old methods has been used with conspicuous success; the story, though told without haste, grips and holds the reader from beginning to end. The translators have carried out a difficult task with great ability; it is rare to find an English version of a foreign book in which the reader is so little conscious of an intermediary."

In **Winged Citadel**, which appeared in an English translation in 1940, Guðmundsson goes far afield in search of a subject-matter and introduces his readers to an entirely new world in his realm of fiction, for this historic novel of his takes place on the island of Crete in the 14th century B.C. On the basis of an extensive study of the history of Crete during the period in question, the author portrays in intimate fashion the life and the culture of that distant age; and we have it on the authority of a specialist in the field that Guðmundsson has succeeded brilliantly in his description. In the poet's penetrating interpretation the cultur-

al deterioration and ultimate fate of ancient Crete becomes symbolic of the prevailing world situation at the time when the book was written, just prior to World War II. The book is also, according to the author himself, highly autobiographical, the life of the hero, though clothed in a different garb, is in many respects the story of the poet's own struggle and final victory.

In its wide historical sweep alone the novel is highly impressive, but it has a still deeper and more universal significance, for the myth of the Goddess and the Bull becomes the memorable symbol of the eternal struggle between the nobler and the lower elements in the nature of man, in short, between good and evil. The characterization of the leading actors in this moving drama is also both graphic and strongly personalized.

Nor was the magnitude and literary excellence of this great novel lost on American reviewers. L. M. Field, writing in **The New York Times**, evaluated the book as follows:

"With the color and richness of prehistoric crete for a background, the Crete which reached its height at a time when the rest of Greece was semi-barbarous, Mr. Guðmundsson has presented an interesting, carefully worked out story of an eager, sensitive, imaginative youth in the midst of an over-ripe civilization."

And the reviewer in **The New Yorker** was very much to the point in saying:

"A credible reconstruction of an ancient period, not cluttered up with archaisms but dramatic, readable, and alive."

To sum up: Guðmundsson's notable novels translated into English, as well as many others of his successful novels, amply reveal his great powers of description and characterization, his fertile imagination, not least in recreating the past, and his vigorous, vivid, and varied style. The Norwegian and Icelandic language alike are a pliant and responsive instrument in his skillful hands.



#### SKULI JOHANNSSON PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE

Skuli Johannsson was elected president at the 51st convention in Winnipeg of the Icelandic National League of North America. Heimir Thorgrims-son was named vice-president, Holmfridur Danielson secretary and Grettir L. Johannson treasurer. Kristin R. Johnson was named financial secretary,

Jakob F. Kristjansson archivist, Gissur Eliasson cultural committee chairman, Johann T. Beck finance committee chairman and Pall Hallson membership committee chairman. All are of Winnipeg. Mr. Johannsson is president of Fron, the Winnipeg chapter of the league.

## THE RIVERTON SCHOOL —CLASS OF 1901



Teacher, Miss Hildur Peterson

TOP ROW: Sigga Bjornson, Sigga Peterson, Ranka Gisslason, Jóna Johnson, Lilja Pálson, Inga Finnson, Stina Finnson, Begga Peterson, George Sigurdson, Vilberg Fridsteinson, Magnus Eyolfson, Marino Briem, Alli Bjornson.

SECOND ROW: Sigrun Eyolfson, Cecilia Eyolfson, Veiga Johnson, Valla Briem, Rosa Finnson, Sigrun Johnson, Sibba Jonasson, Gusti Gisslason, Arni Isfeld, Valdi Isfeld, Soggi Isfeld.

THIRD ROW: Gudny Eyolfson, Bina Oddson, Anna Gisslason, Helgi Stefansson, Vilberg Evolfson, Axel Eyolfson, Halli Schram, Arni Fridsteinson, Trýggvi Briem, Thorarin Einarson, Victor Evolfson, Snorri Peterson, and Jon Evolfson.

## THE RIVERTON SCHOOL

by K. S. Benedictson

The first house used as a school room at Icelandic River, was built by Jóhann Briem when he arrived from Iceland in 1876. (second house on picture on page 35, *Riverton Memories* and on page 32 in the *Icelandic Canadian*, summer, 1970 issue, a small building used for storage—according to elderly residents) Size of this building not known—probably 20'x14'. The first teachers, who were volunteers, were Sigtryggur Jonasson and his wife, Rannveig; Torfhildur Holm, and Halldor Briem. These were much appreciated by young and older people as education in the new country was so essential.

The number of years the school was held there is not known, maybe only two or three years. From there the school was moved to a log house on the east side of the river, called 'Safnaðarhús'. This was whitewashed and kept in good condition. Here the classes with various teachers — continued till 1891, when the first regular day school, named Lundi, was built south of the bridge. Salin Peterson was one of the first teachers, as near as we know.

In 1901, a picture was taken of Miss Hildur Peterson, the teacher, and her 37 pupils. This must have been an important day in the lives of these children. Their names have all been figured out. The list of the other teachers is incomplete, so no other names are included. This work was done by an 87 year old resident of Riverton, Mrs. Clara Mayo. She has been

partly confined to bed for a number of years, but her mind is clear and her memory remarkably good. Four of these pupils were hard to place and we visited several persons for consultation, and only last week was this completed, and we consider this quite a feat, after 70 years. This should be considered as Mrs. Mayo's Centennial Contribution.

In 1916, the one-roomed Lundi School proved too small and it was enlarged into a two-room school (size approximately 60'x30'). The first principal there was Mrs. Oddur Olafson, who has taught 22 years in Riverton, with nine years as principal. She retired this year, 1970.

In 1960-61 a new collegiate building was constructed. Prior to that, a high school room had been included in the old elementary school building.

Two outstanding principals of the Riverton school over a period of many years have been the late Mr. Eysteinn Arnason and Mr. P. Onysko.

By way of a footnote, it may be added that the desks used in the early classrooms were made by Stefan G. Jonsson. They were three-seaters, sturdily built and painted.

In 1910 a new four-roomed school was built on the west side of the river and the name changed to "Riverton School". When this building proved too small for the growing school population, two rooms were made in the basement and a two-roomed school built.

In 1967, with the new school system to bring pupils in by buses, a 15-room Elementary School was built. The first principal there was Mrs. V. Peterson,

In the new Elementary school there are fifteen rooms and in 1970 the number of pupils is 390. This includes the grades from Kindergarten to Grade VIII.

The schools absorbed in this new Union school are: Hnusa (originally

Baldur), Laufas, Progress, Ledwyn (Tarno), Woodglen No. 1, Woodglen No. II, North Arnes, and Big Island (Hecla) schools. A Mennonite three-roomed private school, grades I to X, was also included, but so far only a few pupils have come to Riverton. Their grades XI to XII do attend at the Collegiate here. The longest van route is eighteen miles.



### REVEREND ROBERT JACK

Reverend Robert Jack, whose letter appears on page 30 of this issue, was born in Glasgow, August 5, 1913. The family name Jack comes from Normandy, the Huguenot Jacques family crossing to Scotland at the time of the French Revolution. Robert was brought up in the little town of Milnfavie, Dumbartonshire, but his schooling was mainly in Glasgow.

Robert won early distinction in soccer, playing with Schoolboy Scotland against England, and he received Soccer honors when Glasgow University defeated Cambridge University in 1934 for the British Varsity championship. He later played professional soccer for Sunderland in the English First Division.

Robert was invited in 1936 to coach soccer for the Valur Football Club in Reykjavik and he coached soccer in Iceland during the summers of 1937, 1938, and 1939. Travels in Iceland led to a growing interest in the Icelandic people, including their language and literature.

When Robert was in attendance at the University of Glasgow, he had

rather indefinite plans to become a minister. In Iceland, his interest in a career as minister was revived. When the outbreak of war in 1939 kept him in Scotland, he combined work with the British troops there, with the study of Icelandic and theology at the University in Reykjavik. He graduated in Theology in the spring of 1944 and was ordained to the Lutheran church.

Robert Jack's posting to the island of Grimsey is delightfully portrayed in his book *Arctic Living*.

Following the grimsey years, Robert Jack came to Canada and served with the Icelandic speaking congregations in the old Arborg-Riverton parish. This was in the early fifties. His long tenure charge has been at Vatnsnesi, Vestur-Húnavatnsýsla, in the northwestern part of Iceland. It is from there that he has sent his series of very interesting letters to Logberg-Heimskringla.

Robert Jack has been married twice, first to Sigurleena Sigurdardóttir, then, subsequent to her death, to her sister, Vigdís.

—W. K.

## VICTOR STURLAUGSON

Superintendent of Agricultural Experiment Station, Langdon, North Dakota

Victor Sturlaugson, Superintendent of the Langdon Agricultural Experiment Station, North Dakota, for nearly forty-five years retired from that position in December, 1969.

During his tenure at the Langdon Experimental Station, Mr. Sturlaugson received several distinguished service awards, including awards from the North Dakota State University Quarter Century Club and from various crop and livestock associations.

Mr. Sturlaugson has been active in numerous church, civic, and fraternal organizations. He served as Township clerk for nearly 45 years, school clerk for 35 years, member of the Langdon Chamber of Commerce for 44 years, Director and Officer of the Cavalier County Fair for 37 years and Solicitor for the Red Cross for twenty years.

He has been active in church matters, in the Lutheran Church. He served as President of the Board of Trustees of Peters Lutheran Church at Svold, N. Dak., and as President of the Church Council at United Lutheran Church at Langdon, and was a member of the governing body of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod for a number of years.

He has been an active member of the Masonic Order, and is Past Master of Lebanon Lodge at Langdon, Past Commander of Kadoch in the Langdon Scottish Rite, and a member of Kem Temple of the Shrine at Grand Forks. He has also attained the 33rd degree in Masonry, the highest degree attainable in Scottish Rite Masonry.



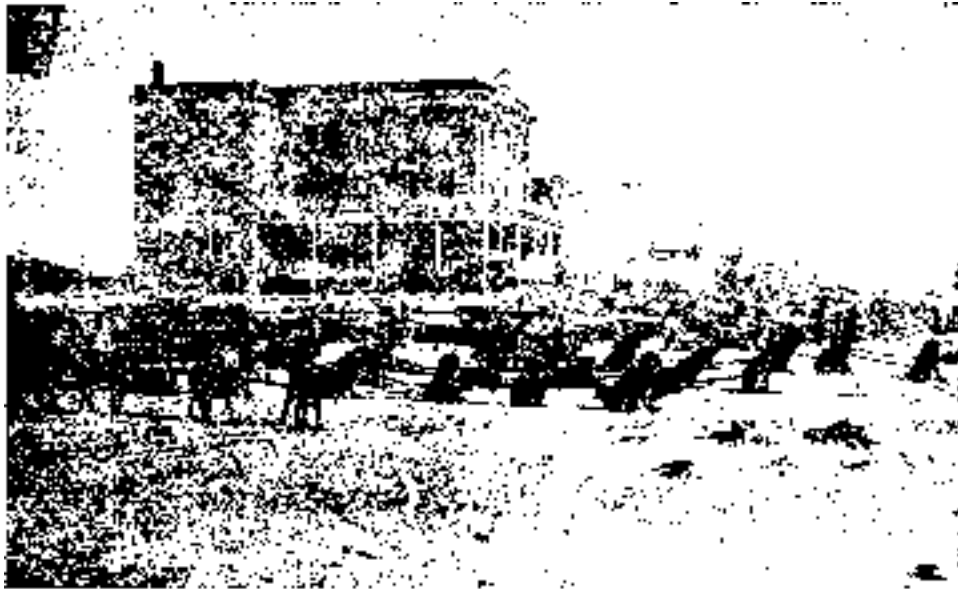
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Sturlaugson

Mr. Sturlaugson was born at Svold, North Dakota, the son of Asbjorn and Una Sturlaugson. He attended the North Dakota State University, attaining degrees in Farm Husbandry in 1922 and a degree in Agricultural and Manual Arts in 1924.

He is married to Aldis, nee Johnson, who, like her husband, has been active in community affairs. They have nine children.

—W.K.

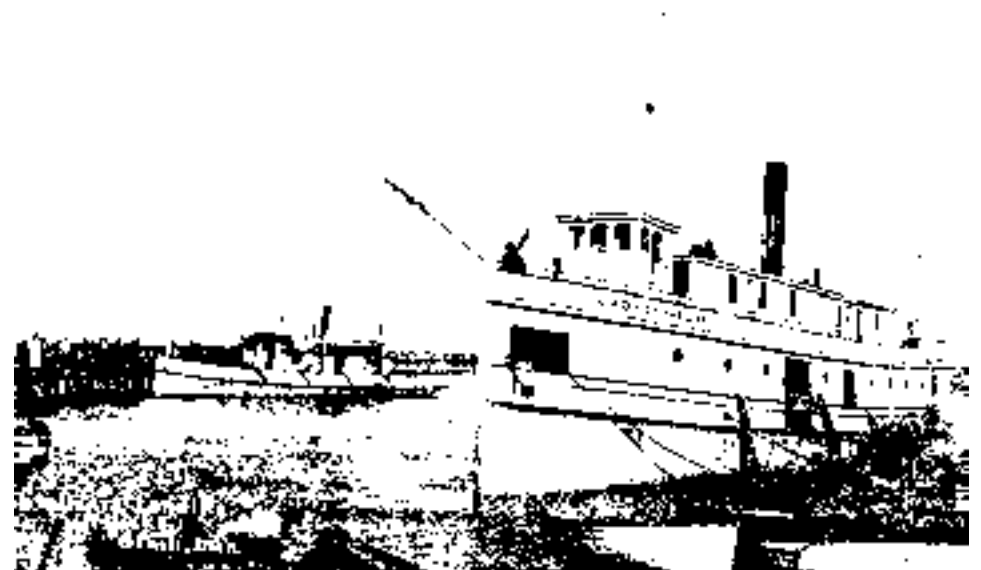
EARLY SCENES OF GIMLI, MANITOBA



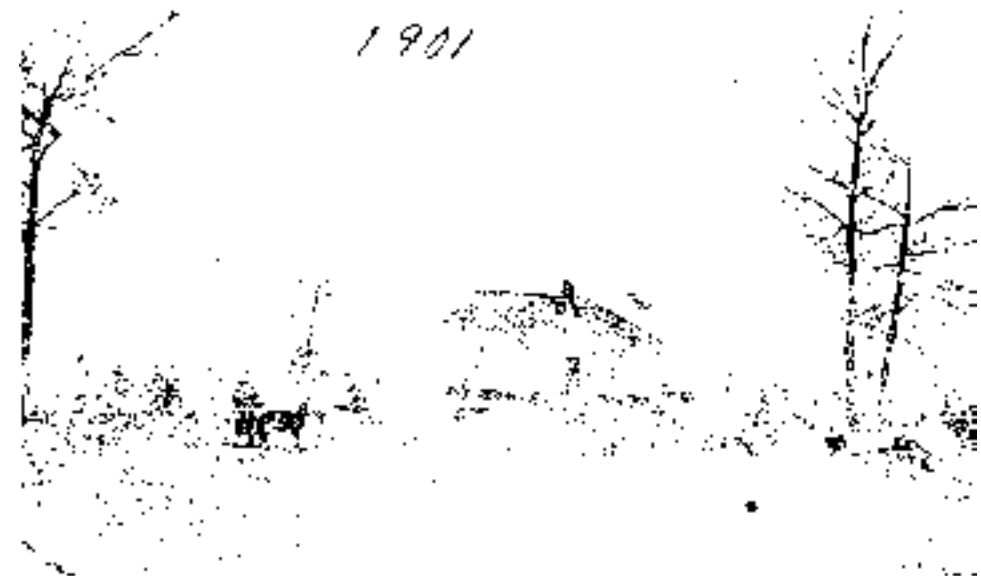
Lakeview Hotel, with dog teams going to Norway House, 1907



Main Street, Gimli, 1910 looking north from what is now the Senior Citizens Home..



Lady of the Lake – the largest steamer built by Icelanders on Lake Winnipeg, landing at the Gimli dock – 1897.



School, near Gimli, Manitoba, 1901





The Lakeview Hotel, Gimli, 1907. This building now part of Betel Home.

The preceding pictures are scenes reproduced from old post cards of Gimli, and in this centennial year, it was felt that they would be of interest to our readers. Mr. Dori Peterson collected them

The second part of the article on "ARBORG DISTRICT", by Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson, will appear in the December issue of The Icelandic Canadian.

## GOLDEN WEDDING

by Caroline Gunnarsson



Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Danielson

People of varied faiths and varied ethnic origins gathered to celebrate in the Parish Hall of the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg on August 9, 1970, for on the morrow the marriage of Hjalmur and Holmfridur Danielson would come of golden age. They were married at Arborg, Manitoba, on August 10, 1920.

Both were born into the Lutheran faith and Lutheran rites have solidified important links in their lives, including their durable marriage, but a clergyman of the Unitarian persuasion was master of ceremonies at their golden anniversary. He is Dr. Philip M. Petursson, now minister of cultural affairs in the Manitoba government, and he read a letter from Dr. Valdimar Eylands, for many years pastor at First Lutheran Church, now residing at Rugby, N.D. Dr. Eylands

paid warm tribute to the couple's devoted service to their church through the years and light-heartedly marvelled at the great age of a marriage claimed by so youthful a couple.

Members of the Manitoba Drama League attended the party as a group, for the Danielsons have served the cause of amateur theatre in the province for years, Mrs. Danielson as an active member of the MDL and its current president. Greetings on behalf of the league were brought by Dr. Harold Turner, head of the department of speech and drama, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

During their fifty years together, the Danielsons have reached far afield in their cultural activities. This was acknowledged in letters and telegrams from Iceland, the United States and several Canadian communities.

Professor Haraldur Bessason, head of Icelandic studies at the University of Manitoba, wrote to them from the West Coast, where he is spending holidays with his family. Tributes were delivered personally for the board of First Lutheran Church by Miss Mattie Halldorson; by Mr. Will Kristjanson for the Icelandic Canadian magazine, Mrs. F. Wilson for the Jon Sigurdson Chapter of the I.O.D.E., Mr. Skuli Johannson for the Icelandic National League and Miss Caroline Gunnarsson for the Icelandic Canadian Club.

There was music of a high order by ranking musicians, who chose their selections with affectionate regard to

tastes of the Danielsons—Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson with her delightful piano solos and Mr. R. P. Frederickson, whose voice filled the hall in one vocal solo after another. The endearing Sigurdson songsters, three tiny grandchildren of Mrs. Danielson's sister, charmed the audience with English and Icelandic songs. Amma was at the piano.

Mr. Heimir Thorgrimsson proposed the toast to the guests of honor in a gay and lively manner, while Hjalmur and Frida had the last words to the warm salute and hearty applause of the host of friends gathered around them.

## HALLDORSON RULES JUNIOR GOLF

by John Down

—Free Press, Sat. Aug. 1, 1970

Danny (Chi Chi) Halldorson, a 140-pound dynamo, recovered from an early morning case of the "sprays" Friday and went on to capture the Manitoba junior golf championship at Niakwa Country Club.

Halldorson, who was born in St. Boniface 18 years ago but now resides at Brandon, brought the Matt Thompson Memorial Trophy back to Manitoba after a two-year absence by defeating Thunder Bay's Jack Palmer 3 and 2 in the 36-hole match play final.

Dave Hill of Southwood was the last Manitoban to win the championship trophy in 1967 (he also won it in 1966 and 65) as Thunder Bay's Mark Shushack and Manfred Braovac won in 1969 and 68, respectively.

For Palmer, there was a certain amount of nostalgia involved. The 130-pound, 18-year old was trying to

add the family name to the trophy for the second time. In 1925, Jack's father, Ernie, won the crown.

But it wasn't to be.

"This is the one I've always wanted to win since I began playing golf," commented the freckled-faced champion as he strode away victorious from the 34th hole, stopping frequently to accept congratulations from a small gallery of 30 to 40 people.

Halldorson gave the gallery, most of them curious and non-believers of the little guy's tremendous ball-hitting ability, plenty to "wow" about. Both times at the 501-yard par 5, 16th, he nailed a driver then reached the green with a nine-iron. At the sixth, he was able to get home in two on the 523-yarder by using a seven-iron for his second shot.

## THE ICELANDIC FESTIVAL

### THOUSANDS FLOCK TO GIMLI FOR THREE-DAY ICELANDIC FESTIVAL

by Ethel Howard

Thousands of Icelandic Canadians and Americans from all over the continent flocked to the town of Gimli during the week-end for the 81st annual Icelandic festival (Islendingadagurinn), known this year as the Manitoba Centennial Icelandic Festival. On Monday, the main day of the celebration, action got under way at 10 a.m. with a spectacular parade led by the Canadian Forces Base Gimli Band and followed by the distinguished guests. Members of the Khartum Shrine turned out in full force with a pipe band, marching team and the skilful motorcycle squad. A large variety of floats depicting the old and the new added color, and the parade ended with a smart group of horseback riders from the Lakeshore Riding Club of Gimli.

The Lady of the Mountain (Fjallkonan), Mrs. Valdheidur Lara Sigurdson, laid the traditional wreath at the cairn honoring the pioneers and opened the afternoon program with her speech in Icelandic bringing greetings from Mother Iceland to her children across the sea. Mrs. Sigurdson, a resident of Arnes, was attended by Joan Valdina Johnson of Arborg and Maureen Lenore Olafson of Riverton.

Lieutenant-Governor Richard S. Bowles delivering the toast to Canada paid tribute to the Icelandic Canadians

who were thinkers and also doers, people who care. Every Icelander, he said, had the heart of a poet. He concluded with a plea for unity among all Canadians regardless of their ethnic origin.

Magnus V. Magnusson Iceland's ambassador to Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, brought warm greetings from the president of Iceland, Kristjan Eldjarn, and on this his first visit to Manitoba wished the gathering success and happiness.

Musical numbers were provided by the Gimli centennial choir directed by Mrs. G. D. Tesch and accompanied by Mrs. A. J. Keck, by singer Reg Frederickson accompanied by Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson, both of Winnipeg, the CFB Gimli band conducted by Corporal J. H. Glover and by the singing Jakobsons, a group of eight brothers and sisters from Neepawa who delighted the audience with their excellent rendition of Icelandic songs.

Greetings were extended by Manitoba Cultural Affairs Minister P. M. Petursson on behalf of Premier Ed Schreyer, Alderman Magnus Eliasson on behalf of Mayor Steve Juba of Winnipeg and by Mayor Daniel Sigmundson of Gimli.

JoAnne Arnason of Gimli was chosen beauty queen with Kathy Benson of Edmonton first runner-up and Cheryl Backman of Lundar second runner-up. A display of paintings by artists of Icelandic background and movies of

the past Icelandic festivals taken by Dr. Larus Sigurdson were on view in the Gimli recreation training centre.

A ten-mile road race took place Saturday morning. On Sunday the track and field events were held at CFB

## THE TEN-MILE ROAD RACE

The Western Canadian ten-mile road race championship, on Saturday morning, was run under the auspices of the Icelandic Festival Committee and it was staged in accordance with the rules of the International Amateur Athletic Association and with the Manitoba Track and Field Association officiating. The distance was certified.

The winner of the event was Chris McCubbins of the U.S. Army, originally from Oklahoma. His time was 52 minutes, 7.1 seconds.

Winners of the Icelandic Festival open race and the Icelandic Canadian Club trophy was Ken Parker, unattached; the winner of the Juvenile

## OLD-TIMERS AT BETEL

Following the parade on Monday morning, the Fjallkona visited at Betel, passing from room to room on all floors. It was most interesting to meet with the residents. Mrs. Ingveldur Kernested, ninety-five years of age, is alert. She was born in Snæfellssysla March 8, 1875, and was thus an infant

## REG FREDERICKSON SINGS "CANADA"

Reg Frederickson, popular baritone soloist, concluded his program with "Canada" a poem written by Guttormur J. Guttormsson, translated by Jakobina Johnson, and set to music by

Gimli. A hootenanny led by Solli Sigurdson of Edmonton, formerly of Riverton, was held at the Gimli Park. The weekend concluded with a dance in the park pavilion. —Free Press

event and the Stewart trophy was Ron Melnychuk, and the winner of the Midget race was Ed Romanowski, in the time of 60 minutes, 1.09.4 seconds.

Bob Steadman, of the University of Manitoba, walked the ten miles in 87 minutes, 10.5 seconds. There were three entries for the event.

McCubbins, winner of the Western Canadian championship, was the winner of the 3,000 metre steeplechase at the Pan-Am Games in 1967. He is presently stationed at Fort Sam, Houston, Texas, but plans to return to Manitoba in the fall to take his Master's degree in Philosophy at the University of Manitoba.

in arms at the landing at Willow Point, Mrs. Sigridur Arnason took part as a child in the first Icelandic celebration in 1890, and was pleased that this should be remembered. Mrs. G. (Halldora) Bjarnason, who arrived at Hecla Island in 1876, is still doing some painting.

Sigurbjorn Sigurdson, formerly of Winnipeg, now of Vancouver. He was accompanied by Miss Snjolaug Sigurdson.

## A JOINT DINNER

### The Icelandic Festival and the National League

The traditional Festival Committee informal dinner was a joint affair this year; the National League wishing to join in honoring Ambassador Magn-

usson and Mrs. Magnusson. The League president, Mr. Skuli Johannsson, presented the Ambassador with a beautiful silver bowl.

## THE COMMUNITY SINGING

The community singing in the Park Monday evening is ever popular and as the rays of the westerling sun slanted through the evergreens the people streamed back to the Park. Reg Frederickson led in the English songs and Herman Fjelsted in the Icelandic songs, with Jona Kristjanson at the

piano and Neil Bardal with his banjo. The relaxed singing in the cool evening air was like a benediction at the close of the three days of the Festival although the dance to follow was actually the very last event.

—W. Kristjanson

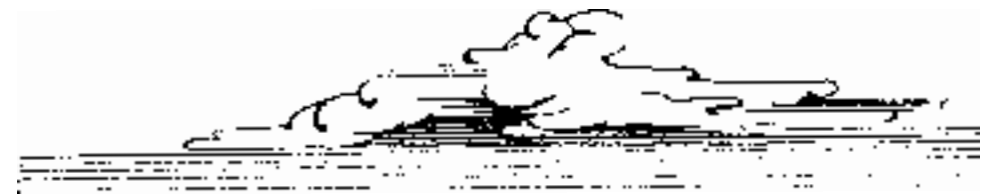
## THE FJALLKONA

From "Framfari", the Canadian Forces Base, Gimli, paper

"The Fjallkona was first conceived as a symbol for Mother Iceland by Eggert Olafsson in 1750. In verse, he depicted her as a mother giving love and guidance to her children, the Icelandic people. Again, in 1810 her name appeared in a toast to Iceland. She became known to almost every Icelander in 1874, when an engraving was published for the Icelandic Millennium. The first personal appearance of the Fjallkona was at the Winnipeg

pageant in 1924, when she lent so much dignity to the occasion, that her appearance became a vital permanent feature of the festivities. Some years later, she also began to participate in Icelandic National Day in Reykjavik.

"The traditional costume of the Fjallkona also has a special meaning. The white painted head dress, above a circlet of small gold stars, represents the snow-capped mountains of Iceland, rising from the volcanic fires. Her green cape symbolizes the green valleys and lowlands."



## GOLD MEDALLIST IN LAW

Eric William Olson, formerly of Gimli, now of Winnipeg, graduated in Law from the University of Manitoba in 1970, won the University gold medal for the highest standing in his graduating year. Other awards won during the academic year were: The Butterworth Co. Prize in Law, for highest standing in the final year; the Carswell Company Prize in Law, for the highest standing in the final examinations in third year; the Margaret Hypatia Crawford Scholarship, subject to enrolment in the Bar Admission Course of the Law Society of Manitoba; the Honourable Alexander Morris Exhibition, for the highest weighted grade-point aggregate in the full course in Law, and the Chief Justice Robson Prize, for highest standing in Local Government.

In his first year in Law, Mr. Olson won the Gilbert Gregory prize for highest standing in Law of Property. In his second year, he won several prizes and scholarships: the Carswell Company Prize, for the second year student with the highest weighted grade-point aggregate in the year; the J. A. Cherniak prize for the highest standing in constitutional law (relinquished); the Harley M. Hughes, Q.C. Memorial Prize in Evidence (relinquished), and the Chevron Standard Limited Scholarship for the highest standing in the first two years of the Law course.

Mr. Olson has been appointed to position of clerk in the Supreme



Eric William Olson

Court in Ottawa for the period of one year, commencing September 1. His present intention is that following this period, he will return to the Winnipeg law firm of Pitblado, Hoskins, and Co., where he has been employed for the past two summers.

Mr. Olson is the son of Olafur Lawrence Olson and Johanna Gorsline, both formerly of Norwood, Winnipeg. Paternal grandparents, the late Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Olson, of Gimli, Manitoba, and maternal grandparents, Mr. E. ●. Markusson, of Gimli, and his late wife Kristin.

He is married to Leslie Mary nee Watt, who is employed with the Cancer Foundation Clinic of Winnipeg. (See also the Icelandic Can. Spring 1961 issue).

G.P.

LETTER FROM DENMARK —

## TRANSPLANTED ICELANDERS

by Joan Stefansson

The hardy being we know as an Icelander thrives best in his own land or in the company of fellow Icelanders. This seems to hold true in Denmark as well as in the rural towns in Manitoba.

My impression of the Icelanders I have met in Copenhagen, has been varied. It varies from one very, very shy fellow who spends most of his time with fellow Icelanders, playing cards, to an Icelandic couple who speak perfect Danish, and are frequently seen in the company of Danes. There are all grades of variation in between. According to the Icelandic couple, there are approximately 300 Icelandic students in Denmark. They are drawn here for the chance to study further in their chosen profession. The reason is mainly that the university in Iceland cannot always offer the knowledge or advanced studies that the Icelanders need to finish their education. This seems to be especially true with regard to engineering, and possibly medicine. The majority of students, however, finish their education here, and return to work in Iceland. This could account for the fact that there are some not eager to learn Danish, since they will be returning to their own land. On the other hand, there are others who enjoy the chance to mix with the Danes, and learn the language.

The Icelanders in Copenhagen have meetings where they discuss the Icelandic newspaper, and renew their

chance to speak Icelandic. They congregate also for the special Icelandic festivals, especially the one on June 17, which commemorates the establishment of the sovereign republic of Iceland in 1944. Other festivals are the ones that celebrate the coming of spring and winter.

The relationship between Denmark and Iceland was formerly a troubled one, since the Danes have ruled over Denmark. The resentment seems to simmer below the surface with Icelandic people I have met here, although the students have not had the direct experience that their parents have had. The story of the "Íslandsk Handskrift", is one that is still unfinished between the two nations. The Icelandic sagas were displayed in the archives in Denmark, until Iceland asked for the right to take them home again to their rightful owners. This has been discussed for many years, and as yet, the sagas are in Copenhagen, but it has been agreed that they are the property of Iceland, and will be sent over. This is still a source of grievance among the Icelanders.

Are there other Icelanders in Copenhagen than those who are here studying? Yes, there are workers who find that they can earn more over here. There are Icelanders in the hospital who cannot receive the medical treatment they need in Iceland, and who are sent to Denmark. (This is mainly in the case of brain surgery). There are Icelandic girls who work in the

hotels over here for a short time, then return home. There are two Canadian Icelanders (perhaps more, but I have not had the pleasure of meeting them). The other Canadian Icelander has been here for two years, and is married to an Icelandic student. This Canadian girl has managed to work so well in Copenhagen, that she was offered a

job as supervisor, which was a great honor since this had only been given to Danes before.

In brief, I will say that the Icelanders here find Denmark a land in which to live and study, but only for a few years. The majority finish their education and are eager to return to Iceland, their homeland.

### TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR DR. SIGURGEIR BARDAL

A testimonial dinner and community gathering were held in May at Shoal Lake, Manitoba, to honor Dr. Sigurgeir Bardal on his completion of 50 years of service as medical doctor for the area. The occasion was called Dr. Sig Bardal Day and more than 600 people attended.

Present was Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson of Winnipeg, head of the Winnipeg Clinic and chancellor of the University of Winnipeg whom Dr. Bardal succeeded in the Shoal Lake post in 1920.

Members of hospital boards and town and rural councils joined with medical associates and friends at the dinner in the Buffalo Plains Inn attended by some 175 persons. Hospital board vice-chairman John Hepworth was master of ceremonies and greetings were brought by Shoal Lake mayor N. S. McLean, Shoal Lake municipality reeve Michael Antonation, Dr. J. E. Hudson of the Hamiota Medical

Group and Dr. Schmidt on behalf of the Manitoba Medical Association. Dr. Thorlakson was guest speaker.

An overflow gathering at the Ukrainian Hall followed the dinner. Straithclair municipality reeve Kenneth Rapley was chairman and presentations were made to Dr. and Mrs. Bardal by the hospital staff, hospital auxiliary, health unit and the community. Read were telegrams of congratulations from Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Lieutenant-Governor R. S. Bowles of Manitoba, Opposition Leader Robert Stanfield, Premier Ed Schreyer and Health Minister Rene Toupin as well as from many friends and former residents of Shoal Lake.

In 1930 Dr. Bardal married Miss Isabel Leiterman, a registered nurse. Dr. and Mrs. Bardal have over the years been active in various community affairs.

### CENSORSHIP

## LITERARY SCAPEGOATS

by Art Reykdal

A mild tempest keeps whistling over the teapot (letters to the editor) over the publication in The Albertan recently of Susan Atkins' memoirs. 'What influence will such reading have on the young?' the writers demand vehemently. Well, among other things, it just might warn some of them against the pitfalls inherent in that way of life.

That hoary old chestnut about influence of bad literature on the young is an unprovable theory anyway. For what is bad literature? And what is good? Isn't that a matter of opinion? And doesn't the very act of censoring a book, either by parents to their children or by the law to the public, make that book all the more desirable?

Left to his own devices, a child will develop his own reading tastes. He will accept what appeals to his personality and he will reject what doesn't. And he will read hundreds of stories about bandits robbing banks or gunmen killing off their enemies without feeling the slightest urge to do these things unless it happens to be in his nature to do them anyway. If his parents are to him, as they should be, the most important people in the world, then their standards of behavior will influence him far more than any book possibly can.

\* \* \*

Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn are classics today.

But when they were written, kids had to slip up to the hayloft to read them in secret. For they fractured all the traditions of the goody-goody, sanctimonious, Little Lord Fauntleroy heroes of the then-accepted juvenile literature. They presented boys who said "sweat" when they should have said "perspiration," who disobeyed their parents, sneaked behind the barn for a surreptitious smoke, played hookey from school and did all the natural but naughty things that boys have done since Cain and Abel—though they didn't commit fratricide, as did Cain.

Hundreds of vice squads campaigned to have the books removed from the juvenile sections of the nation's public libraries. No move was made to ban them entirely; the adults wanted to read them themselves.

\* \* \*

A large library in New York employed a man to read aloud to classes of blind children. He wrote to Mark Twain, told him about the move to remove the books, and asked him if he couldn't present an argument to prevent it. He said they were always the first books he read to each new group of children, for the youngsters always enjoyed them, as he did himself.

Mark Twain replied that he was afraid he would have to agree with

the library committee, for he had written the books for adults and had never intended them for the young. He went on to say that he owed all his faults to the fact that he had not only been allowed, but compelled, to read the Bible at a tender and impressionable age, "and no child can do that and ever draw a clean, sweet breath again. If there is an unexpurgated edition of the Bible on your shelves, kindly remove Huck and Tom from that questionable companionship."

Can anyone deny that the Bible contains scenes of violence and sadism? Can anyone deny that it contains characters who are reprobates, to put it mildly? Can anyone deny that it contains lewdness, depravity and obscenity? Can anyone deny that it is the greatest book ever written? And would anyone dare to stand up and publicly

declare that it is salacious literature?

\* \* \*

No book was ever written that somebody didn't censure—and desire to censor.

Every generation has produced its literary scapegoat for all the wrongs of the young. The dime novel, the penny dreadful, the wild west stories where good guys who didn't smoke or drink or swear shot bad guys who did all three. Studies of juvenile delinquents have revealed that all of them were avid readers of whatever type of literature happened to be suspect at the time. Studies could also indicate that all of them drank milk. Should milk, then, be cited as a contributing cause of juvenile delinquency?

—The Albertan

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## GRADUATES AND RECIPIENTS OF AWARDS

### UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, 1970

The following names taken from the University of Manitoba Convocation proceedings, are of students with Icelandic names or known to be of Icelandic origin—in one or two cases they are presumed to be of Icelandic origin.

#### Bachelor of Arts

George Boyd Sigurdson

Joanna Valgerdur Snidal

#### Bachelor of Science in Engineering

Sigurjon Stefan Isfeld

#### Doctor of Medicine

Lorna May Medd, B.A. (Honors)

Ronald Clayton Eysteinn Eyolfson,  
B.Sc.

Kenneth Theodore Kristjanson

Glenn Allen Scheske

Garnet Leslie Eggert Ulyot, B. Sc.

#### Diploma in Dental Hygiene

Beverley Ann Olson

#### Certificate in Nursing (Public Health)

Linda Sharon Lindal

#### Diploma in Agriculture

Maurice Sigurdson

#### Bachelor of Laws

Eric William Olson, B.A. (University  
Gold Medal)

Donald Sigurd Fjeldsted

**DR. G. KRISTJANSSON**  
*Physician and Surgeon*  
PHONE Spruce 2-9453  
WESTBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE  
Logan and Keewatin  
Winnipeg 3, Manitoba

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WINNIPEG

**GREETINGS**  
FROM TWO BROTHERS

**Bachelor of Science in Medicine**

Kenneth Theodore Kristjanson, M.D.

Lorna May Medd, B.A., M.D.

Garnet Leslie Eggert Ulyot, B.Sc.,  
M.D.**Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy**

Johannes Keith Eyolfson

**Bachelor of Nursing**Janet Ann Thereen (nee Hannesson)  
Wong**Bachelor of Physical Education**

Kenneth Wayne Stephanson

**Master of Business Administration**Christopher William Westdal, B.A.,  
1968**Doctor of Medicine**

Kenneth Theodore Kristjanson

**UNIVERSITY GOLD MEDAL****Law**

Eric William Olson

**Music (L.M.M. Examination)**

Heather Alda Ireland

**Nursing**Janet Ann Thereen (nee Hannesson)  
Wong**Medicine****Sara Meltzer Medal and Prize** for best  
all-round record in the total course in  
Medicine

Lorna May Medd.

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## IN THE NEWS

### JAMES EINARSON AWARDED THE NEAMAN GOLD MEDAL

James Einarson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul O. Einarson of Winnipeg, in May was awarded the Neaman gold medal for general proficiency at the graduation exercises at the Technical-Vocational High School in Winnipeg. Meanwhile Paul Allan Miller, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Miller, also of Winnipeg, received his bachelor of education degree from the University of Toronto at the June convocation. Both are grandsons of Mrs. Sigridur Arnason of Betel, Gimli.

★

### GLENN ALLEN SCHESKE BEGINS INTERNSHIP

Glenn Allen Scheske, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Scheske of Lundar, Man., received his degree in medicine at the University of Manitoba's 91st annual convocation in May and began his internship in June at the Vancouver General Hospital. He is the

grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Einar Johnson who lived at Steep Rock, Man.

★

### DR. BALDUR H. KRISTJANSON RECEIVES ADDITIONAL AP- POINTMENT

Dr. Baldur H. Kristjanson, chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Board and Advisor to premier Ed Schreyer, has been named an ex-officio member and becomes a member of the Board of Directors of the Interlake Development Corporation. Dr. Kristjanson also serves as a Director for West-Man Development Corporation.

★

### INTERLAKE GROUP MEETS AT LUNDAR

The first of a series of meetings of the water and sewer committee of the



Interlake Development Corporation was held in Lundar recently with seven members present and chairman Joe Sigurdson of Lundar, Coldwell municipality reeve, presiding. The committee will prepare a proposal on how to make water and sewer available to more communities and more people. The aim is to submit this proposal to the Board of directors before the end of September. The corporation will put final touches to the proposal and submit a recommendation to the provincial government for a water and sewer policy for the Interlake area.

★

### TOM JOHNSON JOINS HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

Three former playing greats and one hockey executive in the builder category were elected this year to the National Hockey League's Hall of Fame.

Players selected were the late Cecil Henry (Babe) Dye, whose scoring feats were legendary with Toronto Hockey clubs as far back as 1920; Bill Gadsby, a defence stalwart with Chicago Black Hawks, New York Rangers and Detroit Red Wings; and Tom Johnson, another defenceman, who now is coach of Boston Bruins.

Johnson had a 15-season NHL career, starting with Montreal Can-

adiens in 1950 as a full-time defenceman. He was lost to Boston Bruins in the June draft of 1963. Johnson stayed with Bruins for two seasons.

He remained with the Boston organization after his retirement and was appointed coach for the coming season after the sudden retirement of Harry Sinden, who had led the Bruins to their first Stanley Cup in 29 years.

★

### HON. PHILIP M. PETURSSON RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTOR OF DIVINITY DEGREE

Hon. Philip M. Petursson, minister of cultural affairs in the Schreyer government in Manitoba, in June received a doctor of divinity degree from Meadville Theological School, an affiliate of the University of Chicago. The occasion was the 125th anniversary of the School where Mr. Petursson graduated in 1929. Mr. Petursson, a Unitarian minister in Winnipeg for 35 years, was appointed to the Schreyer cabinet after the New Democratic Party won the provincial elections in 1969.

★

### THE "EYRARBAKKI" FERRY BOAT ON LAKE MICHIGAN

Eyrarbakki is the name of a new all-steel ferry boat built by the Bay Shipbuilding Company for the Washington Island ferry line Wisconsin plying on Lake Michigan from Chicago and other centres. Because the first Washington Island settlers came from Eyrarbakki, Arni Richter, Arni Gudmundson's grandson, decided that Eyrarbakki was a fitting and timely name for the new ferry.

Arni and Mary Richter visited the town of Eyrarbakki in 1968.

★

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### MRS. JANET WONG (Hannesson) WINS HONORS

Mrs. Janet Wong (Hannesson) graduated with highest marks and honors from the University of Manitoba. Mrs. Wong attended Selkirk Collegiate and over the years won an IODE scholarship in 1965, a gold medal in 1966, PEO, GM and Isbister scholarships and a governor-general's medal. At her graduation last spring she received her bachelor of nursing degree. She now lives in Winnipeg and is with the Victorian Order of Nursing. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hannesson.

★

### DENNIS NEIL STEFANSON PRINCIPAL OF THE BRUCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Dennis Neil Stefanson of St. James-Assiniboia, a suburb of Winnipeg, this summer was appointed principal of the new Bruce Junior High School in St. James-Assiniboia. Mr. Stefanson has been principal of Heritage School in Assiniboia for the past three years, and prior to that was principal of Kirkfield School for two years.

Mr. Stefanson, formerly of Gimli, is a graduate of the University of Manitoba, where he received his bachelor of arts and bachelor of education degrees. He has served on the Icelandic Festival committee for a number of years and is presently its secretary.

Mr. Stefanson is the son of Eric Stefanson, former MP for Selkirk constituency, and Mrs. Stefanson of Gimli. His wife is the former Claire Gontier. They have three children.

★

### THE ICELANDIC ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK SPONSOR OUT- DOOR GATHERING

Icelanders in New York City, N.Y. in June held an outdoor gathering in Lindberg Park, in Huntington, Long Island, under the auspices of the Icelandic Association of New York. Some 600 persons attended. Geir Magnusson was master of ceremony and the address was delivered by Ivar Gudmundsson of the press corps at the United Nations. Icelandic musicians played for a dance held for young and old and a number of games were staged. Association president is Sigurdur Helgason and the executive includes Stefan Wathne, Geir Magnusson, Hans Indridason, Geir Torfason, Hrefna Hannesdottir, Flemming Thorberg and Robert Werner.

★

### KENNETH H. HALLSON PRO- MOTED TO CHIEF ENGINEER

Kenneth H. Hallson, of Winnipeg, has been appointed Chief Engineer of General Engineering Division of Winnipeg Hydro.

Mr. Hallson graduated from the University of Manitoba as B.Sc. (Electrical Engineering) in 1945.

Following graduation, he joined the Royal Canadian Signals and was commissioned Lieutenant in 1946.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hallson, of Winnipeg.

★

### ALDA WINGFIELD WINS MUSICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Alda (nee Halldorson) Wingfield, of Winnipeg, was first in a vocal section of a Women's Musical Club competition for 1970 and received an award of \$300.00. She has won many festival firsts. She is a student of Dorothy Lawson. Her original home was in Ashern, Manitoba.

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