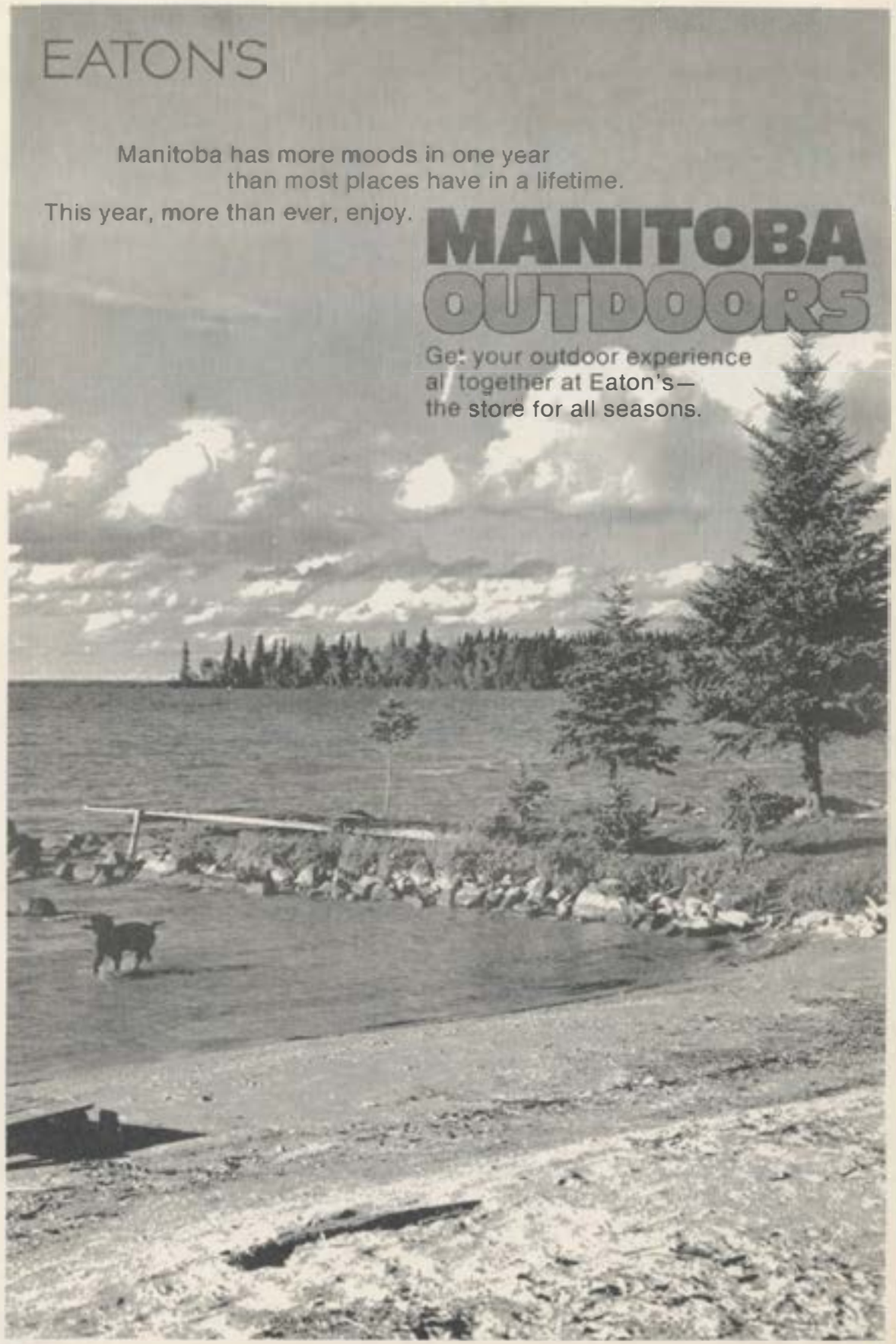

FALL 1974

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

An Angry Lake Winnipeg – picture taken at the Gimli dock

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EDITORIAL

Physical Fitness and Health

by W. Kristjanson

"Yes, the average 60-year old Swede really is more fit than the 30-year-old Canadian", says Lloyd Percival in an article in a June issue of Weekend Magazine. The statement is based on careful scientific studies comparing males of all professions and age categories (excluding professional athletes) in both countries. What is the remedy?

The Canadian style of life is the main contributing factor. Our urban population amounts to 76%; the rural (in centres under 1,000) is 23%. Children play less outside than formerly and there is more passive recreation for young and old in TV watching. Car-riding is a factor. How many drive instead of walking to the corner drugstore?

Obesity is a disease of our civilization. Apart from moderation in diet, excercise is a sound remedy. "You don't need to diet to keep your weight down — just take some regular excercise", says a World Health Organization expert.

In Swedish schools there is more effort to involve everyone in fitness programs, not just gifted athletes in school competitions. In Sweden, in 1969 alone, $400 million was spent on sports facilities; Canada's total federal sports budget in the past ten years has been $60 million and $70 million.

West Germans have launched a keep fit campaign, supported wholeheartedly by radio, television, and newspapers throughout the country. In the course of two years, two million persons have been persuaded to become actively interested in their physical health.

We all know the value of excercise, whether or not we do excercise. With good health we achieve more and enjoy life more — add zest to life.

The harmfulness of physical inactivity is manifested in many ways. Heart attack incidence among London bus drivers between the ages of 35 and 64 is eight times more frequent than among conductors who must work actively and climb stairs in a double-decker bus. Finnish cross-country skiers live on the average seven years longer than physically inactive average population.

There are several organized physical fitness programs in Canada. In Manitoba, to mention only one province, at the Red River Exhibition this year a major attraction was a Canada Fitness award program and sports demonstration, developed by Sport and Recreation Canada. The tests made are designed to develop speed, strength, and agility and the idea behind the testing is fun, an important factor in physical excercise. The Y.M.C.A and the YWCA have for a long time offered valuable health programs. One very simple one was the YMCA "walk a mile" campaign recently.

The Royal Canadian Legion is to be highly commended for its sports and fitness program. The Legion sports Foundation has excellent camp facilities at the International Peace Garden on the Manitoba-North Dakota boundary, with dormitory space for 400 athletes. More than sixty coaches provide top-notch instruction. Plans are now made to transfer a regional camp into a national operation — a Legion Memorial Sports Centre estimated to cost a quarter of a million dollars, a spacious and fully equipped modern sports complex. This is but one phase of an extensive Legion Sports program.

What further physical fitness program might be developed? One suggestion is for the governments — federal, provincial and municipal in cooperation — to establish physical fitness camps, especially for students in the summer holidays and others graduating from high school and as yet without employment. Army camps such as Shilo camp in Manitoba, with accommodation in huts and tents would be one location to consider for such camps, but tents could be set up near towns. The armed forces and the YMCA and the YWCA could provide instructors and a large corps of trained instructors would soon be developed under such a plan. A national conference on fitness and health was held in Ottawa, in 1972.

Meanwhile we can all walk a mile and drink a few glasses of water.

AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

Vilhjalmur Stefansson Inspired the Russians to develop their own Arctic Region

The Russians, inspired by the Vilhjalmur Stefansson vision of Arctic development, turned to the development of their own Arctic regions. Farley Mowat, Canadian author, visited Arctic Siberia in the autumn of 1966. In an article in the Atlantic Advocate, June, 1969, he describes the town of Tcherski, 90 kilometers south of the shore of the frozen Arctic ocean. In 1959 there was no sign of it at all. On the banks of the Kolyma, the only sign of human habitation, were the fishermen's tents. But by 1966 there were 11,000 people on the site and the town was a major transportation and administrative centre for a huge region of previously undeveloped Arctic lands. What impressed Mowat most was the almost unbelievable dedication of the people, their enthusiasm for the opening up of the north, their vision of a new world to be built in a region which, until they came, had thought to be good for nothing and almost uninabitable except by reindeer herdsmen.

* * *

Robert Louis Stevenson in Iceland

A pictorial presentation of Robert Louis Stevenson's **Treasure Island** with well developed captions in Icelandic is being featured in serial form in the Icelandic periodical **Heima er bezt** (At home is best).

The grave of a young Icelandic girl in Greenland

The book **Henry Hudson,** by Llewellyn Powis, London, 1927, conveys a poignant echo from the old Icelandic settlement in Greenland. There has been found in recent times in Greenland a gravestone of a young girl with the following runic inscription upon it.

"Vigdís hvílir her glade Gud sal hennar." (Vigdis rests here. May God gladden her soul.)

* * *

Icelandic Canadian Centennials

Icelandic Canadian centennials are now following one another in quick succession. In 1772 the first permanent Icelandic settler in Canada, Sigtryggur Jónasson, arrived in Ontario. In 1873, a group of about 100 arrived. They are associated with Rosseau and Hekla, in the Muskoka district of Ontario In 1874 a second party of 365 arrived, proceeding to Kinmount, a hundred miles north-westerly from Toronto. In the autumn of that year, 1874, a few single men, persuaded by John Anderson, Johanness Arngrimsson, an uncle of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, proceeded to Nova Scotia. They were the advance party for the Markland, Nova Scotia settlers of 1875. And in October, 1875, the first Icelandic settlers in Manitoba arrived. A centennial celebration for that event is being planned.

"J. B." A FISHERMAN FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY

by S. Stefansson

Jón Björnsson Johnson is his name, but in the many communities where he is known he is commonly called "J.B.", or else by the Icelandic community "Jón á Birkinesi"—John of Birch Point. He is so quiet in manner and totally unassuming that at first glance one would not perceive the tremendous capacity for action in this son of the pioneers and pioneer himself. His friendly smile and soft voice never raised in argument do reveal his essential humanity and concern for his fellowman, but give no hint of the unswerving loyalty to principles, people and causes, and rock-hard steadfastness of purpose and action.

Icelandic pioneer children knew little of childhood. J. B. Johnson, born July 4, 1886, in Vopnafjörður, Iceland, came with his parents to New Iceland in 1892, then aged six. At the age of twelve he began fishing, not as a hired hand, but with a net of his own, working with Jónas Jóhannesson of Grænumörk, who taught him to set the net and remove the fish, and helped him lift it when necessary. Jónas owned the skiff on which both fished of Vigur south of Gimli in summer and fall. No permits were then required to fish for home use. J. B. caught enough goldeye, pickerel and pike to supply the household of five or six people the year around. Fish was then the main food staple of New Iceland families, and if not used fresh was preserved by salting, smoking or drying.

In 1901 he began winter fishing with Friðfinnur Einarson, a married man of thirty-five, and from that time on sold his surplus catch. They worked together, each with his own nets, fishing for pike in the Willow Island lagoon, and then, as the ice grew stronger, out on the lake. Since his father, Björn Jónsson, had died that spring, he also had to do farm work and tend cattle at home, on the family homestead of Mýrar. He was a farmer and a commercial fisherman, supporting a family including his mother Guðrún and younger children, at age fifteen.

The next two winters he fished similarly with Sigfús Bergmann of Gimli. J. B. then had sleigh dogs, but Sigfús a team of ponies on which they transported their surplus catch to Winnipeg Beach, from where fish companies shipped it by rail to Winnipeg.

The ensuing stage was winter fishing at Bullhead on the north of the lake in 1904-5, working for his half-brother Bjorn Johnson of Mýrar, for whom the Johnson Memorial Hospital of Gimli is named, and then some twenty years in partnership with him, though sometimes in separate camps, mainly at East and West Doghead.

So began for J.B. over seventy years as fisherman, foreman or skipper of sail- and gas-boats, fish packer and foreman or manager of fishing stations on Lake Winnipeg, mainly self-employed, supplying his own equipment and hired men, though often in partnership with others, and frequent-

ly engaged in two or even three operations at once, with each partner in charge of one of them. Much of the time he fished in all three seasons of the year.

Now in retirement he shares his countless memories of the lake with others, among them is brother-in-law and one-time partner, Oli Josephson of Gimli. Some of their recollections are combined in the following.

Virtually every home by the lakeshore in New Iceland in pioneer days had a boat. J.B. remembers the very earliest as barge-like in construction, with square stern and prow, and probably several of them made from the lumber of the scows in which the first settlers were transported. Árni Oddsson of Vigur used this type for several years. These boats had two pegs serving as oar-locks, with the oar placed between them and square boards attached to the oar to keep it in position.

Then came he more familiar skiff (bytta), 12-14 feet long and about 5½ feet wide, with square stern, pointed prow and two thwarts, on which two rowers could sit side by side. One or to men fished from the skiffs, which had two or sometimes three oars. The larger sailboats came into use later.

A few of the settlers had brought with them from Iceland nets usually made for deep-sea fishing: some had bought nets in Ontario, and a few made their own, all out of linen thread. J.B. remembers his brother Björn making a rather shallow net of No. 10 thread. The noted fisherman Helgi Einarsson of Fairford introduced cotton nets which he brought from the United States. Later came the nylon nets now in use.

Fishemen's clothing was very varied. Oilskins were used in summer and fall. For protection against water some wore high socks of shaved sheepskin tied just below the knee, which were stuffed with hay for drying. For winter wear some early pioneers had brought with them clothing of extremely warm Icelandic homespun (vaðmál), but few had brought looms for weaving it, (Búi Jónsson had such a loom). The unending industry of Icelandic housewives supplied the men with hand-knitted wool underwear, sweaters, scarves, socks and mitts. They supplied the fishermen with a bag containing twelve pairs of mitts, each pair being used for two nets and then set to dry—a slow process then, but now, since bombardiers have driers. For winter wear sheepskin-lined jackets with wide collars were common, but Oli Josephson remembers wearing two sweaters. Felt caps with ear-laps were later replaced with fur caps with laps tied under the chin. Eventually parkas came into use. Footwear varied greatly. Some made the Icelandic-style slippers from the traditional sheepskin, or from cowhide (but probably more for home use). Boots, moccasins or shoepacs were worn. Some ewed hide to the sole of socks and part way up.

For transportation in early days all over Lake Winnipeg fishermen used dog-sleighs with runners, about 12 feet long and 3½ feet wide, with a crate, often movable, on top if fish was piled in loose; otherwise fish boxes were loaded on. Capt. John G. Stevens was probably the first to introduce toboggans; he used hem for freighting, but they were generally for travel only.

Sleigh dogs were of every variety, even including St. Bernards and Newfoundland dogs, and ranging from stocky, lowlegged furry huskies with curling tail and perky ears, rather slow but powerful, to high-legged wolfhounds, long, lean and superior in speed. The rank and file of dogs were

J. B. Johnson's dog team; his brother Gudmundur driving

trained by placing them at the end of a dog team and coaxing them along. Some would fall in docilely at once; the more independent would let the team pull them along flat on the ground for long disances before submitting. A prospective lead dog would be placed behind the leader to learn from him how to obey commands, such as turns, and keep the team in a straight line, untangled. Some had a sure sense of direction; others little or none. A team for either sleigh or toboggan usually numbered five or six dogs, and could pull a load of 300-500 pounds or more on ice. J.B. had one team that with steel runners and clear ice once pulled about 1200 pounds.

Theirs was a life without a single moment's freedom. If not in harness in the team they were chained with metal chains even in their kennels, and when, after perhaps five or six years work, their strength began to fail they were killed and replaced with younger dogs. Claus, a huge Newfoundland lead dog, so detested this slavery that though friendly he always tried to bite when being chained.

Then as now there were three fishing seasons, fall, winter and summer, with the duration of each established by government regulations: they were hen September 1 — October 31 (fall), November 15 — March 15 (winter) and June 1 — August 15 (summer). They are now slightly altered. Fishermen fished independently in fall and winter with no limit set on the amount caught, but in the summer whitefish season on the north of the lake they fished for the fish companies from their stations, and with a set limit of three million pounds, later two million, still later reduced to one and a half million as supplies dwindled. The season ended when the permissible quota had been caught. Limits are set on more species now.

J.B. fished almost every fall season some years from Gimli, and then Marteinn Johnson of Gimli and he became partners in a fall fishing sation station on Fox Island where they had a fish packing station. They remained partners till J.B.'s son-in-law Lawrence Stevens purchased Martein's share in 1939 and was in partnership with J.B. until 1960 but then J.B. sold his share to him, continuing to fish most fall seasons.

In time a number of Icelandic fishermen became fish packers as well; i.e., besides having their own boats, gear,

nets and hired men, they purchased, processed, stored and marketed fish. Formerly only a limited amount was sold fresh; most of it was frozen. Consequently at intervals along the west shore of Lake Winnipeg from Gimli to Hnausa many fish stations had processing sheds and freezers. The Helgasons, Thorlaksons, Sigurdssons (Hrólfur and Jón) and Sigurdssons (Stefán and Jóhannes) and Magnússons had such freezers. J.B. had one on his farm at Birch Point in partnership with Sigurdur Kristjansson of Gimli, 1909-1914, and employed one man on shore to look after it.

This freezer consisted of a two-storey building about 20x30 feet, with a shed of similar size attached. The freezer had the lengthwise walls lined to about 8-10 feet up with tin plates and eight-inch planks with narrow edge out set at the junction of the plates, with another set of tin plates attached to these at this distance out and held with planks. The aperture between was filled solidly with a mixture of shaved ice and salt poured in and packed.

In the sheds the fish was washed and either dressed or left in the round and arranged in pans which were stacked in compartments (bins) about 6x10 with alternate layers of the crushed ice and salt mixture between rows of pans. When solidly frozen, this form or boxed was stored in the freezer.

Lack of harbors and shipping in summer and fall made this process necessary. While some fish was shipped fresh by boat in summer the rest was frozen. Now, except for the winter catch, all is shipped fresh.

Fall fishing was all done from skiffs and some three or four miles or less from shore. The men rowed to the fishing-ground, except that a few used gas-boats, their own or rented ones, to tow out skiffs for longer distances, as at Macbeth Point.

Every season on the lake has its own dangers, for Lake Winnipeg is notoriously tempramental. The period just preceding winter fishing, when the fishermen were being transported with all their gear and supplies to the fishing stations, was often a difficult one, and is so even yet. Since the ships took them out late in October, they ran some risk of being caught in ice. In earlier days there were few docks, so that only the more skilled and venturesome captains brought the men close to shore. From the point where the ship stopped the men with all their equipment including dog teams and later horses had to be taken to shore by boat, often a lengthy and cumbersome process.

J.B. had particularly vivid memories of an experience of this sort in the stormy cold fall of 1910. About Oct. 24-25 he set out for Reindeer Island on the Mikado (later named Grand Rapids), with Captain Howell of Selkirk in charge. Among those on board was Jakob Sigurgeirsson with his sons Geiri and Joe and his wife Victoria, who had undertaken to cook for their camp during the winter.

It being stormy, Captain Howell took shelter in the Swampy (Berens) Island harbor. During the night a furious north-east gale drove the ship out of postion, shattered its rudder and left it stranded on nearby shallows.

Since the Wolverine stopped at this point on every trip north, the people stayed on board the Mikado till its arrival. It also was conveying men to Reindeer Island, but to a different camp, among them W. J. Arnason, Einar Einarsson of Audnir and Sigfús (Fúsi) Arason of Gimli. J.B. now bargained with the captain of the Wolverine to take him and a man employed by him, Óskar Eiríksson (Oscar Ericson) of Arnes, there too.

On the way there the Wolverine unloaded Gudmundur (Mundi) Magnusson of Gimli and some men with him at Cathead Point, a lengthy process, since there was no harbor on the west side and they had to land by boat. Immediately after ,such a blinding gale broke that the Wolverine was forced back to Swamp Island (now named Berens Island) for shelter. On entering the harbor it struck a reef and like the Mikado broke its rudder. The captain let it drift some distance in and then anchored it in the harbor. Meantime the storm continued unabated.

By now it was November and frosty, too late for other boats to sail, so that the crews and passengers of both ships were practically marooned.

Consequently J.B. with three other men went on a small skiff to the nearby shore of Swampy Island to explore for campsite. They remained about two hours, and found Jakob Sigurgeirsson, who had landed before and had already constructed a camp for his group.

Just then still another storm broke this one at about forty miles an hour. On looking for their little skiff, which they had left on a sand bar on the east side. they discovered that it had been set adrift by the gale and was gone.

However, the two life-boats of the Mikado were near by. Taking one of them they steered it toward the Wolverine. with the storm carrying them straight on toward it without rowing. Large seas in the harbor were tossing the Wolverine back and forth, so that though J.B. threw a rope to moor the skiff to it, he could not reach the side for embarking because of the weather. However, an opening on the stern of the Wolverine was large enough for a man to pass through. With a rope tied around him, each of the four men by his own efforts and the pulling of the ship's crew managed in turn to crawl through it.

J.B. was the third man to try this method of embarking. At the very moment when he was on the icy rail the Wolverine heaved, the rope broke, the man holding him lost his grip, and he was plunged into the icy water. The seas were carrying him away and the yawl with its one man on board tossed wildly in every direction. J..B. had the added disadvantages of wearing heavy clothing and not being a good swimmer Just as he was going down he shouted to the man to reach him an oar. At the very moment of sinking he grasped the oar-blade and the man carefully pulled him in and on board the yawl, from where he now successfully entered the Wolverine. He was given rum, undressed, put in a warm bed, and after a sound sleep felt as well as ever, with not even a cold.

After this close brush with death he built a camp on shore and stayed there till ice formed on the lake. Then he crossed over to Reindeer Island with a dog-team, and as the ice strengthened he moved his gear over there in relays, working with Óskar Eiríksson. As a precaution they were attached to each other with a rope, in case one of them broke through the ice.

As to the two vessels, the Mikado and the Wolverine, they remained frozen in there all winter, till towed next spring by tugs into dry-dock in Selkirk.

Occasionally wives and even whole families if the children were of preschool age accompanied fishermen for the winter season, though less often in summer. Women were sometimes. nowever, engaged as cooks for the sum

mer camps. Oli Josephson recalls that his wife Rosa went out with him two winters with their two young children. They travelled on a tug whose captain was John G. Stevens. It rolled all night, wind-tossed, till both of the children were sea-sick. One of them remarked, "If you go, daddy, I will go with you."

Actually many enjoyed this change from routine living. It had the advantages of family life. The cabins were warm, the food adequate and sickness was rare. People rarely caught colds in the camps — more often on their return.

Many tasks occupied the fisherman in the few days between arrival and commencement of fishing, the most immendiate being construction of fish camps for living quarters, or repair of old ones. A camp housing one small gang of two or three men might measure 14x14 feet. Larger ones might accomodate two or three such gangs, up to eight or nine men. Then a separate kitchen 12x14 feet or more might be built, with sleeping quarters up to twenty feet in length, with a row of bunks 6-7 feet long, lengthwise along the wall and sometimes three to a wall. Often there was a double row, one above the other, and if necessary some on the other side. Generally two men occupied each bunk.

Such camps were set on bare ground or rock and constructed on rough logs fitted only on the corners, with a roof of saplings set side by side, covered with hay or straw with clay on top. For insulation they were chinked with moss. Often, to prevent drafts, white paper supplied in rolls like tar paper but thinner lined the inside over logs and moss. Some made a slush of snow and water and slaped it on the outside walls to form a sheath of ice.

Older camps needed repair, such as re-chinking with moss or mending roofs. If no other shelter was available, the men slept in the open during camp construction. J.B. remembers spending four nights in the open at Macbeth Point

Oli Josephson remembers a site where no logs were available, but abundance of moss in deep layers. He constructed a camp of saplings placed vertically and thoroughly insulated with the moss.

Other details occupied time, such as attention to fishing gear, and construction of kennels for dogs. These were long structures, about three feet high and three deep, and partitioned about four feet apart. The front was open and a hay or straw litter supplied.

Food for the winter camps consisted of beef, pork, either salted or fresh, but usually the former, beans, a great deal also of bannock, or sometimes bread, but relatively little fish. Sometimes there were potatoes, though they were difficult to keep from freezing, but no other vegetables. For beverages there were tea, and evaporated or canned milk, the latter mainly in tea or on rice pudding, which Oli Josephson remembers having in quantity for breakfast. Prunes were often served.

Oli Josephson remembers two 120-pound sacks of beans being shipped out for the season for 7-8 men. Once when the weather remained unseasonably warm he had to salt all the beef for his camp. Consquently in another season he took out two cows to slaughter for beef.

For lunch on the ice the men generally had bannock and beef, or else bread and beef in sandwiches. Some preferred salt pork, as it was less liable to freeze, and the men often ate frozen lunch.

Among the personnel of the camp was the cook, engaged to look after the camp in the men's absence and to prepare meals for them. Although a few were experienced (J.B. remembers John Anderson as one who was an excellent cook), more often they were young lads aged possibly sixteen or seventeen, who received a smaller wage. Their inexperience sometimes led to culinary disasters that were nothing short of ludicrous. A boy of sixteen, having been instructed to prepare bannock, hid the results under a mattress. On being ordered to bring what he had cooked, he hung his head and displayed a peculiar mixture of lumps of bread and flour. His employer shook his head and merely remarked, ,"Jæja karl minn!" (Really now, old man!"). On another occasion the same cook saw some startled expressions on the faces of the fishermen when they tasted his prunes. He had stewed them in juice drained from pickles. But all was forgiven when he went all the way out on the ice to serve them hot coffee, with Icelandic pancakes (lummur.)

The cooks in the large summer stations were, however, all experienced. Several of them were women. They were paid good wages according to those times, and given a helping hand by the night watchman employed at every large camp, who would split and fetch firewood, bring water, and assist in various ways.

After arrival in winter camp fishermen would wait impatiently for the lake to freeze over with firm enough ice for the setting of nets. This can be an anxious period; storms may repeatedly shatter the ice and snowfalls at the time of freezing make it unsafe. Often the men try to catch the run of fish by venturing out on thin ice.

J.B. recalls hat once in the early 1920's when fishing of Egg Island he set out with Marteinn Johnson of Gimli to lift two nets that they had set on the ice for trial. They went out with a sleigh, but had a boat on it as a precaution. Just then a wild snowstorm came on from the west, shattered the ice and drove it out from shore. J.B. and Marteinn came to open water and set out in their boat. In the blinding weather they saw nothing, but they knew the direction and reached shore safely.

Another incident occurred in 1921 off West Doghead where J.B., W. J. Arnason and Sigurdur Kristjanson of Gimli and several others had a camp. One morning early in November J.B. and a workman from Saskatchewan, Valdi Hall, set out to lift nets a mile north on the ice where they had already done some fishing. The ice being thin they did not use dogs but pulled hand sleighs, and threaded their way along glare ice, as there was no firm ice under snow. J.B. had slung a rope over his shoulder and under his arm to pull the sleigh.

They had almost reached the fishing site when J.B.. broke through the ice. He tried to grip the rim of it, but it broke constantly and the heavy current pulled him under. Valdi Hall broke through too, but found firmer ice and climbed out. He saw no trace of J.B., but the sleigh was floating in the open water. He caught at it and pulled it out — and J.B. came up with it from under the ice, with the rope still slung over his shoulder.

They hurried back to camp, changed to dry clothing, and suffered no ill effects.

It is not known whether any other man has ever been drawn under the ice of Lake Winnipeg and come out alive.

However, J.B. never had the experience of being cast adrift on ice floes, as has happened to some fishermen.

As soon as the ice was solidly formed, the regular routine of work began for the winter fisherman, seven days a week, each day's work being from dawn to dusk and in earlier days all in the open, regardless of weather except under extreme conditions. They set out in early morning usually two or three men together, with sleighs loaded with fish boxes and other gear, usually jogging behind the dogs. One man might take an occasional rest by sitting on the sleigh, but mostly they were on their feet and ran rather than walked. On the way out one man might run ahead to encourage the reluctant dogs. Generally they went out from six to ten miles.

The first stage in winter fishing is cutting holes in the ice, which in early times were cut with Hudson Bay axes with a curved edge. In late winter the ice on the north of the lake averages up to four feet or more in thickness but is thinner in the south. At the four-foot depth he hole would be about 3½ to 4 feet long and 2 feet wide, but smaller on thinner ice. Ice chisels with a 4-5 foot wooden handle were used to clear the bottom of the hole. Then improved ice chisels, heavy ones with metal handles, were introduced. The best were made by Tryggvi Jonasson of Gimli, of special steel. Then came "needle bars", like pointed three-edged spears, cut on a slant. The process took about twenty minutes for each hole. Now ice augers attached to bombardiers with a power take-off from the engine will cut through three feet in one minute.

Next came the setting of the nets. This required running poles, which at first were simply poles from the forest about three inches in diameter Later came oak boards about four inches wide and half an inch thick, up to fifty yards long. These slid easily on ice behind dog sleighs. A line of longer length was attached and the pole run under the ice with it. One could see the end of it through clear ice, or gauge its direction and cut a hole accordingly. When a net-length was reached the net was attached to the line and drawn up between the two holes. The pole was then run to the next hole till all the nets were set. Up to twenty nets might be set, with the holes in a straight line.

Nowadays a device called a "jigger" has replaced the poles and the oak boards. It was invented by Helgi Sveinsson of Lundar, half-brother of Kelly Sveinsson of Selkirk, but never patented. Einar E. Einarsson of Audnir near Gimli first introduced it on Lake Winnipeg about 1910.

Jón Viglundsson Johnson of Gimli improved the jigger by adding a device giving sound, but he received no credit either, though the jigger with this addition is used all over the Manioba lakes.

After the cutting of the holes, the fishermen would go through the daily precedure of clearing holes, lifting and setting nets and removing and storing fish. If too far from the camp

to return at noon, they had lunch on the ice. Sometimes they had dry wood and lit a fire on the ice to heat tea. If not, they ate frozen lunch; or if they had expected to return and not brought lunch, but were detained, they might go without food altogether.

Through the day the dog-team lay on the ice watching them, or sometimes curled up in drifts with tails over noses, but always in the straight line set by their leader.

At dusk the men returned to camp, usually following the same route day after day till a trail formed, which for long distances distances in the north as at Reindeer Island was marked with spruce branches. The dogs travelled more readily if they had trail to follow. A ten-mile distance took about two hours.

During the hours on shore the men usually had enough tasks to occupy their time: boxing fish in winter, repairing nets and gear, gathering fuel. Occasionally they played cards, and many, among them J.B., took books with them to read, which they read by themselves, not aloud.

Among the many memorable experiences of these winter seasons J.B. and Oli Josephson, then partners, recall vividly the year of the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-19. That fall they two set out with J.B.'s brothers Björn and Gudmundur (Mundi) Johnson, two immigrants from Iceland as workmen, and Jónas Arnason as cook. Since the lake did not freeze over till by November 20, at which time the tullibee run was over, their first attempts failed. Consequently they moved on two dog-trains to Big Tamarac Island, where Gusti Jacobson lent them a camp, but there they caught only two to three fish in each net. J.B. and Oli then went to Sandhill Island for a trial, tested three spots and caught an abundance of fish, staying up all night in doing so. Then they moved there, with Björn and Mundi joining them. It was bitterly cold. All four stayed at first in a tent so small that the last man in had to crawl out backwards. On the first day when a blizzard struck they made a small hut in a single day.

Since they had taken neither a watch nor a clock with them, they had to depend on visual judgment as to the time of day. Once they woke up, saw a bright light and rushed out to set nets. Then they discovered that it was

Three of the men in this expedition caught the Spanish influenza on the lake J.B., his brother Björn and one of the immigrants. J.B. remembers that the last named was delirious, and he himself spent a sleepless week He remembers taking a drink of hot water and rum the only available medicine, and then going to bed profusely after which and went on about his

on the lake The Carberry, a small tug moving men north, had a couple with influenza on board. Both were taken

back to Selkirk and died there. Deaths were numerous.

During the illness of J.B. and his associates, Jón Pálmason and Gestur Oddleifsson, who were in a neighbor- camp, came daily within calling distance to ask about their condition.

Because of the prevalence of the epidemic the federal government sent the S.S. Bradbury out with Humphrey Brian as captain on a special trip with a doctor to visit every camp. In their case it cast anchor near shore and blew the whistle, upon which a rowboat went out to answer it. On being told that the men were on the way to recovery the Bradbury sent no one on shore, but moved on.

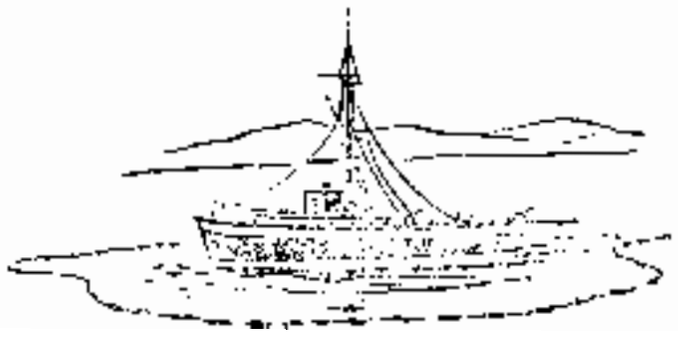
During this season the four men remaining caught tullibee to fill 750 boxes. It had been priced at five cents a pound, but as they were two days late in bringing it in, Northern Fisheries of Selkirk reduced their payment to 3½ cents a pound, which gave each of them some $190.00 or slightly more for the entire winter's work.

J.B. carried on winter fishing at several points on the lake in addition to those previously mentioned, such as Reindeer Island, Doghead, : . Island and Jackhead. About 1925 he went north to Dauphin River and worked there the first · · and the next ten in · · with Gísli Johnson of Gypsumville, both as a fisherman and a fish packer purchasing fish for the Gimli-Armstrong Company. For three additional years he was a fish packer for this firm in Gypsumville. From 1938 on J.B. and his son-in-law Lawrence Stevens were also partners in a winter-fishing operation on Fox Island, with Lawrence as manager.

A memorable season in this period was the winter of 1936-7, which was so cold that J.B. says the fish froze even in the cabooses, and Oli Josephson remarks that the air seemed like fire as the men breathed it in while running after their dogs and every inch of a fisherman's face would be covered with frostbites.

J.B. discontinued winter fishing about 1948, after some forty-five years of it, but continued in the other seasons.

(to be continued)



Address by Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson

Official representative of the Government of Canada to Iceland's 1100th Anniversary Celebration at Thingvellir, July 28, 1974

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour and privilege for me to participate in this historic occasion. I bring official greetings and congratulations from the Government and people of Canada to the Government and people of Iceland.

I recall with great clarity that early morning of June 26th, 1930, when Mrs. Thorlakson and I emerged from our tent to discover that this most hallowed ground and national monument — Thingvellir — was covered with a light blanket of snow.

However, on that auspicious day, Nature smiled on this land. The sun burst upon the scene to bring cheer and warmth to the thirty thousand people, many of whom had travelled across the seas to attend the commemoration of the 1000th Anniversary of Althing. The proceedings began with a service of praise and thanksgiving conducted by His Grace, the Bishop of Iceland, Dr. Jón Helgason. At 11:30 a.m. the celebration was officially opened by the Prime Minister, the Honourable Tryggvi Thorhallsson.

The next day, we witnessed the reenactment of the First Session of Althing in 930 A.D. On that day in 930, the first Law-Speaker, Úlfljótur, stood on Lögberg, the Rock of Laws, and recited from memory the Laws which laid the foundation for the "Grandmother" of all representative Parliaments.

The commemoration in 1930 was a stirring and colourful event. It is one of our most cherished memories, which we can now relive on our fifth visit to Iceland.

In Canada, we are approaching an important centenary. In October 1875, the first permanent Icelandic settlement in Canada was established at Gimli in New Iceland, in the District of Keewatin, now within the Province of Manitoba.

In this connection, it should be recalled that the first serious attempt to establish a permanent European settlement on the North American continent (Vinland the Good) was made shortly after the explorations of Leifr Eiriksson. About the year 1012 A.D., Thorfinnr Karlsefni, a merchant, sailed from Iceland with one hundred and sixty men and women. On board, he had livestock — including horses and sheep — household effects, and necessary equipment and supplies. His son, Snorri, was born on what is now most certainly Canadian soil. After three years, when this attempt at settlement failed, Thorfinnr returned to Iceland and lived here the rest of his life.

Today, many of the first-born of the early Icelandic settlers in Canada — as well as many of the second and third generations — are here to celebrate with their kinfolk another important anniversary in Iceland's long and remarkable history since the high

pillars of Ingólfur Árnarson — the first settler — drifted into the Bay of Reykjavík.

During the eleven hundred years of its existence, the Icelandic nation has experienced periods of glory interrupted by periods of extreme hardship and recurring tragedies which required great physical, moral and spiritual stamina to survive and, in the course of time, to become one of the progressive small nations of the 20th Century.

Mr. President: on Tuesday, July 30th, it will be my pleasure to present a token of the gift from the Government and people of Canada which, when completed, will be delivered to the National Library of Iceland. This collection will augment the section of Canadian books and documents, some of which record in prose and in poetry the loyalty and devotion of Canadians of Icelandic descent to their native country, Canada, and — at the same time — give expression to their continuing interest and pride in their Icelandic heritage, its language and its culture.

KHARTUM TEMPLE SHRINE PRESENTATION TO THE ICELANDIC FESTIVAL OF MANITOBA

Illustrious Potentate Cliff W. Brown Mrs. Brown and Dennis Stefanson, President, Icelandic Festival

Following the Icelandic Festival parade in Gimli this year, Illustrious Potentate Noble Cliff W. Brown of the Khartum Temple Shrine presented Mr. Dennis Stefanson, Festival President, with a Certificate of Membership in the "100" Million Dollar Club" in appreciation of donations received from the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba for the Shrine Hospital. In making the presentation, the Illustrious Potentate was assisted by his good lady Margaret (nee Gislason) who expressed the gratitude of the Shrine in the Icelandic language. Dennis is the son of Sigrun and Eric Stefanson of Gimli, Manitoba.

Helgi H. Austman

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE TRIP TO ICELAND — 1974

Having returned recently from a month long trip to Iceland, which was an extremely enjoyable time for my wife and myself, I can't help but be enthusiastic about telling other people about it. In terms of a vacation, I cannot think of any other time I have had greater enjoyment for a full month from the time we gathered in the Winnipeg Airport along with 198 other people, mostly of Icelandic origin, till all of us returned together a month later. Even though many of the group of 200 did not know each other at the start, we were immediately close friends as a travelling group.

Very briefly let me list some of the reasons why this one-month vacation was so enjoyable for both my wife and myself. First and foremost is the outstanding hospitality of the people of Iceland. Whether it was meeting relatives, friends or strangers, we were received with open arms, much of the traditional coffee and goodies to eat and general friendliness wherever we went. In fact at times the hospitality almost became embarrassing and all of the goodies that are showered upon the visitors can become somewhat overburdening to the digestive system. Still, in many cases, our hosts complained that they did not have the opportunity to do enough for us whereas at the same time we felt that they were doing far too much.

Another most enjoyable feature was the outstanding beauty of the scenery. Iceland certainly is endowed with a great deal of both tender and rugged beauty. There is great variety from the super green-fields and farmlands in the agricultural areas to the rugged, barren, but colorful mountains and the coastline that ranges from black sand beach to tall rugged rock cliffs. The various flowers abound both in the low lands and up in the mountains and are of a type that we seldom see in this country. There is so much to see that you really don't notice that there is a great lack of trees and practically no forest as such. However, where these do occur, such as at Hallormstadir and at Akureyri, they do lend an additional feature to the landscape.

Another enjoyable and exciting feature was the festival atmosphere of the country in this 1100th anniversary of its settlement. In all the districts there were local celebrations, the outstanding one of course being at Thingvellir. It was indeed a colorful and majestic sight to view the many thousands of people who gathered on the slopes of Thingvellir, that beautiful natural amphitheatre, to watch a day-long program of pomp and ceremony and entertainment.

Another enjoyable aspect was the opportunity to act as ambassadors of

Canada and to promote the attendance from Iceland at the 100th year anniversary celebrations of Icelandic settlement in Canada. This impressed many people in Iceland and it was obvious that all 200 of us had been active promoters. The estimates of the number of people that may come to Canada from Iceland next year range from hundreds into thousands.

It will indeed be a challenge for us in Canada to return some of the hospitality that we have enjoyed to our guests from Iceland in 1975. I am sure we look forward to that opportunity and that there will be much planning this winter for how we might do the best possible job both individually and collectively. I am sure, in particular, all of those people who enjoyed the Icelandic hospitality this past summer will be anxious to reciprocate in every way possible.

THE BLUE EVENING STAR

(Er blástjarnan skín)

From the Icelandic of H. S. Blöndal

The blue evening-star
In its path-way of light,
Now gleams from afar,
Through the fathomless night.
What causes my mind
With longing to soar,
Rejoicing to find
Deep wonders in store?

The clear, silent star,
That in reverence I see,
Is sent from afar
With assurance to me:
Though dismal and cold
Be life on this shore,
Vast glories unfold
When my journey is o'er.

—Jakobína Johnson

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AND MEDAL WINNERS

ELIZABETH AGNES COMACK

Gold Medal in Honors Sociology, University of Winnipeg.

Parents: Hugh and Agnes (nee Bardal) Comack, 32 Valley View, Assiniboia,

Elizabeth will proceed with her M.A. studies in Sociology (Specialization in Criminology) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

VALDIMAR WARREN STEFANSON

Gold Medal in Environmental Studies, University of Winnipeg.

Parents: Stefan and Olof Stefanson, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

LYNN MAGNUSSON

Gold Medal Honours Arts, University of Manitoba.

Parents: Agnar and Lauga Magnusson, 747 Garfield St., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Lynn has been awarded a $4,500 Canada Council Special M.A. scholarship in English, studies which she will pursue at the University of Toronto.

She also received a Department of English, University of Manitoba Honors Bursary of $500, and an L. A. Wheeler Book Prize of $50 and an Ieleane Downey Memorial Book Prize of $50.00.

ROGER BYRON JOHNSON — Gold Medallist. A picture of Roger Byron Johnson is not available, nor is information about his parents, except that his father was Icelandic and his mother, Swedish.

Graduates and Scholarships

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
GRADUATES — MAY, 1974

Bachelor of Arts

ARNASON, Barry Charles
ARNASON, Rita Maureen
AUSTMAN, Robert Mitchell
BENSON, Sylvia Ann
BRANDSON, Gilbert Wayne
ELIASSON, Hugh Gissur
GISLASON, Donald Garth
HJORLEIFSON, Josephine
JOHANNESSON, Harold Ross
JOSEPHSON, Wendy Louise
PALSSON, Valerie Ingrid Gwen
STEFANSON, Bonnie Eileen
THOMPSON, Thomas Ingvar

Bachelor of Science (Honours)

HENDERSON, Larry Hjalmar
OLIVER, Douglas Baldur (First Class Honours)

Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)

BENJAMINSON, Ellen Mary
DANIELSON, Dennis Leslie
JOSEPHSON, George Barry, B.Sc.

Bachelor of Science

EGGERTSON, Douglas Edward
JOHANNSON, Bjorn Neil
LAMBERTSEN, Gudmundur Kenneth

Bachelor of Environmental Studies

EINARSON, Neil Gregory

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture

ARNASON, Brett Franklin

Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Civil)

ERICKSON, John Richard

Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Geological)

DANIELSON, Grant Douglas

Master of Science

SIGURDSON, Bryan Gestur, B.Sc (Wpg)
THORGEIRSON, Gordon Wayne B.Sc. (Hons.)

Bachelor of Social Work

BJORNSON, Marion Ann Phyliss

Bachelor of Physical Education

ANDERSON, Douglas Richard
EYJOLFSON, Carlyle Magnus
KRISTJANSON, Cheryl Roberta
PETERSON, Valerie Kathleen

Bachelor of Pedagogy

THORLAKSON, Geraldine Dora

Associate in Education

ANDERSON, Diane Gayle
AUSTMAN, Doreen Joan
JOHANNSON, Judy Christine
JONASSON, Karen Sherrill

Doctor of Medicine

SIGURDSON, Eric Stefan, B.A. (W. Ont.)

Doctor of Dental Medicine

JOHNSON, Roger Byron—University Gold Medal
SIGURDSON, Sigurjon Einar

Bachelor of Laws

CHRISTIANSON, Bjorn, B.A. (Wpg.)
EINARSON, Barbara Jean, B.A.
EYJOLFSON, Albert Walter
GOODMAN, Arnold Arthur, B.A., (Hons.)
GOODMAN, Beverley Erin, B.A.
GOODMAN, Thomas Alexander, B.A. (Wpg.)

Bachelor of Nursing

EINARSON, Linda Mary

Diploma in Occupational Therapy

FJELDSTED, Ingrid Brenda

Master of Arts

KRISTOFFERSON, Kenneth Murray, B.A.
SIGURDSON, Elaine Ann, B.A.

Master of Education

PAULSON, Barbara Lynn, B.A., B.Ed.
SIGURDSON, Siggi, B.A., B.Ed.

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

MAGNUSSON, Augusta Lynne, (Fir (First Class Honours), University Gold Medal.
SNIDAL, Duncan James

Bachelor of Education

ARNASON, Kristjan, B.A. (Wpg.)
EYVINDSON, Peter Knowles, B.A.
FREDERICKSON, Louis Dawn, B.A.
JOHANSON, Judith Elizabeth, B.A., (Wpg.)
ARNASON, Cameron Ross, B.A.
KRISTOFFERSON, Kenneth Murray, B.A., M.A.
PERLMUTTER, Kristine Inga, B.A., (Hons.)
STRATTON, Jonina Nancy, B.A.

MEDALS

Arts Honours Course

MAGNUSSON, Augusta Lynne Gold Medal.

Dentistry

JOHNSON, Roger Byron — (also winner of MacLachlan Gold Medal, Dr. John Earl Abra Scholarship, Dr. Joseph Freeman Memorial Book Prize, Dr. F. W. L. Hamilton Scholarship)

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA FELLOWSHIPS

THORSTEINSON, Olivia Julian, — $1,000.00

UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
GRADUATES — May 1974

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

COMACK, Agnes Elizabeth

Bachelor of Arts (General)

BJORNSON, Carol Margaret
HALLSON, Gerald Marvin

SIGURDSON, Leigh Colin

STEFANSON, Valdimar Warren

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Arts

JONSSON, Barbara Louise

GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

Sociology

COMACK, Elizabeth Agnes, Winnipeg

Environmental Studies

STEFANSON, Valdimar Warren, Winnipeg.

Bachelor of Science

CHRISTIANSON, Carlyle Bruce, (as of Oct. 1973)

MEDALS — BRANDON UNIVERITY SILVER MEDAL

(for outstanding achievement based on student's University academic performance)

Psychology

JONSSON, Barbara Louise

The Peter D. and Una B. Cameron Memorial Scholarship of $600.00

Shared by Barbara Louise Jonsson

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ,1973

JOHNSON, Marion, M.A. degree in Historical Linguistics. London, Ont.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO — 1974

JOHNSON, Marion, M.A. degree in Mediaeval English.

Marion has been awarded a fellowship to pursue her Ph.D. studies in Linguistics at Ohio State University.

WATERLOO UNIVERSITY, ONT. 1974

JOHNSON, Edward, B.A. degree in Mathematics, Honours course.

ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS

The Icelandic Canadian Club of Winnipeg is offering a scholarship of $100.00 for the academic year of 1974-1975, to a student of Icelandic or part Icelandic descent who has completed grade XII in Manitoba and is proceeding to studies at one of the three universities in Manitoba.

Qualifications will be based primarily on Departmental or Board examination results, but consideration will be given to qualities of leadership and community service and need for financial assistance.

Candidates are hereby invited to send their applications together with a satement of examination results and testimonials from two leaders in the community by November 1, 1974, to the Club Secretary:

Mr. H. J. Stefansson
Suite 419,
60 Whellams Lane,
Winnipeg, Man. R2G 0V8

SHIRLEY McCREEDY

Airborne to Iceland

JULY 3-4, 1974

The airship aloft, we set our clocks
ahead five hours. No one sleeps,
for daylight is ahead
as our midnight tolls the witching hour.
We sing . . . we eat. . :
we give thanks that all is well
as we wing our way
to the homeland of our forefathers.
A sense of kinship prevails
and we are light-hearted.
We are over Hudson Bay
framed by black and rocky wasteland,
austere . . . dramatic.
Then dawn brings day
and the last hours of the night
bring dreamlike lethargy.
We meet new friends.
Below are ice floes,
then snow upon snow on Greenland . . .
mountains of white.
What treasures under the mantle of snow?
The sun glistens on the snow,
with play of light and shadow.
Then blinding brilliance blurs the horizon
where white meets blue —
and soft wool-like terrain

replaces the grandeur of tundra.
In awe we feast our souls
in untrammelled pleasure,
relaxing after the foreboding in the night
as we approach the land of the midnight sun
where no darkness falls
and nature's quilt begins to spread
to touch the ocean's surface.
Suddenly a light so blinding we cannot see;
then the horizon's flame cools
to reveal the isolated rocky coast
which at one time was ice;
whose lava flow from aeons past
still marks the surface of the land
and for centuries upon centuries to come
will continue to mark the land
and change the lives of the people who stayed
to preserve this dreamland home.

THE ICELANDIC FESTIVAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba is offering two scholarships to students who have already studied a year at a university, one for $125.00 and one for $75.00. They are tenable at any one of the three universities in Manitoba.

The following is the basis for selection:

- Icelandic or part Icelandic descent.
- A first class "A" academic standing is desirable; a "B" standing is the minimum.
- Participation in extra-curricular or community activities, in school or in the general community.

Applications for these scholarships with relevant supporting information, including age, the name of the college or university attended, and a transcript of marks, are to be forwarded by October 31 to the Executive Secretary of the Festival Committee:

Miss Mattie Halldorson
Suite 3, 568 Agnes St.
Winnipeg, R3G 1N6

ERI BJORNSON:—

WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCES

WITH THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

A casual conversation with the editor initiated this article:

"Would you write something for the Icelandic Canadian?" he enquired.

"What would I write about?" I asked.

"Perhaps an account of your RCAF experiences in World War II," he suggested. "Some of your experiences might be of interest to our readers."

Consequently, after reviewing this three-year career from my past, I have selected a few of my activities and impressions, topics which have lain more or less dormant in my memory for a quarter of a century.

My first awareness of warfare dates back to my childhood years. I recall seeing young men from my neighborhood in World War I uniforms home on leave, and hearing about casualties among them, later, overseas. At school a few years later, I became bilingual (Icelandic — English) and became impressed with the content of textbooks such as the then authorized "Canadian Reader" and concurrent history books. Poems, stories, and other reading material of that era did not develop the anti-militaristic themes and tone which can be found in present-day school books. On the other hand, they lauded war-heroism, answering the call to duty, and the readiness to sacrifice in the interests of one's country. Naturally, in those pre-Commonwealth days, a comparatively pro-British attitude was cultivated with favorable references to the "Mother Country" with its far-flung "Empire" including daughter-Dominions such as Canada.

Childhood impressions are lasting, and undoubtedly a background like this influenced the decision by men of my generation to participate in World War II when it became a reality. Apart from that, the motivations to enlistment are subjective. They may be a complexity of influences which could include those which are personal and social, selfish and altruistic, voluntary and acquiescent, in varying proportions for each individual.

In my case, I chose to ignore the available option of being "frozen" in my civilian profession for the duration of hostilities. I chose to apply for a position as Air Navigator in the Royal Canadian Air Force. My formal enlistment took place 32 years ago in August, 1942. The ceremony included holding hands with a dozen other volunteers as we swore the Oath of Allegiance. Some interest was added by the fact that the well-known radio personality, D. R. P. ("Darby") Coats, conducted the ceremony.

It was December before I was posted to Manning Depot at Brandon. Meanwhile, I continued in my civilian position as teaching principal of a rural consolidated school. At Brandon I was pleased to find, also in uni-

form, several of my colleagues. Included were the late Barney Thordarson, my former teacher at Mary Hill School, Carl Bjarnason, a former fellow-student at the University of Manitoba Summer School. The inevitable question was from the non-Icelanders: "Are you two related?"

Unlike army and navy units, RCAF flights[1] rarely remained intact for more than a few weeks during training. As a result, long-lasting associations were not established among airmen until they formed their crews for combat duty. After a few days at Brandon, I was posted to Souris, Manitoba, where I spent several weeks learning to march, drill, salute, and perform other military functions. Only on rare occasions did I encounter former civilian friends or acquaintances, but I found it interesting to meet and associate with the many types of men with whom I trained.

From Souris I was posted to No. 3 Wireless School in Winnipeg, where several of us future navigators performed "Tarmac Duty" while awaiting a posting to Initial Training School at Regina. Tarmac duty included the cleaning of aircraft, sweeping hangar floors, picking up cigarette butts and other litter around the buildings, and shovelling snow. When we ran out of such duties, the proper thing to do was to keep out of sight. The only break in this monotonous routine was an occasional opportunity to fly as passengers on the training flights for wireless operators. I remember this particularly because of a trick of fate which saved my life. I had missed my scheduled flight because my bus-transport from barracks to the airfield was late. Another airman who was on hand took my place. The plane crashed near La Salle, Manitoba, shortly after take-off.

Later, when I had my turn to go "upstairs" for the first time, I had misgivings. An airman in training for aircrew duty must fly sooner or later, however, and I do recall that this first flight of mine was a genuine thrill. It was a welcome break in a dull and troubled period — for my transition from civilian life to RCAF wartime was not an easy one.

Regina I.T.S.[2] gave little time for the loneliness and moping which could develop in idle time. Intensive study of navigational theory and airmanship, supplemented by vigourous physical training and drill parades occupied both mind and body during the waking hours. Sleep came easily. Health and morale were at their peak. Our course here ended in late summer with a "prop" parade where we were given the rank of Leading Aircraftman (LAC) — a rise from the lowly AC2 (Aircraftman Second Class) where our careers had begun.

During my stay at Regina I recall the pleasure of meeting Fúsi Arnfinnson, a one-time resident of my home town. Fúsi had enlisted early and was already a Flight Sergeant, and later became an officer. I was grateful at the time for his advice and information about RCAF life in general. In due course I was granted a few days' leave between pay-days. It marked the only occasion for my indulgence in the unmanly art of hitch-hiking, when I made the trip from Regina to Winnipeg "on my thumb". Rides were freely offered to servicemen in uniform in those days, but there were complications. Gasoline and tires were

1 Flights in the RCAF were comparable units to the army platoon.

2 Initial Training School.

rationed, and consequently trips were few.

From Regina ITS we were promoted to Portage La Prairie Navigation School in the fall of 1943. Here the class-room training was intensified. We now applied our navigation theory to a practical purpose on 3-hour training flights on Anson bombers which took us over all parts of southern Manitoba. It was interesting to view both familiar and unfamiliar landmarks from the air, both by day and by night. As flying LAC's we were paid $2.25 per day plus board and lodging. With allowances, this was in excess of teachers' salaries at that time. The routine included training in Morse Code, Navigation, gunnery, aircraft recognition. We practised using the sextant as an aid to navigation—a waste of time as it turned out, because it had become obsolete and replaced by radar devices by the time that we arrived overseas for combat duty. I also recall aircraft recognition (ACR) as a lost cause. My low score in this subject was said to have delayed my commission; yet, ironically, in my career as a navigator, it was entirely outside my range of duties, and I was never in a situation where I could have used it.

At Portage I made the acquaintance of Flying Officer Alvin Hamilton who was my navigation instructor and flight commander[3]. Prior to his enlistment he had been a teacher in Saskatchewan — also the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative party which at the time was not represented in the legislature. After a successful career with RCAF Ferry Command, Mr. Hamilton has made, in my opinion, a worthwhile contribution to Canada as a federal M.P. and cabinet minister in the Diefenbaker administration.

From Portage we graduated as Air Navigators in November. We received the rank of Sergeant and were presented with the single wing insignia, with the letter "N", to wear on our tunics and battle-dress. Some of the sergeants were promoted the next day to the rank of Pilot Officers; others remained sergeants for a considerable length of time, rising gradually through the ranks of Flight Seargeant, Warrant Officer 2nd Class, and Warrant Officer First Class[4]. Commissions were granted from time to time through interviews with senior officers. Mine came in the early part of 1945 — later than I would have liked, but welcome nevertheless.

We were ready for an overseas draft in December, 1943, but had to wait. The cause or delay may have been a shortage of shipping tonnage. More liekly it was a surfeit of trained aircrew, for the Commonwealth Air Training Plan had been operating on a large scale for some time.

Commando training was then in vogue — particularly in the army. In order to keep us fit and active, the RCAF gave us a modified course in "unarmed combat", conducted by Canadian Army repatriates. At Valleyfield and Three Rivers in the province of Quebec, we climbed cliffs and trees, slithered down ropes, pretended to jab each other with hat pins, jogged and route-marched, crawled through tunnels, learned how to hit or kick sensitive parts of the opponents' bodies, and practised the art of dodging rifle or Sten-gun bullets. This last-named activity was relatively safe. However, I recall that one overly-curious airman raised his head at the wrong time

3 An RCAF "flight" is comparable in size to an army platoon.

4 W/O-1 equals the army rank of Regimental Sergeant Major.

and was hit. I never learned how he fared after he was taken to the hospital.

In March, 1944, I embarked at Halifax on the New Amsterdam with thousands of other members of the various Canadian armed services. I shared a small stateroom with 17 other airmen. The floor-space accommodated five 3-tiered bunks with three men lying down on the floor after the other fifteen had occupied the bunks. Portholes were locked in order to conceal the ship's lights from enemy reconnaissance. In these cramped quarters (9'x12' approximately) we found the air somewhat thick, or as one would say nowadays, polluted. Traffic to and from the single washroom was restricted after everyone had settled in his niche for the night. The food provided by the ship's kitchens was of unbelievably poor quality, and was the cause of what was politely called seasickness — much more so than the motion of the ship. Only when, near the end of the voyage, we illegally resorted to our emergency food rations, did we recover from the malady.

Our ship, being capable of some 20 knots, was independent of convoys or other protection at sea, and most of the time we sailed alone. We watched porpoises, played cards, promenaded on the deck, and read to pass the time. Once or twice at dusk we sighted a destroyer or corvette flashing Aldis Lamp signals to our ship. This broke the monotony and gave reassurance. Because our course sig-zagged to elude enemy submarines, it took six days to reach our first sighting of land in Northern Ireland. From there it was a matter of only hours before we docked at Greenock, Scotland. Here we were welcomed by a thrilling display of aerobatics by two Spitfires. These aircraft, which were swift and maneuverable, were at that time well-known for the important part which they played in check-mating the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain.

From Greenock, the overland journey to Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, was a memorable experience. I recall vividly the shrill toot of the miniature British railway trains, and the "Mother-Goose" landscape made up of masonry bridges, green hedge-rows, brick houses. I sat up all through the moon-lit night to enjoy the scenery.

The RCAF Reception Depot at Bournemouth was a welcome haven for travel-weary men. Luxurious apartment houses, normally occupied by well-to-do vacationers, were our sleeping quarters. The food was wholesome and tasty. Recreation and entertainment was easily available and, accordingly, our stay at Bournemouth was pleasant. I was housed in Bath Hill Court, a resort hotel made of white limestone. Because it was easily visible, it was ironically nicknamed "Target for Tonight". I say "ironically" because none of us wanted it to be bombed, and, to the best of my knowledge, it never was hit.

It was of passing interest to listen for the first time to "Lord Haw-Haw"[5] on the radio, and to hear in the news that a British plane had been shot down in the nearby "New Forest", according to British history King William Rufus had been killed by an arrow while deer-hunting in the year 1100 A.D.

During my stay at Bournemouth, I contacted two friends — fellow-Manitobans who had preceded me overseas. Lt. Col. Einar Arnason was stationed in southern England developing his flame-thrower project which was later to contribute substantially to the allied war effort and win for Einar the O.B.E. decoration. My visit at his training centre was most interesting. At Bournemouth I encountered Cameron Mann, a former school mate from Lundar, Manitoba He was then on repatriation leave having served for some time as a radar operator in Burma. These two meetings precipitated my awareness of the war and reminded me that I, too, would soon be involved in it.

[5] "Lord Haw-Haw was the nickname of William Joyce, an Irish American who broadcast Nazi propaganda from Europe during World War II.

My training was, however, at this time incomplete. Soon I was posted to Millom in Cumberland for a short course in air-navigation in the English set up. Here, again, we trained in Ansons, flying mainly over the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland or southward along the coast of England and Wales. Millom was as unattractive in every way as Bournemouth had been to my liking. The chief item on the diet was a melange of cheese and potatoes. For variety we sometimes had potatoes with cheese. A new dimension in our [illegible] was the presence of mountains and the sea. Also, we began to know more about the location of British airfields and about navigation procedure in the new environment.

A pleasant break from our Millom routine was a day-long trip into the Lakes District. Some of us visited this beautiful corner of England which is [illegible] associated with the poet William Wordsworth. We had time to visit his cottage and to row for an hour or so on one of the lakes Derwent Water. I think it was.

Soon I was posted to Kinloss, an RAF station in Morayshire, in Northern Scotland, with a number of other navigators. Here we met other aircrew tradesmen: pilots, gunners, wireless operators, bomb-aimers, and engineers. These would constitute the crews which would operate together on further training flights and eventually, on bombing missions. "Crew-up" was a do-it-yourself exercise in personnel selection. Pilots, as ultimate crew-captains took the initiative after observing the members of the other trades in their daily routines of eating, drinking, conversing, and other activities. Everyone tried to exercise care to choose compatible team-mates. Compatibility was very essential in an air-crew, for co-operation was required for efficiency and for safety. It was my good fortune to serve in a crew in which there was mutual respect among the members although all were from different backgrounds.

1. Pilot and Captain: F/O B. G. PEARSON, 20[6], son of English parents, born in Canada after his parents first immigration to this country. Enlisted in the RCAF in London in 1943 while living there with his parents who had returned to England in 1939. Although he trained in Canada, England was 'home' to him during the war. His crewmates enjoyed many leaves with his parents at Dagenham, Essex where his father, B. G. Sr. worked in the nearby Ford plant.

I regret to state that "Bun", after surviving a tour of operations with Bomber Command lost his life in his post-war employment as a helicopter pilot on the so-called "Dew-line". My only contact at present with my crew is an indirect one. I keep in touch with Mr. and Mrs. Pearson who now live in Victoria, B.C.

2. Navigator: The writer of this article, age 30, high school teacher pre-war and post-war.

3. Bomb-Aimer: W/O H. RITCHIE, 20, from Ontario.

4. Air-Gunner: W/O F. MORIARTY, 20, from Toronto and W/O PHIL ILOTT, 30, born in England but a long-time resident of the Ottawa area.

6 Flight Engineer: F/S H. COWAN, 31, a Manchester business-man before and after his RAF career.

7 F/S R. CHISHOLM, 19, from Newcastle-on-Tyne -- an RAF-trained wireless operator.

Individual pursuits in post-war life and geographic separation have all but broken up the friendly association which was mutually enjoyed by the surviving members of this crew, in war-time.

As a crew we were posted to the RAF station at Forres, Scotland, a near-by satellite of Kinloss. At this point, I wish to digress from my narrative to report my indirect encounter with the witches from "Macbeth". It was here that Macbeth and Banquo, according to Holinshead's Chronicles, the source of Shakespeare's historic drama, encountered the three witches which initiate the action of the play. It was here, too, that I saw Cluny Stone at the foot of Cluny Hill near Forres. This huge stone bears a bronze placque with an inscription which may be paraphrased as follows:

> 'Condemned witches were brought to this site, tied in faggots, carried to the top of Cluny Hill and then rolled down its slope. The Cluny Stone marks the spot where they normally came to a stop and where they were burned to death by setting fire to the faggots.'

— So much for my second encounter with history!

At Forres we flew once again in Ansons but soon converted to the larger Whitleys, with whose longer range we cruised farther afield. Our first awareness of "D-Day"[7] was the sight of hundreds of Horsa gliders, laden with men and materials, being towed to the continent to share in the invasion. At this point we were recalled to base, probably in order to remove the cumbersome Whitleys from the path of the east-bound invasion craft. On later training flights we flew Northerly courses — sometimes towards Iceland, but never very near, although at Lat. 58°N, our base was not much more than 300 miles away. A vivid reminder of our northerly position at Forres was the fact that there was almost continuous daylight through the June nights.

Postings now came more rapidly, the first being to Syerston RAF station, where we converted from a 2-engined craft to the four-engine Short Stirling, a massive aircraft, much less manoeuverable than the Lancasters which we ultimately flew on bombing raids. We trained on Lancasters at Swinderby RAF station for a few days before being posted to the RAF station at East Kirkby near Boston in Lincolnshire. At this final location we started and finished our operational tour with Bomber Command — from late 1944 to the end of hostilities in 1945.

"Kirkby" was probably "Kirkjubær" to early Norse settlers in England, but to me it was a place for tension-filled survival between our attempts to carry destruction to selected targets in Europe. A few recollecions come to me as I write:

Two squadrons, including RAF No. 57 to which I belonged, were based at East Kirkby. Crews were composed

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7 D-Day was June 6, 1944, the date when Allied forces invaded Europe to open the western front.

of various mixtures of personnel. Some were entirely RAF while others had RAF airmen in combination with those of the USAAF, RAAF, RNZAF, and others. I had a brief acquaintance, before they went missing, with the navigator of a Norwegian crew which had trained at Little Norway near Toronto. We attempted to converse in my Icelandic and his New Norse, but failed, and had to resort to English. He informed me, however, that communication was possible for speakers of the older Norwegian tongue and Icelanders. My curiousity about this idea persists, and some day I hope to address some rural Norwegian in Icelandic as an experiment. It has also been brought to my attention that off-beat pocket communities in the English Lakes District (previously mentioned in this article) use a medieval Norse dialect resembling modern Icelandic. But I am somewhat skeptical about this being so.

From East Kirkby we completed 24 bombing missions to assorted target areas including Leipzig, Stettin, Aachen, Oslo, and others. Because many of these trips were of ten or eleven hour duration with maximum bomb-load, we were awarded the Operational Wing decoration after 24 trips instead of the normal 30 which constituted a complete tour. The Lancaster carried a fuel load of 2154 gallons and travelled one mile per gallon. Once we returned with insufficient fuel to circle in the usual fashion before landing. On another occasion our airport was being attacked by a long-range German fighter which had preceded us back to base. We took evasive action by landing at a nearby USAAF station where we spent the rest of the night safely. Otherwise we had comparatively few dangerous incidents — as far as we were aware.

The routine for most of our trips was tension-filled until target time, exhilarating as we left the target area safely, and fatiguing as we returned to base for a bacon-and-egg breakfast. My duties included the continuous calculation of wind-speed and direction, logging of times at turning-points and attack, supplying the pilot with the right course and airspeed for each destination, reporting the time and place at which crew members sighted aircraft being shot down. All these duties served some purpose or other. During our tour ,the casualty rate was said to be about 3 per cent per raid. Survival was uncertain, and the words from the song about the Lancaster, "heavily loaded with terrified men" were, on the whole, apt and authentic.

The biggest operation in which I took part was an attack on a German target (Leipzig, I think) by over 1300 Halifax and Lancaster bombers. It was an awesome experience in the evening twilight to see all these large aircraft seemingly filling the sky, and to contemplate on the degree of organization and planning which made it all possible. Our flight engineer, F/S Cowan, described it well, though inadvertently, with the succinct oxymoron: "How bloody beautiful!"

We were once caught in a cone of searchlights but were saved from being hit by the pilot's ability to "corkscrew" our plane out of the flak.

On a 1200-plane daylight raid on Dresden we saw several of our bombers being demolished by bombs dropped from other RAF planes above them — too much traffic congestion in the target area, we thought.

Another time we circled the target area at Politz, near Stettin, for fifteen minutes as decoys while Pathfinder Squadron marked the target with flares. When we finally went in to

bomb, we missed the target. Everyone missed the target because the wind-finder for the night provided the bombing leader with the wrong wind-direction — reciprocal wind, it was called. Flying near Stettin was dangerous for other reasons. The Russian front was near-by, and we were told that the Russians were poor at aircraft recognition and therefore took no chances.

Once we were routed over Goteberg and the Swedish coastline on our way to Stettin. The Swedes, to display their neutrality, fired at us, but obviously aimed to miss. By a pilot's and/or navigator's error, we crossed the German occupied island of Bornholm at 2000 feet instead of the 12,000 foot altitude prescribed at briefing. The flak was heavy, and I'll never understand how we escaped that time.

But there are more tranquil memories from East Kirkby.

As aircrew we depended greatly on the performance of ground-crew such as parachute packers, mechanics, and others. Their work though essential often went unnoticed. We Canadians were able to show them our appreciation by gifts of cigarettes with which we were usually well supplied through parcels from home and duty-free purchases made possible for Canadians overseas. By supplying 'Sweet Caporals', I received free maintenance of my bicycle tires by a parachute packer. We bought hard-to-get eggs from Lincolnshire farmers at the rate of a 10-cent package of cigarettes for a dozen eggs. Our Irish batman cooked them for us for between-meal snacks.

Our airport was protected until near the end of the war by an anti-aircraft unit known as the RAF Regiment. The day when they were disbanded, or sent away, we had several enemy aircraft over our base. They did no harm except to scare us, but in retrospect one sees the irony of it all.

It was my custom, between trips, to play chess with an RAF gunner, Ian Forbes, who shared my hut. He had a chess-board and I supplied the pieces. We agreed that in the event of a casualty, the survivor would appropriate the entire set. I have the set now, as it was Ian's misfortune not to return from one of his trips.

Once, while still a mere Warrant Officer, I took the liberty of using the officers' bathhouse for a bath. This was a common practice because the water was hotter there than in the NCO's facilities As it happened, some twenty perspiring RAF officers who had been playing soccer decided to bathe at that time and caught me more or less in the act, and reported my infraction to my Navigation Officer. A call went out on the Station P/A system for W/O JOYNSON. This mispronunciation resulted in a W/O Johnson of the RAF responding to the call. Later, when I explained and apologized for the error to F/L Melling, he refused to, as he put it, reprimand two people for the same offence—namely "to try to keep clean".

Enough of these personal anecdotes — too much, perhaps.

In due course I was interviewed for a commission. It pleased me that the Air Commodore chose to ignore a certain entry on my file and to consider another. He expressed indignation at the notation: "Needs watching because neither of British nor Canadian descent". This had been written by some one who had a very pro-British bias. It was my good fortune to have been officially rated in the A-plus category as a navigator, and this more positive comment influenced the A/C's decision. It would have been a serious blow to my pride and morale to have been turned down at this time, and I was pleased at my promotion to the rank of Pilot Officer, before returning to Canada.

I was on leave in London when the war ended. The streets were crowded with quietly happy people. It was interesting to me to see the Royal Family driven hrough the crowds and later see Winston Churchill appear with them on a Buckingham Palace balcony.

The only post-war flying I have done to date was the two trips on Lancasters to bring home long-term war prisoners from Europe. The first time the mission was aborted because our landing gear was stuck and we were not allowed to land, as planned, in Brussels. Instead we had to return to East Kirkby for a "crash landing", awaited by the fire engine and ambulance. Fortunately, the landing gear worked properly and we came down smoothly without a fire or casualty of any kind. This was actually the most frightening experience of my RCAF career.

The next time, the last time I flew, we brought back 22 prison-weary British soldiers. Their gratitude for the ride was almost beyond belief.

I went to York to wait for repatriation which took place in August, 1945, exacly 29 years before the writing of this article. At York we ate, drank, relaxed, and gained weight — perhaps too much weight. At this time I encountered more of my friends in uniform, F/O Arni Arnason, and F/L Emil Eyolfson, former schoolmates of mine who had completed successful tours with the all Canadian Squadron in 4 or 6 Group. One other recollection from my stay in York is the sight of Italian prisoners of war who had roamed more-or-less freely through England since the defeat of Italy by the allies. Old York is a walled city. Much of its wall still stands intact, and it was of some interest to me to see these descendants of the Romans who may have constructed these walls, returning to the scene some nineteen centuries after the walls were erected by their conquering ancestors.

In the late summer of 1945 we reached Halifax where all the boats in the harbor seemed to spout water and blow sirens to greet us. Enroute to Montreal we stopped briefly at Moncton, New Brunswick, where I was impressed by the generosity of the people of that town. Each of several hundred servicemen was given a package of candy, matches, an orange, and 4 or 5 cigarettes — seemingly not much, perhaps, but magnificent when one considers that Moncton is neither a large nor wealthy city, and that this token of appreciation was tendered to innumerable thousands of returning servicemen.

Other communities deserve a word of appreciation in this context. Women's clubs in my home town, Lundar, sent regular parcels to all who enlisted from their district, and the same is true of most Canadian communities. After my return I received various welcome-home gifts from communities in which I had resided: scrolls, pen-and-pencil sets, cuff-links, etc. from

the people of Lundar, Oak View, and Oak Bluff.

After a years' study under the auspices of the Department of Veteran Affairs, at Carleton College in Ottawa, and another at the University of Manioba, I was ready to resume my teaching career in Manitoba. Since 1947 I have been on staff of the Winnipeg School Division. I have seldom thought much about my RCAF career, especially in later years. Often it appears as time-out from living, but writing this article has brought back some long-forgotten memories. It was also of some interest to discover on the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate staff with me a fellow-teacher, Art Kemp, who had preceded me by some months as a pilot of a crew operating from East Kirkby. Sometimes he and I reminisce about similar experiences.

In retrospect, what do I think of the war? Although this question is not easily answered, a few random thoughts come to mind:

1. People work harder and co-operate better in a common cause imposed by warfare than they normally do in peace time.
2. Participation in war can be a rewarding experience for its survivors, but not for others and their kin.
3. War is a poor method to settle world problems. There must be a better way.
4. The people of Britain really lost the war — and they deserved a better fate.
5. Great technical advances resulted from the war. These should be applied to the betterment of human society, and some of them have been so applied.
6. Post-war reading has convinced me that Wold War II could have been avoided. Hopefully, World War III will never take place, but it is very easy to be cynical about this at the present time.
7. Finally, there are too many civilian aircraft getting lost in Northern Canada. Navigation is not what it used to be.

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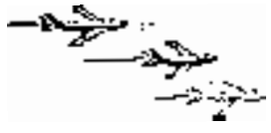
EDITOR'S NOTE: Eric Bjornson was born at Mary Hill, near Lundar, Manitoba. He attended United College (now the University of Winnipeg). the University of Manitoba, and Carleton College, Ottawa.

He taught school in rural Manitoba, and is now teaching at the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, Winnipeg. He was for several years principal of Gordon Bell Evening School, in Winnipeg, previous to it being closed, in 1972.



THE 85TH ANNUAL ICELANDIC FESTIVAL OF MANITOBA

"The popular Islendingadagurinn continued its success story, with three days of warm, sunny weather", reported one of the Winnipeg dailies about the August 3-5, 1974 Icelandic Festival of Manitoba.

The Festival grows year by year, with varied activities by land, water and air. Young and old attend, and not only people of Icelandic descent. The estimated attendance was well in the thousands, but who can take count!

On Friday evening there were already crowds on Centre Street and down by the harbor, but at the lakeside there was an un-festival note. High water covered the foot of the pier and sandbag dikes along the beach bespoke the flood threat from Lake Winnipeg. However, Saturday morning the waters had subsided and the sun shone bright and warm.

Saturday morning early there was a long line-up for the pancake breakfast provided by the ladies of the Festival Committee. On Saturday and the other days were the stands offering a variety of Icelandic foods, including skyr, rullapylsa, vinarterta, rolled pancakes, and hardfish.

The Saturday attractions were mainly down at the lake front.

The daring Delta Wing Ski Kite demonstration, the skilled helicopter maneuvers, and the parachute jumpers absorbed the attention of a throng of spectators. In the lighter vein were the novelty races featuring a variety of float-contraptions.

In the park during the day, ferris wheels and other carnival rides provided entertainment for the children.

The museum into which the water had poured the previous weekend, had been cleaned and dried out and was open for visitors. Two of the many exhibits of special interest are the original of Arni Sigurdson's painting of the landing of the pioneers at Willow Point, October, 1875, and a fishing boat that saw sixty years of service on Lake Winnipeg.

The first event on the Sunday program were the Western Canadian championship 10-mile road race and the Icelandic Festival road races, run concurrently. The winner of the Western Canadian event was 19-year old Rick Bourrier, of Winnipeg, whose very creditable time was 51 minutes and 13 seconds. Fifty-year-old Norman Neilson, from Scotland, a temporary employee of Saunders Aircraft, placed second to Bob Moody of Winnipeg in the Festival event, in 58 minutes, 1 second. These performances should be an inspiration for next year's competitors.

Regrettably the bicycle race was not featured this year, due to lack of entries. This event should be patronized next year. Bicycle races were a feature of the sports events at the Icelandic celebrations prior to World War I.

Sunday morning the Ladies of the Royal Purple, Riverton, served a pancake breakfast in the Park.

The Ecumenical Service at Sunday noon, in the Park, was well attended. Pastor Ingthor Isfeld conducted the service. Father T. J. Hoeks led the

mixed gathering in prayer, and an ecumenical choir led in the singing.

Pastor Isfeld spoke of the many Canadian citizens who belong to other than the Christian faith, including Buddhists, Mohammendans, Hindus and Bahais, as well as the many who profess no faith. "The mission field has changed — no longer is it in far-off lands — it is right here in our own country, our own community."

Sports car races at the Gimli motor-sport Park, featuring speed, maneuverability, and endurance, now attract drivers from Ontario, British Columbia and the United States.

Fine arts displays and music and poetry, at the Leadership Training Centre, Sunday and Monday, are increasingly an important part of the Festival. The paintings, over 50 in number, ranged from the traditional to the modernistic. "Best in the Show" was Batek, by Solveig Borgford, Winnipeg. Investor's Syndicate Purchase Award: V .O. Jonasson, of Winnipeg, oils, Becky Tergesen, of Gimli, oils, Sigridur I Candi, Willowdale, Ont., wool wall hangings. Western Canadian local color was featured in a Winter Prairie Town scene, by R. G. Pollock, and "Prairie Scene", by Agnes (Bardal) Comack, both of Winnipeg..

In a small room curtained off was a continuous showing of a black and white movie of the famous Arctic explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, who was born ten miles north of Gimli, at Arnes. Stefansson learned to speak Eskimo perfectly, like a native Eskimo.

On the grassy mound north of the building, people sat and listened to an informal variety of singing, instrumental music, and readings, all by people with at least some Icelandic background. Choirs from Riverton and Arborg made their contribution. Authors Paul Sigurdson and W. D. Valgardson read from their own works.

Spectacular fireworks at the harbor marked the close of the day.

Monday morning a colorful 45-minute parade was acclaimed by massed thousands of spectators along the route. The Khartum Temple bands and other Shrine performers were most prominent, an indispensable part of the parade. The beautiful Bank of Montreal float, with its silver and blue, was awarded first prize in the commercial category. There were numerous imaginative entries.

The traditional Monday afternoon program in the Park commenced with the stately entry of the Fjallkona, Sigrun Borga Jakobson, of Neepawa, and the Maids of Honour, her two daughters, Thora and Irene. The chairman was Mr. Dennis Stefanson, President of the Icelandic Festival. The Fjallkona delivered greetings from Mother Iceland to her descendants in our western world. Consul-General Grettir Johannson read a personal message from the President of Iceland, His Excellency Kristján Eldjárn.

Hon. Edward Schreyer, Premier of Manitoba, delivered the Toast to Canada, one which he was happy to make. so he said.

"I believe it is in Canada, as much as in any other country in the world

that we have succeeded in living together, people of many different backgrounds, in harmony. At first it was not easy, but gradually, through circumstances, we have succeeded in sharing the cultures of each other."

In closing, Premier Schreyer paid tribute to the contributions of the Icelandic people in many fields of activity.

In the relaxed atmosphere of the cooling evening, after the heat and the manifold activities of the day, the devotees of the traditional Monday evening community singing assembled in the Park. The audience was informed that the winner of the poetry contest had been Betty Jane Wylie of Stratford, Ontario, whose articles have appeared in Maclean's and Chatelaine magazines. She is a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Tergeson, Gimli pioneers.

The Arborg choir under the direction of Mrs Kristin Johnson, and the St. John's Centennial Choir from Winnipeg were featured on the program. Conductor of the community singing was Thor Johannesson.

A dance, the third of the long weekend, was the closing event of the Festival.

Plans are already under way for next year's Festival commemorating the centennial of Icelandic Settlement in Manitoba.

—W. Kristjanson

THE CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Canada Iceland Foundation is offering scholarships of from $100.00 to $200.00 for the academic year 1974-1975, on behalf of certain trust funds.

Scholarships may be awarded to:—

1. High School students of Icelandic descent proceeding to one of the three universities in Manitoba.
2. University students of Icelandic descent, studying towards a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctor's degree in Arts.

Scholarship awards shall be determined by academic standing, leadership qualities, and financial need.

Studies may be carried on in any Canadian university.

Candidates are hereby invited to send their applications together with a statement of examination results and testimonials from two leaders in the community by October 31, 1974 to:

Professor Haraldur Bessason,
Chair of Icelandic,
University of Manitoba.

THE ICELANDIC COMMUNITY IN PEMBINA COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

"Pembina County Centennial, 1867-1967" in an attractive 60-page booklet containing an historical account of this North Dakota County, published under the auspices of the Pembina Centennial Committee The paper is gloss, the printing good, and there is a wealth of illustrations.

Of particular interest to readers of the **Icelandic Canadian** are the sketches of the Icelandic communities in Pembina County, Akra, Gardar, Hallson, and Svold. These are quoted below.

Preceding this material, two paragraphs are inserted to give a glimpse of the origin of these Icelandic settlements in North Dakota. The first paragraph is a direct, the second an indirect quotation from **The Icelandic People in Manitoba,** by W. Kristajnson.

"A migration move from New Iceland to Dakota developed among Thorlaksson's followers in the spring of 1878. The cause was partly the hardships and inconveniences of life in the colony: the mud; the pestilential swarms of flies that gave no peace to the cattle and seriously curtailed the yield of milk, and the distance from market, but a more immediate and compelling factor than the hardships of pioneering life was the strong feeling which had arisen between neighbors . . . the animosity engendered in the religious controversy."

In the spring of 1878, Magnus Stefansson, Sigurdur Joshua Bjornsson, Johann Hallson, and two others explored in the neighborhood of Cavalier, and beyond the Sandhills, towards the Pembina Mountains. These "mountains" were only high hills but the sight of them struck a responsive chord in the bosoms of the Icelandic explorers. Some half dozen families left Gimli for Dakota in the spring and summer of 1878. In 1879 twenty families or more, totalling over a hundred people, followed. The great majority were compelled to walk the 160 miles to their new home: and many arrived in a state of exhaustion.

The following is based on "A History of Pembina County".

The Icelandic settlements in the counties of Pembina and Cavalier date from the fall of 1878 to 1900. Those at Hallson, Akra and Pembina were made in part by a group who wearily tramped to Pembina County from Gimli, Manitoba, where they had lived a life of extreme hardship since Oct., 1875. Their courage was amazing! Persuaded by a devoted minister, Paul Thorlaksson, about sixty families came in another groups to form the nucleus of what is now Mountain. Rev. Thorlaksson became pastor of Mountain, Gardar, Thingvalla and Hallson, When many lacked food in the winter of 1879-1880 he bought one hundred barrels of flour and forty head of cattle on his own note and distributed this among them himself. In 1882, when

Replica of log cabin, built in 1928 to commemorate Icelandic settlement 50th anniversary, held at Mountain, North Dakota

still a young man, he died of consumption, undoubhtedly due to the hardships of his life. He is buried in the Mountain cemetery.

In the 1960 census of Pembina County shows a population of 12,946 persons. . . The Icelanders, though not the first, were the largest ethnic group to settle here.

AKRA

In 1879 the first emigrants from the Icelandic community of Gimli, Manitoba, arrived in Akra township. They were heartily greeted by the only settler, Mr. Butler Olson, a Norwegian and a Civil War veteran. He made them welcome, showed them the countryside and helped in every possible way. The height of influx of settlers from the Gimli colony to Pembina County was in the year 1879 and the two succeeding years. As these people had become impoverished during their northern stay, it is a known fact that many a man footed the whole distance of 150 miles from Gimli to Akra township with his worldy possessions on his back.

Wonder has often been expressed why these hearty Icelanders, when coming from the north and passing through the fertile prairies to the east, chose the lighter soil of Akra township. Grain raising was unknown in their native Iceland and consequently they had not acquired the keenness of judging land on its productive value and fertility. Also, in the spring of 1878-79 when they first entered Pembina county from Pembina, much of the prairie land between Pembina and Cavalier was more or less inundated and this was just what they were trying to get away from because of their experience in Gimli. Building material was plentiful and near at hand so they found just what they had hoped for.

Church services were first held in Mr. Olson's home with the Rev. Paul Thorlaksson as pastor. He served from

Vidalin Church, 1888, Akra, N. Dak.

1878-82, and was followed by Rev. F. J. Thorgrimson. In 1886, Tongue and Sandridge congregations united and in 1888, Vidalin Church was built three miles south and a half mile west of Akra. It is still used, having been remodelled in 1901 and again in 1960.

As times were hard for all pioneers many of the men left to help harvest the crops on Bonanza farms further south. The women and children were left to tend the crops and homes until fall found the men heading home again, sometimes by way of the Red River so they could buy supplies in Pembina. A yoke of oxen cost from $125 to $140 while a team of horses were as high as $400. Farmers traded in their oxen, in some cases, for the more desired horses, mortgaging land to do so. To make ends meet, the cutting of wood became a cash crop with oak selling for $2.00 per cord, and poplar, etc, for $1.50. This would be hauled to Cavalier, Hamilton and other towns.

School was not neglected. A teacher's report of 1897 shows 37 scholars ranging in age from five to thirty-five. It is interesting to note that each sudent had 100 in deportment and that the teacher received $20 a month. Two loads of lumber were used to build the school which opened with Miss Nelly Soper as teacher. Notable among these students are Thorstina Jackson Walters, authoress of North Dakota Icelandic stories, and Gunlaugur B. Gunlogson, engineer, who donated the land for Icelandic State Park.

HALLSON

In February, 1881, a petition was circulated in the Icelandic settlement asking the government for two post offices west of Cavalier, which was the nearest post office at the time. One was to be for the Tongue River community, and the other for Vikur. In the spring of the same year, the two post offices were established: one at Vikur, named Mountain, and the other at the Sigurdur Josua Bjornson home This one was located about nine miles west of Cavalier on the east side of a coulee and was named Coulee Post Office with Sigurdur Josua as postmaster. The first mail carrier was Thorlakur Jonson, making one trip each week from Mountain northeast to Coulee, then east to Cavalier and back. In 1882 Coulee Post Office was moved west to the Gisli Egilson home next to the J. P. Hallson place and named the Hallson Post Office, with Gisli Egilson as postmaster until 1884. It was then moved to the Jon Skjold (Shield) General Store, which he started in 1883. Jon Shield was postmaster. From this time on the Tongue River community was called Hallson, which was very fitting, being named after the first settler there.

Johann Hallson and his son, Gunnar, were the first settlers in the Tongue River community, arriving April 18, 1878. They built the first log cabin, 12x14, on the south side of the Tongue River, 10 miles west of Cavalier. July 6th of that year, a very happy family of nine moved with their belongings into the new home.

January 6, 1881, a meeting was held at the Hallson home for the purpose of organizing a Lutheran congregation. There were 18 men present. Rev. Paul Thorlaksson became their first minister. Church officers were Palmi Hjalmar, secretary; Jon Horgdal, treasurer, and Gunnar Hallson, choir director. To defray the minister's salary, pledges were made of $55: also, wheat, oats, hay, potatoes, and work were pledged. Rev. Paul's failing health and his death in 1882 left the congregation without a minister. When a minister was available, services were held in the homes. In 1886 Rev. Frederick Bergman became the pastor and the Tongue River congregation was divided into two, one named Hallson and the other Vidalin. In 1892, Rev. Bergman left and Rev. Jonas Sigurdson became the minister.

The Hallson Church was built in 1897. The land was donated by Johann Hallson, along with the church bell.

Icelandic Lutheran Church at Hallson, North Dakota, built in 1897

pastor's chair, altar and financial help. In 1899, the Icelandic Lutheran convention was held at Hallson and the church was dedicated at this time. Johann Hallson died shortly before this great day arrived, and he was buried the same day as the dedication of his church. This church, with its beautiful stained glass windows, after 70 years still stands on the north side of Highway No. 5, ten miles west of Cavalier in Pembina county. It is a beautiful and fitting memorial to the first pioneers and to Johann Hallson who founded it.

MOUNTAIN

Mountain is located on the NW¼ of section 16 in Thingvalla Township, Range 56. Rev. Paul Thorlaksson, with a group of Icelanders, chose the site called "Vik", meaning inlet, that is now known as Mountain. The region in which they homesteaded was called "Vikur-bygð". Nov. 2, 1880, the first general election was called and the settlers expressed their first voice in this country's law-making.

In November, 1880, a congregation

Mountain Icelandic Lutheran Church, built in 1887

was organized and the building of a church discussed. Money was scarce and the settlers very busy, so the church was not built until August, 1884. Before Rev. Thorlakson's death he donated a part of his land for a cemetery. On this plot the church was built. Dedicated June 24, 1887, it is the oldest Icelandic church in America. It was the pride of the pioneers and it represented concerted community effort since everybody made some contribution. Rev. Hans Thorgrimson was next to serve as pastor and at his suggestion a synod was organized Jan. 23, 1885. All the Icelandic congregations were invited and by-laws were discussed and adopted. This was the first assemblage of the Icelandic churches in America. Under the leadership of Mrs. Thorlakur Bjornson, the Ladies Aid was organized in 1883, the first one in America. They purchased an altar and most of the furniture for the church.

The first Fourth of July celebration was held in 1880 at Leikvallur. Rev. Thorlaksson gave the welcome with readings and musical selections following.

The first seat of learning was a log hut southwest of Mountain at the home of Rev. N. L. Thorlaksson, first teacher. In 1882, a school was built in town and in 1920 a high school was added Miss Lauga Geir was the first teacher. November 2, 1928, a new school was built and was later destroyed by fire. The present school was erect in 1949. In 1961, Mountain reorganized with Gardar and Edinburg with high school students attending in Edinburg. In 1890, the Mountain Silver Cornet band was organized and the first public concert was held in the winter of 1892 in a hall above a grocery store. In 1910, Thomas Campbell, the Mountain wheat king ,and Don Bull sold stock in the community to build a railroad from Edinburg to Concrete. Later both were removed.

At the turn of the century the A.O.U.W. hall was built and some 60 years later ill serves as a community center for young and old.

Mountain had a library called

"Morning". In 1939, Báran, a branch of the National Association, took over the library. At one time Mountain could boast of many business places; a telephone exchange, elevator, feed mill, jewelry store, livery stable, two general stores, a doctor, homeopath, barber shop, harness shop, book agent, hotel, depot, dress-making shop, lumber yard and a drug store.

The Borg Memorial Home is one of the first modern Old Peoples Homes built in the state and was the largest of its kind in the country at the time of the dedication October 23, 1949. The home was supported by persons of Icelandic descent in all parts of the United States and Canada. Mrs. B. F. Olgeirson, R.N., served as the first matron.

Robert Ripley, in his "Believe it or Not" column, stated that Mountain was one of two towns in the United States with a cemetery in the center of town.

Mountain was incorporated in 1940. The population at that time was 205. Mr. M. F. Bjornson served as its first mayor. Few towns of its size have hard-surface streets, city water and a "white-way."

Two of Mountain's civic minded people served in the state Legislature: Paul Johnson from 1919 to 1927, and F. M. Einarson from 1947 to 1964.

SVOLD

The Svold community, located in the north end of the Icelandic settlement, is physically divided into three parts. The west end comprised the hills on the Pembina Escarpment, the center was the "hayland" or meadow area and the east end included the sand ridge part.

The original Icelandic settlers came about 1880 either directly from Iceland or via the Gimli settlement. An exception to this was the few-non-Icelanders, namely the Crowstons and William Pleasance, both of English stock and both having dwelt in Ontario before coming here. Since space limits the details, the families who settled this area will only be listed, but at the same ime, one will note that most of them are at present represented by the third or fourth generation. In addition to the above named there were the Hillmans, Sturlaugsons, Dalsteds, Thompsons, Jacksons, Vivatsons, John Hjalmarson, Trygvi Ingaldsons, Larus Freemans, Gudmonsons, Sigurdsons, Goodmans, Dinussons, Eyriksons, and later the Barney Stevensons and the Hannessons.

No history of the community would be complete without mention of the initiative of a few of its early residents. G. August Vivatson was founder and owner of the Svold Store and post office, which gave the area its name. After he discontinued selling wares from a pack on his back, as he went from house to house, he established a store in his parents' home and soon after erected a building for that purpose. This store supplied the community's needs for years and was a community center as well. Here the young men gathered to practice for the band which was organized at the turn of the century. Between sessions, wrestling was a favorite pastime.

The need for a community hall was early recognized. This was built on the sand ridge north of the Pleasance home and near the original tree claim planting made by Larus Freeman. Later this hall was moved to the present location and subsequently was re-

placed by another buiding which served the social needs of the community until the present one was erected in 1939. All of these buildings were a total community effort in time, labor and money.

The church, too, had its humble beginnings. Gudmundur Eyrikson, a pioneer of considerable means, furnished the money for the building. His neighbors, in turn, helped clear his land and thus gave their assistance to this project. School was conducted in the first community hall. Later the area was divided into two school districts. The Svold school was built a mile north of Svold where Barney Eastman and Sylvia Johnson taught the children. Later the school was moved a mile farther east. Subsequently, another school was built of the then modern type under the direction of a school board composed of Sturlaugsons and Dalsteds. Other pioneers who figured conspicuously in the community's early history were William Pleasance, who helped organize the area of Akra and Avon (Advance) into Akra township and also School District 92. He was elected clerk of both bodies and served in this capacity until he retired in 1939. When Advance separated from Akra, Barney Dalsted was made its clerk and held this position until in 1934. He was also a surveyor. Mr. Pleasance and Stone Hillman each served in the state legislature. In the community at large were people who excelled in a wide variety of skills. Among them were "Doc" Crowston, a veterinary of long standing and Dr. Friendson, who administered to the ills of his neighbors. The great variety of talents and skills exhibited by members of this closely-knit community has in its own way helped to develop Pembina County and made a proper contribution to its welfare and present status.

Approaching Hensel from the East — 1900

HENSEL

Hensel had its share of Icelandic settlers, but was always tied in with Cavalier, which is only a few miles away. The post office in Hensel had six homes: Joe Erwin's, Austfjord Store, Johnson's Store, Fed Johnson Store, Gillies Machine Shop, Sara Gillies Shop and at present the Erwin Hartje Store. There have been three route carriers: John Wilker, Elias Stefanson and Clifford Olson.

The railroad came to Hensel in 1891.

GARDAR

Gardar is located on the southwest quarter of Section 16 in Gardar Township 159 North, Range 56 West.

The original settlers came from Iceland in 1876 to Gimli, Manitoba, and from there they migrated to Dakota Territory. Other Icelanders had spent a few years in Shawona County, Wisconsin, before coming to the Gardar vicinity in 1879-1880. In 1882, there was a meeting at the home of Eirikur Bergman for the purpose of establishing a post office. The name selected was "Gardar" in honor of one of the earliest discoverers of Iceland. November 24, 1880, settlers met to organize a congregation at Gardar and to make a call to a pastorate, the Rev. Páll (Paul) Thorlaksson. A week later he was also called to serve at Mountain until 1881. The church was built and dedicated June 26, 1892, when the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod had its eighth annual convention at Mountain and Gardar. The first church service at Gardar was August 12, 1881. At this service the Gardar Ladies Aid, which had been working in previous years to save money, presented the congregation with pews, an altar and a pulpit for the church. January 23, 1885, the Gardar congregation was admitted to the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Sunday school at Gardar commenced February 14, 1886.

Only two years after coming here the Icelanders observed Independence Day in 1880, at Gardar, at the homestead of one of the settlers. The following year, 1881, poet Stephan G. Stephansson produced an original play, "The Western Immigrants," for Fourth of July celebration and the Declaration of Independence was read by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a lad, who later achieved fame as an Arctic explorer.

The first legislator from Gardar was Eirikur Bergman who was elected to the 17th Territorial Legislature. Others who have served as State Representatives are Stefan Eyolfson, 1895, Joseph Walter, 1905-1907; J. K. Olafson, 1921-1931, and Fred Olafson, 1965

The Gardar school district was organized August 16, 1882, and the schoolhouse was built that fall. The first school session was three months, in 1882-1883, and the first teacher was the Rev. Fridrik Bergman. Four other schools were built in the township, one in each corner, the last one being built in 1895 The Gardar grade school began in the late 20's to add high school subjects to their curriculum. In 1930 the building was enlarged and a four year high school started in 1932 with Miss Kristbjorg Kristjanson as the teacher.

The Gardar Hall was built by the Foresters Lodge before the turn of the century.

The railroad from Edinburg to Concrete cement mines came through in

1910 Then an elevator was built in Gardar but the elevator and track were torn down in the early 20's. Eirikur Bergman operated a grocery store in the late 80's. The Breidfjord Store which originated in 1887 was instigated by Magnus Breidfjord, grandfather of the present owner, Mrs. Kristjan Kristjanson. At one time there was a feed mill in Gardar, a machine shop operated by Stefan Eyolfson and two grocery stores; one operated by Bjarni Sigfusson, the other by the Breidfjords.

NORSE RUINS FOUND IN UNGAVA

Thomas E. Lee, editor of the Anthropological Journal of Canada, has for several years past been exploring ruins of buildings and other structures in Ungava. He sees definite indications that these ruins and other relics are Norse, not Eskimo. The following is a reprint from the Anthropological Journal of Canada, Volume 6, No. 4, 1968, pp. 20-21.

20. Lichen growth on some beacons are so thick as to completely cement and conceal even wide spaces between stones. This suggests but does not prove age.

21. A unique feature occurs on the Payne Estuary, called the Hammer of Thor because it resembles a hammer, not a cross. Since the vertical member weighs nearly 4,000 pounds and the cross member nearly 400 pounds, the total height being 10 feet, he task of raising it must have been very great in this treeless land. It is in a low place near the water. It could have been a signpost, set up by the people going into the interior. Like the beacons it is regardel by the older Eskimos as the work of "white men before Eskimos."

Longhouses: three longhouses occur on Pamiok Island. Another is reported in the interior, in addition to the Cartier site ruins, and 6 others are said to exist farther north along the coast, esptcially on islands.

22. Two of the Pamiok ruins are 45 feet long and 16 feet wide. The third is an enormous structure, 81 feet long by 23 feet wide, crest to crest of the ridges. The size of the latter alone would exclude it as an Eskimo feature.

23. All of the longhouse walls outcurve in typical Norse manner. All have rounded ends, believed to be in response to environment and building materials.

23 Walls were made of turf and stone, probably in conjuction with wooden poles. They are typically Norse.

25. Stones used in the walls of the largest house run to well over 1,000 poonds each. Use of heavy stones in building is characteristic of the Norse.

26. Entrances were at the ends of the longhouses, but one had an additional side entrance through a vestibule. These are Norse features.

21.. All longhouses had partitions of stone, dividing the dwelling into 3 or 4 rooms. Gaps were left to permit passage from room to room. The arrangement is typically Norse.

28. The end rooms of the longhouses were slightly raised (a few inches) in the form of platforms, persumably for sleeping.

29. In one longhouse post moulds were found. Since driftwood does not come to these shores, the nearest source was about 140 miles to the south, probably at the False River, as indicated by a beacon. This is clear evidence that ships were used—and Eskimos did not have ships.

30. In a fully excavated longhouse, fireplaces were found in pairs along the central line of the long axis. Central fires in longhouses were a Norse custom.

31. Fire or ember pits were in two forms: one was a shallow stone-lined basin, the other a stone box in the floor. Such pits were a custom in Greenland. The discovery of a single one of these in Newfoundland was taken as proof of Norse occupation. On Pamiok we have 18 of them in a single longhouse!

32. The architecural styles reasonably and probably set the dates for the sites. On Pamiok, although a vestibule argues for an earlier period, the principal featores should fall between A.D. 1100 and 1200. But at Payne Lake a later period is indicated by the smaller and nearly square foundations.

34. The Eskimos believe that the longhouses were built by white men before the Eskimo.

Artifacts:

35. At the Cartier site, a large fragment of soapstone lamp was found, unlike Eskimo lamps but similar to Norse.

36. A stone-working culture, characterized by the use of cherty black quartz with non-Dorset tool types and techniques, is associated with the oldest house floor and with the ridges of the walls. It is unlike known primitive cultures of the area and is presumably Norse.

1968 Discoveries:

a) A fourth longhouse, some 50 miles north of Pamiok Island, is the largest thus far examined. It is 115 feet long bv 24 feet wide. Walls and its four partitions are of earth. Few stones are visible, but may have been removed bv Eskimos who later used the site extensively.

b) A group of three beacons at the mouth of the Payne Estuary was examined. The tallest was 13 feet and 6 feet in diameter. Very heavy stones were used even to the top.

c) Excavations of the largest ruin on Pamiok revealed again the presence of central fire pits. Further evidence of timber construction was seen in he form of post moulds along the inner sides of the walls, spaced at about 20 inches apart. These speak of Norse, not Eskimo occupation. Many stones in the walls and partitions are over 1,000 pounds.

37. About 30 feet from the north end of the largest Pamiok ruin, and a little to one side, we found the trash heap. This too is a Norse custom.

Conclusion: We have now outlined 37 points, many of which in our view establish the Ungava finds as Norse, not Eskiamo. Full details and illustrations may be found in published reports at the Centre d'Etudes Nordiques Universite Laval, Quebec.

—10 September, '68.

* * *

The ruins and relics described form the basis for Mr. Lee's conclusions.

Another intriguing find reported in 1970 was a broken iron axehead of primitive type. It has been analysed by Dr. K. Winterton, Metallurgist, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, who finds hat all facts concerning it are consistent with a Norse origin and that the axe is ancient.

There is a picture of a semi-subterranean ruin on Pamiok Island, in the Journal, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1967. Regardless how widespread were these underground abodes, it is interesting to recall here an episode in the saga of Thorfinn Karsefni, the Icelander from Greenland, who made an unsuccessful attempt to found a settlement in Vinland about 1000 A.D.

"When they sailed away from Vinland they had southerly winds and came to Markland. There they found five Skraelings, one bearded, two women and two children. Karlsefni seized the boys but the others escaped and disappeared into the ground. They said there were no houses there; the people lived in caves or in holes (dug-outs?)." (The Saga of Thorfinn Karlsefi, chapter 13, p. 32.)

There is evidence of continued Icelandic and Greenland connection with the coast of North America after 1000 A.D. and that America was a source of timber. One such evidence is an entry in the Icelandic (Skalholt) Annals for the year 1347:

"There came also a ship from Greenland smaller in size than the smallest vessels which sail to Iceland. It came to the outer Straumfjord. It was without anchor. There were seventeen men on board. They had sailed to Markland but afterward they were driven hither."

This indicates Greenland posts or settlements on the North American coast approaching the time of Columbus.

The discovery of the Ungava ruins brings to mind the discovery of the ruins in Northern Newfoundland by Helge Ingstad in 1964, considered to be proof of an early Norse settlement there.

— W. K.

FESTIVAL OPERA GROUP AND THE FESTIVAL LYRIC SINGERS

Festival Opera Group of Winnipeg is an amateur company founded by Elma Gislason, a professional musician of the city, a teacher of singing, piano and Theory. She has studied voice with many outstanding teachers, including Peter Magnus, Sigrid Olson, Ernest Vinci, Bernard Naylor, and Roberto Woods, and Therese Deniset. She has been active with the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Scholarship series and is a long-standing member of the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir.

The Group launched out in a presentation of Verdi's "Il Trovatore" in the Manitoba Musical Festival in 1971. This succeeded so well that the members, thirteen in number, all wished to continue and form an opera group. Opera Highlights, performed in St. Mary's Academy, was their first major effort. It included excerpts from Tannhauser, Madame Butterfly, Aida, La Boheme, Traviata, and the Pearl Fishers. Other operas at succeeding concerts included Marriage of Figaro, Cavaliera Rusticana, Traviata, Magic Flute, Faust, Aida, Martha and La Legende du Vert.

Performances have been at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Rosh Pina Synagague, Holy Trinity Hall, and at the Icelandic Festival at Gimli (1973) and the Icelandic National League February concert, in 1973.

Reviews from the Winnipeg Free Press and the Winnipeg Tribune include:

"Culture springing from a team of dedicated amateurs in the best sense of the word . . . Always musical, some of it extraordinarily good."

"This chorus has a splendid vitality got from a well-focussed tone, excellent diction and precision, and carefully nurtured blend and balance."

"Elma Gislason, the music director, is able to bring out the best in the singers, whether it be arias, ensembles, or chorus. So often we hear operatic choruses which bellow continuouslv. The singing here was always musical, and some of it was extraordinarily good."

Outstanding singers in the group, those of Icelandic origin, are Alda Wingfield and Joy Antenbring.

In January, 1974, the Opera Group and the Winnipeg Lyric Singers amalgamated to form the Festival Lyric Singers. It was felt by the two groups that the only way amateur opera would survive and flourish would be for the existing groups to cooperate, rather than compete with each other. The aim of this new group is to perform many types of music, with opera as their major concern, as well as to provide a stage for aspiring local artists to gain experience and knowledge and to prove "that the word amateur need only mean unpaid, but not substandard."

Ronald Gibson, of the Winnipeg Free Press, had this to say after their first appearance in the Planetarium Concert Hall last April.

"There is certainly a place in the musical life of this city for this group. They are well disciplined, and their conductor knows his job. We hope that they can continue to do the things that suit them, and we look forward to the future appearances with pleasure."

Elma Gislason, for reasons of health and at her own request, will be assistant director of the new group.

Richard Grieg directed the first concert of the amalgamated groups last June. A permanent director will be Glen Pierce, presently Inspector of music in the Winnipeg Schools. This will ensure the continued high standard set in the first three years of the Opera Group and continue to provide a platform for aspiring young singers.

—W. K.

By Sarah Klassen

BOOK REVIEWS

BLOOD FLOWERS,

by W. D. Valgardson,

Oberon Press (Canada), 1973

Pp. 122

Price: $6.95, $3.50 U.S.A. and Canada

Bloodflowers is a collection of ten short stories written by W D. Valgardson, formerly of Gimli, Manitoba. Many of the stories are set in the rural areas, small towns, or fishing camps of Manitoba's Interlake Region. And if the reader expects them to reflect the bleanesks and poverty of this region, he won't be disappointed.

The characters reflect Manitoba's ethnic variety; they are Ukrainian, Icelandic, Indian, and Anglo-Saxon. Their goals are simple, yet too often, impossible to attain. They strain to convert stubborn bushland into a home place, battle the elements, search desperately for jobs, or just endure a visit from Winnipeg relatives. In their efforts they are hampered by their own physical and mental limitations, by loneliness and by superstition. They are ordinary people living out their ordinary lives, in which daily toil leaves little room for joy. They are rarely sustained in their loneliness by warm human relationships, and vision can exist only in the imagination of Gregory, who is retarded ("First Flight"). When their dreary existence is invaded from the outside, it is dangerous ("On Lake Therese") or depressing ("Dominion Day").

The conflicts are localized with respect to geography and economic conditions, so that the reality of the particular incident ends to engage the reader more than does its universal implication. However, although the reader may not identify with individual characters and their immediate concerns, he will experience the mood of wearisome loneliness and futility that often underlies the naratives and supplies an intensity despite the restraint in tone excercised by Valgardson. And if the reader remains an observer, he will be a sympathetic and fascinated one, one who is forced eventually to reflect on the helplessness and insignificance of the "little man" in a harsh world, and to be amazed that he survives so often.

The last statement in one of the stories reads: "It could have been worse;" this represents one of the happier endings. Reading all ten stories at one sitting is not a good idea; this is too great a concentration of unfulfilled hopes and futile human struggles.

In some instances, the stories leave the reader with a feeling of "deja vu". For example, "An Act of Mercy" recalls to mind the stark dilemma in Johann Bojer's "Fisherman" (English 100). The final desperate incident in "Curse" strongly suggests Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (English 200) — with a difference.

The title story deserves special mention; Newfoundland, not Manitoba, is the [illegible] for "Bloodflowers." In it Danny, the outsider, learns that his [illegible] better education and wider interests which he brings to the community are flimsy equipment, unable

to protect him against the fear that results from his encounter with illness, storm and death. He begins by laughing at the superstition connected with the local bloodflower, but its image haunts him in the end. His story is typical of the way Valgardson has depicted the elements, sickness and isolation as man's atagonists..

This story was named one of the Best American Short Stories of 1971 and won the President's Medal for Fiction in the same year.

Manitoba novels are already present, though not abundantly so, in our libraries, and now Valgardson has given us **Bloodflowers.** Comfortable urban readers, whether teachers or students, may feel that in its pages they are aliens in a strange land rather than Manitobans reading about fellow Manitobans (or fellow Canadians). But they will surely find these fictional portrayals of Manitoba's other [illegible] and other times worthwhile.

PAUL SIGURDSON' "THE ICELANDER" SUCCESSFULLY PRESENTED AT OTTAWA

Three years ago Paul Sigurdson's play "The Icelander" was performed at the Manitoba Theatre Centre and at the Icelandic Festival at Gimli.

On June 8, of his year Paul received an invitation to revive the play at the Canadian Multicultural Festival of 1974 at the studio theatre in the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Within the week Paul had succeeded in rallying all the members of the original cast save one, although one member had to come home weekends from Virden, and another made regular trips from Snow Lake.

Reviews by professional Ottawa critics are generally highly favorable.

The Ottawa Citizen music and drama editor Audrey M. Ashley writes:

"An amateur theatre group from Morden, Manitoba . . . is currently making an interesting contribution to Festival Canada's multicultural program in the NAC Studio.

"The Icelander", directed by its author, Paul A. Sigurdson, tackles an old and universal theme — that of one generation striving to retain old values and customs while a newer generation seeks to move with changing times . . .

"With insight, compassion, and occasional flights of lyricism, the play demonstrates how the old order changeth — chiefly in the form of the influence of the Americans occupying a nearby airport — and how the change is directly responsible, in the end, for leaving Magnus quite alone, and still unyielding."

Robin Darrell of the Ottawa Journal, who is critical on some aspects of the performance, says:

"The Icelander is a play that has most of the ingredients of a classic tragedy. It might even be a modern version of a Norse legend."

Of the acting, Audrey M. Ashley says: The cast performs with uniform integrity, though with varying degrees of skill. . . Technically, the production

needs smoothing out a little". Of the play, "but the play is well constructed and speaks from the heart, even though its literary quality is occasionally marred by cliches".

The first performance was not as effective as the other two. Paul Sigurdson, who followed all three performances to the end closely, was able to sum up.

"My cast performed with professional poise and did credit to the play. The final dramatic scene played like a record. The audience was spellbound. It is a very intimate theatre and the action is almost in the laps of those in front. As the tension built up it was like firecrackers going off. As Magnus confronted his children and the American there was a series of climaxes . . . with a final culminating climax."

In announcing the multicultural festival, The Hon. Stanley Haidasz, Minister of State for Multiculturalism, said:

"The festival will visually attest to the multicultural nature of Canada. It will provide an opportunity for grops to share their folklore with Canadians of diverse backgrounds, and will expose Canadians to the variety of cultures enriching our country."

Thirty folkloric groups and eight theatre groups will come from communities across the country to perform on an open-air stage adjacent to the National Arts Centre, and in the Studio, Cafe and Cafe-Terasse of the Arts Centre itself." —W.K.

IN THE NEWS

PRESIDENT, ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF WINNIPEG

Ted K. Arnason

Ted K. Arnason was elected President of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Winnipeg at the annual meeting of the Club in June. Mr. Arnason is Vice-President of the Arnason Construction Company, actively engaged in work at various points as far noth as Wabowden. He is prensently Vice-President of the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba.

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AN ICELANDIC LANGUAGE CAMP AT GIMLI, MANITOBA

An Icelandic language camp was held at Gimli, Manitoba, at the Industrial Park, July 21 to August 2. The purpose, in addition to creating or

stimulating interest in the study of the Icelandic language and gaining confidence in speaking the language, was to develop an awareness of the Icelandic Canadian culture.

A wide range of activities was offered where the use of the Icelandic language was encouraged, including drama, music, crafts, painting, pottery, field trips, and recreation.

Staff co-directors were Mrs. Nadya Kostyshyn Bailey and Ken Kristofferson.

The camp was sponsored by the Secretariat on Dominion-Provincial Cultural Relations, Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Manitoba Department of Education, and the Icelandic community.

The camp was very successful. Six of the campers were from Saskatchewan.

★

SVEIN SIGFUSSON APPOINTED TO THE ORDER OF CANADA

Two Manitoban's were among the 64 Canadians appointed to the Order of Canada June 29, by Governor-General Jules Leger, for outstanding achievements and service. So honoured were Cardinal George Flahiff, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Winnipeg, and Sveinn Sigfusson, of St. Andrews, Manitoba. Mr. Sigfusson is president of Sigfusson Transportation Company an da pioneer in Northern Winter transport.

His Eminence Cardinal Flahiff who was appointed to the top-ranking category of the Order, visited Iceland this summer. He was delighted with his experience there.

PAUL BJARNASON BREAKS HIS OWN WEIGHT LIFTING RECORD

Paul Bjarnason of Vancouver recently broke his own Canadian weightlifting record for the middle-heavyweight two-hand snatch, with a lift of 307 pounds. The former record of 305 pounds was set only three weeks before by Bjarnason. .

Paul Bjarnason's parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bjarnason and his grandparents, the late Oddur and Eliza Bjarnason, from North Dakota, later Wynyard, Saskatchewan and Vancouver.

★

W. D. Valgardson's story "Bloodflowers" has been selected by CBC for television presentation.

"Bloodflowers" was included in the Best American short stories for 1972, a signal honor fo ra Canadian.

★

VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON'S GREAT-NEPHEW VISITS ARNES

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne W. Thorlakson of Bassano, Alta., visited Gimli and Arnes for the Icelandic Festival. They came hoping to find some relatives, as Mr. Thorlakson, who has more or less lost track of his Icelandic background, is a great nephew of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Arctic explorer who was born at Arnes. Mr. Thorlakson's father wa sthe son of Mr. Stefansson's sister, Inga, who lived at Mountain, North Dakota before moving farther west. They were happy to make contact with Mrs. S. A. Sigurdson and to visit Vilhjalmur Stefansson Park at Arnes, and also to visit Miss S. Stefansson, who it turned out was a childhood friend of the family and Inga's sister was her closest friend at Mountain. Mr. Thorlakson is a hotel owner at Bassano, and like all Icelanders, interested in his family tree, though he has lost track of it. His mother was Norwegian, and his wife is English and a son-in-law German, so the fimily is a very Canadian mituxre ethnically.

—Lake Centre News

★

ICELANDIC IMMIGRATION

The federal report o nimmigration for the first quarter of 1974 gives figures for immigration to Canada from the Scandinavian countries, Iceland, and Finland in the first quarter of 1973 and 1974, respectively, as follows:

	1973	1974
Denmark	24	18
Finland	44	55
Iceland	4	4
Norway	28	3[illegible]
Sweden	93	157

In the first six months of 1972, immigrants from Iceland numbered three

Dr. Helgi Johnson, B.Sc. 1926, retired in 1969 as professor of Geology an da director of the New Jersey Bureau of Research and lives in Somerset, New Jersey.

★

Thor Guttormsson, LL.B. 1956 of Winnipeg, has been appointed administrator of court services in Manitoba, a position created in 1969 in effort to streamline court functions.

★

Elin Chitwood of Seattle was Fjallkona at this year's -17th of June celebration of Icelandic Independence Day in Seattle. She is the granddaughter o fthe well-loved Icelandic poet Matthias Jochumson, author of Iceland's National Anthem.

★

John J. Arnason, of Winnipeg, is Assistant General Manager Engineering with Manitoba Hydro.

Lorne V. Palmason, B.Sc. 1946 is senior Vice-President of Marsh and McLennan in New York.

★

STAFHOLT NEWS
Blaine, Washington

Erlendur Sigmundsson, the Secretary to the Bishop of Iceland, and his wife Sigríður Símonardóttir, were at the Icelandic Picnic at the Peace Arch Park.

★

The Stafholt Women's Auxiliary have purchased a coffee maker for the Home. Now al lthe residents who like to drink coffee in the morning and evening in the lobby will be able to enjov hot coffee made by this machine. Presumably all the residents of Icelandic descent will qualify.

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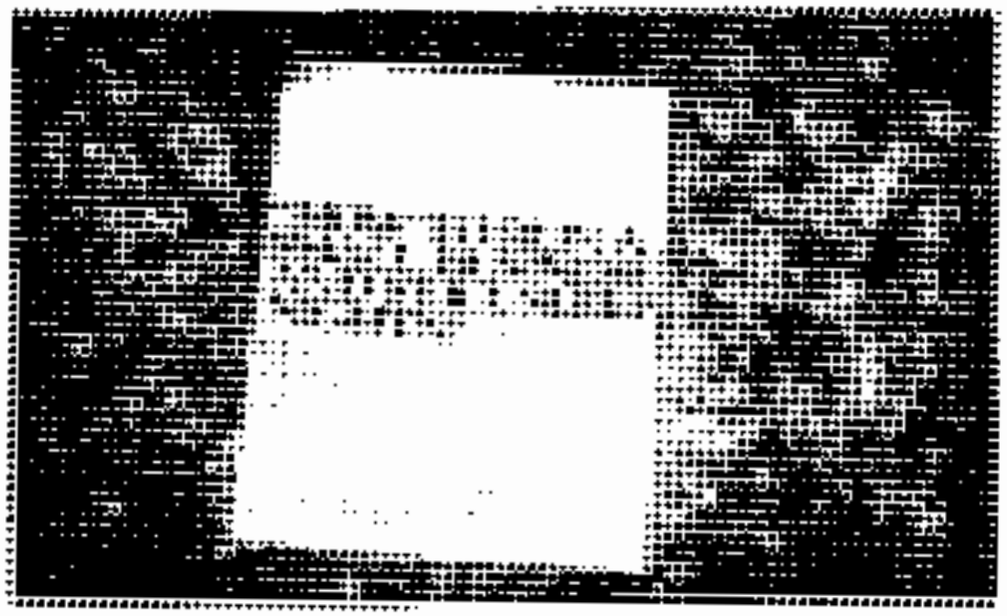

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