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Book Reviews

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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Canada

On the Cover

Photo by Garry Oddleifson

Mural at 563 Ellice Avenue in Winnipeg. A thank you to the Icelanders by depicting their productive and outstanding contributions to the community. Artist: Dave Carty, 1999.

Editorial

Passages

by Lorna Tergesen

During our lifetime we experience many varying forms of passages. *The Icelandic Canadian* magazine is now approximately sixty-seven years old and this year we have seen a great deal of change. We have acquired some wonderful new members to the board, such as the Simundssons, Elva, Avery and Heida, Susan Claire Johnson, and Norma Guttormsson from British Columbia. Elva had served on this board a few years back but we are so happy to have her on board again.

Nothing remains the same. In our small circle of the magazine board, we have experienced the loss of four faithful friends. Their contributions over the years have been invaluable. We have lost Shirley McCreedy and Gustaf Kristjanson. Shirley was active right till the end of her life. Gustaf had moved away, but had helped us out immensely when he was in Winnipeg. Two of our contributors who gave so willingly of their time and talents, Bill Holm and Haraldur Bessason, have also passed away and they are a great loss to us. The work ethic of these people is a shining example for us to follow. Shirley's dedication to the magazine never wavered. She was so loyal and it must be added that her dear husband Russsell always accompanied her in the last few years. Her knowledge of Robert's Rules of order kept our meetings on the right track. With Russell's help, Shirley's failing eyesight never became an issue or hindered her. She was skilled on the computer. She and Russell took courses to keep themselves abreast of the new technologies. Her pride in being able to use her father's articles to promote the history of the Falcons Hockey team was one of her biggest gifts to us. Gus, as we called Gustaf, passed away on the 26th of December, 2008. His years of volunteering on the magazine board were while he and Norah, his wife, resided in Winnipeg. Gus had a very creative approach to all he did and his articles were extremely well researched. He was adept in telling the history of the earlier Icelandic Canadians. Gus was a gentle man who loved to tell a good tale, while his ability to write in a very clear direct manner was to our benefit. Meetings were frequently held in their home, with Norah being a very gracious hostess. Neither Bill Holm nor Haraldur Bessason were ever board members but they certainly did contribute! Each of these men was larger than

life. Both were very adept at story telling and were well noted for their extremely great sense of humour. Their love of our community at large gave us many an article or story. We had received the article from Haraldur that is published in this magazine just prior to his passing. It is truly a loss to us all that their writings have been stilled.

Now the magazine board is in the throes of some changes. It still operates on a volunteer basis with only the desktop setter and printer receiving payment. So many people have volunteered their time and effort over the years. We celebrate this with great pride. From very humble beginnings in 1942, when a small group led by Laura Goodman Salverson realized that many of the descendants of immigrant Icelanders would not be able to speak or read Icelandic, hence the need for an English magazine or journal. There was a close association with the Icelandic Canadian Club and so the magazine's first members and volunteers were drawn from that organization. There was a very strong marketing side to the magazine, with members going out to sell subscriptions and seek advertisers. Packaging the magazine was always a major event with much socializing after the job was completed. Times were not always good. We know that some past editors carried the magazine over rough periods. There always seemed to be ready hands to help or to take over positions that became vacant.

Our biggest challenge now is to gain new subscribers. The list of those that do subscribe are so faithful and loyal. However, we need to broaden our list and we appeal to all of you, who are so loyal to the magazine, to please try to find us new subscribers. The continuation of a healthy magazine will be the best tribute that we can pay to those who worked so tirelessly in past years.

Another significant passage in the life of our magazine is a change of name that will reflect our broader readership, which includes subscribers in Iceland and the USA, as well as in Canada. With this in mind, the magazine board has decided to change the name of *The Icelandic Canadian* to *The Icelandic Connection.* This name change will soon be made, but we want to assure our readers that regardless of the magazine's new name, we will endeavour to continue providing the same quality in reading to which you have become accustomed and are entitled.

CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION INC.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

We invite students to apply for the following scholarships which are offered, or administered, by the Canada Iceland Foundation. Priority may be given to first time applicants.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2009

Information and applications are available electronically by request at Canadalceland@netscape.net (for application requests only), or in hard copy from Lögberg-Heimskringla.
The completed applications are forwarded to:
Canada Iceland Foundation Inc., Box 27012, C-360 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4T3

The Heiðmar Björnson Memorial Scholarship
In the amount of $500, will be given annually to the student obtaining the highest academic standing in Icelandic Studies in his/her final year at the University of Manitoba. The award will be made by the Department Head.

The Margaret Breckman Mack Scholarship Award
In the amount of $500, will be given anually to a needy student of good scholastic ability who is enrolled in the University of Manitoba bachelor of Science Nursing Degree Program.

The Canada Iceland Foundation Scholarship
One scholarship of $500, to be awarded annually. Award to be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a university student studying towards a degree in any Canadian university.

Einar Páll & Ingibjörg Jónsson Memorial Scholarship
One scholarship of $500, to be awarded annually. Award to be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a high school graduate proceeding to a Canadian university or the University of Iceland.

Emilia Pálmason Student Aid Award
An award of $500, to be given annually. The recipients must be of good moral character, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies in high school, college, or at the university level. The donors hope that "somewhere along the highway of life" the award winners will try to provide comparable help to another needy student.

The Gunnar Simundsson Memorial Scholarship
One scholarship of $500, to be awarded annually. This annual scholarship will be awarded to a student in university or proceeding into a university in Canada or the United States. The recipient must demonstrate financial need and high scholastic ability.

Thorvaldson Scholarship
One scholarship of $500, to be awarded annually. This annual scholarship will be awarded to a student in university or proceeding into a university in Canada or the United States. The recipient must demonstrate financial need and high scholastic ability.

John Jónas Gillis Memorial Scholarship
The late Ingunn Gillis made a gift to the Canada Iceland Foundation to set up a scholarship in memory of her son. A scholarship of $500 will be awarded.

Arnold W. Holm Scholarship
One scholarship of $500, to be awarded annually. This scholarship is to be awarded to a student demonstrating financial need and who qualifies to proceed to university education and a degree.

The Kristin Stefanson Memorial Scholarship
One scholarship of $500 to be awarded to a student who is registered or will be registering to take a course offered by The Department of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba. Preference may be given to students who have not previously taken a course offered by that Department.

The Lorna and Terry Tergesen Scholarship
One scholarship of $500 to be awarded to a student entering the second or a later year of study of architecture, fine arts, design or graphic design, music, dance or voice.

The Walter and Beulah Arason Scholarship
One scholarship of $500 to be awarded annually to a student of good academic standing entering the University of Alberta or continuing their education there.

The Margrét Bjarnason Scholarships
Scholarships of $500 each for students pursuing a post secondary education, who graduated from a high school in Evergreen School Division in Manitoba and who demonstrate scholastic ability.

The Judge Walter J. Lindal Memorial Scholarship
A scholarship of $1000 to be awarded annually, in memory of Judge Walter J. Lindal, to a student registering as an undergraduate at The University of Winnipeg with a view to proceeding from there to the study of Law.

Shirley Norma McCreedy
1992 - 2009

by Johanna Wilson & Ingrid Slobodian

One of the most exceptional members of the Icelandic community has passed away. Shirley Norma McCreedy, (1922- 2009) described as" a force of nature" shone her bright light on the Icelandic Canadian Community in Manitoba for many, many productive years. And oh, how we benefited from her enthusiasm, knowledge and sheer determination. She had an insatiable appetite for all things Icelandic and pursued her quest to share and pass on this knowledge. She laid the foundations for a strong and vibrant community through her passion for music, her church work and memberships in the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE, the Icelandic National League and Icelandic Canadian Fron. She was a founding member of the Scandinavian pavilion of Folklorama and was a champion of The Icelandic Canadian Magazine, the Icelandic Community newspaper, Logberg-Heimskringla, The Viking Times, Sunrise Camp and the hockey team, the Winnipeg Falcons. She compiled an extensive, ongoing record of achievements of people of Icelandic heritage. This will prove invaluable for research in the years to come. Shirley's family has placed it in the archives of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine.

A quote from the eulogy Neil Bardal so eloquently presented at her memorial service on April 2, 2009, sums up the impact this wonderful woman had on everyone she met.

"In her diminutive stature, she cast a giant shadow in all she did or promoted. She possessed a vision for who and what we are as people born of the Icelanders".

Her formative years were spent in the west end of Winnipeg as the third daughter of Fred & Norma Thordarson. Every Sunday the family attended The First Lutheran Church on Victor and Sargent followed by dinner at her Amma's on Beverley Street. The First Lutheran church was a busy place with a Sunday school of over 350 children. The Sunday school was a wonderful place for young people and Shirley took part in many of the activities. During the 1940's she belonged to the Dorcas Society of the First Lutheran Church, a junior women's ladies aid group.

In interviews, stored at the Provincial Archives, conducted for the Icelandic Canadian Fron by Laurence Gillespie in 1989, Shirley spoke of the Good Templars, the Icelandic Amateur Theater performing Freða Danielsson's *Moonlight on the Mississippi,* her father's friendship with cartoonist Charles Thorson, Dr. Siggi Jul, Dr. Brandson, Icelandic food, Íslendingadagurinn celebrations in Winnipeg and the Interlake region and wonderful church picnics at Assiniboine Park. Later with the St. James-Assiniboia Seniors Center Dialogue re the Year of Older Persons she recalled the Moonlight train arriving back in Winnipeg after a day at Winnipeg Beach or Grand Beach, the corner lot baseball games, neighborhood street games and her attendance at many hockey games. "We rarely went to the store to shop for food. We had a grocer and butcher who had delivery boys traveling by bicycle to bring our orders daily. We also had an ice-man, a bread-man and a milk-man who poured the milk from his milk can into our jugs.

Eaton's delivered twice a day... These and many more memories cover Shirley's early days.

In 1916, her mother, Norma, was the first woman bank teller in Manitoba (if not in Canada), a foreshadowing of that indominatable spirit which Shirley inherited. Norma often transported thousands of dollars in cash on the city transit system to the main branch of the bank. Oh, those were the days! Her father Fred was a bank manager who once thwarted a bank robbery single handedly by locking the would be thieves in the bank vault. He was also the manager of the world famous Falcons Hockey team, winner of the first Olympic gold medal in hockey in 1920. In 2002 it was Shirley who fought for due recognition for the Falcons as legitimate owners of the first gold medal when she pitted herself against the NHL who mistakenly used the Toronto team colours of 1924 as the first gold medal winners. She won.

Shirley attended Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, graduating in 1939. She went on to attend Manitoba Commercial College and worked as a secretary for several years. Shirley followed her heart's desire and fostered her musical ambitions receiving her A.R.C.T. Piano Teacher's diploma in 1962. She joined the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association in 1966 and for two years taught piano classes in the neighborhood school in St James. She then began teaching in her home studio, retiring some thirty years later in 1996.

And again from Neil Bardal's eulogy:

"Shirley was a gifted pianist and shared that gift with her many students taking part in festivals, leading church choirs and encouraging all whose lives she touched musically to give their best because she always gave her best. Her smile was infectious, it came right from the heart, she was the genuine article."

Shirley threw herself into her profession as a musician and was president of the Provincial Manitoba Registered Music Teacher's Association for two years, beginning in 1975. She was Secretary of the planning committee of the 1975 Biennial Convention of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers, in Banff. She acted as Business Manager of the Canadian Federation of Music Teacher's Association magazine for eight years, and was the M.R.M.T.A. representative on the C.F.M.T.A. council for four years. She was also president of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto Alumni Association, Winnipeg Chapter, and the former Women's Committee of the Men's Music Club.

Shirley brought her unwavering sense of dedication to her faith through her involvement not only as choir conductor at St. Stephens Lutheran Church in St. James for over twenty years but also as a fully participating member of the worship and church committees. Shirley was the Canadian representative on the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship when that commission worked to produce their 1978 Hymnal and the Lutheran Book of Worship. She considered this work as one of the highlights of her life. Included in that edition of the Hymnal is How Marvelous God's Greatness, words by Valdimar Briem (1848-1930) a beloved, famous poet in Iceland. She was Secretary and Past-President of the Women's Inter-Church Council, Board member of the Association of Christian Churches in Manitoba and held numerous other offices, including President of the Evangelical Lutheran Women's Auxiliary.

Shirley was a member of the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir enjoying the camaraderie of many of Winnipeg's finest musicians. She later became the director of the New Iceland Choir of Winnipeg. She performed for many years at Folklorama at the Icelandic Pavilion in St. Stephens Lutheran Church hall and at the Scandinavian Center on Erin Street. Under the auspices of Folklorama, she and Iola Nicklas prepared the informative displays on Iceland presenting them in the schools during the year. Her spirit at the Scandinavian Pavilion of Folklorama was legendary and she elicited the same response from others. Her presence was always joyful, her enthusiasm boundless.

In 1993, Shirley was chosen Maid of the Mountain, Fjallkona of the Icelandic celebration Islendingadagurin in Gimli, Manitoba bringing to the role her own unique presence. She expanded the role of Fjallkona from the single event of the Icelandic celebrations on the August long weekend to attendance at several other celebrations: the June 17 Icelandic Independence Day celebrations at the statue of Jon Sigurdsson on the Legislative grounds in Winnipeg; the Hjemkomst Festival in Fargo North Dakota; the South Central Festival in Swan Lake, Manitoba; the Scandinavian Pavilion at Folklorama; the Brandon Heritage Festival in October; and the Nordic Hostfest in Minot, North Dakota. She wrote and spoke beautifully about the symbol of the Fjallkona, Mother Iceland, as the essence of Icelandic culture and history, and of the ties that bind us to our Icelandic heritage.

Shirley was provincial secretary and councilor of the IODE and Regent of the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter. She performed the many duties of that position including preparations for the Bridge and Whist fundraisers in September and March, hosting the IODE scholarship presentations in October, supporting the Education and Services projects and planning the June 17 Icelandic Independence Day celebrations. Today, the ceremony at the statue of Jon Sigurdsson, which was promoted vigorously by Shirley and the members of the IODE, has become an important event in the life of the Icelandic community in Manitoba. She set the stage for the colourful, meaningful and memorable enactment we enjoy today. Shirley was also Regent of the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE from 1996-98.

In 1975, Shirley and Russell enjoyed hosting and guiding a troupe of dancers from Iceland arranging concerts and appearances in the towns of the Interlake and in Winnipeg at Folklorama and at the Playhouse Theater.

Shirley was honoured with the Governor-General's 125th Anniversary of Canada Medal and in 1992 she received an honourary membership from the Icelandic National League.

Shirley and Russell, her husband of sixty-four years were inseparable. Russell gave Shirley his unqualified support in all her endeavors and she expanded her horizons with him, learning new technologies (the computer age) and keeping an open mind for whatever opportunities came their way. Here is a tribute from their daughter Norma Jean which describes the wonderful marriage of a truly remarkable couple.

"Although she accomplished so much in her community, I think her greatest achievement was the enduring love she and our father sustained over a lifetime. They were a team. Wherever Mom went, Dad was never very far behind . . ."

"Shirley loved her family and friends dearly and was always available whenever they needed help or support. She loved being an Amma, and always took great delight in all of her family's achievements and activities. She will be lovingly remembered for her passion for music, her determination and courage in facing life's challenges, and her abiding faith that everything always works out for the best. Shirley was truly a force of nature".

Shirley was born February 14, 1922. She will be lovingly remembered by her husband of 64 years, Russell; two daughters, Janis Chant (Michael) of Winnipeg and Norma-Jean McCreedy (John Spauls) of Barrie; one son, Kevin McCreedy of Winnipeg; grandchildren, Brad, Caitlin, Bronwen, Declan, Heather, Allen and Eric, and sister, Margaret Hunter of Saskatoon. She is also survived by brother-in-law, Allen (Mary) McCreedy of Winnipeg; sisters-in-law, Marilyn (Dick) LaPage of Winnipeg and Marian McCreedy of Whitby and numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her mother and father, Norma and Fred Thordarson; grandparents, Erlendur Thordarson and Signy Bjorg Erlandsdottir, Sveinn Thorbergson and Helga Hendriksdottir; her brother, David Thordarson; sister, Dorothy Littleford; sister-in-law, Doreen Thordarson and brothers-in-law, Mac Littleford and Ken Hunter.

Gustaf (Gus) Kristjanson: A Tribute

by Kristine Perlmutter

On December 26, 2008, Gustaf (Gus) Kristjanson passed away at the age of 91. He was a valued member of the Icelandic community both in Winnipeg and in Vancouver. As a member of the editorial board of the Icelandic Canadian for over twenty years while he lived in Winnipeg and as a contributor and friend to the magazine after his relocation to British Columbia, he is warmly remembered for his gentleness, his wide-ranging interests and abilities and his dedication. He always had a twinkle in his eye and did everything gracefully and with style- whether it be writing an article, hosting a party, entertaining as a singer and a pianist, gardening, square dancing, teaching or acting.

Gus began his life near Wynyard, Saskatchewan and grew up as part of that Icelandic community. He graduated from the University of Saskatchewan and began a career as a high school teacher. While teaching in Harris, Saskatchewan, he met and married a fellow teacher, his charming wife Norah (Sylvia Lenorah Bradshaw). Gus and Norah had sixty-four years together until her death in 2006. They were a delightful and interesting couple. Guests were always received graciously and could count on good food, entertainment and interesting souvenirs from the Kristjansons' travels to examine.

World War II saw Gus serving as an officer in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1942 to 1946, both aboard corvettes and ashore. Following his military service, he studied broadcasting at Lorne Greene's Academy of Radio Arts in Toronto, Ontario. This led to a fifteen year stint at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as a script editor in Toronto and as a producer for radio drama in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He and Norah then taught school for several years in Bella Bella, British Columbia for the Department of Indian Affairs. Gus spent the last fifteen years of his career as a professor of Drama in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba.

Upon his retirement, Gus and Norah moved to Mission, B.C. where their home gardens won many awards. In his later years, he was a resident of the Surrey/White Rock area.

Both during his working career and after retirement, Gus was a dramatic actor on both radio and television. He was a lifetime member of ACTRA, having been active throughout his life in stage, radio and television. One of his most well-known parts was his portrayal of John Miller, leader of an Amish community, in a 1998 episode of the television series MacGyver titled "The Outsiders."

Gus and Norah loved to travel and travelled all over the world. He made his last trip in 2007, when he toured Egypt and Jordan. Gus's many friends and relatives will also remember him as an excellent pianist and singer. One of my fondest memories is of him at the piano, entertaining at our engagement party in 1973. He was fortunate to have been able to keep up with his playing and singing throughout his life.

Besides his wife, Norah, Gus was predeceased by his son, Ron, in October of 2008. Surviving him are his daughter, Sharon (Brian) Ziel, of Aptos, California, and Ron's widow, Remmawi Kristjanson, of Atlanta, Georgia, as well as seven grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and three step-great-grandchildren. He is survived by his sisters, Lily Hearn, of Ashland, Oregon, Una (David Cline) of White Rock, B.C. and Svava Seymour of White Rock, as well as many nieces and nephews, cousins and other relatives.

The Icelandic Canadian is richer for all the contributions made by Gus to the magazine over the years. We remember him with appreciation and fondness as a wonderful colleague and friend.

Historical tour of Winnipeg

Report from the Icelandic National League of North America Meeting

by Vi Bjarnason Hilton and Judy Thorsteinson

In April of 2007, the Icelandic National League of North America held a conference in Winnipeg at the Hotel Fort Garry. At this conference, we offered a tour for our guests showing where the Icelandic people settled and worked in the early years. We also pointed out historical buildings from the turn of the century. There were two busloads. One tour guide was Vi Bjarnason Hilton and the other was Judy Thorsteinson. We have made a copy of the tour for the readers of The Icelandic Canadian to enjoy.

We began the tour at the Hotel Fort Garry, built in 1913 by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. This grand old lady was built when the railway was completed between the east and west and is only one block from the railway station. Apparently there is a ghost in one of the rooms.

Next, the Manitoba Club on Broadway Avenue, just east of the Hotel Fort Garry, is the oldest clubhouse in western Canada (1874). The first building burned down, as the fire engines, on their inaugural run did not make it in time. This new building was opened in 1905 by then Governor General Earl Grey. The jubilee window was acquired during the club presidency of Sir Hugh John MacDonald, in honour of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. There have been many notable guests at the Manitoba club.

On the corner of Broadway at Main we turned left on to Main Street. On the right is the Union Station, one time home of the Canadian National Railway. Warren Whitmore, architect of the Grand Central Station in New York City, designed this station in 1911. Today the station is the entrance to "The Forks" (the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers), which is where the settlers arrived by boat or rail when they first arrived from Iceland.

Our tour continued along Main Street to York Avenue and we turned right on Waterfront Drive to The Forks Market Road. Shanty Town was located at the intersection of Water and Gilroy and was where the Icelanders first built their shacks. Fridjon Sigurbjornsson built the first house in 1875/1876. Two forts were located in this area, Fiddlers Fort and Fort Gibraltar. Aboriginals were trading here when the Selkirk Settlers arrived from Scotland. The Forks housed immigration sheds, which held 500 people each. The Johnson Terminal was the storage building for flour, sugar, etc., during the boom years of 1870-1920. The building that housed the stables is now used for restaurants and small boutiques. The Forks, now a heritage site, is a tourist attraction and a busy shopping and dining place. During The Pan Am Games in 1999, the awards ceremonies were held there. At the north section of The Forks, the Canadian Human Rights museum is being built, envisioned as an iconic symbol of Canada.

As our tour progressed through The Forks on the right is the Esplanade Riel Bridge, which is one of Winnipeg's most distinctive landmarks.

At one time Broadway Avenue went through to Provencher in St. Boniface, but our tour stopped at The Yellow Brick Road, which runs from the Esplanade Riel Bridge to the Via Rail station. The Yellow Brick Road signifies the important role played by the railroad in the building of Canada and opening up the west. Winnipeg was known as the "Gateway to the West." The Yellow Brick Road represents "the spine of the eagle feather."

The tour circled through The Forks past the travel information center, with Johnson Terminal in the background and then went past the Inn at the Forks.

As we continued through The Forks, we reached Waterfront Drive. We passed the baseball stadium on the left and on the right across the Red River we could see the now amalgamated, former Francophone city of St. Boniface, home to the Festival du Voyageur.

As we continued north on Waterfront Drive, the Stephen Juba Walk came into view. Stephen Juba was a colourful, ambitious and entrepreneurial mayor. During his tenure the 911emergency system was established and is now used all over the world. Waterfront Drive along the Red River is now rebuilt and has many prestigious boutiques condominiums on it.

The next site on Waterfront Drive was the James Street pumping station. This was the first home of The Winnipeg Fire Department. In the early days, horse drawn wagons were used to carry the water to the fires. Water was drawn from the river to spray the fires. This practice was halted after an outbreak of typhoid fever occurred because the water was contaminated by sewage in the river.

Victoria Park is located west of the Alexander Docks on James Street. The park was the site of the first Icelandic Festival or Islendingadagurinn in 1890. Along Waterfront Avenue there are also monuments to the Scottish settlers and a diorama featuring Sir William Stephenson, of Icelandic descent.

Continuing down Waterfront Drive, we turned right on Higgins then on to Annabella and turned left. From 1909 until the end of the Second World War, this street was the heart of Winnipeg's Red Light District. Number 157 Anabella was where Minnie Woods, "Queen of the Brothels," held court. The area contains many female street names, reportedly honouring the wives of prominent citizens and perhaps some of the area's "ladies of the evening" as well.

Our tour continued along Annabella to the 1950s era dike at Rover Street. From Rover we turned right on to Syndicate Street to view the home of Sir William Stephenson at #175. He was born at 28 Higgins Avenue to an Icelandic mother. After his father died, he was raised by Vigfus Stephenson and family. He adopted his foster parent's name. As an adult, he was a friend of Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond 007 novels. Fleming fashioned his main character on Sir William, who had been a brilliant and audacious British espionage agent during WW11 and was called "Intrepid."

The tour then turned left on to Sutherland Avenue and traveled to the Brown and Rutherford Lumber Company. This was where many Icelandic immigrants were employed. Also on the left is the Louise Bridge, named after Queen Victoria's daughter.

Turning right on Higgins, the tour stopped at the old CPR station built in 1904. Built in the Beaux Arts style, the station is designated a provincial heritage site

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and is now the Aboriginal Centre for Winnipeg.

At the corner of Higgins and Main Street the building on the left is called Circle of Life Thunderbird House. This is a meeting place of First Nations People. World-renowned architect, Douglas Cardinal, designed this building which is meant to reflect and represent the beliefs and hope of the aboriginal community. The architecture incorporated traditional forms of round and lodge tepee types, with the head and wings of a thunderbird. Shoes are removed when entering this sacred house.

Next on the tour were the areas of Winnipeg known as Theatre Row, Bankers Row, and Newspaper Row. We turned left off Higgins to Main Street south and traveled down Main Street to Rupert Street past one of Canada's best museums, The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. This museum houses the Hudson Bay Collection and the Nonsuch; a replica ship that was built in England and toured many ports before being brought to Canada and landing in Montreal. When the museum was not ready to house the ship it was taken by Riverton Boatworks Company to the West Coast and back. The ship was built for the Hudson Bay Company's Tricentennial in 1970.

We turned right on to Rupert Street and went down to the stop sign on Lily, where the building at this corner belongs to fashion designer of Finnish descent, Peter Nygard. Well-known Icelander, Arni Thorteinson, is collaborating with Nygard in designing condominiums and commercial buildings.

Straight ahead was the Manitoba Theatre Centre, started by John Hirsch. This theatre as well as the MTC Warehouse, Centennial Concert Hall and Pantages Theatre constitute "Theatre Row." We turned right on Market Street. At Main Street we saw to our right the Centennial Concert Hall built in 1967. This is a fine example of modern architecture, 1945-1975. The windows facing Main Street are like eye lids and hence, no curtains are needed. To the left is the Pantages Theatre, built in 1914, during vaudeville's heyday. Alexander Pantages boasted that his theatre has something for everyone.

Straight ahead are Winnipeg City Hall and administration offices. The chief architect was David Thordarson, who used the themes of modern architecture's form and function, with a focus on the impact of light and open air. David was also one of the main architects of the airport in Winnipeg.

The tour turned left at Main Street. At 460 Main we viewed the Royal Bank Building, constructed in the Italian Renaissance palazzo style in 1906. To the left is the curved Confederation Life Building, which follows the bend in Main Street. The next site was the Motyka Dance Studio, where Jennifer Lopez and Richard Gere took lessons to perform in the movie *Shall We Dance?* Across the street is the Millennium Centre, formerly the Bank of Commerce. At one time this was Winnipeg's only corporate bank and was open until the mid 1960's.

The tour turned right at the corner of Portage and Main Street, known as the windiest corner in North America. At the corner of Smith and Portage is the head office of Logberg Heimskringla. These wonderful quarters are made possible through the generosity of Gordon Reykdal, Honorary Consul for Alberta. Logberg Heimskringla is the only ethnic newspaper in North America to continuously publish for 120 years.

At the corner of Donald Street and Portage Avenue is the New MTS Centre (Manitoba Telephone System). It has been rated as one of the best entertainment venues in North America. This building is situated on the former site of the Eaton's building. John David Eaton was married to an Icelandic girl from Winnipeg, Signy Stephenson. In the centre, on the right, inside the main entrance, is a mural and display to honour the Winnipeg Falcons hockey team, winners of the Olympics in 1920. In the rotunda on the second floor is the statue of Timothy Eaton, founder of the Eaton's Store. Legend has it that if you rub the toe of this statue it will bring you good luck.

Further down Portage Avenue is the site of the new, state-of-the-art Manitoba

Hydro building, which is ergonomically designed and environmentally constructed. On the corner of Memorial Boulevard and Portage Avenue is The Bay, one of the last department stores left in Canada. The Hudson Bay Company is over 300 years old. An indoor walkway allows you to walk from The Bay to Portage and Main without having to battle the elements. The tour headed west on Portage turning right on Furby Street. At the corner of Furby and Ellice Avenue is the mural put up by the "West End Biz" thanking Icelanders for their productive and outstanding contribution to the community. The plaque on the left side of the mural offers more information.

We continued north to Sargent Avenue, also known as "Goolie Street." We turned left on Sargent Avenue and entered the area of the city known as The Icelandic District of Winnipeg. The district between Furby Street and Dominion Street was also known as "Goolie Crescent." Icelandic was the language of Sargent Avenue along with English. "Goolie Hall" at 635 Sargent was the home of The Independent Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.). Two of the fraternal lodges in the Goolie Hall were Skuld and Hekla. The first Icelandic National League meeting was held in this hall in 1919.

Next was the First Lutheran church at 580 Victor at Sargent. In the early years, this church was the meeting place for many Icelanders. The church has continued to be home to many through the years. The tour traveled Victor Street and turned on Ellice Avenue followed by right hand turn on to Toronto Street. At Sargent, we turned left and drove up to number 692, which is the former home of the Wevel Café, where cartoonist Charlie Thorson sketched his first drawings of Snow White.

The corner of Sargent and Banning is the former site of the Unitarian Church. The Safeway at Sargent and Lipton sold a variety of Icelandic foods until the mid 1960s. Our tour proceeded down Sargent to Erin Street to Betelstaður, a Senior's apartment, which was built by a group of Icelanders and still is home to many Icelandic people. Our next site was the Scandinavian Centre at 764 Erin Street, home to descendants of the five Scandinavian countries. The Icelanders are an integral part of its operation. Next, we drove south to Portage Avenue and turned on Dominion Street. We proceeded through the "Granola Belt," or "Birkenstock Way," to Wolseley Avenue. We followed Wolseley to Maryland and turned right over the Maryland Bridge to Wellington Crescent and traveled to Number 1015, the old Eaton Estate. The tour then took the Pembina Highway to the University of Manitoba, home of the Icelandic Collection at the Elizabeth Dafoe Library.

Here are additional points of Icelandic heritage that could be included in an Icelandic Winnipeg Tour:

The Jon Sigurdson Monument on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislative Building.

Jon Bjarnason Academy located at 652 Home Street, was the first and only Icelandic high school in North America.

The Olafson House at 539 William Avenue features interesting architecture.

The University of Winnipeg at 515 Portage Avenue offered classes in Icelandic years ago.

The birthplace of The Icelandic Canadian Magazine was the home of Hjalmar and Freda Danielson, at 896 Garfield Ave.

We hope that this gives you a glimpse of some of our Icelandic history and points of interest.

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The End of Explorations and Settlement in Vinland

by Haraldur Bessason

"At last we caught sight of America, a blue line on the western horizon. For the longest time my grandfather gazed at it exclaiming again and again 'Wineland the Good! Leif the Lucky!' A few deckhands standing nearby burst out laughing as they, in a distorted accent, tried to mimic my grandfather' s words."

- quote from Eiríkur Hansson, Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason' s autobiographical immigrant novel which describes the coming of Icelandic immigrants to Nova Scotia in the mid-1870s

A few years ago the discovery of the North American mainland was commemorated in different places on both sides of the Atlantic, with the peoples of Iceland and Norway and their descendants in North America playing a central role in many of the festivities. Most of these enterprises attracted favourable attention. As was to be expected, the ethnic origins of the principal discoverer Leif Eiríksson were debated. Nonetheless, one must admit that different ideas about his country of origin have not altered anyone's conviction that, except for his taste in women, he must have been a man of good luck. To explain this minor deviance of his from the straight line of good fortune, the story has it that he begat a son named Þorgils with a certain Þórgunna, a Hebridean woman. She appears to have been a sorceress and is likely to have shown some ghost like qualities before she vacated her place among ordinary mortals. Their son Þorgils was born in the Hebrides where his mother raised him and then sent him to his father, Leif Eiríksson in Greenland . We do not know if Þorgils, Leif Eiríksson' s only son, stayed on in Greenland or whether he returned from there to his native Hebrides. The only comment on him in Eirík' s Saga is that "there seemed to be something uncanny about him all his life." Þorgils seems to have disappeared from the scene without family or offspring. Anyone wishing to trace his or her origins back to Leif Eiríksson should therefore exercise a degree of caution and avoid making statements like the one heard on Icelandic television a few years ago to the effect that all Icelanders are the descendants of Leif Eiríksson. Only in folktales or myths would women from the realm of witchcraft and ghosts be capable of having normal offspring. Who is normal and who is not is then indeed an interesting question.

Guðrið Þorbjarnardóttir, Leif Eiríksson' s sister-in-law from her first marriage, and her second husband, Þorfinn Karlsefni, have a much more secure position from the standpoint of progeny or genealogy than other people in the Vínland Sagas. Most Icelanders should be able to trace their origins back to these illustrious explorers.

On many of the recent festive occasions celebrating the discovery of America, the name of Bjarni Herjólfsson has rarely been mentioned if at all. If we are to place any credence in the Grænlendinga Saga, he was the first European (Icelander) to make landfall in North America, playing therefore a very important role in the history of

these early voyages and explorations. Some forty years ago, Bjarni was very much in fashion in scholarly circles. Lately, his fame has been diminishing quite rapidly. It no longer appears to be politically wise to let anyone overshadow Leif Eiríksson's famous voyage of accidental discovery when blown off course en route from Norway to Greenland.

In the early 11th-century, Þorfinn Karlsefni and his family left Vínland to take up permanent abode in his native district of Skagafjörður in northern Iceland. Their departure marks the end of early attempts made by explorers from Iceland and Greenland to colonize parts of the North American mainland. From Eirík's Saga one may gather that the newcomers to Vínland were virtually driven away by the aborigines of that country. In the saga's account one detects, on the part of the explorers themselves, a mixture of anxiety and racial prejudice in references to "small and evil-looking" men with "evil" (coarse) hair. Fatal blows were exchanged and in the words of the author of Grænlendinga Saga "neither side could understand the other's language."

After some abrupt encounters with the natives of Vínland, Þorfinn Karlsefni and his family decided that they must return to Iceland and seek their fortune in the district of Skagafjörður. For the ensuing eight centuries and a half there were no contacts between Iceland and Vínland. It is even uncertain whether, during that long period, anyone knew where to look for the latter. Yet one notes that the Icelandic historian Ari Þhorgilsson the Learned' s mention of Vínland in his Book of the Icelanders written in the early 13th-century has an air of familiarity about it. What ideas the Greenlanders maintained about Vínland no one knows. On the other hand, the location of the Markland of the Vínland Sagas must have been reasonably clear to people in both Greenland and Iceland for centuries if one is to accept as authentic an entry in the Icelandic Annals for the year 1347 in which a boat, on its return voyage from Markland to Greenland, is said to have run aground in the area of Snæfellssnes in south-western Iceland.

Wherever the ancient Vínland and Markland of the Sagas may have been, it is quite certain that, in the late 19th - century Icelandic immigrants to Canada had not forgotten their medieval accounts of Vínland and Markland. In Eiríkur Hansson, Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason' s previously quoted autobiographical novel, the protagonist's grandfather could hardly wait to set foot on Vínland the Good just before he arrived in Halifax supposedly in the mid-eighteen seventies. About that time a group of Icelanders tried to colonize a hilly area in Nova Scotia, some 80 kilometres south-east of Halifax and named their settlement Markland. The community consisted of more than 150 pioneers living on some thirty farms, with each farm having an Icelandic name. The Markland area turned out to be too barren for any meaningful or prosperous farming. As a result, the Icelandic settlement came to an end in less than a decade, at which time people moved on to New Iceland on Lake Winnipeg and to North Dakota.

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Even though this latter-day colony of Markland, Nova Scotia, was a short-lived one, its name has lived on among Icelanders on both sides of the Atlantic through the literary works of Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason. In his already quoted novel and a few short stories, the Markland area acquired a kind of romantic aura showing every aspect of pioneer life, primitive conditions and poverty included, in a pleasant light. In his stories author Bjarnason treats his Markland people with unfailing kindness. Yet, in the spirit of 19th - century romanticism, he makes frequent references to a viking or heroic past in Icelandic history, which is also the heritage on which the immigrants were able to draw in their search for a firm foothold and good fortune in new and unfamiliar surroundings. A splendid past this was, with seafaring men from the north not only braving the high seas but skilled navigators who had mastered the art of sailing in directions opposite to such headwinds as they might run into.

In the face of adversity the 19th-century Icelandic immigrants to North America were prepared to follow the pathways of a distant heroic past to conquer insurmountable obstacles as their famous countrymen and adventurers, Eirík the Red and Leif the Lucky, had done almost nine centuries earlier. Leif the Lucky was only a recent convert to Christianity when he set foot on Vínland. On the other hand, Christ had figured quite prominently in the religious heritage of 19th –century Icelandic immigrants for almost nine centuries. Yet what is important from the present point of view is that, despite their long journey in Christ's company, the modern pioneers had consistently maintained strong cultural and literary ties with the old pantheon of Óðinn, Þór and other champions of Nordic or Icelandic heathenism. To give an example, the founders of the New Iceland colony in 1875, which later became part of the province of Manitoba, did not hesitate to disregard an ancient taboo by borrowing from the sacred text of a mythological poem the name Gimli for the capital centre of their new-found Vínland. Gimli was, in the opinion of quite a few scholars, a household name in Eirik the Red's home, both in Iceland and in Greenland, as the permanent dwelling place of such righteous human beings as made it through Doomsday to a pleasant afterlife. Indeed there is reason to believe that because of his discovery and colonization of a new country as well as for his stubborn resistance to Christianity, Eirik the Red finally gained admission to the old mythological Gimli. The Heavenly Jerusalem of Holy Scriptures is said to be the only place in the entire universe forming an exact parallel to Gimli. Admittedly, the line between mythology and actuality is often obscure. Therefore the exact location of Eirík the Red' s living quarters in afterlife is likely to continue evading us even though we must admit that the present-day splendour of the only Gimli on earth we have seen and experienced makes the above-comparision with a heavenly abode altogether appropriate.

Many more features reflecting the mould into which the Icelandic immigrant community in this country tried to fit memories from the distant past. This was their way of celebrating important episodes and events from their own history, one of which was the discovery of North America. In New Iceland and in many other Icelandic immigrant communities across this continent people may be said to have engraved their history on their immediate environment in the form of place names or topographical names. With the name Gimli in mind they continued their borrowings of names from their old mythology and other branches of their medieval literature, dispersing these over their immediate geographic environment in their small settlements which were eventually spread over large areas of the North American continent. A certain community in New Iceland they named Bifröst after the splendid bridge which once upon a time lay between the home of the gods and the homes of Eirík the Red and other mortal beings who believed that the road to heaven must be well constructed and adequately paved. Only a short distance away from Icelandic River in the Riverton area one finds the place name Ásgarður, the home of the gods. At the Foothills in the Rockies in

Alberta an old community building bears the name Fensalir, which is known from Old Nordic mythology as the hall of the goddess Frigg, Óðinn's illustrious wife. In the New Iceland area and other Icelandic settlements in the Interlake in Manitoba almost every farm had its Icelandic name, many of which were from the Old Icelandic Sagas. To give an example, the farm Hagi near the town Arborg comes from the classical *Laxdælasaga* set in 10th - century southwestern Iceland. At this farm in the Arborg area lived, in the early part of the last century, a well-known and a well respected man by the name of Gestur Oddleifsson whose namesake was a 10th - century farmer and sage living at Hagi in Iceland, a neighbour and contemporary of Eirík the Red and his sons. In the province of Saskatchewan Lögberg - Thingvalla was the name of the first Icelandic settlement, recalling the sanctity of the Old Icelandic outdoor assembly Alþing and its tribunal (Law Rock).

If one goes south of the U.S. border to North Dakota, a town within a short distance of the border bears the name of Garðar. The Icelandic poet Stephan G. Stephansson, one of the town's founders, had brought this name with him from Iceland and thought it was appropriate for an Icelandic pioneer town in North Dakota since it had previously been borne by a 9th - century Swedish seafarer and explorer Garðar Svavarsson, the first man who circumnavigated the country which later came to be named Iceland. Garðar named the country after himself calling it Garðarshólmur (Garðar's Isle). He wintered on the north coast of Garðar's Isle at a place he called Húsavík, and then left. Garðar Svavarsson was as heathen as a Swede can be. His Húsavík now greets visitors to Manitoba on highway 9 just south of Gimli. Heathenism no longer attaches itself to this place. Instead, young people flock there every summer to receive instruction in the Christian faith and the Icelandic language. These few examples of place names, among many other things, testify to a very keen awareness on the part of the Icelandic immigrants who came to this country about 130 years ago of the history and cultural setting of their long-gone compatriots, people who were very distant in time but had nonetheless made it to North America.

The Icelandic homesteaders called the tracts of land allocated to them in their various North American settlements landnám (land-claims or land-takings), using the same terminology as the mid-twelfth century *Icelandic Book of Settlements*, a work which lists some 430 of the principal settlers who made land-claims in Iceland from 874-930 A.D., including both Eirík the Red and his father Þorvald Ásvaldsson. The earliest writings about the settlement of New Iceland in Canada were patterened after this old medieval work. At this point it should be noted that one of the two 12th-century authors of the old *Icelandic Book of Settlements,* Ari Þorgilsson the Learned, had in a still earlier historical work, the *Book of Icelanders,* written a chapter on the Greenland colony, quoting as his source his own paternal uncle who, according to the author, had himself been in Eirík the Red's company when he went from Iceland to Greenland to found his colony.

No special comments will be made here on the constitution or rather the Rules and Regulations published in 1878 for the New Iceland colony. Yet it does not escape one's attention that central concepts of this remarkable code appear to have been borrowed from Iceland's earliest law code on which the Old Icelandic Freestate was founded in 930 A.D. It is indeed tempting to believe that essential parts of that code were eventually recorded in the *Laws of Early Iceland, Grágás,* which appeared in English translation not so long ago as part of The University of Manitoba Icelandic Studies Series. Yet what is interesting from our perspective is that, on the basis of the penal section of this old code of law, Eirík the Red, having repeatedly come into conflict with his neighbours and even killed some of them, was sentenced to outlawry. He then began to turn his eyes toward Greenland, and one may safely say that his banishment had an unquestionable legal basis in what we now know as *Grágás.* This ancient and remarkable lawbook rests upon time-honoured and priceless oral sources and throws valuable light on various aspects of Old Nordic/Icelandic civilization. In the instance of Eirík the Red's banishment from Iceland, it has provided an exceptionally clear example of reprehensible viking energy, if you please, having been directed towards positive goals and great achievements. The discovery of previously unexplored parts of the world and their colonization inevitably fall into that category.

The advent of vernacular Icelandic writing, not to speak of printing, lay far ahead in the future when Leif Eiríksson and his crew began to explore and consider the qualities of Vínland. As a result, he and his people could neither read nor write. Yet one sometimes feels as if these must have been the very people who drew up the original plans for ethnic publications in North American-Icelandic communities. Three Icelandic newspapers began publication in Winnipeg in the 1880s. The first one was Leifur, named after Leif Eiríksson, the second one Heimskringla bore the name of a well-known medieval work on Nordic history which contains among other things a significant account of father and son, Eirík the Red and Leif the Lucky. The third paper was Lögberg (Law Rock), a name commemorating the previously mentioned centre of Iceland's ancient national assembly. Vínland (Wineland) was the name of a sophisticated Icelandic monthly newspaper published in Minneota, Minnesota from 1902-1907. One could not possibly get any closer than that to Leif's Houses (Leifsbúðir) in Vínland through the use of only topographical names and mastheads. Finally, it does not escape anyone's attention that the Icelandic Club in Calgary bears Leif Eiriksson's name.

At first glance the use of Old Icelandic names in the North American-Icelandic communities might appear as superficial and romantic decorations reflecting nostalgic memories of an imaginary grandeur from a distant past. Also, in transplanting names from their country of origin to their new surroundings in North America, the Icelanders adopted a

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pattern similar to the one which many other ethnic groups had followed before them. For example, New Iceland in Canada brings to mind New England, Nova Scotia and New France, which at one time extended all the way from Quebec to Missouri. Place names from the Homeric Lays are not at all uncommon in upstate New York where Greek immigrants were among pioneer settlers, and countless other parallels could be quoted. Yet it is very likely that on the part of the Icelanders their ties with their medieval heritage were much stronger than would have been the case among other minority groups.

Because of an uninterrupted continuity in Icelandic language and literature from the Middle Ages to the present day, any literate Icelander has unlimited access to the total body of Icelandic literature, old and modern. Not only were the immigrants who came here from Iceland able to read, but a number of them brought along collections of books, including old sagas which 19th-century romanticism had placed in the classics category. Writers of North American-Icelandic literature were of course influenced by these works which were set in the era of Viking Age heroic ethics. Sir Maurice Bowra believed that heroic literature originally served the purpose of providing an audience of ordinary mortals with the feeling that they themselves were taking part in the superhuman accomplishments of heroes. A hero, as is well known, differed from other people in the degree of his or her powers. In most heroic literature these are specifically human, even though they are carried beyond the ordinary limits of humanity.

In a recent publication I have called attention to the popularity of a special kind of poetry called rímur (ballads), commonly composed and recited for entertainment in Iceland and later in Icelandic immigrant communities on this side of the Atlantic. The rímur poetry is heroic in theme, which among other things shows its close kinship to the much older and much more serious heroic poetry. The examples I discussed were from North Dakota and Sunnybrook in B.C. With these and many others in mind we can safely draw the conclusion that in the various late-nineteenth century Icelandic settlements in North America rímur ballads, which previously had been composed and recited for entertainment, assumed new force and import. Indeed they took on, at least in some instances, the role of truly heroic poetry under circumstances in which a deeply felt incentive or challenge to survive was bound to override the less significant elements of diversion or vicarious engagement in superhuman achievements, if we are allowed to make an indirect reference to Sir Bowra.

To explain a little further what is meant by all this, we may contend that such famous legendary and prehistoric champions from Europe's remote antiquity as Núми Pompílsson and Án bogsveigir (bowbender) assumed new and significant roles in North American- Icelandic communities. On this side of the ocean the two of them were, in people's minds, elevated to the roles of such outstanding heroes of Germanic legend as Sigurd the Slayer of the Dragon Fáfnir and his brothers-in-law and members of the Burgundian Royal Family, Gunnar and Högni. For many centuries and throughout the entire Germanic world, from central Europe to Greenland, poets and saga men never tired of extolling their virtues and strength of character. From this elevated stage of principal actors in heroic dramas, memories of praiseworthy conduct may well have been of importance. They may have helped instill in those who had to adjust to a new and often hostile territory the will to meet adversity with an undaunted spirit. This would then apply in the case of Eirík the Red's family and followers in Greenland, people in Leif the Lucky's Vínland and, more recently, Icelandic immigrant communities in Canada. Within this sphere of human conduct and intellectual activity it is interesting to note that the longest heroic poem northern tradition has handed down to us may have been composed in the Icelandic colony in Greenland. It is called the Greenland Lay of Atli and describes the lives of the highly tragic characters King Attila the Hun, his Burgundian brothers-in-law, Gunnar and Högni, and their families. This poem is unique, in that we sense in it the chilly environment of

Greenland where even a polar bear has invaded the world of semi-historical or literary characters whose proper domain was on the great rivers of the European continent. Yet what is of importance is that the poem reflects far less interest in the reasons for the sufferings of the heroes concerned than the way in which they surmount them. Perhaps the extant version of the Greenland Lay of Atli or even an older one, now lost, was composed at Brattahlíð, Eirík the Red's home. It would of course be utterly frivolous even to suggest that his son Leif the Lucky was the author. But who knows?

If we pause briefly to look for the Vínland the sight of which fascinated the immigrant grandfather in Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason's novel towards the end of his long and tortuous voyage from Iceland to Halifax in the eighteen seventies, we are unlikely to be able to determine its exact location. But from the point of view of 19th-century pioneers, Vínland was their future home, an area with an attractive name, a land where vines grow of their own accord and where there is "abundance of self-sown grain" to quote an early source in which Vínland is mentioned. The Icelandic Vínland rediscovered in the late 19th-century was not a single territory marked off by a fixed boundary. Perhaps there were as many Vínlands as there were Icelandic settlements. We would then have to look to the Americas rather than North America alone since, after all, there was a small Icelandic settlement in Brazil near Rio de Janeiro. Acceptance of the view that in ancient times Vínland was an "onomastic generalization" referring to a country or the countries known to be west of the Atlantic. Later, Vínland, in the minds of Icelandic settlers or pioneers, came to be a fragmented territory associated with Icelandic settlements in North America, or possibly even South America, that is wherever these settlements happened to be founded and maintained. With this in mind we can suggest that the early nineteen thirties, when the Icelandic settlement in Sunnybrook, B.C. came into being, marked the end of the settlement of Vínland.

The early voyages to the North American continent or Vínland led to highly interesting explorations of new territories, but the explorers themselves did not establish permanent colonies or settlements there. They, their families and followers, were too few in number to be able to form a viable community. Their only option was to return to their homes in Greenland and Iceland where they gradually abandoned ideas of further explorations or put them on hold for almost 900 years. It was then that people of the same ethnic origin as Leif Eiríksson and Þorfinn Karlsefni literally resumed the work they and their followers had begun. Despite this major hiatus in exploratory enterprices we can detect a line across the vast expanses of time being recognized and reactivated as the one having originated with Eirík the Red and worthy of being continued. Despite a gap of some nine centuries this line was picked up, so to speak by his own people.

In the year of 1878 a small Icelandic settlement was founded near Mountain, North Dakota. Its very beginning was marked by lively debates among the newcomers on religious and philosophical matters. A few of them got together and formed what they called "The Icelandic Cultural Society". The poet Stephan G. Stephansson was the principal leader of this new organization.

Even though The Icelandic Cultural Society was active for only a brief period of time, it attracted a good deal of attention and its proclamations and duly recorded objectives had an influence on several young and promising North American Icelanders. One of the objectives of the society was to seek "humanitarianism and fellowship; in place of unexamined confessions of faith, sensible and unfettered research; in place of blind faith, independent conviction; and in place of ignorance and superstition, spiritual freedom and progress upon which no fetters are placed."

When the Icelandic Cultural Society in North Dakota was founded, an Icelandic boy in the neighbourhood by the name of Vilhjálmur Stefánsson was too young to join. He later became one of the world's most famous explorers and more than any

other man he bridges the long gap in Greenland and Vínland explorations. It is evident from his writings that the free thinkers' spirit which permiated the Icelandic Cultural Society had influenced him. He had for example this to say about his father: "Unlike most Icelanders my father was a poor linguist, and the works of liberal authors were, in our part of the country, available only in English. This handicap may have kept my father from leaving the church and possibly finding greater intellectual companionship among the freethinkers."

The freethinkers' spirit of the North Dakota Icelanders was in one way directed towards their own cultural heritage which they tried to use and did use as a foundation for intellectual progress and general advancement. Vilhjálmur Stefánsson's reminiscenes from his childhood years testify to this. "In counting my blessings from that time, I feel that the greatest of them was that we did not have more than the minimum of anything . . . There were not enough Icelandic sagas and so, when reading aloud in the evening, we had to read some of them over again, and these of course were the best ones. Among them was the *Saga of Eric the Red,* and when we reread it, Father said that he wanted to impress upon us that we ourselves were now living in a western extension of the Wineland that Eric and his descendants discovered."

Most of his academic training Vilhjálmur Stefánsson received at Harvard University where he completed his M.A. in Anthropology in 1906. Before that time he had become a teaching fellow, looked upon at Harvard as the Anthropology Department's specialist on the polar regions. As he has pointed out himself this recognition was given to him because of his ability to read the *Vínland Sagas* and other old Icelandic sources in their original language. In addition, his article on The Icelandic Colony in Greenland, published in 1906 in the American Anthropologist further shaped his career. Stefánsson has

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this to say about his publication: "I may have had my first intimation that it was being read attentively when in April, 1906, I received a telegram that turned me from Africa to the Arctic."

At this stage we may say that from our North American-Icelandic point of view the explorations Leif Eiriksson and his men started one thousand years ago were all of a sudden resumed in 1906 when Vilhjálmur Stefánsson went on his first expedition into the Canadian Arctic, and we should add that the ethnic background of the commander himself still remained unchanged. At the end of Stefánsson's third expedition, in 1918, the explorations in Vínland had come to an end. He had, at that time, added 350,000 square kilometres to the geographic map of Canada and made a great number of scientific discoveries. He had learned the language of Eskimos whom he at least suspected were in part descended from Eric the Red's people in Greenland. This again would have meant that if the physiological and cultural traits of the Icelanders in Greenland were transferred back to Stone Age Victoria Island they had to have made a journey backwards in time over a span of some nine thousand years. After all, Vilhjálmur Stefánsson was not only an explorer but a poet of note. To quote him directly he once said that "the explorer is the poet of action and exploring is the poetry of deeds."

That Stefánsson sometimes viewed his own explorations in a wide historical context, including both Eric the Red and Leif Eiríksson, is evident from his writings. On one occasion he had this to say: "The story of Scandinavian penetration westward from the time of Eirík the Red until the present was made into a modern Icelandic saga in 1927 by the chief librarian of Iceland Dr. Gudmundur Finnbogason, when he wrote the first book length account of my life." Another unifying factor not to be overlooked when we try to view our explorer heroes and the literature about them from a sensible perspective is implied by the very names they themselves created for the territories they discovered and explored. Accordingly, the names Greenland (Grænland), Wineland (Vínland) and The Friendly Arctic, which was Vilhjálmur Stefánsson's famous designation for the polar regions, share a semantic feature or component which attracts rather than deters.

A decade and a half ago I had the good fortune of being invited to give an address at The Explorers Club of New York. As I arrived on the Club premises, an attendant on duty took me to the Vilhjálmur Stefánsson wing on the main floor. There I was greeted by a huge but quite friendly looking polar bear. Somehow, the idea then occurred to me that this particular bear, which had been given a permanent place in a spaceous room on Manhattan Island, was the same beast as had made its presence felt in a heroic poem composed in Greenland some nine or ten centuries earlier. In Old Icelandic we have the saying "að hafa bjarnyl af einhverju", which literally means to draw a bear's warmth from something. What is meant is that if we are smart enough we can draw a pleasant warmth from almost any features of our environment, even such awe-inspiring beasts as polar bears are reputed to be. With this in mind I look upon my friend, the Manhattan polar bear, a beast which at varying intervals attached itself to either Eirík the Red or Vilhjálmur Stefánsson, as a powerful unifying symbol for two outstanding explorers who had the good fortune of being able to befriend the icy mountains of Greenland and the ice floes of the Canadian Arctic.

Undan Snjóbreiðunni

What Lies Beneath the Snow - Part Two

Revealing the contributions of Icelandic pioneer women to adult education in Manitoba, 1875 - 1914

by Jo-Anne Weir

Part Two

The historical narrative is a description of a theme that emerged from the second area of influence shown on the conceptual framework: Events. The term, events, in this framework refers to economic, social, political and cultural events of the 1875 – 1914 time period. The Icelandic pioneer women were exposed to a number of events during this time period because it was a time of dramatic growth and change in the history of the province. This event that caused the largest adult education response by the women was the establishment of formal post-secondary educational institutions. Wesley College and the colleges of the University of Manitoba were established in 1877, and the formalized teacher training through The Normal School was established in 1882 (Crippen & McCarthy, 2003, p. 257).

For pioneer women in Manitoba during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, it was a fact of life that women had three career choices: teaching, nursing or stenography (Shack, 1963). Nursing training was still being developed at this time in the province, and both nursing and stenography programs were seen as vocational training (Kinnear, 1998, p. 52). Most women chose teaching as a pursuit because it offered the only way to achieve some independence (Shack, 1973). Pioneer women who wanted that independence and had ambitions of pursuing post-secondary education could consider Wesley College or the colleges of University of Manitoba as of 1877, or Normal School as of 1882.

There were some limitations for women at the colleges of University of Manitoba (U of M). Some of U of M colleges would not admit women until 1886 and 1890 (Kinnear, 1998.p.55). Fortunately, Wesley College admitted women and men equally when it opened its doors in 1877. Another limitation was financial cost. Most women, particularly those from immigrant minority groups, could not afford to go to college, most female students at this time were from wealthy families. By 1894 there were only 13 female grads from U of M (Kinnear, 1998, p. 56). Given the high cost, it is surprising to note that in 1909- 1912 Wesley College had six Icelandic women enrolled, out of a total of twenty-six Icelandic students (Kristjanson, 1965, p. 403). One way the women financed their way through college is illustrated in the case of Salome Halldorson from Posen, who taught school, possibly on Permit, in order to afford to take courses at Wesley College and later at University of Manitoba (Lundar and District Historical Society, 1980, p. 418).

Faced with the high cost of college and university courses, most Icelandic women who wanted a career chose teaching rather than nursing or stenography. Several factors contributed to the fact that more Icelandic women became teachers at this time than did other minority groups of women in Manitoba. Paramount was the high value that the Icelandic pioneers placed on education. This was shown by their immediate establishment of schools upon arrival in New Iceland in 1875, well before school attendance became compulsory in the province in 1916 (Kinnear, 1998, p. 47). The Icelandic value of education was also commented on by Lord Dufferin when he visited the settlement of Gimli shortly after their arrival:

" In fact I have not entered a single hut or cottage in the settlement which did not contain, no matter how bare its wall, or scanty its furniture, a library of twenty or thirty volumes; and I am informed that there is scarcely a child among you who cannot read or write." (Leggo, quoted in Ruth, 1964, p. 20).

For Icelandic women to enter the field of teaching would be a logical extension of the Icelandic value of education.

Another reason that Icelandic women pursued teaching was the fact that their parents encouraged daughters and sons equally in their education (Kinnear, 1998, p. 48). The pioneer years in Manitoba were a time of poor school attendance, yet the Icelandic community was "one exception to this general picture of poor schooling among immigrant groups" (Kinnear, 1998, p. 51). In Gimli, around 1900, the school there "was always able to qualify for high school grants" (Gimli Women's Institute, 1973, p. 171) meaning that they consistently had a sufficient number of students who intended to graduate from high school, usually at the age of sixteen years.

The fact that the Icelandic pioneers insisted on English as the language of instruction in their schools meant that young Icelandic women who graduated from high school were fluent in English. This allowed them to compete with the English-speaking majority for teaching positions throughout the province, and not just in their own ethnic communities. By 1916, it was mandatory that English was used as the language of instruction, but well before then most Icelandic women could read, write, speak and ultimately teach in English. As more and more Icelandic women became teachers, they served as role models for their female students, and this further perpetuated the movement of Icelandic women into teaching.

The Manitoba system of teacher accreditation during the 1875- 1914 time period had different levels. It was a system that provided for the high demand in a rapidly growing province, but also resulted in many teachers being young, inexperienced, and minimally trained. The Manitoba system allowed students who stayed in school until age 16 to write an exam to receive a 3rd class teaching certificate. This certificate entitled them to teach in Manitoba schools. This was referred to as "teaching on permit". If students enrolled at The Normal School to take teacher training, they were granted a 2nd class teaching certificate (Kinnear, 1998, p. 51). Due to the high demand, the province had many teachers "on permit" with 3rd class certificates at this time, though it was not uncommon for these teachers to continue on to The Normal School for the increased training and higher pay that a 2nd class certificate brought.

The first Icelandic pioneer woman to teach in Manitoba was Lara Bjarnason, who is profiled in the previous historical narrative. She taught in the Gimli settlement of New Iceland in 1877 and 1878, before the 1882 provincial accreditation system was in place. Shortly after the sys-

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tem was in place, Icelandic women began to pursue their teaching careers. In 1888, three Icelanders received their 3rd class certificates, and two of the three were women. In 1889, one of these women, Salina Peturson, completed her training at The Normal School and received her 2nd class certificate. One year later, the other woman, Bjorg Jonsdottir Thorkelson, did the same, just seven years after emigrating from Iceland (Lundar and District Historical Society, 1980, p. 731). By 1892 there were fourteen Icelandic teachers in Manitoba, seven with 3rd class certificates and seven with 2nd class certificates.

At first, all teachers of Icelandic descent taught in the rural areas of Manitoba. It was not until 1904 that any Icelanders received teaching positions in the urban centre of Winnipeg. In 1904, Miss Kristin Herman began teaching at Pinkham School and Miss Ingiridur Johnson began teaching at Aberdeen School (Ruth, 1964, p. 54). For teachers in the rural school districts, it meant teaching in a multigrade one-room schoolhouse. These schoolhouses were located throughout the Icelandic communities, and the names of the teachers in the histories are predominantly Icelandic. These were some of the Icelandic women who taught at Baldur School in Breidavik (New Iceland);

1895: Solveig Svensdottir
1896: Gudrun Johannson
1898: Mrs. Nordal
1899: Jona Vopni
1903: Solveig Swinford
1906: Christiana Sveinsson (Hnausa History Book Committee, 2004, p. 26)

It seemed from the research that the Icelandic women moved around to various schools in the same district. Rosa Christopherson for example moved around Argyle teaching at Mimir, Hola and Thor School before moving to Saskatchewan to teach (Rural Municipality of Argyle, 1981, p. 222, 236, 255). Jona Vopni taught at various New Iceland schools and served as the secretary treasurer of the governing Education Association of Lake Winnipeg in 1902 (Gimli Women's Institute, 1973, p. 171).

There was one obstacle for all Manitoba women pursuing a long career in teaching at this time: marriage. This was a time when "no (school) board would employ a married woman ....unless her husband was incapacitated" (Shack, 1973, p. 54) If the woman was pregnant or had a family, it was completely out of the question. Pioneer society could not imagine, much less accommodate motherhood and full-time paid work (Kinnear, 1998, p. 61).

Women such as Bjorg Jonsdottir Thorkelson, who was a much loved and highly respected teacher, went on to have a 30 year teaching career that was available to her only because she was single. It is disheartening to imagine how many other talented Icelandic women could have realized the same had they been born later in Manitoba's history. It is probably, however, that these former teachers found other ways to use their many educational and leadership skills within their families and their communities. For the Icelandic women with formal teachers training and experience there would have been many opportunities for them to use their skills. The historical narratives that follow describe a variety of these opportunities.

This section has referred to the value that the Icelandic people placed on education. One example that illustrates this value is Lord Dufferin's observation of small libraries in the homes of the Icelandic pioneers. Another indicator of the Icelandic belief in the value of education is evident through the community libraries that Icelanders established in almost every settlement soon after they arrived. Icelanders, like adult educator J. Roby Kidd, believed libraries to be a "foundation stone" of learning (1950, p. 88). The best way to illustrate this unique feature of Icelandic settlements is to list the communities and the names that were chosen for the libraries. The names are listed with their English translations because it is interesting how the names chosen reveal the attitude of the pioneers. Ardal's choice of Incentive to Learning as a name reveals their faith in education. Arnes' choice of Forward implies optimism for the future. These

community libraries provided one more way for Icelandic pioneers and their families to engage in learning, whether they were reading to themselves or reading aloud to others. Here are the Icelandic community libraries that were revealed from the many sources in this research, and (when available), the year they were established:

New Iceland:
Gimli – Aurora (Dawn) 1887, Lestrafélægið Giml (Gimli Icelandic Library) 1911

Arnes – Framm (Forward)

Nes – Fjólan (Violet)

Breidavik – Norðurljós (Northern Lights) 1887

Mikley – Morgunstjarnan (Morning Star) 1896

Geysir – Vísir (beginning, growth, sprout) 1911

Ardal – Fróðleikshvöt (Incentive to Learning) 1908

Framnes – Mímir (name of wise giant in Norse mythology) 1905

Posen:
Swan Lake – Dagsbrún (Daybreak) 1904

Suffren (commonly referred to as Siberia) – Mentahvöt (Incentive to Culture) 1887

Shoal Lake – Mentahvöt (Incentive to Culture) moved from Suffren in 1896

Argyle:
Baldur – Íslendínga I Argyle (Icelandic library at Argyle) 1893

Bru – Brú literary Society

Glenboro – Íslendínga Lestrarfelagid I Cypress-sveit (The Icelandic Reading Society in the municipality of Cypress)

Skalhot – Icelandic Library Club

Selkirk:
City of Selkirk – Stjarnan (Star)

Winnipeg:
Progressive Society Library

That concludes the historical narrative entitled, Teachers' Training: Extending the Icelandic Value of Education.

"Fight Like Auður"

Gender, ethnicity and dissent in the career of Salome Halldorson - Manitoba Social Credit MLA, 1936-1941

by Laurie Kristine Bertram, M.A.

This research explores the career of one of the foremost female leaders in the Icelandic Canadian community in Manitoba during the 1930s and 40s, Elin Salome Halldorson, Social Credit MLA, 1936-41. Known only through the general biographies that appear occasionally within popular histories of the community, Halldorson's complex political career has remained largely unexplored. Using Halldorson's papers as well as newspaper coverage of her career, this paper provides an expansion of her biography as well as an exploration of the broader implications of her career namely her navigation of gender, dissent and Icelandicity in the often inhospitable political climate of the interwar and early wartime era.

This discussion requires an appreciation for the restrictive atmosphere in which Halldorson operated, as well as the politics within the Social Credit party itself. It also necessitates a more critical understanding of the comparatively prominent standing of Icelandic Canadians within the cultural framework of this period, one which historians have generally accepted as inextricably connected to xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment. This research reveals Halldorson's negotiation of notions of gender and Icelandicity in a rapidly changing political environment, illustrating that while she enjoyed a good deal of success within the discourse of Depression-era economic reform, her more subversive usages of Icelandic and gender identity in her wartime pacifist women's campaigns failed to undermine persistent notions of female subservience, the hyper-conformity of Canadian wartime politics, and the primacy of Canadian nationalism in public representations of Icelandic Canadian identity.

Although this paper hopes to assist in Halldorson's reinstatement as an important figure within Icelandic Canadian and women's political historiography, it also explores the origins of her exclusion. Halldorson carefully crafted a somewhat simplistic public image in her campaigns, frequently referring to herself as both the noble and loyal "pioneer settler from the land of the Vikings" and the innocuous "lady school teacher turned politician." These references similarly characterise historical references to her life and career particularly several small community biographies which emphasize her community service and downplay her tumultuous political career. While her English writing appears to embrace the language of both Canadian nationalism and domestic femininity, Halldorson deliberately employed these notions in her attempts to garner Anglo-Canadian support for the acceptance of the Icelandic Canadian community, increased in female political participation and leadership, and eventually for radical wartime politics. Although Halldorson's subversive manipulation of these simplistic, palatable notions of gender and ethnicity in her political campaigns challenges existing notions of interwar and wartime women's and political and ethnic history, however, the unsurprising brevity and seemingly uneventful nature of her career has helped to push her to the margins of Canadian history. It was, however, the barriers Halldorson faced and the frustration she endured which provide crucial insight into the surprising and uneven parameters of interwar and early wartime ethnicity, gender and politics.

Halldorson has received scant atten-

tion from Icelandic Canadian and women's historians. Her absence within the Canadian women's political history canon may be due to her membership in a conservative political movement, particularly one which enjoyed only a brief period of vibrant female activism also characterized by the language and logic of traditional gender norms. Janine Stingel's acclaimed 2000 investigation into the intrinsically anti-Semetic nature of Social Credit ideology in Canada may have also inadvertently contributed to a general perception of the movement as being uniformly hostile to progressive political elements, creating an image of female Social Crediters, particularly one from a non-Anglo ethnic community, as trapped within a non-negotiable and intolerant environment.

Halldorson's writing initially fails to dispel these impressions of ethnic female participation in the Canadian Social Credit movement. Her frequent use of traditional nationalist and gendered language as well as her work with the sometimes inaccessible Icelandic Canadian press and Icelandic language in her political campaigns have all contributed to a somewhat hazy vision of her career and political beliefs. Although these factors may help to explain Halldorson's absence within Canadian women's historiography, her exclusion from mainstream Icelandic Canadian history appears quite unusual and presents new questions about the traditional portrayal of historical female figures within the community. Icelandic Canadian historiography generally prides itself on Iceland's history of comparatively progressive property and political rights for women, yet figures such as Halldorson and her other well-known female contemporaries, such as author Laura Goodman Salverson, occupy the outskirts of mainstream history and commemoration. Daisy Neijman notes this "silence" surrounding accomplished female figures such as Salverson appears as "an anomaly for a group that produced so many newspapers and magazines, and was so keen to list its achievements in its adopted society." While the origins of Salverson's exclusion also relate to her decision to write in English for an English audience as well as her contentious treatment of important Icelandic and Icelandic Canadian historical events, the continued ambivalence towards her work and legacy, even following Anglicization, is remarkable. Halldorson, in contrast, was a popular figure within the Icelandic Canadian community. Accounts in the Icelandic Oral History Collection at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba from members of the community's interwar population frequently identify her as a person of prominence alongside other well-known Icelandic Canadian figures such as Charles "Cartoon Charlie" Thorson, Disney animator and co-creator of Snow White and Bugs Bunny, celebrated spy and alleged inspiration for the James Bond movie series, Sir William Stephenson and arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Within the community's popular culture as well as in their official tributes to important political and spiritual figures such as Páll Thorlaksson, Sigtryggur Jónasson, and Jón Bjarnason, Halldorson appears as one of very few well-publicised visions of female Icelandic Canadian leadership and political

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Although Halldorson occupied a unique space within the interwar Icelandic Canadian community as a persuasive and popular female political figure, her marginal position within Icelandic Canadian historiography remains that of the "lady schoolteacher turned politician." Focussing mainly on her long teaching career and stint as principle of the Icelandic Jón Bjarnason Academy in Winnipeg, popular biographies of Halldorson often downplay her controversial political life in favour of her personal history, relationship to Icelandic culture and traditions and her service to the community. Such biographies frequently identify Halldorson as the first Icelandic baby born in the Lundar district in Manitoba and the role of traditional culture in her childhood. These histories also credit Halldorson with unusual intelligence including her ability to play music by ear, as well as her "colourful and eccentric personality", penchant for watching horse racing, knitting, crochet, and fast driving. Beyond her years of school teaching and one well-publicised motion she introduced to the assembly in 1937, however, the details of this lady schoolteacher's political career remain untouched.

Allison L. McKinnon's 1992 article in The Icelandic Canadian is one of the very few community oriented biographies of Halldorson which provides a broad overview of her election and political career. Although McKinnon's work incorporated some forgotten details of Halldorson's political career, she omits any reference to her pacifist campaigns as well as the resistance she faced from her own party as well as the Icelandic Canadian community. Instead Halldorson's story, writes The Icelandic Canadian editor Carol Mowat, fit well into popular Icelandic Canadian consciousness as "a cultural vignette so familiar to us all: the stoic Icelandic woman who becomes a teacher, (whose) career went beyond the one room schoolhouse to the Jon Bjarnason Academy and a stint in politics." In keeping with the traditional emphasis on education and literacy which characterizes Icelandic Canadian culture and historiography, one which community members view as a continuation of the Icelandic saga tradition, Halldorson's education occupies an important space within such biographies. A student of Winnipeg's Wesley College from 1905-1910, she studied German, Icelandic, and Latin while playing on the college's hockey team, and was elected as "Lady Stick" or female student body head. Following her graduation, she taught throughout Manitoba and was hired as a language instructor in 1920 at Winnipeg's Icelandic Lutheran High School, The Jón Bjarnason Academy. (JBA) She became principal in 1926 and dean of JBA in 1927, leading the academy through a period of intense financial adversity following the Lutheran Church's decision to withdraw the academy's funding. She also received a medal for her teaching record from Buckingham Palace on the occasion of the Royal visit in 1939 and taught until the age of 70. In her 1946 autobiography published in the Icelandic newspaper Heimskringla, Halldorson wrote that her decision to enter politics stemmed from her concern for the young unemployed alumni of JBA.

> Boys and girls who had been my pupils came in to school saying that they had looked for jobs for weeks and months. These boys and girls were clever and their plight aroused my wonder. I had not been more clever at their age and yet teaching jobs had never been lacking to me. I began to wonder what was going on and I somehow reached the conclusion that the fault lay with money.

Although Halldorson frequently refers to the role of her career in her decision to pursue politics, community histories, such as Wagons to Wings: History of Lundar and Districts, 1872-1980, often attribute Halldorson's interest in politics to her father Halldór, an Icelandic fisherman and migrant turned farmer who had served as an alderman in Iceland instead. Halldorson wrote that prior to his death in 1921, her father's politics occupied a prestigious place in the family, seldom forcing Salome to question her own political persuasion.

"My people were strong supporters

> of the Liberal party of Sir Wilfred Laurier. My father was a great admirer of his. A large portrait of a very distinguished gentleman was hanging above the organ in our living room. When a lady visitor asked whose picture that was my mother replied 'this is papa's friend, Sir Wilfred Laurier.' . . . I had full confidence that my father knew all the answers in politics . . . any new departure in politics did not enter my mind . . . as I had never taken any interest in (it)."

Despite a family tradition of political service (her brother Kristjan also served as an MLA for the Liberal Progressives from 1945-53) Halldorson's career and life outside of Lundar was a significant factor in her exploration and involvement in divergent interwar politics. It was in Winnipeg where Halldorson explored diverse political movements including the campaign of the recently elected Social Credit Premier Bill Aberhart, who spoke to a full house in the Winnipeg's Walker Theatre in 1935. Hoping to spark a prairie-wide Social Credit movement, Aberhart's appearances attracted Manitobans from a variety of political backgrounds, particularly through his calls for radical economic reform. Alvin Finkel asserts that a blurry vision of the party's political leanings was standard during their early years due to their voracious criticism of the capitalist finance system and the popular support they garnered from CCF and Communist party members. Icelandic Canadian politician and CCF co-founder Magnus Eliason recalled that Halldorson fit well into this early contradictory image of the party, noting that her reputation in the Icelandic community during the 1930s was that of "a left-winger." "She was considered to be a progressive," recalled Eliason, "and then during the 1930s instead of aligning herself with the CCF, she aligned herself with the Social Credit... A lot of people thought that Social Credit was a left wing party."

Attracted to Aberhart's explanation of the causes of the economic crisis facing Manitobans, Halldorson wrote that "I thought that there was truth in what he said and straightaway started studying Social Credit." "At the urging of (her) friends" Halldorson also began to hold community meetings and lecture on Social Credit in numerous small Interlake communities including Silver Bay, Darwin, Hayland, Eriksdale and Lundar where, she writes, "people were very interested in this new concept." Her campaign also resonated with most voters in her home constituency of St. George who selected Halldorson over the incumbent Liberal candidate Skuli Sigfusson in 1936, making her only the second woman ever elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Halldorson began a Social Credit campaign early in the spring of 1936, prior to Premier John Bracken's announcement of a July election, "without having any intention or interest in politics." The accuracy of Halldorson's modest description of her campaign is difficult to gauge, particularly in the absence of records surrounding her election, however, the majority of the campaign appeared to have been organised at a grassroots, only receiving official endorsement and support from Walter Kuhl, a representative from the Aberhart administration in Alberta, just a few short days before the election. Halldorson campaigned throughout her riding in French, English, and Icelandic prior to and during her term as MLA. She also published several booklets and speeches in both English and Icelandic and employed community publications such as the Icelandic newspaper Heimskringla to provide Icelandic Canadians with information on monetary reform, international peace and unemployment. While her Icelandic campaigns sometimes differed from those she presented in English, Halldorson also incorporated Icelandic themes in campaigns geared towards a mainstream Anglo-Canadian audience. This blend of cultures fit well into the newly minted Social Credit Party who actively courted non-Anglo communities on the Canadian prairies and also hoped to create platforms that were compatible with certain ethnic community values and aspirations. Halldorson's election, as well as her usage of Icelandic identity in public speeches and publications reflects this atmosphere within the early Social Credit movement as well as her desire to create a positive image of Icelandic Canadians as a whole in Manitoba. This desire is evident in her speeches to Anglo-Canadian audiences which focussed on the Icelandic Canadian community's affiliation with larger political and cultural traditions which fit well into and even predated Western Canadian institutions and notions of progress and settlement.

> My parents came to this country as pioneer settlers from Iceland- the land of the Vikings—so I come of a strong and sturdy race, who had an instinctive love of freedom and were the first to establish a representative parliament . . . (I) identify myself with the history and ideals of my race. I too am a freedom-loving pioneer, with a strong will to set out in search of a new and better world.

Her usage of the Icelandic language and elements of Icelandic culture in her campaigns poses interesting questions to traditional historical notions of the cultural climate of the interwar years. Historians such as Howard Palmer assert that the 1920s and 1930s resembled a xenophobic "wilderness of discrimination" in which anti-migrant sentiment and economic tensions created little room for expressions of non-Anglo identities. Stewart Henderson's recent work on trans-Canadian handicraft festivals of the 1920s suggests, however, that the relative prominence of Scandinavian culture in Manitoba may have been part of a broader privileging of Scandinavian ethnicity, suggesting that interwar Anglo-elites viewed Scandinavians not as foreign migrants but as "close cousins." This mentality fit well into the popular nineteenth and early twentieth century theories of racial hierarchy which asserted the superiority of northern European peoples over other European groups and all racial groups outside of Europe, or Nordicism. Understanding Halldorson's frequent usage of Icelandic ethnicity and history in her campaigns and career, then, requires an understanding of the development of a comparatively open discourse surrounding Icelandic identity in Manitoba as part of the growth of Scandinavian privilege during the 1930s and 40s.

For the provincial and federal governments, Icelandic Canadians appeared as a desirable racial/ ethnic group who would help to occupy and establish Euro-settler dominance in the newly redistributed territory surrounding Lake Winnipeg in the 1870s, an area still populated by several Aboriginal communities. Although Icelandic-Canadian settlers, many of whom were fleeing dire environmental and economic conditions in Iceland, were complicit in the Anglo-Canadian campaign to remove and relocate Aboriginal Manitobans, understanding the community's larger relationship to the Anglo-Canadian state and other ethnic Manitoban communities is complex. While the early Icelandic Canadian community faced varying degrees of discrimination, some began to ascend to positions of prominence in Manitoba society shortly after the community's initial arrival in 1875. Icelandic Canadians also entered into the realm of local and provincial politics relatively early with the election of the first Icelandic MLA, Sigtryggur Jonasson's in 1896. Historians must understand this degree inclusion and acceptance of Icelandic culture and Icelandic Canadian leaders in Manitoba, however, as a part of extension of privilege and shifting notions of race rather than the growth of pluralism. It is in such instances that scholars of Scandinavian Canadian history have sometimes failed to reconcile the implications of Scandinavian privilege, focussing instead on the negotiation of migrant life and the

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development of dual identities. Scholars such as Daisy Neijmann, for example, focus on the role of Icelandic Canadians in the growth of proto-multiculturalism such as author Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason, (1866-1945) whose writing focussed both on the stories of Icelandic Canadian themes and as well as their Ukrainian Canadian and Métis neighbours. This, she writes, is evidence of an early Icelandic Canadian vision of a "completely new and multi-cultural" third space for migrants and the "muted and nameless, those who lived on the margins of Canadian society." As Anne Brydon cautions in her discussion of Icelandic-Aboriginal relations and the construction of Icelandic Canadian myth, however,

> Social and ideational forces have shaped and selected the memories on which Icelandic-Canadian histories have been based, and their nostalgic narration glosses over less palatable behaviours and events . . . the stories of other nations and ethnic groups are accessed sporadically, as long as they fit into the myth of the historic unfolding of the new identity.

Although the roots of Icelandic Canadian privilege predate Halldorson's election, Katrina Srigley asserts that historians must also be particularly mindful of shifting definitions of race and ethnicity within the interwar period as they pertained to new opportunities for women. Changing employment patterns as well as displays of ethnic loyalty during the World War One all contributed to the fluctuation of Anglo-Canadian white privilege that extended categories of "whiteness" and privilege to previously unwelcome English-speaking Italian and Jewish women but continued to discriminate against Black Canadian and Aboriginal women. Interwar ethnic representatives such as Halldorson, then, do not represent the uniform progress of ethnic communities as a whole within Manitoba, however, her election, popularity, and successful integration of Icelandic elements into her mainstream political campaigns again signaled a broader degree of Anglo-Canadian tolerance and appreciation of the Icelandic culture and community.

It is within the critical framework set forth by Srigley and Brydon that Halldorson's work must be assessed. As a female Icelandic-Canadian MLA in the interwar era, her work appears as part of the broader negotiation of Icelandic Canadian identity, yet her career was also profoundly shaped by the restrictive cultural atmosphere of Palmer's "wilderness of discrimination" and the parameters which defined Icelandic Canadian privilege, most notably Canadian nationalism. Yet Halldorson herself also contributed to discourses of Nordicism and Icelandic privilege. Rather than creating an unlimited third space for other migrant and ethnic groups in Manitoba, her vision of Icelandic Canadian inclusion focussed on the creation of a limited extension, rather than a

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subversion of Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Furthermore, her membership in the Social Credit Party creates urgent questions about her relationship to the party's well-publicized history of anti-Semitism. Janine Stingel cautions that historians of Social Credit must confront the party's profound and inextricable relationship to anti-Semitism, writing that Social Credit leadership, publications and membership all basically accepted the fundamentally anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of founder C.H Douglas. Douglas, who based his understanding of global economics on his fantasies of a small group of male Jewish elites conspiring to spread of Bolshevism, war, and economic chaos across the western world, had a famously poor relationship with Canadian Social Credit leader, Bill Aberhart. This rift led to informal divides within the party between Canadian followers of Douglas and Aberhart, creating factions which were broadly characterised by their variable expressions of anti-Semitism. Similar to many other prominent female figures in the party, Halldorson initially appeared as a Douglasite, even reproducing Douglas's brief letter of congratulations to her in her autobiography and maintaining connections to the party in Britain, although the full extent of her involvement is unclear.

Although the discriminatory sentiment embedded within Social Credit philosophy remained in tact in Canada, many Canadian Social Crediters, opted for more muted displays of anti-Semitism. While such figures preferred somewhat ambiguous references to "the money powers" and threats to Christianity, others preferred more overtly discriminatory and malicious language. One notable example of this more obvious display of anti-Semitism involved MP Norman Jaques, who was eventually expelled from the party for his views in the late 1940s. Jaques' work as an MP, including his attempts to read passages from the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion into Hansard, represents some of the most disturbing and unabashed displays of anti-Semitism both within the Canadian Social Credit movement and federal politics. Like many of his British counterparts, Jaques blamed global Jewish conspiracies for a variety of ills, from the rise of Communism to the development of moderate liberal movements in favour of coalition work and governance including Clarence Streit's Union Now movement, which advocated an international union of North Atlantic democracies.

And who controls the International Finance? A gang of German-Jewish "international" bankers . . . Not only German military totalitarianism, but its evil twin, German-Jewish financial totalitarianism must be destroyed . . . they project the International government which is depicted by the American Wall St. Jew- Clarence Streit in his "Union Now" movement.

Halldorson's 1943 publication Tax-and-Debt Finance Must Go!, a series of extended quotes from numerous popular and political figures on the subject of economic reform, clearly indicates that she did, to some extent, adopt of Jaques' and Douglas's special blends of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. Calling Jaques "a valiant fighter against the Union Now plot, and the Gold Standard Finance it involves", Halldorson quoted from his work extensively in the booklet's chapter "Federal Union, A Plot to Perpetuate Tax-and-Debt Finance." Yet Halldorson's conscious exclusion of explicit anti-Semitic language when quoting Jaques in Tax-and-Debt Finance suggests that she felt uncomfortable with such language. While she may have shied from explicit references to a Jewish plot, however, the conspiratorial tone of Halldorson's own writing also suggests that she still embraced Social Credit theory similarly imbued with Douglas's anti-Semitic vision.

> But here again, the hidden dictatorship of international finance has sneaked (sic) in, like a thief in the night, and has prevented the British nations from the full exercise, or even full recognition, of their powers of sovereignty.

Gauging the extent to which Halldorson consciously embraced anti-Semitism, however, remains somewhat difficult. As president of the Manitoba Social Credit League, Halldorson advocated the

adoption of William D. Herridge's proposal for the creation of a broader "union of Anglo-Saxon peoples" within Canada. Yet, in addition to her conscious editing of Jaques' work in her own publication, Halldorson's work also seldom focussed on the role of Christianity in Social Credit, a hallmark of anti-Semitic expression in party literature. She also appears to have condemned the targeting of "racial and religious groups" in the movement during the early 1940s, the period in which, according to Stingel, the anti-Semitic sentiment within the party was becoming both commonplace and increasingly vicious. Halldorson wrote of this blame not as unjust, but as divisive and counterproductive.

> So instead of laying the blame on the actual cause of the trouble, i.e. (The) monetary system . . . we turn on each other. The poor blame the rich, and the rich blame the poor; the employers blame the workers and the workers blame the employers; the east blames the west and the west blames the east; the city blames the country and the country blames the city. Not a few blame some other racial or religious group. We are all pulling in different directions, and there is no unity in our demands . . .

This somewhat contradictory vision of anti-Semitic theory in Halldorson's writing makes it difficult to establish a definite conclusion regarding her own beliefs. Yet it is clear that despite her discomfort with explicitly anti-Semitic language and campaigns, she did not oppose this element within the party as part of an imagined tradition of Icelandic Canadian inclusivity. In this respect, Halldorson's career and personal politics illuminate the parameters of interwar inclusion and xenophobia. Her failure to extend Anglo and Scandinavian privilege to other Manitoba ethnic communities is disappointing, yet hardly surprising, given the broader political and cultural atmosphere in the Canadian West. It is perhaps important to note, however, that for Halldorson Social Credit philosophies appeared as an important "humanitarium (sic) conception."

In contrast to the relatively mainstream references to "pioneer settlers from the land of the Vikings" and financial conspiracy theories in public, Halldorson employed more radical and subversive gender imagery in her campaigns for increased female political participation. Only the second woman ever elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, Halldorson appeared as a popular female figure as well as a curiosity to the Winnipeg media in the first few years following her election. Halldorson, wrote The Winnipeg Evening Tribune's Lillian Gibbons was "a friendly little person by nature...(who) can milk the cows, bake bread and 'send the men out to the fields well-filled'." Winnipeg newspapers even reported what kinds of flowers she had on her desk, noting that she offered "a pleasing touch" to the Assembly. Such coverage suggests that the "only lady member" assumed an interesting but ultimately unobtrusive place in the Manitoba Legislature. Halldorson herself appeared to embrace these traditional gendered images, frequently employing domestic references in her English writing on the role of women in politics and economics. This political usage of domestic imagery was part of a longer tradition for Manitoban women and was an integral part of provincial suffrage campaigns. Other Icelandic Canadian women played an integral role in this earlier movement including Margret J. Benedictsson, founder of the first women's suffrage organization in Winnipeg and editor of the Icelandic Canadian women's magazine Freyja. Although Halldorson's sister, Maria, was the first president of the Lundar Women's Institute and her mother co-founded the Lundar Ladies Aid Bjork, it appears that no members of her family were directly involved in Icelandic Canadian suffrage campaigns. However, her writing clearly illustrates her familiarity with traditional maternal feminist language evident in her depiction of female economic and political participation as a natural extension of traditional women's labour. "(Women) have been for centuries the holders of the family purse and managers of the homes, and on the whole they have managed well," she announced to the members of the assembly and a packed gallery in her reply to the throne in 1937, "government is only a larger housekeeping." According to Halldorson, female political participation was also an important reserve force in the nation's battle with the dire social and economic conditions of the 1930s. "If the men, holding the reins of government, had managed as well, we would not now be faced with as we are a state of economic chaos for which our leaders have no apparent remedy..."

This language fits well into the historiography of the role of gender in Social Credit politics, particularly their broader vision of women's economic freedom as directly linked to the protection of acceptable female labour within the domestic sphere. Although recognize the party's attention to female poverty and the election of a small handful of female officials in the 1930s as evidence of comparatively progressive gender politics, understanding the conditional nature of their acceptance of female political participation is crucial to locating the parameters of Halldorson's involvement and prospects both within the party. It was the underlying notion of subservience evident in the domestic imagery used to justify female political participation, argues Bob Hesketh which also resulted in the dramatic decline and almost complete elimination of official female political participation following the party's purging of Douglesite and anti-Semitic elements in the post-war era. He writes that the interwar era presented unique opportunities for female activists, resulting in the creation of what he terms the women's "crusader phase" of the late 1930s and early 1940s, also coinciding with the party's transition from a left-of- centre to a right wing party. Yet he cautions against understanding this period as one of unfettered feminism since "the restraints inherent in the concept that a woman's political activism was essentially justified by her domestic virtue became more and more obvious within Social Credit through the 1940s." Adding to this construction of conditional, subservient female power, both Halldorson and her female counterparts in Alberta associated female political participation with "economic chaos" and the pervasive delineation from common sense. Although these women argued that female political participation provided the remedy to what they described as the inherently male political and economic corruption, they also discussed women's political power as a secondary, "emergency" force. "When money is plentiful, this is a man's world," wrote Halldorson, "when money is scarce, it is a woman's world."

Halldorson was among several women elected through the party in the 1930s including Edith Gostick, Edith Rogers and Cornelia Wood. While the relatively large number of women elected to and involved with the party during this "crusader phase" is impressive, women who aspired to positions of leadership within the party during this period still faced significant barriers. Although Aberhart initially accepted women as electoral candidates, his beliefs

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about women's role in the Social Credit movement were still coloured by his own conservative fundamentalist Christian notions of femininity. Aberhart's dedication to creating financial security for women so that they would not seek work outside of the home as well as his frequent usage of biblical references to "woman as helpmate" contributed to the parameters of female political participation during this period, limiting their positions to those which did not subvert his belief in woman's natural role as attendant to rather than leader of man.

Throughout her term, however, Halldorson appears to have continually tested the boundaries of the party's vision of female political participation, presenting new questions for historians of the Social Credit movement. Unlike many of her female Albertan counterparts, her writing lacks the profoundly religious tone that characterised the work of other female Social Crediters such as MLAs Cornelia Wood and Rose Wilkenson who frequently imbued Douglasite economic conspiracy theories with "Satanic powers". Wood's vision of female political and economic participation, moreover, hinged on the concept of motherhood as "the most natural and magnificent career for any normal woman", and she argued that women should be eligible for public office only when they had "raised their families to the age of independence." Halldorson's writing, in contrast, employed domestic imagery but omitted traditional references to maternity. This omission also distinguishes Halldorson's politics from those of maternal feminists in the province who, like Wood, viewed motherhood as the basis for female political rights. Herself a single woman, Halldorson's writing illustrates the relative flexibility of the gender imagery she employed, particularly its effectiveness in the negotiation a position of respect and prestige within the assembly during her first few years in office. Instead of invoking credentials based on motherhood, Halldorson employed the image of the intelligent and strict but concerned "lady school teacher turned politician" to broadcast her political beliefs and navigate power dynamics within the legislature. Using this persona, she even publicly scolded her former pupil, Conservative leader Errick Willis, in front of the entire assembly in 1937.

> It was made known to a large number of people last night that I was his teacher in the 11th Grade. I had hoped it would remain a secret, but now it is out, I wish to say that I will take no responsibility for his words or actions. If he would submit now to a year of my teaching, I might be able to secure more satisfactory results.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of Halldorson's attempt to secure a position of authority within the Legislative Assembly and the Social Credit party was in her public clashes with the Aberhart administration, including the controversial 1936 Social Credit- Liberal-Progressive Alliance announced following the party's secretive leadership election. Although Halldorson was one of the most widely-recognised new MLAs in the 1936 assembly and frequently appeared as a spokesperson for the five Manitoban Social Credit MLAs, she failed to achieve the position of party head, accepting the presidency of the Manitoba Social Credit League instead. When the newly elected Social Credit officials gathered at a closed meeting in Dauphin, Manitoba with Social Credit MP, E. J. Poole, Dr. Stanley Fox of Gilbert Plains won the position of party leader. Shortly thereafter Fox announced that the party would "support" or create an informal coalition with Bracken's Liberal-Progressive minority government, quelling speculation that the province would quickly be plunged into another election. For many supporters of Social Credit in Manitoba, however, the merge created both distrust in the party's new leadership and "bewilderment and resentment," particularly as the Social Credit election campaign had focussed on Bracken's role in Manitoba's economic crisis. Social Credit supporters from across the province voiced their opposition to the merge, particularly the membership of the Social Credit League and its affiliate, the Assiniboia Social Credit Group, who announced to

the media that they had passed a unanimous motion condemning Fox's actions while "telephone calls, letters and telegrams poured in on the doctor."

"I am convinced that Dr. Fox pulled a fast one," stated William Leask, chairman of the meeting and president of the Assiniboia Social Credit group. (")Dr. Fox figured he would fix things for himself by becoming minister of health, and he didn't think of the constitution of the Manitoba Social Credit league."...(others such as) A.C. Benjamin, secretary of the Manitoba Social Credit league, said the executive of the league could hardly believe "it was true" when newspapers reported Dr. Fox's Flin Flon statement...

In keeping with the feelings of most Manitoba Social Credit supporters, Halldorson publicly condemned Fox's announcement. Hoping to stop the coalition before it was made public; she boarded a train for Edmonton to personally confer with Premier Aberhart and to state her opposition. Unfortunately for Halldorson, Fox announced the coalition while she was en route to Edmonton. She learned of the announcement during a stop over in Saskatoon after a reporter from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix approached her at the train station. An angry Halldorson told the reporter that she and the rest of the Manitoba party refused to support either Fox or Bracken.

> Social Credit Party Will Support Bracken According to Leader- Denial that the Manitoba Social Credit Party will support the Liberal Progressive government emphatically made by Miss S. Haldorson (sic) who made a brief stop in Saskatoon . . ."I wish to deny that completely," she said, referring to the Star-Phoenix's morning paper report that Manitoba's Social Creditors had lined up with Bracken." I am also of the opinion that other members of the party will not agree to giving support. I wired Dr. Fox yesterday stating my disapproval of joining with the Bracken party."

Following her meeting with Aberhart, however, Halldorson rescinded on her public opposition to the merge and announced that she and the Social Credit League would provide the Bracken government with the necessary support within the tenets of Social Credit philosophy. Although she agreed to support Aberhart's scheme, she pushed him again in 1940 to allow the Manitoba party to dissolve the informal coalition, writing "there is talk of an election in any case- and I think myself that it is hard to estimate the effect of such a stand on our part." Later in her brief autobiography, however, Halldorson downplayed both her own opposition as well as that of the broader Social Credit membership to the merge.

> In the first place I was against (Bracken's) request and I disliked it so much that I went to Edmonton to confer with Mr. Aberhart. At the time Mr. Aberhart was was confident that Social Credit would take hold in Alberta in the following eighteen months and he saw clearly that if Mr. Bracken was dependent on our support then we could (force him to implement Social Credit policy.) . . . Afterwards there were no complaints from my constituents, although it was reported as a betrayal, especially by the opponents of Social Credit.

Although this controversial merge may appear as a footnote in Depression-era Manitoba politics, Halldorson's role as a public dissenter in the Social Credit party is significant given the repressive political atmosphere within the movement. Dissent within the party was not well-received and serious censure and reportedly, physical violence faced those who went against the party. Prior to his defeat by Edith Rogers, another female Social Credit MLA, Premier Brownlee of Alberta nervously recalled his own encounter with hostile Social Credit party members during an election speech in Waterglen in 1934.

> (When) I began to tell them in all sincerity what I thought of Social Credit. A group of big fellows near the door then left the hall, slamming the door violently as they went out. Some of them got into cars and started to blow horns. Others got logs and began pounding the walls and doors

of the building from outside . . .

Apart from the controversial secret leadership and coalition meetings arranged by Fox and Poole, reports of similarly coercive elements within the Social Credit party in Manitoba also emerged around the time of the 1936 election. Although the party's platform appealed to Manitobans from a variety of political backgrounds, Social Credit organizers in Manitoba were particularly interested in creating party uniformity and distancing itself from leftist parties and organizations. Campaigners who expressed political sentiments outside of the party's official policy such as C. Spence of Winnipeg's North End met with serious censure. Accused of turning the party's election campaign towards the left, Spence was summoned to a closed meeting with members of the Manitoba Social Credit executive and Albertan M.L.A., W. Kuhl, who was also involved in securing Halldorson's endorsement by the national Social Credit Party. The Winnipeg Evening Tribune reported the bizarre circumstances of the meeting in the summer of 1936, shortly following the election. Spence, wrote the Tribune, stood accused of:

> circulat(ing) reports calculated to injure the cause. Specifically, Mr. Spence is said to have tried to induce workers to include in the organization the returned soldiers group and the unemployed . . . During the entire session, six husky young men stood guard outside, armed with clubs. Windows were carefully curtained and closed.

Some of Halldorson's correspondence suggests her own entanglement in the more provocative elements within the party, specifically those dissatisfied with the party's leadership. British Social Credit activist S.T. Powell responded to Halldorson's apparent complaints about party leaders in February 1940, writing that the movement suffered from glorified secretaries masquerading as leaders who "will not admit to being taught anything about any subject for fear that he suffers depreciation in the eyes of his followers." Powell wrote to Halldorson that it was time to "start our movement again amongst almost entirely new people: people without that superiority complex which knowledge of money technique so almost invariably developed." Understanding Halldorson's role as a dissenter within this restrictive political environment is complex, however, as she also served as president of the Manitoba Social Credit League and was also responsible for suppressing dissent and subversive political elements within its membership. However, her public opposition to the coalition certainly indicates that she retained a flare for confrontation.

Halldorson appeared to have recovered politically from her public clash with the party leadership in 1936 and continued to act as a well-recognised politician during her first few years in office. During this time she pressured the provincial government to launch an inquiry into the roots of the Depression, dedicated herself to widows' rights under The Child Welfare Act, farm debt reduction, improving teachers' salaries, women's employment, the provincial censorship board and especially in opposing the Sirois Report and its recommendation to transfer numerous provincial powers to the federal government. Despite her involvement with a variety of political and social issues, it was her persistent aversion to centralisation which motivated her opposition to Sirois that would contribute to one of her most subversive and politically contentious campaigns.

Beyond her calls for economic reform and increased female political participation, it was Halldorson's anti-wartime coalition and pacifist campaigns which gained her a reputation for radicalism and a place on the fringes of the legislature after 1939. Following Canada's announcement of support for Great Britain's declaration of war, the Manitoba Legislative Assembly created a majority wartime coalition under Bracken to provide a united front for the war effort. Halldorson broke with her own party and became one of only three MLAs to form a small opposition to the coalition, announcing to the assembly "that such action (non-partisan government) is subversive of the constitutional principles of representative and responsible government." In her autobiography for Heimskringla, Halldorson hoped to justify her wartime subversion and wrote that it was also the coalition government's consideration of the recommendations of the Sirois Report, which motivated her to oppose the coalition. "As Social Credit policy is absolutely opposed to the idea that authority over each person be placed in the hands of a few men," wrote Halldorson, "I could not in all conscience support the coalition." Interestingly, however, Halldorson failed to mention her role as a vocal opponent to the war itself, a stance which was appeared considerably unpopular with many Icelandic Canadians, particularly her constituents in rural Manitoba.

(Celebrated Icelandic Canadian poet Stephan G. Stephansson spoke to this abrupt shift in political sentiment upon the declaration of war;

So maudlin, with pity and pathos I stood
If someone who erred got he lashes;
If hanged, I'd weep over the ashes.
With vocal dispraise such injustice I viewed.
But somehow as soon as the war-craze ensued,
When slaughter en masse was the popular mood
And corpses all over the planet were strewed,
With dumb indecision I stood.

Her wartime campaigns focussed not only on opposition to the war itself, but also on building a broader, implicitly pacifist women's Social Credit movement. Here again Halldorson's role as a dissenter appears remarkable within the context of the now incredibly restrictive atmosphere of the wartime legislature. Other dissenting MLAs such as the lone Communist, James Litterick, endured censorship and eventually banishment from the legislature. Litterick's disappearance in 1942 and rumoured murder are powerful reminders of the serious risks that political dissenters faced during this period.

As a public opponent to the war and as a popular figure within the community, Halldorson must have also alarmed Canadian officials anxious to promote enlistment and quell dissent within ethnic communities. Although she received little support from other MLAs during this tumultuous period, Halldorson continued to fight for the dissolution of the coalition, while also introducing an unsuccessful bill protesting the government's use of private financial institutions in the funding of the war and co-coordinating an ill-fated wartime vote of non-confidence in the federal government.

Although Halldorson received no support from the pro-war Aberhart administration as well as her former Social Credit MLA colleagues, she continued to focus her challenges to the wartime assembly based on Social Credit principles. In one of her last published speeches, "The Menace of Centralization", (1940) she announced that she "would like to issue another warning to the Hon. Members that the steps they are advocating are leading in the wrong direction- away from true democracy and towards over-riding bureaucratic control which is totalitarianism... Social Credit points the way in the opposite direction." Despite her decision to oppose her own party in the Assembly, she also remained president of the Manitoba Social Credit League, using it in her attempts to draw support from Manitoba Social Crediters and sympathetic women's organizations.

Halldorson's activities within the Legislature as well as her persistent appeals to Manitoba women to take a stand against the war failed to preserve her once glowing reputation amongst the Anglo-Canadian media and particularly with both the Bracken and Aberhart administrations. Halldorson hoped to continue to use the same gender-based appeals that had helped to popularise her unemployment and economic reform campaigns among women in her pacifist campaigns, although her writing from this period suggests that she had begun to take a more radical approach, disposing with politics and housekeeping imagery. "Women!" Asked one Manitoba Social Credit League pamphlet written by Halldorson, "Do you want to end

Depression and War? Do you want to establish lasting prosperity and peace? The power is yours! . . . Social justice will prevail when women have accepted responsibility with men in the political and governmental field."

Beyond these petitions to Anglo-Canadian women, Halldorson's pacifist appeals to Icelandic Canadian women in Icelandic appear even more subversive, particularly in their omission of the Canadian nationalist language which characterised her English discussions of Icelandic Canadian political participation. Her work also stood in stark contrast to the activities of other Icelandic Canadian women such as the members of the Jón Sigurðsson Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire who dedicated their time to creating publications such as Minningarrit Íslenzkra Hermanna 1914-1918 (Memories of Icelandic Soldiers) and organizing knitting drives to supply woollens to the Canadian Armed Forces. Although it appears that the majority of Icelandic Canadian women chose not to openly oppose the war, Halldorson was joined by Laura Goodman Salverson in her attempts to fan Icelandic Canadian pacifism. Salverson's 1937 book *The Dark Weaver: Against the Sombre Background of the Old Generations Flame the Scarlet Banners of the New* was well-received by Anglo-Canadians and even won the Governor General's prize for literature. Unlike Salverson, Halldorson incorporated both English and Icelandic into her campaigns. Although she spoke out against the war in English, one of her undated Icelandic speeches reveals that she reserved some of her most radical sentiments for Icelandic-only forums. Her disdain for traditional female expressions of patriotism in wartime, reminiscent of the activities of the Jón Sigurðsson IODE, is particularly compelling.

> Women have asked me recently whether we couldn't rally together and oppose this war . . . One woman was a member of a(n) organization whose goal it was to work for peace in the world. She said 30 was considered a good turnout at a meeting. But 1300 women in Winnipeg flocked to a meeting in the blink of an eye the other day, to form a group to knit and sew for the army. It is so much easier to knit than to think about the business of our nation.

This Icelandic appeal also included a more subversive usage of Icelandic ethnicity than her Anglo references to the "pioneer settlers from the land of the Vikings". Icelanders now, she said, needed to learn to fight like Auður, wife of the fugitive Gísli in Gísla Saga. This 13th century story describes Auður's defence of Gísli when she is approached by a cruel bounty hunter seeking information about his whereabouts. Au ur pretends to accept a bag of coins as a bribe and then shames and injures him by using the bag to break the bounty hunter's nose. As Kristin Wolf asserts in her work on the influence of nineteenth-century romantic nationalism in Icelandic Canadian culture, the sagas continued to play an important role in self-definition for Icelanders following settlement in Canada, although the more subversive implications of these stories is seldom recognised by community historians. By invoking the story of Auður, Halldorson hoped to appeal to the most fundamental of Icelandic cultural values, values which she saw as both opposed and superior to wartime Canadian nationalist rhetoric. Moreover, the story of Auður is one which celebrates female physical resistance and even violence, an example that Halldorson probably did not plan to follow, but one which she used to construct a tradition of Icelandic Canadian female radical resistance. Although her speech frequently drew upon themes surrounding women, Halldorson intended this lesson from the Sagas to challenge both men and women in the community who had accepted the advent of war. "It is especially important," she wrote, "for all men and all women to stand up for good and defend it with all our might, just as Auður did in her time, because this war which is now beginning has its origins in hatred, vengeance, cruelty and greed."

While this speech suggests that the

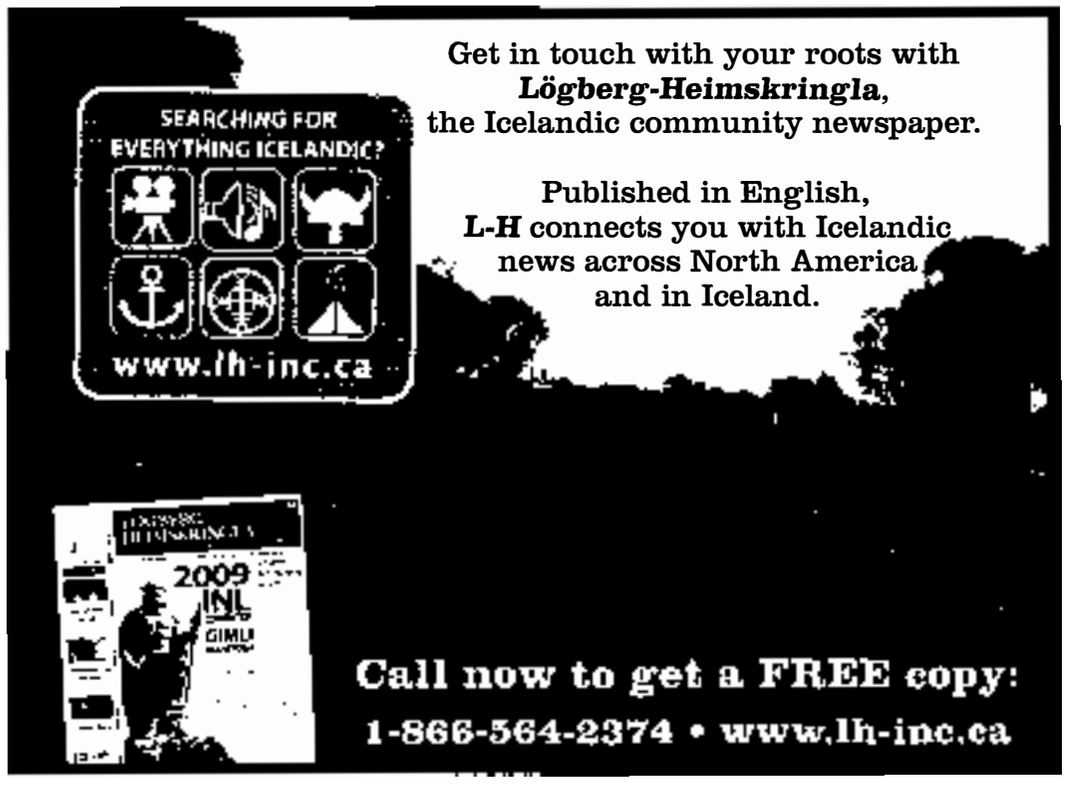
Icelandic language may have helped to shield and foster radical politics behind its linguistic boundaries, it is important to note that Halldorson's pacifist campaign was unpopular with many of her constituents. In contrast to the overwhelming support she enjoyed during her 1936 campaign, it was this during the period between the 1939 declaration of war and the following election two years later that Halldorson felt the restrictive political environment in Manitoba the keenest, culminating in her overwhelming defeat in the 1941. Her decision to restrict more openly subversive usages of Icelandicity such as the story of Auður and her pacifist campaign to Icelandic illustrates both Halldorson's failed hopes for widespread critical and independent thought within the community as well as a general anxiety surrounding the community's appearance to the Anglo-Canadian state and society. Here the parameters of "acceptable" expressions of Icelandic Canadian identity were laid bare, despite Halldorson's best efforts. The only expressions of Icelandic Canadian thought to flourish during this period, such as the IODE knitting circles and veteran memorial book, were those which were subservient to Canadian national identity and policies.

It is the same primacy of Canadian nationalism within Icelandic Canadian historiography which explains Halldorson's historical exclusion. The radicalism of her politics, particularly those within her women's pacifist campaign, created a dramatically different legacy than that of the pleasant and loyal "pioneer settler from the land of the Vikings" and of the innocuous "lady schoolteacher turned politician" which had garnered Anglo-Canadian a significant amount of support and appreciation for Halldorson and her community. Although Halldorson craftily employed these images to further her own political objectives, her increasingly frequent confrontations with the boundaries of female political participation, wartime nationalism and political conformity prompted her to construct a new vision of Icelandic Canadian female activism. Auður embodied Halldorson's appeal to Icelandic Canadian women as a female figure of strength, intelligence and Icelandicity, reminding this privileged ethnic community of traditional obligations beyond the discourses of Canadian nationalism and domestic femininity. The community's discomfort with Halldorson's radicalism and this subversive campaign, however, fuelled what Brydon described as the "nostalgic narration" of Icelandic Canadian memory, namely the renewed restriction of Halldorson's biography to teaching, rather than politics. Halldorson did, of course, help to craft this image of herself and is complicit in the creation of this distorted historical image of her career, yet it was these multiple identities which were so essential to her vibrancy, success and eventually, her catastrophic defeat.

Beyond a new understanding of Halldorson's lost career as a dissident, however, her work presents new challenges to historians of Canadian ethnicity. The sometimes uncomfortable proximity between Icelandic Canadian privilege and the realities of interwar ethnic discrimination, namely anti-Semitism, provides a reminder of the limitations and implications of Icelandic Canadian identity during this period. Halldorson's work also provides intriguing insights into the navigation of this otherwise xenophobic era through her references to the perceived compatibility of Anglo-Canadian and Icelandic culture and political traditions. Yet her work also illustrates that the growth of this privilege, the community's public acceptance of Anglo-Canadian appropriate values and identities, as well as the restrictive atmosphere of Manitoba wartime politics deeply influenced but failed to completely ensure Icelandic Canadian conformity and subservience.

Halldorson appears as both an anomaly and as an intriguing representative of the dramatic shifts within Manitoba's political climate during the 1930s and 40s. Elected during a desperate and somewhat politically experimental year in Manitoba, her often bold and unyielding dedication to female political representation and participation, pacifism and economic reform is remarkable in its consistency, particularly

after 1939. Moreover, her exploration of the parameters of gender, ethnicity and dissent in Manitoba during this period illustrates the speed with which opportunities for political representation changed and ended for women who situated themselves beyond the prescribed boundaries of political and ethnic expression.



Lang-amma Hrund Skulason

by Thora McInnis

My lang-amma and I have a special bond. She was just a little girl when she left Iceland to move to Canada. So was I! I too, was only four when I moved to Canada with my mom. We have that in common. I loved when she told me the story of her journey from Iceland. It was a long sea voyage that occurred just after the Titanic disaster and it had all the elements of a great adventure. I asked her to tell me the story again and again.

The word "dugleg" always comes to mind when I think of lang-amma. It is an Icelandic word that means more than just someone who is busy. It means someone who is hard working, creative and is always doing something constructive. Every one of us in this room has a keepsake from lang-amma's hands. We have fine shawls, doilies, afghans, scarves, tablecloths; all made with love from her incredibly skilled fingers. As babies, each of us great-grandchildren was dressed in the finest knitted or crochetted hats, baby sweaters, dresses and booties courtesy of lang-amma. The output was amazing! I think it is very special that we all have heirlooms from an ancestor we actually know.

Lang-amma has been a constant in my life forever. When we were younger, visiting at Brandon with my amma Gudrun McInnis, lang-amma often came with us. The two matriarchs taught me how to play whist and cribbage. They told me stories and made me feel like I was a very lucky girl to have such a great amma and lang-amma.

Visiting lang-amma has always been my way of keeping in touch with everyone in the family. Through her, I got to know my aunts, uncles and cousins. Each time I came to visit I would spend time looking at all her cards and pictures and catch up on the lives of all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I got to see wedding invitations, birth announcements and pictures.

Back row left to right: Signy with baby, father Melvin McInnis. Front: Thora McGinnis and Langamma Hrund Skulason

She always had lots of pictures. Cousins I barely knew became real. We are scattered on a couple of continents and we never get to see each other. The best connection I have to many of my cousins is through the pictures and explanations that I got from lang-amma.

Another thing that was special when we visited her, we always got fresh baking and pönnukukur. Also, we almost always got angel food cake with strawberries and whipped topping. Whenever I see strawberry shortcake, I think of lang-amma. Once in our discussions of things past and present lang-amma told me that, in her opinion, one of the greatest culinary products of modern times is whipped topping! It was so much easier than the old-fashioned method of beating and beating the cream; which had to be done the minute you needed it; otherwise it went flat. It was tedious and tiring. Whenver I find myself taking things for granted in these times of instant everything, what lang-amma said has often made me stop and think. Life is

just so much better since the invention of whipped topping.

When I was little, one of the great things I remember about visiting lang-amma was her stuff. She has such great stuff. Not only that, but I was allowed to touch that great stuff. Certainly not everyone allows a five year old to hold the fine china, the crystal ornaments and the bird. Especially the bird! Lang-amma has a raven. It was, and still is, my absolute favourite. Lang-amma asked me one time what I wanted left to me when she died. I told her I wanted the raven and so it was promised to me. On a visit about three years ago, I again wanted to hold the raven. She told me that I should just take it. I said, "no". It was still hers and was not mine yet. She thought for a minute and then said: "That raven has watched over me for the last fourty years, I better keep it." I am glad the raven is still watching over her and I hope it will continue to do its job for some time to come.

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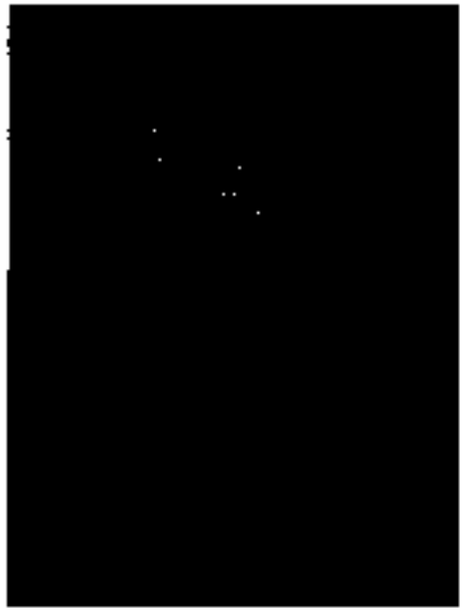

BOOKS WE ARE TALKING ABOUT

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Poetry

Relatives

by Douglas Henderson

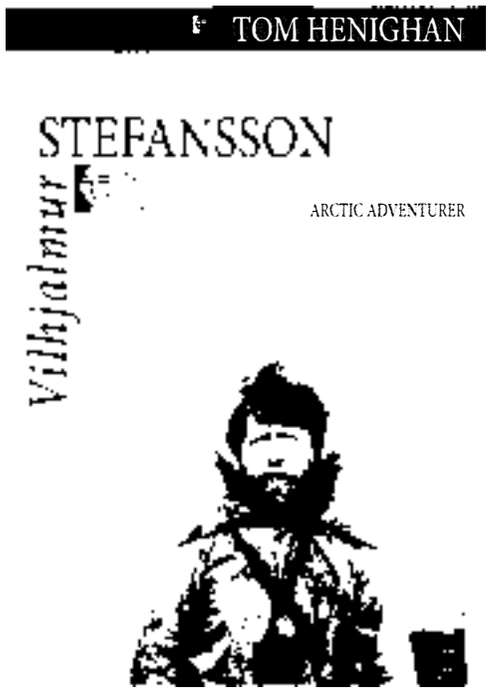
Twice, when hitchhiking on the Prairies in the 60s
I've been picked up by Icelanders
Taking one look at me they said
And whose boy are you?
Of course we found out we were related.

Pounding nails on a construction site
On Saltspring Island, B.C.
The other carpenter, noticed my silver ring, asking
Is that an Icelandic ring?
Of course we were related.

I told these stories later
At a dinner party in Victoria.
A grey-eyed daughter of Freya across the table
Dropped her fork, laughing -
You guessed it.

One day, in my antiques shop
An Inuit - eyes of obsidian and coppery skin
A maker of shamans' drums
Down from the High Western Arctic
Came in and asked if I had any books
On arctic explorers.
Not at the moment I said -
And, in passing, mentioned my connection
To the great traveller Vilhjalmur Stefansson.
He smiled and said
My mother's aunty was his northern wife
I rushed around the counter and hugging him said,
Cousin! Cousin!

Book Reviews



Vilhjalmur Stefansson

By Tom Henigan
Dundurn Press

Reviewed by Darrell Gudmundson

Tom Henigan provides us with an insight into the man who, more than any other, exposed the Arctic and its peoples in the early twentieth century.

This is a curiously structured book; at least three books in one. It starts with a biography, then wanders off into a discussion of explorers and the archetypes that drive them, then into the cultural origins of those archetypes. By this point one begins to feel the book has moved on from Stefansson into a theoretical discussion of history and myth. However, this section is followed by an ingenious play featuring Stefansson, which cleverly reinforces earlier comments about his life and character.

As an Icelandic Canadian, I felt a connection to Stefansson. Growing up about a mile from his sister Rosa Josephson (pictured as a child with her brother near the front of the book), I heard about his visits to Vatnabyggd, particularly Elfros and Mozart, the nearest communities. "Villi's" name was spoken with pride, not so much by Rosa, but by all in general, and his lectures in the old Mozart town hall were frequently mentioned.

I am not qualified to question most of the facts in the book, but I did notice that Stefansson, born in 1879, could not have been born in Manitoba, but was born in the District of Keewatin, which joined the province of Manitoba two years later. This would be trivial were it not repeated on the cover of the book. However, to pick on facts would be to miss the essence of the book, which conveys the essence of the man and the times.

The book is a concise effort to peer into the character of the man, not only recount his exploits. To this end, it opens with a letter from one friend to another, describing a series of meetings with Stefansson, and these give an excellent character study. One can picture the man from this letter: his dress and his manner. Stefansson was accused of being a publicity hound; this account shows him as a man of cautious modesty, on occasion sensationalized by the press, but with a mission burning deeply within - to better acquaint people with the Arctic, and to proclaim the dietary habits of the 'Eskimo' as a model to be emulated.

The book deals well with Stefansson's introduction to the Arctic and his initial acclimatization to Inuit life. Like a true anthropologist, he does not judge the Arctic culture and habits by the standards of southern peoples, but accepts and adapts with true appreciation for the northern way of life. For this he was criticized by fellow "Christians" who saw only through the lens of their background and belief.

In the subsequent expedition, which was troubled by Stefansson's ill preparation, but even more by the arrogant ill-will of some colleagues, the euro-centric attitudes (and perhaps intellectual snobbery) of his government backers and of the scientific members left Stefansson and a small circle of companions isolated and virtually the objects of mutiny.

This book, while a narrative of events, is even more a character study, portraying Stefansson sympathetically in spite of his failings, which were certainly in evidence. The impression is one of balance, a quality that has been sorely needed in connection with the Stefansson story.

I confess to being uncomfortable when Henigan labels Stefansson a 'charlatan,' even when he then goes on to lump a number of famous and accomplished people in this category. While I do not dispute the author's dictionary definition of the word, I don't think it accords with common everyday usage, which we might equate with 'con artist.' Stefansson did, however, have a reach that exceeded his grasp, as his enthusiasm went beyond his ability to organize or to motivate. What he did seem to have is a quality I would refer to as 'charisma,' which appears to have been the key to his publicity. I would characterize his drive to over-reach as false optimism, misleading without any intent to do so.

Such a charismatic person would only be a 'charlatan' if he had done nothing to speak about. Stefansson's long sojourn in the Arctic, his genuine discoveries, in my opinion, takes him out of that category.

A chief accomplishment of this book is to distinguish between the explorer, the discoverer, on the one hand; and the researcher, the documenter, on the other. Stefansson was the former; cast somewhat in the mold of the previous century, while his companions, many of whom vilified him, were the latter. Small wonder they could not see eye-to-eye. Stefansson was perhaps the last of a dying breed of bold adventurous explorers.

Considerable space is spent on 'Stef's" romantic relationships, which further reveals the richness and complexity of this character. The women in his life, from Fannie Panigabluk to Fannie Hurst to his wife Evelyn, appear to have been strong people, perhaps drawn to the adventuresome boy who seems to have been hidden within Stefansson's character.

It is interesting that Stefansson, through his involvements with groups such as the Explorers' Club, sought to mitigate barriers of sex and of race as much as one could have dared in the times. His egalitarian tendencies caused much trouble with the McCarthyists, the impact of which we may never fully realize.

In summary, this book exposes the man, not the myth, and does not attempt to defend the indefensible aspects of Stefansson's career. It does, however, defend the man against the most unreasonable charges made against him, showing them to be the result of human failings, not arrogance. -

Looking back over my shoulder

By Rosa Benediktson
Benson Ranch Inc.

Reviewed by Florence Holigroski

Rosa Benediktson traces the life of her ancestors from northern Iceland to the Markerville area of Alberta, after a short stint of living & farming in Wisconsin and Gardar, North Dakota.

Rosa's parents, Stephan G Stephansson & his wife Helga, created a family of love for their four sons and three daughters. Stephan wrote his beloved poetry at a small desk late into the nights after long days of farm work. His poetry, translated into English by Kristjana Gunnars, Paul Sigurdson and Watson Kirkconnell, is scattered throughout this memoir.

Helga was a strong matriarch who served as a role model when Rosa's beloved husband Sigurdur (Siggi) died suddenly leaving her a widow with four children who ranged in age from five months to thirteen years. Now Rosa found herself thinking of Stephan G and Siggi, asking herself what they would do under the circumstances. She found comfort in her father's poetry, the love of her family and community and vowed to carry on to the best of her ability with her children. Two years of study at the Olds Agricultural College in her teenaged years stood Rosa in good stead as she navigated on alone.

The book traces her life and travels, including a celebratory trip to Iceland in 1953 to honour her father. There are copies of her addresses to the Markerville community in 1974, 1975 and 1976.

The written word played such a prominent role in Rosa's life. It is extraordinary that the sending of accounts of their travels to persons in Iceland now allows us a glimpse into the life of this remarkable pioneer family.

I strongly recommend this book.

Contributors

LAURIE KRISTINE BERTRAM is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Toronto. Her dissertation examines popular Icelandic Canadian culture in the twentieth century, including the history of Icelandic objects, family memory, the cult status of vinarterta, and craft and textile production. This article comes from her MA cognate paper, which she completed under the supervision of Dr. Ruth Frager at McMaster University in 2006.

HARALDUR BESSASON was a Professor and Head of the Department of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba from 1956 until 1987, when he became the Rector of the University of Akureyri in Iceland. He retired to Toronto, ON. He passed away April 8, 2009.

DARRELL GUDMUNDSON is a Professional Engineer, Business Planner, and a Licensed Minister of Religious Science. His experience includes telecommunications engineering, strategic planning, marketing, public speaking, and workshops. He lectures, writes, and publishes books dealing with metaphysics and the use of the mind.

DOUGLAS HENDERSON was born in Kitchener, ON in 1944. He has five books of poetry published and is a retired antiques dealer in Victoria, BC. Through his mother Marney Hill Henderson, he is descended from Gudrun, sister of Stefan Bjornsson who pioneered in Gimli.

FLORENCE HOLIGROSKI is a retired banker, daughter of Magga (Olafson) & John Sigurdson of Lundar. She volunteers with IODE Jon Sigurdson Chapter and Logberg-Heimskringla.

WILLIAM "SKIP" KOOLAGE M.A.,Ph.D., (UNC) is a retired Northern Canadian Ethnologist who still works on his field notes and badgers his colleagues in Geezer Hall, University College. When not being a nuisance, he likes to read and fish."

THORA MCINNIS is the great-granddaughter of Hrund Skulason. Thora was born in Iceland of Canadian parents, Svava Simundsson and Dr. Melvin McInnis. Thora currently lives in Gimli, Manitoba.

KRISTINE PERLMUTTER is a regular contributor to The Icelandic Canadian and was on the Board of Directors for 25 years. She works as a special education teacher in the Pembina Trails School Division in Winnipeg and fits her writing and reading in when she has the time. She and her husband, Bill, are actively involved in the Icelandic community.

INGRID SLOBODIAN of Winnipeg, daughter of the late Ragnar and Elma Gislason. Retired from teaching in 2001. She is a member of Lesterfelag, Icelandic Canadian Fron and the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE. Ingrid has three daughters and is Amma to five wonderful grandchildren.

LORNA TERGESEN is Editor of *The Icelandic Canadian Magazine*. She is involved in the Icelandic community, enjoying her cultural heritage, and sharing it with others.

JUDY THORSTEINSON was raised in Lundar, Manitoba. Her parents were Emma(Thomasson) and Leo Danielson. Judy married Jim Thorsteinson from Lundar in 1968 and they have lived in the U.S. and Canada, settling in Winnipeg in 1987. She was a member of the INLofNA board for 5 years.

JO-ANNE WEIR is a high school Special Educator who splits her time between her home in Winnipeg and her family cottage in Arnes, Manitoba.

JOHANNA WILSON of Winnipeg is a second generation Icelandic Canadian. Johanna's parents were the late Joseph and Gudrun Skaptason. She is a retired teacher of Home Economics, mother to Frank, Joanne Morris and Carolyn Levesque. Amma to four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Life member of the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE and Member Emeritus of the Betel Home Foundation.

Photo by Kent Larus Bjornsson

The back page

Hugh Denham from Alberta, asleep at the outdoor cafe on the promenade in Akureyri.

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