

ICELANDIC CONNECTION



ISSN #1920-423X

Vol. 71 #1 (2019)

Icelandic National League of North America 101st Annual Convention

GIMLI MANITOBA
LAKEVIEW RESORT
APRIL 23 TO 26, 2020



HOSTED BY ARBORG,
GIMLI, LUNDAR
AND SELKIRK



ICELANDIC CONNECTION

VOLUME 71, NO 1 (2019) • WINNIPEG, CANADA

On the Cover	3
Editorial by Lorna Tergesen	4
From Iceland to Manitoba: The Fjallkona Costume by Alana Donohue	6
Icelandic Festive Dress by Elva Simundsson	10
<i>Íslenska lopapeysan</i> Origins, history and design of the Icelandic lopi sweater by Ásdís Jóelsdóttir	14
Daily Life in the 223rd (the Scandinavian-Canadian Battalion) from Konnie Johannesson's 1917 Diary by Brian Johannesson	22
Icelandic-Canadian Pioneer Stories: Part Two compiled by Gail Halldorson	36
Poetry Long Weary Years We Fought by E. J. Thorlakson	46
Contributors	47
The Back page	48

ICELANDIC CONNECTION



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

MANAGING EDITOR Lorna Tergesen
CORPORATE SECRETARY Lorna Tergesen
DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY Catherine McConnell

SENIOR EDITORS

FAMILIAR ESSAYS Elva Simundsson
FICTION Avery Simundsson
INTERVIEWS Heiða Simundsson
REVIEWS Lorna Tergesen
SCHOLARLY ESSAYS Elin Thordarson
CONTRIBUTOR Stefan Jonasson

REGIONAL EDITORS

SEATTLE Rob Olason

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS MANAGER—TREASURER Rick Loftson
ASSISTANT MANAGER Valdine Bjornsson
ADVERTISING & PROMOTION Allison Holm

SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISING & EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Icelandic Connection, Box 1156, Gimli, Manitoba R0C 1B0 CANADA
CONTACT Lorna Tergesen (204) 642-9650 for inquiries about the magazine

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

CANADIAN \$40 CAD yearly, \$80 two years U.S. & INTERNATIONAL \$46 USD yearly
E-JOURNAL \$30 CAD /\$30 USD
SINGLE COPIES \$10 CAD plus postage

WE ACCEPT U.S. & CANADIAN FUNDS, MASTERCARD AND VISA

ON OUR WEBSITE: Payable by Credit Card or PayPal at www.icecon.ca

Typed submissions of articles, book reviews, short stories and poetry are welcome.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS WELCOME editor@icecon.ca

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.icecon.ca

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

Printed in Winnipeg, Canada by Dycom Direct Mail and Lögberg-Heimskringla

ISSN: 1920-423X

ON THE COVER



PHOTO LORNA TERGESEN

Lopi wool from Iceland

Editorial

Cultures and our Shared Values

by Lorna Tergesen

What are the customs in our ethnocultural identity that we cherish and acknowledge? Of course, this is dependent on each individual; our age, upbringing and knowledge of our background and history. Some of us are taught through the stories of our elders, others get curious about their family history and start doing their own climbing into the family tree. We can only truly understand ourselves if we know who we are and where we came from.

Almost forty years ago at a time I was involved in the Icelandic Language and Cultural Camp, I came to realize that children with only a small Icelandic genetic link were still very happy to confirm that it was a significant part of their DNA. I don't know if this is still relevant today, but at the time I was working with these youngsters, I could clearly see that it provided the children with a sense of belonging and pride.

This sense of belonging can be a small piece of one's cultural understanding of ourselves. Just the shared knowledge that we enjoy eating a piece of vínarterta or a bowl of skyr. Or, it can be as large as our pride in our country of origin; of Iceland itself. This very small country, both size-wise and population-wise is now universally

recognized for its natural splendors, its large tourist industry, the equality among men and women and their great successes on the world's stage of the arts and sports. The lifestyle is very enviable. For such a small country, their many achievements are a testament to the fact that this is a country that certainly has its priorities and social practices in order.

One prevailing Icelandic characteristic that I have observed is that they appear to take every individual's right to express his or her opinion for granted. Being independent-minded does not seem to be discouraged. Their society does not condemn or judge an individual who 'walks to a different drummer'. They are a nation of people who can work to attain common goals but still are allowed to retain their own beliefs, ideas and theories.

So; what are your cultural interests that tie you to your Icelandic background? Is it by belonging to one of the Icelandic National League clubs or chapters? Do you subscribe to the Icelandic North American newspaper, *Lögberg-Heimskringla*? Is it hosting guests from Iceland, preparing and eating Icelandic foods, attempting to learn the language or do you express your Icelandic ethnicity by proudly owning an Icelandic

ethnic dress or perhaps a sweater? Do you attend a Þorrablót in your area just to meet up with old friends and enjoy an evening with like-minded relatives who all seem to share the same quirky sense of humour? Maybe it's the music; both old and also the wave of new music from Iceland. Is it literature? Have you read recent works of fiction or the old classics or sagas? Are you brave enough to try to correspond with someone from Iceland, even it is just trying to guess what they are saying on their social media posts? Or are you keeping up with your fifth or sixth cousins wherever they are living? We seem to have a shared opinion that 'kin is kin' – regardless of how many generations separate us. Genealogy

is now such a well-organized and well documented subject among us. Being able to trace your ancestors has become very popular and the information certainly much more accessible thanks to such web programs as Icelandic Roots. (www.icelandicroots.com)

But the question we ask ourselves is: will this interest and pride in our shared heritage remain and grow? Our small attempt to produce this journal that preserves our stories and enhances our interest and knowledge is under threat. We need more subscribers both for the printed magazine as well as the digital edition. Can we attract the younger generations to join as readers and contributors? Can you help?

Celebrating over 60 years of Caring for Seniors



Our modern two storey care facility is government approved and specifically designed to offer a homey atmosphere in a safe contemporary setting. We are located in Osborne Village convenient to all amenities and services.

The Registered Nurse and certified staff cater to the residents' personal care, comfort and supervision. Medications are administered, bath assist, meals, housekeeping and laundry are included.

Our goal over the years has been to provide a moderately sized, non-institutional environment with services to meet the needs of those in the later stages of life. We seek to maintain a quiet, comfortable atmosphere where our residents can feel cared for and safe in a home-like surrounding. We strive to maintain the health, vitality and quality of life of each of our residents.

Thorvaldson Care Center

AN INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY

- 24-HOUR SUPERVISION
- GOVERNMENT APPROVED FACILITY

Herman Thorvaldson
Herman O. Thorvaldson, President

THORVALDSON CARE CENTER

495 Stradbroke Avenue • Winnipeg • Manitoba • R3L 0K2
Phone: 204-452-4044 • www.thorcare.ca • E-mail: thorcare@shaw.ca

From Iceland to Manitoba: The Fjallkona Costume

by Alana Donohoe, March 22, 2019

The *Fjallkona* is known to be the Lady of the Mountain. Embodied by a woman she is seen to be an important figure at Icelandic Festivals, such as *Islendingadagurinn* held in Gimli during the month of August. The *Fjallkona* is known to be the personification of the country of Iceland. The two costumes that were donated to the New Iceland Heritage Museum have a lot of history behind the significance of the *Fjallkona*. This essay will look at the history and origins of the creation of the *Fjallkona*, the connections that it has to Iceland and the importance of the costume of the *Fjallkona* has.

The Lady of the Mountain is a personification of Iceland, and her identity came out during the Romantic period. It is during this same period Germania of Germany, the Dutch Woman of Netherlands, and Britannia for the United Kingdom were created to unify their respective country. The woman chosen to represent the nation of Iceland to create a distinction from the Danish idea of the “fatherland”, this connection represents Iceland’s history with Denmark. As Iceland had been under the ruling Crown of Denmark since 1814 and would remain under this ruling until Iceland would seek independent status in 1944. It would not

be until 1874, the 1000th anniversary of the settlement of Iceland that the *Fjallkona* would be recognized as a symbol of Iceland¹. The Lady of the Mountain is now known to be the mother of Iceland, and the people who reside on the island are her children. The idea of the *Fjallkona*, first appears in nationalistic Icelandic poetry from the eighteenth century and onwards. However, the poetic image has no innovation but looks on the well known and understood Nordic folklore and belief. Meanwhile the visual image has additional associations that are link to early versions of Icelandic folktale collections. the creations of the national costumes and the development of Icelandic national theatre. All of which came to light in during intense period of national-culture creation in Iceland between 1858 and 1874. The *Fjallkona* is seen plainly in *Njárnóttin* a dramatic play written in 1872 by Indriði Einarsson. The play drew deeply on Icelandic folklore that is seen in Jón Arnason’s collection of folk legends. From the research conducted, there is a belief that the *Fjallkona* is focused on the nature of the island, and not only the untamed mountainous wilderness but the underlying power of glaciers and volcanoes which connects the *Fjallkona* with the poem *Islandsminni* (Toast to

1 Horace Leaf, *Yesterday and Today*.

Iceland) written in the Romantic period by Bjarni Thorarensen ².

The idea of representing the Lady of the Mountain as a symbol of Iceland would not come to North America until 1924 at the Icelandic Day celebrations in Blaine, Washington and Winnipeg, Manitoba³. In Manitoba, the *Fjallkona* tradition was brought to the public to help increase attendance at the Icelandic Day celebrations. Originally, a woman chosen to play the role would be a popularity contest. People who purchased their tickets for the *Íslendingadagurinn* festival had an early chance of voting their choice to represent the *Fjallkona*. The winner would be announced the week before the festival held in August. The first winner was in 1924 and was awarded to Sigrun Lindal.⁴ The contest ended up being a large success, with an increase in attendance as compared to previous years. The role that Lindal had was to read a poem written for the occasion as this poem was a blessing bestowed by Mother Iceland and reminded the people of their country's past and hardships but reminded them of their freedom and heritage. The contest was used again in 1925, but in 1926 the contest was dropped and instead the celebrations committee chose one woman to be the symbol of the Icelandic homeland. This year the committee also introduced that the *Fjallkona* chosen would be able to choose their own two personal attendants. The process of deciding who will be the representative of the *Fjallkona* is still being done today,

aside from 1939 when the contest was cancelled again for the year because of the Second World War. The *Fjallkona* has brought so much respect to the Icelandic festivals that it has become a permanent feature at many celebrations in North America and Iceland. It would be some years later that the *Fjallkona* would be introduced to Iceland by the Western Icelanders, and since then her presence has become a part of the ceremonies of the National Independence Day celebrations.

The decision of the image of Iceland to be a woman has two connections. First, the image of the Lady of the Mountain, comes from Old Norse poetry and Icelandic sagas with roots to the pre-Christian Nordic belief in powerful female spirits who protected both individuals and families. In early Icelandic literature this figure is wearing armour and riding a horse, either across the sky or through the landscape of Iceland. The first visual image of the *Fjallkona* as an image of Iceland appeared in the folkloric work designed for foreign audiences called *Icelandic Legends* in 1866.⁵ It is the idea that because the image appears in a book of folktales, it reflects the ideas underlined by Jón Árnason that folk tales can be seen as poetic creation of the nation⁶.

The idea of Iceland as a woman had nonetheless been envisioned by the Icelandic scholar, Eggert Olafsson (1726-1768), his poems *Ísland* (Iceland) and *Ofsjónir við jarðaför Lóvísu drottningar* (Visions at the Funeral of Queen Louisa). Both had a visual image which

2 Terry Gunnell, *The Development and Role of the Fjallkona (Mountain Woman) in Icelandic National Day Celebrations and Other Contexts*, (Reykjavik, 2016).

3 Icelandic National League, *Fjallkonas of Íslendingadagurinn 1924–1989*.

4 Ibid.

5 Gunnell, *Development and Role of the Fjallkona*.

6 Inga Dora Bjornsdottir, *Nationalism, Gender and the body in Icelandic nationalist discourse*, 6.

complemented each other.⁷ From Eggert's description, the image was supposed to be a saddened woman dressed in rich clothes of the time, with the word "Iceland" written above her head. She is described as sitting on a rock up in a valley, close to a river. This descriptive imagery of the *Fjallkona* is meant to resemble the unique and dramatic Icelandic landscapes. It is commonly seen that the *Fjallkona* has a crown on her head, and the crown represents a crown of ice from which fire erupts, representing the northern lights. Her image is to be seated on a stone, reminds the viewer of the volcanic activity that defines Iceland⁸. Some images have the *Fjallkona* with a bird on her shoulder, this bird is typically a raven to represent the god Odin and connects her to the origins of Iceland. Thus, representing their first religion of Heathenism, although now they are of mostly Lutheran faith.

Through my research there have not been any instances of electing a person to appear as the *Fjallkona* until Winnipeg in 1924. Sigurður Guðmundsson, an artist, Eiríkur Magnússon, a translator, Jón Árnason, a librarian, created the collection of folktales. Jon Olafsson, an author who later settled in Winnipeg, together created a society to define Iceland's independence. They all understood the importance of producing a unifying image which connected the past with the present. They looked at images of past and present to create the connections to Iceland's history. Some of the first images can be found in Jon Arnason's volume of *Iceland Legends*.

Iceland's national dress is anything that keeps the wearer warm and dry when enduring the outdoors. The *Fjallkona*

costume is based around the *kirtill*, a heavy grey or black woolen dress that covers everything from wrist to neck to ankle worn traditionally in Iceland⁹. The *Fjallkona* wears a crown of lace to represent the icy landscapes that revolve around the island. The New Iceland Heritage Museum in Gimli, MB has provided photos of *Fjallkona* wearing a cloak. However, in my research, I have found no significance to the item. The first *Fjallkona* would have worn a *kirtill*, style of dress, but in the years since 1924, the costume has been altered slightly. However, the dress still holds the integrity of the Lady of the Mountain. Even more recently the *Fjallkona* in North American chooses to wear a white and modern dress and just a small head piece is worn. In Iceland when the *Fjallkona* is celebrated, the traditional *kirtill*, is worn in respects to its heritage and the tall crown with lace is prominent.

The *Fjallkona* is not limited to a national day, she can take form in various ways and at different times of the year. She can manifest herself every time Icelandic women put on one of Sigurður Guðmundsson's national costumes. Each woman who wears it turns into the symbol of the nation and unite themselves to the past¹⁰. The first female president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir played with the image of the *Fjallkona*, to highlight the blend of a cultural and national leader. Finnbogadóttir wore the *Fjallkona* costume occasionally helping her distinguish an enduring element of the folktale and the symbolic imagery of the nation.

The Lady of the Mountain can be dated back to the eighteenth century, but

7 Gunnell, *Development and Role of the Fjallkona*.

8 Gunnell, *Development and Role of the Fjallkona*; 27.

9 Bjornsdottir, *Nationalism*, 6.

10 Leaf, *Iceland Yesterday and Today*.

it is not until the folktale becomes a reality during the Romantic period when she becomes the personification of the country of Iceland. The *Fjallkona* does not hold a large physical presence until she is introduced in 1924 at the Winnipeg Icelandic Festival. Since this appearance the *Fjallkona*, she has been introduced to Iceland and she is of equal importance when celebrating Iceland's National Day in June.

Bibliography

Bjornsdottir, Inga Dora. 2010. "Nationalism, Gender and the Body in Icelandic Nationalist Discourse." *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 3-13.

Gunnell, Terry. 2016. "The Development and Role of the Fjallkona (Mountain Woman) in Icelandic National Day Celebrations and Other Contexts." In *The Ritual Year 11: Traditions and Transformation*, by Guzel Stolyarova, Irina Sedakova and Nina Vlaskina, 22-40. Reykjavik, Iceland.

Icelandic National League. n.d. *Fjallkonas of Islendingadagurinn 1924-1989*.

Karlsson, Gunnar. 2000. *The History of Iceland*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.



Leaf, Horace. 1949. *Iceland Yesterday and Today*. London, England: Caines of Plaistow.

Powell, George E. J., and Eiríkr Magnússon. 1866. *Islenskar Thjothgur og aefintyri*. January 8. Accessed March 7, 2019. <http://www.jonarnason.is/icelandic-legends/ii-preface/>.

Icelandic Festive Dress

by Elva Simundsson

Faldbúningur

Hardships due to earthquakes, volcanoes, plagues and economic restrictions from the Danish overlords left the entire nation destitute for centuries. Little is left of descriptions or actual clothing prior to the 19th century but it is generally understood that the faldbúningur was the standard women's outfit for most important occasions.

Descriptions and drawings of the faldbúningur became more common in the 19th century. It consisted of a full-length pleated skirt and long-sleeved jacket. The skirt was pleated all around but the pleats across the back were generally narrower than those across the front. The jacket was held closed at the top with a broach and at the bottom with a hook and eye closure and a belt. The jacket was collarless and often worn with a silk scarf around the neck. Elaborate embroidery in gold or silver thread or various coloured silk threads was done in a border around the bottom of the skirt and also on the sleeves and collar of the jacket. The jacket was also trimmed with velvet and/or lace, if the owner was rich enough to acquire such luxuries. Broaches and belt adornments were made of gold or silver, most often filigreed by an artisan goldsmith. The jacket was very short, reaching just below bust so that the ornately jewelled belt was more visible. This jewellery was called ættarsilfrið, which translates to 'the family silver'. These items are carefully guarded and are still being handed down from generation to generation with a great deal of care.



Faldbúningur

The faldbúningur was worn for special occasions. This skirt and jacket ensemble was accompanied by the white cone headdress which was then draped over by a lacy veil. Under the faldbúningur the lady usually wore a lighter material, less voluminous skirt and a laced-up vest, primarily as undergarments. The jacket and overskirt came off and just the underclothing was worn for working at various household chores around the farmstead and the turf houses. However, these undergarments evolved into more elaborate, less underwear-styled clothing. Evenings

were spent embroidering and decorating the vests which eventually became the more common upphlutur outfit we see today. The rather cumbersome cone headdress also went out of general usage and women adopted the more practical knitted and tasseled toque style cap, somewhat similar to what men were wearing at this time.

Skautbúningur and Kirtill

In the 1860s and 1870s, Iceland began a serious effort to gain more rights of self-government from the authoritarian Danish rule. As part of this move to becoming a nation in their own right, an artist Sigurður Guðmundsson took it upon himself to design a proper festive costume for Icelandic women to adopt as their national dress. He designed the skautbúningur and the kirtill. The skautbúningur was very similar to the faldbúningur but with a closed and elongated jacket that reached the waist. Ornate embroidery in silk or metallic threads decorated a band around the bottom of the skirt and along the jacket

front and sleeve cuffs.

By the turn of the 20th century, the kirtill became the more popular of these two designs for major events such as christenings and weddings. The kirtill was of lighter material such as silk, satin or a thinner flannel or wool material and was a more simple design to sew. The artist had envisioned a white dress, but the seamstresses quickly began to turn out blue, green and black dresses. The kirtill had a shoulder yoke which was squared off and the dress was gathered under the yoke at the front and back. The neckline was fairly open and the inlaid sleeves were three-quarter length and wide. The shift-styled dress was gathered at the waist with the 'family silver' belt and a necklace or broach was worn at the throat. Generally, both the neckline and the sleeve ends were decorated with bands of satin ribbon and elaborate embroidery. The artist even designed special embroidery patterns that he wished to see incorporated into the lower part of the skirt. The white cone hat with the lace veil completed this outfit. The kirtill was adopted into the visual images of the Fjallkona, the 'Mother of the Nation' and is now a part of our various Icelandic Festival's Fjallkonu ceremonial garb.



Kyrtill

Upphlutur

It has the traditional black woolen skirt, pleated around the back. There are usually very few if any pleats on the front, underneath the apron. The apron is traditionally of fine hand-woven wool. The traditional outfit has a white shirt of cotton or linen. The shirt design traditionally was very simple; there was no shoulder seam. The shirt design was a large rectangle, folded over with a hole cut in the middle for the neck, and two narrower rectangles sewn in for the sleeves. With the introduction of synthetic materials, these blouses and aprons have become more elaborate and the pattern has become that of a modern-day



PHOTOS: ELVA SIMUNDSSON

Upphlutur

blouse. The skirt is usually black and pleated in the style as described in the *faldbúningur*.

The *upphlutur* has two primary variations. The vest is traditionally made of wool and most often it is black but it also appears in navy. The back is decorated with three strips of black velvet, outlined in silver or gold threads. The front is decorated with two wider black velvet bands. On some of the more elaborate decorated vests the fastenings and decorations are of fine silver or gold filigreed leaves and flower patterns. On others, these bands are embroidered with flowers and leaves in silver, gold or else various coloured silk threads. There is usually a belt, also decorated in matching patterns of embroidery or precious metals that outline the vest from the skirt and apron.

When outfits are sewn in children's or young ladies' sizes, there is often more colourful materials used. Frequently they will feature a brightly coloured vest and a matching band of colour around the skirt.



Skotthúfa

Traditionally, the cap was a knitted wool stocking cap, with a black wool tassel. Later outfits have introduced velvet as a base for the cap. The tassel is attached

at the cap in a gold or silver cylinder. There seems to be no particular rules regarding whether the tassel hangs over the shoulder to the right or the left.

Peysuföt

The *peysuföt* outfit was considered 'every-day' women's wear. It has evolved through the centuries from being a simple, knitted 'peysa', (sweater) to a tailored jacket of woolen material. The material is occasionally dark blue, but most times the jacket is sewn in black. By the nineteenth century the woolen jacket was, and still is in common use.

The jacket is short, reaching just to the waist, with a hook and eye closure at the top and bottom. It is long-sleeved and collarless but with a band of material of different weave (often velvet) circling the neckline and outlining the front opening or else as cuffs at the end of the sleeves. Some women chose to enhance the band with an embroidered leaf and vine design, but often it was a black-on-black decoration. The top and bottom closing allows the jacket front to open, revealing a white cotton or silk undershirt. The outfit is finished with a decorative scarf. The scarf is folded into a fairly narrow band, tied in a knot at the throat with the ends draped over to opposite sides of the jacket. Sometimes, this scarf is tied into a single loop bow. The bow is then



Peysuföt

angled to one shoulder and the ends are draped down to the opposite sides of the jacket.

The skirt for this outfit is essentially the same that described with the *faldbúningur* and *upphlutur*. It is a black wool, pleated across the back. With this outfit, women often had two aprons. One of woven wool for everyday usage and a second, more ornate apron with brighter colours for wear on special occasions.

This outfit was not as richly decorated as the other traditional outfits. Often the only silver or gold jewellery worn was a broach pinned at the throat fastening or on the scarf-knot. For some, the small silver or gold cylinder at the joint of the knitted wool cap and the tassel was substituted with silver or gold or even just black thread wound around the top of the tassel.



Men's Suit

The suit currently in vogue is a modern version of the traditional men's suit. It can be worn in lieu of a tuxedo for formal occasions as well as any other semi-formal events. This is the updated suit style that was designed and given formal approval in 1994 to commemorate Iceland's 50th year of independence from Denmark. The jacket, vest and pants are of a fine, black wool. The vest is double buttoned. The buttons on the vest are either cast silver or pewter stamped with an Icelandic Coat of Arms pattern. The shirt is white cotton with an attached white scarf tie that replaces the collar from an otherwise classic men's white shirt. One end of the scarf is overlapped over the other and held together at the throat with a closed silver clasp. This form of styling is said to be much more comfortable to wear than the standard tight-to-the-throat buttoned shirt and tie.

References

<https://annriki.is>

<http://buningurinn.is/thjodbuningar>



Íslenska lopapeysan Origins, history and design of the Icelandic lopi sweater

by Ásdís Jóelsdóttir
Assistant professor in textile University of Iceland

The Icelandic lopi sweater is seamless and made from unspun Icelandic wool (lopi) in natural colours and knitted on circular needles, with a band of pattern around the yoke and a section of the pattern repeated around the lower part of the body and the ends of the sleeves.

During the Danish trade monopoly (1602-1787), knitted goods, including sweaters, were important export items.

Even though the first figures for the export of sweaters is dated from 1743, sources indicate that “sweaters” or “shirts” used as under-, mid- or nightshirts were

being exported from 1724 and possibly from the 16th century.

Fine-knitted sweaters were exported until 1753, but in 1724 the sweaters were more chunkier and quickly-knitted and made of “bulky twisted single strand”, while spun band is mentioned for other goods.

Chunkier and quickly made Icelandic lopi sweaters therefore apparently have their origins further back in Iceland’s knitting heritage than previously thought.

Knitting was not introduced in Iceland until the 16th century and then it spread rapidly since almost anyone could learn how to knit. Knitting was thus not only a means of eking out a living but also a profitable source of income and everyone who was able to had to knit. This is one of the main reasons knitting was passed on from one generation to another in Iceland.

Icelandic wool is characterised by having a longer coarser outer coat (tog) and finer undercoat (þel), which gives firmness to the unspun strands.



Around 1898



Wool factories were established in Iceland towards the end of the 19th century

The advantages of Icelandic wool in wet, cold or warm weather were also more apparent when it was unspun.

Unspun lopi in natural different color is used to knit the classical Icelandic sweater.

Wool factories were established in Iceland towards the end of the 19th century. Mechanisation of the wool industry created the lopi and formed the basis of the beginning and development of the lopi sweater.

Educational laws (10-14 years) were passed in 1907. At the same time, work obligation was abolished in the countryside. Young people started to move from the countryside to the urban areas. With the increase in fishing came an urgent need



Unspun lopi in natural different color is used to knit the classical Icelandic sweater



for warm clothing and knitting with lopi increased in popularity and developed among working-class women, for whom knitting was an obvious occupation and essential to making ends meet. Lopi is very suitable for thick and fast-knitting sweaters



From 1912



1930-40

and was cheaper than spun band and due to a lack of time and manpower, lopi was used for hand-knitting. Knitting from strands of unspun wool was unknown in other countries. Lopi itself is one of the main characteristics of Icelandic lopi sweaters.

During The Great Depression import restrictions were imposed. It was also the reason for that the Icelandic women started to use more the unspun lopi to fast-knit sweaters with loose and thick loops in the beginning for the workers and the fishermen.

Sweaters for fishermen and farmers, were also with pattern.

In the 1940s – the round circle is beginning to be more prominent, but the sleeves are sewn into the arm – like the fashion was at that time. The circular design band was originally made with raglan decreases, and later with decreases between the design bands and inside the pattern elements, or a mixture of both.

It is the design band that gives the lopi sweater its greatest value: it attracts attention and is the sweater's most striking



Sweater from ca 1938/39 with round yoke pattern

feature. Old and different Icelandic pattern from knitting, weaving and embroidery and old knitting techniques – were inspiration for the sweaters.

Iceland was a Danish colony, like Faroe Islands and Greenland. Many people misunderstood and thought that Icelanders were also Eskimos.

During the Second World War, American soldiers wanted to buy souvenirs and send them to their homeland – and they liked the myth of the Eskimos.

Many sweaters with “eskimo look” were sold during the 1940s and the 1950s.

Iceland gained full independence from Denmark in 1944 and Icelandic pattern books increased in the '40s and '50s.

Auður Sveinsdóttir Laxness, the wife of Halldór Laxness, the great Icelandic writer, is here in her own lopi-sweater in 1943. She knitted many sweaters and made her own pattern and had a major impact on the development of the sweater.

In late 1940s, lopi came to be used almost exclusively. The main reason was that ration coupons were not needed for buying lopi and if sweaters were made at home they were not subject to rationing. The reason was to encourage people to make their own clothes and at the same time to maintain home crafts and the fact that knitted products were an important source of extra income for many homes.

The popularity of patterned woollen sweaters for both men and women became



Auður Sveinsdóttir Laxness



The circular pattern around the shoulders is probably influenced from the costume but the pattern is Icelandic.



Lopi sweaters are suitable for almost everyone and for all kinds of activities

evident during the 1940s and 1950s and when interest in ski and mountaineering increased and people had more free time for leisure activities. The lightness and airiness of machine-produced lopi was very suitable in such conditions and it was much warmer than spun band.



The first Icelandic knitting recipe for lopi-sweater was published in 1963



Students at the Women's school in Blönduós (in northern Iceland) 1963/64 in lopi-sweaters with different variations of patterns

The lopi sweater was also popular amongst young people in Iceland.

1960-62 saw the beginning of a rise of exports of wool products by selling machine-knitted wool sweaters to the Soviet Union and hand-knitted lopi sweaters to the United States.

Factors such as the thickness of lopi, the number of colours in the design, the decrease method and the use of circular needles all helped towards simplifying how Icelandic lopi sweaters were knitted and developing them as a commercial viability.

In 1967, 40.000 hand-knitted lopi sweaters were exported and it were the





Big wool companies started their own design in the beginning of the '80s

Icelandic women who made it possible.

They did not work outside the home, and knitting was a source of extra income. The women developed both varied patterns and a fast knitting technique.

The craftsmanship behind the sweater is unique, because it is possible to knit a medium sized lopi sweater, with yoke pattern, almost in one piece with loose and thick loops in about 10-15 hours of work.

Lopi sweaters are suitable for almost everyone and for all kinds of activities.

The balls of Icelandic band, hespulopi/Álafosslopi (loosely-twisted 3-ply lopi), that came to the market in 1967 were primarily intended for export because foreign knitters could not knit directly from the wheels of unspun strands (plötulopi).

Iceland became member of EFTA in 1970 to be able to sell their wool products. In 1973, the wool industry had become the third largest industry in the country.

At this time, young people were the heralds of new fashions and formed a



growing target group for marketing. It was claimed that if a product was in favour among young people, it would sell both at home and abroad.

In the year 1970 the now familiar identity or trademark of the "Icelandic lopi sweater" is more or less completed. At the same time more than 2000 women were knitting lopi sweaters for about 20 exporters. It was considered remarkable that wool, as raw material, was produced into well-designed clothes and valuable export products.

In the beginning of the '80s the big wool companies started their own design

departments with knitting and textile designers.

The handknitters, who also had been making the pattern, were now more knitting to fulfill orders from retailers, knitting recipes in pattern periodicals but also for the tourist market as they still do today.

The mass production of the clothing-industry in Western Europe was largely in low-income Asian countries. After 1985 the big Icelandic wool companies faced economic problems and ceased operations in 1991.

Today there is just one big spinning



Today there is just one big spinning factory in Iceland

factory in Iceland. The hand-knitting and the pattern survived in the hand of the Icelandic women who worked for the big companies and also because of newer editions of knitting recipes in pattern books.

The sweater has in recent years been a popular model for young Icelandic designers that have gained inspiration from the raw materials, pattern, design, craftsmanship and the image that the lopi sweater stands for.

Thanks to the cheapness of the raw material, the simplicity of the sweater, and the speed at which it could be produced, the Icelandic lopi sweater became a valuable sales article.

It is also clear that the lopi sweater was not “designed” by one knitter or knitwear designer, but rather that many sources of influence came together to create its form and manner of production. Today the Icelandic lopi sweater is held in respect and regarded as a valuable part of Iceland’s history and culture.



The sweater has in recent years been a popular model for young Icelandic designers

The main threats to the lopi sweater in recent years have been imports of foreign imitations. Imitations have had a damaging effect on sales of hand-knitted sweaters that are made by knitters in Iceland.

If this continues, there could be a damaging effect on important heritage skills that are deeply rooted in Icelandic cultural and employment history.

An application for a protected product name “Icelandic lopi sweater” is now in a registration process.

My research about the lopi sweater is an important part of the application.



Bohus-sweater from 1947.
Fair Island in the '60s.

They are all knitted from yarn not from “lopi.”

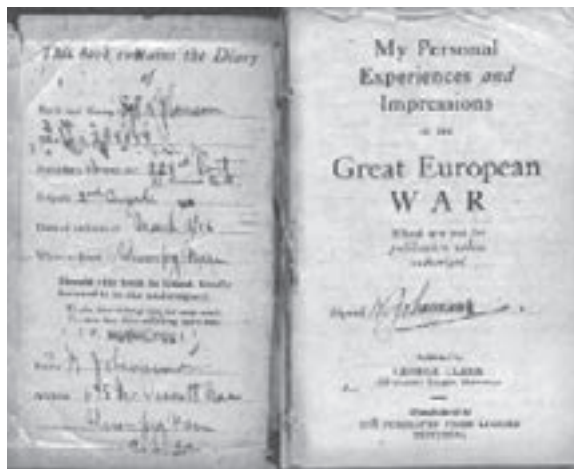


Auður Sveinsdóttir Laxness – wearing lopi-sweater from 1943, she made her own yoke pattern



Daily Life in the 223rd (the Scandinavian-Canadian Battalion) from Konnie Johannesson's 1917 Diary

by Brian Johannesson



Cast of Icelandic Characters

Thanks to Jon Sigurdsson IODE for the use of the biography pictures from Minningarrít



(L-R): Freda (Holmfrídur) Johannesson, in Grade 11 at Central Collegiate, living with her parents, Agust and Margaret at 644 Simcoe Street. She and Konnie were married in May 1921.
 Davey – John Davidson, another Icelandic friend. On the Falcons Executive Committee
 Frank – Frank Fredrickson, Konnie's childhood friend, Falcons player and violinist
 Axford – Captain 'Hebbie' Axford, the Falcons President



(L-R): Harry, Haraldur Johannsson, Freda's older brother, wounded at Vimy Ridge in May 1917.
 B.M. Paulson, another mumps case
 Bill Einarsson, another violinist along with Frank and Konnie
 Joseph B (or J.B.) Skaptason – they may have lived at Hythe near Shorncliffe



Major H.M. (Marino) Hannesson, a Falcons Executive
 Konnie Johannesson, the author of the Diary
 Ole Bjornson, the source of the mumps
 Tubs – a good friend of Konnie and Freda, never known by any other name, only a picture
 Also mentioned:
 Fred Thorlakson, Emil Johnson, Bjarni Stefansson, Steve Solvason, Bill Goodman, Ole Freeman

Konnie and many other people in the Diary had enlisted in the 223rd Battalion of the Canadian Army in March or April 1916. Frank F., Wally Byron, Bobby Benson, Harvey Benson and Konnie were now playing on the 223rd Division Hockey team. Hebby Axford was on the Executive and Gordon Sigurjonsson was the Trainer.

Selected days from the 1917 Diary

Wednesday Jan 3rd: Hockey practice at 4 pm. Went down early to Recruiting Office then over to the Amphitheatre. Skated awhile then practiced. Fair condition. Got seats for game on the fourth. Got home

from practice at 6:30.

Thursday Jan 4th: Took skates to Brawells. Went down to Recruiting Office in afternoon. Ordered special sticks. Played Vics (Victorias) our game, their score 4-3. Was in fair shape.

Friday Jan. 5th: Took 12:05 train for Portage la Prairie (to Camp Hughes) Wrote F. on train. Rode up to Portage Hotel in bus. Idled away afternoon. Supposed to practice but didn't. Skated at Portage rink for first time. Frank and I alone all night, many apologies to girls.

Saturday Jan. 6th: (at Portage) Got up at 8:00 am. No breakfast, not time. Over

on parade at 8:15. Beat it again at 8:45 for Wang's had breakfast with Capt. Lindal and Tom Johnson. Hockey practice at 3:00 Pm. Fair work out. Ate at 6:00. Home and cleaned up and went to dance, helped Bill G. Played one extra on fiddle and drums rest of evening.

Monday Jan. 8th: (at Portage) Arose at 7:40 am. On parade. Beat it, went to Tailors. Bummed around Canteen and Pay Office all morning. Hockey practice at 3:00. Noticed bad hip for first time. Home at 6 Pm. Meeting of hockey players at 8:00 Pm in Capt. Hannesson's rooms in Portage Hotel. Went over to rink and looked on. Then home to bed.

Tuesday Jan. 9th: (at Portage) Arose at 7:40 am. Went on Parade, skipped off. Went to Tailor's and Barber's. Bummed around canteen. Went down to Villa at 10. Lay down from 10 to 12. Hockey practice at 3. Didn't go out.

Wednesday Jan. 10th: (at Portage) Arose at 7:40. Breakfasted at mess, almost choked. On parade at 8:00, Paymaster's muster parade. Beat it at 10:00, home to Villa, Frank and I. Ate at 12:40. On parade at 2:00. Vaccination, I excused (hockey players) Beat it down to rink to pack stuff and send in to city (Winnipeg). Retired at 12:00.

Thursday Jan 11th: (at Portage) Arose at 8:15, breakfasted at Mess. Went home and packed my junk. Woke up Frank and Joe. Took train for city at 10:40. Train 20 mins. late. Got home at 1:00. Ate and called up F. couldn't get hold of her. Went down to Recruiting Office at 2:00 then to Orpheum with the boys. Went to Monarch-Vics game in evening with Lun(?), Monarchs 7, Vics 4. Retired at 11:30 pm.

Friday Jan 12th: Went down to Y.M.C.A. at 10:00. Some of the boys didn't turn up so we bowled for a while and went home. Went down to Recruiting Office in afternoon. Hockey practice at 4:00. Everybody out. Volker out, no good.

Through at 7:00. Didn't go home for supper. Ate at Venice with the bunch. Shot couple of games of Snooker at the Stag with Joe & Frank.

Saturday Jan. 13th: Hockey practice at 4:00. Home again at 7:20 pm. H. Baldwin called up at rink, about 7. Joe, Ole and I decided to go to Toboggan party.

Monday Jan. 15th: Stayed home all morning. Went to Tom's with Frank and got special sticks made. Played Frank game of Snooker, beat him 42-6. Played Monarchs, beat them 5-4. Fastest game yet. F. waited, bunch went to Kensington. The 2 Bills beat it to catch train.

Wednesday Jan. 17th: Hockey practice at 4:00 pm. Home at 6:30. Took F. to Walker (Theatre) in evening. Home at 11:40 after spending time in Waverly. Party already there, some girls and Axford too. Retired at 12:00.

Thursday Jan. 18th: Stuck around house all morning. Went out to Baldwin's and Recruiting Office in afternoon. Then to Mart Hooper's for sticks. Stuck around Stag, bowling for a while. Home at 5:00. Game in evening 223rd & Vics. Left for game at 7:00. Vics defeated us 6-3. Retired at 12:30.

Saturday Jan. 20th: (at Portage) Stuck around all morning, didn't do anything in particular. Refereed game between 223rd and Monarchs in evening, made a great success of it. Banquet of hockey players after game. Home at 1:30.

Sunday Jan. 21st: (at Portage) Stuck around house all afternoon. Invited out to Metcalfe's for evening. Capts. Scholer and Hannesson there. I did some sketching for them. Pretty fair likenesses. Home at 12:30 am. P.S. Hockey practice from 3 to 4 in afternoon.

Thursday Jan. 25th: (at Portage) Took train for city at 10:20, arrived home at 12:40. Hockey practice at 4:00. Went out to Waverly about 9:30. Retired about 12:30.

Friday Jan. 26th: Stuck around house. Went to Amphitheater in afternoon. Hockey practice. Had a good workout. Home at 6:30. Tubs came over, F. called up at time. I went home and made a punch. Retired at 10:45.

Saturday Jan. 27th: Went to Pantages with Frank. Hockey practice at 5:00 pm. Went to Orpheum in evening with F., dropped into Waverly on way home. Ole to be there, he was not.

Monday Jan. 29th: Did sketch of Ole. Got Harvey, Bobby and Byron in afternoon. Chased all over Sargent (Avenue) and Recruiting office for Bobby & Byron. Found them at 5 pm. Rushed home and finished them. Took bunch down to dressing room, gave them to Laydon at half-time. Monarchs beat us 5-3. My skates too fast for me, couldn't stand up.

Wednesday Jan. 31st: Stuck around house all morning. Did sketch of F's portrait in ink. Hockey practice at 5:00. Went over to F's after practice, stayed the evening. Got home about 12:00.

Thursday Feb. 1st: Went down to Recruiting office. Met Joe, played couple of games of snooker, won one apiece. Played Vics in evening. They outscored us, our game as far as play went. Bad knee, didn't get to sleep until 4:20 am.

Monday Feb. 5th: Got pass & Ole's letter. Called up Harvey at Portage and found didn't have to go out. Called up F. and managed to go to game, Vics 7, Monarchs 5. Poor game.

Tuesday Feb. 6th: Stuck around house in morning. Hockey practice at 4:30. Went to Orpheum with F. in evening, fair show. Dropped

into Waverly. Home at 11:30.

Wednesday Feb. 7th: Stuck around house until 3:30. Hockey practice at 4:30. Went to Pantages in evening. Seats for 1st show. Too late, went to second show. One good act only. Home at 11:30 after dropping in on Waverly. Frank & a dame there.

Thursday Feb. 8th: Stuck around house all morning. Went downtown, to Stag and Recruiting office. Hockey game in evening against Monarchs. Our game 9-3. Went up to Waverly after game with F. Got home about 12:30.

Saturday Feb. 10th: Went to Stag in afternoon. Hockey practice at 5. Didn't go home, went straight to F's. Stuck around a little while then went to Wonderland. Stayed awhile at F's on returning, got home at 12:15.

Monday Feb. 12th: Went downtown in afternoon. Dropped into Stag. Everybody shows 5-3 or 2-1 on us for game. Hockey game in evening. Just managed to beat Vics



223rd O.S. Battalion (Canadian Scandinavian) Hockey Club
Winnipeg Patriotic League. Season 1916-1917

Top Row (L-R): Staff Sgt. G.G. Bjornson, Rover. Sgt. G. Sigurjonsson, Trainer. Capt. A.H. Lund, President. St. H. Axford, Executive. F. W. Walker, Defense.

Bottom Row: Cpl. Wally Byron, Goal. Pte. B. J. Benson, Defence. Sgt. Konnie Johannesson, Defence. C.S.M. H. Benson, Right Wing. Corp. Frank Fredrickson, Captain. Sgt. J. Olson, Left Wing.

8-7. They tied us 6-6 at half time.

Tuesday Feb. 13th: Downtown at 10:00 AM. We allowed to stay until Wednesday. Some luck. Went to Pantages in afternoon with Frank. Orpheum in evening with F. One of nicest evenings I ever spent with F. Happy as a lark. F. in great spirits. Retired about 12:00.

Thursday Feb. 15th: (at Portage) Drilled a class in afternoon. Officers and O.C. (Officer Commanding) looking on. I green at it, did none since Christmas. All OK. Went to movie in evening, Charley Chaplin, funny? Got home about 10:00 after dropping in to I.O.D.E. coffee rooms.

Friday Feb. 16th:(at Portage) Went to City on 10:00 train, arrived home at 12:30. called up F. Had hockey practice at 4 pm. Walked home from Amphitheater at 6:30, bad storm, no cars. Stayed home all night. Retired at 10:30.

Saturday Feb. 17th: Hockey practice at 12:00. Had dinner at 5. Bought seats for Walker. (Theater) Called for F. at 7:30. Went to Walker in evening.

Monday Feb. 19th: Mended my puttees. Stayed home all day and read. Played Monarchs in evening. Winkler (?) beat us 5-4. Was to go to Portage same night. Didn't.

Thursday Feb. 22nd: Went down to Recruiting office at 2:00. Saw Capt. Snidal, I am to go to school to qualify as a Lieutenant, on Monday 26th for 6 weeks. To Duluth on 28th. Went to 223rd Auxiliary concert in evening. F. & her mother there, saw them home. Stayed until 12:00, retired about 12:30.

Monday Feb. 26th: Reported at school at 9:00, home at 12:00. Back at school at 2 pm, dismissed, went to show with the boys. Home at 5:30. F. Went to hockey game with F. Home at about 11:30 pm.

Tuesday February 27th: Arose 8:00 am. School all morning and afternoon. Went to Royal Alex (andra Hotel) with F

& B. Had a very nice time. Went to Venice after dance. Home at 2:30.

Wednesday February 28th: Arose 8 am. School all morning. Leave in afternoon to go to Duluth. Put on my civilian clothes and met F & B on their way to school. Left for Duluth at 5:10, dined on train. Inebriation moderate in gang after crossing the boundary. Retired in berth about 12:00. Slept very little. Kept awake by night wanderers' glee.

Thursday March 1st: Arose at 9:00 AM, at Duluth at 10:20. Walked up to Hotel McKay, registered there with the bunch. Had lunch after practice at rink about 12:15. Talk about luck – didn't have to play in game, Walker played. Went to Cabaret St. Louis after game.

Friday March 2nd: Went to game in evening, acted as judge of play. People didn't understand rules of game, had eats at Haley's.

Saturday March 3rd: Breakfast at Haley's. Other boys left for St. Paul at 8:00 am. Dinner at hotel at 6:30. Took train for Winnipeg at 7:00. A quiet time on train, retired at 10:30, slept well.

Monday March 5th: School all morning and afternoon. Went to game in evening, Vics & 221st with F.

Tuesday March 6th: School all morning and afternoon. Played scrub hockey game. Went to Wonderland with the boys, home at 11:30.

March 7th to April 4th: Military school all morning and afternoon, no more hockey games.

Thursday April 5th: Written and practical exams.

Saturday April 6th: School all morning. Company Drill exams. Heard results in afternoon, I qualified as Lieutenant.

Wednesday April 11th: Played at 223rd Band Concert in evening, F. sang and Bea accompanied her.

Sunday April 15th: Home all morning

and afternoon, (at 675 McDermot Ave, where Konnie lived with his parents Jonas and Rosa), went to Church (First Lutheran on Victor St.) in evening. Farewell sermon, Freda sang, simply great. Shook hands with all my friends. Beat it for the Dominion 223rd Battalion concert. Walked up Portage Ave., met Kelly and Benson, walked to station with them, saw the bunch off. Retired at 12:50.

Tuesday April 17th: Took train to Portage la Prairie at 8:25 am, arrived at 10:10. General on train, he beat me to inspection. I got on parade at 11:00 am, on parade in afternoon. Stayed at boys' suite all evening, retired at 11:00.

Saturday April 21st: (at Portage La Prairie) Arose at 7:00, on parade at 7:45. Called up Freda. in Winnipeg, couldn't get away by hook or crook. On parade all day. Fixed up packs that night and went to dance at Prior. Rotten place, danced 3 dances and sat out rest. Got back at 12:30.

Sunday April 22nd: (at Portage La Prairie) On parade in morning, muster parade in afternoon. Preparing for Overseas in the afternoon and evening. Men confined to Barracks.

Monday April 23rd: (on train, day 1) Arose at 4:30 am. Entrained at 7 am. Left at 10:00, arrived at Winnipeg at 12:00. (his family and friends were there to see Konnie and the Icelandic contingent off) Spent rather blue afternoon. Retired at 10:20, time change 1 hour ahead.

Tuesday April 24th: (on train, day 2) Arose at 6:30. All morning en route. Physical drill at Grant (a stop?) for half an hour. All afternoon on train. Wrote a few postcards and retired early.

Wednesday April 25th: (on train, day 3) Cleaned up for march during the morning. Stopped at North Bay and went for a march around town. Left North Bay at 4:00 pm. Ate and had a good concert on train. Bill & I played violins, bunch sang.

Went to bed at 9:00 pm.

Thursday April 26th: (on train, day 4) Arrived at Ottawa during the night. Arose at 5:30. Duke's (Governor-General's?) inspection at Main Station, I Platoon Commander. Lots of sweets dished out by Ottawa girls. Left Ottawa at 10:00 pm. Travelled all night, passed through Montreal. Much booze on train.

Friday April 27th: (on train, day 5) Travelled all morning. Arrived at Riviere du Loup at 2 pm, short march and run. Left and arrived at Campbelltown N.S. at 8. Went for a short route march over town. Left at 9:00. retired at 10 pm, awakened by Tom and Tubs, stayed awake until 12:00. Fell off the water wagon, took a smell of the cork. Everybody soused but I.

Saturday April 28th: (on train, day 6) Arose at 7:30. Travelled steadily until 11:00 am, Held up at Londonderry (Nova Scotia) by a wreck. Waited until 7:30 then went on to Truro. Stopped for about an hour. Very cold and wet. Ole Bjornson sick with the mumps. Retired at 11:00, pulled out into yards and fell asleep while waiting.

Sunday April 29th (on train, day 7) Breakfasted at 9, ate 4 eggs. Best breakfast yet. Arrived at Halifax at 11 am. First glimpse of Halifax and ocean-going Liners, Navy Cruisers and day boats. Stopped on side track in yards at 4:30. Went for a route march in afternoon. Saw Halifax, poor impression. Sat in train all night, had concerts in each car, sang and played.

Monday April 30th (on train in Halifax, day 8) Arose at 7:00. Went for route march in morning. Went for route march and football game in afternoon. Tied 182nd Battalion 1-1. General leave during evening 6-10 pm.

Tuesday May 1st: (on train in Halifax, day 9) Bath parade to YMCA in morning. Leave in afternoon, went through stores, bought music and underwear. Got back to Coaches 5:30. Confined to cars during

evening. Played some of the new pieces.

Wednesday May 2nd: (on train in Halifax, day 10) Raining outside in torrents. Stayed in coaches all morning ready for embarkment. No orders, so leave granted from 5 to 7 pm. Went down to Madir's Cafe and Barber Shop. Got back to coaches, had concert, retired at 10:00.

Thursday May 3rd: (at Halifax, day 11) Waiting for orders to embark. Orders came at 11:00, embarked on *Justicia* at 12:30. I received 2nd Class passage. Swell little cabin for 4. Ate same as Officers. Waited for Pay Box when loading our baggage. Left Halifax at 7:00 pm. Tugs pulled ship out of Dock. Passage through mined area and first symptoms of sea sickness, dizzy giddy feeling. Retired at 9:00 pm, lay awake for long time.

Friday May 4th: (at sea, day 12) Assembly at 10:00 am. Had a snooze before and after dinner. Went up with the boys to the Wet Canteen, had 1 Port Wine and 2 Beers. Stayed in cabin until 3, pay parade then. Went down to cabin, slept, ate and retired at 9:00 pm.

Saturday May 5th: (at sea, day 13) Arose at 7:30. Time altered half-hour, change of time caused us to miss breakfast. Had breakfast from our boxes. Assembly blew at 10:30, we all asleep in one cabin. Fitzgerald came down and woke us. About half-hour late on Parade. Ate and had a snooze. Sat down in cabin for afternoon. Walked the decks for a short time in the evening. Retired at 9:30.

Sunday May 6th: (at sea, day 14) Arose at 7:00 am. Deck Sentry Sergeant. Posting Sentries all day and night. Had short sleeps during the night.

Monday May 7th: (at sea, day 15) Came off Sentry duties at 9 am. No breakfast, ate some fruitcake and candy. Slept until 10, Assembly luncheon, then Assembly at 2:00. Had short snooze before dinner. Walked around decks for awhile.

Tuesday May 8th:(at sea, day 16) Arose at 7:40. Detailed fatigues for ship work. Assembly at 10, read until noon. P.T. at 1 pm for 'A' company. Through at 3 pm. Boxing tournament started in afternoon.

Wednesday May 9th: (at sea, day 17) Arose at 7:15. Did nothing in particular during morning. P.T. for 'A' Company at 1:00, Boxing Tournament at 3:00.

Thursday May 10th: (at sea, day 18) Arose at 7:15. Did nothing in particular in morning. P.T. for 'A' Company at 1:00. Boxing Tournament in afternoon. Clarkson won heavyweight. Assisted Fitz in raising details for the following day. Retired late.

Friday May 11th: (at sea, day19) Arose at 7:00. Went on as Sergeant of Deck Sentries, 90 men, at 9 am. Was on duty all day until 11:00 pm. Saw part of Boxing tournament in afternoon. Gillis given poor decision. Went to Dental Corps Concert in evening. Bill layed, Alf accompanied. Went rounds of sentries and then retired at 12:00.

Saturday May 12th: (at sea, day 20) Arose at 7:00. Came off duty at 9:00. Torpedo Boat Destroyers met us during morning and are escorting us. Left the steamer 'Corrigan' behind. Witness in Orderly Room case at 3:00 pm. Saw Exhibition Boxing bouts. Had a salt water bath.

Sunday May 13th: (at sea, day 21) Sat around all morning. Had a concert in afternoon. Doc, Axford, myself, Kelly in our cabin. Sighted land at noon, off north coast of Ireland. Cleaned up and packed. Retired at 11:00. Roused by gang at 12, asleep at 1 am. Arrived at Liverpool during the night.

Monday May 14th: (at sea, at Shorncliffe, day 22) Arose at 7:00. Went up on deck to see Liverpool as it looked from the river. Ate lunch on ship, disembarked at 2 pm. Left for Shorncliffe at 5:45, arrived at 4:00 am. Marched out to Camp. No sleep during night. Stationed at Lower Dibgate, Shorncliffe. Happy as a lark. F. in great

spirits. Retired about 12:00.

Tuesday May 15th: In Quarantine Camp. Had breakfast at 5:00 am. Got into a tent with Bill G, Hank, Tom, Dave, Tubs and B.M. Paulson. Slept until 11 am. Saw first English Airplane and Dirigibles. Muster parade in afternoon. Blankets issued. Sat in Kelly's tent during evening and rain storm. Retired about 9:30. Five of us slept together. Woke up several times during the night.

Thursday May 17th: Arose at 7 am. Paraded Platoon for breakfast during rainstorm. Rained all morning, wrote application for transfer to Royal Flying Corps. Interviewed by OC along with Tom. Sat around in afternoon, wrote Freda and mother, told them about the camp we were in. Went up to 11th Reserve Battalion grounds, played ball after supper, had some refreshments and walked back. Met Joe Task. Back in Camp, sang, fell asleep.

Friday May 18th: Moved into Quarantine tent. Arose at 7. Gave A Company PT for an hour. Marched up to 11th Reserve Batt. divided into Squads. Marched back and put in Quarantine. B.M. Paulson got the mumps. Moved our tent in afternoon and sat around the rest off day. Could not move from our Quarantine square. Retired early. Saw flashlights (searchlights) in sky for first time.

Saturday May 19th: First day of Quarantine, Shorncliffe. Breakfast in bed. List of fellows in our tent in Quarantine: Tubs, Tom, Henry, Davey, Fred Thorlakson, Bill Goodman, Bill Einarson and myself. Cleaned up generally around tent in morning. Were taken for a walk in afternoon, went to Seabrook, a town on sea coast. Returned at 4 pm. Had our supper, lounged around, sent orderlies to Canteen for drinks. Did some sketching after quenching thirst. Sam Kelly came down to tell us about OC's trip to London regarding transfers to Air Service. Got Kelly to steal us a loaf of bread



and then we had pork and beans and bread by candlelight after retiring.

Sunday May 20th: Arose at 9 am. Polished all our buttons and belts, boots. Sat around all afternoon and wrote diary and letters. Heavy rainstorm during night. Our tent flooded. Had broken sleep. Heavy thunder and lightning.

Monday May 21st: Arose at 9 am. Shaved and cleaned up. Dug out trench around tent which had filled in during storm of last night. Slept in afternoon. Played ball with Tom and tried some jumping, running. Had pork and beans in bed with candlelight. Discussed literature with bunch. Fell asleep at 12.

Wednesday May 23rd: Arose at 9 am. Gave 'mumpies' PT. Made out forms for transfer. Played violin with Bill E. all afternoon. Sat around during evening and retired early.

Thursday May 24th: Arose at 9 am. Cleaned up our shoes, buttons, belts, etc. for afternoon. Went down to Folkestone in bunch, met Doctor. Took bus and walked back home. Stopped for lunch on way. 223rd cleaned up in sports for 11th Reserve Battalion. Tired and foot weary after day. Played and sang in rear of our tent then retired early.

Friday May 25th: Slept until 10. Got up and Tubs told us to get ready to move from Lower Digate to 11th. Arrived 11th at noon. Ate under shade of trees by road through 11th and 8th. Moved into Quarantine tent and had just fixed up tent and finished our supper when 'Fritzers' raided us. One bomb dropped 15 ft. from us. Bill E, Bill, Tom, Hank, Davey and I all cut by flying glass. Raid lasted about an hour. Bill E and I hit for prairies and big oak tree. Helped girls over fence on way. Town of Folkestone, 2 streets blown to pieces. Holes out through our tent from shrapnel. Left for Hospital 8:30 for anti-poison injection. Assisted carrying in the wounded at Hospital. Had a lunch at 11:30 (pm) there and then walked back to our tent. Could not go to sleep for a long time.

Saturday May 26th: Arose at 8. Washed up and sat down in our tent to write up yesterday's raid. Lounged around. Took two pictures of wreckage from bombs. Sat around and read all afternoon. Received papers for M.O. examination etc. for Flying Corps. Lounged around in evening and retired early.

Sunday May 27th: Had breakfast brought to us. Lounged around tent all afternoon. Axford and Harman visited us. One continual stream of men from other Battalions passed our tent to see wreckage of bombs. Skipped over to Canteen with Tubs. Lounged around tent all evening.

Wednesday May 30th: Arose at 7 am. Paraded to M.O, send us down to Westcliffe Hospital for examination, eyes and ears for

Air Service. Ate at YMCA hut Shorncliffe. Saw places where bombs fell. Came back to camp, moved tent over in other lines. Polished up new equipment. Retired early.

Thursday May 31st: Arose at 6 am. Cleaned up, paraded to M.O. for examination. Went on Parade in morning and afternoon. Loafed during evening and retired early.

Friday June 1st: Arose at 6 am. Went on Parade. Called off Parade by R.S.M. along with Bill Einarson. Bill and I went to Metropole Hotel in afternoon to play at concert for wounded soldiers. Ate down at YMCA hut, rode home on Bus. Got 4 letters from family.

Sunday June 3rd: Arose at 6 am. Went to Church Parade. Felt rather blue and was much affected by hymns and prayer. Went to tent and sat around. Were told that our transfers had been turned down by Divisional Hdqrs. Felt sore and disappointed. Put on Fire Picket at 8:00 pm, retired at 10:15.

Tuesday June 5th: On parade all morning and afternoon. Air Raid warning at 5:50. Beat it for trenches. Out of trenches at 6:50. Went to YMCA hut for coffee.

Wednesday June 6th: Arose at 6:00. On parade in morning. Went over to Hut 23, met Ross Miller, found out about R.F.C. Saw Fred Walker, paraded before Cameron. Advised to parade before O.C. Battalion. Retired early.

Thursday June 7th: Arose at 6 am. Hut Orderly for morning. Paraded before O.C. in afternoon, was told that he would see what he could do. Stayed off parade in afternoon, Hut Orderly. Sat around during evening. Retired 10 pm.

Friday June 8th: Arose at 6:00. On parade during morning and afternoon. Received form for application to Officer's Cadet Corps from Major Hannesson in London. Sat around during evening, retired at 10 pm.

Sunday June 10th: Church parade during morning. Filled in Cadet course forms and gave them to Major Hannesson. Sat around tent and cleaned brasses while bunch played Banker.

Monday June 11th: Parade all morning and afternoon. Sat around tent during evening. Gave R.F.C. papers to Major Hannesson. Retired 10 pm.

Friday June 15th: Arose at 6 am. Muster parade all morning. Up before O.C. at 1:00 pm regarding RFC transfers. B.O. for afternoon. Air raid warning at 7 pm, another at 8:30. Wrote mother during 2nd and told about my transfer. Back in tent at 10 pm.

Sunday June 17th: Arose at 6. On Church parade in morning. Kit and foot inspection after. Marched to Ranges, 10 miles in afternoon. Left at 2:00 arrived at 5:00. Terribly hot, many men fell out. Tom and I stuck to it. Had a slice of bread and some jam for supper. Retired at 9 pm, slept out in open.

Tuesday June 19th: Arose at 6. Squad Commander of 16 all day. Quarantine was lifted. Tubs left for Western Hangars(?) C.A.M.C. Headquarters. Retired early

Wednesday June 20th: Cleaned up and polished as I never did before. Paraded by Col. Walker before Brigadier General Lecky about RFC transfer. Promised to sign and forward them. Tom transferred to C.A.S.C. Davy and I going to RFC. Stuck around tent, all of morning off. Parade in afternoon. Went to Lord Roberts Club in evening, heard about Belgium trouble. (Vimy Ridge?) Best string band I've heard. Retired early.

Saturday June 23rd: On parade as Squad Commander in morning. Got late pass and went down town. Had first Creme de Menthe and Manhattan cocktail, few beers. Went to a Vaudeville show, absolutely rotten. Ate after show, walked back 4 miles in 56 minutes. Saw searchlights in sky not

very far away. Arrived at ten 12:15.

Sunday June 24th: Cleaned up and went on Church parade. Brigadier and General there. (They) Presented MM (Military Medal) to a Corporal. Arranged to go to ranges with 20 Squad. Taken off range party and parades for a week for purpose of training (for a walking race) for Athletic meet July 2. Had a snooze in afternoon. Lay around all evening and retired early.

Wednesday June 27th: Arose at 6 am. Had a work out in morning. Slept in afternoon and had a rub-down. Got paid 5 Pounds 6 Shillings. Had a good feed at S.A. (Salvation Army) Many rumours. Retired early, kept awake by drunks.

Thursday June 28th: Had a work out in morning, set pace. Ordered to appear on Mobilization parade at 3:30 pm. Packed Overseas pack for first time. On parade at 3:30 pm. Dismissed at 6:00 pm. Ate at Salvation Army hut. Sat around tent, retired 9:30.

Monday July 2nd: Arose at 6 am. Appeared on 1st SA (Salvation Army ?) parade in my soldier career. Hung around hut all morning. Left for Folkestone Cricket Grounds at 1:30. Walked in Canadian Army Sports Championship meet. Copped 2nd prize. Tied with a Lieut. for 2nd, tossed and won. I ahead of him all the race, he sprinted and caught up, I sprinted with him and am sure I beat him by a foot or so. Declared a tie. Went downtown with Tom and Halli, ate, met Roy Wellefly. Got back to camp at 11:30.

Tuesday July 3rd to Saturday July 7th: (On leave. Went to Edinburgh Tuesday night. Returned to London July 8th, back to Shorncliffe.)

Monday July 9th: Arose at 6:00. On parade morning and afternoon with Squad 19 on Musketry. Went down town after parade and ordered music for Freda, having it mailed. Received a box from Mother.

Tuesday July 10th: Arose at 6. On

parade all morning and afternoon with 19 for Musketry. Bummed around until retiring. Played violin a little then retired. Tubs visited me at 10:30, says he is going back (to Winnipeg) at the end of the week.

Wednesday July 11th: Arose at 6. On parade in morning, Musketry and muster parade. Off in afternoon, practicing for Concert, Bill, Frank, Steve Solvason and I. Saw Ole Freeman. He going back to Canada. Met Tubs, gave him Diary to take to Freda. At this point the 1917 Diary was split into 2 pieces, the part up to now going back to Winnipeg with Tubs. The note at the front of the Diary says:

“Dearest Freda: As I promised some time ago I am sending you my Diary up to the time of departure of Tubs, who will convey this or smuggle it back with him. (He obviously did). Lots of the contents would not pass a Censor, hence the messenger idea. Tubs has promised to tell you what's what over here and no more.
Yours, Konnie”

(The Diary is now taped together, both parts being reunited when Konnie got back to Winnipeg in April 1919)

Thursday July 12th: Arose at 6 am. Musketry all morning. Off in afternoon to practice for Concert. O.C. met us on way to practice, got Frank and Jackie(?) off as well. Practiced medley of Rags. Played at Concert in evening twice and encored both times, sang an encore for last. Met Miss Baldock, gave her violin. An Aviator above doing good dives and stunts. Had some eats at the Salvation Army. Went back to Hut and retired.

Sunday July 15th: Arose at 6. Church parade in morning. Packed up in afternoon and left for Lyddespont Ranges at 5:00. A nice cool breeze blowing, easy march compared with last. Arrived at 8:00. Were given hot coffee and bread. Retired in hut at 9:30.

Monday July 16th: Arose at 4:00 am. Had some hot coffee and started firing at 4:30. Had breakfast at 7:00. Fired until 10:00, off until 3:00. Fired from 3 until 6 pm. Made 101 points out of possible 110. Scrub ball game in evening. Sat out on cliffs and watched ships go by.

Thursday July 19th: Arose at 4:00 am. On ranges until 9:30, made two good scores. Snipers took ranges at 10:00. We off until 3:00. Shook and aired blankets, cold and windy out, On ranges again at 3:00, off at 6:00. Sat around and retired at 9.

Friday July 20th: Arose at 4 am. On ranges all day as per usual. Was sent for by O.C. to play at Banquet. Left ranges at 4 pm, got back to camp at 5:30, cleaned up. Got parcel from mother. Played in Quartet at Officers' Banquet. Through at 7:30. Went over to Hut, made cocoa and had some eats out of box.

Sunday July 22nd: Off for Church but air raid scattered us. Sat in hot sun all morning, nearly roasted. Went down to Skaptason's in afternoon, all the boys and violins. Had a swell time. Walked home from Hythe, just got back in time. Met Red Bergman of the MT6, he just over.

Tuesday July 24th: Arose at 6. Marched out to entrenching area. Practised trench warfare. Relieving and attack. Had noon hour meal out there. Marched home at 3:30. Arrived at 4:30. Received papers and box from home.

Wednesday July 25th: Cleaned up extra well and shined belt. Paraded before G.O.C. for Commission in RFC, Davey, Frank and I. Congratulated us and spoke of increase in responsibility. Hoped we would make good. Highly elated, we walked back to Camp. I wrote to Dad and told him of my success and asked him for money, to cable later. Ball Game : 11th-6 runs, 18th-2 runs, 11th Champions.

Thursday July 26th: On parade all morning and afternoon, took gas (practice)

in morning, went through chamber. Pay parade in morning, I got 2 Pounds 10 shillings. At YMCA concert after. retired about 10.

Friday July 27th: Arose at 6. Marched down to trenches, practiced trench routine in morning. Threw live bombs in afternoon. Marched back at 4:30, arrived at 5:30. Got letters (from his brother and sister). Had my past, present and future read with cards. Ate at Salvation Army Hut. retired about 10.

Sunday July 29th: Dressed for Church Parade. Let up in rain, fell in on square. Started raining, dismissed. Paraded to YMCA for service. Cold and windy out. Cleared up at 2:00. Went down to Skaptason's for pictures. Met Major Hannesson, he leaving for France that afternoon. Went back to camp at 4:30, made coffee in evening at retired at 10.

Monday July 30th: Arose at 6. On parade with 19, good weather. Inspection in morning, O.C. found my rifle dirty. Not dirty, rusty. Practiced Funeral exercises in morning. Was member of Firing Party at funeral in afternoon. 8th Band attended. Through at 4 pm. Stuck around hut in evening.

Tuesday July 31st: Arose at 6. Raining and windy out. Cold and miserable. Out in shirtsleeves for PT. On parade in Cavalry Sheds all morning. Off in afternoon to practice violins for evening at Banquet in Sergeants' Mess for athletes at 6:30. Fair supper. Retired to Saloon where concert was held. O.C. there. Played in Quartet and sang. Left at 12:30. Others hilariously soused. I disgusted, went home to hut and "put myself to bed".

Thursday August 2nd: Arose at 6, sun up for a short

while, raining again at 7:30. On parade all morning and afternoon. Fooled around Cavalry Sheds and only showed life when Officers came around. Canadian Mail in, I didn't get a single letter.

Sunday August 5th: On Church Parade at 9:00. Brigadier there, 3 MMs (Military Medals) awarded. SAI(?) after Church parade. Sent mother a snap of group in front of tent. Retired early.

Tuesday August 7th: Went to entrenching area, had some more battle practice. Trenches wet and muddy after rain. In some places mud up to ankles. Back at camp at 5:00, took pictures down town and ordered prints to be ready next Tuesday.

Friday August 10th (Konnie's 21st Birthday): On parade all day. Got letters from Harry and Tubs. Sat over in boys' hut for a while and then ate at Salvation Army. Read announcement of George and Lauga's (Konnie's older brother and new sister-in-law) wedding in (Winnipeg) *Free Press*. Retired about 10 pm.

Tuesday August 14th: Cleaned up hut and then myself. Got word to go to London for interview on the 11:14. Left at 10 with



Dressed for church parade

Davey and Frank. Arrived in London at 2 pm. Went direct to Cecil Hotel for interview. Major remarked on my weight. Will give me a trial. To be called later. Sent Freda the score of "Chu Chin Chow" (which was still being played 40 years later), saw the show in evening. Most weird spectacle. Ate after. Went to rooms in Empress Hotel, retired about 12.

Wednesday August 15th (in London):

Had breakfast and went to Trafalgar Square and waited for the American troops to march past. Saw them there, then went to Buckingham Palace and saw them march past King, Queen, Queen Alexandra and Lloyd George and my rifle dirty. Not dirty, rusty. Practiced Funeral exercises in morning. Was member of Firing Party at funeral in afternoon. 8th Band attended. Through at 4 pm. Stuck around hut in evening.

Wednesday August 15th (in London):

Had breakfast and went to Trafalgar Square and waited for the American troops to march past. Saw them there, then went to Buckingham Palace and saw them march past King, Queen, Queen Alexandra and Lloyd George and all the other "muckmucks". Went from there direct to American YMCA Hut. Had the best dinner I ever had in England. Left there and went to Madame Tussaud's Wax Works. Ate at YMCA Hut, left for Charing Cross. Left for Shorncliffe at 7:15. Back at camp that night. Fred Thorlakson waiting for me, he leaving on railroad draft in morning.

Thursday August 23rd:

Arose at 7 am. Hut Orderly for the day. Boys all warned for Draft except Davey, Frank and I. Spent evening with boys in 9E. Read, retired at 9:30.

Friday August 31st: Hut Orderly. Got a letter from Harry (Konnie's future brother-in-law, wounded during the Canadian Army attack on Vimy Ridge) He's going back to Canada, at Buxton waiting for a boat. Wrote him immediately. Spent rest of

the evening with Frank and Mundie. Had eats from Frank's box at YM(CA?). Met Hallie, fooled around on road. Returned to hut, retired.

Saturday September 1st:

Hut Orderly. Went downtown in afternoon. It looked like rain, took a chance and left coats. Ate at Maple Leaf Club, got seats for Pleasure Gardens, "General Post" play on. Tommy fell asleep, Frank silly, I disgusted. Ate at Playdall's. Got soaked. Preached to Frank on way home. He condescended to never touch another drop as long as I didn't. Very simple enough for me. Beautiful moonlit night. Roamed around until 12:20. Made way back and retired, asleep immediately.

Sunday September 2nd:

Hut Orderly. Made up butter patties for D Coy. As I was finishing, Clarence Noise shows 2nd Lieutenant Homer Robinson up. I much surprised. Homer with the RFC, also Johnnie Thompson. Both going to Squadron in Edinburgh where Johnny Farquhar went to. Took Homer over to see Frank. Walked up to Salvation Army Hut. Left them there. Slept in afternoon. Over in Pay Office with Ole in evening. Stayed in Pay Office rather late. Retired about 11.

Friday September 7th:

Arose at 6:30. Hut Orderly. Spent morning with Frank. Draft pulled out. (for France) Lt. Bill C. went to 27th, France. Ole told me about being called to attend RFC course. Tommy told us he was going to France tomorrow at 3. Retired about 10.

Saturday September 8th:

Arose at 6:30. Cleaned up empty hut. Warned to go over to Clearing Depot, away to school. Spent afternoon moving. Took pictures on way. At Clearing Depot at 5. Went downtown, spent evening at Pavilion Hotel with Bjarni Stefansson, Hebbie, Frank and Ole. Walked back to camp leisurely. Retired in Receiving(?) hut at 11:40

Sunday September 9th:

Arose at 7. Cleaned up equipment, turned it in to

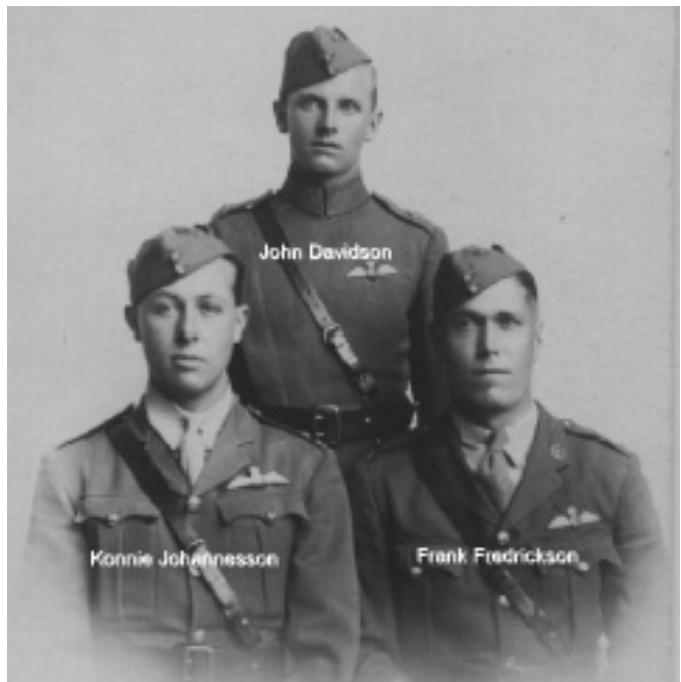
Quartermasters. Had haircut. Repacked my stuff. Had M.O. exam. Went to town on leave with Dave, Ole, Tom, Frank, met Jimmie Jones. Went to Y.M. and then to Royal Pavilion Hotel. Met Bjarni Stefansson there. Walked back to Clearing Depot leisurely. Bjarni walked over with us. Retired about 11:40.

Monday September 10th: Cleaned up, and were sent to St. Leonard's on Sea, Hastings to No. 1 Wing, A Squadron, R.F.C. Cadet School. Changed at Ashford. One hour wait for trains. Roamed around, bought real ice cream. On way to St. Leonard's at 1:05 pm. Arrived at 2:30. Met by Cadets. Paraded to Billet, assigned room. Paraded for Tea. Paraded for particulars. Paraded for dinner, I off till 9. Paraded for Lecture at 9. Back at 10. At St. Leonard's on Sea, No. 1 Flight, A Squadron, No. 1 Cadet Wing, 11 Albany Road, Room 14.

At this point Konnie, Frank Fredrickson and John Davidson were no longer in the 223rd Battalion of the Canadian Army, but were now officially Cadets in the Royal Flying Corps.



Moving from Reserve to R.A.F. September 10 1917



Icelandic-Canadian Pioneer Stories

Part Two

compiled by Gail Halldorson

(Part One printed in Volume 70#2)

Introduction

Oral and written narratives about many Icelandic-Canadian immigrants to the Interlake of Manitoba from the time they arrived in 1875 until the early 1900s have been selected: some happy stories, some sad, some funny, hopefully all interesting (there are a couple of Winnipeg stories, too). There is a preamble before each story to 'set it up' as well as a title for each item. The stories are in italics and have been edited for length and readability using mostly ellipses ... and square brackets []. Regular brackets () are from the original story. The oral narratives are from Magnus Einarsson's book (see bibliography). I tried to keep the spontaneous charm of the spoken word alive. The word "Indian/s" is used if it fits the time period. Today we would use the word "Indigenous". There is a glossary of terms at the end that may be useful.

1. Magnusson Bros. Fish Company, Hnausa, sent Magnus Magnusson to Selkirk to meet a visitor from Iceland.

Magnus and Ingibjorg

One summer day in 1893, Magnus was asked by his employers to take the boat to Selkirk...to pick up a young lady named Ingibjorg, who would be arriving from Iceland to visit her Aunt Valgerdur

Sigurdsson of Hnausa...This was a very exciting prospect for Ingibjorg and she made herself a beautiful bonnet for her trip. In Selkirk, Ingibjorg was met by Magnus Magnusson who took her to Hnausa by boat. During the boat trip her bonnet was blown into the lake by a strong wind. Magnus was busy keeping the boat on course so he was unable to retrieve the bonnet, much to Ingibjorg's dismay and anger. She vowed she would never speak to him again...

Magnus and Ingibjorg were married in 1895 by Reverend Magnus Skaptason. They lived at Nyibaer for two years, then moved into a log house which Magnus built in 1897...

In 1914, with his business interests expanding and an ever-growing family, Magnus built a beautiful, large home at 'Eyjolfstodum'...Magnus and Ingibjorg were tremendous in their generosity and hospitality to all who entered their doors. One of Magnus' friends once said, "I am afraid that my good friend Magnus will never become a rich man, for Ingibjorg, in her warm and generous way, will give it all away."

2. Readers who live in the Interlake in Manitoba will be familiar with the story of the Cree Indian, John Ramsay, and Trausti Vigfusson of Arbog, a poor Icelandic-

Canadian carpenter.

Sometime in the early 1900s, John came to Trausti in a dream with a request that he repair the fence around John's beloved first wife's grave. Trausti wanted John to ask someone else, but John said that Trausti was the only one who could hear him. Several years later, Trausti got the job done. The following are two other stories about Trausti told in oral narrative by his daughter, Thorunn (Tota).

About the Hereafter

There was an acquaintance of [my dad's] here who sometimes came to see him, and he had lost his wife, and he had quite a strong belief in another life, and a rather complete one...and they are talking together about a dream that Dad had dreamed many, many years before... there was some girl in his dream that he wasn't sure who it was...[He] was trying to guess who she might have been. I don't remember the dream, I have never really heard it...this man says to him – he says "Dear Trausti, when I go, I will come to you and tell you everything we have been talking about, as to what's correct in it."

Dad comes home and he tells me about this. And I think like this to myself, I didn't say anything, but I felt he was much more miserable and likelier that he would pass away before this man. But, a week later, this man died suddenly. And I heard this in town the latter part of the day, and tell Dad about it.

We don't talk about it at all, but in the morning, Dad says to me, first thing, "Well, it was strange, my dream guide came to me last night," he says, "and he came with a message and a greeting to me...and he was supposed to tell me that – that he was feeling well" but that he didn't have time to come to him tonight, but that he would come soon, and then he intended to tell him – to talk to him.

Then two nights passed and then he dreamt him, and they spoke together about all of this, and he told him who the girl was (I don't know who she was) and he told him that

it was a lot like they talked about, and that his wife was here, and others. And that this was a beautiful place, and he says, "You will be coming here soon, but not now." Dad was ill that spring; it was really the next to last spring that he lived.

The Missing Brass Piece

Dad was a carpenter, as you knew, and he had a carpenter's chest – tool chest, which is in there...all his tools laid out inside it. There was one plane in there in which there was a loose piece of brass...and he had placed the piece topmost in the chest, on top of the plane in the chest.

But, during this period, he was making spinning wheels, and there was, as happens, a lot of shavings and this and that, and then when he was going to reach for this plane, he found – he couldn't find the piece, took everything out of the chest, and he couldn't find the piece. So, we looked in the wood shavings, or the plane shavings, or the lathe shavings, more correctly put, and didn't find anything. And we went outside where we had thrown them to be burned, the shavings, and we didn't find anything there. And this went on, and he didn't find the piece.

Then a young lad from the neighbourhood came over and asked him for the loan of a trunk. He was going out on the lake, but he thought, because the carpenter's tool chest was possible to lock up, that that was the best trunk he could lend him. So he took all of the tools out of the chest and put them in that trunk, the one you were looking at a while ago, and the plane on top again, but the piece was not there.

More than a year went by. When [Dad] comes and opens the trunk – the piece is on top of the plane.

No one had access to his shop, because it was always locked. He locked it, and he, naturally, thought this to be the work of the hidden people. (laughter)

3. Jon and Paulina Sigurdson came to



Jon and Palina Sigurdson who came to the Narrows in January 1891 on top of a load of freight drawn by oxen.

the Narrows of Lake Manitoba in January of 1891 on top of a load of freight drawn by oxen. In July, twin daughters were born. One of the twins, Emma, writes about the early days.

Pioneering Days

It took great courage to live in isolation miles from the nearest neighbour, especially when father often had to be away, either working for a living, or going to market... Westbourne could be reached by boat in summer, but in winter over the ice of Lake Manitoba.

No wonder mother was often lonely, especially when father was absent from home. Think of a little slip of a woman, only

Rev. Stefan Jonasson

GIMLI UNITARIAN CHURCH

9 Rowand Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 2N4

Telephone: (204) 889-2635

Email: smjonasson@shaw.ca

five feet tall, with three young babies, alone in the wilderness. She had come from a home in her native land where there were twenty people, counting the hired help... To leave such a big household and come to a log cabin must have been a terrific change for a young, jolly woman. One consolation was that she trusted in God's help, also she had three little girls who kept her busy, for a year and a half after [we] were born, a sister, Margaret,

arrived on the scene.

Descendants of the pioneers, Jon and Paulina Sigurdson, are proud of their Icelandic ancestry and culture. Thus, they have contributed one small piece in the mosaic of our Canadian heritage.

4. From an Interlake newspaper column; no name or date available.

Haying Bee for a Sick Neighbour

Thor Sigurdson, John Lindell, Rudy Lindell, George Cowdery and Art Lindell have all been working like mad trying to get hay put up for Rick Lindell, who is in hospital. Thursday last it was so warm, Thor's tractor caught fire, and there were a few exciting moments while the men raced to help. They couldn't save the tractor, but with their shirts and seat cushions soaked in the drinking water, they were able to prevent the fire from getting away when the gas tank blew, spreading the fire all around. Down on their hands and knees, they carefully wet each little flame as it appeared. If the soot on them was any indication, it was a pretty tough session.

5. Guttormur Guttormsson's daughter, "Hulda" Margaret Clarke, gives her father's

account of the day an Indigenous man, his wife, and daughter visited their home. She says her grandmother spoke to them in English and gave them mugs of cold milk. The burial of the baby daughter is told in the second story. It was in 1882 and involved Fridjon and Gudny Fridriksson.

Visit from an Indian Family

When father was a small boy, he loved to sit on the riverbank in front of his home and watch the Indians paddle by in their birchbark canoes. From where he sat, he could also see where their tents were pitched on the opposite bank. One beautiful summer's day, he noticed a canoe turning in towards where he sat, and he watched spellbound as an Indian jumped out and drew the canoe up onto the bank. A woman carrying a baby followed and they walked up the path towards the house... Many years later he still remembered the dress the woman wore and the red and green shawl that covered her shoulders. On her feet she wore beautifully embroidered moccasins... Impressed as he was by her appearance, he was even more so by the man's. The Indian's head was proudly set on wide shoulders, his hair long, black and shining; the eyes were brown with a look of sadness in their depths. Above white pants, he wore a red and white checkered shirt, a multicoloured sash with a fringe encircled his waist, and he too wore embroidered moccasins. So entranced was my father by what he saw that he decided he would like to grow up to be

an Indian just like this one.

After the Indians had paddled away in their canoe, my father learned from his mother that their visitors had been [John] Ramsay and his wife [Elin]. Ramsay was a great friend of the Icelandic settlers and had loaned his cabin to my grandparents when they first arrived at the Icelandic River.

John Ramsay's Request

In 1882, when his infant daughter died at Icclander's River, he went to one of [his] close friends, Fridjon Fridriksson, to ask that the girl be buried alongside the young son that Fridjon and his wife, Gudny, had recently lost. Fridjon and Gudny thought this a beautiful idea, and the two children were laid to rest together, not far from the banks of the river.

6. Rev. Albert Kristjansson came to Canada in 1988. In later life, he was a Unitarian minister in Canada and the United States, taught school, and held a seat in the Manitoba Legislature. This story from his youth is an oral narration of an accomplishment that he considered to be the greatest victory of his life.

The Spelling Bee

...the Icelanders were looked down on by the Brit (laughter) the Anglo-Saxons, who are the lords of law and promises on the Icelanders and all foreigners; they called [us] "foreigners, foreigners." Yes, I should say, I had a seat in the Manitoba Legislature for a short while. They

Guardian

Pharmacist: V. T. Eyolfson

ARBORG PHARMACY

SHARED WISDOM • SHARED COMMITMENT • SHARED VALUES

Box 640, Arborg, MB R0C 0A0

Ph: 204-376-5153

Store Hours: Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Fri. 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. Sun. noon - 6 p.m.

were then still using the word “foreigner”. I told them that they should move it out of their dictionaries. (chuckle) But we – we had to fight for recognition as men – men among men.

...in my mind the greatest victory that I won in my life...I was a boy then. I was in Winnipeg then, went to school there that year... and a competition was then held, a spelling bee. And the kids were divided into two groups and a foreman for each group, see... And then they were given a word to spell, and each time that a kid couldn't spell a word, he was felled. Well, and then the whole team on the other side fell, and I was the only one standing from my group. And I (chuckle) like to say, I much appreciated that victory, precisely because we...had to fight to be recognized as men among men.

7. Gunnar Simundson told this oral



PROUD SUPPORTERS

of the Icelandic Connection

At Pharmasave Gimli
our **Live Well pharmacists**
care about the health and
well-being of our customers.

We want to be with you
every step of the way.

LIVE WELL WITH
PHARMASAVE

204.642.5504
Gimli, Manitoba

narrative. He tended to organize his stories into groups; this story was under the heading of ‘Icelandic Humor’.

The Man in the Moon

The first one is about – deals with Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Johann and Ingibjorg, Vilhjalmur's parents, moved to North Dakota with Vilhjalmur when he was in his second year...his sister Inga was then nearly grown up, but Rosa, the youngest child, was born shortly after they moved south.

Thorlakur of Storur Tjarnir, their neighbour, had eight sons and his oldest son, Bjorn, started to – quickly started to make frequent trips to meet Inga – and his brothers also had various reasons to go over there... Vilhjalmur was then told, when one or the other came over, that this one or that one was the brother of Bjorn Thorlaksson.

One time, when Vilhjalmur was in his third year, Ingibjorg was sitting outside with Rosa and Vilhjalmur was playing nearby when, all of a sudden, he starts staring at a full, newly risen moon. [He] points it out to his mother and asks, “Is that one also Bjorn Thorlaksson's brother?” (laughter)

8. There were Indigenous people in the area when the Icelanders arrived in the Northwest Territories (Manitoba was still the ‘postage stamp’ province). This account gives a glimpse of how they reacted to the fair-haired newcomers. The first story: Fridjon Fridriksson established the first store in Gimli in 1876. The story is from his wife, Gudny Sigurdardottir. In the second story (an oral narrative), Stefania Magnusson relates what her mother told her about when she [Stefania] was a baby. Of the Indians, [Stefania] says “They weren't bad, the Indians, and many of them had a hard time of it.”

Alone at the Store

Yes, there were Indians, and they were not at all overjoyed by our arrival as they thought the land was theirs. We women were terrified of them, especially if the men were away. I

remember how startled I was when I first saw these dark-skinned men. I was alone at home and tending the store when several Indians came in. They undoubtedly found my appearance equally as strange as I found them, and they were especially fascinated by my hair which was light blonde. I really became nervous, though, when one of them came up to me and poked his finger at my glasses; he had doubtless never seen glasses before. They did me no harm, however, nor other women in the settlement, and soon we became used to these people and visited them in their tents.

Greeting the First White Baby

I was born the first winter that Icelanders were here. [The Indians] came here in the fall... about thirty miles north of here, there is a river that runs out of the lake, or runs into the lake, Lake Winnipeg... Well, then... when we came here there [were] nothing but Indians. When these Indians knew that a white child had been born... they started coming in droves to get a look at the white child. None of them had ever – never seen a white child their whole life, not to mention an Icelandic child. (laughter) And the Indian chief – Indian chief – he... Mother said he had been so black and ugly. He – it



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN WEBB

Gudmundur Olson with Gislina and Laura

wasn't enough for him to look – look at me, rather he had to hold me, and then he had been stroking me with fingers about the face and body, with his coal-black fingers. (laughter)

9. Gudmundur Olson and Gislina Gisladdottir were married in Canada in 1886. Gudmundur came with his father, his family, and his father's second family in 1878. Gislina came to Canada with

her mother in 1874, and to Manitoba in 1875. In the first story, Gudmundur's half-brother, G.J. Oleson, wrote about Gislina. In the second story, Gene Telpner of the Winnipeg Tribune wrote about her passing. The third, also in Gene Telpner's column, was information about Ella Benson supplied by Laura Webb. Ella and Laura were two of Gislina's daughters.

Gislina at Seven Years Old

Pall Bjarnason's first wife, Ragnheidur Halldorsdottir, died in August 1874 while waiting to leave for Canada. Pall continued the journey with their five children, the family's domestic servant, Sigurdur Jonsdottir, and her daughter, Gislina Gisladottir. Pall and Sigurdur, who herself was a widow, had at least one child together and later married

in New Iceland.

Gislina at Eighty-six

The last surviving member of the first group of Icelandic pioneers who settled at Gimli died on Feb. 8, 1954 in Winnipeg. Mrs. Gislina Olson, 86, was among the group of Icelanders who landed at Willow Point on October 21, 1875. The first year of her life in Canada was spent at Kinmount, Ontario, after which she came to Gimli with her family.

When she was 18, she married Gudmundur Olson, and they moved to Glenboro, Man. Shortly after, they returned to Gimli. From 1914 to 1923 they lived in Selkirk, Man.

Mrs. Olson did a great deal of community nursing. Her husband built Gimli's first two churches, the town hall, and most of the main street stores, and did most of the work on the dock. He passed away in 1945.

Mr. and Mrs. Olson had four daughters, Mrs. Ella Benson, Mrs. Gudrun Anderson, Mrs. Carrie Paulson, Mrs. Laura Webb; two sons, Frank and Arthur of Selkirk; 18 grandchildren; and 25 great-grandchildren.

Gimli, the Poem

Laura Webb of Winnipeg recently came across a poem her sister, Ella Benson, had written a long time ago. Ella was the organist in the Lutheran Church in Gimli for over 20 years before she and her family moved to Vancouver. This is the poem, titled Gimli:

*"If I had wings and I could fly, I'd be
once more in Gimli;*

*To see the ones I left behind, what
pleasure that would give me.*

*People come and stay awhile and when
they go away.*

*I get a little lonely and I can only pray
That they'll come back some other time
and stay a little longer;*

*And do you know a silent prayer makes
me a little stronger.*

*I have no wings. I cannot fly. That
pleasure I can't give me;*

*But I'll come back some other way and
be once more in Gimli."*



CONSULATE OF ICELAND

Gordon J. Reykdal
Honorary Consul

10250 – 176 Street
Edmonton Alberta T5S 1L2
CANADA

Cell: 780.497.1480

E-mail: gjreykdal@gmail.com

Said Laura Webb: Unfortunately, Ella has gone to her reward and never did get back to her beloved Gimli.

10. An old record book was found in the Steep Rock General Store in 1974. The ledger showed the freight shipped on the "Kayam" between May 24th and October 20th in 1927. A sample trip follows, delivering cans of cream to customers.

The Cream Boat Route

The boat would leave Steep Rock on a Sunday afternoon...then work its way south to Cayer, where there was a cheese factory. There they would anchor out and stay overnight. In the morning the men would load the cans of cream on the boat and set off for the landing on the east side of Big Island. From there they went to John Thorsteinson's landing, then up to Ingvar Gislason's, then through Cherry Island narrows and up to Gudmundur Hjartarson's on Peonan Point in time for four o'clock coffee,

reaching Steep Rock before dark. On Wednesday they would leave Steep Rock again and go south to A. Sviestrups where they stayed overnight at Dog Creek. On Thursday they went north to A. Freeman's, stopping at Arni Paulson's and on to B. A. Johnson's and on to Erlendson's point before returning to Steep Rock on Thursday evening.

11. From *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, Geirfinnur Peterson tells about Helgi Einarson.

Helgi Never Missed a Dance

People on [Gunnlaugson] Island held a dance in the winter of 1889-90, and invited everyone...this incident bore out the truth of the stories about Helgi Einarson.

He had been invited, but could not get away from Fairford until it was four o'clock, when it was snowing and blowing. He headed straight from the Fairford River to Peonan's Point as he had to bypass a big crack in the

TERGESEN'S

Original. Always.

GENERAL MERCHANT • GIMLI, MB
82 FIRST AVE. 204-642-5958



THE PETS
BRAGI ÓLAFSSON
\$19.50 CDN



THE AMBASSADOR
BRAGI ÓLAFSSON
\$23.50 CDN



NARRATOR
BRAGI ÓLAFSSON
\$22.95 CDN



tergesen@mts.net

PHONE ORDERS WELCOME

ice of the lake. It was dark and he missed the right place to cross the crack, so crossed it where pressures had driven both edges of the ice down, making a hollow about seven feet deep covered with a thin layer of ice about two inches thick. The minute the horses stepped on it, they broke through. In the darkness of the blizzard, Helgi jumped out. He grabbed the rope out of the cutter, looped it around Bill's neck, freed him from the cutter and his team mate. When the rope tightened on his neck, Bill came halfway out of the water, got his front feet up on the ice, and with another heave from Helgi, came out. Helgi quickly put the rope on Chief, his other horse, and Bill pulled him out in one yank. The cutter had stayed up, but now Helgi was soaked and the storm was still blowing. Somehow, he managed to get the horses hitched up again and climbed into the cutter.

The weather cleared a bit, Helgi got his bearings, headed straight for the island and surprised everybody, when they answered the door to see a snowman covered from head to feet with frost and slush. Willing hands took care of the horses, others pulled off the wet coat, and with something to eat and a few hot drinks, it wasn't long before Helgi said, "I think I'll go and dance."

Helgi never missed a dance, even though he had to fish his team out of the lake to get there.

Bibliography

Arborg Historical Society (1987). *A Century Unfolds*. Winnipeg MB: Inter-Collegiate Press .

Arnes History Book Committee (n.d.). *The Point and Beyond*. Winnipeg MB: Herff Jones.

Einarsson, Magnus (1991). *Icelandic-Canadian Oral Narratives*. Hull QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Eyford, Ryan (2010). "An Experiment in Immigrant Colonization." Thesis. U of Manitoba. Winnipeg, MB.

Eyford, Ryan (2016). *White Settler Reserve*. Vancouver BC: UBC Press.

Gerrard, Nelson S. (1985). *Icelandic River Saga*. Winnipeg MB: Inter-Collegiate Press.

Geyrsir Historical Society (1983). *Faith and Fortitude*. Steinbach MB: Derksen Printers.

Gimli Women's Institute (1975). *Gimli Saga*. Altona MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd.

Hnausa History Book Committee (2004). *Hnausa Reflections*. Altona MB: Friesens Corporation.

Interlake Pioneers (1974). *Hardships and Happiness*. Altona MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd.

Lindell, Lucy, ed (1970). *Memory Opens the Door*. Altona MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd.

McKillop, Ingibjorg Sigurgeirsson, ed (1979). *Mikley The Magnificent Island*. Steinbach MB: Derksen Printers.

Thompson, Dr. Steinn O. (1976). *Riverton and the Icelandic River Settlement*. Steinbach MB: Derksen Printers.

Thanks to:

Ryan Eyford whose bibliographies have given me so many leads to research sources.

Sharon Halldorson for suggestions and editing.

Richard Koreen for encouragement and tips during his writing classes.

Sandra Reykdal, Librarian at Evergreen Library, who loaned books to me from Gimli, Glenboro, Arborg and Selkirk.

Svala Brynja Thrastardottir for translations from Icelandic to English.

Glossary of terms

Akri—the homestead of Thorgrimur and Seinunn Jonsson in the Icelandic Reserve.

Dalasysla – One of the pre-1988 traditional counties of Iceland. Leif Eriksson grew up there; Snorri Sturlsson

was born there.

Effete – unable to produce; worn out.

Eyolfstodum – the homestead of Magnus and Ingibjorg Magnusson.

Hidden people (huldufolk); also known as elves (alfar) – They are believed to live in rocks, cliffs and hillocks--side by side, but independent, of humans. They look, speak and act like humans. Hidden people are bound up with a rocky topography and are known in Iceland, but seldom in New Iceland (unofficial name for the Icelandic Reserve in Canada).

Icelander's River – The river was known as the White Mud when the Icelanders arrived. They changed it to Icelander's River and it later became the Icelandic River, which is what it's called today.

Lady of the Lake – a famous boat that belonged to the Sigurdsson Brothers

of Hnausa.

Lögberg and *Heimskringla* – Two newspapers printed in Icelandic at that time. In the present day, they have amalgamated and are printed as one newspaper in English.

Os (or Osi) - the homestead of Olafur Olafsson in the Icelandic Reserve.

Rimur – Rima literally means 'a rhyme' in Icelandic. 'Rimur' is the plural form and means poems written in 'rimnahattir', which is a style of poetry using alliteration and consists of 2 to 4 lines per stanza ('rimir meters').

Skogum – the homestead of Sirgurdur and Gudrun Erlendsson in the Icelandic Reserve.

Vidhivellir – the homestead of Guttormur and Jensina Guttormsson in the Icelandic Reserve.



LÖGBERG HEIMSKRINGLA

THE NORTH AMERICAN ICELANDIC COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Discover your Icelandic roots... Subscribe Today
www.lh-inc.ca | (204) 284-5686 | 1-866-564-2374

POETRY

Long Weary Years We Fought

By E. J. Thorlakson

Long, weary years we fought
And suffered in the tempest and the rain.
Nor thought
Through all the anguish and the pain
That all our fight were vain,
And all our dreams were naught.

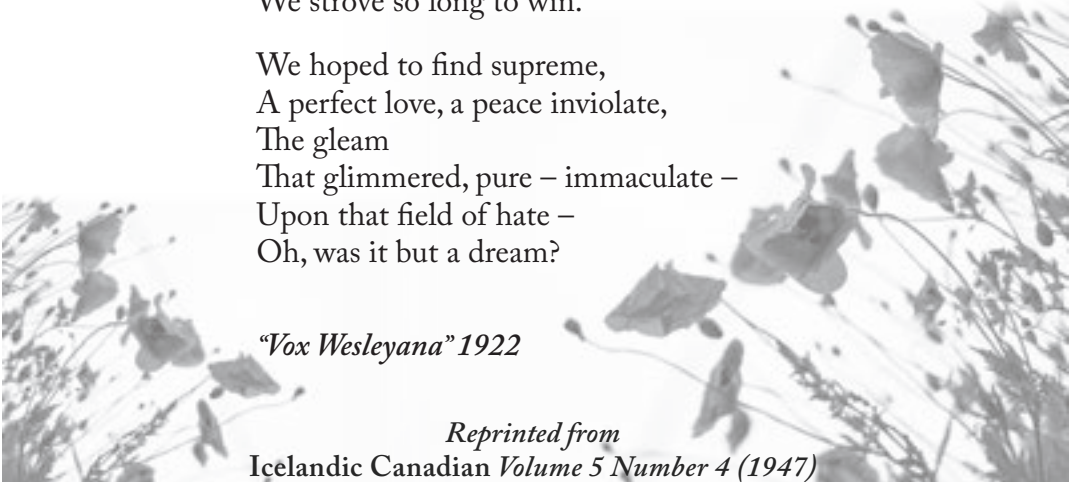
We knew the die was cast,
And staked our life and fortune on the throw
The blast
Of bursting shrapnel, and the flow
Of warm, red blood aglow –
And we returned at last.

Battered and broken men
Weary of war and all its fiendish lies.
Again
We breathed beneath our native skies
And thought to have the prize
We strove so long to win.

We hoped to find supreme,
A perfect love, a peace inviolate,
The gleam
That glimmered, pure – immaculate –
Upon that field of hate –
Oh, was it but a dream?

"Vox Wesleyana" 1922

*Reprinted from
Icelandic Canadian Volume 5 Number 4 (1947)*



Contributors

ALANA DONOHOE is from Steinbach, Manitoba. She graduated from Brandon University in spring of 2019 and is currently studying education at the University of Manitoba.

GAIL HALLDORSON is a retired High School Librarian living in Sandy Hook, Manitoba. She enjoys her volunteer work at the New Iceland Heritage Museum.

ÁSDÍS JÓELSDÓTTIR is an Assistant Professor specializing in clothing and textiles in the Faculty of Education at the University of Iceland. This article is based on a lecture presented at the 100th Convention of the Icelandic National League of North America in May 2019.

BRIAN JOHANNESSON Born in Winnipeg, Brian Johannesson grew up with hockey memorabilia all around him but found it only of curiosity value at the time. His father Konnie had played defence for the 223rd Battalion hockey team and for the Winnipeg Falcons for several years, including 1920, the Olympic year.

After graduating from the University of Manitoba in 1958 Brian moved to Montreal and then with his family to Waterloo, Ontario in 1967. By 1999 he had enough documents, diaries and artefacts to create his first Winnipeg Falcons website. Then he rewrote it entirely in 2006 after acquiring his mother's scrapbook, a treasure trove of several hundred newspaper clippings about the 223rd Battalion and Falcons teams.

Brian now lives in Kitchener, Ontario, culturally a very long way from Icelandic Winnipeg; his Falcons' website is at www.winnipegfalcons.com

ELVA SIMUNDSSON, is a member of the *Icelandic Connection* board of editors and a random book reviewer, contributor and proofreader for the journal. She lives in Gimli, MB.

LORNA TERGESEN is the editor of the *Icelandic Connection*.





COURTESY OF BRIAN JOHANNESSON

Charles “Charlie” Gustav Thorson’s Winnipeg Falcons

The Back Page

A LONG STANDING TRADITION



The Only Funeral Home Owned and Operated by the Bardal Family
One Winnipeg Location Only Across from Brookside Cemetery

Call: **949-2200**
(204)

3030 Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3H 1B9

neilbardalinc.com
info@nbardal.mb.ca

**neil
bardal**
INC
FUNERAL CENTRE

ICELANDIC CONNECTION

CANADA

ICELAND

FOUNDATION

INC

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

For scholarship
information
please contact:

chairman@canadaicelandfoundation.ca

Gifts and bequests support our ongoing work
<http://canadaicelandfoundation.com>