

ROOTS THAT BIND

by

Kristiana Magnusson

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Cover Theme

In his cover illustration Wesley Wilson has captured the theme of beginnings and never-ending hope for a prosperous and happy future.

The time is early spring, at eventide. The man and woman looking towards the horizon over the flat prairie land have a deep respect and love for the land, and a hope that it may yield a bountiful harvest.

To the right the old tree, with its branches bare, symbolizes survival in a land which of times can be lonely and weather-wise hostile, at other times bountiful and compelling in its beauty. The tree has hundreds of tiny branches reaching up, to represent the many descendants of the great-great-grandparents.

At eventide the figures and the tree are sharply silhouetted against the cloud and sky on the horizon. The clouds, partially blocking the sun, symbolize the adversities which faced pioneers but which never totally obscured their vision of a bright future for their descendants.

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by Kristiana Magnusson

Dedicated to
my mother, Lara Sigvaldason,
and to the memory of the Sigvaldasons,
whose roots are spread far and wide.

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FOREWARD

As I pensively think of bygone days,
My thoughts turn back in rhyme,
To the pages of life forever enshrined
In the pioneers Book of Time.

These pioneers came with hope in their hearts
And a prayer for a life secure,
Though little of wordly goods they possessed
Of faith in themselves they were sure.

This country seemed both vast and strange,
But their true Viking spirit endured
And from the stubborn soil and the stormy sea,
A bountiful crop they secured.

Though often they yearned for the sloping hills
And companions and ties of yore,
This country they learned to love and respect,
And proudly its emblem they wore.

Through sagas retold and poetic verse,
They preserved their traditions of old,
And blended these into our Canadian mosaic,
With bonds of love and courage so bold.

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Chapter 1.

ROOTS IN ICELAND....PAST AND PRESENT.

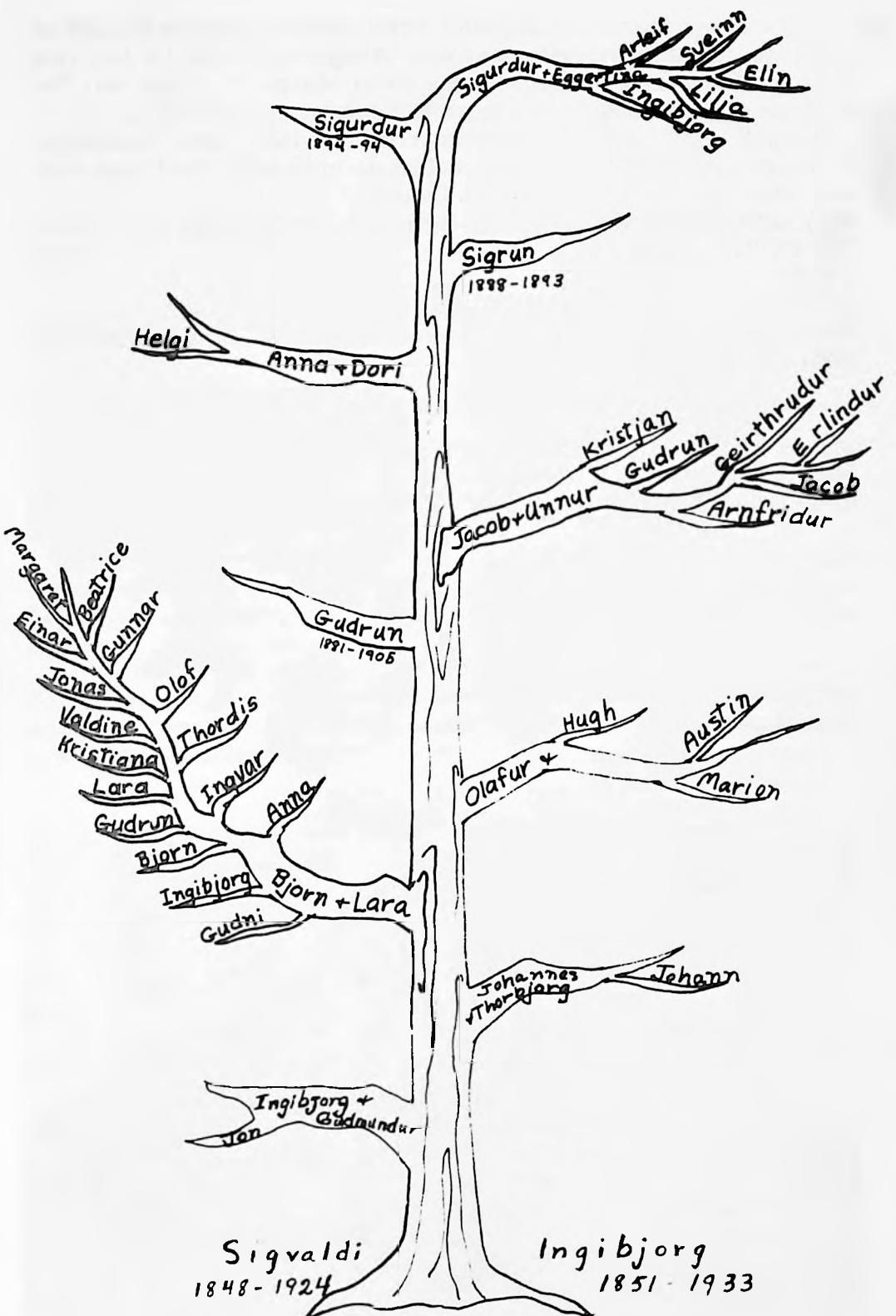
Who are we? What were our ancestors like? What kind of lives did they lead? These are questions all of us have asked ourselves at one time or another. A picture here....a little anecdote retold at family gatherings...records kept through the years..a favourite tradition....these are all clues that we seek out and research.

Gradually a picture and an identity emerge. The final result may perhaps be that eventually we are able to link our lives with our ancestral roots. From this knowledge we gain an insight into our heritage, for family roots bind its members in unshakeable bonds of love and tradition.

Sigvaldi Johannesson (Grandpa) was born October 5, 1848, at Solvanes in Tungusveit, in Skagafjardarsysla in the north-western part of Iceland. His father was Johannes Einarson and his mother was Gudrun Olafsdottir. Sigvaldi's grandmother (Einar's wife) was Arnfridur, but his grandmother on his mother's side was Gudrun Bjarnadottir. By going back three generations our ancestry traces to Petur Peturson, a brother of Hallgrimur Peturson who was a Lutheran minister and poet, as well as the author of the famous Passion Hymns, which have been translated into at least 22 languages.

Ingibjorg Steinunn Magnusdottir (Grandma) was born on April 9, 1851, at Prestbakka near Hrutafjordur in Hunavatnsysla. Her father was Magnus Isleifson Jonssonar. Magnus' mother's name was Gudrun. They farmed at Storuhols in Strandarsysla.

When Ingibjorg was a week old, she was adopted by her Aunt Anna Isleifsdottir and her husband, Bjorn Danielson. He drowned when she was only five years old. He had been a wonderful husband and father, so he was deeply mourned by his wife and little daughter. Ingibjorg (Grandma) always spoke of him as the dearest father any child could wish for. Anna married again, a man named Gudmundur Magnusson, and they brought Ingibjorg up until she went out to earn her own living at sixteen years of age, which was usual at that time.



Family Tree - Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg's children and grandchildren

At the age of four years, Sigvaldi moved with his parents to Grof at Vatnsnesi in Hunavatnsysla, and was brought up there. He had two brothers, Einar and Olafur, and one sister Margaret. Einar was the only one of them that did not move to Canada.

Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg were married in 1877, and farmed at Audnastodum in Vidal in Hunavatnsysla until 1883. That year they sold what they had and moved to Canada.

SIGVALDI JOHANNESSON (1848-1924) married GUDRUN THORSTEINSDOTTIR

1 child

1. Johannes Lindal (1876-1948)

SIGVALD JOHANNESSON married INGIBJORG MAGNUSDOTTIR (1851-1934) 1 daughter

1. INGIBJORG THORSTEINSDOTTIR (1870-1943)
8 children

1. BJORN INGVAR (1878-1947)
2. OLAFUR (OLIVER) (1879-1962)
3. GUDRUN (1881-1905)
4. JAKOB (1884-1953)
5. ANNA (1886-1978)
6. SIGRUN (1888-1893)
7. SIGURDUR (1894-1894)
8. SIGURDUR (1896-1979)

A FAMILY IN ICELAND



Ingibjorg Thorsteinsdottir, who was left with adoptive parents in Iceland.

INGIBJORG THORSTEINSDOTTIR (1870-1943) GUDMUNDUR
1 son

1. JON GUDMUNDSON (1897-1978) married MARIA TOMASDOTTIR
(1907)

1 son

A. HORDUR ARINBJARNAR married RAGNHEIDUR HARALDSOTTIR
(1937) 2 children

- a. EDDA (1965)
- b. MARIA (1973)

A FAMILY IN ICELAND

When Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg left Iceland in 1883, Ingibjorg had to sever all ties with her dear daughter Ingibjorg Thorsteinsdottir, who was left with adoptive parents. She grew up on a farm and later married Gudmundur.

Ingibjorg Thorsteinsdottir's son, Jon Gudmundson, spent his childhood and early working years on a farm. From there he went to Reykjavik, where he became employed in a warehouse, eventually as foreman.

In Reykjavik Jon met a widow, Maria Tomasdottir by name, who had a son Hordur Arinbjarnar. When he was in his early fifties, Jon and Maria were married. Jon was very fond of Hordur and was always a wonderful father to him.



Jon Gudmundson and Maria Tomasdottir.



Left to right - Maria on Rannveig's knees, Edda with her pet dog and Hordur.

In Jon's heart there was always a deep longing to know more about his grandmother's family in Canada. Anna Austman began to correspond with him and in this way he began to learn a bit about his relatives in Canada. Gradually the younger couples began to travel to Iceland and met and learned to love their soft-spoken and kindly relative Jon, and his hospitable wife Maria. Helgi and Lillian Austman and several of Bjorn and Lara Sigvaldason's children have been fortunate enough to have met Jon. Each couple from Canada has been presented with a beautiful sheepskin-covered guest book by Jon and his family, as a memento of their visit to Iceland.

In 1974 when we were in Iceland, one of my happiest experiences was in meeting my cousin Jon, his wife Maria and their son Hordur and his family. Jon had a deep honesty and gentleness about his manner that completely won our hearts. The day we left, after a visit with them, Jon walked with us to catch the bus on Austurstraeti. Somehow, it seemed to us as if Jon wanted very much to know about his relatives and how they were all doing; and what our life in Canada was like. We thought afterwards what a wonderful experience and adventure it would have been for him to have been able to make a trip to Canada. But that was not to be, for a year or so later, Jon became bedridden with a stroke.

Jon and Maria's daughter-in-law, Rannveig Haraldsdottir, has often spoken of Jon's kindness;

"Jon is the kindest man I think I have ever known. He and Maria had a good and happy marriage and he was always a wonderful father and grandfather. His warm nature and his love and concern for us endeared us all to him.

Anna Austman's letters and tapes about her parents' life in Canada meant a great deal to him. In a way they brought him a little closer to his relatives in Canada."

MEMORIES OF YOUTH AND HOME

BY

Anna Austman 89 years of age

(Taped & translated interview sent to Jon and Maria in Iceland, in 1975)

As I reminisce, my thoughts go back to my parents, Sigvaldi Johannesson and Ingibjorg Magnusdottir, who, inspite of hardships they endured in Iceland as well as in their first desperate years of establishing themselves in Canada, yet clung to their vision of a bright future, filled with greater opportunities for their children and future generations.

In the early 1880's, there was extreme poverty in Iceland, especially in the northern sector. At that time ice covered the low-lying areas of Northern Iceland. Little or no fodder for cattle was available, as no hay could be cut until the fall, and very poor-quality hay at that.

My parents lived at Hunavatnssysla and at that time had three young children. They felt that they had two choices open to them during these hard times...to sell their belongings and move to America, in the hope of availing themselves of better opportunities in life; or else to have to accept help from the government in Iceland. They were proud and independent people and had seen to much of the humiliation suffered, especially by children, through accepting help. Under these circumstances, they decided to sell their cattle and belongings. In this way they were able to raise enough money for their passage to Canada, plus a little extra money to tide them over during their first months in a new country, at least until Father would find some work to do.

My parents left Iceland in 1883 with two of their children, Bjorn 5 years of age and Gudrun two. The second son, Olafur, had gone to Canada with an Uncle Olafur Johannesson, who was very fond of him. They travelled by boat to Scotland and then on to England, where they boarded another boat for Canada. The trip was a gruelling one and little Gudrun, who was never too strong, was quite sick and restless during the entire trip. Fortunately, once my parents arrived in Winnipeg, she seemed to pick up in strength.

At this time there were very few jobs in Winnipeg, and what jobs there were, paid very little. My parents therefore, remained in Winnipeg only a short time, then left for North Dakota to stay with a family named Thordarson, who had moved there from Hunavatnssysla in Iceland. They stayed with them during the first winter. In March Father left for Winnipeg to try and get some work for the spring and summer.

During his stay in North Dakota, Father had look around for land. However, the only land available to him was very poor, both sandy and hilly. The better farm lands were not within his reach as he had little money.

After a short stay in Winnipeg, Father was able to find work. He moved his family into rented quarters there. Here they lived for two years, and it was during this time that another son, Jakob, was born.

Father, who had always been an independent man, with roots close to the soil, longed to own his own farm. He had steady work, but his dreams and hopes now centred on becoming a homesteader and having animals to care for. In 1885 my parents moved to Nyja-Island (New Iceland), an Icelandic settlement along Lake Winnipeg, with its centre at Gimli.



School near Gimli - 1901 with sheep grazing in front. Man. Archives.

CHAPTER 2
CULTURE OF NEW ICELAND--PAST AND PRESENT.
BY
CAROL PRENTICE.

The town of Gimli, Manitoba, nestled against the shores of Lake Winnipeg, is today a bustling town of 2100 inhabitants. As one strolls down its main streets, treed parks and sandy shorelines, one gets the feeling that Gimli is similar to many Canadian towns. But there is something special here, a certain spirit, which excludes Gimli from a category of "typical Canadian towns". It is the strong Viking spirit, the spirit of the people who built and formed Gimli into the town it is today.

It does not take a very observant eye to notice some influences of Gimli's Icelandic founders; fishing boats in the beautiful and scenic harbour; merchant stores bearing such names as H.P. Tergesen & Sons General Store; Einarson Realty; The Norsemen Motel, and Arnason's Furniture; the mighty Viking statue, with the giant Viking warrior appearing to rise out of the sea, bearing aloft his powerful weapon—all these are testimony of the settlement by people of Viking origin.



The Viking Statue at Gimli [Manitoba Archives].

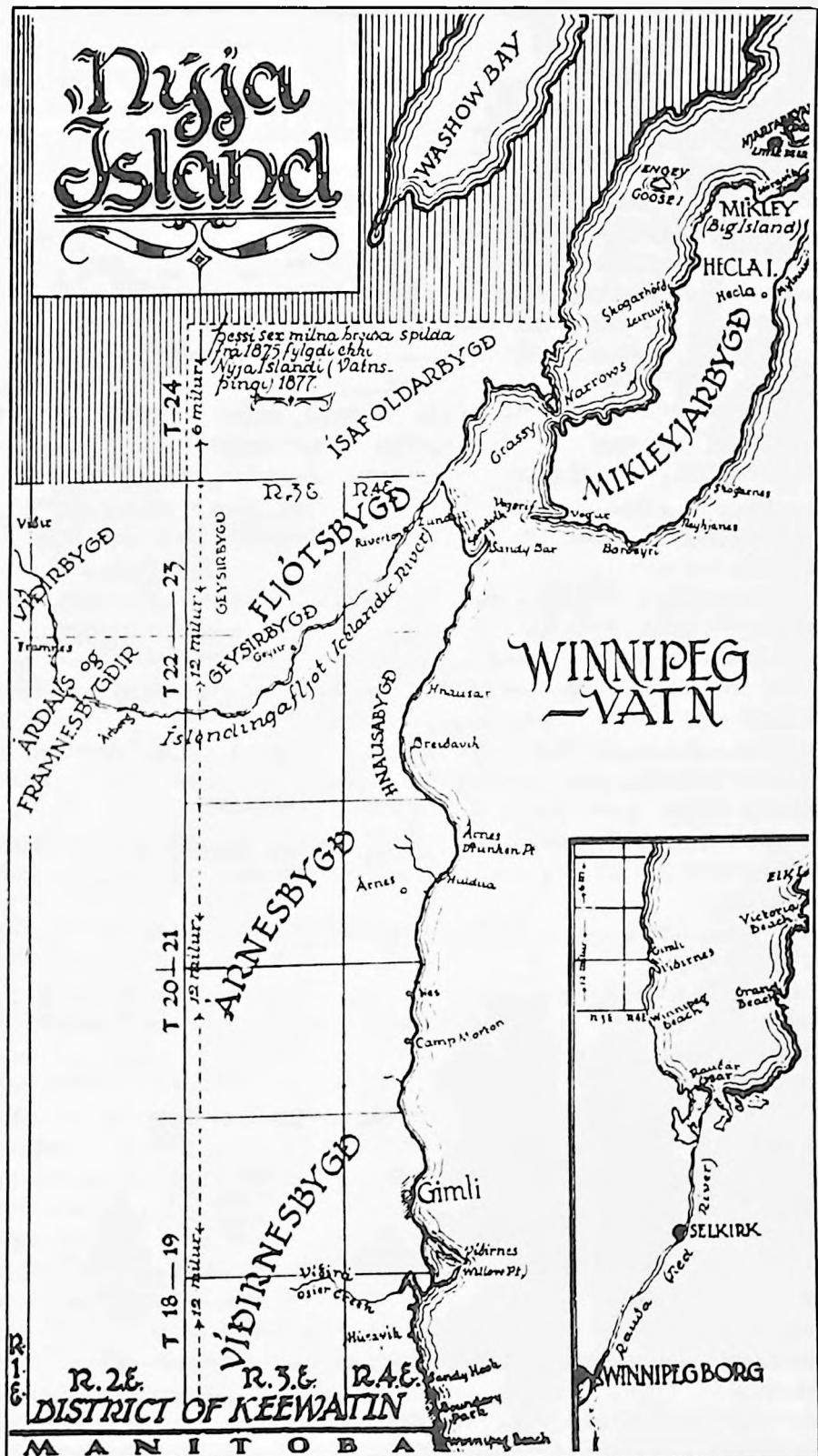
The true Viking spirit however, lies in the hearts and souls of its people. Nowhere is this in more evidence than at Betel Old Folks Home, a home where now reside the sons and daughters of the courageous settlers of over a century ago. Betel Home continues to maintain the tradition of open-arm hospitality and love, so typical of an Icelandic home. The Icelandic language is very much in evidence here, although almost everyone speaks English as well. Here one can learn, from these pioneers, the history and sagas of New Iceland.

The area referred to as New Iceland, has no boundaries or statistics on population. It is a general term referring to an area starting approximately 50 miles north of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and including several towns and communities congregated along the Lake Winnipeg shoreline, as well as further inland. The first Icelandic settlement in New Iceland was at Gimli, but as the years passed the population spread north and west. Towns like Arnes, Riverton, Arborg, Hnausa, and communities such as Vidir and Hecla Island soon developed. Founded by Icelanders, with the majority of their population being of Icelandic origin, all these settlements were included in the area, New Iceland. Today there are many other settlements in Canada that have a considerable number of people of Icelandic backgrounds—towns such as Selkirk, Lundar, Oak Point, Brandon, Baldur, and Glenboro in Manitoba, and Foam Lake and Elfros in Saskatchewan; and cities such as Winnipeg, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria.

New Iceland was not the first Icelandic community in the Americas. Quite a number of settlements had previously been started in other areas, and the purpose of these establishments was motivated by the same reasons. The emigration movement from Iceland started in 1863 and continued until the early 1900s.

Iceland was experiencing hard times during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She was involved in a fruitless struggle for political freedom from Denmark. The people had suffered from adverse weather conditions and volcanic eruptions and a small pox epidemic in 1707 weakened Iceland's strength by taking one third of her population. There was continuing inflation, under-nourishment due to unwholesome food, and a high death rate. Conditions seemed to improve at the turn of the nineteenth century, but the years 1860 to 1880 brought a return of hardships. The mainstay of the Icelandic economy, sheep, suffered a widespread epidemic; arctic ice turned summers into virtual winters in the years 1858, 1859, 1870, and 1881. Mount Helca erupted in 1875 causing loss of property and livelihoods. Emigration appeared to be an immediate response to these continuing hardships. The nineteenth century also brought reports of a better life possible in the New World and a means of reaching it. People were gradually becoming aware that if freedom or comfort was not available in their mother country, there were vast unsettled territories in America to which they could migrate.

North and South America was seen as their solution, their promised land. The movement of Exodus from Iceland began in 1863 when a part of forty left for Brazil. In 1870, emigration to North America began.



Map of Nyja Island showing area districts.

This figure disregards a small group who went to Spanish Forks, Utah in 1855; these were Mormon converts who had no real relation to the main stream. The second Icelandic settlement in the United States was in Washington Island, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the settlement never grew larger than a few families. Wisconsin failed to provide the opportunities the Icelanders were seeking; the economic situation was poor and they were extremely isolated. The year, 1872 brought three hundred Icelanders to Milwaukee to join the first few who had ventured there. Milwaukee, ethnically speaking, was said to be the capital of the Icelanders in the Western World between 1872 and 1875. There was a relatively small population, but all Icelandic activity and Icelandic leaders had centered their headquarters in Milwaukee. A ship from Akureyri, the northern capital of Iceland, brought one hundred and eighty five more Icelandic immigrants to Canada, in 1873. They had all agreed to settle in the same location, but ended up scattered throughout the United States and some in Canada.

There was a desire among the Icelandic immigrants to establish one district large enough to contain all the immigrants to North America. The efforts for settlements in America were met without success, so their attempts turned to Canada. The Canadian government responded immediately and carried on an active program to encourage immigration. In 1874 the steamer, "St. Patrick", brought three hundred and sixty five Icelanders to Quebec. Many wanted to continue to the United States because there was a general belief that there was more freedom in the U.S. than in Canada. After negotiations, the Icelanders decided to remain in Canada provided the following conditions were upheld:

1. As soon as residence qualifications were fulfilled the Icelanders could enjoy full liberty and rights of citizenship, like a native born Canadian.
2. They would be given a sufficiently large and suitable tract of land for a colony.
3. They were to reserve unhindered their personal rights, language, and nationality for themselves and their descendants forever.

This was a turning point in Icelandic immigration; the Icelandic center was transferred from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Canada received the majority of the immigrants from this point on.

Settlements such as Kinmount, Ontario, Rosseau, Ontario, Markland, Nova Scotia and other sites in eastern Canada developed, but again the settlers were not satisfied. In 1875, a committee was established to find a better location for the immigrants. The committee selected a strip of land along the western shores of Lake Winnipeg and called it New Iceland (Nyja Island). There were many positive factors leading to the selection: the area's abundance of timber; fertile soil; fish and game; wild fruit; bright sunny days; and above all its lack of grasshoppers. There was also transportation on the lake and the Red River, by water in the summer and by ice in the winter. It was a large unpopulated area with ample space for the establishment of an Icelandic district.

On October 21, 1875, two hundred and eighty five Icelanders arrived at Willow Point, a peninsula which stretches out into Lake Winnipeg about four miles southeast of Gimli. Ice was already forming on the lake and there was no time to lose. The settlers chose a building site on a wide crescent bay at the present Gimli location. Huts were erected and families doubled up for the winter. Frost set in and one week later the lake froze. The abundance of fish, which was a factor in the selection of this area, were now under ice; the settlers had had no experience with ice fishing.

In spite of the severe winter, a school was organized by Christmas. In 1876 Jon Gudmundsson started a paper, wholly written in longhand, called "Nyi pjodolfur", named after a well known paper published in Reykjavik at that time. The colony was continually expanding, attracting Icelanders from other settlements in Canada, the United States, and Iceland. Unfortunately a small-pox epidemic broke out in 1876. The district was quarantined from November 27, 1876 until July 20, 1877. The illness caused one hundred and two deaths, in addition to heartache and sorrow. The settlement was starting off badly, but the Icelanders held on.

Hardships did not interfere with the establishment of a government. The founding fathers of New Iceland were now free from Danish rule and could establish their own independent government, given permission to do so by Canadian officials. New Iceland's political system adhered to Canadian laws but was based on the Icelandic tradition of representative government. They established four districts identical to the ancient Quarter Division of the Icelandic Parliament at Thingvellir, established in 930 A.D. On February 5, 1877 the New Iceland colony or region was named the "Lake Region" and was further divided into four districts:

1. Vidinesbygd (Willow Point district).
2. Arnesbygd (Arnes district).
3. Fljotsbygd (River district).
4. Mikleyjarbygd (Big Island district).

Each district contained a council of five, including a reeve (mayor), a deputy reeve and three other members; they held jurisdiction over local matters. The colony's government also consisted of a regional council called "Thingrad⁴," which consisted of a President of the council, called Thingradstjori⁵, a Vice President called "Vara Thingradstjori" and the reeves of the four districts. The duties of the "Thingradstjori" were to establish a liaison between the Dominion Government and the district councils, along with advising and holding necessary meetings. The council discussed such questions as the clergymen; the building of churches, schools, roads; and welfare for widows and the ailing.

Unfortunately, the chosen land for an Icelandic colony was not as productive and inviting as was first thought. The hardships were tremendous and many settlers became discouraged and left.

4 rad:council

5 stjori: a very general term, and may mean chairman or governor, according to the circumstances.

Religious controversy between the fundamentalists and the more liberal minded also served to split the colony. Several settlers moved to North Dakota because of the different religious views. By 1881, only two hundred and fifty remained out of the fifteen hundred original, and these strong souls remained mostly out of loyalty to the colony. New Iceland's special status ended and the settlement was forced to become a part of the Manitoba province, giving up their independent government. However, by 1883, the weather for crops had been good, the Icelanders had organized the digging of ditches and drainage, roads improved and life became easier. Immigration to New Iceland resumed and by 1894 the population had increased to fifteen hundred and fifty five inhabitants. The tempo of life increased and in 1897 New Iceland was opened to the settlers of other nationalities. Since then, New Iceland has become a progressive and productive community which has contributed much to Canada.

New Iceland from 1897 onward ceased to be exclusively Icelandic; the people of Icelandic origin are probably outnumbered now by Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, etc. But it is a community which can boast to have more people of Icelandic descent than any other in the world outside the mother country itself. It is also a community which can show the stronger Icelandic influence on their life styles, minds, and spirits than any other in the world. Many of the Icelandic characteristics brought over the sea by New Iceland's founders can still be found in their descendants.



Gimli Lakeview Hotel - 1908.
[Manitoba Archives].

Ethnic characteristics of an Icelander are not so much a matter of physical appearance or outward customs as of the mind and spirit. Icelanders are basically of Nordic and Celtic origin, consequently they vary tremendously in physical appearance, although many are tall and blonde. Icelanders are also very adaptive; they have had to be over the years in order to survive. This is why one finds few distinct customs setting them apart from others. There are many characteristics, however, which are found in almost every Icelander and these are basically their love of independence, literature, language, and land.

In the opinion of many experts on Icelandic emigration (W. Kristjanson, W.J. Lindal, Eric Jonasson), the prime factor involved was not due totally to the hardships and severe living conditions the Icelanders faced. They had lived with worse in their 1100 year history. The prime factor was a longing for independence; an independence from Denmark and also an independence for themselves. Icelanders wanted a freedom in a new land to unfold what was within the Icelandic people and to be given the opportunity to lead a cultural life.

"The truth, sad as it may appear, is that the Icelandic country farmer has never, since this land was settled, been in a financial position to live a truly cultural life." 7

The people of Iceland are a hardy race, a people hardened by life in the mountains, by the sea, and by long years of privations and hardships. They possess a never ending spirit of love for life, freedom, and independence. Their independence, almost to the point of being stubborn, was well shown by the immigrants in their negotiations with the Canadian government. They demanded immediate liberty and rights to citizenship like a native born Canadian, a large tract of land for a colony, and the right to maintain their personal rights, language, and nationality for themselves and their descendants forever. No other immigrating nationality banded together in such a way, nor demanded so much from their new nation. The immigrants to New Iceland did not see Canada as their new nation; rather, they saw themselves establishing their own independent colony within Canada, with its own government, schools, religion, language, culture, and traditions.

Throughout the centuries the people of Iceland had retained a sense of cultural aristocracy which was so characteristic of the original settlers in Canada and the United States. This cultural aristocracy was the reason behind the establishment of the tightly closed colony, open solely to Icelanders. Even when the colony had opened to other nationalities, the Icelanders formed a social tightly knit group. Intermarriage with other nationalities which settled in New Iceland was very much looked down upon, even up to thirty years ago. The Icelandic settlers saw themselves as superior, and perhaps in at least one aspect, educationally, they were.

Iceland may have been a small isolated island with a hard life to offer its habitants, but she also produced a disproportionately large number of great men. These Viking people bore their hardships with

7 Lindal, W.J. THE ICELANDERS IN CANADA, National Publishers,

fortitude and even in times of greatest distress gave abundant evidence of intellectual vigor and a power of imagination. Education has always played an important role in Icelandic life. Home education was all that was available in many isolated family farms, but was definitely not an inferior educational system. Through the Eddas (8) and Sagas, Iceland's folklore, history and literature were passed from generation to generation. Iceland's love of literature and poetry is especially evident. Such men as Hallgrímur Petursson (1614-1674), the composer of the famous "Passion Hymns", Bjarni Thorarensen (1786-1841), and Matthias Jochumsson (1835-1920) are among her leading poets. Great novelists such as Gunnar Gunnarsson (1889-) and Halldor Kiljan Laxness, the nobel Prize winner of 1955 for his novel, "Islands Klukkan," have written many great novels that are internationally known.

The Icelandic Canadians have continued this love of literature and can also drop a good number of names. The majority of the first generation were able to quote reams of poetry, and produced such authors and poets as Stephan G. Stephansson. He came to America in 1873. His home was in Alberta, but his poetry was published in six volumes of "Andvokur" (Wakeful Nights) and had a large impact on its readers. Another great writer was Guttormur J. Guttormsson (b. 1878). He rates second only to Stephan G. Stephansson among the poets of Icelandic origin in America. (9) He lived most of his life in New Iceland, ...he was very original, had a great power of imagination, a wide range of subject matter and a beautiful style. (10) Thorsteinn Th. Thorsteinsson (1879-1955) was the most versatile of the Icelandic Canadian authors; he was a poet, historian, essayist, and short story writer. There are many many others including Laura Goodman Salverson, author of "The Viking Heart" "Confessions of an Immigrants Daughter."

Journalism also has played an important role in New Iceland's literature. The fact that Jon Guðmundsson thought it necessary to hand write an Icelandic paper, "Nyi pjöldolfur", during the first miserable winter is an example of its importance. In 1877, a printed paper "Framfari", which means "Progress", was established in New Iceland and was published on a regular basis. This was two years after the settlers first arrival and in a year of a devastating epidemic; this indeed is a unique achievement in the history of journalism.

8 Eddas: two collections of literature, one of prose, the other of poetry. Eddas tell about the gods and heroes of the ancient Teutonic religion. Without the Icelandic Eddas, there would be little known about pre-Christian religion in northern Europe.

9 Kristjanson, W. The Icelandic People in Manitoba: a Manitoba Saga, Wallingford Press, Winnipeg, 1965. p. 489.

10 Ibid., p. 490.

"There is a common agreement that two things were necessary for the preservation of their precious heritage, a separate colony and a paper in the Icelandic language, published in America. These two projects were so closely linked that it was scarcely to be considered that one would thrive without the other." (11)

On September 4, 1877, after the quarantine for small pox had been lifted, Lord Dufferin, the governor general of Canada and a man very involved in Icelandic immigration, visited the Icelandic settlement. In a speech to the people, he said;

"I trust you will continue to cherish for all times the heart stirring literature of your nation and that from generation to generation your little ones will continue to learn your ancient Sagas; that industry, energy, fortitude, perseverance and stubborn endurance which have been the characteristics of the noble Icelandic race (12) (W. Kristjanson) has continued. A newspaper called "Logberg Heimskringla" is published weekly in Winnipeg. The newspaper is in the Icelandic Language with a few articles in English. It has a good circulation and hopefully will continue in the future."

11 Kristjanson, W. *The Icelandic People in Manitoba: a Manitoba Saga*, Wallingford Press, Winnipeg, 1965. p. 58. A quote from "Framfari", September 10, 1877.

12 Kristjanson, W. *The Icelandic People in Manitoba* Hecla, 1975. p. 32.



Pioneers of 1875 and 1876 at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of New Iceland, held in 1925, at Gimli, Manitoba.

l. to r. standing Sigtryggur Jonasson, Jon Gudmundson; sitting l. to r. Johann and Mrs. Briem, Mrs. Jonas Stefansson, Flovent Jonsson, Mrs. Thomas Jonasson. [Manitoba Archives].

Preservation of the Icelandic language is very important in the maintenance of Icelandic culture in New Iceland. The first and second generation Icelandic Canadians actually learned Icelandic as their maternal language. It was spoken in the home always and English had to be learned at school. The church used Icelandic and taught confirmation classes in Icelandic until forty years ago. Icelandic is heard on every street corner in New Iceland, but unfortunately it is rarely spoken by the younger generations. With the coming of mass media, especially television and radio, the emphasis on Icelandic has decreased; only a few of the third and fourth generation descendants speak Icelandic fluently. For approximately fifty years, there was a trend among the young New Icelanders to reject the idea of being "Icelandic" in favor of the idea of being "Canadian". This idea has continued until very recently. Thus, many customs and traditions, including language, slackened. The past few years have brought a growing awareness on the importance of their Icelandic origin. People have become more receptive to Icelandic customs and culture; for example, Icelandic is now taught at the elementary schools and is offered in the higher grades. A visitor from Iceland told Mrs. Kristiana Magnusson this summer, (1975).

"When I was in Canada fifty years ago, as a young man, I felt certain that the Icelandic language would be forgotten after ten years. Now I return after fifty years and find New Icelanders still speak a very fluent Icelandic and keep up Icelandic traditions and cultures."

Agriculture and fishing have always been the basis of Iceland's economy, and they continue to be in New Iceland. The Canadian prairies have provided better opportunities than the volcanic Icelandic soil ever did, although the settlers faced many more problems with it than ever imagined. Trees, something not found in Iceland, had to be cleared to develop the fields, a great achievement for the Icelandic farmer. But he did not stop there; he also built roads, dug ditches for drainage and irrigation, built homes, schools, and churches. Ice fishing was also a novelty to the New Icelanders, but by hard work, determination, and trial and error, they have developed into expert ice fishermen. While men were learning new skills in ice fishing, hunting, farming, and lumbering, the women learned to supplement their diet, using wheat kernels for coffee, and certain plant leaves for tea. This, of course, is not necessary today but is a good example of how adaptive and close to the land the first Icelandic settlers were. Many pioneers chose such work as fishing or farming in preference to office or factory work even knowing that harder work and less remuneration was involved. They preferred it because they could work at their own pace and in their own way...another facet of their love of freedom.

Icelandic Canadians have contributed much to Canada. They desired strongly to maintain their own Icelandic identity, and to a certain extent they have succeeded in doing so. At the same time they have also blended well into the nation's fabric, adapting and

developing characteristics to suit the best of both worlds. In spite of their small number, they have had a large impact economically, politically, and culturally, on Canada's foundation. They have cherished their Icelandic heritage and have maintained strong ties between Iceland and Canada. Icelandic Canadians have also contributed whole-heartedly in national life; serving in wars; taking an active role in government; creating beautiful literature; and building a community of good citizens and productive workers. The achievements of all Icelandic Canadians in the past should be a source of pride and inspiration in the years to come.

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CHAPTER 3

MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD AT GIMLI.

(taped & translated interview with Anna Austman.)

"It was to the settlement at Gimli, in New Iceland, (Nyja Island) that my parents, Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg, moved in 1885. They were able to stay in a small log-house at "Fogruvellir" (Fair Fields), which was about one and one-half miles south of the village of Gimli.

Father selected land to the north-west of "Fogruvellir", but as there were no buildings here, he was unable to move there until later.

After we were settled in the old log house, Father decided to go back to Winnipeg himself, in order to work for money to keep us during the winter months. Before Father left, he saw to it that Mother had a plentiful supply of wood and food, as she now had four small children to look after.

At this time Mother was 35 years of age. Memories of her bring up a picture of a person of medium height, tending to be rather overweight. Her beautiful, thick golden hair I remember well, for many a time I enjoyed watching her comb out her long golden tresses, then coiling them in a bun at the back. She was fair-complexioned, blue-eyed, bright of countenance, and had a high and well-shaped forehead.

At Fogruvellir the road was very close to our house. For some unkown reason, Mother was always terrified of Indians as they travelled along the road. Sometimes they would stop at our house and ask for a drink of water. Never, at any time, did they show hostility towards us. At times they offered Mother some bear meat, but this offer she always gently refused, as she could not enjoy eating bear meat. Though the Indians were courteous and kind at all times, yet Mother could not still her fear. Perhaps she may at one time have heard stories of atrocities in earlier days, which she could never quite forget.

Mother also feared wolves. During the lonely nights that she was there alone with the children, their howling terrified her. There was dense forest beyong the house and here she knew the bears wandered freely. These she feared too, especially if the children should wander away. Several miles to the west, fires were burning. At night, as she sat alone with the little ones, the red glow of the fire against the night sky, held untold terrors for her.

One particular night at Fogruvellir, the youngest child was very feverish. No doctor was available anywhere around. As Mother sat up all night with the restless and feverish infant in her arms, the red glow of fire which flashed on the window, truly alarmed her. Always, the fire seemed to draw nearer and nearer. The three older children slept peacefully in their beds. Mother, clutching her baby to her bosom, looked on in horrified fascination at the dreaded fire. The sick child tossed and turned, burning with fever. "Dear God, what can I do?", she thought in agony. As the little one seemed to be slipping away she began to pray for help, "Help my little one, Dear God...help me".

Towards early morning the child seemed to be slightly better and finally fell asleep. The wind too changed, and the miraculous sound of rain hitting the roof was like an answer to Mother's prayers. She gave a silent prayer of thanks to God for the baby's return to health and for the blessed rain, which now lessened the danger of the fire spreading.

The following day, Johann Jonsson from Bolstad, the neighbouring farm located one half mile to the north, came by. He inquired as to whether or not Mother needed any help. His kindness and thoughtfulness Mother never forgot. Too, the thought that a kind family lived close by, even though we could not see their home because of the thick forest between the farms, sustained her throughout the rest of the time she was alone with the children. In her heart she gave thanks to God for these kind neighbours in a strange land. It is my firm belief that many a pioneer from Iceland, lonely and frightened in a strange new land, had great need of their faith and belief in God, to sustain them through those first desperate years.

After Father returned from his job in Winnipeg he began to work on the farm, which was called "Grund". There was no house there so that fall and winter he cut down trees and cleared a spot for a home. The following summer, with the help of another man, he built a house of spruce logs, which were fitted together on the corners with dovetail grooves. All joints and cracks were plastered and then the walls were whitewashed, so it looked quite nice. I am not sure about the measurements of this house, but it did have an upstairs and wood floors throughout, not mud floors as was sometimes used. The roof was sturdy and well-built and did not leak, so our home seemed very comfortable.

In the fall of 1887 my parents moved into their new home at Grund. By this time there were outbuildings for the animals. I believe they started with 2 or 3 cows and a few sheep. Sometime later Father was able to buy a pair of oxen to use for hauling hay, wood and various supplies.

There was a plentiful supply of wood as the forest was all around us. Although our wordly possessions were few at first, I do not ever remember that we were hungry....there was always milk, skyr, butter and bread on hand. We were able to buy fish from the fishermen at Gimli for very little, or else in trade. Father always slaughtered at least one animal each year, so there was a good supply of meat. Every

bit of the animal was used...the blood for slatur; the liver for livra pylsa; the head for head cheese; the heart roasted and stuffed; and the hide with the hair scraped off, was used for skin shoes. Indeed, in our warm home, secure against wintry blasts, with food enough in the larder, we considered ourselves very fortunate.

Our schooling was very irregular. A school at Gimli, which was three miles from our home, was held open for part of the year. However, the narrow rutted trails through dense forest and swampy spots, prevented our attending school too often. Bjorn was able to get some schooling there.

It was during these years at Grund that a sad accident occurred when Bjorn was 13 years old. In October 1891 Father had gone again to Winnipeg to earn some extra money for the winter. There were now 5 children at home with Mother. One day Bjorn saw a flock of geese flying over the marshes beyond the farm. He hurried into the house for the shotgun. As he quickly pulled it off the wall rack the butt of the shotgun accidentally hit the floor. The loaded gun immediately went off and the bullet lodged in Bjorn's upper left arm. The closest Doctor was at Selkirk, a distance of 45 miles by water. Gudni Thorsteinsson, a naturopath (homopati) who lived at Gimli, was called upon at once to attend to the gunshot wound. As soon as he saw the wounded arm he realized the danger Bjorn was in. He told Mother that he would have to be taken at once to a Doctor in Selkirk, as the shot had lodged close to the shoulder. Two men, Baldvin Andersson and Magnus Halldorsson, who were both courageous and gentle, at once set to and got a small boat ready. Mother and Bjorn were taken to the open boat and they immediately set off for Selkirk. Baldvin and Magnus had naught but oars and their own strength of will and purpose, and throughout that long night they rowed tirelessly to Selkirk. Meanwhile Mother held onto Bjorn and comforted him as best she could. Fortunately, although this was in October, the weather had not yet turned very cold, but throughout that dreadful night of travelling with the wounded child in an open boat, she must often have feared the worst. At 5:00 A.M. they arrived at Selkirk and Bjorn was taken at once to Dr. Grey. He immediately placed him on a stretcher and removed his left arm, at the shoulder. All that remained was but a small stump.

Meanwhile at home, our kind neighbours took us into their homes and looked after the farm animals. Mother contacted Father in Winnipeg to let him know about the accident. He left Winnipeg at once to see Mother and Bjorn at Selkirk, then came home to look after his children and farm.

Mother remained with Bjorn in Selkirk, where they stayed with friends until his operation had fully healed. Indeed, it seemed miraculous that he survived the terrible ordeal of travelling all night in an open boat with a gunshot wound, then surviving the operation that followed. Dr. Grey had told my parents that had Bjorn come to him an hour or two later, he could not have lived, because of the blood poisoning which had already set in, in the wounded arm.



Grandpa Sigvaldi, Sigurdur and Grandma Ingibjorg

My parents now realized that having only one arm could be a terrible handicap for a growing young man. They felt that it would be very important that Bjorn received a good education, so he could become self-supporting. Fortunately, Bjorn too seemed interested in furthering his education and he had a natural aptitude for learning. My parents decided that the best thing to do, under these circumstances, would be to move to Winnipeg for a few years.

The following spring Father sold his animals, except for two cows. At that time people were allowed to have animals in Winnipeg, provided they lived on the outskirts. After three years of schooling in Winnipeg, Bjorn was able to get a permit to teach for a year. He furthered his education after that on his own and eventually was able to teach anywhere. He was considered an excellent teacher and was the first teacher in Vídir.

During those years in Winnipeg Gudrun and Jakob also attended school regularly and I started school. What little schooling I had there helped me tremendously for I began to enjoy reading both English and Icelandic books. Our Mother taught us at home how to read Icelandic.

It was during these years in Winnipeg also that two sad events took place in our family. Our little sister Sigrun died of measles and we all felt keenly the loss of this dear and happy little child, who had brightened our days for such a short span of time. A short time later, another child, Sigurdur by name, was born. He lived only a few months, so these were days tinged with a deep sadness.

My parents, who were so interested in the happiness and well-being of their children, rejoiced in the success that Bjorn had made of himself, both in his education and in his remarkable attitude in overcoming his handicap. Indeed, throughout his life, he took great interest in educational matters and became deeply involved in community life. Jacob and he were one of the founding members of the Arborg Co-Operative Creamery Association, and Bjorn was the first secretary of that Organization.

I will now relate a bit about the other members of our family. In the fall of 1894 we moved back to our farm "Grund", near Gimli. Now the problem of schooling for us concerned our parents. The closest school was at Gimli, 3 miles away. Our schooling there was irregular. However another school was built around 1900, only a half-mile away from our home.

When I was 14 years of age, and Jacob 16, we were confirmed. There had not been a regular minister for a while, so that year there was a large group confirmed and some of the confirmands were 16 and 17 years of age. At that time it was usually the custom on the farms, that once a child was confirmed, he or she was prepared to work for a living. I had helped at home with haying and various chores. Gudrun, my older sister was working in Winnipeg and she was able to find a helper's job for me there, with an English family. Here I found, that although I had received some schooling in English, my grasp of conversational English was indeed meagre. At school we had spoken English during classes, but had reverted immediately to Icelandic during any free time. The teachers had been Icelandic, and if we didn't understand them in class, they would explain to us in Icelandic. Now with this English family, I found it hard to understand what was sometimes expected of me. This lack also prevented any interesting conversations with the family, so I became very lonely and longed for home again. Gudrun tried to make my life in Winnipeg more pleasant but nothing could replace the longing I had for home. I worked in and around Gimli for some time after that.

After I had worked in Gimli for some time I decided that I would like to further my education in Winnipeg. However, that was not to be just then, for my sister Gudrun, who had never been robust, suddenly became very ill. She spent some time in a Hospital in Winnipeg, but there was little they could do for her there, so she was sent home. Now



Anna and her mother Ingibjorg.

Mother needed me at home as Gudrun was bedridden. She passed away at the age of 24.

During this time we read everything we possibly could, in both English and Icelandic. Bjorn often sent books home, as he too was most anxious that we learn to enjoy reading books and profit from the knowledge found in reading them. Many of the books he sent were classics. One book in particular, which he sent me, proved invaluable. That was the English-Icelandic Dictionary and this 70 year old Dictionary I still possess.

My parents fared well at Grund after the first hard years, and they enjoyed the independence which was part of their life on the farm. They lived at Grund until 1912. By that time their sons Bjorn, Jakob and Johannes had all moved and taken up homesteads at Vidir, the most north-westerly part of Nyja-Island (New Iceland), due west of Islendingafljot (Riverton).

I had spent some time with my brothers in Vidir, as their housekeeper. Father became greatly troubled with rheumatism in later years and found it increasingly hard to manage the farm at Grund alone. Too, Father and Mother missed the companionship of their children, so they moved to Vidir in 1912.

After my brother Jakob married in 1907, I went to Winnipeg and learned sewing. I worked as a seamstress for a number of years and always had plenty of work. Through the years my enjoyment of sewing and working at various handicrafts, has been an added bonus to my enjoyment of life. I remained in Winnipeg until 1916, when my youngest brother Sigurdur, was called upon to serve his country in the First World War. I moved from Winnipeg then to Vidir to be with my parents at their home there, and therein lies another tale.

Helga Finnson of Vidir, whose parents were neighbours of Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg, remembers an incident about Ingibjorg when she lived at Grund.

"Ingibjorg was very anxious that her children have a chance to go to school. The Gimli school was three miles away. Between this school and Grund were low-lying water-logged spots, and heavy bush land, which made it hard for the children to attend school regularly.

One day Ingibjorg heard there was to be an important meeting to discuss opening another school, closer to their home. This was in the late 1890s or early 1900s. In those days women did not attend meetings, but Ingibjorg was determined she would be there.

She did attend the meeting. Furthermore she spoke up. This was unheard of—that a woman should have nerve enough to attend a meeting, let alone to speak up. Needless to say, there was a lot of talk next day about this bold woman who had dared to defy tradition and voice an opinion in public."

Ledger by Bjorn Sigvaldason 1895, when attending school in Winnipeg.

Money paid out.			
and with their fare 2 paid out			
Sat. Jan 4	for registering a letter	10	
at	for my board	22	
Mon.	6	for wages of teacher	22
Sat.	11	for my board	22
Sun.	12	in the church	2
Feb.	13	for rent & room	15
Mar.	17	for soiling my shoes	2
Sat.	18	for my board	22
Wed.	22	for a note written	2
Wed.	22	to the school office	15
Jan.	24	to the L. T. Lodge	35
Feb.	25	for a ticket - Mr. Walter	25
Sat.	28	for my board	22

A ledger kept by Bjorn Sigvaldason in 1895, when he attended school in Winnipeg.

Money taken in.

Mon. Jan 27 taken in for papers 0 10.

Tues. " 28 " " " (saved 100) 1 00.

Thur. " 30 " " " (saved 100) 1 00.

Sat. Feb. 1 " " " 2 00.

Fri 2 saved 18 75 = 14 00 saved.

Mon Feb 5 taken in for papers (saved 30) 0 70.

Tues. " 6 " " " (saved 4 75) 1 25.

Wed. " 7 " " " (saved 1 00) 0 50.

Sat. " 8 " " " (saved 15) 0 75.

Sat. " 9 " " " 1 00.

Saved from this week 12 25.

Mon. " 10 taken in for papers 0 10.

Thurs. " 13 " " " 0 75.

Sat. " 15 " " " 2 25.

(Saved from this week 7 50)

Mon. " 17 taken in for papers 0 10.

Tues. " 18 " " " 0 10.

Thurs. " 20 " " " 0 25.

Sat. " 22 " " " 2 80.

Wed. " 26 " " " (saved 14) 1 00.

Thurs. " 27 " " " 5 50.

Fri. " 28 " " " 0 20.

CHAPTER IV

HOMESTEADING IN VIDIR

When Jakob turned eighteen he and his brothers Bjorn and Johannes, decided that they would take up homesteads somewhere in New Iceland.

At that time anyone eighteen years or over could obtain a homestead for an entry fee of \$10.00. However, certain conditions had to be fulfilled. The homesteaders had to reside on the land for six months of the next 3 years; make certain improvements such as building a house and a barn; put up fences; and break at least ten acres of land. In cases where forests were very dense, certain allowances were made.

Bjorn had been teaching for a few years. Jakob had worked on the home farm at Gimli, Manitoba, and Johannes had gone out fishing during the previous winter months. Now they longed to work together in partnership on homesteads in the area. By 1902 most of the farm lands around Gimli and along the Icelandic River at Riverton and Arborg had been taken up. It would be necessary for them to go farther north and west. A floating bog 2 miles in width formed a barrier to the higher land beyond. This swampy area made travelling very hazardous and tedious.

Beyond this marshland however the terrain was higher, and here large bluffs of spruce and poplar promised sheltered spots. In the undrained low spots, willows grew abundantly, and in the swampy areas tamaracs showed off their beautiful crimson foliage in the late fall.

In 1903 the three brothers filed for homesteads, on the uplands beyond the marsh. This area later became known as Vidir. They foresaw that this land, although a wilderness at that time, held great potential for them as homesteaders.

Although the swampy areas abounded with flies that tormented them mercilessly; although the trails through dense forests were lonely and fraught with danger; although the water squished and bubbled under their feet in places; yet they could see it had great promise. There would be shelter in the beautiful spruce bluffs; there would be timber in the forests, which could be cut and used for building homes; the open spaces could be used for hay and pasture; their dreams of



Pioneer Homesteaders in
Vidir. Standing Bjorn,
seated Johannes, Jakob.

becoming land owners could be realized. All these dreams and hopes beckoned them on, as they clung to their vision of a bright future for themselves and their descendants.

That first Christmas Bjorn called on Sigurdur Eyolfson's family, who lived three miles east of the Sigvaldason Brothers' homestead. This event has been recorded by Fridny Eyolfson in her account of her parents homesteading.

"Our first Christmas was made very enjoyable through the kindness of a young man who had taken up a homestead three miles west of us. His home was at Gimli, and he, along with two brothers, ventured to come to this wilderness to look for land, where they eventually all made their homes. He called on us Christmas Eve, bringing gifts for everyone. He then read us Dicken's Christmas Carol, which was the first time I wept, hearing about Tiny Tim. As I recall, this man walked from Gimli, and returned the same way the following day."

During the summer of 1903 the brothers built a house 14' x 16' on Bjorn's homestead. It was built of spruce logs, and the cracks between the logs were chinked with moss taken from a swamp. There were 2 windows and 2 doors on this house. The doors were made of rough lumber, the floor of planed spruce boards, and the shanty-shaped roof of lumber. The barn was also built of logs with a flat roof of poles. On top of this roof coarse hay was piled.

All the furniture in this home was handmade, except for the cast-iron heater and the cast-iron cook stove No. 8. This small stove had been bought in Winnipeg in 1884 for \$22.00. Included in the price had been some tin plates, cups, saucepans, and a frying pan. The tables, benches, small wooden trunks called "koffort" in Icelandic, and the bunks, were all made of spruce lumber. Mattresses were filled with hay and the comforters were made of thick layers of wool batts.

These comforters were very warm, as indeed they needed to be, for in this home there was no insulation of any kind. The stove pipes simply extended to a small round hole in the roof, as there was no chimney.

At that time game was plentiful. Jakob was a good hunter, and he often brought moose meat, rabbit, elk, and prairie chicken home. There was always enough milk, butter, and the Icelander's favourite dessert skyr, a type of yogurt which was sweetened with sugar and topped with milk or cream. A very nourishing dish called "hraeringur" was made by combining skyr and oatmeal porridge. Topped with milk, this mixture made a hearty meal by itself, and was often eaten at suppertime.

As soon as a garden plot could be worked, potatoes, and later turnips, were grown. It was not until several years later that the Icelandic settlers learned the value of a greater variety of vegetables in their diet, and the comparative ease with which they could be grown. Staple foods bought included flour, rolled oats, coffee, sugar, yeast and baking powder. Once in a while raisins were bought, as a rare and special treat.

The method of preserving food during the hot summer days often presented a problem. Usually the meat was salted down and kept in a brine, in a keg or barrel that had a good, firm lid. This was dug into the ground. Later, small houses were built over a dugout. The hole was filled with ice blocks hauled from the river, or else water was poured into the dugout hole to freeze. This ice was then covered with sawdust and it lasted throughout the summer months. In later years, when cream was shipped, cream cans were sometimes kept cool simply by lowering them into wells.

All clothes were made at home. Many farmers kept a flock of sheep. In almost every Icelandic home the women could spin and card the wool needed to make the warm Icelandic mitts and socks. Indeed, these mitts and socks were later often bartered for groceries. This was a godsend to many a pioneer family. The underwear was knitted on a knitting machine into long strips which were sewn together. These underwear proved to be both warm and comfortable during the cold winter months. When outside, the men wore heavy parkas and overalls of white canvas. The parka had an attached hood with drawstring, and also a band of fur around the edge, to keep the face from freezing. Until Anna came to housekeep for the 3 brothers at their homestead, these clothes were made at their family home in Gimli.

In 1904 the brothers built another house of logs, larger than the first one. Now the spruce logs were squared on the sides. This was done with an axe so it was slow and tedious work. This house had 3 rooms - a large kitchen and 2 bedrooms. The roof was of lumber and shingles. The table here was made larger than the first one, and this house had a few chairs, as well as benches.

Anna Sigvaldason came to Vidir in 1905, to help her brothers and act as their housekeeper. Bjorn taught during the fall and winter months and Johannes went out fishing, so a great deal of the farm work was left to Jakob. Anna cooked the meals for her brothers, and was a



The old spinning wheel was a feature in every pioneer home. Here Ingibjorg is busy at her spinning wheel outside their home in Vidir.

wonderful cook who somehow always managed to make the food tasty though she was very thrifty and an exceptionally fine homemaker. She often helped with outside chores. Sometimes she hauled hay in the winter, and one interesting event took place one day when she was having a hard time getting the cantankerous and stubborn mules to move. At that moment, a neighbour, Gudmundur Kristjanson, often referred to as "Litli Mundi", came by and commented dryly: "They need a man to drive them." He climbed onto the load and took the reins and let a tremendous holler. This yell so startled the mules that they took off at once, and never stopped until they reached the barn.

During their trips back and forth between Gimli and their homesteads, the brothers travelled by team of oxen. Oxen were used at first too for breaking up the sod and other field work. These animals moved very slowly and it took a patient man to refrain from swearing at these animals as they slowly plodded along.

Often the brothers stopped at Snorri Jonsson's homestead. One day Unnur, Snorri's daughter, heard a commotion outside.

"Come on, you darn old slowpokes - get moving," and Jakob stood there angrily prodding the oxen on. "Dammit all - move".

"What an impatient man he is," thought Unnur, as she watched him. She realized later that these bovine creatures only moved at a certain pace...and a very slow one at that. No amount of prodding could hurry them up.

Jakob became increasingly interested in making sure they stopped at Snorri Jonssons, whenever they drove by his homestead.

"Lets' stop for a cup of coffee". At sight of Unnur in the doorway, his face would light up with a smile.

"I think I'm beginning to see why you like to stop here," Johannes would tease Jakob.

Gradually, it became evident that Jakob and Unnur were becoming very attracted to each other, and they began "walking out together."

Sometimes Jakob would go on foot to Snorri Jonsson's home. One time when he was setting off for home, walking, Unnur walked part of the way back with him. Suddenly a huge bear, reared up on his hind legs, appeared on the path ahead of them. It was a terrifying moment for both of them, but fortunately the large dog that was with them, frightened the bear and he took off.

Jakob and Unnur were the first young couple to marry in Vidir. They were married by Reverend Runolfur Marteinsson in 1907 in the log house on Bjorn's farm. The bride wore a green dress with white trim, and the groom wore a new suit for this happy occasion. There were only a few guests present, but it was a happy and friendly gathering.

Jakob and Unnur now lived with Bjorn on his homestead, for the first year, while Jakob himself built a four room home and a barn. After Jakob's wedding Anna went to Winnipeg to work.

Up to 1907 no name for this area had been selected. In that year a group of settlers held a meeting and two names were suggested for this growing community. One name was "Vidir", which in Icelandic means willow; the other suggestion was "Willow Flats". The name "Vidir" won out by one vote. The post office was located at Jon Sigurdson's home, so he used the name "Vidir" for his homestead.

Bjorn was married in 1909 to Lara Johnson and settled on his farm in Vidir, in the log house which had been built in 1904. They covered the log walls with siding, then painted it. Here, though Bjorn was handicapped by having only one arm, he devised methods of getting his work done. In 1920 he sold his farm to Jakob and moved his family to Arborg.

Johannes fished for the first few winters until he moved permanently to his homestead in 1906, and began building it up. Everything around Johannes' home and farm was kept very orderly. Here Johannes lived with his wife, Thorbjorg Davidsdottir and his son Johann, as the community of Vidir expanded and progressed.

After leaving Vidir, Anna went to Winnipeg where she worked as a seamstress for many years. In 1923 she married Halldor Austman, and two years later they moved to Sylvan, where Halldor had a homestead. By this time, Sigvaldi Johannesson, Anna's father, had passed away. The four room cottage which had been Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg's home in Vidir since 1912, was moved to Halldor and Anna Austman's homestead in Sylvan.

The youngest of the Sigvaldason brothers, Sigurdur, came to Vidir in 1911 to live with his brothers for a year until his parents moved there the next year.

In 1912 Sigurdur bought his first farm animals, two calves at \$8.00 and \$12.00 each. The following year he purchased his first team of oxen and rented 30 acres from his brothers and began to work these acres.



Grandma Ingibjorg driving Granni, Jakob's horse. She is sitting with her grandson Ingvar on one of the first buggies in Vidir.

After Sigurdur completed his elementary school his brother Oliver helped him by sending him to Agricultural College in Winnipeg for two years.

In 1920, when he married Eggertina Sveinson, he bought a farm through the Soldier Settlement Board, as he had been overseas in World War I. The wedding took place at the Sveinson home, and after a happy gathering over coffee and cakes, the young couple drove by horse team to their farm. Here they began farming with 3 horses and a few cattle.

Icelandic people have always had a great love of books and the old custom of one person reading, while the others sat around carding wool, knitting mitts and socks, was kept up in the pioneer homes in New Iceland. In 1908 the Vidir Icelandic Library was organized by Magnus Jonasson and a few more of the early settlers. People donated books to the Library which was located in Magnus Jonasson's home for many years.

Magazines and Icelandic newspapers were read, enjoyed and exchanged. The two Icelandic weeklies, Logberg and Heimskringla, were widely read, and their controversial stands on politics and religion were often highly amusing to the readers. Later on, farm periodicals such as the Free Press Prairie Farmer, and Country Guide were subscribed to by most farmers. Another very well-studied publication was the Eaton's catalogue which found its way into every home. What joy and dreams it brought to all members of the family; the young children were fascinated with the pages and pages of mechanical toys, and the beautiful Eaton's Beauty Doll, which every little girl yearned to own; the young girls envisioned themselves looking so grand at the next Dance, in one of Eaton's fashionable dresses; the young men dreamed of owning a bicycle to show off to their best girl;

the mothers carefully checking the styles and prices on the pages of babies and children's clothes; and the men folk yearning for those wonderful tools illustrated so well in the catalogue. Indeed, the Eaton's catalogue was so widely read and studied that a local minister once dryly commented' "I'm afraid that the Eaton's catalogue is studied much more thoroughly on the Holy Day than the Bible ever is."

When a brand new catalogue arrived, the old dog-eared and tattered catalogue was relegated to the outhouse. Here it served a double purpose. Inside the outhouse, usually nestling in a grove of spruce trees, away from prying eyes and calls of work to be done, one could look in leisure at the catalogue, and dream of being able to buy all those wonderful things in there. At last, the catalogue, curled up, tattered and torn beyond recognition, would serve its final purpose in the outhouse.

When the first settlers came the land was cleared by using axes and a great deal of muscle, sweat and hand power. The fields were then broken with oxen and a plow. Sometimes two teams of oxen were used, one team behind the other, or else five oxen would be harnessed, two in front and 3 behind.

The first grain seeded in Vidir was broadcast by hand by Armann Magnusson. The Sigvaldason Brothers and Sigurdur Finnsson followed shortly with grain fields. Gradually the area farmers banded together to buy the essential machinery.

Getting the grain threshed presented quite a problem at first. In the early days of the settlers the grain was cut with scythe and flail, which was back breaking work. Later the binder and the threshing machine replaced the former methods. During threshing time large gangs of men would be working together - some at pitching the grain stooks on the hayracks, one to attend to the threshing machine, another to feed the machine, while others had to haul the grain away to granaries.



Jakob Sigvaldason sits on the binder, driven by 4 horses.



Kris Sigvaldason stands atop the threshing machine, with the grain wagon in foreground.

Threshing time was a very busy time for the womenfolk too. In addition to their usual chores at this busy time, of helping with the milking and feeding the chickens, they had to feed these large threshing gangs, often 10 to 12 hungry men. And what feasts they were! The large kitchen tables would groan under the weight of the loaded platters of beef roast, or venison, potatoes and rich brown gravy, two or three steaming vegetable bowls, topped off with apple pie smothered with whipped cream, and plenty of coffee. Everyone looked forward to these bountiful "threshing-gang meals." Indeed, it almost became a competition amongst the farm wives to see who could come up with the most varied and lavish food for the threshers, much to the delight of the hungry threshing gangs.

Social life in the pioneering years mostly revolved around visiting, or else attending concerts at the Ardal Hall, located one mile west of Arborg which was the closest Hall around when the Sigvaldason brothers first homesteaded. Church services were held at this hall, occasionally, as well as Concerts and Dances.

When there was a Concert here the settlers would hurry with their chores and would leave by oxen team, around 6 o'clock in the evening, the oxen plodding slowly along. After enjoying a Concert and Dance, they would start off for home again, singing and joking on the way, and arrive home at 6 a.m. where a new day of clearing more land awaited them.

In 1909 when the Vidir School was built, this building was also used for church services, meetings, concerts, and gatherings. It is interesting to note the prices charged at the Vidir School for various social events at this time:

Political meetings	\$2.00
Community meetings	1.00
Church services	.50
Concerts for local residents	1.50
Concerts and socials for non-residents	3.00

Any group renting the building was liable for the damages. It is also interesting to note prevailing wages for work rendered at the School building:

\$4.00 to Halldor Austman and Valdi Sigurdson
for fuel for the fall term.
\$7.00 to Peter Herman for 4 cords of
seasoned wood.
\$4.50 to Steingrimur Sigurdson for lighting
the school heater each morning for 9 weeks.
\$2.00 to Jon Sigurdson for hauling desks
and supplies from Hnausa.

After the Community Hall was built in 1914, it was used for Church services, weddings, christenings, funerals, concerts and dances.

The following extract of a poem by Margaret Finnson entitled "Good Old Fashioned Fun" aptly describes part of the early social life in communities like Vidir.

"Though winter months were very cold.
Folks didn't seem to mind,
To simple parties they would go
And leave their cares behind.

In those old days the families
Were large, say six to eight,
And drying socks hung all around
Each with its proper mate.

Oh, there were many other things
That didn't look just right,
Grubby hands and tangled hair,
When company came at night.

They always came at eight o'clock
To start their merry greeting
They came because they wanted to
Not for a business meeting.



Neighbours visiting.

Back row: Left to right.

*Grandma Ingibjorg,
Geirthrudur, Snorri,
Siggi Sigvaldason*

Front Row: Unnur

*Sigvaldason holding
Addie, Jakob*

*Sigvaldason holding
Gudrun –*

*Kris Sigvaldason
kneeling*

Each lady brought a cake or bread,
Whatever she had handy.
It didn't matter what you brought,
Most anything was dandy.

What I remember best of all
Was the pleasure folks did show
At seeing their old friends again
And the ones they'd get to know.

Their happiness came from within,
No swig needed for their fun.
The only bottles to be seen
Were those with baby nipples on.

Down came the violin off its hook,
Mouth organ off the shelf,
Now every one was on the floor
More than ready to enjoy himself.

While on the stairs we kids all sat
To watch the queer performance,
With grace and ease some twirled about,
As others struggled at their dance.

A story there's of one lady fair,
This of course I shouldn't tell,
A little boy crept from the stairs,
Unhooked her skirt and down it fell.

The years rolled by and we no more
Sat watching from the stairs,
Instead we took an active part
In all community affairs.

Now there were concerts, dances too,
Down at the Vidir Hall,
And when the music strains rang out,
Men answered that sweet call.

They swiftly raced across the hall
To seek a partner, one and all,
And as they glided in and out,
No one was left to adorn the wall.

Now wouldn't it be pleasant
To take a little run,
Back to the days when folks enjoyed
This good old fashioned fun.

Over the years the Vidir community has thrived and expanded. Gone are the outmoded machines of yesteryear; gone are the days of the large threshing gangs. They have been replaced by modern self-propelled swathers and air-conditioned combines, which require only 2 men to operate efficiently - one to combine and the other to haul the grain away in the truck with a hoist and using an auger to get the grain into the granary sheds.

Gone are the log houses and barns built by the pioneer settlers. Gone too are the outhouses, hidden amongst the trees. These have been replaced by modern homes with electrical appliances and plumbing. The barns of today hold gleaming milking machines and automatic barn cleaners.

Today the low spots in the area have been drained, and the acres of golden wheat swaying in the breeze and ripening in the hot prairie sun, attest to the productive value of this land, which was carved out of a wilderness of forest and swamp.

Gone are the original homesteaders - Bjorn, Jakob and Johannes, who cleared their land and had visions of a bright future. Today their homesteads flourish under the capable ownership of Jakob's grandsons: Raymond Sigvaldason who lives on Jakob's homestead; Harold, Kenneth and Albert Foster who are on Bjorn's homestead; and Lorne Floyd who is on Johannes' homestead. Their large and prosperous farms are evidence that they too possess the pride, determination and dreams of their ancestors.

Some things however never change. The hospitality and true community spirit, where neighbours help in time of need, are still very



The Foster homes are located on Bjorn's homestead. Today on this farm and on the next one, Raymond Sigvaldason's, the acres of golden wheat attest to the productivity of these homesteads.

much a part of Vidir community life. The young people remain, to a large degree in Vidir, more so than in most communities, to help operate and eventually take over their parents farms. One farmer long ago fondly referred to Vidir as "God's Little Acre." This belief and hope in their community was what sustained the early settlers. Today this tremendous community spirit still prevails and gives to Vidir a special status as a "community that shares and cares."

Footnote:

Research material on this chapter has included notes by Anna Austman, as well as reference material from "Beyond The Marsh".

CHAPTER V.

THIS, MY KINGDOM

ANNA SIGVALDASON (1886-1978) married HALLDOR AUSTMAN (1896-1964)

I child

I. HELGI HALLDOR (1922) married LILLIAN ARNASON

3 children

A. Signy (1946) married ROY HOLSTEIN
I child

a. JENNIFER (1975)

B. LARRY (1949) married MARGARET SHAW

C. BRIAN (1954-1974)

CHAPTER V.

THIS, MY KINGDOM.

When (Aunty) Anna Austman was growing up, her fondest dream was to become a teacher. She enjoyed reading, especially poetic verse. The Icelandic poetry she learned as a young girl instilled in her a deep understanding of the great traditions and culture embodied in Icelandic poetry. However, her dream of becoming a teacher was not meant to be. When her older sister Gudrun, was bedridden at home, Aunty Anna was needed there to help her mother.

Aunty Anna eventually did get to Winnipeg to take up a sewing course and she became an excellent seamstress. She worked at this for a number of years. Throughout her life her natural aptitude for handicrafts provided great enjoyment for her.



Going to Sunday School classes at Aunty Anna's. Grandma Ingibjorg made the hats.

Jakob and Bjorn Sigvaldason's daughters.

Back row: Addie, Anna, Inga, Gudrun

Front Row: Laura, Kristiana, Gudrun, Thruda.

When Aunty worked in Winnipeg she would sometimes walk from Arborg to Vidir, when she came by train from Winnipeg. She often brought trinkets and things for her nieces and nephews in Vidir. To her, books were cherished possessions and she also brought books to read to the nieces and nephews, all of whom loved her dearly for her thoughtfulness. She was able to recite reams of poetry from memory. Indeed, in later years she often recited poetry and favourite passages of prose at entertainment sessions. Ingvar and I spent some time in Vidir with Aunty Anna and Grandma, and Ingvar became a great favourite of Grandmas.

It was during one of these stays that I was introduced to the fascinating legends of the "huldu-folk" or "hidden people", as they were known in Iceland.

One summer evening, when I was 10 years old, Aunty Anna told me about how the huldu-folk came around to visit at night, after everyone had gone to sleep.

"We must leave the house very clean for the huldu-folk," Aunty told me, "They love to come and dance the night away. However, if the house is dirty, they might do some mischief."

I swept the kitchen floor very carefully that night. I went over it once again with the broom, to catch any extra dust flying around.

"They don't like to see a messy place," added Aunty, as she flicked some dust from the corner, "There mustn't be a speck of dust anywhere."

I got out the broom for the third and swept again. Now everything looked spanking clean!

When I went to bed that night I decided I would stay awake and see the huldu-folk. I wanted to see them dance around. When Aunty came to tuck me in I pretended to be fast asleep. I waited and waited, but not a sound did I hear of dancing feet. Finally I fell asleep.

Every night I swept the kitchen very carefully. Every night I tried to stay awake. The huldu-folk must have crept in very softly and danced noiselessly, for never did I ever hear a sound, or catch a glimpse of those little people who came in the night!

Aunty Anna was many things to many people. To her parents she was a daughter they could always depend on for love and support; to her brothers who began homesteading in Vidir, she was a loving sister who kept a home for them and helped with the chores; to her many nieces and nephews she was a favourite aunt, who brought them trinkets to enjoy, who taught them Sunday school classes in Icelandic, who read to them and showed them the joy of having books as good friends through life. To her husband Halldor she was a loving and wonderful helpmate throughout their life together; to her son Helgi and his family she was a loving mother, teacher and guide, ever ready to listen, while instilling in them a deep sense of direction and objective in life.

She enjoyed being part of a lively community life. She took an active part in the Lutheran Women's League and in promoting the Lutheran summer camp at Husavik. Aunty Anna was instrumental in seeing to it that any child who wanted to go to camp, would be able to do so. She was president of the Women's Farm Group and later was made honourary member.

In her quiet and intelligent manner she was able to contribute greatly to the cultural and progressive development of various community projects.

Throughout her life, Aunty Anna looked out at the world with a vision clear and bright, attuned to the satisfaction of working and building up a prosperous farm alongside her husband; the joy of seeing her son find his niche in life; and the happiness of showing her respect and love of the great country she was born in -Canada.



Anna Austman
and Clara
Thorbergson
stooking grain
in Vidir.



Anna and Halldor Austman.

(Taped and translated interview with Anna Austman. 1975 for Jon and Maria in Iceland).

"My early life was spent in Gimli and Winnipeg. When my brother Sigurdur joined the army, I went to Vidir to live with my parents. They were now getting too old to manage the farm by themselves so I looked after the animals and the heavier work. Mother still did a great deal of spinning and knitted mitts and socks for groceries and extra cash. My brothers, Jakob, Bjorn and Johannes helped me a great deal, by loaning me horses to put up hay etc. Later they gave me a horse, which I used for my weekly trips to Arborg with cream and eggs. During the summer

I had the horse and buggy, while during the winter months I travelled by horse and cutter.

It was during this time that I met Halldor Austman, who had been driving the mail to Fisher River for some time. His parents had originally had a homestead in Vidir, but had moved to Winnipeg. Halldor tried to buy their homestead but it already been taken up by someone else.

Halldor and I were married in 1923 and lived with my parents. We had 60 acres of land for hay and pasture, two horses and a few cows. Halldor was a very hard worker and often worked in the bush during the winter months. While we lived in Vidir, our son Helgi was born.

After my father died in 1924, Mother sold her house to us, and she moved into a small house which was moved to Sigurdur's farm.

In 1925 we moved to our homestead in Sylvan, which was north of Vidir. Here everything was covered in bush-poplar, spruce, and pine. It was a tremendous task to clear the land because the homesteader was confronted with endless stones. Piles of rock and stone at cleared sites testified to the time-consuming problem of clearing the land of these stones. Halldor was able to get a loan from the Soldier Settlement Board, with better interest rates, to cultivate the land.

In Sylvan there was only one other Icelandic family, the Lindals. The rest of the settlers were English, Ukrainians, and Poles. There was no community life at all. We did have an Elementary school, GR. I to VIII. We always boarded the teacher at our home, although it was none too large. At that time teacher's salaries were very low, so all we could charge for room and board was \$14 or \$15 per month. However, that money often came in very handy. There were few opportunities here for young people. When we first came to Sylvan, only one pupil had completed Grade VIII.

The people in this community were poor, as the land was very unproductive, both for pasture and grain. Many a stone did Halldor pick up from the ground and pile into wagons. There were no big swamps around, so the danger of fire during the dry season presented problems. Halldor was a tireless worker and by sheer determination and grit, our farming gradually prospered. It was easy to get young people to work, as most of them stayed home after they quit school. The salary paid to young men at this time was \$1 per day, and a long day at that, with dinner and coffee included.

We usually had hired help, especially during the winter months when Halldor worked in the bush. We had built up quite a large herd of cattle. Halldor and I always discussed farm procedures and worked and planned together how best to make our farm productive. We bought another farm in Sylvan. This one was good for pasture and hay, and not as stony as the home property.

If someone in the Sylvan community was sick, or a child being born, I was called upon to act as a midwife. At first I had nothing to work with. However, with time and experience I learned a great deal and helped the doctor with child deliveries. I have always considered it very fortunate indeed that never, at any time, were there any serious complications.

One time when I was called upon to attend a woman in childbirth, the patient was very sick. This time I feared to be alone with her, in case some complications arose. I asked the husband to call up Dr. Bjornson at Arborg, a distance of 20 miles. I stayed up all night with the woman. After a safe delivery the husband drove me home.

About a year later Dr. Bjornson asked me, "Did those people in Sylvan every pay you, the time you were there all night?"

"No," I replied, "I have never been paid for any time I have been a midwife."

"I didn't get paid either," Dr. Bjornson replied.

During the 1930s it was very hard to get ahead as prices on all farm commodities were very low. We had a large number of cattle and



Taken at Vidir, 1948. Left to right: Ella Floyd, Lara Sigvaldason, Siggi and Ena Sigvaldason, Jakob and Unnur Sigvaldason, Inda and Kristjon Sigurdson, Gudrun Sveinson, Anna and Halldor Austman.

enough hayland. Halldor was determined to become an independent and successful farmer.

In the early 1940s the original Austman homestead came up for tax sale. My brother Bjorn had heard about this and knew we had always been anxious to acquire the homestead. He helped us get the necessary loan of \$500 to pay for the farm. At that time it was almost impossible to raise \$500, and very hard for anyone to sell farms for this reason. However, we were able to buy this farm in Vidir. We had always deeply longed to move back to Vidir, where we felt more at home in that progressive community.

While we were in Sylvan our son Helgi attended school there, then took Gr. IX and X by correspondence. The following year he went to High School in Arborg. He helped at home the next year, then went to Teulon where he took his Gr. XII. During these years Helgi always helped on the farm, after school and during the summer holidays. Indeed, he has always been a wonderful son to us—helpful on the farm as well as a tremendous source of strength to me in later years.

The winter before we moved to Vidir Halldor went into the bush to take out logs to build a house, a large barn, as well as a machinery shed. By this time we had a tractor, so Helgi moved the logs to Vidir. Our house was built first.

Before we moved to Vidir Halldor had bought another farm for grain and pasture. He put that farm in Helgi's name as he had helped so much through the years. Halldor also bought two other farms, so by the time we moved from Sylvan, where we had lived for 17½ years, we had 640 acres of land in Vidir, as well as some farms in Sylvan.

When Halldor bought the farm in Vidir, it was in very poor condition and the fences were all down. By the spring of 1942 Halldor had put in crops. This eventually developed into very good land.

The day we moved from Sylvan, September 26, was a cold windy day. We moved the cattle first, although there was as yet, no shelter for them. Our house was partly finished. That night six inches of snow fell, and a cold north wind blew. However, before long, Halldor had a large barn built on this farm.

On this farm grass was plentiful and grain grew well. The beautiful spruce bluff on the north side of the farm provided shelter from the wintry blasts. It was not a high bluff, but a lovely one. To the south was a poplar bluff, with spruce interspersed. In between these two bluffs our home was sheltered and protected.

We were very happy to move back to Vidir where, once again we could become part of a lively and progressive community. Here there were groups interested in furthering and promoting cultural events. The Community club was active, as were the Lutheran Ladies Aid, and the Lutheran Women's League. These organizations proved to be uplifting and provided me with a sense of belonging and being part of a community moving ahead.

By this time we had sold our farms at Sylvan and bought more land closer to our home place. We had large grain fields and large herds of cattle, as we had plenty of hay and pasture land. Our farm prospered.

Helgi attended University and helped with work on the farm during the summer months. In this way he was able to pay for his schooling. While he attended university he married Lillian Arnason. In 1948 he graduated from Agriculture at the University of Manitoba. He had taken a regular four year course in three years., and was fortunate enough to win the Lieutenant Governor's Gold medal in agriculture.

Halldor had a very good herd of beef cattle and some horses. We kept Flicka, our favourite horse, long after we parted with the other horses.

Halldor began to find it increasingly hard to sit on the farm machinery for any length of time, as he had developed an ulcer. In 1953 we sold our farm. Just prior to this my brother Jakob died suddenly, in an accident at threshing time. This loss, combined with the idea of leaving Vidir, where we had so enjoyed living amidst our comfortable surroundings, made us have misgivings about leaving the farm. However, we decided that the time had come to take a more leisurely pace through life, and moved to Arborg.

We had intended to build a new home in Arborg but could not find a location we liked. We did however, buy a home that faced on to the Icelandic river. The view from our home there was idyllic—overhanging willows bending down to touch the water's edge; low shrubs where the birds loved to nest; the bright green riverbank;—all these provided a changing panorama. I spent many happy moments watching the river from our front windows. We made great improvements on the house, both inside and outside.

There were many beautiful shady trees around our home and we planted more trees and fruit plants. The soil was not particularly good, but with the addition of fertilizer our flower and vegetable gardens flourished. I enjoyed the hours I spent gardening as I think a love of the



Anna Austman as Fjallkona, [Maid of the Mountains] at the Islendingadagurinn at Hnausa, Manitoba in 1954.

soil and its marvels is deep-rooted in so many of us who have been brought up on a farm.

Halldor, who had always been an active person and a hard worker, began to find that retirement was not as satisfying as he thought it would be. He longed for a new challenge and more incentive. He had kept some of his farm machinery, so he now bought a small farm west of Arborg, in order to have something to do. At that time property was still cheap. The first winter after he bought the 80 acres he cut wood, then cleared the land and planted grain. He worked this into good land and a few years later he sold these 80 acres to a young couple. He sold his machinery as well.

Halldor was elected Councillor on the Bifrost Municipal Council. He enjoyed this work as he had the time and the enthusiasm to work well with other council members. As he had done a great deal of road work with my brother Jakob, in his younger days, he was in a position to be very knowledgeable about procedures in road work. He promoted the idea of maintaining good roads in the municipality.

Halldor also served on the Hospital Board for the Arborg Hospital. He devoted much time to this and was often on call when others were unable to come, due to pressures of work.

In Arborg we enjoyed belonging to the Icelandic League "Esja" and attended several conventions. I continued as member of the Manitoba Farm Women's group, which sponsored the annual Arborg Fair.

One winter we took a six week trip to Vancouver, where we rented a suite. We had friends and relatives there, all of whom we enjoyed visiting.

When Halldor died suddenly in 1964 of a stroke, I was in the hospital. Helgi, who has always been a wonderful son, was my source of strength then. After I got out of the hospital I stayed in my home for the winter. I realized however, that I would not be able to spend another winter there. I sold our home and moved to Betel where I have been since. Here at this home in Gimli, we are well looked after.

I am now 89 years of age and I find it harder to write. I wish that I had started this tape to you, Jon and Maria, a year or two earlier, when my memory may have been sharper.

To you dearest Jon, kinsman and friend, I send my love and ask God to bless you always—you and Maria, who has been a true and wonderful wife to you. And may God bless your son Hordur, his wife Ranny, and their girls, Edda and Litla Maria. May you all be rich in His love and blessings."

ANNA AUSTMAN



Helgi Austman and family at Loni Beach, Gimli, 1961.

*Left to right:
Signy, Helgi, Lillian.
Front: Brian and
Larry.*

In a letter written to her son Helgi, when Anna was in her 90s, she wrote that she hoped there would be no long eulogies written about her.

Rather she would have them say of her, as well as of so many others who worked hard and who reaped the rewards of their labours, that their creed in life was but a simple and fulfilling one—

"I pledge my life, love and strength to the further development of this great country of ours."

It can be truly said of Anna Austman that her creed and philosophy should be an inspiration to all her family.



Dr. Helgi Austman

DR. HELGI AUSTMAN

Dr. Helgi Austman holds a distinguished record in the Manitoba Department of Agriculture.

When he graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1948, Dr. Austman received the Lieutenant Governor's Gold Medal in Agriculture. Post-graduate studies in extension education at the University of Wisconsin led to a Master of Science degree in 1957, and a Ph.D. in 1961.

Dr. Austman has been with the Manitoba Department of Agriculture for over 30 yrs, retiring this year as Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture. His first position with them was as Agricultural Representative for the Teulon area; from there he was promoted to Assistant Director of the Extension Service, where he worked for 10 years. During the next few years he was Director of the Extension Service, until 1969 when he became Assistant Deputy Minister.

In his position as Assistant Deputy Minister Dr. Austman has been in charge of the Rural Development Division, Chairman of the Water Services Board, and administrative head of that program. He has had the responsibility of initiating, organizing and managing a northern manpower development and employment program. His latest role in the department was as head of the Regional Division, which is the field staff of the Department of Agriculture, a role involving 250 people; as well as developing the latest federal-provincial cost-share agreement on special thrusts in Agricultural development in Manitoba. His goal in this particular job was to complete negotiations, involving \$18 million, and to get that program off the ground.

Dr. Austman is well known throughout the province of Manitoba, through his associations with numerous agricultural associations. He has been past president of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, the Western Canada Farm Safety Conference, and the Canadian Society of Rural Extension. He served as Chairman on the Advisory Council on Scientific Affairs, as well as numerous other associations.

Dr. Austman's work has taken him on many overseas assignments. He has hosted farm groups from Iceland and has acted as agricultural representative on several tours. This year he will be going on an assignment to Guyana. He has made numerous friends throughout Iceland in his capacity as representative of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture.

Like his parents, Halldor and Anna Austman, Helgi has proved that the heritage of his ancestors can successfully merge into the fascinating mosaic of Canadian life. At Gimli, the site of the first Icelandic settlement in Manitoba, Helgi Austman will be living in his retirement years. Like his forefathers, who chose Gimli, which means "Home of the Gods" as their haven, so Helgi Austman has chosen his retirement haven amongst surroundings that are a blend of the old and the new.

A MAN OF HIS TIMES CHAPTER VI

JACOB SIGVALDASON (1884-1953) married UNNUR JOHNSON.
6 children

1. KRISTJAN INGVAR (1908) married PHYLLIS FOSTER
- A. ELLEN UNNUR (1936) married ROBERT MARTIN
 - a. SHARLENE DEBRA (1958)
 - b. LORETTA BERNICE (1959)
 - c. (SIGRID) LAUREEN (1964)
 - d. TRACY DIANE (1973)
- B. SIGURBJORG JESSIE (1938) married HALLDOR FINNISON
 - a. GRANT ALLAN (1959) married CATHERINE ODDLEIFSON
 - b. WANDA DELL (1961)
 - c. BRADFORD EARL (1966)
- C. ANNA EDITH (1939) married TRYGVI FINNISON
 - a. (BRENDA) LENORE (1959)
 - b. JANIS LYNN (1961)
 - c. DAVID WARREN (1963)
- D. KRISTIN PHYLLIS (1942) married ROWLAND KRISTJANSON
 - a. DARLENE LEANNE (1964)
 - b. WESLEY WARD (1966)
 - c. ROSS KENT (1970)
- E. RAYMOND SIGVALDI (1943) married LINDA PAULSON
 - a. TODD RAYMOND (1967)
 - b. SCOTT RUSSELL (1968)
 - c. MELENIE ELAN (1972)

F. SYLVIA MILDRED (1946) married CLIFFORD GISLASON

a. KRISTA RAE (1970)

G. DAVID NYALL (1949) married LEE HARASYM

a. ALAINE DAWN (1973)

b. ARIK DAVID (1978)

2. GUDRUN ANNA (1910 - 1935)

3. ARNFRIDUR (1912 married HAROLD FOSTER

A. HAROLD JACOB (1939) married ALDA SIGVALDASON

a. ROGER GREG (1971)

b. ERIN ALLISON (1978)

B. RICHARD ELMER (1942) married KAREN ROLFE

C. KENNETH OLIVER (1945 married TRUDY ANNE JOHNSTON

a. JONATHAN KEITH (1971)

b. KYLE KENNETH (1976)

D. ALBERT GEORGE (1949 married ELAINE DOLA

a. SHAUNA LEE (1975)

b. TRENT ALBERT (1978)

4. GEIRTHRUDUR (1914) married HARRY FLOYD

A. OLIVE GUDRUN (1938 - 1939)

B. ALICE (1940 married (GUNNAR) LLOYD FINNBOGASON

a. GLENN LLOYD (1961)

b. WARREN SCOTT (1964)

c. ALAN MARK (1967)

d. ROBYN LYNNE (1969)

C. LORNE FLOYD (1944 married LORNA INGIBJORG MARTIN

a. RONALD LORNE (1969)

b. STEWART WAYNE (1971)

D. DORIS LILLIAN (1949) married ROGER BENSON

a. LEANNE DAWN (1970)

b. BOYD HAROLD (1971)

5. JACOB (1919) married OSK JONASSON

A. CAROL THORDIS (1944) married SIGURDUR BARDARSON

a. CHERYL LEE (1964)

b. ROBERT DAVID (1965)

c. TAMMY NANETTE (1969)

B. BEVERLEY LYNNE (1945) married BARNEY EINARSON

a. SHARON ANNETTE (1965)

b. RUSSELL (1968)

c. COLIN BJARNI (1970)

C. BRIAN THOMAS (1948) married MARILYN BRETON (divorced)

a. COREY JACOB (1971)

BRIAN remarried BARBARA

a. LISA DAWN (1975)

b. THOMAS BRIAN (1977)

D. DONALD JACOB (1950) married JEANETTE DRYER

a. LAURIE CAROL (1971)

b. TROY DON (1974)

c. TRACY LEE (1976)

d. CARRIE LYNN (1978)

E. KEITH DOUGLAS (1960)

F. LOIS ANN MARYLIN (1967)

6. ERLENDUR (1921 married LENA GREIN.



*Jakob and Unnur
Sigvaldason and
eldest child Kris.*

A MAN OF HIS TIMES.

"A man of his times" very aptly describes (Uncle) Jakob Sigvaldason. In his heart dwelt the true spirit of the pioneers, who through hard work, courage and stamina helped to build up communities like Vidir across this vast land of ours.

Jakob had the true courage of his ancestors. He had need of it too, for on more than one occasion he was confronted by a bear, and came through the victor. He possessed the strength to fell trees and carve a home out of a wilderness. He had the stamina to stand up to defeat and hard times and come up again to face new challenges in life.

Uncle Jakob also had the gift of laughter and joy. Whenever he came to our home he would look at us with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Hello there, my little ones" he would say with a grin. "What mischief have been getting into lately?"

We always stayed close to the kitchen table whenever he came for dinner. He loved hunting and would tell Papa stories about his hunting trips. He had a hearty laugh and sometimes we saw him wiping his eyes after a good laugh. He had many stories to tell about his sawmill operations at Sugar Creek and his fish freighting experiences.

The day that Uncle Jakob came to our place driving a huge, black McLoughlin touring car is a day to remember.

"Look at that big car," we shouted as we saw him drive in up to the yard gate. "It's Uncle Jakob's new car."

We all ran outside and examined the car inside and out.

"We need a big car like this," Gudni said, "when we go to our summer picnics at the lake. We'd only have to make two trips instead of three."

Uncle Jakob proudly showed us the double row of seats in the back, as he said, "Now I can take all my family out in the car."

By this time we girls were all sitting in the car, the smaller ones on the extra little seats that pulled out, to seat more. Uncle Jakob sat behind the wheel and started the car.

As we rode up to the corner and back home in that huge car, we felt like princesses. We thought Uncle Jakob must be a millionaire, at least, to have a beautiful car like that.

There were bears not too far from Uncle Jakob's home place. One day Gudrun, the eldest daughter, was getting cows from the pasture land to the southeast.

All at once, as Uncle Jakob was busy mending leather traces for the wagon, Addie came running up to him, shouting, "Papa! Look! There's a bear walking behind Gudrun."

Uncle Jakob jumped up, dropping the traces. He rushed into the house. "My gun! I'll have to shoot the bear," he yelled out, as he ran outside with the gun.

Gudrun meanwhile was completely unaware of the bear walking a short distance behind her. As she shooed the cows toward home and milking time, she suddenly heard a shot! Turning quickly around in the

direction of the shot, she saw the bear go down. She stood rooted to the spot. Uncle Jakob shouted at her, "Come on Gudrun, Run home as fast as you can."

Gudrun needed no further reminder. She dashed off as fast as her legs could carry her. Uncle Jakob shot once again to make sure that he had killed the bear.



Jakob Sigvaldason with his prize lamb. He often took prizes and cups at the Arborg Annual Fair. The old barn in the background was the first barn on the farm.

REMINISCING WITH JAKOB'S CHILDREN

(Taped interview by Alice Finnbogason)

"Dad was a very brave man - a man of courage. He had a good sense of humour and was always jolly. He didn't know the meaning of fear - yet he was gentle and could never hurt anyone. He was quick tempered but forgot quickly. Like many other Icelanders, there was nothing in business too big for him to tackle. If he made up his mind to do something, it had to go through. Mother was a capable person and Dad could always depend on her. Mother used to make all our clothes and nothing was wasted. They made a good pioneer couple."

"Bjorn and Dad had 21 cows together. Bjorn was away teaching school so Mother and Dad used to look after the animals. Once Dad had to go away moose hunting to get enough meat for the winter. Siggi was 13 years old and he milked 5 cows. Mother, with Kris on her lap, milked the rest. The wolves were howling outside the barn."

People relied on deer and moose for their meat, and gardens (with mostly potatoes) were grown to supply vegetables for the year. We used to knit the mitts to sell to the store in exchange for groceries."

Addie Foster

"One time when Dad was fifteen years old, he went to Southwestern Manitoba to work at harvesting. Here he was the water boy, and he hauled water, by horses for quite a distance for the old threshing steamer. There was quite a large threshing crew, but they were very dissatisfied, both with the long hours and the poor food supplied."

One day after the noon meal when the food had been very skimpy indeed, the threshing crew became very angry. "We're quitting right now," said their Spokesman, as they talked together.

Dad just happened to come back with a tank full of water at that time. He too was fed up with the poor food rations and long hours.

"I'm ready to quit too," he announced, as he suddenly pulled the plug out of the water barrel. The water quickly spilled out over the ground.

"What do you think you're doing?" angrily asked the boss, as he came up to Dad.

"We're all quitting," answered the foreman Jon, "unless conditions improve - we want shorter hours and better food or you can get yourself another threshing gang."

After some discussion the boss agreed to shorter hours and promised better food. Dad went back to his task of filling the barrel with water to keep the big steamer going."

Thruda Floyd

"There were good farmers. Nobody was really rich in those days. Life was not easy but everyone was a good worker. There were always good neighbours that would help each other, and still do. There was always room at the table for another person. People were travelling and often used to stay the night."

Kris Sigvaldason



Kris Sigvaldason and family: l. to r. Kris, holding David, Kristin, Sigurbjorg, Ellen, Anna, Phyllis holding Sylvia, with Raymond, sitting in front.

"The first house (up east) had 1 bedroom (plus living room, kitchen and utility room). There was a bed in the living room. It always looked nice with the floors painted and the walls papered.

I remember when I had pneumonia, I was 5 years old and stayed in the bed in the living room. I wanted to get up once when Mother and Dad were out milking so Addie and Gudrun got me up. Was Mother ever mad! I remember Ingvar came over with a tiny box and inside was a cookie. I don't remember if I was able to eat the cookie just then, but I sure remember that present.

Spanish flu was really bad after the First World War. Holms and Erlendsons were very sick. Dad did chores for them for a few days. Mother would finish up the chores outside while the kids would be left alone in the house. Some people died from the high fever. Gudrun and Kris had been really sick with it."

Thruda Floyd



Wayne and Erlendur
Sigvaldason.

"Mundi Kristjanson and Dad used to visit nearly every night. If he didn't come that meant he was sick, so someone would go over to see him. Dad and he would argue and argue, but they were the best of friends. They got pretty loud when it came to politics but wouldn't get mad.

Amma (Ingibjorg) used to spend a month or so in the summer with each of her children. I remember one night it was 12 o'clock and she couldn't sleep, since Dad and Mundi were arguing, so she stood in the door and said, "I think it is time Gudmundur went home." He got up and said, "I guess the old woman can't sleep," and went home. He came over the next afternoon and Amma and him had a good chat."

Kris Sigvaldason

"Mundi used to chew tobacco and when he got excited he would forget to go out to spit and there was often a puddle by his chair. I remember how often we'd have to clean up after him. One time Amma came into the kitchen to get a drink of water and she stepped in a puddle. She was pretty mad. She had to go and wash her feet."

Thruda Floyd

"Afi (Sigvaldi) had been strict with his children and I heard some stories when Dad was small. He was always up to some tricks. Visitors came once when the kids were outside playing hide and seek. They didn't see Dad anywhere so asked, "Where is Jakob?" Seems he had been naughty and Amma had locked him in the cellar, put the chair on top and was sitting there so he couldn't lift the door.

I remember Afi came on Christmas Eve with a bag on his back bringing toys and treats for us kids. Auntie (Anna) had made up little green bags filled with candy and one apple for each child. There usually was a doll for the girls and a toy or game for the boys. Once I remember Mother and Dad dressing up us 4 kids and we all drove over to Amma and Afi's. Auntie had put up a big Christmas tree. I can still see that tree, right up to the ceiling, all aglitter. We just stood there and looked at it."

Addie Foster

One thing I remember about (Sigvaldi) Afi was a grey trunk he brought from Iceland, that he stored tobacco in by the bed. I remember it was when we lived on the east farm before Uncle Bjorn moved to Arborg. Oscar Erlendson was working for Dad and he sent me to Afi to get tobacco for him. I must have been 4 or 5 years old. I'm not sure if all the tobacco was in bars, but I remember Afi slicing it up with a knife. When I brought it back, Oscar gave me 5 cents - that 5 cents seemed like a fortune to me."

Thruda Floyd

"Auntie used to work in Winnipeg and brought home nice things. She was always doing good deeds for her nieces and nephews and we all loved her.

Auntie used to teach Sunday School to Bjorn's and us kids in the summer on Sunday mornings. That was how we learned the sounds of our Icelandic alphabet. We were confirmed in Icelandic. She taught us to read Icelandic so we understood better what we were learning before we were confirmed. We read our Bible stories and learned our prayers.

Travelling took all day with horses. I remember the first time we went to Sylvan to visit Auntie and Dori. There was this big hill - it was like a mountain to us. We went on a team of horses in the morning and got there at dinnertime. then had to hurry back to do the chores."

Addie Foster

"I remember the time Mother took me and Grouni (he had been a cowboy horse) to Uncle Snaebjorn's one spring. It was very muddy with puddles everywhere. I was about 4 years old. When we left Uncle Snaebjorn's, Grouni took off and wouldn't stop. Mother held me between her legs, the buggy was just a-jumping. When we got home Grouni came to a dead stop. Dad was out in the yard and just stood there laughing - we were all covered with mud."

Thruda Floyd

"Later we had an old truck - the cab was homemade. We always got stuck when we went to Snaebjorn's. We usually went at Easter, there weren't any roads, so we went cross country by Nyall's and we always got stuck there. Had to push the truck so we all got messed up.

Once the truck wasn't working well and Dad took it to the garage in town. Dori Erlendson insisted on lending Dad a car. Oh, was it ever a fancy car! It had curtains on the sides."

Kris Sigvaldason

"Dad said he would take us to Minerva District where he grew up. We had never been further than Arborg before. We visited Einarsdons and they had a lovely meal for us. I'm sure she didn't know we were coming. It was such an exciting trip - it was like going to the Coast now!

I remember the times we drove to the Icelandic celebrations in Hnausa. We were singing and the louder we sang, the faster Dad drove. I'm sure we went 2 wheels around the corner at times."

Thruda Floyd



Back row l. to r. Lorne and Lorna Floyd, Warren and Glenn Finnbogason, Doris and Roger Benson, Allan, Lloyd and Alice Finnbogason.

middle row. Ronald Floyd, Harry and Thruda Floyd

front row. Robyn Finnbogason, Boyd Benson, Stewart Floyd and Leanne Benson.

"Dad bought a threshing machine in the fall when Elli was born. The Titan was the first tractor, got it around 1916. The Titan pulled the threshing machine. Dad used to thresh for others. People would just stack up the stooks until he could come to their place. I remember one year he threshed at home just before Christmas - the stooks were stacked up in the yard, where Ken's house is now.

When we were older he did some freighting and had lumber mills at Sugar Creek and Beaver Creek. Dad and I sawed lumber during the depression and sold it for \$25 a thousand planed, delivered to their yard, \$15 for rough lumber. We had no trouble selling the lumber, went as far as Teulon and Stonewall. We bought an old steamer to use out in camp for \$200 and later sold the boiler to a rag factory in Winnipeg. (That steamer had cost \$3,600 new.) Everything had to be made from cheap junk in those days."

Kris Sigvaldason



Jacob Sigvaldason's family:
left to right. Donald, Brian,
Osk, Jacob, Carol, Beverly
Front. Keith and Lois Ann.

"When Siggi bought his first radio, he invited our family all over one Saturday night to hear the Chicago Barn Dance. What wonderful sounds seemed to come out of that magic box as Lulubelle and Scotty sang all the popular cowboy songs! We all thought the radio must be the greatest invention ever, even though the static every once in a while, drowned out the singing."

"Dad had a day set that we were going to Sugar Creek. I'll never forget that day. It was so cold! Villi Eyolfson had been home and Dad and he were going to go out together to camp. Dad said, "I'm going - they have to have supplies out there." Cousin Johann and I went with him. It was so cold I just shook like a leaf. Four miles from camp the horses just stopped, close to the hill where the timber wolves howled at night. Dad went to the horses and there were icicles from their nostrils. We stopped and rested, and then we made it to camp. When we came to camp everything was so dark and cold, and I was so cold.



*The Foster Families; l. to r. Harold holding Erin, Richard, Alda, Karen, Trudy, Elaine, holding Trent, Ken, Albert.
Front row. Roger, Addie with Shauna and Kyle, and Keith.*

Dad went in and lit the fire. Bear meat was on the table - no paper, cloth or anything. (The bear meat was not eaten.) I just thought to myself, "I never want to see another day like this."

We used to have our fun at camp too. We got together on Saturday nights to play cards - 500, Petro, and Icelandic whist. Everybody was cutting logs to saw into lumber for their own use and for sale, but mostly for themselves to build up their homes. Then we always had coffee to end up the evening - usually a cake was baked, and buns, and lots of homemade bread. In those days you couldn't run to the store, so everything was baked there.

We would be up at 5 o'clock to start breakfast. Baked bread and buns. The shelf above the heater was a good place for bread to rise. The men would come in wet and cold and I would make up a pudding for dessert with no eggs and put brown sugar sauce on it and it would be like Christmas pudding.

Once we had a windup dance in the cookhouse before we went home. Neighbouring camps were invited and we borrowed a portable gramaphone for music. Danced in the cookshack. The heater, couches, table went out. We still had the stove for heat. We even danced a square dance. We had coffee and it was 4 in the morning before the table, couches and heater were all put back in place and we could go to bed. Didn't go early to bed that night but had had a good time.

Dad used to take contracts on road work. He never had trouble getting hired men."

Addie Foster

"There were hard times, especially from 1929 to far into the 30's. Fortunately this was an age when the family as a unit was in its heyday. It was one for all, and all for one, as far as our family was concerned. There was the love and security bestowed on us by our parents.

We had some real good times at family gatherings, or if Uncle Siggi stopped in for a cup of coffee. He always had a story to tell which delighted us kids no end. On entering he would carefully remove his pipe from his pocket, say "ja", sit down at the table, get out his pouch of tobacco, and in a slow and orderly fashion, he would fill his pipe. Not until this was accomplished was he in a mood to begin talking.

Though money was almost scarce as hen's teeth, that did not seem to bother us too much. Our parents instilled in us the need to have faith in ourselves, and to give a little more than we received in the journey through life.

The most durable monument to their memory would be for us to attempt at least to show the same common sense, stamina, courage and fortitude in times of stress, and yet have enough sense of humour to enable us to laugh at ourselves when occasion demands it, as they did. They led the way, let us follow."

Thruda Floyd

REMINISCENCES FROM THE SUGAR CREEK ERA by Heidmar Bjornson

Jacob hefir jafan verid vinnu gladur
Hardsnuinn og hraustur madur. .

In writing a short account about Jakob Sigvaldason's venture into the sawmill business at Sugar Creek (so named as the water in it had a slightly sweet taste), I can vouch for him as being one of the many venturesome and hardy breed of pioneers, who were instrumental in making the Vidir district the most progressive community in the Interlake area, and second to none in any part of the country.

I believe that his long time neighbour Gunnlaugar Holm, characterizes him aptly in the couplet above, which freely translated, describes him as a hardy and stalwart man, who took delight in his work.

I recall it was in the early fall of 1934 that he set out to locate timber north of Rosenburg. In travelling through the bush he somehow lost his bearings, but after two days and a night, he finally came to a road. A short time later he caught up with a settler, who was driving home with a moose that he had shot. Not having had a bite to eat for almost 30 hours, it did not take him long to assuage his pangs of hunger a bit, for to the amazement of his new found companion, he took out his pocket knife and cut off a piece of moose meat, and ate it with relish.

In his sojourn through the woods, Jakob had found what he had been looking for, namely a very good stand of timber. Never a man to procrastinate, he soon went to work clearing a roadway to the place that he had picked out for a campsite. This took a good deal of time, not to mention the arduous labour it entailed.

Having accomplished this, he set about constructing two log cabins. There was of course no dearth of building material, so within a short period of time a cookhouse, and a bunkhouse were ready for occupancy. These proved to be quite comfortable, as the home-made heaters proved more than adequate to keep the cold out. In fact it did happen that the bunk house door had to be opened in the middle of the night to cool the cabin a bit, even when the outside temperature was 50 below zero.

When the ground was frozen solid enough, Kris, Jacob's son, moved their steamer to the location. Kris Magnuson set up his sawmill ready to cut the logs into lumber, as soon as it began to warm in February.



Logging camps at Sugar Creek.

About the only way one can describe the mode of logging operation at Sugar Creek is by using two four letter words, "Bull Work". It took strength and stamina to wrestle the heavier logs, and to load them on sleighs by hand, to be hauled to the mill site. However nobody seemed to lament his fate, and when the day's work was done, the younger members of the gang might attempt some acrobatic stunts in the bunkhouse.

In retrospect, I venture to surmise that the Sugar Creek sawmill operation could not be compared with those of McMillan Bloedel at the Coast. I am very much afraid that the balance sheet at the end of each year showed considerably less profit. Rough lumber, if my memory serves me right, retailed at \$15 per thousand feet. But of course little of it was sold at that price, as most of the lumber was hauled to Riverton,

where it had to be piled to dry out some before being planed. Most of the product was sold locally, as even in the Depression people planned for the future, and several new homes were erected. However some of the lumber was sold outside the Interlake area.

Jakob was always the first one up in the mornings, and his clarion-like call "Dayling in the Swamp" soon woke the rest of us up.

It was difficult for some of the younger fellows to get it through their heads, how there could be dayling in the swamp when there was utter darkness in the bush. However they generally managed to make it to the cookhouse, before Addie had cleared everything from the table, as they knew that she was in no mood to cater to anyone coming in for a late breakfast.

The winter of '36 was a memorable one. For days on end the thermometer hovered around the 50 below mark. However as there was no breeze one did not seem to mind the extreme cold at all. There was not a sound to be heard, outside of a few chick-a-dees chirping away, and the odd squirrel scampering from limb to limb in the evergreens. You might also listen to the crunching sound of a sleigh sliding over the icy snow in the far distance. However if you happened to be out in the open driving a team of horses you were compelled to walk behind the sleigh, to tolerate the cold, no matter how warmly you were dressed. During this cold snap Jakob and I were busy falling trees, and as soon as we had cut 100 logs we would call it a day, and hit for the warmth of the bunkhouse.

I might mention here that late in December 1935 I developed a severe case of pneumonia. Jakob sent to Riverton for Dr. Thompson. When he arrived, he decided that I was in no condition to be moved. Instead I was moved into the cookhouse, which was more comfortable than the bunkhouse. I suppose with my will to live a bit longer, combined with Addie's excellent nursing care (God bless her) my condition did commence to improve. About ten days later Dr. Thompson came again and took me home to Harry and Thruda's, to recuperate for a couple of weeks before going back to the bush again. I do recall that Dr. Thompson charged me \$25 for the two trips he made to Sugar Creek, and then home to Vidor. No wonder the good doctor never became a wealthy man, but as a humanitarian he had few his ilk.

Another unfortunate incident occurred that winter when Elli had a couple of his fingers nipped in the end saw. Fortunately Dr. Thompson was able to repair the damage.

I am not definitely sure, that it was on the second of February the previous year, when Jakob had his bout with a black bear, emerging from its winter abode. Fortunately he had a stout piece of stick in his hand, with the result that there was bear meat for supper the following evening. I recall that it tasted not unlike pork yet had a sweeter taste to it. The location where this happened was henceforth known as Black Bear, which was about 3 miles from the camp site.

Being that close to Lake Winnipeg, fish was always obtainable and was a staple diet at the camp.

Jakob was very fond of tullibees and we used to marvel at the

dexterity with which he was able to separate the bones from the meat after putting some in his mouth. He would put a chunk of fish in one side of his mouth, while the bones found their way out the otherside.

The work was both arduous and rather monotonous at times, but that did not prevent us from enjoying our leisure moments. Kris Magnuson always had something to say that put everyone in a happy mood. He had a way of expressing himself in a manner, though a bit sarcastic at times, that no one could take offense at. He was gifted with a rare sense of humour. It must be mentioned here, that if everyone had followed his example, the National Tobacco Co. would have been in dire stress, to dispose of their stock of Copenhagen snuff, for Kris manufactured his own. When supply on hand was getting low, he would have to go home to Framnes to replenish it.



Sawmill at Sugar Creek.

One incident that I recall vividly, was one morning when Harry went out to feed the horses. Charlie (my favorite horse) had disappeared. We thought it odd how he could have gone out, locking the door behind him. Even though Charlie was a very intelligent member of the equine family, it did not seem logical that he would have been able to put the latch in place by himself.

This called for a Sherlock Holmes approach. Noting that snow had fallen during the night, we were able to discern faint hoof-marks in the snow. We traced these to Valdi Johannesson's barn. On opening the door there, we saw Charlie eating his fill of hay, for Ragna had not failed to feed him, bless her heart.

We did not have to inquire of her why she had done this mean trick, because we knew.

The previous day, when we knew that she was visiting Addie, we had entered her caboose, and fixed her bed in such a manner, that it would collapse the moment she laid down on it. Needless to say, we did not try to play any more tricks on Ragna.

Then there were the occasions when Gunnar Simundson stayed overnight with us in the bunkhouse. Then Icelandic poetry had its inning, for he could recite Icelandic poems by the hour, while the rest of us would listen.

As the years go by, one can only think back with a bit of nostalgia for the past, for these and other memories will never be forgotten.

REMINISCING WITH JAKOB'S GRAND-CHILDREN.

Warm, kindhearted, generous--these were uppermost thoughts in our minds as we (the grandchildren) reminisced about our childhood with Afi and Amma (Jakob and Unnur).

With determination and independent spirits Afi and his brothers, Bjorn and Johannes, left their home in Gimli in 1903 and were among the first settlers to homestead in the Vidir district.

When Afi and Amma were married, their first home was a small four-room log house. The large home they built in 1933 was the house in which some of us were born. It was a home we came to love and know so well--the large living room where we first learned to pick out a tune on the old organ; the big kitchen which was always the hub of activity; and the little room under the stairs, where the firewood was stored, which became our special hiding-place. Coming in on a cold winter's day, it was ever so nice to sit on Ammas high stool and warm our feet by the big wood stove which always radiated a cosy glow.

One of my most vivid memories is of running across the field from our place into the large kitchen and the special feeling of happiness at simply seeing Afi and Amma there. Afi was usually sitting in his favourite place at the table, reading the paper and puffing on his pipe. Amma always seemed to be busy. Like most pioneer women she had learned to make use of everything and waste nothing. It was at her table that we first tasted many of the traditional Icelandic foods such as skyr, slatur, rullupylsa, and a pudding made from the first milk after a cow freshened.

Amma's patience, understanding and encouragement were a great source of strength to her family in times of hardship. "Accept your place in life; make the most of everything you have; and always look for the good in others"--this was the creed that Amma lived by and one which she often tried to impress on us.

Life was often a struggle for the pioneers who were clearing the land and building homes out of the wilderness. The days were long and the work back-breaking. Afi was not known as a very patient man. In fact, if things did not progress as he thought they should, his temper could be easily aroused by anyone or anything standing in the way of getting the job done. However, this never lasted very long. He would just puff a little harder on the old pipe and soon all was forgiven and forgotten. In his headstrong way he would tackle whatever had to be done. Through hard work and determination anything could be accomplished.

Afi's great love and affection for children brought him much enjoyment. Our parents have told us how he loved to bounce us, one on each knee, as he sang. One time his hearty laughter brought the ladies running to the kitchen, where they saw his two grand-daughters up to their elbows in the slop pail, much to the amusement of Afi. He always had time for us—whether we wanted to tag along for a ride, stop in the barn at chore time to play in the hayloft and get a drink of warm fresh milk, or just drop in for one of our daily visits.

Many an evening was spent around their kitchen table, on which sat the large Aladdin lamp. The room often rang with laughter, or even the occasional friendly dispute as we played countless hands of King Petro. Often we sat and listened to the fascinating stories of the good times and the hard times of their early days in Vidir. Afi's eyes would shine as he relived these adventures of his youth. With a mischievous gleam in his eye, he would tell us of herding cattle from Gimli, and how, after days on the trail, his sweetheart would be waiting for him. In response, Amma threw the orange peel she was holding in her hands, up into the air, saying with happy laughter in her voice, "Come Jakob, let's dance." Around the kitchen floor they danced in time to the old-time music playing on the radio. There were many such jolly times.

We treasure the memories of these everyday joys of life we shared with Afi and Amma. These two grand people enriched our lives in so many ways. Their influence still touches our lives as they are often remembered in our thoughts and dreams.

Anna Finnson.



Jakob and Unnur Sigvaldason's home in later years.

CHAPTER VII.

A WAY OF LIFE.

JOHANNES LINDAL SIGVALDASON (1876-1948)

married THORBJORG DAVIDSDOTTIR

I son

I. JOHANN (1915) married MARION POLOSKY

1 child

WILMA (1937) married ALEXANDER KOSTICK

1 child

ALEXANDRA (1966)

A WAY OF LIFE CHAPTER VII.

Memories of Johannes Sigvaldason, or Uncle Joe as we always affectionately called him, are intermingled with the smell of pipe tobacco, peppermint candies, and fresh buttermilk in the pantry.

Somehow Uncle Joe and his pipe went very well together, for he was a man of few words who loved to sit in his favourite chair in the evenings, contentedly puffing away on his pipe. When it went out, he would slowly fill it again with a piece of tobacco which he sliced from a plug. He rolled this back and forth in his hand, then stuffed it into his pipe, lit up, and settled back once again, contentedly puffing away.

Whenever Uncle Joe came to visit Papa and Mama he always had a bag of peppermint candies for us children.

One summer when I was 11 years old Uncle Joe and his wife Thorbjorg invited me to come out to Vidir and spend some time with them and Johann their son. I thought that would be a wonderful adventure. Besides, I was a bookworm and loved to curl up in a corner somewhere at home, where I would not hear the sound of the baby crying, or someone yelling at me to come out and play or do something or other. At Uncle Joe's it would be quiet and I would be able to read my favourite books in leisure.

I went that day with Uncle Joe and Aunty Thorbjorg and Johann, by horse and buggy. When we got home there I noticed how neat and

orderly everything looked. I had never seen bay windows on a house before and I thought they looked beautiful. Aunty Thorbjorg kept her spinning wheel in one corner of the living room. That evening I watched fascinated, as she deftly spun the sheep's wool into long strands, while the wheel hummed and whirred. Now the wool strands coiled together, then began whirring along on a bobbin, where the wool finally became a big round ball of yarn. Thorbjorg knit a great many Icelandic socks and mitts, which she later sent to the Farmer's Store at Arborg, in exchange for groceries.

There was always such a clean fresh smell in Thorbjorg's pantry, which was a small room at one corner end of the kitchen. There she kept all her dishes, cutlery and pots and pans. Whenever she had some fresh buttermilk she kept it in a big blue and cream jug on a cupboard in there. I can still remember the sweet and salty aroma of the fresh buttermilk.

One day while I was in Vidir, Moses Cohen from Arborg came on his wagon, pulled by his team of white horses.

"I wonder what he has to sell today?" Uncle Joe said, as he went out to greet Moses. Johann and I tagged along because we had heard stories of all the wonderful things Moses kept in his trunks and suitcases.

Moses jumped quickly down from the wagon, his mouth behind the long white whiskers, creased in a big smile. His sharp eyes darted about as he moved around with short, quick steps while he unharnessed the horses.

"I have lots of bargains today," he shouted at us, as he led his horse to the water trough, "and I'll buy any horse hair you have."

"You might as well have dinner with us first," Uncle Joe said, "You can show my wife your goods after dinner."

When Moses Cohen sat down to eat, Aunty Thorbjorg kept bringing more meat and potatoes and filling up the bread plate. It was empty again soon, so she brought some more.

For such a small man he seemed to eat an awful lot of food. Johann and I couldn't wait for him to finish eating. We wanted to see all the wonderful bargains he had. At last Moses finished his dinner and pushed back his chair.

"Thank you Missus," he said to Thorbjorg, "And now I'll show you what bargains I have today."



Johannes and
Siggi Sigvaldason,
sitting down to a
well-earned rest,
while coiling hay.

We followed him out to the wagon where he began to open up the trunks and suitcases. Out spilled dresses in rich, bright colours; men's pants and overalls; ladies silk stockings; men's and ladies' coats; socks; shiny shoes with high heels; dress material in many colours; and buttons, thread and shoe laces. I stood fascinated as all the bright coloured things spilled out from the trunks and suitcases. Aunty Thorbjorg looked longingly at a bright blue printed dress, then shook her head and bought some blue cotton material and thread.

"And here's a small package of buttons Missus, for the nice dinner," Moses said, as he handed Thorbjorg a small card of buttons. Then he packed the trunks and suitcases once again, and harnessed up the horses. With a wave of his hand he hurried on to the next farm, where he arrived in time to have coffee and cakes.

Moses Cohen bought horse hair, cut from the tail and the mane, whenever possible. We heard one day that he had gone to a home in Hnausa, where he often stayed overnight so he could travel on to Riverton or Arnes the following day. At this home there were two young boys, Mike and John, who loved to play pranks on people. That evening, Moses was in the house having supper, after he had put his horses in the barn for the night. He was hungry so he had another big helping of food.

While Moses was having his second helping, Mike and John slipped out to the barn, with a pair of shears hidden under their jacket. There were Moses Cohen's horses bedded down for the night! The boys went up to Moses' horses and hurriedly cut off the hair, from the mane and the tail.

"Somebody is going to get a surprise in the morning," laughed John, as he tied up the hair in a tight bundle.

While Moses was sitting around in the kitchen after the supper meal, Mike and John came in.

"We've got some horse hair for sale," Mike said to Moses.

"How much do we get for it?" asked John.

"The same price as usual," answered Moses as he paid the boys the usual price.

Mike and John hurried out of the room, clutching the money in their hands. It was not until the following morning, when he went out to the barn to get his horses, that Moses Cohen found out he had been duped by two young pranksters.

At Uncle Joe's I would sometimes pump water for the cattle, which came to the water trough when thirsty. One evening, around 6 o'clock, when I had been at Uncle Joe's for about three weeks, I was standing by the pump after I had filled the water trough. In the distance I could hear the tinkle of the cow bells coming closer, as Johann brought the cows home for milking. Only that sound and the faint droning of a bee buzzing around, broke the stillness of that evening. It was so quiet! So very Quiet! Suddenly a terrible feeling of loneliness overwhelmed me. I longed to hear the sound of a baby crying, or one of my sisters shouting out to me, "Come out and play." I longed for home--and for all the noise and commotion of lots of people. I began to cry and cry.



Johannes, Thorbjorg and Johann going to Arborg in their 1928 car.

Aunty Thorbjorg came running out to where I was sobbing.

"Whatever is the matter dear child?" she asked, as she put her arms around me.

At this kind gesture I cried more than ever. Finally I blurted out, "I want to go home."

The next morning Thorbjorg took me on a horse and buggy. On the way to Arborg we stopped at Uncle Jakob and Unnur's home.

"Hello, Thorbjorg min," Unnur called out gaily, as we drove up to her back door, "Where are you and Stjana Litla going?"

I hung my head down and didn't dare to say anything. However, Thorbjorg told Unnur that I had become so lonesome that I wanted to go home. I could hear in her voice that she was disappointed and I felt ashamed to be such a bother to her, as she and Uncle Joe were so good to me.

Unnur looked very surprised, then looked kindly at me as she said, "I just can't understand why she should want to go home where it's so noisy with all those children." I couldn't understand this myself...I only knew I longed for home and my family.

The following summer I went again to Uncle Joe and Thorbjorg's. I gradually got over my loneliness. I have many warm and loving thoughts of these two kind people, who understood right away how an 11 year old child can suddenly feel lonely when away from home.

Johannes (Uncle Joe) was the oldest of Sigvaldi's sons. His mother was Gudrun Thorsteinsdottir from Vatnshorni, at Vatnsnesi, Iceland. Her brother Jon Thorsteinsson, had a hotel at Gimli.

When Johannes was quite young he began to fish on Lake Winnipeg. Fishing had at first, been mainly carried on as a means of supplying food, as well as exchange in the stores for staples.

Gradually more and more men began fishing on Lake Winnipeg and fishing became the main industry around Gimli and Hnausa. In the 1890s the first fish packing house was put up in Gimli by the Hannesson Bros., who paid 1 cent per lb. for the pickerel there. Later the Sigurdson Bros. started a fish packing business in Hnausa, paying 31/2 cents per lb. for the fish at Hnausa, by 1892.

When Johannes started working out on the lake (in the early 1890s) fishermen had begun going out north, as far as Grindstone and Bull Head, to fish. They started off for the winter season as soon as the ice was strong enough to travel on with sleighs pulled by hand. On these sleighs were piled the fishermen's nets, food, tools and bedding. The nets were made by the fishermen with #10 twine. They were set in the lake by pushing them under the ice with poles.

Dog teams were a familiar sight on the lake during the fishing season. These dogs, which resembled husky dogs, were able to travel long distances and were invaluable in the early days of fishing. At night the lonely, keening sound of their howling could be heard for miles around.



Dogs like these were a familiar sight during winter fishing. [Manitoba Archives]

The fishermen had to be strong and tough to withstand the rugged life out on the lake. They walked great distances every day, back and forth as they lifted the nets in the lake. Their canvas parkas, warmly lined, had the hoods edged with fur to protect their faces from freezing. Often the fishermen would go without food from breakfast until they got back to their campsite before darkness set in. The most feared thing for the fishermen was that a blizzard might come up suddenly, obliterating their campsite.

The campsites were often a log cabin hastily set up along the shoreline, preferably close to a spruce bluff. For those fishermen who went straight east on Lake Winnipeg from Gimli and Hnausa, the campsite was usually a caboose, which was a house-like structure on a sleigh. The caboose or camp would be set out on a vast and lonely stretch of seemingly endless ice and snow. These camp shelters were

heated with tin heaters, which had the effect of sometimes making the room so hot the door would have to be opened, even in -35 and -40 degree weather. Alternately, by morning the camp would be so cold that the water in the pail would be frozen.

At night the Icelandic mitts, wet and frozen during lifting of the nets, would be washed out and strung on a line in the camp, to dry. After a hearty meal, stories about fishing experiences would be told and retold. There was always a strong bond of camaraderie amongst fishermen that made for lasting friendships and fellowship.

During the first few years oxen were used for freighting the fish, but they were gradually replaced by horses. For freighting, toboggan type sleighs were made, pulled by oxen or horse teams. When the fish was ready to be shipped, it was stacked in rows on the toboggan, covered with canvas well-tied down, then sent on to Sandy Bar, located on the lakeshore just east of Riverton. Here the fish was put in large boxes on a freighting sleigh and pulled by a team of horses to Selkirk, by a hired teamster.

If oxen were used these trips took from two to three weeks in all. Horses were able to travel faster so they replaced the oxen. At first there were no "stopping-places" on the trail to northern fishing places. Sometimes the freighters had to spend the night in the open. If they were fortunate, they might find an abandoned fisherman's cabin or shelter amongst trees. Gradually regular "stopping-places", such as Ramsays, Darcys, and Baldwinsons were located along the regular freight routes. The charge at one of these places, for a man and his oxen, was 50 cents per night. The freighters were paid 35 cents per hundred weight of fish freighted.

As fishing progressed, freighting conditions improved. Long freight trains became a familiar sight on Lake Winnipeg. After a particularly bad winter in 1892, Sandy Vens from Clandeboye, Manitoba, designed a snow-plow, to clear the way for the freight trains. The sight of these freight trains, long black rows of dots against the brilliance of the sun glittering on the shimmering snow, always gladdened the hearts of the fishermen as they lifted their nets. Their arrival meant a fresh supply of groceries; a letter from a loved one; perhaps a parcel and news from home.



Typical log fish camp in 1930's.
Nets are hung to dry.



A freight gang hauling fish from Lake Winnipeg 1920. [Manitoba Archives]

As the freight train drew nearer they saw the horses, white with hoar frost as their sweat and breath froze on the cool crisp air. The lead teams pulled the snow plow as it cleared a swath for the sleighs behind. Next came the caboose where the driver sat snug and cozy as the heater was kept red-hot to keep the caboose warm. This caboose had a door, one or two windows as well as an opening in front for the horses' reins to pass through. Very often they were lined with kraft paper. All had heaters, a table, a few shelves, benches and bunks for sleeping. Tents were extended from the sides of the caboose to shelter the horses at night. Behind the caboose came the sleighs loaded down with boxes, with the drivers very often walking part of the time to keep warm.

Once the freighting gang reached the fish camps there was a great bustle of shouting. News was exchanged--the fishermen would tell how the fishing had been the last few days; the freighters would tell of the latest happenings in the towns and villages they came from; sometimes a story would be told by the freighters of how, on their last trip in with fish, one of their teams, pulling a load of fish, had fallen through a crack in the ice and had to be hauled out. Finally, after the empty fish boxes had been unloaded and the packed fish boxes loaded up on the sleighs, the teamsters would yell out a command to the horses and off they went, either to another camp or else on to the last lap of their journey into town.

Once again the freight trains became small black dots on the horizon, then gradually disappeared from sight. Once again the campsite and the fishermen on the lake were the only visible signs of life on a vast white sea of ice and snow.



The shelters to the side of the caboose were for the horses at night.

All this was part of Johannes' life when he fished during the winter months. In 1903, along with his brothers Bjorn and Jakob, he filed for a homestead in Vidir. He kept on fishing during the winter months. In 1906 he began building up his homestead. In 1919 he married Thorbjorg Davidsdottir, and with his son Johann, lived on the homestead, which was always kept very neat and orderly. When Thorbjorg died in 1931 Johannes sold his farm to Heidmar Bjornson. He bought a few acres off Halldor Austman, where he built a small, comfortable home, and kept a few cows. On retirement he made his home with Halldor and Anna Austman.

Today Johannes' farm is owned by Lorne Floyd, a grandson of Jakob Sigvaldason. Johann Sigvaldason, Johannes' son, lives with his family in Winnipeg.



A modern combine used today by Lorne Floyd, on Johanne's farm. The cab of this "Yellow Fellow" was made by Lorne Floyd.

Chapter VIII. ADVENTURES IN LIVING.

SIGURDUR SIGVALDASON (1896) married EGGERTINA SVEINSON
FIVE CHILDREN

1. INGIBJORG (1921) married JACK ELMHIRST
 - A. CLAIRE DIANNE (1947) married DOUGLAS DeATHE
 - a. SHARON MARIE (1976)
 - B. MARJORIE LUCILLE (1952) married DAVID HALL.
2. ARLEIF (1925) married HAROLD CALVERT
 - A. (MARGARET) BLYTHE (1949) married BRIAN KNEESHAW
 - a. MARY LEE (1975)
 - DANIEL GEORGE (1977)
 - B. ELAINE MARY (1951) married TIMOTHY DAY
 - a. ANTHONY RYAN (1978)
 - C. (LORRAINE) RUTH (1951)
 - D. DOUGLAS HAROLD (1957)
 - E. LILIAN CHAN (1957 (Foster daughter))
3. LILJA (1928) married PETER ERIKSON
 - A. KAREN MARIE (1951) married EMIL JOHNSON
 - B. JULIE LYNNE (1952) married ROBERT WEIK
 - C. IVAN PETER (1956)
 - D. KARL STEVEN (1958)
 - E. JANET LEE (1963)
4. SVEINN (1932) married SHIRLEY ANDERSON
 - A. JILL AILEEN (1955) married DON WEIK
 - B. SUSAN (1957)
 - C. NANCY (1958)
5. ELIN (1936) married OWEN MOORE
 - A. CHARLENE DONNA (1960)
 - B. WENDY LYNNE (1964)
 - C. ELIZABETH VIOLA (1966)

Chapter VIII. ADVENTURES IN LIVING.

"My life has been varied and interesting."

So spoke (Uncle) Siggi Sigvaldason, at 83 years of age, a man who had always enjoyed life.

Farmer, surveyor, soldier, business man, tour guide, councillor, community worker--these were all occupations and avocations that had been a part of Siggi's life. From these varied experiences he gained a finely honed sense of humour, and the ability to face any new challenge in life.

Siggi started farming in 1911 when he rented 30 acres off his brothers, Bjorn, Jakob and Johannes, who had homesteaded in Vidir.

Through the help of his older brother Oliver, he attended Agricultural College in Winnipeg for two years. Later he worked with surveyor crews north of Vidir, then had a stint in the army.

When Siggi married Eggertina Sveinson he took up farming as a full-time occupation. Their wedding day was one we in our family did not forget for a long time--and all because of the "famous wedding dress story". Papa and Mama (Bjorn and Lara) were going to the wedding and taking the youngest one with them, who was Thordis. Mama decided the baby had to have a new dress so she sewed up a lovely white dress, trimmed with ruffles and lace. Ever after, this dress became known as the "famous wedding dress that went to Uncle Siggi's wedding."



Ena and Siggi Sigvaldason, taken in 1954.

Siggi's home was not large but there was always room for one more. When Ena's father died, Siggi and Ena took her mother Gudrun Sveinson, her daughter Helga, and her adopted son Lyngdal Gudmundson, into their home. Through all this time Siggi maintained the same placid and humorous nature.

One day our family was invited over to Siggi and Ena's for Sunday dinner. That was a special event, for never before had anyone invited us all to dinner, and small wonder - by now there were 16 of us! Uncle Siggi got us on his car.

What a dinner Ena prepared! She had cooked two huge pork roasts with rich brown gravy; many bowlfuls of potatoes, turnips and carrots; and for dessert, prune whip and whipped cream. Ena had prepared for a hungry crowd, for she made a large pail-full of the prune whip. We all had second and third helpings of that delicious dessert.

At our annual picnics the Sigvaldason mothers would bake layers and layers of vinirterta, platters of ponnukokkur, and sandwiches by the dozen. Siggi and Ena always played ball with the younger people. Indeed they often went out on Hallowe'en, dressed up in some outlandish costumes, dropping in and surprising their friends and relatives.

Siggi's love of entertainment was always an important part of his life. In his 70s he attended a house-warming party at his nephew Jonas and Bonny's home in Surrey, B.C. There he took part in a fashion parade as a wiggling Hawaiian hula girl. His fine performance won him 1st prize in the parade.

In 1939 Siggi began an oil business in Vidir, then built a general store. He had the post office in his store until 1966, when many smaller post offices were re-located in large town centres.



*Enjoying the lake
at one of the
Sigvaldason Annual
picnics at Hnausa,
Manitoba.*
*Back l. to r.
Sigrun Brandson,
Margaret Brandson,
Ena Sigvaldason.*
*Front l. to r.
Valdine, Ingibjorg and
Thordis Sigvaldason.*

Through all these years Siggi took an active part in community life. He donated a tremendous amount of time to the building of the community hall. He became a sort of "champion" of the Vidir Ladies Aid in any community event they sponsored. He served on the board of the North Star Co-Op Creamery in Arborg, and as a member of the Vidir school board in years past. He was a councillor of Bifrost Municipality for 27 years.

In 1975 when a Farmer's group from Iceland was hosted in Canada, Siggi was a tour guide on a trip to Alberta. Here his patient and happy nature won the hearts of the Icelandic tourists. More than once his diplomatic manner solved a delicate situation. The following year Siggi took a trip to Iceland where he renewed friendships and met new relatives.

Through the years Siggi's placid nature and sense of humour kept him young in heart. He proved by example and by great style that he was aware of the many new adventures in living, which are to be found at any stage of a person's life.

RECOLLECTIONS BY SIGGI SIGVALDASON.

I. GIMLI:

Just after the turn of the century and until the railroad came, there was quite a big population around Gimli. Those who lived there made their living mainly from fishing.

Gimli has the distinction of being the place that found out how to prepare the famous Lake Winnipeg Goldeye. This fish, when smoked, became a great delicacy. It was served to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip when they came to Manitoba a number of years ago. Before the goldeyes were smoked they were considered poor fare, really only fit for feeding sleigh dogs.

Gimli had a huge population of sleigh dogs, as they were used on the lake in early times. On blustery evenings in October one dog would begin to howl, then gradually all the others joined in. Often it sounded like a huge orchestra starting up. To me it was music; to many others it was most likely a terrible howling sound.

Just before the first World War, an Englishman came to Gimli and bought 105 sleigh dogs for an Antarctic Expedition. Sigurjon Isfeld and J.B. Johnson, young men at that time, took the sleigh dogs to England. The war started just around that time so the Antarctic expedition was cancelled.

I had an excellent sleigh dog that could make the three miles from our home at Grund to Gimli in 15 minutes. My father was offered \$40 for this dog. This was a great deal of money at a time when a cow went for \$30 and a pound of butter for 15 cents. Father did not sell the dog however, even though offered \$40.

There were three general stores in Gimli around this time. In the hardware sections I remember seeing shovels, axes, forks and hand scythes. The grocery section sold sweet biscuits in barrels. We bought green coffee beans which had to be roasted at home, then ground in coffee grinders. Jam came in small wooden pails of about one gallon size.

II. TRIPS TO VIDIR.

As a youngster I made three trips to Vidir before my parents moved there in 1912. On the first trip I travelled with my mother on a small steamer, to Hnausa. This steamer, the "Viking", was owned by Stefan

Sigurdson of Hnausa. From there we went on a team of oxen to Vidir that day.

The following year I went to Vidir with my brother Jakob. At that time I was 10 years old, and Jakob, who was 22, was then living in Vidir. We walked from our parents home at Grund, to Gimli early in the morning. We hoped to catch a ride with the mail man on his trip to Riverton, which was then called "Islendingafljot". However, the mail man had a full load and refused to take us, so we dog-trotted behind him until we got to Drunken Point, (which is one mile north of Arnes) at noon.

We all had dinner at Drunken Point, then we started off once again, dog-trotting behind. Suddenly Jakob picked me up and threw me on top of the mail gags. There I stayed until we reached Geysir, where we met the mail man from Vidir, Jon Halldorson. We arrived at Vidir that same night, a distance of about 40 miles from Gimli.

The third time I went to Vidir was with my brother Bjorn. We walked north-west from Gimli until we came to the gravel ridge, south of Arborg. There was an old trail on the ridge. I noticed in at least three different place that people had been buried there in the past, as there were wooden crosses on the graves. These crosses were made of wood from the surrounding bush.

We left the ridge road and arrived at Arborg early in the evening. Bjorn left me there with people and he kept on walking to Vidir. At that time there was no town in Arborg. The place was known as the post office and school district of Ardal. The following day I made the trip to Vidir. That summer I worked at putting up hay and looking after my brothers' cattle.

When I returned to Gimli that fall I took two cows with me from north of Arborg to the butcher in Gimli. This trip took two days. I received \$1.25 for delivering the cows.

In the early years in Vidir the oxen were the most reliable work animals. They were both hardy and dependable when used for working soggy land. Later, when the land had been partly drained, men replaced them with horses.

At this time I bought two steer calves, one for \$8, the other for \$12. By the time I was 18 I had my own yoke of oxen. In those days it was considered that a man was getting on his feet, once he owned oxen. This brings to mind a story about a young man in Riverton who went to propose to the young lady of his dreams. As he proposed to her, he announced that he owned a pony and a team of oxen. The young lady promptly accepted him as he was set for life with those possessions.

In 1907 the North Star Creamery Co-Op was started at Arborg. A man with a team came around with special barrels on the wagon to pick up the cream. This meant that cows could be kept and cattle raised and sold. The cream cheques were a valuable added income to the farmers.

Higher pieces of land were cleared and broken up, with oxen at first. Jakob bought a 16" breaker plow. Five oxen were hitched on this plow. When you came to a heavy root you let out an ungodly yell and they would go through a five or six inch root. This did a very good job. Jakob then got a six foot McCormick binder. Many of the neighbours had to borrow it, so I was sent to run th binder, as it had to be oiled in

many places at regular intervals. With oxen a farmer could cut about six acres per day. Four oxen or horses were needed to pull a binder.

Originally Vidir was a great moose country, as there were plenty of small willows, on which they fed. Jakob was an excellent moose hunter. He was not what you call a "patient man", but he had infinite patience when he was out hunting. Moose have a very keen sense of smell and exceptionally good hearing.

Jakob's favourite gun was the Winchester lever action 30-30. Every time he shot a moose he put a mark on the stock. At the last count there were 48 marks on the stock. Jakob was generous with his hunting spoils as he often gave parts of his game to neighbours and relatives.

III. NORTH STAR CO-OP CREAMERY.

The first shipment of butter made at the North Star Co-Op Creamery in Arborg, was in June, 1907. This story was related to me by Magnus Gislason of Framnes, Manitoba.

"In June 1907 the first shipment of butter was sent from the North Star Creamery in Ardal district (now Arborg). The butter was loaded at the creamery on two wagons.. in the morning. It was to be taken to Gimli, where the closest railroad was, to be shipped by rail to Winnipeg the following morning.

S.M. Sigurdson, President of North Star Creamery, drove one team of horses, while Magnus Gislason drove the other team. They were accompanied by Bjorn I. Sigvaldason, who was Secretary of the Creamery Association.

Just after they left the creamery at Ardal (Arborg) it started to rain. This made the going very bad. By the time they got as far as Geysir the road was so bad that they called on Thomas Bjornson and Svan Svanbergson with another team of horses each, so there would be four horses pulling each wagon. When they reached the Arnes swamp, which was laid with corduroy in the worst places, it was already dark. One of S.M. Sigurdson's horses slipped off the corduroy and fell into the water. Bjorn Sigvaldason then jumped into the water and held up the horse's head so he would not drown. He kept this up until the other men came to help get the horse up. This quick and decisive action on Bjorn's part saved the horse's life.

After this struggle through the swamp they finally got to Gimli, but too late that next morning to catch the train. The butter had to wait to be shipped to Winnipeg the following day."

IV. THE ARMY AND THE WAR.

In the spring of 1918 I was called up for military service as conscription had been passed. in Canada to supply men for military service. This was passed as the Pope in Rome favoured it and advised leaders in Quebec to favour it as well.

I was to report at Minto barracks in Winnipeg. The pay was \$1.10 per day. We were given 60 cents a day, and the balance (50 cents) was kept until we were discharged from the army. Every day we managed to buy a little extra to eat, such as biscuits or a piece of cake with milk, to add to our regular diet. When I joined up I weighed 184 lbs.. After a month I was down to 160 lbs. There were at that time definite food



*Siggi Sigvaldason.
taken in 1918.
in Edinburgh,
Scotland.*

shortages.

After 30 days of intensive training we were shipped to England. We boarded a freighter in Montreal. From there we travelled for five days, in fog, to join a convoy in Halifax. Early in the morning of the fifth day we slid up on a rock 14 miles south of Halifax. We were all chased up on deck and not allowed to get fully dressed or to go down for our stuff, although there was no danger in any way. We were about two miles from shore. The area was filled up with fishing boats in the fog and they took us ashore. The Ladies Aid there brought us plenty of coffee and doughnuts. From there we walked to Halifax where we were kept for almost a week.

Early one morning we were taken to a rusty old freighter whose railings were rusted off in places. The soldiers did not like the looks of this boat and had to be pushed on with bayonets. When we pulled out in the harbour the last thing we saw of Canada was a row of bayonets. After 10 days we arrived in England where we had further extensive training.

Later that summer I was sent to a hospital where I had the fourth finger of my right hand removed at the second joint. A few years earlier it had split in a saw. This made it stiff and consequently slowed me up in the rifle firing, although I could load and take sight at the rate of 27 per minute. By the time this had healed it was the 11th of November, and the war was over.

I found the general public was kind and considerate of the Canadians. We had leave every six months and had free railroad passage. In this way we could go and see the country for a few days in June. The following spring we left Southampton on a huge liner with four smokestacks at least 800 feet long. We landed in Halifax and I was back in Arborg in exactly nine days from there.

V. ARBORG DISTURBANCE. 1932.

The disturbance that took place in Arborg on November 29, 1932, was caused mainly by agitators coming in or being sent out to stir up people who had no time to study things in a rational way. Their time had been totally taken up in improving their homesteads, fixing houses, making gardens, clearing some land for grain, and even going out to fix some bog hole so they could get in and out.

These people were stirred up to go to a Bifrost municipal meeting in Arborg and demand that no land be put up for tax sale, as well as many other things that were altogether outside the council's jurisdiction.

A parade had been organized to go walking to Winnipeg from Arborg. The younger ones had done most of the walking, with the elders joining them close to Winnipeg. There they met the Premier of Manitoba, at that time Hon. John Bracken. He told them that he could not promise them anything until it had been approved and passed by the municipal council of Bifrost. He was aware that council had no authority to pass by motion or approval any tax exemptions, or other demands they were making.

The result of this was that a crowd of people came to the municipal tax sale, milling around outside and filling up the council chambers. They demanded all kinds of impossible things, such as the cancellation of the tax sale; the disorganization of the municipality; clothes for their children; and the resignation of council. As nothing could be done on the day of the sale due to the crowd, council adjourned the sale.

The reeve at this time was my brother Bjorn I. Sigvaldason. He sent a message to Winnipeg that council would have need of police protection at their next meeting and tax sale, so they could conduct their meeting in an orderly manner.

When the railway train pulled into Arborg the evening before the next council meeting 20 to 30 R.C.M.P. and a captain stepped off the train. They formally lined up and marched to the hotel where they were put up for the night. The following day there was an orderly meeting with the R.C.M.P. Captain standing behind Reeve Sigvaldason, while the rest of the police stood outside. Anyone there that had a complaint was granted a proper hearing and his case considered by council. After this everything gradually went back to normal.

As a result of granting requests made, a strip of land on the north-west was taken out of Bifrost Municipality and joined to the local government district of Fisher. I want to add here that last year, 1978, a petition was circulated by the people living in the area taken out of the north-west part of Bifrost in 1932. They requested to be allowed to rejoin Bifrost.

This request has presented a knotty problem. Today the Municipality of Bifrost has many hundreds of thousands in dollar value of assets such as cash, buildings, road machinery, snow plows, etc., while the others have no such assets.

About 20 years after the disturbance in Arborg the Arborg School District was going to build a new school. They approached financial

houses to sell debentures. They were promptly turned down! The excuse was that there had been a communist parade from Arborg in the early thirties. This did not deter them in any way as farmers in the district lent them the money at the going rate of interest. It has all been paid back a number of years ago.

In the beginning the Municipality of Bifrost was almost one third a floating bog. In many places a man could not walk across. Throughout the years the main energy of council has been to drain and build roads. Today Bifrost Municipality is one of the best built up and most prosperous districts in western Canada. It has been an honour and a privilege to work on this council, as well as a joy to see so many things accomplished.



Siggi Sigvaldason [1947] displays his cars - old and new:
1. his first car - Chevrolet 1928 - cost him \$850 [almost new]
2 his first half ton - was a used truck cost \$400
3 his brand new 1946 Ford. cost \$1600.

RECOLLECTIONS BY A DAUGHTER.

Mother's parents had homesteaded in Vidir around 1907. They were poor but the kindness and hospitality of the neighbouring settlers made the task somewhat easier. When she was in Grade VI Mother decided she should go to work. They were still poor and her father was not well. This early life of working and looking after herself shaped Mother's strong yet gentle character. Throughout her life she was always willing to help those in need, but waste and idleness were to her, a great sin.

Dad was the youngest member of his family so he led a more sheltered life. He never endured the hardships of his brothers Bjorn, Johannes and Jakob. His sister Anna was always very thoughtful and kind to him. By the time he was born his parents were well settled at Gimli, so he had the advantage of being able to take Grade VIII. In those days that was considered higher education. His brother Oliver sent him money to attend Agriculture College for two years. Dad worked on survey crews and was in the army during World War I. These experiences developed him into a broad-minded diplomat.

After the war Dad bought his farm, which was virgin bush. He got a steamer to break up the first field. Then he built a two-room shanty house and a log barn. In 1920 Mother and Dad were married by Reverend Johann Bjarnason.

Their wedding was a simple affair at the bride's home. She wore a dress she had made and Dad wore the suit he had bought when he went to college. After a small wedding reception they drove by team to their farm.

Life in those days was very simple. People worked hard at clearing their land and by this time Vidir was getting fairly well settled. The year after my parents marriage Grandpa (Mother's Dad) died, so his family moved in with Dad and Mother. Another room was added to the house.

Mother was Vidir's seamstress in earlier years. She made many parkas of white canvas for the men going out fishing on Lake Winnipeg. She also made confirmation dresses for some of the Vidir



Siggi Sigvaldason's farm and home, taken 1970.

girls. I remember her making a shroud for Ragnar Gudmundson's Dad when he died. At that time I was about four years old and it all seemed a very strange thing to me.

My folks always welcomed travellers. Many stayed overnight, as Dad had built a large barn and usually had room for a team of horses. I vividly remember Mr. Reid, the Raleigh salesman who stayed overnight sometimes and always had some gum for us. I also remember the Heale Sawmill gang stopping on their way north to the bush. There were also fellows like Grimsi and Methusah Mangi, who stayed the night and might do odd chores around.

The first and only time I went to a Ukrainian wedding remains vividly in my mind. I was around 10 years old when Helen Cherlan was getting married at Morweena, Manitoba. Mother and Dad had helped her family as they were orphaned early in their lives. We were all invited to her wedding and arrived in Morweena early in the afternoon. In a house next to the hall, tables were set with all kinds of food--some of which we had never tasted before. People seemed to be coming and going for refreshments. We sat down and ate, then went across to the hall.

It was a very hot summer day but the people were dancing to lively music. They were really enjoying themselves and the livelier ones had sweat pouring from their faces because of the heat. This was all a new experience for us. We had to leave to do chores at home. Dad's hired man had had too much (liquid) refreshments so Dad wrapped him up in a blanket and Mother held him up until we arrived home. After the milking chores were finished Mother and Dad went back to the dance. I remember how disappointed I was not to be able to go back with them. That was the night Dad first started to dance.

I can remember our first car, a 1928 Chevrolet sedan. To me it was the most beautiful car--green with black fenders. It had real glass windows, which rolled up or down when you turned a handle. The back windows had blinds which could be pulled up or down. It was after we got our car that our horizons broadened beyond our immediate neighbourhood.

We used to have family picnics at Lake Winnipeg with the other Sigvaldason families. There Dad would make camp coffee in an open pail on a little fire. One summer Dad and Mother took us on a camping trip to Winnipeg Beach. Mother sewed the horses' blankets together to make a tent. All the food we needed was taken from home. It was a wonderful camping trip!

My folks were always young in heart. Sometimes we would put on plays for the Vidir community club. In those days people enjoyed themselves without spending a cent. Whenever there was a dance in the hall the children would play hide-and-seek behind the stage, or pump-pump-pull-away outside in the summer; the older folks played a game of whist in the hall kitchen; the younger people danced the night away.

It was total family participation. They even had a couple of beds in the Vidir hall to accomodate the sleeping children!



Siggi Sigvaldason's General Store, built around 1945. Post office was located in store.



Siggi and Ena Sigvaldason's 50th Anniversary Day, 1970.
l. to r. back. Elin Moore, Arleif Calvert, Ingibjorg Elmhirst, Wayne Sigvaldason.
Front. Ena and Siggi Sigvaldason.

I remember our neighbour Asa Magnusson, especially the day she came over and gave Mother a beautiful mauve dahlia when Sveinn was born. It wasn't too long after that Mother was stripping her fern to make a spray for Asa's funeral. Other families too lost their loved ones and in our close-knit community it almost seemed as if part of one's family was taken.

Dad and Mother worked hard and always did their best for us. Even though times were very hard during the depression years they saw to it that we received a good education. They were always a wonderful example to us.

An era is passing with these pioneers gone. They could not be weaklings. Their comforts were limited and only those with courage and will power could survive the perils and hardships of their time. The success they achieved is the result of perseverance and great optimism in the future.

In the community of Vidir there has been growth and development, both of which they have contributed to. This has not been the accomplishment of any one individual or family, but rather the joint endeavour of a community working together and having a common goal. Life in a community like Vidir was interwoven with old friends, relatives and neighbours, who rejoiced in their common bonds of loyalty and pride in their community.

Ingibjorg Elmhirst.

LILJA (SIGVALDASON) ERIKSON

Lilja Erikson, daughter of Siggi and Ena Sigvaldason, had the distinction of winning the Governor-General's Gold Medal in the Province of Manitoba, on her graduation from Grade XII in 1945.

Chapter IX.
PIONEER MERCHANT OF NORTH BATTLEFORD.

OLIVER (SIGVALDASON) JOHNSTON (1879-1962)
 married JESSIE MacCULLOUGH (1888-1908)
 I child
1. HUGH OLIVER (1908) married RUTH ELSPETH CARLYLE
 3 Children
 A. HUGH CARLYLE (1939) married BARBARA KOZLOWSKI
 B. DAVID THOMAS (1941)
 C. WILLIAM OLIVER DENNIS (1943) married Dr. ELIZABETH POWELL
 1 child
 a. DAVID POWELL
OLIVER (SIGVALDASON) JOHNSTON married MIRIAM SCALES
 3 children
1. FLORENCE IRENE (1913-1915)
2. AUSTIN LAFERGEY (1915) married PEGGY FROST
3. MIRIAM ANNA (1916) married DOUGLAS SHAW
 1 child
 A. MIRIAM ELEANOR (1941) married RICHARD FAHRENWALD
 1 child
 a. DAVID (1974)
MIRIAM ANNA married GUSTINE DeSTAFFANY
 I child
 A. KATHERINE TANTA (1951) married DAVID PENNINGTON
MIRIAM ANNA married JACK BAGSHAW

Chapter IX
PIONEER MERCHANT OF NORTH BATTLEFORD.

Pioneer merchant, sportsman, salesman, political mover, community organizer, a romantic—these were but part of the many attributes that made up the debonair personality of (Uncle) Oliver Johnston.

Oliver, Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg's second son, was born in Iceland, but was brought up by his uncle Olafur Johannesson and Margaret. His early years were spent in Winnipeg, where his uncle had a store. At an early age Oliver gained a deep insight and knowledge of business procedures, as well as good public relations, both of which helped him tremendously in later years.



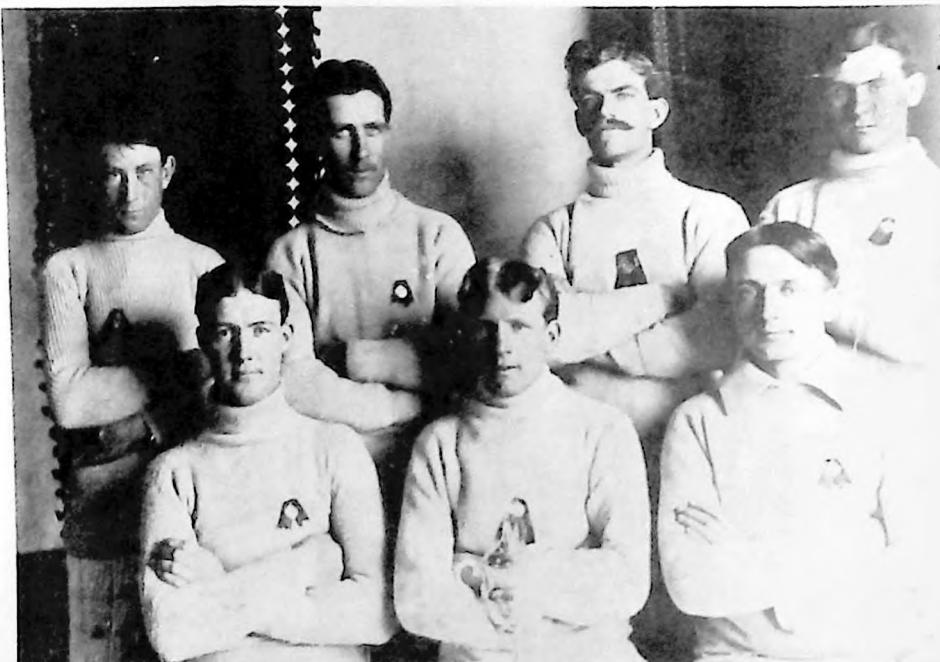
Oliver Johnston as a young man.

Because of the similarity of their names Oliver called his uncle "Uncle John". He also changed his name to Johnston, to facilitate business ventures.

At one time Oliver's Uncle John had owned property in Victoria, B.C., where he had kept a cow and some fruit trees. This property was located directly behind the site where the stately Empress Hotel in Victoria now stands.

When Oliver was growing up his Uncle John took him several times to Victoria during part of the winters. John believed that travelling was a wonderful educator and that it broadened horizons for people. He imbued in Oliver an adventurous spirit and a desire to travel and see other parts of the world. After he graduated from school, Oliver decided to go abroad on a year's trip. His uncle passed away just before that time and left some money to Oliver. Part of this inheritance was used for the trip. However, Oliver travelled through Europe on bicycle, and worked in between travelling from one place to another, to help finance his tour.

Either by arrangement or by chance, Oliver was in London on the day of the coronation of King Edward VII. The streets of London were lined with row upon row of people along the coronation route. No vantage place was left. Oliver, determined to get a "bird's-eye view" of this famous event, found a suitable tree along the route. Ever resourceful, he climbed up. As he hung down from the strongest limb, he had a splendid view as the royal procession went by.



The North Battleford hockey team [1903-06] displaying winners ribbons. Oliver Johnston is seated at extreme left - bottom row. At that time hockey was a 7 man team with a Rover position.

In his early twenties Oliver met a business man, A.D. Pickle by name. They formed a partnership and at first opened up a general store in a tent, in Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1903.

This was at a time when the railways played a major part in the progress and growth of towns. Now North Battleford looked more promising for growth as the railway had been routed through there. Pickle and Johnston built a store in 1905, in NOrth Battleford. This store became a prosperous business and remained so for many years.

Oliver was very interested in sports. He enjoyed going on hunting trips to Northern Saskatchewan. On one of these hunting trips, when he and his friends stopped at Dr. McCullough's home, he met the McCullough's young daughter Jessie, for the first time. She was 14 years old at that time, but Oliver thought she was the loveliest young girl he had ever met. Her sparkling eyes and winsome Scottish wit won his heart completely.

Oliver decided then and there that when Jessie grew up he would ask her to marry him. Just after her 19th birthday they were married. A year later a son Oliver Hugh, was born. Shortly after her son's birth, Jessie Johnston died. Oliver a widower at 30, was left alone with an infant son.

Hugh was brought up by his grandmother McCullough in Winnipeg, amongst a family of aunts and one uncle. Indeed, they were more like older sisters and brother to Hugh, than aunts and uncle. Oliver was



Oliver and his
first wife
Jessie MacCullough,
on their
wedding day. [1907]

always a great favourite with the McCullough family, so his visits to his son were greatly looked forward to by all of them.

Oliver became very involved in his business as well as in community life. He served on a number of committees and boards. In 1911 he was on the committee that interviewed Premier Scott in Regina to obtain construction of the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford. For eight years he served as chairman of the High school and Public School board, including the years when the original Collegiate Institute was under construction. He was also the chairman of the Hospital Board for a number of years.

Oliver was one of a group responsible for starting the Optimist, North Battleford's second newspaper. He was politically minded and throughout his life he was a staunch Conservative, serving as president of the local Conservative Association.

Sports held a special appeal for Oliver. Curling was one of his favourite participation sports. He attended many curling championship games in Winnipeg and some of his prized possessions were trophies won in curling. He organized and sponsored local hockey teams. He enjoyed baseball as a spectator sport and sponsored a local baseball team which became semi-professional.

One winter Oliver was going to a championship curling bonspiel in Switzerland. By this time he had met Miriam Scales, a young girl from Prince Edward Island. When he got to New York he decided he wanted to marry her and take her on a European tour. He quickly sent off a wire to Miriam in Prince Edward Island, "Meet me in New York stop I love you stop Want to marry you."



I. to right, Miriam, Grandmother Scales, Miriam [Oliver's second wife.] Austin, Oliver Johnston.

Miriam came to New York and they were married in the famous "Little Church Around the Corner." They knew no one in New York so the minister who married them called on the janitor of the church and the cleaning woman at the Vicarage to act as witnesses.

Their honeymoon was spent travelling in Europe for five months. On this trip they bought heavy tapestries for their home, as well as a beautiful hand-carved grandfather's clock in Venice. This clock became one of their prized possessions, both for its beauty as well as for its romantic attachment.

In 1927 Pickle and Johnston sold their business. Oliver went into the Insurance business and had a Chrysler car dealership in North Battleford for several years.

Three children were born to Oliver and Miriam. Their first child Florence Irene lived only two years.

Oliver continued to be tremendously interested in the growth and development of North Battleford. His commanding appearance and responsible manner won him the trust and admiration of all who knew him. He was highly respected in his community, and his advice was often sought on various projects. In his 80s he had been a resident tax-payer longer than any other man then residing in North Battleford. As a pioneer merchant there he had the deep satisfaction of realizing that he had played a part in the town's growth and development.

Hugh spent most of his first 32 years in Winnipeg. He received his education there, in public school first, then at St. John's College. He took his last year of high school in North Battleford.



David Thomas Johnston.

*Hugh Johnston and Elizabeth Carlyle's
wedding day [1937]*

Hugh's jobs were mostly related to transportation, his first job being before he turned 17. He became manager of Northwest Airlines in Winnipeg in 1937 and spent the rest of his working life in air transportation. After Northwest he became Regional Traffic Manager for C.P.A. in Edmonton then went to T.C.A. (now Air Canada) in Montreal. He retired from there in 1971, as Director of Cargo Sales for Air Canada.

Like his father, Hugh was tremendously interested in sports. He was active in team sports such as hockey, football and basketball, as well as in individual sports like skiing (downhill and cross-country) and squash. He was very active in the Winnipeg Canoe Club, which recently celebrated its 85th birthday. He was Commodore (president) there in 1937.

Whenever Hugh went on holidays to his uncles' farms in Vidir he loved to ride the horses. With his Uncle Rodger McCullough, who sometimes went to the farms with him, they would ride the pasture lands with Gudni and Kris Sigvaldason.

In 1938 Hugh married Ruth Carlyle of Winnipeg. They have three sons—Hugh Carlyle, David Thomas, and William Oliver Dennis, and one grand-child David Powell. The sons received their education in Montreal and are all living and working there. Hugh and his wife now live in Sidney, B.C.



*William Oliver Dennis and
Elizabeth Powell*



*Florence Irene, Oliver and
Miriam's daughter, died at age 2.*



Hugh Carlyle Johnston and Barbara Koslowski wedding day.

Austin, Oliver and Miriam's son, spent the early part of his life at North Battleford. During these years he sometimes visited his cousins at Arborg and Vidir. After high school Austin attended the University of Toronto where he graduated in Geology. He worked as geologist in B.C. and northern Canada for a number of years. He married Peggy Frost and is now living in Vancouver, B.C.

Miriam has two daughters, Eleanor Fahrenwald, who lives in Kailua, Hawaii, and Tanta Pennington who lives in Vancouver, B.C. Miriam and her husband Jack Bagshaw now live in Victoria, B.C.



left to right. Tanta, Miriam, Eleanor. Taken on Eleanor Fahrenwald's wedding day, at the Outrigger Club, Honolulu.

RECOLLECTIONS BY A DAUGHTER AND GRAND-DAUGHTER.

Dad was a great organizer. If there was a community project on he would get wholly involved in it. He thrived on the bustle and excitement of organizing sports events. He never missed a baseball game and one of the teams he sponsored became semi-professional. His favourite sport was curling and he took part in many championship games.

I think you could say Dad was a romantic and an idealist. He could make lifetime decisions on the spur of the moment, such as the time he was in New York and suddenly decided to wire Mother to come and elope with him.

There was something of an old-world charm about Dad. He was always very well-dressed and he was gentle and courteous at all times.

We did not have too much contact with Icelandic people but I have always been very proud of my Icelandic blood. Like most Icelanders, Dad loved coffee. In fact, when he was home, the coffee pot was always on the stove.

Miriam Bagshaw.

I have very many happy memories of Grandpa (Oliver). My mother and grandparents raised me until I was eight years old, so I always called Grandpa "Daddy". He was such a gentle man! Now I see a lot of Grandpa in Uncle Hugh.

Grandma was always recording dates and events in her bible. Today I noticed that she had the date of Grandpa's birthday, May 23, 1879. That is a hundred years ago now!

I think it would be wonderful to meet more of Grandpa's relatives. Family roots are very important!

Eleanor Fahrenwald

Chapter X ONLY 16 TO GO.

BJORN INGVAR SIGVALDASON (1878-1947)
married GUDJONA LARA JOHNSON
16 children

1. THORARINN GUDNI (1910) married ADALBJORG SAEMUNDSON
3 children
 - A. OSKAR (1937) married CATHY McMULLEN
 - a. THOR A. :1967)
 - B. HULDA (1941-1976) married WERNER HEID.
 - C. ALDA (1945) married DOUGLAS JOHANNSON.
2 children
 - a. DENISE CHARLYLE (1963)
 - b. LESLIE NADINE (1966)
2. INGIBJORG SIGRUN (1911) married RICHARD ROTHE.
4 children
 - A. LILLY (1930 married THEODORE KOPP
3 children
 - a. THEODORE (1956)
 - b. DOROTHY (1958-1978)
 - c. ARTHUR (1959)
 - B. AGNES (1933 married HAROLD BOLBACK
3 children
 - a. HARVEY (1956)
 - b. MARK (1957)
 - c. JULIA (1958)
 - C. HERBERT (1937) married MARY MACROBOULOU
 - D. ROSIE (1940) married INGO BRINKERT
3 children
 - a. RICHARD (1964)
 - b. KERRY (1966)
 - c. ROSS (1971)
3. ANNA (1912) married KRISTJAN THORARINSON
4 children
 - A. KRISTJAN BJORN (1935) married IRENE EGGERTSON
3 children
 - a. KENNETH LEIGH (1963)
 - b. GLENN ALLAN (1965)
 - c. LESLEY KAREN (1970)

- B. HAROLD (1938) married MARGARET TOMASSON
2 children
- a. STACEY LYNN (1961)
 - b. DAVID HAROLD (1963)
- C. BRIAN (1942) married LEILA EGGERTSON
2 children
- a. ROBERT BRIAN (1964)
 - b. LEANNE MARIE (1965)
- D. LORRAINE ANND (1946) married DENNIS OLSON
1 child
- a. LANA (1969)
4. BJORN (1913-1961) married KRISTIN NORDAL OLIVER
4 children
- A. BALDUR OLIVER (1938) married HALLDORA VIGFUSSON
1 child
- a. WARREN GARTH (1962)
- 2nd marriage to MARILYN
2 children
- a. ANDREW BERNARD (1972)
 - b. MICHAEL LORNEI (1975)
- B. BJORN TERRENCE OLIVER (1940) married DARLENE NAGY
1 child
- a. LEON (1966)
remarried --to MARY GINTER.
- C. VIVIAN GAIL (1947) married DEAN NAGY
3 children
- a. LEE (1967)
 - b. DALE (1968)
 - c. DARYLE (1970)
- D. LORNE BJORN (1951) married LESLIE DAWN GOODMAN
5. INGVAR (1914 married SIGTHRUDUR BRANDSON
5 children
- A. MABEL (1944) married JOHN CLARKE
2 children
- a. GRANT (1970)
 - b. CHRISTINE (1972)
- B. LESLIE (1950) married CATHY CLARK
2 children
- a. SHANNON (1972)
 - b. STEVEN (1973)
- C. EMIL (1950) married GERALDINE PETERSON
- D. CLIFFORD (1949) married RITA ZUK
3 children
- a. CHERYL LYNN (1974)
 - b. GREGORY CLIFFORD (1975)
 - c. WENDY DAWN (1977)
- E. DOUGLAS (1956)



Bjorn and Lara Sigvaldason.

6. GUDRUN (1915) married THORKELL JOHANNSON
6 children
- A. THORKELL WALLACE (1936) married CHERYL TAYCHUK
1 child
 - a. JESSICA SYBIL LYNNE (1972)
 - B. SIGRUN ELEANOR (1938) married WILLIAM FRY
1 child
 - a. JON DAVID (1971)
 - C. SIGMAR LAWRENCE (1940) married CAROL LAVERGNE
3 children
 - a. DEAN LAWRENCE (1962)
 - b. CATHERINE LYNETTE (1965)
 - c. LARA MARIA (1970)
 - D. KRISTJAN RONALD (1943) married NORMA GUDJONSON
3 children
 - a. VERNE JEFFREY (1964)
 - b. BRUCE RUSSELL (1967)
 - c. CHRISTINE LAURA (1969)
 - E. LARA BARBARA (1946) married BERNEST ORBANKSI
3 children
 - a. KELLY MICHELLE (1966)
 - b. KEILA ELEANOR (1969)
 - c. JONATHAN BERNEST (1976)
 - F. BJORN NEIL (1953) married SYLVIA WIEBE

7. LARA GUDJONA (1916) married FRANKLIN WILSON d. 1952
 4 children
 A. ELMA HAZEL (1937) married WILLIAM KOZUB
 3 children
 a. CHARISSE MICHELLE (1956) married JOEY STADNEK
 2 children
 aa. TYLER STEWARD (1975)
 bb. TARA NIOMI (1977)
 b. DWAYNE REGAN (1957) married MARILYN PALOMAR
 1 child
 aa. JENNIFER (1975)
 c. GRANT WILLIAM (1960)
 B. RICHARD LEONARD (1939) married MARLINE JOHNSON
 4 children
 a. LAURICE ERIN (1961)
 b. MARLIS DELAINE (1962)
 c. CAMILLE SIGRUN (1967)
 d. ADRIENNE NICOLE (1971)
 C. WESLEY FRANKLIN (1947) married SUSAN KUSLAK
 D. HUGH NORMAN (1951)

LARA remarried in 1956, to GUDMUNDUR G. MAGNUSSON.

8. KRISTIANA (1918) married ALBERT M. MAGNUSSON
 2 children
 A. LYNNE LAURA RANNVEIG (1947) married JEAN M. TAILLEFER
 1 child
 a. Stephane Edouard Joseph (1976)
 B. LARRY ALBERT BJORN (1951)
9. THORDIS (1919) married EMIL J. WILSON d. 1978.
 3 children
 A. ARLINE (1943) married DAVID HOLBURTON
 1 child
 a. CRAIG JAMES (1976)
 B. ROBERT (1945) married DARLENE ERICKSON
 2 children
 a. KRISTIN (1973)
 b. MARLA (1975)
 C. LAURIE LINDA (1957)
10. VALDINE (1921) married NEVILLE PRENTICE
 2 children
 A. MARGARET (1956)
 B. CAROL (1957) married CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL.
11. OLOF SIGRIDUR (1923) married GERRY SIGURDSON
 3 children
 A. BEVERLY (1943) married CHARLES BATES
 4 children
 a. DEREK :(1963)
 b. BRADLEY (1966)

- c. ROBERT (1969)
- d. DANIEL (1974)

B. GARRY (1945) married JEANETTE KRIASKI
2 children

- a. GARRY LEE (1968)
- b. JAMES (1970)

C. RUSSELL (1957)

12. JONAS (1925) married LILAS REYNOLDS
1 child

A. CAROL (1955)

JONAS married MARY HOWELL

3 children

a. DONALD (1956)

b. BRADLEY (1958)

1 child

aa. BRADELY (1978)

c. MICHELLE (1958)

13. GUNNAR (1927) married HELEN WITWICKI
3 children

A. KAREN (1955)

B. MARY-ANN (1957)

C. JANET (1960)

14. EINAR (1929) married ALDA THORSTEINSON
3 children

A. DWAYNE (1963)

B. LAURA-LEE (1964)-

C. FRANCINE (1968)

15. BEATRICE LILLIAN (1931)

16. MARGARET (1933) married ERIC RASMUSSEN
2 children

A. THORA (1965)

B. REID (1967)

ONLY 16 TO GO

Little did Mama dream, that day when she met the handsome young teacher in Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, whom she later married, that she would one day have a houseful of 16 children! How Papa was able to provide for a large family like ours, was a tribute to his and Mama's resourcefulness and good management.

We were one of the largest families in the little Interlake town of Arborg, Manitoba, and surrounding areas. Large families were fairly common then, as the "pill" and its magical powers had not even been thought of. We often wished we were fewer, especially when it came to going places and getting new clothes. However, none of us ever really wished any of our sisters or brothers away. It just seemed at times though, as if the two-storey frame house we lived in, would never be quite large enough for us all, for within its four walls were Papa, Mama, six mischievous boys, and 10 girls of all sizes and ages.



Back row, left to right: Gudrun [Johannson], Laura [Magnusson], Ingvar, Olof [Sigurdson], Gudni, Anna [Thorarinsson], Bjössi, Kristiana [Magnusson]. Front Row, left to right: Einar, Jonas, Valdine [Prentice], Lara, Björn, Thordis [Wilson], Gunnar, Inga [Rothe] Seated in front: Beatrice, and Margaret [Rasmussen].

"I wonder how Lara Sigvaldason can stand it," we once heard Mrs. Johnson say at the Annual Arborg Fair, as she watched Mama carrying the youngest one, Margaret, with six others in tow.

"I really do believe she and Bjorn should do something about it."

Mama had indeed tried to broach that very subject to her doctor two or three times. Doctor Bjornson however, gave her little advice, as anything connected with sex was never mentioned.

So, here we were—16 children, most of us with blonde or reddish hair and a very generous sprinkling of freckles; diapers by the dozens in the washing; plenty of noise and commotion in the house; stacks of dishes after every meal; arguments over whose turn it was to do the dishes and 18 loaves of bread to be baked every third day!

Somehow, because we were so many and looked so much alike, relatives and friends could never quite remember our names. We were usually thought of in groups, or else as little branches—with Papa's and Mama's strong roots holding up a spreading tree. Gudni, Inga and Anna branched out first, with Bjossi and Ingvar reaching up too. Straddling the middle were six girls. Gudrun, Laura, Kristiana, Thordis, Valdine and Olof. Tapering off at the top were Jonas, Gunnar and Einar, then the two youngest, Beatrice and Margaret.

I

Gudni, at an early age, learned to mimic. One of his favourite characters to imitate was Farmer Sykes, who once angrily shouted at Mr. Clark, a cattle-buyer from Winnipeg who had shipped Sykes best cow for a return of only \$5.00. "If I ever see you around my farm again Mr. Clark, I'll bring out my 22." Gudni would shake his head in fury as he proceeded to mimic the farmer, chasing after the thoroughly frightened Mr. Clark, who made a quick dash for his truck.

Gudni could nod his head and look very wise and stern, at other times benign, as he imitated the elderly and beloved minister of our Lutheran church, Reverend Bjarnason.

He played his most forceful role whenever he mimiced the politician who spread his hands out with great flourish, as he roared, "My friends, remember--a vote for me means a vote for better times, better roads, and freer trade with other countries."

Sometimes, when Mama was weary and tired of diapers, crying babies and endless meals, Gudni would catch at her arm and say with his most winning smile, "Come dance Mama." The two of them would twirl around the kitchen and Mama would throw aside the dish towel. Somehow, her cares would simply melt away at moments like this and her eyes would sparkle with joy.

II, III, and IV

How we loved to watch Inga and Anna get dressed and ready to go to a dance! One particular New Year's Eve, Inga and Anna were especially excited about the dance. Mama had just finished sewing beautiful evening gowns for them. Anna's dress, in rich brown satin which set off her auburn hair, was trimmed with wide and full peach-colored ruffles on the sleeves. Inga's gown of filmy chiffon with an alluring and jaunty cape attached, somehow enhanced her petite and quiet manner.

"Come on Inga," called out Anna, as she finished washing Gunnar's face and getting him ready for bed, "We'll have to hurry and get dressed in time for the beginning of the dance."

"I'll just have to put the dishes away," answered Inga as she carefully stacked a pile of dishes in the cupboard. The clock chimed seven times as Inga hastily folded the dish towels on the towel rack.

"Now remember girls," Anna and Inga called out to Valdine and Olof who followed them towards the stairs, "You can't come in to our room while we're dressing." With that they both hurried up the stairs and closed their bedroom door.

"Let's go and watch them," Valdine whispered to Olof, as they crept up the stairs after the older girls.

"Please let us come in and watch the curling tongs for you," called out Valdine. "We'll make sure that they won't get too hot."

"Not now—you'll have to wait until we're dressed," answered Inga, as she gave the door an extra turn.

"You're both a couple of meanies," shouted Valdine as she pounded on the door, while Olof went downstairs again. "This is New Year's Eve and I want to watch you dress for the dance," added Valdine.

However, Inga and Anna paid little attention. This dance was really going to be a special one—new dresses and new beaus! Kris, Anna's new beau, was bringing his brother Thor along, to take Inga to the dance.

"What did you say Thor looked like? ", asked Inga as she slipped on her long petticoat. "I hope he's not fat and dumpy looking, because if he is, I'm not going with him."

"Don't worry," laughed Anna, "You'll like him. He's tall and handsome like his brother. Come and help me with these curling tongs." With that she picked up the tongs from the inside of the coal-oil lamp globe, where they had been heating up.

As Anna wound the hot tongs under a role of her hair, there was a sudden scorched smell. She quickly unwound the tongs and tested them with her finger. The contact made a sizzling sound. "Oh my God, that's hot," moaned Anna, as she licked her sore finger. "I'll just have to let the tongs cool for a bit."

"I'll watch them for you, please let me," Valdine called out from the keyhole, "Please let me help."

"No, you can't come in," said Anna.

"And that's that," added Inga.

All at once there was a sudden quick push on the door and Valdine rushed in, saying "I want to see you put your powder and lipstick on. What's this for? Can I put some on too? I want to smell good." Valdine now reached out for the perfume bottle.

"Get out Valdine, we're busy. Come back later," answered Inga, as she took Valdine's hand and led her back into the hallway.

"You're both mean," shouted Valdine, as she ran down the stairs. She felt a sudden jolt as she bumped into Thordis, who was running upstairs to see what the commotion was all about. Valdine felt a sharp

stab and her eyelid throbbed painfully, as she and Thordis now both rushed up the stairs.

"Are you here again?", Anna called out in exasperation.

"Didn't we—Oh my God—what happened to you?", shouted Inga, as she suddenly noticed Valdine's right eye, swollen to the size of a small gold ball. The pupil of the eye had disappeared completely under the thickening swelling.

Gasping and tugging Valdine by the hand, Inga and Anna rushed down the stairs.

"Mama, Mama,—call the doctor at once. Valdine's eye—look at it—look what's happened."

Mama came rushing in from the sewing room, with a bundle of diapers in her arms.

"Good gracious, child,—whatever happened?" Mama asked as she threw the diapers on a chair. She quickly went off to the wash room and brought a face-cloth dipped in cold water. As she gently pressed and patted the compress against Valdine's eye, the swelling gradually lessened.

Papa, who was rocking little Jonas to sleep, watched Mama cool the compress again and again. "You have a gentle touch my dear," he said with a smile as the swelling went down.

"You know," answered Mama, "My secret wish was always to be a nurse." Then looking at all of us who hovered over Valdine, she added, "But I guess with a big family like ours, I get to practise a bit of nursing anyhow."

Inga and Anna had been anxiously watching as this went on. By now the swelling was gone, leaving a dark bluish tinge around Valdine's eye. Otherwise she was fine. Inga and Anna took Olof and Valdine's hands as they took them upstairs with them. "You girls may come and watch us dress. This time Valdine, you can help us make sure that the curling tongs are just right for curling our hair."

Valdine and Olof smiled happily. After all—what could be more wonderful than to look at all those magic jars of cream and perfume.

"besides," Valdine thought, "I'm sure Inga and Anna will be the most beautiful girls at the New Year's Eve dance."

V & VI

Next to Papa's farm was a narrow strip of land where Stony lived. Here he had a small house along the riverbank, and a barn large enough for his cow Bertha, and her hay supply. An outhouse was located fairly close to the barn, although no shady bluff of trees was around to lend it privacy.

Stony was very fond of his cow Bertha.

"Come here Bertha," we would hear him call out at milking time. Bertha, reddish-colored with large white spots on her belly, would lift her head at Stony's call, move slowly forward, then munch contentedly while he milked her as he tried to balance himself on the small milking-stool.



Left to right: Inga, Bjossi, Ingvar, Gudni, Anna.

"I'd like to scare Bertha," Ingvar said one day as he watched Stony milking. "I wonder what Stony would say." He grinned to himself as he envisioned the milk stool flying off.

"You'd better not," answered Bjossi, "Papa will really get mad if we do anything to tease Stony."

However, something did happen one day that made both Bjossi and Ingvar change their mind about trying any mischief or teasing around Stony's place.

One hot summer's day Bjossi and Ingvar were harnessing the horses, Bell and Minnie, to the hayrack, which was close to Stony's outhouse, on our side of the fence. Bell was a gentle, fawn-colored horse, and often in play, we would form a long row as we took turns walking under her stomach. She would stand motionless as we repeated this play. Minnie, her partner however was the opposite and we never dared to try anything like that around her. Her tawny mane would toss whenever she was approached and she would run wildly about. However, she was usually quite tame whenever she was harnessed with Bell.

On this particular day as Ingvar and Bjossi hooked the traces of the horses' harness to the irons of the single tree, Minnie's mane tossed and turned as she reared up.

"Whoa—woa Minnie," Bjossi said gently, as he tried to pat her. Minnie however, reared up on her hind feet and tugged at the yoke, jerking and pulling at Bell, as if urging her to get moving.

All at once an urgent shout from Papa cracked the air,

"Ingvar—Bjossi—get out of the way!"

The boys rushed to safety under Stony's fence and out of the way. As the horses leaped up and shot forward, the hayrack swerved and swayed.

"Oh, my gosh," shouted Ingvar, "They're going to hit Stony's outhouse."

At that moment there was a loud crash as the hayrack and the looped horses' lines streaked past Stony's outhouse. For a moment, the outhouse seemed suspended in the air, then it slowly turned 180 degrees. The sudden impact lessened the speed of the horses. Ingvar made a mad dash to try to catch the reins as they trailed along the ground.

After some time Papa and the boys got the horses slowed down. The boys led the sweating horses to the water trough. When the horses had slaked their thirst Bjossi and Ingvar hooked the traces up to the irons of the single-tree once again.

"There's Stony coming to his outhouse," Bjossi said in a low voice, as he saw Stony walking from his barn.

Stony turned towards the outhouse and put out his hand as if to open the door. All at once he noticed that the door wasn't there. He stood stock-still, scratching his head in bewilderment, then looked around.

"What's this?" he said. Just then he spied Ingvar and Bjossi standing by the hayrack.

"What's going on here anyway?" Stony demanded. He saw now that the door was turned right around.

"Did you boys do this?" he asked angrily. "I'll tell your Papa about this."

As he handed the reins to Ingvar, Bjossi said to Stony, "We didn't mean to do this Stony. Honest, we couldn't help it."

"The horses had a runaway," added Ingvar, "We promise to straighten out the outhouse today again."

Stony didn't look very convinced that the boys were telling the truth. Fortunately Papa came and spoke to Stony. "I'm sorry about this Stony," he said, "The boys are telling the truth. Minnie can be a wild horse, as she showed today."

Bjossi and Ingvar righted Stony's outhouse. As for Stony, he believed Papa and never referred to the incident again. Strange to say however, after this Bjossi and Ingvar never spoke again of teasing our good friend Stony, in any way.

VII

The highlight of the spring season was the annual Spring Dance, held after breakup, when the roads were once again passable for cars. Admission to dances was usually 25 cents and out in the country the dances would last until five o'clock in the morning. The local orchestras, Art and His Ambassadors, the Palson or Sigurdson family orchestras, would be hired to play until two p.m. That seemed too short a dance for many, so some of the men would walk around with hats to take up a collection for the orchestra to play until 5 o'clock.

Gudrun loved to dance, as did her beau Kelly. One night they had danced until 5 o'clock in the morning, at Framnes Hall. By the time Gudrun reached home it was 5.30 A.M. As she touched the door-knob to go inside she heard a sound in the kitchen.

"Oh my gosh," thought Gudrun, as she realized what time it was, "Papa is up already. What shall I tell him?" She could feel a dull throb of apprehension as she thought of Papa scolding her. "Darn it! What shall I tell him?"

All at once she hit upon an idea! She quickly slipped off her shoes and stockings and crept softly to the caragana hedge, where she hid them in the branches. As she walked back to the door she ran her hand through her hair, to make it look rumpled, as if from sleep. When she opened the kitchen door, Papa looked up from where he was lighting the wood-stove., and said in surprise.

"What are you doing up so early Gudrun?" Then he suddenly stood up and looking very stern asked, "You haven't just come home from the dance, have you?"

"Oh no, Papa," answered Gudrun as she quickly walked towards the stairway, "I had to run to the outhouse. "With that she rushed up the stairs before Papa's probing eyes would make her blush and stammer out the truth.

Papa believed Gudrun, but she made sure afterwards that she got home from dances before Papa got up!

VIII

Mama hated guns and no guns were allowed in our home for many years.

One warm sunny day in June, when the scent of plum blossoms in the air and the rustle of the swaying poplar leaves announced the beginning of summer, quite a few of us were sitting on the back steps of Stony's house.

Margaret, Stony's wife, sat outside too. Her knitting needles clicked swiftly as she knit up warm Icelandic mitts and socks. She was very quick at knitting and often we would see her walking over to her friend Rosa's, the needles clicking back and forth as she walked. Walter Daniels, a friend of Stony's family, sat outside too, with his rifle beside him.

"Let's have a game of shooting at tin cans," called out Thor, Stony's son, as he, Ingvar and Bjossi took their slingshots out of their pockets. These slingshots were made of Y-shaped pieces of wood, with rubber tied around the two forked ends, while a piece of leather served as an anchor for the stone, which was used to shoot with.

"I'll line up the tin cans," called out Bibsa Lifman, who was a great favourite with the boys. She carefully lined up tin cans on the fenceposts close by.

"My turn first," said Thor, as he aimed quickly. He missed the can. "I'll have to aim better," he said, as he slowly aimed for the next can. It flew off into the air on impact. One by one the boys and Bibsa took turns. Laura looked on, hoping her turn would come next.

"Please let me have a turn," she asked as Bibsa took her second turn.

"Of course not," the boys answered, "This game is only for us and Bibsa. You don't know how to shoot."

Bjossi took his third turn now.



Five generations are shown here:
Back left to right:
Great-great Grandmother
Lara Sigvaldason,
Great Grandmother Laura
Wilson Magnusson,
Grandmother Elma Kozub.
Front: Charisse Stadnek
[mother] holding
baby Tyler Stadnek.

"Oh please let me," begged Laura.

As Margaret walked back to her kitchen, she called out to the boys, "Let Laura have her turn. She'd like to try."

Walter Daniels look at his 22 rifle, which was resting against the house. He picked it up slowly.

"Here, Laura, I'll let you try with my rifle."

"Oh no," Laura, answered as she stared in fright at the rifle. "We may never touch a gun. Papa said so." She shrank back against the wall as Walter brought the gun towards her.

"Well—this gun is not loaded. It's empty. Your Papa and Mama won't mind."

"Come on Laura," we all shouted, "Here's your chance. Try it."

"There's nothing to it at all," Walter added, "It's empty. I told you."

"Come on—don't be a scairdy cat," we called to Laura.

"Just set it against your shoulder like this," Walter said as he placed the rifle against her shoulder. "Now all you have to do is pull the lever."

Laura looked uncertainly at Walter, then at us as we waited for her. "Try it," we shouted again, "Aim for that tin can. It's empty...nothing will happen."

Laura looked around again. Then in a quick firm voice she said, "Okay! I'll try it, just for fun. It's empty anyway." She slowly placed her finger on the lever, as she kept her eye on the tin can sitting on the fencepost.

Suddenly there was a click! Laura's shoulder jerked sideways and her eyes shut in fright at the terrifying noise that followed. There was a sharp scraping and whining sound as the tin can shattered in mid air.

Margaret came dashing out of her kitchen, rubbing her hands together as she screamed, "What on earth is going on?"

Walter quickly picked up the gun and crept with it to the other side of the house. We all dashed into the bush at the edge of Stony's property, frightened at the punishment we would get. Laura sat down on the steps, her face white and her fingers twitching.

Papa and Mama came running over to Stony's place. As they saw Laura sitting there terror-stricken, they asked, "What happened Laura? What's going on here?"

"I didn't know it was loaded. Honest, I didn't know Papa. "She began to cry, "Walter said it wasn't loaded."

Papa, Mama, and Margaret walked to the side of the house where Walter stood, looking very shame-faced as they came up to him.

"As for you Walter," Papa called out angrily, "I don't want to see you or your gun anywhere close to us again."

Walter didn't come around to visit at Stony's place for a long time after that. As for the gun we never did see it again.

IX

After the children were in bed, Papa and Mama often spent the evening reading a book together, then discussing what was happening in the story. If they had a free hour in the afternoon, they would also read and discuss a book.

One day when I was 12 years old, I happened to be sitting in a corner of the dining-room reading, when I overheard Papa and Mama discussing a book.

"That scene about Ellen telling Neils Lindstedt about her fear of sex is one of the most daring things I have ever read in a book," Papa said, as he idly twirled his fingers through his thinning hair.

"It's a wonder this was ever allowed to be printed," Mama answered, as she picked up the book.

All at once my ears pricked up. There was that word again. Sex! What did it mean? What was it all about? Dimly I remembered hearing some of the older children talking one day, when we were playing on the riverbank, about someone who had plenty of sex-appeal. Their talk had gone on about something strange and mysterious, which I couldn't understand.

I looked up quickly and tried to read the title of the book as Mama put it down. All I could see was "—of the Marsh." When Papa and Mama got up I watched furtively as Mama tucked the book in a corner of the cupboard in the dining-room.

The following day Papa and Mama drove out to Vidir to visit his brothers and their families. Now was my chance! I found the book tucked under some tablecloths, and hurried up to my secret reading place in Papa's office.

I looked at the title of the book. "Settlers of the Marsh." I knew the title. Now I had to look for some answers. I read and read. The beginning seemed to be all about a man called Neils, who did nothing but work! I read a bit more, then tucked the book again in its hiding place.

The next time Papa and Mama went out I took the book out again and read almost to the end. I still hadn't found the answers I wanted. What did sex mean?

About a week later, as I sat in a corner of the dining-room, once again my ears pricked up as Papa and Mama were discussing the book again.

"This is quite a description." Papa said, as he began to read aloud from the book, "There's one in every district, There's one in yours." Papa put the book down.

All at once I realized what part of the book they were reading. Without thinking, I blurted out, "That's the part about Neils' wife. But what does that mean? They said she was the district whore?"

"What!—whatever are you talking about Kristiana?", Mama cried out in consternation, as she looked very curiously at me.

"Why...the book "Settlers of the Marsh"—the one you and Papa are talking about. But I still don't know what "district whore" means though."

"Do you mean to say?", shouted Papa in a tight and angry voice. "Do you mean to say that you have been reading this book? That's not for someone your age to read."

"Gracious me," Mama cried out as she quickly got up. "I'm going to burn this book. You had no business to read it. "With that she reached for the book and took it to the kitchen. I heard the sound of the stove lid being lifted, then slammed down again.

"Kristiana, don't ever let me catch you doing anything like that again," Papa said as he sent me upstairs and out of the way.

I never did find out how the story ended, until many years later. As for the book, it was never seen around our place after that.

X & XI

Papa and Mama set the cream can down carefully on the hand sleigh by the back door. As Olof came dashing out, tying her blue wool scarf around her coat collar, she looked disgustedly at the cream can. How she longed to kick it over!

"Darn it," she muttered to herself. "Why do Thordis and I have to take this stupid cream can to the creamery today? I hate it! I hate it!"

"What did you say Olof?", Mama asked as she stood by the back door, rubbing her hands together to keep warm. "What do you hate?"

"Oh nothing," answered Olof as she gave the scarf an extra tug to tighten it. "I just wish I didn't have to take the cream today."

"Thordis will be helping you with it," Mama said as she turned to the door and went inside.

Papa reminded Olof, "Remember what I said at breakfast. You and Thordis may go to see "Tarzan and the Apes" at the theatre on Friday night for taking the cream. But you must be careful not to spill it on the way," Papa turned and went into the kitchen.

Thordis came out, pulling on her heavy woolen mitts. She gave her scarf an extra tug, then looking up at Olof said, "I hear Tarzan" is a very good show. Besides, do you know who's going to be at the show?"

"Who?" asked Olof.

"Bob and Ken. I heard them say so in school yesterday. I hope they'll sit somewhere close to us."

"I think you must like Bob," Olof said with a quick laugh, "I saw the way you rolled your eyes at him yesterday."

"What if I did?" Thordis said, tossing her head as she picked up the sleigh handle and began pulling the sleigh. "Anyway, we'll have to hurry or we'll be late for school. It'll take time to stop at the creamery."

As Thordis pulled the sleigh Olof pushed from behind, at the same time making sure that the cream can stayed in the centre of the sleigh. As the sleigh runners sliced through the crisp snow they made a squeaky sound. Today the path down the riverbank seemed narrower and more crooked than ever. All at once Thordis felt the sleigh runners hitting against her heels.

"Don't push too hard," she yelled at Olof, "The sleigh could tip over if we're not careful."

Olof slowed down at pushing the sleigh. She watched the cream can carefully as they went down the riverbank. Soon they reached the level, frozen Icelandic river. "Now it should be easy," she thought to herself. "But that stretch up the riverbank on the other side....that might be tricky."

As Thordis was pulling the sleigh on the level snow-covered river, she kept thinking, "I wish Papa didn't have those darn cows. How I hate to pull this cream can! I just hope Bob doesn't see me pulling this stupid sleigh."

"I'll pull for a while now," Olof called out as she saw they were nearing the slope of the riverbank.

"Okay, that's fine," answered Thordis as she turned over the sleigh handle to Olof. She moved to the side of the sleigh, holding firmly to the cream can as they began to climb uphill.

Thordis thought of Bob as he had pulled at her hair in class yesterday, and whispered, "See you at the show." She had blushed furiously. She had a funny feeling inside whenever she thought of him. He had looked so cute with his mischievous grin!

All at once Thordis felt a sudden lurch beside her. In the next instant the cream can had toppled to the side. The move loosened the top off the can. Now the rich cream was slowly spreading a thick creamy coating on the snow.

"Oh, my gosh," Thordis yelled in dismay, "Olof--stop--stop," as she tried to straighten the cream can.

Olof turned around quickly to see Thordis struggling with the half-empty can.

"Oh, what will Papa and Mama say? What shall we do?" Olof asked as she helped Thordis lift up the can which was almost empty by now.

"I guess we'll just have to go back home," Thordis said as she dried her tears with the tip of her mitten. "But I'm afraid that's the end of our hopes of going to the show. And it would have been so much fun!"



Papa plowing a field. Having only one arm did not deter his farming venture in any way.

XI

Monday was wash day, so Mama always made a big pot of soup then. She could leave it simmering on the stove while she washed the seemingly endless piles of clothes. One of the happiest days of her life had been the day Papa had brought home a new "Maytag" gas washer.

One particular Monday morning, when Jonas was three years old, he seemed fascinated with the black wood stove and the delicious smell of the bean soup simmering there. He loved to climb, so Mama had to turn the chairs upside down. Papa and Mama had just finished their 10 o'clock coffee. Mama hurried downstairs, while Papa went outside again. Jonas noticed at once Mama had forgotten to turn the chairs over.

Jonas looked and looked at that pot on the stove. It smelled so good! He decided he would try and move the chair. He pulled and tugged at it. He finally got it moved up to the stove. Now he looked around the table. The big spoon on the table looked just right!

"Mmmm—that smells good," he thought, "I'm going to taste it."

Jonas now climbed up the chair, with the big spoon in his hand. He dipped the spoon into the big pot. As he held the shaking spoon to his mouth, he felt a stinging on his lips and jerked aside. All at once there was a loud crash and Jonas came tumbling from the chair. The soup pot lay on its side as the soup came pouring down around Jonas.

A piercing scream of pain brought Mama dashing up the stairs. The three older children who had been playing inside came running into the kitchen shouting, "What's the matter? What happened?"

Mama grabbed Jonas who was screaming with pain, as his little head tossed back and forth.

"Run for Papa and the boys," Mama shouted to Valdine, who was the eldest of the smaller children.

Mama paced back and forth with Jonas, whose arm was now a sweltering mass of burns. Papa and Gudni came running in. Papa phoned Dr. Bjornson to come at once, while Gudni held Jonas as Mama sponged his arm with soda and flour. Dr. Bjornson arrived and applied a soothing salve. Jonas' sobs finally subsided and he fell asleep. The scars remained on his arm for a long time.

Dr. Bjornson left a large jar of salve, to be applied to Jonas' arm twice a day. How Jonas looked forward to the day when the salve jar would finally be empty! It was such a nuisance to have to stop playing and to have to sit or stand still while Mama applied the salve!

At last the salve jar was empty! Jonas rushed out to the barn where Papa and the girls were milking the cows. As he held up the empty jar he shouted out. "Look—look—all gone." With a happy grin he tossed the jar high in the air. He had aimed for the manure pile in front of the barn. There the empty jar nestled at the top while Jonas laughed and shouted with joy. "Good Riddance."

XIII

"I'm sure little Gunnar will want to travel a lot when he gets older," Mama said one day as she washed four year old Gunnar's face.

Indeed, Gunnar was a very adventurous little boy. He was filled with curiosity about things and often wandered off by himself. Sometimes he walked to the St. Benedict's Convent next door; sometimes up to the corner road; other times into the bush behind our property. All our neighbours knew how Gunnar loved to wander about.

"There's little Gunnar wandering off by himself," Margaret Anderson would say as she saw his firm little legs trotting along the fence line.

"Your Mama will be looking for you Gunnar," Margaret would say to him. Gunnar usually turned and headed towards home then. Sometimes he fell asleep on the porch, where he lay down to rest after his wanderings.

One day, while Mama was sewing, she asked the older children to watch the little ones playing around outside. When she called them all in for dinner later there was no sign of Gunnar anywhere.

"Wasn't Gunnar playing with you?", Mama asked.

"He was playing just a short while ago," answered Anna, who had been watching the children.

"I saw him walk out to the gate," called out Jonas, "But I don't see him now."

"You'll have to help me look for him," Mama said as she walked towards the gate. She looked around the trees at the Convent.

The older girls hunted through the bush. They looked under the covers on the porch. There was no sign of Gunnar!

When Mama came back from the gate she began to feel a terrible dread all at once.



Olof, Gunnar and Jonas
enjoy the swing on a
summer day in June.

"What if--? Oh dear God, no. What if Gunnar should have climbed up the big cistern in the basement and fallen in?"

Mama had often feared that cistern in the basement in case one of the children should try to climb up and then fall in. She dreaded to go downstairs and look. Finally she went down. However, there was no chair down there to climb up on, so Mama breathed a sigh of relief over that. Mama then phoned our neighbours, the Lifmans and Andersons, but no one had seen any sign of Gunnar.

Mama walked to the corner road. She looked all around but no little figure could be seen anywhere. She stood there, uncertain what to do next. All at once she noticed a horse and buggy coming at quite a speed, from the west road. As it drew closer, she saw Mr. and Mrs. Alexander in the buggy. Between them sat a tiny figure, the head resting against Mrs. Alexander.

"Why, that looks like little Gunnar," Mama thought, "But it just can't be Gunnar—he couldn't have walked all the way to Alexanders—it's over a mile away."

As the buggy drew closer, Mama saw that it was Gunnar indeed, who sat in the buggy between the Alexanders.

"Hello Lara," called out Mr. Alexander.

"I hope you haven't been too worried about Gunnar."

"Why hello," answered Mama. "How come little Gunnar is with you? We've been looking all over for him."

"We were really surprised when we saw this little fellow at our door," said Mrs. Alexander with a smile, "He told us he wanted to see the bridge by our place."

Gunnar had stirred by this time. Rubbing his eyes he looked sleepily at Mama. "I just wanted to see the bridge by the river there," he said as he tumbled into Mama's arms. "It's such a funny bridge," he added, "It goes all up in the middle—just like that big camel in the book you were reading to me."

XIV

Mama had just brought the youngest baby, Margaret, home from the hospital. Einar was a very curious little boy and kept asking Mama, "Where did you get the baby Mama?"

"At the Winnipeg Hospital," Mama answered as she changed the baby's diaper.

"But how?", Einar would persist.

Mama was very busy and really didn't have time to answer his endless questions. "Besides," she thought, "How can I answer that question to a five year old?"

Instead of answering the question, Mama would hand Einar the big Eaton's catalogue, which she kept hidden.

"Be sure not to tear it," she reminded him. "If you do I can't let you look at it anymore."

Einar would sit for hours looking at the catalogue. There was so much to see there! Trains, toy-tractors, ships and books filled the pages. However, Einar's favourite page was the one which showed a little boy his age wearing a bright red suit. And what a beautiful suit it was—leggings, and a jacket trimmed with white fur around the hood. Einar never tired of looking at it.

As Einar sat and watched the little boy in the red suit pulling a toboggan, he said to Mama, "I like this one the best of all the things in the catalogue."

Mama enjoyed sewing, so one day as Einar sat looking and looking at the same catalogue page, she had an idea. About 10 days later Mama received an Eaton's parcel in the mail. There was a piece of red wool material, as well as some red lining material. It was just the color she hoped it would be. Taking out the pattern she had also ordered, Mama began cutting out the material. Einar was sleeping. Mama said to the other children, "Now children don't tell Einar I'm making this for him. That's to be our secret."

Mama cut out the leggings from the soft wool material and lined them with the red flannel viyella. The leggings had buttons on the side so they would fit snugly around the boots. The hooded jacket was also lined with red flannel viyella, and the hood banded with soft white fur.

One day Einar happened to come into the sewing room while Mama was sewing the red suit. "That's just like the red suit in the catalogue," he said, "Who's it for Mama?"

"Oh I'm sewing it for you cousin Wayne. His mother asked me to sew it for her."

"I sure wish I could have one like that," Einar said, as he went out again.

That Christmas Eve, when we had all gathered around the tree for our presents, Einar was handed a big box. There, wrapped in white tissue paper, was the little red suit. The soft white fur around the hooded jacket set off the beautiful red suit.

"For me...is it really for me?" Einar said as he pulled out the red suit. "It's just like the one I like best of all in the Eaton's catalogue."

XV

Fido, our dog, hovered around Beatrice as she played with her dolls. Her favourite doll was Betsy and Beatrice could sit for hours at a time, changing Betsy's outfits of coats, party dresses and sun-suits. Fido would sometimes tease her by tossing the doll clothes around.

"Stop it Fido," Beatrice would scold him. The dog would come running back and sit down on the steps beside her, nuzzling his nose against her legs.

Einar enjoyed taking Beatrice for a ride in his little red wagon. Fido would jump into the wagon too, beside Beatrice, who held tightly on to Betsy.

"Take us to Stratton's place today," Beatrice asked Einar one day.

"I can't," Einar said, "I musn't take you out of the yard."

"I want to see Rosie, please..."

"Okay, just this once," Einar said as he helped Beatrice into the wagon. Fido jumped in too.

That ride was a great adventure for Beatrice. When they reached the high, orange-colored house with the front porch all glassed in. Rosie Stratton stood there with a big doll in her arms.

"I just got it for my birthday," Rosie said happily.

Beatrice whispered to Rosie, "I have a nice dress for your doll. I'll give it to you next time."

"Bring it tomorrow Beatrice," called out Rosie, as Einar began to pull the wagon home again.

The next day Beatrice decided she would take a doll's dress to Rosie. She picked out a full-skirted pink net dress. Einar had gone to the store with Mama.

"I'll have to go alone," Beatrice thought to herself. She had never gone anywhere alone but she called Fido as she started off, carrying Betsy and the pink net dress. As she trudged across the field out to the road she felt tired. When she reached the bridge across the creek, she stood at the railing. She stopped to watch the water trickling over the rocks across the creek bed. Fido stopped too, gazing up at her. As she looked up she saw the high orange house.

"It's only a little farther," she thought, as she started off again. At last she reached the porch and began to knock. There was no answer. She knocked again. Still no answer and no one anywhere around.

Beatrice was getting very tired. She decided to open the porch door. Just inside the door she saw Rosie's new doll lying in a doll crib.

"I'm so sleepy," Beatrice thought, as she lay down by the doll crib, clutching Betsy to her. Fido sat on the porch steps barking and barking.

As Mama and Einar were walking home from downtown on the road in front of Stratton's house they heard the sound of barking.

"That's Fido barking," Einar said to Mama, "Come on Fido."

"What's Fido doing there?", Mama asked, as she kept on walking. Einar called again to Fido, but he just kept on barking and running up the porch steps.

Mama turned to look at Fido. "That's strange. Why doesn't he come?" Fido still kept barking.

Mama and Einar walked up to Fido. They saw the porch door was slightly ajar. All at once Mama noticed Beatrice sleeping beside the doll crib.

"How did Beatrice get here?", Mama asked Einar, "She's never gone anywhere by herself."

Einar blushed, but didn't say anything.

"She's never been here before has she Einar?" Mama asked.

"Well...I..I brought her here yesterday. I remember now she said something to Rosie about a dress or something."

Mama was finally able to wake Beatrice up., and they walked home. Clutching Betsy tightly as she walked the last stretch home, Beatrice decided she would wait until she got a little bigger, before she went off on an adventure by herself again.



Beatrice, Einar and Margaret on the day the girls were confirmed.

XVI

There were a number of chokecherry trees in the bush close to our house. Every year we would eat as much as we could, until our throats and tongues felt too dry to eat anymore. Mama would make sealers and sealers of jams and preserves. One year however, the chokecherry trees still seemed loaded, even after Mama had put down many quarts of preserves. Somehow, it seemed a shame not to use the chokecherries.

"Well," Mama thought, "Maybe I should make some wine from all these chokecherries." She had never made wine before so she got a recipe from a neighbour.

We helped Mama clean and crush the berries, then put them in a large crockery container, and added sugar. Mama set the crock behind the furnace, which was a good spot for the fermentation process. Every time we went downstairs the sweet and sour smell of the fermenting wine hit us.

At last the wine was ready to be strained and put in sealers. Margaret and Beatrice were toddlers then, so Mama asked us to keep them out of the way. Finally Mama had 15 quart sealers of wine sealed and in place, on a cupboard shelf downstairs. The small amount left over in the crock was put in a sealer and left on a lower shelf.

A few days later Beatrice and Margaret were playing downstairs for some time.

Beatrice played with her doll Betsy, while Margaret went exploring behind the furnace.

"This is a good place," Margaret though to herself, "That's a funny smell." She began to look around the shelves. "Mmm.." She wondered what Mama had in those nice bright sealers. She would have to find out.

Mama had visitors that afternoon. As she prepared coffee for them she set out two glasses of milk for the little girls.

"Come on, Margaret and Beatrice. It's milk and cookie time."

Beatrice came running to the kitchen at once.

"Isn't Margaret with you?", Mama asked.

"No, she's downstairs," answered Beatrice.

"She must have fallen asleep," Mama thought. "She'll be cold sleeping down there."

As Mama walked downstairs she thought she heard the sound of someone singing. She looked around but couldn't see anything at first. Then she saw Margaret come tottering towards her, a bluish red ring around her mouth. Margaret looked very odd., as she seemed to be so unsteady on her feet. She kept singing over and over, "Mary had a little lamb....Mary had a little lamb..."

"She looks very strange," Mama thought, "Whatever has she been doing?"

Mama looked around to see what could have made Margaret's mouth such a reddish color. Then she noticed the empty sealer on the floor, A small trickle of wine was spreading around the rim of the lid.



Bjorn and Lara Sigvaldason's home. [1938]

"Oh, good heavens child," cried Mama, as she picked up the sealer, then looked back at Margaret. "What on earth....did you really drink what was in there?"

Margaret pointed to the shelves where the preserves were kept. "I found it there...see there." She was suddenly beginning to feel very sleepy. She lay down with her hand folded against her head. Mama picked her up and carried her upstairs to bed.

Fortunately for Mama, her visitors were a couple who were understanding and not inclined to gossip about a four year old child having gone into Mama's supply of wine.

A few days after this incident the wine sealers suddenly disappeared from the preserve shelves in our basement. That was Mama's first and only venture into the art of winemaking.

Not all our trips to the creamery with a cream can turned out to be disastrous as the one mentioned earlier. In fact, we often hoped we would be the ones lucky enough to take the cream can to the creamery, because our friend Larus Bjornson, worked there. He often gave us ice cream which was made at the creamery. Then ice cream was the most wonderful treat to us. Too, we all enjoyed Larus Bjornson's happy and friendly manner, whenever we saw him.

CHAPTER XI A RIVER, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.

"What a strange assortment of neighbours we must seem," Mama said one day as she looked out from her sunny south windows at the neighbouring places.

Papa had been walking back and forth, twirling his hair as he so often did when deep in thought. He stopped pacing and joined Mama at the window.

"I think we've been pretty lucky with our neighbours," he answered with a smile, "Just as long as they can stand all of our 16 children."

Papa looked east at Stony Anderson's narrow strip of land, and beyond that to Lifman's large white house on the corner property, and to the west of our house to the huge sprawling complex of the St. Bendeict's Catholic Convent. To the north lay the Icelandic River, ambling along on its way to the open waters of Lake Winnipeg.

I. THE RIVER

That winding river became an important part of our lives, as our two-storey house was built along its wide sloping banks. Here stately maple trees at the top of the bank spread out their leafy foliage, while the overhanging willows dipped down to the water's edge in spring.

Most of the time the river was a narrow stream, meandering slowly on its way to the mouth of the river, where it emptied into the cavernous waters of Lake Winnipeg. In the spring however, as the river swelled to the top of the riverbank, the river would burst alive with children playing on makeshift rafts, and men rowing their little boats back and forth to lift fish-nets and muskrat traps.

In the summer we swam there and skimmed down the river on rafts. In the winter we joyfully slid down its sloping banks on our toboggans and skated on the river before the first snowfall covered the clear ice. But the best time of all was in the early spring when the warm sun began to melt the ice in the shallower water along the edge of the riverbank, and gradually softened it. That was the time to play that wonderful game of "rubber ice". About ten of us would form a circle and jump up and down.

"Jump faster," Bjossi called out.



The Icelandic River in spring - Johannesson home across the river.

"And all at the same time," Ingvar shouted with a grin as he jumped higher and higher.

Suddenly the ice would begin to tremble.

"Now," we all shouted together.

The ice slithered and sagged, then gave way and we all slowly went down into the water, up to our knee-boots.

One particular Saturday afternoon in April we were playing along the riverbank.

"Come on," called Laura. "Let's have a game of rubber ice."

We hurried to the edge of the river and tested it.

"It's perfect for rubber ice," said Gudrun as she hopped up and down to test it.

We quickly formed the circle, with 9 of us there, and began to jump up and down.

"Faster, faster," we all shouted, as we began to feel the ice beneath us tremble.

Suddenly a big crack rumbled out and unexpectedly, before we knew what had happened, we all fell in, over our knee rubber boots, and up to the waist of the smaller ones who stood there drenched and shivering.

"Come on, let's try another one," shouted Bjossi, "We're all wet anyway."

Just then we heard Mama calling us, "Children, come in at once." Her voice quivered as she called out again, "Come in, do you hear! I have enough washing to do without having any more wet things to wash. If you don't come, you'll get a spanking."

By the tone of Mama's voice we knew she meant it, so that was the end of the "rubber-ice" for that day!

"That river isn't very big, but it can be very dangerous," Papa said to us more than once. But we forgot all about that as we played in the summertime around the old bridge posts along the river. The bridge had not been used for years, except as a footbridge. The tall

pilings in the river, which looked liked sentinels on guard duty, fascinated us, although the slimy green mould around the water's edge of the poles sometimes repelled us. Here we played the game of "hide and seek" around the poles. One day as Olof hid behind one of the poles, she slid into the water. Fortunately some of us were close by and pulled her out. After that we were strictly forbidden to play around the poles again.

A few years later Beatrice was crossing the same footbridge alone, across the river, to visit Gudrun Jacobson. As she hurried across the narrow bridge she slipped and fell into the river. She clung desperately to the railing posts and was finally able to drag herself up on the bridge again, wet and with her hands and feet scratched and bleeding from the fall. She rushed back home and for a long time after that didn't dare to go near that footbridge.

In the winter months Papa and Gudni chopped round holes in the ice, for the cattle to get drinking water from. These ice-holes proved to be very dangerous.

One February afternoon Thordis, Laufey Lifman, Kristbjorg Anderson from next door, and I were building an igloo from blocks of snow, very close to where an ice-hole was located. All at once Thordis slipped and fell into the ice-hole. She became so shocked by the impact of the cold water that she couldn't get her voice to scream for help. Kristbjorg, Laufey, and I were busy with the igloo, totally unaware that Thordis wasn't around, indeed at that moment she was desperately hanging on the the edge of the ice-hole. Somehow, through some inner strength, Thordis was able to drag herself out of the ice-hole, and as she came up the water was already beginning to freeze on her clothes. She was finally able to scream out, "Help! help! I'm freezing." We were terrified when we saw Thordis standing there, shivering and shaking. We rushed home with her and Mama took off her frozen clothes and bundled her up in warm blankets. Needless to say, our igloo was never completed as we never wanted to play near that ice-hole again.

Another near accident with the ice-hole did occur once again, when Einar slipped into one, but fortunately that time Gudni noticed at once that Einar fell in and he pulled him out in time.

The following winter Papa and Gudni made troughs and pumped water into these for the cattle to drink from so the danger of the ice-holes became a thing of the past.

When the river froze over in winter we would cut across the river to go downtown and to school. This was a much shorter walk during the cold winter days, as we always went home for lunch. One particular blustery day stands out as a very special day. All that morning while we were in school the wind had howled and whined around the corners of the school building.

We snuggled deeper into our coats as we walked home for dinner and thought of the delicious pork and beans which would be waiting for us at home. This was Tuesday and Mama always cooked pork and beans on that day, in a huge baking pan, with large pork slices

sizzling over the sweetened beans and the golden brown sauce.

As we came down the riverbank we noticed that the strong wind had driven off the ice, which by now was absolutely clear. We had never before seen clear ice like that in the middle of winter. Suddenly, as we came to the bend in the river, Laura shouted, "Look, what's that?"

"What's what Laura?" asked Valdine, who was at the end of the row along the path.

"Why, it looks like sails or something."

We all looked up and saw something that looked like sails come skimming along the river.

"It looks like sails, but it can't be," said little Olof as she stood still.

We had seen pictures of Hans Brinker skating along the clear canals in Holland, and also pictures of winter sailboats on the canals there. But this was Manitoba—it just couldn't be a sail boat!

"Who has a winter sailboat?", Jonas asked.

"Nobody that we know," answered Laura, "I've never seen one like this."

As the sailboat drew nearer we saw a hand waving to us.

"What the—who can that be?," we all wondered in amazement.

The sailboat drew closer. All at once a head appeared, red locks pushing forward out of the blue toque, and a happy grin splitting the face of the young man at the helm.

"Ingvar! It's Ingvar!"

Ingvar, laughing out loud, shouted, "Boy, this is fun."

"Come on stop, please stop," we all shouted at him.

Ingvar braced his foot out to stop the sailboat. He had the old stoneboat which Papa and the boys used in the winter for light hauling. That morning when he saw the ice clearing and the wind blowing, he had this great idea.. he told us. He had found some canvas and had rigged up the sails on the stoneboat. "And that's how I made this sailboat."

"Take us for a ride," we all shouted as we crowded around him. Ingvar, happy and grinning, took us all, in turn, for a wonderful ride on that winter sailboat. As we skimmed along the river on that cold and blustery January day, we felt free and flighty as the wind which blew us along.

II ST. BENEDICT'S CONVENT

"The nuns at the Catholic Convent always keep their grounds so nice," Mama would say as she looked at our yard which looked quite straggly in comparison. She always admired the the beautiful grounds of the St. Benedict's Convent. Long rows of spruce trees, planted in double rows along the roadway in front, set off the huge and sprawling Convent Home, in which 90 nuns and 70 orphan children lived. In addition to the large Home, there was the Priest's residence, nestled amongst a shady spruce bluff, as well as a Church, many farm buildings and a large play-ground.

How we wished we could run over there and play in the Merry-Go-Round House, where there were little benches along the sides to sit in as the Merry-Go-Round twirled and twirled. We looked

wistfully over there, hoping to go on that wonderful ride, but if we came too close, the children would call out, "You're Protestant! You'll go to Hell!" We heard this so often that we almost began to believe that we were indeed condemned to go to hell. One night after dark, some of us crept over the high fence around the playground and had a quick twirl in the Merry-Go-Round, but we were too frightened at the thought of being caught to really enjoy that ride.

At one time or another most of us attended school classes at the Convent, especially during the cold winter months when Mama and Papa thought it was too cold for the smaller ones to walk the mile and half to the Ardal School. Sister Superior would meet us at the front door if we had to go on special errands for Papa. The nuns had great respect for Papa, and often sought his advice on farm matters as he always kept up with the latest information on farm procedures. We thought of the nuns as special friends and once in a while they would invite us over to an "apple-bobbing" contest on Hallowe'en. When Margaret and Beatrice attended school there they were invited over for special evenings around Christmans, always bringing home little gifts that the nuns gave them on those occasions.

On hot summer evenings some of the nuns would sit on the long veranda, which was built across the front 2nd floor of the Convent Home. We often wondered what they thought when they saw our older sisters go out on dates with their beaus.

"I wonder if they wouldn't like to be going out."

"I wonder if they aren't lonesome."

We would ask each other these questions, in vain. Every time we saw the nuns they looked happy and serene, as if they had found their own secret joy.

Sometimes we would hear them laughing and shouting as they played Dodge Ball, their black skirts flying around their knees, their white coifs askew, while a look of complete abandonment seemed suddenly to have replaced their usual decorum. Somehow the sight of them laughing and shouting with joy over the game, always made us feel happy and lighthearted too.

One young nun, Sister Celia, was a piano teacher who had several pupils from the town of Arborg. She had been very much in love with a young man, Michael by name, before she took the vows of the Convent. As she taught, as she prayed and sang in the chapel with the other nuns, she could not forget the joy she had known in loving Michael. Finally she began to send letters to and receive letters from him, through one of her piano pupils. The nuns were completely unaware of this development.

One night, after lights were out, Sister Celia ran away from the Convent. Such a thing had never been heard of ever happening before at the St. Benedict's Convent at Arborg!

"She will be excommunicated from the Church," we heard Rosa say to Mama, as we all secretly wondered just what "excommunicated" meant, but we didn't dare to ask, as we would then be sent out of the room.



St. Benedict Convent nuns and class, with religious statue in front of Chapel door.

"To think of that poor Sister Celia going off by herself at night," Mama said as she shook her head at the thought of the nun travelling alone at night.

"Oh, but her young man had it all planned," said Rosa, "They say he had been planning this for a long time."

"She will be forever banned from her Church," Mama said with a deep sigh. "And I am very much afraid that things will not go well with her."

As we stood there listening, we all secretly hoped she would live happily ever after with her true love, because she would be forever banned from her Church, and according to Mama and Rosa, this seemed to be a very terrible thing indeed.

The day that the nuns at the Convent came out to the voting polls for the first time ever, was a day to remember. Papa loved politics. Every time we saw him walking back and forth, twirling his hair, we knew politics was on his mind. He always seemed to get involved in politics, because any politician in the area who was running for office, would seek Papa's support. He was a fluent speaker and very well-versed in current events, so any candidate who had his backing knew he had a firm and staunch ally.

Papa had been Justice of the Peace in our district for a number of years. Our house was constantly filled with people who had problems with neighbours; people who were seeking help in some way or another through the office of the Justice of the Peace; people who were seeking advice or having letters written up. Finally, after much urging from Mama, Papa gave up that office, but he could not forget politics, so he ran in the next Municipal Election for the office of Reeve.

One of the highlights of that election year was that all the nuns at the Convent went out to cast their votes for Papa as the next Reeve of the Municipality of Bifrost. There was overwhelming surprise and disbelief when the nuns came to the polls to vote. That day they came, 5 at a time in their one car, until all 90 nuns had voted. Papa got in as the next Reeve, and there were many joking remarks made about how the nuns at the Convent had saved the day for Papa.

We found out, years later, that the nuns too, had often been very curious about our family, whenever the looked *towards our Home*.

"I wonder what it's like in their home?", they would ask one another.

"How nice it would be to go into their home and see all those children."

The nun who confided this to one of my sisters embraced her when she saw her as she said they had been very fond of all of us. This particular nun had taught some of us. She also mentioned the admiration all the nuns had for Papa and Mama for having their children so well-behaved.

The nuns at the St. Benedict's Convent were indeed dear to all of us. We still remember how we looked over there many a time, especially during a special religious ceremony every spring, when they set up a beautiful altar outside their chapel. We could see the tall candlesticks on the altar. Although we didn't know the exact meaning of this ceremony we looked forward to seeing it every year.

III STONY'S VISITORS

How we loved to creep down the stairs at night, as far as the bend in the stairwell! There we tried to sit as quietly as possible while we listened to Papa and Mama talk "grownup-talk," which we weren't supposed to listen to. But the most fun of all was when Stony Anderson, who by now lived alone next door, came to visit, as he did almost every night. This small, stooped, elderly man always carried a lantern in his hand to chase away the evil night spirits.

Stony enjoyed hearing the latest world news from Papa who read a lot; then he would sit and chat with Mama over a cup of coffee. At the sound of music from the old gramophone or radio, his thin face would light up with joy.

"When I was a young man," he told Papa and Mama one day, "I could play the accordion and dance at the same time."

Stony had been born in Iceland and knew many stories about the terrible trolls who dwelt in the mountains there.

"The trolls," he would say, "hid behind rocks and boulders and attacked people as they travelled the lonely mountain roads at night."

We were terrified, yet fascinated by these stories, and huddled together in the stairwell, as shivers would shake us at the thought of a troll chasing us. We were especially afraid after hearing the stories about the troll women of Iceland, called "skessas" and "grylas" who were very wicked indeed.

"One terrible gryla always listened for the howls of naughty children, then came quickly with a sack on her back," Stony began, then stopped as he rubbed his eyes. We held our breath to see what came next, as Stony continued, "In this sack the gryla put the naughty children and she had a great feast when she returned to her home in the mountains."

After hearing this particular story, we had a hard time falling asleep at all.

One particular night in the late fall we were sent up to bed earlier than usual, because the night before had been Hallowe'en and we had been out getting apples from our neighbours. From the windows in the east room upstairs, Gudni, Bjossi and Ingvar saw Stony come up the path to our house, carrying his lantern in his hand. As the boys crept noiselessly down the stairwell, we followed behind.

"Come in Stony," called Mama, as she heard his knock on the door.

"How was your day Stony?", asked Papa, "Were you able to finish piling your wood up?"

"Everything went wrong today," answered Stony gloomily, as he turned down the wick of his lantern till the light was out, then set the lantern down.

"I believe the trolls must have been around last night. When I got up this morning, the first thing I noticed was that my outhouse had been upset. It must have been the night trolls—who else could it have been?"

"Oh Stony" said Mama laughingly, as she set down a cup of coffee for him at the table. "This isn't Iceland—there are no trolls here. Some of the boys must have upset your outhouse. They seem to get enjoyment out of that on Hallowe'en, although why it's so, I'm sure I don't understand."

"It seems a very foolish thing to do," added Papa, "but I saw last year where some boys in town moved Dr. Bjornson's outhouse and set it up in front of his drugstore."

"Well," answered Stony, as he sipped the steaming hot coffee, "If I find out who threw over my outhouse I will really take the switch to them."

As we were listening to these words by Stony, Ingvar pinched Bjossi and whispered, "I hope he doesn't find out that we were the ones who upset his outhouse."

"Quiet, you two," hissed Gudni, "It not only Stony we don't want to find out. It's Papa. If he found out what we did, we'll really get a good licking."

"Have you any idea Stony, as to what boys would do a crazy thing like upsetting your outhouse?", asked Papa as he walked back and forth, slowly twirling his hair.

"I think it must have been some of those boys who hang around the pool-hall and have nothing better to do," answered Stony, "I'm sure it hasn't been any of the neighbour children," and slowly and carefully as he said this, Stony wiped his nose with the back of his hand.

"I'll call the boys if they're not asleep already," Papa said, then added, "Perhaps they can tell us whether any of the gang from downtown was around this area last night." He turned and walked toward the stairs.

As the boys heard Papa talking, they turned quickly to run upstairs, Ingvar grinning mischievously. Suddenly Papa stopped.. As he looked up the stairs he saw us all flying up as fast as we could go.

"Just a minute there," said Papa, "I just thought of something."

A strange suspicion began forming in his mind;

"Gudni, Bjossi and Ingvar....come down at once."

Now all at once Papa remembered seeing the boys come in past their usual bedtime last night.

"So you were the ones who upset Stony's outhouse last night," Papa said angrily, as he herded the boys, with us following, to stand before Stony.

"What do you boys have to say for yourselves?", Papa asked now.

"Gee Papa, we thought we'd just like to have a little fun on Hallowe'en. Everbody tips over outhouses then," said Gudni, as he sheepishly looked at Stony, who had a strange twinkle in his deep-set blue eyes.

"Honest Papa, all the kids do that on Hallowe'en." Bjossi added hopefully, as he looked up at Papa.

"That's enough of that now boys, no more excuses. Tomorrow, first thing in the morning after you have had breakfast, I want you boys to go over to Stony's place and put his outhouse back exactly where it was before you tipped it over last night," said Papa, as he quickly shooed us all up the stairs again.

When the boys turned back to look at Stony, he slowly winked at them. They hadn't fooled him one bit!

"Stony's pretty darn smart," laughed Gudni, as he added, "Why, he even managed to fool Papa into thinking and figuring out who really did tip his outhouse...not the old night trolls but us."

As Stony got older, he began to have trouble with his eyes. One elderly woman in town advised him to go on a vegetarian diet. "That is a sure cure for eye trouble," she told Stony.

He had never really believed in Doctors, so Stony followed her advice. However, Mama noticed that Stony was getting thinner and thinner. His nightly visits became fewer. Finally Mama brought him to our home and called Dr. Bjornson, who advised him to go to a hospital at once. Mama and Mrs. Lifman took Stony to the General Hospital in Winnipeg.

Stony had been a non-believer, but the day Mama left him at the Hospital, he turned to her and said, "I am sure that God will bless you for always having been a good and true friend to me."

Stony died a few days later.

One November morning, about a year or more after Stony died, a very strange thing happened.

Papa, who was Reeve of the Bifrost Municipality at that time, was getting ready to go to a Convention in Winnipeg, with Snaebjorn



Railway Avenue in Arborg, 1912, on a typical business day. Teams of oxen await their owners as they shop and conduct business.

Johnson. He and Mama were just finishing breakfast when they heard a knock.

"That must be Snaebjorn," Mama said as she went to the door.

"Good morning Lara and Bjorn," Snaebjorn said as he came in and shook their hands, then added, "You must have had an early visitor this morning."

"No one was here this morning," Papa answered as he shrugged into his overcoat.

"What made you think someone was here?" asked Mama.

"Why" answered Snaebjorn, as he scratched his head in surprise, "I was sure I saw a man walk around the corner of your house as I drove up. The car lights shone on him."

"I just can't imagine who that could have been this early," Mama answered, looking very puzzled.

"What did he look like?", she added.

"I saw him only for a moment as the car lights flashed on the corner of your house," Snaebjorn said, then added firmly, "He was a small elderly looking man, and quite stooped."

"Stooped and small, did you say?" Mama asked as she sat thinking.

"That's very strange—Stony was stooped and small—but dear what am I saying?...he's been gone for over a year now."

After Papa and Snaebjorn left, Mama thought about this strange happening all morning.

"A small stooped man....."

"Walking around the corner of your house....."

Mama couldn't forget those words. Somehow they described Stony.. how he looked and how he used to come around the corner of the house, when visiting.

After that Mama partly believed that Stony, who during his life had believed so strongly in spirits and huldu folk, had indeed come that November morning. She was never frightened at the thought however, and she spoke of him thereafter as "the friendly ghost."

"After all," she told us later, "Stony was always a dear old friend, and he would never have anything but the kindest wishes for us."

IV. THE LIFMAN'S

Bjossi and Ingvar considered Bibsa Lifman one of the boys, and that was the greatest compliment any girl could get, when we were growing up. She was more daring than any of us; she could run so much faster; and she could jump even higher than Ingvar, whenever we played the game of "rubber ice." We teased Bjossi and Ingvar on her. They would blush and protest furiously, but we knew that they both thought she was the greatest girl anywhere around!

The large white house that the Lifman family lived in, faced on to the river too, and looked very imposing with its many dormer windows on the 2nd floor. We loved going there for the cookie jar was always filled with delicious cookies. There were many shady trees and secret hiding places in the bush close by, to play in. Best of all, the Lifman's had 5 girls und 1 boy to play with. Bergthora, Bibsa, Laufey, Stefania, and Solla seemed like twin sister to the middle group of girls in our family. Little Baldur, whom Gudni fondly nicknamed "Shorty Mason" was a great favourite. He would follow the older boys around as they harnessed the horses, and then put up the hay; he would laugh as the younger boys tussled in wrestling matches; and he would climb up on gentle May's back for a horse-back ride, while Bjossi watched that he didn't fall.

Mama always enjoyed Mrs. Lifman's visits for they wsre both interested in gardening and sewing, though Mama had little tims for these things, what with looking after a big family.

On April 1st, when Gunnar was born, Mrs. Lifman phoned Papa.

"Please let the little girls come and stay with us while Lara is in bed."

"That will be too many for you," answered Papa, "but I thank you very much for your kind offer."

"It's no trouble at all," answered Mrs. Lifman, then added firmly, "Just send them right over."

When Papa told us 5 middle girls this news we were very excited. Just think...we would be there for 10 whole days! We would have Mrs. Lifman's delicious brown bread for 10 days. We would be able to play with the girls there for 10 days. Suddenly the Lifman family swelled to 11 children. It was auch a great adventure to stay there that the time went by much too fast!

During the summer we often played baseball together in the large field close to Lifeman's house. Bjossi and Bergthora were the oldest



This Icelandic choir of over 50 children and young people was conducted by Mr. Brynjolfur Thorlakson and sang at the 50th Anniversary Day of New Iceland, held at Gimli, on August 22, 1925.

Back Row left to right: Kris Gudmundson, Bjarnason, Marino Eliasson, Herman Fjelsted, Gissur Eliasson, Peter, Brandur Finnson, Maurice Olafson, Kristjon Finnson, Thor Fjelsted, Asgeir Fjelsted, Carl Sigurdson.

Fourth row left to right: Lauga Brandson, Anna Sigvaldason, Inga Sigvaldason, Oddny Sigurdson, Svava Oddson, Olga Benson, Lina Howardson, Stefania Bjarnason, Margaret Wilson, Ragna Johannesson, Finna Kristjanson.

Third row left to right: Inga Benjaminson, Kirk Bjarnason, Fanny Holm, Birna Peterson, Loa Halldorson, Laura Sigvaldason, Sigrun Johnson, Berghthora Lifman, Fanny Magnusson, Maria Bjarnason, Sigga Finnson.

Second row left to right: unknown, Gudrun Gudmundson, Laura Eliasson, Asta Einarson, Laufey Lifman, Mrs. Lifman, Laufey Benson, Sylvia Bjarnason, Valdine Ingaldson, Hugrun Jonasson, Margaret Sigurdson, Snjolaug Sigurdson, Brynjolfur Thorlakson.

First row left to right: Bibsa Lifman, Pauline Solvason, Gudrun Sigvaldason, Kristin Halldorson, Lauga Einarson, Florence Jonasson, Anderson, Violet Myrdal, Tatla Sigurdson, Thora Peterson, Florete Peterson, Kristbjorg

ones playing, so they were Captains and chose sides.

"I choose Ingvar," Bergthora said as she had 1st choice, and the sides would be picked, the smaller children being the last ones chosen.

One day it was the 9th inning of play and the score was 6 to 6. Bjossi was on third base, 2 down, and little Thor Anderson batted out to centre field. The ball was quickly thrown from centre field to home base catcher Ingvar, as Bjossi ran and slid to home base.

"You're out," shouted both Bergthora and Ingvar.

"He's safe," called out Bjossi's team.

"No, he's out," said Bergthora, "The game is over...we're tied."

"He's safe...he's safe," the other side called.

"We won...I was safe," added Bjossi proudly.

"It's a tie," shouted Bergthora and Ingvar.

Just then Mrs. Lifman came quietly out to where we were now shouting angrily back and forth.

"Children, I have something wonderful to show you." and she motioned for us to come and look.

We were all very curious and forgot about the game. We followed her to the large tree in the back yard.

"See the little robins that arrived in the nest this morning. Just to celebrate their arrival we'll all have some cookies."

While we took turns holding the baby robins Mrs. Lifman brought out a big platter of cookies.

"Oh boy, ginger snaps."

"They're my favourite." Bjossi and Bergthora said at the same time and suddenly began to laugh over that.

We all reached out for the cookies and gobbled them up until they were fast disappearing from the large platter. Mrs. Lifman smiled, as she said with a twinkle in her eyes, 'Cookies certainly can do wonders sometimes.'

V. ROSA

Rosa sometimes looked a bit stern, with her dark thick hair done up in a tight roll around her head, but then, as her brown eyes sparkled with mischief, her face would break out in a wide grin.

"Come in...come in my little ones," she would say, as we stood at her door. While she motioned us in, she would rummage in the vast pockets of her long black skirt and bring out licorice candies. "I'm sure you'll like these."

Rosa's "house on the corner", as we called it, was one of our favourite places to visit; It was such a great adventure to go there and see her and Veiga, her daughter, and the many cats and dogs which they both loved and pampered. These scrubby little waifs, often intentionally left abandoned close to her home, became a part of the family at Rosa's.

"Come on little Kesa," Rosa would call as she gently lifted a cold and shivering kitten and cuddled it to her. "Come on home with me." In her little house three or four cats purred under the warm wood stove.



Rosa playfully teasing her pet dogs.

Saucers of milk were scattered here and there accound the small room which served as kitchen and living room. In the bedroom beyond some of the cats would snuggle under the bed or of top to the quilt, nestling contentedly in its voluminous folds.

Rosa loved coffee and her coffee-pot was always there on the stove, ready for the next visitors who came through the door. She read coffee cups so all the young girls went there to see what the future held for them.

"You will meet a youn man very soon." she told Anna one day as she and Inga were visiting Veiga.

"And you're going to marry him," she added, as Anna, Inga and Veiga giggled.

"Inga, I see that you are going on a train soon, and there's a new dress or something here."

Sure enough, a few days later. Anna met Kris, a young man from Riverton, whom she secretly hoped would ask her to marry him, and Inga went on a train trip to Winnipeg, where she bought a dress. After that both Inga and Anna were convinced that Rosa was really good at reading coffee cups.

Sometimes, after a hot summer's day, Rosa built a campfire outside. As their many friends dropped over in the evening for a cup of coffee around the campfire, Rosa would be busy reading cups. Sitting tall in her chair, while the campfire cast a gentle glow around her, she looked like a stately Romany Queen, holding court with her subjects.

Rosa had something else which we all enjoyed and which she shared with our big family. That was the "wonderful Chicago Herald" paper, as we called it, which she got once a week.

Every Saturday we would watch for Rosa, because that was the day

she brought the paper over. As soon as we saw her tall slim figure coming down the road from the corner, we rushed out to meet her. The first one to get there would be the lucky one to read the comic strips first.

"The Katzenjammer Kids....that's the comic we want," Bjossi and Ingvar shouted as they ran to meet Rosa.

"I wonder what tricks they're trying this time."

Those two lovable and naughty little Katzenjammer twins always delighted us, for they had a way of hoodwinking their Papa and somehow or other, always getting away with it. They were our heroes for we never got away with anything naughty the way they did!

"I like "Tillie The Toiler", Gudrun said, as she looked quickly for that comic strip about a glamorous young secretary who had so many beaus chasing after her that she was in a continual flutter. How Gudrun longed to look like her, in those skin tight skirts, but she knew Mama would never allow her to wear skirts like that.

We often wondered if "Little Orphan Annie" would ever grow up, Gudni told us she hadn't grown anything since he was reading about her, ten years ago! We were also puzzled as to why she was known as "Little Orphan Annie", when her Daddy Warbucks was supposed to be one of the richest men in the world.

"You should see."Maggie and Jiggs"today,"Rosa said with a ringing laugh as she handed the comic strip "Maggie and Jiggs" to Mama, one day as she was over at our place.

"Maggie has a big society party all planned", Rosa continued as she pointed to the paper in Mama's hand, "And just when all her rich friends are there, in comes Jiggs, with his low-brow friends from the corner Bar."

Mama and Rosa both laughed as they thought of Jiggs, who loved beer and corned beef and cabbage, and Maggie, his wife, who was always trying to be the Society Lady.

"Will you read our coffee cups today Rosa?", Laura asked that day, as she set out cups for Mama, Rosa, Anna, Veiga, Gudrun and herself.

As Mama and Rosa slowly sipped the scalding coffee, which was made with a coffee-bag, because it gave the coffee an extra rich, strong flavour, Gudrun and Laura quickly turned their coffee cups over to dry.

"Were you at the dance last Friday night?", Rosa asked Gudrun and Laura. "I hear there was quite a commotion there."

"No," Laura answered, adding quickly, "but what happened?"

"Well, you know how the couples want to go behind the stage to neck?" Rosa began, but Mama interrupted.

"Behind the stage?..how come they allow that?"

"Oh, Anna knows.....". Veiga began to talk when all at once she felt someone kicking her legs under the table, while opposite her Anna was blushing furiously and waving at her to stop.

"Well," answered Rosa, "I heard that at the last dance there were as many couples necking behind the stage, as were dancing on the floor!"

"Good heavens," said Mama, shaking her head in disbelief.



All dressed up for a Hallowe'en Dance.
left to right: Veiga Johnson, Sigrun Brandson, Anna Sigvaldason.

"But they're going to put a stop to it," added Rosa, "I hear that the Hall Committee is planning to board off the back stage."

"My cup is dry now Rosa," Laura said as she handed her coffee cup. "Well," Rosa said, as she studied Laura's cup very carefully, "I think you're going to go to a dance very soon."

"I don't think I'll let you younger girls go for a while", Mama said, as she refilled Rosa's cup., "if that's what's going on at the dances."

"And you're going to get a parcel in the mail Laura," Rosa continued.

"Oh, that will be the free lipstick samples I ordered from the Cosmetic Company," Laura answered happily.

"What's in my cup?," Gudrun asked.

"Oh, you have a new beau, I see it in your cup."

Gudrun blushed and quickly picked up her cup, as she noticed Mama looking at her questioningly.

"You're too young to have a beau," Mama said to Gudrun.

"I'm 17 Mama," answered Gudrun, "I hear Joyce is getting married, and she's younger than I am."

Rosa and Mama looked at one another in a very funny way, then Rosa said, without thinking,

"But that will be a shotgun wedding."

"What's a shotgun wedding?," Laura asked, as she turned to Mama and Rosa.

"That's not for your ears, girls," Mama said. She quickly sent the four girls outside, out of earshot.

"What's a shotgun wedding anyway?" Laura asked again, once they were outside. "There's something funny about it, because Mama acted so strange when Rosa mentioned that."

"Come here," whispered Veiga and Anna, "It's when.....it's when....Oh heck....how do you say it?"

Anna and Veiga stood giggling, then Veiga said, "You tell her Anna."

Anna gulped once or twice, then blurted out very fast, "It's when a girl is going to have a baby. If the guy won't marry her, her father will take out his shotgun....there. I've told you and that's what it's all about."

Chapter XII

SMALL TOWN RIOT.

On November 29, 1932, the peace and tranquility of the small Interlake town of Arborg, Manitoba, was shattered by a riot. Bjorn I. Sigvaldason, Reeve of the Municipality of Bifrost, was caught up in the middle of the conflict over the sale of land for tax arrears.

On that day a group of 300 men and women, aroused by agitators from within as well as from without the municipality, ruthlessly took the law into their own hands. Violence erupted when the hostile crowd stormed the Bifrost office at Arborg, attacked the reeve and forced him to resign. In the disturbance, municipal records were scattered about, windows broken, and office machines trampled on.

The most accessible land in Bifrost Municipality had been taken up by early settlers in the 1890's and early years of 1900. The farmers who came later had to homestead in bush-covered and rocky areas in the north-western section where stones and boulders presented a great problem after the land was cleared. Other areas were floating bogs, with low spots which needed to be drained before any crops could be raised.

Siggi Sigvaldason, who has served on the Bifrost Municipal Council for 27 years, has said of this area: "In the beginning, Bifrost Municipality was almost one third a floating bog. There were many places where a man could not walk across."

Most of the settlers worked very hard at clearing the bush land, removing stones once the bush was cleared, draining low spots, building homes and outbuildings. By sheer determination and grit they were gradually able to work the land into shape for grain crops and pasture.

When prices fell in the 1930s farm produce became practically worthless. It was increasingly hard for some of the farmers to pay their taxes, which were anywhere from \$35 to \$75 yearly for a 160 acre farm. After a certain period, if taxes were not paid, the land was sold for the amount owing to the Bifrost Municipality.



The station platform looks deserted here, but usually was crowded when the train arrived.

In order to help the farmers with their tax problems, the Manitoba Legislature passed a Tax Consolidation Law in 1932. This law gave tax-payers a six-year term on arrears. It allowed farmers to get by with paying only the current taxes. The Bifrost Municipality had adopted this consolidation law which meant tax-payers in Bifrost could get out of the tax sale by paying their current taxes only, and having tax penalties cancelled. Some farmers took advantage of this bylaw.

On November 29, 1932, a tax sale was to be held at the Bifrost Municipal Office at Arborg. Properties listed for tax arrears totalled 150, including town lots and farm properties. Private owners and individuals had first chance on buying the properties. If they were not sold, the Bifrost Municipality could take them over and assign tax certificates to whoever was willing to pay the face-value price.

Reeve Sigvaldason was to conduct the tax sale with Secretary M.M. Jonasson. Also at the council chambers were Councillor Rudko, Corporals Burke and Goldie, and Constable Albeck.

A number of the settlers did not fully understand the meaning of these laws. A great many felt they would be evicted from their land, with no other choice available to them. Furthermore, among them and outside the municipality were agitators who were looking for an opportune moment to stir up the farmers into protest marches, as well as demanding the cancellation of the November 29 tax sale.

Siggi Sigvaldason writes further; "The disturbance we had in Arborg was caused mainly by agitators coming in or being sent out to stir up people who had no time to study things in a rational way. Their (settler's) time had been totally taken up in improving their homesteads, fixing houses, making gardens, clearing land for grain, and even going out to fix some bog-hole so they could get out."

Prior to November 29, 1932, these agitators organized a protest march to Winnipeg, to meet with Premier John Bracken. After listening to their demands for the cancellation of the tax sale at Arborg, the Premier told them he could not promise anything not approved by Bifrost Municipal council. However, the Premier was also fully aware that the municipal council had no authority to pass by motion or to approve any such request.

The protest marchers were then organized again to go to The Bifrost municipal tax sale on November 29 at Arborg. Here they were to demand that no land be put up for the tax sale. Other demands were to include having their section of the municipality "disorganized", that is, excluded from the municipality. These demands were completely outside council's jurisdiction.

On the morning of November 29, 300 people gathered at the Ukrainian Hall at Arborg. A delegation of 12 men, with George Kowalchuk as spokesman, was to present a petition to Reeve Sigvaldason at the municipal office.

Mike Kyrylchuk, one of the more vocal of several speakers at this meeting shouted, "We'll ask the reeve to stop the taxes against the people." As he gesticulated angrily, he added, "If he can't stop it, we'll ask him to resign."

The 300 protesters lined up outside. As they marched through the main streets of Arborg, they lifted aloft their banners proclaiming:

"We Are Against Eviction."

We Demand Cancellation of All Arrears Of Taxes."

"We Demand That Clothing Be Given Our Children."

We Demand Disorganization Of The Municipality."

Our Living First."

"We Demand Land Tax Sales Cancelled."

As the angry mob reached the municipal office, a small platform was hastily set up. John Kapusta jumped up on it, shouting out,

"The Bracken government is a farmer government, but they don't do much because it's hard times."

The crowd yelled and clapped him on.

"People! We have to stay together and try to stop them from selling the land for our taxes." As the crowd roared, he added, "Premier Bracken went to the United States to borrow \$4,000,000."

"What for?", shouted someone in the crowd.

"Who's going to pay that money?" asked Kapusta, waving his hands angrily, "We, people! We're going to pay."

As the crowd yelled and clapped, a man in a long sheepskin coat spoke up, "There are three police constables in the municipal office."

"You don't need to be scared of the mounted police," added another.

John Osnach now rushed up to the platform. "They got the mounted police here for protection." Then waving his arms aloft, "They are sent up here by the capitalist; they are paid by the capitalist. Comrades! Don't be afraid of those men, they won't shoot you; they daren't shoot you. If they do they know what will happen to them."

As Osnach kept on talking the delegation went into the municipal

office. They were met at the door by Corporal Burke, who asked, "Who are the delegates?"

George Kowalchuk, the delegation spokesman read out the names of the delegates, which was duly recorded by Secretary Jonasson. Kowalchuk then handed a paper to Reeve Sigvaldason, saying, "I have here a petition signed by people, asking that the tax sale be postponed until the second week in January."

"It is not in my power to stop the tax sale," answered the reeve, "It has been set by the government and I have to do it."

Kowalchuk persisted, "You'll have to do something, because that is what the people want today."

Reeve Sigvaldason consulted with the Secretary and Corporal Burke. They decided that the wisest move would be to adjourn the tax sale.

As the reeve turned to the delegation, he said "This is the best I can do..to hold back this sale for 14 days. We will then have a municipal meeting and will take up this matter for you."

Kowalchuk answered, "I want you to write that promise on a piece of paper, with the three policemen as witnesses."

After the reeve had signed the paper, stating that the sale would be held back for 14 days, Kowalchuk went outside to the crowd. As he read out the signed paper, there was instant reaction from the people outside.

"We don't like that. We want to stop the tax sale for good."

With a roar the people rushed for the door of the municipal office. Corporal Goldie, who stood inside the door, was thrust aside by the momentum of the crowd. They stormed through, yelling, pushing, and opening the back door to let in more people. The small office, 30' by 12' was overflowing with an angry mob while others shouted and yelled outside.

"Reeve, you have to do what we want. You have to do like we demand," shouted Andrew Solinski, inside the door.

Reeve Sigvaldason stepped up on a desk against the wall and spoke out, "We have agreed to postpone the sale."

"That is not enough. We want it cancelled altogether."

Against the raised voices, the reeve answered, "There will be a council meeting before the tax sale takes place. I will recommend to council to consider the matter...." The last words were drowned out in cries of protest.

"We demand that you resign," shouted George Lycar.

The reeve stood firm and unafraid as he said, "I refuse to resign."

George Lycar angrily replied, "We have you in our power and can make you do what we want."

Meanwhile Corporal Burke tried to control the crowd as they trampled on papers and broke the front windows. Finally he called out in a ringing voice, "Quiet! You asked for the sale to be cancelled. It has been cancelled to December 14. What more do you want?"

Several voices yelled, "We want it cancelled altogether."

Another voice added, "We don't want the police here. We don't have to pay them for standing around in the municipal office."

John Koborenko shouted, "And tell the Reeve to resign."

Reeve Sigvaldason firmly stated, "You can keep me here all day. I won't sign."

As Councillor Rudko tried to reason with the angry mob, Lycar shouted to the reeve, "You will have to sign or you won't get out again."

Meanwhile, John Kapusta drew up a document which read, "We undersigned believe that there will be no sale on the farms for arrears of taxes in Bifrost Municipality. Also that we Reeve and Councillor recommending our resignation to municipal commissioner to postpone the sale of farms in Bifrost Municipality ..sine."

"You will have to sign this," John Kapusta said to the reeve as he handed the paper to him.

Reeve Sigvaldason again stated firmly, "I refuse to sign this."

Kyrylchuk spoke to the crowd in Rutherfordian. At this point Hjortur Jonasson, John Abrahamson, and Jakob Sigvaldason entered. They had heard the commotion outside and felt that the reeve could be in danger from the mob.

When Jakob Sigvaldason saw the mob harassing his brother Bjorn, a deep anger welled up inside him. With his eyes flashing fire and his hand held out like a steel vise, he resembled the old Vikings when they set out to do battle. He took a firm grip of one of the heckler's fingers and gave a sudden quick twist to the rest of his arm and body. The heckler, by now cowed and frightened at Jakob's stern appearance and flashing eyes, buckled up on the floor before he knew what had happened to him.

When questioned later at the preliminary court as to why he had come, Jakob Sigvaldason answered, "I wanted to be close to my brother if anything happened. I didn't expect to do much, but I wanted to be close to him anyway."

After the reeve again refused to resign, Osnach threw off his coat and approached him in a threatening manner. Jonasson stepped up to Osnach and pushed him back. As he did this, he was struck from behind by Harry Kolton. He received a heavy blow on the cheek, drawing blood. Constable Albeck also received a blow from behind.

By this time a number of women had jumped up on the desk and began to tear off the Reeve's coat, vest, shirt and suspenders. Mike Kolton rushed at him too.

Kyrylchuk shouted out to Corporal Burke, "You'd better do something or there's going to be trouble."

After almost of two hours of continued heckling, one of the policeman suggested to Reeve Sigvaldason that he had better sign the document, calling for cancellation of the tax sale, as well as his resignation.

When questioned later why he had suggested this, Corporal Burke answered, "I foresaw that if they got ahold of him and threw him off the desk into the crowd, there was apt to be serious damage done, perhaps bloodshed."



The Main Street in Arbog on a winter day. The building with the slant roof in front housed the Bifrost Municipal office on the left and the Telephone office on the right.

After the reeve signed the document, he went outside for a few moments. On his way out he was struck from behind by John Koborenko.

At this time someone shouted out, "The secretary next."

"No", answered another, "He is just a tool. Let him go."

Now that the seething mob inside had gained their aims, they began streaming out, with a last reminder, "We will be back for the next council meeting."

"No more taxes," they shouted to the crowd outside.

"The government will give us all free education."

"Free medical service too." shouted another.

The exultant crowd gradually dispersed and left for home.

The following day Secretary Jonasson went to Winnipeg to discuss the day's events with the Hon. D.L. McLeod, Municipal commissioner.

The Attorney-General, Hon. W.J. Major, promised a full inquiry into the situation.

Eyewitness Veiga Johnson, who worked at the Arbog Telephone office, which was located in the same building as the municipal office, with a wall partition between, has written of the events of November 29, 1932:

"The day of the riot there was such a big mob of people in front of the municipal office, that I went out through the back door of the telephone office. Men had sticks in their hands and they broke dwindows. They looked angry and wicked, and I was scared.

Many of these men didn't know they had to pay taxes. Times were hard. I suppose some of them didn't have the money. They thought they could take the law into their own hands.

In the afternoon while some of the people were in the municipal office the partition between the municipal and telephone office swayed under the pressure.

Reeve Sigvaldason had to do his duty, which was to conduct a tax sale. The people had to find out sooner or later that they could not have a farm year after year without paying taxes. That simply is not done."

Other witnesses also stated that the riot was stirred up by agitators who tried to prevent the due process of law. After this riot incident, a large number of policemen were located in the Arborg and surrounding areas, investigating and rounding up the rioters.

Meanwhile Reeve Sigvaldason was advised that his resignation was invalid, due to coercion on the part of the rioters.

Warrants were issued for the arrest of twenty-two men. By December 12, 1932, all 22 named had been arrested. Bail was set at \$1,000 for a number of them. These men were immediately bailed out by Aubrey Brock, secretary of the Canadian Labour Defence League. Brock had once been a communist party candidate in a general election.

On December 14, 1932, an orderly tax sale was conducted, with a policeman standing behind Reeve Sigvaldason, while 30 more were outside controlling the 200 people gathered there. Any person who had a complaint was allowed a proper hearing and his case considered by the municipal council. Later a strip of land on the west and north was taken out of Bifrost Municipality and joined to the local government district of Fisher.

At the preliminary hearing, held in the Ukrainian hall in Arborg on January 19, 1933, Magistrate Henri Lacerte watched as three hundred people crowded into the small, dimly-lit room. Heated with a wood stove, the room sometimes became unbearable hot, at other times cooling off very fast. The proceedings lasted far into the night. At this hearing two of the accused, Steve Kowalchuk and Harry Stefan gave evidence for the Crown. Of the 14 men who contributed most to the riot and unlawful assembly, and who were later sentenced, the following information came to light.

Mr. McLean, Attorney for the Crown, questioned Secretary Jonasson.

Q. Mr. Jonasson, you are familiar with the taxpayers and property-owners in the Municipality of Bifrost?"

A. "Yes."

Q. "Is Ivan Kapusta (alias John Kapusta) a tax-payer in Bifrost?"

A. "Not in my assessment."

Q. "George Lycar?"

A. "No."

Q. "Steve Kosub?"

A. "No, his father is."

Q. Harry Allamvatch?"

A. "No."

Q. "Andrew Solinski?"

- A. "No, his father is."
- Q. "Kyrlo Hrynychyshyn?"
- A. "He is a tax-payer."
- Q. "John Koborenko?"
- A. "He is a tax-payer."
- Q. "Harry Kolton?"
- A. "No."
- Q. "Mike Kolton?"
- A. "He is a tax-payer."
- Q. "George Kowalchuck?"
- A. "He is a tax-payer."
- Q. "Mike Kyrylchuck?"
- A. "He had a farm under agreement for sale."
- Q. "John Osnach?"
- A. "No."
- Q. "Joe Hrycyshyn?"
- A. "No."
- Q. "Mike Kosub?"
- A. "No."

It was further revealed that Kyrlo Hrynychyshyn was the only one of these 14 men whose name was on the land tax-sale list.

These 14 men were committed for trial at the Assizes, held in Winnipeg, on March 14, 1933. At the assize court some rather strange answers were given out.

When John Osnach was asked why he had come to Arborg on November 29, 1932, he replied, "I came to take a singing lesson."

Another witness, when also questioned as to why he had come, replied, "I came to buy land."

When the trial concluded, two of the 14 were acquitted, and twelve were found guilty of unlawful assembly. Recommendation of leniency was suggested by Justice Dysart.

Siggi Sigvaldason points out "In 1978 a petition was circulated by the people living in the area separated from the north and west part of Bifrost Municipality in 1933. In this petition they requested to be allowed to rejoin Bifrost Municipality.

This is a rather knotty problem. Today Bifrost Municipality has many thousands of dollars in assets, such as cash, buildings, road machinery, snow plows, etc., whereas the District of Fisher has no such assets."

Today Bifrost Municipality is one of the most prosperous and progressive districts in Western Canada.

Arborg is still the seat of the local government of Bifrost. It too has prospered, and the day of the riot of 1932, is but a faint memory of a bygone day when a small group of agitators were able to obstruct justice for a while.

SMALL TOWN RIOT.....footnote.

This riot took place during the time Papa was Reeve of Bifrost municipality. Papa's actions on this occasion showed his courage and integrity in adversity.

When Mama heard of the events of this day, she became very worried that the rioters would harass us. She feared that they might even decide to burn down our home. Fortunately, nothing like that did happen and life gradually resumed its normal pace.

In reminiscing about the time of the riot, Veiga Johnson has written:

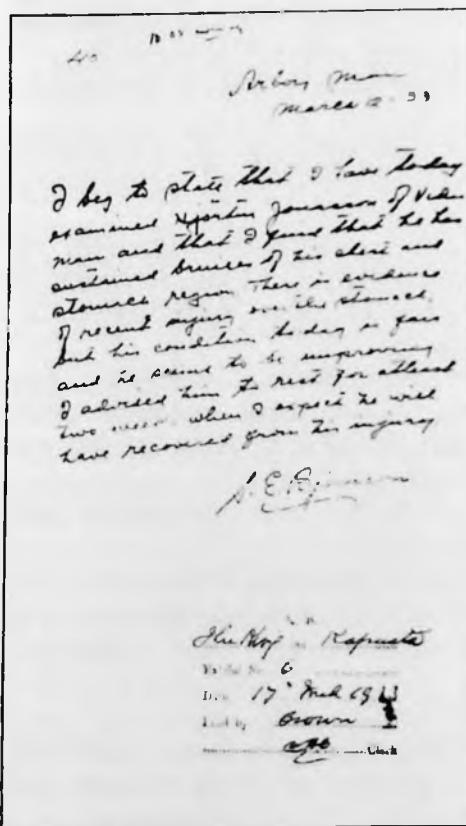
"There were about 30 policemen in town when the tax sale was held on December 14, 1932. You can imagine the excitement that created in a little town like Arborg.

I remember one of the policemen was always coming in to the telephone office to warm up. He thought it was terribly cold to stand outside. We thought he was a bit of a sissy.

That day the policemen asked the girls in town if they would come to a dance, if they held one in the hall that night. It turned out to be a real policemen's ball, as there were only three men there in civies, and they were from out of town also. The local boys were all wild. The young girls in town had a wonderful time. Gudrun your sister was the "belle of the ball". Close to the end of the dance her beau, Kelly, came to walk her home. I remember one of the policemen sent Anna your sister a big chocolate box."

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Photostatic copies of the court case, held at Arborg, Manitoba, on January 19 and 20, 1933, were purchased from the Manitoba Dept. of the Attorney General, Sheriff's Office, and used as research material in this article.



Copy of a letter submitted by Dr. Bjornson, regarding injuries sustained by H. Jonasson.

Sentences:-

Ivan Kapusta alias John Kapusta -
Suspended 2 years.

COUNT OF KING'S BENCH

SPRING ASSIZES E.J.D. 1933

George Lycar:-

Suspended 2 years.

Steve Kozub:-

Suspended 2 years.

Harry Kowalewski:-

Suspended 2 years.

Andrew Solinski alias Sicinski:-

Suspended 2 years.

Kyrylo Kryschyn alias H. S. Kryszko:-

Suspended 2 years.

Max Keborukas alias Keborkas:-

Suspended 2 years.

Harry Koltun:-

Suspended 2 years.

Walter Koltun:-

Suspended 2 years.

George Kowalek:-

Suspended 2 years.

Mike Kryszko alias Kryszko:-

Suspended 2 years.

John Denach:-

Suspended 2 years.

Frank K. Kryszko alias Kryszko:-

Suspended 2 years.

THE KING

against

IVAN KAPUSTA alias JOHN KAPUSTA,
GEORGE LYCAR, STEVE KOZUB, MARRY
ALLIWATCH, ANDREW SOLINSKI alias
SINLINSKI, KYRYLO KRYCHYSHYN alias
KRYCHYSHEN, JOHN KOBORENKO alias
KOBANYKA, MARRY KOLTUN, MIKE
KOLTEK, GEORGE KOWALEWIK, MIKE
KRYSYCHUK alias KRYLICHUK, JOHN
CZULICH, JOSE KRYSYSHYN alias
KRYCHYSHEN and MIKE KOZUB

CHARGE FOR

RIOT - 2 counts

UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY - 2 counts.

Plea
all plead not
guilty w/ C.
18th March 1933

Verdict
Joe Kryszko and
Mike Kryszko - not guilty
all the rest of accused
guilty of Unlawful
assembly. not guilty
of Riot.
Recommendation to
leniency
20th March 1933
(C.C.R.)

Copy of Judge's decision at Spring Assizes, 1933, regarding rioters.

Chapter XIII THE MANY FACES OF CHRISTMAS

CUSTOMS OF ICELAND

Cherished customs and legends are an important part of the joy and wonder of Christmas. Some of these customs and legends are as old as humanity itself; others have developed through the ages; and some are as new as a new-born babe.

One of the oldest customs has been the symbol of light, or fire, which denotes a light in the darkness at a time of year when the days are the shortest. The evergreen as a Christmas tree came into being in 1605, in Germany, although it had been worshipped many years before, by Britian's Druids, who considered them as the conquerors of winter darkness. The Christmas legends through the years symbolize the rejoicing at this time of year. Every year a brand new tradition is born in the heart of a family, very often signifying a new feeling of hope and love for mankind.

From the little country of Iceland, a land of spouting geysers, glaciers, mountains, and fjords: a great many traditions and legends have been handed down through the years.

One tradition of long-standing in Iceland has been that at Christmas a person must receive something new to wear. If he didn't, the Christmas Cat, which was spoken of as a large black cat, would get him. That was something that nobody wanted! The mothers were very busy before Christmas making sure everyone got something new, either warm and patterned mitts, socks or insoles, or very often, a brand new pair of skin shoes. These shoes were made of sheep-skin, usually dyed black for this special occasion. The shoes were edged around the top with white skin; sewn on one side to the shoe, and turned into and sewn on the other side. These skin shoes were used both outside and inside the house. They always had insoles, and these were hand-knitted. Very often the insoles were made of wool of coloured strips, or else decorated with flowers in different colours of wool.

Among the poorer families, the children usually received a tallow candle, something new to wear, and perhaps a deck of cards. Even among the poorest people certain cakes and sweets, such as kleinur and laufabraud were served. Very often rice pudding, with a few raisins added, was the special Christmas treat.

One of the Christmas customs in Iceland was to leave a light on, all during Christmas night, to light the way for any travellers who might have lost their way along the dark mountain trails. In this way they hoped that no one would perish at Christmas.

The first Christmas trees to be set up in homes in Iceland was around 1880, but it was not until after the turn of the century that Christmas trees became a part of the Christmas festivities in Iceland.

Trees have always been scarce in certain parts of Iceland, so the Christmas trees were often made of pieces of wood. A six foot long, four inch round piece of wood was first whittled down to serve as a trunk. Holes were drilled in the trunk and straight pieces of wood were cut and fitted into the holes, to serve as branches. In the late fall the family would go up on the hillsides to pack sackfuls of lyng, a small shrub with red berries, which resembled heather. Before Christmas the lyng greenery would be tied around the branches of the tree and carefully overlapped until each branch was completely covered with greenery. The trunk was then covered in the same way, starting at the top of the wood, then all the way down the trunk. The tree was placed on a platform which was also covered with lyng. It was set up in the parlour, where the children were not allowed to see it until on Christmas Day. (Today most Christmas trees in Iceland are imported).

The adults always decorated the tree, using trimmings made of paper and old pieces of material. Red and green heart-shaped baskets, filled with candy, were hung on the tree, as were apples, strung through the core with thread. Paper roses and bright streamers were cut out and draped around the branches.

Last of all the candles were each set in a metal socket and clipped to the lyng-covered branches.

One of the Icelandic customs was to mark the 24 days before Christmas with a Christmas Calendar, called "JOLADAGATAL". This was usually a long narrow piece of needle-point material cross-stitched with colorful symbols, such as a bright Christmas wreath, an angel, a tree, and a cheery Christmas sock. For 24 days before Christmas, each child picked up candies which hung from plastic rings sewn to the Calendar. This ceremony took place at a set time each day and became a joyful time for the children as they ticked off the days till Christmas.

Christmas Eve or "Adfangadagskvold Jola," as it was called in Iceland, traditionally started at 6 o'clock on December 24th. After everyone had washed up and dressed in their Sunday best, they sat down for the "Huslestur," a time when the Father or Mother read the story of the birth of the Christ Child. After that hymns were sung. In the cities and towns of Iceland church services were held at 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

At home, after the services, gifts were passed around. Each of the children received a candle, as a symbol of light on this Holy night, as well as books and playing cards, although no one was ever allowed to play cards on Christmas Eve. Hot chocolate and a great variety of sweets were served afterwards.

On Christmas Day the parlour doors were opened, revealing the gaily-decorated tree, now shimmering with the candles all aglow. The children formed a circle and danced joyfully around the tree, singing their favourite hymns and songs, while the adults sat around.

Some of these songs were about Santa Claus, who was called "Jolasveinninn". It was believed he lived up in the mountains, but the children always hoped he would come if they sang to him.

After their sing-song the children took down the apples and candy-filled baskets off the tree, and handed one to every person in the room, as a special Christmas treat. A dinner of smoked meat (hangikjot), or ptarmigan, served with potatoes and cream sauce, followed by a variety of desserts and sweets, highlighted the Christmas Day.

After the Christmas season the lynn was taken off the tree and thrown away. The tree was then dismantled and stored away till next year.

On New Year's Eve in Iceland, the children gathered up twigs, sticks and trash to make a big bonfire, called "Aramotbrenna" (Burning at Year's End). They also had a display of fireworks. The sky would become ablaze with beautiful-rainbow-colored flares that arced up in a tremendous show of brilliant lights. These pierced the winter night, and turned it into an enchanting fairyland. At midnight the old year bowed out gracefully to usher in the New Year, in a truly brilliant array of colour...

THE MANY FACES OF CHRISTMAS. CHRISTMAS LEGENDS.

In Iceland the "huldufolk" (hidden people) and the "Jolasveinar" (Christmas gnomes) were very much a legendary part of the Christmas festivities.

According to legend the traditional account of the origin of the huldufolk in Iceland and other Scandinavian countries is:

"Once God visited Adam and Eve and asked them to show Him what they did. They showed Him everything, including their children. However, some of them had been hidden because they had not been washed. God, All Knowing, knew this and said, "That which is hidden to Me shall be hidden to men." In this way the descendants of these people became the huldufolk, or hidden people.

One of the traditional customs in Iceland was to leave food, (especially nuts, which it was said they loved), for the huldufolk on Christmas Eve to keep them happy. Always on Christmas morning, the food would be gone, but whether the huldufolk or some mischievous young men had eaten the food set out, mattered little....the huldufolk tradition had been kept up!

Everyone knew that one must never make the huldufolk angry or cross them in any way. One of the most important events of the year was the beautiful Evensong held on Christmas Eve, in the churches of Iceland. Every member of the family looked forward to this special Christmas Service. However, according to legend, this was also the night when the huldufolk came out in their best clothes and danced the night away in someone's home.

Sometimes these huldufolk were apt to do mischief, so it became the custom to leave one person at home on Christmas Eve, one who was both courageous and strong, so he could guard the home.

As soon as the family left, the huldufolk would come dancing into the house. Dressed in their beautiful silks and velvets, their hands and throats adorned with costly gems that glittered and shone, they would dance around as they decorated the house with gold and silver garlands. As they shrieked and shouted to make as much noise as possible, the person on guard would be at his wit's end. If he could withstand the terrible noise and commotion he might be lucky. Once in a while the huldufolk would suddenly have to flee, dropping their precious jewels as they rushed out. The guard would then be fortunate enough to be able to keep those treasures for himself.

The "Jolasveinar" were gnomes that came around only close to Christmas. According to legend, there were 13 of them. Starting 13 days before Christmas, one gnome came each day, until Christmas Eve, when the 13th gnome appeared. They loved to play tricks on people. Indeed, each gnome or "Jolasvein" had a name which was descriptive of his behaviour.

"Gluggagoegir" (window-peeper) was a curious little gnome who peeped in through the windows to see what the children were doing.

"Ketkrokur" (meat-hooker) would try to hook the smoked meat which was simmering in the heavy pot on the stove.

"Bjugnakraekir" (sausage-snatcher) loved to snatch the thick



stúfur



HURDASKELLIR



KERTASNIKIR



Gáttapefur



ASKASLEIKIR

"Jolasveinar" of Icelandic legend.

sausages up from the rafters where they hung.

"Skyrgamur" (skyr-glutton). Oh, how this gnome loved skyr! People had to hide their skyr from him or he would eat it all up.

"Stufur" (Shorty) was so short that sometimes his long beard was apt to get tangled up in his feet.

"Hurdaskellir" (door-slammer) would slam all the doors to disturb the people when they were sleeping.

"Gattapefur" (keyhole-sniffer) would sniff at every keyhole, to try and find out where the food was kept.

"Askasleikir" (bowl-licker) had a habit of peaking out from under the beds trying to reach the wood-bowls and lick up any food left in them.

"Stjekkastaur" (stiff legs) had very stiff legs. He would go into the barn and frighten the sheep.

"Pvoru-sleikir" (wooden spoon licker) loved to lick the food off the big wooden spoons.

"Pottasleikir" (pot-licker) used to sneak in on Christmas Eve to lick the pots that the food was cooked in.

"Giljagjaur" was a rough gnome, who came through the crevices in the mountains and made strange noises to frighten people.

"Kertasnikir" (candle-beggar) was he 13th gnome, who appeared on Christmas Eve and would try to get the candles from the children.

After 6 o'clock on Christmas Eve the gnomes did not dare to play any tricks, as it was a Holy night. Just as they came, one by one on each day before Christmas, so the "jolasveinar" left again, one each day after Christmas, until the last one, "Kertasnikir" disappeared until the following Christmas.

CHRISTMAS IN CANADA

A CHRISTMAS GREETING by Richard Beck.

Once more I lift my heart in song
On Christmas night.
Swift on their wings of gratitude
My thoughts take flight,
And set their course to all those, far and near,
Whom I hold dear.

This greeting woven in my song
This Holy Night,
Proclaim the tidings heard of old,
And in their flight
Echo the heart's deep yearning, now and then:
"Goodwill to Men."



WINNIPEG AT CHRISTMAS

by Rose Fyleman

In Winnipeg at Christmas
There's lots and lots of snow,
Very clean and crisp and hard
And glittering like a Christmas-card
Everywhere you go;
Snow upon the housetops.
Snow along the street,
And QUEEN VICTORIA in her chair
Has snow upon her stony hair
And snow upon her feet.

In Winnipeg at Christmas
They line the street with trees -
Christmas-trees lit up at night
With little balls of coloured light
As pretty as you please.
The people hurry past you
In furry boots and wraps;
The sleighs are like a picture-book
And all the big policemen look
Like Teddy bears in caps.

And oh! the smiling ladies
And jolly girls and boys;
And oh! the parties and the fun
With lovely things for everyone -
Books and sweets and toys.
So, if some day at Christmas
You don't know where to go,
Just pack your boxes up, I beg,
And start at once for Winnipeg:
You'd like it there, I know.



Winnipeg at Christmas

CHRISTMAS IN ARBORG, MANITOBA.

There was magic in the air on that cold December night in 1932, in the small Interlake town of Arborg, Manitoba. This was the night of the Annual Christmas Concert at the Lutheran Church.

For weeks we had been practising carols and rehearsing parts for the Nativity scene. Mothers had been sewing up gossamer dresses from cheesecloth and adding angel wings tipped with gold and silver tinsel. Old robes had been brought out, blankets sewed up, and long staffs whittled down for the Three Wise Men and the Shepherds.

What excitement as we got ready for the concert!

"Did you brush your hair Laura?"

"Give your shoes a real good shine girls. They look quite scuffed." As Mama said this she was hurrying around, tying on bows in the little girls' hair and straightening the boys' ties. Mama gave Einar's vest an extra tug as he stood there proudly showing off his new outfit—short black pants and a matching vest, set off by a white frilly shirt. At last everyone was ready to go!

As we stepped outside the door a cold blast of air slapped at our legs. We girls were so proud of our silky stockings, which we were now wearing instead of the usual wool stockings, so we were not about to complain of the cold. We went in a long file on the narrow trail to the top of the riverbank, then down to the frozen Icelandic river. If we stepped off the narrow trail we would be in knee-deep snow.

There was a special feeling in the air that night. We felt the crisp crunch of the snow under our feet, while above us the moon shone from a sky studded with shimmering stars of light. In the stillness of that Christmas night the church steeple across the river pierced the night sky. All at once a happy shout broke the stillness.

"Look," called out Gunnar, "Look at the falling star."

We all stopped in our tracks. Olof and Jonas and Gunnar began to call out the old wish chant, and we all chimed in.

"I wish I may,
I wish I might,
Be granted the wish
I wish tonight."

Each of us, as usual, made a special wish.

"Come on children," Mama said, "We'll have to hurry on."

Just then the first peal of the church bells rang out. WE hurried along, up the riverbank to the church.

There was a great deal of confusion and rushing around in the room at the back of the church. We quickly tossed our coats, scarves, toques, and mittens on the table in the corner. There the pile of coats reached halfway to the ceiling and spilled over, under the table.

"Hurry children and get into line," Frida Danielson, the Sunday school Supervisor called out, as she tried to get everyone settled down and quiet.

"Leonard is in my place," cried little Thor tearfully.

"This is my place, not yours," answered Leonard as he shoved Thor in front of him, "That's where you're supposed to be."

"Oh my gosh," called out Molly, "One of my angel wings has come off."

Loa Olafson quietly calmed Molly as she found a pin. "No one will ever notice that your angel wing is pinned on," she said gently.

"I've forgotten what I'm supposed to say," whispered little Timmy.

"Just say "Welcome to our concert," his sister Helga said.

"Where's my staff?", called out Grant, "It was here a minute ago."

"It's up against the wall where you left it" answered Kenneth, shaking his head as he handed the staff to Grant.

Suddenly the loud peal of the organ silenced the children. Then Reverend Olafson announced, "The children's program will now begin."

"All right children," whispered Mrs. Reid, as she motioned them to go forward to the makeshift stage, at one side of the pulpit.

The Christmas tree stood tall and beautiful on the other side of the pulpit. The children's songs rang out with joy; little Timmy remembered his welcome words; Molly had forgotten all about her pinned wing as she stood with the other children around the Christ Child; the Three Wise Men brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh; the concert ended with the whole chorus singing "Joy To The World." "The children then walked down the platform steps, where each one received a red mesh bag filled with Christmas candy and an orange. As they slowly walked around the church pews they sang in Icelandic, "In Bethlehem A Child Is Born."

The Christmas tree candles were lit with a long taper, by Tryggvi Ingaldason. Then he and Stefan Gudmundson, both faithful church members, stood beside the tree, to make sure that the shimmering candles were securely fastened.

Each of us, in our family, received a Christmas card with a twenty-five (cent) paper bill tucked inside. This was from our Aunt Sesselja Oddson, who was always a wonderful friend and Aunt to all of us. She had done this for many years and what joy that meant to us. A whole twenty-five cents of our very own, to spend as we wished! As we walked home from the concert we talked of the treasures we would buy.

"I'm going to buy a brush and comb set."

"I want to buy the book "Elsie Dinsmore."

"I'm going to get a toy tractor."

"I'm going to spend my money at Sigurdson-Thorvaldson's Store because Sigurjon always gives us candy there."

"I want to save mine. Let's hurry home and have some strawberry tarts with whipped cream. Mama always has some for us after the concert."

"Oh look," someone shouted suddenly, as we reached the top of the riverbank. There ahead of us, we saw the glittering lights of the cross at the top of St. Benedict's Convent., shedding a brilliant glow against the night sky. This was a special night, for the cross was only lit up on Holy Nights, or else if special visitors had arrived at the convent.



St. Benedict's convent with the cross shown.

The starry sky above; the shimmering lights on the cross; the joy and wonder in our hearts; these were all there in the magic of that Christmas night in 1932, in the little town of Arborg, Manitoba.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS ..1926.

Christmas Eve was the most wonderful night of the year. On this particular evening in 1926, we were allowed to go to the Canadian Pacific Railway station, to meet our oldest sisters, Inga and Anna, who were coming from Winnipeg. They would be loaded down with parcels as Papa and Mama had asked them buy the Christmas gifts at Eaton's store for all our family.

As we stood waiting around the station platform, we could hear the long drawn-out blast of the train whistle. All around us people waited for loved ones to come home for Christmas. Men with frosted, bushy moustaches and snowy eyebrows waited; the paper boy, shivering with cold, waited for the evening papers; children, holding tightly to their Mama's hands, waited eagerly to greet a sister, brother or cousin.

Suddenly the click-clack of the wheels, and the gleaming globe of light, illuminating the darkness, announced the arrival of the train. With a gradual slow grinding of the gears, the train came to a stop, while rolling and swirling domes of steam puffed up into the frosty air.

The train conductor jumped nimbly down the iron steps and stood waiting to help the passengers down. Inside one of the bright gas-lit coaches we saw our sisters moving towards the exit door.

What great parcels they carried!

"We have gifts for everyone," Inga said as soon as she saw us.

"And we brought some new records," added Anna.

We all hurried home.

"Oh, look at that big turkey," shouted Anna as she spied the turkey on the cupboard.

"Where did you get it?" Inga asked Mama, as she kissed her.

"Do you know what?" replied Mama smiling, "Jonas Johnson brought it over today as a gift from their family. It's a 25 pounder."

"I helped Mama clean it," Gudrun said proudly, "We're having it for Christmas dinner tomorrow."

As soon as Inga and Anna had finished their supper Mama said to us, "Now you children can play in the kitchen, while the older girls and I finish getting the gifts ready."

We were all very curious to know what the girls had brought, so we stood by the door into the living-room, hoping to hear something. At first we only heard a soft murmur of voices. All at once Anna let out a scream.

"Oh Mama...you know what? I thought we had remembered everybody, but it looks like we forgot Thordis."

"Oh my God," shouted Inga, "What are we going to do? There are no stores open at this time."

"Good gracious," exclaimed Mama, "How could you forget Thordis? Her name was on the list with the others."

Thordis, who was listening at the door with the rest of us, began to cry, "I'm not going to get any gift. That's not fair."

"SSh..ssh, be quiet. We want to hear what they're saying inside," we whispered.

"Papa," we heard Mama say, "What do you think we can do?"

Papa, who had been going over his daily accounts, looked up in surprise, saying, "Do about what?"

"Why, about the gift for Thordis," Mama's voice suddenly became excited, "The girls forgot to buy a gift for her. What can we do?"

By this time we were taking turns peeking through the keyhole. We saw Papa get up from his desk in the den.

"You know what?" he said after standing and thinking for a while. "Joe Johannson at the Farmer's Store might just still be there. He often works late."

Papa picked up his overcoat in the hall. As he slipped it over his armless left shoulder, he said to Mama, "It's worth a try anyway. What shall I buy as a gift?"

"We had her down for," Mama whispered the last words so we were unable to hear them. "What could it be?" we thought.

By this time we were getting very impatient. After all, it was now nine o'clock, and we would have to wait for a while yet for our Christmas to begin. Mama, sensing our restlessness, brought out some popcorn balls which the school principal, Mr. Morrisson and his wife sent us every year. Laura put her favourite record, "Ramona" on the gramaphone.

"I'll put on the new Buddy Rogers record after this one," Anna said. Papa had walked to the store, so it was almost ten o'clock when we saw him coming in, carrying a long, narrow box under his arm.

"I was lucky tonight," he said as he handed the parcel to Mama,

Lutheran Church in Arborg, Manitoba within whose walls Annual Christmas Concerts were staged.



"Joe was just leaving when I came, but he opened the store for me again."

Mama, Inga and Anna rushed into the living-room with the parcel. As they were wrapping it up we could hear loud exclamations of "Oh! Oh!"

"It's beautiful," we heard Mama say, but we could not peek this time as Papa stayed in the kitchen with us, warming his hands over the wood stove.

At last the living-room door opened and we could all gather around the tree. Papa and the older boys lit the candles which were clipped on the branches. Each one of us received a gift, and the long box was handed to Thordis. What could it be?

When Thordis opened the box, there, nestled among soft tissue paper, was the lovely Eaton's Beauty doll, with a rosy and glowing china face, a mass of blonde curls, and filmy pink ruffled dress, and dainty white shoes. All of us girls took turns at holding this beautiful doll, which at that time, was every little girl's dream doll.

We never did find out how Joe Johannson at the Farmer's Store found the beautiful doll for Papa. We only realized much later, that the true spirit of Christmas was in his heart that night when he let Papa have the lovely Eaton's Doll for \$2.00.

Some of the Icelandic customs and legends were kept up in Nyja Island (New Iceland in Canada). The custom of leaving the light on, all during Christmas night was kept up at the Johann Saemundson family home, as well as at the Jadri home in Vidir.

On New year's Eve Halla Jonasson of Jadri always placed a candle or light in every room. She also kept up the custom of celebrating January 6, traditionally known as the end of Christmas season, the 13th. Incidentally, according to Icelandic legend, the 13th and last "jolasvein" left on the 13th day after Christmas.

Chapter XIV

FROM EAST TO WEST.

That far-off day in 1883, when Sigvaldi Johannesson and Ingibjorg Magnasdottir with their oldest children, first set foot on Canadian soil, was the beginning of their family's roots in Canada. They came with hope in their hearts and envisioned a better life for their descendants in this country.

During their lifetime they saw the gradual expansion and progress of their area, then known as Nyja-Island (New Iceland). An important milestone in their life was the ownership of a team of oxen, and later a team of horses, for travelling. They had the joy of seeing their children pioneering new areas and merging into the Canadian way of life, while still preserving their traditions of old.

The sons and daughter, during their lifetime, saw vast changes in Canadian lifestyles. At a time, during the depression years of the 1930's, when stock-markets collapsed; when prices went to an all-time low; when bread lines became a way of sustenance for unemployed men in the cities; when men rode the freight trains, searching, always searching for jobs, any kind of job, anywhere; through that difficult time they survived by sheer guts, hard work and determination.

To that generation the radio was a wonderous invention, as was the telephone. Cars replaced oxen and horses as a means of travelling.

Another generation has seen tremendous technological advances. Today the television brings world events into homes around the western world, at a flick of a switch. Men have landed on the moon. Satellites orbit around the Earth. Computer technology supplies facts and figures in seconds. Two-car families are often the norm, rather than the usual. Supersonic jets have emerged as a means of travelling to the far corners of the globe--and today these journeys are made in a matter of hours, instead of the weeks and months of yesteryear.

The Sigvaldason roots have spread out, in an ever-widening circle, across Canada, and into other countries. At the core are the unshakeable roots that bind yesterday's, today's and future generations in a bond of love, fellowship and traditions.

Today the fourth generation of this family are the decision makers. In their hearts are the same hopes and visions of happiness and opportunity for their children and children's children. These, the fourth generation, are spread across the country, in a tremendous variety of occupations. Some have overcome obstacles in life; some have passed on after an all too-brief span of life; some have distinguished themselves in one way or another, too numerous to mention in full; all have a strong desire to be upright citizens, whatever their occupation, wherever their home. To that means they have the determination and courage of their ancestors. To all of these, there is an identity with their roots, which began in Iceland hundreds of years ago. These are roots that bind them all together.



Janet Erikson enjoying an afternoon of skiing.

JANET ERIKSON by Emil Johnson

Skiing is a family recreation that makes good use of snow and winter weather. Any member of the family can participate, whether young or old; cautious or reckless; sighted or blind. At this point you probably want to say, "Stop right there. Did you say blind people skiing? Impossible!"

It's quite natural to assume that a blind person can't ski, but don't voice your misgivings too loudly around Janet Erikson, the 15 year old daughter of Peter and Lil Erikson of Coquitlam, B.C. Although Janet can't see, she enjoys both downhill and cross-country skiing.

Janet is one of those intrepid people who excel in appreciating life. Often not seeing, makes a goal more difficult to attain, but it rarely stops Janet from eventually succeeding. Skiing is one of her many

successes. She worked long hours to learn how to ski and the work has paid off in dividends of joy. More than once I've stood at the crest of a slope and looked back to watch Janet zigzag down the hill, guided by the voice of one of her brothers. A fellow skier will exclaim, "Did you see that blind skier? Isn't that fantastic?—There's no way that I would come down this mountain with only someone's voice to guide me." They are certainly right to think that it is a difficult skill to master.

During the winter of 1979 Janet travelled to Calgary to take part in the Western Regional "Ski For Light" Cross Country Rally for the blind. There she competed in the adult portion of the meet. She finished the five kilometer course in one hour, well under the maximum time of two hours.

If she can't go skiing Janet would rather cycle, skate, or swim, than do math homework. However, when necessary, she sits down with her mother after school to work through the day's assignment. Janet attends Winslow Junior High, a public school that is about a five-block walk from her home. She often makes the trek by herself.

Like her grandmother, mother and sisters, Janet has taken the time and effort to learn how to work with fabric. So far she has tried sewing, weaving and knitting. Last Christmas Janet took the time to knit several toques and pairs of slippers for her brothers and sisters. Among her prized possessions is a beautiful sweater she crafted from a pattern that she bought on a trip to Scandinavia during the summer of 1978.

Like her father, Janet possesses a love of music. She plays several instruments including the organ, recorder, clarinet, and the skookum flute, a peculiar little pipe purchased during the Vancouver Folk Festival in August, 1978.

Janet is enjoying a full, active life, making use of the skills and talents that she has. The major factors that determine the degree of success in any endeavour are her own will power and the support and encouragement that she receives from her family. The word "impossible" scarcely exists in her vocabulary.

MARGARET PRENTICE

by Ann Rundell

She never had heard a sound until she was 5 years old and was fitted with a hearing aid.

"I didn't want to go to bed that night because I didn't want to take it off," Margaret Prentice, 22, remembers

Margaret, the daughter of Neville and Valdine Prentice, Madison, Wisconsin, was graduated from Edgewood College in History magna cum laude in June, 1978. She now is in graduate school studying library science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

She owes her success to her parents, a devoted teacher, an observant doctor and her own strong will.



Margaret Prentice

When Mrs. Prentice was six months pregnant Margaret was born, weighing only 2 pounds, 3 ounces at birth. Her weight slipped to 1 pound, $7\frac{1}{2}$ ounces before it began to climb again.

The baby was kept in the hospital for three months, and the Prentices were warned repeatedly that she "might not make it."

When she was 9 months old, her mother suspected she could not hear and asked the doctor about it. He did not diagnose any hearing loss and the little girl gradually began to talk.

"For the first five years, I heard nothing, but my speech development was good," Margaret says. "I kept talking as if I was hearing. I taught myself to lip read. My mother couldn't get doctors to believe that I could not hear."

It was not until Margaret was 5 years old that a specialist sent her to the Speech and Hearing Clinic at the UW for evaluation. The diagnosis: severe hearing loss.

When Margaret was fitted with a hearing aid a whole new world opened up for her. She started school at Lapham, where classes for the deaf were held at the time. Her kindergarten teacher was Dorothy Hayes, a specialist in communicative disorders. At the end of the year, Mrs. Hayes had Margaret integrated into regular classes at Lapham, where she remained through third grade. From there she went on to regular classes at Elementary, Junior High and High school, then to Edgewood College.

Margaret is anxious for everyone to know how much she owes her parents. "Dad tutored me every night from elementary school through Junior high. I got discouraged many times, but they encouraged me to keep on going and do the best I could."

At Edgewood College, Margaret majored in history. "I've always been into history," she said. Margaret has travelled extensively and takes great interest in historic battlefields, museums and historical sites. She has become very interested in the study of genealogy. She plans to go into library science because she loves to read.

Margaret's hobbies included sewing, crocheting, macrame and other crafts. She likes to swim and is an avid walker. She walked to and from Edgewood, a 6-mile round trip, every day.

Margaret worked in the Children's Room of the Madison Public Library during the summer and will show films to pre-schoolers there during the school year.

The baby who "almost didn't make it" is extremely healthy. She did not miss a day at Edgewood because of ill health in the four years. She hears all sounds now but still depends on lip reading to converse. Loss of hearing never was and never will be a problem for Margaret Prentice.

WALLACE JOHANNSON

The word "Determination" is an integral part of Wally Johannson's character. Determination is what he needed too, at a time in his life when, as a youngster nine years of age, he lost one leg in an accident. The gruelling process of adjusting to having one leg, served instead to mold and develop Wally's strong character.

While Wally learned to adjust to using a peg leg, he decided that nothing would deter him from setting goals for himself. His parents, Kelly and Gudrun Johannson of Arborg, Manitoba, encouraged him in all his endeavours. His grandfather Bjorn Sigvaldason, was also an example to him, as Wallace has remarked:

"My grandfather Bjorn was always an inspiration to me. Here was a man who lost an arm at an early age. This fact never stood in the way of his accomplishing what he set out to do. His exemplary life as a father of 16 children, a good provider, an intellectual, and a man of good business acumen, was a wonderful example to me of how one can overcome obstacles."

Wally has always been tremendously interested in History. When he graduated in Education from the University of Manitoba, History became his medium of teaching for several years. Many of his former students at the Riverton Collegiate, where he taught for a few years, have unequivocally stated that Wally was the best history teacher they had ever had.

Sports have always been of great interest to Wally. During his teaching years he was Football Coach of the Collegiates teams. He has participated in many sports—swimming, tennis, curling, sailing, and now his newest sport interest, cross-country skiing.



Wallace Johannson at Legislative buildings in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Like his grandfather Bjorn, Wally has been very interested in politics. He was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for St. Matthews riding from 1969-1977, as a member of the New Democratic Party. During that time he was Legislative Assistant to the Minister of Education; Legislative Assistant to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Urban Affairs; chairman of several committees; Secretary to the Government Caucus 1969-1977; and Secretary to the Official Opposition Caucus, 1977-78.

For the past five years Wally Johannson has been Research Director for the N.D.P. in Manitoba. This work has involved him in organizing policy and educational conferences, as well as in organizing group team work.

Wally's interest have always included furthering educational values. He now plans to return to the teaching profession, where his understanding of the process of government will be invaluable to the teaching of History. With the clear, unclouded vision of one ever seeking wider horizons, Wally Johannson has proved by example and great style that the development of the individual to his utmost potentiality is possible and within the reach of all who set out to attain their goal in life.



Hulda Sigvaldason Heid 1941-1976

In Memoriam

Poem by Stephan G. Stephansson
translated by Paul Bjarnason.

Selected in Memory of Hulda Heid and Dorothy Kopp

The law that smites a life with harm, or slays,
Gave little time for anguished hope and fear.
It flung to earth a random ray ablaze
And rent the heart of one to me so dear.
But it is well that I should get the news
Without a warning—since I had to lose.

Yea, it is well to understand and know
That it was not a sentient thing, my dear,
With evil for its aim, that struck you so.
But accident, upon its chance career.
No cosmic law, but simple savagery
Designs and wills the keenest agony.

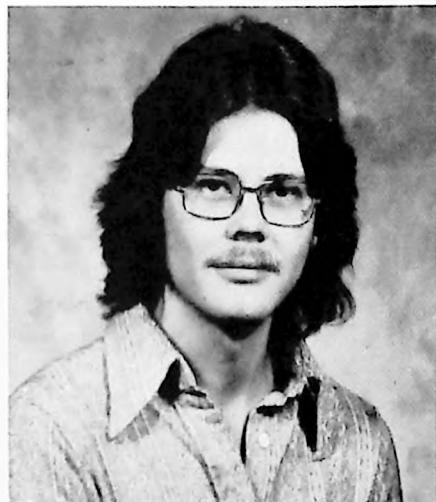
And lovingly I wrap you in my ode
with anguished calm and feelings bitter-sweet.
And there will ever be thy warm abode
Where bliss and goodness, in the spirit, meet.
And so, content, I close each sore that sears
And say farewell, with thanksgiving and tears.

Thy kindness never will be spoiled or spent;
The spool of time will keep thy thread intact.
Though visions for thy glory with thee went,
The ones you gave inspired so much I lacked.
And when I pass from out the sphere of song
The soul of life their essence will prolong.

And yet it will be sweet to sing to thee
A song of greeting from a heart at peace.
Until the final sun has set for me
Beside thy greening hill amid the trees.
And so will be ensanctified the ground
In songs that to thy memory redound.



Dorothy Kopp [1958-1978]



Brian Austman [1954-1974]

In Memoriam
A SON LOANED
by Edgar A. Guest.
Selected in memory of Brian Austman.

"I'll lend you for a little while a child of mine," He said
"For you to love the while he lives, and mourn for when he's dead.
It may be six or sixteen years, or forty two or three,
But will you till I call him back, take of him for Me?
I'll bring his charms to gladden you, and should his stay be brief,
You'll have his memory as solace for your grief.

I cannot promise he will stay, since all on earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there I want this boy to learn.
In my search for teachers true, and from the throngs that crowd life's lanes
I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labour vain,
Nor hate Me when I come to call, to take him back again?
I fancied that I heard them say,
"Dear Lord, Thy will be done,
For all the joy this son shall bring
The risk of grief we'll run.
We'll shelter him while we may,
And for the happiness we've known, forever grateful stay.
But should the angels call for him, much sooner than we planned,
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand."

A CHOSEN CHILD.
by Alice Finnbogason

I walked into the hospital, straight to the pediatrics section. I stopped at the information desk and was told to walk behind the counter.

So many times we had asked ourselves; "Are we doing the right thing? Is it worth all the fuss and bother of signing papers and filling out forms? Will we regret it? Will the child be healthy?"

This time, as I walked behind the counter with the nurse, I had none of that uncertainty. There in the nursery, was my daughter being fed with five other babies. She looked healthy, her fat little cheeks rounding out her cherubic face. She had a dislocated hip, but time would cure that. After feeding time the nurse changed her diaper, then handed her to me. She was 10 days old and she was now ours to take home. As I held her in my arms I wept with joy!

Today she is becoming a beautiful young girl. She has inherited an agile and supple figure and loves to do acrobatics and dance about the house. Although she is very much a tomboy, she enjoys dressing up. Yes, that was my daughter all dressed up in her long dress last Sunday, riding a bicycle down the street!

She is quite particular about certain things that are important to her. She can be very stubborn, obviously a trait acquired from her father. She can knit and sew well, with coaching and help from her doting grandmothers! She loves figure skating and swimming. Hopefully her many activities will include music next year, as she is very musical. She can twist her father around her little finger. A deck of cards can usually be turned into a game, no matter what father is doing.

The years have not always been easy, but when did being a parent become easy? There was the time when she was very small and was quite sick. Her grandfather cured her with love, by holding and rocking her most of the day. Also there are times when learning to read has presented problems..or so it seems at first. But with the help of three brothers and parents, those problems are solved. Today she is a book lover and at bedtime, when it's time for lights out she is apt to call out, "Can I just finish this page....please?" She has learned that brothers can be a big help and are always there to protect, but, as she sometimes says, "They sure can be pests too."

She is the pride of both sets of grandparents. One grandmother is doubly proud when she looks so good in the outfit she sewed for her; the other grandmother sends mitts and socks to make sure she is not cold when she is out on the mountains snowmobiling.

Now as we see our daughter, enjoying life in our home, all the doubts and questions we once had..."Should we not be satisfied with three boys..all happy and healthy? Will we be able to give one more child the right opportunities?" all these doubts and questions have dissolved. We have never looked back and have enjoyed the bonus of having a lovely daughter. She is very special to us.....our chosen daughter Robyn!

A CHOSEN CHILD.

FOOTNOTE

Over the years there have always been adoptions. Sometimes they were not always legal. Parents who were in dire straits gave children away to others who could give them a better opportunity in life. Very often the real mother had direct contact with the adoptive parents. Such was the case with Ingibjorg Magnusdottir, who left her daughter with adoptive parents, in the hope that her daughter would have a better chance in life than with an unwed mother. Today many of her great grand-children have adopted children, to whom they have tried to give love and every opportunity in life.

BRAVERY AWARD.

Constable David Sigvaldason, son of Kris and Phyllis Sigvaldason of Vidir, recently earned a Commanding Officer's Commendation for Bravery at Powell River B.C. for his part in disarming a man wielding a loaded shotgun. The episode took place on May 20th, 1969.

Officers from the Powell River Detachment, R.C.M.P. paraded in full dress in municipal council chambers to see Constables Sigvaldason and Reid receive their bravery awards. This is the first time in 23 years that a bravery award was made in the Powell River area.



Constable David Sigvaldason

fire rescuer honored

Lloyd Finnbogason, volunteer fireman at the Vancouver plywood division, has received an award of merit from



the Greater Vancouver Fire Protection Association citing his rescue of three people from a Burnaby house fire which claimed two lives. He also received letters of appreciation from the Burnaby fire department and municipal council. Lloyd happened on the fire while driving home from Vanply, roused the occupants and led three to safety.

Finnbogason

Vanply man rescues 3

VANCOUVER CANADA JUNE 1975 VOL. 12 / NO. 8

Vancouver Plywood employee Lloyd Finnbogason — a volunteer fireman at the mill for 11 years — was credited with saving the lives of three people recently by leading them from a burning house in which two died.

Lloyd, driving home from a night shift, spotted what appeared to be steam rising from behind a Burnaby house. "When I got closer I could see it was smoke."

Running to the rear, he found flames eating through the wall and tried unsuccessfully to put them out with sand. Then he ran to the front and "hammered on the door hoping someone would hear."

He heard screams, broke open the door and led two teen-aged girls outside. They told him there were three others upstairs.

"I went inside and tried to go up the stairs but there was too much fire and smoke."

He ran outside to the rear where a man was at a broken window, his face burned and hair singed.

"He wanted to go upstairs after his wife and child, but I told him not to," Lloyd said. "He wouldn't have had a chance — you couldn't see a foot in there."

Lloyd knocked the remaining glass from the window and helped the man through. "As soon as I got him out the house went up."

Burnaby fire chief Frank Collum said the mother died when she tried to rescue her baby son.

The chief praised Lloyd Finnbogason for his efforts. "If it hadn't been for him, the other three would have died."

"I wasn't trying to be a hero," he said. "It's just a citizen's duty and I'd do it again tomorrow if I had to."

THE SIGVALDASON FAMILY QUILT

Elma Kozub refers to her quilt as a "labour of love". It all started when plans for a large Family Re-Union were formulated.

"I'd like to make something special in honour of the occasion," thought Elma Kozub. Ideas began forming in her mind as to just which one of her numerous crafts would be best to utilize.

"A quilt perhaps.....". She began envisioning different designs. Then it suddenly came to her!

"A family quilt....," she decided, as she thought of her grandparents Bjorn and Lara Sigvaldason, who had raised 16 children.

"I'll make a family quilt, with each square a special family pattern, designed by the Aunts."

Elma Kozub contacted each family and sent them a blue square to work out their own design, then waited hopefully for the results.

Quilting is an ancient art, now being revived again. The art of quilting originated in China and Egypt, thousands of years ago. At that time clothing was quilted mostly for warmth. In the early days of life in Canada quilt-making developed as a means of using up worn garments, which were taken apart and pieced together, in no special pattern, as patch-work quilts. As time passed and quilt-making became more common, fabrics and colours were co-ordinated and set in patterns to form artistic and useful bed covers. These early quilts provided warmth and comfort.

When central heating came into use in homes, quilt making declined. The quilts were replaced by the factory and machine-made blankets and comforters. Instead of a necessity, quilt making became rather, a social craft. Women began taking a great pride in designing their own patterns and displaying their fine workmanship. In fact, a quilt's use became a sort of status symbol. The guests' social status was often gauged by which quilt the hostess put on her bed. The more elegant ones were usually reserved for the most prominent guests.

Once again quilting has become a highly esteemed craft. The fabrics and dyes available today, also make it possible to create quilts which launder well and wear longer without fading. These factors, combined with a resurgence of all crafts, had helped to develop the art of modern day quilting. Today the trend is to set patterns and geometric designs. Various names that reflect individual tastes, as well as nostalgia, have been given to different geometric patterns. The "Mariner's Compass", a striking geometric design of the compass, was designed as a reminiscence of the days when the men went down to the sea in ships. "Clay's Choice" quilt design was named for an American General during the Revolution.

Elma Kozub's idea of the family quilt brought some very interesting results. The Aunts and Aunts-in-law were most enthusiastic and warm-hearted in their response. When the squares came back some unique and ingenious patterns turned up. Very often the design reflected the occupation or avocation of family members. Each square was different, both in pattern and in colour designs.

With the help of some of her Aunts and friends, Elma set her grandparent's (Bjorn and Lara) square in the centre of the quilt, against a dark blue background. Spreading out from that were the individual family squares, interspersed with variegated design squares.

As a result of this quilt idea, many of Elma Kozub's friends and relatives have expressed a strong desire to start a quilting club. One of the designs suggested for their first joint effort is a "Friendship Quilt". With Elma Kozub's enthusiasm and pride of workmanship, other unique designs and patterns will evolve in due time.



Mabel Clarke, daughter of Ingvar and Sigthrudur Sigvaldason, is shown here with the Bronze Medal which she was awarded in 1965, for proficiency in Psychiatric Nursing from the Selkirk Hospital for Mental Diseases.

A number of Sigvaldi and Ingibjorg's granddaughters and great granddaughters are nurses. Two of these won awards during years of training.

Eleanor Fahrenwald won the nurses' award of her graduating class at the Vancouver General Hospital. Eleanor is the daughter of Miriam Bagshaw, of Victoria, B.C.

Mabel Clarke, daughter of Ingvar and Sigthrudur Sigvaldason, is shown here with the Bronze Medal which she was awarded in 1965, for proficiency in Psychiatric Nursing from the Selkirk Hospital for Mental Diseases.

Signy Holstein has distinguished herself in another field of healing—that of physiotherapy. She is Divisional Director of Physiotherapy, Musculo Skeletal Div., at the Manitoba Rehabilitation Hospital in Winnipeg. She is the daughter of Helgi and Lillian Austman of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

THE NURSE — STGR. ARASON —

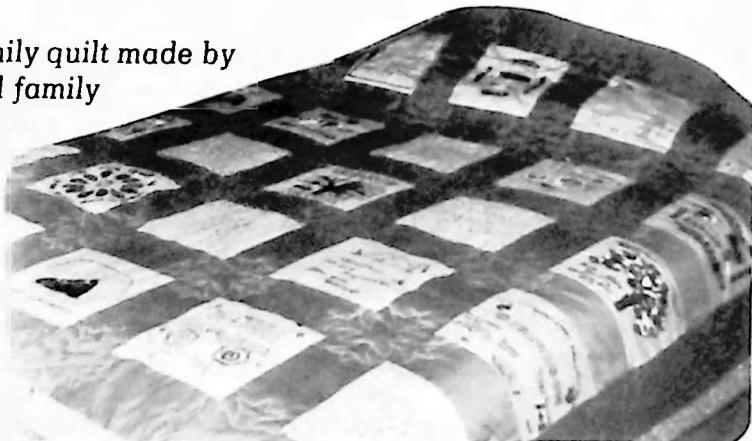
Where pain and grief together
with their twin oppression dwell,
She comes in with the break of morn
to cast her magic spell:
And as she tiptoes, fairy-like,
along those aisles of pain,
A gleam of pleasure settles on
each troubled face again.

With tireless feet and fingers deft
she works from morn till night
And scatters smiles of love that set
each fading hope alight;
And if the healers fail to rid
one's body of disease,
Her magic remedies of faith
will put his heart at ease.

And should the gloomy night of Death
approach with silent tread,
His patient fairy comes and sits
beside his lonely bed.
She dries his tears of anguish
while she holds his trembling hand,
Until the veil is lifted from
his nightless Morning-land.

— And so at last exhausted,
with her day of duty through,
Her heart enjoys a kind of peace
the selfish never knew.

*Sigvaldason family quilt made by
Elma Kozub and family
co-operation.*



DR. OSKAR SIGVALDASON.

At an early age Oskar Sigvaldason showed both athletic prowess and promise of mathematical genius. When he attended Ardal High School at Arborg, Manitoba, he was able to solve algebraic problems that had his math teacher stymied.

Since that time, Oskar, son of Gudni and Adalbjorg Sigvaldason of Arborg, has never looked back, but has forged ahead to a distinguished career as International Consultant and Executive Engineer with Acres Consulting Services Ltd. of Toronto, Ontario.

When he graduated in Civil Engineering from the University of Manitoba in 1959, Oskar was awarded a Doupe Memorial gold medal. In 1961 he was awarded an Athlone Fellowship providing for two-year post-graduate studies in Civil Engineering at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London, London, England. In 1963 the National Research Council of Canada awarded him a \$2400 grant with which to pursue research for a year, in concrete technology at the University of London, where he received his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering. Oskar spent an industrial postdoctorate year in systems analysis and environmental science at Harvard University.

Oskar has been an avid athlete and has participated in baseball, hockey, basketball, curling and skiing. At the University of Manitoba he won awards in sports, and was a member of the University Junior Championship Basketball Team in 1958.

At Acres Consulting Services Oskar's primary interests are in water resources and power systems planning, engineering mechanics, systems analysis and economics. He has developed and applied mathematical models for various planning and engineering assignments. As well as having responsibility for several projects in resources planning, primarily water and energy, he is also responsible for co-ordinating all marketing and business development activities outside North America in these sectors, for the International Hydro Division.

This work of Oskar Sigvadason's entails a tremendous amount of travelling, to such diverse places as Bolivia, Pakistan, Nepal, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and European countries, as a consultant as well as a lecturer.



Oscar Sigvaldason

Oskar has mentioned that the most unusual trip he has ever undertaken was one where he had to rent a taxi to drive 700 miles across the high Andes from Tarija to La Paz. He left Tarija at 8 p.m. Friday, travelling all night and following day, then arriving in Le Paz for a 4 p.m. meeting. After the meeting he was off again to the Airport for an 11 p.m. flight to Toronto, where he arrived at 7 a.m. Sunday morning.

Dr. Sigvaldason is the author of numerous publications and has presented several seminars and lectures in North America and internationally. His publications include an eleven volume report (of which he was principal author) on the application of modern systems methodology for water resources planning and management in Canada. His publication, "The Trent River System; An Improved Operational Strategy" was presented at the 2nd International Water Resources Congress, in New Delhi, India. Additional lectures have been presented on specific projects such as the Churchill Falls Development, the Severn Study, the Alto Anchicaya project as well as many others, both nationally and internationally.

Oskar Sigvaldason has always felt a strong filial attachment to his Icelandic heritage, where he has found joy and wisdom in its stirring sagas; he has felt a deep loyalty to Canada which has given him the opportunity to expand and achieve his potential; and he has felt a respect for the broader, international world, where his line of work has taken him, in search of knowledge as well as in providing

environmental and engineering solutions that may be of benefit to present and future engineering projects.

THE FOURTH GENERATION
CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST
QUEBEC

Larry Albert Bjorn Magnusson Co-ordinator with Royal Bank
Data Processing Head Office, Montreal

Hugh Carlyle Johnston Shipper with Automotive Hardware Ltd.,
Montreal

David Thomas Johnston Insurance & Finance/Sun Life, Montreal

William Oliver D. Johnston Accountant/Canadian Industries Ltd.,
Accounting Dept. Montreal

ONTARIO

Oskar T. Sigvaldason Executive Engineer/Acres Consulting Services
St. Catherine's

Wesley Franklin Wilson Band Musician/lead guitar, Toronto

Terrence Oliver Sigvaldason Carpenter Balmerton Gold Mines,
Balmerton

MANITOBA

Kristjan Bjorn Thorarinsson General Merchant/Owner, Riverton

Harold Thorarinsson General Contractor/Owner, Riverton

Brian Thorarinsson Teacher and Building Contractor, Winnipeg

Lorraine (Thorarinsson) Olson Homemaker & Student, Winnipeg

Lorne Sigvaldason Pipe-fitter apprentice/Grenell Fire Prot., Winnipeg

Clifford Sigvaldason Dairy Farmer, Arborg

Wallace Johannson Research Director/N.D.P. & Teacher, Winnipeg

Lawrence Johannson Owner/Inner City Electric, Winnipeg

Ronald Johannson District Man/Hydro at Pine Falls, Pine Falls

Bjorn Neil Johannson Lawyer/Tallin & Kristjanson, Winnipeg

Barbara (Johannson) Orbanski Homemaker, Arborg

Elma (Wilson) Kozub Homemaker & Avon Saleslady, Riverton

Richard Leonard Wilson Foreman/Tallieu Construction, Winnipeg

Lynne (Magnusson) Taillefer Homemaker & Teacher, Winnipeg

Dwayne Sigvaldason Student, Lockport

Laura Lee Sigvaldason Student, Lockport

Francine Sigvaldason Student, Lockport

Signy (Austman) Holstein Divisional Director/Physiotherapy, Winnipeg
Manitoba Rehab Hospital

Ellen (Sigvaldason) Martin	Homemaker, Vidir
Sugurbjorg (Sigvaldason) Finnson	Homemaker, Vidir
Anna (Sigvaldason) Finnson	Homemaker, Vidir
Kristin (Sigvaldason) Kristjanson	Homemaker, Vidir
Raymond Sigvaldason	Grain & Dairy Farmer, Vidir
Sylvia (Sigvaldason) Gislason	Homemaker & Saleslady, Thompson
Harold Foster	Farmer/Grain & Piggery, Vidir
Kenneth Foster	Farmer/Grain & Piggery, Vidir
Richard Foster	Foreman/York Tire, Winnipeg
Albert Foster	Farmer/Grain & Piggery, Vidir
Lorne Floyd	Farmer/Grain & Piggery, Vidir
Doris (Floyd) Benson	Homemaker & Salesclerk, Arborg
Beverly (Sigvaldason) Einarson	Homemaker, Hnausa
Claire (Elmhirst) DeAthe	Homemaker & Nurse, Carberry
Blythe (Calvert) Kneeshaw	Homemaker & Illustrator, Carberry
Ruth Calvert	Owner/Concession Business, Carberry
Douglas Harold Calvert	Commercial Art Student/California, Carberry
Lillian Chan	Student, Carberry
Wilma Kostick	Homemaker & Teacher, St. Vital

SASKATCHEWAN

Garry Sigurdson Security & Intelligence/R.C.M.P., Saskatoon

YUKON TERRITORIES

Robert Wilson Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Whitehorse

ALBERTA

Alda (Sigvaldason) Johannson	Homemaker & Real-Estate Sales, Lethbridge
Gail (Sigvaldason) Nagy	Homemaker, Calgary
Mabel (Sigvaldason) Clarke	Homemaker & Social Worker, Blairmore
Leslie Sigvaldason	Journeyman Carpenter Sup./B.F. Klassen, Calgary
Douglas Sigvaldason	Carpenter Apprentice/B.F. Klassen, Calgary
Emil Sigvaldason	Carpenter/ R & R Lumber Supplies, Blairmore
Hugh Norman Wilson	Heavy Equipment Operator, Calgary
Arlene (Wilson) Holberton	Homemaker, Edmonton
Larry Austman	Camping Director/Calgary Y.M.C.A., Calgary
Marjorie (Elmhirst) Hall	Social Worker, Edmonton

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Lilly (Rothe) Kopp	Homemaker & Nurse, White Rock
Agnes (Rothe) Bolbach	Homemaker & Teacher, Surrey
Herbert Rothe	Truck Driver/Warehouse, Vancouver
Rosie (Rothe) Brinkert	Homemaker & Teacher, Surrey
Baldur Oliver Sigvaldason	Shop Foreman/General Motors, Delta
Laurie Linda Wilson	Saleslady/Woodwards, Surrey
Beverly (Sigurdson) Bates	Homemaker, Aldergrove
Russell Sigurdson	Marketing Research, White Rock
Carol Sigvaldason	Sig's Art Studio/Owner Artist, Vancouver

Donald Howell	Logger/Powell River, Surrey
Bradley Howell	Millworker/Mohawk Handles, Surrey
Michelle Howell	Dental Assistant Apprentice/Dr. Chan, Surrey
Karen Sigvaldason	Lab Technologist /Van. Gen. Hospital, Vancouver
Mary-Ann Sigvaldason	Hair-dresser, Prince George,
Janet Sigvaldason	Student, Prince George
Thora Rasmussen	Student, Edgewater
Reid Rasmussen	Student, Edgewater
David Sigvaldason	Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Dawson Creek
Alice (Floyd) Finnbogason	Homemaker & Secretary, Port Coquitlam
Carol (Sigvaldason) Bardarson	Homemaker, Duncan
Brian Sigvaldason	Heavy Mechanics, Mackenzie
Donald Sigvaldason	Trucker, Golden
Keith Sigvaldason	Millworker, Golden
Lois Ann M. Sigvaldason	Student, Golden
Elaine (Calvert) Day	Homemaker & Sculptor, Coquitlam
Karen (Erikson) Johnson	Homemaker & Teacher, Coquitlam <input type="checkbox"/>
Julie (Erikson) Weik	Psychiatric Nurse, Coquitlam
Ivan Erikson	Electrical Field, Coquitlam
Karl Erikson	Student, Coquitlam
Janet Erikson	Student, Coquitlam
Jill (Sigvaldason) Weik	Teacher, Coquitlam
Susan Sigvaldason	Student, Coquitlam
Nancy Sigvaldason	Office-Worker, Coquitlam
Charlene Moore	Hairdresser, Vancouver
Wendy Moore	Student, Vancouver
Elizabeth Moore	Student, Vancouver
Tanta (De Staffany) Pennington	Gentleman's hairstylist & Homemaker Vancouver

UNITED STATES FROM EAST TO WEST

WISCONSIN

Margaret Prentice	Librarian, Madison
Carol (Prentice) Mitchell	Nursing Student, Madison

MINNESOTA

Eleanor (Johannson) Fry	Social Worker, Minneapolis
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HAWAII

Eleanor (Shaw) Fahrenwald	Homemaker & Nurse, Kailua, Hi
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ICELAND FROM EAST TO WEST

Hordur Arinbjarnar Computer Work/University of Iceland, Reykjavik



-along quiet paths of nature ...stillness reigns.



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