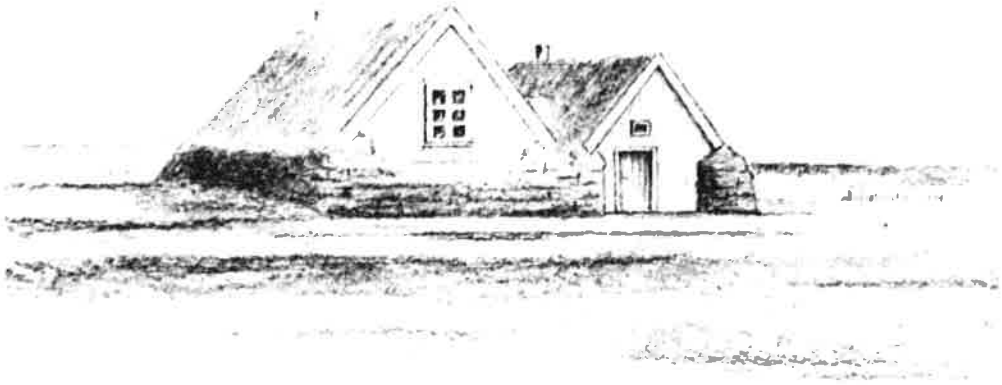
Jónas Ikabobsson
Kona hans
Anna Sveinbjörnsdóttir
og börn þeirra



Halakot
AKRANESI, ISLANDI

Jonas was born at Saurstodum in Haukadal in Dalasyslu, Iceland, January 14, 1866. He was the son of Ikabod Thorgrimsson and Halldora Benediktsdaughter.

Jonas and his family migrated to Canada, leaving Reykjavik on April 23, 1911 and arriving in Winnipeg May 12th. He worked as a laborer. If he had lived, he intended to take up house-painting. He was a man of medium height, erect, with full beard with a red cast to it. He was quiet and composed, industrious, honest and always a gentleman.

Bjarni Magnusson wrote of him: "Jonas and I were personal friends. We fished together several seasons. I knew him to be moderate in all behaviours, interesting, quiet, steadfast and trustworthy. During his long illness, long suffering patience never left him, even when he knew that his end was near."

His last words, directed to his family, were: "Stay together." He died from internal cancer August 29, 1912.

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Anna was born at Bygggardi at Seltjarnarnes, near Reykjavik. The house in which she was born still stands and is in good repair. Anna's father was Sveinbjorn Gudmundssson. He perished in a snowstorm on December 15, 1854, five months before she was born. Her mother was Petrina Regina Rist.

Anna was married twice. Her first husband was Olaf Arnason. They had four children: Paul, Einar, Petrina Regina and Malfrid. Her second husband was Jonas Ikabodsson. They were blessed with five children: Halldora, Asgeir, Benedikt, Helga and Sveinbjorn.

Einar Pall Jonsson, editor and poet, wrote about her: "Mrs. Olafsson was majestic in appearance and regal in all movements. She was of exceptionally joyous disposition and received courage and strength from higher powers." Ragnar Stefansson describes her well in his beautiful poem:

MRS. ANNA OLAFSSON
May 5, 1855 October 27, 1948

Your eyes did tell of a youthful spark,
Though age succeeded in leaving its mark
By frost-runes of numerous years
And hardship, sorrow and tears.

Though hair turned silver, your spirit was young
The kinship of youth was very strong.
Troubles of life could not you daunt
You sought the good in trials and want.

You thought but little of honor and power,
And cared still less of rewards of the hour.
To others you lovingly gave instead
What remained of your daily bread.

"Bensi" was champion wrestler (Glima) of Icelanders in Canada, winning two silver cups. He won one cup three times -- thus getting to keep it. Besides he won medals, a watch and a gold medal.

Benedikt married Lillian Paulson from Winnipeg. Three children were born to this union: Clarence Bakkman, a graduate of British Columbia University, and now a teacher in French and Spanish in Vancouver; Sigrid Helan, a secretary in Winnipeg; and Herbert Benedikt, who teaches sports and supervises recreation for the City of Vancouver. Sigrid traveled in Iceland and Norway in 1968. Herbert was known throughout Canada for his outstanding performance in playing basketball.

Bensi was well known and liked for his merrymaking and mimicry. He won many friends. He visited Iceland in 1952. He died of a heart attack on January 12, 1962.

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Helga was chosen "Beauty Queen" at the Icelandic Day in Winnipeg, the same summer that we arrived there. She was referred to by many as "Helga, The Beautiful" for many years after, and by some, still.

She married Jon Arnason, a merchant, from Reykjavik. Their only child is Anna Jonasina (Johnson). Anna graduated from the University of Manitoba and the following year she received a Master of Arts degree in Home Economics from the University of Minnesota. She worked at research for Cornell University in New York before she was married. She is a mother of ten children -- all living and promising.

Helga is a noble person, generous, hospitable and kind to everyone.

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Sveinbjorn attended Jon Bjarnason Academy for two years. He moved to the United States in 1920 and thereby became the only one of the family that did not "stay together". He graduated from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. He later graduated from Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

He has served in the Methodist Church (Minnesota) nearly forty years, serving churches in Duluth, Minneapolis, South St. Paul and elsewhere.

Sveinbjorn is the only one of his father's children that did not marry an Icelandic mate, but by an old Icelandic custom married an Irish colleen, Maurine Elizabeth Finnegan. She has visited Iceland three times.

They are blessed with two children: Nancy Lou and Paul James. Nancy Lou graduated from Hamline University in St. Paul as a registered nurse. She visited Iceland in 1957. Nancy Lou is married and has

It was not only to the next of kin,
Your faithful friendship was shown in,
When summer had turned to fall
In your heart was room for all.

You lived many years on foreign soil,
Yet in all your joy and all your toil,
The land of your birth, your constant thought
And strength and power in all you wrought.

And blessed it is to sleep content
With child-like faith that God has lent,
When stress and strain of life is won,
To enter the glory of the setting sun.

(Translation)

She visited Iceland in 1930. She passed away October 27, 1948.

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Halldora Olavia was born at Halakoti, Akranes, Iceland, August 18, 1890. All Jonas' children were born there. Dora married Sigurdur Thorsteinsson from Reykjavik.

They were blessed with three sons: Jonas Asgeir, who graduated from Cambridge University, London, England as a Ph.D. and is now Professor and head of the department of entomology at the University of Manitoba; Thorstein, who is a postal clerk in Winnipeg; and Sveinbjorn, who is a salesman for an oil company in Vancouver. Jonas has four children and Thorstein, two.

Halldora was much interested in handicraft. She carded the wool, spun, knitted, and did some weaving. In Icelandic costume, she demonstrated her art many times in many places including Winnipeg and Los Angeles. She was Maid of the Mountains at the Icelandic Cenntenial Celebration in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1955. She visited Iceland in 1949 and dwelt there nearly a year. She died from a heart attack.

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Asgeir died at the age of nine years. He had a good singing voice.

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Benedikt was fifteen minutes older than Helga, being born November 23, 1895. He was a master painter and paperhanger, one of the best in Winnipeg.

He was for a period, with the Champion of Icelandic wrestling and self defense, Johannes Josefsson, traveling through many states, performing in theatres and with Ringling Brothers Circus.

two children. Paul James is a "computer programmer" in St. Paul. He also is married and has two children.

"Sveinki" has traveled to Iceland three times -- 1949, 1965 and 1968.

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WHY THE NAME OLAFSSON?

My mother's first husband was Olaf Arnason from Stora Lambhaga in Leirarsveit. He died early in March, 1886. He was at sea fishing, when he slumped down dead at the oar.

Olaf's children were: Paul, who drowned in the harbor of Reykjavik; Einar,who,after several years in Winnipeg and Minneapolis, returned to Iceland and started a grocery store at Akranes which is now run by his son; Petrina Regina (Petursson), a widow in Oak Point, Manitoba, Canada, age 88; and Malfrid, who lived in Utah having married a Mormon, John Thordarson. Einar, Peta and Freda were all in America when we arrived in Winnipeg and naturally used the name Olafsson. The name Ikabodsson was thought to be a difficult name and very unusual, even in Iceland. Dad and mother decided that both families have the same name. In this my father showed nobility of character.

-- Sveinbjorn, 1970.

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Jonas never had a picture taken. The picture in this folder is a composite one. A picture of Ulysses S. Grant, one of the Presidents of the United States, was doctored here and there, and the result is a very close resemblance of dad before he removed his beard. This he did when he came to Canada.

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