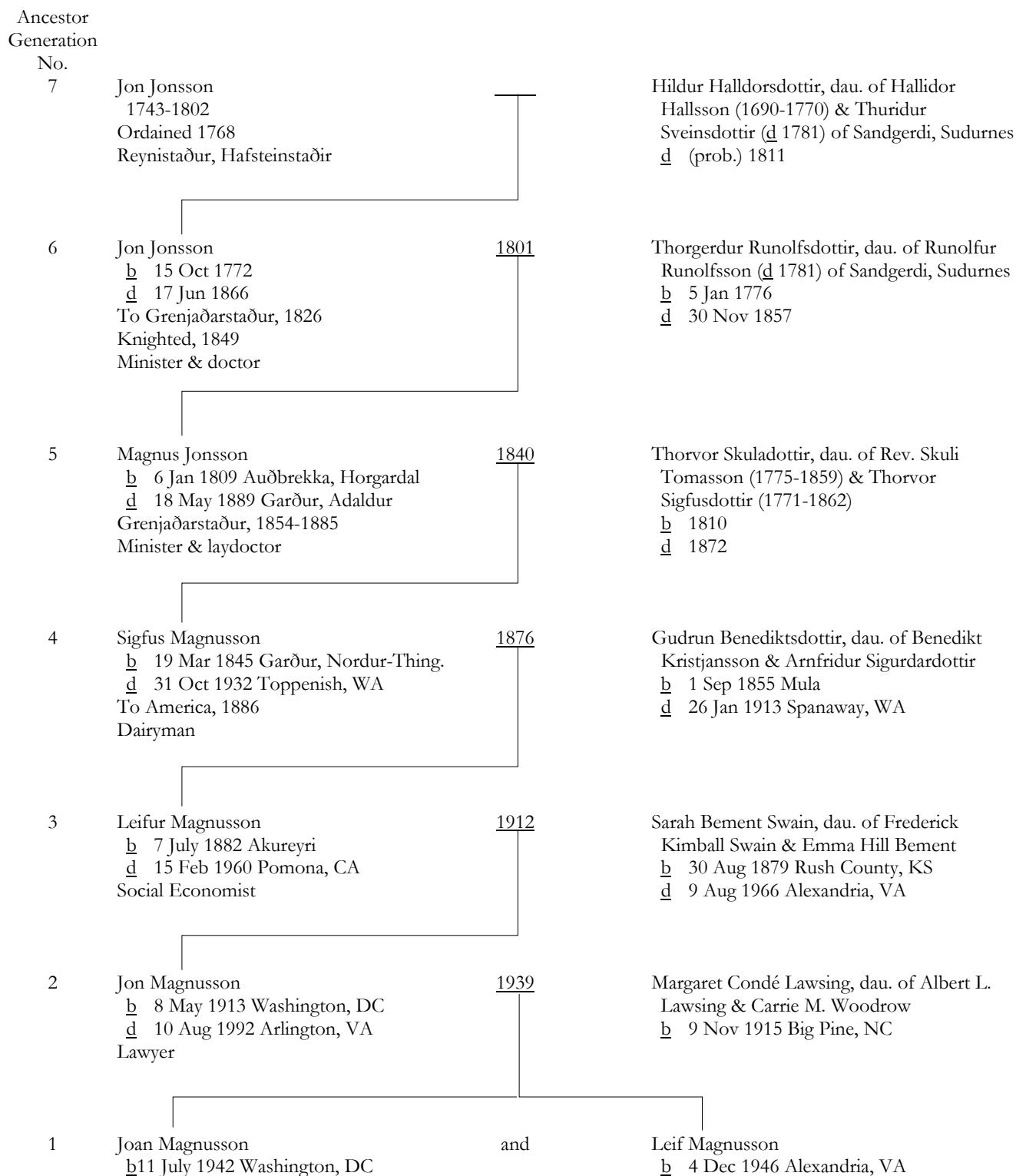


Chart 1. Magnusson ancestors in the Magnusson-Lawsing family

Part A



## Notes

Male ancestors in generations 7-3 and female ancestors in generations 7-4 were born in Iceland. Icelandic ð is sounded th as in breathe. Some ds, perhaps, should be ðs

Magnusson ancestors in the Magnusson-Lawsing family lived in Iceland until 1886 when Sigfus Magnusson (1845-1932) came to the United States. In Iceland, a person's last name indicates his – or her – father's first name: thus, the name Sigfus Magnusson indicated that he was the son of Magnus. In the United States, Sigfus's last name became the stable family name carried forward in time by successive generations of male descendants. The six most recent ancestor generations (AG) of Magnussons in this family are identified in Chart 1 (see opposite page).

The principal source of information about these forebears is an Icelandic genealogy commissioned by Sigfus and completed in 1912 by Johann Krjistjanson of Reykjavik. This work, handwritten in Icelandic, reports ancestors of Sigfus Magnusson and of his wife Gudrun Benediktsdottir through 221 paternal lines varying in length from one or two to seventeen ancestor generations. Their son Leifur, who knew Icelandic, used the Icelandic genealogy to compile genealogies of his parents. In his Sigfus genealogy, reflected in Chart 1, Leifur traced his paternal line to Jon Jonsson (1743-1802), the earliest ancestor identified in Chart 1. The Sigfus genealogy then shifted to the ancestry of Jon's wife, Hildur Halldorsdottir. Through Hildur's forebears, Leifur's Sigfus genealogy reached ancestor Ingolf Arnasson, Iceland's first settler in 874.

Iceland was settled, for the most part, by pagan Norsemen, many of whom are said to have fled from Norway after Harald I (Harald Fairhair or Finehair), defeated rival petty kings at Hafrs Fjord in 872. The settlement period ended in 930 when the Althing, which organized some 39 chieftaincies into a sort of commonwealth, was established. The Althing met at Thingvellir for two weeks every summer, attracting a large proportion of the population. At the Althing of 1000 Iceland adopted Christianity. Two bishoprics were established – Skalholt in the south (1056), and Holar in the north (1106) – which became Iceland's main centers of learning. The commonwealth period ended in 1262 when Iceland came under Norwegian rule. In 1380, Norway with Iceland came under Danish rule. Around the middle of the 16th century, the Danish king imposed Lutheranism on Iceland: Holar bishop Jan (Jon) Arason and his two sons were beheaded in 1550 for refusing Lutheranism. Royal trade monopolies, established in 1602, adversely affected Iceland's economy; and the Althing, whose functions had become increasingly limited, was dissolved in 1800.

Iceland's circumstances began to improve around the middle of the 19th century, when its struggle for political autonomy, led by Jon Sigurdsson, began to bear fruit. The Althing was reconstituted as a consultative assembly in 1843 and foreign trade became free in 1854. In 1874, Iceland celebrated the millenary of its settlement and the Danish king gave Iceland a constitution and control of its own finances. In 1904, Iceland got home rule; and, in 1918, sovereignty, although it remained under the Danish crown. In April 1940 German troops occupied Denmark, and from May 1940 Iceland's defense was undertaken first by British and then by American troops. In 1944 the Althing voted independence for Iceland, a decision ratified by popular vote. The Republic of Iceland was proclaimed at Thingvellir 17 June 1944, the anniversary of the birth of Jon Sigurdsson.

Returning to the Icelanders of particular interest in this account, the Icelandic genealogy identified ten generations of ancestors in the paternal line of Sigfus Magnusson (see Chart 2, p. 308), or seven generations preceding Jon Jonsson (1743-1802), the earliest ancestor in Chart 1. I speculate that Leifur may have chosen not to report earlier ancestors in this line partly because more extensive pedigrees were available in the Icelandic genealogy, and partly because no information beyond their names was given for three ancestors in

Sigfus's paternal line; viz., Grimur Olafsson, Gunnlaugur Grimsson and Tomas Gunnlaugsson, who linked Olafur Tomasson (AG 9) to Gunnlaugur Tomasson (AG 5).

When Jon and I were at Reykjavik (August 1980), we met with Bjorn Sigfusson, the grandson of Sigfus's brother Bjorn. Aware of our interest in family history, Bjorn had typed out for us several pages of pedigrees including a page identifying ancestors in Sigfus's paternal line. Bjorn's report extended this line by identifying Eiríkur Einarsson, father of Tomas Eirksson (AG 10 in the Icelandic genealogy); and it provided a two-ancestor link between Olafur Tomasson and Gunnlaugur Tomasson. When I told Bjorn of the three-ancestor link in the Icelandic genealogy, Bjorn thought that the "written evidence" of the genealogy should take precedence over the "oral testimony" of his report. Considering the weight of the genealogy's evidence at this point, I'm inclined to give precedence to Bjorn's report. In any case, Bjorn reported the earliest known ancestors in Sigfus's paternal line as follows:

**Eiríkur Einarsson**, the priest, d. 1507. The oldest known ancestor in the male line enters history as a priest at Grenjaðarstaðir 1480-1506 (minus some years while he was suspended as he, known as "adulterer," was presumptuous enough to insist on becoming abbot at Munka-Thvera in Eyjafjörður. It is hardly more than a guessing that this priest Eiríkur was a brother's son of lawman Hrafn Gudmundsson i Raudaskrida (which is now in the parish of Grenjáðarstaður). Hrafn (d. 1492) was the son of Gudmundur Eirksson, Isleifssonar. Probably the farmer Eiríkur Ísleifsson was great-grandfather of the priest Eiríkur Einarsson, perhaps through the mother.

**Tomas Eirksson**, priest on Maelifell, Skagaf., then the last abbot on MunkaThverá 1546-51. Before that he was "married" to Thora, step-daughter of Bishop Jon Arason, their son Olafur born 1531.

**Ólafur Tómasson**, 1531-1594, lögrettumadur (lögm.) á Hafgrímsstööm.

Bjorn explained that a lögm. served in a "highest law jury" of 84 men which convened annually for one week in June at the Althing with the responsibility to relate sections of law to the cases considered.

Leifur noted that Ólafur wrote memorial poem to Jon Arason (1484/?-1550) that appeared in the Annals of the Bishops II, 485-498.

**Bjarni Ólafsson**, ca. 1568-1646, lögm. í Stafni, Húnavatnss. Had 30 children.

**Tomas Bjarnason**, b. ca. 1610, d. 1692, then farmer on Bakki, Svarfadardalur. He had been the steward of the see of Holar (under the bishop Gísli Thorláksson – bishop 1657-1684), seated most of his life in Skagafj. Wife: Björg Steinsdóttir.

**Gunnlaugur Tómasson** (Bakki and) Midhus in Skagafj., b. ca. 1661, d. between 1708 and 1713. His brother Jón Tómasson 1663-1707, priest on Sandar, and Ingibjorg their sister married Ólafur Jónsson, Þorgrímssonar á Halsi; both had many descendants. Gunnlaugs mother: Björg Steinsdóttir, his wife: Helga Jónsdóttir.

**Rev. Jón Gunnlaugsson**, 1704-1780, pr. on Ríp, Skagaf. Wife: Puridur Jónsdóttir.

The locations reported for the earliest identified ancestors in Sigfus's paternal line place these forebears on the north side of Iceland in the vicinity of Eyjafjörður. Inland from Eyjafjörður and south of Akureyri lie MunkaThvera and Holar, with Bakki a bit to the west; inland from Skalfandi, the coastal indentation next east from Eyjafjörður, lies Grenjaðarstaður; and, I suppose, the Skagafjord. sites reported by Bjorn lie inland from Skagafjörður, the coastal indentation next west from Eyjafjörður.

Chart 2: Paternal ancestors of Sigfus Magnusson: pages 1-3 of Icelandic genealogy prepared for Sigfus by Johann Krjistjanson, 1912.

<p><i>Sigfus Magnusson fassur 19. mars 1845.</i></p> <p>1. gr.</p> <p>1. Magnúr Jónsson fassur 6. janúar 1809, næstirgatnus inn Þórhálsins 1832, vildur 24. júní 1838, við 17. jan. 1838 Grindavík, 1. ágúst 1841 Gárdi i Helluhverfi, 14. maí 1857 Ári i Felli, fæst vild 1859 ad. stórlagurinn fíður síni at Grindavíkum, færð brautil 1867, launum 1875, og ansætur 18. maí 1889 i Gárdi. Áðalset. 148</p> <p>2. Jón Jónsson f. 15. október 1772, næstirgatnus inn Hlíðarhóla 1793 vildur 1. apríl 1804 og við 3. mars.</p>	<p>Móðruwallaklaustur, 25. júní 1816 Stani-Örskýr, 13. maí. 1826 Grindavíkarsauði. Andari (C.) 24. júní 1867. Þ. af dtr. 145/1849</p> <p>3. Jón Jónsson fældur 1743, vildur 8. maí 1768 við 2. jan. a. 2. Stani-Örskýr, 21. júní 1780 Reyndisartaklaustur. Andari 1. mars 1802.</p> <p>4. Jón Gunnlaugsson, vildur 1743 ad. Þig i Heyrnæs, við 1748 Hlíði i Höfðahverfi, 1760 Reyndisartaklaustur og andaril 6. júní 1780, 76 a.</p> <p>5. Gunnlaugur Þórhálmur. Mis. þeim i Skagafjörðum</p> <p>6. Jón. — Mithuium</p>																														
<p>7. Gunnlaugur Grimsson.</p> <p>8. Grimur Ólafsson</p> <p>9. Ólafur Þórhálmur. Hafþim. stórlum, en er óttað hvort um Jón Eirkjúr Ólafsson og sonu hans (Þorsk II 485-498).</p> <p>10. Þórhálmur Eirkjónsson fæderus i Málifelli. Málki Ólafsson þóra sínus einn Ólaf [Dasa. sonar], og Helgi Sigmundarson er eittar vart barnamálin Jóni Eirkjúr Ólafssonar.</p> <p>2. gr.</p> <p>3. Hildur Hallgrímssdóttir konu Jóni Jónsónu Ólafssonar. Höglundum /</p> <p>4. Hallgrímur Hallgrímsson fæderus. Bræviðarsauði. Verkenkjúr.</p>	<p>Ancestor Generation in Icelandic Genealogy</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>10</td><td>Tomas Eiriksson</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>Olafur Tomasson</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>Grimur Olafsson</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr> <td>7</td><td>Gunnlaugur Grimsson</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>Tomas Gunnlaugsson</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>Gunnlaugur Tomasson</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Jon Gunnlaugsson</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Jon Jonsson</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Jon Jonsson</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Magnus Jonsson, father of Sigfus Magnusson</td><td>5</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	10	Tomas Eiriksson	14	9	Olafur Tomasson	13	8	Grimur Olafsson	12	7	Gunnlaugur Grimsson	11	6	Tomas Gunnlaugsson	10	5	Gunnlaugur Tomasson	9	4	Jon Gunnlaugsson	8	3	Jon Jonsson	7	2	Jon Jonsson	6	1	Magnus Jonsson, father of Sigfus Magnusson	5
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<p>3 —</p>																															

Bjorn reported that Eirikur Einarsson was known as “adulterer” and that Tomas his son, a priest, “married” Thora, step-daughter of Bishop Jon Arason. If Bjorn’s quotation marks meant *so-called*, they may have reflected circumstances arising from a 1237 decree of celibacy for priests: forbidden marriage, priests often took mistresses and legitimized their offspring through adoption (see below, p. 36). If so, Olaf Tomasson’s memorial poem was written to his *grandfather* Bishop Jon Arason. The Icelandic genealogy reported Bishop Jon Arason as a Magnusson ancestor through his son Bjorn (see below, p. 48).

In the Columbia Encyclopedia (2nd ed., p. 94) Bishop Jon is reported as follows:

Aresson, Areson or Arason, Jon, 1484?-1550, Icelandic churchman. He was the last Roman Catholic bishop in Iceland before the Reformation, elected in 1522. Aresson established the first Icelandic printing press at Holar in 1528. When upon the death of Frederick I of Denmark the Reformation began, Aresson refused to enforce any new religious ordinances, and troops were sent from Denmark to compel his obedience. Aresson continued his revolt and, finally captured, resolutely followed his sons Ara and Bjorn to the block.... His poetry, secular and sacred, has been preserved.

There is a monument to Jon at Skalholt. I was told that its inscription, in English, would read:

Jon Arason  
Bishop  
Lost here his life on behalf of  
His Faith and Fatherland  
7 November 1550

\* \* \*

Here is as good a place as any for a few words about the rendering of Icelandic in this account. In general, this account, drawn from Leifur’s work, reflects his practices, including his rendering of the Icelandic P and ð ( sounded *th* as in thin and in breathe). Occasionally, however, I have not followed Leifur’s spelling. For example, he sometimes rendered the old homestead as Grenjatharstad. On a map of Iceland, though, the old homestead was spelled Grenjaðarstaður; and I have rendered – or tended to render – the name Grenjatharstathur. Alas, neither Leifur nor I could be called a consistent speller.

The six most recent generations of Magnusson ancestors, outlined in Chart 1, are more fully reported below. Sources of information for these accounts include Leifur Magnusson’s genealogies; “The Reverend Magnus Jonsson,” by his grandson M. Julius Magnus, translated by Leifur; Sigfus’s recollections, translated by Leifur; and “A Synopsis of Icelandic Family History,” by Ruth and Weiant Wathen-Dunn. In addition, Bjorn Sigfusson read a draft of this section in 1980 and provided some information. (For more about sources, see Sources and Notes, below, p. 55.)

### Jon Jonsson<sup>7</sup> (1743-1802)

**Jon Jonsson<sup>7</sup>** was born in 1743 and he died 1 March 1802. He was ordained in 1768, given a parish in 1780 and served as a minister at Reynistadir and at Hafsteinstadir. He married Hildur Halldorsdottir, daughter of Halldor Hallsson (1690-1770) and Thuridur Sveinsdottir (d. 1780), whose paternal line was reported for 17 generations in the Icelandic genealogy (2 gr 4-21, pp. 3-7).

In his Sigfus genealogy, Leifur reported that this Jon Jonsson was a minister *and* a doctor. In his Sigfus/Gudrun genealogy, however, Leifur did not report that this Jon was also a doctor; and, in his biography of Rev. Magnus Jonsson, M. Julius Magnus did not report that this Jon was also a doctor. Perhaps, then, the report that this Jon was a minister *and* a doctor was mistaken.

### **Jon Jonsson<sup>6</sup> (1772-1866)**

**Jon Jonsson<sup>6</sup>** (1772-1866) married, 5.6.1801, Thorgerdur Runolfsdottir (1776-1857) – her father, Runolfur Runolfsson (d. 1781), was a wealthy farmer in Sandgerdi, Sudurnes. Bjorn reported that this Jon Jonsson died 17 June 1866 at the age of 94. The death date in the Icelandic genealogy, 24 June 1866, may have been his burial date.

In his Sigfus genealogy, Leifur reported that this Jon Jonsson graduated from –

Hola Divinity School, 1793; ordained 1804, and given parish; 1826 at Grenjatharstath[ur] which is known as the family ancestral home. Vesta has a picture of it painted by Sarah in 1934. Was knighted for his medical services to his country. His medical annals are in the Icelandic antiquarian archives at Reykjavik.

In his biography of Rev. Magnus Jonsson, M. Julius Magnus wrote (p. 1):

In 1804 to 1816 there lived at Montruvell Monastery (this is just a place name, not an institution) a priest by the name of Jon Jonsson (whose father was Jon Jonsson, 1743-1802) who had the reputation of being a good doctor..

Jon Jonsson, the priest above named. . .moved from Montruvell Monastery to Staerri-Arskogur in 1816 and then in 1827 to Grenjatharstathur where he was given a clerical living and where he lived until his death at 94 years of age. He had been a priest for 62 years. He was counted among the leading preachers of his day as well as being a good doctor. . . He was knighted by the King of Denmark in 1849. The Reverend Jon was well educated and began as a teacher at the Hola School. . .and at Reykjavik before he was ordained as a priest.

Grandson Sigfus, who came to live at Grenjatharstathur in 1854 when he was nine, recalled that his grandfather Jon was of Skagafjord ancestry; that he was a big man with a shock of snow-white hair who weighed his food (counting grams instead of calories); that he took a jigger of brandy at breakfast; and that he consumed quantities of *skyr* (a sort of Icelandic yogurt) for his stomach's sake. Once, Sigfus remembered, his grandfather – who had a tendency to quinsy – dreamed that he had coughed his throat ailment clear out of his system, and took the dream to mean that he should try chewing tobacco.

In his biography Sigfus recalled (p. 16) a childhood incident at Grenjatharstathur that –

happened one evening when the song and religious reading service had begun. Grandfather kept open the door of his room and paced the floor while the service was held. He thus saw the whole length of the main hall (baðstofa). One of the brothers and Sigfus sat on their bench about the middle of the hall with a chessboard between them anxious to finish a game in progress when the singing service began. They were a bit fearful and nervously watchful when all of a sudden comes grandfather with long strides, jostles the chessboard and stalks back to his room.

The old homestead at Grenjatharstathur has now become a museum – the resident minister now lives in a more modern house behind the old manse. When we visited in 1980, the resident minister – Sera Sigurdur Gudmundsson – showed me the baðstofa. It was composed of three upstairs bedrooms that opened into each

other. Bunks with removable sideboards lined the rooms so that, with the sideboards removed, the bunks became benches that lined a hall made of the opened bedrooms. Gudmundsson identified the front bedroom as that of Grandfather Jon.

Of his paternal grandmother, Thorgerdur, Sigfus recalled (biography, p. 17) that she –

had become quite infirm and wrinkled when he first remembered seeing her; yet she was about on foot and took little walks every day. When she was in bed on her last illness he remembers that medicines were always being given her, all prepared no doubt by his father. One day when she was about to take her prescription for the relief of old age, she spoke up: "Oh, let me die then everything will be cured."

Considering that Thorgerdur died in November 1857, Sigfus would have been around 12 years old when he heard those remembered words. Perhaps his recollection was reinforced when, as seems likely, Thorgerdur's words were preserved in a family story.

Sigfus's maternal grandparents lived at nearby Mula, and Sigfus saw them quite often. He remembered his grandfather Skuli Tomasson (1775-1859) as –

A large man, large of face, broad shoulders and stout hips, with rather thin legs. Everything pointed to his being a man of strength and suppleness. Now all this is a child's memory and may be exaggerated because Sigfus himself was then slight of build.... Firmest in memory are the trips to neighboring Mula and the rock candy and wheat bread or cookies his grandfather gave him all of which greatly pleased him and sharpens his memory that his grandfather fetched these sweets out of a bureau or writing desk which stood in the living room.

Trying to recall his maternal grandmother Thorvor Sigfusdottir (1771-1862), Sigfus's memory yielded three images: grandmother Thorvor in ancient festal costume at a communion service; his grandmother, bedridden, being carried to Grenjatharstathur when fire razed Mula (probably around 1860); and his grandmother taking snuff from a little snuff horn of bone or ivory with a silver spout (see biography, pp. 14-15).

## Children of Jon Jonsson

Jon Jonsson and Thorgerdur Runolfsdottir had 10 children, who were reported in "The Reverend Magnus Jonsson" (p. 2) as follows:

1. **Björn**, b. 10 May 1802. Editor, publisher and owner of periodicals *Norði* and *Norðanfari* in Akuveyr.
2. **Guðny**, b. 20 Apr 1804. Glorified in 20<sup>th</sup> century Icelandic literature for her poetry and her sad, tragic death. She passed away 11 Jan 1836, age 31, in one of the most isolated villages in the extreme northeast corner of Iceland (probably of peritonitis). Married Rev. Sveinn Nielsson, who became deacon to Rev. Jonsson at Grenjatharstathur.
3. **Magnus**, d. infancy.
4. **Christrun**, b. 31 Aug 1806, skilled versifier, m. Prof. Hallgrímur of Holmar. [Leifur's translation: Hallgrím of Holm. Bjorn's correction.]
5. **Hildur**, b. 21 Oct 1807, m. (1st) Dr. Pall Jorbergsson, who drowned 9 Jul 1831 in Breidafjord; and (2nd) Jakob Jánsen, a merchant in Husavík.
- + 6. **Magnus**, b. 7 Jan 1809 at Authbrekka (Auðbrekka), Horgárdalur. [In Icelandic genealogy, birth date: 6 Jan 1809. Bjorn corrected spelling of birth place.] Of principal interest in this account, Magnus is more fully reported below.
7. **Margrjet**, b. 17 Apr 1812: m. Edvald Møller, a businessman from Akureyri.
8. **Sigridur**, d. in infancy.

**9. Jon Gunnlaugur**, b. 17 May 1814.

**10. Halldor**, b. 17 Aug 1815, d. 1903, twice married.

### Magnus Jonsson<sup>5</sup> (1809-1889)

**Magnus Jonsson<sup>5</sup>** 1809-1889, married, 23 April 1840, Thorvor (Þorvor) Skulasdottir, 1810-1872, the daughter of Rev. Skuli Tomasson and Thorvor Sigfusdottir.

Magnus was educated at home until the fall of 1826 when he entered Bessastadt school near Reykjavik, from which he graduated in 1832. He then worked for a while for a merchant of Reykjavik, and then returned home to Grenjatharstathur at the end of the summer of 1833. His hope then was that his father would support him in his wish to pursue a medical education abroad. His father, however, disappointed his hope. Magnus then became a teacher for the children of Kjarten Isfjords, a merchant at Eskifjordur, hoping to earn enough to finance further education for himself. He earned so little, however, that, after three years, he gave up on his plan to study abroad and returned home.

Magnus had been at home for about two years when, by letter of 17 Jan 1838, Deputy Magistrate Bardenfleths appointed him pastor for Grimsey, a little island just north of Akureyri on the Arctic Circle. At this point in “The Reverend Magnus Jonsson” (from which this account is largely drawn), a footnote (probably contributed by translator Leifur) reported that at this time in Iceland, church and state were united so that political officers made church appointments. Apparently Magnus was not drawn to church work and had not sought the appointment. Probably, then, his father took the initiative and had the political clout to secure the position for Magnus. Magnus finally decided to accept the commission: he was ordained 24 June 1838 and left for Grimsey, where he stayed three years.

Magnus reportedly thought that Grimsey was a place unfit for human habitation and secured, 1 Aug 1841, an appointment to the living at Garþur (Garður), Kelduhverf. With his escape from Grimsey assured, Magnus married Thorvor, so it was as a newly-married young man of 32 that Magnus began his second pastorate.

The next ten years were spent at Garþur. Then, in 1851, Magnus received a call to the pastorate at As in Fell and the family moved there in 1852. They were settling in happily when Magnus’s father called him home to be his assistant at Grenjatharstathur. Although disinclined to do so, Magnus made the move back to Grenjatharstathur in the spring of 1854 and took over the management of the homestead and the church. When his father died in 1866, Magnus applied for his place and was given, 15 Feb 1867, the clerical living at Grenjatharstathur. After Thorvor’s death in 1872, Magnus found himself increasingly unable to discharge his pastoral duties, so he asked to be released from them. In 1876, the pastorate was turned over to Prof. Benedikt Kristjansson from Helgastad.

In his retirement, Magnus continued to live at Grenjatharstathur, except for one year when he lived with his son Sigfus and family at Vestdalseyri. When, in 1886, Sigfus went to the U.S., Magnus retired to Garþur in Adaldalur, where he died 18 May 1889. At Garþur, Magnus regularly climbed a little hill from the top of which, with the aid of his hand telescope, he could observe the Grenjatharstathur farm to the southwest. The last time that he made this observation, Magnus caught a cold. “Thereafter,” his biographer wrote (p. 10), “the weakness which he suffered was aggravated and brought him, to his death.”

Of Magnus’s general characteristics, his biographer reported (p. 4) that Magnus was –

a man of about average stature, rather slightly built, good looking, dark haired, affectionate, good natured.

What most distinguished Magnus, however, was –

his great passion for knowledge and his true scientific spirit; he was, as some said, a natural born scientist. He read much and every year gathered periodicals and books from abroad, Danish, German and English. It must have been rare that a parish priest, at the time he lived, or even to this day, followed as closely as he did the foreign literature and scientific trends of his day.

At this point (p. 7) it was reported that Magnus's library contained among other books the works of David Frederick Strauss, a German theologian. Translator Leifur added this note:

The translator of this life of his grandfather is over-joyed to know that his grandfather read this [Strauss] treatise that must have strengthened his tolerance, a virtue so lacking in that Century.

In his Sigfus genealogy, Leifur noted that Magnus Jonsson "dabbled in Homeopathy;" and, in his Sigfus/Gudrun genealogy, Leifur noted that Magnus was "ordained 1838; laydoctor, homeopathy." In his biography of Magnus, M. Julius Magnus gave Magnus's second profession more weight, writing (p. 5) –

It is witness to his [Magnus's] natural bent for the scientific that he vainly struggled for four years to realize his wish to go abroad to study those branches of knowledge nearest his heart – the natural sciences, more particularly medicine.... That which he could not get to learn by study, life still demanded of him. It is not surprising that this side of his life's interest carried the day nor was it at all strange in a country which had been without medical service for 900 years that a man should take up medical studies, even though he had no training, for it was an absolute necessity, particularly in the middle of the 19th Century when there were not more than seven doctors in the whole county.

Biographer Magnus went on to report (p. 6) that when he himself was attending medical school in Strandarsysl in 1909 he met many older men who had known Rev. Magnus and who had even been under his medical care; and that they spoke of Rev. Magnus with affection and respect, including respect for his medical skill. Biographer Magnus also reported that Rev. Magnus's interest in homeopathy involved him in a controversy with Dr. Hjaltain, a public health officer, who tried unsuccessfully to bar Magnus (and other technically untrained doctors) from the practice of medicine. Biographer Magnus's information suggests that, far from being a dabbler in homeopathy, Magnus was a serious and successful practitioner of it.

## Children of Magnus Jonsson

Magnus Jonsson and Thorvor Skuladottir had five children, all of whom were born, at Garthur where Magnus was the minister 1841-51. Garthur lies a little inland from Axarfjordur, the coastal indentation next east from Skafandi. Information about these children came from the biography of Magnus by M. Julius Magnus (p. 4) and from the recollections of Sigfus Magnusson.

**1. Björn** b. 10 May 1802, d 11 Aug 1881. Married Hólmfriður Matthildur Pjeturdóttir. He was a well-skilled versifier, a skilled worker in both wood and iron, and a farmer. They lived at Granastaðir in Koldukinn.

Together with his carpentry master, Árni Hallgrímsson from Garðsá in Eyjaf, in 1867, he worked on the church on the island of Grímsey and at Grenjatharthur in 1865. Björn was a trainer at that time.

Sigfus recalled that Björn died of tuberculosis; that he invented an improved sythe.

About Björn Sigfússon, Björn's grandson whom Jon and I met at Reykjavik in 1980, Herdis Benediktsson wrote (22 July 1980) "until his retirement a couple of years ago, he was the librarian at the University of Iceland."

Björn's son Ólafer Grimur Björnsson advised (24 Nov 2008) that his father earned a master's degree in Icelandic literature (1934, Univ. of Iceland); PhD 1944; BA 1978, (Swedish, Econ. Geography); Head of Univ. Lib. 1945-1974.

**2. Jón Skúli** became a merchant at Eskifjord; married Guðrun Ásgiersdóttir from Isafjord and moved to Hellerup, a suburb of Copenhagen. Four children.

Sigfus remembered that Jón was getting ready to continue his schooling at the Reykjavik Latin school when his plans suddenly changed and he went to work in a store in Akureyri. In retrospect, Sigfus understood Jón's change of plans to have been occasioned by the expense of Hildur's schooling, which precluded higher education for Jón.

The next winter, Jón was at home translating from English to Icelandic the story "The Indian Mother," which was printed in Norðanfari. The editor of Norðanfari was Jón Skúli's uncle, Björn Jónsson (1802-1882), the eldest brother of Rev. Magnus Jonsson. Jon picked up English from Lord Milbank who was at Grenjatharstad for the winter of 1862-63. Milbank, for his part, learned Icelandic and Icelandic textile skills (see "Rev. Magnus").

Children of Jón Skúli and Guðren:

Asgeir, b 2 Aug 1884; merchant.

Gardar Magnus, b 5 June 1887; tax office clerk.

Gunnar, b 11 Nov 1889; lawyer

Sigríð Louise, b 10 Sept 1891; married to a manager of United Steamship Co., Copenhagen.

All of Jón Skúli and Guðren's lived in Copenhagen.

+ **3. Sigfus** was born 19 March 1845. Of principal interest in this account, Sigfus is more fully reported below.

**4. Hildur**, b 1846, d 1907. Born the year of the measles plague, caught measles when three weeks old, which damaged her hearing and she never learned to talk. Later she was sent to a school for the deaf in Copenhagen (Iceland had none) under the care of her aunt, Mrs. Hildur Johnson (1807-1801). Provincial Magistrate Peter Hafstein, Magnus's schoolmate at Bessastadt, helped with Hildur's school expense. Hildur learned sign language in Danish, which was of limited use to her back in Iceland. Her sister Ingibjorg, however, knew Danish and learned to sign from Hildur. After Ingibjorg married, Hildur made her home with her.

It is said that Rev. Magnús complained that the cost of keeping Hildur at the Copenhagen school equalled the cost of sending three students to the University. Therefore he could not afford to send his sons, Björn, Jón Skúli and Sigfús, beyond elementary school.

**5. Ingibjörg** m. Dr. Julius Halldórsson. They had three children, two of whom were M. Julius Magnus and Thora.

M. Julius Magnus (1886-1941) was a medical doctor, a graduate of the University of Iceland medical school in 1910. He specialized in venereal diseases and dermatology, Iceland's first specialist in that field. His Christian (given) name was Magnús, which he changed to Maggi. He wrote his name Maggi Júl Magnús or M. Júl Magnús. His middle name Júl or Július, stands for Júliasson.

The family name Magnús is derived from Rev. Magnús Jonsson. The family still uses the name Magnús.

Another of their children was Thora, who m. Guðmundur Björnsson (1873-1953), a county magistrate.

When we were at Reykjavik in 1980 we met Miss Ingibjorg Björnsson, daughter of Thora and granddaughter of Ingibjorg Magnúsdottir. She said that her last name, Bjornsson, reflected a decree around the

time of World War I which mandated the father's last name as the inherited family name. Later, this rule was rescinded, but Ingibjorg felt it was too late for her to change.

## Sigfus Magnusson<sup>4</sup> (1845-1932)

**Sigfus Magnusson<sup>4</sup>** was born 19 March 1845 at Garthur (Garður), Iceland, where his father was the Lutheran minister; and he died 31 October 1932, at Toppenish, Washington. He married, 29 July 1876, Gudrun Emilia, daughter of Benedikt Kristjansson and Arnfridur Sigurdardottir, who was born 1 September 1855 at Mula, Iceland, and who died 26 January 1913 at Spanaway, Washington.

In Icelandic, her name was Guðrun. Leifur spelled it Gudrun, however, and that is how I've heard it pronounced in the family—Bob Evans says that he's been saying Guthrun all along and I just haven't heard him.

In the spring of 1852, when Sigfus was seven, his father moved to a new post at As in Fell. Many of the details of the overland trek from Garthur to As—camping, fording rivers, the hospitality of isolated farmsteads—were still fresh in Sigfus's mind when he wrote his recollections at least half a century later. The family had scarcely settled at As, however, when a reverse journey to Grenjatharstathur (Grenjaðarstaður) had to be undertaken: Sigfus's father had been summoned home to become the assistant minister to *his* father.

Sigfus grew up at Grenjatharstathur. He ws educated at home except for a winter's (1855-56) schooling at Husavik when he was ten. At Husavik, Sigfus recalled that he and his two brothers lived with relatives and that he received instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic from Jacob Johnson (probably his uncle). The next instruction of the Magnus Jonsson children was at Grenjatharstathur from Rev. Benedikt Kristjansson, then the assistant minister at nearby Mula, who added Danish to the 3-R curriculum—Rev. Benedikt later became Sigfus' father-in-law. The next home teacher, Rev. Magnus Jonsson (no relation), expanded the curriculum with instruction in rhetoric, geography, English and German. Teacher Magnus Jonsson, the last home teacher specifically remembered by Sigfus, probably was at Grenjatharstathur by 1857.

Looking back, Sigfus thought that, although he had acquired a useful store of book knowledge, his education had not prepared him to earn his living. At the same time, he recognized that there was not much vocational opportunity in Iceland.

As a resource for meeting the challenges of adult life, Sigfus prized most his excellent physique. He matured early, reaching his full stature by the age of 18, and he liked physical activities and tests of strength. Among the latter were *glima*, an Icelandic form of wrestling, and the so-called "hook." The hook involved standing, arms behind the back, before a half-barrel of flour and lifting the flour by seizing the rim of the barrel in one's teeth. Sigfus said that he essayed the hook only once. (Sarah, Leifur's wife, once told me that Leifur had broad shoulders "like his father" and that their son, Frederick, had a similar physique in this respect.)

Sigfus spent the earliest years of his manhood at Grenjatharstathur where he became "experienced in just about every kind of work on a farm" (biography, p. 12). Like many other Icelanders, however, Sigfus was dissatisfied with his prospects in Iceland and wished to seek his fortune in some foreign land. He had made up his mind to migrate in 1871, but delayed leaving for two years for "special and personal reasons" (autobiography, p. 2)—probably the death of his mother in 1872 figured in these reasons. Sigfus finally got off in June, 1873. By this time he was 27 years old and engaged to marry Gudrun Benediktsdottir.

Sigfus joined a group of nine other Icelanders bound for Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Icelandic friends had settled the year before. The party, which included another man from Grenjatharstathur and two women, sailed to Norway, joined a group of some 600 Norwegian immigrants at Bergen, and arrived at New York City 26 June 1873. The Icelanders then proceeded to Milwaukee, arriving there on the 4th of July after a number of greenhorn adventures.

At Milwaukee, Sigfus and his party stayed at a cooperative Icelandic boarding house until they found work. Sigfus's first job was unloading boards from a wagon; and, somehow, the man with whom he worked managed to drop a few boards on Sigfus's feet. Angrily Sigfus said, "You must be a rascal!" As he said it, he realized that he didn't know how to curse in English.

Next, Sigfus worked in the wheat harvest and then he settled in for the winter as the hired hand (\$6 a month with bed and board) for an elderly farmer, John Near. With farm work slack during the winter, Mr. Near permitted Sigfus to attend the local elementary school in order to improve his English. Mr. Near and his wife also tried to improve Sigfus: they had him re-baptized, changed his name to Silas, and made him stop smoking. The Nears, who had lost a grown son, indicated to Sigfus that they would like him to stay with them and take their son's place. Sigfus, however, had other plans: to go back to Milwaukee for the summer, and back to Iceland in the fall.

Back at Milwaukee, Sigfus got in touch with Rev. Paul Thorlaksson, who shepherded the immigrant Icelandic flock there. At a meeting organized by Rev. Thorlaksson, a group of immigrant Icelanders sent Sigfus and Jon Halldorsson to search for land suitable for the site of an Icelandic colony (the group paid for Sigfus's and Jon's tickets) – Jon Halldorsson, who immigrated in 1872, later married Sigfus's cousin, Thorvor, from South Fjald, and settled at Long Pine, Nebraska. Sigfus and Jon found no suitable land; but, when they returned to Milwaukee to report their failure, they found that most of the would-be colonists had already left for Canada. Sigfus and Jon, together with another Icelander, then worked the Wisconsin wheat harvest, after which Sigfus returned to Iceland.

Sigfus reached Reykjavik 23 November 1874, and found himself to be a celebrity. He was asked his views of America by the editor of *Isafold*; and, as he traveled with the mail carrier from Reykjavik to Akureyri, he remained the center of attention. Sigfus recalled (biography, p. 35):

At every night's stopping place everyone turned to [him] to learn about the New World; if he had just come back from Heaven, they could not have asked more questions.

At last, Sigfus reached Akureyri where he bought skis and an "alpine stock" for his journey across Vadlaherd. He reached Grenjatharstathur just before Christmas, 1874, after an absence of a year and a half.

That winter, a whale calf was driven ashore at Breidavik, Fjornes, which was then a church property of Grenjatharstathur. Sigfus was sent to oversee the cutting up of the carcass, which was eaten on the spot. Sigfus recalled (biography, p. 36):

The story of the wreck of the whale spread as fast as any telegram could carry it today, and a whale-rush, so to say, took place from all directions. The reason: few had any food with them, and many were hungry; and immediately the largest vat available was at once put upon a fire to cook down the whale for the hungry mob.

In 1875, the magistrate of the area, 'Ola Finsen, appointed Sigfus postmaster at Grenjatharstathur, a position that he held for three years. The next year Sigfus married, 29 July 1876, Gudrun Emilia

Benediktsdottir. Years before her father, Benedikt Kristjansson, had been Sigfus's house teacher. In 1875, Rev. Benedikt Kristjansson was the pastor at Mula as well as being a college professor and a member of the Althing. The wedding of Sigfus and Gudrun was a gala affair. Sigfus recalled (biography, p. 37):

...the festivities found four ministers there, the two parents of the bride and groom, Benedikt Kristjansson, then pastor at Helgastad (and later at Grenjatharstathur) and Jon Ingvaldsson, pastor at Husavik. There was one district magistrate, a businessman, and a poor law magistrate, besides numerous folk living in the district, both young and old. The festivities were held at Grenjatharstathur on account of the shortage of housing at Mula, although all the costs came from the latter household; and costs did not seem to have been spared... .the wedding bowl was drunk in champagne, which certainly was not available in those days in any of the country districts.

For the first six years of their married life, Sigfus and Gudrun lived at Mula, where Sigfus took over the management of this church estate. This work was not entirely to Sigfus's liking: it was unfeasible to make improvements on a public estate; the estate was too large for its workforce; and "other reasons which need not be mentioned" (biography, p. 37) At this point in Ruth Magnusson's copy of Sigfus's biography, Leifur noted that the "other reasons" may have connoted in-law problems. In any case, after six years at Mula, Sigfus decided to make a fresh start at Vestdalseyri in Seydisfjord on the east coast of Iceland.

In the summer of 1882, the Sigfus Magnusson family went to Akureyri to begin their coastal voyage to Vestdalseyri – the weather was so bad that summer that they were weatherbound at Akureyri until the fall. Leifur, the third child in the family, was born 7 July 1882. In his family Bible record, Sigfus reported that Leifur was born at "Muli;" but Leifur, himself, reported that he was born at Akureyri (Sigfus genealogy, p. 4). Leifur's daughter Ruth recalled (Synopsis, p. 6) that Leifur –

was born prematurely, at seven months, and that, while most everyone's efforts were directed at helping the mother, it was the old family servant who thought the baby could be saved and did so by putting him in an oven.

It ran in Jon Magnusson's mind that this servant who preserved the Magnusson line was named something like Gudna Gamma. At this point in my draft, Bjorn Sigfusson offered: "Gudna Gamma = Gudny Gamla?" (old Gudny?)

Sigfus did not report his work at Vestdalseyri, but translator Leifur added parenthetically (p. 38):

(He does not say what he was occupied with at this period of his life. His oldest daughter recalls having heard it said as something to do with the fishing industry. It plainly had not been a success.)

Bjorn Sigfusson noted on my draft at this point that Sigfus worked in the herring fishery and in carpentry. In any case, after four years at Vestdalseyri, Sigfus decided to go again, to the U.S. – this time for good.

Trading on his earlier experience, Sigfus arranged with the British Anchor line to get up a party of 40 Icelandic immigrant passengers in exchange for six free passages for himself – his family group included a hired maid. In due course, the immigrants arrived at New York City, whence the other Icelanders went to Canada. Sigfus and his family went to Long Pine, Brown County, Nebraska, where Sigfus's old friend, Jon Halldorsson, had already settled.

They reached the country town of Long Pine 6 August 1886, and put up temporarily at a hotel. The two older children, Berga and Thorda – then nine and six years old – remembered that, at the hotel, they were

served watermelon for dessert. Their mother told them that she had read about some such melon in *The Arabian Nights*, and she advised them not to eat the strange fruit.

Sigfus lost no time in taking out his first citizenship papers and filing for land under the Homestead Act. He filed for a half-section located about six miles out of town, two miles beyond Jon Halldorsson's: 160 acres would be his after five years' residence and cultivation; and the other 160 acres would be his after five years if he planted thereon 10 acres of trees. Sigfus selected his claim primarily for its closeness to Halldorsson's place. Experience disclosed two serious drawbacks to Sigfus's place: the soil was poor and hilly; and the nearest school was not only too far away for the children but also of poor quality.

The family did not begin living on the land until the spring of 1887, when Sigfus had completed his farm buildings: a sod house, a sod barn and a pig sty. A fourth child, Amy, was born that winter, 22 January 1887, so it was a family of six that moved into the little sod house (it was about 20' x 25', had one door, tamped down sand floor and an attic accessible through a trap door).

Sigfus and his family had a hard time as homesteaders so that, as soon as he could prove up on his land claims, Sigfus was ready to give it all up. The family moved in to Long Pine for the winter of 1891-92, and Sigfus found buyers for his property. He sold the farm to another Icelandic immigrant and his tree claim to someone else, "both for the sum of \$400" (biography, p. 46). Then, early in April, 1892, the family was off to Duluth, Minnesota, a destination selected partly because several countrymen were there already and partly because its schools had a good reputation.

At Duluth, Sigfus first worked as a laborer in a hardware store. Soon, however, he got a few cows and started a little milk business on a "borrowed or permitted use of" lot within city limits. With the help of Gudrun's cousin, who stayed with the family for a while, Sigfus built a four-room house on this lot. It was here that the fifth child, Vesta, was born, 5 March 1898.

Around 1902, the family and the milk business moved outside city limits to the suburb of Woodland Park. Here the family had an eight-room house which Sigfus greatly enjoyed. Meanwhile, the two older daughters had finished high school (they both graduated in 1899) and had become school teachers. The next two children were benefitting even more from their educational opportunities: Leifur earned a B.A. at the University of Minnesota in 1905; and Amy, in 1911.

With the move to Woodland Park, Sigfus considered that (biography, p. 46) –

for the first time a small degree of fortune seemed to smile, as the family (really the two older daughters – translator Leifur's parentheses) were grown up and able to help. They had all gotten the education that their mother had always wished for them, and they did not consider themselves above using their earnings and their actual work to forward the family enterprise.

Probably around this time, Sigfus's interest in genealogy and history came into bloom. This late flowering was reported ("A Backward Look," p. 1):

(Sigfus) often recalled sadly that when he was at the age of confirmation he had dozed off during the reading of the old sagas, as was common in the households in those days in Iceland during the evenings, especially in the winter when the darkness was long. But at last in his later years he took to reading many of them – wide-awake and interested in them. He had often been ashamed of himself for not having been able to take any part in the conversation that went back and forth about the incidents, especially the genealogy, that was in those old sagas. It was later, but not too late, in life to improve

himself along those lines .... it was as late as his fiftieth year that he began to read the ancient sagas when he himself had become a sort of ancient story. His satisfaction was that what he read in those later years really became plain to a matured man which till then had been a closed book, a lost secret, because, as it were, one had sped by so fast in one's eager youth and early years.

Although Sigfus dated his late-blooming to “as late as my fiftieth year” (1895), it might well have been stirred a few years later (after 1902) by fortune’s smile in Woodland Park.

Gudrun died 26 January 1913 at Spanaway, Washington, while on a long visit to her daughter Berga and family. Of these events Sigfus reported (biography, p. 47) that he had first crossed the Rocky Mountains in 1912 when he went to visit Gudrun who was visiting at Berga’s, and that Gudrun had suddenly died there in January 1913. Ruth (Magnusson) Wathen-Dunn once told me that one of Vesta’s childhood memories was of her mother, sitting in the kitchen and shaking from Parkinson’s Disease, directing the older girls in household tasks. It might be, then, that Gudrun’s disability was a factor in her long, long visit to the Benediktsons in Washington. Gudrun’s death certificate reported that she had been found dead in bed; that her death probably was due to organic heart disease; and that her death was not attended by a physician.

Some time after Gudrun died Sigfus sold his Woodland Park property and moved into the city, where he lived at three different places before moving west, 7 December 1921, to make his home with Berga and her family in Washington state (biography, p. 47). Jon Magnusson thought that Sigfus sold his house and dairy sometime after 1916; and that Sigfus and his daughters Thorda and Vesta then lived in a Duluth apartment. Helen Colgan reported that, by around 1918, Sigfus was making his home with her parents (John and Amy Evans); in that this arrangement ended with the birth of Martha Evans (April, 1919). Possibly, the third Duluth domicile reported by Sigfus was the house on 11th Avenue East where Thorda and Vesta ultimately set up their household. As part of the Benediktson household in Washington, Sigfus first lived at Yakima for four years. He then lived with the Benediktsons at Toppenish until he died in October, 1932.

The Magnusson lot in Duluth’s Forest Hills Cemetery contains markers for Sigfus and Gudrun – probably Sigfus, like Gudrun, was cremated and their ashes were interred at Forest Hills. The lot also contains markers for their daughters Thorda and Vesta and for their son Leifur and his wife.

Of Sigfus and Gudrun, their son Leifur wrote (letter to Nordis and Herdis Benediktson, 23 Dec. 1958, see p.22):

(they) were characters in psychological contrast to each other. I sometimes imagine that had they been in the Hollywood tradition, they never would have stuck it out for all their lives. But poverty and an ineluctable Lutheran puritan tradition and an ingrained Stoicism bound the two in a common determination to serve their children....

Herdis copied Leifur’s letter for me and added some parenthesized thoughts of her own, including the comment that both Sigfus and Gudrun abhorred Lutheran, and puritan traditions. On an earlier draft of this account I noted (22 Nov 1979) that Jean (Francis) Magnusson had said that it was “well known” that, when Gudrun reached the U.S. she had stated that she would never go to church again. Jon Magnusson added: “The children later all became Unitarians.”

## Children of Sigfus and Gudrun – Magnusson<sup>3</sup>

Sigfus and Gudrun (Benediktsdottir) Magnusson had five children: Berga (Bergthora), Thorda (Thorgerdur), Leifur, Amy and Vesta. Information for the following accounts of these children came from Sigfus's Bible record and other writings, and from other family members.

**1. Berga** was born 20 May 1877 at Mula, Iceland, and she died 30 Aug 1957. She came to the U.S. with her parents in August 1886, and spent five years in impoverished and isolated circumstances on a farm outside of Long Pine, Nebraska. The family moved to Duluth, MN, in 1892, where Berga attended public schools. She graduated from high school in 1899 and became a school teacher – she contributed some of her earnings to her father's milk business.

Berga married, 30 Dec 1908, Indridi BENEDIKTSON, who was in the dairy business in Washington. They lived, first, at Spanaway in Pierce County, then at Yakima and, finally, at Toppenish. The Benediktsons provided a final haven for Gudrun (she was on a long visit with them at Spanaway when she died) and for Sigfus, who spent the last ten years of his life with them.

Berga and Indridi had five children.

(1) **Nordis** Ingiborg Benediktson, b. 10 Feb 1910, d. 13 Nov 1982 at Toppenish WA. She earned a B.A. at the University of Washington when she was 19; and worked, first, as a bookkeeper and, later, as the manager of the Toppenish hospital. She married Rodney GIBSON. One child:

a. **Barbara** Gibson, m. Lee DAVIS.

(2) **Herdís** Gudrun Benediktson, b. 18 June 1911, d. 31 March 1991. Bright and precocious, like Nordis, Herdis earned a B.A. from the University of Washington at the age of 18, Phi Beta Kappa. Herdis became a school teacher and did not marry.

(3) **Nanna** Thorgerdur Benediktson, b. 4 Dec 1913, d. 1994; m. William HETZNER. Three children.

a. **John** Hetzner, m. \_\_\_\_; one son.

b. **William** Hetzner, m. Cathy \_\_\_\_; two children

(a) **Amy** Hetzner, b. c. 1970.

(b) **Melissa** Hetzner, b. 1978.

c. **Georgia** Hetzner became a teacher of Home Economics. She did not marry.

(4) **Christine** Ephemia Benediktson, b. 1 Nov 1915; d. 1 Oct 1946; m. Frederick Berg. One child.

a. Frederick Christopher (**Chris**) Berg, b. 1946 at Yakima WA.

(5) **Einar** Indridi Benediktson, b. 28 Oct 1918; d. July 1993; m. Midge \_\_\_\_\_. Two children.

a. **Tom**, m. Caroline \_\_\_\_.

b. **John** m. **Liz** \_\_\_\_.

**2. Thorda**, born 28 Dec. 1879 at Mula, Iceland, died of cancer in April 1932 at Duluth MN. Like Berga, Thorda graduated from high school in Duluth in 1899 and became a teacher, contributing her time and earnings to the family welfare. After Gudrun left the Duluth household, Thorda undertook the care and rearing of her sister Vesta. Thorda did not marry.

+ 3. **Leifur** was born 7 July 1882 in Iceland. In his Bible record, Sigfus recorded that Leifur was born at Muli; but Leifur himself wrote (in his Sigfus genealogy) that he was born at Akureyri.

In Icelandic, *ei* is pronounced *ay*, as in lay. The Magnusson family in the U.S., however, tended to ignore Icelandic usage and usually the name was spoken as Leefur, not Layfur.

Of principal interest in this account, Leifur is more fully reported below.

4. **Amy** was born 22 Jan. 1887 at Long Pine, Nebraska, and she died 7 April 1979. She told her daughter Helen how she happened to have a non-Icelandic name: overhearing Sigfus and Gudrun discussing Icelandic

names for their infant, the midwife interjected, "Oh, no! This is an American baby. Give her an American name." The midwife suggested, and the parents accepted, the name Amy.

Amy graduated from high school in Duluth in 1906 and from the University of Minnesota in 1911. She earned her educational way by teaching, and she continued to teach until 1916 when, 26 July, she married John L. EVANS. They had three children.

(1) **Robert L.** Evans, b. 30 May 1917. In 1939 he earned both a master's degree in chemistry and a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Minnesota. He married, 20 Dec 1941, Frances Janet Bentley, who died in November 1955. He married (2nd) Elsie Hardy, an English teacher who retired in 1980.

In 1992, Robert and Elsie moved from their Minneapolis home of 25 years to a condo in the same neighborhood. Robert and Frances had three children.

a. **Amy** Elizabeth Evans, b. 1 Aug 1943, earned a B.S. in biology from the University of Wisconsin and a Master of Library Science from the University of Pittsburgh. While an undergraduate, Amy married, and soon divorced, Roger A. Due. She married (2nd) Dr. Harold Bumberg, who died in 1971. Amy became a librarian with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. where, in 1974, she married Stanford Malcolm LEVIN, a patent examiner with the U.S. Patent Office, who died in 1983. Two children.

(a) **Rena** Frances Levin, b. 3 April 1975.

(b) **Joseph** Irvin Levin, b. 3 July 1978.

b. **Thomas** Randall Evans, b. 19 Sep 1946, became an orthopedic surgeon. In 1968 he married Jane Everts, also born in 1946, a certified orthopedist.

c. **Julia** May Evans, b. 7 Aug 1949, became a veterinarian and teacher (D.V.M., 1974, certificate in Clinical Pathology, 1980, Ph.D., pathology, 1984, Assoc. Prof., M.S.U.). Julie married Russ Lee STICKLE, also a veterinarian and also an Assoc. Prof., M.S.U. Two children.

(a) **Sara Ann** Stickle, b. 5 Nov 1980.

(b) **Andrew Lee** Stickle, b. 2 July 1985.

(2) **Martha** Amy Evans, b. 10 April 1919; d. Feb. 1979. Afflicted with Down's syndrome, Martha lived with her parents except for the last few years of her life. When her parents became unable to care for her, Martha was institutionalized at Brainerd MN.

(3) **Helen Hope Evans**, b. 18 Jan. 1929; graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1951; married 15 Sep. 1956 William G. COLGAN, Jr. They live on the California side of Lake Tahoe, where Bill works as a masonry contractor (licensed in both California and Nevada). Two children.

a. **Sean** William John Colgan, b. 18 April 1958. Originally named William John, he later amended his name to include his nickname. He graduated with honors, 1980, from Caltech, Pasadena; earned Ph.D., 1986 (radio astronomy) from Cornell University; and now works at Ames Research Lab. (NASA), Mountain View CA. He married, 18 June 1983, Louise Elizabeth Barsy, who does Bobbin lace work – gives demonstrations and teaches.

b. **Evan** George Colgan, b. 16 May 1960; graduated with honors, 1982, from Caltech; earned Ph.D., 1987 (material science) from Cornell University; now works for IBM, which has patented four of his developments. He married, 22 Feb. 1994, Janet Saylor, a teacher with a Ph.D. (physics) from Clark University. Both Evan and Janet are avid outdoor recreationalists, particularly practicing skiing and kayaking.

5. **Vesta**, youngest child of Sigfus and Gudrun Magnusson, was born 5 March 1898 at Duluth MN; and she died 15 Oct. 1979 at the Fairfax (VA) Nursing Center, where she had been for a little over a month. She did not marry.

Vesta graduated, 1915, from Duluth Central High School, and opted to begin her work career rather than continue her formal education. (Years later, in July 1960, Vesta earned – 36 semester hours – a certificate in accounting from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School.) During World War I, Vesta went to Washington, D.C., where her brother Leifur had located, and worked as a government secretary. After the war

she returned to Duluth, where she worked as a secretary in a law office and made her home with her sister Thorda.

Thorda's death in 1932 prompted Vesta to move, again, to Washington where, at first, she joined the Leifur Magnusson household. They all attended All Souls Unitarian Church, first in the building at 14th and L Streets, and then in the old Keith's Theater Building while the present church on 16th Street was being built.

In Washington, Vesta was an Administrative Assistant at the Public Administration Clearing House until it moved back to Chicago. Vesta then took a position with the Civil Service Commission where she rose to be Chief of its Retirement and Annuity section. Her own retirement, 18 Jan. 1967, was timed to give her the memorable Civil Service Annuity Number 1010000.

Throughout her successful professional career Vesta also actively pursued many other interests. Many of these interests were connected with All Souls Church: Vesta served as a church trustee for many years; she was a member and sometime president of its business and professional women's club; and she was the perennial treasurer of its Boys Club (later, Columbia Heights Youth Club). Vesta identified strongly with social justice causes, was a staunch Viking fan and enjoyed theater – a plate in the lobby of the Arena Stage attests Vesta's early support of this Washington theater. In addition, Vesta liked to travel. Her first passport, issued in 1930, reported Vesta as height: 5' 3½"; hair: brown; eyes: green. That year she went to Iceland and Europe with a Duluth tour group. The last time that she went abroad, July 1966, Vesta went again to Iceland.

On a trip west in 1969, Vesta had a sort of breakdown so that she had to be escorted back to Washington by her niece Herdis Benediktson. Vesta continued to experience panic and disorientation so that, finally, she committed herself to the Washington Psychiatric Institute where a shock treatment seemed to restore her. In 1971, Vesta simplified her life by moving from her Connecticut Avenue apartment to the Roosevelt Home for Senior Citizens, which provided meals and housekeeping service, and by relinquishing her Youth Club duties. She gave up travel, too. Her condition continued to worsen, and her nephew Jon Magnusson helped her with her affairs (she gave him her Power of Attorney, 17 April 1978, and he was appointed as her Conservator 11 Dec. 1978). In the proceedings incident to the Conservator appointment, medical testimony attributed Vesta's condition to Tardive Dyskinesia and to Diffuse Cortical Atrophy.

To gain more personal care, Vesta moved, 6 Sep. 1979, to the Fairfax Nursing Center, where she died about a month later. As Jon reported in a letter that he sent to Vesta's family and friends:

At the end she was having her bedclothes adjusted by a couple of nurses around 11:30 P.M., and they were talking with her when she "just expired," as one of the nurses said later. Cerebral Thrombosis (stroke) the doctor said.

Vesta's death certificate reported that Parkinson's Disease was a secondary condition "contributing to death but not related to the terminal disease."

In her will, written 2 Oct. 1966, Vesta directed that, after her expenses had been met, the residue of her estate should be shared equally by her nine nieces and nephews and Chris Berg, the surviving child of her deceased niece Christine Benediktsson Berg. Each of the ten shares amounted to just under \$4,000.

### **Leifur Magnusson<sup>3</sup> (1882-1960)**

**Leifur Magnusson<sup>3</sup>** was born 7 July 1882 in Iceland. When he was four years old, his family immigrated to the United States and settled as homesteaders outside of Long Pine, Nebraska. After five hard years of homesteading, the family moved, in 1892, to Duluth, Minnesota, where Leifur finished growing up.

He graduated from Duluth Central High School in 1901. As second highest ranking student in his class, Leifur delivered the salutatory address: A Plea for the Classics – A Word for the Greeks. He went on to the

University of Minnesota at Minneapolis where he majored in Greek and Latin and earned a B.A. in 1905. Leifur's entry in *Who's Who in America* (Vol. 25, 1948-49, p. 1563), the principal source for this account, next reported three years, 1906-09, as a "high school teacher in Minnesota."

The school year 1905-06, not reported in *Who's Who*, was mentioned in an Icelandic Law Directory (see Sources and notes, below), which reported that in 1905-06 Leifur taught algebra and commercial geography at the "Central University of Duluth" (perhaps the old Duluth State Teachers College?); and that, 1906-09, he taught Latin and Greek at Fergus Falls High School (in Otter Tail County, MN) – his last year at Fergus Falls, Leifur was the principal of the school. The Icelandic Directory also reported (here in the editor's translation) that, in 1905, Leifur was –

honored with the fellowship of the Cecil Rode's (sic] foundation to study at the University of Oxford in England, but did not do so.

Leifur's eulogy (Pomona Valley Unitarian, March, 1960) mentioned that his first professional job was teaching Latin and Greek at Fergus Falls and that "had he been faster on his feet in track, he would have been a Rhodes scholar." The will of Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) established two-year Oxford scholarships to be awarded on the bases of high character and superior scholarship combined with outdoor or athletic tastes. Apparently, Leifur felt that, with better athletic credentials, he would have won this award.

Leifur's next career move was to Washington, D.C., where he began his civil service career and completed his formal education. He was first employed, 1910-11, in government library work, and then he worked, 1912-20, for the U.S. Department of Labor doing labor research. Outside of working hours, Leifur continued his education: he did a year of graduate study in economics, 1910-11, at George Washington University; and then he studied law at Georgetown Law School, which granted him an LL.B. in 1915. He became a member of the D.C. Bar, but he did not practice law – he considered his profession to be that of social economist.

Leifur married, 19 July 1912, Sarah Bement Swain, the daughter of Frederick Kimball Swain and Emma Hill Bement of Caledonia, Michigan. Sarah was born 30 August 1879 in Rush County, Kansas. After a year at Ferris Normal School, 1901-02, Sarah taught school for a while. She then came to Washington, D.C., where, 1907-10, Sarah studied at the Corcoran School of Art. The two Midwesterners met at All Souls Unitarian Church which, in those days, was located downtown (the present church at 16th and Harvard Streets was completed around 1924). In the three years following their marriage, their three children were born; and, in 1915, Leifur and Sarah built their first house at 3223 Northampton Street, NW.

In 1920 Leifur left his civil service career to become an associate statistician with the National Bank of Commerce in New York City. The family moved to Westfield, NJ, where Sarah's sister Marion (Mrs. William J. Myers) and her family were settled. One apparent result of sisterly proximity was that Sarah became, 15 Jan 1921, a member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (sister Marion supported her membership application and, doubtless, supplied Sarah with the necessary genealogical information). Sarah's DAR membership was based on her descent from Samuel Freeman (1743-1831), patriot and member of the Provisional Congress. Sarah's entry in *The Compendium of American Genealogy*, Frederick A. Virkus, Ed. (Vol. VII, 1942, p. 297) reports her descent through patriot Samuel Freeman to immigrant ancestor Samuel Freeman who came to Massachusetts in 1630.

Of the job-change that brought the Leifur Magnusson family to Westfield, NJ, Leifur later told his son Frederick that it had been a bad move. Considering that the move had been disappointing, it seems fortunate that, in 1919, Leifur had served as the editor of the English edition of the Proceedings of the First

International Labor Conference in Washington DC. This experience led to a far more satisfactory position for Leifur: he became the English editor of the *International Labor Review*. Leifur's new job was located at Geneva, Switzerland, where the family lived for the next three years, 1921-23.

In Geneva the family finally settled into a large apartment at 2 Avenue de Warrens, located on the south side of a deep ravine made by the confluence of the Rhone and Arve rivers. Just around the corner from the apartment was a public school, L'Ecole de St. Jean, where the children were enrolled and, perchance, learned French with their 3 Rs. With the children in school and household help as well (Jon recalled a maid), Sarah had time and inspiration for painting – several small oil paintings of rustic scenes and of Lac Leman, now in my possession, date from this period.

In 1924, Leifur became the American representative of the International Labor Office of the League of Nations, a position that he held for the next 14 years. The family moved back to the Northampton Street house which was later enlarged. In the late 1930s, when I first saw the Magnussons in Washington, Leifur's place of work was a nice little white building – since razed – on the west side of LaFayette Park at 734 Jackson Place. It was a peerless Washington location: across the park was the old Dolley Madison house, then the site of the Cosmos Club; just north of the park was (and is) St. John's Church; and, to the south, the White House.

In 1938, Leifur resigned from the ILO. Apparently, the organization had informed its personnel of the threat of war in Europe and of serious consequences for ILO operations; and, under the circumstances, Leifur thought it prudent to resign and withdraw his retirement funds while he could. After a short recess from the world of work, Leifur resumed his civil service career. He became Chief, Defense Service Section, Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, 1941-44, and then he was Assistant Director, Manpower Studies, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1944-47. The last position reported in Leifur's entry in *Who's Who* was Associate Professor at Georgetown School of Foreign Service in 1947. I think that, probably, Leifur held this position for no more than a year.

At the end of his *Who's Who* entry, Leifur reported his honors, affiliations and published works as follows:

Decorated 1939, Grand Knight of the Cross with Icelandic Falcon. Fellow, A.A.A.S., member Amer. Econ. Assn., Amer. Statis. Assoc. and American Political Science Association. Club: Cosmos. Author: Housing by Employers in the U.S., 1919; Historical Survey of International Action Affecting Labor, 1920.

About his knighthood, Leifur once told me that he had received an invitation to be at the Icelandic Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair outside of New York City. He thought little more about it until he received his decoration through the mail and realized that, by failing to go, he had missed his decoration ceremony.

The comparable part of Sarah's entry in *The Compendium* lists her affiliations as "D.A.R., Chevy Chase Woman's Club, Unitarian." On my copy of her DAR membership application I noted that Sarah resigned in 1932, so she was not a member when *The Compendium* was published (1942).

Around 1943, Leifur and Sarah sold their Northampton Street house and moved into a smaller one at 816 Chalfonte Drive in the Beverly Hills section of Alexandria, VA. As the 1940s were ending, they started scouting about for a retirement place in California – one winter, I recall, they rented their Alexandria place while they were exploring California for a retirement site. They finally settled on Claremont, a college town some 15 miles east of Los Angeles, where some of their Washington friends had already relocated themselves. They bought a house at 730 West 8th Street and moved into it, probably by Christmas, 1949. I have inferred

this probable date from seven snapshots that they sent us around then: two of the pictures, accompanied by the album note “San Dimas Canyon, 1949,” show Leifur and Sarah, looking happy, at the base of a tree; and five of the pictures show Leifur and Sarah and their new home. On one of these pictures, Sarah has written “Merry Christmas.”

For the next ten years – the decade of their 70s, more or less – Leifur and Sarah seemingly had every reason to be pleased with their decision to retire to Claremont. They joined the University Club, renewed old friendships and made new ones. Leifur busied himself with home-improvement carpentry, politics, bowling on the green and helping to bring into being the Unitarian Church of Pomona Valley. Sarah found a stimulating art group: she started painting with casein, swapped pictures with her peers and exhibited – in 1957, her casein painting of a Yucca tree in San Antonio Canyon won a first award. Sarah’s enjoyment of Claremont was enhanced by her acquisition of an Autoette which enabled her to get around town on her own.

It was at Claremont, I think, that Leifur did much of his work in family history: translating Icelandic sources and compiling genealogies of his parents. At Christmas time, 1958, he made a family distribution of some of the fruits of his labors (see letter, next page). At that time, Leifur was looking forward to doing more with his family history material: he wrote, “I have a lot yet to work on so don’t frame these as yet.” Alas, Leifur did not complete any more genealogical work.

Letter from Leifur Magnusson to his nieces Nordis Benediktson Gibson and Herdis Benediktson, dated 23 Dec 1958, Claremont, California:

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Dear Nordis and Herdis,

I presume you Icelanders are going to be together at Toppenish for Christmas. This copy of the genealogy came in typed from your Aunt Amy yesterday. It came late because I was late (dilatory) in sending it to them for copying. It will serve you as interesting, I am sure.

I have not put on or used the Icelandic alphabet with its á, ð, ó, ö but have used the English equivalents.

All these personages are to be found in either the Book of Settlers, more properly called Book of Colonizers, of the feudal lords (rovers, vikings, pirates) who paralleled the Roman rape of the Sabine women and became your ancestors and ancestresses, none the less; or in the Sturlunga Saga, which takes it to the 13th century. The later ones in the line are probably in the “Bishops Sagas,” as either their wives or their fathers were clerics, ecclesiastics, deans and professors of some sort. A surprising number were knighted.

I have a lot yet to work on so don’t frame these as yet!

I also enclose a translation of your grandfather’s autobiography, which I have rendered in the third person. Of course, I am sorry, he does not tell many things we would like to know – hardship and poverty in Nebraska, equally too in Duluth. Of course that is an economic and less important part of it, for the integrity and optimism, and liberalism were still there. Your grandmother and grandfather were characters in psychological contrast to each other. I sometimes imagine that had they been in the Hollywood tradition, they would never have stuck it out for all their lives. But poverty and an ineluctable Lutheran puritan tradition (yet both of which traditions they abhorred) and an ingrained stoicism bound the two in a common determination to serve their children who have come after.

You will note that the first nineteen generations from the first settler (colonizer) are identical, and that beginning with the 20th they diverged from two brothers who lived in the 16th century. The first five generations were pagan, but don’t hold that against them.

The right hand column is the wife or husband, whichever was the ascendant in the line to date. I have assumed that the woman is just as authentic a carrier of the blood line as the man. “Male and female He created them” according to mythology as well as biology, which I prefer.

You will note that your grandmother's line, really the more distinguished as it runs through that of Sturla (Snorri Sturlasson), comes out as 29 from the first settler. But then it is easy for two persons meeting and marrying in the 19th century to differ by one generation over a period of over a thousand years.

Also note, as I agree that old Plutarch had the right idea when he said that it is all well enough to have great ancestors, but "the glory is all theirs." This will help to shrink the head!

And now will you two be so lovely as to copy (perhaps edit) [but I didn't] this letter and send copies to the other two full-blooded Icelanders on the West Coast, whom I cherish as my grandniece and grandnephew. [He must mean niece & nephew.]

As a letter of cheer and optimism for the season of cherishing our cultural background this will at least reach you before that brief season is over, but always remember there is Twelfth Night to help the dilatory. And Sarah is in on this last paragraph.

S. and L.M.

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Herdís copied this letter for me, adding the bracketed comments, in Jan. 1980.

In the late afternoon of Monday, 15 February 1960, having completed some errands, Leifur was driving home when his car (a 1950 Packard) was hit by a vehicle emerging from a side street. Leifur was thrown to the ground, sustaining fatal injuries – he died at about 6 p.m. at the Pomona Valley Community Hospital. At his memorial service, his eulogy (printed in the Pomona Valley Unitarian, March 1960) began –

With the death of Leifur Magnusson a sturdy oak has been felled and "leaves a vacant space against the sky." His ten years at Claremont have been a story of a multitude of friendships and deepening respect and admiration throughout the wide circle of this community. His fame in national and international service were known to us but it was not for this reason that we loved him. We loved him for himself, for his wonderful zest in living, for the rare sparkle of his friendliness, for his keen aliveness to the whole drama of modern life, for his utterly fearless devotion to the true and the good, and added to all that his high spirit and good humor which lent grace to all his days and deeds. He was like a young man "going forth to run a race" and he ran it to the end.

In the course of his appreciation, Leifur's eulogist also mentioned Sarah: "artist, rare personality and cherished friend." In memory of Leifur, "great lover of books, and our first librarian," the Unitarian Society of Pomona Valley decided to create a Magnusson Library and to establish a Magnusson Memorial Book Fund.

After Leifur died, Sarah wished to remain at Claremont; and, for a while, she did. It became clear, however, that she was not up to heading a household of one, and she joined the household of her son Jon at Arlington, Virginia, in the summer of 1960. For the next six years she lived with the Jon Magnussons, except for summer visits with her daughter and family, the Weiant Wathen-Dunns, at Lexington, Massachusetts.

In the spring of 1966, Sarah's right hip broke as she was getting out of bed. She was hospitalized for 18 days (28 April-16 May) and then returned home where she lived as an invalid, with professional nursing care by day and family care at night. It became clear that she needed 24-hour professional care, and she moved into the Woodbine Nursing Center at nearby Alexandria, Virginia. In August, Sarah developed pneumonia. She was moved to the Alexandria Hospital where, the next day, 9 August 1966, she died, three weeks before what would have been her 87th birthday. Her death certificate reported that the immediate cause of her death was Bronchopneumonia, due to Senility, due to A.S. (athero sclerosis?) Generalized.

As to physical characteristics, Leifur was around 5' 8" tall, broad-shouldered and blue-eyed with brown hair. Sarah was around 5' 3" tall; and, until it turned gray, her hair was red, or auburn. She inherited her hair color from her father and passed it on to her two sons.

## Children of Leifur and Sarah – Magnusson<sup>2</sup>

Leifur and Sarah (Swain) Magnusson had three children, all born at Washington, D.C. Sarah reported (in her Compendium entry) that the children were Jon Swain, Ruth Swain and Frederick Swain.

+ **1. Jon** was born 8 May 1913. As an adult he had no middle name, and I recall that he once told me he had had his middle name officially deleted. Unfortunately, I no longer remember the details of his name-change story.

The records of the University of Virginia report Jon as "Jon Swain Magnusson," while those of The George Washington University report him as "Jon Magnusson." Apparently, Jon deleted his middle name by September 1935, when he entered GW. In his Bible record, Sigfus reported the birth of Leifur's son "Jon Skuli" (evidently named for Sigfus's brother, see above p. 9); so, it would seem, Jon's middle name, originally, was "Skuli" – or, at least, Leifur so reported it to Sigfus. In his extension of Sigfus's Bible record, Leifur recorded his three children – all without middle names.

Of principal interest in this account, Jon is more fully reported below.

**2. Ruth**, born 2 August 1914, graduated, 1937, from Bennington (VT) College as an art major. She married, 19 Dec 1942, at the Magnusson home in Washington D.C., Weiant WATHEN-DUNN.

Of English descent, Weiant, born 27 April 1912, died 13 Feb 1997, grew up in the vicinity of Hartford CT. He attended Wesleyan University where he earned a B.A. in 1934 and an M.A. in 1936. He spent the next four years abroad – for most of this time he was a teacher (math and physics) at Robert College in Istanbul. On his return to the U.S. he taught a year, 1940-41, at Williston Academy before going to a position with the Naval Research Laboratory at Anacostia D.C.

In the early 1950s the Wathen-Dunns moved to Lexington MA, and Weiant began work in communications with the Cambridge Research Laboratories at Bedford. This move was related to the enrollment of daughter Rebecca, who had been deafened by meningitis, in the Clarke School at Northampton MA

In 1989, Ruth and Weiant sold their Lexington house and moved into an apartment in the retirement complex, Brookhaven, also in Lexington.

They had three children, all born in the District of Columbia

**(1) Tanya Wathen-Dunn**, b. 21 April 1945, m. David C. MAHONEY, her high school sweetheart. Tanya graduated, 1981, from the University of Lowell with a B.S. in nursing. She worked most lately as a liaison nurse for Northeast Rehab Hospital 1990-2007 and then retired.

Tanya's husband David continued his education, part-time, and graduated, 1972, with a B.S. in biology from Merrimack College. He helped found and was C.E.O. of Banyan Systems, Inc. He is presently running several start-ups and is on the boards of five companies.

Tanya and David had three children.

**Sean Mahoney**, b. 28 April 1984. Crippled from birth with cerebral palsy.

**Kimberly Ann Mahoney**, b. 21 June 1965; m Scott Patrick HENDERSON 17 May 1997. Kimberly is an assistant administrator at Inferonics. Scott is a senior PCB designer at Cobham.

Kimberly and Scott have two children.

**Patrick**, b. 27 Nov 2000.

**Molly Elizabeth**, b. 28 Feb 2003.

**Stephanie Jill Mahoney**, b. 13 Jan 1967; m 3 July 1994, Harold William MOODY, III, at Bolton MA. Stephaine is Human Resources Director at Converse. Hal is Director of Institutional Product Mgt. at TIAA-Cref.

Stephanie and Hal have three children:

**Harold William, IV**, b. 17 Feb 1997.

**Alexandra Swain**, b. 21 April 1999.

**Kelsey Jill**, b. 2 Oct 2001.

**(2) Rebecca Wathen-Dunn**, b. 9 Dec 1946, learned lip-reading, speech and more conventional subjects at the Clarke School. She graduated from public high school at Lexington MA, and earned, 1971, a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design. She is working as a graphics technician with the Multimedia Service Center at Hanscom AFB, MA, where her father worked for many years before. She is pursuing family history on her father's side from England and has located cousins in England and Australia.

She married, 22 Apr 1972, at the Follen Unitarian-Universalist Church in Lexington, James Marshall BAKER. This union ended in divorce. Rebecca married, 2nd, 4 July 1993, Jarlath William CROWE – his 2nd marriage, too. Jarlath's first marriage, to Belinda Jane Greenwood, ended in divorce in 1983. From this marriage he has a son, Patrick Ambrosius Crowe, b. 2 April 1981.

Jarlath, b. 23 Feb 1948, attended Clarke School a little behind Rebecca – they became better acquainted at Clarke School reunions in 1987 and 1992. He graduated from Williston Academy and completed his education at the Rochester (NY) Institute of Technology (Associate Degree in biology, 1971, and a degree in Social Work, 1975). He is retired from over 30 years with the MS Fish & Wildlife Service of the MS Dept. of Interior.

Rebecca and James had one child..

**Ian Thomas Stancomb Baker**, b. 6 Nov 1977 at Providence RI. Born prematurely, Ian weighed at birth 4 lb. 9 oz. He presently lives in Herndon, VA and is active in SCCA event. He is rated near the top in the Street Touring category. He works in computer and networking with the *Washington Post* in Washington, D.C.

**(3) Peter Wathen-Dunn**, b. 20 Jan 1950, Washington D.C., graduated from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH, and from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C., 1986. He has made a career as a government lawyer, first with the Office of the Federal Register, then under the National Archives of the GSA (1976-78). He joined the Office of the General Counsel for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1978 and transferred to the Department of Education in 1980. Peter is a noted expert in grant law, and was instrumental in getting the Federal OMB to move all its grant-related circulars to the Code of Federal Regulations in 2004. He is also an expert in Suspension and Disbarment Law, and served with a core group of attorneys to totally revise suspension and disbarment regulations. Peter is active in the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church in Adelphi, MD, serving on its Board of trustees 2009-2012.

Peter married, 9 June 1973, Karla Kitigawa. This union ended in divorce (no children).He married, 2nd, 7 May 1983, Karen M. Davis. This union ended in divorce. Karen and Peter had two children.

Children Peter and Karen:

**Kirsten Erika Davis-Dunn**, b. 5 Dec 1986.

**Karla Anne Davis-Dunn**, b. 30 Aug 1990.

Peter married, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Muriel MORISEY on 9 Nov 2002. Muriel received her B.A. in 1969 from Harvard University and her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center. During law school she held senior staff positions in the U.S. House of Representatives, including with Rep. Shirley Chisolm, the first African-American woman elected to the House. In 1974 Muriel was on the staff of the House Judiciary Committee investigating President Nixon's impeachment. In the Carter administration she was an attorney in the Justice Department's Office of Legislative Affairs. Then she was Legislative Counsel to the Department of Civil Rights Division. She served as Legislative Counsel in the National Office of the ACLU for two years. From

1985-91 she also served on the faculty of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Son Andrew Morisey was born 19 May 1987. Since 1991 she has been Associate Professor of Law, Temple University Beasley School of Law.

**3. Frederick**, youngest child of Leifur and Sarah Magnusson, was born 25 Nov 1915. He was educated at the University of Michigan (B.S., 1937) and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.S., 1940, in chemistry). During World War II, Frederick – usually called Ted – was drafted into the army and later completed officer training. He served at various posts within the U.S. – his last assignment was to Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland where, as Lt. Magnusson, he worked on a training manual concerned with the impregnation of uniforms with protective agents against mustard gas. After the war he made his career in chemistry with the U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

He married, 1 July 1943, Jean Francis, daughter of Nathan and Helen (Sawyer) Francis of Carthage, N.Y. Jean, born 29 July 1918, graduated from St. Lawrence University in 1940, *magna cum laude* and *Phi Beta Kappa*. Jean met Ted when she came to Washington as an intern with the National Institute of Public Affairs. Jean died 13 Sept 1993.

Fred m (2nd) 27 Dec 1998 Lois Beaumont. They live at 12561 8th NW Seattle WA 98177.

Frederick and Jean had two children.

**(1) Baiss Eric Magnusson** was born 16 Oct 1945 at Edgewood, Maryland. On birth his name was Eric Francis; but, in 1973, Eric began esoteric training on the spiritual path of the Sufis and, in 1975, he was given the spiritual name Baiss which he prepended to his given name.

After graduating from Miami (Ohio) University, Eric worked for several years in the computer component of the Manned Space Program at Houston, Texas. He then moved to Seattle, Washington, where he continued his career in the computer field, authoring over a dozen software titles for the academic and business world.

Eric married, 26 March 1978, Catherine Clune, then a student of forestry at Everett Community College. Catherine grew up in Hancock, N.Y., the sixth child of Cliff and Lottie Clune – Cliff of Irish and Lottie of Polish descent. Catherine and her family are amateur and professional performers of popular music.

Eric and Catherine had two children.

**Jemilah Sara Magnusson**, b. 21 Aug 1978.

**Rabia Vera Magnusson**, b. 8 Jan 1983.

**(2) Janet Magnusson** was born 2 Dec 1954 at Washington, D.C. She graduated DePauw University at Greencastle, Indiana, with a BA in Political Science. Janet worked for several years as a technical librarian, first at American Gas Association and then at Washington Gas, where she computerized the library. Since 1981 she has worked in the computer field, currently as a web developer.

Janet married, 14 Jan 1984, at the Arlington, Va. Unitarian Church, Douglas Norvin RICKMAN. Janet and Douglas divorced. Two children. Married 1996 William Conrad KRAUSE III. Bill graduated Univ. Of Maryland, BS Engineering; Johns Hopkins, MS Computer Science.

**Valerie Kay Rickman**, b. 30 Oct 1984. Boston University BA, MA Environmental Policy. Like her mother and grandmother, became a member of the *Delta Delta Delta* sorority, 5th generation.

**Joshua Douglas Rickman**, b. 6 Mar 1988.

## Jon Magnusson<sup>2</sup> (1913-1992)

**Jon Magnusson<sup>2</sup>** was born 8 May 1913 at Washington, D.C., where he spent the first seven years of his life. In 1920, the family moved to Westfield, N.J.; and, the next year, the family moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where, 1921-23, Jon attended public school and acquired his good French accent.

Returning to Washington in 1924, Jon attended E. V. Brown Elementary School and then Western High School (since 1974, Ellington School of the Arts) from which he graduated in June, 1931. He went on to the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where he was granted a B.S. in June 1935. By that time, Jon had decided to prepare himself for a legal career, and his fourth year at the University was also his first year in its Law School. Jon completed his law studies, however, at The George Washington University Law School in Washington (J.D., June 1937). The change in law school was prompted by financial considerations; by 1935, all three Magnusson children were in collage, and the expense of Jon's schooling was reduced by his living at home and attending GW. Jon would have much preferred to remain at Virginia. In later years, as a supportive alumnus, he associated himself only with Virginia and its Law School.

The summers of Jon's school years often included visits to relatives. His brother Frederick recalled that, in 1924, when the family returned from Geneva, they all travelled by train to the West Coast, visiting relatives there and en route. He also recalled at least two long summer visits, perhaps in 1925 and 1926, to maternal grandparents in Caledonia, Michigan. One summer while visiting in Caledonia, Jon developed mastoiditis in his right ear. This illness was surgically treated by a Swain doctor-relative at nearby Grand Rapids, but it damaged the hearing in that ear and left it prone to recurrent infection. Parts of some summers, too, Jon spent at the Boy Scout camp on Chesapeake Bay.

In his last year at GW, Jon did volunteer legal work (Sept. 1936-June 1937) at the Legal Aid Bureau of the D.C. Community Chest; and, the following summer (June 1937-Sept. 1937), Jon did volunteer work for the Juridical Division of the Pan American Union. His paid legal career began 6 May 1938 with his appointment as a Junior Research and Correspondence Attorney in the Legal Division of the U.S. Housing Authority. This was a P1, or entry level professional, position that paid \$2,000 per annum.

The next year, 30 August 1939, Jon married Margaret C. Lawsing, daughter of Albert L. and Carrie (Woodrow) Lawsing (see LAWSING), and compiler of this account. I had graduated from Bennington (VT) College (B.A., 1937, Social Studies), where Jon's sister Ruth and I were roommates in 1936 and 1937. I then went on to Columbia University in New York City, where I received an M.A. in Sociology in June 1938. That summer I went to Washington, D.C., and found work with the so-called LaFollette Committee, a Senate committee that was holding hearings on violations of the rights of labor. This position led to a position as Junior Social Science Analyst (P1) with the Labor Division of the Farm Security Administration. In Washington, I naturally renewed my acquaintance with Ruth and thus Jon and I came to know each other.

Jon and I were married on the north lawn of my parents' place at Randolph Center, Vermont. After honeymooning in Canada, Maine and Nantucket, we moved into our first abode: a 2nd-floor apartment at 4305 North Pershing Drive, Arlington, Virginia. This apartment, our home for the next two years, was located in the then-new Buckingham garden-apartment complex, parts of which have now been designated "historic" and ear-marked for preservation. At Buckingham we learned of, and joined, a sort of group home-building project.

The members of this group of would-be home builders organized themselves into a non-profit corporation – Jon drew up the papers – known as Tauxemont Cooperative Houses, Inc., for the purpose of

building houses for the incorporators. A wooded tract some four miles south of Alexandria, VA, was purchased; and, in due course, a little community of 20 basically identical houses, sited on half-acre lots on either side of horseshoe-shaped Tauxemont Road, was built. One of the incorporators, Alexander Knowlton, served as Construction Superintendent at, as I recall, a salary of \$400 per month. The name Tauxemont was taken from a report in the guidebook *Washington: City and Capital* which stated (p. 31) that a 1608 map by Capt. John Smith showed an Indian settlement of that name in the same general area. Actually, the guidebook report proved to be a misreading of *Tauxenent*, the name shown on Smith's map.

In the fall of 1941 we moved into our new house at 15 Tauxemont Road, our home for the next 16 years. During most of this time, Jon was an attorney with the Public Housing Administration, or its predecessor agencies: U.S. Housing Authority, 1938-42; Federal Public Housing Authority, 1942-47; and Public Housing Administration, 1949-57. Otherwise, in 1942, Jon was employed about five months by the Office of Price Administration, a career digression occasioned by a plan to regionalize Jon's housing job to Atlanta and Jon's wish to remain in Washington. Another career digression occurred in 1947, when Jon was separated from his housing job by a reduction in force. This situation eventuated in two months' employment (Feb.-Apr., 1948) with the so-called Bender Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, and then 18 months (Apr. 1948-Oct. 1949) with the Civil Aeronautics Board.

During World War II, Jon's Selective Service classifications (2A, 3A) deferred him from being drafted into military service. In July 1942, however, he tried to enlist in an officer-training program, but was turned down because of his bad ear.

In the fall of 1957, Jon accepted a position with the New York City firm of Reed, Hoyt, Taylor and Washburn, located at 52 Wall Street. His work with this small firm was concerned with the issuance of municipal bonds – work closely related to his experience with housing authority bonds. Jon, who had been angling for such a position, was delighted with his prospects. He went to NYC in September 1957, beginning the fulfillment of a year-long residency requirement for the New York Bar. The rest of the family stayed behind in Virginia – Joan and Leif to start the school year in familiar schools, and I to sell the Tauxemont house. Jon located an apartment for us at 3850 Hudson Manor Terrace (Apt. 5C, W), in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, where Leif and I joined him in December, 1957. Joan joined us about a month later.

As it turned out, our move to New York City led to a sojourn, rather than a relocation, there. The Wall Street position gave out, and Jon's next work was in Washington where, 25 April 1960, he began work as attorney-advisor in the General Counsel's Office of the Federal Maritime Board. The rest of the family followed Jon after we had finished our school terms (I was in school, too: with the thought of becoming a teacher, I had enrolled for the spring term, 1960, at the Yeshiva Graduate School of Education), and after I had found a place to live in the Washington area.

At this time, Jon's widowed mother, Sarah, joined our household in a rented house at 2421 Fort Scott Drive, Arlington, Va. – it runs in my mind that we all moved in on the same day. Later, in November 1962, we bought a house at 2765 Fort Scott Drive, where Jon lived for the rest of his life. Neighbors told us that, during World War II, this house had been the home of movie star Constance Bennett and her husband, Brigadier General John Coulter. In both Fort Scott houses, Sarah had her own sitting room as well as a bath and bedroom.

Jon was at Maritime, in various capacities, for ten years; and, to judge from the "sea stories" that came to embellish his conversation, he found much of interest in his work. Probably the best time of this experience was when (Feb. 1963-Nov. 1966) he worked as special assistant to Commissioner John S. Patterson, whom

he admired. For his part, Patterson gave Jon an Outstanding performance rating, 1964-65. When Patterson was not reappointed, Jon became Chief of the Litigation Division with the rank of Assistant General Counsel. This position was lost through a reduction in force, 8 May 1970. At this time, on his 57th birthday, Jon retired from the Civil Service.

After his retirement, Jon held two more positions. In the academic year 1973-74, Jon was assistant dean of the then-new Vermont Law School at South Royalton, Vt.; and he was an advisor at the Department of Transportation for a little more than nine months, 1975/76. During these “retirement” years, I was working at The George Washington University in its Manpower Research project. I joined this group in 1964 as a part-time research assistant, and I retired in 1977 as a full-time research associate. Both Jon and I were totally out of the world of work by 1978.

During his working years, Jon wrote 10 articles that were published in law reviews, as follows:

- 1948 Our Membership in the United Nations and the Federal Treaty Power, 34 *Virginia Law Review* 137;
- 1951 Observations on the Economic Regulations of the Civil Aeronautics Board, 18 *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 181;
- 1957 Lease Financing by Municipal Corporations as a Way around Debt Limitations, 25 *George Washington Law Review* 377;
- 1960 Parking Facilities – Some Legal and Financial Considerations, 46 *Virginia Law Review* 595;
- 1960 Municipal Bond Buying by Fiscal Advisors, 15 *The Business Lawyer* 393 (reprinted in *The Daily Bond Buyer* and reprints circulated by a New York and a Chicago fiscal advisory firm);
- 1962 Off-Street Parking Facilities for New York, 28 *Brooklyn Law Review* 239;
- 1964 Shipping Conference Dual-Rate Contract Arrangements, 38 *St. John's Law Review* 221;
- 1966 The Need for International Agreement on Obtaining Evidence from Foreign Countries, 26 *Federal Bar Journal* 232;
- 1968 Conflicts of Interest in the Ocean Freight Forwarder Profession, 20 *Administrative Law Review* 459; and
- 1971 Maritime Agreements with State Traders, 46 *St. John's Law Review* 48.

Jon also wrote a non-legal article:

- 1964 Fort Scott in Arlington County during the Civil War, *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, p. 37. Our house at 2765 Fort Scott Drive was built on, or next to, the site of the namesake Civil War fort.

In a resumé prepared around 1971, Jon reported his “special accomplishments” as follows:

Special Commendation Certificate, Federal Maritime Commission, letter of commendation from Chairman of F.M.C. and outstanding ratings. Director, University of Virginia Law Alumni Association, D.C. Chapter; Chairman of Committee on Rights of Individuals, Municipal Law Section, American Bar Association; President of Civic Associations and delegate to Fairfax and Arlington federations of civic associations. Prepared material used in national advertising of housing authority bonds and notes in Moody's Manual of Municipals.

Jon’s “President of Civic Associations” reflected his presidencies of Tauxemont Community Association, of the Mt. Vernon Park and Playground Association (a swimming pool and playground organization for which Jon did initial legal work) and of the Arlington Ridge Civic Association (1964-65). After his retirement, Jon was active in only one organization, the South Arlington Kiwanis Club, which convened at weekly luncheon meetings. He served as president of this club 1979-80.

In October, 1977, Jon won a Ford Fiesta in a Safeway Stores sweepstakes – he tended to be lucky and seemed to win more than his share of doorprizes. In 1977, also, he began an eleven-year record of squirrel catches, entitled “The Squirrels and Me over the Years: Relocations via Hav-a-Heart to Airport Marina.” This record, preserved in Jon’s Personal Records file folder, reflected the circumstances that, every summer, our peach tree made squirrels peach predators, and made Jon a squirrel relocator. From 1977 through 1987 (our peach tree died in 1988), Jon relocated 273 squirrels.

Jon’s Personal Records folder also contained a thank-you note to Jon from James S. Brady, who lived around the corner from us and who had been severely wounded in the attempted assassination of President Reagan. Brady wrote (2 Nov 1981):

You have no idea how thrilled I am with my cane. I really appreciate the time and attention you extended to make sure I received my gift.

Your thoughtfulness and that of all the wonderful people down in the Canal Zone will be a source of inspiration to me as I continue my recovery.

The context of this thank-you note included the facts that my sister Julia married E. E. Daniel, who became a Panama Canal pilot. From time to time, we visited the Daniel family in the Canal Zone; and, on several occasions, Danny had pointed out Black Palms to us and had extolled the heart of this tree as ideal cane material. This led to Jon’s idea to get a heart-of-Black Palm cane for Brady. When we were visiting the Daniels in 1981, Jon enlisted Danny’s help in the cane project and he knew just the man for the job. On learning of the project, this man made it his own. In due course, he made, and Jon delivered to Brady, a handsome cane with a silver Balboa embedded in its head.

Recurrent in Jon’s retirement years were the often-related activities of traveling, photography and the composition of poems. This cluster of interests was stimulated by the fact that Joan had married Foreign Service Officer Thomas C. Hubbard. Their hospitality led to family visits in foreign lands – ideal foreign travels. These visits and travels often stirred Jon to take pictures and to write poems. In 1992, when the Hubbards were stationed in Manila, Joan had Jon’s poems printed in a bound volume, to which Tom contributed an introduction.

Towards the end of the 1980s, Jon was increasingly bothered by an arthritic right hip; and, in February, 1988, on our return from visiting the Hubbards in Kuala Lumpur, Jon had a successful hip replacement operation. In November 1991, however, Jon’s good luck deserted him: he developed pulmonary fibrosis, from which he died, at home, 10 August 1992.

At Jon’s memorial service, held 20 August 1992 at the Fairfax Unitarian Church, his brother Fred read Jon’s poem Asbyrgi (see next page). Jon wrote this poem after our 1980 trip to Iceland where we had visited Asbyrgi, a celebrated spot about 15 miles north of Dettifoss. It is the site of an extinct waterfall, now a giant dry horseshoe-shape made of towering perpendicular lava walls. The shape suggests a colossal hoofprint and has given rise to the legend that Asbyrgi was made by Odin’s steed, Sleipnir. Jon had this poem printed and framed with the thought that it could be displayed in the little upstairs museum room at Grenjatharstathur with its pictures of Jon’s paternal ancestors (hence, Jon’s self-identification “Great-grandson of Magnus Jonsson”). When he went to Iceland in 1985, Fred delivered Jon’s framed poem to the minister at Grenjatharstathur, who was by then the Bishop of North Iceland. Fred reported that the minister “was much pleased with Jon’s poem and placed it on the wall in his study.”

## ASBÝRGÍ

*To An Ancestor*

At Asbyrgi  
 A Waterfall gone, a river dead;  
 Folklore's proof  
 Of indent of Sleipnir's hoof.  
 But the river bed  
 By twist and turn  
 Through bracken and fern  
 'Neath Iceland's sky,  
 (Now the river is dry  
 Its water spent)  
 Shows which way the river went.

Jon Magnusson

(Great-grandson  
of Magnus Jonsson)

Jon's ashes were placed in the southeast part of the graveyard at Randolph Center, Vermont, where our marker stands near those of my parents.

So far as physical characteristics are concerned, Jon's 1967 passport reported that he was 5' 11" tall and that he had red hair and blue eyes. My 1967 passport gave my height as 5' 5½", and reported that I had brown hair and blue eyes. Both of us became shorter in our late 70s.

### **Children of Jon and Margaret – Magnusson<sup>1</sup>**

Jon and Margaret (Lawsing) Magnusson had two children – Joan and Leif. They lived at Tauxemont in Fairfax County, Virginia, until the winter of 1958, when the family moved to New York City for a year and a half. The family then returned to the Washington area, settling in Arlington, Va.

**1 . Joan Magnusson**, born 11 July 1942, earned a B.A. from Windham College at Putney, Vt. in June, 1965. Joan worked at the Asia Society Washington Center, is Founding Director of the Asia Society Philippines Foundation, and received the Eugene Abrams Award for Outstanding Volunteer Worldwide (1999). Joan was active in establishing an Asia Society presence in Korea.

Joan married, 26 March 1966, at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown, Thomas C. HUBBARD. He was born 30 January 1943 and graduated from the University of Alabama in 1965 (B.A., *Phi Beta Kappa*). He entered the U.S. Foreign Service served in Santo Domingo, Tokyo, Patis (OECD), Kuala Lumpur (Deputy Chief of Mission), Manila (Deputy Chief of Mission). He was appointed Ambassador to the Philippines in 1996, and to the Republic of Korea in 2001. As Principal Deputy Assistant of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, he was a principal negotiator with North Korea and envoy to Burma. He is the recipient of the State Department's Superior Honor Award and the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service. He is currently (2009) working with McLarty Associates, a strategic consulting firm.

Joan and Tom had two children.

**Lindley Taylor Hubbard**, called Taylor, b. 26 August 1970 at Sasebo, Japan.

**Carrie Swain Hubbard**, b. 24 October 1974 at Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C. A.B. degree in East Asian Studies with a double minor in Government and Dance, from Skidmore College at Saratoga, N.Y. in 1996; M.S. in Foreign Service, Georgetown University, in 2002. Her career focuses on improving education in developing countries. Carrie taught two years with Teach for America; spent three years with the World Bank; currently is a Program Officer with the Kenya Teacher Education and Professional Development Program.

Carrie married, 13 Nov 2005 at Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown, **John Anthony WILLIMAN**. He was born 31 March 1974. BA Biology/Chemistry, minor in Environmental Studies from Skidmore College, 1996. John has worked as a consultant focused on the pharmaceuticals and medical devices. In 2001 he joined Flamel Technologies, a French drug delivery company; then he and an associate founded Global Life Technologies (GLT), a bio-engineering company focusing on developing preventive and therapeutic products. In 2007 GLT commercialized its first over-the-counter product, Nozin Nasal Sanitizer. In 2008 the company received National Institutes of Health funding in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to develop a novel, broad-application drug to prevent inflammation.

Carrie and John have one child:

**Lillie Reinemarie Willimann**, b 4 July 2008 at Georgetown University Hospital.

**2. Leifur Magnusson** was born 4 December 1946 at Alexandria, Va., a month prematurely – he weighed in at 5 lbs. 2 oz. Originally named Joel Leifur, he later changed his name to Leifur. He attended Middlebury (VT) College (A.B. 1969). In the summer of 1967, he worked on a dairy farm in Grund, Iceland. After college, Leif found employment with the Waterman Steamship Corp. in New York City. While so employed he attended Brooklyn Law School and earned a J.D. in 1981.

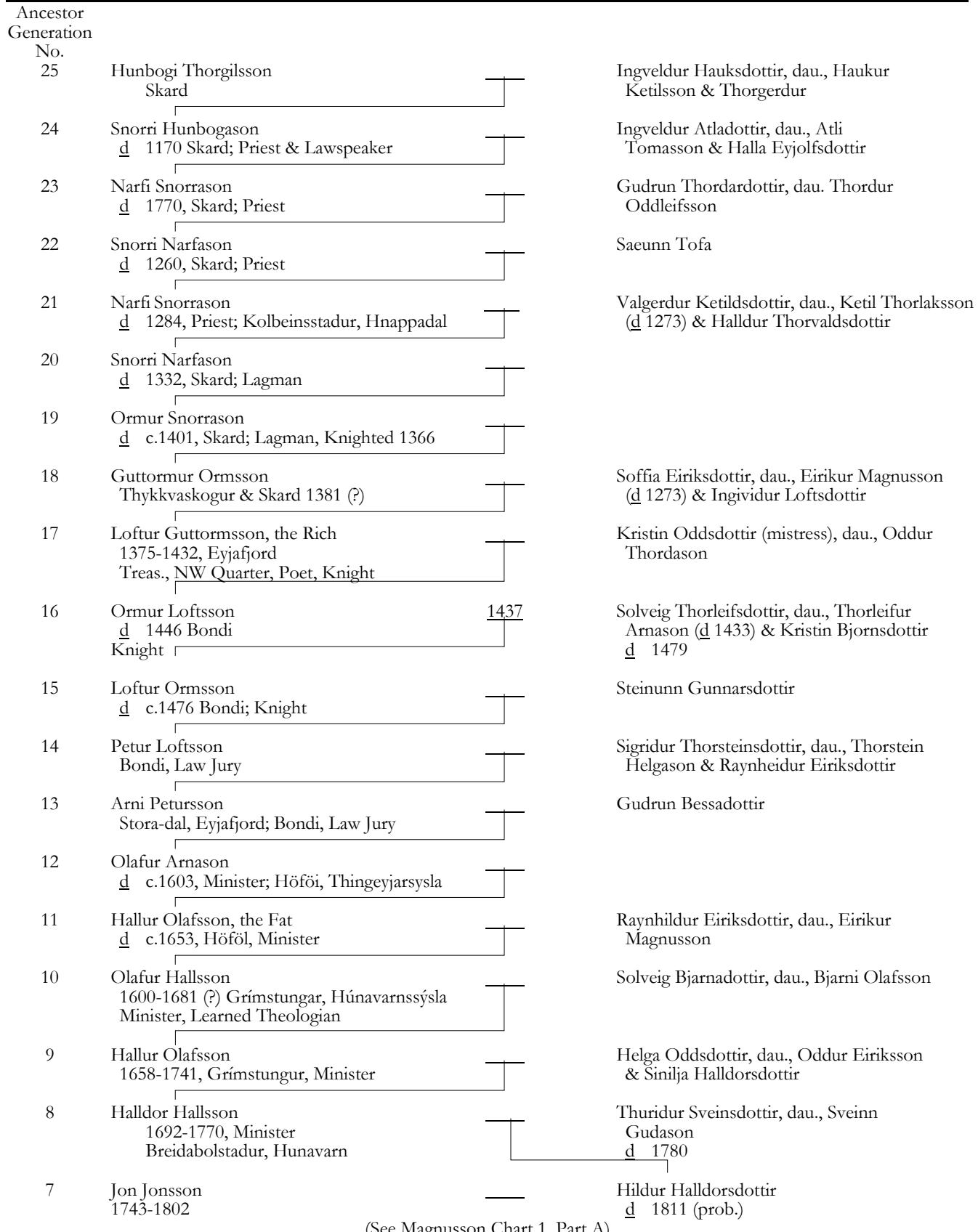
Leif married, 1 October 1988, at Hopkinton NH, **Charlotte Elaine SIBLEY**. Charlotte, born 11 June 1946, also attended Middlebury College (A.B. 1968). She went on to the Graduate School of Business at the University of Chicago where she earned an M.B.A. in 1970.

After their marriage, Leif and Charlotte moved to Metuchen, NJ, where they bought a house and adopted two cats. Leif practices law. He was for many years guardian of a gentleman in the northern Bronx. Charlotte has been a market research executive at various pharmaceutical companies.

They presently (2008) reside on the Main Line outside Philadelphia. Charlotte is Senior Vice President at Shire Pharmaceuticals. She was named Pharmaceutical Business Woman of the Year in 2008.

Chart 2: Magnusson ancestors in the Magnusson-Lawsing family

Part B: Paternal line of Hildur Halldorsdottir



Source: Leifur Magnusson's genealogy of Sigfus Magnusson.

## Magnusson Ancestor Generations 25-8

Leifur Magnusson's genealogy of his father Sigfus reported 18 generations in the paternal line of Hildur Halldorsdottir, wife of Jon Jonsson, the earliest Magnusson ancestor reported in Chart 1. Hildur's paternal line (see Chart 2, opposite) takes the Magnusson ancestry back to Hunbogi Thorgilsson and his wife Ingveldur Hauksdottir in Ancestor Generation 25.

The following accounts add, as possible, information to that reported in Chart 2. This additional information has come from Leifur's notes, from Bjorn Sigfusson's one-page Hildur Halldorsdottir pedigree and from other sources, as indicated.

**Hunbogi Thorgilsson,**<sup>25</sup> as well as the next three generations of ancestors in this line, lived at Skarth (Skarð, but Skard in chart) in Dalasysla, a county that contains the peninsula just north of Snaefellsness on the west coast of Iceland. His wife Ingveldur Hauksdottir descended from Iceland's first settler, Ingolfur Arnason, the "first" Magnusson ancestor in Leifur's Sigfus genealogy (see below, p. 47).

Leifur noted that Hunbogi was the brother of Ari the Learned (1067-1148), who wrote two historical accounts of the settlement of Iceland: *Islendingabok*, or the Book of Icelanders; and *Landnamabok*, or the Book of Settlements.

**Snorri Hunbogason**<sup>24</sup> was described as a prestur and a logsogumadur in the Icelandic genealogy. Leifur uniformly translated prestur as minister, while I have translated it as priest when it described men in pre-Lutheran times. Snorri was lawspeaker 1156-1170.

In his *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth*, Jon Johannesson described the position of lawspeaker, in part, as follows (OIC, p. 47):

For almost two centuries the laws of Iceland were preserved in memory, a function of the lawspeaker and the legislative court, but in the winter of 1117-18 their codification began. Besides knowing the laws, it was the duty of the lawspeaker to make them known to the public by proclaiming them officially .... The office of the lawspeaker was created when the Althing was founded and it remained until 1271. During this period the lawspeaker was the nation's only public servant in Iceland. As a rule he proclaimed the laws at Logberg.... The lawspeaker arrived at the Althing on the first Friday of its annual meeting, when he proclaimed the lawful procedures for the session....

The lawspeaker was the president of the Althing.... [he] was in charge of all of the affairs of the Althing.... For his services the lawspeaker received from the Legislature's treasury two hundred ells of homespun cloth per annum and a portion of the fines paid for various offenses.

About Snorri, Johannesson wrote (OIC, p. 165):

In Snorri's time, priests owned the churches they served and were, sometimes, chieftains whose powers, accordingly, surpassed those of solely secular chieftains. Snorri may have been such a priest as were Saemundr the Learned of Oddi, Teitr Isleifsson of Haukdalur and Ari the Learned.

**Gudrun Thordardottir,**<sup>23</sup> Narfi Snorrason's wife, was a 5th great granddaughter of Thordur Vikingsson. His entry in the Icelandic genealogy read, in part, as follows (15gr26, p. 16):

Thordur Vikingsson [Haraldsson Konung Harfayr] landnamsmadur i Alvidra.... (guessed spelling)

The word *landnamsmadur*, embodying landnam (landtaking), indicated that Thordur was an early Icelandic settler. In *The Book of Settlements*, translated by Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards (University of Manitoba Press, 1977), Thordur was reported, in part, as follows (BOS, #140, p. 67):

There was a man called Thord, who was either the son of a man called Viking or of King Harald Fine-Hair. He went to Iceland and took possession of land between Thufa in Hjallaness and Jardfallsgill and made his home in Alvidra. Thord married Thjodhild, daughter of Eyrvind the Easterner and sister of Helgi the Lean....

**Snorri Narfason**,<sup>22</sup> also known as “Skarth’s-Snorri,” married Saeunn Tofa, of whom Leifur noted “This Tofa was daughter of Snorri, evidently an illegitimate.” In the Icelandic genealogy, Saeunn is reported (17gr18, p. 18) as “Saeunn Tofa kona (wife) Skarð’s-Snorri,” and her mother was reported as Tofa Snorradottir, who was the daughter of Snorri Bardarsson. The absence of a paternal line for Saeunn seemingly meant that she was illegitimate.

The paternal line of Tofa, Saeunn’s mother, was reported back to early settler Geirthjof Valthjofsson. His BOS entry (#136, p. 66) read, in part: [He] was yet another settler at Arnarfjord and he also took possession of Fossfjord, Reykjarfjord, Trostanfjord and Geirthjofsford. He made his home at Geirthjofsford and married Salgerd, daughter of Ulf the Squint-Eyed.

**Narfi Snorrason**<sup>21</sup> had a wife even though clerical celibacy had been decreed 16 May 1237. Johannesson’s reference to this read (OIC, p. 217):

A priest by the name of Narfi Snorrason (d. 1284), the progenitor of the well-known dynasty of Skard (Skardsaett), obtained permission from the archbishop to keep his wife ....

Johannesson went on to discuss clerical “celibacy”:

It appears that shortly after the close of the Commonwealth Period the number of married clerics gradually dwindled. But the change in their marital status had quite different consequences from what had been intended.... Instead of observing celibacy the priests adopted the practice of keeping mistresses.... In many instances the priests would enter into contracts with their mistresses, so that nothing was lacking except the marriage ceremony. Their children were, of course, illegitimate and could neither inherit their parents’ estates nor take holy orders. However, the first could be remedied by lawful adoption, and apparently it was easy for men of illegitimate birth to take holy orders if a payment of a fee was offered. Also, each illegitimate birth required that a fine (sakeyrir) be paid the Church.

Therefore the Church benefitted financially from its unmarried clergy and their mistresses, which again explains why ...its leaders did not fight harder to implement an absolute ban against such practices.

Valgerdur Ketilsdottir, Narfi’s wife, was the daughter of Ketil Thorlaksson and Halldor Thorvaldsdottir. Ketil, d. 1259, was a priest in Hitardal and Lawspeaker 1259-1262. His paternal line went back eight generations, mostly in Grund, Eyjafjord, to early settler Hamund Hell-Skin (see 18gr17-26). Hamund’s wife, Ingunn, was a daughter of Helgi the Lean and his wife Thorunn Hyrna, Ketil Flat-Nose’s daughter.

Helgi and his son-in-law Hamund came to Iceland together. Of Helgi it was reported (BOS 11218, p. 97), in part:

...Helgi's faith was very much mixed: he believed in Christ but invoked Thor when it care to voyages and difficult times. When Helgi sighted Iceland, he consulted Thor as to where he should put in, and the oracle guided him north of the island. Then his son Hrolf asked Helgi whether he was planning to go to the Arctic Ocean if Thor told him to go there?

Helgi settled at Eyjafjord and gave some of his land to Hamund – in all, their land comprised most of the present district of Eyjafjordur.

In the Icelandic genealogy, the paternal line of Valgerdur's mother, Halldor Thorvaldsdottir, was reported back to early settler Ketilbjorn Ketilsson the Old (46gr19-26, or, here, AG 23-30) somewhat as follows:

AG	30	Ketilbjorn Ketilsson the Old	m	Helga Thordisdottir
	29	Teitur Ketilbjarnarson	m	Thordis Thorvaldsdottir
	28	Gizur Teitsson the White	m	Dalla Thorvaldsdottir
	27	Isleifsson Gizurarson, priest	m	Jorunn Einarsdottir
	26	Teitur Isleifsson, priest	m	Alfreidur Thorvaldsdottir
	25	Hallur Teitsson, priest	m	Thori Gudmundsdottir
	24	Gizur Hallsson, d. 1206		
	23	Thorvaldur Gizurarson, d. 1235		

Ketilbjorn the old was reported (BOS 4f 385, p. 143), in part, as follows:

'There was a famous man in Namdalén called Ketilbjorn, the son of Ketil and Aesa, daughter of Earl Hakon Grjotgardsson. He married Helga, Thord Skeggi's daughter....'

Ketilbjorn took possession of the whole of Grimsnes above Hoskulds Brook, as well as the entire Laugardale and all of Bishopstongue up to Stakk River making his home at Mosfell. His children by his wife were Teit, Thormond, Thorleif, Ketil, Thorlatka, Oddleif, Thorgerd and Thurid. Ketilbjorn also had an illegitimate son Skaering.

Teit married Alof, daughter of Bodvar Vikinga-Karason of Vors, and their son was Gizur the White, father of Bishop Isleif, father of Bishop Gizur.

Thord Skeggi, whose daughter Helga married Ketilbjorn the Old, was reported (BOS #11, p. 22), in part, as follows:

'There was a man called Thord Skeggi, son of Hrapp, Bjorn Buna's son. Thord married Vilborg Osvald's-daughter. They had a daughter called Helga who married Ketilbjorn the Old. Thord went to Iceland and with Ingolf's [Ingolf Arnasson's] approval settled on land claimed by Ingolf between Ulfars River and Leiru Creek.'

Vilborg, Thord's wife, was the daughter of King Oswald and his wife Ulfran, who was the daughter of King Edmund of East Anglia, d. 870 (see Icelandic genealogy, 41gr29:42gr29-39; 43gr30-32).

Gizur the White of Skalholt, grandson of Ketilbjorn the Old, is said to have led the Christian forces when Iceland adopted Christianity in 1000. In this undertaking, Gizur was allied with his second cousin, Olaf Trygvason, who became king of Norway in 995. Johannesson's report of these events (OIC, pp. 127-138) has been condensed in the following account. The story is also told in the *Laxdaela Saga*.

According to Johannesson, King Olaf first sent Stefnir Thorgilsson as a missionary to Iceland, but Stefnir was found guilty of blasphemy and forced to leave. Olaf next sent priest Thangbrandr to Iceland. He had a stormy time of it, but he succeeded in baptizing a few prominent Icelanders, including Gizur, Gizur's son-in-

law Hjalti Skeggason, and Thorodor the Temple-Priest at Hjalli. Thangbrandr returned to Norway in 999 and reported to King Olaf that there was little hope of widespread conversion in Iceland. Furious at this news, King Olaf seized Icelanders then visiting from Iceland and threatened to kill or maim them.

At the 999 Althing, Hjalti Skeggason had been found guilty of blasphemy and condemned to lesser outlawry. His blasphemy had consisted of proclaiming from Logberg (OIC, p. 130):

I have no desire to mock the gods; however, I consider Freya a bitch-goddess.

His blasphemy probably arose from the fact that Christians could not participate in the Althing unless they swore by a temple ring “so help me Freya, Njord and the Almighty God.” Johannesson wrote (p. 119):

The “Almighty God” of the temple ring oath was in all probability Thor. Not only was Thor pitted against Christ in literary works dealing with the conflict between paganism and Christianity; but Odinn, the other possibility, seems never to have been worshipped in Iceland.

In any case, outlawed Hjalti left Iceland; and, accompanied by Gizur, went to Norway to consult with the king.

The upshot of this consultation was that Gizur undertook to turn Iceland to Christianity; and the king released his Icelandic prisoners, except for four hostages: Kjartan, the son of Olaf Peacock of Hjardarholt; Svertingr, the son of Runolfr the Temple-Priest of Dalur; Halldorr, the son of Gudmundr the Powerful of Modruvellir; and Kolbein Thordarson, a brother of Flosi the Burner of Svinafell. The freed Icelanders as well as the hostages, all of whom were prominent pagans, probably were important factors in the success of Gizur’s mission.

Gizur and Hjalti returned to Iceland and, collecting supporters along the way, proceeded to the Althing. There Gizur made known his undertaking with King Olaf to Christianize Iceland; whereupon the Althing rejected his proposal and both sides – pagan and Christian – declared themselves out of law with the other. Threatened with the prospect of a divided country, the two factions agreed to accept the mediation of Lawspeaker Thorgeirr Thorkelsson. He came down on the side of the Christians and the pagan majority at the Althing accepted his judgment.

Probably because “recent” scions in this line – Teitur, Hallur and Gizur – lived at Haukadal, Johannesson called the clan The Haukdaelir (OIC, p. 363). He gave a little more information about Gizur Hallson, AG 24: he was Lawspeaker 1181-1200 and he had three sons – Hallur (d. 1230) was Lawspeaker 1201-1209; Thorvaldur (d. 1235) had two sons – Bjorn (d. 1221) and Earl Gizur (d. 1268); and Bishop Magnus (d. 1237). These men would have been the uncles or the brothers of Valgerdur’s mother, Halldur Thorvaldsdottir, AG 22. Halldur’s brother Gizur killed Snorri Sturluson in 1241 and later King Hakon made him his earl in Iceland.

Thora Gudmundsdottir, wife of Thorvald Gizurasson and grandmother of Valgerdur (see p. 37, AG 23) linked Magnussen descendants to other notable ancestral lines. The Icelandic genealogy reported that Thora’s mother, Solveig Jonsdottir, was a descendant of Hrafn Valgardsson the Foolish (53gr2l-29, or, in this account, AG 25-33) somewhat as follows:

AG	33	Hrafn Valgardsson <i>heimskr</i>	
	32	Jorund Hrafnsson <i>godi</i>	
	31	Ulfur Jorundsson	
	30	Svartur Ulfsson i Odda	Helga Thorsteinsdottir
	29	Loftmundur Svartsson i Odda	Thorgerdur Sigfussdottir
	28	Sigfus Loftmundarson prestur, Odda	Thory Eyolfsdottir

27	Saemundur Sigfusson, (1056-1133)	Gudrun Kolbeinsdottir
26	Loftur Saemundarson prestur, Odda	Thora Magnussdottir
25	Jon Loftsson, d. 1197, Odda	Halldor Skegg (?)
24	Solveig Jonsdottir	

Solveig Jonsdottir married Gudmundur Amundarson (53gr20:52gr20). They were the parents of Thorí Gudmundsdottir, Thorvald Gizurarson's wife.

Early settler Hrafn Valgardsson was reported (BOS #338, p. 128), in part, as follows:

There was a man called Hrafn the Foolish, son of Valgard, son of Vermund Word-Master, son of Thorolf Creek-Nose, son of Hraerek the Ring-Scatterer, son of Harald War-Tooth of Denmark. Hrafn went to Iceland from Trondheim and took possession of land between Kaldaklofs and Lambafells Rivers. He made a home at East Raudafell and was a man of great importance. His children were Jorund the Priest, Helgi Blue-Faggot and Freygerd.

Johannesson thought that the translation of heimskr as the Foolish was off the mark, and that better translations would have been “dull-witted” or “simple;” because they would have connoted better the idea of one who hadn’t broadened his outlook by going on viking expeditions like most men. Or, better, his epithet would have been “stay-at-home.” Actually, hinn filska meant the Foolish, as in Ketil the Foolish, a grandson of Ketil Flat-Nose, whose epithet may have reflected the contempt that his pagan neighbors felt for Christian Ketil (see OIC, p. 123).

Early settler Jorundur Hraffnsson was reported (BOS 11346, p. 131), in part, as follows:

Jorund the Priest, son of Hrafn the Foolish, settled west of Markar River, at a place now called Svertingsstead, and built a large temple there.... Jorund was married, and his sons by his wife were Valgerd the Priest, Mord’s father, and Ulf Aur-Priest, from whom the people of Oddi and the Sturlungs are descended.

The word godi originally meant temple-priest, but later came to mean chieftain. As temple-priest, Jorund collected tolls from everyone.

The Icelandic genealogy reported (60gr22-29, or, here, AG 26-33) a royal paternal line for Thora Magnussdottir (AG 26, above). I have made what I could of these reports (see next page) and amplified them, as possible, with information from the *Columbia Encyclopedia* and *King Harald’s Saga*. Johannesson reported (OIC, p. 362) that Thora Magnussdottir was the daughter of King Magnus Bareleg; and that her son Jon Loftson, here identified as the father of Solveig Jonsdottir, was the father of three sons: Bishop Pall of Skalholt, d. 1211; Armr Breidbaelingr, d. 1218; and Saemundr, d. 1222.

Paternal line of Thora Magnussdottir (see p. 39 AG 26):

- AG 33 Harald Fine-Hair, Norwegian king, d. 933. i Heimskringla Snorri Sturlusonar. [c.850-c.933. First king of Norway, son of Halfdan the Black] (succeeded his father at age of 10)
- 32 Sigurd, king.
- 31 Halfran, king.
- 30 Sifurd Hringariks. (Magnus the Good, ruler of Norway 1035-1047) 29 Harald Sigurdsson, d. 25 Sept 1066. (Harald III, half-brother of Olaf II] (ruler of Norway 1047-1066) 28 Olaf Haraldsson, 1067-22 Sept 1093.
- 27 Magnus Olafsson, 1093-1103. Magnus Bareleg.

## 26 Thora Magnussdottir.

Apparently, the report of Harald Fine-Hair in the Icelandic genealogy was referenced to Snorri Sturluson's history of Norwegian kings Heimskringla. King Harald Sigurdsson's history in Heimskringla was translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson and published as *King Harald's Saga* by Penguin Books. Like all the Penguin Book sagas that I have read, King Harald's provided interesting additional information in its introduction, chronology, genealogical tables and glossary of names.

**Snorri Narfason<sup>20</sup>** was a *lagmaður*, which Leifur “anglicized” as lagman. Bjorn termed him a lawman, or one of two state officials who held year-long appointments.

**Ormur Snorrason<sup>19</sup>** was *lagmaður* 1359-68 and 1374-75.

**Guttermur Ormsson,<sup>18</sup>** Leifur reported in his Sigfus genealogy, was a minister who was ordained in 1381. In his Gudrun genealogy, Leifur reported that Guttermur was from Big Woods in Dolum, murdered 1381. Laufey Downey, the Icelandic wife of Jon's fellow-Kiwanian William G. Downey, Jr., wrote (Dec. 1980) that Guttermur's report in the Icelandic genealogy (2gr14) would be translated: “Slain at Snoksdal Sunday in travel day – day of departure-1381.”

Soffia Eirksdottir, Guttermur's wife, was the daughter of Eirikur Magnusson and the granddaughter of Magnus Brandsson – both of Modruvellir in Eyjafjordur, and both termed riki (rich or powerful) in the Icelandic genealogy.

**Loftur Guttermsson,<sup>17</sup>** according to Laufey Downey, was the Royal Governor (*hirdstjori*) of northwest Iceland, and was said to have been a very wealthy chieftain and poet who owned about 80 estates.

Among the genealogical materials prepared by Leifur was a one-page ditto, Loptur Guttermsson (1375(?)-1432), apparently a translation by Leifur from Finnur Jonsson's *Bokmentasaga Islandiga*, which located Loftur at Montruvell and identified Kristin Oddsdottir as his mistress. The first two paragraphs of this ditto read, in part:

Among the most famous chieftains (Gofir) was Lopt Gutterm, the rich .... He was the wealthiest of the chieftains of his day; and had been abroad early in the 15th Century and been named by King Eirik of Pomerania .... He was undoubtedly an energetic person, strong physically, and intelligent.

The story goes, rightly, that he had Christine, daughter of Oddur, the ragged so-called, Thordarson, as his sweetheart, by whom he had children, but it hardly follows that he married her on account of that relationship can hardly be the case. Loptur greatly cherished Christine and it was about her that he wrote and dedicated his *Hattalykil* (Life's Key).

In the Icelandic genealogy, the paternal line of Kristin Oddsdottir was reported back (67 gr13-18) to Erlender Olafsson, d. 1312, who married Janngerdur Thordasdottir. Her paternal line connected Magnusson descendants with Thorstein Egilsson (68gr18-27) and his immediate forebears (described for his sister in 8gr26-27). The Icelandic genealogy information was somewhat as follows:

AG	33	Skallagrimur Kveldulfsson, landnam. i Borg.	
	32	Egil Skallagrimsson i Borg	
	31	Thorstein Egilsson	
	30	Hrifla Thorsteinsson	
	29	Egil Hrifluson	
	28	Skuli Egilsson, 1118	Sigridur Thor (?)

27	Thordar Skulasson, prestur	Valgerdur Markudottir
26	Bodvar Thordarsson, d. 1187	Helga Thordardottir
25	Thordur Bodvarsson, prestur, d. 1220	Shieling (?)
24	Bodvar Thordarsson, d. 1264	Herdís Omarsdottir
23	Thordur Bodvarsson, Bjorgafjord	
22	Janngerdur Thordardottir	

Thorstein's sister, Thorgerdur (AG 31) married Olaf Hoskuldsson, d. 1004, son of Hoskuldur Dala-Kollson and great grandson of Aud the Deep-Minded (see p. 50).

Early settler Skalla-Grim (Bald-Grim) was the son of Ulf, nicknamed Kveld-Ulf, and Hallbera. They had another son Thorolf whom King Harald Fine-Hair, acting on slanderous talk, had had killed and had refused to pay compensation for the killing. At this point, Grim and his father readied a ship to go to Iceland, where their friend Ingolf Arnasson had settled. They went to Solomon's Isles and seized Thorolf's confiscated ship – they killed all of the caretaker crew except for two men who carried the news to the king. Kveld-Ulf took charge of the captured ship and got Grim the Halogalander to join him in command. So it was a little fleet of two ships, each with a crew of thirty men, that took Skallagrim and his father to Iceland.

Near the end of the voyage, Kveld-Ulf fell ill. He directed that his coffin should be made and, should he die, that Skallagrim should be told to settle where the coffin washed ashore. Then Kveld-Ulf died and his coffin was thrown overboard. Grim the Halogalander sailed up Borgarfjord and then up the Gula River as far as he could. He and his men went ashore and soon found the coffin. Meanwhile, Skallagrim had put in at a place called Knarrarness in Myrar and began exploring. They found Grim, who told them about Kveld-Ulf; and, ultimately, Skallagrim settled at Borg, on the north shore of Borgarfjord. He took possession of an immense tract, from which he granted land to his companions and, later, plenty of others (see BOS #29,30, pp. 27-8, from which the above account has been condensed).

The story of Skallagrim and his son Egil is told in *Egil's Saga*. In my copy, a Penguin Classic translated by Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, it was noted that Skallagrim was born c. 863, emigrated to Iceland c. 891, and died 946. Egil Skallagrimsson was born c. 910 and died 990. The translators thought that the saga was composed by Snorri Sturluson, who lived for a while at Borg, and spent most of his adult life in the district of Borgarfjord.

**Ormur Loftsson,**<sup>16</sup> Leifur reported in his Gudrun genealogy, was “Bondi, Governor, Northern and Eastern divisions of Iceland, 1436.” He noted that bondi (usually translated “farmer”) might mean more, possibly connoting a man having some religious and governmental oversight of servants on his estate.

Solveig Thorleifsdottir, Ormur’s wife, was the daughter of Thorleifur Arnason and Kristin Bjornsdottir. Through Kristin, Magnusson descendants are linked to early settler Thorbjorn Loki. In the Icelandic genealogy, this connection runs back through the paternal line of Kristin to Eirik Sveinbjarnarsonar, knight in Vatnsfjord, d. 1341 (81gr13-16), who married Vilborg Einarsdottir (83gr16). Vilborg’s grandfather, Thorvaldur Snorrason Vatnsfirdinga (d. 1228) married Thordis Snorradottir, whose paternal line reached back (88gr18-29, here AG 22-33) to Thorbjorn Loki somewhat as follows:

- AG    33 Bodmondur of Skut
- 32 Thorbjorn Loki, landnam.
- 31 Thorgils
- 30 Kollur Thorgilsson

29	Thorgils Kollsson	
28	Jorunder Thorgilsson	Hallveig Oddadottir
27	Snorri Jorundsson	Asny Sturludottir
26	Gils Snorrason	
25	Thordur Gilson	Vigdis Svertingsdottir
24	Sturla Thordarson i Hvamm, d. 23 July 1183	
23	Snorri Sturluson, Reykholt, d. 23 Sept 1241	
22	Thordis Snorradottir	

Early settler Thorbjorn Loki was reported (BOS #124m p. 62) as follows: There was a man called Thorbjorn Loki, son of Bodmod of Skut. He went to Iceland and took possession of Djupafjord and Groness as far as Gulufjord. His son was Thorgils of Thorgilsstead in Djupafjord, the father of Koll who married Thurid, daughter of Thorir, son of Earl Hallad, son of Earl Rognvald of More. They had a son called Thorgils who married Otkatla, daughter Jorund, son of Atli the Red, and their son was Jorund who married Hallveig, daughter of Oddi, son of Yr and Ketil Gufa [early settler].

Snorri Jorundsson married Asny, daughter of Killer-Sturla, and their son was Gils who married Thordis, daughter of Gudlug and of Thorlatka, daughter of Halldor, son of Snorri the Priest. Gils had a son called Thord who married Vigdis Sverting's-daughter, and their son was Hvamm-Sturla.

Sturla Thordarson of Hvamm, nicknamed Hvamm-Sturla, had three sons – Thordur, Snorri and Sighvatur – who gained unprecedented power in Iceland 1200-1262, so that the era sometimes is called the Age of the Sturlungs. Leifur considered Snorri Sturluson to have been the most distinguished of his ancestors (see his letter, p. 22), and he attached Snorri's account in the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, 2nd. ed., to his Gudrun genealogy. This account (p. 1842) read:

Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) Icelandic chieftain and historian. He was the author of the invaluable prose *Edda*...and of *Heimskringla*, biographies of the Norse Kings, a source of Norwegian medieval history. Snorri loved intrigue, money and power; he held high office in the Icelandic commonwealth [Lawspeaker 1215-18 and 1222-31], but lost favor when he seconded the plan of Haakon IV for the annexation of Iceland to Norway. He was killed on his own land by a relative and rival.

In the introduction to the Penguin *King Harald's Saga*, it was reported (p. 16):

...at the age of two, Snorri was sent to be fostered at Oddi, the outstanding center of culture and learning in Iceland... the home of the most cultivated chieftain in the country, Jon Loptsson (1124-97)... Jon Loptsson was the grandson of King Magnus Bare-Legs of Norway.... [His] mother, Thora, was one of King Magnus's illegitimate children and the men of Oddi were inordinately proud of the fact.

The above provides a sort of footnote for p. 314.

**Loftur Ormsson,**<sup>15</sup> Bjorn reported, died c. 1476.

**Petur Loftsson,**<sup>14</sup> Leifur noted, was a bondi in Hunavatns parish, “the region from which mother’s family also stems.” Bjorn reported that Petur was a logrettmadur, or a member of an 84-man highest jury, serving at the Althing, with the responsibility to relate law to cases.

**Arni Petursson,**<sup>13</sup> Bjorn reported, also was a log. In his Sigfus and Gudrun genealogies, Leifur reported ancestors in common through Arni, after whom Sigfus's line ran through Arni's son Olaf and Gudrun's line ran through Arni's son Magnus.

**Olafur Arnason,**<sup>12</sup> Leifur reported, was a minister 1561-98. Bjorn reported that Olafur died c. 1603.

**Hallur Olafsson,**<sup>11</sup> Bjorn reported, died c. 1653.

**Olafur Hallsson,**<sup>10</sup> Leifur reported, was a Professor, Minister for 54 years; and Bjorn dated him 1605-81 and called him “Learned Theologian.”

**Hallur Olafsson,**<sup>9</sup> Leifur reported, was a Professor, Minister for 62 years.

The Icelandic genealogy reported that Helga Oddsdottir, Hallur’s wife, was the great granddaughter of Oddur Einarson (99gr8), d. 1631, bishop at Skalholt, and of his wife, Helga Jonsdottir. The paternal line of Helga Jonsdottir included Bishop Jon Arason and his son Bjorn (101gr8-11, or here, AG 12 15) somewhat as follows:

AG	15	Jon Arason biskup (d. 7 Nov 1550)	Helga Sigurdardottir fyljikonu Jon biskup
AG	14	Bjorn Jonsson prestur (d. 7 Nov 1550)	Steinum Jonsdottir fyijikonu Bjorn
AG	13	Jon Bjornsson	Gudrun Arnadottir konu Jons Bjornssonar
AG	12	Helga Jonsdottir kona Oddi biskup	

The death dates of Bishop Jon and his son Bjorn confirm that they were put to death for refusing Lutheranism (see above p. 4); and it seems clear that Helga Jonsdottir was a descendant of Bishop Jon through his son Bjorn. The mothers of their children, however, were reported as *fyljikonu* (sp?) instead of the usual *konu* (wife). Seemingly, these two churchmen were technically celibate (see above p. 36).

So far, no information additional to that reported in Chart 2 has come to light for ancestors in AG 8.

Chart 4: Magnusson Ancestors, Part C

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**Ancestors of Ingveldur Hauksdottir and her husband, Hunbogi Thorgilsson.**

**Ancestors of Ingveldur** from Leifur Magnusson's Sigfus genealogy (based on Icelandic genealogy 3gr22-27).

AG

31 Ingolf Arnasson - Hallveiga Frotha(dottir)

Made good the discovery of Iceland 874 and became its first permanent settler. It is said, with truth, that Irish missionaries landed there before then as the Norsemen who came later found there such relics as staffs, bells, croziers and other insignia of Catholicism. Iceland was not Christianized until 1000 A.D. Ingolf was the wisest of all the settlers because he came here to a wild country and was the first to build. There is a statue of him erected in Reykjavik. (*Landnamabok - The Book of Settlement*, p. 35 of Asmundson's Edition, Reykjavik 1891).

30 Thorstein Ingolfsson.

Established a local parliament at Kjalarness before the national one (was) set up in 930.

29 Thorhildur Thorsteins(dottir)

28 Thorkell (Moon?)

27 Ketil Thorkelsson

26 Hauk Ketils(son), - Thorerthur

Ancestors of Hunbogi reported by Bjorn Sigfusson from "many historical sources."

AG

32 Þorsteinn (Thorsteinn) Ólafsson hins hvita (the White).

31 Ólafur (Óleifur) Þorsteinssoa feilan, settled in Hvammur, Dalasýsla, together with his mother: Auður djúpúðga, before 990.

30 Þórdur Gellir Ólafsson, d. 965 or near that.

29 Eyjólfur grai Þordarson (the Grey).

28 Þorjell Eyjólfsson á Helgafelli.

27 Gellir Porkelsson, d. 1073.

26 Þorgils Gellisson, father of Ari the Learned and, almost certainly, of Húnbogi Þorgilsson.

### Magnusson addition

After June 1995, when this draft of Magnusson ancestors was completed, Leif Magnusson, (AG 1) acquired more information about Jon Arason: viz., reprints of Tryggvi J. Oleson's "Bishop Jon Arason (1484-1550)" in *Speculum* Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, April 1953, (The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, MA) pp. 245-278; and Nancy R. Soderman's "John Arason and Thomas More" in *Moreanna*, 1978, pp. 19-20. From these "new" sources – interesting in their entirety – I have taken information for the following short account of the Jon Arason family.

Oleson wrote (p. 247): "At the age of 23 or 24, Jon was ordained priest and received the poor benefice of Helgastadir in Reykjdalur (1507). There he took to himself a concubine, Helga Sigurdardottir. They lived as man and wife for the rest of his life. Nine children were born to them, six of whom reached the years of maturity." These children, four sons and two daughters (more fully reported in Olesson, pp. 252-254) were:

**Magnus**, ordained a priest, 1529, received the rich benefice of Grenjadarstadir. He took, 1533, as concubine a daughter of Vigdis Erlendsson, lawman and governor. He died in 1534.

**Ari** was elected, 1529, lawman at a very early age. He married into one of the foremost families of northern Iceland.

**Sigurdur** obtained, 1534, the benefice of Grenjadarstadir, formerly held by his brother Magnus. Rev. Sigurdur took as his concubine Cecilia of the old family of Loptur Guttormsson the Rich, c.1539 (see AG 15, p. 317).

**Bjorn** became a priest c.1535. In 1533, he took as concubine Steinunn of the same family as Cecilia, Sigurdur's concubine. Bjorn died a wealthy man.

**Helga** married Eyjolfur Einarsson, a wealthy man of very good stock.

**Thorunn**, the bishop's favorite, married, 1526, at the age of 14 or 15, Rafn Brandsson. He died in 1528 from a wound received in a duel which he had forced on Filiippus, one of his retainers. On the early death of her son with Rafn, Thorunn became a very rich widow. In 1533, she married Isleifur Sigurdsson of Grund in Eyjafjord, who died without issue. In 1553, Thorunn married Thorsteinn Gudmundsson, who died c.1570 without issue. Thorunn died at Grund in 1593. Of her husbands, Thorunn reportedly said:

My Rafn was the greatest aristocrat, my Isleifur the greatest dandee, and my Thorsteinn the greatest man-of-the-world.

The estate at Grund, Eyjafjord, figured in Leif's story before he knew that Thorunn was one of his 11th great aunts: in the summer of 1967, he was a hired hand at Grund on the dairy farm of Gisli Bjornsson and Aðalsteina Magnusdottir. As of now (1998) Leif and his wife Charlotte have twice visited Grund. The farmstead where he worked in 1967, now run by Gisli's son Bjarni, still prospers. Grund is remarkable for its church, built in 1907, and for many years now, a national treasure. Leif tells the story that Thorunn once chided her rich husband Isleifur Sigurdsson: "On the fair farm of Grund in Eyjafjordur a farmer has lived for some time, who is unable to make a child." Isleifur replied, "God knows how to make children, my wife."

In her work about Jon Arason and Thomas More, Nancy R. Soderman wrote (p. 19):

While both claimed for women equal rights to higher education, Arason went to lengths which More had explicitly deprecated when he requested that his wife, the strong-minded daughter of a church provost, should hear the confession of both himself and their two sons, Ari and Bjorn, before they were led to the scaffold.

Although a curiosity to modern readers, the clerical concubinage in Jon Arason's family was not remarkable in late Medieval Iceland (see above, p. 310). The children of such unions were legitimatized by adoption; and I speculated (above, p. 278) that Thora, Jon's step-daughter who married Tomas Eirksson, might have been Jon's natural daughter (if "step-daughter" were some sort of euphemism). Oleson's report of the children of Helga and Jon does not support

this speculation. Perhaps then Thora was Helga's daughter from a previous union and no speculation was needed. In the report of Tomas Eiriksson in the Icelandic genealogy (above, p. 308, Chart 2, AG 10) I had earlier recognized the names Helga Sigurdardottir and Jon biskup Arasonar. Now I make out the name Thora.

## Earliest Icelandic ancestors

The six earliest ancestor generations reported in Leifur's Sigfus genealogy identified the forebears of Ingveld Hauksdottir, wife of Hunbogi Thorgilsson, back to Ingolf Arnasson and his wife, Hallveiga Frotha's-daughter (see Chart 4, opposite). Ingolf is thought to have come to Iceland in 874 and is considered to have been Iceland's first permanent settler. With the exception of Leifur's excerpt about Ingolf from an Icelandic *Landnamabok*, all of the information about Ingolf and his descendants in Chart 4 came from the Icelandic genealogy, which also reported Ingolf's paternal line: Orn Bjornolfsson, Bjornolfur Hromundsson and Hromunder Gripsson (great grandfather). Leifur evidently chose to begin his genealogy in Iceland.

Chart 4 also reports earlier ancestors in the paternal line of Hunbogi Thorgilsson, information for which came from Bjorn Sigfusson.

**Ingolf Arnasson**,<sup>31</sup> first permanent settler in Iceland and earliest Magnusson ancestor reported by Leifur, was reported at length in the *Book of Settlements* (#6-9, pp. 18-22). His BOS account, partially retailed here, related that there was a legendary hero, Hromund Gripsson, who had two sons – Bjornolf and Hroald. Bjornolf had a son called Orn, who was the father of Ingolf and Helga; and Hroald had a son called Leif. Ingolf and Leif became blood brothers, went adventuring together, and Leif married Helga. Before that, though, fighting had broken out between the three sons of Earl Atli and Ingolf and Leif – Leif had taken exception to the public remarks of one of the sons, Holmstein, that he intended to marry Helga. The upshot of the fighting was that two of Atli's sons were killed and Ingolf and Leif had to give all their possessions in compensation to Earl Atli and his remaining son. Ingolf and Leif then voyaged to Iceland, where they spent the winter and decided to settle permanently.

They returned to Norway where Ingolf started his preparations to settle in Iceland. Leif spent the summer in a successful Viking expedition to Ireland. That winter, Ingolf held a great sacrifice; but Leif, it was said, would never sacrifice to the gods (BOS, p. 19).

The summer that Ingolf and Leif went to settle in Iceland, Harald FineHair had (BOS 19-20) –

been King of Norway for twelve years; that was 6073 years from the Beginning of the World, and 874  
from the Incarnation of our Lord.

A footnote here added –

In his *Islendingabok* (c. 1125) Ari Thorgilsson says that Ingolf went to Iceland about the same time that St. Edmund of East Anglia was killed by the vikings, in 870.

Another footnote (in *Eyrbyggja Saga*, p. 35) reported:

According to the Icelandic Annals, King Harald ruled for 70 years and died in 931.

As soon as Ingolf caught his first glimpse of Iceland, he threw his high-seat pillars overboard and declared that he would settle wherever the pillars washed ashore. He wintered at Ingolfsfell, west of the Olfus River; and, in the spring, he sent his slaves Vilfil and Karli to search the shore for his pillars. They dropped by Leif's place and found that he and his men had been killed. They went back to tell Ingolf – apparently, lacking oxen, Leif had ordered his slaves to pull the plow which had caused them to revolt. Ingolf had Leif and his men buried, and then he went after Leif's rebellious slaves and killed them. Ingolf reportedly said (BOS, p. 20):

It's a sad thing for a warrior to be killed by slaves; but in my experience, this is what always happens to people who won't hold sacrifices.

In the spring following their third winter in Iceland, Vilfil and Karli finally found Ingolf's high-seat pillars. They had washed ashore at Reykjavik. Ingolf made his home there and took possession of the whole region between Olfus River and Hvalfjord south of Bryndale and Oxar Rivers, including all of the Nesses.

Ingolf's family was reported (BOS, p. 21) as follows:

(He] married Hallveig Frodi's-daughter, sister of Loft the Old, and their son was Thorstein.... Thorstein was the father of Thorkel Moon the Lawspeaker [fn. Lawspeaker 970-984].... His son was Thormond, who held the principal chieftaincy at the time when Christianity came to Iceland.

**Thorstein Ingolfsson,**<sup>30</sup> Leifur reported, established a local parliament (thing) at Kjalarness. Johannesson pointed out (OIC p. 36) that local things, or assemblies, were limited to judicial functions; whereas the national thing, the Althing, embodied both judicial and legislative functions. He also thought that Thorstein took the lead in founding the Althing, citing a passage in the *Thordarbok* version of *Landnamabok* (*ibid.*):

On the advice of Helgi Bjola, Orlygr of Ejuberg and other wise men, Thorsteinn Ingolfsson became the first man to convene an assembly at Kjalarnes before the Althing was founded. That is the reason why the chieftains wielding his authority still perform the “hallowing of the Althing.”

Johannesson went on:

The chieftaincies of Thorsteinn Ingolfsson and his cofounders of the Kjalanes Assembly (appear) to have been merged into one, and the function of performing the inaugural ceremony at the Althing was assigned to its holder. The reason for this must have been that Thorsteinn and his colleagues were the principal instigators behind the founding of the Althing, and that the preparatory steps for this event were taken at the Kjalarnes Assembly.

Johannesson went on (OIC p. 37):

Hardly anyone could have been in a better position to play a leading role in the founding of the Althing than Thorsteinn Ingolfsson...[who could] count among his relatives and in-laws the members of the largest and most influential family in Iceland, i.e. the descendants of Grimr of Sogn (father of Bjorn Buna who was father of Ketil Flat-Nose].

About the Althing, Johannesson noted that most Icelandic settlers, including Thorstein, came from the southwest of Norway, a region that included Sogn and came to be known as the Gulathing. The settlers brought with them the laws of their provinces and the Kjalarnes Assembly followed the Norse model of local laws and local assemblies. The Althing, a national assembly based on national law, however, was an Icelandic innovation unmatched in any Scandinavian country during the era of the Icelandic Commonwealth (see OIC pp. 19,38).

The Althing was held at Thingvollur (Thing Plain) by the river Oxara (Axe River). Johannesson wrote (OIC p. 43):

It is not certain to which settlement Thingvollur originally belonged. ...Ari the Learned maintains that a certain man named Thorir Crop-Beard, who owned property in the neighbourhood of Blaskogar (Blue Woods) was convicted for the murder of a slave or freeman and that as a result of his crime Thorir's farmland became public property which was designated for the use of the Althing. The verdict would have been reached at the Kjalarness Assembly. This may have been the fortuitous event which helped to decide the site of the Althing.

**Thorhildur Thorsteinsdottir**<sup>29</sup> evidently was the daughter of Thorstein and the mother of Thorkell. Considering that the BOS account reported that Thorkell was the son of Thorstein, it might be speculated that Thorstein adopted Thorkell.

**Thorkell**<sup>28</sup> was called Moon is the BOS account, which reported that he was Lawspeaker 970-984. These dates are a better fit with the idea that Thorkell was the grandson, rather than the son, of Thorstein.

The Icelandic genealogy entry for Thorkell includes a few Icelandic words that Leifur did not report and that I could not make out. Perhaps, when translated, they will shed some light on the subject.

**Ketil Thorkelsson**<sup>27</sup> was not further described in the Icelandic genealogy.

**Haukur Ketilsson**<sup>26</sup> married Thorgerthur, the daughter of Ingeldur Vermundsdottir and the granddaughter of Vermundur Thorgrimsson and Thorbjorg Olafsdottir. Haukur and Thoroerður were the parents of Ingeldur Hauksdottir, wife of Hunbogi Thorgilsson.

The Icelandic genealogy reported Thorgerður's paternal line back to Grimur, hersir (war lord) in Sogn, Norway (4gr23-30, or, here, AG 34-27). Thorgerður's immigrant ancestors – Bjorn the Easterner, Kjallak the Old, Thorgrim the Priest, and Vermund the Slender – were featured characters in *Eyrbyggja Saga*, translated by Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards (Southside, Edinburgh, 1973) where the family was called the Kjalleklings.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| AG | 34 Grimur hersir i Sogn....                                      |
|    | 33 Bjorn Grimsson, hersir i Sogn.... "Bjorn Buna"                |
|    | 32 Ketill Bjornsson.... "Ketil Flat-Nose"                        |
|    | 31 Bjorn Ketilsson austrani, landnam.... "Bjorn the Easterner"   |
|    | 30 Kjallakur Bjornsson, hinn gamli.... "Kjallak the Old"         |
|    | 29 Thorgrimur Kjallaksson, godi, d. 980... "Thorgrim the Priest" |
|    | 28 Vermundur Thorgrimsson.... "Vermund the Slender"              |
|    | 27 Ingeldur Vermundsdottir.                                      |
|    | 26 Thorgerðaur   |

Early settler Bjorn the Easterner was reported (BOS #84, p. 44), in part, as follows:

Bjorn the Easterner went to Iceland and took possession of land between Hraunsfjord River and Staf River. He ran a splendid farm at Bogarholz in Bjarnarhaven and had a shieling at Seljar. He died at Bjarnarhaven and was laid in a grave mound at Borgar Brook, the only one of Ketil Flat-nose's children never to be baptized.

Bjorn and Gjaflaug had a son called Kjallak the Old, who farmed at Bjarnarhaven after his father; and another son called Ottar, father of Bjorn, father of Vigdis of Drapuhild, whom Snorri the Priest had put to death. Ottar had yet another son called Helgi who raided in Scotland, where he captured Nidbjorg, daughter of King Bjolan.... Ottar made Nidbjorg his wife, and their sons were Osvif the Wise and Einar Scales-Clatterer.... Osvif married Thordis, daughter of Thjodolf of Hofn; their children were outlawed for the killings of Kjartan Olafsson – and also Gudrun, mother of Gellir, Bolli, Thorleik and Thord Cat.

Beyond the above information about his family, Bjorn's BOS account provided no more information about his life in Iceland.

Bjorn's story is told in *Eyrbyggja Saga* (beginning p. 35) where it was said that King Harold Fine-Hair sent Ketil, Bjorn's father, off to the Hebrides to quell trouble there. At that time, Bjorn, who had been brought up by Earl Kjallak, was living with the Earl in Jamtaland. In the Hebrides, Ketil fought and won a number of battles, and then made peace and alliances with all the leading men. He sent his troops back to Norway, and they told King Harald that Ketil had taken over the Hebrides. When he heard this, King Harald confiscated Ketil's Norwegian estates.

Bjorn stayed on at Jamtaland until Earl Kjallak died; then he married the Earl's daughter Gjaflaug; travelled to his father's estates, and threw out the stewards that had been left in charge. Then the King declared Bjorn to be an outlaw, which meant that anyone could kill him lawfully. The King sent some warriors to kill Bjorn; but Bjorn escaped. He sailed south along the coast to Mostur Island, where a man called Hrolf gave him welcome and sanctuary.

When King Harald heard that Thorolf (Hrolf was a "close friend of Thor's" so he was called Thorolf) had sheltered Bjorn, he sent messengers to Thorolf to dismiss him from his estate and to warn him to give himself up or be outlawed like Bjorn. In the end, Thorolf decided to go to Iceland instead. This all happened about ten years after Ingolf Arnasson had sailed to Iceland.

Meanwhile, Bjorn had spent the summer on a Viking expedition with Thorolf's son, Hallstein, and then sailed to the Hebrides for a family reunion. In the Hebrides, Bjorn learned that his father had died and that the rest of the family had renounced the faith of their forefathers. For this reason, Bjorn decided not to make his home with them. For their part, the rest of the family took to calling Bjorn "the Easterner," because they considered him to be rustic and old-fashioned. After two years in the Hebrides, Bjorn went to Iceland and settled near his friend Thorolf on the north side of the Snaefellsness peninsula.

The introduction to *Eyrbyggja Saga* stressed (p. 11) that "although the saga often seems to be recording history, its true spirit is imaginative and interpretative, a thirteenth-century view of the past." The more "historical" BOS information did not recount Bjorn's relationships with Thorolf, but BOS information is consistent with the idea of such connections: the report of Thorolf Mostur-Beard (1185) immediately follows that of Bjorn; Thorolf did have a son Hallstein; and a BOS map shows Bjorn's and Thorolf's settlements to have been adjoining. As to the idea that saga information is sometimes more fictional than historical, I'm inclined to think that fictions as old as the sagas are, *ipso facto*, somewhat historical.

Thorolf Mostur-Beard's account (BOS #85, pp. 45-6) related that, when he came to Iceland, Thorolf made landfall in the south and then sailed west as far as Breidafjord, where he threw his high-seat pillars overboard and followed them ashore. His hope was that, in this way, Thor would indicate an auspicious place of settlement. Thorolf took possession of land on the southern side of the fjord, about half-way up, and called his place Thorsness. He built a farm there and a big temple dedicated to Thor. He also took possession of the headland between the Staf and Thors Rivers, which contained the mountain Helgafell (Holy Fell). Thorolf and his kinsmen believed that, when they died, they would go into this mountain.

Thorolf established his assembly and held his courts on the headland; and, as a precaution against any defilement of Helgafell, it was the rule that persons at the assembly should relieve themselves at a specified rock, "Dirt Skerry." Sometime after Thorolf died, but when his son Thorstein the Cod-Biter Thorolfsson was still young, young Thorstein had a bitter altercation with Thorgrim Kjallaksson – Thorgrim and his brother-in-law Asgeir were at the assembly and refused to go out to the rock to relieve themselves. Fighting broke out and several men were killed. Thord Gellir took charge of the reconciliation, but the assembly field was considered to have been defiled by blood, so the assembly was moved to the eastern part of the headland. Next to the assembly place, Thord Gellir established the Quarter Court, with the approval of all of the people in the Quarter.

Thorolf's son was Hallstein the Priest of Thorskafjord, father of Thorstein Surt the Wise. The mother of Surt was Osk, daughter of Thorstein the Red. Thorolf had another son called Thorstein Cod-Biter, who married Thora, daughter of Olaf Feilan and sister of Thord Gellir. Their sons were Thorgrim father of Snorri the Priest, and Bork the Stout, father of Sam whom Asgeir killed.

In *Eyrbyggja* Thorolf and his family, the Thorsnessings, are rivals of the Kjalleklings. Two footnotes in the saga are of particular interest here, because they shed some light on Thord Gellir, a Magnusson ancestor through another line. The report of the marriage of Olaf Feilan's daughter and Thord Gellir's sister, Thora, to Thorstein Cod-Biter was footnoted "Thord Gellir was one of the leading chieftains in 10th-century Iceland." The narration of the "Dirt Skerry" affair was footnoted –

According to Ari Thorgilsson...it was at the suggestion of Thord Gellir that Iceland was divided into four Quarters for judicial purposes. The Quarter Courts dealt with law-suits between litigants from different local assemblies, but belonging to the same Quarter.

Bjorn Sigfusson's report of the paternal line of Hunbogi Thorgilsson, husband of Ingeldur Hauksdottir (see Chart 4, p. 318), begins with Thorstein Olafsson (AG 32) whose son, Olaf Feilan, came to Iceland with Aud the Deep-Minded before 990. Aud was the mother of Thorstein and the grandmother of Olaf Feilan. Aud and her family were extensively reported in the *Book of Settlements* (#95-#110, pp. 50-55), from which the following account has been condensed.

Aud was a daughter of Ketil Flat-Nose and his wife Yngvild, and she married Olaf the White, a warrior king. They had a son called Thorstein the Red.

Olaf went on a Viking expedition to the British Isles, conquered Dublin and its surroundings, and made himself king. He was killed fighting in Ireland. Aud and Thorstein then went to the Hebrides where Thorstein married Thurid, daughter of Eywind the Easterner and sister of Helgi the Lean. Their son was Olaf Feilan and their daughters were Groa, Alof, Osk, Thorhild, Thorgerd and Vigdis.

Thorstein became a warrior king and was killed fighting in Scotland. When she heard of his death, Aud had a ship built in which she went off, with Thorstein's widow and orphans, to Orkney, the Faroes and, ultimately, to Iceland. At Orkney, Aud married off her granddaughter Groa; and, in the Faroes, Aud married off her granddaughter Alof. After that, Aud sailed for Iceland with 20 free-born men aboard her ship. Her leading man was called Dala-Koll. He had married her granddaughter Thorgerd and was, thus, Aud's grandson-in-law.

Aud made land at Vikarskeid, where her ship was wrecked. She went to Kjalarness to visit her brother Helgi Bjolan. He offered hospitality for the winter for half her company, but she thought that this was a poor and mean-spirited offer. She then went to visit her brother Bjorn the Easterner at Breidafjord. He welcomed her, invited her and her company to stay with him, and she accepted his offer.

In the spring, Aud took possession of all of the Dales district at the head of the fjord, and she made her home at Hvamm. She was a devout Christian and used to say prayers at Kross Hills, where she had had crosses erected. Later, her kinsmen worshipped these hills where, they believed, they would go when they died.

Aud made generous gifts of land to her ship-mates and freed men, which were reported in six BOS entries (#98-#103), after which the marriages of Aud's granddaughters were reported.

The final Aud entry (BOS #110, p. 55) read:

Aud was a woman of great dignity. When she was growing weary with old age, she invited her kinsmen and relatives by marriage to a magnificent feast, and when the feast had been celebrated for three days, she chose fine gifts for her friends and gave them sound advice. She declared that the feast would go on for another three days and that it would be her funeral feast. That very night she died, and she was buried at the high water mark as she had ordered, because having been baptized, she didn't want to lie in unconsecrated earth. Afterwards her kinsmen lost the faith.

Aud the Deep-Minded and her family, together with Bjorn the Easterner and his family, were protagonists in the *Laxdaela Saga*. My copy of this saga, a Penguin Book translated by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson, contains a wealth of additional information in its introduction, glossary of proper names, chronology, &c.

In the *Laxdaela Saga* chronology, the arrival of Aud (called Unn in the saga) in Iceland was dated c. 915.

**Olaf Feilan,**<sup>31</sup> youngest child of Thorstein the Red, was brought up by his grandmother Aud, who made him her heir. He married Alfdis, and they had four children – Thord Gellir, Thora (wife of Thorstein Cod-Biter, the son of Thorolf Mostur-Beard), Helga and Thordis (LS, p. 57).

Olaf's BOS account (#109, p. 55) reported that he married Alfdis of Barra, daughter of Konal; and that her brother, Konal's son Steimond, was the father of Halldora who married Ketil One-Hand and whose children were Thord Gellir and Thora, mother of Thorgrim.... Ketil One-Hand's BOS entry (#360, p. 135) reported that Ketil was the son of Audun and that he married Asleif. The BOS report of Olaf's children seems to have been garbled – possibly through some confusion of Olaf's mother Aud and Ketil's father Audun.

**Thord Gellir**<sup>30</sup> married Hrodny, daughter of Midford Skeggi, and their sons were Eyjolf the Grey, Thorarin Foal-Brow and Thorkell Kuggi. Thord was one of the leading chieftains of 10th-century Iceland. Ari Thorgilsson credited Thord for the idea of dividing Iceland into Quarters for judicial purposes.

**Eyjolf Thordarson the Grey,**<sup>29</sup> so far, is known only by name.

**Thorkell Eyjolfsson**<sup>28</sup> was born 979 and he drowned 1026. He married Gudrun Osvifs-daughter, her 4th husband (LS, p. 216).

**Gellir Thorkelsson**<sup>27</sup> took over Helgafell after Thorkell died. Gellir, born c.1009 and died 1073, married Valgerd, daughter of Thorgils Arasson of Reykjaness. They had two sons: Thorkel and Thorgils. Thorgils' son was Ari the Learned, born 1068 (LS, p. 238). Bjorn Sigfusson and Leifur Magnusson, family genealogists, believed that Thorgils "almost certainly" had another son, Hunbogi Thorgilsson.

With the above reviews of earliest Magnusson ancestors in Iceland, this family history has revisited in varying extents all of the ancestors identified by Leifur Magnusson in his Sigfus genealogy. In this re-visitation, I have had recourse to the Icelandic genealogy – even though my ignorance of Icelandic prevented a full use of this work, I felt that I could make out some information of interest. For example, the Magnusson family can count a number of early-settler ancestors in addition to the first early settler, Ingolf Arnason. The Icelandic genealogy identified perhaps 30 such ancestors (*landnamadur*), of which perhaps 10 have been reported, to some extent, in this account. I have left a lot for next time, or for the next family historian.

The identification of ancestors in the settlement period opens possibilities of learning more about them, and the period, in early histories such as the *Book of Settlements* and sagas. One of the continuing family history interests for Magnusson descendants must be, it seems to me, the gaining of insights into Icelandic society – particularly, early Icelandic society. Anyone, of course, can gain insights from historical material; but the likelihood of insights and their quality would be enhanced by the knowledge that certain players in the past figured, as ancestors, in one's personal past.

In itself, the Icelandic genealogy seems to illustrate a sort of national interest in genealogy: how else explain the preservation and retrieval of so many family records? A pre-occupation with their genealogies would have been natural to early Icelanders; because the laws of the old Icelandic Commonwealth – as well as the Norse laws on which they were based – involved individuals with their relatives (fourth cousins and closer) in rights and duties regarding such matters as vengeance, inheritance, maintenance of the poor and *wergild*. Later, the circumstances that Iceland was a small country with a national religion (first Catholicism and then Lutheranism) may have fostered the widespread creation and preservation of vital records.

When we were in Iceland in 1980, Bjorn Sigfusson gave us Ari the Learned's (Ari frodi Thorgilsson's) reckoning of his forefathers (Chart 5, p. 326). Bjorn noted that the first 24 (AG 59-36) must have been from mythological sources, and that –

With Halfdan Hvitbeinn [AG 35], a king in the Oslo district in Norway, we enter the historical times (scaldic versified records, however, reach back into Mythology).

As descendants of Hunbogi Thorgilsson, Ari's brother, present-day Magnussons share Ari's Aettartala (pedigree).

Chart 5: Magnusson Ancestors, Part D

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Ari the Learned's reckoning of his earliest forefathers:

Ancestor Generation Number	
59	Yngvi, a king from Turkey (i.e., some Asiate tribe).
58	Njördur, king in Sweden and, after death, a god.
57	Freyr, king at Uppsala and, after death, a god.
56	Fjölnir died in Denmark (drowned in beer).
55	Sveidir
54	Vanlandi
53	Visburr
52	Dómaldur
51	Dómarr
50	Dyggvi
49	Dagur
48	Alrekur
47	Agni
46	Yngvi
45	Jörundur (killed by the Danes).
44	Aun hinn gamli (the Old).
43	Egill Vendilkráka
42	Óttarr, a king, buried in Ottarshaug in Uppland, Sweden
41	Aðuks að Uppsala (king).
40	Eysteinn
39	Yngvarr
38	Braut-Önundur
37	Ingjaldur hinn illradi
36	Ókafyr trételgja
35	Hálfdan hvitbeinn (white leg), Upplendinga-king, Norway.
34	Goðröður, king.
33	Olafur Godrødsson, king in Norway and Dublin, probably buried in the Gokstad mound (Godstad-skip) before 900, and probably Olafur hinn hviti (King Olaf the White).

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Sorce: Bjorn Sigfusson, August 1980.

## Sources and notes

By 1980, when Jon and I visited Iceland, I had drafted the Magnusson part of our family history. I then put it aside and turned to Lawsing parts of the history. In the summer of 1994, I decided to revise my early Magnusson draft so that it could be added to the family history. This revision required reformatting the material in order to conform it to the rest of the history, and soliciting up-date information from the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Sigfus Magnusson. As this is written, I lack such information concerning descendants of Sigfus's daughter, Berga.

## Family sources

Ancestors Sigfus<sup>4</sup> and Leifur<sup>3</sup> were principal donors to a treasure-trove of Magnusson family history. Their contributions, duplicated and distributed to some extent, included the following works.

Icelandic genealogy of Sigfus and his wife, now in the possession of Frederick S. Magnusson, was written in Icelandic in a leather-bound booklet of some 125 7" x 4½" pages. The cover was stamped in gold:

AETTARTLA  
Sigfusar Magnussonar  
og  
konus hans

Within the booklet, a note in Leifur's handwriting added:

Handrit  
Johann Krjistjanson  
Reykjavík 1912

The booklet was broken so that its pages could be reproduced. Jon Magnusson, Ruth (Magnusson) Wathen-Dunn and Nanna (Benediktson) Hetzner are known to have received copies of this genealogy; and, probably, other family members also have copies.

**Family Bible record** in Sigfus's Biblia (printed at Reykjavik, 1909), now in my possession. On 3 front flyleafs, Sigfus wrote his family record dated "in the month of August 1919." This record briefly reported Sigfus's father and grandfather and then gave the names and dates of his wife and their children and grandchildren. Leifur added some information to this record.

Sigfus began:

## Record of my Family for more than a century.

1. Rev. Jon Jonsson, conrector at Holar Iceland. Riddari af Dennebrage (reference to knighthood?), was doctor layman. Rev. Jonsson was born late in the 18th century. Had 6 children....

Rev. Jon's connector position is, so far, a mystery. Leifur, who must have seen this report, did not mention it in his reports; so, I suppose, it is only a minor mystery.

Sigfus writings translated, or thought to have been translated, by Leifur

"Sigfus Magnusson – His Autobiography, 1845-1932." English translation of an article written October, 1913, by Sigfus and published in Almanak (Winnipeg), 4 pp., mimeographed. Dates in title indicate that it was mimeographed after 1932.

“Sigfus Magnusson 1845-1932,” 47 pp., dittoed. Leifur wrote (see p. 297) that he was sending his nieces “a translation of your grandfather’s autobiography which I have rendered in the third person.” In this account, I have referenced this work as Sigfus’s “biography.”

"A Backward Look," 5 pp., mimeographed. Possibly written in Toppenish where Sigfus lived 1925-32.

### Other Leifur translations

“The Reverend Magnus Jonsson, January 7, 1809-May 18, 1889,” written by M. Julius Magnus, his grandson in Iceland, and translated by his grandson in America L. Magnusson.” Dittoed, 11 pp.

“Loptur Guttormsson, 1375(?)–1432,” excerpt from Bokmentasaga by Finnur Jonsson, pp. 417–18. Dittoed, 1 p.

### Mimeographed genealogies prepared by Leifur Magnusson from Icelandic genealogy.

In guessed order of completion, Sigfus Magnusson, 1845–1932, 4pp.; Genealogy of Gudrun Benedikts. Magnusson, 4pp.; Genealogy of Sigfus Magnusson and his wife Gudrun Benediktsdottir, 3pp.; and Genealogy – Gudrun Benedikts. Magnusson through the line of the Sturlungs, 2pp.

Leifur was working on these genealogies early in 1958. In a letter to his sister Vesta, 18 Feb 1958, he wrote, in part:

I am working on the genealogy and John and Amy [Evans] do the typing for me, no questions or money asked. I have among other dope Father's biography and another of our grandfather by his (grandfather's) nephew [grandson] in Reykjavik.

Helen (Evans) Colgan told me in July 1994 that, when her parents received material to be typed from Leifur, her father took it down to the bank where a bank typist did the work. She told me that her mother did not type.

In another note to Vesta, 14 Mar 1958, Leifur wrote, in part:

I have myself all gagged up with this genealogy. I know it is somewhat foolish and futile but it is certainly interesting if not fascinating.

Leifur distributed copies of the genealogies and of Sigfus's biography at Christmas, 1958. Jon was not on Leifur's genealogical mailing list, but copies of Leifur's genealogical materials came to him as part of Sarah's baggage when she came to live with the Jon Magnussons in 1960. They were read some years later.

In addition to the materials stemming from Sigfus and Leifur, family history sources include two works from the next generation in this family.

“A Synopsis of Icelandic Family History,” prepared by Weiant and Ruth (Magnusson) Wathen-Dunn in connection with their 1974 trip to Iceland. Xeroxed, 11pp. inc. map.

A computer printout of ancestors identified in the Icelandic genealogy, organized by generation and paternal line (gr.) by Frederick S. Magnusson. 56 pp., c. 1992.

### Printed sources

Dennis, Andrew; Foote, Peter; and Perkins, Richard, translators, *Laws of Early Iceland: Gragas* – The codex Regius of Gragas with materials from other manuscripts (University of Manitoba Press, 1980).

This work immediately transports the reader into the vanished society of early Iceland.

Federal Writers Project, *Washington City and Capital* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1937).

Haraldsson, Gunnlaugur, Ed., *Icelandic Law Directory*, to be published in 1995. Mr. Haraldsson wrote to Leif, 25 Sep 1994, requesting information for a directory chapter about foreign lawyers of Icelandic descent. He enclosed some material, in Icelandic, about Leifur and Jon, and asked Leif to “fill in the gaps.”

Johannesson, Jon, *Islandica Saga* (Reykjavik, 1956), translated by Haraldur Bessasson and published as *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth* (OIC), University of Manitoba Press, 1974.

Dr. Johannesson (1909-57) was a professor of Icelandic Literature and History at the University of Iceland. OIC was said to be the first major work in Icelandic history in which biographical accounts were subordinated to analyses of social forces and conditions that shaped the destiny of Medieval Iceland. Johannesson was particularly interested in the life cycles of chieftaincies.

Marquis, A. N., Co. *Who's Who in America*, Vol. 25, 1948-49 (Chicago, Ill., 1948). Leifur Magnusson's report, p. 1563.

Palsson, Hermann and Edwards, Paul, translators, *The Book of Settlements: Landnamabok*, University of Manitoba Press (Winnipeg, Canada, 1972 – University of Manitoba Icelandic Studies, Vol. 1). BOS for short.

This is a translation of Sturlubok (c. 1275-80) of Sturla Thordason (1214-1284). Many of the early ancestors identified in the Icelandic genealogy as *landnamsmadurs* (land-taking-men) can be found in BOS. In fact, information in the genealogy seems sometimes to have been derived from BOS.

In both OIC and BOS, ð was rendered d.

### Sagas and other fictionalized histories

Considering that all Magnusson descendants in this account had Icelandic ancestors in the Settlement Period, I imagine that any saga would be of some interest to them. They might find the four listed below, whose characters include identified settler-ancestors or forebears, of particular interest.

*Eyrbygga Saga*, Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, tr. Southside Publishers Ltd. (Edinburgh, 1973, and University of Toronto Press, Toronto and Buffalo, 1973). Settler-ancestor: Bjorn Ketilsson the Easterner.

*Egil's Saga*, Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, tr., (Penguin Books, 1976). Settler ancestor: Egil Skallagrimsson.

*Laxdaela Saga*, Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson, tr. (Penguin Books c. 1969). Settler-ancestors: Aud the Deep-Minded and her brother Bjorn the Easterner.

*King Harald's Saga*, Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Palsson, tr. (Penguin Books, c. 1966). Forebear: King Harald Sigurdsson.

The Penguin editions provide welcome additional information; such as, informative introductions, glossaries, maps and genealogical tables. Below are two later books that I have enjoyed.

*Byzantium*, by Michael Ennis (Atlantic Monthly Press, N.Y., 1989), also features Harald Sigurdsson. Although a novel, the author wrote “All except the most incidental characters actually lived and died almost a thousand years ago, and all of the major events actually took place.”

*Greenlanders*, by Jane Smiley (1988). Portrays Greenland in the 14th century. The society shown in Greenlanders was transported early Icelandic, vitiated by isolation and hard times.

Virkus, Franklin A., Ed., *The Compendium of American Genealogy*, Vol. VII, 1942 (Inst. of American Genealogy, Chicago, Ill.). Sarah Magnusson's report, p. 297.

In the family copy of this work, Sarah's birth year has been corrected (doubtless by Leifur) from 1883 to 1881. In his Civil War pension application, Frederick K. Swain reported that his daughter Sarah was born in 1879.

## Exploring Our Magnusson Roots in Iceland

On Saturday, 9/23/06, we visited Skalholt. Skalholt was Iceland's spiritual center for seven and one half centuries. In 1056, about 50 years after Icelandic acceptance of Christianity, Skalholt became the seat of the first bishop of Iceland, and subsequent bishops up through the 1700s.

There have been 32 Catholic and 13 Lutheran bishops at Skalholt. This church is the 11th built on this site, consecrated in 1963.

We are linked to Skalholt through Jon Arason, who was the last Catholic Bishop of Iceland before the Reformation. He was the Bishop of Northern Iceland, centered at Holar in Eyjaf. He was elected in 1522. He established the first Icelandic printing press at Holar in 1528 and published the Bible in Icelandic. Arason's revolt against the Reformation caused troops to be sent from Denmark who captured him, and on 7 November 1550 he and two of his sons, Ari and Bjorn, were beheaded at Skalholt.

On Sunday, 9/24/06, we flew 45 minutes north to Akureyri, in Eyjafjord, and then drove an hour and a half east to the Magnusson family homestead at Grenjadarstadur (pronounced Gren-yar-stathur). It was made a folk museum in 1958. The oldest building dates from 1865. Sometimes 30 people lived at Grenjadarstadur, 15 in 1915. People lived on the second floor, and were warmed by the animals living on the ground floor. There are 1,000 artifacts, donated from people in the area. Church and state are united in Iceland. Grenjadarstadur was one of the largest and most important church precincts, since the Middle Ages. The priest was the chieftain of the surrounding area. Grenjadarstadur means the place of many fox burrows. There is a comedic character on Icelandic TV who is always shooting a gun, named Eric of Grenjadarstadur.

The church at Grenjadarstadur was dedicated to St. Martin of Tours in the Middle Ages. On St. Martin's Feast Day, November 11, poor people got their share (25%) of the tithe. An embroidery of the life of St. Martin done at Grenjadarstadur in the Middle Ages is on loan to the Louvre. Hanging on the back wall of the church is a painting of those panels, by the daughter of a Grenjadarstadur priest.