

May 26 - 1964

This manuscript was examined today by Professor Haraldur Bessason of the University of Manitoba. He assured me that this was the handwriting of the late Captain Sygtryggur Jonasson.

P. H. T. Thorlakson

The Karsenau is at heart
an adventurer. In his
small but sturdy ships
he battled the winds
and waves in search
of adventure. The app-
roach of the Viking
ships struck terror
into the hearts of the
people whose shores
he raided in search
of plunder. His inde-
pendence of spirit could
break no tyranny. So
when Harald the Fair
haired undertook to
bring the whole of
Norway under his
sway a number of
the more intrepid

2. Landed gentry, nobles
and petty kings for
sake their homes, lands
and titles and took
to the sea in search
of new homes. They
came first to the
"western Islands"
which was their name
for the British Isles,
mostly they settled
in Ireland where
they remained for
several generations
intermarried and be-
came closely allied
with the Irish race.
All the while they
continued their ex-
plorations. They dis-
covered Greenland

9 and Iceland and
established settle-
ments there. Iceland
though barren and in-
hospitable yet allowed
them to lead their
own lives, to establish
their own government,
and to wrest a meag-
er living from the land
and sea. For a
thousand years they
lived independently of
other nations, though
nominally a dependency
first of Norway, and
later of Denmark, making
their own laws and elect-
ing their own parliament.
Early in the seventeenth

4. about 1870 the exodus
to America began. at first
this was only sporadic
consisting mostly of
adventuresome young
men. But in the years
1874-5-6 the movement
gained momentum and
~~some~~ between 15-16000
people came over. Of
these some settled in the
U.S. but ~~the~~ a large
majority made their
homes in Canada -
mostly in the Province of Manitoba.

I shall ~~principally~~
direct my remarks
~~primarily~~ to the
Manitoba settlement,
because I was one of
this group.

5. The life of new comers at that time was not altogether enviable. Planted in a strange ~~land~~ environment, unused to the ways and customs of the country, ignorant of the language and lacking the means and requisites necessary for them to enable them to make a new start in life, their lot was not a happy one. The task of gathering fuel and bringing in supplies for the family needs was indeed an arduous one. The wood choppers' axe was new to them and many a bump and bruise they suffered

6. while wielding it. They
must needs be their own
beasts of burden, for every
thing had to be carried
on their own shoulders,
or else drawn by hand-
sleighs over the snow
~~and~~ ^{or} ice. In summer
flat bottomed boats
driven by their own arms
served the same purpose.
They was cut and mak-
ed by hand, built into
starks and then when
winter came it had to
be hauled on hand-
sleighs may be a mile
or more to the stable.
In the winter time they
fished through the ice.
Holes had to be cut
and then a net had to
guided by a long pole

7. a distance of 20 or 30 feet
to another hole where it
was anchored to a cross
bar. Pulling out the net
and removing the fish
from it in extreme winter
weather was a chilling
task. Well might they
have said with the Duke
in "As you Like It": "Here
feel we but the penalty of
Adam -- etc." It fell to
them to suffer the
extreme rigors of winter
and the extreme sweating
heat of summer. I added
to that was the annoyance
of the mosquitoes and bull-
fogs. We here are more
or less immune to the bite
of the mosquito, but in Ice-
land they have no mosquit-
oes, so there new comers

8. Being non-immunized were
set upon by these pests with
relentless ferocity. I re-
member men going about
with mosquito nets over
their faces and wearing
woven mitts on their
hands in mid summer.

In the early years the
settlers were unable to
extract a living from their
farms and many had
to go to Winnipeg with
the first days of spring
to seek work. And
later in the summer a
large number went
to the harvest fields.
That left the mother at
home with the children
to care for. She must

9. Sew, knit, patch and darn,
wash scrub and iron from
morning till night. But al-
ways the most difficult
task of all was to find
sustenance for the many
little mouths she must
feed - The pioneer woman
was wonderful, her
self sacrifice, courage
and endurance was mar-
vellous - (the greatest woman)
The struggle for education
The Icelandic citizen.