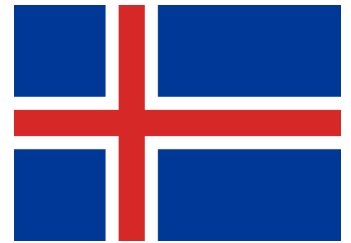


Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia

2021 Newsletter



November, 2021

novascotiaicelanders.ca

Message from the Chair

Dear Members

I hope you are all well and are slowly able to return to some of your normal activities. Although our Society has not held any annual events for almost two years, we are very hopeful we will be able to resume in the spring starting with our Annual General Meeting in April and the hike through Markland on International Trails Day on June 4.

We have had many visitors to the Markland settlement over the past season and the site continues to draw new guests, some who discover it with surprise and awe at the expansive woods with the remaining depressions in the ground, the only evidence of the homes of the Icelandic families who settled here over 145 years ago. The guest book at the entrance has over 100 new entries and we are told there have been many more guests who have visited but not stopped to sign. The comments are very encouraging as we have not seen or met many of these visitors.

This year we have plans to apply for assistance in replacing signage in the settlement and we are hopeful that work on the Caribou road leading to Markland will be completed, making it much more passable. In cooperation with the Moose River Gold Mines Museum and Camp Kidston on Long Lake, a new road sign has been built and installed at the intersection of Hwy 224 and the Moose River Road. Thank you to the Moose River Gold Mines Museum Society for initiating and funding this project and thank you to members Harley Redden, Ken Burrows and Leonard Watson for installing the sign.

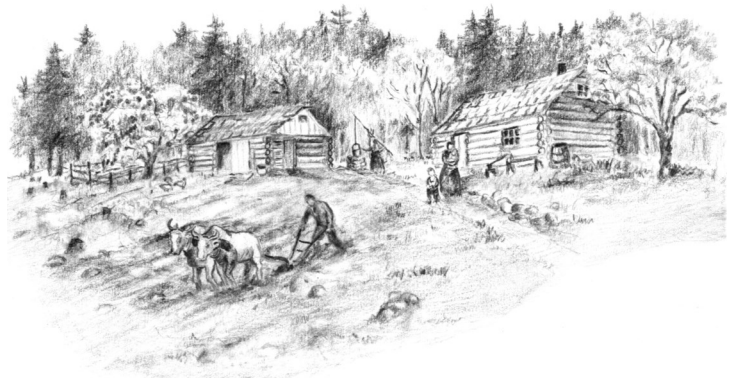
Our Sites and Settlers and Society brochures have been recently updated. The new brochure is more inclusive, as we have coordinated it with the Markland settlers section on our website.

In this newsletter, we are including a family story 'Lost in the Woods of Nova Scotia' sent to us by Susan Sigurdson, a descendant of the Hillman family who lived on Lot 12 in Markland. We are very grateful to Susan and the family for preserving the story and photos and allowing us to share it with you. I know you will find it captivating. We really appreciate receiving your stories, photos and family information and we would be happy to share them. They help us bring our work in preserving this almost forgotten piece of history to life.

Thank you, once again for your continued support and interest. We encourage you to send your annual membership dues and consider purchasing one of our books or other resources as we rely on these funds for our ongoing costs for the log cabin, the cairn site and work on the trails. We have included these forms in the newsletter and they are available on our website novascotiaicelanders.ca. You can also contact us at novascotiaicelanders@gmail.com or visit us on facebook. We look forward to hearing from you.

I would like to wish you and your families health and happiness in the coming year and I hope you can join us at one of our upcoming events.

Glenda Burrows



Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia

Annual Financial Statement

Fiscal Period Ending Dec.31, 2020

Opening Balance, Jan.1, 2020	1,433.00
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Income:

Memberships	540.00
Donations	350.00
Sales, Books, DVD, CD	127.00
Total Income	1017.00

Expenses:

Bank Fees	154.00
Newsletters, Postage	238.00
Brochures, labels	62.00
Lands & Forest lease	357.00
Property Tax	33.00
Cabin Insurance	475.00
Website maintenance	225.00
Joint Stock fees	31.00
INLNA membership	100.00

Total Expenses	1675.00
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Closing Balance Dec.31, 2020	775.00
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Glenda Burrows, Chair

Bonnie Price, Treasurer

Lost in the Woods of Nova Scotia

Pétur Jónsson Hillman and Olöf Kjartansdóttir arrived in Nova Scotia from Kinmount, Ontario in 1875. They spent the winter in Lockeport and in 1876 they began to farm their Markland property. They settled on lot 12, Laufskógar, next to Jón Jónsson Hillman, Pétur's brother who lived on Lot 13, Engihlíð.

With them was Olöf's daughter, Maria Rögnvaldsdóttir, whose father was Rögnvaldur Jónsson (died in 1870) and their son, Rögnvaldur Pétursson (Walter).

Two children, Jon and Una were born in Nova Scotia

after their arrival. Pétur's mother-in-law, Maria Rögnvaldsdóttir joined them in 1877.

In the 1878 survey of Markland compiled by Jón Rögnvaldsson, Maria was 8 years old and Walter was 5 years old. Both Pétur and Olöf settled in Pembina County, North Dakota by 1882.



Maria married Kristján Halldorson in 1887 and they raised 9 children on their family farm west of Mountain in Pembina County, ND. Maria died in Mountain, ND in 1963 at the age of 93. Walter married Guðrun Guðlaug Jóhannesdóttir in 1896. They raised eight children. Walter's wife, Guðrun died in 1928. He married Elizabeth Katrin Sveinsdóttir on December 15, 1931. Walter died in Mountain, ND, November 16, 1961.

In Maria and Walter's final years, they lived at Borg Memorial Home in Mountain, ND. The Borg Home was built in 1949 for senior residents of the Icelandic community.



**Maria Halldorson and
brother Walter Hillman on
Maria's 90th birthday**

This is a story written by Lauga Geir, local historian and writer, for Maria about her childhood experience of getting lost overnight in the woods of Nova Scotia.

It was written while Maria was at the Borg Home and visited with another resident, Martha Kivle. This is Lauga's interpretation of the time that Maria and Martha reminisced about.

Mrs. Jens Kivle from Adams, North Dakota, whose family had emigrated from Norway also lived in the Borg Home. She had been painting scenes from her childhood to preserve her happy memories from the past. When Mrs. Kivle dropped in to visit Maria, now known as Mrs. Halldorson, Maria asked her "Are you still painting from memory?" Mrs. Kivle replied, "That I shall do as long as I can hold a brush." "I have been thinking," said Mrs. Halldorson "what a blessing it is to be able to retain one's memory. There are so many pleasant things to think about that even the darkest days become bright just by recalling various events". Mrs. Halldorson began to tell Mrs. Kivle her story.

'My parents didn't come directly to Dakota. Before that we lived a short while in Nova Scotia. I was 8 years old when we came and my brother, Walter who recently died in this home was 5. Young as we were, we had chores to do, one of which was to fetch the cows from a heavily wooded pasture and bring them home for milking. We didn't mind doing this. Sometimes there were berries to pick along the way or wildflowers to bring home to mother along with the cows.'



Markland trail



Woods in Markland



Moose River at Markland

“One evening we were on our usual trek for the cows, loitering here and there, attracted by the chirping of birds or watching squirrels scampering up a tree, when suddenly we realized we had not seen any cows, yet. We wandered around in hopes of finding them, but evidently, we had completely lost our directions. We knew the sun had set because the woods were getting dark. We saw a bear coming to meet us but evidently, he wasn’t interested in little children, because he turned and ambled away from us. By this time my little brother was crying and wanting to get home. I had to explain to him that we would have to spend the night in the woods. “But I am so scared,” he whimpered.



Kristjan & Maria Halldorson & family



Walter G. Hillman & children

“Strangely enough, I wasn’t a bit scared. I told Walter that mother had taught us so many prayers that all he had to do was recite all of them, then nothing would harm us. I took off my apron and spread it under a tree and told Walter that we would imagine this was the mattress in our bed. He cuddled up to me and slept peacefully through the night. The next morning, we awoke to see a gleam of sunlight through the woods. Knowing the sun rose in the east I immediately got my bearings. Yes, there was the creek we had to cross by jumping from one stone to another, and there were familiar houses along the banks. All of this had been obscured by the darkness of night. Soon we would be home, but then we were not bringing the cows. The idea bothered me. Perhaps mother would be angry and scold us for shirking our duty. I saw some wood chips under the tree that had sheltered us. I picked up my apron

and told Walter we would fill it with chips to use as peace-offering in case mother would be indignant at seeing only her kids and no cows. Soon we were in her warm embrace before the neighbours who were searching for us had returned. “

“This experience I shall never forget “, continued Mrs. Halldorson, “because it has special significance for me. Through the years I have retained the childlike faith in divine providence. Since the lord guarded us children overnight in a bear infested forest, I have never doubted that he would care for me to the end of my days.

I have lived a long time, 93 years, and now the Lord has granted me the precious gift of being able to drift back, over the sea of memories and relive cherished incidents and companionship with long-departed friends, and through these recollections I have come to recognize the marvelous wisdom of the Creator. “

Mrs. Kivle had listened intently, and in a few weeks, she had painted a picture and displayed it on the wall in Mrs. Halldorson’s room. She named the scene ‘Lost in the Woods of Nova Scotia.’ Mrs. Kivle believed that to Maria’s children it would be symbolic of their mother’s firm faith and her wholesome philosophy of life.

This story was sent to us by Susan Sigurdson. Maria is her great grandmother (Langamma.) Walter is the grandfather (Afi) of Lyle Hillman. Lyle and his wife, Dianne have been members and supporters of the Society for many years and joined us for our celebrations in 2000. Thank you to the Hillman family for sharing the family photos and story.

**Painting of Lost in the Woods of Nova Scotia,
by Martha Kivle**



LOCKEPORT ICELANDERS

On Saturday, October 16th, 2021, I drove to Lockeport to visit the Icelandic settlement established there in the 1880s. Nine Icelandic families, including my great grandfather, Erlendur Huskilson, settled in East Green Harbour which is located a few miles west of the Town of Lockeport, Shelburne County. I call this the “Lockeport Settlement”.

The Government bought land in the area and sold one or two acre lots to the Icelanders at a cost of \$25 with five years to pay. Most of the settlers were fishers and farmers from Iceland. Many had first settled in Markland which was the major Icelandic settlement east of Halifax. Erlendur Huskilson bought a house and store from Hans C. Robb in 1879 in Markland (the “Markland Settlement”). In 1880 he moved to East Green Harbour with his wife, Gudlaug Stefansdottir, and two girls, Thorunn (5) and my grandmother, Sigridur Nikolina (1). His son, Lewis, was born there in 1882.



Both the Markland Settlement and the Lockeport Settlement did not last long. By 1881-82, most of the families had moved out west. Erlendur and his family were the only family to stay in Nova Scotia. A few Icelandic girls married local citizens and stayed here.

Erlendur cleared his lot and raised sheep. He was a carpenter and had employment with the Locke family who were merchants in the town of Lockeport. He built coffins and the Huskilson family to this day are still in the undertaking business. Lewis's son, Harold, was the MLA for Shelburne County from 1970 to 1993 and his son, Clifford, was MLA from 1993 to 1999.

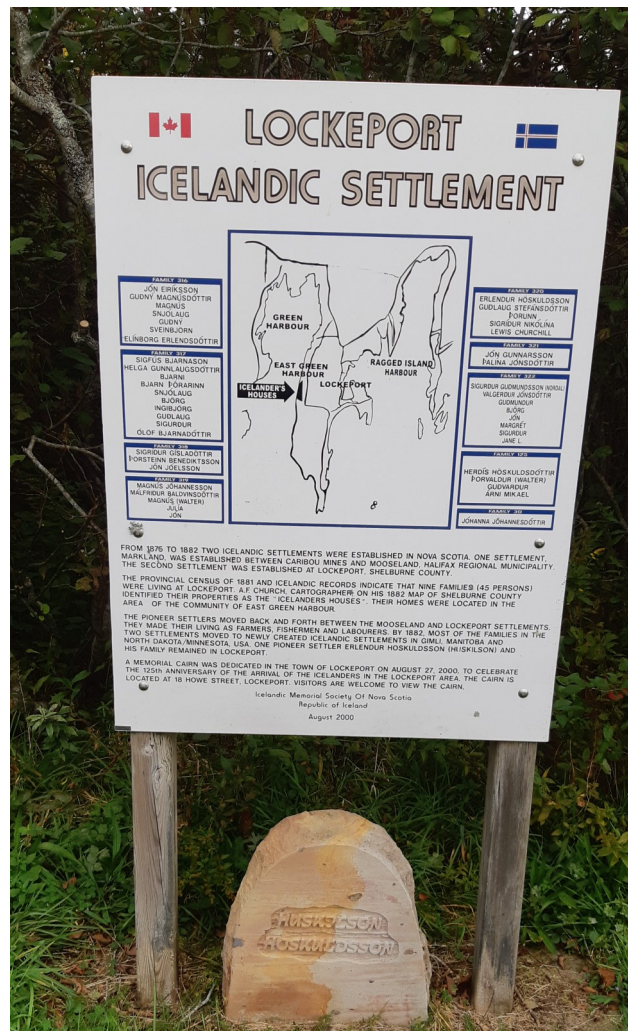
Gudlaug passed away in 1919 at East Green Harbour. My aunt, Evie MacDonald, told me her grandmother never learned to speak English. She would walk with her to Lydgate to sell her eggs. Erlendur moved into the Town of Lockeport to live with his son and family (Sarah Huskilson and nine children). He passed away in 1928.

My dad, Marshall Burgess Sr, remembered his grandfather. When the family had meals at Erlendur's home, he would not let dad or his identical twin brother, Harry, put molasses on their bread for fear they would clean him out. Dad and his family lived in one of the five Locke houses in Lockeport for a period of time before they moved to East Side Port L'Hebert. Grandmother had seven children.

In August 2000, the Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia erected and dedicated memorial cairns in Markland and Lockeport. Sarah Huskilson was the mayor at that time. I designed a historical plaque and it was erected at East Green Harbour by the Huskilson family where the Icelandic families lived. I have painted a picture of Erlendur's house which has now been torn down. I recently visited this site, mowed the grass and planted some tulips and daffodils to remember these brave and courageous settlers.

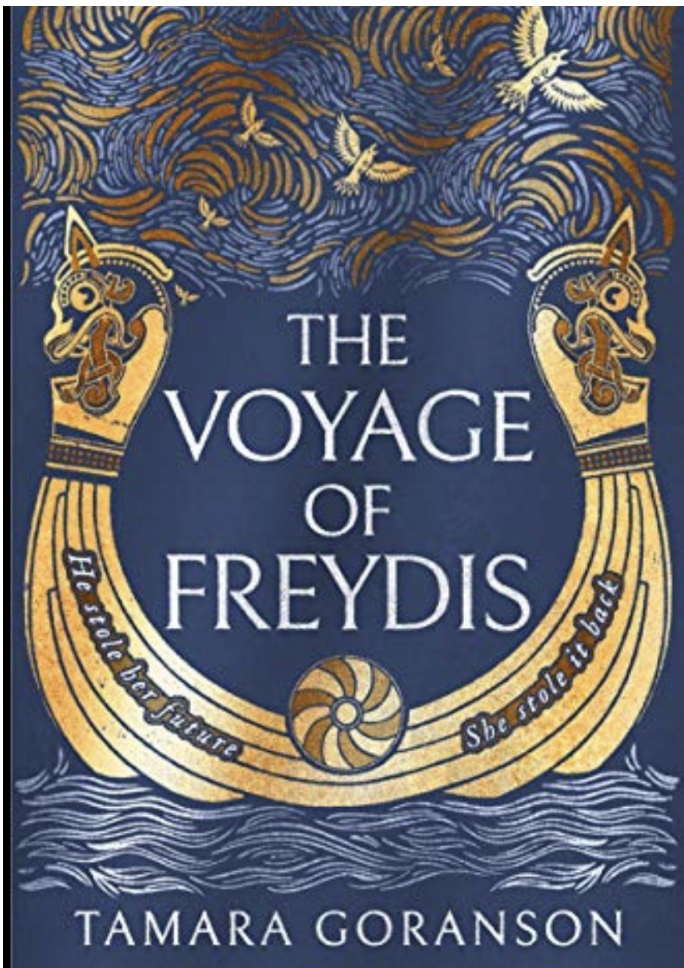
J. Marshall Burgess, QC. Dated October 27, 2021.

LOCKEPORT ICELANDERS (cont.)



The Voyage of Freydis. Tamara Goranson. 2021. Harper Collins

Book review by J. Marshall Burgess, QC



Freydis was born in 970, the daughter of Erik the Red, chieftain (Fadir) of Greenland. She had three brothers - Thorvald, Thorstein and Leif Erikson who was one of the first people to discover Vinland around 1001 AD.

Freydis inherited her father's volatile temperament. Freydis wanted to visit the new land. In 1004 she made the expedition with Thorfinn Karsefni. Her ventures to the new world are mentioned in the Sagas of the Greenlanders.

Freydis came to the new world with a group of Icelanders (Helgi and Finnbogi), not Greenlanders. When they arrived the Icelanders took over the camps left by Leif. Freydis drove them out and said the camps belonged to Greenlanders. She had many of them slaughtered. She picked up an axe and killed five women in the camp.

It was not long before she ran into trouble with the local natives (the Skraelings) who painted themselves in red dye. While her men ran for cover, Freydis stood up to them, beat her sword against her breasts and scared the natives into the

woods. They never saw anything like it. She was an avid hunter with the bow and arrow and killed many caribou. The natives stole her kill and she never forgave them.

Her brother traded with the natives and got along quite well with them. He took lumber and fur back to Greenland to trade. Freydis was not so lucky. When she got back to Greenland the story came out what this warrior had done. Leif did not approve of what his sister had done, but would not punish her. The saga concludes that everyone thought ill of this woman and her descendants.

Goranson puts a new twist on this story. Freydis did not have a happy life with her husband, Torvald. She decides to make the trip to Vinland to get away from him. Again she was unlucky when he came after her. She spent the winter in the new world and had a relationship with a native there. Freydis is portrayed as being ruthless in her dealings with her own people. She is also remembered as a betrayer.

It is a most interesting story. Someday I hope to get to Greenland and visit the site where Erik the Red had his home and family.



Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia

Membership Application and Renewal Form November 2021

Name _____

Phone: () _____

Address _____

Email: _____

Postal / Zip Code _____

☐ Single Membership \$10

Family Names: _____

☐ Family Membership \$20

☐ Corporate Membership \$50

☐ Lifetime Membership \$100

☐ Membership Renewal

Please make cheque payable to:

Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia
Bonnie Price, Treasurer
219 Old Post Road, Smiths Cove
Digby, NS B0S 1S0

e- Transfers (Canadian residents) novascotiaicelanders@gmail.com

The Society continues to research family histories in Markland. If you have any articles, stories, photographs or artifacts, the Society would like to hear from you.

☐ Direct descendent of a Markland family: _____

(Family name)

☐ I have information or photos to share with the Society

☐ I would like to make a donation to the Society (A charitable receipt will be issued.)



Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia

Publication Order Form

Title/Author	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Markland Remembrance of the Years 1875 – 1881 by: Guðbrandur Erlendsson	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Errand Boy in the Mooseland Hills by Magnús Bjarnason translated by Borga Jakobson	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> The Story of Markland on CD Story by: Ken Burrows, Narration and music by: Bill Stevenson	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> The Log Cabin at Markland on DVD 32 minute documentary on the story of the Icelandic pioneers of Markland and the building of the log cabin in the old settlement.	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> The Young Iclander by: Jöðhann Magnus Bjarnason. Translated by Borga Jakobson from <i>Erikur Hansson: A Novel from Nova Scotia</i>	\$20.00

Shipping costs: Will be added at time of purchase

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code/Zip: _____

Email: _____

To order: novascotiaicelanders@gmail.com or mail to:

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bon.price@eastlink.ca

Members at Large
Wayne Scott
Ken Burrows
Myra Jerome
Phyllis Parker



Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia

Membership 2020

Lifetime-18	Single-20
Family-12	Corporate -
Honorary-3	
Total	53



Our New Road Sign

Icelandic Memorial Society of Nova Scotia
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Halifax, NS
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