

The time had now come for us to move on our lands, or, to be more precise, for lands which we hoped would be ours, for in many cases full possession was never acquired. Erlendur and I had built a house together, for we owned the cook-stove in common, and Ingibjörg prepared the meals for me and my Guðmundur. We moved in on the first of April, or shortly after. The weather was cold and the snow still lay heavy on the ground. Because of this, and because of our lack of the requisite equipment, the move was accomplished only with difficulty. Of course, it was possible for the sleds to travel on the lake, but they were so heavy, being made of green wood, and so poorly constructed that all that one person could do was to pull them empty.

Many small sleds had also been built, and at this time almost every person seen on the move had a sled in tow or a pack on his back.

About the tenth of April, I began the building of my house, with four men to help. I had already cut the logs required, and the work of building took two days.

The snow had subsided but little, and fresh snow fell at the beginning of May, and frosts continued until June. On the ninth of May there was a thunder-storm, with an extremely heavy downpour of rain. We were unable to keep a stitch dry in the clayey leakage of Skapti's newly plastered house. The rain commenced about bed-time, and we stood nearly knee-deep in water for most of the night. We were unable to protect our bed-clothes from the rain, and they were soaked. Such was the comfort of most of the homes at that time, and this state of affairs continued for some years to come, in a number of cases.

Then commenced the seeding of beans and potatoes. It was rather difficult work clearing the forest and burning the trees, for the ground was very wet. Hoeing was difficult, too, for the ground was a solid tangle of roots.

The yield was small, and in addition there were a great many destructive small creatures to spoil the crop.

About the middle of June the potatoes

were planted. It had not been possible to bring the seed in before, as the ice remained on the lake till the twenty-fourth of May.

After the middle of June, Mundi and I went to Winnipeg. My Valdis was then employed at a boarding-house. She was not happily situated, for the work was too hard. In addition to that, she was defrauded of a goodly portion of the wages promised her, which was in keeping with what often happened during those first years.

Then we set up a tent and took in boarders, but the undertaking was not profitable; consequently I obtained work in connection with a large ditch which was then under way along Main Street. The work was exceedingly hard and we were driven relentlessly, so that only the strong could stand it. Later I worked for Taylor at making flat-boats for the party of Icelanders whose arrival from the homeland was then anticipated. The wages were not high, and nowhere else were they high, but generally they were better for women in domestic service than elsewhere — for at that time there was little prosperity in the land.

On the eighth of August, Sigtryggur arrived in Winnipeg, with the first group of Icelanders to arrive that summer, numbering upwards of 750. Later, on the fifteenth of the month, Halldór Briem arrived with nearly 450. I mention the names of these two for they were the conductors of the groups. It may well be imagined that we who had been away from home for two years, and not in the best of circumstances, welcomed this addition to our group.

The new-comers were not much better off on their arrival than we had been when we first came to this part of the country, except for the fact that summer was not far advanced when they came. Their group was much larger, and their baggage many times greater than ours, but they had to rely on the same inadequate means of transportation. They were complete strangers to the manner of life and the methods of work, which differed totally in the Old Country. Many