

from
Step

Stephen P. Stephansson.

BY JACK LAYTON, A.G.S. #1182

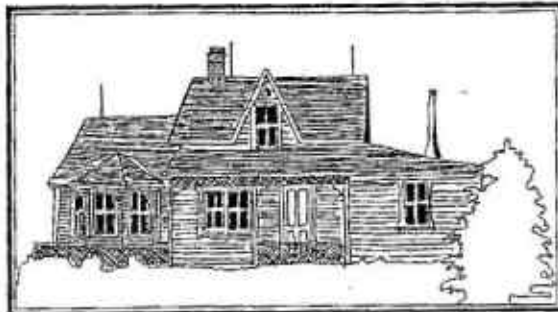
A sign just off Highway 54, 16 km west of Innisfail, Alberta welcomes the traveller to a unique area of Alberta--the land of the Icelandic immigrants and Stephan Stephansson (pronounced Stefan Stefanson), a man better known in Iceland than in his adopted homeland.



"ICELANDIC SETTLEMENT: On June 27, 1888, fifty Icelandic men, women, and children from North Dakota reached their destination along the banks of the Medicine River. Since leaving their homeland in the 1870's, this would be for some the third attempt to establish roots in North America. Here they remained, soon to be joined by more of their countrymen, to share in pioneering the Canadian West. Their proud traditions flourish today in the nearby community of Markerville".

The sign is repeated in Icelandic.

Stephansson chose a site beside the Medicine River about four miles north and slightly west of the future site of Markerville. He settled there with his wife, Helga Jonsdottir, his mother, and three sons. Three daughters and a fourth son were to be born in Alberta. Stephansson's sister, Kristin and her husband, Siglaug Christinsson took up the land immediately south of her brother. Times were hard for the new settlers, as early frosts thwarted all attempts to raise grain; and they made a simple living from mixed farming.



Stephansson continued to be a leader among the settlers. He was active in originating the Markerville creamery (which is now designated as a heritage building), in forming the first school (Holia), and post office and finally in 1907, developing a strain of wheat which would survive the early frost. Closest to his heart, however, was his poetry and his attempts through it to preserve the Icelandic culture. Eventually he gave up his farming to devote full time to his poetry. He has been known as "Iceland's National Poet".

The Stephansson home is now an historic site maintained by the Province. Over 200 came by chartered plane from Iceland for its dedication in 1982. This simple home provides a unique insight into a very complex man and his family. Any traveller in central Alberta will be rewarded for a short detour from Highway 2.



The Stephansson and Christinsson families are interred in a private cemetery just west of the Stephansson home--on a corner of the Christinsson quarter section which has been cut off by the Medicine River. Here are the graves of Stephansson, his mother, his sons, and daughters (except for Rosa, who lives in Red Deer), and their families. Each gravestone identifies the occupant of the grave and many contain inscriptions of his poems, in Icelandic--a challenge for the linguist.



The pretty little graveyard, with its only 17 graves is dominated by a cairn to Stephansson's memory. The cairn identifies him as 'famous poet'. The inscription also includes a translation of one of his poems.

"Though you have trodden in travel
All the wide tracks of the earth
Bear yet the dreams of your bosom
Back to the land of your birth."

Perhaps the latter is what genealogy is all about. It has a fascination which seems often beyond explanation.

Much of this information was gleaned from Grub Axe to Grain, a book published by the Spruceview Historical Society).

DESCENDENTS OF STEPHAN G. STEPHANSSON

as compiled from information taken from grave markers and "Grub Axe to Grain"

Person	Children	Grand Children	1st Great Grand Children	2nd Great Grand Children	3rd Great Grand Children	4th Great Grand Children	5th Great Grand Children
STEPHANSSON, Stephan G.	STEPHANSSON, Baldur MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR	STEPHANSSON, Cecil B. MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Sigurlena BARDAL					
					MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Frethe STEWART		
					MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Frethe STEWART		
					MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Frethe STEWART		
					MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Sigurlena BARDAL		
					MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Sigurlena BARDAL		
		Seifried, Lilja STEPHANSSON MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Sigurlena BARDAL					
		STEPHANSSON, Gestur MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Sigurlena BARDAL					
	STEPHANSSON, Stephan Gudmundur MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR						
		Bergdal, Helga STEPHANSSON MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG					
		STEPHANSSON, Stephan Jon MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG					

Stephanson
Family

OK
6/1999
Relative speaking. Alberta -26- Genealogical Society
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OCKOTA, Florence STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG

Rawlinson, Ethel STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG

STEPHANSSON, Edwin
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG

SCOTT, Marilyn STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Margaret STEWART

BRYANT, Nancy STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Margaret STEWART

STEPHANSSON, Diane
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Margaret STEWART

STEPHANSSON, Mindy
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Margaret STEWART

Good, Emilie STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Regina STRONG

Good, Wilfred
FATHER: Good, THOMAS

Good, Lorne
FATHER: Good, THOMAS

STEPHANSSON, Jakob Kristinn
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR

BARDAL, Stephany Gudbjorg STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR

BARDAL, Gestur
FATHER: BARDAL, Arni

SIGURDSON, Jony STEPHANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR

SIGURDSON, Edna
FATHER: SIGURDSON, Sigurdur K.

STEPHANSSON, Gestur Cecil
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR

BENEDIKTSON, Rosa STEHPANSSON
MOTHER: STEPHANSSON, Helga Sigridur JONSDOTTIR

BENEDIKTSON, Iris
FATHER: BENEDIKTSON, Sigudur Vilberg

BENEDIKTSON, Stephan
FATHER: BENEDIKTSON, Sigudur Vilberg

BENEDIKTSON, Conrad
FATHER: BENEDIKTSON, Sigudur Vilberg

BENEDIKTSON, Theodor
FATHER: BENEDIKTSON, Sigudur Vilberg

COSS REFERENCE ONLY

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY