

Map showing the location of Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland. Image courtesy Intellectual Reserve.



Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland, location of the new museum exhibit focusing on early Latterday Saints who emigrated from Iceland to Utah. Photograph courtesy Intellectual Reserve.

LDS Exhibit in the Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland, Folk Museum

Steven L. Olsen

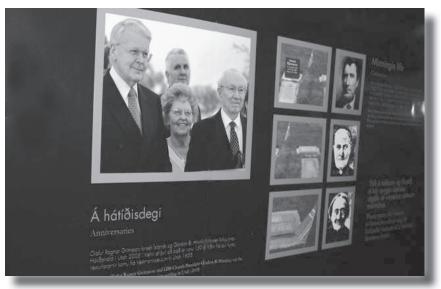
July 16, 2011, was an important date in the recent history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Iceland. On that day, eighty-six Icelandic Latter-day Saints—virtually every active member of the Church in Iceland—gathered to the island of Heimay in Vestmannaeyjar, part of the Westman Islands off the southern coast of Iceland, to attend the opening of a permanent museum exhibit at the Vestmannaeyjar Folk Museum, entitled "Icelandic Heritage Among the Mormons." Traveling some distance by car and ferry, Icelandic Saints initially assembled with citizens of Vestmannaeyjar on the windswept western coast of the island on a beautiful but brisk Saturday afternoon to celebrate the exhibit's opening. The program commenced near the coastal tide pool where many of the two hundred early Mormon converts from Vestmannaeyjar were baptized, and not far from the cove where they once worshipped weekly in secret out of fear of persecution.

Following a brief outdoor brunch, the celebration continued in the shadow of the impressive "Monument to the Emigrants," commissioned by the Icelandic Association of Utah and dedicated in 2000, which features a statue by Utah artist Gary Price. The monument honors some four hundred Icelandic

STEVEN L. OLSEN (olsensl@ldschurch.org) is senior curator at the LDS Church History Department, Salt Lake City, Utah. His formal training is in cultural anthropology, having received a PhD from the University of Chicago in 1985. His professional achievements have focused on exhibit creation and historic sites restoration for the LDS Church. He has also presented and published widely in the fields of Mormon studies and museum studies. He has served the profession on the boards of such diverse organizations as the Western Museums Association, American Society for Church History, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies (BYU), and Utah Humanities Council. For a dozen years he also held an adjunct faculty position in the Department of Anthropology, BYU.



The museum exhibit in Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland, tells the story of Icelanders who joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and emigrated to Utah between 1854 and 1914. Image courtesy Intellectual Reserve.



The museum exhibit in Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland, explores the connection between Iceland and the Latter-day Saints. Pictured here is a 2005 visit of Iceland president Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson during a visit to Utah. LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley is pictured to the right. Image courtesy Intellectual Reserve.

Latter-day Saints who gathered to Utah between 1854 and 1914, and established a new homeland, primarily in Spanish Fork.

Kári Bjarnason, head librarian of the Vestmannaeyjar Library, conducted the program, which consisted of several hymns of the Restoration performed by a combined choir from the Selfoss and Reykjavik branches of the Church, the only currently organized Latter-day Saint congregations in Iceland. Following the singing, those in attendance boarded buses and vans and toured the island to learn of its rich history and to view sites where the early Saints lived. Knowing the farms where early Saints came from is vital for family history in Iceland, since the ongoing tradition of patronymics makes a person's last name virtually irrelevant for tracing his or her family identity.

The hour-long tour concluded at the Vestmannaeyjar Folk Museum, located in the heart of the city between the city hall and social hall, across the street from the city park, and on a principal axis from the harbor—the lifeblood of the local economy and traditional point of entry for all travelers. The museum had just reopened after a major renovation and a reinstallation of its permanent exhibit galleries. The new exhibits featured six major themes from the history of Vestmannaeyjar that express the essence of the island's identity. Themes include the fishing industry and the 1973 eruption of the Eldfell volcano, which nearly destroyed the possibility of continued human habitation on the island.

One of the six core themes chosen by the folk museum to represent the legacy of the island and its people is the widespread conversion of its citizens to Mormonism and their subsequent migration to America. The legacy of this emigration is honored by the people of Vestmannaeyjar partly because many of its leading citizens were among the converts to Mormonism and partly because the Mormon emigrants preserved their Icelandic heritage by continuing in America many of the traditions of their homeland. Even today, Spanish Fork, Utah, hosts one of the largest annual celebrations of Icelandic heritage outside of the "fatherland." The remarkable story of conversion, immigration, and cultural preservation is the focus of this permanent exhibit, which consists of photographs, documents, artifacts, maps, and music. Its centerpiece is a wall depicting the names and photographic images of all known Icelanders who converted to Mormonism and gathered to Utah during this period, half of whom came from Vestmannaeyjar.

At the dedication of the exhibit, attendees filled the exhibit galleries nearly to capacity. The combined choirs sang several Mormon hymns, some of which exist only in Icelandic. Their singing was punctuated by remarks from representatives of the scholarly community, the museum, the LDS Church, and the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, all of whom assisted with the creation of the exhibit. Friðrik Björgvinsson, an engineer from Vestmannaeyjar, spoke about early Mormon history on the island. Páll Marvin Jónsson, managing director of the Knowledge Center in Vestmannaeviar and a member of the town council, expressed his gratitude to those who developed the display. Steven L. Olsen, senior curator of the LDS Church History Department, provided an overview of the exhibit. Kim R. Wilson, chair of the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, officially opened the exhibit and explained how Utah donors had generously provided funding for the project.

Fred E. Woods, BYU professor of Church History and Doctrine, expressed appreciation to Páll Marvin Jónsson for supporting the installation of this exhibit in the Vestmannaeyjar Folk Museum and related how a number of individuals and institutions from Iceland and Utah had worked together to produce the inspiring Mormon exhibition. He also drew upon the words of the Apostle Paul in expressing the view that although many had planted and watered to help develop the exhibit, God had surely given the increase (1 Cor. 3:6–7).

Professor Woods further explained that this exhibit is the



Celebrating the opening of a permanent museum exhibit about Icelandic Mormons are, from left to right: Fred E. Woods from Brigham Young University, Kári Bjarnason from the Vestmannaeyjar Folk Museum, Kim R. Wilson from the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation, and Steven L. Olsen from the LDS Church History Department. Photograph courtesy Intellectual

Reserve.



Article in the August 13, 2011, issue of the LDS Church News featuring a report of the Mormon exhibit in the Vestmannaevjar Folk Museum.

product of a larger historical project which has been ongoing for several years. During the next four years, he and Kári Bjarnason will continue to collect Icelandic manuscripts and images in both Utah and Iceland which they anticipate will provide additional information concerning early Icelandic Mormon history during the years 1851 to 1914.

Fréttir / Fimmtudagur 21. júlí 2011

Saga mormóna í Vesturheimi - Fræðandi dagskrá og sýning í Sagnheimum: Bara helmingurinn af sögunni

-Hinn helmingurinn er skráður hér í bréfunum sem bárust til Vestmannaeyja Þurfum að komast í þau til að fá heildarmyndina - Gaman að sjá að Safnahúsið verða miðstöð rannsókna og miðlunar á sögu okkar - Bækur í smíðum

Laugardaginn 16. júlí efndi Þekk-ingarsetur Vestmannaevis (----ingarsetur Vestmannaeyja i sam-starfi við Sögusetur 1627 til dag-skrár í tilfeni af opnun fyrstu varan legu sýningarinnar um sögu þeirra Íslendinga sem fluttust til Utah á árunum 1854 til 1914. Sýningin er hluti af hinu nýja Byggðasafni – Sagnheimum.

hhui af hun nýja Pygðlastini -Sayheimum, sayheimum, stöðismann Bókasífas Vertnanna-eyja, markaði sýran að ramsska Vertnannnseju um að ramsska Urstmannseju um að ramsska Urstmannseju um að ramsska Urstmannseju um að ramsska um að ar sinna skullar skullar nónar og futust vestur um haf, "Lum 400 einstallingar futust rift falandi til Urah á árunum 1854-til 191 eg var hvinnum einstmin höfur fur vesturmanneyjum", sigði Kári. Dagskráfin höft við Sendibeðann ráði meinstallar skulla skulla skulla skulla fra skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla fra skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestursan við Mærndeapoll sem skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla skulla vestur skulla s

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atburðunum, Safnahúsið.

Samstarf við Utah

Áhugaverð verkefni



GÓÐIR GESTIR frá Utah. Steve Olsen og Fred Woods, Beint fyrir aftan Steve sést í Kim Wilson er opnaði sýninguna.

CÓDER G Fred Woods, professor við Há-skólam (Uda), Hann Symal i An-nerfjun Pokkingsrutur við skolar (Uda), hófu formiga þennan dag undir merkjun Pokkingsrutur Vast-mannarja og lakisölans (Uda) var að bæst við lauð heimildir sem en væru til hjú einstaklingun að tæki fögar ár og markmilöð vær að leita upp jul heimildir sem en væru til hjú einstaklingun að tæki fögar að en aftalð væri að tæki fögar að en aftalð væri að tæki fögar að för Bel heim mils-inn álung á verkefni þeirn Kára og træðski hann mökki Pok heim mils-na försking verkefni þeirn Kára og træðski hann mökking verkefni heimi för ræðilgur verkefni heimi skur og krif heimi á heimig sett verk-enni á hor a kild og fyrtir fæði-nem að nota heilann, þá fyrst lega hjutað er eining sett verk-elhið er er eiki stör sörtning en l

Ekki stór sýning en

áhrifarík Steve Olsen, yfirmaður sýningar-

upp (radinalegs formi, mob havatina. Di disk Kim Wilson við en hann er sjöfnardformaður Skytelfagsins 1 ringa og rannskkur á sögu mornnönu fýmsum löndanu, þar á moðal ofninguma og rannskinia hér, Lýsti hav, sjöngan formlaga kammiliga dagskri moð öng Bendah þessi fræðandi og skæmmiliga dagskri moð öng mornnönakönins og siðan förla Blabanaður nál oð snæygji sör i un og skoða herlegheitin. Þetta er

"Ég mun einungis nýta sumarfríi mitt að þessu sinni til að vera hjá

ale h

Allt vel þegið

Allt vei begið Al lökur föruti Kári Haðamann til að eggi róki að akóða rýja singan sem og að skoða rýja singa kar og að skoða rýja singa kar sen skonst skonst skonst skonst singar um sögu som sen skonst skonst skonst singar um sögu som skráður hör si kefninnar sem börnar til Vast-mannasju. Við þurtim seing að singar singar skráður hör, í bæfrinnar sem börnar til Vast-mannasju. Við þurtim seing að singar singar skráður hör skonst veistmannasjöng og veinnali að skonst skonst skonst skonst skonst veistmannasjöng og veinnali að

sokna og miðlunar á sögu okkar Vestmannasyninga og vonandi að starfsmenn þess haldi áfram á þessari góðu braut. Dagskráin um sögu mormónanna er enn einn kaflinn sem verið er að endurskrifa okkur hinum til ánægju og fróðleiks.

Article in the July 21, 2011, issue of the *Fréttr* newspaper featuring a report of the Mormon exhibit in the Vestmannaevjar Folk Museum.

MORMÓNAKÓR frá Revkjavík og Selfossi sá um allan söngflutning

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