

Loftur Jónsson: A Mormon Icelandic Pillar of Strength

Fred E. Woods and Kári Bjarnason

Loftur Jonsson (Loftur Jónsson) was born in Butra, Teigur in Fljótshlíð, Rangárvallasýsla, on July 20, 1814, from a lineage of devout Lutherans. His parents were Jon Arnason (Jón Árnason) and Thorgerdur Loftsdóttir (Þorg-erður Loftsdóttir). By 1836, Loftur and his brother Arni (Árni) were employed in Vestmannaeyjar in the fishing trade.¹ Loftur prospered in his work and eventually is said to have become the owner of a fishing boat called *Goldfalls* (*Gullfoss*).² During this time, he also hired himself out to take care of the estate of a local widow named Gudrun Hallsdóttir (Guðrún Hallsdóttir), whose husband, Jon Oddsson (Jón Oddsson), had drowned in a fishing accident on March 5, 1834.³ Loftur proved to be of great value to Gudrun, but Loftur later decided he wanted to devote himself solely to the fishing industry. According to family tradition, when he informed Gudrun of his plans, she, though two decades his senior, proposed marriage wherein he would receive half of the estate. Loftur found the offer a great temptation due to the daily struggles of making a living, and he subsequently consented to marriage on October 27, 1836.⁴

FRED E. WOODS (fred_woods@byu.edu) is a professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his BA and MA from Brigham Young University, and his PhD from the University of Utah. He held a Richard L. Evans Professorship of Religious Understanding from 2005–2010, during which time he sought opportunities to build bridges with other cultures and faiths. For the past several years he has researched and published extensively about the Mormon connections to Iceland. He has also been a visiting professor at the University of Iceland.

KÁRI BJARNASON (kari@vestmannaeyjar.is) received a BA in philosophy, a BA in Icelandic literature, and an MA in old Icelandic literature, all from the University of Iceland. From 1989–2006 he was a manuscript specialist at Iceland’s National and University Library. Since 2007 he has been the director of the library in Vestmannaeyjar. In 2011–2012, he was a visiting scholar at BYU, where he was sponsored by the Charles Redd Center.



Map showing the location of Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland.



Loftur Jonsson (Loftur Jónsson) and his first wife Gudrun Hallsdottir (Guðrún Hallsdóttir), circa 1865.
Photograph courtesy Ralph Holding.

Gudrun had two children at this time from a previous marriage: a seven-year-old son named John (Jón), and an eleven-year-old daughter named Gudrun (Guðrún), who went by Gunna.⁵ During the time Loftur was in Vestmannaeyjar, he also learned the skills of blacksmithing and carpentry work. However, he was especially known for his excellent work as a seaman in the fishing trade, and he once saved the life of a boat load of fishermen, thanks to his good judgment as the captain of the vessel. Loftur's sound judgment and advice were soon recognized, and he became a "pillar of strength" to Vestmannaeyjar's island community, which brought opportunities to serve locally in influential positions.⁶

In 1851, Loftur's life would change dramatically when he encountered Mormonism. During the spring of that year, two Icelanders, Gudmundur Gudmundsson (Guðmundur Guðmundsson)⁷ and Thorarinn Hafliðason (Þórarinn Hafliðason),⁸ had embraced the Latter-day Saint faith in Copenhagen while attending trade school there. In the spring, they were sent by Elder Erastus Snow to Vestmannaeyjar to preach the restored gospel to their native people.⁹ The young men began to preach the gospel on this small island off the southern coast of Reykjavik, but just before their arrival, the local press published negative reports about the Mormons, and the Lutheran priest¹⁰ warned the people not to listen to these missionaries, who were referred to as "false prophets, who had come to deceive their countrymen."¹¹

Apparently there had been a threat to turn Gudmundur over to the law, as indicated in the following letter he wrote to the governor of Iceland, Jorgen S. Trampe:

I want, of simpleness of heart to explain for your honor, as the highest authority over the people, my spiritual feelings, by making you aware of the effort now which is taken against my religious teaching, against not only me but also Almighty God and his Son's Law, and those Lutheran religious teachings which are built upon the Bible and not upon the teachings of man.

I know that I am detestable in the eyes of the world so I now offer only my testimony, believing rather that each and every one of the true believers would find the power to ask God, with a humble heart, to teach them of the truth, such spiritual seriousness being necessary, and would soften all, though they literally observe those holy writings which give salvation to each human who seeks God with a humble heart and is the way intended for both small and great.

And you would do well, O Great Leader, to consider that this is not from me only, but of thy God and because of the truth. I trust in thy high calling to adopt not a course of evil, as I point out, O learned ones, and presume to allow my feelings to come to light, which are without objection according to the will of God. May God work a holy work through you.¹²

Just four days later, Vestmannaeyjar district sheriff J. N. Abel¹³ wrote a letter to Governor Jorgen S. Trampe, dated June 3, 1851, in which Abel

discussed the inherent dangers to the region posed by the arrival of the Mormon faith and mentioned Gudmundur, about whom the sheriff seemed to be uneasy because of Gudmundur's intelligence, eloquence, and character. The sheriff's letter breathes a spirit of concern over the Latter-day Saints' presence:

It is disturbing to know that this unholy teaching, in their book of epistles has gained a solid hold much more quickly than was expected. . . . A goldsmith journeyman, Gudmundur Gudmundsson, came here 12 of last month [May] and even though he has not, because of his poverty, brought with him his faith's dogma translated into Icelandic, otherwise I would have taken measures to lay hold upon the information. He was worked diligently and received a good following. The result is such that a certain poor man and his wife were rebaptized in the night between 26th and 27th last month [May].¹⁴ Others who were preparing to be re-baptized were present at the ceremony and among them Loftur Jonsson, the deacon or parish clerk, mediator and member of parliament. . . . I want to now ask you, in your high office—your honor—whether I ought to release him from the board of conciliation and replace him.¹⁵

Abel had already been instrumental in making arrangements for such a release, as evidenced in a letter written to Loftur on May 28, 1851. When the National Assembly commenced on July 5, 1851, this letter was handed to the president regarding why Vestmannaeyjar farmer Loftur Jonsson was absent from the meeting. The president read the letter, addressed to Loftur, before the Assembly, which in part said:

Because we have evidence to prove, that you have supported the spreading of Mormonism here in the island, and because we do not wish to give our vote to a man that will not confess the recognized religion, we hereby revoke with this letter dated the 24th of May last year [1850] your position of being the representative of the Vestmannaeyjar Islands, effective immediately. . . . This we wish to make you aware of, so that you will not have to trouble you or spend any efforts to attend the National Assembly of Icelanders, which is to be held the 4th of July in Reykjavik.¹⁶

Notwithstanding the stiff opposition by Sheriff Abel, civic leaders, the local Lutheran priests, and the press, Loftur courageously embraced the Mormon faith and was baptized the same day Abel wrote his letter to Governor Trampe.¹⁷ A couple of years later Loftur became the branch president in Vestmannaeyjar, replacing Gudmundur Gudmundsson, who had been living with Loftur.¹⁸ In 1857, Loftur left Iceland with his wife Gudrun; as well as his step-daughter Gunna; his step-son, Jon; and Anna, who later became Jon's wife.

Magnus Bjarnason (Magnús Bjarnason), one of the Icelandic converts who departed with Loftur and his family, wrote the following concerning their voyage:

We were in 1857 eleven “Mormons” on the island (Westman) and we all secured passage on the schooner “Adolfina” and sailed for England June 7, 1857. After a voyage of three weeks we arrived in Liverpool, England, where we remained another three weeks, but on the 18th of July, 1857, we sailed from Liverpool, by freight ship “Wyoming” and after spending seven weeks on the Atlantic Ocean, we arrived at Philadelphia, U.S. America, whence we traveled by railroad to St. Louis, Missouri. After spending three days in the city, we boarded a river steamer and sailed up the Mississippi River to Burlington, Iowa, whence we traveled fifty miles inland to the little town of Fairfield, now (1926) in Jefferson County, Iowa, where we lived one and a half years, during which we made preparations to journey to Utah. We left Fairfield May 16, 1859, and arrived in Salt Lake City, August 29, 1859. We spent about three months in the city, after which we moved to Spanish Fork, Utah County, where we became permanent settlers.¹⁹

It appears that while most of the small group of Icelanders went to Fairfield, Iowa, for employment, Loftur’s advanced skills of carpentry allowed him to remain with his family in St. Louis before joining the other Icelanders in a pioneer company in 1859. Dena Bowen, grand-niece of Loftur, wrote, “They were delayed in St. Louis. Lofter [Loftur] . . . very soon . . . was employed as a carpenter.²⁰ Work was plentiful; never in his life had he been paid such wages. . . . They remained in St. Louis²¹ for two years, preparing themselves as best they could for their long trek westward. They were placed in the company of Captain Brown and started for Utah.”²²

This Mormon pioneer outfit was a company of 353 people and fifty-nine wagons led by Captain James S. Brown, who was thirty years-old at the time. Concerning his company, Brown noted that along with Americans gathered from various regions, they also had quite an international assortment: “On June 13th, 1859, the company set out for Salt Lake City, Utah. There were nine different nationalities of people represented, namely, English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Danish, Swedish, Norwegians and Icelanders. . . . Many of them had never driven an ox one mile in their lives, and the result was almost like herding a train on the plains.”²³

Although Captain Brown explains that “the company did not have any serious mishaps,” he did record that the company encountered a group of 150 hungry Sioux warriors who were on the war path. After receiving food and subsequently being diverted by a small herd of buffalo, the Sioux did not harm to the Mormon pioneers.²⁴ Finally, upon reaching Union Square, Salt Lake City on August 29, 1859, they received a warm welcome from several Mormon apostles²⁵ and soon migrated south to Spanish Fork to join their fellow Icelandic Saints.

Over the next decade, Loftur wrote at least five letters back to his dear friend Pall Sigurdsson (Páll Sigurðsson), commencing in 1862 while the American Civil War was ongoing. “Once more I take the pen in my hand to

let you, my noble countrymen, who desire to know of me, know how I or we are doing here in the Salt Sea Valleys. We are doing very well. We live here peacefully and quietly while others here in America . . . kill and destroy one another. We rejoice in the redeeming gospel, which we have received.”²⁶

Loftur also writes candidly, though optimistically, about the transition into a new country and gives details concerning provisions, his carpentry work, and the wages he was receiving in comparison to those of his native homeland:

When I came to this place, where I am now, I had spent all my money I had for myself and other poor folk who could not get here on their own accord, but I hope God will give me life and health, that there may not be many years until I have regained all such and maybe more, because I make my own bread in my own land and make there besides 2 to 3 dollars during the day building things for others. One dollar is worth about 11 marks, 7 schillings. These would be considered a good days wages in our land. If the truth be told, food is more expensive here, but the quality is also much better.²⁷

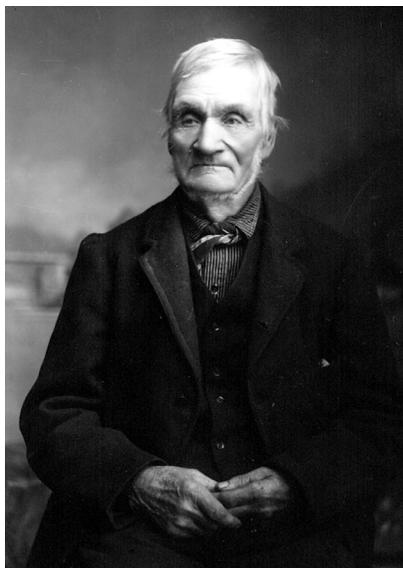
Three years later in another letter to Pall, Loftur told of the end of the Civil War and the assassination of President Lincoln. “Now they are saying that the long and bloody war between the north and south places is over, . . . [but] a man walked in on president Lincoln, where he sat in a chair, and shot him with a pistol right in the head.” In this same letter Loftur wrote of the prosperity of his native countrymen, notwithstanding his concern for restless local Native Americans in the Spanish Fork, Utah, region:

All of the Icelanders live in this little town, all of good health, and prosper both spiritually and temporally. . . . The wild Indians are rather restless at this time, which has led to them stealing cattle so we sought to retrieve it from them, which did not go well, a few of the men, both white and Indian, were killed. But even though they are bad, the Indians, one never needs to fear them in the cities, because there they do not usually come when they are restless.²⁸

On Christmas day 1869, Loftur again wrote his Icelandic friend; confessing his loneliness; his wife had passed away two months earlier. His letter also discloses his desire for companionship with a native Icelander:

I am a widower now. My wife died October 16th, 75 years old, and I have missed her very much despite her age. . . . I wish now that one woman from Iceland was here with me to take her place and dispel my sorrow, for though there be many girls and unmarried women, I find they do not suit me as well as one from my fatherland, because I feel more love for them than I do the inhabitants of any other nation. But this feeling will not desist unless I go myself to get one, and perhaps they will fear my faith and I would have to return again empty handed, and such a trip would be expensive to risk.²⁹

Magnus Bjarnason (Magnús Bjarnason), an early Icelandic LDS convert, immigrated to Utah in 1857. In 1873, he and Loftur Jonsson (Loftur Jónsson) returned as missionaries to their native homeland. Photograph courtesy of the Icelandic Association of Utah.



Several years later an opportunity to bring another Icelandic wife from his native homeland occurred when he returned to Iceland in 1873 to serve a mission with his companion Magnus Bjarnason. They were the first Icelanders to immigrate to Utah and return as missionaries to their native homeland.³⁰ Magnus wrote the following concerning their call, journey to Iceland and initial opposition once they reached their country:

At a general conference of the Church held in Salt Lake City, in April, 1873, Elder Loftur Johnson and I were called on missions to Iceland. We left Salt Lake City May 7, 1873, arrived in New York on the 12th, boarded the steamship “Nevada” on the 14th, arrived in Liverpool, England, on the 25th and the following day traveled by railroad to Hull. There we boarded the steamship “Zebra” on the 27th, arrived in Hamburg on the 29th, thence traveled by railroad to Kiel, and by steamship to Korsor, Denmark, and thence by rail to Copenhagen, where we arrived May 30, 1873. We spent five weeks in Copenhagen waiting for an opportunity to go to Iceland and we left Copenhagen per steamship “Diana” July 7th, arrived in Granton, Scotland, on the 10th, reached the Faeroe Islands on the 13th and arrived on Westman Island on the 17th.

Almost immediately after our arrival, we commenced to converse with our former neighbors and acquaintances about the Gospel; but soon the Lutheran clergy began to oppose us. One of these denounced the missionaries from his pulpit and subsequently petitioned the district judge to undertake an investigation as to where the Elders had visited people in their houses for the purpose of teaching the principles of ‘Mormonism’.

In September, 1873, we went to the main island, where we spent six weeks, after which we returned to Westman, believing that we could do better on the island than on the mainland, where traveling was very difficult on account of bad roads and the extreme cold weather. As soon as we had returned to Westman, we renewed our efforts in spreading the Gospel, and a number were willing to hear us. The news of our propaganda, however, soon excited the Lutheran priest³¹, who demanded judgment against us. We were called into court three times, but after being submitted to a rigid examination we were again set at liberty.³²

The following court minutes have been preserved in their entirety for the dates of December 8 and 11, 1873. Having never been published, the transcription provides a window into Mormon history hitherto unknown:

Monday, 8th of December at 12 the extra court in the sheriff's office held by the sheriff of Vestmannaeyjar, M.M.L. Aagaard with witnesses [Þhorsteinn Jónsson and G. Bjarnesen] to investigate because it had been announced to the sheriff that two Mormons who arrived here in the island last summer wanted to try to lead people to their faith.

For the court the first attendant is Magnus Bjarnason from Utah who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: "I arrived this summer with Loftur Jonsson and we had been sent to teach and spread the Mormon faith. Even though I met with some people I have not started talking about religion unless the discussion led that way and I had been asked about it, and then I have told those people I have been talking to, that if they wished to know more about our religion, I could lend them a few books, that I had, but I have not gone to people for the purpose of talking about religion, and it has not been my purpose to spread my religion to others than those who asked for it. I think that nobody has taken the Mormon faith here in the island [after] being taught by me." The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

The next witness in the court was Loftur Jonsson from Utah, who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: "I came here this summer with Magnus Bjarnason and we were sent to teach and spread the Mormon faith, I have for that purpose often visited people in the island [Vestmannaeyjar] to discuss religion with them and have offered to them papers and pamphlets on Mormonism to read for their enlightenment; nobody as far as I know has taken the faith here. We have never had an official congregation or a service since we arrived here." The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

The next witness in the court was a workhand Magnus Kristjánsson from Oddstaðir who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: "He denies; that the Mormons had started talking to him about religion or offered to lend him Mormon literature, but I have often myself started talking to the Mormons about their religion." The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

Then to the court stood 'tómthúsmaður' Runólfur [*sic*] Runólfsson from Kastali here in the island, who is severely reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: "Both of these Mormons [Magnus and Loftur] have often come to me and sometimes especially at the first talked to me about their religion and offered to lend me Mormon literature without me first asking about it, but later I asked them to lend me more, they have neither forced me or tried to convince me to take their faith. They first talking about their religion to me, after I had asked them about how things were in America[,] about the landscape and customs, but I don't know whether they came to

me for this purpose to teach me their faith.” The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

The next witness in the court was Guðmundur Sigmundsson from Bakkagerði who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: “Magnus Bjarnason has once come to me without mentioning the Mormon faith and Loftur has come [end of p. 70] a few times to me, without ever talking about religion. Once he came to me with three printed sheets in Danish and asked me, whether I understood the Danish, and I didn’t say much about that, and then he left these pamphlets with me and I had them for two weeks and read them over. I don’t think that he came to me for the purpose to convert to Mormonism, and I still have not converted.” The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

Next for the court is Sigurður Sigurfinnsson a workhand with Þorgerður Gísladóttir from Garðar, who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus: “Magnus Bjarnason and Loftur have both come to us, because we have asked them to come, and religion was discussed among other things without the two of them talking about their religion, and they have not compelled us to take their religion. I asked Loftur to lend me some papers to read and he did. Neither of us has taken the Mormon faith. The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

Þorgerður Gísladóttir who had been subpoenaed in this court case could not attend due to bad weather. Court is closed. . . .

Year 1873 Thursday the 11th of December 12 o’clock the extra court was convened in the sheriff’s office held by the sheriff of Vestmannaeyjar, M.M.L. Aagaard with witnesses [Þorsteinn Jónsson and J. Monsson] in order to keep investigating the efforts of Loftur Jonsson and Magnus Bjarnason to make people convert to the Mormon faith. And now for the court arrived the cooper craftsman Sveinn Þórðarson from Lönd here in the island, who is reminded to tell the truth and tells his story thus after being asked by the judge: “Loftur Jonsson never has spoken to me about religion since he arrived here; Magnus Bjarnason who lives with me has offered to me Mormon books or pamphlets to read and I have understood from his words that he would not be sad if I took to his religion, but he has never compelled me to take the religion and never has exactly offered me any teachings regarding it, and I myself have not take[n] to the Mormon faith.” The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

The next witness in the court was Magnús Bjarnason from Utah, after the last testimony had been read to him he says that he actually offered Sveinn some books, but he cannot remember, whether Sveinn has asked for them, furthermore that he would not have felt bad had Sveinn taken to his faith but he never compelled him in that direction, but wished for himself to try what was most true and most right. The court then read his statement back and he agreed.

Next to the court were Runólfr [*sic*] Runólfsson from Kastali, Sigurður Sigurfinnsson from Garðar and Sveinn Þórðarson cooper from Lönd and after their testimony had been read to them aloud they confirmed it legally by oath. It has to be mentioned, that the witness Guðmundur Ögmundsson attended today for the court so heavily intoxicated that the judge did not see fit for him to take the oath. The witness Magnús Kristjánsson did not attend due to illness. After hearing the testimonies read out loud Loftur Jonsson and Magnus Bjarnason stated that they had nothing further to say concerning this matter, but kept to their own statements, that they had previously given. Read out loud and acknowledged.³³

Although no verdict is recorded, it is apparent from the above statement by Magnus Bjarnason that he and Loftur were simply “set at liberty.”

One of their converts, Einar Erickson (Einar Eiríksson), recorded that these missionaries appeared in court on three separate occasions, and that “after considerable suffering, exposure to cold weather and persecution, Elders Johnson and Bjarnason baptized nine persons on Westman Island, among them was myself, who having been apprised of their coming by dreams and visions was ready to receive the message.”³⁴ Einar also mentioned that he had invited these Mormon missionaries into his home, “with the intention to prove that their religion was false.” Yet he adds, “I failed to do so but to my surprise they proved to me that I did not have true religion as [a] Lutheran.” Einar further relates that a branch was organized at Vestmannaeyjar with eight members and that he was selected to be the president of the branch.³⁵

Two members of this Vestmannaeyjar Branch, organized May 27, 1874, were Magnus Kristjansson (Magnús Kristjánsson) and Thuridur Sigurdardotir (Þuríður Sigurðardóttir), who were married this same day by Loftur, this being the first civil marriage performed in Iceland.³⁶

Magnus Bjarnason also summarized their missionary work completed in 1874:

In the spring of 1874 we baptized 8 persons, ordained Einar Johnson (Einar Jónsson) and Einar Eirikson Elders and organized a branch of the Church. We sailed from the island May 29, 1874, on board the ship “Hermine,” accompanied by 11 persons who were all baptized after we arrived in Utah. We reached England June 10, 1874, thence sailed per steamship “Nevada” for New York, where we arrived June 21st; thence we continued the journey by railroad to Salt Lake City, Utah, where we arrived July 2nd and returned to our homes in Spanish Fork the following day, July 3, 1874.³⁷

One of the passengers was an Icelandic woman whom Loftur converted named Halldora Arnadottir (Halldóra Árnadóttir), whom he apparently married while he was still on his mission, before bringing her back with him to Utah.³⁸ An entry in the history of the Iceland Mission acknowledges the completion of Magnus Bjarnason and Loftur’s fourteen-month mission: “At 4:30 o’clock p.m. Magnus Bjarnason of Spanish Fork called and reported that he had returned from a mission to Iceland on July 2, 1874.” The history also states that these Icelandic missionaries from Utah “visited from house to house in Iceland, where seven or eight persons had been baptized and established a branch of the Church on Westman Island.”³⁹

Unfortunately, the same year these missionaries returned from Iceland (1874), Loftur died suddenly in an accident. According to one family record: “Loftur hooked up his mules and went to his field in Palmyra. Something went wrong with the neck-yoke. He got out to fix it and as he stepped in front of

the mules, they became frightened and bounded forward. He fell and was run over with the wagon.”⁴⁰

Although Loftur Jonsson’s life was cut short by this mishap, he accomplished much during his life span of seventy years. As a young man, he was not only a skilled blacksmith, carpenter, and seaman, he was also selected to serve as a member of Iceland’s National parliament, although he was not allowed to attend the Assembly because of his conversion to the Mormon faith. Further, he was one of the first two Icelandic missionaries to return from Utah to his native homeland. While there he not only converted several people, including his second wife, Halldora Arnadottir, he also performed the first civil marriage in Iceland. Though Halldora and Loftur enjoyed only a few months of marriage in Utah before his sudden death a year and a half later she was sealed to Loftur in the Salt Lake City Endowment House on the same day that she married a fellow Icelander for time.⁴¹ Loftur’s example of hard work and enduring faith have left a legacy for both his family and his fellow Icelandic Saints.

Notes

1. Sigfús M. Johnsen, “Mormónar í Vestmannaeyjum,” *Blik* (1963), 221. The census for 1835 notes that Loftur had three sisters and one brother.

2. David Ashby, “Loftur Jónsson,” *Icelanders Gather to Utah, 1854–1914*, (Spanish Fork, UT: Icelandic Association of Utah, 2008), 88. Loftur Jonsson is also listed as one of only three captains of the most famous fishing vessel, the *Gideon*, in Vestmannaeyjar during the nineteenth century. The ship was in use for seventy-two years. “Gideon,” *Blik* (1965), 201.

3. Johnsen, “Mormónar í Vestmannaeyjum,” 222. According to Icelandic census records, Gudrun Hallsdóttir (Guðrún Hallsdóttir) was born August 8, 1794, in Árnessýsla, Iceland, where she was also raised. However, her mother Guðrún Sigmundsdóttir (Gudrun Sigmundsdóttir) died in 1806 when Gudrun was twelve years old. Her father, Hallur Vigfusson (Hallur Vigfússon) died four years later. Gudrun is listed in the Vestmannaeyjar parrish records beginning in 1812, and her name appears in the records for several decades. See *Prestþjónustubækur Vestmannaeyja* (1812–43, 1844–48, 1849–52, 1853–56, and 1857–60). Gudrun’s years in Vestmannaeyjar were probably difficult for her. She not only lost her first husband, Jon Oddson (Jón Oddsson), when she was about forty years old, but she is said to have lost ten children in their infancy. She left Vestmannaeyjar for Utah with Loftur in 1857, along with her two children. According to a letter written by Loftur to Páll Sigurðsson in December 1869, Gudrun died in Utah on October 16, 1869. See reference in note 29.

4. *Ministerialbók fyrir Ofanleitisprestakall í Vestmannaeyjum* (1816 to 1838). See also Ashby, “Loftur Jónsson,” 88–90. The authors are currently working with Ashby on a revised manuscript of his text, which will include more extensive bibliographic materials as well as immigration information. See also Dena Bowen, “Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson,” 1–4, unpublished transcript, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah.

5. Johnsen, “Mormónar í Vestmannaeyjum,” 222. Loftur (age 23) and Gudrun (age 42) also had a son named John (Jón), who was born September 22, 1837. According to church records, Jon died October 1, 1837, only nine days after being born. According to the same records, they also had another son, Loftur, born a year later, on December 18, 1838. He died ten days later on December 28, 1838. See *Ministerialbók fyrir Ofanleitisprestakall í Vestmannaeyjum* (1816 to 1838).

6. Bowen, “Biography of Lofter [Loftur] Johnson,” 3, 6, 8. See also Johnsen, “Mormónar í Vestmannaeyjum,” 222.

7. For a biographical sketch of Guðmundur, see Fred E. Woods, “Fire on Ice: The Conversion and Life of Guðmundur Guðmundsson,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 2 (2000): 57–72. For a general history of Icelandic Mormons, see *Fire on Ice: Icelandic Latter-day Saints at Home and Abroad* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005); and the Icelandic version of this text, *Eldur á ís: Saga hinna íslensku Síðari daga heilögu heima og að heiman* (Reykjavík, Iceland: University of Iceland Press/Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007).

8. Thorarinn Hafliðason (Þórarinn Hafliðason) “was born at Eystri-Hóll í Sigluvikursókn í Rangávallaprófastsdæmi 1. okt. 1825” (October 1, 1825) and was a cabinet maker. His wife, Thuridur Oddsdóttir (Þuríður Oddsdóttir), was born May 12, 1829, and was a housemaid for Jon Austmann (Jón Jónsson Austmann), the local Lutheran priest in Vestmannaeyjar; and both she and Thorarinn had a close relationship with him and his family. Thorarinn drowned in a fishing accident on March 6, 1852. See Kristján Róbertsson, *Gekk ég yfir sjó og land: Saga þeirra Íslendinga sem leituðu Síonar á jörðu* (Akureyri, Iceland: Bókaforlag Odds Björnssonar, 1987), 61, 67, 69; Jón Gíslason, “Ný trúhreyfing berst til Vestmannaeyja,” *Sögur og Sagnir: Endurnýjun í vatni og hugsjónum nýrrar aldar, Heimilis Tíminn*, no. 18, article 3 (August 24, 1978): 11–12.

9. The “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1851, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

10. Jon Austmann was the Lutheran priest at Vestmannaeyjar from 1837–1858. See Sigfús M. Johnsen, *Saga Vestmannaeyja*, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Ísafoldarprentsmiða, 1946), 113. He was born in 1787 in Lyng in Meðalland. See Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenskar Æviskrár* (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenska Bókmenntafélag, 1950), 3:57. As noted previously, he had a close relationship with Thorarinn Hafliðason and his wife, Thuridur Oddsdóttir, until news spread of baptism by the Mormons, whom he viewed as having no authority to perform this ordinance. See Jón Gíslason, “Nýr forystumaður Mormóna kemur til Vestmannaeyja,” in *Sögur og Sagnir : Endurnýjun í vatni og hugsjónum nýrrar aldar, Heimilis Tíminn*, no. 21, article 6 (September 14, 1978): 12.

11. Andrew Jenson, *Deseret Semi-weekly* (September 25, 1911), 9. The annual Reykjavik periodical *Skirnir*, printed annually in Copenhagen, confirms in two separate articles that the information from this Mormon newspaper is correct. The paper also indicates that the religion was nothing more than a laughable combination of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Further, it reveals that the editor wrote how the Mormons believed Joseph Smith, a prophet who had died a few years previously, when he said he saw an angel of the Lord and that the angel told him of a record that was found in the Rocky Mountains of America that had a language which no one had ever seen and that Smith could not have translated without the help of the Urim and Thummim. It also notes that this record is called the Book of Mormon, from which comes the name of Mormon and that the Mormons also believed that Christ visited the ancient Americans. The article goes on to say that although their religion was strange, the Mormons were hard workers who made their new land in America fruitful. See “News,” *Skirnir* (1851), 146; and “Addendum,” *Skirnir* (1851), 162.

Another blow to missionary work on Vestmannaeyjar occurred when Thorarin's wife, Thuridur, strongly opposed her husband's conversion, burned his Mormon literature and, according to Magnus Bjarnason [Magnús Bjarnason], whom Þórarinn had introduced to the gospel, "became desperate and threatened to drown herself." Therefore, Thorarinn ceased to do missionary work. See "Manuscript History of the Scandinavian Mission," April 1851, Church History Library; and "Manuscript History of the Icelandic Mission, 1851–1914," 1854. Guðmundsson recalled: "Thorarinn and four or five others drowned as they were out fishing on a little boat we called in Icelandic 'Jul'. A terrible storm arose and the little boat was engulfed by the sea's frightfully large waves, and every soul perished. Brother Thorarinn had married a young and capable girl which became a bitter enemy of 'Mormonism' and uttered many threats towards her husband. Among other things, I remember that she had taken Brother Erastus Snow's portrait, . . . and in her anger had cast it out into the seas, as she imagined it was a graven image that her husband worshipped. It is a misunderstanding when someone says that our friend Thorarinn died as an apostate. . . . Quite the contrary, he died firm in the faith. . . . But he had a hard fight because of his young wife, . . . along with the priest and the mother-in-law a bitter hater of our teachings." "Erindringer Fra Missionen I Skandinavien," *Morgenstjernen* 3, no. 18 (September 15, 1884): 280. Yet evidence reveals that Thorarinn did in fact sign a document which renounced Mormonism, although he may have returned to the LDS faith as Guðmundur notes, but we do not know. See Jón Gíslason, "Frekari afskipti yfirvaldanna af mormónum, in *Sögur og Sagnir : Endurnýjun í vatni og hugsjónum nýrrar aldar, Heimilis Tíminn*, no. 22, article 7 (September 21, 1978): 7, 10.

Another periodical said that the Mormons in Utah practiced polygamy and that two Icelanders from Vestmannaeyjar would be coming to Vestmannaeyjar in the summer of 1851 to bring salvation. See "News," *Lanztiðindi* (April 15, 1851), 119. This is a very important point in that it reveals that the Icelanders at Vestmannaeyjar knew about the coming of the Mormon missionaries just before their arrival and also about the practice of plural marriage which was not publicly announced from Salt Lake City until the following year. Further, because of the religious freedom which the Danes allowed in Denmark, the article notes that the Mormons had already sent missionaries to Copenhagen.

12. Guðmundur Guðmundsson to Jorgen S. Trampe, May 31, 1851, National Archives of Iceland Reykjavik, Iceland. A copy of it in Icelandic was provided by Björk Ingimundardóttir, who is the archivist there. It was translated by Darron Allred.

13. Jóhann Nicholai Abel was born about 1793 in Denmark and was the sheriff at Vestmannaeyjar from 1821–1839, and again from 1840–1851. It is possible that the Mormons may have influenced his desire to leave the island at this time. He sailed home to Denmark in 1851 and died a decade later in Copenhagen. See Bogi Benediktsson, *Sýslumannaæfir* with explanations and additions by Hannes Þorsteinsson (Reykjavik: Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1909–1915) 4:562–63.

14. The couple referred to here are Benedikt Hannesson (Benedikt Hannesson) and Ragnhildur Stefánsdóttir (Ragnhildur Stefánsdóttir). However, Elder John Thorgeirson (Jón Þorgeirsson) indicated that the baptism of this couple led to the charge that the missionaries no longer proselytize. See "Scandinavian Mission," April 1851. However, Kate B. Carter notes that Benedikt and Ragnhildur immigrated to Copenhagen and were baptized on December 10, 1852. In any case, it appears that it was their conversion which sparked the opposition. Carter further notes, that the Hansson family immigrated to America in 1859, but Benedikt died in Omaha, Nebraska, and thus Ragnhildur was left to continue her journey with her two children (Ephraim and Mary) arriving in Utah in 1862, and then migrated south to Spanish Fork to join the other Icelandic Saints. See "The First Icelandic Settlement in America," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, ed. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols.

(Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–1977), 7:492–93. The Vestmannaeyjar Parish registers substantiate the fact that they emigrated from Vestmannaeyjar in 1852 and further notes that Benedikt was thirty-five-years old and Ragnhildur thirty-seven-years old at the time of their emigration. See Index to Persons Emigrating from Vestmannaeyjar, Iceland, to Copenhagen, to Utah, Hafnarfjörð, Reykjavík and America from 1823–1913, extracted by John Y. Bearnson from Registers GS #12712, parts 1 and 2, GS # 12594, parts 1 and 2 for the Genealogy Society (1979), 13, 30, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

15. Jón Gíslason, “Nýr forystumaður Mormóna kemur til Vestmannaeyja” in *Sögur og Sagnir : Endurnýjun í vatni og hugsjónum nýrrar aldar; Heimilis Tíminn*, no. 21, article 6 (September 14, 1978): 11. The “board of conciliation” referred to above, relates to the board for the National Parliament, held in the summer of 1851, which Loftur was assigned to. “The National Assembly of 1851 (Þjóðfundur 1851) was a constitutional convention called to decide the political status of Iceland. The assembly was called in 1848, . . . but in 1851, when the assembly finally met . . . the Danes presented a bill to the assembly which would have made the Danish Constitution of 1849 valid in Iceland with an exception concerning the legislative power. Iceland was to get six seats in the Danish Parliament. The delegates prepared an alternative bill, proposing a constitution for a practically independent Iceland in personal union with the Danish king. Seeing that the delegates would never agree to the Danish bill and believing them to have no authority to discuss the alternative bill, Governor Trampe decided to dissolve the Assembly. At that point Jon Sigurdsson (Jón Sigurðsson) rose to protest, saying: ‘And I protest in the name of the King and the people against this procedure, and I reserve for the Assembly the right to complain to the King about this act of illegality.’” The official record of the meeting then reads: “Then the members of the Assembly rose and most of them said as if with one voice: ‘We all protest!’ The constitutional status of Iceland was to remain an unresolved issue for decades to come.” See “National Assembly of 1851,” <http://en.wikipedia.org>, accessed July, 2013. For more information on the National Parliament of 1851, see Gunnar Karlson, *The History of Iceland* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 211–215; Aðalgeir Kristjánsson, *Endurreisn Alþingis og Þjóðfundurinn* (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1993).

16. The letter was signed by the following: Abel, H. Jónsson, J. Einarsson, M. Austmann, Gísli Jónsson and was cited in Jón Pálsson, “Upphaf borgaralegs hjónabands á Íslandi: Magnús Kristjánsson (‘mormoni’) and Þuríður Sigurðardóttir.” *Tímarit* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Þjóðræknifélags Íslendinga, 1935), 73–83.

17. Elder Johan P. Lorentzen was baptized and confirmed Loftur (Loftur) Jonsson on June 3, 1851. See “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1851.

18. On or near the date of July 22, 1853, Loftur succeeded Gudmundur as president of the Vestmannaeyjar Branch. However, Gudmundur did not go to Denmark until the following year. Therefore, this date may be one year off. See “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1853. Further, Gudmundur Gudmundsson, a goldsmith, left Vestmannaeyjar in 1854. *Ministerialbók fyrir Vestmannaeyjarprestakall* (1846–1863), 170. In addition, Gudmundur himself wrote that his missionary work at Vestmannaeyjar ended in July 1854. See “Autobiography of Gudmund Gudmundsson,” holograph, microfilm, 2, Church History Library. Loftur is listed as a Mormon in 1853. The following year the local priest at Vestmannaeyjar, Jon Austmann, noted in this same record that Loftur was a Mormon, but a gentleman. See *Húsvitjunarbók Vestmannaeyja 1853–1856*, n.p.

19. “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1857. There were thirty-six Saints on board, led by elder Charles Harman. The master of the vessel was Captain Brooks. See *Millennial Star* 19, no. 31 (August 1, 1857):489. For more information on Mormon emigration to and through Philadelphia at this time, see Fred E. Woods,

“Pronounced Clean, Comfortable, and Good Looking:’ The Passage of Mormon Immigrants through the Port of Philadelphia,” *Mormon Historical Studies*, 6, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 5–34.

20. Apparently, many industrious Mormons left their mark on St. Louis in the mid-nineteenth century, since this was an inland port for European Mormon immigrants on their way to Utah, and opportunities for skilled workers were abundant. Employment provided means for many Latter-day Saints to continue their journey west. One article reported: “St. Louis is a fine, large and flourishing city and has furnished employment to many hundreds and thousands of our brethren who have here in a short time made a good outfit for the gathering place of the Saints. This city has been an asylum for our people from fifteen to twenty years. There are few public buildings of any consideration in this city that our brethren have not taken an active and prominent part in erecting and ornamenting. There are few factories, foundries, or mercantile establishments, but they have taken, or are taking an active part in establishing or sustaining, either as employers, as artisans, or as customers—there is probably more business done in this city than any other of the same magnitude in the world. It supplies the Utah markets yearly with nearly all the merchandise required; there is probably no city in the world where the Latter-day Saints are more respected and where they may sooner obtain an outfit for Utah, than in this city.” “The City of St. Louis: Its Advantages and Disadvantages in Reference to Both Saints and Sinners,” *St. Louis Luminary* 1, no. 11 (February 3, 1855): 42. In addition, a report in a Missouri newspaper illustrates the high visibility of the Mormons during the 1850s in St. Louis when Loftur and his family were residing there: “Although we have no Mormon Church in St. Louis, and though these people have no other class or permanent possession or permanent interest in our city, yet their numerical strength here is greater than may be imagined. Our city is the greatest recruiting point for Mormon emigrants from England and the Eastern States, and the former especially, whose funds generally become exhausted by the time they reach it, generally stop here several months, and not infrequently remain among us for a year or two pending a resumption of their journey to Salt Lake. . . . There are at this time in St. Louis about three thousand English Mormons, nearly all of whom are masters of some trade, or have acquired experience in some profession, which they follow now.” “Mormons in St. Louis,” *Missouri Republican* (May 8, 1851), 3.

21. For information about the Mormons in St. Louis during the mid-nineteenth century, see Fred E. Woods and Thomas L. Farmer, *When the Saints Came Marching In: A History of the Latter-day Saints in St. Louis* (Orem, UT: Millennial Press, 2009), 56–62.

22. Bowen, “Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson,” 8.

23. James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer. Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1900), 397–98. The welcoming of the incoming foreign immigrants by LDS Church leaders occurred frequently. For an overview of the immigrant entrance into the valley and arrival at Union Square and other locations see Fred E. Woods, “The Arrival of Nineteenth-Century Mormon Emigrants in Salt Lake City,” in *Salt Lake City: The Place Which God Prepared*, ed. Scott C. Esplin and Kenneth L. Alford (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 2011), 203–30.

24. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 397–99. However, Brown later notes that a few days later hundreds of Sioux appeared. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 400–02. Though it was at first a bit alarming, their intent was to trade, which was carried out without incident. For additional accounts from Mormon emigrants, see the “Mormon Pioneer Overland Trail” database, <http://history.lds.org/overlandtreavels/companyDetail?companyId=73>.

25. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 404.

26. Loftur Jónsson to Páll Sigurðsson, February 21, 1862, catalogue Lbs 487 fol.

1, National Library of Iceland Archives Department, Reykjavik, Iceland. See also the publication of this letter in Icelandic by Finnur Sigurdsson, ed. in *Vesturfara skrifa heim: frá íslenskum mormónum í Utah* (Reykjavik, Iceland: Setberg, 1975), 15, translated into English by Friderick Gudmundsson.

27. Loftur Jónsson to Páll Sigurðsson, February 21, 1862, see also Sigurdsson, *Vesturfara skrifa heim: frá íslenskum mormónum í Utah*, 15–16.

28. Loftur Jónsson to Páll Sigurðsson, April 27, 1865; catalogue Lbs 487 fol. 1–2; see also Sigurdsson, *Vesturfara skrifa heim*, 19. On the day that the Civil War officially ended (April 9, 1865), Utah's Black Hawk War began and continued until 1872. For more information on the Black Hawk War, see John Alton Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998). During the seven years of the Black Hawk War, "one of the greatest trials [of the family] was trouble with the Indians. Loftur [Loftur] and [his son] John were called to guard the settlement and fight when necessary. They were obedient to President Brigham Young's orders never to shoot unless it be in self defense." Bowen, "Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson," 10. Fern Nichols, ninety-seven year-old granddaughter of Loftur, recalled that according to family tradition, the local Indians in the Spanish Fork region knew that Loftur and his family would treat them well and provide them with food when necessary. Fern Nichols, interview by Fred E. Woods, March 22, 2013, Salt Lake City, Utah. According to one report, a frightening incident occurred in Loftur's home while only his step-daughter Gudrun was present: "She was home alone one day when about fourteen Indians came sneaking right into the house before she knew they were about. . . . One said, 'Heap scared squaw.' Poor Gunna [Gudrun] stood helpless, pale, and trembling. The thought then came to her to simply feed them. After partaking of the food, the invaders departed, and their leader gave her a pair of scissors as a peace offering." Bowen, "Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson," 10–11.

29. Loftur Jónsson to Páll Sigurðsson, December 25, 1869; catalogue Lbs 487 fol. 1, National Library of Iceland Archives Department, Reykjavik, Iceland. See also Sigurdsson, *Vesturfara skrifa heim*, 26.

30. Fred E. Woods, *Eldur á ís: Saga hinna íslensku Síðari daga heilögu heima og að heiman* (Reykjavik, Iceland, University of Iceland Press/Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007), 61.

31. Brynjólfur Jónsson, the priest at Vestmannaeyjar at this time, was born September 8, 1826, and died November 16, 1884. Brynjólfur became an assistant priest to Jon Austmann in 1852, then in 1860 became a priest in Vestmannaeyjar and served in this capacity until his death. In 1853 he married Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir (1829–1921), and they became the parents of seven children. In addition, Brynjólfur represented Vestmannaeyjar as a member of parliament from 1859–1863. Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar Æviskrár*, 1:279–280.

32. "Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914," 1873. Loftur and Magnus were living in Vestmannaeyjar in 1873 and they were both fifty-nine years-old. The local priest was clearly aware of them. See the Icelandic Parish record titled *Prestþjónustubækur Vestmannaeyja* (1864–1894), 230, serial #s 847–848. The authors express appreciation to Guðrun Bjarkadóttir for bringing this document to their attention.

33. The legal proceedings for Loftur and Magnus as attested above for the dates of December 8 and 11, 1873, are located in the court minutes of the sheriff records for the district of Vestmannaeyjar, 1870–1890, as noted in Vestmannaeyjar (Kirkubær og Ofanleiti) GA/18 Aukadómabók 1870–1890, 69–71, National Archives of Iceland. This manuscript indicates that the sheriff at Vestmannaeyjar, who was involved with these court proceedings, was Michael Marius Ludovico Aagard. Aagard was born in Odden Mölle in Hjørring in Denmark, January 30, 1839 and died September 20, 1898. See Bogi

Benediktsson, *Sýslumannaæfir* with explanations and additions by Hannes Þorsteinsson, (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1909–1915), 4:565–566. One of the witnesses in court during the proceedings of Loftur and Magnus was Þorsteinn Jónsson (Þorsteinn Jónsson). He was born November 17, 1840, and died August 13, 1908. Þorsteinn was a district medical doctor in Vestmannaeyjar from 1867–1905. He was also a leading member of the Vestmannaeyjar Reading Society, later Library of Vestmannaeyjar (1884–1906); a boat supervisor (1887–1905); and the sheriff at Vestmannaeyjar from 1887–1889. See Lárus H. Blöndal and Vilmundur Jónsson, *Læknar Á Íslandi*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Reykjavík: Læknafélag Íslands / Ísafoldarprentsmiðja HF, 1970), 1:818–19; Bogi Benediktsson, *Sýslumannaæfir* with explanations and additions by Hannes Þorsteinsson, (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1909–1915), 1:565.

Lutheran bishop Pétur Pétursson wrote a letter May 7, 1874, to the *prófastur* (dean in the south of Iceland) which evidences that the court hearings for Loftur and Magnus were still a point of concern: “In a letter from [April] 24th (1874) you, mr. dean (*prófastur*), have told me about what your parish priest has told you about what has been done about the two Mormons, Loptur Jonsson and Magnus Bjarnason, who had gone to Vestmannaeyjar last summer and spent the winter there, and you have sent me two letters from the priest Brynjolfur Jonsson and your answer to him, also that you have encouraged me, along with the *amtman* (chief of south Iceland), to take heavy measures about this (the Mormons) and let you know. About this, let me tell you that the *amtman* in south Iceland has given me a judgment test that he had put on the said Mormons, and as a conclusion we cannot see that they have made any efforts to convert people to their faith, although they have admitted to have been sent to this land to do so. But inasmuch as such efforts cannot be proven, there will be no reason to charge them. In addition, the *amtman* has told me that he would ask the sheriff to have an eye on the Mormons doings on the islands (Vestmannaeyjar) and the same I will ask you to have the local priest do, and tell me, if proven, if they make any positive efforts in converting people to the Mormon faith or teach it publicly. Whereas the priest, in his second letter to you, thinks that it is a fact that Loptur [Loftur] is married some time ago, and that M. Bjarnason had performed that ceremony, then the priest should tell you if his (Loptur’s) cohabitation with this female person provokes public shame in the parish, as such a marriage is altogether invalid. I finally tell you, that I don’t know better than that Mormons are now prohibited to practice polygamy, by the government and parliament of America and is punishable if violated.” See *Bréfabækur biskups* (1873–1875), Nr. 187-R.1 – 15/74, letter of Bishop Pétur Pétursson, May 7, 1874, 309. Pétur Pétursson was the Lutheran bishop of all Iceland from 1866 to 1889. Pétur Pétursson was born on October 3, 1808 in Viðivellir and died May 15, 1891. Throughout his life, he was “well read, humble, kind and rather popular and loyal to the government.” Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar Æviskrár*, 4:167–68.

34. “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” May 29, 1874.

35. Einar Erickson, “Autobiography of Einar Erickson,” typescript, 1, Church History Library.

36. “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” May 27, 1874. For more information on this issue, see Jón Pálsson, “Upphaf borgaralegs hjónabands á Íslandi: Magnús Kristjánsson (‘mormoni’) and Þuríður Sigurðardóttir ” *Timarit Þjóðræknifélags Íslendinga*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1935), 73–83. Pétur Pétursson sent a letter to Brynjolfur Jonsson (local priest at Vestmannaeyjar) regarding this issue: “You have told me in a letter that Loftur Bjarnson, a Mormon, had married in the traditional way of the Mormons, Magnús Kristjánsson and Þuríður Jónsdóttir, widow, and has asked my opinion about if we should not announce such a common cohabitation to the proper authorities as shameful. About this, let me tell you that I agree that such a Mormon marriage is

shameful and that such a shameful cohabitation should be announced to the secular authorities.” See *Bréfabækur biskups (1873–1875)*, Nr. 438 R. 28/74, letter of Bishop Pétur Pétursson, September 8, 1874, 380.

37. “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1874.

38. In 1874, Halldora was married to Loftur who was a Mormon. See *Prestþjónustubækur Vestmannaeyja (1864–1894)*. Halldora was the “daughter of Arni Asgrimsson [Árni Ásgrimsson] from Undirhraun in Medalland, Iceland.” Carter, “The First Icelandic Settlement in America,” 7:492–93. The national census records of Iceland reveal that Halldora’s mother’s name was Halldora Ólafsdóttir (Halldóra Ólafsdóttir). Halldora was born August 22, 1844. Brown, “Biography of Loftur Johnson,” 14. The national census records also note that Halldora lost her father Arni about the age of two. At that time she had three siblings. In 1850, Halldora was living with her mother and just one of the siblings. Further, Brown notes that when Halldora “was twenty years old, she left her home, going to Westman Island [Vestmannaeyjar] to work for people who maintained a café and rooming house for fishermen. She had worked here nine or ten years when she embraced the Gospel. Her marriage to Loftur made her very happy.” Brown, “Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson,” 14. It is interesting to observe that Loftur’s first wife, Gudrun, was twenty years his senior, but Halldora was thirty years younger than Loftur. He would have been sixty years old and she thirty at the time of their marriage. See also, Jón Gíslason, “Frá Lofti Jónssyni og ættmönnum hans í Utah,” *Sögur og Sagnir: Endurskírni í vatni og hugsjónum nýrrar aldar, Heimilis Tíminn*, no. 3, article 20 (February 1, 1979): 8–10.

39. “Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission 1851–1914,” 1874.

40. Brown, “Biography of Loftur [Loftur] Johnson,” 15. Loftur died on September 9, 1874. Carter, “The First Icelandic Settlement in America,” 493 Unfortunately, no obituary exists for Loftur in any Utah newspapers.

41. In the Endowment House, Latter-day Saints received sacred temple ordinances as well as special blessings, referred to as an endowment. See Lamar C. Berrett, “Endowment Houses,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 2:456. The term “sealed” is used by Latter-day Saints with the understanding that marriage is to be bound not only on earth, but also in heaven, as reflected in Matthew 16:19, wherein Jesus spoke to his chief apostle, Peter, stating, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” Halldora married Gisli Einarsson in the Endowment House on April 17, 1876, and outlived Loftur by forty-five years. In 1920, Halldora suffered a stroke and was incapacitated for nearly a decade. She died March 27, 1929, and was survived by her husband Gisli and well as her three children—Helga, Loftur, and Dena. Halldora is buried in the Spanish Fork City Cemetery. She was known in Utah as Dora A. Johnson.