

FAMILY ORGANIZATION IN RURAL ICELAND

Frederik E. Bredahl-Petersen

Degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Edinburgh

1973



I, FREDERIK E. BRED AHL-PETERSEN, hereby declare
that the thesis "Family Organization in Rural
Iceland" is my own composition and that it represents
my own work.

ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with the changing social organisation in a selected rural district of Iceland. The ecological adjustment of the Icelandic farms is described. The structure and functions of the hrepp (Icel.), or district, are examined showing particularly how, until recently, it performed not only a welfare function but also as a unit of mutual insurance and labour recruitment.

The Icelandic kinship system is analysed as an example of cognatic kinship. Kinship relationships, particularly those pertaining to the maintenance of viable farming units, are examined. Local and kinship ties are shown to be the dominant relationships in rural social organisation.

Changes in rural social organisation are analysed within the framework of social and technological changes in the southern rural sector of Iceland during the past century.

A diminishing rural population, combined with the increase in value of farm units, has initiated a process of nuclearisation of domestic units, while an increasing centralisation of government has rendered the traditional hrepp (Icel.), or district organisation superfluous.

The research is based upon the following sources:

1. Census documents beginning in 1860 and analysed at ten-year intervals until 1960. A 1968 Census was taken during the fieldwork period.
2. The diaries of farmers, the reports of the District Bailiff's office, and various statistical sources from the 18th and 19th centuries are used.
3. Oral histories supplied by informant residents of the district.
4. Scholarly sources on Icelandic rural life of the 19th century are used, along with the very few ethnographic descriptions which are available.
5. Information based upon 27 months of fieldwork, residence and participant observation in the district of Skeid during the period 1967-1970.
6. Questionnaires and interview schedules which were designed to extract and collect specific information on domestic life and the rural work cycle in the rural district of Skeid.

The description of the district of Skeid provides the following:

A rural district is the smallest civil-administrative unit in Iceland. As such it is an organisation of rural households whose mutual relations are governed by law. The district of Skeid, however, is more than an organisation of civil-legal functions. It is a collectivity of householders which forms a rural neighbourhood with very

firm boundaries setting it off from other such rural neighbourhoods. Within the boundaries of the district, traditions of neighbourliness, reciprocity in work, kindred obligations and joint farming take place.

The district is also a geographical unit. Within its boundaries farms have singly and jointly utilised the resources of the environment of the district.

It is the combination of legal and civil administration, householder and kindred expectations, and the subsistence cycle of single and joint farming which give the district of Skeid its unusual character.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals in Iceland were helpful in the research on the material which appears here. Of special help were Professor Dr. Phil., Rektor, Magnus MarLarusson and Professor Dr. Phil., Bjorn Bjornsson of the University of Iceland. Many individuals in the Icelandic government cannot be mentioned, due purely to lack of space, but the Ministry of Education, Customs Service, Police and Office of Statistics and the National Library and Archives were all most cooperative and willing to extend assistance throughout the fieldstay.

Without the friendship of Hr. Jon Gudmundsson of Fjall in Skeid, much of what became not a fieldstay, but a stay with friends could not have occurred. I will remain in debt to all of the people of the district. Its bailiff, Hr. Jon Eiriksson, the Oddveiti, Hr. Jon Eiriksson, and the Parish pastor, Hr. Bernhard Gudmundsson, were especially kind and helpful throughout my stay.

My tutors at the University of Edinburgh are Dr. James Littlejohn in the Department of Social Anthropology, and Dr. Herman Palsson, Reader in the Department of English. For their kindness, humour and patience, I am indebted. To Dr. Mary Noble of the Department of Social Anthropology, I am grateful for her critical review of the thesis.

I wish also to acknowledge the financial aid of the American-Scandinavian Foundation for awarding me the Thor Tor's grant for Iceland for 1968-1969 and 1969-1970. I also wish to acknowledge the aid of a Fulbright-Hays grant for 1968-1969.

It is clear that fieldwork in Anthropology often causes one to become more than a foreign observer of local custom. In my case, informants became friends, and teachers became much more than tutors. Yet, for what appears in this dissertation, I alone am responsible, and it is my burden of responsibility to make certain that acts of kindness and acts of giving time and information, those acts of sharing by individuals and families, were not in vain.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	THE TRADITION OF FARMING IN ICELAND	11
	Agriculture in its Geographic Setting	12
	The Sheep	32
	The Rural Year	40
3	SOCIAL CHANGE IN ICELAND 1860-1970 . .	51
	Demographic and Economic Change 1900-1970.	52
	Agrarian Change	61
	The Farm of Blessastadir 1910-1970 . .	73
	Summary, Process and Phase	81
	Traditional Phase.	82
	Development Phase.	83
4	THE RURAL DISTRICT, JURAL AND SOCIAL TRADITIONS	88
	Settlements	89
	The District, Earliest Tradition . . .	93
	The Nineteenth Century District . .	100
	The County	101
	The District	102
	District and Farm Censuses in The Nineteenth Century	112

Table of Contents (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
	People in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Censuses	119
	Estate and District in the Nineteenth Century	140
	The Domestic Cycle	146
	Chronology and Cycle in the District	150
	Estate Management During the Traditional Period	155
5	THE ICELANDIC KINSHIP SYSTEM	164
	Prior Research on Icelandic Social Organization	166
	The Core Family	186
	Formal Characteristics of the Terminology	198
	Summary	204
	The Jural Rights of Family and Kin	208
	The Laws of 1940, 1962	213
	The Pragmatically Defined Family	216
	Cognatic Descent.	224
	Rural Social Organization in the Perspective of Cognatic-Bilateral Descent	231
6	SKEID IN 1970	238
	The Present Commune, General Comments	239

Table of Contents (continued)

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
	Administration	240
	The Estates	251
	The Recruitment of Labor in the Commune	260
	Kin, Land and Estates in 1970	275
	The Inheritance of Estates	278
7	THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SMALL COMMUNITY	285
	District and Commune	292
	The Household and The Family	298
	APPENDIXES	308
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	346

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
1	Agricultural Lands: Total Area in Thousand Square Kilometres, by Elevation	14
2	Professions, Trades and Farmers in Arnessysla, 1860	22
3	Agricultural Area, Lakes, Glaciers and Desert in Thousands of Square Kilometres	26
4	Sources of Agricultural Income in 1963	26
5	Number of Sheep in Iceland, 1901- 1964	32
6	Population Distribution by Percentages	52
7	Population Growth 1880-1970	53
8	Population Distribution in Iceland by Region	54
9	Dates of Township Charters in Iceland	56
10	Population Density for Selected Countries of Iceland	58
11	Dairy Production in Iceland 1945, 1964	65
12	The Increase in Government Expenditure for the Improvement of Agriculture (in 1,000 Kronur).	67
13	Increase in Homefield Acreage and Tonnage of Fertiliser	69
14	Blessastadir, A Comparison Between 1910-1950	76
15	The Farm of Blessastadir, 1950 and 1970	78

List of Tables (continued)

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
16,17	District Boundary of Skeid	94
18	Electors in Skeidahrepp, Arnescounty, March 1901	104
19	Number of Households per Farm in Skeid, 1703, 1860.	117
20	Icelandic Terms for Housing	120
21	Icelandic Terms for Householders	122
22	Icelandic Terms for Work	125
23	Miscellaneous Icelandic Terms	127
24	Residents on the Farm of Votamyri, 1890	132
25	Married, Unmarried Male Residents, Skeid 1890	133
26	Male Householder Relations, Skeid 1870-1900	134
27	The Population of the Farm of Alfstadir in 1900	137
28	Family Members' Ages in Different Years.	152
29	Chronology of Phases in the Rural Households of Skeidahrepp.	153
30	Joint Estate Management of Skeid	158
31	The Types of Joint Farms in the District of Skeid	159
32	Icelandic Kinship Terminology, The English Equivalent Terms	192
33	Subtypes of Cognatic Social Organization	219
34	Organizational Components of the Commune Board in Skeid	247

List of Tables (continued)

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
35	Groups, Associations in Skeidahrepp, 1970	249
36	The Increase in Home Fields by Hectares Between 1932 and 1970	256
37	Labour Exchange in Skeid in 1970	265
38	A Survey Plot of Household Units Per Farm for Selected Decades, (1900-1970)	268
39	Householders in 1970	279
40	Population of Skeid: 1860, 1961	304

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
1	The District of Skeid and its Geographical Relationship to the Outside World	4
2	Twilight, Sunrise and Sunset	18
3	Chart of Population Location and Its Growth in Reykjavik	53
4	Distribution of Employment in Iceland among Economic Sectors, 1900-1960	86
5	The Icelandic Kinship System	197
6	Iceland, Map of Communes and Commune Boundaries.	241
7	Skeidahrepp, Arnessysla in 1970	253

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Aims, Methods and Place

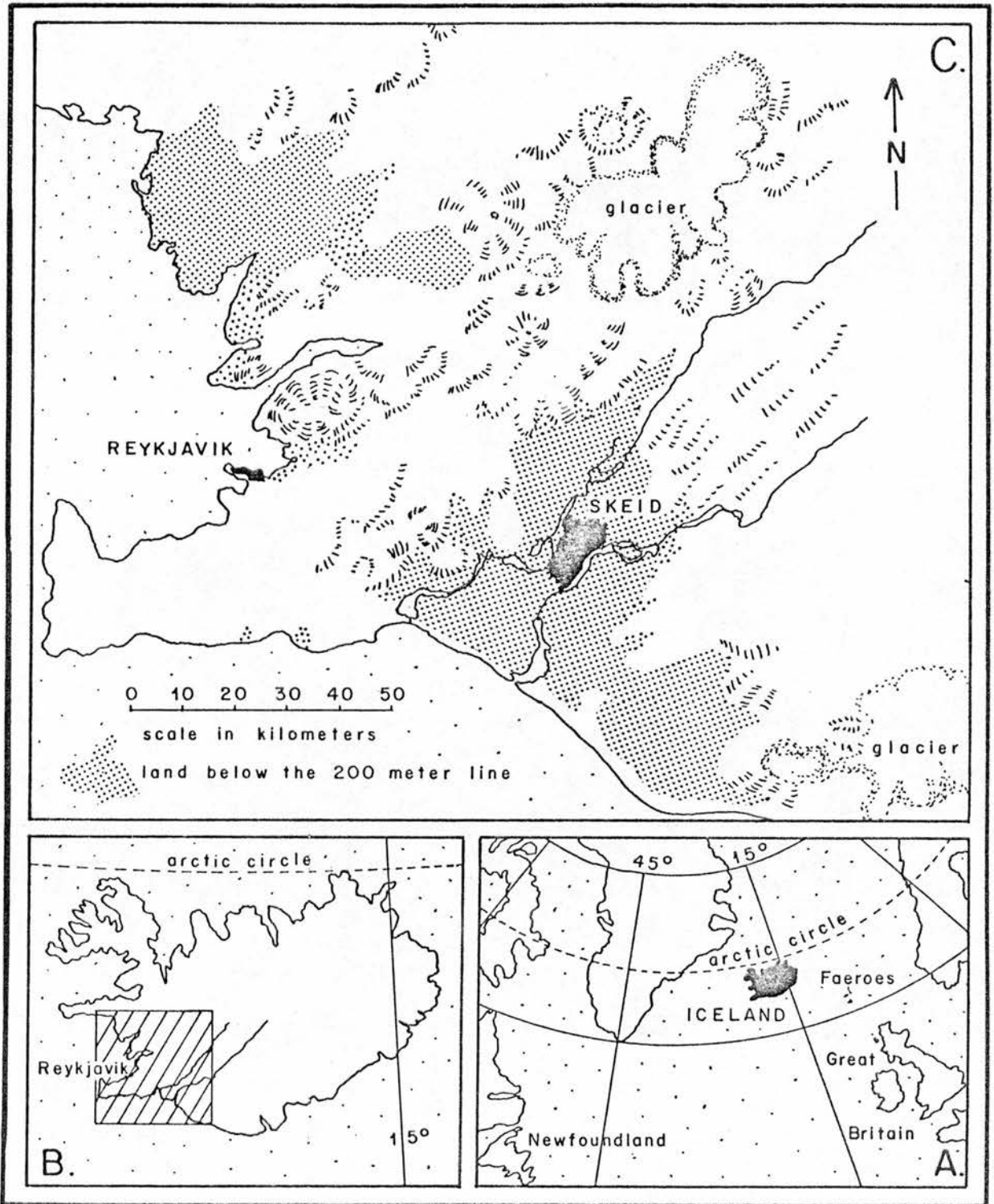
Introduction

The material which follows concerns itself with a description of a rural community in Southwestern Iceland. The name of the community is Skeid, a hrepp, which in Icelandic is the name used for the smallest self-governing civil unit in that country. It should be kept in mind that this is a civil-secular unit, quite different from a parish, i.e., sokn (Icelandic), whose borders do not necessarily coincide with the hrepp. A hrepp is located within a sysla, a county. Skeidahrepp is part of Arnessysla. Traditionally, the four regions of Iceland correspond to the directions of the compass, and thus, Skeidahrepp in Arnessysla is found in the southern quarter of Iceland.

The material was obtained in two ways. The archival material, census data, historical-economic descriptions, and life histories and biographies of residents in the rural area were found in the various libraries and archives in Reykjavik during the period of 1967-1968. I worked in the National Archives (Thjodskaldasafn) in the Department of Population Statistics, the library of the National Bank, and the University Library of Iceland. The field data proper were gathered during my stay in the countryside from September 1968 to May 1970.

My stay in Reykjavik had two purposes: first, to become acquainted with, as well as known by and to, the various groups of government officials, bureaucracies and scholars in Reykjavik; second, to become acquainted with Icelandic language and history and to reconnoitre the documentary and archival material relevant to an understanding of Icelandic society, past and present. I cannot, of course, claim to have become familiar with all of that material, but at least I became aware of possibilities for further research and realised to what a great extent the anthropologist conducting research in a modern European society is dependent on the labour, past and present, of other scholars and of public officials. I am greatly indebted in this regard to Icelandic geographers, historians and statisticians.

Social anthropology as a discipline is characterised by its insistence that the would-be anthropologist undergo a period of "field work," i.e., that he live with a community of people sharing a culture foreign to his own until he arrives at an understanding of that culture. An important problem facing the field worker is that of "legitimation" - how is he to explain his presence in the community of his choice in a way acceptable to that community? My stay in Reykjavik turned out to be particularly profitable in this regard. Having become known to various officials and having demonstrated to them my competence in Danish and



Map 1. The district of Skeid and its geographical relationship to the outside world. A. Iceland and its location within the North Atlantic region. B. The southwest quarter of Iceland, detailed in C. C. The district of Skeid within the southwest quarter of Iceland. Zone of habitation is below 200 meters.

Icelandic, I was invited to fill a vacancy as teacher of English and Danish in a school in the rural district of Skeid. I thus found myself a member of the community with a vocation understood and appreciated by all.

Through teaching and home visits I began to participate in and observe the day-to-day life of the community.

My purpose both in documentary and field research was to gather data for a description of recent social change in Icelandic rural society roughly from 1850 to 1970, and to contribute to our understanding of the Icelandic kinship system. Two questions arise in this connection. First, how can one describe social change in Icelandic rural society by studying a single rural community, i.e. to what extent is Skeid representative of rural communities in Iceland, both as regards its organisation in 1860 and the changes it has undergone since then? I cannot of course claim to know, without a study of a representative sample of Icelandic communities, to what extent my findings apply to "Icelandic rural society." All I can claim in this regard is that by close study of one community I can show processes of change which are likely to be typical of a large number of communities and that it is a task for future research to show the limitations of my findings. Such research would have to concentrate on the demographic and kinship composition of a sample of communities. The economic and administrative changes I describe are common to all

rural communities, as "the community" I deal with is not some vague undefined collectivity but a bounded social unit which in the past had important functions in Icelandic society. I describe these in Chapter 4 on the Hrepp. In Chapter 6 I describe how the more important of these functions have been taken over by the State. The changes in farming techniques that I describe are also common to all communities. It follows that possible variations in processes of change must be due to possible variations in population composition or in kinship composition and institutions (e.g. inheritance) from one community to another.

The second question concerns method; how does one study social change? The question is of some importance since the validity of the concept of "society" which guides my study is at present under attack from two directions. The concept of society I use is that developed in what has become known as structural-functional theory. Briefly, in this view, society is regarded as a structure of relationships among individuals occupying roles, roles such as "father," "sheriff," "house-holder" and so on. Roles cluster in more or less clearly bounded sets, such as families, work units, or, as in this study, "estates," which we normally call groups. A major component of relations among roles are the rights and obligations assigned to them, which, in the case of groups, link individuals such as inheritance or welfare function to

maintain the system of relations among roles. Institutions are interrelated in such a way as to maintain on-going activity in society, to ensure that current requirements are met, and to maintain 'the system,' although any system is liable to have consequences which deprive some individuals relative to others¹ or which engender an ethos which some individuals may find objectionable.

No apology is needed for using this concept of society; for it has been used by many illustrious sociologists and anthropologists, and has guided most of the research by which we have come to at least a preliminary understanding of our own and other societies.² One objection to this approach has recently been levelled by the school of thought which has come to call itself 'ethnomethodology.' The objection is that this approach is only possible for an observer standing outside society, and his findings tell us nothing about the experience of the individuals within the system. Some go so far as to claim that the notion of 'social system' refers to nothing that can be found in reality, that it is a mere academic convention perpetuated by pedagogic and career requirements, and that the experience of the individual is all that is 'really real'; thus our research should

¹Beattie, Parsons.

²Marx, Merton.

be directed at disclosing this experience. As my thesis is not a treatise on methodology in the social sciences, I do not propose to enter into an extended discussion of this approach. Suffice to say that I do not see it as excluding or rendering invalid the structural-functional approach. The two represent optional standpoints and, while disclosing individuals' experience may certainly be a legitimate and (if well done) interesting exercise it cannot replace accurate description of the structure and functioning of societies as a means toward the understanding of society.

Another objection comes from the Marxist tradition in sociology and states that structural-functionalism cannot explain social change. Linked with this is the view that relations of production are the key or dominant relations in society and are the relations on which all others depend. Hence, in order to explain change in society one must begin by disclosing transformations in relations of production. It is possible to produce arguments on a theoretical plane against this view. However, as explained, my intention is not to produce a theoretical treatise, but to demonstrate changes in Icelandic rural society, so for the moment I wish only to clarify my own approach in the light of this objection. It is, in a sense, true that structural-functionalism cannot "explain" social change; but it does offer a precept which can guide the field worker in his empirical research, viz. that since society

forms a system, a change in any one set of relationships or institutions is almost certainly bound to have consequences for others in the system. This indeed is what I have attempted to demonstrate in the following pages. Relations of production in the sense described in Chapter 3 have indeed altered in the rural community, but the alterations have occurred in response to changes originating outside the community, such changes in farming techniques and level of economic activity in Iceland as a whole, and changes in law and the organisation of local administration initiated by the Icelandic State.

A good deal of my discussion necessarily concerns Icelandic kinship; why I say "necessarily" will become clear in the course of the discussion. Briefly, it is because until the 1930's farms in Iceland were family farms employing little hired labour and rarely offered for sale in an open land market. At present, farms are still inherited by a kinsman or kinswoman of the deceased farmer. Moreover, until recently, the range of choice in marriage partners was somewhat restricted, so that members of a rural community were linked to each other in a close network of relationships of descent and affinity. This feature of rural communities, in which the family farm is the basic unit of production, has been noted elsewhere.¹ There has been much discussion

¹Arensberg C., and S. T. Kimball, Family and Community in Ireland, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968.

recently in anthropology concerning the structure and functioning of kinship systems of the cognatic type, of which the Icelandic system is an example. In Chapter 5, drawing on data presented in a previous chapter, I attempt to show how this particular system worked.

Finally, every society has to adapt to an environment, although in adapting, the society in a sense creates its own environment.¹ However, the creation is always constrained by the main features of the environment. Techniques of exploitation of environment form a sub-system in the total social system, a sub-system which in turn puts constraints on the possibilities of organisation and relationships in other sub-systems. This is particularly so regarding kinship systems in rural communities of the type I describe, i.e. in which the family farm is the basic institution. Accordingly, I begin my account with a description of the ecology of rural society.

¹ Rees A. D., Life in a Welsh Countryside, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1968.

CHAPTER 2 The Tradition of Farming in Iceland

Agriculture in its Geographic Setting

The Sheep

The Rural Year

Agriculture in its Geographic Setting

Since Iceland is located in the high latitudes of the northern Atlantic Ocean, two factors are quite important in the shaping of the rural society. The first factor is based upon the geographic position of the island, its soil, the general formation of the land surface, and the elevations of the land; and upon the weather pattern which is influenced by the polar currents and the gulf stream. The second factor is that of its remoteness from European centres of commerce and manufacture. The country owes its origin and present shape to the forces of volcanism, water and frost. It is one of the most active volcanic areas on our planet. When compared with other land masses, Iceland is of recent geologic formation, being essentially made up of basalts of the Late Tertiary and Pleistocene periods. Volcanic activity has taken place throughout the 1,100 years of human habitation, and a number of volcanic eruptions have had their influence upon the welfare of the community.¹ One in particular, was the Laka volcanic disaster of 1783 which caused the death of one-third of the people and

¹Iceland Survey Department, Geological Maps of Iceland, Charts for Central, West Central, Southwest, South Iceland, Reykjavik, 1965.

ninety percent of the livestock,¹ and the very recent destruction of the fishing town on the Vestmann island of Heimaey. Volcanic activity at the present time may be seen in the lava flows which either erode or cover arable land, or form new land masses in the ocean. Of benefit to the human community are the possibilities inherent in the use of thermal sources as power steam generation for electricity, and in the use of hot water to heat houses and greenhouses.

The volcanic origin of the island may be seen in its basic formation. The island is essentially a truncated cone, a highland plateau which in time has become eroded by winds and by frost action. Surrounding the base of this truncated cone, forming a collar or edge between it and the sea, is the flat land below the 200-meter line, the area of habitation for most of the island's population. The highland plateau is not smooth; it is scored by deep, narrow valleys whose basic direction is from the centre of the island towards its outer edges. The floors of the valleys, as well as the shore land between the sea and the central plateau, is made up of debris whose origin may be found in the workings of wind, frost, water, volcanic and glacial actions. The habitable zones of Iceland may be noted in the following

¹J. Terkelsen, "Islands frygteligste naturkatastrofe," Dansk-Islandsk Aarobog, Bd., XIV, Copenhagen, 1941, pp. 20-54.

statistics:

TABLE 1

AGRICULTURAL LANDS: TOTAL AREA IN THOUSAND
SQUARE KILOMETRES, BY ELEVATION¹

0-200 m.	401-400 m.	401-600 m.	600 m. +
13,748	6,034	3,225	798

The environment below the 200-metre line is one of treeless meadows, fresh water streams and lakes. The annual weather pattern in the southern region is characterised by cyclonic winds, high rainfall, and a warm weather season which is a low pressure system with heavy cloud cover. The southwest winds which are primary in the warm season are warmed by the Gulf Stream south of the island. As a consequence, a mild, misty and cloudy weather pattern with its associated rain is typical of this region. Contrary to popular opinion, southern Iceland is not very cold; summer temperatures are in the mid-fifty Fahrenheit range and winter lows rarely go below the teens. However, the wind may cause cold nights in the winter when high pressure patterns, or "Greenland high," moves in from the northwest. Associated with this system are cyclonic winds from 50 to 100 miles per hour, and in this case, the effective

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, Reykjavik, 1967
Table 9, p. 6.

air temperatures are quite low. As a consequence, the growing season is brief and the fauna may be compared to that of the Alpine meadow: wild grasses, small flowering plants, bird life, and birch brambles instead of trees. The four-season pattern considered normal by inhabitants of temperal climates does not exist. The two major seasons are winter and summer and seasonal change from one to the other covers a period of less than three weeks. By the end of March, daylight lasts fifteen hours out of twenty-four and by mid-June, night consists of three hours of twilight. A gradual spring does not occur. Nature and fauna explode with activity and in brief time summer appears, lasting from May until the end of August. By the end of August, the weather is mild, cloudy or rainy with occasional sunshine, but winter is approaching rapidly. Winter begins by the end of September, and lasts until the end of March. The intense and brief succession of summer days in this annual cycle creates a landscape of incredibly beautiful green hues and an abundance of tiny, brightly-coloured flowers. The rich bird life and its sounds over the meadows remain as indelible memories of the beautiful farm land to the south. This impression is contrasted to winter days when the five hours of daylight, which seem more like twilight under the cloud cover, and the endless rain produces a landscape devoid of any colour but dark browns and blacks. The extreme contrasts are most vivid in

the months of January and February, when very cold days and a low pressure weather pattern produce a thin snowfall which covers the meadowland and the surrounding mountains. Overhead the sky is a cloudless bright blue. The two colours, white and blue, and the utter silence of the land in the midst of a commune of 42 family homesteads, combine to produce the third contrast most vividly retained in one's memory.

More than any other person in present society, the farmer is dependent upon, and must coordinate his activities to, the season. If the ground is too soft, he cannot use his mechanised equipment in the fields; it either sinks into the soil or compacts the soil too tightly. When the ground is frozen, all work that is dependent on the condition of the ground, such as work on grass and fields, building construction, and road repairs, must cease until it is dry and warm. During the six-month-long winter, fodder and warmth must be available to cattle, sheep and horses. A basic cost in farming is the need for sturdy, warm buildings for men and beasts and for the storage of food products.

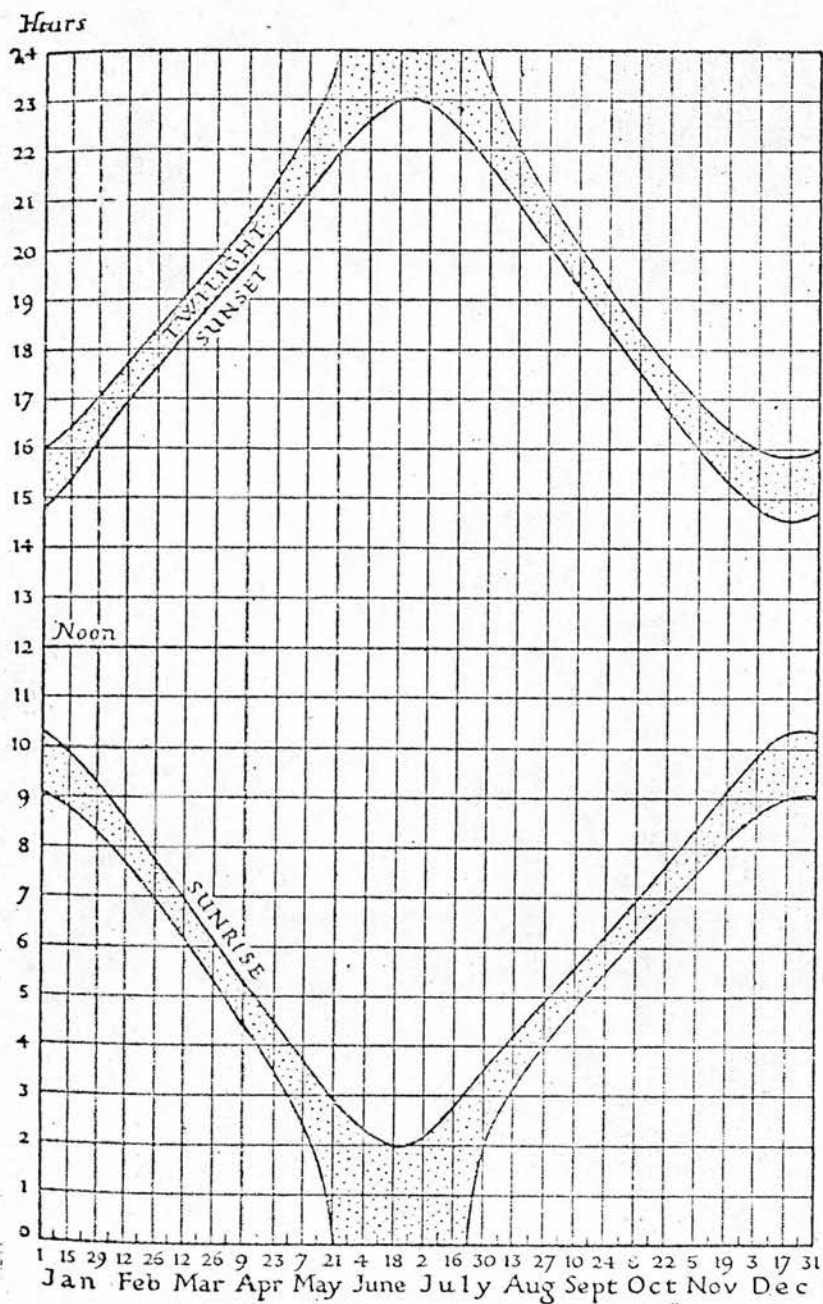
The annual calendar compiled from the information given by the householders shows the environmental influence on the work cycle as a division into two basic modes: one of indoor work during the coldest time of the year, and the other of activity in the countryside during an

eighteen hour day. This outdoor mode lasts from the beginning of May until the end of August. Underlying the ceaseless activity is the knowledge that whatever must be done must be completed by the end of August or mid-September. If houses are not built, or the haying is not done, it must wait for the following year. On the next page, the British Admiralty chart of daylight and darkness for the southern latitude of Iceland indicates the extreme contrasts in the pattern of hours of daylight and darkness for the twelve months of the year.

Farm life in Iceland has for centuries relied upon grass as the one major resource in the environment. This creates a dependence upon a slender range of the limits of success and failure set by soils and climate in the business of pasture farming.

Thus, the first problem of Iceland's geography is one of climate, weather and soil conditions and conditions for the growth of crops. The second problem is also based upon the location of Iceland. C. M. Arensberg coined the term "Atlantic fringe" in a monograph on the isolated and conservative communities which have existed in the remote areas of Ireland, Scotland, Norway and upon the islands of the Shetlands, Orkneys and Faroes.¹ Iceland,

¹R. T. Anderson, "Studies in Peasant Life," Biennial Review, 1965, ed. by B. Siefel. California: Stanford University Press, 1965, pp. 176-210. See also C. M. Arensberg, "The Old World People," Anthro. Quarterly, 26 (1966), pp. 75-99.



Twilight, sunrise and sunset. Icelandic Mean Time (G.M.T. + 1 hr.). Reykjavik district; lat. 64° N, long. 22° W. Compiled from figures in Air Almanac, London. Source: British Admiralty: Iceland, 1942, HMSO, London, p. 431.

throughout its history has exhibited the problems inherent in being on the fringe, reachable only by the sailing ships which ventured into northern seas during the summer season. Rural community with its many scattered farmsteads subsisted for months at a time in isolation from the rest of the world. Within the farmsteads of the commune, life was lived in the confines of houses and was occupied with the daily tasks and the events of the small community. This is the influence of the geography of Iceland in the distance of its communities from the main centres of continental Europe and the British Isles.

Because of its location in the high latitudes of the North Atlantic far from the continent, there has been a particular pattern of trade, dependency and communication throughout the centuries. By the 13th century, shipping on Iceland was in Norwegian hands; from the 14th through the 18th centuries, shipping and trade on Iceland was a monopoly of the Danish crown. A monopoly privilege extended to merchants in Copenhagen and Elsinore. It was not until 1785 that the monopoly trade was abolished and not until the 1890's that shipping and trade came into Icelandic control. Prior to 1920, farms were linked by bridle paths and the many dispersed communities around the island were linked by coastal shipping in the warm season. Before

the 20th century, trading vessels from continental and British ports would call upon the harbour sites. Ships carried cargoes of grain, hardware, distilled spirits and tools and in exchange took on consignments of dried fish, salted meat, hides, wool and feathers.

What is often ignored in descriptions of subsistence-related activities in northern communities, of which Iceland is representative, is the geographic location and the subsequent environmental conditions influencing human societies in the lands north of the 60th parallel. Economy and geography contributed to a particular trade pattern. By the middle of September, the trading seasons in the Tätorts¹ in Icelandic harbours would come to a close. The ships would leave the distant trading sites, not to return until the beginning of June of the following year. Until the steamship reappeared, the communities would return to an isolation imposed by climate and distance.

Besides explaining the isolation of the communities from the outside world, this traditional feature of commercial traffic with the northern regions explains the importance of the Tätorts and may also explain the kind of barter economics which persisted in the rural areas until this

¹Tätort, trans-shipment point (Swedish).

century.¹

Until the years just prior to the first World War, the majority of the population of Iceland lived in rural areas. There were some coastal trading and fishing villages, and few, if any, villages in the rural areas. Farms were dispersed and each had to produce enough not only to maintain the household, but also to provide a small surplus, the sale of which could be used to obtain other goods or foods considered necessary for existence. The volume of this surplus was very small by modern standards. In the year 1860, the 827 farms in the county of Arnes sold to the three merchants in that area the following amount of products:²

Salted Meat (Mutton)	220 Barrels
Rendered Fat (Tallow)	9,008 lbs.
White/Coloured Wool	27,935 lbs.
Eiderdown, Feathers	28 lbs.
Green hides	410 pieces

This amount, which is the reported annual export of the three merchants in Arnes county, would mean that each farm of the county produced as surplus in that year less than one barrel of salted meat, 12 lbs. of tallow, and about 310 lbs. of raw wool. With an average household of 7.6 persons per farm in the county, the cash income

¹J. Swed, Private Cultures and Public Imagery, St. John: Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies, No. 2, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1966.

²S. Hansen "Verzlan á Islandi Arin 1856-1863," in J. Sigurdsson (ed.), Skýrslur um Landshagi á Islandi, Vol. 3, Copenhagen: Thiele og Møller, 1866, pp. 476-616.

of the year's trade with the merchant would come to 153 Rikisdalir and 40 skilling, or less than 30 pounds sterling in present value

The comparative consumption of imported goods per farm in that year was equally small: $1\frac{1}{2}$ barrels of salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ barrel of ground flour, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of tobacco, 3 lbs. of coffee, and $1/10$ th barrel of coal.¹ The small amounts of surplus and imported goods traded are also reflected by the fact that the Trade Monopoly on Iceland lasted until 1858, and that the three merchants of Arnes county in 1860 were the only trade outlets for the 728 farms. How completely rural the Icelandic society was in 1860 may be seen in the census on occupations taken in that year for the county of Arnes, in the southern part of Iceland.

TABLE 2
PROFESSIONS, TRADES AND FARMERS IN ARNESSYSLA, 1860²

	<u>Household Heads</u>	<u>Family Members</u>	<u>Workers</u>
Government officials and Clergy	13	55	61
Merchants	3	18	13
Seamen	13	26	10
Farmers	827	2,587	1,481
Pensioners	<u>27</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	883	2,698	1,565

¹Ibid., see reference to "Sudur Umdaemid," pp. 476-616.

²J. Sigurdsson (ed.) Skýrslur um Landshagi á Islandi,

The key function of the trans-shipment point, the Tätort, was to collect during the winter and early spring those goods to be traded for the imported goods the ships would bring. Since, during the spring and summer, the farmers were in the middle of their productive cycle, it was only after the first winter frost that coal, grain, and timber imported earlier that year could be conveniently carried from Tätort to farm over the frozen land surface. The Tätort served as a storage place for import as well as export goods, and as a trans-shipment point between the rural community in Iceland and the outside world.

The Tätort is defined as a cluster of homes with 200 or less inhabitants, all of whom are engaged in non-rural pursuits.¹ These small settlements located at good anchorage points, consist of the homes of fishermen, merchants, civil government officials and the district officers. In the county of Arnessysla, which contains the hrepp of Skeid, the coastal village of Eyraðakki is, by origin, a Tätort. This village was an old trans-shipment point for the district of Arnessysla. For centuries, it has been the home of the merchant,

Vol. 3, Copenhagen, Thiele og S. L. Møller, 1866, pp. 45-167.

¹W. R. Mead, An Economic Geography of the Scandinavian States, London: University Press, 1958. V. Malmstrom, A Regional Geography of Iceland, Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1958. C. O'Dell, The Scandinavian World, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957.

who was the contact with the outside world for the farmers of Skeið as well as those of other districts. It was also in Eyrabakki that fishing crews from the farms kept their fishing boats and tackle and maintained small huts where they could live during the fishing season.

The century-by-century history of trade and shipping on Iceland may vary as to personae and institutions; however, the pattern is constant. The inhabitants were in an inferior bargaining position, because of distance, foreign ownership of ships, monopoly trade practices, and the lack of internal circulation of currency. All of these factors combined to keep the farmers in the southland locked into a barter situation and a specific production system in which the influence of the merchant in terms of the goods he deemed worthwhile determined those which would be produced. For several centuries woolen goods, dried fish, and salted mutton in barrels were the traditional exports, and iron, flour, and lumber the traditional imports. As economists have shown in their studies, export prices on farm products remained stable for very long periods of time, whereas the price of imports rose constantly. This colonial trade pattern kept the householders poor, and the trade preferences for specific goods prevented innovations and changes on the part of the farmers and resulted in a conventional

farming economy which, over the period 1703 to 1890, shows neither major improvement nor major change.¹

Soil and land surface: The soil all over the country is derived, almost without exception, from basic igneous rocks. In the highlands, as well as in the neighbourhood of the glaciers, there is little organic matter in the soil. Below the 200-meter line, a stratum of humus appears in the soil, and at sea level this humus is common in lands presently used for farming. In spite of the poor quality of the soil over most of Iceland and the uncertain weather conditions, farming has been the main subsistence activity of the country. The combined influence of the factors of weather and poor soil may be noted in the amount of land area available for farming activity.

Of a total land area of 103,600 square kilometres, 23,805 square kilometres are known to be arable land, consisting at present of permanent pastures, meadows, woodlands, and unused grasslands.

In 1963 Icelandic farmers derived 87% of their income from livestock products and the remaining 13% from crops and products gained from hunting and fishing.

¹W. C. Chamberlain, Economic Development of Iceland through World War II, New York: AMS Press, 1968, Table, "Seasonal Movements of Trade," p. 53.

TABLE 3
 AGRICULTURAL AREA, LAKES, GLACIERS AND DESERT¹
 IN THOUSANDS OF SQUARE KILOMETRES

<u>Elevation</u>	<u>Arable Land</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Glacier</u>	<u>Desert</u>	<u>Total</u>
0-200 m.	13,718	1,786	88	9,112	24,704
201-400 m.	6,034	213	300	11,854	18,401
401-600 m.	3,255	458	411	18,044	22,168
600- m.	798	300	11,123	25,528	37,749
Totals	23,805	2,757	11,922	64,538	103,022

The following table shows the distribution of production and income in that year.

TABLE 4
 SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL INCOME IN 1963²

Cattle products	46.1%	Garden produce	5.99%
Sheep products	38.79%	Other:	7.11%
Horse sales	1.71%	Salmon, Trout, Lumpfish, Seal, Fowl, Driftwood	

Almost half of all Iceland's agricultural income is derived from the sale of fluid milk; in 1963 the annual production amounted to 114,345 tons (metric). The

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, Reykjavik, 1967, Table 9, p. 6.

²Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, Reykjavik, 1967, Table 89, p. 105.

second most important source of income is the sale of mutton, which in that year amounted to 686,764 tons (metric).¹ The stable agricultural products are those resulting from the grazing economy; cereal crops are not grown on the average Icelandic farm.² Throughout Icelandic history farming has been a system based upon a subsistence economy of sheep herding and cattle. The production of grass and its conversion into hay to supply at least six months of winter fodder for the stabled livestock remains the primary concern of the farmer. Without grass and hay the system of production would come to a standstill. A fodder shortage has occurred several times during the past two centuries. The personal diary of Jon Jonsson from Vogí by Myvatn in northern Iceland records in plain language the dependency of Icelandic farming upon climate and the effects of a scarcity of fodder in just one winter season:

"..July 19th, 1858. I began haymaking, but as we had very rainy weather almost during all the time of the hay harvest so the hay could not be dried sufficiently and could not all be good food for sheep in the next winter. The haymaking was finished the 17th September and the winter season began early with snows and stormy weather lasts in September... I saw too late that I could have saved my elder sheep if I had in the autumn slaughtered all my lambs, 28 in number...

¹Ibid., pp. 101, 103.

²I. T. Ashwell, "Recent Changes in the Pattern of Farming in Iceland," Canadian Geographer, VII, 4, 1963, pp. 174-181.

The winter lasted until Easter the 24th of April 1859...early in the month of March we had no hay left but for the cows... when this memorable winter was ended, I had lost 65 sheep and goats and owned yet 25... this great loss was a shock in my housekeeping, and amounted to a value of 33 Pounds Sterling."¹

The land surface below the 100 meter line in southwestern Iceland is characterised by boggy wet meadows, and the natural grasses which grow in abundance on this surface are primarily sedge grasses (*Carex* spp). This is a grass upon which sheep feed well, but cows require true grasses or clovers (*Graminae*, *Trifolia*) which are native to only a few places in Iceland. As a consequence, cattle-keeping requires a grass surface which must be prepared by the farmer not only for summer grazing but also as the source of winter fodder.² Cows must be milked twice daily, and during the summer months the cattle are kept on the small clover field close to the byre. This tradition of summer keeping varies from the cattle-keeping and dairy practices of two parallel herding systems, the Norwegian and the Swiss. In the "saeter" economy of Norway and of Switzerland, the youth of the communities accompany the cattle to highland grazing plots and remain with the animals throughout the summer. Milking and

¹H. Hannesson (ed.) Jons Saga Jonssonar, Reykjavik, 1968, Isafoldprentsmidja, p. 110.

²Commenting upon this S. Sigurdursson writes "lengir var tadan adalfodur nautgripa her a landi," p. 305 in S. Sigurdsson (ed.) Bunadarhagir, 2nd vol. Reykjavik, 1937, Bunadafelag Islands.

cheese manufacture occur in the highlands where houses are built to accomodate the herding groups and the manufacture of milk products. In Iceland traditional cattle-keeping methods have kept the cows close to the farms but have sent the sheep to the highlands to graze. The small basis for dairy production prior to the expansion of home fields in the 1940's may be seen in the statistics of the past century. The 8,252 estates possessed a total of 9,906 ha. of infield grassland; thus, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century an average infield was only 1.2 ha. in size. The reason for this small field is the difficulty of the labour necessary to maintain the tun (Icel.). The natural meadow is subject to solifluction phenomena, the appearance of hummocks, or thurfur (Icel.). The hummocks are two to three feet in diameter and one and one-half to two feet in height at their centre. Thus, to convert a natural meadow to a flat field capable of producing true grasses and clovers requires exhausting work which, until the introduction of tilling machinery in the 1930's, was done by hand using a spade.

Based on current standards of amount of grass and hay produced per hectare of tun field and the fodder needs of a 400 kg cow, the winter fodder needs would be 2,160 kg of hay. The 1.2 ha. of tun field would not produce much more than 50 horse burdens of hay, as the old measure went, or 5,000 kg. by present measure. In

Skeidahrepp in 1880, the 38 estates had a dairy herd of 170 cows or a little less than 4 cows per farm.¹ The slightly larger number of cows in relation to field area and amount of fodder may indicate that in the 1880's a pre-industrial farming system worked with lower standards for amount of milk production and lower fodder requirements than does the present system.

The second grazing area of an estate was the outfield area adjacent to the farm. The natural meadows covered 100 to 200 acres on the average estate in the southern region. During the spring and autumn seasons the fields were used for grazing horses and sheep, but when the sheep were sent to the highlands in June, the outfields were cut to produce winter fodder for the livestock. On such hummocky fields, a scythe was used to cut the grass, and it was a task which required the daily labour of all the members of the household. Men worked with the scythes, while women and children raked and turned the grass to hasten the process of drying. Hay production depends upon dry and sunny weather, and for this reason, the Icelandic traditional farming system operated on the edge of failure. Weather statistics for the months of May through August show that a maximum of 15 days per month could be expected to be sunny and dry which permitted

¹The values on which the above estimates are based are taken from Bunadafelag Islands, Handbok Baenda, Reykjavik, 1968, p. 303.

barely enough time for the production of hay. Hay from the tunfield and the outfield was stored out-of-doors for the winter in long mounds covered with turf, and wastage occurred. The rainy weather and the exposure of the hay to the winter elements caused dampness, mold and rot, and hence a loss in the amount of usable fodder. Surhey (Icel.) was an old method of storing wet hay in such a manner that it would not spoil. With the introduction of hay barns in the 1920's, the problem of wastage of this crop was solved, and the condition of the animals was ameliorated.

Few other crops are grown by the farms; the low income statistic on garden produce on page 26 is indicative of this fact. Potatoes were introduced into Iceland in the late 1750's and cabbages have always been grown in garden plots. However, at present, the single crop production system of the Icelandic farm has not changed significantly. Potatoes, bread grains and other feed grains must still be imported not only for human consumption but also to add to the fodder used by livestock.

Farming production in Iceland is thus limited not only by climate and soils but also by traditional practise. It follows a pattern of rural subsistence which for the past 900 years has sustained self-sufficient and isolated households, each located within its own field boundaries. The system is best characterised as a herding and cattle

system utilizing a three field pattern of grasses and augmenting the annual food production with hunting and fishing. The absence of grain crops and the lack of trees of any variety in the environment were and continue to be the limitations within which the farmer must work. This basic rural subsistence pattern was introduced in Iceland by settlers from Norway and Ireland and remained unchanged in work methods and production until the end of the nineteenth century.

The Sheep

Several authors have commented upon the very conservative nature of Icelandic rural life which has lasted into the present time. It is the work in the fields and with the livestock that carries the traditions of the past into the present.¹ Iceland has the highest ratio of sheep to men of any European country. Figures for selected years are given below.

TABLE 5
NUMBER OF SHEEP IN ICELAND, 1901-1964²

<u>Year</u>	<u>Iceland</u>	<u>South Region, County of Arnes</u>
1901	482,189	38,549
1921	553,900	56,279
1941	637,067	53,732
1964	736,381	67,145

¹E.g., I. Y. Ashwell, V. Malmstrom, a.o., see Bibliography.

²Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, Reykjavik, 1967, Table 80, p. 69.

In the southern region the 1,251 estates possess an average herd of 250 ewes, and every estate in the commune of Skeid carries on the traditions of sheep handling and breeding. The Icelandic sheep is a hardy animal, rather small in size, with a carcass weight of about 22 kilograms. It has a long, flowing coat of coarse wool, the colours of which run the gamut of the white-brown-black range. The animal is indigenous to northern Europe and was imported to Iceland at the time of settlement. There have been attempts at cross-breeding with foreign strains to improve the wool or the carcass weight as well as attempts at introducing new species. So far these attempts have met with little success, and contemporary breeding techniques concentrate on improving the stock already in the country. Until the 1920's, improvements in practices of breeding and raising the sheep were made by individuals. In 1920 co-operative societies concerned with herd maintenance, slaughtering methods and breeding were established. However, it was not until 1943 that the first co-operative breeding society on a district-wide level was established in the southern region. In that year special markings were introduced to aid in the bookkeeping and control of ewes and breeding lines.¹

¹Bunadarsamband Sudurlands, Afmaelisrit, Selfoss: Prentsmidja Sudurlands H. F., 1959, p. 147.

Although much of veterinary practise is reflected in the breeding of sheep, the traditions still in use today constitute a conservative element in rural life. Practises and laws are related to the ownership of sheep, the highland pasturing and round-up, the marking of the animals and the terminology employed by the people are centuries old. Sheep rearing and herding necessitate collective activity on the part of individual owners, and such collective work has in time led to a kind of communal organization of which each estate manager is a member. Each commune has a highland grazing association and each controls the registry of earmarks which all the sheep must carry. In Skeidahrepp all farmers are sheep owners, and all sheep owners must be members of the grazing association. When a farmer's son is about five years old, he is introduced to the tradition in a very simple manner: he is given a few sheep of his own. To be a sheep owner and to run the sheep on the lands of the commune, the boy must choose and register an earmark. Much discussion precedes the choice of mark. Many of the Icelandic earmarks are known by name and in several cases the personality or deeds of past owners are well known.¹ Once the mark is chosen it belongs to

¹Note: Well known earmarks may be seen in S. Blöndal, Islandsk-Dansk Ordbog, Reykjavik: Prentsmidjan Gutenberg, 1924, Table III in Appendix. A discussion on earmarks and their parallel naming for the Orkneys and Iceland may be read in G. Jenkins (ed.), Studies in Folklife, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1969, p. 219. To my knowledge no other studies have been made on earmarks for the North Atlantic region.

the boy for life. The bailiff enters the mark in the commune's registry book and the boy has become a member of the highland grazing association of his community. Since the earliest days of the first Icelandic republic, the laws have stated that one cannot own sheep without possessing an ear mark, nor can one refuse to participate in the communal association responsible for collective work with the herds.¹ Thus the sheep, their marks, the grazing association, the highland pasture season, the round-up festival, the corral in which the sheep are kept are some of the seven centuries-old traditions which contribute to the solidarity of the commune.

The round-up of the sheep, which takes place annually during the third week of September, should be commented upon briefly. It is a task towards which the young men of the community look with anticipation. The participant in the round-up must choose his two horses, saddle and packs with care, and prepare horsemen's clothing and food; and he will take the opportunity to carry along more whiskey than is strictly necessary to protect him from snakebite. During the round-up, the men sing songs, and tell stories and rhymes. The pleasure of doing something which is as ancient as the Sagas themselves and of working with livestock, horses and dogs in the

¹Jonsbok, Kong Haakon Magnusson's Lovbog for Island, (ed.) O. Halldorsson, N. Thoroddsson, 1970, Odense, Universitetsforlaget, Kap. 46, p. 176; Kap, 49, p. 181; Kap. 47, p. 177.

company of other men who are kinsmen, neighbours and acquaintances, establishes a strong bond of communal identity. After the week's work in the highlands, the 12,000 sheep of the commune appear as a great white flock winding its way through the lowland valley to the communal corral. No more clearly traditional or physical expression of the collective nature of the management of estates and the status of the farmer in Skeid exists than the corral itself. It is a double circle structure with walls built of lava block. From the central circle to which the animals are first led, the farmers sort out their own by their marks and lead each sheep to the gate separating the first circle from the second. The name of the farm is written over the gate; these names have remained unchanged since they were recorded in the census of 1685 and 1703.

The rural economy prior to the changes introduced by modernisation beginning in 1920 has been described as a diffuse self-sufficient household economy. I have shown that three separate annual work cycles underlie and sustain this economy. The first and primary cycle is a shepherding system which depends upon the naturally occurring grasses in the environment and which produces the milk, meat and wool products used by the household; this system is the most ancient and enduring of the rural traditions of the commune and has lasted through

the present time. The second work cycle is related to cattle, which do not survive well in the Icelandic landscape. Much work in the preparation of fields, in the production of specially grown grasses, and in the housing and care of these animals is necessary for the successful outcome of the dairy production, and no little part of the total investment of labour and costs is needed to maintain even a very small dairy herd of four cows. The third work cycle on the traditional farm is one based upon maritime exploitation and gathering of birds eggs, berries, driftwood and eiderdown, all naturally occurring seasonal resources. Fresh and salt-water fishing produces trout, salmon, cod, lumpfish, seal and walrus. Traditionally, the fish was dried and salted, while the blubber from the marine mammals served as lamp oil, and their hides as substitutes for ropes, shoe leather and other items.

The influence of the arctic environment upon the human community and its patterns of adaptation can be noted in the case of rural subsistence in Iceland. The first time the attention of anthropologists was directed towards the arctic phenomenon was by the description and analysis of M. Mauss of the seasonal variations in Eskimo social life. In his description, he pointed out that the world, or, more correctly, the "nature of reality," was divided into the domain of winter and the domain of summer. This classificatory principle extended from the

innermost core of the society's ideology outwards into the physical world and the manner in which Eskimo hunters and gatherers lived together each season. During the winter season in western Greenland, the Eskimo peoples lived in large settlements of about 200 inhabitants occupying long houses and sharing together a social life centered in the dance lodge. Their winter settlements were on the edge of the sea, permitting forays to be made across the land and ice out to sea to hunt seal and whale. The dance lodge served as a center for social gatherings. Once summer began, the settlements broke up into small family tent groups which would range more than 400 kilometers south along the Greenland coast to hunt reindeer and to fish the inland streams and ponds. Across the arctic, from Alaska to western Greenland, a hunter-gatherer people practised a two-seasonal land and sea subsistence technology and, linked with this a pattern of agglomeration into winter settlements and dispersal in summer across the land in small family tent groups. During the winter season there was a high incidence of social interaction, communication and exchange. Conversely and antithetically, the summer world was secular, isolated and concentrated on the affairs of the extended family group.

Icelanders are by history, origin, and tradition northern European people who, throughout the settlement of the island, have practised farming and some hunting and fishing on a seasonal basis.

In contrast to the Inuit peoples who inhabit the northern tier of the North American continent and Greenland, the North European subsistence pattern prior to the industrial period was a diffuse land-maritime system of exploitation and farming. Yet, in spite of the differences between the Inuit and Icelandic societies, one sees in traditional rural Icelandic society the same two-seasonal variation. As described earlier, the seasons in the "mitternächtiger länder," are marked by long periods of daylight or dark, and the land surface and the resources of the environment exhibit the same stark contrasts. Iceland is located within a discontinuous permafrost line. This means that during the winter season the ground is frozen solid. Ponds and slow moving streams are also frozen, and water is scarce on the traditional farm. The summer season's landscape is one of boggy land surfaces, streams and ponds, heavy groundcover, and yields an abundance of food resources, such as varieties of birds and vegetation.

I have included in this descriptive geographic and historical material on Iceland, a set of diary notes which are based upon interviews with householders in Skeidahrepp and which illustrate the seasonal variations of rural life in southern Iceland. The interesting point is that when this contemporary material is contrasted to what is known about the traditional and seasonal work cycle of the nineteenth century pre-industrial subsistence household, it is clear that the

primary and basic features of the rural round of activities has not changed. I conclude this introductory section with a schedule of work activities as these relate to the months of the year.

The Rural Year¹

The year may be divided into two halves, the period from May to September, being the spring-summer season, and the period from October to April, the autumn-winter season. From April until early October the cattle stay out-of-doors; from the beginning of June until the second week in September, the sheep graze the highland meadows. Lambing takes place in April and May, and in June the young follow the herd up to the pastures. Both horses and sheep graze freely for about seven months of the year.

By the end of April work begins in the hay fields. Mowing begins in early July and continues for about ten weeks, until the middle of September. Winter weather is quite unpredictable in the southern region; a late winter may mean an ice and snow cover on the fields, and the need to rely on dwindling hay stocks, while an early spring may make it possible to send the animals out to graze two weeks earlier than usual.

¹Material collected is based upon interviews with farmers in the District, and upon personal observation by the author during the 1969-1970 field stay.

There is no lack of work in any season. A month-by-month outline of the work, as I observed it, will demonstrate that the householder is engaged in simultaneous tasks which, to the outsider, look unrelated and confusing. However, these are tasks that must be done during a particular season. Daytime milking and feeding of animals must be done daily throughout the year. When summer work tapers off, autumn-winter preparations begin. As winter wanes in February plans are made for field preparation and seeding of the summer's harvest.

Two dates mark the basic turning points in the year in Skeid. The round-up on September 16-18 marks the end of the summer's work. The first day of summer is celebrated in February and signals the beginning of spring and summer preparations. In March, the last party is held in the district's school hall, and between March and September no more district-wide parties are given.

January: The working day in winter is shorter than the summer working day. People rise by 7 a.m. and complete the milking and feedings by 9 a.m. Work beginning after breakfast lasts until noon. From 12 until 2:30 p.m., most stay indoors and sleep, read or visit. Coffee is served on the farms at 2 p.m. after which the second half of the working day begins and continues until 8:00 p.m. During the winter months

work is centred in the stables housing the cows, sheep, and horses. Manure is cleaned out every day, and the cows must be milked twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. In the winter months of January through March, there is time for local visits, relaxation, reading and visits to Reykjavik.

February: If the weather is good, the horses are exercised. Mounts are saddled, and people ride to visit neighbours and friends. During the early part of the month, the sheep dogs are wormed, and the sheep are dipped. Daily work continues; the cattle are fed and milked twice a day. By the end of February thoughts and plans turn towards the spring and summer work.

March: Animals are given additive foods in the form of pellets, vitamin injections and soycakes. If weather permits, building projects are started and if the ground is not too soft, the tractors will spread manure on the fields. The 200-300 sheep on each farm are weighed to ascertain their feeding needs. Incidentally, farmers believe that twin lambing depends upon the feeding of the sheep prior to tuppung and during pregnancy, and twin lambing runs about 60-75% in each herd. Cows are calving at this time, necessitating extra work in terms of staying up during the night to assist in the births. By the end of the month, hay stocks run low and some farmers must buy hay from more fortunate neighbours.

During the summers of 1967, 1968 and 1969, trucks loaded with hay were run from the north of the island to the counties in the south where the farmers had run out of feed. If ice packs the northern shores of the island, the spring is delayed, thus extending the time the cattle must spend indoors. This means an extra expense for the farm, since additional fodder must be purchased.

May: Spring work begins. Lambing is in progress and a hectic work pace pervades the community, since there is much that must be done in a short time. The fields must be prepared, fertilised and seeded, ditches must be cleaned, fences must be reset, and green fodder must be sown. By the end of the month, barns are cleaned of old hay, manure is moved out to the fields and potatoes are set out.

June: The work begun in May continues. Vegetable gardens are laid out; and, with the advent of better weather, house building, repairs and painting are begun. By now the sheep must be sheared and the weaned lambs marked with the owner's ear mark. With flocks of two hundred and more sheep per household, shearing and marking comprise most of a week's work. In the old days, shearing was not only a work event, but had social overtones. Shearers worked in groups, and farms co-operated in the task. At present, shearing is done with electrical tools. The market incentive

is quite important. During the three seasons of my field stay, there was little incentive to cut the wool, since the price of one kg. of uncleaned wool was so low that it hardly paid for the farmers to do the work. It was not an unusual sight to see wool lying in neglected heaps along fences or to see unsheared sheep with wool falling off by itself.

July: The influence of technology on farming in Iceland is particularly obvious in the task which now occupies the farmers for the next three months.

Agricultural statistics on man-hours show the rationalisation in hay cropping which has taken place in the last thirty years. Cutting grass with a sickle requires fifty man-hours per hectare; the job is reduced to twenty man-hours per hectare with a scythe, and to three man-hours with a reaper. About thirty years ago horsedrawn reapers known as "sicklebar cutters" were introduced, and their effect was felt immediately. What had been the hardest work of the year, a ten-hour day spend swinging a scythe, was reduced to the work of sitting on a horse-pulled machine. But thirty years ago, home fields were small, and the major portion of the hay was obtained from the hummocky outfields where the reaper could not be used. Since a horse needs one hectare of hay during the year if it is used as a work animal, the old farm still faced problems of energy output. The introduction of the tractor has had two effects: the enlargement of the

home fields upon which mechanised cutting equipment can be used, and a subsequent neglect of outfields as the major source of hay. With the reduction of dependence upon the horse and the enlargement of the fields, hay may now be used for the dairy herds. Changes have also taken place in the dependency upon skilled farm labour. Rationalisation of hay production has been drastic. Thirty years ago, a team of four adult men was needed to work the scythes, and a team of women to turn and rake the cut grass. Today, a single man on a tractor with an enclosed cab not only works comfortably in bad weather, but does the work of twenty men in a day. Many a farmer, with the help of a couple of young boys, handles today what eight to ten adults were needed to do in 1940.

During the month of August, as well as the first two weeks of September, the haying continues. If the rains make work in the fields impossible, farmers work on building projects and upkeep.

September: By the middle of the month, the sheep round-up takes place. Between September 16 and 18 the sheep return, marking the end of the summer's activities and heralding the change from summer to the beginning of winter.

During the days of the rett old friends meet around the corral within which some 7,000 sheep mill around.

Young and old wade into this mass of animals, examine earmarks and, having found one of their sheep, put a leg over the animal's neck, grasp its curved horns with both hands, and walk the squirming, jumping creature to the gate of the pen where their farm's name is posted. Boys and girls attempt to imitate the adults and often find their legs too short for the task. Old farmers arrive at the round-up knowing they will be able to chat with friends they have not seen all summer and they carry flasks in their coat pockets. The laughter, hugging and greetings are interspersed with exchanges of swigs from bottles and snuff from tobacco boxes. Dozens of horses are tied to the walls of the fold, with their saddles and saddle rolls. Sheep dogs sit on the walls of the corral watching the sheep intently. Young men who took part in the round-up sleep along the walls of the corral. Surrounding this scene are more than fifty jeeps, carts and trucks. Friends from the city are here to take in the sights and to participate in the evening's festivities in the school gym. During this celebration, the caricature of the Icelandic countryman comes to life, that of a shouting and singing man, with a red bandanna handkerchief in one hand, a Norse horsewhip in the other, a flask sticking out of his ulpa (Icel.), the characteristic sheepskin-lined coat. In the evening a dance takes place in the district hall. Six hundred people attend this event in a building where 150 people

are a crowd.

Although times have changed, the round-up has not.

The following remarks from 1861 by Jón Jónsson of

Vogi bear out my observations:

The 18th September, I rode to Hraunsrétt. It is a great square of stone, whither the immense flock of sheep is driven from the summer runs ... It was a very fine weather this day, and an innumerable multitude of sheep, horses, dogs and men were come together on this occasion, and there was an accursed tumult and cries, as many became intoxicated, especially at the end of the day. I rode homeward the following night.¹

The rett, i.e., the round-up marks the turning point of the seasons. It is the end of the summer, and, when everyone has sobered up, the preparations for autumn begin. At the end of September, it is customary to pay four men to conduct a second round-up of sheep to make certain that no strays remain in the highland pastures. If necessary, a third round-up will be conducted by two men, in a final attempt to locate all the sheep. In the older days, it was believed that hidden somewhere in the interior of the country is a valley where stray animals live. Many, it is said, have lost their lives searching the empty wastes for the Icelandic equivalent of a Shangri-La.

¹H. Hannesson (ed.), Jons Saga Jonssonar, etc. Reykjavik: Isafold-prentsmidja H. F., 1968, p. 116. NOTE: The orthography and word order are from the original. Jón Jónsson taught himself English and never did hear the language until he spoke with a few Englishmen on a visit to Myvatn.

October: The two-wheeled, stake-bodied carts filled with sheep appear on the roads of the commune. They make their way to the Co-operative Slaughterhouse at Laugarás, just north of Skeid. The farmers may make extra money working in the slaughterhouse. Workdays are long, lasting from very early morning until late at night, and the assembly line work is difficult. The usual work continues as well, the twice-a-day milking, the final hurried work on houses and buildings and repair of equipment in the evenings. The sound of tractors pulling hay-blowers to dry out the hay in the barns is heard night and day in the district.

The month of October is a busy one for the women also. Their housekeeping includes preserving foodstuffs for the coming winter. In the old days, muscle meats as well as other parts of the animal, such as entrails, were preserved by a form of pickling or curing in milk acids and storing in barrels; and many farms still do this traditional kind of food preservation. However, from the interviews conducted with the farm women, I learned that most foods today, in contrast to those of only twenty years ago, are purchased in the Co-operatives in Selfoss, where they are packaged and frozen in freezer lockers. Many of the old techniques of food preservation, whether of vegetables or milk products, such as cheese or skyr, or meats, are becoming lost arts in the modern rural household. A pleasant change

in diet occurs during this month. The newly slaughtered lambs provide very good meat and serve as a welcome contrast to the fish that has been eaten all through the summer season.

October is a quiet month for some. One farmer, who did not keep sheep, said, "There is little to do at this moment. A couple of years ago I went to Selfoss every day to learn to drive a car." For most, with the extra job in the slaughterhouse, with the needs of their dairy herd and sheep, and with the necessary preparations for winter, this is a very busy month. By tradition, winter begins on the Saturday of the last week in October.

November: Manure is spread on the fields to lie there throughout the winter. Horses are stabled, and sheep are taken in at night. Winter has set in; night falls several minutes earlier every day and becomes more noticeable. The day does not begin before 10 o'clock in the morning.

December: The sheep are tuppé. The only other major events are Christmas and the New Year's celebration. Iceland is a Scandinavian country and celebrates a Lutheran Christmas with many the same foods and customs found in Scandinavia. As Jón of Vogli wrote in 1857:

As usual, I held the Christmas and New Year with our rural festivity and joyfulness, and regaled my family with coffee and fine

bread besides smoke dried mutton which is
only given at feast days ...¹

His description is still apt.

¹Ibid., p. 128.

CHAPTER 3 Social Change in Iceland 1860-1970

Demographic and Economic Change 1900-1970

Agrarian Change

The Farm of Blessastadir 1910-1970

Summary, Process and Phase

Traditional Phase

Development Phase



Demographic and Economic Change 1900-1970

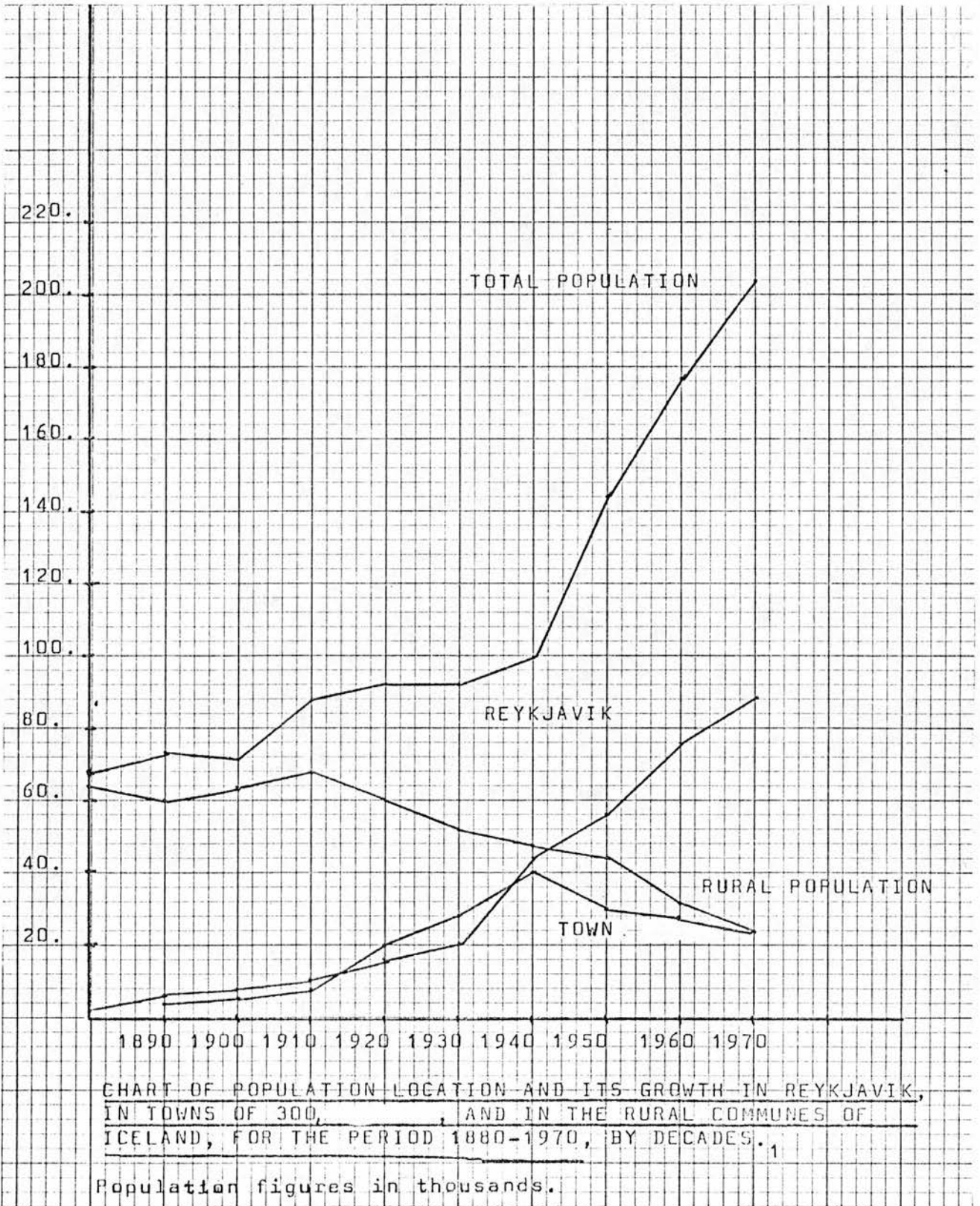
In 1900 more than 75% of the population lived on farms and engaged in work activities related to rural subsistence. In 1970 less than 15% of the population lived on farms and less than 20% of the nation's workforce earned an income derived from work related to rural economics. The chart on the following page is a graph showing population growth in Iceland for the period 1880-1970. The graph is divided into subcategories as follows: (a) the rural population, (b) the population of the capital city of Reykjavik, and (c) the population of urban areas of more than 300 inhabitants.

The rural-urban movement of the population has been recent and large scale and the following statistics show the very sudden shifts in location of population for each decade:

TABLE 6
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGES¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
1890	11.1	88.9
1901	19.8	80.2
1910	32.2	67.8
1930	54.6	45.4
1950	72.8	27.2
1966	82.6	17.4

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbok, Reykjavik, 1967, Table 18, p. 21.



The figures used in the annual statistics displayed on the chart are taken from the Statistical Office of Iceland's publications.

The population shift in Iceland began in the decade of 1890-1900; it is clearly discernible in the statistics of 1920. Until the decade beginning in 1970 there seemed to be no let-up in the rural-urban migration, in the nation's high birthrate, nor in the headlong development of towns. This rapid urban development and the shift from agriculture to other forms of work is a process which has occurred primarily in the southwestern region of Iceland, of which the capital city of Reykjavik is the centre. The following statistics on national population distribution by regions show the present concentration of population in the southwestern region.

TABLE 8
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ICELAND BY REGION¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>SoWest</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
1901	27.8%	15.6%	25.8%	13.5%	17.0%
1920	36.4%	14.1%	24.2%	10.8%	14.5%
1950	56.0%	7.8%	19.9%	6.7%	9.6%

The work-related activities of the population reflect the shift from agrarian subsistence activities to other forms of work. By 1920, 50% of the population was engaged in agriculture and fishing. By 1966 the workforce of the nation could be divided into three sectors:

(a) the primary sector of agriculture and fishing

¹Hagstofa Islands, Manntal a Islandi, Reykjavik, 1958, "Table 1-1950," p. 22.

employing 24.3% of the workforce, (b) the secondary sector of manufacturing and building industries, employing 33.9%, and (c) a tertiary sector including those employed in commerce, transportation and services, which engage 42.8% of the workforce.¹ In 1901 approximately 80% of the population lived on farms; today 85% of the population lives in urban areas. Rural abandonment has been drastic during the period of 1900-1970. G. M. Gudbergsson estimates that in 1915 there were 6,400 farms of which 2% were abandoned; by 1961 26% of the 7,300 farms were abandoned.²

The process of migration from farm to town involved more than the individual decision to leave one place and establish domicile in another. The decision to move required a consideration of the desire to engage in work which is not only different in nature from agrarian work but in many ways antithetical to the rural lifestyle. In the material which follows I describe the economic basis of township formation in Iceland, and argue that the shift from farming to fishing was instrumental in the process of urban

¹The distribution of employment among economic sectors for the period 1910-1960 is based upon insured work weeks statistics; see pp. 65, 68-70, Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbok, Reykjavik, 1967.

²G. M. Gudbergsson, The Geographical Characteristics of Iceland's Farm Abandonment, 1915-1961, unpubl. M.A. Thesis, Department of Geography, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., 1965.

development. I will begin with a listing of the years in which townships were chartered.

TABLE 9
DATES OF TOWNSHIP CHARTERS IN ICELAND¹

<u>Pre 1900</u>		<u>1900-1930</u>		<u>1940-1960</u>	
Reykjavik	1786	Hafnarfjordur	1908	Akranes	1942
Isafjordur	1866	Vestmann Isl.	1919	Saudarkrokur	1947
Akureyri	1862	Siglufjordur	1919	Olafsfjordur	1945
		Neskaustadur	1929	Keflavik	1949
				Husavik	1950
				Kopavogur	1955

Urban Development 1900-1970

Thus the process of township formation took place in the present century and six of the new towns were established after 1942. I shall describe the general features common to all of these towns, namely their location, access routes, hinterland population, physical lay-out and primary industry.

All of the towns are located by the shore and in each case the town is a harbour site with deep and sheltered waters which permit the docking of modern fishing boats, trawlers and cargo ships. The location of harbour sites for modern ships is a primary factor. The southeastern coast of Iceland, between Hofn in the east to Keflavik

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbok, Table 19, p. 22.

in the southwest, is empty of harbour sites. The waters shoal quite far from land and the coast is sandy and smooth with no sheltered sites. Although this part of the land area of Iceland is opposite rich fishing banks, the only fishing port is Stokkseyri, which is such a small harbour that no more than four boats fish from this site. Access to the new towns is possible by land routes, but the roads are still not passable all year round. Commenting upon this, K. Stone points out that land routes to settled areas in the valleys are one-lane unsurfaced roads, and that principal towns are linked to the capital by regularly scheduled airline services.¹ In fact, easiest access to most of the new towns is not from the landward side, but either by the air or by ship.

The location of a township most commonly depends upon the location of a hinterland population. In fact, most towns depend economically upon income derived from their status as transportation, trade and service centres not only to their own urban population but also to a larger rural and village population located in the surrounding region.² Icelandic towns have, as a rule, a very small hinterland population upon which to depend

¹K. H. Stone, "Isolations and Retreat of Settlement in Iceland," Scottish Geographic Magazine, vol. 187, No. 1, April, 1971, p. 10.

²E. A. Gutkind, "Urban Development in the Alpine and Scandinavian Lands," in International History of City Development, Vol. II, New York: Collier, MacMillan, 1965, pp. 277-454.

for the exchange of services and goods. The following statistics give the population of each of the towns, the population of the county in which the town is located, and the density of population that the town serves. I give a population density based upon agricultural lands in each county and not a population density figure based upon total land area, since 75% of land areas in Iceland are uninhabitable.

TABLE 10
POPULATION DENSITY FOR SELECTED
COUNTIES OF ICELAND¹

<u>Town</u>	<u>Pop.</u>	<u>Cnty. Pop.</u>	<u>Population Density</u>
Akureyri	9,398	4,439	14.5 persons per sq. km.
Husavik	1,752	2,764	3.0 "
Isafjordur	2,715	1,894	12.7 "
Neskaubstadur	1,444	4,229	6.8 "
Saudarkrokur	1,326	4,439	5.6 "
Seydisfjordur	786	2,475	1.1 "

The list is not exhaustive but it makes the point that in the regions where the new towns have appeared there is little if any hinterland population; and the density, in several cases, is so small that it is difficult to see the reason for the number of services, administrative offices, and shops in the town. The new towns are not located at cross roads nor at the foot of mountain passes,

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbok, Reykjavik, 1967 II, Tables No. 9, 10, 19, 21, p. 40.

nor do they serve as centres of communication and services to a landed population. They are located on promontories reaching into the Atlantic Ocean or deep inside fjords and bays, which provide especially good harbour sites for modern shipping. In fact, most of the towns are located in small, isolated places and separated from each other by stretches of empty and thinly populated regions. It is when one looks at the townscapes and considers the primary industry of the towns that the reason for their existence becomes evident. The towns are single-industry sites, dependent upon fishing, and their location is dictated by their proximity to important fishing areas in the sea. The single most obvious example of the relationship between the development of fishing in Iceland and township formation is the case of the Vestmann Island community. In 1900 the population of the Vestmann Island, Heimaey, was 334; by 1920 it was 2,426, and by 1960 there were 4,600 inhabitants. Today this town is the most important fishing site in the southern region of Iceland. The townscapes are essentially alike; the town core, the promenades and the important shops and industrial sites are located around the harbours, and in most cases, only a few blocks of houses separate the towns on its landward side from the empty stretches of the sparsely inhabited interior region.

That it is fishing and related industries which have brought about the formation of the towns may be seen in the facts concerning the continuing economic vitality of the new town and its population growth. If the population of a town increases each year at a rate higher than the national birthrate for urban areas, one may assume that growth has resulted from the presence of migrants who have come to work and settle. If, on the other hand, the town shows a normal population increase which differs little from the national birthrate, one may assume that no new immigration has taken place. In the case of the towns of Akureyri, Siglufjordur and the Vestmann Islands, population growth rates for the period 1900-1940 exhibit 300%, 116%, and 160% increases over the original populations. These same tendencies may be seen in the population statistics for the fishing towns of Hafnarfjordur and Keflavik which are located in the Faxabay (Faxafloi, Icel.) area of southwestern Iceland. In these towns, fisher-entrepreneurs engage in year-round fishing and catch from three to ten different commercially valuable species of fish. In contrast to the vitality of the industry and the increase in populations of these towns, the town of Isafjordur, on the western peninsula of Iceland, shows a history of stagnation which must be related to the development and pattern of the fishing industry. Between 1900 and 1940 the population of Isafjordur grew from 1,220 inhabitants to 2,833

inhabitants; between 1940 and 1963 there was little or no population increase, and at present there are 2,715 inhabitants. Fishing statistics for Isafjordur show that between 1900 and 1955 the town's fishermen caught codfish exclusively and did not invest in equipment nor engage in methods which would have made it possible for them to catch other commercially important fish species. Codfishing is a seasonal activity, and the amount of codfish available in Icelandic waters has remained at a constant level. The catch levels on codfish in 1970 approximate the total annual catch of 1940 although a greater number of larger and better equipped trawlers are used today.¹ In short, there is a relationship between the growth and expansion of economic income and population in Icelandic towns and the level of technological and economic development in the fishing industry. The towns which show population increase and economic expansion are those in which fishing has become a year-round activity, and where the fishing industry is integrated from the boat to the sale of processed fish products.

Agrarian Change

Only two towns in Iceland may be described as having originated on the basis of traditional township formation

¹Government of Iceland, Fisheries Jurisdiction in Iceland, Reykjavik, 1971, Figure 3, p. 7.

and development. They are Hveragerdi and Selfoss, both located in the county of Arnes in which the commune of Skeid is found. Selfoss is a town of about 2,000 inhabitants and is located at the crossing point of the Ölfus river. Until 1943 the population was so small it was not counted separately from the county, but the town had always been a resting place for the traveler riding horses from the rural area of Arnes County to the town of Reykjavik. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a farm located near the river crossing point extended hospitality and rest to men and horses on their travels to and from the coast. By 1950 the settlement had grown to include 957 inhabitants and had, with the introduction of automobiles and cooperative societies, and the expansion of agriculture, become an important shipping and administrative centre for the rural area. Today busses pass through Selfoss several times a day. The bus companies have here their regional repair shops and stores, as do the cooperative societies; in Selfoss are also located the rural bank, the offices of the county officials, and the post office. Selfoss has become a supply and manufacturing outlet serving the neighbouring farms, and its growth must be seen in the perspective of the development of farming in Iceland as this took place between 1900 and the present.

Arnes county (Arnessysla) is a major farm area in southern Iceland. The road distance from the border

of the county to the capital is approximately 28 kilometres. Although until 1968 this was a dirt road, it was capable of carrying all-weather traffic. In the last two years it has been paved and widened and now carries a considerable traffic of buses, heavy lorries, and passenger automobiles on a year-round basis.

The county has more grazing land below the 200-metre line than any other county in Iceland and is so favoured by nature as to make it the most fertile and richest grazing lands in the country. Its land distribution in terms of height is as follows: 1,647 square kilometres of land below the 200-metre line, 741 square kilometres below the 400-metre line, and 472 square kilometres above the 400-metre line. The total land area of the county is 2,860 square kilometres, and in terms of size the county is approximately 75 kilometres wide at its seashore line and approximately 150 kilometres in length from the shore to the central highlands. Within Arnessysla live 7,136 inhabitants; half of them are distributed among five towns, three of which are fishing communities located along the southern shore. Both Hveragerdi and Selfoss are recent phenomena; until 1940 no statistical records were kept on the villages, except as part of the rural communes in which they were located. In 1940, Hveragerdi and Selfoss appear in the national statistics on towns and villages, with 121 and 214 inhabitants respectively.

Selfoss has increased ten times in population in the last thirty years, and is today the urban centre of the rural region of Rangarvallasysla and Arnessysla.

As concerns the county of Arnes, the contrasting figures between 1945 and the present (1970) indicate the rapid and large scale technological and economic changes in the farming economy in the southern region.

In terms of technology, farming in Iceland in 1940 was still pre-industrial. In the southern region the county's 593 farms had a total of 22 tractors, 925 horse-drawn carts, and 25 automobiles of all categories. Horses pulled the sicklebar grass cutters, the manure spreaders, the hayrakes, and the two-wheeled carts.¹ By contrast, in 1964 the 5,569 farms in Iceland owned 7,642 tractors, giving an average of 1.2 tractors per farm. This figure does not include caterpillar-track type tractors, trucks or jeeps.

Increased agricultural production since World War II has focused on the development of the dairy industry. The increases are in the development of dairy products, in their packaging and in their distribution, not only for domestic consumption but also for an emergent export market. The slaughterhouses in the countryside built and run by cooperative societies have caused a

¹Bunadarsambands Sudurland, Minningarit, 1941-1953, Bd. Prentsmidjan Holar, 1948, pp. 70-71.

uniform production of frozen carcass meats for export. The wool industry shows a similar increase not only in overall figures, but also in the type of products which are currently produced. But the agricultural products are still primarily intended for domestic consumption. In 1968, Iceland's main export was fish, which accounted for 92% of the country's foreign trade earning while only 7% was earned in the export of agricultural products. The rise in dairy production since the 1920's has been spectacular and must be viewed from the perspective of the farms' relationship to the emergent urban area during the fifty-year period of 1920-1970. The first three large-scale modern dairies capable of producing a full line of products were built in Borgarfjadar county just north of Reykjavik in 1925, in Akureyri, the northern regional capital of Iceland in 1928, and in the county of Arnes east of Reykjavik in 1929.

TABLE 11

DAIRY PRODUCTION IN ICELAND 1945, 1964

<u>Number of Cows</u>	<u>Dairy</u>	<u>Home Consumption</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Year</u>
27,481	24,344 ton	39,655 ton	63,999	1945
40,560	100,497 ton	22,003 ton	122,500	1964 ¹

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, "Mjolkurframleidslan 1935-1964, in Metric Tons," Reykjavik, 1967, II.40, Tf. 86, p. 102.

The statistics provide evidence of changes in the farm production system. The increased production of milk from 1945-1965 by a little less than twice the number of cattle was made possible through changes in housing, feeding, veterinary practices and selective breeding.

Dairy production, in contrast to livestock management, puts into the hand of each farmer a weekly or monthly pay cheque. Thus the change from a traditional economy based on the management of sheep herds to a modern economy based on the dairy industry has meant a change in the flow of cash to the individual farmer.

In the case of sheep herd management, there are two periods in the production cycle when the farmer receives a cash income--from the sale of raw wool in early summer, and from the sale of animals for slaughter in late autumn. The weekly or monthly cheque from the dairy means not only a considerable amount of cash distributed in rural areas, but also a dependable income for the farmer. This is important in that it enables the farmer to calculate on the basis of this income the extent of debt purchases possible for the year.

This development of the southern farm in Iceland was long in the making. The following sketch of the history of this development will consider two aspects of the period of 1880-1970: the development of bureaucratic organisations which support farm management and

production, and the national investment of funds which took place during the same period. The organisation of the farmers into countrywide bureaucratic structures took place along two lines. The first was the development of government agencies which began increasingly to invest and to oversee the expansion of farming and the initiation of new farming practices. The improvement of the land areas in the south of Iceland was, of necessity, given priority. Hummocky fields had to be made smooth, and the wet lands dried out by ditching. This increasing intervention of the government in the development of farming may be seen in the following table of expenditures made for the improvement of agriculture.

TABLE 12
THE INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FOR THE
IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE (IN 1,000 KRONUR)¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1880	10.0	1920	346
1900	42.3	1940	1,703

Soil improvement programs began in 1893 when, with the support of the national government, farmers in each region were urged to join local soil improvement associations. In the meetings of the local associations farmers were

¹C. W. Chamberlin, "Economic Development of Iceland Through World War II" (Ph.D. Dissertation), University of Columbia, 1948, p. 35.

taught methods for improving and ditching the land parcels they held. Part of this national effort was an incentive, or cash bonus, offered each year to the farmer according to the amount of ditches dug or the square metre area of improved field. The local society received 5% of the bonus and the farmer kept 95% to use as he wished. Other such incentive improvement schemes were legislated between 1900 and 1920, and by 1920 the Icelandic Senate unified the many schemes and programs into a single act known today as the Improvement of Estates Act. By 1930 the national organisation of farmers included all householders and estate managers in the nation; by 1935 there were 220 local farm societies, one for each commune in the country.¹ At present the improvement programs are concerned with the major components of the farm, such as livestock breeding, building construction, land improvement, machinery rentals and purchases, and price support in the purchase of cattle feed, fuel and other materials.

An indication of the shift from the old production system relying upon naturalia and manual labour as the basic ingredients in the work, to that of the present system may be seen in the statistics on the increasing use of chemical fertiliser and in the expansion of homefield acreage.

¹S. Sigurdsson, Landbrug og Landboforhold paa Island, Copenhagen 1940, E. Munksgaard Forlag and his discussion of farming conditions and changes in the 19th century in S. Sigurdsson, Bunadahagir, Bunadafelags Islands Aldarminning, Reykjavik, Rikisprentsmidjan, 1937, Vol. 2, p. 53.

TABLE 13
 INCREASE IN HOMEFIELD ACREAGE AND
 TONNAGE OF FERTILISER

<u>Year</u>	<u>Homefields (Tun)¹</u>	<u>Fertiliser Consumption²</u> (Total annual figure fertilisers K, N, P)
1900	16,933	None
1920	22,031	7 ton
1940	35,937	612 ton
1960	75,000	13,167 ton
1964	89,500	19,189 ton

From the study of the kinds of decisions made between 1900 and 1930 by the Icelandic government, it is clear that the farm policy during this period focused on making the country self-sufficient in domestic food production. The formation of the local soil improvement associations beginning in 1893 has already been mentioned. In 1882 the farmers of Thingeyjar county formed the first cooperative purchasing society. Thirty years earlier the whole nation had been divided into trade areas, each controlled by a merchant who held monopoly rights to his trade area. This system developed into a system of abuses in which farmers received very low prices for their products, and

¹Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, "Túnstaerd og Tödufall á ha," Reykjavik, 1967, Tf. 76, (1900-1964), p. 92.

²Hagstofa Islands, Tölfraedihandbók, "Notkun Tilbuins Aburdar," 1921-1965, Reykjavik, 1967, Tf. 77, p. 93.

had to pay high prices for imported goods.¹ The history of the formation of farmer-owned and managed cooperative purchasing stores for the period from 1882 to 1910 is that of the struggle against invested interests. However, by 1906 the first large cooperative society store which not only imported goods but also exported farm products was opened in Akureyri, the largest town in the northern area of Iceland. By 1936 the 39 cooperative societies had 8,600 members and by 1940 the process of development and recruitment of farmers into the cooperatives was completed. In that year the membership numbered 15,600 or nearly all estate managers in the country.²

Besides providing an alternative solution to the old merchant system, the cooperatives have had very wide influence. They have insisted upon the production of high grade agricultural products, and to this end sponsored the establishment of breeding societies that would improve breeding stock. They have also developed new industries to utilise the native production of milk products, meats, and wool. Dairies, canning plants,

¹For a careful description of the effects of barter trade and monopoly practices in a parallel situation, see: J. Szwed, Private Cultures and Public Imagery, Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies, No. 2; Newfoundland: Inst. Soc. Econ. Res., Memorial Univ., 1966, citing Sir W. Greenfell's report, Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1930, G.B., p. 80.

²E. Einarsson, "Co-operative Societies," Iceland Today, Reykjavik, Prentsmidjan Edda, 1961, p. 172.

slaughterhouses, freezer houses, and wool spinning plants have all been built by the cooperatives; and today the large national co-op organisation is the major structure within which the farm communities and the individual farms work.¹

The government's interest in supporting the farmers was not confined to soil improvement societies and the development of cooperatives. When, in 1935, it became obvious that the depression had resulted in a lack of cash flow available to Icelandic farms, and when this lack of cash flow caused the forfeiture of debt payments, the government enacted a measure which set up a crisis fund designed to assist farmers in meeting payments to creditors. In June of 1935, the crisis fund of 11.5 million Icelandic Kronur was established; by December of that year 80% of the fund had been lent to 2,900 householders in the rural areas.²

Another example of government policy with regard to self-sufficient domestic food production may be seen in an act in 1936, by which the Department of Agriculture granted subsidies to farmers in the southern region who produced potato crops. Along with the subsidy policy went a policy of import controls on this food crop. This measure led to a considerable increase in the production

¹S. Sigurdsson, Op. cit., p. 175.

²Chamberlin, Op. cit., p. 38.

of potatoes in the southern region. Measures of this kind have occurred with regard to all types of agricultural produce; i.e., a policy of encouragement through subsidisation, along with a policy of restrictions and controls on the importation of the product.

Until the closing decades of the nineteenth century farms were under utilised enterprises, backward and primitive little had been done to level or to expand the hay fields in the southern region and housing was inadequate not only for humans, but for beasts and crops as well. During the winter season horses and sheep roamed the fields, scratching through the snow cover for the little grass available at the time. Livestock would be in such weakened condition that it was not until the spring grass feeding in the month of June that these animals would be strong enough to be of any use to the farmer. The loss of crops through wastage incurred by outdoor storage was considerable. Roads were non-existent and there were no support facilities for dairy production or herd management. The decision to curtail the monopoly trade initiated the move towards organisation of the farm population into purchasing societies. The government subsidy, the utilisation of local labour, and government encouragement of increased production led to the development of a nationwide Farmers Union, which at present regulates the

subsidies, the incentives, and the production pattern of the rural enterprises.

It has been seen that the development of commercial fishing in Iceland at the close of the nineteenth century led to the formation of towns along the coast. This urban development based upon industries other than agriculture created a ready local market for the surplus production of which the Icelandic farm was potentially capable. Thus, in very broad terms, a triple development took place, i.e. commercial fishing, urbanisation, and the organisation of farmers into regionally organised production and purchase organisations.

The Farm of Blessastadir, 1910-1970

The changes in farming in Iceland in the south may not only be documented with gross figures of national statistics or with the history of organisations and their membership size. One may also demonstrate in the history of the single farm the changes which took place in the lives of individual farmers.

The following case of a farmer and his sons in the district of Skeid covers the years from 1910 to 1970. What emerges from this single case are the stages which have been suggested as having taken place in southern rural Iceland. The early period, that of the father, is the beginning of the twentieth century. His farm

was an eighteenth century enterprise of sod huts, few animals, little cultivated land and traditional work methods. The father's life and work were devoted to the cooperative enterprises of his own district and to a participation in the new marketing ventures which took place after 1889 in Skeid. The sheep pest and the depression of the closing years of the 1920's and 1930's nearly destroyed his life's work, but he was rescued by the 1935 Estates Act, as were many of his colleagues. By 1940 the farm entered its second phase of development. The sons began farming and when the old man retired, they took over completely. The expansion of the domestic market, the use of government subsidies and the pattern of cooperative work among the householders in the district, permitted each of them to develop his part of the parental farm into estates that were larger than the original farm had been at the time of the Father's retirement in 1940.

In 1910 the father, at the age of 32, purchased the farm of Blessastadir for 3,500 Kronur or 14 Pounds Sterling, 1970 exchange value.¹ The true value of this amount may be inferred from the following: 1,000 Kronur were borrowed from a brother's savings, 1,500 Kronur were earned in two years of fishing prior to the purchase, and the last 1,000 Kronur were obtained by a mortgage loan taken at the Agricultural Bank in Reykjavik and repaid over a period

¹Blessastadir in Skeid, Estate No. 192. NOTE: 1970 exchange -- 240.00 Icel. Kr. = 1 Pound Sterling, U.K.

of ten years. As surety for the mortgage, neighbouring farmers of the district signed the mortgage papers, each pledging a part of the surety. At the time of the purchase in 1910, the farm consisted of 390 hectares of unimproved grassland and two hectares of homefield, the Tun. The only building was made of turf, with wooden flooring, wainscoting and ceiling in the main living and sleeping room, the Bathstofa. Attached to this main room was a kitchen, Eldhusid, a storage room, Bur, a stable for two cows, and a tool shed. There were two cows and thirty sheep. Tools were primitive consisting of scythes, rakes, spades, buckets and pots. Besides the farmer and his wife, the farm's population included four working people between the ages of 24 and 50 and two teenage girls in foster care. For each decade from 1910, the year of purchase until 1950, the year of retirement, the farm supported no less than eight people and sometimes up to twenty people in the haying season. Each decade's inventory of buildings and equipment shows the growth of investment and the stages of technology development as these occurred in rural Iceland. By 1920, a modern wood frame house covered with corrugated iron was built to house the family members and the old turf house was then used for stable, tool shed, and barn. By 1930, the farm was equipped with horsedrawn equipment, a sicklebar cutter, a wagon, a plough, and a hay rake. In 1940 a concrete house was built for residence, and new barns and

sheep sheds were added. The evolution of this farm between 1910 and 1950 is a microcosmic example of the change in farming practices in the southern region.

TABLE 14
BLESSASTADIR, A COMPARISON BETWEEN 1910-1950

	<u>1910</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1950</u>
House	turf	woodframe	concrete
Sheds	none	turf huts	concrete
Barn	none	turf hut	wood frame
Homefield	3 ha.	6 ha.	9 ha.
Grassland	390 ha.	386 ha.	383 ha.
Cattle	2	10	18
Sheep	30	160	90 ¹
Equipment	primitive	horsedrawn	horsedrawn

In 1950, the two sons were married and began to establish their households on the paternal farm. The process of division of a farm, called skipti, was undertaken; thus there were legally three owners of what was formerly a single property. The brothers decided to farm in partnership and to expand as rapidly as possible into dairy production. In the words of the brothers, they and their families could not live off such small income. Since dairy production depends upon the assurance of a large and stable supply of hay, the unimproved meadows had to be deep-ploughed to remove the hummocks and ditched to dry out the soil. However, in 1950 the

¹The small number of sheep in 1950 was the result of the sheep pest of the 1940's. The stock of animals was slowly being replaced by 1950.

district's only tractor, the only means by which the fields could be improved, was 16 years old. Since all the farms in the district had need for the tractor, there was a long waiting list, and no one was willing to go outside of cooperative loyalties, work on his own or buy a tractor. As one farmer, reminiscing about this event said, "... we are Framsoknarmen,¹ we are strong on the idea of cooperatives in societies as well as in helping out each other. Men in Skeid have been this way since the beginning. The men of Blessastadir, Hlemmiskeid, Reykir, Vorsaber, and Fjall were all brought up by their fathers to believe in the cooperative principle ...". He went on to illustrate the depth of feeling he had about the cooperatives by giving the following illustration: "... even today farmers in our district would rather buy their cabbages from the cooperative in Selfoss than buy them more cheaply from a wholesale merchant. This is a faith we have. Men still want their societies to be strong and well run ...". He concluded the remarks by speaking of the solidarity of the district and said, "... we are all related and we all bring up our children to believe in these principles ...".

The two sons knew this, as did the three young men who were also establishing households on neighbouring paternal farms. The older farmers shook their heads when the subject of

¹Translation: "Progressive Party"; also agrarian and related to the Cooperative Union.

enlarging the fields was broached, and most of them thought that no one could run a farm with so much improved grassland. The outcome was that the brothers talked to the young householders of the farms of Skeidaholt and Kalfholl, and together the five of them brought a small Farmall tractor. Feelings in the district ran so high about their act that, as one of the brothers said, "We were called quislings ..."¹

The contrast between farm components of 1950 and those of 1970 shows the results of the deliberate innovation on the part of the brothers. It shows an investment in industrialised production methods and a dependence upon the urban market in the southern region. This commitment rested upon the growth of Reykjavik and the constantly expanding need for agricultural products.

TABLE 15
THE FARM OF BLESSASTADIR, 1950 AND 1970

<u>Farm Components</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1970</u>
House	1 concrete	2 concrete
Sheds	2 wood frame	6 concrete, 2 silos
Barns	1 wood frame	2 concrete, large
Homefield	9 ha	120 ha.
Grassland	381 ha.	260 ha.
Cattle	18	78
Sheep	90	560
Equipment	horsedrawn	4 tractors and equipment, 1,000-gal. milk cooler, maintains electricity, water, plumbing, T.V., etc.

¹NOTE: Vidkun Quisling, a leader of the Norwegian

It should be mentioned that once the five young householders had taken the step to break the solidarity of the district's farmers in their traditional work patterns, others began to purchase their own tractors and equipment.

The changes which occurred in Iceland between 1900 and 1970 have their roots in the events of the mid-nineteenth century. With the changed relationship of the farms to the urban market as this relationship developed over the fifty year period of 1880-1930 a concomitant change in the organisation of the farm communities took place. Prior to 1930, the rural district, the Hrepp, was the only organisation within which the individual farmer worked. Throughout the history of the country until the twentieth century, this organisation served as the only local community structure within which the populace was organised and governed. The lessening of Danish commercial trade controls beginning in 1850, led within 30 years to the formation of two new organisations, both of which became nationwide farm organisations with strong political and economic influence upon the nation's life. The encouragement of the soil improvement societies by the national government through subsidisation and legislation occurred first. The local district organisation of farmers became the body from which members were recruited

Nationalist Social Workers Party in 1939-42 appointed by A. Hitler the leader of occupied Norway. A name used by Scandinavians to denote a traitor.

for the new improvement societies. Thus, the same group of men operating within a new structure could learn new ways of farming, instead of being locked into the traditional system of householder solidarity. It should be pointed out that to join a soil improvement society implied nothing more than the desire to become a better farmer. However the concomitant development of the cooperatives in the local communes of Iceland may be thought of as more than the expression of a desire to improve upon the economic conditions of farming, since the cooperatives became a vehicle for the organisation of political ideology. To the farmers of nineteenth century Iceland, the memories of the Danish monopoly trade system and the determining of prices and imports of goods by the local foreign merchant represented the worst aspects of a foreign and colonial government. In the struggle to develop the first cooperative in 1882, and in the continuing work to establish cooperatives in each rural area, farmers gained a voice in the government of the nation. The cooperatives are viewed by their members as more than economic ventures which benefit farmers. The informants who spoke about their dedication to the cooperative idea expressed an ideological outlook which contains ideas from English Rochedale socialism, Danish Grundtvigianism and the Icelandic Folk High School movement. Thus, beginning with the early decades of the twentieth century, farmers in Iceland, such as

Gudmundur of Blessastadir, not only practised the new economics and technology which changed traditional farming methods in Iceland, but also expressed a new ideology, patriotism and a desire for self-education.

Summary, Process and Phase

It is when three elementary factors in agriculture are taken into account that it is possible to provide a summary overview of the phases of development which have taken place over the past seventy years.¹ The three factors are work, soil and capital and it is the differential interplay of the factors which set the limits to what I shall call the traditional, the developmental and the developed phases which together make up the process of change. For example, during the closing decades of the nineteenth century the rural work force was very large, the soil areas under-utilised and farm economics isolated vis a vis a market. The barter economy and lack of credit facilities prevented the establishment of new farms. This situation may be contrasted with the 1950's when the rural work force is only one third its 1890 figure, the area of soil lands used by farms has increased by ten times, farm-market organisations exist, and there is wide use of credit and banking institutions in the rural area. The elementary

¹H. H. Herleman, "Landwirtschaft," in Handwörterbuch der Raumforschung und Raumordnung, Hannover: Gebrd. Janecke Verlg., 1970, pp. 1842-52.

factors of work, soil, and capital remain but, as stated, their differential interplay sets limits to what I shall describe as phases in the process of agrarian development in the southern region of Iceland.

Traditional Phase

National population statistics for the period 1860-1900 indicate that from 80.2% to 95.0% of the population lived in rural domiciles; thus it was a society in which the single institutional relationship of agrarian subsistence based upon estate and commune was the condition of life. The conditions of rural society described by S. Magnusson in 1785 still held true a century later and these conditions lasted until the end of the nineteenth century.¹ Rural communities in the southern region of Iceland were communities which may be characterised by low standards of production, under-utilised land areas, and a primitive technology. The estates were individually managed enterprises and their economy is best described as self-sufficient, isolated vis a vis a market, and engaged in reciprocity and barter defined relations not only among rural workers but also towards the local merchant.

¹J. Helgason (ed.), Skuli Magnusson, Forsog til en kort Beskrivelse af Island, Bibliotheca Arnarnaganeana, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1944, Vol. V.

It is not until 1893 that any organisational change heralds what may be seen in retrospect as the emergence of the developmental phase or the process which underlies the shift from traditional economics to modern conditions. In 1893 the first land reclamation society was organised, composed of the estate managers of a local county. The purpose of the society was to encourage each farmer to ditch and dry the meadow land of his farm, and to begin the task of enlarging the homefield; in fact, the initial goal was to double the acreage of homefield meadow land.

Developmental Phase

Between 1900 and 1920 the soil reclamation societies were established in the rural areas of Iceland, and the results of the societies' work can be measured in the length of ditches dug, land areas drained, and the acreage of new homefields added to each farm in the nation. This work has continued into the present time and is now part of the government subsidy scheme available to estate managers; a fee is paid for so many yards of fencing, ditching, fertilised meadow lands, etc. By 1965 one could see the completion of this work begun two generations earlier. Thus if the limits to the developmental phase are marked by the completion of the renewal and modernisation of the farm units in the south, the task has been completed. Every statistic one may point to is essentially one of increase, whether it be technological substitution for

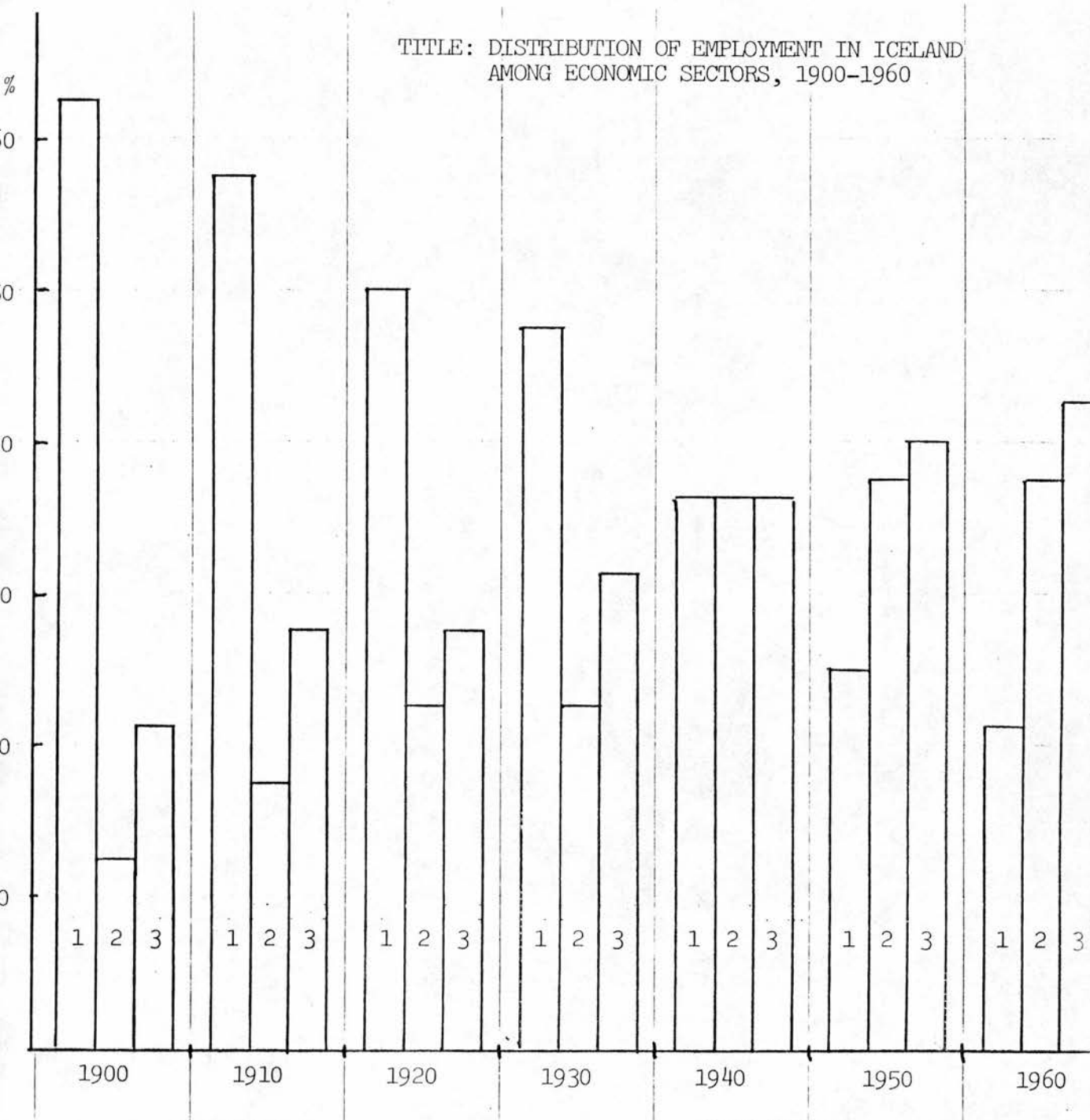
earlier human and animal labour, increased cropping, twin lambing, or higher milk production. This phase is thus characterised by the process of intensification in traditional spheres of activity, a process which utilises the traditional components of the agrarian system, such as animals, land, buildings, and techniques. The process of intensification may also be noted in another traditional sphere of work, i.e. fishing. What had been a pre-industrial pattern of seasonal, close-to-shore fishing in open row boats became, during the same period an industrial enterprise, although the species of fish utilised remained unchanged until the post-1940's. By 1950 the Icelandic fishing industry turned to ocean perch, the catch of which requires very modern electronic search equipment and a new technique of trawling at depths of more than 400 metres. Icelandic fishing began its developmental period in the 1880's and completed this phase by the 1940's; at present the trawler fleet is fully organised, as are the other components of the fishing industry. Commenting upon the development of modern nation states which were formerly colonial possessions, E. Boserup writes "the pressure of population growth in underdeveloped countries led to a sharp contrast between the sector producing for export and the sector which continues to produce for subsistence. This contrast was sustained by the expansion of the production of tropical crops for export, and the rising export sector consuming food

produced domestically and relies upon non-agricultural goods imported from other areas..."¹ Thus, intensification and the emergence of an economic differentiation within the population occurs during a developmental phase, and what supplies the economic base for the development in underdeveloped states is the reliance upon the "exotic crop." This is true for Iceland, except that one may substitute fish for "exotic crop." In Iceland's case the export earnings from fishing during the years 1900-1950 amounted to more than 95% of total annual foreign earnings. That intensification of traditional spheres of work and the socio-economic process set in motion resulted in economic differentiation within the population may be seen in the statistics on the primary sector. Fishing and agriculture remained throughout the period of 1900-1950 the most important sources of work and income in Iceland. The bar chart on the following page shows that the decade beginning in 1950 the traditional spheres of work had become less important; by the decade beginning in 1960 the secondary and tertiary sectors had gained in importance, and thus I set the limit for the developmental phase in the decade 1950-1960.²

¹E. Boserup, The Conditions of Agricultural Growth, Chicago: Aldine Publication Co., 1965, pp. 116-118.

²A very detailed description of the technological change in Iceland prior to 1942 may be read in T. Krabbe, Island og det's tekniske udvikling, København: Nordisk Forlag, 1946.

TITLE: DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ICELAND
AMONG ECONOMIC SECTORS, 1900-1960



Explanation, Sector 1. Primary, Agriculture and Fishing.

Sector 2. Secondary, Manufacturing and Building Industries.

Sector 3, Tertiary, Commerce, Transportation, Services, Government.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Manufacturing Industry in Iceland, Reykjavik 1966.

The developed phase in Icelandic society, and especially in agriculture is described in the chapters which follow. I suggest that social change has been a result of the demographic shifts, and the technological, economic and organisational processes which were instituted in Iceland beginning in the first decade of this century. The shift from traditional society to developed nation has a particularly strong impact upon the rural community. To show the effect of change in rural society, I will first describe the traditional districts, which Skeidahrepp used to be, and contrast and compare this traditional organisation of farms in a commune to the modern district which Skeidahrepp has become by 1970.

CHAPTER 4: The Rural District, Jural and Social Traditions

Settlements

The District, Earliest Tradition

The Nineteenth Century District

The County

The District

District and Farm Censuses in the Nineteenth Century

The People in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

Estate and District in the Nineteenth Century

Chronology and Cycle in the District

Estate Management During the Traditional Period

The following notes on the settlement of Iceland are given to provide a perspective on the length of time the human community has existed in that country. It is also noteworthy to recall that the kind of farm settlement which occurs at present in the district of Skeid is unchanged in pattern from that of the earliest days of the first republic in 930 A.D. Since the tenth century, the pattern of land use, i.e. the location of farms as isolated and dispersed units situated within the boundaries of their own lands has been the normal and traditional pattern. In contrast to Scandinavian rural communities in southern Norway, Sweden and Denmark, a village tradition has not existed in Iceland.

The history of the settlement of Iceland, entitled Landnammabok, includes the names of the best known settlers and the boundaries of the land areas which they took as their own.

Settlements

... Ari Hinn Frodi Thorgilsson (1067-1148) is the first historian who writes in a Scandinavian tongue. He wrote the Islandingabok between 1122-1133. This was a short survey of Iceland until 1120... It is Ari's contribution which gives Saga writers their chronologies both in the case of the Icelandic family sagas and the royal Norwegian sagas... He is possibly the source of the Landnammabok which was edited and expanded in the 13th century by other authors
...¹

¹H. Beyer, Norsk Litteraturhistorie, Oslo: Ascheougs Forlag, 1964, p. 45.

The historical and traditional reasons given for immigration to Iceland is that King Haral Finehair of Norway oppressed the people of his kingdom. Whatever the stated reasons for leaving Norway, the settlement of Iceland is the result of a one hundred year population migration which came to a climax in the establishment of the free state in 930 A.D. with a population of 40,000. The land of Iceland is rich in the resources upon which herders and fishers depend, such as fresh water, natural meadows and streams and ocean shores laden with trout, salmon and cod. The land was free and it was empty of people; since there were no aboriginal inhabitants in Iceland, no one had prior claim to land when the settlers came. Knowledge of the existence of this free land, the navigational skills possessed by the Norse peoples and the tradition of land settlement which was part of their social heritage made the long voyage a reasonable venture.

As far as is known, no earlier, permanent settlements existed prior to the coming of the Norse-Celtic peoples.¹ Earliest pre-Norse statements about Iceland which may indicate prior visits are found in a few literary sources and are also indicated by some archaeological finds.

... Pytheas of Marseilles in 330 B.C. speaks
of land in six days sailing North of Britain
...

¹G. Hannesson, Körpermasse und Körperproportionen der Islander, Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1925.

... A Roman coin find in Iceland consisting of three coins dating from the period of 270-305 B.C. ...

Diucil's volume, *De Mensura Orbis Terrae*, states that in 825 A.D., monks had lived in Thule for 30 years ...¹

The date of the first Norse settlement in Iceland is given as 870 A.D., when a Norwegian named Ingolfur Arnarsson set up his homestead near the site of present-day Reykjavik. There is very little information on the settlement of the district of Skeid; however, what is known about the district in its earliest days may be gleaned from several sources, sparse as they are. The district of Skeid is inland from the coast; it must be traversed in order to go further inland to, among others, the Thjorsadalur district which is known to have been settled by the tenth century. It is reasonable to suggest that this would be the terminal date for the settlement of the district of Skeid. In all probability, it was settled by the time of the first national assembly in 930 A.D.² In Skeid, three farms were present from this earliest period: Olafsvellir, Reykir and Alfstadir. The Book of Settlement mentions the principal settler, his farm, Olafsvellir, and the boundaries of the district of Skeid.

¹K. Eldjarn, Kuml og Haugfé, Doctor of Philosophy Thesis in Archaeology, Reykjavik: Bokutgafan Nordri, 1956, University of Iceland, p. 11.

²E. Arnarsson, Arnesting, Reykjavik: Arnessingafelagid, 1950, pp. 61-69.

. . . Olafur Tvennumbruni het madr; han for
af Lofots til Islands; hann nam Skeid oll
milli Thorsar ok Hvitur til Sandlaekjar;
hann var hamrammar mjork. Olafur bjo a
Olafsvollum hann liggr i Brunahaugi undir
Vordufell . . .

Translated, the passage reads:

. . . There was a man called Olaf Split-Brow
who went from the Lofoten Islands to Iceland.
He took possession of the whole of Skeid,
between Thjors River, Hvit River and Sandbrook.
He was a great sorcerer. Olaf made his home at
Olafsvellir and lies buried in Bruni's Mound
below Vordufell . . .¹

It is noteworthy that the land area and its boundaries
which made up the settlement claim of "Olaf Split-Brow"
prior to 930 A.D., when described in the Book of
Settlement, would constitute a legal claim and a
recognition of the land area as a distinct unit. The
boundaries claimed in 930 A.D. are those of the Hrepp
of Skeid, and have remained so throughout the years
until the present. The farm of "Olaf Split-Brow,"
named Olafsvellir is the name of the present farm
located in the centre of the district. Throughout
the centuries it has remained the largest farm, with at
least six tenant farm units as part of its land area.
By the time of the 1703 Census, it was a beneficium of
the established church.

The farm of "Olaf Split-Brow" was not the only settlement
in the district during the settlement period. This may

¹H. Palsson and P. Edwards, manuscript translation,
University of Edinburgh, 1970, by permission of the
authors.

be seen from the following brief note found in the Saga of Burnt Njal: "... At Reykjum a Skeidum bjo Runolfr Thorsteinsson Hildiglaumur het son hans...". That is, "... On the farm of Reykir in Skeid lived Runolfur Thorsteinsson. His son was named Hildiglaumur ...".¹ The farm of Reykir and its sub units are at present the largest single enterprise within the present district.

Archaeological research in the district uncovered in the 1950's a farm and a burial site west of what is at present the farm of Alfstadir, indicating that this site would have been occupied during the same early period.²

These brief remarks on the settlement period permit the cautious estimate that not only did the district exist as a bounded land unit by the time of the first Icelandic republic in 930 A.D., but also that what at the present time are its largest farms were enterprises noteworthy enough to be commented upon by medieval authors.

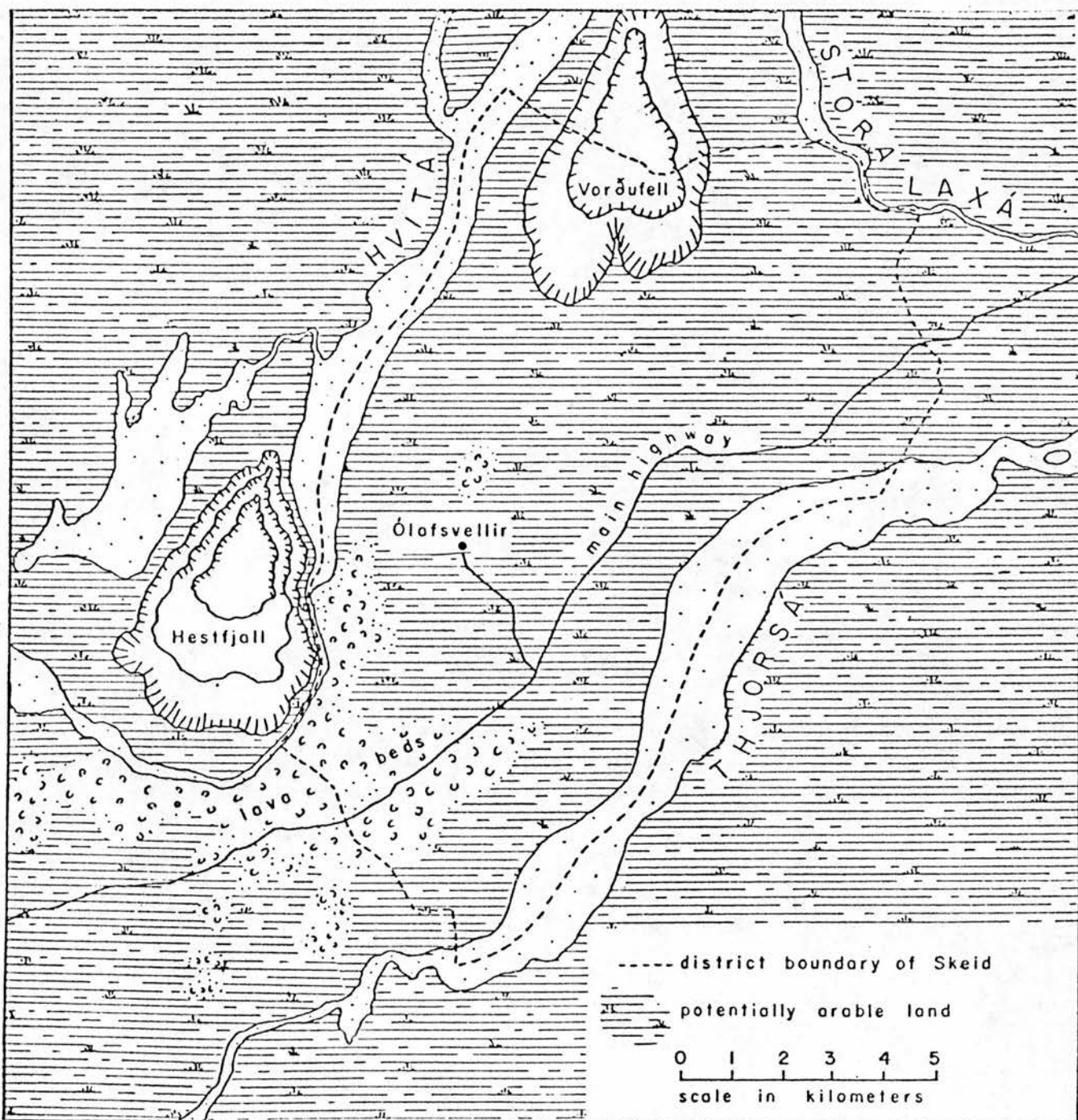
The District, Earliest Tradition

The district was the lowest level unit of administration in the political organisation of Iceland. The next higher unit was and still is the county; and finally counties were grouped into two major regions directly

¹M. Magnusson & H. Palsson, Njals Saga, London: Penguin, 1965.

²K. Eldjarn, Kuml og Haugfe, Reykjavik: Bookutgafan Nordri, 1956.

TABLE 16, 17
DISTRICT BOUNDARY OF SKEID



responsible to the Senate of Iceland. The number of districts varied from eight in one county to twenty-five in another, but 18, the number which at present is found in the county of Arnes, may be taken as representing the national mean.

It is convenient to take the date of 1872 as the point in time at which to consider the organisation of the district since some changes in the district-county relations were instituted at that time. It should be stressed, however, that the district is one of the more ancient institutions in Iceland's history and, until recently, one of her most important. The Icelandic word for district is Hrepp, which occurs in medieval Norwegian and Swedish legal traditions; it is a form of civil organisation which was brought to Iceland by the early settlers. The oldest district names which appear in Landnamabók, (Icel.), i.e. Book of Settlement, mentions the names of some of the district of the county of Arnes.¹

The earliest written law collection of Iceland, titled Grágás (Greygoose), specifies that a legal district (Hrepp, Icel.) should consist of twenty farm householders, each of whom possessed enough land and goods to be taxed at a specific value.²

¹J. Johannesson, Islendinga Saga, Vol. 1 Thjodveldisöld, Reykjavik: Almenna Bokafelagid, 1956, pp. 103-106.

²The law code Grágás was used until the union with Norway in 1262 A.D. V. Finsen, Grágás, etc., København: Komiss. Arnamag. Legat., 1883.

Professor Johannesson in his History of Iceland suggests that the principle of civil organisation inherent in the rural district organisation was brought to Iceland by her early settlers. "It is a curious social organisation," writes Professor MarLarusson in his discussion of the district.¹

Most of the laws relating to the district at the time of the first republic in 1000 A.D. were concerned with the care of the poor. By 1097 A.D., the laws of the district were formulated and made part of the tithing laws instituted by the Christian church. The twin emphasis on the care of the weak and the indigent and the mutual responsibilities shared by the householders of the district is reminiscent of the medieval guild principle so common to Germanic Europe. Professor Johannesson rests his opinion on an author of the 1184 A.D. manuscript of Sturlunga Saga who equates the district meeting with a guild association.²

The following paragraph is taken from the law of 1281 with regard to the district:

Löghreppar skulu vera sem at fornu hafa verit, eigi faeri baendr i hrepp en.xx., skal engi theira minna fé eiga en til.x. hundrada ... Fimm menn thá er bezt thikkja till fallnir, skal nefa til at hafa stjörn... (Kap. 31, "Um Hreppstjornarthing" (9), lines 10-15).

¹M. MarLarusson, "Hreppr," Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middeladler, Vol. 7, G. Rona (ed.), København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1962.

²J. Johannesson, Op. cit., p. 108.

I take the above paragraph to mean that a legally constituted district is one which already exists and must be constituted of at least twenty farmers from assessable farms, and that from their group five men should be elected to lead in the governance of the district's affairs.

In the medieval period the district governed its own internal affairs. District members held three annual meetings, the first in Lent (Langaförstu, Icel.), the second after the Spring Moot, and the third at harvest time, usually the first Sunday of winter. Meetings were called Samkomur (Icel.) and the householders of the district were notified of the meetings by the passing of a wooden cross from farm to farm. At the spring meeting the farmers elected the five-member commune council; these members were titled Soknarmenn (Icel.), and were all land owners in the district. Their primary task was to sue anyone who disobeyed the rules of the district; other duties included adjudication of tithe payments due each householder, collection of food for the poor, care of the chapel and graveyard, and care of the indigent and orphaned. The categories of poor, i.e., those entitled to the residence and food of the farms of the district are in three groupings. A man was legally responsible for the upkeep of his indigent kindred, at least as far as and including his third cousin; these could sue for support. The second category was the poor who were born within the district ;

this includes those who as family heads were not qualified to pay the tax and judged incapable of supporting their own immediate family. The third category included orphans, the old and the sick who, as born members of the district, merited support. All cases of indigence were adjudged by the communal board and each farm was assessed by the board according to its ability to support a given number of poor by providing food and shelter, i.e. residence. The annual tithe which a district collected during the thirteenth century was divided into four parts: one part was kept for support of the poor, and the other three-quarters were given to parish, clergy and bishop.

Every able-bodied man in the district who was not a householder had to establish a legal residence with a farmer. Such men were hired or contracted for one year at the time of year called fardögum (Icel.), i.e., the first four days of the seventh week of summer.

A district was, however, more than a poor-relief unit. It was also a special mutuality of colleagues. By tradition and by law, farmers owed each other assistance in many undertakings, but especially in two cases: first, if a man lost one-fourth of his sheep herd to predators or disease, he could ask his fellow householders for animals with which to replenish his own depleted herd; and second, if the dwelling, the kitchen and

food-storage house (Stofa, Eldhus, Bur, Icel.), were destroyed by fire, he would be reimbursed by his fellows.

Another word for the members of the communal council still in use today is the word virdingamen (Icel.), that is, men who adjudge and evaluate. Long winters require a sufficient supply of hay to feed the stabled cattle and penned sheep. Tenancy agreements were renewed yearly, boundary lines had to be re-surveyed, and quite often a householder would try to expand his herd at the expense of others in his district. All such cases required argument, adjudication and settlement. The bailiff and the district board have throughout the history of the district acted as men who adjudicate and settle disputes and issues.

Since the thirteenth century, the rural district in Iceland has been a bounded land area within which a class of farm householders have practised self-government. As householders they were mutually responsible by tradition and by law for the welfare of the inhabitants of the community. This class of individuals owed obligations of aid and support not only to kinsmen, but also to those born within the district as well as to their colleagues in maintaining each farm unit as a viable ongoing unit. As a land area, the district had a set of natural resources, land and grass, a river with

fish, a traditional common grazing land, the unimproved meadows between the farms, and a highland grazing territory. The district was thus a known and limited amount of good land upon which a class of households individually and co-operatively conducted a balanced and diffused economy. This community of households in a physical space containing natural resources, is the medieval district as it appears in the laws of the thirteenth century.

The Nineteenth Century District

The structure of civil government in Iceland in the nineteenth century was one by which the country was divided into two major regions, a northern and a southern, governed by a governour and vice-governour respectively. The governours in conjunction with the Althing (Icel.), i.e., Senate, governed the country as a region which was part of the Danish Kingdom. The Icelandic Senate oversaw and regulated the activities of the county councils and the officers of the counties, the Syslumen (Icel. pl.). Thus the civil government and internal divisions of nineteenth century Iceland consisted of a Senate, two regions, nineteen counties and about 204 districts or rural districts. The Senate, along with the representatives of the crown, the two governours, oversaw the affairs of the nation; the county officers

the affairs of the county; and the officers and boards elected for each commune or district the affairs of the rural districts.

There were eighteen districts, on the average, within the jurisdiction of each county. The county officer's representatives in each district were known as bailiffs (hreppstjori, Icel.). Thus the Crown and the State were represented on national, county and district levels by appointed officers; these officers were responsible in jural matters and in the collection of taxes. The Senate, the county councils and the commune/district councils were elected by vote of the adult male householders in the nation. In principle, crown officers were concerned about the peace and taxation; the populace was left to govern itself insofar as the domestic and civil life was concerned.

The County¹

The county council was comprised of from six to ten members, all of whom were elected by popular vote. In attendance at the council meetings would be a clergyman who administered the work of the parish clergy located within the county boundaries. If a county contained more than ten districts, each district above that number would

¹L. Bjornsson, Saga sveitarstjornar a Islandi, 1st Vol. pp. 250-255, "1872, Tilskipun Sveitarstjorn", Reykjavik: Almenna Bokafelagid, 1972, esp. paragraphs 1-32, on the government of the commune.

send representatives to the county board. The county council had a treasurer known as Oddveitin (Icel. sing.), who kept the budgets of the county and who also reviewed the budgets of the districts located within the county. The county councils had many duties. They assisted the crown officers in the collection of taxes and in the keeping of peace. They were responsible for the upkeep of roads and bridges in the county, and for all matters relating to social welfare and education. The county council also adjudicated in conflicts which might arise in the form of boundary disputes between districts in such matters as the highland grazing areas. The councils kept records of owners' marks of horses, sheep and cattle, as well as records of the highland grazing associations of each district and the boundaries of each farm. The most important of all tasks of the county councils and the appointed and elected officials of the councils was the collection of census data from each of the districts within the county's jurisdiction.

The District

(a) Structure: Each district, the smallest civil and politically administered unit of the Icelandic nation in the nineteenth century, was a bounded land area and a unit of rural households. It was governed jointly by the crown officer, the bailiff, and the head of the commune council, the Oddveitin (Icel. sing.). The

district council was made up of representatives popularly elected by the eligible voters of the district. This electorate was composed of one adult householder from each farm or unit of a farm within the district.

Oddveitin served as chairman of the council meetings and kept the books of the district's affairs on a daily basis. The district councils varied in size from three to five to seven members, their number reflecting the size of the population of the district. One member of the council was the parish clergyman, since during the nineteenth century the clergy was responsible for the education of children in the rural areas, served on the poor relief committees of each district and directed the work of the parish committees in the district.

(b) Functions: Franchise law in the nineteenth century were quite limited and specific. Every male over twenty-five years of age born in the district or who had resided in the district for one year before the day of election, about whom nothing ill was known or could be said, who owned property and did not owe outstanding taxes, and who was not a hired or contracted worker, could vote. The following list of voters is copied from the district bailiff's records in the Hrepp of Skeid and mentions those qualified to vote in the year of 1901.

There were in 1901 a total population of 91 males born in the district 20 years of age and older. In the

TABLE 18

ELECTORS IN SKEIDAHREPP, ARNESCOUNTY, MARCH 1901

Kjörskrá, fyrir Skeidahrepp i'Arnessyslu
i Marz 1901¹

<u>Nofn og heimili</u> <u>(Name and residence)</u>	<u>aldar</u> <u>(age)</u>	<u>stada</u> <u>(social position)</u>
Asbjörn, Andresfjosum	65	bondi
Asgeir, Ahraun	38	bondi
Bjarni, Framnesi	48	bondi
Bjarni, Skeidhåholt	50	bondi
Brynjolfur, Olafsvöllum	50	Prestur
Eiríkur, Alfstöðum	34	bondi
Eiríkur, Vötumyri	40	bondi
Eiríkur, Midbyli	39	bondi
Erlindur, Skeidhåbolt	52	bondi
Gudmundur, Blessastöðum	24	bondi
Gudmundur, Kalfholi	55	bondi
Gudmundur, Fjalli	34	bondi
Gudmundur, sst.	39	bondi
Gudmundur, Kylhraun	44	bondi
Gudmundur, Hlemmiskeid	46	bondi
Gestur, Husatoptum	49	bondi
Hafleidi, Birnistöðum	63	bondi
Halldor, Brunavöllum	48	bondi
Hannes, Brunavöllum	54	bondi
Helgi, Osabakka	35	bondi
Jón, Mini Olafsvöllum	38	bondi
Jón, Brjamstöðum	36	bondi
Jón, Skeidhåholt	87	Hreppstjori
Jón, Vorsabae	53	bondi
Jón, Utverkum	63	bondi
Ingimundur, Vesturkoti	30	bondi
Kristin, Brunarvallakoti	38	bondi
Ketill, Alfstöðum	31	bondi
Ketill, Nordurgardi	29	bondi
Magnus, Votumyri	66	bondi
Ofeigur, Borgarkoti	48	bondi
Páll, Löngumyri	70	bondi
Sigurdur, Hlemmiskeid	33	bondi
Thorstein, Husatoptum	37	bondi
Thorstein, Reykjum	66	bondi
Thorgeir, Olafsvöllum	33	bondi

Skeidahreppi 8 Marz 1901
signed: Jón Jónsson

¹Bailiff's records, Skeidahrepp, 1969, copied by me.

electoral roll the youngest voter is 24 years of age and there is a total of 36 voters on the list. The extent of the franchise is made clear by this record. The electors are either Bondi (Icel.) farmer, Prestur (Icel.) clergyman, or Hreppstjori (Icel.) bailiff; no one else voted in nineteenth century rural Iceland.

Election day in the district was held in the spring. Householders who were eligible to vote would inspect the electoral roll three weeks prior to the election. If any elector had questions about the election and the slate of proposed board members he could raise objections to the list up until the day of the election. Any questions concerning the results of the election could be addressed to the county sheriff's office, but had to be submitted within eight days following the election. The bailiff and two chosen assistants conducted the elections and submitted the final tally to the county committee. The chairman and treasurer of the district board is known now, as in the nineteenth century, as Oddveitin (Icel. sing.). He was elected at the board meeting preceding the spring election for a three-year term of office. His task was to lead the

I have retained the spellings on the farm names although these vary a bit from the present orthography. The words "bondi," i.e., farmer; "Prestur," i.e., parson. The record consists of the first name of the farmer, followed by the name of his farm. Since there are so many names alike, calling a man "Jon from the Hill" is a reasonable convention.

district council in its deliberations and to call the meetings. The minimum number of meetings a district council was legally obligated to conduct in the nineteenth century was two; most boards met four times a year. The meetings coincided with the important tasks for which the rural community was collectively responsible each year. The spring meeting of the district board was concerned with the upcoming election, the preparations for the summer's highland grazing when all the farms of the district sent the sheep away to the highlands, and the business of the settlement of tenancies. The tenancy year ran from May to May, and there were often disputes about rents and payments. The autumn meeting was devoted to end of summer business, such as reviewing the tax assessments sent to the district from the county office. Since yearly taxes were based upon what livestock each farm possessed and the previous year's production of goods for sale, as well as the number of dependents on each farm, a review of the assessments was quite important to the householders of the district. A farm could have increased or decreased in value since the last assessment, or could have increased or decreased its numbers of livestock or dependents. Hence the review of assessments, with its arguments about how much a farm should be taxed, was a yearly affair. Once the assessments were gone over and settled to each farmer's and the district council's satisfaction they were returned to the county

office. By November the assessments appeared in the bailiff's office as tax dues and the business of the winter meeting in November was to settle the payment of taxes due from each farm. The autumn meeting was also concerned with the settlement of indigents on the farms in the district; again, the number of indigents per farm depended upon the farm's value and prosperity. This again was cause for debate and compromise since the indigents were an expenditure to a farm's household economy in terms of food, a bed, some clothing and the extra care of another person. Another subject of consideration at the autumn meeting was whether or not each farm had an adequate supply of winter fodder with which to feed the livestock for the winter season. To this end, trustworthy men from the district council were selected, usually older farmers who were known as virthingamen (Icel. pl.) literally translated as men who measure. These men went as a committee from farm to farm to survey the number of livestock and the supply of hay and, if the proportion was not reasonable, to suggest to the farmer that the supply be increased or that members of the horse, cattle or sheep herd be sold or slaughtered in order to diminish the number of animals dependent upon a given supply of fodder. This was not an expression of the tyranny of the many over the single individual farm householder; the district is an ancient guild of farmer householders and one of its responsibilities was to assist member

households to survive the winter. Thoughtlessness and foolishness on the part of an individual householder could injure and cause a depreciation to the property of the whole community. The board of the district and its two officers were especially responsible for three areas of concern, the collection of taxes, the maintenance of the livestock population of the district so that it would not diminish during the winter season, and the duties of the district towards the indigent population. The claims of the indigent population were of two kinds. First were the claims from those without visible means of support, i.e., the elderly and the orphans. The law was clear on this matter, basing the claim to support upon the claim of birthright. It required that residence and support be provided to those who were born as members of the district and to anyone who was a third cousin to a householder in a district. The second kind of claim to support was that necessitated by misfortune; thus the guild of householders served as a mutual insurance group. Any householder who suffered a misfortune or accident such as the destruction of a house, stable or byre due to fire, or the lack of sufficient fodder during the winter with which to feed the livestock on a farm, could claim the support of the district members. These rights to claim by both indigents and householders had their counterpart in the rights of the district council to oversee the activities of the inhabitants of

the district. This right to govern may be noted in the existence of the Poor Council, which helped the indigent, and in the institution of virdingamen (Icel.), the elderly farmers who measured each farm's food supply, hayfields and boundary marks.

It should be pointed out that the farms in Iceland during the nineteenth century were assessed more in terms of the size of the human population and the amount of livestock which could be supported, than what has become modern practise in farm assessment, not only in Iceland but elsewhere, namely the acreage of land belonging to a farm. Hence the disputes arising out of and originating in the management of estates were, in reality, questions about the common good. These disputes are now assumed to be outside the prerogative and competence of a public body and to belong to the individual estate manager. Since the traditional Hrepp, as we have noted from its function in the nineteenth century, was a collectivity of householders or a guild of peers, the institutions of care and support were traditional, reasonable and necessary in a pre-industrial farming system. The price paid for such a conservative and conserving system of relationships in the rural Icelandic district was that of the heavy weight of tradition. The district board, by tradition, could undertake no new action nor institute any change nor assess any dues of householders not specified in the law or by tradition. Any householder

who felt himself wronged in such matters could, by application to the district council and the Sysluman's office, have decisions questioned on the basis that they deviated from the legal and traditional ways.

The district included two categories of persons, namely householders and non-householders; that is, those with rights to land and the management of the estates, and those without rights to land who resided upon the estates as kindred, workers, indigents and elderly. Both groups of individuals shared in what I shall call and describe in later chapters as a bundle of rights and obligations. The householders with their inherited rights to land and to estate management were given many duties of decision and the daily work of considering the welfare not only of the estate and its livestock but also of its inhabitants. The second group, although dis-enfranchised, barred from landholding, and dependent upon the householders for rights to work, residence, welfare, education and old age support also possessed certain rights. These originated in the laws of the state, and in the claims based upon birthright and kinship. As we have noted, the Hrepp (Icel.) is one of the most ancient and traditional forms of rural social organisation. It was a form of rural household organisation brought by the original settlers from their medieval Norwegian communities and established as early as 930 A.D. in Iceland. It is an institution which

was established by thirteenth century law, which may be seen in a revised form of administration in the laws of 1872, and which persists in present day Icelandic rural areas.

The rural district has so far been described as a landholding unit, a bounded area of land within which are located at least twenty taxable estates. It has also been described as an historic and legally identifiable unit or organisation of estate managers who collectively oversaw the day to day administration of the district. As has been described on the previous pages, the electorate, i.e., those who might vote in local as well as national elections, and who might serve on the governing councils of the district and the county, was carefully defined and circumscribed. Thus, within each district a small class of male householders or estate managers were the electors and governors of the lives and affairs of the rural populace. In Skeidahrepp the thirty-six electors of 1901 were the farmers. All other inhabitants in the district derived their rights, sustenance and welfare by virtue of claims which, although defined by national law, could only be exercised within the framework of district government, and within the confines of the individual estate.

To explore further the question about the conditions and life of the inhabitants of the rural district in

the closing decades of the nineteenth century, I turn to the evidence of the censuses which have been conducted in Iceland every decade since 1840. There were only five national censuses taken in Iceland prior to that year, those of the years 1703, 1762, 1769, 1785 and 1801.

District and Farm Censuses in the
Nineteenth Century

The household censuses are the basis for the annual national censuses published each decade throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They are in reality documents of an ethno-historic significance, since each census sheet was filled in by the householder and conveys much more than the figures which are given about such matters as the number of inhabitants per household, the amount of livestock or the condition and type of construction of the farm's buildings. What is of interest to our research on family and kindred in a rural Icelandic district is the consistency and continuity of the terminology employed by those who filled in the census sheets. The householders not only noted the existence of a wife and children in the household, but added to the listing of the number of working people on the farm what their genealogical and familial relations were to the person who filled in the census. Thus the census sheets record through time the terminologies and the definitions of classes and statuses of members of

the rural districts. The censuses are evidence of a rural society of traditional Iceland and indicate the socio-economic conditions and the extent of familial relations which existed in a commune such as Skeidahrepp in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹

By 1703 it is possible, on the basis of evidence from a census, to provide a description of the population in Iceland. The country may be unique in this respect since only Japan, Norway and England possess population censuses dating from the 1720's. The census in Iceland covered the entire population; every person was entered on the householder's report between the months of March and June in the year of 1703.

The instructions to the county sheriffs were very specific. Each bailiff within their jurisdiction was to oversee the collection of this information and to append to the collected household censuses of their district a summation of all figures. This bundle was passed from the bailiff to the sheriff, who, in turn, sent all of his material to the governor's office. The governor sent this material by ship to the Icelandic ministry in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The fate of the census of 1703 may be commented upon very briefly. It was not utilised for 75 years until some of

¹See Appendix B, p. for examples of the household censuses of Skeidahrepp in the nineteenth century.

the data were published in a report on Iceland in 1778. From that year until 1918, when the material was discovered in the files of the old Icelandic ministry in Copenhagen and shipped back to the National Archives in Reykjavik, the existence of the census was in doubt. The census was published in full by the Statistical Office of Iceland in 1947, two hundred and forty-four years after it was taken.¹ The 1703 census was designed to elicit the following information from the householders. They were asked to answer the following questions concerning their households:

1. The number of households on an estate.
2. The number of homes on a farm, or part of an estate.
3. The names of the members of each household.
4. Household members identified by full name; including newly born children not yet baptised.
5. The names of members of the household listed in the following order: householder, wife, children, step-children, adopted children, foster children.
6. Adult children residing on in the household.
7. Kin, listed as mother, father, sister, brother to householder couple, in-laws and relations.
8. Extended kin, grandparents, grandchildren and other relations.
9. People placed on the farm by the commune, or by reasons of kindred relations.
10. All individuals must be listed by birth date, place of birth, sex, whether married or unmarried.
11. All members of the household who received any kind of compensation for their work must be listed with a work designation.
12. Those who reside in the household and do not receive compensation for work must be listed.
13. Level of completed schooling, religious affiliation, and citizenship must be given.²

¹Hagstofa Islands, Manntalid 1703, Reykjavik, 1960, II, 21, Tf. 8A, pp. 5-7.

²The questions householders were instructed to answer did vary somewhat between the censuses. However, the questions concerning members of the households are the same in all cases.

14. Visitors in the household on the date of the census must be listed with their legal residence provided.
15. Information about adult females in the household had to be provided, all children living or dead, and born in or out of wedlock must be listed.
16. Miscellaneous questions, such as the state of buildings, living standards and so on, depend on the census year.¹

The 1703 Census lists four classes of households in the rural area: (a) assessed farms, (b) non-assessed farms, (c) cottars, and (d) lodgers with their families living on larger farms. The Icelandic terms for the four classes of households are Baendabyli, Hjaleigur, Tomthus, and Husmennska.²

The four classes were distributed among the population as follows: (a) assessed farms, 72% of the population; (b) non-assessed farms, 14.5% of the population; (c) cottars, 4.25%; and (d) lodgers, 9.2%. There was a total of 8,191 households on farms, with those on assessed farms being in the majority.

The fourfold classification of the households rests upon two categories. First is the classification of households by a taxable rate. This is determined by the size of the farm, its productivity, its land and the size of livestock herds it could support. The farms which were tax-rateable were not only in the majority, but were also the most

¹Ibid.

²Hagstofa Islands, Manntal a Islandi, "Skeidahreppur, Arnessysla," 1703 and 1860, Reykjavik, 1969.

important estates in the district, since the district organisation depended upon the existence of at least twenty such estates within its domain. The non-assessed farm units and cottar units on which 18.7% of the population lived were estates of a size which would support at best a single nuclear household.

Second is the classification of the farms into estates and tenancies based upon the status of the householder managing the unit. Cottars and lodgers, as well as the household heads of non-assessable farms, were those who performed work as payment of rent to the owners of the estates on which their farms were located, or to absentee owners.

The explanation for the difference in the number of households per estate between 1703 and 1860 (see table on the following page), must be found in the fact that in 1703 the population of Iceland was 50,358 and in 1860 it was 67,000. The pressure of the population on the available farms is the second part of the explanation of the increase in family households per estate in the southern area. In that year the population of Reykjavik was 1,444; that is, the overwhelming majority of the population in the area resided on the estates as in 1703. The rural nature of the population of the southern region may be noted in statistics for the county of Arnes. Less than 200 of the 5,409 inhabitants lived in

TABLE 19

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS PER FARM IN SKEID, 1703, 1860

	<u>Census Number</u>	<u>1703</u>	<u>1860</u>
	182	2	3
	183	1	2
	184	2	3
	185	2	2
	186	1	2
	187	2	2
	188	2	3
	189	1	2
	190	1	2
	191	1	2
	192	1	1
	193	3	3
	194	1	1
	195	1	1
	196	1	1
	187	1	1
	198	1	3
	199	1	-
	200	2	2
Benefice ¹ Tenant Units	(--A	1	1
	(--B	1	1
	(--C	1	1
	(--D	1	1
	(--E	1	1
	201	1	3
	202	1	2
	203	2	2
	204	1	1
	205	1	1
	206	1	2
	TOTALS	39	51

the villages of Stokkseyri and Eyribakki which were located by the coast. Besides its rural nature, the population of the county was remarkably stable in terms of place of residence; 2,731 inhabitants resided in the

¹NOTE: Benefice, i.e., church living.

district of their birth and the other 2,626 resided in the county of their birth.¹

The farms were managed by estate managers and farm workers of both sexes, but these workers were not hirelings in the sense of being a rural proletariat which moved from farm to farm seeking labour and livelihood. On the contrary, workers on estates were family members; for example, the censuses of 1703 and 1860 show that in a population of 55,000 inhabitants only 318 individuals were described in the censuses as contract workers on a one-year contract. The district of Skeid had no such workers; and, in the county of Arnes, only 45 of the total number of 5,409 inhabitants on the farms were listed as contractual labourers.² Little demographic and social change in the rural areas had occurred in the 157 years between 1703 and 1869. The farms were managed by male householders, the labour was performed by family members, and the size of the domestic unit per farm had not varied; the average household size for both census years was 5.9 members.

¹See H. I. B., Skýrslur um Landshagi á Islandi, Kaupmannahöfn: Tiele og Møller, 1868, 3. Bd. Tf.C. Bls. 131, "Sudurumdaemid, Arnessysla,".

²Manntalid 1703, Op. cit., p. 131.

The People in the Eighteenth and
Nineteenth Century Censuses

The terms describing individuals residing in the households are themselves of some interest, indicating conditions of life and work in the district. But, more importantly, the terms may be seen as signifying statuses defined by economic, jural and affective relations.

Terminology classifies residents of households into four groupings, and combinations of the four; these are (a) terms which describe family relations within the households of the farms, (b) terms which describe the jural status of individuals, such as head of household, Council board member, indigent or orphan, (c) terms which describe the economic status of the people on the farm, i.e. working man, working woman, or working child, and finally, (d) terms which denote age.

There are also terms used about the farm itself, these are not reported on a regular basis, and cannot therefore be used in the manner in which the terms describing the population of the farms can, but their occasional appearance in the census records provide a glimpse of the eighteenth and nineteenth century farm conditions, which confirm what we have already stated about the conditions of housing and the technology of farm management.

In the terminology which appears on the following pages, Icelandic terms are listed first and then translated into English terms which in my understanding best conveys the Icelandic meaning.

TABLE 20

ICELANDIC TERMS FOR HOUSING

<u>Icelandic</u>	<u>English</u>
byli	residence
baerinn	a farm
Österbae	east farm
torfbaer	turf structure
heilthili	fully timbered gables
halfthylum	half timbered gables
timburhus	timber structure
hjáleiga	cottar, tenant farm

The terms given above, when explained in greater detail in English, are as follows: byli is a residence or place of residence; baerinn means a farm, and secondarily, the houses of the farm, especially the house in which the householder resides; Österbae is the second of two household residences of a single farm unit, the houses on the east side of the farm. Torfbaer is a turf house. Until the introduction of the wood balloon frame structure, rural housing consisted of turf and stone walled structures. The buildings of the traditional farm shared walls and presented their gable ends to the front. A well built and more expensive version of a traditional farm house was a turf construction in which

flooring, wainscoting, ceiling, and gable ends were of wooden planks. The terms heilthili and halfthylum refer to the amount of wood used in the buildings. Heil (Icel.) means complete and half (Icel.) means half-timbered gable construction.

Hjaleiga (Icel.) is a term used for small farms located within the area of a larger estate as either the home of a cottar, an extension of the main unit further removed or as that part of the unit tenanted out to someone else.

In the district the clergyman's farm, Olafsvellir, had as hjaleigar, (pl. Icel.), six smaller units attached to it; the large freehold farm of Fjall had traditionally Midbaeli, Framness and Utverk as hjaleigar units; and the farm on which the Hreppstjori (Icel.), the bailiff, lived had the unit of Borgarkot as a hjaleiga.

The terms in Table 21 are more fully explained as follows: abuanði (Icel.) is the term used in the 1703 census records, and means one who resides in the household. Bondi (Icel.), and husbondi (Icel.) are similar terms and mean a farmer, one who manages or owns a farm, a male householder in a rural area who engages in farm work. Odalsbondi (Icel.) is an intriguing term. It is Norwegian in origin and is mentioned in Iceland's traditional law of 1281 A.D. The word odal (Icel.) denotes an

TABLE 21

ICELANDIC TERMS FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

<u>Icelandic</u>	<u>English</u>
abuandi	resident
bondi	farmer
husbondi	head of household
odalsbondi	estate owner
husmodir	wife
husfreyja	wife
kona	wife
hreppsnefndur	district council member
Hreppstjori	bailiff
Oddveiti	district council chairman
Prestur	Clergyman
Sera	The Reverend (title, mode of address)
Kennari	school teacher
nafnteljara	censustaker

inheritance which must be passed on to the following generation as a complete and undivided estate. Most likely first born male descendant of present owner will become the next estate owner. Customarily heirs to estates inherit equal shares of the parental estate, the designation odalsbondi (Icel.) is most unusual.¹

Husfreyja (Icel.), is a term used in the eighteenth century censuses for the wife of the householder and means the same as the next term, husmodir (Icel.), used in the nineteenth century censuses for the mistress of the house. The term used for the female householder of the farm unit is more than a polite term for "wife"

¹Lög 1962/102/21 des. Um Aettarödul, etc., pp. 1468-1482 in A. Snaevarr (ed.), Lagasafn, etc., 1965, Reykjavik: Dómsmala Raduneytisins, 1965.

or "woman." The wife brought dowry and possessions with her at the time of marriage. She retained ownership rights to these possessions throughout her lifetime, and it was her children, not her husband, who could inherit them. In the traditional farm economy, the important half of the productive work is the conversion of raw material products into finished food products. The women of the household possessed this technical knowledge and on the old farms, the Bur (Icel.), a place where foods were stored, was locked and the mistress carried the key.

Hreppsnefndur (Icel.), is a title used for a few of the older retired men and means a member or a former member of the district council. Hreppstjori (Icel.), is the name for the bailiff. Oddveiti is the title of the district council foreman. Prestur (Icel.), is a person or clergyman and his title appears in the censuses also as Sera (Icel.), or in abbreviated form Sr. in front of the person's name. The title is equivalent to the English, the Reverend, as used about a member of the established church. Kennara (Icel.) and its variants such as umgöngu (Icel.), barnakennara (Icel.), barnakennari, or just kennara, mean a teacher of children. The history of education in the rural area may be discerned in the three title variants just given above. Umgöngu barnakennara (Icel.) means an itinerant teacher, one who moved within a district in

the 1890's from one cluster of farms to another and who taught the children who were within easy walking distance of each cluster. Children were taught for about four weeks during the winter season at this time. By the time of World War I, a small school building was built on one site in the district, and the barnakennara (Icel.), the teacher, now lived on a single farm and was registered as a member of a household in several censuses.

The term nafnteljara (Icel.), a title which is used two or three times on the household census records after a man's name indicates the person who, as a board member of the district, checked on the filling in of the census records.

Titles about work: Insight into the division of labour in the rural area for the period in question may be gained by an inventory of the terms used to designate categories of workmen, farmhands, females and the younger people who, as residents of the households, earned their keep. The laws governing census record-keeping required that a householder must mention any member of a household, whether a family member or not, with a work designation if this person received any kind of compensation for his or her work. The logic behind this rule, which is still in use at present, is one which divides the family members into hired labour and estate manager. The census regulations make members of a household who were not

householders labourers. For example, in the censuses, one often finds the unmarried brother of the householder listed as a vinnumadur (Icel.), i.e., a farmhand or working man.

TABLE 22
ICELANDIC TERMS FOR WORK

<u>Icelandic</u>	<u>English</u>
bustyra	woman in charge on an estate
fjárhyrding	herding sheep
fjárverkum	working with sheep
fjosamadur	working in the byre
heyvinna	working at haying
lausafolk	seasonal labour
lausakona	woman seasonally hired
lausamadur	man seasonally hired
leigjandi	tenant
ráðskona	woman in charge on an estate
ráðsmadur	man in charge on an estate
sjómadur	fisherman/sailor
slattumadur	hired to cut grass
smáli	shepherd
smidur	blacksmith
vinnufolk	hired hands
vinnukona	hired woman
vinnumadur	hired man
verkstjori	man in charge on an estate
yfirsetukona	midwife

The terms are more fully explained as follows: the English translations of the above terms provide an understanding of the work categories and thus an idea not only of the division of labour in the rural community but also of the existence of status categories inherent in the work in rural households of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Bustyra (Icel.) was a person found on a farm where there was either a widower with a flock of children, or on a large farm where the wife required assistance in the supervision of women's work. A bustyra was a woman who supervised the tasks which normally were those of the mistress of the household. A variant term, and one still in use, is ráðskona; the literal meaning is a woman who gives advice, but she holds the same position as the bustyra. In some cases one census lists the householder as widower and the woman is as bustyra, and a later census finds the couple married. The woman's position in the household approximates that of mistress of the household.

Fjáhyrðing (Icel.), and fjárverkum (Icel.), are terms used for farmhands hired to work with the sheep, in contrast to the formal term smáli (Icel.), a term which is not seen in the latter records of the mid-twentieth century. Thus smáli is the title of the professional sheep herder, and the terms fjárhyrðing, fjárverkum indicate hands on a farm who feed and care for the animals during the year when they are not pastured away from the farm lands. Fjósamadur (Icel.), in eighteenth-nineteenth century censuses, is the term for the farmhand specifically hired to work the byre and care for the cattle. Lausafolk, lausakona, lausamadur (Icel.) are individuals or couples hired for one work season in the year. Usually this title is accompanied

by an explanation, such as advinna með hey (Icel.) or advinna með fjárverkum (Icel.), that is, hired to work the hay fields, cutting and raking the grass, or hired to work the sheep during a winter season. In one case, a lausamaður in the 1901 census was explained as being a sjómaður i opin skipi (Icel.), that is, a sailor on an open-decked vessel who apparently worked on the farm during the fishing or trading off-season. Ráðsmaður is a male supervisor of farm work, and sláttumaður, a farmhand hired to cut and work the hay for the season. Smidur (Icel.), is a blacksmith. Vinnufólk, vinnukona and vinnumaður, the term most generally found in the census reports, appear in the first census of 1703. The three terms are variants of a general one for farmhand and mean respectively a working couple, a working woman, and a working man on the farm. Verkstjóri (Icel.), is a variant of the term Ráðsmaður, that is, a male supervisor of work.

TABLE 23

MISCELLANEOUS ICELANDIC TERMS

<u>Icelandic</u>	<u>English</u>
medhjalpari i Kirkjunnum	Verger
Forsöngvari	Verger
passar börn	cares for children
sker tobak	chops snuff tobacco
tvinna band	knits stocking bands
lettadrengur	boy hired
lettastulkur	girl hired
vinnupiltur	boy hired

The odd and occasional remarks in the censuses give glimpses of the activities which, to the inhabitants of the commune in the nineteenth century, would be understandable as part of a person's status in the community. Medhjalpari i Kirkjunnum (Icel.), means an assistant to the clergyman in the parish church, in contrast to the more formal title Forsöngvari (Icel.) which is a title related to the liturgy of the established church of Iceland. This title is that of a lay member of the parish congregation who assists the clergyman during the service.

The terms for eleven year old boys and girls found in the nineteenth and early twentieth century censuses, viz., léttadrengur, léttastulkur, vinnupiltur. About teenaged girls the comment will be written, passar börn (Icel.), that is one who cares for children. Of one old man the householders wrote, sker tobak and tvinna band (Icel.), i.e., chops tobacco into snuff and knits stockingbands.

After the name of a tenant indicated by the term leigjandi (Icel.), about crofters or cottars, one may read leigjandi gegnir heyrinn og fjarverkum, (Icel.), i.e., a tenant who in return for a house and a garden plot worked on the larger farm in the haying season and with the sheep during the winter season.

The traditional Icelandic rural district was not only a guild of estate managers and householders, it was also responsible for the care of its own indigent, sick and old people. These persons were placed in the care of households in the community, such people were identified in the census records with the following terms: blindur, fosturbarn, heynarlauss, kjördottir, medgjafabarn, matvinnungur, nidursetningur, óvinnfaer, sveitar, thurfi, tökudrengur. Other remarks about the indigent, the old and the retired residents in the households are: lifir á efnum sinum, lifir á eignum sinum, hefur ellistyrk, nytur sinna fyri daga, theggur á sveit, lifir á sveita styrk, lifir á fataekra styrk, and vinnu fyrir sér.

Terms refer to single individuals and their conditions: blindur (Icel.) is a blind person; fosturbarn (Icel.), is a child who is in adoptive care; heynarlauss (Icel.) means deaf; kjördottir (Icel.) is a girl in adoptive care; medgjafabarn (Icel.) is a child in adoptive care; matvinnungur (Icel.) means a person who receives food in compensation for work done; nidursetningur (Icel.) is the general term used for a person placed in a household by the district's overseers of the poor; óvinnfaer (Icel.) means not able to work; sveitar thurfi (Icel.) means one who is a poor member of a rural district; tökudrengur (Icel.) is a boy in adoptive care.

When old householders retired, they remained on their estates to live out their days. A number of written comments throw some light on the condition and status of such old people in the households. Lifir a efnum sinum (Icel.), and lifir a eignum sinum (Icel.) mean those who live on a retirement income, savings or pension. Nytur sinna fyrri daga (Icel.) is one who enjoys his old days, as one son wrote about his retired father.

Another group of remarks were about those of whom the Danish country people would say, nyder naadens brod, (Dan.), i.e., the bread of mercy about the old who must subsist on charity and public welfare. About such, one householder wrote, theggur a sveit (Icel.), meaning begs from the district, or lifir a sveita styrk (Icel.), which is a kinder way of stating the truth, i.e., lives on a pension given by the district. One householder wrote, about his father who was a 74-year old widower, vinnu fyrir sér (Icel.), that is, works for his own keep.

It is possible to classify the terms into broad groupings which may be labelled: terms on housing, on householders, on status, on work specialities, and on indigency and the retired. The status of householders, both male and female, indicates that the heads of households in the district are persons who occupy the positions of leadership in the community. They serve as board members, as overseers of the poor, as people who check on household censuses,

as assistants and lay leaders in the established church. They lead the work on the farms and confer households upon the succeeding generation.

It is also possible, on the basis of the records, to arrive at a classification of divisions of labour. Farm labour is seen as constituting a number of specialities. There are terms for those who work with dairy cattle and the byre; there are men who work with the sheep in winter, and there are professional shepherders. There are men and women who are hired in the haying season or for the winter's work on the farms, in contrast to those who are hired as general farm workers on an annual basis. In the 19th century and appearing in the census records until 1920, one finds the very young as part of the labour on the farms. Eleven-year old boys and girls are described as such. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century one finds a few cases described where it is possible for individuals to work in one capacity in one season and in another capacity in another season, such as the seaman who becomes a farm worker. The work categories indicate the sexual division of labour on the estates; women oversaw the work of women, and men the work of men. The eighteenth and nineteenth century census material records large numbers of unmarried siblings who remained on the estates of their birth and were occupied throughout their life as workers.

An example of the kind of extended and related household arrangements which could occur is given below:

TABLE 24
RESIDENTS ON THE FARM OF VOTAMYRI, 1890

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Relation</u>	<u>Census Term</u>
Magnus Sigurdsson	54	Father	Householder
Gudrun Eiriksdott.	56	Wife	Householder
Gudmundur Magnuss.	12	Son	Child
Gudrun Magnusdott.	14	Daughter	Child
Sigurdur Magnuss.	22	Son	Farmworker
Gudrun Magnuss.	24	Daughter	Farmworker
Eirikur Magnuss.	32	Son	Householder
Hallbera Vilhjalmsdott.	31	Daughter-In- Law	Householder
Thordis Eiriksdott.	0	Daughter (Grandchild)	Child
Gudni Eirikss.	1	Son (Grandson)	Child
Gudmundur Gudmundss.	20	No relation	Farmworker
Sigurdur Erlindss.	40	No relation	Cottar, shepherd
Sigridur Arngrimsdott.	73	No relation	Indigent
Hellberg I. Jonass.	1	Adoptive	Indigent

The censuses of Skeidahrepp in 1890 show that in the 43 households resided 22 unmarried adult males listed as labourers who were siblings of the householders. Some of these might have become estate managers later in life, but their age, in conjunction with the number of sons already born to householders, suggest they did not. In the table given on the following page, I analyse the proportions of married to unmarried males in the Hrepp as indicated by the census for the year 1890.

TABLE 25

MARRIED, UNMARRIED MALE RESIDENTS, SKEID 1890¹

Age Group,	Total	Married	Unmarried Sons, Siblings	Others
0- 9 yrs.	45		35	10
10-19	23		17	6
20-29	23		11	12
30-39	19	13	4	2
40-49	13	7	3	3
50- +	31	23	4	4
TOTALS	154	43	74	37

The youngest married group of householders in the district is the 30-39 year old group. Since these have sons in the 0-9 year category, I assume marriage to occur about ten years earlier or sometime between 25 and 30 years of age. The category of "Unmarried Sons, Siblings" includes both groups of male resident children of householders and householders' brothers. The "Others" category is made up of males who are unmarried and who reside on estates in the district either as indigents placed on the estates by the district council, or as male adult labourers residing on an estate due to the annual work contract struck with the householder. Of 154 resident males in the district in 1890, 111 are not householders, and 74 are the male relations to the householders who possess potential rights

¹Hagstofa Islands, Manntals á Islandi, "Skeidahreppur, Arnessysla", Reykjavik, 1890.

to estates in the community.

The persistence of categories of male residents in the district over a longer period of time can be seen in the table given below. The number of householders in the district varies very little in comparison to the number of male residents of the community.

The following table is an analysis of the closing decades of the nineteenth century, 1870-1900:

TABLE 26
MALE HOUSEHOLDER RELATIONS, SKEID, 1870-1900

<u>Year</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Unmarried</u> <u>20 years +</u>	<u>Sons-Sibs</u> <u>total no.</u>	<u>Miscl.</u>	<u>Males</u> <u>Unm. Adult</u>
1880	141	37	16	69	35	51
1890	154	43	22	74	37	59
1900	152	41	17	78	32	50

The category in the above table labelled "Unmarried, 20 years +", will, when added to the "Miscellaneous" category, provide the total number of adult unmarried males residing in the district in that census year. The "Miscellaneous" category is one which includes adult males who are listed as farm hand, cottar (unmarried), estate manager, shepherd, orphan or old person on retirement. When unmarried sons and siblings are added to the rest of the resident unmarried male population

of the district, the proportions between married to unmarried are, in 1880, 37 married to 51 unmarried adult males; in 1890, 43 married to 59 unmarried, and in 1900, 41 married to 50 unmarried.

The reason for discussing the adult siblings and sons over age 20 in contrast to those 20 years of age and younger, is that the former is the marriageable group. Sixty-nine sons and siblings of all ages resided in the 37 households in the census year of 1880. The disparity between those who reside in the household of their father or brother after the age of twenty and those who do not, indicates that unmarried sons and siblings remained on the estates within the district and worked on them as farm hands. The majority of adult farm workers in the district in any census year for the period given indicates that these are relations of householders and that few left the district to seek their fortune elsewhere.

I conclude from this analysis that in the nineteenth century rural community a restraint existed limiting the number of households which could occur in the district. An economic and subsistence tradition which balanced population and resources and which created a division into economic categories householders and estate managers and non householders and farm labourers. This division of landed and landless populations was also one of political category since only householders had

the right to vote and to be elected to the commune council.

By using the word "division" I do not mean to imply that those occupying the two statuses were opposed to each other or that they were engaged in "class and conflict" as this situation occurred in industrial Europe at that time. The political division was related to the traditions of family and kinship in the community in such a way that the disenfranchised members of the community who were also the landless possessed rights to resources such as labour, residence, food and welfare from their more fortunate siblings who were the householders in the district. Those without kin but who were either long time residents of the district or born within the district could claim the same resources.

In nineteenth century Skeid a householder and an estate manager was one and the same person as an example of this, I consider the two electors on the roll of electors of Skeid in 1900 (p. 104), who resided on the estate Alfstadir. The census record for that year on the estate indicates the following household personnel:

TABLE 27
THE POPULATION OF THE FARM OF ALFSTADIR IN 1900¹

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Relation</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Description</u>
I	<u>Eirikur Asbjarnarson</u>	<u>Husband</u>	35	Male	<u>Farmer, Verger</u>
	Ingveldur Thorsteinsdott	Wife	31	Female	Wife
	Thorgeir Thorsteinsson	Wife's Brother	16	Male	Farmhand
	Helga Magnusdottir	--	89	Female	Poor relief
	Sigurveig Jonsdott	--	40	Female	Farmhand
	Thorgeir Jonsson	Son	12	Male	Farmhand, Son of Sigurveig
	Bjarni Thorsteinsson	Child	2	Male	Relation to household
	Sveirn Jonsson	Child	4	Male	Relation to household
II	<u>Ketill Helgasson</u>	<u>Husband</u>	30	Male	<u>Farmer</u>
	Kristin Haflidadott	Wife	27	Female	Wife
	Brynjolfur Ketillss	Son	0	Male	Child
	Valgerdur Eyjolfsdott	Husband's Mother	60	Female	Retired
	Olafur Helgasson	Husband's Brother	28	Male	Farmhand
	Gudmundur Helgasson	Husband's Brother	25	Male	Farmhand
	Helgi Helgasson	Husband's Brother	24	Male	Farmhand
	Vigfus Magnusson	--	52	Male	Farmhand
	Svein Gestsson	--	11	Male	Farmhand
	Gudleyf Thorkjelsdott	--	27	Female	Farmhand
	Jon Magnusson		76	Male	Retired farmer
	Margrejt Einarsdott		70	Female	Wife

¹Hagstofa Islands, Manntals a Islandi, "Skeidahreppur, Arnessysla" Reykjavik, 1900.

In this population of 14 adults in 1900 two were householders, estate managers and electors. In the case of the second household, Ketill Helgasson it will be noted that three of the farm workers residing in it are unmarried adult brothers of Ketill's.

Insofar as the adult residents of the nineteenth century district are concerned they may be described as constituting a set of opposites. The two are "householder" and "resident"; all domestic, jural and political rights in the community are based upon the two categories. "Householders" are heads of families, estate managers, electors, council members and the leaders in the daily work on estates and within the district. "Residents" are recipients of rights such as the rights to residence on a kinsman's estate, the right to an annual work contract beginning at age eleven, and the right to care when old. Although these rights are defined by tradition and law they are given to "residents" not only by the householder of the estate where they reside, but also by the guild of householders who make up the district council.

"... Orlygur Hauksson of Borg was at this time about fifty years old. Since he was young he had been the acknowledged leader in the Hrepp, partly because he was the only heir to Borg, but also for other reasons. Besides having the largest farm in the community, he was a Bailiff, and a Verger, in brief, all one man can attain in an Icelandic Hrepp when wealth, intelligence and personality are combined in

one person ... when he was acknowledged as the leader he was kind and benign ..."¹

Social scientists since R. Linton's chapter on Status and Role, have utilised the idea of status and role and define a "status" as a position in a particular social pattern.² It is the sum of the many positions which an individual occupies in the social system. The manner in which statuses are discoverable is to analyse the patterns of reciprocal behaviour between individuals and groups of individuals. Thus "status" is a polar position in the pattern of reciprocal behaviour. The "status" an individual occupies is the collection, or assemblage, of the rights and duties which he possesses.³

The statuses of the landless are seen more as deriving from a relationship to the householder, than as initiated by them. A workman is so by virtue of the contract between him and the householder, a child in the household is so by virtue of being descended from the householder; and the rights of the district members are acted upon by decisions of the electors. Thus, as a type, consider the householder as that person who occupies the dynamic aspect of status in the community.

¹G. Gunnarsson, Borgslaegtens Historie, Gyldendals Tranebøger, København, (1968 ed.), p. 15, (my translation).

²R. Linton, The Study of Man, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936, pp. 113-131.

³Ibid., p. 114.

Estate and District in the Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century the status of householder was superordinate when compared to the status of residents of the district who were neither householders nor estate managers. To the householders accrued a collection of rights and duties which, when viewed together, provide insight into the nature of the traditional rural society.

The householder was a person who possessed traditional and legally defined rights to a set of resources which I have called an estate. It was his duty to manage this estate and be concerned with its welfare, for which he was solely responsible. In the period I have described, each state was an exclusive area of land, a set of buildings and tools, a herd of livestock and the collective labour resources of its own population. A householder, although one of several siblings in a parental household, was that person chosen by his parents over others of his own kind to become the householder and estate manager. He received this right as an inheritance and with this right he could marry and establish a new household which, in Skeid, in time replaced that of his parents. I have shown that rules about who could marry and establish a household must be seen in the context of restraints which were based partly upon the traditions of subsistence and partly upon descent ideology in the community. The census records of the period (1860-1900) indicate that

households varied very little in number from one generation to the next.

But the estate is more than the home of the householder; it is a domestic unit wherein resided siblings and other close kin of the householder. Tradition and laws defined their rights and for as long as they remained on their parental estates, they had usufruct shares in the estate's production, and rights to care when sick and to old age residence until the day they died.

Finally, the householder is chef d'entreprise (French¹), responsible for the success of the annual production cycle and for the maintenance of a surplus of food and products necessary to sustain the estate's resident human and animal population. The Icelandic countryman's saying fé er fostri líkt is appropriate in this context, namely that the care of livestock is as bothersome as the care of children.

Thus, the roles acted out by the householder are behavior patterns appropriate to his status and may be typified by the terms "pater familias," "estate manager" and

¹Chef d'entreprise term used in annual statistical publications on Iceland; Annual statistical publications were part of the Kingdom of Denmark Annual Statistics until 1944, and were printed in the native language of the community recorded in the statistics, i.e., Icelandic, Faroese, Danish as well as in French.

"elector."¹ The behavior patterns are indicative of the three institutions which made up the traditional rural society, namely the conjugal-natal unit, the estate and the district.

The district is in its organizational aspects much like the estates of which it is the collectivity. In this I am mindful of Vinogradoff's comment in which he calls the "township commons the mother of the fields," i.e., the source and origin of each estate's resources. The district is a residential unit, a place where a population resides by right of birth or by right of established residence due to a lengthy stay on an estate. This population had claims on the resources contained within the district, and these claims can be defined as poor relief, welfare, old age support and education. Those members of districts who, for lack of kinship relations to some estate, had no claims upon an estate's resources, had in reality the same claims as did the non-householder

¹In this discussion on the "office of the householder," as that status component of the social organisation of the district, which explains the nature of the district, and the commune, as a fusion of domestic-economic and jural spheres; I rely for my insight upon the following source and author:

M. Gluckman (ed.) Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations, Manchester University, 1962. M. Gluckman, "Introduction," in the Essays, etc., p. 41.

residents of estates.¹

The district is, moreover, a jurally defined institution recognised by the inviolability of its traditional boundaries and by its collective rights to plots of land outside of its boundaries, such as highland grazing plots. Like the estates, the district was an economic or subsistence productive entity wherein the whole community prospered through the joint labour of the estates contained within it. Both individual estate holders and the district council, in the name of the district, could contract labour and enter into economic relations with neighbouring districts for a share in productive resources not contained within the district's boundaries.

The estate and the district share several institutional characteristics in nineteenth century Iceland; both are residential, subsistence-production and jurally defined institutions.

Householders are the persons in a district who were charged with the dual responsibility for interest and welfare of an estate and the interest and welfare of a district. The district was a dually aligned institution; a member of its council was a member of

¹Sir P. Vinogradoff, The Growth of the Manor, 1920, London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., pp. 263-266.

institution; a member of its council was a member of the county council. In this manner each district was concerned not only with its own internal affairs but participated in the decisions which would support the interests of all like institutions, the neighbouring districts which jointly made up a county.

A distinction which can now be made between the estate and the district is in the nature of the claims individuals could make of both institutions. Rights of members of estates were domestic rights, the rights were as members of families. Thus, claims to residence, livelihood, and support when a child, when ill or old are defined by the Icelandic concepts of the family, and are rights which rest upon the concepts of filiation and descent. The claims residents of districts possessed were in those cases where those born in a district had a birthright to district support and welfare and those who had lived in the district for a long time as adult workers on estates. Such claims in nineteenth century Iceland were the rights of all citizens, rights defined as jural and civil rights, but for their exercise and execution a citizen had to be a district member. Hence, in the cases of individuals who possessed no claims to family support or who as members of families were from

such poor estates that they could not be cared for by their own, the Hrepp organisation provided assistance.

The Domestic Cycle

The sociologist C. Loomis was the first English language scholar to call attention to the study of the 'developmental cycle in domestic groups' with a comparative analysis of rural North American, Latin American and German households.¹ In 1957-1958 additional comments and further research brought this subject to the attention of both British and North American social scientists.² The research on peasant households is an attempt to describe the changes which occur within such households in a given community. It is a description which takes into account ecologic restraints and social traditions such as kinship, jural rights, and the ideology of the family in order to provide an understanding of the logic of the actions taken by members of rural communities. Quite often the data necessary to accomplish an analysis of peasant households in a given community is difficult to obtain, since most

¹A. V. Chayanov analysed the domestic cycle of Russian peasant households in 1922, on the basis of over 3,000 zemstvo studies done in Russia between 1890-1914. See D. Thorner, B. Kerblay, R. E. F. Smith (eds.), A. V. Chayanov, The Theory of Peasant Economy, American Economic Association Translation Series, (1966), Illinois.

²C. Loomis, "The cross section vs. the historical method in family life cycle analysis," in Studies of Rural Social Organization in the United States, Latin America and Germany, East Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 1945.

M. Fortes, "Introduction," in The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups, J. Goody (ed.), Cambridge: University Press, 1962. P. Glick, American Families, New York: Wiley, 1957.

communities studied by social anthropologists are not well documented. If extensive census documentation from the past does exist, quite often the information contained in the documents is not useful to such a study. For example, the abundant Icelandic census documentation reflects the concerns of the government more than it describes the life and activities of local peasant households during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Estates in the censuses are divided for taxation purposes into separate households, and household residents are noted in census documents more for reasons of administration of public relief, education of children, or care of the old than for the reason of providing information on the natural life of the small community which was the estate at this time.

The three methods presently used in the analysis of the "domestic cycle" are (1) the historical method, (2) the cross-sectional method, and (3) the panel analysis method. The historical method is the collection of the life histories of the oldest living members of a community. The problem in this approach is the often faulty memories of old people; but its positive result is the collection of material which provides an insight into the values and norms guiding the actions and decisions taken in the community. The cross-sectional method is a random sample taken from the total number of households in a community. On the basis of the sample, a logical sequence of the

"domestic cycle" can be described, since

... in each community we can, if we wish, find several types--a 'nuclear family type,' an 'extended patrilocal type,' an 'extended matrilocality type' and so forth... when it is recognised that these so-called types are in fact phases in the 'developmental cycle' of a single general form for each society, confusion vanishes. Residence patterns are the crystallisation, at a given time, of the development process...¹

The advantages of the cross-sectional method are obvious. Most household studies done in peasant communities over the past decade or so have used this method not only as a data gathering method, but also as a perspective on the sequence of events in domestic units in a community, as is stated in the above quotation. The drawback to this method is that it reflects the time of research in the absence of any other kind of data such as life histories or census documentation from the past. The description possible in the use of the cross sectional method is one which provides the information on the households of the community as an 'ethnographic present,' i.e., at the time of the research. This method cannot by itself provide further insight into possible factors which would have caused changes in household formation in the community and which have shaped the households in being researched. Neither can the cross-sectional method by itself permit any assessment of factors which would have consequences for the future of domestic units in the community.

¹M. Fortes, "Introduction," in The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups, J. Goody, (ed.), Cambridge: University Press, 1966, p. 3.

The panel analysis is a method which for its success depends upon a series of cross-sectional studies, each study representative of a point in time. Each study must contain the same kind of information and when compared to others, make it possible to discover the factors having influenced the households in the community.

My own study on Skeid has used all three methods of analysis and data gathering. From the oldest living members of the community it was possible to discover the norms and values of the rural householder, the logic of the process of skifti (Icel.), the underlying principles of skifti vinna (Icel.), i.e., exchange labour between estates, and the chronology of the introduction of technology innovations on the estates in the district. The cross-sectional method was not strictly followed since in Skeid the number of households is relatively small and it was possible for me to reside in each household for 48 hours at some time during the field stay. However, the principle of the cross-sectional method given in M. Fortes' comment (p. 148) that households in a community exhibit all possible variations of arrangements of the domestic cycle was utilised in my analysis. Thus the 1968-1970 cross sectional analysis of Skeid established the kinds of data which would be necessary to carry out historic cross sectional samples, one for each decade, 1960, 1950, 1940, 1930, 1920, 1910, 1900, 1890, 1870, 1860, and for the year 1703, the year of the first national census in Iceland.

Once a decade sequence of samples had been collected for the 100-year period 1860-1970 it was possible to begin a panel analysis of the households in Skeid, and the factors which (a) establish a continuity of a given tradition of domestic cycle, and (b) the factors which influenced the change from the traditional household to the present.

The developmental cycle of the domestic group is one consisting of three phases, a phase of expansion, which lasts from the marriage of two people until the completion of their family. A second phase termed dispersion or fission, begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children are married. The phase of replacement is the third and final phase of the domestic unit. It begins with the retirement of the parents from active household management and lasts until the death of the widowed parent.¹ At this point the families of the children replace those of their parents in the social organisation of the community.

Chronology and Cycle in the District

The households of Skeidahrepp are located either upon a single estate or as part of an estate in which there are more than one independent domestic unit. Each unit occupies

¹M. Fortes, pp. 4-5.

its own living quarters, manages its own kitchen and its members reside apart from those of other units on that estate. To understand the chronological framework of the family units in Skeidahrepp it is necessary to know the times in the lives of adults when the phases begin and end in the domestic units of which they are the married pair.

Only by taking the family through the full extent of its development starting at birth and finishing at death, can we understand the basic laws of its composition. By so doing it is possible to discover what is the pragmatic basis upon which the domestic cycle rests in a farming system wherein isolated households were the production unit.¹

Thus wrote A. V. Chayanov in his analysis of rural Russian households.

In my analysis of the census material, as well as the information provided by present living householders on their own careers certain common facts appear: age of marriage and the establishment of the new household on an estate is on the average 29.0 years. The spacing of children is one or two years between each child. On the basis of this one may set up a table which resembles that which Chayanov used in analysing the production values in a rural Russian household (Table 28).

¹Ibid. A. V. Chayanov traced the natural history of the family and stressed demographic differentiation in contrast to Marxist concept of class differentiation of the peasantry. P. 154.

TABLE 28
FAMILY MEMBERS' AGES IN DIFFERENT YEARS

Year of Family's Existence	Ages of Children										Number of Persons	
	Husband	Wife	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th		
1	29	26										2
2	30	27	1									3
4	32	29	3	1								4
6	34	31	5	3	1							5
8	36	33	7	5	3	1						6
10	38	35	9	7	5	3	1					7
12	40	37	11	9	7	5	3					7
14	42	39	13	11	9	7	5	1				8
16	44	41	15	13	11	9	7	3				8
18	46	43	17	15	13	11	9	5	1			9
20	48	45	19	17	15	13	11	7	3	1		10
30	58	55	29	27	25	23	21	17	13	11		10

What distinguishes a traditional farming family from an urban family is not only the kinship unit but the dual nature of the domestic group. The labour force on the estate in Skeid throughout the period 1860-1900 is one of the adult members of the extended family. Thus, the marriage of a child, a son or daughter in the household, necessitates in Skeid the establishment of that child as an estate manager. If it was a daughter she would become the female head of household and her husband, the son-in-law, would become an estate manager working a part of the wife's father's estate as his own. Associated with marriage is the process of sharing the parental estate with the child's household, a process known in Iceland as skipti, i.e., to turn over or to exchange. The pattern of the chronology of phases in the domestic units in Skeidahrepp may be visualized thus:

TABLE 29
CHRONOLOGY OF PHASES IN THE RURAL
HOUSEHOLDS OF SKEIDAHREPP

Parent's unit:	Expansion	Fission	Replacement
Child's unit:		Expansion	Fission

Householders do not retire from active estate management before they are 68 to 70 years old, thus father and son, father and two sons, or a father and son-in-law work together as equals in the management of the estate, as

farmers, each of his own part.

Two terms, farm and household, are not separate, but instead are the single whole in what I call impartible inheritance. This is the irreducible minimum transmitted from one generation in order to establish the next. To break up this economic package is to counter the strategy of farming and to deny to the next generation that viable basis upon which to build its householdership. In order to marry and to establish a household, one must be the farmer. The farmer is one who is a householder.

This duality is understood by peasants and by farming folk. As A. V. Chayanov states in his discussion on rural economics, "the first fundamental characteristic of the farm economy is that it is a family economy ..."¹ Professor B. Björnsson, in his historic analysis of marriage and betrothal in Iceland, describes the event called festar (Icel.), the betrothal of the young couple was a ceremony which in the nineteenth century included a legal document wherein was stated that the parental estates of the young couple would contribute as assets to future household of the children.

A formal betrothal agreement is no longer a tradition in Skeid. However, nineteenth century practice continues

¹Ibid., p. 154.

and parents settle upon their children who are to be married as part of an estate. This process, called skipti (Icel.) as described, does involve a legal contract and at present still antedates a marriage. The phase of "replacement" in the domestic cycle in the district began with the retirement of the parents and lasted until both were dead. The law on inheritance specified that although the estate was legally divided in the act of skipti (Icel.), the parents, and later a surviving spouse, retained one-third of the estate. The parental unit could not be abolished and as inheritance could not occur until both parents were deceased. With the act of inheritance the parental domestic cycle came to an end and the children's households replaced the parents' as part of the social organisation of the district.

Estate Management During the Traditional Period

The division of the estate necessary for the establishment of a new household was done in accordance with the law on inheritance. The analysis of the 12 censuses of the district's households, as well as the career histories of the farmers of the nineteenth century indicate that actual practise conformed to the formal principles inherent in the laws of the society. Thus, the principle of joint farming in the district results from events occurring within the domestic unit, and it is at the

juncture of domestic events and subsistence traditions where we find the reason for the tradition of felagsbu (Icel.) in Skeid.

A couple had to have property with which to maintain themselves and their children. Accordingly only heir designates could marry and farm within the district. The property owned by the heir-designate's father would be assigned a portion of the estate for his own use. If he was an only son he would be assigned one half of the estate; if he had a brother, he was assigned one quarter; if he had a sister and no brothers he was assigned two-thirds of the one half of the estate and his sister and her husband the remaining one-third of the one half. The heir or heirs designate could use the land for farming but could not sell it. Thus, father and son managed the estate as a joint enterprise, and a son would at about age 29 exchange his position from one of being a child within his parental domestic sphere to become a householder, an estate manager with his father and thus enter the jural sphere of relations in the rural community.

In traditional farming society in Iceland inheritance and marriage worked together as a system wherein certain resources were transmitted as a bundle of rights and property to certain individuals. This impartible inheritance, the bundle of assets transferred generation

by generation by parents to their children in essence conformed to the comment by M. Fortes, that when the phase of replacement occurred, the households of the children replaced those of their parents.

The act of skipti (Icel.) wherein the future inheritance was settled while the father continues active farmwork, not only established the claims of the child who would replace his parents as householder of an estate. This act further brought about jointly managed farms and the variations in the pattern of estate management between two or more individuals who all are managers of parts of the estate. It will be seen that the variations of management are in reality expressions of the stage or phase of the domestic unit in question. However, regardless of the type of arrangement, sharing in the estate's management has occurred throughout the period for which censuses exist and indicates that this arrangement of estate management is traditional to the district of Skeid.

In the past rules concerning who received the estate followed a pattern. The choice was apparently based upon the timing of the marriage, a father's estimate of the son's ability to farm, the age of the father or the wealth of the property. In some cases, the estate was too small to be subdivided and could be transmitted only as a whole. This would necessitate waiting until a

father's retirement.

TABLE 30
JOINT ESTATE MANAGEMENT IN SKEID

Father and Son	32	Alienated (Sold)	5
Father and Son-In-Law	7	Brother and Brothers Sons	3
Miscellaneous (Tenanted, 1; Foster- Son, 1)			
Total number of cases for the Period:	49		
Number of cases analysed:	49		

C. M. Foster's description of Mexican peasant social organisation in Tzintzuntzan states that the relationship between two adult individuals in the community may be described as "dyadic."¹ In Foster's usage the "dyad" is an unnamed principle of reciprocity which underlies the formal ties among the villagers. A tie which "crosscuts formal ties and serves as the glue which holds society together. It is an informal structure in which significant relationships between individuals are achieved rather than ascribed." But this tie between partners in the rural Mexican social organisation lacks ritual or legal validation. This contrasts to the

¹C. M. Foster, Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967.

tradition in Skeid. Here, ties between partners of an estate are formal since a declaration of partition of the estate must be undertaken before a partnership can be established. Secondly, the achievement oriented aspect which is named by M. Foster is not relevant to Skeid. Partnerships between estate holders in the commune are derived from the factors inherent in the domestic cycle, and are based upon kinship, filiation and descent. The joint estate system is based on ascribed kinship statuses, e.g., the relationships of fathers to sons, to sons-in-law, between brothers and brothers-in-law, and brothers and brothers' sons. It is this feature of the social organisation of the rural commune of Skeid which contributes to its solidarity not only in terms of the cooperation between estate partners, but also in the ties which exist between the inhabitants of the commune.

TABLE 31

THE TYPES OF JOINT FARMS IN THE DISTRICT OF SKEID

<u>Term (Icelandic)</u>	<u>Relationship Between Partners</u>
Felagsbú	Unspecified joint household
Fedgarbú	Father's and Son's joint farm
Braedrabú	Brother's joint farm
Systkinabú	Siblings' joint farm
Margabú	Brothers and Sibling Husbands' joint farm
Tengdabú	Father's and Daughter's Husband's joint farm

Throughout the pre-industrial period estate management can be shown to be a process in which fission and consolidation of estates occurred. As each new generation became householders, parental estates were divided; when parents died, the divided estate became once again a single unit to await the repeat of this process when, in the future, the children of the parents once again became householders. Research shows that limits existed in the traditional farming system to the number of estates which would be permitted in a district.

There is nothing especially noteworthy about the increases or decreases in population within the districts or counties of southern Iceland during the period 1800-1900. What is noteworthy is the persistence over a long period of time of the district's boundaries and its jural rights, and the constancy of the number of estates within the district and the numbers of households within each estate. Skuli Magnusson, who wrote a description of rural and socio-economic relations in 1786, lamented the conservative state of the traditional farming system. He wrote: ". . . most possess farms of from one-quarter to one mile in land area but neither till the soil nor fence it, and I understand the law to read 'briota skal Jord til tadna', that the soil should be dug and converted

from natural meadows into tun fields . . ." ¹ One can point to economic but not to ecologic restraints which would have prevented the populace from accomplishing in the nineteenth century what it did in the first two decades of the twentieth: namely, from banding together as members of a Hrepp and engaging in the kinds of cooperative endeavors which in the twentieth century so radically changed the circumstances of life in rural Iceland. For it was not the introduction of modern technology which caused work to be undertaken in soil reclamation, house construction, and expansion and development of each estate's households or its farming system. Modern technology, when introduced after the 1930's, aided in the acceleration of a process of change which had begun at a time when pre-industrial implements were still in use. This state of affairs indicates the existence of a social system possessing both formal and informal traditions and rules for behavior and about life which not only served as constraints upon individual enterprise but also succeeded in keeping the traditional farming system in balance.

I am reminded of the following conclusions Professor Vinogradoff makes at the end of his study "Villainage in England." He writes

¹S. Magnusson, Forsog til en kort Beskrivelse af Island (1786), Bibliotheca Arnarnaganaeana, Munksgaard 1944, Copenhagen, p. 45.

. .if we look at the village life of medieval England, . . . in order that we may detect the principles that hold it together, we shall be struck by several features which make it quite unlike the present arrangement of rural society the system as exhibited in England is linked to a division into holdings which gives it additional significance . . . The holding of the English peasant is distinguished by two characteristic features: it is a unit which as a rule does not admit of division; it is equal to other units in the same village . . . The holdings are not all equal . . . (in size or wealth) and the question may be put, why should an artificial arrangement contrived for the sake of equality start from a flagrant inequality? . . . a second difficulty may be found in the unchangeable nature of the holding . . . the insight (we gain) into the nature of these English village communities is that they did not aim at absolute equality; they subordinated the personal element to an agricultural one . . . whichever way we may look one and the same observation is forced upon us: the communal organization of the peasantry is more ancient and more deeply laid than the manorial order . . . a peasant class living and working in economically self-dependent communities under the loose authority of a lord, whose claims may proceed from political sources and affect the semblance of ownership . . .¹

The District of Skeid remained, since its creation in the tenth century, a perpetual and unchanged jural and civil entity. The number of estates which had been established prior to the seventeenth century was maintained until the first decades of the twentieth century, and the number of households each estate possessed in the past was maintained until the end of

¹P. Vinogradoff, Villainage in England, Essays in English Medieval History, (Republished, as copy of original edition of 1892), Scholarly Press, 1968, Grosse Pointe, Michigan . . . Quoted in part from pp. 397-409.

the nineteenth century. Impartible inheritance in the farming system of Southern Iceland meant that an estate or part of an estate was transferred as a single package of rights, duties, properties and prerogatives from older generation to younger. The status of estate-manager/householder persisted; he was that person who, as head of his household, protected and served the needs of his dependents; he was also a member of a corporate body, the Hrepp, or the district. It was not until the 1930's that the changes first became noticeable in rural Iceland.

The tradition of family, inheritance and rights of families of rural Skeid, and of the members of a district in traditional Iceland, will be described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: The Icelandic Kinship System

Prior Research on Icelandic Social
Organization

The Core Family

Formal Characteristics of the
Terminology

Summary

The Jural Rights of Family and Kin

The Laws of 1940, 1962

The Pragmatically Defined Family

Cognatic Descent

Rural Social Organization in the
Perspective of Bilateral-Cognatic
Descent

Even if kinship were not a central focus of anthropological study, any student of Icelandic life and institutions would be obliged to devote some time to its consideration, for Icelanders themselves are "kinship oriented."

Kinship involves ties among individuals arising from their relative positions within a system of relations of descent and affinity. Anthropologists consider kinship as central to their discipline not out of some antiquarian interest but because in the societies they study, rules regulating inheritance of property and succession to status distribute these rights among determinate categories of kin. In more primitive societies almost all the rights and obligations making up the social structure are so distributed. As I have shown, that was not the case in Icelandic rural society for the period considered. Political and legal rights devolved upon the individual by virtue of his membership in a commune, and as a citizen of the state. But the differentiated distribution of political rights, i.e., the franchise within a rural district, created the two statuses of householder and non-householder. An individual's right to one status or the other depended upon whether or not he inherited rights to land.

In this chapter I will first describe the prior research which has been done on Icelandic kinship and the information that scholars have produced thus far on

Icelandic social organization. Second, I will investigate the system of nomenclature, or the kinship terms which are present in the Icelandic language, with the view to discovering the formal characteristics of Icelandic kinship nomenclature. Third, I will describe the jural rules concerning (a) the extent of the close family, (b) the extent to which a wider kindred is recognized in the law, and (c) what constitutes impartible inheritance and general inheritance and rights to support. Finally, I will analyze Icelandic kinship according to the social/anthropological concepts of cognatic-bilateral kinship.

Prior Research On Icelandic Kinship

Earlier authors on Icelandic kinship studies are L. H. Morgan (1870), B. S. Phillpotts (1913), W. H. R. Rivers (1914), G. P. Murdock (1949, 1957, 1960), M. S. Edmondson (1957), R. T. Merrill (1964), and R. J. Bjerke (1969). All agree on the very conservative nature of Icelandic kinship terminology, and suggest that the terms in use at the present time may be traced to the tenth century.¹ Most of the terms used in Iceland today

¹L. Morgan, Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity in the Human Family, Smithsonian Institution, Contributions to Knowledge, No. 17, Washington, D. C., 1871.

G. P. Murdock, 1949, Social Structure, Macmillan Co., New York.

G. P. Murdock, 1957, "World Ethnographic Sample," American Anthropologist, vol. 59 (1957), p. 678.

are, with few exceptions, the same as those one may read in the Sagas. Some terms as 'foreldra' (Icel. pl.), i.e., parents, prior to the sixteenth century meant 'ancestors.' This is shown, for example, in the Icelandic version of the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament printed in the 1584 Holar version wherein the word 'foreldra' (Icel. pl.) is used by the translator to describe the ancestry of the Saviour. Another term 'hju' (Icel. pl.) meant in medieval Iceland a worker and married couple on an estate. At present the term designates the married head of a household. It is, however, true that most terms in use today have retained their centuries-old meaning. To Lewis Henry Morgan, Icelandic kinship terminology, as he described it in 1870, was a descendant system of an earlier Norse system; this in turn was a branch of the Teutonic-Germanic systems which descended from the Indo-Aryan kinship systems. Thus, it constituted a relatively unchanged transmission of a system of kinship nomenclature reaching from ancient Indo-Aryan society to a 'present' Icelandic nineteenth century social usage. In Morgan's scheme of human and social evolution, the

M. S. Edmondson, 1957, "Kinship Terms and Kinship Concepts," American Anthropologist, vol. 59, (1957), pp. 403, 407-408, 422.

R. T. Merrill, 1964, "Notes on Icelandic Kinship Terminology," American Anthropologist, vol. 66, (1964), pp. 867-872.

R. Bjerke, "A Contrastive Study of Old German and Old Norwegian Kinship Terms," Part II, International Journal of American Linguistics, vol. 35, no. 1 (1969).

stages of human development could be discerned. The promiscuous horde, mankind's earliest stage of evolution, could be diagnosed by the presence of classificatory kinship terms only, indicating that the group was primary and the individual was submerged and had little if any rights to property.

Morgan's use of Icelandic kinship terminology did become part of the nineteenth century debates on human social evolution.¹ The controversy over Morgan's scheme questioned not only the applicability of his model of social evolution, but also the distinction which he made between kinship systems by calling them 'classificatory' and 'descriptive.' By the time of the W. H. R. Rivers lectures in 1914, this distinction between kinship systems was understood to be erroneous. 'Classificatory' and 'descriptive' refer to terms in a kinship system and not to whole terminologies.² The debate about whether or not Norse-Teutonic kinship systems were at one time tribal and lineal systems and had become cognatic and bilateral was researched and answered by the thesis written by

¹L. H. Morgan, System of Consanguinity and Affinity in the Human Family, Smithsonian Institution, Contributions to Knowledge No. 17, Washington, D.C., 1871.

²G. P. Murdock, Social Structure, N.Y. 1961, Macmillan Comp. p. 100.

Dame Bertha Phillpotts in 1913. Her conclusion is as follows ". . . the kinless condition of the vast majority of the settlers leaves a permanent impress on the Icelandic constitution. The bond between Godi and his Thingmen is not that of kinship but neighbourhood . . ." Her conclusion is that kindred solidarity, i.e., tribal and/or lineal social organization had decayed in medieval Norway and Iceland; however, there were surviving remnants of the persistence of kindred solidarity in medieval Denmark, Southern Sweden, Schleswig, and Holstein.¹

Her attempt "to discover how long the solidarity of the kindred survived as a social factor of importance in the various Teutonic countries" did not result in an analysis of ego's 'arbor consanguinitis,' i.e. an individual's ties with a cognatic kin to the fullest extent. She examines a segment of kin relations in an analysis of the structure of the "peace family" or that group of ego's agnates who were responsible in matters relating to slayings, or 'wergild' or 'bloodfeud,' i.e., those individuals who come within "bauga," (Icel.) or the circle of kin.² Thus, her analysis is of the structure of the 'blood-feud' group,

¹B. S. Phillpotts, Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After. Cambridge, 1913, University Press.

²B. Magnusson Olson, Um Kristnikökuna Arid 1000, Reykjavik, Felagsprentsmidjunnj, 1900, p.24 f.

as this is recorded in historic and legal documents. Authors such as P. Vinogradoff and W. E. Mitchell have commented upon the limited focus of Phillpotts' analysis.¹

Dame Bertha makes certain assumptions, and fails to make some crucial distinctions, namely as in the above quote that a move from Norway to Iceland was one wherein the immigrants lost all connection with their families in Norway, and failed to carry on a tradition of family which had been in existence in earlier Norwegian society. There is no reason why a group of settlers in Iceland in the tenth century, after an initial period of urgency of settlement building and establishment of subsistence production, would not have turned to the task of recreating in their social organization the laws and traditions that they had left in their homeland. In fact, they do so; but in medieval Norway, as Dame Bertha does point out, there was no extended lineal family organization or tribal organization. Another problem in the debate undertaken by her thesis is the assumption of a single tradition of social and jural organization and rules applying to all social classes in medieval Scandinavia. Most experts on medieval Scandinavia

¹P. Vinogradoff, Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence, vol 2, London, 1920, John Murray; W. E. Mitchell, "Theoretical Problems in the Concept of Kindred," American Anthropologist (1963) 65:343-354.

describe the existence of at least three classes of men: nobles-warriors, peasants-freedmen, and serfs-slaves. Her research, based upon an analysis of settlement documents concerning family disputes, discusses disputes between noble families and not those of the peasantry. It is regrettable that social anthropologists, since the day of B. Phillpotts, have with few exceptions,¹ ignored the medieval social organization of northern European peasantries; since, during the period from the tenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, jural and corporate relations of peasantries and their districts were defined in the laws of all Scandinavian countries. The laws of Eirik of Sweden, Haakon of Norway and Valdemar of Denmark, all written during the mid-thirteenth century, and continuing an earlier and older legal tradition, emphasized in great detail the primacy of the rural district or Hrepp organization, describing the several and separate prerogatives and duties of the common and free peasantry as being distinct from those rights and prerogatives of the nobility. Hence, when Dame Bertha writes of medieval Norse societies as having abandoned

¹I.e., Homans, The English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century, Cambridge, 1941.

earlier traditions of tribal social organization, one must first decide whether these ever existed; and, if such an organization did exist, whether all members of the society were included. The negative evidence her thesis does show is this, that from the founding of Iceland eleven centuries ago social organization in that country may be described as cognatic and bilateral.

W. H. R. Rivers's lectures in 1914 contain some comments upon the nature of the Germanic-Scandinavian family system, and he does make a distinction between kinship and descent which has been observed to this day. This distinction was considered by scholars prior to Rivers; for example,

It would be wrong to assume that the predominance of agnatic organization necessarily implied a denial of all other modes of relationship . . . that the predominance of agnatic relationship must have entailed . . . the exclusion of a relationship through the women, or vice versa. That the recognition of rights proceeding through women is to be considered a bar to any working arrangement of agnatic kinship . . .¹

It is Rivers, however, who called attention to the concept of kindred, and it is to his understanding of this concept that most contemporary anthropologists refer, i.e.,

¹P. Vinogradoff, *Growth of the Manor*, pp. 9,90. Historical Jurisprudence vol. 1, p. 306 f.

Fortes, Freeman, Murdock and others.¹ Rivers distinguished among: "(1) the small group of parents and children; (2) the bilateral group consisting of persons related through both father and mother, (3) the unilateral group of persons related through father only, and (4) the unilateral group consisting of persons related through the mother only." He named the groups respectively, (1) the family, (2) the kindred, (3) the patrilineal joint family and (4) the matrilineal joint family.²

Descent is defined as rules which are jural in nature and which affiliate an individual at birth with a group of relatives which provides rights and obligations such as status, property, etc. Kin groups are defined quite simply as any social grouping based upon kinship ties. Kin groups may be ego-centered, lasting the lifetime of an individual and sundered at the time of his death, or kin groups may last over several generations.

¹M. Fortes, The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi, London, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 14.

J. D. Freeman, "The Family System of the Iban of Borneo," in, The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups (ed) J. Goody, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, no. 1, Cambridge, University Press. 1958, p. 52

G. P. Murdock, Social Structure, 1949, Macmillan, N.Y. pp. 45-56

²W. H. R. Rivers, Social Organization, in J. Perry (ed) New York, 1924, Alfred Knopf, p. 15.

In brief, in contrast to descent systems which are founded upon formal and jural rules and are major components of the social organization, kin groups may or may not be central to a social organization. Rivers' lectures of 1914, insofar as the Germanic kinship systems, in which I include the Scandinavian systems, are concerned, set aside what was at best a theoretical and historical debate, namely, the origin of Germanic kinship, at a time in the distant past when such systems might or might not have been lineal and tribal descent systems. It was not until 1975, in the *Festschrift* to E. E. Evans-Pritchard, that H. H. Meinhard renewed what until then had been a Victorian debate about Teutonic kinship.¹

Rivers stated ". . . a family system . . . a body of persons of common descent living in one house . . . the patriarchal or extended family, the 'Gross-familie' of the Germans . . .,"² thus emphasizing that the core unit in Germanic social organization was a three generational household the members of which were so

¹ H. H. Meinhard, "The Patrilineal Principle in Early Teutonic Kinship," in, J. H. M. Beattie, R. G. Lienhardt (eds) *Studies in Social Anthropology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 1-30.

² W. H. R. Rivers, *Kinship and Social Organization*, R. Firth, D. M. Schneider (eds) *L. S. E. Monographs in Social Anthropology*, no. 34, London, 1968, Athlone Press, p. 83.

because of marriage and filiation. In another set of brief comments in his lectures of 1914, Rivers states that the Norse-Scandinavian kinship nomenclature is descriptive in nature, i.e., made up of compounded elementary terms, and that the source of these terms would be found in the extended family or within the large households.¹

In 1959, two articles appeared in the American Anthropologist which had relevance to the study of Icelandic kinship. The first was M. S. Edmondson's article, entitled "Kinship terms and Kinship Concepts,"² in which the author combined formal linguistic analysis of selected European kinship terminologies with a geographic area distribution of terminologies.

Edmondson writes,

. . . it is our general impression that modern European languages have displayed almost no tendency to alter their kinship terminologies in recent centuries . . . twentieth century Dutch terminology is identical, for example, with eighteenth century Flemish terminology . . . Modern Icelandic . . . preserves a similar continuity with the 'classical' Icelandic of the twelfth century . . .³

¹W. H. R. Rivers, Kinship and Social Organization, R. Firth, D. M. Schneider (eds) L. S. E. Monographs in Social Anthropology, no. 34, London, 1968, Athlone Press, p. 89.

²M. S. Edmondson, "Kinship terms and Kinship Concepts," American Anthropologist, vol. 59 (1957) pp. 303-413.

³M. S. Edmondson, "Kinship terms and Kinship Concepts," American Anthropologist, vol. 59 (1957) pp. 403.

By formal analysis, Edmondson does show that a number of societies bordering on the North Sea share the following structural concepts as regards social organization: English, Dutch, German, Norwegian, and Swedish kinship terminologies share the concept of differentiation of lineal from collateral relatives and are distinguished by terms for three generations namely Parent, Ego, and Child, and the differentiation of each resulting term is by sex of referent. Further, he notes that within the Scandinavian group, i.e., Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, exist a set of concepts which are ". . . analytic, sex of referent differentiated terms for parent, child, sibling, and the descriptive application of these to all other relatives, except that a special term for cousin seems characteristic . . ." ¹

European kinship terminologies, in the author's view, possess at least four structural features, each of which is typical of a region. Northwestern and southwestern European terminologies show a differentiation of lineal from collateral relatives. Northwestern European systems possess a three-generational division in contrast to the five-generational division characteristic of southern and eastern European systems. Sexual referent differentiation

¹M. S. Edmondson, "Kinship terms and Kinship Concepts," American Anthropologist, vol. 59 (1957) pp. 407.

is northern and central European in distribution . . .¹
 To sum up his comments, Icelandic kinship terminology is as a type of the Scandinavian group, three-generational in division, it differentiates lineal from collateral relatives, and each resulting kinship term is differentiated by sex of referent. Edmondson's paper provides a historic and formal analysis of kinship systems and is a contribution to the continuing discussion in the literature on the question of social organization in societies without lineal descent groups. As I have already stated, Rivers' definition of the kindred, suggesting that it is a special type of kinship structure, has been used by most anthropologists since his day.²
 G. P. Murdock, a major exponent of the assumption that kindred is an especially compatible structural feature of cognatic social organization, researched 250 societies recorded in the Human Relations Area Files at Yale University. His conclusion is, ". . . clear inferences attest to the presence of kindreds in 33 societies in our

¹Edmondson, Op. cit. p. 408.

²I.e., B. Phillpotts (1913), W. H. R. Rivers (1924), G. P. Murdock (1949), R. E. Leach (1950), W. Goodenough (1955) R. Pehrson (1957), G. P. Murdock (1959), W. Davenport (1959), R. Fox (1967), and others.

sample In general, they are clearly associated with an absence of, or a minimal stress upon, unilinear descent. Probably they will ultimately appear to be characteristic of most bilateral societies"1

This point of view written in 1949 remains unchanged in his most recent remarks on kindred.² In 1959, Murdock wrote in an article for the American Anthropologist, a survey of Icelandic social organization in the eleventh century. In brief, Icelanders lived on dispersed homesteads, each homestead occupied by a small extended family. There was an absence of local clans and an absence of patrilineal kin groups; descent was bilateral and any form of organized kin groups is unreported.³

With the exception of L. H. Morgan's list of Icelandic kinship terms in his publication of 1870, it was not until 1964 that another attempt was made by an anthropologist to

¹G. P. Murdock, "World Ethnographic Sample," American Anthropologist, vol. 59 (1957) pp. 664-688. See also, W. Goldschmidt, E. J. Knobel, "The Structure of the Peasant Family," American Anthropologist, vol. 73, no. 5 (1971) pp. 1058-1076.

²G. P. Murdock, "Cognatic Forms of Social Organization," in Social Structure in Southeast Asia, G. P. Murdock (ed.) Viking Fund Publication, Anthropology, no. 29 Wenner-Green Foundation, Chicago 1960, pp. 1-14.

³Ibid.

analyze Icelandic social organization.¹ Merrill's study was carried out in order to make available to anthropologists an outline of the kinship system of Iceland. He drew his material from dictionaries of thirteenth-century and modern Iceland. He divided the terms into four classes: (1) those used to distinguish a specific individual or relationship (Icel. fadir); (2) those distinguished from 1, in that they can be used reciprocally (Icel. brodir); (3) plural terms designating all persons of a particular relationship (Icel. fedgar), and (4) terms for large groups and people making up such groups (Icel. fraendi), and included in the article is for the first time in the literature an Icelandic genealogical chart. Merrill's contribution is not limited to the list of terms, an attempted classification and the genealogical chart; the author includes his own observations and interpretation of the development of the Icelandic kinship system. He concludes his analysis as follows:

". . . In summary, Icelandic kinship consists of two parallel systems; the first for everyday informal use, constructed basically of pairs of terms, distinguished by sex, for the three most important types of relations: blood, in-laws, and foster; the second carefully distinguishing and grouping relatives in terms of their reciprocal and mutual responsibilities. While it can be

¹R. Merrill, "Notes on Icelandic Kinship Terminology" in 'Brief Communications,' American Anthropologist, vol. 66, (1964) pp. 867-872.

stated . . . that no term basic to the two original systems has been lost . . . the historical trend suggests that both systems are breaking down . . . to form a new single system consistent with changing social conditions . . ."¹

Merrill's argument was that in daily use the kinship terms are those which apply to the members of the extended household. These terms I shall describe later as 'core' terms from which all other descriptive terms are produced by compounding. Secondly, he points to a number of Icelandic kinship terms for which there are no equivalents in modern English, such as 'faedgar' (Icel.) i.e. a father and his son(s), 'magur' (Icel.) brother-in-law, or 'fostra-sonur' (Icel.) foster, son and so on. He suggests that such terms denote persons who share equal responsibility and status and are thus considered identical. Thirdly, he argues for the presence of ancient terms which denote allodial (odal) rights. This latter point is a questionable conclusion, since when the Norwegian law of 1281 was introduced in Iceland it had to be changed in those paragraphs which defined allodial rights in order for the law to fit Icelandic traditions, where allodial rights were never recognized.

¹Ibid. p. 872.

The most recent analysis of relevance to Icelandic social organization is a study of Old Norwegian kinship terms.¹ Bjerke's source material is taken from the earliest Norwegian vernacular documents dated from 1189 AD. Bjerke, like Bertha Phillpotts in 1913, bases his analysis upon the jural and written settlement agreements concerned with family disputes over property and inheritance. His study of the documents consisted of extracting from such medieval sources any kinship term which appeared and subjecting these terms to the following analyses:

I. Internal Criteria

Frequency of term, use in compounding, use with adjectives, extended meaning, double meaning, use to describe an individual, kinship terms in stock phrases, textual glosses, use with synonyms, social level, dialect and surnames.

II. External Criteria

Relatives, age of persons mentioned in documents, i.e., nobles whose lives were recorded in biographies. Family trees of genealogies on some of the individuals named in the documents.²

¹R. Bjerke, A Contrastive Study of Old German and Old Norwegian Kinship Terms. Part II, Supplement to International Journal of American Linguistics, vol. 35, no. 1, Jan. 1969, Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics Memoir 22, University of Indiana, Baltimore, Md. 1969, Waverly Press.

²Ibid, pp. 9-17, "Method."

In contrast to the other anthropologists mentioned thus far as having written on Icelandic kinship, Bjerke bases his material upon vernacular and jural source documents. The problem with taking one's information from dictionaries and other literary sources is that it is not possible to discern if a kinship term represents a norm or an ideal. For example in some Icelandic literature kinship behavior is made to resemble that ideal popular in medieval French romances.

Bjerke's research may be summarized as follows. The terms which appear in the documents describe the members of the family as "sonur, brodir, fadir, dottir, modir, systir, barn, systkin, and fedgar;" in English as son, brother, father, daughter, mother, sister, child, siblings, and father and son(s).¹ In fifty-nine percent of the kinship terms found, patronymics have been used and have remained since the thirteenth century in both Norway and Iceland as the basis for namegiving. For example, in modern Icelandic, the son Fridrik of the father, Jon, is known as Fridrik Jonsson, Jon's daughter Oddny is called Oddny Jonsdottir. Compound kinship terms are formed almost exclusively from the six basic terms relating to the family, i.e., fadir, modir, brodir, systir, sonur, dottir.

¹Ibid, pp. 55-59, "Discussion of the Norwegian Kinship Terms."

Thirty percent of the kinship terms found in the documents designate relationships outside the family by the use of compound terms. In the medieval documents the following terms were found, "fóðurfadir, fódurbrodur, modurfadir, modurbrodur, modursystir, brodursonur, brodur dottir, systur sonur, systur dottir, sonar dottir," and are in English, father's father, father's brother, mother's father, mother's brother, mother's sister, brother's son, brother's daughter, sister's son, sister's daughter, son's daughter, constituting that group of relatives which in English kinship terminology would be denoted by the classificatory terms grand-parents, grand-children, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces. The most common word for in-law found in the documents was "magur," i.e., a male-in-law, who could be a wife's father, wife's brother, sister's husband and daughter's husband; no other in-law terms were used.

Bjerke's conclusions are, (1) the keynote of the system of Old Norwegian kinship nomenclature is simplicity, in that six basic terms denote the family and serve as the compound root terms for extended family relations; (2) relations one step beyond the family are designated by compound terms; (3) in the sources researched no individual term was found which described relationships beyond the second degree; relationships beyond the second degree were designated by a classificatory term "fraendi," and its derivatives such

as "fraendkona," female relative, or "fraendbarn," a related child. Thus, dispute settlements involving property and status in thirteenth century Norwegian material recognized two degrees of the family: (a) the conjugal family, and (b) relations to the second degree.

Prior research on Icelandic social organization spans about one hundred years of time, beginning with L. H. Morgan's listing of Icelandic kinship terms. Morgan used this kinship system to illustrate the existence of a "purely descriptive kinship system," which would serve as an example of the advance of human societies from a prior and primeval state to a more advanced social state. The research by Bertha Phillpotts did much to provide for the anthropological scholars of her day the insight that no present known historical evidence existed of the presence of lineal and "tribal" organizations among the ancient Norse-Teutonic peoples. However, the discussion continued as to whether a more ancient and unrecorded Norse social organization possibly tribal in form had existed. But this continuing debate rested upon a germanic and nineteenth century tradition of linguistic analysis, that is, upon the etymology of kinship terms and the history of their development and meaning. I will not dwell on this debate, other than to provide a well-known example of its kind:

".....The Anglo-Saxon word for kinfolk was maeg (maegas). A man owed loyalty to his 'kith and kin.' Kith were one's friends by vicinage, one's neighbours; kin were persons descended from a common ancestor. So, for 'kith and kin' Anglo-Saxon would say 'his magas and his frynd' which is translated in Latin as cognati atque amici . . . :¹

However, another direction of research, begun by Rivers, and continued by Murdock and Edmondson, occurred in the study of the type of social organization which the Icelandic kinship system represented. The issue was whether a 'kindred' was or was not a special kind of social organization, and further, whether the kindred was especially the outcome of cognatic descent organization. Many scholars have participated in this research and in the debate on the nature of the kindred, and there is no need on my part to list them all. However, the result of this research was an analysis of the kindred and a cross-cultural description of cognatic descent systems.

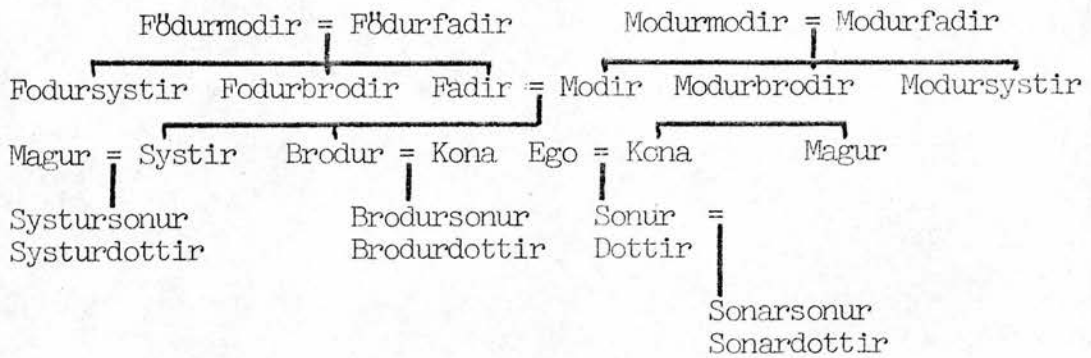
¹A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Introduction," in, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, D. Forde, (eds) African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, International African Institute, Oxford University Press, p. 15, 1950.

It was not until the publication of Merrill's paper in the American Anthropologist in 1964 that anything new appeared on Icelandic social organization. Until then, comments upon the Norse, and upon Icelandic kinship, were generally made by choosing illustrations from the Icelandic Sagas to serve as examples of a putative "ancient Norse-Icelandic kinship organization." One now must ask whether these illustrations ever existed except in the author's imagination. It was not until the publication of Bjerke's thesis in 1969 that the nearly fifty-year hiatus in the research on Icelandic social organization finally came to a close.

The Core Family

W. H. R. Rivers stated about the Germanic family the following: ". . . a family system . . . a body of persons of common descent living in one house . . . the patriarchal or extended family, the 'Gross Familie' of the Germans . . ." ¹ Thus, following River's advice, I have provided below a diagram of the household and core terms of the Icelandic kinship system. The terms are used by and about the members in the family, and

¹W. H. R. Rivers, Kinship and Social Organization (eds.) R. Firth, D. M. Schneider, LSE Monographs in Social Anthropology no. 34, London 1968, Athlone Press, p. 83-89.



When classified according to linguistic structure, kinship terms are distinguished as elementary, derivative and descriptive.¹ In Icelandic terminology the elementary terms, or irreducible words, are:

<u>Icelandic</u>	<u>English</u>
Afi	Father's father, Mother's father
Amma	Father's mother, Mother's mother
Fadir	Father
Modur	Mother
Sonur	Son
Dottir	Daughter
Brodur	Brother
Systir	Sister
Barn	Child
Kona	Wife
Madur	Spouse
Fraendi	Male Kinsman
Fraenka	Female Kinsman
Magur	In-law
Svili	In-law

The listing of elementary terms contains both denotative terms and classificatory terms. I define denotative as

¹G. P. Murdock, Social Structure, New York, 1960
(Seventh Ed.) Macmillan Comp. p. 98.

a term which applies only to relatives in a single kinship category defined by sex, generation and genealogical connection.¹ A classificatory term applies to persons of two or more kinship categories as defined by sex and genealogical connection.

The elementary and denotative terms in Icelandic terminology are those of a three-generational family; thus, *afi-fadir-sonur*, (Icel. sing.) i.e. father's father, father and son, and parallel to these terms, *amma-modur-dottir*, (Icel. sing.), i.e. mother's mother, mother and daughter. The elementary and classificatory terms are, *barn-fraendi-fraenka-magur-svili*, (Icel. sing.), i.e. child, male kinsman, female kinsman, and in-law of ego's generation.

A derivative term is one that is the compound of an elementary term and some other lexical element which does not have primarily a kinship meaning.² I list the lexical elements which appear in the terminology in connection with the elementary terms, thus:

¹Ibid. p. 99.

²Ibid. p. 99.

<u>Lexical Element</u>	<u>Kin Term (example)</u>	<u>English</u>
-lang	Langafi	(Grand)-father
-tengd	Tengdamodir	Mother-in-law
-tveir	Tvimenningur	2nd Cousin
-thrir	Thrimenningur	3rd Cousin
-fjorir	Fjormenningur	4th Cousin
-fim ¹	Fimmenningur	5th Cousin

I should point out that the Icelandic terms for 2nd-5th cousin are lexical elements and are not pure kinship terms. In Icelandic, such terms as "tvimenningur" take on an extended meaning as (a) designating two people together, as in the statement 'two people drinking together,' or 'two people riding on the same horse,' 'rida tvimening' (Icelandic); (b) designating cousinship in given ascending generation; and (c) terms with transfer meaning wherein the word 'tvimening' takes on the larger meaning of the quality of twos.²

The word "tengd," denoting in-law, can be used both in a denotative sense, i.e. tengda-modir (Icel.), mother-in-law, as well as in a classificatory sense, i.e. tengda folk (Icel.), namely 'in-laws;' but what distinguishes this term for in-laws from the elementary terms given on page 188 namely 'magur' - 'svilli' (Icel.), is that the word 'tengd' is used about in-laws in the first ascending

¹The Icelandic numbers are given in nominative singular.

²S. Blondal, *Islensk-Donsk Ordabok*, 1924, Copenhagen, Gutenberg, p. 873 entry: "tvimenningur (-s,ar).

and descending generations to ego; thus, 'tengdamodir,' - 'fadir' or 'tengda sonur;' 'dottir,' denotatively, i.e., mother and father-in-law and son and daughter-in-law. This characteristic of the term is also true when it is used classificatorily as 'tengdafolk,' i.e. spouse's parents, and 'tengdabarn/börn' a child-in-law, or children-in-law to ego. But 'magur,' 'magar,' 'magkona' designates a brother-in-law, i.e. in-laws of ego's generation, or for example the sister-in-law, as well as 'svili,' 'svilkona,' 'svilar,' which designate wife's sister's husband, husband's brother's wife, and spouses of husband of wife's siblings. I conclude that in Icelandic terminology lexical elements when combined with elementary terms, designate descent and cousinship, or in-law relations above and below ego's generation.

A descriptive term is one which is compounded from two or more elementary terms, such as 'BrodurModurFadir' (Icel.) i.e. Mother's Father's Brother, designating a specific relative.¹ On pages 191-195 there are listed ninety such terms, all of which are terms for relatives designating a single category of person according to sex, generation and genealogical connection.

¹Ibid. p. 99.

TABLE 32
ICELANDIC KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY, THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENT TERMS

<u>Icelandic terminology</u>		<u>English equivalent</u>
Denotative term ¹	Classificatory	
<u>3rd Ascending Generation.</u>		
Fadurfödurfadir	Langafi	FAFAFA
Modurfödurfadir	Langamma	FAFAMO
Modurmodirfadir	Langafi	MOMOFA
Modurmodirmodir	Langamma	MOMOMO
<u>2nd Ascending Generation.</u>		
Födurfadir	Afi	FAFA
Födurmodir	Amma	FAMO
Brodurfödurfadir		FAFABR
Systirfödurfadir	Afasystkin (Grandparental Sibs.)	FAFASI
Brodurfödurmodir		FAMOBR
Systurfödurmodir		FAMOSI
Modurfadur	Afi	MOFA
Modurmodir	Amma	MOMO
Brodurmodurfadur		MOFABR
Systurmodurfadur	Ömmusystkin (Grandparental Sibs.)	MOFASI
Brodurmodurmodir		MOMOBR
Systurmodurmodir		MOMOSI
<u>1st Ascending Generation.</u>		
Fadir		FA
Födurbrodir		FABR
Födursystir		FASI
Modur		MO
Modurbrodir		MOBR
Modursystir		MOSI
Kona Fadurbrodir		FABRWI
Kona Modurbrodir		MOBRWI
Eiginmadur Modursystur		MOSIHU
Eiginmadur Fadursystur		FASIHU
Fengdafadir		WIFA
Fengdamodir		WIMO

Icelandic terminologyEnglish equivalent

Denotative term

Classificatory

Ego's Generation.

Brodur		BR
Systur	Systkinabörn	SI
Kona		WI
Magur		WIBR
Magkona		BRWI
Magur		SIHU
Magkona		WISI
Svili		WISIHU
Sonur Modursystir	Fraendi	MOSISO
Dottur Modursystir	Fraenka	MOSIDA
Sonur Fadurbrodir	Fraendi	FABRSO
Dottur Fadurbrodir	Fraenka	FABRDA
Sonur Modurbrodir	Fraendi	MOBRSO
Dottur Modurbrodir	Fraenka	MOBRDA
Sonur Fadursystir	Fraendi	FASISO
Dottur Fadursystir	Fraenka	FASIDA

1st Descending Generation.

Sonur	Barn	SO
Dottir		DA
Tengdasonur		DAHU
Tengdadottir		SOWI
Brodursonur		BRSO
Brodurdottir		BRDA
Systursonur		SISO
Systurdottir		SIDA
Brodur Eiginmadur Dottir		DAHUBR
Systur Eiginmadur Dottir		DAHUSI
-Kona Brodursonur		BR SOWI
-Eiginmadur Brodurdottir		BR DAHU
-Kona Systursonur		SISOWI
-Eiginmadur Systurdottir		SIDAHU

Icelandic terminologyEnglish equivalent

Denotative term Classificatory

2nd Descending Generation.

Sonarsonur	Barnabarn	SOSO
Sonardottir	Barnabarn	SODA
Dottursonur	Barnabarn	DASO
Dotturdottir	Barnabarn	DADA

3rd Descending Generation.

Sonarsonarsonur	Barnabarnabarn	SOSODO
Dottursonardottir	Barnabarnabarn	DASODA
Sonursonardottir	Barnabarnabarn	SOSODA
Sonurdottursonir	Barnabarnabarn	SODASO
Sonurdotturdottir	Barnabarnabarn	SODADA
Dottursonursonir	Barnabarnabarn	DASOSO
Dotturdottirsonur	Barnabarnabarn	DADASO
Dotturdotturdottir	Barnabarnabarn	DADADA

Cousin terminology, 1st Ascending Generation.

Födurbrodurbörn	Tvimennningur	FABRCHI
Brodursonur	Tvimennningur	FABRSO
Brodurdottir	Tvimennningur	FABRDA
Födursysturbörn	Tvimennningur	FASICHI
Systursonur	Tvimennningur	FASISO
Systurdottir	Tvimennningur	FASIDA
Modurbrodurbörn	Tvimennningur	MOBRCHI
Brodursonur	Tvimennningur	MOBRSO
Brodurdottir	Tvimennningur	MOBRDA
Modursysturbörn	Tvimennningur	MOSICHI
Systursonur	Tvimennningur	MOSISO
Systurdottir	Tvimennningur	MOSIDA

Icelandic terminologyEnglish equivalent

Denotative term

Classifactory

Cousin terminology, 2nd Ascending Generation.

Afabrodursonur	Thrimenningar	FAFABRSO
Afabrodurdottir	Thrimenningar	FAFABRDA
Ammabrodursonur	Thrimenningar	FAMOBRSO
Ammabrodurdottir	Thrimenningar	FAMOBRDA
Afasystirsonur	Thrimenningar	FAFASISO
Afasystirdottir	Thrimenningar	FAFASIDA
Ammasystirsonur	Thrimenningar	FAMOSISO
Ammasystirdottir	Thrimenningar	FAMOSIDA
Ammabrodursonur	Thrimenningar	MOMOBRSO
Ammabrodurdottir	Thrimenningar	MOMOBRDA
Ammasystursonur	Thrimenningar	MOMOSISO
Ammasysturdottir	Thrimenningar	MOMOSIDA
Afibrodursonur	Thrimenningar	MOFABRSO
Afibrodurdottir	Thrimenningar	MOFABRDA
Afisystursonur	Thrimenningar	MOFASISO
Afisysturdottir	Thrimenningar	MOFASIDA

The diagram on the following page is an attempt to give a visual presentation of the terms listed on pages 191-195 and shows the individuals designated by terms as related to an ego. In the section which follows, I describe the formal criteria of affinity, collaterality and polarity as these apply to the Icelandic terminology. As reference sources for the Icelandic terms and their translation, I refer to the dictionaries in the footnote.¹

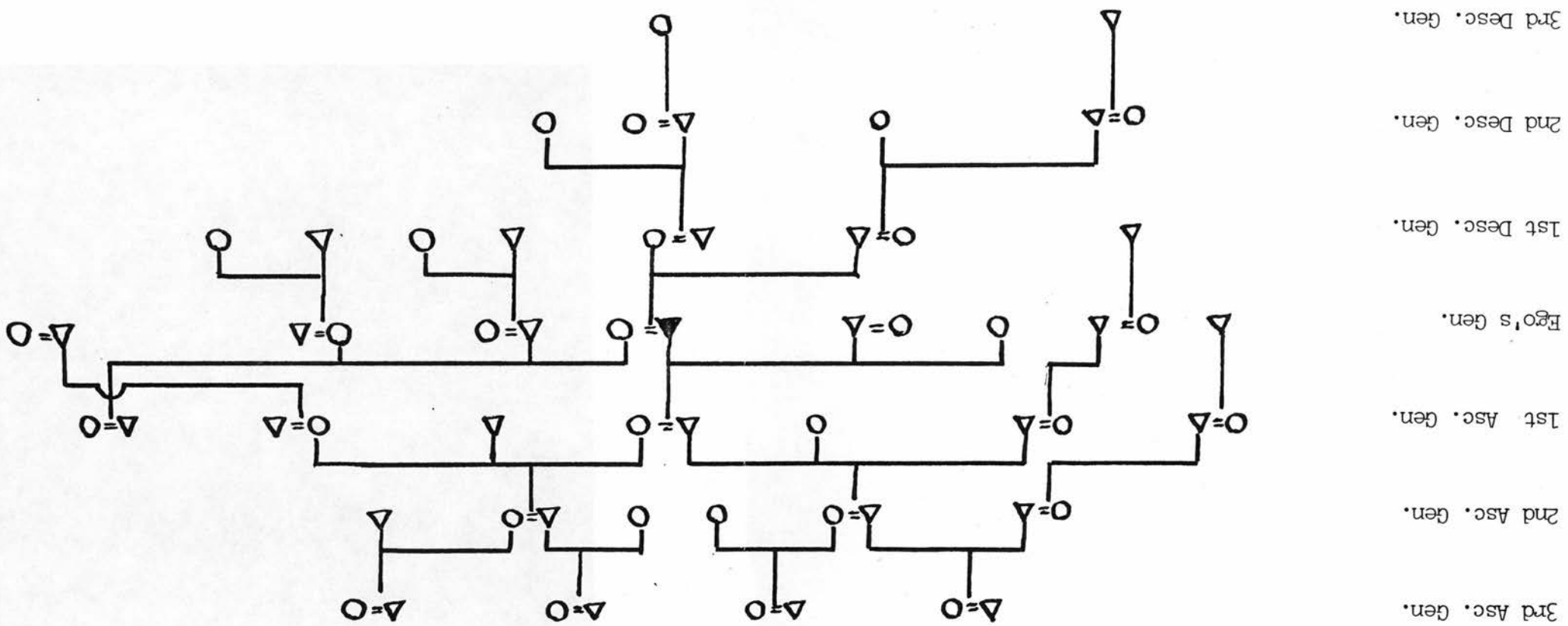
¹Sources of information are as follows:
 Field notes, and informants interviews conducted during field stay in Skeid, and in Reykjavik.
 Written sources on Icelandic kinship are as follows:
 R. Bjerke, "A contrastive study of Old German and Old Norwegian Kinship terms" in, Part II, International Journal of American Linguistics, vol. 35, no. 1, (Jan. 1969), Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics, Memoir no. 22, University of Indiana publications.

S. Blondal (ed), Islandsk-Dansk Ordbog, Prentsmidjan Gutenberg, Reykjavik 1924.

R. T. Merrill, "Notes on Icelandic Kinship Terminology," American Anthropologist vol 66 (1964) pp. 867-872.

L. H. Morgan, "Icelandic Kinship Terminology, Index no. 16 In Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family, Smithsonian Contribution to Knowledge, No. 218, Smithsonian Institution Press (1968).

THE ICELANDIC KINSHIP SYSTEM



3rd Asc. Gen.
2nd Asc. Gen.
1st Asc. Gen.
Ego's Gen.
1st Desc. Gen.
2nd Desc. Gen.
3rd Desc. Gen.

Formal Characteristics of the Kinship Terminology

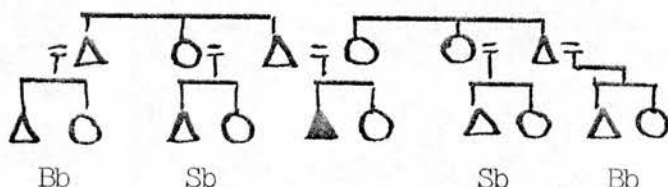
The terms given make it clear that Icelandic kinship terminology is descriptive in nature, and that compound terms are, in the main, made up of elementary terms. Thus, to our Icelandic "ego," two sets of terms are present: elementary terms which designate the core family, a three-generational household, and a terminology consisting of compounded terms which permit one to trace any and all genealogical connections.

I want to stress that genealogical connections tracing descent are traced through any and all relations, and constitutes bilateral recognition of descent.

The criteria of 'sex' and 'affinity' are present in the terminology. In the case of 'sex' only two elementary terms ignore this criterion, namely child (barn, Icel.) and sibling (systkin, Icel.); all other elementary terms are sex of referent. In the case of classificatory terms, sex of referent is ignored; thus, kinsmen, whether male or female, traced through father's or mother's line, or both, as in the case of stocks, are termed 'fjölskylda' (Icel.), or as 'tengdæfolk' (Icel.) i.e. in-laws.

Second, third, fourth and fifth cousins are designated classificatorily as 'tvímenning' - 'þri' - 'fjór' - and 'fímmenning' (Icel.), i.e. second, third, fourth and fifth cousin.

"Collaterality," is defined as the phenomenon present in kinship terminology whereby lineal kinsmen and relatives through various degrees of relationship to ego are denoted with a single classificatory term. A common feature in kinship terminologies is one wherein a parent and a same-sexed sibling are merged, e.g., a sibling and a parallel cousin, or a wife and her sister, a son and daughter or a nephew and niece.¹ The terms for first cousins in Icelandic are such classificatory terms which merge parallel and cross cousins. Diagrammatically the merging is as follows:



The letters "Sb" stand for 'Systrabörn' (Icel. pl.) namely children of MOSI and FASI, and "Bb" stand for "Braedrabrön" (Icel. pl.), the children of FABR and MOBR. Children of Ego's siblings are designated in the same manner; thus to Ego, his first cousins in

¹Ibid. p. 101.

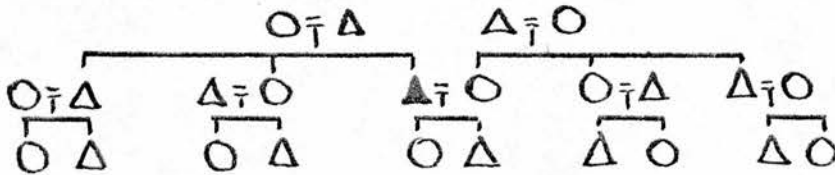
first ascending and descending generations are classificatorily children of Ego's father's and mother's siblings and Ego's siblings. It should be noted that children of in-laws and in-laws' spouses in Ego's generation, i.e. children of 'magar' and 'svilar' (Icel. pl.), are not so designated; thus the formal limitation to the recognition of close kin is the presence of terms exclusive to a household; namely, to children of siblings in first ascending and descending generation.

'Polarity' is defined as the recognition of the social relationship by which participants in the relationship address one another. Most common are the terms by which Ego addresses the members in his own nuclear family; Ego is son to his father, brother to his sister, etc. When polarity is ignored, the relationship becomes a unit one in which the participants use the same classificatory term about each other. In English kinship terminology, polarity is recognized throughout, with the exception of the term 'cousin;' the same is true in Danish kinship terminology, with the exception of the term 'svoger,' i.e. in-law. In this, the Icelandic terminology differs from English and Danish terminologies.

The terms in Icelandic where polarity is ignored are:

Descriptive Terms	Magur	WIBR,SIHU
	Magkona	BRWI
	Svili	WISIHU,HUSIHU
	Svilkona	HUBRWI
Classificatory Terms	Faedgur(-in)	FA-SO,FA-DA
	Maedgur(-in)	MO-DA,MO-SO
	Fraendi	Male kinsman
	Fraenka	Female kin
	Braedrabarn	FABRCHI,MOBRCHI,BRCHI
	Systrabarn	FASICHI,MOSICHI,SICHI

The terms given above are those which denote the following sets of pairs, namely Ego's own and first descending generation.



Another example is the terminology by which Ego may designate first cousins and siblings' children and which avoid the criteria of 'generation,' and 'polarity.'

The following diagram, using only the terms for sibling and first cousin, illustrates this:

Summary

The formal criteria for Icelandic terminology exhibit the following characteristics:

Elementary, descriptive and classificatory terms are found throughout the kinship terminology. One may point to the existence of two systems of nomenclature. One is descriptive and consists in the main of compound terms made up of core terms and a few lexical elements. A second terminology is one by which ego denotes groups of relations classificatorily. In Icelandic, however, there exist terms which classify individuals within the immediate and close family; for example, MO-DA, SI and BR children, parents, siblings.

The core terms of the Icelandic system are those which designate a three-generational family: Ego's own family, as well as the families of his own and sibling's spouses, and the first descending generation to Ego and his siblings. The core-elementary terms are exclusive to this group and all other terms in Icelandic are compound and classificatory terms, the latter indicating all relations beginning with cousins i.e. relations of the second ascending generation. This suggests that formally and linguistically the boundary of the Icelandic

family unit is three generations in extent and includes first cousins and siblings' spouses. All other terms designate relations as a bilateral and cognatic kindred--the limits to which do not exist terminologically.

I conclude that the limits to descent-recognizing of the larger kindred must be found outside the kinship system proper.

An unusually large number of terms are present which emphasize Ego's generation, his cousins, in-laws, in-laws' spouses, siblings, and siblings' spouses, indicating that the prevalent and primary grouping in the Icelandic kinship system is the extended conjugal family.

The analysis of the Icelandic kinship terminology leads to the conclusion that there exists a dual system of terms. In the sense in which Merrill wrote i.e., an informal system in daily use, and a formal system no longer in common use. The terms by which descent may be traced by a single individual is known and may be seen in practice in the many publications of regional genealogies which reach the Icelandic book market every year. A system of descent which primarily relies upon the compound terminology. By this feature, any Icelander can trace his descent widely and deeply into the past,

in some extravagant instances linking a person in the present with a Saga hero of more than 1,000 years ago. Descent as a criterion in the Icelandic system rests upon the principle inherent in filiation,¹ i.e., for Ego to be the legitimate child of married spouses, siblings, and own legally born children; etc.

Icelandic descent is traced equally through marriage links, and counts as descendants any and all who can trace their genealogy to a common ancestor. Thus, Icelandic descent rules and the compound terminology of the kinship nomenclature is such that one cannot point to a formal limitation or boundary to Ego's descent group. The pragmatic limits which exist in the recognition of descent in Icelandic society, I will show are not wholly part of the formal criteria of the system of kin terms. Instead, the real limits must be found in such factors as jural rules, subsistence traditions in farming. That is, limits are those which exist as rules of the social organization in the rural community.

There is present in the terminology a set of terms which may be seen as possessing the characteristic of recruitment of people to Ego's own group. The terms

¹G. P. Murdock, "Cognatic Forms of Social Organization: quoting Fortes, ". . . filiation the relationship created by the fact of being the legitimate child of one's parents. . . universally bilateral. . ." in, G. P. Murdock (ed.) Culture and Society, 1965, University Press, Pittsburgh, p. 181.

which are core terms and, hence, exclusive to the family, designate Ego's in-law relations in the first ascending and descending generation, and there are also a set of terms which are exclusive to Ego's generation and which designate his group of in-laws. Finally, there are terms which ignore polarity, merging members of the family of orientation and the family of procreation. This terminology is confined to the family, and one is led to the conclusion that the extended household in rural Iceland is traditional to the social organization and is the core unit of rural society.

" . . . However, since any status is defined in terms of the culturally expected behavior in the relationship in which it is embedded, there are a priori reasons for assuming a close functional congruity between terms of reference and the relationships in which the denoted kinsmen interact. . . and most students of kinship have arrived at the same conclusion, persons toward whom ego behaves in the same manner he will call by the same term. . . persons toward whom ego behaves in a different manner he will call by different terms. . ." ¹

The question is, therefore, whether the formal characteristics of the Icelandic kinship terminology reflect the pragmatic behavior of the members of the rural society. As a test of the above statement, and further, as an attempt to discover the limits to descent reckoning and the extent of the kindred, I turn to other

¹Ibid. p. 107.

evidence. The evidence rests upon the following:
the laws on inheritance of property and the household
censuses of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Jural Rights of Family and Kin

There is a great depth of tradition on inheritance in the case of Icelandic society. Upon the cessation of the Icelandic republic, and with the beginning of Iceland's commonwealth relations with the Kingdom of Norway in 1262 A.D., new laws were introduced in Iceland; the law of 1281 A.D. and its emanations of 1294, 1305, and 1314 A.D. have for centuries been the legal and civil code of the common people.¹

" . . . Jonsbok was for a very long time the most popular secular reading in Iceland. It was a primer for the beginning reader, it was customary to have young men learn it by heart, and legal knowledge was expected in the daily decisions given by county sheriffs, judges, the communal board members, and the parish clergy. . . ." ²

I have listed in the footnote at the bottom of this page the paragraphs of the law known as Jonsbok,³ which is the

¹G. Thoroddsen, "Efterskrift," in Jonsbok, Kong Magnus Haakonsons Lovbog for Island (eds) O. Halldorsson, G. Thoroddsen, Odense, Universitetsforlaget, 1970, pp. 1-6 Appendix, translation mine.

²Ibid. p. 4.

³Jonsbok, Chpt. 7, para. 1. The law on inheritance, para. 2-11 (pg. 80-84, 1970 ed. Odense) on the succession of claims of descendants not children of deceased.

evidentiary material upon which my conclusions are based. The first paragraph of the law on inheritance states quite simply that children born in wedlock inherit from their parents. Children who are the issue of common-law i.e., marriages without a prior contract and the benefit of clergy, children who are the issue of relations with mistresses, "in whoredom" as the law states it, or the issue resulting from incestuous relations, are not descendants and cannot claim the property of their parents. Filiation rests upon two jural definitions, namely, (a) the legally contracted marriage union, and (b) a public declaration made by a parent when the child enters adulthood, at the age of fourteen, that this child is an heir.

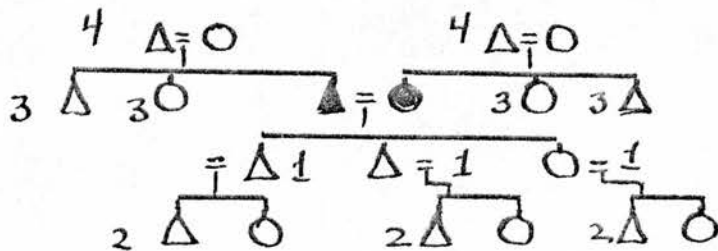
The law of 1281 was quite detailed in deciding the future property rights of heirs. A child could sue a guardian for the mismanagement of its estate, a wife could sue a husband for the mismanagement of that part of the household estate which she had brought to it by marriage, since the husband did not inherit his wife's estate but managed it as part of the household estate which in the future would become the inheritance of the children.

The paragraphs which follow upon the first paragraph on inheritance, consider the problem of interruption in the natural succession of a household. Given the death of the married couple and the fact of their childlessness, who then becomes heirs? And, what descendants may claim the property of the deceaseds' estate?

Eleven paragraphs in the law of 1281 name the potential claimants given the lack of heirs in a family. They are:

Son's Son, Son's Daughter, Daughter's Son, Daughter's Daughter, Brother, Sister, Mother's Father, Father's Mother, Mother's Mother, Father's Brother, Brother's Sons, Father's Sister, Mother's Brother, Sister's Son, Mother's Sister, Sister's Daughter, Brother's Daughter, Children of Siblings.

The following diagram indicates how small was the range of claimants to household property, i.e., an estate in the traditional twelfth and fourteenth century Icelandic law.



Precedence of claimants is indicated in the diagram by the numbers, 1-2-3-4; individuals numbered 1 are first in line of succession to the property of the deceased's estate. The extent of claimants, the reckoning of descent in terms of inheritance, is that of second descending generation to deceased, and the limits are those of the children of siblings, who themselves are children of deceased. Claimants in 3rd and 4th line of succession owe their status to the law's view of a household, an estate, as a bundle of rights and property which should not be dissipated, but which should be kept intact as household property. Given the lack of first and second degree heirs, siblings of deceased become the heirs; thus these households will absorb the property of a brother or a sister. The same logic governs the fourth degree of succession, namely the return of the property to those households which made it possible in the first place; i.e., the inheritance is returned to parental households. Thus, in the law there is a limit to descent which did not surface in the formal analysis of the kinship terms, namely, that the descent insofar as inheritance of household property is concerned counts as heirs' members of an extended family only.

A patrilineal bias is introduced by the manner in which the law assigned proportions of property to heirs; sons inherited twice as much as daughters. In the law, this disproportionate division of deceased's estate is followed throughout the married successors. Thus, the Son, Son's Son, Brother, Father, Father's Brother, and Brother's Sons would in each instance inherit twice as much of an estate as would a Daughter, Daughter's Daughter, Sister, Mother, Mother's Brother, Sister's Son, Mother's Father or Mother's Brother's Son. In the laws of 1281, agnates are superior claimants to estate property, and 'primus agnatus' is the male descendant of deceased.

When I consider the research by Bjerke in light of the jural rules concerning inheritance and rights to property, the findings he noted on the Old Norwegian kinship system become logical, namely, ". . . Thus in the light of the early documents in Diplomatarium Norvegicum, there are only three degrees of blood relationship in the Norwegian system: (1) the core family, (2) relationships one step removed, designated by compounds of core-family terms, and, (3) more distant relationships. . ." ¹ His

¹R. Bjerke, *Ibid.* p. 59. Footnote reference p.

analysis of dispute settlement documents is in reality an analysis of the jurally defined rights to family property as these rights were established in medieval law. And in this law, the family was no more and no less than what I have described so far.

The Laws of 1940, 1962.^{1,2}

The present law on incest defines this as the sexual acts committed between parents and their children, between siblings, and between children of parent's siblings, (i beinan aetlegg, (Icel.)) on both sides of the family, i.e., between first cousins parallel and cross. Children below the age of 18 who are in foster care, adopted, in-law's children in foster care with a relation, (tengdur i beinan legg, (Icel.)), that is, in-laws from both sides of the family, are included by this statute on incest.

The modern law on inheritance defines as heirs and successors to an estate the following: children born in wedlock, children born out of wedlock whose paternity is acknowledged, and legally adopted children.

¹"Sifskaparbrott," 1940/19, Feb. 12, in Lagasafn vol. II, (ed) A. Snaevar, 1965, Reykjavik, Felagsprentsmidjan, pp. 2530-2531.

²"Erfdir," 1962/8, March 14, in Lagasafn, vol. II, (ed.). A. Snaevar, 1965, Reykjavik, Felagsprentsmidjan, pp. 2270-2280.

Concerning the question of precedence of heirs, and identification, the descendants are who may claim deceased's property. Present laws define first the case of surviving spouse and children. One-third of an estate belongs to surviving spouse and cannot be sold or disposed of in any manner, and it is not until the death of a surviving spouse that heirs can receive this part of an estate. Two-thirds of the estate is the joint property of the children while they are below legal age, and remains as joint property for as long as one sibling is below legal age. Thus, complete rights to property are not transferred from parent's generation to children's generation before both spouses are dead, and until all surviving children are of age. All children inherit equally, and the settlement of siblings' claims will most likely occur anywhere from 5-10 years after the death of the first parent. If the marriage is childless and both spouses are dead, the estate is divided in half, and returned to the estates of the parents of the spouses; that is, property reverts to the two estates which in the first place established deceased's estate.

In brief, the law of 1962 does not differ much from the law of 1281. Precedence of claims follows the ranking of heirs for the law of 1281. Descendants of

deceased Ego and his spouse are their descendants in first descending generation; if such do not exist the estate reverts to claimants related to deceased ego in the first ascending generation.

The modern law is equitable in that male and female descendants to deceased share equally in an estate; however, modern practice in Skeid circumvents this equality in the traditions of estate inheritance in that community. I have referred to the legal act known as 'skifti,'¹ an act wherein a living parent assigns a portion of an estate to that adult child who will marry and co-farm the estate with the parents. The sibling who remains to farm has by law the first right of purchase (athallrett, (Icel.)) of any part of an estate his own siblings might want. I have analyzed more than 25 cases of estate settlements in Skeid, for the period 1940-1970. Unmarried adult siblings have remained on their parental estates to work with that brother or sister who became the householder. In other cases, when children reached adulthood they left the community to engage in other forms of work. Although the law provides equal shares in inheritance, the behavior of the people in the community is the fact, and, in this case, the letter of the law is not observed.

¹See p. 141 in the thesis.

Whether ancient or modern, the laws on inheritance define the family as a group, three generations in extent, centered around the conjugal couple, and includes in the close family, by rules of incest and inheritance claims, first cousins parallel and cross, and in-laws of first ascending and descending generation to Ego.

The Pragmatically Defined Family

I have already referred to written census records on the rural households of the district of Skeid for the period 1703-1900.¹ This was done in order to discern and explain the economic relations between members of the rural society and to describe the status and role relationship in a traditional rural community. I turn now to the evidence provided by the census material on the personnel residing in the households of Skeid in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The kinship terms for the people of the households, as these are written by the householders in the censuses, are as follows in Icelandic: Fadir, Tengdafadir, Stjupfadir, Fadurbrodur, Modurbrodur, Brodur, Magur, Tengdasonur, Brodur sonur, Systur sonur,

¹See p. 132.

Sonur sonur, Dottur sonur; in English these are: Father, Father-in-law, Stepfather, Father's brother, Mother's brother, Brother, Sister's Husband or Wife's brother, Brother's son, Sister's son, Son's son, Daughter's son. Female relations in the estate censuses are listed in Icelandic as follows: Amma, Modir, Tengdamodir, Stjupmodir, Fadir systir, Modur systir, Systir, Magkona, Tengdadottir, Brodur dottir, Systurdottir, Sonur dottir, Dottur dottir; translated into English are as follows: Grandmother, or Father's Mother and Mother's Mother, Mother-in-law, Stepmother, Father's sister, Mother's sister, Sister, Brother's wife, Daughter-in-law, Brother's daughter, Sister's daughter, Son's daughter and Daughter's Daughter. The terms for children listed in the census records in Icelandic are: Barn, Stjup barn, Kjörbarn, Medgjafabarn, and Fosturbarn; and in English as follows: child, stepchild, child legally adopted, child in foster care for whose keep someone outside the household is responsible.

'Medgjafabörn,' i.e., the children for whose keep someone else pays, constitute in present Skeid the children born out of wedlock, who reside in their mother's household, and whose paternity is acknowledged by a father's money payment to the household. The 'fosturbarn' in present day Skeid is a child of a neighbouring kinsman whose household is so poor that other kin must take over the cost of care and upbringing.

In his paper of 1960, G. P. Murdock states that at least a third of the societies recorded by anthropologists are not unilineal but possess cognatic descent systems.¹ At present there are about 51 societies on record from all parts of the world which exhibit the structural features of social organization which correspond to his classification.

The following table is taken from G. P. Murdock's cross-cultural analysis of cognatic social organization, and I have underlined the structural features by which Icelandic social organization corresponds with the three major subtypes.

The structural features of cognatic social organization are, first, the prominence of small domestic units such are the primary economic, residential and status-defining units in the community. In Skeid conjugal units are the core units within larger production and consumption units, the estates of the district. The second feature is the presence of extended families; here I note the universality of the three-generational household in Skeid and the very common occurrence of parents' and siblings' households in combination with spouses' siblings' households within a single estate. Third, on the question of locality of new conjugal units, the term 'ambilocal' describes more

¹G. P. Murdock, Culture and Society, "Cognatic Forms of Social Organization," pp. 177-199, 1965, Pittsburgh University Press.

TABLE 33

Subtypes of Cognatic Social Organization¹

Structural Feature	Bilateral (Eskimo)	Quasi-Unilineal (Carib.)	Ambilineal (Polynesian)
Small Domestic Units	<u>prominent</u>	not prominent	not prominent
Extended Families	absent	<u>present</u>	<u>present</u>
Bilateral Kindreds	<u>present</u>	absent	<u>present</u>
Ambilineal Ramages	<u>absent</u>	<u>absent</u>	occasionally
Residence	<u>neo-ambilocal</u>	unilocal	<u>ambilocal</u>
1st Cousin Marriage	allowed	cross-only	<u>forbidden</u>
2nd Cousin Marriage	<u>allowed</u>	<u>allowed</u>	forbidden
Cousin Terms	<u>Eskimo</u>	Iroquois	Hawaiian
Avuncular Terminology	<u>lineal</u>	merging	generation

¹ Ibid., p. 196.

correctly than any other term for form of locality, the historic tradition of inheritance and the tradition of subsistence economics in the farming system. In Skeid, marriage, householdership and estate management constitute a single bundle of rights, property and status, and locality is therefore a question determined by which child, son or daughter will succeed to an estate. Fourth, bilateral kindred are present: incest prohibitions extend to first cousins, second cousin marriages occur frequently and in fact 43 households out of the present 54 households in Skeid are related in third ascending generation. Icelandic cousin terminology merges parallel and cross cousins in first ascending generation and conforms to the classification known as Eskimo terminology. Avuncular terminology is lineal; father's and mother's siblings are designated with descriptive terms and classificatory terms equivalent to the English 'aunt' and 'uncle' are not present in the terminology.

Throughout the period researched, householdership is not the exclusive property of a senior and male group, and, in Skeid, the timing of access to this status has never meant that one generation must retire before the succeeding can begin. In Skeid the principle of felagsbu (Icel. pl.) is one wherein two generations, that of the fathers and that of the sons, become colleagues. The census material

on the households in Skeid for the past 100 years, the pragmatic history of the household phases as I have researched it, the formal kinship terminology, and the laws on inheritance all combine to show that practice and principle coincide to establish a succession of householders and estatemanagers, a group I will call agnatic titleholders, and a family pattern which conforms to the criteria inherent in the term 'stem family.'

At present there are in Skeid three estates where the household is made up of unmarried adult siblings who jointly manage their parental property. Such cases are rare for the period I have researched, but the three exceptions to the norm are logical when viewed in the perspective of the Icelandic system. When marriage does not occur, when the domestic cycle is not set in motion once again by the establishment of new households, property remains undivided and the sibling unit retains the parental property. This confirms the fact that the family property is in principle the property of all the members of the conjugal-natal unit. Such sibling units are termed 'Systkinabu' (Icel. pl.), i.e. sibling's farm, or sibling's joint estate.

For the 100-year period researched, estate management in the district has rested upon the principle of joint enterprise, one in which Ego's ascending generation and

first descending generation shared the status of householders and estatemenagers. The felagsbu (Icel. pl.), i.e., the joint estates of Skeid, are termed by the residents of the community according to the phase in the domestic cycle; thus, the father and son estate is denoted fedgarbu (Icel.), the brother and brother-managed estate is termed a braedrabu (Icel.) and the father and son-in-law estate, or the estate managed by two brothers-in-law is designated a tengdabu (Icel.). I conclude that the status of householder and estatemenager is conferred when the next generation is ready to farm and is not a status dependent upon age or generation. An individual becomes a householder because of the phase in the domestic cycle within his own conjugal group and is not dependent upon a principle of generational substitution or replacement of individuals.¹

Thus both formal, historiographic, and pragmatic analyses of households in the district indicate that an Ego-focused kindred is that group from which householders and estatemenagers are recruited.

¹I.e., the pattern described for County Clare, or Wales, see C. Arensberg, S. T. Kimball, The Irish Countryman, and A. D. Rees, Life in a Welsh Countryside.

The characteristics of the Eskimo type of cognatic organization may now be described, using the data from Iceland. In Skeidahrepp the most important social, economic and landholding groups are the domestic units; these units are created by marriage, which establishes affinal links. Children acquire membership in the domestic group by filiation, the fact of being the legitimate child of one's parents.¹ The domestic group, a conjugal-natal group, is bilateral in nature, recognizing as kin the relatives of both father and mother. This group is exogamous and the kinship terminology reflects the significance of the domestic group, in that one set of terms are confined to the members of this group. Another set of terms are employed for collateral members of Ego's kindred but are not used to designate members of Ego's domestic group.

Outside of the domestic unit in Skeid, the only other important grouping is the kindred. W. H. R. Rivers defined the kindred as follows: "as embracing close lineal and collateral kin whether the connecting links are male or female. . ."² The range of inclusion of members can vary depending upon the social system in question. In Skeidahrepp, the range of the recognition of the bilateral

¹M. Fortes, Kinship and the Social Order, London 1969, Routledge Keagan Paul, p. 280.

²W. H. R. Rivers, Social Organization, London 1924, Athlone Press, p. 16.

kindred is second cousin; beyond this range a cousin terminology designates descendant relations in terms of ancestral stocks.

A great deal of discussion has taken place in the literature on the question of whether the kindred is a descent group.

In Skeid a kindred is not a landholding group nor is it a corporate or jural unit, neither is it a residential unit. The kindred exists by reference to an ego and has no existence independent of this focus. The kindred in Skeid is not a social group, but a social category; and its personnel or make-up varies from that group which Ego designates as his descent group. I reserve the term 'bilateral' to mean an Ego-focused kindred, a group which I have described on the previous pages. I define the term 'cognatic' to mean a descent system, as this may be discovered in the analysis of Icelandic kinship.

Cognatic Descent

The question I want to consider is one asked by W. Goodenough in his monograph on Malayo-Polynesian social organization, namely, ". . . given an ideology

of cognatic descent how are discrete and corporate kin groups formed out of the bilateral kin universe? . . ."1

It is first necessary however to compare and contrast briefly the differences in social organization which have been described in the literature between unilineal descent organization and cognatic descent. Social groups which have in common the fact that membership is acquired through one parent only, exclusively, through the father or exclusively through the mother, not through both at the same time nor optionally through either, are termed unilineal. The terms 'patrilineal,' 'matrilineal' and 'double descent' are used in the literature to describe the kind of lineage organization which may be found in a society in which this form of descent principle is practiced. 'Double descent' is a form of social organization in which Ego is a member of one group through patrilineal descent and of another through matrilineal.²

A lineage consists of two or more generations of people consanguineously related through one of the sexes, i.e., a man and his children or a woman and her children. Most commonly, groups are organized in which three or four generations of several siblings of the same sex are

¹W. Goodenough, "Kindred and Hamlet in Lakalai, New Britain" Ethnology, vol. 1, no. 1 (1962) pp. 1-5.

²M. Freedman, "Systems of Descent" Encyclopedia Britannica, 1965 Chicago, W. Benton Publishers.

joined as a residential, property holding and religious group. Such groups are termed 'minimal lineages;' several of these may operate jointly as a larger group united for some purpose, and are termed 'major lineages.' A 'maximal' lineage is one in which groups are united on the principle that all can trace descent from a common ancestor. Such maximal lineages may unite for purposes of warfare, in the regulation of marriages, or in seasonal or annual ceremonies wherein ritual expresses and celebrates the lineage's corporate and jural nature. Lineages, their size, depth of generation and their functions vary greatly in societies where they are found.¹

One structural feature common to lineage organizations is that regardless of size of a lineage, lineages are equated in the society in which they occur.² Lineages are corporate units with legal and/or political status, and members of lineages possess status because they are members. The lineage is perpetual in the sense that it outlives any of its members at any given point in time. Thus, the lineage is a stable group with defined jural and corporate identity and often can and does serve as

¹J. A. Barnes, "African Models in the New Guinea Highlands," (1962) MAN, vol. 62, pp. 5-9.

²M. Fortes, "The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups" American Anthropologist (1953) vol. 55, p. 17-41.

a property-holding group as well as a group wherein ritual and political office is perpetuated. "Since most of a man's statuses and other rights are determined by who his ancestors were, it follows that a man will respect and venerate his lineage founders."¹ The ideology of descent is one which may be termed 'ancestor-focused' and the lineage is defined relative to an ancestor who remains as the fixed point of reference.² Unilineal descent is commonly reflected in the residential patterns in the society in which it is practiced, residence and descent forms correlate highly.³

I have commented upon the political, religious and economic rights which belong to the lineage as well as the residential pattern typical to unilineal social organization. These rights are not optative; they belong to the group and the group is paramount in assuming responsibility for its members.

In contrast to unilineal descent, in cognatic descent individuals' descendance corresponds to actual genealogical linkages and as I have shown it in the

¹Ibid.

²R. Fox, Kinship and Marriages; An Anthropological Perspective, 1970, Penguin Books, Baltimore, MD, p. 169.

³V. Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, 1969, Aldine Pub. Comp. pp. 82-84.

Icelandic case, no principles in the descent system limit the extension of a person's relationships. As genealogical ties become more distant, the number of persons who make up Ego's descent group increases geometrically and the result is a very large, rather loosely defined collection of kin, all of whom claim a common descendancy based upon some point of ancestral reference in the past. In this system, Ego is the reference point and around him is a kindred, a group of people with whom he can trace genealogical linkages. W. Goodenough writes that cognatic descent confers membership in categories, not in viable social groups, and that conditional entitlement to membership is contingent upon a number of other factors.¹ These factors I have enumerated on previous pages, namely residence, inheritance laws or the potential rights of one's parents, and the defacto consolidated rights of persons.

In this perspective Ego is surrounded by a series of circles of kindred with whom he has varying degrees of relationship and the clear-cut outlines of the unilineal descent organization are not present; in cognatic descent no 'either-or' principle is at work. In cognatic social organization, siblings share the same number of kinsmen,

¹W. Goodenough, "Kindred and Hamlet in Lakalai, New Britain" Ethnology, vol. 1, no. 1, (1962) p. 1-5.

Since they are descendants of the same ancestral stock. Yet, upon marriage, each sibling's spouse brings into the marriage a new set of kindred relations, who become to the first descending generation a new source of ancestry. Hence, in cognatic descent, by the fact of the recognition of descent by any and all means, an endless overlapping of descent groups occurs. Ego in this system is given the choice of whether to stress as point of reference and origin of his descent group, one ancestor or a given number of conjugal pairs.¹ Ancestor-focused descent can occur in cognatic social organization; for example in the principle wherein certain descendants are given more rights than others. The rule of primogeniture, i.e. that firstborn males inherit all titles and estate properties is a rule by which a firstborn male descendant possesses the inheritance and his siblings are denied shares in the inheritance. This principle in fact establishes a lineal descent, a 'stem kindred' a line of agnatic titleholders is not unusual in European societies whether for nobility or peasantry. Fox comments upon the existence of such groups and calls them 'fairly permanent non-ego-relative groups,' and I have shown that such a principle of inheritance has produced in Skeid a line of agnatic titleholders to estates,

¹R. Fox, "Prolegomena to the Study of British Kinship," 1965, London, in, Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences, Penguin Publ. p. 138-139.

and to incorporeal property such as titles and rights, i.e., the franchise, and the management of households.¹

What does occur in cognatic social organizations is the fact that Ego has the possibility of working out a strategy of recruitment of personnel to form his own kindred. This 'opportunistic' strategy contrasts markedly with the principles of recruitment and descendance in a unilineal system.² For example, Leyton's metaphor on 'spheres of inheritance' in Aughnaboy is meant to explore the criterion of priority in inheritance in a cognatic social organization where the criteria for selection of heirs are primogeniture and sex. Other factors have been shown to occur to establish a strategy of recruitment on the part of Ego, e.g. the factor of neighborhood, the principle where individuals over time ignore that kin who does not live and work within its vicinity. Acknowledgement

¹Ibid. p. 140.

²I refer to the research on 'action groups-kith-entrepreneur-network,' in
 J. A. Barnes, "Land rights and kinship in two Bremnes Hamlets" Man, vol. 60, (1959).
 J. A. Barnes, "Class and Committees in Norwegian Parish," Human Relations, vol. 7, (1954)
 O. Blehr, "Action groups in a Society with Bilateral Kinship: A Case Study from the Faroe Islands," Ethnology, vol. II, no. 3, (July 1963).
 O. Brox, "National Conditions, Inheritance and Marriage in a North Norwegian Fjord," Folk, vol. 6, (1964).
 J. Clyde Mitchell, Social Networks in Urban Situations, 1969, Manchester, University Press.

of kin in cognatic social organization becomes confined to the people who live and work in the same area; kinsmen who leave are not recruited, and in time their conditional membership to Ego's group lapses. M. Fortes has commented upon this factor of vicinage and labels such kin as 'occasional kindred.'¹ This suggests that in cognatic social organization, the factor of social expectation sets limits to what Ego can expect of his kin in terms of services and membership. In Skeidahrepp the limits are those of second descending generation to Ego; beyond this there are no relationships or groups in which the individual acquires membership by virtue of birth.

Rural Social Organization in the Perspective of Cognatic-Bilateral Descent

Only one organization in the rural area takes into account membership by birth; this is the Hrepp (Icel.), the district itself. In the material which follows I want to consider the district, its solidarity, its rules of membership, and recruitment, and its corporate nature in the perspective of cognatic descent ideology; and to consider once more the question of how discrete and corporate kin groups are formed out of the bilateral universe.

¹M. Fortes, Op. cit., p. 192.

Einarsson comments upon the origin and nature of the Icelandic Hreppar (Icel. pl.) as follows, ". . . concerning the immigrant Norwegians who settled in southern Iceland, their ambition as small farmers must have been satisfied if they were allowed to farm in peace and raise their new families. . ." ¹

Old family ties cut by emigration, and the traditional family solidarity suggested in the laws of vengeance and recompense in slaying, no longer existed. The Hrepp organization of twenty privately owned farms, where pasture and fishing rights were held in common, where the care of the poor and indigent was cooperatively managed, and where mutual insurance against livestock and property loss was undertaken, now came into being. J. Johannesson concludes that the Hrepp organization may best be understood as a corporate householder unit conforming in manner of organization to the principles of the medieval Germanic guild. ²

M. MarLarusson writes that the Hrepp is a unique social organization which controlled the domestic relations of individual households and the jural-corporate relations of all estates within its jurisdiction. With the

¹S. Einarsson, A History of Icelandic Literature, American-Scandinavian Foundation Publications, 1957, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, p. 10.

²J. Johannesson, Islendinga Saga, vol. 1, Thjodveldisöld, 1956 Reykjavik, Almenna Bokafelagid, pp. 103-106.

acceptance in Iceland in 1281 of the King Haakon Magnusson Law of Norway, or Jonsbok, as this law is known, the Hrepp organization became formally defined and accepted as a civil and jurally defined entity of Icelandic society. The emphasis in the law was two-fold (a) of the Hrepp as a geographical and bounded unit with collective rights to the resources it contained, and (b) of the Hrepp as a poor relief organization. From this time until the present, the Hrepp has existed as an individual corporation holding rights to properties outside its borders, such as grazing sites in the highlands, and to its own lands within its boundaries. A Hrepp can join other Hreppar in contractual arrangements, leasing lands and sites outside of its own territory, it can hire individual workers to work within its own area, and it can oversee the contractual relationships of workers to estates within its jurisdiction. M. MarLarusson notes the following estimates of the Hreppar of Iceland at various times in the history of the country: a 1311 AD inventory of 3,800 taxrateable farms listed 190 Hreppar; the first national census of 1703 listed 164 Hreppar; and at present there are 215 such rural districts or communes in Iceland.¹

¹M. MarLarusson, "Hreppar" in, vol. 7, Konversations Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder, (ed) G. Rona, 1962, Copenhagen, Rosenkilde og Bagger.

There can be little doubt that the Hrepp organization was both ancient and traditional in Scandanavian rural societies. The laws of King Eirik of Sweden, King Valdemar of Denmark, and King Haakon Magnusson of Norway, all written during the thirteenth century, can be described as follows: ". . . (an) equilibrium of holdings produced by the concurrent interests of peasant neighbors and by the sense of household solidarity on the one hand, of township organization on the other, quite apart from any discipline and exploitation carried into village life from the outside."¹ This statement suggests that the district could be perceived from three perspectives: (a) an extension of domestic relations in view of its resident population, (b) a civil-jural and corporate unit of society in general, and (c) a self-governing institution of a class of population different from the elite of Scandinavia, i.e., Monarch, Church and Noble.

Given the fact of cognatic descent ideology, wherein descendance is one of genealogical recognizing, and given the fact of a long-term resident population in a district, one must conclude that in a peasant community everyone is

¹Sir P. Vinogradoff, The Growth of the Manor, 1920, London, G. Allen and Unwin Ltd. pp. 263-266.

related to everyone else.¹ The laws of the medieval period in Scandinavia take a curious attitude in this regard; for example, on the question of selection of jurors in support of claimants' case as this concerns a peasant in Denmark, King Valdemar's law reads ". . . 12 men from his own family, or men from his township. . .," in defining indigent claimants' rights to support, Jonsbok comments, ". . . he should seek relief in the district in which he is born, or from those estates of which he is third cousin. . ." (thrimeningur, Icel.).²

The rope used in medieval Danish rural townships to measure out strips of fields, meadow and woodland into shares became the symbol and term describing the corporate solidarity of householders and the corporate-jural rights of peasant households. The reb of Denmark with its rebstyrrer, is a cognate organization to Iceland, i.e.,

¹M. Gluckman, his comment in (1955), Custom and Conflict in Africa, p. 22.

²I refer here to that category of medieval law known as 'omagaframfaerslu' (Icel.) the claims of district members to residence, welfare and work. Jonsbok, Kong Haakon Magnussons Lov for Iceland, 1281, (ed.) O. Halldorsson, G. Thoroddson 1970, Odense, Universitets forlaget, see also

V. Finsen, Gragas, Islaendernes Lovbog i. Fristatens Tid, Bd. V. Ordregister, 1888, Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Skrifter, Copenhagen.

Hrepp, and its Hreppstjori. The ancient townships disappeared in Denmark and Norway by the 1850's, and are today 'sogne' and 'Kommuner' (Danish), i.e. parishes and communes. The Hrepp organization of Iceland was restructured in 1872; I have already described this in the chapter on The Nineteenth Century District. However, the changes over the past century and a half do not negate the function of this corporate and jurally defined group of peasant households. The two-fold function is furthering the welfare of all households within the Hrepp boundaries and serving the claims of its resident population to that sphere of residual resources which I will call the partible inheritance.

I have already described in detail the estate and the household, and I have already explained inheritance and kinship terminology. The impartible inheritance was that bundle of rights, property and household which was transferred from generation to generation in toto. By this form of transfer, a lineal bias was introduced into the principle of cognatic descent since some descendants are favored and others are deprived. Yet all the resources available to the peasantry were not exhausted with the inheritance of estates. The residual and not inconsiderable resources of residence, usufruct, contractual labor, indigent care, sick relief and old-age protection made up that bundle of rights and property possessed by everyone in a Hrepp by virtue of birth.

It is when I consider the persons who do qualify for the support of the Hrepp that its dual nature of domestic organization and jural-civil corporation becomes clear. To the question of who qualified, I discover three kinds of claims, (a) those based upon birthright in a district, (b) those based upon lengthy residence and work in a district, and (c) those who could trace a genealogy as third cousins of an estateowner in any district. Thus, agnatic titleholders became householders and estatemanagers, and their conjugal and natal families so carefully designated by the laws and by the terms of the kinship terminology are the inheritors to the estate inheritance. All others not so fortunate, but still descendants and in the cognatic system of descent reckoning, potential heirs and family to titleholders, accrued a bundle of rights to residence upon the estate, to the status as Hrepp resident, a residual inheritance managed by a collectivity of householders, that jurally defined and corporate group known as the Hrepp.

I cannot describe a Hrepp, the district, as a local group organized in terms of descent principles, but it is nevertheless organized as a group in which every member belongs to the personal kindred of every other member as long as they remain within it. The nature of the Hrepp is such that if corporate groups are to be formed in cognatic descent system, additional non-kinship principles must be used as the basis of its formation.

CHAPTER 6: Skeid in 1970

The Present Commune, General
Comments

Administration

The Estates

The Recruitment of Labour
in the Commune

Kin, Land and Estates in 1970

The Inheritance of Estates

The Present Commune, General Comments

When I describe the commune of Skeid I may not necessarily provide a representative picture of the rural communes of the nation.¹ Populations have diminished in many rural communes across the northern half of the island and especially in the western peninsula. Some communes in Iceland suffer from their great distance from urban centers, and the problems arising from the extension of social and welfare services to areas where drastic population decline has occurred form separate and distinct issues which I have not researched. By contrast, the communes of southern Iceland are demographically and economically stable areas and quite prosperous communities, whether measured by the income standards for Iceland or for the European Economic Community.² The inhabitants of the rural regions of the south are engaged in economic relations vis a vis an urban market and are fully integrated into the urban economy and administration of this region.

¹The information collected for this chapter is based upon my fieldstay in the community of Skeid from spring 1968 to spring 1970. I am indebted to Hr. Jon Gudmundsson and his family of the farm of Fjall in Skeid for their help and hospitality.

²Iceland's gross national product per capita in 1971 was more than \$2,910, the corresponding figure for the U.K. was \$2,455. In fact, in four out of five years up to 1971 Iceland's gross national product per capita exceeded that of the U.K.

See: International Court of Justice, Fisheries Jurisdiction Cases, vol. 1, The Hague, 1975, p. 309, para. 127.

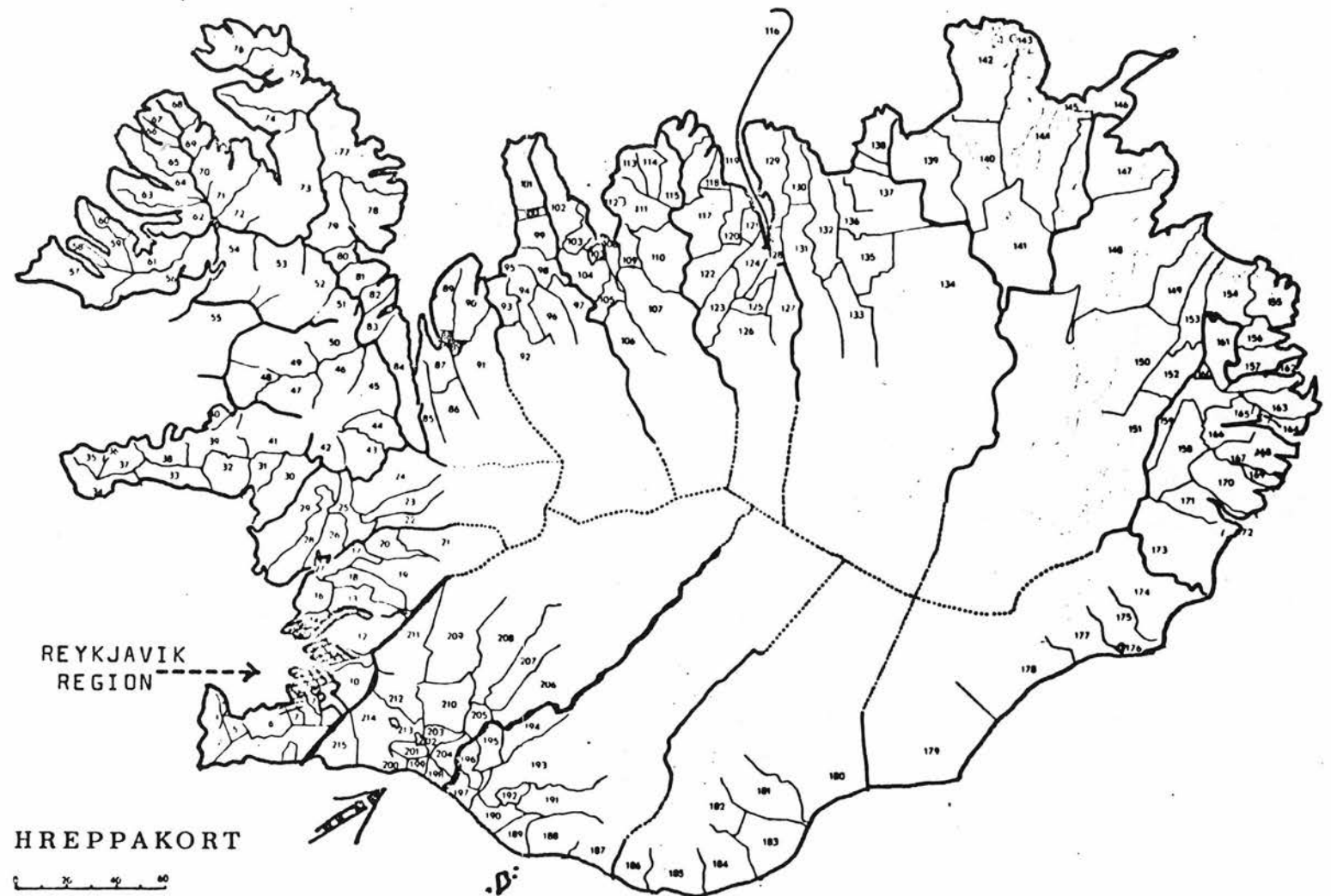
As a consequence, my description of Skeidahrepp is typical of the prosperous farming communities of the southern part of the nation. The problems of the western and northern regions of Iceland must await a separate and different investigation.

Administration

At present, Iceland is divided into sixteen rural counties and fourteen urban townships; the present rural counties contain an average of eighteen communes and the total number of communes in Iceland is 215. The national government is located in Reykjavik; townships are independently governed, as are the rural counties with their own civil administrative offices located within their own jurisdictions. Each county is governed by a county official, Syslymann (Icel.), and a board of popularly elected board members; these board members are elected from the commune boards which serve under the jurisdiction of the county.

Rural commune boards consist of a chairman, Oddveitin (Icel.), and four other members, all of whom serve a four year term of office. All residents of a commune aged 21 or older possess the franchise, and communes are not only voting districts, but also taxation, welfare, education and police districts; they are, at present, the smallest civil-administrative units in the nation. Each commune is, moreover, a farm union district

ICELAND, MAP OF COMMUNES AND COMMUNE BOUNDARIES



The arrow on the map points to the County of Arnes.
Its proximity to the Reykjavik Region may be seen.

The Commune of Skeid is No. 205.

The arrow on the map points to the County of Arnes.
Its proximity to the Reykjavik Region may be seen.

The Commune of Skeid in No. 205

and in each resides an agent of this organization. As in the old days, parish boundaries and commune boundaries do not coincide and the civil administration is kept separate from the national administration of the established church of Iceland.

In Skeid the commune boundaries, highland grazing areas and layout of the farms remain as they were in the past. Its commune council consists of five members, all of whom are estate managers from the following estates: Skeidhaholt, Hlemmiskeid, Reykir, Andresfjos and Vorsabae. The bailiff of the district resides on the estate of Skeidhaholt, the parish pastor who serves two parishes resides on Brautaholt, and both are occasional participants in the deliberations of the commune council.

The ancient and traditional office of bailiff has not changed much in function nor in duties; the present office and its functions are defined in the laws of 1872, to which I have referred in the chapter on the nineteenth century commune. The bailiff is the representative appointed for life by the county official, and his duties are primarily those of taxation and keeping of the peace. I found that in Skeid little action was undertaken by individual estate managers before they had had the opportunity to talk with the bailiff. In the meetings that I attended between the bailiff and the householders, conversations were usually

about taxation problems of local government, requests for blank forms and tax stamps and advice on whom to see in the national bureaucracy in Reykjavik. The present bailiff in Skeid is a member of the third generation of the estate of Skeidhaholt to serve in this lifetime and appointed office. His status of elder householder is such that in this commune he was asked to settle problems which officially were not part of his duties. A person whose advice was highly regarded, he served as chief mediator in local disputes and was often asked to witness such matters as the signing of wills and the settling of inheritances between members of families.

The second officer of importance to the affairs of the commune is the chairman of its board. Oddveitin is popularly elected from among the board members and serves in this office for two years. He may succeed himself, and, in fact, the chairman in Skeid had served for about a decade in this office. Oddveitin chairs the board meetings which are held twice a month during the winter months of September to March. He keeps the financial records of the commune, its minutes and decisions, and signs the monthly paychecks of the teachers in the local school. By consent of the estate managers in the commune, each year he will take out loans on their behalf so that they may purchase cooperatively bulk supplies of feed and fertiliser.

A difference between the traditional Hrepp of the nineteenth century and modern Skeid is the manner in which decisions are made about the allocation of funds and subsidies within the commune. In 1900, 85% of the funds collected in a commune were expended within it by its board. As a consequence, there was quite a variance in the quality and extent of welfare and other services provided by the rural communes of Iceland. Wealthy communities could and did expend more funds on the indigent residents and on communal properties than could the poor communes in remote areas. At present a national administration mediates the difference between wealthy and poor communities by a system of proportional funding and subsidies. Nationally sponsored agencies oversee, regulate and set annual expenditures which the communal boards must undertake. At present less than 20% of the annual funds expended in a commune come under the independent and sole jurisdiction of the local boards.¹

I shall not comment upon the schoolmaster, the teachers, clergyman or verger, all of whom reside in Skeid; but will instead turn to the importance of the resident Farm Union agent in the commune. He is *de facto* the third officer of the rural commune although he is neither

¹G. Blöndahl, "The Development of Public Expenditure in Relation to National Income in Iceland" (Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics), London, 1965, copy in National Bank Library (Landsbankasafnid) in Reykjavik.

elected nor holds an official position within the national government. His importance is derived from the impact the various programs of rural development have had upon the communities since the process began in 1936. As an expert on the regulations and requirements which govern the application of farm subsidies and support, his advice and information constitute an important component of the day-to-day management of the present estates in Skeid. Farm subsidy support exists for a variety of estate property activities, such as land reclamation, ditching and fencing, equipment purchases and installation, fuel, fodder and fertiliser purchases, as well as individual schemes for the improvement of an estate's livestock and its buildings and machinery. On the modern estate in Skeid all major livestock is controlled as to breeding, handling, feeding, and slaughter, veterinary inspections. Cooperative breeding societies, purchasing and slaughter societies and cooperative dairies all have impact upon the management of an estate, partly through subsidy, partly through inspection, and partly through the requirement that estate managers be members of these institutions. Without the farm agent as source of information and advisor on estate management and without his assistance in the application for subsidies, estate managers in Skeid could not function as farmers. The commune of Skeid's annual budget in 1970 was 1,450,000

Icelandic Kronur; the income derived from all categories of taxes from the commune itself amounted to 735,000 Kronur. Thus, about 50% of the commune budget each year depended upon additional funds provided by the various agencies of the national government.¹ The importance and impact of the outside agencies is evident, i.e., the social welfare subsidies, the farm redevelopment program, the improvement of communal properties such as roads, school, and church depend upon subsidisation. On the following page is an outline of the organisational components of the commune board, its subsidiary committee responsibilities and its primary funding categories. The principle of government of the local commune is one of close and joint cooperation between the national administration of Iceland and the locally elected board members. Bailiff, schoolmaster, teacher, clergyman and Farm Union agent represent agencies which influence the decisions and the programs in which the local community will be involved; these people, co-jointly with the local leadership, manage the affairs of estate and commune in Skeid.

¹Information on subsidies, commune budget and national programmes of funding was provided me by the resident farm union agent of the estate of Husatoptir, and the commune board chairman of the estate of Vorsabae.
NOTE: Currency exchange in 1973; 240,00 Icelandic Kronur are equivalent to One Pound Sterling, and to \$2.40 in U. S. currency.

TABLE 34

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS OF THE COMMUNE BOARD IN SKEID¹

C O U N T Y					
	<u>Syslumadur</u> Sheriff			<u>Syslunefnd</u> County Board	
Gen. Admin. Bailiff Taxes	Justice Police	Fire	<u>Social Welfare</u> Education Public Assist. Social Insur.	Agric Veterin. Misc. Sub.	Roads

C O M M U N E					
Hreppstjori Bailiff		<u>Hreppsnefnd</u> Commune Board		<u>Oddveiti</u> Chairman	
Justice Taxes Dispute Settlements		Administrative Decisions		Disbursements Budget	
<u>Cemetery</u>	<u>Social Welf.</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Cultural</u> Orgs.	<u>Roads</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>
Upkeep Records Parsonage	Orphans Old Age Midwife	Teacher Salaries Buildings Materials Housing	Young Men Society Library	Repair Snow Removal	

To demonstrate how pervasive the agencies are in the daily administration of an individual estate, I point to the large number of organizations and associational groups which exist in this small community. The organizations marked on the following page with an asterisk are those of which an estate manager must be a member in order to function as a farmer. The societies control either the management of livestock or the sale of the products derived from estate management. It is not possible to apply for subsidies and supports, nor to sell the raw milk, wool or meat from a farm unless the farmer is a member of these associations. Consequently, the estate managers of Skeid are all members of the Farm Union, the Cattlemen's breeding society, the Highland Grazing Association, the Horsebreeders' Societies, Young Farmer's Association, and the estates are member units of the local Cooperative Purchasing Societies, Dairy in Selfoss, and the Cooperative Slaughterhouse. The associations or groups listed on the following page which have fewer than 38-41 members are essentially subcommittees with two functions: (1) supervising specific tasks supported by a national agency, i.e., the placement of foster children in the homes of the commune, and (2) reporting to the commune board on some specific issue, i.e., the mediator group.

TABLE 35

GROUPS, ASSOCIATIONS IN SKEIDAHREPP, 1970

	<u>Membership</u>
Bunadafelag Skeidahrepps * (Farm Society of Skeid)	38
Nautgriparektafelag * (Cattlemen's Association)	36
Saudfjaerraektafelag * (Sheep breeders' Association)	17
Hestamannafelag * (Horsemen's Association)	21
Hrossarraektarfelag * (Horsebreeders' Association)	32
Afrettamálafelag * (Highland Pasture Association)	36
Ungmennafelag * (Young Farmers' Association)	41 Male 11 Female
Kvenfelag (Women's Association)	30 Female
Lestrarfelag (District Library Society)	40 Male 39 Female
Hreppsnefnd (Commune Council) Past, Present Members	10
Sóknarnefnd (Parish Council)	2
Fraedslunefnd (Education Board)	7
Barnaverðnanefnd (Child Welfare Agency)	3
Sáttanefnd (Mediators)	3
Syslunefnd (Commune Representative to County)	2
Saumaklubbur (Women's Sewing Groups, Circles)	18

Every householder and estate manager is directly influenced and guided in the strategy of farming by an agency which is located outside of the community. Each of the many organisations of which the individual farmer in Skeid is a member effectively influences an aspect of the estate's management.

The present day farmer is a bookkeeper, as daily, weekly and monthly statistics are kept on each phase of the estate's management, its livestock population and the produce production. For example, city people drive passenger automobiles which use gasoline; farm people drive jeeps which use diesel fuel. Since jeeps are farm vehicles, diesel fuel can be purchased by a farmer at a lower price than that paid by city people. I am not sure how an Icelandic farmer makes the distinction between driving for personal pleasure and using his jeep for farm business, but that is how the present system works.

When older householders reminisced about the past they invariably spoke about the contrast between the present and the "old days." At present there is more and better cooperation between the estates, and the commune is more clearly a cooperative and closely knit community. Such attitudes might seem surprising to the observer, especially in view of the growth of a central bureaucracy in the nation, the rapid urbanisation of the country and

the technological and economic changes which have occurred in the countryside. When the present time is contrasted to that of fifty years ago, when the traditional householder guild was still functioning and the traditions of a pre-industrialised peasantry still prevailed, such an attitude seems out of place.

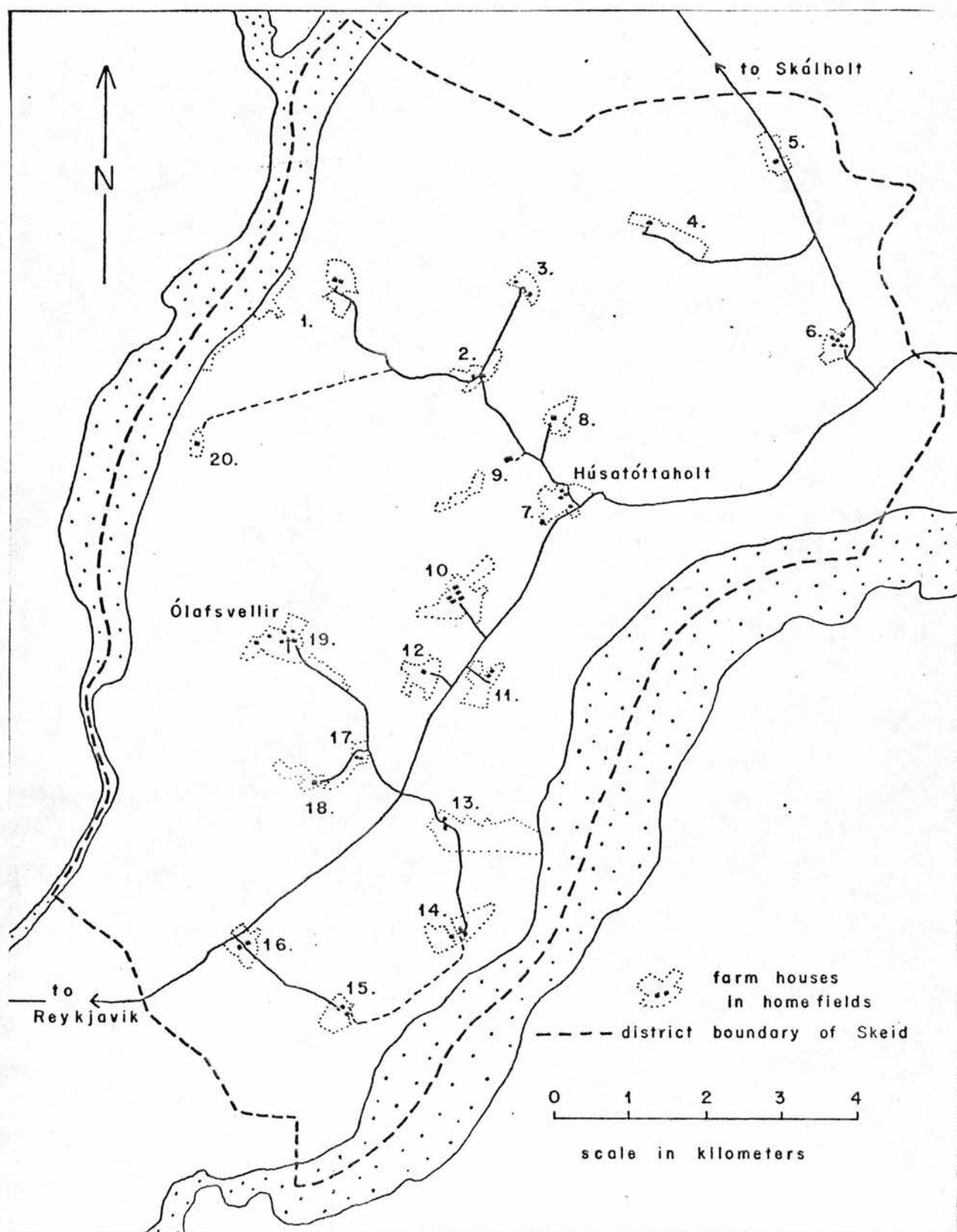
Yet what the old men speak about is their understanding of what has taken place over these decades. The existence of organisations and societies in the local community necessitating joint decisions on the part of all householders, and the carrying out of improvements which have required the cooperative labour of all, has meant that all householders have been engaged in a community-wide exchange of decisions and labour. And the existence of the national support schemes for rural redevelopment has meant that ideas and joint decisions for the improvement of estates were not just idle speculation but could be realised and carried out. The material which follows will describe these aspects of community life which have contributed to the present solidarity of the community and the present pattern of organisation of the estates.

The Estates

The land area of Skeid is 99 square kilometres, a land surface of about 9,900 hectares. One thousand hectares consist of lava fields, mountain slopes and sandy

areas near the two rivers which border the commune on its east and west sides and may be considered unuseable land for farming. In 1932 the improved fields of the community covered an area of 273 hectares in area; by 1970 this area had increased to 1,517 hectares, which leaves about 6,500 hectares of unimproved meadowlands remaining in the community.

An estate is a unit of land averaging 300 hectares of surface, 10% or 30 hectares of which is improved meadowland. The improved meadowland is the most important area in the present farm economy, since improved fields are smooth and permit the use of mechanised cutting and hay baling equipment. Two harvests of hay can be taken from these fields, and this crop serves as the fodder for cattle and sheep most of the year. In the present economy of the farms, the unimproved 80-90% of their land areas constitute additional summer grazing for the livestock, and can be turned into improved meadowland should the need arise. The following map indicates the present locations of farms in Skeid and the extent and location of their improved meadowlands. It will be noted that the community is bounded by rivers on the east and the west, and that the land is low, occasionally flooded and to be improved must be ditched and resurfaced. The map indicates also the dispersed pattern of settlement in the landscape. There is no doubt in my mind that twice the number of households could, without any deterioration



SKEIDAHREPP, ARNESSÝSLA IN 1970

Note: Stippled areas outline present homefield areas, the tun of each estate.

Explanation of Map Titled:
SKEIDAHREPP, ARNESSYSLA IN 1970

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Estate Name</u>	<u>No. of Households Per Estate</u>
1	Fjall	3
2	Vorsabaer	2
3	Birnustadir	2
4	Alfstadir	1
5	Osabakki	4
6	Reykir	3
7	Husatottir	4
8	Efri-Brunavellir	3
9	Sydri-Brunavellir	2
10	Hlemmiskeid	6
11	Votamyri	2
12	Brjanstadir	1
13	Blessastadir	3
14	Skeidhaholt	4
15	Kalfholl	2
16	Kilhraun	2
17	Arakot	1
18	Langamyri	2
19	Olafsvellir hverfi	6
20	Utverk	<u>1</u>
	Total	54

of living standard or farm economy, be accommodated within the district's borders.

The 38 estates have a livestock population of 1,070 cattle, 4,700 sheep and 487 horses. The sheep population in 1970 during the breeding and summer season expanded to 8,001 animals, indicating that each year about 3,300 sheep are produced for slaughtering and meat sales.

The impact of national re-development in the rural areas may be noted in the statistics on the expansion of homefield meadows in the community given on the following page. The increase in area of improved meadowland for the nearly forty year period of 1932-1970 is the result of land reclamation efforts, mechanisation of agriculture and the existence of the urban market of Reykjavik, 60 kilometres away. The changes in livestock management may be noted in the shift from the more traditional sheep ranching system of the old days to the modern dairy production system of the present. In 1940 the proportion of sheep to cows was 4,700 sheep to 360 dairy cattle; in 1970 the total livestock population of Skeid was 4,700 sheep and 1,070 dairy cattle.

The largest estate in the commune in terms of land area is Reykir with an area of 1,000 hectares, but of which only ten percent or 92 hectares are improved meadowland. Three domestic units comprising a total population of 24 live off this single estate. In 1970 the estate

TABLE 36
 THE INCREASE IN HOME FIELDS BY HECTARES
 BETWEEN 1932 AND 1970¹

<u>Farm Unit</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1970</u>
Fjall no. 1	11.0	55
Fjall no. 2	2.6	--*
Framness	4.9	ab.**
Birnustadir	7.0	--*
Alfstadir	6.5	50
Osabakki	3.5	35
Reykir no. 1	6.5	92
Reykir no. 2	--*	--*
Husatoptir I, nos. 1-2	3.4	40
Husatoptir II, nos. 1-2	2.4	28
Hlemmiskeid I, nos. 1-2	3.7	71
Hlemmiskeid II, nos. 1-2	5.6	60
Brjanstadir	2.9	40
Votamyri	5.4	25
Blessastadir, nos. 1-2	6.0	110
Skeidaholt, nos. 1-3	7.8	104
Kalfholl	5.9	65
Kilhraun	6.2	40
Borgarkot	1.4	29
Arakot	2.4	30
Langamyri, nos. 1-3	3.0	30
Ahraun	4.8	ab.**
Olafsvellir	6.3	70
Vesturkot	2.3	22
Minni Olafsvellir	1.8	30
Björnskot	2.6	15
Nordurgardur	2.4	33
Andresfjos	2.9	45
Brunavallakot	2.4	ab.**
Sydri Brunavellir	2.5	25
Efri Brunavellir	3.4	--*
Vosabaer, nos. 1-2	7.7	14
Midbaeli	3.0	ab.**
Utverk	3.9	--*

* no available information

** abandoned house site, fields incorporated into another farm

¹1932 figures from Hagstofa Islands, Bunadaskyrslur, 1932, Reykjavik, 1933, Table No. 83; 1970 figures, Farm Inventory, by author.

managed 56 dairy cattle and 738 sheep. The homes and buildings were all modern structures, with electricity, central heating and modern kitchen and plumbing facilities. The estate was fully mechanised and in fact there is an average of four tractors per farm in Skeid. Skeid is neither crowded nor suffers from lack of land, and the living standards exceed those of neighbouring European countries and the U.S.A. For example, in the U.S.A., one million farm households have an annual income of \$20,000 or more before taxes and expenditures; 1.8 million are below this income level. Skeid households belong in the upper forty percent by U.S. farm household standards.

My interview notes collected from interviews with the oldest farmers in the community confirm the technical and economic development process which I described in Chapter 3. When the now retired farmer of Votamyri began to farm in 1913, the only building on his estate was a single-story turf and stone structure, of which two-thirds of the space was dwelling and one-third was byre. The farms of his youth were, until the mid 1930's, pre-industrial and primitive enterprises, with homefields of less than two hectares in area, which produced grass to feed no more than four dairy cattle each year. Horsedrawn equipment was non-existent and the only tools at hand were scythes, spades and buckets. When in 1918 his father did skifti (Icel.), i.e., established the son's share as a farm unit of the paternal estate,

father and son worked jointly on its improvement. In 1923 the first horsedrawn equipment was purchased; in 1935 a new sheep barn and hay shed were constructed; in 1942 a new byre was built; in 1949 a tractor was purchased and by 1950 new dwellings and hay barns were constructed. The present estate of Votamyri has a homefield area of 30 hectares in extent and produces from this area more than 2,100 horse burdens of hay per annum.

The retired father on the estate of Arakot thought that the greatest single improvement with impact upon the work of farming and on living standard was the installation of main's electricity in 1957. "...In the old days we had to burn moss and sheep manure. Everything to be kept was put down in salt; now we just stick things in the freezer. I don't know how we did without..."

The retired farmer on the estate of Brjanstadir explained that at present hay is not cut from the natural meadows and that such land surfaces are used for summer grazing only. Prior to 1950 the unimproved meadows were cut, since the small homefields could not provide enough hay for the winter season. Cutting grass by hand was an arduous and time-consuming task which necessitated the labour of all the people of an estate. It was best cut when it rained, since grass turned stiff in the rain, and people worked ten hours a day during the summer months raking and cutting in the fields. When, in the

1920's, horsedrawn equipment was introduced, the farmers in Skeid discovered that the Icelandic horse was too small for draught purposes. Teams would tire out after about two hours of work, and as a consequence, the innovation of horsedrawn equipment caused grazing land capacity to be diverted to feed larger herds of horses. Estates were now burdened with the problem of balancing the hay and grass supply for motive power and productive purposes. This may be one reason for the rapid abandonment of horsedrawn equipment in favor of tractors when these could be purchased after 1945. Tractors do not eat grass and horses became superfluous in the farm economy of the commune.

The careers of the 22 oldest farmers confirm the processes and changes caused by the impact of bureaucracy, technology and economics in the southern farming region of Iceland. This impact may be noted in the management practises of the estates and in the very rapid and drastic increase in living standards on the farms of Skeid since the late 1940's. Prior to this decade the estates were underutilised and underdeveloped enterprises, primitively equipped and with a population whose life style resembled more nearly the conditions of the traditional community in the nineteenth century. The changes which have taken place transformed not only the landscape of Skeid, its buildings, fields, lands and roads, but also transformed the lifestyles of the residents of the community. The

young men who begin to farm now share with their elders a tradition in so far as their family histories are concerned, but they live in a world which bears little resemblance to the days of their fathers.

The Recruitment of Labour in the Commune

Three words commonly used in daily speech on the part of the residents of the commune point to the pattern of cooperation and the manner in which labour is organised in the community. The Icelandic words are: skifti vinna, samvinna and dagsverk, i.e., exchange labour, cooperative labour, and a day's labour.

Although some reconstruction and repair of houses and buildings has always taken place, most of the buildings currently found on the estates have been built since 1943. The period when building construction is possible in Iceland is limited to the four months of each year when the farmers are most busy. Thus, to build is to engage in labour beyond that necessary for accomplishing the task of farming. During the twenty-four year period of 1943-1967, 166 concrete and wood frame buildings were constructed, not only to replace the ancient turf dwellings but also to house an expanding livestock population and the increased crop production. During this period 27 domestic dwellings were built, all of which are two stories in height, large enough to accommodate two or more conjugal-natal units, each with a full

complement of rooms including kitchen, bathrooms, basement, living rooms and bedrooms for each family. Other buildings constructed during this period were 33 hay barns, 39 byres with milk parlours attached, 29 sheep barns with hay storage space and room for 100-200 animals, 19 silos and 13 machine and tool storage buildings. During the summer months of the past two decades, the people engaged not only in the daily work of their farms, but also in land reclamation, expansion of livestock herds, building reconstruction and new construction. All the work was done with the labour available in the commune; the labour needed in carpentry, installation of electricity and plumbing systems was provided by skilled people who supervised the farmers. The cooperative societies supplied cement, machinery and machine operators at cost, but everything else was done by the farmers themselves. Of the many stories I was told, and of the many instances I witnessed, I shall give only one example which illustrates the process and organisation of exchange labour. In 1968 the farmer of the estate of Brjanstadir decided to build a new large byre and hay barn on his estate. Building plans and specifications were obtained from the Farm Union Agent and cost estimates were drawn up taking into account the subsidies which would apply to this task. Once the paper work had been done and supplies secured, the farmer asked his neighbours to assist him with five days of labour. On the first day

of the project twelve neighbours arrived with tractors equipped with hydraulically operated digging scoops, and by the end of that day the foundation site had been prepared. The second day the men, under the direction of a carpenter, constructed and set up the wooden forms which would hold the concrete. On the third day the concrete mixing machine arrived from the cooperative machine shop in Selfoss, the nearby town. A young farmer skilled in the operation of this machine ran it all day; and, as the concrete was mixed, it was poured into the forms. This work required one more day; a week later, on the fifth and last day of labour exchange, the concrete was smoothed and the forms were removed. The farmer hired a carpenter to construct the wooden framework of the building upon the concrete foundation. Once this was done the people of the estate spent the rest of the summer covering the structure with corrugated iron sheets, roofing the building and installing the blower and ventilation equipment.

The idea of exchange of labour is not new, nor is it an idea which grew out of the recent process of innovations and farm improvement. When plans were formulated in 1931 to build a school and assembly hall in the commune, farmers were asked how many days of work each estate could contribute to the project. Each gave from fifteen to twenty days of work; thus, the idea of dagsverk is a measure of labour which is exchanged not only between

neighbouring estates, but can be used in the interest of the whole community.

The rules are known in so far as exchange labour and the recruitment of personnel is concerned. One must be able to return labour in order to ask for it, and one must be an estate manager in order to participate in the system of exchange services. The old farmers did not engage in the exchange since they were too old and avoided the system by paying cash for the work done on their estates. Another farmer explained to me that his son, soon to be married and to begin farming his own estate, engaged in skifti vinna (Icel.) on neighbouring estates because he wanted to begin this system of exchange with his neighbours. A young farmer was helped by his more experienced neighbours in the following manner: "I have asked my neighbour who owes me two days of labour exchange to give them to the young man; he is a fine farmer and needs the assistance..."

One cannot recruit labour for one's own estate from just anywhere in the community. A boundary line, which may be drawn from west to east through the estate site of Husatoptir (Site No. 7 on the map, p. 253), divides the community into two halves. Sheep dipping tanks are located in each half of the commune and estates south of this boundary take their animals to the southern tank, while the northern estates take theirs to the northern

half. Recruitment of labour and the exchange of services between estates is confined to the areas within the two halves.

The Husatoptir estates have for the past century or so been the central location of the district where, in former times, the commune council met. At present the estates are the place where the mail is delivered and where the telephone exchange is located.

In only one case was labour exchange extended across the commune boundaries. Reykir estates (Site No. 6, on map, p. 253) assisted the estate of Sandlaekjakot, a couple of kilometres to the east and located in the neighbouring commune, since the householders of the two estates were in-laws. All other estates confined labour and service exchange to each other within an area defined by the residents as sudur Skeid (Icel.), i.e., southern Skeid, and up Skeid (Icel.), i.e., upper or northern Skeid.

The definition of work exchange is equally clear; it is work confined to farming tasks, as the people say "work which all know how to do but which requires help." Diesel engine repair, veterinary assistance, welding or electricity installation are tasks which can only be done by outsiders and skilled craftsmen and must be paid for in cash.

Thus the idiom of exchange is a vocabulary of terms which express the role of estate manager and commune resident householder. The terms are, in Icelandic, skifti, skifti vinna, felag, felagsbu, felags vinna and samvinna; the English meanings are as follows: exchange of estate property between kinsmen, work exchange, society, joint estates, to work cooperatively, and to work together. What is exchanged in labour is a unit defined as dagsverk a day's labour.

The question is whether such labour exchange is the result of the present innovations of technology and the present process of expansion of estates. Given below is my analysis of the kinds of work done by the personnel on an estate and the kind of work done jointly by the personnel of more than one estate.

TABLE 37
LABOUR EXCHANGE IN SKEID IN 1970

	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Joint</u>
Livestock Management		
Dairy Cattle	X	
Horses	X	
Sheep	X	X
Estate Work		
Daily Work	X	
Equipment Maintenance	X	
Work on Fields	X	
Land Reclamation		X
Equipment Purchases		X
Building Repair	X	
New Building Construction		X
Communal Property		X

It is noteworthy that the tasks which are shared correspond to the duties householders owed one another by thirteenth-nineteenth century commune laws.

The management of estates and the responsibilities of householders in the traditional Hrepp were threefold: the management of herds, the joint endeavours in land resource allocation and management, and the mutual support in building insurance. The present system of exchange takes advantage of the subsidy schemes provided by the central government and the national farmer's union, but the joint work done today is still that kind of customary obligation which householders in the past extended towards each other and received from others in the community.

To be an estate manager and householder in Skeid whether in the past or in the present is to be part of an unending round of obligations. It is the existence and continuation of such obligations which give to the commune its solidarity and which maintain the status of householder/estate manager, since they are the only ones who can receive and extend such support in the community.

The People and Households on the Estates in 1970

Estates in the commune of Skeid have been privately owned by commoners since 1790 when crown lands were auctioned

to the public.¹ There is no elite landownership in Iceland; feudal tenure, haciendas or plantation systems do not exist. The farms of the southern region are family farms, either privately owned or rented as lifetime tenancies from the government of Iceland. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, fourteen of the 37 households in the district were owned by resident householders and 22 were tenanted but owned by estate owners residing in neighbouring communes. By 1840 the class of estate holders in Skeid is clearly noted in the soil records for that year; after each titleholder's name is the Icelandic notation Be., i.e., Baenda eign, which means owned by the farmer whose name appears in the record.²

A total of 49 title holders are listed for the estates of Skeid in 1901; of these, 28 title holders were farmers who did not reside within the boundaries of the commune, two were merchants, and the rest were owner-managers of estates in the commune.³

Soil records from the year 1910 show that 37 title holders owned the estates in the commune, 22 resided on

¹J. Johnsen, Jardatal a Islandi, "Seldar Skálholts stóls jardir", Copenhagen: S. Trier, 1847, pp. 416-21.

²Ibid., pp. 63-64.

³Hagstofa Islands, Manntal a Islandi, "Skeidahrepp, Arnessysla," Reykjavik, 1901.

the estates which they owned, and 7 were absentee land owners.¹

What occurred is a process of consolidation of property into the hands of the peasantry which came into ownership in Skeidahrepp by 1790. The consolidation of property during the following century established a community of residents of the district/commune who have remained and who now trace their roots to the early eighteenth century.

The tradition of residence and joint estate management in Skeid is old; the tradition which I described in Chapter 4 on the eighteenth century commune continues, and the following survey of joint estates for the period 1900-1970 shows stability of households and the domestic cycle.

TABLE 38

A SURVEY PLOT OF HOUSEHOLD UNITS PER FARM FOR
SELECTED DECADES, (1900-1970)²

<u>Farm Name</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>				
		<u>1900</u>	<u>'10</u>	<u>'40</u>	<u>'50</u>	<u>'70</u>
Fjall	182	x	x	x	x	x
		x	x	x	x	x
		x				x

NOTE: "x" indicates a singular nuclear household; "-" indicates abandoned unit.

¹Ibid.

²Hagstofa Islands, Skeidahrepp, Arnessysla, Manntals 1703, 1860-1960; Personal Survey, 1968-1970.

<u>Farm Name</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>				
		<u>1900</u>	<u>'10</u>	<u>'40</u>	<u>'50</u>	<u>'70</u>
Framnes	183	x	x	x	x	-
Birnustadir	184	x	x	x	x	x x
Alfstadir	185	x x x	x x	x	x	x
Osabakki	186	x	x	x	x x	x x x x
Reykir	187	x x	x x	x x	x x x	x x x
Husatoptir	188	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x x x
Hlemmiskeid	189	x x	x x	x x	x x x x	x x x x x
Brjanstadir	190	x	x	x	x	x
Votamyri	191	x	x	x	x x	x x
Blessastadir	192	x x x	x	x x	x x	x x x

<u>Farm Name</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>				
		<u>1900</u>	<u>'10</u>	<u>'40</u>	<u>'50</u>	<u>'70</u>
Skeidhaholt	193	x x	x x	x x	x x	x x x x
Kalfholl	194	x	x	x	x x	x x
Kilhraun	195	x	x	x x	x x	x x
Borgarkot	196	x	x	x	x	x
Arakot	197	x	x	x	x	x
Langamyri	198	x x	x x	x	x	x x
Ahraun	199	x	x	x	x	-
Olafsvellir	200	x x	x x	x	x	x
Vesturkot	200A	x	x	x	x	x
Minni Olafsvellir	200B	x	x	x	x	x
Bjornskot	200C	x x	x	x	x	x
Nordurgardur	200D	x	x	x	x x	x
Andresfjos	200E	x x	x	x	x	x x

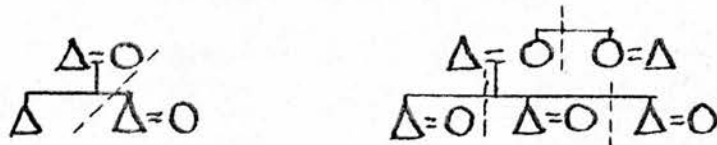
<u>Farm Name</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>				
		<u>1900</u>	<u>'10</u>	<u>'40</u>	<u>'50</u>	<u>'70</u>
Sydri Brunavellir	201	x	x	x	x	x x
Brunavallakot	202	x	x	x	- -	-
Efri Brunavellir	203	x x	x x	x	x x	x x x
Vorsabaer	204	x	x	x	x x	x x
Midbyli	205	x	x	-	-	-
Utverk	206	x	x	x	x	x
<u>Total Number of Units:</u>		45	39	37	44	54

The survey of households per estate for the period of 1900-1970 indicates the continuing tradition of management and the domestic cycle. The large estates on which more than one domestic unit resides have not changed, and the smaller estates which can support only one domestic unit have also remained.

The survey suggests the impact of migration from rural to urban communities, as well as the depressed conditions to which farming in Iceland was subject during the period 1910-1940. The increase in number of households

beginning in 1950 can be explained by the expansion of farming in the community and the new prosperity which began during this decade.

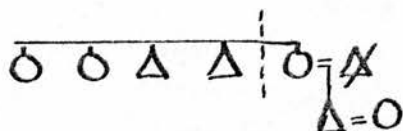
The following types of joint estates and households related to each other as sibling units or parent-child units were found in the commune of Skeid in 1968-1970. The stippled lines which are drawn on the diagrams indicate which members of an estate are located in the separate households. An example of a Fedgarbu (Icel.), i.e., father-son managed estate is shown below.¹



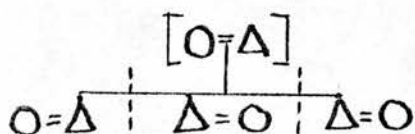
A Systkinabu (Icel.), i.e., an estate managed by siblings, is given below. Four older unmarried live together as one separate household. Their sister, now a widow, manages a part of the estate with an adult married son, and receives assistance from her siblings in such matters as land reclamation, equipment purchases, etc.²

¹The farm of Hlemmiskeith, Subunits Nos. 1-5. (Site No. 10, p. 253).

²The farm of Fjall, Subunits, Nos. 1 and 2. (Site No. 1, p. 253).



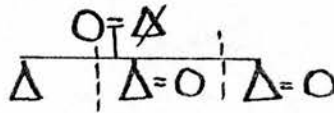
A Braedrabu (Icel.) is an estate jointly managed by brothers, each, in the case shown below, independent householders living in separate dwellings on the estate. The whole estate is managed jointly in so far as land reclamation, purchases and building construction is concerned.¹



When I show the stippled lines in the diagrams I want to stress the fact that the households of these estates are independent, occupy their own spaces, manage their own kitchens, etc. But in matters of the management of farming, the day-to-day work and the sharing of costs of improvements, each estate's population works as a unit. A variation in the Braedrabu (Icel.), i.e., brother's estate, may be seen in the following diagram. Here two brothers are not directly engaged in day-to-day farming; one is a carpenter and the other is busy with

¹Skeidhaholt, the Hreppstjori household is in parenthesis,

truck hauling and truck gardening supplying vegetables to restaurants in Reykjavik. Yet management decisions and costs of estate management are shared and income is added to the estate by the non-farming work of the brothers.



1

The following summary of the domestic units on the estates in the commune indicates the relationship between joint farming, inheritance practises and domestic cycle in a rural cognatic social organisation.

TABLE
JOINT ESTATES AND HOUSEHOLDS IN SKEID, 1970

<u>Type</u>	<u>No. Estates</u>	<u>No. Households</u>
Sibling units	5	5
FA-SO units	7	17
FA-SO-in-law	3	6
BR-BR	4	11
Total	19	44
Single estates	7	7
Grand total	26	51

the old man is active as a bailiff, but does not any longer work in farming. (Site No. 14, p. 253).

¹Osabakki, and Subunits (Site No. 4, p. 253).

Partnership within each estate is based upon inheritance and is not the result of the sale of estates on an open market. The traditional aspect of the social organisation that continues in the present commune is the manner in which estate holders come into being; succession to management is based upon ascription. There is a succession of agnatic titleholders, and the maintenance on the estates of a stem family system.

Kin, Land and Estates in 1970

The law of 1962, No. 75, known as the "act of new settlements" constitutes at present the national policy on the redevelopment and expansion of estates in rural areas.¹ The first version of the act was formulated and made law in 1936, the act was revised and expanded in 1947, and the present version of 1962 constitutes thirty years of national involvement in rural redevelopment.

The underlying reason for the legislation was the urgent need to solve the problems of rural economic depression during the years 1920-1940. By 1936 unemployment in rural areas was high and the legislation formulated as a response to this problem was one which not only dealt with the matter of unemployment, but also legislated the beginning of a process of modernisation of farming

¹Althingi Islands: Lög um Stofnlánadeild landbunadarins, landnám, ræktun og byggingar i sveitum, No. 75, 1962, 27 April, in A. Snaevar (ed.), Lagasafn, 1965, Reykjavik.

in Iceland.

Principally, the act supported two undertakings: (1) the subdivision of large estates with under-utilised lands, and (2) the relocation of farmers from marginal lands to productive lands. For example, in 1940 about 1,000 estates were located in regions where farming was at best marginal in terms of the available natural resources of the region. The 1,000 farms were also located far from other farms and far from the population centers of the nation. To move the farmers made sense for two reasons; their relocation onto productive land surfaces would constitute a much more effective national work effort as well as a shift of civil administration and social services away from marginal areas into more populous areas. By the mid 1960's about 800 farms had been relocated in better areas in the northern and southern regions, and, as a consequence, abandonment of marginal lands took place in the extreme western and eastern regions of the nation. The effect of the 1936-1947 and 1962 "acts on settlement" can be seen in Skeid in the expansion of the number of households on the estates and in the reclamation of their land areas. The whole process of rural redevelopment was initiated by the Icelandic Senate, planned by the Department of Agriculture, and underwritten by the National Bank. A five-man committee oversees this redevelopment scheme and the

funding for rural redevelopment is underwritten by national taxation, loans and mortgages given by the national bank. As a general rule, a young man qualified to become an estate manager can receive up to 85% of the costs of building reconstruction and land reclamation of his estate. The development of estates in Skeid and elsewhere in Iceland has meant that the nation is the mortgage holder on most estates which have come into being since the inception of the 1936 act. The question was raised therefore as to what should be done with the estates once the original lender and participant in the subsidy scheme dies? In the acts on settlement of 1936, 1947 and 1962, the State has first right of purchase of an estate except when the owner "sells" to his parents, his siblings, his children, his adopted children, his children-in-law, and his grandchildren. This has caused the continuation of the emphasis upon the traditions of testamentary succession to estates in the rural areas. The close kindred to Ego retain primary rights to an estate, and the law of 1962 on "act of new settlements" indicates clearly that in the question of Ego's kindred the 1943 law on inheritance is to be followed in this matter.

In fact, estates in Skeid are not available on an open market; the skifti between parents and children sets a value upon an estate which does not match the true market value, but is based upon mortgage and tax value. This

is a price far below true market price and one set by agencies involved in farm subsidisation and redevelopment. Thus the agricultural support legislation introduced in Iceland by 1936 had much to do with the manner in which social organisation in present Skeid is shaped. The question of "testamentary succession" can be shown to be one where modern legislation supports the tradition of agnatic titleholders and stem families. Further, the perception of the old farmers that the district commune has become a place where there is more cooperation than there was in the past is quite correct. In the 1936-62 settlement acts, preference of subsidy support is to be given where new estates are developed by men who are of the same family. The consequence of this is the presence of the many jointly managed estates in present Skeid.

The Inheritance of Estates

Of the 26 estates in the district, eight farm units were tenant units and farmed singly as einyrkjabú (Icel.), that is, as singly worked farms. All others are felagsbú (Icel.), that is, joint estates which are owned by the present householders. The transmission of the estates occurs in the process of skipti, that is by the dividing of the estate between the parents and their children.

Present laws concerning the property which is part of

a rural household is quite specific on this matter.¹ Household property in Skeid consists of the house and its contents, the buildings of an estate, its equipment and livestock, the homefields of the estate, and whatever valuables parents possess.

In 1970, householders of the estates in the commune were descendants of prior estate managers. The following analysis given below indicates the population from which householders are recruited.

TABLE 39
HOUSEHOLDERS IN 1970

<u>Estate</u>	<u>Potential Inheritors</u>	<u>Householders from Sibling Group</u>
Fjall	7	4
Skeidhaholt	5	3
Brjanstadir	9	4
Framnes	3	1
Langamyri	2	1
Hlemmiskeid	17	2
Votamyri	5	1
Vorsabaer	8	1
Blessastadir	15	2
Reykir	11	3
Osabakki	11	2
Alfstadir	8	4
Kilhraun	6	2
Sydri Brunavell	3	2
Efri Brunavell	5	1
Husatottir, 1	11	3
Husatottir, 2	6	1
Kalfholl	3	2
TOTAL	Siblings 151	Householders 39

¹Althingi, Erfdalög, 6 March 1962. The law has two major sections, the first on inheritance and the second on undivided estates.

The law gives to the child chosen to be the successor to the present estate manager the right of adalrett (Icel.); that is, he who stays to farm has first right to buy any shares of the estate which his siblings might want to sell. If, as was the case prior to 1950, the estate was small, the issue on shares in the estate became moot. Older children married and moved away to Reykjavik, while younger children stayed to farm. I cannot show that the 120 potential inheritors all left the district. In a number of cases daughters married the sons of neighbouring estates; in other cases sons remained as unmarried residents on sibling estates and never established families of their own. The count which I have made is of the present householders who are estate managers, who are married, and who will pass on to their children the title to the estate.

As I stated earlier, it is in theory an open market for buying land and estates. However, the practice of selection by parents of the next householder, the legal principle which gives to the primary heir to the estate first rights to buy out siblings, and the fact that those who do not become householders move away to establish their families outside of Skeid or remain as unmarried workers on the farms, make it impossible to speak of an open market. It would indeed be quite difficult at present to move into Skeidahrepp and offer to buy an estate and the title to its land.

The question of succession and who succeeds to an estate can be answered as follows. For the period 1900-1970 there occurred in Skeid 47 instances of transfers of estates. Of these, 43 were transfers wherein sons became managers, and four were cases of transfer to sons-in-law. There is little relationship between categories of succession and the choice of successor. Neither primogeniture, whereby oldest son succeeds, nor ultimogeniture, whereby the youngest succeeds, are practised. In 33 of the cases of succession, successors came from the first through fourth born children of the household. In ten instances, the successors came from the fifth through seventh born children of the household. In 33 instances, adult sons worked estates with active fathers in the system of joint management I have described. In ten cases, it was apparent that the father would be ready for retirement at the time of his son's adulthood. On the estates of Husatopfir there were five cases of succession between 1930 and 1950; here two sons who succeeded were first born children, and three sons were last born, sixth and seventh children, respectively; succession reflects not age nor youth but the economics of farming. Most sons succeeded to the estates in the commune while their fathers were active. In the cases where estates or parts of estates are not large enough to contain two households, fathers retire before their sons take over.

The present laws work to favour the common occurrence of the children who remain to farm and who establish a household on the parental estate. An estate is not easily sold or divided by its heirs; in cases where there are many children, the principle of equal division among them of the parental inheritance is such that those who want to sell out are disadvantaged. In the first place, the estate may not be saleable until several years after the parent's death and until all heirs are adult. In the second place, the shares may be so small as to be worthless and the act will work to the detriment of all. Finally, there exists in the commune of Skeid the practise of making a distinction with regard to land values of an estate between its reclaimed land areas and its unimproved lands. To divide a homefield and the property of an estate into shares would render each share worthless as a farm. Thus, in most cases, heirs who do not farm do not press the legal point; they accept the fact that the sibling who remains to farm is the successor to the estate.

Heirs to estates who have left farming utilise their inheritance in other ways. Children of city siblings may spend summer holidays on the farm and exchanges of foods from farm to city take place at holiday time. The participation of urban siblings in special events and parties on farms constitute other forms of exchange

which last throughout life among the siblings who have left and those who have stayed in the community.

It should also be emphasized that the present prosperity of the farms in Skeid is recent; prior to 1950, farming was not an enviable profession in Iceland. Children who stayed on estates during the period 1930-1950 remained in depressed economic circumstances, and their siblings who left to enter commercial fishing or other professions in the city were usually much better off, in terms of income and living standards as well.

The prosperity and comfort of the farms in present day Skeid is a recent factor and raises an important question in the minds of the present householders as to what to do about the law of equal inheritance of estates. They foresee much trouble between siblings in the future over this question; several of the householders interviewed expressed their concern about how to "keep the land within their family and to keep the present estates intact."

The Director of the Farm Union of the Southern region pointed out that the Norwegian Law of 1941, known as Odelsret (Norwegian), i.e., the law on family property, was adopted into Icelandic legislation in 1962 as Aettarodul, (Icel.), i.e., the law on indivisible family property.¹ On an estate which is large enough to

¹A. Snaevar (ed.), Lagasafn, etc., Reykjavik, 1965, Vol. 2, p. 1468.

support more than one household, the present householder may request the county to have the estate made indivisible. The procedure is complex, lengthy and cumbersome, the County Magistrate's office must first file a claim, the Farm Union agent must survey the estate and file his reports, and finally the decision must be made final by a court decree. No one in the commune has undertaken such action to this date but the law remains as a solution to the problems which householders foresee. The problems on some estates are compounded by the thoughtlessness of the old; as the younger men say, "...the old behave as if they were going to live forever..." In some cases wills are not written, successors are not chosen and the orderly system of inheritance and estate management as it has occurred may be disrupted.

CHAPTER 7: The Impact of National Development
on the Small Community

District and Commune
Household and Family

Conclusion: The Impact of National Development
on the Small Community

The history of the rural community of Skeidahrepp in southern Iceland for the period 1860-1970 is the history of a small community exhibiting the effects of the development of a nation, one which, seventy years ago was an underdeveloped and backward country and was to become in the present time a modern, western European republic.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the prospects for the future of the people of Iceland were discouraging. The country was a Danish province ruled by a governor; its national assembly consisted of property holders elected by a minority of the population. Its national economy could be characterized as colonial, dependent upon a foreign power and keeping the inhabitants in an inferior economic situation. The inhabitants lived in self-sufficient households subsisting on farming and fishing both of which were inefficiently conducted by the standards of the time and were traditional in their management. Neither towns nor industries nor trades existed in Iceland, and there were no roads, bridges, harbours nor other means of communication to ameliorate the isolation of the scattered and small human communities. The technological, industrial and economic-social advances which occurred in western

Europe between 1860-1900 did not reach Iceland until a generation later when changes, so wished for by her people, began to make their effects felt.

In structural functional theory, society is regarded as a structure of relationships among individuals occupying roles. Roles cluster in bounded sets, and the components of roles are the rights and obligations assigned them which, in the case of groups, link individuals and function to maintain the system of relations among roles. In brief, my concern has been to research, contrast and compare the constitution of enduring groups and categories of persons in a rural area of southern Iceland for the period of one hundred years. By the word "change," I understand the effects of national development in the acceptance of innovations introduced into a traditional society. The effects of innovations resulted in a national development process, lasting about sixty years, which impacted upon institutions basic to the maintenance of a traditional rural community, its district organisation and the households located within it. Thus the district of Skeid is viewed as a small self-contained and bounded social system which, as a component of a larger and more complex society, was affected by development which resulted in its transformation into something new.

Iceland is an island society and is part of a larger social and cultural region designated by the term 'Norden,' the community of five Scandinavian nations. Iceland shares with the four Scandinavian countries racial, linguistic, historic and social affinities and features. When the national development of Iceland is considered for the period beginning in 1900, it can be documented, and this is stated in my research, that innovations which were accepted in Iceland were introduced into that country. These were, for example, the cooperative societies movement, the Folk Highschool movement, the legislation on social welfare, many of the laws on property and inheritance, fishing and farming technologies, and dairy and veterinary institutions. In the main, Icelanders brought back to their native soil the ideas on national progress and the technological innovations in fishing and farming which they had seen elsewhere in Scandinavia.

My concern with innovations is not with their point of origin nor with the manner in which they were transmitted from point of origin to Iceland, but with what happened when the innovation accepted in Iceland was introduced to the small-scale social systems of which Skeidahrepp is an example.

A truism about pesantries is their conservative outlook and reluctance to engage in innovative undertakings which, in the view of the outsider to the community, promise an improvement in conditions of life for the members of the community. And in the case of Iceland it is not very difficult to find descriptions and comments, at the present time and as far back as the eighteenth century, on the unwillingness and resistance of Icelandic farmers to the attempts to improve their lot in life. S. Sigurdsson researched the question of how many surveys, studies and experiments directed towards the improvement of life of the Icelanders were undertaken by the Danish government for the period 1647-1800, and whether any succeeded. One is struck by the contemporary and modern ring to the question, and the perspective of "foreign aid" which Sigurdsson holds up to his readers. The Danes attempted twenty-four such projects, all of which, after an initial success which lasted only a few years, came to naught.¹ For example, young men from Iceland were sent to Norway and Denmark as apprentices to learn new skills; a ropewalk, a sulfur mining experiment and other such projects were attempted.

¹S. Sigurdsson, Bunadarhagir, Reykjavik, 1937, p. 53.

Throughout the medieval period, the estates in Skeid were part of the diocesan estate of Skálholt, and the farmers of that time practiced the cattlekeeping and sheep herding that they do today. Yet the wheeled plow pulled by oxen, so common in medieval Scandinavia, was not used in Iceland. Mechanistic explanations such as the softness of the ground, the poverty of the farmers, or the lack of wood and carpentry skills are not satisfactory. One is left to wonder why the iron plow imported from Denmark in the 1880's, the wheeled wagon used to carry butter from the community's creamery in 1905, and the tractor imported in 1928, were used to accomplish what could have been done several hundred years earlier. Thus, my reserach has had to weigh such explanations which I now call mechanistic and ex post facto, and one is left with the fact that a particular kind of pastoral economy and a given form of social organization occur in the southern Icelandic region, established by the eleventh century and remaining unchanged until the end of the nineteenth century. The social organization of the community, the logic of traditions, restraints, custom and habit and the continuity of the community in isolation are factors which provide some explanation for the persistance of the community until recent times.

The conclusions at which I arrived on the persistence of the tradition and the lack of innovative undertakings on the part of the peasantry can be supported in the 1785 description of Iceland written by Skuli Magnusson. He scolds his countrymen for their sloth and their habit of living in filth; he laments the lack of resources, he complains about Danish taxation and commercial practices, and he understands well that unless the land is reclaimed in the rural communities there is no basis for progress in Iceland. Yet it is not until 1893 that the first district-wide soil reclamation society is begun, and, although the Danish monopolistic trade system is abolished in 1786, it is not until 1882 that the first cooperative purchasing society is formed by the farmers in a northern county in Iceland.

In brief, what was accomplished in the development of estate management during the period 1900-1960 could have been accomplished a century earlier. If the tradition of the "elite farmer" had existed in Iceland as it did in England and Denmark, a wealthy landowner such as Bishop could have established a demonstration estate in the Eighteenth Century in Iceland, on which all the advances which finally occur on that country's farms in the twentieth century could have been seen.

Thus, the question of innovation as part of the process of development of a traditional community was a necessary question, and much of the research undertaken was done so in order to elicit, with the aid of historic sources and the assistance of living persons, what was a "situational logic" with which members of the traditional community lived, and what possibly served as the impetus for change. Once this perspective had been gained, research on the processes of change and on the social-structural shifts which occurred could be undertaken.

District and Commune¹

Rural communities in Iceland in the nineteenth century were autonomous and self-sufficient. However, districts, of which Skeidahrepp is an example, were more than aggregates of a given number of households and of a given size of land area. They were units of government, ruled by ancient laws and upheld by councils of property holders, and possessed as autonomous units a wide range of responsibility for the economic and domestic relations of their inhabitants. Districts were therefore economic units, defined areas of land, units of government, corporate organisations of property holders, and mutual

¹"Commune," i.e., the smallest local political division of various European countries, governed by a municipal council.

insurance groups.

The logic of the situation by which district councils and their property holders lived when viewed as a set of constraints on initiative and change, had several facets. Initiatives for innovation can be seen to have been attempted on the part of individual estate holders. But to increase the production of a farm in order to earn more and thus improve life, or to change the traditional production of a farm and attempt to develop new articles and produce for sale, would inevitably run into problems. P. Vinogradoff speaks of the peasant community as one based upon the "equality of in-equal holdings"; in Iceland, to increase a farm's production meant to graze more animals on the district lands than the farm traditionally had done. District councils resisted the expansion of a farm's livestock. Secondly, what the merchant would not buy of a farm's produce would have to be consumed by its own household. Without any other trade outlet, and without the possibility of expanding a farm's production, little incentive existed for individual initiative. Besides the restraints inherent in management of estates in a district, and in the economic conditions set by long distance import and export trade with the merchant as the redistributive intermediary, there was the absence of any alternative to life on the estate in nineteenth

century Iceland. For example, as recently as 1900, less than twenty percent of the population lived in villages; in that year Reykjavik was a small, harbour and trading town of 6,682 inhabitants. Thus, the overwhelming institutional relationship available to a majority of the population, was the residence in rural households.

Besides the restraints inherent in estate management, in economic relations, and in the institutional focus of the population, the laws governing the relationships between the inhabitants of the district served to function in the maintenance of the system of relations among roles. Until 1915 the franchise was restricted to adult male property owners in a district, with the result that the majority of the nineteenth century population had little influence on the deliberations of a district council. A law of 1787, its intent not revoked until 1900, required of every inhabitant in a district to possess a legal domicile,¹ either as a property owner on his own farm or estate or as a worker on an estate. The law went so far in its original intent as to enjoin a father either to contract his own sons

¹"Forordning angaaende de saa kaldede Løse=Maend paa Island," in Forordning angaaende den Islandske Handel og Skibsfart, Christiansborg Slot, 13 Junii, 1787.

as workers at age eighteen, or to have them contracted on a neighbouring estate. The districts never had public welfare institutions, but, by a law which can be traced back at least to the tenth century, they had to place in the households of the district those inhabitants who were in need or who were aged or infirm. Thus, an Icelandic rural household of the traditional period was not just a family household, whose members belonged by rules of kinship. It was a household wherein nested a series of units defined by their function--procreation, welfare, production, with all members of the estate's household forming a single consumption unit. I have shown in Tables 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 the continuation of the traditions mentioned in the rural community as these persisted throughout the nineteenth century.

Thus, to the question of how innovations occur in a traditional rural community, the research indicates that during the traditional period innovations introduced into Iceland could only fail after a brief period of success, if restraints on individual enterprise and initiative as these existed in the prevailing social organisation of the community were not removed or modified.

On pp. 81-87 I summarized the process of development into three phases, a traditional phase lasting until 1900, a developmental phase beginning in 1900 and lasting until 1965, and a contemporary phase beginning in 1965. The three terms which may be used to describe the effects of national development on a small community are collectivization, intensification and nationalization. Collectivization is the process of establishment of cooperatives and collectives, each one an agency directed by a national office which oversees and controls all aspects of farm management in the rural community. By 1930 every estate manager in Iceland had become a member of a National Farmer's Union. What distinguishes the period 1900-1965 is the intensification of traditional farm management activities. Where there had been two hectares of reclaimed meadowland per estate in 1900, by the 1960's an estate would have an average of seventeen hectares of reclaimed land. Where there had once been four dairy cows to an estate, there is now an average of twenty dairy cows on each estate in the southern region. No new products appear, instead, one finds simply more of the same in every category of farm production. And it is only in the past decade, according to the production statistics on farms in Iceland, that new products designed for urban consumption such as hogs, poultry, truck gardened vegetables, and hothouse fruits appear as new items in an individual

estate's work cycle.

Nationalization took place as the traditional duties and rights of the district councils were transferred over a period of fifty years to national agencies located in the capital. With the soil improvement act of 1893, the government began a system of subsidization of estates which continues to this day. An "Improvement of Estates Act" was enacted in 1920 and expanded into a "New Farm Development Act" in 1936. When an analysis is made of the discretionary management of funds available to a district council, one finds the same process at work, where in 1900 about eighty-five percent of annual budgets were managed by the district councils, although within broad guidelines and with discretionary powers. At present, less than ten percent of an annual district budget remains for a council to dispose of according to locally determined priorities. As I show in the chapter on the present commune of Skeid, estate managers are no longer members of a corporate-jural entity, but are instead tied into a large group of nationally organized collectives, and react today not to the traditions upheld by an oligarchy of property holders espousing traditions of estate management, but to the demands of the marketplace. At present, the commune of Skeid is not a unit of government, neither is it the locus of exchange of

services between residents. Residents cross commune boundaries each day in order to work, to purchase goods and services, to attend schools and to use nearby urban communities for recreation and entertainment. Many skills necessary in the management of estates are not possessed by present managers and are brought into the community by a large number of trades and professions. At present, all goods and services are purchased by cash transactions, and, with the exception of some traditions of labour exchange and assistance between estates, the old system of mutual insurance and dependence is no longer. Thus, the present community is not an autonomous unit of government; neither is it a corporate body nor is it a self-sufficient economic unit. Although the ancient boundaries remain and the ancient names of estates are still used, the resemblance between the two forms of social organization, the traditional district and the modern commune, is very slight.

The Household and the Family

In rural communities already studied by anthropologists, the family and kinship relationships originating in them have been found to be of greatest importance to an understanding of the rural social structure. The reason for this is that a rural family is a unit of landownership

and production. The following excerpted comments from some social anthropological studies on rural societies in the British Isles indicate the importance of the family: ". . . the farm house is most often, though not always, a comparatively isolated house standing upon its own ground, forming an integral part of the holding . . . it lives and performs almost all of its work within this spatial unit of land and house . . ." ¹ Or, ". . . In Ashworthy as in much of western Europe, the conjugal family is a primary unit in the social structure . . . the farm is a unit of economic production . . ." ² or, ". . . an analysis of the structure of a community of this kind must begin with the family which is not only a primary social group, but also the unit of economic production . . ." ³

All three authors have, as have many more, repeated the dictum of Chayanov that the rural family is not only a conjugal-natal unit but also a unit of production. The problem in much of social anthropological research on rural communities is the use of the terms "household"

¹C. M. Arensberg, The Irish Countryman, Gloucester, Mass. 1959, Peter Smith, p. 43.

²W. M. Williams, A West Country Village: Ashworthy, London, 1963, Routledge and Keagan Paul, p. 46.

³A. D. Rees, Life in a Welsh Countryside, A Social Study of Llanfanhangel yng Ngwynfa, Cardiff, 1950, University of Wales Press, p. 60.

and "family," and the diffuse aspects of the definition of functions which are performed by members of rural households.¹ As an example of how difficult it is to define units by function I give the following description

" . . . At the time we are speaking, the farmer and his family were as much a part of the labour team as the servant and his family . . . this may seem obvious but this state of affairs is in marked contrast to . . . today . . . the change is reflected in the great decrease in meals supplied by the farmer to the farm workers . . . formerly the farmer's wife herself organized the preparation and distribution of them . . . the farm worker's family is no longer in any sense part of the farm . . . his wife and children no longer help in the work . . . the worker and his family are no longer dependent upon the farm for their food . . . the shepherd's relation to the farm has changed . . ." ²

Thus, to ask the question of what, if any, change has occurred in the rural family, is to ask more than one

¹One discussion of the sense in which the two terms are used and the misconceptions which may arise because of their conventional definition see: E. A. Wrigley, "The Process of Modernization and the Industrial Revolution in England," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, vol. 3, (1972), pp. 225-259, and also P. Laslet, R. Wall, (eds.), Household and Family in Past Time, Cambridge, 1972.

²J. Littlejohn, Westrigg: A Sociology of a Cheviot Parish, London, 1963, Routledge and Keagan Paul, pp. 56, 70-73.

questions; and it poses the problem that an estate is more than a farm, a family is less than a household, and groups defined as residing on an estate must be analyzed by the functions which they perform. For example, an estate may contain the owner's family, the families of shepherders, a couple of cottar units. At certain times of the year all adults of the estate's population work as a single production unit, but do not necessarily share in the fruits of the production. At other times of the year each conjugal-natal group, "the family," works by itself, engaged in production activities which directly support their own units. Another example of the problem of analysis of family, is the question of property holding groups in a rural community. As my research shows, in cognatic social organization the effects of reckoning of kindreds and the rules of descent and filiation are such that there are in theory no limits to a "family." Yet members of the same conjugal-unit do not all receive such property as a farm, and in the rural society of the nineteenth century, without inheritance of that kind--a piece of land, livestock and a residence--marriage could not occur. In brief, in each generation children of rural households were by the rules of the system divided into two classes, property holders and property-less. Thus to analyze the units called "household", "family," or

"property holding group" is in reality to attempt to analyze groups which in one perspective is a single unit, i.e., a consumption unit; in another, "the family," it must be divided into two units, those who become householders and those who do not.

The research on Skeidahrepp for the period 1860-1970 concerned itself with the jural rights and the relations which grew out of them and served to maintain the social organization of the traditional community. Rules guided daily decisions on the part of the members of the community on such matters as who would inherit the estate, who could get married, who should receive domicile in the households of the estates for reasons of kinship, who should receive public relief, or who should become contractual workers.

Several social anthropological studies done on small scale social systems located in western Norway and the Faroes have concentrated their analyses on "networks," "kith-groups" and on "entrepreneurial activity."

Analyses of this kind have revealed opportunistic strategies acted out by persons in small scale systems.¹ In contrast, my concern has been with the constitution of enduring groups--the district, the estate, the

¹I.e., J. A. Barnes, "Landrights and Kinship in Two Bremnes Hamlets," MAN, vol. 60 (1959).

household--and with the categories of persons which result from the presence of jural rules on inheritance, welfare, work, domicile and labour exchange.

In nineteenth century Iceland, everyone was a member of a household on an estate in Skeid. The reason is explicit; the laws required this, and the reasons for residence in a household emerge when the census documents of the period are researched. People lived on estates for three reasons: (1) they were members of the conjugal-natal family which held the estate as property, (2) they were workers residing on the estate by reason of having struck an annual contract with the estate owner, and (3) they were residents due to the laws on public welfare, and hence placed on estates by the annual decision taken by the district council. In brief, the personnel of an estate, its consumption group were the family, the workers, and the lodgers.

The traditional household in Skeidahrepp in the nineteenth century can be defined on the basis of residence and commonsality. The core of the household

F. Barth, The Role of Entrepreneur in Social Change in Norway, Oslo, 1963, Universitetsforlaget.

O. Blehr, "Action Groups in A Society with Bilateral Kinship," *Ethnology*, Vol. II, No. 3, (1963).

J. Clyde Mitchell, *Social Networks in Urban Situations*, Manchester, 1969.

was usually a two-generational conjugal-natal group; the average household size was fifteen persons.

The effect of industrialization and urbanization in Iceland over the period 1900-1965 can be seen in the following statistics.

TABLE 40

POPULATION OF SKEID: 1860, 1968

Year	Married	Children (15 yrs. younger)	Population (15 yrs. +)	Total
1860	92	81	298	571
1968	96	88	47	231

The number of households have increased from 38 in 1860 to 49 in 1968, but the overall population of the community has decreased by 340. And the above statistics indicate which group has declined, i.e., the population over fifteen years of age which, in the nineteenth century, had no choice but to remain in the community. The decline of population in the community can be shown to be related to the urban and industrial development of the nation. The table entitled "Population Growth 1880-1970" on page 53 shows the relationship between migration out of the rural communities and the establishment of urban communities on the coasts. It is possible to conclude that as alternatives appeared

in Iceland to the traditional institutional relationship of residence in rural households, members of the population who otherwise would not have become rural householders, left.

One may also speak of a "push-pull" effect on the movement of members of the rural population away from the rural areas. The introduction of modern farming technology into the community, beginning in 1930, made it possible to accomplish the production of goods of an estate with fewer workers; and the emergence of urban and industrial residential and work opportunities exerted the pull on the population.

The present household in the rural community is the family. Its workers and lodgers are no longer present; but, while it is possible to state that no function has been lost to the rural household, i.e., procreation, production, consumption, residence, or commonsality, it is true that the traditional household no longer exists. The farms of Skeid now may be considered in the manner in which W. C. Williams defines the farms of Ashworthy in England: they are family farms and primary units of the rural community.

The dependency relations of the traditional district are no longer, and those whom I describe as the heirs to a residual inheritance are gone. There are no hired

workers on the estates in Skeid, and the only reason one would reside on a farm today is because one is a member of the conjugal-natal unit of the household. The introduction of alternatives to traditional welfare, work and residence by the national government has done much to reduce the importance of district council, kindred and neighbour.

The nineteenth century district was the source of civil, economic and domestic rights; relationships were expressed as claims, couched in the tradition of the past, to birth in the district and to genealogical linkages by which individuals proved their rights to welfare, domicile and work. In the nineteenth century, where the inhabitant of a district looked he found householders who were members of the district's council, who were poor relief overseers, who sat on the parish council and who most likely were siblings or kindred; these individuals, in contrast to himself, held superordinate status position in the traditional community.

By 1970 the impact of national development on agriculture and the rural community has been in effect for a number of decades. Economic expansion and differentiation of the population had occurred, and by 1965, the infrastructure basis for a modern agronomic system had been completed. Thus it is possible to point to economic, technological and urban changes in the nation. But, the countryside

had undergone a social revolution which, natively instituted, completely changed the constitution of the district and made it into a modern civil administrative unit of a national government. The social revolution had undercut the traditional dependency relationships of inhabitants to the district and to each other.

APPENDICES

	<u>Page</u>
A Farm Inventory	309
B Census Record Sheets	326
C A Genealogy of Householders in the District of Skeid - 1860, 1900, 1920, 1968	335
D A Map of Skeidahrepp	337
E Transfer of Households for the Commune of Skeid, 1860-1970	343

Appendix A: FARM INVENTORY

An explanation of the inventory: Part One of the inventory is concerned with the household and the daily activities of its members. Inquiries are made into the composition of the household in 1969: the family origin of the householders, the educational level of its members, whether part-time or full-time jobs are held outside of farming, group membership, and the degree of participation of the household in the regularly recurring social events in the community.

Part Two of the inventory is concerned with the farm; livestock, property, buildings, machinery, equipment of various types are noted down. A part of the inquiry is concerned with dates of acquisition of the above-named items. Since many of the farms were turf structures and peasant enterprises until the 1930's in the commune, it was important to discover when, how and why technological changes and practises had changed. The other inquiry was the contrast between the past and the present in the disposition of produce and animals of the farms and in what manner the household at present is a self-sufficient subsistence unit.

Part Three is concerned with the question of work: the work cycle of the year, the months, the seasons, and the work of the day the inquiry was conducted. The

events which would require cooperation were discussed. This led to an uncovering of a work exchange system still in use among the householders of the commune.

Part Four deals with the question of the acquisition and disposition of land, fields, produce and equipment.

1 FARM INVENTORY

Series No:

Group No:

Ind. No:

Yfirlit yfir sögu býlisins: _____
 (The history of the present Farm of)

Ábúandi er: _____
 (Occupied by)

Sem er eigandi, leigjandi, _____, eða _____
 (Who is owner, tenant) (or other)

og hefur verið svo síðan _____ . Áður lagði hann
 (and has been so since) (Before that date)

stund á eftir farandi störf: _____
 (he did the following)

Heimilistólk á þanum telst vera:
 (All occupants of the Farm are)

Ábúandi:
 (Farmer)

Eiginkona:
 (Wife)

Barn/Börn
 (Child/children)

Vinnufólk:
 (Workpeople)

Aðrir (hverjir?):
 (Others (specify))

2 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Ætt og uppruni ábúanda:
(Husbands family)

Ætt og uppruni eiginkonu:
(Wifes family)

Refer to: GSS MALE
Decade/s
GSS FEMA.
Decade/s

Upplýsingar um skólagöngu heimilismanna hvers fyrir sig:
(Educational level and skills of the members of the present household
list by member; education, special schools, job skills, professional,
women's schools, farm schools)

3 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Upplýsingar um skólagöngu heimilismanna hvers fyrir sig (frh.):
(Educational level and skills of the members of the present household
list by member, cont.)

Upplýsingar um störf heimilismanna utan heimilis, fullt starf,
störf í ígripum:

(Jobs held, part time or fulltime by any member of the household)

4 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Þátttaka í félagsstarfi/félagslífi:

(Membership in Groups)

	(HU)	WI	MA	FE)
<u>Búnaðarfélag Skeiðahrepps:</u>				
<u>Nautgripæræktarfélag:</u>				
<u>Sauðfjárræktarfélag:</u>				
<u>Hrossaræktarfélag:</u>				
<u>Afréttamálafe­lag:</u>				
<u>Ungmennafélag:</u>				
<u>Kvenfélag:</u>				
<u>Lestrarfélag:</u>				
<u>Hestamannafélag:</u>				
<u>Hreppsnefnd:</u>				
<u>Sóknarnefnd:</u>				
<u>Fræðslunefnd:</u>				
<u>Barnaverndarnefnd:</u>				
<u>Áfengisvarnarnefnd:</u>				
<u>Sáttanefnd:</u>				
<u>Sýslunefnd:</u>				
Annað:				
(Other)				
<u>Saumaklúbbur:</u>				
<u>Kirkjukór. (Church choir):</u>				
<u>Þorrablót:</u>				
<u>Hjónaball:</u>				
<u>Sumardagurinn fyrsti:</u>				

Markmið einstakra félagshópa/nefnda:

(Purpose of the Groups)

5 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Funda/samkomutími, almenn umræðuefni:
(Meeting times, general topics)

Aðrir þættir félagslífsins:
(Other social events)

Kvikmyndasýningar á Flúðum:
(Movies in Flúðir)

Félagsvist:

Búnaðarsýning Reykjavík:
London:

Á hvaða bæi er farið í heimsóknir, litið inn?
(Which farms visit/for coffee, or chat?)

Hvert fer unga fólkið á bænum í heimsóknir?
(The young people, whom do they visit?)

6 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Hversu langan starfsferil eiga félögin, nefndirnar, klúbbarnir sáað
baki, og hvenær hóf hver einstakur þátttöku í þeim?
(How old are the groups, when did individual join?)

7 FARM INVENTORY
Part of:

Búpeningur:
(Livestock)

Aldur-tegund (Age-Type)	Fjöldi (Number)	Hvernig fenginn (How obtained)	Afurðir (Products)	Notkun ⁺ (Disposition)
----------------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------------------------------

--	--	--	--	--

⁺Notkun:

(Disposition; used by household, sold, traded, if so, what and where -
used for, kept for what purpose)

8 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Skrá um húsakost og vélakost:
(Building and Machine inventory)

Fasteignir/vélar (Item)	Hvernig eignast (How obtained)	Verð (Price)	Hvar (Where)	Frá hverjum (From whom)	Hvenær (When)
<u>Byggingar</u> (Building)					
<u>Vélar</u> (Machinery)					
Bytte-lån falleseje					

tick for over _____

(investigate Bytte-lån, egen eje, fælles eje) retain language
i.e. Danish

9 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Búsýslan árið um kring:
(Farm cycle in a year)

Mánuðir: 1.
(Month no.)

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

10 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Búsýslan árið um kring:
(Farm cycle in a year)

Mánuðir: 9.
(Month no.)

10.

11.

12.

Búsýslan frá morgni til kvölds:
(Work cycle in a Day)

Vorverkin:
(Spring-time)

11 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Sumarverkin:
(Summer-time)

Haustverkin:
(Autumn-time)

Vetrarverkin:
(Winter-time)

12 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Önnur verk:

(Other work; maintenance of buildings, machinery, breeding of livestock, dipping of sheep, worming of dogs)

Tímabundin (árstíðabundin) störf utan heimilis. Ábúandi, eiginkona, börnir
(Seasonal employment outside of the farm. Husband, wife, children)

13 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

Lendur: (Land Parcels)	Tún	Úthagi	Annað	Garður
Stærð í hektörum (Hektares)				
Staðsetning (Location)				
Í eigu ábúanda, í leigu, félagseign (Type of Poss.)				
Hvernig fengið (How obtained)				
Notkun (Use)				

NOTES:

14 FARM INVENTORY

Part of:

(Disposition of all equipment, products in terms of ownership, co-operative work, part time employment. Income and outflow, and sharing).

Notes:

Appendix B: CENSUS RECORD SHEETS

The Design of the Census Record Sheet

The following are xerographic copies of the research instrument designed to contain the information available in the records of the households of the commune. The problems in copying the information from the large record volumes in the archives section posed difficulties at the time. Due to lack of equipment, space and cost, it was not possible to photograph each census page whether of the first census of 1703 or the last of 1960. The estimate of an average of three pages to a household census per year, an average of 37 to 42 households in the commune and 20 annual censuses would have meant reproducing 2,400 copies photographically. Another consideration in the design of a census record sheet is the matter of the steps to be taken in the research, i.e., from the raw data collection to data manipulation and to record storage for later analysis. Standard research procedures on multiple-page questionnaires suggest a single page as a second step, usually known as a "storage sheet." Quite often such sheets are designed to serve as punch and code instruction sheets in cases where keypunch cards become the third step in the handling of population data. It seemed therefore more logical to design a simple sheet which would contain the relevant information on the population and households of the

commune and to use this sheet as the first and second steps in the research for copying by hand the information contained in the archive's volumes.

The result is what I have called a Genealogical Survey Sheet. Its design was arrived at on a trial and error basis and its final form was printed up by the USIS office in Reykjavik. The prime drawback in any hand copy procedure is the inadvertent misspelling, omission, and misunderstanding of the information written on the originals. Until World War II, the original sheets were filled in by each householder in ink or in pencil. It did take some time to become familiar with nineteenth and early twentieth century handwriting, variations in spellings, and the abbreviations used by the various householders. The major benefit is that it was possible to enter the archives section for a day's work and proceed to read and copy a census year on the rural commune. The winter season in Reykjavik during the period from January to March, 1968, was taken up with the task, and since the out of doors was not inviting anyway, the long afternoons in the archives section proved to be a pleasant task.

An inquiry into the composition of households and into the changes in patterns of residence, not to speak of work categories and family relationship terminologies, are furthered by the information contained on the "GSS"

sheets for the census years 1860 to 1960. To the question of what is the composition of a household for each decade from 1860 to the present, the information is quite explicit. On the questions concerning the status of welfare recipients, their number, their ages and condition, again the census material is quite exact.

The inquiry furnishes evidence of other matters which are not part of the census proper, but which may be deduced from it. As an example, one may analyse the lifetime career of farm householders. Males can be traced from birth to death, the age when they begin work, when they marry, and what units they move to and from.

Such information may be seen on the basis of the census information provided by the householders themselves in the records.

Each line on the GSS sheet is numbered. The numbers 1, 2, and 3 and 31, 32, and 33 were set aside to permit a sheet to be identified and indexed in relationship to other sources of data collected during the stay. The letters GSS, FI, N, and CI, are neither cryptic nor overzealous bookkeeping practises. FI means Farm Inventory, permitting an individual GSS sheet to be keyed to a specific farm in the present and to a story about a family told incidentally during a conversation. CI means the punched card index onto which much of the information of the GSS sheet was copied. N refers to casual notes kept on 3 x 5 cards which one carried in a pocket every day.

323
GENEALOGICAL SOURCE SHEET

40. 1103

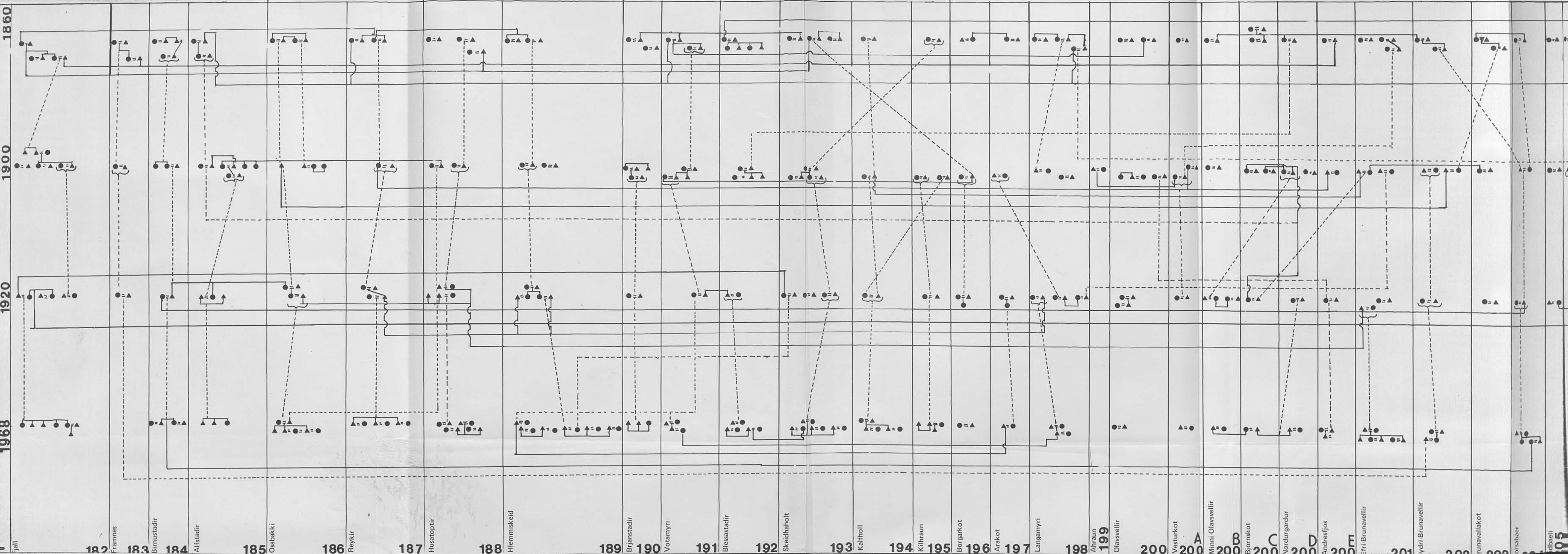
Sheet No: 2				1	
Series No:	Group No:	Ind. No:	Decade 15	2	
FARM: Fjall (2)	HREPP sked		CNTY Arnes. NEWS (SE)	3	
HU: Þorður Guðbrandsson (aukur)	Age 42	Born 1661	Origin 'Abúandi'	4	
Began Farming	Date Married			5	
WI: Guðrun Þoroddisdóttir	Age 27	Born 1676	Origin hústreyja	6	
CHILD	Sex	Age	Born	Origin	7
Þoroddur Þorðarsson	M	7	1696	Barn	8
					9
Þorrun Jónsdóttir	F	79	1624	Móðir-	10
					11
Þorkell Einarsson	M	29	1674	Vinnumaður	12
Jón Freysteinnsson	M	21	1682	Suáli	13
Ulfhildur Guðnadóttir	F	34	1669	Vinnukona	14
Ketill Jónsson	M	30	1667	Vinnumaður	15
					16
					17
KIN DATA				18	
Line no.	line 8, son named after MoFA				
	line 10, note title: móðir ábúandaus Þorðar (HUHO)			19	
				20	
				21	
				22	
				23	
				24	
Line no.	Miscellaneous/ list line no/ other			25	
				26	
				27	
				28	
				29	
				30	
Refer to.				31	
Refer other Sheet no	GSS FI N CI			32	
Tick for over				33	

324
GENEALOGICAL SOURCE SHEET

yr. 1703

Sheet No: /	1	29			1
Series No:	Group No:	Ind. No:	Decade/5		2
FARM: Fjall (1)	HREPP Skeið	CNTY Arnes.	NEWS (SE)		3
HU: Jón Jónsson abandi	Age 37	Born 1666	Origin		4
Began Farming	Date Married				5
WI: Halldora Sigvalda dottir	Age 25	Born 1678	Origin (kustreyja)		6
CHILD	Sex	Age	Born	Origin	7
Jón Jónsson	M	8	1685	barn	8
Guðrún Jónsdottir	F	3	1700	barn	9
Sigvaldi Jónsson	M	2	1701	barn	10
					11
Arni Einarsson	M	-	-	Vinnumaður	12
Ingveðir Nikulásdottir	F	-	-	Vinnukona	13
Herdis Felixdottir	F	-	-	✓	14
Guðlaug Jvardsdottir	F	-	-	✓	15
					16
Svein Jónsson	M	-	-	HUSMAÐUR	17
KIN DATA					18
Line no.	notice line 10, named after MofA.				19
					20
					21
					22
					23
					24
Line no.	Miscellaneous/ list line no/ other				25
	line 17, what is Husmaður Utverk?				26
					27
					28
					29
					30
Refer to.					31
Refer other Sheet no	GSS FI N CI				32
Tick for over					33

Appendix C: A GENEALOGY OF HOUSEHOLDERS
IN THE DISTRICT OF SKEID-
1860, 1900, 1920, 1968



Appendix D: A MAP OF SKEIDAHREPP OF 1917

The map of Skeidahrepp and the boundaries of farmlands of the commune: The map of the community is a rare item. It belonged to the father of Hr. Jon Gudmundsson, Hr. Gudmundur Lydsson, who was one of the community's leaders in the organisation of the first attempt at land rehabilitation between 1917 and 1923. It was thought possible to drain the lands and in doing so use the two rivers which form the eastern and western boundaries of the commune. To drain the meadows ditches would be excavated between the rivers, and the land would be drained in this manner. An account of this work may be read under the topic, Skeidaaveitan in the history of the Agricultural Society of Iceland.¹

Preparatory to this large and difficult undertaking the farmers of the commune walked the land and carefully measured their respective plots. On the basis of this investigation, the large hand-drawn map was produced. With the exception of air photographic records this is the most accurate map of district soil ownership. The following reproduction is a hand-drawn copy of the original and photographically copied in half size. The projected ditches which criss-crossed the land surface

¹S. Sigurdsson, Bunadahagir, Bunadafelag Islands, Aldarminning, 2nd volume, Reykjavik: Gutenberg, 1937, pp. 125-141.

and which appear in the original were not included in this copy. Our interest is the boundaries of each farm's lands as these were agreed upon by the householders of the commune.

Map signatures: The 1917 map includes a number of farms and other man-made features which do not exist in the present. By the farm of Framness, just south of Vördu mountain, there is a feature marked Smjörbu (Icel.), which is a small square building built in 1905 by the cooperative work of all the householders. To this building was brought milk, and here a hand separator was used to extract cream for butter manufacture. Old farmers told of the first time four-wheeled wagons were used in the commune; they were used to carry the heavy barrels of butter to Reykjavik.

The now abandoned sites of Midbaeli and Arhraun are located on the map, with the fields which used to belong to these farms. That of the Midbaeli's are now farmed partly by Fjall and partly by Utverk. Those of Framness are farmed by Sydri Brunavellir. Next to the farm of Arhraun is a signature marked Ferja (Icel.), that is, a ferry site. Prior to the road improvements of 1910, farmers would cross here to the riding paths which led to Reykjavik.

The map signatures which are employed on the map signify features of the land surface of the commune. Reading

from left to right the signatures displayed in the boxes below the map are as follows: wet grass lands, swampy land, swamp, lava covered land, sand covered land, and contour lines. The large arrow at the right hand corner of the map points to "map north," and the smaller lines indicating southwest and northwest are the directions of the prevailing winds over the area. The rivers Laxá to the north, Thjorsá to the east, and Hvitá to the west enclose the commune. They make the district an island in the midst of the southern farming region of Iceland. The stippled line which surrounds the commune is the boundary of the district. The numbers, and the dots next to such are heights in meters above sea level. In a land area which is frequently flooded by the spring floods of the two large rivers, any landscape feature at a height of 40 metres or more is a prominent feature. It will be noted that on the map all house sites are located very close to or upon such hillocks in the landscape. South of the farm of Reykjaholt is a signature made up of two circles, one with spokes and one without. This is the location of the sheepfolds of the commune. Each year when the sheep return from the highland pastures on September 16 and 17, the animals are kept here for sorting, prior to their return to the individual farms for the winter.

The map is important as an historic document in what it tells of the pre-1940 farming system in Iceland. Each

farm in the district is surrounded by a stippled line; these are the homefields of a farm. It will be noted that between the homefields of the farms is a large area of unimproved wet and swampy grassland, where during the year the animals of the commune would roam. At most, the old homefields varied from $1\frac{1}{2}$ hectares to 10 hectares for the largest units. This map of land use, reflects the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' farming practises. The changes in farming practise may be seen in post-1940 maps of the area.



SKEID



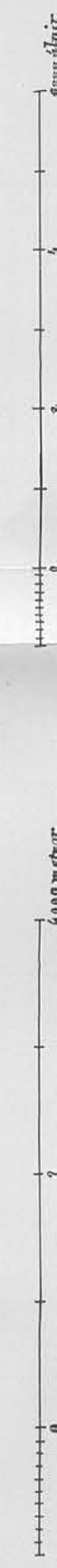
FE B.P. 1924

20° 24'

20° 30'

20° 36'

- Engi
- Mýri
- Mósti
- Hraun
- Sandur
- Hedlinur
- Bar.
- Kirkja
- Tun



Appendix E: TRANSFER OF HOUSEHOLDS
FOR THE COMMUNE OF
SKEID, 1860-1970

<u>Farm Number</u>	<u>Pattern of Transfer</u>
182	FA to SO 1900, Farm sold 1910, FA to SOs 1940, SIBs 1940-1968, SIBs to SISO 1970.
183	2 BR units, FA to SO 1900, FA to SO 1940.
184	BR to SISO 1870, FA to SO 1900, FA to SO, DAHU 1950.
185	FA to SO 1890, FA to DAHU 1900, SIBs 1950.
186	2 BR units 1890, FA to SO 1890, FA to DAHU 1910, FA to SO 1950.
187	2 units: DAHU, SIBR 1860, FA to SO 1900, FA to 3 SOs 1940.
188	2 units: FA to SO unit 1, 1890; FA to SO unit 1, 1930; FA to 3 SOs unit 1, 1950; FA to SO unit 2, 1900; FA to SO unit 2, 1940.
189	2 BRs 1890-1910; unit 2, FA to DAHU 1870; unit 3, 2 BRs, 1900; unit 1, FA to 2 SOs 1950; FA to SOs unit 2, 3, 4, 1930-1950; SOs and BRs in all five units by 1950.
190	BR to SISO 1900, FA to SO 1930.
191	FA to SO 1870, FA to SO, unit 2, 1880; FA and So one unie each 1880-1910, FA to SO 1940.
192	FA to 2 SOs 1900; Farm sold 1900, FA to SOs 1940.
193	3 units 1860; 2 by BRs; 2 BRs, 1 SO 1880, 1 BR to 2 SOs 1890, FA to DAHU 1910, FA to 3 SOs 1950.
194	FA to 2 SOs 1880, FA to Foster SO 1910, FA to 3 SOs 1940.
195	FA to 2 SOs 1920, FA to SO 1950.
196	No pattern, men farm the unit on an average of 10 years.

<u>Farm Number</u>	<u>Pattern of Transfer</u>
197	No pattern 1860-1920. FA to DAHU 1940.
198	2 BRs, FA to SO 1870, BR to SISO 1900, unit sold 1910 to SO from number 187, FA to SO 1940. Unit 2, FA to SO 1870, FA to SO 1910, unit sold.
199	No pattern discernible, unit abandoned 1930.
200	200, a-d. Farm units are on state owned land, farms are tenanted, no pattern discernible.
201	FA to DAHU 1890, HU to BR 1910, FA to 2 SOs 1940.
202	1860-1920 no discernible pattern. FA farms 1920-1950, FA to DAHU 1950.
203	No discernible pattern.
204	FA to DAHU 1880, FA to SO 1910, FA to SO and DA 1940.
205	FA to SO 1890, SO farms to 1900, sells out. Unit abandoned 1930.
206	FA to SO 1890, SO farms 1890-1910. ¹

¹I use the conventional abbreviations for the individuals in the households: FA = Father, MO = Mother, SI = Sister, SO = Son, DA = Daughter, BR = Brother, and combinations of the above; thus, MOBRSO = Mother's Brother's Son, and so on.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- a) General Sources
- b) Foreign Sources
- c) Articles
- d) Public Documents

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, B.G. and R.T. Anderson, The Vanishing Village.
Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964.
- Arensberg, C. M. The Irish Countryman, An Anthropological Study. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959.
- Arensberg, C. and S. T. Kimball. Family and Community in Iceland. Second Ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Balandier, G. and R. Firth (eds.). Social, Economic and Technological Change, A Theoretical Approach.
Paris: UNESCO, 1958.
- Barth, R. (ed.). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.
- Beck, J. August. Iceland Adventure. Cambridge expedition to Iceland, 1934. London, 1936.
- Beddoe, John. "On the Stature and Bulk of Man" Memoirs of the Social Anthropological Society, 1870, in The Anthropological History of Europe. London, 1921.
- Bennett, J. W. Northern Plainsmen, Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life. Chicago: Aldine, Atherton, 1969.
- Beyer, H. Norsk Litteraturhistorie. Oslo: Ascheoug Forlag, 1964.
- Bjerke, R. A Contrastive Study of Old German and Old Norwegian Kinship Terms. Supplement to International Journal of American Linguistics, Vol. 35. No. 1 (January, 1969), Part Two, Memoir No. 22. Indiana University Publications in Linguistics and Anthropology, Indiana University, 1969.
- Bjornsson, B. The Lutheran Doctrine of Marriage in Modern Icelandic Society. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971.
- Blythe, R. Akenfeld. Portrait of an English Village. London: Allen Lane, 1969.

- Boserup, E. The Conditions of Agricultural Growth. Chicago: Aldine Publication Co., 1965.
- Briem, H. P. Iceland and Icelanders. Maplewood, N.J.: J. H. McKenna Co., 1945.
- Burton, R. F. Ultima Thule, or A Summer In Iceland. Vols. 1 and 2. Edinburgh: W. P. Nimmo, 1875.
- Clark, A. H. Iceland and Greenland. Smithsonian Institute War Background Studies, Number 15. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1943.
- Dalton, G. (ed.). Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economics, Essays of K. Polanyi. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.
- Erixon, S. (ed.). The Possibilities of Charting Modern Life: A Symposium for Technological Research about Modern Time. Stockholm, 1967, Wenner Gren Center, International Symposium Series, Vol. 13. Edinburgh: Pergamon Press, 1971.
- Erlingson, T. Ruins of the Saga Time: Being An Account of Travels and Explorations in Iceland in the Summer of 1895. London: David Nutt Pub., 1899.
- Firth, R. Social Organization, Essays Presented to Raymond Firth. London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1967.
- Firth, R., J. Hubert, and A. Forge. Families and Their Relatives, Kinship in a Middle Class Sector of London. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1969.
- Firth, R. and B. S. Yamey (eds.). Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societies. London: G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1969.
- Forde, D. Habitat, Economy and Society. New York: E.P. Dutton and Sons, 1963.
- Fortes, M. Kinship and the Social Order, The Legacy of L. H. Morgan. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1969.
- Foster, G. M. Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967.
- Foster, L. C. Across the Bursting Sand. London: C.A.W. Lock Pub., 1876.

- Fox, R. Kinship and Marriage, An Anthropological Perspective. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970.
- Frankenberg, R. Communities in Britain, Social Life in Town and Country. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Gluckman, M. (ed.). Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations. Manchester: University Press, 1966.
- Goodenough, W. H. "Yankee Kinship Terms," Cognitive Anthropology. Edited by S. A. Tyler. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1969.
- Goody, J. (ed.). Kinship, Selected Readings. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971.
- _____. The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, No. 1. Cambridge: University Press, 1958.
- Hannesson, H. (ed.). Jon Jonsson's Saga, The Genuine Autobiography of a Modern Iclander. Reykjavik: Isafoldarprentsmidja, H. F., 1968.
- Haralz, J. H. and A. Vilhjalmsson. "The Economic Development of Iceland," Iceland Today. Reykjavik: Landkynning, Ltd., 1961.
- Hawkes, L. (ed.). Iceland. London: Great Britain Naval Intelligence Division, 1942.
- Henderson, E. Iceland, or the Journal of a Residence in That Island During the Years 1814 and 1815. Second Ed. Boston: Perkins and Marvin, 1831.
- Jarvie, I. C. The Revolution in Anthropology. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1967.
- Jenkins, G. (ed.). Studies in Folklife, Essays in Honour of I. C. Peate. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1969.
- Johnson, S. Pioneers of Freedom. Boston, Mass.: The Stratford Co., 1930.
- Kroeber, A. L. A Roster of Civilizations and Culture. Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1962.
- Lane, M. (ed.). Structuralism, A Reader. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970.

- Langness, L. L. The Life History in Anthropological Science, Studies in Anthropological Method. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.
- Larusson, B. The Old Icelandic Landregisters. Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1967.
- Leach, E. R. Pul Eliya, A Village in Ceylon. Cambridge: University Press, 1968.
- Leaf, H. Iceland, Yesterday and Today. London: G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1949.
- Lindroth, H. Iceland, A Land of Contrasts. American Scandinavian Foundation. Princeton: University Press, 1937.
- Littlejohn, J. Westrigg, The Sociology of a Cheviot Parish. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1963.
- Löve, A. and D. Löve. North Atlantic Biota and Their History. New York: Macmillan Co., 1963.
- MacFarlane, A. The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, a 17th Century Clergyman, An Essay in Historical Anthropology. Cambridge: University Press, 1970.
- Magnusson, E. "Land and Nation," Iceland Today. Reykjavik: Landkynning, Ltd., 1961.
- Magnusson, M. and H. Palsson. Njals Saga. London: Penguin Books, 1965.
- Malmstrom, V. A Regional Geography of Iceland. Washington, D.C.: National Sciences Research Commission, 584, 1958.
- Mitchell, J. Clyde (ed.). Social Networks in Urban Situations. Institute for Social Research, University of Zambia. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969.
- Morgan, L. H. Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family. Smithsonian Contribution to Knowledge, No. 218. Smithsonian Institute Press, 1968.
- Murdock, G. P. "Cognatic Forms of Social Organization," Kinship and Social Organization. Edited by P. Bohannan and J. Middleton. American Museum Sourcebooks in Anthropology. New York: National History Press, 1968.

- _____. Culture and Society. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965.
- _____. Social Structure. New York: Macmillan Co., 1960.
- Nordal, J. and V. Kristinsson. Iceland, 1966. Reykjavik, 1967.
- O'Dell, A. C. The Scandinavian World. New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1957.
- Palsson, H. and O. E. Stefansson. Farming in Iceland. Reykjavik: Bunadarfelag Islands, 1968.
- Palsson, H. and P. Edwards. Book of Settlement. Manuscript Translation. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1970. (By permission of authors.)
- Pehrsson, R. N. "Bilateral Kin Groupings," Kinship, Selected Readings. Edited by J. Goody. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Phillpotts, B. S. Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After. Cambridge: University Press, 1913.
- Paddington, R. Kinship and Geographical Mobility. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.
- Polanyi, K. The Great Transformation. New York: Rinehart, 1944.
- Polanyi, K., C. M. Arensberg and H. Pearson. Trade and Market in Early Empires. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957.
- Potter, J., M. N. Diaz and G. M. Foster. Peasant Society, A Reader. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967.
- Purkis, J. The Icelandic Jaunt, A Study of the Expeditions Made by Morris to Iceland in 1871 and 1873. Republic of Ireland: Morris Society, 1962.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. and D. Forde (eds.). African Systems of Kinship and Marriage. Oxford: University Press, 1960.
- Redfield, R. The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture. Chicago: Chicago University Press, Phoenix Books, 1961.

- Rees, A. D. Life in a Welsh Countryside, A Social Study of Llan Fihangel yng Ngwynfa. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968.
- Sarmela, M. Reciprocity Systems of the Rural Society in the Finnish-Karelian Culture Area. FF Communications No. 207. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1969.
- Schneider, D. M. American Kinship, a Cultural Account. Anthropology of Modern Man Series. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.
- Scott, P. and J. Fisher. A Thousand Geese. Severn Wildfowl Trust Expedition to Iceland, 1951. London, 1953.
- Siegel, B. J. (ed.). Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1969. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1969.
- Simpson, J. Everyday Life in the Viking Age. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1967.
- Somme, A. A Geography of Norden. Second ed. København: (SCUB) Munksgaard Forlag, 1963.
- Stefansson, F. Iceland, Its History and Its Inhabitants. Annual Report, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C., 1906.
- Szwed, J. Private Cultures and Public Imagery. Newfoundland Social and Economic Studies, No. 2. Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University, St. Johns, 1966.
- Theodoratus, R. J. "Iceland," Europe: A Selected Ethnographic Bibliography. New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, 1969.
- Thompson, L. The Secret of Culture, Nine Community Studies. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Thorbjornsson, S. (ed.). Freedom and Welfare, Social Patterns in the Northern Countries of Europe. København, 1953.
- Vinogradoof, P. The Growth of the Manor. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1920.
- Williams, M. W. Social Scandinavia in the Viking Age. New York, 1920.

- Williams, W. M. A West Country Village, Ashworthy, Family Kinship and Land. Dartington Hall Studies in Rural Society. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1963.
- Wright and Brenner. "Diaries," Sir John Stanley's Trip to the Faroes, Orkney, and Iceland, 1789. Manuscript. Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland.
- Wolf, E. R. Peasants. Foundations of Modern Anthropology Series. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Young, M. and P. Willmott. Family and Kinship in East London. London: Penguin Books, 1965.

Foreign Sources

- Arnarsson, E. Arnesthing. Reykjavik: Arnestingafelagid, 1950.
- Bjornsson, L. Saga sveitarstjornar a Islandi. Reykjavik: Almenna Bokafelagid, 1972.
- Blondal, J. (ed.). Felagsmal a Islandi. Reykjavik: Felagsmalaraduneytid, 1942.
- Blondal, J. and S. Kristjansson. Althingi og Felagsmalin. Reykjavik: Althingissögufnd, 1954.
- Blondal, H. "Hjemme paa Islandske Gaarde," Dansk-Islandsk Aarbog. København, 1939.
- Brunn, D. Nordboernes Kulturliv i Fortid og Nutid. Vol. 1, "Island," København: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1897.
- _____. Turistruter paa Island. Foreningen de Danske Atlanterhavs øer, Kort og Rejsebøger, No. 2. København: Gyldendalsk Boghandel, 1912.
- _____. Fortidsminder og Nutidshjem paa Island. København: Nordisk Forlag, 1928.
- Bunadarsambands Sudurlands. Afmaelisrit, Minnt 50 Ara Starfs. Selfoss: Prentsmidja Sudurlands, F.F., 1959.
- Dansk Islandsk Samfund. Island Strejflys over Land og Folk.

- Einarsson, S. Saga Mjolkursamsolunnar i Reykjavik 1935-1965. Reykjavik: Mjolkursamsalan i Reykjavik, Prentsmidjan Edda H.F., 1965.
- Eldjarn, K. Kuml og Haugfe. Reykjavik: Bokutgafan Nordri, 1956.
- Finsen, V. Gragas, Islaendernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid, Bd. I-IV; Bd. V. Ordregister (1852-1870). Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Skrifter 1888, Historisk-Filosofisk Afd. København, 1888.
- Gudmundson, V. Islands Kultur ved Aarhundrede Skiftet 1900. København: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1902.
- Hansen, G. Saedelighedsforhold blandt landbefolkningen i Danmark i det 18de Aarhundrede. København: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1957.
- Hannesson, G. Köpermasze und Körperproportionen der Isländer. Reykjavik: Felagsprentsmidjan, 1925.
- Heinzel, R. Beschreibung der Islandischen Saga, ein anthropologische untersuchung. Wien, 1880.
- Johannesson, J. Islendinga Saga, Vol. 1. Thjodveldisöld. Reykjavik: Almenna Bokafelagid, 1956.
- Johnsen, J. (ed.). Jardatal a Islandi, 1847. København: S. Trier, 1847.
- Jonsson, B. a Vogli. Fra Islands Naeringsliv med historisk oversigt. Kristiania: Forlaget Norge, 1914.
- Jonsson, F. "Norsk-Islandske Kultur og Sprogforhold i 9. og 10. Aarhundred," Bd. III, No. 2, Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. København: Bianco Luno, 1921.
- Jonsson, G. Fornaldar Sogur Nordurlands. 2 Bd., Islendingasaga utgafan. Reykjavik, 1914.
- Kaalund, Kr. Familielivet paa Island i den første Saga periode. Aarboger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie. København, 1870.
- _____. Bidrag til en Historisktopografisk Beskrivelse af Island. Bd. 1-2. Kommissionen for den Arnamagneanske Legat. København: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1877.
- Krabbe, T. Island og det's tekniske udvikling gennem tiderne. København: Nordisk Forlag, 1947.

- Lévi-Strauss, C. (ed.). M. Mauss, Sociologie et Anthropologie. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960.
- Magnusson, F. "Om de gamle Skandinavers Inndeling af Dagens Tider," Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskabs Historiske og Philosophiske Afhandlinger 7de. Del. København: Bianco Luno, 1844.
- Magnusson, S. "Forsog til en kort beskrivelse af Island, 1786," Arnarnagneyske Samling, Bd. 5. København: Munksgaard, 1944.
- _____. "Beskrivelse af Gullbringu og Kjosar Syslur," Arnarnagneyske Samling, Bd. 4. København: Munksgaard, 1944.
- Marmier, X. Lettres sur l'Islande. Paris, 1844.
- Mayer, A. Atlas Historique. Paris, 1842.
- Ola, A. Thusund ara sveitathorp. Reykjavik: Bokutgafa Menningasjods, 1962.
- Olafsen, E. and B. Palsen. Reise igennem Island, Bds. I, II. Sorøe, 1772.
- Olavius, O. Oeconomisk Reise igennem Island. København, 1780.
- Olsen, B.M. Um Kristenitökuna Arid 1,000 og tildrog hennar. Islenska Bokmenta felagid. Reykjavik: Felagsprentsmidjunni, 1900.
- Rehnberg, M. Ljusen paa Gravarna. Stockholm: Nordiska Museets Handlingar: 61, 1965.
- Sigurdsson, S. Landbrug og Landboforhold paa Island. København: Munksgaard Forlag, 1940.
- Simon, J. Augustsson. Um Aettleidingu. Reykjavik: Almenna Bokefelagid, 1964.
- Skuladottir, H. Rangarthing, Vol. 2, Rangavellir, 1930. Reykjavik, 1946.
- Steensberg, A. Gamle danske bøndergaarde. Second Ed. København: P. Haase og Sons Forlag, 1962.
- Terkelsen, J. Island før og nu. København: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1964.

Thorkelson, J. Islenzkar Artidaskrar eda orbituary Islandica. Aettar skrar. Vol. III. København: Islenzka Bokmenntafelagid, 1893-95.

Thoroddsen, T. Landbunadur a Islandi. København: S. Moller, 1872.

Thorsteinsson, B. Aettarskra. Reykjavik: Acta, H.F., 1930.

Westrup, S. "Fra det moderne Islandske Landbrug," Dansk-Islandsk Aarboeg, Vols. 1-6 (1928-1933). København, 1933.

Articles

Ahlman, H. W. "The Present Climatic Fluctuations," The Geographical Journal, Vol. CXII (July-December, 1948).

Anderson, R. T. "Studies in Peasant Life," Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1965. Edited by B. J. Siegel. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965.

Arensberg, C. M. "The Old World Peoples: The Place of European Cultures in World Ethnography," Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 36 (July, 1963).

Asgeirsson, B. "Islandske Landbruks organisationer," 2 heft, Nordisk Landbruks Ekonomisk Tidsskrift, 1952.

Baric, L. "Traditional Groups and New Economic Opportunities in Rural Yugoslavia," in Themes in Economic Anthropology, ASA Monograph, No. 6. Edited by R. Firth. London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.

Barnes, J. A. "Land Rights and Kinship in Two Bremnes Hamlets," Man, Vol. 60 (1959).

_____. "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Parish," Human Relations, Vol. 7 (1954).

Barth, F. "Anthropological Models and Social Reality," Second Royal Society Nuffield Lecture, Proceedings of Royal Society, Vol. 165 (1966).

_____. "Models of Social Organization," Occasional Paper No. 23, Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1966.

- _____. "On the Study of Social Change," Plenary Address, American Anthropological Association, 1966, American Anthropology, Vol. 69 (1967).
- Basehart, "Social Organization," Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1959. Edited by B. J. Siegel. Stanford University Press, 1959.
- Bilfeld, P., H. F. Hansen, and H. Paaskesen. Dansk Skole lovgivning, med et tillæg om skolelovgivningen i de øvrige nordiske lande. M. Gislason, "Skoler og Uddannelsesveje i Island," pp. 104-109. København: Gyldendal, 1964.
- Bjarnason, O., S. Fridriksson, and M. Magnusson. "Record Linkage in a Self-Contained Community," Record Linkage in Medicine. Oxford, 1967.
- Bjorkvik, H. "Kyrlag," in Vol. 10, Kyrkoratt-Ludos, Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder. Edited by G. Rona. København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1965.
- Blehr, O. "Action Groups in a Society with Bilateral Kinship: A Case Study from the Faroe Island," Ethnology, Vol. II, No. 3 (July 1963).
- Brekkan, F. Asmundsson. "Andelsbevaegelsen paa Island," Dansk-Islandsk Aarvog, Vol. 1 (pp. 69-90). København: Woels Forlag, 1928.
- _____. "Island 1927," Dansk-Islandsk Aarvog, (Aargng. 1-6), 1928-1933, (pp. 69-90). København: Woels Forlag, 1928.
- Brox, O. "Natural Conditions, Inheritance and Marriage in a North Norwegian Fjord," Folk, Vol. 6 (1964).
- Bruun, K. "Gennem affolkede bygder," Geografisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 14 (1898). København, 1898.
- Coburn, F. "Brief Notes on an Expedition to the North of Iceland in 1899," Zoologist, Vol. 4 (London, 1900).
- Congreve, Freeve. "Seven Weeks in Eastern and Northern Iceland," Ibis, Vol. 12 (1930).
- Cornell, K. H. "Peasant Marriage in Ireland, its Structure and Development since the Famine," The Economic and Historical Reviews, 2nd Series, Vol. 14 (1961).

- Croog, S. "Aspects of Cultural Background of Pre-marital Pregnancies in Denmark," Social Forces (December, 1951).
- Curle, A. "Kinship Structure in an English Village," Man, Vol. 52 (1952).
- Dalton, G. "Theoretical Issues in Economic Anthropology," Current Anthropology, Vol. 10, No. 1 (February, 1969).
- Davenport, W. "Non Unilinear Descent and Descent Groups," American Anthropologist, Vol. 63 (1961).
- Donegani, J. A., N. Dungal, W. E. Ikin, and A. E. Mourat. "Bloodgroups of Icelanders," Annals of Eugenics, Vol. 147 (1950).
- Edmondsson, M. S. "Kinship Terms and Kinship Concepts," American Anthropologist, Vol. 59 (1957).
- Einarsson, E. "Cooperative Societies," Iceland Today. Reykjavik: Prentsmidjan Edda, 1961.
- "Festermaal," Epistolarum-Fralsebande, Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder. Edited by G. Rona. Reykjavik: Bokaverzlun Isafold, 1959.
- Firth, R. "Themes in Economic Anthropology: A General Comment," Themes in Economic Anthropology, ASA Monograph No. 6. Edited by M. Banton, London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.
- Foster, G. M. "The Dyadic Contract: A Model for Social Structure in a Mexican Village," American Anthropologist, Vol. 63 (1961).
- Frankenberg, R. "British Community Studies: Problems of Synthesis," The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, ASA Monograph No. 4. Edited by M. Banton. London: Tavistock Publications, 1966.
- _____. "Economic Anthropology: One Anthropologist's View," Themes in Economic Anthropology, ASA Monograph No. 6. Edited by R. Firth. London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.
- Freeman, J. D. "On the Concept of the Kindred," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 91 (1961).
- Friederick, "Proto-Indoeuropean Kinship," Ethnology, (pp. 1-36), Vol. 5 (1966).

- Friedl, E. "Studies in Peasant Life," Biennial Review of Anthropology. Edited by B. J. Siegel. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967.
- Gebhart, A. "Statistisches aus Island," Globus, Vol. 73 (1899).
- Gertz, G. "Studies in Peasant Life: Community and Society," Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1961. Edited by B. J. Siegel. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962.
- Gillin, J. "Methodological Problems in the Anthropological Study of Modern Cultures," American Anthropologist, Vol. 57 (1949).
- Goodenough, W. H. "Kindred and Hamlet in Lakalai, New Britain," Ethnology, Vol. 1 (1962).
- Gudmundsson, J., B. Jonsson, and H. Kristbjornsson (eds.). Arvakur (Marz, 1964, Juni, 1965, April, 1966, Juni, 1967, and Mai, 1968).
- Halpern, J. M. and J. Brode. "Peasant Society: Economic Changes and Revolutionary Transformation," Biennial Review of Anthropology. Edited by B.J. Siegel and A. R. Beals. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967.
- Hansen, V. "Befolkningsforskdydningerne paa Island," Dansk-Islandsk Aarvog, Vol. XVI. København: Woels Forlag, 1943.
- Harshberger, J. W. "The Gardens of the Faroes, Iceland and Greenland," The Geographical Review, Vol. 14 (1924).
- Hofer, T. "Anthropologists and Native Ethnographers at Work in Central European Cultures," Anthropologica, XII, No. 1 (1970). Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology. Ottawa, Canada: St. Paul University.
- Honigman, J. (ed.). "Modernization and Tradition in Central European Rural Cultures," Anthropologica, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1970). The Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology. Ottawa, Canada: St. Paul University.
- Isaksen, F. T. "Bygdesociologien i landbruk ökonomiens tjenester," Nordisk Landbruks Ekonomisk Tidsskrift, 4 Heft (1952).
- Jackson, A. "The Sheep Islands," New Society (August, 1972).

- Johnston, H. S. "Notes on the Geography, Geology, Agriculture and Economics of Iceland," The Scottish Geographical Magazine, pp. 441-66 (1895).
- Jonsson, G. "Islandske Landbruksregnskaber og nogle af deres hovedresultater," Nordisk Landbruks Ekonomisk Tidsskrift, (1952).
- Kenny, M. "Europe: The Atlantic Fringe," Anthropological Quarterly, Vol 36, No. 3 (July, 1963).
- Kimball, S. T. "Rural Social Organization and Cooperative Labour," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 55 (1949).
- Leach, E. "On Certain Unconsidered Aspects of Double Descent Systems," Man, No. 214 (September, 1962).
- Lewis, I., "Introduction." in History and Social Anthropology, ASA Monograph No. 7. Edited by I. M. Lewis. London: Tavistock Publications, 1968.
- MarLarusson, M. "Hovedgaard," Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder, Vol. 6. Edited by G. Rona. København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1961.
- _____. "Hreppr," Hovedstad-Judar, Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for nordisk Middelalder, Vol. 7. Edited by G. Rona. København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1962.
- Merrill, R. T. "Notes on Icelandic Kinship Terminology," American Anthropologist, Vol. 66 (1964).
- Murdock, G. P. "World Ethnographic Sample," American Anthropologist, Vol. 59 (1957).
- Newby, J. "Iceland and Icelanders," Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society, Vols. 11-12 (Manchester, England, 1900).
- Pehrson, R. N. "The Bilateral Network of Social Relations in Konkama Lapp District," Indiana University Publication, Slavic and East European Series. Indianapolis: University Press, 1957.
- _____. "Bilateral Kin Groupings as a Structural Type, A Preliminary Statement," Readings in Kinship and Social Structure. Edited by N. Graburn. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

- Schapera, I. (ed.). "Studies in Kinship and Marriage," Occasional Paper No. 16, Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1963.
- Schneider, D. M. "American Kinship Terms and Terms for Kinsmen," American Anthropologist, Vol. 67 (1965).
- Sigurdsson, J. (ed.). Skýrslur um Landshagi á Islandi, I-V. Copenhagen, Thiele og Møller, 1866.
- Sigurjonsson, A. "Det Islandske Landbrukets utveckling," Nordisk Landbruks Ekonomisk Tidsskrift, 3 Heft (1951).
- Sjoberg, G. "Folk and Feudal Societies," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 58, No. 3 (November, 1952).
- Sprague-Smith, C. "Modern Iceland," American Geographical Society Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 30 (September, 1890).
- Steffensen, J. "Islandsk Folkemaengde gennem Tiderne," Medicinsk Historisk Aarboeg (1964).
- Stone, K. H. "Isolations and Retreat of Settlement in Iceland," Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol. 87, No. 1 (April, 1971).
- Terkelsen, J. "Islands frygteligste Naturkatastrofe," Islandsk Aarboeg, XIV (1941).
- Thompson, L. "The Rural Community in Iceland: A Pilot Study Report," Vie Congres des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques. Paris: Musée de l'Homme, 1963.
- Thorrodssen, T. "Om Islands geografiske og geologiske undersogelse," Geografisk Tidsskrift, Vol. 12 (1893); "Rejser i Vest Skaptafellssyssel," Vol. 12 (1893); "Nord-Ost Island," Vol. 13 (1895). København, 1893-1895.
- Tomasson, R. F. "Iceland on the Brain," The American-Scandinavian Review, Vol. LX, No. 4 (December, 1972). New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1972.
- Vestdal, J. E. "Die Grundlagen der Wirtschaft in Island," Zeitschrift fur Wirtschafts Geographie, No. 7 (1933). Hagen, 1961.
- Voget, F. "Culture Change," Biennial Review of Anthropology, 1963. Edited by B. Siegel. Standord: Stanford University Press, 1963.

Warner, W. "Social Anthropology and the Modern Community," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 46 (1941).

Wolf, E. R. "Types of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Discussion," American Anthropology, Vol. 58 (June, 1955).

_____. "Kinship, Friendship and Patron Client Relations in Complex Societies," The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies, ASA Monograph No. 4. Edited by M. Banton. London: Tavistock Publications, 1966.

Public Documents

Bunadarsambands Sudurlands, Reikningar og Skyrslur Starfsmanna Arid 1966. Adalfundi, 5 Mai 1967.

Christiansborg Slot 13 Juni 1787, Forordning angaaende den Islandske Handel og Skibsfart. København: P. M. Hopfner Universitets Bogtrykker, 1787.

Gudmundsson, B. (ed.). Syslulysingar 1744-49. Reykjavik: Isafold prentsmidja, F.F., 1957.

Hagstofa Islands. Arbok Hagstofa Islands 1930. Reykjavik: Rikisprentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1930-31.

Hagstofa Islands. Bunadarskyrslur Arin 1961-63. Reykjavik: Rikisprentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1965.

Hagstofa Islands. Hagtidindi. (Monthly Statistical Analysis.) Series beginning with 50th year, No. 1, January 1965-52nd year, November, 1967. Reykjavik.

Hagstofa Islands. Mannfjoldaskyrslur Arin 1916-1920. Reykjavik: Prentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1928.

Hagstofa Islands. Mannfjoldaskyrslur Arin 1921-25. Reykjavik: Prentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1929.

Hagstofa Islands. Mannfjoldaskyrslur Arin 1926-30. Reykjavik: Prentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1933.

Hagstofa Islands. Mannfjoldaskyrslur Arin 1941-50. Reykjavik: Rikisprentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1952.

Hagstofa Islands. Mannfjoldaskyrslur Arin 1951-60. Reykjavik: Rikisprentsmidjuni Gutenberg, 1963.

- Hagstofa Islands. Manntalid 1703. Reykjavik:
Ríkisprentsmíðjunni Gutenberg, 1960.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1860. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1870. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1880. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1901. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1910. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1920. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1930. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Ríkisprentsmíðjunni
Gutenberg, 1937.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1940. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1950. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1960. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Manntal á Íslandi 1968. "Skeidahreppur,
Arnessýsla." Reykjavik: Thjóðskálasafn.
- Hagstofa Islands. Tölfraeðihandbók II.40. Reykjavik:
1967.
- Hreppstjóri. Yfir verkfraeramenn í Skeidahreppi, 1899-
1968. "Skeidahrepp, Arnessýsla."
- Hreppstjóri. Kjorskra fyrir Skeidahrepp í Arnessýslu,
Marz 1901-1922. "Skeidahrepp, Arnessýsla."
- Hreppstjóri. Bok um Utteks, 1871-1935. "Skeidahrepp,
Arnessýsla."
- Johannesson, T. Bunadarsamtök á Íslandi, 1837-1937.
Aldarminning, Vol. 1. Reykjavik: Bunadarfélag
Íslands, 1937.

- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Bunadarskyrslur, agricultural
statistics, 1850-1878.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Dánarbok, records of death and
its causes, 1784-1920.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Dómabok (see also, Fogetabok),
Sheriff's sales of property, 1784-1920.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Hreppreikningur, annual records of
rural district expenditures and incomes, 1784-1920.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Husvitjunarbok, parish clergy annual
house visit records, 1766-1928.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Járdabok, record of landowners and
land values of Skalholt Bishopric, 1785-1803.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Manntal, Public census beginning 1880.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Ministerialbok, parish records, 1785-
1925.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Skipaskjöl, records of ship arrivals
and cargoes, 1879-1890.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Skiptabók, evaluations of estates for
purposes of inheritance, 1784-1920.
- National Library Archives Section (Thjodskallasafn),
Reykjavik. Syslumadurbók, County sheriff's
annual reports, 1784-1960.