

LITERARY ARTS

Novel celebrates the 30th anniversary of UNESCO World Heritage Site

In April of 2008 the L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site at the tip of Newfoundland's northern peninsula will celebrate its 30th anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognizing this site as the earliest known European settlement in the New World. To celebrate, author R.G. Johnston has written *Vinland: The Beginning*, an adventure novel based on the Vinland Sagas.

Vinland: The Beginning is set at the close of the first century. It celebrates the lives of brave men and women fighting the dangers of the cold North Atlantic to seek out new lands and new riches. Although the exact location of Vinland is in dispute, author R.G. Johnston has drawn on his extensive research and used real settings to bring the story to life, using names from the Sagas and several names from extant sources as well.

Adam of Bremen, based on the real Adam of Bremen (who, as far as we know, did not venture outside of his own country) is a pivotal character in the book as the protector of the faith and bounty hunter seeking to find and return the Book of Kells and the Holy Lance, believed to be in the possession of the Culdees, a breakaway monastic sect on Markland (Labrador). He accompanies the Norse merchant Thorfinn Karlsefni and his wife Gudrid to Vinland, set in modern-day Newfoundland, where Thorfinn dreams of

establishing trade and a permanent settlement. Gudrid, however, plans to return to nearby Markland, where she buried her two previous husbands 20 years ago. Together with members from the previous expeditions, she hopes to again

locate and open a secret cavern containing a city of gold, and return with the treasure to Iceland. One obstacle stands in their way - Ari Marrson, the unscrupulous, tyrannical leader of the Culdees.

Vinland: The Beginning gives readers a glimpse into the lives of North America's earliest explorers, as they navigate not only dangerous seas and unknown lands, but love and betrayal, life and death, and their own ambitions.

Author R.G. Johnston is dedicated to celebrating, in story, the varied and fascinating people that make up Canada. Inspired by historical documents he creates an adventurous

tale focusing on the mystery and allegory of human existence. He currently resides in Belleville.

Vinland: The Beginning is available in Belleville at the Quinte Arts Council, 36 Bridge St. E., Jazz Salon, 270 Church St., Estetika Total Bliss, 270 Church St., Dr. Dinsmore, 275 Bridge St. E., and in Picton at County Blossoms, 124 Main St. You can order a copy at www.vinlandthebeginning.com. Inquiries can be sent to rgjpublisher@sympatico.ca.

