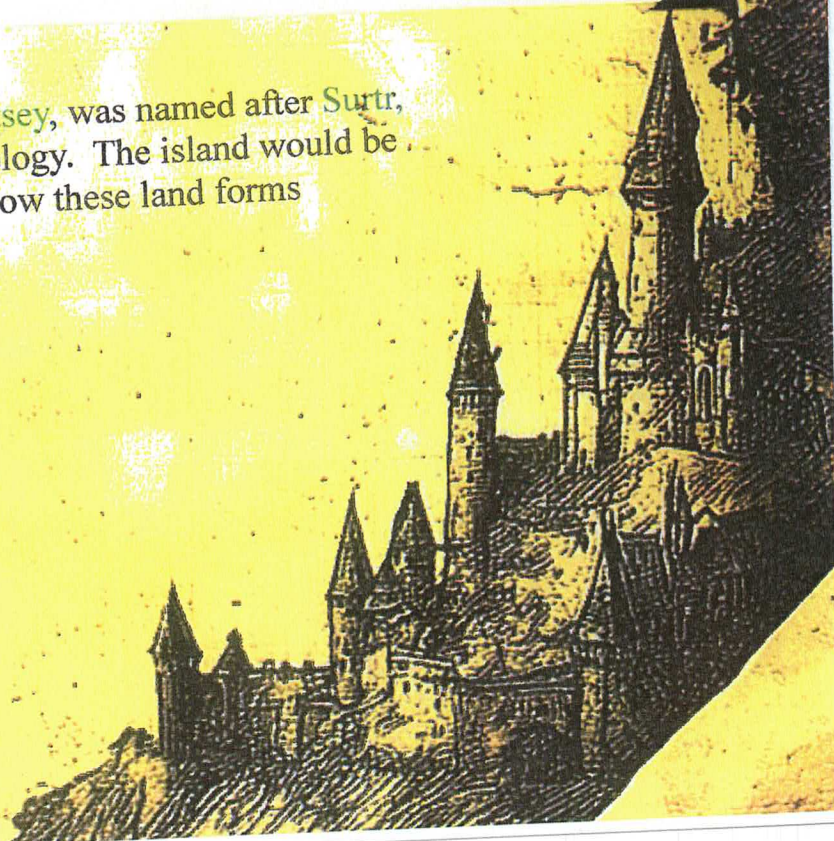


BIRTH OF AN ISLAND

On Nov. 14, 1963 a volcanic eruption off of the southwest coast of Iceland began cracking the water's surface from a depth of 430 feet. The eruption continued until Jan. 5, 1967 forming an island that measures 1 sq. mi. with an elevation of 500 ft. above sea level.



The world's newest island **Surtsey**, was named after Surtr, a fire giant from Norse mythology. The island would be studied and protected to see how these land forms grow and develop.



SURTSEY ISLAND

In the spring of 1985, the first plants were found growing on the northern shore. And during the island's first 20 years, twenty species of plants were identified with half of them becoming established.

Birds began nesting on Surtsey three years after the eruption ended. Twelve species of birds including gulls, guillemots and puffins are now found regularly on the island.

Seals were seen basking on the island shortly after its formation, and in 1988 a group of 70 made it their breeding grounds.

In 2008, UNESCO declared Surtsey a World Heritage Site in recognition of its value to the scientific community.

Currently there is a prefab hut on the island which is used by researchers while studying the islands development.

In 2009, a weather observation station and webcam were installed allowing us to see first hand how Surtsey evolves.

