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A fika with Leslie

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

A sunny Saturday in August 2015 I had the pleasure of meeting Leslie Longoria from Gonzales, Texas, who was one of the participants in *Allt för Sverige* (The Great Swedish Adventure) in 2014.

Her cousin Tommy Nyström had told me where she was staying with her friends and cousins in Stockholm, and we met at a nearby café. We had a great time together.

Leslie is a very friendly person, just as she was on TV, and her great braids and her baseball cap were fine parts of her personality.

She told me that she was very fond of Sweden, it was a clean place, and she liked all the friendly people she had met during this her second visit to the country of her ancestors. She felt that cousin Tommy was just like a son to her, and he took such good care of her.

Leslie had done her DNA testing which showed her to be 45% Swedish, 39% Irish, 6% Italy/Greece, and the rest a mixture from various countries.

One of the great experiences during this trip was a visit to Ljusterö, in the Stockholm archipelago, where her paternal grandmother Signe Olivia Nordberg had her roots. She was a daughter of Ernst Wilhelm Nordberg, born on 28 Feb. 1865 at Ljusterö, and who immigrated around 1889 to the U.S. from Stockholm without bothering the authorities for his proper papers. His father was Johan Magnus Nordberg, born 1833, who died in 1903 in Stockholm. Ernst Wilhelm's wife was Christina Larsdotter, born 17 Nov. 1863 in Öster Hästbo, Torsåker (Gäst.), who immigrated in 1888.

The grandmother Signe was actually born in Brockton, Mass., on 23 July 1905, but grew up in Cuba from

age 4. Later on she married Otho Vivian, a Texas Ranger who was seeking refuge after being ordered to kill some cattle rustlers in Texas, but the family returned to Texas in 1930 when things had become quieter.

The parents remained in Cuba after Signe moved to Texas. Ernst Wilhelm died 7 Dec. 1943 in Cuba. His wife had died 31 March 1937, also in Cuba.

Their sons, Ernest Herbert and Clarence William, were both still in Cuba when Fidel Castro took over the government in 1959. Herbert made it to the U.S., but Clarence did not. He lost his land and was put into prison where he soon died.

As Signe, Leslie's grandmother, had grown up with maids in the household in Cuba, she had not learnt to cook, which was a problem when she came to Texas. She could cook only Mexican food, but spoke a number of languages. Signe died 12 Feb. 1969 in the town of Carrizo Springs, Texas.

Back to Ljusterö, Leslie visited Mjölнарström, where her ancestor Johan Dionysius Nordberg, born in 1801, father of Johan Magnus, had been a miller.

His birth was a problem, as he was born out of wedlock, and there was no indication of where his mother Greta Forsman came from.

But a very lucky find by researchers Leif Mörkfors and Fredrik Mejster of the *Allt för Sverige* crew turned up her moving-in certificate at Ljusterö, which showed that she ac-

tually came from Malung in Dalarna province, where it was possible to follow her lines further back. She actually was identified as a distant relative of Leif Mörkfors and the Lindjo family. The latter family was important in the history of Bishop Hill in Illinois and the ErikJansonist movement.

In Stockholm she had visited all the addresses where her Swedish Nordberg ancestors had lived after leaving Ljusterö, and taken photos of the houses. They seem to have all lived on the island of Söder, with addresses like Barnängs Tvärgränd 8, Erstagan 24, Bondegatan 42, and several more.

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