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## The Last Page

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# The Last Page

**Dear friends,**

Summer is here and everything is very green, the berries in the garden are ripe for picking, and since it is a month after Midsummer the nights are starting to get dark again. That points to the month of August and the time for crayfish fishing, which I experienced as a child. It was quite exciting to be allowed to be up so late and to go to the lake and take up the cages, in which we caught the crayfish. And then the drive home with all the crayfish in a big sack and you could hear the noise they made as they crawled upon each other. Later came the big crayfish party for my parent's friends, which we, my brothers and I, were allowed to take part in. That was in the early 1950s, long before crayfish pestilence had almost

made them extinct. The Swedish crayfish still exists, but you have to pay almost \$100 for a kilo, so nowadays people mostly eat crayfish from Turkey, Spain, and even China.

In early June I participated in a conference, organized by Finnsam, which is a group that works with research on the old Finns who immigrated to Sweden in the early 1600s. They are also called the "Forest Finns" or "Slash and burn Finns" because of their methods of farming. They moved to remote areas in the forests in middle Sweden, from Medelpad in the north to Östergötland in the south. They cut down the forest and then burned the trees where they had fallen, and then sowed a special kind of rye in the ashes. They

repeated the process for a number of years and then moved again to an unused area.

Forests were not regarded as valuable land, but as the need for charcoal grew along with the iron industry, their farming ways were no longer allowed, and they had to settle down and work as charcoal makers or miners. They have many descendants, but it can be hard to identify them, as they lose their distinct Finnish names very quickly. This might be a good topic for a future article in SAG, as I do not think there is much written about them in English.

For now I wish you all a good summer (what's left of it)!

*Elisabeth Thorsell*

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Limited number of spaces!