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What was the Teardrop Route?

James M. Borg

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What was the teardrop route?

In an e-mail to the editor Dr. *James M. Borg* puts the following question:

“I am a subscriber to the *Swedish American Genealogist* and would like to request your assistance in answering a question about the so-called “teardrop route.”

“My great-grandfather, Carl Borg, who was born near Valdemarsvik, Östg., in 1861, went to sea as a sixteen year old. He spent five years (1877-1882) aboard cargo ships – mainly (collier?) barques – operating in the Baltic, Russia (perhaps mainly the White Sea region of Mezen and Arkangel); then went “around South America,” and visited the Caribbean Islands [perhaps the Danish Virgin

Islands such as St. Thomas, and one of the big sugar islands]. He once told a relative that he had followed the “teardrop route” in [some?] of his journeys. Can you assist me in identifying what that route consisted of?

“My speculation is that it may refer to one of two routes: 1) from Goteborg up the coast of Norway (sort of a teardrop shape) and on into the northern seas of Russia (plus maybe the phrase resonated with the tears that young sailors shed on such a miserable journey); or 2) possibly it referred to making a lengthy passage around the ports of South America going all the way to Iquique, Chile, where nitrates were a major com-

modity at this time.

“Your expertise in answering this question would be most appreciated.

*Yours sincerely,
James M. Borg, Ph.D.”*

Unfortunately the editor had to admit her lack of knowledge and I am now relying on the many all-knowing readers of SAG.

Any information can be sent to Dr. Borg at 1910 Surrey Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045.

<slbborg@netzero.net>
or to the editor at
<sag@etgenealogy.se>

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