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 commodity 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.
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or to the editor at <sag@etgenealogy.se>