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From 'Lucy' to Åby!

The discoverer of the roots of mankind finds his own roots in Östergötland

By ANDERS KÖHLER

A couple of years ago I received a letter from a professor Donald Johanson at The Institute of Human Origins in Arizona. Donald Carl Johanson, born 1943 in Chicago, is the son of two immigrants from Sweden.

Professor Johanson asked me if I could check if he had any Walloons in his family tree. The tradition in the Johanson family claimed that.

I started the research and soon I found names like Allard, Bonnavier, and Qwarfordt among his ancestors. At least it is possible to trace the Bonnavier family back to Belgium. So the tradition in the family about a Walloon background was correct.

Now I had enough information to start planning a trip in Johanson's ancestors' footsteps. I met Johanson at the home of his cousin Inga Britt in Norrköping. The first place we visited was the old iron industry site, Håvla *hammarsmedja* [Håvla forge] in Skedevi parish of Östergötland's *län*, where Johanson's forefather had been a *hammarsmed* [forge smith]. It is a very interesting place to visit. We stopped at Skedevi church where some of Johanson ancestors are buried. Then we went to Finspång and on to Kullerstad church.

In Kullerstad church Johanson and I have a common relative buried; he was *Mäster* [master smith] Christian Qwarfordt, who died in 1694.

Johanson said, "Even more exciting was the discovery that Anders and I are distantly related and are descended from a common ancestor, Anders Qwarfordt, who lived in the early 17th Century."

Professor Johanson really enjoyed

the trip in Sweden. He attained more knowledge about his ancestors and their history, and found Walloons in the family tree. He recommended that other Americans with Swedish background do the same, take a tour to the Old Country.

Donald Johanson is a professor of anthropology at the Institute of Human Origins at Arizona State University. Johanson was the anthropologist who discovered our prehistoric ancestor 'Lucy' in Ethiopia in East Africa. 'Lucy' is over 3 million years old. Professor Donald Johanson is a good example of an American with Swedish ancestors who has become famous all over the world.

Professor Johanson is not the first member in the Johanson family to be successful. His uncle Ivar Johansson¹ was a gold medalist in wrestling in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles 1932. For me it was a nice experience to get in contact with a person like Donald Johanson, a contact I still have.



Anders Köhler (left) and Donald Johanson in Kullerstad church by the tombstone of Christian Qwarfordt.

Note:

1) Ivar Valentin Johansson, born 31 January 1903 i Kuddby (Östg.), died 4 August 1979 i S:t Johannes (Östg.)

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