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# A trip of a lifetime

## Tracking the ancestral trails throughout Sweden makes many memories forever

BY DEE KLEINOW

My husband Ray and I have done a fair amount of traveling to different places, but our trip to Sweden this summer tops my list of travels.

A number of years ago, I was given many old family photos without names. After sorting, arranging, and researching them and putting the information into a genealogy program, my interest in genealogy and researching all my family lines back into Sweden became an addiction. This led to attending many classes, many hours of research in records both here and in Sweden, and many hours of research volunteer work. With this knowledge and connecting with my special Swedish relatives and friends, a wonderful month-long trip to Sweden was planned. Now a month sounds long, but with such an exciting, full schedule, it seemed as if time flew by. We have been asked to report on this trip, but we quickly found we must give just the highlights or write a book, so....

### The travel plan

We first decided on an overall plan of starting in Skåne; then Kronoberg; Kalmar; Stockholm; Leksand in Dalarna; back to Stockholm; over to Värmland; relatives in Norway; and leave through Oslo. To do this, we chose Icelandic Air to break up our journey.

### Off we go!

We left Minneapolis on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2008, arrived in Iceland on the 14<sup>th</sup>,

toured a little, stayed overnight, then flew on to Copenhagen on the 15<sup>th</sup>. We were met at the airport by my cousins, Gert-Ove and Anny Nilsson, who drove us over the Öresunds bridge to Sweden, and their home in Höllviken, which is located in the far southwest corner, about a block inland from the sea.

### In Skåne

Over the next several days, we went sailing on the Öresund and were invited to numerous family reunions and relatives' homes in the Malmö, Lund, Höör, and Löberöd area, where Swedish coffee, desserts, and delicious meals were served. We were taken to the family churches, grave sites, and family farms around Västerstad, Östraby, Östra Kärrstorp, and Fränninge; visited the old Lund Cathedral and watched the medieval calendar clock announce 12 noon; walked the streets of many of the old historic sea captain towns like Trelleborg, Ystad, and Simrishamn; toured many of the medieval castles and Viking villages along the Skåne western, southern, and eastern coasts. There is so much history in Sweden and this area to talk about, but it was time to move on.

### Växjö next!

Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, we packed our bags, said our tearful goodbyes to my cousins in Skåne, and picked up our rental car in Malmö and worked our way to Växjö, where we were invited

to stay with Helmer and Maine Olofsson, friends who grew up in the same area of Slätthög, Moheda, Berg, Asa, and Tjureda, as my mother's father and relatives did and have ties to southern Minnesota. With Helmer's knowledge, we drove the back roads, through the village farms, and visited an old, out-of-the-way local museum, found farm history books, and visited with the local historians.

There are no words to really explain your feelings while touring the family farm sites, visiting the church where your emigrant family left from, and touching the baptism font where your grandparents or great-grandparents were baptized. While in Växjö, we strolled through the old section of town, visited the 11<sup>th</sup> century cathedral, and the House of Emigrants where we had coffee with a delightful elderly gentleman, Ivan



*Dee ponders the ancestors and their baptisms.*

Nilsson, one of the first volunteers at the Emigrant Center. We also took a tour of the Emigrant Museum which shows a very interesting display of the emigrants leaving for America and Minnesota. We did not do any research here as we had already done it at home. With so much genealogy research resources available on microfilm or on the Internet, it is much easier, faster, and cheaper. So, do your family research before you plan to travel overseas.

## To Orrefors and Läckeby

It was now May 23<sup>rd</sup> and time to drive east, through the region of Vilhelm Moberg and a tour of the Orrefors glass factory which started production in 1742. (Yes, we spent a few *kronor* here!).

Then on to Läckeby where long time genealogy friends, Susanne Åkerfeldt, Rune Eriksson, and children, who have family ties to Minnesota, were waiting for us. After a nice, relaxed evening meal, we had a surprise visit from their neighbor, who was a board member of the *Kalmar län Genealogiska Förening*. We exchanged genealogy related items, while listening to the beautiful nightingale's evening song.

Highlights of this area took us to the medieval city center of Kalmar, which still has part of the city wall; *Västerport*, the main entrance to the city, located close to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Kalmar *slott* (castle). It has a terrific view of the city, ocean, and coastal



*Skokloster, northwest of Stockholm.*

area. Then over the bridge to the island of Öland, with its historical sites, windmills, and farmland meadows, which was larger in size than we had expected.

## Going north

Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, we started our journey north along the east coast, through beautiful rocky green rolling hills and large farm fields of rapeseed and potatoes in full bloom. We stopped for a quick shopping trip through IKEA on the northwest side of Stockholm, which was larger than our Minneapolis store.

We met Bengt & Elisabeth Thorsell, editor of the *Swedish American Genealogist* and a past guest speaker at our Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota meeting. She had invited us to their home where gene-

alogy was, of course, the main topic. After we dropped off our rental car, we were off to tour the 17<sup>th</sup> century royal palace, Drottningholm, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia's country home on the island of Lovön near Stockholm. While here we saw the changing of the guard and enjoyed our walk through the beautiful landscaped grounds. Then we were off to tour the countryside and to visit the Lovö parish church, which is a very old *kyrka* with many runestones around the building and cemetery. The next day, we toured the Skokloster *kyrka* and *slott* where Elisabeth has family ties. This is a pearl among churches in this area, and is still in use today. Skokloster Castle, which is right beside the church, is the largest private palace ever built (1645) in Sweden. It is a museum of artifacts with many of the originals still intact, including three rooms of a fantastic armory collection, dating to the 1670s era. With so much history, our camera was working overtime.

## Dalarna next!

Then it was off to cousin Annika and Peter Wallenskog's beautiful historic home for an evening of visiting and relaxation. May 29<sup>th</sup> found us up early taking the train from Stockholm to Leksand, Dalarna, where genealogy friend, Stenåke Petersson, met us with a surprise handshake from Leksand Mayor Lars Nygårds. We were off to another wonderful



*An Öland windmill.*



*Runestone U47 at Lovö. See note.*





*The House of Genealogy in Leksand. Those filefolders in the back are full of microfiche from the whole of Sweden!*

three days of visiting, and traveling through the beautiful country around Lake Siljan, visiting the old historical village farms, and local museums. We also took a tour down into the Falun copper mines, which is one of Sweden's most important industrial monuments with history that goes back almost a thousand years. We toured Nils Olsson's Dala Wooden Horse workshop by Nusnäs.

We can't forget our visit to the House of Genealogy (*Släktforskarnas Hus*) in Leksand, where we had coffee and treats with the director and staff, toured their facility, and heard more about their working connections with Genline. After another delicious meal with Stenåke and Britt-Marie Petersson at their beautiful summer home, we said our goodbyes and took the train back to Stockholm and the Wallenskog home.

## Exploring Stockholm

Between June 1<sup>st</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup> Peter Wallenskog, a member of the board of directors for Genline, invited us for a tour of the Genline facility, located in Stockholm. We met with the new CEO Mikko Ollinen and staff, and heard about their exciting future plans. We also were invited to visit Väsby *Hembygdsförening*, an old farm village which was used by their local historical society, and enjoyed a tour ending with coffee and treats. Next was the Steninge Palace culture

center, on the shore of Lake Mälaren, whose history stretches back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and past the stately homes in that area.

We also tried out the subway system into downtown Stockholm, where we bought tickets for a two hour boat ride under the bridges and around many islands of Stockholm. We walked past many government buildings and where the Nobel Prize awards are held; toured the Royal Palace (built and completed in 1754) where the royal official entertainment functions take place; watched the changing of the Royal Guards; and toured the Stockholm *Storkyrkan* (cathedral). Jan Eurenus, a staff member of Genline and a research friend, gave us an interesting driving tour of the islands north of Stockholm. We visited more of *Gamla Stan* (Old Town, Stockholm). At the Vasa Museum, the warship *Vasa* is displayed. She capsized on her maiden voyage in 1628 and was raised in 1956. The *Vasa* is the world's only surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century warship with over 95 percent of its original parts preserved.

## To the Värmland cousins

Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, we said goodbye to our wonderful hosts in Stockholm, and picked up our rental car at Bromma Airport. We started our drive west across Sweden to Karl-

stad, Värmland, where Dr. Fredrik Haeffner of SweGGate fame was waiting for us. He had planned to give us a tour of the research center (*Emigrantregistret* [The Kinship Center]), but it had closed early in preparation for Sweden's national celebration on the 6<sup>th</sup>. After a nice walking and driving tour of the area, he escorted us to Töcksfors and cousin Ingrid Andersson's home, where we had been invited to stay for the next few days.

When we visited this area in 1995, I only met two distant cousins. Because my *mormor's* lines go back to the very beginning in the Töcksmark, Östervallskog, and Holmedal church records, I knew there would be more. I was told that I had many relatives waiting to meet us. After being given the history and a driving tour of the many family farms, and visiting a couple of my new-found relatives, the big reunion day came on Saturday. About 155 relatives replied that they were coming. I was told that over 500 relatives lived close by in the area.

## The big reunion!

The Töcksmark community center was full! Dr. Haefner and cousin Ingrid Andersson had planned a very exciting reunion with lots of printed family information being shared. The wood carvings behind the Töcksmark church altar and around the church were done by a relative. A family history program followed, mainly in



*The Family Reunion in Töcksmark.*



*Sandwich cake (smörgåstårta) is a very common dish at big gatherings.*

Swedish, so I hope my personal history was okay. A delicious meal downstairs followed the program. Afterwards, it was back upstairs for question and answer time in the afternoon. Naturally, this followed with coffee and a nice selection of desserts.

## Next stop: Norway!

By June 9<sup>th</sup> it was time to pack our suitcases full of gifts and books and visit the last items of interest around Töcksfors. We said our goodbyes and headed over the border to my cousin Frode Myhrvang's home in Askim, Norway. We were given a tour of the Askim church and cemetery, and had more delicious meals with relatives.

The next day we drove south to Halden and the large Fredriksten Fortress, construction started in 1661, which covers approximately 150 acres. It was a major point of defense before Sweden had taken

over the former Norwegian territory in 1814. Your general fitness will decide whether you walk around this fortress, which takes a good two hours with many steps. While visiting with cousin Frode, I was given a family picture of my *mormor* with her parents and siblings. This picture is special, because I only had a pencil drawing of my great-grandparents, and never knew that this picture even existed.

June 11<sup>th</sup> we headed to Oslo, checked into a hotel and went for a tour of the Viking Ship Museum and the *Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum*, Norwegian maritime museum. It had many exhibits and artifacts of the Vikings, and other ships from the 19<sup>th</sup> century polar expeditions. We took a relaxed walk along the bay area and the public park surrounding these buildings. We had sunny weather, with low 70s to high 80s (above

average) temperatures for most of the trip. It had become very dry. We heard TV reports of forest fires in some areas of Sweden and Norway burning out of control.

## Going home

Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, we had a relaxed breakfast at the hotel, collected our belongings, and left for the Oslo/Gardermoen Airport, where we returned our car. We flew back to Reykjavik, Iceland, another delicious meal, and a little more touring, before returning home to Minneapolis in the evening of June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks to genealogy and all the special relatives and wonderful friends that we've met along the way, this was "A Trip of a Lifetime," and I will remember it forever!

## Note:

The text on the Lovö runestone #U47 says "*Torgils och Sihnjut de reste stenen efter Vig, sin fader*" (Torgils and Sihnjut erected the stone [in memory] of Vig, their father).

**Editor's note:** This travelogue was first published in *Tidningen* 2008/3, journal of the Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota.

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## Swedish(?) names in the 1870 U.S. Census

Recently I looked for a "lost" Swede in the 1870 Census, and tried to find him by listing all the Swedes in his county. In the resulting list I found a number of names, where the name-bearer was supposed to have been born in Sweden, but the name looked a bit odd.

When looking closer at some of the names, I think I could make out what many of them would have been, if indexed by a Swede.

Comments welcome!

Here are the names I read:

*Dolber*  
*Benzston*  
*Bumquist*  
*Lindagrín*  
*Gusto Nelson*  
*Lofgrin*  
*Ewickso*  
*Chinburg*  
*Elenquist*  
*Berystrom*  
*Carsa Underson*  
*Southergrust*

And here are the names in Swedish:

*Dahlberg*  
*Bengtsson*  
*Blomquist*  
*Lindegren*  
*Gustaf Nelson / Nilsson*  
*Löfgrén*  
*Erickson / Eriksson*  
*Kindberg*  
*Elmquist*  
*Bergström*  
*Caisa Andersson*  
*Söderquist*

*Elisabeth Thorsell*