

ROOTED

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Sweden



SwedGen Tour Romani Travelers

WE HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING MANY EVEN NUMBERS RECENTLY. NOT long ago we printed issue number 100 of our magazine Diskulogen. At the annual meeting in March, we welcomed member number 50,000. Not that we currently have 50,000 members, we do not recycle old member numbers, but a total of approximately 50,000 people are or have been members of DIS. Furthermore, we just passed 27 million records in DISBYT. We have more than 80 % of the parishes covered in GIDx, which will then be used in DISPOS. When you think about it, an amazing amount of work has been done during the Society's 30 years of existence.

Unfortunately we see the beginning of a downward trend in the number of members. Is DIS not needed anymore? Yes it is, but we need to boost DISGEN and make sure DISBYT and DISPOS are more user friendly and easy to use on e-readers, develop some nifty genealogical apps (we have many ideas), develop a solution for collaborations on genealogy projects (like a particular family, or a village genealogy) on the internet, and much more. There is no shortage of fun development projects for those who want to get involved, and our goal is to add value to the membership so that everyone wants to be a member in DIS.

Towards member 60,000!

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Photo: Charlotte Börjesson

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Cover photo: Charlotte Börjesson

Welcome to SwedGenTour 2013

Have you hit a brick wall in your Swedish research or do you want to know where to begin?



We are a group of four Swedish genealogists who are touring the United States for the sole purpose of helping Swedish-Americans learn more about their heritage. On previous trips, the group was successful in helping many individuals get started with their research as well as breaking down many brick walls. This year the group will make the following stops:

Schedule of lectures

- Saturday and Sunday, September 27–29 in Lindsborg, KS
- Saturday, October 12 in Oakland, CA
- Tuesday, October 15 in Kingsburg, CA
- Saturday, October 19 in San Diego, CA

At every stop our group will lead a Swedish genealogy research day that will include presentations and demonstrations on how to use the various resources for Swedish genealogical and historical research. There will be presentations on Swedish genealogical online resources, Swedish genealogical CDs and Swedish emigration.

One on one sessions

We also offer individual research help. Sign up for half an hour with one of us and we will help you with your Swedish genealogical problems, give some ideas on where to look for more information and how to get in touch with living relatives in Sweden.

Welcome to SwedGenTour 2013!

For more information see www.swedgen.se.

The heritage of the Romani Travelers

by Anna Linder



KRISTINA LINDHOLM, BOHUSLÄNS MUSEUM, AND BODIL ANDERSSON, ØSTFOLDMUSEENE, ARE participating in a project to document the traces of the Romani Travelers' communities left in Sweden and Norway.

Resandekartan, the Scandinavian travel map, is a project to make the Romani Travelers' part of our history visible. The project will run for two years in Bohuslän, Dalsland and Østfold.

The Romani people have been in Sweden and Norway since the early 1500s, according to confirmed data from 1512 in Sweden and 1525 in Norway. The Romani Travelers worked with trade, craft and artistry. They often performed duties that the resident Swedes and Norwegians did not want to do. The Romani Travelers are a recognized minority group in Norway, where they are called taterne, romanifolket or de reisende, and in Sweden where they are called resande romer.

The Romani Travelers have always lived on the edge of society. Settlements are sometimes mentioned in the archives, but to find old camp sites oral sources must be used. Older Romani Travelers or permanent residents who once lived nearby can still remember this. Today only ruins and stones remain of the old settlements.

The traveler village Snarsmon is located in Bullarebygden in northern Bohuslän, 400 meters from the Norwegian border. The village was inhabited between the years 1850 and 1900. The inhabitants consisted of two large families, as well as a number of other people who came and went.

During one week in 2004 an archaeological excavation of Snarsmon began, and

then continued with a working week each year until 2008. A group of traveling families consisting of 15–20 people, the museum and local history experts helped with the excavation. The travelers physically dug after their own history.

They found 10 to 12 buildings in Snarsmon. The buildings consisted of earth dug outs in varying sizes. They also dug out two larger building, 13 x 16 ft, and a smaller building, 6 x 10 ft. These buildings were made of stone and had a window in the gable and one in the door or above. These buildings proved to be a dwelling house and a collective kitchen.

– Snarsmon is the only excavated travel site I know of. Now Snarsmon is a popular destination that attracted 100 listeners just to the inauguration, says Kristina Lindholm.

The Scandinavian traveling map will try to examine the encounter between the majority and minority populations. Snarsmon was not unique; there were many similar places in Sweden and Norway. You can find traces of these sites when studying the map - they often had names like Tattarstan and Skojarholmen, as the travelers themselves were not allowed to name the places on the map.

– In this project we do no genealogy, we note only that the traveler lived at a specific site. We think it may be unethical if we begin to search forward and reveal the ethnicity of living people. Especially when we are reminded of the nastier parts of our history when both Sweden and Norway were interested in eugenics, says Bodil Andersson.

It's a slim source material they have to work with. There is often a one-sided

description of history that illustrates the inhabitants' encounters with travelers, including names and places. The only collected information about Snarsmon is found in a book by Karl Sjöblom from 1929.

There are interviews from the 1940s, with older people who talk about their childhood and when they met 'gypsies'. Occasionally the travelers are included in the household examination rolls, husförhörlängder, but this is uncommon. The travelers used to be buried in the church cemetery, often on the edge, so it should theoretically be possible to find many of them in the death records.

Folkklivsarkivet in Gothenburg can provide many answers with its Tattarlista, a questionnaire survey. Here it is possible to get answers to how the travelers looked and how they lived. There is also some information on Snarsmon.

There are many extorting myths about the traveling people. For example, William's house in Naversta, Bohuslän, was said to be exactly on the border between Sweden and Norway, and therefore had a room in each country. This project measured the ruins of the house and found that it was wholly on the Swedish side, but on the border path.

The remains are connected to people by the project. There is also a tragic story that when William got old he did not like the old people's home. So he left and went on a hike to reach his daughter, but got lost and froze to death. The project could eventually confirm the story when they made contact with one of the locals who remembered the incident and even could show researches the place where William froze to death. 🗿



Anneli Andersson, Anna-Lena Hultman, Gunilla Didriksson and I, Charlotte Börjesson, traveled on the SwedGen Tour. Among the many places we visited was Kansas, a memorable detour on our long drive between Chicago and Salt Lake City.

In Lindsborg, McPherson County, Kansas, there was no need to photograph tombstones since they have all been photographed previously. Despite this, we managed to make a church visit to the Bethany Lutheran Church which is located in Lindsborg. We got books and magazines that are of great value in family history research. One book was published in 1980 by and with members of the church where they are gathered in families with portraits and residential addresses and telephone

numbers. Twenty years later, in 2000, came another edition, and this is done in color.

Old Mill Museum

The Old Mill Museum in Lindsborg kept church records for McPherson County. On the museum's website www.oldmillmuseum.org, McPherson County Old Mill Museum, has much of interest and links to records of the censuses in 1875 and 1890, births and divorces around the years 1870 to 1917, inventories and wills, U.S. citizenship, death notices in newspapers, cemeteries and more. The records can be found on their website under the Local History & Genealogy, then Online Record.

Butter in the Well

Linda K. Hubalek writes books about settlers on the prairie in Kansas. Her writing focuses on women's lives in their new homeland. In her books there are a lot of pictures of people, documents, family

trees, buildings and environments that are related to the families. The books are of great value to us who so research on immigrants to the United States. Even if you do not have relatives in Kansas, you are able to get knowledge of what life could be for many new arrivals when they came to their new homeland.

The first book series Linda wrote was *Butter in the Well*, which consists of four books and is about Kajsa Svensson Runeberg from Dalsland and her life with the family on the farm they built. Linda has also written three books in the series *Planting Dreams* that takes place between the years 1868 and 1919. This series is about her ancestors, Charlotte Samuelsdotter and Samuel Johansson, and their lives in Kansas. They emigrated from Pelarne in Småland in 1868 with their two oldest children. In the United States they changed their last name to Johnson, and they settled in Salem Borg north of Lindsborg.



➔ If you are interested in the books you can buy and read more about each book on Linda's website www.lindahubalek.com.

If We Could Only Come to America

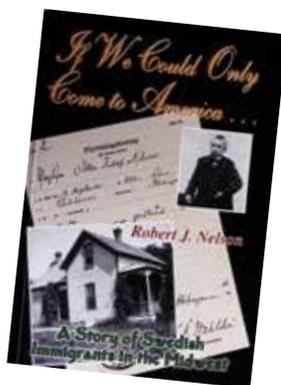
Another book I bought at the museum was the book *If We Could Only Come to America* by Robert J. Nelson. The book is about his parents, ancestors and relatives who settled in Kansas as well as other parts of the United States. Robert's grandmother Fredrika Charlotta Johansson, born November 10, 1848 in Askeryd, emigrated in 1868 from Eksjö Country Parish. A few years later her parents and siblings began emigrating one by one from Askeryd and Eksjö in Småland according to Emibas. In Emibas it is stated that the siblings Johannesdotter/Johannesson and Petersson in the United States are called Johnson and Ekblaw.

Books about Lindsborg

The Bethania congregation in Lindsborg has published two collections of Lindsborg and the lives of the members. The book "Lindsborg – Swedish-American Culture photo" from Central Kansas is from 1909. It contains many stories of how they got here, who they knew and socialized with, had business or other relationships with.

Many images represent individuals and families as well as buildings. Ten years later, in 1919, the second book was published: *Lindsborg - after 50 years*. It contains a summary of the first book and new stories of those who lived in 1919, with numerous portraits and group photos.

For genealogists, these books are worth gold if we find the relatives we are researching. I also have some similar books from other places, which I bought during our SwedGen Tours through the years. Imagine if these books are digitized and searchable one day! 🐼



In October 2012, we were back in the U.S. for another SwedGen Tour. Such a trip is planned and prepared by us for almost a year in advance so it always feels so nice to finally be on the road, once we board the flight to Boston.

Olof Cronberg and I, Charlotte Börjesson, have different areas that we will lecture on, but we usually share the responsibility to demonstrate DISBYT and DISPOS. On the same day as the lectures we book one-on-one meetings with some visitors who get to see us alone for half an hour to get answers to their own questions and help with their genealogy research.

In order for them to get as much help from us as possible, they booked their meetings with us in advance and sent information on what they want help with. It can be anything from that they do not know what city their ancestors came from

Links
 Read more about SwedGen Tour:
www.swedgen.se and www.blogg2013.swedgen.se.



Swedgen Tour 2012

by Charlotte Börjesson

Photo: Olof Cronberg

in Sweden, when they emigrated, and which boat they came to the U.S. with, to find living Swedish relatives. We spend a lot of time on these issues in advance and try to find as much information as we can and present it to the visitor when we meet. Many times we have even been in contact with their Swedish relatives. They will also receive information on how they should and can do research on to get more knowledge about their family. When we find a relative, living or deceased, that they themselves have been struggling to find, there are often tears of joy down running down their cheeks, which also makes us a little teary-eyed.

Conferences with lectures

Our first meeting was in Sturbridge, southwest of Worcester, Massachusetts, organized by SARA, Swedish Ancestry Research Association, and lasted two days. A few days later we were in Boston, on the western outskirts of Providence in Rhode Island, at a conference organized by Risha,

Rhode Island Swedish Heritage Association, during a day at the library. The last conference was in Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, arranged by the Western PA Genealogical Society, the Carnegie Library in a theater. The library here has a great floor plan with an incredible, comprehensive collection of books, documents and digital resources for genealogy research, both locally and in the United States. There is a great selection for research also in other countries and continents.

Church records and photography

We normally rent a car during our journey in order to visit our scheduled lecture locations more easily. In between lectures, we visit the Swedish churches or churches that have once been Swedish. There may be books of Swedish church members. We are always treated well when we get there and when we ask if we may photograph the books we have received only positive reactions. These books contain information about when members of the Church

are born, baptized, confirmed, married, died and where they are buried. The books are often divided into unmarried individuals and families, and where it is clear when and where you were born, arrival to the United States and in- and out-migration tasks. The dates for these books tend to be from the church's information, often in the late 1880s and onwards.

We choose the churches that have the most information about their members and the churches we have visited in previous years. This we visited year, the Lutheran as Bethany, First, Gustavus Adolphus, Trinity, Zion and the Evangelical Church. All the churches are of the Swedish traditions and celebrations of Easter, Midsummer, Lucia and Christmas are very much appreciated by the members.

Another interest we have is to photograph the headstones of buried Swedes and it is not uncommon to find cemeteries that belong only to the Swedish church in the locality. This year the weather was not on our side when we had the opportunity

Join the DIS Society!

Are you still not a member of the DIS Society?

The DIS Society is the Computer Genealogy Society of Sweden and produces this e-zine *Rooted in Sweden*. As a member you will also get access to the DISBYT database with over 28 million records, which covers a third of the total population who lived in Sweden before 1910. You will also get access to DISPOS, a tool to make it easier to find indexes to sources.

We already have more than 27,000 members. You are also welcome to join the DIS Society. Annual fee: USD 22 including e-zine *Rooted in Sweden*. USD 35 including the Swedish magazine *Diskologen*.

<http://adm.dis.se/english>

➔ to photograph headstones. In cold and wet weather, a visit to the cemetery to photograph tombstones is not recommended.

Old and new acquaintances

During our travels we meet many nice visitors that we get to know and keep in touch with even after our trip. It's always nice to see them again when they attend our lectures.

A memorable part of the trip was when we stopped in Ridgway, Pennsylvania on our way to Jamestown, New York. It was a Sunday and we had not planned to stay right there but we decided to take a break anyways. Anna-Lena looked up a church in the area, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church was open and there was singing and music there. The priest greeted us and when he heard that we were from Sweden we were welcomed by open arms. Erik Hart, as he was called, had finished the singing exercises in the chorus and told me that he had Swedish ancestry himself. He did not speak Swedish but some of the church members did. The whole family was gathered in the church. They had time to stay for a few hours and gave us permission to photograph the church records and confirmation cards.

Erik showed off an old Swedish bible with pages filled with names and birth dates. I photographed these pages without

knowing the family situation. Erik's mother Nancy had told me that her grandparents came from Bohuslän and Halland and curious as I am, I thought to look at those names when I came home to Sweden to see if the Bible belonged to their family.

On the side where the ceremony stated, it is handwritten Anders M Anderson from Uddevalla, Bohuslän and Britta O Carlsson from Warberg, Halland and they married in Youngstown, Ohio July 30, 1889. No indication of the age or date of birth shown. Common names and not so much to start looking at the Swedish sources, I thought. At *Ancestry.com*, I hit on a family tree and the census for 1900 in the U.S. and there appeared a birth year and month which I was then able to use in order to continue the research. I found them in birth books: Anders Magnus Andersson (Andreasson) was born in Uddevalla; Britta Olivia Carlsson was born in Träslöv, and found even when they emigrated. The Bible once belonged to Nancy's grandparents who are Anders and Britta (Betsy). I always find it funny when we can pass on information and pictures from our travels with SwedGenTour to relatives in Sweden.

Thousands of images

It is always under great improvisation, based on the opportunities we have, that we choose how to photograph which

church records. Light is essential to getting the best results and it is not always easy. We may be taking photos in anything from small archival rooms to larger rooms, libraries, or in the church hall. This year we used a tripod for most of the book photo shoots and it has made the images much sharper. The camera was connected to the computer and we used a photo software to take pictures. It is also important to try to avoid photographing our own shadows.

What do we do with the photos we have taken on the church books, tombstones, photographs, etc.? We have thousands of photos from each trip and they provide very little benefit to others if they are kept only on our personal computers. In order for others to benefit from the many images, a lot of time must be spent fixing the images. They might need to be cropped, rotated, renamed etc. We are gradually working on creating searchable indexes on the names and the information in each image on our webpage.

When the four of us were gathered in Cranston, we formed the Association SwedGen and we began the association's website where searchable indexes for each image will be found. The tombstones will also be recorded and published with the picture on the Swedish Genealogical Association website *Roots in the international part of the tombstone inventory*. 📷