

Len and Diana Nasman

Travel to Sweden



**A narrative report of the adventures of Len and Diana in Sweden
during the Summer of 1997**

Len and Diana Nasman
Travel to Sweden

Why We Went	1
Swedish History in Brief.....	2
Gust Ericksson Starts a Country.....	2
King Vasa Needs Money	3
Gustav Adolph Puts Sweden on the Map.....	3
Why We Made The Trip.....	4
Getting Serious	5
Where Would We Go?	5
Nils Holgersson's Adventures	6
How Would We Get There?	6
How Would We Get Around?	6
Making Contact.....	7
Getting There	9
Driving in Sweden	10
Time for a Nap	10
Skåne.....	11
First Overnight	11
Bleking	12
On to Kalmar	13
The Land of Emigrants.....	15
Meeting the Immigrants	17
On To Långaryd	17
Moving On Through Småland	19
EuroStop.....	20
Västerås.....	21
Sigtuna	23
Stockholm.....	23
Uppsala	25
Sundsvall.....	27
Tynderö.....	28
Cousin Annika	28
Lake Siljan	31
Värmland	32
Halland	35
Varberg.....	35
Tvååker	36
Back to Malmö	37

Chapter 1

Len and Diana Nasman Travel to Sweden



Why We Went

Up until about a year before leaving for Sweden, we didn't know much more about Sweden than that all of Len's grandparents came from there. Well, there were the Nasman family traditions, lutefisk at Christmas, the special Swedish recipes that Len's Mom was so good at (Swedish Rye Bread, Sylta, Korv) and his Dad's sill (pickled herring) and Swedish accordion music. Len's parents had a lot of Swedish American friends and had been active in the Vasa Lodge. And, whenever anyone from Sweden visited Kane, Len's parents were sure to invite them to the house for a visit. But Len left Kane right after graduating from high school and you know how much interest most high school kids have in studying their ancestors.

Len never thought much about doing any serious genealogy research because of what he thought he knew about the old Swedish customs for naming children. For example, if Sven Gabrielsson had a son named Gustav, he would be known as Gustav Svensson. A daughter might be Anna Svensdotter. If Gustav had a son named Karl, he would be Karl Gustavsson, and so on. This system was continued until the early 1900's. There were exceptions. Members of the nobility, clergy, or high ranking military officers maintained a consistent family surname. But, it appeared to Len that this system would make it impossible to trace ancestors in Sweden. This, he discovered was completely wrong. The explanation of why this was wrong requires a brief review of Swedish history.

Chapter 1

Swedish History in Brief

Gust Ericksson Starts a Country

Modern Sweden starts pretty much with Gust Ericksson who was a member of the Vasa family in the 1500's. At that time, what is now Sweden was controlled by King Christian of Denmark. He was known to the Danes as Christian the Kind and to the Swedes as Christian the Tyrant. Gust Ericksson had been taken as one of a group of hostages by Christian in an attempt to keep the members of the nobility in line, but had escaped to Germany. Gust got word that the Danes were making new trouble for the Vasa family in Stockholm, so he headed out to try to help.

In the mean time, King Christian rounded up all of the members of the Vasa family and had them killed in what is known as the "Bloodbath of Stockholm." Gust got word of this while he was on the way. He also heard that the Danish soldiers had orders to kill him on sight. There are lots of stories about young Gust hiding from the Danes; some of them might even be true, such as the story that he was disguised as a kitchen helper on an estate. When the soldiers came around looking for any Vasas that might be hiding there, the cook smacked Gust back and forth across the head and proclaimed that he was only a stupid low life helper. Once when a farmer was helping Gust travel by hiding him in a hay cart, one of the soldiers took a spear and jabbed it around in the hay piled in the cart. He stuck Gust in the leg, but didn't discover him hiding under the hay. Later, when the farmer noticed that he was leaving a trail of blood from Gust's wounded leg, he cut the horse's leg with his knife to explain the blood.

Anyway, after many adventures, Gust made it to Mora, a town on beautiful Lake Siljan, now considered the heart of the folk district of Sweden. As the people were coming out of church, Gust got up on a small hill and gave a speech, trying to convince the people that he was the last of the Vasa line, and that they should join with him to throw the evil



King Christian out of their country.

The people didn't pay too much attention to Gust, who by now was a scruffy looking dirty young man, and pretty much ignored him. Gust Ericksson strapped on his skis and headed for the hills hoping to escape to Norway. The next day some local businessmen returned from a trip and said something like "Hej, did you hear about the bloodbath in Stockholm? All of the Vasa family are dead. Now we have no one to lead us in the fight against Christian the Tyrant!"

The people looked at each other and said, "Oops!, we better find Gust Ericksson." So they sent their best young skiers to find Gust. They caught up with him at the Norwegian border. To this day, every year the great Vasalopet ski race is held to commemorate this event. As many as 12,000 compete for prizes.

Well, when Gust got back he was able to get a small group together and chase the Danes away from the famous copper mines at Falun. With word of this success, his army grew. He got some loans from his German friends who



King Gustav Vasa

were members of the Hansa (Hanseatic League), and were very interested in the copper and iron mines of Sweden. With all of this help, Gust was able to drive Christian the Tyrant back to Denmark, and became known as King Gustav Vasa.

King Vasa Needs Money

Now that King Vasa was in charge, he had to find a way to pay his bills to the Hansa, and to build cities, forts, and castles fit for a King. He checked around and discovered that the royal family controlled about five percent of the land, but that the Catholic Church controlled about 25 percent of the wealth. The King didn't much like the idea of all of

The Wonderful Adventures of Len Nasman in Sweden

that wealth going to Rome, so he decided that the Swedes would all be Lutherans, and that the Lutheran Church would be the official state church.

This seemed to work out pretty well. At least until Gustav Vasa died. Gust had a number of sons, the oldest being Eric (known to some as Eric the crazy). Eric liked excitement. One of his favorite games was the blanket toss; he would sit in the middle of a blanket and people would hold on to the edges and bounce him up in the air. One time he was bounced so high that his head took a great whack on a ceiling beam. This knocked him cold for a bit. Maybe that is how he got to be crazy, or maybe he already was. Anyway, he was no match to his Father when it came to running the country, and things started to deteriorate. He was locked in the castle tower for a time and some say he died from poison placed in his split pea soup.

Gustav Adolph Puts Sweden on the Map

The crown was worn by several of King Vasa's children, but it was his grandson Gustav II Adolf who was the



Gustav Vasa's Clan

genius of the family, and who made Sweden a major European power. Gustav Adolph was very successful waging war in Poland and Germany, saving the protestants there from the Pope and his allies. You might have read about the 30 Year's War. Gustav Adolph had some very clever advisors, the most notable probably Axel Oxenstirna. At one time Gustav Adolph's chaplain was Johannes Rudbeckius. During a military campaign in Russia, Johannes is said to have given a real hell-fire-and-damnation sermon about the duties and responsibilities of rulers, and how they should set a good example for their subjects and not fool around with women without being married. So, Gustav Adolf

settled down some, got serious about religion, and took a wife.

Johannes Rudbeckius became Bishop of the domkyrka (Cathedral) at Västerås. He established the practice of having each local church keep the official birth, marriage, and death records for the state. This is why Len was wrong about how hard it is to do genealogy research in



Johannes Rudbeckius

Sweden. These family register books, with records well back into the 1600's, have all been micro-filmed (by the Mormons) and are available for study at any Mormon Family History Center. Many of the records are now being computerized. This will make it even easier to do genealogical research in the future.

The country of Sweden is now divided into provinces for political purposes. But the old geographical organization by church districts is still very much alive and operating. Churches were built so that every person was within walking distance of a church. Each church district is divided into smaller regions. At one time each of these regions had to contribute soldiers to the King's army, or taxes to fund the country. In the rural areas, it is still possible to identify the farms associated with each region, and many churches and communities have books that trace the owners and workers on these farms back to the 1600's and sometimes earlier.



Chapter 1

Why We Went

Now that you know why Len was wrong about how hard it is to find your ancestors in Sweden, we can get back to the main story.

About a year before the trip, Len was fooling around on the computer. He was using what is called a “search engine” on the internet World Wide Web. Since the name Nasman is not too common, he decided to see what references the computer would come up with if he searched on nasman. There were about 200 references. Several were personal. For example, the course syllabus for several Engineering Graphics classes appeared because they are using books that Len has written. Someone in Sweden posted the results of a sporting event, so the fact that a Gunther Näsman took 12th place in an Orienteering competition popped up in the search.

A fellow named Mats Naslund in Sweden, who counts genealogy as one of his hobbies, had posted on his web page a listing of all of his ancestors. Buried in this list was one individ-



Mats and Len

ual named Näsman. Len sent a brief email note to Mats mentioning that all of his grandparents were from Sweden, and asking if Mats thought there might be some connection between the Näsman on his list and Len’s ancestors. Mats responded by explaining the church record keeping system in Sweden. He also offered to do a search for Len if he could supply the church and birth date of a grandparent.

Len supplied his grandfather Peter Nasman’s birth date and the fact that he was from Tynderö (near Sundsvall). Mats did a search and soon supplied Len with a large amount of information about his ancestors. Although Mats now lives in Stockholm, he is originally from Harnösand, which is only

about 40 kilometers from Sundsvall. After several rounds of email messages, and more searching by Mats, it was determined that Mats and Len are something like 12th cousins.

Also, it was discovered that Peter Nasman’s mother was descended from Johannes Rudbeckius, the very person who made genealogy study in Sweden possible. Len was hooked! If you like to play detective, and enjoy putting puzzles together, doing genealogy can become very addictive. Len continued searching the internet for more information about his ancestors. He discovered a number of distant cousins who shared his interest, both in Sweden and in the USA. He also developed a strong interest in studying Sweden, its people, and its history. All of this (combined with Diana’s long-time interest in international travel), led up to the *big trip to Sweden* in the Summer of 1997.



Chapter 2

Planning the Trip



Getting Serious

After deciding that the summer of 1997 was a good time for the trip, and that the three weeks between the end Spring Quarter at Ohio State University, and the beginning of Diana's job as Director of the Japanese English Teachers' Summer Program was the best time to go, we had to do some serious planning. The first questions were pretty fundamental. Where in Sweden did we want to go? How would we get around in Sweden? Where would we stay? And where would we eat?

So, we picked up some books about Sweden, searched the internet, and paid a visit to our Travel Agent to get some more information. The guide books indicated that hotels and restaurants in Sweden were fairly expensive. Of course this is completely dependent on the exchange rate between

Swedish kronor and US dollars. A couple of years ago it was about 6 kronors per dollar, but when we went it was 7.6 kronors per dollar, a little better than the guide books reported. One nice thing about having a computer connected to the internet is that it is easy to determine the current exchange rates.

Where Would We Go?

Sweden is a long country similar in size and shape to California. Although much farther north than California, Sweden has only a little more than eight million people. About eighty percent of the people live in the southern twenty five percent of the country. The north extends beyond the Arctic Circle, and is covered by mountains, forests, and lakes. Trying to see very much of such a large country was not going to be possible in only three weeks.

Chapter 2

Len was very interested in seeing the home turf of his many Swedish ancestors. His father's father's home was near Sundsvall which is about half way up and along the east coast of the country. Just north of Sundsvall begins the Höga Kusten (the High Coast), with lots of beautiful scenery and very few towns. Len's mother's mother's home was Tvååker, which is in southern Sweden along the west coast. Len got a map and marked the places he did not want to miss.

Nils Holgersson's Adventures

In doing research on Sweden, Len read as many books about Sweden (written English) that he could find. Then one day Diana



Nils Holgersson

came home from a garage sale with a copy of *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson* written by Selma Lagerloff, the Nobel Prize winning Swedish author. This book is about a boy who was put under a spell by an elf, and was made very small. He rode on the back of the farmyard **Goosy Gander**, who joined with **Aka**, the leader of a flock of wild geese, and traveled all over Sweden, having great adventures along the way. The book was written to teach Swedish children about Swedish geography, and Len found it just the thing to help in planning the trip. Connecting the marks Len had made on the map created a path that was surprisingly close to the path followed by Nils. Another surprising coincidence was that Selma Lagerloff was descended from Johannes Rudbeckius, making her another of Len's distant cousins.

How Would We Get There?

There are several choices for flying to Sweden. The two big Swedish airports are in Stockholm and Gothenberg (Göteborg). Other choices are Oslo, Norway, and Copenhagen Denmark. Since Copen-

hagen is an easy ferry ride to Malmö in southern Sweden, we decided to fly to and from Copenhagen.

How Would We Get Around?

The big loop on the map started in southern Sweden, went up through Stockholm to Sundsvall, over through the folk district around Lake Siljan, and back south. The question was, how would we follow this path?

Public transportation in Sweden is reported to be good with lots of choices between air, train, and bus connections. We considered a train-car rental combination pass that allows something like 9 days of train travel and 4 days of car rental in a three week period. Len had nightmares about moving suitcases and heavy bags of glassware and souvenirs on and off of trains and buses. We thought about renting a car and staying in hotels and/or bed and breakfast places, but that would require making lots of reservations and sticking to a tight schedule.

When we lived in Colorado, we owned a pickup truck with a camper for traveling around the Rocky Mountains. Len liked the idea



of the flexibility provided by traveling in such a vehicle. So, we again called on our email friend Mats for advice and information. He located a place in Malmö that rented such vehicles. After exchanging a few faxes with "Holiday Rent," a deal was made. Electronic funds exchanged through the bank provided the means for paying the deposit and rental charges for the husbil (house car). This also answered the questions of where to stay and where to eat.



The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

Making Contact

Now we were committed. The plane tickets were in hand; we had the outline of a schedule. We knew where we were going, and when we had to be in different places to complete the trip on schedule. Now came the step that made all of the difference between getting the normal nice tourist view of Sweden, and getting a real inside look at the country. Len made a copy of our rough schedule of when we would be where, and sent it by email to his internet connections. Many of the friendly Swedes responded by offering to show us around their part of the country when we were in the area, and provided phone numbers and good advice about things to see along the way.

So now we were ready to go.



Chapter 2



Chapter 3

Starting the Big Trip



Getting There

Monday, June 16, 1997 around 8AM we are off. A good friend chauffeured us to the airport in Columbus where we flew first to Cincinnati, then to JFK in New York, and from there about seven hours non-stop to Copenhagen. We arrived at about 7AM local time. (There is a 7 hour time difference between Sweden and the eastern USA.) After collecting our luggage, walking through customs (no checking of luggage at all), and exchanging a bit of money to kronor, we found the flygabus to Malmö.

A special bus travels from the Copenhagen airport directly to the docks and drives right onto a big twin hulled ferry boat. After the bus is parked on the boat, all of the passengers have to get off the bus during the boat ride.

The trip to Malmö takes a little more than a half an hour. At this time of the morning, the bus only had a half dozen passengers,

and the ferry was not at all crowded. We wandered around, spent some of our new Swedish money on a coke, found a seat, and watched the scenery as we sped over the water. The ride was quite fast and amazingly smooth.

In no time at all we were across and had to get back on the bus. After driving off the boat, the bus stopped for a customs check. A uniformed officer



Fast Ferry Boat

Chapter 3

boarded the bus, walked down the aisle and back, and got off without asking anyone to show his passports or open his luggage for inspection. I guess there is not much of a problem with people trying to smuggle stuff into Sweden. Or maybe we all looked very honest.

The bus dropped us at the Central Train Station in downtown Malmö. With a population of around 225,000 people, Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden. We took a cab to Holiday Rent, about a five minute trip. There we met our fax friend Per Rasmussen, who instructed us in the finer points of using the husbil.

So, we made it to Sweden, and were off. It took Len awhile to get used to the 5 speed column shift and small pedals of the Fiat powered camper. The roads in Sweden are very good. But if they had the system in the USA that they have on the two-lane highways in Sweden, there would probably be blood all over the place.

Driving in Sweden

The sides of the two-lane highways (the berm that we sometimes refer to as the break down lane) are marked off with dashed lines. The practice is for slow moving vehicles (like our husbil) to move over to allow others to pass. Because someone coming the other way is probably passing, most drivers (especially trucks) cruise along with two wheels over the dashed lines. It seems that it is harder to get a driving license in Sweden, and the



drivers seem much better than in the USA. For example, although we were traveling slower than most of the traffic, no one ever tailgated. They would hang way back until there was a clear opportunity to pass.

Another common highway feature is the traffic circle. There you have to pay attention to which way you want to exit the circle, and who is supposed to yield to whom at which part of the circle. This was great fun since we rarely knew exactly where we were going, and because we were trying to navigate the circle in the big slow husbil. Fortunately, there is not much of a traffic problem in most of the country.



There are a few major highways in Sweden that are four lane limited access similar to our interstate highways. Most of our travel, however, was on two lane roads. Except in some northern rural areas, the roads were in very good condition with few pot holes and few

patches.

Time for a Nap

We drove a little north and east out of Malmö, heading out across the beautiful rolling farm country of the province of Skåne. By this time we had been travelling over 30 hours straight, and Len rarely sleeps on planes, so we found a Rastplats right next to a service station, had a sandwich, and took a nap. We decided early in the trip that the husbil provided excellent flexibility in when and where we could stop for meals and a rest.

The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

Skåne

The province (or county) at the southern tip of Sweden is Skåne. (The å in this case sounds like the o in the word only.) This part of Sweden, along with its neighbors Blekinge and Halland, became a part of Sweden in the mid 1650's by agreement between the Kings of Denmark and Sweden. Of course no one bothered to ask the people who lived there whether they wanted to be Swedes, Danes, or something else. Some folks, even today, still resent the treatment of their ancestors 300 some years ago.

Skåne is sometimes called the food store of Sweden because of the large productive farms and excellent fishing areas. I talked to one farmer from the area about how the size of farms had changed, and how farming itself had changed since the time my grandparents lived there. He said that 20 years ago there were fifteen people working on his farm. Now there are only two, but they produce more.

The farms in Sweden are more diversified than in the USA. In our midwest corn and soy beans are the most common crop. There is no corn to speak of in Sweden (too far north), but they grow wheat, oats, rye, potatoes, and a plant that covers the ground with yellow flowers that look similar to wild mustard, and produce oil for both fuel and cooking.

There are a lot of large old manor houses and castles in Skåne; obviously the area has a long and rich history. As we headed east along route E22, it soon became clear that we would only be able to see a very small percentage of what we wanted like to see.



First Overnight

After driving for a while across Skåne, it was time for our first overnight camping experience in the husbil. Overnight is not a very good description since that far north in the summer it never gets really dark. As a matter of fact, we never saw any stars the whole time we were in Sweden, even though we stayed up past midnight on many occasions.

We drove that evening to the Norje Rastplats. It was on a small side road separated from the highway by a grove of trees. It had a freshly painted little house with clean rest rooms and running water. We discovered there a very typical information sign that had a detailed map and information about the attractions in the area.



There was plenty of room, and only a couple of other vehicles shared the area. Of course, this was still before the main holiday season. In Sweden, everyone gets at least four weeks of vacation (or semester, as they call it).

The information sign provided some suggestions of places to see that had not been in the guide books. It was not easy to choose, but the next morning we



Chapter 3

visited sights in the county of Bleking.

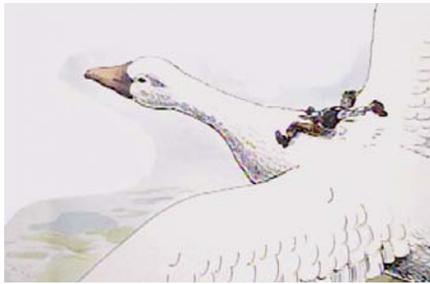
Bleking

The county of Bleking is where Nils Holgersson started his wonderful adventures. So, it was fitting that this was the place for us to start taking the business of being tourists a little more seriously. We carefully studied the map and list of attractions at the Rastplats, selected four places to visit, and only managed to get to two of them before it was time to move on.

The first stop that day was at the small town of Mörrums where we visited the Mörrums Laxenhus.

(Lax is the word for salmon.) Here there is a river splashing over a series of waterfalls before running into the Baltic Sea. There are deep pools where the salmon collect as they swim upstream to spawn. Back in the 13th century, only the King was allowed to fish here. Now, anyone can get a permit and try his luck. We met one man who came from Germany just to spend three weeks fishing here. Pools in the river are marked either for fly fishing or for spin fishing.

There is a nice museum that includes a small aquarium.



Lovely paths line the river, and there are still some old fish traps at the falls. The rhododendren along the river were in full bloom the day we visited. Because our mental clocks had not yet adjusted, we got here long before the museum opened.

After a walk along the river to observe the fishermen and some sleeping ducks, we found a Kondeteri open where they served great pastries.



Although it was cool, and we had a little light rain, it was a very pleasant place to visit. We got our first experience shopping at a local grocery store, and discovered that we could get along very easily with the Swedish selection of food.

We probably spent more time here than we should have, so we had to skip the Blomstergården and the Ronneby Brunnspark, and move on to Karlshamn.

Hamn, we soon discovered, means harbor, and Karlshamn is an old harbor town on the Baltic Sea. It was interesting to walk along ancient narrow cobblestone streets, and to observe how they have



The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

installed double doors into the sides of buildings and small courtyards to adapt the old style to modern requirements. If you peek in, you will see cars parked inside.

One of the attractions of Karlshamn is a nice waterfront park. Here is found a statue of Karl-Oscar and Kristina, the main characters of Vilhelm Moberg's series of novels about the Swedes who emigrated to America. Anyone who would like insight into what life was like for these emigrants must read the Moberg books. Many of the emigrants left for America from this very port.



There will be more to tell about Karl-Oscar and Kristina when we get to the emigrant museum in Växjö, but the sculptor has Karl-Oscar looking out over the sea to the new land and the future, while Kristina looks back over her shoulder at the land that in her mind she could never leave.



On to Kalmar

After another overnight spent beside a very peaceful lake, we traveled on to the city of Kalmar (population 30,000) located in the south eastern corner of the old province of Småland. Kalmar is noted on an old Arabic map dating back to 1154, and was settled as early as the 8th century. The Kalmar Slott (castle) is said to be one of the best preserved castles in Scandinavia. In 1397 it was the site of the signing of the agreement for the Kalmar Union. The Kalmar Union joined Denmark, Sweden and Norway together, and lasted about 100 years.

Although the lighting in this photo makes it hard to see, the tree in the foreground is covered with lilac blossoms... in the middle of

June. We were surprised to see how late the lilacs and peonies were blooming, and how long they seemed to last.



We once again arrived here before things were open, so we walked



around the cobbled streets of Gamla Stan (old town), and strolled through Stadsparken, a very large park near the castle. We then followed a group of people who seemed to be entering the castle, but when we crossed the draw bridge, walked through the narrow winding passage way (to make it easier to defend from attacking intruders) and entered the courtyard, no one was around.

So we walked through an open door and found our way into a chapel where some kind of service was being conducted in Swedish. Everyone except the speakers and the organist looked more Arabic than Swedish, however. Later we determined that it was a kind of religious class for some of the new immigrants to Sweden. The large number of people from third world countries in eastern Europe, the mid-east, and Africa, are starting to become a drain on the Swedish social welfare state, and are causing some controversy.



Chapter 3

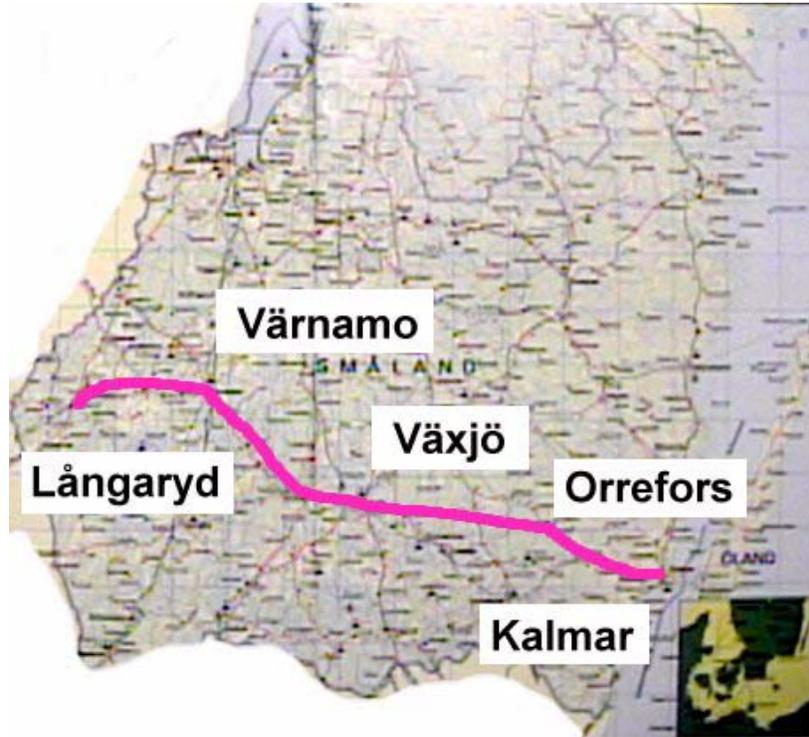
We finally discovered where we had to pay for a tour of the castle museum, and roamed around the interior of the castle looking at the interesting exhibits. It would have been possible to spend more than a week just exploring the area around Kalmar. And, just across a big bridge, is the long narrow island of Öland where many Swedes spend an entire vacation. And about 90 kilometers off of the coast is the big island of Gotland, another place that we had to miss.

But for this trip, it's back to the husbil for a drive into the heart of Småland.



Chapter 4

Småland



Småland

In addition to thousands of lakes, expanses of well kept forest land, and beautiful scenery, Småland is the center of glass making in Sweden. It is known as the Kingdom of Crystal. There are fifteen different glasbruk (glass factories) in the Växjö region. We had to visit at least one, and we selected the Orrefors factory.

We watched as experienced crafts people poked into furnaces, drew out red hot globs of glass, and then blew, rolled, twirled,



and pushed it into graceful shapes. Several different artists are associated with each factory, and each produces a distinctive style. Of course they have a factory store and we, like a lot of tourists on a travel budget, crowded around the seconds tables. To our untrained eyes, it was impossible to see the difference between seconds and firsts. There were many beautiful pieces, and it was hard to limit ourselves to what we could carry home easily.

The Land of Emigrants

Between the mid 1800's to the early 1900's over one million Swedes emigrated to America. This amounted to 20 to 25 percent of the population of the country at the time. The province of Småland contributed the largest number of these migrating people. Why did they leave? There were many different reasons.

Chapter 4

The old practice of dividing the family farm between the sons when the farmer died or got too old to farm had created many farms that were too small to feed a family. Years of bad weather had caused repeated famines. Some people (like those who established the colony at Bishop Hill, Illinois) left for religious reasons. The Homestead Act, signed by President Lincoln, offered fertile farmland to any who would spend a few years improving it and attracted farmers. Letters from early emigrants telling wonderful stories of opportunities in America, together with people who made a business out of selling ship tickets and making big promises attracted many. The migration from Sweden to America during this period was unprecedented. At one time Chicago had enough Swedes to make it the second largest Swedish city.

The story of this mass movement of Swedes is told in the Emigrants Museum in Växjö. Housed in the same building is a research center that contains countless records of the Swedish people, it was a place Len had to visit.

We got there late in the afternoon. The museum would be open for three more hours, but the research center would be open for only an hour. Again time was too short.

Len remembered that there was once a Swede living in Kane who was traveling around microfilming old church records and Vasa Lodge books, and interviewing Swedish Americans. Len's parents became friends with the man and Len could remember meeting him when he was back in Kane

for visits. It seemed reasonable that the man had been connected with the Emigrant Museum organization, so Len asked a research assistant if he knew of a Lennert Sutterdahl. Not only had he heard of him, he pointed out an oil portrait of him on the board room wall. Sutterdahl spent ten years in the USA gathering information about what happened to the Swedes who went to America. Unfortunately, he died a few years ago.



With only a short time available in the research center, there wasn't much of a chance to do much searching for more ancestors. One ancestor that Len did not have much information about was Annie Severina Karlsdotter, his father's mother.

The research assistant found a microfilm of the family register book from the church she came from, and after a little looking, he found the names of her father, mother, brothers and sisters. The church where she was from, Långaryd, was not far off the planned route, so, a side trip was added to the agenda.

But first, a little more about the displays in the Museum.

There is quite a collection here, and it is impossible to describe it all. One case is full of Swedish American club memorabilia, and there are several medals and ribbons from Jamestown, NY included in the display. There is an exhibit showing Swede Street in Chicago. A full scale model of the berths on board the ships that carried many Swedes to America shows that each steerage passenger had a very narrow bunk bed with only a foot or so of head space. Len's grandmother Swanson traveled



The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

from Göteborg to Ludlow, PA for a total cost of \$46 and must have had such a bunk. Since Len's ancestors took several weeks in such conditions to make the trip, he felt much better about the relatively minor inconvenience of being cramped in an airplane for seven hours to cover the same distance.

A large space is devoted to Vilhelm Moberg who wrote the stirring series of books about the emigrants. The books are highly recommended for anyone who is interested in the lives of these hardy people. Here stands the original plaster cast of the statue of Karl-Oscar and Kristina seen in the Karlshamn harbor park, and who are typical of more than a million travelers.



compete with the new MacDonalds... “and why didn't the government do something about it?” (Sounds a lot like in the US.) His biggest complaint about the Swedes was that they didn't complain enough. We found out later that the Swedes biggest complaint about the immigrants is that they complain too much.

The House of Emigrants is a must for any Swedish American who visits Sweden.

Meeting the Immigrants

After visiting the Museum, we walked around the downtown Växjö pedestrian mall. It seems that there is such a place free of cars and full of people in every city in Sweden. We ordered sandwiches and a baked potato from a small shop and Len got a chance to try his “Jag kan inte tala Svenska” phrase. The shopkeepers could speak passable English, so ordering was really not a problem.

Later, while sitting at the outdoor cafe, we had a nice discussion with the husband of the woman who owned the shop. They were from Romania, and had lived in Sweden for about twelve years. It was very interesting to get a Swedish *immigrants* view of Sweden after just seeing the House of Emigrants Museum. He talked about the problem of the small restaurant owners' trouble with trying to



Chapter 4

On To Långaryd

After spending the night in a parking lot behind a department store in Värnamo, we drove to Långaryd where Len's father's mother was from. This was our first visit to a rural Swedish kyrka (church).



The church districts are organized so that everyone was within walking distance of the



church. As we found out, what was considered walking distance one hundred years ago was a full day for some people. At Långaryd, some had to walk 15 kilometers to get to church. This could take all day Sunday, especially in winter. The preacher there complained that 100 years ago, more people attended church when they had to walk 15 kilometers, then now when they have less than 15 minutes to drive. People seem to have a lot more to talk to God about when times are tough than when times are easy.

Each of the smaller regions of the church district had to appoint a soldier to serve locally, or to heed the call of the King when required. One of the jobs these soldiers had was when someone died. They had to carry the body to the kyrkagård (church garden, or cemetery). For some reason no wagon was allowed for this.



We soon discovered that the kyrkagårds are very well taken care of. In the case of this church, there was one full time and one half time caretaker. In addition to that, many people were to be seen tending the flowers at the family graves. The day we were here was the morning of midsummer day, a big Swedish holiday.

Len got out his family history book, and approached an elderly couple to see if he could learn anything about his ancestors family or where their grave might be. His few words of Swedish were Greek to the couple, but they did recognize some of the names in his book.

They pulled us by the sleeves, and dragged us to the preachers' house near the church. Kontraktspastor Björn Berggren was home, and could speak English extremely well in spite of never having been out of Sweden. After taking a look at Len's book, he invited us into his house where he started digging out old church books to see if he could find any record of Len's grandmother.



Before long, he found records of the Karl Johan Arvidson family. He discovered that they were from the Bälshult



The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

region of the church district.

He then made a call to a Helge Olsson, an 86 year old man who made it his business to know where everything and everyone in the district was.



Pastor Björn invited us to go with him in his car and visit the site where Grandma Nasman's home had been when she was a girl. We picked up Helge Olsson and headed down a narrow paved road that turned into a narrower dirt track, from which we turned off onto a nearly invisible lane in the woods.



Here Helge showed us a hole in the rocks that had been the family root cellar.



And there was a pile of stones that had been the chimney of their house.



Of course one hundred years ago, there would have been a clearing here instead of the present thick forest of fir trees. It was a



very beautiful site right on a very large unspoiled lake. But here the stories of Swedes leaving because of poverty came close to home. Helge Olson told of a neighbor lady who gave the Arvidson family food one day after she saw that the children were so hungry they were eating grass.

Anni Severina was the youngest of eight children. She went to Brooklyn, NY and worked as a housemaid until she married Len's grandfather and later moved to a farm in Scandia, PA. In her family were twin brothers who moved out of the district. Later one of them, Amandus, moved back here and built a new house nearby that still stands. Amandus died in 1913.



Back at the cemetery, Pastor Björn made it a project to find the grave site of Annie Severina's mother. In



those days, people were buried in the order in which they died. The second person to die in a particular year was placed next to the first person to die that year. Since many families had little or no money, many graves are unmarked. The procedure for finding a grave, is to have a copy of the list of people who died that year, find a marker for one of the people on the list, and then count graves from there. Pastor Björn believes that the spot shown in this photo is the place where Len's great grandmother is buried.

Our experience with Pastor Björn and Helge Olson was the first of many experiences where the friendly Swedes not only made us feel welcome,



Chapter 4

but went far out of their way to help make our trip delightful.

Moving On Through Småland

Our side trip to Långaryd had turned into a major adventure, and had put us a little behind schedule. Although we saw a lot of nicely decorated maypoles, we had missed the costumed dancers celebrating the midsummer festival. Actually, the word maypole is an English corruption of the Swedish word for the pole that is decorated with flowers and has nothing to do with our month of May.

Anyway, we had to resist the temptation to see more of the interesting sites of Småland. We could easily have spent the whole three weeks there and not see it all. We passed close to, but missed seeing, the Smålandsstener, a pre-viking era circle of stones similar to Stonehenge. We had to skip the Match Museum in Jönköping, the birthplace of the wooden safety match. The thousands of pristine lakes in the area promised lots of good fishing for trout, pike, and perch that were quite safe from Len's fishing skills.

Småland is also the home of Astrid Lindgrens Värld, the headquarters for everything related to the famous Pippi Longstocking and Emil who seem to be featured on every child's backpack and lunch box in Sweden.

Jönköping is a city of about 80,000 located on the southern end of lake Vättern, the second largest lake in Sweden. At one hundred kilometers long and thirty kilometers wide, it is the size of some of the American Great Lakes. The difference is that you can drink the water, and the lake shore (like all Swedish lakes) is pretty much unspoiled. The view of the lake from highway E4 between Jönköping and Gränna is quite spectacular.



Two thirds of the way up Vättern, on the east shore, is the old town of Vadstena. We stopped briefly there late in the evening, and took a quick look at the castle that is currently being restored. We moved on and spent the night at the Örebro EuroStop.



EuroStop

Imagine a high class gas station, hotel complex, indoor mall, grocery store, truck stop, and 24 hour convenience store with excellent rest rooms and free showers (ask the attendant for the nyckel [key]), and you are imagining a EuroStop.



We discovered the EuroStop in Örebro, and found that there were several of these in Sweden. It was a great place to rest and get cleaned up before traveling the next day to Västerås.

Chapter 5

Västerås, Stockholm, and Uppsala



Västerås

Västerås is an historically important city of about 100,000 people situated on a finger of Lake Mälaren. The word västerås can be roughly translated as western ridge. The town is first noted in 1120 and became an early religious center. Although Stockholm is about 100 kilometers away, Lake Mälaren provides water transportation between Stockholm, Uppsala, Västerås, Vadstena, and other important Swedish historical sites.

In the middle 1500's it was at the Västerås castle that King Vasca assumed the throne, and decided to make Lutheran the official religion of Sweden. The Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) was held here on a number of occasions in the 1500's. Västerås has its Gamla Stan with narrow steep cobbled lanes that we navigated the husbil through while trying to

find a parking lot. Battles were fought here when King Vasca was trying to drive the Danes from Sweden, and recent construction has uncovered piles of bones from the soldiers who died in those bloody fights.

Domkyrka

In Västerås is the famous Domkyrka (Cathedral) where many important events took place. This is where Len's ninth great grandfather, Johannes Rudbeckius, was Bishop in the 1600's.



Chapter 5

A statue of Johannes by Carl Mills (the most famous Swedish sculptor) stands in front of the Domkyrka.

The Mills statue has an angel whispering in Johannes ear Or, maybe Johannes is giving advice to the angel?



Underneath a memorial stained glass window in an otherwise dark section of the Domkyrka are the tombs of Johannes Rudbeckius and his son Nikolas Rudbeckius. Nikolas followed Johannes as Bishop, and was Len's eighth great grandfather.



The interior of the Domkyrka is in the traditional gothic style. It contains the tombs of many important Swedes including Erik XIV (the crazy king).



Many of the tombs and memorials are decorated with elaborate sculptures, plaques, and epitaphs. Although the Domkyrka has been added to and remodeled many times, parts of it date back to the 13th century.

Just down the street from the Domkyrka is a town square that has a delightful sculpture depicting a group of elderly bicycle riders.



The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

Sigtuna

On an arm of the very complicated shoreline of Lake Mälaren is Sigtuna, one of Sweden's oldest towns. We had been traveling around Sweden for about five days at this point, and never saw any crowds of people, anywhere. We chalked it up to the midsummer holiday, and decided everyone must be at home celebrating. But, the tiny village of Sigtuna was crowded!

Sigtuna is a small town (population 5,000) on one of the many arms of Lake Mälaren, and boasts the oldest street in Sweden. The town has been around since before the year 1000 BC. On the day we were there it was hard to find a place to park, and hard to navigate the streets because of all of the people strolling around. We finally parked near the ruins of an ancient church, and walked around the narrow town streets. Because this is a popular tourist attraction, there are many shops in the old part of town. There is a nice park along the shore, and many folks were to be seen launching or removing their boats for trips around the lake.

While walking around town we discovered a small cabin that was built in the old style, including a sod roof. We were too late in the day to see them, but apparently demonstrations were put on here showing some of the traditional crafts and iron making that took place in this area a thousand or so years ago.



From Sigtuna, we drove to the Euro Stop near Arlanda airport north of Stockholm. We made this our headquarters for visits to Stockholm.

Stockholm

We had three days to see Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, with a population of around one million. Once again we were frustrated by our limited time. It would be easy to spend three weeks in Stock-

holm and not see everything. Our Stockholm visit however, was special because here we met the first of Len's distant email contact cousins.

We made phone contact with Christer Lindgren (another descendent of Johannes Rudbeckius) and agreed to meet him at a hotel where there



would be room to park the husbil. Chris is a native of Stockholm, and even though it was a rainy Sunday morning, he was able to show us some of the highlights of the city. We did a quick driving tour of Gamla Stan, visited the Galleria mall, and had a wonderful lunch at the Operakällaren's Restaurant. Chris is the kind of person that makes you feel like you are old friends.

The next day we drove about 3 kilometers from the Euro Stop to the Märsta train station, and rode with the commuters to the Stockholm Central Station. We met with Mats Naslund, who is the one who got Len hooked on genealogy in the first place, and who was indirectly responsible for our taking the trip. He was always helpful in providing information on renting the husbil, and traveling in Sweden.



Mats is working on a Ph.D. in Cryptography at the National Technological Institute in Stockholm, and is another of Len's distant cousins. He led us on a nice excursion through Gamla Stan. Here you see Len and Mats on the narrowest street in town. You can reach out and touch the walls on both sides of the street at the same time. Then we went over to the Djurgården island where the Wasa Museum is located.



Chapter 5

The Wasa is a warship built in the 1600's; it sailed for about a half an hour before sinking. Was it top heavy?



Did someone forget to close the gun ports? Or was the original design changed after the designer died? The blame was never established. It rested below the cold water until the 1960's when it was raised. The Swedes have been working on preserving and restoring it ever since. It now rests inside a museum built especially for preserving this unique ship. It is amazing beyond description. The number and quality of wood carvings that decorate the ship, along with the degree of preservation, make it a must see for any Stockholm visit.

The Wasa is on the same island as Skansen. This is an open air museum where buildings from all parts of Sweden, and representing many historical eras, are located. People dress in appropriate costumes and help interpret the early life and times of Sweden. Diana caught these young dancers posing for pictures. The island is also the location of a Nordic museum and amusement park that we did not have time to visit.



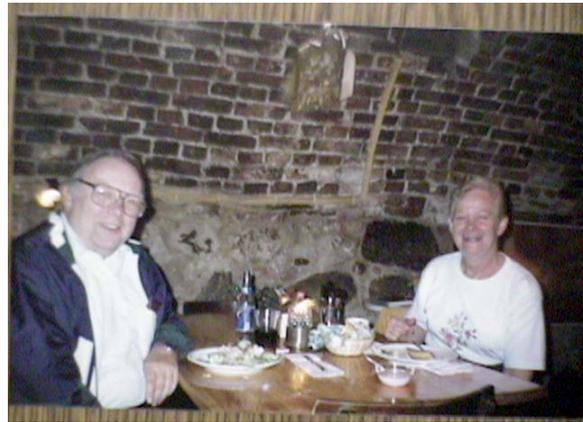
On our third day in Stockholm we saw the changing of the guard at the palace,



toured the Swedish Parliament,



had a nice lunch in a cafe located in an underground grotto,



and took the *All Around Stockholm* boat ride. And



took in many other sights. There are many that we did not have time for.

Stockholm is built on 24 islands, and is located where Lake Malaren enters the Baltic Sea. The

The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

boat trip traveled through two locks and under 15 bridges, and provided a good perspective from which to view the city. The Swedes are very protective of their environment and it is possible to fish for salmon in downtown Stockholm.

On the train ride to and from Märsta, we noticed that almost every flat surface (signs, small buildings, electrical boxes, etc.) were covered with graffiti. This was the only thing in Sweden that was other than well kept and clean. On one train ride we sat next to a fellow from Nigeria who was talking to some girls from Turkey, and another African who had lived for a time in Chicago. In the next row of seats a conversation in Spanish was taking place. These people were not tourists but were recent immigrants.

Uppsala

The Euro Stop where we were staying was between Stockholm and Uppsala, so it was an easy trip to our next major stop. The original settlement in the Uppsala area (around 500BC) was built by the Svea tribe from which Sweden takes its name. Christians built churches here in the 1100's and the first Swedish university was started here in 1477. The great cathedral (domkyrka) here contains the tomb of King Gustav Vasa (the same Gust Erickson who drove out the Danish King Christian and started modern Sweden).



We had an excellent personal guided tour of Uppsala by Marta Ronne, a Ph.D. student majoring in literature. Len had made email contact with Marta as a result of discovering articles she had written that mentioned Johannes Rudbeckius.



Her office is in the Castle that was started by Gustav Vasa, completed by his children, and is the very same place from which Queen Christina (daughter of Gustavus Adolphus) abdicated. Imagine studying the history of women's literature and having your office in such a place.

Marta was born and raised in Uppsala and provided us with many stories of events that took place in the area.



A major figure in the history of Uppsala was Olof Rudbeck, a son of Johannes Rudbeckius. Olof was a professor of medicine, botanist, engineer, scientist, and at one time chancellor of the University.



Chapter 5

Right across the street from the domkyrka is this building with an unusual dome. The dome contains the first operating theater in Sweden and was designed and built by Len's Uncle Olof. The building now houses a very interesting museum.



The Castle was built on a hill so that it would be higher than the church (the King believed that he was more important) and below the Castle is a large botanical garden originally designed by Uncle Olof.

One of Olofs students was Carl Linne, the father of



modern botany, who later added to the extensive collection. Olof attempted to create a book that would contain all known plants and flowers. He had a collection of 16,000 woodcuts to be used in the production of the book, but most of them were lost in a great fire that destroyed much of the city in 1702.

If you know the Black Eyed Susan, you may know that the scientific name is Rudbeckia. The name was given to the flower by Carl Linne in memory of Olof Rudbeck. So, Len has decided that Rudbeckia is the official Nasman family flower.



There is a smaller botanical garden near downtown Uppsala with a museum dedicated to Carl Linne that contains this bronze statue.

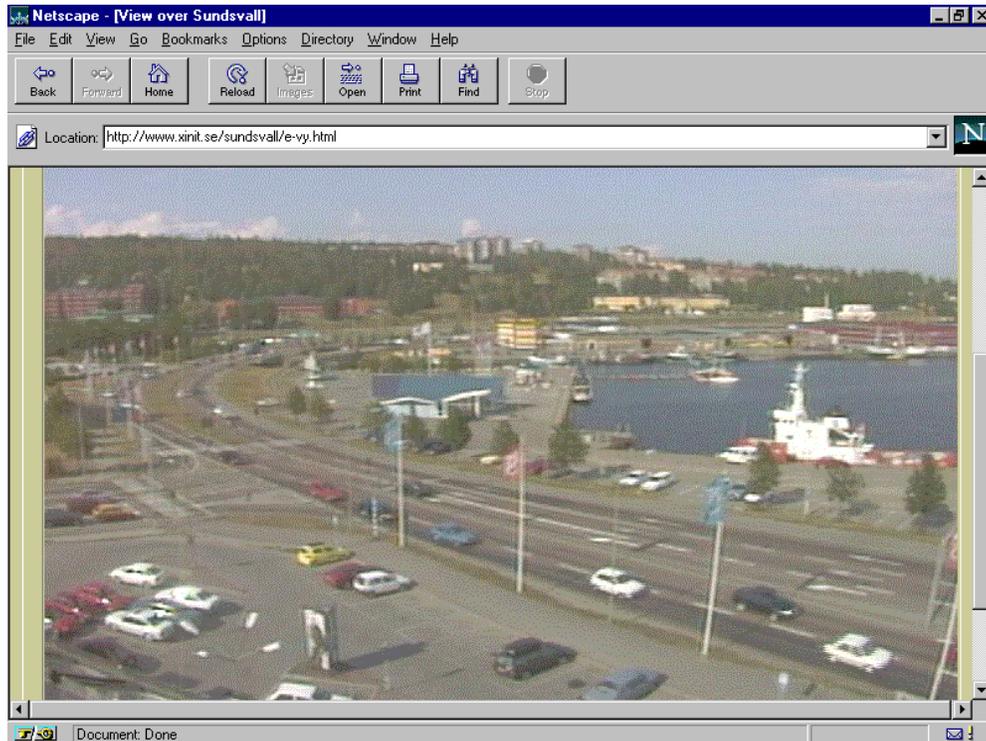


Although again there was more to see, it was time to move north toward Sundsvall, about 200 kilometers away. We headed up highway E4 and came on a nice Rastplats beside a lake north of Gävle where we spent the night.



Chapter 6

Sundsvall



Sundsvall

Sundsvall is a city of about 60,000 and lies halfway up the east coast of Sweden. Len's grandfather Petrus Näsman came from near here. It was the farthest north we would get on this trip.

The picture above was captured from the computer in Len's office in Dublin, Ohio. There is a company in Sundsvall that has a video camera pointed out of their third story window overlooking the Sundsvall harbor. Using the internet, you can see what it looks like through that camera at any time. Len had been monitoring the view for about a year prior to our trip, and had watched the weather and seasons change.

Now we were at this exact spot.

As a matter of fact, if you turn to the right and walk a block you will come to the Rästplats where we spent several

nights. The city provides 24 hour free parking to visitors, and has a nice information center, all within a few blocks of downtown and the harbor.



The guide books list Sundsvall as an industrial city with major sawmills, lumber factories, and the largest aluminum factory in Europe. This information misled us into thinking that it would be similar to an American industrial city. Not so. It turns out that Sundsvall is one of the cleanest and most charming cities we visited.

Chapter 6

Len had made email contact with a cousin, Annika Lindquist, who works in Sundsvall



and lives just across a bridge on the island of Alnö. Annika is descended from Johannes Rudbeckius, and has made it her hobby to collect names of his descendents. She now has over 28,000 names in her computer database. After calling her, and making an appointment to visit her and her family later, we set off to explore the home of Len's grandfather Nasman.

Tynderö

Tynderö is a small village or church district on a peninsula a few miles north east of Sundsvall. The church here is typical of many northern Swedish churches in that the bell tower is a separate structure (across the street) from the main church. Like all of the churches we visited, it has been beautifully restored, and the kyrkagård (cemetery) very well kept. Len was able to find the graves of a few relatives here.



The Tynderö area was a fishing center and is still known for its production of sturströmming (fermented herring, an acquired taste they say). We drove out to the end of the peninsula to a place called Skeppshamn. This required navigating the husbil over narrow blacktop and, finally, dirt roads. The amazing thing is that even here there is bus service (you have to find a wide area in the road, and hold your breath, when a bus comes by). Skeppshamn has a very small museum and chapel overlooking the tiny harbor that opens into the Gulf



of Bothnia. It is said that in the olden colder days, people traveled over the ice from here to Finland.

We then traveled to Indal, a small town in the beautiful Indalsleden valley. The church at Indal has posted on the wall a list of the preachers who served the church. The list contains two of Len's ancestors who date back to the 1600's. We met the current pastor and his wife who were having coffee in the back yard of their house next to the church. In spite of some language difficulties, we had a pleasant visit. Then, it was back to Sundsvall to meet Annika and her family.



Cousin Annika

Annika and her husband live on the island of Alnö overlooking the Sundsvall harbor. They have four delightful children, two pre-schoolers and two teenagers.



The family provided us with an excellent barbecue dinner, and we visited late into the evening. The next day we went with them



on a family outing. First we visited the Selångers church on the outskirts of Sundsvall. This was Annikas home church and there is a family crest/epitaph on the wall for Erik Teet who Len and Annika share as a common ancestor.

The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

From there we went back to the Indalsleden valley and on to Gudmandstjärn, a family farm from the 1800's that is maintained as a park. There we had a picnic while listening to some local folk musicians, watched a lady demonstrate spinning yarn, and saw a water wheel powered sawmill and shingle making machine in operation.



We stayed one more night at the Sundsvall Rästplats before heading back south. We awoke the next morning to find a light rain and a husbil with a dead battery. Fortunately Len was able to borrow a battery and jumper cables from a nearby Statol station to get us on the road again.

Annikas' father lives not far from Gudmandstjärn, so we stopped there for a brief visit. Len was especially impressed with the wildflowers blooming near their house on a hill overlooking the Indalsleden valley. We were treated like close relatives, and had quite a wonderful day.



Back in Sundsvall, we stumbled on an unusual event. They were trying to set a new *Gunnies World Record* for the **World's Longest Reindeer Meat Sandwich**. Streets were blocked off and volunteers set up saw horses and boards to form a long table.



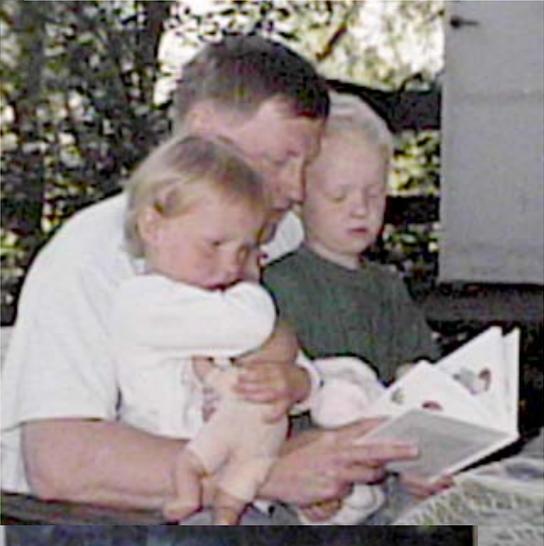
Bread was laid out, and butter was spread. A slab of reindeer meat and a dollop of potato salad were then rolled up to form a long sandwich that went up the street, curved around in a U shape, and back again. It ended up being 1,400 meters (about seven eighths of a mile) long. We heard later that the whole thing was gone in 48 seconds.



Chapter 6



Annika and family



Chapter 7

The Folk District



Lake Siljan

We drove south and then west from Sundsvall to the county of Dalarna, known as the “folk district” of Sweden because in this area they are known for preserving the traditional music, crafts, and culture of the country. In the center of Dalarna is beautiful Lake Siljan. We stopped here at a very well situated and equipped campground. They had everything you could wish for an extended stay.



There was a nice beach, playground equipment for the kids, facilities for laundry, showers, a small cafe, a kitchen, and a nice bar where you can relax and enjoy the view. We took advantage of our stay here to do some laundry and some serious cleaning.



Here is where Len discovered that he was getting too good at saying his one Swedish phrase, and that it was probably not the best phrase to learn and use. He was in the WC, where a man (who turned out to be the husband of the owner) was putting up some new shelves.

Chapter 7

The man greeted Len and proceeded to converse in Swedish, so Len said “Jag kan inte tala Svenska” (I can not speak Swedish). The man laughed and continued speaking rapidly in Swedish, so Len tried “Jag förstå inte Svensk” (I understand no Swedish). The man laughed, and continued again in Swedish. Eventually, Len convinced the man that he really did not understand or speak Swedish, and the man switched to English. He told Len that his Swedish phrase and dialect was so good that he did not believe him at first. Diana later reminded Len that he would probably have a similar reaction if someone came up to him and said in perfect English “I cannot speak English”.

We found that our husbil was not as common as husvagens (house trailers). Our neighbors at this camp site had a husvagen that popped out a tent complete with picture windows and curtains.



The campground was just across the lake from the town of Leksand. The Leksand church was visible from where we camped as a



white dot hidden in the trees. Len found it interesting to sit and contemplate a scene that must have been viewed by his ancestors nearly 400 years ago.



In the Leksand church there is a memorial marker on the front of the ornate organ that names Uno Trolius who was a preacher here in the 1600's, another of Len's ancestors.



In the olden days, people traveled to church in long oar powered boats. This tradition is preserved today, and we could see people practicing with the church boats from our camp site.

Siljan is a large lake extending from Leksand on the south to Mora on the north. You may remember Mora as the place where Gust Ericksson started out on skis for Norway. One of the traditional crafts that is practiced here is carving and decorating the (usually bright red) Dalarna horses. This part of Sweden is forested and mountainous. Quite different from the rolling farmland of the southern counties of Skåne and Halland. Not far from here is the mining district of Falun, an area that has been a center of industry for a thousand years or so.

To the north of Darlana, along the border of Norway, is the mountainous central region of Sweden. This is an area where the true nature lovers can hike up and away from the population centers. Unfortunately, we did not have time to explore this part of Sweden. Instead, we continued south.

Värmland

The county of Värmland is considered by many to be the heart of Sweden. Rivers and lakes, forest and farms, mountains and meadows, all provide candy for the eye. Nels Holgersson and Goosy Gander visited Värmland during their wonderful adventures. Here, the reader is provided with a touching story of a lady who leaves home in her youth, and after many years returns to find that her people have passed on.

The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

This is the story of the author herself, Selma Lagerlöf, who died in 1940 after becoming the first woman to win the Nobel prize for literature. (She is also descended from Johannes Rudbeckius, and is therefore another of Len's distant cousins.) She is regarded as one of the major literary figures in Sweden and is honored by having her picture on the Swedish 20 kronor bill.



The southern edge of Värmland is bounded by the shore of Lake Vänern. Covering 5,550 square kilometers (3,449 square miles), it is the largest lake in Sweden. We spent some time at Trollhätten near the south west end of Lake Vänern. We watched as ships moved through some of the highest locks on the Göta Canal.

The Göta Canal crosses Sweden from Göteborg (Gothenberg) on the west to Stockholm on the east. If you have an extra week and some extra money, you can take a boat from Göteborg to Stockholm. Maybe on some other trip we can do the canal boat ride.

Her home, Mörbaka, is in the Värmland countryside, includes beautifully landscaped gardens, and is maintained as a park and museum. We arrived there too late to take the normal tour, but we had a nice visit with a young lady who serves as the landscape gardener.



If we would have had more time, we also could have visited the home of cousin Alfred Nobel, a park with sculptors by Carl Mills, and the home of John Erickson. Erickson gained fame in America during the Civil War by designing the ironclad warship the Monitor that some credit with helping the Union win. But, if we didn't push on we would never make it back to Malmö in time.

A popular vacation excursion for some Swedes is to build a log raft, pitch a small tent on it, and float down the Klarälven river that flows through the center of Värmland.





Chapter 8

Halland and Home



Halland

We traveled southwest from Lake Vättern bypassing Göteborg, the second largest city in Sweden. Among other claims to fame, Göteborg is the home of Volvo, and is a major seaport and industrial center. Since we were running low on time, we decided to pass up another city visit in favor of the country.

The county of Halland is considered Sweden's answer to the Riviera. It lies along the west coast of Sweden south of Göteborg and just across the Kattegat (sea) from Denmark. As a matter of fact, Halland (and its neighbor Skåne) were switched from Denmark to Sweden by a treaty between kings back in the 1600's without bothering to ask the local folks if they preferred to be Swedes or Danes.

Miles of sandy beaches and a sunny climate attract many European and Swedish tourists.

Varberg

Our first stop in Halland was the town of Varberg (population 25,000). We were there on market day when vendors fill the town square with everything from fresh jordgubbe (strawberries) and other in-season produce to arts and crafts. The town was also filled with tourists. We found a parking place and started exploring.

On the shore near the center of town is a large fortress built in the 13th century.



Chapter 8

The massive walls hide museums, gardens, and a few cottages still used as residences.



There are people dressed in medieval costumes performing, demonstrating, and generally creating the atmosphere of the “good old days” of the castle.



We took in the museum, and explored what amounts to a small village inside of the massive earth filled stone walls. From the top of the walls you get a good view of the town and harbor.



Since this is a big tourist area, you can find many things designed to separate the tourist and his kronor. For example, just outside the fort you can play Vatten Golf (water golf). The object seems to be to try to hit a golf ball into one of the targets floating in the harbor.



Bicycles are very popular all over Sweden, as seen outside of this ICA grocery store in Varberg. A big difference between here and in the USA



is that very few of these bikes had locks on them.

We explored the market day stalls set up in the town square for a while, and then took a walk along the beach on a nicely paved path enjoyed by pedestrians as well as families of roller bladers. An unusual thing (to us anyway) is that within an easy stroll of downtown Varberg are two female and one male nude beaches (discreetly fenced off from the strolling public). There are a variety of public beaches in the area, and a locally famous “cold bath house” spa.



Tvååker

Len’s mother’s parents came from the village of Tvååker, about 10 kilometers from Varberg. Gust Swanson died when Len’s mother was 7 years old, and Annie Karlsdotter was an orphan who emigrated to the US when she was 20, so we had very little information about that side of the family. Len had made contact with Henrick Larsson, a college student from Tvååker, and Len had a brief snail mail correspondence with Inge Svensson, a friend of Henrick’s family.

We stopped at the ICA grocery store in Tvååker and tried to call Henrick, but the phone number we had was wrong. Again we discovered how friendly and helpful the Swedes are. A clerk in the store closed her cash register and studied the local phone book only to discover that there was no listing for Henrick. She did, however, find a number for Inge.

The Wonderful Adventures of Len and Diana Nasman in Sweden

We called him and he said that he would meet us in the parking lot in 5 minutes.

Inge arrived and in spite of our almost zero Swedish speaking abilities, and Inge's limited English we got along very well. After jump starting the husbil (which again had a dead battery) Inge led us to Henrick's house just outside of Tvååker. There we had a nice visit with Inge, Henrick, and his family.



Inge and Henrick provided Len with some new and interesting information about Len's mother's ancestors.



After the brief visit and a discussion of genealogy, we were taken on a guided tour of the Tvååker area. We saw a number of places where Len's ancestors had lived. By now it was getting late, so Inge invited us to park the husbil in his yard.

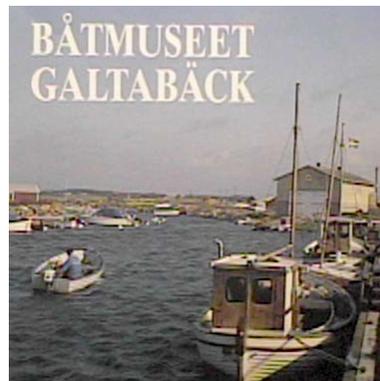
Inge also lives just outside of Tvååker. The countryside here is rolling farmland with small forested hills poking up here and there. Inge's house is on a small tree covered hill with a beautiful view of the surrounding farm-



land. Here we parked the husbil for the next two nights.

The next day Henrick rode his bicycle over and joined us as Inge gave us a wonderful guided tour of the Tvååker area. Among other sights, we saw the Monkagård estate where Len's great grandfather had once worked as a groom for the horses and cows. The stone buildings here date back to the 12th century when they had been part of a cloister.

We went to Galtabäck harbor (once an important fishing harbor) where one of Len's ancestors had been a boatsman. Here we saw the small but very interesting Galtabäck Båtmuseet (boat museum)



We also visited several churches in the area. In the evening, Inge invited his son and daughter in law, and Anders Andersson and his wife over. Anders is also involved in genealogy, and had papers showing some of Len's ancestors. As a matter of fact, we discovered that some of this branch of the family tree have been having family reunions. The most recent had been in Jamestown, NY. Next summer the Swedish members of the family will be hosting the Americans for a reunion in the Varberg area.

Our visit to Tvååker was another excellent adventure on our trip. Len had such a good time during our visit with Inge that he said "I liked him so



Chapter 8

well that I wished that I would have known him all of my life”.

Back to Malmö

Time was running out. We had to head back to Malmö to return the husbil on schedule. So, after doing a few touristy things along the way, we made it back to Malmö on schedule. We returned the husbil to Holiday Rent, and then had a day to spend before riding the flygabus back to the Copenhagen airport. We found a hotel a few minutes walk from the Central Station, and then spent some time exploring Malmö.

Malmö (population 225,000) is the third largest city in Sweden. Our hotel was a few blocks from an old castle there that has a very good museum and is adjacent to a large city park. Because of its history and proximity to Europe, Malmö has a slightly different personality than the other large Swedish cities. Again, there is so much to see in the area, that you could spend much more than a day exploring. But, time was up, and we had to head for home.

Just like Nils Holgersson, we had many wonderful adventures. We learned a great deal about the geography and history of Sweden, and were very impressed with the culture and the way the Swedes protect the beauty of their country. We learned why so many Swedes emigrated to America, and we learned why Sweden never left the hearts and minds of the emigrants.

Most of all, we met many wonderful Swedish people, and hope that when we have visitors we will be able to treat them as well as we were treated in Sweden.

Len and Diana Nasman

Summer, 1997



Computer Links

Much of the research that led to our adventure was done using the computer internet. Here are a few of the world wide web addresses that were used. (These were active at the time of this writing, but web pages come and go.)

View Over Sundsvall

<http://www.xinit.se/sundsvall/e-vy.html>

Jonny Blästa's genealogy home page

http://www.nts.mh.se/~blajo/gen_inde.htm

Mats Naslund

http://www.nada.kth.se/~matsn/matsn_homepage/antavla.html

Peter Sjölund, links to Swedish genealogy

<http://www.ts.umu.se/~petersj/swegen.html>

High Coast Bridge

<http://www.connection.se/hoga-kusten/uk/livedok/>

Swedish Genealogy Group of Minnesota

<http://www.mtn.org/mgs/branches/swedish.html>

The House of Emmigrants

<http://www.hv.se/forskkn/migr/sei/eng.html>

Links to Swedish WEB Pages

<http://www.it-kompetens.com/swedish/>

Swedish Information Service (New York)

<http://www.webcom.com/sis/>

Swedish Information from CIA Factbook

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/nsolo/factbook/sw.htm>

Family Tree Maker (computer program)

<http://www.familytreemaker.com/>

Books by Vilhelm Moberg (1898-1973)

The Emigrants, bk.1

Unto a Good Land, bk.2

The Settlers, bk.3

The Last Letter Home, bk.4

The History of the Swedish People

The Unknown Swedes : A Book About Swedes and America, Past and Present