



LEADING STAR LEDSTJÄRNAN

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International Order of Runeberg Supreme Board President's Message

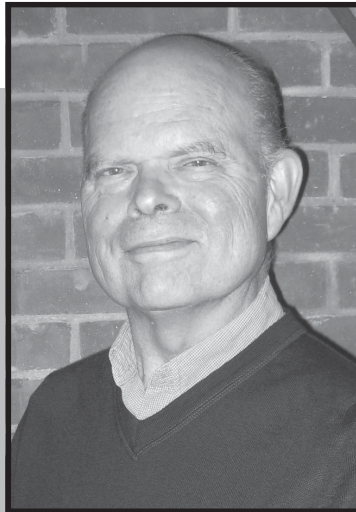
Greetings to our members & friends in Canada, Finland, and USA.

As most of you are aware, the dissolution of the International Order of Runeberg will occur on March 31, 2015, as was voted on at the August 2014 IOR Convention. This was precipitated by a lack of members willing to fill the IOR Board positions combined with a dearth of younger members, especially in lodges that have disbanded. There are exceptions to this trend, with some lodges bringing in younger members.

On the positive side, \$9,000 has been allocated to continue both: (a) publication of the *Leading Star*, which will allow continuing this newspaper that has been in publication since January, 1906 (109 years), and (b) publication of our website, www.orderofruneberg.org.

Also on the positive side, lodges that have plans to continue may use the "Order of Runeberg" in their name. For example, "Order of Runeberg, Lodge #205, New Haven." There are six lodges that plan to continue independently after the March 31 IOR dissolution. They are: Lodge #8, Dollar Bay; Lodge #102, Eureka; Lodge #106, Tacoma; Lodge #124, Vancouver; Lodge #126, North Bend / Coos Bay; and Lodge #205, New Haven.

The seventh lodge, Lodge #105, Butte, is planning to disband.



The IOR Board encourages all lodges, whether disbanding or continuing, to send in past IOR records of interest to SFHS. You will find within this issue of the *Leading Star*, an article that provides the SFHS Guidelines to IOR for Records of Interest. These guidelines list, in order of priority, the records that are important to

archive with SFHS. SFHS reimburses the sender for the postage.

2015 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. Finlandia Foundation National has a section of their website dedicated to Sibelius' 150th anniversary:

<http://finlandiafoundation.org/sibelius-150-calendar>. This website provides a calendar that includes dozens of events supported by Finlandia Foundation National. You may also learn more about Sibelius at our website: From the home page, orderofruneberg.org, select the "Cultural Topics", then select "Sibelius & Finlandia", or use this link:

www.orderofruneberg.org/culturaltopicssibeliusfinlandia.html.

In addition to learning about Sibelius, the web page has two links to performances of Sibelius' Finlandia (Hunter College & NPR), and since these links will open in a separate browser window, you'll be able to listen to "Finlandia", while

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Change

The *Leading Star* will soon change from being part of the International Order of Runeberg to being a paper for the Order of Runeberg. The format will not change, but some of the content will. There will be no President's Message, as mentioned in Stew Lyon's President's Message in this issue. Some suggestions have been made then as to what to replace it with. Let us know if you have ideas or would like to volunteer with an article. Please continue to send in news about your lodges so we will have plenty of articles for the paper.

Please note the article on page 7 about the SFHS Guidelines for sending in records. SFHS will reimburse the sender for postage. This may take time and effort to do but will be a valuable treasure for future generations.

—DH

President's Message

continued from page 1

at the same time, continue exploring our website!

With the IOR dissolution on March 31, there will be many changes—two of immediate note: (a) On our website references to IOR will be removed, other than history-related references. Also, "International Order of Runeberg" will be replaced with "Order of Runeberg Lodges," (b) As mentioned in the December issue of the *Leading Star*, please think about and offer your suggestions for a *Leading Star* column to replace this IOR "President's Message" column. You may email your suggestions to the *Leading Star* editors (Email: d.mlhjort@juno.com), or myself (Email: stewlyons@gmail.com). In the 2/22/15 Board meeting it was suggested that this IOR "President's Message" column be

replaced by article contributions from the six lodges, alternating alphabetically. I suggest lodge members think about possible topics, and let Dale and Mary Lou or me know when you or your lodge have an article to publish. Our *Leading Star* editors, Dale and Mary Lou, suggest articles that are 300–500 words in length.

I would like to extend congratulations to Vancouver Lodge #124, as the lodge celebrates its 90th anniversary, with a dinner and entertainment on March 28 at the Scandinavian Community Centre in Burnaby, BC.

Lastly, I would like to thank all members of IOR for the opportunity to serve you during my 2010–2014, and this 2014–2015 extension of IOR office term.

Stew Lyons
IOR President



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To correct our listing of your address, fill in the requested information in the form below and send your old mailing label to:

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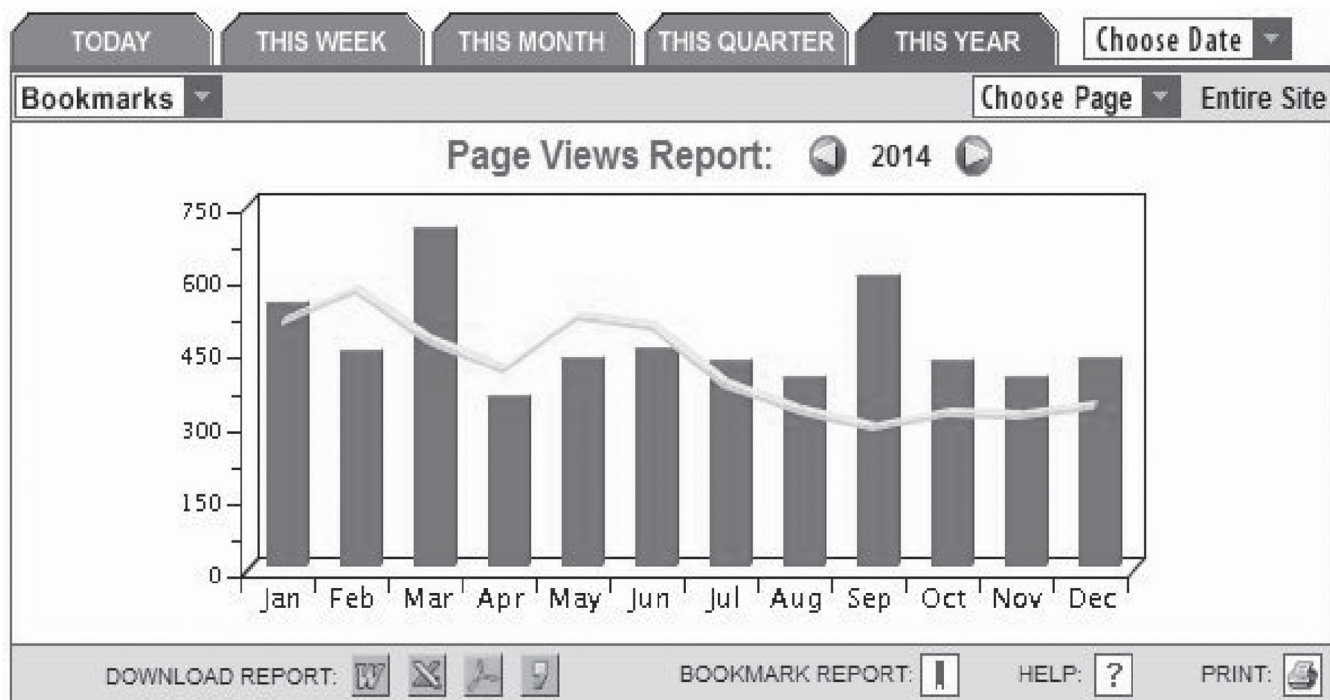
Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Lodge & Number: _____

IOR WEBSITE 2014



Totals: 2014: 5,546 2013: 4,981

Page Views Report Details

Month	2014	2013
1. January 2014	541	510
2. February 2014	441	574
3. March 2014	697	473
4. April 2014	348	413
5. May 2014	426	524
6. June 2014	448	502
7. July 2014	422	382
8. August 2014	386	329
9. September 2014	596	293
10. October 2014	423	324
11. November 2014	389	317
12. December 2014	429	340

As can be seen in above graphic, 2014 (blue bars) was a very successful year for our website (www.orderofruneberg.org). The 5,546 visits in 2014 was an increase of 567 visits (11.4%) over the 4,981 visits in 2013 (yellow line).



LODGE NEWS



Lodge #106 Tacoma, Washington

There were 28 members present at the Order of Runeberg meeting on October 4, 2014. Our speaker was Paul Lundborg, a retired minister who attends the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church together with his wife Rose Ann Lundborg.

Coming up will be our Christmas meeting in December on December 6, 2014. It will be a potluck meeting and it will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on College Street—continue on between 19th and 21st. The church is across from the Mountain View Elementary School directly across the street.

A big welcome to all who will attend. There will be a singing group present in December.

Birthdays in December are:

Dianna Nelson—Dec. 5

Larry Sandell—Dec. 14

Carina Mohammadi—Dec. 31

Carina and Joe have already left for Puerto Vallarta and will turn back the 25th of December.

God Jul

Sincerely, **Marita Agnew**

President of Tacoma

Lodge #106



*Paul Lundborg,
a story of Swedes in
America in 1862:
"Death of a Dream"*



From left:
*Marilyn Thompson
Marita (Gustafson) Agnew
Rose Ann Lundborg*



From left:
*Carina Mohammadi
Barbara Soderberg
Joe Mohammadi*



From left:
*Virginia Ulrich
and Eileen Scott*



From left:
*Marilyn Thompson
and Patricia Backman*



LODGE NEWS



Lodge #106 Tacoma, Washington

Today would have been—"Johan Ludwig Runeberg's 211th B-day." He was born on the 5th of February 1804 in the Jakobstad Finland, which was a small city half-way up the Gulf of Bothnia. He was a very educated man and spoke several languages.

Must say we have had some warm and beautiful days lately. The rose bushes are beginning to show green leaves, the daffodils are blooming and so is the Christmas Cactus here in my "Office" where I work. It's unbelievable how many blooms it has had. This cactus was a starter from my grandmother Sanna Amanda Karlsson in Kantlax, Munsala, and then passed it on to my mother, Phoebe Amanda Gustafsson, and now to me, Marita Phoebe Agnew. I have a crocus plant that is also in bloom.

I'm looking forward to seeing a lot of you at the Order of Runeberg Meeting in February 2015.

Sincerely, **Marita Agnew**

President of Tacoma #106 Lodge P.S. There were 28 present this last Saturday at the Tacoma Lodge #106.

Sincerely,
Marita (Gustafson) Agnew



Christmas at the Agnews 2014, showing above the fireplace



*Christmas tree 2014
at the Agnews in
Olympia, WA,
Marita Agnew and
Monica Mason*



*Sisters [left] Monica (Karlson) Mason and
[right] Carol (Carlson) Hahn.
Monica born at the hospital in Jakobstad,
Finland; Carol born in Michigan, U.S.A.*

*An old spinning wheel made as
a gift from her father inscribed:
"Sanna Amanda Eriksdotter
Laggar" year 1893
The yarn was spun and carded
when the sheep's wool was
trimmed off.*





LODGE NEWS



Lodge #205 New Haven, Connecticut

“Bowling & Pizza” event

Our annual “Bowling & Pizza” event, held on January 25, was well attended, including children, as shown in this article’s accompanying pictures. After an enjoyable time bowling, George & Brenda Nousiainen hosted the lodge members at their home. Following the “disposal” of six pizzas, everyone enjoyed dessert—“make your own sundae,” featuring a selection of ice cream flavors, numerous toppings, and a variety of cookies. Of course, Brenda and George provided copious amounts of fresh coffee for Finns, such as me.

To view more pictures (in color), visit the New Haven lodge’s web page at the Runeberg website: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/lodges/l205newhavenct.html> or go directly to the “Bowling & Pizza” event page: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/l205bowling15.html>.

Article submitted by
Stew Lyons



Doug on left, Ken keeping score, Kirsti with a nice smile, Peter seated on right, and Lise bowling



Left to right: Aaron, Christian, Jamie and in back, Jason



That’s Jamie bowling



After pizza, everyone is enjoying ice cream sundaes!
Foreground, *L-R: Kirsti, Doug, Liisa, Noora & Kaarina*
Background, *L-R: Sandy, Glenn, Pekka, Roy & Lise*



Enjoying their “make your own sundae” are, left to right Jamie, Jason, Aaron & Christian



John Olof Sandstrom,

member of International Order of Runeberg Lodge # 106, Tacoma, WA

Resolutions

John passed away quietly in his sleep on December 30, 2014, in Tacoma, Washington. John was born on September 14, 1933, in Finland. John's parents were Karl and Anni Sandstrom. His brothers were Richard, Bror, Simon, and Gustav, each with a family, and two sisters, Hazel and her husband Bertel and Gunvie in Sweden who is married and has 5 boys and 2 grandchildren. Only Hazel and Gunvie have several grandchildren.

He moved to the Tacoma area in the 1970s, where he worked for Puget Sound Plywood for many years. John is survived by two sisters and several nieces and nephews

in Finland. John also had two cousins, Marta Cederberg in Tacoma, WA, and Greta Lindroos in Vasa, Finland. John also left behind Suzanne Edwards, his long-time companion and best friend. John loved to work in his flower gardens and his yard. He also enjoyed helping other neighbors with their yards and lawns. John loved animals, especially cats. John also loved to spend time at his home on Lake Sammamish, which reminded him of where he grew up. A memorial service was held in honor of John at the Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, WA, on January 24, 2015, officiated by Rev. David R. Brown.

Rest in Peace.

Your friend **Marita**

From childhood days in Orvais

SFHS Guidelines to IOR for Records of Interest

The following guidelines were prepared by Syrene Forsman of SFHS, specific to IOR lodges. These guidelines are provided to all lodges, whether dissolving or continuing, and we urge lodges to send in past records of interest to SFHS.

Here is the list of records according to importance. Oldest are most important. ALL records are important, of course, because they tell the story of Swedish-Finn immigrants within a community.

- Membership registers: If the member's name in North America appears WITH their name in Finland and their birth day, month, year, and parish, it is so much easier to connect with the person's records in Finland. SFHS' genealogy office receives many requests for help in reconnecting with immigrants separated from home by the Atlantic Ocean. IOR records are the best kind of resources for such research.
- Minutes of meetings: What issues and events did the membership support? Who worked with what committee? The most difficult question to answer for a relative in Finland is "What was their life like?"
- Scholarship records with applications are important as marks of your lodge's impact on the future. Students who have studied in Swedish Finland will bring home a special awareness of the heritage and culture. Their contacts in Finland can have lifelong impact.
- Photographs, especially those with date, place, names
- Newspaper articles, perhaps there might even be photos, in media outside of the *Leading Star*. SFHS

has archived most *Leading Star* issues after 1957. Any earlier issues from 1900 on, or even earlier, are much sought after.

- Memorial booklets about the lodge history
- Lodge Charter, etc.
- Banners, desk flags from partner lodges, and other realia
- Each lodge may have been part of a larger community event, such as parades, competitions, Lucia pageant, fairs, other Scandinavian organizations. Articles and records of that involvement show where the lodge fit into its geographic site.
- Financial records of members are not important. Sick benefit records, dues records should probably be considered private information. Financial records of lodge activities on the other hand can give a picture of where the hall was located, who played for the dances, and other interesting materials.

SFHS will reimburse the sender for the postage. The SFHS address is 1920 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109. Should a call be necessary, the phone number is 206-706-0738.

Looking for Relatives

I am looking for other relatives of Greta Liza Svens (b.1884), and relatives of Edward Oman/Ahman (b.1883), who came to America. They came from Vora, Vasa, Finland, about 1910. They are my grandparents. Please contact me, Tom Martin, at temartin903@gmail.com

2015 International Scholarship Winners

The International Order of Runeberg Scholarship Program began in 2002; and thanks to many generous donations, we have awarded 37 scholarships. Since the International Order of Runeberg will be dissolved March 31, 2015, these are the last 5 scholarships we will award.

*We are pleased to announce the 2015 scholarship recipients. They are **Ryan Connell**, New Haven Lodge #205; **Austin Swanson**, Eureka Lodge #102; **Leanne Felton**, Vancouver Lodge #124; **Sten-Erik Andreassen**, Tacoma Lodge #106; and **Mira Vuorensivu**, Vancouver Lodge #124. These are all hard-working students with impressive academic achievements. We can be proud of these members and send our "Best Wishes" for a future that will meet their goals and dreams.*



RYAN CONNELL has been a member of New Haven Lodge #205 for 10 years. He will graduate from high school this year where he has been involved in various sports, captain of 3, and several community groups. He is an outstanding student. His plan is to go to college and get a degree in sports communications with a goal of becoming a sports broadcaster for ESPN. Journalism is also in his plans and he now writes for the school paper, is sports editor, and has established an online sports website. He is a responsible, respectful, conscientious, mature student with a positive attitude. He has a passion for sports and telling a story.

Good Luck in your studies, and perhaps one day we will listen to you broadcasting sports games.



LEANNE FELTON joined Vancouver Lodge #124 14 years ago. She is a 1st year student at the University of Victoria with a goal of becoming an elementary teacher. She is Philanthropy Chair of the Upsilon chapter of Kappa Beta Gamma International Sorority. In high school she was in the TALONS program for gifted students and participated in in-depth projects, outdoors trips and cultural activities. It helped her adjust to high school after being homeschooled for 2 years. In Musical Theater, for 4 years, she progressed from chorus to lead character in "Footloose." She was one of 16 in the elite Vocal Jazz Ensemble. She maintained her place on the Honor Roll. Her piano playing was enjoyed at various events. Leanne volunteered at Fast Brained Kids Gifted Association and

Odyssey of the Mind, where her team placed 20th in the World Finals, competing against 825 teams from around the world. She cut off 12 inches of her hair and donated to Wigs for Kids.

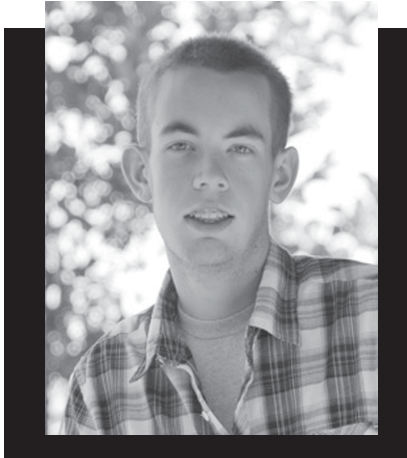
Good Luck, Leanne, for a successful future.



AUSTIN SWANSON has been a member of Eureka Lodge #102 for 7 years. He is a freshman at the College of the Redwoods. He is majoring in Kinesiology with a goal of becoming a physical therapist. He sees a need for blending physical therapy with sports medicine due to his experiences with playing team sports. Besides being a good, responsible stu-

dent, Austin has been dedicated to developing his talent as an athlete in baseball and bowling. He would like to play in Major League Baseball. He is a young man of integrity, strong work ethics with a positive attitude and is a dependable worker.

Best of Luck, Austin, as you continue your studies.



STEN-ERIK ANDREASSEN has been a member of Tacoma Lodge #106 for 3 years. He is currently attending Pierce Community College where he joined Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. In the future he plans to transfer to Oregon State University in Mechanical Engineering. He is an excellent student, very dedicated and hardworking. He enjoys building things and spends time building stage sets for his church. He volunteers in the Life Center Singing Christmas Tree, a major musical and dramatic production. He is willing to help wherever needed, manage prop distribution, run a spot light, handle fog machines, etc. He does all this with a positive attitude. He is dependable, diligent, friendly, respectful and reliable in all that he does.

Best Wishes and we hope your goal of working for Boeing one day comes true.



MIRA VUORENSIVU has been a member of Vancouver Lodge #124 for 13 years. She graduated from Douglas College with a certificate in Dental Assisting in 2010. She has now been accepted to B. C. Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. She was a dental assistant for 3 years and was a well organized and confident team member. She took on complicated responsibilities and became head assistant. She completed the Dental Anesthesia Assistant's Certification Examination with impeccable results. She is motivated and strives to improve herself. She has volunteered at the Finnish Manor Care Facility and her experiences have confirmed her passion for patient care. She wants to be a valued member of a larger health care team.

We wish you Good Luck in your Nursing career, Mira.

Lorene Mara
Scholarship Chairman

Thank You

Dear Order of Runeberg,

I want to express my sincere gratitude for awarding me the scholarship this year. I am currently undergoing my first year of Nursing school at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Even though I only just started the program; I already feel a strong sense of belonging and that I am on the right path to a challenging yet rewarding

career. I have just under 3 years ahead of me in the program so again, this scholarship is much appreciated. Thank you so much for recognizing my efforts and for supporting my career goals.

Sincerely,
Mira Vuorensivu

Thank you for awarding me with this scholarship. It is an honor to receive this scholarship as it is a way to help support my future endeavors in college. I look forward to pursuing a career in sports broadcasting and advancing my education. Runeberg has been an enjoyable experience and is something that I am proud to be a part of. Thank you again for, helping me further my education.

Sincerely,
Ryan Connell

Hello!

I'd like to express my gratitude for being awarded the Order of Runeberg Scholarship. Having been a member for most of my life, I am honoured to receive this support from an organization that I care about. This scholarship will go toward my second year tuition at the University of Victoria, where I am pursuing a BEd in Elementary Education. Once again, thank you very much for this generous award.

Leanne Felton

I am very proud and honored to have received this scholarship from International Order of Runeburg and the scholarship committee. With this scholarship, I will be able to continue my education.

My family and I are very committed to our local lodge. We continue to try to promote the Order of Runeburg in our area.

Once again, thank you very much.
Austin Swanson

Thank you to the Order of Runeberg for awarding me this scholarship. This is an honor to receive this scholarship because I will be able to continue on towards my future. I am so happy to see that so many others support me in pursuing a higher education.

Thank you,
Sten-Erik Andreassen

Genealogy Corner

Old Traditions in Österbotten

Education

When the Reformation was established in the Nordic countries, it became an important task for the Lutheran Church to inform people of the Christian religion. This was found in Martin Luther's Little Catechism. But reading ability among the country people was almost non-existent. In widely spread congregations with the poor communication of the time, the pastor could not impart any teaching to the children. The church law of 1686 required the pastor to direct his preaching to the main parts of the Catechism and in such a way to instruct the parishioners.

According to a decree of 1644, the parish clerk was required to live in a parish cottage near the church and to read with the children. The rector had to see that the youth of the congregation learned to read. Parents also had an obligation to teach their children to read the Catechism. But it was a long time before this decree could be followed because many parents had little or no reading ability.

In 1596 Uppsala Cathedral in Sweden required the pastor to travel through his parish and gather the residents for Catechism examination, and in 1686 the church law required a reading examination. Both parents, the master and mistress with all the house residents as well as children and servants were required to attend the examination. It could be in progress for three days and he who held the examination paid for food and drinks. As soon as the examination was over, a dance was held and it could be in progress for two days and nights with intermission only during mealtime.



**June Pelo,
A Dedicated Genealogist**

In Nedervetil parish in the 1700s, Catechism and reading examinations as well as training in writing were the first forms of teaching. Young people were often noisy and ill-mannered in church, so in 1781 the church was required to appoint a supervisor over the children during divine service. At a reading examination in Murick that same year farm hand Jakob Gabrielsson was threatened with a school whipping. At a reading examination in 1775 Ahlskog's maid Karin Michelsdotter was warned about slow book learning and laziness.

The usual penalty for missing a reading examination and for reading aloud poorly was the log punishment. With legs firmly shackled in the logs, they were punished by sitting outside the church door along the roadside for public inspection. This was a great shame and far from pleasant. This punishment was used frequently. (It must have been similar to the pillory.) "Wisdom should be knocked in with sticks to prevent lazy machines from taking supremacy," an old saying goes. At reading examinations the young people were threatened with whipping if they did not read aloud better.

At the end of the 1700s people were required to memorize the Catechism, and parents were fined if their children had not learned their simple Catechism

part by heart. This fine amounted to about 90 öre or 12 pennis.

The parish clerk served as a teacher and went from farm to farm to teach the children to read. The parents could not teach for they themselves could not do much reading. One of the first ambulatory school teachers in Nedervetil parish was Ängman's widow. She wandered from farm to farm and taught the children to read. Another school teacher from that time was Gabriel Rönnerberg, born 1736 in Sweden, who was married to Magdalena Larsdotter Friis. He was a master gardener and could read and write.

The teachers were poorly paid. After each child's birth, a wife made a monetary gift to the church. This money was used mostly to teach poor children, especially after the 1808–09 war when orphans were found in great numbers. The parish school teacher was the first pioneer in teaching. Poverty was their life and we cannot fully appreciate their contribution during the 1700s and 1800s.

Wild Animals

One feature of daily life in a village was the struggle with wild animals. It was mostly wolves and bears that periodically made life unsafe for both people and cattle. Small children were never safe outside. The family men were out hunting or fishing most of the time, so the women had to meet the danger. Preventive measures were taken. The early dwellings were built with such a narrow entrance that one had to crawl to enter. The barn roof was loaded with big stones to protect the stock against the bears. Traps were placed in surroundings and pits were dug in the paths used by the beasts. An inner yard was built in the form of a square where the little children were fairly well protected and under supervision. A similar construction could be seen in the villages of Riippa and Pelo

in the 1800s. The last bear in the area was seen in 1825 and the last wolf was shot in 1950 near Terjärv.

Superstitions

People believed that magic could bring them the luck—luck at fishing, good year's crops, luck in brewing, well-being for the livestock, protection from witches and the ability to track down thieves. Through witchcraft, people could also harm other people and animals. Through magic they felt protected from illness, snakebite and wounds.

When the cows were released to pasture in the spring, a cross was drawn on the ground with tar. The cross protected them from evil spirits, it was believed.

When a pregnant woman sat at a loom and wove fabric, she did not leave the weaving reed in the web because her birth pains would be long and difficult. If there was a split in the fabric during weaving, one had to lay 25 pennies on the bolt of weaving. The fabric burst because someone put a spell on the loom.

If a child was sick, a dram of schnapps had to be taken to the goblin in the attic and the child became well.

Easter was not only a big church festival but was also a resurrection of nature and could not be ignored. Life was found in the form of Easter eggs, in fertility and vitality. In olden times, this was interpreted as a sign of life's mysterious power. People believed that man could profit from nature's secret power over evil and good beings that lived in plants and animals, water and stones, by fastening them to his property, his house or household goods. At the beginning of the 1800s and later one could find excellent rams horns over a door, owl wings spread out, runestones of trolls or hobgoblins under the churn, iron horseshoes over the door of a building, etc.

During Lent people tried through all sorts of ways to indemnify themselves. On the Tuesday before Lent they ate meat broth and boiled milk with buns. They stayed outside all day, either running with a toboggan or on skis, or riding in an empty haywagon with a horse on the road. And on that same day it was customary to hold a big dance in the parish.

On the Tuesday evening before Lent, if a man went to the barn early, then the cows came home early during the summer. That same day someone had to sweep the cottage floor and barn roof 9 times without speaking. If they did that, there would be no flies in the summer. They also had to eat 9 times that day.

On Easter evening if one sketched an old witch on the door of the barn, the witch would not be loose in the barn. If one neglected to do this, the Easter witch clipped wool with the sheep shears in the sheep pen. If this happened, there would be bad luck that year, the sheep would not thrive nor breed. Otherwise, if the sheep were sheared, then singed, the wool was better.

In the remote farms and villages, witchcraft and superstition flourished a long time. There was a group of farms in Över Korplax called Kotkama where there were several witches who could have an effect on animals. One time some horses were so bewitched that they would not stop kicking even after becoming soaking wet from the exertion. People tried to take them outside and drive them, but they reared on their hind legs and stood still. So a certain old woman was summoned who said she knew what the behavior of the horses was about—that under the floor was a bag containing a man's bones. When the floor was taken up and the bag was removed, the horses stopped kicking and standing on their hind legs. Among those same farms it was said that if one wanted to see the Easter witch, he had to lie awhile on his back on the roof of the house until the witch appeared.

When the main road in Nedervetil parish went past the church and cemetery, a traveler could see ghosts floating over the cemetery during the night. Sometimes the horses were forced to stop right in front of the church and they would not continue. They shook and trembled with fright. But if a person said a prayer or spoke God's name, the ghostly spirit disappeared and the traveler could go on his way.

It was such an experience for a farmer from Kaustby when he was driving home in the dark autumn from the market in Gamlakarleby. When he came to the church, the horse sprang loose from the cart. The farmer hopped

off and tightened the harness, but as soon as it was tightened, the strap sprang loose again. This happened many times. As quickly as the farmer fixed the harness and started to drive, the strap sprang loose. Then he realized that he had to cooperate with the ghost and when he said a prayer, he could continue his journey.

In Tast a long time ago there was a bandit who died. When a man went to the church to toll the knell for him, the bell stuck. No matter how he tried, he could not make the bell ring.

Two brothers in Pelo village were laying a straw-thatch roof on a sunny summer day. They sat along the roadside near the barn while eating their noon meal, and from the past their late father's father walked by. Both saw him clearly. He was clothed in the same clothes as when they last saw him alive. He went inside the barn but did not come out. The brothers were not frightened, and went into the barn to see where he went, but the barn was empty.

One New Year's evening a man saw two cows go out and scratch for grain in the snow. When he went out to look at them, the grain turned into two men who took him away to the edge of the woods. Then they disappeared as if swallowed into the ground.

During the Great War a Russian courier was murdered at Tast. After that no one would live on the farm because all who attempted to live there became destitute.

Customs

When electricity, motorcars, telephones and other modern inventions became commonplace, the old customs and practices disappeared. They were dependent on seasonal changes and on deeply rooted experiences.

On parish farms people held small celebrations that brightened the weekdays and gave renewed energy for the continuous harvest work. After haymaking was over and all the grain in the fields was gathered, the barley had to be cut, and the turnips and potatoes were dug up. Then everyone gathered to celebrate with rabbit which was cooked with potatoes or turnips.

When all the grain was threshed and put in the grain shed, bread was

continued

baked from the year's harvest. Perhaps there was some "firewater" at some farm to slake the thirst if the mistress of the household did not serve the customary beer. These modest work parties were still held in the beginning of the 1900s; people also combined these small occasions into a large festival equivalent to the large harvest festivals celebrated in the villages and parishes.

When relatives came to visit, they arrived on Saturday afternoon and left on Tuesday or Wednesday. They were fed and housed and not in any hurry to leave. They, in turn, were obliged to repay relatives with a similar feast.

When a woman had a child, it was customary for relatives to bring butter, meat, bread, raisin soup, wool, etc. They in turn were invited to stay and eat.

From earliest years, girls learned all sorts of handwork, to sew an even seam—at that time there were no sewing machines available—to knit, to set up a loom and to weave. They also had to tidy up and tend to small brothers and sisters, so they had their hands full. In later years, the children in the house also learned to read and write. They wrote on slate with a slate pencil.

The boys stacked wood in a pile, helped those who wove, helped in the cowshed and helped those who did woodwork. Knives were the most desirable treasure for boys. When they learned to do carpentry work, they needed a knife.

In olden times the women took advantage of every minute. In the spring they went to a far-lying pasture to bind birch brooms and whisks for cleaning house. They also took their knitting needles and knit stockings while following the cows home. If the family was large, it was not easy to provide stockings and mittens. If there was a lack of wool or if they could not keep up with sewing for all the family members, the men used rags in their boots. Knitting needles were a woman's constant companion.

If a cow was taken ill, it could be cured as follows: soil from three different places in front of the doorstep was blended with water and given as medicine to the sick cow. It was repeated for three Thursday evenings and the results were good.

Cats and dogs were treated with great love. It was maintained that when people fell into sin, God threatened to deprive them of all food. But then the cat and dog stepped forward and asked for mercy for mankind. God regretted his decision and the people were allowed to keep their food.

In the fall the farmers thinned out the herd of animals they didn't want to feed during the winter. They sold the best meat and kept the worst. When they slaughtered, rather than knocking the animal in the head, they cut an artery in the neck and the blood ran into a container. The children took part in the slaughter and stirred the container so the blood did not coagulate.

Farmers in olden times had a strong bond with old customs and outgrown methods. A third of the ground always lay fallow. This was particularly true of the back fields where they sowed rye. Fallow acreage was grazed over during the early summer by the sheep. Then it was plowed and harrowed and kept black during the summer by industrious harrowing. The 18th of August was when they sowed rye, with a spring sowing day on the following May 25th.

The farmers did not relax during the time between sowing and haymaking. They had long fences to repair or rebuild. Large farms had many kilometers of fences to keep in repair. In the early spring they cut wood for the fences which were held together with split spruce branches. A good fence could last up to 30 years.

Immediately after summer came leaf taking time. They could not take the leaves when the moon was waning because the sheep would not eat the leaves. Sheaves of leaves were dried on drying hurdles and they needed a thousand leaves for the winter needs of the sheep.

In olden times all hay was cut with a scythe and grain was cut with the sickle. How heavy and laborious it was. We have only a weak conception of how the men worked from morning to night for days until all was threshed. When horses came into use, threshing time was much easier.

There was an ancient practice of bleeding to purge the body of impurities. A horn cup was made from the shaved tip of a cowhorn, and a bit of

calf bladder was tied over the small end. The afflicted part of the body was lanced with a copper axe, the large open end of the horn was placed over the wound, and suction was applied by drawing on the small end of the horn with the mouth. This was usually done by old women called Cup Women who practiced this bloody handiwork. The patient usually went to the sauna after bleeding, and then to bed for a good night's rest.

The custom of cremation survived yet at the close of the 1700s and the beginning of the next century. It was a frightful and unpleasant task. During the winter months all the bodies of the dead were collected in the ash cellar at the back of the church. They could not dig graves when the ground was frozen. After the first spring thaw, men dug a big common grave and all the bodies collected during the winter were turned into the grave and burned. The men who performed the job then got drunk with brandy because they could not bear the stench.

Tailors and shoemakers went from farm to farm and sewed clothing and made shoes. Hides and skins were smeared with tallow and pitch oil before the shoe-maker began to work. Women dressmakers also went around. But usually the farm women sewed everything for their own needs. Other skilled workers who wandered around were the carpenter, watchmaker and tinsmith. Itinerant peddlers appeared with dishes, baskets, fabric, and geegaws.

As their wages, servants always got shoes and wool. They were also allowed to sit at the same table as the master's family and ate the same food. Therefore many of them stayed many years on the farm.

A lot of old customs were associated with festivals. Late in October people began to prepare for Christmas. They slaughtered sheep and cows and butchered enough animals to provide meat for the entire year. The butchered meat was salted down in a barrel and part of it was smoked in the sauna. The blood was kept and baked into bloodbread. The guts and bowels were cleaned and filled with sausage and roasted in the oven.

After this came the malting of rye and grain. They needed malt in great quantities for the beer they would

brew. The grain was soaked in water until it sprouted. Then the sauna was fired and the grain was kept there until the sprouts dried and became strong. It was then ground in the mill and the malt was ready to brew. There was a large separate vat used for brewing. The home-brewed beer was sweet and good. On large farms they made a thousand liters which provided drinking for the entire year. Yeast was not bought, but they took the sediment from the brewing vat and saved it for use during the year.

Many weeks before Christmas, the baking was started for the many assortments of bread for the Christmas table. First, they baked hardtack (crisp hard rye bread). It had to be hard and dry and baked in such large amounts that it lasted an entire year. Then they baked sour bread, yeast bread and limpa (rye meal bread), which were fermented with yeast that came from the brewing vat. The sour bread was made by putting rye flour in a dough tray and then hot water was poured on it and it was covered with a cloth. Flour was added 3 or 4 times and the dough was left to ferment for 3–4 days during which it acquired a sweet-sour taste. The bread was baked with slow heat, usually several hours. The baked bread then sat in the dough tray, covered with a cloth, overnight in the kiln to turn a dark brown. Bloodbread was made by stirring salt and flour into the blood.

The last day before Christmas, they tidied up. The log walls in the house were decorated. Benches made of planed boards were fastened to the walls. Many people had little means for Christmas. Usually, they made some minor addition in the home. Some took on the job of weaving rugs. They were a nice adornment for the heavily scrubbed floors. The horses were also given something that warmed and adorned them on the journey to church on Christmas, so a horse-cloth was woven. The old grandmother also received a warm garment, usually a large shawl of wool. In the 1700s it was still customary to spread straw or juniper twigs on the floor on Christmas Eve day. Father Christmas greeted everyone and brought presents. At six o'clock Christmas morning they all drove to the church with sleigh bells ringing—burning torches shone here and there through the drifting snow. The torches

were dipped in oil and they burned until the return from church. The days were very short at that time of year, so it was dark most of the time. On the return trip home, the men drove in competition because he who reached home first also had his harvest taken in first later in the year.

Brick Making

After Christmas, preparations began for making bricks. Men went to the woods and cut down trees and carried the wood home. On some farms clay pits were dug and sand was hauled to the pits. As soon as spring sowing was finished, work began on the bricks. It was slavery to beat the clay, but people welcomed the additional income during those miserable times. Everyone on the farm was used: men, women, children and horses. A large trough was made from logs and filled with water, clay and sand. These ingredients were blended and kneaded by the hooves of a horse which was led back and forth in the trough.

Near the trough was a plank on which the bricks were formed. Under the plank was a water bucket filled with water so one could easily take water and add to the clay to form the bricks. Both hands were formed into fists to punch the mass into a wooden form, smoothed with the hands and then with a twitch the brick was moved from the plank and placed on a flat surface. The children then came with a sand bucket and with their hands, strew sand over the bricks so they would not crack from the sun. The empty form was then placed in the water and had to be clean and wet before the next brick was formed. The bricks had to be protected from rain and then fired for three days.

Brick making was a gathering place for all the elders of the village. They told amusing stories, played cards, drank coffee, and sang and danced themselves purple. About 10,000 bricks were made in the summer and sold to the city. It was a craft that was later taken over by industry.

When one reminds himself of all the old simple but useful customs that were cherished in the Swedish villages of Österbotten since time immemorial by one generation after the other, we realize that people made no big de-

mands of life. They were satisfied with what their own village could give them for variety and experience. It was natural for them to follow the same customs of their forefathers for hundreds of years.

Weddings

Banns and weddings adhered to many customs that no longer exist. On the Friday before Pentecost all the couples who intended to post banns traveled to the city to shop. The fiancé purchased the clothing and adornments for his bride. They rode to the city in a long parade with an escort of the best horses leading the bridal pairs in chaises from all the parishes in the area. The road was lined with children who gathered for hours to see the bridal couples. The couples who tied the nuptial knot during midsummer usually posted banns on Pentecost Sunday, and banns were also posted for the next two Sundays. Pentecost was considered the golden engagement time.

In 1900 in one of the parishes, a farmer's son was engaged to marry the prettiest girl in the parish. The full-grown village boys had advance news of the event and they went to the bridegroom's house and began, without permission, to empty the buildings and sheds of the items stored there: old carts, sleds, barrows, plows, boards, rollers, dung carts and all sorts of large bulky things. These were placed on the road leading to the bridegroom's house. They knew it would create a problem for the engaged man to attempt to remove everything in order to reach the house. The small boys of the village searched for old pans, horse bells, cowbells and whatever they could use to make a noise when the engaged couple came to the farm. In the evening there was a dance with coffee and buns for all.

In Gamlakarleby, as well as in Kronoby, it was customary for the engaged couple to go around to the farms to collect or beg for household items. The gifts consisted of wool, linen and other textiles or money. Several ordinances from the 1600s prohibited the custom, but it did not deter the people although the custom existed for a long time.

continued

Following is a description of a large wedding:

Several weeks before the wedding the wedding yard and the nearby farms were spruced up. The house was repaired inside and out; windows were cleaned in the house, barns and out-buildings. Young spruce was collected from the woods. Birch branches were placed around the benches which young boys built.

In olden times a wedding pole stood in the wedding yard. This has currently been replaced by a triumphal arch which was made by standing two long white poles near each other and draping a white sheet between the poles. Lingon and crow-berry branches, and small juniper twigs were gathered and bound into a small garland that formed the word: Vålkommen.

A week before the wedding, a carriage boy traveled around with invitations bidding people to the wedding. The day before the wedding everyone on the farm was occupied. The bride baked, beer was brewed, whitefish was rinsed and pickled for use as meat for sandwiches, coffee was roasted and ground by the small girls. Sugar was purchased and shaved. Fresh Baltic herring was rinsed and salted. The baking of coffee bread required cinnamon. In more recent times gingerbread biscuits were baked. When the women arrived at the wedding yard they carried a bundle which contained several breads and a large pat of butter on a plate. If they came from a well-to-do farm, they had a contribution of meat—calf or mutton, all of which was a good addition to the wedding meal.

The evening before the wedding the ground was swept and raked all the way from the house to the main road. Everything had to be as neat and clean as possible for the guests because the older married couples had plenty of time between entertainment to wander around and see how things were. When one considers the large number of wedding guests (1500–2000 people), it is difficult to understand how people could undertake the task of treating and entertaining such a large number of guests for three days. But usually there was no other occasion for many of the people to meet each other. And there was great harmony and helpfulness in the old villages; they were satisfied with the good things of their world.

When the wedding day arrived, preparations were made for over a thousand persons, to lodge them and treat them with food and drink for three days. The wedding was held on a weekday in the middle of the week, and the marriage was performed in the wedding yard. The wedding chamber was beautifully decorated with home-woven bridal sheets. The day before the wedding the young people made wreaths of berry and juniper twigs which were hung around the wedding room, and mirrors were borrowed to be hung on the walls.

If the wedding was not held in the church, an altar was erected in the house. A bench was placed with two long pillows on top, covered by a fringed bridal sheet on which was placed a little square cushion covered with a little square white embroidered cloth and a colored paper flower was placed on top of it. A fringed sheet was placed on the floor before the altar.

The bride's clothing was black silk and in many cases was borrowed from the pastor's wife. Many of the gowns were altered many times because they were worn by small and large-sized brides. The bride also wore a large bridal crown which was borrowed, paper flowers and silk ribbons.

The guests were richly provisioned and between mealtimes they played all sorts of jokes and pranks, lifted cart wheels, ran in sacks, ate bread hanging from a cord, and ran races. One prank was to hold a trial with a prosecutor, judge and jury. The one to be prosecuted received a summons. He was prosecuted for a crime of a humorous nature. The culprit could ask for a representative during the legal proceedings.

At a wedding at Pelo village in Nedervetil, Hansas Kalle (Karl Hansén) danced himself purple with another man's wife. He was prosecuted for undue advances to the wife and was summoned to appear in handcuffs at legal proceedings. He asked Emil Högnäs to be his representative at the trial, and the judge was Judge Gustaf Bishop from Kronoby who acquitted him and he did not have to pay a fine.

Even into the 1940s large weddings were still being held. When my friends Edmund Brännkärr from Nedervetil and Synnöve Bodbacka from Terjärv were married at Brännkärr, Nedervetil,

in 1945, 1,000 people were invited to the wedding and the celebration lasted for three days. Their wedding was one of the last large weddings in the parish. It was during the postwar period and all the food provided for the banquet was produced at Brännkärr. Edmund's grandfather Alfred was a farmer with extensive land.

Edmund and Synnöve emigrated to America in 1956 and lived in Springfield, Massachusetts, in a house with 13 rooms which they rented out. In 1965 they built a new house and lived there until 1975 when they moved to Sebring Hills, Florida, where they have lived for 20 years. They are now the only Finlanders remaining of the 22 families in the neighborhood who lived there 20 years ago. Every other summer Edmund and Synnöve return to Nedervetil to their little red stuga on Klockar-backen. When they are in residence both Finland's flag and the American flag fly from the same pole.

On 9 July 1995 during a visit to Nedervetil, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Their son Tage insisted that they celebrate in Finland and he and his sons Jeffrey and Mark went to Nedervetil to plan a big celebration at Gillestugan to which 350 guests were invited.

Farm House

To the left of the entrance door was a bed with a high frame. A farm hand slept there. In the corner of the house between the gable wall and side wall stood another bed for some of the residents. These beds were usually found in small farms where children were more abundant than in well-to-do families. In the summer everyone slept in the attic except for the young daughters who slept in the loft. If there were guests and not many extra beds, their children slept in the attic. If the guests were harvesters or haymakers, during meals they sat nearest the farmer and children and young people sat farther along the table. At the end of the table was a stool. It was required when spinning and when wool was carded. If a guest appeared, he sat on a stool. In the room where the farmer's family slept, there was a stool for the mother who nursed the baby in front of the fire in the tile stove.

The typical house had a pole running along the ceiling from which hung the hardtack—it was baked with a hole in the center. The sour bread and rye bread were kept in barrels or on a tray. The floor and tables were scoured with water and sand.

The benches were short and long, depending on the purpose for which they were used—for example, as an extension to the bed. The farmer usually kept some tools for repairing shoes on a bench, and another bench would hold drills, screw-driver, folding rule, etc. There was also a bench near the fireplace on which the dishes were washed. The axe bench was near the entrance door. The spoon holder was on the wall behind the table. The wooden spoons were not washed, but were licked clean!

In the floor of the fireplace was a large trapdoor with steps to the cellar where root stock was kept. Potatoes were also kept in the cellar. Some farms had a revolving arm of metal attached to the fireplace, with a candle holder at the end of the arm. When the candle was lit, one could see what was cooking in a pot. The main source of light in a house was the fire in the fireplace. They also used tallow dip, potato lamps with a wick that burned with oil, small sheet metal lamps with oil as fuel and then later a ceiling lamp that consisted of a glass reservoir with a burner and a glass tube.

Some farms had a useful thing in a little side room: a little round stool with a hole in the middle of the seat with a chamberpot underneath for the youngest in the family.

When the walls became so smoky they could not be cleaned by thorough scouring, they had to be redone. The old plaster in the seams was removed and new lime plaster was applied. When it was dry, the plaster was smoothed. Then distemper was mixed either in red (cowberry) color or blue and applied to the surface.

Funerals

A relative was chosen to go from farm to farm and invite relatives, village residents and other acquaintances to a funeral feast which followed the burial service. Some large funeral feasts lasted for two days. One example of a large funeral feast concerns the burial of Matts Isaksson Frijs' wife in 1842.

It was no small job to provide meals for those who attended her funeral. It required 1 1/2 barrels of rye, 1 1/2 barrels of malt, 4 half-pecks of grain, 5 pounds of coffee and sugar, 2 half-pecks of peas, 28 jugs of schnapps, 5 pounds fresh whitefish, 6 pounds salted whitefish, spices, 3/4 jug of rum, 1/2 jug molasses, and 5 pounds of tobacco.

The village people were invited and there was great harmony. During those times people helped each other when it was necessary. When they heard about the feast, they helped with tidying up so that everything was neat and clean. The men borrowed from the community warehouse tables, seats, dishes, spoons, wooden cups. They also collected spruce and juniper twigs from the woods. These were chopped fine and strewn along the way from the steps of the cottage to the road. Some of the very finely chopped twigs were strewn on the cottage floor. The large branches were placed in a green border around the floor in front of the fireplace. The food tables were covered with a cloth and at one end stood a carafe or a wooden jug containing home-brewed beer.

People ate many meals during the two-day funeral feast. The peas were cooked into a pea stew to be eaten with pork, or pea soup with pork. Beef was roasted in a long pan in the oven and eaten with peeled potatoes. The salted whitefish was placed on a wooden plate with a knife and people cut off a piece to eat with bread and butter as a first course to the evening meal, together with barley porridge cooked with milk. The fresh fish was cooked together with potatoes and eaten as a first course.

On the second day of the funeral feast, it was the custom to warm up the food remaining from the previous day. There was also bloodbread (kamstekt) as a first course to the first meal. It was baked the same way as French bread, then cut into pieces and water and pork were added and it was cooked until done. (I can remember, as a child, making bloodbread in our kitchen.)

There was a great quantity of malt which was brewed with hops and sugar. The hops was strong, sweet and made excellent beer that they drank at the feast. At the end of the meal a psalm was sung. Then the alms bowl was passed to collect money for the needy. The guests were invited to the funeral at 8 a.m. at the home. The deceased

was in his coffin which rested on two stools, covered with a cloth. Then the cover was removed and the stools and seats were placed along the cottage walls. The guests were greeted by the host and hostess and then they stood for a moment of silence by the coffin. They were all dressed in black. They were invited to coffee from the coffee table which stood near the hearth. After drinking coffee, they all stood while the parish clerk sang a psalm. A lid was placed on the coffin and screwed tight. Another psalm was sung in unison, the coffin was carried out and placed on a vehicle and accompanied by mourners from the home to the church.

It was a very old custom that the deceased in his coffin was placed in front of the church on a catafalque. At the appointed time the parish pastor and parish clerk stood before the coffin which was then carried to the funeral chapel. The pastor and clerk led the mourners who followed in a single line, all the while singing as they walked to the funeral chapel. The women showed their reverence for God's name as they curtsied each time God's name or Jesus' name was mentioned. This custom is no longer followed.

When the burial ceremony was over, the mourners proceeded to the church where a divine service held. The service was closed with thanks to the deceased. (The funeral chapel was a separate building located near the parish church.)

At Maria Frijs' funeral feast, 70 liters of schnapps and 3/4 of a jug of rum were consumed. The relatives reacted angrily to that quantity by opening legal proceedings against the widower Matts Isaksson Frijs. The legal action was discontinued and the family was reconciled.

In Karleby parish large funeral feasts were in progress for two days for the family, and three days for the cooks, helpers and neighbors who had a lot to do to clean up after the feast. Funerals in the parish were celebrated with great solemnity with church bells ringing, the casket procession and guests invited to the home. Everyone showed respect for the last time to their dear deceased.

Excerpts from
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"Nedervetil KommunHembygdeshistoria"

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