



LEADING STAR LEDSTJÄRNAN

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In the last issue Stew Lyons shared about the history of some of the most recently active lodges in the Order of Runeberg. That prompted me to think, where have there been lodges in the history of the Order of Runeberg? I recently was able to look at a *Leading Star* from May 1944, almost 72 years old, and see where lodges existed. This was very interesting to me and I thought I would share this.

I think the 1940s were the peak of Order of Runeberg membership. In May of 1944 there were a total of 6,559 members in 73 lodges. These lodges were located in a total of 16 states. They ranged in number of lodges from 19 in Michigan to one each in Colorado, Montana, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. There were also three lodges in Canada. There would be lodges added later on, like Anacortes, Washington, in 1948, where I was member along with my parents and grandmother.

When you look at the lodges by district, this is the breakdown. The Central District had 31 lodges, the Western District had 26 lodges, and the Eastern District had 16 lodges.

The breakdown by states show that the Western District had lodges in six states, the Eastern District had lodges in five states, and the Central District had lodges in four states. Canada had lodges in two provinces.

More History of Our Lodges



Dale Hjort

It appears, based on the numbering system of the lodges, that there had been nine other lodges that had formed and then disbanded.

You are probably interested like I was as to which cities in which states had lodges so I will start with the district and states in that district and then the towns.

Central District

The Central District had lodges in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Michigan had a total of 19 lodges; Minnesota had 6 lodges; Wisconsin had 4 lodges; and Illinois had 2 lodges.

The lodges in Michigan were in the following cities: Bessemer, Ironwood, Negaunee, Crystal Falls, Calumet, Gladstone, Dollar Bay, Baraga, Escanaba, Munising, Iron Mountain, Felch, Norway, Ramsay, Stambaugh, Ontonagon, Manistique, Hancock, and Detroit.

The lodges in Minnesota were in the following cities: Eveleth, Hibbing, Chisholm, Biwabik, West Duluth, and Duluth.

The lodges in Wisconsin were in the following cities: Superior, Kenosha, Ashland, and Conover.

The lodges in Illinois were in the following cities: Chicago and Waukegan.

The lodges in the Central District were numbered from

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Change to the Paper

We have changed the paper to a 12-page format from the previous 16 pages. This was done after recommendations from consultations with some of the lodge leaders. With the 16-page format there were some issues that were short of articles about our lodges and filled with interesting but non-Order of Runeberg content. We hope that with the fewer number of pages and more submission of articles and pictures from the lodges we can have a paper that is filled with content that is Order of Runeberg related. As you look through this issue, you will see that we have several articles and pictures about our lodges and a full paper about them.

We remind you, as does Stew in another article on this same page, we need people to write front-page articles in addition to articles for the other pages. We need your help in keeping our paper filled with content about what is going on in our lodges.

—DH

A Reminder

A reminder to our lodges, including individual lodge members, of the need to provide front page articles and lodge meeting and activities articles for future issues of the *Leading Star*.

As Annabelle's June, 2015, front page article mentioned:

"The success of the *Leading Star's* continuation will depend on all the remaining lodges and members being willing to contribute something to each publication."

Thank you,
Stew Lyons

Correction

The front page article in the December *Leading Star* talked about the history of our lodges. Some information was unintentionally omitted when writing about Eureka Lodge's early days. Here is the correction that includes the omitted information:

Lodge #102, Eureka, CA

Lodge #102 is on "Memorabilia" page 103 in pdf file 3.

The Temperance Club was started in 1896, building their own hall. In 1903 another temperance society, "Stjarnan av Vasa", was organized and also built its own hall. In 1908 these societies united and one hall was sold. The same year the benefit society "Swanen" was founded. Stjarnan and Swanen merged in 1920 to form Lodge #102 Order of Runeberg with 188 members. The lodge grew rapidly, reaching a membership of 429 in 1935.

Stew Lyons



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The Leading Star / Ledstjärnan

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

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Lodge & Number: _____

More History of Our Lodges

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Lodge 1 to Lodge 35. Four lodges had disbanded in this district.

Western District

The Western District had lodges in Washington; California; Utah; Oregon; Montana; Colorado; and British Columbia, Canada. Washington had a total of nine lodges; California had seven lodges; Utah had three lodges; Oregon had three lodges; Montana had one lodge; Colorado had one lodge; and British Columbia, Canada, had two lodges.

The lodges in Washington were in the following cities: Seattle, Tacoma, South Bend,

Hoquiam, Everett, Rochester, Olympia, Aberdeen, and Port Angeles.

The lodges in California were in the following cities: Eureka, San Francisco, Fort Bragg, Reedley, Berkley, Bakersfield, and Los Angeles.

The lodges in Utah were in the following cities: Eureka, Bingham Canyon, and Salt Lake City.

The lodges in Oregon were in the following cities: Astoria, Portland, and Marshfield.

The lodge in Montana was in Butte.

The lodge in Colorado was in Telluride.

The lodges in British Columbia, Canada, were in Vancouver and New Westminster.

The lodges in the Western District were numbered from Lodge 101 to Lodge 130. Four lodges had disbanded in this district.

Eastern District

The Eastern District had lodges in Massachusetts; Connecticut; New York; New Jersey; Rhode Island; and Ontario, Canada. Massachusetts had a total of eight lodges; Connecticut had three lodges; New York had two lodges; New Jersey had one lodge; Rhode Island had one lodge; and Ontario, Canada, had one lodge.

The lodges in Massachusetts were in the following cities: Fitchburg, Worcester, Boston, Quincy, Springfield, Norwood, Gardner, and North Chelmsford.

The lodges in Connecticut were in the following cities: New Haven, Bridgeport, and Branford.

The lodges in New York were in the following cities: Brooklyn and New York.

The lodge in New Jersey was in Jersey City.

The lodge in Rhode Island was in Woonsocket.

The lodge in Ontario, Canada, was in Hamilton.

The lodges in the Eastern District were numbered from Lodge 201 to Lodge 217. One lodge had disbanded in this district.

My next project is to find out how many lodges came into existence after May 1944 and to also find out the names of those nine lodges that disbanded before May 1944. I will let you know what I find out.

Dale Hjort

Publication Fund Report

Costs of the December issue of the *Leading Star* were the same as the previously reported issues:

Per *Leading Star* issue:

Editors' stipend:	\$200
Graphics:	\$480
LS postage:	\$204.69
Printing:	\$136.41
Total / issue:	\$1021.10

Publication Fund Balances:

Initial:	\$9,000.00
Balance reported in Dec '15	\$6,799.31
Cost of Dec '15 LS	\$1,021.10
Current Balance	\$5,778.21

We have decided to reduce the number of pages in the *Leading Star* from 16 pages to 12 pages, effective with this March issue. This reduces the amount of non-Order of Runeberg content that has been used in previous issues, and reduces both printing and graphics costs. The exact amount of the cost reduction will be known after the March invoices are received, after which I will project a revised "last *Leading Star* issue," previously projected to be the March 2017 issue.

Report submitted by
Stew Lyons

Genealogy Corner

This is the story of the life of **Aina(Teen)MakiNyman**, born in Kampinkyla, Kurikka, Finland, on 1 January 1907 to Isaac (Teeri) Maki and Alma Lehtinen. Aina died at age 85 on 2 August 1992 in Ironwood, Michigan. The story was submitted by her daughter Faye Nyman Fitzgerald.

In my earliest memories we lived in a small home in Kampinkyla, Kurikka. Father Isaac Teerimaki left for America in 1910 when I was three years old. He left behind my mother, my sister Lydia, almost five years old, me, and baby sister Alma, a few months old. My father went to America to search for a better life and would send for us as soon as possible. We lived at his parents' home with Grandmother Liisa (Grandfather Samuel Teerimaki had died a year earlier) and with Father's youngest sister Matilda (my aunt). It was a one big room log house with two "kamaris" (bedrooms) added on that didn't have a way to heat them.

The tupu had homemade beds. The upper bunk of the large bed was for us, and the lower bunk was for Mummu who was very arthritic (bedridden all of my memory) but very authoritarian – she ruled from her bed. She loved to touch us, but a cry of pain followed our childish ap-



June Pelo
A Dedicated Genealogist

Waiting to go to America

proach near her bed. I can remember the odor of lambs' wool mixed with a warm odor of a sickbed. We loved especially the yogurt "filia" and special treats my maiden aunt Matilda "Tilda" fixed for us. She was chosen to stay home and take care of her mother, being the youngest. Two of her sisters had gone to America, and another left home early. Aunt Tilda was still very bitter about having to waste her life when all the rest had enjoyed the world outside. She was 75 years old when I visited her in 1966 and lived only two more years after that. Grandmother ruled like a tyrant from her sickbed!

We moved to our own first home, the small house to be our own on the edge of a forest. Facing toward grandmother's was a big open-quilt pattern of meadow, cultivated with grain field and pastures with clusters of farms. My safe security was short-lived – father met with hard times in America during the 1912-13 "poor time" and he couldn't pay the mortgage, so we lost that first happy haven where my mother had been happy for the first time, being on her own away from her mother-in-law. Mother had a difficult, loveless life, working for the landowners in the field and their houses. She was able to learn the intricate weaving of designed window curtains, wool and flax cloth and figured cottons and care for us three small girls. I forget the name of the family that took us in when our house was taken by the mortgage holder. I'll never forget the pain and panic when they nailed the boards on the windows. I still cry as I did 75 years ago.

We moved again! A family took us in. We had a bed to sleep on and food – mother always worked in the field or with wool in the winter. Grandmother Lehtinen (Mother's mother) lived with Uncle Franz (he was the only son), and they took us in. Little sister Alma died – she wasn't two years old yet. Uncle

Franz and Hilja Latvaluopa got married (Aina attended this wedding and had a photo – the bride wore a black dress). We moved to a small shack-like house with one room – always waiting to start our America trip. Only small amounts of money came from our faraway father in America. I was five years old when the *Titanic* sank in the Atlantic.

Finally, our trip to America seemed close. Our excitement was beyond control, although Mother's attitude puzzled us. All hope shattered with news of war. A member of royalty was shot in Eastern Europe on 28 June 1914; a Serb assassin in Sarajevo shot Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, which marked the beginning of World War I. The British ocean liner *Lusitania* was sunk by a German submarine off Ireland 7 May 1915.

No passenger travel was allowed on land or ocean. The following years were most disappointing and heartbreaking. Some food was rationed – flour, sugar, soap. Coffee was out of the question. Mother worked for wealthy landowners, mostly for food – milk, potatoes, flour. She got a job as cook and housekeeper for a family. The lady was bed-ridden with tuberculosis. One of us could stay with her by turns. I stayed with Aunt Amanda, cared for babies – she had seven children. She was cranky, nervous. Her husband, folks said, was a ne'er-do-well, who worked in the woods. That summer was hard to live through. My sister Lydia and I got to stay at the wealthy

home with Mother in order to go to school close by.

Mother bought a house, a board shack that was cold in winter. It also had only one room. Our home – finally! We were approaching teenage. We went to school and helped to earn shoes by watching cows, babysitting, picking berries, and gathering twigs and branches (as allowed) from the forest, as well as pine cones for warmth and light by the open fireplace. The shoes were simple moccasins, made by the shoemaker on lasts to each measured foot. The smell of leather, its tan color waxes, polishes, the “pikilanka” on two needles sewed on both sides of the seams (with both hands sometimes) shaped on the last, paddled with a greasy-looking wood mallet. Wood nails that looked square to me, the shoemaker “suutari” spit out one nail at a time from a mouthful. Always a lot of wooden tool kits, lasts, black wax and bits and stacks of leather around him. Dressmakers sewed to measurements – never used patterns. We just showed the style we wanted. Cloth was home-grown wool or flax, hand-woven. One summer when I was ten, I watched cows for neighbors – three cows, two calves. Each fall I helped other kids round up sheep from the open range. To identify them, the sheep's ear was notched with a brand. I earned one pair of “pieksut” moccasins.

At age 11, I lived three summer months with a family of a wealthy landowner who was an Evangelist preacher. I watched a herd of cows and cooked small

new potatoes in a three-legged cast iron pot near the low wet spot with willows.

Finland's civil war – class struggle, whatever it was called – started in 1918-1919. World War I was ending with the Russian Revolution and Europe's awful turmoil. Finland was at war, brother against brother, which lasted a year. No actual battles occurred in our village, but people disappeared. There were whispers, fears and confusion. The men joined red or white armies. Trainloads of widows, “punakaartin leskia,” and orphaned children were brought in. Children were placed in homes, some in orphanages. Women prisoners were held in the Labor Hall. One day we were near the church and saw soldiers marching the women to a clubhouse for their noon meal.

World War I ended. Once again Father sent money for our tickets to America. Mother got passports, doctor certificates, clothes, fixed bags, made endless arrangements.

Immigrating to America!

I looked through the eyes of an idealistic 13-year-old girl. The year was 1920, the last week of August. My sister Lydia and I grabbed our bags which had been packed by Mother, who had left a week earlier for the last check of travel arrangements – tickets, passports, money. Aunt Hilja gave Lydia and me a bouquet of pretty summer flowers as we boarded the train at the Kurikka railroad station. We



LODGE NEWS



Lodge #205 New Haven, Connecticut

"Bowling & Pizza" event

The Group



Group during bowling



Cindy and Lisa



Ken and Ray



Glen and Christian

Our annual "Bowling & Pizza" event was held on January 31st, as shown in the accompanying pictures. After an enjoyable time bowling, George & Brenda Nousiainen hosted the lodge members at their home. Pizza and salads were served first, followed by dessert—"make your own sundae," featuring a selection of ice cream flavors, numerous toppings (including Brenda & George's homemade fruit jams), and a variety of cookies.

A special feature of the evening was the delicious birthday cake, baked by Lise to celebrate Roy's 60th birthday (I had two pieces). Of course, we all joined in to sing Happy Birthday to Roy. Brenda and George provided copious amounts of fresh coffee for Finns, such as me.

A new member, Cindy Martin, joined our lodge at this meeting. Lodge #205 members welcome her.

The accompanying pictures can be better appreciated in color. To view these and more pictures (in color), visit the New Haven Lodge's web page at the Runeberg website:

<http://www.orderofruneberg.org/lodges/205newhavenct.html>

For members, friends, and persons / families interested in Finnish and/or Swedish-Speaking Finnish culture and traditions living within driving distance to our New Haven area Lodge #205 meetings, you are invited to join us for our next event—"St. Urho's Day celebration" scheduled for Sunday, March 20, 2016, 6 p.m., at the Havumaki's home in Wallingford. Event details, with address, map, and contact information are at: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/lodges/205newhavenct.html>

Stew Lyons



Lisa bowling



Glen, Kirt and Doug



Ray's 60th Birthday



LODGE NEWS



Here are some pictures from Marita (Gustafson) Agnew, president of
Lodge #106 Tacoma, Washington



**Paul Lundberg—A Story of Swedes in America in 1862...
 “Death of a Dream”**



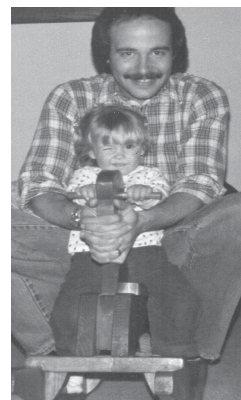
Greetings from Oravais, Finland



From left: Carina Mohammade, Barbara Söderberg, and Joe Mohammade



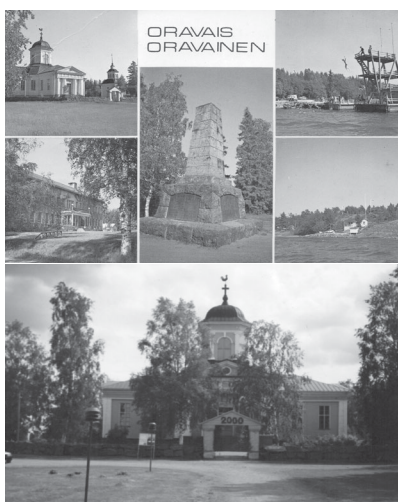
From left: Marilyn Thompson and Patricia Backman (The book Marilyn is holding is Death of a Dream by Paul Lundberg)



David and Rebekah have a lot of fun on the rocking chair horse.



From left: Kathleen Mason, Signe-Anita Lindgren, David Agnew, Sten-Erik Andreassen, Bill Agnew, Karlyn Andreassen, and Marita Agnew



Oravais Church was built 1793



The manager of the Oravais Community, Börje Nygård and William Hägg, retired teacher and well-known writer of history in the Swedish part of Finland

Lodge #126 Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Here are some articles about a trip to Sweden and Finland written by the grandchildren of Annabelle Kergan.

My Trip to Sweden and Finland

By Linden

June 29, 2015 – 1:00 p.m.

The people on our trip were me, Linden, my sister Martina, my grandma, my mom and my dad. Dad came on the 4th as he had to work. It is about 1:00 p.m. on June 29th, the day we leave for Sweden. We're all packing the last few essentials that we might need on the plane and when we're in Sweden. At noon we pack our bags into the car and leave for the airport. We have lots of time because our flight leaves at about 3 p.m. in the afternoon. We even have time to go to the lounge. We are flying from Vancouver to London, England, then from London to Stockholm, Sweden. On the plane, we watched movies and slept for a few hours so we wouldn't be tired when we had to switch planes in London. In London my mom, Michelle, took me and my sister Martina to walk to the other terminal while my grandma used the cart. Mom first checked to see which terminal our flight left from. OK, terminal 3 but when we got to terminal 3 the board said it left from terminal 2 so back we went! A very long walk! When we finally got to the right terminal, my Nana had started to worry about us.

Now for a snack at the café and ready to get on our plane.



Melina Carlson with Linden and Martina Kienzle at the airport arrival in Stockholm

The plane ride from London to Stockholm was about two hours long so I slept again. When we arrived at the airport, grandma's cousin's family, the Carlsons, were coming to meet us. But whom did we see? Pippi Longstocking! (Melina)! She gave us presents, even Mr. Neilson the monkey and Pippi's horse! When we came to Melina's house in Osterskar we met Melina's brothers, Tim and Bill Fredman, and the dogs Ludde and Nullie. We played in the backyard for a little bit then went inside to have dinner and then off to bed.

The next day on July 1st all we did was have fun and talk with our relatives. On the second morning cousin Bernice met us in Stockholm to go to Skansen

for the day. Skansen had lots of fun stuff to do! There were animals, a stage show and museum-like houses. We even had pancakes for lunch. The next day we were off to Stockholm again. This time Bernice took us to Old Town. Old Town was very interesting. I learned that Old Town was built around the 13th century. We got lots of souvenirs. I even got to climb the church tower overlooking the city. I learned a lot of facts and history about Old Town. The very top of the tower was extremely high and the balcony even tilted a little bit! Halfway down we saw a little door on the wall that led to about a 100-foot drop but they don't know why it was there! Next, we went to see the royal guards and to see the palace of the King and Queen

of Sweden. After Old Town we went to Bernice and her husband Sam's apartment to have dinner and more presents!

The next day more relatives arrive and we are off again for more sightseeing and lunch in Stockholm. When we return we make our own pizzas for supper. The Carlsons have their very own outdoor pizza oven and a real pop maker. On the 4th day Maj Helene and Lenart have planned a family reunion for us with all our relatives from Sweden. There were 27 guests in all. They even had a Princess Cake for my dad's birthday. Lenart and Melina took us to a really old castle across the street from their house. It was very cool and scary because they said that it might be haunted! Melina even had a scary birthday party there once!

On July 5th we packed and cleaned up and got ready for our trip to Astrid Lindgren's world in Vimmerby! We traveled by motor home and car. The ride from Osterskar to Vimmerby was a really long ride so we had to get out and stretch every few hours. On arrival in Vimmerby we stayed at a campsite with cabins. We stayed in a big one! It had a bathroom, a mini fridge, a porch, two bunk beds, and a high loft that Martina and I slept in! We even went swimming in the middle of the night! The next day we went to Astrid Lindgren's theme park. First, we went to the Karlson on the roof exhibit. Martina and I got called up onto the stage but we backed out because we didn't speak Swedish. Next, we went to Emil's exhibit. It was very funny. All at once it was delayed half way through because of a huge thunderstorm with heavy rain

and lightning! Luckily, we had rain ponchos with us. Next was Pippi Longstocking. The play was about Pippi's dad's arrival home. Because the plays were in Swedish, we had to do a lot of guessing. We even got an ice cream cone called Karlson's favourite, and it had a meatball on top! After Astrid Lindgren's world we went to Astrid's birthplace and childhood home. There was an exhibit that told you all about Astrid Lindgren.

When we got back to Stockholm, we went to the Vaasa Museum. The *Vaasa* is a ship

that sank in the Stockholm harbor and then was brought out of the sea almost three hundred years later! We visited the ship, saw the artifacts, and learned all about the ship. It was very interesting.

The next day we set off on the second part of our journey, to Finland. The whole family was coming...Carlsons and the 2 dogs as well! Ten of us travelling in the motor home and the car.

To be continued FINLAND

Part 2 look for it in the next edition of the *Leading Star*.

By Linden Kienzle age 10

My Trip to Sweden and Finland!!

In the summer of 2015, I went to Sweden and Finland. My mom, dad, grandma, and brother, Linden, went with me. It was a long plane ride. We had breakfast, lunch and dinner on the plane. First, we arrived in London; then we went on to Stockholm, Sweden. We met Pippi at the airport (my cousin Melina was dressed as Pippi)!



Martina keeping warm at the Market in Helsinki

We went to her house. Later, her family, the Carlson's, had a party for us with about 30 people and three dogs! Next, we took a train into Stockholm for 3 days in a row, visiting Skansan, Old Town and Vaasa Museum. The exciting

part was seeing skeletons and the big *Vaasa* ship. Later, we went to Astrid Lindgren's world in Vimmerby. There were 10 of us and 2 dogs in a motor home and a car, all travelling together. We went for three days. It was so amazing. We had so much fun watching lots of shows. We saw Pippi, Emil and Carlson on the roof. My favorite show was Emil and the pig!! We slept in a cabin that had a loft and four more beds, a small table and chairs, and a lake outside our door!

After that we went to Finland. It took a long time so we slept on the boat. We got off the boat and

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Strawberry Welcome cake to Finland

My Trip to Sweden and Finland

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Martina Kienzle trying out the coll trapeze

drove to a little town named Abo. We had brunch by a big river in Abo. Then we went on to Moominville where I met more cousins. It was so exciting! Little

play areas, gift shops and little Moomin people. Then off to Kristinestad where my great grandpa was born. He was born on a street named Cat Street. And it smelled a little like cat!! Next we went to Vasa and stayed with Johan and Margareta, Grandma's cousin. We arrived at 11pm and it was still light out. They served us strawberry cake, yummy! Their house was very interesting. They had a hunting room with all kinds of real animals (stuffed) on the walls and outside a cool trapeze swing to play on. We also went to their very own island, called Rock Island. Here we went in their sauna and swam in the cold ocean after. It was lots of fun! Lunch was in the gazebo where we sat around the bar-b-que while Johan cooked caribou right

in front of us. We stayed with them for a couple of days and then stayed with more cousins that had a dog named Elvis. We did many things in Vasa. We went to Stundars where I built a boat and a pig out of wood. We also baked kinekibro" in an old oven and made butter too. We also saw the house that my Great Grandma lived in. After a few days in Vasa, we all drove to Helsinki. We went to a market that sold all kinds of things. It was so cold that Mom, Nana and I had to buy a hand woven scarf that was nice and warm. Now it was time to say goodbye go our Swedish relatives the Carlsons. The next day we woke up really early to go to the airport. It was a long journey home after a wonderful vacation!!

I will always remember the fun I had!!

By Martina Kienzle

*Suomi
Finland*
100

LATEST NEWS

**MARCH
2016**

The Embassy of Finland is hoping to help promote 12 signature events in conjunction with the Traveling Sauna that would take place in 2017, starting in January on the West coast and moving east across the country each month. Arranging these signature events would, in most cases, be in the hands of local organizations and individuals wishing to celebrate the centennial in their region.

We have an exciting update regarding the centennial year and the upcoming events. We had originally planned monthly events around the United States, and a Travelling Sauna to bring publicity to these events. Now we are waiting for news on an actually bigger "Finland on the Road" truck project.

The truck would be a moving exhibition that showcases Finnish culture, innovations and expertise very broadly. The truck would stop at various locations across the U.S. and would target especially young people and college students. The Travelling Sauna would even fit inside the truck.

The organizers of the truck project are currently working to secure the necessary funding to create the truck. If it materializes, the project organizers will take care of all the logistics, including driving the truck from one state to another. They will make the final decision regarding this project in May.

So, we will either have our original Travelling Sauna – or a Finland on the Road truck.

From the internet <http://www.finland100usa.com/latest-news.html>

Genealogy Corner

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spent a day in Helsinki and then we were off to Hanko Harbor to board the *Arcturus* ship for the first ever ocean travel experience. The North Sea, “Pohjam Meri” was at its worst! A storm that seemed to toss us continually in every direction. It was loaded to capacity and almost everyone was seasick. The deck was slippery with food that didn’t stay in the stomach when we raced for the edge rail for relief. We arrived in London, and the sea was calm. The famous big city with its double-decker buses and horses with the biggest hoofs I had ever seen – their sound filled the streets.

We waited for hours in a warehouse-like holding area teeming with swarms of refugees running from revolutions; third class, primitive. It was an overnight train ride to Hull where the gigantic ocean liner, Cunard’s finest *Aquatanian* with four smoke stacks awaited. The voyage took two weeks or longer. I got tonsillitis and was awfully sick. I stayed in our stateroom most of the first part of the trip. People were dancing, being entertained and friendships were born on that over-crowded deck – there were three classes on different levels.

Finally, we arrived in America. I crowded in front of the ferryboat to see the Statue of Liberty and recited to myself the inscription of Emma Lazarus’

poem, “Give me your poor” in Finnish, of which I later lost my copy. But we weren’t taken to this enchanted skyscraper city of New York. We were herded onto Ellis Island like cattle. Now I really saw the hundreds of Eastern European refugees in the less-civilized mode. They pushed, rushed getting ahead of others – maybe panicked lest they be sent back. There were roped-off areas and roped-off lines which guards herded you into for yet more examinations. The eyes seemed to be turned inside out. Fear and nervous dread gripped me each time.

Will they send me back because I was sick? It seemed as though the Finnish interpreter was never around and this human mass of many nationalities milled around, some very rude, eying around to our corner, which was to be “our spot” for ten days, because my sister Lydia came down with bronchitis and they took her to a hospital or infirmary. Mother waited the whole day to find out about her. The wait was the worst experience of the trip. We were herded to the second story to eat, and were handed a loaf of white bread and two eggs, which you hung onto or someone across the table grabbed it! They took us to the third floor, the women’s and children’s sleeping hall, with steel cots – stacked two and three high. Mother was a miracle! She

remembered our assigned cots, and the assigned seats in the dining room which could hold 1,200 at a seating.

Needless to say, I had hair and body lice and the misery of the bathroom grew worse; those refugees used the floor, the excrement was all over the toilet – wherever you found a clean place to step was a success! They hosed it often and this big hall had a hundred or more toilets.

One morning I found that our bag of nice clothes and hats which Lydia and I were to wear to meet our father, gone for ten years, had been stolen. Finally, my sister was back and we were taken to New York and boarded the train to Chicago and then on to Ironwood, Michigan. We arrived in Ironwood on Labor Day, 5 September 1920.

Mother was disappointed with Ironwood and its ore colored streets and mud. Father Isaac had a home waiting for us in the country.

By Aina (Teeri) Maki Nyman,
Finnish American Reporter,
October 1998
June Pelo

Did You Know

Finland was one of the first countries in the world to give women both the right to vote and to be elected in the parliament. Finnish women are highly educated and full-time employment is the norm.

From Finland in the U.S.
Newsletter - March 2016

THE LEADING STAR

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