



LEADING STAR LEDSTJÄRNAN

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Best wishes, thanks to all, and *Leading Star* history

Bästa hälsningar, tack till allt, och
Ledande Star historia

Parhain toivotuksin, kaikkia kiittäen ja
Leading Star historiaa

If you have been reading the "Publication Fund Report" in previous *Leading Star* issues you know that this, unfortunately, is the last issue of the *Leading Star/Ledstjärnan*.

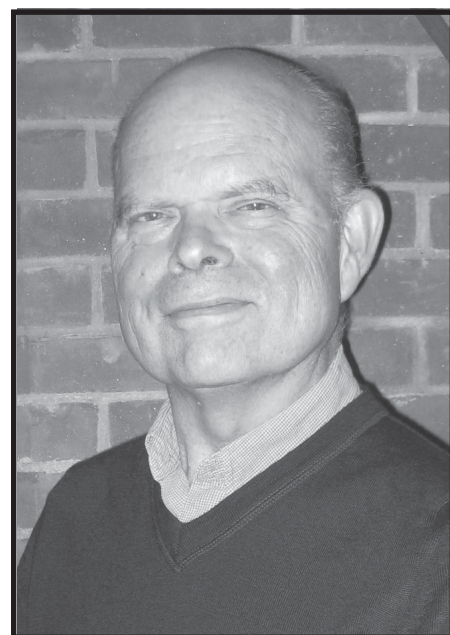
Best wishes

I would like to give my best wishes to all those I have worked with in the former International Order of Runeberg, from the second convention I attended (2006 Portland Convention), to these final days. It was at that 2006 convention I met the newly elected IOR President, Annabelle Kergan, and suggested to her that a website would be helpful to IOR – Annabelle embraced this, and our website was born shortly after the convention.

Thank you

Thank you, first and foremost, to our *Leading Star* editors, Dale and Mary Lou Hjort. In their editor capacity, they: gather all information from lodges' submittals, put the articles in a standard format for the graphic designer; if picture captions are needed they write them out and anything else that might

be needed; they hope to get content from the lodges and not have to supply content - as needed (typically needed), they obtained content from various sources such as their relationship with June Pelo / Genealogy Corner, The Finnish American Reporter, The SFHS's quarterly, and The USA Newsletter put out by the Finland Diplomatic Missions. They used the articles to develop a layout for the paper. The basic layout is set up before working with the graphic designer via a combination of email and hand delivery content that is provided to the graphic designer. The graphic designer, Lois Greene / Greene graphics, then puts the *LS* together. In a 3-hour meeting



Stew Lyons

with the graphic designer; they finalize the paper; they call the printer to see when the paper will be ready and then drive there to pick it up; they do the address labels; they fold the papers in half; apply the labels and the mailing dots to hold the paper closed; apply the stamps;

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Remembering the *Leading Star*



Dale Hjort

Mary Lou and I were editors for the first time for the March 2001 issue of the *Leading Star*. We took over from Doug Hansen who helped us get started. We learned a lot with each issue and found the paper to be challenging yet enjoyable.

Over the years we have been the editors of about 63 issues of the paper. We have gone from 11 issues of the paper per year when we started to four issues per year since 2003. The layout of the paper has also changed. We went from tabloid size (17 by 11 inches) using newsprint to a booklet size (11 by 8.5 inches) using copy paper. Through all of these and other changes we have done our best to create a quality paper.

Mary Lou was by my side as co-editor from the beginning through the December 2016 issue. In January of 2017 she became ill. She was not able to help with the March and June 2017 issues which were the final two issues of the paper. She passed away in June and is remembered in an obituary on page 9 of this paper.

Mary Lou and I were fortunate to have two special people with us for the whole time we were

editors. Without them putting the paper together would have been more difficult.

June Pelo provided the article for the Genealogy Corner for each issue. She had started doing this before we became editors. Even though she lives in Florida she was just an email away. She has done extensive research on genealogy and she always had an article ready for us.

Lois Greene did the graphics and layout for the paper. Lois works out of her home and so

when we were ready to finalize the paper we had very comfortable and pleasant surroundings to work in. More importantly Lois was always there for us no matter what day or time of day.

I am so glad and Mary Lou would be too, that the *Leading Star* is being preserved digitally by the Swedish Finn Historical Society for future generations so that it can always be remembered.

—DH

Stew Lyons

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and lastly, take the “ready to mail” papers to the post office. THANK YOU, Dale & Mary Lou for your years of doing the *LS* editors tasks.

I would also like to thank, at the IOR level, Annabelle Kergan, and Ed Brannfors, for their continued guidance and support following the 2014 Vancouver, BC Convention, in which our lodge’s representatives voted to dissolve IOR.

Leading Star History

The *Leading Star* newspaper has been published since January, 1906 (111 years!). Between 1906 & 1920, The *Leading Star* (*LEDSTJÄRNAN*) was published by the “Temperance Association” - in 1920 the “Temperance Association” & the “Benefit Association” merged to form the International Order of Runeberg (IOR). Commencing with the March, 2013 issue, the format changed from “newspaper” format to standard “letter” size pages, in Adobe Acrobat (pdf). This new format facilitates dis-

tribution via web and email. Therefore, the web page, <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/leadingstar.html>, contains the most recent quarterly (March, June, September, and December) issues of the *Leading Star*, from March, 2013 to this final June, 2017 issue (17 issues).

Also from the 2014 convention, it was voted to: (1) send the records of each chapter to the Swedish Finn Historical Society. SFHS already had copies of most of the *Leading Star*, and (2) provide \$10,000 to SFHS to help support the archiving of these records. SFHS has recently completed digitizing of the *Leading Star* (See the issues of *Leading Star* from 1913 and 1947 at http://www.swedishfinnhistorical.org/digital_leading-star/). The digital copies are searchable in Swedish or English. They will be made available to SFHS members online. SFHS has also nearly completed the digitizing of photo files some of which are from IOR. These too will be available online. If you’d like to contribute, SFHS

next column

Stew Lyons

is requesting donations to continue this fine work.

Website to continue

As noted in the "Publication Fund Report" in this *Leading Star* issue, it is estimated that the "last *Leading Star* issue," to be this June, 2017 issue (same as previously projected). Assuming the June *LS* issue will cost the same as the March issue, we will have a balance in our Publication Fund bank account of \$314.74. I have suggested to Annabelle Kergan, Ed Brannfors, and Dale Hjort that we use this small balance to support our website until the fund balance is zero, which should take approximately 2 years. They agree. Considering this June *LS* issue is the last issue, updated "Publication Fund Reports" (for June *LS*, and following updates, will be published at our website at the following location: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/leadingstar.html>

Stew Lyons

New Haven CT Runeberg
Lodge #205

Reflections



Annabelle Kergan

June, 2017...This being the last copy of the *Leading Star* and the end of an era for the International Order of Runeberg one wonders what we are truly left with.

Memories of...

Conventions, Song Fests, Musical exchanges, dance groups
Lifelong Friendships made
Trips away
The Swedish language
Learning about our heritage
Interest in Finland and Sweden
Passion for community and the connections made
Fund raising
Charitable acts of kindness
Dancing – Singing – Concerts
Picnics
Programs

The list goes on and on – but one thing is certain – my life (and perhaps yours) as a member of the International Order of Runeberg will never be erased from my mind.

Sadly, as the last page of the *Leading Star* is closed we are only left with the memories. Thankfully we have the website to continue with for a short while and then we have the Swedish Finn Historical Society which graciously has a collective of information left behind by individual lodges as well as the *Leading Star* copies that are now made available through the Society. A wonderful legacy left for all to enjoy – be it for research or for pure enjoyment. Let us not forget this wonderful opportunity made possible to us which is the last tribute to this fine and honorable organization.

Hopefully, let us never forget what the International Order of Runeberg has meant to each of us as we say goodbye to a very endearing and noble organization. I am one who is proud to have been a member.

Enjoy the read The opportunity will never come again.

Respectfully submitted

Annabelle Kergan
Runeberg Social Club
Vancouver B. C.

FinnFest USA 2017

**September 21 @ 8:00 am -
September 24 @ 5:00 pm**

FinnFest USA 2017

returns to Minneapolis, Thursday Sunday, Sept. 21-24, to create a national gathering for all to commemorate Finland's 100th anniversary of Independence. FinnFest will use the downtown Hilton Hotel, 1001 S. Marquette Ave, and Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, as its anchor locations for its

Friday and Saturday events.

Events include: All-day Genealogy Forum that will feature keynote speakers, presenters, and workshops; Finnish choral music symposium occurring at Plymouth Congregational Church, 1900 Nicollet Ave; Unannounced guest appearances by Finnish and Finnish cultural heroes and celebrities, Finnish-defined sports events, All-Finnish composers concert where FinnFest registrants will receive a 20 percent discount on tickets; Family day at the American Swedish

Institute, 2600 Park Ave; Lecture opportunities; Contemporary pop concert featuring an ensemble of professional Finnish and Finnish American musicians and ensembles; Singalongs; Folk dancing; All-day forum featuring Finnish America's rich labor history at the East Side Freedom Library, 1105 Greenbrier St, St. Paul and more.

For more information visit, finnfestusa.org, or finnfest.us.

From the internet



Genealogy Corner

Gustav Lillbäck - the boy who became a devil

In the last issue of Katternö publication there was an overview of the Great Northern War in Finland, as part of the war known as the Great Northern War, 1700-1721. It described how a large part of Ostrobothnia was devastated, how people were systematically murdered, about how 20,000 people, mostly children and young people, were taken as slaves to Russia and how some 30,000 people, mainly from urban areas, fled to the western part of the country. Not many were left to tell about the atrocities. And those who could do it often tried to forget their experiences. But of Gustav Lillbäck, son of the sheriff in Ii, there is extensive documentation.

The description below is based largely on Kustaa Vilkuna's book "The Devil's War", the core of which is the story of Gustav Lillbäck.

Gustav Lillbäck was born just before the Great Northern War was launched, as the second of the sheriff Gustaf (fl. Kyösti) Lillbäck's and wife Beata Lillbäck's children. The baptism



June Pelo
A Dedicated Genealogist

was conducted by the chaplain in Oulu. A young man who was studying to be a priest, Abraham Frosterus, witnessed the baptism as a godfather.

The son of Gustav had the same name as his father, but the Finnish version of the name was Kustaa.

Sheriff Lillbäck was tied to an influential farming family, and his father had also for a period served as sheriff. The wife Beata came from a family of Lübeck who were adopted as citizens of Oulu.

As the sheriff's son, Gustav Lillbäck followed his father on his missions and helped him with the records. They gave detailed knowledge about the conditions and about the inhabitants and their property in Ii parish, which at that time stretched into the country to Pudasjärvi.

Gustav Lillbäck's escape on skis began when the Russians attacked the home farm Hiivala on the last day of 1714. Two of the brothers were taken as prisoners, while Gustav managed to slip away. His value as a young slave motivated the Cossacks who followed him; ski tracks in the snow could easily be followed.

In a column with a hundred other children and adolescents from Oulu and surrounding parishes, Gustav Lillbäck was then marched through Savo to Vyborg. In the column were also Gustav's brothers and their cousin Kristoffer Toppelius.

(As told in the previous Katternö article Kristoffer Toppelius returned after many years to his home area and became the great-grandfather of the writer Zacharias Topelius.)

The patrol that took Gustav Lillbäck prisoner was led by the Cossack corporal Fyodor Fyodorovich, and Gustav thus became his property. Fyodor Fjodorovitj's data included collecting war taxes and the humiliation and punishment of the people. Looting and rapes were part of his everyday deeds.

Kustaa Vilkuna describes how the captured youngsters systematically underwent Russianization. Gifted children - of which Gustav obviously was - learned

Russian so well in a year that they could act as interpreters for the Russian occupation army.

The official Russification was considered to be through rebaptism to the orthodox doctrine. It tied the young people to their Russian masters, the Russian army and the Russian Empire. Rebaptism helped prisoners escape deportation to Tatar country.

Gustav Lillbäck in his rebaptism was named Vasily. With that he was no longer regarded as a prisoner or slave, but as Fyodor Fjororovij's own son. Kustaa Vilkuna describes how the Cossack corporal conscientiously fulfilled his fatherly duties towards Vasily, who in turn learned to behave like a Russian soldier.

In January 1716 Vasily Lillbäck returned with his new father Fyodor Fyodorovich to Northern Ostrobothnia as interpreter and interrogator.

During a battle in Siikajoki, where the Russians simply slaughtered a troop of peasants, Vasily acquired the rite of passage with an ax to give the coup de grace to wounded opponents. As a gift, Fyodor Fyodorovich gave a captured horse and a rifle to his son. Vasily Lillbäck's status and freedom of movement grew with it.

Kustaa Vilkuna: "Russian farmhands had been brought to violence by violence, and when they suddenly incomprehensibly had so much power in relation to the common people, they made the most of it. With guns, sticks

and whips, they performed the Russian army's order in a state of unrestrained eagerness."

The torture begins

The last week of January 1716 Vasily Lillback began his career as a torturer. The first victims were the couple Gabriel and Anna Teppelius from Oulu. They had fled to the forests of Ylikiminki and were arrested. Vasily Lillback had known the pair previously.

The treatment was the same for both. They were tied behind with a rope, the rope was thrown over a ceiling beam, and the victims were hoisted up in the air. Getting your arms pulled backwards and upwards in this way is very painful. The couple was also beaten and whipped.

Anna Teppelius, who was highly pregnant, cried appealingly to "Gustav", her torturer, who was furious at being spoken to by his old name. She seems to have been rescued after the other torturers intervened.

But this was just a quiet start. Brutality was one of the objectives. It could be justified by saying the Tsar ordered the destruction. Another was to impose taxes by the occupying power. But often the driving force to plunder was for their own profit or pleasure.

As the war approached Northern Ostrobothnia, many had hidden away prized possessions by burying them. They knew the occupiers, and threats and torture was their method to ascertain the hiding places.

As an interpreter Vasily Lillbäck had an advantage also

over the Russians. By translating selectively he could retain information for himself about interesting items to loot. But then it was important to not arouse suspicions of the superiors and to avoid the risk that people reported him.

One method was to murder those who confessed. Vasily Lillbäck started this method in Liminka in March 1716. Jaakko Vähä and old master Riski were discovered in the woods and confessed under torture about their neighbor's hideout. Riski was murdered immediately, while Jaakko died a week later after being severely beaten.

Next stop was Oulunsalo, where Vasily Lillbäck led a long sequence of atrocities, beginning in Ervastila's house. Five women were hiding in the attic but were revealed by two captured maids. The women were tied behind and taken to a neighboring farm Tiltula where there were already a number of other prisoners and were tortured for three days.

One of the women, Pirkko Piipari, was hung from the ceiling with her hands tied. Vasily Libäck struck the woman for everything he was worth until she was nearly unconscious. When she lifted down, her daughter appealed to him not to kill her mother.

"Then give me her money and her silver," shrieked Vasily and hit the final death blow to Pirkko Piipari with a lump of wood.

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LODGE NEWS



Lodge #205 New Haven, Connecticut

"St Urho's Day" 2017 Celebration

Everyone had a good time at our annual "St Urho's Day" celebration, on March 19th. The celebration included a potluck dinner, reciting the "Ode to St. Urho" and good conversation at the home of our hosts, Glenn and Sandy.

Glenn and Sandy, did a wonderful job decorating for the St Urho's Day celebration - purple, green, and grasshoppers everywhere! We had a good turn-out of members as can be seen in the pictures accompanying this article.

It had been decided at our January meeting that in honor of "Finland 100 centenary celebrations," the St. Urho's Day potluck dinner meeting entrees would focus on Finnish and Swedish traditional foods, such as: Finnish coffee cake (Kaarina), Finnish blueberry pie (Sandy), Swedish Rice Pudding with boysenberries (Dottie), Chocolate chip cookies (Dottie), Jannen's frestelse (Liisa), Rye bread with reindeer

Gathering at the serving table.

L-R: Kirsti
Tuula
Cindy
and
Doug



L-R:
Sandy
Kirsti

L-R: Dottie
Tuula
Liisa
Doug
photo by
Inke



Reciting "Ode to St. Urho."
L-R: Klas
Cindy
Sandy
Glenn.
Glenn is leading, so note the hat with grasshopper on top.

L-R: Sandy
Glenn
Kirsti



Gathering at the serving table.
L-R: Tuula,
Cindy
Doug
Inke
Brenda



LODGE NEWS



(Liisa), Beef salad (Kirsti), Cucumber salad (Kirsti), Black current jam (Kirsti), Finnish mint-chocolate buttons (Kirsti), Karjalan paisti (Inke), Salmon loaf (Cindy), Pulla (Cindy), Karelian pies, egg butter (Tuula), Carrot casserole (Brenda), and Beef stew (Brenda). All the potluck appetizers, dinner and des-

sert items were delicious - thank you to all our members for their contributions to the gourmet selections!

During our business meeting there was discussion for election of officers (normally done at our January meeting) - re: the present slate of officers. All remained, except Inke who said that moving

to FL would make being VP difficult. A discussion ensued and Cindy Martin agreed to take her place. A motion was made by George re: adding "Publicity Chair" as a new position, Dottie seconded, and George Nousiainen volunteered to fill the position. Thank you, Cindy and George! A card was presented to Inke, signed by all present, which conveyed the message that we will miss her very much - i.e. her hosting of our Summer Picnic for many years! Thank you, Inke!

After a business meeting, Glenn Havumaki led the group in reciting the "Ode to St. Urho." The 12 pictures accompanying this article (6 of potluck food items, and 6 of members celebrating Finnish and Swedish-Speaking Finnish Culture and Traditions and sharing in comradeship) may be seen in color at New Haven Lodge's St Urho's Day web page: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/2017sturho.html>

The St Urho's Day page may also be accessed directly from our New Haven Lodge 205 web page: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/lodges/l205newhavenct.html>

For our next meeting, check our lodge web page for details as the date approaches. www.orderofruneberg.org/lodges/l205newhavenct.html

Stew Lyons
New Haven CT,
Runeberg Lodge #205



Finnish blueberry pie



Finnish coffee cake



*Left: Rye bread with reindeer,
Right: Karelian pies, egg butter*



*Front: Salmon loaf,
Rear: Chocolate chip cookies*



Pulla, photo by Inke



*Swedish rice pudding with
loganberries*

Obituary

Glenn Olsen (1930-2017)

Glenn C. Olsen, 87, a life-long resident of Hancock, Michigan, passed away at the Houghton County Medical Care Facility in Hancock on Wednesday, April 19, 2017.

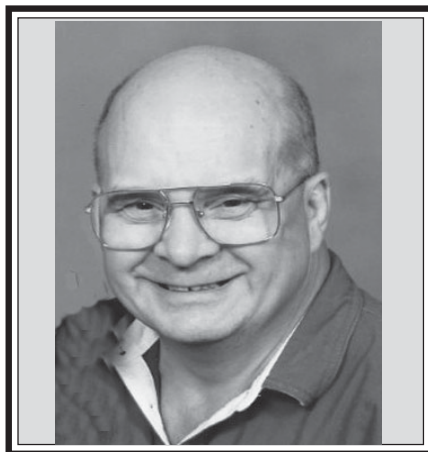
Glenn was born in Hancock at the family home on January 26, 1930, to the late, J. Fred and Saimi (Kyllonen) Olsen. He was a 1948 graduate of Hancock High School, where he was a star player on the varsity football team.

He served overseas in the United States Navy from 1950 to 1954 during the Korean Conflict.

Glenn was united in marriage to Adele Irene Kendall on December 26, 1952. She preceded him in death on August 7, 2011.

He was employed at several businesses in Hancock, including the A&P Grocery Store for many years, and at the Copper Crown Motel, retiring in 1992.

Glenn was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Hancock since 1960. He and his wife belonged to several bowling leagues and the Order



of Runeberg Lodge No. 8 of Dollar Bay, where they enjoyed dancing. Glenn liked to laugh and often played pranks and jokes on his friends and family. He owned an apartment building in Hancock, and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and he even built several boats during his lifetime.

He is survived by a sister-in-law, Lois Seiler of Calumet; a special nephew and niece, Norman and Barbara Kendall of the Hancock Canal area, who were his caregivers

in later years; and also by nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at the O'Neill-Dennis Funeral Home of Hancock, with Rev. Scott Lindenberg officiating. Burial was at Lakeside.

Submitted by *Renee Ozanich*,
Secretary, Lodge #8 Dollar Bay, MI

Mervin Sastamoinen (1923-2017)

Mervin W. Sastamoinen, 94, of Dollar Bay, died Friday, April 7, 2017, at the Houghton County Medical Care facility in Hancock.

He was born February 11, 1923, in Mohawk, Michigan, a son of the late Nestor and Ida (Hoyer) Saastamoinen. He attended school in Mohawk and Painesdale, and graduated from Jeffers High School.

Mervin was a World War II veteran of the U.S. Navy, serving in the South Pacific.

He was employed at Atlas Powder as a shop foreman and, prior to retirement in 1985, worked at the former D&N Bank as head of maintenance.

On September 6, 1946, he was married to the former Hilma Ypparila in Chassell. The couple has made their home in Dollar Bay since 1946.

Mervin was a life member of the Dollar Bay VFW Post 6028 and the Order of Runeberg Lodge of Dollar Bay for 60 plus years.

Mervin loved to skate and play hockey, which he played well into his 80's.

Mervin is survived by his wife, Hilma of Dollar Bay; two sons, Robert of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Gary (Joanne) of St. Petersburg, Florida; one daughter, Julie (Longin) Krol of Fairbanks, Alaska; seven grandchildren; one nephew, and several nieces.

Interment will be held later this summer at the Mountain View Cemetery in South Range with military rites to be conducted.

Submitted by
Renee Ozanich,
Secretary, Lodge #8 Dollar Bay, MI

George Sundquist (1924-2016)

George Sundquist passed away on November 11, 2016 after a long illness at his home in Redwood City, California. He was born in Munsala, Finland in 1924 and emigrated to America in 1952, moving to San Francisco where his uncle, also named George, was living. He worked in construction, eventually starting his own construction company. He is survived by his wife Marion and their children and other family.

George and Marion returned to Finland every summer where they maintained the original family property. He cherished his roots in Munsala especially the village of Vexala. They spent so many months there each year that Marion could speak the Munsala dialect flawlessly.

George was well known in the Finnish and Swedish Finn community. He served on the board of the Finlandia Foundation National for several years and also on the board of The Swedish Finn Historical Society. He was active in the San Francisco chapter of the Order of Runeberg along with other groups like the Norwegian Club and American Scandinavian Foundation. He loved sports, travel, history, and especially music. George established a fund with Finlandia Foundation to provide funds for Swedish Finnish musicians to travel to North America to give concerts. He would arrange concert venues all around San Francisco and the West Coast for performers.

The Quarterly of The Swedish Finn Historical Society Winter 2017

Mary Lou Hjort (1943-2017)

Mary Louisa (Trumbull Pope) Hjort was born to Mary (Castles) Trumbull and Charles Trumbull on January 25, 1943 in Helena, Montana. Both of her parents were school teachers who loved music, and knew Latin. The family lived in Forest Grove, Oregon; Cathlamet, Washington; then finally settled in Auburn, Washington. Montana was dear to her heart, and Mary Lou spent many summers and Christmases visiting family in Superior, Montana, and elsewhere across the state.

Mary Lou graduated from Auburn High School in the class of 1960, and received a B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Washington in 1964. She played flute and piccolo in the UW marching band, marching in the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl twice.

In 1964, she married her high school sweetheart, Claude Pope of Algona, Washington. She taught for one year in Auburn, and then the couple moved to California, where Mary Lou continued to teach elementary school for several years. In 1978, the family of now five moved home to Auburn. In November of 1987 her husband, Claude, lost his battle with melanoma.



After all three kids graduated from Auburn High School, Mary Lou married long-time friend Dale Hjort and moved to La Palma, California where she lived for the past 22 years. There, she became an active member of University Baptist Church in Long Beach. She was a leader in the Lakewood Women's Club, supporting education-focused organizations. She worked for Teacher Created Materials. She and Dale co-edited the International Order of Runeberg's Leading Star newspaper.

On June 19, 2017 following years of struggle with a variety of diagnosed and undiagnosed ailments, she passed away peacefully at her home. She is survived by husband Dale Hjort, brother Bill Trumbull, son Wesley Pope, daughter Annette Wolf, son Bradley Pope, and grandchildren: Makenna, Rylee, Oliver, Claudia, Fiona, and Guthrie.

She was laid to rest in Mountain View Cemetery in Auburn, beside her first husband, Claude Pope. Memorial Celebrations took place at Messiah Lutheran Church in Auburn on July 1st and at University Baptist Church in Long Beach on July 8th.

Submitted by
Wes Pope and Dale Hjort

Genealogy Corner

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The next victim was Simo Ervasti who described a hide-away where Oulu citizen Johan Uhlbom had hidden money. Simo Ervasti reckoned that he would be released, but Vasily took out his bloody birch club and slew him also.

In this manner, the brutalities continued. Before nighttime Vasily took a woman and raped her. The next day he left a group of children together in one house, killing one of them and left the others to freeze to death.

So continues the account in Kustaa Vilku's book, detailed with so many examples that it becomes unbearable. Vilku also describes how the Russians occasionally are surprised by Vasily Lillbäck's brutality.

A twelve-year-old girl, Riitta Laanila, stood out by not showing Vasily the respect he demanded. He began to beat her with a birch cane and shouted that he will continue to beat until she begs for mercy. Answers Riitta Laanila, "I hand over everything to God's hands. Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my soul." Whereupon Vasily continued beating until she was unconscious and later the same day she died from injuries.

Kustaa Vilku: "Everywhere in Finland, there were plenty of Russian farmhands who wanted respect and honor like Lillbäck. But what separated Lillbäck from many others, and at the same time showed what position he achieved with his brutality, was that "no one dared to go

against him despite that he was alone"

Vasily Lillbäck's reputation as a cruel war criminal spread throughout the province. He was the worst of them all, worse than the occupiers, a devil figure.

Escape

The turn came the summer of 1717. The Russians began to introduce civil rule in Finland and reduced its forces in Northern Ostrobothnia. The guerrilla bands gained ground and began to direct their attacks against the Russian soldiers still remaining. Fyodor Fjodorovitj's troop department withdrew southwards to Vasa to reduce the risk of their own losses.

Ostrobothnia was now so destroyed that it was no longer able to support any major troops. Kustaa Vilku describes how the buildings in many parishes were almost completely wiped out. In Oulu and Liminka, where before the war there were nearly a thousand farms, now just 60 farms were entered in the tax list. The same level of destruction was in Siikajoki, Pyhäjoki, Ii and Kalajoki.

Karleby, Vetil, Kelviå and Lochteå were destroyed, as well as Kronoby, Lappajärvi, Jakobstad and Nykarleby. Half of Vörå was deserted. South of Vasa, Malax, Närpes and Lappfjärd had been destroyed in the beginning of the Wrath.

With civil government started, the remaining people hoped for a future. Russian farm-

hands and interpreters of the Russian troops had to move back to Russia, and they were not eager to go. More and more began to flee, and a place to escape to was precisely the parts of Ostrobothnia that the Russian troops had left.

So did Vasily Lillbäck in October 1717. He stole a small amount of money, a horse and an old silver spoon from his master, was once again Gustav Lillbäck, and rode away to his parents' home in Ii.

Fyodor Fyodorovich did not let him escape the theft. In the summer of 1718 he went to a patrol heading north to return the fugitive. In Kalajoki he met the chaplain in Liminka, Johan Hedreaus, who said that Gustav Lillbäck had been tried and sent to Stockholm.

The fact was that Gustav Lillbäck himself had asked to cancel the Orthodox baptism and he be restored as a member of Ii parish. This presupposed, however, an investigation of the applicant's actual relationship to the faith.

When Ii and Pudasjärvi's summer court was held in early June 1718 matters took a different turn than Gustav had thought. It was a trial for his crimes. Lillbäck explained that he had been a minor (under 15 years) at the capture and had not acted on his own will but by compulsion. But his defense speech did not help. He was arrested and taken to Stockholm, to be accountable to the Åbo Court of Appeal.

Witnesses talk

Thus begins a new chapter in the story of Gustav Lillbäck. The trial was to last over two years

and lead to investigations and debates. The main question was whether Gustav Lillbäck could be held responsible for his actions.

Gustav Lillbäck originated the idea in prison in Stockholm to eloquently write down his story. A letter was written directly to Queen Ulrika Eleonora and depicts how he as a poor prisoner sits innocently imprisoned. He points out that he had to obey the orders of the Russians, and that he bravely escaped from the enemy after three years as a slave of a brutal enemy.

In a letter to the members of the Court of Appeals Gustav explains that he is the victim of unjust accusations by malevolent people. He proves his claim with two written certificates signed by three people, Juho Pekanpoika Tiesko, Iisakki Matinpoika and Juho Juhonpoika.

Step by step during the trial process Gustav was forced to retreat. The reputation of the trial spread to the many Ostrobothnians living as refugees in Stockholm, and more and more witnesses came forward and gave details of Gustav's deeds.

After the testimony, Kaarina Matintytär from Oulu asked Gustav whether he as a Christian was not plagued by whipping the poor people.

Gustav changed tactics by arguing that he had done many good deeds which saved people from even worse brutality. The Court asked how he tormented the people and got this answer:

"We used three different torture methods. Firstly, to bind the hands behind the back and hang up the person in the ceiling, second lashes, and third burning."

Regarding the burning inflicted, Gustaf sometimes shoved a person head first and sometimes feet first into the furnace and lit it. The heat was so hot that people sweated and often burned their clothes in the fire. It was not deadly, he argued, but a good way to press for results. The people became more willing to revealing where they hid their property.

In October 1719, there was a staggering blow for Gustav. Abraham Frosterus, his godfather at the baptism, showed the court his old almanac, which showed that the baptism took place 29 December 1699. In other words, Gustav Lillbäck was 15 years old when he was captured and was therefore criminally of age.

In February 1720 Gustaf's position became worse. After testimony by Juha Pekanpoika Tiesko, Iisakki Matinpoika and Juho Juhonpoika, it was revealed that the certificates which he referred to are counterfeit.

There was a question for the Court of Appeals about the legal principles to be applied. Against each other were Deputy Court of Appeals president Sven Leijonmarck (formerly Agricola) who believed that Gustav should be pardoned under the IPDC International law, and the Court of Appeals president Johan Cruetz, who required a harsh penalty.

Behind this lurked a power struggle. Creutz represented the highest aristocrats while Leijonmarck was among senior officials and the upstart nobility. The gap was significant, but in the end Creutz won.

In February 1721 the Court of Appeals submitted the case to the king for judgment.

The end of Gustav Lillbäck was shameful. A common death sentence was not considered adequate. First, they cut one of his hands off, then his head. The severed hand was nailed to a pole to display.

From Katternö, #1-2015

Svenolof Karlsson

Translated from Swedish by

June Pelo

News from Mika Roinila

Hello to all my friends, I hope all is going well for you. Things are good here in South Bend, and I have something for you that might interest you.

Last summer I was able to translate the book *Sissiluutnantti: Olavi Alakulppi* by Kari Kallonen from Finnish into English, and I am happy to let you know that this translation is available as a Kindle e-Book through Amazon.com. The book was released on June 12

This is a great book for military history buffs and Finnish War veterans, but everyone would enjoy this story! The author is a well known non-fiction writer in Finland who won Finland's 2008 War Book Award for this book.

Have a look at this link for more information - https://www.amazon.com/Guerrilla-Lieutenant-Alakulppi-Mannerheim-Champion-e-book/dp/B071ZWQRLS/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1496663136&sr=8-1&keywords=kallonen

Feel free to tell others about this book.

Cheers,
Mika Roinila

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SFHS Guidelines to IOR for Records of Interest

The following guidelines (condensed) were prepared by Syrene Forsman of SFHS, specific to IOR lodges. These guidelines were provided (full form) to all lodges, whether dissolving or continuing, and lodges are urged 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 immi-

grants within a community. These records include membership registers, minutes of meetings, scholarship records, photographs (especially those with date, place, names), newspaper articles, memorial booklets about the lodge history, lodge charter, etc., banners, desk flags from partner lodges, and other realia

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 reimburses 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.

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