

Fond memories of the Jubilee

Sometimes in life you will do things that seem out of your control. You just know that the time has come and that you really do not have a choice in the matter. Some people say that destiny is calling others speak of finding themselves. I believe that it is in the meeting with other people that life sometimes takes on a very special meaning and that these meetings help us to understand more about ourselves and why we have become who we are. Last August, I had one of these experiences, when I went to Canada in search of my roots and to find out more about my family history. This is what the Jubilee meant to me.



Christina, Anne-Marie and Anette visiting our mom's birth place.

My name is Anne-Marie Dabérius. I live with my husband and two children in Enebyberg, a suburb of Stockholm. My mother's name was Astrid Sandman. She was born to Andreas Buskas (son of Johan Irjasson Buskas and Maria Johansdotter Hinas) and Lina Knutas (daughter of Simon Johansson Knutas and Katarina Andreasdotter Hinas). In the summer of 2007, I went with my family to Gammalsvenskby in the Ukraine and felt my family's history caress my face as I walked up and down the old streets of the village. When my mother passed away on Christmas Day 2009, I knew I also had to travel to her birth place in the village of Meadows, Manitoba where she was born on June 2, 1931. What better occasion to take this trip to Canada than to combine it with the 80th anniversary celebration of the Gammalsvenskbyborna in Wetaskiwin last August. Said and done, off I went together with two of my sisters, Christina and Anette, on an emotional trip to find out more about our past.

The heartfelt welcome we experienced from everyone we came in contact with is one we will never forget. While in Wetskiwin, Christina and I stayed with Reg and Louise Buskas, an incredibly friendly and hospitable couple. We felt right at home the whole time, even though we met them for the very first time on the evening we arrived at their farm. (Now we are waiting for you to come to visit us in Sweden, like you promised.☺) Anette stayed with her family at a hotel in town.



Matilda (to the right in the photo) was my mother's godmother and babysitter in Meadows. If I'm not mistaken, she was the oldest participant at the Jubilee. I was very sad to hear that Matilda passed away in November. Ingrid, her daughter, is to the right of her. Also in the photo are Nels and Roxanne

On Saturday, Nels and Roxanne Buskas graciously invited us for lunch after our visit to the Heritage museum in Wetaskiwin. Nels is our mother's cousin. Their fathers were brothers. First Nels showed us the old train station, where our grandparents arrived together with other svenskby-families to Wetaskiwin.

(Some of them later moved on to

Meadows, Manitoba). We then spent the afternoon looking at old svenskby-photos and found out more about the Buskas family. Roxanne reminded us very much of our own mother. Not just her kindness, but even her coloring and facial features. (Is it perhaps the Swedish heritage?) We'd like to thank you both for a lovely afternoon.

The dinner on Saturday evening was very well organized. We met so many friendly people that we wished that the evening would never end. Christina and Anette participated in the auction. Anette purchased the original photograph from the day of the departure from the village in 1929. She has decided to donate it to Svenskbyföreningen in Sweden to be put in Svenskbygården in Roma, Gotland. This way everyone that visits Roma will be able to enjoy the framed photograph. (We just need to make good quality, professional copies of it first to keep in our homes.)

The lunch on Sunday, included an additional discovery for the three of us. Not only did we meet all of Nels' and Roxanne's children (some of which we had met before.) We also met five additional 2nd cousins, the children of Nels' sister Emma. It was a wonderful surprise for us. We actually met by sharing their snacks while waiting for lunch to arrive. So, in a way I am grateful for the food first taking a detour to another church.

One of the reasons for why this trip (and the one to Gammalsvenskby) has taken on such importance to me is that I never had the possibility to meet my grandparents. Sadly, they had both passed on before I was born. Therefore, I have felt like I have been missing a major part of my family's history. I have never heard the stories that, in many families, are passed on from grandparents to their grandchildren, so thank you all for having made this experience possible. My sisters and I now have wonderful memories for life. Hopefully, we'll meet some of you again either in Stockholm or on Gotland or perhaps even in Canada. Don't forget to look us up if you are planning a trip to our part of the world. Here is my email address: ammidaberius@gmail.com.



The photo will be donated to Svenskbygården in Roma, Gotland, for all to enjoy.



Anette, Anne-Marie and Christina (to the right in the photo) together with our Canadian relatives. We are very happy to have met you all.