



Picnic-picture in Platte

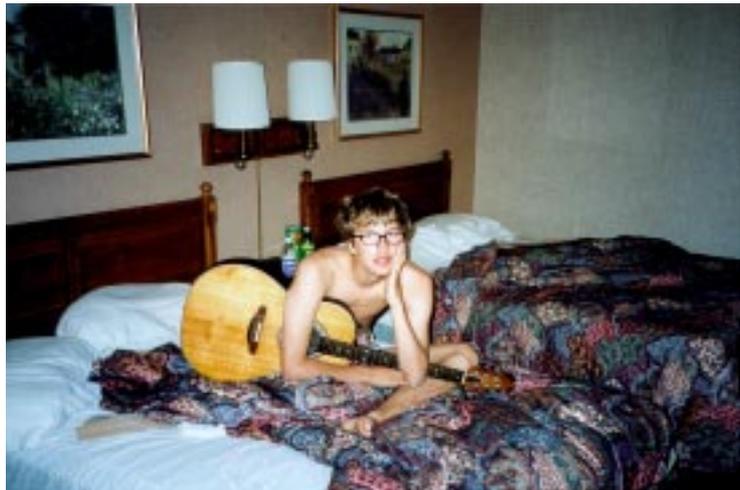
# Spinnel-Annas in US 2000

Lennart Stensson

## Spinnel-Annas On tour in USA 2000.

My personal diary from the Family Reunion  
Lennart

Most of the people in the group met at Good Morning Hotel close to the airport of Stockholm, and 5.00 in the morning we were checking in for Amsterdam. We had some problem with the tickets, but we could leave for for the "great adventure" as planned. The flight oversea was nice and calm, and we finally landed in Minneapolis. We got stuck at the airport for some hours because we missed six of our bags, and the line to the lost luggage-office was terrible. Ann-Christin Moonen, brought up in Minneapolis but with swedish parents, met us and took us to "Best Western Downtown". She was our tourguide in Minnesota, and had a lovely swedish-american accent and we found out that she knew everything worth knowing about the subject. The hotel was downtown but had no restaurant, and a crowd of starving sweedes went out to explore the american cooking. This turned out to be hard, since the 3rd of July is the day before the 4th of July - and almost everything was closed. After half an hour we finally found a place with "fast - food". Thanks heaven! Some had even found a pub, and told stories about the nice and cool beer!



*Johan*

### 4:th of July

We started the day with a guided tour in Minneapolis and St Paul.

AnnChristine told us about the newdowntown, so changed since our last visit (in 1980), and took us on a tour in the surroundings. Americans want to live in their own houses, and the older parts were great with big houses, green parks and lots of flowers. Minnesotais the land of 10000 lakes, and the lakes in Minneapolis was recreation areas for



*Ann-Christine Moonen, our guide*



the citizens. Parks and pathways and places for family picnics .

I St Paul we stopped at the city Hall and were invited to look at the beautiful statue the famous Swedish artist Carl Milles designed in white marble, a



*Carl Milles impressive statue*

A tour bus stopped in front of her house, and a crowd of hungry Swedes entered her beautiful house and garden! Her family and closest relatives helped her, and we had a wonderful picnic in the garden!



*Britt Lundgren, our host*

The team from Minneapolis was really beaten, so it was not a hit! Along the river there were a lot of "tents", and I thought it was just like Chicago, with a lot of different restaurants and food from all over the world...

celebration to the native tribes in the area. We also looked at the funny Snoopy-statues in different shapes, reminding of Schultz who lived in St Paul. Capitolium was an impressive House of Parliament, and we had an interesting tour in the beautiful rooms. Outside people had started the 4th of July celebrations in the streets.



*Karl and Snoopy*

The guided tour had a different ending. Britt Lundgren had asked if somebody would like to have lunch at her house, thought maybe some would be interested, but more than 50 people said "Yes, please!"



*A bus full of hungry people!*

Thanks Britt! This was special!

The younger people had a special tour in St Paul to look at the festivities, and made their own programs all through the US tour. Great!

Finally we had to say Thanks and good-bye and went back to the hotel.

After shower and relaxing we decided to celebrate 4th of July down by the river like most of the citizens.

Some of us first went to a baseball game in the dome. The team from Minneapolis



*A garden full of relatives*



*Lots of people and good music*

. Wrong! They just sold a lot of different stuff, not food and drinks! Finally we found a restaurant and were told to sit down outside and have a beer, and we'd have a table inside in an hour! When we finally got our table, we would have to wait at least another hour just to order the food. We wanted to see the fireworks, so

we said Thanks, and went out for a Hot Dog. Not the celebration dinner I had longed for!

The fireworks were great and a lot of people had gathered on the bridge and we really had a good time!

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### **Wednesday July 5**

Next morning a rainstorm had caused traffic-problems, and AnnChristine had a hard time to make it to the hotel. Our first stop was in Stillwater. If you have read



*Celebration dinner: Hot Dog!*



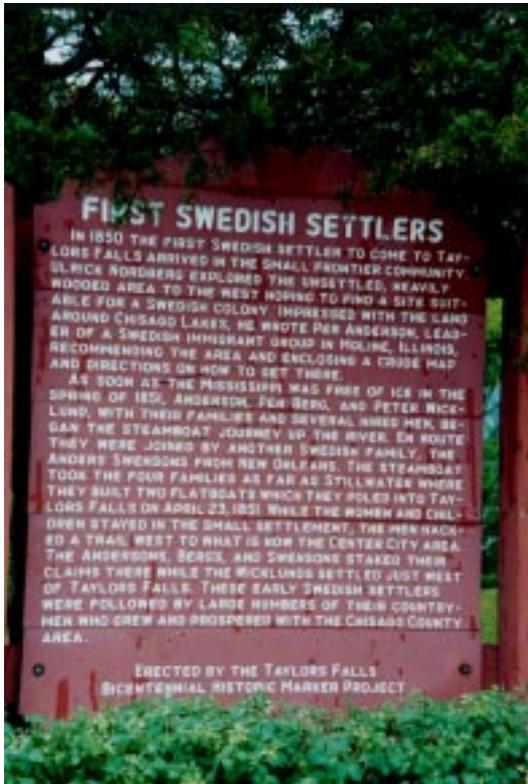
*Stillwater from the mountainside*

the books of Wilhelm Moberg, you will know that Stillwater was the town the Swedish settlers reached coming up the St Croix river. From this town they made their way up the river on rafts till they reached Taylor Falls where they couldn't pass the rapids. Stillwater is a beautiful town with a famous bridge and a lot of paddle-wheel boats. We had a look-out from the mountainside, and had a break for shopping.

We followed the river up-stream, looked at the beautiful areas in the river valley. Seemed to be a great place for canoeing!

Next stop was in Taylor Falls, where a sign told about the swedish settlers in the area. We had some pictures from the rapids and strolled this nice little town for an ice-cream.

In Scandia we made a stop for lunch, – AnnChristine hade made reservations for lunch in the church - and we had meatballs, herrings and potatoes served by ancestors to the swedish settlers.



*Taylor Falls*

It really tasted good! Close to the church they had managed to make a museum with buildings and things from the old days, and we had a great giuded tour in the buildings.

In Lindstrom we stopped at the statue of Karl-Oskar and Kristina, and we also sat down under the statue of Vilhelm Moberg on his bike. He lived and worked here for many years to collect stories and make re-



*Lunch in Scandia*

search for his books. The house he choosed to call the homestead of Karl-Oskar has now been moved half a mile and been rebuilt with a wouderful wiew of Lake Ki-Chi-Saga. The house is called "Nya Duvemåla". We were guided round the building, looked at the apple-tree which had an important place in the fiction, and walked down to the old graveyard by the lake. The life of Karl-Oskar and



*Kristina and Karl-Oskar in Lindstrom*



*The swedish group in front of Moberg on his bike*

Kristina are described so well and with so much feelings, that people today expect to find their gravestones in the graveyard!

On the way back to the hotel almost everybody in the bus fell asleep, and after a quick showed at the hotel we found our way to the "Mall of America", the second biggest mall in the world. (West Edmonton Mall we passed on our Canada-tour is the biggest)

Håkan och Margareta were interested in an special store for lamps, and found out they had better things back home. We met with Carol Pogue and her boy-friend, had an american burger and had a special ride by car through Minneapolis. Finally we stopped outside an HD-cafe, and found out we felt like home with people with black leather clothes,



*After a special day....*

## **Thursday July 6**

Leaving Minneapolis at 08.00 for a 700-km ride i bus. The driver was a charming lady and spoke a lot of life in US. I told about the country we passed through, and we sang some of the songs we should remember for the Family meeting. We made some short stops for icecream and coffee, for instance i Madelia, a small town where the citizen finally captured Younger Brothers, some of the robbers i Jesse James' gang. We stopped for lunch i Sioux Falls, and had a look at the rapids. Must have been a great scenery in the old days, before the power plant!

I have to come back to this town to figure out where my grandfather lived 1898. Some of his cousins settled in the area and I must have a lot of relatives on this branch as well?



*Nya Duvemåla*

tatoos and long black hair! A great rock'n roll band was playing, made it hard to speak naturally, but we had a great time! Thanks Carol!



*Wallpainting of the gunfigth in*

We had planned to be in Platte at 5 PM, and perfectly on time we stopped outside the Community Building. People from US were checking in, and it was a great feeling to see so many familiar faces again! Our hosts met us and with a lot of hugs and greetings we spread out in the Platte area. Rena Johnson at once took care of my family and explained that we would stay in her house as usual. She looked just the same as ten years ago, and her son Jeff came to spend the weekend with us. My cousin May



*The rapids in Sioux Falls*

McCaskell and her daughter Carol had driven for three days from British Columbia, and turned up just as we checked in. Great to see them, I'd never had an opportunity to see Carol before, just on pictures, a lovely girl!



*John L Johnsons home, our special home in the US*

We went to Johnson's place, and installed in the nice and cool apartment in the basement, wonderful in this heat outside. After dinner we met with May and Carol, and Jeff took us for a guided tour in the town. We stopped at the golf-course, had a tour on an old marry-go-round, and had a look at a new stable for Quarter-horses. A wonderful building with everything a horse could need, and we met some of the best horses in US. They even had a pub, - not for horses.

We had a great evening with relatives that really made us feel special!

## **Friday July 7**

Started with lunch at the Community building, and then our host-families had special programmes for their guests. Craig Johnson, his wife Marcia and their kids Emily, John and Joshua showed up with Jeff and his son Preston, and May and Carol followed us to Mitchell. Corn Palace was a strange building, since the beginning of last century all covered with corn cubs in different patterns and colours.

It was really hot outdoors, and we walked in the shade and found stores with AC - weak swedes! We looked at the Doll-museum, The



*In front of Corn Palace*

Baloon-Museum, The Pioneer-museum and had many thoughts about life in the old days. We found a new store with everything you could need in the Outdoors, and met almost half of the Swedish group. It was really cheap, I could have bought a new canoe for half the price in Sweden - too big for handluggage on the airplane, though. Bitte bought a fleecjacket - strange this in this summer heat!

My son Johan spent the day with the younger generation, swam in the river and made a visit to the



*What a shop for outdoor-lovers!*

The closest relatives had a hard day with hundreds of people gathering at the old farm expecting a day in happiness. I must say I admire these people who could organise such a wonderful day for us under these circumstances. Granps Lodge was the new name of the old homestead and the house was now rebuilt.

"Grandpa" Qualm was interested in golf, hunting, fishing and farming, and every room had its own character. A beautiful building, and a superb hunting lodge.



*A prariewagon in Mitchell*

Hutterite People, an interesting experience. In the evening we all met for dinner at the Community Building.

### **Saturday July 8**

Brunch i Community Building.

The day for the Family Party had a tragic start, since one of the Qualm family was missing on Friday evening, and they found her dead under her 4-wheeler.



*Brunch at the Community Building*

At noon people started to gather in the shadow of the trees, and some nice music bands played and sang. The younger generations played volleyball. I can't understand that how they managed in the heat. Instead I introduced "KUBB" - an old viking game - and much cooler!



*One of the great bands playing*

All families brought coolers with cola and beer, and I found out I had a can in my hand the whole afternoon! You could sit in the



*A hot boatride on the Missouri*

shadow and talk with people, take a ride on a horse-wagon, or for example have a boatride on the Missouri, a nice cooling ride - but you should have seen my red-burned knees!



*"KUBB" was introduced*

The World Championship in "Slätkäpp" didn't have too many competitors in the heat this year, but we have strong people in the family!

The new champions:

Girls	Jill Olson
Boys	Karl Engman
Men	Rick Lefont
Women	Jenny Dvorak



The Family Photo was taken. Sharon Huizenga was lifted in the air by a huge tractor, where she could look at all Spinnel-Annas.

The BBQ was a masterpiece, with all kind of tastes, flavours and colours. Our hostfamilies had brought different dishes and a huge table was ready for a hungry crowd!



*Den gamla kommittén njuter av aktiviteterna*



*Nice and cool in the shadow!*

The youngsters kept on their games with "bränn-boll", I just could make it one round of the game, but I think the kids liked it - maybe a game for US as well?

We tried to speak with as many relatives as possible before it was time to return to Platte. I had a chance to play some music with my cousin May before bedtime.



*BBQ-experts in action!*



*What a beautiful table!*

## Sunday July 9

The sunday programme started with a meeting at the Lutheran Church. A lot of people showed up, so different from Swedish churches. I had the honour of translating some of the words into Swedish. It was a different kind of Worship to God, the kids had their own part of the ceremony, and a lot of nice music and singing by the Qualm sisters.



*Children activities in the church*



*Craig and Rena*

The church has a different meaning for the people in SD than for us in Sweden, it more important in a social way. The people pay for their own church and I think Platte had 9 different churches and new ones are under construction!



*Craig standing by one of his 50 veteran cars*



*Jeff och Craig by the grave of John L Johnson*

After lunch we went to John L Johnsons grave, the head of the american branch of the family for

so many years. We made some stops to look at Craigs veterans - ha must have had at least 50 cars from the old days. Some 15 Pointiacs 1934-36, -if you don't know what to do on your free time - make Craig a call!

The water in Missouri was nice in the heat, and we stopped south of the bridge at Snake Creek and jumped into the water. The pebbles on the beach burned our feet, and we stayed in the water as long as possible. We also learned the right way to have a swim in the river: You take a cooler full of beer and put it on a floating tyre, Then you can cool your body from the inside and the outside at the same time!



*Enjoying life in the Missouri*



*Arizona dancers*

In the evening we were served dinner at the Community Building, and a program with music and dancing took place. Our Swedish group sang some typical Swedish songs, and I had some special music with my cousin May.



*Baywatch?*

Jamie and Dawn Pryor from AZ showed us how to dance, and the "Qualm Family Band?" played a lot of good music. The winners for World Championship in Slätkäpp



*Cousins with Swedish Folk Songs*

2000" were presented, and some Spinnel-Anna T-shirts were auctioning off, quite a show!

Finally I got an opportunity to say thank you to IlaVae Antonsen and the committees for coordinating, organizing and taking care of us all, I know about the hard work behind the success! I also had a chance to thank Darrel Leuthy for his great job with the family records.

It was a strange feeling to say thanks and good-bye, but I know we will meet again in Sweden in 2005! Welcome to Sweden, and love to you all!

## Monday July 10

10 PM we took off from the Community Building. Many hugs and good-byes, and even some tears - 'til we meet again!

The busdriver turned out to have been on the road since 2 in the morning, he almost fell asleep a couple of times and I had a hard time to keep him awake! We left Charles Mix County for Interstate 90, and the flat countryside amazed us.

We crossed the Missouri at Chamberlain, and I told about the Sioux and about the history of Black Hills.

We stopped for an icesream in Murdo, and left I 90 at Cactus Flat for a tour in the Badlands.

These amazing rocks once was the bottom of a big lake and was forced upwards when the Rockies were formed.

Rain and wind then made this sculptural landscape look like a part of the moon.

We stopped at Cedar Pass to walk on the rocks, take some pictures and buy some postcards.

The indians called this area "Land Bad", and you could understand why. How could people find their way through these rocks??



*Bad Lands - a fascinating landscape*

We stopped for lunch at Wall. This little town is a typical tourist trap, you can find adds on the road all round US: "You just have 1450 km to Wall Drug". We were told that the town began to grow when the owner of the drugstore offered free water to people passing through. Before the days of A.C. peolpe really could need cool water. Today you stop for food and for shopping, we found many interesting stores to explore!



*lunch in Deadwood*

At dinnertime we found out that the hotel in Rapid City was the same as on the tour in 1980, just had a new name. The youngsters found the pool refreshing, and we old folks took a walk downtown to see what had changed.

May and Carol showed up, they had left Platte just after the bus, and had passed us somewhere on the road.

This was the town of Francis Johnson, and Francis and Ilene came down to the hotel and took us to the Firestation for dinner. This restaurant had an own brewery, and we tested six different sorts of beer before we ordered the food. We had a great time!



*Swimmingpool - great!*



*Dinner at the Firestation*

## **Tuesday July 22**

Time for a tour in the Black Hills!  
One of the wishes from the swedes

was to see Deadwood, which wasn't planned by the agency in NY, something I understood after a while.

Spoke to the driver, who talked with office, and I was told everything was OK.

We passed Keystone and stopped at Mt Rushmore to see the fantastic faces in the rock, The entrance was all new since last time I was here, in a modern - classic way, focusing the faces.

We followed a guided tour to Bourlumeau studio, and were told the interesting story behind the faces.

Just before Custer we stopped at a new restaurant, where you pay for the food at the entrance, and could make your own choice from all different dishes. Perfect!



*Mount Rushmore, impressive sculptures!*

Crazy Horse turned out to be a failure. The bus just stopped at the entrance for pictures, and took off for Lead. It turned out that the entrance would cost just as much as the tour to Deadwood - our choice!

Made a short stop at the world second biggest goldmine in Lead - quite a hole I must say!

We made a stop in Deadwood with time for an ice-cream, beer, shopping or just to feel the wings of history. Scenes from the story of Wild Bill Hickock were played in the street and in Saloon Nr 10. I must say the slot-machines didn't fit in this history!

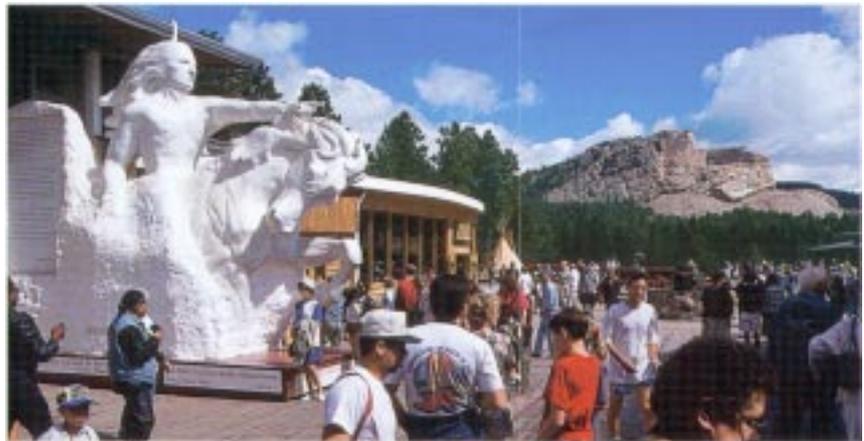
On our way back to Rapid City we passed Sturgis, this small town was to be crowded with 500000 MC-enthusiasts in a couple of weeks. Must be a special show!

We were picked up at the hotel by Francis Johnson, and had a nice ride in a Cadillac to their new home. The area had a golf course as a center, and all the houses were of the same white colour, and opened towards the open green space. Looked great!

Francis' sister and her husband was there, as well as Craig and Marcia. Curtis Johnson had made a break in the business of the state and with May and Carol, Monika and Roger Grape and Staffan Lundgren we enjoyed Francis' special BBQ and had a wonderful evening!

I made a phonecall to the aircompany, didn't trust NW and KLM, and reconfirmed all our tickets.

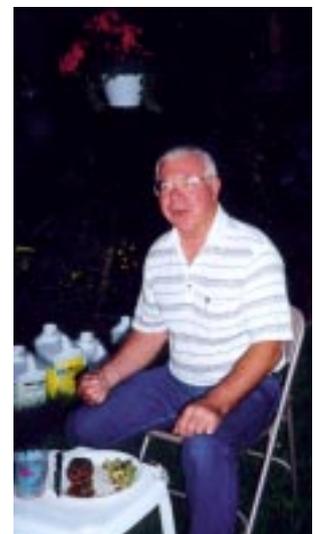
Back at the hotel I found the hotelroom in the temperature of a Finnish sauna, and got a key to a new room. Bitte had some strange problem with her hip and didn't want to move, so I closed the hot AC and opened the window. When it finally started to feel comfortable the afterparty from the night club round the corner started outside. Didn't sleep too much that night!



*Crazy Horse - the mountain in the background is to be a statue!*



*Streetshow in Deadwood*



*King of BBQ - Francis*

## Wednesday July 12

Time for us to move on. People going back to Sweden started at 9, and people going south were to leave at 4PM. They had a most interesting tour to the airbase with Francis as a guide.

I made sure that all swedes got on their plane back home, and found out that Minneapolis airport isn't my lucky place. The plane for Buffalo was not fit for flight, and next plane as well. Finally after three hours we took off and landed in Buffalo, where Christer, Bittes brother, met us and in the night we drove to Toronto.

Had a great week in Ontario before going back home to Sweden. Sure a wonderful summer!



*Good-bye in Minneapolis*

