

The Country of Finland

# Jim and Emmy's Travel Journal

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1979

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We arrived at the Luxembourg Airport on Aug 26, bought a camper at the US Army base in Mannheim, and visited Emmy's cousins and West Germany for a few days. We traveled by ferry to Denmark, another to Sweden, then by overnight ferry from Stockholm, Sweden to Helsinki, Finland.

### SF, Helsinki, Sep 11, Tue

We arrived in Helsinki between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning. It was raining and dark and difficult to find our way. After we arrived somewhere near Ron and Hagar's we bought a street map. Then when we got nearer to Ronnie's home we found road construction, so we hired a taxi to let us follow him the rest of the way.

The house where they live is large, old, and in need of plumbing and heating repairs, besides other problems. In the evening Ron and Jim took the train to downtown Helsinki. Ron for a meeting, and Jim to look around.

### SF, Helsinki, Sep 12 Wed

Took the kids to a baby sitter today and Hagar went with us to downtown Helsinki. The weather is nice. Emmy and Hagar shopped and had a Finnish Pizza lunch while Jim went to the Olympic stadium and looked around the town.

We found it not as interesting as Stockholm, but a very livable city. Did not seem to have much tourist appeal. The carrots purchased in the Helsinki marketplace, complete with dirt, were the best carrots ever tasted.

In the evening Hagar, Joanna and Jim went to the local sauna at the High School. It costs very little, has a separate sauna for men and for women, and a very, very cold swimming pool for Hagar and Joanna, but not for Jim.

### SF, Helsinki, Sep 13 to 16, - Thu to Sun - 154 - 1,491

Did a variety of things during these few days, including a drive to Lousia to visit Hagar's mother and other members of her family. Mother lives in a very nice farmhouse and of course she had to fix us a very special meal. A great variety of delicious food including meat wrapped in a dough.

One day Emmy had her hair washed, etc., at the beauty parlor and we went to a laundromat to get some clothes washed and dry cleaned. It seems to cost a lot of money, at least four times what it would have cost at home. Emmy fixed fudge and popcorn, a couple of times. Some of us went to the sauna again, while Grandma played with the Grandkids. This trip was the first time we saw Peter, he is about eight months old and was born in Finland. Joanna is able to translate

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between English, Swedish, and Finnish. (A skill that was promptly forgotten upon her arrival in the US a year later.)

### SF, Helsinki, Sep 17, Mon - 164 - 1,655

Left at 7:00 AM. Ron had to go to Nokia to teach a class (he teaches English), and since we were going that direction, we took him to his class, and met some of his students. It was the day of the Tampere annual "sidewalk" sale, and of course it was raining, but not too hard.

Arrived in Vasa about 2:00 PM to visit with Hagar's sister and her husband and son. We arranged for Kaj to meet us at the railroad station parking lot. We felt he could recognize a camper from the US easier than we could recognize a certain house in Finland. Kaj's father built the house some years ago, and they have recently remodeled and added a bath, some other space, and an indoor sauna that Jim enjoyed very much. (They have since visited in our home in California.)

Kaj learned his English by watching TV. They show programs from the US, leave the English voice alone, and add Swedish subtitles. Don't know what language is spoken the most, but seems Swedish may be more popular than Finnish.

Margaretta is a nurse and did not get home from work until 8:45 PM. She walked into the house with a big smile and a huge bouquet of flowers she had picked from the hospital grounds. What a delightful woman she is! Certainly wished we could speak Swedish, or that Margaretta had watched more TV!

### SF, Vasa, Sep 18, Tue - Margaretta - 300 - 1,955

We slept well, but had planned to be up in time to see them before they went off to work. Must have misunderstood when they were to leave, as they were gone when we came downstairs.

When we went back downtown we tried to buy some cooking gas. We don't know how much propane gas we have, but the hose connections they had in Vasa would not fit our "Made in the US" propane tank. Looked through the town and bought some small drinking glasses, made in Russia. We got to the ferryboat port for the trip to Sweden, about noon. The ferryboat ride will be six or seven hours and it will be dark when we arrive in Sweden. We ate smorgasbord in the ferry boat's restaurant, cost was about \$7 or \$8 each.

Boarded a ferry to Sundsvall, Sweden. We then visited along the Norwegian coast (including many small ferryboats), and another ferryboat to Denmark. We crossed Germany, spent a few days in The Netherlands, then Belgium. Then we entered France, on our way to Paris.

We drove across France and continued on our way to visit Spain. After a couple of days in Portugal, back to Spain, then spent two days on a tour to Morocco in Africa. Spent more time in Spain, then drove to the France Riviera. We drove east along the Mediterranean Sea to near Genoa, Italy, then north and through the tunnel under Mont Blanc and back into France. We returned to Mettlach, Germany, and parked the camper at Toni's neighbor. From Luxembourg's airport, on November 29 we flew to Iceland for a couple of days, then home to the US.