

## **Historical Time Travel. Skansenskolan, Mörbylånga, Grade 8 Södra Bruket, “The Southern Factory”, at Degerhamn 1900**

### **Facts**

#### **Sweden at the turn of the century 1900**

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great change and upheaval in Sweden. Many people left the countryside and the life as farmers, for an industrial job in the city. There were many new technical inventions in the community, such as railways, cars, telephones, electricity etc. Most people believed in the future and thought that almost anything was possible. But there were still big differences between rich and poor, new and old.

Everybody read the news about discoveries, thrilling stories of great explorers and for example life in America, in the local newspaper. Many people emigrated to America (1,2 million Swedes altogether) to build a better future for themselves and their families. They wrote letters back and sent money to their relatives in Sweden. Some even came back after a few years. Others went to Germany to work for a year or two.

#### **Scenario, Södra Bruket, autumn in the year 1900**

It is Saturday morning in the early autumn and it's very busy at the Southern factory at Degerhamn. Like all Saturdays work will finish a little bit earlier today.

The inspector gives the duties in the morning. His wife needs new clothing pegs so some of the men will make some. The wife in one of the very poor families has asked her neighbours for help. Some young women will help her with the cleaning and cooking while the men are at work at the factory.

At the same time as working men and women are talking about the current issues. One has heard that a socialist agitator is coming to the factory. The socialist mentions the social injustices there are in society and encourages people to work for change, to form a labour union and maybe even make revolution.

There is also a lot of talking and discussing about democracy and that every man and woman should have equal voting. Some of the women are attracted to the new ideas but others like the old traditional society better.

The foreman of the factory has been to America and say that everything is bigger and better over there. Can we trust him? Many dream of going far away to America, to Australia or even to South Africa and find a new and better life.

A musician is often coming on Saturdays and there will be some dancing. Is he coming today?

### **Key questions**

- How do we find life at the industry? Does the owner use us? What about forming a labour union?
- Democracy and social injustice. How do we change society in a better and more equal way, what is our way of democracy? Socialism? Voting for both men and women?
- How do we want the future to be? For ourselves? For the community?  
Should we stay or leave? Maybe even emigrate to America? Or to South Africa?

## **Roles**

The students are workers and young maids at the factory

Inspector

Foreman

Workers and workers wives

Musician

The people from South Africa are seamen who have been working on the route Cape Town-Liverpool and now are employed on the route Hull - Kalmar.

## **Activities**

- Make washing pegs
- Chop wood
- Make paint
- Make wooden spoons/wire work
- Sharpen the tools
- Clean up
- Wash the clothes
- Clean the house
- Textile work
- Cook the food
- Set the table

## **Time plan**

07.00 Set up

08.30 Learners arrive, introduction, dress up

09.30 Time travel

The activities start

10.30 Coffee

11.00 The work continues

12.15 Meal

13.00 The socialist arrives, the inspector

13.20 Dance, music

13.35 The photographer

13.45 Time travel

Reflection

14.30 Learners leave

Clean up, wash up

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Peter Danielsson, Ebbe Westergren

Kalmar Läns Museum

## **Role cards**

You are South African sailors who have been working on the passenger ship Octavia operating the route Liverpool - Cape Town. This year, 1900, you are tired of that work and want to see some other parts of the world than the Cape Colony and England. You decide to take jobs on a ship going with cargo between Hull in England and Kalmar. The ship brings coal from Hull to Kalmar and timber on the way back. When you have a day off in Kalmar you take the steamboat to Degerhamn to see a little bit of Öland.

You listen to the workers discussing their lives and ideas. You talk about your life on the sea and in the Cape Colony and Natal. You mention the Anglo-Boer War and your opinion about that.

Think about the key questions.

You are (first) mate, cook, steward/stewardess, machine operator etc on the ship.  
Choose a South African name from the turn of the century 1900.