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## West Riverside 1870, a historic drama

We are glad that you and your class have accepted our invitation to take part in a historic drama at West Riverside Historic Site.

### Who we are, All-Time History

We are four people from Kalmar County Museum, south-east Sweden, that are going to lead this drama. Two of us are archaeologists/ historians, two are teachers, all of us working at the County Museum in Kalmar. In Sweden, mostly in the County of Kalmar, we help schools in their studies in local history. We write educational materials for pupils and teachers, we take part in historical radio and TV-programs, we lead study days for teachers, and we do historical dramas or role-plays with pupils based on their local history. The dramas are time-travels to another time, the time depending on what is known in the source material or what we can see in the local environment. We do time-travels to the stone-age, the bronze-age, the viking-age, the middle ages, the 19<sup>th</sup> century or... We do it for all ages of pupils, from nursery schools to high schools and college classes. The dramas consists of a lot of practical activities, based on the idea "learning-by-doing".

The time-travels are very popular in Kalmar County. More than a hundred schools and perhaps 200 classes every year take part. The Kalmar County Museum has now got a special commission from the Swedish government to spread this idea to schools and museums in the rest of country. We have been abroad a couple of times but it is the first time we do these time-travels in the USA.

### A day in May 1872 at the log-cabin of Isaac and Christina Edblad

#### Background, facts

The Edblad family emigrated from Hässjö in Jämtland, north Sweden, 1857. They went by boat from Trondheim in Norway to New York, then along the Mississippi to Wisconsin. After troubles with the Sioux-Indians they left for Cambridge, Minnesota in 1859, settled at the Rum River and built their own log cabin.

The population in Minnesota grew rapidly at this time. Most of the people were farmers but some were trappers, hunting in the woods. The new industries, lumber yards and mining needed workers. Also the cities of St.Paul and Minneapolis were growing very fast. This was a time of fast change and a lot of new things happening.

#### 1872

The Edblads are farmers, growing mostly wheat. They have cattles and sometimes do a little hunting in the woods. The father is Isaac (55 years old), his wife Christina (50). They have five children: Karin Maria (31), Olof (29), Brita Märta (27), Margareta (25) and Christffer (9). Only Christoffer is still living at the house, the others have left but often come to visit (Karin Maria is a teacher, Olof a post-man).

The Edblads are religious people. In the log-cabin people from the neighboring farms and villages meet on Sundays, listening to Isaac Edblad reading the Bible and the Book of Sermons.

The indians, Chippewa, are common guests in the cabin, curious and perhaps looking for some food.



New Swedish immigrants of the area often come to Edblads. Isaac and Christina let them stay there until they have bought their own land. The Edblads has good contact with people in Sweden. Often there is a letter from Sweden to Isaac and Christina and every year they take care of new immigrants, learning them about the new country.

### **Scenario, At the log-cabin of the Edblad family in May 1872**

This special day in May 1872 the Edblads are very busy. There are a lot of work at the fields. Unfortunately, Isaac has a bad foot and can not take part in the work.

A couple of months ago they received a letter from Karl Oskar Karlsson, Kalmar, Sweden. Karl Oskar is a relative of Christina, emigrating from Sweden with his daughter Lina. They want to settle in Minnesota. Later perhaps the rest of the family will come, too. In Sweden there are problems with bad harvests and starvation. Isaac and Christina have promised to take care and help Karl Oskar and Lina. Any day the immigrants could come. Isaac and Christina are waiting eagerly. The neighbours, specially the kids, are curious about the newcomers. Some of the kids have emigrated from Sweden, Denmark or Norway and are interested in news from the old country. They come to the log-cabin this day also to help Isaac (have heard about his injured foot) and Christina. Christina needs help with washing and cleaning. Everything has to be neat and clean when the immigrants from Kalmar come.

### **Time-schedule**

The class arrives. Someone of us is there to meet them. The kids and teachers dress in 19<sup>th</sup> century clothes. Time-travel to 1872.

The kids (and teachers) take part in the life of the Edblad family, see the scenario.

At the end you do a time-travel back to the year 2000 and undress.

The whole drama takes 2½ hours and includes a little bit food.

### **Note**

Try to be in time.

We are both outdoors and indoors. Be sure to dress in clothes depending on the weather.

There are more houses at the historic site, houses that are not part of the drama. We try to ignore those houses that day.

This is a drama. That means that when we have made the time-travel back to 1872 we ignore all modern things and all the time try to talk as if it is really the year 1872. 1872 is present time.

### **Welcome**

We hope for a day full of experience.

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Tina Lindström

Kalmar County Museum