St. Croix Scenic Byway
Swedish Ring
Teacher Study Guide

This Guide is designed to be used with students before and after visiting Byway locations associated with the Swedish Ring Historic Backway story theme that recounts Swedish arrival and heritage experiences in the St. Croix valley. It has been designed to include information and activities that will increase student understanding of the hardships and challenges faced by Swedish immigrants who left their homeland for a new life on the American frontier. This Teacher Guide may be reproduced for handouts to your students but not reproduced for profit.

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Who, What, When, Where:

The Minnesota St. Croix Scenic Byway is a roadway that travels 124 miles from Point Douglas, to Askov, Minnesota; along the route there are many stories of history and culture. The Swedish Ring Historic Backway covers a portion of the route between Stillwater and Almelund, Minnesota and still to this day has the largest concentration of authentic history to explore.

The Swedish Ring Historic Backway is a series of roads that wind in and out of historic villages and settlement sites that pre-date the Minnesota Territory and State of Minnesota. While the outer Swedish Ring road is hardly circular, it presents a well-rounded Swedish immigrant experience and explores the contemporary Swedish heritage that grew out of those 19th century pioneer arrivals

The Swedish Ring roads that you will experience, were selected to guide appreciation for Swedish heritage experiences that date from the 1850s, or even earlier, and continue to this day. The Ring route is a way to retell important immigrant arrival stories and to reveal the triumphs and travails the American frontier had in store for these early pioneers. The Swedish Ring experience is also devoted to highlighting traditions passed down from earlier generations, and to telling simple stories that are emblematic of Swedish immigrant families. Finally, to complete the journey, the physical Swedish Ring route leads back to a point of logical beginning, Scandia, site of the first Swedish settlement in Minnesota.

The Swedish Ring Historic Backway exits from the Byway in Marine on St. Croix, the oldest European settlement site in Minnesota, takes Old Marine Trail to the site of the first Swedish settlement in Minnesota, travels through the beautiful Chisago Lakes area and the communities of Scandia, Chisago City, Lindström and Center City, turns north through rolling farmland to the Swedish community of Almelund. It then makes its way back south along a segment of the Scenic Byway that leads to the old river towns of Franconia and Taylors Falls, from which many 19th century Swedish immigrants, after arriving by riverboat, set out on foot and by wagon to stake a claim to land on the American frontier as they pursued a new and better life in America.

Time Line:

- 1840's Settlers arrived in the Marine area from Ireland, Germany, England, but mainly Sweden.
- 1847 The Marine General Store was built; it is still in operation today.
- 1850 Three young men from Sweden—Carl A. Fernstrom, Oscar Roos, and August Sandahl—established a farm near Hay Lake
- 1852 Sven Anderson built a log cabin about two miles northeast of Marine.
- 1855 The Hay Lake School was first organized.
- 1858 May 11 Minnesota became a State.
- 1850 Three young men from Sweden—Carl A. Fernstrom, Oscar Roos, and August Sandahl—established a farm near Hay Lake and built the first Swedish log home in Minnesota. .
- 1852, Ansel Smith made a claim near the St. Croix River and platted the village of Franconia
- 1855). Glader Cemetery was established, the oldest Lutheran cemetery in Minnesota.
- 1856 Elim Church building (Gammelkyrkan), which is the oldest Lutheran church building in Minnesota was built it now resides at the Gammelgarden Museum.
- 1860 Carl and Lena Kajsa Linn family built a home that was later moved to the Ki Chi Saga Park in 1995 to represent the Karl Oskar House.
- 1872 Christ Lutheran Church and the Stone House were built in Marine
- 1896 The Hay Lake School building was built and remained in use until 1963.
- 1916 English sermons were first spoken in the Almelund Swedish church, up until this time all sermons were spoken in Swedish. The schools Swedish textbooks were also replaced with English ones and Swedish was forbidden to be taught.
- 1938 Sven Anderson cabin moved to Judd Street in Marine for the centennial celebration. It now sits along side the old Mill Pond.
- 1995 the Ki Chi Saga Park was created near Lindstrom, Minnesota, to represent the Karl Oskar homestead.
- 1996 King Carl Gustaf XVI and Queen Silvia of Sweden visited the Carl Oskar site.

Fact Or Fiction:

Karl Oskar was the first Swedish Immigrant to arrive in Minnesota Fact or Fiction

The flow of settlers into this county swelled greatly from 1868 to 1872, due largely to a considerable upsurge in Swedish immigration resulting from agricultural failures in Sweden during 1868 and 1869. Fact or Fiction

Lots of other people came to America during the 1850's to 1890's, but the Swedish people were the only people that settled in the St. Croix Valley area. Fact or Fiction

The Swedish flag is yellow/gold cross on a blue background. Fact or Fiction

Marine on the St. Croix is the oldest settlement in Minnesota. Fact or Fiction

The name Almelund in the Swedish language means, "elm grove." Fact or Fiction

The Part You Play:

When you are on a field trip to an historic site, on a field trip or sitting in class listening to a teacher or other adult telling you about history you have a part to play.

- Listen carefully and watch closely.
- Laugh when something is funny.
- Applaud when the time is right.
- Talking or whispering is not okay; it will distract the person presenting the information to you.
- The more you respect the people you are learning about the more open your thoughts and heart are to learn about what is being said.
- The more you learn about others the less you will fear them.
- The less you fear someone the more comfortable you are around all kinds of people.
- The more people you know or know about the more interesting your life becomes.
- Our ability to see is a powerful tool for experiencing the world around us. We did not live in the 1880's, so to learn about that time we need to listen and imagine.
- Sound adds a richness that sight alone cannot provide.
- When listening be aware of the noise your movement makes, when you walk do you hear your feet shuffle or your clothes rustle?
- Hearing about life in the 1880's is an option we have for experiencing it and imagining what it was like to be there.
- Listen quietly and immerse yourself in the historic time period of the 1880's and the immigration of people from Sweden, their customs, values and hardships.

Ask Yourself---What Did You Learn?

1. I can identify the first community settled in the St. Croix River Valley

2. I know in what community the first Swedish people settled.

3. I can identify where the majority of the Swedish people settled

4. I learned about the hardships of Pioneer life? Some examples are:

5. I learned about the immigration of the Swedish people to the St. Croix Valley in the 1800's. They lived differently then we do, but in many ways their lives are similar to ours today.

6. I learned some of the ways that the early Swedish settlers handled hardships?

7. I can now identify some of the reasons my ancestors came to America?

8. I now understand some of the reasons people are still immigrating to America today.

Swedish Ring Circle A Word Puzzle:
Insert puzzle

Additional Information

www.stcroixscenicbyway.org
Marine on St Croix 150 Years of Village Life, James Taylor Dunn, 1989
Marine on St Croix From Lumber Village to Summer Haven 1838-1968, James Taylor Dunn
Saving the River, The Story of the St. Croix River Association 1911-1986, James Taylor Dunn
The St. Croix Midwest Border River, James Taylor Dunn, 1979
Life & Times in Taylors Falls, Taylors Falls Historical Society
Minnesota Beginnings, Records of the St. Croix County Wisconsin Territory 1840-1849, History Network of Washington County, 1999
The Taylors Falls & Lake Superior Railroad, Richard E. Thompson, S J Monson, 2005
History of the Saint Croix Valley, Vol 1 & 2, Augustus B Easton, 1909
Washington: A History of the County, Willard E Rosenfelt, 1977
An Early Look At Chisago County, Chisago County Bicentennial Committee1976
The Human Imprint, The Buildings and Sites of Center City, Minnesota, Center City Historic Preservation Commission, 1995
Shafer Swamp to Village, Vivian Fry Myers, 1978
St. Croix Tales and Trails, Rosemarie Vezina Braatz, 2005
The St Croix River Road, Russ Hanson, 2006

All books listed, if available for sale, can be found on Amazon.com.
Check out local and on-line library sources or for research only, not for check out, at the office of the St. Croix Conservation Study Center, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin.