

Swedish American Historical Society of Wisconsin



COMING EVENTS--

March 21—Swedish Film, by Cookie Anderson

April 11—Swedish Genealogy Research Group

May 16—Bishop Hill by Martha Bergland

June 21—Midsommar-Heidelberg Park

MARCH 2026

MARCH FIKA MEETING: SWEDISH FILM—Saturday, March 21, 2026—1:30 PM.

Cookie Anderson is back; with a presentation on Swedish Film, including information about the most famous film directors and movie makers and the movies they made. The meeting is at the Martin Luther Lutheran Church, 9235 W. Bluemound Road, just east of the Milwaukee Zoo.

In the January 2025 Fika meeting, Cookie talked about Swedish authors. She reviewed 14 different writers from the 18th century to the present. She also had an idea to include Swedish Trivia in the Fika meetings—10 questions that everyone participating could answer before the meeting, and then we would quickly review the answers at the meeting. For the March meeting, you can get the questions through the link following newsletter link. Participating is all voluntary and there are no specific rules, however if you participate you may you may end up with a small price.



So, for March 21 meeting, the trivia questions will be an attachment in this email..

After the presentation and reviewing the Trivia questions, enjoy traditional Fika the Swedish way. If you can, bring a dish to share. Do you have a favorite Swedish recipe you want to share? If so, bring it and we can add it to the website Swedish Food Heritage page.



REMINDER TO ALL SAHSWI MEMBERS IN 2026 – FROM BEV WENZEL

With your January newsletter, you received your 2026 SAHSWI membership renewal form. Did you send it in with your renewal or did you set it aside for later action? Most of our members have submitted their 2026 dues, but if you did set it aside, please send it now! Send your \$15 check made out to SAHSWI and address to:

Irene Roberts, Treasurer
SAHSWI
P.O. Box 166
Eagle, WI 53119

Or bring it to the next Fika Meeting on March 21st. Can't remember if it was sent in? Call Bev at 262-781-6113.

Did you know we are a national organization with members numerous states in the U.S. including...

Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Colorado, Arizona, Tennessee.

This year we have become an international organization with members maintaining membership as they move to County Cork in Ireland and to Cuenca in Ecuador. Their ancestors emigrated to America and Wisconsin. Now in this generation, these members have migrated on to other parts of the world.

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**THE FALUN COPPER MINE**--(Swedish: *Falu Gruva*) was a mine in [Falun, Sweden](#), that operated for a millennium from the 10th century to 1992. It produced as much as two-thirds of Europe's copper needs and helped fund many of Sweden's wars in the 17th century. Technological developments at the mine had a profound influence on mining globally for two centuries.<sup>[2]</sup> The mine is now a museum and in 2001 was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

There are no written accounts establishing exactly when mining operations at Falun Mine began, but some studies indicate that mining operations started sometime around the year 1000. Objects from the 10th century have been found containing copper from the mine. In the beginning, operations were of a small scale, with local farmers gathering ore, [smelting](#) it, and using the metal for household needs.

Around the time of Magnus III, king of Sweden from 1275 to 1290, a more professional operation began to take place. Nobles and foreign merchants from Lübeck had taken over from farmers. The merchants transported and sold the copper in Europe but also influenced the operations and developed the methods and technology used for mining. The first written document about the mine is from 1288; it records that, in exchange for an estate, the Bishop of Västerås acquired a 12.5% interest in the mine.

By the mid 14th century, the mine had grown into a vital national resource, and a large part of the revenues for the Swedish state in the coming centuries would be from the mine. The then king, Magnus IV, visited the area personally and drafted a charter for mining operations, ensuring the financial interest of the sovereign.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Economic impact**--Sweden had a virtual monopoly on copper which it retained throughout the 17th century. In 1690, Erik Odhelius, a prominent [metallurgist](#), was dispatched by the King to survey the European metal market. Although copper production had already begun to decline by the time he made his report, something Odhelius made no secret of, he stated, "For the production of copper Sweden has always been like a mother, and although in many places within and without Europe some copper is extracted it counts for nothing next to the abundance of Swedish copper".<sup>[11]</sup> By modern standards, however, the output was not large. Copper production declined during the 18th century, and the mining company began diversifying. It supplemented copper extraction with iron and timber production. Production of the iconic [Falun red](#) paint began in earnest. In the 19th

century, iron and forest products continued to grow in their importance. In 1881 gold was discovered in Falun Mine, resulting in a short-lived gold rush. A total of 5 tonnes of gold would eventually be produced.<sup>[1]</sup> By the late 20th century, the mine was no longer economically viable. On December 8, 1992, the last shot was fired in the mine, and all commercial mining ceased. Today the mine is owned by the Stora Kopparberget foundation which operates the museum and tours.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1922 the old administrative building (Swedish: *Stora Gruvstugan*) that had been built in the 1770s was converted into the Mining Museum. In 1966 the building had to be demolished due to an expansion of the mine and a copy was made.<sup>[16]</sup> The museum has around 100,000 visitors per year.<sup>[17]</sup> It displays the history of mining at Falun Mine through the centuries; including the production of minerals, models of machinery, tools, and the people at the mine.



Figure 1 Main Museum Building

In 2001 Falun Mine was selected as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, one of 15 in Sweden. In addition to the mine itself, the World Heritage area covers the town of Falun, including 17th century miners' cottages, residential areas, and Bergsmansbygden, a wider area that the free miners settled and in which they often built estates mirroring their wealth.

As noted earlier, nobody really knows how mining started in Falun. However, there is an old folk tale about the discovery of the mine, as by Johanna Nybelius, the Falun Museum educator.

*“Once upon a time, it was common for farmers to let the livestock graze freely in the woods far away from the farm. Young men and women were tasked with looking after the animal and they could spend many months alone in the woods during the summer, with only the cows, sheep and goats for company. According to this fold story, a farmer had hired a gitrl to take care of his herd of goats an she lived in a little shed while she tended the animals. One of th goats was a majestic billy goat called Kåre. Kåre, like many goats, drifted during the days but came home in the evenings. One evening , the girl saw that Kåre had gotten red stains on his horns. At the next morning Kåre ran out into the woods again, and once again in the evening, he returned with red horns. When this happened the third night in a row, she needed to tell the farmer.*

*“After she had let the goats out for the day, she walked the long way back to the farm. When the farmer saw her returning, he got curious and angry that she had left the animals by themselves in the woods. The girl told him about Kåre the billy goat and hid red horns.*

*“When the farmer heard about the red stains, he became very interested. The farmer, like many other farmers in the region, was also skilled in working with iron. In those days, iron was mostly taken up from lakes and bogs and smelted in small furnaces close to the farm. The farmer knew that a telltale sign of an area rich in iron was that the water draining from the bog was colored red.*

*“The farmer decided to follow the girl into the woods and see Kåre for himself. When Kåre came back to the little shed in the woods, the farmer could see for himself that not only the horns, but the pelt as well, had large red stains on them.*

*“The next morning, the farmer and the girl decided to see where Kåre went during the day. They followed him and suddenly they came to a clearing in the woods. In the clearing there was a bog, and in the bog, there were a couple of rock formations cropping up. As soon as Kåre reached the bog he started to rub his horns against the rocks, and immediately they turned red. The farmer walked closer to the rocks and he saw that they were glistening in the sunlight. He realized that Kåre had just not found a bog filled with iron. In the ground you had something even more valuable. In the rocks he could see the rich copper shing up at him.*

*Soon the farmer returned to the bog with proper tools and started to mine the copper and that is how Falun Mine was discovered a long time ago. That is, if you believe this old folktale.”*

*NORDIC FOLKLIFE—UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—*  
**Dedicated to Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest**

Whether it be through listening to a Norwegian fiddle tune, admiring a piece of Swedish folk art, or enjoying a decadent helping of Danish kringle or Finnish squeaky cheese, life in the Upper Midwest brims with reminders of Nordic mass migrations to North America, events that transformed the Nordic countries as well as the United States. Millions of Scandinavians immigrated to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, settling predominantly in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Northern Michigan, and surrounding states. While some eventually returned to their countries of origin, the vast majority of these immigrants remained permanently in their new country, contributing vitally to its culture and society. So ubiquitous and understated is this Nordic presence that it often goes unnoticed, with only sporadic and uncoordinated attempts to document and analyze its many cultural effects in contemporary Upper Midwest life. Following is one of the events that Folklife helps to sponsor.

**Kom så dansar vi! Celebrating Young People in Scandinavian American  
Folk Music and Dance  
Syttende Mai Weekend—May 15-17  
Stoughton Norwegian Dancers**

The dancers will light up the city with traditional Scandinavian folk dance, live music, and the unmistakable spirit that has defined this group for more than 70 years. The group is made up of Stoughton High School sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Each year they tour the US, bringing their signature mix of heritage, humor, and high-energy performance to audiences nationwide.



For times and locations, please go to [www.stoughtinnorwegiandancers.com/syttende-mai](http://www.stoughtinnorwegiandancers.com/syttende-mai) or <https://folklife.wisc.edu> for more general information.

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