

Our Family Links

The Groberg/Holbrook Family History Association Newsletter

Issue 16, Spring/Summer 2011

Family Connections Throughout the World

Richard Groberg

Richard and Ronda Groberg had the opportunity to serve in the Helsinki Finland Temple from 2009 to 2011. During this time we had contact with many saints from the temple district which then included most of Russia, Finland, Estonia and Lithuania, spanning eleven time zones. We met many saints who knew members of the extended Groberg family. This is a sampling of our contact and various relationships with some of these great saints. This list is not inclusive of every contact, but a sampling and remembrance of some of their stories.

Bob and Julia Blair served in the Baltic States from 1993 to 1996, where Bob served as the mission president. Bob also served a mission in Finland from 1950 to 1953; while there he taught and baptized a family named Hartiala. The Hartiala's had a young daughter called Mimú who later migrated to Boston where she met and married a recent convert named Jim Sloan. The Sloan family had recently moved back to Finland when Dick met Mimú in the temple. She was called to be the relief society president during a sacrament meeting we spoke at in Tampere. When the Bishop asked for a sustaining vote for Sister Sloan, she corrected him by adding Hartiala to her last name. This was the



Dick Groberg with members of the Hartiala Family

6th time she had been called as relief society president. The other 5 times were in the Boston area. Her husband Jim was in the high priest group leadership and conducted the Priesthood meeting. Her son was in the Helsinki Marja Niemi ward and taught the Sunday school lesson when we visited there. They were regular temple attenders and researched and performed ordinances for both of their families. Dick worked with Brother Sloan, his son and grandson in performing baptisms for deceased family members. Sister Hartiala remembered both Dick and Bob from when they were young missionaries. The Tampere ward was happy they moved to Finland.

Brother and Sister Hales were faithful members in Vilnius, Lithuania. Brother Hales

spoke at sacrament meeting and taught the Priesthood lesson one Sunday we were present. He is from the Pocatello area, where he was a doctor. He has a beautiful Russian wife who attended the temple regularly. They both asked us to extend greetings to the Blairs.

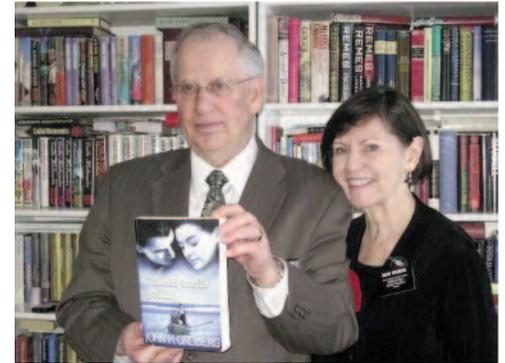
The Kempainen family is a very active family in Finland. They have had contact with the Blairs for many years. Brother Kempainen served as a counselor for President Blair in Estonia. In Finland, brother Kempainen served on the High council, his wife, in the Stake Primary and their son, in the Helsinki 3rd Ward Bishopric. All attended the temple.

Erki Koiv from Estonia was called by Bob Blair to serve his mission when Bob was President of the Baltic States Mission. Erki is now District President in Estonia and leads his group of Estonians often to the temple, usually traveling by boat. He sometimes drives a large van and brings his family and a group of faithful saints to the temple. He and his wife work as temple ordinance workers.

Many others sent greetings to the Blairs. Some served in the Baltics with the Blairs, including Esko Lethinen, the Timotov family, who regularly visit the temple from Estonia and watch their children hug the temple, and the first branch president in Talinn, Estonia. A Finnish Stake Patriarch,

Brother Savolainen, who has given over 1300 Patriarchal blessings, remembers Bob Blair well. He has been an active member and leader for over 60 years. He gave us a book of his life. He was a temple sealer and officiator with a very positive attitude. I told him, "In your mind the sun is always shining, even on the dark days." He said it was the light of the gospel that shined in him.

Often members would ask if we were related to the General Authority who wrote the book and made the movie. We would sometimes say, "Do you mean Kolipoki?" "Yes." "He is Dick's oldest brother." Some requested a picture with us or commented how much they enjoyed the movie and especially the book. The Other Side of Heaven was translated into Finnish and the DVD had



Dick and Ronda Groberg with copy of 'The Other Side of Heaven' in Finnish

both Finnish and Russian subtitles. The Russians said the translation was not good but they could follow it.

John and Jean visited Finland in 2004 and presented a fireside in Helsinki with clips from the movie. Many remember the presentation. The sister who translated for Jean was particularly impressed. She was a good friend of Ronda's. Many Finns and Russians asked us to tell John that they loved him and enjoyed the book and the movie. Some had purchased one or both.

Ronda and I had the opportunity to present the movie, answer questions and discuss the movie on 8 occasions to organized groups. We made presentations to the Lithuanians and Estonians in 4 wards and 2 branches. Usually the leader would introduce me and I

(cont. pg 2)

A 'How To' Guide to Personal Genealogy

Mary Jane Fritzen

Sent by Heavenly Father, Elijah came to Joseph Smith to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (III Nephi 25:6) This doctrine is found in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. It proclaims the importance of families.

I teach Primary CTR-7 children the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel--faith, repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost. Obeying these principles and ordinances we can be linked into an eternal family.

As we do proxy ordinances in the temple, we prefer to take "family" names, but can't always find them. Although our extended

(cont. pg 2)

Family Connections Throughout the World (continued)

would introduce Ronda and then tell about the movie, how it was made and a little about John and his family. We left DVD copies to a ward and a branch for use in missionary work. We had some clips made for our Estonian presentation. All the firesides were in Finnish except the one in Estonia. The number attending ranged from about 15 to 85. All seemed to enjoy the movie and later made positive comments such as, "It really changed our lives." A bishop mentioned how it had helped his boy become interested in going on a mission. One sister said, "You are also Kolipoki." That was true.

In addition to John and Jean, a member in a nearby ward knew John Enoch at BYU. He is a musician (Steve Stewart) and a high tech man. He married a Finn. He gave us a CD of his music and was a participant in his wards musical presentation. He and his wife have increased their temple attendance.

Another, Brother John Webster, was the liaison between the Finnish and the U.S. air force. His parents were taught by John in Indiana. He was a good friend and gave us a tour of his work place and the American Embassy. He started his mission in Finland and when Russia was opened for the gospel, he was sent over there. We always enjoyed his visits. He could speak some Russian and some Finnish and was able to help his family, a wife and 5 children, in adjusting to Finland.

There are many early Finish converts who attend the temple regularly. Because it is very expensive to travel in Finland, regularly sometimes means when possible (maybe 2 times a year).

A good friend of ours was a speaker and trainer for several large European companies including Nokia. He said he usually ended his presentation with "The Race" by Dee. I asked him where he got it and he said from the internet. I told him to at least give credit to Dee. He said what a great message "The Race" gives to people for success in life.



Dick with brother and sister Sheffer, friends of Anna Grobergs

The Russians from St. Petersburg area remember Anna (Joe's and Jeanne's daughter) from when she had served a mission there. One couple especially remembered her because she taught the wife and child, afterward the husband was able to baptize them. The husband, Brother Sheffer, (Russian but of German roots) is a union railroad leader with a very interesting sense of humor. Both Brother and Sister Sheffer are temple workers and attend often.

David and Lorraine, with Kim and her daughter visited the temple while it was under construction. David had the opportunity to look at the blueprints. The area is now beautifully landscaped with temple ordinances performed 5



Elder Groberg and Elder Groberg

days a week. Beth was acknowledged on at least 2 occasions regarding her song "Children All Over the World." The primary in Kotka, with only a few members, prepared and sang the song in Finnish at a sacrament meeting program. A sister temple missionary without knowing Beth's involvement said that was her favorite song and they sang it in her SLC ward often.

A couple missionary from Sacramento serving in Russia visited the temple when getting their visas renewed. They knew both Gloria and John. Ben Blair's in-laws visited the temple twice while serving as missionaries in Russia. It was always nice to see the senior couples and the full time missionaries from Russia.

We were able to meet Elder Joseph Groberg (George and Bonnie's son) on a few occasions. One time we visited him in the city of Hyvinkaa, where we presented the Other Side of Heaven. There were about 55 present. The bishop said there were 15 investigators or inactive persons in attendance. Joe did a great job in organizing the event. Dick enjoyed walking with him to pick up an investigator and also took an investigator home after the fireside.

A nice looking Russian asked if we knew Gretchen Groberg, George and Bonnie's

(cont. pg 3)

A 'How To' Guide to Personal Genealogy (continued)

family ancestry contains multiple thousands, we would like to find just one person for whom ordinances should be performed. Let's avoid duplicates. If I should find a treasure-trove, I'll let you know--even if I find one area which you may research. In the meantime, we can assist others with their family names or temple names. We can't do everything, but we can do something. We have a duty to keep our own records.

Each of us who are children of Jennie and Delbert were born into a covenant family and were sealed to our spouses. Our children, the next generations, are likewise important. We have an obligation to them. Please keep up your immediate family records. How well can you remember essential facts unless you record them? Here is a short-"how-to" guide for you:

What? Events, names, dates and places for Births, Deaths, Marriages, Baptisms, Temple Endowments and Sealings.

Who? Pertaining to yourself, parents, siblings, children, spouse. You may record more if you want, but your immediate family is essential; others are optional.

When? As soon as possible after the event.

Where? Mom used a notebook. I use a computer program, Personal Ancestral File (PAF). The purpose is quick reference.

How? Keep all these records in one place. Papers will get lost.

Why? You may count the reasons:

a. To be faithful to the Spirit of Elijah, to follow the prophet.

b. To be faithful to your eternal family. We owe it to our posterity.

c. To show our children what we really care about. "Attitudes are caught not taught." When they see you faithfully doing this, they will gain similar values.

d. To readily access these records when they will be needed.

e. To save the planet.

Do you have some questions or ideas for us? Let us know your interest.

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President and Matron Joe and Jeanne Groberg (from November, 2011)
Calle 6ta y Avenida Rodrigo Chávez González
Principado de las Lomas

Family Connections Throughout the World (continued)

daughter. She lived with them for a few weeks while teaching kindergarten children English. His mother was a member but he wasn't. He since joined the Church and now serves as branch president in Moscow.

We were pleased to work with so many good saints. One couple had Groberg relatives dating back to 1750. Dick was able to help them in the work. Finland was part of Sweden then. Mary Jane made contact with the sister to see if there is a connection to us. They were a great family and enjoyed their temple work.



Dick with friend of Gretchen Hilton

Finding Cousins and Ancestors of Note

Grandma Jennie was not always subtle or particularly humble in pointing out that President Gordon B. Hinckley was her father's first cousin. However, we may not have heard her mention (and maybe she did not know) that current Apostles Robert D. Hales and David A. Bednar are also not too distant cousins, descending respectively from her (and their) great-great grandfathers George Mayer and Moses Holbrook. Going back just a few more generations, she (and thus we) shares common ancestors with 8 of the current 12 Apostles.

Besides those and many other present and past Church leaders, the ranks of her (and thus our) distant cousins include 22 of the 44 U.S. Presidents (the current one, however, is not among our 22). Cousins of the notable literati include Mark Twain, T.S. Eliot, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and

Our first fireside was at Haaga soon after we arrived. A young lady was waiting for us and introduced herself as Sister Marja Leena Lindberg's granddaughter, Heli. We had taught and visited her grandmother many times on our previous mission. Heli later joined the church and spoke at stake conference. Now her grandmother is taking the temple prep lessons. Heli is planning on getting married in May 2011, one year after being baptized.

Dick and Ronda had the privilege of working with the Vorimos who served in the temple presidency. Dick had taught and baptized Brother Vorimos in 1960. Many of his posterity are in Finland and are leaders in the church.

Elder and Sister Perry held a mission president seminar in Talinn, Estonia. The entire group came to the Helsinki Temple. Ronda and I drove the Perrys up the hill to the temple. They remembered staying in our house



Dick with the Vuotilainen Family, who are Groberg Relatives

and were surprised to see us in Helsinki. They sent greetings to John and Jean.

Elder Rasband also visited at a special stake conference when the Kiev temple was completed. He sent greetings to John and Jean.

It was very interesting and uplifting to meet so many who had been in contact with members of the family. Thank you all for your positive influence.

(yes Margaret and Bruce it's true) even the eminent Bard on Avon.

Other multiple-times-removed cousins include the inventing geniuses Thomas Edison, Eli Whitney and the Wright Brothers. And of course we can't forget our entertainment icon cousins Walt Disney and Bing Crosby.

Moving from our famous cousins to our famous multiple great grandsires, we can establish direct lines of descent from Mayflower passengers Stephen Hopkins, Edward Fuller and William Brewster and a plethora of European nobles including a number of King Henrys of England, a number of King Louises of France, Duncan I King of Scotland (no Margaret and Bruce it's not that King Duncan of Scotland), and a bunch of other Byzantine, Holy Roman, Bohemian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, and Scandinavian monarchs.

Of course none of those connections are going to score any of us the next William and Kate type wedding at Westminster Abbey. They can, however, provide us all a fun family night family history activity.

BYU developed a "Relative Finder" web page at <http://roots.cs.byu.edu/dig-roots/> to help us make the connections. Through that site, you first create your own free account. You then login to your account and from there further login to your new.familysearch.org account. It then gives you the option of clicking on "self report."

Your computer screen will then fill up with lists showing how you are related to all the folks listed above and a whole lot of famous folks not listed above. For more help figuring out the Relative Finder web page, contact Tom Groberg.

Don't forget to send your tax deductible contributions to the Groberg/Holbrook Genealogy Association.

You can still make donations to help our Brunt relatives effected by the devastating earthquakes in New Zealand. Please specify how much is for the Brunts when you donate. You will receive a receipt for your contributions.

There are 2 ways you can contribute:

- 1) Mail a check to 1605 S. Woodruff Ave, Idaho Falls, ID 83404
- 2) PayPal to dvgroberg@hotmail.com

Your contributions make this newsletter possible as well as give you access to other powerful tools that help keep you connected to your family, past, present and future. Don't forget to use these tools to keep connected:

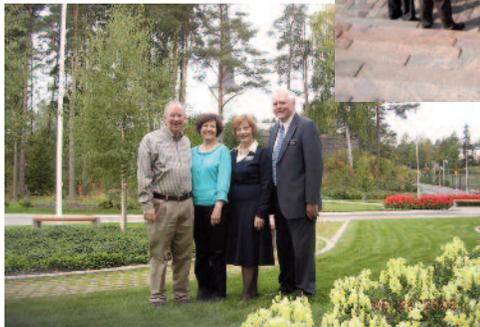
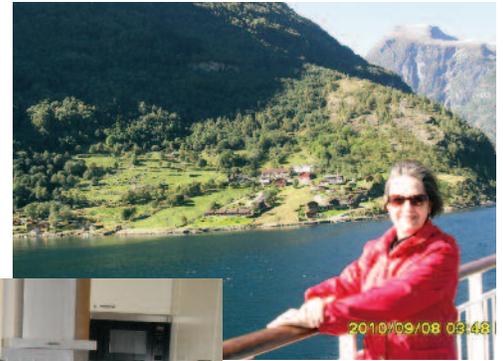
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Send updates on family information (e.g. marriages, new babies, missionaries), new addresses, and any other information requests that you may have to dvgroberg@hotmail.com

If you are an author, or would like to be published, please send in your stories or ideas for stories you would like to see in a newsletter. Email them to dvgroberg@gmail.com or call Tom Groberg.

Family Connections Throughout the World

Additional Pictures, each with their own story and connection



Family Temple Connections Update

Since our last newsletter, many of you have added new information onto our family temple spreadsheet on Google documents, thank you.

The updated records show that family members have done ordinance work in at least 87 of the 134 currently dedicated temples.

The updated records also show that we probably ought to get even more

information before we start saying where we've done most of our living ordinances. Last time it appeared that more of us were endowed and sealed in the Salt Lake Temple than in the Idaho Falls Temple and more in the Mesa Temple than in the Provo Temple. Now it appears that those numbers are reversed (42 endowments and sealings in IF; 40 endowments and sealings in SL; 15 endowments and seal-

ings in Provo; 14 endowments and sealings in Mesa).

Though it will probably be a while before Buenos Aires, Anchorage, and Freiberg approach those totals, we have starts in many of those and many other faraway places. Keep serving as often and in as many places as you can, and keep on letting us know about it. Thanks again.