

LINDSBORG

LITTLE SWEDEN, USA

Ja!



SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE
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For Immediate Release
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Lucia

Light Shining in the Darkness

LINDSBORG, KANSAS - 12/06/2010 -How strange one of the most popular of Swedish traditions is possibly based on a Mediterranean saint and has everyone singing in Swedish the song of the Venetian gondolier. The story begins in the year 284 A.D. when Lucia was born to a prosperous Sicilian family.

She was raised in the Christian faith and vowed to remain a virgin dedicating her life to helping the poor and serving Christ. Lucia refused to marry and her suitor upset at having lost an opportunity at her considerable dowry, accused her of aiding and abetting Christians, which was an illegal religion at the time. She refused to recant her beliefs and was martyred. Lucia became the patron saint of the blind; sailors ask for her help in times of storms, which explains her song sung by gondoliers. According to legend, the story came to Scandinavia, when Sweden was in the throes of an appalling famine and at the peak of the terrible winter a ship, shining with light, laden with food and at the helm a beautiful girl, came across the waters of Lake Vänneren in the province of Värmland. The food was distributed and the starving were saved.



Lindsborg Lucia

Therefore, to honor Lucia, whose name is derived from *lux* meaning light, the eldest daughter of Swedish families awakens early on December 13 morning to serve traditionally a tray of saffron buns, ginger cookies and coffee to her family. She wears a white gown with a red sash and a crown of lingonberry branches with seven lit candles. The green and light represent new life in the climax of the Winter Solstice.

A favorite Swedish holiday tradition, also observed in Lindsborg, is the Lucia Festival celebrating the figure who is the emblem of light and comfort with candles in her hair and food in her hands. Lindsborg honors Lucia's sacrifice and martyrdom on the second weekend in December. The day

begins at 10:30 a.m. with live holiday music and Swedish folk dancing downtown. A processional of girls in white carrying candles and *stjärngosse* (star boys) lead the crowd to the Bethany Lutheran Church where the town crowns a local Lucia. The new Lucia goes amongst the crowd serving ginger cookies, coffee and the promise of Spring to come.

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Contact the Convention and Visitors Bureau for more information regarding the holidays in Lindsborg.

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W: visitlindsborg.com. When in Lindsborg, please stop by at 104 E. Lincoln for all travel information. See you in the 'Borg!

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