

SKOVDRIVERS COME TO HATTFJELLDAL PARISH.

The main post shows that two unwed sisters in our ancestry were involved with skovdriver Gustav Henriksen. He fathered a child with each, on either side of 1875, then abandoned their parish. He left few identifiers, so the mission was to assess the job and profile him to share accountability with the sisters, through his association with other skovdrivers. The events occurred in Hattfjelldal Parish, Nordland County, Nord-Norge Region of Norway.

THE SEARCH

Skovdriver, alternatively skogdriver, was a forestry job.¹ The exact nature was not found, but unneeded for our use. The term(s) was searched at the National Archives of Norway via its Digitalarkivet.no. Output came from two sources: i) Censuses (1865, 1875, 1891, 1900, 1910 and 1920) and ii) Parish Church Books (Immigration and Emigration, Births and Baptisms*, Confirmations, Marriages and Deaths).

Skovdriver/Skogdriver Numbers by Census and Regions of Norway						
Census	Ostlandet	Sorlandet	Vestlandet	Trondelag	Nord-Norge	Total
1865	3	36	0	21	3	63
1875	40	86	5	9	71	211
1891	13	2	0	36	4	55
1900	26	18	2	44	27	117
1910	8	5	2	19	13	47
1920	1	1	1	21	4	28
Total	91	148	10	150	122	521
Skovdriver/Skogdriver Numbers in Parish Church Books 1865-1920						
A	Hattfjeldall Parish, Nordland, Nord-Norge					38
B	Other Parishes in Norway					21
Total	All Parishes in Norway					59
Source: Search on Skovdriver/Skogdriver at Digitalarkivet.no / format@marileewein.com						

The archive showed small numbers nationwide (580 hits) and a narrow timeframe of use for the term (55 years from 1865 to 1920), clustered mid-1870s in the area of our parish. (See Disclaimer). With these numbers, surely the needle would shine from the haystack, to easily illuminate Gustav Henriksen.

CENSUS REVELATIONS ON OUR SKOVDRIVERS

Census 1865 saw the first searchable use of the term. It was concentrated in two counties:

- Vest-Agder County of Sorlandet Region had the heaviest use. (This county had a Budal Farm.)
- Nord-Trondelag County of Trondelag Region was next. (Sor-Trondelag County had a Budal Parish.)
 - Fosnes Parish, Nord-Trondelag, an early skovdriver adopter, had 15 hits - 3 on Saxen Farm.
 - Peder Halvorsen, a Swede born 1818, was a skovdriver on Saxen Farm.²
 - Saxen Farm had a number of tømmerhugger, or lumberjack, who later became skovdrivers.
 - Sivert Halvorsen, b. 1847, Nord-Trondelag, in Stjordan Parish, Hegra local, was one.
 - Although unrelated, Peder became a principal at Sivert's wedding *in Hattfjelldal Parish*.
 - Their journey revealed the identity of unlawful father, Ole Halvorsen.

In 1865, Unkervatne Farm, Hattfjelldal (Gustav's residence to be) was managed by Swedes from Vilhelmina.

Note: Our ancestral home was Nord-Trondelag, Stjordan Parish, Local Parishes of Hegra and Meraker.

Census 1875 – Output is entirely missing for Hattfjelldal Parish; not so, for neighbor Vefsn (the two separated early 1860s). Vefsn posted a whopping 56 hits of that year’s national total of 211. Hattfjelldal did have hits from its Church Books; when added to the Vefsn Census, they proclaimed **skovdrivers had come to town!**

- Halsten Thorgersen was a skovdriver at Vefsn. After sponsoring Gustav Henriksen’s daughter at baptism, he became another unlawful father of the main post. His profile, when fully realized, suggested he was more friend to the unwed mothers, than to the absconded Gustav. He was unhelpful in pursuit.

Census 1891: skovdriver numbers were decreasing nationally, but increasing in Sor-Trondelag County:

- Sor-Trondelag took 22 of the nation’s 55 hits, with 20 in Hemne Municipality.
 - Gustav fled Hattfjelldal, likely to Budal Parish, Sor-Trondelag. It is quite southeast of Hemne.

In 1891, Unkervand Farm (Gustav’s flee-from place) was still run by those Swedes from Vilhelmina. As well, an unwed “too-young” Henrik Gustafsen b. 1850 in Tarna Vasterbotten was temporary resident of Bissador Farm.

CHURCH BOOK REVELATIONS and GUSTAV HENRIKSEN

Hattfjelldal Parish spectacularly outperformed the nation in two ways:

- attaching the term “skovdriver” to its owners in old Church Book accounts of their lives
- selecting “occupation” for the modern digitization of those records.

The Parish was also very atypical in search output:

- It had zero hits from any census, but most hits nationwide came from censuses (521).
 - Census-wise, maximum skovdriver activity was 1875, with Hattfjelldal output missing and -
 - Gustav was likely scheduled to be tabulated there, so it should have provided the needed information on his age and origin. Perhaps it will be available in the future.
- Hattfjelldal had 38 hits for skovdriver, all from Church Book records – with only 21 more, nationwide.
 - Of its 38 hits, 24 were for discrete individuals due to some repeat fathering.
 - Most of these were from the mid-1870s, mitigating the census absence, but anyway not including the important identifiers for Gustav Henriksen.

Search on the terms “Gustav Henriksen” and “Hattfjelldal” (variants) drove 5 hits on 3 events for his two children. Each Birth and Baptism event had been recorded, with varying information, in two separate Church Books.

Ingrid Mathilde Gustavsdatter: Born & Baptized 10/12 & 30/10/1874	
Digitized Output For 1874	Information Not Digitized
Father: Gustav Henriksen	Status: Unmarried
Residence: Unkervand	Sponsors: Halsten Thorgersen and others
Hemming Gustavsen: Born & Baptized 6/7 & 30/10/1877. Confirmed 5/7/1893	
Digitized Output For 1877	Information Not Digitized
Father: Gustav Henriksen	Occupation: <u>Skovdriver</u>
Residence: <i>Budal Parish</i>	Residence: <i>Budal (forladt Sognet)</i>
	Sponsors: Elias of Tustervand and others
	Remark: "illegible" 7/8/65
Digitized Output For 1893	Information Not Digitized
Father: Gustav Henriksen	Nothing of interest.
Occupation: <u>Skovdriver</u>	
Source: Digitalarkivet.no Church Books of Hattfjelldal Parish 1860-1878, 1865-1878, 1878-1898. format/extract © 2023 marileewein.com	

POOLED DATA FROM THE THREE EVENTS.

Assuming there was only one Gustav Henriksen, then he was an unmarried resident of Unkervand Farm in 1874 and a skovdriver, at least by 1877. He left Hattfjelldal for Budal; today's digitizer interpreted it as Budal Parish.

- Budal Parish is in Sor-Trondelag County.
 - "Budal (forladt Sognet)" translates to Budal (abandoned Parish). In context, the author feels it might mean Budal (abandoned [Hattfjelldal] Parish, leaving lesser destinations possible, such as Budal Farm in Vest-Agder County.

Gustav Henriksen was found at neither destination. However, Sor-Trondelag was significant to his son.

- The non-digitized and illegible remark pointing to an event on 7/8/ 65 was unhelpful; no *searchable* event for Gustav Henriksen or Hattfjelldal was found, with the term too vague to proceed.
- Sponsors: Halsten Thorgersen seemed to be our family friend. Elias of Tustervand was family of Alette Ingebrigtsdtr, our step-great grandmother, proving our families were close before Wisconsin. No one seemed to be there "for Gustav". Church Books showed skovdrivers were chummy, sponsoring each other's children. At least four other skovdrivers lived at Unkervand with Gustav; no such interaction was seen. Three of the other four were from Trondelag Region; all from Norway.
 - *By hunch, Gustav Henriksen was a loner, as would seem shared, by his good son, Hemming.*
- The children:
 - Inger Mathilde Gustavsdatter (1884-1885) died as an infant; the only reference to her father on that record was her surname.
 - Hemming Gustavsen (1877-1966) died in Sor-Trondelag after considerable time abroad. He said his father was born in Norway. Both issues are explored second next, for what they may tell about his father. His own life is documented at: <https://marileewein.com/2022/11/19/granddads-cousin-hemming-gustavsen-1877-1966-a-larger-life-than-lean/>

PARAMETERS FOR GUSTAV

Father: His father would, almost certainly, have Henrik in his forename. His father's surname could have been any Boynamesen or Farmname. Potential fathers would then be tested for feasibility.

Birth Year: Those listed as skovdriver in the pivotal Census of 1875 were born between 1808 and 1857. The great majority of those were born between 1830 and 1845, (30 to 45 years old). The job apparently required experience or seniority. Two were born in 1856 and one in 1857 who appeared with father or older brother.

Taking 1857 as his outer limit, Gustav would have been 16 when partnering with Elen, who was born in 1855. Likewise, using 16 for fatherhood, Henrik could have been born as late as 1841.

WHAT HEMMING GUSTAVSEN SAID

Hemming Gustavsen had three US Censuses and in each he said his father was born in Norway. That may be so. However, he idealized his mother, ever referencing her as Anne Marie Gustavsen, when clearly she did not marry Gustav. Hemming left Norway in 1906, when only the year prior, had Norway separated from Sweden. Now, Hattfjelldal is very close to the border and many of its residents were from Sweden, even as seen in our own family. Church Book Registrants would be careful about such matters. Every day persons might not, especially a man abroad, when fleetingly addressing the origin of a father of abandonment. He might simply default to "born in Norway". If Gustav had come and gone from Sweden, in the heyday of skovdrivers in Hattfjelldal, that could explain why he was not revealed by Norway Censuses.

FURTHER ON THE SEARCH

Church Books provide a long view on life, but it must be appreciated that a census is a one-day snap shot.

Censuses and Church Books were further probed for all “Gustav Henriksen” within the parameters. As Gustav was presumed to be in the uncounted Hattfjelldal Parish, Census 1875 was useful to trim the list. A skovdriver who was home in 1875 was counted out. Obviously, the lack of his age and origin was a huge disadvantage. Another was the quick rise and fall of the terms use, such that a practitioner in 1875 may not have been so, in 1865 or 1891, or later. No perfect finds emerged, only speculation.

SPECULATION

Sor-Trondelag County is a possible origin because of Gustav’s flight to Budal Parish. The parish had no detected skovdriver activity but the county was a skovdriver star. The area of greatest activity then, Hemne, was a firm destination later, for the much travelled Hemming Gustavsen who spent his WWII years in the area. He died in Heim, Hemne. Hemming’s information is well documented, while Gustav in Budal is but a phrase in a Church Book.

Henrik Gustavsen as Gustav’s father continues to tease; the farmer of temporary residence at Bissador Farm in 1891. He was born in Tarna Parish, Vasterbotton, Sweden, which is just across the border from Hattfjelldal. Many in town called that home. Then too, our skovdriver had been resident of a Swedish home, also from Vasterbotton, but Vilhelmina and albeit in the decade and half past. This interest remains despite that Hemming Gustavsen repeatedly said his father was born in Norway. Two other huge factors confront: i) it is hard to disengage from bias for a Henrik Gustavsen, even when certain that the father of Gustav Henriksen could be any Henrik Boynamesen ii) the digitization of Henrik’s 1891 data gave his birth year as “1850 ?”. That would make him too young to father Gustav. The original record had the 18 preprinted. What followed was a clear 5 followed by what looked to be a large un-capitalized “a”. A question mark followed. What cannot be answered is, what was the question mark questioning – was it “1850 vs 1859” or, *did this census subject appear older or younger than what was being told?* It is not resolvable.

Gustav Henriksen could have arrived in Hattfjelldal from anywhere, but Nord-Trondelag intrigues. After all, Saxen Farm in Fosnes Parish did point one skovdriver from our ancestral home in Stjordal Parish, right to our Hattfjelldal doorstep. Recalling the census window of one day, it is entirely possible that Gustav also followed Peder Halvorsen’s lead to town. Saxen Farm did have a couple of married Henrik Boynamesen, born in the 1830s, who could have fathered an unlawful and undetected son named Gustav. One was even a skovdriver.

The needle remained dull in the haystack, leaving Gustav Henriksen as the mystery man of the Church Books of Hattfjelldal Parish.

Notes and Sources

Notes

*In Norway, Births and Baptisms could provide a wealth of information: i) the child’s given names with dates of birth, church baptism, and where applicable, home baptism and whether “legitimate” or not ii) parents’ names, residence, status and birth year iii) sponsors to church baptism and others, if home baptized, often including their job or status and residence iv) remarks particular to the baptism, such as status of unwed parents.

Disclaimer: Some hits represented the same individual over time, for an over count. Still, under count likely prevailed since not all records were thorough, preserved or digitized. No attempt was made to correct for these factors because the mission was simply to see what could be found with information at hand. Then too, some events were recorded in more than one

Church Book; each instance was counted because there was often variation in expression. Therefore, the overall numbers are rough approximations of reality.

Sources

1 Equivalence of the terms is supported at: <https://otjoerge.wordpress.com/norwegian-american-dictionary>. Whether correct or inclusive enough, did not matter since the objective was merely to track owners of the terms as used in Hattfjelldal within the timeframe of interest. Some in town wore both labels over time, even to describe the same event, such as for Peder Halvorsen. The 580 hits at Digitalarkivet.no were over-weighted to scovdriver.

2 The main post has detailed references on the characters of this PDF. Also, our family ancestry is documented in the PDF attached to the base article for this series at <https://marileewein.com/2022/06/04/matt-hemmingsen-1876-1967-in-the-beginning-again/>

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