



From the left: Maria Vilhelmsdatter, Vilhelm Wilhelmsson Korsgård and Maria's husband Lorents Blandkas. In the foreground, Anders Ødegård. In the picture we are looking in the direction of national border marker J.

Vilhelms stuga (Vilhelm's cottage)

***Vilhelms stuga* [Swedish for William's cottage] is found along the border between Sweden and Norway, between border markers I and J. The cottage, approximately 4 x 7 metres, was just inside the border on the Swedish side, while the shed was on the Norwegian side. Today only the foundation wall remains of the cottage. According to tradition, the cottage would have had one room and a**

kitchen, and we can see remains of the fireplace. In the northwest corner of the cottage there is a cellar measuring 1 x 1.5 metres with a bulkhead entrance.

The shed is basic in construction with board cladding. Today there is a house foundation in this area measuring 2 x 2.5 metres with stone walls on three sides and an opening facing the borderline. A similar house foundation measuring 2 x 2 metres lies further back with an opening facing the south-east and without visible walls. These are similar constructions to those we find at Snarsmon and Skojareberget in Rölunda.

We don't know who built the house, but tradition has it that it was Vilhelm, and that he had an apple orchard. Between the cottage and Lake Vammen the soil appears to have been tilled, but Vilhelm was probably not a farmer.

VILHELM

Vilhelm came from a family of Travellers, and in parish registers 1860 – 1930 Vilhelm is registered as a "zigen" (gypsy). As far as we know he lived his whole life here along the Swedish-Norwegian border. He lived for some time at Snarsmon, a little more than one kilometre as the crow flies to the southeast. There is a crofter's holding under the Röane farm in the Vassbotten area called Bingane, which was also called Wilhelmsbackane [Vilhelm's hills]. Here we also find Wilhelms-ekrene [Vilhelm's fields], allegedly named after Vilhelm's father, who had the same name.

THE FAMILY

The parents of Vilhelm Korsgård (1838 – 1928) were Vilhelm Andreasson Korsgård (1784 – 1862) and Anna Katrina Kjellberg (1813 – 1890). They had seven children. Vilhelm first married Anna Stina Petersdotter (1839 – 1868) in 1866. They had one child – Hilda Karolina, and Anna Stina had a son by a previous relationship, Carl Johan (born 1864). Vilhelm's second marriage was with Anna Britta Kristiansdotter in 1871 (1838 – 1904). They had six children: Emma Kristina Charlotta born 1871, Maria Olivia Nicolina born 1873, Olaus Alfred born 1875, Johan Vilhelm born 1877, Anna Katrina born 1880 and Oskar Kristian born 1887.



Vilhelm stuga: Grenserås M, Vamsjørøysa som ligger på øya Valö i Sör-Vammsjön. Sett fra bukta vest for Vilhelms stuga. Foto: Svein Norheim.

LIVELIHOOD

It is said that Vilhelm Korsgård made baskets and brooms for a living, but from what we know about Travellers in general, we may assume that he also was able to carry out other types of handicraft work, and perhaps also laboured on farms in the district. Earning enough to stay alive with a large family was probably a daily challenge for Vilhelm and Anna Brita.

OLD AGE

Vilhelm Korsgård lived to be a very old man. It was uncommon to make it to 90 a century ago. It is said that in his final years Vilhelm lived in the old folk's home in Östad but that he never really settled down there! On a winter's day in 1928, as the story goes, he walked from the old folk's home to his daughter Maria Olivia Nicolina, then keeping house for Lorents Marenius Olsen, who ran a crofter's holding under Mjølnerød farm in Enningdalen. She had been a housekeeper at Bakken since 1905. On 24 July 1920 she married Lorents Marinius Olsen Bakken (Tellesåsbakken) born 1872 – also called Blandkas.

What happened on this walk is uncertain. We don't know if he had visited his daughter and started walking back, or whether he never reached Maria Olivia. In any case, Vilhelm was found by a large boulder east of Enningdal river in the vicinity of Goldenkasa. He had obviously been surprised by a harsh winter storm and lost his way. Perhaps he sought shelter behind the big boulder. Today this place is called Vilhelmsnaret (Vilhelm's grove).