

Stockholm Rowing Madams's (Roddarmadammer) should be remembered in some sort of local transportation memorial - A transportation legacy.

During my Stockholm Walkabouts I'm at one point and another close to water by walking along the quays or passing over water via bridges or by ferries, as Stockholm is build on many islands to be interconnected, as Stockholm often referred to "City between the waters", or the best one is "the Venice of the north".



Rowing Madams, ca 1855
Photo; Stockholmskällan

1800s
Rowing Madams



1900s
Steem Boats



2000s
Motor Ferrys'



Rowing Madams,
Photo; Stockholmskällan



Steemboat Djurgården
Photo: Stockholmskällan



Motor Ferry Djurgården 10
Photo: Waxholms bolaget

Right up mid 1800s, the streets of Stockholm paved with rough cobblestones full of potholes. Therefore, the city's waterways was a much easier way to get around on from island to island, at least 14+ of them as many gaps has been filled out over time.

"Roddarmadammer" was the name for the woman handling the transportation of the people and goods against a fee between the islands, and they established a new commune in ferry drivers guild established in the early 1600s.

Stockholm rowing madams (roddarmadammer) was spoken of in the mid-1600s by the author Olof Rudbeck. They were known for their brusque and coarse language. A visiting count Fransisco de Miranda called them to be, "Good woman that is rowing like hell", during his visit to Stockholm 1787.

They had steady, long boats, as they rowed two and two with long, lithe oars. Some schedules and fares were not in place from the beginning and was based on the rowing madams own priorities. The boats retired when it suited rodderskorna. In 1759 issued Stockholm Trade College of conduct for "roddarbåterne", and it is said among other things, that "boats must be numbered, commodious, good and strong and constantly kept tidy. It was up to the rowing madams to keep a calm, peace and sober manner of life, have sober people to the service, which reconciled with each other and not exclaim in strife and profanity." And in early 1722 there was a published Fare (Taxa) document published.

For 150 years, until the late 1700s, mastered the whole "local traffic" in Stockholm by these rowing madams who worked in teams of two. Each team own its boat, or it could also be own by a third person most likely an older rowing madam having the team in their services. In the 1870s there was circa 100 boats servicing the local traffic in Stockholm, and there was at the time circa 200 woman claiming the title "roddarmadam".

In the early 1900s with the arriving of the steam engine, followed by the motor engine the whole scenario for transportation changed in Stockholm. Over time many new bridges was build so it became easier to transport people and good between the islands.

The best way to see Stockholm is to stay close to the water and really witness the beauty of the city.

Written by Leif Rosqvist, editor of the Newsletters of New Sweden Cultural Heritage Society and SRIO in Portland, Oregon.

More information for the interested reader:

- Go to Google and type in "Roddarmadammer", and here you find mauch information about this topic.

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I will also thank my wife's uncle Nils-Olof Engström for the old photos that enriched the view of the area as well as the story.

More information for the interested:

- Go to Google and type in Master Michael's Street, Stockholm and more information is available
- Go to Stockholmskällan and type in Master Michael's street for more information
- Go to Google and type in author Ludvig Nordström ("Lort-Sverige") name