

THE NEW LEIF ERIKSON PLAZA DEDICATION AT THE PORT OF SEATTLE'S SHILSHOLE BAY MARINA, SEATTLE, WASH. OCTOBER 7, 2007

I attended a rainy, windy Sunday 3:00 pm dedication for the restored Leif Erikson statue at Shilshole Marina in Ballard. The 42-year-old, 16-foot, 9,500 pound bronze new restored statue of Leif Erikson stood tall on a 10-foot high solid granite square block. The crowd of 2,000-3,000 Scandinavian heritage descendants arrived early for this event Sunday afternoon.

When I arrived at the new Leif Erikson Plaza, the event tent was full of people avoiding the rain. It was fun to see so many young and old Scandinavian people with blonde hair and blue eyes, both young and old, wearing their traditional Scandinavian sweaters. The Seattle Norwegian Ladies Choir, dressed in traditional Nordic heritage with gold and silver jewelry, and red and blue Scandinavian dresses, were there to sing for the dedication of the Leif Erikson Plaza. I was proud to be there this day as a Norwegian and a Ramstad descendant. My wife, Myrna, was home with a broken ankle but wanted very much to attend this event.

Under a very wet umbrella, I was finally there to see my Grandfather's John Nelson Ramstad name, from Bergen, Norway, 1887, on the list of names for the Scandinavian immigration to the United States of America after my \$125 donation to the Leif Erikson International Foundation Memorial to Scandinavian Immigrants. I got very emotional with the songs from Norwegian Ladies chorus, but realized I was there this day to stand tall and proud as the other Scandinavians next to me in the crowd under wet umbrellas to honor my Grandfather John Nelson Ramstad for the entire Ramstad family. This was one of the greatest experiences in my retired life and another Ramstad family history project completed.

It was very hard to hear the speakers, due to the very poor Port of Seattle public address system provided for this event. We all tried to listen to the speakers with the heavy rain tapping on the top our umbrellas, but the best words were from Kristine Leander, President of the Leif Erikson International Foundation. Kristine pushed this project though the Port of Seattle in a record time for this new Leif Erikson Plaza. Kristine delivered a great loud inspired speech for all of us to hear. She said "Every family has a Leif Eriksson out there in this great United States". Then a check was of \$8,900 was donated to the Ballard Nordic Museum from the Leif Erikson International Foundation by Sharon Storbo. Next Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels made a proclamation honoring October 7, 2007, as Scandinavian Heritage day in Seattle. The Leif Erikson Plaza reception followed in the tent at 4:00PM.

The statue of Leif Erikson was a gift to the Port of Seattle by the Leif Erikson League, led by Tryve Nakkerud. The sculptor was August Werner. It was originally unveiled and dedicated on Norway Day June 17, 1962, at the Century 21 Seattle's World Fair.

In retrospect, it all started in 1961 before the 1962 Seattle's World Fair when Grandmother Emma Ramstad donated \$50 toward this very same Leif Eriksson statue that now has been restored for 2007. This was the whole reason I started this project last February 2007 for the Ramstad Family, which I just discovered by chance or fate in life.

If you are visiting Seattle please visit and see Grandfather John Nelson Ramstad's name, the Leif Erikson Statue and please experience your "Nordic Roots in Life" and know how you got here to America.

Gary Ramstad, Family Historian in the Past and Present.