

Whitney
Sundby
March, 2002

Introduction and Outline

I. Today, when one hears the word “Viking”, one is inspired to think of bloodshed, warfare, looting, and raids. Somewhere in the many centuries that have passed since the Vikings flourished, the broader meaning of the word “Viking” has been clouded over by the myths and legends, which surround their history. The Vikings were, in fact, much more than just a group of unmerciful raiders—they have a very long, interesting history. One would expect that the meaning of the name “Viking” would have something to do with the words “savage” or “bloodthirsty”. However, the literal meaning of the word translates into something like “kings of the sea” or “people of the sea”. What did the Vikings accomplish in order to be considered ‘peoples of sea’? This civilization may have been looked upon in apprehension for its raiding and pillaging, but the Vikings were also known for their magnificent shipbuilding and navigational skills. Their homeland was Scandinavia, which includes modern-day Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, a region of Europe situated perfectly near the Atlantic Ocean for exploration to places such as Iceland, Greenland, and even North America by sea. The sea was the Vikings’ way to the outside world, and therefore they mastered techniques of building marvelous ships, which Europeans could not boast about at the time or even for centuries afterward.

I. Brief History

- b. The background of the Vikings
- c. Origin
- d. Achievements

V. Exploration

- a. Short History
- b. Leif Ericson, Eric the Red
- c. Vinland, America

VI. Shipbuilding

- d. Techniques
- e. Design of the Ship
- f. Artwork; Woodcarving
- g. Importance of the Ships to the Vikings

VII. Navigation

- h. Navigational Skills
- i. Techniques
- j. Instruments/Tools
- k. Use of astronomy, oceanography

VIII. Conclusion