Swenson Center News, 1997

Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Augustana College

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From the Director . . .

1996 was a busy year for all of us interested in Swedish-American affairs. The 150th anniversary of the beginnings of the Swedish mass immigration to the United States was celebrated both in the U.S. and in Sweden, and the interest in these celebrations attests to the long-lasting cultural consequences of the great migration on both sides of the Atlantic.

Here at the Swenson Center we experienced the interest in the jubilee year in many ways. In April the Center sponsored a conference on the history of early Swedish immigration to the U.S. called "Of Pioneers! Swedes on the American Frontier," which attracted more than 300 people, who for two days listened to paper presentations and participated in a field trip. We felt that the conference was very successful, and plans are currently underway to publish the papers in a special issue of the Swedish-American Historical Quarterly. The jubilee year also meant that the number of visitors to the Center increased, including many tour groups from both Sweden and the U.S. Two special visitors were the King and Queen of Sweden; who called on the Swenson Center in September as part of their visit to Augustana College.

1996 was also an anniversary year for the Swenson Center, as it has been 15 years since we opened our doors in September 1981. During that time the Center has grown in many ways. In 1991 we were able to move into our current quarters where the Center enjoys both beautiful and adequate space for its operations. Our activities have also greatly expanded during these fifteen years. Each year we receive hundreds of visitors and mail and e-mail inquiries from individuals interested in researching some dimension of Swedish-American history. Many of them are pursuing genealogical research, and the Center has extensive resources for persons interested in tracing their Swedish ancestry. Since 1992, the Center has also been the publisher of Swedish American Genealogist, the leading journal for anyone interested in Swedish-American biography or personal history. The Center is also the American agent for SVAR, the division of the Swedish National Archives responsible for making national Swedish church records available on microfiche. Anyone interested in purchasing these records can do so through the Center.

We also receive academic researchers, working on a paper, article, or dissertation in Swedish-American history. A selective list of subjects that have been researched at the Center during the past fifteen years includes such a variety of topics as Swedes in the Civil War, the Swedish-American labor movement, the history of Swedish immigration to Texas, history of Swedish-American literature, Swedish-American art, history of the Swedish-American press, and development of a Swedish-American educational system.

One of the objectives of the Center is, according to our statement of purpose, to "promote and initiate new research in the field of Swedish-American studies." One way we have tried to meet this goal has been by arranging conferences. In April 1987, a major conference was held, called "The Ethnic Mosaic of the Quad Cities: Past and Present Perspectives," which examined the history of immigration to and ethnicity in the Quad-City area in western Illinois and eastern Iowa. In cooperation with the Putnam Museum of Davenport, Iowa, the Center also produced a photo exhibit with the same name, which brought together photographs illustrating different dimensions of immigrant and ethnic life in the Quad Cities. (This exhibit is available for viewing on the Internet at http://www.augustana.edu:80/library/ethnic).

In 1992 the Center sponsored a conference called "Scandinavian Immigrants and Education in North America" that dealt with the education and immigration among Scandinavians in North America, focusing on the educational experiences of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, and Icelandic immigrants in North America. Our most recent conference, in 1996, was also our contribution to the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the United States.
the beginnings of Swedish mass immigration to the U.S., and explored different dimensions of the early and pioneering phase of Swedish immigration to the U.S.

Since 1988 the Swenson Center has also sponsored the Ander Lecture Series in Immigration History, which each year brings a prominent scholar in immigration history to the Augustana campus. The series commemorates O. Fritiof Ander, a professor of history at Augustana College from 1930-1968 and a leading scholar of Swedish-American history. The Ander Lectures have covered topics such as Swedish-American art, the writing of Swedish-American history, Swedish-American settlement patterns, and the relationship between Swedish immigrants and other ethnic groups.

Our library and archival holdings have also increased significantly during the past fifteen years. The Center's library, currently approximately 15,000 volumes, includes an extensive collection of books relating to all aspects of Swedish immigration to North America. A number of special collections reflect donations and acquisitions with special emphases, such as the Nils William Olsson Collection and the G.N. Swan Collection, which are especially strong in Swedish local history and biography and in Swedish-American literary culture, respectively. Even more material is currently being cataloged. Many unique titles are being added to large computerized bibliographic databases, making them accessible for online searches all over the United States.

On the archival side we have also acquired many resources during the past fifteen years. Currently, we have an extensive collection of Swedish-American church and organizational records, the majority of which are on microfilm. The church records represent more than 1,800 congregations of all major denominations founded by Swedish immigrants in the United States and Canada. The collection of secular Swedish-American organizations contains records of a wide variety of both national and local organizations founded by Swedes in the United States, such as mutual aid societies, music groups, provincial societies, athletic associations, educational institutions, and businesses. The Swenson Center also has the best collection in North America of Swedish-American newspapers, with 225 titles represented. In addition to the microfilm collection, the Center has a manuscript collection of over 450 linear feet, covering a wide range of individual and institutional records.

Looking back on the past fifteen years, we find it rewarding to note the growth of the Center. In addition to the growth of our collections, we have acquired new and beautiful quarters on the main floor of Denkmann Memorial Hall on the Augustana campus. We also see a steadily increasing number of researchers visiting the Center, both for genealogical and academic research. Our location at Augustana College has been very important to us, as it has made us a part of the Augustana academic community. In particular we maintain close ties with the College's Department of Scandinavian Studies and with the Augustana College Library.

It is also gratifying to know that many have followed the leadership of Birger and Lyal Swenson in providing financial support for the Center. The support of the Wallenberg Foundations has been of immense importance both in making our new facilities possible and in supporting several special projects. Our endowment has grown thanks to support from several major donors, and many others have joined one of our support groups.

Those of us who work in the field of Swedish-American studies know how exciting it is, and how much more work there is to be done. It is thus with anticipation that we look forward to the Swenson Center's next fifteen years.

— DAG BLANCK
FROM THE ARCHIVES:
The Ernst Skarstedt Collection

Ernst Teofil Skarstedt was one of the leading figures in Swedish America around the turn of the century. Born in 1857, the son of a leading theologian and professor at Lund University, Skarstedt emigrated to America in 1878. In the U.S. Skarstedt quickly became active as an author and newspaperman, working at several Swedish-American newspapers and as the editor of Vestkusten in San Francisco and Nordstjernan in New York.

Skarstedt was a prolific writer who published a number of books dealing with Swedish-American topics. His book Våra Pennäktare from 1897, which appeared in a revised version in 1930 as Pennäktare, includes biographical entries for all the Swedish-American authors and journalists with whom Skarstedt was familiar. The entries are of very great value for anyone interested in Swedish-American literature. Skarstedt also wrote histories of the Swedish settlements in Washington, Oregon, and California, as well as very insightful descriptions of Swedish-American life at the turn of the century. In 1916, he received the Swedish medal Litteris et artibus in recognition of his literary and cultural achievements. He died in 1929.

The Skarstedt collection is fortunate enough to have a collection of Skarstedt's scrapbooks. The 42 volumes include materials relating to Marcus Skarstedt, Ernst's son, a graduate of Augustana College, a professor of mathematics at Whittier College, and a well-known librarian. These new additions to the Skarstedt collection will significantly increase our understanding of this leading Swedish-American cultural personality, and we express our gratitude to Ernst Skarstedt's great grandsons.

Frieman Letters and Other Acquisitions

The Center also has received copies of a collection of letters of the Frieman family, dating from between 1842 and 1862, from H. Arnold Barton of Carbondale, Illinois. Included are a number of significant letters from before the Civil War, describing conditions in the U.S. in general and in Wisconsin in particular. A book based on these letters and edited by professor Barton has just been published. The book, America: Reality & Dream (The Freeman Letters from America & Sweden 1841-1862), is a handsome edition with illustrations and extensive notes. To order, please write to:

Augustana Historical Society
Augustana College Library
639-38th Street
Rock Island IL 6101-2273

Cost is $15 (plus $2 shipping and handling). Please make checks payable to the Augustana Historical Society.

Other recent archival acquisitions since January 1996 include:

- Anderson and Beckstrom Family Papers and printed family history, donated by Earl and Becky Swanson of Urbana, Illinois.
- Collection of letters written by Andrew G. Youngquist to siblings in Sweden, donated by Gerald L. Youngquist, Monmouth, Illinois.

How to reach the Swenson Center

The Swenson Center is located on the main floor of Denkmann Memorial Hall, 3520-7th Avenue, on the campus of Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

Office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. Hours may be limited during college vacation periods.

If you plan to visit the Center, please make an appointment by calling or writing in advance.

SWENSON CENTER STAFF

DAG BLANCK / director
CHRISTINA JOHANSSON / head of archives
VICKY OLIVER / head of library services
JILL SEAHOLM / head of genealogical services

The Swenson Center's Internet home page is now up and running. Please visit us at http://viking.augustana.edu/admin/swenson/
In late April 1996, the Swenson Center’s major contribution to the 150th Swedish-American anniversary celebrations during 1996 took place when we hosted a conference called “O Pioneers! Swedes on the American Frontier.” The conference, held on the campus of Augustana College, examined different aspects of the role played by early Swedish immigrants to the United States.

The significance of the pioneer phase in Swedish immigration history has often been underscored, as it is clear that the immigration patterns established from the 1840s up until the Civil War played a highly decisive role for the future course of Swedish immigration. Geographically, the early Swedish immigrants settled in an area reaching from Minnesota in the North through Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa and all the way down to Texas in the South. These areas functioned as a core and acted as magnets for further Swedish immigration. Numerous connections were established between receiving and sending areas in the U.S. and Sweden, linking together communities on both sides of the Atlantic. These links became very strong, and it is possible to speak of an “immigration tradition” to certain of these early areas, which in many places remained in effect throughout the entire emigration era.

As the immigration continued, it spread further west, and Swedish settlements were established in Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, and further west. In many cases, individuals or groups from the pioneer settlements provided the nuclei for these Swedish-American communities, which in some ways can be seen as “daughter colonies” to the settlements in the original core areas. Different colonization companies were even established, to promote migration further west. The new western settlements also attracted immigrants who arrived directly from Sweden.

The pioneer phase of Swedish immigration also played an important role in addition to directing the streams of Swedish immigrants to geographic areas. Many of the cultural, religious, and organizational patterns that became so important in Swedish-America can also trace their roots to this period. In particular, the seeds of the major Swedish-American religious denominations were sown during this time.

Eleven papers were delivered at the conference by presenters from both the United States and Sweden. The keynote address, which also served as the 1996 O. Fritiof Ander Lecture in Immigration History, was presented by Kathleen Conzen, professor of history at the University of Chicago. Her talk, called “Pioneering as an Immigrant Process in the 19th Century American West,” dealt with the role of pioneers in American immigration history in general, and she offered some intriguing examples from her ongoing research on German immigrant communities in southern Minnesota that offer interesting entry points for further exploration of Swedish-American immigration.

In addition to the keynote address, the following presentations were included:

“From Nerike to Wisconsin, Emigration of Baptists, Their Settlements, and Congregations from 1868 to the 1920s” (Hans Norman, Uppsala University)

“America Letters and Iowa’s First Two Swedish Settlements” (Kevin Proescholdt, Minneapolis)

“Plat Deeds and Odd-Numbered Sections: A Case Study of Community Building Among the Burlington West” (Ang Legreid, Central Missouri State University)

“Swedish-American Culture in Texas” (Larry Scott, Augustana College)

“Vilhelm Moberg and the Minnesota Frontier” (Roger McKnight, Gustavus Adolphus College)

“Being Swedish-American in the Intermountain West: The Experience of Immigrants to Idaho” (Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Idaho State University)

“Strangers Yet Acquainted: The Personality of Religious Schism in Lindsborg, Kansas, During the 1870s” (Philip Anderson, North Park Theological Seminary)

“Registered Swedish Voters in Chicago, 1888” (Nils William Olsson, Swedish American Genealogist)

“Early Swedish Settlements in Western Illinois” (Vicky Oliver, Augustana College).

At the end of the conference, H. Arnold Barton of Southern Illinois University provided commentary on these papers.
In addition to the formal presentation of papers, conference participants took a field trip to two early Swedish settlements in western Illinois. The first stop was at Andover, Illinois, the site of one of the earliest Swedish Lutheran congregations in the U.S. There a short religious service, partly in Swedish, was arranged in the historic Jenny Lind Chapel, the first Swedish-American Lutheran house of worship, dating back to 1851.

The second stop was Bishop Hill, Illinois, the utopian Swedish colony founded in 1846. Here, Carolyn Anderson from Gustavus-Adolphus College gave a presentation in the Colony Church on the topic “Bishop Hill: Mysteries, Myths, and Meanings,” exploring the fascinating history of this Swedish settlement. Conference participants also had ample opportunity to see the various sites, as well as to meet representatives of the different organizations in Bishop Hill.

Immediately preceding the “O Pioneers!” conference, the Swedish Council of America held its biennial Conference of Swedish America in Davenport, Iowa, just across the Mississippi River from Augustana College. All participants in the Conference of Swedish America also were invited to take part in the “O Pioneers!” conference, and the total number of conference goers thus approached 300.

Given the quality of the presentations and the level of participation, we feel that the conference was a great success. We extend our thanks to Lyal Swenson, Rock Island, Illinois; the American Scandinavian Association at Augustana College, the Augustana Historical Society, the Swedish Council of America; and to Augustana College, all of whom provided generous support for this event. We currently have plans to publish the papers presented, and more information about the publication will be provided in the next issue of the Swenson Center News.

Swedish American Genealogist Salt Lake City Tour

During the week of October 27-November 2, 1996, nearly 50 subscribers to the journal Swedish American Genealogist took part in a week-long genealogy tour in Salt Lake City, Utah. The tour was led by Dr. Nils William Olsson, editor of the journal.

The majority of the annual tour took place in the Mormon Family History Library, beginning each day with a 90-minute lecture about which records to use and how to use them. Participants spent the rest of the day doing research in the abundant resources of the Library with the aid of Dr. Olsson and his tour staff members—including Swenson Center Researcher, Jill Seaholm—and the knowledgeable staff of the Family History Library.

This tour gives a group of people interested in their Swedish background—a chance not only to do research, but also to meet and share research backgrounds.

The next tour is scheduled to take place October 5-12, 1997. Check future issues of Swedish American Genealogist for details.

Source Materials on New CD-ROM

Over the past decade or so, a number of important sources for the history of Swedish migration to North America have been computerized. The computerization has greatly facilitated genealogical and family history research.

Another important step was taken during 1996 when the Swedish Emigrant Institute in Växjö, the Emigrant Register in Karlstad, and the research group Göteborgs-Emigranten jointly produced a CD-ROM of great significance for Swedish-American genealogical research. The following databases are included:

EMHAMN — The names of more than 1.3 million Swedish emigrants from the ports of Göteborg 1869-1930, Malmö 1874-1930, Stockholm 1869-1930, Norrköping 1859-1919, and Kalmar 1880-1893. Included in this database are the names, ages, places of origin, and destinations of the individual emigrants.

EMIBAS — The names of approximately 37,000 emigrants from the city of Göteborg. It includes all the city's residents who emigrated from the mid-18th century to 1930.

EMISJÖ — The names of approximately 20,000 Swedish sailors who were signed off or jumped ship outside of Europe.

SAKA — A listing of microfilmed Swedish-American church records at the Swedish Emigrant Institute.

The first source group, the lists of emigrants from different Swedish ports, is frequently used for genealogical research. Its availability on a CD-ROM means that it is possible to use it and rapidly search for individuals in new ways.

It is anticipated that this CD-ROM will be updated with new source groups in the future. The recommended minimum equipment is a Pentium PC, 75MHz, 16Mb RAM, Windows or Windows 95, and a 4X CD-player.

Anyone interested in ordering this CD-ROM should contact Göteborgs-Emigranten, Box 53066, S-400 16 Göteborg, Sweden, fax 01146-31-20 99 02. Cost (plus shipping and handling) is $300, which can paid by personal check.

C.W. Mortensen Dies

On March 13, 1996 C.W. Mortensen passed away. Mr. Mortensen, a retired attorney-at-law of Newark, Delaware, maintained a life-long interest in Viking history and culture, and in 1993 he donated a significant collection of books on this topic to the Center. The C.W. Mortensen Collection is now one of the seven permanent collections in the Center's library, and includes a number of rare books relating to the lives and times of the Vikings. The Center expresses its sympathies to the Mortensen family.
The Dagmar and Nils William Olsson Fellowship

The Swenson Center is pleased to announce the establishment of a fellowship designed to help defray costs for one person doing research for an extended period of time at the Center. The fellowship was established by Nils William, a leading authority in the field of Swedish-American studies, and his wife Dagmar.

The fellowship, which is in the amount of $1,500, is open to anyone doing academic research on any aspect of Swedish-American history. The fellowship is not intended to be used for research on a person's individual family history. We particularly encourage graduate students and younger scholars to apply. The minimum stay required at the Swenson Center is three weeks, and the fellowship must be used within one year of notification.

Anyone interested in applying for the fellowship should submit a two-to-three-page proposal to the Swenson Center, outlining the proposed research topic. The proposal should also include a current curriculum vitae, as well as a statement showing how the resources of the Swenson Center are appropriate for the particular project. The deadline for application is April 1, 1997.

About Our Finances

Sometimes we are asked how the Swenson Center is financed. Many assume that all expenses are paid by income from the Swenson endowment.

The fact is that the gift received over fifteen years ago from Birger and Lyal Swenson was vital in the establishment of the Center and in financing it during the early years. Another fact, however, is that the program of the Center soon outgrew the support received from that initial fund, and other sources of income were needed.

Fortunately, support has come in two ways — through additional endowments and through annual gifts and grants. The original endowment has now more than doubled as a result of the generosity of friends. Endowment income still provides most of the Center's support. In addition, more than 650 persons have joined one of the annual support groups. From time to time, we have also been able to secure grants in support of special projects, such as those recently received from the Wallenberg Foundations in Sweden.

The Center's program is greatly enhanced by its location at Augustana College, and this relationship continues in many ways to be an important benefit. The Center's annual expense budget, however, is supported entirely by endowment income and annual gifts separate from the College's budget.

Although program expenses must be limited to the funds available, we realize that more work needs to be done. As the Center attempts to meet increasing demands in its efforts to serve as a national center for preserving and interpreting the record of Swedish immigration to North America, more financial resources will be needed.

You can help in this effort. By establishing an endowment with the income restricted for the Center's use, you can create a permanent recognition of your interest in preserving the Swedish heritage in America, or you can memorialize an immigrant of your choice. We will be happy to provide suggestions regarding how this can be done.

Another way to help is by joining one of our three annual support groups. Your participation in helping to support the Center is much appreciated. We hope it will also give you satisfaction in being a partner in making sure that the Swedish record in America is available to future generations.

Annual Support Groups

More than 500 persons have enrolled as Swenson Center Associates, each making an annual contribution of $25. In addition to supporting the work of the Swenson Center, Associates receive a discount on research fees and a reduced subscription rate to Swedish American Genealogist.

For an annual contribution of at least $100, donors are designated as Swenson Center Scholars. In addition to the benefits provided to Associates, Swenson Center Scholars receive Swedish American Genealogist free of charge.

A support group of major importance is the Swenson Center Circle. Members of this group support the work
of the Center through an annual contribution of at least $250. In addition to the benefits provided to Associates and Scholars, members of the Swenson Center Circle receive an annual book in the field of Swedish-American studies. We thank those who have become Associates, Scholars, and members of the Circle, and we encourage those not yet members to join. By participating as a donor you are, in a very important way, helping us realize our goals.

**Upsala College Archives Update**

As noted in the last issue of *Swenson Center News*, the Swenson Center has received the archives of Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey. Upsala College closed its doors in May 1995, and its archives were subsequently transferred to Rock Island. Upsala College was founded in 1893 as a way of providing Swedish Americans on the east coast with educational opportunities.

The cataloging and inventorying of the archives will be an important task for the Swenson Center as we make these materials available for future use. The Upsala College archives are not only important from the point of view of Swedish immigration history, as the school was founded by the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod, but the school's records will also provide scholars interested in issues of higher education with rich materials for studying the life of a private liberal arts college and how it coped with changing circumstances of the last decades.

Please note that the Swenson Center does not have any student records from Upsala College. They are maintained by Felician College of Lodi, New Jersey, and any questions regarding transcripts, etc., should be directed to that institution.

The transfer of the Upsala College archives from New Jersey to Rock Island was made possible by a generous grant from Lutheran Brotherhood.

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**Publications available from the Swenson Center**

- Offprints of the 6th annual O. Fritiof Ander Lecture in April 1994; $2.00 per copy, postage included. The lecture, entitled "Naming Patterns Among Swedish-Americans," also was published in the June 1994 issue of *Swedish American Genealogist*.
- Microfiche of our master index of the Swedish-American and Swedish-Canadian church records we have on deposit; $1.00 each, including postage. Please specify American or Canadian.
- A guide to the Swenson Center's microfilm holdings of Swedish-American newspapers (and a few Swedish-Canadian papers); $1.50, including postage.
- Copies of *Collective Memory and Ethnic Groups: The Case of Swedes, Mennonites, and Norwegians* by John Bodnar and *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant* by Marcus Lee Hansen. These were published as a part of the Occasional Papers Series. Please send a check for $3.00 for *Collective Memory and Ethnic Groups* and $2.00 for *The Problem of the Third Generation* ($5.00 for both); postage included.

Please make all checks payable to "Swenson Center" and send payment to: Swenson Center, Augustana College, 639 38th St, Rock Island, IL 61201-2273.

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**How you can support the Swenson Center**

Please enroll me in the following category of support for the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center:

- SWENSON CENTER ASSOCIATE (annual contribution of $25 or $_______)
- SWENSON CENTER ASSOCIATE with one-year subscription to *Swedish American Genealogist* (annual contribution of $40 or $_______)
- SWENSON CENTER SCHOLAR (annual contribution of $100 or $_______)
- SWENSON CENTER CIRCLE (annual contribution of $250 or $_______)
- SWEDISH AMERICAN GENEALOGIST (one-year subscription for $25)
- Other Amount $_______

Please send information on endowment possibilities.

Name:__________________________
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State:_________ Zip:_________ Telephone:_________

Return this form to:
SWENSON SWEDISH IMMIGRATION RESEARCH CENTER
Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL 61201-2273
Augustana Summer School in Sweden – 1997

For those with a genuine curiosity to learn more about Sweden and the Swedes, Swedish culture, or one's Swedish roots, a knowledge of Swedish is essential. Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois announces its fourteenth Summer School in Sweden, which provides an excellent opportunity to learn Swedish in Sweden. Now well into its second decade, this six-week program offers five weeks of intensive college-level Swedish language study at the folkhögskola (folk high school) in beautiful Grebbestad on the Swedish west coast, and one week in Stockholm, the Swedish capital. The program runs from May 31 to July 13, 1997.

The program is designed for anyone from 16 years of age to 90 who is interested in intensive study of Swedish. Three levels of language instruction — beginning, intermediate, and advanced — will be offered. Each level corresponds to one year of college or university-level study and may be taken for credit granted through Augustana College. Each course meets separately from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily, and small groups, conversation drills, and lectures on Swedish cultural history complement the basic classroom materials.

The first five weeks will be held at the folkhögskola in Grebbestad, a small, idyllic fishing village and popular summer resort in northern Bohuslän on the Swedish west coast, located midway between Göteborg (Gothenburg) and Oslo. There will be weekend excursions to Oslo and Göteborg, field trips, visits to areas of local color, as well as opportunities to meet with Swedish families. Following the five weeks in Grebbestad, the group will travel to Stockholm, where one week will be spent exploring the capital and surrounding areas.

The cost of the program is set at $3,150 (with reservation for major exchange rate fluctuations). This price covers all books, ground transportation, meals, and lodging in Grebbestad and room and breakfast for the week in Stockholm. Arrangements are being made for a special air fare from Chicago.

For further information and application forms, please contact:

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