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Augustana Seniors Fall 1885: Introduction

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Augustana Seniors Fall 1885 : Introduction

Thomas E. Bengtson

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The series of papers “Augustana Seniors Fall 1885” represent the work of students in FYI 103 Practical Genealogy, taught by me in the spring term of the 2018–2019 academic year. The course is part of a three-term sequence of First Year Inquiry courses that all first-year students at Augustana take. The students in my class worked in small teams to investigate the family history and genealogy of an Augustana alum. The alums were taken from the members of the senior class as listed in the Augustana College catalog of 1885–1886.¹ The resulting papers were part of the requirements of the course.

Somewhat remarkably by modern standards, the catalogs in the 1880s listed every student at the college. The catalog of 1885–1886 listed fifteen students in the senior class. Only seven of those students were the subject of a research paper this year. All the alums chosen for study graduated from Augustana in the spring of 1886 and all of them became pastors in the Augustana Lutheran Church. For each alum chosen, there was a record card signed by the alum himself in the Augustana Library Special Collections. (All of these alums were men.) The record cards served as a starting point for research on each alum.

The record cards are about 13 cm by 20 cm. The cards have more detailed information, and ask about the date and place of birth of the student, the name of the father and the father’s occupation, and the name of the church of which the student was a member. Although there is not always a record card for each, the alums this year were chosen partly because there was such a record for each of them. An example of such a registration card is included later.

The alums were immigrants from Sweden. Armed with the knowledge of what parish in Sweden the student or his family had emigrated from, it was possible to find that family in Swedish parish records. The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, via *ArkivDigital* and *Ancestry.com* was able to provide access to these Swedish records. Much of the work on the ancestors of each alum was done there.

The Swenson Center also is a repository for microfilm copies of Swedish American church records. As the seniors of 1885 were a religious lot, they went to church in this country. Quite often they could be found in these American records. Sometimes information about their descendants showed up.

Another common source for many teams was Conrad Bergendoff’s *Augustana Ministerium*.² Although compiled from other sources, it is generally reliable and gives information about the career of each pastor ordained in the Augustana Lutheran Church.

The research teams were encouraged to consult a wide variety of sources. Some of the more frequently used sources included the Augustana student newspaper, *Augustana Observer*, records in genealogical website *FamilySearch.org*, and various census records in the United States.

Each paper has several sections. The first is a biography of the Augustana alum himself. For some much is known, while for others there isn’t a lot to say. Next comes an ancestors report (ahnantafel).

1 *Augustana College Catalogue 1885–1886*, p. 8, volume bound in *Augustana College Catalogue 1871–1891*, Aug. Inst., LD 271, A6651, C3, 1871–1891; Augustana College, Special Collections, Rock Island, Illinois.

2 Conrad Bergendoff, *The Augustana Ministerium* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Historical Society, 1980).

The next section is a descendants report. For some alums there is quite a bit to say, but for others there is almost nothing. Descendants who might still be alive are indicated only as “living” even when the research team know the names of the descendants. (Citations may provide the reader with sources as to who these living people might be.)

Time was short, and so each report has some open questions suitable for further research. Interested readers are invited to pick up the trail and fill in the gaps. The teams created records for their subjects on the Family Tree on *FamilySearch*. The report gives the record locator on *FamilySearch* and readers can use this locator to find the Augustana alum in this big and growing tree.

The final section for each report is a list of sources. We have tried to follow good genealogical practice in creating citations as footnotes and then listing our sources at the end. In the few instances where an image of the alum was available, credits for the photograph are given at the very end.

Acknowledgments

My students and I are especially grateful to Special Collections librarian Emma Lincoln, who gave much useful guidance on what materials were available and was generous with her time.

Many thanks go to the staff of the Swenson Center, including Jill Seaholm, Susanne Titus, and Lisa Huntsha, who were patient and generous as they first helped the teams locate these old Swedish records and then translate them into English.

Special thanks go to Augustana Librarians Connie Ghinazzi and Mary Tatro. Connie and Mary were instrumental in getting these projects to Augustana Digital Commons.

Example of a Registration Card

The image to the right is a full size scan of the registration card for Peter Olof Hansen.³ The registration is a printed form, with blanks apparently filled in the registrant, and signed by the registrant. Of particular interest for genealogical research is the date and place of birth, the name of the father, the approximate date of immigration to the United States, and the church where the registrant was a member. The card also shows the name of registrant exactly as given by the registrant. An added bonus is the signature of registrant.

No. _____ Records for 1883. Sophomore Class. V
AT
Augustana College and Theological Seminary.

Please, fill out this blank legibly, and return it without delay to your Class Guardian.

1. Write your name and surname in full (underlining your name of familiar address): Peter Olof Hansen
2. State your parents' nationality: Swedish
Your father's name: Olof Hansen
Occupation: Farmer Residence: Knarville
Whether he is living or dead: Living
3. Where were you born? Storsjöcken, Kristianstads Län, Sweden
4. When were you born? Year 1861, month December, 18 day.
5. What was your occupation before entering this institution? Studying
6. Where did you receive instruction before entering this institution? Hedding College, Abingdon, Ill.
7. When did you or your ancestors arrive in this country? My father emigr. in 1869, my mother 1871.
8. Where is your present home? Knarville, Knarlee, Ill.
9. When did you enter this institution? Fall Term 1883.
When did you enter this class? Fall Term 1883.
10. What course of studies do you pursue here? (State in what class, and whether Classical, Scientific, or selected; if selected, state what topics, and in what class or classes).
Classical Course
Sophomore Class
11. To what church and congregation do you belong? Sw. Evng. Luth. Church at Knarville
12. Do you receive any beneficiary aid, and how much?
13. In what room do you live? Number 18 Sudover
14. Subscribe your usual signature: Peter O Hansen

Scan of an early registration card, courtesy of Augustana College Special Collections librarian Emma Lincoln.

³ Registration card of Peter O Hansen, Folder 10 "1883, A-Z", Box 1 "Early Registration Records, 1876-1891", MSS 241c "Augustana College Office of the Registrar records", Special Collections, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

Sources

Augustana College Catalog 1885-1886. Augustana College. Special Collections. Rock Island, Illinois.

Bergendoff, Conrad. *The Augustana Ministerium: A Study of the Careers of the 2,504 Pastors of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Synod/Church 1850-1962*. Rock island, Illinois, Augustana Historical Society, 1980.

Registration card for Peter Olof Hansen. Augustana College Office of the Registrar records, MSS 241c. Augustana College. Special Collections. Rock Island, Illinois.