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Biography of Mrs. Clara Sophia Swanson, part 2
(Miss Frisk, Mrs. John Nordquist, Mrs. Carl Swanson)

This was written in 1926 by an old immigrant who left Sweden in 1868. She lived in Red Oak, IA.

In June 1875 the country was visited by grasshoppers. The corn was just ready to be ploughed the second time. They started coming in at noon and by evening the fields were covered with them. When they landed on the house, it sounded like a heavy hailstorm and they were so thick that even the sun could not be seen. When they left the next day everything was gone. The grasshoppers had eaten all the crops, gardens, leaves off the trees and bushes and everything in sight.

In the early days, heavy rains and thunderstorms, and blizzards in the winter, were more frequent than in later years. A great many farms were surrounded by high hedge fences, which made the snow drift so badly the roads were impassable and they had to drive through the fields.

There was no Swedish church in town at that time, but they had services once a month in a rented hall. They were conducted by the pastor of a church ten miles from town. The first Swedish church was built and dedicated in the fall of 1873.

Moving to town
Part of the time they lived in town, her husband, John Nordquist, working at his trade, as a shoemaker, and his sons took care of the farm. The first Swedish church was built and dedicated in the fall of 1873.

Tragedy strikes
Two sons and three daughters were born to them; the oldest son, Gust William, died 14 October 1880 at the age of eight years. Three weeks later, November 8, her husband died, leaving her with four small children.

Life goes on
She then moved back to the country and kept house for her stepsons until October 30, 1883. On that date she married Carl Swanson, (b. 1837).

Back to town
They then moved back to town to the home which they had previously purchased and have resided there continuously since that date. Her second husband was a stonemason by trade as well as a well digger, but as that kind of work cannot be done during the cold weather, she did some washings and later kept boarders for a number of years to help with the family finances.

With the exception of one serious case of typhoid fever in 1880, she has never been sick and has enjoyed good health with the exception of sciatica attacks during the course of her lifetime. She has been able to take care of her household duties until five years ago when she fell and broke her right arm, which prevented her from doing any more heavy work. A year later at the ripe old age of eighty, she suffered a severe heart attack and has been unable to do any work as a result of it. She loved to read and sew, but her eyesight is impaired by cataracts, so she is unable to do either of these pastimes.

The children
The oldest daughter, Augusta Amelia, (b. 23 Jan. 1874) was married 23 Feb. 1898, to Henry Albert Carlson. They have lived on farms in Nebraska and Iowa and at the present time are living six miles west of Red Oak. They are the parents of seven children: Ernest Mable, Grace, Robert, Inez, George, and James.

On April 26, 1898, the son, Henry Ambrose (b. 14 Jan. 1876), was called to serve Uncle Sam in the Spanish-
American War. He was stationed at San Francisco, CA, five months and then sailed with CO. M – 51st Infantry Regiment for the Philippines. He was on board the transport ship ninety days before they could land. They remained in the Philippines a year during which time they took part in several skirmishes, returning to these U.S. in November 1899. Of all the hardships of pioneer life, nothing could compare with the worry and anxiety of having an only son so far from home not knowing when word might come that he had been wounded, killed or, perhaps, died of fever, so prevalent in the Philippines. Her faith in God and plenty of work to keep her busy helped her through the long, anxious months.

However, he returned safely, though broken in health for a time. Though not wounded by bullets in the Army, he was wounded by Cupid’s darts in San Francisco. After remaining at home for eighteen (18) months, he returned to the West coast and was married June 11, 1902, to Fannie Grace Wallace of San Francisco where they have since made their home. They have two daughters: Dorothy and Barbara. He has part ownership in a business handling boy’s clothing and men’s furnishings.

Emma Conradine (b. 24 Jan. 1878) was married 14 June 1906 to Claus Victor Anderson. At that time he held the pastorate of the Swedish Mission Church of this city (Red Oak). Later he held pastorates near Waverly, Nebraska; Buffalo, Minnesota; and at the present time he has a pastorate in West Duluth, Minnesota. They have three children: Holger, Hazel, and Herbert.

The daughter Anna Christine (b. 7 Dec 1879), is living at home with her mother.

**Husband II dies**

On June 21, 1919, her second husband, Carl Swanson, died after a lingering illness. He was 81 years of age at the time of his demise.

**A great trip**

That fall she fulfilled a wish of long standing when, accompanied by her daughter, she took a trip to California to visit her son and his family. This trip was very different from the one she took when she came to this country in a crowded immigrant train in comparison to the Pullman accommodations she enjoyed on her journey to the West Coast. She spent five months in San Francisco where she enjoyed the comforts of her son’s home and the many wonderful sights to be seen in that city.

She especially enjoyed going to the beach when the day would be warm and sunny so that she could watch the huge waves rolling in and breaking over the cliffs. Golden Gate Park was another favorite visiting place as there were so many wonderful things to see such as the Museum, Japanese Tea Garden, Aviary, and the Conservatory. She had always loved flowers, so she enjoyed being in the state where flowers were blooming during the winter season while back home there was ice and snow. The trip out there was made over the C.B.& Q.R.R., the D. & R.G.R.R.; through the Royal Gorge then over the Western Pacific via the beautiful Feather River Canyon. Coming home, the trip was over the Southern Pacific Railroad where there are forty miles of snow sheds in the Sierra Nevada Mountains; then over the Union Pacific Railroad to Omaha, Nebraska and on to Minnesota to visit the daughter at Buffalo before returning home.

**Quiet retirement years**

Most of her time since then has been spent in Iowa with the exception of
short trips to Nebraska to visit her daughters during the time they lived in that state.

One of her experiences in traveling occurred when she took an automobile trip. She was 77 years old then and the distance covered was 460 miles, 100 of which was over muddy roads, necessitating the use of chains on the car. The trip took three days.

During the fifty-three years she lived in Red Oak, she has seen the wild prairies converted into prosperous farms, small shanties replaced by large modern residences, a great many having their own lighting plants. Instead of lumber-wagons, or carriages, which were used later, hundreds of automobiles of every make and description now speed along the highway, the latter being kept in good condition.

The town itself has grown into a beautiful little city with the majority of the main streets being paved. There is a good lighting system, several factories, five large brick grade schools, a junior high school, and a high school, which includes a junior college. There are ten churches, six of which are brick, and in every respect modern.

The old sand spring just outside of the city where children played many years ago and gathered wild flowers is now the source of the city's water supply, since wells have been built at that site. The city also has two modern fire engines.

**Voting for the first time**

In the fall of 1924, she went to the polls for the first time to cast her vote for Calvin Coolidge for President of the United States.

**Family reunion**

Last year she had the great pleasure of having a family reunion at her home with all the members of the family being able to attend with the exception of the oldest grandson and his wife and little daughter. However, they were able to attend shortly thereafter. In connection with this affair, a reunion of all the relatives residing in the community was held at the Tourists' Park, which is located on a hill overlooking the city and surrounding country. There were 45 people present at this gala affair.

One of the pleasant features of the reunion was that the whole family (19 members) attended church together on Sunday morning and listened to an inspiring sermon by the son-in-law, C.V. Anderson, and singing by son, Henry, and the grandchildren, Holger and Hazel Anderson.

She is a member of the Swedish Mission Church, but on account of feebleness she has not been able to attend but a very few times during the past four years.

She is the last surviving member of a family of nine children. The brother, Axel, who came to America with her died in April 1918, and her sister, Charlotte, who also lived here, died while she was in California in January 1920.

Mother Clara Sophia has a wonderful memory and can relate many childhood instances as well as details concerning her later life with accuracy. The greater part of this sketch of her life was related to her daughter by her from memory at the age of eighty-four.

She enjoys company. Since she is unable to read or do any work, time hangs rather heavily on her hands. However, as every day draws to a close, she is one day nearer her "Heavenly home," where there is no more work, hardships, or tears and where God will most certainly reward her for the good deeds she performed on earth.

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**This text was submitted by Charles E. West, a relative of Clara Sophia's.**

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**Parishes with royal names**

Mostly the Swedish parishes have geographical names, like Södra Unnaryd, Timmele or Svanskog, but there are exceptions.

Especially it seems to have been quite popular to change a parish name to something that had to with royalty.

Some examples are **Skedeskamna** (Karl Gustav [N]), **Deglunden** [Gustav Adolf [S]], **Böringe** (Gustav [M]), **Klockrike** (Josephina [E]), **Karungi** (Karl Gustav [BD]), **Mortorps kapell** (Oskar [HI]), **Arvika Västra** (Oskarstad [S]), and **Väderstad** (OskarFredrik [E]). Not all parishes kept their new names, but have reverted to the old one.

There are more of these parishes, but if you cannot find the right place then try google, with the name + word "socken" + province. If that does not work you can enter the parish name in Arkiv Digital, but you may have to use alternate spellings like Gustav - Gustaf.

Three parishes in northern Sweden were named Fredrika, Dorotea, Vilhelmina after Queen Fredrika, Dorotea och Vilhelmina, (b. 1781, d. 1826), wife of King Gustav IV Adolf, who reigned 1792-1809.

This is the Gustav Adolf church in Värmland, which was first known as Deglunden, but had its name altered in 1791, after the King's son Gustaf Adolf. This parish was earlier a part of Norra Råda, and is situated in eastern Värmland, an area with many forest finns.