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Swedish Use of Patronymics for Established Family Names

Erik Wikén

It is not unusual for Swedish citizens, with well established family names, to select, for various reasons, the use of their patronymics while travelling or residing abroad. The reasons for this practice are quite understandable if the family name was difficult to pronounce in a foreign tongue, or if the name attracted unusual attention, such as the case of the many members of the Uggla family, who changed their names, rather than being called "ugly". Occasionally, however, the traveller wished to, or had to conceal his real surname. Thus it has happened on many occasions, that persons coming to America, have exchanged their surnames for a patronymic, and have thus remained unidentified, or hidden from view from the student seeking the whereabouts of Swedes who left for foreign parts. It is my purpose in this short study, to cite a few examples of Swedes, who followed this practice in the United States, although I am sure that many more examples can be found, not only in the U.S., but also elsewhere in the world.

Claes Georg Bäckström, a son of *Georg Bäckström*, fled to America in 1806, and thereafter used the name of *Göran Göransson* (*Göran* is the Swedish equivalent of *George* in English).¹

The Swedish Norwegian Consul in Le Havre, France, Carl Gustaf Broström, gave a helping hand in 1830 to a Swede named Aminoff (his Christian name is not divulged) aboard the *Superior*, a vessel destined for New Orleans.² When this vessel arrived there Dec. 4, 1830, there was, according to the ship's manifest, only one Swede on board, and his name was L. Henricks.³ It is a known fact that Lorentz Fredrik Aminoff, after having left Swedish military service in 1828, went abroad to France and subsequently to South America, dying in Cartagena, Colombia in 1832.⁴ There is no doubt that Lorentz Aminoff, son of Axel *Henrik* Aminoff, is identical with L. *Henricks* (*Henricks* can be either a patronymic of the same type as *Ericks*, *Hennings*, *Jacobs*, *Peters*, etc., or else an incomplete form of *Henricksson*).

Anders Garberg, son of *Anders Garberg*, departed for America after a quarrel with his family and arrived in New York Dec. 15, 1838. The following year he enlisted in the U.S. Army, using the name of *Andrew Anderson*.⁵

Axel Adlersparre, son of *Axel Adlersparre*, served during the period of May 3, 1839 to Feb. 26, 1841 aboard the U.S. corvette *Cyane*, commanded by Capt.

Percival.⁶ When queried in 1842, Capt. Percival responded that while he did not know anyone by the name of Adlersparre, he knew of a Swede named *Axelsson*, who had served aboard his vessel, and he must therefore be identical with Adlersparre.⁷

A Swedish jeweller named Herman Hirsch, the son of *Herman Hirsch* of Stockholm, used the patronymic *Hermansson* already in Sweden. He embezzled jewelry entrusted to his care and fled to Paris in 1842. From Paris he moved to Le Havre, and is here identical with Herman Hermanson, who arrived in New York from Liverpool July 15, 1842.⁸

August Sundevall, son of *Jacob Sundevall*, married in 1839 the daughter of a Swedish cleric, whose name was Charlotta Henrietta Nelander. Sundevall lost his position due to a fondness for alcohol and departed for America alone in 1845.⁹ His wife sued him for divorce, which was granted in 1849, after which she remarried a clergyman named Carl Emanuel Trägårdh.¹⁰ August Sundevall wrote a number of letters from America to his brothers in Sweden, notably to Carl Jacob Sundevall, A Swedish zoölogist. This correspondence is to be found among his papers, on deposit in the library of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. From this correspondence we learn that August Sundevall enlisted in the U.S. armed forces in 1847 under the name of Augustus *Jackson*. He is to be found under this name, as unidentified, in Nils William Olsson's list of enlistments in the U.S. Army. From this register we also learn that Sundevall died in Vera Cruz, Mexico June 25, 1848.¹¹ His last letter to be found in the Sundevall Collection in Stockholm is dated Vera Cruz in March, 1848, which includes a very complete description of the journey from New York to Mexico with his troop contingent. In addition he also describes the month the group spent in Charleston, SC as well as the conditions in Vera Cruz, which the United States forces had captured.

Måns Hultin,¹² son of Carl Magnus (*Måns*) Hultin, departed from Sweden in 1864 as ship's surgeon aboard the emigrant vessel *Ernst Merck*. The vessel had been requested by Benjamin Franklin Tefft, an emigrant agent in Sweden for the State of Maine. Hultin wrote about the journey across the Atlantic as well as his somewhat negative experiences in America. These impressions were contained in five letters, which he submitted to the Stockholm newspaper *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in 1864. After his return to Sweden he wrote a few articles for *Ny illustrerad tidning* in 1865 (these articles were edited and published in book form by Erik Gamby in Uppsala in 1958). In 1865 Hultin also published a small volume concerning the famous Dr. Roback in America.¹³ In all of these cases he consistently used the pseudonym Måns *Månsson*, a practice he had followed earlier in his career.

Finally I wish to cite a few examples of a somewhat different method of dropping a family name. Here we are dealing with the substitution with one or more Christian names, either unchanged or in a slightly altered form.

Carl *Wilhelm* Lilliecrona, a legal expert in military matters, left for America in 1821 and is identical with C. *Williams*, a lawyer, who from passenger arrival sources arrived in New York July 23, 1821.¹⁴

Hugo *Ferdinand* Öhrströmer emigrated to America at the end of 1838 or in the beginning of 1839 and enlisted in the U.S. Army under the name of *Ferdinand*.¹⁵

Ernst *Wilhelm* Holmstedt arrived in New York Dec. 9, 1846.¹⁶ He is identical with Ernest *Wilhelmi*, who toward the end of 1847 enlisted in the U.S. Army.¹⁷ During the years of 1856–1858 he queried the Swedish Norwegian Consul General in New York concerning letters which might have arrived to *himself* or under the name of *Ernest Wilhelmi*.¹⁸

- ¹ Elgenstierna, Gustaf, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, I–IX (Stockholm, 1925–1936), (SAA), VIII, p. 469.
- ² *Kommerskollegium* (The Board of Trade), *huvudarkivet* (The Main Archives) E VI:a Vol. 131 (Broström's bill, dated Feb. 20, 1831), *Riksarkivet*, Stockholm.
- ³ Olsson, Nils William. *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in U.S. Ports 1820–1850 (except New York)* (Stockholm and St. Paul, MN 1979) (*SPAexcNY*), p. 54, unidentified.
- ⁴ SAA, I, p. 77.
- ⁵ Olsson, Nils William, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York 1820–1850* (Stockholm and Chicago, 1967) (*SPANY*), p. 29, n. 53. After completing his period of enlistment Garberg returned to Sweden Jan. 9, 1845 (*Göteborgs poliskammars journal över inländska resande*) (The Journal of the Police Chambers of Göteborg dealing with domestic travellers), 1845, *Landsarkivet*, Göteborg.
- ⁶ SAA, I, p. 52; *Axel Adlersparres arkiv* (Axel Adlersparre's Archives), Vol. I, *Krigsarkivet*, Stockholm; L. L. von Horn, *Biografiska anteckningar* (Åbo, 1934), Vol. III:2, p. 8.
- ⁷ Letter from the Swedish Norwegian Vice Consul Hunt to the Swedish Norwegian Minister in Washington, DC, Gustaf af Nordin (copy attached to the Minister's letter to Count Ludvig Manderström, Swedish Foreign Minister, dated Washington July 13, 1842) in Vol. E 4745, *Riksarkivet*, Stockholm.
- ⁸ *SPANY*, p. 42; *SPAexcNY*, p. 89.
- ⁹ He arrived in New York Aug. 4, 1845 according to *SPANY*, p. 63, n. 79.
- ¹⁰ *Lunds domkapitels protokoll* (The Minutes of the Diocese of Lund), No. A I, dated Jan. 31, 1849, *Landsarkivet*, Lund; Knut G. Trägårdh, *Släkten Trägårdh från Skåne* (Stockholm, 1978), p. 36.
- ¹¹ Olsson, Nils William, "Swedish Enlistments in the U.S. Army Before 1851", *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, Winter and Spring, 1951 (*Swedish Enlistments*), p. 14. The information contained in L. M. Örnberg's *Svenska ättartal*, Vol. VI, p. 366, that Sundevall returned to Sweden and died as a farmer in Skåne is therefore erroneous.
- ¹² *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, Vol. XIX, pp. 457–459.
- ¹³ Hultin, Måns, *Resa till Amerika 1864 med emigrantskeppet Ernst Merck* (Uppsala, 1958); Månsson, Måns, *Doktor Roback eller en svensk bonde i Amerika* (Stockholm, 1865). For further information concerning Roback, see Sten Almquist's article "The Knave of Fallebo", *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, 1976, pp. 6–25.
- ¹⁴ *SPANY*, p. 1, unidentified. Concerning Lilliecrona's visit to America, see Nils Runeby, *Den nya världen och den gamla* (Uppsala, 1969), pp. 26–28 and Gert Hornwall, "Läsarliberalen Carl Wilhelm Lilliecrona", *Personhistorisk tidskrift*, Vol. LXXV, No. 1–2, pp. 51–61.
- ¹⁵ *Swedish Enlistments*, p. 29, unidentified.
- ¹⁶ *SPANY*, p. 127, n. 83; *SPAexcNY*, p. 95.
- ¹⁷ *Swedish Enlistments*, p. 29, unidentified.
- ¹⁸ *Beskickningen i Förenta Staternas arkiv, 1850-talet* (The Archives of the Swedish Norwegian Mission in Washington, DC of the 1850's); *generalkonsulatets diarium 1855–1858* (The Journals of the Swedish Norwegian Consulate General in New York 1855–1858), pp. 420, 424, 436, 488, *Riksarkivet*, Stockholm. Regarding Holmstedt's participation in the American Civil War, there are a couple of letters in the same archives of the Swedish Norwegian Mission for 1862, dealing with miscellaneous items, consuls, etc. *Post- och inrikes tidningar* for Sept. 29, 1862 contains a condensed version of a letter from Holmstedt, dated Washington, DC July 19, 1862. *Uppsala-Posten* for Jan. 7, 1865 contains a news item concerning Holmstedt, translated from an American newspaper. Holmstedt died Sept. 20, 1867, according to the New York newspaper, *Skandinavisk Post*, dated Oct. 23, 1867.