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Declarations of Intention by Swedes in Rockford 1859–1870

Nils William Olsson

Declarations of intention to become United States citizens and the final naturalization documents are among the best sources for determining the presence in a given community of early Swedish settlers. Up until the time that the law was changed in 1906, with the establishment of the Immigration and Naturalization Service under the U.S. Department of Justice, which then took over the sole function of the naturalization of foreign subjects, any foreigner in the United States had been able to secure his or her naturalization in almost any court of justice, ranging from the U.S. District courts to the police courts of individual cities and towns.

Any foreigner coming to the United States could become a citizen of this country, after having resided here a minimum of five years, renouncing his loyalty to the sovereign of the country of his birth, and after having taken out the "first paper" or the declaration of intention, which could be done a year after arrival.

For immigrants who were naturalized before 1906, therefore, the naturalization records as well as the declarations of intention may be found in almost every court in the United States, except where the records have been transferred to central archival institutions or have been lost through fire, neglect or because of the upheavals wrought by the Civil War.

The information contained in these records will vary from court to court. If the searcher is fortunate, he might find such valuable genealogical data as the birth date of the applicant, his city or province of birth, the time of his arrival in the United States, the port of arrival and in some rare instances even the name of the vessel which brought him to this country. At the other end of the spectrum one will usually only get the name of the applicant, his date of declaration or naturalization as well as the name of the court, and perhaps the names of the witnesses who aided in the naturalization process.

The city of Rockford, located in Winnebago County, Illinois, is one of the most Swedish communities in the United States and one can expect to find here a great deal of information concerning early declarations and naturalizations. In checking the early records in the well organized and pleasant surroundings of the modern court house the writer came across three early volumes which have been

helpful in pinpointing the presence of early Swedish settlers in Winnebago County.

The first volume which stems from the earliest period, before the heavy flow of Swedish immigrants descended upon the city, contains relatively few Scandinavian names. Unfortunately the first volume carries no signum. Its spine is missing, but internal evidence shows that it contains naturalizations for Winnebago County, extending from Oct. 13, 1851 to Oct. 2, 1858. The information contained in this volume is quite sparse — usually only the names, the nationality, the date of naturalization and the names of the two witnesses who appeared at the ceremonies. Only fourteen names are Swedish or Norwegian, the difficulty being that inasmuch as Norway and Sweden were united under a dual monarchy during most of the 19th Century under a Swedish sovereign, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the applicant was Norwegian or Swedish. An analysis of the names, however, shows that the greater part of the fourteen names listed must be Norwegian. The names of those naturalized between 1852 and 1858 are listed here with the date of naturalization:

Date	Name	Witnesses
April 26, 1852	Christopher Kittleson	William Randall and David Wood
Sept. 27, 1852	Gunald Halwerson	" " " L. V. Cleveland
" " "	Aslack "	" " " "
" " "	Hallowell Anderson	" " " "
May 3, 1853	John Christensen	G. W. Elliott and William Morris
" " "	Thore Torgersen	" " " John R. Henning
" " "	Mogens Swennungson	" " " William Morris
— — —	Lars Johan Suckow	William Morris and John R. Henning
April 27, 1854	Lars Nielson	— — — — — — — —
March 7, 1857	Johns Pederson	S. R. Franklin and Augustus Johnson
Feb. 27, 1858	Augustus Johnson	John Peterson and John Fraley
Sept. 27, 1858	John Olson	Peter Johnson and Peter Peterson
Sept. 30, 1858	John Nelson	A. Johnson and C. J. Carlson

The next volume carries the signum A and is titled *Final Naturalization Record*. It runs from 1860 to 1890. For some reason, unfortunately, there is a lacuna between 1860 and 1877. Certainly there must have been naturalizations during these seventeen years, even though the Civil War years intervened. What happened is difficult to ascertain. Perhaps this volume after the year of 1860 was misplaced, and another volume, now not extant was used, which carried up to 1877, when this volume again came into use. There are only five names recorded during 1860. Since this study is limited to Swedes in Rockford before 1870, no names from 1877 on have been included. The five names from 1860 are as follows and all are undoubtedly Swedish:

Date	Name	Witnesses
Sept. 3, 1860	Charles Anderson	John Telander and Peter Hokenson
Sept. 7, 1860	John Svenson Smith	Augustus Johnson and Charles J. Charleson
Sept. 10, 1860	Isaac Lundgren	James Albert and Augustus Johnson
" " "	Joseph Hogland	" " " " "
Sept. 14, 1860	Magnus Forsburg	Andrew Andreen and John Anderson

The third volume and by far the most voluminous is a record of *Declarations of Intention* and runs from February 1, 1859 to December 7, 1888. The information contained in these declarations is quite sparse indeed, being concentrated to the name of the applicant, his or her nationality and the date the declaration was filed. Since the declaration could be filed at any time after the first year after the arrival in the United States, there is no way of determining from the declaration how long the applicant had resided in this country. Again, as for the other volumes, the applicant's foreign allegiance is given as the Kingdom of Sweden and Norway. This means that we cannot be quite sure if the applicant is Norwegian or Swedish. Therefore all of them have been listed, except in two or three instances, where he has indicated that he is a subject of Norway solely and where his name obviously has a Norwegian ring to it.

One important fact concerning these declarations should be emphasized. They have all been signed by the applicant, except in such cases where he was illiterate and the clerk of court wrote his name, but asked the applicant to indicate by his mark (x) that he was indeed the individual making the declaration. Where the applicant actually signed his name, we are able to witness how he originally spelled his name and how it was used in Sweden, before he had succumbed to the custom used by so many of his fellow immigrants, either anglicizing his name or dropping the patronymic in favor of a taken family name.

At times the applicant used only his initials, but the clerk has often supplied the first or Christian name. In such instances the first name is to be found within parentheses. Parentheses have also been used to indicate instances where the applicant inadvertently dropped letters as he signed his name.

In the autumn of 1930, Herman G. Nelson, popular Rockford journalist, wrote a series of articles on the early Swedes in Rockford for the *Rockford Morning Star*, highlighting their achievements in industry, civic affairs, politics, church life as well as their very active involvement in the Civil War. Many of those listed in the declarations below can be found in Mr. Nelson's highly interesting narratives.

The following Swedes (and perhaps a few Norwegians) declared their intention of becoming United States citizens in the County Court of Winnebago, Rockford, Illinois from 1859 to 1870:

Date	Name
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1859

Feb. 11 — Gustaf Andersson
Feb. 21 — Magnus P. Lindahl
March 8 — Peter J. Henberg
March 19 — Johannes Abrahamsson
April 27 — Christopher Hansen; Andreas Hansen
Aug. 8 — Isaac Linquist
Sept. 19 — Ephraim Andersson
Oct. 19 — C. Christopher Lunde

1860

Feb. 17 — Anton Hendrickson (x), his mark; Ole Larson (x), his mark
Feb. 23 — Peter Benson (x), his mark
Feb. 24 — Christopher Kittleson
March 17 — Peter Lindahl
March 20 — Abraham Johnson
April 5 — Jerome Patterson
April 7 — Ole Pettersson; Petter Hakansson
April 10 — Gustaf Pettersson
May 31 — Micha(e)l Olson
June 18 — Olaus Pettersson
Aug. 7 — Nyquist Johansson
Sept. 26 — Andrew Peterson (x), his mark; Seaver Anderson (x), his mark
Oct. 17 — Frank Anderson
Nov. 20 — Andro Androsen
Dec. 1 — Nels Olson (x), his mark
Dec. 29 — Christopher Heide

1861

Feb. 10 — Knud Swenningson
Feb. 24 — Carl Fredrick Gustafson
March 15 — Charles Anderson (x), his mark
April 2 — Louis Svenson
Aug. 2 — Ole Christian (x), his mark; Johan Hansen
Aug. 4 — Alexander Anderson

1864

Nov. 23 — Carl Johan Andersson

Date Name

1865

June 24 — Ole Andreas Tallakson
 July 10 — Janne Olstrum; Johanna Clifford
 Sept. 30 — Andrew Borg (x), his mark
 Nov. 22 — John Goransson
 Dec. 13 — Frank Enoch

1866

Jan. 10 — Anders Qvist; Andrew Floberg; Johan Johnson
 Jan. 15 — Jonas Johnson
 Jan. 16 — Swen Welin; Jacob Welin; Charles I. Welen (Welin?); Elias Magnus Nilson
 Feb. 27 — Charles John Nelson
 March 20 — Lars Molander (x), his mark; Andrew Floberg (x), his mark
 Aug. 22 — Andro G. Edberg
 Sept. 26 — A. Engelbrektson
 Oct. 10 — Gustavus Peters
 Oct. 20 — Swan L. G. Johnson; Andreas Snäll
 Dec. 7 — Jonas Pettersson
 Dec. 15 — Adolf Colsen (x), his mark
 Dec. 18 — Swen Peterson (x), his mark; Andrew Adamson (x), his mark

1867

Feb. 5 — A. (Andrew) Holmquist
 Feb. 20 — Carl Gustaf Peterson
 March 4 — F. Lundquist; S. R. Anderson; Jon Petter Berglund
 June 19 — Andrew A. Anderson
 Oct. 23 — John Lind (x), his mark
 Nov. 9 — L. (Lars) Noling

1868

March 7 — Otto Petersson; Charly F. Hultstrom
 March 9 — J. A. Pettersson; Anders Holm; Joh. Jaldman; Gustaf Carlsson
 March 10 — Johan Stenström; Andrew G. Friborg; Sven Flygare; Johan August Danielsson
 March 11 — Petter Johansson; Gustaf Floberg; Johan Gren
 March 12 — S. J. Pettersson; Gustaf Melin; John Lend (Lind?); Bengt Nilsson; Endro (Andrew?) Isackson
 March 25 — Andrew Leonard Dahlgren; Johan Allgoth Danielsson; Johan August Jönsson; Johan Fabian Nordstr(o)hm; Charle(s) Hultdt; Frank Adrian Söderström; Gustave Peter Johnson; C. M. Lundberg; Jonas Peter Johnson; John Henry Beckman; Augustus Kling

Date	Name
March 30	— Gustaf Alfred Hellberg
March 31	— P. A. Wennerström
April 3	— Claes Johanson
April 4	— Andrew Linberg (x), his mark
April 14	— Andrew Kellgren
April 16	— Gustaf Sanden
June 19	— John A. Kling
Aug. 1	— Jöns Nilsson
Aug. 8	— Andrew Carlsson; Andreas Linder
Aug. 15	— August Bredberg
Aug. 28	— Charly Theo. Anderson
Sept. 8	— A. P. Edstrom; A. Stromberg
Sept. 17	— Gustaf Alfred Boman
Sept. 19	— Knut Mauritz Ohman
Sept. 29	— Charles Söderberg; Charles John Liljequist
Sept. 30	— Fredrick Anderson; Frank O. Linden; Isac August Peterson
Oct. 2	— Charles A. Anderson; A. (Adolphus) Bowman; Nils T. Thompson; Andreas Bergsten
Oct. 3	— Francis B. Mattson; Hans Melander; August Lindstedt; John Lunden; Jan P. Sjögren; Peter Hägglund; Olof Johanson; John C. Brolin; Charles Oscar Bowman
Oct. 5	— Johan(n)es Åval(l); Johannes F. Benson; John Benson; Axel Johnson; August Kjellgren; Charley Edvard Borg; L. P. Linstrom; A. P. Bergstedt; Johan(n)es A. Halander
Oct. 6	— Per Andersson; Cha(r)le(s) Booman; Melcker Frank; Lars Rothsten; August Bergman; Isak Peter Lindbeck; John Challgren
Oct. 7	— O. (Olof) Rose; Gustaf Janson; C. (Charles) Moberg; Ferdinand Boman; Johan August Gräns; Johan Sköld; Peter Settergren; Anders Bred; Johan August Nilsson; Lars Fihn; Johan Petter Larson; Gustaf Hägg(q)vist; Gustaf Petterson; Swan Adamson; Gustaf Försäll; G. W. Wästerström; Jan Larsson; Gustaf Samuelson; Anen Jansson; Jon Peter Swanson; Charles H. Johnson; Frans Os(c)ar Runnqvist; Johan August Petersson; C. A. Isacson; John P. Ny; Johannes Gabrielsson
Oct. 8	— August Wallentinsson; A. (Andrew) Svensson; Isak Danielson; P. (Peter) G. Johanson; L. G. Andersson; Sven August Fagerqwist; Johan Andersson; Lars Wallentinsson; Carl Otto Lundgren; N. G. Stockenburg; N. P. Nygren; Carl Jonsson; Cha(r)les Englund; Anders Stenstrom
Oct. 9	— A. (August) Nygren; A. (August) Sjöblom; Charles Paterton; Peter Larson; P. (Peter) G. (Gus) Bowman; Adolf Carlsson; A. (Anders) N. Nor- ling; John Noling; Anders Kjellberg; Lewis (Lars) Westergren; P. (Peter) M. Melander

Date	Name
Oct. 10	— Charle(s) Jasperson; Sam. Johnson Kjellgren; Johan Olson; A. G. Andersson; Samuel Johnson; P. J. Holmqvist
Oct. 12	— Charles Wallin; Andrew P. Anderson
Oct. 16	— Gustavus A. Wallin; C. (Charles) A. Röst; Joh. Hallberg; Joh. H. Hollem; Johan Petersson; A. M. Petersson; Johan Erik Hultqvist; S. (Swan) A. Borg; N. (Nielson) J. (John) Käl(l)ström; Peter E. Ericson; Adolf Fredrick Habbe
Oct. 17	— Abraham Isakson Langen; John Benson; F. (Frederick) Pohl
Oct. 21	— Christoffer Gustafsson; Carl Swärd
Oct. 26	— Andrew Anderson (x), his mark
Oct. 27	— C. (Charles) Svensson
Oct. 28	— Per Svensson
Oct. 29	— Olof Pontus Risberg; Johan Bernhard Ericson
Oct. 31	— John Lidell; Eric Olsson; Anders Sjögren
Nov. 2	— L. (Lars) P. (Peter) Svanson; O. (Ole) Larsson; John Sandin; Efraim Sandin
Dec. 14	— Ole Fredrickson (x), his mark
Dec. 26	— John Johnson

1869

Feb. 1 — Anders (Andrew) Olsson

Feb. 9 — Perry A. Oberg; Johan Skooglund

Feb. 16 — Sven Daniel Andersson

Feb. 23 — Jonas Andersson; Nils F. Lindquist

Feb. 27 — Hans Bengtson; Anders Torkelsson; Joseph Adamsson

March 1 — H. F. Lundgren

March 15 — Carl Nordstrom; Jonas Petter Källqvist; August Lind; S. A. Johnson; Gust A. Jonsson

March 25 — Jan Smedström; Pher Fredin

March 27 — Anders Wilhelm Johansson; Carl August Johansson; Gustaf Johansson (x), his mark; August Malmberg; Oscar Malmbärj (Malmberg); August Samuelsson; Anders Svensson (x), his mark; Carl Alfrid Johansson

March 29 — Peter Johan Olson (x), his mark

March 30 — Peter Wanstrom; S. P. Wennerström; Johannes Svensson; Svante Moberg; Anders Ekzaell; Andrew Svanstrom; Gustaf Berlof; Johan Fredrick Setterlund; Johan Emanuel Nilsson (x), his mark; Frans Falk; Johan August Beckman

May 4 — Johan Pehrsson

May 12 — John Buckland (x), his mark; John Sundgren (x), his mark

May 22 — Johan Ellm; Ferdinand Allmen; Johan Allmen; August Appelgren

Date	Name
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May 24	— C(h)arles Roos; Hans Ljungberg; Jan Petter Stenstrom; Petter Johansson
May 25	— F. W. Jonson; A. F. Jonson (x), his mark
May 26	— Johan P. Soderquist; C. A. Ostrom (x), his mark; C. W. Carlsson
May 31	— Charle(s) G. Yderen
June 5	— Olaus Andersson
June 17	— John Carlsson (x), his mark; Fred Carlsson (x), his mark
June 23	— John Westergren (x), his mark
June 28	— Johan Svanbom; Gustaf Edlin; Gustaf Gislen; Johan Kjellgren
June 12	— Carl Johan Söderqwisht; Anders G. Frid (x), his mark; Anders Nyberg
Aug. 14	— John A. Hultquist; Gustaf A. Hultquist; John P. Hult; Gustaf Lungn; John W. Johnson; John Gaust
Aug. 21	— Anton Anderson
Sept. 28	— Johan Kling
Oct. 9	— Ole C. Johanson
Oct. 12	— Carl Andersson
Oct. 14	— Johan Andersson (x), his mark; J. P. Stockhus
Nov. 23	— Carl Andersson
Nov. 25	— Lars Stenström
Dec. 10	— Lars Johan Seger
Dec. 13	— P. L. Norlund; Jonas Larsson
Dec. 20	— Ola Rossenlund (sic!)

1870

Jan. 3	— Frid Walus; John Bruszer; A. W. Sander; Anders Johnsson
Feb. 4	— J. O. Lundvall; Charles A. Lundvall
Feb. 7	— Alexander Sanberg; C. A. Stockhus
Feb. 8	— Hagen Andersoon
March 2	— J. Johansson; Johan Lind; Alexander Lind
March 9	— Joel Kling
April 11	— Charles John Rosenquist; Gustaf A. Johnson
June 13	— Frans L. Carlsson; Claes A. Carlsson; Gustaf F. Carlsson
June 20	— Carl Gustaf Johansson
Oct. 17	— John J. Bucklund
Oct. 22	— Charles Barquest (x), his mark
Nov. 9	— G. Flodell
Nov. 29	— G. J. Jonsson
Dec. 10	— A. G. Sävfgren
Dec. 31	— Isak P. Forsberg; John Johnsson