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A mystery child

– an extra child is found in a family where she did not belong

BY DAVID ANDERSON

Swedish church records in the 19th century are amazingly complete and generally speaking it is possible to trace people from cradle to grave since the movement of people was so heavily regulated and documented. The individual parish *husförhörslängd* (clerical survey) records provide the backbone to researching Swedish ancestors in great depth and are supported by birth, marriage, death, and occasionally the in- and out- moving records. Generally speaking, people would move away from home at the age of 15–18 to get experience learning a trade before getting married sometime in their early 20's and raising their own family. Births of children seem to have been generally evenly spaced about 2 years apart and mortality rates were high. My great-grandfather's brother's family provides a stereotypical opportunity to track a family 150 years later, with an altogether surprising and unexpected twist.

A Dalarna family

Johan Jansson was born in the cottage *Jonas Erkers* in Grådö, Hedemora, on 24 Apr. 1840 to Jan Jansson (1801-1845) and Anna Persdotter (1798-1874). He was the youngest child born to this couple and one of only two of the five born in this family to survive to adulthood. The other surviving child, Anders Jansson (b 1829 - ?) is my great-grandfather. The small family lived in the cottage *Jonas Erkers* until they moved to the nearby *Svens* cottage in 1854, where Johan remained until 1858 when, at the age of 18, he moves a few miles north to Stora Skedvi.¹ Johan is found at Fäggeby, Stora Skedvi, where he is living and working as a farm hand (*dräng*) for *nämndeman*

(layman judge) Carl Gustafsson for four years from 1858² to 1862 at the *Spennar* farm. He then works as a farm hand at *Sols*, in Fäggeby, in 1862 and 1863³ before spending most of a year at *Hampus*, Orrsta, St. Skedvi, in 1864.⁴ On 28 Aug. 1864, at the age of 24, the farmhand Jan Jansson from the farm *Hampus* in Orrsta, St. Skedvi, married the farm owner's daughter Augusta Persdotter of Yttersätra, Stora Skedvi. On the marriage record Jan's birth is recorded as being on 24 Apr. 1840, while Augusta's birth is recorded as being 26 Feb 1837 in Norrbärke. This is the first marriage for both of them.⁵

The first child arrives

After their marriage the couple lives briefly with her parents at *Herrmans*, Yttersätra, where their first child Hedvig Augusta was born on 15 Oct 1864. The birth record says: "*bonden Herrmans Jan Jansson i Yttersätra o Hu (= hustru (wife)) Augusta Persdotter.*" This gives his occupation as "*bonde*" (peasant farmer) and ties him to the farm *Herrmans*. The family is then for a short time found at *Fäggeby*, Stora Skedvi, in 1866 where Jan is working as a *dagkarl* (day laborer).⁶ The family moves and lives briefly at the *Prästgården*, Stora Skedvi, through the winter of 1866-67 where they are noted living by 18 Nov 1866.⁷

On the move

They leave Stora Skedvi for Stora Kopparberg (Dala.) on 24 Apr. 1867, but are not recorded in Stora Kopparberg's *Inflyttning* record until 28 June 1867 when the *dagkarlen* [the day laborer] Johan Jansson *m[ed] Hu[strun] o[ch] barn* are recorded moving to the house *Bergsgården* in St. Kopparberg.⁸

Their second daughter, Johanna Charlotta, is born shortly thereafter on 14 Jul. 1867 at *Bergsgården*. Johanna Charlotta's birth is the 75th recorded in St. Kopparberg in 1867 and her parents are recorded as "*Dagkarlen Johan Johansson och Hustru Augusta Persdotter, Bergsgården.*" Again the mother's name is recorded as Augusta Persdotter.

The family lived at *Bergsgården* in Stora Kopparberg from 1867.⁹ In 1869 the family moved to *Nygården* in Vika (Dala.) where the "*arbetaren*" (the laborer) Jan Jansson, his wife Augusta Persdotter, and now four children, Hedvig Augusta, Johanna Charlotta, Johan Wilhelm, and Erica Carolina are recorded.¹⁰

The two new children are: Johan Wilhelm, born 16 Jan 1871 in Vika, and Erica Carolina, born on 6 Jan 1872 in Ugglebo. Johan Wilhelm's birth record indicates he is the 5th recorded birth in Vika in 1871, and the 3rd child born to Jan and Augusta. His parents' names are recorded as "*Jansson, Jan, arbetaren/Nygården and Persdotter, Augusta.*"

The birth records for Vika list Erica Carolina as the 6th born in Vika in 1872 on Jan 6th. She is reportedly the 4th born child of "*arbetaren Jan Jansson i Nygården och Hu. Augusta Persdotter (barnet födt i Ugglebo).*" A side note indicates that Erika Carolina was baptized by the clergyman K F Sjöström in Ugglebo. A check of Vika's *husförhörslängd* did not show the family living in a place with the name of Ugglebo or leaving and returning to Vika in 1872 when Erica Carolina was supposedly born in "Ugglebo." There is however, mentioned that the family did move in 1872 from *Nygården*, Vika, to *Persarftet*, Vika,¹¹ where Johan is listed as being a *backstugesittare* (dug-out dweller). There are no other notes in

De framfödda barnens födelse-		De levande födda barnens														Föräldrarnas		Modren		För anteck. särskildt
år och månad.	dag.	kön.	dopnamn.		civilstånd.		Dödfödda.		namn, embete, yrke, stånd, hemvist, nationalitet och religiösbekännelse (om främmande) samt stället för moderns nedkomst (om ej i bemörten).		Barnet anslutit.		Födelseort, födelse-år, födelse-ort eller födelse-år.		Födelseort, födelse-år, födelse-ort eller födelse-år.	För anteck. särskildt				
Jan 6			Anna Kajsa (2 ^a)						Erfven Erik, Nybyggare i Svantjärnads fru Olof Håren											
			Erica Carolina						Jansson Jan, Arbetskarl från Wika, Falu Persdr Augusta Carolina											

The birth of the mysterious Erica Carolina in Ockelbo 6 January 1872. Ockelbo CC:2, image 32. (Arkiv Digital).

the Vika *husförhörslängd* of the family moving from Persarfvat, where daughter Emma Wilhelmina is born on 17 Jun. 1873. Emma Wilhelmina's parents are "arbetaren Jan Jansson och hu Augusta Persdotter i Persarfvat 9 år." The "9 år" notation indicates, correctly, that the parents have been married nine years.

A check of parish listings in *Cradled in Sweden* said "Ugglebo, see Ockelbo."¹² I then checked the parish birth records for Ockelbo and found a birth recorded on 6 Jan. 1872 for Erika Carolina, born to "Jansson Jan, arbetskarl från Wika, Falu län och hu Persdr Augusta Carolina," (Jansson Jan, laborer from Vika, Falu County, and his wife Persdr **Augusta Carolina**) (highlights mine for emphasis). The entry includes a note that the birth certificate for Erica Carolina was sent to the pastor in Wika on 23 Jan. [1872].¹³

It is interesting to note that Jan, or Johan, Jansson's wife's name, Augusta, is consistently given as Augusta, not Augusta Carolina, in her birth record from Norrbärke on 26 Feb 1837, marriage record from Stora Skedvi, in various *husförhörslängd* records, and in her children's birth records. Nowhere is she called Augusta Carolina.

The *husförhörslängd* for Persarfvat, Vika, 1876-1885¹⁴, shows arbetaren Jan Jansson's family with two additions to the family, three deaths, and four names crossed over which indicates those people are no longer present. Those crossed over names include Erika Carolina.

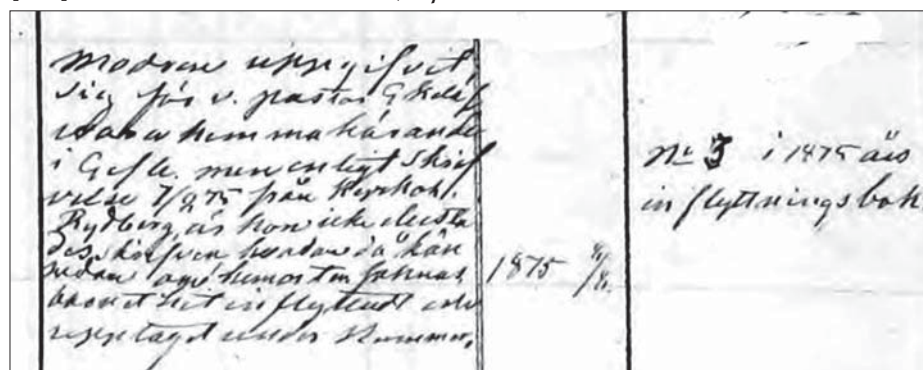
Daughter Emma Wilhelmina dies on 16 Oct. 1879 of "difteri," or diphtheria; Klas Emil, born 3 Jun. 1876, dies on 28 August 1876, cause not listed; Klara Matilda, born 24 Jan. 1878, dies on 14 Jun 1879 from complications due to "lungshot," or tuberculosis. There is also a note with Erika Carolina, translated by Elisabeth Thorsell, that says: "This child is incorrectly recorded with these parents, and does not belong to this family, and is buried in Mo in 1875. Its mother was the vagrant **Augusta Carolina** Eriksson."¹⁵ The five remaining living family members, although their names are not crossed over, are noted as moving back to "Stora Kopparb[erg] on 7/10 18[81]."¹⁶

A search of the Mo parish church records during 1875 reveals that on July 30th Erika Carolina, daughter to the widow (*enkan*) **Augusta Carolina** Sundqvist from parts unknown, aged about 3 years old, died of the measles (*mesling*).¹⁷ A note with Erika Carolina's death record is translated as: "The mother has told the vice pastor G. Kolle that [she] has her domicile in Gävle (Gef-

le), but according to a letter [dated] 1875 Aug. 7, from the vicar (*kyrkoherde*) Rydberg, she is not known there, and thus as there is no knowledge of her domicile, the child is recorded in the moving-in records under the number [in right margin] 3 in the year 1875 moving-in book."¹⁸ See picture below.

Who was Augusta Carolina?

The name of Jan's wife was Augusta Persdotter. The name of Erika Carolina's mother is Augusta Carolina Eriksson or Sundqvist. Many questions remain about who Augusta Carolina was, and where she was from. Was Jan Jansson the biological father of Erika Carolina? If not, why did a birth record from Ockelbo where Erika Carolina was born get sent to Vika where Jan Jansson and family live? If so, where did the paths of Jan and Augusta Carolina cross? Was Augusta Carolina living in Vika in 1871 at the same time Jan was living there? Augusta Carolina, being a



Mo parish (Gävle.) Deaths (1867-1894) EI:2, image 80. (Arkiv Digital).

