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Cover picture:
A small fishing village in Nordingrå (Ånge.)
(Photograph by Anna Brita Östman Mohr, June 2012).
Sweden and I

The 2012 winner of Allt för Sverige tells about her adventures in Sweden

BY ANNA BRITA ÖSTMAN MOHR
(TEXT AND PHOTOS)

I was privileged to grow up in an almost exclusively Scandinavian family. I would secretly pride myself on being half Swedish (and also Norwegian!) while so many others around me could only claim bits and pieces of their various ancestries, if they even knew them at all. I could claim it (though humbly of course, in keeping with the reserved nature of my heritage), and I even looked the part with the stereotypical blonde hair, blue eyes, and ruddy cheeks, but I did not have a full understanding of what that meant. My entire childhood was spent intrigued by the countries and stories of my ancestors, and my dream was to eventually go to the lands that forged the blood in my veins and the personalities of my family members. I attended Midsommar celebrations in Poulsbo, Washington, and nearly pursued Scandinavian Studies as my college major. Life circumstances have a way of creeping up on us, however, and my Nordic dream eventually became unattainable. I put aside those desires as the realities of children and adulthood consumed me, but I always kept alive a feeble hope they might be revisited on some future date.

Then Allt för Sverige fell upon me with a force I can only describe as predestined. The actual process of being cast on the show is a story long enough to fill a novel, but it was very evidently meant to be. The timing in my life, the experiences I had endured, the evolution of my thoughts all came together at the precise moment Allt för Sverige entered my life, and I was thus prepared in mind, body, and spirit for the long-awaited journey to my ancestral lands that would come to impact me in very unexpected and profound ways.

Allt för Sverige is a most unusual way to discover one's heritage. It is a reality TV show based on the premise of bringing ten Swedish Americans back to Sweden to discover its culture, history, and traditions. Concurrently, each participant discovers his or her personal family histories through individual "special day" trips to their ancestral homesteads com-

per with a family history, photos, and other documents uncovered by extensive genealogical research conducted prior to filming. Along with traveling throughout the country and discovering heritages, participants compete in culturally oriented competitions in order to win the grand prize of the show: a family reunion with unknown Swedish relatives. This grand prize includes no cash reward, and the resulting atmosphere on the show is overwhelmingly positive as a result. Everyone wants everyone else to meet their family! As the winner of season 2 of Allt för Sverige, I can attest to the priceless value of such a meaningful prize.

I traveled to Sweden with a rudimentary understanding of parts of my Swedish heritage.

My mother's grandmother (Emma Erika Palm, b. 1884 Feb. 18 in Voxna, Häls., immigrated in 1902) came from the Voxna area of Hälsingland while mom's grandfather (Carl William [Wilhelm] Anderson) was born in Långared (VaGö) on 1875 Oct. 13, and left for America in 1896. I knew a bit about why my great-grandmother left, and the story was intriguing. Apparently, her father was an intensely strict and religious man, and she immigrated close behind her free-spirited sister, an unmarried woman with an illegitimate child, to escape the atmosphere of persecution at home. Emma soon met Carl, who by this time was a successful building contractor in the state of Washington and eventually settled in Spokane to raise a large, tight-knit Swedish family. My mother, her siblings, and many cousins speak often of their unique Swedish upbringing in Spokane’s Swedish Covenant Church and their culturally Swedish family. This family history has been known to me since I was child, but my other Swedish side, my father’s side, was much less clear.

My dad’s grandfather (Peter Olof Ostman) has always been a mystery, although we assumed he was from the north of Sweden. [He has lately been found as Per Olof Östman, born 1878 Sep. 30 in Nättra, (Ånge.), who left Sweden in 1901 for Canada.]

He met and married my dad’s grandmother (Frida Nikolina Siden, b. 1894 Oct. 14 in Nättra, (Ånge.), immigrated in 1909) after meeting her in coastal Washington State. Both were recent Swedish immigrants, and they settled in Raymond, Washington, to work hard and raise two children. Frida was the one great-grandparent I was blessed to know as a child. I can vividly recall her ancient smile as my brother and I greedily accepted her cookies and gumdrops on visits to her nursing home. We knew her, but we did not know much about her heritage or family history or why she left Sweden in the first place.

It was this line of my heritage Allt för Sverige chose to pursue, and it was Frida’s family in Angermanland I was eventually able to meet. Long before meeting the relatives, however, I spent my “special day” near Köpmanholmen in the Hoga Kusten area exploring the large, beautiful home in which she lived as a child. I walked the same forest trails and beaches of Nässjöbäcken she most likely walked with her family. I read an extensive letter describing her life as the daughter of a hardworking torpare and how the rocky soil and cold climate made immigration to America almost a necessity for many poor families of that generation. Seeing the land, the gardens, and the climate while contemplating the moving, personal story of my great-grandmother had a profound impact on my understanding of myself, my father, and my grandfather. Discovering one’s roots is vastly meaningful, and finding oneself in the history of another country — a country surprisingly comfortable and familiar from the first step upon its cold ground — is unspeakably life-changing. I would discover more. I would meet actual family members themselves, but first I was in for an adventure of a lifetime.

Together with the nine other participants, I spent time at Norr-Fällsviken just to the south of my great-grandmother’s ancestral homestead. There in an ancient church full of tiny pews and tiny doors we experienced our first “Swedish Class” taught by our host, Anders Lundin. I took copious notes, predicting the information he passed along would be important to remember at a future date. We also had our first taste of an odd Swedish food, Surströmming (fermented herring), and participated in our first competition. From there, we traveled to Skellefteå, threw late spring snowballs at one another, and attempted to sleep away the pink arctic nights on cabin floors at the beautiful farm Rismyrilden. It was on the farm that we ten cast members formed insoluble bonds that persist to this day.

![Frida's home near Köpmanholmen in Nättra, Ånge.](image-url)
Kelsey, Debra, Anna Brita and Meghan shopping in Old Town, Stockholm.

From the north, we traveled back to Stockholm to explore the capital city and then experienced our first bilsemester as we drove RVs down the E4 past Lake Vättern to rhododendron-laden Ronneby far to Sweden's south. We did everything from witnessing the production of polkagrisar (peppermint candy) in picturesque Granna to attending The Sweden Rock Festival in Sölvesborg.

After our southern excursion, we stayed at Häringe slott, a castle of royal history, and then jumped into the lives of "everyday Swedes" in Södertälje who just so happened to be immigrants to Sweden much the same as our ancestors were immigrants to America. Every experience was unique and unexpected and provided us a more in-depth understanding of our beautiful Swedish country and heritage. We never knew what was coming next, and I think that added to the excitement and pure joy we display so heartily on the show. It is all genuine, and we all fell deeply in love with the entire breadth and scope of Sweden during that first month of exploration.

Along the way, Anders continued his "Swedish classes," we participated in various competitions, and one by one a treasured friend was consequently sent home. It was always a sad day to see someone leave.

By the time Midsommar rolled around, only five of us remained, and we felt as if we'd been Swedish family members forever. We spent Midsommar in Värmland, and I had the remarkable opportunity along with Vernon Ferguson to tour Selma Lagerlöf's home and see her Nobel award, so rare and beautiful, as she was the first female in history to receive such an award.

Finally, we landed in Trosa, the "end of the world" and a quaint little village set upon small channels and waterways gently running in from the Baltic Sea. It was in Trosa we competed in our final three compe-
tions, and it was in Trosa my note taking and observations paid off. Surely everyone deserved to meet their family, but only one could win
the prize and somehow that person was me. Shortly thereafter, I flew back up to the Höga Kusten and was blessed with the most moving and personal event of my entire adventure: meeting my Swedish family.

I now have another home, another place I belong. I was blessed to have had an intense immersion into many facets of Swedish culture and history, but the family connection is what ultimately sealed the bond. I saw myself reflected in the faces of strangers, and I even saw an older woman who resembled uncannily my great-grandmother Frida who I hadn’t seen for nearly thirty years! It was as if I had found my long-lost home. And now I not only look and say I’m Swedish, I feel Swedish, and I know deeply what that means. I am eternally grateful to Allt för Sverige for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to discover so much about myself and, yes, I’ll say it – my country.

I strongly encourage anyone who is moved by your heritage and interested in your family histories to continue your efforts and pursue your own stories. You will be rewarded with a profound discovery of not only people and places, but of yourself. I hope you all get the opportunity to experience the beauty and peace that is so evident throughout Sweden. You will not be disappointed, and – who knows - perhaps we may even run into one another there!

Anna Brita Östman Mohr can be contacted through her Facebook page

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The Genealogical Society of Sweden turns 80!

In 1933 some gentlemen met at an hotel in Stockholm and discussed the need for a new society, which would work with the ancestors of ordinary people, not just the noblemen’s. The result of this meeting was the start of the Genealogiska Föreningen, also known as GF (Genealogical Society of Sweden), which now celebrates its 80th anniversary.

The society started with just a handful of members, but the membership kept growing and it turned into a working society with many projects. Already in the middle 1930s it started to clip newspaper announcements from the daily Svenska Dagbladet about births, deaths, and marriages. They then sorted them alphabetically, and even clipped all the Anderssons, Johanssons and Petterssons. The project continued to about 1990, and has since then been digitized and is available online to members. It is a great help when you are tracking living relatives.

During the years the GF has collected books and manuscripts, and now has the largest genealogical library in Sweden, maybe in Scandinavia.

During the 1980s GF took the initiative to start the Sveriges Släktforskarförbund (Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies). This was because during the 1970s many new societies started as more people were doing genealogy as it was then easy to borrow churchbooks on microfilm. The new societies needed an umbrella organization, which today has more than 160 societies as members.

Lately GF has gained many new members, due to many new projects of digitizing new kinds of records and making them available online.

The 50th anniversary was held at the outdoors museum Skansen in Stockholm, where you could find genealogists in all the houses there, sometimes connected to the original inhabitants. The current anniversary will not be on this grand scale, but a pleasant event for everyone.

SAG sends its congratulations to the Octogenarian! Link on p. 30.
This letter was written in August 1902 by an old widow, Mrs. I. Williamson, to the Swedish consul in Chicago, Mr. Lindgren, and his business associate, Mr. Haugen.

The Swedes regarded the consul as a person who represented the homeland and who probably could help with many requests, however unlikely.

The archives of the Swedish representatives abroad are now kept in the Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet) in their branch at Arninge, north of Stockholm.

During a visit there the preserved records for 1901 and 1902 were researched, and some amazing things were found, including the above letter. Several letters were from manufacturers in Sweden who wanted business contacts and advice on where to buy the best farming equipment, or if they could recommend someone who made good roof tiles.

All kinds of human problems showed up in the consul’s office, and were soon answered.

Transcription / translation on p. 20.
Your link to your history!

NEW!
The Swedish Census database (Folk-räkning) for 1910 has now 2 million individuals. 105,110 posts were just added.

NEW!
The Swedish Census of 1990 - the way to find your living cousins. A DVD with millions of Swedes 20 years ago.

The Digital Research Room
Here you can do research about people and their property, their life, work and taxes. Contact us at the address below to find out much more!

Stockholm Tax Rolls
Mantalslängder and Kronotaxeringslängder from 1652 to 1915. Indexes too for some of them.

One of the released prisoners in the SVAR prison records.

www.riksarkivet.se/svar

Riksarkivet

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Swedish American Genealogist 2013:1

April 9, 1940, was the day the Nazis occupied Norway. On that same day a young Swedish nurse received a letter that would change her life. The letter included a marriage proposal from the man she loved. He was a Norwegian living in the U.S. Leap of Faith describes their love story, and Ingrid Sillén's brave war-time journey and the life she found in America.


Nineteenth century peasant life in Sweden was difficult. People lived in the shadow of the all-powerful parish church. When it became known that Augusta Torsdotter’s daughter Elsa-Carolina was born out of wedlock, both of their lives were changed forever. Elsa-Carolina soon moved to America. However, at the age of 94 she returned to Sweden to come to terms with her childhood.


Just like many nineteenth-century women, Alma Christina Lind Swensson found herself on America’s frontier. She was born in Sweden, but grew up in Moline, Illinois. At the age of 20 Alma was newly married and came to the Swedish town of Lindsborg, Kansas. She was very musically talented and used that talent to build an unusual community. Her friendliness enabled her to reach out to people. Her faith helped to carry her through good and bad times.

Early Education for Swedish Immigrant Children

Many Swedish immigrants were laborers in the Old Country and their children were often expected to follow in their footsteps. The education of their children largely consisted of preparing them for their occupation. To them, education was not the same as going to school; education was integrated into other aspects of family and community and rooted in traditions of language and faith.

In the New World, education took on a different meaning. School was often seen as a means to teach immigrant children how to be an American citizen. As the American school system became compulsory and unified, religious education and Swedish language instruction became difficult to obtain for immigrant children who could not attend parochial schools. Students learned English and studied subjects that were unrelated to their old, assumed occupations of the Old Country.

Education also had the effect of assimilating Swedish immigrant children through contact and communication with other ethnic groups. John Dewey, a well-known school reformer, remarked that through American education, immigrant children “lose the positive and conservative value of their own traditions . . . they even learn to despise the dress, bearing, habits, language, and beliefs of their parents.”

The traditions of language and faith, however, were still a large part of immigrant children’s education, taking place at home, in church, and through Sunday school. This multi-faceted education served the purpose of fostering a new, Swedish-American, identity in immigrant children, while maintaining Swedish language and religious education traditions.

Lisa Hunter
Archivist

Visit the Swenson Center Facebook page and see some of the books used for this article.
Excerpts from Dagbok på resan till Amerika 1868

Samuel Magnus, Augusta, and August Hill and their parents left Sweden for a new land

By Ann Essling

I began doing genealogical research in 1976. Until the Swenson Center at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, indexed Samuel Magnus Hill's papers on their website, I knew little of my Swedish great-grandmother's life before the 1890s. Finding this archive gave me a window into the past.

Samuel Magnus was a teacher, Lutheran minister, and poet. In 2012, the Swedish American Genealogist published Samuel Magnus's autobiographical letter.1 Lucky for me his daughter, Cordelia Hill Barnes, gave his collected writings and correspondence to the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center.

I never would have dreamed that I could read the words describing my ancestor's voyage to America in 1868. Dagbok på resan till Amerika 1868 or Diary of the journey to America in 18682 is my great-uncle Samuel Magnus Hill's daily journal of his family's emigration from Sweden to America.3

1868 May 4
In May of 1868, my great-grandmother Augusta, age four, her brother August, age nine, Samuel Magnus, age 18, her Mamma Maja-Stina Andersdotter, and Pappa Samuel Samuelsson leave Västra Ryd and travel 23 miles to the town of Eksjö.

"Monday, May 4, 1868...since we only had one horse, father and I had to walk almost the entire way...My paternal grandfather met us there, too, because he had been called as a witness in a case in the magistrate's court. We said farewell to each other, never to see him again in this life. God bless his grey hair."

"With Mamma and the little ones on the horse and Pappa and Samuel Magnus walking, they traveled this way another 19 more miles to the Nääsjö train station.

"For the first time I got to see a locomotive pulling train cars, and it was curious for me to observe its devices....There were about 100 of us from Västra Ryd alone, and quite a few from other areas, so we were about 500 individuals at the station travelling to America."

1868 May 5
"Tuesday May 5. In the morning, we got up well ahead of our departure and...got there an hour early. I think it was the worst hour of my life, because the room was so overcrowded that we were packed like sardines in a tin and could not move. And I had my sick brother August to take care of....The noise was deafening, some cried and prayed, others swore, and very few were calm, because they feared that the train would depart before they could board it. But finally the train arrived at the scheduled time, and we all got on after some trouble and shoving. Then off we went, first to Jönköping, where a number of emigrants waited to be united with us. We were, all in all, 1600 traveling to Gothenburg, all of us emigrants to America. The train consisted of 150 cars when we arrived in Gothenburg....We saw many remarkable things...among them was the mighty Gota River on which big ships rocked as far as the eye could see, so that the river appeared covered with masts."

Why did they leave?
What could cause 1600 people to immigrate to America from one small area in Sweden? Ireland wasn't the only country to have potato famines. Sweden had "disastrous crop failures from 1867 to 1869."4 In Sweden in the 1800s, all or most of the land belonged to "Nobles, clergy, burghers, landowning farmers (bönder)." A common person could hardly hope to own any land. To earn their living, for 13 years Maja-Stina and Samuel worked separately on different farms. My great-uncle Samuel Magnus lived with his paternal grandparents for five or six years.5 Here in America, the Homestead Act of 1862 promised free, or almost free, land to settlers. In 1868, 21,472 Swedes left their homeland. Over a million will emigrate in the next decades.6

1868 May 6
"Wednesday May 6. I walked down to the canal and the harbor, where the ships were. There I had the opportunity to see, for the first time, a ship with masts and rigging, and it was exactly as I had envisioned it from reading about it...we bought tickets and...a little wine and Persian insect powder."

They used Persian insect powder to control lice.
1868 May 8
“Friday May 8. Finally, the day came for us to leave our dear homeland and meet our unknown fate... The name of the ship was Cato. It cast off from land at 5:45 p.m....I lost my wallet, which I had in my coat pocket.

1868 May 9
“I met with Carl Johansson of Stena-bo who loaned us the money for our travel.”

Samuel Magnus footnotes this last journal entry, “When I last met him [Carl Johansson], he complained to me that, of all he helped, I was the only one who paid his debt. This was in 1880 or 1881, when I was in St. Peter [Minnesota].”

As the winds rose, most suffered from seasickness.

“...My brother August was not seasick, but almost better now than on land.”

1868 Sunday May 10
“Heavy fog lay over the water. The ship went slow for fear of encountering another vessel. Pastor Nordgren read a sermon to us. We even sang a few hymns. As the fog cleared, we saw a beacon....This was, of course, England....The ship was towed to the wharf, where it unloaded cargo, and at half-past one we go ashore. We had to walk quite a distance to the immigrant inn, and I remember how tired I was, and how I had to carry August on my back while Momma and Pappa carried the suitcases.”

At the inn in Hull, Samuel Magnus ate all he could.

On seeing the sights around Hull, Samuel Magnus is impressed with the size of the horses, large, as large as elephants, he imagines, and small ones. “I had never seen so small, they are like goats with large carriages after them.”

1868 May 13
“We drink our coffee and go to the railway station to go from Hull to Liverpool. There we arrived at 3 p.m. and went directly to our ship, the City of Limerick. We were entertained with ship’s biscuits and butter, which tasted good because we did not have dinner.”

The City of Limerick ship was a three-masted steam ship with one smokestack constructed of iron. Its engine speed was 10 knots or 11.5 miles per hour.®

Samuel Magnus’s journal records the next days’ sufferings from seasickness and whether or not he felt well enough to eat.

1868 Sunday May 17
“Prayer on Sunday May 17. August is suffering not so much from seasickness, and we start believing that the voyage will do him good.

1868 Wednesday May 20
“Wednesday 20. A child died during the night and was buried in the waves. A funeral service was performed, but in English, which I did not understand. The corpse was wrapped in a black cloth and weighted down with stones. It lay on the board while the funeral service was performed, whereupon the board was lifted up, so that the bag slide out and fell into the sea.”

1868 May 21
Thursday, Ascension Day, May 21. At 18, Samuel Magnus loves to eat, “I’ll eat anything.”

“August may be admitted to the hospital because he has been sore on the right side from lying on hard boards. We are afraid because a boy from Nassjö parish was there [and] had dysentery [and died].

The wind is quite cold. [There is] a good wind and the ship runs with full sails.

1868 Friday May 22
“Fish for dinner, which was good but too salty, so that I was thirsty. We avoid the tea for supper and get oatmeal instead, morning and evening. This may be a good change because it is fresh and not salty.”

In 1868, there was no source of safe drinking water on a ship.

“August got salve for his hip. He has a good appetite and eats much, but he might not have enough, so we give him our soup.

1868 May 24
“Sunday the 24. A two-year-old child was buried at 9 p.m. August’s hip is slightly better but he has a sore throat, and difficulty swallowing.

1868 May 28
“August is better on his side but his tongue and throat are worse. We are near land but cannot see it because of the fog. In the afternoon, we are brought on a boat to Castle Garden. There we stay overnight for free. Here you can convert money and change tickets. I am embarrassed by diarrhea and feel pretty bad and puke all night. It has a horrible stench.

From 1855 to 1890, Castle Garden, located in the Battery of New York City, was America’s first official immigration center.®

“We go on a ferry across to the train and are packed on like sardines in a can. A purse was taken from a man. Both his money and tickets were stolen. The same happened to one emigrant who had a wife, two children, and a maid.

1868 Saturday May 30
“The train travels all night. During the night a woman gave birth to a baby girl in the same train car we were in. All are happy and well....The train stops in Albany at 1 o’clock and then goes on.

1868 Monday June 3
“The train runs all night again, which
was quite uncomfortable so that we could not sleep in peace. I put myself under a bench, but I was still walked on. The train stopped a 10 p.m. We went by carriages to stay overnight until 7 a.m."

1868 Tuesday June 4

“We arrived in Chicago at 10 o’clock in the evening.

“Carlsson gathered most of the immigrants up into a sort of attic, almost like a hayloft in a stable, and there was a sermon. The station manager was an old man with long hair. His name was Brown and he helped us get some food for August.

“I went out on the streets to see if there were a few pieces of bread to be found. We only had moldy bread with us and some syrup that we had bought. This was our lunch. When I was in the street, I found a fairly large piece of bread with butter right in front of me. I picked it up and wiped off dust. As soon as I picked it up, I heard a laugh from a window above. Children were there and had fun at my expense. They had thrown the bread pieces to see me pick them up. Then I noticed that it had spit on the one in my hand. I threw it away then, of course, but at the same time I experienced a feeling I have never before experienced, that they could take pleasure in seeing others suffer. It was a hard lesson.

1868 June 5

“Thursday 5. We traveled all night and arrived at Altona, Illinois, at 9 a.m. There we had food and shelter and August got to lie down on a sofa.

“Four hours after we arrived, August gave up the ghost.”

I knew when I started to translate Samuel Magnus’s diary that August did not live. But reading Samuel Magnus’s words makes me experience his death as though my little great-uncle died yesterday, not almost 150 years ago. Samuel Magnus used the phrase “gave up the ghost” that was used to describe Christ dying on the cross in a Bible version of that time period.

“He was so emaciated. The swelling was completely gone. He had suffered from dropsy since the previous autumn and winter. We thought he wasn’t strong enough to come with us, but he got better. The doctor said the voyage could possibly make him well.”

Dropsy was a diagnosis for heart disease. Also, August must have suffered from edema, retaining water and swelling.

“We were received by Mr. Sandquist, the organist of the church, who received all immigrants. We were entertained with coffee, bread, and cooked pork. It was very pleasant after such a long, difficult journey.

“We were received by Mr. Sandquist, the organist of the church, who received all immigrants. We were entertained with coffee, bread, and cooked pork. It was very pleasant after such a long, difficult journey.

“Wouldn’t August have loved to refresh himself with a little lemonade and sweet milk?”

In the evening, I was so surprised that it gets dark so quickly. We were sitting at dinner after prayers and eating. When I went out, I found the dark night full of flying sparks of fire. They had not told me about fireflies. Not knowing about them, I was quite taken aback. When I came in, they saw how surprised I was, and they laughed at me and said there was plenty of this kind in America.

1868 June 6

“Friday June 6. A coffin for August cost nine dollars. We went to the graveyard and Pappa and I had dug
his fork and hit his sister with it. The neighbors visited the neighbors. The neighbors were kind and fed her. That evening Augusta kept the glass bowl. Augusta was an artist.

"After working all day to earn money for the food, Samuel Magnus was so angry that he took his fork and hit his sister with it. The fork bent in half. Augusta kept the fork all her life."

After graduating from Augustana in Rock Island, Illinois, Samuel Magnus Hill became a teacher at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. This allowed his sister, Augusta, to be a student in Gustavus's first year as a college. She became a teacher eventually moving to Wahoo, Nebraska, where her brother taught. In 1894, her best friend, Magdelena Schulz Essling, died of consumption in St. Peter, Minnesota. In 1897 in Wahoo, Nebraska, Augusta married Magdelena's widower, Joel Essling, becoming stepmother to two children. Nine months later, my grandfather, Edward M. Essling, was born in St. Peter, Minnesota.

In the early 1950s, after Joel Essling tried to burn coal in their gas furnace, Joel and Augusta moved to a retirement home in St. Paul, Minnesota. Joel and Augusta did not like the modern facilities they visited. Finally, entering a rather rundown, older home, someone greeted them in Swedish. This is where they insisted on staying.

Joel and Augusta Hill Essling both passed away in 1954. Joel was 99 and Augusta 91 years old. They were married 67 years.

The author Ann Essling lives in Fridley, MN, and can be reached by her e-mail: <aessling@usa.net>

Eds: note: The previous article on Samuel Magnus Hill was published in SAG 1/12, page 4.
In May 1887 Johan August Eriksson and his family emigrated from the borough (köping) of Säffle in Värmland. The year before he had sold his farm Östbacken in Östra Skruferud in Kila parish to the bailiff O.W. Lindh from Säffle. Johan August, his wife Clara, and their four children joined the "family colony" at Moody County, South Dakota. In many respects the Eriksson family was typical of the immigrants of that period. Later on more children were born to the family, the next to youngest was named Eric Elmer. He was to leave the farming life and became a long-time professor of mathematics at one of the most prestigious universities in the Midwest.

The father, Johan August Eriksson, was born 1855 Jan. 11 at Ölserrud in Kila, and had very deep roots in the parish. His maternal grandmother’s father was named Olof Andersson (1780-1856), and built the house at Bockerud at Djupviken in Kila. The house was much later moved to Säffle and was turned into the local heritage museum (hembygdsgården). Olof’s oldest granddaughter, Britta Maria (1825-1891), in 1848 married Erik Börjesson’s second marriage to leave the Kila area for America. Six of them settled in the same area, south of the city of Flandreau in Moody County in South Dakota.

To America
Johan August (now mostly called just August) as the eldest son took over Östbacken for a couple of years, but sold the farm in 1886. He and his wife Clara Jansdotter (1856-1935) from Spässlanda in By parish, left Kila parish and first lived for a year in Säffle before they started their travels to America, with the destination of Moody County. By then they had four children: Johan August (called John), Axel Edvin, Ingeborg, and Oskar Oliver. Several of August’s maternal aunts and cousins also came to Moody County as did more people from Kila, so you can really talk about a family colony there. The place was even for a while called Kila, South Dakota! Many of them applied for land under the 1862 Homestead Act.

The area in Moody County had the most fertile soil in South Dakota. The Erickson family now grew with five more children: Valborg, Amelia, Ruth Anna, Eric Elmer, and Violet. After just a few years in America the children were given American names.

It is Eric Elmer Erickson, born 1899 Aug. 6, who is the focus of this article. In his memorial notes he tells about his life. I had access to them through Robert Schmidt, archivist at Miami University.

The sod house school
Eric Elmer was born near the Chilberg farm, six miles northeast of the little town of Trent in Moody County. For some year Father August tried his luck as a settler in Perkins County in northwest South Dakota. The western part of the state, west of the Mississippi, has decidedly less precipitation than the eastern part, which makes it very difficult to farm...
there. The family lived in a sod house, and Eric Elmer's first school was also built of sod and any leaks were stopped by newspapers. There was very little rainfall during their two years in Perkins County, and finally they were able to sell their land and return to Trent, where August had bought a butcher's shop, which he ran for many years.

During the spring of 1916 Eric Elmer finished the 11th grade of high school in Trent and a solemn graduation ceremony was held in a nearby Baptist church. At this ceremony the shy Eric Elmer held his first public speech. For the first time he could also dress himself in long pants; until then he had always worn short trousers. He now moved in with his older brother Axel Erickson and his wife Lizzie in the neighboring town of Egan, and due to this he could complete his 12th year of high school in Egan.

It was now 1917, and in April of that year the U.S. entered World War I. In that year graduation took place earlier than usual, so the students could do farm work. There was a lack of farm workers by then, as many had been called up. The summer of 1918 the draft age was lowered to 18 years of age. Eric Elmer joined the Student Army Training Corps (SATC), an organization connected to colleges, universities, and business schools all over the U.S. SATC aimed at training students for the war effort and Eric Elmer went through his training at South Dakota State College in Brookings. The SATC students lived the life of soldiers with reveille, uniforms, and training in military tactics and drill exercise, as well as taking part in the ordinary college programs.

**Upheavals**

SATC was demobilized in December 1918, without Eric Elmer making any close contact with the war, and he decided to keep on studying as an ordinary student. The family had no resources for college fees, but Eric Elmer worked hard at house painting and digging jobs during the summers, and graduated during the spring term of 1922 with a B.A. in electrical technology. He was given awards for his good academics.

Many know that World War II resulted in great upheavals in American society, where people that would not otherwise have had the possibility to study could go to college under the G.I. bill. But World War I also gave new possibilities for talented youth. Eric Elmer was a clever young man who might not have enjoyed this opportunity unless he had joined the SATC.

After his college exam Eric Elmer was employed to teach trigonometry to army veterans and geometry to college students. The career of teaching was appealing to Eric Elmer, and in the spring term of 1923 he received a scholarship to the University of Iowa, where he graduated with a master's of mathematics and physics. He continued to teach at this university until, through a friend, he heard about a position for a mathematics teacher at Miami University in Ohio. He sent in his application and was accepted in the fall of 1925. Here he spent the the rest of his professional life.

**Miami University**

Miami University had been named after the Miami River, and is located in the city of Oxford in the southeast corner of Ohio. It has no connections to Miami, Florida. The university was founded in 1809, and is the second oldest in Ohio. The city of Oxford was named for the British city of Oxford.

Among the more well-known alumni of Miami University we find Benjamin Harrison (president of the U.S. 1889-1893), vice presidential candidate in 2012 Paul Ryan, and Maria Cantwell, senator from Washington state.

In the fall of 1925 Eric Elmer started his career as an assistant professor of mathematics at Miami University. After two years he also started as a student advisor, which also meant the he lived with the students in the dorms. In 1943 he was promoted to a full professor, even though he lacked education as a researcher. In a memorial text from the university, Eric Elmer is described as a stimulating teacher, well-liked, but demanding and energetic. It could be dangerous to sit in the front row or close to an aisle, since then he could mark the students with chalk on their foreheads, or “saw” on their ears with a ruler to make them pay attention. Lazy and unprepared students were not allowed, but he also could show great patience with needy and diligent students.

About this time Eric Elmer started to care for his nephews and nieces in a special way. He invited no less than seven of them to study at Miami University, and five of them graduated from there. This was a great drain on a teacher's salary, but “we made out all-right,” as he writes in his memoirs.

In 1944 Eric Elmer married Louise Glasgow, a woman he had met in 1931 when she came to Miami as a
Louise Glasgow Erickson (1905–1986) and a student.

music student. After her studies and work at Syracuse and in New York City and other places, she came back to Miami to teach piano. Eric Elmer himself was an avid singer and music was one of his great interests during his life. Already as a boy he had been singing as a boy soprano in church. During his time in Iowa he had been singing one of the leading parts in Gilbert & Sullivan’s H.M.S. Pinafore and he had been the bass soloist in Messiah by Handel. At Miami he continued to take singing lessons, was the soloist on several occasions, and sang in the church choir for 39 years.

A man of many interests

Eric Elmer was interested in many things. He was the timekeeper and judge at athletic competitions at the university. He restored several old buildings and collected antiques. His pride was his collection of no less than 50 old kerosene lamps, and also he worked as a surveyor. He had the post of city engineer for Oxford, and worked with WPA projects during the Depression. For 20 years he belonged to the Oxford “Board of Public Affairs,” and improved the water and sewage systems of the city. During World War II he worked for a year at the university airport, where 20 pilots from the navy and 60 from the army were training to fly airplanes. For 8 weeks he supervised their training before the army and navy sent in eight officers to do the work he had done on his own.

Eric Elmer retired from Miami University in 1964, but still lived in Oxford with his wife Louise. Eric Elmer died in 1977, and his wife in 1986. In their memory there are scholarships at Miami University both for mathematics and music. They also donated considerable sums to the hospital in Oxford.

Eric Elmer Erickson’s Memories are ended by this modest summary: “a person who is lucky enough to be born in this country should use his talents and energy to improve his city, his state, and country in every way possible.”

First published in Säfle-Tidningen 2013 March 5.

The author Carl-Johan Ivarsson works as a high-school teacher in Söderköping, Sweden. His e-mail is: <cj.ivarsson@telia.com>

Web site: www.375th.org

Celebrating the 375th Anniversary

Some Events in the Delaware Valley

Sponsored by New Sweden Alliance and Member Hosts
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Minnesota newspapers will come online

Every newspaper in the state of Minnesota is sent to the Minnesota Historical Society, in accordance with state statutes. For decades, every newspaper (at last count about 425, mostly weeklies) was made accessible to the public via microfilm. However in the midst of a budget crunch, on June 30, 2009, the state closed its microfilm lab.

Now the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) has created a new, and probably better, plan: a digital newspaper database for researchers, called Minnesota Newspapers Online. It should launch within two years.

Minnesota Newspapers Online is beginning as a pilot project with 12 members of the Minnesota Newspaper Association — a trade organization of over 360 state newspapers.

(Dick Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter 2013 Mar. 3).

Martina – Swedish American of the Year

Martina Arwidson of Hudson, New York, has been elected as the Swedish American of the Year for 2013 by the two Swedish districts of the Vasa Orden av Amerika. She was born 1966 in Stockholm, with some of her roots in Småland. Mrs. Arfwidson is the daughter of Gun Novak, legendary founder of the cosmetic company Face Stockholm. Mrs. Arfwidson is now the CEO of Face Stockholm, a company known for its passion for environmental health, and a healthy ideal for beauty.

H.R.H. Princess Lilian

H.R.H. Princess Lilian of Sweden, born as Lilian Davis in Swansea, Great Britain, on 1915 Aug. 30, died in her home in Stockholm on 2013 March 10, at the age of 97. She was since 1997 the widow of H.R.H. Prince Bertil, the King’s uncle. The couple had no children.

Changes in the Swedish National Registration (Folkbokföring)

Ever since the Swedish government took over the keeping of the National Registration (Folkbokföring) in 1991 from the Church of Sweden, and even more after the separation of state and church on 2000 July 1, it has been discussed on many levels how to do this in the future? Some technocrats wanted to totally abandon the old parishes, who kept the books from the 1600s. This was a continuity that was invaluable not only to genealogists, but also to historians, demographers, and many others. The present government has now decided on keeping the parishes, but in the future called distrikt, and freeze the boundaries as they were in the year 2000. This new law will be decided by parliament during the spring of 2013, and in force 2016.

(Riksdag & Departement 2013 Apr. 9)

Prehistoric Gogling

This picture was found on Facebook, and serves as a reminder of the eons of time before computers. This also worked, but much slower, and you still had to be creative in your search.

SwedGen Tour 2013

The group of travelling Swedish genealogists will be back in the U.S. in the fall. The group consists of Anneli Andersson, Charlotte Börjesson, Olof Cronberg, and Anna-Lena Hultman.

So far their plans are not fixed, but they will have a seminar at the Old Mill Museum in Lindsborg, KS, on the 28th of September.

Other stops will be announced later on their web site (see p. 30), and may include California.
Thure Emanuel Sandgren
— engineer, painter, and globetrotter

The story of an unusual early traveller

BY TED ROSVALL

On 21 March 1876, the Motala Tidning (the local newspaper) published the following detailed obituary for the engineer and painter Thure Emanuel Sandgren (1817-1876). The text deserves to be reproduced in full:

Thure Emanuel Sandgren

"To those more unusual personalities whose restless energy and spirit is an enigma to most of us, one has to count the former engineer Thure Emanuel Sandgren, who recently passed away.

“He was born in 1817 in Ransberg parish, Västergötland, and belonged to a family of limited means. From his early youth he showed a talent for drawing, which is why he was in 1830 hired as an apprentice painter at Motala factory, where he was able to learn other skills, especially in mechanical drawing. An uncle of his took him out hunting and thus he eventually became a passionate hunter. Painting, however, initially became his main focus and in which he gained considerable skill, not the least from lengthy field trips not only within this country but also to Norway and northern Germany. He was again employed at the Motala Verkstad (Factory), but did not receive enough encouragement from the then English managers, so he resumed his first profession, became established as a master painter in the city of Hjo, painted and donated an altarpiece to the Slöta church, but saw so little prospect in this profession that he soon continued to Stockholm and then on to Finland, where he became a machinist on the steamer Union and later procured employment with the Nobel mechanical workshop.

“In 1845 he left here to go to the United States and worked for Reaney & Neafie Ship & Engine Co. in Philadelphia for three years, after which health reasons forced him to return to Europe. Being restored to good health, he obtained employment with the firm Ericsson & Cowe in Åbo (Turku), visited St Petersburg, was offered lucrative positions in the interior of Russia, but returned to Sweden and from thence immigrated a second time to North America, where he found a position as a designer with the renowned shipowner Loper in Philadelphia. On his behalf he accompanied a small steamer on an adventurous and stormy journey to Brazil, lived in this country nearly a year, and then afterwards travelled directly to Europe. In 1852 he immigrated for the third time to North America, landed in Boston, and made a substantial trip via Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cairo (IL), and the Mississippi River to New Orleans and thence by sea to Havana and New York.

“Again employed by Loper in Philadelphia, he received an invitation on behalf of the state to build two lighthouses in California, and thus departed via Panama in 1855. He was to stay in California for nearly 3 years, during which time he took part in extensive hunting expeditions, all described in a series of short articles

Thure Sandgren quail hunting i California. Drawing by Thure Sandgren.
Who was he?
Thure Emanuel Sandgren was a very early immigrant who, long before the great immigration period started, left Sweden several times to go not only to North America, but also to Norway, Germany, Russia, and Brazil. A true globetrotter!

The obituary mentions an altar-piece, which Thure had painted and donated to the Slätts church, the church his grandfather, the district glazier (häradsglasmästare) Isac Svensson Sandgren at Enåsen, once fitted with fine glass. The painting, which is supposed to have portrayed the removing of Jesus’ body from the cross, is however not to be found in that church. The “memoirs” that this article is based on, have sadly not been found either. Perhaps they were destroyed by his surviving widow or children?

Thure’s official family
In November 1859 Thure Emanuel married Miss Constantia Benedikta Hagelberg in Motala Koping. She was born 1824 Mar. 16 in Karlstad, and died 1922 Apr. 2 in Hedvig Eleonora, Stockholm. The couple had three children, all born in Motala: s. Seth Sigfrid, born 1860 Sep. 6. d. Sera Thurina, born 1861 Oct. 2 s. Tyko Leo, born 1865 Dec. 12.

Marital mysteries
In 1879, Nils William Olsson published the second volume of Swedish Passenger Arrivals in U.S. Ports 1820-1850, a giant pioneering work listing thousands and thousands of early immigrants. To my great amazement, I found in this book a note on one Henrietta Ulrika Sjögren/Åberg (1821-1907) who, together with her son, Carl Wilhelm Hjalmar Åberg (1846-1918), arrived in Philadelphia in October 1846. She is listed as a “mantle maker” – some sort of seamstress. Upon arrival, she calls herself “Mrs. Ulrica Henrietta Atkins” later Americanized to “Oberge,” but it is a name and a title she had no right to. The father of the child was in all likelihood the tenant and bookkeeper Carl Wilhelm Åberg (1822-1863), who in 1845 moved to Slättsång in Sandhem. In the same household is “Mamsell Henrietta Ulrica Sjögren.” In the fall, however, Åberg escapes to America, presumably to avoid responsibility for the illegitimate son, born 11 February 1846, and possibly to escape marriage ....

Ulrica, however, does not give up. Instead, she and the infant son hastily leave for America, but it is unlikely that they were ever able to chase down the runaway fiancé and father.

The note in Olsson’s book goes on to say that Ulrica, according to a family tradition, married a Swedish sea captain named (Charles) Sandgren, with whom she had a daughter.

This information naturally surprised me very much. Could it be that Thure Emanuel or his younger brother Johan (my great-grandfather) got married while both lived in Philadelphia in the 1850s? Hardly, for in that case they would have committed bigamy when they eventually got married in Motala in 1859 and in Baku in 1866 respectively. But perhaps a betrothal?

I researched further, and could eventually conclude that the daughter’s name was Francisca Sandgren and that she was born in 1854. At age 18 she married a hero from the American Civil War, Major Daniel T. Wells,
and the couple had three sons, two of whom died when small. In 1990, I was able to make contact with Francisca’s great-grandchild, Mrs. Elise Palmer, who provided me with a few pictures, but did not know anything more about Francisca’s father or the circumstances of her birth and paternity.

After this, the matter has rested for over 20 years. Occasionally, I would believe the theory that these Sandgrens in Philadelphia were my relatives; occasionally I would not. What complicates the research is that there is actually quite a large family in Philadelphia with a similar surname: Sandgrän – and with family members named Charles....Is it in this family constellation that Ulrika and Franciska belong, rather than in my family circle?

A notice in the paper solves the puzzle

In December last year, I was surfing among digitized and OCR-recognized American newspapers at resources like Genealogybank.com and NewspaperArchives.com. I tried a search asking for the combination of the words Sandgren and Philadelphia. The following wedding notice from 1872 made my heart stop:

**Married:** At the residence of the bride’s mother, No. 1010 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pa, Thursday, Jan. 18th, by Rev. Wilbur F. Paddock, D.D. Daniel T. Wells, U.S. Army, to Francisca Thurena Sandgren, of Philadelphia, No cards.

In this blessed announcement, for the first and only time, Franciska’s middle name is mentioned; Thurena – and hence all doubts are gone.... Ulrika had this daughter by Thure Emanuel Sandgren, and as in the case with the previous relation, that with Carl Wilhelm Åberg, there was no marriage, and yet she pretended to have been married to both men by calling herself first Mrs. Oberg and then Mrs. Sandgren. Thure disappears to California, and a few years later he returns to Sweden, probably without passing through Philadelphia. Did he not feel at all responsible for his American daughter?

Well, perhaps he did. Around 1860, Mrs. Ulrika H. Sandgren starts to advertise her boarding house for elderly and disabled people on Spruce Street in Philadelphia.


Are we to believe that it is Thure who has used some of his new wealth to help his old girlfriend in Philadelphia buy and set up this boarding house as a way of supporting herself and their daughter?

**Francisca’s family**

What then happened to Thure’s daughter Francisca and her family? In the 1880 U.S. Census, we find her and her husband the major living at Fort Dowell, Angel Island, Marin Co., California. They are then childless, having lost their two sons Ulric Burrell Wells (1873-1880) and Alfred Tyler Wells (1874-1875) at a tender age. In 1883, a third son is however born to them, Hewitt L. Wells, and he is to survive. Because of the major’s military career and assignments, the family moves around a lot, first to Omaha, Nebraska, then to California, and finally to Fort Russel, Laramie Co, Wyoming, where Francisca died in 1896. The widower retires shortly afterwards and moves back to Detroit, Michigan, where he died in 1899.

The only surviving child, Hewitt L. Wells (1883-1960) is taken care of by an aunt and uncle in Detroit, but soon settles in Washington, D.C. where he makes a career for himself as a mechanical engineer, pretty much the same profession as his grandfather, Thure Emanuel Sandgren, had and just like him he was an inventor and a constructor engineer. Hewitt was married three times, his two first wives passing away rather young. By his second wife, Elise Atterbury Campeau (1877–1934) he had two children; Hewitt C Wells (1915–1989) and Mary L Wells Kauffmann (1917–1988).

The daughter Mary was married to the editor of Washington Post, Rudolph Kauffmann, Jr., and had four children. Today, there are descendants in New York, Maine, and Alaska and also in Bristol, England. The son, Hewitt C. Wells becomes a successful architect and settled in California, where his children and grandchildren reside today. As he got older, Hewitt C. Wells devoted more and more time to painting, and his watercolors are today quite valuable. It would appear that my American cousins have inherited a lot of talent from their hitherto unknown ancestor, Thure Emanuel Sandgren, both in regards to engineering, drawing, and art....

Ted Rosvall is an experienced immigration researcher. He lives near Falköping, Sweden.

His e-mail is: <ted.rosvall@telia.com>
An interesting obituary - but why?

BISHOP HILL.

Carl Johan Nelson was born in Lillsjödal, Småland, Kalmar Lan, Sweden, October 9, 1826 and died in Bishop Hill, Ill., August 10, 1914, at the age of 87 years, 10 months, 7 days. He was married to Vanda Isaacson in 1848. She passed away in Chicago four years ago. To this union were born three sons and three daughters. Mr. Nelson and family came to this country twenty-five years ago and settled in Chicago, where he lived until two years ago when he came here to make his home with his son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Eli Larson. During this time his health has been failing and for the past nine months he has been confined to his bed. He leaves to mourn his departure, three sons, John, Frank and Amel, of Chicago; two daughters, Mrs. Boman of Chicago and Mrs. Eli Larson of this place, besides fifteen grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. The funeral services were held at the Larson home west of Bishop Hill on Tuesday afternoon and were conducted by Rev. A. G. Peterson, many neighbors and friends being present.

Card of Thanks—We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to neighbors and friends for their kindness, help and sympathy during the illness and death of our beloved father.

Children of Carl Johan Nelson.

This obituary appeared in the Galva News in 1914 Aug. 20, and was sent to SAG by Bob Nelson of Trempealeau, WI, who has done extensive research on the people from Bishop Hill.

The deceased man is an ancestor of Bob's, but also has a wider interest as being an ancestor of movie star Greta Garbo.

The ancestral tables for Greta Garbo were published in 1996 in a book called 24 Famous Swedish Americans, issued by the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies (Sveriges Släktforskarförbund). The book is now out of print.

From this we learn that Greta's mother Anna Lovisa Johansson was born 1872 Sep. 10 in Lillsjödal, Högby parish, (Kalm.), and died 1944 Oct. 18 in Scarsdale, NY.

Anna Lovisa's father was Johan (John) August Karlsson, born 1848 Oct. 9 in Applehult in Högby parish. He left his family in 1882 and came to America. He is mentioned in his father's obituary as living in Chicago in 1914. The parents of John were Carl Johan Nilsson (Nelson), born 1826 Oct. 9 in Granstugan, Mörlunda parish (Kalm.), who died 1914 Aug. 16 in Bishop Hill, Henry Co., Ill. His wife was Wendla Isaksdotter (Isaacson), born 1826 Oct. 15 in Fröske, Älgvits parish (Kron.), who died 1910 Jan. 18 in Chicago.

The Nelsons left Sweden 1888 Oct. 31 with tickets for Chicago. After the death of Mrs. Nelson her widower moved to Bishop Hill to live with his daughter Emelie Gustafva, born 1860 Jan. 5 in Applehult in Högby, who had immigrated in 1888, possibly in the company of her parents.

Emelie had been married in Sweden, but her husband Karl August Petersson ended up in a mental hospital, and she seems to have got a divorce after her immigration. She remarried 1893 July 20 in Chicago to Elias (Eli) Larsson from Bishop Hill, and they became the great-grandparents of Bob Nelson.

Elisabeth Thorsell

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Swedish American Genealogist 2013:1
The solution of the Handwriting Example 34

Transcription

Mr. Haugen o Lindgren
Dyre Vänner,


Translation

Mr. Haugen and Lindgren
Dear Friends

With this letter my intention was to contact you, dear friends, for help. We left Chicago in 1901 and came here to Brooklyn. It has been so hard for us since we came here. My son did not find work for half a year, and now he does have work, but (with) so little pay that it is not enough for us. We have rented a furnished room, and it costs us three dollars per week and the food is so very expensive here. You were so kind when my husband died and gave me help.

There is another page of this letter, which will come in the next issue of SAG.

This letter is just an example of all the problems that people could have. There is a stamped date on the letter which shows that it was answered just a week later, but it is not possible to find the answer, as all copy books from the consul’s office for this time are gone.

An ad had been inserted in the Swedish newspapers about a man, Charles Andrew Johnson, age 53, who had died of gas poisoning in Chicago. He had left money, and had no relatives in the U.S., so relatives in Sweden were told to write to the consul.

Many answered, and demanded that they should have the money, at once!

The letter writers were from all parts of Sweden, and guessed that the deceased man was their missing brother, husband, uncle, but no one had any proof. Most of them got a short answer, “No, you are not related to the deceased, and there will be no money for you!”
A Malung family in America

- what happened next?

In SAG 2008/2, p. 10, the sad story was told about the immigrating family of Torspers Mats Halvarsson, his wife Joni Marit Jonsdotter, and their children, and how they lost newborn twins in Nordmark (Värm.) when on their way to the port of Göteborg.

The family left Göteborg 1869 June 15 on the S/S Scandinavian for Leith in Scotland. From there they probably travelled to Glasgow and got on a big steamer for America.

When the family was found on the Göteborg passenger lists, the family were recorded on two different pages. The daughters Kerstin, Brita, and Anna were listed among other passengers, and the parents, Mats and Marit, among people with prepaid tickets. This shows that somebody, probably a relative in America, had sent them a ticket, but who could that be? Was there anyone in Mats's or Marit's family that had immigrated to America earlier?

Next step

The next step was to check on the siblings of Mats and Marit, so I started with Marit.

Marit was born in 1833 Oct. 28 in Östra Fors village in Malung, one of the children of Jonas Larsson and his wife Brita Nilsdotter. Jonas and his family lived at Östra Fors #31, and had the farm name Lindjo, which alternated with the farm name Joni.

This couple had several children, all born in Östra Fors:
- d. Anna, b. 1822 Mar. 23.
- d. Marit, b. 1833 Oct. 28.

When following the family forwards in time, it was found that daughter Brita “ran away to America” in 1846. This indicates that she had joined the prophet Erik Jansson and his followers that immigrated in 1846 to Bishop Hill in Henry County, Illinois.

According to the Bishop Hill database, built by Bob Nelson of Trempeleau, WI, Brita married first in 1848 July 30 in Bishop Hill to Erik Sallin, who seems to have died before 1851. By 1864 she was married to Anders Olsson Nordin, born 1823 Aug. 27 in Buckarby, Nora parish (Västman), who died in Bishop Hill in 1908. Their daughter Christina Mathilda Nordine was born 1864 May 8 in Bishop Hill.

In Brita’s obituary it is mentioned that she had a sister in Bishop Hill, which was her younger sister Marit, widow of Torspers Mats Halvarsson, and mother of Ed Halverson (Americanized spelling), where Brita died. So it seems very likely that Brita was the one who sent the tickets to the Halvarsson family, but perhaps did not know that they also had the three girls. Maybe children’s tickets were less expensive, so Mats and Marit could pay for the children themselves.

Marit lived longer and did not die until 1917 Dec. 21 of a stroke in her home in Bishop Hill. She was survived by her daughter Mrs. Christine Alstrom of Clay Center, KS, Anna, who lived with her mother, and Edward Halverson in Bishop Hill.

End notes:
1) Göteborg Passenger Lists, volume SE/GLA/12703/E IX/1, 1869, picture ID A0056890_00353 (SVAR).
2) Malung C:2, page 176.
3) Malung Al:4b, page 32.
4) Malung Al:5b, page 32.
5) http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?db=bishophill
7) Martha Halverson obituary, Galva News 1917 Dec. 27.

Elisabeth Thorsell
Hulda’s story

- the tragic early death of a young Swedish maid

BY SUZANNE ERICKSON WALLACE

So many of our family stories turn out to be far removed from the truth when generations pass them on to new generations. A distant relative, living in Sweden, contacted me a few years ago to find information regarding his Grandaunt Hulda Johansson, who had, as he had been told, died in Chicago of a gas accident at age 18 in 1899.

Hulda Christina Johansson was born in 1881 June 3 in Tofteryd Prästgård in Tofteryd (Jönk.), the daughter of Christina and Johan Johansson. Her older sister Emma had emigrated from Tofteryd (Jönk.) to Chicago in 1895, and Hulda followed her there in 1897 from Tofteryd.

WOMAN IS SMOTHERED BY GAS: Hulda Johnson, Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-1922), November 26, 1899.

Hulda Johnson, 18 years old, was asphyxiated by gas in her room at the residence of Austin H. Baker, 5651 Peoria Street, yesterday morning. While attempting to shut off the gas supply to a small heating stove she was overcome by the fumes and fell on the stove. When found her right arm and side were severely burned.

From the Tribune information, which was found by the Newberry Library, I continued my search and found that the weekend of Hulda’s death was probably Thanksgiving time. The address given in the article was that of Austin Baker, a veterinarian. Hulda was most likely living there as a servant and not as just a boarder because the 1900 census, the year following Hulda’s death, lists another young girl from Sweden residing in the Baker household as a servant.

The Newberry Library searched for a death certificate. I also looked, but none has been found. The state of Illinois did not strictly require death filings until 1916. Now I am searching for Hulda’s place of burial. I have been to most of the oldest cemeteries in Chicago in my search.

The story handed down through generations turns out to be true but remains unfinished for me until I can find where Hulda lies buried.
Emma, Hulda's sister

In 1893 Emma moved from her mother's home in Hagshult to Tofteryd, and then in 1895 immigrated to the U.S. She left from Göteborg on March 29 and had a ticket for La Porte, Indiana.

Then Suzanne writes “I do have some facts. First, Emma must have been notified of Hulda's death, probably by her employer or by the police, and Emma must have been the one to notify their mother in Sweden. The 1890s and early 1900s Chicago city directories are online through the Newberry Library include names, addresses, and occupations. It is not possible, however, with the city directory to identify which of the Emma Johnsons could be our Emma.

“We assume she was in Chicago though. I did find her husband in the 1910 city directory living at 2224 Kedvale and working as a motorman. Secondly, I cannot find Emma in the 1900 and 1910 census. In the 1920 census an Emma and husband Emil Carlson are listed at 2224 Kedvale with a daughter Evelyn age 11. The first verified piece of information is the 1930 census, listing Emma and the husband Emil Carlson, along with a 21-year-old daughter Evelyn, and a nephew named Carl Ekstrom living at 2237 S. Keeler, just a block away from the 1920 census address on Kedvale. We know this entry is correct because Lars [my source/relative in Sweden] has a photo of Carl Ekstrom at the S. Keeler address. Lars first told me the nephew’s name was Carl Väge Johansson. The name Ekstrom, Väge's mother's maiden name which he used while in America, was easier for me to find. This nephew returned to Sweden and died there. According to this 1930 census Emma's husband was a motorman for the Street Car Company surface lines, which my relative Lars had been told. On the census, daughter Evelyn Christina Carlson was a teacher for the Chicago city schools. “The 1940 census is now online and indicates that Emma, Emil, and daughter Evelyn were still all alive, with the same occupations, and still living at the Keeler address.

“According to Lars, Emma also had a daughter named Ruth Mathilda born about 4-5 years before Evelyn. Ruth should have been on the 1920 census as she was about 15 years of age, but she is not listed there. So, Emma’s first daughter remains a mystery.

“I have been to several Chicago cemeteries searching for Hulda and for Emma and Emil with no success. I have one more cemetery to visit; it is the oldest one in Chicago. Emma and Emil could have moved out of Chicago after 1940 to the suburbs, but in what direction? Without the date of Emma's death, or her husband's, it is nearly impossible because the names are so common. For sure there was a daughter Evelyn, but what about the daughter Ruth in the photo? I need to have Lars go over all the old letters he has once more for clues about Emma and her daughters. I have much more research to do.”

The author is
Suzanne Erickson Wallace.
Her e-mail is:
<jsw0731@frontier.com>

Appendix: Hulda’s family

Hulda was the 6th child in the family of Johan Johannesson, born 1840 July 2 in Tofteryd, and his wife Christina Johnesdotter, born 1842 May 7 in Hagshult. Johan and Christina were married in 1869 May 29 in Hagshult, where Christina was a maid at Torp Norregård, and the groom a farmhand in Boarp in Tofteryd.

They soon had a large family:
d. Anna Carolina, b. 1871 Jun. 21 in Tofteryd, as most were of the children. s. Carl August, b. 1873 Apr. 1.
d. Emma Mathilda, b. 1875 Sep. 15.
s. Johannes Fritiof, b. 1877 Oct. 28.
d. Hulda Christina, b. 1881 Jun. 3.
s. Johan Gustaf, b. 1883 Apr. 3 in Hags-hult.

When Johan and Christina were first married they lived in cottage Hagen on Sjöeryd lands in Tofteryd, then moved sometime in the 1870s to Tofteryd Prästgårds, where Johan was a tenant farmer. In 1882 they moved to Jönshult Södregård in Hagshult, where Johan was again a tenant farmer, and in 1883 they moved to Kushult, also in Hagshult, where Johan died in 1885 of intestinal obstruction (tarmvred).

Widow Christina and the children moved in 1890 to the dug-out Segerholm on Starkeryd lands, also in Hagshult. It was from this place that Hulda emigrated in 1897. She got her moving-out testimony (flyttningsbetyg) on May 31 and travelled to the port of Göteborg, where she boarded a smaller steamer on July 21, and sailed for England. On July 24 she left from Liverpool on the steamer S/S Lucania and arrived at Ellis Island, New York, on July 31, and she was going to her sister E. Johanson in La Forte, Indiana.

In 1899 Nov. 19 the widow Christina moved to Tofteryd, where she lived with her children at cottage Molund #2. The head of the household was her oldest son, the blacksmith Carl August Johannesson. He married in 1903 June 21 to Anna Ekström, born 1874 Mar. 26 in Tofteryd, and they had a son, Holger Josef, born 1904 June 12.

Unfortunately his grandmother Christina never saw this descendant as she died 1903 Jan. 16 at Molund in Tofteryd, of cancer in the larynx.

Elisabeth Thorsell
Vikings in the West


Vikings in North America have long been a subject of great interest to many Scandinavian-Americans, and to the people in their countries of origin. Solid evidence of their presence in North America has, however, been scant and usually highly controversial. A new book from a somewhat different tangent. The author, Annette Kolodny, is described as “a feminist literary critic, activist, and retired professor in humanities.” She has written several books and essays centered on the role of women on the frontier, and on higher education in the twenty-first century. This is her first work on Vikings in North America.

Until about 1960 no solid evidence had yet been found of the presence of Vikings in the New World to confirm the stories in the ancient Norse sagas. This was greatly changed with the discovery then of what appeared to be remains of a Viking settlement on the northern tip of Newfoundland, Canada. First thought to be from Native Americans, this discovery near the small fishing village of L’Anse aux Meadows by Norwegian Helge Ingstad and his wife Anne Stine Ingstad, was further examined and excavated over the next decades. After finding artifacts that were only known to Vikings and not natives, and after carbon dating of some objects, this site came to be accepted by most authorities as real evidence of a settlement by a group of Norse Greenlanders. The remnants of their houses, boat sheds, a charcoal kiln and smithy, evidence of domestic animals, a woman’s spindle whorl, a cloak-pin, and other Viking items confirmed the presence of Vikings in about the year 1000.

Theories about Vikings in North America did not begin with the L’Anse aux Meadows discovery, however. In the Viking Age (750 A.D. to 1050 A.D.) oral sagas recited by storytellers were common. Many originated in Iceland, which was settled by the early 19th century. Both American and Scandinavian writers soon found these sagas to be the basis for further theories and speculations about the voyages to North America led by Leif Ericsson, Thorfinn Karls-efni, and others.

In 1837 a Danish philologist, Carl Christian Rafn, published large volumes including some eighteen documents written in Iceland in the original language. These, together with certain objects discovered in New England in North America, claimed that the area was visited by Vikings in about 1000 A.D. English translations soon followed which launched by several writers and popular lectures about this claim. Many items of physical evidence were identified, including the Dighton Rock, the Newport Tower, a skeleton in armor, and other objects were claimed to support Rafn’s arguments. All were later discredited as Viking items, but other writers and poets were inspired to support or to romanticize these claims. Examples of poems attributed to these discoveries include Longfellow’s “Skel-leton in Armor” and Whittier’s “The Norsemen” which appeared in 1840.

This early history of these claims is traced thoroughly by the author, who views them as an effort to discredit or diminish the discovery of Columbus in 1492, mainly by those who had trouble crediting Italians with this accomplishment. New England’s romantic poets also saw these events as a source for their own creative efforts. A lively competition continues to this day between Italian-Americans and Scandinavian-Americans over who first “discovered America.” This competition continues to be disparaged, of course, by Native Americans who occupied North and South America for thousands of years. The Viking supporters, bowing to political correctness, now cite Leif Ericsson’s voyage as “The First Europeans to visit North America.”

Ms. Kolodny devotes many pages to examining the literature of the nineteenth century for opinions and theories about the Viking presence in North America, most of which has long been considered either spurious, misguided, or written to support a particular agenda of the many writers. Events such as the Chicago
World’s Fair of 1892 (The Columbian Exposition) and the presence of a replica Viking ship which sailed from Norway to New York, thence through the Great Lakes waterways to Chicago, and many other events served to keep the name of Leif Ericsson in the news and in the public consciousness. Statues erected to Leif Ericsson are shown, and even the well-known Kensington Runestone in Minnesota deserves a mention. (It is regarded by most experts as a hoax, but avidly promoted by local adherents.) Its claimed date on the inscription is 1362, more than three centuries after the Viking visits to L’Anse aux Meadows.

A unique contribution of the author is her effort to seek out any parallels to the North American contacts by the Vikings in the sagas with Native Americans in their own legends and oral histories. We do know that these first contacts usually resulted in violence, mainly due to misunderstandings and problems communicating in disparate languages. As a result of these contacts, the Vikings soon withdrew from further voyages when they found that the lands were occupied by far greater numbers of people with roughly similar weaponry. Kolodny has searched the Native oral traditions for traces of these first contacts. After interviewing several native storytellers from tribes inhabiting New England and the Maritime Provinces, and other sources, she was able to find only a few references that could be construed to relate to first contacts, and those required a significant stretch. There was a pattern of stories relating to the coming of the white man from the east, but not specific enough to identify them with which white men. One story from a dream identified a “floating island which approached the shore, the island had trees on it and bears in the trees subsequently identified as men.” A Viking ship has a single mast, one spar, and has little need for crew to climb up in the rigging. A later multi-masted sailing ship with crewmen working in the rigging might have more likely accounted for the natives’ description in this story. This search for native parallels to Viking sagas was exhaustively pursued, described, and well documented in the appendix, but it appears little solid evidence was found. Whatever references were found that appeared to have some relevance require as much if not more speculation and conjecture than did the stories handed down to us from the Vikings' versions of these contacts. This reviewer’s “reading between the lines” of the text seems to suggest strong sympathy for the native accounts of events, yet goes far to ridicule much of the nineteenth century American writers' speculations about Viking presence in New England and Canada.

Despite this new volume, solid evidence of the Vikings' explorations in North America a thousand years ago remains slim. What we know for sure today remains the sometimes inconsistent accounts in the two sagas, backed up by the real Viking remains at L’Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland. The most recent view is that this location was not Vinland, but Leif’s houses and camp were to be a base station for further explorations in North America, but not a permanent settlement. Birgitta Wallace, successor to the Ingstads in investigating the Newfoundland site (and one of many sources for Annette Kolodny’s book) puts forth this theory, and the explorations to the south along the coast of the Maritimes and New England and possibly the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, led to other sites referred to in the sagas. A site in New England would be more consistent with some of the descriptions such as the presence of grapes, self-sown wheat, and days where the “nights were more nearly equal to the days.” Possibly Vinland was one of these sites. Thus far, no authenticated artifacts have been found to support this theory, however. Meanwhile, a presidential proclamation still recognizes Leif Ericsson Day on Oct. 9 each year in the U.S., and a Viking ship replica, The Norseman, based near Philadelphia, sails each year on that date and at other times to remind Americans of the accomplishments of the Vikings and Leif Ericsson a thousand years ago.

For those new to this subject, In Search of First Contact provides an excellent and up-to-date summary and reference book on the history of Vikings in North America, very thorough and readable. The book is accurate in separating fact from conjecture and misinformation, and explores in depth the motives of the writers in what they believed and why they wrote. Those enthusiasts already well-read on the subject will find little if no new evidence or facts...
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about the Viking explorations, but a
great deal of detail on the literature
of the quest for solid information and
the multiplicity of theories advocated
by numerous writers over many
years.

Dennis L. Johnson

Finns in
Sweden &
Norway

The Forest Finns of Scandinavia, by
Maud Wedin, Finnbygdens Forlag
and FINNSAM, Falun, 2011, 34
pages, Illustrated, Softcover, Ameri-
can Swedish Institute, Minneapolis,
about $13.00 plus shipping.

Beginning around the year 1600 a
migration began of people from the
area of Savo in central Finland.
Finland was part of the Swedish king-
dom from the 13th century until
1809, and the Finns living in that
area were known as Forest Finns,
 differing in culture and background
from their traditional Swedish and

Finnish farmer equivalents. King
Gustav Eriksson (Vasa) (1523-1560)
and his sons encouraged this migra-
tion to help populate Swedish inte-
rior forested areas which had not yet
been settled. Better lands along the
coasts, lakes, and rivers in Sweden
and Finland were already occupied,
and these farmers and their children
showed little interest in these poorer,
forested lands. They were used only
for hunting and fishing, and a few
outland farms.

The author, Maud Wedin, has
written a small but informative book
about these Forest Finns and their
impact on these areas, largely in
Sweden and also some in Norway,
which were affected by this migra-
tion. She writes about the reasons for
the migration, the culture of the
settlers, areas of distribution, foods,
handicrafts, buildings, their economy,
and the present state of these Forest
Finn areas. Many old maps, and
newer sketches and color photo-
graphs serve to locate the settled
areas and to illustrate settlement
patterns and farming methods used
by the Forest Finns. A section near
the end serves as a reference to
language and family names, and the
various organizations and museums
and visitors' centers dedicated to the
Forest Finn settlements and people.

The Forest Finns had over many
generations become expert at a type
of farming in forested areas known
as "slash and burn" (svedjebräning)
farming. The method of doing this
varied from place to place, but gener-
ally consisted of raising one or two
crops after cutting all trees in an area
and burning the brush in place. This
was usually done in late June, and
when the ashes had cooled, some rye
was sown of a type that grew in
tussocks. These seedlings were then
by the end of summer grazed by
cattle. The following spring, the rye
plants began to grow again and the
area was fenced to keep out cattle
and game. By fall, the rye was

harvested with sickles and dried on
long ricks or in drying houses. The
period from cutting and burning to
harvesting a crop often took 3 to 4
years, and only two harvests could
be taken from one field. After this the
area was left fallow, or was used to
graze cattle. Sometimes, turnips
could be grown on this land.

Cattle raising and dairying often
became occupations for the Forest
Finn women. With the production of
cattle manure on these fields, some-
times arable crops of barley or oats
could then be grown. The farmers
augmented their income and diet by
hunting and fishing. In areas where
mining took place, they could find
employment in this industry, in fores-
try, or later when industries began
to develop in these areas, by working
as craftsmen in these industries.

Slash and burn farming often was
resisted by the forest and iron in-
dustries, since they competed for
wood needed by the sawmills and for
charcoal needed for iron production.

The author goes on to point out
that today many of these former
slash and burn areas are abandoned
or sparsely populated. The former
farmers have over several genera-
tions migrated to the cities or abroad,
their language is being lost as they
adopt Swedish, and they become

SALE!
Swedish Voters in
Chicago 1888
By Nils William Olsson
302 pages of Swedes,
comments, and indexes.
$10 + $5 S&H
Contact Jill Seaholm at
<jillseaholm@augustana.edu>

The Forest Finns
of Scandinavia

Translation: Olaf Lindman

Maud Wedin

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An adoptee’s search


Many books and articles have been written by authors who have chronicled their search for their ancestors using generally accepted methods of tracing their parents and previous generations.

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Mention the Genealogist when you join or order books

Dennis L. Johnson

which might include the further history of the Forest Finns in North America. Those who share this background will find the book especially interesting, and others of Scandinavian descent will also find the subject to be one more fascinating sidelight on the history of their native country.

Many older Forest Finn villages and buildings have survived and are used for summer houses for other Swedes, sometimes the descendants of the original Forest Finns. This earlier culture is now recognized by several museums, visitors' centers and by annual workshops or conferences. References and websites are given in the book for those interested in learning more about this unique aspect of Swedish and Norwegian history.

No doubt many of these Forest Finns joined in the 19th century great migration to North America, and even continued their farming methods and culture in the New World. Significant numbers of Forest Finns have settled in forested regions of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, and adjacent Canadian provinces along the border. Traces can still be found of these settlements, although the use of slash and burn farming no longer exists. In these areas many Finnish names can be found, some of whom are descendants of the Forest Finns of Scandinavia. Some probably took this migration as an opportunity to change their names and suppress their Finnish language in order to blend with the Swedes and Norwegians in the area. When they left Sweden or Norway, they were still suffering some discrimination because of their backgrounds.

The author has done an excellent job of compressing a complex subject into a very compact and informative book, augmented by many fine photographs and drawings. The book could well be a basis for a more comprehensive work on the subject,
generations as far back as records allow. These are good and offer many tips and methods for using public records, church records, censuses, and other official documents to track their ancestors one generation at a time.

This new book, however, presents a new and different challenge for a person who learns as an adult that he has been adopted and strongly wishes to find his birth parents and their family and ancestors. Until very recently, adoption records were closely guarded by public officials, courts, and adoption agencies, thinking that this would prevent unauthorized disclosure and resulting complications due to a variety of reasons, some legal, some personal. Only in the last decades in the U.S. has this tight grip kept on adoption information been somewhat loosened, probably due to changing attitudes about adoption and a greater frequency of adoption in the culture.

Richard Hill in his book has written the story of his half-century long search for his true parents after learning at age 21 that he had been adopted. This came as a great shock to him, learning this not from his family, but from a new family physician. He had gone to see this doctor for persistent chest pain, (diagnosed as easily treated heartburn) and found his medical records had been passed on to the new family doctor for reference. In the course of doing a physical on his new patient, the doctor asked a number of questions including a few which meant to explore his mental health. One was “How did he feel about being adopted?” This revelation was completely new to him, since his parents had never mentioned a word about this. After thinking it over, he decided not to ask his parents directly, not wanting to hurt their feelings. Not until many years later did he talk to his father about this as he neared death, and finally, at the approaching end of her life, to his mother.

After first learning of his adoption, Richard developed an intense interest in finding first his birth parents, and later on any new relatives he now had as a result of this information. He began a many-year quest to find out what he could, turning to whatever sources he was able to find. This quest moved in fits and starts over the years as his own life, career, family, and other matters often interrupted his intermittent yet persistent efforts to satisfy his desire for information. There was no one else to ask, he was an only child, his grandparents had passed on, and he knew only of two older cousins. During the next years, he was occupied with graduating from college, a first job, meeting and marrying his wife, starting a family, and going to graduate school. The family settled near home in Michigan, where he had grown up in a small town near Grand Rapids. His wife prompted him to resume his search for his birth family.

In their conversation his father had told him that his birth mother was named Jackie, who was divorced when he was adopted, and that she also at the time had an older son, and that Jackie had arranged with his parents to adopt him just after his birth in 1946. His father knew little more about Jackie except that she had died in an auto accident a year or so after his birth, and that Richard “should try and find his brother.” This information plus further urging from his wife and his wife’s sister (who was seeking a child she had given up at birth) prompted him to resume work on finding his birth parents.

The quest resumed with a little help and advice from a local chapter of AIM (American Identity Movement), a voluntary association of people who have done or are doing similar work in seeking the identities of their birth families. After contacting many known friends and relatives of his birth mother, Jackie, Richard finally finds out more about her, where she lived at the time of his birth, where she worked at several jobs, and some of her friends and associates. Clues to his birth father were much more difficult, as she was not married at the time and he learned that she had several boyfriends and male acquaintances, enjoyed a wide social life, and one candidate after another emerged and for one reason or another had to be ruled out. The following chapters detail his long and frustrating process of tracking down these individuals. Some were dead, or could not be found, but through dogged work and interviewing of a number of people who may have known them, Richard makes slow progress. The book reads like a detective story with its alternating successes and dead ends. Finally, he narrows the search to a
Book Reviews

family with five sons, almost any one of whom were known to Jackie and could have been his birth father. He must then resort to DNA testing to identify his real father, and as in many suspense-filled detective stories, a last minute twist comes as a surprise to Richard and the reader to make the story complete. Fortunately he was able to win the friendship and cooperation of this family and was, in fact, soon welcomed as a family member.

Despite the fact that Richard Hill found no Swedish ancestors in the course of his search, the book is an engaging story which will hold the reader fascinated until the very end. For readers interested in taking up a similar quest for their birth parents, the book is almost a guidebook for adopted individuals who do not know their birth parents. Along the way, one learns a great deal about adoption records in the U.S., the value of finding helpful friends and relatives in the search, and even quite a bit of the usefulness and limitations of DNA testing in positive verification of blood relationships. The author also teaches the values of persistence, and of diplomacy in approaching people about what could be for them a very sensitive subject leading possibly to an unwelcome outcome.

Dennis L. Johnson

Old nobility

Äldre Svenska Frälseläkter, published by the House of Nobles (Riddarhusdirektionen), by Hans Gillingstam, Ph.D. and Lars-Olof Skoglund, M.A. Volume II:2, 2013. 349 pages, personal, topographical, and biographical index to the whole work. For more information contact the Riddarhuset at <kansli@riddarhuset.se>

This long-awaited last part of the history of the “Old nobility” of Sweden covers four families that had become extinct by the time the Riddarhuset organization was founded in 1626 by the chancellor Axel Oxenstierna.

The four families in this last part of the Äldre Svenska Frälseläkter contain genealogies of the families of Bergkvaraätten, Bese, Bralsstorp and Bylow. Each genealogy is very well researched in medieval documents and they are all meticulously sourced.

Hans Gillingstam, Ph.D., is the master of Swedish medieval genealogy and has spent more than 60 years in untangling the difficult history of the old families long before the age of church records. He has used hundreds of parchment documents, that give details of dowries, inheritances, real estate businesses, and much more.

Elisabeth Thorsell

New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

The Genealogist’s U.S. History Pocket Reference by Family Tree Magazine contributing editor Nancy Hendrickson delivers fascinating facts such as these: that the city of Vicksburg, Miss., didn’t celebrate Independence Day from 1863, when residents surrendered on July 4 after a 47-day Union siege, until 1945; or that during the Oklahoma Land Rush of April 22, 1889, two cities of 10,000 residents each (Oklahoma City and Guthrie) sprang up in less than a day; There are also timelines, charts (one, for example, summarizes the dates, causes, and outcomes of the major Indian wars), maps, important dates (including censuses), and lists of popular foods, books, music and trends. It encapsulates historical phenomena you might need a refresher on, such as the Triangle Trade and Bleeding Kansas. Link to the publishers on p. 30.

Recently I noticed a new (to me) crime mystery writer with a Scandinavian connection, named Kathleen Ernst. I have now read her Old World Murder, which is all about a museum curator named Chloe Ellefson, who works at the Old World Wisconsin Museum. The heroine turns out to be of Norwegian descent, and the mystery is mostly about where an old Norwegian ale bowl, decorated by rosemaling, has ended up. The book started a bit slow, but got more interesting after reading more. She has published more books in this series, but I would prefer knowing about more books with Swedish connections.

William Dollarhide is a man who has written, for instance, a MapGuide to American Migration Routes 1735–1815 (1997). Not long ago I found that he has published a short Online Resources for Finding Living Relatives, which can be bought from Family Roots Publishing (link on p. 30) as a pdf for $3.99, or as a 4-page laminated quick sheet for $7.95. There are many useful links and hints for tracing living relatives that one might not think about. Also the links have descriptions of what you might find by using each resource. If the links go to subscription databases that is clearly marked by ($$). I found this useful. There are also a few UK links. Link on p. 30.
Interesting Web Sites

Scandinavian Folk Music Festival in Nisswa, MN: http://www.nisswastamman.org/
Danish administrative divisions: http://digdag.dk/
A portal for historical statistics for Sweden: http://www.historicalstatistics.org/
Web site of Carl Linnaeus (with botany and zoology): http://linnaeus.nrm.se/welcome.html.en
Web site for Vasa Orden av Amerika (Swedish): http://voadl20.se/
Danish research tips and LDS immigrants: http://aurelia-clemons.dk/
Searchable old New York state newspapers: http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html
Interesting long article about Castle Garden:
   http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/elis/castle_garden.pdf
An online genealogy magazine: http://www.theindepthgenealogist.com/
Family Tree Magazine webshop: www.shopfamilytree.com/
Kathleen Ernst's blog about historic places and more:
   http://sitesandstories.wordpress.com/category/historic-sites/
Svenskt diplomatarium (in Swedish, medieval documents):
   http://www.riksarkivet.se/diplomatarium.aspx
Riddarhuset (House of Nobles,[in English]): http://www.riddarhuset.se/jsp/index.jsp?id=2663
The SweAme blog: http://sweame.blogspot.se/
The Swedish Genealogical Society of Colorado (new address): http://swedgensoc.org/
10 Things to Know about Sweden: http://travel.cnn.com/10-things-about-sweden-256186
Old medical terms: http://www.thornber.net/medicine/html/medgloss.html
The Genealogical Society of Sweden: http://genealogi.net/
Digitized newspapers from Petersburg, Alaska: http://petersburg.advantage-preservation.com/
Database of people buried at NY Hart Island (Potter's field) from 1869:
How to cite sources:
   https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Cite_Your_Sources_%28Source_Footnotes%29
The German Genealogy Group: http://theggg.org/

Genealogy without documentation is just mythology!
Genealogical Queries

Genealogical queries from subscribers to Swedish American Genealogist will be listed here free of charge on a “space available” basis. The editor reserves the right to edit these queries to conform to a general format. The inquirer is responsible for the contents of the query.

We would like to hear about your success if you receive useful information as a result of placing a query in this publication. Please send us your feedback, and we will endeavor to report your new discoveries in this section of the journal.

Larsson, Larson
Looking for information on this person: Her name was Anna Martina Larson. She was born August 21, 1880, in Småland. The parish is unknown. She moved to Moline, Illinois, in 1903. She married Charles A. Larson September, 1906 in Rock Island, Illinois.

They had one child named Evelyn, who married Alphonse Fleming.

Anna Martina died November 4, 1959. The funeral was conducted by Rev. J. Eric Holmer of Salem Lutheran Church, Moline.

I would appreciate if you could find some more information about Anna Martina Larson – where she lived in Sweden - info on her family including siblings who might have stayed in Sweden and their descendants, vessel used to cross Atlantic, etc.

All information on this woman most welcome!

Jill Seaholm, Swenson Center, Augustana College, 639 38th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201-2296.

E-mail: <JillSeaholm@augustana.edu>

Answer: After checking the Larsons in the 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Federal censuses, I noticed that Martina seemed to be a little later than 1880, her age was usually given as being about three years younger. The next step was to look into the database Emibas, for someone named Anna Martina, born in 1882 or 1883 on Aug. 21 in Småland. [An observation is that the year can be a bit off, but the date usually correct]. So finally Anna Martina Johansdotter, born 1882 Aug. 21 in Fröderyd, (Smål.) and immigrating in March 1903 was found. She was born to Johan Petter Johannesson and his wife Sofia Kristina Jonasdotter of Angseboda in Fröderyd.

When checking the Ellis Island database it was found that Anna Martina arrived in New York on 1903 April 13, after having left Liverpool by S/S Invernia on 1903 April 4. She had a ticket for Cambridge, Ill., and was going to her brother Carl J. Johanson there. According to the church records of Fröderyd this Anna Martina did have a brother, Carl August Julius Johansson, b. 1879 Apr. 10, who left Sweden for America in 1897 May 7 with a ticket for Chicago.

This looks quite reasonable, but to be certain it is the right Anna Martina more research is needed.

Nilsson, Höij, Hallen

A few days later they sailed for America on the S/S City of London and arrived in New York on July 20. Supposedly they continued to Moline, Rock Island County, Ill., where Olof is said to have bought some land, and then died within a few months, possibly in some accident, while working on the railroad. Son Carl Johan is also said to have died shortly after arrival.

In the 1870 Federal Census for Illinois the widow Louisa Swanson is listed in Moline with children Gustav, Augusta, and Christina. Later Lovisa is said to have remarried and then died in childbirth. She might be the Louisa Swanson who in 1874 Dec. 8 married John Hallen in Rock Island County, according to Illinois Marriages on Family Search.

In 1876 Erik A. Peterson and Olof Hjelm petitioned the District court to be appointed guardians for Olof Nilsson’s daughters Augusta and Christine. Son Gustav had probably died by then. In the 1880 Federal Census these girls are living with the E. A. Peterson family in Golden, Col. Augusta was a member of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Golden, but in 1881 moved to Denver, where she in the 1885 State Census is listed as a “servant” in the household of Charles Morey in Denver. Augusta was a member of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Denver, but was stricken out in 1889 March 18, which is the last information on her. Nothing is known about the sister Christine after 1880.

Any information about this family would be very welcome!

Gunn Höij, Ida Sömmerskas gränd 6 E, S-239 35 Skanör, Sweden. E-mail: <g.1721@telia.com>
Dear friends,

Spring is finally here it seems, after an unusually long winter. During March it was sunny and nice during the days, but the nights were cold, so ice and snow stayed on the ground. But now the little Blåsippa has come, almost as blue as the blue color in the Swedish flag, and that is a certain sign of warmer and sunnier days.

A couple of weeks ago I got a reminder of how vulnerable we can be when relying on computers. My almost new one with Windows 7, suddenly would not start, and my brother and my son, both computer experts, could not get it to work again. It had to go to a repair shop, and I was almost computer-less for a week. It felt very empty, but I do have a small laptop, so I could still do e-mails and write some texts. But all my files for SAG were in the dormant desktop, as well as my pictures, and other important things. And backups did exist, but I could not access the programs that could use the files. So I was a very happy person when they called from the shop and told me the computer worked again.

Well, summer time is travelling time, and Americans are on their way here. First my cousin Rich from Salt Lake City comes, and then, almost at the same time, Jill Seaholm and her husband Dave Garner from Rock Island. And perhaps there are more that I will be glad to meet in downtown Stockholm over a “fika”.

And on the horizon the Swedish Genealogy Days (Släktforskardagar-na) in Köping in late August starts to show itself.

Välkomna till Sverige!

Till next time!

Elisabeth Thorsell

Help us promote the SAG journal!

Do you belong to a Swedish genealogy or other Swedish interest group? Even a group that only sometimes focuses on Sweden? We are happy to supply SAG back issues and subscription brochures for you to use as handouts. If you will have a raffle or drawing, we can even provide a certificate for a 1-year subscription to SAG for you to give away. Contact Jill Seaholm at <jillseaholm@augustana.edu>, or 309.794.7204. Thank you!

Sold out!

SAG Workshop
Salt Lake City
3 – 9 Nov.
2013!

We look forward to seeing old and new friends in our happy group of researchers!

The SAG Workshop is the highlight of the year – a fun learning experience and a chance to do your Swedish genealogy with hands-on help from experienced Swedish and American genealogists.

The social side includes both welcome and farewell receptions, a buffet dinner & entertainment.

Contact Jill Seaholm at 309-794-7204, or e-mail: <sag@augustana.edu>.
## Abbreviations

### Table 1. Abbreviations for Swedish provinces (landskap) used by Swedish American Genealogist (as of March 2000) and Sveriges Släktforskarförbund (the Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies, Stockholm [SSF]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landskap (Province)</th>
<th>SAG &amp; SSF Abbr.</th>
<th>Landskap (Province)</th>
<th>SAG &amp; SSF Abbr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blekinge</td>
<td>Blek.</td>
<td>Närke</td>
<td>Närk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohuslän</td>
<td>Bohu.</td>
<td>Skåne</td>
<td>Skån.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalarna</td>
<td>Dala.</td>
<td>Småland</td>
<td>Smål.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalsland</td>
<td>Dals.</td>
<td>Södermanland</td>
<td>Södm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotland</td>
<td>Gotl.</td>
<td>Uppland</td>
<td>Uppl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gästrikland</td>
<td>Gäst.</td>
<td>Värmland</td>
<td>Vär.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halland</td>
<td>Hall.</td>
<td>Västerbotten</td>
<td>Väbo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hälsingland</td>
<td>Häls.</td>
<td>Västergötland</td>
<td>Vägö.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Härjedalen</td>
<td>Härj.</td>
<td>Västmanland</td>
<td>Väsm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jämtland</td>
<td>Jämt.</td>
<td>Ångermanland</td>
<td>Ange.</td>
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<td>Lappland</td>
<td>Lapp.</td>
<td>Öland</td>
<td>Öland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medelpad</td>
<td>Mede.</td>
<td>Östergötland</td>
<td>Östg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrbotten</td>
<td>Nobo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Abbreviations and codes for Swedish counties (län) formerly used by Swedish American Genealogist (1981-1999) and currently used by Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB) (the Central Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Län (County)</th>
<th>SAG Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Code</th>
<th>Län (County)</th>
<th>SAG Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Abbr.</th>
<th>SCB Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalarna*</td>
<td>Dlrn.</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Södermanland</td>
<td>Uppsala</td>
<td>Söd.</td>
<td>Södm.</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gävleborg</td>
<td>Gävl.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Skaraborg (Skar.; R)</td>
<td>Värmland</td>
<td>Vär.</td>
<td>Vrml.</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halland</td>
<td>Hall.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Skaraborg (Skar.; R)</td>
<td>Västerbotten</td>
<td>Vbn.</td>
<td>Vbntn.</td>
<td>AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kronoberg</td>
<td>Kron.</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Skaraborg (Skar.; R)</td>
<td>Örebro</td>
<td>Öre.</td>
<td>Öreb.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrbotten</td>
<td>Norr.</td>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Skaraborg (Skar.; R)</td>
<td>Östergötland</td>
<td>Ög.</td>
<td>Östg.</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skåneb</td>
<td>Skån.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Skaraborg (Skar.; R)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a formerly Kopparberg (Kopp.; W) län.
*b includes the former counties (län) of Malmohus (Malm.; M) and Kristianstad (Krist.; L).
*c includes the former counties (län) of Göteborg and Bohus (Göt.; O), Skaraborg (Skar.; R), and Älvsborg (Älvs.; P).
The counties (län) as they were before 1991.

The provinces (landskap).