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## Book Reviews

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# Book Reviews

Here you will find information about interesting books on the immigration experience, genealogical manuals, books on Swedish customs, and much more. We welcome contacts with SAG readers, suggestions on books to review perhaps.

If you want to review a book yourself, please contact the SAG Editor, at <sag@etgenealogy.se> so we know what you are working on.

## Latin for family historians

*Latin för släkthistoriker*, by Urban Sikeborg. In Swedish. 2013. Hardcover, 103 pages. ISBN 978-91-87676-78-9. Price 225 SEK + postage. Order from Rötterbokhandeln, <<http://shop.genealogi.se/shop/>>

As many researchers have found out, in the older Swedish church records, the clergymen used the Latin language to write about births, marriages and deaths, which can be a problem for one who is not a Latin scholar.

This new book, in Swedish, will, with the use of a good Swedish dictionary, help to decipher the curious words.

The book has nearly 6,500 words, abbreviations, examples, and Latinized names.

The words all have pronunciation diacritical marks, like *úxor* (wife), but these marks are not seen in the old documents, they are just a help to pronounce the words correctly.

### 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](mailto:jillseaholm@augustana.edu)>

The author, Urban Sikeborg, has for many years studied the use of Latin in Sweden during the centuries from the 1500s onwards. During this period the kind of Latin that was used was called *Nylatin* (New Latin), which means that it differs from the old Latin that was used during the Roman Empire. These New Latin words might not be found in classical dictionaries, or may have changed their meaning.

One thing to remember is also that words change, according to the gender, so *renatus* is a little boy that is being baptized; when it is a little girl the word is *renata*. Sometimes a man is mentioned as being *a successor matrimonii*. This means that he succeeded someone in a marriage, a widow's second husband.

When the little Anders Pettersson was sent to a city school he soon changed his name to *Andreas Petri*. He also may have added a surname based on his homeplace, for instance *Holmiae*, meaning from Stockholm.

If a man has a very common name, this kind of surname can help to identify him, like *Olaus Andrae Flognaeus*, a clergyman who was born as Olof Andersson at Västra Flogned in Köla parish (Värmland).

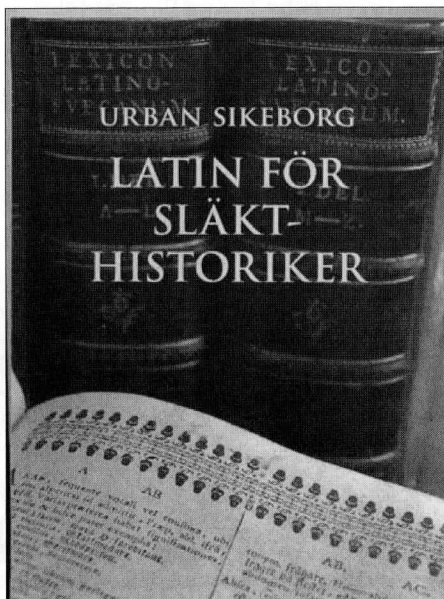
The various names of the Sundays and feastdays are also explained with a note on which day they were celebrated. *Michaelis Archangeli dies* was the feastday of the Archangel Michael, which was celebrated on 29 Sep. This date was for many years the day when farmhands and maids moved to their new employ. In 1819 it was changed to 24 Oct.

Latin was also used frequently in legal records, so words like *auditor*, *auscultans*, *legifer*, and many others are explained in this dictionary.

Sometimes the clergymen used Latin to write notes on the conduct of their parishioners, so if they came by and happened to look into the clerical surveys, they could not read what he had written. One example is *accusatus furti*, which means that someone was accused of being a thief. Another is *ante nuptias natus, alio Patre*, which means born before marriage, had a different father (not the mother's husband). And yet another example is *olim faber ferarrius*, which means (he) used to be an iron smith. Other not so seldom seen words are *ebriosus* (drunk), and *notus/nota* (illegitimate boy or girl).

This book will be a necessary tool on the desk of all dedicated Swedish researchers, whether they live in America or Sweden.

Elisabeth Thorsell



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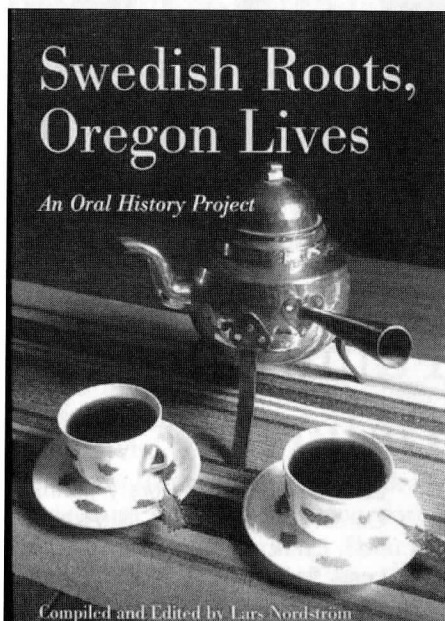


## The Swedish experience in Oregon

*Swedish Roots, Oregon Lives* – an oral history project, compiled and edited by Lars Nordstrom. Publisher: Swedish Roots in Oregon Press. 2013. Softcover, 213 pages, ill., selected bibliography, no index. Price \$ 20 incl. s & h. Order from sales@swedishrootsinoregon.org.

The organization *Swedish Roots in Oregon* started in 1999, and at once realized the value of doing oral history, and preserving the tales of living immigrants. Some of these interviews had been done earlier, but were now merged into the new project.

The project published its first book, *Ten New Lives* in 2011, reviewed in SAG in 2012/1.



This new book is of great interest to anyone who wants to know more about the lives of recent immigrants to the Northwest. It contains edited transcripts of taped interviews with several immigrants that came to Oregon in the 1900s. They tell a little about their background in Sweden, why they left Sweden, and what happened next.

In this book nine women, three men and three married couples tell their stories. The oldest was born in 1898 and the youngest in 1969. The majority have their roots in Norrland, the counties of Västernorrland, Västerbotten, and Norrbotten. The

emigration from Norrland started later than from southern Sweden, according to the statistics.

The first story is told by Oscar and Mary Nastro (in Sweden the name was Näsström). Oscar immigrated in 1923, and he told this story about his experience at Ellis Island: "I had to show my fifty dollars. There were two other fellows there from the same boat and the same place in Sweden, and all three of us used the same fifty dollars going through. It was passed from one to the next, and then I got it back." He then worked at various places in Nebraska and Wyoming, before coming to Portland, Ore., in

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1943 where he stayed for the rest of his life. In 1961 he married Mary A. Erickson, born in Wisconsin of parents from Dala-Järna (Dala.) She was a school teacher. In Portland Oscar first worked in the shipyard during the war, and afterwards he had his own business as an interior decorator. He and Mary were very much involved in the local Swedish-American community in many positions, Oscar played music for many events, and sang in several choirs.

Emma Nordgren was born in Umeå, Sweden, and her father left for the U.S. when she was very little, but immigrated later with her mother, and was reunited with an almost unknown father. Among other things she tells about how it was to be a Swede during World War I, when there was a very anti-German feeling, and Swedes were also thought to be pro-German and had their share of abuse. When grown up Emma worked as a phone operator, and later became a photographer. Her story about life during the Depression is very interesting. In the photo shop every week they got pictures of houses to develop. When she finally asked about those houses, she was told that it was homes that the bank had taken back, as the owners could not pay their loans.

One of the younger people telling her story is Rhonda Lynne Erlandson, born in 1959 in Portland, of a Swedish-born father and an American mother. Her father, Rolf Axel, had immigrated in 1948 with his parents, but already had many relatives in the area that had done well.

The relatives still in Sweden had difficult times, farming in the northernmost area of Sweden, and were

invited to come to Oregon. So they left, and came to Warren, Ore., where they lived for some years. The son Rolf Axel now had to be the "man of the family" already in his upper teens, as he quickly learnt to manage in English, and helped his parents to find jobs. Rolf Axel married young to an American girl, spent some time in the army, and later worked in a paper mill, where his father also worked. When Rhonda was sixteen, she was invited by her great-aunt to accompany her to Sweden, and it is interesting to read all about her experiences during the summer. She was able to visit the village of Bratten near Lycksele (Vbn), and was even allowed to sleep in the same room where her father had been born.

This book makes for fascinating reading, it tells so much about the conditions in Sweden and America during the early 1900s, and so much about the lively Swedish-American community in Oregon, and especially in Portland. It is to be hoped that the younger descendants will allow those Swedish traditions to be kept alive, even though they are three, four, or five generations distant from their Swedish immigrants.

*Elisabeth Thorsell*

## Heathens into Christians

*The Conversion of Scandinavia*, by Anders Winroth. (2012). Yale University Press. Available from [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

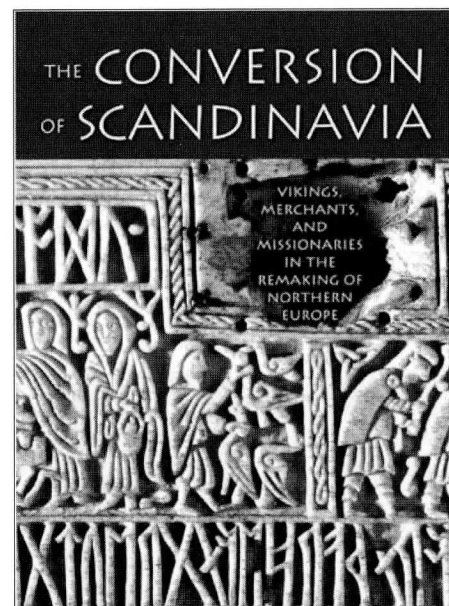
Anders Winroth is a Swedish scholar, now a professor of medieval history at Yale University.

In his new book Winroth argues for a radically new interpretation of the conversion of Scandinavia from paganism to Christianity in the early Middle Ages. Overturning the received narrative of Europe's military and religious conquest and colo-

nization of the region, he contends that rather than acting as passive recipients, Scandinavians converted to Christianity because it was in individual chieftains' political, economic, and cultural interests to do so. Through analysis and historical reconstruction of both archeological and literary sources, and drawing on scholarly work that has been unavailable in English, Winroth opens up new avenues for studying European ascendancy and the expansion of Christianity in the medieval period.

För this book Anders Winroth was awarded the Gustav Ranis International Book Prize in 2013.

(Text cited from a press release from The Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale 23 Aug. 2013)



## Family in Dalarna

*Back to Venjan*, by Mary Johnson Corcoran. 150 pages, ill. Available from Lulu.com. Pdf file is free, book costs \$45.20.

In this book Mary Johanson Corcoran



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tells the story of her great-grandmother (*farmors mor*) Herres Catharina (Karin) Danielsdotter (b. 6 Nov. 1848 in Venjan) and her husband the tailor Johan August Wetterström (b. 29 Nov. 1852 in Forsby [Skar.]) The first years they were married they lived in Stockholm. They left Sweden with their children in 1889 and travelled to Montreal, Canada, from where they went on to Minnesota, and finally settled in Detroit Lakes, Becker Co., MN.

Next comes a vivid description of the celebrations in 2007, when Venjan parish had been its own parish for 400 years; it was ceded in that year from Mora parish. One of the important places Mary and her husband John visited was where the house had stood where great-grandmother Karin was born. The house was gone, but the foundations were still there.

Then follows a detailed family genealogy, starting with the major Daniel Jonsson (1599–1663) and his wife Margareta Danielsdotter Tersera (1611–1689), a niece of the famous rural dean (*prost*) Elof Engelberti Terserus of Leksand. The lines from Daniel and Margareta are followed forwards in time until the family of Herres Karin immigrated in 1889. All along siblings are mentioned, but their lines are not carried forwards, except for the siblings of Herres Karin.

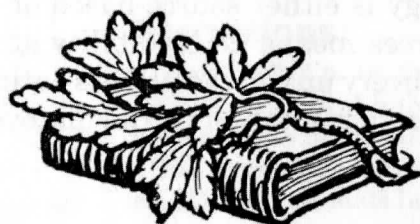
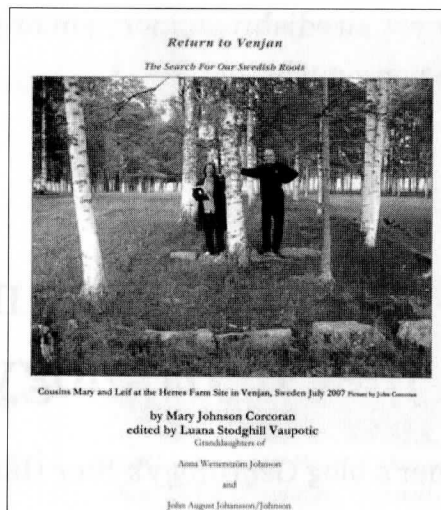
The ancestors of Johan August Wetterström (*farmors far*) are also listed, starting with his grandfather Peter Hallberg (b. 1795 i Skara [Skar.] and his wife Maria Jonsdotter (b. 1799 in Varnhem [Skar.]. Their son Lars (b. 1823 in Skövde [Skar.]) was a soldier with the military name

Sten. He was married twice, first to Cajsa Johansdotter (b. 1829 in Grevbäck (Skar.), died 1871 in Forsby (Skar.)). Married 2nd to Christina Adamsdotter (b. 1830 in Kyrkefalla (Skar.)). Johan August was from the 1st marriage, and started to use the Wetterström name, as did some of his siblings.

Mary's paternal grandfather (*farfar*) Johan August Martin Johansson was born 1882 in Torshult, Kråksmåla parish [Kalm.], and had his roots in that parish. The oldest persons mentioned are his grandparents Johan Ernst Larsson (b. 1810 in Fagerhult (Kalm.) and his wife Stina Lisa Persdotter (b. 1819 in Kråksmåla). Their son Emil's (b. 1852) descendants are followed to this day.

This book is a fascinating read, and has many illustrations in color. What I miss is a graphic ancestral chart, and a name index, but that is just minor points. As a whole I liked also to read about Mary's experiences in modern Sweden.

*Elisabeth Thorsell*



## SAG needs Your help!

We regard the reviews as a very important part of SAG, as the readers are spread all over the U.S., Canada, and Sweden and a lone subscriber even in Australia.

For all of them it is very difficult to keep track of the many interesting books (and movies) that are published with a *Swedish* or *Swedish-American* theme.

We need you to keep your eyes open. And we are extremely pleased if you will write a review and send it to the SAG editor.

Family histories, church histories, local group histories, and lodge histories are among the things we would like to present in SAG. And all in English.

A good book review contains the full title of the book, name of author, year of printing, name of publisher, where it can be bought, and the price of the book.

Send all book reviews to the SAG editor!

*Elisabeth Thorsell*  
SAG editor

## The Jonas Bronck Center

This is not a book, but a newsletter from a new organization in Sweden, that will be focusing on doing research about Jonas Jonasson Bronck, from the Sävsjö area in Småland. Jonas Brunck /Bronck is said to have been born there, and at an early age have left for Holland and who became a captain of the Dutch East India Company. In 1639 he left for America and bought the land close to Nieuwe Amsterdam, which is now known as The Bronx.

In 2014 it is 375 years since this happened and there will be celebrations in Sävsjö on 29-31 Aug., and in New York.

*See link on p. 30.*