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The Steelman / Stillman family of Rogberga

A Worcester family finds its Swedish roots

BY KAY SHELDON

The challenge for many of us is to locate the place in Sweden where our family lived before immigrating to North America. As the generations pass it can become more and more difficult to find a family member that remembers that small village's or parish's name. Added to that, the "Swedish" name has often become another lost memory.

After the creation of the Swedish databases, *Emibas*, and *Emigranten*, it has become easier to locate the parish if you have the correct name or birth date of your Swedish ancestor. Not that American sources should be overlooked, as we all know, ALL sources should be examined as we follow our family back in time.

How it started

A family, from the neighborhood I lived in during the 1950's & 1960s are members of our local historical society, and asked if I could help them find where in Sweden their family came from. Their name is Steelman, but they had no idea what their name may have been in Sweden. They had great information about their family in America, but not anything about Sweden.

The family knew that the grandfather was Carl August Steelman. Looking at the World War I draft registration for a Carl Steelman drew a blank. Time to look at the federal census.

An August C Steelman with a wife Agda E was living in Worcester, MA in 1930 in a Swedish neighborhood. They were paying \$30 a month for rent and he was working as a toolmaker in a machine shop. In 1930 both said they had been married for

31 years. August had arrived in America in 1892 and Agda said she arrived in 1895. Using the census data, Carl was born in 1871 and Agda in 1875. Three children, all born in Massachusetts, were living at home: C Edwin was 27, and was a clerk in a spring shop; Arthur H was 20, and was a clerk in an oil company; and George was 12. The census said August and Agda were naturalized citizens.

Checking on the 1920 census index, no August or Agda Steelman appeared, but Arthur H, son of Carl A and Olga (sic!) did. Checking the original sheet, Arthur's siblings were listed, more than on the 1930 census, and with a slight variation of the names. August C is now Carl A but he is still a toolmaker and Agda E is Olga E, C Edwin is Carl E. Arthur H

is still Arthur H, but George is now George R, and two more children are named, Edith S age 20, and Philip E 15.

The 1910 census has Carl A and Agda A, still in the same neighborhood with the four oldest children, but Carl Edwin is now Edwin C. Carl says he came in 1882 and Agda in 1886, and they had been married for 12 years.

On the 1900 census Agda and Agust (sic!), still living on Belmont hill in Worcester, say they have been married for two years and have one child, Edith. August says he is 29 years old, but was born in Feb. 1881! I think the enumerator subtracted wrong. It seems that Carl August was no longer being called August and perhaps Agda E is an example of the census enumerator confusing names



Front row: Agda, Arthur H, and Carl August. Back row: Philip, Edith, George, and Carl Edwin Steelman.

June Worcester	11	June 25	August J. Hanson Amelia Swenson	Worcester	25 22	Diehramer Domestic	Sweden "	John + Louisa Carlson Andrew + Bengt Carlsson
"	18	" 25	Gustaf Hammar Elinor Allstrom	"	33 24	Carpenter Domestic	"	Carl E + Johanna J. Larsson Lars H + Maria C. Ekman
"	24	" 25	Carl A. Steelman Agda E. Anderson	"	27 24	Wireworker Domestic	"	Carl Stillman + Johanna Anders Klang + Maria

The Massachusetts Marriage records on FamilySearch.org.

Olga and Agda, and copied it over incorrectly). Agda says she was 26 born in June which would be 1873. The census was supposed to show your information as of 1 June 1900, but Agda had her birthday on the 7th, and when the enumerator came by on the 13th or 14th she gave her current age. So instead of becoming 27 in June and therefore being born in 1873, she was 26, and born in 1874.

Who was Agda?

It is time to see if we can find Agda's maiden name. *Familysearch.org* has the Massachusetts Vital records until 1915 available at no cost or if you are a member of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, or your library has a membership, you can check for the births of the children and the marriage of Carl and Agda.

Carl A Steelman and Agda E Anderson were married 24 June 1898 in Worcester by Rev. Nels Eagle. His father is listed as Carl Stillman and his mother as Sophia Swenson! At last some new names. Agda's parents are listed as Anders Klang and Maria Johanson. The groom is a wireworker, and the bride a domestic.

On to Swedish records

Using the *Emibas* database, Carl August Stillman, born 26 Feb 1871 in Månsarp, Jönköping, left Rogberga, Jönköping 7 March 1892 for Norra Amerika (North America.) After checking everything but his naturalization papers we seem to have found the family name.

So that you don't think we may have missed something, Carl August had a brother living in Worcester, John Theodore Steelman. A check of

his World War I and II draft cards showed only his Steelman name and birthday. No place of birth on the WWI card and "Jankapning" on the WW II card.

Checking for a John Theodore Stillman born on 19 September 1881 on *Emibas* was the next step to confirm that Carl August had a brother named John Theodore Stillman. Sure enough, John Tedor Stillman Karlsson is listed. Born in Rogberga, the same parish Carl August left to come to America. Both Carl August and John say they are coming to Worcester on the *Emigranten* database.

Emibas indicates that his leaving is found on page 400 of the Rogberga clerical survey.

You can look at these records at a Family History Branch Library or by subscribing to one of the services, SVAR, Genline, or Arkiv Digital.

Page 400 of the AI:17 *husförhörlängd* of Rogberga lists Carl August's family. He is crossed out because he had left for America. Below Carl Au-

gust is Jon Theodor, born 1881 Sep. 19 in Rogberga. The brother who will be John Theodore, John Tedor, John Therdor, or John T Steelman in Worcester.

Carl August's parents were not married at the time of his birth. His mother is Sofia Svensdotter, born 4 Jan 1850 in Månsarp, but was living in Rogberga, although she gave birth in Månsarp. Carl August's parents were in the same household in 1870, and when his mother moved to Jönköping in 1876 he went to live with his father's parents and was called Carl August Carlsson until his parents married in 1880. Only at his birth was he called illegitimate.

Carl Svensson Stillman's parents, Sven Jonasson Stillman and his wife, Maja Lisa Esaiadotter were both in their sixties when young Carl August came to them in 1876. Sven Jonasson Stillman was born in Rogberga 10 July 1810 and his wife Maja Lisa Esaiadotter was born 20 Jan 1811 in Ödestugu.

Personernas namn, stånd, embete, yrke och näringsfång, (backstugu, inhyses- och fattighjon), nationalitet (om främmande), lyten (svagsinta, blinda, döfstumma).		Födelse-		Äktenskap.		Hittflyttad		Ödd.	
år.	mån och dag.	ort, (socken i län, stad).	år.	mån och dag.	Gift.	Enkl. eller enkla.	från (socken i län, stad eller pagina i husförhörboken).	år, månad o. dag.	Indflyttadskennetalsnummer
47	26	Rogberga	80	7	✓				
2.	50	Månsarp			✓				
3.	71	Jö.			✓				
4.	81	Rogberga			✓				
5.	84	Jö.			✓				
6.	87	Jö.			✓				
7.	90	Jö.			✓				
8.	22	"			✓				
9.	90	"							
10.									

Rogberga clerical survey AI:17, p. 400 [1892-1896]. Picture from ArkivDigital.

Married in 1834, Sven and Maja Lisa had at least seven children shown in the Rogberga *husförhållning* AI:11 p. 176. Two children, *Maja Lena* and *Johan*, came to America before Sven and Maja Lisa's grandsons Carl August and John Theodor.

Daughter Maja Lena, b. 1845 Apr. 9 in Rogberga, was married to Johan Johansson, b. 1840 June 26 in Stenårdshult (Jönk.), a master builder. They emigrated with their six children from Öggestorp, (Jönk.), and left the port of Göteborg on 1881 Sep. 2 with tickets for New York.

Son Johan, b. 1842 June 17 in Rogberga, emigrated already in 1869 April 30 from Våeryd in Rogberga to Chicago by way of the port of Göteborg.

What about Agda?

According from information from the *Emibas* and the marriage record, she was born 1874 June 7 in Forserum (Jönk.) and her parents were Anders

1874 års Födelse- och Dop-Bok									
Inskriftsnummer	Födelse-		Dödpelse-		Kön.	Dopnamn.	Föräldrarnes		Tillhör. Afd.
	Månad.	dag.	Månad.	dag.			M.	Q.	
	10	Juni	7	Juni	7	1	Agda Ulida.	Soldaten Anders Klang, Sunnastorp S. 7.	Hu. Maja Katarina Johansdotter j. 1849.

Forserum Birth Records 1874 [Forserum CI:4 1861–1895, ArkivDigital].

Klang and Maria Johansdotter.

When checking the Forserum birth records this was found to be right. Agda's father was a soldier and the family lived in the soldier's cottage #111 on Gunnestorp lands. Anders was a soldier for the Life Company of the Jönköping Infantry Regiment. He was born 1848 Aug. 24 in Forserum, and his wife Maja Katarina Johansdotter was born 1849 Nov. in Lekeryd (Jönk.).

Daughter Agda left her home at a

fairly young age as she is shown in the *Emibas* to have emigrated 1895 April 20 from Jönköping Sofia parish in Jönköping city.

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Arson destroys a Minnesota Heritage Center

The *Isanti County Heritage Center, Cambridge, (ICHS) MN*, was destroyed on 2011 July 8, after being set on fire. Despite the fire department's best effort, the building was completely demolished. The archival room suffered the greatest damage and over 70% of the society's archives were lost.

This deed was done by an arsonist, and there have been other unexplained fires in the neighborhood.

The ICHS was started in 1964 and now has about 200 members.

The Heritage Center building, which was built in 2003, was designed by former board member Gunilla Hill and resembles a Swedish farmstead. It is located on 5 acres in the northwest corner of the Isanti County Fairgrounds. The center was built specifically to house the Isanti County Historical Society collections and historical records. It also served as a



Before the fire.



After the fire.

meeting place for all interested in the history of the country and state.

What the ICHS needs most now is money, to buy archival supplies and many other needed things. There are possibilities to donate on their web site!

When the ICHS has a new home they will need donations of many items, books, documents, photos and much more. There is a form on their web site which you can use to tell what you want to donate when they



Some things left of the collections.

are ready to accept things. But money is the priority now.

(Photos from the ICHS website).

Isanti County Historical Society: <http://www.ichs.ws/index.html>