

6-1-2012

## Elinor and Vincent Ostrom

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### Recommended Citation

Thorsell, Elisabeth (2012) "Elinor and Vincent Ostrom," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 32 : No. 2 , Article 13.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol32/iss2/13>

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# *Nobel Prize Laureate and her husband with Swedish roots dies*

## *– Elinor and Vincent Ostrom*

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

In the middle of June 2012 there was a notice in the newspapers in Sweden that Elinor Ostrom had died 2012 June 13 in Bloomington, IN. In 2009 she was awarded the *Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel*, which she shared with Oliver E. Williamson, Mrs. Ostrom was born 1933 Aug. 7 in Los Angeles, CA.

Her surname sounded like a Swedish name, which would have been spelled *Åström* in Swedish, but it was not her maiden name, which was Awan.

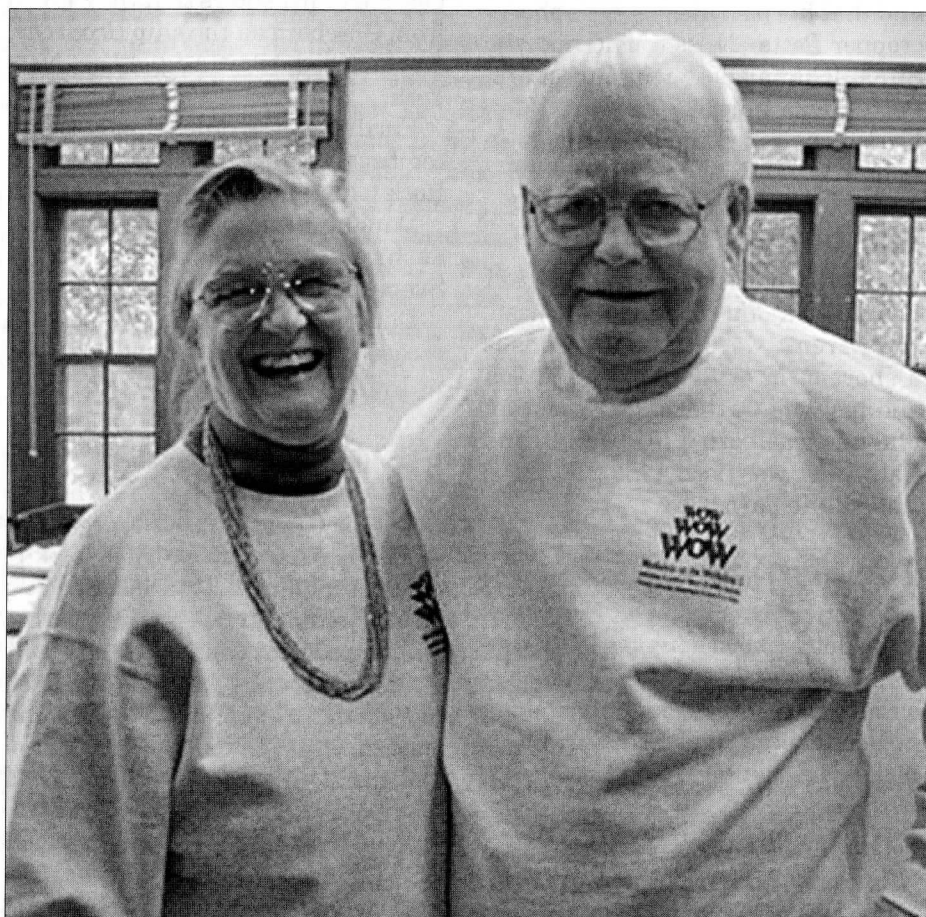
The Ostrom name came from her husband Vincent A. Ostrom, whom she married in 1963. Vincent A. Ostrom was the founding director of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, based at Indiana University and the Arthur F. Bentley Professor Emeritus of Political Science.

Vincent Ostrom died just 16 days after his wife on 2012 June 29 in Bloomington, IN.

According to biographical information on the internet, Vincent Alfred Ostrom was born 1919 Sep. 25 in Whatcom County, WA, son of Alfred Ostrom and Alma Knutson. Alfred and Alma married in 1918 May 9 in the city of Bellingham, Whatcom County, WA.<sup>1</sup>

An Alfred Ostrom was not found in the Swedish immigration databases, but what did the U.S. censuses tell about his family?

In 1920<sup>2</sup> Alfred, Alma and little Vincent lived in Maple Falls in Whatcom County, WA. Alfred was 25



years old, born in Sweden. Alma was 20 years old, born in Washington with Norwegian parents, and little Vincent just 3 months old. Alfred is said to be a laborer in a logging camp.

In 1930<sup>3</sup> the Ostroms lived at Nooksack, also in Whatcom County, and now had two more children, d. Lena C. H., 8 years, and Gordon S., 6 years. Alfred is recorded as having immigrated in 1901. On the same

census page is found an older Ostrom woman, Kristina, 69 years old, born in Sweden, and a widow. She lived with her son Peter Ostrom, 30 years old, also born in Sweden.

Going back in time to 1910<sup>4</sup> an Ostrom family was found in Nooksack, which looked interesting.

The head of household was Peter Ostrom, 57 years old, born in Sweden, his wife Christine 47 years old, and

children Alfred, 15; Peter, 13; Otto, 10; all born in Sweden. They also had a son Oscar, age 4, born in Washington.

As they still could not be found in the Swedish records, the next step was to look for a family consisting of father Peter, mother Christina, sons Alfred, Peter, and Otto, in the CD database "Swedish Population 1900," as Alfred was said to have come to the U.S. in 1901.

A search for a child Alfred, born around 1894, with parents Per (Swedish version of Peter) and Christina, did not give any good hits. But by trying different spellings of names a likely family turned up.

This was the Per Olofsson family of Kläppe #2 of Marby parish in the province of Jämtland.

According to the clerical survey<sup>5</sup> Per owned a very small farm in Marby, and as the family grew it might have been very difficult for them to survive in this rather poor farming area. The children had not been baptized, and that might also have contributed to the decision to emigrate – in many communities belonging to a "free denomination" was not popular. Also it is shown that the parents were married in 1883 Feb. 8 in a civil ceremony (*borg. = borgerlig*), another indication that they had left the Church of Sweden.

Son Karl Johan, born 1897 Jan. 30, died already on 1897 Mar. 2. The oldest son Olof, born 1883 Apr. 24, seems to have enlisted in the Jämtland Rifles (*Fältjägarer*), where he was given the soldier's name of Eklund. To be able to emigrate legally he must apply for the King's permission, which he did not bother with, so he is recorded as "run away to America in 1901." In 1918 he was a witness at his brother Alfred's marriage.<sup>1</sup>

Per Olofsson and his family left for America on 1901 Sep. 2 and travelled by way of Trondheim in Norway, which was their closest port of departure. On Sep. 18 they left Liverpool on the *S/S Germanic* and arrived in New York on Sep. 27. Their destination is given as New Watcom in Washington State.<sup>6</sup>

Household: (Barn), Alfred, b. 1894

Olofsson, Per	1851 Father
Ersdotter, Kerstin	1862 Mother
Persson Eklund, Olof	1883 Child
(Barn), Erik	1885 Child
(Barn), August	1887 Child
(Barn), Alfred	1894 Child
(Barn), Petrus	1898 Child
(Barn), Karl Otto	1900 Child

Search result from Swedish Population 1900.

# Kläppe N:2

5/118

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Torp, lägenhet, verk och inrättningar m. m. under ovanstående fastighet. Personens för- och tillnamn samt familjeställning, äfvensom personens titel, om annan än den i kol. 2 angifna.	Yrke (tjänst, näringsfång). Stäm (främmande). Lyte (fallandesot, sinnessjukdom, idioti, blindhet, döförmhet).	Född		Födelseort (församling i län eller i stad).	Verksamhet el. hant. konf.	Gift år, dag och månad.	Enk. enka från år, dag och månad.
1. <del>Per Olofsson</del>	<del>Hemmansägare</del>	54	11/5	<del>Marby</del>			
2. <del>Kerstin Ersdotter</del>		62	16/1	<del>D:</del>			
3. <del>Olof Persson Eklund</del>	<del>Fältjägarer</del>	83	24/4	<del>D:</del>			
4. <del>Erik</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	85	3/6	<del>D:</del>			
5. <del>August</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	87	1/8	<del>D:</del>			
6. <del>Alfred</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	94	13/11	<del>D:</del>			
7. <del>Karl Johan</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	97	30/1	<del>D:</del>			
8. <del>Petrus</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	98	1/6	<del>D:</del>			
9. <del>Karl Otto</del>	<del>icke döpt</del>	1900	19/8	<del>D:</del>			

Marby Alla:1 (1895-1909) Bild 830 / sid 71 (Arkiv Digital)

They travelled as the Olofsson family, but probably changed their surname soon to Ostrom.

## The final dates

Per Olofsson a.k.a Peter Ostrom died 1913 Sep. 5 in Whatcom Co., WA.<sup>7</sup> His widow Christina died 1936 Dec. 1 Everson, Whatcom Co., WA.<sup>7</sup> Alfred Ostrom (Ostrum) died 1931 Sep. 24 in Everson, Whatcom, WA.<sup>7</sup> Alma Ostrom, widow of Alfred, died 1996 Dec. 12 in Lynden Co, WA.<sup>7</sup>

## Notes:

1. Washington State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Certi-

- ificate of Marriage, License #3752.
- 1920 United States Federal Census (Ancestry.com).
- 1930 United States Federal Census (Ancestry.com).
- 1910 United States Federal Census (Ancestry.com).
- Marby Alla:1 (1895-1909) Bild 830 / p. 71 (Arkiv Digital).
- New York Passenger List 1820-1957, for *S/S Germanic* 1901 Sep. 27, page 8 (Ancestry.com).
- Washington State Archives – Digital archives, Death records, <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Home>