

6-1-2011

News from the Swenson Center

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Recommended Citation

(2011) "News from the Swenson Center," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 31 : No. 2 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol31/iss2/3>

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News from the Swenson Center

The 2011 Nils William and Dagmar Olsson scholars

This year there will be two Nils William and Dagmar Olsson scholarships awarded

1. Adam Hjorthén, Stockholm

who writes in his application "My research project has the working title *Commemorating Presence: Swedish-American Jubilees in Transnational Perspective, 1938–1996*. Several of the Swedish-American jubilees that constitute the focus of the study have had their center in the Midwest, and in particular Illinois. In order to enable the vital research that needs to be done at the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, as well as numerous other archives in the Quad-Cities area, I hereby submit my application for the Dagmar and Nils William Olsson Research Fellowship.

"During the twentieth century, Sweden and the United States mutually celebrated a number of jubilees. These commemorations were bilaterally organized, performed on both sides of the Atlantic, with participating groups and organizations from national, regional, and local levels.

"The commemorations celebrated the seventeenth-century New Sweden colony and the 19th century Swedish mass migration to America. These historical events have been the most frequently recounted in Swedish and American cultural relations. By producing historical collective memories, the jubilees have manifested good relations between Sweden, the Swedish-American diaspora, and the United States of America.

"The main purpose of this research project is to analyze how transnational collective memories have been produced and constructed in

bilateral Swedish-American jubilees. Memories of New Sweden and the Great Migration have united a cluster of actors. The dissertation will therefore discuss the negotiations surrounding the common history, how and why different actors found the historical events relevant, how the narrative about New Sweden and the Great Migration were related to, and interpreted in the light of, each other, and which consequences this had for the topography of the collective memories. An important dimension of the analysis regards how the narratives about Swedish colonialists and immigrants have been constructed in relation to explicit narratives and implicit assumptions about Native Americans.

"More specifically, this research project will focus on four commemorations: the 1938 Delaware Tercentenary, the 1948 Swedish Pioneer Centennial, the 1988 "New Sweden '88" and the 1996 Swedish Immigration Jubilee. These have been the most large-scaled and widely observed commemorations."

2. Katrin Leineweber, Kiel, Germany

Ms. Leineweber writes in her application: "The title of my PhD thesis will be "The integration of Swedish immigrants in Seattle / King County since 1850." Its main focus will be on the political, cultural, and social history of a Swedish community. In particular, it will concentrate on the issue of socio-cultural change among Swedish immigrants in an American city on the U.S. Pacific coast from the end of the 19th century to the end of

the Second World War.

"Since the U.S.A. has always been a land of immigration, it is no wonder, that the international research has extensively covered that topic over the last century. In the last 60 years intensive research has been undertaken in Sweden as well as in the U.S.A., but with a quite narrow approach. These studies deal with the period of mass immigration and the states in the Midwest (Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota), notably its agrarian sector and some cities like Chicago, Bishop Hill, and Minneapolis. Parts of the history of Swedish immigrants in the U.S.A. have already been well-documented, but many areas are still lacking research.

"One of them is covered by this PhD thesis. My research topic on the integration of Swedish immigrants into both American society in general and the urban environment has been more or less neglected, especially regarding coastal areas. Harald Runblom, for instant, has published an article in *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* (Runblom 1979) where he suggested that the U.S. coasts and the industrial areas would constitute excellent fields of research.

"However, not much has changed in the last three decades. This seems to be strange given that the Swedish immigrants were among the pioneers of Washington territory. Seattle is a young city (founded in 1869) where Swedes settled from the beginning, and as such it is an excellent example to determine the structural models of integration and the urban life of Swedish immigrants."