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Bondeskog and the Frans August Svensson Family

BY RUSSEL CHALBERG

The place was Ljuder parish, Kronoberg län; the time was December 1897.

Frans August Svensson (b. 1838 March 10 in Ljuder) and his family were living on their farm called Bondeskog. Frans August was a very hard-working farmer who used the slow time when not farming to travel around Kronoberg and Kalmar län in his wagon selling glassware that he purchased from the nearby Kosta factory. Times were tough and the little extra income from selling glassware helped to support his family. Four of their children had immigrated to America and five were still at home.

In the fall of 1897 Frans August injured his leg while working on a building on the farm. This injury led to his death on December 23rd at the age of only 59. He is buried at the Ljuder Church where the Svenssons had been faithful members for years.

The first immigrants

The first four to leave were Carolina Svenson (b.1867 May 24 in Ljuder) who left her home in 1886 June 17, and left Göteborg on June 25 with a ticket for New York. Next, sister Hilda Maria Svenson (b. 1870 Feb. 22) and brother Johannes Edvard Svenson (b. 1873 March 5) left home together on 1893 Jan. 3, and probably left from the port of Malmö on March 9 with tickets for New York. They travelled in the company of their sister Carolina (Carrie), who had come home to fetch them.

The oldest brother Johan Wilhelm Svensson (b. 1864 Oct. 13 in Algutsboda) had left home as a youngster and worked in many places. He was recorded around 1892 on the special list of people who nobody knew where they were, *löslistan*. In 1893 he is again listed at home and is then said to have moved to Malmö 1893 Jan. 31, but probably also ended up in the U.S. at an unknown date.

The rest of the family goes to America

The five still at home when the father died were: Carl Emanuel (b. 1875

Oct. 4), Anna Augusta (b. 1877 Oct. 4), Ester Kristina (b. 1882 Jan. 30), and the twins, Ellen Ruth and Lydia Naëmi (b. 1885 March 2).

The untimely death left the widow Johanna Johansdotter (b. 1840 Feb. 9 in Ljuder) and her 5 younger children the problems of operating the farm in what were already very difficult times. The older children, who had immigrated some 10 years earlier, soon persuaded Johanna to join them in America. Son Johannes Edvard even came home in 1898 to evaluate the situation of his mother and siblings. On April 13th 1899 she sold Bondeskog and left with her



A present-day view of the Bondeskog farm in Ljuder.

1. Torp, hushåll, verk och inrättningar m. m. under öfverstående fastighet. Personens för- och tillnamn samt familjeställning, äfven om personens titel, om annan än den i kol. 2 angäva.	2. Yrke (tjänst, näringsfångl. Stäm (främmande). Lyte (fallandesot, sinnessjukdom, idioti, blindhet, döfthörsel).	3. Född		4. Födelseort (förening i län eller i stad).	5. Vaccinerad af hett koppor	6. Gift år, dag och månad.	7. Enking. enka eller frånskild år, dag och månad.	8. Infyttad eller öfverfödd.	
		år.	dag och mån.					Från förs. i län eller i stad, eller sida i föreningensbok eller boken öfver obefintl.	år, dag och månad.
Frans August Svensson		78	12/3	Ljuder	✓				
Johanna Johansdotter		40	2/2	"	✓	1/31			
S. Karl Emanuel		75	31/5	"	✓				
Anna Augusta Svensson		77	4/10	"	✓				
Ester Kristina		82	30/1	"	✓				
Ellen Ruth		85	2/3	"	✓				
Lydia Nalme		85	2/3	"	✓				
Johannes Ored		78	5/2	"	✓				H. Schmidt 7/98

The last view of the Svensson family in Swedish records. Picture from volume Ljuder AIIa:1, page 380 (1896–1902). Original book kept in the Regional archive (Landsarkivet) in Vadstena, Sweden. Online picture from Arkiv Digital. Left side

family. Frans August had purchased this farm and home in Sept. 1879 for a price of 3,000 kronor and now some 20 years later Johanna sold Bonde-skog for 8,500 kronor.

Daughter Anna Augusta had taken a teacher's exam to teach small children, and moved for a while to Norra Åkarp in Skåne to teach, but decided to immigrate with the others.

Over the Ocean

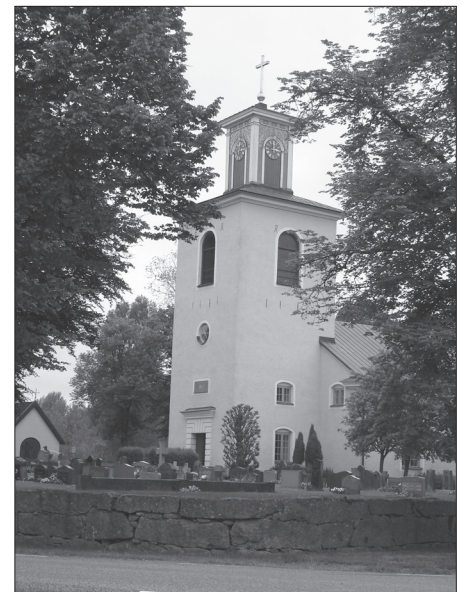
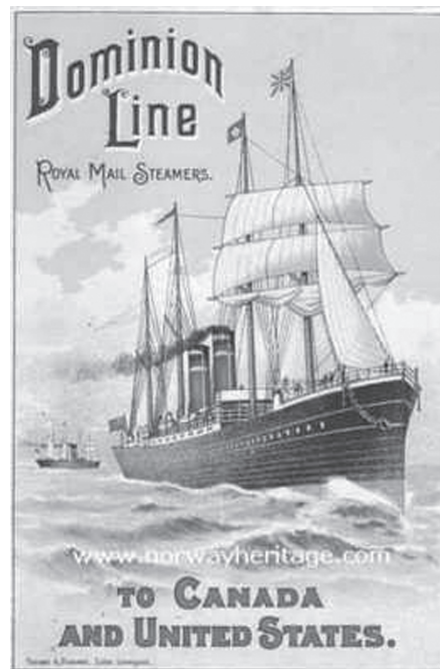
The family went to Malmö, from where they left on 1899 April 17 and traveled to Denmark and across England sailing from Liverpool on the S/S New England of the Dominion Line on April 20th 1899.

The S/S New England was a new ship and carried 1,200 passengers.

Johanna and her family were part of the 800 in 3rd class. They arrived in Boston on April 27th proceeding by train to Chicago where her older 4 children and a few other relatives were eagerly awaiting them. It was almost dark on the 31st when the train got to the south part of Chicago. The family persuaded the conductor to stop the train at an unscheduled place to let the family get off near the location of some of her Swenson

relatives. Johanna and her 5 walked the remaining few blocks to the awaiting arms of many.

Johanna died on Jan. 2, 1907, in Hammond, Indiana, and her 9 children were later to have descendents all over the United States with the majority settling in Indiana and Texas.



Ljuder church. The Ljuder church was built 1842–1844, in a style which was very popular at the time. It succeeded a wooden church from medieval times. (Wikipedia).

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Konst- brev- betyg	År	År	Anteckningar om frejd; naltvardshinder; äktenskapshinder; utfridd lytning; hindern- löshetsbetyg; skjutet; barns legalisering; uttråde ur svenska kystan; främmande trosbekännelse; främmande nationalitet; den församling i Sverige, som melder vid ankomst utom riket tillhörde; m. m.	Väropligts- förhållanden.	Uttlyttad eller öfverförd.		Död år, dag och månad.
					Till förs. i läu eller i stad, eller såda i församlingsbok eller boken öfver öbefintl.	År, dag och månad.	
	96-7						
6	N	96					23 1877
6	N	96-7-8					
6	N	96	Småskoll. ex.	Frikallad	N. Amerika 10/4/97		
6	N	96-7	Betyg att konfirmeras i Hofmantorp. Admitt. i Hofmt 1899		Öfr. lya 26 N. Amerika 1/98		
6	N	96-7-8					
	96-7-8				N. Amerika 10/4/99		
8	N	98	Wistats i N. Amerika 31/1-94 - 13/10-98. D. 7/4-99 erhållit Kongl. Maj:ts tillstånd att emigrera		N. Amerika 10/4/99		

Right side. Note on line 3: Frikallad = exempted from military service. Note on line 4: Småskoll.ex. = examined teacher for small children. Note on line 5: Betyg att konfirmeras i Hofmantorp. Admitt i Hofmt 1899 = Got testimony to be taught for confirmation in Hofmantorp. Admitted (to communion) in Hofmantorp 1899. Note on line 8: Wistats i N. Amerika 31/1-94 – 13/10-98. D. 7/4-99 erhållit Kongl. Maj:ts tillstånd att emigrera = Has been in America from 13 Jan.-94 to 13 Oct.-99. On Apr. 7 -99 received Royal consent to emigrate.

Some news about the Swedish Emigrant Institute

On September 15, 2010, the former director of the Swedish Emigrant Institute (SEI) in Växjö, Professor *Ulf Beijbom* contacted SAG and told us the following news:

The House itself was sold in the spring of 2010 to the *Växjö Fastighets AB [Vöfab]* (a real estate company owned by Växjö city) for a sum of 9 million SEK (half the cost of building the house). The *Kulturparken Småland* (a company that is to run the Växjö Museum and the Kronoberg Archives) is renting the building. Vöfab will take over the building on Nov. 1st. The SEI is to pay a minimal rent of 6000 SEK/month for the next 5 years.

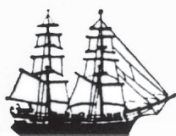
The SEI has been closed to the public since the spring and will not open until 2011 (maybe).

The SEI has dismissed the majority of the staff, and is reorganizing the library for the much smaller area that the SEI will have to rent from the new owners.

It is said that SEI in the future will concentrate on its core work, which is supposed to be research. The reading room and the archives will supposedly continue to function as usual.

An agreement has been signed by the SEI and *Kulturparken Småland* that the latter will continue to work with the exhibitions in the house and keep them open. It does seem a bit doubtful if they have the competence and finances to do this.

This dismantling of the SEI has unfortunately been mostly regarded as a local matter, and has not generated much interest in countrywide media or at the Department of Culture. The loss of one of the foremost places for visits by American tourists seems to be of no concern to anyone except the SEI itself.



Professor Ulf Beijbom in 2006.

SAG editor's comment: This is so sad, and really a shame for Växjö city and the Kronoberg county government.

It is amazing that they do not understand the value of keeping the contacts between Sweden and all the Swedish descendants in other countries open and growing; instead they close the doors in the face of our visitors, who then go elsewhere and spend their money. They do get a bad impression of the area, and leave. I experienced that myself this summer.