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# Another letter from the Emigration Survey, # 173

BY SAMUEL MAGNUS HILL, FROM ÖSTERGÖTLAND

TRANSLATION BY ELISABETH THORSELL AND CHRIS OLSSON

(I) was born 10 Jan. 1851 in Östergötland county. Father was a worker and later a dugout dweller. At the age of eleven and a half I was apprenticed to learn shoemaking, where I was for almost three years; later I learnt to be a saddler. A farmer in the neighborhood intended to go to America in 1868, and two uncles I had there promised to go surety for us, so he lent us the money to go too. When we had sold what little we had, and the farm owner had paid my parents for the building and farming they had done at the place, we had just enough to pay to go to Göteborg. We left our home on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May and left from Göteborg on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1868. I thought that in 10 years time I would be back, as I never could imagine that I was to spend my entire life in America.

Upon arrival we lived with an uncle, and I worked for him as a painter. After two years I had paid for our journey. My father was in poor health and was very unhappy with his surroundings, as he could not earn much money. In the fall of 1870 we moved from Illinois to Iowa. Father and I travelled with horse and buggy and mother and my sister took the railroad. We settled in Chariton, Iowa, where we were to buy ten acres outside the town. We built a small house, only 12 feet square, dug a small well in the valley, and father started to cultivate the land and get things in order. But the water in our well was bad, and after a few weeks father was ill with typhoid fever. A week later mother was also ill. I worked at the railroad, but one Friday evening father was unconscious, and I went for the doctor. The next morning father died. At the funeral mother was so confused and distraught that she did not know about

father until about two weeks later. At that time I was ill, and my little sister had to take care of us. After a week she also fell ill, and then the neighbors had to care for us. They moved us to town, where we got poor relief for six months. I fell ill in October and could start working after the new year. I worked both in a shoemaker's shop and in a saddler's shop. The next spring I bought a plot of land in town, the neighbors helped dismantle our little shed, and put it up again in our yard, where I put things in order during the evenings, such as digging a basement, etc.

When I had worked there for three years, I got an opportunity to enter a school, and after the new year I travelled to Augustana College in Paxton, IL. We had stayed there with my uncle, so they knew me in the area. I had \$65 saved when I left, and still had to care for my mother and sister in our home in Iowa. But she was busy taking care of the sick people and being the midwife in the little Swedish community there, without any schooling, just her practical skills and her familiarity with sick care under the guidance of a doctor. Thus my mother and sister had their upkeep almost without my help.

In the spring of 1879 I graduated from the college, which by now had moved to Rock Island, and the following spring I was hired by the college of the Minnesota Conference in St. Peter, Minnesota, as an assistant teacher. I stayed there for three years, fetched my mother and sister, and my mother died there shortly before Christmas 1881. In the spring of 1882 I accepted the Synod's call to be a missionary among the Swedish Mormons in Utah, got married, and travelled there during the summer.

We stayed there for two years. In the spring of 1884 we moved to a Swedish college, Luther Academy, in Wahoo, Nebraska, where I have been a teacher ever since, and still am.

**Eds note:** while working on this text, it dawned on me that the writer, who was only identified as S. M. H., was a quite famous person, Samuel Magnus Hill. That he mentioned his birth date was a big help.

His uncles, who had immigrated earlier, had started to use the Hill surname, and so did Samuel Magnus's family too after their arrival.



*Picture of the Samuel Hill family, probably taken after their immigration in 1868. From left: wife Maja Stina Andersdotter, daughter Augusta, Samuel Samuelsson Hill, and son Samuel Magnus. Son August, born in 1859, died shortly after immigration and is not in the picture.*

*(Picture from Brand Family Tree on Ancestry.com)*

## Some information on Samuel Magnus Hill



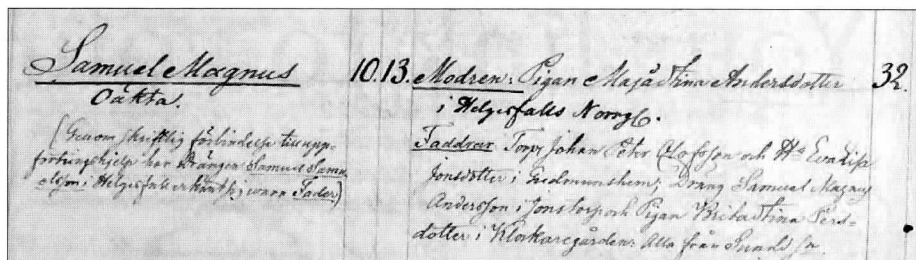
Photo from the SSIRC collection.

Samuel Magnus Samuelsson was born in Helgesfall, Västra Ryd, Östergötland, Sweden on January 10, 1851, to Samuel Samuelsson (b. 1824 Aug. 19 in Västra Ryd) and Maria Stina Andersdotter (b. 1819 Jan. 4 in Sund [Östg.]). The parents were not yet married, but Samuel had agreed to pay child support, and confessed to being the father of the boy. Samuel and Maria (Maja) Stina married 1855 Dec. 28 in Västra Ryd.

The family emigrated from the dugout Källstorp on Helgesfall Södergård lands in Västra Ryd, Östergötland on 1868 Apr. 29 to Altona, IL, in 1868.

Shortly after arriving in the U.S. the family changed their surname to Hill. The family eventually moved to Paxton, Illinois, and finally settled in Chariton, Iowa. There his father died in 1870, and the remaining family was very poor.

Samuel enrolled at Augustana College in 1875 at the age of 24 and graduated in 1879. He worked during his college years to support himself and pay the tuition. His mother was poor and unable to provide any



Birth of Samuel Magnus. (Västra Ryd C:4 (1821-1860) Bild 102 / sid 195, AD Online).

financial assistance.

After graduation, Samuel went to Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, to teach music and other subjects. Shortly after his arrival at Gustavus, the College decided to change to co-education and in the first class of girls, he met Julia Johnson whom he married in 1882.

In 1882, Hill was called by the Illinois Conference to go to Utah and serve as a missionary among the Swedes in the Mormon Church. He remained in Utah until 1884, when he accepted a teaching position at Luther Academy in Wahoo, Nebraska. Hill taught a wide variety of subject at the Academy, but history, the Swedish language, and literature were his main subjects. After the president resigned, Hill agreed to take over the administration of the Academy as acting president, a position he held for 15 years. Hill served the Luther Academy for 31 years.

Hill was ordained in 1917, and upon his resignation from teaching he accepted a call from the Swedish Lutheran church in Colton, Oregon. During his years as a pastor, he also spent time writing poetry and contributing articles to the Swedish-American press. During World War I, he published a collection of poetry, *Uggletoner i Vargatider* (Portland, 1916). He also served as contributing editor to the journal *Ungdomsvännen*.

Samuel Magnus Hill passed away on June 5, 1920, in Elgaros, Oregon.

### SM Hill manuscripts

Most of his manuscript collection is kept in the archives of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, and another collection is in the

archives of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN.

### Other emigrants in the family

Samuel Magnus mentions in his letters that he had relatives already in the U.S.

They were his father's siblings:

*Johannes Samuelsson*, b. 1822 Mar. 25 in Västra Ryd, emigrated 1868 May 3 from Hult (Jönk.).

*Anders Samuelsson*, b. 1827 Jul. 27 in Västra Ryd, emigrated 1856 from Västra Ryd.

*Johanna Samueldotter*, b. 1841 Sep. 1 in Västra Ryd, emigrated from Asby (Östg.) 1865 Jul. 14.

*Gustaf Samuelsson*, b. 1833 Mar. 27 in Västra Ryd, moved to Torpa (Östg.) from where he moved to Göteborg in 1856, and presumably went on to the U.S. as Samuel Magnus mentions his uncle Gustaf Hill in Illinois.

### Samuel Magnus's own family

Before travelling to Utah, Samuel Magnus married in 1882 June 4 in Grant County, MN, to Julia (Gölin) Johnson, born 1859 Oct. 12 in Linsell (Jämtl), daughter of Johan Jonsson, b. 1812, who died there in 1866 May 5, and his wife Gölin Kjellsdotter, b. 1813 in Linsell. Mother and daughter immigrated in 1870 to the U.S.

Samuel Magnus and Julia had 9 children, most of them born in Wahoo, Nebraska.

For information on the Emigration Survey, see SAG 2011/3.