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News from the Swenson Center: Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy

Jill Seaholm

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News from the Swenson Center

Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) – Swedish Track January 2012

BY JILL SEAHOLM

I was offered the opportunity to attend the Swedish Track at SLIG in January. I knew the instructors and they urged me to go. I was unsure of what SLIG was, but the more I looked into it and thought about it, I realized that it was exactly right for me and that it would be important for me to go.

It was an invaluable experience for me and it was especially good that I went this year because it may not be offered again for 4-5 years.

SLIG is an annual event, organized by the Utah Genealogical Association, but only every few years would there be a Scandinavian research track. This was the first year that a specific Swedish course track was offered, to test the waters for future individual Scandinavian country tracks.

Geoffrey Fröberg Morris, Swedish Track coordinator and instructor, along with instructors Wilma Svedin Larson and Paola Manfredi, kept us busy yet enthralled the whole week.

Of the 21 people in my class, 10 of us already knew the *SAG* journal and the Swenson Center, and seven of us go to the *SAG* Workshop in Salt Lake City most every year, so I was among friends.

Thanks to Geoff for allowing me the limelight for a few minutes to introduce the rest of the class to the Swenson Center, the *SAG* journal, and the annual *SAG* Genealogy Workshop in Salt Lake City.

The program

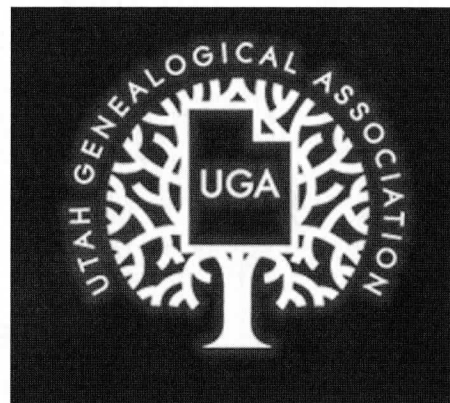
We received a total of 20 hours of instruction over five days, most in the Downtown Radisson, where most SLIG participants also stayed. It was intensive instruction with mountains of course handouts and even some

daily homework (not graded, thankfully). The instructors began with lessons in reading and pronouncing simple Swedish words before slamming us with more advanced vocabulary and handwriting in records we had not imagined existed.

It seemed the instructors' most important objective was to teach us that the most-used record types (birth, marriage, death, household examinations, and in- and out-migration) only make up 6% of available records, though many are not yet scanned or even microfilmed. The instructors covered a lot of Swedish history so we could understand how different record types came about. We studied examples in different types of court and military records, migration records within Sweden, government records, parish records outside the top five types, and many other useful things. My brain overflow valve kicked-in toward the end of the week. Now I hope I can retrieve the information I took in and apply it when I need it, and thankfully we all walked away with a good, thorough syllabus binder as a permanent reference tool.

Other experiences

There were vendor lunches with representatives from RootsMagic and Ancestry.com, as well as optional evening classes, a welcome breakfast the first morning, and a farewell banquet the last night. The banquet's guest speaker was "Lou Szucs," whom I knew of as Loretto Dennis Szucs, author of the 1996 *Chicago and Cook County: A Guide to Research*. I have reached for that book in Chicago research many times over the years, so I was thrilled that she was the speaker. "Lou" spoke about her own family



background and how she became interested in genealogy. She was very open and humorous.

In SLC again

I felt prepared for the dryness in Salt Lake City with eye drops and saline nasal spray, but wintertime is even drier than when we visit in the fall and my poor eyes and nose suffered for a day or two. But what a beautiful sight Salt Lake City is in winter. The surrounding mountains and buildings were snow-covered most of the week.

I feel privileged to have attended SLIG and am extremely grateful for the opportunity. Kudos to the Swedish instructors and SLIG organizers!



Instructor Geoff Morris at full speed!