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Bo Rask

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The Sylvanders of Lowell and Taunton, MA

Bo Rask*

In reading the article on the naturalization of Swedes in Lowell, MA (see *Swedish American Genealogist*, Vol. IV, No. 2, June 1984, pps. 49–62) my attention was directed at entry No. 26, that of Carl Augustus Sylvander. Since I am in the possession of quite a bit of information on his origin and family, I am pleased to submit this material as an *addendum* to the Lowell article. Much of this information was gathered almost a quarter of a century ago by a kinsman, Frederick Blancke Sylvander, based partly on research done by Cecilia Schmidt of Stockholm, Sweden.

Carl August Dur Sylvander was born in the city of Skara in Västergötland, Sweden 23 Oct. 1847, the son of Svante (Sven) Johansson Dur, a musician and drummer in the Royal Västergötland Regiment, and his wife, Maria Christina Andersdotter. The father altered his name to Dur upon enlisting in the regiment, a practice quite common in the Swedish military forces. The interesting view here is that the Swedish word *dur* means the same as major in the musical scale. His brother, Vilhelm, assumed the name Tempo, when he enrolled in the same regiment, excellent examples of how the musical talents of the two brothers were brought to bear on the creation of their new family names.

In his early years Carl August or Augustus was apprenticed to a shoemaker in his home city and it was probably at this time that the young lad dropped the Dur name for that of his maternal grandmother, Sylvander. The origin of the name is unclear, it was carried by an ancestor as far back as the end of the 17th century.

A few days after reaching his 17th birthday Carl August left for Stockholm, where he affiliated with the St. Nikolai Church, the original home parish of his grandmother's family. Two years later, in 1866, he departed for Copenhagen, still unmarried. However, in Denmark, he met and married Anna Christina Nilsson. Little is known of her background, but she must have been Swedish, by the spelling of her name. She may also have been a

*Bo Rask, a Swedish subscriber to *SAG*, resides at Lärksoppsvägen 5, 452 00 Strömstad, Sweden.

Swedish immigrant to the Danish capital. It is probable that the family, now including children, moved back to Sweden in 1871. It is unknown where the party resided during the next few years, but in 1880 the entire family left for America, arriving in Boston 16 May 1880 on board the Cunard steamship *Marathon*, out of Liverpool.

Carl August Sylvander settled in Lowell, MA, where he became an American citizen 3 Nov. 1886. He worked as a shoemaker in a Lowell shoe factory and died in Taunton, MA 16 Sept. 1920. He lies buried in Lowell.

Of his four children, born in Denmark and Sweden, only two grew to adulthood — Nelli Cordelia, b. 4 Dec. 1869; d. 1 May 1948 and Carl Reinhold (see below).

Carl (Charles) Reinhold Sylvander was b. in Sweden, probably near Göteborg 14 Feb. 1873. He arrived in Boston together with his parents and sister Nelli in 1880 and settled in Lowell. As a young lad he displayed a great talent as a cornet player, a skill he doubtlessly had inherited from his paternal grandfather. At the age of 17 he went to Fall River, MA, where he worked as a machinist. Here he met and married Lydia Ashton, the daughter of Goldart Thomas Ashton and Elizabeth Yates, the marriage being performed 6 July 1894 by the Rev. E. W. Smith. Carl or Charles Reinhold was well-known in Fall River as a cornet soloist as well as the leader of the American Band. He composed music as well, writing selections for the military band at this time. About 1904 he moved to Taunton, MA, where he became foreman at the Mason Machine Works. Later he became superintendent of the entire factory, but when the firm ceased operations, Carl Reinhold started his own business, operating his own machine shop until the time of his death. He was very active as a musician in Taunton, being at various times conductor of the Taunton City band, president of the Musicians' Union, a member of Hern's Dance Orchestra, as well as of the Taunton Theater Orchestra. He also served as director of the Cadillac Band. He died in Taunton 7 Dec. 1940 and lies buried in that city. He and his wife had five children — Roy Cornelius, b. 7 Feb. 1895; Mildred Anna, b. 4 June 1896; Carl Alfred, b. 6 Jan. 1898; Charles Hiram, b. 12 Feb. 1903 and Thomas Ashton, b. 7 Feb. 1906.

A brief ancestral table of the Sylvander family follows:

1. SYLVANDER, Carl (Charles) Reinhold (see above).
- I. 2. SYLVANDER, Carl Augustus (August) (see above).
3. NILSSON, Anna Christina.
- II. 4. DUR, Svante (Sven) Johansson, b. Skara 24 Feb. 1821; m. 23 Oct. 1842; d. Skara before 1870.
5. ANDERSDOTTER, Maria Christina, b. Eriksberg Parish (Älvs.) 27 Jan. 1813; d. Skara between 1861 and 1870.

- III. 8. SVENSSON, Johannes, b. Varnhem Parish (Skar.) 19 Feb. 1791; m. Skara 11 April 1821; d. in cholera 23 Sept. 1834.
- 9. SVENSDOTTER, Ann, b. Händene Parish (Skar.) 24 Oct. 1788; as a child known as Annicka; d. probably in cholera 1834.
- 10. JONASSON, Andreas, b. Eriksberg 19 Dec. 1783; m. 10 April 1803.
- 11. SYLVANDER, Johanna Helena, b. Jäla Parish (Skar.) 22 Sept. 1789.
- IV. 16. ANDERSSON, Sven, probably in Varnhem 1752; d. before 1800.
- 17. JANS DOTTER, Stina, b. 1753; res. in Varnhem.
- 18. ANDERSSON, Sven, b. Ving Parish (probably Skaraborg *län*) 1762; d. after 1811.
- 19. BENGTS DOTTER, Maria (Margareta); b. 1763.
- 20. ANDERSSON, Jonas, res. in or near Eriksberg.
- 21. PEHRSDOTTER, Stina.
- 22. SYLVANDER, Nicholas Nicolai, b. Fristad Parish (Älvs.) 6 Oct. 1737; m. 1766; d. Eriksberg 20 March 1815; clergyman in Eriksberg.
- 23. LITHANDER, Brita Catharina, b. Grolanda Parish (Skar.) 1743; d. Eriksberg 12 Nov. 1819.
- V. 44. SYLVANDER, Nicholas Laurentii, b. Möne Parish (Älvs.) 27 Sept. 1689; d. Fristad 19 March 1737; clergyman (*komminister*) in Fristad.
- 45. HELLSTENIA, Johanna.
- 46. LITHANDER, Nils, b. Marum Parish (Skar.); d. Grolanda 18 Nov. 1769; clergyman in Grolanda.
- 47. LUNDGREN, Helena.
- VI. 88. NILSSON, Lars, alderman (*rådman*) in Bogesund (renamed Ulricehamn in the 18th century).
- 90. HELLSTENIUS, Magnus Magni, b. Möne 1645; m. 1691; d. Ving (Skar.) 30 March 1727; clergyman in Ving.
- 91. MITANDER, Helena.
- 94. LUNDGREN Anders, b. Tådene Parish (Skar.) 1669; d. Lekåsa Parish (Skar.) 22 June 1725; clergyman in Lekåsa.
- 95. LEUCHOVIA, Catharina Margareta, d. Lekåsa 1741.
- VII. 178. MAURITSSON, Sven, bailiff in Redväg hundred.
- 182. MITANDER, Magnus Olai, d. 1683; clergyman at Skara Asylum.
- 183. PEDERS DOTTER, Kerstin.
- 190. LEUCHOVIUS, Johan, fiscal officer employed by Queen Christina.
- VIII. 356. NILSSON, Mauritz.
- 357. HELGESSON, Kerstin.