

9-1-1984

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Recommended Citation

Hoff, Henry B. (1984) "Additional Early Swedes on St. Eustatius," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 4 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol4/iss3/4>

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Additional Early Swedes on St. Eustatius

Henry B. Hoff

Recently in going through some of the source materials for the island of St. Eustatius in the West Indies, I came across the following Swedes in the marriage registers of the Reformed Dutch Church (1750-91), the civil marriage registers (1787-1816) and the civil death registers (1793-1817):

Aaron Ahman's death record on St. Eustatius says that he was born in Gothenburg. He died 19 Dec. 1810 at the age of 60.¹

Christian Detloff Homberg from Straalsund, under Swedish hegemony, a bachelor, 27 years of age, was betrothed 20 May 1786 to Petronella de Ladoiré of Bordeaux, France.²

Adolf Frederick Hansen, a bachelor, 30 years of age, born in Stockholm, was betrothed 25 Feb. 1786 to Judith Benners, a spinster, age 21 years, born here. They were married 15 March 1786.

Dr. Jacob Leuron, a native of Sweden, was married to Adriana Hansen (a daughter of the above couple) 10 July 1815.

¹According to M.R.H. Calmeyer and Mej. Drs. Ariette Schippers, "Het Geslacht Zymonsz Doncker: Zeeuwse kolonisten op de Bovenwindse Antillen" in *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* 37: 193-203 at p. 198 (1983), he married Elizabeth Z. Doncker 25 Oct. 1794, widow of Maarten Deborois Godet. She evidently was living as late as 20 Aug. 1809, when the betrothal on St. Eustatius of Eliza Ahman, spinster, born on St. Martin, to Jacobus Creagh Runnels was witnessed by the bride's uncle *Heer* Aaron Ahman and his wife *Mejuffrouw* Elizabeth Ahman.

²Also in Prof. Dr. Laurentius Knappert, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Bovenwindse eilanden in de 18e eeuw* (The Hague, 1932), p. 194.

Additional Notes

Aaron Åhman was born in the Cathedral Parish in Göteborg 28 March 1751, the son of Olof Åhman, a prominent merchant, and Elisabeth Rauwerdt.

He followed his brother, Simon Jacob Åhman, to the West Indies and seems at first to have settled on the Dutch portion of the island of St. Martin, where, according to his own account, he had served as governmental secretary to the Governor Comptroller, Abraham Heijliger, and later to his successor, John Solomon Gibbes.

When Sweden acquired St. Barthélemy from France in 1784, Åhman moved over to that island and served there as secretary to the Swedish governor, Pehr Herman von Rosenstein, whose tenure lasted from 1787 to 1790. Von Rosenstein was not satisfied with Åhman, claiming that he was deficient in languages—Swedish and French. During von Rosenstein's period on St. Barthélemy, he and Åhman were constantly feuding. Toward the end

of his mandate von Rosenstein wrote a letter 21 Oct. 1789 to Count Eric Ruuth in Stockholm, the King's personal representative on the Board of Directors of the Swedish West India Company, saying that Åhman was more incompetent than ever and asking Ruuth's help in getting rid of him.

Åhman was a controversial figure and had angered quite a few residents, including Robert Montgomery, a Swedish officer, who had been sent into exile to St. Barthélemy for his involvement in the Anjala conspiracy, aimed at King Gustaf III, and who wrote home to his wife in Sweden 28 April 1791 that "Åhman, . . . , was a stupid, arrogant, bankrupted gambler, who had married an old, ugly wornout actress from Bordeaux."

Actually Åhman had married the 27 year-old Catherine Pouthalier Duchesac 18 Nov. 1787 on St. Barthélemy. She must have died, since Åhman married again 22 June 1796 Dame Elizabeth Z. Doncker, widow of Martin Du Bois Godet on St. Eustatius.

In 1790 Åhman asked for six months' leave of absence from his employment on St. Barthélemy and went to Europe to tend to some private business as well as to visit relatives in Göteborg. Wohlfart claims that Åhman had been born 17 July 1751, which must be an error, inasmuch as Wohlfart's reminiscences were written down toward the end of his life from memory. He does elaborate on Åhman's visit to Sweden in 1790 by offering the following narrative—"He (i.e. Åhman) was tall of stature, slim, thin and possessed a sallow complexion . . . (He) was dressed in a suit of cashmere, complete with a sword at his side and gold buckles on his shoes. He was accompanied by a young negro servant . . . and it seemed that the real purpose of his journey to Sweden was to seek the position of governor (of St. Barthélemy). He had an audience with King Gustaf III and in order to ingratiate himself with the King, he made a present of the slave to His Majesty . . . Whether it was the gift, or Åhman, himself, who did not win favor with the King is not known. Åhman's request was turned down . . . (and he) returned to his birth place dejected and without his slave. Soon thereafter he returned to his . . . beloved Barthélemy.—"Swedish Parish church record on St. Barthélemy", courtesy Rolf Lamborn, Winter Park, FL; Adolf Christian Wohlfart, "Wohlfartska Familjens Slägt-Register" (1863), manuscript in the University of Göteborg Library, Göteborg; Ingegerd Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy och Västindiska kompaniet fram till 1796* (Lund 1951), pp. 85, 70 and 193.

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Simon Jacob Åhman, born in the Cathedral Parish in Göteborg 13 Jan. 1745 (according to Wohlfart), the brother of Aron Åhman. He preceded his brother to the West Indies, settling on St. Eustatius and St. Martin. On 17 July 1785 he was naturalized a French citizen on the French portion of St. Martin. He seems then to have settled on St. Eustatius, where he acquired considerable land holdings. On 16 Aug. 1798 he received a citizen passport (*borgarbrev*) on St. Barthélemy as well as licenses to operate two small vessels—*Två Systrar* and *Olof*. His date of death is not known, but according

to Wohlfart it occurred between 1815 and 1820. At his death his widow was living, as well as a son, who had studied briefly at the University of Uppsala and a daughter, married to the above-mentioned Runnels. His estate was the subject of much litigation and legal entanglements.—Information courtesy Rolf Lamborn; Wohlfart, "Wohlfartska Familjens Slägt-Register".

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Adolph Fredric Hansen, born in Stockholm 31 Aug. 1755, the son of Alexander Hansen, a baker, and his wife in a second marriage, Maria Sperling. Together with another merchant, his second cousin, Jacob Eliasson Röhl, he established a partnership, Röhl & Hansen, who became the official agents of the Swedish West India Company. He arrived in St. Barthélemy 8 March 1785 and married Judith Benner(s) who was born on St. Eustatius 31 Dec. 1764. They had a daughter, Maria Louisa, b. 17 Oct. 1786. A second daughter, Adriana, was born in 1789 and married Dr. Jacob Leurén (see below). On 31 July 1804 Adolf Fredrik Hansen embarked for Stockholm on board the brig *Orion* together with his two daughters, a negro and a negress. He also had two sons—Adrian and Alexander.

Hansen was active on the island for many years and served as a member of the Governor's Council on several occasions. He died in Gustavia 29 March 1844.—"St. Barthélemy Parish records", courtesy Rolf Lamborn; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin St. Barthélemy*, pp. 69–70; (Lars Magnus Victor Örnberg), *Svensk slägtkalender & Svenska ättartal I–XIV* (Stockholm 1884–1908), XI, p. 229.

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Jacob Levrén or Leurén, b. in the province of Västergötland 24 Sept. 1784 (according to the St. Barthélemy parish records), the son of Peter Levrén, a veterinary doctor, and Petronella Lundgren. He attended the University of Uppsala in 1800 and after many years of medical studies was graduated Doctor of Medicine 12 June 1810. The following year he went to St. Barthélemy as government physician. He married 13 Sept. 1815 Adriana Hansen, daughter of Adolph Fredric Hansen (see above). The official records of St. Eustatius have 10 July 1815, but since this was a civil marriage, the latter date must have been the church ceremony in Gustavia, performed by the Rev. Fredric Adolf Lönner, who served as the Swedish government pastor on St. Barthélemy from 1815 to 1824.

Leurén served not only as government physician on the island of St. Barthélemy but was also a member and secretary of the Governor's Council as well as a member of the Lutheran Parish Vestry. In 1831 he visited Sweden but returned the following year. He apparently quit his duties as government physician in 1835, going to St. Eustatius, where he resided until 1841. That year he returned to Gustavia, but "his memory was so poor, that he no longer could be of help to the people of the island". He died in Gustavia 8 Nov. 1841. His widow, Adriana Hansen Leurén, seems to have died in Gustavia 1853, the year an estate inventory was held in the capital of the island.—"St. Barthélemy Parish records" courtesy Rolf Lamborn; Johan Fredrik Sacklén,

Sveriges Läkarehistoria ifrån Konung Gustaf I:s till närvarande tid I–IV (Stockholm and Nyköping 1822–1835), II, p. 150; IV, p. 200; Arne Lenner and Erik Wikén, *Gävle gymnasiums matrikel 1669–1849* (Gävle 1969), pp. 132–133; A. Hilarion Wistrand, *Sveriges Läkare-historia ifrån Konung Gustaf I:s till närvarande tid af Johan Fredrik Sacklén*. New supplement (Stockholm 1853), p. 214; Johan Eric Fant & August Theodor Låstbom, *Upsala ärkestifts herdaminne I–III* (Uppsala 1842–1845), II, p. 89.

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An additional note should be cited regarding Laurentius M. Algerus, who was betrothed to Catharina Hassel or Hazell on St. Eustatius 17 March 1742 (see Henry B. Hoff, “Early Swedes on St. Eustatius” in *Swedish American Genealogist*, Vol. III, p. 136). Algerus, whose death in Helsingborg was noted in that article, can also be found in the death register of the S:ta Maria Church of Helsingborg, which states that Laurentz Allgerus (sic!) died 19 Jan. 1800 and was buried from the church 24 Jan. 1800. He was born in Algutsrum Parish (Kalm.) on the island of Öland. From these new facts we may assume that he took his surname from his home parish at the time he matriculated at the University of Uppsala.—*Editor*.

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Victims of the San Francisco Earthquake

On 18 April 1906, an earthquake measuring 8.25 on the Richter Scale, rocked San Francisco. The quake lasted 48 seconds—the subsequent fires lasted three days and nights and caused immense property damage. The number of casualties, never completely tabulated, was in the hundreds.

To arrive at an accurate total of the number of dead, Mrs. Gladys Hansen, San Francisco City Archivist, has made a thorough search of all available records. Her total of 826 known dead far exceeds the official figure of 478, given by the 1907 City Board of Supervisors. Yet, even with her careful calculations, Mrs. Hansen believes the revised figure too low. She therefore appeals to anyone having knowledge of any person killed in the 1906 disaster to write her with whatever information he or she might have. The names of the dead will be entered upon the official roster in the San Francisco Public Library, available to researchers of history and genealogy.

We encourage anyone seeking information on people killed in the 1906 earthquake and fire to write to:

Mrs. Gladys Hansen
San Francisco Archives
Public Library
Civic Center
San Francisco, CA 94102

and enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.