

Oh, Granny Wahlquist – what secrets you kept!

Life in Sweden was not always easy – why not go to America?

BY HELENE LEAF

Maria Elisabeth Eklund was born 1837 Feb. 18 in Forsby in Björklinge parish (Uppl.). Her parents were Olof Eklund and Lisa Andersdotter. She was the third daughter of four children. The fourth child, a boy, died at two months of age. The family moved to Långåker, also in Björklinge, in 1838, and Maria lived at this place during her early years. Maria and her older sisters followed the pattern of eventually moving out of the parental home and working as a *piga* in various places.

Starting in 1856 Maria moved to Vitska, Lilla Malma, Uppsala, back to Björklinge, and then in 1860 back to Uppsala. In 1861 she moved to Stockholm. I was not sure in which parish she lived and since most HFL (*HusFörHörslängder*) in the Stockholm parishes do not have much information, I did not pursue looking for her in the Stockholm HFLs. In 1871 she became a member of the Mormon Church. On 13 June 1872 she immigrated to America on a ship of Mormon converts. By July she was in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Her husband in America was August Wahlquist who was born 1844 May 7 at Råstorp, Stora Åby, (Östg.). His parents were Anders Pettersson and Anna Caisa Forsberg. He was the second to the youngest of many children. He lived at Råstorp until 1861 when he moved to Tegneby Södergården, Västra Tollstad (Östg.). In 1863 he moved to Stockholm, and once again I decided not to search the HFL in Stockholm as I was uncertain in which parish to look. In 1870 August joined the Mormon Church and

on 13 June 1872 he left Stockholm and went to America on the same ship as Maria.

So far there is nothing unusual in this story of two Swedes who immigrated to “Amerika,” but there always were some questions.

A family story was that Maria had an illegitimate child in Sweden and left it behind. In the Salt Lake City cemetery is a child, Maria Elisabeth Wahlquist, who died 1872 July 28. From this record and the ship’s registry, the child was born either 1868 or 1869. Perhaps this is the illegitimate child? U.S. census records seemed to indicate that August and Maria married in 1871, but I have never found any marriage record in Sweden or in America. This child is listed with Maria on the Mormon ship record as Maria Elisabeth Eklund, same name as her mother. August Wahlquist is listed a couple of blank spaces lower on the same page. Hmmm.

The 1900 U.S. census record shows that Maria had had seven children and four were living. I could account for six births and two deaths. Hmmm. Perhaps Maria had left a child behind in Sweden?

In the spring of 2011, I looked for a marriage for Maria Elisabeth Eklund and August Wahlquist on Familysearch. To my great surprise up came a marriage for Maria to Axel Wilhelm Hallberg on 1868 Jan. 19 in Hedvig Eleonora in Stockholm. Hmmm. This was the correct Maria and probably meant that the child Maria Elisabeth was Axel’s child and was legitimate. This immediately



Maria Eklund Hallberg Wahlquist.

sent me off to find out more about Axel and eventually to delve into the Stockholm records.

Axel was born 10 November 1834 in Årestad, Björkeberg, (Östg.) where he lived until 1852 when he moved to Linköping. By 1860 he is in Maria parish in Stockholm. His occupation is usually listed as *betjänt* (servant). In 1861 he is in Klara parish.

Now it gets really interesting. Using *in-och-utflyttninglängd* and HFL from various parishes and *Mantals- och skattskrifning* (tax records) from the Stockholm archive, I was able to mostly piece together the lives of Maria, Axel, and August in Stockholm during the years 1861-1872.

In 1861 Maria moves into Brunkhalsen *quarternet*, Klara parish. The address is 16 Drottninggatan. She is one of a number of maids and servants listed. She is not listed at this place in 1862, but Axel Wilhelm Hallberg is listed. I do not know exactly where Axel was at the end of 1861,

and I did not find where Maria was at the end of 1862. But on 1863 Jan. 19 Maria has a child at the *Allmänna Barnbördshuset* in Stockholm. No father is listed, but the child's name is Axel Fridolf and Maria is registered in Klara parish. From the years 1863-1866, Maria is listed in HFLs in Björn *quartern*, Klara parish. Axel Fridolf is not with her, nor is he listed as a foster child through the *Allmänna barnbördshuset*.

Meanwhile, Axel Wilhelm leaves Klara in 1864 and goes to Gåsevadsholm, Tölö, (Hall.) for two years, and then in 1866 he moves to Gustavi Domkyrko parish, Göteborg. On 1867 Oct. 10 he moved into Jakob parish, Stockholm. The whereabouts of Axel Wilhelm are somewhat tentative as he always got his *utflyttningsbetyg*, but it might be months before he turned it in at the next parish. For example, he moved out of Göteborg 1867 July 10, but turned in his *betyg* in Jakob on 1867 Oct. 19.

Maria marries Axel

On 1867 Dec. 20 Maria moves to Hedvig Eleonora parish in Stockholm; she marries Axel on 1868 Jan. 19 in this parish, and Axel moves out of Jakob on 1868 Jan. 20 to Hedvig Eleonora. On 1868 Apr. 17 they both move to Klara parish. In none of these HFL or *in-och-utflyttning* (removal) records is there any mention of Axel Fridolf.

The key to unraveling at least part of the mystery was finding the marriage of Maria and Axel, something for which I was not looking and had no previous knowledge. After finding this, I started in Hedvig Eleonora parish and worked both forward and backward in the church records for Maria and Axel. I also looked at the tax records for Klara parish, Stockholm. Both sources yielded some surprising information. Until I looked at the tax records for 1870, I did not know about the existence of Axel Fridolf nor the birth date of the child Maria Elisabeth. The tax record for 1870 for Axel Wilhelm Hallberg and Maria Elisabeth Hallberg (1152) was recorded on 1869 Nov. 16. Both child-

ren are listed with their birthdates and Axel is off in America. His occupation is listed as extra *vaktmästare* at the post office, extra janitor perhaps. A check of *EMIBAS* showed that he left Klara parish 1869 May 28 and *Emihamn* showed that he left Göteborg 1869 June 11. Maria and the children are living in Klara, Hägern Större *quartern*, n:o 8 Klara Östra Kyrkogata. The 1869 HFL (Klara AI:148, AD v87251.b245) shows Axel with the same occupation and lists Maria as *hustru* (wife) and the two children. There are many people living at the same address.

August is nearby

Meanwhile August is found on 1870 tax record 1061 (registered 1869 Nov. 27). He is living in Klara in nearby Hägern Mindre at 9 Odengatan. His occupation is *smedsarbetare* (smithy laborer). The 1869 HFL (Klara AI:148, AD v87251.b239) shows him with 15 other people at the same address, some singles and some couples with children. He is one of four *smedsarbetare* at this address.

The HFL Klara AI:149 (1870) (AD v87252.b258) yielded the biggest surprise. In Hägern Större *quartern*, at 8 Klara Östra Kyrkogata, 25 people are listed. *Fru* M.E. Hallberg and children Axel Fridolf and Maria Elisabeth are listed. Axel Hallberg is not listed, but directly below the two children is August Wahlquist. Some in the family had said that Maria and August met on the boat, but this shows that they knew each other at least by the end of 1870.

In the HFL Klara AI:150 (1871) (AD v87253.b294) in Hägern Större *quartern*, at 10 Klara Östra Kyrkogatan are listed many people among them, *Hustrun* Maria Elisabeth Hallberg and children Axel Fridolf and Maria Elisabeth, a single man and then August Wahlquist. This told me that at the end of 1871 Maria was still married to Axel. There is no record of a divorce between Maria and Axel in Sweden.

Checking emigration records does not clear much up. Maria, her child Maria Elisabeth, and August left

Stockholm on 1872 June 13. Neither Maria nor August is in *EMIBAS*. The ship stopped at Copenhagen to pick up more passengers. At this point Maria and her child are registered on 1872 June 18; her occupation is *sypige* (seamstress). August was registered on 1872 June 21. They had different contract numbers so they apparently were not traveling as a couple. In all the emigration records Maria is using the name Eklund with various spellings.

Going to America

Both Marias and August traveled from Liverpool via Queenstown to New York on the S.S. *Nevada*. They are listed two pages apart on the manifest. Maria is listed as wife, but that could be because she had a three-year-old with her and was pregnant. They arrived in New York July 9 and traveled to Salt Lake City; they arrived there before July 28 because on that date little Maria Elisabeth, age 3, died. She is buried in the Salt Lake City cemetery with the name of Maria Elisabeth Wahlquist. I do think that Axel Hallberg is her father. Although Maria and Axel were living in Klara at the time of her birth, I have never found her birth record. The reason that the name on her tombstone is Wahlquist is that August and Maria had a 3-year-old girl Lily who died in 1884, and the stone with both names was most likely purchased at that time.

Life in Salt Lake City

Maria and August lived the rest of their lives in Salt Lake City. They had five children born in Salt Lake City. In 1883 Maria was one of the five charter members of Zion Lutheran Church; August joined the church in 1886. Sometime before 1884 they bought a house at 933 E. Third Street South in Salt Lake City, and they both lived there until their deaths. August died 1918 Nov. 4; he did not die of the flu, but because of the ban on gathering during the influenza epidemic, his funeral was quite unusual. The casket was in the house, the pastor was on the porch, and the

congregation stood in the yard. Maria died at the ripe old age of 100 on 1937 Oct. 16; she ate her lunch and then, feeling very tired and yet very restless, she lay down on her bed and died that afternoon surrounded by two of her children. Maria and August are buried in the Salt Lake City cemetery near to the two little girls, Maria and Lily.

Some answers found

A few questions have been answered: Maria's illegitimate child has been found, and she did leave him behind in Sweden. Many more questions remain.

What happened to Axel?

Axel Wilhelm Hallberg left for America in 1869, but I have not found any trace of him in the U.S. at the time. He returned to Sweden, it seems. When he did is not known and where he was in the early 1870s is not known either, but he must have been in Stockholm as Emihamn lists him and Axel Fridolf leaving from Göteborg on 1872 Sep. 6, home parish Stockholm, and bound for Boston. I have not found him on any ship's manifest landing in Boston from 10 September to the end of the year. Did they stop off at some other port of

call and stay there or did they return to Sweden? I have not found either of them in America or in Sweden. Did he intend to go to Utah to find Maria? Did he intend to leave Axel Fridolf with her as he had never shown much interest in his children? Why did Maria leave this child behind? And where was Axel Fridolf from the time of his birth in 1863 until 1869?

More questions

Two months after arriving in Salt Lake City, on 25 September 1872 Maria had a child, Charles August Wahlquist. Was this child August's or Axel's? I think that this child was August's. At least that is what the family always assumed. There is no family story about the marriage to Axel Wilhelm Hallberg. Did Maria and Axel get a divorce? Did Maria and August get married somewhere? I am afraid that all these secrets will remain hidden and unanswered. Oh Granny Wahlquist, did you ever share any of them with anyone?

Sources:

Allmänna barnbördshuset (Public maternity hospital) Stockholm, Sweden.

Dansk Data Arkiv.
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Emihamn.

Familysearch.org.

LDS, Membership Roster for Stockholm, 1863 and ff, page 47.

Mantals-och Skattskrifning, Stockholm's *Stadsarkiv*.

Salt Lake City directories.

Salt Lake City cemetery records and cemetery visits (2002 and 2008).

Ship's Manifest 1872 arrival, New York M237_362, S.S. *Nevada* List number 717.

Swedish Church records:- *Arkiv Digital*, Familysearch.org, Family History Library, Genline, and SVAR for Björklinge, Uppland; Björkeberg, Östergötland; Gustavi, Göteborg; Hedvig Eleonora, Jakob, Klara, and Maria Magdalena, Stockholm; Stora Åby, Östergötland; Västra Tollstad, Östergötland; Tölö, Halland.

U.S. Federal censuses.

Zion Lutheran Church records, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Colorado's Swedish genealogists visited Sweden in June

Many members of the *Swedish Genealogy Society of Colorado* (SGSC) attended the SwedGen Workshop in Sweden, Midsummer festival at Lunedet near Karlskoga, a hosted Midsummer dinner at one of our members beautiful home, then off to their individual areas of interest where many found churches, farms of their ancestors and even living relatives. I have enclosed a photo of the group in our SGSC shirts while attending Midsummer.

Janet Folden

Photo: courtesy of Cheryl and Ron Floberg.

