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Anna Stina and Nils from Sunnemo

A complicated story ends in bigamy

BY JAN KÄRRMAN

This is a story about how I found my great-grandfather's sister Anna Stina after she had immigrated to America, and various other things that were revealed along the way.

Anna Stina, born 1857 July 11 on Norra Viljamsbohl lands in Sunnemo, in eastern Värmland, was the oldest of four siblings; the others were Karl Johan (b. 1860 Nov. 24), Axel (my great-grandfather) (b. 1864 Aug. 18), and Maria (b. 1868 Aug. 10). They were all born in Sunnemo, Värmland. Their parents were Anders Petter Kärrman and Stina Nilsdotter; the younger of the three children took their father's name Kärrman, but Anna Stina chose the traditional way and was called Andersdotter.

Anders Petter Kärrman died in 1871 June 14, when Anna Stina was 14, and Maria, the youngest, only 3 years old. A court record shows that there was no estate inventory made after Anders's death, because he did not own anything more than the clothes he was wearing. It must have been hard times for the widow Stina and her children; the court protocol also shows that they were living with parish support.

Stina married again to the sharecropper Jan Larsson of Norra Väsby in Sunnemo in 1878 May 31, and things seems to have gone better for

them, but by then Anna Stina had grown up and was on her own.

Anna Stina moved around, first working as a maid in different places in Värmland, then in 1885 she moved to Hushagen in Stora Tuna, Dalarna, and worked there as a maid for an engineer Carl Ångström. The job opportunities were better there; the steel mill Domnarvets Jernverk had been founded some 10 years earlier. Anna Stina's younger siblings were to follow her to Stora Tuna, one, by one. Axel in 1889 and Karl Johan in 1891, both to work in the steel mill. Maria came in 1892 and worked as a maid for the steel mill worker Anders Bergdal. When he became a widower, she married her 30-year-old employer. Karl Johan was already married to Emma Berggren from Sunnemo when he came to Stora Tuna. Axel married Maria Blom from Stora Tuna.

Stina goes to America

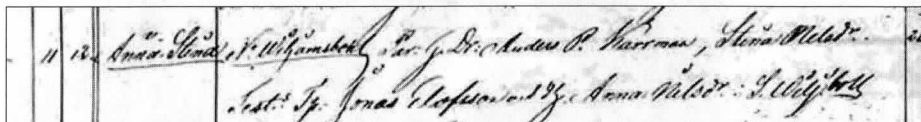
But by the time Anna Stina's siblings came to Stora Tuna, she had already moved again: in 1888 she immigrated to America. She left Göteborg on Aug. 21 with a ticket for Worcester, MA. Anna Stina, who by that time had changed her name to Andersson, was then 31 years old, still unmarried, and, from what I could tell, did not have any company on the journey. I



Anna Stina Anderson (b. 1857 July 11). became curious about why she left, where she went, and what happened to her. But trying to find an Anna Anderson in America felt like trying to find the proverbial needle in a haystack. Note that the Ellis Island immigration station wasn't opened until 1892. So after a few vain attempts, I put this aside for the time being.

Siblings came too

I had better luck with the brother Karl Johan who immigrated to America in 1892. He was then married to Emma Berggren; they had two children: Elin and Ragnar. He and his family left Göteborg 1892 May 13 with tickets for West Superior, WI. Since they were called Karrman, it



Sunnemo C:2 (1850-1860) Bild 23 / sid 39 (Arkiv Digital). Testes (witnesses at baptism) were Jonas Elofsson and his wife Anna Nilsdotter from S [ödra] Viljamsbohl.

was not difficult to find them, for example in the U.S. census of 1920. Ragnar has changed his name to Rayner, and Elin to Ellen; she is now married to Herman W. Keen.

In the 1930 census, Herman Keen is now the head of the family, since Karl Johan has died. Herman and Ellen now have two children: Burton and June. Note also the boarder Naemi Green, although that name had no significance for me when I first saw this document.

The name Burton Keen sounded to me like a rather unusual one; perhaps he could be found. It would be interesting to find someone that maybe could tell about what happened to the family? Searches in different on-line directories on the web showed a Burton Keen living in Minnesota. This was in 2006 when Burton was 84 years old, so I thought that, should I contact him, I'd better do it soon before it is too late. I found his phone number, composed myself, and gave him a call.

Calling old Burton

Burton confirmed that he was the grandson of Karl Johan and Emma. He turned out to be a very youthful person, both physically and mentally. We had a nice long talk, exchanged e-mail addresses, and have been in contact with each other since. Incidentally, Burton's middle name is Karrman, after his mother's maiden name.

In 2009 Burton sent me a letter, written in Swedish, that he had found among the belongings of his mother Ellen (who by the way lived to be 100 years old). Burton does not know enough Swedish to read the letter, but he saw the name Kärroman, so he thought it could be of interest to me. It contained a wedding photo with for me several familiar faces among the guests, for example my parents. The bride was Ulla Blomqvist, a second cousin of my father, her husband was Ove Larsson, and the letter was written to Ellen by Ulla's mother Helga. Helga was the daughter of Maria, the youngest of the four siblings. So Ellen and Helga

were first cousins. The marriage was held in 1953.

Here is my translation of the letter; my own comments are within brackets:

"Dear Ellen!

"Thank you for your letter and for the lovely present that Mrs. Berggren brought with her. It was so nice meeting her, but it was just for a short visit, it would have been so nice if she could have stayed a few days so that we could have talked some more. I went to Anna with her parcel yesterday, they were all well. I'm sending a small memory from Dalarna to you and Naemi, it would be so nice if you could come over and visit us some time. You are heartily welcome.

"I'm sending a photo of my daughter's wedding, you can see the cousins there, it is not particularly good, but you can see what we look like. Have to finish now with hearty greetings from all of us to all of you,

"in haste Helga.

"Give my best regards to Mrs. Berggren."

[Ed's note: Then there was a list of the people present in the photo, omitted here].

Naemi mystery solved

Beside the naming of the people in the photo, there were three names mentioned in the letter: Anna must have been Anna Morelius, born Kärroman, daughter to Axel; Burton had previously told me that his mother had contact with the Morelius family in Sweden. Mrs. Berggren was probably a relative to Karl Johan's wife Emma Berggren. But the name

Naemi was previously unknown to me; she was obviously well-known enough to Helga to send her a gift. As far as I know, Ellen and Helga never visited each other, so who was this Naemi that Helga sent a gift to across the ocean? Could it be another relative? I went back to the 1930 census to see if there was any Naemi living in the neighborhood of the Keen family, and it was then I saw Naemi Green, living as a boarder with the Keens!

At this point I was contacted by Håkan Olsson, another Swedish genealogist. He is related to Emma Berggren and has known the Keens for several years. It turned out that he had also received a copy of the letter from Burton. He asked me if I knew the wedding couple and guests, which I could confirm. Håkan agreed that Mrs. Berggren, mentioned in the letter, must have been a relative on his side. But he did not know any Naemi Green, or any other Naemi among his relatives for that matter. He did recall seeing the name Anna Green, though, in a story that Ellen Keen wrote at age 95 about her life. Håkan sent me a copy of the story, and there I saw what Ellen had written about when they first had arrived in America in Superior, WI. "We stayed with my father's sister Anna Green for a time".

So Anna Stina must have been married Green, and Naemi was probably her daughter. And indeed, I found the family in the census of 1900.

Her husband's name was Nels J. Green and they had three children:



The 1953 wedding between Ulla Blomqvist and Ove Larsson.

Lilli, Nanna, and Eina(r). It doesn't say Naemi, but she was probably called Nanna. They were then also living in Superior, WI. In the 1910 census the family can be found again, without Nels who had died.

Here the daughter's name is written Naemi.

Who was Nels?

In the 1900 census one could see that Nels Green was born April 1844 in Sweden, and that he immigrated in 1873. In Sweden his name would have been Nils. A search in a database of Swedish emigrants, *Emibas*, for everyone called Nils having those birth and emigration dates resulted in a single hit:

Jonasson Sundgren, Nils

Male

b. 4/13/1844 in Sunnemo, Värmlands län (Värmland)

Emigrated 4/10/1873 from Muskhöjden, Långserud, Värmlands län (Värmland) to Nordamerika

Although the emigration database is not complete, my gut feeling was that this must be the right person. Like Anna Stina, Nils was born in the small parish of Sunnemo, so surely he and Anna Stina must have known each other from their time in Sweden. Also, Sundgren could well have been changed into Green.

I looked up Nils in the birth records for Sunnemo – his parents were Jonas Elofsson and Anna Nilsson. [witnesses at the baptism of Anna Stina]. I followed the family in the household examination rolls, and for some time the families with Nils and Anna Stina were listed after each other in the books, suggesting that they were close neighbors. But in 1863 Nils's family moved quite a bit away from Sunnemo, to Långserud parish. Nils was then 19 and Anna Stina only 5 years old. After that, they never seemed to live close to each other, so it didn't seem to be a love from their youth.

Nils later became a soldier; that's when he was given the soldier's name Sundgren. In 1869 he married Kristina Lovisa Axelsdotter and they had

two sons: Axel Emil and Johan Alfred. Hmm, was I on the wrong track after all?

But, in the household examination rolls 1871-1875, there is a note that Nils has left for America, although his family remains in Sweden. Notes like this then continue volume after volume: "the husband is in America," even after Nels Green was married, and even after his death in America. Apparently, he had abandoned his family, and they had no knowledge of his whereabouts.

To make sure that it was indeed the same person, I requested the marriage record for Nels Green and Anna Stina. The most interesting parts are:

1. *Full name of husband:*
Nels John Green
2. *Name of the father of husband:*
John Elafson
3. *Name of the mother of husband before marriage:* Ann Nelson
4. *Occupation of husband:*
Millhand
5. *Residence of husband:*
Connors Point, West Supr.
6. *Birthplace of husband:*
Sweden
7. *Full name of wife previous to marriage:* Anna Anderson
8. *Name of the father of wife:*
Anders Anderson
9. *Name of the mother of wife before marriage:* Christina Nelson
10. *Birthplace of wife:*
Sweden
11. *Time when the marriage was contracted:* Nov 1st 1890 1 PM
12. *The place, town or township, and county:* City hall, City of Superior,
13. *Where the marriage was contracted:* Douglas County, Wis.

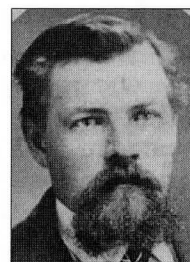
Nels's parents' names are more or less correct. A bit strange is that Anna Stina states her father's name as Anderson. Being quite young when he died, perhaps she didn't remember what it was and simply copied her own name. Also, note that the mothers's names have the suffix "son" and not "dotter." This change of name was a general trend in the late 19th century. Stina is of course a short version of Christina.

It still puzzled me how Nils and Anna Stina apparently still knew each other after their families had separated when she was so young. I went back to the Sunnemo records and realized quickly that their mothers were sisters. So, Nils had committed bigamy with his first cousin!

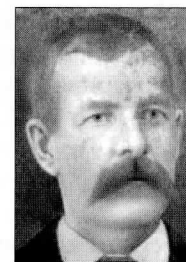
To find out something about Nils's remaining family in Sweden, I went to *Disbyt*, a web [of the Swedish Computer Genealogy Society (DIS)] site where one can post ones family trees, searchable for others. I made a search for Nils there and found a tree created by a great-granddaughter of his: Kerstin Karlberg. She is a daughter of Erik Sundgren, a grandson of Nils from his 1st marriage. I contacted Kerstin and she confirmed that Nils had abandoned the family when her grandfather Johan Alfred was only about two years old.

One story Kerstin told me was that Nils later had sent a letter to his then only son alive; the letter contained a ticket for him to the U.S.A., together with a photo of Nils with his new family. Johan Alfred became furious and threw both ticket and photo away!

Kerstin sent a photo of Nils from before he left Sweden, and later a photo of Nels Green was found, clearly showing the same person.



Nils Johan
Sundgren



Nels Green

A final twist to this story came when I looked at what happened to Nils's mother Anna Nilsson. After some time she had become a widow and later remarried. But in the household examination rolls for Långserud 1881-1885, there is a note that she had run away from her husband around 1882 and gone to America! Such a mother, such a son.... I have not been able to confirm that she actually went there, though.

Speculations

Say that Nels's mother Anna joined him in the U.S.A. and maybe she had contact with her sister Stina in Sweden. Stina had an unmarried daughter of 30+, and Anna had a son that was married, but obviously did not want to rejoin his family. Perhaps the sisters arranged to have their children married. No one in the U.S. would know about the bigamy and their close relationship. Maybe Nels sent Anna a ticket for her to come over, like he did later to his son. Just a bit of guessing on my part....

The end

Nels Green died in 1904 and Anna in 1916, both in Wisconsin. Of their five children, all but Naemi died at a

young age, so it was only Naemi that had a child of her own. Using Ancestry.com I first found out that she married Alfred Persson Youngstrom and they had a daughter Gay Ann. Then also that Gay Ann married Robert Eugene Goudy and that they had three sons and four daughters. I managed to locate the youngest daughter Melissa and got in contact with her on Facebook. Their family today knew very little about the Swedish background of Nels and Anna, not much more than that they did come from Sweden; they seemed very interested in the information I could supply.

In 2011 I had the pleasure of being visited in Sweden by all four charming great-granddaughters to Anna Stina Andersdotter.



The Goudy girls, visiting Sweden.

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More details on the above story can be found on Jan's website.

Link on p. 30

Hulda's grave is found

A follow-up to SAG 2013/1, p. 22

When I sent you the newspaper article about the gas asphyxiation of Hulda Johansson in November of 1899, I had not located her place of burial. Yesterday, I was finally successful. I had visited several very old cemeteries in Chicago with no success. When I looked in a source book of Chicago from 1986, I found the name of another cemetery established in 1854. This cemetery, Oak Woods Cemetery, is located at 1035 E. 67th Street, which is within a few miles of where Hulda Johnson had been working when she died. Why I did not look at my maps and investigate this cemetery much earlier, I will never know. The cemetery records do not give the name of a funeral home or date of actual burial. The records do say that her body was received there on November 27, 1899, and that her sister Emma Johansson made the arrangements for her burial. Hulda is there in section O3, lot 327, grave 2N. I was able to locate the exact site, but there is no gravestone. The gravestones in this section, if visible, are sunken into the ground,

and many are covered over with grass. Section O3 is a very old part of Oak Woods Cemetery. Hulda's final resting place is quiet and serene. I wished I had brought flowers. (see attached photo).

Suzanne Wallace

A correction

Christina Johannesdotter was born 1840 May 19 in Hagshult. Her son Johannes Frithiof was born 1877 Oct. 20, and son Johan Gustaf on 1883 Apr. 30.

Sorry for the mistake in dates!

Elisabeth Thorsell

