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The 444 - Sandin-Tillner Family Tree Statistics

BY NORMAN "PONO" SANDIN

I don't have any batting averages, greens in regulation, or wins by knockout numbers, but for those of you who are statistically inclined, I've picked out what I think are some interesting numbers about my family tree.

Currently, I'm reporting information on 444 direct ancestors. The information is complete on some, partial on some, and really scanty on some others. I have personally verified the data on many of the ancestors, but not all of them. There are some others cooking, but not yet at the stage of being ready to report. There are many hundreds more who are siblings to my direct ancestors and I have info on lots of them, but I have not applied the same degree of diligence to that research, so I have not reported on them.

Lifespans

Of the 444, more than 300 have known or carefully estimated birth and death dates. For these, the average lifespan is 67.9 years. I find this number remarkable for several reasons. First, I am now older than the average. Second, the ancestors represented in this average lived from the early-1600s to current days, with the preponderance in the earlier times when life expectancies were much lower than they are now. Third, I've seen lots and lots of early deaths in the Swedish records I pursued. Of course these early deaths did not result in offspring but did factor in

to the low life expectancy. It seems that persons who survived to child-bearing age tended to survive much longer!

The shortest lifespan accurately documented (both birth and death record were found) is my 4th great-grandfather Per Andersson. He lived for only 34 years. The longest lifespan is clearly documented in the death record, but subject to question only because it depended on the memory of the reporter. It is my 8th great-grandmother Anna Olofsdotter who lived 108 years! Second oldest is Per Nilsson Västgöte at 102 years, subject to the same question. Third oldest is my mother Mamie Eleanor Tillner Sandin accurately documented at 97 years!

Given names

Of the 444, 210 are female and 234 are male. Why the difference? In early days, women were truly the lesser sex – almost chattel. Birth records often read "Jan Jansson's son Jan, etc." with no mention of the mother. Death records for women were often "Jan Jansson's wife died, etc.," or "Wife of Jan from farm name died, etc.," or even "Widow of Jan Jansson, etc." many years after Jan's death! Household surveys in the early days often gave the husband's name only or sometimes his name and just the Swedish word for wife. Again, even years after his death, the widow was referred to as "Widow of Jan Jansson" in the yearly census.

It was not unusual to find a man known to be married, but with no indication in the records of the wife's name.

Of the 210 females in my database, 5 had no reference to their first names, and only one of those had reference to her patronymic name.

Of the 234 males in the database, there are only 61 unique first names. This number is shaky due to interpretation of handwriting, quality of records, spelling and penmanship of the recorders, and many other factors. Occasionally an individual could be found with several variations of spelling of the given name.

Jan appeared as Johan, Johannes, Jonas, and Jon. Per might be Pehr, Peter, or Petter. When "variations" are combined, there are only 46 unique male names out of the 234!

Of the 205 females with first names (after deducting the 5 with no names), there are only 54 unique names. This number is similarly shaky due to the factors noted above. Also, very frequently an individual could be found with a large number of variations of spelling of the given name.

Catharina was also written Catrina, Caisa, Kajsa, Cajsa, and Katarina. Elisabet was also written Elisabeth, Lisa, Lisbet, Elisabets, and Elisbet. It could be argued that other combinations are valid. Karin and its variations somewhat overlap the Catharina set. Maria and Margareta sometimes overlap. These are just

the ones in my ancestry – there are many other variations as well! When “variations” are combined, there are only 31 unique female names out of the 205!

Here are the most popular male and female given names in this database with the count of each:

34	Anders, Andreas	43	Anna, Annika, Anica
23	Jan, Johan, Johannes, Jon	25	Kerstin, Cherstin, Chierstin
20	Per, Pehr, Peter, Petter	23	Maria, Marina, Marit, Maja
19	Erik, Erich, Eric	18	Karin, Carin, Kari
16	Nils	16	Elisabet, Elisabeth, Lisa
16	Olof, Oloff	15	Brita, Britta
14	Lars	14	Cathrina, Katarina, Cajsa
13	Hans	11	Margareta, Margreta
9	Sven	8	Stina, Christina
7	Hindrik, Hindrich	4	Elin
6	Mats	3	Ingrid
5	Göran and Mårten (tie)	3	Sara

The most popular male first name represents 14% of the total male names.

The most popular female first name represents 20% of the total female names.

The 4 most popular male first names represent 41% of the total.

The 4 most popular female first names represent 51% of the total.

The 12 most popular male first names represent a whopping 77% of the total.

The 12 most popular female first names represent an enormous 87% of the total.

My personal choice from the database for most unusual male first name is my sixth great-grandfather Gottskalk and for most unusual female first name is my eighth great-grandmother Sissela.

Last names – patronymic and surnames

By far the majority of ancestors had patronymic last names. For those not familiar, the patronymic convention consists of a given name followed by the father’s first name combined with the Swedish word “son” or “dotter.” Thus Per Jansson is Per, son of Jan, and Anna Jansdotter is Anna, daughter of Jan.

Because of the patronymic convention, last names pretty much paralleled the male first names in frequency. Andersson and Andersdotter prevail, with Jansson and Jansdotter following. Of the 444 ancestors, 194 men sported patronymic names and 179 women.

Forty ancestors, less than 10%, (both male and female) carried non-patronymic names – regular surnames. Of those 40, there were only 21 unique surnames. Not surprisingly, Sandin was the leader with 7 representatives. There were 5 Finne, 5 Skotte, 2 Bagge, 2 Krantz, 2 Rotkopp, 2 Tillner, 2 Willing, and 13 single occurrences.

The rest, some 30 individuals, go into my records with no names (see above) or only first names.

As ever, one should take these numbers with a grain of salt. First, the group surveyed is small – 444. Second, some people carried both patronymic and regular surnames. These were included in the surname numbers only – 40. Third, some surnames actually referred to nation of origin (e.g., Finne – Finland; Ryss – Russia), even though they were used as surnames. Fourth, some surnames were actually occupations (e.g., only one example, Garmakare – copper ore refiner).

One gentleman, my 8th great-grandfather Per Nilsson Västgöte, carried a patronymic, son of Nils, and a surname. He was from an area on the ill-defined border between the provinces of Västergötland and Småland. He mostly used the name Västgöte relating to his origin in the first province, but also was called Små-

länning relating to the second province.

My 7th great-grandfather Erik Ersson was the end of a line. I could find nothing about his ancestry, but according to the patronymic conventions his father would be Erik also. Ersson is a commonly used abbreviation for Eriksson. Erik 7 had a son Erik 6 who had a son Erik 5 – all my ancestors – so I have three ancestors in a row named Erik Ersson! I can only guess that there must have been a lot of nicknames in use to disambiguate between the generations. This was not unusual!

Summary – the end of the line

By far the most Sandin ancestors are from Ljusnarsberg and Ramsberg in the *län* of Örebro. The Tillner ancestors are from Ärtemark in Älvsborg and Essunga in Skaraborg.

These stats are fluid. As I review them, I see some areas that need more work or more careful research. Each day that passes after this one will see changes to the numbers. A year or two years or some time later I hope to republish a similar memo. It will be interesting to see if anything changes significantly. As a preview I can tell you that I’ve been tracking average life span for a long time – from about 184 ancestors to the current 444 – and the average has only changed a tenth of a year or so!

Now, to wrap it up: these stats cover 444 individuals. I am the only one still living. Each person was born, grew up, married, worked, had more or fewer children, lived a short or long life, experienced joy and sorrow, had a story to tell, and finally died. The stats only aggregate and summarize 444 lifetimes and tell a generalized story. Looking at the forest makes one forget that each tree had its own life and glory.

Hindrik Werre, Bertil Larsson, Sigfrid Matsson, and Erland Algutsson were all born around 1600. Hindrik had three children who fed their genes into my tree. Bertil, Sigfrid, and Erland each contributed one

child's genes. Many others also made their contributions. Now, four centuries later, I really wonder what they would think of the product.

Editor's note:

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics the mean expected length of life for a baby, depending on if it was a male baby or a female, was like this for the whole country of Sweden:

Males

Year of Birth	Age
1751-1790	33.72
1791-1815	35.35
1816-1840	39.50
1841-1850	41.66
1851-1860	40.49
1861-1870	42.80
1871-1880	45.27
1881-1890	48.55
1891-1900	50.94
1901-1910	54.53
2001-2005	77.99

Females

Year of Birth	Age
1750-1790	36.64
1791-1815	38.44
1816-1840	43.56
1841-1850	46.10
1851-1860	44.40
1861-1870	46.37
1871-1880	48.62
1881-1890	51.47
1891-1900	53.63
1901-1910	56.98
2001-2005	82.41

It is interesting to see that the median life expectancy decreased during the 1850s, but increased during the 1860s, when there were three difficult years of famine. It is also clear that these figures show that the population must have grown, as more people lived longer. The increase of the population was one of the major reasons for the migration to other countries. There was not enough work to be found in the homeland.



Charles Sandin, born 1 May 1873 in Ljusnarsberg (Väsm.), died 25 July 1961, the author's grandfather.

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The Poorhouse in Boone County, Iowa

While surfing on the internet there are many things to find, not all of them showing the best side of people. In the old days people ended up in the poorhouse for many reasons, and here are a few with a Swedish connection, who were inmates of the Boone County Poorhouse in the center of Iowa:

John Peterson Nov 6, 1917, correspondent Mrs. J.M. Olson, Storm Lake, Iowa, where living when committed: Swedish Home, white male, 78 yrs, 135 lbs, 5'5, blue eyes, gray hair, married, has three kids, is a farmer, mother and father are Swedish, lack of memory.

Matilda Wilson Feb 21, 1918 Garden Twp (Boxholm, Iowa), correspondent John Wilson (brother), 55 yrs, 140 lbs, 5'6 dark complected, gray eyes, gray hair, mom and dad were from Sweden.

Anna Forslund transferred from Clarinda Sept 10, 1935, paroled to brother in 1952, Joe Youngstrom from Fort Dodge, Iowa, from Pilot Mound, Iowa, correspondent Esther Ballard, sister, Stanton, Iowa, white female, 50 yrs, 140 lbs, 5'3, blue eyes, gray hair, b. July 10, 1882 Webster City, Iowa, widow with 3 kids youngest 14 yrs,, parents from Sweden, cause of insanity: Accidental death of husband.

No 4735 **Charles Zanderholm** Dec 3, 1920, painter, dementia paranoid type, white, single, age 66 b. March 21, 1885 Boonesboro, Iowa, returned to Clarinda July 10, 1943, back to Boone March 21, 1950, father Andrew Zanderholm, Sweden, correspondent: Mrs. J E Huffman, sister.

Sarah L Johnson April 9, 1929, brother John P. Johnson, Ogden,

Iowa, correspondent G.E. Johnson guardian, physician Dr J.O. Galleo Ogden, Iowa, living with brother when committed, white female, 63 yrs, 125 lbs, 5'5, gray eyes and gray hair, b Aug 6, 1855 Sweden, mother and father born in Sweden, type of insanity: psychosis, mental deficiency.

Mary Wilson Hoflund Feb 21, 1918, Dr Johnson Boxholm, Iowa, white female, 53 yrs, blue eyes, white hair, b. April 24, 1854 divorced, father and mother from Sweden.

Mrs **O.W. Tornell** Dec 20, 1946, Pilot Mound, Iowa, widow with 8 kids, white, 79 yrs, 100 lbs, 5', gray eyes and hair, b. Oct 22, 1867 Illinois, religion: Swedish Mission, father and mother from Sweden.

<http://iagenweb.org/boone/history/poorhouse1.htm>