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Elin Viktoria's secret

Why did she never talk about her life in Sweden?

By CHRIS OLSSON

From time to time I'm asked to do research for friends and acquaintances who know I spend a week every fall helping out at the annual SAG Workshop held in Salt Lake City. If there's time, I take the opportunity to look up a date or check a fact to help someone I know with a genealogical riddle that can often be easily solved in minutes using the incredible resources available at the Family History Library.

In October, 2006, I had such a request. This one came from a good friend, a woman who had been my secretary/administrative assistant during some of the years I was executive director of Swedish Council of America. Ann Moonen (born Johnson) is a tall, blonde, statuesque Swedish-American now in her early 50s who is very proud of her Swedish heritage. Both of her parents, Floyd and Gunvor Johnson, had raised her to speak both Swedish and English and had been active volunteers at the American Swedish Institute (where the Council has its office). So when Ann wrote me a couple of years ago that she had a "sort of mystery" about her family, I was happy to help.

Ann's father, Floyd (who is now deceased), was born in Minneapolis on 13 February 1922. Floyd's mother, Elin Viktoria Eklund, unfortunately never talked about her family or heritage. She had immigrated in 1915 when she was 21 years old, settling in Minneapolis where she married Oscar Johnson from Värmland in 1921. The following year she gave birth to Floyd. She had been

very reticent about her early life. All the family knew about her was that she had given birth to an illegitimate daughter in Sweden, an older half-sister to Floyd. This Aunt Margit had been adopted as an infant by relatives and grew up in Gävle and eventually settled in Norberg, in the province of Västmanland. Consequently, although Floyd had met his Swedish sister several times, he was never able to learn much more about her background.

The "mystery?"

Ann told me that after Floyd died in 1991, she had learned that there was *another* sister besides Margit who had been born to Elin Viktoria before her departure for America in 1915. What had happened to her?

On the third day after my arrival in Salt Lake City last October I pulled out the few notes I had about Ann, her father, and her father's story. I had some spare time in my generic responsibility to help the 50 or so individuals who spend a week every October looking for clues to their genealogies. I would now see what I could find about Elin Viktoria Eklund.

I began by checking the birth book for Norberg parish in Västmanlands län. Sure enough, Elin Viktoria was born there on 5 February 1894, the fifth child born to the miner Gustaf Eklund and his wife Anna Sofia Andersdotter. She was born in the village of Rosendal, just 3.6 kilometers south of the center of Norberg.

For the next few years, the family

moved several times, but continued to reside in and around Norberg. The first significant change came in 1912. According to the note in the *husförhörslängd*, Elin Viktoria, now 18 years old, moved to Kungsholmen in Stockholm on the 5th of November.

Trying to find someone who lived in Stockholm in the 19th or early 20th century used to be a genealogist's headache (if not a nightmare). That is now changing. Many of the relevant records specific to various city areas have been collected, digitized, and put on CD-ROM discs for quick and easy retrieval. The first to appear was the CD "*Söder i våra hjärtan*" in 1998 which contained records, maps, and even historical photographs from the part of Stockholm south of the Old City called *Södermalm*, or *Söder* for short. Others followed: *Gamla Stan*, *Klara*, and now *Kungsholmen* have been released.

The Family History Library had received a copy of *Kungsholmen* CD by last October, but to my frustration, it had not yet been catalogued. Thus, it was unavailable to me sitting on floor B1 of the Library (the floor where Swedish and other European microfilms and microfiche are kept). Fortunately, one of the participants in the annual SAG workshop is Elisabeth Thorsell, editor of this magazine. She always comes with her laptop computer and a collection of CD-ROMs; Elisabeth had the new CD-ROM and she had already installed *Kungsholmen* on her computer.



It was time to find Elin Viktoria. I knew she had lived in Stockholm, probably Kungsholmen, from late 1912 until her departure for America in October 1915. The *Kungsholmen* CD revealed the information I sought almost immediately. There were two entries for Elin Viktoria Eklund in the *Rotemansarkiv*.

1. She is first listed as a *tjänarinna* (servant girl), unmarried, living without family, at Kronobergsgatan 7. She apparently lived there less than four months, because she is recorded as returning to Norberg on 1 April 1913. The second entry may explain why.

2. Nearly two years later, on the 28 December 1914, she returns to Kungsholmen in Stockholm. She is again listed as a *tjänarinna*. She is still unmarried and now she is *inneboende* (technically, a “lodger”) with Erik Wilhelm Pettersson at Fleminggatan 65.

Other residents of Fleminggatan 65 reveal more: Margit Viktoria had been born 23 August 1913, and Elin Sofia was born 22 September 1915.

Returning to the records available at the Family History Library, I checked the extract from the birth book for Kungsholmen. Here was the confirmation that Elin Sofia had been born 22 September 1915 to Elin Viktoria Eklund, 18 years old. (This is an error; she was actually 21.) The shame of giving birth to two illegitimate children before the age of 22 was apparently a heavy burden for Elin Viktoria. The *Emigrantlistor* (Emigrant lists) for Kungsholmen notes that she immigrated to America 6 October 1915 – alone. Elin Sofia was only 15 days old. And what became of her was still a mystery.

A genealogist never has all the facts, but sometimes the clues that the written records reveal allow for some speculation. My guess: 1. Elin Viktoria, age 18, had left Norberg and moved to Stockholm in late 1912 and moved into an apartment at Kronobergsgatan 7. There she met, fell in love with Margit’s father, and soon became pregnant. By April 1, 1913, she moved back to her home parish, Norberg, probably ashamed

to be carrying a child, and seeking the comfort of family and home.

Nearly two years later she returns with her 20-month old infant daughter, Margit, to live again on Kungsholmen, this time at Fleminggatan 65. She is a lodger with Erik Pettersson. Is he Margit’s father? Again, this is speculation, but not an unreasonable guess. Almost immediately she becomes pregnant again and a little less than nine months later little Elin Sofia is born.

Modern databases help

Fortunately, *Kungsholmen* is just one of a number of CD-ROMs that have made research in Swedish genealogy much easier. Two CD-ROMs, *Sveriges Befolkning 1970* and *Sveriges Befolkning 1980*, are now available so that researchers can continue their search.

The first of these gave me exact information. I searched on “Elin Sofia Eklund b. on Kungsholmen, Stockholm, on 22 Sep. 1915” and this gave me a unique “hit.” I discovered that in 1970 she was now Elin Sofia Berg, married to Harald Bernhard Berg, born 26 November 1904 in Båstad, a small resort community in

Skåne not far from Helsingborg. The second informed me, unfortunately, that Elin Sofia had died 30 July 1971.

I found additional information on the first CD. There were at least two children born to Harald and Elin: Georg Wilhelm Berg (b. 12 February 1944 in Helsingborg) and Ingrid Christina Berg (b. 20 April 1949 in Båstad). These would be cousins to Ann Moonen; hitherto unknown cousins of approximately her age.

The second CD informed me that Ingrid Christina Berg was now Ingrid Christina Linnér, living in Billdal just south of Göteborg. The only thing to do now was to check one more resource, and for this information I turned to the World Wide Web. The website www.eniro.se is an online Swedish telephone book. There I quickly found Christina Linnér’s cell phone number (she prefers “Christina” to “Ingrid”). I e-mailed the information to Ann Moonen. It was now up to her. My job was done.

Postscript: In January, 2007, Ann made contact with her “unknown” cousin. So far communication has been by letter and e-mail. A future meeting is planned.

Rotemansarkivet

9 profiler

Eklund, Elin Viktoria	5/2 1894
Eklund, Elin Viktoria	5/2 1894
Hammar (Eriksson), Elin Viktoria	13/10 1894
Hammar (Eriksson), Elin Viktoria	13/10 1894
Hammar (Eriksson), Elin Viktoria	13/10 1894
Karlsson, Elin Viktoria	10/3 1894
Karlsson, Elin Viktoria	10/3 1894
Petersson, Elin Viktoria	13/3 1894
Samuelsson, Elin Julia Viktoria	4/11 1894

Häfte 20376 (1902-1920), s. 19, r. 25 (öfte 23, Kungsholmen/fk.)

Eklund, Elin Viktoria
Tjänarinna

f. 5/2 1894 (Norberg, Västmanlands län)
Ogift, inneboende, ensamstående med barn

Fleminggatan 65 (Arbetaren 11)

In 28/12 1914 från Norberg, Västmanlands län
Ut 6/10 1915 till Amerika (utrikes ort)

Hoskällgövtändareappgift:
Erik Pettersson

Övriga uppgifter:

Inflyttningsdatum i flyttningslängd: 23/12 1914
Sida i infli-längd/f-bok: 106
Utflyttningsdatum i flyttningslängd: 6/10 1915

1870

1880 1890 1900 1910 1920

1895
1906
1936

SÖK RENSA

Results from the *Kungsholmen* Rotemansarkiv on CD.