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A Family from Östra Husby, Östergötland



The Sven Alfred Anderson family of Lund, Evansville, Douglas County, Minnesota. From left, standing: Alma (b. 1896), Phoebe (b. 1895), Ester, (b. 1888), Frida (b. 1893), and Ernst (b. 1889). Sitting: Sven Alfred, Elizabeth (b. 1892), and Mathilda Andersdotter. Photo from about 1905.

On 19 May 1855 a daughter was born on the farm Ormestad in Östra Husby. Her name was Mathilda Helena and her parents were the farm owner Anders Olofsson and his wife Inga Stina Nilsson. Her family was quite well-to-do, the descendants of a long line of farm owners.

On her 32nd birthday, 19 May 1887, she married Sven Alfred Svensson, a former farmhand at a neighboring farm. Two weeks after their marriage

they immigrated to North America. Sven Alfred had visited the U.S. some years before, and had found a farm that he could rent. This farm was situated in Douglas County, Minn. After a few years the Svenssons bought some land near Evansville, also in Douglas County, where they lived until 1920, when daughter Ester and her family took over the farm.

Sven Alfred and Mathilda then

bought a house in Evansville, where they lived with their other daughter Elizabeth. Sven Alfred died in 1921 and Mathilda Helena in 1936. In her obituary one can read "The Lord has demanded it profitable to call home one of his loved ones, Mrs. Mathilda Swenson, who passed to the great beyond Saturday morning, July 18, at the age of 81 years and two months. She was born in Östergötland, Sweden, where she grew to

womanhood. After her marriage to S. A. Swenson they immigrated to America and settled in this community, which always remained her home." At her funeral they sang *Tryggare kan ingen vara* (Children of the heavenly father), one of Mathilda's favorites."

The family story says that Mathilda's mother took the emigration of her daughter so hard that she died in a year. The farms owned by Mathilda's family are still owned by relatives.

Mathilda and Sven's daughter Elizabeth was trained as a teacher, and started her career in a one-room school in the rural area and retired as the principal of Evansville High School.

One of Mathilda and Sven Alfred's descendants is Dr. Ross Anderson, who lives in Minnesota with his family. He is my father's 3rd cousin, and came here in 1993 with his wife Carol and visited me. We could then show them Mathilda's home in Ormestad and the area where she had lived prior to her immigration.

Editor's addition:

Mathilda Helena emigrated 27 May 1887 from Oklunda in Östra Husby, where she had lived with her parents. Her groom, Sven Alfred Svensson, born 17 October 1855 in Jonsberg, (Östg.), was at home for a visit to get married, as he had emigrated already on 17 March 1882, also from Oklunda village. Mathilda Helena's parents were Anders Olofsson, born 23 March 1807 in Östra Husby, died at Oklunda 7 June 1882, and his wife Inga Stina Nilsson, born 18 October 1815 in Östra Husby, died 11 April 1888 at Oklunda.

The Swenson family was enumerated in the 1900 Federal Census on 6 June 1900 in the township of Lund in Douglas County, Minnesota. The father is indexed as Swan Swenson.

In 1920 they had moved to Evansville and still had three daughters at home: Elizabeth, a teacher in a rural school; Freda [Frida], a dressmaker, and Phoebe, who had no occupation listed.

In 1930 Elizabeth has rented a room in Evansville. Her mother and sister Phoebe lived in a little house there.

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In 1993, Ross Anderson, a descendant of Sven Alfred and Mathilda came to Östergötland for a visit. Standing, from left: Ross Anderson, Anders and Johan Köhler, Gunnar Vadman, Torsten Wiklöf, and Gösta Vadman. Sitting: Carol Anderson, Maud Wiklöf, Brita Wiklöf, and Maria Vadman. The house is the one Mathilda was born in at Ormestad, now renovated.

The John Ericsson Day

Every year the *John Ericsson Day* is celebrated in the town of Filipstad in eastern Värmland. The reason is that the inventor was born in the village of Långban, which these days belongs to the Filipstad *kommun*. The date for this event is always on the Sunday closest to 31 July, his birthday.

The day usually start with a ceremony at his mausoleum in the cemetery, when wreaths are placed there and traditional songs sung.

Then in the afternoon there is pub-

lic entertainment in a park near the lake *Daglösen* in the middle of the town, which attracts a crowd, both local people and some prominent public figures. This year one could see both the present Swedish-American of the Year, E. Jan Hartman, and a former one, Agneta Nilsson. Elise Peters of Swedish American Council could also be found watching the big bang that came after speeches and music: the yearly re-enactment of the historic battle between the

Monitor and the *Merrimac*. This takes place on the *Daglösen*, as can be seen on the cover of this issue of SAG.

With the help of the Swedish Army there are many faked cannon shots, water is cascading over the audience, and every one has a good time. Finally *Monitor* wins the battle, and *Merrimac* tries to escape, but is apprehended and put in storage for next year.

Elisabeth Thorsell