

# Why notes?

## Genealogy without documentation is mere imagination

By P. ROBERT WILLEY

After having written three articles about my ancestors for publication in the *Swedish American Genealogist*, I decided to now go about the task of writing a book about my ancestors from Sweden. When I first thought of doing this, I knew the idea of organizing, prioritizing, searching through, and categorizing over thirty years of collecting documents, photographs, and various handwritten notes and letters stored in boxes throughout our home would be a challenge, especially when much of the information is in Swedish.

My goal was to be accurate, concise, and provide myself and the reader the sources of information which others could research and further develop. Thus I set out to put a footnote with each identified fact (birth, death, education, marriage, employment, community activities, place of residence, etc.).

### Things I have learnt

In going through this detailed process I have learned:

- \* human error was frequently discovered in both my recording and verifying information
- \* that frequently I had made erroneous conclusions re dates, events, places, and relationships
- \* how in my enthusiasm of discovering materials I often overlooked subtle clues necessitating me to read carefully again the documents, analyze the evidence, and put together the sequence of events

\* to make new linkages with previously thought of unrelated data and in so doing has led to previously overlooked sources and research findings

\* to crosscheck specific information with multiple sources which led to more comprehensive fact-finding whereby increasing my understanding of the individual's life experiences in an historical context of events

\* that, when I found a document that needed further clarification, to recheck this with the original source.

### The necessity of notes

The process of using footnotes is a tedious time-consuming task and the importance of using them in writing genealogy is paramount. The more self-disciplined I was to consistently follow a specific researching and writing protocol for documentation the more insight I gained from the information I had been keeping for many years. The knowledge that the information is now more accurate and verifiable is a comforting feeling. Doing one's genealogy is an ongoing evolving journey.

### A sample of my documentation

This is a sample from my grandfather and the format I found useful (I eventually documented over 100 footnotes in ten pages of text) to describe his life:

### Martin (Svensson) Swanson "Papa"

**Born:** July 20, 1872-Höganäs, Sweden-Bruksförsamling ("bruk"-factory section) parish, Malmöhus län (Skåne-Province).<sup>1</sup> Died November 16, 1956 (Worcester, Mass.).<sup>2</sup> Buried in New Swedish Cemetery (Worcester, Massachusetts).<sup>3</sup> In the *Husförhörslängd* (catechism record) named Martin Johannesson Svensson.<sup>4</sup>

**Parents:** Johannes Svensson (worked as a *Kolhuggare*-coal cutter employee #276 ) and Botilla Qvistberg (father Jonas Qvistberg worked as a miner).<sup>5</sup>

**Entered United States:** Declared plan to leave Sweden on October 6, 1890 (*Flyttningbetyg*-emigration record of altered residence issued by the parish).<sup>6</sup> Emigrated October 13, 1890, from Gruvan 235 (lot no.) to America.<sup>7</sup> Departed around October 16, 1890, from Copenhagen, Denmark- giving Worcester, Mass., as his destination.<sup>8</sup> The *Husförhörslängd* collaborates this information.<sup>9</sup> Arrived November 2, 1890, (location unknown) Worcester, Mass., on November 4, 1890<sup>10</sup>. Application for Naturalization October 11, 1897.<sup>11</sup> Citizenship granted April 29, 1898, (vol. #11 record #30 U.S. District Court-Brooklyn, New York)<sup>12</sup>

**Married:** Ellen Maria Larson February 14, 1903, (Worcester, Massachusetts)<sup>13</sup>.

Marriage License February 14,

1903-E.J. Nystrom, Clergyman, Svenska Lutherska Gethsemane Church, Worcester, Mass.

## Note:

An invaluable source I have frequently used in organizing and recording my writing in a consistent manner is: Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997.

**Editor's note:** My feeling is that does not matter if you use footnotes or endnotes, as long as you use notes to document your work. So here comes the author's notes as endnotes, which is easier to handle in Pagemaker.

## Endnotes:

- 1) Demografisk Databas Södra Sverige < <http://www.ddss.nu>>, downloaded 10 June 2003, Lund, Sweden & 1872 *Födelse- och Dop Bok* (birth book) - Höganäs, Sweden.
- 2) Martin Swanson, death record no. 10280, City Clerk's Office Worcester, Mass., & Obituary *The Worcester Daily Telegram* November 17, 1956, p. 18 - Worcester, Mass.
- 3) Obituary in *The Worcester Daily Telegram* November 17, 1956, p. 18 & Swedish Cemetery Corporation Records (buried November 16, 1956) - Worcester, Mass. & Eric J. Salomonsson, William O. Hultgren & Philip C. Becker, *Swedes of Greater Worcester*, Arcadia Publishing, p. 127 - Charleston, South Carolina.
- 4) *Husförhörslängd* Record, electronic communication to author June 13, 2004, from Carin Olofsson, Höganäs, Sweden.
- 5) *Demografisk Databas Södra Sverige* <<http://www.ddss.nu>>, downloaded 10 June 2003 - Lund, Sweden.

6) *Flyttningsbetyg* Record, O.J. Has-slom, pastor - Höganäs, Sweden & *Flyttningslängd* (migration register) p. 205, electronic communication to author from Elisabeth Thorsell March 18, 2008 - Järfälla, Sweden

7) *Emibas* migration file ID Höganäs M 1890 047 (Household Examination Roll, p. 205) via letter to author from *Landsarkivet i Lund*, February 23, 2004 & May 7, 2008 Lund, Sweden

8) *DDD Emigration Databas* <<http://www.emiarch.dk/home>> downloaded 14 October 2005, The record indicates Name of ship: "Indirekte" meaning departed from a non-Danish port, probably Germany or England, control no. 640000 - Aalborg, Denmark  
**[Editor's note:** The ship's name is not listed here]

9) *Husförhörslängd* Record, electronic communication to author June 13, 2004, from Carin Olofsson - Höganäs, Sweden.

10) Zion Lutheran Church Membership Records, October 22, 1916 (microfilm) - Worcester, Mass.

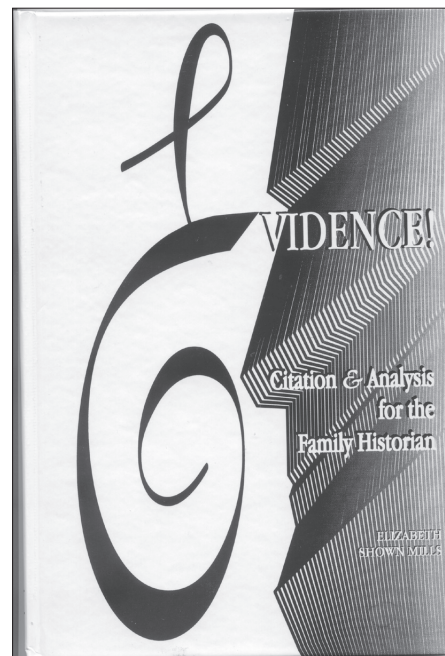
11) U.S. District Court, p. 3 vol. 11 record 30, microfilm index of names, <41//MI 674//256>, National Archives, New York, New York - Brooklyn, New York.

12) District Court for the Eastern District of New York, April 29, 1898 (original copy) - New York.

13) Marriage License February 14, 1903 - E.J. Nystrom, Clergyman, Svenska Lutherska Gethsemane Church - Worcester, Mass.

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Ms. Mills has since *Evidence! also published the huge Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace!* (2007, 800+ pages).

## The Olof Krans Museum in danger

According to an article in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* from 26 August 2008, the *Olof Krans Museum* in Bishop Hill, in Henry County, Ill., is in danger of being closed. The reason is said to be budget cuts, and they are accepted by the Illinois governor, Rod Blagojevich, whose predecessor inaugurated the museum in 1988.

It would certainly be a bad thing for the Bishop Hill tourism if the museum is closed, as the pictures of Olof Karns give a vivid view of all the old pioneers, followers of the "prophet" Erik Jansson, who came there in the late 1840s.

Also one would think that it probably is not a large sum that is needed to keep the museum open, and it is indeed a vital part of the Bishop Hill experience.