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Elisabeth Thorsell

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A condition for a young man to emigrate

A ticket was not the only necessary document to have for young men to leave Sweden

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

The Swedish government saw during the 1880s that the avalanche of young men leaving Sweden could pose serious problems for the Swedish army in the future. If so many young men left, who were to be the soldiers in the Swedish army in the future?

On 2 Dec. 1886 a decree from King Oscar II and his government stated that young men that wanted to leave the country must have his testimony of removal (*flyttningsbetyg*) from his parish priest and also a consent from the local military authority.

On 17 Feb. 1887 another decree stated which procedure the future emigrant had to follow to get the consent. He had to write to the commander of the local military area where he had earlier mustered, but addressed to the King. With this letter he must enclose a testimony from the parish, and a testimony that he had the necessary funds to emigrate, signed by parents or neighbors.

When the local military commander had got all necessary information he was to send the papers, and information, if the applicant had done his national service, to the Department of Defense, which after the decision was returned to the local commander and sent to the future emigrant.

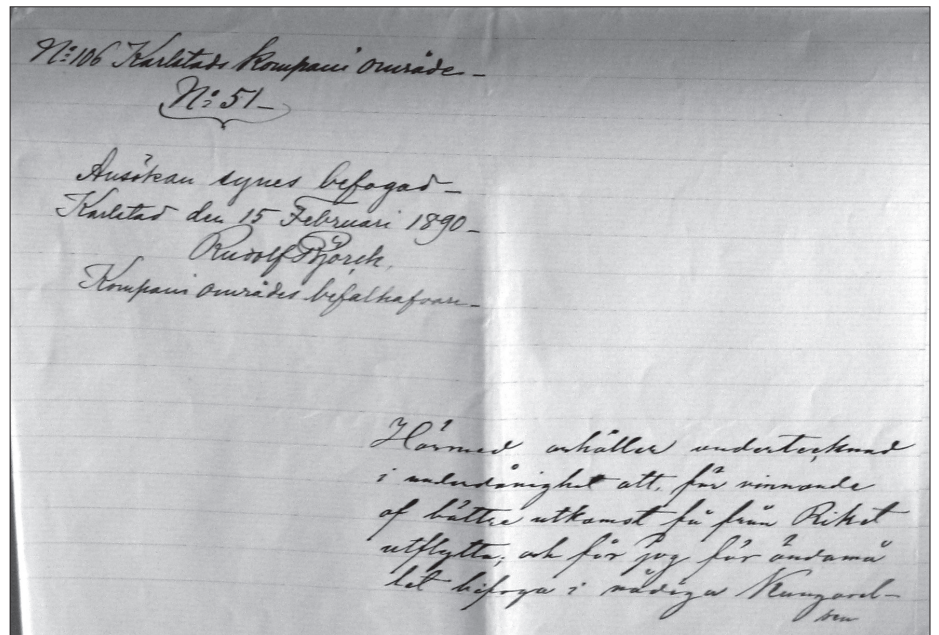
This is the explanation of the phrase *Kungl. Majts tillstånd att emigrera* or something similar that can be found in the field for remarks (*anmärkningar*) in the clerical surveys in 1887 and later.

Some of these documents might still be found in the Swedish *Riksarkivet* (National Archives), which has not yet been explored. By chance I happened to find some applications from Övre Ullerud this summer. They are kept in the archive of the parish (*kyrkoarkiv*), which is kept in the Re-

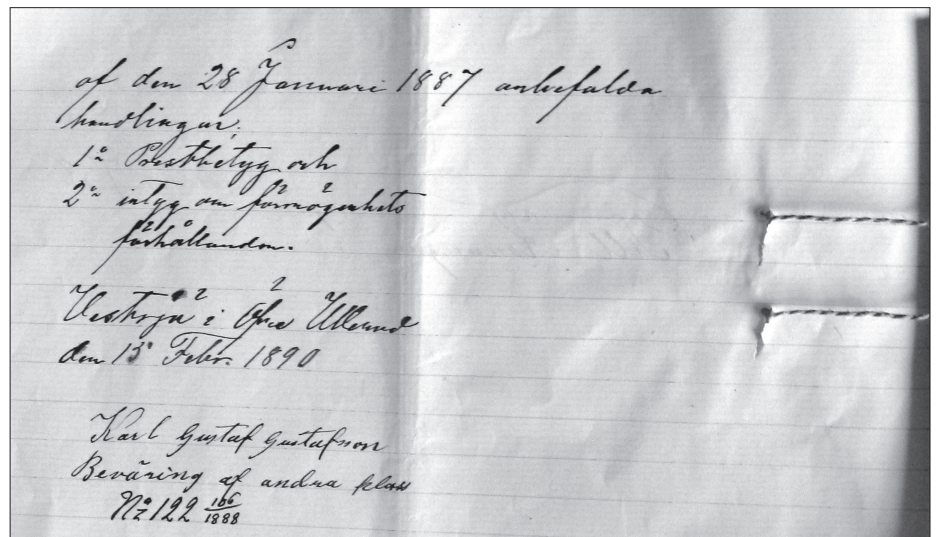
gional archives for Värmland (*Värmlandsarkiv*) in Karlstad.

The example concerns Karl Gustaf Gustafsson, born 9 March 1867 in Övre Ullerud, who in 1890 was a farmhand at Västsjö in Övre Ullerud.

He got his consent and left his home on 26 March 1890 and on 18 April he left Göteborg with a ticket for Chicago. What happened later to him is not known.



Document #1 and #2. Front and back of Karl Gustaf's application. All documents translated on page 24.



Att Värnpliktige Karl Gustaf Gustafsson
från Westjöns församling
född 29 Mars 1867-jättöfjin
eger godkänd kristendomsksamhet
är oförhindrad att begå H. H. Nattevard
samt åtnjuter medborgerligt förtroende,
af som fullgjort 1^{sta} af 2^{dra} års vapenöfning
varder härmed på begäran intygadt för ämbets- och Nådigt Lieftännd
att som offrigt från riket Öfre Ulleruds församling
af Wernlands län den 14 Februari 1890 mittis,
fol. 424.
Pastor.
Pastors-Ämbetet
Öfre Ullerud, Wernlands län

Karlstad, Bjälmar Petersson & Cois förlag.

The Swedish National Service:

From 1812 there was a new military system besides the old *indelningsverket* (allotment soldiers) as the existing army was not supposed to be strong enough in the number of soldiers. From that year every man from age 20 to age 25 had to do his National service (*beväringstjänst*).

Up to 1872 it was possible to hire somebody to do one's service. In 1882 the time a man should serve was increased to 12 years, eight years in the army and four years in the militia, later augmented to 20 years. The actual time spent in training as a soldier was 90 days, 68 days the first year after mustering and 22 days the next year. If there was no threat of war, then they had done all that was required of them.

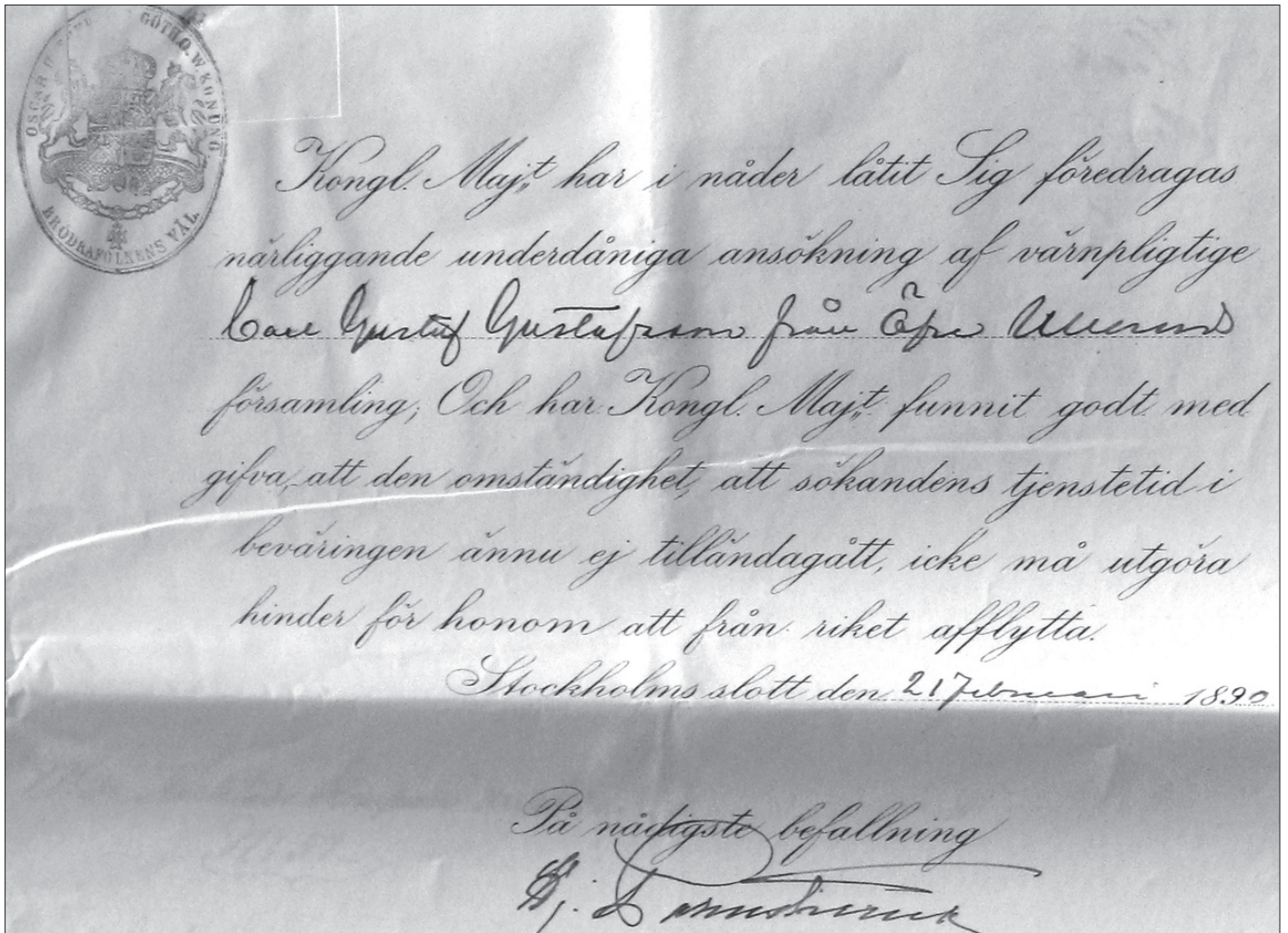
In 1901 the old *indelningsverket* was abandoned, and the new army consisted of the young draftees. The military training was prolonged to about a year, with some repeat meetings in following years.

(Source: Nordisk Familjebok 1876-)

Document #3. The pastor's testimony.

Att värnpliktige, Karl Gustaf Gustafsson
från Westjöns församling i Öfre Ullerud för oss är väl
mer bekant, ^{och} är i den ekonomiska ställning
att han utan risk kan företaga resa till
Norr-Amerika intygad af underskrifade,
Nykilby i Öfre Ullerud den 13^{de} Febr. 1890.
L. Aug. Larsson Elias Jönsson
Herrmansbrukare hemmanägare

Document #4. Testimony from the neighbors about Karl Gustaf's financial situation.



Document #5. The royal consent to emigrate.

Roots on the Åland Islands?

The islands of Åland are situated between Sweden and Finland, and are a mostly self-governing part of Finland, with their capital at Mariehamn (Maarianhamina) on the main island. The total population is about 25.000 with some 10.000 in Mariehamn, almost all Swedish-speaking.

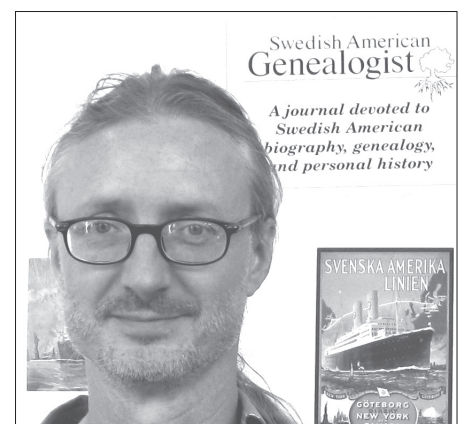
There are a number of parishes there: *Brändö, Eckerö, Finström, Föglö, Geta, Hammarland, Jomala, Kumlinge, Kökar, Lemland, Lumparland, Mariehamn, Saltvik, Sottunga, Sund, and Vårdö.*

As these islands have belonged to Sweden since the early Middle Ages or even further back in time, they have the same kinds of church records as mainland Sweden and Finland, starting in the 1600s. There are often gaps for the period of 1714 to

1720, as Åland was then occupied by the Russians during the war, often called the "Great Wrath" (*Den stora ureden*). During this time most of the Åland inhabitants fled to Sweden to escape the enemy, and thus no records were kept, as there was nobody there to keep them.

After the peace treaty of Nystad in 1721 the people returned home and tried to pick up their lives again.

Persons with roots in Åland can be very lucky, as there exists a series of books, in *Swedish*, that gives the genealogy for most people in a number of the Åland parishes. The books are called *Ålands Släktregister* and have so far been compiled for the parishes of *Lumparland, Kumlinge, Brändö, Vårdö, Sund, Sottunga, Lemland, and Saltvik*. Usually they



start in the 1600s and goes to the present time.

The author is *Håkan Skogsjö*, a well-known Swedish genealogist and writer. He has a wide experience of other sources than church records, which shows in his books.

His web site is
<http://www.bokhandeln.ax/index.htm>