

12-1-2007

Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



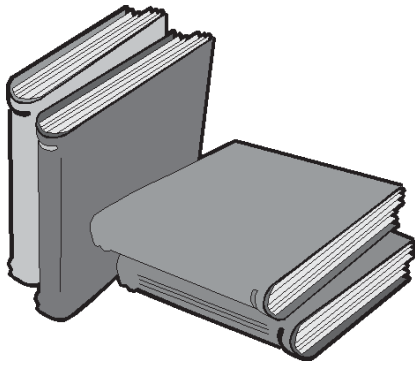
Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2007) "Book Reviews," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 27 : No. 4 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol27/iss4/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Swedish American Genealogist* by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.



Book Reviews

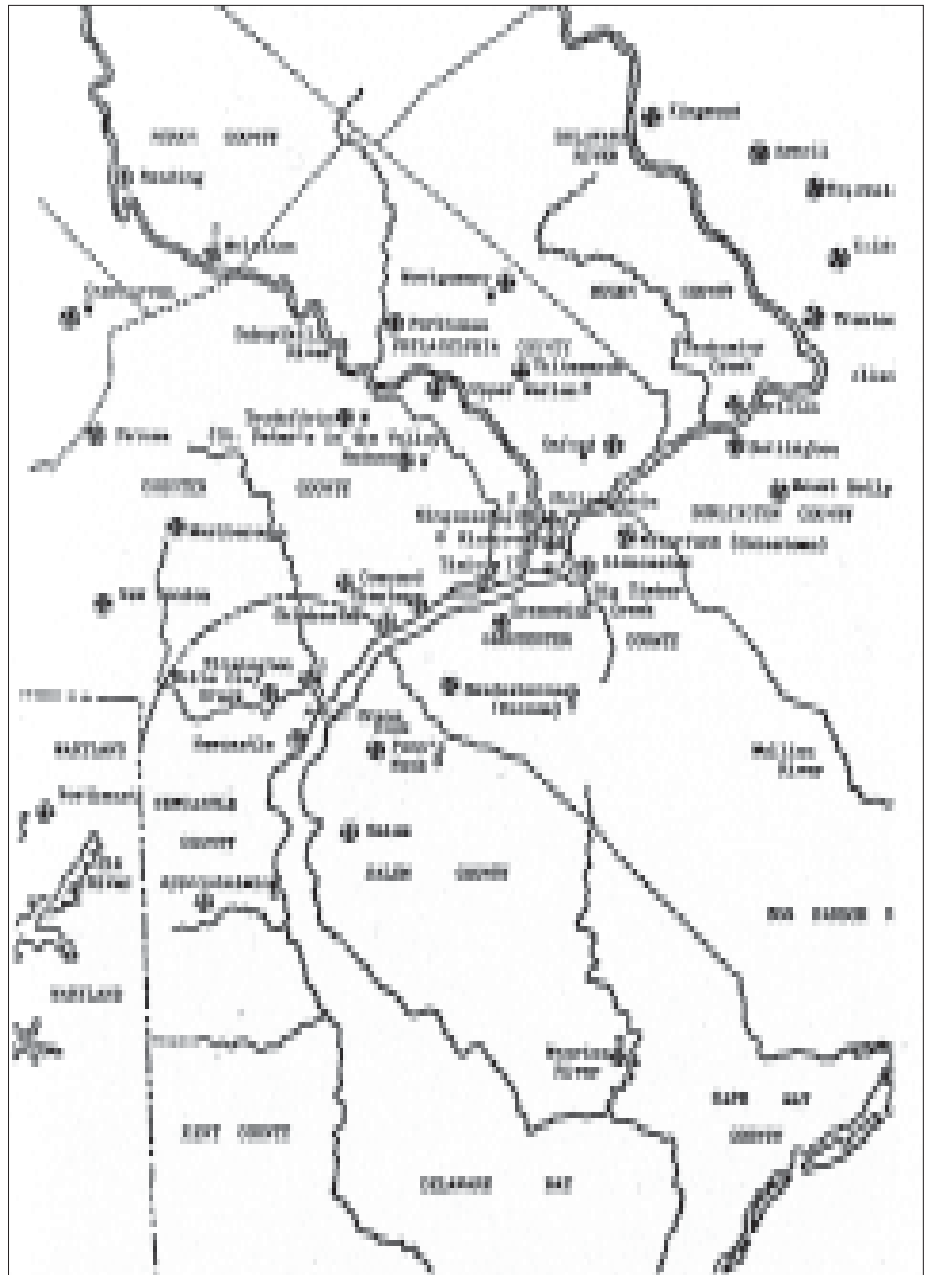
Here you will find information about interesting books on the immigration experience, genealogical manuals, books on Swedish customs, and much more. We welcome contacts with SAG readers, suggestions on books to review perhaps. If you want to review a book yourself, please contact the Book Review Editor, Dennis L. Johnson, at <1_viking@verizon.net> or Dennis Johnson, 174 Stauffer Road, Bucktown Crossing, Pottstown, PA 19465, so he knows what you are working on.

New Sweden churches

Colonial Records of the Swedish Churches in Pennsylvania, Volume III, by Peter Stebbins Craig, Editor, and Kim-Eric Williams, Assistant Editor, Swedish Colonial Society, Philadelphia, 2007, hardcover, 301 pages, Swedish Colonial Society, 916 Swanson Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19147, \$25.00, (\$20.00 for members).

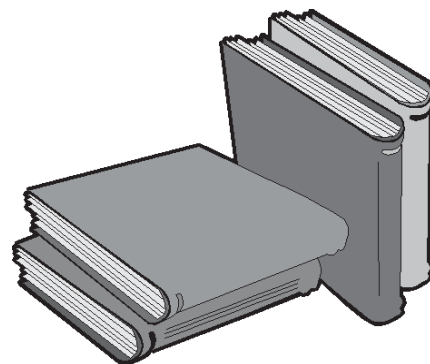
Continuing the series begun in 2006, this book is the third in a projected series of volumes intended to collect in one place, in English, the documented history of the Old Swedes' churches of Pennsylvania in the colonial period and up to 1786. (See previous review of Volumes I and II in SAG, December, 2006.) The first volume covered the period from 1646 to 1696 and the first log churches built by the Swedish Lutheran colonists in the Delaware Valley. The second volume concentrated on the Rudman years, 1697-1702, when the first new pastors were sent by the Church of Sweden to the new colony, pastors who undertook the building of the first permanent brick churches in Philadelphia and in Wilmington, DE.

The new publication centers around the period of Pastor *Andreas Sandel* (1671-1744), who was sent by the Bishop of Skara, Jesper Svedberg, to replace Pastor Andreas Rudman in 1702. (Svedberg was the father of Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedish scholar and mystic, whose



Anglican, Swedish and Welsh churches in the greater Delaware River Valley area in colonial times. Swedish churches are designated with "S", Welsh with "W." (Map from *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Vol. VII, No. 2, June 1938)

Book Reviews



followers were to found the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in 1778.) Pastor Sandel served the newly built Gloria Dei Church in "Wicaco," now part of Philadelphia, for seventeen years. During these years he built up his own congregation, supported the new congregations in New Jersey and Delaware, established strong relations with neighboring Episcopal congregations, served many outlying Swedes as far as the New Jersey coast and counties to the west. He became an important personage in Philadelphia during his time in New Sweden. Shortly before returning to Sweden to become pastor at Hedemora, in Dalarna, Sweden, Pastor Sandel took steps to buy additional land around Gloria Dei, thereby assuring that the church was well protected from threats of crowding by residential or industrial buildings in rapidly growing Philadelphia.

This account of Andreas Sandel's pastorate in New Sweden is told through his own diary, his church records, and various related letters and documents, most of which were translated from their original Swedish by Kim-Eric Williams. These are

all arranged in chronological order to present a clear sequence of events.

It is interesting that Sandel's pastorate in New Sweden roughly coincided with the reign of king Carl XII, who spent most of his reign out of his country engaging in war with Poland and Russia. After his defeat at Poltava in 1709, the King spent five years in exile among the Turks. During that period, however, his efforts to assist the churches in New Sweden by furnishing Bibles, psalm-books, and in appointing new pastors continued through his chancellors in Stockholm and, especially, Bishop Svedberg of Skara.

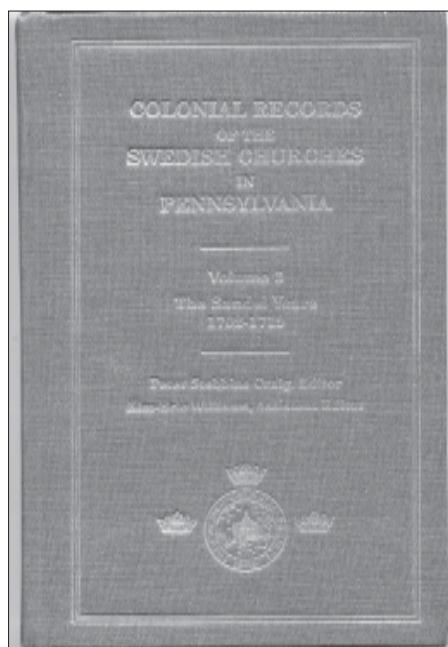
Through these newly translated words of Pastor Sandel, and other letters and documents, a vivid picture of life in the Delaware Valley just over three hundred years ago is given to the reader. While we now take for granted the comforts of modern life and travel, conditions at the time were harsh, difficult, and time consuming. The journey to or from Sweden could take three months or more by sailing ship, amid the dangers and hazard of ocean travel. An exchange of letters or important news required many months as well. Local travel was equally difficult, as described in Pastor Sandel's diary of trips to Maryland; Christina, DE; New Jersey; or the interior. Travel was by horse or on foot on primitive roads and trails through forests, swamps, and river or stream crossings. It became a major advance when the old ferry across the Schuylkill was replaced by one large enough to carry a few horses. Until then, only a few people could ride in the ferry and their horses had to swim alongside to cross the river. There being no bridges across the Delaware River, Swedes living in New Jersey finally petitioned to start their own church at Raccoon, to avoid the dangers of crossing by boat or ferry in bad weather.

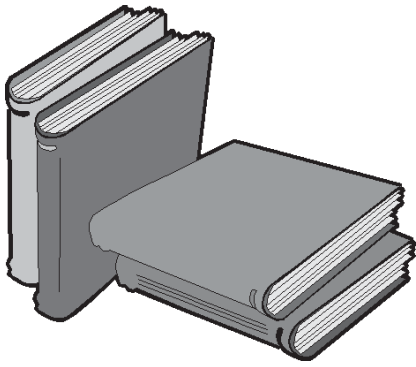
Included among the translated

records are many church documents and other information recorded by Pastor Sandel, including the annual church accounts of receipts and expenses. His diary reveals some of the difficulties of collecting pledges from many of the well-intentioned Swedes, not only for his own salary, but for special needs of the church. All accounts are in pounds, shillings, and pence, the currency of the day under the administration of the English governor, William Penn, and his lieutenant, John Logan. Correspondence reveals disputes between the Swedes and the governors about the "quit-rents" (real estate taxes) paid at the time, usually in bushels of grain per 100 acres of land owned. Early surveys were also very imprecise and numerous disputes occurred over the amount of land owned and property boundaries.

Relations between the native American people and the Swedes are described in some detail, as are comments about their habits and practices. The natives were found to be generally friendly and peaceable, but were becoming fewer in numbers due to diseases and migration to the west. The Swedes generally got along well with their English neighbors and even began to intermarry with them and with a few Dutch in the area. Pastor Sandel was very friendly with his English counterparts in the Anglican Church, exchanging pulpits on numerous occasions or at times allowing them to use the Gloria Dei church when needed. He felt that their theology was most similar to his Lutheran, but had less good to find in some of the other denominations in Philadelphia at the time.

The period of Pastor Sandel's





Book Reviews

pastorate was some sixty to eighty years after the arrival of the first Swedish settlers beginning in 1638. By his time, his congregation consisted mainly of the second and third generations from the initial settlement. Swedes were growing in numbers due to large families, although deaths were also numerous among children, mothers in childbirth, and younger people, as well as the old. Swedes were also beginning to intermarry with their non-Swedish neighbors. Many of these marriages were performed by Pastor Sandel, both at Gloria Dei and at other Swedish churches in the area. Some of his parishioners were becoming more affluent and more involved in colonial affairs, while others moved westward or south to Delaware and Maryland, or to New Jersey seeking land of their own.

For the serious scholar or historian of New Sweden and colonial Philadelphia, this book is another valuable resource to assist in their research. The book is well documented with the sources used, and the list of contents, indexes of place names and of personal names, a sizeable bibliography; all will be a great help to the researcher. Many of these names and places are known by more than one name, or the name or spelling has changed over the years. The editors have gone to exceptional lengths to assist the interested reader in clarifying the exact person or place referred to. Many forefather members of the Swedish Colonial Society will find references to their own ancestors in these records of the activities of the time.

But for me, and most general readers, the most interesting aspect

is the portrait provided mainly through Pastor Sandel's diary of the times and conditions in New Sweden and the lives of these settlers some sixty years and more before the Declaration of Independence; a portrait provided through the direct words of Pastor Sandel and others, now translated into the English language. Many thanks are due to the immense efforts of the editors, The Swedish Colonial Society, and the sponsors (William Penn Foundation, Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, Tatnall Hillman, the Barra Foundation, and Gloria Dei Church) who have contributed to help make this series of books possible.

Dennis L. Johnson

Three Quick Takes

Several slim volumes relating to Swedish American genealogy that may be of interest to readers of SAG have crossed my desk in recent weeks. Each in its own way gives a look at one slice of Swedish American life in different locations in the United States.

Have You Ever Lived in a Mining Town? Winona A. Laird, Ex Libris Corp., 2007, 47 pages, softcover, illustrated.

Subtitled "The Life and Spirit of a Wonderful Woman," this little book is an account of the life of the author's grandmother, Anna Robertson, born in 1890 in Park City, Utah. Her parents were Charles Robertson, who immigrated from Stockholm, Sweden, in the 1880's, and her mother, Hilda Matilda Lawrence, who

immigrated from Söderåkra, Kalmar, Sweden, with several brothers and sisters. Charles and Hilda married in 1888, after meeting in Salt Lake City. They lived and worked in Park City, Victor, Hollywood, and nearby mining towns all their lives. Charles Robertson was a worker in the silver mines in and around these mountain communities.

This book was written from many notes, a short account of her life, many stories told by Anna to her granddaughter Winona, and handwritten notes by grandmother Anna and discovered by the author after her death. It is a fascinating tale of life in a remote Utah mining town, early hardships, fond memories, and memories of other relatives and friends in the life of this pioneer family. Photographs of ancestors and other family members are included. Winona Laird now lives in Seattle, Washington.

Swedish Chicago, Paul Michael Peterson, Arcadia Publishing, Chicago, IL, 2003, 128 pages, softcover, illustrated, Arcadia, \$19.99. (www.arcadiapublishing.com)

Andersonville and North Park neighborhoods were the centers of Swedish settlement in Chicago the 19th and early 20th centuries. They continue today with a strong Swedish flavor. The Swedish American Museum Center, North Park University, many Swedish American shops, stores, and bakeries, and other elements continue today to identify the strong Swedish heritage of these Chicago neighborhoods. This book is one of a series published by Arcadia celebrating the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country.

Paul Michael Peterson is an English teacher and lifelong Chicago resident whose grandparents immigrated from Sweden. He compiled a visual history of the Swedish community in Chicago, a book of photo-

Book Reviews

graphs with a minimum of text. Introductions to each chapter and brief photo captions identify the families and places shown. The time period is from about 1880 up to the present. The book is organized mainly by subject, including chapters on The Early Years, Family Life, Work, Tradition and Community, Notable Swedes in Chicago, Arts and Culture, and concludes with a section on Swedish Chicago in the present day. Local landmarks shown are Erickson Jewelers, Nelson Funeral Chapel, Borg Flowers, Tre Kronor Restaurant, the Sweden Shop, Svea Restaurant, Erickson's Delicatessen, Wikstrom's Gourmet Foods, and many others. The book is a fine tribute to the Swedes and Swedish life and culture in one of America's largest cities.

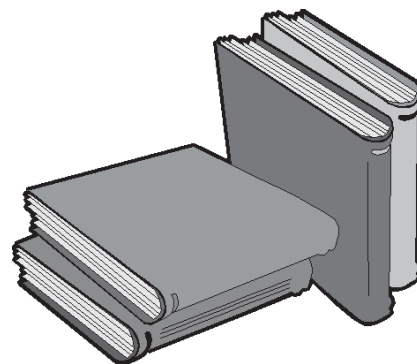
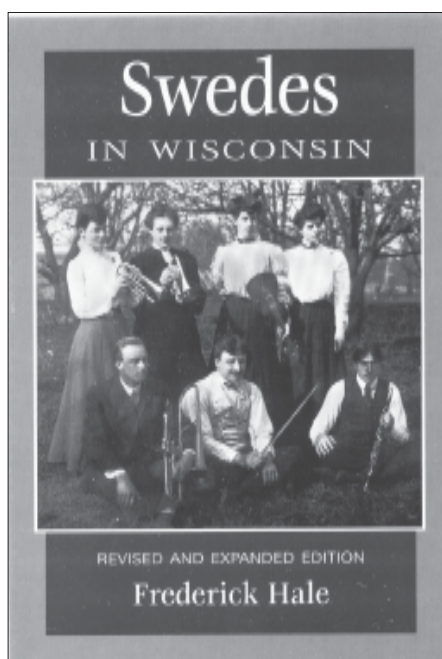
Swedes in Wisconsin, Frederick Hale, The Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2002, Madison, WI, 72 pages, softcover, illustrated, (www.wisconsinhistory.org/publications), \$9.95 plus postage.

As in neighboring Illinois and Minnesota, Swedes began migrating into Wisconsin as early as 1841. The first recorded immigrants were a group of six Swedes and one hunting dog that sailed from Gävle to New York in 1841. Unlike most immigrants, three of the six were graduates of Uppsala University. It is claimed by the author that they were to establish the first Swedish colony in the United States since the New Sweden colony in the Delaware Valley in 1638. With no destination in mind, they were advised to head for the Midwest and traveled by the usual early route, up the Hudson River and through the Erie Canal into the Great Lakes toward Chicago. Hearing encouraging reports about the Wisconsin Territory, they debarked instead in Milwaukee. They settled about 25 miles west of Milwaukee, near Pine Lake. This group was led

by Gustav Unonius, and they called their little settlement New Uppsala.

For various reasons this settlement did not thrive. By the time Frederika Bremer visited the area in 1850, she found only a half dozen Swedish families living there "in low circumstances." Unonius went on to attend a local seminary and ministered to congregations in eastern Wisconsin and in Chicago before returning to Sweden in 1858. Many of this first group of settlers, accustomed to more cultured surroundings in their home country, found themselves unable to cope with the rigors of frontier life. They were soon replaced by the mass migration of Swedes beginning in the 1860's and later. Many of these bypassed Wisconsin and settled in Minnesota. These farmers were better equipped to deal with the harsh conditions found there, and most settled into farming.

Quite a few of these later Swedes did settle in Wisconsin, however, mainly in the northern and western counties. They founded towns such as Stockholm, Trade Lake, Grantsburg, Lund, and Falun, and many settled in Marinette and in Superior.



This volume chronicles many of these settlements and communities, accompanied by a number of photographs of the early settlers' families and their homesteads. The book discusses the politics, work, religion, and other aspects of Wisconsin's Swedish pioneers and some of the prominent people that the Swedish migration produced. Nearly twenty pages near the end of the book are devoted to reprinting vivid descriptions of Wisconsin territory by Frederika Bremer from her 1850s diaries of her travels in this region.

This is an engaging, if brief, account of the lives and times of early Swedes who settled in Wisconsin in the 19th century, and serves as a useful introduction to the Wisconsin experience, for students of the great migration and for the general reader.

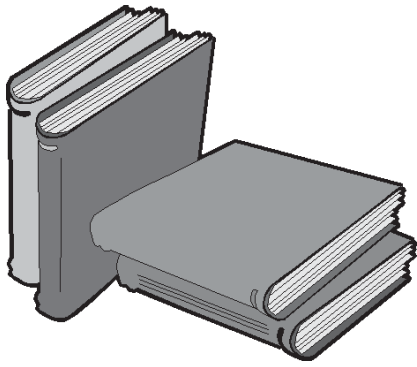
Dennis L. Johnson

A man of adventure

The Wildcatter, A Portrait of Robert O. Anderson, by Kenneth Harris, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York, 1987, Hardcover, 180 pages, Ill. (Out of Print, a few used copies available at Amazon.com, \$28.88.)

An obituary in the *Wall Street Journal* caught my eye recently. The *Journal* regularly runs a few obituaries of persons once prominent in business and government who have died. The Anderson name, although common in the U.S., is often likely to be Swedish American in origin.

Reading on, the first sentence began: "Brought up in a staid Swed-



Book Reviews

ish Chicago banking family, Robert O. Anderson grew up to be a Stetson-sporting oil man and rancher..." Needless to say, I read on. The three column obituary summarized Anderson's career and noted that he died Dec. 2, 2007, at age 90 of "complications arising from a fall."

My interest was now aroused, and I turned to the Internet for more information about this prominent Swedish American. A biography was written about him twenty years ago by Kenneth Harris, a leading British writer. I was able to find a used copy on Amazon.com, and the book was soon in my hands to tell me more about this remarkable man. I soon learned that Bob Anderson, of modest beginnings in Chicago, began with a part ownership of a small oil refinery in Arizona with only a dozen employees. He went on to become a "wildcatter," a term for men who search for oil at great risk and occasionally strike black gold. Through ownership of a small company, he went on through a series of mergers and acquisitions to build up the seventh largest oil company in the U.S. Along the way and starting with no land at all, Anderson became the largest individual rancher in the U.S., owning nearly a million acres in Texas, New Mexico, and Wyoming. He became prominent in politics and later philanthropic pursuits, all well detailed in *The Wildcatter*.

According to the author, Bob Anderson's grandfather, Karl August Anderson, was born in about 1861 in Husby, Sweden. His father died when he was age 10 and Karl August was raised by his widowed mother, who died in 1880. He was then an apprentice at the foundry of Huseby in

Skatelöv and learning the trade of master pattern maker. Soon after, in 1884, he married Augusta Mardh, and moved in 1886 to Helsingborg. (According to the Household Examination Records, p. 2773, for Helsingborg, Karl August Andersson was born Feb. 6, 1861, in Skatelöv, [Smål.]. He was married to Augusta Catharina Mård, born June 5 1859 in Skatelöv.) "Husby" is a spelling mistake for "Huseby", a manorial estate in Skatelöv, sometimes owned jointly with the nearby iron works (*bruk*). *Emibas* also shows that they emigrated to America from Helsingborg, living there at Lilla Möllenvången, Helsingborgs Stadsförs., (Skåne). Two sons were born in Sweden, Hugo's older brother Carl Bernhard, b. June 21, 1885, in Skatelöv, and Hugo August, b. Apr. 20, 1887, in Helsingborg. The family immigrated Nov. 13, 1888.

Karl's sister had immigrated to Chicago and, four years later in 1889, he joined her, found work, and within six months sent for his wife and two sons, Karl Jr. and Hugo, in Sweden. (Karl and Augusta would later have three daughters born in the U.S.) His second son, Hugo, was only a year and a half old at the time, and would later become the father of Robert O. Anderson. Both Karl and Karl Jr. became Charles and Charles Jr. after they came to Chicago. The family attended the Evangelical Covenant Church in Chicago.

Hugo was an ambitious boy, loved to read, and had a newspaper route and odd jobs by age 10. Small for his age, he left school when he was 14 to help support his family. A friend from his church helped him get a job as a bellboy at the First National Bank of Chicago. This humble position, aided by his energy, intelligence, and hard work, led to rapid advancement at the Bank. Hugo retired at age 70 as First Executive Vice President after a long and distinguished career, one of the better-known bankers in

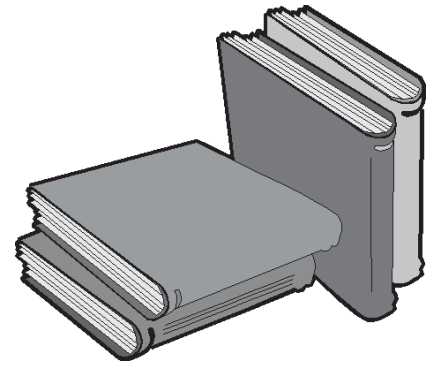


Robert O. Anderson in Aspen, Colorado, in 1966. (photo by Franz Berko).

the U.S. He also had a great reputation for voluntary work among many institutions in Chicago, including North Park College and Seminary, where he established a Chair for Swedish Studies. Hugo died at age 97, having been awarded honors by three Swedish kings. His intense pride in being an American earned him some detractors among fellow Swedish Americans, however, because he would not support continued use of the Swedish language; he felt that this might delay the assimilation of Swedes.

Bob Anderson's mother, Hilda Nelson, was born in Chicago. Hugo met her while she was singing in the church choir. When they became engaged, Hilda worked three more years to help him complete night school before they married in 1914. They had four children, their second son Bob was born in 1917. Bob had one older brother, Hugo Jr., one younger, Donald, and a youngest sister, Helen. The children were teenagers in the early 1930's, as the family suffered financial losses during the Great Depression, but recovered as the economy began to improve. Hugo Anderson firmly be-

Book Reviews



lieved in a good education and they chose to live near the University of Chicago campus where the college also had the University Elementary and High Schools. These “laboratory schools” run by the college used University faculty and their students were largely faculty children, consequently standards were very high. Bob and their other children attended these schools.

Bob did well in high school and, in 1935, he was awarded a four-year scholarship at the University of Chicago. He was given free choice of a course of study, and he concentrated mostly in the humanities. While in college Bob met Barbara Phelps, a descendant on both sides of colonists to America whose ancestry dated to the early 17th century. Bob and Barbara were married on his graduation day, two hours after receiving his university degree. They had a great deal in common, both loved the outdoors, their families got along well, and they shared many other interests. Bob was 22, Barbara 20 years old, when they married.

Bob had many interests, but those in science and technology attracted him most. His father had become an expert in financing high-risk oil producers, of which there were many small independent operators. Bob spent a summer vacation after his sophomore year working with a pipeline crew in Texas, at a company which was a banking client of his father. On graduation, he went to work for the same company to learn the ropes of the oil business. In 1941, his father helped him finance a stake in a small oil company, MALCO Oil, which operated a small refinery in New Mexico. By January, 1942, Bob and Barbara, with their first child, Katherine, drove from Chicago to Artesia, New Mexico, and settled into a small stucco house in Artesia.

The Wildcatters goes on to describe in great detail the amazing business career of Bob Anderson, beginning

with MALCO Oil Company. Over the next 15 years, he bought and built up other refineries in the Southwest, began wildcatting for new fields, and in 1957 discovered a large oil field in New Mexico. By 1963, he had merged his company into Atlantic Refining Company, then in Philadelphia. Within two years, he became Chairman and Chief Executive of Atlantic, then led the company through two more mergers, first with Richfield Oil Co. of Los Angeles to form ARCO, and then with Sinclair Oil to form the nation’s seventh largest oil company. By the 1970’s, Anderson led a consortium of oil companies to find and develop the Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, oil field and pipeline against strong obstacles by Congress and public opposition. Later activities included efforts to develop oil sands in Canada, and to acquire several other companies including Anaconda Copper and a solar cell company. He sought retirement by 1981, but stayed on at ARCO as CEO until 1986. He did not retire to a rocking chair, however, but revived his old Hondo Oil Co. in 1989 and took on other refinery and wildcatting ventures. Most did not pan out, however, and he was forced to sell quite a bit of land to return to financial health. He remained a major shareholder of ARCO, however, and supported a new merger with BP Amoco in 1999.

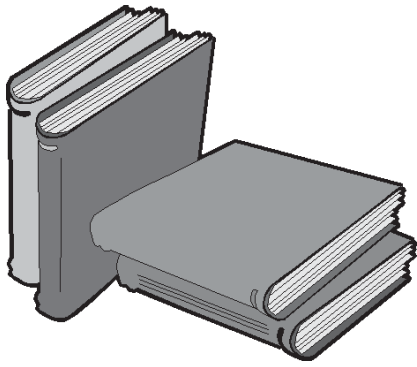
Like his father, Hugo Anderson, Bob in later years became a strong financial supporter of several philanthropic institutions. He financed and served as president and then chairman for 30 years of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, founded to address world problems. He supported environmental groups, and rescued two failing publications, a British newspaper named *The Observer*, in 1977, and *Harper’s* magazine, in 1980. He also helped found several other study groups, including the Worldwatch Institute, and the John Muir Institute of the En-

vironment in California. As a rancher, Bob ran as many as 30,000 head of cattle and 12,000 sheep in three states. He was also a collector of Indian art. Anderson was active in Republican party politics, serving in many nonelected positions in the party. He favored nuclear power and a smaller federal government. He was twice asked to fill an unexpired term in the U.S. Senate, twice asked to serve as ambassador to Great Britain, and once offered the position of Secretary of the Treasury. He was even a guest at a Royal Concert given for him by the King of Sweden.

Bob Anderson was married to Barbara Phelps for 68 years, and together they raised seven children, five daughters and two sons. At the time of his death he had 20 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. He loved the outdoors, riding, fishing, and hunting and loved to host large groups of friends at his Circle Diamond Ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. A very non-typical oil tycoon, Bob had a diversity of interests ranging from protecting the environment, raising a new breed of cattle, favoring higher taxes on the oil industry, and wide-ranging research. He liked to wear a Stetson Hat, a bow tie, and cowboy boots.

Like his father, he supported Swedish-American causes, and made donations to North Park College and was a board member of Swedish American Council and a member of the Royal Round Table. He was certainly a giant among his peers, and one of the most, if not the most, successful Swedish-American to find his future in the United States.

This book gives a remarkable, if incomplete, story of this remarkable



Book Reviews

Swedish *Who is Who* 2007 A famous shipwreck!

man. The author, Kenneth Harris, was a close friend and admirer, but was not able to convince Bob that this book should be written for a long time. Finally, in 1987, it was completed, based mostly on personal conversations over many years and in many places. The author describes the book as a "portrait," not a biography, admits to his own favorable bias, and leaves any criticism or reappraisal of Bob Anderson's life to others, at a later date. This exceptional man much deserves an updated and more comprehensive biography and broader recognition among all Swedish-Americans.

Dennis L. Johnson

Vem är det 2007. Svensk biografisk handbok. ISBN 91-975132-7-X. Published by NE Nationalencyklopedien AB. 2006. 674 pages. Ca 500 SEK + postage.

It was feared for some years that the old biographical handbook *Vem är det* had ceased to be in the early 2000s, but a new publishing house took over. In 2006 a new volume appeared. It has short biographies of more than 8,500 Swedes. These individuals are mostly professional people; politicians, professors, artists, businessmen, authors, sportspeople, etc. They should all be listed with date of birth, place of birth, parents' names, current spouses, and their career. A useful book, but the information must be checked, as always with secondary sources.

Elisabeth Thorsell

Maiden of the Titanic, by Lilly Setterdahl. Softcover, 281 pages, 2007. ISBN 978-9778290-2-6. Price \$11.95 from The Midwest Writing Center, Davenport, IA 52801
www.midwestwritingcenter.org

Well-known immigrant historian *Lilly Setterdahl*, author of *Swedes in Moline, Illinois 1847-2002*, has now ventured into another field, that of writing romantic novels. Her first effort is based on the famous shipwreck of the *Titanic* in 1912. The heroine is of course a Swedish maid who through many twists of the plot, ends up with the hero of her choice. There is also a scoundrel and many exciting happenings. It is a good read for a rainy day, when you take a break from the computer and the ancestors. *Elisabeth Thorsell*

New and Noteworthy

(short notes on interesting books and articles)

A very good book just arrived on my desk. It is in Swedish only, but has lots of information that might be useful to people with Östergötland roots. The book's title is *Östgötska bonderiksdagsmän, bondeståndets ledamöter från Östergötland 1600-1866*, by Bo Lindwall and Henrik Mosén, both well-known Swedish genealogists. The subject of the book is the 600 members of parliament from Östergötland who represented the Peasant's Estate (*Bondeståndet*) from when the records about them start around 1600 until the parliamentary reform in 1866 abolished the parliament of the four estates (*Ståndsriksdagen*). The other estates were the noblemen, the clergymen, and the burghers. These 600 *riksdagsmän* (members of parliament) all get their own biography with dates of birth, marriages and deaths, wives, children, and parents. They also have information on what they did in parliament and at home, from court records, parliament minutes, and much more. There are also charts that show family connections between many *riksdagsmän*, statistics, indexes, and much more. To order the book or just get more information, contact Henrik Mosén at <henrik.mosen@vifolka.se>. See next page for a link.

The January-February 2008 issue of *Ancestry* magazine contains articles on how to tackle 12 different ethnic origins for ancestors. The various articles are just two pages long, and makes me wonder if they all are so questionable as the one on Scandinavian origins? For me it is wrong to try to cover Danish-Norwegian records and Swedish-Finnish records as being all the same, as the legislation for keeping records was different in the two regions. Also in this article they do not tell you at all how to start, just mention that Sweden has the clerical surveys, and that Norway and Denmark have free web sites with church records online, on the plus side. On the minus side, they mention the few given names and the extra letters (Å, Ä and Ö). Also they say that knowing 50 words will be enough to do basic research in the Nordic countries, and then they show a picture of very bad handwriting as an example of the Swedish records. This was not an article to entice new genealogists!